

CHINA

Experts: Tech to play positive role in art world

By **LI MENGHAN** in Beijing and **QI YICHAO** in Nanning

Experts gathered in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Oct 21 to discuss how new technologies can be utilized as a force for good in the art world, saying that their integration could lead to the creation of works of great significance.

Shu Yong, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said he hoped there would be a deeper integration of science and art.

"While technological revolutions have sparked artistic revolutions, I also hope that art can empower the development of technology. The humanities can offer fresh insights for technological advancement, which is of great significance," he said at the 2025 National Conference on Science Popularization Content Creation.

Shu, who is also vice-president of the Kaiming Art Academy of the Central Committee of the China Association for Promoting Democracy, said there will be inevitable changes brought by disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence. However, neither the instinctive elements of the humanities nor artistic works can be replaced; instead, they can create classics of different times, passed down through generations.

Over the past three years, Shu has been using AI for his painting, which, according to him, is "not just to produce stunning artworks, but to transform them into an exploration of knowledge through the continuous creation process".

"Cooperation between science and art also involves making science visible, comprehensible and perceptible through artistic approaches," he added, citing the example of showcasing the future of AI by having robots perform the traditional *yangko* dance at this year's Spring Festival Gala.

Li Chengcai, a documentary filmmaker, echoed Shu's views by highlighting the difficulties in transforming abstract, profound and specialized knowledge into tangible and relatable aspects of daily life.

"We need to strike a balance, maintaining both the solemnity and seriousness of science, as well as the vividness and storytelling elements that are accessible to the general public," Li said, adding that this is a conflict, as some fundamental scientific principles are inherently at odds with storytelling.

In such a dilemma, the ability to explain the profound in simple terms is of great significance. This involves discovering the warmth and humanistic care within science and delivering the splendor of life and respect for nature that the creator felt to the public, he added.

"I'm a transmitter of life. If I can record the whole and explain a part, that's enough," Li said.

The event was organized by the China Science Writers Association to enrich the forms of popular science works and contribute to cultivating an innovative culture.

Contact the writers at limenghan@chinadaily.com.cn



Chen Qiong (middle) teaches female participants about elderly health services during a training course organized by her nonprofit organization, Yichuang, in Hebei province.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Platform transforms rural women's lives

Initiative blends job skills with cultural values

By **LI HONGYANG**
lihongyang@chinadaily.com.cn

In Beijing, Chen Qiong is leading an initiative that is transforming the lives of rural women throughout China. As a dedicated scholar advocating for women's empowerment, she is at the forefront of efforts to provide rural women with new opportunities for economic independence and personal growth.

Through her organization, Yichuang, the 48-year-old from Ji'an city, Jiangxi province, is empowering women with practical skills while reinforcing cultural values related to family and elder care.

The organization has categorized women into two age groups: 18 to 45, and 45 to 65. For the younger cohort, Yichuang offers the "beauty for a better life" program, a decade-long initiative that equips women with skills in beauty services such as makeup and hairstyling. These skills enable women to find flexible employment opportunities close to home, allowing them to balance work with family responsibilities.

"By staying in their communities, these women can ensure their children receive proper care and education, while also supporting their families financially," Chen said. "For women themselves, it's about more than just economic independence. It's about dignity and self-worth."

Each year, about 40 classes are held across the country, with 40 participants in each. Operating in hundreds of counties, the program targets key rural vitalization areas such as Hebei and Henan provinces, and extends to less developed western regions like Shaanxi and Guizhou provinces, Chen added. These women, often with little or no experience, undergo an intensive 20-day training. By the end of the course, they are ready to work, earning around 3,000 yuan (\$421) per month.

"For those in the 45 to 65 age group, their responsibilities for raising children are mostly completed,



Chen (second from right) and her colleagues provide free health checks to seniors at a village in Hebei province.

as their kids are typically off to college. The focus of this group of women shifts more toward caring for the elderly," Chen said.

The elderly care program developed by Yichuang enables women to not only care for their own elderly family members, but also extend their support to other seniors nearby whose children have moved away for work.

The program allows these women to earn extra income while maintaining their primary occupations, whether in farming or local jobs. The participants check in with the elderly every day, either in person or by phone, to ask about their meals, sleep, mood and any special needs. Once a week, they visit the elderly to ensure there are no safety hazards related to water, gas, or fire. Every two weeks, they offer services such as haircuts or accompanying the seniors to medical appointments.

"After the training, the participants improve in educating their children and managing relationships with family and neighbors. For example, children are more likely to value learning if they see their mothers doing the same. This holistic approach helps foster healthier, more supportive family and community environments," Chen said.

Her journey began during her graduate studies in 2005 at Central China Normal University in Wuhan, Hubei province, where she was deeply influenced by her mentor, Liu Xiaohong, who studied rural women's political participation. This early exposure inspired her commitment to rural women's empowerment.

After completing her doctorate,

Chen moved to Beijing, where she became an expert adviser for Beijing Rural Women, an NGO focused on rural women's development. She found that grassroots organizations faced challenges in navigating government partnerships and leveraging policy support.

"One of the biggest hurdles was the disconnect between grassroots initiatives and government policies. We needed a bridge to ensure our efforts were aligned with national priorities," she said.

Recognizing these challenges, Chen founded Yichuang in 2017. "Yichuang is a platform to unleash the potential of rural women and transform their lives," she said.

She added that the current program relies heavily on local partnerships that engage local organizations and female-led businesses to implement its framework. These partners receive resources and financial support that Chen collects from governments and various foundations. The program includes six months to a year of follow-up on the results, ensuring that participants can translate their new skills into economic opportunities.

Feedback is conducted via surveys with participants, enabling them to report their employment status and income levels. "Finding reliable local partners is a significant challenge. Occasionally, partners may exploit the program for personal gain, such as charging for what should be free training. To counteract this, the program prioritizes transparency and accountability," she said.

A dedicated team of seven from Yichuang have developed and refined the program's framework. Once proven effective in one location, the framework is replicated in other regions.

"Men and women are not opposites; they grow and thrive together. A woman's development should not only focus on achieving personal goals and happiness, but also on enhancing the well-being of her family, community and the broader society," Chen said.

"A woman's development should be measured by the increased happiness of her family, children and seniors," she added.

New logistics network transforms fortunes of remote Metog county

By **PALDEN NYIMA** in Lhasa
palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn

The once-secluded county of Metog in the Xizang autonomous region has transformed from an isolated outpost into a fast-growing hub of commerce in recent years, according to local reports.

The shift follows improvements to transport links and the rapid expansion of e-commerce, which have helped bring the area's distinctive products to markets far beyond its mountainous borders.

Metog was long known as the "isolated island" of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau due to its challenging terrain. Until 2013, when a national road was completed, it was the last county in China without road access.

The arrival of a road connection marked a turning point, ending decades of geographical isolation and laying the groundwork for new industries to take hold.

As a groundbreaking change, since the latter half of last year, some e-commerce platforms have waived logistics transfer fees for remote regions, including Metog.

This policy shift has been instrumental in driving local commerce, allowing specialty products from Metog, such as its famed stone pots, to find eager buyers across the country.

Entrepreneur Wangmo set up an online shop specializing in local stone pots in 2017, and her business has been flourishing thanks to the revamped shipping policies. "My orders now come from all over the country, with the farthest destinations being Taiwan and Hong Kong," Wangmo was quoted as saying by CCTV's finance channel.

By hosting her digital storefront on the popular online shopping platform Pinduoduo, her business has achieved monthly sales of over 100 stone pots.

Wangmo said that her entire quality of life has improved thanks to the convenience of e-commerce. Her newly built house is filled with home appliances purchased online, reflecting the ease of shopping and delivery brought by improved logistics. "It's now much easier to sell stone pots, but just as importantly, I can purchase what I need and have it delivered right to my door at no extra cost — it's amazing," she said.

According to a representative from JD Logistics in Lhasa, the geographical remoteness of Metog previously meant that deliveries often took over a week to arrive. However, with the expansion of JD

“My orders now come from all over the country, with the farthest destinations being Taiwan and Hong Kong.”

Wangmo, entrepreneur living in Metog county, Xizang autonomous region

Logistics' self-operated warehousing and distribution network, online purchases made by Metog residents are now shipped from its Lhasa smart warehouse.

This enhancement allows for next-day delivery in most cases and, in some instances, even same-day delivery, marking a major improvement compared to previous delivery times.

While enabling products to reach rural areas, logistics companies are also closing the gap between agricultural producers and national markets. These products, stored locally, are quickly distributed nationwide via warehousing and transportation systems, creating a seamless logistics channel for Xizang's unique items.

Local specialties such as stone pots and tea from Metog are able to be distributed widely across China. By overcoming the logistical challenges associated with transportation in remote mountainous areas, logistics companies have significantly reduced courier fees for farmers, thereby helping them lower costs and increase income.

The success of such logistics advancements was evident during this year's Singles' Day shopping carnival, during which Xizang showcased vibrant consumer activities on e-commerce platforms.

Data from JD revealed that Xizang led the nation in per capita spending.

Last year, Metog's GDP was 1.01 billion yuan (\$142 million), with a growth rate of 6.95 percent. The per capita disposable income of urban residents in the county reached 47,198 yuan, marking a 7 percent increase compared to the previous year, while the per capita disposable income of rural residents was 24,935 yuan, reflecting an 8.3 percent growth, according to local authorities.



Tibetan residents receive a parcel from a courier (right) in Nakarze county, Xizang autonomous region, in August. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Study shows how moderate grazing boosts grassland productivity



Nomads herd sheep on the grassland in Gangca county, Qinghai province, on Nov 15. QI ZHIYUE / XINHUA

LANZHOU — Chinese scientists have recently proposed a key scientific mechanism in explaining how moderate grazing enhances productivity in alpine grasslands, according to Lanzhou University. This study provides a new perspective in explaining how moderate grazing can improve community productivity and offers a key scientific basis for the sustainable management of alpine grasslands, the university said.

The study was conducted by researchers from Lanzhou University in Northwest China's Gansu province, Nanjing University in Jiangsu province and the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology in Qinghai province — with their findings published in the journal *Oikos*.

"Throughout the long history of

human grazing, it has been well known that moderate grazing can enhance grassland sustainability by promoting biodiversity and productivity. However, understanding of its scientific mechanism was insufficient," said He Jinsheng, a professor at Lanzhou University and leader of the study.

To explore this key scientific issue in grassland management, the research team established a large-scale grazing experiment based at the national field scientific observation and research station of the alpine grassland ecosystem in Haibei Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Qinghai.

Researchers found that expansion of the functional trait space of grassland plant communities is one of the key mechanisms by which moderate

grazing promotes the productivity of alpine grasslands.

Functional trait space is an overall multidimensional framework, where each dimension represents a different functional trait — such as plant height, leaf size, and leaf nitrogen and phosphorus content. "It can be understood as a 'coordinate system', in which plants can be positioned according to their traits," He said. "The volume of the species making up this community represents the potential of this community in resource utilization."

In an alpine meadow, scientists conducted a yak grazing experiment via four methods — grazing exclusion and light, moderate and heavy grazing. The team measured 13 functional traits across 22 commonly occurring plant species.

Grazing increased biomass production by 16.7 to 28 percent — with low and moderate grazing significantly expanding the functional trait space, the study revealed.

Such expansion showed a strong positive correlation with biomass production, primarily mediated by increased variation in leaf traits, which are associated with enhanced photosynthetic efficiency.

This study confirmed, for the first time in alpine grasslands, that the expansion of functional trait space is the core mechanism for promoting grassland productivity through moderate grazing, He said.

"This finding not only proposes a new perspective in explaining that moderate grazing can improve community productivity — but also provides a key scientific basis for the sustainable management of alpine grasslands," He said.

XINHUA