

ART OF THE LAND



Ning Hou's Paintings

Presented

At Pear Ranch Gallery In Locke

Illustrated by Fiona Wang

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By Appointment only

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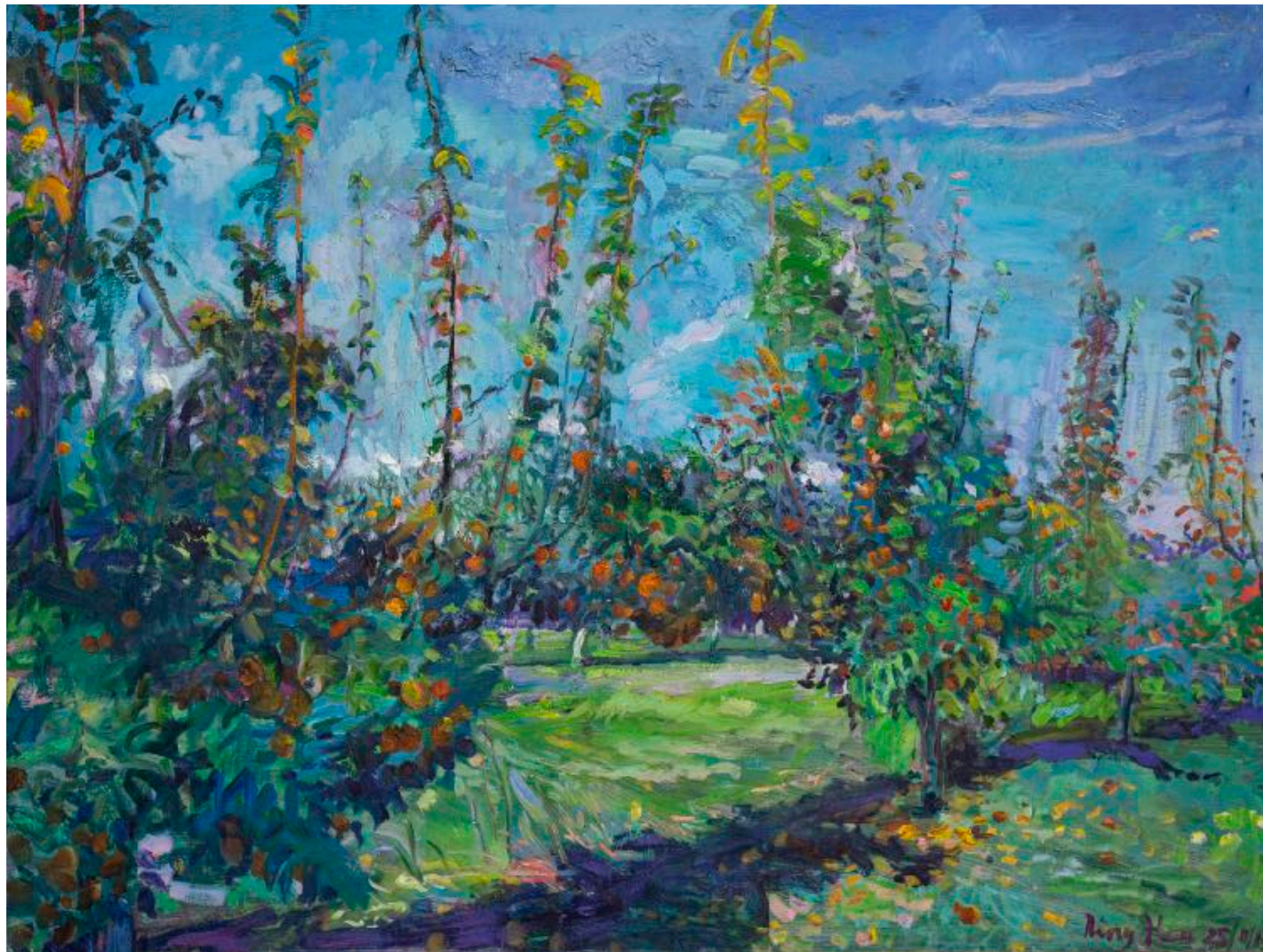
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Event on Mar. 20, 2021 At Pear Ranch





1 Brown Pear Orchard

36" * 48"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

Ning Hou, the artist, was excited to see the first organic brown pear orchard in California Delta. He expressively uses blocks of green and blue (with violet) on canvas, with tree branches reaching out to the sky. Shadow casted on the field divides the bottom part of the canvas to two triangles.

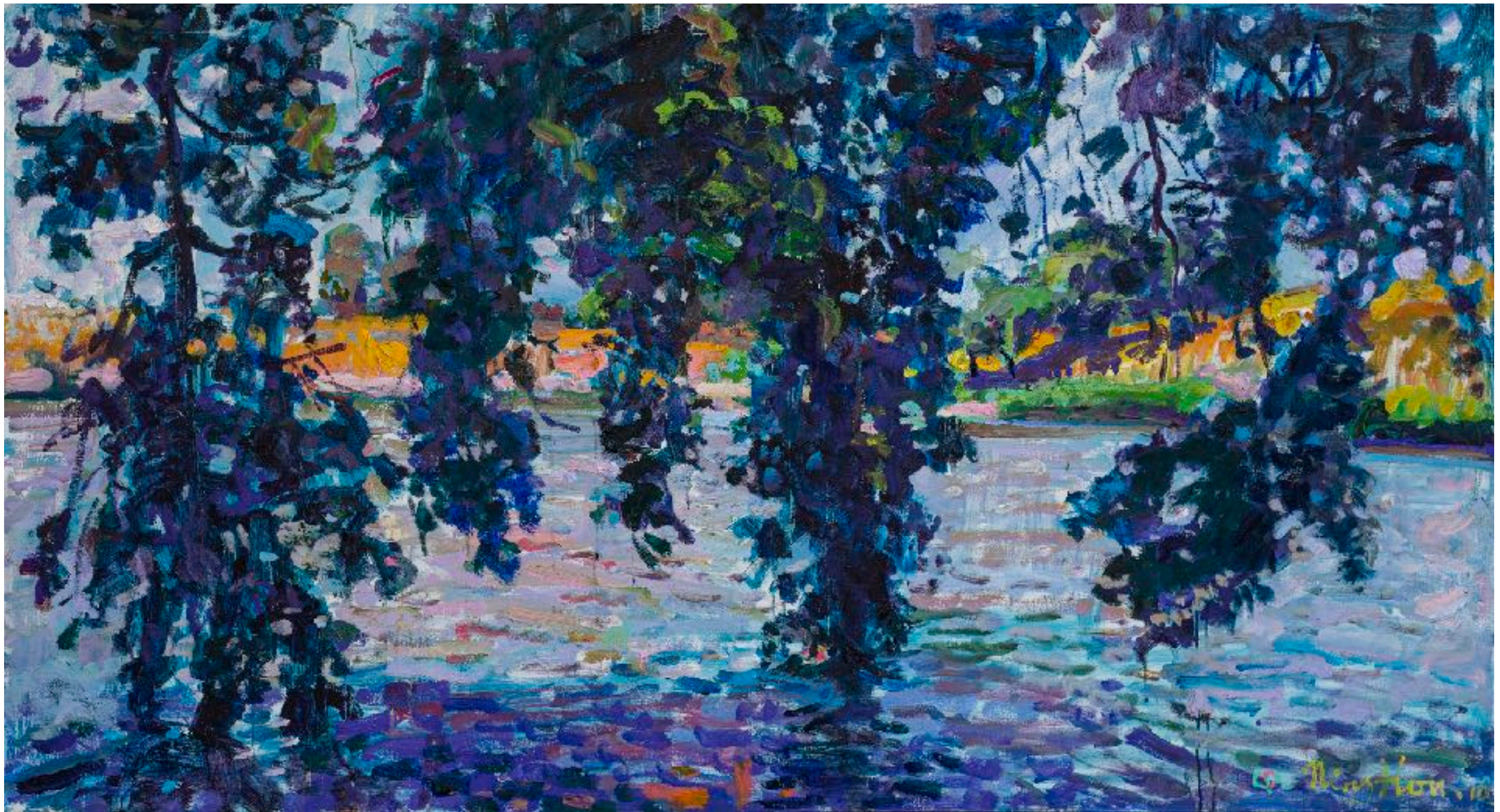


2 Iris

30"*23"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

This painting depicts black queen Iris at Ning's garden at Locke. The artist uses various shades of violet, blue and green on canvas.

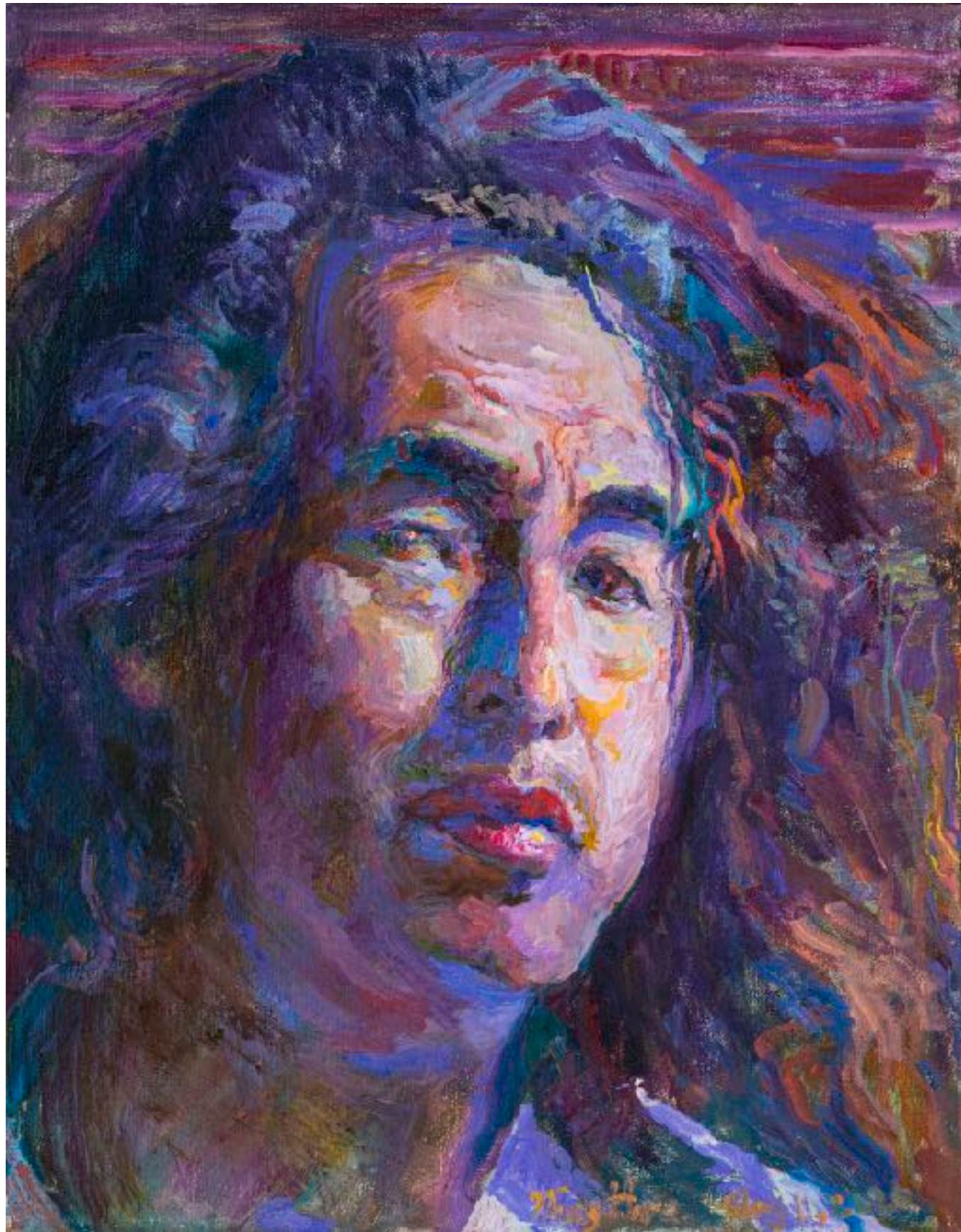


3 Regina Lake

39" * 72"

NING HOU, 2010 Oil on Linen

This large scale Plein Air painting provides an interesting perspective. With branches coming down from top of the painting all the way to the bottom, viewers may feel the scene — in a sunny afternoon, standing on the levee in the shadow of the tree, looking to the other side of the lake through the branches. The violet of the tree branches and the orange color in the distance, compose a vision contrast of sun and shadow, a feel of temperature of hot and cool.



4 Ning Portrait

29"*32"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

This self portrait was completed during COVID-19. Ning applied different shades of violet, with contrasting color of orange and cadmium yellow, permanent green light, Prussian red around his eyes, to depict a conflicting expression of the figure - gloomy for the reality, yet with hope for the future.

NFS



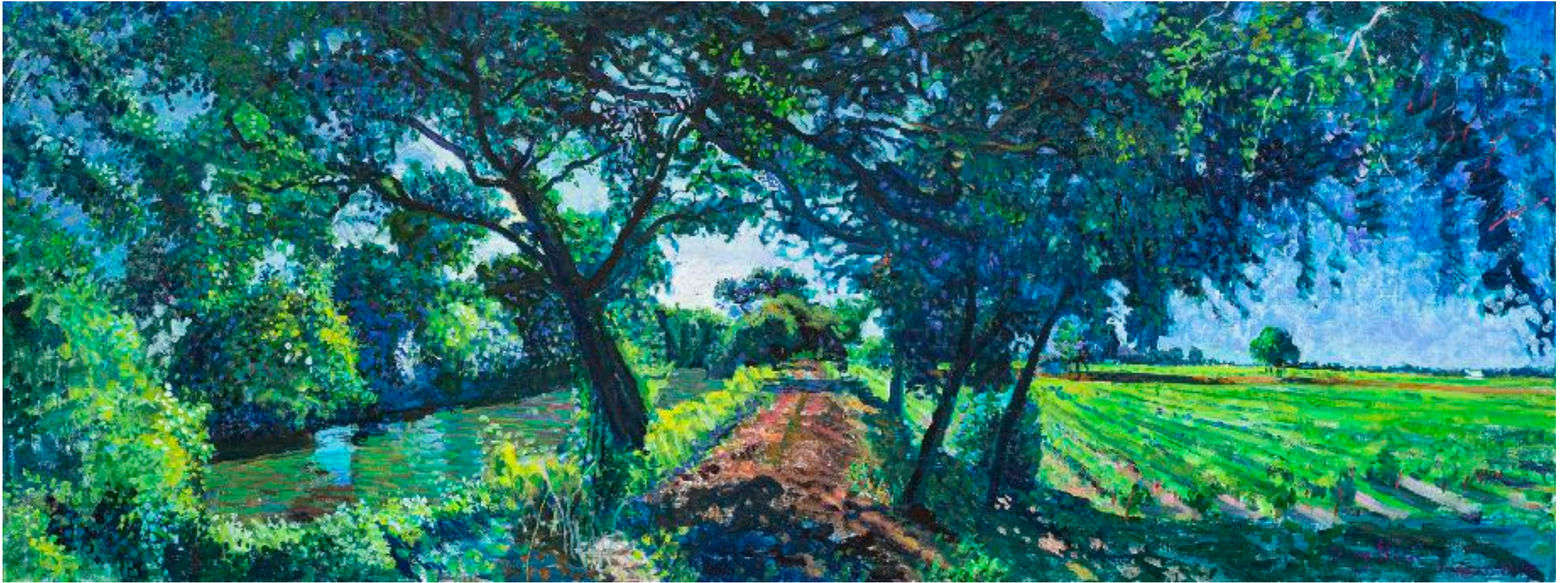
5 Cutting

81"*54", 2020 Oil on Linen

Painting is a self-portrait of the artist's inner world. By looking at the painting, the viewers could tell immediately the way that the artist perceives the world.

In Ning's painting, the world and the nature is always a poem to appraise, a symphony to compose.

Bright hue colors of blue, orange and yellow paint a symphony of an autumn orchard in Delta. As colorful and beautiful as the artist inner world.



6 Vinery by River

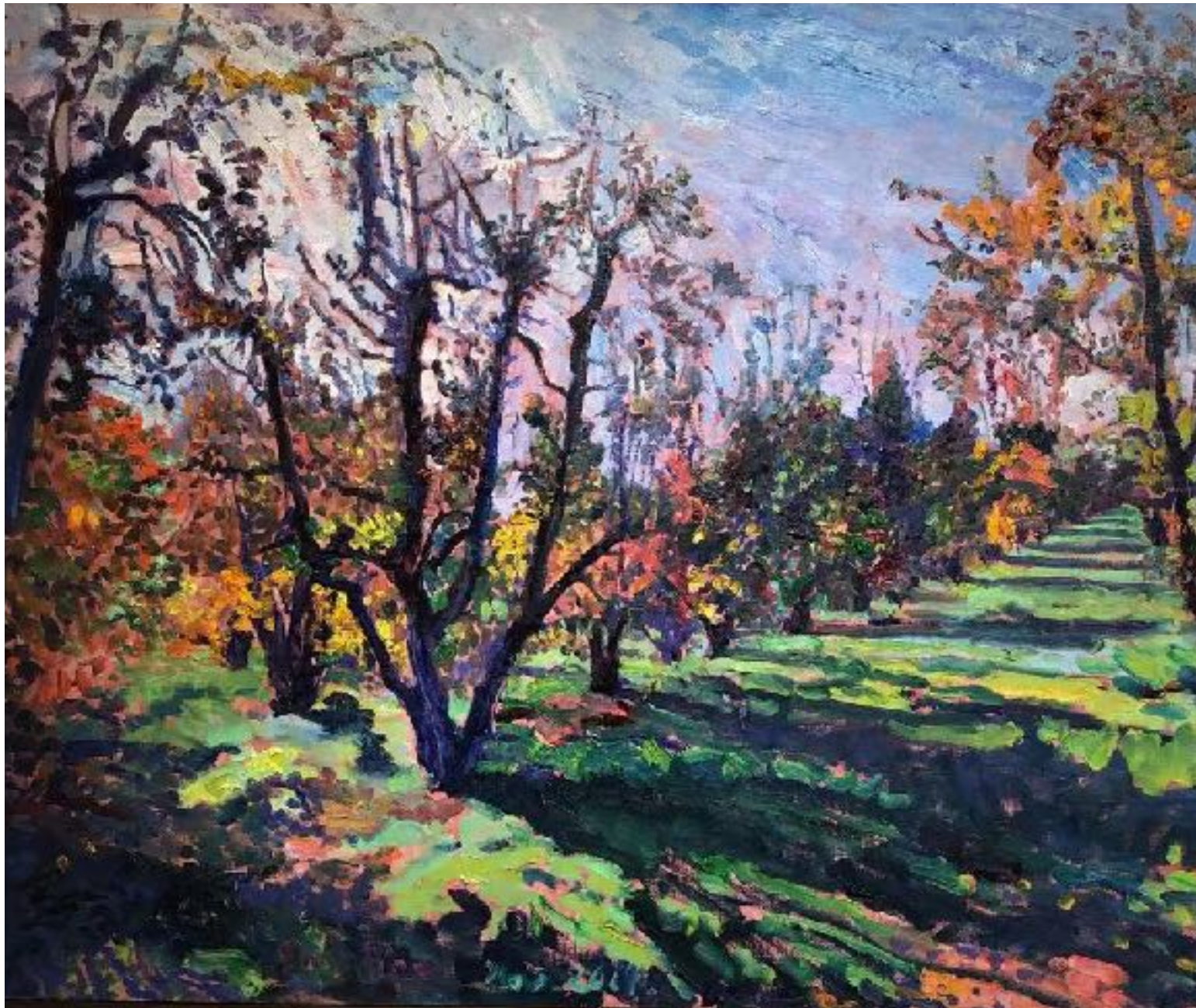
41" * 110"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

This painting depicts a private road in a vinery by the river. The panorama enables the viewer to walk into the painting, along the path, to the far end of the road.

Along the road, are the old wild oak trees which are unique in Delta. The artist uses Chinese calligraphy techniques to paint the trunk and the branches of the tree, to express the energy of the wild.

The painting can also be appreciated in three separate paintings, the left, the middle, and the right part of the painting. Each compartment provides a different tone yet in combination, they construct a harmony.



7 Pear Orchard In Autumn

30" * 36"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

Pear orchard is one of Ning Hou's favorite themes in his painting. Having lived in California Delta for over 30 years, he depicted his favorite subjects in every season - spring, autumn, summer and winter. To him, every orchard, each tree has its own beauty.

This painting depicts a pear orchard in autumn near Locke. The combination of orange and green gives an instant feeling of autumn. The painter didn't paint the sun on canvas, leaving the hint of the shadow on the ground for the viewers to discover.



8 Labor

48" * 40"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

The man in the painting has been working on this farm for 80 years. Now, over 100 years old, he is still working on the farm to pick fruits. His life is tied with this land and the Delta area. He is one of those, who immigrated to California when they were young, and worked here for the rest of their life.

The painter expressively paints a purple stripe at the left side of the painting, to express his love resides with the land at Delta. The color of violet symbolizes human emotions of this painting.



9 Pear Harvesting

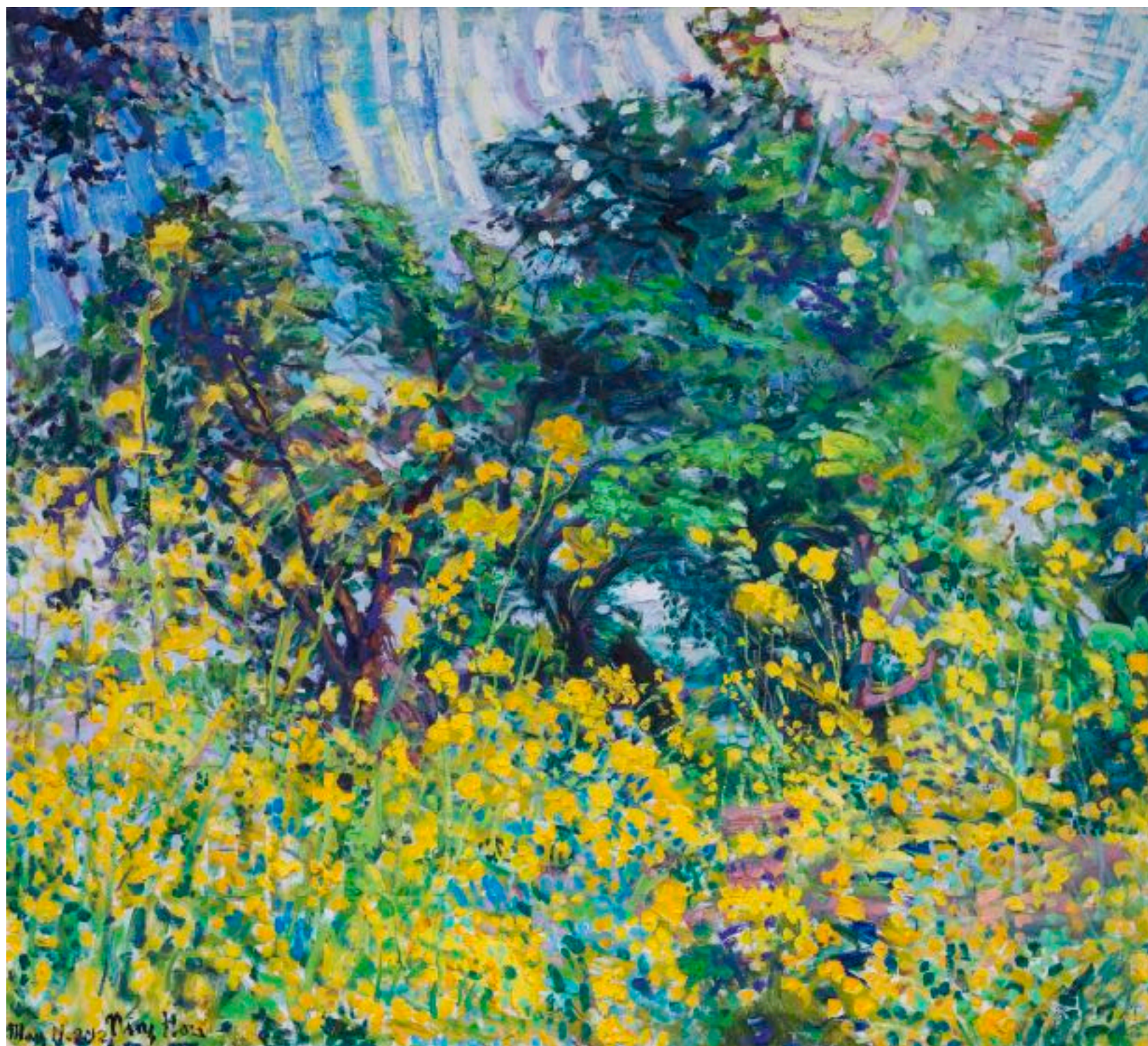
54" * 72"

NING HOU, 2018 Oil on Linen

The expressive brush strokes, firm and full of energy, construct an exuberant pear harvesting scene in Delta.

The close look of the tree provides an opportunity to draw attention to the pears - multi-color in one brush stroke adding a flamboyant tone to the painting(i.e., pear at the bottom left).

When looking at the painting in details, you will also find it a brilliant abstract painting with dancing lines and variegated colors.



10 Delta Virgin Land

72"*80"

NING HOU, 2012 Oil on Linen

This painting depicts a scene of an early spring in Delta. Bright yellow radish flowers, with green oak trees, layers of sun, paints an idyll poem of Delta's beauty. All of sudden, everything wakes up in spring, like a waltz in harmony.



11 Cherry Orchard

79" * 120"

NING HOU, 2017 Oil on Linen

This Plein Air cherry orchard painting was started in 2016 and was completed in 2017.

The use of green, red and orange color depicts a vibrant cherry harvest in Walnut Grove, California.



12 Sinking City

48" * 59"

NING HOU, 1999 Oil on Linen

This is one of Ning Hou's early paintings in Locke. Locke was built in 1915 by Chinese immigrants to help build the Central Pacific Railroad and later on to work in the farmlands in Delta. It became a thriving Chinese community in 1930s with its own schools, post office, restaurants, grocery markets and hotels. Locke began to decline after World War II. There are less than 100 residents nowadays in Locke. This painting depicts this decaying town of Locke, yet is the Florence to the painter.



13 Safa Flower

60" * 120"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

This oil painting represents ultimate immersion into a landscape of safa flowers in California Delta.

The painting can be appreciated at different distances--10 feet away for the vast view and a close look for the details.

"The challenge for this painting is the balance between the details of the flower and the whole flower field, the individual and the group." by Ning Hou

This painting was completed on Sept 11th, 2020 for the memorial of 911.



14 Cow From Bath

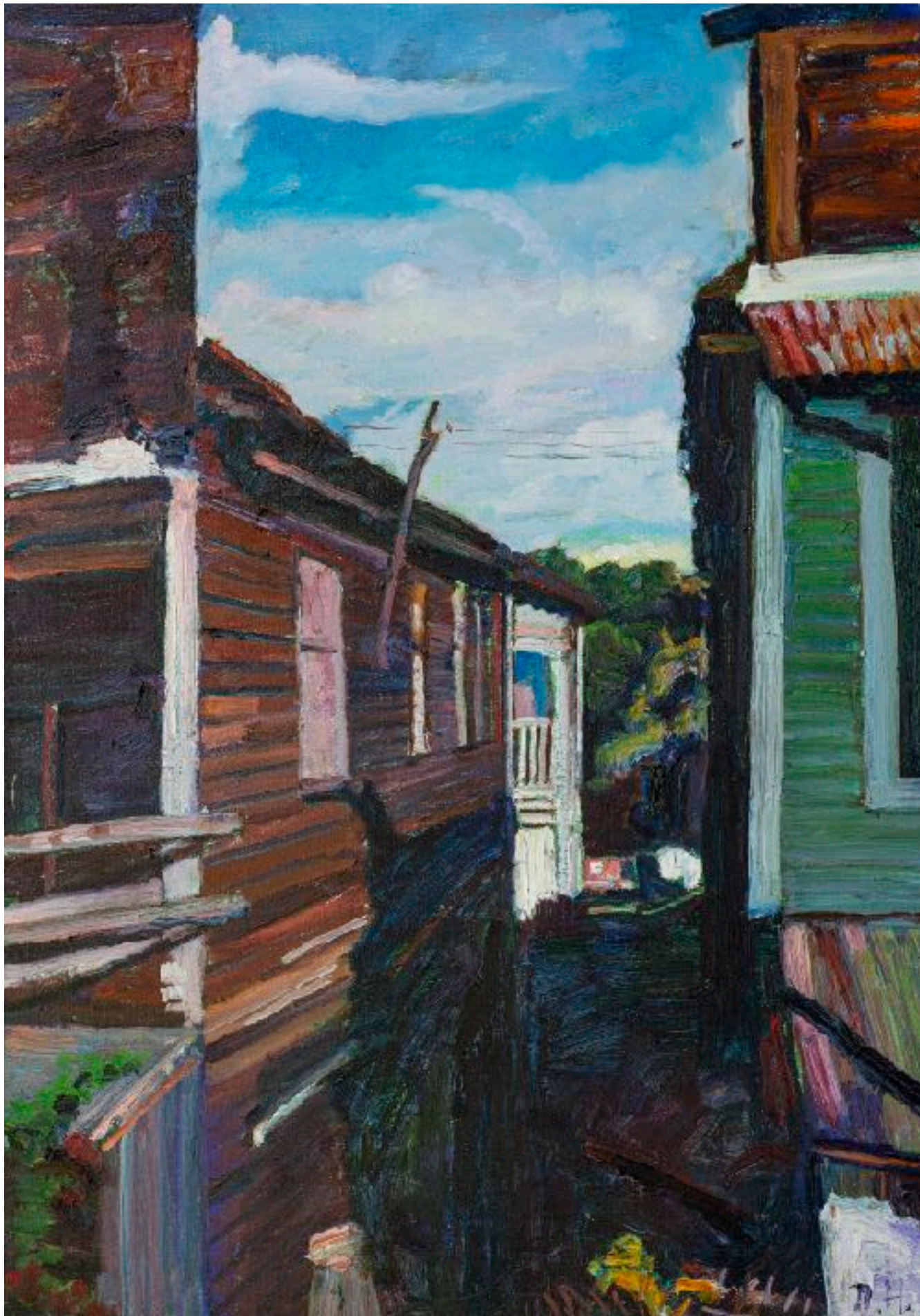
30" * 35"

NING HOU, 2015 Oil on Linen

Pasture raised cow at Birds Landing, Rio Vista.

It is great to look at this painting from a distance of 12 feet. The viewer will see the dark blue and violet color from the cow's body which gives a feeling of wet cow, coming out from a bath, with its body shining under the sun.

Ning Hou, the painter, uses layers of color on the cow's head to depict the look of the cow when she sees a stranger human being.



15 Locke Alley

38" * 27"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

There is no such thing called AMBIGUOUS in Ning's painting. He uses decisive and expressive brushstrokes in his paintings to convey his emotion.

On the right side of canvas is the newly re-painted green building, on the left is the traditional 'Locke' style two- storey boarding house. The blue sky in the middle forms a shape of a chopper, cutting Locke into two separate pieces, old and new.



16 Pear Blossom

45" * 53"

NING HOU, 2012 Oil on Linen

This painting depicts one of the oldest pear orchard in Delta. Unusual composition of the tree and the wire sculpture like, free-of-constraint brushstrokes expresses a vital and intense energy. Thick paints on the branches and flowers emphasize this vital energy.



17 Wheat Field

47" * 60"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

Is this painting black & white? Yes and no. Please have a close look at the wheat. Can you see something different?

Trace of burnt umber and indigo on canvas gives subtle, unnoticeable difference, yet adding the richness of color to the painting. It has rich color behind the pure black and white. So do our lives.

Decisive brushstroke on the stems and the fringes of the wheat adds the energy of the painting.

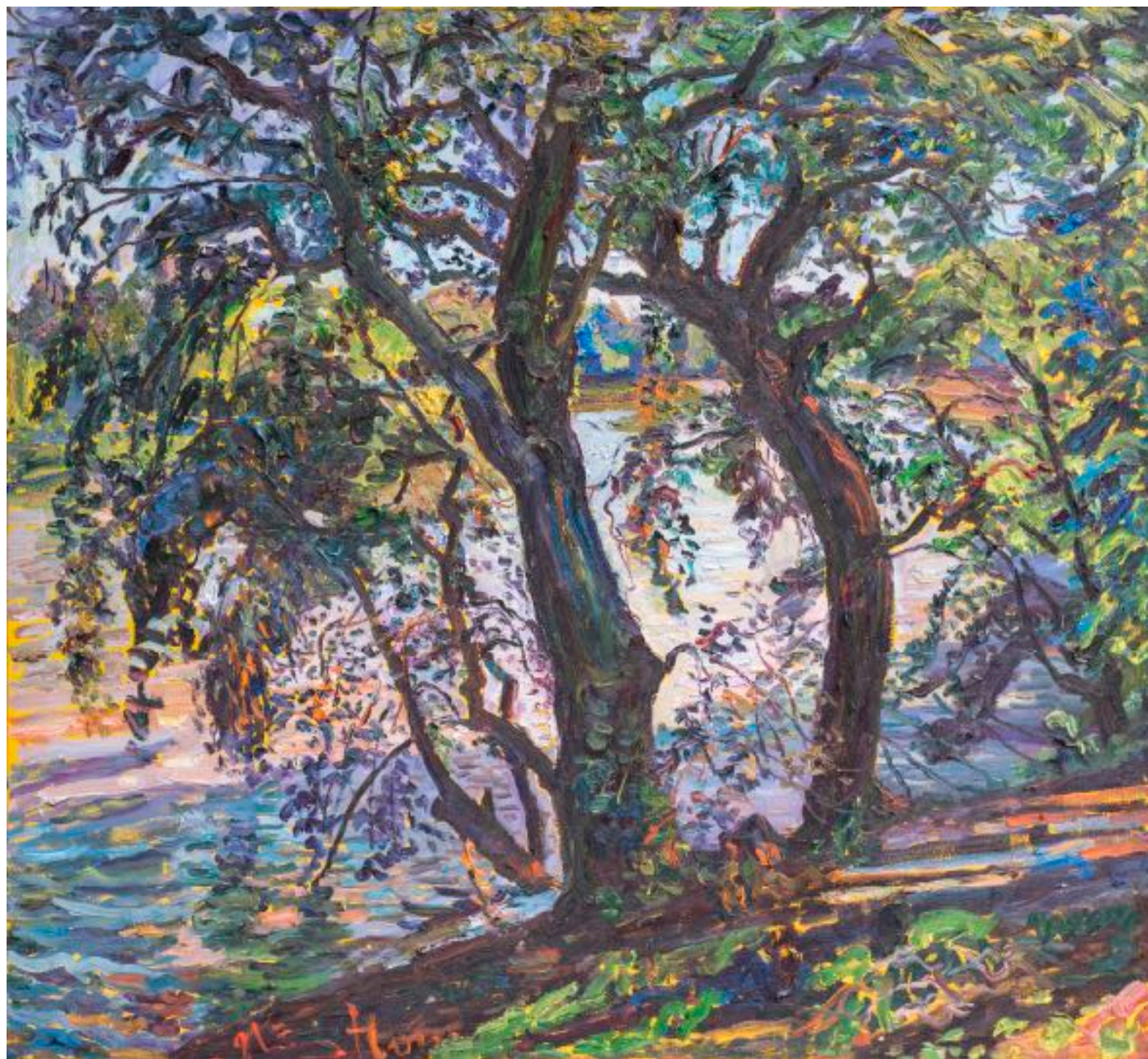


18 Cherry

36" * 36"

NING HOU, 2017 Oil on Linen

A close look of the cherry tree.



19 Delta Riverside

46" * 50"

NING HOU, 2005 Oil on Linen

Expressive, bold brushstrokes combined with contrasting colors depict an old tree with energy.

The highlight of this painting is bark of the tree. When zooming in, each compartment forms an individual abstract painting. The artist's technique of using multicolors in one brushstroke adds the richness. The volume of oil paints used on canvas gives the depth of the painting, hence it is a Relief rather than painting on canvas.



20 Pruning

26" * 39"

NING HOU, 2013 Oil on Linen

The color of orange, yellow and green left with the viewers an instant impression of an early autumn orchard.

This painting depicts a specific scene of the pruning workers who always listen to music while they are working, and walking cheerfully as if they are strolling on the moon. Warm tone of colors in the painting and the motion of the characters deliver a cheerful tone as if there is no burden on shoulder, no suffer in life.



21 Barn With Car

20" * 22"

NING HOU, 2000 Oil on Linen

The artist portrayed two paintings of the barn - a barn with a car (in 2000), and a close look of the barn (in 2007). Both of these two paintings depict a tranquil scene with Dutch barn on the farm. It seems, on the painting, nothing has changed over years.



22 Red Pears

33"*27"

NING HOU, 2011 Oil on Linen

This still-life painting has a dominate color of various red and green. Painted under fluorescent light, the pears as well as the background carpet display a cold tint.



23 Peach Orchard Blossom

40" * 46"

NING HOU, 2009 Oil on Linen

This painting is a Plein Air at Yuba City. It depicts a scene of peach blossom, with young peach trees stretching out their branches to the sky.

The large proportion of sky on canvas makes the painting breathable - the spaces for the tree to grow and the spaces for the viewer to see.



24 Delta State Park

37" * 53"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

Sometimes, a realistic painting can be very inspiring.

This painting depicts a trail along Highway 160 with serenity. Sunlight casts shadows on the path through green leaves. Trees and branches at the center of the painting forms a Cathedral of Forest. Viewers can imagine himself/herself standing at the far end of the trail, looking up through the greenish leaves, searching for the sun.

Unlike the pointillism techniques that used by Impressionists, wood block carving techniques are used in this painting. This wood block carving brushstrokes embodied with energy.



25 Sandhill Crane in the Morning

31" * 80"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

This painting depicts a morning scene of sandhill cranes foraging in field. Silhouettes of the sandhill crane draw people's attention to the painting, yet with the sandhill crane scattering around the canvas, the viewers' eyes will follow. The reflection of the sandhill crane adds a repetitional rhythm to the painting. Purple, violet, and orange color capture the glory of the sun casting on earth before sunrise.



26 Sandhill Crane in the Evening

31" * 80"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

Every creature follows the rhythm of the earth. Sandhill crane is no exception. Every year they converge at the California Delta. This painting depicts a scene in autumn, with sandhill cranes riding autumn winds, dancing in the mud.

The motion captured in the painting gives a live show of the sandhill cranes, putting them on stage under the spotlight.



27 Haystack

24" * 34"

NING HOU, 2000 Oil on Linen

This painting depicts an autumn scene with golden haystack before sunset. The sky has a pink-violet tint which gives a tranquil feel of the scene. The golden haystack amplified the glory of harvest in Delta.



28 Peach Blossom

8" * 9"

NING Hou, 2021 Oil on Linen

Plein Air at a peach orchard in Walnut Gove, February 2021.

Orchards and blossoms are a major inspirations for Ning's painting.



29 Grandpa to Meeting

50" * 70"

NING HOU, 2008

Oil on Linen, Hand-primed

Painting is a powerful tool to convey stories and history.

This black and white painting depicts a scene that an old man floating a boat on the river. The real story behind this painting is that the man was going to attend a business meeting in Sacramento. Due to the heavy rain and flooding, he had to take a boat from his home to Sacramento. This painting illustrates people's life in Delta area back in 1920s, which may be very different from nowadays.

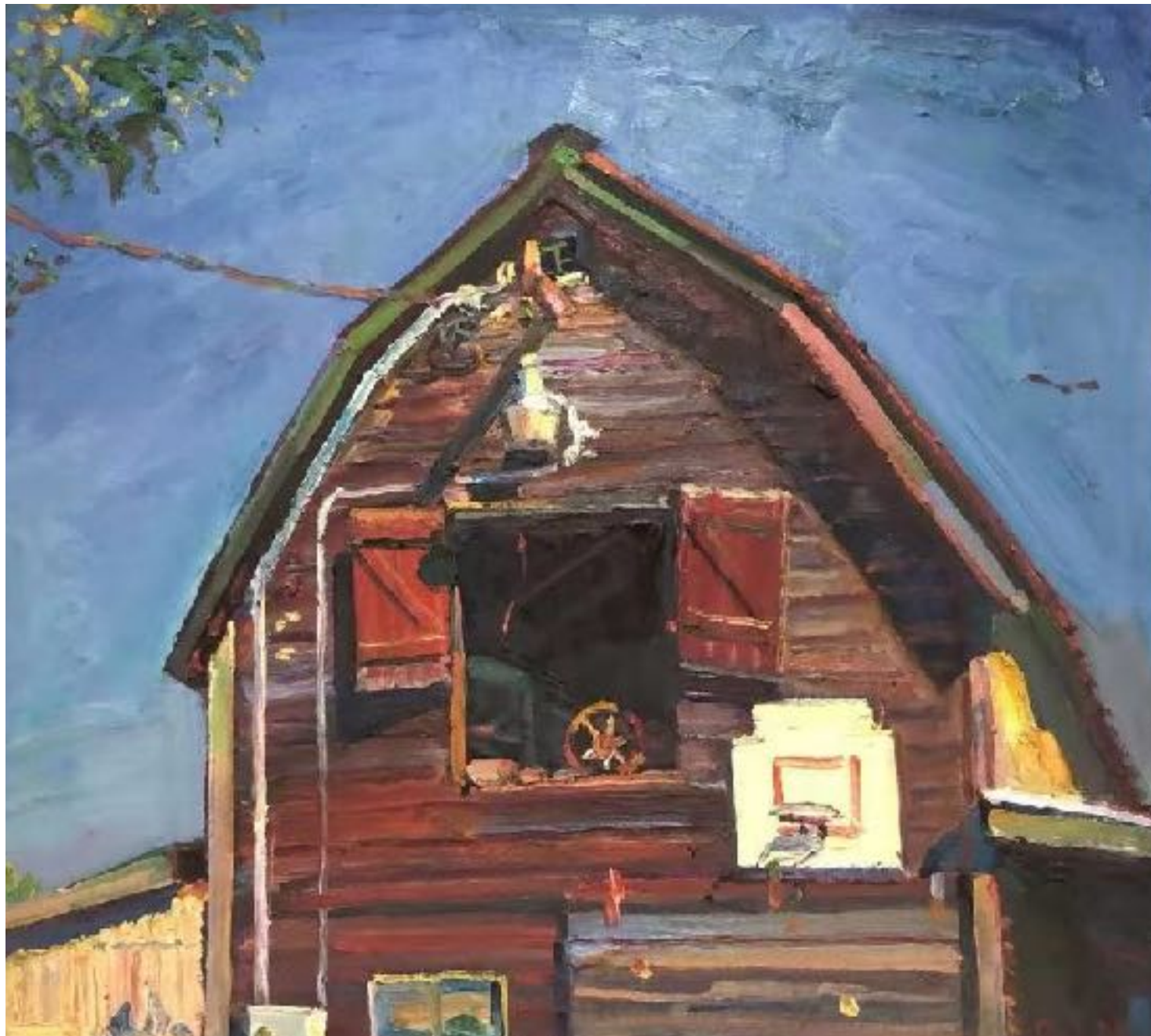


30 Orchard In Winter

18"*22"

NING HOU, 1994 Oil on Linen

This painting is one of Ning Hou's early paintings in his career. Colors on canvas is monotonous compared to his later works. Yet the essence of love and passion of life stays the same.



31 Barn

20"*22"

NING HOU, 2007 Oil on Linen

The painting captures the moment of a sunny summer day, an eagle is circling around in the sky. The painting doesn't include any figure in it, but the backboard give a hint of the hobby of the barn owner.



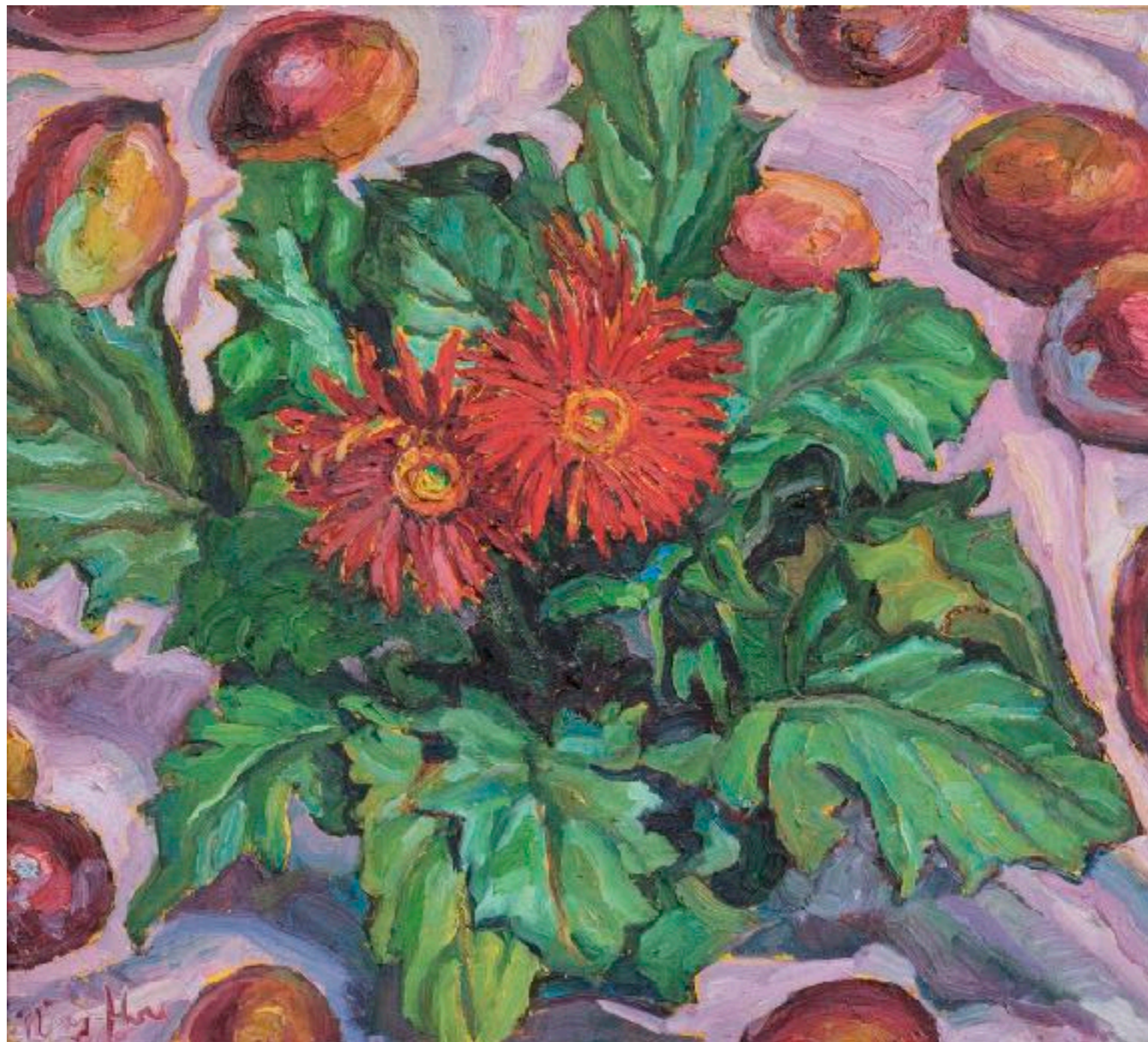
32 Still Life Lily

37"*26"

NING HOU, 2005 Oil on Linen

Ning Hou painted this painting on his birthday as the birthday gift to himself. Over years, he painted various subjects on his birthday as special birthday gifts to himself.

White lily flower on this painting represents Ning's love to his wife, Patricia Conway. Red peach at the left corner represents Ning Hou. In Chinese culture, peach is a symbol of longevity.



33 Gerbera

20" * 22"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

This is a still-life painting for two tropical objects - gerbera and mango. The painter uses warm colors of orange, blue, and green to deliver a tropical feel. Yet with a close look, viewers may notice something different - cold colors are used as the highlight of the flower and the shadow casted on the table. This painting captures the subtle color temperature changes.



34 Iris

26"*30"

NING HOU, 2014 Oil on Linen



35 State Park

30" * 36"

NING HOU, 2005 Oil on Linen

Delta is a getaway paradise for Californians with vast waterways. This painting depicts a cloudy day on the Sacramento River. The large proportion of the sky to the waterways leads viewers' eyes to the swirling cloud. Subtle color changes on the river depict shadows of the tree under the sun.

Violet is the artist's signature color. In this painting, he uses violet and blue to create an atmosphere as if the wind is whispering at your ear, the sun is hugging you gently.



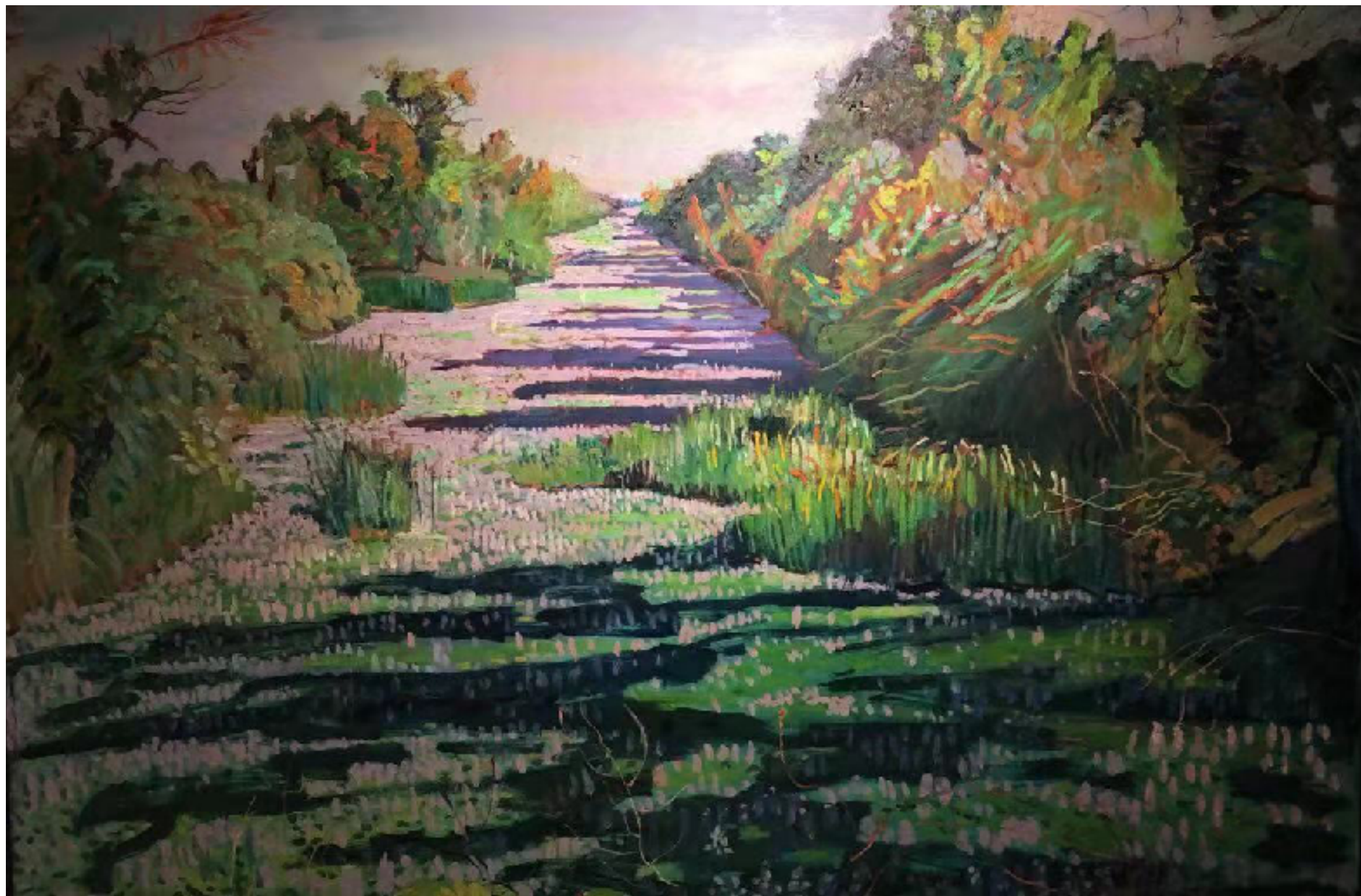
36 Roaster

28" * 37"

NING HOU, 2021 Oil on Linen

This oil painting portraits a roaster full of vigor. When having a close look at the roaster, viewers will notice the richness of the color - red, green, lemon, violet, orchard yellow. The painter applied five layers of paints on canvas, creating a visual effect of the fur shining under the sun.

This painting demonstrates Ning Hou's unique painting technique - Relief Painting. He applied layers of oil paints on canvas. For each layer, he reduced the areas of oil paints applied on canvas, so that the underneath color from previous layer could come out. By reducing color on each layer, Ning constructed a Relief on oil paints, with depth and richness of color. It also helped to sculpture the subject, creating an impression of depth and solidity.



37 Water Hyacinth

64" * 80"

NING HOU, 2004 Oil on Linen

This painting was completed in 2004 when water hyacinth was removed from Sacramento river. The composition of the painting composes geometric shape of four triangles which meets at the vanish point. The shadow on the river forms negative space of the painting, while others could be seen as positive space.

Year 2004 is a turning point in Ning's painting style and techniques. After suffering meningitis for almost ten years over three surgeries, he finally recovered. After the last surgery, Ning could distinguish different shades of violet and even see some of ultra violet on the spectrum, hence starting to use vast violet in his painting since then.



38 Pear Orchard In Spring

38" * 108"

NING HOU, 2020 Oil on Linen

This painting has a tint of watercolor, although it is painted with oil. Clear sky with light tone colors – light teal, light ultramarine blue, peach, light lemon – depicts a wash of sky after rain.

Contrasting to the 'soft' tone of the sky, the calligraphy-like- brushstrokes endows strength and energy of the painting. It is the war on canvas, between soft and hard, and the final harmony it achieved, that makes the beauty of this work.



39 Pear Orchard After Rain

61" * 80"

NING HOU, 2008 Oil on Linen

Stay 8 feet away from the painting. Feel the energy of the painting.

This painting depicts a spring pear orchard after rain in Locke. One of the unique features of this painting is the brushstrokes - the vibrant brushstrokes at sky gives a feeling of swirling moving air after rain. The viewers can even feel the moving cloud. The painter applied tradition Chinese calligraphy technique ,adding energy to the tree, as if they are growing inch by inch, to the sky.

The color of violet and dark blue of the orchard gives the painting of ' wet ' feeling, precisely depicts the scene after rain.



40 Locke

20"*24"

NING HOU, 2018 Oil on Linen

Violet is a color which has strong emotion tied to it. In this painting, the artist uses violet and its complementary color, yellow (lemon), to create an intense emotion. The emotion that the artist resonates with Locke.

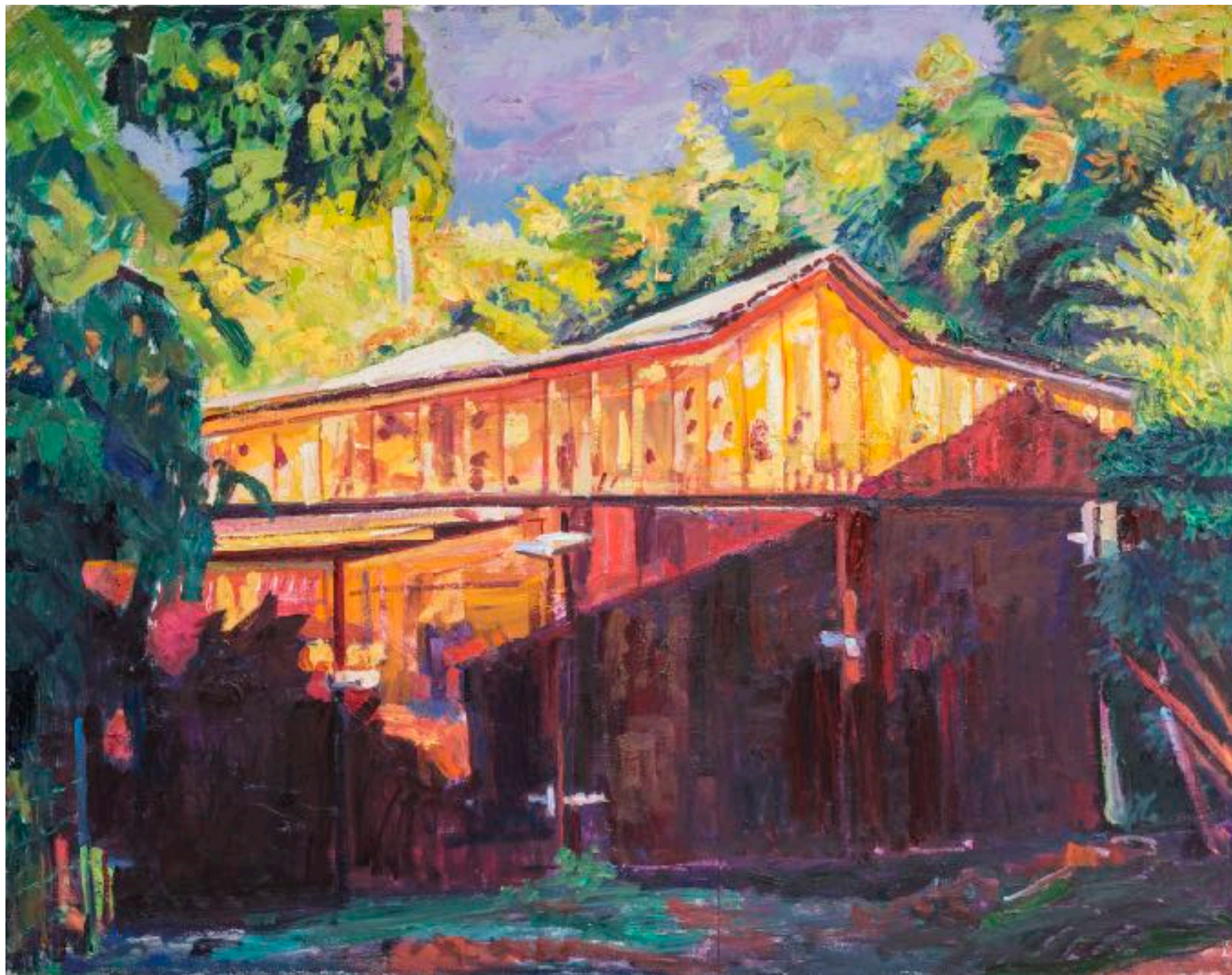


41 Red Pear Tree

44" * 36"

NING HOU, 2019 Oil on Linen

This is a portrait of a red pear tree. The painter uses bright hue colors of Prussian blue, green, orange and red, illustrating a tree with vigor and strength.



42 Xiaomin Studio

48" * 60"

NING HOU, 2014

Oil on Linen, Hand-primed

This painting portrays a tranquil scene with studio. The artist exercises different shades of brown and green on canvas to illustrate the contrast in color temperature - warm colors under the sun, cold colors in the shade. To name a few, different shades of brown used in this painting include yellow ochre, raw sienna, burnt sienna, earth yellow and earth orange etc.



43 Fish

36" * 48"

NING HOU, 2011 Oil on Burlap

This is a still-life of three Mandarin Fish, caught in the streams in Delta area.

Three fish compose a triangle (Δ , Delta) , like dancing in a circle, adding the rhythm of the painting. Multicolors on the fish reflect the light casting on the fish scale. The painter uses viridian green, yellow orchard and cobalt to create a 'wet' feeling of the fish.



44 Cherry Blossom

30" * 40"

NING HOU, 2001 Oil on Linen

Beautiful white cherry blossom with a smalt tint. The color of violet, blue and green on bark at the right side of the painting, somehow creates an impression of Chinese ink.

It paints an idyll of cherry blossom in spring in Walnut Grove, California. When poring over, the viewer will notice that each flower is an individual sculpture – spiraling in wind.



45 Water Lilies

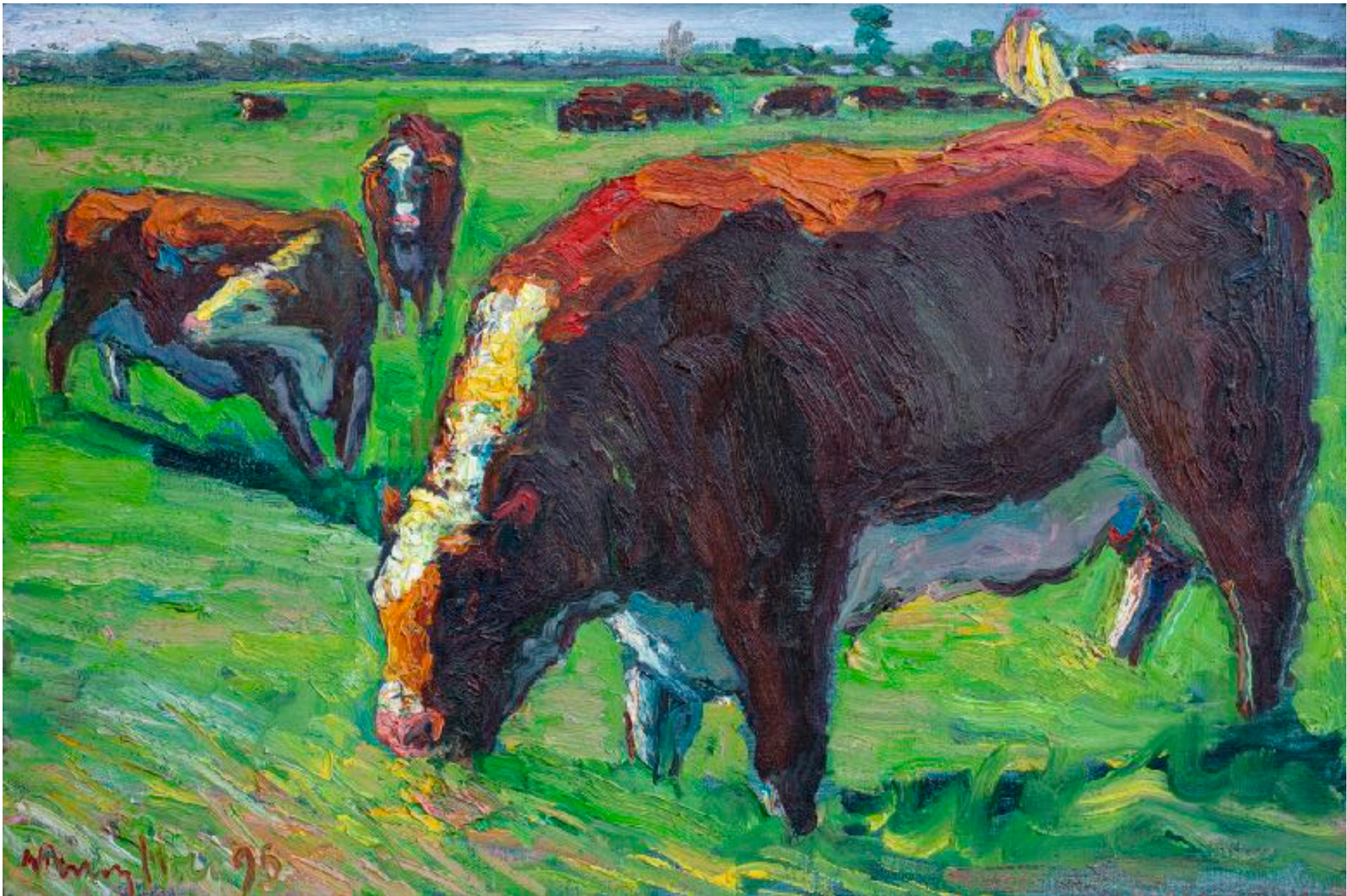
36"*71"

NING HOU, 2017

Oil on Linen, Hand-primed

This painting depicts an afternoon scene of a water lilies' pond at Auburn, California. The color of green, red and pink may gives an immediate impression of the traditional Chinese watercolor painting. In fact, the painter uses grey violet as the first layer of color base, hence give depth of the painting.

The green water lilies' leaf and the shadow of the water comprise a contrast between positive and negative space.



46 Bull

20" * 30"

NING HOU, 1995 Oil on Linen

Distinct, decisive, and vigorous brushstrokes on this painting illustrate the artist's energy inside. This oil painting was painted in 1995 when Ning was in his 30s. Two cows and a bull in the foreground tell an interesting story.



47 Still-Life Lobster

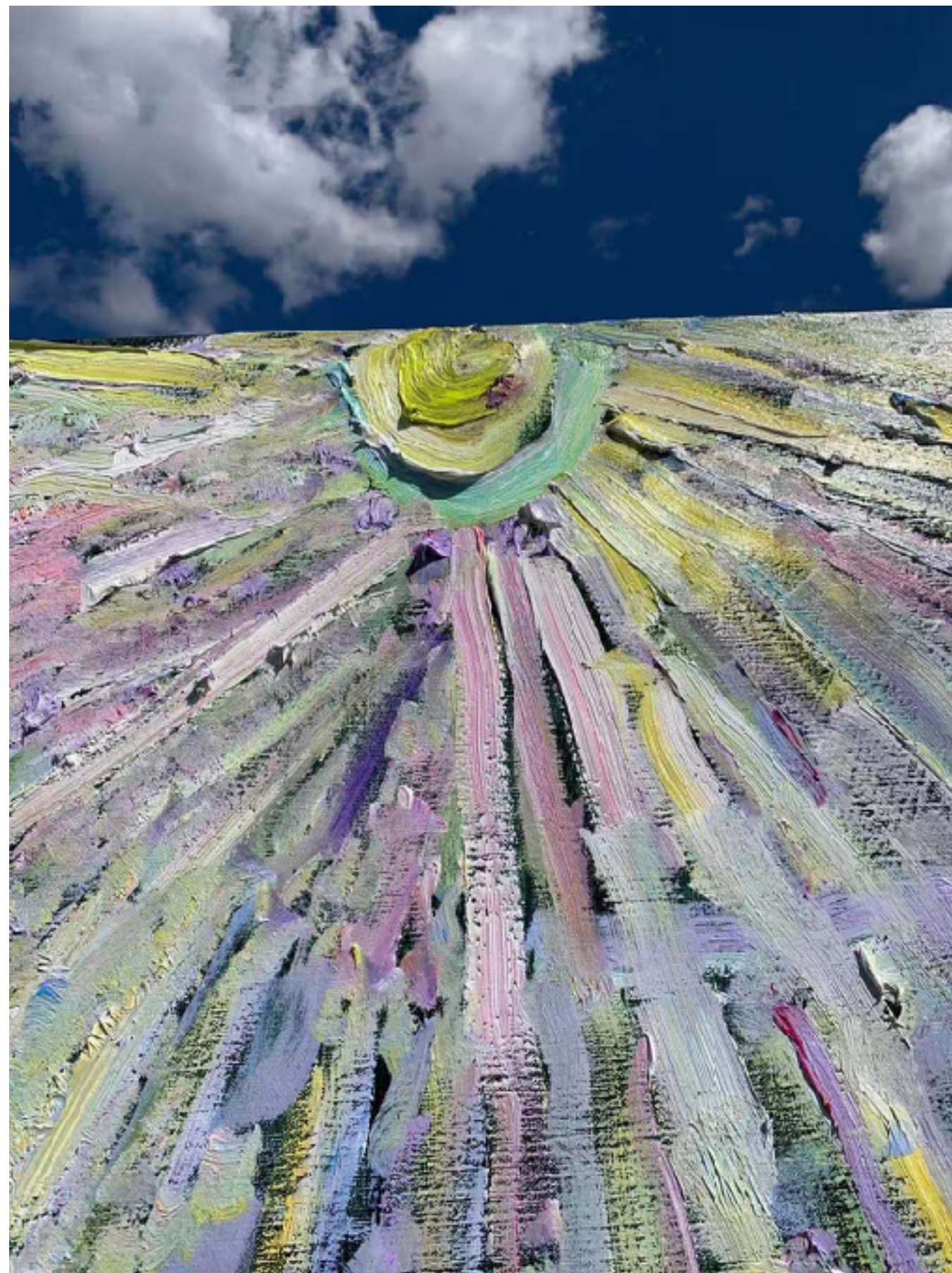
32" * 40"

NING HOU, 2005 Oil on Linen

This still-life depicts a scene in the kitchen - two red lobsters, three bulbs of garlic, ready to cook.

This painting expresses the artist's unique painting technique - using multi contrasting colors to construct a vivid subject.

Having a close look at the "white" tablecloth, you will notice that it is not pure white. The painter uses multi colors – cobalt violet, blue violet, lemon, green, indigo, grey - providing the richness and the depth of the color. The same technique applied to illustrate the shadow of the plate, the inner layer of the bowl, and the back wall.



The End

Photo by Fiona Wang