

Georgette Chen

Bio: Born in 1906, studied in Paris, worked between China, France, SG.

Influenced by:

- Surroundings
 - Works have both Eastern and Western influence due to her constantly changing environment
 - Western painting style, using oil paint medium and concepts like vanishing point and three-dimensional perspective
 - Eastern compositions of people, landscapes, still-life. Common and unpretentious, capturing the everyday.
- People
 - Post impressionists
 - Cezanne: Similar in linear brushstrokes (prominent) and using daubs of colour to create a richness in tone. Inspired by his landscapes (L'estaque) and still life (Still life with cherries). Similar skewed perspective in Chen's still life (Phoenix eyes)
 - Van Gogh: Similar in using thick paint and brushstrokes [Painterly manner] that follow form (Still life with cut apple and orange VS Irises) and in using comp colours
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Created & Subject matters:

- Portraits
 - Self portraits
 - Portraits of Eugene Chen (posthumous too)
 - Portraits of surrounding common people (young girl, lady) reflecting Eastern culture through dressing and appearance
- Still life
 - Common items
 - Painted exactly what she saw
 - Reflected SE Asian life
- Landscapes
 - Chinese/SEA surrounding
- Worked with sensitivity towards subjects, drawing from environment

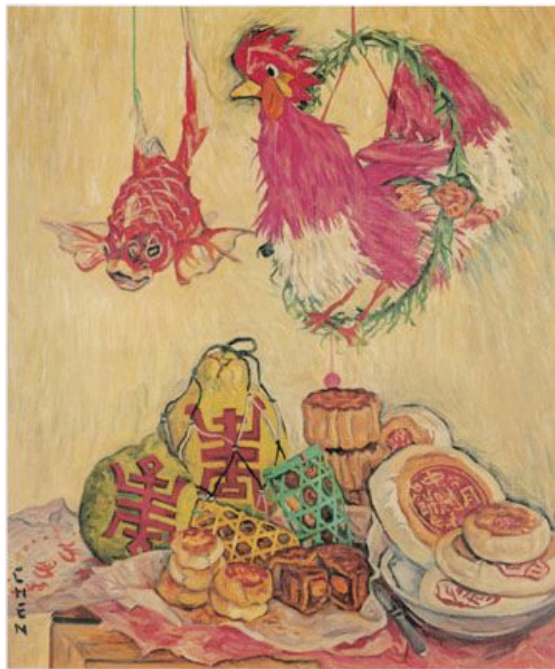
Key themes:

- Portraying the essence of her environment through meticulous colour, composition and brushwork

Elements of work:

1. About strokes
 - Short choppy brushstrokes (reminiscent of Impressionists and Post Impressionists like Cezanne)
 - Express texture and tactile quality of subject matter
 - Emphasize 3-Dnality
2. About colour
 - Strong and subtle used to emphasize and bring to the back
 - Often neutral backgrounds (cream, brown) compared to warm/cool subject matters (red, blue)
 - Mixes tones to balance image
 - Light and dark tones used to create an illusion of space
 - Dark tones to contrast from background
 - Colour palette suggests environment eg. (Warm, bright colours w/ subtle BG in Moon Festival Table creates homely and convivial environment)
3. About composition
 - a. Common imagery
 - i. SEAsian elements that show cultural context of her work
 - ii. Familiar to audience (down to earth), relatable
 - b. Good composition skills
 - i. Carefully place to show spatial definition for fore-, back-, mid-ground
 - ii. Structural approach to composition and form
 - iii. Deliberate arrangement of objects while retaining a natural, homely look showed discipline and comprehension of painting conventions (learned in Paris probably)

Example works



Still life (Moon Festival table) (c. 1965)

- quality of lightness and pleasure (literally in the hanging objects and metaphorically in the festival items)
 - conscious efforts put into choice of objects, their composition and colour scheme
 - formal and yet unpretentious
 - red, green common colours among items
- VS yellow BG
- colourful exuberance
 - atmosphere of spiritedness of occasion
 - simple joy in common items

Cityscape of Beijing (c. 1950)



- Intricately sculpted bridges shows attention to detail
- Open air with clouds and a calm lake > naturalism
- Fluid curving lines and cool palette
- Reflected in the water is a simplification of the grand palace (Adding realism)

Self portrait (c. 1930)

- Thick paint applied in daubs (esp when compared to second self portrait c. 1946)
- Muted tones
- Sombre tone, stare with hooded eyes showing coldness

