

Shao Yuan Zhang Artist Statement

“Elemental” Show || July 2018

I express my emotions and understanding of the world today through each brushstroke. In the process of this expression, I devote my attention to the the journey of painting itself: the process of understanding, application and exploration of the medium, materials, tools and the techniques of painting.

This process is what propels me forward. Over the past two years, I’ve begun to explore the intersection of oriental ink and oil painting resulting in my my “Horses” series. My inspiration begins with my journey from surviving as a teenage artist in rural China during the Cultural Revolution to dreaming of studying in the United States and overcoming the challenges of a poverty-stricken immigrant experience decades later. The majestic horse became the focus of my paintings not only because of what they represent: strength, depth, empathy, solitude and complex dynamism--but also because of their power to transcend boundaries. Horses embody the elemental powers of nature where no explanations are needed.

For me, painting has always been the process of establishment, destruction and re-establishment. New discoveries are made in the process of destruction and establishment. Every ounce of “damage” to an existing image brings forth new possibilities and opportunities. This process never fails to surprise and encourage me to strive for in seek understanding all my works.