

what's on

STAGE

Ukrainian Children's Ballet

The Ukrainian Children's Ballet will give two performances, one of *Snow White*, the other, *Cinderella*. The ballet will also perform at the Ukraine Pavilion in the Expo Garden on Aug 24, Ukrainian National Pavilion Day.

7:30 pm, Aug 14-15
Shanghai City Theater, 4889
Dushi Road
021-6217-2426
80-280 yuan

Thunderstorm

The Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center will launch its new production of the modern Chinese drama *Thunderstorm*, by Cao Yu. It tells of a family tragedy in which everyone struggles between love and hatred. When dirty secrets from the family — both present and past — are unveiled, everyone has to face the cruel truth about life.

Aug 19-22
Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center,
288 Anfu Road
021-6473-0123
100-200 yuan

12 Angry Men

The play, *12 Angry Men*, by Reginald Rose, will be staged in Chinese. The play presents a jury deciding the fate of an 18-year-old accused of murdering his father. These 12 ordinary men from vastly different backgrounds find they have to take the boy's life seriously and reconsider such concepts as justice, responsibility and respect for life.

7:30 pm, Sept 7-12
Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center,
288 Anfu Road
021-6473-0123
150-250 yuan

EXHIBITIONS

M816

The exhibition features 10 paintings, sculptures and new media works by artists from M816, an art community in Xingxi village, Meilong town, Minhang district. Artists started to build studios here in 2007. Now M816 has become a new cultural center in suburban Shanghai.

Aug 21-28
Duolun Museum of Modern Art, 27
Duolun Road
021-5671-9068

Ink art

M Art Center will present a new exhibition devoted to contemporary Chinese ink art. Curator Wu Wenxing will put together the work of 14 artists. Gong Yunbiao is the academic director of the show.

Aug 14-Sept 13
M Art Center, Building No 2, 50
Moganshan Road
021-6299-6610

Traditional art — contemporary issues

New York-based Ji Yunfei traces the history of the Three Gorges Dam project using an ancient art, **Zhang Kun** reports.

Ji Yunfei's latest exhibition at the James Cohan Gallery in Shanghai features a new series of paintings on Badong, a county in Hubei province near the Three Gorges Dam.

One of the most important pieces is a Chinese watercolor painting scroll, 3.14-meter long, presenting a panoramic scene of life near the Three Gorges Dam before villages were flooded to make way for the project. Ji made the painting into woodprints and one of the 108 copies of the print is on exhibition at the gallery.

Even though he began painting images of the Three Gorges Dam years before he actually went to Hebei province, the artist, who has lived in New York since the mid-1980s, was surprised to see things were so different from what he imagined.

This latest exhibition presents a new angle of art by juxtaposing modern themes and contemporary issues with traditional Chinese art.

Born in 1963, Ji was enrolled by the Central Art Academy when he was only 15. Bored with the systematic training while studying painting in college, the young rebellious student discovered the work of Picasso and Chinese masters like Chen Laolian, who lived in the 16th century.

"That was really great art, and Chen Laolian was so modern," Ji said, recalling his excitement after discovering Chen's work.

Ji's skills in line drawing excelled and, as traditional Chinese art became popular again, he turned away from Western oil painting to Chinese ink art.

In 1986 he moved to the United States and lived in New York City, but couldn't find inspiration.

"For quite a long time I couldn't produce anything that I was satisfied with," he said.

Emerging from his slump and lack of inspiration, he started to paint contemporary issues using traditional Chinese ink art. The sharp contrast of his subjects and his painting style was a refreshing change for art enthusiasts.

In the late 1990s, he started to work on the Three Gorges Dam, reading about the dam project and its great impact. It wasn't until 2002 he had the opportunity to visit the area.

Ji remembers the bus trip vividly, with winding roads and cliffs, and passengers too busy smoking and watching movies to



Ji Yunfei is holding an exhibition of ink art paintings of the Three Gorges Dam.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

notice the spectacular views outside the bus windows.

He went around the reestablished villages in Yichang and chatted with the villagers, asking them where they were from. "Then I'd go to check out the old village on a map. Sometimes it has disappeared from the map," Ji said.

He was angered and disheartened that these small villages were virtually erased from China's memory.

"I can't help but think about China's modern history; we have been too eager to eliminate things, but human art and culture rely so much on inheritance."

Ji said talking with the villagers changed his understanding of the issue.

"I have a lot of respect for their endurance. They are tough people, with superb survival

abilities."

He has also been inspired by the people's resourceful and creative nature.

"Some regions were trying to develop tourism and put on campy and commercialized ethnic group performances," said the artist.

Presenting his impressions and journeys to the area, his new exhibit is one that beautifully uses traditional Chinese ink art aesthetics to depict modern issues.

IF YOU GO

Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am-6 pm; Sunday,
12-6 pm, until Aug 29
James Cohan Gallery Shanghai
1F, Building 1, Lane No 1, 170 Yueyang Road
021-5466-0825