

Attributed to Fu Baoshi, “Mountain Landscape,” Hanging Scroll.



One of China's greatest 20th-century artists, and arguably the founder of modernism in China, Fu Baoshi had a seismic impact on Chinese painting and art history that continues to be seen in contemporary art to the present day. Michaan's Auctions is proud to offer a painting **Attributed to Fu Baoshi, “Mountain Landscape,” Hanging Scroll** (\$5/8,000) for sale in our Summer Fine Sale, held on Monday, June 17th.

This painting, measuring over thirty-one inches long, and nine inches wide, is a monochromatic ink painting on paper. It depicts a plunging waterfall, which extends from the top of the image area to the bottom, beginning narrowly

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at the crest and widening as it reaches the base. There are a few small boulders that interrupt the flow of the water, both at the crest and at the base, and the rockface is loosely rendered to either side of the whitewater. Close to the viewer, on the right side of the scroll, is a small outcrop of rocks that extends to the center of the image. These rocks are the darkest part of the image, and our view of them is partially blocked by a tree that overhangs the water, extending almost to the left edge of the painting. The painting is inscribed and dated 1962 in black ink, and also bears the artist's signature via a red seal, both placed along the right side of the frame, against the tree and rocks.

This work is situated in a unique position within Fu Baoshi's body of work, representing in many ways the culmination of the artist's trajectory. Early works by Fu Baoshi emphasize his

extraordinary technical ability, honed through a traditional academy education, the intensive study of the history of Chinese painting, and significant time spent perfecting his reproductions of historical works. However, this mountain landscape, painted only three years before his death, utilizes a level of abstraction and impressionist rendering of form that contrasts sharply with his early career. Like much of his late work, the piece shows evidence of Fu Baoshi's time spent in dialogue with his contemporaries while teaching, as well as his widespread travels, the modernization of China, and his development of new techniques such as "action art" in a manner similar to Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollack.

Through his innovations in the visual arts, Fu Baoshi greatly

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contributed to the modernization of Chinese society which took place in the years following World War II. After finishing his studies, he found work teaching in the Art Department at Nanjing University in 1935, where he was able to experiment with his work during the Japanese invasion and subsequent civil war. Finally, peace was established in 1949, and Fu Baoshi was tasked with modernizing the school's curriculum and advancing Chinese art in line with progress made in other areas of society.

Fu Baoshi was faced with a difficult task, as after centuries of development, academics and artists had together constructed a complex system of sign-making and interpretation within Chinese painting, making these works hard to access for average people. Aiming to create a more approachable style, he began to integrate foreign

influences into his work, reintroducing earlier uses of strong color and ink wash, and experimenting with spontaneous methods of working. These advances effectively revived an art form that had been constricted by its long history and reverence for tradition, and Fu Baoshi was widely acknowledged as the leader of the New Chinese Painting Movement, a movement that formed the



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basis for much of contemporary Chinese art.

Perhaps China's most original and influential modern artist, Fu Baoshi was born in the small town of Xinyu in Jiangxi Province (southern-inland China) in 1904. He grew up in a deeply tumultuous period in China's history, he was only eight when the imperial dynasty system which had ruled for 2,100 years, a dissolution which led to the warlord era of the 1920s. This was followed by the beginning of the Chinese Civil War, which lasted for thirteen years, itself interrupted by the invasion of Japan in 1937 and World War II. Despite the near-constant tumult, Fu Baoshi lived a remarkable life, studying Eastern Art at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts from 1933 and teaching at one of China's best universities, Nanjing University from 1935. As an art historian, he was primarily focused on

the evolution of Chinese painting from 300 BCE to the present and was especially enamored with Shitao, a well-known individualist painter born in 1642, even renaming himself in honor of the artist. He continued to paint, research the history of Chinese art, and teach at Nanjing University, earning widespread acclaim, until his death in 1965.

A painting **Attributed to Fu Baoshi, "Mountain Landscape," Hanging Scroll** (\$5/8,000) will be offered in Michaan's Auctions Summer Fine Sale on Monday, June 17th. This sale features an incredible selection, full of the season's most esteemed items. The sale is headlined by historically important works in the Asian Art Department, exquisite jewelry in the desirable Art-Deco style, and important works from notable American and European modernist artists. Also

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featured are fine examples of Persian carpets, sterling silver dishware, and an extremely rare book by an icon of American poetry.

Also on June 17th, Michaan's Auctions will be presenting an initial selection from the vast estate of the notable New York artist and antiques dealer, Vito Giallo, who is finally offering the most treasured items from his Madison Avenue store, in a special auction preceding our Summer Fine Sale. This collection, titled "Chapter I" to commemorate the recent publishing of Vito Giallo's memoir, features

exceptional pieces across every department, headlined by bronzes and painted works in the Fine Art Department, as well as impressive collections of Silver & Objects de Vertu. Also included are important collectibles, quality decorations, and admirable pieces in glass.

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