

ISAMU NOGUCHI AND QI BAISHI: BEIJING 1930

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FOREWORD

The Chinese ink painter Qi Baishi has long been a subject of interest for The Noguchi Museum, which continues to explore artists who have influenced the development of Isamu Noguchi's artistic practice, and who in turn Noguchi has gone on to influence. The young Noguchi spent six months* from August 1930 to January 1931 in Beijing where he met Qi Baishi. Although short, this period had a significant impact on both men. The few brief paragraphs in Noguchi's autobiography describing his time in Beijing and his meeting with Qi Baishi, whom he "adopted as a teacher," have served as a springboard for the exhibition *Isamu Noguchi and Qi Baishi: Beijing 1930*. The only other artist Noguchi held in such esteem and continued to reference throughout his life is one far more familiar to Western audiences—Constantin Brancusi in whose studio Noguchi worked in 1927.

This exhibition developed out of a gift to the collection of the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) over sixty years ago. The Japanese economist, author, and pacifist Sotokichi Katsuizumi was in the early stages of what would become a distinguished career when he introduced Noguchi to Qi Baishi. He worked for the Yokohama Specie Bank in Beijing from 1925 to 1931 and acquired works by both artists. An alumnus of the University of Michigan Katsuizumi went on to donate one Noguchi drawing, which came to be known as the Peking Scrolls or Peking Drawings, and ten Qi Baishi paintings to UMMA in 1949. The prior year UMMA had purchased forty-six works on paper by Noguchi, including two Peking Drawings. UMMA Associate Curator of Asian Art, Natsu Oyobe, and the team at The Noguchi Museum recently began to explore the idea of jointly developing an exhibition focused on the period of the relationship between the two artists—an area for which there was very little original documentation. Marking Noguchi's first visit to the East since leaving Japan as a teenager, this period, coupled with the growing attention and scholarship surrounding Qi Baishi, suggested rich areas of overlap worthy of further development.

A third partner entered the picture as a result of conversations with Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Director of the Frye Art Museum. In 2005, while serving as Director of the Villa Stuck in Munich, Danzker developed an exhibition titled *Shanghai Modern: 1919–1945*, which surveyed the artistic exchange between China, the East, and European modernism, and the related discourse that took place in Shanghai. Urging us to broaden the exhibition's viewpoint and take into account the influence of modernism on Chinese artists working during the period in which Noguchi and

Qi Baishi became acquainted, she brought her prior research and enthusiasm to our exhibition. Subsequently, the Frye signed on as its third venue.

We extend special thanks to Alexandra Snyder May, The Noguchi Museum's associate director from 1985 to 1990, who served as a key consultant on the project, and shared her first-hand knowledge of Noguchi and insights into the life and work of Noguchi's "teacher," Qi Baishi, and his prominence within the Chinese art community. In addition, we share our sincere appreciation to Sotokichi Katsuizumi's granddaughter Sharlynn Crew Circo and her husband Andrew Circo for their critical insight throughout the planning of the exhibition along with their generous gift of one of Noguchi's most personally significant Peking Scrolls of a seated monk that Noguchi himself gifted to Mr. Katsuizumi.

We are extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to include in the accompanying catalogue such thoughtful considerations of the subject from scholars Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Britta Erickson, Natsu Oyobe, Lang Shaojun, and Bert Winther-Tamaki. Each has written expertly of the time Noguchi and Qi Baishi spent together, the nature of the East/West relationship, and the respective practices of each artist. We thank all of our contributors.

We are also most grateful to the Terra Foundation for American Art, the National Endowment of the Arts, the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation and The Freeman Foundation along with the University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies for their generous contributions toward this exhibition and related publication.

Without the guidance and support of our respective governing boards along with the teamwork of our wonderful Museum colleagues, *Isamu Noguchi and Qi Baishi: Beijing 1930* would not have come to fruition. Our deep gratitude goes to each of them.

Jenny Dixon, Director The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum

Joseph Rosa, Director University of Michigan Museum of Art

PREFACE

My relationship with Isamu Noguchi emanates from the close friendship he shared with my grandfather, R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller, beginning in 1929. My appreciation of Noguchi's Peking Scroll Drawings, the subject of this exhibition, begins in early memories of a Noguchi scroll in my grandparents' dome-home in Carbondale, Illinois, the only geodesic dome in which they resided. My grandmother, Anne Hewlett, had a keen eye and a love of delicate beauty. I remember her lament at the loss of that scroll in a move they made across country.

Later there was the majestic *Mother and Child*, an ink-and-brush drawing signed "Isamu, 1930" (fig. 1.23), which presided over many dinner parties at the New York City apartment of Priscilla Morgan, long time friend of Noguchi, Fuller, and numerous artists, writers and thinkers of the time. This piece now graces my own home in Portland, Maine. Its' presence alongside drawings by Fuller, would have made my grandmother happy.

In the years that I worked at The Noguchi Museum (1985–1990), several of Noguchi's ink-and-brush works were displayed but many others were kept rolled-up in his studio. Their historical context seemed tangential to Noguchi's mature work. Unlike Noguchi's other self-appointed teachers, such as Constantin Brancusi, the artist Chi Pai Shi (Qi Baishi) remained in the shadows, being noted in only in a few paragraphs in Noguchi's autobiography in relation to this six-month period.

In 2004 I moved with my husband and children to Hong Kong. It was a fascinating time as Western interest in China swelled and Chinese art, both contemporary and traditional, found its way on to the international art market and awareness. As I delved into Chinese culture my curiosity about Noguchi's teacher, Qi, grew. It should not be surprising, given Noguchi's instinctive ability to find his way to great artists as his adopted teachers, to learn that Qi Baishi is one of China's preeminent modern ink-and-brush painters. With light shed on Qi and his great body of work, questions arose about the relationship between the Chinese master and the young Japanese-American traveling artist, Isamu Noguchi. These questions were the seeds of this exhibition.

Alexandra May, Curatorial Advisor



ISAMU NOGUCHI IN CHINA: SOTOKICHI KATSUIZUMI, QI BAISHI, AND THE REINVENTION OF ABSTRACTION IN THE PEKING SCROLL DRAWINGS

Natsu Oyobe*

Isamu Noguchi and Qi Baishi: Beijing 1930 is the first large-scale exhibition to focus on the fruits of the artistic encounter between the American sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) and the Chinese ink-and-brush painter Qi Baishi (1864–1957), who were introduced by the Japanese businessman and collector of Chinese painting Sotokichi Katsuzumi (1889–1985) during Noguchi's six-month stay in Peking (Beijing) in 1930–1931.¹ In this period Noguchi created more than one hundred ink-and-brush works commonly called the Peking Scroll Drawings (fig. 1.1).² Many are very large in size, some exceeding two meters (six feet) in length, and all are mounted as hanging scrolls, the formal mounting style (fig. 1.2) in the East Asian literati tradition. Though the impressive Peking Scroll Drawings have been included in many solo exhibitions and publications on Noguchi and are regularly on view in the galleries of The Noguchi Museum in New York,³ their importance is often overlooked because they are considered oddities in his long and prolific career.⁴ While it is true that two-dimensional works were not a central focus for Noguchi, who is known first and foremost for his sculptural works and second for his designs of gardens, fountains, stage sets, and furniture,⁵ the Peking Scroll Drawings occupy an important place in his development as an artist, acting as a catalyst that helped him to arrive at his own form of abstraction. When Qi's ink-and-brush paintings and Noguchi's Peking Scroll Drawings are seen side by side, as they are for the first time in this exhibition, it opens up new possibilities for the understanding of Noguchi's work, and provides insight into the importance of China in his artistic formation, which is usually eclipsed by his relationship with Japan.

Qi Baishi and Sotokichi Katsuzumi played key roles in introducing Noguchi to Chinese painting (fig. 1.3.). Noguchi's biographer Masayo Duus has written that Noguchi was fortunate to encounter mentors at important junctures of his life.⁶ It may be that he was drawn to these men out of a need to fill the emotional void created by the absence of his biological father, Japanese poet Yone (Yonejirō) Noguchi (1875–1947), but each offered encouragement and creative inspiration to the ambitious and determined young artist. While a great deal is known about Noguchi's relationships with many of these figures, who include the educator Edward A. Rumely (1882–1964), the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, the designer and inventor R. Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983), and the Japanese ceramic artist Kitaōji Rosanjin (1883–1959), there are few records besides the Peking Scroll Drawings themselves of his creative encounter with Qi Baishi.⁷ Nevertheless it was Qi and Katsuzumi who fueled Noguchi's interest in brush, ink and paper, guiding the young artist toward a medium that would liberate him from Brancusi's influence and allow him to define a new approach to interpreting the human form.

*Associate Curator
of Asian Art, University of Michigan
Museum of Art

THE LURE OF ASIA

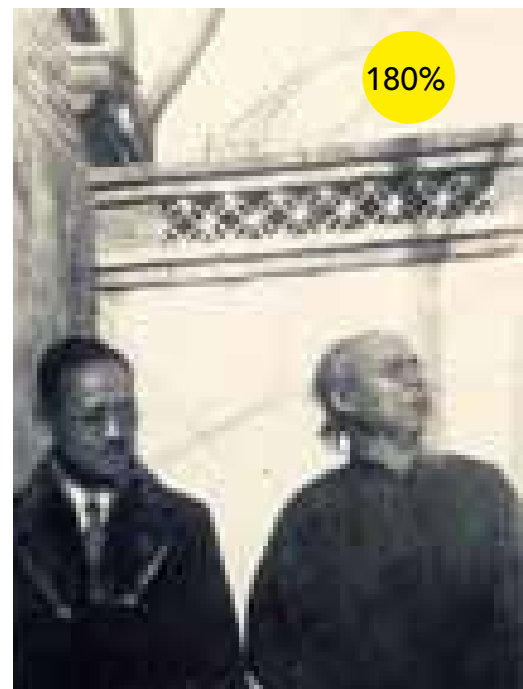
Visiting Asia had been in Isamu Noguchi's mind since 1927 when he first applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship, which allowed him to study in Paris between 1927 and 1929.⁸ There he served as a studio apprentice to Brancusi, and also produced his own highly abstract sculptures of metal and stone strongly influenced by the great modern master (fig. 1.4). When he was denied an extension of the fellowship, Noguchi moved back to New York, where his desire to go to Asia intensified. In New York he was forced to make sculptural portraits of wealthy clients to earn a living, but even in his free time he was hesitant to create abstract sculpture; Brancusi had cast a long shadow over Noguchi and he struggled to find his own voice. In his memoir, Noguchi said, "There was never a denial of making abstractions, only a recognition of inadequacy on my part, I was poor and could not afford it. On the other hand, I was too poor inside to insist upon it. How to presume to express something from within when it was empty there? I felt myself too young and inexperienced for abstractions: I would have to live first."⁹ The subsequent visit to Asia, especially Japan, seemed to free Noguchi to establish his identity as a person and artist. His father, with whom he had had no contact since leaving Japan in 1918, became a beacon of the journey. Just as Yone Noguchi had tried to introduce the East Asian literary tradition to the West in the late 1890s and early 1900s, Noguchi hoped that in Asia, far removed from Brancusi's influence and the concerns of everyday life, he would be able to forge a path toward an abstract art that blended Eastern and Western aesthetic traditions.

By the spring of 1930 Noguchi had earned enough from his portrait commissions to travel to Asia for an extended period. He had hoped to visit India, but concerned about epidemics there, he decided instead to visit China and Japan, intending to travel to Asia via Paris and the Siberian Railroad. While in Paris for two months awaiting a transit visa, he received a shocking letter from his father that altered his plans: Yone Noguchi wrote that he refused to see Noguchi in Japan, and would not recognize him as a son. Before this, China had been a place Noguchi had planned to stay temporarily while en route to Tokyo, but now he started to contemplate a longer stay. Once he arrived in Beijing, the city captivated him so much that he remained until January of 1931.¹⁰

Noguchi has said that his six-month stay in Beijing was marked by fortuitous events. He soon made the acquaintance of many colorful people, including Nadine Hwang—the lieutenant of the powerful military figure Zhang Xueliang, and some fellow Americans—and easily found a house, a maid, a cook and a rickshaw boy. Noguchi's tormented heart was eased by China's former capital city: "If my father did not want me, Peking had heart and warmth to spare."¹¹ China in 1930, however, was not a safe place for foreigners due to the combination of the military and commercial interests of Japan, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States, and the territorial conflicts among the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, and numerous warlords. Northern China was a volatile center of these conflicts; by 1931, Japan would establish the pro-Japanese state of Manchukuo, whose border was not far from Beijing. It was a city Noguchi described as being "in a perfect state of anarchy," one that would prove to be particularly conducive to the exploration of a new medium.



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2



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1 | Isamu Noguchi with Peking Scroll Drawing at Demotte Gallery, New York, 1932
Collection of The Noguchi Museum

2 | Qi Baishi (right) and Sotokichi Katsuizumi (left) in Beijing, c. 1930
From the Katsuizumi Collection, courtesy of Sharlynn and Andrew Circo

3 | Isamu Noguchi with Foot Tree (not extant) and other sculptures in his Paris studio, 1928
Photo by Atelier Stone, courtesy of The Noguchi Museum



In Beijing, Noguchi also met Sotokichi Katsuizumi, who not only introduced him to Qi Baishi but also provided the support that he needed during the emotional crisis prompted by his father's rejection.¹² Katsuizumi was a banker working for Yokohama Specie Bank, a Japanese national bank specialized in foreign exchange that flourished in tandem with Japan's ambitious trade expansions into Europe, America, and Asia. After receiving a master's degree in economics from the University of Michigan, he was hired by the bank's New York office, and in 1926 transferred to its Beijing office. As the conflicts between foreign forces and Chinese political factions began to intensify in 1929, he sent his family back to Tokyo.¹³ When Noguchi met Katsuizumi through a mutual friend, he was living alone and they immediately became very close despite their fifteen-year age gap; the intimate friendship lasted until Noguchi left Beijing for Japan in late January of 1931.¹⁴ Noguchi and Katsuizumi frequently took long walks, ate in Japanese restaurants, and visited Japanese-style public bathhouses.¹⁵ Unlike most Japanese living in Beijing, Katsuizumi spoke impeccable English, which was a big help for Noguchi, whose Japanese language skills had declined since he left Japan at the age of thirteen and who knew no Chinese. Although Katsuizumi was fourteen years younger than Yone Noguchi, Noguchi saw him as an image of his father, who had similarly made a voyage to the United States as a young man, making his own way through hard work. Katsuizumi, lonely while away from his wife and daughter, recognized the combination of frustration, anger and yearning Noguchi expressed toward his father: "[Noguchi] was the most lonely fellow I ever had known," Katsuizumi said, "so I extended my assistance to have him go to Japan without his father's aid; yet to have him make an enjoyable stay in Japan."¹⁶

Katsuizumi was very interested in Chinese art and had amassed a collection of hanging scrolls, album leaves, and fan paintings by contemporary Chinese artists, including thirty works by Qi Baishi. By then Qi was an established artist in Beijing, but he had first become successful in Japan. In 1922, when he was still unknown in China, Japanese friends in Beijing organized a group exhibition of Chinese and Japanese artists in Tokyo, through which Qi's works came to be known by many Japanese. Qi sold his paintings to Japanese living in Beijing, including Tansô Itô, a major collector of his works who introduced him to Katsuizumi in the fall of 1925. Qi's large paintings were too expensive for Katsuizumi, but after they became acquainted he was able to purchase small and medium-size works directly from the artist.¹⁷ Katsuizumi and Qi became good friends and before Katsuizumi returned to Tokyo, Qi inscribed a farewell to him in a painting entitled *Solitary Bird Perched on a Banana Plant* (fig. 1.5). On at least three occasions, Qi sent letters to Katsuizumi expressing his desire to someday visit his old friends in Japan's capital (fig. 1.6).

After the initial introduction through Katsuizumi, the twenty-six-year-old Noguchi frequently visited the home of Qi Baishi, who at sixty-eight was older than Yone Noguchi. Although not much is known about their relationship¹⁸, since Katsuizumi recalled that the first meeting between them occurred in winter, the entire period of Noguchi's study with Qi was probably about two months at most.¹⁹ Though they could not communicate verbally, Katsuizumi recognized at the first meeting that their mutual interest in art bonded them instantaneously:

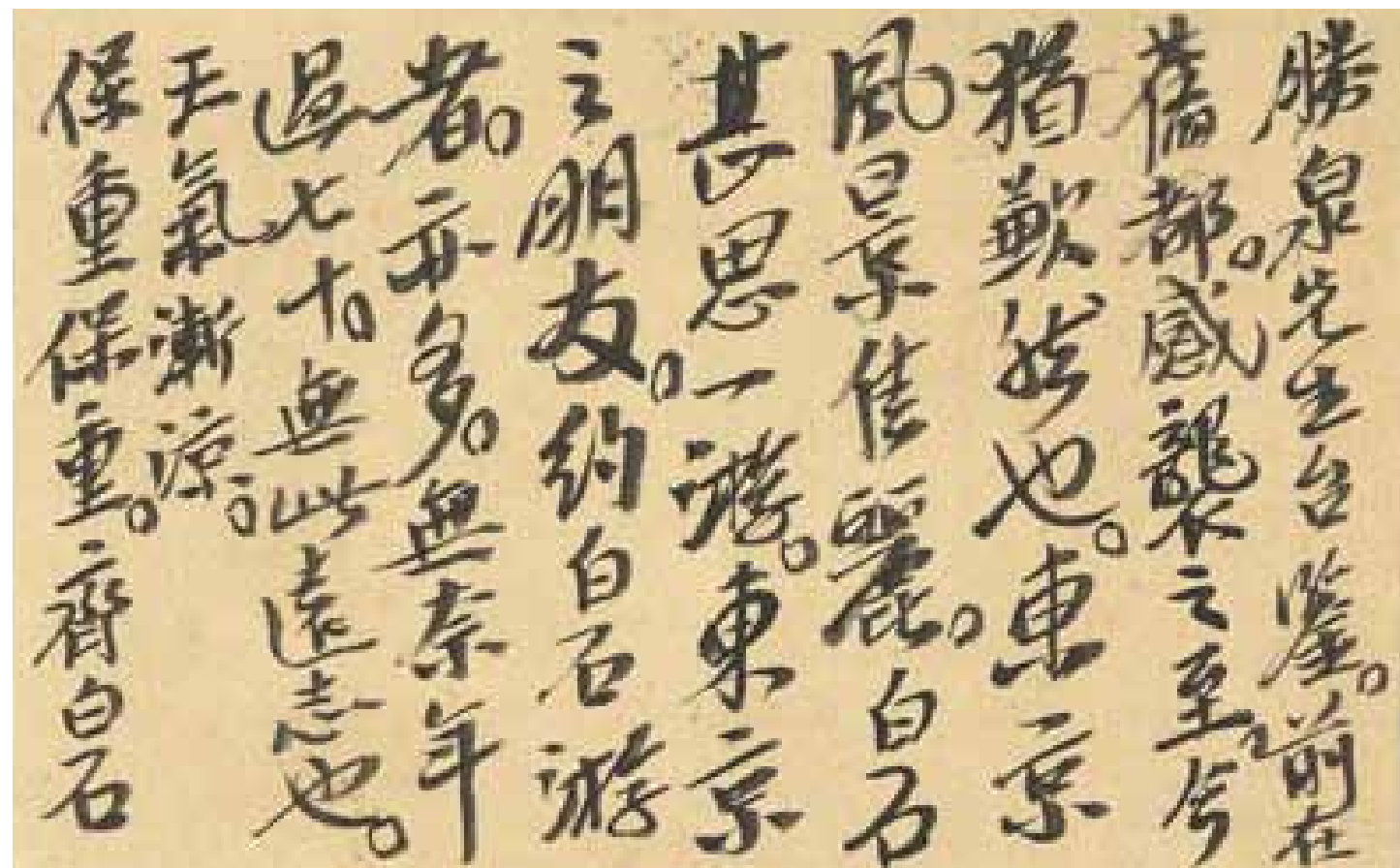
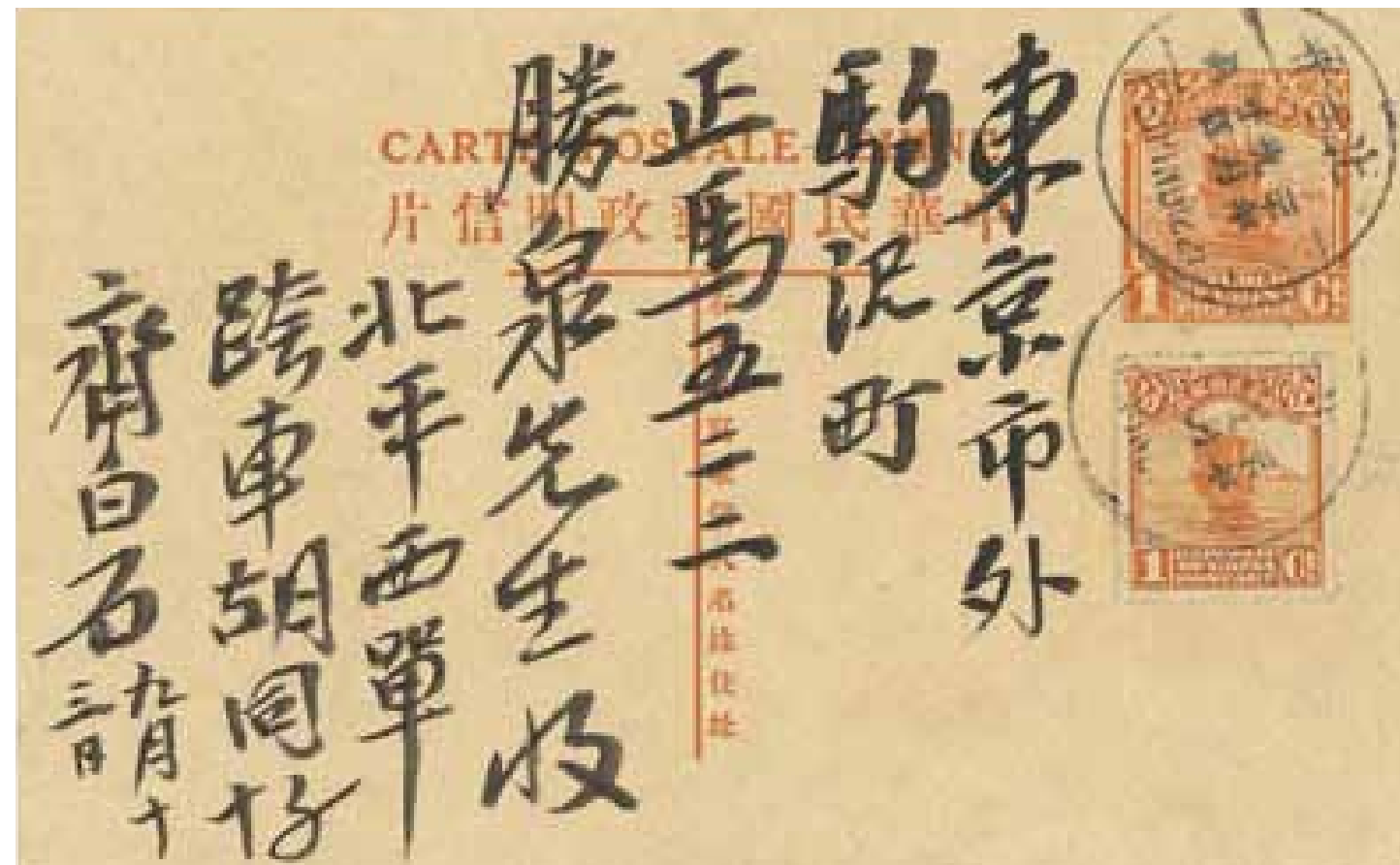
4 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Seated Male Figure, c. 1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum, gift
of Andrew and Sharlynn Circo
from the Katsuizumi Collection
35.0 x 40.0 inches

EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND AROUND THE WORK



5 | QI BAISHI
Solitary Bird Perched on a Banana
Plant, c. 1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
University of Michigan Museum of
Art, gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi,
1949/1.196
26.7 x 13.1 inches

6 | Letter from Qi Baishi
to Sotokichi Katsuizumi,
dated September 13, 1932
From the Katsuizumi Collection,
courtesy of Sharlynn and Andrew Circo





7

A quite strange thing had happened. They did not need to get acquainted each other. ... Here they both seemed to understand each other quickly —great minds run in the same channels—for other matters it would have been a dumb show. Isamu Noguchi asked the master to show his paintings. The Master showed him his paintings generously ... After a while he asked the Master to paint some. The master obeyed without any resistance. To this his disciple concentrated his energy and attention for a while. I noticed, he had mastered the trick!²⁰

It is presumed that their subsequent lessons were like the first encounter: Noguchi would intently study Qi's masterful brushstrokes in the studio and then try to copy them as best he could on his own.

Noguchi must have stood out among Qi's many students during this period, both those studying with him at home and those from Beijing's Academy of Arts (now China Central Academy of Fine Arts), since he had no interest in the training, style, or subject matter associated with the literati painting tradition. Hoping to learn ink-and-brush technique from the master, Noguchi must have been instinctively drawn to Qi's approach to art, which was to create works based on close observation of nature rather than representing lofty ideas through landscapes or pine trees in the manner of traditional literati painters. Qi once said to an interviewer,

20

7 | Qi BAISHI
Seal for Isamu Noguchi, c. 1930
Marble
The Noguchi Museum
2.3 x 1.1 x 1.1 inches

8 | Qi BAISHI
Daffodils, c. 1920
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
The Noguchi Museum
80.0 x 18.5 inches

8 >



EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND AROUND THE WORK

“To draw what you do not usually see, rather than to draw what you usually see, is like to ignore truth and to create something grotesque.”²¹ This emphasis on empirical observation is strikingly similar to language used by Noguchi in his 1927 application for the Guggenheim Fellowship: “It is my desire to view nature through nature’s eyes, and to ignore man as an object for special veneration. [...]—a fine balance of spirit with matter can only concur when the artist has so thoroughly submerged himself in the study of the unity of nature as to truly become once more a part of nature—a part of the very earthy, thus to view the inner surfaces and the life elements.”²² In the application, Noguchi said that his journey to East Asia was intended to train and cultivate his mind so that he could achieve this. He must have felt he had found the embodiment of his ideal in Qi’s work.

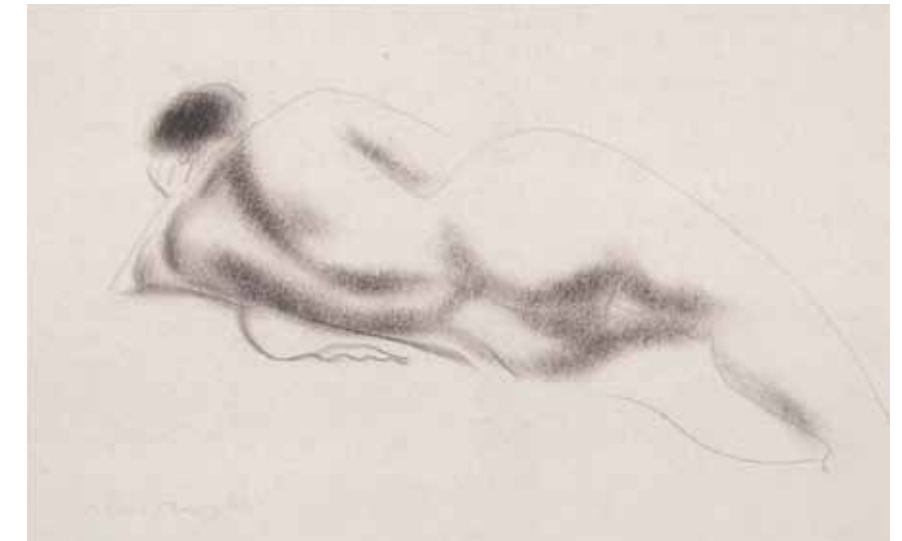
Although he left no record of their encounter, there is evidence that Qi valued the master-student relationship with the young American artist. Qi, who was known as a seal maker as much as a painter, created and presented Noguchi with a seal of his own (fig. 1.7). In East Asian literati painting, seals (sometimes multiple seals can be seen on a single painting) are not just signifiers of the creator; along with inscriptions and hand-written signatures, they are part of the painter’s persona and integral elements of a painting. Gifting a seal to his American student was thus an extraordinary gesture of esteem by Qi. Noguchi also acquired at least four paintings by Qi, some of which have inscriptions and dedications to him. One of them, a painting of daffodils, is inscribed “Who says that plants have no passion; sometimes the opposite can happen,” alluding to Noguchi’s, or his own, relationship with nature (fig. 1.8).

THE PLAY OF FIGURATION AND ABSTRACTION IN THE PEKING SCROLL DRAWINGS

When Noguchi returned from Paris to New York in 1929 after working for Brancusi, he went back to making the portrait heads and busts that sold so well. Although Noguchi remembers this period rather negatively in his memoir, the situation redirected his attention back to figuration from the highly abstract sculptures he had created under Brancusi’s influence. Between commissions, he worked on portraits of his close friends, including such charismatic figures as the dancer and choreographer Martha Graham and R. Buckminster Fuller; the strong presence of these sitters made him contemplate how a sitter’s personality generated a sculptural piece. Back in Paris while waiting for his transit visa to Asia, Noguchi continued to be fascinated by the human figure, incessantly working on drawings in front of actual models at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, the art school at which he had studied during his previous stay. These crayon drawings, including single female nudes and combinations of female and male nudes, are comprised of simple contour lines with or without shading (figs. 1.9–1.15). During this time Noguchi also created a small, full-figure bronze sculpture based on an actual model, *Glad Day* (fig. 1.16). Inspired by William Blake’s famous painting of the same name, the sculpture exudes the energy and determination of youth through the figure’s extended arms and



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9 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Two Seated Nudes, 1929
 Sanguine crayon and sanguine
 and brown chalks on cream paper
 mounted on board
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.304
 16.9 x 21.9 inches

10 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Reclining Nude, c. 1929–30
 Black crayon on off-white paper
 mounted on gray pasteboard
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.324
 11.7 x 18.1 inches

11 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Crouching Nude, c. 1929–30
 Black crayon on white paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.318
 10.8 x 17.3 inches



12



13



14



15

12 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Standing Nude, with Arms Raised, 1929
 Black crayon on off-white paper
 mounted on gray pasteboard
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.325
 22.0 x 18.1 inches

13 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Seated Nude, with Hand over Face,
 c. 1929–30
 Black crayon on off-white paper
 mounted on gray pasteboard
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.298
 28.1 x 22.1 inches

14 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Seated Nude, Back View, c. 1929–30
 Sanguine on white paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.291
 17.4 x 10.6 inches

15 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Two Standing Nudes, c. 1929–30
 Black crayon on white paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.316
 17.2 x 10.5 inches

legs, firm muscles, and unyielding gaze. The modulated muscles are a departure from the smooth, polished surface of Noguchi's abstract sculptures inspired by Brancusi.

Noguchi carried with him to Beijing his interest in the human body. There he created a small sculpture of a Chinese girl out of dental plaster (fig. 1.17), but he found it difficult to produce others because of the lack of materials. Instead, "fantastic brushes and expressionist flourishes upon incredibly beautiful [Chinese] paper" became the means of Noguchi's exploration of the human figure.²³ Unlike in Paris, he was free to choose his models and their poses: women, men, children, and babies, alone or in pairs. His servant would go out into the streets and find people willing to sit for the artist.²⁴ The models were generally portrayed nude, the only exceptions being monks, who are draped in loose robes. Noguchi seems to have drawn his models in every possible position—standing, sitting, reclining, wrestling and performing acrobatics. And, unlike in Paris, he was not limited in the sizes of these drawings; while Western academic drawing was done on an easel, East Asian painting was executed on a table or floor, allowing him to create almost life-sized works.

When Noguchi first encountered Qi Baishi he was already seriously engaged in drawing figures. Katsuizumi has observed that in the Peking Scroll Drawings one may easily see the difference in Noguchi's skills with a brush before and after studying with Qi, and Noguchi himself said that seeing Qi's work made him ashamed of his limitations.²⁵ Although Noguchi did not note which individual works were created before or after he studied with Qi, pre-Qi works often may be identified by their rather stiff brushstrokes. In a figure drawing of a boy (fig. 1.18), for example, Noguchi uses the ink and brush as if they are pencils or crayons; the contours are very rigid and the ink wash serves almost as shading. In contrast, the lines in a drawing of a little boy playing with a string (fig. 1.19) are fluid and very minimal, capturing both the softness of the boy's body and the swiftness of his movement. This work bears a seal that Qi Baishi made for Noguchi, suggesting it was created after their encounter.

Many of the Peking Scroll Drawings have broad sweeps of ink wash applied with a thick brush over the fine contour lines of the bodies; this brush technique was a signature of Qi Baishi's work. In *Solitary Bird Perched on a Banana Plant* (fig. 1.5), for example, Qi masterfully paints the dark, large banana leaves and the tiny bird using the sides of the brush. Noguchi's attempt to master the thick brush may be seen in the drawing of a tumbling male figure (figs. 1.20, 1.21) in which the ink wash is used to create a sense of volume, just like the shading in Western academic drawing. As Noguchi became more adept at controlling large brushes, his ink washes became more confident, highlighting the intersections of multiple models or a movement of a body, as seen in his drawings of a mother and baby (fig. 1.22) and a baby alone (fig. 1.23). The broad brushstrokes in these works become almost independent of the contours of the bodies, emerging as abstracted forms.

It was through such experimentation that Noguchi's own sense of abstract form finally began to emerge. It is a form, not static and polished like Brancusi's, but animated, extracted from the postures or movement of human figures and conveying the model's personality and emotional state. In Japan, he encountered *haniwa*, highly abstract prehistoric mortuary figures buried in



16



16 | BERNICE ABBOTT
Isamu Noguchi with Glad Day, c. 1930
Gelatin silver print
Collection of The Noguchi Museum

17 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Chinese Girl, 1930
Plaster
The Noguchi Museum
6.5 x 19.5 x 12 inches



18



19

18 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (boy with string), 1930
 Ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 35.0 x 29.9 inches

19 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Baby: Scroll (Kakemono), 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.190
 26.0 x 22.8 inches



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21



22

20 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (tumbling male, ankles crossed), 1930
Horizontal hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
43.7 x 81.0 inches

21 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (man sitting), 1930
Horizontal hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
41.0 x 76.3 inches

22 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Reclining Male Nude, 1930
Brush and ink over black crayon on off-white laid paper
University of Michigan Museum of Art, museum purchase, 1948/1.302
26.1 x 32.1 inches

23 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Mother and Child, 1930
Ink on paper
Collection of Alexandra and Samuel May
97.0 x 44.0 inches



23



24



25

tombs. As he said, "through my journey to find my own roots, I started from abstraction in Paris, I came to find the abstraction of ancient Japan". These ancient figures made him realize that modern sculpture similarly should be more than just an aesthetic object, it should be based on human life.²⁶ At the studio of ceramic artist Uno Ninmatsu (1864–1937), Noguchi created *The Queen* (fig. 1.24), a stack of cylinders and a sphere in terracotta inspired by *haniwa* figures. Soon after he returned to New York from Japan, Noguchi showed the Peking Scroll Drawings along with some terracotta figures at two galleries.²⁷ The large-scale presentation suggests his strong confidence in his accomplishment in China and Japan.

His six-month stay in China may have begun as an accident, but the experience played a significant role in the development of Noguchi's artistic identity. The Peking Scroll Drawings represent a crucial stage between the figural portrait heads made in New York in 1929 and the abstract terracotta sculptures made in Kyoto in 1931. In subsequent years he would create abstract sculptural works, such as *Miss Expanding Universe* (1932) and *Death (Lynched Figure)* (1934, fig. 1.25), whose forms echo some of the abstract ink-and-brush technique seen in the Peking Scroll Drawings. By the 1940s, Noguchi's sculptures had become highly abstract. When he was in his seventies, Noguchi reminisced that he had hoped to return to Beijing after a short absence "to learn the art of brush, learn how to be with nature, how to live"; although he never traveled to Beijing or China again, his stay there and encounter with Qi Baishi had made a lasting impression.

32

24 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
The Queen, 1931
Terracotta (two elements)
Whitney Museum of American Art
44 x 16 x 15.5 inches

25 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing, 1930
Ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
50.0 x 35.0 inches

26 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Death (Lynched Figure), 1934
Monel metal, steel, wood, and rope
The Noguchi Museum
88.7 x 31.8 x 22.1 inches



150%



THE "DISCOVERY" OF QI BAISHI

Lang Shaojun

[Figure 2.1] Recognized as one of the masters of traditional Chinese painting in the twentieth century, Qi Baishi (1864–1957) began his career as a village craftsman carving fine furniture and painting religious subjects and portraits on commission.¹ His early portraits, based on charcoal drawings and sometimes on photographs, and his depictions of *caochong/chongcao* [insects and grass]² are distinguished by his use of chiaroscuro, the strong contrast between light and dark, in a Western style that was commonly found in the coastal regions of China.³ Another distinguishing feature of Qi's early work is his use of *tanbi caran* [draw shading with charcoal], for which he would dip a paper stick into charcoal as well as ink.⁴

[Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3] In 1917, in his mid-fifties, Qi Baishi moved to Beijing. Here, however, his large freehand paintings of flowers and birds, people and landscapes, did not garner attention from the painting community despite the strong personality of his works and their active sense of life. Qi's style at this time was imitative of the influential seventeenth-century painter and calligrapher Bada Shanren (also called Zhu Da) (ca. 1626–1705). It was not until 1926 to 1927 when artist Lin Fengmian (1900–1991), the director of Guoli Beiping Meishu Xuexiao [National Beijing Art College],⁵ first discovered Qi Baishi and appointed him chair of the Chinese painting department. In 1928 Qi was discovered again, this time by artist Xu Beihong (1895–1953), dean of Huafa Yanjihui (Institute of Painting Studies) at Peking University, and was appointed professor.⁶ Both Lin Fengmian and Xu Beihong had studied in France. While Lin was attracted to contemporary European art, especially expressionism, impressionism, and fauvism, Xu was drawn to classical European realism and nineteenth-century art.⁷ Both men were critical of the conservative tendencies prevalent in contemporary painting circles in Beijing, and both appreciated, independently of one another, Qi's work.

While Lin was director of the National Beijing Art College, he recruited the French expatriate painter André Claudot (1892–1982) as a teacher.⁸ Claudot also appreciated Qi Baishi's work, so much so that he painted a portrait of him and asked the Chinese artist to make a Claudot seal for him. In the French artist's résumé, a comment stands out: "discovered Qi Baishi in Beijing."⁹ The word "discover" is significant. In his autobiography, Qi Baishi writes:

A French teacher named Claudot told me that after he came to the East, of all the numerous painters with whom he had come into contact, whether from China, Japan, India, or Southeast Asia, who had done work that impressed him, I was foremost. This was a wonderful compliment, and I was greatly moved by it.¹⁰



27

While Qi was pleased by such praise from Claudot, he did not understand why the European artist valued his paintings so highly.

From 1921 to 1926, Vojtěch Chytil, a Czech diplomat and painter posted in China, served as an adjunct faculty member (honorary professor) of the National Beijing Art College and came to know a number of Chinese painters, among whom the most prominent were Qi Baishi, Chen Nian (1876–1970) and Xiao Qianzhong (1883–1944). Between 1928 and 1935, Chytil often assumed the role of an art dealer, returning to Beijing to acquire a large number of Chinese paintings which he brought back to Czechoslovakia. Chytil especially admired Qi's work. Describing him as "a painter who discarded the old restraints on painting, and who has his own style," Chytil exhibited Qi's paintings in Europe many times.¹¹

[Figure 2.4] In the 1950s and 1960s, cultural contacts between Czechoslovakia and China were frequent, and another collection of works by Qi's work was assembled.¹² Today the National Gallery in Prague¹³ has more than one hundred paintings by Qi, one of the largest collections of his work outside of China. In the 1950s, Josef Hejzlar, a Czech student of art history at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing, also met Qi and became an adoring and enthusiastic proponent of his work. When Hejzlar first visited Qi and mentioned that he was from Czechoslovakia, Qi cupped his hands

36

27 | QI BAISHI
Rural Village, c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.193
 8.6 x 10.9 inches



28

29

and shouted: "Chytil!"¹⁴ When this author visited Hejzlar in Prague in 2002, his living room contained an arrangement of a large number of exquisite small paintings by Qi. He told me that he had written two books about the Chinese master—*Qi Baishi* and *Qi Baishi and His Famous Students*—and had translated and published a special edition of the artist's *Poetry of the Heavenly Pond*.

Although Qi never traveled outside China,¹⁵ he became increasingly known in Europe through a number of exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art.¹⁶ In Japan his work was introduced in an important bi-national exchange, the second *Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition*, which took place from May 1 to May 15, 1922, at the Tokyo Prefectural Institute of Awards for Commercial and Manufacturing Achievements. Four hundred paintings by sixty artists from Shanghai and Beijing were shown with seventy-nine paintings by Japanese artists. The paintings from China were accompanied to Japan by two members of the influential China Painting Research Society (CPRS), Jin Cheng (1878–1926) and Chen Shizeng (1876–1923).¹⁷ Among the paintings were nine by Qi, which were very well received and sold for good prices.¹⁸ In his autobiography,

37

28 | QI BAISHI
Old Man with a Double Gourd, 1927
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 San Diego Museum of Art, gift of
 Anne and John Chew, 1994.107
 17.9 x 19.3 inches

29 | QI BAISHI
Portrait of the Immortal Liu Haixian,
 c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
 gift of Mr. and Mrs. David M. Levitt,
 by exchange, 1978.255
 87.5 x 27.8 inches



30 | QI BAISHI
 Red Camellias, c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 Collection of Tsao Family
 39.8 x 13.5 inches

31 | QI BAISHI
 Autumn Landscape with Cormorants,
 c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 Collection of Tsao Family
 42.5 x 13.4 inches





32

Qi acknowledged that much of his success in the Tokyo exhibition could be attributed to the encouragement of Chen Shizeng, who had advised him to change his painting style.¹⁹

The most important Japanese collector of Qi's works was diplomat Yakichiro Suma, who had served in China in a variety of capacities between 1927 and 1937.²⁰ During that time he acquired more than seventy paintings by Qi,²¹ and recommended his work to others, including the German ambassador to China, Dr. Oskar P. Trautmann, to whom he reputedly said that "Qi could be considered the Paul Cezanne of the East." Trautmann became an enthusiast and collector of Qi's art.²² According to Ma Bi, a disciple of Qi Baishi and close friend from the village in Hunan where he was born, by the 1940s Trautmann was able to recognize even unsigned *caochong/chongcao* [insects and grass] paintings as Qi's work.²³

[Fig. 2.5] Qi's growing reputation also spread to Korea in the 1930s through Korean painter Kim Yōng-gi (Ch'ōng-gang, 1911–2003),²⁴ a student in the fine arts department in the college of education at Fu Jen Catholic University in Beijing (then known as the Catholic University of Peking). Between 1932 to 1936, Kim studied painting at Qi's home every weekend. In his home country, Kim was a strong advocate of Qi's literati painting and his teacher's large, freehand style. Beyond the forms of Korean and Japanese modernism already familiar to his fellow countrymen, Kim believed that Qi

brought the freehand style of old literati painting into modern painting, and this is the same as the tendency in Western art for Fauvism to manifest subjective development of style.²⁵

40

32 | QI BAISHI
Wisteria, c. 1930
 Album leaf, ink and color on paper
 From the Katsuzumi Collection,
 courtesy of Sharlynn and Andrew Circo
 8.3 x 13.0 inches

33 | QI BAISHI
Chicken and Gourd Vine, c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 99.0 x 26.4 inches



33 >

EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND AROUND THE WORK



34 | QI BAISHI
Pine and Bamboo, c. 1930,
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.191
 54.2 x 13.2 inches

35 | QI BAISHI
Seal Script, 20th c.
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 Collection of Michael Gallis
 53.6 x 13.1 inches

In a not dissimilar fashion, Hejzlar argued that appreciation for Qi's paintings had paved the way for his countrymen to better appreciate modern art in Czechoslovakia and had accelerated the understanding of Qi Baishi in Europe. Hejzlar saw Qi—like Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Degas, and Picasso, as well as Czech artists Filla and Czibulka—as “sources of inspiration” reflecting the joys of home, childhood, nature, and the world, as well as the spiritual qualities of boldness, heroism, and passion. He also commented that Qi works in his last three years displayed the restlessness and agitation of baroque art and represented the emergence of works that clearly manifested emotional expressionism.

Their ink touches seem to be so deep, and so, dark, that is almost impossible to penetrate. Although what the brush conveys remains the force of a pen, the force is very rough, and certainly does not seem tranquil. His grapevines, grape leaves, and flowering tea trees seem thoughtful, but also profoundly unhappy. A fierce wind blows through his favorite peonies—this is not ‘a gentle breeze,’ but ‘a typhoon,’ a fierce gale that brutally tears through its flowers and leaves. The peonies are tossed about by the force of the fierce wind, endlessly shaking, bent down to the ground, like banners waving in the midst of an intense battle. The rough pen force of expressionism is reflected in the annotations on paintings of his later years. It is interesting that the expressionism like that manifested in the paintings of Qi has also appeared in the works of the famous landscape painter Huang Binhong.²⁶

(fig. 2.6 & 2.7) After 1954, due to declining powers in his old age and a trembling hand, the themes of Qi's paintings diminished greatly, his calligraphy and painting lost form, and his handwriting deteriorated. Hejzlar interpreted this, in an obvious misreading of Qi's work, as a manifestation of the restlessness and agitation of baroque art or of expressionism. Interpretations of works by Huang Binhong at the age of 89 are often similarly mistaken. In fact, all the key interpreters and advocates of Qi's work mentioned here—Czech painter Chytil, French painter Claudot, Japanese collector Suma, Korean painter Kim Yǒng-gi (Ch'ǒng-gang), Chinese painter Lin Fengmian, and others—were familiar with, and fond of, Western modern painting in its various manifestations, such as impressionism, expressionism, and fauvism. And each has, to varying degrees, misread Qi's works. How can we explain this misreading?

First, I believe, that Western artists and critics lack a deep understanding of Chinese cultural and artistic traditions and are therefore bound by their own experience and knowledge when interpreting Qi's work. Second, Qi's paintings (as well as those of Huang Binhong and others) have elements that are similar, or identical, to, those of modern Western painting. Both have strong personality, a distinct sense of form, innovation and creativity, and a unique way of experiencing nature and life. The artist Teng Baiye (1900–1980), for example, who studied in the United States in the 1920s and befriended American painter Mark Tobey, knew Chinese art and modern American art well.²⁷ He once referred to expressionism in Chinese Art.²⁸ By denoting interpretations of Qi's work as “misreadings”. I am offering an insufficiently accurate explanation—although



36



37

36 | QI BAISHI
Fish, c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.194.
 11.8 x 12.4 inches

37 | QI BAISHI
Crabs, c. 1930
 Album leaf, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.199
 22.1 x 18.1 inches



38

it does have a basis and rationale—for what is essentially an intuitive but ill-formed grasp of an artistic phenomenon, a response that is based foremost on feelings. The phenomenon of such misreadings is widespread, and has now become an inseparable part of art history.

[Fig. 2.8] Within the context of twentieth-century art in China, Qi occupies an extraordinary role in terms of his birth and experience. Until he was twenty-seven, Qi was an engraver, woodworker, and folk artist who had only attended private school for half a year. At the age of twenty-seven, thanks to the support of a painter of royalty from his home village, Hu Qinyuan (1847–1914), he studied the painting of flowers and birds, along with ancient poetry and songs. After the age of forty, Qi traveled through most of China with the assistance of friends. Qi moved to Beijing to avoid war and chaos, and remained there for the rest of his life. Except for a few visits to his hometown to see relatives, a tour of Sichuan in 1936, and visits to Nanking and Shanghai in 1946 for art exhibitions, Qi rarely went far from his door. In Beijing, except for intermittent teaching at art institutions between 1927 and 1949, Qi almost never participated in associations and the social activities of the arts community. In fact, he had a seal that stated that “Those without talent join all painters’ associations.”

Qi did not care to participate in the debates of the art world of his day, such as the art revolution, literati painting, innovation in Chinese painting, and “Chinese painting versus Western painting. Qi was a painter with deep feelings for his home village and its society, one whose creativity was motivated by pastoral memory. His mental training and habits of mind did not

38 | QI BAISHI
Duck, c. 1930
 Album leaf, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.202
 15.1 x 19.5 inches

158%



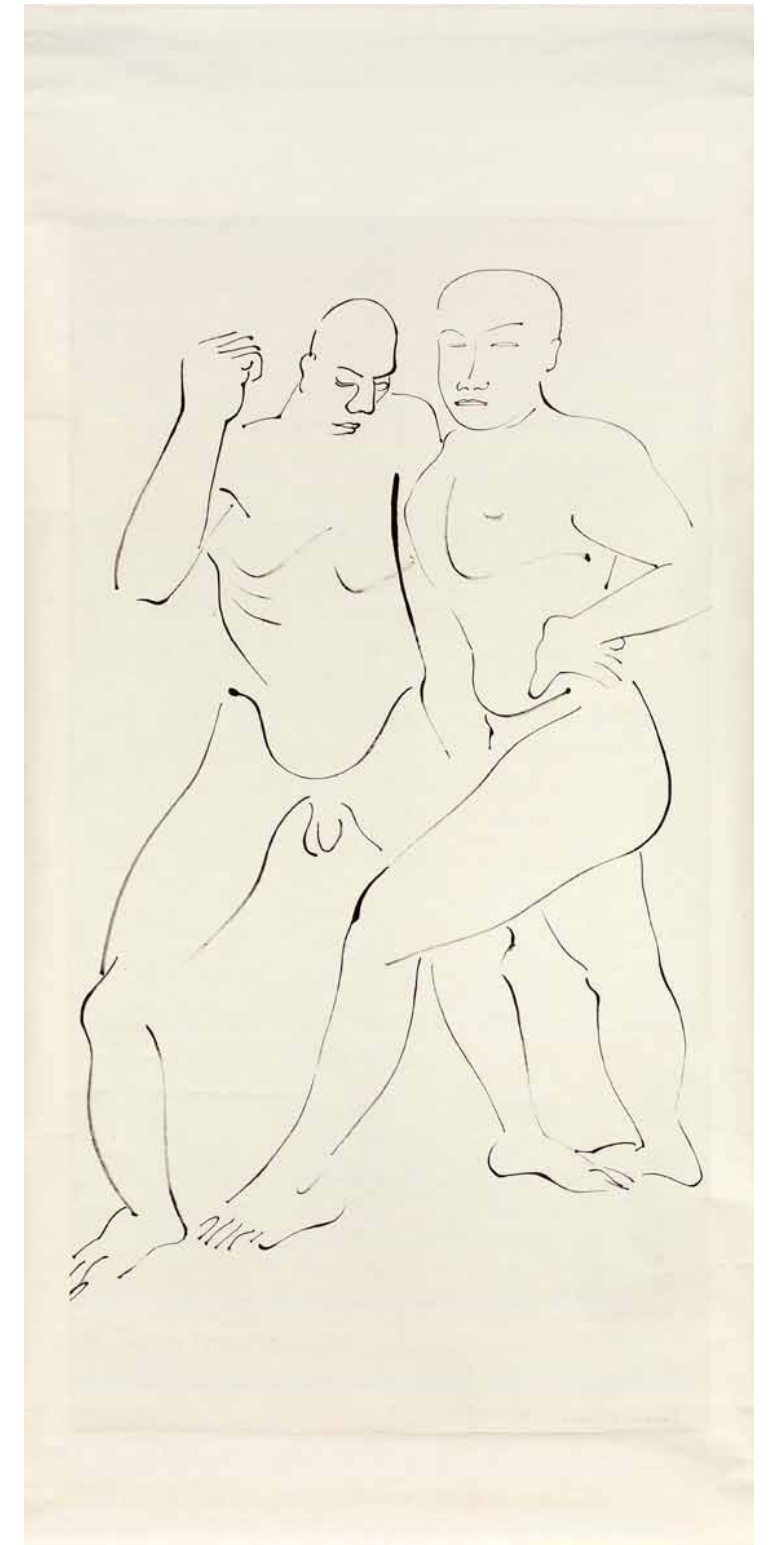
EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND AROUND THE WORK



40

39 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing, 1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
68.0 x 32.0 inches

< 39



41

40 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (slouching monk),
c. 1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
87.1 x 38.1 inches

41 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (two nude wrestlers),
1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
91.5 x 40.3 inches



42

include the opposition of East and West. He was not like Huang Binhong, Xu Beihong, or Pan Tianshou, those painters who were conscious of national identity and aware of cultural nationalism. Instead, he attached importance to simple, concise art forms and a straightforward, clear language of art. A man who jealously guarded his lonely road, Qi was able nevertheless to be daring and individualistic. Instead of writing articles on art, he wrote poems about historical chronicles and topics related to painting. In other words, Qi spent most of his time behind closed doors painting, engraving seals, and writing poems (fig. 2.9).

From 1919 to 1927, Qi reformed his method, abandoning the imitation of the themes, forms, and styles of his predecessors and developing an independent approach that merged literati painting with the subject matter and strong colors of folk art in a unique manner. His distinctive style gained increasing, and broad, recognition. Above all, Qi Baishi began working independently, and in isolation from the art community.²⁹

From June 1930 to early 1931, twenty-six year-old American artist Isamu Noguchi, of Japanese and American descent, was living in Beijing. Qi was sixty-six years old at the time, and at the peak of his artistic creativity. There is little documentation in Chinese literature on the relationship between Isamu Noguchi and Qi Baishi in Beijing, and Qi did not mention Noguchi in his

42 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Seated Male Figure: Scroll (Kakemono),
 1930
 Horizontal hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.332
 33.5 x 63.3 inches

48



43

autobiography. In 1930, when Noguchi arrived in Beijing, Qi Baishi was accepting apprentices. Speaking about the period of 1930 to 1931, in his autobiography Qi wrote:

When I was a professor at the College of Arts, in addition to the college students, many others considered me to be their teacher.

Disciples mentioned in the same passage include well-known figures such as Rui Guang, the Abbot of Yanfa Monastery; Qiu Shiming, director of the Jinghua Institute of Fine Arts in Beijing; poet Zhao Xianyu, and dramatist Fang Wenxi. According to tradition, when Qi formally accepted apprentices, they had to line up and bow to him. In 1946, when Zhang Daofan, a senior official

43 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
*Peking Drawing (woman nursing baby,
 reclining on left arm)*, 1930
 Ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 51.3 x 48.5 inches

49

218%



44 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Mother and Child, 1930
 Ink on paper
 Collection of The Lannan Foundation
 75 x 41.2 inches

of the Nationalist government, wanted to become an apprentice, Qi told him, "If you want to be my disciple, you must kowtow."³⁰

The only physical evidence that we have of the relationship between Qi and Noguchi is the Isamu Noguchi seal made (see fig. 1.6) by Qi,³¹ but this seal does not necessarily prove that the relationship between Qi and Noguchi was one of teacher and apprentice, (nor does it raise the issue as to whether Noguchi too was required to bow to Qi). Apprentices' names do not appear in Qi's records and he never mentioned the names of his non-Chinese apprentices. In addition to the traditional master-apprentice relationship, Qi taught non-apprentice students of painting whom he would call *men ke* or "guest" (as he sometimes also called his disciples). Considering the lack of records, it is unlikely that Noguchi was a disciple of Qi but rather a guest of ink painting. Whether Noguchi was Qi's formal disciple is, however, not as significant as that he came to know and study painting with Qi and that this relationship had an influence on the art Noguchi would produce.

[Fig. 2.10 – 2.12] In 1930 Noguchi completed a number of ink paintings in Beijing. His artistic subjects from this period differ from the depictions of flowers, birds, insects, and fish we find in Qi's paintings. Noguchi was fond of using ink to portray the human body: young men and women engaging in sport, fighting, and dancing; young mothers holding infants or nursing them; monks wearing cassocks; toddlers lying down or sitting. While Noguchi did adopt Qi's concise brushstrokes in his sketches of figures, such as wet nurses holding babies and men pulling rickshaws, his most daring works were portraits of nudes. Furthermore, the large dimensions of Noguchi's paintings, two to three meters in width, hint at the future scale of his sculpture and landscape interventions, and indicate his preference for large spatial scale.

[Fig. 2.13-2.18] Of these rarely seen works, the ones that have left the deepest impression on viewers are of young mothers nursing infants (fig.2.19). As his subjects appear to be East Asian, one can presume that he used Chinese models. Why did Isamu Noguchi repeatedly paint images of mothers nursing infants? Were these songs about his mother, or odes to new life, or expressions of nostalgia for childhood? What is certain is that the themes and human subjects of Noguchi's works have no direct correlation to Qi's paintings and in terms of the level of technical skill, Noguchi did not mimic Qi (in fact, none of Qi's Chinese disciples and apprentices directly copied their teacher). Noguchi's dual identity as half Japanese and half American, and his isolation in Beijing in 1930 because his Japanese father did not want him to come to Japan, perhaps encouraged him to seek cultural roots in China, a country that traditionally had racial and cultural relationships with Japan. This search became especially troubled when Japan attacked China at the end of the decade. In 1938 Noguchi made the following inscription on one of his paintings of a mother holding an infant:

I am a follower of great China and I have learned from its great art. Today intruders are attacking the Asian continent, forgetting their cultural roots. I don't want to forget my art's teacher. Oh children of great China! You live in the most difficult of times, yet you can still nurture peace and



47

48

< 45, 46

53

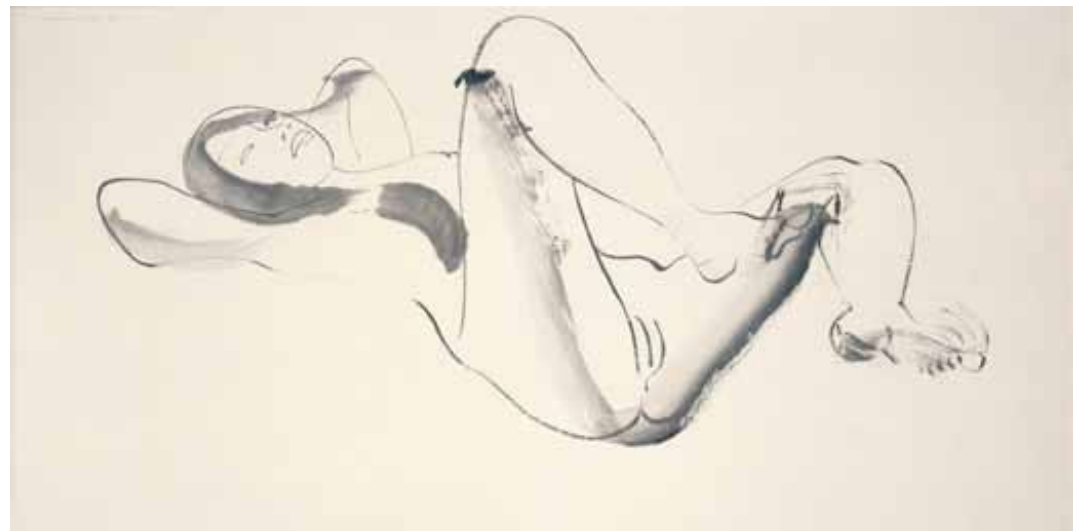
45 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Mother and Child, 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 Private collection
 77.0 x 22.0 inches

46 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (three figures, one behind the next), 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 117.0 x 51.0 inches

47 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing, 1930
 Ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 53.8 x 104.2 inches

48 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (robed monk), 1930
 Ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 70.3 x 37.3 inches

EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND AROUND THE WORKS



49

resist violent attack; you are the makers of the future and builders of a new Chinese destiny.
Isamu Noguchi, 1938, March 9, N.Y.³²

[Figure 2.20] Under his name was the Isamu Noguchi seal Qi created. This passage demonstrates Noguchi's deep affection for Chinese culture and his sympathy and strong support for the Chinese people as they endured disasters. From the single phrase "my art's teacher," we can comprehend the wider sense Noguchi had of Chinese culture, and an acknowledgement of his teacher Qi Baishi.

In examining Isamu Noguchi's Beijing works one sees that his use of brush and ink on paper was proficient and unhindered, coming close to traditional Chinese ink-and-brush sketching. His brush strokes are precise and delicate, mellow and full, and thus inspirational in effect. One can sense the special fluidity and suppleness of Eastern art³³. These lines are much different from Qi's thick calligraphic brushstrokes. Noguchi's interest obviously lay in the tools and materials of ink painting and the line modeling method of painting, but he either did not accept, or understand, Qi's brush method or his tastes, and principles. Interestingly, his ink paintings more closely resemble contemporaneous works by French painter André Claudot and Chinese modernist Lin Fengmian, which are even further stylistically from Qi's. This dissimilarity is not strange, as the basis of Noguchi's painting remained essentially Western. Especially worthy of note is that, in many of his works, Noguchi adds generous, dense, and light ink to his fine pen sketching of human subjects. His sketches are free and uninhibited, not subject to the constraints of a plastic realism associated with fine lines. Heavy ink sketching is superimposed on precise, delicate, realistic images. A layer of abstraction deconstructs and destroys the original sketch. The conscious intertwining of these two different methods creates a form-like body and its shadow, a shapeless non-shadow, an isomorph of a tangled national identity.

[Figs. 2.21 - 2.24] Qi Baishi has been "discovered" many times, including by Isamu Noguchi.

54

49 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (female reclining), 1930
Ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
36.5 x 67.5 inches

50 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (reclining female nude, holding head), c. 1930
Horizontal hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
43.5 x 90.0 inches

157%



EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND AROUND THE WORK

50 >



QI BAISHI AND NOGUCHI, SQUARE AND CIRCLE¹

Britta Erickson

Isamu [Noguchi] stopped in Peking knowing nothing to do. At that time I happened to meet him, and I was alone myself because my family was away in Japan avoiding the danger of the Chinese civil war. I brought him to my home quite frequently. One evening he stayed after dinner. I showed him my collection of Chinese paintings and drawings.... He nodded at each one . . . but not very enthusiastically. Then [we got to some contemporary black and white paintings] all by Qi Baishi. When he saw a small scroll of cabbage and mushrooms his eyes sparkled and, approaching it closely, he said, "This is the real act. Is the artist living?" I said, "Yes." Then he asked if I knew him, [followed by various questions, and finally] "Can I see him?" to which I replied "Yes." [...] He went home, fetched a bicycle, and came to me before the dawn. Since I too had a bike, we pedaled hard and were able to reach the artist's gate very early in the morning.... [Figures 3.1 and 3.2] He appeared and welcomed us very cordially, ushering us into his studio and showing us his painting tools as well as how to use them. [Figures 3.3-3.5] Isamu was very interested in seeing them all and asked if he could return in the future. Qi Baishi said he would be delighted. When we two bade him goodbye, Isamu and the old man were quite intimate in spirit even though they do not share a mutual language." — *Excerpt from Mr. Sotokichi Katsuizumi's (1889–1985) letter to his granddaughter, Sharlynn Circo.*²

Thus, in 1930 the paths of two of the twentieth century's greatest artists briefly intersected, subtly influencing the direction of the younger's oeuvre. Qi Baishi (1864–1957), one of China's most famous painters of the past century, took the great Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) as his ink-painting student for six months. Neither had yet accrued the accolades afforded them later in life: Qi was a rapidly rising star and Noguchi his short-term youthful disciple. Scant information survives regarding their interactions. Qi did not find his student worthy of mention in his autobiography, and no obviously student works by Noguchi's hand are known to have survived—for example, sheets of paper filled with repetitive practice brushstrokes or motifs, or paintings marked with corrections by the teacher. What does remain is a group of finished ink studies created by Noguchi during this period (figs. 3.6, 3.7). Careful consideration of these paintings hints at a conception of space nurtured by Noguchi's experimentation with brush and ink, incorporating the sophisticated appreciation of positive and negative space apparent in Qi's oeuvre. Noguchi's half-year of training with Qi may thus have contributed to the unique understanding of space, and of dark and light, that characterizes Noguchi's mature oeuvre.

QI BAISHI'S TRAINING AND EARLY CAREER

When he met Isamu Noguchi, Qi Baishi was sixty-seven years of age, in his mid-career phase and finally gaining well-deserved widespread recognition. As the child of peasants, his path as an artist had been difficult and slow to start. Born in 1864 in Xingdoutang (Star Pond), Xiangtan district, in Hunan province, Qi received his only formal education in the local school in 1870, but was unable to complete the first year because his family could not afford it. In 1877 he was apprenticed to a carpenter, soon proving so talented that he transferred to work under a wood carver. Five years later, in 1882, a life changing event occurred: he came across a partial copy of the woodblock printed book, the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual* (first volumes published 1679), and began to learn from it how to paint. Beginning in 1888, he studied portraiture, a genre from which an itinerant artist could make a living. Opportunities to learn bird and flower painting and landscape painting followed. His progression from carpenter to fine wood carver to portraitist, then painter of birds and flowers, then landscape painter represents a steady path from the most humble of arts to the most elite genre, landscape. Next Qi mastered seal carving, considered superior to painting. His entirely self-motivated education reached its apogee when he was able to write poetry, a more elevated undertaking even than seal carving.

Qi Baishi traveled to Beijing for the first time in 1903 but it was his second sojourn, in 1917, that changed his life. He had hung a price list in the Southern Paper Shop in Liulichang, a street still famous for its many shops selling books and antiques and supplying artists with paper, ink, brushes, paints, and other tools of the trade. To post such a price list with examples was a common means for artists to reach new customers. The painter Chen Hengke (Shizeng, 1876–1924) saw Qi's list and admired the seals affixed to it, whereupon he sought out and befriended Qi.³ (fig. 3.8) Upon Chen's advice, Qi developed his painting manner in a new direction, resulting in a lush and robust style where before it had been spare and restrained. Qi's earlier works had adhered too closely to the ancient masters, no doubt encouraged in this by the conservatism of Beijing art circles, but now his personal spirit came through, energetic and strong, with highly expressive brushwork in the bold *xieyi* (writing the idea) manner.

Chen Hengke was a member of the most important ink painting society in Beijing, the Chinese Painting Research Society founded in 1920. He was one of the three society members responsible for accompanying paintings to Tokyo for the second *Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition* (1922), perhaps chosen to go because he had studied in Japan two decades previously. Because of Chen's influence, Qi Baishi's works were included in the exhibition. The Japanese audience's appreciation for the Chinese paintings was so great that the exhibition sold out, with Qi's paintings selling for the unprecedented price of 100 to 250 silver dollars. Furthermore, there was some talk of making a Japanese film about Qi and Chen, and, even better, French visitors to the exhibition chose Qi's paintings for an exhibition in Paris. Qi noted that following the Japanese exhibition he had numerous new clients: foreigners, Liulichang antiquities dealers, and people



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52

of somewhat elevated taste all came to request paintings, so business improved day by day.⁴ Unfortunately, Chen's friendship and encouragement of Qi's career ended prematurely when the former died in 1923.

BEIJING ARTISTIC CLIMATE

Although Beijing was a site of intellectual foment and political turmoil in the early twentieth century, its visual arts circles were conservative. Since the mid-1800s, Shanghai had steadily emerged as China's center of artistic creativity, and by the 1920s was flourishing as an exciting international metropolis, with wealthy and well-educated patrons supporting an innovative art scene. Shanghai School painters typically rendered fresh or popular subjects such as birds and flowers or mythological figures in bold lines and bright colors. (fig. 3.9) While their work thus held an obvious appeal, it also satisfied demanding connoisseurs via the employment of superb brushwork derived from ancient calligraphic forms. In addition, it often embodied a new edgy quality based in compositions that challenged the comfortable old relationship between viewer and work of art. It did this, for example, by cutting short the composition at the edge of the paper, or by combining painted flowers with the rubbing of a bronze vessel. (fig. 3.10) Beijing, by contrast, favored a gradual evolution of classically rendered landscape paintings. The works of Jin Cheng (1878–1926), like Chen a member of the Chinese Painting Research Society, exemplify this manner. (fig. 3.11) Such landscapes were firmly rooted in an orthodox tradition traced back to the Four Wangs of the seventeenth century and, through



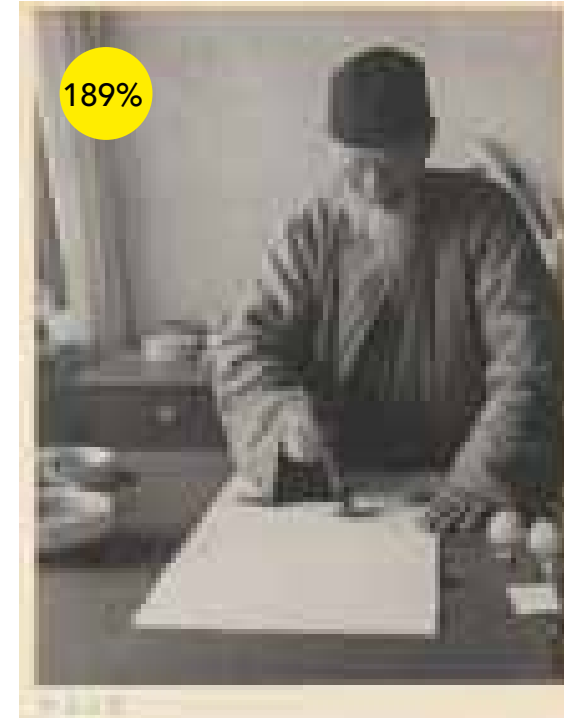
53

53 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Scroll (standing monk, right view), 1930
 Framed, ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 67.5 x 32.7 inches



54

54 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Scroll Drawing (standing female), 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 90.5 x 43.0 inches



55

55 | HEDDA MORRISON (1908–1991)
Artist Qi Baishi Painting, 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 5.9 x 4.7 inches



56



57

56 | HEDDA MORRISON
Artist Qi Baishi Painting, 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 4.3 x 5.9 inches

57 | HEDDA MORRISON
Artist Qi Baishi Stamping an Inscribed Painting with his Seal, 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 4.3 x 5.9 inches

them, back to the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). In the simplest of terms, these artists had reduced landscape painting to codified forms and brushstrokes. The brushstrokes could be traced back through history to particular great masters, so that nineteenth and early twentieth-century painters could lay claim to painting “in the manner of” a small group of easily identifiable predecessors. Innovations were appreciated but generally were made within these constraints. The codified compositions and brushstrokes were transmitted not only through copying of earlier paintings, but also notably through the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual*, which Qi Baishi had studied. This seventeenth-century woodblock printed manual had originally focused on landscape but was subsequently expanded to four volumes that included figures, and birds and flowers.

News of Qi Baishi’s international activities contributed strongly to his rising profile in Beijing art circles. The new respect accorded him led to invitations by directors Lin Fengmian (1900–1991) and his successor Xu Beihong (1895–1953) to teach at the most important art school in Beijing.⁵ Interestingly, Lin and Xu represented differing views of the direction art should take in the new China. Xu Beihong sought to import aspects of Western representationalism—for example, by creating the illusion of three dimensions via shading—into ink painting, with results that could be awkward. (fig. 3.12) He believed artists could better serve a broad public by producing art that was less elitist and easier to understand. Like Xu, Lin had studied art in Europe,



58 | CHEN HENGKE
Banana, Bamboo, Rock, and Amaranth,
 1923
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 Tsao Family Collection of Modern
 Chinese Painting
 70.7 x 37.4 inches



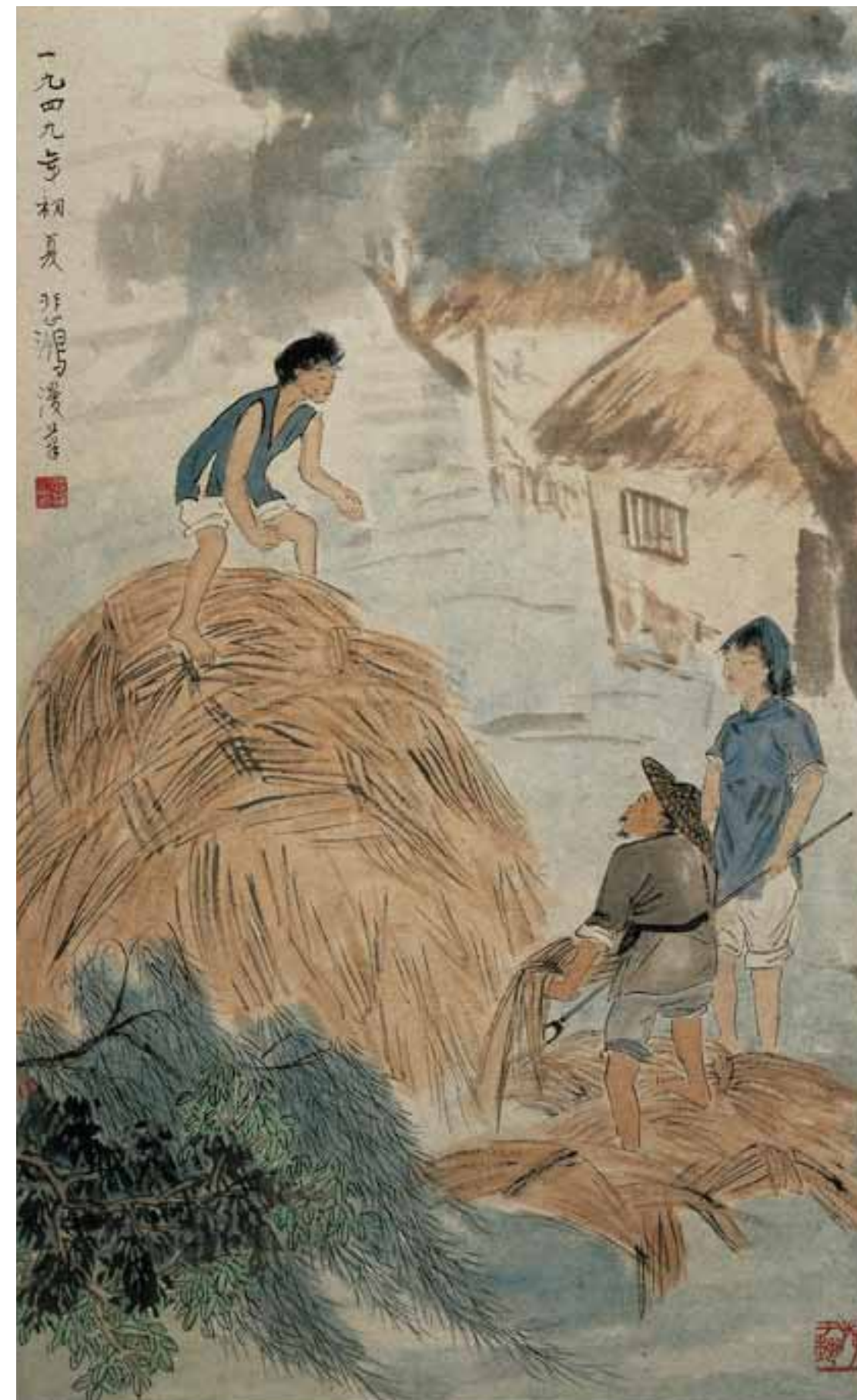
59 | WU CHANGSHI (1844–1927)
Flowering Vine, early 20th c.
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 The Reverend Richard Fabian
 Collection
 71.2 x 37 inches



60



61



62

60 | Xugu (1824–1896)
Bronze, Plum, and Bamboo, late 19th c.
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
The Reverend Richard Fabian
Collection
37.2 x 21.4 inches

61 | JIN CHENG (1878–1926)
Autumn Clearing at a Fishing Village,
1913
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
The Reverend Richard Fabian Collection
34.6 x 18.4 inches

62 | Xu BEIHONG
Harvesting Hay, 1949
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
Tsao Family Collection of Modern
Chinese Painting
36.4 x 22.5 inches

but he returned to China advocating a more expressionist or modernist approach to painting. (fig. 3.13) Both artists recognized that Qi Baishi understood the great tradition of ink painting, including the lineage of the Four Wangs, and had forged a viable new path for ink painting. His art brought together conservative high standards for brush-and-ink technique with such popular elements as bold color (similar to the approach of some Shanghai artists) and subjects drawn from Qi's early peasant life, including gourds on the vine, insects, baskets of fish, water buffalo, and endearing rural figures.

QI BAISHI'S HOME IN BEIJING

It was on his third trip to Beijing, in 1919, that Qi Baishi opted to stay. After residing in a succession of monasteries and nunneries, convenient for a single person intending a temporary visit, in the winter of 1926 he purchased a comfortable courtyard-style house at no. 15 [now no. 13], Kuache Hutong (Cross-Cart Alley).⁶ The house is located in the area called Western Beijing just south of the old city walls, almost directly south of the Forbidden City, and not far from the Temple of Heaven. (fig. 3.14) A dwelling typical of old Beijing, the courtyard house was a private walled compound composed of rooms surrounding an open courtyard. While a busy communal life typically takes place outside the walls of such a home—joined together in rows, courtyard houses open onto an alley, or *hutong*—within the walls Qi found the peace for painting. Built from the ubiquitous grey bricks of Beijing, Qi's new home was adorned with carved windows, wooden pillars, a main gateway flanked by stone guardians and with a tile roof supported by complex carved and painted beams, including such symbols of good fortune as the bat. Willow trees and grape vines provided shade in the summer.⁷ Adding to the house's charm, Liulichang was just two kilometers away, convenient for purchasing art supplies and books. (fig. 3.15) When Qi had settled in Kuache Hutong, his wife came from their home in Hunan to find him a second wife—Hu Baozhu (1902–1944)—to care for him in Beijing, and soon the courtyard was filled with Qi's new family of Hu and a succession of children. (fig. 3.16)

NOGUCHI IN BEIJING

Noguchi lived at 18 Dayangmao Hutong (Great Wool Alley), 500 meters from the Ancient Observatory and the old city wall, and five kilometers, or an hour's walk, from Qi Baishi's house. (figs. 3.17, 3.18) Although not as international as Shanghai, it was nevertheless a lively city with a wealth of ancient architecture and a long-established way of life. With a rickshaw or even on his bicycle he could reach the vast Forbidden City, lakes to the west of the palace, ancient ceremonial sites such as the Temple of Heaven, numerous Buddhist temples, and commercial areas. In addition, the streets were frequented by performers, service-providers such as barbers, and food stalls. Noguchi wrote that: "Without doubt there is no greater city than Peking.... A house





64



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68

64 | Old Beijing city gate and wall
HEDDA MORRISON
Dong bian men, City Wall, Moat,
 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 3.1 x 4.3 inches

65 | Liulichang
HEDDA MORRISON
Interior of a Scroll-Mounting Shop
 Showing Mounters Applying Backing
 Paper To a Scroll (left), Moving
 a Drying Board (rear), and Viewing a
 Scroll Painting (right) Around

a Mounting Table Called a da an,
 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 3.1 x 4.5 inches

66 | **HEDDA MORRISON**
Artist Qi Baishi with his Wife
 and Five Children, c. 1937
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 4.7 x 6.4 inches

appeared [...], a cook appeared, speaking and cooking French as well as Chinese; a rickshaw boy, a houseboy, and their families.”⁸ So enthusiastic was he about the city that when he left after eight months, including just six months of ink painting study, he “resolved that it would be only a temporary absence from Peking after which I would return to learn the art of the brush, learn how to be with nature, how to live.”⁹ However, the escalating Japanese aggression toward China was to make that impossible.

QI BAISHI AND ISAMU NOGUCHI

Following their introduction by Sotokichi Katsuizumi, how did Qi Baishi come to take Isamu Noguchi as a student? In order to supplement his income from seal carving and sales of paintings and calligraphy, Qi took in students for instruction. Besides young men with the potential to become great painters, Qi taught people who were of interest to him for other reasons, for example, the celebrity opera performer Mei Lanfang (1894–1961). Katsuizumi mentioned in his letter that Qi and Noguchi were attuned in spirit by the end of their first encounter. Perhaps Qi recognized talent in Noguchi, or perhaps upon learning of Noguchi’s background he felt a sympathetic kinship with the young man’s adverse beginnings and the determined self-motivation driving him to become an artist. Both had spent a time apprenticed to carpenters, so they may have shared an understanding of tools and a particular sensitivity and respect for materials.

It is difficult to weigh the importance of Katsuizumi’s introduction. As a collector of Qi’s work, he brought the weight of *guanxi*—in Chinese thinking, the mutually binding web of responsibility inherent to interpersonal relationships. Among the many paintings by Qi in his collection were some inscribed to Katsuizumi as gifts from the artist in appreciation of their friendship, affirming the closeness of their interactions. From 1925 to 1932 Katsuizumi was living in Beijing as an employee of the Yokohama Specie Bank, whose Beijing branch was just north of the old city wall, not far from Noguchi’s house. He was obviously passionate about art but also, given his career, it may have been his duty to contribute to Sino-Japanese understanding. Japan was concerned with allaying China’s well-founded suspicions regarding Japan’s intentions in China. The Japanese government had mobilized soft power, including spending on art exchanges as a possible means of soothing concerns. The Sino-Japanese exhibitions were part of this program.¹⁰

Fortuitously for Noguchi, 1930, the year of his introduction to Qi Baishi, fell during the short-lived period when Qi Baishi was well disposed towards the Japanese: it was after Japan’s enthusiastic reception of Qi’s paintings, but before Japan’s aggressive expansionism began to alter drastically the relationship between Japan and China. In 1931 Japan occupied Manchuria, and by 1932 troops were threatening Beijing: Qi left the city temporarily. When Japan’s forces occupied Beijing in 1937, Qi Baishi devised ruses for avoiding painting requests by Japanese

67 | **HEDDA MORRISON**
Astronomical Instruments at Guan
xiang tai [ancient observatory],
 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 2.9 x 2.9 inches

68 | **HEDDA MORRISON**
Western End of Dashanlan Street
 Showing Gate, Shop Signs, Rickshaw
 Puller, and Pedestrians, 1933–46
 Gelatin silver photograph
 Harvard-Yenching Library
 4.3 x 3.3 inches



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officers and, when acceding to their requests was absolutely unavoidable, he wrote slyly insulting inscriptions upon the paintings. The Sino-Japanese War lasted from 1937 through the end of World War II in 1945.

NOGUCHI'S INK PAINTINGS

On arriving in Beijing, Noguchi created some sculpture in plaster but wrote that then "shifting to materials more natural to the place, I made enormous drawings with fantastic brushes and expressionist flourishes upon their incredibly beautiful paper. I did figure drawings, because that was what I knew how to do. How ashamed I was of my limitations when I visited the painter Qi Baishi, whom I adopted as a teacher."¹¹ Chinese ink painting involves the interactions of three materials, ink, paper, and brush, all of which were developed and honed over centuries. The structure of Chinese brushes allows them to hold a well of ink in the center, releasing it as demanded by the artist, so that it is possible to render long brushstrokes without reloading the brush. In addition, the brush responds to the slightest twisting motion or nuance of pressure: the line can fluctuate from fine to heavy in an instant. Through the addition of water to the ink, infinite shades become possible, and the brush can deploy more than one shade at once, resulting in brushstrokes that appear three-dimensional in themselves. Chinese *xuan* paper (often referred to in the West as rice paper, though rice is not a primary ingredient) is the ideal match for the ink, which it is said to "observe." Although in six months it was not possible for Noguchi to become

71

69 | QI BAISHI
Li Tieguai, 20th c.
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift
of Madame Fan Tchun-pi and her sons
in memory of Dr. Tsen Tson Ming,
1980.104
44.8 x 13.3 inches

70 | QI BAISHI
Mother and Child
Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
Tsao Family Collection of Modern
Chinese Painting
41.2 x 12.5 inches

71 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Scroll Drawing: "Ye Kau Jong"
(robed man, sitting cross legged,
resting on fist), 1930
Hanging scroll (horizontal), ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
44.7 x 84 inches

skilled in traditional Chinese ink painting, a medium that demands years of practice, he clearly understood the advantages of the medium from watching his teacher. Accustomed to thinking in terms of space, he readily adapted his drawing technique to take advantage of the sense of three-dimensionality facilitated by fluctuations in the brush line.

Noguchi's black crayon drawings of 1929–30, for example, his *Crouching Nude* studies (see figs. 1.11,), already show a sensitivity to the expressive qualities of the line. With ink and brush he pushed this farther, as in *Peking Scroll Drawing: "Ye Kau Jong"* (fig. 3.19). There, linear fluctuations are more dramatic, and he has studied Qi Baishi's method of rendering the folds of a draped robe, as in Qi's *Portrait of the Immortal Liu Haixian* (fig. 2.3), indicating the depth of the fold via the thickness of the line. From his studies with Qi, Noguchi seems to have realized that it is not necessary for lines to be complete in order for them to fully evoke the subject. We see this principle at work in Noguchi's *Peking Scroll (Woman Nursing Baby, Reclining on Left Arm)* (fig. 2.19), where the breaks in the line result in a sense of movement, and encourage the viewer's imagination to bring the figure to life. A large subset of the Peking Scroll Drawings consists of paintings where Noguchi overlaid a figural painting made with a small brush with much wider, looping brush gestures. He may have begun by observing Qi's talent for reducing a human subject to its essential form, as in *Li Tieguai* (fig. 3.20) and *Old Man with a Double Gourd* (fig. 2.2), but his concern moved from description (see *Seated Female Nude: Scroll (Kakemono)*, fig. X.X ??) to capturing a sense of an active volume and its relationship to surrounding space, for instance, in *Peking Scroll Drawing (Sleeping Infant)* (fig. 3.22). The subtleties of the lush brushstrokes in the latter result from a skilled exploration of brush usage that is not within the Chinese tradition, but that exploits the possibilities inherent in ink and brush. If we compare Noguchi's *Mother and Child* with Qi's painting of the same title, we see that where Qi has reduced the forms of two figures to essential descriptive lines emphasizing the fusing of the two identities, Noguchi further reduced the figural group to form and movement in space. (figs. X, XX) He seemingly reveled in the performance aspect of ink painting: with his most reductive paintings, as in traditional *xieyi* painting, the viewer can follow the course of the artist's brush, adding a temporal dimension to the work.

Just as sculpting in stone is a creative method that permits no turning back, so too is ink painting. A mark once made cannot be withdrawn. Noguchi embraced this corollary of ink painting, confidently capturing forms in space through brush gesture. The understanding of the relationship between forms and space is a crucial element in ink painting, where the paper that is left blank plays an active role in the composition. This relationship is also at the core of much of Noguchi's later sculpture, for example *Walking Void #2 (The Void)* (1970), *Energy Void* (1971–72), and the well-known *Noguchi Table* (in production from 1947). (figs. 3.20, 3.21) The angles and interlocking shapes forming the base of the Noguchi table strongly echo the lines in his Peking Brush Drawing of a reclining figure. (fig. X.XX) Noguchi's low-relief sculptures representing unrealized projects, such as *Contoured Playground* (1941), also hint at the influence of ink painting.



72



73

72 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Seated Female Nude: Scroll (Kakemono), 1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
museum purchase, 1948/1.331
68.5 x 36.5 inches

73 | CUI ZIFAN
Lotus Pond in Autumn, 1994 or earlier
Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco,
gift of the Jack Anderson Collection
26.2 x 25.3 inches



74

(fig. 3.22) The modulated curves and indentations, along with their shadows, suggest flowing, fluctuating brushstrokes.

A secondary way in which Noguchi’s Beijing sojourn might have influenced his concept of the space and void is through the city’s shaping of spaces. First, framing devices feature prominently in Chinese architecture (i.e., gates and windows framing views). Second, geometry is important in Chinese ritual and ceremonial architecture. The Forbidden City is laid out as a series of rectangles within a large rectangle sitting on a north-south axis, surrounded by a larger rectangle, the city wall. To the four cardinal directions sit four temples for imperial offerings, the Temples of Heaven, Earth, Moon, and Sun. Geometry is crucial to the layout of the Temple of Heaven (15th–16th c.), so near to Noguchi’s residence. Opened to the public in 1918, it is a complex where the emperor performed annual sacrifices to heaven. Its symbolism connects Heaven, the circle, with Earth, the square. Both this geometry-based symbolism and architectural framing devices appear elsewhere in Asia, but as an adult Noguchi would first have encountered them in Beijing, and would have been literally surrounded by them.

QI BAISHI’S LATER CAREER AND INFLUENCE

As the communists grew in power in China, eventually defeating all opponents and establishing the People’s Republic of China in 1949, they propounded the idea that art should serve the people. In general, they considered traditional ink painting to be feudal or bourgeois, and something to reject out of hand. Some ink painters avoided persecution by adding signs of China’s modernization, such as hydroelectric dams or skies red from industrial pollution, to their landscapes. Because of his humble background, his advanced age, and his personal familiarity with subjects peasants could readily understand, Qi Baishi survived and thrived. When the communist forces entered Beijing in 1949 led by Mao Zedong (1893–1976), Mao sent a letter to Qi, who came from the same province. Qi accrued a long series of honors: he was named an honorary professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing upon its founding in 1950, elected as the

74

74 | ISAMU NOGUCHI, *Peking Scroll*
Drawing (sleeping infant), 1930
Hanging scroll (horizontal), ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
48.7 x 72.5 inches



75

75 | LI KERAN
Washing the Water Buffalo, 1960s
Hanging scroll, ink and light color
on paper
The Reverend Richard Fabian Collection
17.7 x 12.9 inches

75



76



77

first Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chinese Artists' Association (1953), made honorary director of the Beijing Painting Institute (1957), and even presented with the International Peace Prize by the World Peace Council in Stockholm (1956).

Qi Baishi left a powerful legacy. After initially suffering derision in Beijing for his apparently cursory painting style, he convinced skeptics that it was possible to create a fresh lineage connecting with the great masters of the past in a less imitative manner than was au courant, reducing references to past brush manners and compositions to a bare minimum, notably in his ink landscapes. The strength of such a method in the hands of the master led to Pablo Picasso's (1881–1973) apocryphal remark to Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), when they met in Nice in 1956, that he feared the talent of only one artist, Qi Baishi. In addition to showing a new path for the development of traditional ink painting, Qi attracted numerous students and followers. Among the most famous of these are Li Keran (1907–1989), Li Kuchan (1899–1983), and Cui Zifan (1915–2011). (figs. 3.24, 3.25) The weight of Qi's legacy is impossible for painters in the *xieyi* manner to avoid. The more talented benefit from his brilliant innovations, while the less talented are simply overwhelmed.

It was to Noguchi's great advantage that he was not only independently brilliant, but also flexible enough to learn from the master. The two artists' intuitions concerning the world intersected in two dimensions, but then diverged in three. With his appreciation of the humble life and the creatures of the earth, and his avowed willingness to depict only things he had personally experienced, we can associate Qi Baishi with the earth, or square. Noguchi, by contrast, is the circle, aiming for the heavens with his penchant for intangible abstraction.

76 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Contoured Playground, 1941
Bronze
The Noguchi Museum
2.7 x 26.2 x 26.2 inches

77 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Coffee Table (IN-50), 1945
Walnut and glass
The Noguchi Museum

78 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Walking Void #2 (The Void), 1970
Swedish granite
The Noguchi Museum
67.9 x 28.3 x 33.1 inches



EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND TO RIGHT AND LEFT, AND TO THE BOTTOM



GRABBISM: 1930S

Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker

[Fig. 4.1] Isamu Noguchi described his six months in the ancient Chinese capital of Peiping (now called Beijing), in a household with a French cook, a rickshaw driver, a houseboy, and their families,¹ as “splendid living.”² This privileged existence was, however, taking place in the shadow of civil war, under the threat of Japanese invasion, with a restless, passionate desire among the Chinese people for independence from the foreign powers occupying concession territories within China.

One such region was the Legation Quarter, Dōng Jiāo Mǐn Xiàng, in Beijing. It was here that Noguchi was welcomed by an array of memorable figures, who had gathered in the area to pursue academic research or for diplomatic or military service. Among this circle was the American scholar of traditional symbols and design, Carl Schuster (1904–1969), a distinguished art historian and archivist who possibly awakened Noguchi’s interest in visual analogies across cultures. The connoisseur Jean-Pierre Dubosc,³ who was attached to the French Legation, amassed a collection of Ming dynasty paintings, calligraphy, and Chinese lacquer that eventually found pieces held in some of the world’s most important repositories, such as the British Museum in London and the Musée Guimet in Paris. A beautiful young lieutenant known as Nadine Hwang⁴ did not fail to attract Noguchi’s attention: She was serving in the army of the Manchurian warlord Zhang Xueliang (1901–2001), who was commonly known as “Young Marshal” and would later spend more than a half century under house arrest in retaliation for kidnapping the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek in 1936.⁵

BORROWING WITH CONFIDENCE: A NEW ARTISTIC VOCABULARY

[Figs. 4.2–4.6] In the autumn of 1930, as Noguchi sought to master ink and brush in a manner as bold as that of his teacher Qi Baishi (1864–1957), another Beijing expatriate, Czech painter and diplomat Vojtěch Chytil (1896–1936), was extolling the virtues of Chinese painting, especially those by Qi, in exhibitions across Europe.⁶ In his introduction to the catalogue for *Modern Painters from China and Japan* at the Berlin Secession,⁷ Chytil described the nearly forty paintings included by the 66-year-old master as “a flood of wildly exultant rhythms of lines.” Qi’s compositions transcended “all boundaries of our occidental imagination,” Chytil wrote. “His brush is of singular boldness in the history of Chinese painting, the manner of his imagination is inexhaustible!”⁸ Above all, Chytil praised the virtuosity with which Qi mastered his brush and the manner in which he created “the finest hair-thin lines to passionate brush strokes as wide as a hand.”

Noguchi had chosen to study *guohua*, Chinese national painting, with one of its greatest exponents. He could hardly have failed, however, to be aware of the urgent search for new artistic vocabularies in China at that time and the virulent debates among intellectuals and artists as to whether the aesthetic heritage of classical China was a viable resource for those who wished to enter the modern age but simultaneously resisted cultural invasion and domination.⁹ Many Chinese intellectuals had turned away from classical traditions and, instead, embraced Western models as a source of inspiration. Among them was the renowned writer and revolutionary Lu Xun (1881–1936), who had been appointed in 1912 to the Social Education Office of the newly formed republic as Head of the Section for Art, Culture and Science. The introduction of the study of Western art into the curriculum, and Lu’s proclamation of the social function of art in 1912, had unleashed polemical discussions lasting into the present day regarding the role of Western art in the reform and modernization of Chinese culture.¹⁰

As Noguchi studied the intricacies of Chinese national painting in Beijing, and Chytil lauded its accomplishments in Berlin, Lu presented the exhibition *German, Russian, French Woodblock Prints* at a union hall in October 1930 in the Japanese concession of Shanghai, attracting more than 400 visitors in two days.¹¹ The prints were from the writer’s superb collection of expressionist European and American graphic art, including such artists as Ernst Barlach, Lyonel Feininger, George Grosz, Erich Heckel, Käthe Kollwitz, Fernand Léger, Frans Masereel, Max Pechstein, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. He

had assembled his collection, rich in depictions of the disenfranchised and dispossessed, with the assistance of the Chinese scholar Xu Shiquan (1909–2000), who had studied art history, literature, and philosophy in Berlin and Heidelberg between 1929 and 1932.¹² Along with illustrated books, newspapers, and journals,¹³ Xu had sent Lu woodcuts of exceptional quality that portrayed the distress, anxiety, and alienation of a continent that was soon to fall under the sway of Nazi dictatorship and the scourge of a second, even more brutal, global war. [Figs. 4.7, 4.8]

The following August, Lu began lecturing on the history of Japanese and German expressionist woodcuts and initiated a woodcut training class at Shanghai’s renowned Uchiyama Bookstore.¹⁴ The store was a frequent place of exchange for Chinese and Japanese intellectuals, artists, and



79

79 | Isamu Noguchi in Beijing, c. 1931



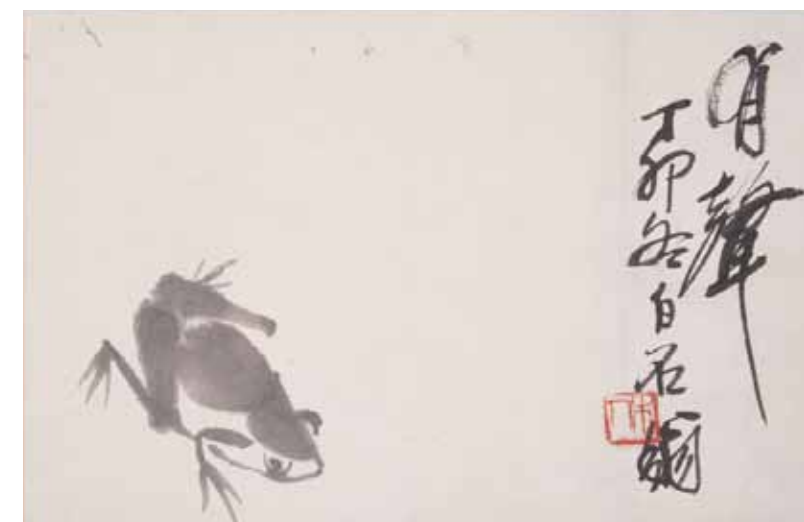
80

80 | Qi BAISHI
Grasshopper, c. 1930
Album leaf, ink on paper
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.201
18.5 x 15.2 inches



81

81 | Qi BAISHI
Shrimps, 1931
Album leaf, ink on paper
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.200
15.0 x 15.8 inches



82

82 | Qi BAISHI
Frog, 1927
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
Gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.195
34.0 x 14.4 inches



83 | QI BAISHI
Two Crickets and Pea Plant,
 early-mid 20th c.
 Hanging scroll, ink and color
 on paper
 San Diego Museum of Art,
 gift of Anne and John Chew, 94.106
 77.0 x 22.0 inches



84 | QI BAISHI
Five Water Buffaloes, c. 1937
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
 gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth,
 in memory of La Ferne Hatfield
 Ellsworth, 1986.267.219
 53.3 x 13.3 inches

writers, among them Noguchi's father, the renowned poet and fiction writer Yonejirō Noguchi (1875–1947).¹⁵ As scholar Kuiyi Shen has noted, although the woodcut had been invented in China a thousand years earlier, the cosmopolitan and political subjects favored by the woodcut movement that emerged in China in the 1930s under the tutelage of Lu Xun were considered by its practitioners to be Western and "modern."¹⁶

The act of seeking inspiration from outside one's own cultural milieu, as exemplified by both Noguchi and Lu, was not without precedence or controversy in China in the 1930s. Lu called it "grabbism," or *nalai zhuyi*. In the 1925 essay *Upon Seeing a Mirror*, he defined grabbism as borrowing with confidence, like a master who chooses freely according to his needs and not like a neurotic who fears the loss of indigenous tradition or enslavement by what is borrowed. Shu-mei Shih, a scholar of comparative literature, noted, "This confidence of the individual writer as a global citizen who can freely borrow without the anxiety of cultural contamination or subjugation is what grounds Lu Xun's resolute search for new techniques."¹⁷

Noguchi's grabbism and resolute search for new techniques has been described as an ambiguous and "contradictory negotiation of artistic nationalisms" by virtue of his birth and biography.¹⁸ This dualistic view of his artistic nationalisms as exclusively Japanese and American reflects neither the boldness of Noguchi's borrowings nor his global citizenry. It also does not acknowledge his deep attachment to Chinese culture and society in the 1930s, a society in the throes of extreme and rapid transformation, one engaged in a sophisticated discourse on identity, tradition, modernity, and social responsibility in cultural expression.

PURE AND CHARACTERISTIC: NATIONAL PAINTING IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

[Figs. 4.9–4.11] Chinese artists and intellectuals navigated an increasingly militarized and nationalistic Europe in their search for recognition of China's place in the world as a modern nation. It was the high regard in which Japanese culture and yoga, or Western-style Japanese painting, was held in Europe that led Shanghai-based artist and curator Liu Haisu to insist in 1931 that only those works that "express their own [cultural] character" should be included in exhibitions of modern Chinese painting in Europe. Any indication of "superficial westernization", which in his opinion applied to Japanese modern painting, was to be avoided.¹⁹

Liu, himself a key exponent of *xihua*, or Western-style Chinese painting, co-curated the ambitious *guohua* exhibition *Chinese Contemporary Painting*, which in 1934 traveled in various forms to Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Amsterdam, The Hague, Geneva, Bern, and London. Among the 296 modern paintings²⁰ selected for the exhibition in Berlin²¹ were two by Qi Baishi, *Hawk on Pine* and *Grapes*.²²

The exhibition in Berlin enjoyed the highest level of official support from the German government and was a resounding success with 13,000 visitors. Its Honorary Committee included the Reichsminister for Foreign Affairs in Adolf Hitler's year-old regime and the German Ambassador



EXTEND THE GREY BACKGROUND TO THE TOP



86

to China, Dr. Oskar P. Trautmann, a collector of Chinese contemporary art and the paintings of Qi Baishi. It was noted in the exhibition catalogue:

From the German side the wish was expressed to see pure Chinese works and indeed especially those which express that which is characteristic of Chinese painting.²³

While this desire on the part of the Nazi regime to promote pure and characteristic Chinese works can only be seen in the context of such earlier censorious incidents as storm troopers searching the house of expressionist painter Lyonel Feininger in March 1933, or the Dresden exhibition *Degenerate Art* in September 1933, a counterpoint is found in Shanghai, where one of the earliest international protests *against* the mishandling of academics, writers, and artists in Nazi Germany took place. On June 3, 1933, a Letter of Protest from the China League for Civil Rights was signed by, among others, Lu Xun. (A responding letter to the league from the German government denying the allegations came from its Ambassador, Oskar P. Trautmann.)²⁴

A last exhibition to be graced by official representation from both China and Nazi Germany took place in Berlin from May 1937 through June of that year, only weeks before Japan attacked China.²⁵ Under the auspices of the Society for East Asian Art and the National Gallery in Berlin, and the patronage of the Chinese Ambassador to Germany, Dr. T.F. Chêng, the exhibition presented sixty-seven contemporary Chinese paintings belonging to Oskar P. Trautmann, who Leopold Reidemeister²⁶ described as “an advocate of Chinese art”:

The closeness of his relationship to Chinese painting is demonstrated not only by the number of paintings but also by the fact that the artists of China have dedicated numerous works to him.²⁷

A PARALLEL PATH: TENG BAIYE AND MARK TOBEY

Among the artists represented in this contentious exhibition were Qi Baishi with three paintings, one of which was illustrated,²⁸ and the Suzhou-born artist Teng Baiye (1900–1980) with six paintings, one of which, the undated finger painting *The Demon Slayer Chung Kuei*, was also illustrated.²⁹ Also known as Teng Kwei,³⁰ Teng was one of the first Chinese artists to study sculpture in the West. In 1924, he enrolled as a master’s student at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he would later take on a teaching appointment lecturing on Western art, the history and philosophy of Chinese art, and comparisons between Western and Chinese painting.³¹ In an interview in *The Seattle Star* on November 17, 1927, he is quoted as saying, “People will soon tire of this too realistic age and turn to oriental art.”³² The following June, Teng exhibited both his brush and finger painting in a solo exhibition at the newly founded Henry Art Gallery on the University of Washington campus.³³

85 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Tamanishiki (The Wrestler), 1931
Terracotta
The Noguchi Museum
5.8 x 8.7 inches

86 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Two Wrestlers: Scroll (Kakemono),
1930
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
museum purchase, 1948/1.330
10.2 x 18.3 inches



87



88



89



90

87 | QI BAISHI
Plum Blossoms and Bird, c. 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 gift of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, 1949/1.192
 52.1 x 13.1 inches

88 | QI BAISHI
Young Eagle on Pine, 1939
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 Collection of Tsao Family
 53.7 x 24.3 inches

89 | QI BAISHI
Grapes and Vine, c. 1920
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 90.5 x 18.3 inches

90 | QI BAISHI
Cabbage, c. 1920
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 57.8 x 19.3 inches



91

In spring 1931, while Noguchi sought “the Orient”³⁴ in Japan, Teng moved from the United States to China, where he obtained an appointment as head of the Department of Fine Arts at Yenching University in Beijing, an institution closely associated with Harvard University, where Teng had also studied.³⁵ Two years later, in the extensive article “Art in Modern China,” published in the Chicago-based journal *Open Court*,³⁶ Teng wrote of the turmoil, poverty, war, and military exploitation he found on his return to China and the “mystery” of the extraordinary richness of cultural life in Beijing at that time. He attributed it to the “victory of idealism in the life and death struggle on the part of Chinese artists.”³⁷ In early 1934, while his ink paintings *Demon Slayer Chung Kuei* and *Geese* were touring across Europe, Teng moved to Shanghai, then the fifth largest city in the world. There he lectured on the idealist aesthetic of *guohua* and the “powerful calligraphic expressionism” of Chinese art,³⁸ noting,

in contrast to Western art, Chinese painting is lineal...whilst Western art is the massing of different colors to make a form.³⁹

Among Teng’s first visitors in Shanghai, in April 1934, was his former student, artist Mark Tobey (1890–1976), who had studied calligraphy under Teng in Seattle. A photograph of Teng, dedicated to Tobey and dated December 16, 1926, is among the Tobey papers in the University of Washington Libraries. It is a vivid and moving testimony to the deep friendship between the two men.

91 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Crouching Nude, c. 1929–30
Black crayon on off-white paper
mounted on gray pasteboard
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
museum purchase, 1948/1.290
16.1 x 21.5 inches



92

Like Noguchi, Tobey immersed himself in the rich, cosmopolitan life of his adopted city. “China is sky climbing,” the young American artist observed:⁴⁰

Thousands of Chinese characters are twisting and turning. [...] The whole scene is alive in a way Broadway isn’t alive [...] the human energy spills itself into multiple forms, writhes, sweats, and strains every muscle towards the day’s bowl of rice.”⁴¹

Quartered with Teng’s family in the city’s elegant French Concession, Tobey continued his studies with his friend, visited art exhibitions, and attended spectacular performances by the renowned Peking Opera star Mei Lanfang (1894–1961), an acquaintance of Qi Baishi in Beijing.⁴² On May 12, 1934, Tobey noted in his diary,

Mei Lang Fan [sic] grows more and more remarkable the more one sees him, the stylized movements, the gesture of emotion allowing for imagination on the part of the spectator. The lack of realism is seen as a higher expression of emotion.

A few weeks later, on June 3, 1934, Tobey would follow in the steps of Noguchi when he too traveled to Japan and studied poetry and calligraphy. In 1935, on his return to Britain, Tobey completed his seminal painting *Broadway Norm* in a style that has come to be known as “white writing.”

92 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (man reclining), 1930
Ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
35.1 x 57.5 inches



93



94

93 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (crying baby), 1930
 Ink on paper
 The Noguchi Museum
 48.8 x 42.3 inches

94 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Infant in Arms: Scroll (Kakemono), 1930
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.329
 24.3 x 15.8 inches

It is instructive to compare work by Tobey and Noguchi in the period immediately following their respective sojourns in China. *Broadway Norm*—indebted to Tobey’s study of calligraphy and to his fascination with the thousands of “twisting and turning” Chinese characters in the sky-climbing streets of Shanghai—is marked by a *lack of realism* and an insistent lineality, whereas Noguchi’s drawings during his studies with Qi Baishi are distinguished by both the absence *and* the presence of realism, with an emphasis on the human body. Broad and fine ink brushstrokes delineate or mask Noguchi’s underlying figures or reduce them to a line: Volume and mass, so common to Western art, are erased or overlaid by the lineal.

MUTUAL MISREADINGS – THE PATH TO THE MODERN

[Figs. 4.13–4.17] In his essay in this publication, Lang Shaojun makes a provocative assertion regarding Noguchi’s drawings from this period: He does not believe that Noguchi sought to imitate Qi Baishi’s powerful mastery of the brush but favored a distinctive use of line that Lang considers reminiscent of one of China’s most distinguished modernists, Lin Fengmian (1900–1991).⁴³ Lin, who was appointed director of the National Beijing Art College in 1926 and of the National Academy of Art in Hangzhou in 1928, was convinced that “artists of this new era” should not confine their views within national boundaries but “should study the art of all nations with a global perspective.”⁴⁴ Shaojun suggests that the work of Noguchi might have more in common with that of Lin because both shared a foundation in Western art. Lin, who had indeed studied art in Europe, nevertheless made a sharp distinction between Eastern and Western art, especially in the practice of landscape painting. He believed that Chinese landscape painters enjoyed more freedom of expression and, unlike Western artists at the time, were not mechanically “representing the surface of nature.”⁴⁴

The debate about the true nature of Noguchi’s drawings and sculpture from the 1930s and whether his work is closer in spirit to that of his teacher Qi Baishi or to that of the Chinese modernist Lin Fengmian is a fascinating study in how, after a century of cultural exchange between modern China and the West, the phenomenon of mutual “misreadings” of Eastern and Western art, as Shaojun points out in this volume, now constitutes an integral part of the history of art.

Xu Jiang, president of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, has suggested that Lin himself went “through a long period of ‘misreading’ and an even longer creative process of active misreading and hybridization.”⁴⁵ I believe that it is this mutual practice of active ‘misreading’ that unites the grabbists of the 1930s in both the East and the West: Isamu Noguchi, Lin Fengmian, Lu Xun, and the artists of the modern woodcut movement in China. Their creative misreadings and hybridization, their ease in moving from one artistic vocabulary to another with grace and sophistication, is nowhere clearer than in a sculptural work Noguchi produced in 1934: *Death (Lynched Figure)*. (fig. 1.26)

On his return to the United States from China, Noguchi craved “other means of communication—to find a way of sculpture that was humanly meaningful without being realistic, at once

abstract and socially relevant.⁴⁷ The extraordinary *Death (Lynched Figure)* was dismissed by Henry McBride in a review of Noguchi's exhibition at the Marie Harriman Galleries in New York: "The gruesome study of a lynching with a contorted figure dangling from an actual rope [...] as a work of art it is just a little Japanese mistake."⁴⁸ This mistake was an indictment of social injustice, similar in power and intent to one of the iconic works of the modern woodcut movement in China, Li Hua's *China Roar!* from 1935.⁴⁹

Noguchi fondly maintained his indebtedness to China. In New York, in December 1937, on learning of the massacre of thousands of Chinese citizens by the Japanese Imperial Army at the siege of Nanking, he joined others in raising funds for China's defense with an auction at the Park Lane Hotel on December 5, 1937, sponsored by the Chinese Women's Relief Association. He offered the ink drawing *Mother and Child* (fig. 2.20).⁵⁰ The piece, which scholar Robert J. Maeda believes was made in 1930, has a calligraphic inscription by Noguchi dated 1938 in which he proclaims an unequivocal rejection of Japan's invasion of its territory. Two days before the auction, Noguchi described the city and people of Beijing to whom he was so deeply attached to the *New York World-Telegram* and again acknowledged "an everlasting debt to China." He recalled,

the [hutongs] that wind like gray ribbons through the dusty haze of evening. [...] the cries of the street vendors—the pork man, the water man, the bean curd man. [...] [listening] in the morning for the music of the pigeons as they passed overhead with whistles on their legs [...] [and looking] in the evening for the purple tinge on the western hills. [...] the magnificent flow of the Peiping life—a life that seems to exist in a state of perfect anarchy, unencumbered by thou-shalt-not laws, satisfied that beauty and intelligence are the essential virtues in a city's heart.⁵¹

95 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (baby in cutout),
1930
Ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
71.5 x 36.1 inches



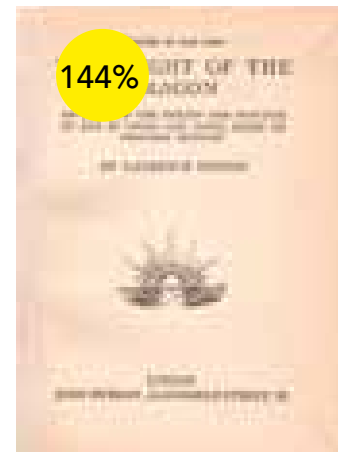
A SCULPTOR'S BRUSH WITH INK: FROM THE FLIGHT OF THE DRAGON TO THE POOL OF THE INKSTONE

Bert Winther-Tamaki

The East Asian aesthetic of brush and ink was typically appreciated in the twentieth century for its deep and fascinating roots in historical practices of painting and calligraphy. A new awareness is emerging, however, of just how profoundly the twentieth century itself shaped views of Asian traditions of ink painting that prevail today. For despite the antiquarian preoccupations of many of its proponents, ink painting was dramatically altered and expanded by the theoretical and experimental efforts of numerous artists and writers throughout Asia and beyond. Starting in the late nineteenth century and continuing to this day, for example, photographers have emulated and extended the aesthetic of ink monochrome landscape imagery with photographic techniques. And since the mid-twentieth century, abstract painters all over the world have studied brush and ink calligraphy for models of non-mimetic signification and gestural brushwork. Meanwhile, art historians, critics, and theorists have articulated the relevance of East Asian ink art to agendas ranging from modernist self-expression to cultural nationalism. Among the least recognized accomplishments of Isamu Noguchi are his innovative contributions to this twentieth-century discourse of Asian-associated ink art, starting with his 1930 gestural figure drawings that are the primary focus of this exhibition, but also including later sculptural works that transformed aesthetic ideals of ink on paper into three-dimensions. This essay identifies some of Noguchi's sources and inspirations in early twentieth-century discourses of ink painting, assesses the significance of his Peking Scrolls to this discourse, and describes his innovative three-dimensional remediations of ink painting in postwar abstract sculpture.

FLIGHT OF THE DRAGON

Although Noguchi's short intense bout of ink-and-brush figure painting in 1930 was a product of his encounter with Beijing and Qi Baishi, his predisposition for this creative work took form long before his arrival in China. Accounts of Noguchi's career rightfully emphasize his apprenticeship in Brancusi's studio in 1927, but he also spent considerable time in 1927, 1928, and early 1930 drawing from nude models at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris. Moreover, in 1928 he traveled to London "to study Oriental matters at the British Museum Library," where he "saw Laurence Binyon, the curator of prints at the British Museum, quite often." These two European experiences—drawing from live nude models in Paris and conversing with one of England's leading experts on Asian art—would have significant consequences for his work with brush and ink in Beijing. In Paris, Noguchi gathered with other young artists from all over the world to draw



human figures while observing the poses and physiques of naked hired models. In 1931, the *New York Times* would admire Noguchi's Paris drawings for conveying "something universal and eternal," praise their line quality for being "as pure as Ingres's and as evocative as Picasso's," and note that they had a much more finished quality than the "notations flung 'on the wing,' like Rodin's." These impressions were triggered by drawings such as *Seated Nude: Study in Black* (see fig. 5.10), which depicts a female model with deep black patches of moist ink within thin precise contour lines rendered in pen and ink and a few thicker brushed strokes. While most of Noguchi's Paris drawings demonstrate this more finished and anatomically precise approach, he surely also came into contact with the style of rapid gestural figure drawing pioneered by Rodin, alluded to by the *New York Times*, and widely practiced by subsequent modernists.

Meanwhile, Noguchi's interaction with Laurence Binyon in the British Museum engaged him to a very different constellation of artistic values. When the twenty-four-year-old Noguchi met the fifty-nine-year-old Binyon in 1928, he was surely aware that the latter had been a close friend of his estranged father, Yone Noguchi. Binyon and the elder Noguchi were near contemporaries and their careers paralleled one another for both were well-known poets as well as authorities on Asian art history. In 1903 Yone wrote from London to Isamu's mother, Leonie Gilmour, who edited his English-language writings, that Binyon was one of several men of "literary genius" who were "jolly companions." Having not seen his father since leaving Japan eleven years earlier at age thirteen, Isamu must have been curious to hear Binyon's reminiscences of the Japanese poet. But Isamu would also have surely been eager to hear Binyon's views about Sino-Japanese painting, the primary focus of Binyon's influential book, *The Flight of the Dragon*, which was published in 1911 as part of the 'Wisdom of the East' series of books intended to serve as "ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West." (fig. 5.1) This lofty goal was also associated with Isamu Noguchi's father and further embraced by Isamu himself in his often quoted 1927 statement of his intention to travel to Asia: "My father, Yone Noguchi, is Japanese and has long been known as an interpreter of the East to the West, through poetry. I wish to fulfill my heritage."

Binyon's interpretation of Asian painting for the West stressed one of the fundamental ideals of Chinese and Japanese painting, namely the "rhythmic vitality" (C: *qiyun*; J: *ki-in*) articulated in the sixth century by Xie He. Binyon explained:

In order to apply the energy of the body to the utmost effect, we must discover a certain related order of movements; and, when this is found and followed, a power comes into play which far surpasses in effect the application of brute strength and muscular effort. We rightly recognise this order of movements as rhythm.... Is it not just such a discovered principle in ourselves which is the essence of the impulse towards creation? It is a spiritual rhythm passing into and acting on material things.

The "flight of the dragon"—the title of Binyon's book—was another expression of this rhythmic vitality, because in Chinese thought, he wrote, the dragon was "a spirit which is able to pass

96 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Seated Nude: Study in Black, 1929–30
 Pen and brush on cream-colored paper
 University of Michigan Museum of Art,
 museum purchase, 1948/1.295
 22.1 x 17.2 inches

97 | Title Page to Laurence Binyon,
The Flight of the Dragon (London:
 John Murray, Albemarle Street), 1911

out into all other existences of the world and resume its own form in man." Binyon praised the unique capacity of Asian ink painting to realize this elusive sense of spiritual rhythm, cautioning that the English word "monochrome" was but a "starved and lifeless term" that fails to convey the "marvelous range and subtlety of tones" of Chinese ink. In Binyon's dualistic thinking, "living ink" was part of a view of Oriental culture defined in opposition to Occidental culture: Sung ink landscape was the classical touchstone of the art of the East, while Western art found its epitome in the nude bodies carved in stone in ancient Greece. Noguchi's brush drawing in Beijing, however, was to blur this binary, by requisitioning the Asian art of ink painting to render monumental nudes.

To be sure, many Asian ink painters, including notably Qi Baishi, had painted human bodies, but the bodies they rendered in ink were rarely if ever painted from life. Even Hokusai's extraordinary repertoire of human figures shown working and performing in all kinds of poses were not sketched from live models. Hokusai's figures, explains Inaga Shigemi, were "based more on the physical skill of the habituated hand, trained by the repetitive copying of the master's model, than on direct observation of nature and the spontaneous capturing of its effects." Rather than sketch live models, East Asian ink painters often constructed images of the body by combining different types of brushstrokes. This method of figurative ink painting is demonstrated, for example, by a sixteenth-century Japanese painting of Bodhidharma (fig. 5.2) in the British Museum, where Binyon may well have shown it to Noguchi in 1928. In contrast to the thick, dark, and rough strokes of the Zen Patriarch's robe, his hair is rendered in softly raked gray strokes, while his eyes and mouth are delineated in sharp thin black contours. But Binyon's highest praise for this sort of diversified brushwork was reserved for the fifteenth-century Japanese ink painter, Sesshū. Binyon noted Sesshū's mastery of a "miraculous range," including "exquisite harmonies," as well as passages which "amaze[] us by his power with the brush [for] his strokes are sudden, strong, and vehement."

BEIJING BRUSH DRAWINGS

In Beijing Noguchi resumed the practice of drawing figures from the observation of posed models that he had mastered in Paris, but now he joined this practice to an exploration of the varied types of Sino-Japanese ink brushwork that he had discovered with Binyon in London. His *Nude Man and Boy Reclining* (fig. 5.11) demonstrates his most controlled mode of rendering bodies in a network of thin even contour lines, while his *Huddled Man and Boy* (fig. 5.12) combines dark lines delineating bodies together with thick abstract brushstrokes. Despite the relative regularity of the line in *Nude Man and Boy Reclining*, this is not the unvarying sort of ink line that Noguchi had drawn with a pen in Paris. Rather, this is a brush line that changes in intensity, thickening and darkening slightly where it defines the man's shoulders, head, and eyes, but lightening and then temporarily disappearing around his upper arm and elbow, and becoming more delicate in defining the boy's body. This continuous flowing line manifests the kinesthetic qualities often

98 | *Bodhidharma*, unsigned,
2nd half of 16th c.
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
British Museum
30.2 x 15.3 inches





99



100

admired by connoisseurs of gestural contour line drawings of the sort pioneered by Rodin. One senses the movement of the artist's body and how his response to the emerging brush paths on his paper during the process of brushing impacted subsequent brush outlays as much as the appearance of the models posed before him.

Huddled Man and Boy may well have been drawn from the same models as those who posed for *Nude Man and Boy Reclining*, but Noguchi's addition of thick abstract brushstrokes onto the figures in the former exemplifies one of the most unusual and experimental aspects of his Beijing brush drawings. As noted above, East Asian ink paintings often combined radically different sorts of brushwork, and sometimes viewers of such works may have the impression of an abruptness in the transitions from rough or dark and thick passages to light or delicate passages delineating different details of the same body. But Noguchi takes this disjunctiveness to a new extreme by overriding the logic of the carefully contoured figures with stormy broom-like sweeps, as though seeking to visualize some force pulsing through their bodies, something akin to Binyon's "flight of the dragon."

The juxtaposition of two markedly different brush systems in this drawing suggests an interesting parallel to the dualistic thinking already noted in the East/West rubric used to articulate the aims of Noguchi, his father, and Laurence Binyon. In Isamu Noguchi's case, however, this East/West duality was sometimes configured as a poignant and even painful statement of his often denigrated status as the son of an Asian father and a European American mother. One rather presumptuous mentor wrote to Isamu in 1930: "...I know how to interpret your desire for the Far East... Only a limited number of fibres in your nervous system belong to the Extreme Orient. Most of your physiological functions, including your intestines and your earthly desires, belong to the Extreme West. This is almost tragic." According to Noguchi's own later account, he prolonged his stay in Beijing instead of proceeding as planned to Japan because he received a letter in Moscow from his father in Japan telling him not to come to Japan using the name Noguchi. Thus, it is not surprising that during his months of brush drawing in Beijing, Noguchi was perceived by one who knew him well as "the most lonely fellow I ever had known." Given these circumstances, the brush drawings of the man and boy pair, though rendered from local Beijing residents who Noguchi hired to pose in his studio, seem to be the projection of his personal experience of paternal rejection. Or rather, they redress this rejection with an almost homoerotic image of father-son harmony. In *Nude Man and Boy Reclining*, the man's body forms a cave-like den of safety for the boy who rests peacefully within this tender shelter. In *Huddled Man and Boy*, these figures come together in a circular composition of unity, and the overlay of abstract lines seems to visualize an energy that transpires between them.

While Noguchi's Beijing brush drawings were generally well received in the various venues in the United States where they were exhibited in the early 1930s, critics were divided with regard to the success of his addition of the thick expressive brushstrokes to his figures. One noted that "the artist has added a broad ribbon of wash, not with any realistic intent, but as a sort of counterpoint

99 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (nude man and boy,
reclining), c. 1930
Ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
37.5 x 66.0 inches

100 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Peking Drawing (man and boy
in circular tumble), 1930
Horizontal hanging scroll, ink on paper
The Noguchi Museum
55.5 x 90.8 inches

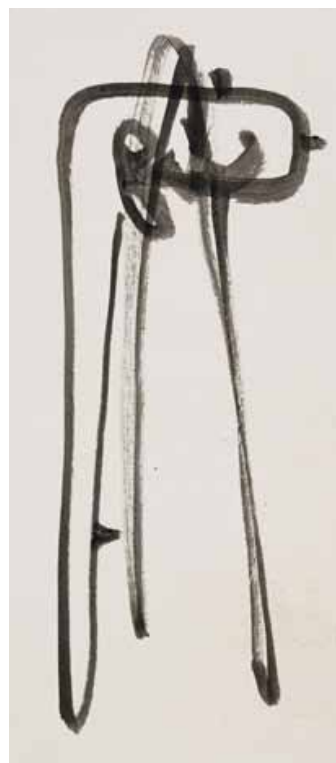
to the central composition," while another criticized "the intervention of shadings that seem indeed only dragged in." To be sure, perhaps due to emotional tension provoked by the subject matter, the abstract strokes in *Huddled Man and Boy* intrude on the figures with something of a disruptive force. In the case of *Toddler with a String* (fig. 1.19), however, Noguchi succeeds in melding the bursting energy of the child with large cursive calligraphic strokes. These wet gray ink strokes seem to diagram vectors of the child's dynamic exertions of budding strength.

Much of the impression of Asianness associated with Noguchi's Beijing brush drawings may be attributed to their hanging scroll format. Painting formats, perhaps even more than styles and iconographies, are "necessarily linked to [...] culturally specific spaces and patterns of behavior." And indeed, the hanging scroll, referred to in English texts by Binyon and others of this generation with the Japanese word *kakemono*, even when associated with a Chinese painting, was believed to be difficult to export from Japan: "work in *kakemono* form is seen to much disadvantage when exhibited in numbers strung along the walls of [an American] museum. [They] are best viewed singly, suspended in the recess of the *tokonoma*, or alcove. A certain seclusion is essential to the enjoyment of their delicate and subtle effects." By defying this view and presenting his brush drawings as *kakemono* for public exhibition in the United States, Noguchi asserted the Asian locus of their creation, materials and techniques, while obscuring the Paris source of their basis in sketching live nude models.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL REMEDIATIONS OF INK

After leaving Beijing in 1930, Noguchi would never again focus so intently on brush-and-ink drawings based on the observation of live models. Though he did periodically return to ink and brush painting, later works in this medium were typically focused on recording sights while traveling, or planning or illustrating concepts and forms for sculpture and design projects. Despite the proficiency of his early drawing in Paris and Beijing, the primary accomplishments of Noguchi's career were in the three-dimensional media of sculpture and design. Thus the afterlife of his early intense exploration of brush-and-ink painting is particularly interesting in terms of his remediation of qualities of this two-dimensional aesthetic in materials and forms remote from the world of the ink painter.

Noguchi's first major postwar sculptures took the form of thin marble sheets jigsawed into curved shapes and slotted together, a scheme suggested in part by the forms of Chinese characters. (fig. 5.3) Noguchi reportedly had a photograph of a work of Chinese calligraphy in his studio while creating some of these sculptures and indeed, the perpendicular interlocking of curved stone shapes resembles the combinational structure of a multi-stroke Sino-Japanese character. Moreover, Noguchi rendered the forms of some of his slotted stone sculptures in calligraphic ink and brush sketches as illustrations for the catalogue of his 1949 Egan Gallery exhibition. (fig. 5.4) Noguchi returned to this investigation of the sculptural possibilities of ink-and-brush calligraphy



101

101 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Egan Drawing of Avatar, 1948
Ink on paper
6.7 x 3.5 inches
Illustrated in Isamu Noguchi/ Rosanjin
Kitaoji (Tokyo: Sezon Museum of Art,
1996), page 69, figure D-41.

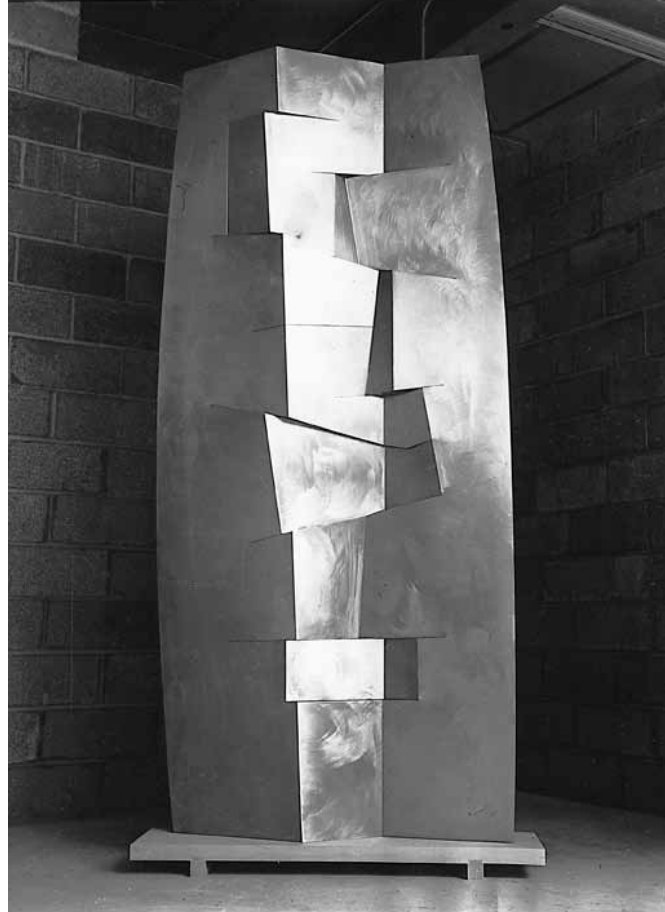
102 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Avatar, 1947–80
Bronze
78.5 x 33 x 23 inches



102



103



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in the 1960s with a group of sculptures consisting of elements that resembled calligraphic brushstrokes more explicitly than his slotted stone pieces of the 1940s. Now Noguchi sliced curved planks from the soft light-weight material of balsa wood and composed them in abstract spatial arrangements, which were then cast in bronze. For example, *Shodô Hanging*, (fig. 5.5) much as its title suggests (*shodô* being the Japanese word for “calligraphy”), consists of three-dimensionalized brushstrokes that hover in space as though a calligraphic character had collapsed and its parts suspended midair before falling to the ground. Such works attempted to import the sense of balanced weight that operates in the virtual space of calligraphy on paper into sculpture where real gravity can only be held in balance by contending with the laws of physics.

Aluminum would seem to be a surprising material for contemplating the Asian art of brush and ink, but this unlikely feat was accomplished in Noguchi’s 1959 sculpture titled *Sesshû* (fig. 5.6) after the fifteenth-century ink painter Laurence Binyon admired. This sculpture was part of a series of aluminum sheet works in which Noguchi sought to endow this material with poetic

103 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Shodô Hanging, 1962
Bronze
82 inches high

104 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Sesshû, 1959
Anodized aluminum
108 inches high

qualities without disguising its associations with industrial efficiency and new technologies. Noguchi’s aluminum sculpture alludes to the revered Japanese ink painter by means of its planar shape and variegated gray color. The shape evokes one of the formats associated with Sesshû’s painting—not the hanging scroll, but the accordion-like relief of the freestanding hinged panels of the folding screen (*byôbu*). And the dull gray shine of the anodized aluminum surface suggests the gray tonalities Sesshû obtained in ink. One of Noguchi’s sources for appreciating Sesshû’s gray tonalities was surely his friend, the Japanese artist and writer Hasegawa Saburô, who had served as a guide to Japanese culture for Noguchi during his first extended postwar exploration of Japan in 1950. The previous year Hasegawa had described Sesshû’s ink aesthetic as “a dull blurry grey tone” and proceeded to characterize his subjective response to Sesshû’s gray: “it possesses a sorrowful quality that hits with a resonance in my chest and lingers afterwards.... Then, as I mull over that aftertaste, it softens my heart with a pleasant sense.” Noguchi’s abstract aluminum sculpture would seem to be conducive to an aesthetic experience similar to that which Hasegawa reported upon contemplating Sesshû’s painting.

Stone was the most important material of Noguchi’s late sculpture and, like aluminum, this material might seem irrelevant to ink-and-brush painting. Nonetheless, one of the most dearly treasured tools of the East Asian ink painter was the inkstone (J: *suzuri*) and reflections on the cultural and aesthetic qualities of this object were critical to one of Noguchi’s most fruitful genres of abstract sculpture, namely the stone landscape table. Like other ink painters, in Beijing in 1930, Noguchi would have ground his ink from a dry cake on a small slab of stone with a reservoir for holding the water used to obtain different concentrations of liquid ink. Many years later, in the 1960s, Noguchi began creating sculptures as low table-like horizontal slabs of granite carved with various protuberances and depressions suggesting landscape forms. Despite their larger size, these landscape tables resemble inkstones in their black stone material as well as their horizontal relief. Indeed, the black stone surface of the 1968 *Water Table* (fig. 5.7) is carved with two shallow recessed areas, and when filled with water, they resemble the dark pool of liquid ink in an inkstone reservoir. Referring to another of his table sculptures, *Whetstone* of 1970 (fig. 5.8), Noguchi observed:

A primary use of stone is to sharpen tools. Sumi is made by rubbing charcoal on ‘suzuri’ (an inkstone). Grinding is a process in carving, as is the final polishing. A whetstone is of the highest significance.

Thus the painter’s act of grinding the brick of ink against the wet slope of an inkstone is analogous to the sharpening of a steel blade against a whetstone, and the grinding of stone itself in making sculpture. Noguchi continued to ponder various associations with what one painter called “preparing yourself spiritually” through the “ritual of ink making” by rubbing the brick of ink in the puddle of an inkstone. Amidst the rough protruding areas and polished flat areas



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of a horizontal stone topography actually titled *Ink Stone* (fig. 5.9), Noguchi carved a shallow depression that closely approximates the well of an inkstone, though it can also be read as the bird's eye view of a pond in a tract of land with flat and hilly areas. Thus the grinding of ink on the stone emerges here as analogous not only to the grinding of the stone in the making of the sculpture, but the environmental and geological processes that weather and form the terrestrial surface. Noguchi's youthful passionate pursuit of the "flight of the dragon" had been focused on the native bodies that populated his lonely world, but toward the end of his life, like the legendary Japanese poetess Ono no Komachi, the "flight of the dragon" became the pursuit of a position between the microcosmic spaces of art making and the macrocosmic spaces feared and imagined by the mind:

A mountain wind blows down Osaka's slope
 To moan the certainty of death;
 Its message still eludes me.
 Yet, when blossoms scatter and leaves fall,
 Still in this hut I find my pleasure:
 Grinding ink, I dip my brush and write.

105 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Ink Stone, 1984
 Swedish granite
 Private collection
 2.7 x 40.5 x 25.1 inches

106 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Whetstone, 1970
 Granite
 The Noguchi Museum
 5.5 x 42 x 33.2 inches

107 | ISAMU NOGUCHI
Water Table, 1968
 Black Swedish granite
 The Noguchi Museum
 14.2 x 51 x 31.5 inches



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NOTES

FOREWORD

* In Noguchi's autobiography, *A Sculptor's World*, he mentioned an eight month stay when in fact he was in China for six months.

ISAMU NOGUCHI IN CHINA: SOTOKICHI KATUSUZUMI, QI BAISHI, AND THE REINVENTION OF ABSTRACTION IN THE PEKING SCROLL DRAWINGS

1. Katsuizumi collected the work of both artists, some of which he donated to the Museum of Art at the University of Michigan, his alma mater, in 1949.
2. The Peking Scroll Drawings were called Peking Brush Drawings or Brush Drawings when they were first exhibited in 1932. The current titles are varied; some works bear these original titles, and others more specific titles, such as *Two Wrestlers: Scroll (Kakemono)*. For consistency, I call the group Peking Scroll Drawings in this essay, and use current titles for individual works. Peking is the old transliteration of the Chinese city, which is now written as Beijing.
3. See, for example, the exhibitions and accompanying catalogues, *Isamu Noguchi: Retrospective 1992* (The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto), and *Isamu Noguchi: Master Sculptor* (Whitney Museum of American Art and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., 2004–2005). For additional publications, see Noguchi's autobiography, *A Sculptor's World* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2004 [1968]), and Isamu Noguchi, *The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987).
4. See Nancy Grove, "Noguchi and Drawing" (*Drawing*, vol. 8, no. 6, March/April 1987); Bruce Altshuler, "Isamu Noguchi: Early Drawings

from Paris and Beijing" (*Drawing*, vol. 16, no. 4, Nov.-Dec. 1994); and Robert J. Maeda, "Isamu Noguchi and the Peking Drawing of 1930" (*American Art*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1999). Bert Winther-Tamaki also discusses the Peking Scroll Drawings in relation to Noguchi's ceramic works in the 1930s. See "The Ceramic Art of Isamu Noguchi: A Close Embrace of the Earth" in Louise Allison Cort and Winther-Tamaki, *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth* (Washington, D.C.: The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2003, pp. 9-10).

5. After the 1940s, Noguchi's drawings were mainly sketches for the artist's sculptural and garden works rather than ends in themselves. See Grove, "Noguchi and Drawing", p. 122, and Altshuler, "Isamu Noguchi: Early Drawings from Paris and Beijing", p. 77.
6. Dousu Masayo (Masayo Duus), *Isamu Noguchi: Shukumei no ekkyosha* (original Japanese version of *The Life of Isamu Noguchi: Journey without Borders*), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2004 [2000]), pp. 285-86.
7. Noguchi's study with Brancusi in Paris in 1927 and 1928 is well documented. See, for example, Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, pp. 17-19, Masayo Duus, Peter Duus trans., *The Life of Isamu Noguchi: Journey without Borders* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 111-21. The mentorship of the famous Japanese aesthetician and potter Kitaōji Rosanjin in the 1950s was one of the main themes of the exhibition *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth* (The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C., and other venues, 2003–2004).
8. In the application he wrote, "[...after one-year study in Paris] The two following years I proposed to spend in Asia, going first to India, then through China into Japan". Isamu Noguchi, "Guggenheim

Proposal" in Diane Apostolos-Cappadona and Bruce Altshuler (eds.), *Isamu Noguchi: Essays and Conversations* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), p. 17.

9. Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, p. 19.
10. Though his stay was in fact six months, Noguchi later recalled it as being eight months. This is why many studies say that it was eight months.
11. Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, p. 20.
12. Noguchi gave several of the Peking Scroll Drawings to Katsuizumi with warm dedications. The inscription on a drawing of a baby reads: "This for Sotokichi Katsuizumi my best friend in Pekin[g] for whom I have great affection, Isamu" (fig. 1.23). Katsuizumi, who would also soon leave Beijing to return to Tokyo, cherished the memory of the meeting between the Chinese master painter and the young American artist. In his scrapbook, he kept Qi Baishi's pictures and letters, along with Japanese newspaper clippings of Noguchi's exhibitions and activities in Japan.
13. Sotokichi Katsuizumi, "Chi'h Pai shih & Isamu Noguchi: Personal Recollection of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, Aug. 15, 1962" (unpublished and unpaginated).
14. Noguchi's letter to his mother, December 28, 1930, cited in Duus, *The Life of Isamu Noguchi: Journey without Borders*, p. 130.
15. Parallel to Japan's colonial ambitions in China, many Japanese resided in Beijing, Shanghai, and other large cities in this period, and many amenities and services, including department stores, were established to cater to Japanese residents.
16. Katsuizumi, "Chi'h Pai Shih & Isamu Noguchi: Personal Recollection of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, Aug. 15, 1962." According to Noguchi's account, he paid his own trip to Japan. See Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, p. 20.

17. Katsuizumi also mentioned that he purchased works from Qi's concubine. Katsuizumi, "Chi'h Pai shih & Isamu Noguchi: Personal Recollection of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, Aug. 15, 1962" and also a personal recollection of Anne Katsuizumi Chew (Sotokichi Katsuizumi's daughter), April 1994 (unpublished and unpagged). 18. It was through Katsuizumi's collection that Noguchi first encountered Qi's work. This moment and Noguchi's subsequent encounter with Qi were dramatically relayed by Katsuizumi in a letter to his granddaughter in 1984. Sotokichi Katsuizumi, letter to Sharlynn Circo, March 1984. A part of the letter was published in the catalogue to the Christie's auction on May 31, 2011, p. 278. 19. Noguchi would leave Beijing in late January 1931 for Japan. 20. Katsuizumi, "Chi'h Pai shih & Isamu Noguchi: Personal Recollection of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, Aug. 15, 1962." 21. Sai Hakuseki (Qi Baishi), *Sai Hakuseki: Hito to geijutsu (Qi Baishi: The Person and Art)* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1975), p. 150. 22. Katherine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962) p. 173. 23. Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, p. 20. 24. Noguchi said, "I came to know the people as well as I did the life of the city on all levels. I felt confident that I could maintain myself as such an artist." Noguchi, *The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum*, p. 234. 25. Katsuizumi, "Chi'h Pai shih & Isamu Noguchi: Personal Recollection of Sotokichi Katsuizumi, Aug. 15, 1962" and Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, p. 20. 26. Dousu, *Isamu Noguchi: Shukumei no ekkyosha*, p. 302. 27. The exhibitions were held at Demotte Gallery and John Becker Gallery in New York from February to March, 1932.

THE "DISCOVERY" OF QI BAISHI

1. This essay is based on a text written by Lang Shaojun for the present publication and a conversation between Lang Shaojun and Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker in Beijing in November 2012, translated by Xu Jia, Deputy Director, International Office, Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing. The essay and its notes have been edited by Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker to incorporate both the text and the conversation, and to include English language references. 2. "Caochong/chongcao [insects and grass] is a term used by the bird-and-flower painter who considers it as a special training in drawing natural objects from life. In a slightly different yet related term, *gongchong* [insects in meticulous style], a bird-and-flower painter draws the insects realistically as exemplified in the painting manuals by court/professional artists. Most typical is the work of Huang Quan (1879–1965), now in the Palace Museum in Beijing. <http://www.chinaonlinemuseum.com/painting-birds-huang-quan.php>. As E.H. Gombrich (1909–2001) observed in his writings, such as *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (1963), Chinese artists achieved illusionistic effects in the Song dynasty, constituting one of three islands of representational style along with that of the ancient Greeks and the Renaissance Italians." Correspondence between Hong Zaixin, Professor of Art, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington and the editor, December 2012. 3. Qi Baishi was born to a peasant family from Xiangtan, Hunan, which is situated on the Xiang River, a waterway connecting the Yangtze River with the Pearl River Delta (editor's note). 4. "Tanbi caran [draw shading with charcoal] is similar to Western drawing techniques to create

three-dimensional effects using charcoal." Correspondence between Hong Zaixin and the editor, December 2012. 5. "In April 1918 the renowned educator and president of Peking University, Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868–1940) established *Huafa Yanjiuhui* [Institute of Painting Studies] at Peking University, and served as its Director. Cai hired Xu Beihong as one of its instructors. Also in 1918, Cai established *Guoli Beiping Meishu Xuexiao* [National Beijing Art College] of which Zheng Jing (1883–1959) became the first President. It is the former incarnation of today's Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA). Lin Fengmian hired Qi." Correspondence between Hong Zaixin and the editor, December 2012. 6. In 1928, the University Yuan of the Nationalist Government instituted a district school system, the *Huafa Yanjiuhui* [Institute of Painting Studies] at Peking University. This was renamed Beijing University Institute of the Arts and Xu Beihong was appointed Dean. Xu served for three months and then resigned. During that time he appointed Qi Baishi as professor. 7. Cai Yuanpai sent both Lin Fengmian and Xu Beihong to Europe to study. Beginning in 1919, Xu studied oil painting at the Académie Julian and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris while Lin Fengmian studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Dijon and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before completing his studies in Berlin. Both artists curated exhibitions of contemporary Chinese painting in Europe. Lin returned to China in February 1926 while Xu returned in 1927 (editor's note). 8. According to *André Claudot, peintre 1892–1982*, Claudot moved to China in 1925 and remained until 1931. See <https://sites.google.com/site/andreclaudot/>, accessed

November 2012. The filmmaker Bernard Baissat (b. 1943) produced a 52-minute long, 16-mm film of Claudot's life in 1978 titled *Écoutez Claudot* (editor's note). 9. Wan Qingli "The French painter André Claudot and His Travels in China," see *Fine Arts Anthology of Wan Qingli* (Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2004), p. 219. 10. Oral report by Qi Huang, notes by Zhang Cixi. *Autobiography of Qi Baishi* (Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1962), p. 79. 11. Michaela Pejcochova, "The Qi Baishi Collection in the Czech Museum of Fine Arts," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Qi Baishi*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Culture and Arts Publishing House, 2010), p. 621. See also "Treasury of Chinese Paintings—The Need for Foreign Language Literature on Studies of Qi Baishi" by Hong Zaixin, in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Qi Baishi*, vol. 2, p. 358. 12. For a history of the collection of Chinese painting at the National Gallery in Prague, see Claire Roberts, Review of Michaela Pejcochova, "Masters of 20th-Century Chinese Ink Painting from the Collections of the National Gallery in Prague," *China Heritage Quarterly*, no. 16 (December 2008), http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?searchterm=016_chineseartprague.inc&issue=016, accessed September 2012 (editor's note). 13. This author had the pleasure of seeing Chytil's collection of Chinese paintings in the National Gallery in Prague in 2002, of which the most numerous are by Qi Baishi, masterpieces filled with energy and a strong flavor of life. 14. Josef Hejzlar, "Remarkable, Outstanding Qi Baishi", in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Qi Baishi*, vol. 1, p. 306. 15. In 1908–1909, Qi Baishi traveled

to the Province of Guangdong twice. During one of these trips he visited the neighboring border town Mong Cai in Vietnam, looked at the scenery, and returned on the same day. 16. For information on these exhibitions see Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, *Grabbism: 1930s*, in this volume, pages ?. 17. For information on the second *Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition* and the participation of Qi Baishi, see Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press and Association for Asian Studies, 2006), pp. 106-108, and Kuo-Sheng Lai, *Learning New Painting from Japan and Maintaining National Pride in Early Twentieth-Century China*, with *Focus on Chen Shizeng (1876–1923)*, dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2006, p. 139. <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&sqi=2&ved=0CC4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdram.lib.umd.edu%2Fbitstream%2F1903%2F3773%2F1%2Fumi-umd-3612.pdf&ei=aZq7UK7lKojviQL2-oHwDA&usg=AFQjCNFmjEnJYQ8hPLCmjeBuZHCPPmeS5Q>, accessed November 2012 (editor's note). 18. See Lu Weirong "Qi Baishi and the Modern Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition—Qi Baishi's Introduction to Japan," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Qi Baishi*, vol. 2, p. 457. 19. "Shizeng advised me to create new ideas of my own and to change my way of painting. I listened to him and created the 'red flower ink leaf' style. I originally painted plum blossoms in the manner of Yang Buzhi [1097–1171] (Wujiu) of the Song Dynasty. Yin Hebo [Qing Dynasty] (Jinyang), whose hometown is the same as mine and was famous for painting plum in Hunan. He also learned Yang Buzhi's

style. I applied his brushstrokes, too. Shizeng said, 'To paint with *gonbi* style would be laborious and plain-looking at the same time.' I listened to his words again and changed my manner of painting. Yi Weiru (Zongku) from my hometown is a senator. He asked me to paint a round-shaped fan. Lin Qinnan saw it and greatly praised it, saying, 'Wu in the South and Qi in the North, they are comparable.' He compared me with Wu Changshuo. It is true that our brushworks are somewhat similar." Cited by Kuo-Sheng Lai, *Learning New Painting from Japan*, *op. cit.*, p. 138. According to Aida Yuen Wong, prior to the Tokyo exhibition Qi Baishi had been receiving only 2 silver yuan for his work. At the Tokyo exhibition he received 250 yen for each of his paintings: Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists*, *op. cit.*, p. 108 (editor's note). 20. In the edition of October 18, 1940, of *The Argus* published in Melbourne, Australia, Yakichiro Suma was described as former secretary to the Japanese Embassy in England and Germany in 1923; secretary to the Legation in China in 1927; counselor at Canton in 1930; Consul General at Nanking in 1933, and counselor (1937) and Foreign Office spokesman (1939) at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. See <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/11315339>, accessed November 2012 (editor's note). 21. Most of the Qi Baishi paintings in the collection of Yakichiro Suma were donated to the Kyoto National Museum. See Nishigami Minoru, "Formation and Documentation of the Suma Collection," in *Proceedings of the International Exchange of Researchers of Modern Chinese Paintings* (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, 2010), p. 358. 22. For further information on Trautmann, see Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, *Grabbism: 1930s*, in this volume, pages ?.

23. Ma Bi, *Qi Baishi, Father and Son Anecdotes, Calligraphy and Painting* (Taiwan: New Wenfeng Publishing Company), p. 45. 24. "Kim Yong-gi (Ch'ong-gang, 1911–2003) published several books on Qi Baishi, a history of Korean art, and his own paintings." Correspondence between Hong Zaixin and the editor, December 2012. 25. Hong Shanbiao, "The Reception of the Style of Qi Baishi in the Korean Art World," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Qi Baishi*, pp. 412, 413. 26. Josef Hejzlar "Remarkable, Outstanding Qi Baishi," *op. cit.*, pp. 297-305. 27. See Wan Qingli, *A Chinese Who Influenced American Abstract Impressionist Painting—Teng Baiye*, and *Fine Arts Anthology of Wan Qingli* (Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2004), p. 225. Teng appears to have had no exchanges with Qi Baishi but he did have a reasonable understanding of the connections between Chinese and Western art. 28. For further information on Teng's theories on expressionism in Chinese art and on the relationship between Teng Baiye and Mark Tobey, see Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, *Grabbism: 1930s*, in this volume, pages?. 29. See Lang Shaojun "Outside the Tide," *Qi Baishi* (Tianjin: Tianjin Willow Green Painting Society, 1997), pp. 9-12. 30. Ma Bi, *Zhang Daofan's Ins and Omissions With His Master Qi Baishi*, records conversations between Nanjing Military Police Commander Zhang Zhen (Zhenfu) and Qi Baishi. "Mr. Zhenfu started out by saying: 'Since Zhang Daofan wants to observe the formalities as a disciple, this is something meaningful, so respond to him!' He fixed his eyes on the old man as he spoke. 'This is something that I have thought about.' The old man said with assertion in Hunan dialect: 'I am a

painter. It is not a good thing for me to be involved with a high-ranking politician.' He then said: 'And I have a condition, which Zhang Daofan will certainly not accept, and that is, if he wants to be my disciple, he will have to kowtow.'" See Ma Bi, *op. cit.*, p. 2. 31. On seals, see Lang Shanjun, Guo Tianmin (eds.), *The Complete Works of Qi Baishi*, vol. 8, Seal Cutting (Changsha: Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, 1996). 32. Robert J. Maeda, "Isamu Noguchi and the Peking Drawing of 1930," *American Art*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1999), pp. 86-87. 33. We know that Isamu Noguchi enjoyed visiting antique and art shops in Beijing and the many ancient buildings and parks of the city. This undoubtedly indirectly affected his later sculptural and landscape works.

QI BAISHI AND NOGUCHI, SQUARE AND CIRCLE

1. My thanks to Wu Hongliang, an expert on Qi Baishi at the Beijing Painting Institute, for his generous advice. 2. Christie's, Sale 2858 (Fine Modern Chinese Paintings, May 31, 2011), Lot 2843, Qi Baishi, *Cabbage and Mushrooms* http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot_details.aspx?in tObjectID=5442391&CID=5447010005801a N.B. I have edited the translation so that the English is more idiomatic. 3. Jung Ying Tsao and Carol Ann Bardoff, *The Paintings of Xugu and Qi Baishi* (San Francisco: Far East Fine Arts, in association with the University of Washington Press, 1993), p. 207. 4. Baishi Qi and Cixi Zhang, *Baishi laoren zishu* (Autobiography of the Old Man Baishi) (Changsha: Yue lu shu she, 1986), p. 78. 5. For the sake of simplicity, I omit some details: the art school changed its name while Qi was

there, and from 1928 to 1949 Beijing was called Beiping because it was not the capital of China during that period. (Beijing means northern capital.)

6. For information concerning the fate of Qi Baishi's house, see: John F. Burns, "Chinese Artist's Family Renovating His Legacy," *New York Times* (Aug 28, 1985), sec. C, p. 21; and Erik Eckholm, "Art's Fate in China: A Battle by an Heir," *New York Times* (Jan 5, 1998), sec. A, p. 4.
7. *Kuache Hutong li de gushi* (A story of Kuache Hutong), qianggen.com (March 11, 2012) <http://culture.qianggen.com/2012/0311/23537.html>
8. Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 20.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), pp. 106-107.
11. Isamu Noguchi, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

JO-ANNE BIRNIE DANZKER

1. "A house appeared (Ta Yang Mao Hutung 18), a cook appeared, speaking and cooking French as well as Chinese; a rickshaw boy, a houseboy and their families. All was run with incredible ease, and soon I was a householder studying Chinese in the mornings, and receiving merchants." Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2004), p. 20.
2. "I was eight months in Peking, by which time my splendid living had reduced my resources precariously, and I decided to leave." *Ibid.*, p. 20.
3. "Jean-Pierre [Dubosc] had once been in the French foreign service, had spent years in China, had collected Ming-Qing paintings and sold a group to the Musée Guimet, becoming a dealer, and was now a major source for European collectors

such as Drenowatz. [...] I found him completely congenial, both personally and in his scholarship: he had [...] [promoted] the study and collecting of Ming-Qing painting; he had collaborated with Larry Sickman on the groundbreaking exhibition of Ming-Qing paintings at the Wildenstein Gallery in New York (1951?)." James Cahill, *The Writings of James Cahill*, see <http://jamescahill.info/the-writings-of-james-cahill/responses-a-remiscences/148-26journey-home-stockholm-to-dc>, accessed September 2012.

4. Dore Ashton, *Noguchi East and West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 28.
5. Nicholas D. Kristof, "Zhang Xueliang, 100, Dies; Warlord and Hero of China," *The New York Times*, October 19, 2001, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/19/world/zhang-xueliang-100-dies-warlord-and-hero-of-china.html>, accessed September 2012.
6. One of the earliest exhibitions took place in Brno in Czechoslovakia; see Claire Roberts' review of Michaela Pejcochova, "Masters of 20th-Century Chinese Ink Painting from the Collections of the National Gallery in Prague," *China Heritage Quarterly*, no. 16, December 2008, http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?searchterm=016_chineseartprague.inc&issue=016, accessed September 2012.
7. *Moderne Maler aus China und Japan*, September to October 1930.
8. "Eine Flut wild jubelnder Rhythmus] von Linien, seine Kompositionen sprengt alle Grenzen unserer okzidentalen Phantasie. Sein Pinzel ist von schier einziger Kühnheit in der Geschichte der chinesischen Malerei und seine Vorstellungsweise ist unerschöpflich!"
9. For a discussion of these debates, see Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," in Jo-Anne

Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian (eds), *Shanghai Modern* (Munich: Museum Villa Stuck, 2004), pp. 18-71.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
11. Kuiyi Shen, "The Modernist Woodcut Movement in 1930s China," in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian (eds), *Shanghai Modern*, *op. cit.*, p. 267. Between 1928 and 1930 Lu Xun published five volumes of European woodcuts, which included the work of artists as diverse as Aubrey Beardsley and the Russian constructivists.
12. In 1929, Xu Fancheng (also known as Xu Hu and Xu Shiquan) traveled to Germany, where he studied on a scholarship he had obtained with the assistance of Lu Xun, whom he had met in the 1920s. In 1932, Xu returned to China without completing his degree for family reasons. In the following years he translated Nietzsche and texts from India, where lived from the late 1930s until 1978 when he returned to Peiping. See Thomas Kampen, *Chinesen in Heidelberg*, <http://147.142.222.80:8081/Plone/SHAN/newsletter/2011/shan-newsletter-maerz-2011-1/chinesen-in-heidelberg>, accessed September 2012, and Thomas Kampen, *Chinesen in Europa – Europäer in China: Journalisten, Spione, Studenten* (Gossensberg: Ostasien-Verlag, 2010).
13. Lu Xun's diary mentions Xu Shiquan 154 times between August 20, 1929, when Xu Shiquan took his leave before departing for Germany, and his return to China on August 30, 1932. See Thomas Kampen, <http://147.142.222.80:8081/Plone/SHAN/newsletter/2011/shan-newsletter-mai-nr.-52/lu-xun-xu-fancheng-und-heidelberg>, accessed September 2012.
14. See Kuiyi Shen, "The Modernist Woodcut Movement in 1930s China," *op. cit.*, pp. 268-69.
- Uchiyama Kanzô (1885–1959) came to Shanghai in 1913 and rented a single shop at no. 1908 North Sichuan

Road, where he opened a bookstore before opening a second branch on Nanjing Road. In 1980, the Uchiyama Bookstore became protected as a former cultural site. (<http://www.expo2010.cn/expo/english/eu/nc/ct/userobject1ai7543.html>, accessed October 2012).

15. Paul D. Scott, "Introduction," *Chinese Studies in History*, vol. 30, no. 4 / Summer 1997, p. 62: "To name but a few, the novelists Tanizaki Jun'ichiro and Sato Haruo, the poet Yonejirô Noguchi, the Buddhist priest Suzuki Daisetsu (Teitaro), the constitutional lawyer Yoshino Sakuzo, as well as labor leaders Suzuki Bunji and Matsuoka Komakichi, all passed through Uchiyama's bookstore with varying degrees of interaction."
16. Kuiyi Shen, "The Modernist Woodcut Movement in 1930s China," *op. cit.*, p. 266.
17. Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 86.
18. Kuiyi Shen, "The Modernist Woodcut Movement in 1930s China," *op. cit.*, p. 266.
- 18.19. Susan Platt, review of Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations, Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/416>, accessed September 2012.
- 19.20. *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 7, no. 2 (1931): p. 100.
- 20.21. In the literature to date on this exhibition, the number of works is given as 274, the number listed in the catalogue. There was, however, a printed Addendum to the catalogue listing an additional 22 paintings that were also exhibited, all by Liu Haisu.
- 21.22. *Chinesische Malerei der Gegenwart* (Chinese Contemporary Painting) was exhibited at the Academy in Berlin from January 20 to March 4, 1934. Among the members of the Chinese Organizing Committee were Cai Yuanpei, Lin

Fengmian, Xu Beihong, Liu Haisu, and Gao Qifeng. The Honorary Committee included representatives of major German companies active in China, such as Siemens, Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach, Melchers & Co, Hamburg-America Line, Deutsche Bank, and I.G.Farben.

- 22.23. The paintings by Qi Baishi were titled *Habicht auf Kiefer* and *Weintrauben. Gedicht des Künstlers*.
- 23.24. Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 24.25. For information on the relationship between Qi Baishi and Trautmann, see Lang Shaojun, *The "Discovery" of Qi Baishi*, in this volume, ?-?.
- 25.26. The Second Sino-Japanese War took place from July 7, 1937, to September 2, 1945.
- 26.27. Leopold Reidemeister was appointed curator at the State Museums of Berlin in 1932, according to *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 18, no. 3 (May-June 1932), p. 172.
- 27.28. Leopold Reidemeister, *op. cit.*, footnote 92.
- 28.29. The paintings were *Rote Pflaume* (Red Plum), *Staude* (Shrub), and *Glyzinie* (Wisteria). It was noted in the exhibition catalogue that the works were ink and strong color (especially red) on paper: *Chinesische Malerei der Gegenwart: Sammlung Trautmann* (Chinese Contemporary Painting: Trautmann Collection), Prinzessinnen Palais, Berlin, 1937.
- 29.30. Among the paintings in the 1934 Berlin exhibition *Chinese Contemporary Painting* were two by Teng Baiye (1900–1980): *Demon Slayer Chung Kuei* and *Geese*.
- 30.31. Teng Baiye is the pen name of Teng Gui, who was also known in the West as Teng Kuei, T'eng Kwei, Teng-Kroei, Teng Quay, and Kwei Dun. See David Clarke, "Cross-Cultural Dialogue and Artistic Innovation: Teng Baize and Mark Tobey," in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian (eds), *Shanghai Modern*, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
- 31.32. Teng was described as an

assistant to the first chairman of the University of Washington's art department, Walter F. Isaacs (1886–1964). See David Clarke, *ibid.*, p. 86.

- 32.33. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 33.34. *Ibid.*, p. 86. See also *Finger Paintings in Chinese Ink by T'eng Kwei (Kwei Dun)*, <http://www.henryart.org/exhibitions/past/1051/1928>, accessed October 2012.
- 34.35. Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2004), p. 20.
- 35.36. See http://harvarddeac.org/about/BP_Hall.htm, accessed September 2012.
- 36.37. T'eng Kwei, "Art in Modern China," *The Open Court* (Chicago), XLIII (December 1933), pp. 479-94. http://archive.org/stream/opencourt_dec1933caru#page/478/mode/2up, accessed October 2012.
- 37.38. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
- 38.39. David Clarke, "Cross-Cultural Dialogue..." *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- 39.40. "Expressionism in Chinese Art. Chinese Authority's Address to Local Club," *The North-China Herald* (Shanghai), January 31, 1934, p. 172, cited by David Clarke, *ibid.*, p. 97.
- 40.41. Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, "Shanghai Modern," *op. cit.*, p. 62.
- 41.42. Cited by David Clarke, "Cross-Cultural Dialogue..." *op. cit.*, p. 98.
- 42.43. According to the Peking opera star Mei Lanfang, many famous painters came to his house for his birthday party and collaboratively painted a painting for him. These artists included Ling Zhizhi, Yao Mangfu (1876–1930), Chen Shizeng, Wang Mengbai (1888–1934), and Qi Baishi. Kuo-Sheng Lai, *Learning New Painting from Japan and Maintaining National Pride in Early Twentieth Century China, with Focus on Chen Shizeng* (1876–1923), dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 2006, p. 71.
- 43.44. See Lang Shaojun, *The "Discovery" of Qi Baishi*, in this volume, ?-?.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
45. Xu Jiang, "The 'Misreading' of Life" in: Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian (eds), *Shanghai Modern*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
47. *Ibid.*, 22
48. *Ibid.*, 23
49. Li Hua, who began teaching himself printmaking in 1933, established The Modern Woodcut Society in Guangzhou in June 1934. In addition to works such as *China Roar!* Li Hua published albums of landscapes and polychromatic nudes. See Kuiyi Shen, "The Modernist Woodcut Movement in 1930s china" in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, Zheng Shengtian (eds), *Shanghai Modern*, *op.cit.* 267
50. Robert J. Maeda. "Isamu Noguchi and the Peking Drawing of 1930." *American Art*, vo. 13, no.1 (spring 1999), 84-93
51. Jack Foster. "Japanese-american Artist Fears for Old Peiping", *New York World-Telegram*, December 3, 1937

CHRONOLOGY

1860-1969	1870-1979	1880-1889
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WORLD EVENTS

1874 | Japan invaded Taiwan

1889 | End of Meiji Era

1866 | The Meiji Restoration paved the way for the modernization of Japan

QI BAISHI

1864 | Born to a peasant family in Hunan Province, China.

1872 | Received one year of formal education.

1877 | Apprenticed to a craftsman to learn the art of woodcarving.

1882 | Taught himself the art of painting by copying the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual*, a manual of Chinese painting compiled in the early Qing dynasty.

SOTOKICHI KATSUIZUMI

1889 | Born in Ishikawa prefecture, Japan.

ISAMU NOGUCHI

1890-1999	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1924	1925-1929	1930-1934	1935-1939	1940-1944
<p>WORLD EVENTS</p> <p>1895 China loses sovereignty in the first Sino-Japan War</p>	<p>1900 Boxer Rebellion</p>	<p>1914 Collapse of the Qing Dynasty</p> <p>1917 China declares war on Germany in World War I</p> <p>1919 May Fourth movement brought student protesters to the streets of Beijing</p>	<p>1921 First Congress of the Communist Party of China held in Shanghai</p>	<p>1927 Chinese Civil War</p> <p>1929 Stock Market Crash in the United States that led to the Great Depression</p>	<p>1932 Japanese invasion and occupation of Manchuria</p>	<p>1937 Chinese and Japanese troops clashed on Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing</p>	<p>1941 China declared war on Japan</p> <p>1941 Pearl Harbor attack</p>
<p>QI BAISHI</p> <p>1896 Learned calligraphy and acquired the skills of script writing and seal engraving.</p> <p>1898 Began to be noticed as an artist along with a developing interest in seal carving.</p> <p>1899 Became a student of Wang Xianyi, one of the most influential scholars of the time.</p> <p>1892–1901 Joined the Dragon Hill Poetry Society and the Longshan Poetry Society.</p>	<p>1902 Went to Xian to teach painting. Beginning in this year, he changed the techniques of his flower and bird paintings from elegant and meticulous detail to freehand brushwork.</p> <p>1902–1909 The years of his “Five Long Trips”. He traveled extensively around China and as far as Vietnam. Through his travels he gained inspiration and experience. He was introduced to some of China’s most prominent artists and masters of calligraphy.</p>	<p>1919 Moved to Beijing making it his permanent residence.</p>	<p>1922 Paintings included in the <i>Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition in Tokyo</i>. All of his paintings were sold and two selected for exhibition in Paris.</p>	<p>1928 Became a professor at Beijing Academy of Arts teaching traditional painting and published a collection of poetry.</p>	<p>1932 Protested against the Japanese invasion of Manchuria by locking his door and refusing to see Japanese guests. He resigned from teaching at the Beijing Academy of Arts.</p>		
<p>SOTOKICHI KATSUIZUMI</p>	<p>1907 Visited the United States, arriving in San Francisco.</p>		<p>1921 Graduated from the University of Michigan, Masters Degree in Economics and was selected as a member of the Japanese Delegation to the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armaments.</p> <p>1923 Worked at Yokohama Specie Bank, New York Branch. Worked with the Japanese Delegation at the Four Powers Consortium to help reorganize the finances of China.</p> <p>1924 Returned to Japan.</p>	<p>1925 Transferred to Beijing Branch of Yokohama Specie Bank. Introduced to Qi Baishi by a Japanese friend. Katsuizumi made his first two acquisitions of Qi’s work.</p> <p>1926–30 Purchased a large number of Qi’s paintings directly from Qi, and also from Qi’s former concubine, to whom they had been presented as gifts by the artist.</p>	<p>1930 Met Isamu Noguchi and introduced Noguchi to Qi Baishi.</p> <p>1932 Transferred to the head branch of Yokohama Specie Bank in Yokohama. On the eve of his departure, Qi Baishi presented Katsuizumi with a calligraphy scroll with an inscription.</p>	<p>1937 Member of the Japanese Economic Commission to America and Europe.</p>	
<p>ISAMU NOGUCHI</p>	<p>1904 Born in Los Angeles to American writer Leonie Gilmour and Japanese poet Yoné (Yonejirō) Noguchi.</p> <p>1906 Moved with his mother to Japan.</p>	<p>1913 Apprenticed to a carpenter and cabinet maker.</p> <p>1918 Sent to Interlaken School in Indiana.</p>	<p>1923 Enrolled in Columbia University as pre-med student. Concurrently attended sculpture classes at Leonardo da Vinci School. After two years, Noguchi left Columbia and devoted himself to sculpture.</p>	<p>1925 Exhibited at the National Academy of Art. Elected to the National Sculpture Society.</p> <p>1927 Received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Traveled to Paris, served as Brancusi’s studio assistant. Made first abstract sculpture.</p> <p>1929 Returned to New York and held his first solo exhibition at the Eugene Schoen Gallery; created portrait busts to support himself.</p>	<p>1930 Returned to Paris before traveling to Beijing in summer on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Arrived in Beijing in August, where he studied ink-brush painting with Qi Baishi.</p> <p>1931 Traveled to Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan. Met with his father, Yoné Noguchi in Tokyo and returned to New York in the Fall.</p> <p>1931–32 The exhibition of his <i>Peking Drawings</i> and sculptures traveled to New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities in the United States.</p>	<p>1937 Donated <i>Mother and Child</i> scroll to raise funds sponsored by the Chinese Women’s Relief Association.</p>	<p>1942 Voluntarily spent 6 months in Japanese-American relocation camp in Poston, Arizona.</p>

1945-1949	1950-1954	1955-1959	1960-1964	1965-1969	1970-1979	1980-1984	1985-1989
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<p>WORLD EVENTS</p> <p>1945 Start of the Allied occupation of Japan</p> <p>1949 Formation of People's Republic of China</p>	<p>1950 Start of the Korean War</p>	<p>1955 Civil Rights movement began in the United States</p>	<p>1964 Students protested against U.S. involvement in Vietnam War</p>	<p>1966 Start of the Cultural Revolution</p>	<p>1972 Nixon visited China</p> <p>1979 China introduced one-child policy to address overpopulation</p>		<p>1989 Tiananmen Square protests</p>
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<p>QI BAISHI</p> <p>1946 Painting exhibitions held in Nanjing and Shanghai.</p>	<p>1953 Elected President of the Association of Chinese Artists.</p> <p>1954 Elected the Hunan province representative of the National People's Congress.</p>	<p>1955 Collaborated with other important Chinese artists on the large-scale work <i>Eternal Peace</i> for presentation to the World Peace Conference.</p> <p>1956 Awarded the 1955 World Peace Prize by the World Peace Council.</p> <p>1957 Died in Beijing.</p>					
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<p>SOTOKICHI KATSUIZUMI</p> <p>1945–47 Advisor to General MacArthur on economic matters, credited with providing assistance to Japan's economic recovery.</p> <p>1949 Donated 11 Chinese paintings (9 by Qi Baishi) and one of Isamu Noguchi's <i>Peking Drawings</i> to the University of Michigan Museum of Art.</p>			<p>1962 Trip to America following a fire at his home in Tokyo that destroyed his house and killed his wife.</p>	<p>1968 Published the English translation of <i>A Japanese Sees the US: Penetrating Opinions of the Good and Not So Good in American Life</i> (the Japanese version had been published in 1964).</p>	<p>1970 Director of the Industrial Productivity Consultant Office, Tokyo.</p>		<p>1985 Died in Japan.</p>
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<p>ISAMU NOGUCHI</p> <p>1949 Received Bollingen Foundation Fellowship to research a book on "environments of leisure"; the grant enabled Noguchi to travel extensively in Europe and Asia.</p>	<p>1950 Commissioned to create a memorial room for his father at Keio University, Tokyo.</p> <p>1951 Designed his first Akari light sculptures (lamps).</p> <p>1952 Completed <i>Two Bridges for Peace Park</i>, Hiroshima, Japan.</p>	<p>1956 Created <i>Gardens for UNESCO</i>, Paris.</p>	<p>1961 Established studio in Long Island City, Queens, NY.</p>	<p>1968 Retrospective exhibition was held at The Whitney Museum of American Art; publication of his autobiography, <i>A Sculptor's World</i>.</p>	<p>1970 Created <i>Fountains for World Expo 1970</i>, Osaka, Japan.</p>	<p>1982 Designed and began construction of garden museum at Noguchi's studio in Shikoku, Japan.</p> <p>1984 Received New York State Governor's Art Award and the Japanese-American Citizens League Biennial Award.</p>	<p>1985 The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum in New York opened to the public.</p> <p>1986 Received the Kyoto Prize.</p> <p>1987 Received the National Medal of Arts, presented by President Ronald Reagan.</p> <p>1988 Died in New York.</p>
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