

趙少昂@雲端社群

2,025 則帖子 120 萬位粉絲

關於：

1905 年生於廣東省廣州市

1948 年定居香港，在此生活長達 50 多年

16 歲學藝於高奇峰私立美學館

1930 年在廣州創辦嶺南藝苑、1948 年移居香港復辦藝苑

座右銘：「一切皆幻，藝術有真；時乎不再，努力為人。」

治畫格言：「明乎造物，擷其精要，機杼獨運，乃能出神入化。」

#老師 高奇峰 #前輩 徐悲鴻

#友人 張大千 #友人 #天風七子

#好友 #篆刻 張祥凝 #好友 #嶺南畫派 楊善深 #友人 黃君璧

#友人 齊白石

趙少昂 (10 小時前發佈)：嶺南地區春天一到，木棉花綻放，顏色深紅宛如血般濃烈。唯有多下功夫進行寫生練習，細察花的生長狀態，方能將木棉的千姿萬態盡數描繪出來。

#嶺南藝苑 #師法自然

(左) 趙少昂 (1905 – 1998) | 嶺南春色 | 1982 | 水墨設色紙本直幅 | 香港文化博物館藏品

(右上) 趙少昂 (1905 – 1998) | 木棉 | 1960 年代 | 水墨紙本冊頁 | 香港文化博物館藏品 | 趙之幹及趙之泰先生捐贈

美美：@趙少昂 請問如何賦色用墨？

阿生@嶺南藝苑：趙少昂用沒骨法繪畫木棉花，透過深淺的用色，寫出橙紅色花朵的形態和厚潤質感。另外，他善用墨之濃淡，表現出樹幹粗糙的肌理質感。

在《嶺南春色》畫面左下方有一隻翠藍色羽毛的喜鵲昂首凝望盛開的木棉花，兩者色彩紅、藍互補，令畫面顏色對比鮮明！

阿真@嶺南藝苑：趙少昂在樹上畫了一隻姿態靈動的喜鵲，仿佛張嘴鳴叫，令畫面活潑生動。

再說，木棉長得挺拔，帶有一股堅韌的英雄氣概，因此木棉又稱為「英雄樹」。

民間視喜鵲為吉祥報喜的象徵，每稱「喜鵲叫，好事到」。趙少昂以木棉與喜鵲一動一靜相互映襯，於畫面意象構成絕妙對比。

遊於藝：此畫題識：「萬紫千紅空爛熳，孤標畢竟勝凡株」，可見趙少昂以木棉言志。

白話翻譯題識大意：紅的、紫的花兒盛開卻徒添熱鬧；這些常見的花草總比不上木棉的孤高挺立。

木棉是嶺南一帶常見的植物。你知道嗎？趙少昂 1930 年於廣州創辦的嶺南藝苑也以木棉為苑徽。

#嶺南藝苑苑徽

徐悲鴻（6 小時前發佈）：

#贈畫

徐悲鴻（1895 – 1953） | 飲馬圖 | 1942 | 水墨設色紙本直幅 | 私人藏品

美美：哇！這幅《飲馬圖》是徐悲鴻（1895 – 1953）給趙少昂的作品嗎？

我記得徐悲鴻另有一幅寫貓的作品贈予趙少昂，他更珍而重之將它掛在家中。

徐悲鴻（1895 – 1953） | 貓 | 1938 | 水墨設色紙本 | 馮秋泓先生藏品 | 圖片由馮秋泓先生提供

趙少昂與畫友楊善深（1913 – 2004）及學生們也曾在此作品前合照呢！

阿生@嶺南藝苑：徐悲鴻畫馬寫實自然、強調馬的肌肉線條、骨骼結構，以流暢的筆墨線條捕捉馬有力度的姿態，善用墨色濃淡的變化表現光影效果，又細緻描繪馬的毛髮、眼神，讓觀眾感受到馬的力量和生命力。

反之，他筆下的貓，多取柔韌的曲線，柔和的墨色，筆意柔中帶剛。

趙少昂繪畫教室：據徐悲鴻的兒子徐慶平（1946–）憶述，徐悲鴻愛貓，家裡曾養過八隻貓呢！他即使下班累著，依然坐在躺椅，拿著乒乓球逗弄貓兒玩耍，仔細觀察貓的機敏神情與動勢。他畫的貓大多借以抒情、或是信手拈來創作，聊贈知交雅賞。他將此畫贈予趙少昂，可見兩人交情甚篤。

遊於藝：說來徐悲鴻與嶺南畫派可謂大有淵源。二十世紀初，有識之士如高劍父

(1879 – 1951)、高奇峰(1889 – 1933)等均就改革中國畫提出種種想法。他們提出「折衷中西，融匯古今。」徐悲鴻也提出「古法之佳者守之，垂絕者繼之；不佳者改之，未足者增之；西方畫之可採入者融之」。趙少昂深受高劍父、高奇峰影響，秉承推動國畫現代化的理念。他在《燈塔月刊》中，提出國畫要訣，主張在學習傳統之外，更要認識解剖學、透視學、物理學、圖案學、光學等。

阿生@嶺南藝苑：趙少昂與徐悲鴻的友誼遠不止於此呢！1920、30年代，高劍父及高奇峰邀請徐悲鴻到廣州開辦畫展，趙氏也因此與他認識。抗戰期間，趙氏避居西南，當時徐悲鴻出任重慶中央大學藝術系主任，聘請趙氏任教，又為他的展覽撰文推薦，甚至讚譽趙少昂是「中國花鳥畫第一人」。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：徐悲鴻曾替趙少昂畫過一幅畫像，趙氏也把作品掛在畫室呢！這些畫作見證著他們兩人的友情。

徐悲鴻(1895 – 1953) | 少昂側寫(複製品) | 1937 | 鉛筆紙本

嶺南畫派討論區（6 小時前發佈）：9 月 10 日教師節

趙少昂（1905 – 1998）、周一峰（1890 – 1982）、葉少秉（1896 – 1968）、何漆園（1899 – 1970）、黃少強（1901 – 1942） | 奇峰夫子遺像 | 1934 | 水墨設色紙本立軸 | 香港中文大學文物館藏品 | 何耀光先生、霍寶材先生、黎德先生及其他人士惠贈 | 1973.0922 | 圖片由香港中文大學文物館提供

遊於藝：奇峰夫子是誰？

高奇峰是嶺南畫派的創始人之一，與兄長高劍父及陳樹人（1884 – 1948）並稱「嶺南三傑」。少時隨兄長習畫，後赴日本留學，學習寫生、素描與透視技法，並將這些技法融入傳統水墨畫。歸國後，高奇峰積極投身藝壇活動，曾參與

《真相畫報》、《時事畫報》的出版，又設美學館授藝。1929 年，因病隱居於廣州天風樓，高氏依然與弟子談藝作畫，不時舉辦雅集。他一生授徒無數，其中如周一峰（1890 – 1982）、何漆園（1899 – 1970）、黃少強（1901 – 1942）、張坤儀（1895 – 1969）、容漱石（1903 – 1996）、葉少秉（1896 – 1968）及趙少昂等成就最顯著，被稱為「天風七子」。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：高奇峰認為習畫必須虛心學習世界各畫學理法。1920 年代，他在演講稿《學畫不是一件死物》曾提及：「我以為學畫不是一件死物，而是一件有生命能變化的東西。每一時代自有一時代之精神的特質和經驗……」

美美：請教各位，款識說什麼？我看不太懂。

遊於藝：款識云：「甲戌六月十三日為高師誕辰。予與同門何漆園、黃少強、趙少昂、葉少秉等合繪斯圖。是日並舉行美學苑第二次繪畫展覽，以誌教澤而留紀念云爾。」

白話翻譯：1934 年 6 月 13 日是高奇峰老師生辰。我（即題字人周一峰）與同門何漆園、黃少強、趙少昂、葉少秉等共同創作這幅畫作，並於當日舉辦美學苑的第二次畫展，藉此感念已逝高老師的教誨並留下紀念。

高奇峰於 1933 年病逝，他的學生不時辦雅集寫畫、舉行畫展，以示不忘老師的教誨。直至 1970 年代，他們依然舉辦畫展紀念高奇峰，反映師徒之間的親厚感情。

嶺南畫派討論區（3 小時前發佈）：想當年……

高奇峰（1889–1933）及門人 | 十分春色圖 | 1933 | 水墨設色紙本立軸 | 香港中文大學文物館藏品 | 何耀光先生、霍寶材先生、黎德先生及其他人士惠贈 | 1973.0924 | 圖片由香港中文大學文物館提供

1931 年高奇峰與眾弟子攝於廣州。

左起：周一峰、何漆園、趙少昂、張坤儀、高奇峰、葉少秉、黃少強

遊於藝：《十分春色圖》由高奇峰與九位弟子合作繪畫，容漱石畫紅梅、何漆園畫牡丹、周一峰畫芍藥、趙少昂畫茶花、葉少秉畫玫瑰、劉定叔畫墨蘭、黃少強畫白梅、馮遂川畫水仙、張坤儀畫青菊，再由高奇峰畫臘梅。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：好個滿院春色！高奇峰的學生各有所長，難得即席合繪深有默契，群芳風姿各異，卻又出奇地和諧。眾畫家下筆有所依據，又懂得合作寫畫互相謙讓、映襯，才造就出一幅《十分春色圖》。

阿生@嶺南藝苑：說到合作畫，我們不妨來看看這幅由嶺南畫派第二代弟子所繪的《十分春色》。這幅作品同樣充滿生機與風采~

趙少昂（1905–1998）、黃侃（1886–1935）、周一峰（1890–1982）、葉少秉（1896–1968）、何漆園（1899–1970）、容漱石（1903–1996）、司徒奇（1907–1997）、黃獨峰（1913–1998）、楊善深（1913–2004）、尹如天（生卒待考） | 十分春色 | 1949 | 水墨設色紙本立軸 | 香港中文大學文物館藏品 | 北山堂惠贈 | 2001.0267 | 圖片由香港中文大學文物館提供

趙少昂（12 小時前發佈）：

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 灕江煙雨 | 1943 | 水墨設色紙本立軸 | 香港文化博物館藏品

阿生@嶺南藝苑：1940 年代，趙少昂流寓桂林、貴陽，再入重慶。雖然當時時局紛擾，但受桂林山水美景啟發，趙氏畫了不少寫生稿和山水作品。

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 桂林 | 1943 | 鉛筆紙本 | 香港文化博物館藏品

美美：這幅《灕江煙雨》先以近景的大樹，引領觀眾遊移於蜿蜒曲折的水道，在煙雨迷濛之間，驟見遠景桂林象鼻山著名的「水月洞」景致。原來國畫山水也講究地理景貌。以前我總覺得山水畫看來差不多一模一樣，想是渾然沒有留心箇中細節。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：@美美 你看趙少昂在中景畫了什麼？船夫冒著雨在江上划著竹筏，與前景的樹及遠景的山景，巧妙營造出前、中、後的空間層次，並形成一靜一動的對比。

趙氏作品繪畫的題材，總是來自生活的所見所聞。這可是從寫生觀察大千世界而來的。

美美：原來如此！山水作品添了船夫顯得富有生趣。**@嶺南藝苑** 甚麼時候再辦寫生團？我一定要好好學習如何取景、如何構圖佈局。

背包客阿霞：跟大家分享一下，這是我上月泛舟灕江拍下來的照片。相較之下，趙少昂的畫作從鳥瞰的角度描繪山光水色，畫面更開闊。他又以淋漓筆墨寫迷濛霧景，似乎映照時人面對戰禍的心情。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：趙少昂的山水畫中運用了渲染技法，使畫面呈現出煙雨迷濛的效果。背景山脈以多層次淡墨疊加，表現灕江山水霧氣的厚重感，展現桂林多變的氣候。

嶺南畫派討論區（3 小時前發佈）：1948 年定居香港後，趙少昂屢次憑藉當時的寫生稿及記憶描寫桂林山水，以筆墨重遊舊地。他運用細膩的渲染技法，捕捉光線的變化，通過層層點染，呈現出桂林挺拔奇峰中的遠山靄氣、夕照水影及雨後濕潤的景致。

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 獨秀山 | 約 1943 | 鉛筆紙本 | 香港文化博物館藏品

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 暮色連空遠 | 1962 | 水墨設色紙本立軸 | 香港文化博物館藏品

張大千（6 小時前發佈）：#贈畫

張大千（1899–1983） | 白描仕女圖 | 1945 | 水墨紙本直幅 | 馮秋泓先生藏品 |
圖片由馮秋泓先生提供

阿真@嶺南藝苑：這幅仕女圖見證著趙少昂與張大千（1899–1983）的交往及時局的變遷。1945 年，抗戰的最後一年，張大千在成都拜託友人高嶺梅（1913 – 1993）把畫作交給身處重慶的趙少昂。和平再臨，趙氏將畫作由成都、貴州、柳州等地帶回到廣州，其後又帶到香港，長掛於他的畫室。

Lola：張大千的款識：「此紙携過渝中，幸勿令君璧見之，見時又笑曰：『此大千未竟之作也』。蓋予性疎略，往往不肯粉朽，畫成每有複筆。」，讓人覺得他很幽默可愛！

他竟然跟趙少昂說，此作不能讓同儕黃君璧（1898 – 1991）看到。張大千自謙粗疏，不喜對畫作多加粉飾。若黃君璧看到畫作，定必取笑此作尚未畫成。

趙少昂（10 小時前發佈）：洋紫荊的花四季綻放，春夏兩季開得尤其旺盛。枝節的末端會長出花莖，花莖上會開好幾朵花，香港地區的洋紫荊花色多為深紫色，也有淺紫色和淺白色兩種。

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 洋紫荊 | 1970 年代 | 水墨設色紙本冊頁 | 香港文化博物館藏品

阿生@嶺南藝苑：我記起來了！趙少昂在《實用繪畫學》曾說過，畫洋紫荊時，要先用薄粉蘸紫色寫花瓣，花瓣要畫得薄，看起來有彈性，顯得明麗活潑。

畫葉子時，用大筆分兩筆畫成，趁墨色未乾時勾勒葉筋，葉子的顏色可以用蒼綠色或墨色；洋紫荊的枝幹可用墨來畫，靠近花朵的嫩枝，可用墨綠色蘸點赭墨來畫。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：這幅《洋紫荊》冊頁方寸小巧，精巧地描繪了洋紫荊的各處細節。這功力源於趙少昂多年寫生和對大自然的細心觀察。

趙氏對大自然觀察入微，在戶外寫生時遇到昆蟲，他都會留心觀察其形態。就連他的畫室裡，都擺放著友人贈送的昆蟲標本，方便隨時參考研習。

趙少昂（12 小時前發佈）：

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 馬來殘照 | 1950 – 60 年代 | 水墨設色紙本立軸 | 香港文化博物館藏品

阿真@嶺南藝苑：1950 年代，趙少昂一心將中國藝術弘揚海外。1952 年，趙氏南遊新加坡、吉隆坡、怡保、檳城等地並舉行展覽。歸港後特寫《馬來殘照》一作誌記。

美美：趙少昂以硃標及藤黃，用排筆層層暈染晚霞，描繪出款識中「殘紅在空」的美麗景致。

Lola：趙少昂將遊歷所見的馬來風景，轉化為水墨創作，突破傳統山水畫偏重表現山林美景和隱居生活的選題取向。這樣的題材很新鮮。原來山水畫沒有地域限制。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：趙少昂說「宇宙之大，每多奇境」。

趙少昂（12 小時前發佈）：

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 頽垣 | 1954 | 水墨設色紙本橫幅 | 香港文化博物館藏品

款識：

當年霸氣已全消，賸得寒鴉話寂寥。墟廢繞烟迷望眼，紛紛紅葉晚風飄。

一九五四年，少昂過羅馬之作。

背包客阿霞：趙少昂遊歷歐洲也不忘作畫。羅馬鬥獸場與提圖斯凱旋門相毗鄰，雖然建造時間有異，卻同樣見證著羅馬帝國的敗亡。今天再兩座古跡的故事，再看這幅作品，不得不感嘆時間烙印於世上的痕跡。

遊於藝：@背包客阿霞 深有同感！趙少昂的款識尤為感傷。

白話翻譯其大意：昔日的威勢與榮耀早已消散殆盡，剩下寒鴉低訴四週冷冷清清。迷霧繞繞讓眼前廢墟看來朦朦朧朧，只見黃昏晚風一吹紅葉四處飄散。

中國文學向來就有懷古，借廢墟、古戰場等遺址抒發時間流逝的哀傷。趙氏發揮文學的懷古題材，但描寫的卻是羅馬帝國的遺跡，使得水墨創作的題材隨著畫家的遊歷有所開拓，更能反映當代的世界觀。

阿生@嶺南藝苑：分享一下趙少昂在威尼斯遊河的照片。1954 年，趙氏到琉森舉辦展覽，順道遊覽日內瓦，及後到巴黎和羅馬舉辦展覽。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：1950 年代以來，趙少昂應邀在英國、法國、美國、加拿大等地舉辦展覽，成為戰後最早在西方展示中國水墨畫的畫家之一，作品更被歐美藝術館收藏。

趙氏秉持傳揚中國繪畫的使命，足跡遍及歐美亞三大洲十多個國家。所到之處，除舉辦展覽、講座教學以外，更經常舉辦藝術示範活動，讓西方觀眾親身領略中國水墨神韻。這類國際巡展與講學活動，在當時可謂開創先河。

阿生@嶺南藝苑：1960 年，趙少昂於美國三藩市地楊博物館畫展即席示範。1960 年，趙少昂在美國三藩市中華會館舉行個人畫展。1960 年，趙少昂在美國逗留期間寫生。

美美：趙少昂請嶺南篆刻名家張祥凝（1911–1958）刻製多枚印章。其中一枚的印文刻有「足跡英法意瑞德日印菲諸國」，正好說明趙氏遊歷天下的雄心壯志，讓世界各地更多人認識中國藝術。

快來展覽找找看，趙少昂在哪些作品採用此印？

張祥凝（1911–1958） | 足跡英法意瑞德日印菲諸國（朱文方印） | 1954 | 香港文化博物館藏品

我在《香江琴緣—古琴的傳承》圖錄，看到了一張名為「琴韻解憂」琴，從中得知趙少昂與斲琴名家蔡昌壽（1933–2025）的友誼。

蔡昌壽（1933–2025） | 「琴韻解憂」琴 | 無年款 | 仲尼式古琴 | 香港文化博物館藏品

阿真@嶺南藝苑：早於 1960 年代，趙少昂因朋友介紹而認識蔡昌壽。後來蔡師傅斲製古琴相贈，不惜用上清代舊杉木製作面板，紀念兩人的交情。

你有否留意趙少昂的題字：「人生多苦辛，勞形亦勞役，一曲翠琴音，悠然心自適。」

人生在世難免營營役役，但古琴琴音令聽者頓感適意。

趙少昂寫了一幅《銀杏小鳥》贈與蔡師傅。一琴一畫的往還，大有雅興。

趙少昂（1905–1998） | 銀杏小鳥 | 1981 | 水墨設色紙本直幅 | 香港文化博物館
藏品

阿生@嶺南藝苑：我想起來了！趙少昂不是就把蔡昌壽所贈的古琴懸掛在家中嗎？

美美：1981 年，蔡昌壽得到趙少昂的允許，按照原琴樣式尺寸另斲一琴，並由趙氏親題琴名。此琴現藏香港文化博物館。

趙少昂是書畫名家，蔡師傅是非物質文化遺產——古琴藝術傳人，一張琴牽起兩人的技藝，好不風雅！

趙少昂（10 小時前發佈）：

趙少昂（1905－1998） | 蟬與我心清 | 1985 | 水墨設色紙本冊頁 | 香港文化博物館藏品 | 趙少昂教授捐贈

款識：

竹同君子節，蟬與我心清。風高聲自遠，露重見堅貞。乙丑新春，少昂於蟬嫣室。

美美：從款識所指，老師似乎自比為蟬？為甚麼？

遊於藝：我們來看看款識的白話翻譯：

竹像君子一樣堅守節操，蟬與我心一般的清澈。

大風翻飛，蟬聲依然遠播四方；露珠重重滑落，竹葉卻不改氣節、不會垂垂順勢。

傳統文人認為竹子挺立節節分明，就像君子正直不阿的美德。古人又認為蟬餐風飲露，與清高之士一樣，對物欲無所求。

趙少昂將竹與蟬並置於畫中，既取蟬鳴遠揚的清朗，又取竹子迎風不倒的韌勁，就像傳統讀書人一樣以詩畫明志——在逆境堅持操守，顯出自身的品格。蟬是趙氏一生最重要的創作主題。趙氏於款識道：「蟬與我心清」，他借畫自喻，更將自己的畫室命名為「蟬嫣室」。

美美：「蟬嫣」是什麼意思？

遊於藝：蟬嫣有連續延綿的意思。趙少昂喜愛蟬的清高脫俗，嫣又有美好之意，

「蟬嫣室」有著他對美善的追求。

Lola：@嶺南藝苑 哇！香港文化博物館舉辦的展覽「嶺南風範」還可以看到趙少昂畫蟬的示範影片！各位萬萬不能錯過！

背包客阿霞：跟大家分享一下，我行山拍攝的蟬。與趙少昂的蟬畫比較，不難看出趙氏寫的蟬生動得很，好像隨時會從紙上騰飛而起！

Lola：看過示範影片，我發現趙少昂寫蟬的筆法利落，意到筆隨。只見他用濃墨勾寫蟬首，又用赭石染出柔軟的蟬腹。

蟬翅則用細筆勾點其脈，略加淡墨渲染，盡顯其透薄。怪不得趙氏常說「用筆之靈活，表達事物之生命，墨之濃淡，表達事物之精神」。

趙少昂（12 小時前發佈）：

趙少昂（1905 – 1998） | 沙田望夫山 | 1968 | 水墨紙本立軸 | 香港藝術館藏品

款識：

世傳此是望夫山，望斷天涯人未還。忍聽鶉聲啼不住，每逢風雨淚斑斑。

戊申春三月偶過沙田，為望夫山寫照。背即獅子山也，少昂於嶺南藝苑。

遊於藝：趙少昂以濃淡相間的墨色描畫大家所熟悉的香港風景。

前景寫的是林間寮屋，走過一片又一片的田，只見重重山林煙雲渺渺。就在觀者看不到前路時，卻赫然發現頭上的望夫石以及背峰的獅子山。趙氏以縱深的構圖，帶領觀者登高遠眺，再回望山下的民居。

款識提到望夫石的傳說：早已石化的妻子一直守在此地望到天邊盡頭，卻依然看不到丈夫回家。她忍痛聽著杜鵑鳥不斷悲鳴，每當風雨驟來，她的淚水就止不住地流下來。

Lola：古人認為杜鵑鳥的鳴叫聲聽似喊著「不如歸去」，大有思念家鄉之意。傳說古蜀國皇帝杜宇眼見國家滅亡，便化身為杜鵑鳥，夜夜哀啼，甚至吐出鮮血把杜鵑花染得嫣紅。

趙少昂將杜鵑鳥與望夫石的傳說相提並論，畫中望夫石又與山下人家並置，總令我生起世事滄桑，要珍惜眼前人的感慨。

背包客阿霞：趙少昂的作品讓我想起從大圍紅梅谷出發踏上望夫石，再經獅紅古道登獅子山的旅程。

向來我們大多從九龍方向仰望獅子山，如邱良（1941－1997）的攝影作品《獅子山下》；又或從望夫石眺望沙田區，如麥峰（1918－2009）所拍的《沙田望夫石》。但老師別出心裁將望夫石與獅子山背峰一併入畫，讓人從不同角度欣賞本地風光。

邱良（1941－1997） | 獅子山下 | 1960 | 照片 | 香港文化博物館藏品

麥峰（1918－2009） | 沙田望夫石 | 1951 | 照片 | 香港文化博物館藏品

遊於藝：大家談到趙少昂所畫的本地山水。剛好我找到 1950 年代，他與嶺南藝苑學員到粉嶺戶外寫生的照片，份外讓人懷念！

阿生@嶺南藝苑：趙少昂的畫作不但寫望夫石、獅子山，更寫山下民居，表現當日新界的面貌。今天我們回望他的作品，不得不感謝趙氏為這地方留下的山水印記，讓我們重新細看本地風光。

阿真@嶺南藝苑：你認為香港哪裡的風景最美？你又會如何紀錄此美景？給趙少昂留言吧.....

Chao Shao-an@Cloud Community

2,025 posts 1.2M followers

About:

Born in Pangyu, Guangdong province in 1905.

Moved to Hong Kong in 1948 and lived here for over 50 years. Studied at Gao Qifeng's private studio at the age of 16.

Founded the Lingnan Art Studio in Guangzhou in 1930, which was relocated to Hong Kong in 1948.

Motto: "Illusory as everything may be, only art reflects true essence. As time marches on, we must always strive for personal excellence".

Painting Tip: "Understand the principle and order of things to extract their essence; then work with one's creativity to attain excellence and perfection".

#Teacher Gao Qifeng #Senior Xu Beihong

#Friend Zhang Daqian #Friend #Seven Disciples of Tianfeng Lou

#Friend #Seal Carving Zhang Xiangning #Friend

#Lingnan School of Painting Yang Shanshen #Friend Huang Junbi #Friend Qi Baishi

Chao Shao-an (Posted 10 hours ago): Spring in the Lingnan region sees the red kapok flowers burst into full bloom, their deep red petals as intense as blood. The only way to truly capture the myriad forms and expressive vitality of the red kapok is through close observation and lots of practice in sketching from life.

#Lingnan Art Studio

#Learning From Nature

(Left) Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Red Kapok Blossoms | 1982 | Vertical scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

(Top right) Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Red Kapok Tree | 1960s | Album leaf, ink on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum | Donated by Mr Chiu Chi-kon and Mr Chiu Chi-tai

Mimi: @Chao Shao-an How should I get started with drawing?

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: Chao Shao-an adopted the mogu (boneless) technique to depict the red kapok flowers, skilfully layering shades of colour to give richness and depth to their reddish orange petals. Chao also made excellent use of varying ink tones to render the tree's rough bark with a convincing texture.

In the painting's bottom left corner, a blue Oriental magpie gazes up at the flowering red kapok. The reds and blues complement each other to create a striking visual contrast in the composition.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: The lively Oriental magpie depicted by Chao Shao-an, perched on a branch with its beak open as if calling out, adds a sense of movement and vitality to the scene.

The red kapok tree grows upright and tall, representing a resilient and heroic spirit—hence its popular name, “Hero Tree”.

In Chinese folklore, the Oriental magpie is seen as an auspicious symbol of good news, often associated with the saying, “When the magpie calls, good things are on their way”. By juxtaposing the red kapok tree’s still form with the animated magpie, Chao Shao-an created a beautifully balanced contrast of both form and meaning.

Enjoy the Arts: The inscription on this work reads: “However dazzling the myriad colours, the singular tree always stands out among the common plants”. It encapsulates Chao Shao-an’s own aspirations, as symbolised by the red kapok tree.

The red kapok tree is widely distributed throughout the Lingnan region. Did you know that when Chao founded the Lingnan Art Studio in Guangzhou in 1930, he chose the red kapok flower as its emblem?

#Lingnan Art Studio’s emblem

Xu Beihong (Posted 6 hours ago):

#Art Gifting

Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) | White Horse | 1942 | Vertical scroll, ink and colour on paper | Private Collection

Mimi: Wow! Was this work White Horse painted by Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) and given to Chao Shao-an as a gift? I remember that Xu Beihong also gifted a cat painting to Chao Shao-an. Chao greatly cherished it and had it on prominent display in his home.

Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) | Cat | 1938 | Vertical scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Mr Feng Qiuhong | Image courtesy of Mr Feng Qiuhong

The photos show Chao Shao-an, his fellow artist Yang Shanshen (1913 – 2004), and students in front of Xu's cat painting in Chao Shao-an's studio.

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: Xu Beihong's horse paintings are renowned for their realism and vitality. He applied a fluid, expressive brushwork to capture horses' muscular and bone structure, conveying their grace and strength. His sensitive use of different ink tones creates a convincing play of light and shadow, while his meticulous rendering of the horses' eyes and hair expertly conveys their power and life force to viewers.

By contrast, Xu's depictions of cats reveal a softer aesthetic, with their supple, curving lines and gentle ink washes. Yet beneath the cats' grace lies a quiet strength, a balance of softness and resilience.

Chao Shao-an Painting Studio: According to his son, Xu Qingping (1946 –), Xu Beihong was a passionate cat lover. At one point he had as many as eight cats at home! Despite being tired out after a day’s work, he would settle down in an armchair and play with his cats with a ping pong ball, all the while closely observing their alert expressions and agile movements.

His paintings of cats, expressive and poetic in style, were sometimes created casually and given as gifts to close friends. The fact that this particular painting was presented to Chao reflects the close and respectful relationship between the two.

Enjoy the Arts: In fact, Xu Beihong shared some deep connections with the Lingnan School of Painting. In the early twentieth century, artists such as Gao Jianfu (1879 – 1951) and Gao Qifeng (1889 – 1933) were calling for the reform of Chinese painting. They advocated “synthesising the East with the West and blending the old with the new”. Xu Beihong’s own ideas resonated with this philosophy. He articulated his own vision by stating, “Preserve the good in traditional methods, inherit those on the verge of being lost; improve the inadequate, supplement the insufficient; and integrate what is worthy of adoption from Western painting”. Chao Shao-an was deeply influenced by Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng, and upheld the same idea of modernising Chinese painting. In the *Lighthouse Magazine*, he stated that artists should not only study traditional techniques but also disciplines such as anatomy, linear perspective, physics, study of patterns and optics, in order to enhance their artistic skills.

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: Chao Shao-an cultivated a close friendship with Xu Beihong. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Gao brothers invited Xu to hold exhibitions

in Guangzhou, which is where he first met Chao Shao-an.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Xu played a crucial role in helping Chao flee to Southwestern China. At that time, Xu was Head of the Art Department at National Central University in Chongqing, and he invited Chao to join the faculty there. He also wrote articles in support of his exhibitions and praised him highly, describing his bird-and-flower paintings as “the foremost in modern China”.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: Xu Beihong also painted a portrait of Chao Shao-an, who later displayed the work in his studio. These works they exchanged stand as lasting testaments to their enduring friendship.

Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) | Portrait of Shao-an (replica) | 1937 | Pencil on paper

Lingnan School of Painting: Online Forum (Posted 6 hours ago) :

Teachers' Day, 10 September

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998), Zhou Yifeng (1890 – 1982), Ye Shaobing (1896 – 1968), He Qiyuan (1899 – 1970), Huang Shaoqiang (1901 – 1942) | Portrait of Master Qifeng | 1934 | Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Gift of Mr Ho Iu-kwong, Mr Huo Pao-tsai, Mr Lai Tak and others | 1973.0922 | Image courtesy of Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Enjoy the Arts: Who was Master Gao Qifeng?

Gao Qifeng was one of the key founding figures of the Lingnan School of Painting. Alongside his elder brother, Gao Jianfu and fellow artist Chen Shuren (1884 – 1948), they are collectively known as the “Three Masters of the Lingnan School of Painting”. Gao Qifeng began his artistic journey under the guidance of his brother. He later pursued his studies in Japan, mastering techniques such as sketching, shading, and linear perspective which he skilfully incorporated into his traditional Chinese ink paintings.

Upon his return to China, Gao had a significant influence on the art community. He contributed to illustrated publications like Zhenxiang Huabao (The Truth Record) and Shihi Huabao (Current Affairs Pictorial), and founded a private art studio to teach aspiring artists. In 1929, he withdrew from public life due to health issues, and settled down at Tianfeng Lou (Tianfeng Studio) in Guangzhou.

Despite his ill health, he continued to create art and mentor students, often hosting literary gatherings. Among his disciples, the most outstanding were Zhou Yifeng (1890

– 1982), He Qiyuan (1899 – 1970), Huang Shaoqiang (1901 – 1942), Zhang Kunyi (1895 – 1969), Rong Shushi (1903 – 1996), Ye Shaobing (1896 – 1968) and Chao Shao-an, who became known as the “Seven Disciples of Tianfeng Lou”.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: Gao Qifeng believed that those studying art must adopt a humble and open attitude toward artistic traditions from around the world. In the 1920s, in a lecture titled “Painting is not a Static Thing”, he stated “I believe that painting is not something fixed or lifeless; it is something alive, capable of change. Every era has its own distinct spirit and experiences...”

Mimi: Could someone help explain the painting inscription? I’m having trouble understanding it.

Enjoy the Arts: The inscription reads: “On the thirteenth day of the sixth lunar month in the year *jiaxu* (1934), we commemorated the anniversary of our teacher’s birthday. I collaborated with fellow disciples He Qiyuan, Huang Shaoqiang, Chao Shao-an, Ye Shaobing and others to create this painting. On the same day, we held the second exhibition of the Aesthetics Academy to honour our teacher’s guidance and celebrate the occasion”. (Inscribed by Zhou Yifeng)

After Gao Qifeng’s passing in 1933, his students continued to hold gatherings for painting and exhibitions, to express their enduring respect for their master and gratitude for his guidance. Right up to the 1970s, they organised exhibitions in his memory—a testament to the deep bond of affection between master and disciples.

Lingnan School of Painting: Online Forum (Posted 3 hours ago): Those were the days...

Gao Qifeng (1889 – 1933) and his disciples | Spring Flowers | 1933 | Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Gift of Mr Ho Iu-kwong, Mr Huo Pao-tsai, Mr Lai Tak and others | 1973.0924 | Image courtesy of Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This photo shows Gao Qifeng with his students in Guangzhou in 1931. From left to right: Zhou Yifeng, He Qiyuan, Chao Shao-an, Zhang Kunyi, Gao Qifeng, Ye Shaobing, Huang Shaoqiang.

Enjoy the Arts: *Spring Flowers* is a collaborative artwork created by Gao Qifeng and nine of his disciples. Rong Shushi painted the red plum blossoms, He Qiyuan the peonies, Zhou Yifeng the Chinese peonies, Chao Shao-an the camellias, Ye Shaobing the roses, Liu Dingshu (dates unknown) the black orchids, Huang Shaoqiang the white plum blossoms, Feng Suichuan (1901 – 1972) the narcissus, and Zhang Kunyi the green chrysanthemums. Finally, Gao Qifeng completed the piece by painting the wintersweet.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: What a wonderful piece! Each of Gao Qifeng's students had their own unique painting skills, and on this occasion they all came together in perfect harmony. While every flower has its own distinctive charm, they all blend together beautifully in this work, reflecting the artists' mastery of sketching from life. Having a shared appreciation for each other's brushwork, the artists were able to unite their talents to create this stunning masterpiece, *Spring Flowers*.

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: Speaking of collaborative paintings, let's take a look at *Spring Flowers*, created by second-generation artists of the Lingnan School of Painting. This work, too, radiates vitality and elegance, brimming with the distinctive spirit of the Lingnan tradition.

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998), Huang Kan (1886 – 1935), Zhou Yifeng (1890 – 1982), Ye Shaobing (1896 – 1968), He Qiyuan (1899 – 1970), Rong Shushi (1903 – 1996), Situ Qi (1907 – 1997), Huang Dufeng (1913 – 1998), Yang Shanshen (1913 – 2004), Yin Rutian (dates unknown) | *Spring Flowers* | 1949 | Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Gift of Bei Shan Tang | Image courtesy of Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Chao Shao-an (Posted 12 hours ago):

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | River Li in Misty Rain | 1943 | Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: In the 1940s, Chao Shao-an fled to Southwestern China, travelling through Guilin and Guiyang before returning to Chongqing. Amidst the turmoil of the era, he found great inspiration in the breathtaking landscapes of Guilin. Their profound beauty moved him to make multiple sketches from life while he was there.

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Guilin | 1943 | Pencil on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Mimi: In *River Li in Misty Rain*, Chao Shao-an has placed a large tree in the foreground, then takes the viewer's gaze along a winding river disappearing into a hazy, rain-soaked distance. Through the mist, the famous Moon Water Cave at the Elephant Trunk Hill in Guilin can be glimpsed. This image makes clear how landscape paintings in Chinese art reflect a keen sense of geography and place. I used to think that all landscape paintings looked similar — until I realised how much specific detail and close observation they actually contain.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: @Mimi Look closely — what has Chao Shao-an placed in the middle ground? Boatmen rowing their bamboo rafts through the rain. These, together with the tree in the foreground and the mountains in the distance, help to create

a carefully balanced composition that leads the eye through foreground, middle, and background, combining both stillness and movement with masterly precision.

In his paintings, Chao often drew inspiration from the things he saw or experienced in daily life. His ideas were grounded in close observation of the living world—a skill developed by sketching from nature.

Mimi: Now I see! By adding the boatmen, Chao Shao-an has injected human life and warmth into the landscape. When will @Lingnan Art Studio be organising another sketching trip? I must make sure I join so I can learn how to select a view and compose a scene properly.

The backpacker: I want to share a photograph I took while boating on the River Li last month. In contrast with my photo, Chao Shao-an's painting captures the grandeur of the mountains and water by adopting a bird's-eye view to evoke a greater sense of space. He uses layers of ink washes to depict the drizzling rain and enveloping mists, creating a vast and desolate atmosphere—perhaps reflecting the mood of people living under the shadow of turbulence.

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: In this landscape, Chao Shao-an employs shading techniques to evoke the soft, misty atmosphere of rainfall. Layers of light ink overlap across the distant mountains, conveying the dense humidity and shifting weather patterns of the River Li scenery around Guilin.

Lingnan School of Painting: Online Forum (Posted 3 hours ago): After settling in Hong Kong in 1948, Chao Shao-an repeatedly revisited the landscapes of Guilin in his art, painting them from memory and from sketches he had previously made. His delicate ink washes capture the subtle changes in light in his depictions of the hazy outlines of distant peaks, the reflections of sunset on water, and the fresh shining landscape after rain. His brush became a means for him to revisit places from his past.

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Duxiu Shan | ca. 1943 | Pencil on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Sunset | 1962 | Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Zhang Daqian (Posted 6 hours ago):

#Art Gifting

Zhang Daqian (1899 – 1983) | Portrait of a Lady in Baimiao Style | 1945 | Vertical scroll, ink on paper | Collection of Mr Feng Qiuhong | Image courtesy of Mr Feng Qiuhong

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: *Portrait of a Lady in Baimiao Style* bears witness to Chao Shao-an's friendship with Zhang Daqian (1899 - 1983), and to the changing tides of history.

In 1945, during the final year of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Zhang Daqian in Chengdu entrusted his friend Gao Lingmei (1913 – 1993) with this painting, for delivery to Chao Shao-an in Chongqing. Once peace was restored, Chao took it with him on his journey from Chengdu through Guizhou and Liuzhou, and finally back to Guangzhou. Later it went with him to Hong Kong, where it hung in his studio for many years.

Lola: Zhang Daqian's inscription reads: "When you carry this painting to Chongqing, please do not show it to Huang Junbi (1898 – 1991), otherwise he will tease me saying, 'this is an unfinished work by Daqian!' I am an indolent man. Always refuse to embellish my lousy paintings, after completing a work, there are always underdrawings". These words reveal Zhang Daqian's sense of humour. He joked with Chao Shao-an that he shouldn't let their fellow painter Huang Junbi see the piece, in case he teased him for not having finished it. Zhang's humble charm is well illustrated in the way he describes himself as indolent, and in his declared dislike of over-

refinement in his paintings.

Chao Shao-an (Posted 10 hours ago): The bauhinia tree flowers throughout the year, most profusely in spring and summer. At the tips of its branches grow slender stems, each bearing several flowers. In Hong Kong, the flowers are most commonly a deep purple, though lighter shades of lilac and pale white can also be found.

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Bauhinia | 1970s | Album leaf, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: As I remember, in *A Study of Chinese Paintings*, Chao Shao-an advised that the first step in painting the bauhinia should be to paint the petals, using a soft brush dipped in a thin mix of white and violet. The petals should appear thin and bouncy, and be bright and lively.

As for the leaves, Chao recommended using two strokes of a broad brush to form each leaf, then outlining the veins while the ink is still damp. He suggested colouring the leaves in greyish green or black ink, painting the branches in ink, and rendering the tender twigs near the flowers in dark green with a touch of reddish-brown.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: Although this *Bauhinia* album leaf is small, its details are exquisite, every nuance of the flower captured with remarkable finesse. This level of accomplishment stems from the many years that Chao Shao-an spent in sketching from life and his constant attentive study of nature.

Chao's observation to nature were extraordinary. When sketching outdoors, he would pause to study even the insects he encountered, carefully noting their form and structure. He also kept insect specimens gifted by friends in his studio, ready to be referred to when he was painting or studying.

Chao Shao-an (Posted 12 hours ago):

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | *Malayan Sunset* | 1950 – 1960s | Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: In the 1950s, Chao Shao-an put a lot of effort into promoting Chinese art overseas. In 1952, he travelled through Southeast Asia, holding exhibitions in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Penang. Upon returning to Hong Kong, he painted *Malayan Sunset* to commemorate his trip.

Mimi: To depict the glow of sunset, Chao applied broad, layered washes using pigments of cinnabar and gamboge, beautifully capturing the scene described in his inscription— “waning red in the sky at dusk”.

Lola: Chao transformed the landscapes he encountered during his travels in Malaya into expressive ink paintings. In doing so, Chao departed from the traditional genre that often focuses on idyllic landscapes and the reclusive lifestyle. His Malayan subject was refreshingly original, demonstrating that Chinese landscape painting can transcend geographical borders.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: As Chao Shao-an said, “In the vastness of the universe, wonders abound at every turn”.

Chao Shao-an (Posted 12 hours ago):

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Ruins | 1954 | Horizontal scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Inscription:

That imposing aura from yesteryear is all but gone, leaving only jackdaws whispering of lonely days. Swirling mists at ruins confuse gazing eyes, as crimson leaves fall gently in the evening breeze. Written in 1954 during Chao Shao-an's visit to Rome.

The backpacker: Even while travelling through Europe, Chao Shao-an never set aside his brush. In this painting, the Colosseum is placed next to the Arch of Titus — two monuments from different periods, both serving as silent witnesses to the decline of the Roman Empire. Chao used his brushwork to evoke the charm of dissolution. Anyone observing these ruins today and then looking at this painting is drawn to reflect on how time etches its mark on the remnants of history.

Enjoy the Arts: @The backpacker Yes, that's how I feel. Chao Shao-an's inscription carries a deep emotional weight.

Chinese literature has long embraced the theme of “nostalgia for the past”, often reflecting on the passing of time through descriptions of ruins or ancient battlefields. Chao drew on this literary tradition of historical reflection, but applied it to relics of the Roman Empire. In doing so, he broadened the thematic scope of traditional ink painting, prompted by his travels to embrace a broader, more contemporary worldview.

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: This photo shows Chao Shao-an enjoying a boat ride in Venice. In 1954, he held an exhibition in Lucerne and then toured Geneva before travelling on to Paris and Rome for further exhibitions.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: From the 1950s, Chao was invited to exhibit in the United Kingdom, France, the United States, Canada and other locations. He became one of the earliest Chinese artists to showcase his work in the West, and his paintings were acquired by museums and art institutions across Europe and America.

Guided by a strong sense of mission to share Chinese ink art with the world, Chao visited over ten countries across Europe, America and Asia. Wherever he went, he not only held exhibitions and lectures but also conducted live painting demonstrations, enabling Western audiences to experience first-hand the essence of Chinese ink art. International touring and educational activities like this were truly pioneering for their time.

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: In 1960, Chao Shao-an conducted a live painting demonstration at the M. H. De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco.

This photo was taken at Chao Shao-an's solo exhibition at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in San Francisco in 1960.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: In 1960, while travelling in the United States, Chao Shao-an often found time to sketch from life.

Mimi: Chao Shao-an requested his close friend, seal carving master Zhang Xiangning (1911 – 1958), to create several seals for him. One of the seals bore the inscription: “Footprints across Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, India and the Philippines”, beautifully encapsulating Chao’s ambitions of travelling the world and introducing Chinese art to audiences everywhere.

Zhang Xiangning (1911 – 1958) | Footprints across Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, India and the Philippines | 1954 | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

While browsing the exhibition catalogue titled *The Legend of Silk and Wood: A Hong Kong Qin Story*, I came across an entry for a *qin* called *Qinyun Jieyou* (Relaxing the Troubled Mind through the Sound of a *Qin*). This entry highlighted the friendship between Chao Shao-an and the renowned *qin* craftsman, Choi Chang-sau (1933 – 2025).

Choi Chang-sau (1933 – 2025) | *Guqin (Qinyun Jieyou)* | Not dated | Confucius-style *Guqin* | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: Chao Shao-an and Choi Chang-sau formed a bond in the 1960s, thanks to a mutual friend. To commemorate their friendship, Choi specially handcrafted a *qin* for Chao, using a soundboard made from aged fir wood from the Qing dynasty.

Did you notice Chao Shao-an's inscription on the instrument? "Life is full of hardships, burdens, and toil; yet one song on the emerald qin brings quiet to the heart". Indeed, life is never without its struggles, but the serene sound of the *qin* brings calm and comfort to the soul.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: In return, Chao Shao-an painted *Little Bird on Maiden-hair Tree Branch* in 1981 as a gift for Choi Chang-sau. This exchange of a painting for a *qin* reflects a perfect exchange of the arts between two scholarly gentlemen.

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Little Bird on Maiden-hair Tree Branch | 1981 |
Vertical scroll, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Sheng @Lingnan Art Studio: Now I remember! Didn't Chao Shao-an hang the *qin* gifted to him by Choi Chang-sau in his home?

Mimi: In 1981, Choi Chang-sau was given permission by Chao Shao-an to craft another *qin* based on the style and dimensions of the original, with Chao inscribing the name of the *qin*. This *qin* is now part of the collection at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum.

Chao Shao-an was a renowned calligrapher and painter, while Choi Chang-sau is an inheritor of the intangible cultural tradition of *qin* making. A single *qin* thus linked the

artistry of these two masters, creating such a wonderful connection!

Chao Shao-an (Posted 10 hours ago):

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Cicada and Bamboo | 1985 | Album leaf, ink and colour on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum | Donated by Professor Chao Shao-an

Inscription:

Bamboo embodies a gentleman's virtues, while cicada resembles my pure heart. The high wind carries far the soothing drone of the cicada, while in rain and heavy dew the bamboo steadfastly stands.

Yichou year (1985), Spring. Shao-an at the Chanyan Studio.

Mimi: In the inscription, Chao Shao-an compares himself to a cicada. Why does he make this comparison?

Enjoy the Arts: In Chinese literati tradition, bamboo—characterised by its upright structure, segmented appearance, and resilience—symbolises the virtues of an honourable gentleman. The cicada, which feeds on wind and dew, serves as a metaphor for the noble recluse, a person free from material desires.

In this painting, Chao pairs bamboo with a cicada. The cicada symbolises purity and clarity, with its song that echoes far and wide, while the bamboo stands for resilience, bending against the wind. Together they embody the traditional scholar's ideals of integrity and perseverance in adversity, virtues that were widely celebrated both in Chinese poetry and painting.

The cicada was an artistic theme that Chao came back to throughout his life. In the

inscription, he wrote: “Cicada resembles my pure heart”. The paintings of cicada served as a self-portraits of sorts; indeed, he even named his studio “Chanyan Studio”.

Mimi: What does “Chanyan” mean?

Enjoy the Arts: “Chanyan” carries the meaning of continuity and perpetuity. Chao Shao-an admired cicada’s (“Chan”) symbolism of noble purity, while “Yan” connotes beauty and grace. The name “Chanyan Studio” thus references his pursuit of beauty and virtue.

Lola: @Chao Shao-an Painting Studio Guess what! The Hong Kong Heritage Museum has launched an exhibition titled “Legacy of Lingnan School of Painting: In Commemoration of the 120th Anniversary of the Birth of Chao Shao-an” that includes a demonstration video of Chao Shao-an painting a cicada. You shouldn’t miss it!

The backpacker: Let me share a photograph of a cicada that I took while out hiking. If you compare it to Chao Shao-an’s paintings of cicadas, you realise just how lifelike his renderings are—his cicadas seem ready to spring from the paper and take flight at any moment!

Lola: While watching the demonstration video, I was amazed by the speed and decisiveness of Chao Shao-an’s painting technique. The moment he conceived the image, his brush sprang into action.

First he outlined the head in deep, rich ink, then used ochre tinted ink to wash the abdomen, suggesting a certain softness. Then the wings were delicately traced, with fine lines added to depict the veins, and lightly shaded with ink to capture their translucence. It's no wonder Chao often said, "The vitality of brushwork expresses liveliness; the tonality of ink reflects the spirit".

Chao Shao-an (Posted 12 hours ago):

Chao Shao-an (1905 – 1998) | Amah Rock, Shatin | 1968 | Hanging scroll, ink on paper | Collection of Hong Kong Museum of Art | AC1979.0002

Inscription:

It is said that this is Amah Rock—a wife whose gaze is fixed on the horizon, waiting for her beloved husband's return.

How can she endure the cuckoo's relentless cries? Each time the wind and rain arrive, her tears flow anew.

In the third month of spring in the *wushen* year (1968), I had the opportunity to pass through Sha Tin and paint this scene of Amah Rock. Behind it rises Lion Rock.

Chao Shao-an, Lingnan Art Studio.

Enjoy the Arts: In varying shades of ink, Chao Shao-an depicts a familiar Hong Kong landscape. In the foreground, rural dwellings sit nestled among trees; beyond them lie fields, and further back, mist-veiled hills. Just as the viewer feels there is no way forward, Amah Rock suddenly comes into view, with Lion Rock forming the ridge beyond.

In this deep landscape composition, Chao invites the viewer to climb high and look further, then to glance back down toward the cluster of homes below.

The inscription recalls the legend of Amah Rock, which tells of a wife who turned to stone while waiting endlessly for her husband's return. Waiting, she stood gazing

toward the very edge of the sky for one who never came back. During her wait she endured the sound of the cuckoo's ceaseless lament, and her tears fell anew every time the wind and rain swept in.

Lola: In Chinese tradition, the call of the cuckoo is often interpreted as a longing to return home, a sentiment steeped in a deep yearning for one's native place. According to legend, Du Yu, the ruler of the ancient Shu Kingdom, was transformed into a cuckoo after his realm fell. He cried out in sorrow night after night, until his blood dyed the rhododendron (Du Juan) flowers red.

By pairing the story of the cuckoo with that of Amah Rock and placing the rocky peak in juxtaposition with the dwellings below, Chao Shao-an evokes reflections on the transience of life and encourages a renewed appreciation for those who are present in our lives.

The backpacker: This painting reminds me of the walk from Hung Mui Kuk in Tai Wai up to Amah Rock, then along the Lion Rock Ancient Trail to Lion Rock itself. We often view Lion Rock from the Kowloon side, as captured in Yau Leung's (1941 – 1997) photograph *Lion Rock*, or looking from Amah Rock towards Sha Tin, as shown in Mak Fung's (1918 – 2009) *Amah Rock at Sha Tin*. Chao Shao-an takes a fresh approach by uniting both Amah Rock and the ridge of Lion Rock in a single composition, offering a new perspective on our local scenery.

Yau Leung (1941 – 1997) | Lion Rock | 1960 | Photography | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Mak Fung (1918 – 2009) | Amah Rock at Sha Tin | 1951 | Photography | Collection of Hong Kong Heritage Museum

Enjoy the Arts: While researching Chao Shao-an's local landscapes, I come across a photograph from the 1950s showing him and students from the Lingnan Art Studio on an outdoor sketching expedition in Fanling—a scene that brings back fond memories!

Sheng@Lingnan Art Studio: Chao Shao-an's works don't just depict natural landmarks such as Amah Rock and Lion Rock, they also include villages nestling beneath them, reflecting the landscape and life of the New Territories in his day. Looking back at his paintings now, we cannot help but feel grateful to Chao for preserving the visual memory of these places, and helping us to rediscover the beauty of our local scenery.

Chun@Lingnan Art Studio: Where do you think is the most beautiful scenery in Hong Kong? How would you capture and cherish this scenery? Comment and share your thoughts with Chao Shao-an.

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