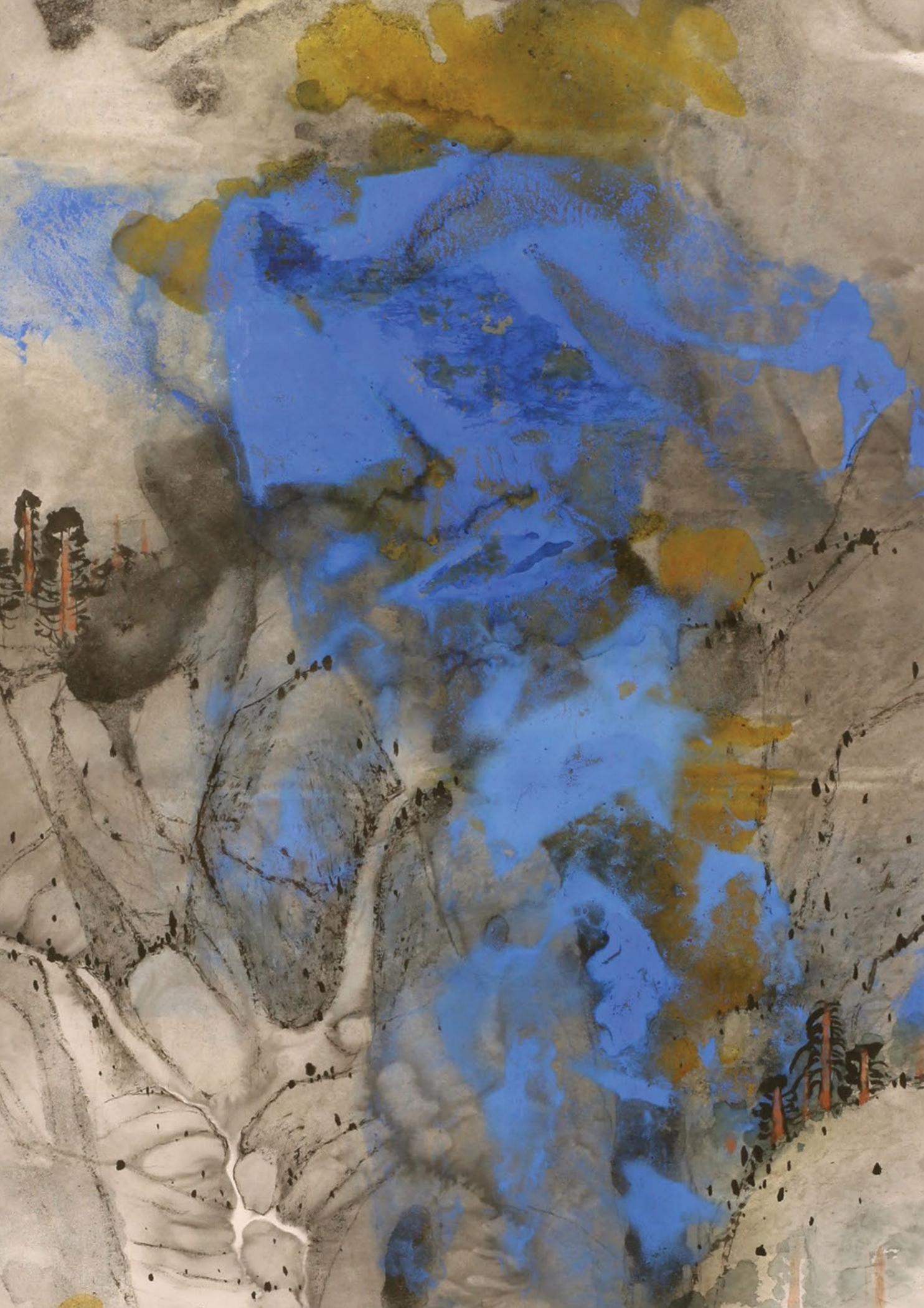


Hou Beiren at 100  
百岁北人



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## Director's Preface

Two years ago, at the opening of *Sublimity: Recent Works by Hou Beiren*, I proposed a toast to Master Hou: "... it was not in the plan prior to this moment, but I hope to present another exhibition of your works two years from now to celebrate your 100th birthday." Master Hou was a little surprised by my proposal but replied affirmatively right at the moment. Thus we are having this current exhibition – *Hou Beiren at 100*.

In the long course of human history, 100 years is just a blink of the eye. Yet when it comes to a man, 100 years is certainly a magnificent journey, especially considering the vast era of tremendous socio-political changes in modern China that Hou's life and times encompass. Growing up as a village boy in a small county of Northern China, Hou had lived in China, Japan, and Hong Kong before relocating to the US sixty years ago. Witnessing the ups and downs, whether first-hand in China, or as a sojourner overseas, Hou never gave up his passion for painting. In fact, through painting he had been searching for his "dream", "ideal" and "soul", as he wrote in his statement. The mountains and valleys, rivers and creeks, trees and flowers, clouds and mists, waterfalls and rains, are all his heartfelt expressions in the means of ink and colors, and the yearning for a homeland in his dream. However this nostalgic sentiment is expressed in the most audacious way. The bold colors, the sheer verve and grand pattern, always lead us to the realm of sublime beauty, which transcends eastern and western, traditional and modern, abstraction and figuration, poetic feelings and painterly conceptions. Such level of artistic achievement is certainly the reflection of a fully lived life.

In this sense, this exhibition is not only to fulfill a promise, nor just to congratulate a birthday. It is the celebration of a century's life journey. It is the tribute to a living legend of our time.

My gratitude goes to Prof. Mark Dean Johnson for curating this exhibition and for writing the insightful essay. I would also like to thank

## Celebrating Hou Beiren at 100

*Mark Dean Johnson*

Master Hou's many students, especially Ms. Susan Chan, for helping to edit Hou's chronology and photos. Last but certainly not least, it is our sincere wish that this exhibition marks the beginning of many more healthy and happy years to come for Master Hou and his lovely wife.

*Edward Gui*  
*January, 2016*

Hou Beiren is one of California's greatest contemporary Chinese painters – and he has firmly held that position for the past sixty years, since his 1956 arrival from Hong Kong. Born in 1917 and now nearing his 100th birthday (Chinese are one when they are born), this exhibition marks these auspicious anniversaries by presenting some of his most recent, audacious and explosively colorful works. Known as Paul Hau (or Paul 'Pei Jen' Hau) in English, and Hou Beiren in Chinese, he is a bridge between Chinese painting and America.

Hou Beiren has said that the inspiration for his work can be found in four words: "home in my dream."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the colophons or inscriptions in his paintings echo this nostalgic sentiment; on one painting from earlier this year he wrote "Seventy years ago I climbed onto the top of the E'mei mountain; the beautiful scenes are still fresh in my memory. I am writing this down to alleviate my homesickness in old age somewhat. Hou Beiren at Ninety-nine."<sup>2</sup> Such yearning is a central theme for much Chinese classical art and literature, beautifully evoked in the classic 'Peach Blossom Spring', Tao Yuanming's fable from the early Liu Song of 421 C.E. about the loss of utopian ideals and endless search to recover them.

But Hou's paintings are not generally melancholy in mood - nor stuck in the past or static in their development. His work has evolved steadily since his first arrival in San Francisco – in response to varied stimuli including his encounter with Western abstract expressionism, and his close friendship with Zhang Daqian (or Chang Dai-chien, 1899-1983), perhaps the greatest Chinese painter of the twentieth century. Hou's recent abstract paintings in the current exhibition are engaged with a brilliantly colored cosmos that reflects both an extension of Zhang's signature style of splashed ink and color, and an increasing sense of jubilation and vitality that is both invigorating and inspiring.

Like many Chinese artists in America, Hou Beiren is today better known and celebrated in China than in the United States; in China, two museums

bear his name and feature major collections of his work. His work has been featured in major solo exhibitions in Beijing and Hangzhou<sup>3</sup>. But Hou's work has also been featured in important exhibitions in California, including two solo exhibitions at the de Saisset Museum at the University of Santa Clara (1959, 1962), at San Francisco's de Young Museum (1963), the New Orleans Art Museum (1964), a retrospective at the San Jose Museum of Art (1980), the San Francisco Chinese Culture Center (1988) and multiple gallery exhibitions, including the Chinese Art Gallery in Los Altos, founded in 1973 by Hou Beiren and his wife Mary. His work has also been included in many group exhibitions including at the Euphrat Museum at De Anza College (2009) and San Francisco State University (2013). He has also been an influential teacher, founding the American Society for the Advancement of Chinese Arts (ASACA), as well as teaching at the Pacific Art League in Palo Alto beginning in 1957<sup>4</sup>, at the Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, and in Sunnyvale and Merced, California.

It is interesting to consider how Hou's career parallels or contrasts the situation of other Chinese artists in America. First, like some of his colleagues, Hou Beiren was exposed to Chinese culture early in his youth. Hou was born in Liaoning Province – and initially studied painting in elementary school with Li Zhongchang. His taken artist name, Beiren, translates as 'from the north,' as a nod to his early life and development. Hou received a fellowship to pursue a degree in sociology at Kyushu University in Japan as part of a scholarship program that was in place since the late Qing Dynasty. Hou continued to pursue study with noted Chinese artists – including Huang Binhong (1865-1955) in Beijing during the summer of 1940; Huang is another renowned figure in twentieth century Chinese art, whose work in ink prefigures abstraction. Huang's teaching was based in modeling ethical personal behavior instead of imparting technical skills and this understanding was influential on Hou's artistic development. After graduation, Hou moved to Chungqing, the Kuomintang capital of occupied China, where in 1942/43 Hou met and exhibited with Fu Baoshi (1904-1965) at Century Art College. Fu Baoshi is

another major figure in twentieth century painting who was then at the peak of his artistic production; Fu's gestural dry brush strokes over dampened paper can sometimes be sensed in Hou's works. In 1949, Hou moved to Hong Kong because of the Civil War in China – like many other artists and intellectuals; he studied there with Zheng Shiqiao and wrote his first novel. Hou became the editor and sometimes author for a magazine entitled *Free Front* that featured politics, the arts, and literature. It was in Hong Kong that Hou first met Zhang Daqian. In 1953, the United States invited two thousand Chinese with higher education to emigrate from Hong Kong – including Hou Beiren. Although he initially resisted, Hou accepted the invitation the second time it was extended as it enabled his family to relocate with him – an offer he felt might not be extended again. Shortly after his immigration to California in 1956, Hou Beiren was invited by Zhang Shuqi (1901-1957), perhaps the most famous Chinese painter in America during this period, to help the artist at his own studio in Piedmont, CA – where he was then reproducing his paintings as note cards - and Hou's wife in fact did work there for a time. Hou presented his first solo show in the United States at the gallery associated with the World Journal newspaper in the same year and soon mounted a second exhibition at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel as part of a UNESCO-affiliated project. The success of these exhibitions enabled the artist to plan for a new home. In 1961, Hou purchased land in Los Altos, California that had been an orchard. Here he built a beautiful ranch-style house and studio, surrounded by a Chinese garden, that he subsequently named 'Old Apricot Villa.' That neighborhood has since developed to become among the most desirable residential areas of Silicon Valley.

Over the years, Hou also met several other Chinese artists who worked in Northern California – including Fu Wenyan (b. 1920) – himself a student of Zhang Daqian from Shanghai; Fong Chung-ray (b. 1934) – an abstract painter; Lim Ching-ai (1914-1985) - who maintained a Chinese Art Gallery on Waverly Place in San Francisco's Chinatown that opened in 1965; and Cheng Yet-por (1907-1991) - at whose Carmel Chinese Art Gallery Hou exhibited in

1967. In fact, Hou arranged for the first American exhibition of three artists from Taiwan, Liu Yeh-jau, Wang Chang-chieh and Cheng Yet-port – at the Montalvo Art Gallery in Saratoga, California, where Hou was then teaching. Hou also came into contact with prominent visitors to Northern California such as renowned painter/connoisseur Wang Jiqian (1907-2003) who had relocated to New York; acclaimed photographer Long Chingsan (1892-1995) who traveled extensively but was based in Taiwan; and painter Zhu Qizhan (1892-1996) from China. Hou's work, along with Long Chingsan's and others was reproduced in the early Chinese American identity publication *Ting: The Cauldron*, edited by Janice Mirikatani and published by Glide Memorial Church in 1970.

When Hou first arrived in the United States, his work was classically oriented – typified by finely painted landscapes in black ink. But by the mid-1960s his work changed radically. This was in part because of Hou's increasing contact with Zhang Daqian who had visited Northern California annually since 1954 and who established an artistic presence there by the mid-1960s. Zhang Daqian renewed friendships with many people from his early life in China who had relocated to Northern California, including Pauline Tao (b. 1916), the daughter of Zhang Xueliang (1901-2001); celebrated chef Cecelia Chiang (b. 1920); and artists like Zhang Shuqi and Hou Beiren. Zhang Daqian bemoaned the lack of audience for Chinese painting and articulated the need to make it internationally relevant and fresh. These conversations were inspiring for Hou. In the mid-1960's, Hou embraced a brighter palette and more intuitive ways of working, seen both in his flower paintings and landscapes. His new style initially incorporated a dry brush mark that would also later typify his later calligraphy – it is as if there is air, or breath, embedded in each stroke and in the landscape. These works appear to reflect Hou's understanding of Fu Baoshi's dry brush. But by the mid-1970s, Hou's style reflected the radical 'splashed color and ink' that Zhang Daqian became renowned for developing – and Hou's late work represents the on-going exploration of

this approach that often borders on abstraction. It is these works that have brought the artist to a new level of appreciation both in the United States and China.

This brief essay does not consider Hou's literary contribution. He has authored three novels, an autobiography, a brief treatise about Fu Baoshi, and many articles. In this, he is the embodiment of a contemporary *literati* artist.

The current exhibition features roughly twenty of the most recent works by Hou Beiren in his mature, splashed color style. His colophon inscriptions suggest some of the abandon that goes into the creation of these works. He wrote "I paint at will and subject to no rules" on one painting from 2015; and "I paint like a maniac and know no bound, as my heart is in a sublime realm of artful perfection" on another. On a third, he noted "I laugh at worldly affairs while drinking a cup of wine in front of the withering flowers; when I am drunk I am unaware of the passage of time, and only see a mountain covered by yellow leaves of fall." In other recent paintings, the colophon is about the experience of pure color: the green of the mountain, the red of the cliff or sun glow, the white or blue waters. These works are often almost purely sensory, and the imagery of the landscape has increasingly dissolved into primordial atmosphere. But these abstract paintings are not merely ethereally cosmic. They pulse with life and passion, they ache with feeling and memory. They reflect the fully lived experience of a rich life and an unblinking, clear look into the future. They are a celebration of Hou Beiren at 100.

Mark Dean Johnson  
December 2015

The author would like to thank SFSU students including Laura Amshel and Lydia Chain, and NanHai Art Director Edward Gui for their assistance in preparing this essay.

1. "Exhibition features work of 96 year-old master" *Shanghai Daily*, November 18, 2013, page A-9.
2. Translation of the painting's colophon provided by Chunhua Chen.
3. These include 1984 and 2008 exhibitions at Beijing's National Art Museum of China, and a 2013 exhibition at the Zhejiang Art Museum.
4. "Chinese Art Trailblazer Leading Quiet Life in Los Altos" *Los Altos Town Crier*, February 1, 2005.
5. See web site for the Zhejiang Art Museum, documenting Hou Beiren's 2012 exhibition [www.zjam.org.cn/Site\\_En/news/2014/002/00781.shtml](http://www.zjam.org.cn/Site_En/news/2014/002/00781.shtml)

**Mark Dean Johnson** is Professor of Art and Gallery Director at San Francisco State University. He was the Principal Editor of 'Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970' (2008: Stanford University Press), and curator of many exhibitions. These include 'China's Changing Landscape: Contemporary Chinese Ink' (2014: Nordiska Akvarellmuseet, Sweden), 'Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents' (2008: de Young Museum, San Francisco), and 'Chang Dai-chien in California' (1999: San Francisco State University). He was educated at Yale University and the University of California, Berkeley.

## My One Hundred Years: An Artistic Journey

Hou Beiren

Looking back at my life of one hundred years, I feel that I have not achieved much. But probably it is fair to say I have been blessed with both luck and opportunities.

I was born in 1917 in the suburbs of an ancient city in eastern Liaoning Province. My great grandfather, Hou Wanxuan, was a student at the Imperial Academy in the last years of the Qing Dynasty, so there was a collection of books in my ancestral home. As a little boy, I read Chinese classics such as "The Analects of Confucius" under the guidance of my grandfather, Hou Fuchen. Later, I was sent to primary school, where I first got a sense of the charm of painting. I studied painting under Mr. Huang Binhong in Beijing in the 1940s, and then under Mr. Zheng Shiqiao in the 1950s in Hong Kong. The two master painters led me to start a long artistic journey. The world since then had witnessed plenty of ups and downs, but thanks to luck or miracles, I always managed to find a desk to paint and immerse myself in the world of art in that eventual era.

I spent most of my life far away from home, and could only watch the wars, humiliations and miseries that my homeland had endured from a distance. The emotional and physical pains the times had inflicted upon individuals were immense. But I never gave up my passion for and commitment to painting. Through painting I searched for my dream, my ideal and my soul. The mountains, trees, valleys, waterfalls, clouds, rain, fog, people, and flowers that I painted are all reflections of my inner self; they are my emotions in colors and shades.

In the 1980s, when Mr. Feng Qiyong, one of my best friends, came to the Old Apricot Tree Studio to visit me, he wrote the following poems on my mountains-and-waters paintings: "The red trees and green mountains are painted freely, because the artist has gone back to the Divine Land in his dream for thousands of times. If you read the letter carefully, between the lines is all old hometown moss." "Drift for ten thousand miles to the

West; the painter is a commoner, and the green mountains are vast; waters, mountains, and creeks in the homeland, are cherished with the whole heart."With the two poems, he said all about my paintings. Later, he made the two seals, "Homeland in My Dream" and "Old Hometown Moss," for me. Indeed, when I look back at my life as a painter in the past several decades, I feel my artistic aspirations can all be expressed with these poems and seals.

In the 2000s, my paintings were exhibited in Hou Beiren Art Museum in Kunshan. My friend, renowned writer Yang Shousong, said to me: "Your use of colors is incredibly bold." He aptly described what I have aspired for: to show the boldness and beauty of China's mountains and waters. The colors of nature ought to be painted boldly.

At the age of one hundred, I am still healthy enough to hold a brush and splash ink and colors to entertain myself. I feel contented. Not long ago, I wrote this poem and sent it to a friend:

*I splash colors like a maniac,  
My styles are not those of Song and Yuan dynasties.  
Wang Qia the Tang painter splashed ink to damp the silk,  
Huai Su the old monk left a blank to indicate the cloud.  
Rain of colors, beauty of landscape.  
My youth has fled, my hair is grey.  
People who accompanies me by my desk, listen:  
When I'm gone, bury my old brush with me.*

畫畫生涯·百年回首 侯北人

百年回首，在人生的道路上走過來的不多，是幸運是機遇，都無法回答，但是也可以說，是幸運與機遇吧。

我生於一九一七年，在江蘇一個古城的鄉間，因為家世曾祖萬選公，乃清朝末年的周子監大學士，故家有藏書，余幼年由祖父教讀，伴讀一年，論語等書籍。後入小學，始接觸繪畫，在進入一生（繪畫）的起點一九四〇年，在北京師範美術系虹先生一九五〇年在香港師事鄭石菴先生從此進入了這一生的繪畫生涯。風風雨雨，世多變，<sup>這</sup>一個可謂是古時代中，始終邊流於後進藝術生活中，可以說，是幸運的奇跡吧。

是難言的，但不是我沒有放棄我的繪畫，最後和漫遊在山崗上，村木河石，飛瀑，雲霞，雨霽，人煙，花草，都是來自我的心的表述和演繹。用墨、淺、和色彩表達出來的清感。

一九八〇年至一九八五年，馮其庸先生在老舍堂作客時，他在拙作山水畫上題有：神州夢繞幾千回，紅樹青山信手裁。海西青山芒屨一布衣，向君神裏何所有，一片故園好山溪。這兩首詩他道盡了我作畫的心境和畫中所表現心中的思念。後來他又製印「黃河程家山」，家山舊草堂，贈我，回憶你畫幾十年，畫中所述不者，在詩及印中都可尋到。

二〇〇〇年，拙作在昆山人侯北人美本館展出，在名作家楊守松地對我說：你的畫真是色膽包天。他道盡了我作畫的內心。你追求是力求祖國的山河美景，壯觀，大地丹青。今在已期願之年，仍能執筆塗抹，沿溪墨彩，寫山河壯麗自娛，予稍知足晚年。昨偶讀友人一詩云：澄灑丹青似癡狂，休知此法追宋元。王洽傾墨濕絹素，高僧飛白寫雲煙。彩雨斑斑河山秀，韶華老去鬢髮斑。柳筆且吟寒塞人，留得先覺共長眠。



Plates



1.

*Landscape*, 2015

Ink and color on paper

38 x 86 in.

**Inscription**

I splash colors like a maniac,  
My styles are not those of Song and Yuan dynasties.  
Wang Qia the Tang painter splashed ink to damp the silk,  
The old monk left a blank to indicate the cloud.  
Rain of colors, beauty of landscape.  
My youth has fled, my hair is grey.  
People who serve by my desk, listen:  
When I'm gone, bury my old brush with me.

**Six Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Color of Nature (intaglio characters),

Man outside the Pass (relief characters), Ninety-nine Longevity Seal (relief characters)

*previous spread*

2.

*Spring Mountains*, 2015

Ink and color on paper

54 x 27 in.

**Inscription**

I long for being able to howl to heaven as a drunkard in the spring mountain.  
I am indeed old.  
By Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio in 2015.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), My Heart is with the Lakes and Mountains  
(relief characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters)





訪禪行

續文竹老為堂九九

印

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3.

*A Visit to Temple*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
38 x 86 in.

**Inscription**

A Visit to Temple.  
By Hou Beiren at ninety-nine in Old Apricot Tree Studio.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Ninety-nine Longevity Seal (relief characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters),  
Color of Nature (intaglio characters)

*previous spread*

4.

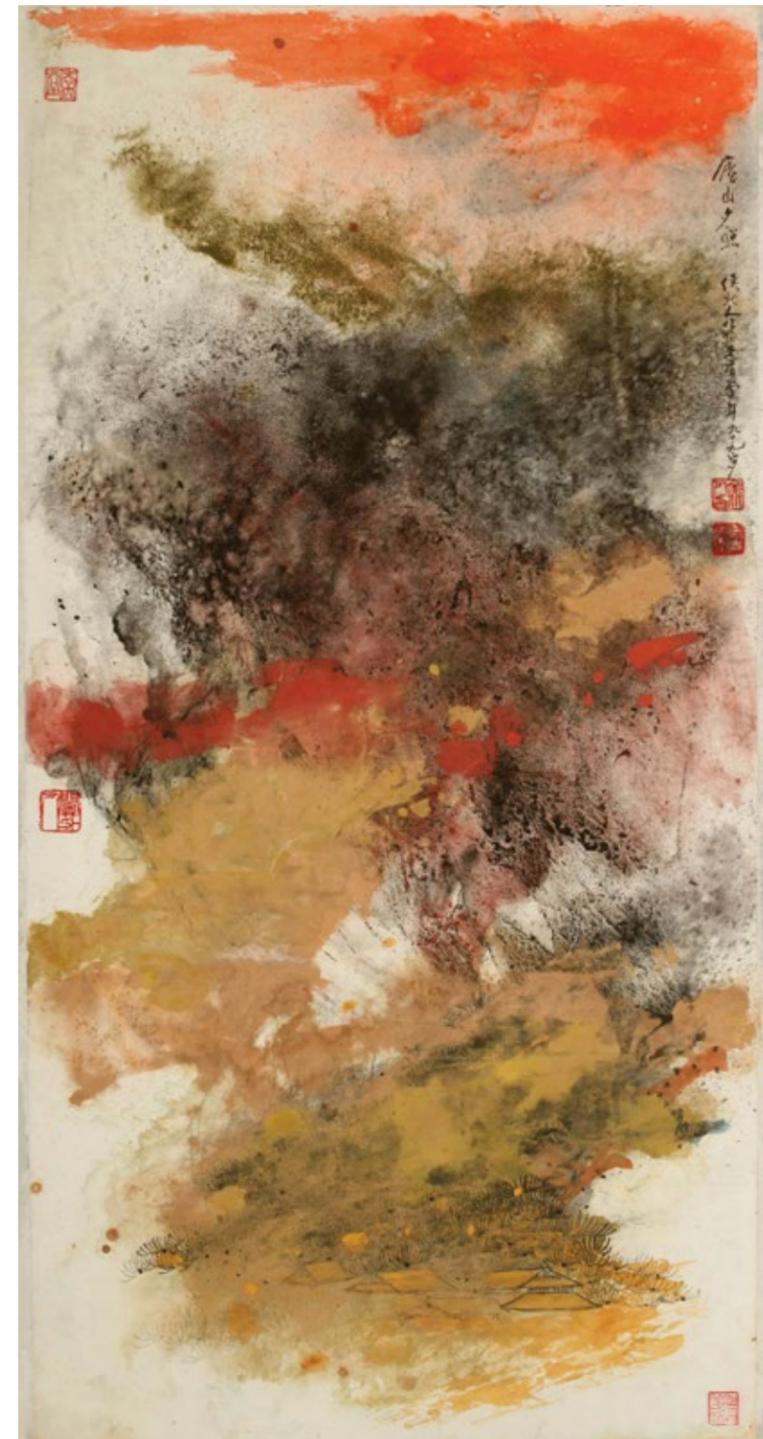
*Sunset at Lushan Mountain*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
54 x 27 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

Sunset at Lushan Mountain.  
Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at nighty-eight.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters)





紅華山和臨濟寺  
蘇文作  
一九九九年  
蘇文作

5.  
*Wushan Mountain and Yangtze River*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
39 x 86 in.

**Inscription**

Splash ink to paint mountains wildly; colors on valleys, ink on clouds. My painting is full of the splendor of the Wushan Mountain and the Yangtze River. Hou Beiren painted the dawn of the Wushan Gorges and added prose at ninety-nine years old in Old Apricot Tree Studio.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Ninety-nine Longevity Seal (relief characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters)

*previous spread*

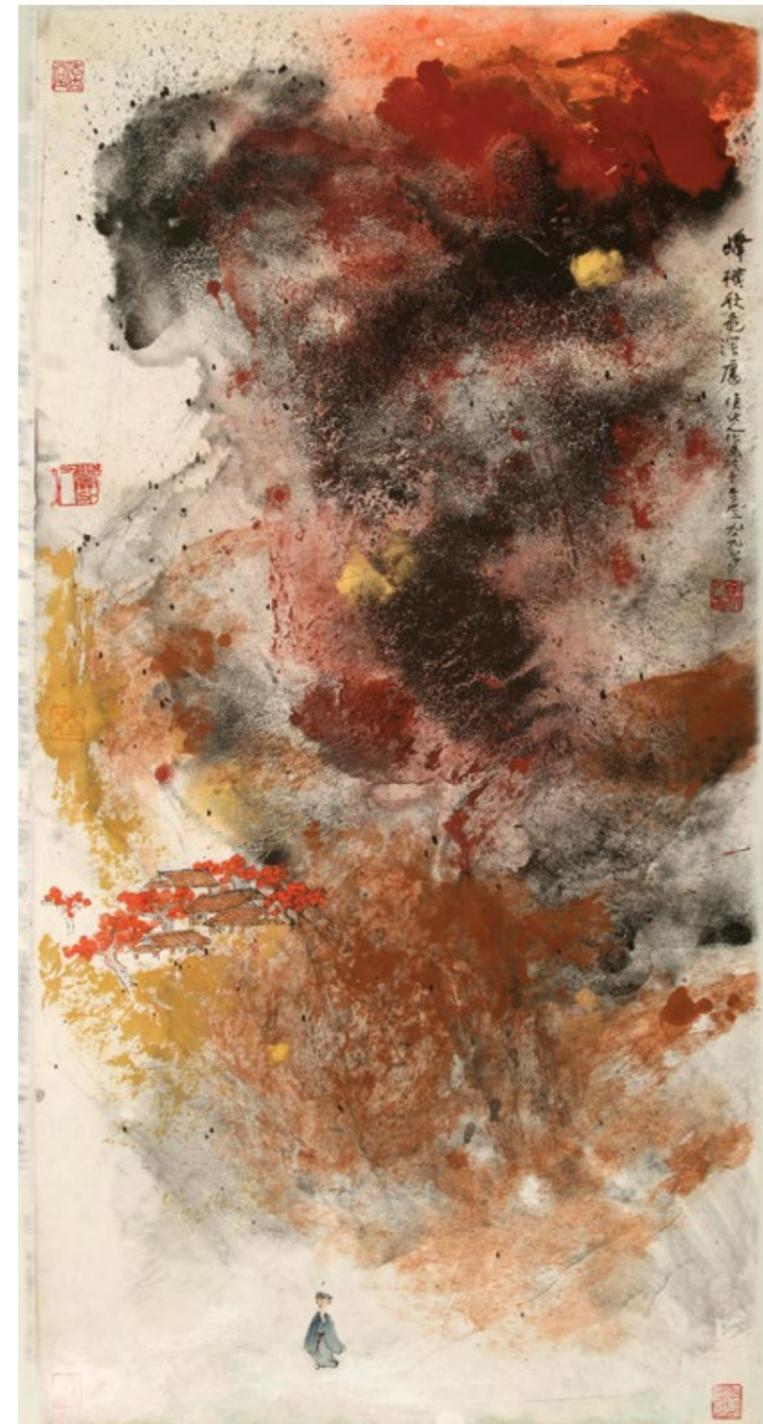
6.  
*A Peak in Autumnal Tints*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
53 3/4 x 27 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

A peak thrusts itself towards the depth of autumnal tints. By Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-nine.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Ninety-nine Longevity Seal (relief characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters)





巖岩金頂

七十年...  
...  
...  
...  
...

...

...

7.

*Golden Peak of the E'mei Mountain*, 2015

Ink and color on paper

37 1/2 x 85 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

Seventy years ago I climbed onto the top of the E'mei mountain; the beautiful scenes are still fresh in my memory. I am writing this down to alleviate my homesickness in old age somewhat. Hou Beiren at Ninety-nine.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters),  
Color of Nature (intaglio characters)

*previous spread*

8.

*Mountains and Valleys in Rain*, 2015

Ink and color on paper

85 x 37 3/4 in.

**Inscription**

I paint at will and subject to no rules; At sunset, the mountains and valleys are soaked in rain, the chilly forests are locked in fog. By Hou Beiren at ninety-nine in Old Apricot Tree Studio.

**Six Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Color of Nature (intaglio characters),  
Man outside the Pass (relief characters), Hou Beiren in Longevity (intaglio characters)





9.

*Wind in Pine Trees*, 2015

Ink and color on paper

37 3/4 x 85 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

Wind in pine trees sounds like a rainy day.

Ancient verse.

By Hou Beiren at ninety-nine.

**Six Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters),  
Ninety-nine Longevity Seal (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters),  
Color of Nature (intaglio characters)

*previous spread*

10.

*Lost in Clouds and Fog*, 2015

Ink and color on paper

51 x 33 in.

**Inscription**

Lost in clouds and fog; the sun is setting below the mountains; I paint like a maniac  
and know no bound, as my heart is in a sublime realm of artful perfection. By Hou  
Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-nine.

**Six Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters),  
Hou Beiren in Nineties (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Color of Nature (intaglio characters),  
Man outside the Pass (relief characters)



11.  
*Mountain in Autumn*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
53 1/2 x 27 in.

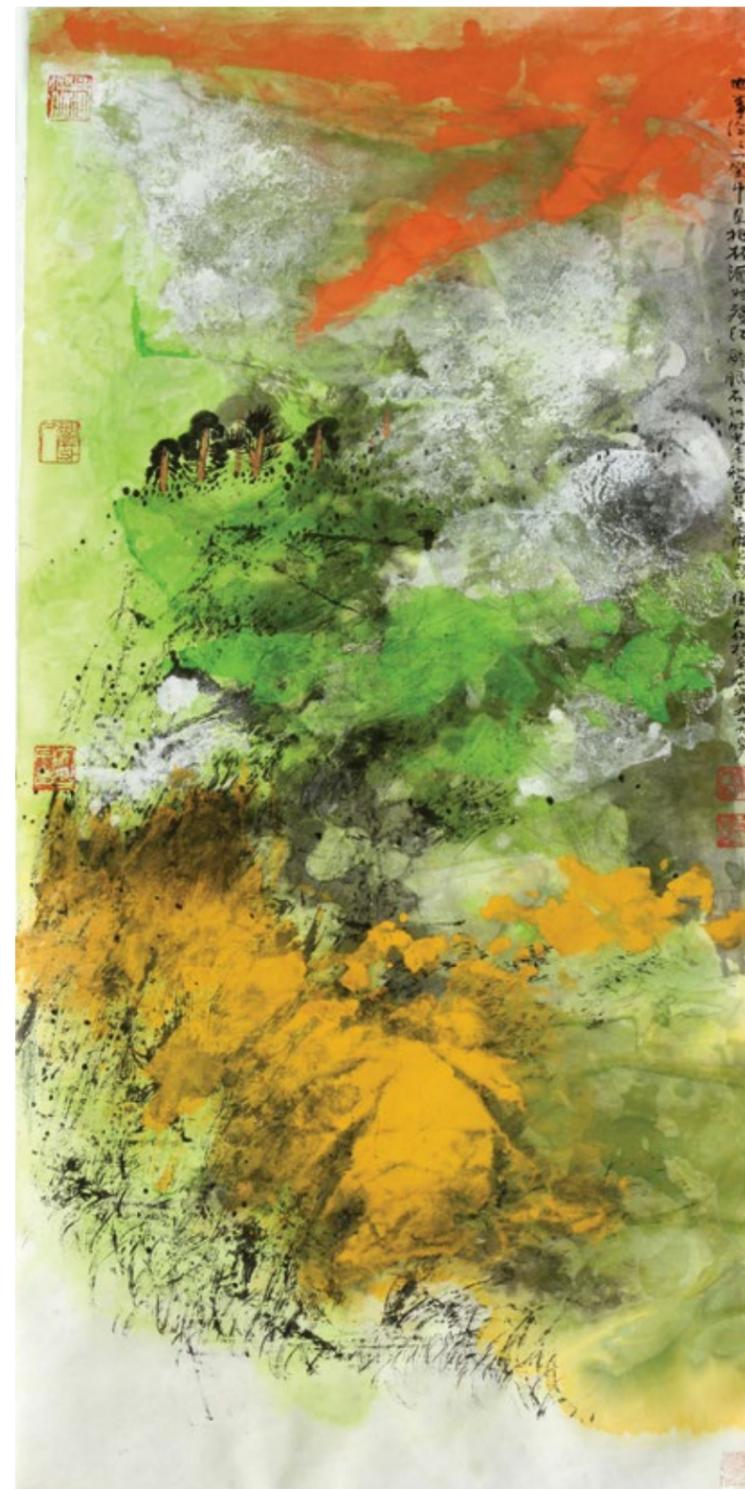
**Inscription**

I laugh at worldly affairs while drinking a cup of wine in front of the withering flowers;  
when I am drunk I am unaware of the passage of time, and only see a mountain  
covered by yellow leaves of fall.

**Six Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters),  
Hou Beiren in Nineties (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters),  
Color of Nature (intaglio characters)





12.  
*Lakes and Mountains*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
29 x 56 in.

**Inscription**

Lakes and mountains can be as green as such.  
Hou Beiren at ninety-nine in memory of old times in native land.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Hou Beiren in Nineties (relief characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters)

*previous spread*

13.  
*Golden Sunset*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
54 x 27 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

Sunset is like melting gold; clouds hover around; I forget where I am. Verses by Li Qingzhao. Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-nine.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Color of Nature (intaglio characters),  
Man outside the Pass (relief characters), Hou Beiren in Longevity (intaglio characters)





松石有雲煙茫茫處  
侯人仙九步



14.  
*Vast and Hazy Clouds*, 2015  
Ink and color on paper  
27 1/2 x 54 in.

**Inscription**

I looked at where is vast and hazy and lost my heart.  
By Hou Beiren at ninety-nine.

**Three Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters),  
Ninety-nine Longevity Seal (relief characters)

*previous spread*

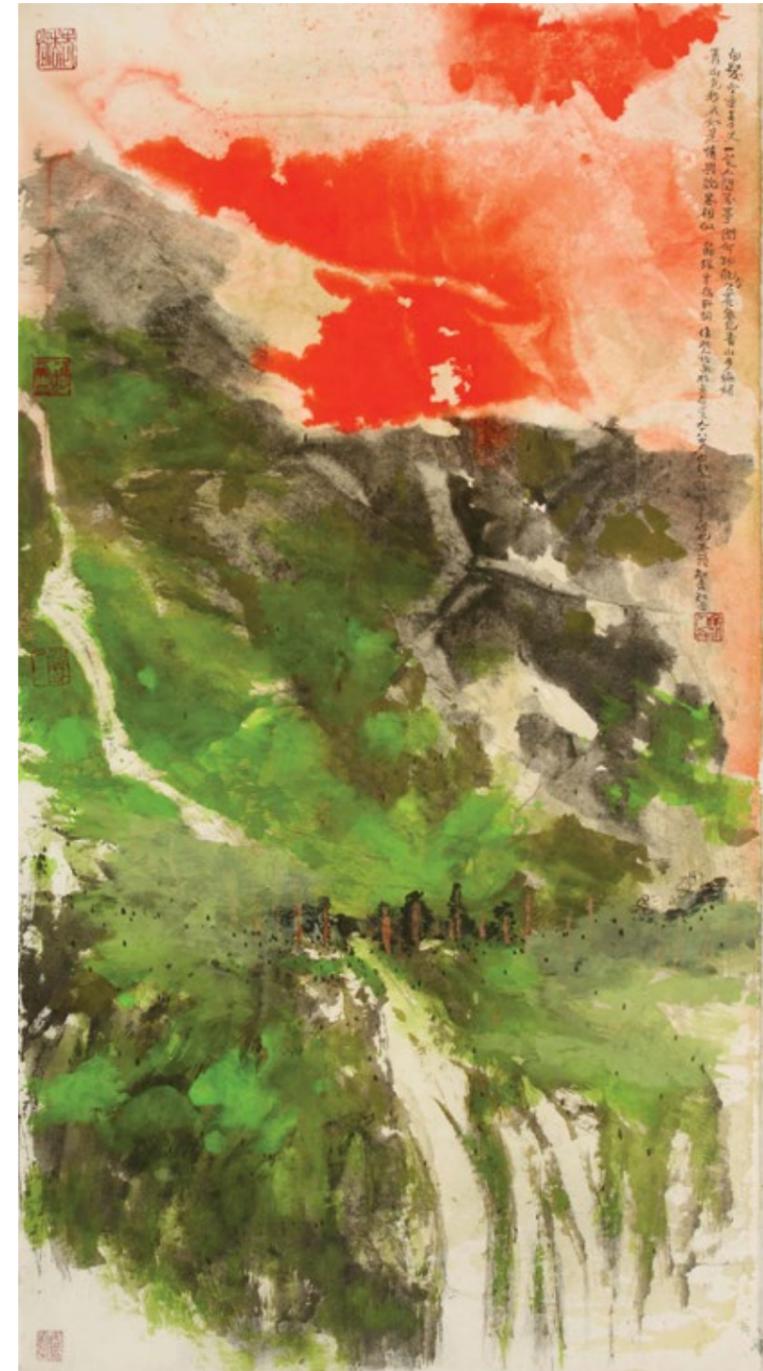
15.  
*Charming Green Mountains*, 2014  
Ink and color on paper  
56 1/2 x 30 in.

**Inscription**

Letting down the three thousand meter white hair like a pouring cascade, I laugh at worldly affairs. If you ask what pleases me: I see how charming the green mountain is, and expect the green mountain sees the same in me. Extract from a poem by Xin Jiaxuan; Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at nighty-eight; my white hair is not as long as three thousand meters but close. Did you know?

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Color of Nature (intaglio characters),  
Man outside the Pass (relief characters), Hou Beiren in Nineties (relief characters)



16.  
*Lonely Peak and Deep Valleys in Rain*, 2014  
Ink and color on paper  
60 x 33 in.

**Inscription**

I painted mountains with a broken brush, it feels like wild scribble. Lonely peaks and deep valleys are beautiful in their own ways. In the vast expanse I see sunglows in clouds, rain and fog. I indulge myself with a bottle of wine after splashing ink. Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at nighty-eight. Wild at old age.

**Seven Seals of the Artist**

Right: Gutless old man (intaglio characters), Man outside the Pass (relief characters), My Heart is with the Lakes and Mountains (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)



17.  
*Homology of Calligraphy and Painting*, 2014  
Ink and color on paper  
54 x 27 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

Being wild in calligraphy is fundamentally the same with being wild in painting; the only difference is in technique. By Hou Beiren at ninety-seven. Too much hubris?

**Six Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Seek Change (relief characters),

New Realm at Ninety-five (intaglio characters), Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)



18.  
*Red Cliff*, 2013  
Ink and color on paper  
63 x 27 3/4 in.

**Inscription**

Red Cliff

I was demoted to the Snow Studio due to my essay  
There were poems about the Three Kingdoms  
Yet all that ancient history has passed already  
Looking at the red cliff and white waters  
I howl at midnight  
The vast world senses my grief and becomes small  
Poem by Xin Jiakuan, painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, on the day  
of my exhibition in Liaoning Art Museum.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Color of Nature (intaglio characters),  
Old Apricot Tree Studio Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)  
Left: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters)



19.  
*Transformation of Song & Yuan Paintings*, 2011  
Ink and color on paper  
55 x 28 in.

**Inscription**

I learnt to paint along the styles of Song and Yuan dynasties, which I now seek to change. Right or wrong no longer means much to an old man like me. Hou Beiren at ninety-four in Old Apricot Tree Studio.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Seek Changes at Ninety (relief characters),  
Old Apricot Tree Studio Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)



20.  
*Splendid Clouds and Green Stream*, 2011  
Ink and color on paper  
54 x 27 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

Red sun glow and white clouds, blue water and green mountains.  
Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-four.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren Seal (intaglio characters),  
Old Apricot Tree Studio Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)  
Left: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)



21.  
*Yi'ai Temple*, 2011  
Ink and color on paper  
48 x 27 1/2 in.

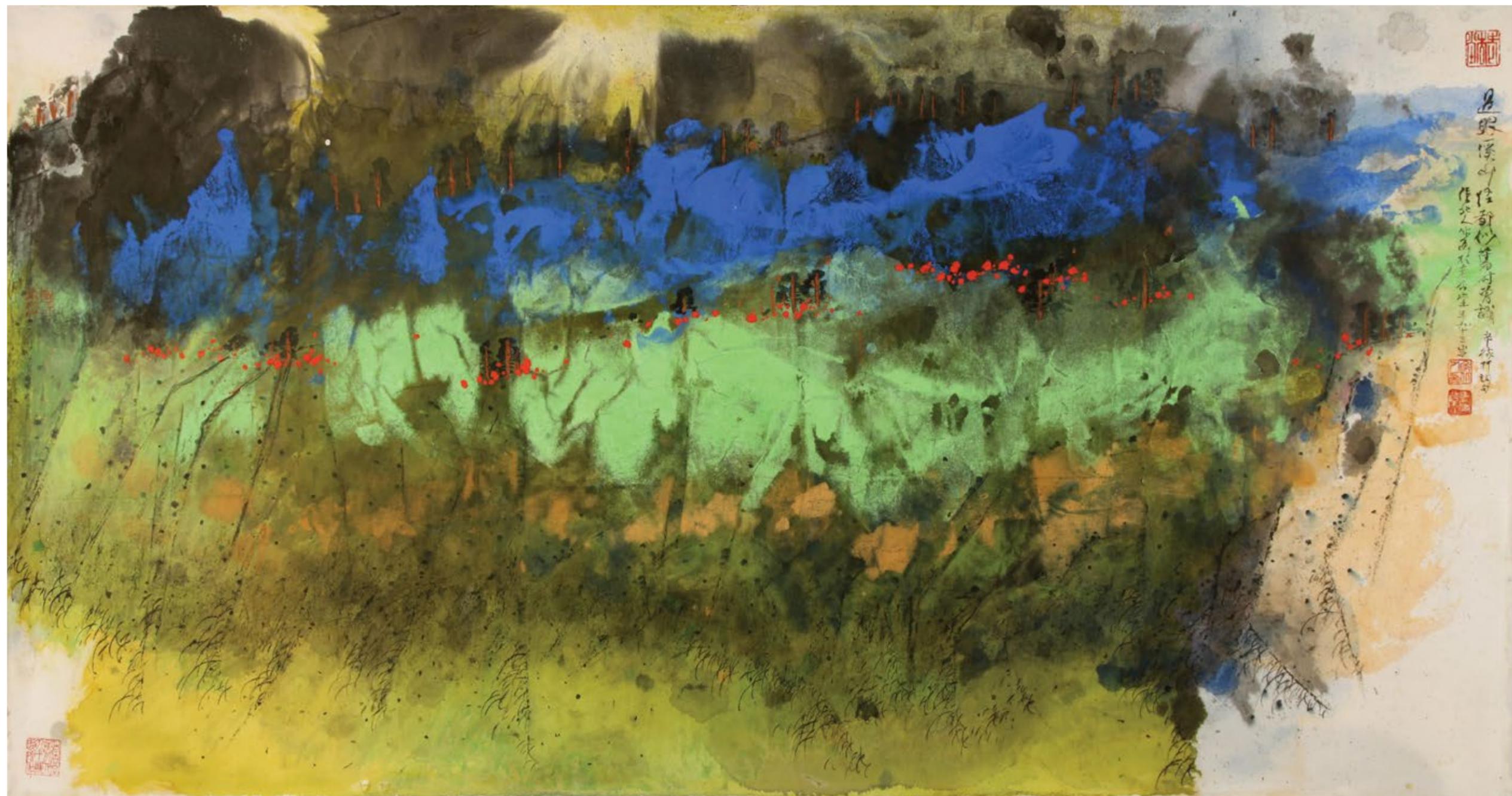
**Inscription**

Yi'ai Temple. Yi'ai Temple is located at the foot of Xianglu Peak, to the west of Lushan Mountain. Bai Juyi once wrote a poem about it. Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-four.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou (Relief characters), Beiren (intaglio characters)  
Left: Seek Change at Ninety (relief characters), Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)





月照溪山  
佳景似畫  
平林竹  
王



22.

*Mountains and Creeks like Old Acquaintance*, 2010

Ink and color on paper

38 x 73 in.

**Inscription**

Creeks and mountains that meet my eyes, all feel familiar.

Verse by Xin Jiaxuan.

Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-three.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren Seal (intaglio characters),

Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters)

Left: Seek Change at Ninety (relief characters). Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)

*previous spread*

23.

*Glamorous Mountains*, 2009

Ink and color on paper

55 x 30 in.

**Inscription**

Splendor of the Mountain.

Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, 2009.

**Three Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters)



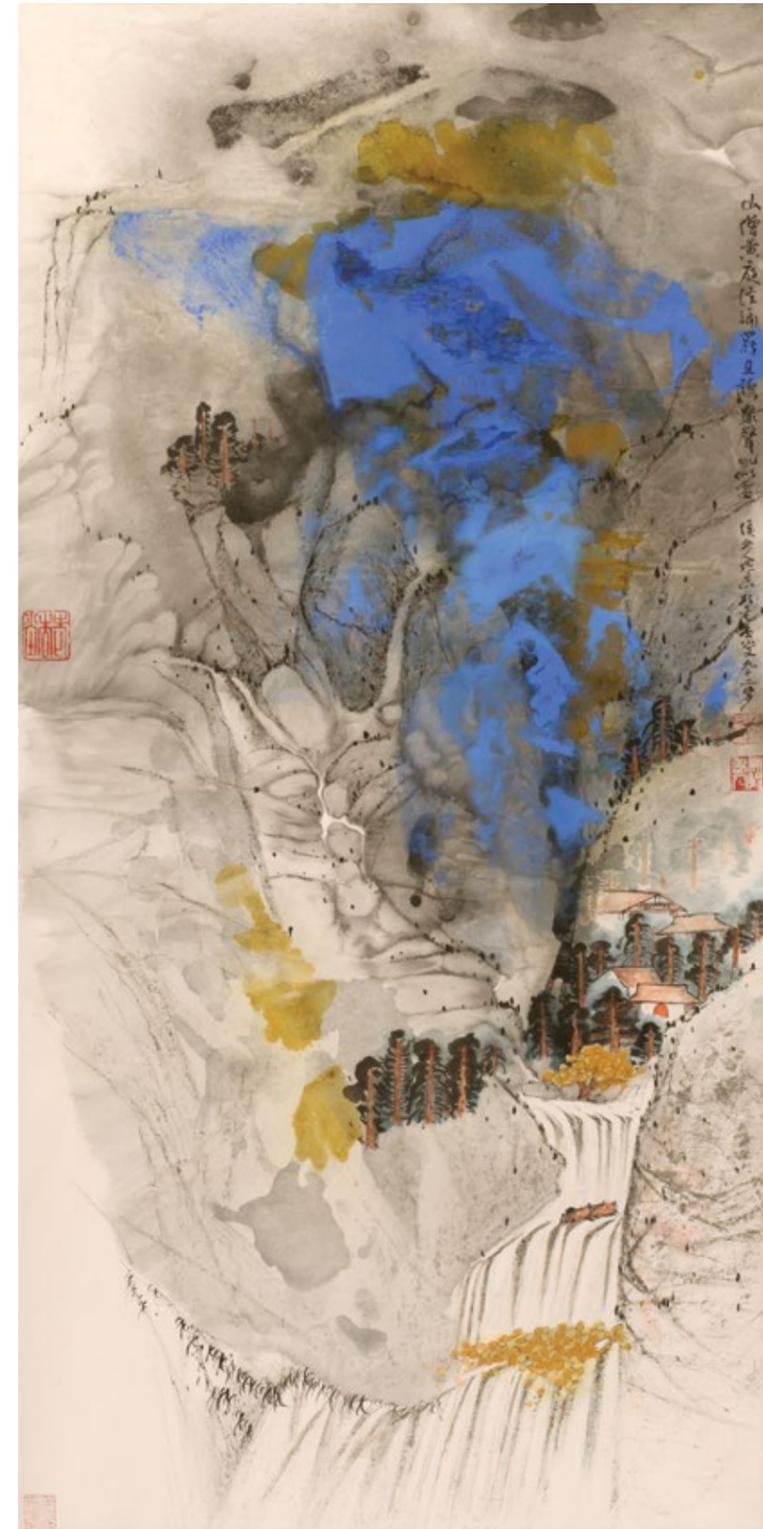
24.  
*Mountain Spring*, 2009  
Ink and color on paper  
53 x 26 in.

**Inscription**

The monk in the mountain, having completed his chanting, is listening to the thunder-like tinkling of the spring.  
Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-two.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (intaglio characters), Gutless old man (intaglio characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)



25.

*E Mei Pavilion at Caishi Crag*, 2008

Ink and color on paper

84 x 37 in.

**Inscription**

E'mei Pavilion on the Caishi Crag

By the bold cliff

I see the water falling in a sweeping force for a thousand miles

The mountains on both sides of the Yangtze river

Are like a beauty's knotted brows

When can her sadness and lovesickness end?

The tide is lowering, the gale is strong

I finished my wine, listen to the flute

Let me ask you, Li-bai the great master of poetry

Where to seek peace and serenity?

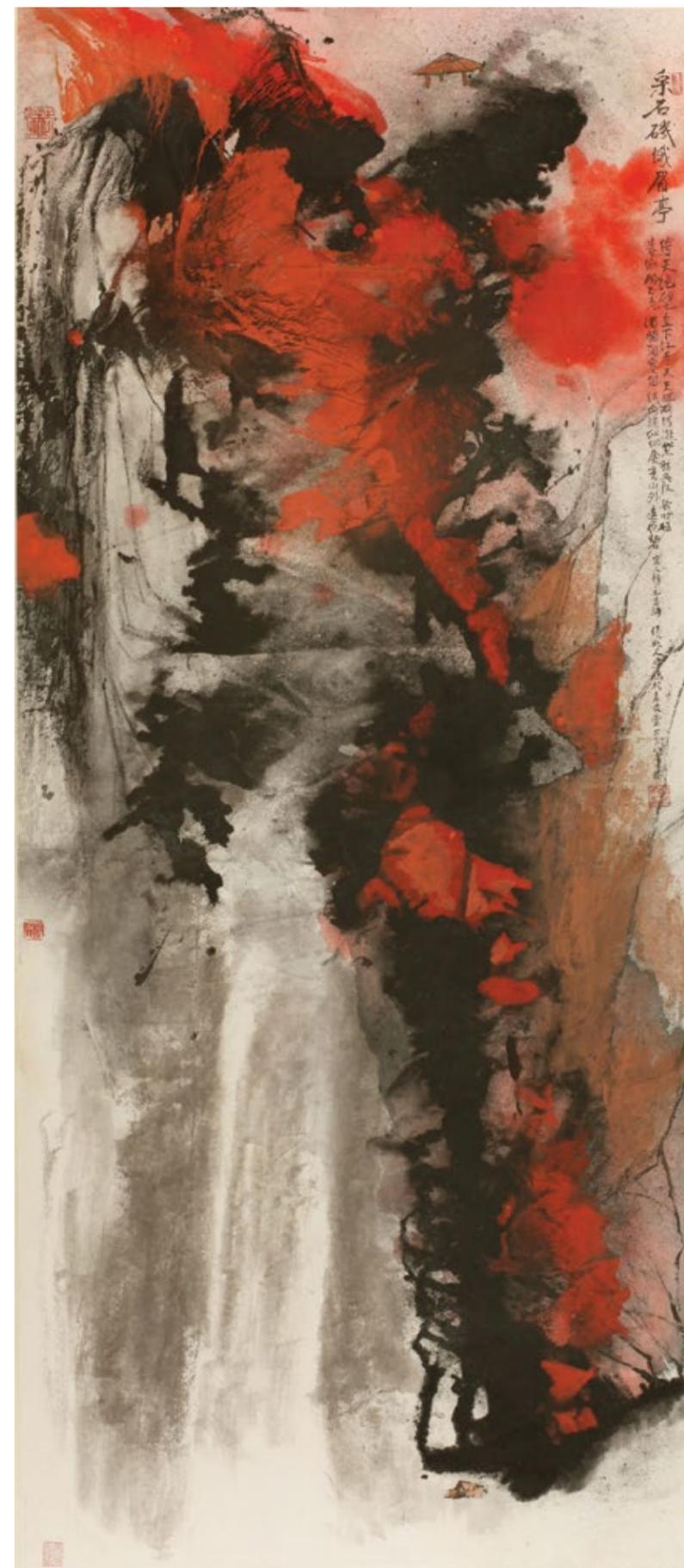
Poem by Han Yuanji of the Song Dynasty

Painting by Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, 2008.

**Four Seals of the Artist**

Right: Gutless (intaglio characters), Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), I Dream of My Hometown (intaglio characters)



26.  
*Cloudy Mountains*, 2008  
Ink and color on paper  
84 x 37 in.

**Inscription**

Clouds in the mountains.  
Clouds stay on the mountain top, rain falls down the hill. Deep in that vast expanse  
are old temples and peaks. By Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio at ninety-two,  
December 2008.

**Three Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters)

Left: One Hundred Plums Hut (relief characters), A Blade of Grass for Sunlight in Spring  
(intaglio characters)





27.

*Red Rock Mountain (Four Panels), 2008*

Ink and watercolor on paper

54 x 27 in.

**Inscription**

Red Rock Mountain.

Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, at midnight on January 15th, 2008.

Five Seals of the Artist.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou Beiren Seal (relief characters), Gutless old man (intaglio characters)

Left: One Hundred Plums Hut (intaglio characters), All are Old Hometown Moss (intaglio characters), Old Apricot Tree Studio Hou Beiren after Ninety (relief characters)

*previous spread*

28.

*Mountains at Sunset, 2004*

Ink and color on paper

27 x 54 in.

**Inscription**

Green mountain bathed in sunset is as red as flames; a cottage hides in the depth of white clouds.

Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, California, August 10, 2004.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: I Dream of My Hometown (intaglio characters), Hou Beiren in Eighties (relief characters)

Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren (intaglio characters), Gutless old man (intaglio characters)





29.  
*Gorge in Autumn, 2002*  
Ink and watercolor on paper  
38 x 86 in.

**Inscription**  
Autumn in the gorges.  
Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio in 2002.

**Four Seals of the Artist**  
Right: Hou Beiren Seal (intaglio characters), Gutless old man (intaglio characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Hou Beiren in eighties (relief characters)

*previous spread*

30.  
*Seeking Plum Blossom, 2002*  
Ink and color on paper  
29 x 55 in.

**Inscription**  
A visit to plum blossoms.  
Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, May 2002.

**Six Seals of the Artist**  
Right: Hou Beiren Seal (intaglio characters), Gutless old man (intaglio characters),  
Gutless old man's seal for paintings (relief characters)  
Left: Old Apricot Tree Studio (intaglio characters), Thoughts of You are Like Flowing Water  
(relief characters), Hou Beiren in eighties (relief characters)



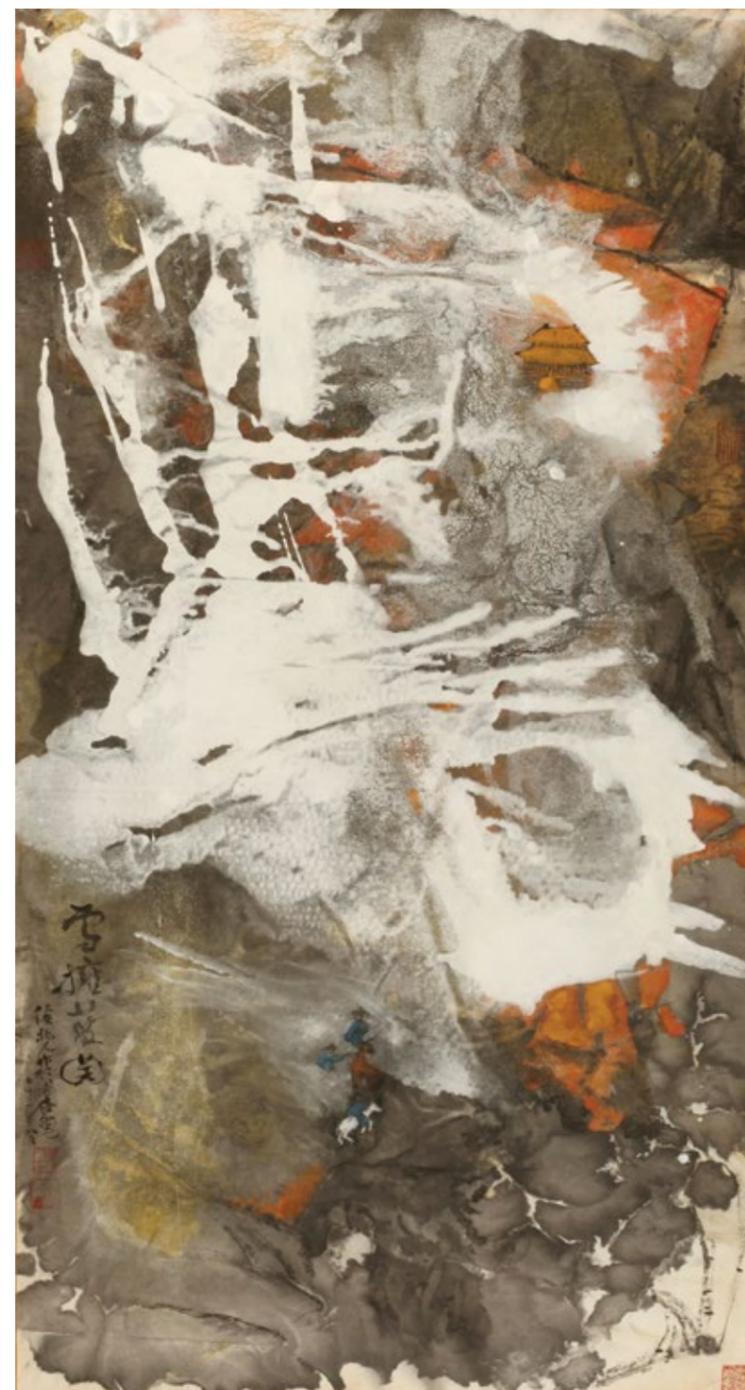
31.  
*Snow Filled Plank Road*, 2001  
Ink and color on paper  
54 1/2 x 29 1/2 in.

**Inscription**

The blue pass is covered in snow.  
Hou Beiren in Old Apricot Tree Studio, August 2001.

**Five Seals of the Artist**

Right: Old Apricot Tree Studio (relief characters), Hou Beiren in Nineties (relief characters)  
Left: My soul yearns for homeland (intaglio characters), Hou Beiren Seal (intaglio characters),  
Gutless old man (intaglio characters)



32.

*Temple in Dusk*, 1992  
Ink and color on paper  
50 x 26 in.

**Inscription**

Clouds fall over a thousand mountains.  
Three, then five leaves fly in the breeze.  
A temple seemingly abandoned but with a door half closed,  
Welcomes a monk in as dusk falls.  
Poem by Yu Qian. Painted by Hou Beiren in One Hundred Plums Hut in 1992.

**Three Seals of the Artist**

Right: Hou (intaglio characters), Beiren (relief characters)  
Left: One Hundred Plums Hut (intaglio characters)





Hou Beiren 侯北人

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## Biography

Hou Beiren was born in 1917 in Liaoning, China and graduated from Kyushu University, Japan in 1943. During his early years, he studied painting under Li Zhongchang, then with Huang Binhong and Zheng Shiqiao. Hou moved from Hong Kong to the United States in 1956 and settled in “Old Apricot Villa”, his home in Los Altos, California. For the next half century, Hou has been engaged in art creation and established his own unique and innovative “splash ink and color” painting style, which seamlessly integrated both Eastern and Western aesthetics. Hou is regarded as one of the most influential overseas Chinese artists to the transformation of Chinese painting.

Hou’s works have been exhibited and collected throughout the US and internationally, including Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Jose Museum of Art, National Art Museum of China, Nanjing Museum, Zhejiang Art Museum, and Austria Museum of Modern Art. In 2004, the City of Kunshan in Jiangsu, China built Hou Beiren Art Museum to house 300 pieces of Hou’s donation containing his works and rare collections. In 2015, Liaoning Art Museum opened Hou Beiren and Zhang Yunqin Gallery.

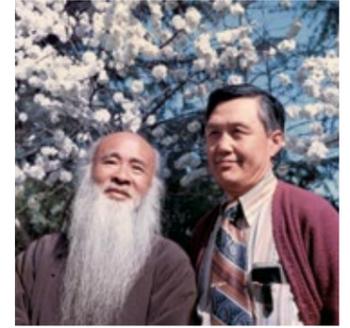
- 1917** Born in Dajiatun, northwest of Haicheng County, Liaoning Province
  
- 1922** Began to copy rubbings and old paintings of the four-gentleman: plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum
  
- 1930** Enrolled in Haicheng Zhonglu Elementary School where he began formal art lessons with Li Zhongchang, an artist from Hebei province
  - Learned traditional painting methods of the four-gentleman: plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum and practiced calligraphy after He Shaoji style
  
- 1933** Entered Junior High Yingkou Middle School
  - Practiced calligraphy in the style of Wei rubbings
  - Painted landscape modeling after Four Wangs of Qing Dynasty
  
- 1935** Entered Senior High Yingkou Middle School
  - Assumed the position of chief editor of the school’s magazine
  
- 1938** Enrolled in Baoding Normal College in Hebei
  - Published essays and novels in *Chinese Literature and Art* monthly magazine
  
- 1940** Won the award for official scholarship to study in Kyushu University, Japan, majoring in Sociology
  - Became a student of Huang Binhong, a modern Chinese painting master
  
- 1943** Graduated from Kyushu University; Returned to China
  - Served as a researcher on Japanese Affairs in Chongqing International Institute
  
- 1945** Took a job in Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - After the Japan and Chinese war concluded, resigned his post in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and took a job as the editor for *Revitalization Journal* in Shanghai
  
- 1946** Elected Representative of Constitution Legislating National Assembly
  - Took the post of Legislator
  
- 1947** Married Zhang Yunqin
  - Resigned the post from Legislating National Assembly; Return to Beijing
  
- 1949** Moved to Hong Kong



- 1954 Published first novel *The Spring of Homeland*
- 1955 Met Zhang Daqian at Hong Kong
- 1956 Migrated to the United States
  - First exhibit in the United States hosted by *San Francisco World Daily*
- 1957 United Nations Cultural and Education Committee hosted a solo exhibit for Hau Pei Jen at the Grand Hall of San Francisco Woman Federation
  - Began teaching Chinese painting and calligraphy at Pacific Art League in Palo Alto
- 1958 Solo exhibit at the Santa Clara University Art Museum, USA
- 1959 Solo exhibit at Lake Montalo Art Association, USA
  - Solo exhibit at Palo Alto Art Association, USA
- 1960 Solo exhibit at Chainable Fine Art Gallery, USA
- 1961 Solo exhibit at Palo Alto City Main Library, USA
  - Solo exhibit at Sunnyvale Art Association, USA
  - Taught Chinese calligraphy class
  - Purchased land in Los Altos, built a home and named it “Old Apricot Villa”
- 1962 Solo exhibit at Santa Clara University Art Museum, USA
  - Solo exhibit at Lake Montalo Art Association, USA
- 1963 Solo exhibit at San Francisco de Young Museum, USA
  - Solo exhibit at *San Francisco Chronicle*, USA
- 1964 Solo exhibit at New Orleans Art Museum, USA
- 1965 Solo exhibit at UC Berkeley, USA
  - Solo exhibit at Marseilles Art Association, USA
  - Solo exhibit at Wells Fargo Bank Gallery in San Francisco, USA
- 1966 Solo exhibit at Lake Montalo Art Association, USA
- 1967 Solo exhibit at China Art Gallery in Carmel, USA
- 1968 Solo exhibit at Art Museum of Holy Names University, USA
- 1969 Solo exhibit at San Jose Art Association, USA
  - Zhang Daqian moved to Carmel



- 1970 Solo exhibit at Los Altos Art Association, USA
- 1971 Painting and calligraphy pieces were auctioned in Sotheby's, New York, USA
- 1972 Solo exhibit at Foothill College, USA
- 1973 Solo exhibit at Los Altos Art Gallery, USA
  - Solo exhibit at City Hall, Hayward, USA
- 1975 Solo exhibit at Palo Alto Pacific Art League, USA
- 1976 Solo exhibit at Chinese Education Center, Stanford University, USA
  - Invited for a special exhibit at California State Government Building, USA
- 1977 Solo exhibit at Xintai Art Gallery, USA
  - Solo exhibit at Palo Alto Culture Center, USA
- 1978 Solo exhibit at Menlo Park Art Association, USA
- 1979 Exhibition, demonstration and lecture on Chinese painting techniques at San Francisco Oriental Art Association, USA
  - Established American Association for the Advancement of Chinese Art (ASACA)
  - Elected to be the first president and subsequently named as the permanent of ASACA honorary chairman
- 1980 Held Retrospective exhibit at San Jose Museum of Art for his twenty-fifth years as residence of the United States, USA
  - Published retrospective exhibit catalog
- 1981 Solo exhibit at Nevada University, USA
- 1982 Exhibited at San Jose Museum of Art, USA
- 1983 Zhu Qizhan visited Old Apricot Villa
  - Hou Beiren and Zhu Qizhan met Ansel Adams
- 1984 Solo exhibit at China Art Museum, China
  - Solo exhibit at Hefei Museum, China
  - Solo exhibit at Redding Museum, Redding, USA
- 1985 CCTV and CNDFILM made a documentary of Hau Pei Jen, filmed at Old Apricot Villa





- 1987 Solo exhibit at Nanjing Museum, China
  - Solo exhibit at Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, appointed honorary professor, and established scholarship at the Academy, China
- 1988 Invited to exhibit at the Beijing International Wash Painting Exhibit, China
  - Solo exhibit at San Francisco Culture Center Gallery, USA
- 1997 Beijing Foreign Language Press issued “Hou Pei-Jen Works Collection”
- 2002 Donated private collection and his own works, totaling over three hundred piece to the establishment of Hou Beiren Art museum in Kunshan, China
- 2004 Hou Beiren Art Museum opened in November, China
- 2008 July, National Exhibit of Hou Beiren’s *Magnificent Nature Landscape* began at Shenzhen Art Museum, China
  - October, National Exhibit of Hou Beiren’s *Magnificent Nature Landscape* toured to Nanjing, China
  - December, National Exhibit of Hou Beiren’s *Magnificent Nature Landscape* toured to Beijing, China
  - December, Solo exhibit at Nanhai Art Center in Millbrae, USA
- 2009 March, National Exhibit of Hou Beiren’s *Magnificent Nature Landscape* toured to Shanghai, China
  - April, Invited as the lead artist for the inaugural exhibit at the Euphrat Museum in DeAnza College, USA
  - July, *Color of Nature Hou Beiren Landscape* exhibit opened in Silicon Valley Asian Art Center, USA
  - October, National Exhibit of Hou Beiren’s *Magnificent Nature Landscape* toured to Changshu, China
- 2010 April, *Homeland in My Dreams* Hou Beiren Landscape exhibited in Liaoning Art Museum, China
  - May, Century Meeting of Writing Brush special exhibit opened in Shanghai honoring the works of Zhu Qizhan and Hou Beiren, China
- 2011 March, Fifty Year Retrospective Exhibit of Hou Beiren in
  - Pacific Art League in Palo Alto, USA
  - October, Solo exhibit Hou Beiren in Silicon Valley Asian Art Center, USA
  - Solo exhibit in Anhui, Hefei Yaming Museum, China
- 2012 October, Solo exhibit in Fujian Art Museum, China

- 2013 January, Started to paint long handscroll *Endless Autumn Mountains* on silk
  - February, Exhibit *The Moment for Ink* and talk in San Francisco State University Gallery, USA
  - March, Gave talk with Prof Michael Sullivan in Silicon Valley Asian Art Center
  - October, Donated 60 paintings to Liaoning Art Museum(LAM) to establish Hou Beiren and Zhang Yunqin Gallery, China
  - November, Solo exhibit in Zhejiang Art Museum, China
- 2014 Solo exhibit *Sublimity: Recent Works by Hou Beiren* at NanHai Art, USA
- 2015 Hou Beiren and Zhang Yunqin Gallery opened, Liaoning Art Museum, China



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