

PRESS RELEASE

***Zen as Art, Celebrating my 80th Birthday!* by Alok Hsu Kwang-han
Wednesday, Sept. 12, 7 to 8:30 pm, Sedona Arts Center**



“In the Middle of nothing, a road with no dust” a Koan painting by Alok Hsu Kwang-han

Zen Calligraphy Master Alok Hsu Kwang-han will give a free presentation and demonstration, “Zen as Art, Celebrating my 80th Birthday!” on Wednesday, September 12, 7 to 8:30 pm, at the Sedona Arts Center, 15 Art Barn Rd, Sedona, AZ 86336. Admission is free.

Alok comments, “Painting Zen, as it has evolved through me in the last 40 years, proceeds with the methodless-method of what I call “resting in presence and moving from emptiness.” As a true Zen practice, the “self” is not in the way. Celebrating the 80th birthday of my body can truly be a celebration if the “self” can also not be in the way— without identification or attachment to “my” body or to the “I” supposedly anchored to the body. The “I” then, present and empty, can be spacious and grateful for the miracle of all existence, including my existence, and the beauty of our impermanence. This way we can be relaxed and easy with life and death together. It’s a fierce and liberating art to have no preference for one over the other. Zen is our digested and embodied wisdom that emboldens and supports us at each stage of our life-and-death. “God” has designed it this way but we have lost our way....

In 1950 Alok immigrated and was welcomed to the United States as an eleven year old refugee from the civil war in China. He was fortunate to receive scholarships for an excellent education in mathematics, Christian theology, sociology and psychology of religion. After briefly teaching in academia, Alok accepted his restlessness as a good and appropriate resource to energize him to search, savor and embody the boundless yet simple truths of existence often hidden in various cultures, religious and spiritual traditions around the world. He has journeyed 20 times to India as part of his personal pilgrimage and explored the confluence of Eastern meditation practices and Western psychotherapies. Back in China he translated and published 20 books on meditation. When the Chinese authorities closed down his work, he decided to go into the world and paint! That was in 1998.

Alok has never studied art nor had a teacher of art, but from his meditation, he discovered by being “present, available, playful and not-knowing” one can access the intelligence prior to thought. It is from this intelligence, simple, fresh and bold, Zen as art comes forth!

Alok has exhibited at the National Ethnographic Museum in Sweden, The Great Hall of Exhibition in Shanghai, the Seattle Art Museum, Goldenstein Gallery in Sedona and other venues. He

is best known for painting Zen calligraphic portraits for individuals, couples, families, and organizations. Since 1998, he has taught hands-on workshops on “Zen as Art” in both Europe and the United States. To pass on what he has been given and then evolved through him, he teaches tutorial retreats for experienced individual artists in his home studio in Sedona. He is the subject of the feature documentary, “Moving from Emptiness: the Life and Art of a Zen Dude”, a celebrated film made by Sedona’s Shaeri Richards and Jerry Hartleben.



“Watching a creative genius at work” by Marguerite Casey

Alok will demonstrate painting Zen on topics suggested by the audience or freshly arising in him. He will explore the process and result with you on Wednesday, Sept. 12, 7 to 8:30 pm at the Sedona Arts Center. Later in the month, Sat. and Sun., Sept. 29-30, he will teach a two-day hands-on workshop, “*A Brush with Emptiness: Zen Creativity and the Art of Life*” also at the Sedona Arts Center. For more information, please consult <http://sedonaartscenter.org/School/Faculty/alok.html> or Alok’s website: www.zencalligraphy.com



photo by Lynn Wilkinson