Saturday: May 21, 1:30 — via ZOOM ---- SDIS Monthly Lecture

A Review of Modern Chinese Art, Including its Antecedents and its Relationship to Modern Chinese Culture.

By Dr. Kuiyi Shen

Kuiyi Shen is Professor of Asian Art History, Theory, and Criticism, Vice Chair and Director of the Ph.D. Program at UCSD. His teaching and writing focus on Chinese and Japanese art with an emphasis on modern and contemporary Chinese art and Sino-Japanese art exchanges in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Topics include lectures and seminars on Chinese landscape painting of Song and Yuan, Chinese literati and court painting, tradition and modernity in twentieth-century China, contemporary Chinese art and mass culture, Japanese Buddhist art and architecture, Japanese painting and Ukiyo-e prints, and the arts of modern Japan.

Shen received a BA in fine arts from the Shanghai Normal University and an MA and PhD in art history from Ohio State University. Prior to his 1989 relocation to the United States, Kuiyi Shen served as the director of the art book department at the Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House.

Shen has been the Managing Editor of Brill’s book series Modern Asian Art and Visual Culture. He served as Member of the Exhibition Advisory Committee, Experimental Art from China, Guggenheim Museum, New York (2018).

ABSTRACT
We plan to explore modern Chinese Art through examples and discussion, including its origins and its tensions with traditional Chinese Art. We will consider its development over this last century, and its relationship to the rapidly developing economic, political and cultural changes in China. We include the periods from the opium wars, to the cultural revolution, and from the opening of China to the West to the present.
The Scholars Notebook is issued monthly during the academic year, except December, by the San Diego Independent Scholars.

SDIS strives to promote opportunities for active learning and scholarship, for its members and for the San Diego community.

Public service activities of SDIS include free public lectures and cooperative educational projects with other organizations. SDIS members enjoy a variety of regular discussion groups, presently via Zoom.

SDIS, established in 1982, was instrumental in the founding of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, an organization that unites eight similar organizations and has international membership.

For more information see https://sdscholars.org or contact sdisask@gmail.com
For several months, the Biosciences Group has been exploring psychological and neuroscientific information pertaining to current societal problems. In April, group member Jaime Pineda summarized neuroscientific concepts related to social interactions among humans. Some topics addressed in his presentation were:

· **Why do humans have such a large brain?**
  - Which enlarged brain regions influence our complex social interactions?

· **How do we understand the mental states of others?**
  - What are the strategies we’ve evolved?
  - Are those strategies innate or learned?
  - Do they give us insight into the first-person subjective experiences of others?

· **How do these mechanisms influence our social, especially prosocial, behavior?**

A remark in our March discussion --“If humans are so prosocial, why do we have so many wars?” – will be the focus of the group in May. In that context, we will consider quotes from two of Steven Pinker’s recent books: *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (2011) and *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress* (2018.)

*Better Angels of Our Nature* presents data and statistical analyses that indicate declining human violence across time, such that the chances of a person being killed by another human are lower now than in the past, if the entire globe is considered, despite monstrous atrocities in some locales at specific times. Pinker proposes several cultural developments that seem to favor declining overall violence, such as the development of nation-states in which laws and police replace vigilantes and revenge in the settling of disputes.

*Enlightenment Now* argues that the enlightenment values of reason, science and humanism can also act to decrease violence. Do you agree? Join us at 1:00 on Friday, May 13, to participate in the discussion.

**Dorothy Parker**
COLLOQUY CAFÉ
1:30p.m. — Wednesday — May 18 — via Zoom

You might say that “reality,” our April concept for discussion, is not what it used to be. Zoom, which originally seemed a virtual meeting because its participants are not actually together, has become “reality”; it may not be here but it is now.

One member compared the dreaminess of fantasy fiction to the real life quality of a reality TV show. Another commented that most of TV is recorded; we watch after the fact. Even though it may have been “live,” what we see is often a filmed copy of the actual event.

A third person said that what one perceives is real to that person; the amount of consciousness involved is connected to the perception of reality. He added that reality depends on the impression made by the event, speaker, poem or play in question; therefore “reality” is not definite or solid, but malleable.

Another member used the term "squishy" to describe the same quality.

Still another participant remarked emphatically that reality affects every aspect of our being and is in the moment. She cited the role of an actor in a play she once saw as having changed her life. Think of a jury’s response to testimony given in a trial, added another member.

A very different concept and one certainly even more squishy, “romance,” will be examined at the May Colloquy meeting, Wednesday the 18th, Zooming as usual at 1:30.

Gerry Horwitz

PHYSICAL SCIENCES GROUP
2 p.m. — Wednesday — May 11 — via Zoom

At its March 27th zoom meeting (the March 20th meeting was postponed a week) the Physical Sciences Group, having completed its development of the free Klein Gordon quantized field, examined a simple example of the effects on the field of the presence of an interaction. The authors, Peskin and Schroeder, proceeded by assuming a defined interaction (much like examining Maxwell's electromagnetic fields in the presence of a known set of charges and currents). Following Peskin and Schroeders development, we assumed an interaction that was on only for a finite period of time. For this case we were able to demonstrate that after the interaction is no longer on, we can find the number of new particles created in each momentum interval, and determine the total number of particles created and the associated total energy.

We then went on to Chapter 3, to examine Peskin and Schroeder's development of the Dirac fields and their quantization. They start the chapter with an interesting exploration of Lorentz Invariance for field equations, leading to the development of matrix representations of the Lorentz Group, and a concise review of continuous groups and their underlying Lie algebras. Our next zoom meeting will be on May 11th at 2pm.

Alvin Halpern
WORKS IN PROGRESS

3 p.m.— Thursday — May 19 — via Zoom

At 3:00 on May 19, the Works in Progress Group will host Publishing in Science after Retirement, a presentation and discussion concerning strategies for remaining professionally productive as an independent scholar. Although emphasis will be on mathematics and science, ideas appropriate to all areas of study will be considered. These include library access, bibliographic or reference database availability, establishing or maintaining contact with others in a specialized field, and learning how to write for popular audiences.

One member will lead the discussion, describe his experiences with an open access publisher, and present a recently completed paper. Several others who have written textbooks, review articles, interdisciplinary papers, or popular articles will also have an opportunity to contribute.

As before, this meeting will be available to Works in Progress and other SDIS members, who can request the address for the Zoom session by emailing Ken Krauss or Dorothy Parker. Persons who are not SDIS members, but would like to visit the group, may ask to be placed on its mailing list by contacting sdisask@gmail.com.

Ken Krauss and Dorothy Parker

**The Independent Scholar** is now inviting submissions

*The Independent Scholar* (TIS) is a peer-reviewed open-access journal sponsored by the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS) and published under an Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) Creative Commons License.

All NCIS members, and members of our affiliated Partner Groups such as SDIS, are cordially invited to submit manuscripts to TIS using the submission form on the TIS page of the NCIS website ([https://www.ncis.org/the-independent-scholar/tis](https://www.ncis.org/the-independent-scholar/tis)).

You should submit an abstract in the first instance, and the full paper should follow within 4 weeks.

More information about TIS and the papers in earlier volumes are available at the TIS page mentioned above. For email queries concerning TIS articles, contact [tis@ncis.org](mailto:tis@ncis.org). For book reviews, contact [reviews@ncis.org](mailto:reviews@ncis.org).
The Film Group will meet Wednesday, May 4 at 10 am to view *Parallel Mothers*, Pedro Almodovar’s 2021 drama about two single mothers who meet while giving birth to baby girls. The mothers stay in touch occasionally, and after one of the mothers discovers that the babies were switched at birth, she initially keeps the secret to herself. After eventually telling the other mother, the story proceeds as the truth is revealed and the family situations change completely.

This is considered Almodovar’s best film, appearing on numerous “Best” lists for 2021. Our film group has previously watched more of his movies than those of any other director; this will be our seventh. We started in 2011 with the 1999 drama, *About My Mother*, and continued through the years with *Talk to Her*, *Bad Education*, *Volver*, *Julieta*, and *Pain and Glory*. Internationally acclaimed,

Almodovar’s films are filled with bold colors and lots of music. His themes frequently focus on females facing tragedies, drugs, and family interactions. He was raised without male influences and quite naturally gravitates to stories about strong females.

On Monday, April 5th, the SDIS Film group enjoyed a screening of the first film based on the Broadway musical *Show Boat*. Released in 1936 by MGM, the songs, with music by Jerome Kern and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, featured a surprising array of standards, which members recognized and greatly appreciated.

The cast members in the movie who had appeared in the stage production, included Hattie McDaniel (who sang and danced “Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man o’ Mine), Helen Morgan (who delivered a definitive, “Just my Bill,”) and Paul Robeson (belting out the tragic “Ole Man River). They were joined by Irene Dunne and Alan Jones and a large cast comprised of some of the familiar faces drawn from the MGM collection of extras.

Members commented not only on the superb production values but also on how the attitudes of the time imposed a certain racism, most apparent in Miss Dunne’s one number in blackface, on a script that was originally intended as a critique of such prejudices. All in all, this black-and-white classic proved an enormous success so many decades later.

Barbara Heckler and Ken Krauss
READING EXPERIENCE

10 a.m. — Third Monday —June 20 --- via Zoom

A lively discussion was the response to Stephen Birmingham’s “Our Crowd”: The Great Jewish Families of New York at this Study Group’s April 18 meeting. Birmingham traces the careers of numerous founding fathers of significant banking, investment, railroad and other firms, from their origins in mid- to late-19th century Germany to the situations of their descendants in 1967 when his large account was published.

In addition to their career ups and downs, the author also emphasizes their intense family loyalties, their determination to succeed, their relationships, their varied responses to anti-Semitism as well as their snobbery and insularity.

The second in the group’s current concentration, “groups,” the great difference between this assortment of individuals and those of the previous book, which examined the witty and creative 1920-30s Algonquin Round Table friends, was noted.

Next in the series will be James Mellow’s Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company.

Reading Experience continues to meet during the summer, by Zoom and always at 10 a.m. on the 3rd Monday of each month.

NOTE: However, this year a recess will be taken during May so that the next meeting will be June 20.

Gerry Horwitz

“Spanning the years from 1903, when Gertrude Stein first arrived in Paris, to her final days at the end of World War II, ‘Charmed Circle’ is a penetrating and lively account of a writer at the heart of modernity.”
As I began preparing an Agenda for May 14, the obvious choice for the lead item was the dispute which had broken out between Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and Disney World. DeSantis had just pushed through the Florida legislature a bill that would make it illegal for any teacher to lead a discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in grades K-3rd grade, or in any grades where the discussion would be inappropriate.

While the bill was still pending in the legislature, the President of Disney World refused to express an opinion about the bill, stating that Disney should not get involved in such a controversial political issue. After the bill was signed by DeSantis, Disney employees lobbied Disney to reverse its position on the bill and to come out in opposition to it. Disney did reverse its position, and agreed to appeal the bill, which they called Don’t Say Gay.

DeSantis then caused the Florida legislature to withdraw a decades old Disney special district allowing Disney to basically own and operate all of the multiple acres housing the Disney World theme park, including a police and fire department. Basically, Disney World has been allowed to operate its own city government all these years, and that special privilege has now been taken away because of the political position taken by Disney on this controversial bill.

Before the Agenda had been completed, however, another highly controversial political event took place which will occupy much of the discussion during the May study group. Twitter, one of the most popular social media platforms in the country, has just been sold to Elon Musk, the richest man in the world.

A wealthy billionaire buying another company would not normally be considered a political issue, but Twitter has become a place to discuss the leading political issues of the day, and Musk has announced he will turn Twitter into the equivalent of a digital free speech public square where all opinions on all political subjects will be allowed. Twitter currently prohibits former President Trump and several other conservative political voices from expressing their opinions on its platform. In addition, every major newspaper and notional cable television channel except Fox has come out strongly against the Elon Musk purchase of Twitter.

I am looking forward to a lively discussion of these two topics, as well as several other issues, at the May 14 SDIS Inside Politics Zoom Study Group.

Al Korobkin
May 2022
SDIS meetings and events listed are via Zoom

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<td>Colloquy Café 1:30 p.m.</td>
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For North County Village events: Contact Jack Kerr: jek123@msn.com, Oceanids, an organization affiliated with UCSD, lists additional activities at: http://ccom.ucsd.edu/~oceanids/newsletters/2021_2022Feb_Mar_Newsletter.pdf