

Self-ish Portrait (Sun Duoci 孙多慈)

by Tom E. Greenway

When observing this portrait briefly, it appears to be featureless and without form, but on closer inspection one can make out a serene face, maybe with eyes closed in contemplation. I assumed that the artist depicted may be of Chinese descent, due to Sun being a common family name, and having an interest in Chinese culture, visiting and exploring the country in my twenties. I wonder if the use of green was a conscious decision, symbolising the commonality of jade in the country, the paints almost reflect and produce a glistening glimmer effect.

Sun Duoci, also known as Sun Yunjun (1912-1975) was an accomplished artist, originating from Shou County, China. She is known for her oil paintings, sketches and ink work as well as for being a calligrapher and writer. She studied in the Art department of NCU Nanjing, where she was championed by artist Xu Beihong, who wanted to foster and encourage her talent, and they eventually eloped (Stefanowska, 2007). Not much is known outside of this, but Sun's works have sold at auction for \$100,000+ (Mutual Art, N.D). The abstract and elusiveness of features and form in the Self-ish Portrait could represent the lack of information and recognition of the artist in the wider art world.

Tom E. Greenway is a Lincoln based artist originating from Oxfordshire. He has a keen interest in immersive installations and working with sound, and unconventional methods and materials that result in uniquely thought-provoking pieces. Tom has an extensive background in the music industry, having worked in the sector for 15+ years, this also saw him tour throughout Europe and further afield as a session musician.

L. X. H. Lee, A.D. Stefanowska and S. Wiles (2007) Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: Antiquity Through Sui, 1600 B.C.E. - 618 C.E. Armonk, N.Y.: Routledge (An East Gate Book). Available from <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.library.lincoln.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=275495&site=eds-live&scope=site> [accessed: 19 February 2024]

Mutual Art (no date) *Sun Duoci*. New York: Mutual Art. Available from <https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Sun-Duoci/60E569C4626B7CBA> [accessed 19 February 2024]