

Friday, September 4, 2009

## Innovative exhibition displays ancient and modern Chinese Literati art

By **Katie Land**, news editor

This fall Oakland University ushers in an innovative and unique art exhibition devoted to the Chinese literati movement. An interdisciplinary approach to art, literati combines poetry, painting and calligraphy.

Oakland's exhibit illustrates this broad view with its display of both original and ancient literati art, lectures, a calligraphy demonstration and guqin concert, "Archaic Scent of the Plum Pavilion."

"This is a pretty new concept for Oakland," said Shuishan Yu, curator of the literati exhibit and assistant professor of art history. "The combination of the painting exhibit and guqin concert makes for a very unique event. It brings a special perspective by keeping them together."

Literati art brings together the talents of poets, musicians, painters and sculptors to emphasize how different types of art and culture are interconnected. It combines the "three perfections" of poetry, calligraphy and painting.

"This exhibit will give students a taste of non-Western art and cultural diversity, while leading to a broader understanding of art as a whole," Yu said. "Students specializing in any field such as photography, painting or drawing will see that there is no need to limit themselves to one form in the art world."

The aim of literati is for the artist to achieve a higher spirituality through the creation process. Literati artists hope to develop their own moral standard and to cultivate their personality, rather than creating art for art's sake.

Studying literati is very valuable to understanding contemporary art because of its broad base and big picture emphasis, according to Yu. Rather than focus on an individual discipline, it combines many different approaches to create a single piece of work.

"I love this literati art," Yu said. "It is a very special type of Chinese art with a long history of being supported by scholars. For me, it is a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to art that demonstrates how interconnected everything is."

The exhibit's pieces are themselves from a diverse background. On display will be scrolls created a thousand years ago during the Song dynasty, paintings from the early twentieth century, contemporary Chinese pieces and two original paintings created by Yu.

The artwork is on loan largely from the Flint Institute of Art and from several different personal collections. The exhibit will be on display from September 11-November 22 in the Oakland University Art Gallery.

The Guqin concert is set for 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct 16 in Varner Recital Hall. On Saturday, Oct. 17 there will be a guest lecture by Marshall Wu, former senior curator of Asian Art at the University of Michigan Museum of Art and an artistic demonstration by Yu Zengshan, a painter from Nantong, China.

For more information on the literati art exhibition, visit the [art gallery Web site](#) or the [Department of Art History Web site](#).



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### SUMMARY

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