



Japanese Crane

Watercolor on rice/bamboo paper, 59 inches by 30 inches
By Thanapoom Boonipat ('16)

Thanapoom Boonipat has been creating art since he was very young; he tried “almost every form of drawing and painting” and decided, at age 11, to focus on Chinese painting, his favorite. He grew up in Thailand and took lessons in classical Chinese painting in both Thailand and China.

His paintings have been exhibited with nationally recognized artists in Thailand and have won first place in competitions at Johns Hopkins University, where he majored in biomedical engineering. His work has been published in various magazines, including the Chinese Painting Association of Thailand’s *Magazine of Outstanding Chinese Paintings*. He has also auctioned a number of his paintings, raising about \$25,000 to support different hospitals in Thailand.

Chinese painting is an “unforgiving medium” that requires precise control of the pressure and speed of the paintbrush. “A stalk of bamboo or the leg of the Japanese crane is done in one brush stroke,” Boonipat says. “Once it is made, one cannot erase anything or change the color since the rice paper is very absorptive and delicate—almost like tissue.” Painting the pine trees in *Japanese Crane* required repeated application of ink to give depth to the pinecones and needles; the process took two to three weeks.

One of his teachers, a Thai mentor who specialized in Chinese painting, passed away in 2011 at age 89. “I was inspired to paint this painting to reflect his equanimity and his ability to not hang on to material things or worldly affairs,” says Boonipat. “The Japanese cranes [a symbol of longevity] resting on the pine trees looking out into the empty space reflect this quality well.”

Painting has taught Boonipat a lot about life. “The unforgiving aspect of Chinese painting taught me to accept the mistakes and not try to fix them, which usually only worsens it,” he says. “Having worked with terminally ill patients, this concept of acceptance and letting go is also vitally important in leading a happy life, at all periods of life, and especially when dealing with losses and disappointments.”

His next project is a Chinese painting that includes certain parts of the human body, inspired by his anatomy class at Geisel.

The work of Boonipat and of Benjamin Blais ('15), whose work was featured in the Spring 2012 issue of *Dartmouth Medicine*, will be displayed at the AVA Gallery in Lebanon, N.H., from February 8 to March 1. ■