

Visitors appreciate the artwork at the Feng Chaoran painting exhibition. — Xi Lingyan



Exhibition highlights Shanghai-style artwork in detail



“Ancient Lady and Plum Blossom,” 1918

Xi Lingyan and Wang Jie

Many people are familiar with Lu Yanshao (1909-1993), who is considered an authority on modern art in China, but very few may have heard of Feng Chaoran (1882-1954), who nurtured a group of notable artists, including Lu and Zheng Mukang (1901-1982). There is currently a special exhibition showcasing Feng’s painting style and art at the Lu Yanshao Art Gallery.

The exhibit, organized by the Jiading District Culture and Tourism Bureau and the Jiading District Literary and Art Federation, aims to explore and reflect the growth of traditional Shanghai-style painting through Feng’s art.

This exhibition presents the artist’s paintings in a methodical and thorough manner, with references to his life and work.

It is said that Feng, a keen painter since childhood, earned his living by selling his paintings at 13 or 14 years of age.

Feng specialized in landscapes, figures, flowers and birds, and was especially skilled at depicting women. He was also interested in calligraphy, connoisseurship and collection.

Jiading, a historical and cultural area in Jiangnan (regions in the south of the Yangtze River), has long been known as one of the cradles of painting and calligraphy.

Great painters from Jiading, such as Li Liufang (1575-1629) and Feng’s student Lu, all demonstrated such artistic mastery. Lu, in particular, has achieved remarkable artistic breakthroughs through his extensive study of classical literati and his mixing of poetry, calligraphy and painting.

Lu was introduced to Feng in his house on Shanghai’s Songshan Road in 1927. Lu never forgot what Feng had told him: “To learn to paint, you must have the spirit of martyrdom.”

Feng never held an exhibition in his lifetime. So, in effect, this is Feng’s first exhibition and includes over 70 artworks lent out by family members, museums, painting institutes and private collectors.

The exhibition is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the documentation and resources related to Shanghai style — a fusion of Eastern and Western elements, Feng’s personal experience, and the exchanges that took place between his students and friends.

The second section features 53 of Feng’s works as well as 24 paintings by his students. The majority of the exhibits are being presented to the public for the first time.



“Melody beside the river,” 1920

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Work a lot harder, and hopefully, you’ll inherit it from me.

Feng Chaoran
Chinese painter and calligrapher

“Feng learned and appreciated Chinese ancient paintings, but he also continued to broaden his horizons,” said Tang Zheming, a local artist.

Feng worked hard to uphold and enhance traditional Chinese painting by understanding and absorbing the creative essence of traditional culture.

“Since the Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties, Chinese landscape painting has been passed down from one generation to the next,” Feng once told his student Lu. “It’s finally my turn. Work a lot harder, and hopefully, you’ll inherit it from me.”

Date: Through October 8
Venue: Lu Yanshao Art Gallery
Address: 358 Dongdajie St
东大街358号