



Dream of America, oil, 30" by 24"

"Every painting I create, I visualize with a dream and paint with passion. In painting this woman, the broad brush strokes express her dignity and her power. The movement of her body, especially her hands, creates rhythm lines. And the strong contrast between her dark skin and her colorful outfit brings out the romance. I create not only drama, I create opera."



Rural Trade Fair in Xin Jiang, oil, 30" by 40"

"The strong contrast between the circles and lines, together with the body movement, forms the beautiful rhythm of this painting, and the pink, white, and gray brings out poetic romance."

'Life is My Teacher'

By Mary Nelson

The face of a baby, beautiful by its freshness and innocence, can inspire poetry, art, magic. The absence of life's drama, as yet, leaves no trails on the infant face, a face that is easy to adore. Yet it is the mature face, with its marks of age, experience, joys, and loss that Jove Wang prefers to paint. They are faces that display their personalities, their memories, and their dreams. Here is a kind of beauty brought on by living that takes a particular artistic vision to see and impart with the sensitivity, style, and grace that is Wang's trademark.

Wang, a native of China, is a man of few words. He seeks to observe, not merely discuss. Nothing is too mundane or banal for his scrutiny. Nothing is too insignificant to escape his interest. Close observation gives the California artist insight to paint with the kind of emotion that has lasting impact on viewers. "For artists," he says, "art is your life. Life is my teacher, so I am always out exploring, traveling, and looking for new experiences to keep my creative eye open and improving."

That introspection has fostered an artistic expression that has been

described as a mix of free brushwork and elegant detailing that incorporates a strong narrative element in Wang's work. So adept is his ability to express emotion in his art that he is able to evoke in his viewers a nostalgia for daily lives of people or cultures they might not even know.

As a boy growing up in China, Wang exhibited a natural talent that his family recognized and encouraged early on. "About at age 4, I started drawing everything I could see almost everywhere [on the paper, the ground, and the walls]," he says. His mother, seeing her

Red Scarf, oil, 14" by 11"

"The bright pink of the scarf, the dark red of the dress, and the lively gray background forms an interesting contrast in color and value. The sensitive expression of the face is achieved by the subtle temperature change and variety of brush strokes. With more realistic rendering, the face became the focal point, compared with the rest of the painting that is bold and abstract."



government, traveling throughout Europe and South America and designing exhibition pavilions as he went. That travel opened his eyes to new environments and design possibilities, and planted the idea of becoming a fine artist who travels the world to paint.

When the time seemed right, Wang immigrated to the United States in 1990. He arrived with about \$40 in his pockets and knew only one person in the country, a friend who lived in Los Angeles. Finding a job was not easy, because Wang lacked manual labor skills, but he

landed a job with a collection agency. His boss introduced him to friends who wanted portraits, and it wasn't long before Wang was able to support himself as an artist. He also got involved in the Chinese American art community, made friends, and began teaching classes and conducting art tours.

That, he says, is where his schooling in traditional Chinese training melded with what he saw Western artists creating, and his style and technique underwent a subtle change. "When I began painting, surrounded by Western art, my

energy and feeling became a part of each painting," he says. "My heart opened, and I began to paint, combining all my foundation with the unlimited power and emotional response of contemporary arts." Anyone can try to invent a style, he says, but true style, unique to the artist, comes from inside.

By combining the precision of rendering an image with free brush strokes, an artist composes an inventive design. Wang chooses an almost abstractionist approach to laying down the elements that comprise his paintings. Composition is



In the Heat of the Day, oil, 30" by 24"

"I did not follow a conventional way of composition in this painting. I have created multiple asymmetric triangle shapes that intertwine among each other. The bold composition with subtle contrast of values creates the powerful impact in this painting."

Plentiful Harvest, oil, 24" by 20"

"The approach of this painting is the romance between a farmer and his wife during the harvest season. Even though we cannot see his face, we can feel that he is responding to her attraction toward him."



the initial element he considers as he begins a painting. Next in line are the elements of color, value, and subject matter. All those aspects blend together to evoke the mood, the core of his paintings.

"Feeling is most important, because it is from the heart," Wang says. "[What I do with my art] always goes far beyond rendering. I always have a vision or dream before I start to paint." The painterly quality of his art is enhanced by a unique color palette. Wang's use of rich darks and grays and the distillation of figures serve to eliminate surface distraction and get to the heart of the person or scene he depicts. What results is a powerful image.

In addition to painting, Wang has a large and loyal following of students who hope to absorb some of the spirit they see in Wang's art. As

a teacher, he is generous in sharing his knowledge and is energetic in his teaching. His goal is to help his students invoke their passion through composition, color, and design in order to express the mood, the motion of the painting. But he is the first to say that he gains as much from his students as they gain from him.

"My students bring to me my greatest rewards," Wang says. "They are my friends and have given back to me so many different cultural experiences. I have grown from this, and my world has evolved and been enriched into the powerful expression of my personal growth."

In addition to teaching in his own studio, Wang has been invited to teach oil painting workshops at various art schools and galleries, including the Scottsdale Artists' School in

Scottsdale, Arizona; the California Art Club Art Center College of Design in Pasadena; and the Autry Museum in Los Angeles. He also is a guest professor at several academies of fine art in China.

Looking back at his career, Wang is satisfied with his decision to become a fine artist. Actually, there is more than satisfaction; there is a lust for creative expression that has been fulfilled through art. What does being an artist mean to Wang? "In our daily life, where and how we live and what we eat and wear, are all the elements that nourish creation," he says. "Even if I were to start over again, I'd still be an artist." ❧

Mary Nelson is a writer living in Minneapolis, Minnesota.