

前言

兩年前當我們舉辦約翰·法蘭寇收藏之常玉作品專拍時，除了其作品本身的稀有性及新鮮感令人耳目一新外，同樣重要的是從藏品的文獻部份包括常玉與其好友約翰之間的書信往來，使我們得以發現更多有關常玉前所未聞的生平軼事。

在常玉結識法蘭寇將近二十年以後，命運又驅使他與另一位好友及支持者結緣，那就是蜚聲國際的攝影大師羅勃·法蘭克。本目錄內的畫作已伴隨法蘭克的身邊超過五十個寒暑。法蘭克並非能預知常玉作品與日俱增之名聲及受歡迎之程度，但是他對於這些畫作一向珍如拱璧，是為了懷念這一位對他一生有深刻及特殊意義的摯友——常玉，並非為其作品的金錢價值。

1949年，當二十五歲的法蘭克與四十八歲的常玉初在紐約認識時，法蘭克剛從蘇黎世抵達美國。縱使那時法蘭克僅是一個名不見經傳而經濟狀況並不富裕的攝影師，但當常玉與他同在紐約時，他除了本身的生活費用外，亦接濟了常玉的開銷。眾所週知的是法蘭克在日後成為了當代最具影響力的攝影師之一，他的作品最為人稱道的包括於1958年所出版的一本極具震撼力的攝影集 *The Americans*。礙於篇幅所限，本目錄並不旨於詳述法蘭克在藝事上的成就及其攝影作品對於當世及爾後之影響。對於筆者來說，能得以親身與這位攝影大師對談及聆聽他對於其摯友——常玉，作那樣溫馨與欣賞的回憶，實在深感榮幸。從法蘭克對常玉的畫作多年以來一直保存在身邊及他對於這份友情至今仍非常的珍惜，足以反映出他對於常玉深切的懷念。法蘭克將常玉的畫作及他對常玉的友情及懷念與我們分享，並讓世人對於常玉的過往有更深一層的了解，使我們得以持續的鑑賞及讚揚這位當代最重要的華人藝術家之一，實為幸事。

衣淑凡
1997年6月
台北

Preface

Two years ago, when we offered for sale *The Johan Franco Collection of Works by Sanyu*, it was an exciting breakthrough not only for the freshness and rarity of the works offered, but equally for the unexpected discovery of new information about Sanyu contained in the documents of the collection, such as the letters he wrote to his friend, Johan Franco.

Nearly two decades after Sanyu met Franco, his path crossed with another person who was to also become a close friend and patron, the world-renowned photographer, Robert Frank. The paintings offered in this catalogue have been with Robert Frank for the past fifty years. He has kept these paintings near him wherever he has been and, not knowing the fame and popularity that were to grace Sanyu posthumously, he treasured these paintings not for their value, but for the memory of Sanyu, who was, for him, a person who touched his life in a very special way.

When they first met in New York in 1949, Robert Frank was 25 years old (Sanyu was 48) and had just arrived in America from Zurich. Although he was at that time still a young and relatively unknown photographer, he was able to support himself and help Sanyu during the years Sanyu stayed with him in New York. Frank, as it is well known, was to become one of the most influential photographers of our time with, among other things, the publication of his powerful photographic essay, *The Americans*, in 1958. It is beyond the scope of this catalogue to elaborate on the breadth of Frank's accomplishments and the implications of his work. Needless to say, it has been for me an honor and a privilege to have met Robert Frank and to hear him talk with such warmth and fondness of his friend, Sanyu. Indeed, the depth of his devotion

to the memory of Sanyu is shown in his caring for these paintings over all these years and the special place in his heart reserved for their friendship. By allowing us to share this, he has dedicated to the legacy of Sanyu a deeper understanding with which we can continue to appreciate and celebrate one of our most important Chinese artists.

Rita Wong
June 1997
Taipei



當常玉與羅勃·法蘭克初結識於1949年的時候，他倆均從飽歷戰火蹂躪的歐洲來到美國尋找新希望。前者是一位將近五十歲的中國男人，作為一個不算是成功的藝術家，他渴望到美國來開拓他的新事業，卻終於事與願違；後者是一名只有廿五歲的年青瑞士人，他遠道而來卻發展出他日後出類拔萃的職業攝影師生涯。

原籍四川的常玉出生於1901年10月14日。十八歲那年離開中國先赴日本，停留兩年後再赴巴黎。他於1921年初抵巴黎時，全賴掌管其家族紡織事業的大哥支持他的生活開銷。至三〇年代初期，因遭逢兄長去世及緊接著的中日戰事爆發，家裏的接濟變得不太穩定。此時的常玉卻幸運地遇上兩位人物協助推介其作品給歐洲收藏界認識，他們分別是著名的藝術經紀人、收藏家兼作家亨利·皮爾·侯謝及荷蘭藉作曲家約翰·法蘭寇（參看蘇富比台北拍賣，1995年10月15日）。有賴他倆的鼎力支持，常玉得以熬過了困厄的三〇年代，可是當到了四〇年代初期這些朋友的支持相繼終止，並適逢二次大戰爆發，常玉再次陷入捉襟見肘的苦日子，而據說一度曾在街邊販賣石膏藝品為生。作為一個飽嚙失望及貧苦折磨的藝術家，常玉渴求為自己打開新的出路，而他選擇了美國。

羅勃·法蘭克1924年出生於瑞士蘇黎世，他成長於三〇及四〇年代歐洲最動盪不安的政治環境當中。父親為一名猶太裔之成功商人，故法蘭克一家得以享有較優渥的生活環境。儘管如此，他們卻也無時無刻得活在希特勒對猶太族裔進行的政治迫害的陰影底下。雖生活在這個困難的時代當中，法蘭克在學成以後還是頗順遂的踏上了當時一門新興的攝影行業，並一直維持至戰爭結束。數年後躊躇滿志的法蘭克為了不想被囿限於祖國瑞士，遂決定前往美國開展他在攝影方面的才華。

1947年當羅勃·法蘭克剛抵美國不久，即被哈潑(Harper's Bazaar)雜誌顧用為專用時尚攝影師。兩年後有一次當他剛從秘魯結束一項攝影之旅回來，哈潑美術部門的一位同事告知他有一位從巴黎來的

藝術家正在紐約找尋落腳地。法蘭克正打算於未來數年要待在歐洲好一陣子，遂同意讓該位藝術家入住其倉庫公寓而他自己則遷往這位藝術家位於巴黎的工作室。就這樣透過交換住宅，常玉與法蘭克便彼此認識了。

當常玉與哈潑雜誌聯絡協助找尋住所時，其人已身在紐約了。當他獲知法蘭克願意跟他交換寓所後，他馬上便搬進了其位於東 11 街 53 號的倉庫寓所。然而由於計劃生變，法蘭克仍待在紐約而未往巴黎。因此本來要互換公寓的兩人，卻因緣際會地成了室友。

常玉入住了法蘭克的倉庫寓所之後，他立刻請求法蘭克把所有的傢俱搬走，好讓他可在地上繪畫他的乒乓網球場。他甚至希望法蘭克也能遷出，以便於他自己可以安心工作。年青的法蘭克對於這位他剛認識，行為帶點荒誕的中國藝術家所提出的諸多來得不合情理的要求，却都毫不猶疑的一一答應了。據法蘭克回憶，為了力求完美，常玉足足花上好幾天的時間，非常用心的在地上繪畫出那個鮮紅色配上白線條的漂亮的乒乓網球場，看起來就像是一個經改良過後的網球場。

“我永不會忘記他是怎樣繪畫它的。花上了好多天去完成。現場一片凌亂。他費盡心力地在繪畫它。真是非常漂亮。遺憾的是我並未有把它拍攝下來。”

據認識常玉的人說，常玉熱愛網球運動，他早期在巴黎時有較多的時間及能力去從事此項運動。而乒乓網球場則像是個小型的網球場，球網較輕且懸掛得較低（可能類似羽球網），比賽雙方以握把較長的改良乒乓球拍相互擊球，而球則為一般的乒乓球。

我們絕不能小覷常玉對這項運動的熱愛程度。根據他寫給其好友約翰·法蘭寇的信件，我們得知常玉曾於 1936 年專程前往柏林參加於當地舉行的奧運會，企圖推廣乒乓網球。常玉在當地並碰上了一位



Sanyu in his studio,
Paris, 1960s

常玉在其巴黎之工
作室，1960年代

聲名遠播的德籍網球冠軍 Gottfried von Cramm，他對乒乓網球表示了一定程度的推崇。常玉並因此而冀望依靠他的推動能獲致最終的成功。事實上常玉在推廣此一運動上確曾達到過一定的成效。從 1946 年刊登於巴黎 *Le Parisien Libere* 的一份文章所載中（參看 Lot 6）提到常玉為乒乓網球之發明者，“一項已在巴黎流行數年的運動”。五〇年代晚期至六〇年代早期時常玉並接受巴黎一個運動俱樂部 Club de Bagatelle 之邀請往教授乒乓網球。從常玉花了將近三十年的時間致力於推廣此一運動上，再一次印證了我們所熟知的常玉本性中的熱誠及純真。當然我們現在知道乒乓網球並沒有大行其道，卻反隨同其發明者一併逝去。

“常玉到美國來就是為了推廣乒乓網球，這是他來的唯一原因。”

為了把全副心思及希望放在乒乓網球上，常玉基本上已經放棄了繪畫。他在紐約時曾告訴過法蘭克他以後不再繪畫了。事實上從羅勃·法蘭克認識常玉的這麼多年以來，包括在紐約時及往後在巴黎的十五年中，除了那次常玉繪畫的乒乓網球場外，他未曾再看到常玉執筆作畫，而從常玉寫給約翰·法蘭寇的書信當中，亦曾多次提及他想放棄繪畫而回歸中國另闢事業的構想，常玉渴望成功及致富，

他深感當一名藝術家絕非達成此一目的之最佳途徑，明顯地常玉前往紐約只為了推廣乒乓網球以改善其經濟狀況。據法蘭克所說，常玉對藝術已感絕望。除了更多的挫折及窮困不安的日子以外，他不知道從事藝術還能帶給他什麼。法蘭克記得常玉並不喜愛談論藝術甚或他自己的畫作，他真正的興趣似乎在別的方面上。

“當常玉看見一本關於藝術的書籍時，他會快速的翻閱然後很快的又攔下來。他懂得分辨藝術的好壞卻不太想去談論它。每當他提到繪畫，會盡量的簡略，那並不是最最重要的。”

Painting by Sanyu taken in his studio,
Paris, 1960s

常玉之畫作，攝於其巴黎的工作室，
1960年代



但有一件事情對常玉來說卻是異常重要的，那便是食物與烹飪了。法蘭克猶記得常玉非常喜歡到哈林區看電影（那時候看三套只須花兩毛五）後逕往雜貨店購物。他會買很多美味的食物諸如豬腰等回來做他拿手的腰花湯。法蘭克直到現在回想起來却還是感到倒胃口呢！常玉會在當地一些雜糧舖內以極其低廉的價錢買來一些通常會被別人所丟棄的材料。利用這些材料他會泡製其家鄉道地的辛辣菜式，諸如腰花、腸旺及魚頭等等這些常玉認為美味無窮的食物，但是看在這位年青瑞士人眼中卻怎麼也是不對口味的！

法蘭克清楚的記得有一次常玉決定為二十多位法蘭克的朋友燒一頓飯，他做的是樟茶鴨及麵條。常玉花了很大的勁兒在烤爐上搭出一個製具來準備燻鴨，而每根麵條均需經過一定程序的處理及風乾。正如他一貫的處事作風，常玉非常用心地烹調這頓菜餚。可不巧的是，當所有賓客均已上座時，燻鴨卻被烤焦了。據法蘭克所說，樟茶鴨雖是烤焦了，但仍然是美味可口的。可是常玉卻只看著它，難過得離開了數天以後才回家。

“他真的很愛美酒與佳餚。那時候有一種酒名 HINE 是常玉最愛喝的。他會在酒瓶的牌子加上英文“C”使其變成“CHINE”（法文“中國”的意思），每當他看到的時候總會會心一笑。”

常玉抵達紐約一年以後，發揚乒乓網球運動的前景已顯得愈加渺茫。尤其連當初曾答允支持他的 von Cramm 也變得敷衍了事。法蘭克一向對其好友的需要及抱負最為關心，於是他幫忙常玉在曼哈頓區的 Passadoit 畫廊籌劃了一次展覽，並協助把部份畫作從巴黎運往紐約。可惜的是這次個展並沒有賣出一張畫作。

這時候的常玉更是孤寂而絕望。法蘭克猶記得常玉總是一個人在倉庫內好幾個小時去寫作一些有關於動物的故事。他會跑到倉庫後面觀察外面的老鼠及松鼠，然後為牠們編寫很長很長的故事。有趣的是當常玉回到巴黎以後，他把這些小動物都一一融入其裸女及靜物畫作之中，相較於其早期畫作之中同樣是以動物為主要題材，常玉在紐約時期以後的畫作中卻明顯地把這些動物的體積比例給縮小了，而背景卻往往是茫茫天際接連大地，佔去了極大的畫幅。當常玉年事漸長而卻沒有獲得金錢與感情上的滿足時，這些縮小了的動物恰好反映出其與日俱增之落寞與孤單。一直到他生命晚期的時候，在他給一位朋友的信中即提到一幅他所畫的，一頭小象在偌大荒漠中的畫作，乃代表他自身在此浩大而不友善的世界中的窘況。

從常玉搬進法蘭克的倉庫中的那一刻開始，這位年青人即無條件的接納了常玉的一切。包括他如何准許一位剛相識的陌生人在他倉庫的地上繪畫出一個紅白雙色的乒乓網球場；還有法蘭克記得有一次一位阿拉伯人把一幅常玉所繪四週環繞著一些小花紋的瓶花油畫拿回來，希望常玉能給他修補畫面上的龜裂痕。常玉老大不願的開始進行修補，卻把旁邊所有的小花紋用白色塗蓋了。兩三個星期後常玉告訴法蘭克他無法繼續完成客人這項修補的請求。他叫法蘭克把那位阿拉伯客人付給他的八百元代退還給他，因常玉實在拿不出錢來，而阿拉伯客人也絕不會再取回那幅已接近全白色的畫作。八百

元雖是一筆不少的金錢，但法蘭克還是同意了並代常玉退還給那阿拉伯人。

“我能接受這些事情，我甚至於能接受常玉的任何要求。常玉是不是一個好的藝術家對我來說並不重要。”

常玉於 1951 年返回巴黎，此後每當法蘭克路過巴黎均會前往拜訪。法蘭克記起他倆會在 La Coupole 或 Le Dome 等咖啡座坐上好幾個小時來觀看人們。他感覺到此時的常玉更顯得遺世孤獨了。他身邊的朋友不多，法蘭克甚至認為一般人通常會感到跟他難以溝通。似乎常玉在逗留過於紐約以後，正經歷著一些改變。或許是其生命中不管作為一位年青藝術家或是乒乓網球的發明者，均遭遇接二連三的挫敗，反驅使其邁向了從前所欠缺的一種成熟度。這成熟度幫助他認清無論有多艱苦，他最終及首要的選擇還是作為一位藝術家。一改前期畫作中的純真及簡鍊，他此時期的畫風反映出一種圓熟而高潔的格調。他並曾對一位友人說：“在經過一生的繪畫歷程以後，我現在終於懂得如何繪畫了。”從他生命中最後十年的創作生涯裏那如奔流傾瀉般的創作能源，正好說明了他對自身的這種醒悟。

法蘭克的攝影生涯到了五〇年代開始邁進新的高峰，並正準備一項極其重要的計劃，就是進行一次有關於美國的攝影記錄。這項行動的成功，更促使其攝影集 *The Americans* 的發行，法蘭克並因此而獲致社會名流的地位。他的攝影作品不單對攝影界留下了深遠的影響，甚至還影響了整個國家對社會意識的醒覺。法蘭克雖已成名，但還是一有空便往訪常玉。法蘭克在常玉身上能感受到一種特殊而獨有的智慧，或可說是屬於中國人的智慧。那是命運的巧意安排，促使這兩個背景完全相異的人，得以在時空交錯中相遇，他們之間的友誼雖短暫卻彌足珍貴。縱使他們往後很快的又各自往不同的方向前進，但不論他們身處何地，或做著什麼樣的事，他們之間總是能夠找到一個能相互認知的交匯點。基於這種性靈上的溝通，他們之間真可說是能彼此了解的。

“有時候當你遇上一個人，你立刻能感應出彼此之間的心靈溝通及了解。我從他身上學到了以一個宏觀的態度來了解世事。”

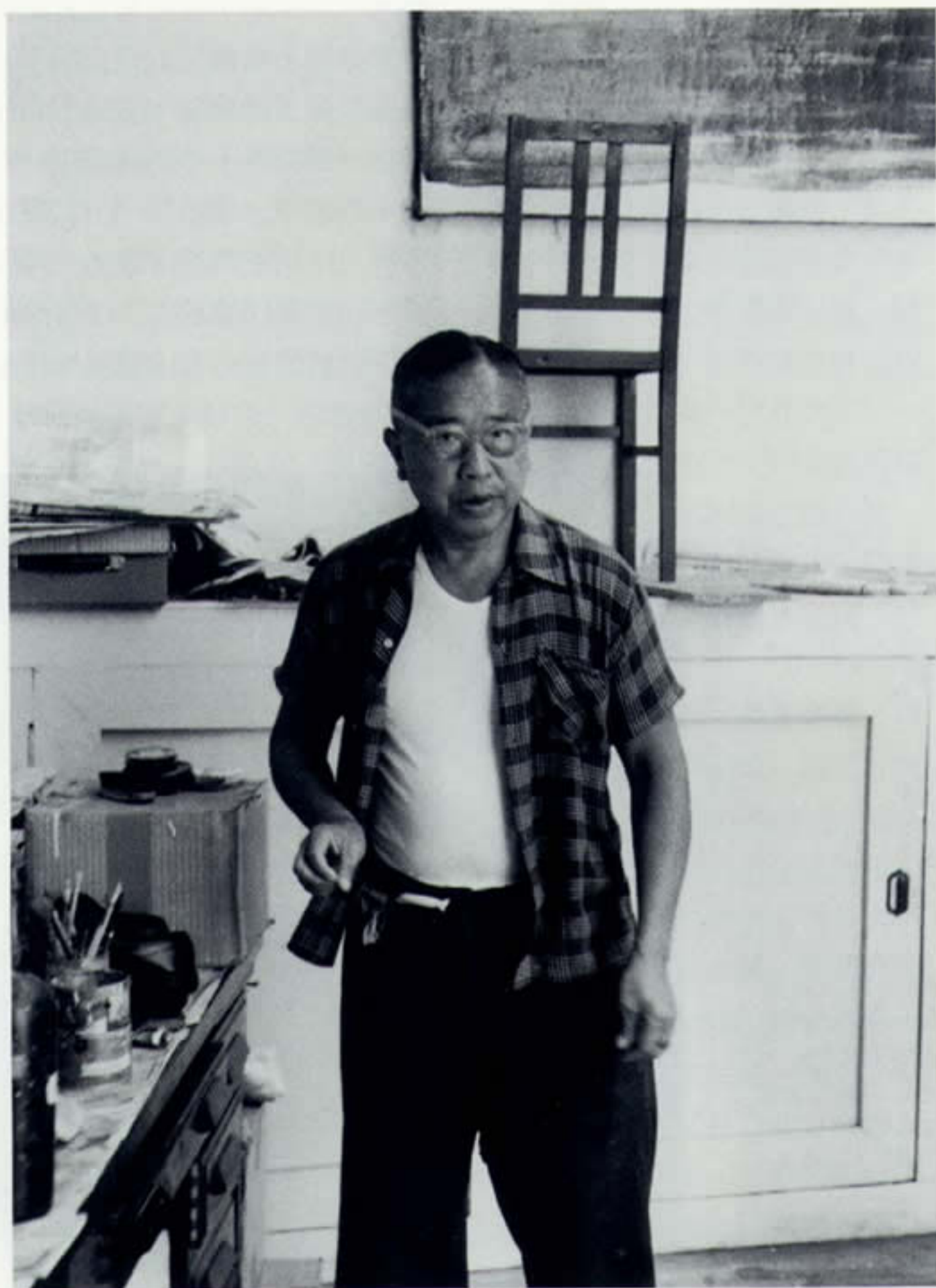
從常玉與約翰·法蘭寇的友誼上，我們獲得一次非常寶貴的機會去研究了常玉親手寫給其友人法蘭寇的信件。從資料的取得上來看，這次羅勃·法蘭克的情況卻不一樣。我們沒有從常玉那邊得到任何有關法蘭克的資料，有的卻是一大串法蘭克對常玉的珍貴回憶。我們也有過去五十年來法蘭克一直守護在身邊的這批常玉遺留給他的十七幅畫作，並將其一一呈現在此本目錄內。這些畫作的重要性並不單只由於它們從未曝光，同樣重要的是因為它們乃來自於一九四〇年代這個仍屬於常玉生命中最撲朔迷離的階段。通過這些畫作我們開始能體會到常玉畫風的轉變，並瞭解到它如何從三〇年代獨特



Sanyu, Robert Frank and Sabine Monorys at Orly Airport, Paris, 1965

常玉、羅勃·法蘭克及好友於巴黎奧里機場，1965年

的粉紅時期過渡至五〇年代或更晚期較為細膩的風格。然而更重要的是這些畫作引證了一段友誼的可貴，它跨越了兩者之間的文化差異，並戰勝了時間的考驗。



Sanyu in his studio,
Paris, 1960s

常玉在其巴黎之工
作室，1960年代

By the time Sanyu and Robert Frank met in 1949, they had both come to America from a ravaged post-war Europe to seek new opportunities. One was a Chinese man in his late forties, who as a failed artist, went to America hoping, futilely, as it turned out, to establish a new career; and the other, a young 25 year-old Swiss, made the journey to develop what was to become a highly successful career as a photographer.

Sanyu, a native of Szechuan province, was born on October 14, 1901. At the age of 18 he left China, first for Japan, then, two years later, Paris. When he arrived in Paris in 1921, his older brother, who ran the family textile business, provided for him completely. By the early 1930s financial support from his family became irregular and unreliable, due initially to the death of his eldest brother and following that, the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. At this time, Sanyu was fortunate to meet two people who helped him by promoting his art to the European collecting community. One was the famous art dealer, collector and author, Henri-Pierre Roché and the second, the Dutch composer, Johan Franco (see Sotheby's Taipei sale, October 15, 1995). While the support from both these men carried Sanyu through the difficult 1930s, it petered out by the early 1940s, so that during the war, Sanyu, at the height of his financial despair, was reported to have spent his days making plaster objects that he sold on street corners. His life as an artist in the City of Light had been strewn with disappointments that relegated him to a life of abject poverty. Sanyu was desperate and had to seek hope elsewhere. He chose America.

Robert Frank, born in Zurich in 1924, grew up amidst the turbulent political milieu of Europe of the 1930s and 1940s. His father, a successful businessman, was of Jewish origins and even though he provided comfortably for his family, they were



Sanyu and Mary
Frank, Paris, 1960s

常玉與瑪利·法蘭
克·巴黎·1960
年代

nonetheless acutely aware of and affected by the persecution of Jews under Hitler's regime. In these difficult times, Robert Frank, upon completion of his schooling, was still able to begin a fledgling career in photography that lasted through the end of the war. A few years later, feeling stifled in his native Switzerland, the young Frank decided to travel to America to explore and discover his own potential.

Shortly after Robert Frank arrived in America in 1947, Harper's Bazaar hired him as one of its in-house fashion photographers. Two years later, upon his return from a photographic field trip to Peru, someone in the art department at Harper's Bazaar told him that there was an artist from Paris looking for a place to stay in New York. Since Frank was planning to spend some time in Europe over the next few years, he agreed to let this artist stay in his loft while he stayed at his studio in Paris. Through the circumstance of exchanging apartments, Sanyu and Robert Frank met.

Sanyu was already in New York City when he contacted Harper's Bazaar and upon learning of Frank's willingness to exchange apartments, immediately moved into his loft at 53 East 11th Street. A change in plans, however, kept Frank in New York

City. So instead of exchanging apartments, they became roommates.

As soon as Sanyu moved into Frank's loft, he asked that all of Frank's furniture be removed so that he could paint the floor with his *ping-tennis* court. He even wanted Frank to move out so that he could work uninterruptedly. Unquestioningly, the young Frank complied with all the wishes of this somewhat eccentric Chinese artist whom he had just met. According to Frank, it took several days to paint the court and Sanyu was meticulous in making it perfect. It was a beautiful cinnabar red court with white lines, much like a modified tennis court.

"I'll never forget the way he painted it. It took days. It was a mess. He painted it with the utmost care. It was beautiful. I'm sorry that I didn't photograph it."

From the people who knew him, Sanyu was an accomplished tennis player and in his early years in Paris had the time and the means to pursue this sport. The *ping-tennis* court is much like a scaled down tennis court with a somewhat smaller and lighter net (probably more like a badminton net) hung quite low. Players use modified ping-pong paddles with slightly longer handles and regular ping-pong balls. Sanyu's obsession with this sport he invented cannot be underestimated. According to letters he wrote to his friend, Johan Franco, we learn that he made a trip to Berlin in 1936 to try to promote *ping-tennis* at the Olympics. Apparently, he met the notoriously famous German tennis champion Gottfried von Cramm who was quite taken by the sport and gave Sanyu much hope in its eventual success. Indeed, Sanyu did achieve a certain level of success in promoting this sport. Based on an article in *Le Parisien Libere*, in 1946 (see notes for lot 6),

mention is made of Sanyu being the inventor of *ping-tennis*, “a sport now popular in Paris for several years”. In the late 1950s to early 1960s, the Club de Bagatelle, a sports club in Paris, asked him to give lessons in *ping-tennis*. For thirty years Sanyu was unwavering in his determination to promote his game and displayed the familiar enthusiasm and innocence we have come to recognize as inherent to Sanyu’s nature. Of course, we now know that nothing was to come of this and *ping-tennis*, in effect, died with its inventor.

“Sanyu came to America to promote ping-tennis. That was his only reason for coming.”

In placing all his hope in *ping-tennis*, Sanyu basically gave up on painting. While he was in New York, he told Frank he was finished with painting. He said painting would never amount to anything. In all the years that Robert Frank knew Sanyu, whether in New York or over the next 15 years in Paris, with the exception of the *ping-tennis* court, he never actually saw Sanyu paint. From the letters Sanyu wrote to Johan Franco, he repeatedly expressed his desire to give up painting and either return to China or pursue another profession. Wanting very much to be successful and to have money, he realized that in order to achieve this, he best find a means other than being an artist. Evidently, Sanyu went to New York with the sole purpose of promoting *ping-tennis* as the only way to attain financial prosperity. According to Frank, Sanyu lost hope in art. He couldn’t see where it would take him and what it could bring him aside from more frustration and financial deprivation. Frank remembers that Sanyu didn’t like talking about art or even about his own paintings. His real interests seem to lie elsewhere.

“When Sanyu would see a book on art, he would flip through it very quickly and put it away. He would know if the art was good or bad and simply didn’t want to talk about it. Whenever he talked about painting, he minimized it. It wasn’t the most important thing.”

One thing that was important to Sanyu was food and cooking. Frank remembers how he used to love to go to Harlem to watch movies (three for 25 cents) and buy groceries. He would buy delicacies, such as kidney, which Frank recalls with much distaste, to make kidney soup. Sanyu bought, at a very reasonable cost, ingredients at local grocery stores that would normally be discarded. With these he prepared the spicy foods of his native Szechuan province. Dishes of kidneys, intestines and fish heads, while delicious to Sanyu, could not have been terribly palatable to the young Swiss!

Frank recalls vividly one incident where Sanyu decided to cook a meal for around twenty of Frank’s friends. He cooked duck and noodles. It took tremendous preparation that required building a contraption on top of the oven to prepare the duck. Every noodle had to be laid out a certain way and dried. In typical Sanyu style, he was meticulous in the preparation of this meal. Somehow, though, he burned the duck. All the guests were already there and, according to Frank, the duck, though burnt, was still edible. Sanyu, however, just looked at it, walked out and didn’t come back for days.

Sanyu with Pablo and Andrea Frank, Paris, 1960s

常玉與巴布羅及安
迪利亞·法蘭克·
巴黎·1960年代



“He really liked good food and wine. There was a liqueur called Hine. He liked it and would always have a bottle of it. He would put a ‘C’ in front to make it ‘Chine’! He would always laugh when he saw that!”

About a year after Sanyu arrived in New York, it became clear that prospects for *ping-tennis* were diminishing and that von Cramm, who had apparently given him some promise of support, didn't come through. Frank, ever sensitive to the needs and aspirations of his friend, organized an exhibition for Sanyu at the Passadoit Gallery in Manhattan. He helped Sanyu arrange to have some paintings shipped over from Paris for this show. No paintings were sold.

By now, Sanyu was desolate. Frank remembers how he sat in the loft for hours and wrote stories on animals. He would look outside the back of the loft to observe the rats and squirrels and write long stories about them. It is interesting to note that after Sanyu returned to Paris, he started to incorporate small animals into his nudes and still lifes. Similarly, where his earlier paintings treat animals as the main subject, his paintings after New York characteristically show the creatures in very small proportion to the large expanse of land and sky in the background. As Sanyu grew older without financial or emotional satisfaction, these shrinking animals seem to represent his heightened feelings of despair and loneliness. Towards the end of his life, he wrote to a friend about his painting of a small elephant in a vast and engulfing desert being, in fact, himself in this large and unfriendly world.

From the moment Sanyu moved into Robert Frank's loft, the younger man simply accepted everything about him, epitomized by how he allowed a total stranger to paint the floor of his loft with a red and white *ping-tennis* court. In another incident,

Frank recalls how an Arab brought over a beautiful painting by Sanyu of a vase, flowers and little figures all around. Apparently, the painting was cracking and he wanted Sanyu to repair it. When Sanyu reluctantly started to work on it, he overpainted all the little figures white. Two or three weeks passed and Sanyu told Frank that he simply could not and would not continue to make the requested repair. He told Frank to repay the Arab the \$800 he paid for it. Sanyu didn't have any money and the Arab would not take back the painting, now mostly white. This was a large sum of money, but Frank agreed and managed to pay the Arab.

“But I could accept that from him. Anything from him. He just came from a different world and I just liked his look at the world. Whether or not he was a good artist, I don't know. It didn't matter.”



Figure of a horse by Sanyu taken at the loft on 11th Street

常玉之陶馬作品攝於11街的倉庫寓所

When Sanyu returned to Paris in 1951, Frank visited him whenever he went there. He recalls how they would sit for hours at La Coupole or Le Dome looking at people. Frank sensed that Sanyu was lonely and ever more withdrawn. He didn't have many friends and, according to Frank, people found it difficult to make contact with him. It seems that after his stay in New York, Sanyu underwent a change. Perhaps the repeated disappointments in his life, whether as a young artist or as the inventor of *ping-tennis*, forced him to reach a level of maturity that he heretofore lacked. This maturity helped him realize that, however difficult, he was first and foremost an artist. His paintings of this period reflect qualities of maturity and sophistication that replaced the innocence and simplicity of his earlier period. He is reported to have declared to a friend, "Finally, after a lifetime of painting, I now understand how to paint." The spurt of creative energy during the last ten years of his life served as testimony to his resolution.

By the 1950s, Frank's career as a photographer had reached new heights and he was about to embark upon a project of enormous magnitude - a photographic documentary of America. The success of this endeavor, resulting in the publication of *The Americans*, catapulted Frank to a position of social significance. The impact of his work has had a lasting effect not only on the field of photography, but on the social consciousness of an entire nation as well. Despite his success, Frank always had time to visit with Sanyu. In Sanyu Frank found something special, a quality of wisdom that was, perhaps, says Frank, Chinese, but nonetheless unique to him. For two people of such different backgrounds, it was a kind act of fate that let their paths converge, however briefly, allowing them a moment in time to discover and embrace their friendship. Their lives shortly thereafter went in divergent directions. Yet, they were always able to find a common meeting

ground wherever they were and whatever they were doing. They had an understanding of each other, an understanding based on a camaraderie of spirit.

"You know, sometimes when you meet somebody, you just know. It's there on both sides. You understand each other. I learned from him. There was a certain largesse, a certain understanding of the world."

In the case of Sanyu's friendship with Johan Franco, we had the unique opportunity to examine a collection of letters Sanyu wrote to Franco. In Robert Frank's case, the flow of information goes the other way. We have nothing from Sanyu about Frank, but a wealth of memories from Frank about Sanyu. We also have what Frank has guarded for the past 50 years - the seventeen paintings that Sanyu left for him and that are now presented in this catalogue. The importance of these paintings is not only that they have never been seen by the public, but equally because they are from a period of Sanyu's life that remains the most obscure, the 1940s. Through these paintings we can begin to comprehend and perceive Sanyu's stylistic transition from the distinctive Pink Period of the 1930s to his later more stylized renditions of the 1950s. Above all, these paintings serve as testimony to a friendship that transcended the differences in culture and the confines of time.

好嗎 常玉老友，

許久未見，你可回來了

帶著你的精神

夢想及畫作

那些小腳的粉紅裸女

荒漠中的孤單野獸

優美而冷傲的花卉

今天你會訝異嗎？

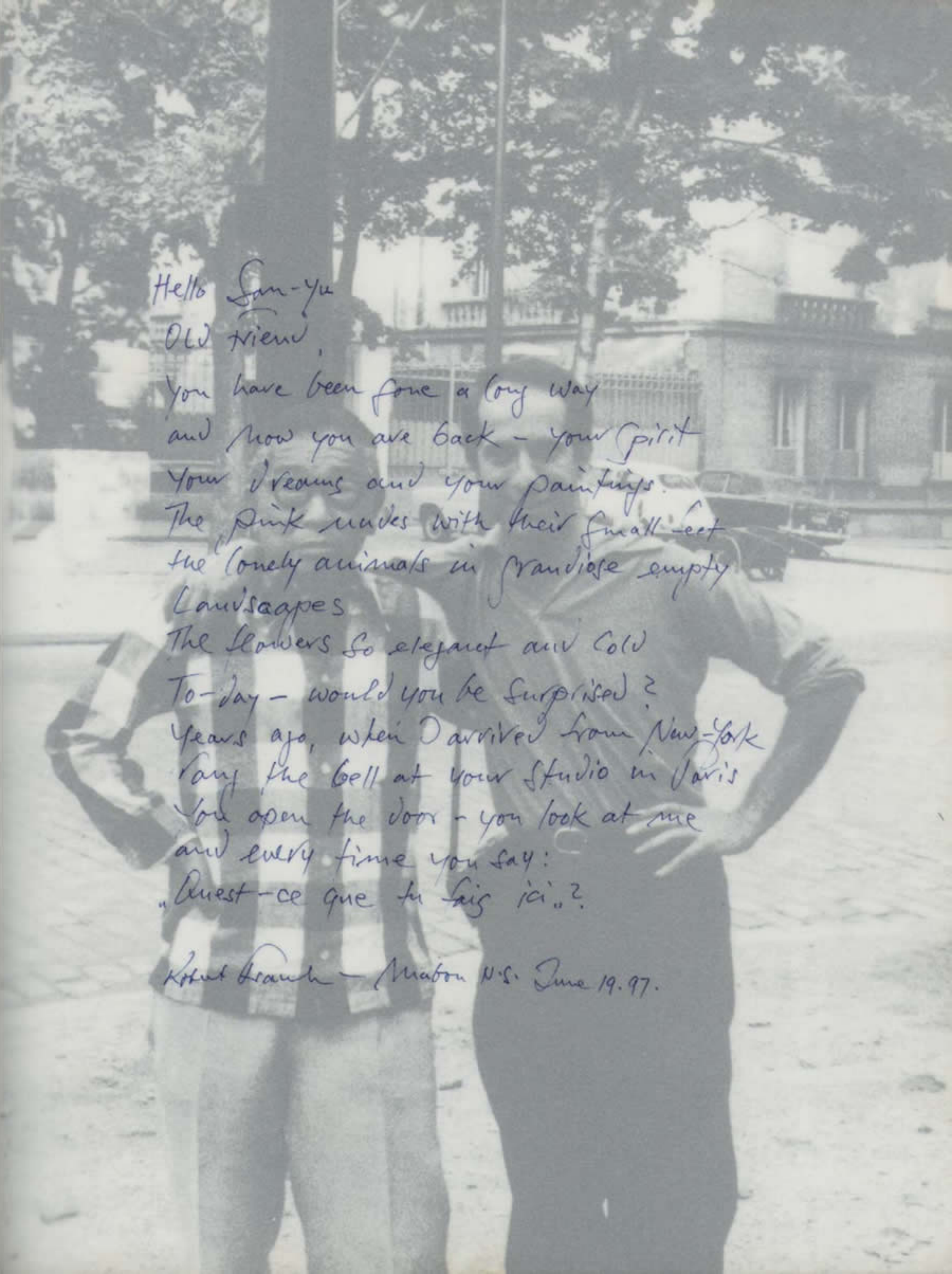
當年我自紐約抵達你巴黎的寓所

按鈴時，你開門的第一句話總是：

“你來這裏做甚麼？”

羅勃·法蘭克 — 馬布，新斯科細亞

一九九七年六月十九日



Hello Sam-yu
Old friend,
You have been gone a long way
and now you are back - your spirit
your dreams and your paintings.
The pink nudes with their small feet
the lonely animals in grandiose empty
landscapes
The flowers so elegant and cold
To-day - would you be surprised?
Years ago, when I arrived from New York
rang the bell at your studio in Paris
you open the door - you look at me
and every time you say:
"Qu'est-ce que tu fais ici?"

Robert Frank - Mabou N.S. June 19. 97.

好嗎 常玉老友，

許久未見，你可回來了

帶著你的精神

夢想及畫作

那些小腳的粉紅裸女

荒漠中的孤單野獸

優美而冷傲的花卉

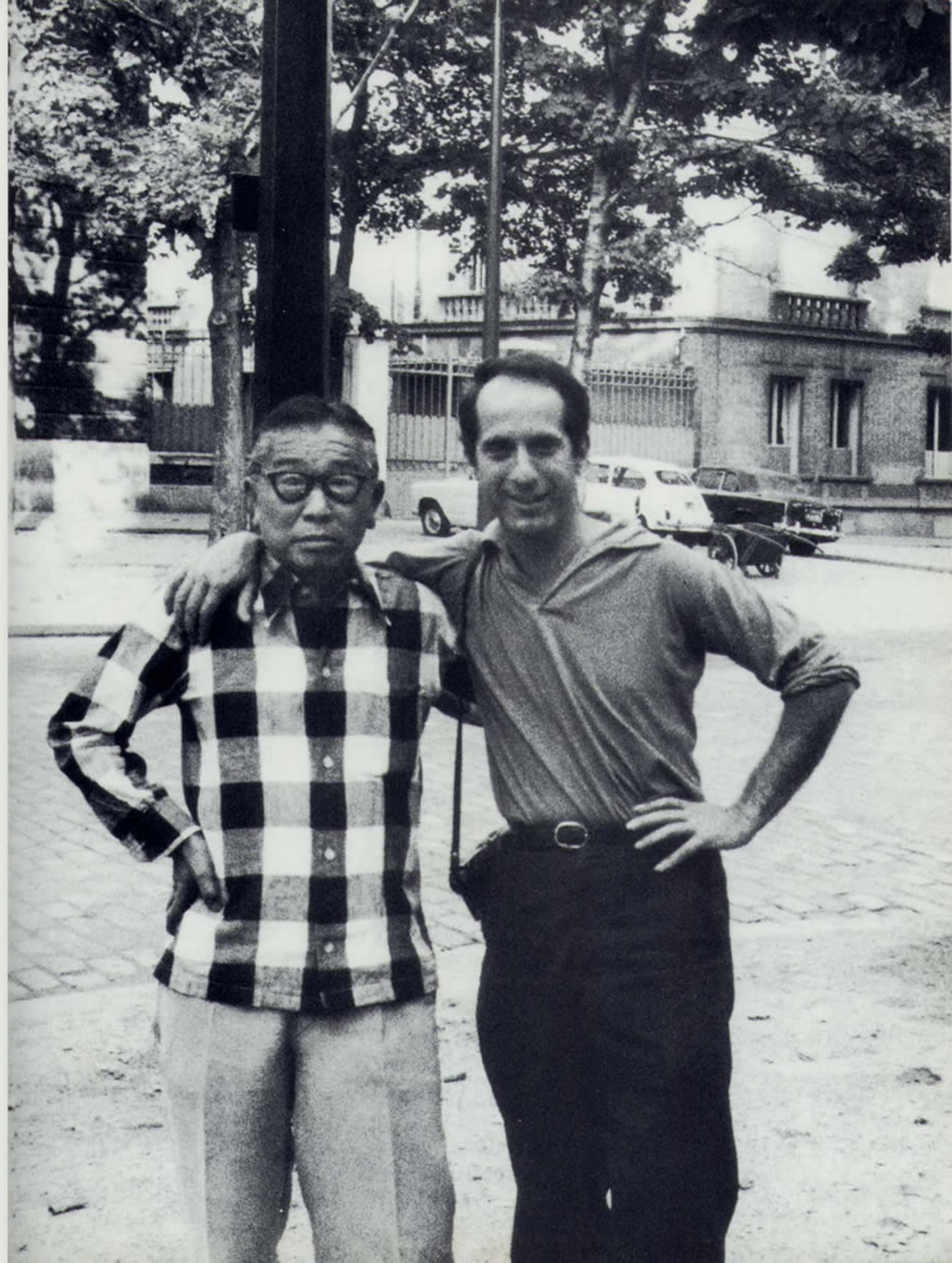
今天你會訝異嗎？

當年我自紐約抵達你巴黎的寓所

按鈴時，你開門的第一句話總是：

“你來這裏做甚麼？”

羅勃·法蘭克 — 馬布，新斯科細亞
一九九七年六月十九日



The proceeds from this sale will go to
The Andrea Frank Foundation, Inc.

此次拍賣之所得將歸於
安迪利亞·法蘭克基金會

In efforts to help to restore the paintings by Sanyu
at the National Museum of History Taiwan,
The Andrea Frank Foundation, Inc., will contribute
a portion of the proceeds from this sale to the Museum.

為了幫助維護現存於
臺灣國立歷史博物館內之常玉畫作，
安迪利亞·法蘭克基金會將撥捐
此拍賣中之部份所得予博物館。

The Andrea Frank Foundation, Inc., founded by Robert Frank,
is a charitable foundation which supports artists and arts organisations.
安迪利亞·法蘭克基金會由羅勃·法蘭克所創辦，
為一專門資助藝術家及藝術團體之慈善基金會。



1

1 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

DOE

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in
Chinese in a square, and numbered
47/50 in pencil
etching on paper
7 1/4 by 5 1/8 in. (18.5 by 13.8 cm.)

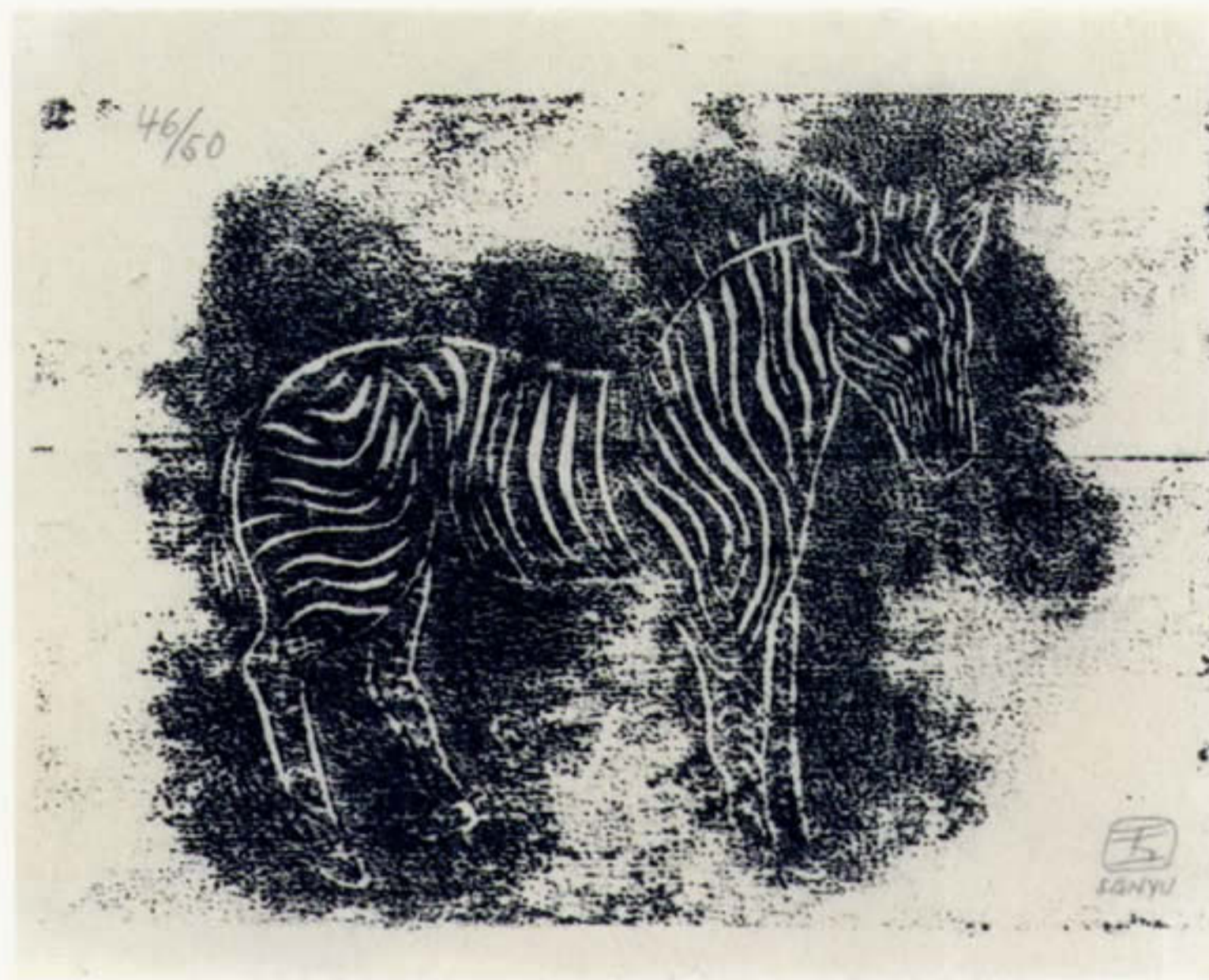
See *The Johan Franco Collection of
Works by Sanyu* (Sotheby's Taipei,
Oct. 15, 1995) Lot 11 and *Fine
Modern Chinese Oil Paintings,
Drawings and Watercolours*
(Sotheby's Taipei, Oct. 20, 1996) Lot
13B

常玉 小花鹿 蝕刻版畫 紙本

簽名：玉 SANYU

總限量印行五十幅之第四十七幅

參看約翰·法蘭寇收藏之常玉作品拍賣
目錄（蘇富比台北，1995年10月15
日）內之 Lot 11，以及現代中國油畫、
素描及水彩拍賣目錄（蘇富比台北，
1996年10月20日）內之 Lot 13B



2

2 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

ZEBRA

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square, and numbered 46/50 in pencil
etching on paper
5 1/4 by 6 7/8 in. (13.5 by 17.5 cm.)

See *The Johan Franco Collection of Works by Sanyu* (Sotheby's Taipei, Oct. 15, 1995) Lot 20

常玉 斑馬 蝕刻版畫 紙本

簽名：玉 SANYU

總限量印行五十幅之第四十六幅

參看約翰·法蘭寇收藏之常玉作品拍賣目錄（蘇富比台北，1995年10月15日）內之 Lot 20



3

3 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

LEOPARD

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square, and numbered 38/50 in pencil
etching on paper
8 1/4 by 10 in. (21 by 25.4 cm.)

See *The Johan Franco Collection of Works by Sanyu* (Sotheby's Taipei, Oct. 15, 1995) Lot 21

常玉 花豹 蝕刻版畫 紙本

簽名：玉 SANYU

總限量印行五十幅之第三十八幅

參看約翰·法蘭寇收藏之常玉作品拍賣目錄（蘇富比台北，1995年10月15日）內之 Lot 21



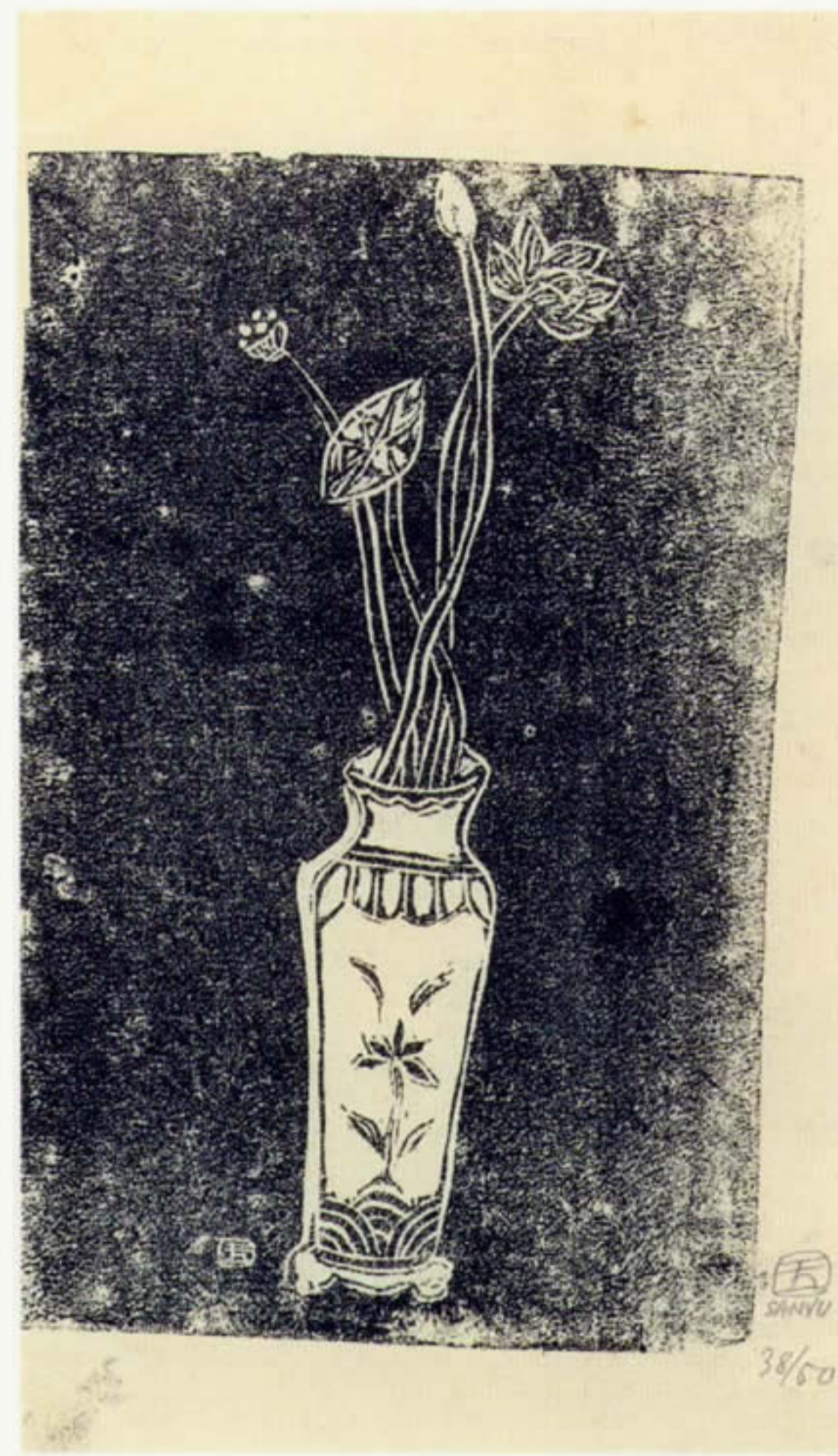
4

4 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

LOTUS (TWO)

both signed SANYU in English, and
yu in Chinese in a square, and
numbered 43/50 and 38/50,
respectively, in pencil
two etchings on paper
each 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 in. (21.5 by 14 cm.)

See *The Johan Franco Collection of
Works by Sanyu* (Sotheby's Taipei,
Oct. 15, 1995) Lots 4 and 11



4

常玉 蓮花 蝕刻版畫 紙本 (兩幅)

簽名：玉 SANYU

左圖為總限量印行五十幅之第四十三幅
右圖為總限量印行五十幅之第三十八幅
參看約翰·法蘭寇收藏之常玉作品拍賣
目錄 (蘇富比台北·1995年10月15
日) 內之 Lot 4 及 Lot 11

5 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

FRUITS

signed SANYU in English, and yu in
Chinese in a square
oil on canvas
19 3/4 by 25 3/4 in. (50 by 65 cm.)

常玉 果宴 油畫 畫布

簽名：SANYU 玉



An exhibition of Sanyu's works, Amsterdam, 1930s
(Courtesy of National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague)

常玉作品展覽，荷蘭，1930年代
(圖片提供：荷蘭國家檔案庫，海牙)



5

6 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

WHITE HORSE, BLACK HORSE;
LEOPARD (DOUBLE SIDE)

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square; with an inscription in Chinese on the reverse, and signed *yu* in Chinese painted on both sides, oil on panel 12 by 20% in. (30.5 by 52.4 cm.)

Painted 1930 to 1945

The inscription on the reverse reads:
This painting took two decades to complete.

In 1930, I painted only the black horse; the white horse was added in 1945.

At that time, I was in love with a young woman.

Because of her, I completed this painting and dedicated it to her. Later we parted and this painting is still with me.

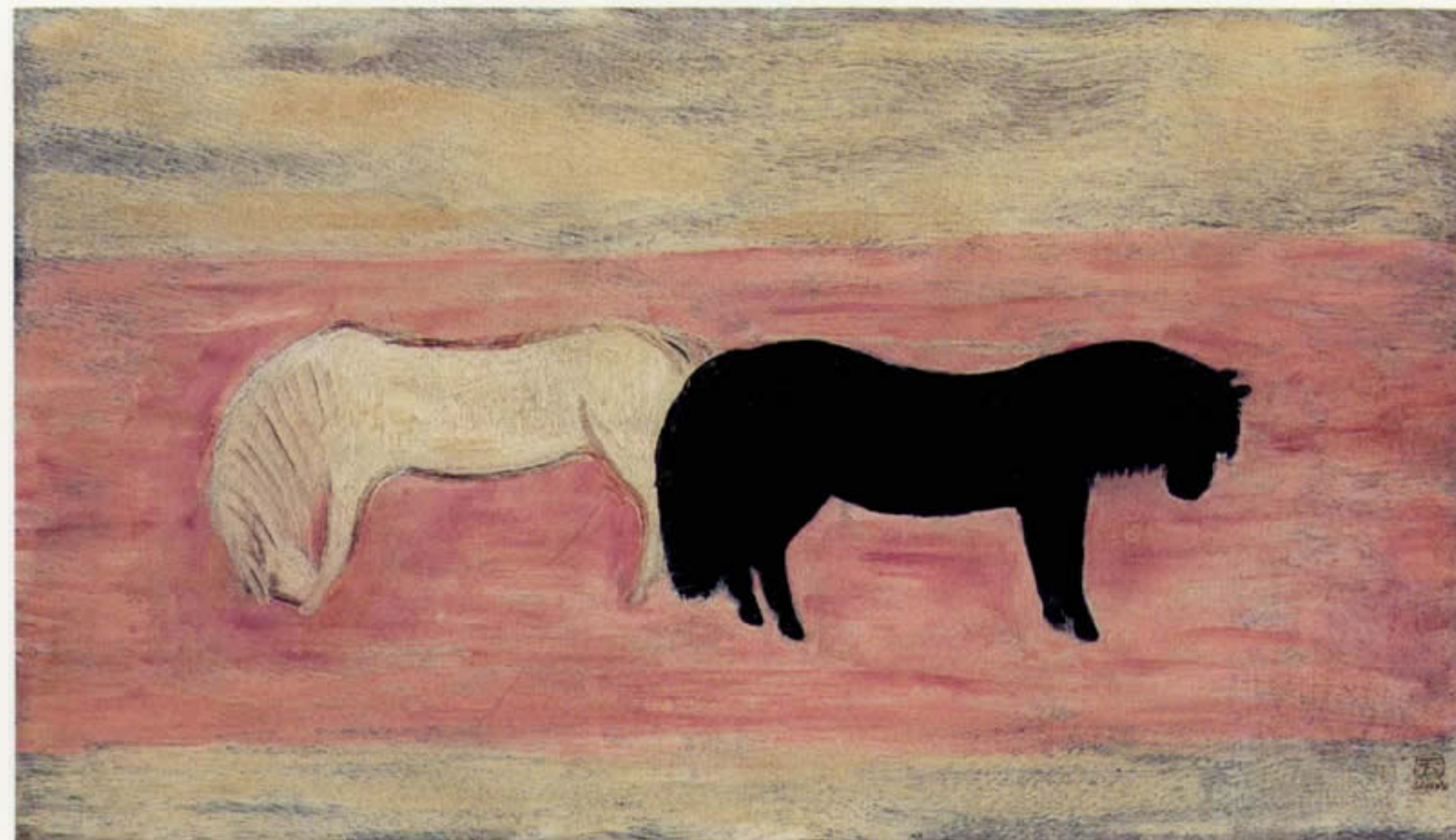
Signed, Yu

常玉 白馬·黑馬·豹兒 (畫背)
油畫 木板 (雙面)
一九三〇至一九四五年作

簽名：SANYU 玉

畫背之題識如下：
此畫經兩個時代方成
起畫在一九三〇年黑馬當成
白馬未就全。成就在一九四五年
在這個時代我戀愛一少婦
因她而成此畫。這幅畫已屬於她
後因絕離此畫仍為此

玉記



6 (front)



6 (reverse)

Note:

This painting was illustrated in an article that appeared in the French newspaper, *Le Parisien Libere** (December 25, 1946). The article is entitled "Inventor of Essentialism, SAN-YU, Chinese painter of Montparnasse". (see photocopy of this article opposite)

translation of article:

"European painting is like a lavish feast where there are roasts and fried foods and all kinds of meat. As for my works, they are like vegetables, fruits and salads. They can help you put aside your usual tastes in painting."

Thus speaks Sanyu, a Chinese painter who is currently exhibiting at the Paris Club Feminin. Sanyu is a slight and agile man with a smile tinged with humor. Humor seems to be the principal resource of this man who is both inventor of *ping-tennis* (a sport that has been very popular for some years now) and creator of these subtle paintings of pink woman and animals alone in a vast and dizzying space.

The curious could ask if Sanyu is a Chinese who is an artist or an artist who is Chinese. There is no answer to this question. The particular gift of this artist is to unite East and West in his paintings, not in a confused, sacreligious way, but with an elevated awareness where one loses usual points of reference. Sanyu has found one word to describe his minimalist art using basically three tones of color: Simplicity. Some people have

substituted this, perhaps somewhat inappropriately, with the word "essentialism", which may not be better, but could allow critics to differentiate it from other groups or cliques of 'isms'.

Concerning modern art, Sanyu expresses an individual opinion: "Contemporary artists paint with a type of deception using more color. I do not deceive, so I cannot be regarded as one of the more popular painters..." That does not stop him from having a sincere admiration for Picasso. "Picasso has become well-known, but we do not understand his works. The deformation in his works is simply a first step. Our race is too old, our bodies too fragile, our lives too short... We thought that we would have to build barriers along the steel rails. It is the same with Picasso. Let us not erect barriers around Picasso..."

**Le Parisien Libere* was a daily newspaper founded in 1944. In 1986 its name was changed to *Le Parisien*.



Article from *Le Parisien Libere*, 1946
巴黎解放日報刊載之原文，1946年

附記：

此畫作曾著錄在一份法國報紙 *Le Parisien Libere* (1946年12月25日) 巴黎解放日報* 的文章中。題目為“本位主義之發明者常玉，一位在蒙帕拿斯的華人藝術家”。(參看以上之影印圖樣)

上述文章之內容翻譯如下：
“歐洲繪畫好比一席豐盛的菜肴，當中包含了很多燒烤、煎炸的食品以及各式肉類。我的作品則像是蔬菜、水果及沙拉，能幫助人們轉換及改變對於欣賞繪畫藝術的品味。”

刻下正於巴黎婦女會所展出新作的一位中國畫家常玉作如是譬喻。常玉，一位長得細小但甚靈巧的男人，一臉滿載著幽默感的微笑。這位同時身兼“乒乓網球”的發明者(此運動早

已流行好幾年了)；又是那些奇妙畫作的創作人；畫中往往描繪一些粉紅女人或是動物被錯置在一個偌大而令人迷惑的空間中。綜而言之，幽默感似乎是其創作原動力之基本泉源。

好奇的人會問：常玉究底是身為一個中國人而為藝術家；抑或是身為一位藝術家而為中國人，這也許沒有答案。這位藝術家能以其不按常理而又不落俗套之創作手法，毫不含糊地把東西之優點融合於他的畫作中。對於他那基本上只運用三種顏色建構的畫面，常玉以這樣一個字眼去概括，那就是：簡單主義。或有人以另一個略顯不當的“本位主義”來代替，不過這也未嘗不可，至少可以方便藝評家們把其與別的派系或主義作分野。

談到現代繪畫，常玉發表了他個人的見解：“當代畫家們總帶點欺騙地以多種顏色作畫。我不欺騙，故此我不被歸納為這些較為人接受的畫家之一……”但這並不妨礙他對畢卡索的一種真切的仰慕。“畢卡索雖已出名，但我們並不見得都了解他的作品。其作品中的形體變構只算是他踏出的第一步。我們的風俗太陳舊了，身體太軟弱了，生命太短促了……剛開始時我們對火車鐵路此一嶄新發明都感到惶恐，總覺得需要在路軌旁加建圍欄。對畢卡索也是一樣，讓我們別在他的身上築構屏障……”

**Le Parisien Libere* 巴黎解放日報是巴黎一份創辦於1944年的日報。它於1986年時被更名為 *Le Parisien* 巴黎日報。



7

7 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

CAT PLAYING

unsigned
oil on canvas
13 by 16 1/8 in. (33 by 41 cm.)

常玉 貓戲 油畫 畫布



8

8 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

PINK CHRYSANTHEMUM

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square; on the reverse signed SANYU, and dated 1937
oil on canvas
15 1/2 by 12 1/4 in. (39.5 by 31 cm.)

常玉 小粉菊 油畫 畫布
一九三七年作

簽名：SANYU 玉：SANYU（畫背）

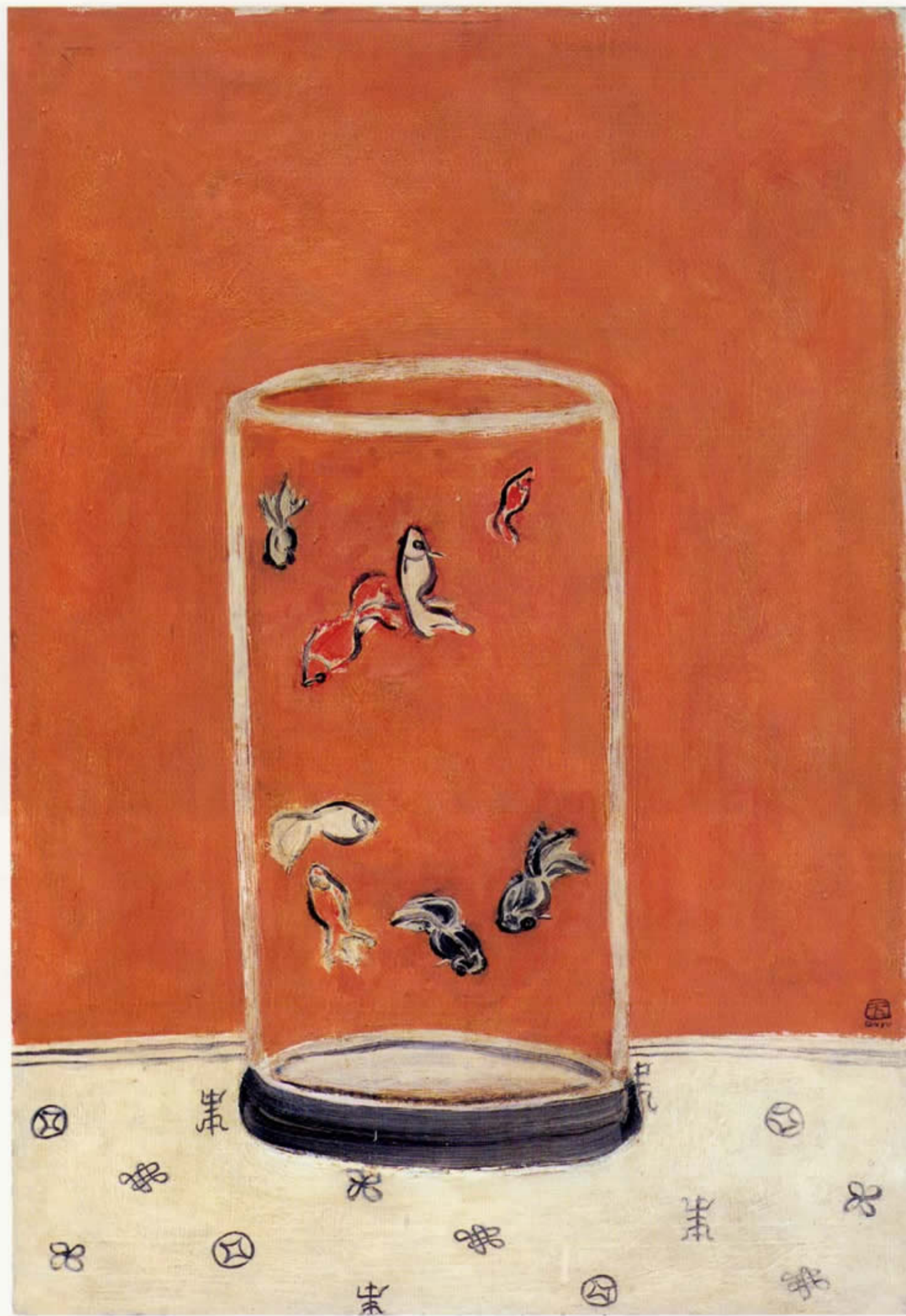
9 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

GOLDFISH

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in
Chinese in a square
oil on canvas
29 by 19½ in. (73.5 by 50 cm.)

常玉 八尾金魚 油畫 畫布

簽名：SANYU 玉





10

10 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

PANTHER

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square
oil on masonite
24 by 28 ½ in. (61 by 72.8 cm.)

For similar painting, see *Fine Modern Chinese Oil Paintings, Drawings, Watercolours and Sculpture* (Sotheby's Taipei, April 10th, 1994) Lot 50.

常玉 荒漠黑豹 油畫 纖維板

簽名：SANYU 玉

參看中國現代油畫、素描、水彩及雕塑拍賣目錄（蘇富比台北，1994年4月10日）內 Lot 50 之一幅類似的油畫作品。



11

11 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

TIGER

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square
oil on masonite
23 ½ by 28 ½ in. (60 by 73 cm.)

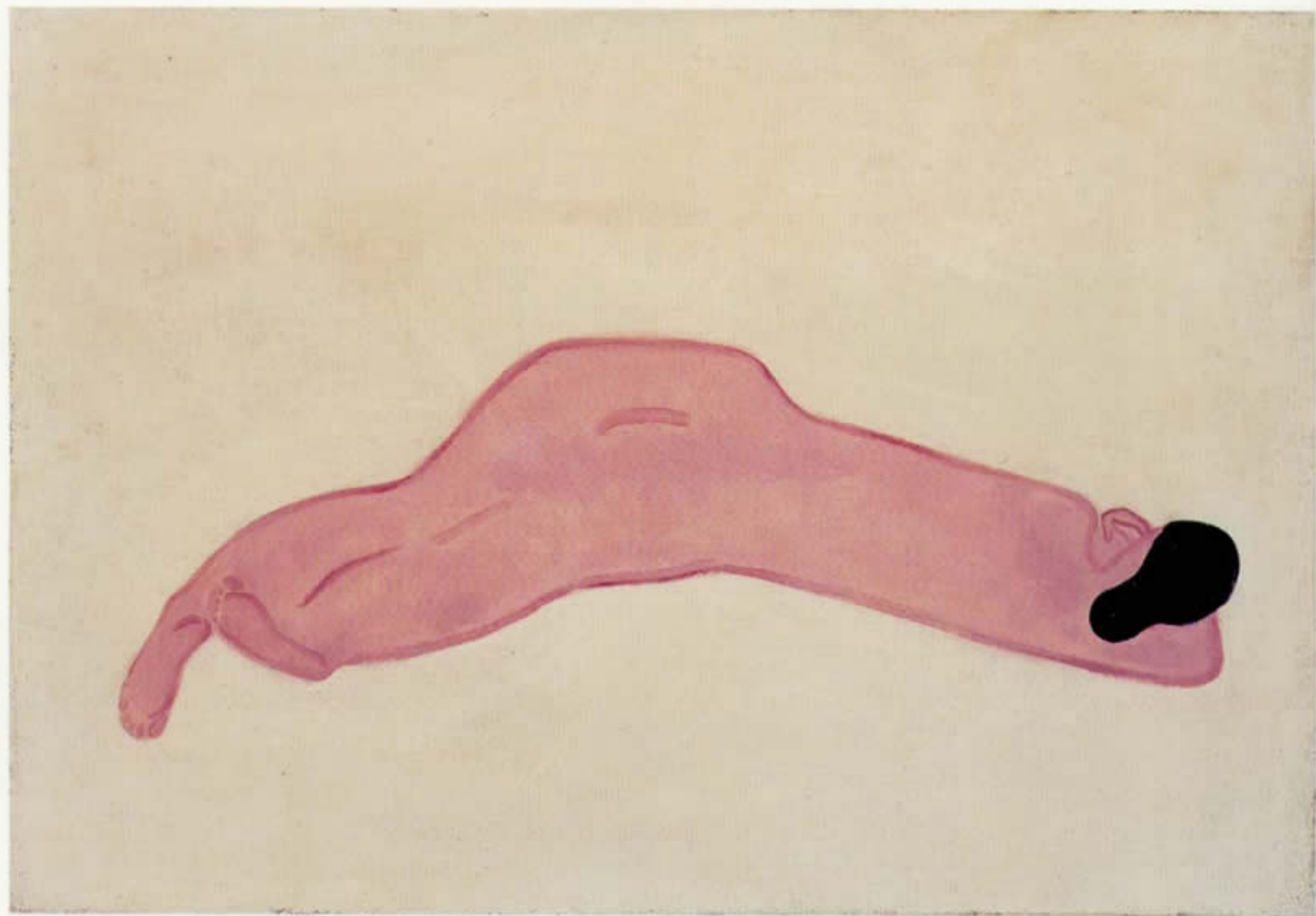
Painted circa 1946

Illustrated:
Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1996) p. 204

常玉 虎嘯 油畫 纖維板
約一九四六年作

簽名：SANYU 玉

著錄：
廿世紀中國藝術與藝術家（米高·蘇立文著，加州大學出版社出版，加州柏克萊及洛杉磯，1996年）第204頁



12

12 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

PINK NUDE

unsigned
oil on canvas
25 1/4 by 36 1/4 in. (65.5 by 92.5 cm.)

常玉 粉紅色裸女 油畫 畫布

13 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

PINK NUDE ON FLORAL SHEET

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in
Chinese in a square

oil on panel
18 1/4 by 32 1/4 in. (46.5 by 82 cm.)

常玉 輕躺在碎花毯子上的粉紅裸女
油畫 木板

簽名：SANYU 玉



13

14 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

PRANCING PINTOS

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square
oil on masonite
19% by 25% in. (50 by 65 cm.)

For a similar painting, see National Museum of History, *The San Yu's Paintings* (Taipei, 1995) pp. 68-69; National Museum of History, *The Art of Sanyu* (Taipei, 1995) p. 87, Pl. 73; and also Chen Yen-fon *Overseas Chinese Fine Arts Series I—San Yu* (Artist Publishing Co., Taipei, 1995) Pl. 91, illustrated below.

常玉 草原漫步 油畫 纖維板

簽名：SANYU 玉

請參看常玉畫集（國立歷史博物館，台北，1995年1月出版）第68至69頁；常玉畫集（國立歷史博物館，台北，1995年10月出版）第87頁，圖版73；以及華裔美術家選集I—常玉（陳炎鋒著，藝術家出版社出版，台北，1995年9月）圖版91之一幅類似以上之油畫作品，見以下之附圖。

Horses, oil on board,
123 x 176 cm.
(Courtesy of
National Museum
of History, Taiwan)

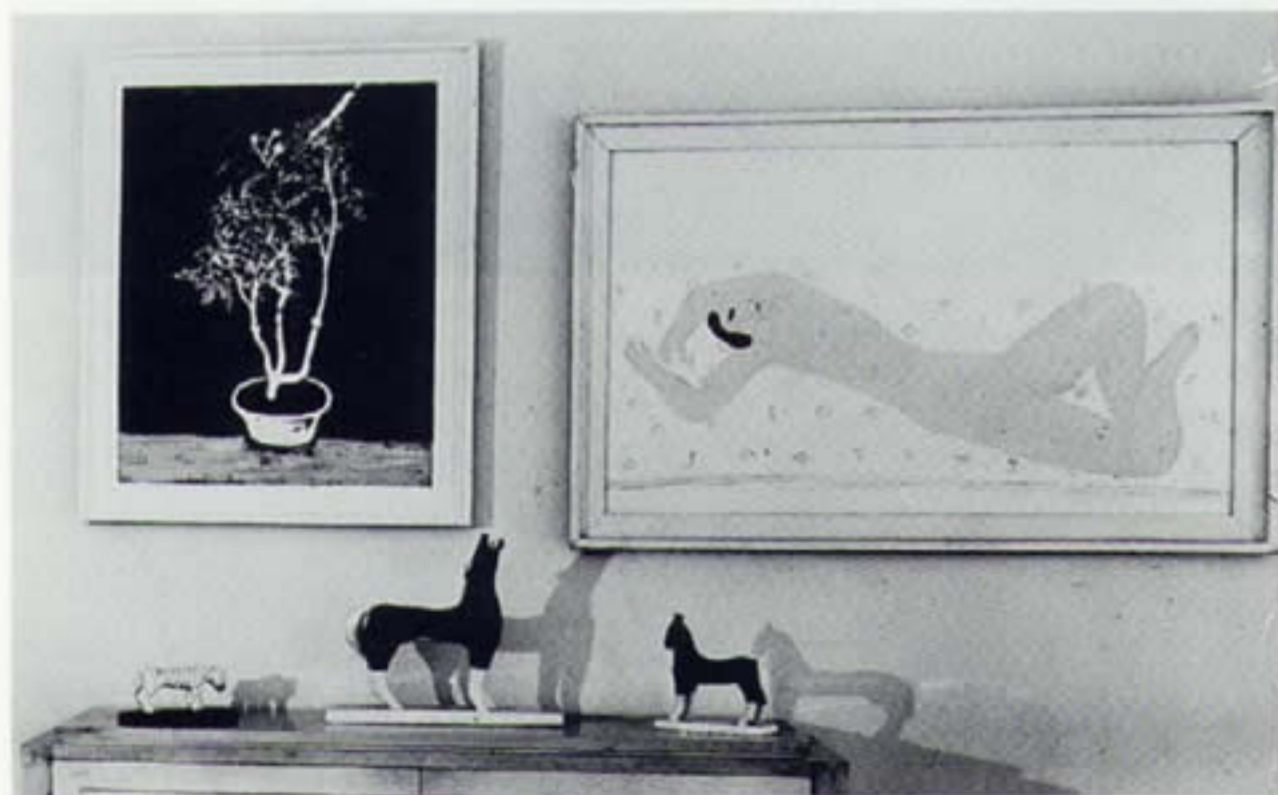
馬 油畫 木板
(圖片提供：台灣國立歷史博物館)





Sanyu with the painting
(Courtesy of National Archives of the Netherland, The Hague)

常玉與此畫作
(圖片提供：荷蘭國家檔案庫·海牙)



An exhibition of Sanyu's works, Amsterdam, 1930s
(Courtesy of National Archives of the Netherland, The Hague)

常玉作品展覽·荷蘭·1930年代
(圖片提供：荷蘭國家檔案庫·海牙)

15 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

PINK RECLINING NUDE

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in
Chinese in a square
oil on canvas

31½ by 51 in. (81 by 129.5 cm.)

常玉 粉紅色的裸女臥像 油畫 畫布
簽名：SANYU 玉





16

16 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

MARE AND FOAL

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square
oil on masonite
28 1/2 by 36 1/2 in. (72 by 92.5 cm.)

常玉 相依 油畫 纖維板

簽名：SANYU 玉



17

17 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

TWO ZEBRAS

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square
oil on masonite
28 1/2 by 36 1/2 in. (72.5 by 92 cm.)

常玉 斑馬之戀 油畫 纖維板

簽名：SANYU 玉

18 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

TWO NUDES BY THE OCEAN

unsigned
oil on masonite
28 3/4 by 36 1/4 in. (72.8 by 92 cm.)

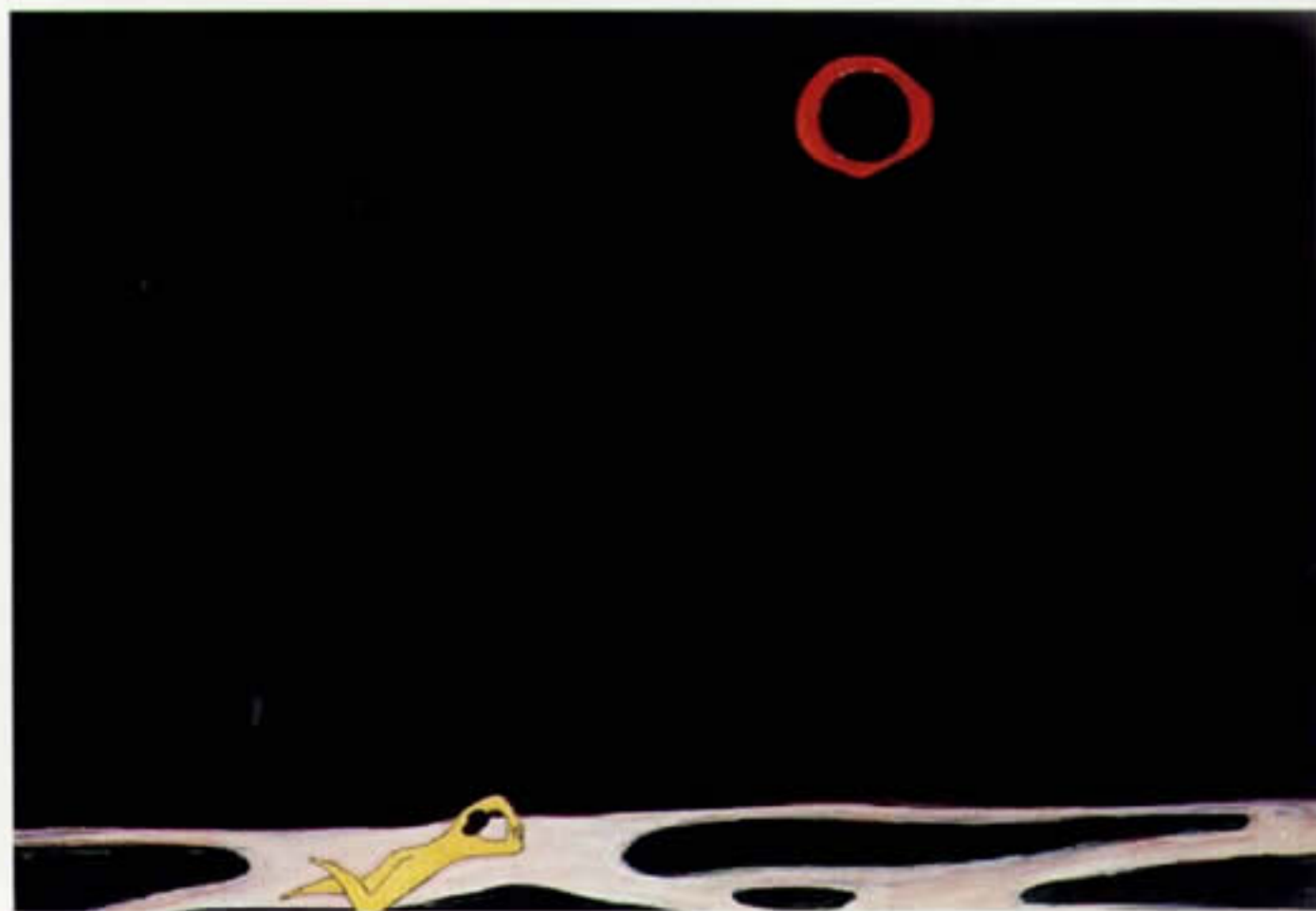
For a similar painting, see National Museum of History, *The Art of Sanyu* (Taipei, 1995) p. 69, Pl. 55; and Chen Yen-fon *Overseas Chinese Fine Arts Series I – San Yu* (Artist Publishing Co., Taipei, 1995) Pl. 120, illustrated below.

常玉 海邊雙美 油畫 纖維板

請參看常玉畫集（國立歷史博物館，台北，1995年10月出版）第69頁，圖版55；以及華裔美術家選集I—常玉（陳炎鋒著，藝術家出版社出版，台北，1995年9月）圖版120之一幅類似的油畫作品，見以下之附圖。

Moon, Sandbar
and Nude, circa
1960s, oil on
masonite,
179 x 125 cm.
(Courtesy of Lin &
Keng Gallery,
Taipei)

圓月·沙洲·裸女
約1960年代
油畫 纖維板
(圖片提供：大未來
畫廊·台北)



18

19 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

GREEN PLANT

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in
Chinese in a square
oil on masonite
28 3/4 by 23 3/4 in. (72.8 by 60 cm.)

常玉 綠意 油畫 纖維板
簽名：SANYU 玉



Mary and
Pablo Frank,
New York, 1953
(Copyright Robert
Frank)

瑪利及巴布羅·法蘭克於紐約，1953年
(版權所有：羅勃·法蘭克)



20 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

SEATED BLONDE NUDE

signed SANYU in English, and *yu* in Chinese in a square oil on masonite
36 by 28 1/2 in. (91.5 by 72 cm.)

For similar paintings, see *Fine Modern Chinese Oil Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours* (Sotheby's Taipei, April 18th, 1993) Lot 82; National Museum of History, *The Art of Sanyu* (Taipei, 1995) p. 71, Pl. 57; and Chen Yen-fon, *Overseas Chinese Fine Arts Series I - San Yu* (Artist Publishing Co., Taipei, 1995) Pl. 110; and also National Museum of History, *The San Yu's Paintings* (Taipei, 1995) pp. 34-35, both illustrated below.



Le Femme Nue Assie,
oil on masonite,
circa 1950s,
127.5 x 79 cm.
(Sotheby's Taipei,
April 18, 1993, Lot
82)

裸女背像，油畫
纖維板，約1950年
代作
(蘇富比台北，
1993年4月18日
春拍，Lot 82)

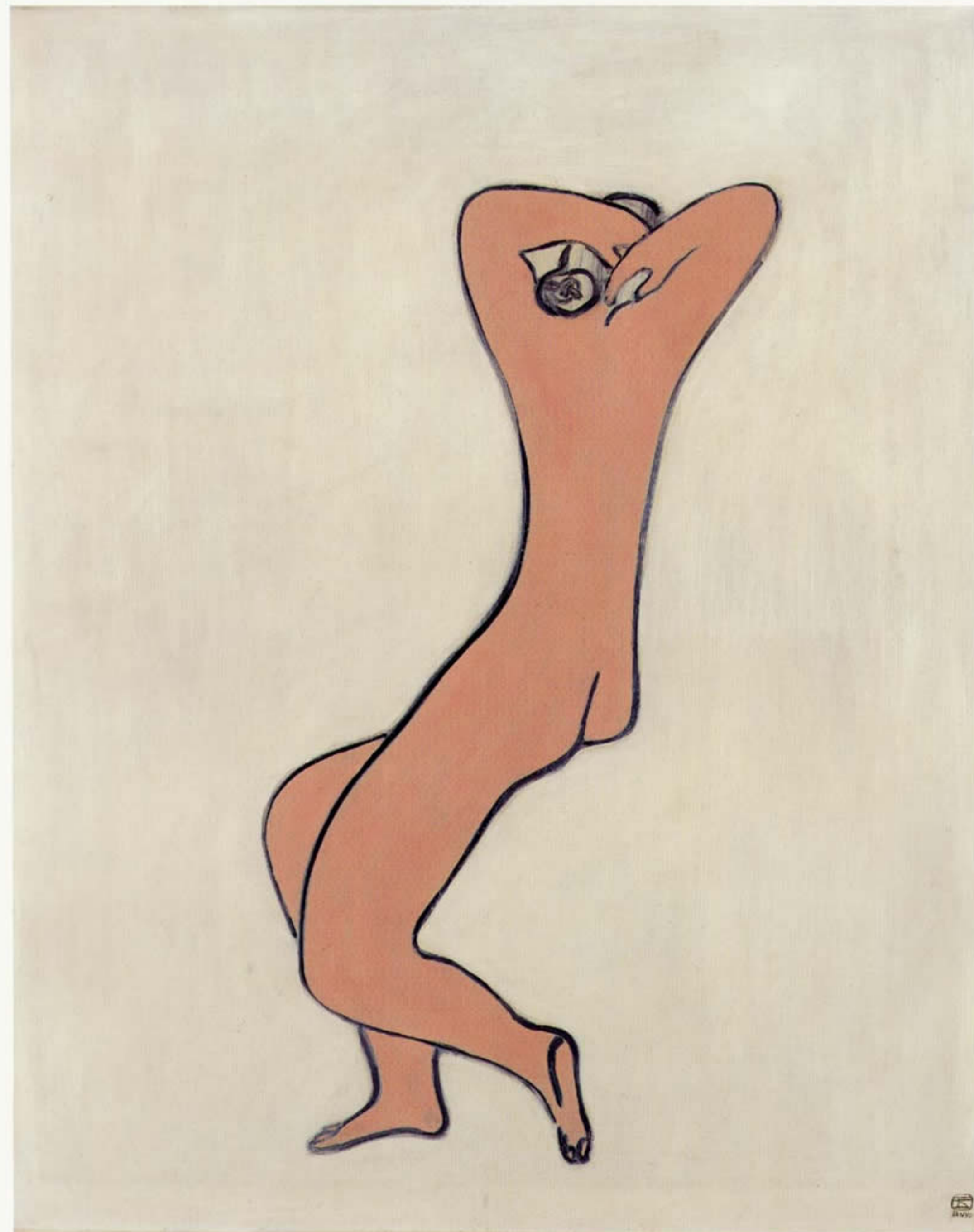
A Bather,
oil on masonite,
131 x 82 cm.
(Courtesy of
National Museum
of History, Taiwan)

浴女，油畫 纖維板
(圖片提供：台北國
立歷史博物館)

常玉 金髮裸女坐像 油畫 纖維板

簽名：SANYU 玉

類似以上的兩幅油畫作品，請參看中國現代油畫、素描及水彩拍賣目錄（蘇富比台北，1993年4月18日）內之 Lot 82；常玉畫集（國立歷史博物館，台北，1995年10月出版）第71頁，圖版57；以及華裔藝術家選集 I—常玉（陳炎鋒著，藝術家出版社出版，台北，1995年9月）圖版110；另常玉畫集（國立歷史博物館，台北，1995年1月出版）第34至35頁，兩幅均見以下之附圖。



21 Chang Yu (Sanyu, 1901-1966)

WHITE FLOWERS IN A WHITE POT

unsigned

oil on masonite

31 $\frac{3}{8}$ by 25 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (81 by 65.5 cm.)

常玉 白色盤花 油畫 纖維板

END OF SALE

