

BRUSH

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sharing their art with the students. Each of these artists have roots deep in the soil of traditional Chinese calligraphy, but each one's work has flowered into something quite different and utterly unique, work that is undeniably modern. The characters may be unreadable because they've been painted so large that only a portion of them may be seen, or they may be painted in three dimensions and manipulated, or the characters may be repeated in a pattern or painted on top of each other, character upon character.

One of the guests is Dr. Yiguo Zhang, FGCU's executive professor and curator of Asian Art, an internationally recognized expert in the field. Zhang curated "I Am

In It: Contemporary Chinese Art Expressions," a landmark show that opened at the university's art gallery the previous evening. Zhang and the four artists are visiting local schools such as the Gateway Charter School and the Renaissance Academy, as well as FGCU classes, to speak about their art and give demonstrations.

After demonstrations by all four artists, Zhang opens up the discussion for questions. He stands in the center of the classroom, translating English into Chinese and Chinese into English. Sometimes more than one artist jumps in and an animated discussion in Chinese ensues.

Associate Professor of Art and Art Program Leader Morgan Paine asks about the importance of negative space in the work, the space around the characters.

"The negative space is so important in Chinese culture," Zhang says. "Some think the negative space is more important than



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Artist Shao Yan working on a painting.

the characters themselves. Every artist cares about negative space."

Paine has additional questions. He's curious as to whether the artists plan their works before they approach the paper, or if the images and characters are created spontaneously.

"Is it like a symphonic score when you paint it out, so you know ahead of time where you're going," he asks, "or is it like

jazz, when you don't know what's coming next?"

"We all study the past, ancient calligraphy," Zhang says. "We all have to start in the past, then you have your own understanding. [For example, you learn how to play Mozart.] But the musicians have their own interpretation of Mozart. I studied everyone, then I have my own understanding, my own approach. Where does the image come from? I don't know. You put it together to create something new."

Pu Lieping projects some of his work on one of the drywalls. Using a computer, he turned some of his ink drawings into three-dimensional models. The liquid flowing line of a character is frozen in stone or brick, almost as if a breaking wave was instantly frozen in time. The computer flashes on the same character drawn different ways, as if in different typefaces. Then it shows sketches for buildings whose structures are

Lan ZHENGHUI



Lan Zhenghui - Waterfall

Pu LIEPING



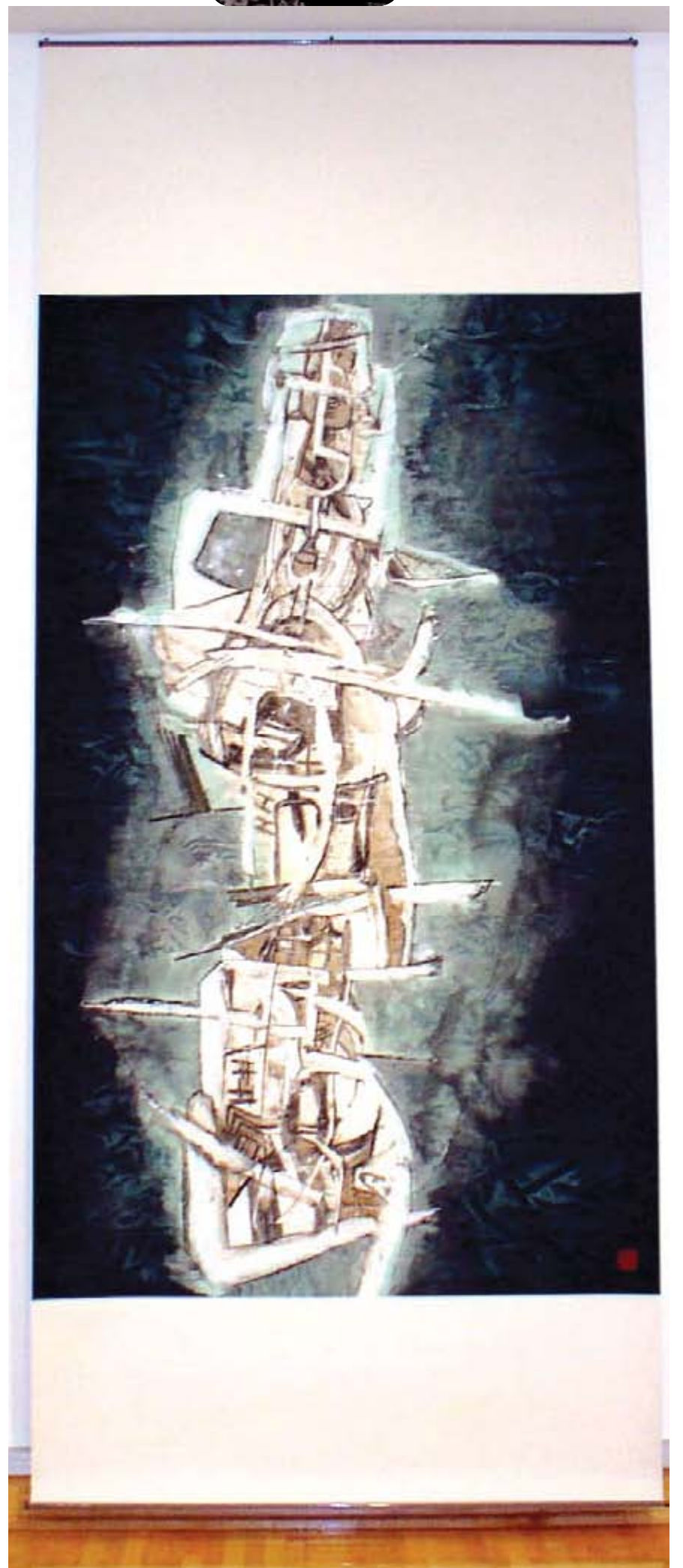
Pu Lieping - Music Series 1-4

Yiliao



Yiliao - Imprisonment Series 9

Shao YAN



Shao Yan - Challenge