

Summer Trees Casting Shade: Chinese Painting at Berkeley, the First Fifty Years

UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
July 6 through September 25, 2016



Berkeley, CA) July 22, 2016 — The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) presents **Summer Trees Casting Shade: Chinese Painting at Berkeley, the First Fifty Years**, on view through September 25, 2016. Comprising over fifty works dating from the twelfth to nineteenth centuries, this exhibition presents the largest group of Chinese paintings from BAMPFA's renowned collection to be exhibited in over fifteen years. The diverse subject matter—from monumental landscapes to intimate views of quiet gardens, and from figures of lofty gentlemen to seldom-depicted street characters—highlights the richness of the collection.

BAMPFA has long been known as home to a robust collection of Chinese paintings, thanks in large part to the late scholar, collector, and UC Berkeley Professor Emeritus James Cahill. Cahill's personal collection forms the central core of BAMPFA's holdings, which he used to great effect in his nearly thirty years teaching at the University. The exhibition also includes other important gifts and purchases made over the last fifty years.

The first Chinese painting entered the BAMPFA collection in 1967. *Scholar Instructing Girl Students* by the noted figure painter Chen Hongshou (1598–1652) remains an iconic image, one that will forever be identified with a history of collecting distinguished Chinese paintings. A Berkeley alum purchased the painting for BAMPFA from an important collection belonging to the noted scholar and collector Victoria Contag, who literally “wrote the book” on Chinese painting (*Seals of Chinese Painters and Collectors*, 1940). Our most recent acquisition, *Landscape with*

Buildings, a monumental fourteenth-century landscape painting by Sun Junze, originally in the James Cahill collection, was donated in 2015 by Sarah Cahill in memory of her father.

The works in the exhibition are divided by subject matter into three sections. The first is devoted to the relationship of humans to the natural world. In early paintings towering mountains are shown looming over and dominating the human realm; in later landscapes people are depicted moving easily and confidently in a more welcoming natural environment. The second section features painters who attempt to capture the essence of nature, either through exact and careful rendering of each detail—leaf or wing—or by expressing the inner energy of the subject through expressive, often elegant brushwork. The final section shows Chinese painters reflecting on humanity in all its vagaries, from a noble scholar to a street entertainer.

Summer Trees Casting Shade is one of several current and upcoming exhibitions that showcase BAMPFA's encyclopedic collection, including **Berkeley Eye: Perspectives on the Collection** (through December 11); **This Just In: Recent Acquisitions** (through September 11); **Sojourner Truth, Photography, and the Fight Against Slavery** (July 27–October 23); **Push and Pull: Hans Hofmann** (August 31–December 11); and **Mind Over Matter: Conceptual Art from the Collection** (October 19–December 23).

Summer Trees Casting Shade: Chinese Painting at Berkeley, the First Fifty Years is organized by BAMPFA Senior Curator for Asian Art Julia M White.

Above:

Wang Hui: *Landscape (in the manner of Jiang Shen)*, 1667; hanging scroll: ink on paper; 38 1/2 x 18 in.; Museum purchase: Bequest of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, by exchange, 2011.18.2

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Visitor Information

Address

2155 Center Street Berkeley, CA 94704

Hours

Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Gallery Admission

\$12 general admission

\$10 Non-Berkeley students, disabled, 65+

Free for BAMPFA members; UC Berkeley students, faculty, staff, and retirees; 18 & under + one adult

Free First Thursdays: Free gallery admission on the first Thursday of each month

Social Media

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Hashtags: #SummerTrees #BAMPFA

About BAMPFA

Internationally recognized for its art and film programming, the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) is a platform for cultural experiences that transform individuals, engage communities, and advance the local, national, and global discourse on art and film. Founded in 1963, BAMPFA is UC Berkeley's primary visual arts venue with its screenings of some 450 films and presentations of up to twenty exhibitions annually. BAMPFA's mission is to inspire the imagination and ignite critical dialogue through art and film.

The institution's collection of over 19,000 works of art dates from 3000 BCE to the present day and includes important holdings of Neolithic Chinese ceramics, Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese painting, Old Master works on paper, Italian Baroque painting, early American painting, Abstract Expressionist painting, contemporary photography, and Conceptual art. BAMPFA's collection also includes over 17,500 films and videos, including the largest collection of Japanese cinema outside of Japan, impressive holdings of Soviet cinema, West Coast avant-garde film, seminal video art, as well as hundreds of thousands of articles, reviews, posters, and other ephemera related to the history of film—many of which are digitally scanned and accessible online.