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Shao Yixuan (邵逸軒 1886-1954)

Red Leaves in the Autumn Mountains

Ink and color on paper, hanging scroll

45 x 16 in. (114.3 x 40.6 cm)

Signed Shao Yixuan, with one seal: Yixuan

Exhibited and illustrated:

The Paintings of Late Mr. Shao Yi-hsuan and the Recent Paintings of His Daughter Miss Shao Yu-hsuan, National Museum of History, Taipei, 1977 and published in the exhibition catalogue, plate 12 (Zhang Daqian wrote the title and preface for the catalogue)

Shao Yixuan and The Beijing Salon II, China 2000 Fine Art, New York, NY, 2006 and published in the exhibition catalogue, plate 4.



Shao Yixuan (邵逸軒, 1886-1954), given name Xilian (锡濂), courtesy name Yixuan (逸軒), pseudonym Yixian (亦仙), also signed as Zhedong waishi (浙东外史), Zixi waishi (紫溪外史), was native of Zixi, Dongyang, Zhejiang Province. Shao was a renowned painter and journalist in modern China.



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Shao was born into an intellectual family with a rich collection of paintings and books. From an early age, he loved painting and, under the supervision and encouragement of his father Shao Xinsu (邵新蘇), studied assiduously, learning from the ancients, exploring the styles of the Song and Yuan dynasty, and integrating the strengths of different schools of painting, without being confined to them. His landscape paintings were simple yet elegant, imbued with poetic inspiration. Zhang Daqian commented on Shao Yixuan's painting as: "His landscapes resemble Shitao and Xuege (雪箇 pseudonym of Bada Shanren), while his flower-and-bird paintings are reminiscent of Shitian [石田 pseudonym of Shen Zhou (沈周, 1427-1509)] and Baiyang [白阳 pseudonym of Chen Chun (陳淳, 1483-1544)]."

By the beginning of the Republic of China era, Shao Yixuan had already gained a reputation in art circles in Beijing. He was a close friend to his contemporaries Qi Baishi (齊白石), Zhang Daqian (張大千), Pu Ru (溥儒), Huang Binhong (黃賓虹), Chen Banding (陳半丁), Wang Baimeng (王夢白), and many others. He had a particularly close relationship with Qi Baishi. Shao wrote: "I have a deep friendship with Mr. Baishi. I admire his knowledge, moral character, and especially his distinctive approach to painting." This group of brilliant artists surrounding Shao, a kind of Beijing painting salon, shared intellectual and artistic pursuits and collaborated on paintings. The high quality of the collaborative paintings they created reflects the compatibility of their intellect, talent, and their spirit of fraternity.

Around 1920, Shao Yixuan taught at Beijing Normal University, and the National Art School in Beijing. In 1923, he became the art editor of Jing Bao 《京報》, a newspaper founded by his uncle Shao Piaoping (邵飄萍, 1886-1926), and later became the editor of its "Art Supplement." Shao Yixuan was also a famous journalist and social activist in Beijing. In 1927, he co-founded the Beijing Jinghua Art School with Wu Gonghu (吳公虎), Yan Bolong (顏伯龍), and others. In 1932, he established the Shao Yixuan Chinese Painting Research Institute in Beijing, becoming one of the most famous Chinese painters of the Republican period in Beijing and Tianjin. Shao had many students, including Fu Baoshi (傅抱石), Sun Yunsheng (孫雲生), Jiang Zhaohe (蔣兆和)'s wife Xiao Qiong (蕭瓊), Duanmu Zongxi (端木夢錫), Zhou Shixian (周世賢), Feng Ping (馮憑), Hou Jiming (侯及名) and many others. He also taught painting to famous Peking Opera performers, such as Mei Lanfang (梅蘭芳), Wang Yaoqing (王瑤卿), and Cheng Yanqiu (程硯秋).

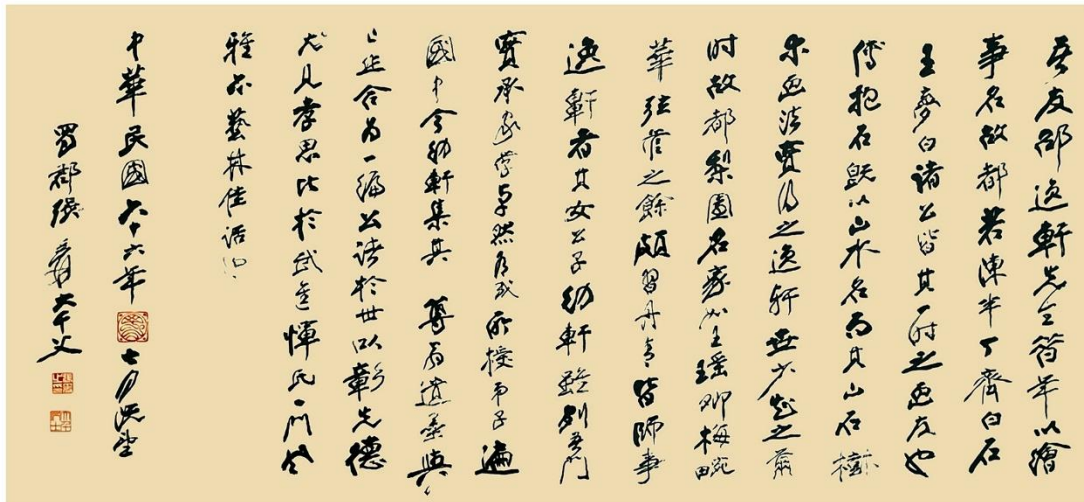
After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937, he returned to his hometown of Dongyang, Zhejiang, and became the director of the public education center. Later, he moved to Hangzhou and Beijing. He was an early member of the Beijing Chinese Painting Research Association and joined the Chinese Artists Association in 1952. His works are collected by institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, the National Art Museum of China, and the Beijing Academy of Painting. Lian Zhan (連戰), the former chairman of the Kuomintang, awarded Shao Yixuan the "Hua Xia First-Class Achievement Medal" for his contributions to Chinese art. His son, Shao Xiaoyi (邵小逸, 1912-1986), learned



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painting from Qi Baishi. His daughter, Shao Youxuan (邵幼軒, 1914-2009), was a famous painter in Taiwan and was Zhang Daqian's student.

The art of Shao Yixuan can be characterized under the heading of literati painting, adhering to a stylistic branch that follows the individualists of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Those artists declared the right to individual expression and the necessity to carefully study nature, of which the painter himself forms a part. The innovative spirit of Bada and Shitao had a profound influence on Shao. Additionally, the Shanghai school of painting penetrated conservative Beijing, and Shao incorporated elements from the Shanghai style that exhibited free and spirited brushwork, emphasizing calligraphic abstraction. The work of Shao Yixuan is a masterpiece of brushwork, rhythm, strength, and beauty, painted in a refined style that is unique to him.



Zhang Daqian wrote in the preface of the book 《邵逸軒遺作及其女子幼軒近作畫集》 The Paintings of Late Mr. Shao Yi-hsuan and the Recent Paintings of His Daughter Miss Shao Yu-hsuan:

My friend Shao Yixuan, in the old days, was famous for his paintings in the ancient capital, just like Chen Banding, Qi Baishi, and Wang Mengbai, who were all his contemporaries. Fu Baoshi was famous for his landscape painting. Few people knew that Fu's painting methods of mountains, rocks, and trees, are learned from Yixuan. In those days, renowned Beijing Opera performers, such as Wang Yaoqing and Mei Lanfang, also studied under Shao.