

VISUAL ARTS

If you go

Multiple Encounters: Through Feb. 16. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday. \$7-\$10. Berkeley Art Museum, 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. (510) 642-0808. www.bampfa.berkeley.edu.

'Multiple Encounters': Bridging old, new Chinese art



Berkeley Art Museum

"Clearing Out the Mountain: Demons Fighting with Animals in the Forest," anonymous Ming dynasty scroll painting, ink and colors on paper, from about 1500.

By Kenneth Baker

The retrospective given Chinese contemporary artist Yang Fudong by the Berkeley Art Museum has ended, but an interesting postscript to it continues.

Chen Fong-fong, J.S. Lee Memorial Fellow at UC Berkeley, has combined classical Chinese paintings and a 2005 video by Yang, inviting us to seek continuities between old and new Chinese art.

With sound but no dialogue, the video describes crossing paths of villagers trying to escape to the city as city-dwellers try to escape to the country.

Chen and I spoke in the exhibition.

Q: I see humor in Yang Fudong's video, but is there any in these traditional works?

A: I think there is. This scroll deserves further study because this subject matter, "Searching for Demons in the Mountains," features these demons — lady demons. I find the depiction of them quite shocking, though I don't think for people in the 16th century, it would have been humorous. It's a legendary story about Chinese gods. ... I found the video interesting in presenting costumes and tools as images of the identities of people. You could see comedy in those, but he uses them to reflect something serious in contemporary society.

Q: Was Yang thinking about antique paintings when he made this video?

A: I don't know. But we viewed some of them together when he was here. He has seen a lot of

classical Chinese painting, and maybe he can recall some of the images.

Q: Is there anything in the paintings analogous to a video soundtrack?

A: There is a professor at Harvard University studying symbols of sound in Chinese painting. He came to see this exhibition and he thought he saw something in one of the album pictures that might be called a soundtrack effect. ... Text sometimes evokes visionary imagination, so that could have some kind of sound effect as well.

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Art During the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910)." Ends Sun. "The Carved Brush: Qi Baishi (1899-1997)." Calligraphy, painting and seal works. Through July 13. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Sun. 200 Larkin St., S.F. (415) 581-3500. www.asianart.org

Cantor Arts Center "Mapping Edo: The Social and Political Geography of Early Modern Japan." Through Feb. 2. "Flesh and Metal: Body and Machine in Early 20th-Century Art." Through March 16. Lomita Drive, Stanford University. (650) 723-4177. www.museum.stanford.edu.

Cartoon Art Museum "Grains of Sand: 25 Years of the San Francisco Cartoonist." Through March 16. "Searle in America." Through March 30. "Small Press Spotlight: Tyler Cohen." Through April 6. "Sam and Max: Swift and Mirthful Justice." Steve Purcell, illustration. Through April 20. "Starry, Starry Night." Through April 27. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sun. 655 Mission St., S.F. (415) 227-8666. www.cartoonart.org.

Charles M. Schulz Museum "Play Things: Toys in Peanut Town." Through Feb. 3. "School Projects." Through March 2. "Starry, Starry Night." Through April 27. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays (closed Tues.), 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat.-Sun. 2301 Hardies Lane, Santa Rosa. (707) 579-4452. www.schulzmuseum.org.

Contemporary Jewish Museum "Works in Progress: Considering Utopia." Through Jan. 20. "Frog and Toad and the World of Arnold Lobel." Through March 23. "Live Archive." Through March 23. "To Build and Be Built: Kibbutz History." Through July 1. 1-8 p.m. Thurs., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri.-Tues. 736 Mission St., S.F. (415) 655-7800. www.theckm.org.

De Young Museum "A Biggy Exhibition." Through Jan. 20. "Modeled Bodies." Through Feb. 9. "The Art of Bulgari: La Dolce Vita and Beyond." Through Feb. 17. 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sun. 50 Tea Garden Drive, Golden Gate Park, S.F. (415) 750-3600. www.deyoungmuseum.org.

GLBT History Museum "The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus: Celebrating 35 Years of Activism Through Song." Ends Wed. "Vicki Marlane: I'm Your Lady." Through Feb. 28. 4127 18th St., S.F. (415) 621-1107. www.glbthistorymuseum.org.

Legion of Honor "Sweden's Master Painter." Anders Zorn, paintings. Through Feb. 2.