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| Dong Xiwen (1914-1973) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Dong Xiwen [董希文] was a modern Chinese painter, whose art was widely appreciated in Communist China. Dong attended the National Academy of Arts in Hangzhou, and in his early career experimented with a diverse range of artistic styles and demonstrated great creative talent. His art underwent a radical change after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. After moving to Beijing in the mid-1940s, Dong Xiwen began to make art in support of the Communist Party. He joined the Communist Party in 1949, and became one of the PRC’s most prominent painters, producing compelling paintings as part of state commissions while also teaching at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. His most famous commissioned work is *The Founding of the Nation*, commemorating the historical moment when Mao Zedong [毛泽东] proclaimed the People’s Republic of China atop of the Tiananmen gate in 1949. This painting was recognised as a model of new political art, not only articulating communist ideology, but also acting as an exemplar of nationalised oil painting. However, Dong was later forced to revise the painting twice, removing the disgraced figures from this monumental piece. |
| Dong Xiwen [董希文] was a modern Chinese painter, whose art was widely appreciated in Communist China. Dong attended the National Academy of Arts in Hangzhou, and in his early career experimented with a diverse range of artistic styles and demonstrated great creative talent. His art underwent a radical change after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. After moving to Beijing in the mid-1940s, Dong Xiwen began to make art in support of the Communist Party. He joined the Communist Party in 1949, and became one of the PRC’s most prominent painters, producing compelling paintings as part of state commissions while also teaching at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. His most famous commissioned work is *The Founding of the Nation*, commemorating the historical moment when Mao Zedong [毛泽东] proclaimed the People’s Republic of China atop of the Tiananmen gate in 1949. This painting was recognised as a model of new political art, not only articulating communist ideology, but also acting as an exemplar of nationalised oil painting. However, Dong was later forced to revise the painting twice, removing the disgraced figures from his monumental piece.  File: Dong\_Xiwen\_The\_Founding\_of\_China\_1953.jpg  Figure 1: Dong Xiwen, *The Founding of China* (1953). Oil on canvas, 230 x 405cm. National Museum of China.  Dong was born in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, and gained exposure to traditional Chinese painting from his father, Dong Eqing’s [董萼清] rich collection; Eqing was a renowned art collector who had an enthusiasm for Chinese antiquity. When studying at the Hangzhou academy, Dong became fascinated with the artworks of European masters, which led him to reconsider the traditional Chinese pictorial language. In the 1930s, he studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, which was headed by the French-trained artist Lin Fengmian [林风眠]. Taking the French curriculum as its model, the Hangzhou academy set its mission to educate a new generation of artists and to create modern Chinese art by synthesising indigenous tradition with Western culture. After graduation, Dong travelled to Dunhuang where he spent two and a half years copying and exploring the ancient murals preserved in Buddhist cave temples.  Dong Xiwen’s art career was curtailed by illness. He died of cancer during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Along with his other paintings, *The Founding of the Nation* is now displayed at the centre of an exhibiting hall in the National Museum in Beijing together with a restored copy of its original version. List of Works: *Changzheng lushang xiesheng ji* [*Colleciton of sketches along the route of the Long March*] (1958)  *Dong Xiwen Huaji* [*Collection of Dong Xiwen’s Paintings*] (1996)  *Guofeng jingjie: Dong Xiwen huaji* [*The Realm of National Style: Collection of Dong Xiwen’s Paintings*] (2009) |
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