

IKLEKTIK Designs & Asia Society
Co-Host Houston Exhibit for Pioneering
Chinese Contemporary Artist *Wang Chi*

For Immediate Release:
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This September, **IKLEKTIK DESIGNS** and **The Asia Society Texas** co-host an exhibit for the renowned international artist **Wang Chi**. Wang Chi is considered a pioneer in the contemporary Chinese art movement. Her creative style, unique techniques, and innovative teaching philosophy, which combines the best of Eastern and Western artistic expression, has greatly impacted Chinese modern art.

EXHIBITION DATES: September 8 – 26, 2003

Opening Reception: Tuesday, September 9, 6 to 8pm.

EXHIBITION TIMES: 8am – 7pm daily.

LOCATION: Two Allen Center, Gallery Lobby, 1200 Smith Street, Houston.

PHONE INQUIRIES: 713.869.5151.

ADMISSION: Free.

Houston-based, Wang Chi is a revered and respected figure both nationally and internationally. During the 1960s, she was among the first artists to leave China for the West, receiving advanced art degrees first in Spain then in the United States. Famed as an innovator in print-making as well as the area of hand-made paper, her graphics and paintings shatter traditional notions of Chinese landscape/still life painting, while preserving an underlying Asian aesthetic.

Entitled “Sounds of Nature,” this significant exhibit is curated by Deborah Colton, founder/director of IKLEKTIK Designs. For its Houston presentation, Colton has selected 31 original paintings, highlighting two major bodies of work from Wang Chi’s illustrious five-decade career. Showcased will be the artist’s hand-made papers from the 1980s, a breakthrough series, which offers abstract interpretations from nature. Alongside these works, the exhibition will debut Wang Chi’s most recent paintings; begun in 2001, these dramatic, yet sensual acrylics on paper channel Western contemporary artists such as Larry Bell. Limited edition prints of both bodies of work will also be available.

WANG CHI – Biography

Born in Jilin City, Jilin Province, China in 1926, Wang Chi's career as an artist has straddled two worlds, reflecting the often radical artistic transformations that rocketed through her country as it moved from old to new China. As a child, she studied art under Japanese invaders, absorbing their rigorous system, which emphasized the strictest stylistic control. At the age of 19, she moved to Beijing, where she learned traditional Chinese brush and ink painting, focusing on landscape and still life subjects. Due to political turmoil, she settled in Taiwan in 1959.

A year later, she made the brave, if unheard of step of leaving China for the West. It was 1960, and she moved to Spain, enrolling in Barcelona's well-known art academy, Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes, where she received her first training in classical Western art. It was an exciting and heady time. Her friendships in Spain encompassed many cutting edge European artists, including Salvador Dali, who took a particular interest in Wang Chi, and encouraged her career as a painter.

In 1967, she and her husband moved to Washington, D.C., where they would live for the next 22 years, establishing and running a successful art gallery. During this period, Wang Chi began exhibiting in New York; her first Manhattan show was held at the China Institute in America in 1969. Seeking to integrate Western aesthetics more deeply in her art, she later enrolled in the University of Maryland, earning her MFA with highest honors in 1984.

The following year, sponsored by the Chinese Embassy, she embarked on the first of many annual trips to China. Over the next decade, she traveled back and forth between both countries, staying for extended periods in China where she lectured and taught art at such prominent universities as Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts, Tianjin Art Institute, Shandong Normal University, Shandong Art Institute and Jilin Province Art Institute.

In 1989, Wang Chi and her husband relocated to Houston, where she currently resides, actively contributing to the city's artistic and cultural community.

Wang Chi's creative style, unique techniques, and innovative teaching philosophy, which combines the best of Eastern and Western artistic expression, has greatly impacted Chinese modern art.

WANG CHI

Born: Jilin City, Jilin Province, China, 1926

Education:

1984 M.F.A., Printmaking, Department of Art, University of Maryland
1967 Professor's Degree, Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes, Barcelona,
Spain

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

2003 "Sounds of Nature," IKLEKTIK Designs, Two Allen Center, Houston
2001 "Trans-Century Art Exhibition," The Asian American Center,
University of Houston
1999 "New Millennium Exhibition," Gallery International, Houston
1998 "Trans-Pacific Art," Center for the Study of Cultures, Rice University,
Houston
1995 Chinese Culture Center, Houston
1993 Taiwan Museum of Art, Taichung, Taiwan
1990 Tainjin Arts Museum, Tianjin, China
1990 O'Kane Gallery, University of Houston – Downtown
1985 Art Gallery, Beijing Central Art College, Beijing, China
1975 Stoneman Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1971 Stoneman Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1969 China Institute in America, New York
1968 Galeria De Arte, Grifé & Escoda, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
1968 Embassy of the Republic of China, Brussels, Belgium
1968 Salons de la Société, RICART, Paris
1967 "Graduation Exhibition," Galerías Augusta, Barcelona, Spain
1964 Salon Rovira, Barcelona, Spain

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1988 Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Honors:

2003 White House Commendation, Initiative on Asian Americans and
Pacific Islanders
2002 Life Achievement Award, World Peace Art Competition, University of
Houston
1996 Listed in *The World Famous Chinese Artists Almanac*
1995 "Wang Chi Day," celebrated on May 6 by the Mayor of Houston
1991 – 95 President of the Chinese Art Association, Houston
1964 Named to the Royal Arts Society of Spain

WANG CHI

Wang Chi's art bridges East and West, traditional China and today's cutting edge contemporary scene.

Her paintings and hand-made papers are at second glance more radical than they appear, manifesting a free spirited abstraction as well as complex sense of three-dimensional space that is a decidedly foreign to traditional Chinese artistic practice.

Wang Chi's subject matter is also adventuresome. Instead of depicting classical Asian landscapes, figurative scenes or still lifes, she has boldly ventured into abstraction, but one that maintains a carefully considered sensibility for nature.

Historically, stylistically, aesthetically, Wang Chi is a seminal figure in the second half of 20th century Chinese art. Her pioneering hand-made paper works and acrylic paintings have received well-deserved international attention, including garnering prestigious museum exhibitions in both China and the United States.

Abandoning the proscribed subject matter and strict stylistic control of her early art training, she had instead synthesized the best of the East and the West. While celebrating the Western concepts of spontaneity and abstraction, Wang Chi's art preserves an adroit and understated refinement, an elegant restraint that is purely Asian in its Zen-like reverence for nature and the ebb and flow of universal energy.

Catherine D. Anspon, August 2003
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