

# IN THE PICTURE



Lui Shou-kwan at work in the studio and live sketching outdoors.

# Lui Shou-kwan: the art of tradition and innovation

Fifty years after his death on February 6, 1975, Chinese artist Lui Shou-kwan's influence on contemporary ink painting remains profound. Born in Guangzhou in 1919, Lui once recalled how he learned how to paint by copying the classical Chinese landscape ink paintings that passed through his father's antique dealership. Lui moved to Hong Kong in 1948, where he became a pivotal figure in the New Ink Movement. His innovative techniques blended traditional Chinese art with Western abstraction, creating a style that resonated with the changing times. His works often explored themes of Zen Buddhism, reflecting his deep spiritual interests. His celebrated "Zen paintings" are known for their powerful, minimalist brushstrokes, conveying profound meaning through seemingly simple forms. For example, his "Zen Circle" series explored concepts of emptiness, enlightenment and the interconnectedness of all things. He also experimented with unconventional materials and techniques, pushing the boundaries of traditional ink art. Lui — pictured with his family in an undated photo — was also a dedicated teacher, nurturing a new generation of artists. His works have been shown in museums and galleries globally, cementing his place as a pioneer of modern Chinese art.



Autumn Junks around Outlying Islands, 1965.



Works by Lui Shou-kwan. Clockwise from above: *Hong Kong at Night*, 1966; *Lianhua Mountain*, 1963; *Dwellings Among Hills*, 1961; *Farmland at Dawn*, 1962; *Junks*, 1967. Below: *Zen*, 1974. Image credits: Mr. Alcan Fine Arts.

