



"Jiading" by Wang Jiafang

Artist's giant artwork a tribute to Jiading

Chen Haojun and Wang Jie

The giant painting "Jiading" was recently unveiled at the Jiading District Planning Exhibition Hall.

This is not the first time artist Wang Jiafang has created a large painting, but it was the most daunting one dedicated to the place full of his childhood memories.

Wang, who was born in the late 1950s, was regularly taken by his father as a child to Dongmen where his family has got deep roots in Jiading. He used to play with his friends on a stone bridge beneath the Fahua Pagoda, arguing over the number of stone lions in front of the Confucius Temple, or listening to his elders tell him legends of Jiading's literati.

The winding road, the small bridges and flowing water in the Qiuxia Garden, and the houses and streets in traditional Jiangnan style all left a lasting impression on his childhood memories. The solemn Confucius Temple, as well as the hustle and bustle of the old streets, have all become his spiritual home.

Working on his large-scale painting of "Jiading," the artist spent a long time revisiting and reinterpreting his time spent in here. Wang realized that the familiar scenes he remembered from his childhood had changed dramatically.

He has been enamoured with Jiading New City's development in recent years.

Automobiles, science and technology, and intangible cultural heritage are all prominent in Jiading.

Walking through the streets and alleys with a drawing board in hand, the artist appears to trace back 800 years of the district's history from a new perspective.

By painting many small



Wang Jiafang

pictures of Jiading, he made a strong base for the big painting.

Even though the size of the painting is intimidating, Wang chose to make the cityscape the main focus.

These buildings and landscapes may be geographically and spatially distant, but when presented on the same tableau, they would conjure up a link between Jiading's past and present.

"The architecture is silent and static, but when you stand, you can clearly feel its inner power," he said.

The new pattern of the city has provided inexhaustible inspiration for his creation, and he hopes to use his brush to continue to express his love for the place and portray the new pattern of the city.

"Jiading" combines the elegance and simplicity of Chinese landscape painting with the colors, perspectives and techniques of modern Western art.

"It is more difficult because Western oil painting can be modified, but Chinese ink painting is all about being done in one go; you must have a clear picture of what you are going to paint on the rice-paper, which means you must have a complete idea of the entire arrangement in your mind."

Wang describes his painting

style as "traditional and avant-garde at the same time."

He admits that he has set a difficult task for himself, but it is also a challenge and an innovation.

"When you stand in front of the painting and gaze at it, you will feel completely 'wrapped' by it."

The giant ink painting (10m wide by 2.4m high) took him three months of intense work.

"When the final splash of color was applied to the picture, my heart was overjoyed," Wang said.

"My wish was granted when I created and donated this painting to Jiading, my creative source, and I will paint more works for this beautiful place."



Small landscape paintings done by Wang in preparation for creating "Jiading," a large work unveiled at the district planning exhibition hall.



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One of Wang's sketches of Jiading's traditional Jiangnan-style houses