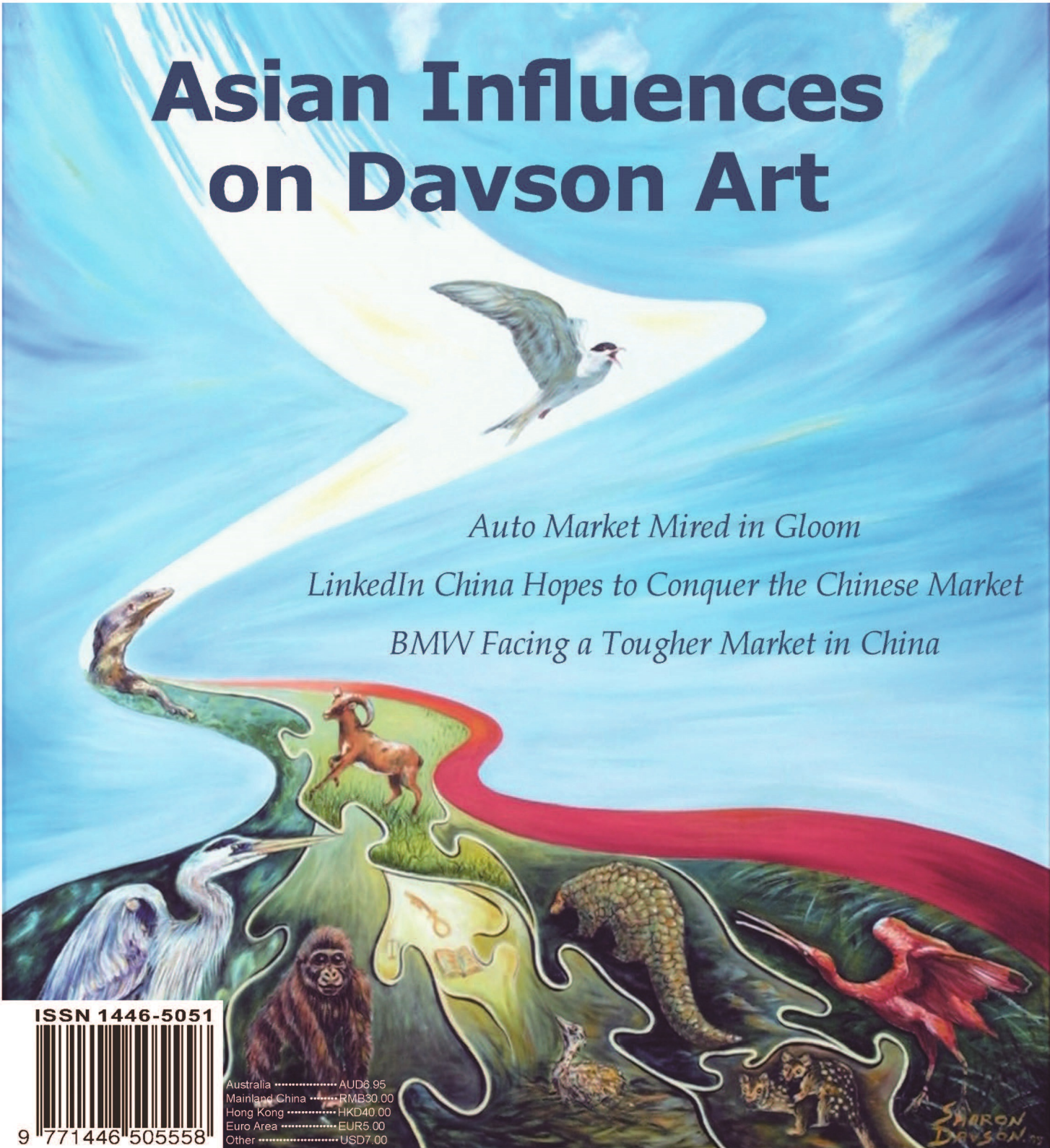


# Asian Influences on Davson Art

*Auto Market Mired in Gloom*

*LinkedIn China Hopes to Conquer the Chinese Market*

*BMW Facing a Tougher Market in China*



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2014 Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott with Davson and her art in Parliament House, Canberra.



1989 *"Reflections"* in the collection of the *Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory*, Darwin, Australia

# Asian Influences on Davson Art

**D**o you ever consider the influences of Chinese and eastern culture on modern Australian art? Possibly not; even though the historical influence of Chinese art on European and American art and artists is well documented. Chinese and other eastern images, concepts, philosophies and themes have also played an important role in the development of the art of Australia's highest valued living artist, Sharon Davson.

Sharon Davson has been an internationally successful artist for about thirty years, with her art represented in Royal and public art gallery collections. There is both a painting and a drawing by her in the

Royal Collection of Great Britain and one artwork in the Royal Collection of Malaysia.

Australia's Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin, and Japan's Hikaru Memorial Museum in Takayama are examples of high-profile museums with significant paintings by Davson in their art collections. Her art, including drawings and original prints, has for several decades been housed in over forty public regional art galleries and civic collections in Australia, Japan and New Zealand.

However, long before her professional career successes, starting as a Fine Art student at the College of Art in Brisbane, QLD, Australia, Davson says; "I was fascinated by the beauty and delicacy

of Chinese paintings and the bold colours and patterns on Oriental ceramics. I also read Chinese philosophy and Buddhist texts and was blending these ideas with my western style upbringing in rural Australia. They became important influences in the development of my creative thinking.”

Many of her student creations were far more stylised with minimal design images compared to the art images created by her art college peers. She allowed Eastern influences to help her express a spiritual depth through focussing on simplified imagery, with bold colour and design.

These interests and influences have remained throughout her career, prompting her many trips to China and various Asian countries over three decades.

So who is Davson and why are increasing numbers of people in the Chinese cultural and business communities taking an interest in her art?

Davson is a visually articulate artist who chose to be artistically relevant in a modern world. She creates art in which people can find meaning, be uplifted and encouraged to continue efforts to make our world a better place for all its inhabitants, human or other. Her images promote emotional, mental and physical wellbeing through their beauty, joy and thoughtfulness.

Choosing a positive and uplifting approach to imagery has been a progressive development. As Davson says; “It meandered through my art from early on to become a core feature of my work from the late 1980’s onwards.” Her art is passionate and layered with meaning. It both reflects cultural history and forges its own path for others to follow.

In correspondence written in 1999 by Wairah Marzuki, Director of the National Art Gallery of Malaysia, she states; “*Sharon Davson’s art has ... a sincerity and beauty, conveying messages of hope in an uplifting and inspirational approach to art. Sharon lights a path leading us forward. Her art is strong, confident and reaches out to people of diverse cultural backgrounds.*”

Yet, in the tradition of the great masters, her work has mostly sold before being created. Davson works mostly on commission without ever compromising her style or the veracity of her intent to raise questions and communicate.

Giving her art meaningful relevance to its surroundings, whether it is a large scale painting, sculpture, glass work or intimately drawn etching, print or woven image, has always been a priority for Davson. She believes that her creativity is enriched by working with people, geographies and histories.

So for three decades, working on commission has afforded her considerable freedom in the international marketplace. When her art works resell (and they do), it has mostly been directly from



1997-99 “*On the Ark of Salvation*”  
In 2011, at \$1.3 m, this painting set an Australian living artist sales record



1996 **"Seeds of Gratitude"** in the collection of the *Hikaru Memorial Museum*, Takayama, Japan

one collector to another, with minimal involvement from commercial galleries or auction houses. This also means Davson has maintained a level of privacy for herself and her high-profile clients.

Each original Davson painting has been carefully documented and authenticated. In an art world plagued by paintings not worked on by the artist and by potential forgeries; this is a necessary reassurance.

Creative leadership means Davson follows her passions to make a positive difference in our world. Over 400 celebrities have endorsed her World Flag and charitable ventures for world peace and endangered species awareness; art galleries are named after her, and she has been acknowledged as the leader of a new art movement. Along the way, she has become the highest valued living artist in Australia with multiple record making seven figure sales.

For an artist to have their creative development exhibited throughout a series of public art galleries requires high artistic achievement and reputation.

From 1999 to 2002, the retrospective exhibition *"Davson - With Gratitude for the Light"* toured Australia. Of the 65 exhibits (dating from 1972 to 1999), many were on loan from public, corporate and private collections as Davson owns few of her own paintings.

In 2000, this impressive retrospective provided the opening exhibition of the Gatton Shire Davson Art Gallery in Davson's home town of Gatton, Queensland. However, this gallery closed in 2007 to make way for the new Lockyer Valley Cultural Centre.

From 2008 to 2011, a second major retrospective exhibition, *"Davson ~ World Leaders and Enlightenment"* toured public art galleries and venues. Many of the 45 artworks (dating from 1972 to 2008) were on loan from superannuation and other investment fund collections. It previewed at the Hunter Valley Gardens with acclaimed British-Australian singer Leo Sayer and the Cessnock Mayor John Clarence officiating.

*"Davson ~ World Leaders and Enlightenment"* became the opening exhibition for the new Lockyer Valley Cultural Centre in Gatton in December 2009; and provided the opening exhibition of the Davson Arts Museum in Newcastle, New South Wales.

Patrons for *"Davson ~ World Leaders and Enlightenment"* included: Newman Haas Racing with Carl Haas and film star Paul Newman, Sir Jack Brabham, Kelly Slater, Layne Beachley, Sir Cliff Richard, Dame Cleo Laine, Leo Sayer, and other international sporting and entertainment celebrities.

According to racing car driver Sir Nigel Mansell, the 1992 Formula One World Champion and 1993 IndyCar World Champion from the United Kingdom;

“Davson is ... a remarkably gifted artist who can even get race car drivers to pay attention.”

For collectors of rare and valued works, it is important to note that Davson has only created about 100 paintings. Many comparable artists created thousands of pieces in order to reach the same level of acclaim!

This is a surprisingly small number for an artist who is best known for her paintings; and who has lived and supported charitable initiatives from the sale of her art for over thirty years. Thus accessing her art for many becomes a rare endeavour and a precious achievement; ownership of a Davson painting is a privilege afforded to only a small number of people across the world.

Fortunately, in recent years the artist has been keeping a register for as many of these paintings as she can. This includes where the art, and the full provenance on each piece, as well as which collectors could be willing to re-sell their precious paintings created by her. Some of these works have changed hands seven to nine times over the decades with values of her paintings doubling around every three or so years for over thirty years. Very rare for a living female artist!

Davson made a choice to be a professional artist. She held her ground in good and bad times. With integrity, her art has provided her studio and staff, charities and organisations in which she believes, with necessary finance since the early 1980's.

At 30 years of age, Davson became Australia's youngest truly professional fine artist, and has remained purely professional for many decades through her 40's, 50's and now 60's. This is unheard of in Australia; and even very rare among women artists internationally. Most fine artists teach part-time for at least a couple of decades.

Davson chose her own path and her distinctive style evolved naturally and progressively.

At the Queensland College of Art where Davson studied from 1972 to 1974, the dominant emphasis was on the abstract vision. However, within these institutional confines she quickly began forging her own style.

In 1978, in her early 20's, Davson worked as a school teacher and evening art class teacher and lived on a small acreage in rural QLD. Here she created large collaged art works featuring images cut from magazines and assembled as 'landscapes' with environmental and political themes.

Jig-saw puzzle pieces entered Davson's art in 1979. She had loved jig-saw puzzles since childhood. With a passion for nature and animals, her



above: 1973 *"What It Means to Me"* in the collection of the *Millicent Art Gallery*, Millicent, South Australia

below: 1973 *"Let's Go Walking"* in the collection of the *Muswellbrook Arts Centre*, Muswellbrook, New South Wales



then hobby was breeding Appaloosa horses; and her philosophic inspiration was the Tao and its Chinese philosophy for change.

In her drawing titled “Drop Zone”, about the sport of skydiving, she added some pieces of cut photography to a landscape drawn as a jig-saw puzzle. She says; “The jig-saw puzzle piece was the perfect shape through which to visually communicate. It has both Yin and Yang - male and female components. A puzzle piece can function well on its own as an individual, yet when combined with other pieces they can create a greater picture; just like people and communities.”

“These jig-saw puzzle shapes also give the viewer entry points to seek, understand or question the multi-layered concepts and ideas embodied in my works of art.”

Those jig-saw puzzle shapes had started by re-

flecting the yin and yang energies – the female and maleness - in her compositions; as well as the singular and the collective, however, with time they came to represent much more, encompassing a visual autobiography of the artist herself.

Thus, jig-saw puzzle and similarly shaped imagery such as water pattern motifs have remained a pivotal signature element of Davson’s art, along with her spiritual understandings and passion for the natural beauty of our environments.

Do you enjoy and value art in your home, work place or investment portfolio? Do you love the colour and textural interest art brings to your life, dinner conversation, and sense of emotional and future well-being?

Davson’s art provides all of the above and more. “I love the creative process; from the conception of a work to the participation of the audience.



left: 1995 “Travelling Together” commissioned by Cathay Pacific Airlines  
right: 1990 South China Morning Post article about Davson

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1990

SOUTH CHINA MORNING

ARTS

# Drawing attention to vanishing world

**ZELDA CAWTHORNE meets artist Sharon Davson who is setting up a major international touring exhibition to highlight the world's endangered species.**

WHEN Sharon Davson heard the Western Hairy-Nosed Wombat was on its last legs, she knew she had to do her bit for the world's endangered species.

"That was the turning point for me," recalls the Australian artist. "I realised then I had to do something, find some way of breaking through the barriers so people everywhere could understand what was happening."

This is not a joke. The marsupial with the funny name does appear to be facing extinction - particularly sad for the island continent famed for its unique flora and fauna - and Davson was absolutely serious.

She found her answer: Artist For Life, launched just three months ago and already shaping up as one of the most imaginative and effective conservation campaigns of the 90s.

What better way to get the message across than to enlist the aid of the world's leading living artists - to say nothing of governments, corporations and the media - in a global assault on ignorance and apathy, reasoned Davson, whose strategy is inspired: a touring exhibition of paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and craft pieces all on the theme of endangered species.

What better way, indeed, have responded such luminaries as America's Tom Westman, James Rosenquist, Larry Rivers and Christo of landscape-dependence.

The United States was her starting point. If she could rope in the Americans - responsible for initiating most of the world's important art movements since World War II - the rest would follow, judged the Australian, shrewdly.

Her gambit appears to have paid off. Taking their lead from the States, artists from other countries including Russia have expressed keen interest in Davson's brainchild which, like Bob Geldof's Live Aid, is aimed at nothing less than encompassing Planet Earth.

Her adventure, which covered Australia's five eastern states and included perilous stretches in scorching desert country, captured the imagination of millions.

A decade later it's hard to imagine that lone traveller, but her passion to beat the odds hasn't changed. Give those species half a chance and they'll be around for future generations, believes Sharon Davson fervently.

Tragically, not even Artists For Life is likely to save Central Australia's Western Hairy-Nosed Wombat.

"Until recently, there was still a chance because the last 60 mating pairs were put in an enclosure and a carefully guided breeding programme was introduced.

"Everything was going fine until one night, a red fox got in and killed 30 of the wombats. Now the gene pool is so small, there's almost no hope for them. Another loss to the world."

likely to lead the way for corporate support.

"The conservative estimate is that we are currently losing three species a day, followed by Russia, Central Europe, Africa and South America before winding up in Canada - about three years in all -"

In Hongkong, Davson, accompanied by her marketing manager Fiona McNeill, lost no time. There were artists to assess, curators, critics and prominent collectors to talk to. There was also another reason for the stop-over.

"Until now, we haven't been asking for funds, but now the project is gathering momentum, we're looking for interim finance," said Davson, who along with McNeill and Sydney graphic artist Graham Ramsay, has so far footed the bills.

"By January, our major submissions have to be in, so things are fairly crucial. What we need are companies or individuals prepared to commission art works for the exhibition."

It will be a big one if it comes of the world's top talents represented in a show designed to go well beyond the usual.

In each country, hopes Davson, Artists For Life - non-profit-making, with all proceeds distributed by the United Nations to bodies involved in saving endangered species - will be supported by complementary exhibits at museums and galleries, plus films, lectures and projects in schools.

Already there have been some major coups. On loan from the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York, will be Andy Warhol's Endangered Species series, World Book International has commissioned a painting to be used for promotion world-wide, and a major US firm seems



Sharon Davson with one of the paintings she hopes will help save the world.

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I am grateful to those who make each step in the process possible. We achieve nothing by ourselves, so gratitude for interconnected effort is important.”

Davson plans to build centres for the Arts and Earth. Acquiring her major works can give such art owners veneration for generations to come in these centres. A gallery in such a complex could bear the name of the collector / investor, as well as information on permanent display concerning that person, family or entity.

Such is the artist's vision and passion for enlightened creativity, and our Earth and all it sustains, including the endangered species both great and small.

To Davson; “Endangered species is more than an urgent environmental issue. It is of major cultural importance. As we lose species from the wild, their inspiration is lost to future generations of artists. Our culture, as well as our environment, is diminished.”

In April 1992, Davson started her “*Hands Up*” campaign to assist endangered species awareness. American singing legend Neil Diamond launched the Hands Up project with her at a national press event at the Regent Hotel in Sydney, Australia.

Since then, Davson has conducted this activity with over 400 celebrity leaders from World Champion sportspeople to international entertainers, including Michael Chang, Mario Andretti, Sir Nigel Mansell, Pete Sampras, Boris Becker, John Newcombe, Ian Chappell, Paul Newman, Olivia Newton-John, Tom Jones, John Denver, Dame Joan Sutherland, and Bon Jovi.

It is a compliment to Davson, and the positive power of her initiative, that her concept has been copied worldwide, to help many charitable causes.

Davson periodically continues the initiative for world peace initiatives and dignity for women causes. As well as prominent celebrities, thousands of adults and children have participated in her in Hands Up campaigns. And yes, many endangered

species have featured in her art over the decades, with more likely to be bestowed roles in her detailed visual stories presented in harmonious colour.

According to renowned poet Celia Berrell, “Davson’s art is rare, valuable, beautiful and powerful. Her paintings speak to the soul raise pertinent issues relevant to our modern world.”

In mid-2014, Davson was invited by Newcastle businessman Tony Hughes to be the artist for his Art Hotel. In accepting this invitation for a new art hotel in Newcastle, she was informed that the property would be named after her and dedicated to her art, “*The Davson Art Hotel*”.

So what is an Art Hotel?

Davson freely admits; “I had not heard of, nor seen, an art hotel until I saw one last year in Tel Aviv, Israel.”

In an Art Hotel the art comes before all the other finishes. So the décor to ‘matched’ in detail and colour to complement the art; from the bed covers, cushions and crockery. The exact reverse of the usual quality hotel scenario where the art is matched to the décor.

In this case, exclusively the art of Sharon Davson who has been involved from the early architect and planning stage.

Tony has commissioned Davson to create several major art pieces for the proposed licenced accommodation property; each is valued in seven figures. These works are part of the multi-million dollar commission for her to create a considerable number of new works of art over a couple of years for the property.

However, the owner and developer of the complex does not feel he needs to own the smaller works whose images are needed for the guest rooms. Instead he has acquired ‘rights to reproduce’ as ‘photographic canvases’ the art Davson is creating for these guest rooms and other areas. Images from these paintings will also be reproduced on quality products for the hotel and as souvenirs.

Australian and Chinese collectors are acquiring these ‘guest room’ paintings by Davson. Because these works are ‘new’ and relatively modest in size and price, collectors are taking advantage of these new works coming onto the market by ordering them at concept and early development stages to benefit from destined provenance growth with the growth of *The Davson Art Hotel*.

Davson is the creative consultant throughout the project which will include an art gallery/gift shop showcasing both original art by her, as well as quality reproduction prints and products from her art.

Davson’s art will be the foundation for the promotion of the hotel after it opens in about two years, from its stationery to the detailing throughout the hotel and to all the items in the gift shop/gallery.

The major creative theme she chose for her series of art for *The Davson Art Hotel* is the semi-autobiographical ... “*A Wondrous Life*”.

According to Davson; “We all have a Wondrous Life. No matter how many ordeals or hardships, there is still just so much in which to find joy, love or learning, have gratitude and experience beauty.”

Davson’s wondrous life continues with her



2014-15 “*Story Book Garden*” created in association with The Davson Art Hotel; in the collection of T & J Wang

return to the republic of China a little later in the year.

Please, visit her website [www.davsonarts.com](http://www.davsonarts.com) or

tel +61 416 026 426 to enquire in English; and +61 433 335 588 to speak with Mark Lee 马克丽 in Chinese. **CBF**