

THE OEUVRE OF THE ARMENIAN AMERICAN ARTIST HOVSEP PUSHMAN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN STILL LIVES WITH CHINESE ART OBJECTS

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The current research is dedicated to the legacy of the American artist of Armenian descent Hovsep Pushman, the climax of whose oeuvre is still life paintings with highlighted Asian, including Chinese, figurines depicted with the use of the principles of tenebrism, Impressionism and the expressive means of Symbolism. The distinguishing features of Pushman's approach to this genre are unveiled through analysis of his works, featuring the Tang Dynasty figurines, Chinese porcelain, and antiquities, within the framework of the Western, including American, tradition of still life with Chinese art objects – a genre that emerged in the era of Chinoiserie and the Dutch Golden Age and found new horizons for interpretation in the late XIX – early XX centuries. The concept of inclusion of Chinese artifacts as primary compositional elements, their arrangement within the compositional space and their contextual relation to each other, as well as the Chinese backdrops in Pushman's canvases are examined in comparison with the Oriental still lifes of his colleagues: William Orpen (1878-1931), Soren Emil Carlsen (1853-1932), Hubert Vos (1855-1935), Roger Eliot Fry (1866-1934), Denman Ross (1853-1935), Claude Raguet Hirst (1855-1942), and Harry Willson Watrous (1857-1940). Thereby we showcase the process of cultivation of the sources of influence and formation of the distinctive style of the Armenian American artist.

Key words: Hovsep Pushman, Tang figurine, Chinese porcelain, American art, still life, Buddha, Emil Carlsen.

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Introduction

The Chinese commodities, primarily Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, have been decoratively and metaphorically used in Western art, more precisely in the scenes of the Christian narrative and Greco-Roman mythology, since as early as the 15th century in the canvases of Renaissance masters as a scarce and precious object to reference the divinity and sacral nature of the protagonists and the plot as a whole. We see a wealth of Chinese emblematic blue-and-white wares in allegorical scenes of Flemish and Dutch artists of the late 16th-early 17th centuries as a symbol of aesthetic delight for the eye and a desirable item to fill the interior with.

The Dutch Golden Age (1575 - 1675) shifted the perception, reception, and employment of the tradition of showcasing Chinese commodities as an element in delicate art compositions, declaring the first phase of extensive executions of Chinese goods in European art. The Chinese items with meticulously rendered ornaments that widely appeared in genre compositions and still lifes were juxtaposed with imported goods, such as Oriental rugs, Islamic silverware, Venetian glass¹, and even African servants to perform the exotica acquired through advanced international trade, or combined with the vanitas objects to question the interrelations of human pleasures, mind, and soul.

The recent scholarly discoveries demonstrate the pioneering usage of Chinese figurines in Western painting composition² as a valuable collec-

¹ Willem Kalf authored an impressive number of still life paintings, where Chinese porcelain bowls, jars, plates as luxurious imports were combined with Oriental carpets., For instance, Willem Kalf (Dutch, Rotterdam 1619–1693 Amsterdam), Still Life with Fruit, Glassware, and a Wanli Bowl, 1659, Oil on canvas, 23 x 20 in. (58.4 x 50.8 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, Credit Line: Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund, 1953, 53.111, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436805>.

² Rembrandt van Rijn shaped the general figure of the Western art connoisseur and collector, surrounding him with art objects derived from various cultural and religious sources, including a Chinese figurine of a deity or a seated official, See Rembrandt van Rijn, Abraham Francen, apothecary, c. 1657, etching/dry-point, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1961-1151, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-1961-1151>.

tible object uncovering the preferences and identity of powerful art connoisseurs.

In the crossroads of Baroque and Rococo (late 17th-early 18th century), a new style- “Chinoiserie,” was born that was manifested in opulently-painted and decorated interiors, paintings, wallpapers, ornate furniture, and ceramic objects inspired by the pictorial language of imported Asian luxurious commodities. The European imagination of China as an Eden was blended with the patterns inspired by Chinese imported furniture, textile, and porcelain, and the quest for decorativeness dictated by Rococo. The prevalent appearance of Chinese goods in portraits and genre paintings might be pondered as the second stage of popularisation of Chinese motifs in the Western art history.

Chinese porcelain and figurines became one of the interests of painters in the era of Modernism and Japonisme (mid-19th to the early-20th centuries), not valued as items associated with elites or overseas commerce but for their Eastern imageries, decorative qualities, and blue-and-white palette, as artists creating in the style of Impressionism, Fauvism, and Post-modernism, were seeking ways to experiment with the loose, broken brushwork, daring combination of colors, innovative techniques, expressing their own identity and social status as an artist. Paris, known for its dense cultural and artistic network, gave birth to the exciting variations of a new subject matter that can be coined as “West meets East,” where the ideas or epitomes of West encounter or communicate with the object or a person, identifying East. The interpretations of this subject, which later was spread to other European countries due to the travels and the significant role of Parisian art institutions, include Chinese items as well, expressed in the series of paintings with the Chinese screen or Chinese decorative motifs as a backdrop, the general image of a modern art connoisseur demonstrating or examining Chinese goods, portrayals of Western upper-classes, mainly females, in the interiors abundant with Chinese porcelain and figurines, Western women wearing Chinese robes and accessories, interior paintings with highlighted Chinese objects, and lastly, the visual communication and a peaceful dialogue between a female figure with the emphasized Western

physique and Chinese ceramic figurines. The notion of Chinese porcelain as a symbol of femininity and grace was broadened in the canvases of the artists who belonged to or derived from the Aesthetic and Arts-and-Crafts movements, with the motto of “art for art’s sake.”

Hovsep Pushman’s input in the development of the genre

The gradual enhancement of implication of Chinese ceramics and decorative sculpture in Western art, from a barely-attainable material unit to the assertion of femininity and from aesthetics for sophisticated palates to the visual ecclesiastical studies, reached novel interpretations in the art of the Armenian-American artist of the early and mid-twentieth century-Hovsep Pushman/Pushmanyman (1877-1966), who projected some of the concepts mentioned above and extended this tradition far beyond the depiction of the simple rendering of Chinese material culture through the lens of the Western viewer to the seeker of their gist and the appropriate methods to mirror it in his canvases.

Hovsep Pushman was one of those rare illustrious personages who, during his lifetime, experienced the affection, reception, demand, and admiration of collectors, museums, and connoisseurs of contemplative art in France, America, and Armenia. In 1942, “The Time” selected him as the American painter with the most expensive art³. The press declared that the oeuvre of oriental still-life paintings and prints by Hovsep Pushman was a major contribution to the history of American art, as it represents an equally significant achievement in the history of the still-life genre. “Hovsep Pushman, an American artist of Armenian birth, is an excellent craftsman. And he finds in objects of the East models of form and color, which he paints with a rare fidelity. No American painter has equaled him in the skill and beauty with which he portrays these striking types”⁴.

Hovsep Pushman has been a member of the American Art Association of Paris, California Art Club, Laguna Beach Club (founded in 1918), and Salmagundi Club, and in 1928 he was elected an honorary

³ **Edward W. Redfield**, “Highest-Priced Painter”, *Time*, September 28, 1942, p. 42.

⁴ *Immigrant Gifts to American Life*, *The Illuminator*, Allen E. Eaton, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1932.

member of the Union of Artists of Armenia. Pushman's canvases are housed at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Houston Art Museum, Milwaukee Art Institute, Wisconsin, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Minneapolis Art Museum, Minnesota, Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, New Britain Institute, Connecticut, Norfolk Art Association, Virginia, Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Rockford Art Guild, Illinois, San Diego Fine Arts Society, Seattle Art Museum. As a result of the donation of Pushman's sons Arman and Arsen in 1970, the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Armenia includes the four works of the American-Armenian artist; "Portrait of the Artist's Wife", "Ray of the Sun", the still life works with Chinese statuettes "The Golden Dusk of Life", and "The Maternal Fountain"⁵.

The Milwaukee Art Museum owns two of Pushman's early Orientalist works; the first depicts the African girl holding the incense burner⁶, and the other one, "Hour of Rest" (circa 1915, image unavailable)⁷. A still life with the figure of Madonna and the open medieval manuscript painted in 1927⁸, and the portrait of the artist's wife wearing a Chinese gown, but

⁵ Those four oil paintings of Pushman are represented in the database of the National Gallery of Armenia; see <http://www.gallery.am/hy/database/authors/32/>

⁶ Hovsep Pushman (American, b. Armenia, 1877–1966), *The Incense Burner*, before 1921, oil on wood panel, 31 1/2 × 24 3/8 in. (80.01 × 61.91 cm), Milwaukee Art Museum, Layton Art Collection Inc., Gift of Messers, J.K. Ilsley, Charles F. Dickens, Charles Ray, G. Miller, Fred Vogel, Howard Greene, L.J. Petit as a memorial to Frederick Layton L197, See Eastberg, John C., and Eric Vogel. *Layton's Legacy: A Historic American Art Collection 1888–2013*. Madison, WI: the University of Wisconsin Press, 2013, pp. 204, 458, color illus. p. 204, <http://collection.mam.org/details.php?id=18901>

⁷ **Pushman Hovsep**, *Hour of Rest*, ca. 1915, oil on canvas, 48 1/4 × 64 5/16 in. (122.56 × 163.36 cm), Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Sixteen Friends (B. Frank Adler, Charles Allis, S.O. Buckner, Victor Brown, Ernest Copeland, Adolph Finkler, Arthur H. Gallun, Wm. Hinrichs, Alfred F. James, Mrs. Fred Pabst, Ludington Patton, Charles F. Pfister, Fred C. Pritzlaff, Walter Stein, Mrs. A.K. Taylor, E.E. White) M1915.1, <http://collection.mam.org/details.php?id=8617>

⁸ **Pushman Hovsep**, "The Guardian Spirit", 1927, oil on wood panel, 22 × 17 inches, Gift of Mrs. J. Fletcher Coan in memory of Lucy M. Beck, Rockford Art

with the title "A Priestess of Madagascar"⁹, created in 1915, are housed at the Rockford Art Museum. Another Orientalist portrait that was executed when the artist traveled to Egypt is a part of the Nelson-Atkins Museums collection¹⁰. The still life with the Chinese wooden figurine of Buddha, which belongs to the later period, is represented at the Taylor and Graham Gallery¹¹. Besides the mentioned canvas, the current institution hosts the portrait of a girl, Marguerite, from the Parisian period of the artist¹². The genre painting authored by Pushman that displays the female figure of allegorical connotations with the elements of still life found its home in the James Cox Gallery collection. This small boudoir scene (Boudoir, circa 1915) was painted in France at the beginning of the twentieth century. Exquisite harmonies of broken color are at play throughout the room. The beauty and temptation of the forbidden fruit are symbolized by the young model gazing at a small still life of a silver tea

Museum, 1940.02, <https://rockfordartmuseum.org/collection-item/guardian-spirit/>

⁹ **Pushman Hovsep**, "Priestess of Madagascar", 1915, oil on wood panel, 48 x 33 inches, Rockford Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. George Roper, 1918.01, <https://rockfordartmuseum.org/collection-item/a-priestess-of-madagascar/>

¹⁰ **Pushman Hovsep** (American, 1877 - 1966), "Head of an Egyptian," 1921, Oil on canvas, Unframed: 19 3/4 x 17 5/8 inches (50.17 x 44.77 cm) Framed: 23 1/8 x 20 5/8 x 1 3/8 inches (58.74 x 52.39 x 3.49 cm), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert R. Jones, 52-54, <https://art.nelson-atkins.org/objects/16314/head-of-an-egyptian?ctx=ddcbbe8e-f338-4d81-ae7a-ebeb411b1901&idx=0>

¹¹ **Pushman Hovsep**, Tapestry of Dreams, oil on panel, 22 1/8 x 17 1/4 inches, Framed: 27 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches, Signed lower right, <https://www.taylorandgraham.com/artists/235-hovsep-pushman/works/10979-hovsep-pushman-tapestry-of-dreams-undated/>

¹² **Pushman Hovsep**, Marguerite, #47, Oil on panel, 23 x 32 inches, Framed: 33 x 42 inches, Signed lower left: Pushman, <https://www.taylorandgraham.com/artists/235-hovsep-pushman/works/9856-hovsep-pushman-marguerite-47/>

service¹³. Stephanie's Art Gallery in California has the least eight of the artist's canvases, among them an early depiction of a nude, the still life paintings from the pivotal period in Pushman's career ("La Petite Dieu", before 1915) when he turned his gaze to the still life genre with Chinese art commodities. One of them is entitled "Repose": the gallery owns the glassware jars and the figurine that was at the core of the composition¹⁴. Another rare painting from the artist's oeuvre that represents his transitional period of adoption of Chinese themes and depictions of Chinese art objects from the early 1900s- "Songs of Samarkand"¹⁵, has been sold at the Live Auction to the private collection Marina Del Rey, CA. The Avery Galleries located in Pennsylvania displays the Eastern still life of Pushman in its original frame¹⁶. His later work from the 1940s, when the still life had already grown into the artist's hallmark, is housed at the University of Illinois¹⁷, which also owns an early 20th-century still life with the wooden statuette, Tibetan background, and wilted rose¹⁸.

From the point of the naked eye, one can spot the abundance of Chinese art objects in Hovsep Pushman's art. The critical reviews noted,

¹³ See the archives of the James Cox Gallery,
<https://web.archive.org/web/20120303160110/http://www.jamescoxgallery.com/EdgeofChange/pages/HovsepPushman.htm>

¹⁴ The images of all eight canvases authored by Hovsep Pushman are available on the official website of the gallery, See
<https://stephaniesgallery.com/portfolio/hovsep-pushman/>

¹⁵ **Pushman Hovsep**, Songs of Samarcand, Artist's No. 131. Canvas mounted on masonite/panel, Live Auctions Lot 0152

¹⁶ **Pushman Hovsep** (1877–1966), The Prince and His Horse, Oil on canvas, 26 x 20 1/2 inches (66 x 52.1 cm), <https://averygalleries.com/art-gallery/pushman-hovsep/prince-and-his-horse>

¹⁷ **Pushman Hovsep**, My Golden Yesterdays, ca. 1940, oil on panel, 34 3/8 x 28 in. (87.31 x 71.12 cm), Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Gift of Merle J. and Emily N. Trees, 1940-1-5, <https://collection.kam.illinois.edu/objects-1/info/328?sort=0>

¹⁸ **Pushman Hovsep**, "When Autumn is Here", early 20th century, oil on panel, 28 1/2 x 21 1/4 in. (72.39 x 53.98 cm), University of Illinois, 1931-1-5, <https://collection.kam.illinois.edu/objects-1/info/33?sort=0>.

“Within Pushman’s work, it must have been remarked by those who study the art of India, China, and Persia that it presents an ever-present combination of the beautiful with the cruel or terrifying”. Biographers state that when Pushman’s family had just emigrated to Chicago, he studied Chinese culture; besides, the artist since the year 1905 had traveled for several years in China, immersing himself in oriental art, philosophy, and literature, although we do not have exact information where the artist has been and where he has studied in China. “Austere Solitude,” still life with Chinese antiquities and authored by Pushman, has been presented to the American Ambassador’s Residence in Peking, China. Thus presumably, the artist himself had been there at the time. Nonetheless, the artist’s portraits of people of Chinese ethnicity, the genre paintings, and landscapes capturing sites of China are unknown. The rare portrait of a Chinese man, entitled “Long Wong,” is available in a black-and-white image¹⁹ and possibly belongs to a private collection. This is how the American press described the current canvas “In many ways, most striking and observable was the head of a Chinaman, a bit of minute realism wrought into a scheme of decoration. The drawn and yellow skin became mellow in tone like old ivory against the rich background of purple velvet until this sphinx-like head suggested a carved curio in a plush-lined case. His black jacket subdued the scheme of orange and purple to harmony, and a purple reflection upon the ear let a curious interest. The observer experienced a feeling of mystery about this wrinkled face with its pinched and puckered lips and shifty eyes”²⁰. The strong profile of the Chinese man with the sculpted cheek bones, the contemplative gaze looking toward eternity, and the character reflected in the positive light of compassion and dignity is one of the few oil portraits with the Chinese subject matter in the American art of the time that treats the Chinese sitter with profound respect and at the same time has an aesthetic power.

¹⁹ **Evelyn Marie Stuart**, *The Dawn*, Courtesy Dr. Ernest Copeland, Milwaukee, Ernest Copeland, was a serious art collector and a strong and early supporter of the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Layton School of Art of a Colorist, *Fine Arts Journal*, February 1916, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Feb. 1916), pp. 79-84, p. 84, ill.

²⁰ **Evelyn Marie Stuart**, *The Dawn of a Colorist*, p.84

It's substantial for the thorough understanding of Pushman's artistic choices to determine and summarise the historical, contextual, and personal circumstances that pave the way for Pushman to the still life paintings with Chinese artworks:

He was born in the Armenian town of Digranagerd (nowadays Diyarbakir) and received early artistic education in Constantinople/Istanbul. The Oriental landscapes, mysteries in the ruins of medieval castles and fortifications, colors of the Armenian quarter in Istanbul, and picturesque seascapes have nourished his taste for the Oriental.

The father and brother of the artist were successful Oriental rug dealers in Armenia and later in the United States, Chicago. He obtained his first knowledge in the field of Oriental art and rug-making in Chicago, and the ornamental structure of the Armenian rugs has always been one of his inspirational sources.

Pushman received artistic education at Académie Julian in Paris, under the supervision of outstanding teachers, such as Jules Joseph Lefebvre²¹, known for his Oriental and Japonisme-inspired canvases, such as "The Odalisque" and "The Japanese Fan."²² . He could have gotten in touch with Orientalism since his first days in this Parisian institution

²¹ The French were insatiably curious about the art and culture of this mysterious and long-inaccessible land. France was soon swept by Japonisme - the craze for all things Japanese. Several French artists of the day - Manet and Degas among them - engaged in a serious study of Japanese prints and worked to incorporate their compositional and spatial principles into their paintings. Other artists, including Jules-Joseph Lefebvre, responded more lightheartedly to the popular French vogue for Japanese curios, fans, and costumes. They produced several fancy-dress _portraits à la japonaise - romantic genre images of women in stylish, Oriental garb. See Jefferson C. Harrison. _The Chrysler Museum Handbook of the European and American Collections: Selected Paintings, Sculpture, and Drawings_. The Chrysler Museum. 1991, p. 148

²² **Jules-Joseph Lefebvre** (French, 1836 - 1912), *Une Japonaise* (The Language of the Fan), 1882, oil on canvas, 51 1/2 x 35 1/2 in. (130.8 x 90.2 cm), Overall, Frame: 69 3/8 x 53 1/4 x 6 1/4 in. (176.2 x 135.3 x 15.9 cm), Chrysler Museum of Art 71.2058, <https://chrysler.emuseum.com/objects/26402/une-japonaise-the-language-of-the-fan?ctx=614581b0-d5ca-4285-9493-682dca7f3e97&idx=0>

during the classes and in the art studios of his tutors. Pushman's artistic identity began taking shape after he opened his studio in 1921. Upon seeing one of Pushman's early studio still lifes, one of his teachers at Julian, Tony Robert-Fleury (1837 – 1911), said, "That painting is you", and since 1921, Pushman's career has been devoted to one subject, interpreted in the reviews as an "oriental mysticism" and one form, the still life²³.

Orientalism and Japonisme were in vogue both in Europe and America, and Hovsep Pushman followed the dominant tendencies. The American cities were actively responding to the signals of Parisian avant-garde suffused with the obsession with Oriental cultures. Although that was the time of the triumph of Orientalism, Japonisme blooming in the American fine arts as well, Pushman's canvases indeed bore the mission of transmitting not the decorativeness, outer beauty, exotica of the distant lands but the wisdom, philosophical nature, and the unknown sides of the Eastern cultures executed in the recognizable Western manner and emphatic sense of color.

He has been exhibited in Chicago, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and other American cities, where the vast Chinese population was concentrated in Chinatown districts and where artists used to visit for sketching, inspiration and purchase of Chinese applied art.

He has been an avid art collector and connoisseur of the arts, mainly Oriental antiquities, familiar with the art objects he embodied in his body of work²⁴. Contemporaries asserted that the artist used to explore

²³ Նկարչության բանաստեղծը - Հովսեփի Փուշման: "Սովետական գրականություն" ամսագիր, Երևան, 1986, թիվ 11, էջ 123-129, Levon Chugasian, The poet of painting - Hovsep Pushman. "Soviet literature" magazine, Yerevan, 1986, No. 11, p. 123-129, This paper entitled "Nkarc'ut'yan banastelce"-Hovsep Pusman (The poet of painting - Hovsep 'Pushman)" is devoted to the life and artistic legacy of Hovsep 'Pushman, (1877-1966), the American-Armenian painter was active in France and in the USA

²⁴ **Vartanian Hrag**. "One of a Kind: Armenian Creators & Connoisseurs." Agbu. Vol. 12, April 30, 2002, p. 16, <https://agbu.org/new-york-new-york/one-kind-armenian-creators-connoisseurs>

them and watch them for hours, especially during the last stages of his career²⁵. The still life painting might also be studied as the outcome of that catharsis and commune.

He had strong ties with the Bohemian clubs in America and artistic clubs; those artistic groups prompted the choice of Chinese subject matter in visual arts during group exhibitions and annual meetings for the exchange of ideas and inspirations.

The artist extensively traveled with his wife to African and Middle-East countries. He was one of the rare American artists who personally paid a visit to China, getting acquainted with Chinese culture, literature, and philosophy during the period when there was a wave of racism towards Chinese inhabitants of America that, unfortunately, affected the aesthetic choices of a number of American artists. Pushman had not reacted to those short-termed moods, remaining a true admirer of China throughout his lifespan.

Although the Western obsession with China was often limited to the purchase, acquaintance of, and artistic employments of blue-and-white porcelain, Pushman was more fascinated with the Han and Tang dynasty figurines, small-sized bronze statuettes of Chinese Buddhist and Taoist deities, juxtaposing them with each other against the corresponding background- his impressions from the ancient Tibetan hangings and Dunhuang murals. The decorative nature of Chinese porcelain and the exotic appearance of the Chinese applied art items were the main reasons for the artists to capture those objects throughout the centuries. Still, Pushman was more interested in those artworks' spirit, their historical background, and the original ideas they conveyed. A dimly lit interior in his paintings turns into an otherworldly realm, where faint, pale background or dark, flat layer of blackish paint absorbs some parts of the depicted figurines. Most Chinese antiquities in Pushman's paintings demonstrate heavy cracking and losses to lacquer and paint commensurate with age. Rendering the textures of minor nicks, losses to paint, and scuffs throughout, maybe even retouched and inpainted parts,

²⁵ **Edward W. Redfield**, "Highest-Priced Painter", *Time*, September 28, 1942, p.42

prove that he didn't idealize them, considering each crack and paint-loss as a mark of its rich past, insignia of its uniqueness. Here is why Chinese art is not of decorative interest to him, so hiding the patterns under the veil of darkness and rejecting explicit, idealized, and polished execution of the artifacts was meant to focus the attention of the audiences on the penetrating notions they objectified.

The selection of a monochromatic background or the Buddhist imagery executed an atmospheric perspective appears to slightly flatten the composition, but through the volumetric illustrations of the body of the figurines, they seem tangible and identifiable for the viewer's sight. For instance, the Tang female polo player²⁶ in Pushman's canvas²⁷ (**Picture 1**) is strongly reminiscent of the pair of painted pottery female polo players of the early Tang Dynasty from the Scanlan Collection²⁸. The flowing sleeves and pointed polo sticks are extremely rare, showcasing Pushman's keen eye in the selection of limited and uncommon Chinese antiquities.

Even juxtaposing Chinese items with Indian, Islamic, Armenian, and African idols and manuscripts, Pushman still pays tribute to the indigenous features of the Chinese culture and gives new possibilities for viewing the Chinese component as a maintenance of Orientalism but not that distorts the essence of the Orient and not the one that confronts the Occident, but the one that provides the equality, inner beauty, tolerance, and purity for each of the represented cultures. The Chinese compositional units in his

²⁶ The Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), being considered a golden age of Chinese arts and culture, brought the taste of cosmopolitanism to China through flourishing international trade and cultural exchanges. Polo game, as being a reflection of those processes and a popular pastime for women and men, has been featured in Tang murals, sculpture and decorative arts.

²⁷ **Pushman Hovsep**, "The Princess and her Horse", oil on board, 23 x 26 in. (58.4 x 66 cm.) <https://www.artnet.com/artists/hovsep-pushman/the-princess-and-her-horse-aAgzmCzaymuOUUvPVkbeYQ2>

²⁸ Female Polo Player, Early Tang Dynasty, 8th century. 15 x 12.5 inches. Provenance: The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, purchased from Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, May 17, 1941, Lot 205, <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/scanlan-collection/tang-polo-players-ex-doris-duke-china-8th-century-2129752>

art are not marginal, secondary, or additional to the main protagonists; they are the focal points of his arrangements; they are not displayed as playful and decorative and don't have to convey the ideas of patronage or advanced global trade, femininity, or aestheticism. They unlock the sides of the artist's identity, his visions, and his reception of the surrounding world, its past and present.

Certain parallels with the Chinese culture are not limited only to the capturing of the figurines of Han and Tang dancers, grooms, horses, guardians, Buddha, statuettes of Guanyin, Lu Dongbin, Shouxing, the war god Kuan-ti/Guandi in variable compositional arrangements. The metaphorical connotations of the motif of the horse with and without a groom in different postures have certain links with the auspicious interpretations of the horse in Chinese paintings. The cropped edges and asymmetrical compositions, properly-selected metaphorical titles for each still life, channeling Chinese poetry ("A Spring Blossom", "A Cherry Blossom") can be viewed as inspirations derived from Chinese culture.

For the stylistic classification of Pushman's still life paintings with Chinese artifacts, we propose a collocation of "contemplative" or "mystic still life." Those compositions share traits with Magical Realism or New Objectivity- as recognizable mundane objects blur the boundaries between reality and the imaginary world, with Symbolism - as they demonstrate the usage of Chinese figurines to express indirect, symbolic ideas and allegories, with Surrealism, as those depictions have the dreamy and illusionary character, with Tonalism and Post - Impressionism due to their blurry outlines and open brushwork, implementation of stippling and impasto, with Theosophy - by the amalgamation of artworks refereeing to different religions and beliefs, and examining the concept of worship and mysticism, and finally with Orientalism - with their combinations of Oriental cultural monuments. Nonetheless, the artist succeeded in forming his signature style, even if being inspired by artistic movements.

Comparative analysis of Hovsep Pushman's still life in the context of corresponding works of his peers

Hovsep Pushman's achievements' pinnacle is undoubtedly his still life works. Pushman's oriental still life painting is inherently linked to the

work of the 18th-century French still life painter Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin (1699-1779). Chardin's carefully composed still-life kitchen scenes included polished utensils and well-worn objects, which were rendered through the light and depth of their patterns and subtle relationships, expressing an undeniable spiritual bond between man and matter. Chardin typically used the same elements in other compositions, varying the position of the objects slightly or adding or subtracting a utensil; the usage of the same objects in differentiated arrangements draws Pushman's still life closer to Chardin's principles²⁹. In addition, the dark umber and hickory brown neutral backdrops the artist used in the series of still life paintings allude to Chardin's work. The turning point in the history of still life might be viewed as the fact that they brought new insight into the objects possible to interpret them not as the economic power and intelligence of patron-bourgeois but as disguised symbols; painting becomes more as a codified system of representation and less a mimetic art with resemblance as its base³⁰.

While studying in Paris for nine years, Hovsep Pushman confirmed his devotion to the man he considers the greatest of all still-life painters, Jean Chardin. Other American artists influenced by Chardin, who continued the still life tradition well into the 20th century, were Emil Carlson (1853-1932) and his son Dines Carlsen (1891-1968). Both eventually specialized in kitchen scenes and Oriental objects, emphasizing the relationship between form and light. They carefully balanced different shapes and sizes of objects with an open-air atmosphere that cultivated an "ideal beauty" painted in the high key of brilliant impressionism-inspired color and a love for surface texture.

However, hailed as a visionary artist, Chardin is nonetheless rooted in the art of eighteenth-century France, and the metaphysical quality of his compositions through the eyes of the modern viewer does not mean that they are timeless. They bring the viewer instead into an earthly world and

²⁹ The Robert Hudson Tannahill Bequest to the Detroit Institute of Arts. Exh. cat., Detroit Institute of Arts. Detroit, 1970, pp. 17, 27-28 (ill.)

³⁰ Sheriff, Mary D. "Reflecting on Chardin." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1988, pp. 19-45, p. 20.

into the creative process of one of the greatest French painters of all time. As for Pushman, he tended to create a philosophical, non-earthly realm, employing rather objects of the applied arts and ceramic pieces that were not meant for daily usage in the kitchen.

Although Hovsep Pushman rose to prominence in Paris, later in America mainly for choosing the subject matter of still life paintings involving Oriental, predominantly Chinese statues, art objects, antiquities, and motifs borrowed from Chinese Buddhist and Taoist culture, arranged in the compositions evoking ideologies and metaphors of Chinese philosophy and literature, nevertheless, he was not the pioneer in terms of employing Chinese motifs.

When Hovsep Pushman entered the American art scene, the still-life genre was already flourishing, derived from the colonial American still-life traditions based on Dutch and Spanish approaches. These ideas reached the new lands through advanced trade and immigration. The Chinese export porcelain pieces had their place among the consecutive components of those compositions, again recalling the Dutch tradition. In the early 19th century and for generations beforehand, still-life painting was seen to possess little artistic or intellectual merit. Since it appeared to imitate ordinary objects merely, the genre was thought to appeal only to unsophisticated viewers. Raphaele Peale (1774–1825) ignored its low status and is now acknowledged as independent America's first professional still-life painter³¹. Interest in still life gradually increased in the United States in the 19th century since the genre offered a way to celebrate the abundance of the present and the potential of the future. American painters such as Peale also used still life to engage with the burgeoning interest in science brought about by the Enlightenment in the 18th century. Nonetheless, the interesting alteration between the American and European still life genre with Chinese commodities might be considered the implementation of the Chinese export porcelain utensils made exclusively for the American market, often bearing the coat-of-arms associated with the wealthy American patron families, and varying in terms

³¹ **Judith A. Barter**, Sarah E. Kelly, Ellen E. Roberts, Brandon K. Ruud, *American Art*, New Edition, The Art Institute of Chicago, 2008, p. 26.

of pallets and pictorial design from the Chinese blue-and-white porcelain vessels emblematic for the European still life over centuries. For instance, in the still life, by Peale housed at the Art Institute of Chicago,³² the sugar bowl and creamer are Chinese export porcelain, which was popular among wealthy Americans and emblematic of Philadelphia's status as an important trading port. The American still-life painters hereby were reflecting their national identity and pursuits for independence through the Chinese porcelain made under American patronage and with the imagery based on European-American prints and engravings. It's worth mentioning that the Chinese export porcelain baskets for the American elite were rendered in a Romantic, sensual, and elegant manner also in the canvases of Raphael's young uncle- James Peale (1749–1831); in the still life canvases by this artist displayed at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston³³, at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco³⁴, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington³⁵; the represented basket-shaped porcelain

³² **Raphael Peale**, (American, 1774–1825), *Still Life—Strawberries, Nuts, &c.*, 1822, Oil on wood panel, 41.1 x 57.8 cm (16 3 / 8 x 22 3 / 4 in.), the Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Jamee J. and Marshall Field, 1991.100

³³ **James Peale** (American, 1749–1831), *A Porcelain Bowl with Fruit*, 1830, oil on canvas, 41.59 x 56.83 cm (16 3/8 x 22 3/8 in.) The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of JoAnn and Julian Ganz, Jr. and Emily L. Ainsley Fund and Eliza Oliver Fund, 1979.520, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/34330/a-porcelain-bowl-with-fruit?ctx=6350d9e0-38ef-4976-b00b-7505d02f5e96&idx=288>, also cited in William H. Gerdts, *Painters of the Humble Truth: Masterpieces of American Still Life, 1801–1939*, exh. cat. (Columbia, Mo.: Philbrook Art Center and University of Missouri Press, 1981), 50–51

³⁴ **James Peale** (1749–1831), *Still Life with Fruit*, ca. 1821, oil on wood panel, 18 1/4 x 25 1/4 in. (46.4 x 64.1 cm); Frame: 23 5/8 x 30 1/2 x 1 3/4 in. (60 x 77.5 x 4.4 cm) Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Museum purchase, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, 46.11, <https://www.famsf.org/artworks/still-life-with-fruit>,

³⁵ **James Peale**, *Fruit Still Life with Chinese Export Basket*, 1824, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Jeanne Rowe Mathison Family in Memory of Robert Vincent Mathison, 1990.71, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.71370.html>

plate for the fruits³⁶ didn't appear in the European still lives. Instead, American collectors and museums own an impressive number of Chinese openwork vessels in the same form and ornaments³⁷. The still-life heritage of the Peale family was continued by John F. Francis (American, 1808–1886) with his impromptu dinner tables with the tinge of *Trompe l'oeil*³⁸.

The American artist Claude Raguet Hirst (1855-1942) was one of the very few women to have painted in the super-realist trope *l'oeil* still life style popular in late-nineteenth-century America, following her contemporaries William Michael Barnett (1848-1892) and John Frederick Pete (1854-1907). At the turn of the 20th century, Hirst's meticulous still lifes held a such public appeal that, as one critic wrote, "they are apt to be hanging crooked...as people take them down so many times to hold them and look at them." While touching art in galleries was discouraged then, as it is now, the close examination was precisely the response that Hirst sought. The painter was one of a handful of Gilded Age artists – and the only female to gain critical acclaim for illusionary imagery³⁹.

The distinguishing feature of the artist's compositions is that Hirst centers worn volumes in the foreground as if inviting the viewer to enter the scene. Several still-life paintings authored by this female artist contain Chinese porcelain jars, ceramics, and statues combined with the book

³⁶ Nicolai Chikovskiy JR. with contributions by Linda Bantel, John Wilmerding, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1989, p. 77

³⁷ For instance, Fruit Basket, Chinese, 1800s, Worcester Art Museum, 1965.84.1 and, <https://worcester.emuseum.com/objects/31175/fruit-basket?ctx=21e2620089b4ed951521c7ed3dc4b23cc62a68f7&idx=592> and Basket, Chinese, 1750–1799, 6.4 x 19 cm (2 1/2 x 7 1/2 in.), Worcester Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel T. Hobbs, through the bequest of Mrs. Anna N. W. Hobbs, 1957.26, <https://worcester.emuseum.com/objects/30799/basket?ctx=bdef2e8b39d7be5a707edac0f0acc0e14665a0b2&idx=440>

³⁸ **Malcom Rogers**, Theodore Stebbins, Eric M. Zafran, Karyn Esielonis, *Still Life Painting in the Museum of Fine Arts*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1994, p. 5

³⁹ Neal, Christine Crafts, "'The Female Harnett': Claude Raguet Hirst," *American Arts Quarterly* (Summer 2001), pp. 20-27, p. 20.

motif, also implied by Pushman in his Oriental canvases. However, they were interpreted by art historians as the epitome of her identity and feminine power, her ambitions as a female painter to say her own word in the art scene dominated by her male counterparts. The painting “A Book of Poems”⁴⁰ contains no iconographic vestiges of the masculine bachelor's still life. Hirst has completely eliminated the pipe and smoking paraphernalia, which rarely appear in her works after 1911. Her inclusion of the yellow bowl with the red dragon-and-cloud motif, which probably originated in China, has significantly lightened her palette and further obscured the masculine codes of the bachelor still life⁴¹.

While American men had previously participated in collecting celadon ceramics from China and Japan, such as those depicted in “The Bookworm’s Table” by Hirst⁴², it had by the twentieth century emerged as a pursuit dominated by women. Numerous articles appeared in American women’s magazines at this time, instructing women on how to collect such pieces as well as how to create their own.⁴³

Besides, an important facet of the flourishing Aesthetic Movement, that of art pottery, no doubt influenced Hirst and her subsequent mature paintings, often including decorative ceramics. At the art institutions, there have been private classes in china painting, and decorative pottery was

⁴⁰ A Book of Poems, (watercolor on board) by Hirst, Claude Raguet (1855-1942); 20.8x25.7 cm; Private Collection; (add.info.: A Book of Poems. Claude Raguet Hirst (1855-1942). Watercolour on board. 20.8 x 25.7cm.); Photo A© Christie's Images; America.

⁴¹ **Martha M. Evans**, Claude Raguet Hirst: transforming the American still life, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., Oct. 15--Dec 19, 2004; Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, Jan. 15--April 10, 2005, p. 83.

⁴² Claude Raguet Hirst, The Bookworm's Table, the 1890s. Watercolor over graphite on cream, moderately thick, rough-textured wove paper, 12 1/2 x 9 1/2 in. (31.8 x 24.1 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Designated Purchase Fund, 80.79, <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/106690>

⁴³ **Martha M. Evans**, Claude Raguet Hirst: transforming the American still life, p. 130.

perceived as an income-producing new profession for women and a mere “accomplishment.”⁴⁴

Thus, Hirst’s still life with Chinese and Japanese figurines, porcelain jars and other decorative items from Asia were obliquely reflecting the shifts towards women’s labor and occupation, their engagement in the artistic circles as porcelain collectors and makers.

In her still life, “Books and Pottery Vase”⁴⁵, Hirst presents an arrangement of old books and a ceramic pot with Asian motifs. She draws the eye to a bright lid, opened book rendered with such precision that words can be read from its pages. The worn volume was one of the artist’s favorites: a 1795 English translation of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s romantic novel *Paul and Virginia*.

In the rare interview for “Times”, the American-Armenian artist referred to his painting “A Book of Life”⁴⁶ “ Very rarely, Artist Pushman makes a statement about one of his paintings. He did so for a famous Pushman called “The Book of Life”. “In this picture,” he said, “there are several objects, namely, an iridescent vase containing a fading rose, a figure of a saint from the medieval ages, with a background of an ancient textile, against which rests an open manuscript- the last page of the Book of Life. “Often I have wished that when my life like the rose in the vase reaches its drooping state, and I come to the last page of my Book of Life, I may illuminate my page also with golden letters of my joy and contentment, that I have lived. The figure of the saint which stands next to the book casts the evening shadow over the last page- my guardian spirit

⁴⁴ **Martha M. Evans**, *Claude Ragout Hirst: transforming the American still life*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Claude Raguet Hirst, *American*, 1855 - 1942, *Books and Pottery Vase* (Primary Title), the early 1900s, oil on canvas, unframed: 7 1/8 × 10 in. (18.1 × 25.4 cm), framed: 13 1/16 × 16 × 2 in. (33.18 × 40.64 × 5.08 cm), Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 71.23, <https://vmfa.museum/piction/6027262-8089744/>

⁴⁶ **Pushman Hovsep**, *The Book of Life*, No. 378, Circa 1930, oil on panel over canvas, 23 1/2x29, <http://www.hovseppushman.net/The-Book-of-Life,-No.-378.html>

through the long coming night.”⁴⁷

Although both artists do not treat books as props and compositional devices, for Hirst, they were primary elements to decode the content of the work; Chinese porcelain and figures were subordinate to her in that sense; they either played a decorative role or were featured to balance the division of color over the compositional space. As for Pushman, particularly the Chinese artifacts were basic clues to the mystic meanings of his work, making his still life look more Eastern; they occupied the foreground, and books formed a part of the backdrop for them. The texture of the old parchment, the hand-written golden initials in the manuscript and the shadow the figurines cast over the pages were artistic tools for Pushman to express his philosophy.

Hubert Vos (1855 - 1935), a graduate of the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, who has been exhibited widely in Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Dresden, and Munich and became known for his travels to China and portraits of the Chinese Empress Dowager Cixi, by the 1920s was already enhancing Western art with Chinese motifs and themes. His still life paintings of the 1920-the 1930s represent the Chinese antiquities he got as personal gifts from Empress Cixi, either acquired by himself. Although Vos's style of featuring Chinese porcelain, statuettes of guardian lions, snuff bottles, and textiles are characterized by proper arrangements and strictly balanced compositions, however, the artist tended to endow them with a certain glamor and dignity. One critic described his works as “delicate, smooth, and accomplished.”⁴⁸ and that he made “the exotic” fashionable and tangible to his Western audience. His choice of expensive, rare, lavishly patterned Chinese porcelain vessels and small-scaled figurines⁴⁹ aimed to showcase his privileged status as one

⁴⁷ **Edward W. Redfield**, “Highest-Priced Painter”, *Time*, September 28, 1942, p. 42.

⁴⁸ **Virginia Anderson**, *A Semi-Chinese Picture: Hubert Vos and the Empress Dowager of China, East-West Interchanges in American Art: A Long and Tumultuous Relationship*, ed. Cynthia Mills, Lee Glazer, and Amelia A. Goerlitz, Smithsonian Institution Press (Washington, D.C.), pp. 97-109, p. 98

⁴⁹ **Hubert Vos** (1855 - 1935), *Still Life of Chinese Objects*, oil on canvas signed

of the few artists who had the opportunity to meet and capture the empress of the Celestial empire. Pushman's aspirations were to decode the hidden messages of Chinese commodities, and he didn't have artistic preferences in opulently ornamented chinaware.

The figures of a Tang horse and a Bodhisattva (probably *blanche-de-chine*) appear in still life paintings of Roger Eliot Fry (1866 – 1934), one of the pioneering figures to raise public awareness of modern art in Great Britain, reflecting the artistic developments of the Parisian *avant-garde*. He emphasized the formal properties of paintings over the "associated ideas" conjured in the viewer by their representational content. "The Mantelpiece" (1919)⁵⁰ and the "Still Life with T'ang Horse" (circa 1919–1921)⁵¹ are executed in that particular manner. The artist's daughter wrote that Fry had owned the T'ang horse as long as she could remember and that the standing pottery figure is a "Han lady", bought around 1919. Despite the presence of Han dynasty statue, the Tang tomb figure of the horse paired with a vase with a single flower in it, raise some associations with Pushman's artistic approaches to the subject matter⁵², but Fry didn't intend to play with their original context, he was more interested in the methods of paint-handling of his *avant-garde* manner, representing faceless figures in bold blocks of brown hues.

Hubert Vos and dated 1923 (lower right), unframed: 103 by 80.5 cm; 40 ½ by 31 ⅝ in, framed: 122.5 by 99.5 cm; 48 ¼ by 39 ⅝ in, Hirschl & Adler Galleries label affixed to the reverse,

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/modern-discoveries-encounters/hubert-vos-xiu-bo-tewo-si-still-life-of-chinese>.

⁵⁰ **Richard Shone.** *The Art of Bloomsbury: Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant.* Exh. cat., Tate Gallery. London, 1999, p. 133, fig. 97 (color)

⁵¹ Roger Fry 1866–1934, *Still Life with T'ang Horse*, c.1919–21, oil paint on canvas, Support: 356 × 457 mm, frame: 542 × 440 × 50 mm, Tate Gallery, London, T01780, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/fry-still-life-with-tang-horse-t01780>

⁵² For instance, the Tang horse appears in the current work of Pushman, Hovsep Pushman, *The Prince and His Horse*, No. 344, No. 2, Circa 1930-1940, Oil and gold leaf on board, 28 1/4x24 1/2, <http://www.hovseppushman.net/The-Prince-and-His-Horse,-No.-344,-No.-2.html>

Sir William Newenham Montague Orpen (1878 – 1931), a prolific Edwardian painter, had left the artistic legacy of still life canvases; among them, one can admire the arrangements with Chinese commodities and figures. The first blanc-de-chine figure can be traced in juxtaposition with a Japanese doll in the canvas “Reflections, China and Japan”- Orpen’s first important still-life⁵³. A similar porcelain figurine returned around 1907 in the magisterial still life, housed at the private collection. Although “Reflections, China and Japan” is by rights regarded as a virtuoso still life painting, which demonstrates Orpen’s facility at depicting texture and reflective surfaces with flair and skill, it is created with less emphasis placed on a coherent compositional arrangement, unlike Pushman.

Nonetheless, one of the Chinese-themed still lives authored by Orpen might have been one of the influential sources for Hovsep Pushman. The painting “ Still life, pottery figure of the Chinese war god Kuan-Ti and a crystal ball”⁵⁴ **(Picture 2)** was the outcome of William Orpen’s friendship with Hugh Lane, the art collector, and dealer, who was not an expert on Chinese and Japanese vases and figurines, but he amassed them for their decorative appeal. The artist used to pick and choose from these objects, and in a number of notable instances, they made their way into his paintings. One example is likely to be the colorful pottery figure of Kuan-Ti, more familiarly known as Guan Yu, the Chinese God of War, the subject of the present canvas.

Unlike his other still-life paintings depicting blanc-de-chine deities, this bold polychrome figure prompted a decorative approach which is emphasized in the painted zig-zag frame which encloses the composition. It is a predecessor of the ornate mirror frames that Orpen frequently

⁵³ Sir William Orpen (1878 - 1931), *Reflections: China and Japan*, 1902, oil on canvas, 40.5 x 51 cm, Dublin City Gallery, N 35, <https://hughlane.emuseum.com/objects/1509/reflections-china-and-japan?ctx=ac4f5874b2d4fc5ea5a4970a0917a3c2b9e0c5d2&idx=13>

⁵⁴ SIR WILLIAM ORPEN, R.A., H.R.H.A. (BRITISH, 1878-1931), *Still life, pottery figure of the Chinese war god Kuan-Ti, and a crystal ball* signed with a cipher (lower right), oil on canvas, 76.8 x 63.6 cm. (30 1/4 x 25 1/8 in.), <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/21769/lot/44/?category=list>

included in later self-portraits. The statuette itself is loosely painted with slashes of emerald, cobalt, and red oxide that accentuate its dramatic character. Kuan-Ti is traditionally presented in an aggressive pose, with a flowing beard and frowning red face. Where Orpen might adopt a suave, studied approach to the milk-white Dehua porcelain of a Guan Yin goddess, this threatening warrior demanded vigorous handling that contrasts with the precision of the crystal globe that lies at his feet. In order to accentuate its oriental and decorative lineage, Orpen has signed the present picture in an unusual way with a monogram formed from his initials. Giving the impression of a Chinese “chop” or stamp, its use by Orpen is rare.

Searching the glazed surfaces of this ancient figure around 1908, Orpen was reaching back into the art of the past and to an exotic culture. The trade in Chinese artifacts began in the seventeenth century and gathered pace in the Edwardian years. Great collections were formed and bequeathed to British museums, but few viewed those antiquities with greater curiosity than the Irish painter who placed the stoneware War God statuette in front of a blue-black curtain and painted its portrait⁵⁵.

As for Pushman, he started to include various figures of Kuan-Ti in his still-life paintings created 1940-the 1950s. One of those works was sold via Sotheby's Auction House, entitled *The “War God”* (1953)⁵⁶. Unlike Orpen, Pushman owned the statuette (most likely a Tibetan figurine with an animal-like facial expression) and was familiar with its historical context. Reminiscent of Open, Pushman's dimmed, blackened section dominates over the polychrome part of the composition for the same purpose; to repel the mystic origins of the figure. However, Pushman employed the dramatic lighting of chiaroscuro principles, juxtaposing the figure with his

⁵⁵ Christopher Pearson of The Orpen Research Project, Professor Kenneth McConkey for compiling, the catalog entry for the Bonhams Auction House, <https://www.bonhams.com/legals/>

⁵⁶ **Pushman Hovsep**, *The War God*, titled *The War God* and numbered 607 in labels affixed to the stretcher, oil on fiberboard, 24 by 21 3/4 in. 61 by 55.3 cm, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/american-paintings-n08522/lot.43.html>.

emblematic Chinese figurine with long sleeves on the right and a small-scaled jar on the far-left corner. The scale hierarchy increases the impression of the god's power, which seems vivid and imperious. The same Kuan-ti figurine was implemented as a compositional motif in two other works of the same time period- "The Power of Terror"⁵⁷ and "The Warrior"⁵⁸, testifying to the amazing skill of Pushman to rearrange, reuse the identical artifacts in differentiated relations and proximity to each other to convey different meaning and narratives. The theme of war in Pushman's perception might be viewed in the employment of another statue of Kuan-ti, this time a smaller gilded wooden figure with calmer human features, captured in the interaction with a Tang tomb dancer⁵⁹, then facing the spectator against the background of Tibetan depiction of the war deity⁶⁰. Through the two opposing characters- violent, destructive, dehumanized power and self-protecting, tenacious, fighting type of War God, the artist, as if representing the various associations with the notion of war and fight itself, tells his own story of a man who has seen the aftermath of the warfare, having gone through the genocide, two world wars and migration.

With his love of the Asian culture and rendering of Chinese artifacts with thickly-textured paint, Denman Waldo Ross (1853 – 1935)⁶¹ bears a certain analogy to Pushman. He was an American painter, collector, and

⁵⁷ **Pushman Hovsep**, The Power of Terror, No. 525, circa 1950, oil on panel, <http://www.hovseppushman.net/The-Power-of-Terror,-No.-525.html>

⁵⁸ **Pushman Hovsep**, The God of War (The Warrior), No. 362, Circa 1940, oil on panel, 28x21, [http://www.hovseppushman.net/The-God-of-War-\(The-Warrior\)-No.-362.html](http://www.hovseppushman.net/The-God-of-War-(The-Warrior)-No.-362.html)

⁵⁹ **Pushman Hovsep** (1877-1966), Dancing Girl No. 2, signed 'Pushman' (lower right), oil on panel lined with canvas, 22 7/8 x 25in, <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/23275/lot/75/hovsep-pushman-1877-1966-dancing-girl-no-2-22-78-x-25in/>

⁶⁰ **Pushman Hovsep**, The War God, Circa 1940, oil on panel over a canvas, 29x23 1/2, <http://www.hovseppushman.net/The-War-God.html>

⁶¹ Denman Waldo Ross, American (Cincinnati, OH 1853 - 1935 London, England), Still Life with Asian Vase and Red Ribbon, 1901, Harvard Art Museum, 1936.150.239, <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/230821>

scholar, teaching design and art theory at Harvard University by 1889 and working with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on their burgeoning Oriental Art department.

The lifespan and nuances in the life and career of Harry Willson Watrous (1857 – 1940) many points parallel with Pushman's legacy: he was born in San Francisco, the city that had the most picturesque and inspiring Chinatown in America; he studied in Paris, Academy Julien, under the supervision of Jules Joseph Lefebvre, who was also one of the beloved tutors of Pushman. Watrous used to acquire and collect Asian antiquities and render them in his works, including the still life genre. He had his one-man show at the Grand Central Galleries in New York, the artistic home of Pushman, where the Armenian artist also had a studio and was repeatedly exhibited.

From 1905 to 1918, he painted many of his stylized figural works, depicting elegantly-dressed modern women in decorative interiors, using Asian backdrops⁶² or Asian artifacts as an attribute to reveal the sitter's mood. "The Broken Vase" is a classic example of Watrous's work from this period. The artist's delicate handling of the beautiful woman's black chiffon dress is dramatic against the pastel pattern of floral and parrot shapes behind her. This elegant figure sits at a table, delicately fitting a broken piece back into a Chinese Jardinière⁶³. Around 1923 Watrous began to paint still lifes in the form of arrangements of the antique applied art objects he eagerly collected, including a number of Buddhist images, scrolls, blue-and-white porcelain, figurines of guardians, Taoist deities, and statuettes of actors of Beijing Opera. Several objects, tapestries, and pieces of furniture appear in more than one painting, as Watrous

⁶² For instance, Harry Wilson Watrous (American, 1857-1940). *Just a Couple of Girls*, 1915. Oil on canvas, 42 1/8 x 52 in. (107 x 132.1 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Elizabeth Watrous, 20.648, <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/132>

⁶³ **Harry W.** Watrous (1857-1940), *The Broken Vase*, signed 'Watrous', (lower right), oil on canvas, 12 x 16 in. (30.5 x 40.6 cm.), <https://www.christies.com/lot/harry-w-watrous-1857-1940-the-broken-vase-1889545/?intObjectID=1889545&lid=1>

recombined them for different effects over the years. In addition, he employed Chinese blue-and-white porcelain in his genre paintings of charming females with allegorical overtones. In the 1930s, employing devices that recall "works by earlier American trompe-l'œil painters," he created images of weathered religious icons, combining the Western art objects with the Asian commodities⁶⁴, inducing affiliations with Pushman's work within the framework of "West meets East" subject.

We can conclude that the artists had influenced each other, carrying the Parisian taste of Asian still life and bringing it to the newly-formed fine art scene of America. However, Pushman's palette was darker, and the contrast of light and shadow- was sharper, arrangements meant to revive and bring life to the figurines; Watrous, in his turn, experimented with a wider range of stylistic and compositional possibilities- from light, airy palette to the polished representations of the chinaware, from the broken brushwork channeling Impressionists to trying his skills in imitation of the Chinese silk painting style⁶⁵.

Despite the fact that Pushman was numerously cited in the American, French, and Armenian press and critical reviews as an artist with a recognizable and distinguishable style both due to his subject matter and artistic vocabulary but also for the technique, there is an artist whose works undeniably bear a resemblance to Pushman's oeuvre- the Danish-American well-known artist Emil Carlsen (1848/1853-1932). The still life genre received high regard in the works of both artists. "There is no essential difference between a still life and a portrait," said Emil Carlsen on one occasion. "Up to a certain point, a portrait is still life. Then there must be something added-personality, life. But to a still life, there must

⁶⁴ **Harry Willson Watrous**, *Madonna, and Child*, signed Watrous (lower right), oil on canvas, 46 by 30 inches, (116.8 by 76.2 cm), <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/american-paintings-drawings-sculpture-n09484/lot.184.html>

⁶⁵ **Kwan Yin**, by 1936, private collection, This work was in Watrous's possession at the time of his death and was auctioned by his estate shortly thereafter; see "Watrous Art is Sold," *The New York Times*, 26 October 1940, p. 13.

also be something added to make it a work of art-call it what you will.”⁶⁶ Hovsep Pushman was exhibited in the U.S. in the galleries and museums that also welcomed Emil Carlsen; both had been trained in Paris, and both had the pursuit of darkened backgrounds derived from Munich school. Both artists were credited with the rebirth of Chardin's style, have openly spoken about their inspiration drawn from Chardin, and were regarded pioneers in terms of expanding Chardin's concepts of still life painting in early American art. His peers described Carlsen's persona as "the leading American proponent of the nineteenth-century Chardin revival"⁶⁷.

“Still Life, Chinese Vase”, completed in 1922⁶⁸, epitomizes the late phase of Carlsen's career when his emulation of Chardin achieved its highest level. With an economy of means and attention to the subtleties of light, form, and texture, Carlsen captured both the quiet mood and soft atmosphere of the French master. The still life's harmonious colors and balanced arrangement of objects add to its serenity and contemplativeness.

It's noteworthy that both artists arrived in the United States at an early age, and both valued their studies in Paris. The selection of Chinese snuff bottles, combining them with Oriental brass and copper utensils, the hierarchy of pottery pieces' scale in the composition, the representation of the brass and bronze bowls not standing on the foot but bending over the backdrop and glimmering interior spherical cap to the viewer, the celebration of the variety of textures, surfaces, and media such as glass, porcelain, brass, textile, and the principle of their amalgamation, the interrelations of Eastern figurines, decorative art objects, books, daily items and ceramic samples as the contextual basis, are the prevalent traits

⁶⁶ The Prizes in the Annual Exhibition Author(s): M. B. W., Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951) , Dec., 1922, Vol. 16, No. 7 (Dec., 1922), pp. 89-92, p. 90.

⁶⁷ **Poland, Reginald.** “A Baker's Dozen Important Paintings In San Diego's Gallery” The American Magazine of Art, vol. 21, no. 1, 1930, pp. 24-29, p.28

⁶⁸ Søren Emil Carlsen, Still Life, Chinese Vase, 1922 oil on panel, 14 x 10 in. (35.6 x 25.4 cm), Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2000.238.1, <https://collections.artsimia.org/art/13147/still-life-soren-emil-carlsen>

and approaches both artists shared. The Tibetan textile figurative patterns, the imitation of ancient Chinese murals as backdrops for still life, which was another specific feature of Pushman's oeuvre, appears in Emil Carlsen paintings as well, some of them dated earlier, than Pushman's works, such as "The Picture From Thibet" (1920-1921)⁶⁹. Carlsen wrote in a letter to The Macbeth Gallery in advance of a major exhibition in 1922: "As for the image of Tibet, I will keep it. Put a very high price on it, and even at that price, I am not interested in selling it. It is a very special picture with a finish that I could never achieve again"⁷⁰. The Chinese-Tibetan cultural relics were captivating for Carlsen first and foremost for their aesthetic values of color combinations, textures, and surfaces, providing endless opportunities for him to experiment and master his skills of handling oil paint and color tones. But for Pushman, the historicism behind that silence and stillness of Chinese statuettes, the mystery concealed in the imagery of Tibetan hangings and silk banners, were of primary importance.

The art historian William Gerds concurred, writing of Carlsen's still lifes: "What makes the paintings beautiful is Carlsen's sensitivity in the arrangement—large shapes are juxtaposed with small flat forms and tall ones, their outlines are often united in refined, harmonious curves, and are placed backward and forward on their limited support surface to allow for 'breathing room, 'for slow movement in space"⁷¹. The juxtapositions of art objects as main compositional elements in Pushman's work have a very

⁶⁹ Emil Carlsen [1848-1932], *The picture from Thibet, 1920-1921: The picture from Thibet*, oil on canvas, 38-3/16 x 27-1/8 inches, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2014.136.63, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.195647.html>

⁷⁰ "Conscious Painting", by William Eric Indursky, based on an essay from Kim Lykke Jensen, *Emil Carlsen Archives, World's Largest Visual Reference Dedicated to the Preservation of the Work of Danish-American Impressionist/Realist Painter, Emil Carlsen [1848-1932]*, Library of Congress Subject Authority Heading: Carlsen, Emil, 1853-1932, no.: n 85141186, 2013, <http://emilcarlsen.org/essay/>

⁷¹ **Emil Carlsen** at the Salmagundi Club, "The Magazine Antiques", September 15, 2022, editorial, <https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/article-emil-carlsen-at-the-salmagundi-club/>

corresponding approach. Therefore, it's evident that both Pushman and Carlsen were influenced by Chardin. Nevertheless, they interpreted that inspiration in their own ways; Carlsen, with the focus on arrangements utensils, decorative ceramics, and edibles, and Pushman embraced himself in the spiritual executions in stage-like groupings of ancient Chinese small-sized statuary.

In Paris, between 1884-1886, Carlsen developed his interest in producing still-life with fine Chinese porcelain, which later was to become his trademark style. In the early 1900s, Pushman, as we noted before, endorsed his dedication to still life with Chinese art objects in Paris, too. Both artists brought the vogue for the still life of Chinese ceramics and artifacts to the United States. However, later Carlsen painted few still lifes, more focusing on landscapes and portraits, claiming that still life fell out of fashion in America. But Hovsep Pushman kept on developing the genre with Chinese antiquities, enriching it with mystic arrangements of tomb figurines of dancers, court ladies, musicians, guardians, Buddhas, and Taoist deities. The Tang horse, Chinese polychrome, glazed figurines⁷², and a Chinese ancestral portrait vaguely seen in the background⁷³, Chinese jade bowls⁷⁴, bead necklaces⁷⁵, porcelain snuff bottles, and Tibetan tanga as a background in some of Carlsen's early paintings were the aesthetic novelty of American art of the late 1800s and early 1900s that was in later decades expanded in Pushman's still life. The juxtaposition of Western-Christian art objects with Eastern ceramics and artifacts

⁷² **Emil Carlsen** [1848-1932], Chinese Statues, ca. 1892, oil on canvas, 20 x 15-3/4 inches, <http://emilcarlsen.org/portfolio/emil-carlsen-chinese-statues-c-1892/>

⁷³ An Oriental oil on canvas still life painting after Emil Carlsen (1848-1932), Canvas size 25 1/2" by 21 1/2", framed 33 3/4" by 29 1/2", <https://bidlive.bruneauandco.com/lots/view/1-ABETZ/aft-emil-carlsen-oriental-still-life-oc-painting>

⁷⁴ **Emil Carlsen** [1848-1932], Jades, ca.1918, oil on wood panel, 14-1/2 x 10-1/2 inches [unframed] | 14-3/8 x 10-5/8 inches [unframed], <http://emilcarlsen.org/portfolio/emil-carlsen-jades-ca-1918/>

⁷⁵ **Emil Carlsen** [1848-1932], The mandarin's necklace, 1915, oil on canvas, 27-1/4 x 15-1/4 inches, <http://emilcarlsen.org/portfolio/emil-carlsen-the-mandarins-necklace-1915/>

is yet another trait one can find in still-life paintings authored by Pushman. Nonetheless, the hallmark of Pushman's still life paintings is Tang figurines and Chinese wooden gilded statutes that are seen rarely in Carlsen's oeuvre. Besides, the philosophical and mystical elements in Carlsen's art were not dominant; the poems Pushman wrote for his paintings and the level of symbolism they were pervaded with make them be viewed separately from Carlsen's works.

Carlsen's painting of Tibet demonstrates the inverting painting technique, which has certain parallels with Pushman's style of handling the paint and the application on the canvas or panel. At the beginning of his career, Carlsen's technique closely mimicked his cousin's- one of the most celebrated nautical painters of Denmark, Viggo Johansen's (1851-1935) style, applying thinly painted dark brown, black, and dark blue colors down and accenting the scene with thickly painted white for any areas of light. Carlsen's work at this time was flat and followed accepted conventions of seascape and nautical painting in Denmark.

As for "The Picture From Thibet", the artist alerted his technique; he began the painting by applying ivory-colored paint over most of the fabric; the layer was thinly applied and barely covered the open-weave (and probably un-primed) fabric. The artist then used a pencil and fine lines of blue paint to carefully draw in the design. Some passages of the patterned textile background were left at this stage, while other parts of the background received additional applications of paint, wet-into-wet. The still-life objects were carried to a greater degree of finish, and in these areas, the paint is generally thicker and more blended than in the background. Pushman did so in some of his canvases as well.

Under ultraviolet light, greenish fluorescence in parts of the textile that acts as the background suggests the artist may have added some resin to his paint; Hovsep Pushman also mixed a small amount of resin to his paints. But the implication of soft outlines by Carlsen that apart from the colors, formed the shapes are absent in Pushman's technique; instead, the impressionistic brushwork and dotted areas of color learned and cultivated in Paris is yet another distinction between the oeuvre of these two remarkable artists.

However, Carlsen, being originated from Denmark, carried in his art the stamp of Northern still-life traditions with the care of details and rendering the beautiful ornaments of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain vessels⁷⁶. Hovsep Pushman's still life is not based on the Dutch School (although the darkened background was partially a reference to Willem Kalf), rather his personal life experiences, travels, and curiosity toward Chinese literature, philosophy, and applied arts opened up new horizons in still life genre for him. Carlsen's traveling records do not contain information on his trips to the East: China, Japan, or India; his favorable destinations were European countries.

The implementation of a fan as a compositional unit and the reflection of the idea West-East dialogue by combining Western art artifacts with Eastern antiquities is another feature both artists share. "The French fan" still life (1922)⁷⁷ (Picture 3) by Emil Carlsen represents the Eastern, supposedly Chinese figurine of a Buddhist disciple facing towards the Parisian fashionable fan with European imagery, opposing the rectilinear outlines of the statue with its semicircular curvature and contrasting it both with the palette and the pictorial style. Pushman, in his turn, employed the motif of a fan in one of his still lifes⁷⁸, though the rendering style of the artist does not let the sight identify whether it's an Asian or a European accessory. Once again, the fan, with its curvilinear qualities, provides a setting for the Asian figurine and the petite vase with the faded flower, evoking symbolic connotations. The application of dramatic lighting and the superiority of the darkened areas over the relatively light parts multiply the sense of mystery, contrasting Carlsen's

⁷⁶ Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Loretto, PA, "Père et fils: Art of Emil and Dines Carlsen", August 20 – October 23 1977, <http://emilcarlsen.org/portfolio/1977-southern-alleghenies-museum-of-art-loretto-pa-pere-et-fils-art-of-emil-and-dines-carlsen-august-20-october-23/>

⁷⁷ **Emil Carlsen** [1848-1932], *The French fan*, 1922, oil on board, 15 x 18 inches | 15-1/8 x 18-1/8 inches, <http://emilcarlsen.org/portfolio/emil-carlsen-the-french-fan-1922/>

⁷⁸ Hovsep Pushman, *Hymn of Peace*, No. 292, Circa 1930, Oil on panel, 23x18, <http://www.hovseppushman.net/Hymn-of-Peace,-No.-292.html>

composition based on the soft outlines and accentuation of French imagery on the fan.

The scarce biographical records do not spread light on the question; of where and how two artists met. It is possible that both of them were encountered at the Art Institute of Chicago. Taking into account that Carlsen was Pushman's elder colleague and in the late 1800s he was already famous, Pushman, while studying in Chicago, probably took his classes or visited his exhibitions to deepen his knowledge of fine arts, enhance his technique and nourish his devotion to still life. We can also assume they met each other during the meetings at Salmagundi Art Club they both were members of⁷⁹.

Homage to Hovsep Pushman

Pushman managed to foster the curiosity of American artists towards Chinese Tang figurines, Tibetan backgrounds, handling of light and shadow, mirroring the shimmering quality of the pottery and glassware, and the spiritual essence of the material culture items. During the period of the mid to late twentieth century, a new generation of American and European still life painters were influenced by the Armenian-born artist, among them Richard Vernon Goetz (1915 - 1991), David A. Leffel (b. 1931), Shari MacGraw (b. 1954), John McCartin (b. 1954), Robert Chailloux (French, 1913- 2005), Loran Speck (b. 1943), Aaron Bohrod, (Wisconsin, 1907-1992), Vladimir Pavlosky (1884 - 1944).

Born in New York City, David A Leffel graduated from Parsons School of Design, and between 1959 and 1960, with the help of a Merit Scholarship, he learned the fundamentals of chiaroscuro. He was part of the artists 'stable in New York City's Grand Central Galleries in the 70s and 80s. As his reputation as a consummate artist grew, he received a visit

⁷⁹ Salmagundi is a not-for-profit, professional, and social club created in 1871 by artists and patrons to support one another. It is one of America's oldest arts organizations. The Club has championed representational art from its founding with iconic members, including Thomas Moran (1837-1926), William Merritt Chase (1849-1916), Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), Emil Carlsen (1848-1932), N.C continuously. Wyeth (1882-1945), Childe Hassam (1859-1935), and Winston Churchill (1874-1965).

from one of history's most intriguing political figures, Madam Chiang Kai-shek⁸⁰. Her interest in Western painting and specifically in Leffel's work may explain his current widespread popularity in China, which started with an invitation to the First American Art Exhibit in Beijing, China, and reemerged in a recent traveling exhibit of realist artists with the America China Oil Painting Artists League (ACOPAL). The links with the Grand Central Galleries, the interest, and voyage to China, following the path of the old masters in terms of oil painting principles, as well as a selection of Tang dynasty horse figurines and equestrian statues⁸¹, other antiquities with careful juxtapositions, poetic titles of some of his still life paintings with Chinese antiquities⁸² speak for the inspiration drawn from Pushman's oeuvre. Moreover, in his interview for the 2011 November-December issue of the "Fine Art Connoisseur" magazine, Laffel opened up about the artists who inspired him, speaking of the old masters whom he admires-Velazquez, van Eyck, Rubens, Turner, Giovanni Batista Moroni, and Hovsep Pushman⁸³. One of his giclées bears the title "Rembrandt, Pushman, and Court Lady"⁸⁴, where the artist drew direct parallels between the old masters of Baroque and the American-Armenian artist of the first half of the twentieth century by comprising the reproduction of Pushman's "Challenging The Unknown" (1940)⁸⁵ (**Picture 4**) alongside

⁸⁰ She was a key Chinese political figure who was the First Lady of the Republic of China and the wife of President Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China.

⁸¹ See the painting "Tang horse and the rider with the flower", 1998, oil on canvas, 22x24 in the "Behind the Beautiful Painting", an article for the artistdaily.com, covering the oeuvre of David A. Leffel and his technique.

⁸² **David A. Leffel**, "The awakening of spring", oil on canvas, "30" x 28", Mutual Art, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/THE-AWAKENING-OF-SPRING/6C0DDC989406A75F>

⁸³ **Rachel Wolf**, "The elegance of paradox", "Fine Art Connoisseur" journal, November-December 2011, pp. 32-34, p. 33.

⁸⁴ **David A. Leffel**, "Rembrandt, Pushman, and Court Lady", 2000. o/c – 32" x 26", giclée print, courtesy of David A. Leffel, <https://brightlightfineart.com/product/rembrandt-pushman-and-court-lady/>

⁸⁵ **Pushman Hovsep**, "Challenging The Unknown", circa 1940, oil on panel over the canvas, 27x27, <http://www.hovseppushman.net/Challenging-The-Unknown.html>

Rembrandt's self-portrait hung on the base where the Tang dynasty courtesan figurine stands in tranquility.

Conclusion

Pushman's work, characterized by a cluster of objects, is infused with subtler themes, where there is always a yearning for liberation from the shackles of the material and the mundane, but there is no place for tensions and boldly expressive dynamism; on the contrary, they are imbued with elegiac mood, questioning the ending and beginning cycles of life, age, love, power, and longing. Pushman's elusive, esoteric, often ambiguous compositions stem from the Oriental impressions of his childhood and hometown, the links with the Oriental rug-making his family was involved in, his Parisian education and Parisian vogue for the East, his travels to China, Africa, Arabic countries, the preferences and taste for the Orient within the European and American artistic circles of connoisseurs, collectors, and artists compound with his emotions, memories, and worldview. The artist's own experiences, thoughts, impressions, and perceptions of the world, time, space, human life and death, eternal and mortal, Yin-yang, confronting yet complementing forces are personified through the Chinese Taoist and Tang dynasty tomb figurines rarely seen in the oeuvre of Western artists. He tended to achieve harmony between the formal structure, color combinations, implementations of modeling, careful compositional arrangements, and the narrative to unveil the symbolic ideas to the Western viewer. Being influenced by Eastern cultures in terms of evoking the spirit and profoundness of the objects' nature, and allegorical approach to the material world, he nonetheless remained a Western painter with his employment of dramatic illumination and exquisite sense of color. Sharing some features with his peers in terms of compositional interconnections of Chinese statuettes and ceramics, juxtaposing them with the art objects of Western and Oriental cultures and Tibetan settings, absorbing the still life principles of his predecessors, he remained faithful to his style and subject, continuing the lineage of the Western painters who turned their brush to the Asian still-life, bringing it into the new climax and serving as an inspirational source for the coming generations of oil painters. Being an Armenian in origin,

taking his first steps as an artist in Paris, developing his style to new heights in America, and discovering the objects of material culture that had shaped his vision of the world in China, Hovsep Pushman as a persona, as an artist and his artistic legacy as a part of Western art history became a bridge between essentially different continents and civilizations, that has yet to be explored.



Picture 1. Hovsep Pushman, "The Princess and her Horse", oil on board, 23 x 26 in. (58.4 x 66 cm.) compared to Female Polo Player, Early Tang Dynasty, 8th century. 15 x 12.5 inches. Provenance: The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, purchased from Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, May 17, 1941



Picture 2. Hovsep Pushman, The War God, titled The War God and numbered 607 in labels affixed to the stretcher, oil on fiberboard, 24 by 21 3/4 in. 61 by 55.3 cm, Image courtesy of Sotheby's on the left and Sir William Orpen, Still life, pottery figure of the Chinese war god Kuan-Ti, and a crystal ball signed with a cipher (lower right), oil on canvas, 76.8 x 63.6 cm. (30 1/4 x 25 1/8 in.), Image courtesy of Bonhams Auction House on the right



Picture 3. Hovsep Pushman, Hymn of Peace, No. 292, circa 1930, oil on panel, 23x18, Image courtesy of www.hovseppushman.net on the left and Emil Carlsen, The French fan, 1922, oil on board, 15 x 18 inches | 15-1/8 x 18-1/8 inches, Image courtesy of www.emilcarlsen.org on the right



Picture 4. David A. Leffel, Rembrandt, Pushman, and Court Lady, 2000. o/c – 32" x 26", giclée print, courtesy of David A. Leffel, Image courtesy of Davis A. Leffel on the left and Hovsep Pushman, Challenging The Unknown, circa 1940, oil on the panel over the canvas, 27x27, Image courtesy of www.hovseppushman.net on the right

**ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՆԱՅ ՆԿԱՐԻՉ ՀՈՎԱՅՓ ՓՈԽՇՄԱՆԻ ՍՏԵՂԾԱԳՈՐԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ
ԶԻՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՌԱՐԿԱՆԵՐՈՎ ԱՐԵՎԱՏՅԱՆ ՆԱՏՅՈՒՐՄՈՐՏՆԵՐԻ
ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍՈՒՄ**

ԱՆԻ ՄԱՐԳԱՐՅԱՆ

Մեր գիտական ուսումնասիրությունը նվիրված է ամերիկահայ նկարիչ Հովսեփ Փուշմանի ժառանգությանը, ում ստեղծագործության նշանակալից մաս կազմող նատյուրմորտները՝ ընդգծված ասիական, այդ թվում՝ չինական արձանիկներով և ճենապակյա անոթներով, պատկերված են տենեբրիզմի, իմպրեսիոնիզմի և ժամանակի այլ գեղարվեստական ուղղությունների սկզբունքների կիրառմամբ: Այս նատյուրմորտներում Փուշմանի մոտեցման տարբերակիչ առանձնահատկությունները կարելի է բացահայտել նրա այն հորինվածքների վերլուծության միջոցով, որոնցում ներկայացված են Թան դինաստիայի արձանիկներ, չինական ճենապակյա իրեր և հնություններ, դրանք դիտարկելով չինական արվեստի գործեր պատկերող նատյուրմորտի արևմտյան ավանդույթի շրջանակներում, որը ծագել է Շինուազերիի և Հոլանդական ոսկե դարի ժամանակահատվածում՝ գտնելով մեկնաբանման նոր հորիզոններ 19-րդ դարավերջին և 20-րդ դարասկզբին: Փուշմանի կտավներում չինական արվեստի առարկաների ներգրավվածության հայեցակարգը, դրանց դասավորությունը կոմպոզիցիոն տարածության մեջ, դրանց բովանդակային փոխառնչությունները և չինական մշակույթից ներշնչված ֆոներն ուսումնասիրվել են նրա ժամանակակիցների ստեղծած արևելյան նատյուրմորտների հետ համեմատության մեջ, որոնց շարքում են Սորեն Էմիլ Կարլսենը (1853-1932), Հյուբերտ Վոսը (1855 - 1935), Ռոջեր Էլիոթ Ֆրայը (1866 - 1934), Դենման Ռոսը (1853 - 1935), Կլոդ Ռագեթ Հերստը (1855-1942), Ուիլյամ Օրփենը (1878 - 1931) և Հարրի Ուիլսոն Ուոթրոուսը (1857-1940)՝ վեր հանելու ամերիկահայ արվեստագետի ազդեցության աղբյուրները և ինքնատիպ ոճի ձևավորման գործընթացը:

Բանալի բաներ՝ Հովսեփ Փուշման, Թան դինաստիայի արձանիկ, չինական ճենապակի, ամերիկյան արվեստ, նատյուրմորտ, Բուդդա, Էմիլ Կարլսեն:

**ТВОРЧЕСТВО АРМЯНО-АМЕРИКАНСКОГО ХУДОЖНИКА ОВСЕПА
ПУШМАНА В КОНТЕКСТЕ ЗАПАДНЫХ НАТЮРМОРТОВ С ПРЕДМЕТАМИ
КИТАЙСКОГО ИСКУССТВА**

АНИ МАРГАРЯН

Наше исследование посвящено наследию американского художника армянского происхождения Овсеп Пушмана, кульминацией творчества которого являются натюрморты с выделенными азиатскими, в частности, китай-

скими статуэтками, изображенными с применением принципов теневризма, импрессионизма и выразительных средств символизма. Отличительные черты подхода Пушмана к этому жанру раскрываются на основе анализа его произведений с изображением статуэток династии Тан, китайского фарфора и предметов старины в рамках западной, в том числе американской традиции натюрморта с предметами китайского искусства – жанра, возникшего в эпоху Шинуазри и Золотого века Голландии и нашедшего новые горизонты интерпретации на рубеже XIX–XX вв. Концепция включения китайских артефактов в качестве первичных композиционных элементов, их расположение в композиционном пространстве и их контекстуальное отношение друг к другу, а также применение китайских задних планов в полотнах Пушмана рассматривается в сопоставлении с натюрмортами его сверстников, таких как Уильям Орпен (1878–1931), Сорен Эмиль Карлсен (1853–1932), Хьюберт Вос (1855–1935), Роджер Элиот Фрай (1866–1934), Денман Росс (1853–1935), Клод Рене Херст (1855–1942) и Гарри Уилсона Уотроуса (1857–1940). Тем самым демонстрируется процесс культивирования источников влияния и формирования самобытного стиля армяно-американского художника.

Ключевые слова: Овсеп Пушман, статуэтка династии Тан, китайский фарфор, американское искусство, натюрморт, Будда, Эмиль Карлсен.