



MEDIA ALERT: New Tyrus Wong artwork discovered in a Chinatown church

[Water to Paper, Paint to Sky: The Art of Tyrus Wong](#)

December 12, 2013, San Francisco, CA — Midway through an exhibition showcasing one's life-retrospective, it is rare to uncover artwork done by the celebrated artist. The Walt Disney Family Museum is excited to announce the discovery of a larger-than-life-sized painting, formally titled *Jesus*, hidden away—and assumed forgotten—in a church in San Francisco's Chinatown until now.

After reducing the surface dirt, supporting the frame, and preparing it for exhibition, The Walt Disney Family Museum has decided to add Wong's *Jesus* to our current special exhibition—*Water to Paper, Paint to Sky: The Art of Tyrus Wong*—a life-retrospective of the art of 103-year-old artist and Disney Legend Tyrus Wong.

Prior to its discovery, Wong had painted *Jesus* on request from Reverend T. T. Taam for the Chinese Congregational Church in Los Angeles around 1935. According to Wong, the church's caretaker did not like the painting and asked for it to be removed, as he felt Jesus should be depicted in a more traditional manner. In Wong's *Jesus*, the subject's hair and beard are painted red, with archetypal Asian facial features. The painting shows some of the influences of Stanton MacDonald-Wright, whose paintings and color styles were beginning to influence Wong and other Los Angeles artists at that time.

How the painting made its way to San Francisco is still a bit of a mystery, but it is believed to have traveled with the reverend when he moved to the city around 1939. It was found at the Chinese United Methodist Church in San Francisco, where *Jesus* had been for 75 years, collecting dust and miraculously avoiding further damage by the constant movement of patrons and choir children running to and fro.

Wong's *Jesus* will be on view in time for this holiday season, starting Saturday, December 21, and it will remain on view until the exhibition closes on February 3, 2014.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Now through February 3, 2014, The Walt Disney Family Museum presents the exhibition *Water to Paper, Paint to Sky: The Art of Tyrus Wong*. Organized by Michal Labrie, the museum's director of collections, the exhibition focuses on the life and work of Chinese-American artist Tyrus Wong—a celebrated painter, muralist, kite maker, lithographer, Hollywood sketch artist, calligrapher, ceramicist, and Disney Legend. At age 103, Wong is still a practicing artist today.

This retrospective features more than 150 works including paintings, sculptures, works on paper, painted scarves, kites, and more. Although he never met Walt Disney, it was the ethereal beauty of Wong's Eastern influenced paintings that caught Walt's eye and became the inspiration for the animated feature *Bambi*, which changed the way animation art was presented, and continues to be an inspiration to contemporary artists.

The exhibition also includes paintings, hand painted ceramics and silk scarves, original greeting cards, works on paper, and his latest work including handmade and hand-painted kites, which range in size from six inches to 150 feet.

Water to Paper, Paint to Sky: The Art of Tyrus Wong is organized by The Walt Disney Family Museum.

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Walt Disney Family Museum presents the fascinating story and achievements of Walt Disney, the man who raised animation to an art, transformed the film industry, tirelessly pursued innovation, and created a global and distinctively American legacy. Opened in October 2009, the 40,000 square foot facility features the newest technology and historic materials and artifacts to bring Disney's achievements to life, with interactive galleries that include early drawings and animation, movies, music, listening stations, a spectacular model of Disneyland and much more.

Hours: 10am to 6pm, Wednesdays through Monday; closed on Tuesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Tickets: \$20 adults, \$15 seniors and students, and \$12 children ages 6 to 17.
Admission is free for [members](#).

Where: The Presidio of San Francisco, 104 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA 94129

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