

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW SURVEY ON WU GUANZHONG AS AN ART EDUCATOR OFFERS FRESH INSIGHTS INTO HIS ARTISTIC IDEALS AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

National Gallery Singapore's new exhibition 'Wu Guanzhong: Learning from the Master' offers an in-depth look at his artistic practice during the years of 1976 to 1985, a period where he also taught at the Central Academy of Art and Design



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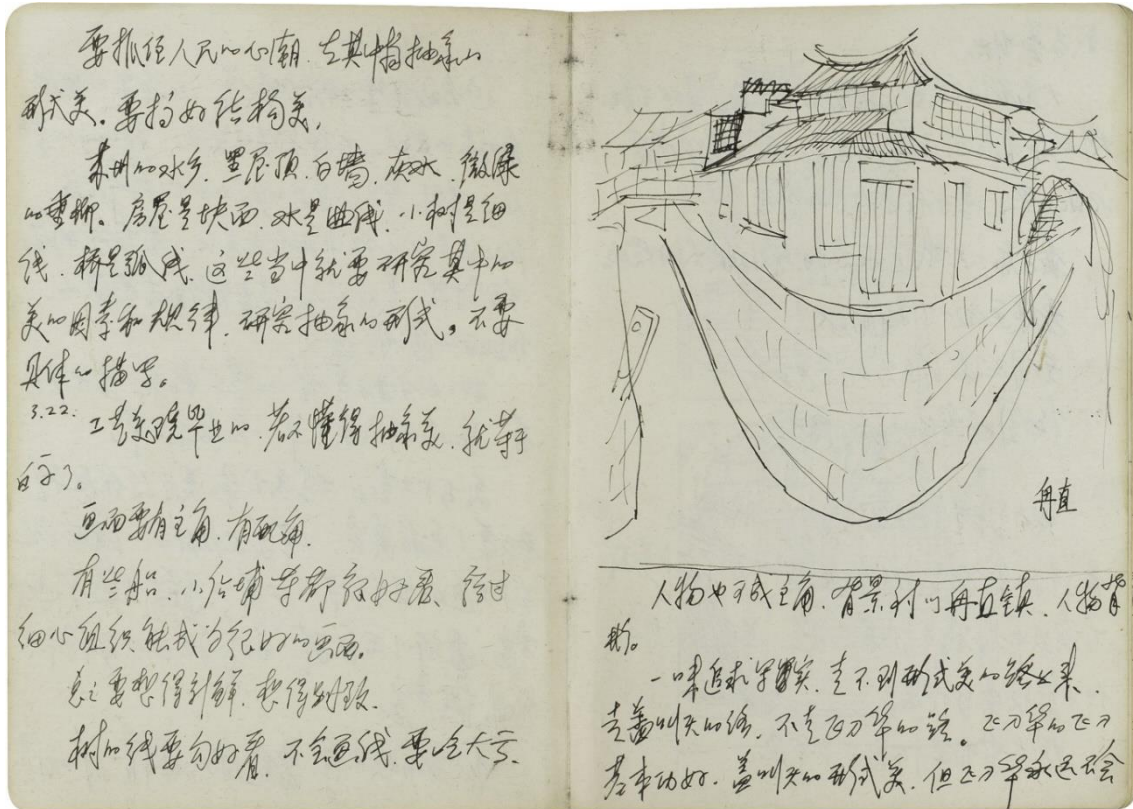
LEARNING FROM
THE MASTER
教·学·记

20 FEB 2021 ————— 26 SEP 2021

Singapore, 18 February 2021 – National Gallery Singapore's latest exhibition *Wu Guanzhong: Learning from the Master*, is the first of its kind to showcase works by students he taught, and to emphasise his contribution to academic modernism through his teachings and pedagogy. Opening on 20 February 2021, the exhibition will feature over 80 works of art and archival materials from both Wu and the students he taught at China's Central Academy of Art and Design. By shining the spotlight on Wu's lesser-known role as an art educator and his teachings, this exhibition critically expands research on his practice, and adds to discourse on his role and influence in developing modern Chinese art and Asian modernism.

Through this in-depth analysis, the exhibition reveals how the artist applied his learnings on modern art and aesthetics to his teaching, and highlights the rich exploratory dialogues he shared with students. On display are a host of artworks by students whom Wu Guanzhong taught at the academy, as well as photographs and study notes from their outdoor drawing

lessons. In particular, Wu's handwritten manuscripts offer audiences a deeper, more intimate look at his thoughts, and afford a greater understanding of his ethos on art.



Notebook #4 (Handwritten notes by Zhao Tianxin, a student from the 1977 class of the Department of Graphic Design at the Central Academy of Art and Design).

1980. Carbonic ink and pen on paper. Collection of the artist.

Dr Eugene Tan, Director of National Gallery Singapore, says, “Following on from our previous exhibition *Wu Guanzhong: Expressions of Pen & Palette, Learning from the Master* embodies an important new phase of a deeper exploration into the various facets of this prolific artist’s practice, and is the culmination of the Gallery’s dedication to furthering research and discourse around Wu Guanzhong’s seminal role in the development of Asian modernism. Through this exhibition, we hope visitors will gain a newfound appreciation for the maverick artist’s boundary-defying life and practice, especially within the context of the world and the times that he lived in.”

A pursuit of formal aesthetics and artistic autonomy

Regarded as one of the most significant contemporary Chinese artists of the 20th century, Wu Guanzhong is renowned for his distinctive style that integrates Western and Chinese art traditions. In addition to his artistic practice, Wu is also acclaimed as an art educator, having selflessly shared his artistic philosophies and experiences with students at leading educational institutions in China over a teaching career that spanned more than 40 years.



Wu (back row, second from left) with students from the 1977 class of Central Academy of Art and Design's Department of Graphic Design, on an outdoor drawing trip to Shanhai Pass, October 1978.

Image courtesy of Zhang Peng.

Building on the foundation of artworks donated by the artist and his family, the Gallery continues to research Wu's artistic practice within the wider contexts of ink aesthetics and modern Asian art. *Wu Guanzhong: Learning from the Master* is the fifth in a series of exhibitions dedicated to the artist. It continues the Gallery's curatorial approach of teaching and educating the audience on modern Chinese ink art through an exploration of Wu's practice and pedagogy, which was first seen in the 2018 exhibition *Wu Guanzhong: Expressions of*

Pen & Palette, following thematic explorations on the artist's life and practice in earlier exhibitions.



Notes from outdoor teaching trips to the Great Wall and Qinhuangdao.
26 drawings, 1978. Carbonic ink and pen on paper. Collection of the Tsinghua University Art Museum.

Staged within the Wu Guanzhong Gallery, *Learning from the Master* is showcased in dialogue with the ongoing exhibition *Georgette Chen: At Home In The World*. Beyond this tangible spatial connection, they shed light on the vital roles that these two pioneering artists played as educators, revealing the lasting impact they made on a generation of artists, and their vital contributions to Asian modernism. Together, they also speak to the Gallery's ongoing focus on art education, highlighting its perennial importance in the development of art within the region.

Curated by Cai Heng and Jennifer K.Y. Lam, *Wu Guanzhong: Learning from the Master* will be on show at the Wu Guanzhong Gallery from 20 February to 26 September 2021. In addition to the exhibition, National Gallery Singapore will host a free panel talk available online and onsite, *Our Teacher, Wu Guanzhong*, on 20 February featuring students who were taught by Wu at the Central Academy of Art and Design. During the exhibition run period, visitors will also be able to participate in curator-led and docent tours.

Wu Guanzhong: Learning from the Master is made possible through the support of Strategic Partner Cultural Matching Fund. For more information on the exhibition, please visit [here](#). Media assets can be accessed [here](#).

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About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which oversees the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian modern art. Situated at the birthplace of modern Singapore, in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments - City Hall and former Supreme Court - that have been beautifully restored and transformed into this exciting 64,000 square metre venue. Reflecting Singapore's unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery aims to be a progressive museum that creates dialogues between the art of Singapore, Southeast Asia and the world to foster and inspire a creative and inclusive society. This is reflected in our collaborative research, education, long-term and special exhibitions, and innovative programming. The Gallery also works with international museums such as Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay, Tate Britain, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a key node in the global visual arts scene.

In 2019, the Gallery was the only museum in Southeast Asia that received a ranking in The Art Newspaper's annual global survey of attendance at art museums, taking 32nd place. It was the first museum in Asia to receive the Children in Museums Award by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums in 2018. The Gallery also won the awards for "Best Theme Attraction" at TTG Travel Awards 2017, "Best Attraction Experience", "Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism" and "Best Customer Service (Attractions)" at the prestigious Singapore Tourism Awards in 2016 for its role in adding to the vibrancy of Singapore's tourism landscape.