

Taiwanese Artists' Study of Chinese Painting during the Japanese Colonial Period: A Case Study of Lin Yu-shan

Tsai, Chia-Chiu

Associate Prof. | Graduate Institute of Art History,
National Taiwan Normal University

Abstract

The paper examines the scrapbook and sketchbook of Taiwanese artist, Lin Yu-shan (1907-2004), and reviews their sources in order to better understand the artist's experiences studying Chinese painting. In Lin's early years, his studies included the fundamentals of traditional painting and calligraphy initiated in the framing business of his family, afterward Lin studied in Japan, visiting art exhibitions, tracing artworks in the museums, and prodigiously sketching from nature. His scrapbook and sketchbook are considered proofs of his studies and art-making process, as demonstrated in previous studies. This paper will reproduce that proof, focusing on such subject matters as lotus, waterfowl in bird-and-flower paintings, and Guan Yu figure paintings, examine the processes in greater detail.

These materials provide an opportunity to probe the historical context of Taiwanese art, and understand the multilayerity and complexity of the era through the artist's eyes. Traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy, the cumulative East Asian art tradition, and modern Japanese art all coexisted, merging and further developing in Taiwan. How do Taiwanese artists learn and integrate various arts? Have they formed a certain historical conception of Chinese or East Asian art? Rather than evaluate the accuracy of Lin's tracing activity and historical conception, the paper endeavors understand the artist's vision, his choices and motivations, and thereby better appreciate the results of his art-making processes. This will, additionally, provide key concepts for understanding the relationship between Taiwanese and East Asian art histories.