

# FRYE

## ART MUSEUM

### Guided Artwork Discussion: Chen Chi

<https://youtu.be/Fz9-Cslhh9c>

Thank you for joining us for a virtual here:now Artwork Discussion with the Frye Art Museum. My name is Caroline, and I am the Education Coordinator here at the Frye. I will be facilitating today's digital discussion. While we cannot be together in the galleries, we hope you will still enjoy the opportunity to slow down, look closely, and spend some time with a work from the Frye Collection.

It's always fun to look at art by yourself or invite a friend or family member to join you in this discussion. You might also choose to write down your observations or make a drawing in response. If this is the case, please gather your materials now.

We will begin each artwork discussion by taking a quiet moment to simply look at the work of art and observe. Remember there are no right or wrong answers—it's about what you notice or experience when looking. After you have taken a moment to observe on your own, I will ask some questions to guide your looking and provide information about the artwork before we end.

You can expand or minimize the video on your screen for the discussion. You can also access closed captioning through the settings tool. Take a moment to see what works best for your viewing.

Today's theme is **Winter's Arrival and the Promise of Spring**. The winter is often a time of change, as we welcome a new year and look ahead to the future. Winter can offer its own pleasures, as snow dusts the ground and daylight returns, however slowly. As we explore today's artworks, I encourage you to enjoy these scenes as they are now and imagine how they may change over time.

I am particularly excited that this format allows us to share works from the Frye's collection that we have not previously featured in a here:now discussion.

This is the artwork we will be looking at today. We will take pauses in between each set of questions to give you time to look closely at the artwork and think about your responses. Remember: you may pause this video at any time to spend more time on one of the slides.

To start our discussion, please take 30 seconds to look quietly at this piece. You might start at the top corner of the canvas, moving across and down. You may move close to the screen to see details or step back for a new perspective. Your cursor is a great tool to trace and track details within the artwork.

Thank you for your quiet observation.

We will now move into our guided questions. If you are looking with a friend or family member, we hope you will share your observations, or consider writing down or sketching your answers.

1. What is going on in this painting?
2. Where does this scene take place? Is this a familiar or realistic landscape? What do you see that makes you say that?
3. Do you see movement in this work of art or does it seem still? Do the colors, lines, and shapes make it seem that way? How?
4. Imagine this image were a still from a film. What do you think might happen in the next frame? If you have a writing utensil and paper, you might like to draw this out.

Thank you for taking the time to share and reflect on your observations. I would now like to share some information on this piece.

Chen Chi (American, born China, 1912-2005)

*Father and Son in the Snow*, ca. 1974

Lithograph

27 x 18 in.

Frye Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1974.015

Chen Chi was an internationally known master watercolorist, who brought together Eastern and Western artistic practices to create his distinct style. Born in China in 1912, Chen Chi attended art school in Shanghai and was a member of the avant-gardist "White Swan Club," where he was influenced by Western art practices and ideas.

After a solo exhibition in China, Chen was invited to the United States as part of a cultural exchange program. He exhibited throughout the country, and eventually settled in New York City, becoming a US citizen. Chen taught art throughout his life, first as an Instructor of Watercolor at St. John's University in Shanghai and then as a visiting art professor at Pennsylvania State College and Utah State University. He continued to paint landscapes, including many praised scenes of New York City.

During his long and successful career, Chen received numerous honors, including the National Art Club Medal of Honor and the American Watercolor Society's Gold Medal of Honor in 1966. His works are included in many major museum collections today, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and Chen Chi Museums in Shanghai and Wuxi. Chen passed away in 2005.

Chen's artistic process was described as an adventure. As a world master of watercolor, as well as a poet and philosopher, he wanted his painting to reflect both visual interpretation and his own "emotions, spirit and intellect." Chen brought together materials, subject matter, and mood with careful control, yet welcomed moments of chance or accident, believing this truly brought his work to life.

Chen even inscribed some of his paintings with a seal that read "I use my way", and his successful merging of Eastern and Western artistic practices continues to influence many in this field.

*Father and Son in the Snow* is a shining example of Chen's talent and style. Our view hovers above two figures as they move through a snowscape. The elements around them are hazy and generalized - faint lines could suggest snowbanks, while the frenzied and various brown lines on the left and right might indicate nearby woods. This is typical of Chen's landscapes, which focused less on realistic rendering and, instead, sought to capture the feeling of the scene.

Chen Chi was also a poet. I wanted to leave you with you one of Chen's poems. We have learned that Chen approached his paintings with both skill and emotion, and I think his poems capture this careful balance, as well.

With the Eastern mind:  
Peace, freedom, harmony, tranquility,  
joy, humility  
I paint.  
-Chen Chi

Thank you for joining us for a here:now artwork discussion and for being part of the Frye community. We value your support and can't wait to welcome you back to the Museum again soon.