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ART IN REVIEW

Lu ShengZhong

Chambers Fine Art
210 11th Avenue, at 25th Street
Chelsea
Through Jan. 12

As an addition to its cosmopolitan roster, Chelsea has a gallery dedicated entirely to Chinese art. Named for the 18th-century British architect Sir William Chambers, who championed Chinese garden design, the gallery is run by Jerry Chen, a specialist in scholar's objects and furniture, and Christophe Mao, who concentrates on contemporary work.

Contemporary takes precedence in the show of work by the Beijing-based Lu ShengZhong, born in 1952, who is making his American debut. Like many Chinese artists who came into their own in the 1980's, Mr. Lu sought to get beyond classical styles and Socialist Realism. Where many of his colleagues took their cues from Western Pop, he immersed himself in a native folk tradition of paper cutting.

Here he has used this fragile medium, notable for its lacy, intricate openwork patterns, to create a templelike installation. The gallery is lined with floor-to-ceiling scrolls made of red cutout forms pasted on a black ground. Each scroll carries a dominant circular design made of countless symmetrical figures resembling acrobats and dancers. Below are rows of pictographic forms, entirely abstract, composed from the leftover scraps.

Mr. Lu's interest in playing around with the cultural traditions and the look of language, on a monumental and microcosmic scale, is shared by many of his contemporaries, notably Xu Bing and Gu Wenda. But with the help of a team of cut-and-paste assistants, he has come up with a look very much his own, at once whimsical and hushed, part circus, part sacred space.

HOLLAND COTTER