

Asian American Art **Now**

A supplement to *Fine Arts*, the members' magazine of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.
Produced in conjunction with the de Young exhibitions *Asian/American/Modern Art* and *Maya Lin*





Fig. 13. Martin Wong, *Chapter II: Scarry Nite*, ca. 1967. Ink on paper, 38 x 8½ in. The Martin Wong Foundation

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Martin Wong (b. 1946, Portland, OR—
d. 1999, San Francisco, CA)

Fairy Tale, 1967

Ink on paper, 81½ x 12¼ in. The Martin
Wong Foundation

Martin Wong grew up in San Francisco near the neighborhood that became known as Haight-Ashbury. This unusual "fairy tale" is dated June 23, 1967, a date that had special meaning during this period—it was the first day of the countercultural season known as the Summer of Love. Wong, who was interested in both poetry and calligraphy at this time, fashioned an elongated format and hand-lettering style that referenced East Asian calligraphic scrolls. The grim tale that he invented recounts the story of a gutter goddess who entices unsuspecting men to a magical kingdom where they drown. Wong's stylistically related *Chapter II: Scarry Nite* (fig. 13) is a hilarious retelling of the meeting of Van Gogh and Gauguin in Arles that evokes the psychedelic passion of the 1960s era. Wong later achieved renown for his figurative paintings of New York's Lower East Side, which reflected the area's distinctive energy and street culture during the ensuing decades. *M.W.F.*



M.W.F.



Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900–1970

de Young Museum
October 25, 2008–January 18, 2009

Presented by  WACHOVIA

This exhibition represents the culmination of more than ten years of research and collaboration. San Francisco State University partnered with the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution (with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities) to research artist biographies and learn about their work. Stanford University developed a scholarly initiative to contextualize this achievement. Scores of students and scholars have participated in these efforts to learn more about our shared Asian American artistic legacy.

—Mark Dean Johnson, Guest Curator

This is the first comprehensive exhibition to explore the rich history of work produced by artists of Asian ancestry in America. It brings together 95 masterworks created during the first seven decades of the 20th century, shedding new light on some of the most important cultural contributions of Asian Americans during this period. The exhibition also attests to the impact of Asian culture in America by both immigrant and native-born artists.

Major highlights include the 1960s Fluxus innovations of media artists Nam June Paik and Yoko Ono; the first museum exhibition of immense public art works by Tseng Yuho and Dong Kingman; and the opportunity to consider together the revolutionary abstraction of Yun Gee, Alfonso Ossorio, and Isamu Noguchi. The exhibition also premieres important works by artists Mine Okubo and George Matsubara Hibi created during the


internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. In addition, treasures such as a 1968 folding screen by Cheng Dai-chien and calligraphy by Martin Wong make this exhibition critical for anyone interested in American art. It is important to note that strict immigration legislation of the era means that works by Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean American artists are predominant; other Asian American communities would find opportunities for artistic expression later in the century, when those laws were relaxed.

This exhibition is organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the Asian American Art Project at Stanford University in collaboration with San Francisco State University, and is supported by the Ednah Root Foundation, the Phyllis C. Wattis Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts, Delta Dental of California, and the E. Rhodes and Lorna B. Carpenter Foundation.



Maya Lin: Systematic Landscapes

de Young Museum
October 25, 2008–January 18, 2009

Presented by 

American artist Maya Lin (b. 1959) came to prominence in 1981 with her design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and has since achieved a high degree of recognition for a body of work that includes monuments, buildings, earthworks, sculpture, and installations. *Systematic Landscapes* features recent sculptures and drawings, focusing on a trio of large-scale installations that translate landscapes into the materials of architecture and offer a different means for viewers to encounter and comprehend the natural world. The de Young presentation coincides with the unveiling of an outdoor sculpture by Lin at the new California Academy of Sciences.

Maya Lin: Systematic Landscapes is organized by the Henry Art Gallery and curated by its director, Richard Andrews. Major support for this exhibition has been provided by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Peter Norton Family Foundation. The San Francisco presentation is made possible by the Ednah Root Foundation and a bequest from the Evelyn A. Westberg Trust.

Above left: Tseng Yuho, *Western Frontier* (detail), 1964. Nine-section mural of multi-paneled sections; palladium and gold leaf, handmade paper, tapa cloth and acrylic paint mounted to pegboard Masonite. Wachovia Bank, N.A.

Above right: Maya Lin, *Blue Lake Pass* (detail), 2006. Durafake particleboard. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery. Photograph by Colleen Chartier