

Pan Yuliang's Art Dissemination in the Republican Period (1928-1937)

Ran Tao

College of China ASEAN Art, Chengdu University, Chengdu, Sichuan, 610106, China

Abstract: From Pan Yuliang's return to the Republic of China in 1928 to her second trip abroad in 1937, her artistic career was in full swing. She actively organized solo exhibitions, art group exhibitions, and art society activities during this period. By studying Pan Yuliang's art dissemination during the Republic of China period, we will explore art dissemination activities and their relationship with cultural ecology.

Keywords: Pan Yuliang; Republican period; Art dissemination

1. Five Individual Exhibitions

During her nine years back in China, Pan Yuliang sequentially curated and presented five individual exhibitions. as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Pan Yuliang's five solo art exhibitions, 1928-1937 ^①

serial number	Exhibition time	Exhibition venue	Name of the exhibition	Number of works
1	November 28-December 2, 1928	Shanghai Ningbo Hometown Association	Exhibition of paintings commemorating Ms. Pan Yuliang's return from her stay in Europe	80
2	October 23, 1929	Shiseido Ginza, Tokyo	Pan Yuliang's Solo Exhibition	
3	May 1-5, 1935	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	Pan Yuliang's Solo Exhibition	Over 200 pieces
4	June 2-8, 1936	Shanghai French Concession, Shaoxing Road, Zhonghua Xueyi Club	Pan Yuliang's Solo Exhibition	200
5	June 10-13, 1937	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	Ms. Pan Yuliang's Painting Exhibition	Over 170 pieces

Promoting by authoritative figures is one of the most essential reasons why Pan Yuliang has achieved social recognition and prestige. For example, Pan Yuliang's first solo art exhibition was initiated by Cai Yuanpei, Park Wenwei, Zhang Ji, and other authorities in mainstream cultural circles. They published the "Opening of a Painting Exhibition for Ms. Pan Yuliang" ^[1] in *The Shun Pao* on the day of the exhibition, solemnly recommending Pan Yuliang to her peers and audience in China, which shows the mainstream culture's concern and praise for Pan Yuliang.

The social status Pan Yuliang acquired upon her return to China also enhanced her personal prestige and industry influence. During this decade, Pan Yuliang acquired some social identities, including head of the Western Painting Department at the Shanghai Fine Arts College and professor and tutor at the Xinhua Art College.

In terms of the cities where she held her exhibitions, aside from Tokyo in October 1929, her primary domestic venues were Nanjing and Shanghai. At that time, Nanjing, as the capital of the Republic of China, served as the national political, economic, and cultural hub, offering unparalleled advantages for hosting personal exhibitions. Meanwhile, Shanghai, an international metropolis, attracted artists from across the country and boasted a proliferation of artistic societies, fostering a novel ecosystem for art. This provided crucial conditions conducive to the dissemination of fine arts.

2. Joint Art Exhibitions and Group Activities

Throughout this decade, in addition to her solo exhibitions, Pan Yuliang was actively engaged in numerous joint art exhibitions and artistic associations. She participated in over twenty collaborative exhibitions, encompassing official shows organized by various departments of the Republican government and those hosted by private art societies such as Yi Yuan and Yi Feng She, as illustrated in Table 2. Analyzing these joint exhibitions provides insights into the objectives behind art exhibitions during the Republican era, their organizational structures, selection processes, and dissemination methods.

To commence, the analysis focuses on the organizers' nature, distinguishing between official exhibitions hosted by government entities and those organized by private art societies. For clarity, the discussion centers on the inaugural National Art Exhibition organized by the Ministry of Education. Conceived initially in 1922, the event surmounted numerous challenges before its successful inauguration on April

10, 1929, at the Xin PuYutang in Shanghai. The primary objective of this exhibition was to stimulate nationwide art education. Notably, the proportion of calligraphy and painting exhibits constituted roughly half of the total, a reflection of the nationalist cultural inclination of the Republican government of the time. During the event, the exhibition editorial team issued a periodical named ‘The Art Exhibition Bulletin,’ which featured copperplate reproductions of 30 artworks alongside various commentaries related to the exhibition, with each issue printed in

Table 2 Pan Yuliang’s Participation in Joint Art Exhibitions (1928-1937)^②

serial number	Exhibition time	Location	Sponsor	Exhibits
1	November 28-December 2, 1928	Guangzhou Museum Art Department	Guangzhou Museum	
2	April 10-30, 1929	Shanghai Xinpuyutang	The First National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education	The Drinker, The Black Woman, The Shadow, The Song, The Man in the Lamp-light
3	July 6-9, 1929	Shanghai Xizang Road Ningbo Fellowship Association	Yiyuan Painting Institute	—
4	September 20-25, 1929		The First Art Exhibition of Yiyuan Institute of Painting	Paintings and sculptures include The Rising Sun of Broken Cliffs, A Corner of the Immortal Sea, and The Drinker.
5	April 2, 1931	Shanghai Yalpei Road Mingfu Library	The Second Art Exhibition of Yiyuan Painting Institute	White Dang Lake
6	May 19-June 4, 1931	Nanjing Fuzimiao	Nanjing Art Exhibition	My Family, Self-Portrait, Two Girls, and other oil paintings
7	June 25-27, 1931	Nanjing	CUHK Art Department Teachers' and Students' Painting Exhibition	Cattle Farm, Reclining Cow, My Family, and 17 other oil paintings.
8	August 1, 1931	Shanghai	Chinese Art Exhibition	My Family
9	April 16, 1933	Nanjing	Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition of the Aid Army	
10	June 3-10, 1934	Shanghai Zhonghua Xueyi Society	The First Painting Exhibition of the Yifeng Society	Mimi, Memories, Phoenix Pine, Qinhuai River, Beiping Tuan Cheng, and other oil paintings
11	September 15-22, 1934	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	Commemorative Exhibition of the Establishment of the Chinese Art Association (The First Art Exhibition)	My Family
12	April 15-22, 1935	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	The Second Exhibition of the Chinese Art Association	The Great Wall, The Human Body, etc.
13	May 1-6, 1935	Nanjing	Inspiration Society	—
14	May 19-22, 1935	Nanjing Central University Library	The Second Art Exhibition of the Yifeng Society	Self-Portrait, Ms. Yu, etc.
15	October 10-16, 1935	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	The Third Exhibition of the Chinese Art Association	Old Drudgery, Body Clean and Refreshing, To be Vendor, Laoshan Pine, Qingdao Coastal Park
16	December 8-15, 1935	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	The 24th Anniversary of the Founding of Shanghai Fine Arts College Modern Masterpieces Exhibition	—
17	February 1936	Shanghai Universal Art Theater	Chinese Modern Masterpieces Exhibition	—
18	April 18-21, 1936	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	The Fourth Exhibition of the China Art Association	Autumn Chrysanthemums, Snowy Mountain Pine, Yandang Hundred Generals Cliff, Yandang Scattered Water Cliff, Self-Portrait
19	June 19-21, 1936	Shanghai Baxianqiao YMCA	The First Exhibition of Paintings	—
20	November 1-8, 1936	Nanjing Overseas Chinese Guest House	The Fifth Exhibition of the China Art Association	Sea of Clouds, Remnants, Pasture, Raccoon Girl, In the Mist
21	April 1-23, 1937	Nanjing Great Hall of the People	The Second National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education	Spring, Immigrants, etc.

20,000 copies distributed nationally. ^[2] Additionally, postcards depicting the exhibited pieces were circulated. Following the exhibition's conclusion, a catalog showcasing a selection of the works was published, thereby intensifying the promotional outreach of the exhibition across the country. Not only did Pan Yuliang's works participate in the National Art Exhibition, but her contributions to the first iteration were also featured in issues one and three of 'The Art Exhibition.' Furthermore, during the preparations for the second National Art Exhibition organized by the Ministry of Education, she was appointed as a member of the preparatory committee, actively engaging in the planning and organization efforts.

Secondly, in terms of exhibition types, Pan Yuliang's involvement extended beyond official exhibitions to include participation in society-hosted events and school achievement exhibitions. Art exhibitions, as cultural events, emerged in the late Qing Dynasty due to the influx of Western learning and rapidly evolved during the Republic's early years. School-based art exhibitions also experienced swift growth, with student works showcases and faculty-student art exhibitions emerging, providing aesthetic appreciation and affording the public increased access to engage with art.

Lastly, regarding Pan Yuliang's engagement with various art associations, it is noteworthy that she was involved in many societies amidst a thriving landscape of civil and officially endorsed artistic communities. Between 1912 and 1936, Shanghai alone witnessed the establishment of over 60 civilian painting societies, according to records in the "Chinese Art Association Annals" ^[3], while the government sponsored only one formal organization, the "Chinese Art Association." This disparity was not coincidental; it reflected the influence of the rise of group theory espoused by the Reformists, who advocated for the assembly of like-minded individuals to fulfill societal objectives. The shifting political climate and waves of patriotism led to intellectual movements advocating for "Art Education as a Substitute for Religion" and the harmonious integration of Eastern and Western styles under the principle of "Combining China and the West into One Administration." These trends inevitably gave birth to numerous art societies in response to societal needs.

3. Mass Communication

Newspapers, magazines, and pictorial periodicals served as the predominant media for mass communication during this era, functioning as vital platforms for the dissemination of art and art education. The propagation of Pan Yuliang's art was primarily centered on her works, focusing on publishing her paintings and critical reviews in these media outlets.

Through an examination of documents related to Pan Yuliang's activities, it is evident that her artworks were prominently featured in a variety of publications, including but not limited to *The Ladies Journal*, *Fine Arts Life*, *Art Garden*, and *Oriental Magazine*, etc. For example, Li Yuyi wrote in *The Ladies Journal*, "Her brushwork is simple yet full of charm, emanating naturally without affectation, not forced or contrived. While it may not have reached the pinnacle of perfection, in our nation's realm of female artists, or even in our contemporary art world, such talent is rare." ^[4]

4. Conclusion

Pan Yuliang's artistic dissemination during the Republican Era unfolded against the backdrop of the most stable societal conditions of that time, with Shanghai and Nanjing presenting fertile grounds for art communication. Amidst the tide of new cultural movements, the idea of "Art as a Substitute for Religion," and the emergence of art exhibitions as a novel social phenomenon, artists, including Pan Yuliang, leveraged public exhibitions, critiques, and society engagements to forge a conduit between art and the masses. Thus, analyzing Pan Yuliang's dissemination in this era serves as an optimal lens to apprehend the intricate cultural dynamics and ecological relations of that period.

Footnotes

- ① Dong Song. Preliminary Chronology of Pan Yuliang (1895-1937)[J]. *The World of Chinese Painting AND Calligraphy*, 2010(02):25-27.
- ② Dong Song. Preliminary Chronology of Pan Yuliang (1895-1937)[J]. *The World of Chinese Painting AND Calligraphy*, 2010(02):25-27.

References

- [1] Cai Yuanpei et al. Kai for Ms. Pan Yuliang to Hold A Painting Exhibition [N]. *Shun Pao*, November 28, 1928.
- [2] Cui Guangxiao. Spreading and Significance of the Idea of "Popularization of Fine Arts" in the Republican Period--Taking the First National Fine Arts Exhibition in 1929 as a Point of View[J]. *Journal of Shaoyang University (Social Science Edition)*, 2010, 9(05):111-113.
- [3] Xu Zhihao. *Chinese Art Society Diffuses Record* [M]. 1. Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Publishing House, September 1994.
- [4] Li Yuyi. The Ministry of Education National Art Exhibition Visiting Records (II)[J]. *The Ladies Journal*, July 1929 (Vol. XV, No. 7).