

Contemporary Artists/Traditional Forms: Chinese Brushwork

Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut
September 28 - December 8, 2019



Sun Wenzhang, *The End of Spring*. Gifted to the Town of Greenwich as part of the 2019 U.S.-China Art and Culture Exchange.

GREENWICH, CT, September 16, 2019 – On Saturday, September 28, the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, CT, opens *Contemporary Artists/Traditional Forms: Chinese Brushwork*.

This new exhibition, on view in the Bantle Lecture Gallery, features the U.S. debut of 15 pieces of contemporary Chinese brushwork gifted to the Town of Greenwich as part of the 2019 U.S.-China Art and Culture Exchange. The exhibition introduces visitors to the basic tools and concepts that inform these works of art and presents these pieces in their historical and present-day contexts.

Also known as water-painting, brushwork has a long and illustrious history in China. The art form developed from the practice of calligraphy, or “Beautiful Writing,” sometime during the Han Dynasty (220-589 AD). Traditionally, brushwork was not practiced by professional artists but by amateurs colloquially known as scholar artists, who prided themselves on their mastery of calligraphy and incorporated painting into their poems. Today the legacy of the scholar artist lives on in China and in the creation of these contemporary works of art.



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Press Release

This exhibition highlights the connections between calligraphy and traditional brushwork by exploring the time-honored practice of water-painting by contemporary scholar artists. In the traditional calligraphic practice, artists copy the masterworks of previous generations in order to learn to create their own works. Each of the artists in the exhibition uses an established language of brushstrokes, natural images, and color washes to express their own unique point of view.

“It is with great pleasure that the Museum gets to share these beautiful works of art with the public,” says Corinne Flax, exhibition curator and Manager of School and Community Partnerships for the Bruce. “When curating this exhibition, I concentrated on the themes and motifs that connect these contemporary works with those from the past. It is by exploring these connections that we are able to appreciate the skilled artistry that went into their creation. It is an honor for the Bruce to be the first institution to exhibit them.”

To complement the exhibition, the Museum will be hosting two workshops with teaching artist Dr. Louise Flax. Offered for adults age 55 and older, each session will focus on a different aspect of Chinese brushwork painting.

On Monday, October 21, Dr. Flax will lead students through an exploration of the use of line and the traditions of bamboo painting. On Monday, November 18, the workshop will focus on the use of washes to create depth and texture.

Both workshops will run from 1:30-3:30 pm, with a warm-up activity, a visit to the exhibition, and a 1-hour focus on a final product. Materials will be provided to students, along with coffee and snacks. The cost for each workshop is \$25 for Museum members and \$30 for non-members; register at brucemuseum.org or by calling 203-869-0376.

In addition, during the Museum’s Fall Family Day, taking place on Sunday, October 27, 1:00 – 4:00 pm, the Greenwich Conservatory of Classical Ballet will be performing interpretive dances inspired by the *Contemporary Artists/Traditional Forms: Chinese Brushwork* exhibition. With the theme “Autumn Rains and Fall Colors: Exploring the Bruce,” Fall Family Day also features a variety of crafts and hand’s-on activities for children, from learning about minerals to watercolor painting.

And on Wednesday, November 6, the Bruce Museum and Greenwich Arts Council are partnering to present a concert by renowned cellist Kenneth Kuo, who will be performing works inspired by the pieces exhibited in *Contemporary Artists/Traditional Forms: Chinese Brushwork*. The Founder and President of The Connecticut School of Music in Greenwich and Westport and the creator of the Connecticut Musical Arts Foundation, a nonprofit organization assisting students with musical and financial needs, Kuo has performed throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia, appearing in dozens of distinguished venues, including New York City’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts’ Avery Fisher Hall and Alice Tully Hall, and Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall.



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This collaboration is the first of its kind for the two Greenwich organizations and will begin at 5:00 pm at the Bruce with an after-hours viewing of the exhibition and light refreshments. The evening continues at 6:30 pm at the Greenwich Arts Council, 299 Greenwich Ave., as Kuo performs accompanied by pianist Matthieu Cognet. This program is free, but reservations are required; brucemuseum.org or 203-869-0376.

Admission to the Museum will be free to all visitors through January 31, 2020, while the main gallery spaces are being renovated. During the renovation phase, the Permanent Science Gallery will remain open, as will the Bantle Lecture Gallery, Education Workshop, and Museum Store. The galleries will re-open on February 1, 2020, with the installation of major new art and science exhibitions. Please be aware that the Museum will be closed to the public from Tuesday, September 17 through Friday, September 27, to facilitate renovation work. The Museum re-opens Saturday, September 28 with *Contemporary Artists/Traditional Forms: Chinese Brushwork*.

The Bruce Museum is grateful for exhibition support from the Charles M. and Deborah G. Royce Exhibition Fund and the Connecticut Office of the Arts.

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About the Bruce Museum

The Bruce Museum is a community-based, world-class institution highlighting art and science in more than a dozen changing exhibitions annually. The permanent galleries feature the natural sciences that encompass regional to global perspectives. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and voted the best museum in Fairfield County by area media in recent years, the Bruce plays an integral role in the cultural life of area residents and attracts approximately 70,000 visitors annually, including 24,000 schoolchildren, reaching out to families, seniors, students, and community organizations. Located in a park setting just off I-95, exit 3, at 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Museum is also a 5-minute walk from the Metro-North Greenwich Station. The Bruce Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, call the Bruce Museum at 203-869-0376 or visit brucemuseum.org.

Media Contact: Scott Smith, Director of Marketing and Communications, 203-413-6735 or ssmith@brucemuseum.org.