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Master strokes

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MASTER STROKES

A new exhibition at HKDI will reveal how one of China's most famous contemporary artists created a unique synthesis between East and West.

WU GUANZHONG (吴冠中) IS widely recognised as the father of modern Chinese painting. A contemporary Chinese artist, his work features Chinese architecture, plants, animals, landscapes and waterscapes in a style reminiscent of the impressionist painters of the early 1900s. Some of Wu's most important works will be exhibited at HKDI in May 2012, in order to enhance HKDI students' understanding of Chinese culture and their ability to use the Chinese painting medium as a means to visualise ideas for their design projects.

Master Wu was born in Yixing, Jiangsu, in 1919. In 1942 he graduated from the National Arts Academy, Hangzhou and in 1947 travelled to Paris to study at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts on a government scholarship. Although he initially taught traditional watercolour painting, Wu began to combine western watercolours and Chinese ink painting techniques. The experiment was successful and his watercolour paintings integrated eastern artistic concepts with western disciplines. This combination made him famous as a watercolour



ABOVE WU GUANZHONG, TWO SWALLOWS; TOP WU GUANZHONG, 祈祷 (PRAY)

landscape painter in China.

In August 1966, at the outset of Cultural Revolution, Wu was prohibited from painting and writing about art, and many of his early works were destroyed. It was not until after Mao Zedong's death in 1976 that Wu, like many of his peers, was able to return to his work. Wu had his first solo exhibition in 1979, and his career took off

in the 1980s. In 1991 Wu was made an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.

With the support of Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMA), the HKDI Wu project will consist of an exhibition, a series of seminars and Chinese ink painting workshops conducted by curators and HKDI teaching staff. ©