

Remembering Madeleine Fu (1919-2016)

Reflections by Matthew Burns (FOSAS Executive Director) and Jacqueline Jew (Student Artist)



When you witness someone doing something of great complexity with such apparent ease, you know you are in the presence of a master. This is inspiration that exceeds all barriers and becomes universal. It has been a treasure to have had a master presence with us for several years at the Sharon Art Studio. The entire Sharon Arts Studio community mourns the loss of Madeleine Fu, a grand master of Chinese brush painting and long-time Friends of the Sharon Art Studio (FOSAS) instructor. She passed away peacefully in her sleep on December 19, 2016. She was 96 years of excellence. Ms. Fu was one of the original FOSAS instructors who began teaching at the studio in the early 1990's. The complexity of her talent grew from years of creative pathways.

Madeleine was born in Beijing to a prominent family, which includes her grandfather, Chu Bo-Wen, who was mayor of Shanghai. Even as a young child, Madeleine was drawn to the arts, and her calling led her to formal study at Shanghai's Hsin Hua Art College where she studied traditional Chinese painting. Later studies with Fu Te-Nian placed her on the pathway to meet and marry Fu Te-Nian's son, Paul – a talented and renowned artist. Together, Madeleine and Paul studied with one of China's foremost painters, Master Chang Dai-Chien. In addition to Fu Te-Nian and Chang Dai-Chien, Madeleine also studied under the famous Master Tang Yun.

For a time, Taiwan was home and Madeleine's calling as a teacher and painter blossomed. The Fu family: Paul, Madeleine, and their three children, Peter, Anna and John, eventually moved to the United States. In 1962, Paul and Madeleine established the Fu Studio in the Froghorn complex in San Rafael. In 1965 they opened Fu's Art Studio in Strawberry. Madeleine continued instruction, painting and exhibiting, touching the lives, and meeting the pathways of students and patrons throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. She exhibited locally, nationally and internationally, including a special exhibit with Madam Chiang Kai Shek.

To our Sharon Building, Madeleine brought a dynamic and open style- a unique sense of community. She attracted students from near and far, many returning session after session, through various seasons and from their own unique pathways to learn from the master. Just as she intimately connected with the beauty of nature and people, many of her students developed deep, enduring friendships that grew from their shared experiences and connections.

To be in Madeleine's home, one would be surrounded by the cards, notes, and letters from grateful students whose lives and careers were touched and shaped by her patience, inspiration, and continuous encouragement. We are thankful for her innate talent. She shared her art and gifts unselfishly and said she wanted her students to keep painting, and that would be her legacy. Spoken like a true master.