

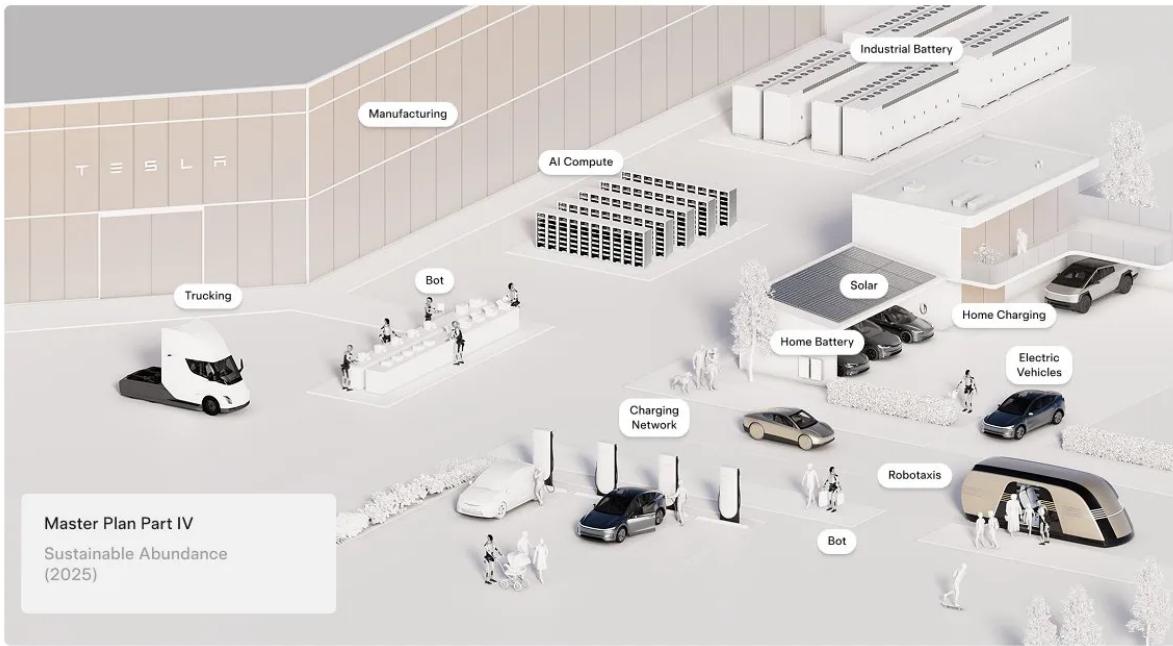
The Sunday Blender

Issue Sep 13, 2025 · Good Old Apple Strikes Back

Tech



The recent **Apple** Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) in 2025, titled “Awe Dropping,” unveiled a new lineup of hardware and software. A major announcement was the iPhone Air, touted as Apple’s thinnest smartphone ever. The new iPhone 17 series, including the Pro and Pro Max, were also revealed with upgrades like the A19 Pro chip, an enhanced camera system with a new Center Stage feature, and a more durable screen. Additionally, Apple introduced the AirPods Pro 3 with live translation and heart-rate sensing, along with the Apple Watch Series 11, SE 3, and Ultra 3, which now have advanced health features like blood pressure monitoring. The event also highlighted the new operating systems for all of these devices, including iOS 26 and watchOS 26, with a new design called “Liquid Glass” and improved Apple Intelligence features.



Elon Musk has recently revealed **Tesla**'s “Master Plan Part 4,” a radical shift in the company’s long-term vision. This new roadmap moves Tesla’s core focus from electric vehicles to artificial intelligence and humanoid robotics. Musk stated that humanoid robots, like the company’s Optimus line, could one day account for 80% of Tesla’s value, surpassing its automotive business. The plan, which Musk calls “sustainable abundance,” envisions a future where AI and robots handle most of the world’s labor, leading to a new era of prosperity. The company has set ambitious production goals for Optimus, aiming to produce thousands of units in 2025 and hundreds of thousands by the end of the decade. This aggressive strategy positions Tesla not as a car company but as an AI and robotics-first company at the center of a new trillion-dollar market.

On September 4, 2025, **President Trump** hosted a high-profile AI dinner at the White House with top tech executives. The event, which included **Meta**’s Mark Zuckerberg, **Apple**’s Tim Cook, **OpenAI**’s Sam Altman, and **Google**’s Sundar Pichai, aimed to showcase American innovation in artificial intelligence. During the dinner, Trump went around the table asking for investment pledges. Zuckerberg and Cook each pledged a staggering \$600 billion in U.S. investments, while others like **Microsoft** and Google promised significant spending. The dinner also signaled a major shift in the relationship between Silicon Valley and the administration. Notably absent from the guest list was Elon Musk, a former ally who has recently had a falling out with the President. This dinner highlights the administration’s focus on securing U.S. leadership in the global AI race by collaborating directly with tech titans.

Global

The final **Nissan GT-R** (R35) production has sadly ended after an impressive 18-year run, with the last car, a T-Spec model, rolling off the line on August 26, 2025. This decision was a response to strict global emissions and noise regulations. The GT-Rs legacy, however, is immense. It earned its fame as a “supercar killer,” offering incredible performance at a more accessible price. Its advanced all-wheel-drive system and twin-turbo V6 made it a technological marvel. The car’s mythical status



Figure 1: Trump AI dinner



Figure 2: Nissan GT-R

was further cemented in popular culture, especially in Japan's manga series. In **Initial D**, the **R32 GT-R**, nicknamed "Godzilla", was portrayed as a nearly unbeatable force on mountain roads, driven by the leader of the NightKids racing team. Nissan has hinted at a future electrified successor, but for now, "Godzilla"'s reign has come to a quiet end.



Chinese EV maker **Nio** has reportedly incurred cumulative losses exceeding 130 billion yuan since its founding, though its recent financial reports show a narrowing of losses as the company pursues profitability. In a new strategic move, Nio has confirmed a collaboration with the British supercar brand **McLaren**, a deal facilitated by a shared major shareholder, Abu Dhabi's CYVN Holdings. Nio will provide technology, including its electric vehicle platform and battery solutions, to McLaren, a partnership that is already generating a new stream of revenue for the company and signals its shift from just a car maker to a technology provider.

Economy & Finance

Oracle's shares recently surged by over 35% in a single day, marking their biggest one-day jump since 1992. This dramatic rally was sparked by the company's announcement of a series of multibillion-dollar deals to provide cloud infrastructure for artificial intelligence (AI) to major tech companies like **OpenAI**, **Nvidia**, and **Meta**. The company's massive contract backlog, which quadrupled to an estimated \$455 billion, signals strong, long-term growth and positions Oracle as a key player in the booming AI ecosystem. The stock surge was so significant that co-founder **Larry Ellison** briefly surpassed Elon Musk to become the world's richest person.



Pop Mart's stock recently plunged nearly 7%, triggered by investor concerns over demand for its popular **Labubu** collectibles. This concern stems from a significant drop in the secondary market, where resale premiums for the new mini Labubu dolls have fallen by as much as 24% from their peak. The decline is attributed to increased product supply, which has diluted the scarcity value of the toys. The stock market reaction reflects a recalibration of investor sentiment, balancing the company's prior growth with rising concerns about product saturation.

Nature & Environment

According to the China Meteorological Administration (CMA), **China** experienced its hottest summer since records began in 1961, with a national average temperature reaching 22.31C from June to August. This new record narrowly surpassed the previous high set in 2024. The heat was particularly intense in the country's south, but even the capital, Beijing, saw temperatures approach 40C in June. **Shanghai** endured 27 days in August with temperatures above 35C, a new record for the city.

Science

A **NASA** news release from September 10, 2025, announced that the Perseverance Mars rover has discovered a potential biosignature. A rock sample from the "Bright Angel" formation in Jezero Crater contains organic carbon, sulfur, and other elements that could have sustained microbial life. The presence of specific mineral patterns, dubbed "leopard spots," suggests a "fingerprint for microbial life," although these minerals can also form without biological processes. This groundbreaking find, located in some of the mission's youngest sedimentary rocks, suggests Mars



Figure 3: Hot Summer in Shanghai

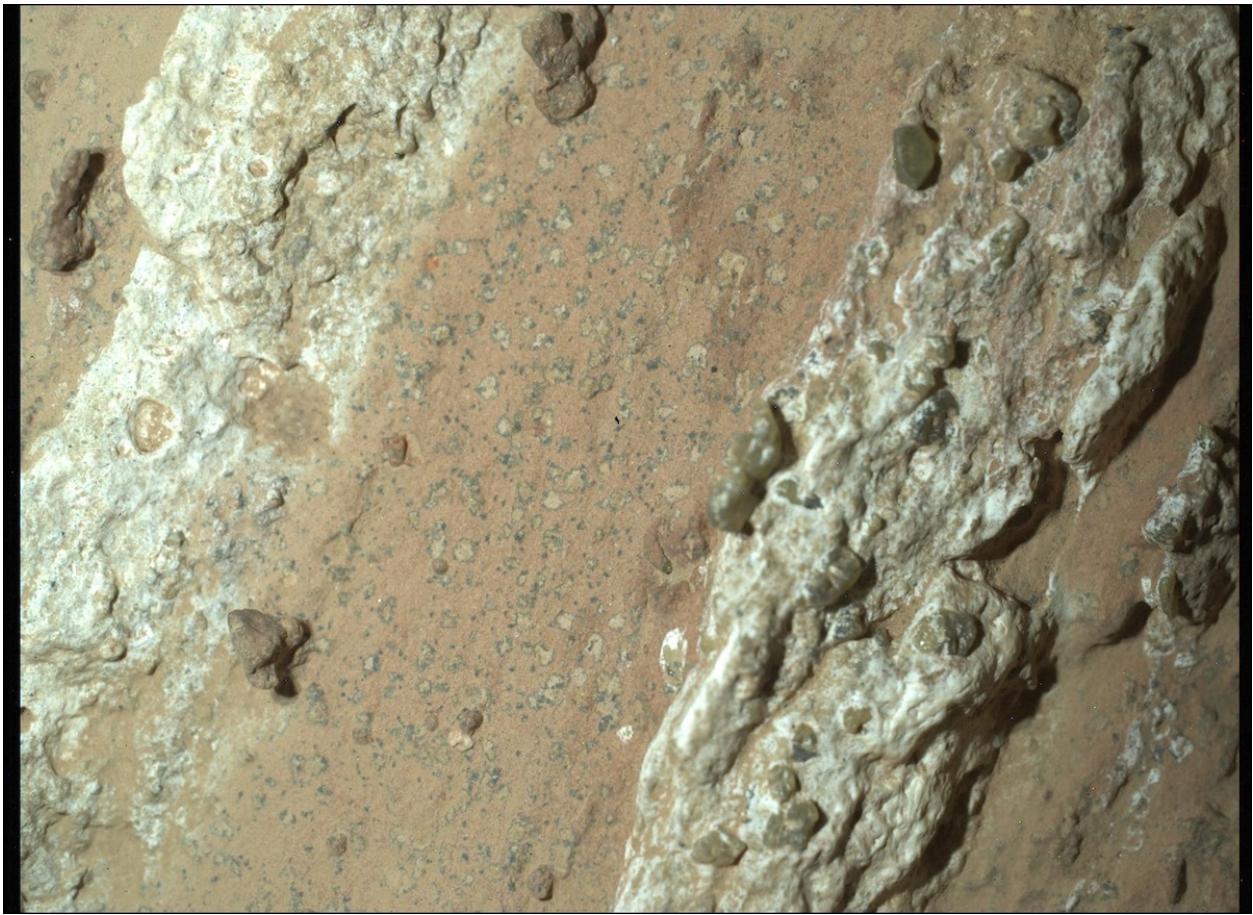


Figure 4: life on Mars

may have been habitable for longer than previously believed. The data will now be further analyzed by the scientific community.



Figure 5: Hellfire on UAP

A whistleblower provided a video from a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone to the US Congress, which was shown at a hearing on September 9, 2025. The footage, dated October 30, 2024, shows the drone tracking a glowing orb-like Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) off the coast of Yemen. A Hellfire missile is fired at the object, but instead of being destroyed, the missile appears to bounce off, and the UAP continues its flight. This event has sparked renewed questions about UAP technology and has prompted calls for greater government transparency and further investigation into these phenomena.

Lifestyle, Entertainment & Culture

Teacher's Day is a celebration of educators and their significant contributions to society. While World Teachers' Day is officially recognized by UNESCO ("United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization") on October 5th to commemorate the 1966 signing of a key recommendation on teacher's rights, the observance has a diverse history. In the United States, the modern movement for a national day was initiated by **Mattye Whyte Woodridge**, an Arkansas teacher whose advocacy led to a proclamation from Congress in 1953. In China, Teachers Day is celebrated on **September 10th**, a date chosen in 1985 to coincide with the start of the academic year and to elevate the teaching profession. This variety of dates reflects a universal appreciation for the vital role teachers play in shaping minds and building a better future.

In the NBA sneaker scene, **Kobe Bryant**'s enduring legacy dominates. Years after his 2020 passing, his Nike signature line topped the 2024-25 season as the most worn, with 136 players lacing up Kobes—outpacing Kevin Durant's 30, Devin Booker's 28, Sabrina Ionescu's 27, and LeBron James' 17. The Kobe 6 Protro, favored for its lightweight agility and ankle support, led with 61 users,



Figure 6: Teacher's Day



Figure 7: Kobe Shoes

especially in Grinch colorways. This reflects Kobe's global impact, inspiring international stars through his innovative designs and work ethic. Nike holds 65% market share, but Kobe's shoes embody timeless excellence on the court.



Figure 8: Cycling across America

At 85 years old, American Robert “Bob” Sanders didn’t just cycle across the country—he conquered it on a standard road bike, a testament to his sheer grit over modern-day enhancements. He embarked on the 3,000-mile “Sanders Challenge,” a journey from San Diego to St. Augustine Beach, which took him 44 days. Supported by his wife and a friend in a trailing vehicle, Bob battled relentless heat and rugged terrain. His unwavering determination earned him a Guinness World Record. After completing the epic journey, he declared with a smile, “I’m glad I did it... I wouldn’t do it again.”

Sports



Figure 9: cycling

The 2025 Vuelta a Espaa, one of the three major grand-slam multi-day cycling races in the world, is heading into its dramatic conclusion, with the general classification (GC) battle intensifying. Pre-race hot favorite, **Jonas Vingegaard** (Team Visma-Lease a Bike), has lived up to the hype and is now wearing the red jersey. He leads his rival by a crucial 40-second margin, a testament to his climbing prowess and tactical brilliance. His closest competitor, **Joo Almeida** (UAE Team Emirates XRG), has been relentless in his pursuit, with the two trading blows on every summit finish. While Vingegaard has been the dominant force on the steep climbs, the likes of **Juan Ayuso** (UAE Team Emirates XRG) have kept the race from becoming a two-man show with two impressive stage wins of his own. The final stages promise a thrilling showdown for the red jersey, leaving fans on the edge of their seats.

In the recent **FIFA World Cup qualifiers**, **Cristiano Ronaldo**, at 40 years old, delivered a history-making performance. In Portugal's 3-2 victory over Hungary, he scored a crucial penalty, which was his 39th goal in World Cup qualifiers. This strike equaled the all-time record for goals in the competition, a milestone previously held solely by Carlos Ruiz of Guatemala. Ronaldo's recent form also includes a two-goal performance in the prior 5-0 win against Armenia. He has scored 141 goals for Portugal and 943 goals in his professional career.



Figure 10: Ronaldo



Norway has been a powerhouse in the recent **FIFA World Cup qualifiers**, topping their group with a perfect record. Their dominant performance culminated in a historic 11-1 victory over **Moldova**, a match where star striker **Erling Haaland** scored an incredible five goals. This massive win has given them a significant goal difference, putting pressure on their main rivals. Additionally, Norway's campaign has seen a convincing 3-0 win against Italy, showcasing their strength against top-tier opposition. The team's clinical finishing and solid defensive play have made them one of the most feared sides in the qualifying stages, demonstrating their strong ambition to return to the World Cup stage.

Luka Doni delivered a masterful 42-point performance to lead **Slovenia** to an 84-77 victory over Italy in the Round of 16 of **FIBA EuroBasket 2025**. Doni was unstoppable from the start, scoring a remarkable 22 points in the first quarter alone. His final stat line was a near-perfect 42 points, 10 rebounds, 1 assist, and 3 steals, securing a double-double and cementing his status as the tournament's most dominant player. The win, which advances Slovenia to the quarterfinals to face Germany, was a hard-fought battle. Italy mounted a late comeback, at one point cutting Slovenia's lead to a single point, but Doni's clutch free throws in the final minute sealed the win. The performance solidifies his place among EuroBasket's all-time great scorers and demonstrates his leadership and ability to carry his team.

This Day in History

Roald Dahl, born on **September 13, 1916**, and passing in 1990, was a British novelist, short-story writer, and screenwriter of Norwegian descent, raised in Wales. Orphaned early, his traumatic schooling fueled stories of plucky kids triumphing over adversity. A WWII pilot for Royal Air Force, injuries shifted him to writing, starting with wartime tales. His iconic children's books—like **Charlie**



Figure 11: Luka Doncic

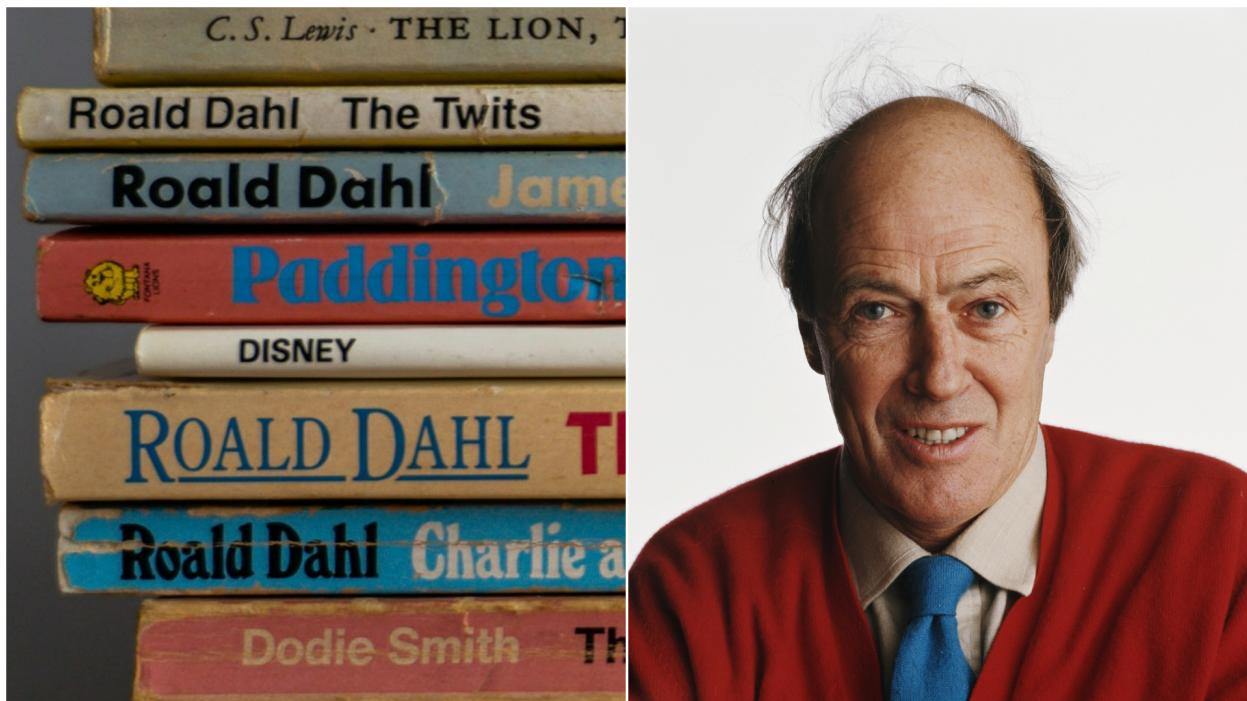
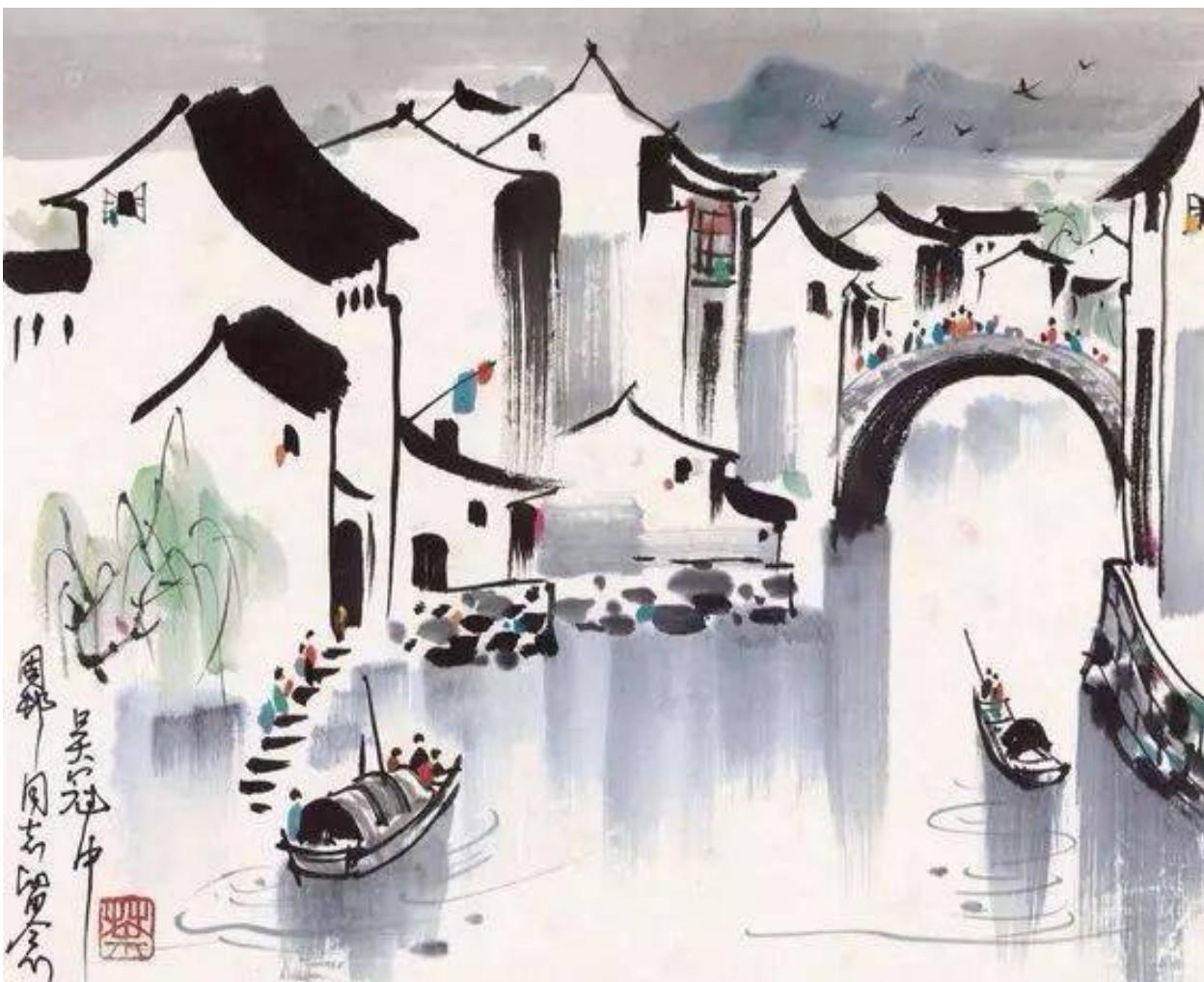


Figure 12: Roald Dahl

and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, and The BFG—mix whimsy, dark humor, and ethics, selling over 300 million copies globally. Dahl reshaped kids' lit by challenging conventions, inspiring films, theater, and education. His legacy persists in pop culture, despite critiques of stereotypes in some works.

Art of the Week



This painting is a classic work by **Wu Guanzhong**, a master of 20th-century Chinese art. Titled “Village by a River,” it exemplifies his unique style that blends traditional Chinese ink wash painting with Western modernism. The work depicts a picturesque Jiangnan-style village, characterized by its whitewashed walls, black-tiled roofs, and winding rivers. Wu’s use of simple, bold lines and a limited color palette of black, gray, and subtle hints of green and red captures the tranquil beauty and architectural harmony of the region. The painting is celebrated for its dynamic composition and its fusion of Eastern and Western aesthetic sensibilities.

Funny

July 06, 2025, While Young Talents Trailblaze AI Frontier, Legendary Icons Write New Chapters



Figure 13: ice cream

June 28, 2025, Flying Without Wings, Seeing Without Eyes, and Driving Without Humans

June 21, 2025, Cyber Doomsday Meets AI Boomtown

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