

Late Chinese and Korean Art
1300s-Present

By Noah Simon

China

Background History

- Early thirteenth century the Mongols began to build an empire
- After capturing Northern China, Kublai Khan (grandson of Genghis) took Southern China as well
- Founded Yuan Dynasty
- Caused Chinese to be more introspective, even long after Mongols left

Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)

- Mongols made a northern city now known as Beijing their capital
- Great cities of the south caused tension with the Yuan rule
- Affected art

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

- Ming came from poor uneducated peasants
- Used scholars to his benefit
- Once emperor, grew to hate intellectuals
- Known for alienation of scholars

Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

- Armies of Manchu people take over China
- Already accustomed to and respectful of Chinese tradition
- Art is very similar to Ming Dynasty

The Modern Period

- 1800s, China shaken from defeats by Western powers and China
- Come to realize their place in the world
- End imperial rule, reconceived as Republic
- 1949, became Communist state

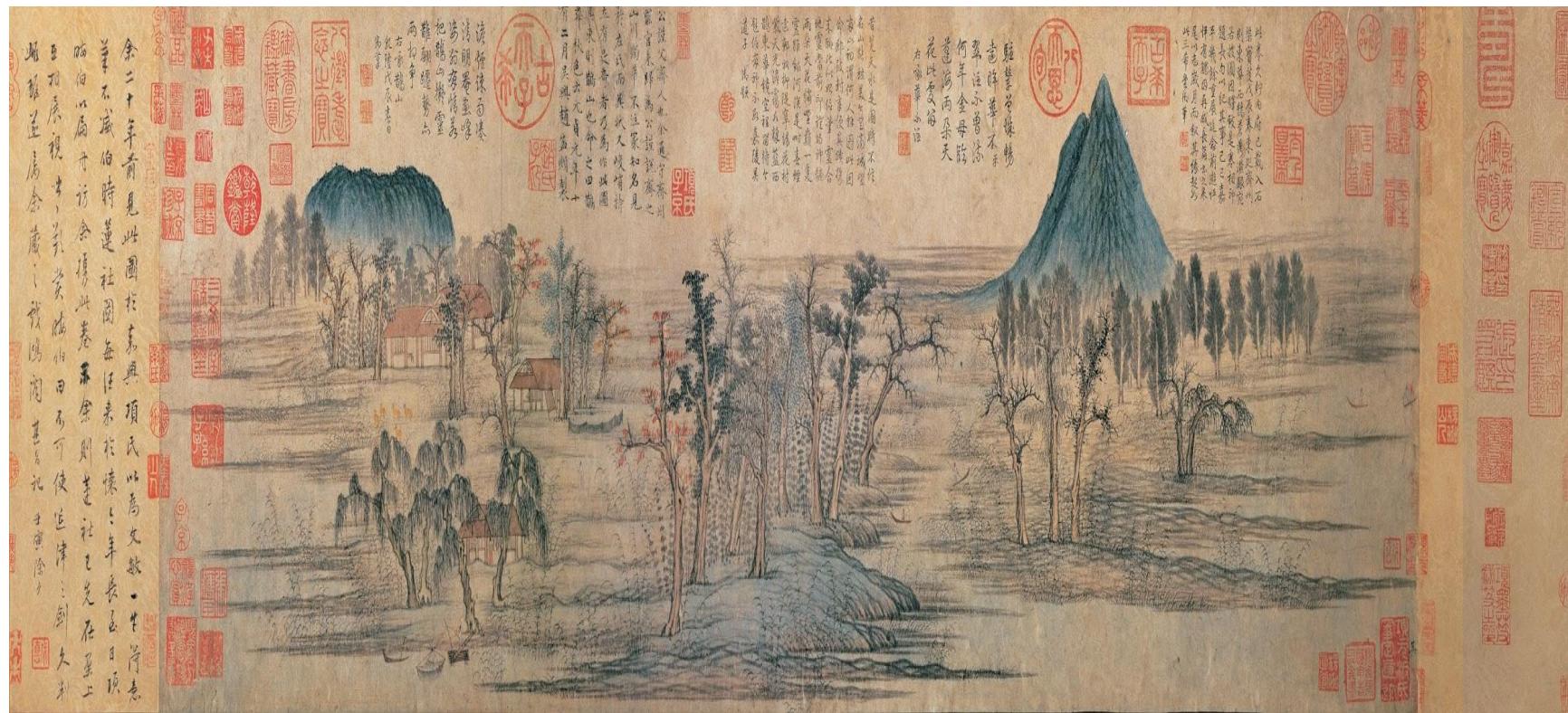
So How Did This Affect The Arts?

- For most of Chinese history, imperial court dictated the arts
- However, over centuries, artists rose to status equal of court officials
- Literati**=people that painted for the court who eventually revolutionized art and how it is consumed
- Literati separated from imperial court, deciding they did not need income from their art
- Personal expression>mere professional skill

So How Did This Affect The Arts? (Cont.)

- Yuan dynasty continued tradition of imperial art patronage
- New, magnificent buildings, murals, gardens, and paintings had little impact on Chinese scholars who hated Mongolian government
- Lack of writings on new art led to government positions being bestowed onto Mongols and foreign allies
- Scholars now try to express themselves in personal and symbolic terms

Autumn Colors On the Qiao and Hua Mountains
Zhao Mengfu
1296
Yuan Dynasty



Autumn Colors On the Qiao and Hua Mountains



-Zhao Mengfu was a scholar, who, unlike most at the time, decided to work for the Yuan Government.

-He is known for his carefully rendered paintings of horses.

-His most famous painting is *Autumn Colors On the Qiao and Hua Mountains*.

-Made for his friend

-He depicts the landscape of Jinan in a style more characteristic of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Shows nostalgia for China's past.

Autumn Colors On the Qiao and Hua Mountains

-**Literati Painting** = Taste for “spirit of antiquity,” unassuming brushwork, sparingly used subtle colors, use of landscapes to convey personal meaning.

-Literati painted for each other, not public display, on **handscrolls, hanging scrolls, or album leaves**

The Rongxi Studio



Ni Zan
1372
Yuan Dynasty

The Rongxi Studio

-Painted by Ni Zan

-Done entirely in ink, depicts lake region in Ni's home district

-Sketched with minimum of detail using dry brush technique where the brush is not fully loaded with ink, but rather about to run out. This makes the paper breath through the ragged strokes.



The Rongxi Studio

- Has light touch, sense of simplicity and purity.
- Literati style=reflects painter's personality. Ni's spare, dry style became associated with a noble spirit.
- Ni was known for his cleanliness.
- Painting of literati contains views on appropriate life.
Ni and other scholars are too refined for dusty world of government service
- Differs from the vibrant, colorful art of Western culture.
- Focus is on the spiritual value of a painting, not the superficial aesthetic

Hundreds of Birds Admiring The Peacocks



Vin Hong

*Late 15th-Early 16th
Century*

Ming Dynasty

Hundreds of Birds Admiring the Peacocks

- Large painting on silk
- Probably for Beijing Court
- Bird and flower genre
- Symbolic Meaning: Homage of birds to peacocks=homage of court officials to emperor
- Large format and multiplication of details typical of the Ming

The Forbidden City

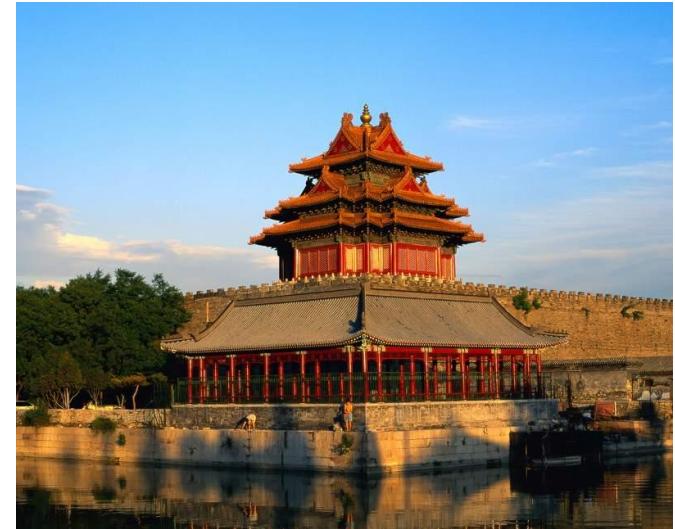
Beijing

Ming Dynasty



The Forbidden City

- Most Chinese architecture destroyed
- Initially Beijing was a walled rectangular city by the work of the Mongols
- About 200 years later, Emperor Yongle had Forbidden City rebuilt



Forbidden City

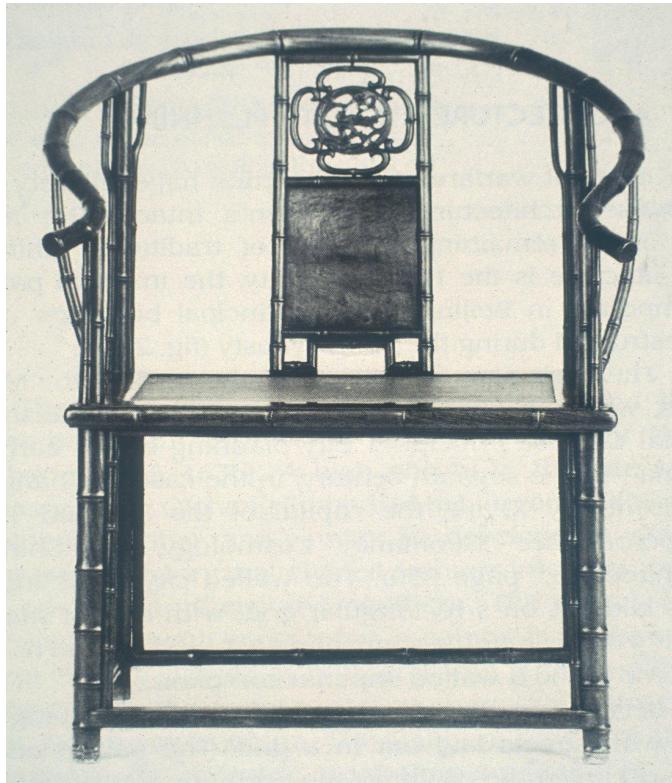
- Visitors walk through Meridian Gate, a monumental gate with side wings
- Inside Meridian Gate is a broad courtyard, which is crossed by a bow-shaped waterway that is spanned by five arched marble bridges.
- Across courtyard is the Gate of Supreme Harmony, opening out onto an even larger courtyard with 3 ceremonial halls, The Hall of Supreme Harmony, Hall of Central Harmony, and the the Hall of Protecting Harmony



Forbidden City

- In its balance and symmetry, the plan reflects Chinese beliefs about the harmony of the universe.
- Emphasizes emperor's role as Son of Heaven, whose duty is to maintain the cosmic order from his throne in the middle of the world.
- In comparison to Western architecture, the plan is created mainly based on religious and spiritual philosophies as opposed to practical or aesthetic reasons.

Armchair



Ming Dynasty

Armchair

- Taste of literati came to influence furniture
- Chinese domestic furniture reached height of development in 16th-17th century
- Constructed without the use of glue or nails.
- Pieces fit together based on principle of **moline-and-tenon joint**, in which a projecting element piece fits snugly into a cavity on another.



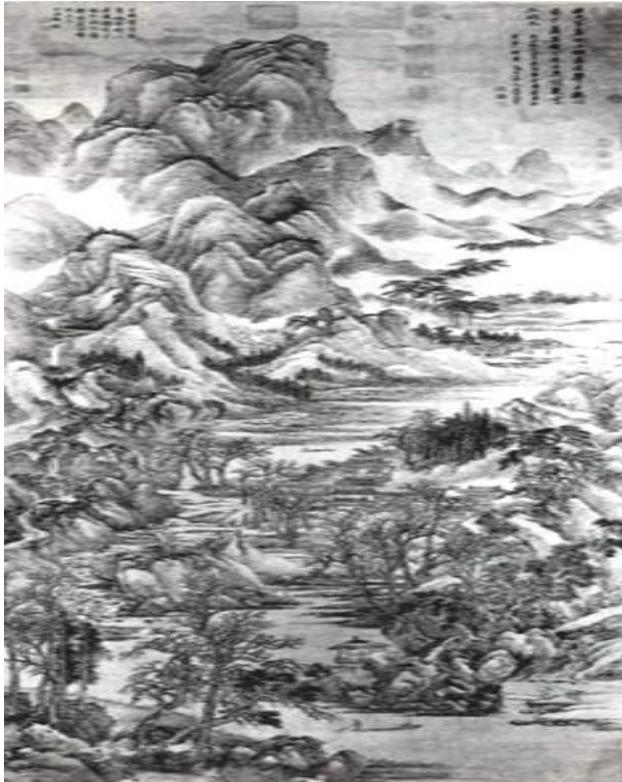
Armchair

- Each piece of chair is carved, not twisted.
- Similar to Chinese architecture in its simplicity, clarity, symmetry and balance.
- Effect is formal and dignified but natural and simple—virtues central to Chinese view of proper human comfort as well.

Dong Quichang

- Literati theorist
- Created northern and southern schools (nothing to do with geography)
- Southern school=unorthodox, radical, and innovative-preferred ink to color and free brushwork to meticulous skill.
- Northern school=traditional and conservative-professional painters, emphasized technical skill.
- “Read ten thousand books and walk ten thousand miles.”-Quchang’s views on literati training.

A Thousand Peaks and Myrian Ravines



Shitao

Qing Dynasty

Late 1600s

A Thousand Peaks and Myrian Ravines

- Shitao, descendent of Ming emperor.

- Qing Dynasty

- Example of **individualist** painting

- The individualists were those who were alienated by the Qing government because of their allegiance to the Ming.

- Express their anger and melancholy through their art.



A Thousand Peaks and Myrian Ravines

- Took Dong Quichang's idea of painting as expression of artist's personal feelings very seriously, cultivated highly original styles.
- Shitao took refuge in Buddhist temple when Ming Dynasty fell.
- Depicted is a monk sitting in a small hut, looking out onto mountains in turmoil.
- Dots used for centuries to indicate vegetation on rocks
- Rocks seem alive, about to swallow up monk.
- Shitao identified with Ming for the rest of his life

Pine Spirit



Pine Spirit

-Wu Guanzhong, 1984

-Modern Era

-After 1979, Communist restrictions on artistic expression began to die down.

-Paved way for Abstract Expressionism, a Post WWII Western style, using sweeping gestures of paint.

-Pine Spirit has semi abstract style that depicts scenes from Chinese landscape



Pine Spirit

- Though Chinese art has always felt Western influence, still retains traditional identity.
- Landscapes remain important subject, and **calligraphy** remains a vital role.
- Using Western techniques and methods, China's artists have joined an international avant-garde.
- Other painters still seek communion with nature through their ink brushstrokes as a means to come to terms with nature.

Korea

Background

- 1392, General Yi Seonggye overthrew Goryeo Dynasty, creating Joseon Dynasty (Yi Dynasty)
- Moved capital to Seoul in 1394
- Rejected Buddhism, and made Neo-Confucianism as state philosophy.
- Patterned bureaucracy on that of Ming emperor's, adopting even symbols of Ming imperial authority
- Period of cultural refinement and scientific achievement

Ceramics

Horizontal Wine Bottle With Decoration of A Bird Carrying a Newly Caught Fish



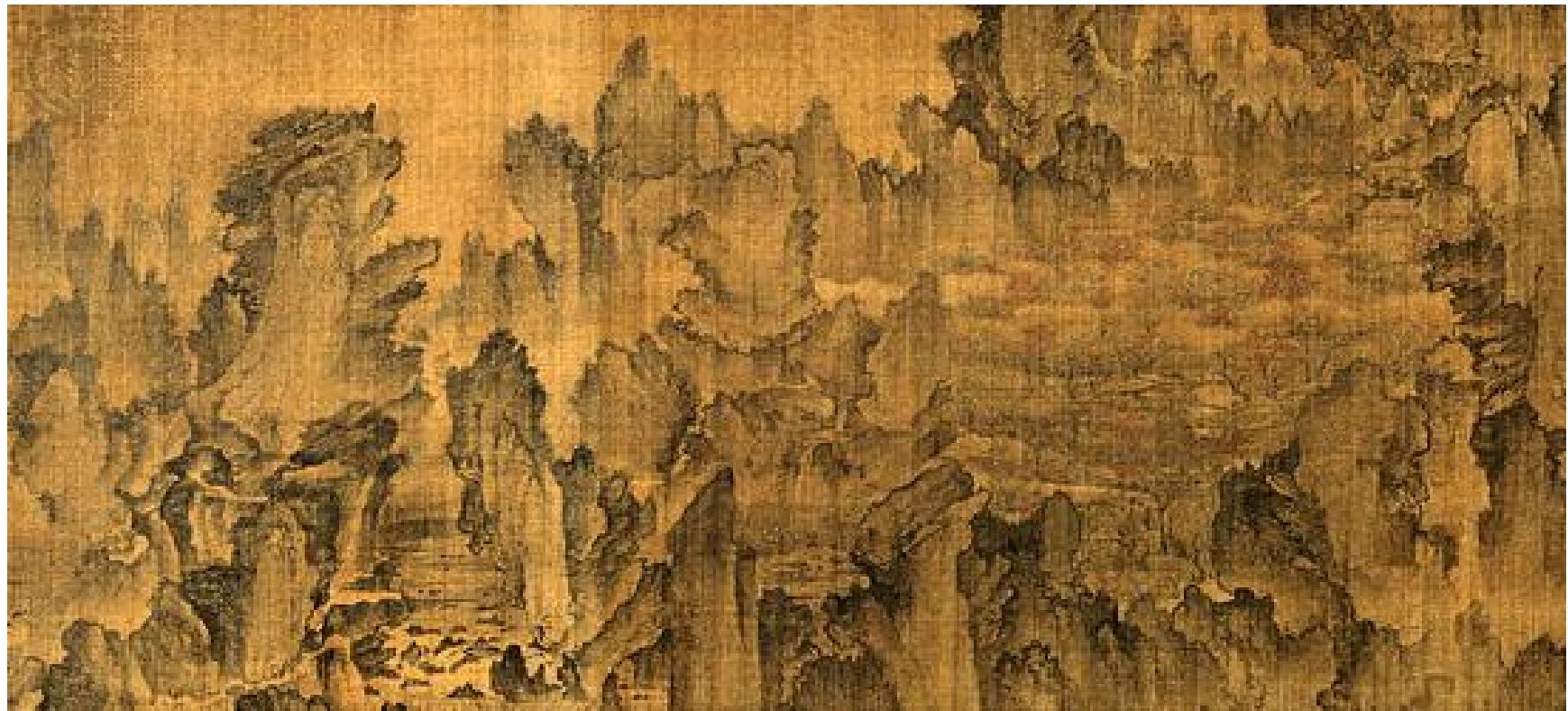
Horizontal Wine Bottle With Decoration of A Bird Carrying a Newly Caught Fish

- Example of Bencuehong Ceramics, descended from Goryeo celadons,
- Decorative effect relies on use of white slip that makes humble stoneware resemble more expensive white porcelain.
- Embellished with wonderfully fluid, calligraphic brushwork
- Has stylized floral decour
- A bird with outstretched wings grasps a fish that it just caught, while two giant lotus blossoms frame the scene.



Joeson Painting

Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land



Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land

-An Gyeon

-1447



-Jeoson painting employ Chinese styles and formats, range of subjects expanding from botanical motifs to include landscapes, figures, and variety of animals.

-Earliest dated Jeoson secular painting.

Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land

- Illustrates fanciful tale by China's revered nature poet Tao Qian
- Recounts a dream about chancing upon a utopia secluded from the world for centuries.
- Monumental mountains and vast, panoramic vistas channel past Chinese styles from Southern Song (1127-1279) and Ming periods (1368-1644)

Picnic At The Lotus Pond



-Sin Yunbook

-Late 18th Century

Picnic At The Lotus Pond

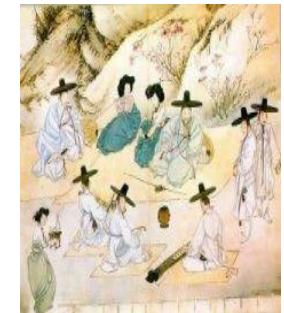
- Example of truly Korean style, called **Silhak**, or “practical learning.”

- Emphasized study of things Korean in addition to Chinese classics.

- Yunbook known for depicting aristocratic figures in native Korean garb.

- Here, album leaf represents group of Korean gentlemen enjoying themselves in countryside on an autumn day around *giaseng*, female entertainers.

- Figures are very Korean-women with full coiffures, short jackets, and generous skirts, and men with their beards, white robes, and wide-brimmed hats.



Modern Korea

-Joeson dynasty=policy of isolationism

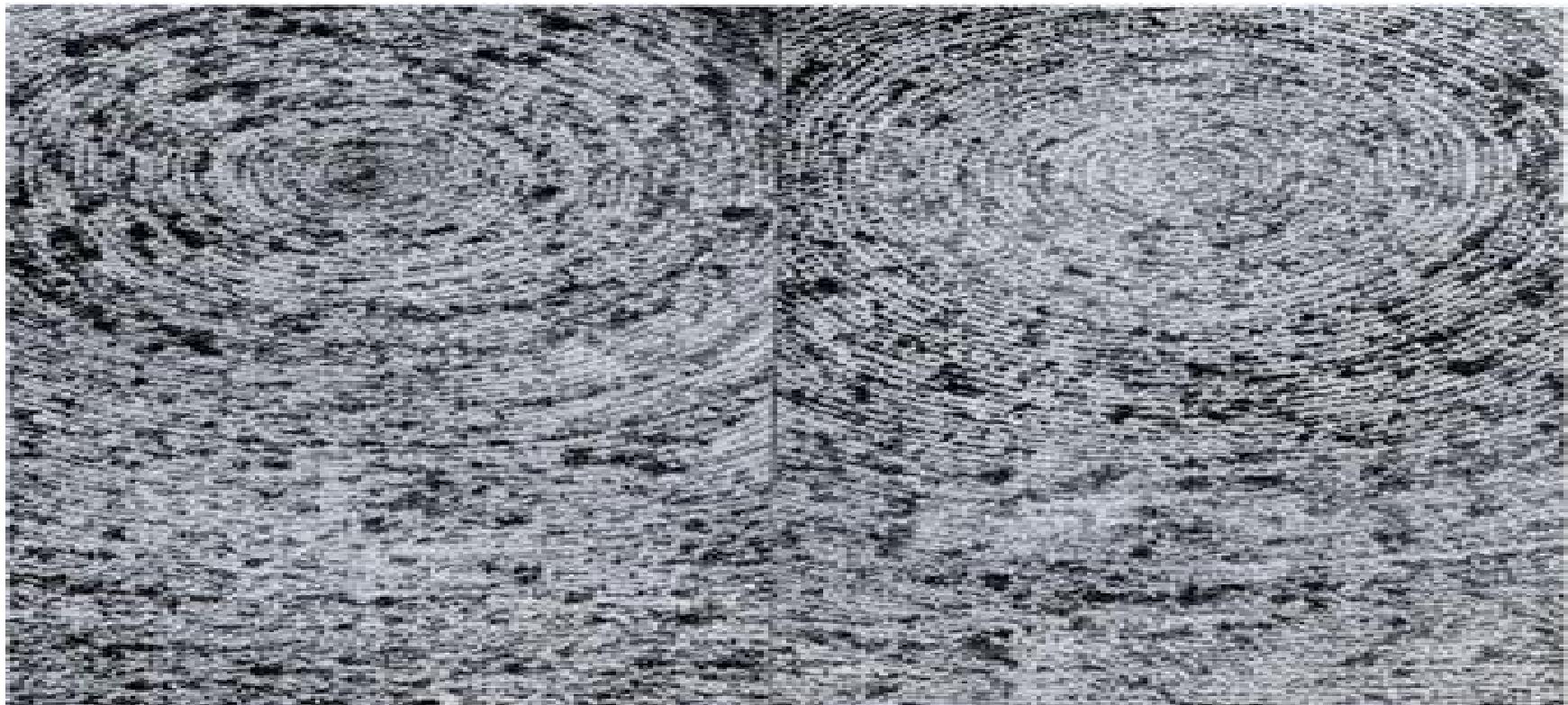
-Japan's annexation in 1910, brought Joeson dynasty to a close, prolonged seclusion

-World War II

-Korean War

-Impeded Korea's artistic and cultural development during first half of 20th century

S-IV-71



S-IV-71 (1971)

- Some Western influences manage to make its way into Korea through Japan and China
- Gim Hwangi, the painter, was influenced by Constructivism and geometric abstraction
- Korean artist=Chinese influence, but also studied in New York and Paris
- Painting illustrates the paradox that modern artist faces while finding a distinctive, personal style
- Should he paint with wholly traditional style? A wholly international style? International style with local twist?

The Rongxi Studio vs. Merode Triptych



Vocab

Literati = Chinese Artists who believed more in personal fulfilment in art than monetary gain or professional skill

Album Leaf = A single painting from an album

Moline-and-tenon joint = in which a projecting element one piece fits snugly into a cavity on another.

Silhak = or “practical learning.”

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