



**New England
Botanic Garden**
AT TOWER HILL

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Art exhibition coming to New England Botanic Garden celebrates Chinese culture, tradition, and the women who shaped dynasties

Chinese Empresses by Xiang Li on display June 14 – August 24

BOYLSTON, MA, May 20, 2025 – [New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill](#) is thrilled to announce an exciting exhibition coming to the Boylston-based botanic garden in June. [Chinese Empresses](#) by internationally acclaimed artist Xiang Li is a collection of artwork depicting more than 200 empresses intricately hand-painted on silk using traditional Chinese gemstone watercolor techniques. Xiang Li's portrayals elegantly incorporate elements of nature, in particular floral forms, highlighting the rich symbolism of traditional Chinese culture and honoring the unsung women who shaped dynasties. *Chinese Empresses* opens June 14 and continues through August 24.

"*Chinese Empresses* is a visually stunning collection of paintings rich in detail and story," says Lea Morgan, exhibitions manager for New England Botanic Garden. "It's a privilege to showcase Xiang Li's exceptional artwork and to share Chinese history and traditional artmaking through this special exhibition."

Xiang Li's journey as an artist began within the storied walls of the Forbidden City in Beijing, China, where she dedicated over 37 years as a Master Artist specializing in the meticulous art of painting, restoration, and cultural preservation. Immersed from a young age in the ancient techniques passed down through generations, she developed a profound respect for Chinese history, traditions, and artistry. Xiang Li began work on *Chinese Empresses*, her most artistically and technically challenging collection of work, in 2010. *Chinese Empresses* has been showcased at museums across Massachusetts including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Harvard Museums, Worcester Art Museum, Jean McDonough Arts Center (JMAC), Cambridge Library,

and more. The appearance of this collection at New England Botanic Garden marks its first in full.

“Each empress I paint carries a story of resilience, wisdom, and strength,” says Xiang Li. “To exhibit this collection at the New England Botanic Garden — surrounded by nature and beauty — is deeply meaningful. It feels like the perfect home for these women, who throughout history were so closely tied to the natural world.”

While the exhibition is on view, Garden visitors can enjoy a number of exciting learning opportunities and engaging programs to further enrich the experience of Xiang Li’s artwork. These include lectures and walk and talks with the artist in July and August. Art classes for adults and pop-up lion dance performances by the [Southeast Asian Coalition of Central MA](#) have also been scheduled in celebration of Chinese culture and traditions. For visitors who would like to bring the artistry of *Chinese Empresses* home with them, the Garden Shop will be carrying the newly released book, *Chinese Empresses* by Xiang Li and her daughter Fei Wu. The book features portraits accompanied by historical insights and reflections on the lives and impact of the women depicted. Signed art prints, collectible postcards, notecards, and beautifully designed scarves created from Xiang Li’s original paintings will also be available for sale in the Garden Shop.

Chinese Empresses will be on display in the Milton and Fern Galleries at New England Botanic Garden and visitors can experience the exhibition with general Garden admission. The Garden is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. To learn more visit <https://nebg.org/chinese-empresses>. To schedule a visit or an interview contact Public Relations Manager Liz Nye at lnye@nebg.org.

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“Northern Song Dynasty Early Period Empresses,” painted on 100% silk, spans 2 x 4 meters and is one of the many pieces on display at New England Botanic Garden June 14 – August 24 as part of the exhibition *Chinese Empresses* by Xiang Li. (Download the image [here](#).)

About New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill is a nonprofit organization located at 11 French Drive in Boylston, Massachusetts. A regional destination, the Garden is operated on nearly 200 acres by the Worcester County Horticultural Society, one of the oldest of its kind in the country, and is open to the public for garden viewing, trail walking, educational programs, private events, weddings, exhibitions, and more. This year New England Botanic Garden was voted "Top Botanic Garden in the U.S." by *TravelAwaits*. New England Botanic Garden is an [AAM-accredited](#) museum that includes an irreplaceable collection of plants and creates opportunities for visitors to experience the wonder of plants, learn about the natural world, and make joyful connections. Learn all about New England Botanic Garden including its history, mission, and its staff at www.nebg.org.

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