Chang Dai-Chien

Paintings

10 August - 4 September 1965

Grosvenor Gallery
28/30 Davies Street London W1
telephone
Mayfair 0691
telegrams
Savenvartz London

Front cover: No. 6 Autumn Mountain
CHANG DAI-CHIEN has been called the leading traditional Chinese painter of our time. This is misleading, for, although he is rooted in the historic tradition of the Chinese brush, his use of it is by no means conformist. Indeed, his mastery of calligraphy and pictorial brushwork enables him to develop new and more powerful effects. There was a time when it might have been fair to call him eclectic, even though he handled each style in a personal way. But in the past four or five years, since he reached the age of sixty, he has broadened and loosened his brush strokes so as to show that the tradition is still capable of a break-through into new effects.

Chang Dai-Chien is not unknown in London, where his work was first seen in 1935 in the exhibition of contemporary Chinese painting in the New Burlington Gallery, but this is the first time he has had a gallery to himself. There have been three important exhibitions of his work in public galleries in Paris since the war and more recent exhibitions in New York in 1963 and in Cologne in 1964, when the new tendencies in his work became apparent.

He has been experimenting with ink painting on the scale of wall covering for twenty years past. Having been bowled over by the grandeur and fecundity of the old Chinese mural paintings surviving in the Buddhist cave temples of Tun-huang and Maichishan, which he studied and copied in the 1940's, Mr. Chang found means of painting on this scale, while still working on paper laid flat on the table in the usual Chinese way. Starting with lotus pictures he has now turned to landscape. In these large compositions form is rendered by ink tone, in a great range of blacks, to which strong blues have now been added, but only as an extension of the range and without breaking the unity of the brushwork. All his life the artist has shown his admiration for the work of the great Individualist painters of the later seventeenth century, Pa ta Shan-jen and Shih T'ao, and has found in their work the inspiration to develop as he has. Even in the latest work the combination of dry and delicate line with saturated ink points back to these masters.

He has travelled very widely in three continents, always absorbing the spirit of great mountain landscapes, but always returning to the Szechwan which was his home. As in all Chinese landscape painting, the sublimity of nature lends strength to the painter’s brush.

Basil Gray, MA, CBE
Keeper, Department of Oriental Antiquities,
British Museum
1899  Born May 19th at Nei kiang, Szechwan.
1914  Attended Chui-ch'ing School in Chungking.
1916  Captured by bandits and kept as secretary to the Chief. Escaped after 100 days.
1917  Joined his brother Shan-tze at Kyoto, Japan, to study drawing and the art of dyeing materials.
1919  Returned to Shanghai. Studied with Tseng-hsi, a famous scholar. Became a novice in a Buddhist temple at Sungkiang and received the Buddhist name Dai-Chien. Three months later he returned to Szechwan to get married. Studied calligraphy with Li Ju-i-ch'ing at Shanghai.
1920  Death of Li Ju-i-ch'ing. Returned to Szechwan.
1922  Younger brother Chun-sou committed suicide. Went to Shanghai.
1923  Stayed with brother Shan-tze in Sungkiang.
1925  Death of his father.
1929  Member of Committee for first National Exhibition of Fine Arts.
1930  Death of teacher, Tseng-hsi.
1931  Journey to Yellow Mountains. Delegate to Exhibition of the Art of T'ang, Sung, Yuan and Ming dynasties, in Japan.
1932  Settled with brother and their families in Soochow.
1933  Lived in summer palace on shores of Lake Kunming, near Peiping. Participated in Paris exhibition of Chinese painting at the Jeu-de-Paume Museum. 'The lotuses' purchased by the Museum.
1934  Exhibition in Peiping. Visited Huashan and Japan.
1935  First shown in London in exhibition of contemporary Chinese paintings at the New Burlington Gallery.
1936  Death of mother. Taught at Central University, Nanking. Exhibition in Shanghai.
1937  In Peiping at the start of Sino-Japanese War. Forbidden by Japanese to leave city.
1938  Escaped and returned to Szechwan.
1939  Lived with family in Ch'ing-cheng Mountains. Exhibition in Chungking.
1943  Returned to Chengtu. Exhibition of new works.
1944  Exhibition of copies of Cave frescoes in Chengtu and Chungking. Two volumes of drawings with critical studies published.
1945  Giant Lotus painting, a major work on four panels, completed for exhibition in Chengtu.

1947 Exhibition in Shanghai. Twelve Tun-huang frescoes published in colour.

1948 Exhibition in Hongkong.

1949 Visited Taipei, Taiwan.

1950 Exhibitions in New Delhi and Hyderabad. Stayed over a year in India and spent three months in the Ajanta caves.

1952 Moved with family to Argentina. Exhibition in Buenos Aires.

1953 Visited the United States. Exhibition in Taipei. Dr. Kuo presents twelve major works to the Municipality of Paris.

1955 Exhibition in Tokyo.


1957 Returned to Sao Paulo via Japan and Hongkong.


1960 Exhibition of recent paintings in the Grande Salle d'Honneur at the Salon Nationale, Paris. Exhibitions at the Royal Museum of History and Art, Brussels; Parnasses Hall, Athens; El Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid.


1962 Exhibition for the inauguration of New Museum, Hongkong.


1964 Exhibition in Cologne.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Cold Spring</td>
<td>14¼ × 16½</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fishing in the Autumn River</td>
<td>14¼ × 16½</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mountain and Boat</td>
<td>14¼ × 16½</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chatting Idly on the Bridge</td>
<td>14¼ × 16½</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chingchen Shan, Szechwan</td>
<td>14¼ × 16½</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Autumn Mountain</td>
<td>18 × 23½</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>21 × 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>21 × 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>23½ × 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Peony</td>
<td>23½ × 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Peony</td>
<td>23½ × 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Music of Nature</td>
<td>28½ × 56</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Dragon Waterfall of Yen Tang, Chekiang</td>
<td>24 × 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Green Peaks</td>
<td>23½ × 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nature’s Grandeur</td>
<td>23½ × 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Reflection in the Lake</td>
<td>18 × 23(\frac{3}{4})</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Warmth of the Green</td>
<td>18 × 23(\frac{3}{4})</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Switzerland, Scenery in the Rain</td>
<td>23(\frac{1}{2}) × 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lake Scenery, Austria</td>
<td>18 × 23(\frac{3}{4})</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lotus</td>
<td>70(\frac{1}{2}) × 35</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mountain Village in My Dream</td>
<td>18 × 23(\frac{3}{4})</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Rain on River</td>
<td>14(\frac{1}{2}) × 17(\frac{1}{4})</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Bamboo and Plum Blossom</td>
<td>53(\frac{1}{2}) × 27(\frac{1}{2})</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Cowherd</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Bamboo</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>On Route Switzerland–Austria I</td>
<td>37 × 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>On Route Switzerland–Austria II</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>On Route Switzerland–Austria IV</td>
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<td>30</td>
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No. 22  Rain on River
No. 42  Fishing Under the Cliff
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