

趙少昂 黎雄才  
關山月 楊善深

合作畫選

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**SELECTED JOINT  
PAINTINGS**

**BY ZHAO SHAOANG,  
LI XIONGCAI, GUAN SHANYUE  
AND YANG SHANSHEN**

Responsible Editor: Shan Jianfeng

Photographers: Dan Qing

Cui Hanping

He Peixing

Xie Jianliang

Translator: Huang Jiaxiu

Translation Reviser: Li Xiaojun

Binding Designers: Xie Sunjing

Shan Jianfeng

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# **COMMUNION OF HEARTS AND SOULS COMBINATION OF TALENTS AND SKILLS**

——On the Exhibition of Joint Paintings by Zhao Shaoang,

Li Xiongcai, Guan Shanyue and Yang Shanshen

(In Lieu of Preface)

Yu Feng

A unique art show has opened in the Guangdong Institute of Painting, drawing enormous attention. Four great contemporary painters of the Lingnan School — Zhao Shaoang, Li Xiongcai, Guan Shanyue and Yang Shanshen — have brought tremendous pleasure and excitement to the art lovers of Guangdong with their one hundred and thirty jointly-painted pictures.

These paintings, which the four masters started to work on in the autumn of 1981, are the result of their collaboration over the years. They were shown at the art exhibition in the Fung Ping Shan Museum, Hong Kong University in 1983 and the National Museum, Singapore in 1984. Later, they went on an exhibition tour to a number of American cities, including San Francisco. Wherever they went, they were extremely well-received. At the current exhibition in Guangzhou, some new works have been added to



the original one hundred.

The way in which these paintings were produced is indeed extraordinary. Two of the artists, Zhao and Yang, live in Hong Kong while the other two, Guan and Li, are permanent residents of Guangzhou. However, they collaborated on every painting, thus necessitating an elaborate system by which the paintings were circulated among the artists. This method of joint-painting by artists residing in two different cities is almost unheard of. Every painting is therefore a collective effort of the four masters, a crystalization of their outstanding talents and exquisite skills, and, needless to say, an elaborate and painstaking work of art.

Separate parts of each painting show the individual style of each painter, whereas the whole picture presents a complete and unified artistic conception, leaving viewers with the impression of one harmonious whole completed in one brilliant stroke.

Though these paintings are all of them composite works by four separate hands, no one can tell where the work of one ends and that of another begins. The paintings look all of one piece, as they are products of the spiritual intercourse and heart-to-heart communion of the four artists. One of them would start a composition by putting down on paper the important first strokes that set the motif and decided the layout. Yet the follow-up job of the others was no less essential, was it only to add a flower or a tree, a bird or an insect, a rock or a stretch of water. Following the set pattern and conforming to the given theme, each of these ingenious masters in his turn would spring surprises and invigorate the painting with new life. Then the artist whose turn came last would apply the finishing touches, by which loose ends were tied up and the composition achieved its final flawless perfection. The process of such a collaboration can in fact be seen as one of fructification of the empathy of the souls and the concord of the minds of the participating artists.

It was indeed a great event for these four old masters to bring their united talents, with amazing will-power and resolution, to bear on so many wonderful paintings. Their collaboration exemplifies the solidarity and friendship between the artists of Guangzhou and Hong Kong and is a major new step to the promotion of further artistic exchange between the two cities.

**Zhao Shaoang**, also called Shuyi, was born in 1905 in Panyu County, Guangdong Province. He was taught by a private tutor during his childhood. When he was sixteen, he learned painting at the private art school founded by the distinguished Lingnan painter, Gao Qifeng. At the age of twenty-three, he became a teacher at the Foshan City Art Academy. One of his paintings was shown at the Brussels International World Fair in 1930 and was awarded a gold medal. In the same year, he founded Lingnan Art Studio in Guangzhou, where he later gave three one-man shows in 1933. In the following year, he went on a tour of the country, visiting many famous mountains and rivers and such historical sites as the Caves of Stone Buddhas in Yungang and the Great Wall. During the tour, he exhibited his own works in Nanjing, Tianjin and Beijing.

In 1937, Zhao was appointed head of the Department of Chinese Painting, Guangzhou City Art School. He moved to Hong Kong after the "July 7 Incident". He held one-man shows in Hong Kong, New Zealand and Lisbon in 1939. In 1941, when the Japanese armies invaded South China and occupied Hong Kong, he left Hong Kong for Macao, from where he later went to Guangzhouwan. During the war, he went to the interior, for he was accorded professorship at the National Central University and the National Art Academy. On his way to Chongqing, he passed Hunan, Guangxi and Guizhou. He sketched, painted and exhibited his pictures during the trip and donated the money he got from these exhibitions to war refugees. During his stay in Sichuan, he broadened the scope of his painting as a result of his extensive visits to many scenic spots of artistic interest, such as the beautiful Mount Emei, the peaceful and secluded Qing Cheng Shan and the spectacular Three Gorges of the Changjiang. After the Anti-Japanese War, he returned to South China.

In 1946, he displayed his works in Hong Kong and Macao. He was appointed professor of art at the University of Guangzhou in 1948. In the same year, he moved to Hong Kong and re-established the Lingnan Art Studio, where he taught art students. In 1951, at the invitation of the Asahi Shimbun, he went to Japan and held an art exhibition in Tokyo. In the following year, he toured Southeast Asia and his works were shown in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and



Peneng. In 1953, he visited Europe and exhibited his paintings in Switzerland. In 1954, his one-man shows were held in London, Manchester, Paris and Rome. From 1960 to 1971, over thirty exhibitions of his paintings were held in major American cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, Boston as well as Hawaii, Canada, West Germany and Australia. In addition, he had two one-man shows at the City Hall, Hong Kong in 1962 and 1979.

During his long career as an artist, Zhao has produced thousands of flower-bird works and landscape paintings. He enjoys tremendous popularity at home and abroad. During the past few decades, he has committed himself to the task of carrying forward the Lingnan School's spirit of innovating Chinese painting. The large number of artists trained at his Lingnan Art Studio are now scattered throughout the world and have made remarkable contributions to international cultural exchange.

Li Xiongcai was born in Gaoyao County, Guangdong Province in 1910. His father, Li Junting, who was well versed in Chinese calligraphy and painting and excelled in the art of reproducing rubbing from bronze and stone inscriptions, supported his family by mounting scrolls and rubbings for others. Li Xiongcai received his basic training in calligraphy and painting from his father during his childhood. At the age of thirteen, he went to the Zhaoqing Middle School, where he was formally initiated into the art of Chinese painting by his teacher, Chen Jian, a favoured student of Ju Lian, a famous Guangdong painter. When he was sixteen, Li was admitted as a private student by Gao Jianfu, a founder of the Lingnan School of painting, who highly praised his artistic talents. A year later, Li went to Guangzhou and became a student at Gao's Chunshui Art Studio. There he not only received training in Chinese painting, but also studied other forms of art. During this period, he built up a good foundation in the technique of sketching.

Financially supported by the Chunshui Art Studio, he went to Japan in 1932 and studied art at the Tokyo Art Institute. Thus, he had the opportunity to observe the various innovations made in Japanese painting. He returned to China when he finished his studies in 1935. From

then on, he held various teaching posts in the Guangzhou City Art School, the Guangzhou City Art Academy and the National Art Academy in Chongqing.

During the Anti-Japanese War, Li toured the Southwest and Northwest of China. He visited Qujiang, Guilin, Chongqing, Chengdu, the Three Gorges of the Changjiang, Mount Emei, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. During his journey, he made a series of sketches of the places he visited and studied the cultural relics found in these places. This long journey resulted in a great change in his style of painting. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, he has often visited industrial centres and rural areas where he has done a lot of outdoor sketches. On one occasion he went as far as the Qinghai Highlands. Li has held many one-man exhibitions, including one held in Hong Kong in 1982. He has visited Korea, Japan, the Philipines, Thailand and Canada. During the past few decades, he has produced numerous sketches and thousands of paintings, many of which are huge in size, varying from a few metres to over ten metres in length. He published *Li Xiongcai's Landscape Painting Manual* in 1981, *Selected Painting by Li Xiongcai* in 1982 and *Collection of Paintings by Li Xiongcai* in 1985.

After 1949, he taught successively at the South China College of Literature and Art, the Central and South China Art Academy and the Guangzhou Institute of Fine Arts, of which he was a professor and vice-president. He was also vice-chairman of the Guangdong Branch of the Association of Chinese Artists. At present, he is a member of the National People's Political Consultative Conference, a committee member of the Research Institute of Chinese Painting, and an adviser to the Guangdong Branch of the Association of Chinese Artists, the Guangdong Institute of Painting and the Guangzhou Institute of Fine Arts.

Guan Shanyue, originally named Zepei, was born in 1912 in Yangjiang County, Guangdong Province. His father was a school teacher who was skilled in Chinese painting. Influenced by his father, Guan Shanyue cultivated an intense interest in painting during his childhood. He became a primary school teacher in Guangzhou after he graduated from the Guangzhou Teachers Training College in 1933. At that time, Gao Jianfu, a great painter of the Lingnan



School, was giving lectures at Zhongshan University. With the help of his former classmates, Guan went to the University to sit in Gao's lectures. Later, he studied art at the Chunshui Art Studio founded by Gao. From then to 1940, he learned painting under Gao.

Between autumn, 1939 and spring, 1940, Guan held his first one-man shows in Macao, Hong Kong and Guangzhouwan (Zhanjiang), which were very well received. In 1941, he left Guangdong and travelled extensively in the various provinces in the Southwest and Northwest of China. He kept on sketching and painting during the tour and exhibited his works in cities like Shaoguan, Guilin, Guiyang, Chongqing, Kunming, Chengdu, Xi'an and Lanzhou. Later, he went to Dunhuang with his wife, Li Xiaoping, where he copied and studied the ancient mural paintings in the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas in Mogao Grotto. The travels in the period from 1941 to 1945 contributed significantly to the development of Guan Shanyue's art of painting, and it was during this period that he began to establish a distinctive style of his own.

In 1946, he returned to Guangzhou and was appointed professor and head of the Department of Chinese Painting, Guangzhou City Art Academy. In 1947, he toured Southeast Asia. He visited Bangkok, Chiang Mei, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, doing sketching and giving exhibitions of his paintings in these cities. In 1948, he organized in Shanghai an exhibition of the sketches and paintings he had done during his travels in Southwest and Northwest of China and Southeast Asia. Two collections of his paintings were published for this exhibition. Early in 1949, he went to Hong Kong, where he joined the Renjian Painting Society and engaged in revolutionary art activities.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Guan became successively professor and deputy head of the Department of Fine Arts, South China College of Literature and Art, professor and deputy principal of the Central and South China Art Academy and professor and vice-president of the Guangzhou Institute of Fine Arts. He joined the Communist Party of China in 1956. Besides teaching, he often went to construction sites and places of historic interest to do outdoor sketching. He also visited Korea, Poland, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Vietnam and

Japan, inspecting and studying the art of painting in these countries. In 1982, he was invited to Japan to give exhibitions of his paintings in Tokyo and Osaka. In 1983, he was awarded the first prize of the First Guangdong Provincial Lu Xun Prizes for Literature and Art. In March, the same year, he went to Hong Kong to attend the Exhibition of Joint Paintings by Zhao Shaoang, Li Xiongcai, Guan Shanyue and Yang Shanshen. In 1984, he went on a lecture tour to America with his wife and became an honorary professor at Baylor University. His painting *Blue Seas Surging Toward the Sky* won the honorary prize at the Sixth National Art Exhibition in the same year. In May, 1986, he visited Korea as head of the Delegation of Chinese Artists, and in June, went to Australia to present the Exhibition of Paintings by Guan Shanyue and Li Xiongcai. He visited Thailand as a member of the Delegation of the Guangdong Provincial Society of Poetry in February, 1986, went to Hong Kong to participate in the Consortium of Modern Chinese Painting in May, was invited to present a one-man show in Singapore and published *Selected Paintings by Guan Shanyue* in September. He also published *Paintings by Guan Shanyue* in 1979 and *The Jinggang Mountains*, a collection of paintings, in 1984.

Guan Shanyue is currently a member of the National People's Congress, vice-chairman of the Association of Chinese Artists, a member of the Committee of the All China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, professor of the Guangzhou Institute of Fine Arts, director of the Guangdong Institute of Painting and chairman of the Guangdong Branch of the Association of Chinese Artists.

Yang Shanshen, also named Liuzhai, was born in 1913 in Taishan County, Guangdong Province. His paintings were put on show for the first time in Guangzhou when he was twenty-one. In 1935, he went to Japan and studied art at the Dormoto Art Institute in Kyoto. He returned to China in 1938 and held a one-man show in Hong Kong. In 1940, he travelled to and exhibited his paintings in Singapore and other cities in Southeast Asia. In the same year, he gave another one-man show in Hong Kong in order to raise donations for refugees.

During the Anti-Japanese War, Yang moved to Macao, where he became closely associated



with Gao Jianfu, a great master painter of the Lingnan School. It was during this period that Gao's art of painting exerted great influence on Yang, who then gained a profound understanding of the art of the Lingnan School of painting. In 1941, he founded a society of art, "Xie She", with Gao Jianfu, Feng Kanghou and other artists in Macao. In 1945, he set up another society of art, "Jin She", with Gao Jianfu, Chen Shuren, Zhao Shaoang, Guan Shanyue and Li Gemin in Guangzhou. In the same year, he presented a one-man show in Shiqi, Zhongshan County and a joint exhibition with Zhao Shaoang in Xinchang and Taishan, Guangdong Province. In 1947, he co-operated with Zhao Shaoang again in organizing an exhibition of rose paintings. At the invitation of the Guangdong Provincial Popular Education Centre, Yang and Gao Jianfu, Chen Shuren, Zhao Shaoang, Guan Shanyue and Li Gemin held a joint exhibition of their paintings in Guangzhou in April, 1948. This exhibition was later restaged in Hong Kong in June. And in July, the same year, Yang displayed his paintings in Macao.

After Yang settled down in Hong Kong in 1949, his paintings were shown in a number of cities: in Singapore in 1955 and 1973, in New York, San Francisco, Honolulu and Vancouver in 1959, in Taipei in 1971 and in Hong Kong in 1978 and 1981. He held a joint exhibition with Feng Kanghou, Chen Jinghong and Zhao Shaoang at the City Hall, Hong Kong in 1970. In the same year, he founded the Chunfeng Painting Society.

In 1971, he visited a number of countries, including India, Pakistan, Iran, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Britain, France and West Germany. He returned to the mainland of China three times to do outdoor sketching. He went to Shandong, Beijing, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Yanan in 1972 and Mount Huang, Mount Tai, Qufu, the Three Gorges of the Changjiang, Kunming and Yungang in 1979. These experiences have contributed significantly to the development of Yang's art.

At present, Yang Shanshen teaches painting at his studio, the Chunfeng Painting Society, in Hong Kong.

# JOINT PAINTINGS



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