



WALLASSE TING



Bright Eyes, 46 x 40cm

Front Cover: Big Friendly Yellow Cat, 80 x 95cm

# Walasse Ting

(1929 - 2010)

CATTO GALLERY

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It's been said many times that Walasse Ting is a uniquely cross-cultural artist. Chinese born but globally travelled, he developed a painting style that is the perfect confection of delicate Eastern drawing and audacious Western experimentation.

As if the work itself isn't enough proof of this blend, there's even the name. Ting was born in Wuxi in 1929 and nicknamed Hua la Si by his parents. But by 1950, he was hanging out with the Parisian avant garde. He so admired Matisse that he decided to change the 'si' in his first name to 'sse'. From then on, Hua La Si was known as Walasse.

Ting's Parisian sojourn was just one of the many episodes in a globetrotting artistic journey that began on the pavements of Shanghai. Ting would make chalk drawings on the asphalt, and was eventually asked to exhibit his work in a bookstore. In time, he learned how to paint in watercolour and started selling to American collectors.

Perhaps it was this exposure to Western taste (and cash) that inspired him to leave for France. He arrived there with five US dollars and zero knowledge of French. Yet somehow he ended up hanging out with the artistic new wave in Paris. He was especially drawn to the COBRA Group - a school that preached pure experimentation in colour. Ting embraced this philosophy pretty much for the rest of his life.

But it didn't stop him travelling in search of new ideas. After nearly a decade in France, Ting may have sensed the energy in the art world shifting to the US. In 1958, like many other Europe-based creatives, Ting moved to New York. It proved an even more successful decision than his previous relocation.

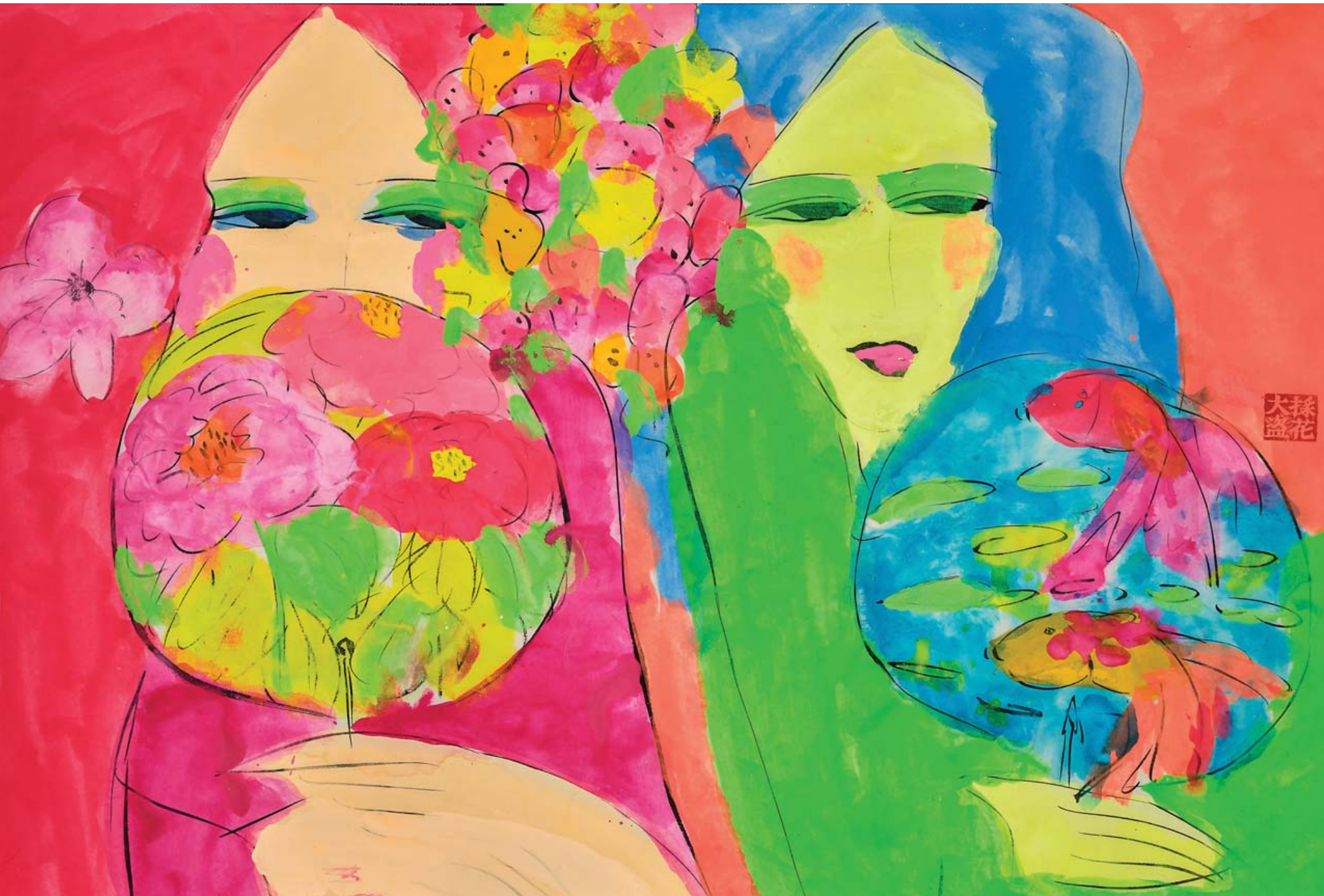
He arrived in the US just as Pop Art was countering the austere strictures of abstract expressionism. A rising generation of artists – Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Asger Jorn, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol – were inventing a new language that celebrated the 'crass' consumerism of the age. Ting and his day-glo parrots fitted right in.

But this wasn't just a visual thing. Ting had the right attitude too. He wrote short enigmatic poems, which appealed to the Pop art sensibility. Indeed, in 1964 Ting and fellow artist Sam Francis collaborated on one of the greatest art books of the period. *1 Cent Life* was a collection of Ting's stream-of-consciousness poems illustrated with 60 original lithographs by 28 artists. It is now regarded as one of the most important Pop projects and remains highly sought-after.

The mid 60s was a golden period for Ting. He had arrived at his mature style fusing dancing brushstrokes with vivacious colour. He had also narrowed his subject matter to the things he loved most of all: flowers, goldfish, birds, cats and beautiful (frequently) naked women. Although these paintings were produced in the midst of the New York avant garde, the Chinese roots are always evident. They have the flattened perspectives that recall traditional ink-and-brush scroll paintings. They were often painted on rice paper.

Ting's later life was spent in the Netherlands. He moved to Amsterdam in 1987. He said it reminded him of the canals of Hangzhou. Ting suffered a brain hemorrhage in 2002, and died in 2010. In the decade since, his reputation has continued to grow. There is an increasing collector base for Chinese art and artists. Ting, with his unique status as the artist who straddled both Western and Eastern art, is in high demand.

The Catto has been exhibiting Walasse Ting's paintings for over 25 years and we are delighted to present a new selection of previously unseen works.



Two Girls, Two Fans, 66 x 97cm



Blue Cat, Pink Nose, 47 x 34cm



Mischievous Cat and Yellow Flowers, 96 x 150cm



Love Birds on Blue, 48 x 66cm



Six Colourful Parrots and Two Ladies 178 x 97cm





Sleeping White Cat, 40 x 57cm



Beautiful Blue Lady, 51 x 58cm



Fruity Fruits, 23 x 35cm



Love Birds on Green Branch, 37 x 50cm

Elegant Lady with Bright  
Red Flower, 47 x 50cm





Two Green Parrots and Two Ladies, 178 x 97cm



Mr Pink Nose, 24 x 38cm



Fish Fan, Flower Fan, 61 x 91cm





Sleeping Orange Cat, 32 x 48cm



Orange Cat on Green, 46 x 35cm

Pretty Yellow Parrot, 45 x 32cm



Back Cover: Four Brightly Coloured Parrots, 48 x 61cm



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Opening times: 10am - 5.30pm Mon - Sat  
12pm - 5pm Sunday • and by appointment

Exhibition dates: 29th September – 17th October 2022