

QIU TI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO JUELANSHE AND THE INTERSECTION OF
MODERNIST IDEOLOGY, PUBLIC RECEPTIVITY, AND PERSONAL IDENTITY FOR A
WOMAN OIL PAINTER IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Despite her pioneering actions as one of the first female oil painters in China, Qiu Ti (丘堤, 1906-1958) remains on the periphery of China's modernist art movement. This dissertation repositions her to the center of a lively early twentieth-century dialogue about new roles for women in China's art world. Focusing on her involvement with the influential art group Juelanshe (决澜社, often translated Storm Society), this study reassess her professional identity and the impact her membership had on the 1930s Shanghai art community. Examining contemporary magazines, essays on modernist art theories, art group manifestos, and the author's own interviews with the artist's children, this dissertation sheds new light on Qiu Ti's contributions. It demonstrates that, though her career ended early, the daring Qiu Ti embraced new styles and genres of modernist art with the same adventurous spirit as her male colleagues.

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LIST OF IMAGES

- 0.1 Qiu Ti. From Cheng Shuhua and Philip Tinari, ed. *Schudy* (Nanjing Shi: Jiangsu jiao yu chu ban she, 2006).
- 0.2 Pang Xunqin, *Sons of Earth*, lost. *Dazhong huabao* 12 (Oct. 1934): 22.
- 0.3 Ni Yide, *Summer*, 1932, oil on canvas, reprinted in Kuiyi Shen, “The Lure of the West: Modern Chinese Oil Painting,” In Julia Frances Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, and Jonathan D. Spence, eds. *A Century in Crisis : Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum: Harry N. Abrams, 1998): 175.
- 1.1 A youthful Qiu Ti years before she met Pang Xunqin. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 1.2 Fang Junbi, *Nude (Renti 人体)*, *Meishu shenghuo* 4 (Jul 1934): 5.
- 1.3 Pan Yuliang, *Landscape of the Tsien Tang River, (Qiantang jiangpan 钱塘江畔)*, “The Young Companion's Series of Contemporary Paintings by Chinese Artists Section II [O]CCIDENTAL: NO.8” *Liangyou* 93 (1934).
- 1.4 “Exposition of Storm Society Paintings,” *Shidai huabao* (Nov 1933).
- 1.5 “Juelanshe jiang 决澜社奖” *Shidai huabao* 5.4 (Nov 1933).
- 1.6 *Liangyou* 90 (Jul 1934): 14.
- 1.7 “Literature and Art Pictorial: Comparison with the Ancient Books” (*Yishu huabao: guben duizhao 艺术画报：古本对照*) *Xiaoshuo yuebao* (July 1934).
- 1.8 *Dazhong huabao* 13 (Nov 1934): 33.
- 1.9 “Juelanshe de yi qun jiqi zuopin 决澜社的一群及其作品,” *Qingnian jie* 8.3 (Oct 1935).
- 2.1 Qiu Ti, *Flower*, oil on canvas, lost. From Pang Tao, ed. *The Storm Society and Post-Storm Art Phenomenon* (Taipei: Chin Show Publishing Co., Ltd, 1997): 35.
- 2.2 Qiu Ti, *Two Camellias*. Published in Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 2.3 Qiu Ti, *Wild Chrysanthemums*. Published in Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 2.4 Qiu Ti, *Mushrooms* (lost). Published in Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 2.5 Qiu Ti, *Doll*. Published in Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.

- 2.6 Upside-down Pang Xunqin painting in *Liangyou* exhibition review (bottom center). *Liangyou* 82 (1933): 30.
- 2.7 Ni Yide's solo exhibit, *Meishu shenghuo* 7 (Oct 1934): 12.
- 2.8 Wang Yachen 汪亚尘, *The paeonia albiflora* 芍药花 and Wu Hengqin 吴恒勤, *The two rabbits* 兔子, *Liangyou* 71 (1932).
- 2.9 Wang Yachen 汪亚尘, *Flower* 花, *Meishu shenghuo* 1 (Apr 1934): 14-15.
- 2.10 Lü Sibai 吕斯百, *Meishu shenghuo* 8 (Nov 1934): 8.
- 2.11 “Peonies by Y. C. Wang: The Young Companion’s Series of Contemporary Paintings by Chinese Artists. Section II Occidental: 3,” *Liangyou* 86 (1934): 18/19.
- 2.12 “Still Life by P. I. Chen: The Young Companion’s Series of Contemporary Paintings by Chinese Artists. Section II Occidental: 2,” *Liangyou* 85 (1934): 18/19.
- 2.13 “Flowers by F. M. Lin: The Young Companion’s Series of Contemporary Paintings by Chinese Artists. Section II Occidental: 4,” *Liangyou* 87 (1934): 18/19.
- 2.14 “Autumn—Season of the Arts,” *Liangyou* 71 (1932).
- 2.15 Role reversal? Pang Xunqin stands in the shadows behind Qiu Ti (on far right). Ni Yide and Zhou Duo stand in group on left. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 2.16 Fourth Annual Juelanshe Exhibition published in *Xinren zhoukan* 2.10 (Nov. 2 1935). The painting in the center of the right page belongs to Liang Baibo.
- 3.1 Qiu Ti, *Untitled*, 1933 or before, oil on canvas, lost and presumed destroyed *Shidai huabao* 5.1 (Nov 1933).
- 3.2 Qiu Ti, *Figure (Renti 人体)*. *Dazhong huabao* 13 (Nov 1934) 33.
- 3.3 Paul Cezanne, *Large Bathers*, 1905, oil on canvas, 132.4 x 219.1 cm, The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, USA.
- 3.4 Henri Matisse, *Joy of Life*, 1906, oil on canvas, 175 x 241 cm, The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, USA.
- 3.5 Henri Matisse, *Dance (II)*, 1910, oil on canvas, 260 x 391 cm, The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia.
- 3.6 Gauguin, *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*, 1897, oil on canvas, 139.1 x 374.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA.

- 3.7 Marc Chagall, *Red Nude*, 1908, oil on canvas, 90 x 70 cm, private collection.
- 3.8 Marc Chagall, *Nude over Vitebsk*, 1933, oil on canvas, 87 x 133 cm.
- 3.9 Roger Bissiere, *Three Adolescent Girls and a Dog to Guard Them*, 1925, oil on canvas, Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris.
- 3.10 “Exhibition of Hiunkin Pang Paintings” and “*Qiu zhi yanghua zhan*” 秋之洋画展 [Autumn’s Western-style Painting Exhibits] Possibly from *Zhonghua* no.29 (1934).
- 3.11 “*Shanghai zhi yanghua zhan* 上海之洋画展 [Shanghai’s Western Painting] *Shidai huabao* 3.4 (Oct 10 1932).
- 3.12 Pang Xunqin, *Nude (Luoti 裸体)*, *Liangyou* 72 (1932).
- 3.13 Pang Xunqin, *Wicker Chair (Tengyi 藤椅)*, *Shidai huabao* 3.8 (Dec 16, 1932).
- 3.14 “Art Picture Exhibition” *Liangyou* 65 (1932): 46-47.
- 3.15 Guan Liang (关良), *Nude (Luoti 裸女)*, “The Young Companion’s Series of Contemporary Paintings by Chinese Artists Section II OCCIDENTAL: NO.9” *Liangyou* 95 (Oct 1934).
- 3.16 Fang Ganmin, *White Doves (Baige 白鸽)* *Meishu shenghuo* 2 (May 1934): 10-11.
- 3.17 Wang Jiyuan, *Nude Woman*. *Yishu xunkan* 12 (Jan 1933).
- 3.18 Yang Taiyang, *Two Nude Women*, *Yishu xunkan* 12 (Jan 1933).
- 3.19 Ni Yide, *Female Nude (裸女)*, 1930s, oil painting. From Yang Qiuren. “Huiyi Ni Yide he Juelanshe.” *Meishujia* 31 (Apr 1983): 18-22. Original source not given.
- 3.20 Ni Yide at the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition, *Shidai huabao* 5.1 (Nov 1933).
- 3.21 Coverage of the Third Annual Juelanshe Exhibition. “In the Painting Exhibition of the Storm Society,” *Dazhong huabao* no. 12 (Oct. 1934): 22-23.
- 3.22 Pan Yuliang, *Song of Spring*, 1930, oil on canvas. From Anhui sheng bowuguan , ed. *Pan Yuliang meishu zuopin xuan* (Jiangsu: Jiangsu meishu chuban she, 1998): 59.
- 3.23 Edouard Manet, *Luncheon in the Grass*, 1863, oil on canvas, 208 x 265.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

- 3.24 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Bathers*, 1918, Oil on canvas, 80 x 65 cm (26 1/2 x 32 in), The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania.
- 3.25 Pan Yuliang, *Secret (Mimi 秘密)*, *Xinren zhoukan* 1.6 (Oct 22 1934). Also published in *Shidai huabao* 6.12 (Oct 10 1934).
- 3.26 Pang Xunqin, *Miss Zhong (钟小姐)*. *Liangyou huabao* 71 (Nov 1932).
- 3.27 Zhang Ruogu, “*Zhong Duqing nüshi huashi zhi yijiao*” 钟独清女士画室之一角 [A Corner of Ms. Zhong Duqing’s Studio], *Shidai huabao* 1.11 (Oct 1, 1930).
- 3.28 Fang Junbi, *Nude Woman (Luofu 裸妇)*. *Zhonghua yuebao (China Monthly)* 2.2 (1934).
- 3.29 Zhou Xijie, *Study*, from *Yi Feng* 3.5 (May 1935). From David Clarke, “Iconicity and Indexicality: The Body in Chinese Art.” *Semiotica* 155–1/4 (2005): 229–248.
- 3.30 Kuroda Seiki, *Morning Toilette*, 1893, oil on canvas, destroyed in WWII.
- 3.31 Yorozu Tetsugoro, *Nude Beauty*, 1912, oil on canvas.
- 3.32 “An uncivilized race in civilized world,” *Shidai huabao* 4.6 (May 16, 1933).
- 3.33 “*Chun xia jiaoxiangqu*” 春夏交响曲 [Symphony of Spring and Summer] *Shidai huabao* 4.6 (May 16, 1933).
- 3.34 Lang Jingshan, *Thinking afar (思悠悠)*, *Meishu shenghuo* 9 (December 1934).
- 3.35 “*Tige yundong, jianmei nüxing*” 体格运动、健美的女性 [Body building, *Jianmei Women*] *Xinren zhoukan* 2.41 (June 13, 1936) back cover.
- 3.36 “Modern Girls 时代姑娘,” *Shidai huabao* 4.12 (Aug 16, 1933).
- 3.37 “Nude Beauties in 1933, 一九三三年式裸体美,” *Shidai huabao* 4.12 (Aug 16, 1933).
- 3.38 *Xinren zhoukan* 1.27 (Mar 18, 1935).
- 3.39 *Yi Feng* 3.5 (May 1, 1935): 75. From Clarke, “Iconicity and Indexicality.”
- 3.40 Huang Ding, “*Nüxing de chongbai*” 女性的崇拜 [The Worship of Woman], *Meishu shenghuo* 2 (May 1934): 27.
- 3.41 Kang Nian, “*Mingli de gongju*” (名利的工具 [Tool for Fame and Wealth] *Meishu shenghuo* 9 (December 1934). Republished in Carrie Waara, “The Bare Truth: Nudes,

- Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials,” in Jason Kuo, ed. *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007).
- 3.42 Zhang Hongfei, “*Nühuajia de bianli*” 女画家的便利 [The Convenience of Female Painters] *Meishu shenghuo* 5 (August 1934). Republished in Waara, “The Bare Truth,” 2007.
- 3.43 Yu Feng, cartoon. *Shidai manhua* 24 (Dec 20, 1935). Caption reads: “画家：唉，可惜太没有肉的曲线了！我的意思说做模特儿应该胖一点才行！模特儿：先生！那您除非到洋楼里的太太小姐中去找才有啊！”
- 4.1 Qiu Ti, *Fruit*, 1935 or before, oil on canvas, in family’s possession. Published in Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.2 Qiu Ti, *Still Life*, 1935 or before, oil on canvas, in family’s possession. Published in Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.3 Detail of signature. Qiu Ti, *Fruit*, 1935 or before, oil on canvas, in family’s possession.
- 4.4 Pang Xunqin, *Portrait*, 1929, oil on canvas.
- 4.5 Detail of Fig. 2.7 Ni Yide, *Music*, 1934 or before. *Meishu shenghuo* 7 (Oct 1934).
- 4.6 Pang Xunqin, *Green Wine Vessel* (*Lüzun* 绿樽), 1930. Published in black-and-white in *Qingnian jie* 8.3 (Oct 1935).
- 4.7 Detail of Fig. 1.3 Zhou Duo, *Odds & Ends*, 1932 or before. *Qingnian jie* 8.3 (Oct 1935) and in coverage of the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition in *Shidai huabao* and *Liangyou*.
- 4.8 Detail of Signature. Qiu Ti, *Still Life*, 1935 or before, oil on canvas, in family’s possession.
- 4.9 Detail of book title. Qiu Ti, *Still Life*, 1935 or before, oil on canvas, in family’s possession.
- 4.10 Ni Gengye, *Girl Seated on a Sofa*, 1930, *yuefenpai* for Hatamen Cigarettes. Cover image from Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004).
- 4.11 Qiu Ti dressed in a fashionable *qipao* between the births of her two children in 1935. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.12 Pang Xunqin, *Portrait of Qiu Ti*, early 1930s, oil on canvas, lost. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.

- 4.13 Cover of *Meishu shenghuo* 4 (July 1934).
- 4.14 Cover of *Meishu shenghuo* 2 (May 1934).
- 4.15 Yu Ben, *The Unemployed*, 1941, oil on canvas. From Andrews, Shen, and Spence, *A Century in Crisis*, 1998, pl. 73.
- 4.16 Side by side pictorial reviews of the Fourth Annual Juelanshe Exhibition and the second Zhonghua duli meishu xiehui exhibition. *Liangyou* 111 (Nov 1935).
- 4.17 Qiu Ti, *Self-Portrait*, 1937, oil on canvas, lost. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.18 Photograph of Qiu Ti taken in Beijing around the time she painted her self-portrait. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.19 Yu Feng, *Self-Portrait*, 1935 or before, *Liangyou* 108 (Aug 1935): 40.
- 4.20 Qiu Ti dressed in folk textiles poses with family in Kunming in 1938. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.21 Qiu Ti's children Pang Jun and Pang Tao sit with some of the more than one hundred dolls she made for the relief effort, 1938. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.22 Qiu Ti, *Portrait of Pang Jun*, 1945, oil on canvas, in private collection. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.23 Qiu Ti, *Portrait of Pang Tao*, 1945, oil on canvas, lost. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 4.24 Pang Xunqin, *Portrait of Qiu Ti*, 1947, lost. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 5.1 Liang Xihong (梁锡鸿), *Zhongguo de yanghua yundong* 中国的洋画运动 [China's Western Painting Movement] *Daguanqiao* 大光报 (June 26, 1948). The article reproduces Qiu Ti's painting of sunflowers in a vase (second image from the right), which has been generically titled *Flowers (Hua 花)*. Photograph taken at a retrospective exhibition for Yang Qiuren, Guangdong Museum of Art, June 30 – July 31, 2011.
- 5.2 Qiu Ti sketches the composition of an oil painting in Beijing in 1954. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 5.3 Qiu Ti, Folk Dancing Costume Designs, 1953-1957. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.
- 5.4 Xiao Shufang (萧淑芳 1911-2005), Yu Feng, and Qiu Ti sketching garment designs. From Cheng and Tinari, *Schudy*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF IMAGES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
A (New) Life in Pictures: Qiu Ti's Campaign to Reinvent Herself through Photographs and Biographic Profiles in Contemporary Periodicals	15
CHAPTER TWO	
An Ornamental <i>Flower</i> : The Significance of Qiu Ti's Prizewinning Entry in the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition	48
CHAPTER THREE	
Modern Bodies on Display: The Prominence of the Female Nude in 1930s China and Qiu Ti's Modernist Contribution	79
CHAPTER FOUR	
Commodity, Domesticity, and the Demise of Qiu Ti's Career	119

CONCLUSION	149
CHRONOLOGY	159
BIBLIOGRAPHY	160

INTRODUCTION

An independent spirit and one of the first female oil painters in China, Qiu Ti (丘堤, 1906-1958) played a pivotal role in the development of modern Chinese art (Fig. 0.1).¹ This dissertation examines what impact Qiu Ti's membership had on Juelanshe (决澜社, often translated Storm Society), an influential Chinese modernist oil painting group active from 1931 to 1935, and, conversely, what her membership in the group may have meant for her. Focusing on four of her earliest paintings, I examine Qiu Ti's unique perspective within Juelanshe as the group's only female official member.² I also assess her singular status as the only recipient of a Juelanshe Exhibition Award, which the society bestowed upon one of her submissions to the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition in 1933; no other painting before or since can claim this honor. I inquire about the extent to which Qiu Ti, as a woman artist in a larger art community dominated by men and as the wife of Juelanshe's cofounder, Pang Xunqin (1906-1985), was a full and valued member of Juelanshe, and ask if the award—and perhaps her very membership in the society—might have been largely symbolic. By closely examining and contextualizing selected examples of her artistic activity within the larger cultural sphere of the modernist movement, this study reassesses Qiu Ti's professional contributions to the 1930s Shanghai art community. I find that, despite her pioneering actions, Qiu Ti's contributions to China's modernist movement have been little understood. This dissertation attempts to fill this void.

¹ Citing the Shanghai pronunciation of “堤,” Qiu Ti's daughter, Pang Tao, romanizes her mother's name as Ti instead of Di. I follow Pang Tao's romanization.

² Although a few scholars list Liang Baibo as a second female member of Juelanshe, chapter two briefly explores her status as an outside participant in the annual Juelanshe exhibitions.

The Founding of Juelanshe

Qiu Ti first met Pang Xunqin at his solo painting exhibition in 1932 and they became romantically involved soon after.³ Soon after the start of their relationship, she joined Juelanshe, which had been founded a year earlier by her future husband and his friend Ni Yide (倪貽德 1901-1970). As the cofounders, Pang Xunqin provided the energetic impetus for Juelanshe, while Ni Yide contributed his expertise as an established art critic. Pang Xunqin was a European-trained artist. Arriving in Paris at the tender age of nineteen to study at the Académie Julien, he did not return to China until four years later, in 1929. When he returned to his home country, he naturally chose to settle in Shanghai, the “Paris of the Orient.” However, he was disappointed in his new locale and felt that it lacked the lively atmosphere and worldly sophistication of the French capital. In an attempt to reform and vitalize the Shanghai art scene, Pang Xunqin boldly opened a Parisian-style art salon.

Pang Xunqin first made the acquaintance of Ni Yide in his short-lived salon. Ni Yide, for his part, studied at the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, graduating in 1922, and later spent a year studying in Japan. A good five years older than Pang Xunqin, Ni Yide had already established himself as an oil painter and art theorist with important connections in the local community by the time the younger artist arrived in Shanghai. Although the two struck up an immediate friendship, they did not launch their avant-garde painting society until two years later. At that time Ni Yide had returned from a temporary teaching position at the Wuchang Art School, and Pang Xunqin’s Parisian salon had already proved a financial failure and closed. Together, the two decided to form an artists’ association. Through group exhibitions and publications, the

³ Xu, Hong, “Early 20th-Century Women Painters in Shanghai,” in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds. *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004): 210. Prior to this meeting, Qiu Ti had graduated from the Shanghai Art Academy in 1928 and studied briefly in Tokyo before returning to Shanghai and joining the Research Institute of her alma mater.

members of the society could promote the modernist art movement and further their own careers. A career in *xihua* (Western-style painting) was not as lucrative as one in *guohua* (Chinese-style painting) and the opportunities for Juelanshe members to sell paintings were few and far between.⁴ Instead, Pang Xunqin and Ni Yide both relied on teaching positions for financial means.

Because of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Juelanshe postponed its first meeting until the winter of 1931. Including Pang Xunqin and Ni Yide, the group consisted of only seven initial members. The name, *Juelan*, refers to a type of storm-caused wave with destructive power, and was adopted as a metaphor for the energy with which the members hoped to modernize the Shanghai art scene.⁵ Clearly cognizant of its position on the outside of standard art practice, Juelanshe battled to shift the art scene to a modernist terrain modeled on that of Europe. The group successfully planned and held annual art exhibitions, which several popular Shanghai magazines covered with photographic reviews.⁶ Initially, group members hoped to publish a journal to advocate their cause, but could not afford the expense.⁷ Ni Yide's role as editor-in-chief of *Yishu xunkan* (*L'Art* 艺术旬刊), however, gave Juelanshe members the opportunity to

⁴ Ralph Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China," in John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (New South Wales: Wild Peony, 1993): 142.

⁵ An issue of the contemporary publication *Liangyou* gives "The Storm & Stress Society" as an English translation. *Liangyou* 82, (Nov 1933). Ken Lum observes that the group's name corresponds with that of a contemporary avant-garde art periodical *Der Sturm* (1910 to 1932), which "also promoted modern and revolutionary art (in the sense of promoting radical social and political change), emphasising the aspect of personal expression." Ken Lum, "Aesthetic Education in Republican China: A Convergence of Ideals," in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds. *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004): 223.

⁶ The coverage presented in the periodicals of the time is especially valuable today, as it is often the only extant evidence of many of the paintings in the exhibitions.

⁷ Croizier, 139.

publish several articles about their group.⁸ In these writings Juelanshe repeatedly trumpeted its radical status.

Like many artists' associations of its day, Juelanshe formulated a manifesto, which was published in *Yishu xunkan*. Unlike the 1930 manifesto of the Shanghai-based Chinese Painting Society,⁹ however, the Juelanshe document did not express a sense of nationalistic obligation. The group instead pulsed with a defiant spirit. Chastising the blasé state of the current art scene in China and promising to bring a sweeping wave of avant-garde art trends fresh from Europe, the manifesto singles out a few particularly inspirational European stylistic movements, namely Fauvism, Cubism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. Arguing against the need for mimesis or socially relevant subject matter in art, Juelanshe advocated the self-expression of the artist. In its concerns, the group's manifesto responds to earlier developments in the art community, in particular a heated debate initiated by Xu Beihong's scathing critique of the 1929 First National Art Exhibition. As Ralph Croizier explains in his article on Juelanshe, the manifesto and modernist dialogue forwarded by the members of the group meant that, "it was now a contest between westernizers over who possessed the real essence of Western art and supposedly the future of China."¹⁰

Despite the manifesto's call for a rhetoric-free "world of pure shapes," some of the paintings of Juelanshe cofounder Pang Xunqin do, in fact, invite political readings. His most controversial painting, *Sons of Earth*, was a highly charged criticism of ineffectual government

⁸ *Yishu xunkan* was a journal that the Muse Society (*Mo she* 摩社), an artist society largely associated with the Shanghai Academy of Art, published every ten days. Zhu Boxiong and Chen Ruilin, *Zhongguo xihua wushinian, 1898-1949* 中国细画五十年, 1898-1949 [Fifty years of Western painting in China] (Beijing: People's Art Publishing House, 1989): 301.

⁹ Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, "The Traditionalist Response to Modernity: The Chinese Painting Society of Shanghai," in Jason Kuo, ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007): 83-85.

¹⁰ Croizier, 140.

(Fig. 0.2). Its sympathetic depiction of a peasant-class family of flood victims supports a left-wing political view and Communist ideology. Unmistakable references to Christian iconography--the fence in the background mimicking the shape of a cross and the arrangement of the human figures resembling a Pietà composition—liken the flood fatalities to the sacrificial death of Jesus.¹¹ The title of the painting, which plays on the old designation of the Chinese emperor as the “Son of Heaven,” emphasizes the disparity of wealth between the classes in China.¹² Not all of Pang Xuqin’s paintings contain such blatant ideological content, but the political commentary apparent in this painting certainly was not lost on the audience when the artist displayed his painting at the Third Annual Juelanshe Exhibition.¹³

Ni Yide’s role as an art critic and his connections in the publishing world meant that many of his theories on art were published, and these provide great insight into the views held by the Juelanshe membership in general. In one essay, Ni Yide addresses the standard practice of dividing paintings into the two simplistic categories: *guohua* (Chinese-style painting) and *xihua* (Western-style painting).¹⁴ He argues that Western-style art had spread across the globe and that all art made by Chinese artists, whether of a traditional or modern style, should still be considered Chinese painting. Ni Yide felt that art should be categorized according to medium, such as oil painting or ink painting, rather than by stylistic tradition. In another essay Ni Yide derides the Chinese art community, and his arguments are quite illuminative of Juelanshe’s ideology as when he declares:

¹¹ Kuiyi Shen, “The Lure of the West: Modern Chinese Oil Painting,” In Julia Frances Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, and Jonathan D. Spence, eds. *A Century in Crisis : Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum: Harry N. Abrams, 1998): 176.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Zheng Shengtian, “Waves Lashed the Bund from the West: Shanghai’s Art Scene in the 1930s,” in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds. *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945*. (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004): 178-179.

Art! Art! We have talked a great deal about it in China for nearly 20 years. What have we accomplished? Speaking of the overall art scene, despite today's large number of art schools, where are the new talents they have trained? Although quite a few people have returned from studies abroad, where are their works? Some have collected several of the skeletal remains of the academic approach and viewed them as treasure. Others have learned a few of the basics of impressionism and felt quite content to stop there. Twentieth-century painting is developing rapidly and progressing radically, yet our painters have been completely out of touch with this development and have not been pursuing art for its own sake. Instead, they have been seeking personal gain and fighting among themselves. From a societal point of view, art education has not been popularised in society, so the public is still motivated by vulgar interests, without seeing any need for genuine art. Those who are relatively educated, however, have turned art into a means to illustrate fact. They do not care about technical matters of artistic expression, but will applaud collectively as long as they can find a subject matter that conveys meaning. This is the current state of our art scene, neither dead nor alive. Thus the young and more avant-garde painters among us should band together and create a new art movement. In China, the earlier Western painting movement has come to an end. Now is the dawning of a new era. This is what I often sense.¹⁵

For all his vibrant talk of revolutionizing art in China, Ni Yide's own art has been criticized as leaning to the conservative side. Kuiyi Shen characterizes his style as falling between two waves of artistic influence from Japan—one in the mid-1920s and the other occurring later in the 1930s.¹⁶ Shen explains that a painting titled *Summer* represents Ni Yide's move to a slightly more abstracted style as opposed to the more post-impressionistic style he had previously practiced (Fig. 0.3). Arguably, Ni Yide contributed more to Juelanshe through his dynamic and eloquently worded theoretical essays than the stylistic choices presented in his paintings.¹⁷

The other members of Juelanshe shared Ni Yide's ideological vision. A good deal older than the other members, Wang Jiyuan (王济远 1893-1975) nevertheless spoke of the group's

¹⁵ Ni Yide, "A Galaxy of the Storm Society (1 October 1935)," in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Ken Lum, and Zheng Shengtian, eds. *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004): 238.

¹⁶ Shen, "Lure of the West," 176.

¹⁷ Ken Lum identifies Ni Yide as "one of the key artist-intellectuals of China's first modernist movement." Lum, 223.

goals with equal enthusiasm, declaring, “We want to hit the rotten art of contemporary China with a powerful wave.”¹⁸ More recently, the youngest member of the group, Yang Taiyang (阳太阳 1909-2009), restated this intent. In a 2004 Chinese television interview, Yang Taiyang was asked about the society’s artistic goals. He replied:

One word, ‘innovation’. Our overall goal was, in the direction of modernism, to make something new. We wanted to break out of the mould of conservatism. Mainly, we wanted to innovate. We wanted to create something that expressed individuality. That’s it. After all, they did study in France. They had been to Japan and France, in an endeavor to bring Chinese painting up to date in the modern era. They had a progressive idea. A storm, as powerful as a tidal wave, was crashing down on the era.

Determining Qiu Ti’s Role

Recent scholarship on Juelanshe recognizes the pivotal role the group played in the development of modernist painting in 1930s China, but research focused on Qiu Ti remains limited. While a few studies offer fairly in-depth analyses of Juelanshe, such as Ralph Croizier’s “Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China,” a chapter in the 2004 exhibition catalogue *Shanghai Modern, 1919–1945*, and Li Chao’s *Kuangbiao jiqing—Juelanshe ji xiandai zhuyi yishu xiansheng*, little in these works pertains directly to Qiu Ti. Likewise, the single chapter dedicated to Juelanshe in Zhu Xiaoqing’s recent dissertation on Pang Xunqin barely touches on Qiu Ti. Scholarship focusing more directly on Qiu Ti mainly comprises biographical accounts and overviews of her entire oeuvre. An essay by Xu Hong, “Early 20th-Century Women Painters in Shanghai,” references Qiu Ti in a brief biography, but there is no discussion of her paintings. Two exhibition

¹⁸ Shen, “Lure of the West,” 176. Wang Jiyuan was thirteen years older than Pang Xunqin. The two had been roommates when Pang had first returned from Paris in 1929 and, presumably, it was through this relationship that he was later drawn into the organization. Wang Jiyuan participated in the group for only the first two years. Croizier, 146.

catalogues, *Three Generations of Chinese Modernism* and *Schudy*, provide rare studies specifically concentrated on Qiu Ti, but both encompass the artist's entire life and are confined by a biographical methodology. These two broad surveys of Qiu Ti's oeuvre do not offer thorough analysis of individual paintings or provide focused investigation of cultural issues, nor do they answer many questions concerning her relationship with the group. Ultimately, these studies emphasize Qiu Ti's dramatic life story at the expense of a deeper understanding of her goals as an artist.

This dissertation advances our understanding of Qiu Ti and her art by centering on paintings she submitted to Juelanshe and examining the context in which these paintings were created and exhibited. Concentrated analysis of these four paintings allows the evaluation of her relationship with Juelanshe and the investigation of cultural factors contributing to her work. By focusing on the distinct period of her involvement with Juelanshe, this dissertation provides an in-depth assessment of her complex identity as a female modernist painter and fresh examination of what it meant for her to be a member of the Juelanshe. In the process, I offer a new assessment of the societal conditions in which female modernist oil painters worked. In my analysis of the paintings and written work of her contemporaries, I explore the artistic milieu that impacted her career as an artist. Thus, this study sheds new light not only on the contributions of Qiu Ti and other female artists to modernist art in China, but also on the cultural contributions of an influential artist organization to the modernization of the uniquely cosmopolitan city of Shanghai in the 1930s.

Much remaining evidence of paintings by Qiu Ti and other members of Juelanshe consists of articles by and about the artists and photographic exhibition reviews in magazines of the period, and these primary sources open especially important avenues of research. *Yishu*

xunkan contains scores of articles by the members of Juelanshe, most notably theoretical essays by Ni Yide and personal musings by Pang Xunqin, as well as illustrations of Western and Chinese modernist art that the society members held to be most relevant to their interests. *Meishu shenghuo* and *Liangyou* are two other important sources of information about art and culture in 1930s Shanghai. These two publications present stories on a wide variety of art, artists, and exhibitions of the time and reflect the interests of Juelanshe's audience and Shanghai society at large. *Shidai huabao* contains coverage of Qiu Ti's unique award, and *Funü zazhi* not only sheds light on women's issues of the period, but also offers perspectives of women artists who were Qiu Ti's peers. I have also conducted interviews with the children of Qiu Ti and analyzed paintings by Qiu Ti and her colleagues. Of Qiu Ti's four submissions to Juelanshe's annual exhibitions, only two are extant today. The other two submissions are known through black-and-white photographic reproductions. This study also makes use of significant and previously undocumented finds, including a new addition to her oeuvre of a striking figure painting, which I discovered in a Republican-period pictorial, and the artist's own handwritten account of her study in Japan.

Drawing on these sources, my dissertation reveals that Qiu Ti pushed the boundaries of convention and struggled to stand on common ground with her male peers. In Qiu Ti's generation, female artists, who had long practiced their craft behind the closed doors of their households' private quarters, sought recognition as professional artists. Women made these gains after the reforms of the late Qing and early Republican period opened new opportunities for education to them. Not long into the Republican period, a significant number of women tested the waters of the workforce. At the same time that women began to join the ranks of professional artists, modernist art was making waves in the Shanghai art community. Women like Qiu Ti

contributed directly to this art movement as students, professional artists, members of art societies, and college teachers. Together with their male colleagues, women artists pursued and promoted the exciting new styles and ideologies of modernist art.¹⁹ Despite their new opportunities, however, most women artists remained near the margins of the art community, their successes modest and fleeting.

Though more successful than most women artists, Qiu Ti teetered on the edge of social respectability and professional acceptance. Her marriage to Pang Xunqin was a second start in life following a secret divorce.²⁰ Women professionals were a growing trend in China and popular culture celebrated women artists both individually and as a phenomenon, but both Juelanshe and the press repeatedly pointed to the exceptionality of Qiu Ti's role within the group as its exclusive female member. As a woman career artist of the Republican period, Qiu Ti was not just a minority in her chosen field, but also her area of specialization was unconventional—in 1930s China, oil painting remained an avant-garde form of art that involved foreign media, techniques, and styles. As a member of Juelanshe, she participated in an artists' organization that proudly agitated the Chinese art world with its radical ideology.²¹

This dissertation opens with an overview of Qiu Ti's personal history prior to her involvement with Juelanshe and, through an investigation of contemporaneous press coverage, analyzes how Qiu Ti was received both in Juelanshe and in society at large. Depictions of women in print media indicate how modern perceptions of womanhood—such as Talented

¹⁹ Tao Yongbai and Li Shi, *Shiluo de lishi: Zhongguo nüxing huihua shi* 失落的历史：中国女性绘画史 [Lost History: The History of Chinese Women's Painting] (Changsha Shi: Hunan meishu chuban she, 2000): 120-121.

²⁰ A newly accessible option for the women of the Republican period, divorce was still rare and it is not surprising that Qiu Ti chose to keep her first marriage hidden.

²¹ Juelanshe perhaps was not quite as controversial as its members wanted it to appear. The subject of plentiful media coverage in magazines and newspapers, the members of the group come across more as media darlings than as rebels of the art scene, as they saw themselves. Moreover, many Juelanshe members and other modernists survived by teaching in art departments at national universities and private art schools, where they received institutional support and trained the next generation of artists.

Woman (*cainü*), New Woman (*xin nǚxing*), Modern Girl (*modeng gōu'er*), and Flower Vase (*huaping*)—evolved along with the rapidly changing social status of Chinese women. Despite dramatic social changes, however, marriage continued to limit professional opportunities for women painters of the Republican period, as it had for their predecessors. Media coverage in Shanghai magazines provides tantalizing evidence of the impact Qiu Ti's marriage to Juelanshe cofounder Pang Xunqin had on the public's reception of her artistic career. Drawing on six photographic and biographical profiles of Qiu Ti published over the course of two years, my dissertation is the first detailed study of Qiu Ti's professional persona. By critically examining these sources, most of which historians have never analyzed before, I determine that her marriage to Pang Xunqin initially won Qiu Ti special consideration as an artist, but she was quickly eclipsed by her husband.

Against this background, I look for evidence of Qiu Ti's status as an avant-garde artist in her works. Chapter two assesses *Flower*, which received the Juelanshe Exhibition Award and which Ni Yide acclaimed as a non-representational expression of artistic vision. This chapter questions whether the painting was as radical as Ni Yide asserts or as controversial as current scholarship insinuates. Identifying the subject of the painting as an ornamental coleus plant, I argue that, rather than a reactionary jab at the art establishment, *Flower* is similar in style and content to the work of Qiu Ti's peers. I trace all evidence of controversy to Ni Yide's essay, which ties into Juelanshe's ideological mission and reflects the active debate in the larger art community about the role of art in society. The participation of another female artist within Juelanshe, Liang Baibo, brings Ni Yide's designation of Qiu Ti as the group's only female member into question. This, linked with particular circumstances surrounding the formal recognition of Qiu Ti as the recipient of the Juelanshe award, suggests that the group's

presentation of the award was motivated by more than the critical assessment of the painting's quality. In contrast to the prevailing assumptions of current scholarship, I conclude that the public presentation of the painting and the painter may have been manipulated to suit collective interests and further the group's modernist agenda.

The third chapter relocates Qiu Ti's second submission to the Annual Juelanshe Exhibition of 1933, an abstract rendering of nude female figures in an idyllic outdoor setting, to the center of a vivid modernist dialogue on the nude in art. Investigation of what prompted Qiu Ti to create this painting, which is unlike anything else in her oeuvre, requires consideration of the genre of the nude in modern Chinese painting and what it meant when a woman painted nude subjects in China. In contrast to the impediments Japanese women experienced, Chinese women artists were relatively free to paint and exhibit images of female nudes. Current scholarship on popularity of the body in 1920s and 30s China generally ascribes women the role of passive spectator, but I show that women artists actively engaged in the trend of painting the nude. I explore in detail three factors in early 1930s China that encouraged Qiu Ti and other female artists to paint and exhibit images of female nudes—the widespread exposure and acceptance of nude imagery, the prevailing modernist art ideology espoused by theorists such as Ni Yide, and the feminist aspirations of the women in her field as revealed in articles by two woman participants in the First National Art Exhibition. Modernist and feminist theory on the nude in art written by artists who were Qiu Ti's peers demonstrates that, although the theoretical dialogue of her time encouraged a male artist/female model dichotomy, many women—including Qiu Ti herself—actively promoted the depiction of female nudes in art.

Qiu Ti's back and forth between margins and center ultimately ended with her return to the periphery of professional recognition, where she remained for over half a century. The fourth

chapter, which highlights her submissions to the final Juelanshe exhibition in 1935, observes that the career advances made by Qiu Ti and her female colleagues produced little permanent change. First, I demonstrate how one of the paintings—a precisely detailed still-life of assorted commercial goods—echoes the riot of influences at play in Qiu Ti’s life at that time: the role of women in Shanghai consumer culture; the national goods campaign and the patriotic domestication of modern women’s activities in the mid 1930s; and the rise of a domestic arts and crafts movement. On the one hand, the painting can be read as a positive reflection of the life of a woman who “had it all”—a professionally prestigious career and a rewarding family life. At the same time, the painting’s singularly domestic focus, the product of the tumultuous social changes of mid 1930s China, foreshadows the different direction Qiu Ti’s life subsequently took. Following the exhibition, Juelanshe quietly disbanded. Shortly thereafter, Japan invaded, driving Qiu Ti, her small family, and the majority of the intellectual community inland. I argue that the struggles of wartime undermined women’s efforts to preserve their careers, forcing Qiu Ti and many others to forsake the occupational gains made in the 1920s and 30s. Sent back to the periphery, they played supportive roles in the home, while their husbands monopolized resources and recognition.

A glance at history quickly affirms that the struggles and disappointments Qiu Ti endured as a woman artist were more routine than remarkable. Concentrating on Western women artists, feminist art historians such as Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollock document how the entrenched biases of the art establishment long stifled women’s attempts at professional parity in art.²² A small handful of scholars, most notably those included in the singular anthology *Flowering in the*

²² See Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” *ARTnews* (Jan 1971): 22-39, 67-71 and Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity, and the Histories of Art* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

Shadows, have turned their attention to women practicing traditional arts in East Asia.²³ Recent interest in Japanese and Chinese modernist women artists, such as Alicia Volk's article on Katsura Yuki and an exhibit of women artists' self portraits at the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, indicates a growing desire to understand the complex intersection of art, gender, and the social change that East Asia underwent with the influx of new stimuli from the West.²⁴

No better example of this collision of disparate worlds can be found than Qiu Ti's interactions with Juelanshe. As a case study, she offers the chance to better understand the complicated role women career artists played in the development of modern Chinese art. Irrespective of their groundbreaking efforts, she and other Chinese women artists remained near the margins of the art community. Despite the dramatic advantages she enjoyed over her predecessors in both the East and the West, Qiu Ti ultimately attained no greater measure of success. For a brief interval, however, the momentous realization of gender equality seemed just on the horizon and she reveled in belonging to an influential art organization. As the idealistic young Qiu Ti embraced the daring new styles and genres introduced from Paris, the capital of the international art world, she did so in step with her male colleagues.

²³ Marsha Weidner, ed, *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990).

²⁴ Alicia Volk, "Katsura Yuki and the Japanese Avant-Garde," *Woman's Art Journal* 24.2 (Winter 2004): 3-9. Central Academy of Fine Arts Art Museum, *Self Image: Woman Art in China (1920-2010)* 自我画像：女性艺术在中国 (1920—2010), Dec. 17, 2010—Feb. 20, 2010, <http://www.cafamuseum.org/en/Exhibitions/ziwohuaxiang/Text>.

CHAPTER ONE

A (New) Life in Pictures:

Qiu Ti's Campaign to Reinvent Herself through Photographs and Biographic Profiles in Contemporary Periodicals

QIU TI'S PAST

The Formative Years

In the early 1930s Qiu Bizhen (丘碧珍), a young woman originally from the little town of Xiapu in northeastern Fujian province, was busily reinventing her life (Fig. 1.1). It was around this time that she took Qiu Ti as her new name and briefly adopted a Romanized rendering of it, Schudy, as a signature. She joined the high-profile Shanghai artist group Juelanshe, won an exhibition award, and had her image and profile published in several popular magazines. A whirlwind romance with her colleague Pang Xunqin soon led to the start of a family. Meanwhile, previous episodes in the young artist's life—her personal background, her time spent in Japan, and a prior romantic attachment—quietly slipped into the past.²⁵

Whether deliberately suppressed or simply forgotten, aspects of Qiu Ti's upbringing provide clear foreshadowing of the independent spirit she employed during her time of collaboration with Juelanshe. Born in the final years of the Qing dynasty, Qiu Ti (or Qiu Bizhen as she was then known) enjoyed the new social equalities extended to women in the Republican period. As a girl she attended primary school—first enrolling in Xiapu County No. 1 Primary

²⁵ Qiu Ti kept even the most fundamental information, such as her real age and the identity of her parents, hidden from most of the world, including her children. In a 2009 interview Pang Tao recalls that she and her brother did not know their mother's actual age until chancing upon the information after Qiu Ti's death. *Schudy* recounts how Pan Xunqin, when pressed by his children about the identity of their grandfather, teased that Qiu Ti's father was none other than Qiu Ji'er, the famous British politician Winston Churchill. Ni Jun. "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 83.

School (*Xiapu xianli di yi gaodeng xuexiao* 霞浦县立第一高等小学) in 1911 and then transferring to Xiapu County Girls' Middle School (*Xiapu xian nüzi gaodeng xiaoxue zhongxue bu* 霞浦县女子高等小学中学部) in 1915—and it was during this time that a thirteen year-old Qiu Ti was particularly struck by the radical ideals of the May Fourth movement and participated in social reform actions.²⁶ In 1920 Qiu Ti and her primary school classmate You Shou (游寿 1906-1994) entered Fuzhou Women's Normal School (*Fuzhou nüzi shifan xuexiao* 福州女子师范学校). While there Qiu Ti befriended two additional girls who showed early artistic promise and later attained recognition for their talents in the arts. Collectively they were known as the Four Talented Women of East Fujian (*Mindong si cainü* 闽东四才女). Qiu Ti's closest friend, You Shou, grew up to become an archeologist and an accomplished calligrapher; Cao Yingzhuang (曹英庄 1904-1988) specialized in poetry; Pang Yuke (潘玉珂 1908-?) excelled in *guohua*;²⁷ and Qiu Ti dedicated herself to oil painting.²⁸ During this time Qiu Ti cut her hair short in a dramatically modern style, and in the summers of 1923 and 1924, she and You Shou returned to their hometown to lead door-to-door campaigns aimed at teaching women and children to read.

Following her graduation from Fuzhou Women's Normal School in 1925, Qiu Ti's personal history becomes much less transparent. Eventually, she moved to Shanghai and enrolled

²⁶ Ibid. Ni Jun states that at this time Qiu Ti read *Xin Qingnian* magazine and became familiar with the ideals espoused by Chen Duxiu and Hu Shizhi.

²⁷ Perhaps the most radical of the four young women, Pan Yuke wore men's clothes and kept her hair cropped short like a man's. Rejected at birth for being a girl, she was coldly tossed into a sewer. She miraculously survived for two nights and was finally rescued, but afterwards endured the nickname "Sewer Sister." Pan Yuke dressed as a male since childhood and, after refusing an arranged marriage at age sixteen, remained single her entire life. In an interview, Pang Tao recalled an occasion during her own childhood when she was shocked to see her mother embrace a strange man who had just arrived. She quickly learned, however, that the visitor was not a man at all, but in fact her mother's dear friend Pan Yuke.

²⁸ It is difficult to precisely identify when the group of young women were first referred to as the Four Talented Women of East Fujian, however, the relative anonymity of Qiu Ti following her death suggests that the term originated during her lifetime and most likely during her years of schooling at Fuzhou Women's Normal School.

in the Western Painting Department in the Shanghai Art Academy (*Shanghai meishu zhuanke xuexiao* 上海美术专科学校).²⁹ While school records confirm that Qiu Ti graduated in the second class of the Western Painting Department at the Shanghai Art Academy in 1928, the exact time of her entry into the program is unknown. Similarly, details about Qiu Ti's time spent in Japan, where she went to continue her studies after graduation, remain unclear. No Japanese record of Qiu Ti's enrollment in any school there has yet been found.³⁰ The only extant documentation concerning Qiu Ti's studies in Japan comes from a personal data form Qiu Ti submitted to the Democratic Women's Federation years later.³¹ In the section for educational background she records having graduated from Tokyo East Asia Japanese Language Professional School (*Tokyo tōa nihongono senmon gakkō* 东京东亚日语专科学校) as well as having attended the Tokyo Pacific Ocean Art School (*Tokyo taiheiyō bijustu gakkō* 东京太平洋美術学校).³²

Qiu Ti returned to Shanghai around the end of 1929. She secured a position as researcher in the oil painting department at the Shanghai Art Academy and at first moved into the apartment of her old friend Pan Yuke, who was now a researcher in the academy's *guohua* department.³³

²⁹ During her study at Shanghai Art Academy the faculty included one Japanese oil painting instructor, Tsujimoto Hiroshi, as well as eventual Juelanshe co-founder Ni Yide. Ni Yide had graduated from Shanghai Art Academy in 1922 and was employed as an oil painting instructor after graduation. In the fall of 1927 he went to Japan to study at Kawabata Painting School, but left Japan in protest of the Japanese attack in Shandong (Jinan Incident, late April-early May 1928). It is possible that Qiu Ti took courses from Ni Yide during her initial study at the Shanghai Art Academy.

³⁰ The 2006 catalogue mentions that Japanese art historian and Republican-period painting specialist Tsuruta Takeyoshi conducted a search for records of Qiu Ti in Japan but was unsuccessful. Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 85.

³¹ Qiu Ti, Shanghai Democratic Women's Preparatory Committee Member Resume 上海市民主妇联筹备委员简历表.

³² Many thanks to Professor Li Chao of Shanghai University who, having uncovered this important document in the Shanghai Municipal Archive, kindly shared a copy with me.

³³ Records of their appointments can be found in Izumi-shi Kubosō Kinen Bijutsukan, Kubosō Kinen Bunka Zaidan, Toyo Bijutsu Kenkyujo, *Kiyō: Minkoku-ki bijutsu gakkō kagyō dogakuroku, bijutsu daitai kaiinroku shūsei, 2-3-4.*

Pan Yuke's correspondence with Pang Tao in the 1990s indicates that the period following her return from Japan was a time of uncharacteristic depression for Qiu Ti. Pan Yuke writes, "After Qiu Ti returned to Shanghai from Japan, her body was weak and her mind was depressed. She briefly lived in my home, so we often were able to discuss our innermost thoughts."³⁴ Later, Qiu Ti moved into a rundown women's apartment building and her condition continued to deteriorate.

A dramatic sequence of changes that redefined Qiu Ti's life, however, began in the fall of 1932. In September of that year Qiu Ti's spirits brightened tremendously when she attended Pang Xunqin's solo exhibition and met the artist. As a modernist oil painter intent on reforming China's art world and himself recently returned from abroad, Pang Xunqin impressed Qiu Ti greatly.³⁵ She left the exhibition with a newfound excitement, and a love affair between the two emerged soon after. By the following year she had experienced major changes in her personal and professional life; a relationship and failed pregnancy with Pang Xunqin and a high-profile membership in Juelanshe.

Questions about Qiu Ti's Personal History

A number of uncertainties cloud Qiu Ti's biography: she deliberately concealed her age; the exact date of her entry into the Shanghai Art Academy is unknown; and she refused to tell her children about her time in Japan. Moreover, decades after Qiu Ti's death, revelations from friends led to the startling discovery that Qiu Ti had been married prior to her meeting with Pang

紀要:民国期美術学校畢業同学錄·美術团体會員錄集成 (Izumi-shi: Izumi-shi Kubosō Kinen Bijutsukan, 1991). At that time, the position of researcher at a college was roughly equivalent to that of today's graduate student.

³⁴ "丘堤从日本回到上海后,身体很弱,心情也有些苦闷。她暂时住在我家里,所以我们经常能够讲讲心里话。" Reprinted in Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 84.

³⁵ Pang Xunqin returned to Shanghai from Paris in 1930, the same year that Qiu Ti returned from Japan.

Xunqin. Pan Yuke was apparently the first to mention this surprising fact, and did so in a series of letters dated to 1992.³⁶ Despite repeated inquiries from Qiu Ti's children, Qiu Ti's closest friend, You Shou, remained intriguingly silent on the matter, never confirming nor denying a previous marriage.³⁷ In the fall of 2010, however, Qiu Ti's daughter learned that late in her life You Shou had discretely confided to a pupil details about Qiu Ti's prior marriage.³⁸

The combination of material found in Pan Yuke's letters and the account of You Shou's student provides a reasonable amount of information about Qiu Ti's obscure first marriage.³⁹ Based on this material, it seems that following her graduation from Fuzhou Women's Normal School in 1925, Qiu Ti married a man with the surname Lin, and the two immediately left for Beiping (modern Beijing). They pursued different majors at separate universities; Qiu Ti attended Beiping Art Academy (*Beiping yishu zhuanke xuexiao* 北平艺术专科学校) while Lin studied political economics at another institution. Not long after moving to Beiping, Qiu Ti fell ill and had to return to the south where she attended the Shanghai Art Academy. After her graduation in July 1928, Qiu Ti and her husband left for Japan. The exact date of the couple's return to China is contested, but they arrived back in Shanghai by the start of 1930 at the very latest.⁴⁰ Lin and Qiu Ti lived in Shanghai for a time, but were unable to find employment.

Sometime in 1930, Lin left Shanghai to take a post at a middle school in his hometown in Fujian.

Qiu Ti, who had grown to regret her marriage to a man wholly unsympathetic to her artistic

³⁶ After hearing about her mother's previous marriage from Pan Yuke, Pang Tao questioned her half-aunt, Qiu Zhongtang who categorically rejected even the possibility of an earlier marriage. Although she would have been only 9 years old at the time of the first marriage, Qiu Zhongtang argued that her older sister could not have married without the knowledge of the entire family including herself.

³⁷ Pang Tao, interview by Amanda Sue Wright, 19 June 2010, digital audio recording.

³⁸ Pang Tao, email correspondence, September 2010.

³⁹ All information provided in this paragraph is based on September 2010 email correspondence and 19 June 2010 interview with Pang Tao, as well as a letter dated *Yuanxiao* (15th night of the first lunar month) 1992 from Pan Yuke that Pang Tao shared with me during our interview.

⁴⁰ Pan Yuke and You Shou's narratives differ in this area. Pan Yuke wrote that Qiu Ti was in Japan for just over a year and studied at an art school there. You Shou had told Pang Tao that Qiu Ti was in Japan for two years and only studied at language school and then traveled and visited art museums on her own.

interests, stayed behind in Shanghai. Both friends confirm that the couple, incompatible from the start and having spent very little of their marriage actually living together, decided to divorce.

The account provided by Pan Yuke and You Shou's pupil helps to explain a number of the questions that have surrounded Qiu Ti's life. In all likelihood, Qiu Ti was depressed following the dissolution of her marriage and her suppression of facts such as her real age and details of events occurring in the late 1920s served to hide the existence of a relationship prior to Pang Xunqin. Although she credited a deep resentment of the Japanese invasion as the reason for her silence, it is more likely that Qiu Ti refused to speak of her time in Japan in order to conceal personal details and a timeline of events that threatened to reveal her prior marriage.⁴¹

It is the decisive actions that Qiu Ti took—her determination to rewrite her own narrative and join a radically modernist painting society—that most tellingly reveal her commitment to the reform movement and her identification with an emergent social role, that of the “New Woman” (*xin nüxing* 新女性), an informed woman of the modern era who broke with the restrictive social codes of the past. As a New Woman, Qiu Ti forged a bold new path, yet at the same time, she was identified as one of the Four Talented Women of East Fujian. By Qiu Ti's time, the designation Talented Woman (*cainü* 才女) was increasingly dismissed as an archetype linked to an antiquated past. For many reformers, it had come to signify a woman of some literary skill who lived under and perpetuated an oppressive system that only allowed her limited access to knowledge. Recent scholarship demonstrates that the rise of the New Woman archetype

⁴¹ Even if she had developed a deep hatred for the Japanese, it is still curious that the sentiment would have led Qiu Ti to refrain from discussing her studies in Japan. Study abroad was a valuable credential for early twentieth-century Chinese artists and despite ongoing Japanese invasions articles in popular magazines evidence that the general Chinese public considered an artist's training in Japan highly significant. In fact, Qiu Ti herself is noted to have studied in Japan in at least two of her magazine profiles. It would appear therefore that rather than wanting to suppress all evidence of her study in Japan, Qiu Ti simply wished to avoid going into detail with her children about a potentially delicate topic.

symbolized the triumph of modern social progress over China's history of feudal backwardness. In order for the rhetoric of the modern liberated woman to succeed, it had to discredit the notion of the *cainü*, whose existence as an earlier model of educated woman in China's history proved problematic.⁴²

Both heralded as a Talented Woman and acting out the prerogatives of the New Woman, Qiu Ti exemplifies the tension between historic and modern notions of womanhood. Not as straightforward as social reformers wished to portray, modern social roles required Qiu Ti, like many women of the early twentieth century, to “juggl[e] multiple identities.”⁴³ A brief consideration of Republican-period perceptions of modern womanhood will help contextualize Qiu Ti's actions and set the stage for an examination of how she negotiated her place in society.

“AGE OF FLOWER VASES”: THE PRESENTATION OF CAREER WOMEN IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY MAGAZINES

New Women

In the early twentieth century, radical social reformers championed the elevation of women's rights and expanded women's vocational opportunities. Frequently identified as the “woman problem” (*funü wenti* 妇女问题) in newspapers and popular magazines, women's issues were both embraced and manipulated by divergent factions.⁴⁴ The nationalist government

⁴² Hu Ying, “Naming the First New Woman,” *NAN NÜ* 3.2 (2001): 199-206. Paul Bailey also discusses early twentieth-century attitudes towards the *cainü* and the New Woman, as well as analyzes pervasive social anxiety over the perceived character flaws of women. Paul Bailey, “Women Behaving Badly: Crime, Transgressive Behavior and Gender in Early Twentieth Century China,” *NAN NÜ* 8.1 (2006): 156-197. Joan Judge describes the vilification of *cainü* for the purpose of spurring reform in the late Qing dynasty. Joan Judge, “Blended Wish Images: Chinese and Western Exemplary Women at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *NAN NÜ* 6.1 (2004): 102-135.

⁴³ Hu Ying, 230.

⁴⁴ Here I follow Wang Zheng's translation of *funü wenti* as “the woman problem” instead of “the woman question.” Whereas *funü wenti* was the Chinese translation of the longstanding English phrase “the woman question,” with her use of “problem” instead of “question,” Wang is able to “emphasize that linguistic importation often alters the

promoted women's education as a patriotic means to train the next generation of "good wives and wise mothers" (*xianqi liangmu* 贤妻良母).⁴⁵ The May Fourth movement, a student initiated widespread push to modernize and revitalize the Chinese nation, advocated the abandonment of traditional values and culture. Encouraged by the successes of the suffragette movement in the west, Chinese reformers sought to redefine the role women played in the development of their own country. These reform-minded activists and feminists, most of whom were men, rejected old Confucian social standards and argued for women's rights (*nüquan zhuyi* 女权主义) as part of their effort to overturn the feudalistic remnants of the Qing dynasty.⁴⁶ Erudite treatises by male intellectuals and editors—and later essays submitted by female journalists—appeared frequently in Shanghai magazines of the 1920s-30s, popularizing discourse on women's rights.⁴⁷ Many of these authors reasoned that in order to develop moral character (*ren'ge* 人格) and be of value to a new society, women needed education, a meaningful occupation, and the independence afforded through personal financial resources.⁴⁸ Moreover, as early as the mid-1920s, the

connotation of a phrase. *Funü wenti*, as it was used at the turn of the century, suggests not only an awareness that problematized the women's situation formerly regarded as normal but also a presumption that women hindered the nation's ascendance to 'modernity.'" Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 3, fn. 5.

⁴⁵ Lien Ling-ling, "Searching for the 'New Womanhood': Career Women in Shanghai, 1912-1945," Diss. (Irvine: University of California, 2001), 4. Wang, 14-15.

⁴⁶ Jacqueline Nivard, "Women and the Women's Press: The Case of the *Ladies' Journal* (*Funü zazhi*), 1915-1931," *Republican China* 10 (1984): 37-55.

⁴⁷ Nivard, 44-48. Nivard's survey of the Republican period's most successful women's journal *Funü zazhi* provides a detailed look at the men behind the publication of material on women's rights and the inaccessibility of journalism as a career choice for women. Ma Yuxin examines opposing feminist discourses of male and female journalists and concludes that, "a new autonomous women's feminism was born from within or discursively from without male feminist discourse in the late 1920s by writers such as Chen Xuezhao, and soon grew to eclipse male feminist discourse as the dominant feminism in China in the 1930s." Ma Yuxin, "Male Feminism and Women's Subjectivities: Zhang Xichen, Chen Xuezhao, and *The New Woman*," *Twentieth-Century China* 29.1 (Nov 2003): 23.

⁴⁸ Bryna Goodman, "The Vocational Woman and the Elusiveness of 'Personhood' in Early Republican China," in Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson, eds, *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005).

Communist party promoted equality between men and women (*nannü pingdeng* 男女平等) as a component of the socialist state to be realized through revolution.⁴⁹

Despite the seeming popularity of women's occupations outside the home, vocational opportunities for career-minded women in China remained limited. An insightful study by Bryna Goodman reveals that, while early twentieth-century discourse on women's issues promoted the advancement of women's equality, social commentary critical of women's motives in the workplace, often circulated in the very same publications, undermined their occupational success.⁵⁰ In the early 1920s a hotly contested public debate about the morals and virtue of women working outside of the home erupted, and women professionals encountered ambivalent attitudes about their role in modern society. On the one hand, women were expected to seek vocations in order to be contributing members of society; on the other hand, they became targets of lingering cultural biases and disparaging presumptions. By offering their professional skills for pay outside of the home, career women opened themselves to comparison with prostitutes and implications about their wanton sexual habits and greedy dispositions.⁵¹

Modern Girls and Flower Vases

By the 1930s women with professional careers had become slightly more commonplace, but attitudes about their roles in the workplace remained ambiguous. Certain occupations deemed appropriate for women, such as nursing and teaching, could be defended as noble service for the good of the nation.⁵² In contrast, salesclerks and office workers frequently received

⁴⁹ Dorothy Ko and Wang Zheng, *Translating Feminisms in China : A Special Issue of Gender & History*. (Oxford, 2007), pp. 2-7.

⁵⁰ Wang Zheng, p. 62. Goodman, 269.

⁵¹ Goodman, 276-278.

⁵² Lien, 64-65.

criticism for exhibiting salacious behavior.⁵³ Although in the 1920s New Woman referred to the emancipated woman of modern society, in the 1930s the pejorative term *modeng gou'er* (摩登狗儿), a transliteration of “Modern Girl,” came to represent attractive young women who paid close attention to the latest fashion and trends but had little interest in contributing to society or bettering the nation.⁵⁴ The prevalence of women office workers employed solely on the basis of their beauty led to the coining of another derogatory term, Flower Vase (*huaping* 花瓶). As Wang Zheng explains, many employers hired Flower Vases to serve as decorations, “to present a modern image or to attract male clients,” and when they married, the Flower Vases often found their office careers over.⁵⁵

The women of the Republican period recognized the precariousness of their new social identities, and some wrote to the press about how women should address the issue of their own persona and public perceptions of them. In these essays, the writers appeal to other women, instructing them on how to behave outside the home and chastising them for the use of sexuality to advance in the workplace.⁵⁶ A 1934 article by a Ms. Li Ying in the women’s magazine *Ling long* (玲珑) is representative.⁵⁷ Presumably concerned about the reputations of her peers, the

⁵³ Ibid., 65-66.

⁵⁴ Sarah E. Stevens surveys provides a detailed analysis of the opposing archetypes—the nation-building New Woman and the dangerous Modern Girl—in “Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China,” *NWSA Journal* 15.3 (Fall 2003): 82-103. Tze-lan D. Sang acknowledges Stevens’ study in a footnote within her own informed analysis of the Modern Girl persona, but argues that a precise distinction between the Modern Girl and the New Woman cannot be made. See Tze-lan D. Sang, “Failed Modern Girls,” in Doris Croissant, Catherine Vance Yeh, and Joshua S. Mostow, eds, *Performing “Nation”: Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). I feel that while there was slippage in the use of these two terms, magazines generally embraced the New Woman as a positive concept in the 1920s and later largely regarded the Modern Girl as the object of disdain in the 1930s.

⁵⁵ Wang Zheng, p. 263.

⁵⁶ Lien, 67-68.

⁵⁷ The name of the magazine, *linglong*, is an onomatopoeia for the tinkling sound of jade ornaments and could be used to describe a delicately made object or a clever person. Li Ying, “Zuo yi wei xiandai nüzi 做一位现代女子,” *Ling long tuhua zazhi* 玲珑图画杂志 135 (4.10, April 4, 1934): 583-584. University of Columbia’s C.V. Starr East Asian Library maintains a high-quality webpage devoted to this journal that includes archived digital images of

author explains that the notion of a modern woman (*xiandai nüzi* 现代女子) is typically associated with the Modern Girl, which in turn is often conflated with the negative images of Flower Vases and Playthings (*wanwu* 玩物).⁵⁸ She prefers the designations “Girl of This Age” or “Girl of Today,” and prescribes five preconditions for such a woman’s success. To prosper, she must be strong of body and mind; possess a determined and visionary spirit; have the benefit of an education; maintain financial independence; and renounce jealous feelings. The author places the burden on women, expecting them to perfect themselves in order to improve their reputations.

Similar sentiment is expressed in the rousing writings of Lu Yin (1899-1935), who graduated from Beiping Women’s Normal College in 1922, found employment as a high school teacher, and wrote prolifically. In an article about Lu Yin’s use of feminist rhetoric, Bo Wang argues that Lu Yin was cognizant of the domination of the women’s movement in China by men.⁵⁹ Pointing out that the issue of women’s equality was naturally more pressing for women themselves, Lu Yin questioned the motives of the men involved in the movement, and called on women to take active roles rather than depending on men or copying their actions.⁶⁰ In her essay, “The Age of Flower Vases,” published in a newspaper supplement in 1933, Lu Yin begins with the sarcastic rationalization that the life of a Flower Vase, being a vast improvement in status for women, may not be an unsatisfactory condition.⁶¹ Nevertheless, she ends the piece with an excited appeal for women to destroy the objectifying net in which they were ensnared:

every page from all issues in the library’s collection.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/linglong/index.html>.

⁵⁸ Li Ying, p. 583. A translation of this article may be found on the C.V. Starr Library’s *Ling long* webpage.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/linglong/contemporary-girl.html>.

⁵⁹ Bo Wang, “‘Breaking the Age of Flower Vases:’ Lu Yin’s Feminist Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric Review* 28:3 (2009): 253-254.

⁶⁰ Bo Wang, 256.

⁶¹ Lu Yin, “Huaping shidai 花瓶时代,” *Shishi xinbao* 时事新报, Qingguang 青光 supplement (Aug 11, 1933: reprint in *Lu Yin dai biao zuo* 庐隐代表作, Beijing: Huaxia chuban she, 1998: 373-374).

And so, the fate of this Flower Vase is actually too tragic. If we want to save ourselves, then only from our own determination to smash this Age of Flower Vases can we be reborn through bitter experience, and acquire our own identities. Moreover, this kind of arduous task entirely relies on self-awareness. No longer will you be deluded into begging for food and favors from those men. If the ambitions of men can be as great and selfless as you have imagined, then all of the daydreams of the world will have come true! Furthermore, men's pretense to generosity is exactly what can cause your demise. Don't be coy and flirt with men just so that you may think yourself exceptional. The Age of Flower Vases exposes the populace's shame and stupidity!⁶²

所以这个花瓶的命运，究竟太悲惨；你们要想自救，只有自己决心把这花瓶的时代毁灭，苦苦修行，再入轮回，得个人身，才有办法。而这种苦修全靠自我的觉醒。不能再妄想从男人们那里求乞恩惠，如果男人们的心胸，能如你们所想象的，伟大无私，那么，这世界上的一切幻梦，都将成为事实了！而且男人们的故示宽大，正足使你们毁灭，不要再装腔作势，搔首弄姿的在男人面前自命不凡吧！花瓶的时代，正是暴露人类的羞辱与愚蠢呵！

Lu Yin's cutting diatribe is aimed at women who might be content with an ineffectual existence as a decorative object in the workplace.⁶³ She implores women to take their lives into their own hands in order to be seen as the equals of men.

Lu Yin's peers seem to have taken her advice and leading periodicals regularly featured photographs of college-educated young women along with female artists and athletes. Nevertheless, while the abundant images show women asserting themselves in professional arenas and educated circles, even active career women remained subject to the tastes of the media and its readership. No doubt conscious of circulation figures, editors of Republican-period magazines and newspapers placed greater emphasis on physical attributes and marital status of women than on their professional abilities and careers. To cite a few examples, scores of issues of *Xinren zhoukan* (新人周刊) from 1935 include a page devoted to photographs of charming modern ladies, the thrice-weekly Tianjin publication *Beiyang huabao* (北洋画报) reserved the

⁶² Lu Yin, "Huaping shidai," 374.

⁶³ Bo Wang, 259.

center of each front page for a portrait photograph of a prominent young woman, and a 1933 issue of *Shidai huabao* (时代画报) published a two-page photographic spread titled “Modern Girls” (*shidai guniang* 时代姑娘).⁶⁴ A cover girl welcomes the readers to each issue of *Liangyou* (*Young Companion* 良友), and several issues of the magazine contain a “Women’s Page” consisting of flattering photographs of select, socially prominent women.⁶⁵ Usually identifying the subjects by name, the captions for these images frequently mention their educational status or professional occupations, as well as their hometowns.

While publicizing women’s accomplishments, such coverage evidences the permeation of the Flower Vase stereotype. The photographs carefully emphasize the beauty of their subjects: female athletes are posed to accentuate their naked limbs, occasionally in synchronized formations that mimic flower blossoms; socialites appear in lyrical settings staged to emphasize their fashionable appearances. The sexualized presentation of the women in the pages of the popular magazines is all the more telling when precursors to these images are taken into consideration. Leo Ou-fan Lee suggests that the use of alluring covergirls for Republican-period publications, such as *Liangyou*, continued practices of the late Qing courtesan journals; cover shots of the New Woman of the modern era merely replacing the Qing-dynasty images of the courtesans.⁶⁶ Whereas the Qing publications underscored the market value of the women, the later publications “had to reinvest the female body with an entirely new meaning and ethical

⁶⁴ “Modern Girls 时代姑娘,” *Shidai huabao* 4.12 (1933). For an example of the images in *Xinren zhoukan*, see *Xinren zhoukan* 1.27 (Mar 18, 1935).

⁶⁵ One example of a “Women’s Page” can be found in *Liangyou huabao* 62 (Oct 1931): 36-37. The Chinese title, “Guixiu fangying 闺秀芳影” [Pleasant Visages of Literati Women], is certainly more descriptive than its English counterpart.

⁶⁶ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 65, 73.

value.”⁶⁷ And yet, the magazines capture the complex relationship between the New Woman and the Modern Girl, as the women introduced have an ambiguous character: seemingly selected for their intellectual abilities and modern outlook, they are displayed in ways that only encouraged their objectification via their emphasized physical allure. Undoubtedly, readers admired these women for their modern image, but it is unlikely that they took the professional personas of these women very seriously, providing a scenario parallel to that of the Flower Vases in the workplace.

New Opportunities through Education and Divorce

The prominent display of attractive young socialites and college girls in the pages of popular magazines was a means to advertize and amplify awareness of their marriageable status. By appearing in a magazine, young women increased their visibility, which in turn could allow them to rise in social status, a turn of events that probably depended on a fortuitous marriage. Education also contributed towards a woman’s opportunities for finding a favorable match, and the captions for many pictures of women in magazines note their formal education. In her dissertation, Lien Ling-ling observes that social commentators in the 1930s criticized the motives behind the education of women, and maintained that ultimately “the purpose for women’s education for the family was not to prepare [the women] for the job market, but for marriage.”⁶⁸

Although families hoped school degrees would make their daughters more marriageable, education and the resultant career opportunities gave women newfound freedom to reject arranged marriages.⁶⁹ Financial independence achieved through a professional career allowed

⁶⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁸ Lien, 53-54.

⁶⁹ For general information on the quality of education extended to women in the early twentieth century, see Paul Bailey, “Active Citizen or Efficient Housewife? The Debate over Women’s Education in Early-Twentieth-Century China” and Sarah Coles McElroy, “Forging a New Role for Women: Zhili First Women’s Normal School and the

women to live independently and escape pressure from their families.⁷⁰ Women could also use their enrollment in a distant school to avoid an unwanted marriage. For example, the writer Baiwei (1894-1987) fled to Japan in 1918 to escape the abuse she suffered from the mother-in-law she acquired through an arranged marriage, and later returned to China to pursue an independent life as a career woman.⁷¹

New access to education and careers, coupled with Republican-period legal developments, also affected women's decisions to end an unhappy marriage through divorce. Kathryn Bernhardt reports that divorce, "became a real option for wives and concubines in the major cities... and they turned to the courts in numbers unimaginable in the Qing."⁷² Whereas Qing women were at a disadvantage in legal matters, including the conditions of divorce,⁷³ in the Republican period social reform improved the status of women in legal matters and equalized the divorce process. Thanks to its convenience and affordability, mutual-consent divorce (*xieyi lihun* 协议离婚) was common in the Republican period.⁷⁴ By drafting a simple mutual-consent divorce agreement, a couple saved themselves legal expenses and avoided public scrutiny of any embarrassing details that might have surfaced in a contested-divorce trial.⁷⁵ Sometimes, to conveniently inform the community and publicly denounce financial responsibility for their

Growth of Women's Education in China, 1901-21." Both in *Education, Culture, & Identity in Twentieth Century China*. Eds. Glen Peterson, Ruth Hayhoe, and Yongling Lu. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁷¹ Ibid., 75-78. Baiwei returned to China in 1926 and found employment in Wuhan as a Japanese interpreter and a college science professor.

⁷² Kathryn Bernhardt, "Women and the Law: Divorce in the Republican Period," in Kathryn Bernhardt and Philip C.C. Huang, eds. *Civil Law in Qing and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) 214.

⁷³ Divorce based on mutual consent was possible in the Qing dynasty, but not nearly as prevalent as in the Republican period. Ibid., 190.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 193. According to Bernhardt, mutual consent divorce comprised 70 percent of the 3,171 divorces recorded in Shanghai between August 1928 and August 1934.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

former spouse, couples from larger cities even announced their divorce in newspapers such as *Shenbao* (申报).⁷⁶

WOMEN ARTISTS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY

Historical precedent

Despite the new educational opportunities for women and their rejection of arranged marriages and predefined gender roles, Chinese female artists in the 1930s such as Qiu Ti followed well-established historical precedents in the professional sphere. As in past centuries, Republican-period husbands and other male family members had great influence on the professional opportunities and critical reception of most female painters. In the late imperial era, when the elite painted as leisure activity and expression of amateur artistic virtuosity, women in more progressive families were allowed to take up the brush as a personal pastime within their homes.⁷⁷ Typically, they gained access to the arts only if they were wives, concubines, or daughters of royal or elite families or were courtesans of men of the scholar-official class. And only those encouraged by male family members to take up painting succeeded in developing this skill. For a concubine or courtesan, skill in painting was often ranked among her desirable traits. A scholar-official choosing a romantic partner, as opposed to an official wife, might find skill in painting a desirable quality to be counted, along with beauty, poise, or talents in poetry and music, among the attractions of the object of his affection. Sometimes, but less commonly, economic hardship forced talented women of the scholar-official class to sell their paintings to

⁷⁶ Ibid., 192

⁷⁷ Marsha Weidner, "Women in the History of Chinese Painting," in Marsha Weidner, ed, *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300-1912* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988) 13.

support their families. However, for elite women as for gentleman, painting professionally was disparaged and only pursued out of financial necessity.

Considering women's traditional roles within Confucian society, it is not surprising that few female artists are recorded in premodern canonical texts of Chinese painting history.⁷⁸ A talented female painter rarely had the opportunity to share her paintings with individuals outside of her restricted social sphere. In the few cases that the paintings by a woman were appreciated on a wider scale, it was usually because one or more of the men in her family promoted her work to his social and professional network.⁷⁹ Larger compendia of biographies of Chinese painters include biographies of female artists, but these entries are usually relegated to the back of the collection. Moreover, the information provided is not nearly as detailed or significant as that given for men. In *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300-1912*, Marsha Weidner relates that a biographical entry for a female painter typically comprises:

her alternate names, the names of important family members and teachers, her favorite painting subjects, preferred painting styles, and other skills such as poetry and embroidery. Her husband's name will be cited in the same way as official positions are in entries for male artists. For a bit of spice, there may be an anecdote or perhaps an observation about her fame, beauty, or feminine virtue... [The sources of information for these biographic entries] often quote one another and rely heavily on stereotypes and clichés. Even the writings of the artist's contemporaries seldom afford more than a glimpse of her real personality and the everyday circumstances of her life.⁸⁰

Moreover, many of the details included in these biographies are gender specific. On occasion, a woman is complimented as the female version of a more celebrated male artist.⁸¹

Often critiques used terms traditionally associated with feminine characteristics to praise the

⁷⁸ The Yuan-dynasty calligrapher and ink bamboo expert Guan Daosheng stands as the one exception, and even her fame is overshadowed by the success of her husband, Zhao Mengfu. Ibid.

⁷⁹ Weidner, "Women in the History of Chinese Painting," 25.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁸¹ Ibid., 26.

style of the woman painter.⁸² If, as was believed, the painted image revealed the essential character of its maker, it is understandable that the paintings of the virtuous women of the elite class should reflect their elegant and refined demeanors. In the Republican period, the same type of formulaic description is found in the biographies of women painters and their works published in popular magazines. Although the newer biographies of contemporary women artists appear in the modern format of mass-marketed magazines and document a newly recognized profession for women, the sustained influence of old models is readily apparent.⁸³

Painting as a Profession

For female artists such as Qiu Ti, the late 1920s and 1930s offered unprecedented opportunities for public recognition of their careers. In particular, 1929 stood as an exceptional year for media coverage of female artists. The July 1929 issue of *Funü zazhi* (婦女雜誌), dedicated to the First National Art Exhibition in Shanghai that year, published reproductions and biographies of 24 female artists included in the exhibition.⁸⁴ The same year, the journal *Truth, Beauty, Good* (*Zhen mei shan* 真美善) produced a special issue on female artists in tribute to the magazine's first anniversary.⁸⁵ The issue included reproductions of at least one work of art by each of the seven female artists featured and accompanying biography. The biographies include a photograph of the artist, most commonly a portrait headshot, paired with several lines of identifying description. The format used for the biographies in both magazines is identical, and represents a continuation of the traditional manner of describing an artist's life.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Republican-period biographies for male artists are equally derivative.

⁸⁴ *Funü zazhi* 15.7 (Jul 1929).

⁸⁵ *Nüzuojia hao: Zhen meishan zazhi yi zhou nian jinian haowai* 女作家號: 真美善雜誌一周年紀念號外, Shanghai: Zhen meishan shudian, 1929.

Just five years later, 1934 was another banner year for not only female artists in general, but also specifically Qiu Ti. Several women specializing in *guohua* painting founded the Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society (*Zhongguo nüzi shuhua hui* 中国女子书画会) in 1934, and local pictorials covered the group's inaugural exhibition.⁸⁶ The same year two prominent female painters, Fang Junbi (方君璧 1898-1986) and Pan Yuliang (潘玉良 1895-1977), received exclusive recognition of their talents in separate full-page features, each with a large color reproduction of one painting and a biography of the artist. *Meishu shenghuo* (美术生活) published Fang Junbi's painting of a female nude as part of a larger review of the nude figure in painting (Fig. 1.2). *Liangyou* selected Pan Yuliang's *Landscape of the Tsien Tang River* (*Qiantang jiangpan* 钱塘江畔) to run in a monthly series of paintings by individual contemporary Chinese artists (Fig. 1.3). In the same year, no fewer than three major Shanghai magazines published photographs of Qiu Ti.

Significance of Marriage for Female Artists

A closer look at the female artists published in magazines in 1934, however, reveals that the women of modern China, like their premodern counterparts, still depended on the men in their family for success in the arts. Most of the women of the Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society had the luxury to pursue their artistic interests because of financial support of their families.⁸⁷ Husbands played comparable roles in the careers of female oil painters. The

⁸⁶ *Shidai huabao* 6.5 (1934) and *Meishu shenghuo* 1 (1934) and 15 (1935). See Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance: The Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society of 1930s Shanghai," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 11.1 (Spring 1999): 1-30.

⁸⁷ Andrews and Shen point out that to the women of the Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society the production of their work represented a serious occupation and their participation in the group meant more than the indulgence of a simple hobby. That said, most of the women did not support themselves through their artistic careers,

biographies of Fang Junbi and Pan Yuliang show how their relationships with men affected public perceptions of their careers.

Fang Junbi's relationship with her husband is a central concern in her biography (Appendix 1.1). Following the model of traditional biographies of women, the account opens by identifying her native place and naming her husband, Zeng Zhengming, before turning to her career. We then learn that she went to France as a youth, where she pursued degrees first in art and art history.⁸⁸ The biography goes on to note her research travel in Rome and teaching jobs in China. Although her independent accomplishments are certainly recognized, it is evident that her husband's career took precedence. We are told that she followed him to Lyon, France, when he took the distinguished position of secretary-general in the Sino-French Institute. The biography recognizes Fang Junbi's independent accomplishments, but emphasis on the importance of her husband and the identification of his job title follows the standard format established centuries earlier for the biographies for women.

In contrast, Pan Yuliang's biography does not mention her husband at all (Appendix 1.2). Instead, the paragraph focuses on the artist's own professional success as director and professor at three prominent institutions, quite a feat for a woman of the time.⁸⁹ Although Pan Yuliang's career would not have been possible without the support of her husband, we may suppose that Pan Yuliang's private life was omitted from the biography because she was a secondary wife, a

but instead funded the costly expenses of society exhibitions and catalogue publications through the substantial financial resources of their families. Ibid.

⁸⁸ A native of Fuzhou in Fujian province, Fang Junbi was only 14 when she traveled to France with her sister and sister-in-law. By the time she returned to China in 1925, she had spent nearly half her young life in Europe. See Xu Hong, 209.

⁸⁹ It could be argued that Pan Yuliang's current fame resulted from her unconventional lifestyle. She spent most of her life as an independent artist and single woman in Paris. She famously and unwaveringly maintained a personal "Three No's" policy (no lovers, no dealers, no French citizenship), which may have caused her to suffer financial hardship during her lifetime, but allowed her to freely pursue her own artistic inclinations. Thanks in large part to her exemption from familial obligations or household duties, Pan Yuliang produced the largest body of work for any Chinese female modernist artist of her generation.

less than favorable status especially in the post-May Fourth era of social reform. Reference to her husband also might have reminded readers of the circumstances in which the two met and a past that the artist continually struggled to overcome, namely her life as a courtesan in a brothel. Pan Yuliang's career as a professional artist was stigmatized by her personal history for the duration of her stay in China. Even supporters of social reform and women's rights could have perceived the artistic success of a former indentured courtesan as a threat to their vision of a reformed society. The public's hostility to Pan Yuliang's new persona as professional artist manifested itself at her 1936 solo exhibition when an attendee slashed her large oil painting *Powerful Hero* (*Renli zhuangshi* 人力壯士) and scrawled on the wall the scathing critical interpretation, "A prostitute's ode to her patron."⁹⁰ It was the last exhibition Pan Yuliang held in her native country; she left for France the following year never to return.

As these two examples show, a proper domestic life remained critical to the public's reception of a woman painter. A husband with a prestigious career reflected positively on a female artist and could be listed among her accomplishments as a measure of her professional success and personal character. Conversely, as in the case of Pan Yuliang, mention of anything less than a respectable social status was to be avoided, lest it negatively impact the public's opinion of an artist and tarnish her professional image. Needless to say, for a female artist interested in crafting her persona, her husband was of special consideration.

Republican-period journal publishers and artists enjoyed a symbiotic relationship that resulted in flattering biographies of the latter. Shanghai magazines of the 1920s and 30s frequently printed biographies of eminent figures in Chinese society alongside photographs of

⁹⁰ “妓女對嫖客的頌歌。” This sensational incident is widely mentioned in connection with Pan Yuliang. For just one example, see the chronology in Christophe Comentale (柯孟德), *Pan Yu-lin*, Overseas Chinese Fine Arts Series 3 (Taipei shi : Yishujia chubanshe, 2007) p. 197. English translation of the painting title is my own.

military and technological developments, articles on scientific advances, and film stills from Chinese cinema. This was done to cater to public demand for positive accounts of the nation, highlighting its cultural prestige, modern revitalization, and international status. Biographies of respected citizens, such as internationally recognized artists, also cast the nation in a good light. Artists, of course, benefited from the publication of such favorable accounts, which afforded them greater public recognition and enhanced their professional images. Thus, flattering biographies were to the advantage of both the publications and the artists. A scandalous expose hardly would have contributed to national esteem or the individual's reputation.

CONTEMPORARY MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC RECEPTION OF QIU TI

Personal Redefinition through a Public Media Blitz

In the early 1930s, Qiu Ti changed her name and began suppressing aspects of her personal history, including her first marriage and details of her time in Japan. These actions coincided with the start of her relationship with Pang Xunqin and indicate a desire to shed her past in order to make way for a new life and budding career. More than simply hiding her past from her children, Qiu Ti symbolically and literally divorced herself from her previous life. We might be reminded of the courtesan poet and painter Liu Yin (柳隱 1618-1664), who married the prominent poet and literary critic Chen Zilong (陈子龙) in 1641 and attempted to adopt a new persona by giving up the names associated with her previous life to assume pennames provided by her husband.⁹¹

⁹¹ James Cahill, "The Painting of Liu Yin." In Marsha Weidner, ed. *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990): 104.

Qiu Ti continued to use the name Qiu Bizhen as late as 1931,⁹² and most likely changed her name and adopted its western transliteration, Schudy, as her signature after she met Pang Xunqin in 1932.⁹³ By claiming to be younger and refusing to discuss the past, Qiu Ti effectively deleted the years that she had been married to Lin. Deliberate vagueness about her education and time abroad allowed her to maintain the ruse. Divulging too many details about her time in Japan might have drawn attention to her modified timeline and brought her previous marriage to light.

Six magazine articles on Qiu Ti published between 1933 and 1935 represent the success of her campaign to construct a new image.⁹⁴ (Appendix 1.3) Like other artists and national celebrities, Qiu Ti is cast as a positive role model. By featuring a young female modernist oil painter, who had studied overseas and now actively participated in Shanghai's art scene, the magazines highlighted the modernity and progressiveness of their nation. I believe that the artist took an active part in this high-profile public relations campaign, and manipulated the media to personal ends. These articles molded public perception of her professional identity and established her role in the art community and Juelanshe. Buoyed by this media coverage, Qiu Ti triumphantly launched her new public career as a modernist oil painter.

⁹² It appears on a roster of Western Painting Researchers employed in the Painting Research Office of the Shanghai Art Academy. Her name is listed under *xihua yanjiuyuan minglu* 西画研究员名录, which in turn is categorized under *huihua yanjiu suo* 绘画研究所. Izumi-shi Kubosō Kinen Bijutsukan, 89.

⁹³ I suspect that Schudy was a name that Pang Xunqin selected for Qiu Ti. Schudy is a European surname of Swiss origin and it is more probable that Pang Xunqin encountered an individual with the surname while he was in France than Qiu Ti personally having exposure to the name during her time in China or Japan.

⁹⁴ At least five contemporary magazines published photographs of Qiu Ti on six separate occasions. The magazines are *Shidai huabao*, *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, *Liangyou*, *Dazhong huabao*, and *Qingnian jie*.

Qiu Ti in the Public Media

Shidai Huabao Exhibition Review

The earliest published photograph of Qiu Ti known is in the photographic review of the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition published in the November 1933 issue of *Shidai huabao* (Fig. 1.4).⁹⁵ The two-page spread consists of eleven black-and-white, variously sized reproductions of artworks featured in the exhibition. While a couple of the artists were fortunate enough to have two works published, the others, including Qiu Ti, were represented by a single painting. A small strip running across the bottom of both pages contains the photographs of eight Juelanshe members taken at the exhibition. Each artist is positioned in front one of their works. For example, two of the paintings reproduced in the upper portion of the exhibition review can be distinguished behind Duan Pingyou (段平右 1906-?) and Zhou Duo (周多 1905-?), respectively.⁹⁶ We can see only a small portion of the framed painting behind Qiu Ti, but it is enough to identify it as *Flower*. This photograph is equal in size and composition to those of her male colleagues, and is neither placed next to nor otherwise related to that of her husband. Moreover, no gendered honorific accompanies her name. In light of this evidence of gender equality, I am disinclined to make too much of the fact that her painting of female nudes in a landscape is squeezed between two portrait paintings of women and is the smallest of the reproductions.

⁹⁵ “Exposition of Storm Society Paintings,” *Shidai huabao* (Nov 1933).

⁹⁶ The painting in the background of Ni Yide’s portrait is not featured in the magazine but was reproduced in “Huiyi Ni Yide he Juelanshe” by group member Yang Qiuren in a more recent issue of *Meishujia*. Yang Qiuren, “Huiyi Ni Yide he Juelanshe 回忆倪貽德和决澜社,” *Meishu jia* 艺术家 31 (Apr 1983), 20.

Shidai Huabao Juelanshe Award Announcement

The announcement "Juelanshe Prize" in the November 1933 issue of *Shidai huabao* (Fig. 1.5) features a large black and white photograph of *Flower* partially obscured by a smaller-sized headshot of the artist and the following statement:

Juelanshe, one of the notable painting organizations in Shanghai, has initiated the practice of rewarding up-and-coming, hardworking artists. During the Second Exhibition at the World Society in October, Ms. Qiu Ti's *Flower* was especially praised as an exceptional work, as a consequence of which the organization's members presented her the Juelanshe Award. Above is a recent image of Ms. Qiu Ti and her work.

决澜社为沪上有数之绘画专集前曾发起奖励新近努力作家办法于十月在世界学院举行第二届展览中以丘堤女士之“花”尤称佳构遂由该社员之评定获得“决澜社奖”云上为丘堤女士近影及其作品。⁹⁷

This brief caption describes Juelanshe as a reputable painting society and confirms the date and location of the Second Exhibition. Nothing is said about the artist's training, professional career, or her relationship with Juelanshe. Her gender is acknowledged with addition of the feminine honorific *nüshi* (女士) to her name.

The arrangement of the images, moreover, suggests what the magazine sought to convey to the public. Effectually, Qiu Ti's feminine visage takes precedence over evidence of her artistic accomplishment. Overlapping *Flower* with Qiu Ti's portrait disrupts the visual integrity of the painting to focus on the artist's femininity. Although clearly captured in a professional sitting, Qiu Ti poses like many women depicted in the magazines of the day, in a three-quarters view, but looking into the camera, chin tucked down slightly. She is dressed fashionably in the same dainty jacket she wore to the exhibition, and the staging of the photograph has the effect of

⁹⁷ “Juelanshe jiang 决澜社奖” [The Juelanshe Award] *Shidai huabao* 时代画报 5.4 (Dec 1933).

emphasizing her femininity. Her face alluringly confronts us, while her turned body prevents the pose from being overly assertive; soft waves of permed hair gently framing her face and upturned glance giving a sweet expression to the eyes.

Liangyou Marriage Announcement

Three articles are essentially illustrated marriage announcements that highlight Qiu Ti's new role as wife. The first, printed just a month before the birth of Qiu Ti's daughter, appeared in the July 1934 issue of *Liangyou* (Fig. 1.6). A photograph of the newlyweds, with a short biographical note, is tucked into the upper part of a page filled with a broad range of content, including a short story and an obituary for a political cartoonist. The photo caption identifies Pang Jie'an as the photographer, and the image conveys a sense of the photographer's close relationship with her subjects.⁹⁸ It is a warmly intimate shot that captures the couple sitting together on a set of low steps, presumably the front stoop of their new residence. Their attire is fashionable, if somewhat conservative. Qiu Ti wears strappy high-heels and a long and relatively loose-fitting, short-sleeved *qipao* that modestly conceals her pregnancy.⁹⁹ Pang Xunqin wears a dark, traditional *dagua* robe along with light trousers and nondescript cloth shoes. Qiu Ti's hair, once cut short in a modern bob hair-style, is now long enough to be swept back. Her face exudes youthful vitality as she engages the camera with her direct gaze. Once again positioned at a three-quarters angle to the camera, she turns toward her husband but looks out toward the photographer. Her right leg extends forward slightly so that her foot is placed between the viewer and Pang Xunqin, almost as if to suggest that he is no longer an eligible bachelor. Pang Xunqin is captured in a moment of seemingly comfortable conversation with his wife. While seated in a

⁹⁸ Pang Jie'an would seem to be a relative, but Pang Tao is unaware of her connection to the family.

⁹⁹ Qiu Ti gave birth to Pang Tao in August, 1934.

frontal posture, he casually holds a cigar in his hand and looks at her, making her the focus of the picture. The photograph caption reads:

Artist Mr. Pang Xunqin, famous for his excellent paintings, recently married Ms. Qiu Ti. Ms. Qiu is also considered accomplished among the art set. With their congenial relationship, each bringing out the best in the other, they are much talked about in artistic circles.

艺术家庞薰琴氏，精绘事，有名于时，近与丘堤女士结婚，丘女士也为画苑中健者，志同道合，相得益彰，诚艺坛佳话也。(庞洁庵摄赠)¹⁰⁰

Although Pang Xunqin takes precedence by virtue of his relative fame and gender, Qiu Ti is described as a significant presence in the art community. She is not merely portrayed as supportive of her husband, and the two are described by idioms that indicate a mutually beneficial relationship recalling that of China's famous artistic couple of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), Zhao Mengfu and Guan Daosheng.

Xiaoshuo Yuebao Marriage Announcement

A one-page photo-essay printed in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* (小说月报 *Short Story Magazine*) in the same month as the *Liangyou* profile and featuring the same photograph of Qiu Ti and Pang Xunqin provides a useful contrast (Fig. 1.7).¹⁰¹ Titled “Literature and Art Pictorial: Comparison with the Ancient Books” (*Yishu huabao: guben duizhao* 艺术画报：古本对照), the page celebrates the recent marriages of three men from the art community. Far from presenting the couples as equals in reciprocal relationships, the *Xiaoshuo yuebao* piece concentrates attention entirely on the grooms. The page provides a photograph of each pair of newlyweds and an

¹⁰⁰ *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 90 (Jul 1934): 14.

¹⁰¹ *Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小说月报 (July 1934). Many thanks to Zhu Xiaoqing who brought this marriage announcement to my attention and provided me with a digital copy.

accompanying paragraph congratulates the men who are held up as pillars of their respective specializations in literature, art, and music. In addition to the photograph of each couple, a childhood photograph for each groom is meant to indicate what the young couples' future sons—and heirs—will look like. The reader is told that, for the benefit of these sons, the magazine endeavors to preserve these images. The photograph of Qiu Ti and Pang Xunqin, similarly attributed to Pang Jie'an, is in the upper left corner of the page, and just below their photograph, the smaller photograph of a young boy is captioned "Painter Pang Xunqin." A second line of smaller text continues, "married Qiu Ti on June 3rd."

Dazhong Huabao Marriage Announcement

A feature in the November 1934 issue of *Dazhong huabao* (大众画报) combines a photograph of Qiu Ti with a short caption and a black-and-white reproduction of her painting of a nude figure viewed from the back and resting on a blanket (Fig. 1.8).¹⁰² This article and the painting seem to have escaped prior scholarly notice.¹⁰³ The painting extends across the top of the profile piece and fully occupies half of the feature. The photograph of Qiu Ti shows her alone. Again she is seen in three-quarter view while looking out at the viewer. Wearing a short-sleeved *qipao* with a lively plaid print, Qiu Ti looks at the camera directly while her body is angled to the viewer's right. Her torso leans forward slightly so that her arms may rest in her lap, her hands demurely clasped. Although her midsection is partially hidden by her arm, she does not appear pregnant. Most likely the photograph was taken shortly before the magazine issue was

¹⁰² *Dazhong huabao* 大众画报 13 (Nov 1934): 33. *Dazhong huabao* was a comprehensive monthly pictorial magazine that was published in Shanghai from November 1933 to May 1935. Liang Desuo was the founder and editor-in-chief.

¹⁰³ Correspondence with Pang Tao confirms this. Many thanks to Kris Ercums who kindly shared his personal copies of *Dazhong huabao*, which in turn allowed me to discover this valuable document.

published, in which case Qiu Ti would have given birth approximately two months earlier.

Though her pose remains the same, the setting has changed. Whereas the previous photograph placed her at the entrance of the home she shared with her husband, now the new mother has been returned to the “inner quarters.” Carefully posed in a fashionable domestic scene, she sits on a nondescript piece of furniture; at her back stands a chest of drawers designed with clean modern lines, and above this a painting, presumably by either the artist herself or her husband.

The pleasantly phrased biography reads:

Qiu Ti is a native of Fujian Province, a member of Juelanshe, and has studied in Japan. Her works are refreshingly elegant and graceful, just as she is. This year she married famous painter Mr. Pang Xunqin, which has become a major topic of conversation in artistic circles.

邱堤女士，藉福建，决澜社社员，曾留学日本，其作品清丽秀逸，一如其人。本年与名画家庞薰琴君结婚，尤称艺坛佳话。¹⁰⁴

Although this still has the ring of a marriage announcement, it tells us something about Qiu Ti, i.e. where she is from, with which group she is affiliated, and where she studied abroad.¹⁰⁵ Yet, it is still an inescapable fact that her husband is the more well-established artist, who presumably needed no other introduction. The caliber of Qiu Ti’s work is mentioned, but—as with historical examples of women artist’s biographies—in predictably feminine terms, which are then patronizingly extended to describe the artist’s own femininity. Recycling the same stock phrase used in *Liangyou* to indicate the couple’s notoriety (*yitan jiahua* 艺坛佳话), the text

¹⁰⁴ *Dazhong huabao* (Nov 1934): 33. There are a couple of typos in this announcement: 丘 was printed as 邱 and 籍 as 藉.

¹⁰⁵ It would seem that the editorial staff at *Dazhong huabao* had stronger ties with Juelanshe than did those at *Liangyou*, as evidenced by the selection of Pang Xunqin for a photographic assemblage of artists’ hands and the two-page spread for the Fourth Annual Juelanshe Exhibition in the previous month’s issue. Probably for this reason the *Dazhong huabao* biography expresses greater interest in profiling Qiu Ti as an independent artist, whereas *Liangyou* simply sought to convey a romantic bit of news to its readership.

states that they had married in that year, 1934. According to friends and family, however, the couple became romantically involved around the time of the First Annual Juelanshe Exhibition in October 1932, were engaged by the end of the year, married shortly thereafter, and by the time this article was published had already experienced their second pregnancy, the first having ended in miscarriage.¹⁰⁶

Qingnian Jie Juelanshe Review

A sixth photograph, quite likely the last image of Qiu Ti to be published in a contemporary periodical, appears in a group profile of select Juelanshe members printed in the September 1935 issue of *Qingnian jie* (青年界) (Fig. 1.9).¹⁰⁷ This example is simultaneously the least descriptive and most suggestive of the biographic notes featuring Qiu Ti. Meant to accompany Ni Yide's essay, the two-page pictorial spread features portrait photographs of five group members, seven reproductions of artwork by those members, and a minimal use of text. With the exclusion of Qiu Ti, each member portrait is shown next to at least one example of his artwork. In Qiu Ti's case, however, her photograph is simply placed next to that of her husband's. While not a single one of her paintings is showcased, four examples of his are carefully squeezed onto the page. The caption for Pang Xunqin reads: "Mr. Pang Xunqin and his work." The caption for Qiu Ti: "Female Juelanshe member, Ms. Qiu Ti." In this instance, Qiu Ti is not identified as the wife of Pang Xunqin, but her gendered role is no less inescapable. She is labeled a female member of Juelanshe, not that her photograph would have left any doubt. For it

¹⁰⁶ The exact date of Qiu Ti's and Pang Xunqin's wedding is something of a mystery. See Yuan Yunyi, *Pang Xunqin zhuan* 庞薰栻传 (Beijing: Beijing gongyi meishu chubanshe, 1995): 72-73. See also Andrews and Shen, "Schudy," 73.

¹⁰⁷ "Juelanshe de yi qun jiqi zuopin 决澜社的一群及其作品," *Qingnian jie* 青年界 8.3 (Oct 1935). *Qingnian jie* was a monthly comprehensive magazine that ran 1931-1948.

she has been posed in a pleasantly feminine gesture of interlocked hands gracefully held under her chin. For good measure, the caption also labels her with the ubiquitous, and in this case redundant, feminine honorific *nüshi*.¹⁰⁸

Of these six publications of Qiu Ti's image, those dating to before her marriage—the two found in *Shidai huabao*—place the least emphasis on Qiu Ti's gender and the most on her artistic productivity. The four features published after her marriage to Pang Xunqin—those from *Liangyou*, *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, *Dazhong huabao*, and *Qingnian jie*—illustrate that, though she enjoyed a higher profile than most other female artists, Qiu Ti was also received by the public in terms similar to those of her female colleagues. That is to say, she was pressed into the mold of Republican China's modernized gender roles. News of her award may have been widely circulated, her portrait photographs and short biographies ran in various pictorial magazines, but in many instances those magazines downplayed her role as artist in favor of her role as wife. While at first glance her high profile in the public sphere may make it seem that Qiu Ti broke the restrictive flower vase mould, in reality her image was closely tied to her husband's.

CONCLUSION

A Double-Edged Sword: The Consequences of Marriage for Qiu Ti

At the time that these profiles were published, Qiu Ti's potential for a fulfilling career in oil painting seemed great. She now had the implicit cooperation and support of her husband, a component critically absent during her artistic training and the start of her oil painting career.

¹⁰⁸ While *nüshi* is a standard device used since antiquity to identify the gender of the subject, the honorific has the effect of reinforcing the anomalous nature of women in the public sphere, as the gender of male subjects was rarely indicated and therefore could be inferred by its absence. In the case of artists, the names of women were often designated with the appellation, “female artist” (女画家 *nühuajia*). For an example, see “The Nan Feng Studio Exhibition 南风社画展,” *Liangyou* 67 (1932): 15.

Her second marriage, a happy and reciprocal relationship with Pang Xunqin, allowed her to undertake a career as a professional—and now highly visible—artist. Lu Yin’s essay, published just months before Qiu Ti received the Juelanshe Award, would seem unnecessary advice for Qiu Ti. Not content to be a pretty plaything, she had participated in feminist groups, graduated from Shanghai Meizhuan, studied abroad, and was an active member of the art community. Yet the profiles also document a gradual drift toward her new identity as wife, not colleague, and provide a sober foreshadowing of the direction her career as an oil painter would soon take. Although Qiu Ti’s fashion was cosmopolitan and her actions assertive, media coverage emphasizes her marriage. The photographs and biographies show her role as an artist was increasingly overshadowed by her role as a married woman. In the earliest piece she is presented as a member of Juelanshe, without gender designators such as *nühuajia* or *nüshi*. Later she was showcased as the wife of the more famous Pang Xunqin. But by 1935, already a young mother, her role has changed, and she has become a silent feminine presence at her husband’s side. Hardly content to be a flower vase, but with a young family to nurture and faced with realities of economic hardship and societal upheaval, just a few short years later she would find it impossible to break free of traditional gender roles and maintain a professional career.

Marriage was thus both a boon and a hindrance to Qiu Ti’s vocation as an oil painter. Without her favorable second marriage, she would not have received such an enthusiastic reception in contemporary periodicals. At the same time, her marriage identified her as wife and—according to social conventions—automatically placed her in a position subordinate to her husband. As Qiu Ti struck out on the path of her new life, the final outcome of her struggle between societal roles—private and public identity, wife and artist—was by no means assured.

Her years of participation with Juelanshe mark a brief period in which she negotiated her roles within the organization and her marriage.

CHAPTER TWO

An Ornamental *Flower*: The Significance of Qiu Ti's Prizewinning Entry in the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition

Flower, a painting of a potted plant on a table and Qiu Ti's most heralded work, was exhibited at the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition and during the exhibition received an award (Fig. 2.1).¹⁰⁹ The original was lost decades ago. All that remains of the painting today is a black-and-white photographic reproduction and a couple of brief textual references.¹¹⁰ Intriguingly, *Flower* not only received the sole prize presented by Juelanshe in the history of the group, but also is cited as justification for Qiu Ti's inclusion in the painting society as its exclusive female member.¹¹¹ It seems more than coincidental that the group's only female member was also the recipient of its only award. This chapter examines the circumstances surrounding the exhibition of *Flower* and the group's selection of Qiu Ti to receive the award. I analyze the painting, the controversy that has been attributed to it, and compare it to the work of Qiu Ti's peers. I demonstrate how Ni Yide's comments about the painting in his 1935 essay relate to the group's ideology and larger developments in the art community. Investigating Qiu Ti's dubious status as Juelanshe's only female artist, I analyze the nature of the award as well as

¹⁰⁹ Despite standing as Qiu Ti's most publicized work, many questions surround *Flower*. The date Qiu Ti painted *Flower* is uncertain, although its showing at the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition in October of 1933 provides a terminus ante quem. In all probability *Flower* was painted in oil on a canvas of modest size, as are all other extant examples of Qiu Ti's work. Some sense of the painting's size might be discerned from the photograph of Qiu Ti in *Shidai huabao*'s feature of the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition. The painting behind Qiu Ti is almost certainly *Flower* and based on the fact that the upper and lower corners of the painting in the background extend outside the frame of the photograph, it may be surmised that the canvas is at minimum a couple of feet in height. See "Juelanshe jiang."

¹¹⁰ As discussed in the previous chapter, an announcement in the Shanghai pictorial *Shidai huabao* reproduces the painting and gives a short written description of the circumstances surrounding the award. "Exposition of Storm Society Paintings 决澜社第二回展览会出品," *Shidai huabao* 时代画报 5.1 (Nov 1933). A second and more widely cited source of information about *Flower* is an essay written and published in 1935 by Juelanshe co-founder and promoter, Ni Yide, which will be discussed in detail below.

¹¹¹ The other Juelanshe members were presumably granted membership without awards to validate their work.

unspoken motives the group may have had in presenting the prize to her. The chapter concludes by using this information to speculate on Qiu Ti's position within Juelanshe and reframes *Flower* as a painting with evolving symbolic significance.

The Painting

Black-and-white reproductions recovered from contemporary periodicals reveal that *Flower* skillfully balanced tone, texture, and shapes to form a lively study of contrasts—light and dark, rough and smooth, and geometric and organic. A dark hue served as the background of the painting. Stretching to all four corners of the canvas, this flat, even color appears as an impenetrable blanket, separating the subject of the picture from any recognizable environment. In contrast, a trapezoid as light as the background is dark and equally flat occupies most of the lower half of the painting. The large potted plant and patterned mat identify the geometric form as a table. The mat is slightly off center, but the pot is precisely in the center of the table and the canvas. Painted in a medium tone and rendered volumetric by shading, the pot is a smooth cylindrical form with a pronounced thick lip. From its dark soil, the asymmetrical plant grows dynamically upwards. The lower half of the plant is a bushy mass of serrated tri-colored leaves remarkable for the complexity of their vivid patterns, with a medium tone at the margin, a dark band just inside the margin, and a light color in the center. The plant stems thrust dramatically upward and end in inflorescences that seem to stab into the abstract ground at the top of the picture. These sparsely covered spears are sprinkled with tiny flowers and buds as thin and fragile as the body of the plant is bushy and vibrant. These vivid contrasts in hue, texture, and shape create a tension that is intensified by the distortions of space. The surface of the table is sharply tipped, creating a sense of instability. The objects on the table look as if they might slide

off the bottom of the picture. To be read as a table, the ambiguous trapezoid requires the presence of potted plant and mat. Qiu Ti heightened the spatial ambiguity by adding her signature, "Schudy," to the lower right corner of the tabletop as if to deny its physicality as a table.

Despite its spatial ambiguities and course brushwork, *Flower* is remarkably descriptive, so much so that the variety of plant is quite obvious. Qiu Ti faithfully portrayed the distinguishing characteristics of the coleus, an ornamental plant cultivated for its distinctive leaves of brilliant reds and greens. Several varieties of coleus bear large leaves with the same serrated edges and variegated patterning as the plant seen in the painting. The coleus plant is typically appreciated for its full and bushy form, but such a growth is only achieved by pinching off the flower stems when they begin to sprout upwards from the mass of the plant. If left to its own devices, the coleus grows spindly stems that reach up towards the sky and produce tiny vertical rows of flowers, just as seen in *Flower*. In fact, the coleus may have been a plant that Qiu Ti knew well. *Flora of China* lists the coleus as native to the southern provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi.¹¹² Qiu Ti's daughter, Pang Tao, observes that the plant was common to her mother's home province.¹¹³ It is possible that while Qiu Ti lived in Shanghai the plant held sentimental significance for her as a reminder of her childhood home.

In style and subject matter, *Flower* is representative of Qiu Ti's oeuvre in many ways. Selective use of coarse brushstrokes in the painting conveys a sense of organic texture. The clearly organized composition involves a minimal number of objects. The artist combines

¹¹² Today the coleus is cultivated in all of China's provinces and is quite popular worldwide. See 五彩苏 http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=2&taxon_id=200019547. See also 鞘蕊花 <http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/taxon.pl?317409>.

¹¹³ Pang Tao notes that the plant in *Flower* grew in Qiu Ti's hometown in Pang Tao, "Early Works of Qiu Ti and Pang Xunqin," *Meishu yanjiu 美术研究 [Art Research]* 104 (2001). She reiterated this view during an interview that I conducted when I remarked upon a lush coleus plant prominently displayed in her Beijing residence. Pang Tao, interview by author, Beijing, China, March 20, 2009.

descriptive detail based on a faithful observation of nature with a playful stylization. Nearly all of Qiu Ti's still lifes share these characteristics. The majority of the paintings made throughout her life are highly engaging for their interpretive brushstrokes and composition with easily identifiable subjects true to their natural forms. Although she used dramatically ragged brushstrokes in *Two Camellias* (1939) and *Wild Chrysanthemums* (early 1930s), and playfully exaggerated dimensions as in *Mushrooms* (1947) and *Doll* (1939), the existence of real objects on which the images are based is never in question (Fig. 2.2-5).¹¹⁴ The camellias approximate the colors and shapes of their real-life counterparts; the mushrooms are rendered in familiar textures and shades; and the doll has the same playful proportions and vibrant hues as the original. Qiu Ti clearly enjoyed painting what she saw in front of her, and virtually without exception the subjects of her paintings appear accurate in proportion and color scheme. In light of what was apparently her typical practice, we can assume that the now-lost *Flower* was also mostly accurate not just in physical dimensions, but also in selection of color, and possibly modeled on a real red-leafed coleus plant of the type native to her home province.

Textual Sources and Recent Scholarship on *Flower*

If in fact *Flower* depicts a common coleus, then it is an interesting paradox that the painting has been repeatedly recognized in the scholarly community for its supposed radical color scheme. This curious present-day interpretation of the painting results from recent readings

¹¹⁴ The *Schudy* catalogue relates that *Mushrooms* was painted during an exercise in which Qiu Ti instructed her children to stretch their imaginations while painting from the limited resources available, in this case the arrangement of mushrooms. The subject of *Doll* was one of a set of more than one hundred plush toys that Qiu Ti made in 1938 to sell for the war effort. Additional visual evidence of this toy can be seen in a photograph of Qiu Ti's children with more than a dozen of the dolls in *Schudy* and a still life by Chang Shuhong (1904-1994) that features one of the dolls, *Thunder throughout the Land* (1939). Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 100.

of Ni Yide's essay, "The Group Juelanshe" (Juelanshe de yi qun 决澜社的一群).¹¹⁵ Published in 1935, two years after Qiu Ti exhibited the painting and received the award, the essay promoted the painting society in anticipation of its Fourth Annual Exhibition.¹¹⁶ Ni Yide begins his article with a lengthy and romantic description of his good friend Pang Xunqin and the circumstances surrounding the founding of Juelanshe, and then introduces individual members of the group. In the last paragraph he comes to Qiu Ti, saying:

If our memory serves well, we may still remember the autumn of 1933 Second Juelanshe Exhibition award winner Qiu Ti. She is Juelanshe's only female artist. Her masterpiece *Flower*, was at that time the main feature and special feature in many illustrated publications, yet at the same time was by one know-nothing critic censured for its mistake of red leaves and green flowers. Regardless of whether among flowering plants there is or is not a red-leafed green-flowered variety, sometimes for the sake of ornamental effect, there is no harm in even changing natural colors. That painting *Flower*, was done entirely in an ornamental style. Based on this award-winning painting she was recommended for membership in Juelanshe.¹¹⁷

我们如果记忆力还好的话，总还可以记得一九三三年秋决澜社第二届画展中得奖的丘堤吧。她是决澜社唯一的女作家。她的那幅杰作花，是被当时许多画报上大登而特登的，而同时又被一个无识的批评者指摘其红叶绿花的错误。姑无论草花中有没有红叶绿花的一种，但画面上有时为了装饰的效果，即使是改变了自然的色彩也是不妨的。因为那幅花，完全是倾向于装饰风的。她也就因了这幅画的得奖而被介绍为决澜社的社员了。

Based on this brief description, most recent scholars infer that *Flower* stirred up great controversy. In his groundbreaking 1993 study of Juelanshe, Ralph Croizier draws heavily from Ni Yide's essay to inform his analysis of Qiu Ti's painting and its impact on the art world at the

¹¹⁵ This essay was the final installment of a three-part article. Ni Yide, "Yiyuan jiaoyou ji: Juelanshe de yi qun 艺苑交游记: 决澜社的一群" [Notes on Friendly Connections in the Art Community: The Group Juelanshe], *Qingnian jie* 青年界 8.3 (Oct 1935): 65-70.

¹¹⁶ Ni Yide, "Juelanshe de yi qun," 65-70.

¹¹⁷ An alternate translation of this passage may be found in Ni Yide. "A Galaxy of the Storm Society," 236-241.

time of its public display.¹¹⁸ Discussing the entries in the Juelanshe exhibition of 1933, Croizier writes:

But it was not Pang's "Design" of vaguely Leger-like automatons or the surrealistic still lifes of Zhou Duo and Yang Taiyang that attracted the most attention at the second exhibition. The biggest controversy arose over a prize-winning entry by the only woman member, Qiu Ti (Mrs. Pang Xunqin). Reproduced in several magazines (unfortunately not in colour) what disturbed critics and casual onlookers was the fact that in a decorative picture of a potted plant she had painted the leaves red and the flowers green.

Writing about this public flap over unnatural colours, Ni Yide cited it as proof of China's backwardness where most people still did not understand artistic expression...

Croizier finishes the sentence with a direct quote of Ni Yide's theoretical argument in support of altering color to achieve ornamental results. He then launches into a metaphysical rationale for artistic license, which he ties to a line from the group's manifesto and the larger debate between realism and modernism roiling in the Chinese art world in Juelanshe's time.¹¹⁹

Five years later, Kuiyi Shen similarly reasons that the critical reception of *Flower* prompted Ni Yide's words about the painting. In his essay, "The Lure of the West: Modern Chinese Oil Painting," in the catalogue for the canon-making Guggenheim show, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*, Shen cites Croizier as his source for the following passage:

The Storm Society's only exhibition prize was awarded to Qiu Ti (1906-1958) for her highly stylized still life with red leaves and green flowers, which was shown in the second exhibition. The painting, published in 1933, apparently drew enough criticism from the realist camp that Ni Yide felt compelled to defend it in an article published the following year.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Croizier, 146.

¹¹⁹ Croizier describes nature as "the mere outward manifestation of reality." Ibid.

¹²⁰ Shen, "Lure of the West," (1998): 176.

The weighty impact of Ni Yide's essay has not been limited to Western scholarship. The most comprehensive volume on modern Chinese women artists to date, *Shiluo de lishi: Zhongguo nüxing huihua shi*, (Lost History: The History of Chinese Women's Painting), provides a biographic entry for Qiu Ti, a substantial portion of which discusses *Flower*.¹²¹ The authors, Tao Yongbai and Li Shi, base their entire assessment of the painting on Ni Yide's interpretation, both paraphrasing and quoting from the 1935 essay. The only point of divergence from Ni Yide's words comes when the authors, presumably elaborating upon his mention of the critical reaction of a single critic, state that *Flower* "drew objections from not a few people" (*yinqi le bushao ren de yiyi* 引起了不少人的异议).¹²²

In a 2001 review of her parents' early artistic works, Pang Tao candidly mentions that the subject of *Flower* is a variety that grows in the southern part of her mother's home province.¹²³ She also says, however, that some people asserted that leaves should be green and flowers should be red and thus the painting "led to a controversy" (*yinqi le yi fan zhenglun* 引起了一番争论).¹²⁴ Though she does not specifically refer to Ni Yide's essay, she seems to be closely following his words when she concludes her discussion of the painting by saying:

Pang Xunqin, Ni Yide as well as Qiu Ti and the other artists of Juelanshe, naturally felt that [when it came to] art changing natural colors, the progressive art process was beyond reproach, on account of making this standpoint known, [they] ultimately awarded the only "Juelanshe Award" to Qiu Ti.¹²⁵

庞熏菜、倪貽德以及丘堤等一些决澜社画家，自然认为艺术改变物象本色，进行艺术处理无可非议，为表明观点，最后将唯一的“决澜社奖”颁发给了丘堤。

¹²¹ Tao and Li, 213-217.

¹²² Tao and Li, 215.

¹²³ Pang Tao, "Early Works," 28-29.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* Translation mine.

The 2006 Schudy catalogue provides two of the most recent assessments of *Flower*. In “Schudy, the Storm Society, and China’s Early Modernist Movement,” Shen and Julia Andrews provide no source for their observation that, though *Flower* was generally accepted, at the same time the painting also provoked a critical reaction from the more conservative members of the art society. Calling Qiu Ti by her Western name, the authors write the following analysis:

Inspired by the spirit of the first exhibition, she prepared a very daring work for submission to the next Storm Society show. Although there were many talented female artists exhibiting in Shanghai in that period, including Fang Junbi, Pan Yuliang, and Guan Zilan, Schudy was certainly one of the best painters, and was far more avant-garde than many other artists, male or female, of the time. The second Storm Society exhibition was held on October 10, 1933, in the auditorium of the World Society (Shijieshe) on Ferguson Road (Wukanglu) in the French concession. Schudy submitted her still life “Flowers in Vase”, which was awarded the first and only Storm Society Prize ever presented. Schudy’s painting, as the show’s prize-winning work, was published in many magazines and newspapers. Although widely appreciated, it was also a focus of criticism from some critics who did not accept the goals of the Storm Society. The striking work, of which no color reproduction survives, depicted flowers and a vase in green, with the leaves in red, presumably reversing the natural order of things. It was this daring color and non-representational quality that drew strong criticism from more academically trained artists and critics of the time.¹²⁶

In the catalogue’s second essay, “Schudy: Her Art and Life,” contemporary Chinese artist Ni Jun provides his own highly creative reading of *Flower* and its critical reception, which he bases in part on Ni Yide’s essay.

Schudy’s “Flowers in Vase” won the only award at the Storm Society’s exhibition; it also caused huge controversy. Chinese audiences at that time were only familiar with representational and realistic work; they considered Schudy’s expressionistic and Fauvist ways of rendering color—red leaves and green flowers, unacceptable. In defending Schudy, Ni Yide wrote that in modern art, artists were not required to present realistic images in their works. Schudy’s

¹²⁶ Andrews and Shen, “Schudy,” 73.

flowers were the flowers of her heart; the color of the flowers was the color of her heart.¹²⁷

The only study to question whether or not *Flower* was enveloped in controversy is Huajing Xiu's dissertation on the Shanghai art world during the Republican period. Though Xiu's assessment does not identify the species of the plant nor the fact that Qiu Ti's home province was its native habitat, she nonetheless acknowledges that the painting is a relatively faithful portrayal of a plant found in nature.

The painting Qiu Ti contributed to the second Storm Society exhibition was titled *Flower*, a potted plant with red leaves and green flowers, which won the first prize. Croizier claimed that this painting caused controversy among the audience, because of the unnatural colors she used. The flower itself was a plant, the sort of plant whose matured leaves turn red but the new leaves on the top are green. If it caused any controversy, the uproar should be about this rare plant, not Qiu Ti's way of representing it. She was painting the object as it was, not a hint of unnatural colors. The reason she got the prize must have been its delicate composition and the decorativeness.¹²⁸

Without citing Ni Yide's 1935 article, Xiu maintains that Qiu Ti must have received the Juelanshe award for its artistic merits alone, rather than for any provocative conceptual content that has been attributed to it. Confident that the painting portrays a real plant, Xiu faults Croizier for fabricating a controversy based on Qiu Ti's use of color. But as the above review of scholarship on *Flower* demonstrates, Croizier was not alone in believing that the painting generated a hot debate.

¹²⁷ Ni Jun's description of Qiu Ti's inspirational source seems to be his own unique interpretation. Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 91. The Chinese translation of his article is even more colorfully elaborate and calls Ni Yide "the other valiant general of Juelanshe" (*Juelanshe de ling yi ming mengjiang Ni Yide* 决澜社的另一名猛将倪贻德) who "defended the principles of the group" (*hanwei le Juelanshe de jingshen yu zhuzhi* 捍卫了决澜社的精神与主旨) and "forcefully advocated for Qiu Ti's painting to receive the award" (*Ni Yide lizhu Qiu Ti de "Pinghua" gai de jiang* 倪贻德力主邱堤的《瓶花》该得奖).

¹²⁸ Huajing Xiu (Maske), "Shanghai - Paris : Chinese Painters in France and China, 1919-1937," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2000): 242.

I feel that both Croizier and Xiu provide particularly useful contributions to our understanding of *Flower*. Croizier adroitly captures the ideological drive behind Ni Yide's words. Rather than misconstruing Ni Yide's words, per se, Croizier aptly articulates the artistic vision and group objective of Juelanshe. His analysis of Ni Yide's ideological fervor rings true, regardless of whether a controversy existed or not. On the other hand, as Xiu suggests, scholarship's emphasis on a "controversy" and the conflation of this controversy with the painting's award-winning status has created the impression that Juelanshe presented Qiu Ti with the award for having challenged artistic convention with an unnatural color palette. In fact, the presentation of the award and the critical reception of *Flower* may have been unrelated.

Among Her Peers

Whereas recent scholars have teased a controversy out of the thin textual evidence, in reality *Flower* was probably not that controversial. It certainly was not the most shocking painting in the Juelanshe exhibition of that year. Judging from the exhibition review in *Shidai huabao*, other oil paintings on display were more provocative in style and theme (See Fig. 1.3). The exhibition included two landscapes by Wang Jiyuan, a landscape with a boat by Zhou Zhentai, and three portraits of women by Ni Yide, Zhang Xuan (张弦 1901-1936), and Zhou Duo. All six of these paintings drew from Post-Impressionism in offering simplified but still easily recognizable subjects. Like Qiu Ti's *Flower*, a still life by Zhou Duo contrasts a light-colored tabletop, seen from above so that it reads vertically, with a dark background. Instead of showcasing a single subject, however, Zhou Duo scattered "odds and ends" across the surface of his table. The bold composition and the sharp delineation of the objects give the painting a starkly modernistic feel.

Even more daring is Duan Pingyou's contribution. Composed of bold geometric shapes, it is barely recognizable as a landscape containing the vague forms of clouds, houses, and a hillside. Pang Xunqin submitted a minimally descriptive painting of a crowd comprising identically streamlined male figures wearing either swimsuits or short-sleeved shirts, with one figure holding an accordion. That the painting was printed upside-down in the *Liangyou* exhibition review may have been a simple printing accident but it is also possible that it indicates the extent to which the painting was befuddling to contemporary eyes (Fig. 2.6). Yang Taiyang's boldly surrealistic still lifes must have been deemed especially exciting, as two were selected for publication in *Shidai huabao*. Even the other exhibition entry submitted by Qiu Ti—a pared down depiction of nudes in a landscape with little suggestion of perspective—appears more daring than *Flower*.

The regular appearance of oil paintings of fruit bowls and flower vases in the pictorial magazines of the 1930s suggests strong interest in the Western still life. Many of these still lifes, such as the two paintings of lilies in Ni Yide's 1934 solo exhibition, can be characterized as pleasant if pedestrian variations on Post-Impressionism (Fig. 2.7).¹²⁹ A double-page review in a 1932 issue of *Liangyou* illustrates in black-and-white two competent examples by professors at the Xin Hua Academy: Wang Yachen's (汪亚尘 1894-1983) painterly depiction of a rounded vase overflowing with peony blossoms titled *Paeonia albiflora* 芍药花, and a more naturalistically detailed still life of dead rabbits on a table by Wu Hengqin (吴恒勤 n.d.) (Fig. 2.8).¹³⁰ Two years later, *Meishu shenghuo* reproduced Wang Yachen's painting of peonies in

¹²⁹ *Meishu shenghuo* 7 (Oct 1934): 12.

¹³⁰ "Autumn—The Season of Arts: Exhibition of works by the faculty of S. H. Academy, Qiu zhi huazhan: Xinhua yizhuan jiaoshou zhanlanhui yu Pang Xunqin geren zhanlanhui 秋之画展：新华艺专教授展览会与庞薰琴个人展览会" [Autumn's Painting Exhibitions: Xinhua Art Academy Professors' Exhibition and Pang Xunqin's Solo Exhibition], *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 71 (1932). The two-page feature reviews two separate exhibitions; the

color, revealing a naturalistic color scheme of pastel pink and yellow flowers and muted green foliage against a neutral background of mottled gray (Fig. 2.9).¹³¹ The November issue of *Meishu shenghuo* presents two full-color photographs of still lifes by recent Académie Julian graduate Lü Sibai (吕斯百 1905-1974) (Fig. 2.10).¹³² Delicately observed in tonal gradations and proportions but Post-Impressionist in the gestural application of paint, these depictions of European subjects—in one case the makings of a hearty French meal of rabbit with potato and leeks and a copper cooking pot—reference his appreciation of both Cézanne and the eighteenth-century painter Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin.¹³³ The 1934 *Liangyou* “Occidental Painting Series” also provides multiple color reproductions of still life paintings, including study of a vase of white peonies on a tablecloth by Wang Yachen; the composition is highly reminiscent of his pink peonies in its use of a rumpled tablecloth and mottled gray background, similar arrangement of the flowers, and identical rounded copper vase (Fig. 2.11).¹³⁴ The series’ installment of the previous month features a Cézannesque still life, an assortment of fruit in a Western cut-glass bowl, by Chen Baoyi (陈抱一 1893-1945) (Fig. 2.12).

By far the most experimental of the still lifes featured in *Liangyou*’s series is Lin Fengmian’s *Cockscomb*, a boldly brushed composition of black and prismatic colors of yellow, green, blue, and vibrant red (Fig. 2.13). A potpourri of European styles, the painting builds up parallel strokes of pigment much like Cézanne, employs vivid colors with black outline, much as

majority of the nine images belong to a group exhibition for the professors of the Xin Hua Academy and only two images come from Pang Xunqin’s solo exhibition.

¹³¹ *Meishu shenghuo* 1 (Apr 1934): 14-15.

¹³² *Meishu shenghuo* 8 (Nov 1934): 8-9. Lü Sibai had graduated from the Académie Julian earlier that year and these two paintings may represent work he presented at a graduation exhibition. Michael Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists: A Biographical Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006): 112.

¹³³ Sullivan identifies Lü Sibai as “[i]nfluenced by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, and Paul Cézanne.” *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Liangyou* 86 (1934): 19. More than half a year after the publication of Wang Yachen’s painting of white peonies in *Liangyou*, *Meishu shenghuo* published a color reproduction of his pink peonies, which had already appeared as a black-and-white reproduction in *Liangyou* over two and a half years earlier.

would a Primitivist; and evokes Fauvism in its application of brilliant color to abstracted shapes.

Lin Fengmian's use of color and brushwork was so striking that it became the focus of the biographical note accompanying the image. Devoting only a single sentence on his illustrious career, the paragraph offers a detailed discussion of his style.

Mr. Lin Fengmian, currently the president of the Hangzhou National Art Academy, studied painting in France for years. He paints with broad strokes of the brush. As for tonal aspects, he has always liked to use murky colors of blue and green, which fills his images with a gloomy mood. Recently, however, in a change from his previous style, he is using garish colors that are animated and bright in appearance and striking by comparison. His brushstrokes have an even greater bold and unconstrained feeling than before. The *Cockscomb* in this magazine represents one of the works in his recent style.¹³⁵

林风眠氏，现在杭州国立艺术专门学校校长，曾留法习绘画有年。作画用笔阔大，色调方面，一向喜欢用蓝绿等灰暗的颜色，故画面满充沉郁的情绪。最近所作，却一变以前的风格，色彩则用大红大绿，画面热烈明快，成强烈的对照，笔触则比前更觉豪放，这里所刊的《鸡冠花》，可代表他最近的作风的一斑。¹³⁶

While the composition of Qiu Ti's *Flower* is more dramatic than many of the still lifes by her contemporaries, judging from Lin Fengmian's *Cockscomb* and the paintings of other Juelanshe members it is evident that *Flower* was not the most provocative painting of its time. Though indeed a striking image, *Flower* does not challenge preconceived notions of the subject to the same degree as did the surrealist assemblages of Yang Taiyang or the fragmented brushwork of Lin Fengmian's *Cockscomb*. As Xiu points out, it is unlikely that anyone familiar with this plant could have felt unsettled by the colors of the painting.¹³⁷ Rather than concentrate

¹³⁵ Translation mine.

¹³⁶ "Flowers by F. M. Lin: The Young Companion's Series of Contemporary Paintings by Chinese Artists. Section II Occidental: 4," *Liangyou* 87 (1934): 18/19.

¹³⁷ A color photograph in *Shidai huabao* 5.8 (Feb 16, 1934) features a coleus variety, suggesting that the plant was not completely unknown to the Shanghai magazine's audience.

on Qiu Ti's use of color, it is more pertinent to examine how Ni Yide's discussion of *Flower* ties into the popular dialogue and trends of the Shanghai art community at that time and to deconstruct the objectives that might underlie his words.

Exhibitions, Manifestos, and the Purpose of Art

The thrust of Ni Yide's commentary on *Flower* upholds the ideology of Juelanshe and ties into a rousing trend of art activism, the new spirit of determination that swept over the Chinese art community in the 1930s. In her seminal study "China's Response to the West in Art, 1898-1937," Mayching Margaret Kao identifies a growing trend of factionalism among the artists trained in Western styles following the First National Art Exhibition.¹³⁸ Whereas Chinese artists had previously adopted Western painting styles and theories more or less indiscriminately, by the 1930s a more critical and nationalistic response had emerged with art expected to contribute towards the betterment of the struggling nation. Artists generally embraced the same nationalistic goal of transforming China through art, but split into opposing factions in formulating specific responses "to the demands of a society in transition and a nation in danger."¹³⁹ The Movement for the Renaissance of Chinese Art (*Zhongguo yishu fuxing yundong* 中国艺术复兴运动), which supported the development of a new national painting (*xin guohua*) through the fusion of Chinese and Western art, encompassed a diverse range of work, including examples by Xu Beihong, Fang Junbi, and Liu Haisu.¹⁴⁰ In stark contrast, artists such as Lin

¹³⁸ Kao, Mayching Margaret. "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898-1937." PhD Diss. Stanford University, 1972. Andrews and Shen also use the year 1930 as point of division around which their discussion of *guohua* painting is split, pointing to the significance of the late 1920s-early 1930s in all fields of Chinese art. Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War Through the Cultural Revolution, 1840-1979* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum/Echo Rock Ventures, 2000).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁴⁰ Kao, "China's Response," 151. Kuiyi Shen discusses several of the painters that sought to reform traditional painting with the selective application of Western techniques and styles in his essay. Kuiyi Shen, "Traditional

Fengmian and the members of Juelanshe made a strong commitment to the styles of the modern European painting schools, and explored conceptual issues and the expression of inner emotion. Meanwhile proponents of academic realism, most famously Xu Beihong, who demonstrated that artists could simultaneously promote more than one theoretical approach to art, advocated the conservative use of traditional Western painting styles.¹⁴¹ Kao writes of these heady times:

The divergent currents in these years created a stimulating and controversial environment. Many exhibitions were held and new groups were formed to search for a possible reconciliation between form and theory. Art education developed (under the leadership of students returning from Europe) and began to build a firmer technical foundation. New “isms” continued to be introduced, but they received more scrutiny before acceptance.¹⁴²

The Shanghai art community in which all of this turbulent activity occurred provided overlapping venues for professional exposure and public interaction. In her analysis of the Shanghai art scene, Andrews identifies “four distinct but intersecting realms in the 1930s”: institutions of higher education, art societies, the art market, and periodicals.¹⁴³ Juelanshe exemplifies the interplay between these four realms. A privately operated art society, it effectively exerted its influence in publications and at the art schools where many of its members taught. And for Juelanshe, like other art groups, the exhibition and the group manifesto were

Painting in a Transnational Era, 1900-1950,” In Julia Frances Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, and Jonathan D. Spence, eds. *A Century in Crisis : Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum: Harry N. Abrams, 1998): 86-88.

¹⁴¹ Xu Beihong initiated a high profile debate over the relevance of modernist art when in reaction to the 1929 First National Art Exhibition he published “Huo 惑” [Doubt] in the exhibition newsletter, in which he bitterly criticizes many of the modernist painters in Europe. A public dialogue involving poet Xu Zhimo, painter Li Yishi, and Xu Beihong ensued. *Shanghai Modern* p. 187-192

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁴³ Julia Frances Andrews, “A Shelter from the Storm: Chinese Painting in a Cataclysmic Age, 1930-1979,” in Julia Frances Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, eds, *Between the Thunder and the Rain: Chinese Paintings from the Opium War Through the Cultural Revolution, 1840-1979* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum/Echo Rock Ventures, 2000): 182-183. Andrews observes that the Western leanings of the art schools in Shanghai favored oil painters and notes that the art market was critical to the *guohua* painters. Conversely, teaching appointments served as the main source of income for the modernist painters, as they made few successful sales of their work. Croizier, 142.

expedient means of distinguishing and disseminating their ideas on raising the art of the nation to greater heights.

Chinese interest in public exhibitions originated during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when travelers returned from abroad with knowledge of the exhibition cultures in Europe and Japan and the spectacle of Western-style expositions.¹⁴⁴ By the beginning of the twentieth century, China was staging its own exhibitions.¹⁴⁵ Initially appreciated as venues for the promotion of the nation, early exhibitions placed emphasis on displays of scientific and commercial worth.¹⁴⁶ As the first generation of Chinese artists studying abroad began to return home in the 1920s, the public art exhibition quickly became a part of the social fabric of the art community. Typically the exhibitions for the oil painters revolved around a seasonal calendar; autumn became known as the “Season of the Arts,” and the majority of group and solo exhibitions occurred in and around October (Fig. 2.14).¹⁴⁷

By the time Qiu Ti displayed her work alongside that of other Juelanshe members in the 1930s, the public exhibition was an accepted practice on both the national and local levels. The First National Art Exhibition held in Shanghai in 1929 evidenced government sponsorship of a comprehensive and large-scale public display of art. On a local level, major cosmopolitan centers saw the proliferation of exhibitions staged in public venues by artist associations and independent artists. As an outgrowth of the new culture movement, exhibitions allowed artists to

¹⁴⁴ Lisa Claypool, “Ways of Seeing the Nation: Chinese Painting in the *National Essence Journal* (1905-1911) and Exhibition Culture,” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 19.1 (Winter 2011, in press): 11.

¹⁴⁵ Claypool dates the start of China’s domestic exhibitions to the first decade of the twentieth century. Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ “Autumn—The Season of Arts.” Perhaps in the timing of their exhibitions the Chinese artists had decided to follow the relatively recent Parisian tradition of the seasonal exhibition first established by the inaugural Salon d’Automne (Autumn Salon) in 1903.

make public contributions to the betterment of society.¹⁴⁸ They served as vehicles that could express either the perspective of a single artist or a unified group vision to a larger audience. Reviews featured in contemporary pictorial magazines indicate that the exhibitions staged by Juelanshe amply demonstrated their democratic embrace of Western styles.

Like exhibitions, manifestos offered artist societies of Qiu Ti's time an oft utilized outlet for sharing their vision with the outside world. Manifestos were easily disseminated to large audiences via popular journals, and many from the early twentieth century speak of revolutionizing art and nation. All types of art and literature organizations, from traditional *guohua* societies to modernists, drafted and published manifestos. At times quite verbose, these manifestos reveal deep anxieties felt by art society members. Many promote art as a means to alleviate social problems and rebuild China's broken social and political system. The manifesto of the National Art Movement Society (*Guoli yishu yundong she* 国立艺术运动社), printed in *Yapole* (Apollo) in 1929, provides an example of the typical psyche of the art community.¹⁴⁹ It boldly declares that the group's "ultimate vision" is "to unite a majority of creative powers in the art community to expedite the realization of a new artistic age, as a lasting spiritual contribution to society."¹⁵⁰ While the group concedes that, "Speaking about Art Movements in this devastated China without addressing the needs of the time seems ridiculous," they also argue that, "the more

¹⁴⁸ Though open to the public, in reality the exhibitions for modernist artists, such as the members of Juelanshe, drew a majority of attendees from the rarefied ranks of the intellectual and artistic communities. Croizier examines how the crux of the modernists' inability to secure widespread and enduring support lay in its basic ideology which was "subjective, individualistic, innovative, and, by implication if not intent, elitist. The emphasis on the individual's inner vision and constantly changing creativity meant that it could brook no rules or regulations, no source of external authority." Croizier, 147.

¹⁴⁹ *Yapole* [Apollo] was an art journal edited by Lin Wenzheng and published by the National Hangzhou Art College.

¹⁵⁰ Translation of the National Art Movement Society Manifesto is taken from "Manifesto of the Art Movement Society (1929)," in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker et al., *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004): 373.

unstable a society is for its inhabitants, the greater their need for art to serve as an emotional and spiritual refuge.”¹⁵¹ Therefore, the group explains:

We understand the true meaning of art. Although wandering about in a desperate plight at a time like this ceaseless war, yet without a moment’s hesitation [we] raise up the art movement’s banner in the midst of screams and groans, spreading the gospel of art! This is our bounden duty!¹⁵²

我们明白了艺术之真义。虽际此干戈未息颠沛流离之时期，仍毅然决然揭起艺术运动的旗帜在呼啸呻吟之中，宣传艺术之福音！这是我们的天职！¹⁵³

By 1930 idealistic proclamations were so prevalent that the art community was already experiencing something of a manifesto fatigue, as evident from a group statement presented on the back cover of the journal *Bai E* (White Goose 白鹅), published by a painting association of the same name established by Chen Qiucao, Fang Xuegu, and Pan Sitong in 1924.¹⁵⁴ Labeling all manifestos as impotent lies, the group refused to characterize their text as a manifesto per se, and instead focused on the future content of the magazine. (Appendix 2.1) Their intent was not to provide any particular ideological bent or spur social progress, but rather to cater to the editors’ personal interests, which might range from art and fiction to news and satirical cartoons. Moreover, the organization reserved the right to pause publication of the journal when lacking inspiration.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Reprinted in *Zhongguo youhua wenxian* 中国油画文献 (Changsha shi: Hunan meishu chuban she, 2002): 572.

¹⁵⁴ “Bai E de kaishi 白鹅的起始” [The Beginnings of White Goose] *Bai E yishu banyuekan* 白鹅艺术半月刊 (March 15-June, 1930): back cover. The organization designated itself the Bai E Huihua Yanjiusuo (白鹅绘画研究所) in 1928 and opened the Bai E Huihua Buxi Xuexiao (白鹅绘画补习学校) a painting continuation school. On March 15, 1930 the association began publication of a bimonthly journal, which concluded in June of the same year after a total of five issues. The school burnt down August 13, 1937 during the Japanese invasion.

Two years after the non-manifesto issued by the White Goose Society, Juelanshe contributed a new and equally audacious declaration.¹⁵⁵ (Appendix 2.2) Even more strongly worded than the rousing example from the National Art Movement Society, the Juelanshe manifesto is filled with passionate, even melodramatic, prose. The vivid language and metaphoric imagery of the manifesto addresses the factionalism of the Chinese art community, and proclaims Juelanshe's opposition to the other groups. Declaring a hatred of the old and conventional, the society aligned itself against traditionalism and suggested resistance to new *guohua* as well.¹⁵⁶ The manifesto also rails against the techniques of literal reproduction employed by Western academic realism. Instead of subordinating art to religion or the written word, the manifesto demands that art must stand on its own.¹⁵⁷ Like other art societies, Juelanshe intended to revitalize and reconstruct the ailing nation through art, but the admiration of a wide range of European art movements underscored the group's encouragement of artistic diversity and independence. Above all, the manifesto makes it clear that the members of the group planned to lead by example, using their own lives to demonstrate the sincerity of their aims.

More than seventy years later, Yang Taiyang echoed the sentiments of the Juelanshe manifesto. In a 2004 interview about the society and his association with it, Yang Taiyang emphasizes that members looked to outside sources and selectively incorporated elements from these sources into their own art in order to create distinctive styles. Focusing on innovation and individual expression, the group "provided an impetus for innovation, which overturned the

¹⁵⁵ Juelanshe, "Juelanshe xuanyan 决澜社宣言" [Juelanshe Manifesto] *Yishu xunkan* 艺术旬刊 1.5 (Oct 1932): 8.

¹⁵⁶ Writing about *guohua* in 1928, Ni Yide ends his article by admonishing young *guohua* artists to give up the themes and sentiments of the past and instead, "1.) From new events and new feelings, go seek new poetic flavor and new sentiments. 2.) Bringing about new skills, go display new painted worlds. 一, 从新的事象, 新的感觉中, 去寻新的诗意, 新的情调。二, 创造新的技巧, 去表现新的画境。" Ni Yide, "Xin de guohua 新的国画" [New Guohua] *Yishu mantan* 艺术漫谈 (Shanghai: Guanghua shuju, 1928).

¹⁵⁷ As Croizier points out, the manifesto also likely implies an objection to the use of art to bolster political agendas. Croizier, 148.

conservative ways of painting, and helped painting move in a new direction towards a new era and with a new spirit.”¹⁵⁸ Yang Taiyang relates that Juelanshe, “accepted new ideas, and exercised its own creativity as well. It also transformed things from other nations into something that the Chinese could use. This spirit was indeed the spirit of innovation.”¹⁵⁹ He insists that the group’s approach was not “art for art’s sake,” but instead promoted “art for life.”¹⁶⁰ Without prescribing a set approach, Juelanshe strove to present a unified challenge to conservatism, hoping to shake things up and transform Chinese art and culture in the process. “We still had to transcend the old society and move forward towards this new idea and new world,” the artist maintains.¹⁶¹ “Everyone had his own individuality, but as a group we all moved in the direction of advancement and innovation that represented the era.”¹⁶²

While the Juelanshe manifesto implies that art should remain independent of any didactic function or moralizing content, the objectives of the group were in line with those of many contemporary Chinese artist societies in advocating the use of art to assist in reconstruction of the nation. As Yang Taiyang relates:

We were all concerned about our society, which was rather chaotic and backward. So the members of the Storm Society were trying, through painting, to transcend the spirit of the time. A new, progressive, and revolutionary spirit, reminiscent of the nature of a storm, was to break out of the old era and to create something new. Of course, we were targeting the backward and

¹⁵⁸ Yang Taiyang, “The Storm Society (Interview),” in Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker et al., *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004): 242-245. Translation provided by source.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 245.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 244. These are two terms coined by Chinese literary groups in the 1920s; in particular, the Creation Society and the Literary Research Association (*Wenxue yanjiuhui* 文学研究会), which was “generally referred to as the realist or ‘art-for-life’s-sake’ school.” *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster, 1995): 281-282, 685-686. The Literary Research Association edited *Xiaoshuo yuebao*, one of the magazines to publish a marriage announcement for Pang Xunqin and Qiu Ti in 1934. Further discussion of the Literary Research Association, the Creation Society, and the “art for art’s sake” (*wei yishu er yishu* 为艺术而艺术) v. “art for life’s sake” (*wei rensheng er yishu* 为人生而艺术) debate can be found in Michel Hockx and Kirk A. Denton, eds. *Literary Societies of Republican China* (Lanham, MD : Lexington Books, 2008).

¹⁶¹ Yang Taiyang, “The Storm Society (Interview),” 244-245.

¹⁶² Ibid, 245.

conservative thinking of China at that time. That is, like a stormy wave, like a tidal wave, we wanted to transcend it. Our ideas were fresh and bold. We wanted to create something new, something new for our nation. That's the spirit we had. We wanted to see progress in the culture and art of China.¹⁶³

In light of the intentions professed in Juelanshe's manifesto, Ni Yide's discussion of *Flower* confirms Yang Taiyang's description of the group's ideology. As already noted, Ni Yide made a point of emphasizing the prerogative of the artist to create a purely ornamental image with no substantive content. This sounds like a defense of 'art for art's sake,' but we can assume it was more than that given the group's professed desire to use revolutionary creations of "pure design" to shock Chinese society into a new awareness, and transform decorative works into tools for an improved life. In positing the painting as a challenge to the status quo in its flagrant reversal of a conventional color scheme, Ni Yide links Qiu Ti's painting to the pursuit of group objectives. *Flower* not only bucked traditionalism, but as a decorative object of a purely ornamental sensibility, it also divorced itself from any dogmatic content. Thus, according to Ni Yide's interpretation, *Flower* not only supported Juelanshe's insistence that art be received on individual merits instead of serving as a slave to ideological or literary themes, but also offered Chinese society a revolutionary approach to art in the form of progressive spirit and pure design.

Juelanshe's Only Female Artist

We have no way of knowing if Ni Yide's understanding of Qiu Ti's painting was shared by the artist herself, but I doubt that *Flower* was meant to be as complex and subversive as he suggests in his essay. As already indicated, *Flower* is not a decorative imagining with a color scheme manipulated for ornamental effect, but a descriptive rendering of a specific plant.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 244.

Beyond what we can see in her paintings, Qiu Ti's artistic intentions remain unknown. In the case of *Flower*, the group's professional art theorist functioned as her mouthpiece. She did not publish any writings, nor did she have a solo exhibition. Her persona was linked to her husband's, others spoke for her in print, and thus it would seem that she enjoyed little sense of autonomy among her colleagues.

In regard to Qiu Ti's reception within Juelanshe, Ni Yide's article indicates that he did not rank Qiu Ti among the male Juelanshe members (Fig. 2.15). Moreover, he follows traditional biographical practice in placing his paragraph on Qiu Ti at the very end of the text. Curiously, in the immediately preceding paragraph, he writes: "Finally, I would like to talk about Zhang Xuan, who was the last to join." In point of fact, Zhang Xuan's participation in the group *preceded* Qiu Ti's. The previous year Pang Xunqin had listed the twelve artists involved at the inception of Juelanshe.¹⁶⁴ A friend of Pang Xunqin's, Zhang Xuan was probably a founding member of the Storm Society and he participated in the First Annual Storm Society Exhibition in October 1932.¹⁶⁵ Qiu Ti, however, met her future husband for the first time just a few weeks before the first show, and did not exhibit with the group until the following year.¹⁶⁶ Although Qiu Ti began associating with Juelanshe well before the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition, she was first publically recognized as a group member *after* receiving the award. Ni Yide's identification of Zhang Xuan instead of Qiu Ti as the final person to join the society provides a glimpse of his

¹⁶⁴ Pang Xunqin, "Juelanshe xiaoshi 决澜社小史" [The Brief History of Juelanshe], *Yishu xunkan* 艺术旬刊 1.5 (Oct 11, 1932): 9. The list does not include Qiu Ti as she did not yet know Pang Xunqin or had begun interacting with the group at that time. "Excluding the author, those at the January 6, 1932 meeting were: Liang Baibo, Duan Pingyou, Chen Chengbo, Yang Taiyang, Yang Qiuren, Zeng Zhiliang, Zhou Mi, Deng Yunti, Zhou Duo, Wang Jiyuan, Ni Yide. Altogether there were 12 in attendance."

¹⁶⁵ Croizier, 144. Zhang Xuan originally became friends with Pang Xunqin in Paris and both returned to Shanghai around the same time. Andrews and Shen, "Schudy," 67.

¹⁶⁶ Andrews and Shen, "Schudy," 73. As discussed in the previous chapter, Qiu Ti met Pang Xunqin at his solo exhibition (September 15th-25th, 1932) and the First Annual Storm Society Exhibition took place the following month (October 9th-16th, 1932).

perception of her. Whereas all of the men in the society made independent decisions to join, Ni Yide's words imply that the acceptance of Juelanshe's only female member required group approval; only after her work passed muster was she "recommended [by others]" for membership. He thus creates the impression that membership to Juelanshe was exclusive, and Qiu Ti was included only after her painting received public praise. By including a single female member within the Juelanshe ranks the group proved its progressiveness with demonstrated support of the women's movement, but avoided diluting the overall professional prestige of the collective with under-qualified, would-be Juelanshe members from the "fairer" sex.¹⁶⁷ Ni Yide's treatment of Qiu Ti assigns her a secondary role, more passive recipient than active collaborator.

Overall, there is a striking contrast between Ni Yide's discussion of Qiu Ti and his treatment of the other members of the group. After Pang Xunqin, Ni Yide lavishes the most attention on Zhou Duo and Duan Pingyou. Calling these two the "Hunan brothers" for their shared home province and friendly exchange of ideas, he spends a lengthy paragraph describing their training, influences, and artistic style. He concludes his enthusiastic endorsement for the two by encouraging interest in whatever future work they might produce. In a shorter paragraph, Ni Yide concentrates on two painters from Guangxi, Yang Qiuren (杨秋人 1907-1983) and Yang Taiyang. He succinctly promotes the two Yangs by praising their talents and highlighting aspects of their styles. A more detailed paragraph is devoted to Zhang Xuan. Zhang's artistic training is described at length, with emphasis placed on his two trips to France. His past and present stylistic inspirations are identified, and he is recognized for his diligent devotion to his art. Ni Yide concludes with a description of Zhang's current artistic endeavors.

¹⁶⁷ For a sense of Ni Yide's essentializing of the opposite gender, see the following chapter's translation of his vivid description of women's bodies.

In contrast to his discussions of the others, Ni Yide begins his paragraph on Qiu Ti with the words, “If memory serves well, we may still remember...,” suggesting that his readers might not recall her. Yet he makes no effort to bring them up to date. He does not mention her current artistic efforts or any other artistic output of hers at all. He ignores the fact that over the previous two years she had received a substantial amount of publicity. He appears unaware of the possibility that, as the only official female member of Juelanshe and the subject of a half dozen recent profiles, Qiu Ti was likely more recognizable to readers than several of the other group members.

In fact, whereas Ni Yide emphasizes the overall careers of the male members of Juelanshe, in his discussion of Qiu Ti he only considers the circumstances surrounding *Flower*. This makes her artistic merit and participation in the group seem quite one-dimensional; not only is there no mention of her current or anticipated artistic output, but her history, training, influences, and artistic interests are also not considered. Because the paragraph serves to promote the group and its ideology more than the artist, we are left with the impression that he did not perceive Qiu Ti as very significant to the group. The photographic spread accompanying Ni Yide’s essay in *Qingnian jie* bolsters his distinct vision of Juelanshe (See Fig. 1.8). It includes four paintings by Pang Xunqin, matching the attention lavished on the artist in the essay. Qiu Ti, is left artistically mute beside her prolific husband, represented only by a photograph of her face. Not even her award-winning painting is reproduced.

Liang Baibo: The “Non-official” Female Member of Juelanshe

Although Ni Yide designates Qiu Ti as the only female member of Juelanshe, there was another woman publicly associated with the society: Liang Baibo (梁白波 1911-*ca.* 1970s).

While not mentioned in the essay, she nevertheless participated in Juelanshe activities, including the final exhibition for which Ni Yide's article was published.

Like Qiu Ti, Liang Baibo has been largely forgotten in the narrative of modern Chinese art history.¹⁶⁸ When remembered, she is frequently cited for her romance with married cartoonist Ye Qianyu (葉淺予 1907-1995). Yet more significantly, she bears the distinction of being China's only Republican-period female cartoonist and illustrator. She earned her living through her illustrations and cartoons for magazines. Her most beloved figure was the frisky protagonist of her "Miss Honeybee" serial cartoon strip, first published in *Li bao* (立報) newspaper in 1935.¹⁶⁹ Initially, Liang Baibo participated in Taimeng huahui 苔蒙画会 (Société de Deux Mondes), a politically charged artists' society even shorter-lived than Juelanshe.¹⁷⁰ Pang Xunqin and Zhou Zhentai were cofounders of Taimeng huahui, and it is probably through this connection that Liang Baibo decided to join Juelanshe. In his short article in *Yishu xunkan* about the formation of Juelanshe, Pang Xunqin places Liang Baibo first on a list of the twelve members who attended the second organizational meeting for the society.¹⁷¹

Media coverage also verifies her continued contributions to Juelanshe up to the time of its demise. In *Xinren zhoukan*, reproductions of paintings in the fourth and final Juelanshe Exhibition confirm that she had at least one painting, a portrait of a woman, in the show (Fig.

¹⁶⁸ A newly discovered album of Liang Baibo's paintings and drawings promises to encourage more attention on this neglected artist. The album was purchased in New York City and brought back to China by the new owner, where the discovery was subsequently heralded in the press. See Xu Wenhua and Li Chao, "Niu Yue: Zhongjian Liang Baibo de yishu shengming 纽约：重见梁白波的艺术生命" [New York: An Important Look at the Artistic Life of Liang Baibo], *Xinmin wanbao* 新民晚报 (Aug 29, 2009): B-16.

¹⁶⁹ Liang Baibo is said to have died of schizophrenia in Taiwan sometime in the early 1970s. As schizophrenia is a nonfatal mental disorder, it is likely that as little is known about Liang Baibo's death as is known of her life.

¹⁷⁰ Andrews and Shen, "Schudy," 69. Taimeng huahui was banned for its reactionary views in January 1931.

¹⁷¹ Pang Xunqin, "Juelanshe xiaoshi," 1932. See footnote above for the list of member names.

2.16).¹⁷² Not only treated as a member of the group, Liang Baibo's painting receives pride of place. The portrait, positioned in the center of the page, intrudes upon the surrounding compositions by four other group members. Since Liang Baibo participated with the group from its inception until its final exhibition, it would seem that she should be considered a full member. However, she briefly taught art at a middle school for the children of overseas Chinese in the Philippines, returning to Shanghai in 1935.¹⁷³ Perhaps this leave of absence explains why Ni Yide did not deem her a member, despite her ongoing involvement. In any event, his exclusion of Liang Baibo from his essay leaves us to wonder if she was not interested in full membership in Juelanshe or if she was never encouraged to officially join.

A Sincere Intention to Promote

If *Flower* was not the radical challenge to the art world's status quo that Ni Yide proclaimed and Qiu Ti potentially was a marginalized member of Juelanshe, why did she receive the group's one and only award? Closer scrutiny of the award itself suggests a possible answer to this perplexing question.

First mention of the award appears just over a month before the exhibition in an announcement that the group submitted to the September 4, 1933 issue of *Shenbao*:

Scheduled this year from October 10th to 18th the Second Annual Exhibition will be held at the World Society, we welcome outside artist comrades to take part, and during the exhibition among the work by outside comrades the most outstanding will be selected and presented an award of 100 *yuan*, to show our

¹⁷² "Juelan huazhan 决澜画展" [Juelanshe Painting Exhibition], *Xinren zhouban* 新人周刊 2.10 (Nov 2 1935). The linear qualities of Liang Baibo's painting suggest the hand of an illustrator. Liang Baibo's personal friend Huang Miaozi (黄苗子 b. 1913), a calligrapher and art critic, has briefly discussed her painting style and interactions with other Juelanshe members. See Huang Miaozi, *Fengyu luohua—yi huajia Liang Baibo* 风雨落花—忆画家梁白波, Beijing: Zuo jia chubanshe, 2005): 8.

¹⁷³ Tao and Li, 217.

sincere intention to promote art. Send documents to Number 90, 2nd Floor, intersection of Avenue Dubail and Rue Marcel Tillot, Foreign Concession.

定于本年 10 月 10 日至 18 日假世界学院举行第二届展览会，欢迎外界艺术同志参加，并于开会时选外界同志出品中最优秀者赠给奖金一百元，以示提倡艺术之微意。收件处发租界吕班路口麦赛尔蒂罗路九〇号二楼。¹⁷⁴

The notice presents several interesting pieces of information. In addition to establishing the date and location of the exhibition, it documents the group's eagerness to increase participation in the event. Juelanshe welcomed non-affiliated artists, and encouraged their involvement by holding a competition only open to them. The substantial monetary prize of 100 *yuan* demonstrated the society's promotion of art in general. The generous prize was also a means of drawing attention to the group and generating curiosity about the show. This seems to be the award that Qiu Ti received at the exhibition in the following month.

Despite the publicity scheme, Pang Xunqin's memoir, *Jiushi zheyang zouguo lai de* 就是这样走过来的 (*It Happened Just Like This*), indicates that the attendance at the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition was disappointing.¹⁷⁵ The exhibit was held at the World Society because Wang Jiyuan's personal connections to the society allowed Juelanshe to use the exhibition space free of charge. However, the venue turned out to be an inconvenient location that drew few visitors outside of the tight-knit artist community.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, following the close of the event, a handful of the exhibited paintings garnered a wider audience through photographic

¹⁷⁴ *Shenbao* 申报 (Sept 4, 1933): 19. Here I follow Shen's and Andrews' translation of *Shijie Xueyuan* as "World Society." Andrews and Shen, "Schudy," 73.

¹⁷⁵ Pang Xunqin, *Jiushi zheyang zouguo laide* 就是这样走过来的, (Beijing: Shenghe, dushu, xinzhì sanlian shudian: Xinhua shudian jingxiao, 1988), 178.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Pang Xunqin describes the exhibition visitors comprising only art students from the Shanghai Art Academy and Xin Hua Art Academy as well as close friends within the art community.

spreads in the popular pictorial magazines *Liangyou* and *Shidai huabao*.¹⁷⁷ At the time of the exhibition, neither magazine published a photograph of *Flower*.

Nearly two months after the exhibition, *Shidai huabao* ran its quarter-page announcement of the award bestowed on the painting.¹⁷⁸ The wording of the announcement implies that the newly-established prize would be a reoccurring event for the purpose of encouraging new artists. *Flower* is noted for having received special acclaim, but the announcement leaves it to its readers to determine the outstanding merits of the painting. Notably, the award announcement neither mentions any the controversy surrounding the painting nor addresses the artist's use of color. Apparently, Qiu Ti's choice of colors for the plant was not deemed remarkable enough to be newsworthy.

I suspect Juelanshe's decision to award Qiu Ti the prize was at least partly motivated by financial circumstances. The call for submissions that Juelanshe posted in *Shenbao* stipulated that the award would be a cash prize and was reserved for a work by an unaffiliated artist. Romantically involved with the society's co-founder, Qiu Ti held an ambiguous status within the society as she effectively participated as a member, but her affiliation had yet to be officially recognized in print. By placing the cash prize in her hands, the group ensured the sum benefited

¹⁷⁷ Since no list of exhibited paintings survives, the images published in these two features provide invaluable records of the content of the show. "Art Exhibition of the Storm & Stress Society," *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 82 (Nov 1933): 30. "Exposition of Storm Society Paintings, Juelanshe di er hui zhanlanhui chupin 决澜社第二回展览会出品." *Shidai huabao* 时代画报 5.1 (Nov 1933). *Liangyou*, self-titled *Young Companion* in English, is easily the Republican-period's most renowned periodical. An extraordinarily long-running (1926-1941) comprehensive pictorial magazine founded by Wu Liande, it was published in Shanghai once a month. *Shidai huabao*, another comprehensive pictorial, chose *Modern Miscellany* as its English title. Also published in Shanghai, it ran 1929-1937 and was chiefly edited by Zhang Guangyu, Ye Lingfeng and Zhang Zhenyu. Ye Qianyu and Liang Desuo also contributed as editors in later issues. Although initially a monthly publication, *Shidai huabao* switched to semi-monthly printings by the fourth issue.

¹⁷⁸ "Juelanshe jiang." See previous chapter for the transcription and translation of the announcement.

two core members of Juelanshe. Qiu Ti, most likely already married to Pang Xunqin by this time, presumably applied her award money towards their joint expenses.¹⁷⁹

The members of Juelanshe may have considered Qiu Ti an *official* member only after she received the award in order to legitimize their actions. Qiu Ti joined the group not long after the publication of Pang Xunqin's list of members. While the recorded members of Juelanshe were all automatically disqualified from the competition the following year, Qiu Ti remained a candidate because the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition was her first public showing with the group. Thus Ni Yide could stress in his 1935 essay that she had gained entry to the group by virtue of her award-winning painting.¹⁸⁰ In explaining why she was given the award, Ni Yide focused on the innovativeness of *Flower*, and provided a theoretical basis for the painting's decorative properties. At the same time, he advanced the group's artistic agenda by characterizing the painting as a product of pure artistic license, echoing the group's strong expression of similar artistic ideals in its manifesto published three years earlier.

¹⁷⁹ A biography of Pang Xunqin written by his second wife, Yuan Yunyi, provides additional information about the award. By this account, not only did Wang Jiyuan use his connections to secure the venue for the Second Exhibition, he also personally invited Li Shizeng, head of the World Society and an important official in the Republican Central Committee, to make the formal presentation of the award to Qiu Ti for her work *Flower*. According to Yuan Yunyi, the Juelanshe Award he presented consisted of 50 *yuan*. This amount, it should be noted, is half of that advertised in *Shenbao* and, according to Yuan Yunyi, it had all been collected at Pang Xunqin's expense. Yuan Yunyi, *Pang Xunqin zhuan*, 79. Yuan Yunyi's account must be viewed with some scepticism, however. Overall, her narration of Pang Xunqin's early life includes very few references to Qiu Ti and one has to wonder if the second wife bore some resentment towards the first. For instance, when listing the paintings from the Juelanshe exhibitions that were published in *Shidai huabao*, Yuan Yunyi curiously omits two examples by Qiu Ti (the untitled painting of nudes in a landscape and the still life with grapes) that were included in the very same photographic spreads. Yuan Yunyi, *Pang Xunqin zhuan*, 79.

¹⁸⁰ This may also be why the *Dazhong huabao* profile piece on Qiu Ti as well as the wedding announcement in *Xiaoshuo yuebao* state that the couple married in 1934. The couple might not have wanted to alert the readers to the fact that they were already married the previous year.

Conclusion

Instead of limiting our perception of *Flower* to Ni Yide's portrayal of a prizewinning subject of controversy, I suggest that we re-envision the painting as a more complex artwork with fluid meaning and multiple functions. At first *Flower*, a relatively literal rendering of a plant common to Qiu Ti's hometown, exhibited as a representative product of Qiu Ti's skillful hand. Later, the group recognized the painting as an outstanding work by an unaffiliated artist. Later still, Ni Yide appropriated *Flower* to serve the group's ideological mission by redefining it as an exercise in artistic license, and the painting has been colored by the slant of his theoretical interpretation ever since. Published time and again as an award-winning and provocative artwork, the painting ultimately contributed to the development of Qiu Ti's professional persona.

Thus, Qiu Ti's award-winning painting is very revealing of the interpersonal dynamics of Juelanshe. Although *Flower* was an impressive painting, no doubt worthy of the praise it has garnered, Qiu Ti had limited control over how her art and public image were received. As for most women of the Republican period, her work was vulnerable to manipulation by the stronger voices of her male colleagues.¹⁸¹ *Flower*, which may have held personal significance for the artist as a reminder of her native place, was transformed into a modernist ideological statement on the purpose of art for the benefit of the group. Similarly, Qiu Ti, who was already an active contributor to Juelanshe, was put on public display as an attractive new member and token female. Though Ni Yide imbued the painting with ideological meaning in order to promote a defiant group purpose, to some degree, Qiu Ti must have acquiesced to his treatment of her work. Even a woman as determined as Qiu Ti could not exert total authority over her work at a

¹⁸¹ I do not mean to imply that the intentions of any of Qiu Ti's colleagues were malicious; their actions were simply products of the social reality in the "Age of Flower Vases."

time when female professionals were largely used as the pretty emblems of modernity.¹⁸² But thanks to the recognition accorded this painting, she was able to lay claim publicly to full membership to Juelanshe, something Liang Baibo was denied.

¹⁸² When observing the continually limited opportunities available to women artists in today's China, one has to wonder if the conditions under which Qiu Ti struggled over half a century ago have yet to be smashed. See Britta Erickson, "The Rise of a Feminist Spirit in Contemporary Chinese Art: Women Artists in China," *Art Asia Pacific* (July 2001): 64-71. One of the artists discussed in the article is Qiu Ti's own granddaughter, Lin Yan.

CHAPTER THREE

Modern Bodies on Display

The Prominence of the Female Nude in 1930s China and Qiu Ti's Modernist Contribution

INTRODUCTION

In addition to her prize winning *Flower*, Qiu Ti exhibited at least one other painting in the 1933 Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition (Fig. 3.1).¹⁸³ The untitled painting of female nudes in a landscape disappeared long ago and is known today only through a black-and-white reproduction from an issue of *Shidai huabao* (*Modern Miscellany* 时代画报) published the month following the exhibition. Given that the painting of nude figures in oil and canvas was an artistic practice new to early twentieth-century East Asia and that the female professional artist was also a new phenomenon, it might seem that Qiu Ti's choice of subject matter was radical. In this chapter, however, I highlight numerous examples of paintings of nudes by Qiu Ti's peers, male and female alike. Establishing that the female nude was a popular painting genre for Qiu Ti's generation, I explore three contributing factors that could have compelled her to pursue the subject matter. The prevalence of body imagery in Shanghai popular culture meant repeated exposure to depictions of the nude female figure, as well as its implied association with modernity. For avant-garde painters, the act of painting a nude model came to signify modernism and images of nudes were argued to encourage cultural rebirth and demonstrate social progress. The writings of other Chinese women artists indicate that Qiu Ti's female peers viewed paintings of nudes as a feminist opportunity for professional growth. I conclude that, in choosing to paint this subject, Qiu Ti was participating in a vivid national dialogue on the body and the nude.

¹⁸³ Pang Tao refers to this painting by the title *Spring*, however, the caption for the reproduction in the *Shidai huabao* exhibition coverage reads simply "Untitled" (*Wuti* 无题). *Shidai huabao* (SDHB) 5.1 (Nov 1933).

Western Precedents for Qiu Ti's Painting of Nudes in a Landscape

Qiu Ti's painting features five playfully simplified female nudes positioned in a forested landscape. A woman with bobbed hair sits in the foreground with her back to the viewer and her head directed to the right. She appears to be gazing—and likewise encouraging the gaze of the viewer—towards a woman in the middleground. This woman, undeniably the focus of the painting, commands the viewer's attention as she self-indulgently sprawls on her back in the middle of a grove of trees, her arms stretched behind her head and one leg propped in the air. Her large body centered vertically on the canvas, the woman's head is positioned at the bottom of the composition while her body angles toward the top. A third woman stands leaning against a tree in the middle ground, and her head, too, turns to view the reclining woman. On the leftmost side, two more women sit in the far distance.

Qiu Ti's painting is a robust celebration of space and form. The artist plays with perspective and composition to create an unexpected re-envisioning of nude women in a landscape, a popular and often uninspired trope in oil painting. In Qiu Ti's painting, the stylized forms of the thick and short-legged figures are blocky and angular. Far from a precise rendering of anatomical features, the gender characteristics of the figures are downplayed or completely hidden from view. Cunningly, Qiu Ti uses the inverted figure in the middle ground to literally turn a conventional nude posture on its head. Her arrangement of figures both frame the composition and direct the eye to the central woman, but also create a spatial ambiguity that challenges a reading of the painting. A sharp recession of the high groundplane is indicated by the upward thrust of the main figure, the positioning of the trees, and the diminutive forms of the two women in the background. At the same time, the nearly overhead view used to render the

form of the reclining woman breaks the logical reading of a receding groundplane. And the completely flat use of color for the ground on which the figure lies only makes the sense of space less distinguishable.

A painting of a single nude figure by Qiu Ti—published with a profile on the artist in the 1934 *Dazhong huabao* (*Cosmopolitan*)—shares many characteristics with her painting of nudes in a landscape and further illuminates her distinct approach to figure painting (Fig. 3.2). Clearly a painting of a nude model in an art studio setting, the figure rests in a static pose on a blanket against an abstract background. The model faces away from the viewer, thereby concealing her breasts and pubic region. While the hourglass silhouette identifies the figure as female, Qiu Ti refrains from flaunting the sex of the model, placing less emphasis the sensuality of the flesh than on the image as a visual exercise in form and shading. Her painting employs a smooth gradation of tones, a simplification of features, and exaggerated anatomical features. She streamlines the model's long and sinewy body with simple contours such as the arcing slope of the hip and thigh.

In her choice of subject matter and style for the painting of nudes in a landscape, Qiu Ti undeniably references the work of master painters that lived and worked in Paris in the early twentieth century. Western artistic precedents are broad and numerous. Most famously, Cezanne executed a large series of nudes—mostly women, but some men, as well—in landscapes. Most frequently titled *Bathers* or some variant thereof, the oil paintings of this series span from the 1870s up to the year of his death in 1906. Comprised mostly of pastel colors, the *Bathers* series may be of some help in suggesting the palette that Qiu Ti may have used in her painting, but the agitated brushwork of Cezanne's post-impressionistic paintings bear little resemblance to Qiu Ti's precise silhouettes and flat blocks of color (Fig. 3.3). These characteristics may be found in

the works of Matisse. His Fauvist works, such as *Joy of Life* (1906) and *Dance (II)* (1910), employ flat applications of riotous colors, firmly defined silhouettes of female nudes frolicking in nature, and perplexing depiction of space (Fig. 3.4 and Fig. 3.5). Yet, these paintings do not contain the volumetric color gradation distinguishable in Qiu Ti's trees, and his figures are vigorously outlined, whereas Qiu Ti's appear not to have been outlined at all. The work of Gauguin, such as the most famous painting from his Tahitian period, *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (1897), places nude female figures in an outdoor setting with a manipulated sense of space and combines flat color with some volumetric shading (Fig. 3.6). Qiu Ti's nudes in a landscape shares these elements, however her painting lacks the narrative tableau and majestic scale of Gauguin's. Although he did not seem to favor depicting clothes-less women in the great outdoors, Marc Chagall's Primitivist and Surrealist paintings bear some similarity to Qiu Ti's in style. *Red Nude*, (1908) pares down the form of the female nude into nearly geometric planes (Fig. 3.7). His unusual juxtaposition of simplified figures and objects and surrealist use of scale and angles, as seen in *Nude over Vitebsk* (painted in Paris in 1933), also may have inspired the artistic freedom of Qiu Ti's painting (Fig. 3.8).

As a final comparison to a French painter, the composition and style of Qiu Ti's painting of nudes in a landscape bear a suggestive resemblance to a particular painting of Roger Bissiere. His *Three Adolescent Girls with a Dog to Guard Them* (1925) contains the clustering of circular tree foliage and smooth volumetric articulation of tree trunks as Qiu Ti's painting (Fig. 3.9). Likewise, his composition similarly uses a tree trunk as framing device on the right side of the canvas and an arrangement of trees receding diagonally from the lower left toward the upper right. His painting, too, depicts a female figure lying at ease on her back with arms behind her head and one leg balanced upon the other. The other women in his painting also rest in static

poses with their arms folded and heads angled toward the reclining woman. And although the figure in the foreground of his painting is a guard dog instead of a human figure, there is a somewhat similar arrangement of a body propped on one limb, with its back to the viewer and head turned toward reclining woman. Though she never studied in Paris herself, Qiu Ti doubtless paged through many volumes of reproductions artists such as Bissiere and other renowned French painters. As she composed her painting, Qiu Ti may have drawn on any number of these and other Western painters for inspiration.¹⁸⁴

The Popularity of Painting Female Nudes

In truth, Qiu Ti was just one of many artists engaged in the enthusiastic transference of Western modern painting style and subject matter to the Chinese art world. A few years before Qiu Ti exhibited her painting in Juelanshe exhibition, a debate over the acceptability of nude figure painting as an artistic pursuit had polarized Chinese society.¹⁸⁵ China had no indigenous tradition of depicting the nude body outside of erotic or medical works, so the nude in art was immediately identified with Western culture.¹⁸⁶ In the first decade of the twentieth century, art educators— many recently returned from their own studies abroad in Japan or Europe—

¹⁸⁴ The dissemination within China of reproductions of Western paintings is a topic worthy of further study. In the mid to late 1930s Liu Haisu published monographs on a number of Western painters, including Matisse, but even before then artists returned from abroad surely shared images amongst the local community.

¹⁸⁵ For more information on art education and the nude art debate see Chen Zui's article Chen Zui (陈醉), "Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan meishu yanjiusuo 中国艺术研究院美术研究所," [Art Institute of China Art Research Institute] *Yishu yanjiu 艺术研究* (Jan 2006): 130-136 and Julia Andrews, "Luotihua lunzheng ji xiandai Zhongguo meishushi de jiangou 裸体论证及现代中国美术史的建构" [The Nude Debate and the Construction of Modern Chinese Art History] in *Rai pai hui hua yan jiu wen ji Studies on Shanghai School Painting* (Shanghai Shi : Shanghai shu hua chuban she, 2001): 125-129.

¹⁸⁶ James Cahill briefly discusses the female nude in Chinese erotic prints and paintings and argues that the awkward depictions of female bodies were deliberate aesthetic choices on the part of the artists. His comments respond to disparaging assertions that the Chinese traditionally lacked interest in or understanding of the female form. Cahill's total disregard of the male body in erotic art, however, suggests that he subscribes to the Eurocentric presumption that the female nude is a requisite genre of art. James Cahill, *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010): 191-197.

introduced the practice of life drawing to the classroom and the new genre was immediately off to a tumultuous start. At first, it was very difficult to find life models, and all models were men until 1920 when the Shanghai Art Academy employed its first female model. As the activities of the Shanghai Art Academy life drawing courses gradually became known through exhibitions of student work, the public and government officials began to decry the images as examples of public indecency. While conservatives labeled art portraying nude figures pornographic, the art community largely embraced the genre as a sign of sophistication and cultural flowering. From 1917 to 1926, a protracted debate revolved around the legality as well as the morality of employing nude models in the classroom. Despite the controversy, many artists and art educators vehemently fought for allowing artists' models to pose nude, arguing that adoption of this Western practice signified a cultural rebirth.

By the 1930s, however, the painting of nude figures was a widespread practice and Chinese artists frequently displayed their images of nudes at exhibitions and in print. Like Qiu Ti, most oil painters looked to the models of the French masters. Black-and-white reproductions of the oil paintings of the high-profile Liu Haisu—who had been an antagonistic defendant in trials seeking to criminalize the institutionalized study of nude figure painting just a few years before—include a nude, in addition to a variety of cityscapes, landscapes, and a portrait. Titled simply *Figure (Renti 人体)*, the painting consists of a loosely painted, frontal depiction of a seated nude (Fig. 3.10). A simple composition placing the figure in an indoor setting with patterned backdrop, the painting is reminiscent, perhaps, of Matisse's series of *Odalisque* paintings from the 1920s, but without Matisse's use of Orientalist flair. The reproduction of Liu Haisu's nude is part of contemporary pictorial magazines' joint exhibition coverage of three

Shanghai oil painters' solo shows: Liu Haisu, Liu Shi (刘狮 b. 1917), and Pang Xunqin (Fig. 3.11).

Among Pang Xunqin's contributions are two female nudes, both simply titled *Nude* (*Luoti* 裸体), which are daringly abstracted simplifications of the human form. One of these paintings consists of a bold, diagonally placed rectangle, over which the artist incised a gestural line drawing of a nude, her head resting in the lower left corner of the canvas and her legs extending beyond the reach of the upper right. Pang Xunqin's other painting of a nude was also printed in *Liangyou*, where the half-page color reproduction reveals a sultry mix of muted browns and tans (Fig. 3.12). Possibly a watercolor, the painting features a nude lying on her back, grasping a pillow behind her head with one hand, and reaching behind her with the other. Pang Xunqin apparently did not favor painting the nude, and there are only a few examples by his hand, but these few mostly consist of linear abstractions. One other oil painting of a nude, also published in a color half-page reproduction in 1932, is his *Wicker Chair* (*Tengyi* 藤椅) (Fig. 3.13). In it a playfully abstracted, pink-hued nude model sits with her large legs folded over the side a yellow chair, which in turn sits upon a black rug with sgraffito pattern. This painting of Pang Xunqin's, in particular, resembles the oeuvre of Chinese-Parisian artist, Chang Yu (常玉, Fr. Sanyu, 1901-1966). (See Figure 3.11 for a full-page sketch by Chang Yu on right page.) That same year, two other Juelanshe members published paintings of nudes, but in an exhibition review for the 20 Spring Painting Society (Erling Chun Huahui 二零春画会) (Fig. 3.14).¹⁸⁷

Yang Taiyang's and Yang Qiuren's paintings, both titled *Figure* (*Renti* 人体), each depicts a

¹⁸⁷ Both Yangs studied at Shanghai Meizhuan in 1928 and later studied under Chen Baoyi. Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Artists*, 196-197. In addition to 20 Spring Painting Society, the two also organized Art Society of the Eleven (Yiyi Yishe 一一艺社), before joining Juelanshe in 1931, the same year as their graduation from Shanghai Meizhuan. Lu Peng, *A History of Art in 20th Century China* (Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2010): 309.

female nude with legs folded into a static seated pose, and uses flat blocks of differing shades to convey the bulk of the figure in Post-Impressionist style. In both paintings, the image of the nude fills the composition, crowding out most of the details of the interior setting.

Nude (Luoti 裸女) by Guan Liang (关良 1900-1986) is another painting with straightforward title and simple composition (Fig. 3.15). A color reproduction published in the *Liangyou* painting series in 1934, the oil painting comprises a dramatically lit, ruddy-colored female nude resting in a gray chair against vivid yellow wall. Thick brushstrokes emphasize the hand of the painter and add some visual interest to the painting, but once again we see a motionless nude seated in an uninspiring interior. Another large-scale, color reproduction of a female nude in the same year employs a vastly different style. Fang Ganmin's *White Doves (Baige 白鸽)* uses geometric shapes of softly graduated pastels to an effect somewhat like the Cubists, but with a sculptural undertone suggestive of Art Deco (Fig. 3.16). While the reclining nude dominates the composition and leaves little room for the indication of a setting, Fang Ganmin does squeeze in a few symbolic motifs of doves and flowers along the upper edge of the canvas.

Not surprisingly, the annual Juelanshe exhibitions also included figures of nudes, and the entries reveal interests in sync with the painting trends of the day. The first Juelanshe exhibition contained no fewer than three paintings of nudes. Pang Xunqin submitted a painting titled *Nude (Luoti 裸体)*, Wang Jiyuan submitted *Nude Woman (Luo fu 裸妇)*, and Yang Taiyang submitted *Two Nude Women (Er luo nü 二裸女)*.¹⁸⁸ The twelfth issue of *Yishu xunkan* published eight of

¹⁸⁸ Of the entries in the first exhibition, Li Chao lists Wang Jiyuan and Yang Taiyang's nudes, but also includes a nude by Pang Xunqin. Regarding the source of the list, Li Chao cites an unspecified historical document. Li Chao 李超, *Kuangbiao jiqing—Juelanshe ji xiandai zhuyi yishu xiansheng 狂飙激情--决澜社及现代主义艺术先声* [Hurricane Passion: Juelanshe and the Modernist Art Prelude] (Shanghai: Shanghai jinxu wenzhang chubanshe,

the paintings that hung in the first Juelanshe exhibition: one landscape, two still-life paintings, and five figure paintings,¹⁸⁹ including the two paintings of nudes by Wang Jiyuan and Yang Taiyang (Fig. 3.17 and Fig. 3.18). These two paintings provide an intriguing contrast. Wang Jiyuan's painting depicts a single, seated nude figure; her large breasts and pudgy torso suggest a woman of mature age, while her prominent and sharply rendered facial features likely indicate a model of foreign origin. Yang Taiyang's painting, in contrast, portrays two nude young girls, one standing in front of the other. The girl in front holds a bunch of grapes in one hand as she gestures with the other. The skin and contour of her body appear smooth and supple. Her round face and small nose hint that the model was Chinese.

The following year, when Qiu Ti exhibited her painting of nudes at the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition, Ni Yide also submitted a painting of a reclining nude to the exhibition (Fig. 3.19). Although this painting was not reproduced as his representative work in pictorials of the time, we see it behind Ni Yide in a photograph taken at the exhibition (Fig. 3.20). The painting presents the figure displayed diagonally across the picture space, from the upper left corner down to lower right corner. With her body completely exposed to the viewer, the model stretches casually on a sheet, folds her arms behind her head, extends her right leg fully, and bends her left leg at the knee. The artist's use of graduated shading renders the model's body as a series of smooth volumetric planes and accentuates the fleshiness of the young woman's healthy physique. The Third Annual Juelanshe Exhibition included no less than three female nudes (Fig. 3.21): *Half Nude Female* (半裸女像) by Yang Qiuren; *Figure* (人体) by Duan Pingyou; and *Nude Woman by the Sea* (海边裸女) by Yang Taiyang.

2008): 7. Croizier notes that Pang Xunqin's memoir says a catalogue was printed for the exhibition, but the memoir actually discusses the catalogue for the artist's individual exhibition of the same year. Croizier, 144, fnt 23.

¹⁸⁹ *Yishu xunkan* (YSXK) 12 (Jan 1933). A second landscape from a separate individual exhibition for Liu Shi (刘狮) shares the same page as the Juelanshe images.

Contemporary pictorial magazines show that a number of women artists also painted female nudes, and in very similar ways as their male colleagues. The women's movement was in full swing when the art of the nude was introduced in China. Though initially banned from figure painting classes, Chinese women artists quickly overcame such restrictions, and by the 1920s they were enthusiastically participating in the production of nude images with equal skill and style as their male counterparts. Pan Yuliang in particular devoted her career largely to depictions of female nudes in a variety of settings. Like Qiu Ti, Pan Yuliang painted an outdoor scene of female nudes, which she titled *Song of Spring* (Fig. 3.22). Though the two paintings share similar subject matter and dates of manufacture, they could hardly be more different. The women in Pan Yuliang's painting are clearly Asian, but they exhibit an air of Orientalism; one would be hard pressed to assign them to a specific time or place. The loosely brushed pastoral scene and image of nudes frolicking out-of-doors seem drawn from French Impressionism, in particular Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass* (1863) and Renoir's *Bathers* (1918) (Fig. 3.23 and Fig. 3.24). Like both of the French works, Pan Yuliang's composition heightens the sexual suggestiveness of her figures: the position of the figure in the foreground allows both admiration of her posterior and, simultaneously, a glimpse of her breast; the heads of the two foreground figures frame the plump *derrière* of the lady dancing in the middle ground. At the same time, Pan avoids vulgarity by cleverly concealing the pubic region of her subjects: for instance, in her strategic placement of a figure's knee, or a bit of cloth, or the hand playing a *sanxian* (a three-stringed musical instrument similar to the Japanese *shamisen*).

Pan Yuliang's *Song of Spring* falls in line with the conventions of the day. Not only did she select the female nude as the subject of her painting, but she manipulated the composition and details to encourage appreciation of the aesthetic properties of the feminine form. Perhaps

Pan Yuliang's unconventional life story accounts for why she chose the nude as her area of expertise. While she painted a diverse range of subjects, it is her female nudes, many of which are blatantly seductive, for which she is particularly noted. For example, in her painting *Secret* (*Mimi* 秘密), which was published in at least two magazines in 1934, a feline voyeur catches a glimpse of its mistress' titillating secret: a body completely naked under a heavy winter coat (Fig. 3.25). The uncomfortable S-curve of the body exaggerates the feminine physique, while the high-heeled shoes dramatize the naughtiness of the image by suggesting the woman is about to step outside in such scandalous attire.

Another female artist of Qiu Ti's time, Zhong Duqing (种独清 n.d.) also painted the nude. In contrast to Pan Yuliang's career, however, she followed a more typical trajectory for a female artist; despite securing an artistic education, she did not attain professional success and very little is remembered about her today. Though herself not a prolific artist, Zhong Duqing's beauty apparently inspired the art of her male colleagues, and it is through their work that we know her best. For example, in his 1942 remembrances of the Western art movement, the pioneer modern artist and essayist Chen Baoyi (陈抱一 1893-1945), mentions Li Tiefu's (李铁夫 1869-1952) portrait of Zhong Duqing and includes a biographical note about her.¹⁹⁰ He states simply that she had studied painting in Paris, but after returning to China seldom published her work.

Reproductions of the works in Pang Xunqin's 1932 solo exhibition include a portrait painting of Zhong Duqing. Pang Xunqin—who met his future wife at this solo show—depicts the lovely

¹⁹⁰ Chen Baoyi, *Yanghua yundong guocheng lueji* 洋畫運動過程略記, in Lang Shaojun 郎紹君, Shui Zhongtian 水中天, *Ershi shiji zhongguo meishu wenxuan (I)* 二十世紀中國美術文選(上卷) (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1999) 544-574. In *Shiluo de lishi* Tao Yongbai and Li Shi mention only that Zhong Duqing was from Jiangsu province and it would seem that nearly no information on the artist survives. See Tao and Li, 182.

visage of *Miss Zhong* in her studio while she is practicing her craft (Fig. 3.26).¹⁹¹ An image of a nude female torso hangs on the wall of her workspace, compositionally positioned between the artist and her canvas. The strategic positioning of the image within the portrait suggests that she is portrayed in the act of painting from a model. A photograph in a 1930 issue of *Shidai huabao* also offers a glimpse of the artist's work and environment as staged by the writer and critic Zhang Ruogu (张若谷) (Fig. 3.27). Here, too, a painting of a female nude—with arms thrown over her head and body angled towards the viewer—is incorporated into the scene, this time as what appears to be a preparatory sketch by Zhong Duqing's own hand. The portrait of Zhong Duqing and the photograph of her workspace both document her participation in the trend of painting nude figures. The selection of objects included in the photograph indicates that Zhong Duqing took pride in the image of the female nude that she had created.

Female artist Fang Junbi painted the nude as well, and the pose of the model in her *Figure (Renti 人体)* is nearly identical to Qiu Ti's painting of a single nude (See Fig. 1.2). Published in *Meishu shenghuo* in 1934 as part of a multi-page review of the nude in art, the color reproduction of Fang Junbi's oil painting commands a full page.¹⁹² Much more naturalistic and detailed than Qiu Ti's painting, the nude figure is convincingly proportioned and modeled to suggest a real sense of flesh. The soft skin of the thigh yields to the foot on which it rests, and the curves of the buttocks conform to the sheet-draped furniture underneath. Fang Junbi's interest in depicting the fleshy qualities of the female nude comes across in another image, a standing nude printed in a *China Monthly* issue from the same year (Fig. 3.28). In terms of approach to the

¹⁹¹ One of seven paintings reproduced in a one-page spread on Pang Xunqin's 1932 solo exhibition. I viewed this in a bound volume of assorted and fragmentary Republication-period pictorials. Consequently, I am still unsure to which periodical this page belonged, but it was possibly *Zhonghua*. Also published in *Liangyou huabao* 71 (Nov 1932).

¹⁹² In addition to the full page *Meishu shenghuo* reproduction and biography, paintings by Fang Junbi also regularly ran in the *China Monthly (Zhonghua yuebao)* and appeared in other publications, as well.

genre, she and her female peers painted nude figures much as did their male counterparts, which is to say, women oil painters made conscientious studies of attractive female nudes, emphasized the figures in their compositions, and played up the sexual characteristics of the figures every bit as much as did male artists.

In an article titled, “Iconicity and Indexicality: The Body in Chinese Art,” David Clarke notices Republican-period artists’ similarities in approach when painting the nude. Specifically, Clarke cites these artists’ tendency to accentuate the three-dimensionality of the figure’s form, preference for depicting static poses, and concentration on the nude as the subject in its own right by including few or no narrative elements. Clarke then speculates that Chinese modernist artists favored the art nude because it offered the best means to overthrow an antiquated art establishment.¹⁹³ He argues that Chinese modernist painters—in antagonistic opposition to the elitist social practices of the literati painting tradition—deliberately emphasized the iconic significance of the female nude. To emphasize their break with tradition, Chinese modernists composed their paintings in ways to remind the viewer of the artist’s use of a model.¹⁹⁴ Clarke thus frames the Chinese modernist artists’ use of the nude as an act of deliberate provocation rather than a product of passive reception of the West’s cultural influence. Identifying the nude figure as the primary subject of the painting served as a self-reflexive device that allowed the artist to not only to challenge tradition but also to emphasize his or her own role in the modernization of the nation.

The examples Clarke uses to illustrate in his analysis—*Daydreaming* by Yang Jianhou, *Study* by Zhou Xijie (Fig. 3.29), and *Woman by the Riverside* by Hu Yiwen—share the

¹⁹³ Clarke, David. “Iconicity and Indexicality: The body in Chinese Art.” *Semiotica* 155–1/4 (2005), 234.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

characteristics he describes.¹⁹⁵ But these three examples, as well as five others that he cites but does not reprint, all come from a two-year span of a single magazine, *Yifeng* (April 1933—May 1935). Thus, it would be reasonable to wonder if the consistencies Clarke observes simply reflect the personal preferences of the magazine's editor. When these images are analyzed alongside those already mentioned in my discussion above, however, a safer estimation of painting trends in 1930s Shanghai emerges and confirms Clarke's observations. In nearly all cases of the paintings discussed, the stationary pose of the figure dominates the composition and the setting does not distract from the impression of the nude as figure study. As Clarke argues, these paintings document a propensity for emphasizing the nude as primary subject matter within a given composition and reflect the desire to emphasize the artist's own engagement in modernist experimentation through the act of artistic creation. Rather than focusing on three-dimensionality, however, it would seem that the artists of the 1930s Chinese modernist art community focused on an obvious application of Western painting styles. In some cases their chosen approach resulted in the three-dimensionality Clarke observed. In other cases, however, the style of choice produced linear expressions, such as Pang Xunqin's nudes, or flattened silhouettes, as seen in Qiu Ti's painting. I would also add to Clarke's analysis, the obvious—but no less significant—fact that all of the nude figures are female. As will be discussed below, there was no doubt in the minds' of modernist art supporters that artistic depictions of the female nude, specifically, conveyed contemporary interests in modernity.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Reproductions of all three may be found in issues of *Yifeng*: Yang Jianhou's painting is in *Yifeng*, May 1935, 3 [5]: 134, both Zhou Xijie's and Hu Yiwen's paintings may be found in *Yifeng*, May 1935, 3 [5]: 138 and republished in Clarke. All three works are presumed lost.

¹⁹⁶ There are examples of male nudes—such as Xu Beihong's well-known *The Fool Who Moved the Mountain* (1940) and Qian Ding's (钱鼎 1896-1989) bizarre nude portrait of *Mr. Hui Langxi* (*Hui Langxi xiansheng* 会朗西先生)—but these are exceptions in a genre dominated by images of female nudes.

Paintings of Nudes in Japan and Qiu Ti's Access during Her Study Abroad

It is possible that Qiu Ti encountered and even tried her hand at painting images of nudes during her study in Japan, where the nude as painting genre was already a well-established practice. For two reasons, however, it seems unlikely that she received much encouragement to study the subject. In the first, Qiu Ti's limited stay in Japan seems to have been primarily focused on language study, which allowed her to graduate from a language school while there. Perhaps even more significantly, her opportunities to study painting of the nude figure would have been further hindered by the secretive and androcentric culture that enveloped nude painting in Japan.

At the turn of the twentieth century, parts of the art community in Japan fixated on the fine art nude as a “path of entry to the West.”¹⁹⁷ Associated with Western culture and equated with modernization, the fine art nude stood as a visual signifier of cultural superiority. Skillful Japanese oil paintings of nude figures indicated success in the assimilation of the West's modernity and nudes became the benchmark by which to judge a *yoga* (洋画 Western painting) artist's success at his craft.¹⁹⁸ The majority of Japanese artists studying in Europe in the late nineteenth century gravitated to the studios of masters specializing in the depiction of female nudes, such as those of Jean-Léon Gérôme and Raphael Collin.¹⁹⁹ Ability to depict the nude became evidence of a successful artistic education abroad. By using oils on canvas to paint a nude Western woman—that is, combining foreign medium, foreign subject matter, and foreign

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 116.

¹⁹⁸ Jaqueline Berndt, “Nationally Naked? The Female Nude in Japanese Oil Painting and Posters (1890s-1920s),” *Performing Nation: Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940*, ed. Doris Croissant, Catherine Vance Yeh, Joshua S. Mostow, (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 311.

¹⁹⁹ Norman Bryson, “Westernizing Bodies: Women, Art, and Power in Meiji Yoga,” *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003): 109-114.

style—Japanese artists demonstrated a mastery of European painting skills that could not be acquired in their home country at that time.

The gender relationships between artists and their models may account for initial Japanese interest in the nude. Norman Bryson posits that, when enrolling as a pupil of figure painting, the Japanese artist entered “into the masculine camaraderie of the studio. The libidinal currents of the life class spelled fraternity, the comradeship between men as men, equalized before the naked woman who was there for all of them in the same way.”²⁰⁰ The nude female model thereby generated a sense of unity among men regardless of nationality or race. Japanese artists, bolstered by the shared sense of superiority in the face of the naked feminine Other, achieved fleeting moments of equality on the otherwise uneven playing field of Western academic painting studies in Europe.

In Japan, conservative social practices merely increased the gender inequities arising from the practice of painting of the nude. After returning to their home country, Japanese artists faced restrictions on exhibiting and publishing their paintings of nudes. While *yoga* artists embraced the image of the nude—a component of Western painting tradition—as a signifier of modernity, Meiji society viewed nudity as uncivilized and the antithesis of Meiji reform goals.²⁰¹ Thus, when Kuroda Seiki (1866-1924) exhibited his *Morning Toilette*, a life-size oil painting of a

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 111.

²⁰¹ Alice Y. Tseng, “Kuroda Seiki’s *Morning Toilette* on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto,” *Art Bulletin* 40.3 (Sept 2008): 431. Conforming to the prim Victorian cultural standards of Europe and America, the Meiji government struggled to redefine local concepts of propriety and battled popular customs such as bathing at mixed gender bathhouses. Laws governing nudity and public indecency first appeared in Tokyo in 1872 and reached the rest of the country only at the turn of the twentieth century. Gregory Smits, “Chapter Four: Making Japanese by Putting on Clothes,” <http://www.east-asian-history.net/textbooks/MJ/ch4.htm>, *Making Japanese*, <http://www.east-asian-history.net/textbooks/MJ/index.htm>, (Penn State University online textbook). To depict nudes at this time was not counter to the Meiji government’s decency laws, but also threatened to recall the tradition of *shunga* (“spring pictures”, i.e. erotic art), which some now considered indecent. Japan was home to a highly developed *shunga* tradition that included finely painted and mass-produced erotic images, such as those of the *ukiyo-e* school replicated in woodblock-prints. The ideology of the Meiji reform, however, designated *shunga* as a backward custom from Japan’s past and contemporary artists avoided reference to it.

nude Western woman, at the National Industrial Exhibition in Kyoto in 1895, he did so in anticipation of a public uproar and moral consternation in Japan's cultural capital (Fig. 3.30).²⁰² He was not disappointed. With police intervention, the painting was removed to a special room and, whenever important visitors attended the exhibition, draped with a white cloth. Although the restricted viewing of nude images by Kuroda and other *yoga* painters was practiced ostensibly for the sake of public decency, the production and appreciation of these images was still held as a mark of cultural sophistication.²⁰³ The very act of viewing the nude figure gave the viewer an authority based on a claim of worldly knowledge. Thus, despite the controversy Kuroda Seiki stirred up with *Morning Toilette*, Alice Tseng observes that the painting was an unmitigated critical success.²⁰⁴ In addition to challenging the conservatives in the Japanese art world, *Morning Toilette* also earned Kuroda Seiki a bronze medal at the exhibition, a hefty income when sold to a private collector for a staggering amount following the exhibition, and a position among the faculty at the prestigious Tokyo School of Fine Arts.

Despite government censorship of publications and exhibitions that remained in effect in Japan until the 1920s, paintings of nude and semi-nude figures appeared with increasing frequency.²⁰⁵ Anatomically accurate depictions of the semi-nude female body enjoyed growing popularity in the graphic arts and commercial advertisements and marketed a range of domestic

²⁰² Kuroda (considered the father of modern Western-style painting in Japan) studied at the Academie Colarossi in Paris and brought the painting back to Japan with him to serve as his debut as an artist in his home country. Tseng, 417, 432.

²⁰³ To some extent, the carefully guarded display of images of the nude figure parallels the historical tradition of ritual viewings for certain sacred Buddhist icons in Japan. In both cases, the esoteric authority invested within the image, deemed too potent for the casual viewer, was made accessible only to approved initiates.

²⁰⁴ Tseng, 436.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 320. Approaches to painting the nude figure underwent a gradual process of naturalization in Japan during the early twentieth century. Initially, Japanese artists modified the proportions of the Japanese models' bodies to more closely resemble those of Western women. Berndt, 326-329. But as Berndt describes, by 1910 paintings of nudes had become "Japanized" and more truthfully portrayed Asian body proportions. Popularly transformed from a fully nude Western woman into a semi-nude Japanese woman, the local interpretation of this subject was widely embraced as a variant of the beautiful woman (*bijin*) genre. Alicia Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugorō and Japanese Modern Art* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010): 60.

products to both men and women.²⁰⁶ Painters of the nude began experimenting with style as means to distinguish themselves. Less than a decade into the new century, a new wave of artists returned to Japan from overseas study and brought with them a new set of artistic interests, such as the rebellious styles of the European Post-Impressionists.²⁰⁷ Younger *yoga* painters trained in Japan, such as Yorozu Tetsugoro, began to question their teachers' adherence to a progressively outmoded stylistic approach to figure painting. Controversy surrounding Yorozu's submission to the graduation exhibition, *Nude Beauty*, in 1912 was not centered on the acceptability of the semi-nude figure, but rather on the style used to portray it (Fig. 3.31). The defiantly awkward style of the painting was a shocking challenge to the *yoga* community, which had grown complacent under government patronage and Kuroda Seiki's direction.²⁰⁸ A few years later, Yorozu wrote that rather than copying nature, artists "should express the nature within."²⁰⁹ Though *Nude Beauty* was roundly criticized, the Taisho period (1912-1926) nonetheless saw artists turning to stylistic experimentation in increasing numbers. Several of these artists, such as Togo Seiji, Murayama Tomoyoshi, and Sumiya Iwane, depict startlingly abstracted and unrecognizable bodies in their paintings.

Stylistic experimentation with images of nude figures was thus a distinctive aspect of the art world that Qiu Ti entered when she traveled to Japan in the late 1920s, but her experience within this art world was assuredly different from that of her male counterparts. More than was the case in China, the women of early twentieth-century Japan found it extremely difficult to

²⁰⁶ Berndt, 334-344. Advertisements employed women's semi-nude bodies to sell every conceivable commodity, including cigarettes and women's kimonos.

²⁰⁷ Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism*, 49.

²⁰⁸ Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism*, 53.

²⁰⁹ Mizusawa, Tsutomu, "The Artists Start to Dance: The Changing Image of the Body in Art of the Taisho Period," *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*. Ed. by Elise K. Tipton and John Clark (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000): 21.

establish a career as an artist.²¹⁰ By the time of Qiu Ti's visit, a handful of newly-formed women's painting societies existed and the art of some female painters had gained limited exposure in venues such as women's magazines,²¹¹ but few Japanese women pursued painting as a profession, and most of those who did were firmly discouraged from taking up *yoga* painting. One reason why women were generally prevented from studying *yoga* was precisely because it was so closely identified with the nude.²¹² Despite the acceptance of the nude as key feature of imported artistic cultivation, for the Japanese art community and public alike the *yoga* nude possessed an overt sexuality. Women were prohibited from publicly viewing images of nude figures. At public exhibitions, care was taken to hide nude forms from the view of women and important officials. In some instances these images were covered with strategically placed drapery; on other occasions the offending images were removed to a separate room altogether, with only men who were members of the art community granted access.²¹³ As consequence of the virtual boy's club erected around the creation and appreciation of the nude female figure in Japan, *yoga* was considered too manly for women.²¹⁴ Instead, women were expected to restrict themselves to *nihonga*, a modern incarnation of traditional Japanese painting.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ Alicia Volk writes, "Women could paint if they wished, but only as amateurs, and with the style and subjects that preserved their sanctioned role as protectors of the state's conservative values." Volk, "Katsura Yuki," 3. See also Laura W. Allen "Modern Girls, Working Women and Housewives: Japanese Women Artists in the Interwar Years," *Essays on Women's Artistic and Cultural Contributions 1919-1939: Expanded Social Roles for the New Woman Following the First World War*, Ed. Paula Birnbaum and Anna Novakov (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

²¹¹ Allen, 104-105.

²¹² Allen, 102. Volk quotes Katsura Yuki's (1913-1991) parents' response when initially forbidding their daughter to pursue oil painting as: "Painting nudes and getting covered in oil paints is only for boys, and is an inappropriate accomplishment for an unmarried girl." Alicia Volk, "Katsura Yuki," 3.

²¹³ For examples see Berndt, 320.

²¹⁴ Shunted to the more docile *nihonga* sidelines, women avoided contact with risqué content. Though few touched the nude as painting subject, some women *nihonga* artists did specialize in *bijinga* (paintings of beautiful women). During the Meiji, the art establishment had effectively severed the *bijinga*'s ties to erotic art and infused the newly sanitized genre with a moralistic tone aimed at the education of women. *Bijinga* imagery of the twentieth century now represented the ideal Japanese woman, and as such promoted the nation-building rhetoric of women as "good wives and wise mothers" as well as perpetuated a fashionable consumer culture in magazine and poster advertisements. Doris Croissant, "Icons of Femininity: Japanese National Painting and the Paradox of Modernity,"

For the small number of women who dared to pursue *yoga* painting, social pressures and the male camaraderie of the figure painting studio must have been daunting. The Tokyo University of the Arts (*Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku* 東京芸術大学) did not even begin admitting female students until 1946. Some few brave women did enroll in nude figure painting classes at private schools at a much earlier date. For example, Takamura Chieko painted nude models during her 1907-1911 study at the Pacific Ocean Painting Research Institute (*Taiheiyō gakai kenkyūjo* 太平洋画会研究所), the same art school Qiu Ti was to attend nearly two decades later when it was renamed the Pacific Ocean Art School (*Taiheiyō bijustu gakkō* 太平洋美術学校).²¹⁶ It is possible that Qiu Ti took life drawing classes during her brief attendance—perhaps no longer than a semester—at the Pacific Ocean Art School. More probable, is that she availed herself of opportunities for self-study. These limited opportunities would have included viewing images on display for the general public and purchasing however many volumes of the reproductions of European and Japanese artists' works as she could afford. Real development in her interest of nude figure painting would have occurred after she left Japan. In early 1930s China, three factors encouraged Qiu Ti and other female artists to paint and exhibit images of female nudes—the widespread exposure and acceptance of nude imagery, the prevailing modernist art ideology, and the feminist aspirations of the women in her field.

Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field, ed. Joshua Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003): 137-138.

²¹⁵ Allen, 102.

²¹⁶ Phyllis Birnbaum, *Modern Girls, Shining Stars, the Skies of Tokyo: Five Japanese Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999):76-77.

Images of the “New Woman” and the Rise of the Nude in Popular Culture

Qiu Ti most likely produced her two paintings of female nudes following her return to Shanghai, where access to nude models and an incentive to paint them would have been much greater. The popularity of nude imagery in Shanghai art and popular culture would have encouraged interest in reproducing the nude figure. During the late 1920s and early 1930s interest in the human body—particularly the nude female body—reached a zenith in Chinese popular culture. By the time Qiu Ti exhibited her painting in the Juelanshe annual show, the nude as subject matter was nearly as routine as landscapes and still lifes. Chinese female students freely attended the same painting studios and studied the same nude models as did their male classmates.²¹⁷ Art exhibitions freely displayed images of the nude, and magazines published uncensored reproductions. By this time, the nude carried very different cultural baggage than it had when it was first introduced to Japan decades earlier. Instead of conflicting with Victorian principles of propriety, it participated in a euphoric international vogue of exhibitionism and beautiful healthy bodies.

The sheer abundance and diversity of depictions of the human figure available in the Republican-period is remarkable and includes oil paintings, commercial advertisements, and tabloid coverage of Hollywood icons. Leo Ou-fan Lee remarks, “It would take a lengthy treatise to put the public display, artistic or otherwise, of the female body in a modern Chinese cultural context.”²¹⁸ While an exhaustive treatise remains lacking, a number of partial studies have begun to clarify this complex subject.²¹⁹ Despite employing a range of methodologies in analyses of

²¹⁷ Tao and Li, 121. In *Shiluo de lishi* the authors note that Chenguang yishu hui (晨光艺术会 “Dawn Art Society,” begun as Chenguang meishu hui in 1920 and renamed in 1927) gave its female members full access to the figure painting studio, where men and women painted from the model side by side.

²¹⁸ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 72.

²¹⁹ See Zhang Yingjin, “Artwork, Commodity, Event: Representations of the Female Body in Modern Chinese Pictorials” and Carrie Waara, “The Bare Truth: Nudes, Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials.”

disparate images, these investigations nonetheless reach the similar conclusion that the body served as a vehicle for the dissemination of modernist ideology. Within this overarching modernist agenda, the innumerable displays of unclothed or semi-nude bodies seen in popular publications managed to simultaneously bear a diverse range of meanings. Images of women held particular significance, and Lee argues that for the Republican-period urbanite “the display of the female body had become part of a new public discourse related to modernity in everyday life.”²²⁰ Essays by Zhang Yingjin and Carrie Waara in Jason Kuo’s 2007 anthology, *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*, testify to the enthusiasm with which publishers and artists pitched the body to China’s modern audiences. Zhang analyzes China’s pictorials of the 1930s to argue that the female body was manipulated in three often overlapping modes: transformed by photography or painting into a work of art; packaged as a marketing device to encourage publishing sales; or held up as signifier of culturally significant undertakings such as China’s zealous participation in the physical education movement.²²¹ In Waara’s view, nudes—appreciated for the “destabilizing potential” of their sexual power—were employed within a middle-class modernization project.²²²

The modernization project of which Waara speaks was by no means a homogeneous, structured campaign. Contemporary publications printed a multitude of diverse and seemingly irreconcilable depictions of the body. Within a single 1933 issue of *Shidai huabao*, for instance, the body was used to convey a range of disparate symbolic meanings.²²³ Most notable is the construction of a paradigm wherein fashionable clothing equates civility and a lack of clothing

Both in Jason Kuo, ed. *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007).

²²⁰ Lee, 74.

²²¹ Zhang, 123-124.

²²² Waara, 164.

²²³ *SDHB* 4.5 (May 1, 1933).

demonstrates primitiveness. A photo documentary labels the Li ethnic minority of present-day Hainan Island—captured in ungenerously candid poses—as so “primitive” that they feel no shame in their nakedness (Fig. 3.32). The text expresses near disbelief that any ethnic group still survives in a country with such a venerable history of cultural sophistication as China, while the images of half-naked natives presumably reinforced the reader’s belief in the superiority of a modern lifestyle. Later in the same issue, two double-page spreads devote themselves to the human form; this time, however, the conspicuously clothed bodies convey modernity. “Ladies of the Hour” celebrates the exemplary—and accordingly dressed—women of modern China, while the following two pages cover the current women’s fashion vogue of wearing men’s clothes. Paradoxically sandwiched between the photo-documentation of the Li people and the “Ladies of the Hour,” yet another double-page feature breaks with this paradigm by asking the modern reader to identify with the nude body. This spread pairs a euphoric, freeform narrative verse with an assemblage of photographs of summer images. The diverse jumble of modern sights includes Western-style straw hats and young Chinese women with bobbed hair. The women, clad only in swimsuits, sit in formation on a diving board, with their natural, i.e. unbound, bare feet quite conspicuous. Meanwhile, another photograph—strategically positioned to suggest a line of sight from the bathing beauties—depicts male youths engaged in synchronized nude exercise (Fig. 3.33). The accompanying short text, titled “Symphony of Spring and Summer” (*chun xia jiaoxiangqu* 春夏交响曲), provides the reader with clues on how to interpret the images; it describes the narrator’s impulsive decision to throw off all [his] clothes while in the ecstasy of the summer day. Taken as a whole, with its conflicting presentations of fashion, gender, and

social mores, this magazine issue imparts ambivalent views of what modernity—and the body of a modernized individual—should look like.²²⁴

Mail-order multi-volume sets dedicated to the “study” of the female body attest to the populace’s interest in the nude.²²⁵ The same publishers as the *Shidai huabao* magazine, the China Art Publishing Society, printed a set of books that purported not only to contain thorough research on the beauty of the female bodies from around the world, but also to serve as a reference tool for a strong and healthy feminine physique and clarify the basis of women’s wisdom and foolishness (*mingliao nüxing zhihui yuchun zhi genyuan* 明瞭女性智慧愚蠢之根源).²²⁶ Continual progress worldwide meant that anything might serve an educational function, claims an advertisement for the set, and this detailed examination of the “mothers of the human

²²⁴ Waara reaches a similar conclusion about the content of *Meishu shenghuo* (*MSSH*) when she states that the pictorial’s “treatment of the human subject, clothed and unclothed, carries important messages about men’s and women’s identity in Republican China. Although it is often represented in contradictory and competing ways, the images of homemakers and desirable nudes, athletes and entertainers, all give form to the periodical’s modernization movement.” Waara, 196. Three successive earlier issues of *Shidai huabao* present symbolic images of nude women as a recurring feature on page 8. The series starts with the April 1, 1933 issue which contains a full-page color photograph of a woman wearing large earrings and fringed shawl. The shawl is draped loosely about her shoulders and clasped in front of her groin; thereby revealing both of her bare breasts. The next issue contains two photos of nude women; these are coyly captioned “Parisian Spring Scenery” (*Bali chunse* 巴黎春色)—“spring scenery” being a euphemism for erotic imagery. While the second installment of the series depicts alluring “scenery” from the West’s most famously decadent city, the last image of the group projects a more serious and nationalistic tone. In this case, the full-page color image presents a completely nude young woman who symbolizes the defenseless modern-day motherland. Though the composite photograph carries no title or caption, the meaning is inescapable. Unclothed and supine, the woman represents China, while the troops marching in formation that are superimposed above her body insinuate the current vulnerability of the nation and the trauma of the ongoing Japanese invasion. (Interpretation is mine, there is no text provided for image.) A year or two later, as Japan’s aggressive actions towards a feeble mainland continued to escalate, nearly all of the mainstream pictorials replaced their pinup girls with the robust countenances of athletic beauties in swimsuits or track shorts. The latter images played double duty by fulfilling the role of pinup while supporting a nationalistic imperative to activate the masses and invigorate the nation. In a recent conference paper Joan Judge observes a dramatic shift in the visual depiction of women on the covers of popular Chinese periodicals; the sextop covergirl of the 1920s giving way by 1939 to “new, more ideologically strident models of womanhood,” such as the example she gives of robust fieldworkers on the cover of *Xin Zhongguo funü* 新中国妇女. However, Judge does not reference the *jianmei* movement or fashion trends of the mid 1930s. Joan Judge, “The Modern Shanghai Visual Imaginary: Magazine Cover Girls and New Cultural Possibilities in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Moderne and Modernity: Visual Narratives of Interwar Shanghai* (conference paper, University of California, Berkeley, March 6, 2010).

<http://www.youtube.com/user/calcommunitycontent#p/c/3B4BC26C0768B4E2/11/xGb3PaZWMAU>

²²⁵ *SDHB* 2.5 (Mar 1 1931), back cover.

²²⁶ *SDHB* 1.4 (Jun 1930), back cover. 中国美术刊行社 *Zhongguo Meishu Kanxing She*.

race” offered distinct satisfaction for inquisitive minds. Other publishing houses produced similar publications. Zhang documents a range of such contributions from the Liangyou Publishers in 1933—on topics such as art photography, famous nude paintings, and the nudist movement—and from *The Chin-Chin Screen*, a popular Shanghai film magazine, the following year.²²⁷

As these encyclopedic sets evidence, interest in the female body ranged from the passive appreciation of its visual dimensions to the “scientific study” of the physically active body. These interests extended to the widely read pictorials, as well. For instance, professional art photographer Lang Jingshan is best known for his theatrically-titled black and white shots of nude young Chinese women (Fig. 3.34). His images of female nudes undoubtedly held broad appeal, as they appeared prominently as full page reproductions in multiple issues of *Arts & Life* (*Meishu Shenghuo*). By introducing a new genre to the fledgling art of photography, his photographs of the female figure encouraged aesthetic appreciation of the body in a modern sense.²²⁸ Meanwhile, a burgeoning physical education movement promoted the ideal of a healthy beauty—or *jianmei*.²²⁹ Plentiful photographs of national athletes and didactic articles promoted a healthy beauty in keeping with international standards. A 1936 issue of *New People’s Weekly*

²²⁷ Zhang, 135, 157 fnt. 29.

²²⁸ Lang Jingshan’s numerous art photographs evidence that the predominant characteristics found in painted images of nudes also extended to fine art photography. *Prayer* (祈祷) and *Regret* (怨望) were published in *MSSH* 2 (May 1934) and *Thinking afar* (思悠悠) in *MSSH* 9 (December 1934). All republished in Waara. Lang Jingshan’s photographs take full advantage of the sexuality of his subjects, yet are careful to avoid what he considered to be vulgarity. For a brief discussion of Lang Jingshan see Waara, 2007, 192 & 196.

²²⁹ So far as popular publications are concerned, the mid 1930s witnessed a rise in *jianmei* imagery concurrent with nationalist sentiments, while the number of images meant for the passive appreciation of the feminine form solely on aesthetic terms appears to have declined. For information on the *jianmei* movement see Yunxiang Gao, “Nationalist and Feminist Discourses on *Jianmei* (Robust Beauty) during China’s National Crisis in the 1930s,” in eds. Dorothy Ko and Wang Zheng, *Translating Feminisms in China: A Special Issue of Gender & History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007): 104-137 and Denise Gimpel, “Freeing the Mind through the Body: Women’s Thoughts on Physical Education in Late Qing and Early Republican China,” *Nannü* 8.2 (2006): 316-358, “Exercising Women’s Rights: Debates on Physical Culture since the Late Nineteenth Century,” in eds. Kai-Wing Chow, Tze-Ki Hon, Hung-Yok Ip and Don C. Price, *Beyond the May Fourth Paradigm: In Search of Chinese Modernity* (New York: Lexington Books, 2008): 95-130.

(*Xinren zhoukan*) provides its readers with a visual comparison of Soviet, American, and Chinese athletic beauties, as if to confirm that the women of China measure up (Fig. 3.35).²³⁰

In several instances a deliberate juxtaposition of the Western female nude and clothed Chinese socialites served to not so subtly remind the readership of the sexual desirability of China's own young women. For instance, an issue of *Shidai huabao* features a double page spread of Chinese socialites, who are identified by name and collectively referred to as “Modern Girls” (Fig. 3.36). Immediately following these pages of demure Chinese beauties is another two-page spread of beautiful women—this time Western and exuberantly exhibitionist—which runs under the heading “Nude Beauties in 1933” (Fig. 3.37).²³¹ A more modest example, a single page from *New People's Weekly*, also features portraits of local women. These ladies—labeled with mundane captions such as “Ms. Liu Yunying in winter attire” (*Liu Yunying nüshi dongzhuang* 刘云英女士冬妆) and “Ms. Cao Jiahua leaning against a small railing” (*queyi xiaolangan Cao Jiahua nüshi* 却倚小阑干曹家华女士)—are suggestively accompanied by a nude sculpture that bears all the hallmarks of the West's classical style (Fig. 3.38).²³²

²³⁰ “Tige yundong, jianmei de nüxing” 体格运动、健美的女性 [Physical Exercise, Fit Women] Image from the back cover of *Xinren zhoukan* (XRZK) 2.41 (June 13 1936). English translation of the journal title is my own.

²³¹ The two double-page spreads ran back to back in *SDHB*, 1933.

²³² For the benefit of aspiring socialites, the pictorials also carried educational articles that specifically targeted women's display of their own bodies and instructed women on how to cultivate a modern image. The article in the October 1934 issue of *The Cosmopolitan* (*Dazhong huabao*), “Careful of Your Sitting Position,” serves as an illustrated manual on proper ways for women to govern their bodies in public. “Danxin, ni zuo shi de zishi” 担心，你坐时的姿势 [Careful of Your Sitting Position], *Dazhong huabao* (DZHB) 12 (Oct 1934): 26-27. The ladies illustrating the improper forms of repose are all labeled with a caption indicating that their stance was for demonstration purposes only and not reflective of their natural posture. An earlier article in the same pictorial, “The Beautiful Form of Breasts” explains how the shape of the breasts betray the owner's level of sophistication and, providing a Western advertisement for corsets as an illustration, discusses how a new way of clothing the body could produce positive results. Huang Ping, “Rufang de xingtai mei” 乳房的形态美 [The Beautiful Form of Breasts], *DZHB* 4 (Feb 1934): 26-27. Thus, although the intentional display of a body within Republican-period popular culture generally relates to a modernist agenda, the body itself did not inherently symbolize modernity. Women needed to wear modern support garments and sit in modern poses in order to become modern. Youth of the modern era required healthy athletic bodies in order to compete at an international level. An individual unaware of his or her nakedness, as in the case of the Li people, were presented as holdouts from a bygone era and provided a measuring stick against which readers could gauge the modernity of their own cosmopolitan lifestyle. Serving as a

By the 1930s interest in the body, and the art nude especially, enjoyed such popularity that it became ripe for lampooning. Cartoons poked fun at those transfixed by the nude feminine form (Fig. 3.39). A cartoon titled “The Worship of Woman” illustrates a voluptuous female nude elevated on a pedestal with throng of submissive men prostrating themselves in adoration (Fig. 3.40). Also satirized in cartoons were those who sought profit from the female nude body—here summed up by the title “Tool for Fame and Wealth” (Fig. 3.41). Another cartoon goes farther to imagine the supposed advantage possessed by female artists. Titled “The Convenience of Female Artists,” the cartoon depicts a woman in an artist studio, sitting on a stage that she has placed in front of a large mirror while she paints her own nude form (Fig. 3.42).

These cartoons wittily illustrate the great cachet of the nude female figure and the gains to be found in capitalizing on its aesthetic appreciation. Commenting on the opportunities the female figure offered, Zhang Yingjin concludes that the female body was “a site where the male artist displays his unusual talent, the male viewer practices his exquisite connoisseurship, the male entrepreneur invests for financial gains, and the male adventurer tests his imaginary encounter with the West.”²³³ Zhang only briefly raises the question of how a female viewership might receive these images.²³⁴ In her analysis, Carrie Waara argues that the female art nude “signifies passive submission.”²³⁵ She resolves potential discomfort on the part of the female viewers by assigning them the role of wishful spectators: a role in which women elevated their level of aesthetic appreciation, identified with the sexual objectification of the nudes, and longed for greater sexual attractiveness for themselves.²³⁶ The cartoons, however, suggest that women—

commentary on the country’s present condition, the anthropomorphized depiction of China as a defenseless nude female imparts a sense of timelessness and unresponsiveness instead of dynamic modernity.

²³³ Zhang, 153.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Waara, 185.

²³⁶ Waara, 196-197.

in securing their own adoration, wealth, and fame— also acted as agents in this social phenomenon, albeit the cartoons’ portrayals of these types of women’s characters is less than flattering. “The Convenience of Female Artists” not only depicts a woman artist producing an image of a nude, but in absolute control of the entire creative process.²³⁷

Though Zhang and Waara acknowledge that the way in which Republican-period women received these plentiful images of nudes is problematic, they cannot account for the female authorship of female nude images. Rather than addressing female artists as participants in the manufacturer of nude images, recent scholarship assumes a historical context in which men were the creative and consumptive agents and women the passive object of “the gaze.” Women artists like Qiu Ti, however, were far more than spectators on the sidelines. They painted, published, and exhibited images of female nudes alongside those of their male colleagues. And like their male colleagues, these women must have shared a similar sense of ideological pride in the act of putting oils to canvas to paint the nude.

Ni Yide’s “Considering Nude Art” and the Significance of the Nude to Modernist Art in 1930s China

A sense of the modernist idealism invested in the act of painting the nude during the 1930s is conveyed in an essay by Ni Yide. Beyond creating and exhibiting paintings of nude women, Ni Yide, wrote an essay in defense of the subject, “Considering Nude Art (*Lun luoti yishu* 论裸体艺术).” In this article, which was popular enough to have been published at least twice, Ni Yide waxes philosophical about the reception and significance of the art of the nude

²³⁷ The cartoon seems to be a humorously ridiculous image, but it may have some basis in reality. Pan Yuliang is widely believed to have served as her own nude model.

(*luoti yishu* 裸体艺术) in China.²³⁸ He opens with the monumental line, “Just as with other ideologies and thoughts, the trend of nude art has spread to our land.” (*Tongbie zhong xin de xueshuo xin de sixiang yiyang, luoti yishu de chaoliu ye boji dao women de guotu le.* 同别种新的学说新的思想一样，裸体艺术的潮流也波及到我们的国土了。) After which, he proclaims the art of the nude a positive forerunner of a renaissance (*yizhong wenyi fuxing de zhengxiang* 一种文艺复兴的征象) in China and assures his readers that this knowledge should compel them to leap for joy. Comparing it to the revolutionarily benefits of socialism, Ni Yide argues that the art of the nude was similarly misunderstood by his countrymen. The art of the nude could usher in a cultural rebirth (*zaisheng shidai de xianqu* 再生时代的先驱), and the continued opposition to it posed a dire threat to China’s art world. Those who opposed the nude in art were of three general types: the moralists, who look upon the nude images as base pornography; the misguided, who view the depiction of the nude as a useful anatomical study but not as a finished work of art; and the crass marketers and sham artists, who manufacture crude images of nudes in order to capitalize on the ignorance of young audiences aspiring to be cosmopolitan.

Although he observes that the popularity of the nude figure had prompted the use of the word “curvaceous” (*quxianmei* 曲线美) as a fad, Ni Yide argues that the aesthetic merits of nude art reach beyond the shapeliness of the model. For him, the body represents a perfect harmony of form and function. Referencing the pursuit of formal beauty in ancient Greek art and Classicism, he states that Chinese artists should follow the example of the new artists of the modern age who, in paying little attention to fixed methods of depicting form (*yiding fangshi de xingshimei bushen*

²³⁸ Ni Yide, “Lun luoti yishu 论裸体艺术,” in Lang Shaojun 郎紹君, Shui Zhongtian 水中天, *Ershi shiji zhongguo meishu wenxuan (I)* 二十世纪中国美术文选(上卷) (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1999) 128. The article, which was written in 1924, was first published in *Chenbao fukan* (Sep 17, 1925) and later republished in Ni Yide, *Yishu mantan* 艺术漫谈 (Shanghai: Guanhua shuju, 1928).

zhongshi le 一定方式的形式美不甚重视了), have advanced the genre of painting nudes. In particular, he points to Cezanne and Matisse as indicative of the trend in which artists give rise to the intoxication of beauty through the sensuality, roundness, and coloration of the body (*you renti zhi rougan, yuanwei, secai, er yinqi de mei de taozui* 由人体之肉感, 圆味, 色彩, 而引起的美的陶醉).

The remainder the essay is largely devoted to discrediting adversaries of the fine art nude movement. Ni Yide asserts that these critics are the old Confucian moralists who, despite their strict ethics, are in fact nothing more than hypocrites and degenerates. Characterizing their views as out-of-date remnants of an archaic past, he concludes:

Although I now feel instead that their hatred and reproach is not worth consideration; the provocations of the outside world more than anything else stimulate our efforts. Is there even one artist who has not been misunderstood by the world? Time is a most solemn and perceptive judge. I believe the outmoded powers surely will soon die out, and new prospects will finally arrive with the sunshine of the following era!²³⁹

不过我现在反觉得他们的仇视与非难为不足虑, 外界的刺激最是我们努力的兴奋剂, 那一个艺术家不是被当世所误解了的? 时代是一个最严肃而明敏的裁判者, 我相信陈旧的势力不久定会淘汰, 新的前途终会随时代的阳光到来了!

In the end he dismisses the opinions of those opposed to nude art as outdated moralizing that only served to further motivate artists' defiant actions, yet Ni Yide felt compelled to address the public's qualms against nude models and the artists who paint them. Acknowledging the public's fears that artists have inappropriate relations with their models, he argues the artist has much more lofty concerns. Rather than remain detached, the artist develops an appropriate passion for his model. This passion, a love for the harmonization of soul and flesh (灵肉调和的

²³⁹ Ni Yide, "Lun luoti," 128-129.

爱), is only carried out to a certain level before transforming into an everlasting visualization (*buguo zhe yi zhong ai dao le mozhong chengdu erzhi, erqie shi yongjiu chengwei xiangxiang de* 不过这一种爱到了某种程度而止, 而且是永久成为想象的); namely, the love an artist holds for his muse. The public's assumption that nude models engage in shameful activities essentially equal to those of prostitutes is absurd. To the contrary, models deserve recognition for their honorable act of sharing the beauty of their bodies with others. As the inspiration of artists, a nude model should be praised for her great contribution to the art world, namely her indirect role in the creative process.

Ni Yide's article offers tantalizing insights into gender roles in the nude art movement. Most notably, he recognizes men as artists and women as models, generalizing from his personal experience. Nude models were to have the appealing softness of women's bodies, which satisfied a basic human preference for soft and pleasant things, he explains.

And especially the body of a youthful woman—her high swelling pair of breasts, her two thighs like jade pillars, her large and prominent buttocks—how capable of giving rise to our life's happiness, our love's vigor!

Closely related to roundness [of form] is fleshiness. Generally, the natural instinct of human beings is to ardently admire soft objects; the fragrance of flowers, a light breeze in a willow tree, a young girl's merry song and graceful dance. Therefore the reason that one can make us harmoniously happy is none other than that they possess a kind of gentle softness, and this soft flavor even more allows the beauty of the sense of touch to be experienced through the visually beautiful. Therefore the reason why nude painting should select female models is exactly because women's flesh has a gentle softness. Of Impressionist master Renoir—the most outstanding to have portrayed nude women—we can say that the most unique aspect of his art is precisely his ability to depict soft voluptuousness. One may well say his paintings of nude young girls—lovely and graceful in appearance, charming in carriage—express this to the upmost extent. With just one glance at his work, the whole of body and mind can unconsciously sense a type of perfect harmony and enters a state of peace, love, and beauty; at

the same time we also then can know, this gentle fleshiness most probably is the reason why women's bodies are beautiful.²⁴⁰

而尤其是妙年丰盛的女性的肉体，她那高高隆起的一对乳峰，她那玉柱一般的两条大腿，她那肥大突出的臀部，是何等的能引起我们生的愉快，爱的活跃！

与圆味有密切关系的，便是肉感。人类的天性，大概是对于柔软的物质具热烈的爱慕，花的芳香，杨柳的轻风，少女的轻歌妙舞，所以能引起我们谐和的愉快者，无非是具有一种温柔的软味的原故，而这软味更能由视觉的美而感到触觉的美。所以裸体画为什么要取女性做模特儿，便是因为女的肉体含有温柔的软味的原故。描写裸体女子之最杰出者，当推印像，印像派的巨子罗诺尔(Roneir)，罗氏的艺术之最独到处，我们可以说就是能将柔软的肉感充分地表现出来，他所绘的裸体的妙年少女，爱娇的貌，妩媚的姿态，可谓发挥殆尽。我们只要一看到他的作品，全身心就会不知不觉的感到一种适当的调和，而入于和平爱美之境；同时我们也就可以晓得，女性肉体之所以为美者，大半是因于这温柔的肉感。

In Ni Yide's essay, woman's role in the artistic process is not as artist, but as muse; her job is to be beautiful and to inspire the artist to create his great art. As the (male) artist acts out the role of creative genius, the woman assumes the part of passive participant. Her role is further complicated by Ni Yide's admission that most women did not turn to nude modeling by choice, but out of financial desperation. So while he advocates the admiration of female model's noble contribution, in reality Ni Yide undermines the model's act by stating that it was not usually performed willingly in pursuit of an artistic ideal, but rather reluctantly out of economic necessity. Moreover, the artist is expected to fall passionately in love with his voluptuous model, later transforming her into his personal muse. This transformation process effectually removes the model's identity as an individual and supplants it with the position as a figment of the artist's imagination.

²⁴⁰ Ni Yide, "Lun luoti," 125-126.

As essentializing and proscriptive as Ni Yide's generalization of male artists and female nude models was, his words did not dissuade women such as Qiu Ti from creating their own images of nudes. They, too, sought to tap the same salvational power of the nude. Like Ni Yide, women artists looked to the female nude as muse and concerned themselves with the achievement of an ideal artistic image. Without restrictions on the study and painting of nude figures, and without the need to defend their desire to paint the female nude, the Chinese women artists of Qiu Ti's generation extended their attentions to a different set of theoretical arguments.

Painting the Female Nude as Feminist Action

Far from having the nude shielded from their eyes, as had been the case in Japan, Chinese women directly engaged the subject in their journals. *Funü zazhi's* 1929 special issue on women artists provides particularly substantive insight into women artists' views on the practice of painting nudes.²⁴¹ As participants in the national painting exhibition, the women artists who contributed articles to the magazine addressed the field from a position of authority. A particularly relevant article, "Women's Physical Development and the Techniques of Figure Painting" (*Nuzi fayu mei yu renti huafa* 女子发育美与人体画法), was written by Tao Cuiying (陶粹英 n.d.), a female participant in the First National Art Exhibition.²⁴² Her biography in the same issue describes her as inherently honest and quiet, a diligent art student respected by her friends, and especially knowledgeable about oil painting. Nothing is said of her artistic style or inspiration, but she is identified as the current art director in the School of General Education at Central University (*Zhongyang Daxue* 中央大学). In light of her occupation, it is not surprising

²⁴¹ See Tao and Li, 200-215 for what little information is available on Republican-period women artists.

²⁴² Tao Cuiying 陶粹英, "Nuzi fayu mei yu renti huafa" 女子发育美与人体画法 [Women's Physical Development and the Techniques of Figure Painting], *Funü zazhi*, 15.7 (Jul 1929).

that her essay is thoroughly instructive. She contrasts historical notions of beauty in the West and East, evaluates the medical significance of the model's physique and prescribes corrective behavior, and outlines the techniques used to depict a human figure accurately. After briefly observing that the artists of "golden-age" Greece depicted two types of human beauty, namely the muscular male and the fecund female, she devotes the remainder of the article to the female figure. The ancient Westerners selected the most beautiful and voluptuous of women, she states, and in so doing placed greater emphasis on the female model's entire body than just her face. China, the author reasons, is the very opposite; Chinese aesthetics judges a woman's beauty solely on the basis of her face and is more concerned with facial expressiveness than the health of the her overall body.

Tao Cuiying subscribes wholeheartedly to the Western artistic tradition, and advocates considering the aesthetic properties of the entire body. The most important requirement for any beautiful figure is good health, followed by balanced proportions and the general functional ability of the body. All three of these beauty requirements can be achieved through a proper regimen of exercise and nutrition, she proposes. Such a regimen holds the potential to remedy a whole range of ailments, including eye disorders, acne, and short legs. But women in China have only just awakened to the benefits of diet and exercise, she maintains, and therefore the beauty of Chinese women is in a state of early development. It is still difficult to find a perfectly healthy beauty in China, laments the author, and the models available to figure painters are all sick and deformed, with sallow complexions and ugly proportions. Regardless of artistic ability, Tao Cuiying assures the reader, an artist cannot create a beautiful figure painting based on an ugly model.

Tao then turns her attention from the subject of the painting to its creator. She implores that, even though it is impossible to find a truly healthy model in China, at the very least the artist should select a woman who is well-developed and free of any obvious signs of sickness. Therefore, it is essential that the model be a pretty, young woman who enjoys exercise. Continuing her dialogue with the artist, Tao Cuiying discusses in turn proper body proportions (providing diagrams for her readers' reference), suitable coloration of the body, and the need to convey three-dimensionality and a sense of movement.

Discerning the nature of the audience Tao Cuiying intended to address is difficult, as she gives advice to artists and models alike. Focusing on the youthful female as the appropriate subject of figure painting, Tao, much like Ni Yide, is preoccupied with the presentation of an ideal female form. Thus, in the first half of the article, she concentrates her attention on women models and instructs them on the proper cultivation of a healthy physique.²⁴³ But while the model is clearly identified as female, there is no indication in Tao Cuiying's article that she assumed the artist who paints the nude to be male. In fact, given that the article was published in a magazine for women and the author herself was an oil painter, it seems likely that the Tao Cuiying had female artists in mind.

The author of another article in the same issue, also a contributor to the First National Art Exhibition, more pointedly targets her words to her female peers. In "Women and Art" (*Nüxing yu meishu* 女性与美术), Jin Qijing (金启静 1902-1982) begins by saying that women and art have a special relationship, but goes on to observe that most women of her time had very little appreciation or understanding of art.²⁴⁴ Calling woman the "darling of the gods" (*Nüxing, shi*

²⁴³ Like many Japanese art critics in the early twentieth century, Tao Cuiying disparages Asian women's natural features and feels them to be typically unsuited for the nude painting genre.

²⁴⁴ Jin Qijing 金启静, "Nüxing yu meishu" 女性与美术 [Women and Art], *Funü zazhi*, 15.7 (Jul 1929).

meishen de chonger 女性, 是美神的宠儿), the author credits her gender with an intuition for art and maintains that women's fluid nature, intense emotions, and sincere love gave them profound connection to the creative works of the world. To illustrate her point, Jin Qijing provides a brief and highly selective survey of the Western world's symbolic imagery of women. She praises the positive feminine traits of the Greek's sculptures of Venus, chastises the damage wrought by the Christian zealots of the European Dark Ages, proclaims the Renaissance and DaVinci's *Mona Lisa* to be the rebirth of feminine charm, traces a newfound reverence for the Goddess of Peace to lessons learned from the Great War, and concludes with the Arts and Crafts Movement in Lyons, France. Equating the prevalence of images of women—especially nudes—with evidence of women's contribution to art, Jin Qijing notes that more than a quarter of the 80 Japanese entries to the First National Exhibition depict women.²⁴⁵ She also observes that the entirety of China's own examples of Western-style figure painting in the exhibit consists of depictions of women. This, along with the audience's favorable reception of images of female nudes, she decides illustrates the deep connection between women and art and serves as firm evidence of how essential women are to the field.²⁴⁶

Only the last third of Jin Qijing's article deals concretely with the idea of women as artists. Lamenting that her nation's women were long fettered by the Confucian ethical code (*shoule lijiao de shufu* 受了礼教的束缚), she explains that many talents virtually disappeared (*wuxingzhong yanmo le hen duo de tiancai* 无形中湮没了很多的天才). Here she asserts that the

²⁴⁵ Jin Qijing cites four images of nudes as the most famous examples from the First National Art Exhibition of Japanese paintings: *Harmony in Silver* (*Yin zhi xiehe* 银之谐和) by Okada Saburosuke (岡田三郎助 1869-1939); *Flower of Tirenitian* (*Tirenitian de hua* 梯仞梨天的花) by Wada Eisaku (和田英作 1874-1959); *Woman* (*Nü* 女) by Mitsutani Kunishiro (満谷國四郎 1874-1936); and *After the Bath* (*Yuhou* 浴后) by Ishikawa Toraji (石川寅治 1875-1964).

²⁴⁶ Although in comparison to twenty first-century American feminism Jin Qijing's argument seems odd, her article leaves no doubt that she was striving to equalize the status of women.

few women artists of the Song, Yuan, and Qing dynasties were not indexed in the painting compendiums and thus forgotten.²⁴⁷ Turning to the women featured in the National Art Exhibition, Jin Qijing relates that attendees were shocked to see that the brilliance of these female artists was on par with their male colleagues. In particular, she lists the outstanding examples of Pan Yuliang, Cai Weilian, and Wang Jingyuan. Declaring that, though most people now recognized women's equal standing in society and the arts, restrictions on the women of the past had kept them dependent on men and unable to develop their personalities or stimulate their minds. Now that they were entering society and seeking occupations, women have the complete capacity to bloom in the lofty undertakings of literature, music, and the arts. The author predicts, women will have a brilliant future in the development of the arts. Jin Qijing concludes her essay with a rousing battle cry for her female comrades to join in the incipient women's art movement. She asks her women comrades to root out their inner vanity and, by using their innate talent, to go forth and grab the "golden key" of art.

Both of these articles by women artists link the female nude to the success of their gender in the art world and society at large. While Tao discusses issues of women's health and Jin urges women artists achieve parity in the arts, both women turn to the nude painting genre specifically as a means of elevating Chinese women's positions. In addition to focusing on the perceived cultural authority of Western examples of art, both articles stress the feminine characteristics of women's bodies, much like Ni Yide's essay. Intriguingly, the articles of the women artists do not treat images of woman as examples of objectification, but instead regard instances of female nudes in the arts as examples of women's participation in artistic production. Producing images of nude women was not to be avoided, but energetically encouraged. To this end, Tao Cuiying

²⁴⁷ Apart from the fact that she neglects to mention the Ming dynasty, her argument is not true, as some women artists were included in the backs of these dynasties' compendiums.

gives details advice on how to select and depict the female nude and Jin Qijing promotes the female nude as a useful way to stimulate the audience's positive reception. In her enumeration of the successful Japanese entries in the national exhibition Jin Qijing observes that Ishikawa Toraiji's *After the Bath*, "[in] drawing all kinds of feminine expressions of women at their toilette, made the audience even more interested and attentive" (写裸女理装的种种女性表现, 更为观众所爱好所注目). In addition to these two articles, the *Funü zazhi* special issue on the female artists of the First National Art Exhibition prominently reproduces several paintings of female nudes.

Other female artists appear to have supported the genre and, if anything, were concerned about maintaining the aesthetic standards shared by their male colleagues. In 1935 female artist Yu Feng (郁风 1916-2007) published a cartoon that speaks to the concerns expressed in Tao Cuiying's article through social satire (Fig. 3.43). Her single frame cartoon depicts a male artist peering around his easel to rest his disapproving gaze on the form of his nude female model. With a sneer he criticizes the model's bony physique by saying, "Oh, what a pity there really are no fleshy curves! What I mean to say is, to be a model you should be a bit fatter!" (唉, 可惜太没有肉的曲线了! 我的意思说做模特儿应该胖一点才行!) For once given a voice of her own, the model retorts that if he wants a well-fed model, then he should look for one among the wealthy inhabitants of mansions. The exchange between the two characters acknowledges that the model was held to a standard that most women at that time could not attain. For the women of 1930s China, their physique was not simply a matter of healthy habits as Tao Cuiying had implied, but dependent on more complex issues of socio-economics. Yu Feng's cartoon questions the artistic ideal and the expectations of the figure painter, but does not challenge the

primacy of the female nude as painting subject. The cartoon model chides the artist for his criticism of her body, but she does not object to depicting nude women in art.

Conclusion

For women artists of Qiu Ti's generation, the question was not whether to paint the nude, but how to paint an attractive nude. By the 1930s, an active dialogue on the nude painting genre concentrated on the cultivation of aesthetic appreciation according to modern sensibilities, the achievement of the perfection of form, and by extension the physical health of the model. While the painting of nude bodies may have been a modern gesture for many Chinese artists, for some female artists painting the female nude was part of their participation in the women's art movement. The potent symbolic value of the female nude in art —no less than the power to stimulate a renaissance according to contemporary modernist art ideology —presented women artists with the opportunity to contribute to the modernization of their nation and the liberation of their countrywomen.

In her submission of the untitled painting of nudes in a landscape to the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition, Qiu Ti engaged in the same hopeful and excited activities as her colleagues. She did not passively observe a trend exclusive to her male peers, but instead transformed the subject into a vehicle for the exploration of a modern style. With its large fields of color and distortion of space, Qiu Ti's painting is much more reminiscent of the work of Western artists such as Matisse than that of most of her contemporaries in China. Her use of simplification creates illogical anatomical proportions and the inverted figure and distorted ground plane confuse the composition. Unlike the work of many of her colleagues, Qiu Ti's painting does not present an easily readable depiction of female nude figures, but emphasizes the style over the

subject matter. Here, perhaps more than in *Flower*, is the spirit of artistic liberation to which Ni Yide alludes in his 1935 essay.

CHAPTER FOUR

Commodity, Domesticity, and the Demise of Qiu Ti's Career

By the time of her death in 1958 at the age of 52, Qiu Ti's role as a professional oil painter was already largely forgotten. Indeed, the end of her career as a modernist painter roughly corresponds to the end of Juelanshe in 1935. For the last twenty years of her life, while her husband continued to work as a professional artist, she primarily painted as a hobby. Why did Qiu Ti's professional career stall while that of her husband continued to grow? Her personal history, as detailed in the previous chapters, indicates a determination to paint professionally that well exceeded a passing fancy. What caused the independent and strong-willed Qiu Ti to relinquish this commitment?

To answer these questions, this chapter begins by introducing two still-life paintings that Qiu Ti presented in the final Juelanshe group exhibition, examining one in particular in relation to Shanghai consumer culture and Qiu Ti's engagement with this culture as a fashionable, modern, career woman. The discussion then turns to the impact of influential social movements of the mid 1930s, the New Life Movement and the National Product Movement, on Qiu Ti's life and art. Finally, I explore how wartime conditions and the dissolution of Juelanshe prevented her from continuing to paint professionally: an occupation outside of the home was no longer economically viable given the harsh living conditions of refugee life and lack of a professional network.

Still Lives and Shanghai Consumerism

In 1935 Juelanshe held its fourth—and what was to be its final—exhibition.²⁴⁸ Magazine coverage indicates that Qiu Ti submitted at least two still lifes to the show, one simply titled *Still Life* (*Jingwu* 静物) and one called *Fruit* (*Shuiguo* 水果).²⁴⁹ Whereas *Fruit*, a spartan arrangement of fruit and tableware, captures the makings of a midday snack, *Still Life* contains a seemingly random assortment of everyday objects. Miraculously, given the loss of so many paintings of this era, both were found among a small stash of Qiu Ti's works discovered in 1989 and remain in the family's possession. In recent years, *Still Life* has been featured in multiple exhibition catalogues, becoming Qiu Ti's best-recognized work (Fig. 4.1 & Fig. 4.2).²⁵⁰ The following discussion is based on first-hand study of both pictures.

In *Fruit* Qiu Ti used muted tones to create a quiet study of classic *xihua*. Not only the oil-on-canvas medium and Post-impressionist style, but also the very components of the still life—the Western tableware and plain cloth backdrop—point to the painter's literal reliance on foreign models. The soft cream and buff coloring of the background and tablecloth dominate the composition. A small melon of the same tints shares a plate with a table knife roughed out in cool tones of white and silvery gray and a small cluster of purplish-blue grapes. A second cluster of grapes rests in front of a tall, clear glass half-filled with an ochre colored liquid. For the

²⁴⁸ As no catalogue for the exhibition survives, we must rely on exhibition coverage in contemporary periodicals to approximate show content. (Appendix 4.1)

²⁴⁹ See Liangyou 良友 111 (Nov 1935) 21, *Meishu shenghuo* 美术生活 21 (Dec 1935), and *Xinren zhoukan* 新人周刊 2.10 (Nov 2, 1935). Previous studies on Qiu Ti have mistakenly assigned the two still lifes to group exhibitions of two separate years, based on a typo in appearing in the November 1935 issue of *Liangyou* that incorrectly labels the Juelanshe exhibition of that year as the third annual exhibit. In fact, there is no evidence of Qiu Ti's exhibition submissions in 1934 and it could be that she did not participate in the third group exhibit.

²⁵⁰ See *Three Generations of Chinese Modernism: Qiu Ti, Pang Tao, and Lin Yan* (Vancouver, B.C. Canada: Art Beatus Gallery, 1998); Julia Frances Andrews, Kuiyi Shen, and Jonathan D. Spence, eds, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum: Harry N. Abrams, 1998); and Cheng Shuhua and Philip Tinari, ed, *Qiu Ti* (Nanjing Shi: Jiangsu jiao yu chu ban she, 2006). My analysis of these two paintings—as well as other still lifes by Qiu Ti discussed in this chapter—is informed by firsthand study of the works in the collections of her children.

backdrop, brushstrokes of dull grayish-browns cut across the canvas in dramatic, gestural improvisations of drapery folds. A particularly freeform line twists from the glass down to the lower right hand corner. Another, darker line slices across the entire lowermost portion of the canvas. The triangular wedge formed between these two lines frames the grapes that work like an arrow pointing to the artist's signature, "SCHUDY," in the lower right-hand corner (Fig. 4.3).

Fruit appears in just one of the four Juelanshe exhibition reviews, but the layout of this pictorial review shows that it was still a valued contribution (Appendix 4.1). It is shown nearly twice the size of Guan Liang's still life of fruit and nearly the same size as Pang Xunqin's *Design*, which it counterbalances diagonally on the page. In this understated picture, Qiu Ti successfully improvised on current stylistic trends. *Fruit* shares many characteristics commonly found in paintings by her colleagues, such as a still life by Chen Baoyi done the previous year (Fig. 2.12). His more ambitious painting of fruit on a cloth backdrop employs a palette and conspicuous brushstrokes like those in Qiu Ti's picture, but her work differs in its sketchy imprecision, an approach she shared with Pang Xunqin. Pang's sketchy approach can be seen in a portrait painted in 1929 (Fig. 4.4).²⁵¹

In *Still Life*, Qiu Ti pulled together an assortment of utilitarian objects to create a complex study of shapes and textures. We view this orderly arrangement of household items on a white ledge from a low angle and in a bright light. A tall stoneware jug with a high shoulder, small neck, and single lug sits on the left directly on what appears to be a white ledge. Next to it,

²⁵¹ Pang Tao also made a connection between these two works in an interview. Pang Tao, Aug. 8, 2011. Ni Yide wrote of Pang Xunqin's fondness for *croquis* (French: sketch) and explained the significance of this foreign concept to Chinese artists. He states, "This *croquis* is not the same as a preparatory sketch for an oil painting. To a certain extent, it is similar to a kind of Chinese brush painting employing light ink. Only a few simple lines are used to express the artist's ideas. What is of value in a *croquis* is not the subject depicted, but rather the pure aesthetic of line and the artistic creation of shape and form. All the modern masters of Paris, such as Picasso, Matisse and Derain, have expended their efforts on *croquis* and engendered their own unique ways of using lines and shapes." Ni Yide, "Juelanshe de yi qun." Translation from Ni Yide. "A Galaxy of the Storm Society," 238.

several objects rest on a horizontal, rectangular block wrapped in a yellow cloth that twists into a soft jumble of folds on the right. The objects include a narrow vase with a lustrous green glaze, a martini glass on top of two books, a squat blue glass inkbottle partially obscured by the drapery folds, and, behind the inkbottle, a metal coffee percolator. The coffee pot is framed by an empty gilded picture frame propped against the wall in the background. Also in the background and settled partly in front of the gilded frame is an asymmetrical wooden object with a curvilinear upper edge, probably a painter's palette. The broad assortment of materials—glass, wood, ceramic, cloth—gave the artist the opportunity to demonstrate the range of her technical skills.

The selection of objects in *Still Life* sets it apart from the typical still-life oil paintings of the day, which tended to feature fruit or flowers. This is not to say oil paintings of utilitarian objects were uncommon. Along with two still lifes of flowers, Ni Yide's 1934 solo show included a watercolor painting of a mandolin, its case, and sheet music. Pang Xunqin's 1930 *Green Wine Vessel* (*Lüzun* 绿樽) is a study of three ceramic antiquities. As mentioned in chapter two, Zhou Duo's *Odds & Ends*, an entry in the 1932 Juelanshe exhibition, immortalizes the tools of his trade (Fig. 4.5-7). In all of these cases, however, the artists grouped thematically related objects. Qiu Ti's objects, in contrast, do not suggest a unified theme. They do not share a singular use or purpose; instead, it is as if the artist walked around her home gathering a massive armful of the most interesting and diverse objects she came across. Thus the painting provides a candid snapshot of a domestic environment not found in the paintings of her colleagues.

A visitor to the 1935 Juelanshe exhibition must have been struck by the remarkable contrast of Qiu Ti's two still-life paintings. Whereas *Fruit* is a minimal grouping of objects in an open composition rendered with gestural brushstrokes and muted colors, *Still Life* contains a compact and complex composition formed of tight, hidden brushwork and diverse colors. Even

the artist's signature is radically different between the two: unlike the "Schudy" tucked into the lower right corner of *Fruit*, a small and faint Ti "堤"—the second portion of Qiu Ti's assumed name and how she would sign all of her subsequent paintings—hovers in the upper left corner of *Still Life* (Fig. 4.8). Perhaps the most arresting difference between the two still lifes, however, is in type of objects represented. Whereas *Fruit* presents a simple and timeless Western table setting, *Still Life's* selection of objects evokes the burgeoning consumer culture of early twentieth-century Shanghai.

The marketplace played a key role in *Haipai* (海派 "Shanghai style") culture. The term *Haipai*, which had originated during the Qing dynasty, referred to a distinctly Shanghai approach to the arts that extended to the cosmopolitan commercialism in fashion and popular culture.²⁵² *Haipai* culture reached new heights in the 1920s, with the development of the Nanjing Road shopping district and the rapid construction of stores, many built in the art deco style, and continued into the 1930s.²⁵³ Major department stores offering the latest in clothing fashions, décor trends, home appliances, and international brand names employed a bounty of images in their competitive marketing campaigns. They retailed visions of blissful materialism fueled by products that looked to the future. Department store advertisements touted the superiority of these new products and strove to convince the domestic population of the necessity of the newly available international goods.

The items depicted in *Still Life*, though not the most expensive of luxury goods, were nonetheless fashionable commercial products of the modern world that reverberated with the cosmopolitan culture of the Shanghai urbanites. In effect, the objects in Qiu Ti's painting

²⁵² Jason Kuo, "Introduction." in Jason Kuo, ed, *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007): p. 2.

²⁵³ Wen-hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1843-1949* (Berkeley: Los Angeles, 2007): 56-63.

function as self-reflexive icons of her savvy consumption of international style. The gilded painting frame made to hold a Western-style painting, the colored martini glass designed to hold foreign cocktail concoctions, and the coffeepot manufactured specifically to percolate an exotic beverage made of imported beans all point to the cultivation of international tastes. The Western-style binding on the books and the English title of the bottom book—identifying it as “*The Story of the World’s Literature*” by American author John Albert Macy—implies an ability to read foreign languages (Fig. 4.9). Even an object as seemingly unremarkable as the inkbottle signified modernity for consumers in 1930s China; whereas for thousands of years the Chinese kept sticks of ink at the ready to be ground with water just before use, commercially produced bottles of liquid ink was a distinctly modern phenomenon and a concept likely introduced from the West. Thus, many of the items pictured in Qiu Ti’s painting linked her to recent shopping activities at up-to-date department stores and suggested a refined taste likely acquired during time spent abroad.

Young, trendy women like Qiu Ti figured prominently in Shanghai marketing campaigns, both as models and as consumers. In a twentieth-century extension of the old *meiren hua* (美人画) painting genre, beautiful women graced the colorful *yuefenpai* (月份牌) calendar posters and lent sex appeal to magazine advertisements (Fig. 4.10). A whole industry developed for the production of the ubiquitous *yuefenpai*, which were widely distributed as commercial gifts, sold by street vendors, and hung as popular decorative items in middle-class homes, and the many studios generating these commercial images quickly recognized the high demand for pictures of attractive women.²⁵⁴ Selling all manner of marketable items, these early twentieth-century advertisements transformed beautiful women into icons of consumerism; their ever-smiling faces

²⁵⁴ Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004): 3.

attesting the benefits of the products they used or held. Peddling everything from cigarettes to medicine and cosmetics, the pretty promulgators generated sales to both genders. The consumers, encountering these copious advertisements on a daily basis, perceived the women pictured as “glamorous, fashionable, desirable, and available.”²⁵⁵

While male consumers might fantasize of possessing the alluring beauty advertising the packet of cigarettes he favored, female consumers might dream of becoming such a woman. *Yuefenpai*, magazine, and radio ads infiltrated the family home, painting new images of what life should be like for the modern woman.²⁵⁶ Newly liberated from the confines of the inner quarters, she shopped for home conveniences in the comfort of the modern department store, her transition into the outside world softened by the camaraderie of her shopping companions, the pleasantness of the department store surroundings, and the helpfulness of trained salesclerks. Radio and print advertisements coaxed the female shopper out to the Nanjing Road shopping district, promising that there she would find all the most fashionable things at low prices. As Wen-hsin Yeh observes, “in this newly fashioned culture of consumption, shopping was not only safe and proper, but also the very embodiment of feminine well-being.”²⁵⁷

As targets of marketing campaigns, women played central roles in the development of consumer culture on Nanjing Road. The previously edgy and politically progressive look of the Modern Girl became mainstream and, as a component of popular culture, was pursued by women of all walks of life.²⁵⁸ In her shopping excursions, the female consumer made purchases that

²⁵⁵ Louise Edwards, “Policing the Modern Woman in Republican China,” *Modern China* 26.2 (Apr 2000): 116.

²⁵⁶ For a colorful discussion of Shanghai department stores and modern marketing campaigns, see Wen-hsin Yeh’s chapter on “Visual Politics and Shanghai Glamour” in Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*, 51-78.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁵⁸ Edwards, “Policing the Modern Woman,” 116. Interest in affecting a modern appearance was not exclusive to women; many men also readily groomed themselves according to modern fashion trends. Wen-hsin Yeh notes that “The concept of the ‘transformed Chinese,’ who in the eyes of the turn-of-the-century teahouse observers seemed so awkwardly absurd with his plans for daily showers and Western-style clothing, had thus already become

allowed her to fashion herself from head to toe into the image of modern woman of the *yuefenpai*, with form-fitting dresses known as *qipao*, accessories, cosmetics, and permanent wave hair treatments. The *qipao*, a garment of contemporary invention, cleverly retained indicators of Chinese heritage while simultaneously satisfying Western fashion trends.²⁵⁹ Perms, quite common by the 1930s, required frequent trips to the hair salon—a type of shop new to China. Charged with the responsibility of transforming the home into a reflection of the occupants' modernity and cosmopolitanism, women perused the state-of-the-art displays of the newly opened department stores for the latest household conveniences and designer furniture sets.²⁶⁰

Qiu Ti enthusiastically participated in Shanghai fashion and consumer culture (Fig. 4.11). Pang Xunqin's early 1930s painting of his beloved depicts her in a Western-style dress with low neckline and lace trim. The predominance of muted gray in the composition, coupled with Qiu Ti's withdrawn posture and elongated features, gives the portrait a melancholic air and emphasizes the passivity of the sitter (Fig. 4.12). This image, however, belies her vibrant personality. Photographs of her in contemporary magazines depict a young woman with sure fashion sense and a fearless use of style. In addition to a bobbed and permed haircut, Qiu Ti wore snappy western-style jackets and pointed-toe, high-heeled shoes. Like the pretty young women

naturalized by the early 1930s as an ordinary urban consumer of casual sophistication and national respectability." Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*, 75.

²⁵⁹ In her essay on government sanctioned dress for women, Laing speculates that the versatility of *qipao* led to its popularity in the early twentieth century. The basic structure of the dress mimicked traditional Manchu women's garments of the Qing dynasty but tailor shops altered sleeve length, hem length, and silhouettes according to current trends. Ellen Johnston Laing, "Visual Evidence for the Evolution of Women's 'Politically Correct' Dress in Early Twentieth Century Shanghai" *Nan Nü* 5.1 (2003). Edwards also discusses the *qipao* and noting the garment's multivalent cachet she finds that, "The *qipao* typified the pseudo-modern woman because it was at once modern in its display of female accessibility and "equality," and traditionally Chinese in its imitation of an imperial fashion. It was both daringly modern and yet curiously hinted at a modest traditional style." Edwards, "Policing the Modern Woman," 130-131.

²⁶⁰ See Wen-hsin Yeh's description of the "Peach Blossom Spring" showroom in Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*, 73. See also Carrie Waara's discussion of the "cult of domesticity" aimed at women through periodicals. Carrie Waara, "Invention, Industry, Art: The Commercialization of Culture in Republican Art Magazines," in Sherman Cochran, ed, *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1999): 78.

of the calendar posters, she enjoyed wearing short-sleeved *qipao* made of sumptuous fabrics. In the photograph of her in *Dazhong huabao* she wears a *qipao* made of a bold plaid pattern. The later remembrances of Pang Xunqin's relatives reveal the deep impression her style and personality left on others.²⁶¹ On a visit to the Pang family home early in her marriage, all of the family members enjoyed Qiu Ti's sophisticated demeanor and clamored to be near her. The younger women of the family especially admired the yellow silk *qipao* that she wore. Not long after, the couple moved into a newly built Shanghai residence with modern conveniences such as flooring, white tiled walls, and in-house bathroom.²⁶² There they frequently entertained guests, undoubtedly with cocktails and coffee, and the newlywed husband and wife cultivated an atmosphere of domestic beauty and refinement despite their limited income. Pang Xunqin grew roses on the balcony, and Qiu Ti furnished the home with the modern household accessories pictured in her painting.

Patriotic Reform and the Domestication of the Modern Girl

Qiu Ti's *Still Life* captures some sense of the modern household she kept with Pang Xunqin and also suggests the artist's personal response to synchronous national lifestyle reform movements. At the time that Qiu Ti exhibited the painting, a new atmosphere gripped her city. The exuberance of Shanghai commercial culture, which had peaked during the prosperity of the previous decade, took a new turn during the 1930s in response to growing social and political turmoil.²⁶³ Factional fighting between the Nationalists and Communists, as occurred in the Shanghai massacre of 1927 and ongoing Japanese military actions such as the invasion of

²⁶¹ Yuan Yunyi, *Pang Xunqin zhuan*, 87.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ Ellen Johnston Laing notes that the advertising art characteristic of Shanghai consumer culture "continued to thrive during the 1930s, despite political crises both nationally and locally." Laing, *Selling Happiness*, 42.

Manchuria in 1931, led to increased anxiety about the condition of the nation. In 1934 the Guomindang subjected the nation to its stringent New Life Movement (*xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活运动) aimed in part at curtailing the rampant consumerism and the extravagant lifestyles for which *Haipai* culture was so renowned.²⁶⁴ In the interest of moralistic austerity, women were admonished to limit all spending, forego extravagances such as makeup and high heels, and avoid vain displays of beauty.²⁶⁵

The same year that the government in Nanjing mobilized the New Life Movement and dictated a life of frugality and virtue for all citizens was also designated the Women's National Products Year (*funü guohuo nian* 妇女国货年).²⁶⁶ It was the second in a succession of national products years; the first in 1933 was a comprehensive National Products Year, the third in 1935 was dedicated to students, and 1936 was directed at citizens. Developed in tandem with the New Life Movement, the National Products Movement frequently reproduced government slogans—such as, “If we want to resist the exploitation of imperialists, we must earnestly promote national products”—in its associated dialogue and advertisements.²⁶⁷

The tenets of the New Life Movement preached a life of restraint and self-sacrifice for the nation; nonetheless Shanghai merchants and mass media seized upon the National Products Movement as an opportunity for an aggressive marketing campaign urging increased

²⁶⁴ Chiang Kai-shek initiated the New Life Movement—a broad social reform effort based on a mix of Confucian thought, nationalist rhetoric, and authoritarian directives regarding personal hygiene and appearance—in 1934 in an effort to counteract Communist ideology.

²⁶⁵ Carlton Benson, “Consumers Are Also Soldiers: Subversive Songs from Nanjing Road during the New Life Movement,” in Sherman Cochran, ed, *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1999) 92, 129.

²⁶⁶ Gerth, *China Made*, 286 n2. I follow Gerth's translation of *guohuo* as “national products” instead of “national goods” to similarly emphasize the importance of the domestic manufacture of commodities and the push for industrialization in Republican China. Gerth, *China Made*, 7.

²⁶⁷ Gerth provides a translation of fifteen official slogans devised by the Women's National Products Association (Funü Guohuo Hui 妇女国货会) and observes that the list of slogans was widely distributed in 1934. Gerth, *China Made*, 296-297.

consumption of goods. Manipulating the official nationalistic ideology for economic profit allowed retailers to promote a patriotic consumerism while protecting themselves from economic ruin and government censure.²⁶⁸ Chinese women of the upper and middle classes, already identified as zealous consumers, were now designated the arbiters of national and familial wellbeing through the practice of disciplined shopping.²⁶⁹ The Guomindang expected women, while serving in the capacity of good mothers to a strong and healthy future generation of patriotic citizens, to be frugal and outright reject foreign imports. In radio jingles and magazine advertisements, however, merchants subverted the messages of the New Life Movement by encouraging women to support the nation as much as possible through the purchase of domestically produced goods.²⁷⁰ Instead of cutting back on shopping expenditures, as the New Life Movement asked, merchants urged patriotic women to fight foreign aggressors with the power of their pocketbooks. Slogans directly compared the domestic economic affairs of women to the actions of soldiers in the army. Appearing in newspapers and magazines and posted all over the city, the slogans told women in strong language what buying national products meant for them and the nation. For example, one such slogan asserts, “A woman who commands her family to use national products is the equivalent of someone commanding officers and soldiers on the battlefield to kill the enemy for the country.”²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Exploring the use of marketing strategies to engender “economic nationalism” and patriotic consumerism, Waara observes that, “Shanghai culture found a way to undermine the New Life Movement’s anti-consumerist messages even as it incorporated the ideal of national rejuvenation.” Waara, “Invention, Industry, Art,” 71, 74, 87. Discussing more pointedly the department stores of Nanjing Road, Yeh writes, “Wing On’s turn to ‘national products’ in the mid-1930s was not only gesture a gesture of patriotism, but also a matter of calculated self-interest.” Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*, 75. Benson’s essay also largely investigates this topic. Benson, “Consumers Are Also Soldiers,” 93.

²⁶⁹ Gerth, Waara, and Benson all extensively discuss the gendered consumer culture promoted by Shanghai retailers.

²⁷⁰ Benson, “Consumers Are Also Soldiers,” 106.

²⁷¹ Gerth, *China Made*, 296.

Thus, the Guomindang and the Shanghai retail industry jointly instructed the Chinese woman on how she could do her part to create a strong nation.²⁷² Shopping for domestically made household goods became a way in which she could act out her devotion to family and nation while still enjoying current fashions of commercial culture. Popular magazines such as *Liangyou* and *Meishu shenghuo* picked up the torch for the New Life Movement's militarization of women's private lives and in their illustrated and editorialized pages transformed the movement into "a kind of nation-building based on comfortable, healthy homes managed by informed and educated women."²⁷³ *Meishu shenghuo* especially dedicated the July 1934 issue to the Women's National Products Year (Fig. 4.13).²⁷⁴ As Carrie Waara has observed, this and subsequent *Meishu shenghuo* issues on children and family life evidence that the pictorial targeted young women of the middle and upper-class who were "going to be married and have a family and still be concerned with China's future."²⁷⁵ In the pages of *Meishu shenghuo* and other pictorials, the model Chinese woman was pretty and her home fashionable, but her true beauty rested in an unswerving commitment to domestic goods. She was well educated, but rather than pursuing a professional career her most important contributions to society came through running a happy and patriotic home. In addition to shopping for the appropriate products for the home, small scale home industry, such as sewing and embroidery, could give the particularly active homemaker the chance to further contribute to her nation without neglecting her duties at home.²⁷⁶ Viewed as a linchpin in the nuclear family (*xiao jiating* 小家庭), itself a new social

²⁷² Waara writes that, Chinese women were "told that they could play an important role in reconstructing the nation as homemakers, mothers, and consumers of art and household goods." Waara, "Invention, Industry, Art," 78.

²⁷³ Waara, "Invention, Industry, Art," 62.

²⁷⁴ This issue of *Meishu shenghuo* is the same issue that contains the section on the nude in art discussed in the previous chapter.

²⁷⁵ Waara, "Invention, Industry, Art," 79.

²⁷⁶ Waara, "Invention, Industry, Art," 78-79.

construct, the modern woman was thus made to fully understand her role as middle-class housewife and serve it well.²⁷⁷

At the same time, many magazines from the mid 1930s propagated concern about another type of woman, the incorrigible Modern Girl, who served as the polar opposite of the politically sanctioned Good Wife and Wise Mother.²⁷⁸ In contrast to glowing descriptions of the virtuous woman who frequented Nanjing Road but did so for the betterment of her family and nation, magazine articles and reader contributions vilified the frivolous Modern Girl for her vanity and wastefulness. Instead of dressing plainly and conservatively in national products as the New Life Movement expected, the Modern Girl flaunted herself and danced the night away while wearing foreign textiles and makeup. This fashionable socialite, who cared more about enjoying luxury goods than staying loyal to her own country's domestic product, was deemed treasonous and her morals compared to those of prostitutes.²⁷⁹ In a nation increasingly stirred to patriotic actions and nationalistic vigilance, tolerance for the Modern Girl and her self-indulgent whims was running thin.

During the mid 1930s the Shanghai art world continued a gradual process of reform that, having begun a few years earlier with calls for using art to enact social change, now additionally reflected the rhetoric of the New Life and National Products Movements. Thus, the emergent commentary directly addressed the commercial side of the arts and ever more registered the pressing need to revitalize the nation. Like the superficial Modern Girl, artistic products with no obvious tie to the greater social good increasingly came under attack. Echoing the rhetoric of the

²⁷⁷ Describing the early twentieth-century concept of the *xiao jiating*, Yeh writes, "Once married, the ideal couple began the construction of a new domestic order. The heart of this order was the nuclear home: a neat and immaculate place managed by a full-time housewife." Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*, 115.

²⁷⁸ This term, mentioned in chapters one and three, is an enduring concept that received renewed attention under the conservative ideology of the Guomindang.

²⁷⁹ Gerth, *China Made*, 305-306.

national goods movement, Liang Desuo (梁得所 1905-1938)—a very active editor with his hand in *Liangyou*, *Shidai huabao*, and *Dazhong huabao*—criticized the pretty images of the vapid Modern Girl in typical *yuefenpai*. These cheap and salacious posters, he argued, lowered the Chinese public’s ability to appreciate quality art and resulted in the obliteration of the market for a more authentic domestic product— reproductions of traditional Chinese art.²⁸⁰ Meanwhile, others took up the cause of a domestic Arts and Crafts Movement, seeing it as the most practical and immediate way to employ art in the revitalization of China.²⁸¹ A writer by the name of Zhe An promoted the development of the applied arts in China, asserting that the success of a nation was reflected in its applied art. In his view, the applied arts—such as architecture and graphic design—could act as a bridge bringing aesthetic appreciation to the masses.²⁸² Through their daily access to art, the spirits of the people would be strengthened and uplifted. Railing against the stratification of the art world, the author criticizes artists with inflated notions of self-worth who thought themselves too elite to contribute to the applied arts and argues that the craftsman, whose product held real use for the general populace, was equally great.²⁸³

Zhe An’s essay was just one of many articles on *gongyi meishu* (applied arts 工艺美术) to be featured in *Meishu shenghuo*. Focused on integrating the arts with daily life, *Meishu shenghuo* roundly supported *gongyi meishu*, running numerous articles on the topic in addition to

²⁸⁰ Liang Desuo, “Huihua” 绘画 [Painting], in *Zhongguo xiandai yishushi* 中国现代艺术史 (Shanghai: Liangyou tushuguan, 1936): 28. See also Laing’s discussion of this passage. Laing, *Selling Happiness*, 38.

²⁸¹ Waara discusses the ideological dimensions of this movement as seen in three contemporary publications: *Zhenxiang huabao*, *Liangyou*, and *Meishu shenghuo*. Waara, “Invention, Industry, Art,” 63-68. Separately, Zhu Xiaoqing analyzes the *gongyi meishu* trend as seen in the art periodical, *Yifeng*. She observes that there was an “agenda to democratize and champion applied art is promoted in numerous articles written for *Yifeng* (Art Breeze) magazine, published in Shanghai between 1933 and 1935.” Zhu, “Pang Xunqin,” 125-126.

²⁸² Weipin Tsai, “Having It All: Patriotism and Gracious Living in *Shenbao*’s Tobacco Advertisements, 1919-1937,” in Peter Zarrow, ed, *Creating Chinese Modernity: Knowledge and Everyday Life, 1900-1940* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006): 132. This article is also discussed in Waara, “Invention, Industry, Art,” 64-65. Neither Weipin Tsai nor Waara provide any biographical data for Zhe An and it is possible that that the author published under a pseudonym.

²⁸³ Zhe An “Zhuangshi meishu zhi xin gujia (xu)” 装饰美术之新估价 (续) [A New Appraisal of Decorative Art (Continued)], *Meishu shenghuo* 美术生活 4 (July 1934).

full page depictions of architectural schematics, photographs of chic interior arrangements, collections of the latest Art Deco furniture models, and the graphic designs of recent art school graduates. In addition to repeatedly stressing the value of commercial art, the magazine also kept the welfare of the nation at the forefront of its concerns, as is evidenced by frequent discussion of national products and several militaristic covers (Fig. 4.14).²⁸⁴ As Waara observes, the *gongyi meishu* movement “had a double impetus: not only was it a logical extension of the ‘art for life’ movement to promote the practical and applied arts for national glory, it also promoted national economic rejuvenation through consumer culture.”²⁸⁵

Much closer to home, Qiu Ti’s own husband participated firsthand in the *gongyi meishu* movement from the beginning of their marriage. In the summer of 1933 Pang Xunqin cofounded the graphic design cooperative Daxiong Gongshang Meishu She (Great Bear Industrial and Commercial Art Society 大熊工商美术社). In establishing the group and naming it after the constellation of the North Star, Pang Xunqin intended to lead the way for the development and integration of graphic design in Chinese society.²⁸⁶ At this time Pang Xunqin designed magazine advertisements for a variety of goods, including beer, cigarettes, and cosmetics. Later, further testifying how greatly Pang Xunqin inclined towards the applied arts, the year following the breakup of Juelanshe he accepted a teaching position in the Graphic Design Department at the Beiping Art Academy.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ For instance, the cover of the children’s issue depicts a little boy holding the flag of the Republic of China and surrounded by toy tanks, ship, and artillery. The caption at his side reads, “I am not the sick man of Asia” (*Wo fei dongya bingfu* 我非东亚病夫). *Meishu shenghuo* 美术生活 6 (Sept 1934).

²⁸⁵ Waara, “Invention, Industry, Art,” 64.

²⁸⁶ Zhu, “Pang Xunqin,” 115-116. Zhu Xiaoqing notes that one of Pang Xunqin’s poems begins with a mention of the Great Bear constellation and convincingly surmises that the artist’s intention in naming his cooperative as he did was to compare the actions of the group to the guiding light of the North Star.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

Qiu Ti certainly came into contact with these new ideas about the role of the arts and felt the impact of the numerous social reform movements. Given her husband's commercial art published in prominent magazines like *Shidai huabao*, Qiu Ti's life was directly touched by the rise of the applied arts. With her own paintings published in several magazines, including *Meishu shenghuo* and *Liangyou*, Qiu Ti doubtless paged through these periodicals absorbing the repeated invocations for socially minded art and the national goods movement. As she read instructive articles and browsed color images of household goods, she would have related to the content on many levels; as a professional artist, as a young woman interested in culture and style, and as a new wife and mother. Indeed, amongst the pages of these pictorials Qiu Ti would have found constant affirmation, as her life perfectly harmonized with prevalent social trends. True, the young women of China were increasingly urged to give up the self-indulgent Modern Girl ways in order to serve nation and family from the home, but as a new mother Qiu Ti was already spending more time in the home. Like the many woman targeted by the Shanghai merchants' National Products Movement marketing campaign, Qiu Ti found ways to participate in *Haipai* consumer culture and continue her professional pursuits while maintaining more proper ties to the domestic sphere. The inundation of patriotic consumer culture and *gongyi meishu* in popular periodicals informed Qiu Ti's perception of the commercial objects within her presence. Not trained in the applied arts, she used the skills at her disposal to contribute to the national cause by painting the types of household goods that merchants marketed to reformed Modern Girls and modish homemakers just like her.²⁸⁸ Thus, *Still Life* allowed Qiu Ti to simultaneously participate

²⁸⁸ Gerth notes that the National Products Movement was a nation-wide ideology applied to personal lives with varying stringency. Gerth, *China Made*, 20-21. Foreign imports were remarked as domestic products by crafty merchants, policy supporters gave speeches on the importance of buying domestic products while wearing foreign-made clothes, and Shanghai intellectuals supported the National Products Movement while coveting the foreign lifestyles and luxuries to which they had become accustomed on their studies abroad. Thus, the English-language book in Qiu Ti's painting does not necessarily call into question her support of the movement.

in two increasingly exclusive worlds. She visually identified herself with the domestic space and commercial goods for the home, while exhibiting the painting publicly as a professional painter.²⁸⁹

For Qiu Ti, the mid 1930s was a time of fulfillment and positive activity—and perhaps the happiest period of her life.²⁹⁰ During this time her professional life flourished as her activity with Juelanshe helped her achieve the greatest public recognition of her painting career. Her personal life also blossomed with a marriage based on true love and the birth of two healthy children. Though the *xiao jiating* she had begun was poor, with no steady income and spartan living conditions, her professional success and active home life would have rewarded her with a strong sense of accomplishment. Unfortunately, due to the tide of social change in motion, Qiu Ti's success at balancing career and family was to be short-lived.

Growing nationalism under the threat of war and the art world's turn to greater societal accountability eventually precipitated the demise of the Juelanshe. As artists were increasingly expected to produce work that could lead the nation to salvation, domestic interest in international art styles waned dramatically. Kuiyi Shen notes the ailing state of Chinese modernist art in the mid 1930s and explains that:

...modernism with its strong focus on the individual imagination became a luxury to the Chinese people. Whether to the Communists or Nationalists, art that manifested the slightest tendency towards modernism was regarded as displaying a "formalism" that was divorced from the people. It was impossible for these modernists, whose ultimate goal was individuality and pure art, to bear the heavy burden of social responsibility that required using their art as a means to rescue the country.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ I suspect that Qiu Ti switched her signature from “Schudy” to “堤” at this time either as a reflection of her own greater sense of patriotic pride or in response to growing anti-foreign attitudes in general populace.

²⁹⁰ Ni Jun, “Schudy: Her Art and Life,” 89.

²⁹¹ Kuiyi Shen, “Modernist Movements in Pre-War China,” paper presented at *Urban Cultural Institutions in Early Twentieth Century China* (Ohio State University, April 13, 2002) <http://mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/institutions/shen.htm>.

At this same time, the general population experienced rising disenchantment with the perplexities of the modern lifestyle and a pessimistic trend pervaded popular culture.²⁹² This pessimistic tone permeated the art world, and compounded with the lack of interest in modernist self-expression and ever more limited resources, led to significant changes in the course of oil painting in China. Thus, on the heels of the Japanese invasion in 1937 came a new turn in oil painting that shared none of the giddy modernist enthusiasm of the 1920s and early 1930s, but instead reflected the dismal reality of the downtrodden and displaced masses (Fig. 4.15).²⁹³

Juelanshe was a casualty of this evolving social climate; its members unable to make ends meet, the group disbanded in 1935. It was not the only avant-garde painting association to experience hardship at this time of increased conservatism and nationalism. A modernist painting society based in Guangzhou, Chinese Independent Art Association (Zhonghua duli meishu xiehui 中华独立美术协会), suffered a similar fate.²⁹⁴ Comprising several Cantonese artists studying in Japan and a few Japanese artists, the association was founded in Tokyo in 1934. Its members painted in styles as diverse as Juelanshe's and especially favored the styles of Surrealism, Fauvism, and Cubism. Freshly returned from Japan in 1935, the group published a journal titled *Duli Meishu* (Independent Art 独立美术), the very first issue of which disseminated the group manifesto. In many ways the Chinese Independent Art Association manifesto echoed the sentiment expressed in Juelanshe's manifesto of a few years earlier. Similarly citing inspiration from art movements abroad, the Guangzhou group's manifesto uses rousing words to proclaim its dedication to pure art and the freedom of creative expression for a

²⁹² See "Chapter 6 Petty Urbanites and Tales of Woe" in Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor*.

²⁹³ Shen, 178-179.

²⁹⁴ Shen, "Modernist Movements."

new age in China. That same year, the group staged two exhibitions: the first in Guangzhou in March; the second in Shanghai in October. The second Zhonghua duli meishu xiehui exhibition occurred at the same time and place as Juelanshe's fourth group show (Fig. 4.16).²⁹⁵ As with Juelanshe, Chinese Independent Art Association's October 1935 exhibition was to be the group's final show. Their non-objective art ill-suited for the nationalistic climate and dire social concerns, Chinese Independent Art Association ultimately disbanded in 1937.

Life after Juelanshe

Almost prophetically, the two still lifes Qiu Ti entered into the final Juelanshe exhibition foreshadow her life to come; more than a decade of which she spent relatively confined to the home, painting primarily still lifes only in her spare time. In fact, the final group show effectively marks the end of Qiu Ti's professional career as an oil painter. The reality she now faced was one of increasingly limited time and resources with which to pursue a career in painting. What little resources the family had were given over to Pang Xunqin, who supported the family financially with a career as a professional artist and professor. So that Pang Xunqin could take a stable job at Peking National Art School, the family of four—Qiu Ti gave birth to her second child just one month prior—moved to Beiping in September 1936.²⁹⁶ Less than a year later, though, the start of the Japanese invasion forced them to flee back to Shanghai. Then, just days after their arrival, Japanese forces began bombing Shanghai as well.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Two pictorials printed side-by-side in two magazines coverage of the exhibits of both groups. See *Liangyou* 111 (Nov 1935) and *Shidai huabao* 8.10 (1935). The works pictured in *Liangyou* are *The Flower Girl* by Li Dongping (李东平), *Little Girl* by Liang Xihong (梁锡鸿), *The World Today* by Liang Chao (梁潮), *Desire* by Bai Sha (白砂), *Jumping* by Zhao Shou (赵兽), and *Flower* by Zeng Ming (曾鸣).

²⁹⁶ Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 95.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

A charming self-portrait Qiu Ti painted around this time also captures a sense of her transition from professional artist to stay-at-home mother (Fig. 4.17 and Fig. 4.18). Composed of the clean lines and smooth shading she favored in her painting, the still life depicts a confident and tranquil Qiu Ti gazing directly at the viewer. Presumably painted as her children napped or played, the image situates her in the home with her back to a window and the outside world. The window opens to a cold landscape of leafless trees, but the prickly spines of a potted cactus block even this restricted access to the exterior. Only the slimmest suggestion of a canvas along the left side identifies the painting as a self-portrait. All other indications of Qiu Ti's former profession, such as brush or palette, are hidden from view. One of the last of her oil paintings to be published during Qiu Ti's lifetime, the self-portrait appeared in print in 1937. That same year it was lost, along with several other examples of Qiu Ti's work, during the family's frantic flight from the Japanese bombing of Shanghai.

On Aug. 13 1937, as the Chinese Air Force fought Japanese aircraft over the skies of Shanghai, Pang Xunqin watched from the roof of a house and declared "that he would rather learn how to make bombs and mines to fight the invaders than stay in the studio to paint."²⁹⁸ Pang Xunqin's words convey the spirit of activism that gripped the entire nation during the War of Resistance. Women, too, wished to play a role in the war effort, and in popular media such as pictorials and movies the image the patriotic woman attending to nation or family soon replaced that of the self-indulgent Modern Girl.²⁹⁹ The artist Yu Feng exemplifies the growing patriotic

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ The year 1939 certainly was a nexus for the re-envisioning of women's roles. At the end of her paper on images of women on the covers of *Funü shibao* in the 1910s, Joan Judge briefly chronicles the transition from the alluring Modern Girl on magazine covers in the 1920s to the strong laboring women of the masses frequently depicted on the front of magazines such as *Xin Zhongguo funü* by 1939. In her article on the depiction of women in 1939, Shu-mei Shih notices the preferential treatment given to the image of the happy homemaker. Antoine Finnane documents the rise of gender-bending clothing fashions for women in the 1930s and cites the 1939 cinematic revival of the classical tale of the cross-dressing woman warrior Mulan. Finnane also observes that the popularity of trousers for women

activism practiced by women following the onset of the Sino-Japanese War. The niece of short story writer and poet Yu Dafu (郁达夫 1896-1945), Yu Feng studied oil painting first at the Beiping Art School (Beiping yishu zhuanke xuexiao 北平艺术专科学校) and then later under Pan Yuliang and Xu Beihong at the National Central University (Guoli Zhongyan Daxue 国立中央大学) in Nanjing. When she returned from her studies to Shanghai in 1935 she made a splash in the social scene; her uncle introduced her to the art and literature circles and she published her work in leading magazines—including the cartoon discussed in the previous chapter and a self-portrait (Fig. 3.43 and Fig. 4.19). As Antonia Finnane discovered, Yu Feng was “a lively, highly sociable individual who like many of her generation developed a commitment to nation and revolution and threw her energies into both. She sacrificed the opportunity to further her art studies in France in the mid-thirties: her duties were to China.”³⁰⁰ Not long after, Yu Feng took up political activism: in 1936 she founded the Young Women’s Club (Qingnian funü julebu 青年妇女俱乐部);³⁰¹ the next year she worked for the *Salvation Daily* (*Jiuwang ribao* 救亡日报); and the year after that she infiltrated Guangzhou division of the Guomindang war effort as a secret agent for the CCP.³⁰² A pivotal reason why Yu Feng found so many ways to be active at

increased with the outbreak of war with Japan. See Joan Judge, “The Modern Shanghai Visual Imaginary: Magazine Cover Girls and New Cultural Possibilities in the Early Twentieth Century,” paper presented at *Modern and Modernity: Visual Narratives of Interwar Shanghai* (Berkeley Art Museum, March 6, 2010) <http://www.youtube.com/user/calcommunitycontent#p/c/3B4BC26C0768B4E2/11/xGb3PaZWMAU>.

Shu-mei Shih, “Shanghai Women of 1939: Visuality and the Limits of Feminine Modernity,” in Jason Kuo, ed. *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s* (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007). Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008): 198.

³⁰⁰ Antonia Finnane, “Yu Feng and the 1950s Dress Reform Campaign: Global Hegemony and Local Agency in the Art of Fashion,” *Voices Amid Silence (II): Women and the Society in Modern China (1600-1950)* (Taipei: Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, 2003): 246.

³⁰¹ Li Hui (李辉), *Ren zai xuanwo—Huang Miaozi yu Yu Feng* 人在漩涡—黄苗子与郁风 [People in a Whirlpool: Huang Miaozi and Yu Feng] (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 1998): 71-72.

³⁰² Finnane, “Yu Feng,” 245.

this time was because she did not marry and begin a family life until 1944, and therefore freely pursued activities that put her life in very real danger.

A full decade older, Qiu Ti's experience during the late 1930s and 1940s was dramatically different than Yu Feng's: basic domestic chores, such as keeping her family clothed, fed, and safe became her full-time job. Rather than enlisting in the fight against Japan, her husband continued his professional career as an artist and teacher in order to support his family.³⁰³ After the bombing of Shanghai the family resumed their flight from warfare, undertaking a lengthy exodus with multiple relocations. Their migration deep into China's interior and back again involved moving first to Jiujiang, Jiangxi; then to Yuanling, Hunan; then Kunming (Fig. 4.20), Yunnan; next to Jixiang Temple in Pi County and Chengdu, Sichuan; back to Shanghai briefly; then to Guangzhou and Hong Kong, before finally settling in Shanghai in 1948. All the while, Qiu Ti took care of household duties in whatever home they could find and Pang Xunqin sought employment through relocated universities and museums.³⁰⁴ In what little spare time she had, Qiu Ti applied artistic creativity to her domestic chores and engaged in activism.³⁰⁵ While in southwest China she designed and made creative clothes for her children

³⁰³ As mentioned in chapter two, modernist painters in early twentieth-century China derived very little income from the sale of their art and therefore relied heavily on other sources of income, such as teaching or the commercial arts, to make ends meet. During wartime, this scenario was ever more the case and many members of the art community moved inland along with the universities and institutions that employed them. Shortly after the family fled the bombing of Beiping, Pang Xunqin followed the Beiping Art Academy to Yuanling in 1938. After a conflict between the Beiping Art Academy and the Hangzhou Art Academy later that same year, he relocated his family to Kunming where he became an independent artist. In Kunming, Pang Xunqin worked as a research fellow in the planning department of the relocated National Central Museum (中央博物馆). He then moved with the Academia Sinica to Lizhuang, Sichuan in 1940, but later that same year resigned and moved his family again so that he could teach at the Chengdu Provincial Art Academy. Zhu, "Pang Xunqin," 128-133. Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 101.

³⁰⁴ According to Li Chao, Qiu Ti once held a teaching position at Chengdu Sichuan Shengli Yishu Zhuanke Xuexiao. This would have occurred sometime in 1941-1945, while the family lived in Chengdu. Li Chao, *Kuangbiao jiqing*, 75.

³⁰⁵ Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 103.

and sketched exterior and interior home designs.³⁰⁶ On one occasion she handmade more than one hundred cloth dolls for the war relief effort (Fig. 4.21).³⁰⁷ After returning to Shanghai, Qiu Ti continued her activism by aiding underground communists and offering the family's home as a safe haven and secret meeting locale.³⁰⁸

Despite her constant activity, Qiu Ti was unhappy to see her professional identity slipping away. Feeling that all housework and heavy burdens fell mainly to her, she often complained that she had no time to paint or maintain a career.³⁰⁹ When she did find the opportunity to paint, she mostly painted still lifes.³¹⁰ (Appendix 4.2) More than other subject matter, still lifes accommodated Qiu Ti's new role as housewife; her still lifes comprised objects inside in the home and were easy to paint in snatches of time stolen from her domestic duties.³¹¹

³⁰⁶ Shui Tianzhong 水天中. "Tanxun Qiu Ti." 探寻丘堤 [Searching for Qiu Ti] *Meishu yanjiu* 美术研究 (*Art Research*) 4 (1997).

³⁰⁷ One of these dolls is depicted in her still life painting in the Shanghai Museum and another appears in Chang Shuhong's still life *Thunder throughout the Land*. See footnote 114 for an earlier reference to these dolls.

³⁰⁸ Qiu Ti and Pang Xunqin first offered their home as a meeting spot for radical artists and activists while living on Disiwei Road in 1946. After returning to Shanghai from Hong Kong in 1948, the family lived at No. 8 Puyuan Road in a neighborhood with several high-ranking Nationalist government officials, which ironically provided their actions relative freedom from scrutiny. Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 105, 111.

³⁰⁹ Pang Tao, email correspondence, September 2010.

³¹⁰ Of twenty nine paintings by Qiu Ti's hand—seven of which known only through reproductions today—twenty one are still lifes. Revealing just how limited was her access to oil painting materials, two of her still lifes, *Doll* and *Chrysanthemums*, are painted on opposite sides of a single canvas. She was set to paint over *Doll*, but when Pang Tao objected to her mother painting over a favorite image Qiu Ti settled for painting on its reverse. See Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 103. Owing to the family's impoverished living conditions, Qiu Ti also must have struggled at finding interesting objects to paint. As a result, the content of several of her still lifes consist of gifts given to the family, such as flowers from the landlord and dead pheasants from a friend. See Huajing Xiu Maske, "Three Generations of Chinese Women Painters in Pang Family, Part I," in *Three Generations of Chinese Modernism: Qiu Ti, Pang Tao, Lin Yan*, (Vancouver: Art Beatus Gallery, 1998) 5. *A Pair of Pheasants*, the final painting she produced, is her only known painting of animals. Of her still lifes, the only one to be composed completely of non-organic objects is the painting filled with household goods that she exhibited at the Fourth Annual Juelanshe Exhibition.

³¹¹ In "Women Painters in Traditional China," Ellen Johnston Laing questions to what extent accessibility influenced Chinese women painters' choice of subject matter and acknowledges that it is impossible to determine why so many preferred to paint flowers and plants. In light of the fact that three out of the four paintings that Qiu Ti submitted to the Juelanshe exhibitions were still lifes, it similarly is not possible to positively state that her later choice in subject matter was dictated by life's circumstances. It may be that Qiu Ti still would have gravitated to painting still lifes had she had access to greater financial and professional support. Ellen Johnston Laing, "Women Painters in Traditional China," in Marsha Weidner, ed. *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990): 92.

Plants are noticeably prevalent in her paintings—nineteen out of twenty one still lifes feature some sort of vegetative material, be it fruit, flowers, or gnarled root. Inanimate objects that were much easier to secure than live models, the plants nonetheless let her inject life into her painting. On rare occasion, Qiu Ti painted landscapes and portraits, but the contents of these, too, were dictated by her role as housewife. After the end of the Sino-Japanese War but before the family left Chengdu, Qiu Ti painted a portrait each of her children, the only portraits she is known to have painted (Fig. 4.22 and Fig. 4.23).³¹² Of three landscapes painted after the birth of her children, two were painted as viewed from her home, the other was made when she took the children to the West Lake in Hangzhou for a picnic and to practice *plein air* painting.

Though Qiu Ti continued to paint up to 1957, the year before her death, she never again experienced the widespread recognition for her oil paintings that she had enjoyed as a member of Juelanshe. However, her husband, always the better recognized of the two, continued to gain notoriety. Through a variety of channels, Pang Xunqin, even as a refugee managed significantly greater visibility than his stay-at-home wife. With a museum research appointment in Kunming, he explored new avenues for the decorative arts, created countless watercolors and sketches inspired by the art of ethnic minorities, and wrote a critically acclaimed book.³¹³ His teaching positions afforded him constant access to art materials and he continued to show his work in multiple solo shows and larger exhibitions.³¹⁴ Meanwhile, sacrificing her own ambition in her support for her husband and the family's only source of income, Qiu Ti became lost in his shadow. On at least one occasion—when Pang Xunqin left for a three-month research trip to a

³¹² As the children were reluctant to sit still, it is not surprising Qiu Ti did not produce more paintings of them.

³¹³ Pang Xunqin's *Gongyi Meishu Ji* received second prize for academic research from the Ministry of Education. Zhu, "Pang Xunqin," 133.

³¹⁴ While in Sichuan, Pang Xunqin held five solo shows (in 1941, 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946). Pang Tao, ed., *The Storm Society and Post-Storm Art Phenomenon* (Taipei: Chin Show Publishing Co., Ltd, 1997): 18. In 1942 he showed two paintings in the Third National Art Exhibition. Zhu, "Pang Xunqin," 190.

remote area of Guizhou in the winter of 1939/1940—she endured alone as the sole caretaker of the home and their children. When her husband struggled to finish his book *Gongyi Meishu Ji* (*Collection of Arts and Crafts* 工艺美术集), she again had to give up painting altogether in order to take over all household duties.³¹⁵ When Qiu Ti did manage to set aside some time to pursue oil painting, she received little to no serious regard outside the home. Unlike her husband, she never held a solo show and during the war years only once exhibited her paintings.³¹⁶ Hanging her work alongside her husband's at Pang Xunqin's 1941 "solo" show, Qiu Ti doubtless came across as little more than the wife of the artist.³¹⁷ Thus, as she labored fulltime to nurture her family through an extended period of extreme hardship and without the professional support of a teaching position such as her husband's or the pooling of resources such as had been with Juelanshe, Qiu Ti's career as an oil painter slipped into oblivion.

Other female artists and writers in wartime China encountered adversity similar to that experienced by Qiu Ti and, like her, lost hold of the professional careers they had previously established.³¹⁸ For instance, during the war years in western China and while her husband Liang Sicheng worked for the relocated Institute for Research in Chinese Architecture, the brilliant architectural historian Lin Huiyin (林徽因 1903-1955), exerted all her energies on keeping her family fed and clothed. In the 1930s and 40s Lin Huiyin wrote a series of letters to her friends Chinese art historian Wilma Fairbank and her husband, sinologist John K. Fairbank, describing

³¹⁵ Ni Jun dates this period to 1940, but Zhu Xiaoqing gives the summer of 1941 as the year of the book's completion. See Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 103, and Zhu, "Pang Xunqin," 133.

³¹⁶ Qiu Ti never exhibited independently during her lifetime and the exhibition for which the 2006 catalogue was printed was intended to be her first solo show. However, Pang Tao says that the exhibition never actually materialized. Therefore, to this day, Qiu Ti still has never had a solo exhibition.

³¹⁷ Ni Jun, "Schudy: Her Art and Life," 103.

³¹⁸ Shui Tianzhong discusses some of the problems faced by women artists at this time in his article on Republican period artist couples. In addition to Qiu Ti and Pang Xunqin, he also profiles the relationships of Cai Weilian and Lin Wenzheng, Chen Zhixiu and Chang Shuhong, and Su Lan and Fang Ganmin. Shui Tianzhong, "Yishu yu jiehun—20 shiji qianqi de meishujia fufu" 艺术与婚姻——20 世纪前期的美术家夫妇 [Art and Marriage: 20th Century Artist Couples] *Zhongguo nüxing zhuyi* 中国女性主义 1 (Spring 2004).

the misery of refugee life in war-torn, rural Yunnan and Sichuan.³¹⁹ For Lin Huiyin, who had received a degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1927 and following her return to China briefly taught in the Architecture Department at Northeastern University (Dongbei Daxue 东北大学), the life she was now forced to live caused her utter frustration. In one letter she explains, “Whenever I am engaged in household chores, I feel what a waste of time it is, thinking that I am neglecting more interesting and more important people whom I do not know.”³²⁰ On top of living in constant fear of Japanese air raids and being unable to buy basic provisions due to extreme inflation, in the fall of 1939 Lin Huiyin had to manage the household alone while her husband led a six-month research trip of temple architecture in remote parts of Sichuan. Describing her daily routine, she writes:

I get up to scrub and slave, then to buy and cook, then to tidy and wash, then to feel like hell, and have no time to feel at all between the three difficult meals, and then finally to ache and groan again back to bed wondering why I have lived. That is all.³²¹

Lin Huiyin’s letters give remarkable clarity to not just the miserable living conditions she experienced during the war years, but also what life must have been like for Qiu Ti and so many other women who once had cultivated stylishly modern and independent lifestyles.³²²

Recognizing the inequities she faced and attempting to reconcile herself to her fate, in one letter

³¹⁹ Wilma Fairbank compiled and edited Liang Sicheng’s *A Pictorial History of Chinese Art*.

³²⁰ “每当我做些家务活儿时，我总觉得太可惜了，觉得我是在冷落了一些 素昧平生但更有意思，更为重要的人们。” Xiao Qian 萧乾, “Yidai cainü—Lin Huiyin” 一代才女--林徽因 [The Talented Woman of a Generation], *Dushu* 读书 10 (1984): 115. Translation from Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001): 209.

³²¹ Wilma Fairbank, *Liang and Lin: Partners in Exploring China’s Architectural Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1994): 111.

³²² While in Kunming Liang Sicheng and Pang Xunqin were professional colleagues and Liang Sicheng’s younger brother, the renowned archeologist Liang Siyong, gave Pang Xunqin access to the excavation findings of the National Central Museum’s Department of Archaeology. Zhu, “Pang Xunqin,” 129-130. It is quite probable that, more than simple acquaintances, Lin Huiyin and Qiu Ti became familiar friends.

Lin Huiyin reasons, "The worst thing I can do is let myself in for bitterness. I am born a woman and it is wartime."³²³ Previously an accomplished poet and writer of fiction, she had lost contact with her friends in literary circles. Overwhelmed with the stress of war and the arduous demands of maintaining some semblance of a home, she frequently fell desperately ill. Not surprisingly, whenever she managed to find the time, Lin Huiyin delighted in the escapism of researching and collaborating with her husband. In a 1943 letter she relates that managing the household was a much bigger burden "than writing a whole chapter on Sung, Liao, and Chin architectural developments or an attempt to reconstruct pictures of the Sung capitals. Both these are jobs I have done with interest and conscientiousness for Sicheng while he was busy over other parts of his writing."³²⁴ In the end, however, her husband alone typically received credit for their joint work.³²⁵

Just as Lin Huiyin's husband profited from her assistance, so too Pang Xunqin without a doubt benefitted greatly through his collaborations with Qiu Ti. During their time in southwest China the two shared a mutual passion for folk arts, decorative pattern, and graphic design. A comparison of the family portraits the two made in the 1940s—Qiu Ti's portraits of her children and Pang Xunqin's portrait of his wife two years later—conveys a sense of the strong similarities in their artistic approach. In all three portraits the playful abundance of the flat patterning in the background wallpaper design—and in the floral print Qiu Ti wears—threatens to overtake the minimal detailing of the figures (Fig. 4.24). The two also shared a love of costume design inspired by ethnic minorities and historical aesthetics. Qiu Ti and her daughter often dressed up

³²³ Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*, 129.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

³²⁵ Shu-mei Shih observes that Liang's "contribution to her husband's work as a professional architectural historian has so far been systematically ignored, although, according to several close friends who knew her professional relationship with her husband, it was she who was the major inspiration behind what passed as Liang Sicheng's work." Shih, *Lure of the Modern*, 209.

and posed for Pang Xunqin's sketches of graceful women in Tang-dynasty-esque flowing garments or traditional dyed and patterned outfits of the Miao. In her own work, Qiu Ti extended the beauty of her designs into tangible products, first by artistically producing the clothes her children wore and later by excelling in a second career as a designer of stage costumes for folk dances under the People's Republic of China.

An impression of the dismissive reception Qiu Ti received as an artist during wartime China, however, may be gleaned from Chinese art historian Michael Sullivan's "Reminiscences of Pang Xunqin," which he penned shortly after the family left Chengdu in 1946. The short essay, focusing exclusively on the heroic struggles faced by Pang Xunqin during his career as artist, mentions Qiu Ti just in passing within the initial paragraph.

Many of the most pleasant hours during the past two years have been spent in a small house on the southern outskirts of the Sichuan city of Chengdu. There, in a small bright room barely twelve feet square, the Pang family entertain their guests, paint their pictures, and study. Even the children are artists: a sturdy boy of ten with a vigorous style and his beautiful and gentler sister, who have recently been spending many industrious hours copying postcard reproductions of paintings by Paul Nash and Augustus John. Their mother, Qiu Ti, studied in Japan and paints flowers when not making clothes for the children and keeping house—a hard task in these days of inflation. Pang Xunqin keeps a benign and fatherly eye on his family and in a quiet way exerts a great influence on them.³²⁶

A close family friend, Sullivan surely had no intention of slighting Qiu Ti, but his comments nonetheless trivialize her professional accomplishments and reinforce ancient gender roles. He makes no mention of Qiu Ti's college degree and research appointment at the Shanghai meishu zhuanke xuexiao, nor later in the essay does he disclose her participation in Juelanshe when he discusses Pang Xunqin's role in the group. Sullivan does observe in passing Qiu Ti's

³²⁶ Michael Sullivan's "Reminiscences of Pang Xunqin," (1946), reprinted in Danzker, Jo-Anne Birnie et al, *Shanghai Modern, 1919-1945* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004): 248.

education abroad, but then labels her a flower painter, children's clothing maker, and housekeeper. In other words, Qiu Ti provides pretty and quaint flourishes while fulfilling her proper role within the home. Meanwhile, her husband assumes the stereotypical role of Confucian patriarch, a "benign and fatherly" ruler of the house whom all members of the family, swayed by his effortless superiority, heed. The author no doubt shared a perception of Qiu Ti common within the larger art scene at that time, and perhaps even accurately conveys the image that the artist herself wished to project. Considering Sullivan's personal involvement with the struggling refugee artists in Chengdu and his subsequent decades-long standing as preeminent Western authority on modern Chinese art, this essay should not be read as a simple eyewitness record of the unfolding of history, but rather as a preliminary foray into the construction of a canon. Regrettably, this emergent canon of modern Chinese art held little room for domesticated Modern Girls like Qiu Ti.

By the time of Sullivan's essay, Qiu Ti's former identity as a sophisticated and career savvy professional artist was already forgotten. Her life irrevocably changed, she now bent to societal expectations that called for her sacrifice in support of family and nation. Regardless of Qiu Ti's personal wishes, however, her pursuit of a career outside the home simply was not economically viable for the family. The chaotic refugee life necessitated her constant vigilance to home affairs while her husband, the more financially successful of the two, predictably assumed the role of provider. Lacking the professional network and visibility she had experienced in Shanghai, Qiu Ti's opportunities to paint and exhibit in war-torn China dried up. Thus, the demise of Juelanshe effectively marked end of her painting career. The two still lifes she submitted to the final group exhibition—at the time when the demands of the domestic sphere first began for her—may not have been the last paintings she was to exhibit or publish. At the

twilight of Shanghai's modernist art epoch, however, they were the last glimmers of an autonomous and cosmopolitan woman's career.

CONCLUSION

In the November of 1935, Juelanshe held its fourth exhibition. In an article published a month before the exhibition opened, Ni Yide trumpeted:

Since the general public typically views art as merely ‘a means of illustrating certain facts,’ it should come as no surprise that the Storm Society is ignored or even sneered at by the public for its pursuit of new techniques. Nevertheless, among Western-style Chinese painters who, as a community, appear to be on their last legs, I am afraid the Storm Society is the only organization that still shows signs of life and struggles onward.³²⁷

Ni Yide clearly did not foresee that the fourth exhibition would mark the conclusion of the society. Despite the group’s influence and the members’ own sense of grand mission, the organization came to an abrupt finish immediately following the event. Pang Xunqin later described the general dejected mood that permeated the event and the members’ decision to disband. He reminisced, “The fourth exhibition was held at the Zhonghua Art School, the same venue as our first exhibition. Very few visitors came on the last two days, which were cloudy. It was in such a quiet and indifferent atmosphere that the society came to the end of its history.”³²⁸ Later still, Yang Qiuren reasoned that his colleagues “inevitably did not understand, or perhaps did not understand very clearly, the reality of their time. They were out of touch with reality.”³²⁹ While the group succeeded in garnering substantial public recognition through exhibitions and magazine features, it evidently was not capable of provoking the sweeping and enduring change within the Chinese art world for which it had hoped.

³²⁷ Ni Yide, “A Galaxy of the Storm Society,” 236.

³²⁸ Zheng, 196.

³²⁹ Ibid.

Recent scholarship nonetheless credits Juelanshe with a powerful impact on the development of modernist art in China. Shen and Andrews identify Juelanshe as, “China’s most important group of modernist artists.”³³⁰ Though the group staged only four exhibitions, the bold ideological vision and daring words of Juelanshe members earned them recognition throughout the Shanghai art world. When the group disbanded, the field of modernist art was fraught and fractured, and was not to be revived for over four decades. So strongly felt was the absence of the group that art historian Zheng Shengtian observes, “The disappearance of the Storm Society not only stilled the once vibrant artistic community in Shanghai, it also signified that the curtain had finally fallen on this debut performance of modern art in China.”³³¹

Despite growing recognition of Juelanshe’s importance, accurately assessing Qiu Ti’s contribution to Juelanshe and the modernist art movement has been a vexing problem. Scholarship on Qiu Ti in large part relies on the dubious construal of her painting by Ni Yide, whose flair for the dramatic led him to color his theoretical arguments and writings about her and other Juelanshe members for sensationalist impact. The memoirs of Qiu Ti’s peers likewise do nothing to establish her professional reputation. In his 1948 review of the Chinese modernist art movement, Liang Xihong (梁锡鸿 1912-1982) tacks a brief mention of Qiu Ti to the end of his discussion of key artists. While the styles of male artists warrant individual consideration, the works of Qiu Ti (Fig. 5.1) and two other “authors of the weaker sex” (*nǚliú zuòjiā* 女流作家) are simply consolidated under the generic descriptor of “typical women’s art” (*nǚxìng yìshù de diǎnxíng* 女性艺术底典型).³³² Perhaps unconsciously revising the past to suit later

³³⁰ Andrews and Shen, “Schudy,” 63.

³³¹ Zheng, 196.

³³² Liang Xihong (梁锡鸿), “Zhongguo de yanghua yundong” 中国的洋画运动 [China’s Western Painting Movement] *Da guang bao* 大光报 (June 26, 1948). The other two Chinese women artists that Liang Xihong

developments, Juelanshe member Yang Qiuren's 1983 article incorrectly states that Qiu Ti began by studying decorative art, and then he dismisses her art with the observation that, "needless to say her work had a decorative taste." (*Qiu Ti yuanshi yanjiu zhuangshi yishu de, ta de zuopin budaiyan juyou zhuangshiwei* 丘堤原是研究装饰艺术的，她的作品不待言具有装饰味)³³³

Most startling is the absolute silence of Pang Xunqin in regards to his late wife's artistic career. Pang Xunqin's glaring omission of Qiu Ti was perplexing enough to prompt art historian Shui Tianzhong to observe, "In Pang's memoir *Jiushi zheyang zougulai de* (the part before 1949) the account of life in the 1930s, actually does not say one word about his relationship with Qiu Ti." (*Zai Pang de huiyilu Jiushi zheyang zougulai de (1949 nian yiqian bufen) you guan 30 nian shidai shenghuo de xushu zhong, dui ta yu Qiu Ti de guanxi jingbuzhe yi zi.* 在庞的回忆录《就是这样走过来的》(1949年以前部分)有关30年代生活的叙述中,对他与丘堤的关系竟不着一字。)³³⁴ How is it that Qiu Ti's closest colleague, for whom she sacrificed her own professional aspirations, would not once mention her in all of his writings of Juelanshe and the avant-garde art movement?³³⁵

Michael Sullivan's dismissive appraisal of Qiu Ti in his authoritative *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* also greatly influences our limited understanding today of her contributions to modernist art in China. His only assessment of Qiu Ti in the entirety of the canon-making text is a rather patronizing analysis of a single painting. Of the painting he writes, "Qiu Ti, who had married Pang Xunqin after his return from Paris, was a competent oil painter

mentions are Liang Baibo and Sheng Cijun (盛此君), both of whom he identifies as members of Juelanshe. Liang himself had been a founding member of the Chinese Independent Art Association in Guangzhou.

³³³ Yang Qiuren, "Huiyi Ni Yide," 20.

³³⁴ Shui, "Seeking Qiu Ti," 46, fnt. 5.

³³⁵ Pang Tao suggests the jealous influences of Pang Xunqin's second wife may account for the omission of Qiu Ti from the memoir. Political pressures also may have colored Pang Xunqin's reminiscences—for example his characterization of Juelanshe is fairly disenchanted in general—and this may have influenced his decision to omit earlier references to his wife.

and a sensitive one, as shown by her portrait of her little daughter, Pang Tao, painted in Chengdu in 1944."³³⁶ Is it merely a coincidence that, rather than select one of her contributions to Juelanshe, Sullivan reinforces Qiu Ti's gender identity by focusing solely on the artist's depiction of her child? Perhaps not, as his underestimation of Qiu Ti's contributions mirrors his treatment of other women artists of Qiu Ti's generation. In "Leading Masters between the Wars," another chapter from the same publication, Fang Junbi is the only female artist Sullivan addresses. Predictably, he places her at the very end of the chapter. She is categorized under the subheading "Some Lesser Masters," a designation she shares with Ding Yanyong, who Sullivan describes approvingly as "[l]ively, quirky, humorous" and "too much of an individualist to found a school."³³⁷ Comparing him to the much admired Eccentric painters of China's art history, Sullivan instructs the reader that, "Ding Yanyong stands outside the accepted canons, and so is not to be judged by them."³³⁸ In contrast, Fang Junbi is labeled as "more orthodox," a comment most certainly not intended to be a compliment. Sullivan continues his assessment of her with:

Fang Junbi was a competent oil painter with a romantic streak that only too often, as with her friend Pan Yuliang, strayed into sentimentality. ... She was one of a number of modern Chinese artists whose adventurous, at times tragic, lives were more interesting than their paintings.³³⁹

Not until nearly thirty years after her death was Qiu Ti remembered as a modernist artist of significance. When Shui Tianzhong mentioned Qiu Ti's two contributions to the Second Annual Juelanshe Exhibition in his paper at the 1986 Conference on Chinese Oil Painting (*Quanguo youhua taolunhui* 全国油画讨论会), it was the first consideration of her contributions

³³⁶ Sullivan, *Art and Artists*, 64.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

to Juelanshe in well over three decades.³⁴⁰ Since then, several art historians have referenced Qiu Ti in discussions of the developments of modern art in China. Yet, despite occasional recent inquiries into the life and work of Qiu Ti, the slim 2006 *Schudy* catalogue remains the most extensive study on this underappreciated artist. Similarly, Qiu Ti has never received a solo exhibition. The exhibition for which the *Schudy* catalogue was published, which was to be Qiu Ti's first solo show, never materialized. Following the exhibition marking the one hundred-year anniversary of Pang Xunqin's birth, the Nanjing Jiangsu Museum revised its intentions to hold a similar exhibit for Qiu Ti. It was only upon the insistence of Pang Tao that her mother's catalogue saw the light of day.³⁴¹

The parallels Qiu Ti's life holds with the fates of other modern women artists around the world are inescapable. A recent article by Wendy M. K. Shaw reveals particularly striking similarities to the experiences of Turkish women artists of the early twentieth century.³⁴² Forty years after Linda Nochlin's seminal article on Western women artists, Shaw, who specializes in the painting of the Ottoman Empire, writes a non-Western response to the same thorny question.³⁴³ Summarizing the direction of her argument, Shaw states that the "retroactive enumeration of female artists from this period repeats the use of women as tropes of modernization rather than critically evaluating their historical opportunities to participate fully as agents in the modern public sphere."³⁴⁴ The crux of Shaw's article takes a quite different turn,

³⁴⁰ Cheng Shuhua and Philip Tinari, ed. *Schudy* (Nanjing Shi: Jiangsu jiao yu chu ban she, 2006): 141. Prior to Shui Tianzhong's paper, the last time Qiu Ti's modernist painting career received attention seems to have been in Liang Xihong's lackluster evaluation, which he illustrates with her painting of sunflowers in a vase.

³⁴¹ Pang Tao interview, August 2011.

³⁴² Wendy M. K. Shaw, "Where did the Women Go? Female Artists from the Ottoman Empire to the Early Years of the Turkish Republic," *Journal of Women's History*, 23.1 (Spring 2011): 13–37.

³⁴³ Though raised and educated in the United States, Shaw's ethnic heritage is in part Turkish and the bulk of her research for this article was conducted during her six years of employment in Istanbul, which would seem to grant her an insider view of Turkish art and culture. See Wendy M. K. Shaw, "Why Care about Women Ottoman Artists?" supplementary online essay, *Journal of Women's History*, http://bingdev.binghamton.edu/jwh/?page_id=385.

³⁴⁴ Shaw, "Where Did the Women Go?" 13.

however, when she concludes that not only were there no great Ottoman women artists, there were no great Ottoman artists at all.³⁴⁵

Setting aside my own belief that the designation of a nation's "greats"—artists or otherwise—hangs not on a universal comparative evaluation but on the significance of the individual to his or her own society, I nonetheless find Shaw's analysis of Ottoman women artists insightful. Shaw views the Ottoman artists' images of women, as well as the women artists themselves, as "signals of modernization." As occurred in China, appreciation of Western art in the Ottoman Empire began in the nineteenth-century when the government encouraged the study of technical drawing for scientific purposes.³⁴⁶ Looking to the West, modernist artists at the turn of the twentieth century fixated on the female figure and saw the female nude as a means to elevate the art of the nation—creating a perplexing quandary for a conservative Islamic state.³⁴⁷ Though a minority in their field, women pursued careers as artists and also created paintings featuring styles and genres popular with the avant-garde. Harika Lifij (1890-1991) entered two paintings of nudes in the 1917 Vienna Exhibition and Hale Asaf (1905-1938) was one of the first Turkish artists to work in a Cubist manner.³⁴⁸ Many successful women artists of the first generations were either the daughters of reformers, members of the elite, or the wives of

³⁴⁵ Shaw writes, "Paraphrasing Linda Nochlin, there were no great women artists in the Ottoman Empire because there were no "great" artists in the first place. The limitations which faced women in the arts also faced non-Western artists struggling to create a career in a society where painting was a very new cultural form. . . . In such an environment, male artists struggled to make ends meet, and often created work less with an eye to the creation of original works than with a desire to please, and thereby educate and modernize, the public. However, limited as the opportunities for male artists were, they were still more limited for women." *Ibid.*, 31. Though Chinese modernists also faced great difficulty in 1930s Shanghai, there is no doubt that many—in particular, Xu Beihong, Lin Fengmian, Liu Haisu, and Pang Xunqin—readily emerge as the "greats" of their generation. I would also argue that many women artists—such as Qiu Ti, Pan Yuliang, and Fang Junbi—although less studied, are similarly crucial contributors to the development of modernist art in China.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14. Comparison to China is my contribution; Shaw makes no comparative reference to East Asia in her article.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26, 27.

influential artists.³⁴⁹ Neither their privileged circumstances nor the rhetoric of a society proclaiming interest in the emancipation of women, however, prevented these women from eventually making career sacrifices in favor of their domestic obligations.³⁵⁰ Shaw finds that, “Despite the concurrence of the growth of the arts with increased women’s activism and participation in the public sphere during the late-Ottoman period, their artistic practice was largely subsumed within traditional gender roles.”³⁵¹ Of the few Turkish women who achieved recognition as accomplished artists, their work was often evaluated in terms relative to their gender; Hale Asaf’s painting described as feminine in its “delicacy,” “purity and calm.”³⁵²

So, too, unfolded the brief painting career of Qiu Ti’s. Most of the recognition and success she experienced in her career related to her marriage to Pang Xunqin, always the more famous of the two. Misleadingly credited as Juelanshe’s only female member, her work was reinterpreted by a male peer and appropriated by Juelanshe to suit the ideological aims of the collective. Rather than rejecting the objectification of women inherent in the production of images of female nudes, she readily engaged in painting the popular subject matter. Art criticism of her painting then—and to some extent now—focuses on the perceived feminine traits of her style.³⁵³ Ultimately, she abandoned her painting career in favor of her husband’s; catastrophic social upheaval and extended periods of war having undermined the tremulous career gains made by the women artists of her generation. As true for Qiu Ti as for the artists surveyed by Shaw is Shaw’s observation: “Even when women took their own pursuits seriously, social practices such

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 19-20.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 20-21, 23.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 20-21.

³⁵² Ibid., 27.

³⁵³ The 2010 translation of Lu Peng’s ambitious survey of twentieth-century Chinese art says of Qiu Ti’s style: “In her expression, she moved between Impressionism and decorative painting, and possibly because of her female temperament but more likely because of the suggestions of Japanese painters her works are characterized by simplicity and gentleness.” 309. Pang Tao disputes the authenticity of the painting the text reproduces as an example of Qiu Ti’s work.

as marriage often sidelined their efforts or made them secondary in relation to the professional practices of their husbands.”³⁵⁴ By and large, the work of Qiu Ti and her contemporaries did not result in international prestige, lengthy professional careers, enduring empowerment within their profession, or permanent social gains for women more broadly.

Contemporary publications point to women’s rights as evidence of social change and modernity and the writings of Qiu Ti’s peers, such as Lu Yin and Jin Qijing indicate they shared optimistic belief that they held the power to shape their futures, but the extent of the self-determination these women exercised remains in question. Nevertheless, Qiu Ti and her female peers were significant players in a key chapter of the history of Chinese modernist art and I have sought to reaffirm their accomplishments. I examined in detail for the first time what was the extent of Qiu Ti’s participation in Juelanshe, arguably the most important modernist art organization in early twentieth-century China. In chapter one I document Qiu Ti’s brave pursuit of an education and a divorce and her bold self-reinvention of with magazine publications of her professional artist persona. I find that her gender and marriage to a better-known artist made her a popular news feature, but presented her little critical acclaim. In the second chapter I determined that two designations traditionally held as indicators of her success—the award and her status as Juelanshe’s only female artist—distract from the real probability that Qiu Ti was marginalized even within the progressive group. Comparing Qiu Ti’s paintings of nudes to the work of her peers, I assert in chapter three that her choice of subject matter was not necessarily radical, but rather suggestive of her attunement to standard art practices of the time. Far from indicating a passive adherence to a patriarchal art establishment, her paintings of female nudes demonstrate her equal participation in the art trends followed by her male peers. In the final

³⁵⁴ Shaw, “Where Did the Women Go?” 23.

chapter, I detailed the events that led to the undoing of Qiu Ti's career as an oil painter, and showed that wartime China no longer supported equal opportunities for women, but undermined their career gains and quickly forgot their earlier contributions. When Michael Sullivan arrived in Chengdu and began assessing the modern art world in China, this is the new art world he encountered and canonized.

The initial decades of the People's Republic of China firmly closed modernist art as a mode of expression, yet Qiu Ti retained a passionate commitment to the visual arts and brought a second artistic career to fruition in her final years. Qiu Ti had never ceased to paint in oil (Fig. 5.2), and in the early 1950s even produced ten large-scale paintings of rural life in Zhejiang.³⁵⁵ In 1953, however, she turned to a new profession as a designer at the Research Institute of Art and Design. Under state support, Yu Feng directed a Dress Reform Campaign that consisted of a team of women artists and designers dedicated to guiding the development of Chinese women's clothing (Fig. 5.3).³⁵⁶ Qiu Ti served as a member of this team and contributed folk-dance costume designs based on the clothing of China's ethnic minorities (Fig. 5.4). This new career direction illustrates how resourceful these modernist women artists were in finding politically acceptable outlets for their creativity. Even though the policies of the PRC continued to push women in the direction of gender-related fields and the degree of social progress for women made under the new political regime is questionable,³⁵⁷ during the four years that Qiu Ti worked

³⁵⁵ These paintings are now lost. Cheng Shuhua and Philip Tinari, ed. *Schudy*, 117, 139.

³⁵⁶ Finnane, *Changing Clothes*, 206-215.

³⁵⁷ Writing of the social developments in China during the 1950s, Finnane observes that, "Women's liberation ceased to be a right and became a duty, and the circumstances for identity formation became rather constraining, especially given the well-documented ambiguities and contradictions in the Communist project." Finnane, "Yu Feng," 246. Noting that the fashions that Yu Feng designed in reality experienced very little application to the garments worn by the public at large, Finnane nonetheless concludes, "As an artist drawing up designs for clothes at a time when the cultural content of a 'New China' was being negotiated, Yu Feng deserves identification as an agent in a specific historical process." *Ibid.*, 262.

as a fashion designer, she received official recognition for her talent, and for a time her peers once again validated the importance of her artistic contributions.³⁵⁸

Had she lived longer, perhaps Qiu Ti would have returned to oil painting on a professional level. As it was, at the time that she died, life had become exceptionally precarious for the former modernist artists of China. Her husband was branded a Rightist, and Qiu Ti was denied the medical attention that might have saved her life. The ardent Communist activist Yu Feng also fell victim to the purges of the Cultural Revolution and was imprisoned for seven years. Taking up painting again a few years after her release in 1975, however, Yu Feng exhibited her *Life Awakening in Springtime* (*Chunfeng chui you sheng* 春风吹又生) at the 1982 French Salon Exhibition and won the gold prize, securing international recognition.³⁵⁹ Indeed, redemption for many of the modernists, such as Pang Xunqin, came only in their twilight years. Blessed with a longer life, Qiu Ti could have reclaimed her rightful role in the development of modernist art in China.

³⁵⁸ Email correspondence with Pang Tao. Document of official recognition published in Cheng Shuhua and Philip Tinari, ed. *Schudy*, 119.

³⁵⁹ Finnane, “Yu Feng,” 262.

Chronology of Qiu Ti's Life before Juelanshe

- 1906 born third day of third lunar month, March 27
- 1911 entered Xiapu County Primary School (age 5)
- 1915 entered Xiapu County Girls' Middle School (age 9)
- 1920 entered Fuzhou Women's Normal School (age 14)
- 1923,24 led study groups for women & children (age 17-18)
became known as one of Four Talented Women of Fujian
- 1924 teachers' strike delayed graduation
- 1925 graduated from Fuzhou Women's Normal School (age 19)
married, went to Beiping with husband
started Beiping Art Academy
fell ill, returned to south
- 1928 graduated Shanghai Art Academy (age 22)
(date of matriculation unknown)
- Jul 1928-late 1929 studied abroad in Japan with first husband (age 22-23)
- Early 1930-fall 32 in Shanghai (age 23-26)
husband returned to Fujian in 1930
first stayed at Pan Yuke's place, then moved into women's apts.
listed as researcher at Shanghai Art Academy in 1931
- Fall 1932 met Pang Xunqin (age 26)

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