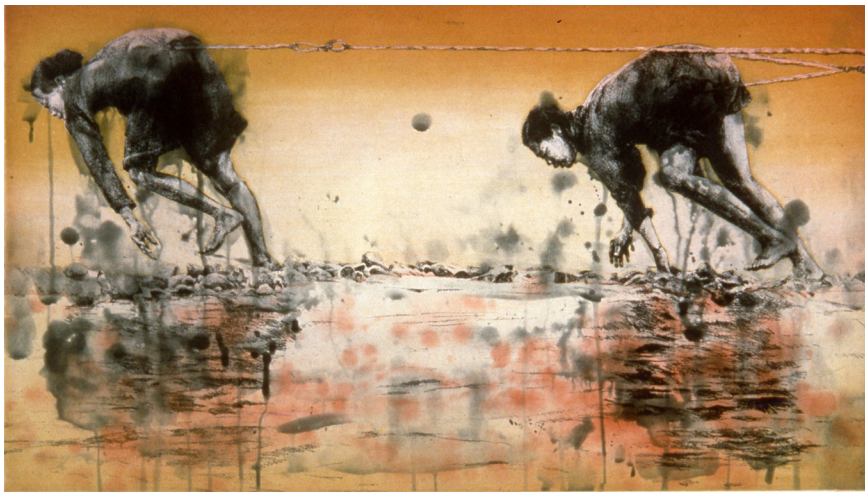


Mu Nu/Yellow River



Winter with Cynical Fish



Mu Nu/Yellow River, 1997

Winter with Cynical Fish, 2014

(In)Visible Lives

Hung Liu (1948–2021) labored four years in Communist China's agricultural "re-education" program. Consequently, she identified with the anonymous women portrayed in historical photographs she unearthed decades later. Incorporating such portraits into her art, Liu immortalized marginalized individuals omitted from histories.

Take a closer look

Liu transformed old photographs into empathetic tributes. By superimposing notable motifs from traditional Chinese art on portraits of working-class women, Liu commands respect for them. Her distinctive drips blur forms and faces, evoking tears, suffering, and memories diminished by time.

In her own words

"I don't want their stories to be forgotten; I don't want them to disappear without a trace."

Who knew?

Liu created drip effects in her paintings with drizzles of linseed oil and gravity. She replicated them in prints using the spitbite technique, so-called because spit conventionally formed part of the acid mixture applied to bite the image into the plate.

Hung Liu, *Mu Nu/Yellow River*, 1997; Aquatint with spitbite and soft-ground etching, 25½ x 36½ inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Steven Scott, Baltimore, in honor of the artist and the thirtieth anniversary of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; © Hung Liu Estate

Hung Liu, *Winter with Cynical Fish*, 2014; Oil on canvas, 60 x 72 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Fred M. & Nancy Livingston Levin, The Shenson Foundation in Memory of Ben & A. Jess Shenson; © Hung Liu Estate

