

Fusion

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Abstract

I believe that the fusion of distinctive cultures which extends from traditional Chinese culture is the new spirit in the East. I will take two pieces of my work, *National Treasures* and *Thousand Kilometer Landscape*, as examples to elaborate this perspective.

My first job after graduation in the 1980s was being a mariner. I set out on two round-the-world voyages during those four years. This experience allowed me to understand the spherical Earth and where the East and the West were located.



Fig. 1. Wan Liya's first round-the-world voyage across the Pacific in 1984

I'm going to share my personal understanding of the theme of this congress with two of my works. The first piece is titled *National Treasure*, which is inspired by the legend of the porcelain Guan Ware (from the royal kiln)—*Yongzheng Fencai Bat Peach Stria Olive Vase*.



Fig. 2. Wan Liya, *National Treasure*, 2011, 250 x 250 x 460 cm



Fig. 3. Yongzheng Fencai Bat Peach Stria Olive Vase



Fig. 4. Table lamp made from the vase



Fig. 5. Photo of the buyer and seller at the auction



Fig. 6. Buyer and the curator of Shanghai Museum at a donation ceremony



Fig. 7. Her Royal Highness Princess Máxima of the Netherlands (now Queen Máxima of the Netherlands) opens at the exhibition *The Hague under Heaven - Contemporary Sculpture from China*

This precious porcelain strayed into Europe in the late Qing Dynasty, which was then brought to the U.S. Since no one knew how valuable it was, it was converted into a table lamp by its owner and was neglected for years, which replaced its position from a national treasure to a daily necessity. In 2002, it was sold for HK \$41.5 million at an auction after being discovered and was donated to the Shanghai Museum by a buyer, which marked the return of the porcelain of considerable value to China. At that time, many national treasures were bought at a staggering price from overseas back to China, which drew much attention worldwide and was known as the “Porcelain Patriotism” by western media.

For me, it is a legendary story involving the differences in culture, ideology, and value between the East and the West and even has something to do with geopolitics, which is what I want to discuss in my works. Thus, I enlarged this national treasure and changed it back into a table lamp, which was exhibited at *The Hague under Heaven - Contemporary Sculpture from China* in 2011 (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 8. Wan Liya, *Thousands of Kilometers Landscape*, 2010, blue and white porcelain, dimensions variable

This work is inspired by *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains* (Fig. 9), one of the top ten legendary paintings in China, by Wang Ximeng, a painter from Northern Song Dynasty. In my opinion, this piece of work is representative of traditional oriental spirit.

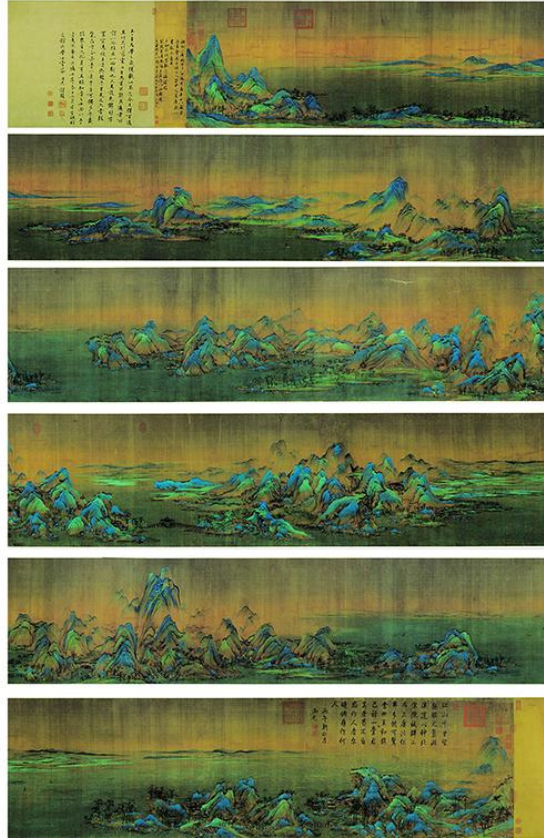


Fig. 9. Wang Ximeng, *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains*, Northern Song Dynasty, 1191.5 x 51.5 cm, permanent collection of the Palace Museum in Beijing

In the digital age, free flow of information and convenience of travel provides an unprecedented condition for international culture exchange. So in my practice, New Orientalia for me is — a “**fusion**,” which is built on the profound foundation of oriental traditions that embodies our distinguished cultures.