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Exhibition Description

**Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art** features 32 works and celebrates recent gifts of contemporary Chinese art to the SCMA. Notable among these new additions are works donated by Andrew and Wan Kyun Rha Kim (class of 1960) and Ethan Cohen, however, the bulk of the exhibition is drawn from the extensive gift of Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954) and her husband, Jerome A. Cohen. The Cohens lived and traveled in China during the 1970s and 1980s, witnessing first-hand the dramatic changes taking place in the Chinese art world. The works in this exhibition provide a remarkable look into the era when Chinese artists began to throw off the restrictions of China’s 30 years of Maoist Communism (1949-1979) and reclaim their individuality.

**Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art** is curated by Aprile Gallant, curator of prints, drawings, and photographs, and will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue. The 25 page, full color catalogue will be sold for $8 through the Museum Shop and online at [www.smithmuseumstore.com](http://www.smithmuseumstore.com). The exhibition is supported by the Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston.


Why we made this Teacher Pack

The Smith College Museum of Art welcomes the special exhibition, *Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art*, on view on the second floor of the Museum from February 6 - May 31, 2009. The Education Department of the SCMA has prepared this Teacher Pack and group of related images for K-12 teachers to use in preparation for a class visit to the Museum. Activities are also suggested at the end of the packet to help students process their museum visit and try related hands-on projects. Educators may adapt this information into lesson plans suitable for their classrooms.

This spring at the SCMA

**Spring School Tour note:** The spring school tour theme is “Looking at Contemporary Art,” inspired by the objects on display in the special exhibition. The tour will include stops in both the special exhibition and the museum’s permanent collection.

**Teacher Workshop: Chinese Contemporary Art**
Tuesday, February 24, 10:00am-3:00pm

Join art historian/photographer Joan Lebold Cohen (class of 1954) in the gallery while she shares her experiences collecting art and working with artists represented in *Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art*. The afternoon will include a hands-on Chinese ink painting activity led by local artist Q Li Holmes (no art-making experience necessary). A fee of $25 ($20 Members), required with registration, covers all materials, a certificate of participation, and lunch. Educators who teach relevant topics and/or visual arts are encouraged to register. Registration is limited to 20 K-12 teachers and should be received by Tuesday, February 17. Contact museduc@smith.edu or (413) 585-2781 to register.

NEW on our website

Educators with computer access may also register for free downloadable Teacher Packs and images for use in their classrooms at www.smith.edu/artmuseum/education (follow links for K-12 educators). Teacher Packs are available about the permanent collection and the current special exhibition.

For further assistance

Contact Julie Zappia, Associate Educator for School and Family Programs, at (413) 585-2773 or jzappia@smith.edu, for more information or ideas about how to integrate this exhibition and/or SCMA's permanent collection into your classroom. This packet was written and compiled in January 2009 by Rachel Crowe ’09, Student Assistant for Museum Education, and Julie Zappia. School programming at the SCMA is funded by the Museum Program Fund and the Friends of the Museum. The bus subsidy program is funded by the Friends of the Museum.
Background information: (terms in **bold** are defined in glossary)

**Communist China and Post-Mao Dreaming**

*Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art*, an exhibition that provides a window into the era when Chinese artists began to emerge from the constraints of 30 years of Maoist **Communism** (1949-79). Artists began to explore art beyond the limits of the official style. Most of the work was given by Smith Alumna Joan Lebold Cohen ('54) and Jerome A. Cohen. Both Cohens are scholars who first visited the People’s Republic of China in 1972, during the height of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (**Cultural Revolution** for short) and towards the end of Chairman Mao Zedong’s rule. Art like every aspect of life in China in that period was strictly controlled by the authorities, directed by Mao, and was a vehicle for official messages in subject matter and created in official **socialist realist** style.

Much of the work in the exhibition was created during the 1980s when the Cohens lived in China, and as a whole, reflects the first steps taken by the Chinese art world as it began to overturn the totalitarian standards that had so severely limited creative expression. Individual artists responded in different ways to the changes that occurred in the end of Maoist China—the older artists possessed a pre-Communist artistic vocabulary on which to fall back, while the younger ones explored a new vocabulary. This led to a very interesting melding of traditional Chinese mediums and subject matters with modernist styles, as unique to China as the history that produced it.

**Smash the Old World! China during the Cultural Revolution**

During the three decades following the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the government led by Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China sought to modernize China across all aspects of society, a process that included suppressing or destroying much of traditional culture. The government also sought to create a new visual culture to communicate its goals and ideology to the Chinese people. Artists were called on to create art that reflected the revolutionary spirit of the time, in Mao’s words, to make “art for the masses.”

“[Our purpose is] to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind.”

-- Mao Zedong, Yan’an Forum “Talks on Art and Literature”

The impact of this directive on artists was enormous. Oil painting in a socialist realist style replaced **ink painting**—which had been one of the most revered art forms in China for over 1,000 years—as the preferred painting style. Revolutionary heroes, such as workers, soldiers, and peasants replaced traditional subjects such as landscapes, birds, and flowers.

While this shift toward new mediums and subjects began in the 1950s, it was adopted with greater absolutism during the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976. This was lead by Chairman Mao and the “Gang of Four,” which included Mao’s wife Jiang Qing who was the cultural tzar. The Cultural Revolution, motivated by power struggles within the Party and a fear of the Soviet Union, led to a major upheaval in Chinese society and was far reaching into all aspects of Chinese life. During this ten-year period—sometimes referred to as the “decade of catastrophe” or “ten years of turmoil”—senior artists, especially ink painters, were subjected to public humiliation and sometimes torture, and their homes and artworks were seized and destroyed.
This type of harassment was not confined to the art world, but occurred across the entire nation. Conservative estimates of the number of people who died from persecution during the Cultural Revolution are in the tens of thousands, while some recent studies have claimed the death toll to be as high as three million. China’s historical reserves, artifacts and sites of interest suffered devastating damage as they were thought to be at the root of “old ways of thinking.” Many artifacts were seized from private homes and often destroyed on the spot. There are no records of exactly how much was destroyed. Western observers suggest that much of China’s thousands of years of history was in effect destroyed during the short ten years of the Cultural Revolution, and that such destruction of historical artifacts is unmatched at any time or place in human history.

A significant amount of this damage was done primarily in 1966. Just three months after the official launch of the Cultural Revolution in May, one million youths gathered at Tiananmen Square to attend Mao’s first meeting with the Red Guards. Red Guards were civilians sanctioned by Mao and his supporters to “rebel against the system” all over China. With “Mao Zedong Thought” as their weapon, the young Red Guards were encouraged to be revolutionary by “sweeping away the dust of all the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes;” in other words, what Mao referred to as the destruction of “the Four Olds.” Sworn to protect Chairman Mao and his revolutionary line, the Red Guards caused havoc and eventually turned on each other, resulting in great destruction and considerable loss of life. Across the country, art schools and universities were closed down and cultural heritage sites and antiquities were destroyed. One estimate cites that 4,922 of the 6,843 officially designated places of cultural and historical interest in Beijing were destroyed (Asia Society, “Art and China’s Revolution”). During this time, artists who wanted to paint non-revolutionary subjects, such as landscapes, had to do so in secret and under pain of punishment. Mao said, during his famous 1942 Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art, “What we demand is the unity of politics and art, unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form. Therefore, we oppose works of art with a wrong political viewpoint.”

Mao's Death and the End of the Cultural Revolution

As the Cultural Revolution spun out of control and grew past Mao’s original intentions, Mao’s ability to control the situation, and in turn, his authority, dwindled. In 1969, Mao declared the Cultural Revolution to be over, although the official history of the People’s Republic of China marks the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 with Mao’s death. In the last years of his life, Mao was faced with declining health due to Parkinson’s disease and remained passive as various factions within the Communist Party of China mobilized for the power struggle anticipated after his death. During this decade, Mao and the Gang of Four manipulated the widespread turmoil to glorify Mao to a godlike status as the “red sun” and created a “cult of personality” (known specifically as the “Cult of Mao”) in which his image was displayed everywhere and his quotations were included in bold face or red letters in even the most mundane of writings. There were even specific directives to artists during the Mao period about how to portray the Chairman.

After Mao’s death in 1976 and the arrest of the Gang of Four, blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping, a prominent Party member who had previously passed in and out of Mao’s favor, quickly seized power from Mao’s appointed successor Hua Guofeng. Although Deng never officially became the head of the Party or State himself, he served as the de facto leader of the People’s Republic of China from 1978 to the early 1990s. His reformist leadership and influence within the Communist Party led the country to economic reforms of significant magnitude and the Party subsequently loosened governmental control to some degree over the personal lives of its citizens.
Art after Mao: Ancient Traditions and Modern Innovations

The status of traditional Chinese culture within China was severely damaged as a result of the Cultural Revolution. Many traditional customs, such as fortune telling, paper art, feng shui consultations, wearing traditional Chinese dresses for weddings, use of traditional Chinese calendar, scholarship in classical Chinese literature, and the practice of referring to the Chinese New Year as “New Year” rather than “Spring Festival,” had been weakened in China. Some aspects recovered fully while others managed to survive in some form in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and overseas Chinese communities.

After the Cultural Revolution era, many artists struggled to reconnect with traditional styles of painting and calligraphy because the old methods for learning, such as tutelage under a master or training in a workshop, had largely disappeared. Each artist approached the problem of searching for tradition and identity in novel ways. Some taught themselves brushwork through photographic reproductions, while some adapted Western techniques and ideas of composition to traditional themes and materials. Other artists chose to confront traditional painting and calligraphy, thereby establishing a dialogue linking the past and present.

This exhibition captures an extraordinary period in Chinese art history, one in which artists deviated from the officially-mandated socialist-realist tradition while exploring historical Chinese art forms, such as ink painting, alongside innovations in both form and subject matter. Throughout the 1980s, artists reacted against the Maoist dictum that content should determine form and sought to create, instead, beauty and artistic power based purely on form. Ironically, the Cult of Mao exists today in both Chinese and American pop culture (for example, the t-shirts, key chains and posters with Mao’s image one can find being sold on the streets of New York City) without any real connection to the facts of that period in history. In conclusion, the newly liberated artists sought styles, mediums, and subjects with which they could express themselves more honestly and without outside limitations. Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art features works produced between 1979 and 2005 by key artists of the period, representing both the reclaiming of tradition and the breaking of new artistic ground.

Timeline

1893 December 26, Mao Zedong is born.
1911 End of the Qing Dynasty and Imperial China.
1912 Creation of the Republic of China.
1934 Communists reorganize under a new leader, Mao Zedong. He leads the Chinese Communist army in the Long March to Yan’an in Shanxi Province where they establish a guerrilla base until 1949.
1942 Mao Zedong reveals his vision of how art must serve politics at the famous Yan’an Forum “Talks on Art and Literature.”
1949 October 1, The People’s Republic of China is founded by Mao.
1966 The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution begins. It lasts 10 years until Mao’s death and has since been dubbed the “ten years of turmoil.”
1972 Mao suffers a serious stroke, beginning of health problems that would lead to his death 4 years later.
1976 September 9, Chairman Mao dies. The Gang of Four, including Mao’s wife, is arrested. The Cultural Revolution is declared to be at an end.
1978 Deng Xiaoping seizes power from Mao’s appointed successor and serves as the de facto leader of the People’s Republic of China until the early 1990s.
1979 January 1, Normalization of US-China relations take effect.
1986 Pro-democracy demonstrations by students occur in major cities.
1989 April-June, A series of student demonstrations demanding freedom and democracy lead to a hunger strike by three thousand students and, eventually, the massacre at Tiananmen Square on June 4 when government troops occupy the square.
Calligraphy — In ancient China, painting and calligraphy were the most highly appreciated arts in court circles and were produced almost exclusively by aristocrats and scholar-officials who alone had the leisure and resources to perfect the technique and sensibility necessary for great brushwork. Traditionally, calligraphy was thought to be the highest and purest form of painting. The tools were the brush pen, made of animal hair, and black inks, made from soot. Writing as well as painting was done on silk. But after the invention of paper in the 1st century CE, silk was gradually replaced by the new and cheaper material. Original writings by famous calligraphers have been greatly valued throughout China’s history and are mounted on scrolls and hung on the walls in the same way that paintings are.

Communism — A theory and system of social and political organization that dominated much of the history of the 20th century. In theory, communism is a classless society in which all property is owned by the community as a whole and where all people enjoy equal social and economic status. As a political movement, communism sought to overthrow capitalism through a workers’ revolution and redistribute the wealth in the hands of the proletariat, or working class.

Cult of Mao — The “cult of personality” used to promote Mao to godlike status as the “red sun,” the center and source of all things red. There were very specific directives to artists during this period about how to properly portray the Chairman. No matter how Mao was depicted, he had to be painted red, bright and shining; no grey was allowed for shading, and the use of black was interpreted as an indication that the artist harbored counter-revolutionary intentions. His face was painted usually in reddish and other warm tones, and in such a way that it appeared smooth and seemed to radiate as the primary source of light in the composition. In many instances, Mao’s head seemed to be surrounded by a halo which emanated a divine light, illuminating the faces of the people standing in his presence. Paintings in this style highlight the joy of living under the revolution. In addition, Mao became a regular presence in every home, either in the form of his official portrait or as a bust. Not having a portrait on display indicated an apparent unwillingness to go with the revolutionary flow Mao demanded.

Cultural Revolution — A shortened name for “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” a movement initiated by Mao Zedong in 1966 to purge China’s intellectuals and others who were insufficiently “red.” It was led by Mao and the “Gang of Four,” which included Jiang Qing (Mao’s wife). Students across China were encouraged to abandon their studies and join the “Red Guards,” a volunteer organization that began by primarily supporting Communist propaganda, but later killed, tortured, and imprisoned many supposed “counter-revolutionaries” and their relatives. By the end of 1966, the Red Guards went on a massive campaign to destroy religious structures and religious institutions, destroy “counter-revolutionary” art and architecture, and burn ancient scrolls and books. In time, the most violent stage of the Cultural Revolution gave way to an extensive “cult of personality” and reeducation campaign. At the same time, young urban intellectuals were sent to the countryside to live and work alongside peasants. The Culture Revolution ended in 1976 with the death of Mao Zedong and the arrest of the Gang of Four.

Ink Painting — Painting in the traditional style involved essentially the same techniques as calligraphy and was done with a brush dipped in black or colored inks; oil paints were not used until the 20th century. Beginning in the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), the primary subject matter of painting was the landscape, known as shanshui (“mountain water”) painting. In these landscapes, usually monochromatic and sparse, the purpose was not to reproduce exactly the appearance of nature but rather to grasp an emotion or atmosphere so as to catch the “rhythm” of nature. As with traditional calligraphy, the most popular materials on which paintings were made are paper and silk. The finished work was then mounted on scrolls, which could be hung or rolled up.

Red Guards — The legions of volunteers who led the purging of intellectuals and others who were insufficiently “red” during the Cultural Revolution.

Socialist Realism — Another artistic movement that served as a vehicle for propaganda, socialist realism glorified “the masses”—workers, peasants, and soldiers—through a squeaky clean portrayal of their daily life.
Three artists

Wenzhi, Song. (1919-1999, Taicang, Jiangsu province)

Song Wenzhi, who came from Taicang, near Suzhou, attended the Suzhou School of Fine Arts, but also studied privately with Wu Hufan and Lu Yanshao—two prominent members of the Shanghai traditionalist painting elite. Not yet fully mature as an artist by the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, he was able to modify his artistic vocabulary to “serve the needs of the new society,” which stipulated that naturalistic representation of reality, not self-expression, were the goals of art. An extremely versatile and open-minded artist, Song became a dominant figure in a group of Nanjing painters who created a new socialist realist landscape style in the late 1950s and 1960s. In 1961 he traveled thousands of miles through the countryside with Fu Baoshi, father of the Nanjing School of landscape painting, and with two other distinguished Nanjing artists, Qian Songyan and Ya Ming (whose work is also included in the exhibition), on a state-funded mission to “learn from nature.” The state desired Song and the other artists to document the face of new China, specifically by studying the light, space, and atmosphere of Jiangsu province’s exceptional scenery. They painted landscapes of the Yangzi River valley, in which optimistic signs of China’s new economic development figured prominently in a lyrical landscape setting. At the same time, the Jiangsu painters cast aside the brushwork conventions of traditional ink painting, which were considered feudal and elitist by the official art establishment, and replaced them with techniques that incorporated elements of Western painting, considered to be more progressive in that era.

Song, perhaps unique among artists of this older generation, was able to launch a new artistic direction in the post-Mao period; Mount Huang, a painting Song inscribed for the Cohens in Beijing in 1979, marks a transitional moment in his artist reinvention. Mount Huang leaves political matter behind and rejoices in the new freedom to travel and paint for pleasure enjoyed by the now-elderly artist. The scenic Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) range of Anhui province was a particular favorite of the artists from Shanghai and Nanjing; Song has captured the essence of the range in this spontaneous effort. Like Mount Huang, many of the paintings the Cohens acquired from this period were painted on-the-spot at social occasions as expressions of friendship. There is a long tradition of such painting among Chinese artists, and indeed these works are sometimes called “occasional” paintings. In more contemporary terms, one might even refer to them as “performance” paintings. Although this painting includes some decorative and evocative elements from images he had created as part of the Jiangsu group before 1979, Song later returned to the soft, expressive classical brushwork he had learned from the Shanghai traditionalists of the 1940s and early 1950s. In the mid-1980s Song began to experiment more freely with ink spots and color, both of which expanded his visual repertoire. In the two decades leading up to his death in 1999, Song turned his extraordinary technical skill to the creation of small, gem-like observations of the Yangzi River landscape. With a foundation in classical brushwork and a distinctly modern emphasis on direct observation from nature, Song’s work enthusiastically combined realism with echoes of the past.
Hongtu, Zhang. (b. 1943, Pingliang, Gansu province)

“I believe in the power of the image, but I don’t believe in the authority of the image.”

Zhang Hongtu represents a second group of artists in the collection, consisting of a slightly younger generation of painters, who developed as artists entirely after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Zhang attended the high school affiliated with Beijing’s Central Academy of Arts and Crafts and may have been the only student in the high school whose father had been declared a rightist in 1957 during one of Chairman Mao’s Anti-Rightist campaigns. The purpose of the campaigns was to purge alleged “rightists” (people who were not communist-enough, in other words people who stressed the importance of nationalism, tradition, and religion, and who opposed socialism, communism, and internationalism) within the Communist Party of China and abroad. Zhang’s family was Muslim and his father was China’s leading Arabic scholar and interpreter. When, despite his strategically important skill, the father was denounced as a rightist, he and his family were humiliated, and he lost his salary.

Nevertheless, Zhang graduated from high school in 1964 and then from the Central Academy of Arts and Crafts in 1969, where he studied painting, calligraphy, Buddhist art, and socialist realist art. Upon graduation, Zhang and his classmates were sent to the countryside of Hebei province for three years to farm and be “reeducated.” In 1973, after returning from the countryside, Zhang was assigned to work at the Beijing Jewelry Company, where he designed precious objects such as ornamental boxes, birds, and flowers. He managed to paint in his free time and became a member of the “Contemporaries,” an independent group that some of his classmates organized to discuss and exhibit art. They were adventurous for the time because they had no official approval. In 1982 Zhang became one of the first Chinese artists to come to the U.S. from the People’s Republic of China when he won a scholarship to study in New York at the Art Students League. In New York, Zhang was able to explore neo-expressionism, the style of that moment, enabling him to reach well beyond official Chinese restrictions and subsequently transforming himself into a political pop-style artist.

The tragic events of June 4, 1989, also known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre, during which a significant number of students demonstrating in favor of democracy were brutally killed in Tiananmen Square, had a profound impact upon Zhang. Soon after, in the 1990s, Zhang settled abroad and began obsessively creating works based on the image of Mao; Zhang, having freed himself from Chinese subjects while studying in the U.S., returned to them and began making satirical images of Mao and other symbolic protest works. The image of the leader had been everywhere during Zhang’s youth, like an omnipresent god. Now Zhang began re-creating Mao’s image by cutting his profile out of different surfaces—such as a ping pong table, corncobs, and slate—and even transforming the Quaker Oats man into an image of the great leader, in a style similar to that of Andy Warhol. The piece by Zhang from 1993 included in the exhibition depicts the Chairman wearing a headband inscribed with the motto “Serve the People” standing in front of banner-waving student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. After the millennium, Zhang moved beyond Chinese pop images to build on the works of famous Chinese ink painting masters from the past centuries and then create hybrid canvases that combine traditional Chinese painting with the color and composition of famous Western artists (for example, a Chinese mountain range landscape in the style and colors of Vincent van Gogh). Zhang currently lives and works in New York.

“If you stare at a red shape for a long time, when you turn away, your retina will hold the image but you will see a green version of the same shape. In the same way, when I lived in China, I saw the positive image of Mao so many times that my mind now holds a negative image of Mao. In my art I am transferring this psychological feeling to a physical object.”

Deshu, Qiu. (b. 1948, Shanghai)

Born in 1948 on the eve of the Chinese Communist victory into a family that was labeled “intellectual,” Qiu Deshu was excluded from elite educational opportunities but pursued learning about ancient China, Buddhism, and brush painting privately. Qiu graduated from high school in 1967, during the very beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and in 1968 was assigned to a permanent job as a factory worker, a destiny common during the Cultural Revolution when colleges and art schools were closed. Initially shoveling coal in a plastics factory, Qiu eventually was able to make his way into the product-design department, where he found some opportunity to paint. In 1970 and again in 1973, he was sent to attend special short-term classes at the Shanghai Art School to learn to paint illustrations for story books. One of the most highly motivated in the class, Qiu was considered a top student and developed a close friendship with a young instructor in the class, Chen Jialing (another artist represented in the exhibition). Chen (b. 1937) had graduated from the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in 1963 and was a leader in the Red Guard movement, even though he maintained an activist stance during the Red Guard period.

Possessed of strong skills in traditional seal carving and painting, Qiu was transferred to the Luwan District Cultural Palace as an “art worker” in 1977, after the fall of the Gang of Four. There he began organizing non-mainstream art exhibitions and in 1979, with hints of cultural liberalization in the air, he formed a group to explore the similarities and differences between Chinese ink painting and Western water color painting. In 1980, Qiu organized an independent experimental art exhibition by the group called “Caocao” (“Grass grass”). At that time it was a bold move to exhibit a privately organized, unauthorized group, and Qiu risked official sanction. Warned by the administration that they could not call themselves “Independent Artists” as they intended, the group took on the comparatively meek title “Caocao.” The name, which means little sprouts of grass (literally “grass grass”), suggests the beginning of the independence of thought and artistic creation they hoped would flourish in the future. The other participants were, like Qiu, factory workers. Most knew nothing of Western art in that period, and many were committed to innovation within ink painting. Trained on nothing but socialist realism, their idea was to develop something entirely new. It was here, during the only exhibition organized by the group, and a critical transitional period in Qiu’s work, that Qiu Deshu met Joan Lebold Cohen.

Qiu, the artist whose work is most comprehensively represented in the Cohen collection, created abstract paintings suggestive of calligraphy and seals before conceiving the “fissuring” technique that became characteristic of his work thereafter. To achieve this, Qiu experimented with traditional techniques to create a unique visual language using Chinese rice paper (typically used for Chinese painting and calligraphy, as seen elsewhere in the Cohen collection) that he tore, crumpled, manipulated with color, and pasted to a sturdy ground of either canvas or Chinese painting paper. The process became an artistic vehicle that guided both his exploration of figurative and pure abstraction in the 1980s and his return to landscape imagery in the 1990s. Qiu, like Zhang, was also able to come and study in the U.S. when he served as an artist-in-residence at Tufts University from 1985-1986 before returning to China to establish himself as a professional painter in Shanghai, where he still resides. He has since participated in many exhibitions both at home and abroad.
For Further Reference

BOOKS:


WEBSITES:

Beyond the Border’s Film “From the Masses to the Masses” Resources (Art and Ideology; Woodblock Art)
www.beyondtheborder.org/teachers_guides/art_and_ideology.pdf
www.beyondtheborder.org/teachers_guides/woodblock_art.pdf

Condensed China: Chinese History for Beginners
www.condensedchina.com

Morning Sun: A Film and Website About Cultural Revolution
www.morningsun.org

Museum of My Art Only: Artist Zhang Hongtu
www.momao.com

Songs of China’s Cultural Revolution: Presented by Professor William A. Joseph of Wellesley College (MP3 format)
www.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/China/CRSongs/crsongs.htm

Visions of China: Informative Multimedia Presentation from CNN
www.cnn.com/specials/1999/china.50/flash.html

MUSEUM WEB RESOURCES:

Asia Society, educational materials for teachers (lesson plans, background essays, maps, images & other resources)
www.askasia.org/teachers

Asia Society and Museum of New York, recent exhibition “Art and China’s Revolution”
www.asiasociety.org/chinarevo

Guggenheim, electronic exhibition of modern section from past exhibition “China: 5,000 Years”
http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/gug/intr/intropage2.html

The Met’s Timeline of Art History: China, 1900 A.D. - present
www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/11/eac/ht11eac.htm

SCMA’s exhibition website for *Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art*
www.smith.edu/artmuseum/exhibitions/
**Before Your Visit: Inquiry-based Discussion**

*Get students ready to talk about art!*

**Lesson Goal/Concept:** Introduce your trip to the Museum and give students an opportunity to practice looking closely at a work of art.

**Overall Objective:** Students will participate in a teacher-led inquiry-based discussion using images so that they can explore what they will gain from a visit to the Museum.

**Massachusetts Curriculum Framework Connections:** ELA General Standard 1 (June 2001 Framework, pages 13-14), Discussion: *Students will use agreed upon rules for formal and informal discussions in small and large groups.*  ELA General Standard 2 (June 2001 Framework, pages 15-16), Questioning, Listening, and Contributing: *Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.*

**Supplies needed:**
- ~three images from the *Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art* exhibition
- ~a way to project or reproduce those images so that all students can look at them as a class

**Directions:**

1. Begin the discussion without the images, and ask your students some of the following questions:
   
   ~Have you ever been to a museum before? Tell me about your visit.
   ~What kinds of things do you expect to see at the Museum?
   ~What kinds of words do you think you might hear used when talking about art?
   ~What do you want to learn from our visit?
   ~As a class, what do you think some of our goals for going to the museum should be?
   ~What can we do to make sure we meet these goals?
   ~Are there any questions you might want to ask our guides about the Museum?

2. Introduce one of the *Post-Mao Dreaming: Chinese Contemporary Art* images by projecting or reproducing it large enough for all students to see at one time. You don’t necessarily need to know any detailed background information about the artwork before you show it to your students— you can try some of the following questions and let students know that you’ll just be exploring ideas together.

   ~What seems to be going on in this artwork? What do you see that makes you say that?
   ~Does this piece remind you of anything in your life? How might it relate to your life?
   ~What do you want to know about this artwork? How could we find out more information?
   ~What can we guess about the artist from looking at this artwork? Why do you think the artist chose to create an artwork like this?
Before Your Visit: Discussion and Visual Analysis

Post-Mao Dreaming...what does it mean?

Lesson Goal/Concept: To introduce students to what “Post-Mao” China means.

Overall Objective: Students will learn about the differences in Chinese art during the reign of Mao Ze-dong (1949-1979) and after. Students will then compare two works of art made during each period.

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework Connections: ELA General Standard 2, Questioning, Listening, and Contributing: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge. Arts General Standard 7, Roles of Artists in Communities: Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and art institutions in societies of the past and present. History and Social Science Learning Standards WHII.34, Identify the political and economic upheavals in China after the Chinese Revolution.

Supplies needed:
- An image of Mao Zedong (many are available online, or use the Hongtu painting included on the CD or on the SCMA website)
- The images on the following page (also available for download on our website- see p. 3).

Discussion Points:

1. Who was Mao? (see also pp. 4 and 7)

Mao Zedong became the leader of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 (after a period of civil war). Also known as “Chairman Mao,” he was the leader of the Communist Party and led the country until his death in 1976. Under Mao’s rule, many changes were incorporated into Chinese society that affected all areas of culture, including the way art was made.

2. The Cultural Revolution (see also pp.4-5, p. 7)

Among the changes that Mao instituted in China, he launched the Cultural Revolution, a program to eradicate elements of what the Communist Party considered “traditional” Chinese culture and replace them with Communist culture. This meant that all images (including art) that were created had to follow a strict set of rules that were determined by Mao’s leadership.

3. Art during the Cultural Revolution (see also pp. 4-5)

Because the Cultural Revolution sought to remove the liberal upper class from their status in society, modern cultural institutions such as art schools were largely shut down and the teachers, artists and writers who staffed them were either imprisoned or sent to labor in the countryside. Mao felt that these people needed to understand peasant and working-class life, and he declared that all traditional forms of art should be replaced by a new form of art referred to as “socialist realism” (see p. 7).Basically, artists were forced to quit making art the way they desired to and follow the rules that Mao established.
4. Art after the Cultural Revolution, and “Post-Mao” (see also pp. 5-6)

The Cultural Revolution is thought to have ended with the death of Mao in 1976, after which the government somewhat loosened its control over private citizens. Therefore, art made during the later 1970s through today (the period represented in the Post-Mao Dreaming exhibition) captures a time in China when artists were re-emerging from thirty years of Maoist Communism. Artists rejected Mao’s socialist realist style and began to express themselves more honestly and individually. The artworks on display in Post-Mao Dreaming reflect individual choices of artists, some whose work harkens back to traditional techniques (such as scrolls and ink paintings), and some who took traditional concepts and put a newer spin on them.

Visual Analysis:

Compare a work of art made during the Cultural Revolution (in socialist realist style) and one made afterwards (in a style of the artist’s choosing). Display and discuss the following images:

**Tang Muli**, Chinese b. 1947  
*The Young Bugler*, 1971  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of Andrew Kim and Wan Kyun Rha Kim, class of 1960

* What do you see in this picture? What do you think is going on?  
* Where do you think this man is going?  
* What can you determine about his mood?

This image depicts a young bugler eagerly preparing to travel. While the smile on his face seems to indicate happiness, in reality, he is being exiled to the countryside to labor in a rural location. The artist himself was laboring on a dairy farm at this time, instead of studying physics at college as he had originally intended.

**Qiu Deshu**, Chinese b. 1948  
*Sun and a Half with Black Cracks*, July 21, 1989  
Ink and stamping on paper  
Gift of Joan Lebold Cohen, class of 1954, and Jerome A. Cohen

* What do you see in this image?  
* Does it remind you of anything?  
* What kind of mood is being portrayed here? How do the colors contribute to the mood?

This image represents a major shift from socialist realism (as seen above) to an individualized, expressive form of abstraction. The artist experimented with art in the 1980s by exploring and comparing techniques of traditional ink and western watercolor painting.
Lesson Goal/Concept: To examine the mixed media technique of Qiu Deshu.

Overall Objective: Students will be introduced to the work of Qiu Deshu and complete a hands-on activity inspired by his technique.

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework Connections: Visual Arts General Standard 1, Methods, Materials and Techniques: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods, materials and techniques unique to the visual arts.

Supplies Needed:
- Chinese rice paper (also known as xuan paper, actually made from bark)
- canvas or stiff paper to serve as a sturdy ground for a collage
- Chinese ink (or sumi ink)
- watercolor paints and brushes
- an adhesive such as Elmer's glue or glue sticks

Directions:

1. Review Deshu's biography (on p. 10) with your students.

2. Introduce Qiu Deshu's artwork. Five of the thirty-two Chinese works of art in the Post-Mao Dreaming exhibition are by Qiu Deshu, making him the most represented Chinese artist in the show. Deshu developed an experimental mixed media technique for which he coined the term liebian. The word liebian is comprised of two Chinese characters: lie, meaning “split” or “crack,” and bian, meaning “change” or “transform.”

3. Describe the liebian technique. Liebian was one of many techniques that Qiu Deshu used (for example, the artwork pictured on the previous page, Sun and a Half with Black Cracks, was done with ink stamps on paper). The technique is best described as one which uses traditional materials, manipulated by the artist to arrive at a contemporary result. To achieve what we might call a collage in Western practice, Qiu builds up layers of traditional xuan paper and colors them with Chinese ink and different paints. Sometimes the colors are meant to achieve a figural representation, sometimes not. He then crumples or tears the paper and attaches it, with techniques modified from those of traditional Chinese scroll mounting, to canvas or sturdy paper.

4. Have your students make a Qiu-inspired collage. They may wish to begin by painting color onto layers of rice paper with the goal of creating an image, then ripping up that image and putting it back together to form a new, unique composition that they can adhere onto stiffer paper. Qiu Deshu's Blue Mountain (pictured on p. 10) was created in this way.
OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE to TEACHERS

@ the Art Museum

Cunningham Center for Prints, Drawings, and Photographs
This part of SCMA houses over 16,000 works on paper including prints, drawings, photographs, watercolors, and illustrated books. The center is open for class and individual visits by appointment only Tuesdays-Fridays. To schedule a visit or to obtain more information, call (413) 585-2764 or email ccenter@smith.edu.

SCMA Records Room
Explore curatorial files and access slides and disc images on the fascinating spectrum of works within the Smith College Museum of Art collections. Visits by appointment only during business hours. Contact the General Administrative Offices to inquire, (413) 585-2761.

Museum Website
Use our website to get the scoop on upcoming exhibitions, as well as accurate event and contact information. We have launched a new section for educators which includes the ability to become a free registered user in order to download our teacher packs! www.smith.edu/artmuseum/education (follow links for K-12 educators).

Museums 10
To learn about other museums and cultural resources around the Five Colleges area, please visit the Museums10 website at: www.museums10.org.

Database
Search this developing database by title, artist, or artist's culture to dive into the art collections of the Five College Museums and Historic Deerfield. www.museums.fivecolleges.edu

Friends of SCMA
Consider membership at the Educator or Individual level to receive the museum newsletter, and enjoy discounts to teacher workshops and special programs. You can purchase a membership online at www.smith.edu/artmuseum (click on “Join”), or call (413) 585-2777.

@ the Art Library (adjacent to the Art Museum)

Hillyer Art Library
Research any art topic or keep up with the latest exhibition news through Hillyer’s extensive collection of books and periodical holdings. Regular hours during the Spring 2009 semester: Monday – Thursday 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 P.M., Friday 9:00 A.M. – 9:00 P.M., Saturday 10:00 A.M. – 9:00 P.M., Sunday 12:00 P.M. – 12:00 A.M. (413) 585-2940 www.smith.edu/libraries/ibs/hillyer