

## The Challenge of Change

### Aaron Gan: Recent Paintings

For one solid year from 2011 to 2012, Aaron Gan immersed himself passionately and intensively in the illusive art of watercolor. His forte was the depiction of nature. But it was his personal gift in his painting approach - his incisiveness in pictorial conception and skillful watercolor techniques – which raised his watercolor art above fellow practitioners at that point of development.

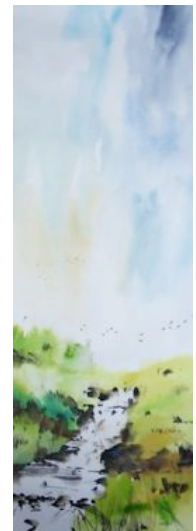
The special distinction in Gan’s watercolor art lies in the fact that he had the foresight and courage to distance himself from the status-quo, from the substantial body of watercolor techniques which has been repeatedly tested, which has been well endorsed and documented, and which faultless logic has wide appeal, leading to countless watercolor practitioners achieving popular appeal in their artworks.

As a serious and ardent watercolor exponent, Gan is driven by the ideals beyond the widely accepted standardized quest in watercolor art. Obsessed with the urge to continuously search for fresh and profound ideas, he was captivated by the philosophical concepts of Zen and Tao (Way) – concepts not related directly to artistic endeavor. He not only accepted unorthodoxy in his approach to art but, in fact, embraced it.

In time, Gan discovered the fascination of Chinese ink painting. He was intrigued by the fact that such an artistic repertoire as Chinese ink painting which painting boundary was so severely bounded in artistic concept, painting techniques and painting materials - black ink, rice paper, supple brushes and water - could, in the hands of brilliant masters in this unique art form, forge masterworks of the highest order. Nothing vital is amiss – vision, creativity, evocation, resilience.

Out of irresistible curiosity, Gan plunged immediately into intimate comparison with his two favorite art media – watercolor, which he had close contact and Chinese ink painting, which he sensed exciting possibilities. The conclusion: The perennial strength of watercolor was its intriguing visual transparency; while the potential strength of Chinese ink painting was the intuitive command in ink expression.

As a serious painter, Gan is constantly concerned with the scope and endurance of his art. For him an artistic endeavor is a long, demanding and turbulent journey but one that is exciting, continuously evolving and fresh vistas are opened up along the way enabling the artist’s vision to grow in perpetuity. For him, Chinese painter Wu



Opportunity  
76x28cm  
watercolor 2012



Roots  
76x28cm  
watercolor 2012

Guangzhong's enduring and resilient painting career has been both enlightening and inspirational.

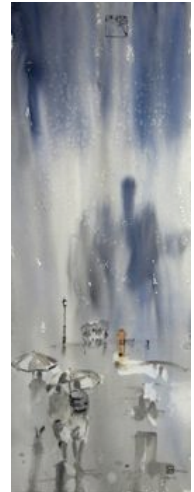
Spanning a breathtaking seven decades, Wu's artistic journey is characterized by the revolutionary transitions which clearly reflect his fierce determination to effect important changes in the visual art in China. Wu's tremendous success in all the three transitions is eventually evident: In Hangzhou, he succeeded in his own terms, to rediscover the essence of the traditions in Chinese ink painting; later in Paris – painting amidst brilliant artists, Wu created his series of oil paintings notable for its painterly technical stringency and visual clarity; and eventually returning to China, a euphoric home-coming, he plunged into his ambitious artistic challenge – an attempt to liberalize and modernize traditional Chinese ink painting.

As Gan began his experiments to forge a new direction in his art through the fusion of watercolor and Chinese ink painting, a cluster of his recent works took on a special significance. These paintings include: *Opportunity*, *Roots* and *Abundance*.

They vividly reflected three crucial achievements – the preservation of watercolor transparency, the acquisition of the instinctive, terse brushwork of Chinese ink painting and, most important for Gan, the uncanny fusion of media innate sensitivity and technical ingenuity.

On his thoughts for the future of his artistic development, Gan said:  
*I am determined first to forge a unique personal style of creditable standard – something which all aspiring artists work towards. But in the long run, after years of struggle, I aspire to making a mark in the Singapore Art scene and being an influential artist to a younger generation. I believe Dr Chen Wen Hsi and Wu Guangzhong have achieved such a status.*

**W.Y.Choy**  
**Artist**  
**2012**



Beacon  
76x28cm  
watercolor 2012



Prosperity  
76x28cm  
watercolor 2012



Abundance  
76x28cm  
watercolor 2012