

Wang Chui

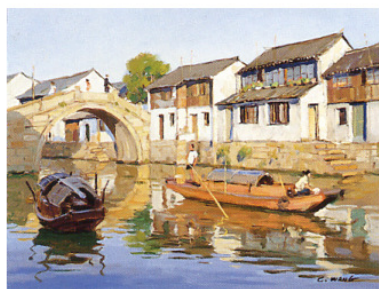
From China to Montréal and Back Again



VENICE, 52 x 34 in.
THE OLD CANALS/LES CANALS, 34 x 32 in.



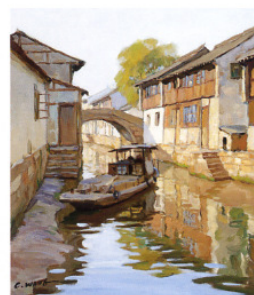
VENICE, 52 x 34 in.



SUMMER BY THE CANAL/L'ÉTÉ AU CANAL, 24 x 32 in.



ONE SIDE OF THE CANAL/UN CÔTÉ DU CANAL, 22 x 28 in.



THE CANAL IN THE AFTERNOON/CANAL L'APRÈS-MIDI, 24 x 30 in.

YVES SAUVAGEAU



Wang Chui is Chinese, originally from Hunan. He has a Masters in Fine Arts and is a titular professor of painting at the University of Beijing. He is also the winner of French Ministry of Foreign Affairs exchange scholarship which allowed him to study for two

years at Montpellier University in the south of France during the late 80s. During his stay in France he exhibited and won more than a few prizes, becoming well known in the process.

In 1991 he moved to Québec and now lives with his wife in an apartment studio in Verdun, a Montréal sub-

urb. "I prefer the calmness here. There aren't as many people as there are in China," says Wang explaining why he moved to Montréal. "China is changing, the people have more money. Here you are not being continually disturbed. I am my own boss. My studio is close to shopping and there is an Asian community that we know. As well, my studio has three large windows which give me good light when I paint."

Wang's studio is in an old school that has been converted, close to a subway station. "The cost of housing in this neighbourhood is reasonable and we have easy access to downtown." His arrival in Québec at the beginning of the 90s wasn't easy. There was a full recession under way and galleries were closing their doors because sales had plummeted. During this period Wang made ends meet by teaching more than by painting.

His painting is figurative and he works in oils, often in large formats. Wang's subjects are diverse, daily life in China, Canadian cityscapes, rural themes and nudes. He starts by expressing an idea in small drawings that he works on for a long time.

Then he transposes the idea into large scale which he then works on until he is completely satisfied. It can take him up to three months to finish a large painting. He throws out the work that doesn't satisfy him. "I refuse to put a

painting on the market that isn't good enough."

Like many another artist working in oils he works on multiple paintings at the same time, sometimes up to ten at a time, working first on one and then on another as he waits for the oils to dry. "I do a lot of retouching. Sometimes, if I'm not satisfied I'll start over at the beginning." If he is working in large format Wang might produce 40-50 paintings a year. If he is working in small format that number might climb to a hundred.

"The artist must be honest, work honestly and express his feelings honestly. It's fundamental. When an artist is working well he can exchange ideas and communicate with other artists. The artist is at once a private person and a public person. If I do something that people can't understand, I'm not happy. I want my art to be honest and simple, like a conversation. I don't want art to become mysterious or complicated. Art is a visual medium."

Wang Chui had just returned from Beijing when we met. He had been chosen along with eight other Chinese painters to represent oil painting at the spring 2005 exhibition held by the Chinese National Art Museum, the Central Fine Arts Academy and the Chinese Artist's Association, a real national honour in a country containing thousands of artists. He has exhibited 16 paintings

in the show. Oddly enough, all of the artists, who are all members of the Central Academy of Fine Arts are classified according to their age, and not their ability or subject matter.

In his work Wang Chui expresses his feelings. "In my portraits, I want to discover the essence of the person I am painting and show their beauty. That provides me with great pleasure." Wang Chui's paintings sell quickly. So much so that people will arrive at the gallery hours before the opening in the hopes of buying a painting.

The artist appreciates what galleries do for him and knows that the commission is money well spent. There are rumours that he will be having a show in March, but the arrangements are still to be confirmed. He doesn't lack paintings. His studio is overflowing with both finished paintings and paintings waiting to be finished.

"The Québécois are getting to know me more and more. They are warm and friendly. I feel myself respected." His wife adds that the Québécois remind her a little of the people in Beijing, who are also warm and friendly to strangers.

Jean-Guy Thibault

Wang Chui is listed in the *Biennial Guide to Canadian Artists in Galleries* published by *MAGAZIN'ART*. He is represented, by Le Balcon d'art, St-Lambert; Art & Culture, Montréal; Pierre Seguin, Île-Perrot; Le Portal Art-tour, Québec; Bonheur du Jour, Magog; Clarence Gagnon, Outremont; Art Mode Gallery, Ottawa.