London Metropolitan University

Appropriation and Hybridity of Taiwanese Literati Painting and American Abstract Expressionism (1949 – 2007)

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ABSTRACT

For centuries, traditional Literati painting has been unchallenged and has not undergone any real or radical change. The Taiwanese Modern Ink-wash Painting that emerged in the 1950s is an extension of this painterly tradition. This new visual form of modern Ink-wash painting that I am presenting, is a hybrid, combining both Chinese Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism, and represents a different and I hope more progressive artistic style in comparison to the restricted conventions of Literati painting.

My thesis seeks to evaluate the mutual appropriation of the stylistic and ideological assumptions of both Chinese painting, in particular Literati painting, and American Abstract Expressionism. The final objective of my research is to create a new hybrid art that comprises both Eastern and Western aesthetics and with a view to establishing new paradigms in visual arts culture.

A dualistic approach was therefore adopted to analyse both painterly traditions in terms of their components such as media, techniques, philosophical and aesthetic theories. Some evidences of previous and existing East-West cross-cultural influences are also evaluated as well as the further developments of both traditions to the present day. The findings of these studies were then used to support the creation of my new hybrid artworks with the main artistic components of both Literati painting and Abstract Expressionism. In addition, a list of criteria is thereby created to enable me to evaluate the elements of hybridity of my artworks.

Both modern Ink-wash painting and Abstract Expressionism emerged in similar socio-political conditions with a common interest in abstraction and challenging convention, as well as seeking greater freedom of attitude in visual expression. In the same way, and by handling the components in the table of hybrid evaluation criteria[1] I have set up, a body of my new hybrid art reveals the increasing hybridism from a totally Oriental Literati painting to a painting that is almost fully Westernised.

By varying the combinations in the table of hybrid evaluation criteria, one may utilise this methodological framework to create diverse hybrid artworks and which are limited only by imagination.

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[1] See section 1.2

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The appropriation and influence of stylistic and ideological factors on the development of both American abstract art and Chinese Ink-wash painting demands further study. There is limited literature providing detailed records as to how Chinese Ink-wash painting was influenced by Western Abstract Expressionism and vice versa. Furthermore, there has not been much written on the inter-relationship between Oriental and Occidental art. Most of the existing research concentrates mainly upon stylistic monographs of painters and art works. This study will investigate the part played in these developments by aesthetic, social and historical influences.

Taiwan's modern Ink-wash painting extends the lineage of traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting, and is a hybrid art form that was initially conceived mainly from the conjoining of Chinese Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism. It is therefore imperative to examine both painterly sources in order to have a better understanding of this merging of East and West painterly traditions. The development of both traditions from 1949, and the founding of Taiwan, Republic of China (R.O.C.) by the Kuo Min Tang (KMT), to 2007 is the main subject here, where their conception, painting media, formal characteristics, aesthetic language and accompanying philosophical backgrounds will be critically analysed.

Art reflects both the character of its age and the diversity of contemporary values. Many significant art works, such as Picasso's integration of elements of African

aboriginal art into his own work, possess cross-cultural influences. This observation provides an opportunity for developing a dialogue between Western art and traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting, recognizing their mutual appropriation of each other's stylistic and ideological assumptions. The final objective is to produce a new hybrid art encompassing both elements of Western and Eastern aesthetics with a view to establishing new paradigms in visual arts culture.

The modern Ink-wash painting movement was influenced by theories and exponents of Abstract Expressionism. These Western methods and ideas, which were adopted and assimilated by the Taiwanese artists, enabled them to establish new formal and stylistic innovations.

In recent years, artists have tried to reinvigorate the Ink-wash painting tradition by fusing ideas from East and West and challenging convention, all in the pursuit of a creative breakthrough.[2] However, in the process, the *shi shu hua he yi*[3] (詩書畫合一, or "Traditional three-fold character of Chinese Literati painting") – the scholar-artist's permutation of poetry, calligraphy and painting – has perhaps gone astray. Hsieh Hsiao Yun (謝小韞, 1954-) indicates that in the beginning of the 1960s when Western modern art trends began to influence artists in Taiwan, the features of modern Ink-wash painting developed and changed. Artists carried out experiments reinterpreting tradition and modernity, East and West, and concept and form, especially from the starting point of abstraction.[4]

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[2] Hsieh Tung Shan, *Contemporary Art in Taiwan 1980-2000*, (Taipei: Artist Publishing Co., 2002), 16

[3] See section 2.2.3.1

[4] Hsieh Hsiao Yun, *Ink transformation*, (Taipei: Taipei Fine Art Museum, 2008), 10

This thesis uses the Chicago convention in its style of citation and attribution of notes and bibliography. The Chinese characters are in the traditional Chinese[5] format, while the translations are mainly in the *Hanyu Pinyin* format. The organisation of this thesis adopts a dualistic approach that reflects the hybridism of modern Ink-wash painting – the Chinese Ink-wash painting tradition and American Abstract Expressionism. First and foremost, the latter half of this *Chapter 1* informs the theoretical framework and methodology for this research, conjoining the empirical analyses of the first half of the research with the subsequent practice-based studio research. Taiwanese modern Ink-wash painting and its conception are also introduced here. This sets the context and briefly paints the historical background and its socio-political influences that have determined its development.

Modern Ink-wash painting is then separated into its two parent influences, namely the Chinese Ink-wash painting tradition and the American Abstract Expressionism movement, which will be investigated in depth in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. This provides the foundation for which other chapters are built.

Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the meaning of 'Literati Paintng', followed by an analytical breakdown of its components into categories of painting media, technicalities, and philosophical and aesthetic theories.

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the conception of American Abstract Expressionism, its liberal views on the use of media, and its respective aesthetic concepts and techniques.

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[5] Traditional Chinese characters are mainly used in places such as Taiwan, Republic of China (R.O.C.) and Hong Kong, while simplified Chinese characters are mainly used in countries such as People's Republic of China (P.R.C.)

Chapter 4 goes on to provide evidence of the hybridism and existing East-West cross-cultural influences of these two painterly traditions. It commences with notable Abstract Expressionists who had Oriental influences, followed by the pioneers of modern Ink-wash painting that were in turn influenced by Abstract Expressionism.

The lineage extensions of both traditions are then explored in *Chapter 5,* beginning with the evolution of abstract art in America, with studies on subseqient generations of abstract artists. Similarly for its Eastern counterpart, the development of *Nativism* in Taiwan will be explored followed by an examination of the new cohort of modern Ink-wash artists.

The hybrid artworks resulting from my studio practice will be examined and evaluated in *Chapter 6*, critically analysing and linking with the knowledge from previous chapters.

Finally, *Chapter 7* will conclude with the results of the research, its limitations and recommendations for further studies.

1.2 Methodology

According to Graeme Sullivan, "Practice-based research is the term used in current discussions to describe the profile of 'making' disciplines in higher education and is used in debates about the status of research in the visual arts, design, and, to a lesser extent architecture, in higher education."[6]

As stated by Frayling, the practice-based doctorate should contribute new knowledge partly through artistic practice.[7] Hence, my thesis comprises a body of my own original artworks as well as an accompanying thesis of approximately 45,000 words, to place these artworks in a relevant theoretical, historical, critical and visual context.

Positivist science, which appeared in the late 1800s, had been the dominant research approach and the model for all scientific research. However, according to Sullivan, "although scientific inquiry has enormous status, the capacity to cater for the full dimensions of human need and knowing is shown to be limited."[8] This therefore creates options of inquiry for a greater and broader intellectual and imaginative space for a more complete discussion. In my case, visual arts, which belong to the category of artistic inquiry, can be applied as the scientific 'other'. It is an important form of human knowing which makes contribution to a fuller understanding of everyday reality.[9]

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[6] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 84
[7] Christopher Frayling, *Practice-based Doctorates in the Creative and Performing Arts and Design*, (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997), 12,14, http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/publications/reports (Accessed May 25, 2010)
[8] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 65
[9] Ibid

Although I began my research inquiry with *Art Practice* as the central source, different views and practices may appear as inquiry transitions into new fields and moves toward different sources. These three categorizations of research inquiry are divided into *Empiricist, Interpretivist,* and *Critical.* These three categories describe different research methods which suit artistic inquiry in the visual arts. This tradition originates from Habermas (1929-), who advocated the need to expand the breadth of epistemological frameworks "to include technical, contextual and critical understanding."[10] Raymond A. Morrow paraphrases Habermas' three categories of inquiry processes as follows:

"We seek to know in order to control social and natural realities (the empirical-analytic interest), to qualitatively interpret and understand such realities (the hermeneutic-historical interest), and to transform our individual and collective consciousness of reality in order to maximize the human potential for freedom and equality (the critical-emancipatory interest)."[11]

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[10] Juergen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 314

[11] Raymond A. Morrow, *Critical Theory and Methodology,* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 146

1.1 Arts-based Research Methodology

Nonetheless, when visual arts inquiry focuses on art-making practices, the artist's experiences are the core source for the creation of new knowledge. The potential for new understanding is possible through the three research paradigms of *Empiricist Inquiry*, *Interpretive Discourse*, and *Critical Process*.

1.2 Empiricist Inquiry

For inquiries in the empiricist tradition, Sullivan advocates that "the data used for analysis is information and it comes in many structures and forms."[12] The general emphasis is placed on research which is mainly supported by data, and by evidence that is derived from experiences of social reality. Hence, in my case, the visual arts research strategies that I have employed in the empiricist tradition include *Reviews* and *Reports, Methods,* and *Designs.* These research exercises focus on the forms and structures of data, which in turn help guide me in my search for new knowledge.

Before undertaking visual arts research, it is necessary to know what others have done before as a basic scholarship requirement. *Reviews and reports* serve this purpose and are part of the literature review process. This allows me to build on existing foundations and to further new knowledge creation. In the earlier chapters of this thesis, I have collected information from different books and reports on the nature of traditional Chinese Literati painting and how modern Ink-wash painting differs. Additionally, I have also researched American Abstract Expressionism and its developments over time. Artists such as Liu Kuo Sung and Mark Tobey were also reviewed to investigate how their art had pushed the boundaries of their traditions and how they were influenced by different cultures. In other words, how the West was influenced by the East and how the East was influenced by the West.

The aim of the whole thesis is to create a new hybrid art elucidated by new and original theoretical underpinning. Therefore data collection and reviews form part of my literature review of earlier fine art production and theorization. In terms of *methods* of empirical inquiry, which are essentially various ways of dealing with

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[12] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts,* (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 215

research literature, these are made up of different strategies for gathering and analyzing information. I have gathered information from various sources about traditional Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism, and consequently grouped them into different categories. Some parts of this thesis are descriptive such as simply stating the components of traditional Literati painting; while other parts such as the artists' reviews were applied a more analytical and understanding approach.

With regard to *design*, as Sullivan declares, "Designing research projects is a scholarly practice that is informed in part by what is known, yet it is also critical in that conceptualizations are based on an idea structure of one's own making."[13] I have designed my whole research project in this manner, and the first half of my thesis is mainly gathering and analyzing background empirical data, which will then support the critical analysis of my hybrid artwork practice in the latter half of my thesis.

1.3 Interpretive Discourse

Sullivan asserts that, "Theorizing one's studio art practice for the purpose of identifying preferred ways of doing research, and for interpreting research interest,

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[13] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 215

involves three stages that include a *reflective* process, a *contextualization* procedure, and a *reflexive* activity."[14]

Being Taiwanese, I was brought up in the artistic traditions of calligraphy and Literati landscape painting. Although my education included the teachings of conventional Chinese aesthetic theories and philosophy, it was only in recent years, during the period of my university studies that I started to have any exposure to modern Ink-wash painting. As mentioned earlier, with regards to Taiwan's historical background and *Nativist* fervour, I have also tried to infuse some Taiwanese flavour into my paintings.

According to Sullivan, the second stage is a contextualization procedure where the aim is to create a "network of 'others' whose ideas, art, or actions, influence your art practice in some way."[15] In comparison with the reflective process which focuses on the influences of internal elements, the contextualization procedure deals with external ideas or art that influence one's artistic creation in any way.

In my case, examples of this "networks of others" include artists such as Liu Kuo Sung, Chao Chung Hsiang in Taiwan and Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Terry Winters in the U.S.A, all of whom share a common interest in challenging or breaking convention along with freedom of expression. Subsequently, other broad influences are the collections and exhibitions in various museums including Tate Modern, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the British Museum where I was introduced to a range of Western aesthetic influences and ideas. Even simple things

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[14] Ibid
[15] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 217

in daily life, such as the different environment and culture that I experienced when living in London, have influenced me in some way. For instance, snow is more prevalent in the United Kingdom than in Taiwan, and was the inspiration for my *Deep Snow* painting series.

The final stage of the interpretive discourse paradigm is the reflexive process. This requires the artist to combine both the reflective and contextual processes, and then respond to his individual artworks. This process is also set up to answering some questions on the artwork's anatomy such as what the artwork is about, why the artwork was created, the artwork's content and form determinants, and what impact it has on others. According to Walker and Chaplin, "every artefact is the result of multiple determinants or factors."[16] Therefore after completing the reflexive activity, this then reveals what Sullivan calls "a history of personal preferences and practices and to identify points of content and process connection, collaborative potential and community relevance."[17]

This is applied in the next half of the thesis where I critically analyze my hybrid artwork, and consider my artistic history and ideas network of 'others' to make new meaning out of my paintings. By comparing my artwork with that of modern Ink-wash painters and Abstract Expressionists, I can then locate my practice into current discourse and central ideas in light of the style of painting.

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[16] John A. Walker, and Sarah Chaplin, *Visual Culture: an introduction*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 4

[17] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 216

1.4 Critical Process

The critical paradigm focuses on breaking from the conventions of social structures that limit a researcher's imagination and potential. According to Sullivan, "Knowledge is seen to be a consequence of experience, reasoning, and inquiry, and to further our understanding there is a need to not only conduct research but to also critique what is done by others."[18]

Several ways of evaluating arguments exist and according to Hart, three of these strategies are *Supposition*, *Assertion*, and *Inference*. [19] First and foremost, supposition is an uncertain belief that the claim is merely based on an assumption. Assertion is the claim or declaration of something without any supporting evidence. Lastly, the third strategy – inference – is a conclusion reached on the basis of some observation or knowledge claim.

When doing the critical analysis of my arguments, I can then use the knowledge that is created in the *Empirical Inquiry* and *Interpretive Discourse* paradigms to prove these arguments. After rigorous testing, and if I am able to provide sufficient and convincing evidence to support my claims, I would then have achieved my research

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[18] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 218
[19] Christopher Hart, *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*, (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 80

objectives. For instance, when trying to evaluate whether a new painting is hybrid enough and free from the restrictions of Literati painting conventions, one of the arguments could be, 'This painting is of an Abstract Expressionist style.' The evidence could be whether the new painting contained any traces of the elements of traditional Literati painting, or how much of Western Abstract Expressionist influences are present in the painting. From this critical process, a new set of meanings is constructed that I can build upon to further enhance my artwork.

According to Karl Popper, the opposing concept of falsifiability can be used to confirm the robustness of knowledge. Raymond A. Morrow described it below:

> "For Popper what is more fundamental to science than verifying empirical propositions is the attempt to prove them wrong—to *falsify* them... After all, endless amounts of good evidence can be found for all kinds of theories. But one crucial piece of falsifying or disconfirming evidence can potentially demolish a given theory... in the light of the theory-laden character of facts, any fairly credible theory can amass a body of factual 'proof'. What was more important for scientific adequacy was whether propositions potentially could be proven wrong."[20]

According to Sullivan, "the analysis of arguments may reveal fallacies. Fallacies give rise to conceptual deceptions that may be unintended and often unknown until revealed through critique."[21] This could potentially result in the construction of a

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[20] Raymond A. Morrow, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 70
[21] Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 219

new set of meanings in the research process. Further research could then be undertaken on the gaps revealed in the knowledge frameworks, which would give a more robust body of theoretical knowledge. For instance, as cited earlier, I had been engaged in the traditional Literati circle for so many years; when I first started to create hybrid artworks such as my *Reminiscence* paintings, I had believed that they were very Westernized and that I had achieved my research objectives. However, after discussion with Western colleagues and teachers, the feedback I received was that it was still a Chinese painting with almost insignificant traces of Western influence.

More rigorous examination revealed that the majority of the elements of Chinese Literati paintings such as the typical *Three Distances*[22] perspective, and *bi mo*[23] were still present, hence the overall feeling that it was still a traditional Chinese painting and not a new hybrid painting. Therefore, besides finding evidence to support my arguments, I also search constantly for any evidence that denies the claims in my arguments. Now that I have established how to use evidence to either support or reject claims in my arguments to further new knowledge, I have formulated the following list of criteria that will aid in the critical evaluation of my artwork.

The hybrid evaluation criteria table is divided into three main sections, beginning with *Painting Materials, Pictorial Elements* and *Visual Language*. Painting materials refer to the physical media with which the painting is created and is fairly straightforward with subsections of painting surface, type of paints used, and the

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[22] See section 2.2.4
[23] See section 2.2.2

tools which to apply the paints. The next section focuses on the pictorial elements of the picture and dissects each painting into its primary building blocks. The final section is about the visual language of the painting and focuses on the aesthetics and style of the artwork. The table is fairly simplistic with the main objective of locating the artwork in context, and to answer the critical question in the previous chapters of, 'What makes a painting a Literati style?' or 'What makes a painting a Western Abstract Expressionist painting?'

1.5 Sample Hybrid Evaluation Criteria Table

The illustration over is a sample hybrid evaluation criteria list, to evaluate the hybridity of my new artwork, and the extent to which it is more Oriental or Western. My hybrid artwork is to be situated between the artistic traditions of Literati Ink-wash painting and Abstract Expressionism. For the purposes of this thesis, these two traditions form the opposite ends of my creative spectrum and are the first step in setting my creative work in its theoretical, historical and visual context. Similar to a questionnaire survey, a score obtained determines whether the artwork is more Oriental and leaning towards the Ink-wash painting end of the spectrum, or more Western, leaning towards the Abstract Expressionism end of the spectrum. Although simplistic, it provides a system of measurement to determine that my artwork is a hybrid of both traditions and that I have satisfied that part of my thesis objective.

A more important benefit of the application of this list of criteria is that it provides a comprehensive overview by which to critically evaluate my artwork. First and foremost, it will allow me to judge how many elements of each tradition I have in any particular painting. Subsequently, by addition or subtraction of the different components, I can then vary the extent of hybridization of my paintings. For instance, when I first begin with my traditional Literati Ink-wash painting, all the boxes under Ink-wash painting would be ticked, and therefore I would be able to give it a full score of being Oriental. This would not be a hybrid work of art yet, but would be the first basis for comparison with subsequent creations. After which I would then slowly work my way up and progressively introduce Western elements and subtract Ink-wash painting elements to create my hybrid artwork.

As this process progresses with my art creation, the different combinations of elements from both traditions that develop, would not only prove the hybridity of my

artwork, but would also give an insight into the creative process and contribution to new knowledge. An example would be *Snowy Night*, where my lines are in the manners of both the calligraphic as well as the gestural. Together with the inversion of white acrylic paint applied by a syringe over black background, instead of the traditional black ink with brush over white paper, it also makes this a unique visual effect, not done previously by any Ink-wash painter, or Abstract Expressionist. This will be further elaborated in *Chapter 6*, but this illustrates the combination of elements of both painterly traditions to create a unique hybrid art style that contributes to new knowledge of the modern Ink-wash painting practice.

Furthermore, every time on finishing a new painting, I would complete this questionnaire to evaluate where this new painting stands in terms of identity, and its relationship to previous paintings. I would ask questions such as whether there was something in previous works that could be applied in this current one, or if there was something new in this current painting that should be kept and developed further in future paintings. This leads me to the next benefit, which is to prompt me to evaluate the relative strength of each component, its desirability and potential for further development. This was the case for *Snowy Night*, where the gesture-painting element in the next painting of this series was much stronger and, I believe, better. This mechanism helps me to develop every painting series to its maximum potential. As Terry Winters points out, "Working in series is a way to relieve the pressure that builds from working on an individual piece. There's a lot of potential for surprise and invention, and it's a way for me to expand the territory."[24] Detailed analysis will be explored and elaborated in *Chapter 6* when the paintings are evaluated critically.

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[24] Arcy Douglass, 2007, *Printmaking, Pollock and Poetics: A Conversation with Terry Winters,* http://www.portlandart.net/archives/2007/04/printmaking_pol.html (Accessed 30 Oct 2010)

1.3 Taiwanese Modern Ink-wash Painting

1.3.1 From *Guo Hua* to *Shui Mo Hua*

In Taiwan in the 1990s, the term '*Shui Mo Hua*' (水墨畫 or 'Ink-wash painting' or 'Ink painting') become established as a more neutral name to be used in replacement of its original appellation of '*Guo Hua*' (國畫 or 'national painting'). This designation arose from two crucial principles; firstly, after the type of media employed: *shui* (水, water) and *mo* (墨, ink), similar in the way that oil painting and watercolour painting are named and secondly, due to the fact that the majority of Taiwanese ink artists felt that the meaning of '*Guo Hua*' or 'national painting' suffered from the overly political connotations of '*Zhong Guo*' (中國 or China), with the '*Guo*' in '*Guo Hua*' referring to '*Zhong Guo*'. They therefore changed the name due to the ideological rise of Taiwanese national self-identity against the political backdrop of the 1990s.

Admittedly, the ink tradition of Taiwan originated from China as a result of the continuous influx of Chinese immigrants who moved to Taiwan during and since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). However, Taiwan modern Ink-wash painting is integral to the art world within the region because Taiwan has benefited from an unbroken link with Chinese culture. Mainland China, through the *Cultural Revolution*[25] (文化 大革命 or '*wen hua da ge ming*'), underwent a radical disruption of its cultural development, with the result being that Taiwanese Ink-wash artists have been able to

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[25] The term *Cultural Revolution* describes the violent upheaval in China during the period between 1966 to 1976. This political movement, fomented by Mao Ze Dong (毛澤東), completely recast the existing cultural, social, political, and economic systems. It also resulted in the deliberate destruction of antiques, historical sites, and works of art. During this period, artists were forbidden to practise, and many valuable works and collections were burnt or destroyed by the *Red Guard* (紅衛兵).

integrate a more developed traditional sensibility together with Western artistic Modernism into their renderings of contemporary life and culture.

Perhaps, the analogy that best depicts how we can interpret the development of China and Taiwan's Ink-wash art is that they stem from the same source (Chinese culture and tradition), but branch off into different tributaries due to different political, historical, and environmental spheres of influence.

1.3.2 The *'Modernity'* of Taiwanese Modern Ink-wash Painting

The term 'Taiwanese modern Ink-wash painting' in my thesis will be located it in the specific period after 1949, the year of pivotal importance in the history of Taiwan in the 20th century and the consequent political and historical backdrop. During the 1960s, American Abstract Expressionism was the underlying influence on Taiwanese modern Ink-wash painting, and therefore advanced the 'modernity' of this genre and diversified its artistic styles.

With reference to 'modernity' in Taiwan's modern Ink-wash painting, we should not confuse it "with 'modernity' in the Euro-American sense of a marker of temporal logic (as part of a sequence from pre-modern to modern and postmodern)."[26] As Juergen Habermas (1929-), the German sociologist and philosopher, puts it, in Western theory of modernity, the term 'modernity' refers to a historical time and epoch. Habermas has shown that "the word 'modern', in its Latin form 'modernus', was used for the first time in the late 5th century in order to distinguish the present, which had become officially Christian, from the Roman and pagan past. With

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[26] Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee, "Particular Time, Specific Space, My Truth: Total Modernity in Chinese Contemporary Art," in *Antinomies of Art and Culture*, (London: Duke University Press, 2008), 134

varying content, the term 'modern' again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new."[27] Western modernity is related to 'progress', while its counterpart 'traditional' is associated with 'backwardness'.

However, in most non-Western countries, this model of periodization may not be the most suitable to their experience. Many of them, especially so-called third world countries, lack a clear historical line of progression from pre-modern to modern and then to post-modern. For instance, in some countries such as China where 'modernization' is barely a century old, but in others such as Malaysia and Taiwan, modernization is only a few decades old, and according to Smith, Enwezor and Condee, "Third world countries, therefore, have experienced modernity more through changes of their social environment and political space then through more abstract notions of time and epoch."[28]

With regard to Taiwanese modern Ink-wash painting, the consciousness of 'modernity' represents a new artistic language, quite different to that found within the traditional school. Prior to the late 1950s, Ink-wash painting, referred to the traditional genre that most Taiwanese painters still carried out according to conventional aesthetic theories, forms, techniques, and media. After being inspired by American Abstract Expressionism, Ink-wash painting became more Westernized and modernized, and then subsequently developed alongside Taiwanese culture, environment, and life.

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[27] Juergen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project," in Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves and Seyla Benhbib, *Habermas and The Unfinished Project of Modernity*, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997), 3

[28] Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee, "Particular Time, Specific Space, My Truth: Total Modernity in Chinese Contemporary Art," in *Antinomies of Art and Culture*, (London: Duke University Press, 2008), 136

Traditionalists continued to employ brushes and ink as their creative media, forging their skills through the study of *bi mo*[29] and *cun fa*[30] techniques. However, this transmission of antiquity and the expressive system of traditional Ink-wash painting faced rigorous challenges in the changing times, and, in its evolution from traditional to modern, the content of Ink-wash painting has broken through its restricted media classification and its limited subject matter categories.

As artists pursued formal variations and individual styles, they then developed their own painting techniques based on their specific academic backgrounds. For example, those who persisted in a traditional Ink-wash painting context not only focused on borrowing from the past to create new directions, but also incorporated modern concepts to advance traditional ideas. When Eastern and Western art techniques are blended organically, they naturally mix tradition and modernity giving the underlying traditional context a new fresh set of characteristics to suit a new historical era.

Nonetheless, the pursuit of Western expressionism, enabled artists in Taiwan to emphasize, by the use of comparatively unrestrained brushwork, greater individual expression and emotional release. As the modern Ink-wash painting movement started to gain momentum, artists were transforming traditional Ink-wash painting through references to concepts and techniques derived from Abstract Expressionists. Specifically, their methodology was to maintain the inherent qualities of brushwork and traditional *xuan* paper but to employ new art symbols and compositional styles to

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[29] See section 2.2.2
[30] See section 2.2.2

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present an expanded vision and bring a fresh vitality to the art form. In the words of

Hsieh Tung Shan (1946-), the contemporary art historian, "In spirit, modern

Ink-wash painters identify with traditional aesthetic values, and in terms of medium,

hold steadfastly to its unique traditional nature. However, in terms of technique, they

deviate broadly from the norms of traditional brushwork to create completely new

features and styles."[31]

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[31] Hsieh Tung Shan, *Contemporary Art in Taiwan 1980-2000*, (Taipei: Artist Publishing Co., 2002), 7

1.3.3 Social-political Influence and Historical Development

Before 1949

The development of Ink-wash painting in Taiwan can be traced back to the transitional period between the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties, when there was large migration of Han Chinese people (漢人, or '*Han ren*') from along the mainland coast to Taiwan. Ink-wash painting in Taiwan was therefore shaped by artists from Mainland China's coastal provinces such as Zhejiang (浙江) and Fujian (福建).[32] Representative Ink-wash painters during this period include Lin Chao Ying (林朝英, 1739-1816), Zhuang Jing Fu, (莊敬夫, Qing Dynasty) and Lin Jue, (林覺, Qing Dynasty).[33]

1.6 *Reeds and Duck* (蘆鴨圖), Qing Dynasty, Lin Jue, 29x20cm

[32] Wang Yao Tin, "Artistic Relationship between Taiwan and China since a century," in *New Direction, New Spirit – A Symposium on the Development of Taiwanese Ink Painting in the New Century*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1999), 86

[33] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *Taiwan Modern Art Series: Abstract Lyric Ink Painting*, (Taipei: Taiwan Council for Culture, 2004), 13

1.7 *Double Heron* (雙鷺圖), ca.1814, Lin Chao Ying, 227x136cm

In 1895, after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (馬關條約, or '*Maguan tiao yue*'), Taiwan's sovereignty was ceded to Japan, thereby ending the First Sino-Japanese War (中日甲午戰爭, 1894-1895). During the second half of Japanese Occupation Period, *jiao cai hua*[34] (膠彩畫, '*Nihonga* painting' or '*Japanese Painting*') became the mainstream[35] replacing the traditional Ink-wash painting.[36] *Nihonga* painting, for the Taiwanese, was a new genre imported from Japan characterized by rich and elegant colours from mineral sources. According to Wang,

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[34] The Chinese term of *Nihonga* Painting has been shifted from *ri ben hua* (日本畫) to *jiao cai hua* (膠彩畫) since 1977, which was proposed by Professor Lin Zhi Zhu (林之助, 1917-2008) who is a notable *Nihonga* painter and established the Taiwan Jiao Cai Hua Association (台灣膠彩畫協會) in 1981.

[35] During the initial years under Japan rule, the Chinese Literati painting tradition was respected and protected by the colonial Japanese government. Subsequently, *Nihonga* painting assumed preeminence

[36] Guo Zhen Xiang, "Development and Source of Jiao Cai Hua in Taiwan," in *International Symposium in the Theory and Creation of Chinese Painting*, (Taipei: National Taiwan Normal University, 2002), 146

this period is generally considered to be the lowest point in development for traditional Ink-wash painting in Taiwan.[37]

After 1949 (Post-war Taiwan)

In 1949, after the withdrawal of the Nationalist government ('*Kuo Min Tang*', or 'KMT') to Taiwan[38], there was a substantial influx of traditional Literati painters from across the Taiwan straits, re-establishing Chinese Ink-wash painting as the mainstream in replacement of *Nihonga* Painting from the preceding era of Japanese occupation and sovereignty (1895-1945).[39]

Amongst the many artists who came over, the most notable include Pu Hsin Yu[40] (溥心畬, 1896-1963), Zhang Da Qian[41] (張大千, 1899-1983) and Huang Jun Bi[42]

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[37] Wang De Yu, "Future of Taiwanese Ink-wash Painting," in *New Direction, New Spirit – A Symposium on the Development of Taiwanese Ink Painting in the New Century*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1999), 126

[38] Nationalist government was defeated by the Communist party (共產黨, or '*Gong Chan Dang*') and retreated to Taiwan in 1949.

[39] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *Taiwan Modern Art Series: Abstract Lyric Ink Painting*, (Taipei: Taiwan Council for Culture, 2004), 14

[40] Pu Hsin Yu (溥心畬, or royal name "Aixinjueluo"), was grandson of Emperor Dao Guang (道光, 1821-1851). He was born in the royal imperial Manchu family in Beijing in 1896, and his younger cousin Pu Yi (溥儀, 1906 - 1967), at the young age of three, was to became the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty from 1908 to 1911. Pu Hsin Yu was both educated at Peking University and Humboldt University Berlin, Germany. He received a privately tutored classical education that included training in Chinese painting and calligraphy and he excelled at both. During the 1930s and 1940s, he was as famous as Zhang Da Qian. When people referred to masterly painters, they would often cite "Zhang in the south and Pu in the north (南張北溥)." Pu Hsin Yu was also skilled in poetry, painting and calligraphy. His paintings have been collected in most museums in Taiwan and China.

[41] Zhang Da Qian (張大千, 1899-1983) was born in a family of artists in Sichuan, China. After an extended visit to Kyoto, Japan, Zhang settled in Shanghai in 1919 to study with prominent artists Tseng Hsi (曾熙, 1861-1930) and Li Jui Ching (李瑞清, 1867-1920). In 1939 he found refuge in the remote desert outpost of Tunhuang (敦煌), where he spent more than two years copying the legendary murals in the *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*. A staunch supporter of the KMT government, he left China in 1948 and moved to Brazil, and then to California, before finally settling in Taipei, Taiwan. A meeting between Zhang and Picasso in 1956 was viewed as a meeting between the pre-eminent masters of Eastern and Western art. He is also regarded as one of most important Chinese painter in both China and Taiwan.

[42] Huang Jun Bi (黃君璧, 1898-1991) was a famous artist majored in traditional Literati painting. He once studied under Li Yao Ping (李瑤屏) to learn traditional Chinese painting and then entered Chu Ting (楚庭) Art Institute to learn Western painting. He has greatly influenced the development of traditional Ink-wash painting in Taiwan after his arrival in 1949. Meanwhile, he had been the head of

(黃君璧, 1898-1991), who were acclaimed as the 'du hai san jia' (渡海三家, or "Three Masters from across the Taiwan Straits").[43] The Nationalist government brought with them significant national treasures to Taiwan including calligraphy and paintings that would greatly influence Taiwanese Ink-wash painting.[44]

After withdrawing to Taiwan, the Nationalist government or KMT, undertook to account for their failure in the civil war. They eventually recognized that the Communist party under Mao Ze Dong (毛澤東, 1893-1976) had effectively monitored and manipulated the media in terms of propaganda. The consequence of this self-criticism was that Taiwan entered an era of the censorship and manipulation of mass media. Many Taiwanese people suffered loss of reputation and careers, even imprisonment and death.[45] Furthermore, the Nationalist government promoted comprehensively its right-wing propaganda through all media channels, the result of which being that artists felt stifled and repressed and hence, they became afraid to paint anything that was not in the government's propaganda agenda.[46]

As the content was too abstract to illustrate or carry any political connotations, the application of non-figurative content of Abstract Expressionism was thought by artists of the time to be the best way forward for Taiwanese modern Ink-wash

painting's predicament. Moreover, Abstract Expressionism provided an emotional outlet to Taiwanese artists at a time of oppression, it being relatively free, loose and diverse in its character in comparison to traditional Ink-wash painting which had become relatively restricted, regulated and narrow in operation.

The *Fifth Moon* and *Eastern* Painting Groups

With the beginning of the Korean War in 1950, Taiwan received not only defensive backing but also economic aid from America, as a result of which Taiwanese society became under the influence of unfamiliar cultural and economic stimuli. Artistic concepts and forms from Western modernism that were assimilated by artists such as Li Zhong Sheng[47] (李仲生, 1911-1984), who is widely acknowledged as the "*Father of Taiwanese Modern Art*" and one of the first proponents of abstract painting.[48] While exhibitions naturally represented the most effective way to disseminate the modern painting style to the general public, in straitened times, however, few individuals had the financial means to showcase their work, leading to the formation of circles or 'groups' of like-minded artists. In 1957, two important groups arrived on the Taiwan arts scene, the *Fifth Moon* (五月) which was founded predominantly by graduates from the National Taiwan Normal University, and the *Eastern*[49] (東方) painters, both contributed to the modernization of traditional art by

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[47] Li Zhong Sheng (李仲生) completed his art training in China and Japan and moved to Taiwan with the Nationalist Government in 1949. A pivotal artist and teacher, he introduced the most up-to-date developments (particularly in abstract painting) from the West to Taiwan in the post-war era. He also held considerable influence in the art world in Taiwan as an educator.
[48] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *Fifth Moon and Eastern groups*, (Taipei: Dong Da Publishing Co., 1991), 79
[49] The *Eastern* Art Group was established in 1957; the members of this group were all students of Li Zhong Sheng. Notable figures from the *Eastern Art Group* include Hsiao Chen (蕭勤), Xia Yang (夏陽), Huo Gang (霍剛) and Lee Yuan Jia (李元佳).

breaking away from convention and embracing Western artistic ideology and technique.[50]

While members of the *Fifth Moon* group such as Liu Kuo Sung (劉國松, 1932-) and Ping Zhong Rui (馮鍾睿, 1943-) advocated an abstract style to bring a new relevance to the Literati Ink-wash tradition, the *Eastern* group pursued a diversity of artistic styles. Early in the 1960s, trends from Western modern art began to exert a powerful influence on Taiwan. A number of modern artists, particularly those who experimented with abstract painting, began to consider various avenues of conflict and fusion between Chinese, Western, traditionalist and modernist styles. Consequently, a new and modern version of Ink-wash painting gradually began to take shape.

However, during this extended period of activity from the mid 1950s, painters would still suffer oppression in terms of artistic censorship for the following few decades until 1987 when Martial Law was finally abolished. Only at this juncture did modern Ink-wash painters acquire full artistic autonomy, thus ushering in what has come to be regarded as the golden age of Taiwan's modern Ink-wash painting movement.

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[50] Tseng Su Liang, *Taiwan Modern Art Series: Image-Configuration Ink-Water Painting*, (Taipei: Council for Culture, 2004), 12

2 The Chinese Ink-wash Painting Tradition

2.1 Chinese Scholar Painting

In the development of the world's civilization, Ink-wash painting is considered as one of the most representative arts of Chinese culture. It is the cultural crystallization of one of the greatest civilizations of mankind and has contributed significantly to the development of Chinese culture. Despite the many painting schools, styles and techniques in Chinese art history including court painting, folk art, and Literati painting; Literati painting is generally regarded as the most important of the three broad "schools" or genres. Significantly, Literati painting of the scholar-artists has been the dominant form of Chinese painting since the Yuan Dynasty (元代, 1271-1368). This in turn has led to a tendency to equate Chinese painting with this particular painting school.

Ink-wash painting is a genre of the conventional Chinese painting performed on *xuan* paper in black with no other colours. Simple, yet elegant, it gradually became the most significant style of Chinese painting in the Yuan Dynasty during the 13th century.

Also known as 'Literati painting' or 'scholar painting', Ink-wash painting refers to the painting of the scholars and Literati who were the more well-educated and cultivated within the officialdom of Chinese feudal society, as distinct from court or folk painting. Literati painting can trace its origins back to the late Song Dynasty, becoming popular in the successive Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties. Even up till today, there are still many artists producing paintings of this tradition.

In the thirteenth century, the Mongol invasion of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) established the Yuan Dynasty by force. During the period of Mongol rule across the whole of China, those scholar officials that were loyal to the previous Song Dynasty chose to retire. To help them cope with their sense of loss, they had to find other sources of mental stimulation, with most of them choosing to paint. According to James Cahill, "Under the harsh political and economic conditions of the Yuan occupation, educated people formed networks of mutual support, coteries within which traditional Chinese cultural practices were perpetuated."[51] However, it was not only these retired scholar officials that practised the Literati painting style. A number of Han Chinese officials in the Yuan Dynasty such as Zhao Meng Fu (趙孟頫, 1254-1322), also practised this form of Literati painting, which soon spread to the general community of scholars to become a new trend in Chinese Ink-wash painting and a cultural phenomenon that gradually developed in the feudal society of Imperial China.

This long process of evolution may be attributed to a number of influential factors. During the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), Wen Tong (文同, 1019-1079), Su Shi (蘇軾, 1036-1101), and Mi Fu (米芾, 1051-1107) popularized Literati painting with a proliferation of art and writings on the topic, making Literati painting into an important influential artistic movement. During this formation process, the Yuan Dynasty painters Zhao Meng Fu and Ke Jiu Si (柯九思, 1290-1343) emphasized calligraphic elements in the painting (*From Calligraphy into Painting*[52], 以書入畫),

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[51] James Cahill, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 140

[52] The term '*From Calligraphy into Painting*' (以書入畫) generally refers to the application of different types of calligraphic qualities in Ink-wash paintings, but the style of *cursive script* is normally applied.

while Qian Xuan (錢選, 1235-1305) advocated his *shi qi*[53] (士氣) theory. Many artists utilized symbolic plants including the plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum (also known as the "Four Gentlemen"[54], 四君子, *Si Jun Zi*) as their painting subject matter to represent their personal aspirations and sentiments.[55] Further along the timeline into the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Literati painting had risen to dominance, becoming a painting system that possessed unique national characteristics for the people. With the crossing of the three masters, namely, Pu Hsin Yu (溥心畬), Zhang Da Qian (張大千) and Huang Jun Bi (黃君璧), to Taiwan in 1949, Literati painting continued to flourish in Taiwan.

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[53] *Shi qi* (士氣) refers to the noble character of the Literati. During the Yuan Dynasty under foreign rule, many Literati refused to work for the oppressors and become government officials. They chose instead to stay at home to write and paint, highlighting their high moral ethics of refusing to give in to the enemy. Qian Xuan's *shi qi* theory therefore contributed to the development of Literati painting, instituting the scholar's moral character as one of the aesthetic standards of Literati painting.

[54] James Cahill, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*. (New Haven: Yale University and Foreign Languages Press, 1997), 140. Plant subjects such as bamboo, blossoming plum, Orchid, and chrysanthemum had been the favourites of scholar painters since Northern Song Dynasty. The symbolic meanings attached to plant subjects made them ideal for carrying congratulatory and other messages between Literati, and for strengthening their sense of community at a time when these common values seemed threatened. For example, the blossoming bamboo was symbolized as survivors of the harshness of winter, the Confucian virtue of maintaining one's integrity in trying times.

[55] Yang Xin, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, (New Haven: Yale University and Foreign Languages Press, 1997), 141

2.1.1 The Colours of Ink-wash Painting

The use of colour in ancient Chinese painting reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty period. However, and due to the rise of Literati painting, Chinese Ink-wash painting moved towards using *qian jiang* (淺絳), which was invented by Yuan Dynasty painter Huang Gong Wang (黃公望, 1269-1354). This was a monochromatic form of expression involving the application of very light layers of colour on ink foundations. This led to colour taking a secondary and complementary role to ink.

Traditionally, ancient Chinese have regarded black, white, red, green and yellow as the standard primary colours. These colours correspond to the *Five Elements* of water, metal, fire, wood and earth, and the Chinese believed they made up everything in Nature. These five standard colours have often been used by the ancient Chinese to represent all the colours in the world. For instance, in the *Tao Te Ching* (道德經), Lao Tzu states, "Five colours blinds."[56] Lao Tzu uses the five colours to represent all the colours in the world.

The use of colour in traditional Literati painting is generally restricted to the traditional Chinese painting pigments and which are mainly mineral green (石綠, *Shi Lu*), mineral blue (石青, *Shi Qing*), vermilion (朱砂, *Zhu Sha*), orange-red (朱膘, *Zhu Biao*), sandy beige (赭石, *Zhe Shi*), white (白粉, *Bai Fen*), cyanine blue (花青, *Hua Qing*) and cadmium yellow (藤黃, *Teng Huang*). These colours are seldom mixed together to produce other colours. Traditional Chinese Ink-wash painters are conservative in their use of colours, normally only using very light tones.

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[56] Translated from Chinese text "五色令人目盲"

Importantly, they also avoid bright vivid colours fearing that they will be visually stronger than the black ink, placing more emphasis on the tonal changes of the ink than in the changes in the colours.

2.2 Principle Components of Ink-wash Painting

2.2.1 The Four Treasures of Ink-wash Painting

Every creative process of making artworks, which has it own individual style of both artistic forms and techniques, is a result of utilizing different materials and tools. In traditional Ink-wash painting, the four essential artefacts comprise *bi* (brush), *mo* (ink), *zhi* (paper) and *yan* (ink stone). Among Chinese artists, they are also known as the *Four Treasures of Study*, and there is a considerable body of literature on the subject left by painters and connoisseurs from deep into antiquity.

Bi (笔, Brush)

Of the Four Treasures, the most ancient and prized is the brush, of which there is archaeological evidence dating back to the Zhou Dynasty (1045 BC–256 BC). Traditionally, a brush consists of a bundle of animal hair held together by a hollowed stick of bamboo. The hair normally comes from either a rabbit, a weasel, a wolf, a goat or a deer[57] while precious materials such as jade, ivory, sandalwood are sometimes used to replace the humble bamboo handle.

Brushes vary greatly in shape and size but are more typically classified by texture such as *ruan hao* (軟毫, 'soft-hair'), *jian hao* (兼毫, 'mixed hair') or *ying hao* (硬毫, 'hard hair'). Whether the brushstroke quality is stiff or soft is determined by the type of animal hair used, as each type possesses different absorptive capacities resulting in a different manner of calligraphic line. Wolf hair is more resilient than goat's hair, while rabbit hair is firmer. Different brushes are used for different styles of

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[57] In antiquity, hair from a newborn's first haircut was used as a medium, as it was believed to bring good luck in the imperial examinations, a system used to select elite officials for the state bureaucracy.

calligraphy and Ink-wash painting; a stiff and resilient brush with a stiff waxed core would give a line that dynamically thins and thickens, while a soft brush would produce a more even line.

2.1 *Chinese Brushes*

Mo (墨, Ink)

The ink stick is a form of ink made solid and was developed during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) for ease of transport and preservation. Generally speaking, ink sticks are categorized as either *you yan mo* (油煙墨) or *song yan mo* (松煙墨), made by smoking tung oil or pine resins. By burning the tung oil or pine resins under a cover, a residue known as lampblack was collected and mixed with animal-based glue. The mixture was then pressed into moulds and allowed to dry to produce ink sticks. By adding a bit of water, these ink sticks can then be ground with an ink stone into the fluid ink used for painting. This is usually done just before painting as ink dries quickly after a few hours.

*Zhi (*紙, *Xuan* Paper)

Paper was first invented in China in AD 105. Before then, bamboo slips and silk were used for writing. More convenient than bamboo, paper soon gained popularity as a cheaper alternative to silk, and its prevalence was confirmed when the Chinese developed woodblock printing as an inexpensive method for mass-producing and distributing literature.

Xuan paper can be divided into two primary categories, *sheng zhi* (生紙, raw paper) and *shou zhi* (熟紙, ripe paper). *Sheng zhi* is not treated by any process, and is most absorbent and malleable. On the other hand, *shou zhi* is smeared with a dilute glue solution or alum, and has a less absorbent quality. The characteristics of *sheng zhi* and *shou zhi* are achieved by the controlled application of glue or potash alum to paper fibre, thereby determining absorbency and stiffness. In terms of thickness, the categorization of *xuan* paper is divided as *dan xuan* (單宣), *jia xuan* (夾宣), *shuang xuan* (雙宣). *Dan xuan* is a very thin paper with a porous and absorbent character; *shuang xuan's* thickness is double that of *dan xuan*; *jia xuan's* thickness lies in between the other two.

Yan (硯, Ink stone)

Ink stones are used to grind the ink stick into powder, which is then blended with water to produce ink for painting and calligraphy. The first known ink stones or stone mortars date back to the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). Early ink stones incorporate a cavity for storing water that, in later iterations, would develop to become an ink reservoir.

Ink stones are often embellished with carved ornamentation. More important than visual appearance, however, is the type and quality of the stone where the texture and granular quality of the ink is determined by the surface grain on which the ink stick is ground. A finer ink stone surface grain gives a finer pigment texture to the ink while a coarse grounding surface results in a correspondingly coarser texture of the resulting ink.

2.4 *Ink stones*

2.2.2 Technical Fundamentals of Bi Mo

Bi Mo

Bi mo (bi/筆/brush and mo/墨/ink) constitutes both the principal language and technique of traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting that make it unique. Yun Shou Ping (惲壽平, 1633-1690), a celebrated artist of the Qing Dynasty, commented that, "where there is bi and mo, there is painting." More recently, Lang Shao Jun elaborates the point when he says that "In the hands of the masters, what originates as the skilful mastery of a specific medium transcends into an agency for visual and philosophical discourse"[58]. Ni Zai Qin (倪再沁) of the Dong Hai University Research Institute in Taiwan, remarks that the "language of Ink-wash painting, what we call bi mo, is a collective designation for the technical skills of brush and ink, equivalent to line and hue in the Western idiom."[59] Bi mo can therefore be considered syntactically as nouns, adjectives, and verbs. According to Ni, "They are the form, content and spirit of Chinese painting."[60]

Bi Methodology (筆法)

There are eighteen brush forms in traditional Chinese figure painting, Shi Ba Miao (十八描), and additionally various cun fa[61] (皴法, brush texturing strokes) in landscape painting. These myriad techniques of expression have been passed down through generations of artists. In contrast to the importance of colour in Western art, the line is paramount in traditional Chinese painting. Traditional flower-bird painting, landscapes and portraiture rarely deviate from the basic manipulation of the

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[58] Lang Shao Jun, *Modern Chinese Essays*, (Nanning: Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House), 201
[59] Ni Zai Qin, *A Critique on Chinese Ink Painting*, (Taipei: Collector Artist Magazine), 170
[60] Ni Zai Qin, *A Critique on Chinese Ink Painting*, (Taipei: Collector Artist Magazine), 74
[61] In traditional Chinese painting, different combinations of brush and ink techniques are used to depict the different textures of rocks and trees

line. The success of the line relies on *gu fa* (骨法, structural brushwork), one of the "*Six Principles of Chinese Painting*" identified by Hsieh Ho (謝赫, ca. 6th Century), in *Notes and Criticism of Ancient Painting* (古畫品錄, *Ku Hua P'in Lu*), observed by all traditional schools of Chinese Ink-wash painting. Put simply, *gu fa* comprises the means by which a brush can be used to achieve different effects in ink. There are many brush techniques in landscape painting and different schools that accentuate different brush techniques, but these can be categorised essentially into *zhong feng* (中鋒), *ce feng* (側鋒), *ni feng* (逆鋒), *shun feng* (順鋒), *san feng* (散蜂).

In the *zhong feng* technique (中鋒), the brush is gripped with the shaft aligned at 90 degrees or perpendicular to the horizontal picture so that the tip of the brush remains in the centre of the line (Fig. **2.5**). Lines drawn in this form are rich and solid; this technique, strongly favoured by traditional artists, is recognized as the most basic and vital. Good examples of this technique include '*pi ma cun*'[62] (披麻皴, hemp-fibre texture strokes) in *cun fa*, which was often used by the celebrated artist Huang Gong Wang (黃公望, 1269-1354) in the Yuan Dynasty, and may be seen in his painting *Fuchun Mountain Retreat* (富春山居圖) (Fig. **2.6**).[63]

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[62] Hemp-fibre texture stroke: One of the techniques of painting rocks using repetitive arc-like lines from top to bottom, weaving together from left to right. Mostly used to depict the Jiangnan mountain scenery which has more soil than rocks.

[63] Zhan Qian Yu, *Chinese Ink-wash Painting*, (Taipei: Artist Book Co., Ltd, 2000), 84

2.5 *Zhong feng,* Ye Guo Shin   **2.6** (*Pi ma cun*), *Fuchun Mountain Retreat* (富春山居圖),
                                                1350, Huang Gong Wang, 33x636.9cm

In the c*e feng* technique (側鋒), the shaft of the brush is positioned at an angle

between 10 to 90 degrees to the paper when the ink is applied (Fig. **2.7**). If the angle

is less than 10 degrees, the technique is known as *pian feng* (偏峰). Lines drawn

using *ce feng* give an impression of sharpness and firmness because the brush tip is

inclined to one side. Applications of this method include '*fu pi cun*'[64] (斧劈皴,

axe-cut texture strokes)[65] in *cun fa* and notable exponents include Xia Gui (夏圭, ca.

1195-1224), who painted *Clear Mountain and Streams* (溪山清遠圖) from the

Southern Song Dynasty (Fig. **2.8**).

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[64] Axe-cut texture stroke: This type of *cun fa* is drawn with *ce feng*, like an axe cutting through rocks,
mainly used to depict texture of hard rock boulders. This technique is often used by Southern Song
landscape painters.

[65] Li Jing Sheng, *Chinese Painting: Landscape,* (He Fei: An Hui Art Publisher Co. Ltd, 2008), 70

2.7 *Ce feng*, Ye Guo Shin

2.8 (*Fu pi cun*), *Clear Mountain and Streams* (溪 山 清 遠 圖), ca. 1200-1230, Xia Gui, 46.5x889.1cm

In the *ni feng* technique (逆鋒), the brush is pushed against the paper in the direction of the brush tip with the shaft set at an angle of less than 80 degrees to the picture surface (Fig. **2.9**). A horizontal line will therefore be drawn from right to left and a vertical line pushed up from bottom to top in contrast to the conventional stroke. This implementation is more mannered, lending the line a quality of 'agitation' and 'distress'.

2.9 *Ni feng*, Ye Guo Shin

2.10 *(Ni feng), Dwelling with Million Bamboo in the Mountains* (萬竹山居圖), 1922, Qi Bai Shi,

103x49.5cm

Shun feng (順鋒) represents the converse of *ni feng*. Using this technique, the shaft is inclined against the holding hand during the stroke so that the tip of the brush is concealed within the furrow created by the ink, thus tending to intensify the core of the line in relation to its edges.   The result is a seemingly effortless stroke with a natural follow-through. '*Zhe dai cun*'[66] (折帶皴), a form of *shun feng*, is well exemplified in *Remote Stream and Cold Pines* (幽澗寒松圖) by Ni Yun Lin (倪雲林 , 1301-1374) during the Yuan Dynasty (See Fig. **2.12**).

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[66] This technique was developed by Ni Yun Lin. The drawing method is to first use *shun feng* to draw a long horizontal line, then run down in the direction of ninety degrees. Using several groups of these overlapping brush strokes creates a visual effect like folded tape.

2.11 *Shun feng,* Ye Guo Shin

2.12 (*Zhe dai cun*), *Remote Stream and Cold Pines* (幽潤寒松圖*)*, ca. 1314-1368, Ni Yun Lin, 59.7x 50.4cm

San feng (散鋒) is a stroke employing a 'broken' brush where the hairs have been pre-spread in advance, and which results in a series of short forked lines (Fig. **2.13**). This technique creates the result of '*fei bai*'[67] (飛白, flying white) (Fig. **2.15**). The 20th century artist Fu Bao Shi (傅抱石, 1904-1965) developed this technique and often utilized it in the *cun fa* depiction of rocks and mountains known as '*bao shi cun*'[68] (抱石皴, Fig. **2.14**).

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[67] A technique derived from calligraphy. When writing calligraphy, due to ink not completely flowing out of the brush tip, resulting in dragging lines or *liu bai* visual effects. This technique can be achieved by *san feng* technique or by accelerating the speed of the brush stroke.
[68] Fu Bao Shi used the *san feng* technique to depict structure of the mountains and texture of the rocks, creating his own unique style of *cun fa* named after him.

2.13 *San feng,* Ye Guo Shin

2.14 (*Bao shi cun*), *Walking with Cane in Search of Tranquillity* (策杖探幽圖), 1963, Fu Bao Shi, 67x44.5cm

2.15 *Joy of Bi and Mo*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 35x136cm

Mo Methodology (墨法)

Zhang Da Qian (張大千, 1899-1983) the twentieth century painter famed for both his traditionalist and modern impressionist works, once said that "it is hard to use a brush to draw, and harder to use ink."[69] Hsieh Ho (謝赫, ca. 6th Century) of the Southern Qi Dynasties writes in his *"Six Principles of Chinese Painting"* of *gu fa* (骨法, textural brushwork), the techniques through which the brush is manipulated, but does not specifically go into the usage of the ink. As the development of Chinese Ink-wash painting began to mature and in addition to brush techniques, more emphasis was placed on ink effects. The usage of ink can be described in two ways, namely – ink tones (such as *thick, thin, dry,* and *wet*), and ink application techniques.

Traditional Literati Ink-wash paintings are usually monochromatic, with traditional Literati painters using ink as a substitute for colours in their paintings. Much has been written on this point and here I cite Li Jing Sheng when he says that, "Just like colours with their different hues and tones, ink can also produce different tonal variations; when used properly and coupled with layering, ink can be divided into different 'colours' to enrich the depiction of pictorial elements."[70]

Citing a much earlier authority on the classification of ink tones, Zhang Yan Yuan (張彥遠, 815-907) of the Tang Dynasty writes in *Famous Paintings Through the Ages (歷代名畫記)* that ink can, through transformation and layering, effect a vivid palette of hues. He goes on to classify ink into five 'colours' (墨分五色, *mo fen wu se*) - *scorched, thick, thin, dry* and *wet*. Tang Dai (唐岱, ca. 1673-1751) of the Qing Dynasty adds white to the mix, creating a six-hued palette of *black, white, dry, wet,*

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[69] Kao Ling Mei, *Chinese Painting by Zhang Da Qian,* (Taipei: Art Book Co., Ltd, 1988), 104
[70] Li Jing Sheng, *Chinese Painting: Landscape,* (He Fei: An Hui Art Publisher Co., Ltd, 2008), 65-66

thick and *thin*. Whether the mixture is wet or dry is determined by the ratio of water to ink while thickness is regulated by the amount of ink from the ink block. These two characteristics, dilution and fluidity, are combined to enable a large variety of monochromatic hues. Experienced painters can create vivid 'colours' using surprisingly small quantities of ink. Water is absorbed into the body of the brush, the tip dipped into concentrated ink, and the brush applied before the two can properly combine; as the ink becomes more diluted and dry, the brush can achieve the whole range of thick, thin, dry and wet 'colours', creating highlights and shadows and folding in dimensional complexity to demonstrate the artist's command of different ink types and styles.

In 1945, the Mainland Chinese painter Huang Bin Hong (黃賓虹, 1865-1955) proposed an alternative classification known as the *Seven Methods of Ink* (七墨法) comprising of the *thick*, the *light*, the *broken*, the *splashed*, the *leftover*, the *accumulated*, and the *scorched*. What sets these classifications apart from previous designations is the detailed categorization of ink 'colour' based on application techniques.

I have compressed the Seven Methods as proposed by Huang Bin Hong into the following four.

1. **Accumulated Ink Method (積墨)**: In landscape scenes featuring mountains, rocks, trees and forests, layering and shading is often employed in order to express depth. This method uses thin ink to prime the base. After drying, a second, a third, and subsequent layers are applied to build up density without allowing the layers to bleed into one another. Layers are accumulated

incrementally to make the artist's preferred background, foreground and all the elements in between. The painters Gong Xian (龔賢, 1618-1689), Wang Yuan Qi (王原祈, 1642-1715) and Li Ke Ran (李可染, 1907-1989) were all skilled exponents of the accumulated ink method. (See *Reading Room* in the Pine Forest by Gong Xian (Fig. **2.16**) and *Shao Mountain* by Li Ke Ran (Fig. **2.17**))

2.16 *Reading Room* in the Pine Forest (松林書屋圖), 1684, Gong Xian, 272.2x128.3cm

2.17 Shao Mountain (韶山圖), 1969, Li Ke Ran, 107.5x102cm

2. **Broken Ink Method (破墨)**: There are two different applications of this method, namely – *thin over thick* (淡破濃) (Fig. **2.18**) and *thick over thin* (濃破淡) (Fig. **2.19**) – which both use contrasting consistencies to break up a large painted area, to establish dimension and detail in a painting. Examples of this method can be found in early Qing Dynasty works by Shi Tao (石濤, 1642-1718), Ba Da Shan Ren (八大山人, ca. 1626-1705), and Qi Bai Shi (齊白石, 1864-1957). (See *Living and Touring in the Landscape* by Ba Da Shan Ren (Fig. **2.20**)).

2.18 *Thin over thick*　　　　**2.19** *Thick over thin*　　　　**2.20** *Living and Touring in the Landscape* (居遊山水圖), 1699, Ba Da Shan Ren, 118x43cm

3. **Splashed Ink Method (潑墨)**: Developed during the Tang Dynasty by Wang Qia (王洽, ca. 805), this comparatively random technique involves splashing concentrated and diluted ink onto the paper and then allowing it to settle naturally. The artist then integrates features that fit the contours and shapes of the deposited 'colour'. The splashing ink method can be found in many works of Zhang Da Qian (張大千, 1899-1983). (See *Swiss Peak* by Zhang Da Qian (Fig. **2.21**)).

2.21 Swiss Peak (瑞士奇峰), 1968, Zhang Da Qian, 66.3x188cm

4. **Scorched Ink Method (焦墨)**: This method uses partially desiccated (filmed) ink to achieve a 'colour' that is both extremely dense and dry (Fig. **2.22**). This resultant, somewhat granular ink, was often used by painters in antiquity to mark boundaries or the outlines of objects. This method can be seen in Huang Bin Hong's (黃賓虹, 1865-1955) landscape works such as *Landscape in the Spirit of Dong Yuan and Ju Yu* (Fig. **2.23**).

2.22 *Scorched Ink*, Ye Guo Shin

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2.23 *Landscape in the Spirit of Dong Yuan and Ju Yu* (董據餘意), 1954, Huang Bin Hong, 44.3x77.5cm

The making of an Ink-wash painting inevitably involves multiple, overlapping methods. A picture may, for example, simultaneously make use of splashed and accumulated ink methods. This can lead to undesirable results where different methods vie for attention or one overpowers another, leaving the painting unbalanced. Conventionally, *bin zhu*[71] (賓主) should be applied where a principal technique (主, *zhu*) is preferably combined with other methods that are subordinate (賓, *bin*), providing variety and dynamism to a cohesive work.

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[71] See section 2.2.5.2

2.2.3 Literati Paintings, Literature and Calligraphy

While the aesthetic theory of *"The Shared Origins of Calligraphy and Painting"* (書畫同源, or '*shu hua tong yuan*') stems originally from Zhang Yan Yuan (張彥遠, 815-907) during the Tang Dynasty, the emphasis on the interrelation of both calligraphy and Chinese painting became popular after the Song Dynasty. Due to the rise of Literati painting in the Yuan Dynasty, the scholars who were initially skilled in calligraphy, merged calligraphic *bi* methodology into their paintings, making a closer relationship between calligraphy and painting. Eventually, the incorporation of the linear quality of calligraphy, incorporating *bi* methodology into Ink-wash paintings, became an essential aesthetic criterion in judging Literati painting.

The role of calligraphy in traditional Chinese paintings has mainly been classified into different categories as set out in the *"The Shared Origins of Calligraphy and Painting"*. Traditionally, this aesthetic concept has been used to explain the close relationship between calligraphy and Ink-wash painting, but there are several interpretations to it. Firstly, both calligraphy and Ink-wash painting use the same media, namely the Chinese brush and ink. Secondly, they both employ the same *bi mo*[72] techniques, the skilled application of the brushstroke. The brushstrokes used in both Ink-wash painting and calligraphy are similar in nature, and the skilled execution of the various elements in a Ink-wash painting require a good command of the art of calligraphy and proficiency in the use of the brush. Song Dynasty aesthetician Zhao Xi Hu (趙希鵠, ca. 1231) once emphasized that, "proficient calligraphers must be good at painting, proficient painters should also write well.

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[72] See section 2.2.2

Calligraphy and painting are actually the same incident."[73] Guo Xi also expressed in his book *Lofty Ambitions in Forests and Streams* (林泉高致, *Lin Quan Gao Zhi*) that "people who study painting, are no different from those studying calligraphy"[74]; subsequently, Yuan Dynasty Zhao Meng Fu (趙孟頫, 1254-1322) and Ke Jiu Si (柯九思, 1290-1343) also expressed similar views. Thirdly, from a theoretical perspective, calligraphy and traditional Ink-wash painting share the same aesthetic principles, such as *xu shi*[75] (虛實), *shu mi*[76] (疏密), *qu shi*[77] (取勢).

A significant point to note is that using calligraphic means of depicting subject matter such as bamboo and pine trees in Ink-wash painting eventually evolved to become an important characteristic of Literati painting. Upon completion of their paintings, many artists even added a '寫' (*xie*, literally translated as "wrote") behind their signatures to highlight the fact that most Literati artists apply calligraphic techniques to draw the pictures or integrate the calligraphic qualities into their paintings. Peng Xiu Yin advocated, "Every blade of grass, vine or leaf in a Literati painting is expressed through the lines of calligraphy by the Literati painters."[78] This is to illustrate their pursuit of the "*The Shared Origins of Calligraphy and Painting*", and to emphasise their scholar status by observing the Literati painting tradition of *xie hua* (寫畫), literally translated as "writing the painting."[79]

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[73] Zhao Xi Hu, *Tong Tian Qing Lu Ji Gu Hua Ban*, (Taipei: World Book Co., Ltd, 1974), 51
[74] Lin Guo Xi, *Quan Gao Zhi*, (Taipei: World Book Co., Ltd, 1974), 38
[75] See section 2.2.5.2
[76] Ibid
[77] Ibid
[78] Peng Xiu Yin, *Aesthetic Tradition of Chinese Literati Painting*, (Taipei: Wen Jin Publishing Co., Ltd, 1995), 4
[79] Peng Xiu Yin, *Aesthetic Tradition of Chinese Literati Painting*, (Taipei: Wen Jin Publishing Co., Ltd, 1995), 5-6

Yuan Dynasty painter Zhao Meng Fu (趙孟頫, 1254-1322) composed a poem which has become well-known in its description of the close relationship between calligraphy and the Literati painting tradition. The poem describes, "Rocks as in flying white, trees as in seal script. When painting bamboo one applies the spreading clerical script. Those who understand this thoroughly will realize that calligraphy and (Literati) painting have always been the same."[80] Below is an illustration of Zhao Meng Fu's painting *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees* (秀石疏林圖) and the use of different calligraphic scripts (Fig. **2.24**).

2.24 *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees (秀石疏林圖)*, Yuan Dynasty, Zhao Meng Fu, 27.5x62.8cm

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[80] My own translation, and the original Chinese text is "石如飛白木如籀,寫竹還應八法通,若也有人能會此,須知書畫本來同."

2.2.3.1 Shi Shu Hua He Yi

Shi shu hua he yi (詩書畫合一, or "Traditional three-fold character of Chinese Literati painting"), is an imperative component of Literati painting, and refers to the three essential elements of calligraphic quality, classical literature, and painting to constitute the genre of traditional Ink-wash painting. From the aesthetic perspective of *shi shu hua he yi*[81], more emphasis is placed on calligraphy in the form of the calligraphic inscriptions (落款, *luo kuan*) being an indispensable part of Literati painting. These pictorial content-related classical poems are an integral part of the Literati painting, judged not only for literary merit but also on aesthetic criteria of calligraphy.[82]

This type of painting format became popular from the time of the Yuan Dynasty. Before then, artists normally would not sign their works although some would hide their signature among the leaves in a tree, such as in the case of Fan Kuan (范寬, ca. 960-1030) in his *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams* (Fig. **2.25**). Shen Jing (沈璟, 1553-1610) of the Ming Dynasty wrote in his book *Paint the Dirt* (畫塵), "Calligraphic inscriptions (落款, *luo kuan*) were normally not practised by artists before the Yuan Dynasty, and signatures were usually written between the stone crevices, because their calligraphy was not good enough and would destroy the composition of the painting."[83] It was only after the Yuan Dynasty when artists additionally pursued classical literature and calligraphy as important components in their paintings. For example, in the Yuan Dynasty painter Ni Yun Lin's (倪雲林,

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[81] The oeuvre of Literati painting is created by the scholar-artist, who focuses on calligraphic quality, philosophical ideology, aesthetic theories, and classical literature. Therefore, they infuse these artistic components into their oeuvre when they paint.

[82] Fan Po, *History of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy Aesthetics*, (Jilin: Jilin Fine Arts Publishing House, 1998), 462

[83] My own translation, and the original Chinese text is "元以前多不用款,款或隱之山隙,恐書不精, 有傷畫局."

1301-1374) painting *Remote Stream and Cold Pines* (幽澗寒松圖) (Fig. **2.26**), classical poetry occupies the top left portion of the whole painting, describing the artist's mood at that time. From Ni Yun Lin's inscription, we learn that during the Yuan-Ming period of transition when there were a lot of wars, Ni Yun Lin's close friend Zhou Xun Xue (周遜學) wanted to reject marriage in order to participate in the wars; Ni Yun Lin composed this painting in an attempt to retain his friend and persuade him not to join the military (Fig. **2.27**).

The relationship between painting and poetry was intended to ensure that the content of the literature was integrated with the content of the painting and that one should echo the other. It was also intended that the literary content should also indirectly imply the artist's creative ideas and the nature of the content of the painting. Importantly, the inscriptions were usually written in classical literature so that the viewer could appreciate both the beauty of the literary text and painting at the same time.

2.25 *Travellers Among Mountains and Streams*, 11th century, Fan Kuan, 155.3x74.4cm

2.26 *Remote Stream and Cold Pines (*幽澗寒松圖*)*, Yuan Dynasty, Ni Yun Lin, 59.7x50.4cm

2.27 The poem of *Remote Stream and Cold Pines*

2.2.4 Multiple Visual Perspectives

The difference in perspective representation between Eastern, and Western Renaissance and post-Renaissance paintings is considerable with the most influential perspective theory in Chinese landscape painting being the *Three Distances* (三遠法, also known as "*Three Types of Mountain Perspectives*") as proposed by Guo Xi (郭 熙, 1023-1085). In it, he distils the lessons of the ancients from which he derived the *Three Distances*, which in turn has given Chinese landscape painting its unique character.

Guo Xi's perspective theory is concerned with being able to observe the scene in the painting from multiple viewpoints, thereby creating visual effects of different heights and proximity. As a result, he identified *deep-distance*, *high-distance* and *level-distance* as three different perspective views, and which are known collectively as the *Three Distances*.

In *high-distance* (高遠) composition (Fig. **2.28**), the perspective is bottom-up, that is to say the scene is one of a cliff viewed from the foot of a mountain. Layer upon layer is built up to represent the near-far relationship between mountain groups and steep hills, evoking the sense of vastness that one experiences when one encounters a great mountain. In comparison with the overlapping approach of *level-distance composition*, the main difference is that the angle of vision is from below.

In *deep-distance* (深遠) composition (Fig. **2.28**), the painting is painted from a bird's-eye view. The viewer is not only looking downwards from the top to the foot

of the mountain, but can also see several overlapping layers of mountain scenery in the background.

In *level-distance* (平遠) composition (Fig. **2.28**), the focal point is at eye-level extending towards the horizon. It is more commonly known in the West as one-point perspective.

2.28 *High-distance*   *Deep-distance*   *Level-distance*

2.29 *Early Spring*, 1072, Guo Xi, 158.3X108.1cm

Chinese landscape painting always incorporates these three perspectives into one painting, creating so-called "multi-perspective", also known as "mobile perspective." Chinese landscape painting's *Three Distances* lets the viewer, in the same mountain painting, simultaneously look up at the mountain, look down from the mountain, and look beyond the mountain. The viewer's viewpoint is fluid, constantly shifting from one angle of vision to another to create the visual effects of depth, height and expansiveness. The viewer's focal point changes from high to far, far to near, near to low, and then stretches towards the infinite horizon; thus, creating a rhythmic visual presentation.

In addition, landscape painting is also concerned with the frame of mind, and for this reason, painting scenery is not at all about creating a genuine or faithful depiction of the elements of the scene. The painter looks to express a feeling of resemblance as well as a disparity between their inner being and the natural world (像與不像之間), thereby striving to attain the different moods of scenes that Guo Xi identified as 'where one can walk, where one can view, where one can live, and where one can travel'[84] (可行,可望,可居,可遊). This kind of situation, in which man and nature are mixed together, contains the notion that the two are inseparable. Certainly, just as Taiwanese academic Hsu Fu Kuan (1904-1982) elucidated in his book *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, seeing the invisible through the visible, is a kind of blending of oneself with the external world, which is a deeply Chinese philosophical point of view.

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[84] Shih Shu Ping, *Journey East: Spanning the Mountains and Valleys – A Historical and Aesthetic Account of Taiwanese Ink Painting*, (Taichung: National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, 2007), 56

2.2.5 Philosophical and Aesthetic Theories in Ink-wash Painting

2.2.5.1 Philosophical Ideology

Before we can begin to consider the differences between modern and traditional views of aesthetics in Chinese painting, we must first know what is Chinese painting and what are its underlying philosophies.

According to Rowley, on the 'spirit' of the (Chinese) people, commented that, "These are the intangibles that embody the hopes and feelings of a people, and their views and experiences of God, Nature, and Man, or as the Chinese put it, Heaven (天), Earth (地), and Man (人)."[85] As regards the dominant cultural mindset in ancient China (pre-Qing Dynasty China), instead of religion, the Chinese preferred the art of living in this world. "Just as Christianity and the Hellenic traditions moulded European art, in China the two indigenous doctrines of living, Taoism (道教) and Confucianism (儒家), determined the cultural climate in which Chinese painting flourished."[86]

Delving deeper, the Chinese and the West had distinctive differences in their viewpoints and understanding of the basic contrast of 'spirit' and 'matter'. For the West, the division between them has consistently been seen as problematic with matter belonging to the field of science, with 'spirit' belonging to the realm of prayer and worship. These two irreconcilable entities resulted in Western art heading towards the extremes of realistic representation and religious meaning. The Chinese, however, created a unique notion of the "oneness of spirit and matter, where the

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[85] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 3
[86] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 3

realm of spirit was one with the realm of matter."[87] The notion of the Tao (道) embodied this unique concept of spirit and matter.

> "There was something formless yet complete that existed before heaven and earth, without sound, without substance, dependent on nothing, unchanging, all-pervading, unfailing. One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven. Its true name we do not know. Tao is the by-name that we give it."[88]

Instead of the Western dualisms of spirit and matter, creator and created, animate and inanimate; the Chinese emphasized the notion of one cosmic power pervading the whole universe. "This concept of the Tao was the touchstone of Chinese painting which affected the creative imagination, the subject matter and the interpretations."[89]

It was the underlying concept of the Tao that inspired Chinese painting to its creative heights. The Chinese artist therefore sought harmony with the universe through a communion with nature, using painting as a way to express the harmony of Tao as reflected in nature. As both belong to the elemental being of the universe, there is no separating line drawn between nature and the experience of man.

Within the tradition of Chinese landscape painting, nature is considered to be the fountainhead of artistic inspiration with its inexhaustible variety of forms and patterns, and the aim of the artist is to capture the essence or spirit instead of just the superficial likeness of the exterior form. In order to achieve this, it is believed that

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[87] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 4

[88] Zeng Chun Hai, *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, (Taipei: Wu Nan Culture Enterprise, 2005), 265. Translation from the original Chinese text, "有物混成,先天地生,寂兮寥兮,獨立而不改,周行而不殆,可以為天下母.吾不知其名,強字之曰道,強名之曰大-道德經第二十五章."

[89] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 5

the artist must first be attuned with nature and the universal forces of Tao, its primal source. On achieving this sense of a communion with nature, the artist becomes meditative and contemplative, with the emphasis being on "perception through contemplation of the world of nature until you merge with the universal."[90] In this regard, traditional Chinese painting is therefore generally as a form of spiritual experience reflecting in the words of Yu Tseng Tseng, the "Chinese sublime view of nature in concert with the universe."[91] According to Sze, "The concept of Tao, and the ideal of conduct and thought expressive of Tao, continued to be of fundamental importance, governing technique, theory, and the approach of the painter."[92]

Confucianism, on the other hand, is an ethical and philosophical system developed from the teachings of Confucius (551-479 BC) in China. It is, in effect, a code of conduct to live one's life and focuses on human morality and 'correct' action.[93] The Chinese approach to art and its relationship to humanity dates back to Confucian teachings from over 2500 years ago, with a fundamental Taoist assumption that there is a unity in the essence of all substances, and that all phenomena are generated by substances. The Confucian assumption of unity in the universe, proclaimed by Confucius himself as "My Tao[94] can be understood with one idea", was reinforced by Mencius (孟子, BC372-289) who proposed the existence of the universal chi (氣) sustaining everything, including man's life and activities.[95] Chinese painters always

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[90] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 2
[91] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 5
[92] Sze Mai Mai, *The Tao of Painting*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1957), 7-8
[93] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 11
[94] "The right manner of human activity and virtuous conduct seen as stemming from universal criteria and ideals governing right, wrong, and other categories of existence." Tao. Dictionary.com. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tao (Accessed: June 11, 2009).
[95] Hsu Kai Yu, *Chinese Civilization*, (San Francisco: Asian Language Publications, 1972), 51

endeavoured to emphasize the *shen* (神), or spirit, rather than the external form of the subject, yet without completely abandoning the objective, recognizable form.[96] Within traditional Chinese culture, *chi* is regarded as the vital force inherent in all things and the fundamental source of all beings, sentient and non-sentient, and of all movements and interactions. In the area of painting, the 6th century authority, Hsieh Ho, advocated that a painting must contain the "resonance of vital force, vibrant and moving"[97] (氣韻生動).

2.30 *Yin yang*

Throughout Chinese culture, one can see the extensive use of *yin yang* (陰陽) in everyday life in fields such as medical, metrological, martial arts, music and art (Fig. **2.30**). It is an established Chinese belief that the world is made up of matter, and that all matter is formed, and transformed from the interaction of the forces of *yin* and *yang*. The original meaning of *yin yang* is plain and simple. In essence, it refers to the orientation towards the sun, with the facing side termed *yang*, and the rear shadow side termed *yin*. This basic ideology then extended to include other dualisms

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[96] Zeng Chun Hai, *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, (Taipei: Wu Nan Culture Enterprise, 2005), 288

[97] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 34

such as cold and hot, dark and light, bottom and top, left and right, stillness and motion, and inwardness and outwardness. *Yin yang* can also be applied to stand for entities including man and woman, sun and moon, fire and water. The Chinese sages of ancient times realized and understood that *yin* and *yang* were opposing forces that needed one another for completeness. This completeness or coherence of all things in nature can be found in the dualism of forces throughout the universe, whose interaction is the source of life—birth and death, male and female, heaven and earth. "Fundamentally the principle of *yin yang* stems from Taoism and means the relationship of opposing forces which are mutually necessary to one another."[98]

Traditional Chinese landscape paintings also embody the Tao and *yin yang* principles. For instance, the traditional Literati painter "must always include some dead trees even in the most luxuriant foliage."[99] This is to highlight the living quality of the lush trees by the *yin-yang* opposition of a dead tree by show of contrast.

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[98] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 51
[99] Ibid

2.2.5.2 Aesthetic Theories

Hsieh Ho's Six Principles of Chinese Painting

Hsieh Ho (謝赫, ca. 6ᵗʰ century) was the Chinese art historian and critic most remembered for proposing the much quoted "Six Principles of Chinese Painting". For centuries, Chinese artists have used Hsieh Ho's "Six Principles as the cornerstone of Chinese aesthetic theory"[100] with this ethos having changed very little over the last 1500 years. With regard to the techniques of Chinese Ink-wash painting, it is essential to understand these basic concepts and also to recognize the importance of the order in which this canon has been structured. In essence, Hsieh Ho's 'Six Principles' advocate that the painting should:

1. *Have a life of its own, be vibrant and resonant.* (氣韻生動)

2. *Demonstrate good brushwork providing a sound structure.* (骨法用筆)

3. *Bear some likeness to the nature of the subject.* (應物象形)

4. *Employ hues that answer the needs of the scene.* (隨類賦彩)

5. *Possess a well thought-out composition.* (經營位置)

6. *Respect and learn from tradition.*[101] (傳移模寫)

The first and most important principle is roughly translated as 'spirit resonance', whereby a painting is infused with life and vitality. "In Chinese cosmology, the created universe arises from the primordial breath and the vital breaths (*chi*) that derive from it. This is why it was deemed important in art as in life to recreate these breaths. 'Bring to life the harmonic breaths,' was a canon formulated by Hsieh Ho at

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[100] Michael Sullivan, *The Three Perfections*, (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1980), 20
[101] T.C. Lai, *Chinese Painting*, (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6

the beginning of the sixth century that became the golden rule of Chinese painting."[102] That the painter should bring out the true spirit of a subject in a natural way is a quality not achievable through technique alone. It is more to do with the mindset of the painter, 'being at one' with the essence of the subject, whereupon one is then able to paint a spontaneous picture.

According to Francois Cheng, "The idea of capturing the spirit of something, rather than its superficial likeness, has remained an important guiding principle in Chinese painting"[103], and Qi Bai Shi (齊白石, 1864-1957), possibly the best-known Chinese artist to Westerners in the twentieth century, illustrated this in his well-known paintings of shrimps. In 1926, he started to keep live shrimps in a water bowl on his desk to observe and draw them. Three or four years later, in his depictions he reduced the shrimp's ten small underside legs to eight. To him, painting only eight of the swimming legs pleased the optical experience of the observer more than the actual ten, and would be a better representation of the shrimp's form as a sentient being with its own *chi* or vital force. He felt that any more (than eight) would tend to be cumbersome and negate its vitality. Having achieved that breakthrough, he then went further in the subsequent years to "eliminate those details that were artistically non-essential to the shrimp, though realistically extant on the live shrimp, and accentuate those characteristics of the subject that contribute to the perfection of the shrimp's form."[104] On this basis, the shrimp normally does not show its short feelers in any noticeable way, but accentuating them enhances the mobility and vitality of the shrimp on paper. It is this idea of capturing the spirit or *shen* (神) of something,

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[102] Francois Cheng, *Empty and Full*, (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1994), 100
[103] T.C. Lai, *Chinese Painting*, (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1992), 12
[104] Li Chun, *Studies on Chi Pai-shih*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Ren Min Mei Shu, 1959), 138

instead of just a semblance of its exterior form that has remained an important

guiding principle in Chinese painting.[105]

2.31 *Shrimps*, 1947, Qi Bai Shi, 104x34cm   **2.32** *Shrimps*, 1949, Qi Bai Shi, 138x41.5cm

The other five principles are mainly concerned with technical aspects, with the

second principle emphasizing the pre-eminence of the brushstroke in the aesthetics of

Chinese painting, advocating the use of the brush in a controlled manner.

The third principle relates to the issue of the depiction of the subject matter, requiring

that it should be recognisable. With the aim of capturing the essence (*shen*) and to

express its vital force (*chi*), the artist engages in a selective process of reducing the

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[105] Zeng Chun Hai, *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, (Taipei: Wu Nan Culture Enterprise, 2005), 288

subject to its bare essentials. According to Yu, this process is facilitated by the method of "painting indirectly from a mental image rather than directly from a scene or object."[106]

"In this way, unnecessary details are naturally eliminated. The goal is to paint not what the eye sees but rather what the mind knows; thus Chinese painting is less concerned with the appearance than the essence of things. Natural images serve only as a point of departure, a vehicle for the expression of transcendental images, which ultimately reflect the basic idea of the unity of human beings with the cosmos."[107]

The painting is based on the artist's memory and image in his mind, but regardless of whether the memory is good or bad, the subject must be recognizable to the viewer.

The fourth principle refers to the careful application of colour, including tonal variation and layering. Traditionally the best brush strokes were always created with black ink on paper. It is therefore important to use the shades of grey to their best advantage by varying tone and fluidity to convey texture, or background and foreground perspective.

The fifth principle is about the thoughtful planning and placing of elements in a picture. This is achieved by capturing the *shi* (勢, structural integration) of the painting. *Shi* is the structural cohesion that holds the whole structure together, such that "when looked at as a whole, appears as if done with one breath... One may say

[106] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 3
[107] Ibid.

that the breath of the spirit (*chi*) is in the *shi*."[108] Related to achieving the *shi* is the asymmetrical feature and original concept of the positive use of space.

In Chinese aesthetics, the distinction between asymmetry and symmetry is as different as is between the natural and the mechanical, art and artifice, the dynamic and the static. The former is always more desirable than the latter. According to Yu, "the aim is to create a dynamic equilibrium rather than a static balance."[109]

In Chinese painting, space plays an important role in asymmetrical compositions, with a significant aspect being the intentional leaving of unpainted spaces in a picture. As a positive element, space is a fundamental concept in Chinese aesthetics for the purpose of balancing the composition of the picture and helping the viewer to focus on the essential simplicity of the painting. Yu further elaborates,

> "This profound and lucid space not only serves effectively in harmonizing all the elements in a painting but also gives a hint of the infinite, thus imparting poetic feeling and a spiritual dimension. We see space as a metaphor, space transformed into substance."[110]

The sixth principle is about emulation, which is a significant element in learning traditional Ink-wash painting. Most of traditional Ink-wash painters regard it as the most important foundation. In ancient times, and even up to today, people who would like to study Ink-wash paintings have to devote considerable amounts of time

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[108] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 37
[109] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 4
[110] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 4

and energy to emulation. Traditional groups believe that artistic creation should incorporate the experiences and resources accumulated by one's predecessors. It is thought that without this kind of training, artistic representation is easily flawed by superficial innovation, and therefore lacking in substance and depth. On that very question, Zhang Da Qian argued that,

"it is unintelligent to regard emulating ancient paintings as just a way to establish an affiliation with certain schools. Emulating in painting is like reading books to copying ancient inscriptions from rubbings to study calligraphy. No one can write essays without reading books or excel in calligraphy without practicing ancient inscription."[111]

Bin Zhu (賓主)

Bin (賓) in Chinese means the 'guest', while *zhu* (主) refers to the 'host'. Just as a play has to have main actors as well as supporting actors, and a song has to have a main tune and assisting melodies, when applied to the picture plane, *bin zhu* refers to the focus of the picture, where there will be a main theme, a sub-theme and accompanying ornamentation. Consequently, this enables the picture to display a main focal point to attract the attention of the viewer, which then shifts to the point(s) of secondary focus and finally to the ornamentation. Therefore, the main function of *bin zhu* in the composition of the picture is to portray the main primary (*zhu*) and secondary (*bin*) focus of the painting and their relationship to one another.

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[111] Kao Ling Mei, ed., *Zhang Da Qian's Paintings: Introduction to the Painting Section*, (Hong Kong: Oriental Society of Hong Kong, 1967)

The concept of *bin zhu* is a fundamental principle in Chinese Ink-wash painting composition and artists have always paid much attention to their relationship in the painting. Just as Song Dynasty painter Li Chen's *The Secret of Landscape Painting* (山水訣) states, "When painting landscapes, first establish the positions of *bin* and *zhu*, then define the depth of the forms, and finally string the scenery together and adjust the height"[112]. Tang Dynasty Wang Wei's *Landscape Theory* argues the need to "establish the relationship of *bin zhu* first to depict the magnificence of the mountain peaks."[113] This implies that the main focus should be the most important and most prominent. In a Chinese Ink-wash painting, it is rare to have two main themes in the same picture. The correct way is to use *bin zhu* to give priority and order to the different focuses.

Xu Shi (虛實)

The Taoist philosophy of *yin* and *yang* has greatly influenced the conception of *xu* (虛, void) and *shi* (實, solid) as aesthetic theory in Chinese Ink-wash painting. The integration of *xu* and *shi* is a particular characteristic of Chinese Ink-wash painting and conceptually, Chinese Ink-wash painters have tended to simplistically differentiate the theory into two parts, thus: *yin* = *xu* = void = white and *yang* = *shi* = solid = black, with *xu* referring to the empty spaces of *liu bai* as previously described.

The Chinese have been well-versed in expressing themselves through the extensive use of *xu shi* (manipulating *xu* to express *shi* and manipulating a void to express a

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[112] Li Chen, *Shan Shui Jue*, (Taipei: World Book Co. Ltd, 1974), 27
[113] Wang Wei, *Landscape Theory*, (Taipei: World Book Co. Ltd, 1974), 30

solid). Not only is this concept present in painting, but it can also be found in traditional Chinese theatre where the stage is usually bare and there is little emphasis on stage props, and where the actors' movements and expressions are performed in a stylized and symbolic manner. For example, in a horse riding scene, the actor will be holding a real whip and performing the whip action, representing the notion of *shi*, but there would be no real horse or any props to depict such a scene. This imaginary galloping horse that the audience conceive in their minds represents the notion of the corresponding *xu*.

In Chinese Ink-wash painting, the *liu bai* (white spaces or *xu*), does not mean that it is empty, but rather that it is a means of implying a different form of space in the picture, similar to how a written text can have implicit meanings that are not directly expressed, these blank spaces in the picture could signify sky, water, ground or even distant scenery. In Qi Bai Shi's (齊白石, 1864-1957) *Shrimp* painting below for example, the whole picture comprises of three shrimps with a literary calligraphic inscription on the right (Fig. **2.33**). Being the accomplished painter that he was, Qi Bai Shi was able to portray the shrimps in such a manner as if they were swimming in water. Having achieved Hsieh Ho's "spirit resonance" in the portrayal of the shrimps, he indirectly also implies that the surrounding empty spaces are clear water. However, this association can only be achieved if the viewer can experience the same perception.

Another good example is Song Dynasty painter Liang Kai's (梁楷, ca. 1140-1210) painting of *Li Bai Chanting* (李白行吟圖, Fig. **2.34**). Here, the artist uses a few simple strokes to depict the figure of the poet Li Bai (李白, 701-762) chanting, and leaves the rest of the painting surface blank. According to Yuan, "the viewer has the

impression that although Li Bai is within the picture, but with the background extending indefinitely in the imagination, it feels as though his field of motion is not limited to the boundaries of the paper."[114]

2.33 *Shrimps,* ca. 1940s. Qi Bai Shi

[114] Yuan Jin Ta, *Comparison of Eastern and Western Painting Compositions,* (Taipei: Yi Feng Teng Publishing Co. Ltd, 1990), 68

2.34 *Li Bai chanting,* ca. 13th, Liang Kai, 81.2x30.4cm

If a painting is too dense or solid (*shi*), the viewer might feel stifled, but if there is too much blank space (*xu*), it would seem empty and lacking in content. Therefore, according to Li, traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting emphasizes the interactive use of both *xu* and *shi*, both existing together in harmony.[115] Just as in the previous example of Qi Bai Shi's painting of shrimps, the large white expanse of unmarked space represents water and is *xu*, while the painted shrimps are solid *shi*. This is an illustration of solid in void (虚中有實, *shi* in *xu*), but focussing in on the shrimps themselves, there is a small empty space in the solid form of the shrimp representing

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[115] Li Jing Sheng, *Chinese Painting: Landscape,* (He Fei: An Hui Art Publisher Co. Ltd, 2008), 78

the opposite void in solid (實中有虛, *xu* in *shi*). *Xu* and *shi* serve to complement each other just like *yin* and *yang*. However, this does not always mean that only *liu bai* spaces are *xu*. This ideology can also be applied to a withered tree (*xu*) amongst a lush forest (*shi*), where the dead tree serves to emphasise the vitality of the other trees surrounding it. "In all, ancient Chinese painters always stressed the importance of the coexistence of *xu* and *shi* within a painting where there is *xu* in *shi*, and *shi* in *xu*."[116]

Liu Bai

In pictorial terms, *liu bai* refers to the empty spaces in Chinese Ink-wash painting as described by the aesthetic theory of *xu shi*.[117] Chinese Ink-wash painting places particular compositional emphasis on empty unpainted areas that are left as the natural colour of the paper, often as the backdrop of the painting. The strong contrast of white (without *bi mo*, 筆墨) and black (with *bi mo*) makes the objects stand out more and give the impression of vast extended space. *Liu bai* induces the viewer to imagine what could be in the white space, be it in the form of clouds, mist, fog, or water or as a reflection of the viewer's inner mind. Sze Mai Mai advocated that,

"Space of any sort was regarded as filled with meaning since it was filled with Tao, in fact was Tao, an idea that inevitably had a profound influence on painting. It is pointed out in Chapter XI of the Tao Te Ching that the space between the spokes of a wheel make the wheel of use, the inner space and not

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[116] Yuan Jin Ta, *Comparison of Eastern and Western Painting Compositions*, (Taipei: Yi Feng Teng Publishing Co. Ltd, 1990), 60

[117] Chiang Tsu Wang, *Ink-wash Painting and Taiwanese Aesthetics*, (Taipei: Institut Ricci de Taipei, 2004), 212

the pottery of a pitcher is its essential part, and the space within four walls

compose the usefulness of a room."[118]

Shu Mi (疏密)

It is difficult to arouse an audience's interest with music that has a monotonous

rhythm, or a story that has no plot twists. According to Yuan Jin Ta, "*shu mi* refers to

the sparseness (疏, *shu*) and denseness (密, *mi*) in Chinese Ink-wash painting, which

is analogous to the harmonious melody of varying tones and rhythm."[119]

Since ancient times, Chinese artists have attached great importance to the use of *shu*

mi. They believe that there should be differential spatial densities in a painting, and

that if it were too dense, the viewer would feel over-powered, but if it were too loose

and sparse, the painting would feel too slack and weak. *Shu mi* must be used

appropriately with the proper mix of being loose and tight, together and scattered, in

order to create rhythm. There are three principles of using *shu mi* and which are

namely:

To seek sparseness in the dense (密處求疏): When the whole composition is very

dense already, loose space needs to be added to prevent monotony.[120] This principle

is illustrated in Wang Meng's (王蒙, 1308–1385) work, *Dwelling in the Qing Bian*

Mountains (青卞隱居圖, Fig. 2.35). In this painting, amidst the dense mountains,

those small wisps of clouds, and a section of the rivers and waterfalls, as well as

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[118] Sze Mai Mai, *The Tao of Painting*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1957), 17

[119] Yuan Jin Ta, *Comparison of Eastern and Western Painting Compositions*, (Taipei: Yi Feng Teng Publishing Co. Ltd, 1990), 62

[120] Yuan Jin Ta, *Comparison of Eastern and Western Painting Compositions*, (Taipei: Yi Feng Teng Publishing Co. Ltd, 1990), 62

those rocks that are drawn with less textural *cun fa*, are also considered parts of *shu*. *Shu* and *mi* are, in fact, opposites that may be used together in tandem in a painting, harmoniously complementing each other to naturally produce rhythm in the picture.

To seek denseness in the sparse (疏處求密): When the overall composition is that of *shu* (sparseness), there should always be some form of *mi* (denseness) within it.[121] Examples of this principle are Ni Yun Lin's (倪雲林, 1301-1374) *The Rong Xi Studio* (容膝齋圖, Fig. **2.36**) of the Yuan Dynasty.

To add denseness in sparse areas, and add sparseness in dense areas (密處加密, 疏處加疏): This is a type of *shu mi* where the relationship is that both independently pursue the extremes in the painting.[122] When a picture has both the extremes of *shu* and *mi*, it will make the painting produce strong pull-push visual effects, such as Wu Zhen's (吳鎮, 1280 – 1354) *Fisherman* (Fig. **2.37**), and Qi Bai Shi's (1864–1957) *Crabs* pictures (Fig. **2.38**).

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[121] Ibid
[122] Ibid

2.35 *Dwelling in the Qing Bian Mountains* (青卞隱居圖), 1366, Wang Meng, 141x42.2cm

2.36 *The Rong Xi Studio (*容膝齋圖*)*, 1372, Ni Yun Lin, 74.4x35.5cm

2.37 *Fisherman* (漁父圖)*,* 1342, Wu Zhen,   **2.38** *Crabs,* 1953, Qi Bai Shi

176.1x95.6cm

Shi (勢)

Chinese painters in ancient times believed that whether a painting possessed vitality or not was closely related to the *shi* of the pictorial composition. *Shi,* also used interchangeably as *qu shi* (取勢), literally translated to mean 'acquire the *shi*', is an abstract and metaphysical concept in Chinese aesthetics, and is applied in calligraphy as well as painting. Using Western artistic terminology, the *shi* in Chinese Ink-wash painting is akin to the Western artistic concepts of "dynamism" and "rhythm".[123] However, in comparison to these concepts, the *shi* in Chinese Ink-wash painting refers to a more suggested or implied expression of direction and movement.

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[123] Yuan Jin Ta, *Comparison of Eastern and Western Painting Compositions*, (Taipei: Yi Feng Teng Publishing Co. Ltd, 1990), 80

The most obvious display of *shi* in a Chinese landscape painting is by Yuan Dynasty painter Wang Meng[124] (王蒙, 1308-1385), with the S-shaped mountain ridges in his works such as *Autumn Cottage* (秋山草堂圖, Fig. **2.39**) being striking examples. The mountains stack up from the bottom of picture but their curving mountain ridges also act as the main device to express the *shi* of the whole painting, integrating all the different mountains of the sierra, leading the viewer's eye along the S-shaped ridge from the bottom to the top of the painting (from near to far).

Similarly in Song Dynasty Xia Gui's (夏珪, ca. 1194-1225) *Boat in Xi Hu Lake* (西湖柳艇圖, Fig. **2.40**), two S-shaped forms of *shi* (勢) are vaguely hidden in this painting. One is found in the solid form, while the other is found in the void space. The roadside trees' S-shaped arrangement leads the viewer's eye into the distance further into the picture, while the S-shaped virtual form of *shi* can be found in the clouds (far-distance) and the river (near-distance).

However, this does not mean that only S-shaped structures are expressions of *shi*. In the compositional structure of a painting, *shi* also encompasses two forms of opposing forces in a painting, *zhang* (張) and *lian* (斂).[125] The convergence of energy into a focused center is called *lian*, while the outward radial stretch is called *zhang*. Ba Da Shan Ren's (八大山人, 1625-1705) landscape paintings often express *shi* in terms of different directions and angles, and using a unique technique of radiating elements outwards, but the overall composition is still that of the traditional S-shape format.

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[124] Wang Meng (王蒙) derived a unique landscape painting style from both Dong Yuan and Ju Ran styles, which is very delicate and complex. Future artists have subsequently compared him with Huang Gong Wang (1296-1354), Wu Zhen (1280-1354), and Ni Yun Lin (1301-1374), also known collectively as the 'Four Yuan Masters'.

[125] Zhan Qian Yu, *Chinese Ink-wash Painting*, (Taipei: Artist Book Co. Ltd, 2000), 211

The use of *shi* in *flowers and birds painting* (花鳥畫) is probably more obvious and easier to understand than in landscape paintings, with its emphasis on the use of *shi* in the pictorial composition of *flowers and birds paintings*. According to Zhan, "Traditional *flowers and birds paintings*' pictorial compositions have different types of *shi* such as *stretch*[126], *pull*[127], *lead*[128], and *flow*[129](伸, 收, 引, 瀉; Fig. **2.41**)."[130] Where the emphasis is on the changes in the directions of the branches and relationship between the forms and lines, with the main objective of depicting the trees with more vitality, and making the painting more moving and dynamic.

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[126] **stretch**: in compositions where the overall balance is to one side, elements should extend into the picture plane.

[127] **pull**: when the overall sense is one of shooting outwards, elements should be 'pulled' back into the picture plane

[128] **lead**: when the main direction is shifting towards the extremities of the picture plane, elements should be 'led' back in.

[129] **flow**: when the elements are crowded, they should be allowed to 'flow' into space.

[130] Zhan Qian Yu, *Chinese Ink-wash Painting*, (Taipei: Artist Book Co. Ltd, 2000), 211-212

2.39 *Autumn Cottage* (秋山草堂圖), Yuan Dynasty, Wang Meng, 123.3x54.8cm

2.40 *Boat in Xi Hu Lake (*西湖柳艇圖*)*, Song Dynasty, Xia Gui, 107.2x59.3cm

2.41   Stretch   Pull   Lead   Flow

(Source: Zhan Qian Yu, 2000**)**

3 The American Abstract Expressionism Movement

America's art world in the 1940s saw a new vanguard of *Abstract Expressionism* emerge after the Second World War. It was also known as the New York School as it was started by a loose group of artists mostly active in New York. Abstract Expressionism achieved extensive influence worldwide and was the first American movement to usher in what many regard as the beginning of the golden age of American art. Abstract Expressionism, in effect, declared its independence from European art styles and became the first American school to influence art abroad rather than vice versa. The art world's focus shifted from Europe to America, and Paris was replaced by New York City as the metropolitan cultural centre of the Western art world.

"The term 'Abstract Expressionism' was first applied to American art in 1946 when art critic Robert Coates of the *New Yorker* first used it to characterize the paintings of a number of American artists."[131] However, it first appeared in 1919 in an article with the title "*Der abstrakte Expressionismus*," by Oswald Herzog, which appeared in the German magazine, *Der Sturm*, relating to German Expressionism. Alfred H. Barr Jr. later used it in 1929 relating to Kandinsky's early improvisations.

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[131] Robert M. Coates, "The Art Galleries," *New Yorker*, XXII, No.7, March 30, 1946, 6.

3.1 The Golden Age of American Art

A lot of the young Abstract Expressionists began their artistic careers in the 1930s during The Great Depression, when socio-political and economic trauma and strain were moulding prevalent aesthetic viewpoints. Artists, as well as millions of other Americans, were all affected by the economic recession in 1929, with many becoming jobless and homeless.

While usually on the margins of society, the artists in New York found themselves in worse conditions in the 1930s than before. A few joined together and formed the Unemployed Artists' Group in 1933, later simply called the Artists' Union. The union pressured the government for financial aid and relief, and the Roosevelt administration, sympathetic to their plight, established the Public Works of Art Project in December 1933. The relief programme hired 3,749 artists who produced 15,633 works of art for public institutions during its brief five months of existence. Encouraged by the success but also aware that it was not helping enough artists, its relief activities were extended, and eventually transferred to the newly organized Federal Art Project under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the government's nation wide employment relief program in August 1935.

Unlike its predecessor, the Federal Art Project did not require proof of professional qualifications before artists could be eligible for financial aid. This allowed younger and lesser-known artists to participate in the relief programme.[132] By paying artists to create artworks including drawings, paintings, murals, sculptures and prints, the

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[132] Artists were paid an average of $95 monthly for which they were required to work 96 hours and to submit paintings periodically in any style they chose.

Federal Art Project played a crucial role in American art's developement. This allowed many artists, especially the then younger artists such as Ashile Gorky, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, to devote their energies to painting. The programme also allowed them to experiment freely with new techniques during their formative years and which subsequently led to them establishing their career paths.

Responding to the prevailing mood of the times, on the whole, artists chose to work in socially-oriented styles. American Social Realism and Regionalism were the mainstream at that time, with the regionalists embracing a rightist, isolationist ideology, while the social realists depicted leftist, Marxist ideals in their paintings of workers engaged in class struggles. However neither of these approaches satisfied the group of future Abstract Expressionist artists' desire for an art form that was rich in meaning and satisfied their social 'commitment' to society, but yet was apolitical. Guilbaut elucidates thus,

"Prominent among the factors that helped to shape Abstract Expressionism and ensure its success was the slow process of de-Marxization and later depoliticization of certain groups of left-wing anti-Stalinist intellectuals in New York from 1939 on, coupled with the rapid rise of nationalist sentiment during the war."[133]

Although most of the artists in New York were leftist at that time, Sandler remarked that, "in response to World War II and the intellectual climate generated by it, the

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[133] Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 2

future Abstract Expressionists came to believe that they faced a crisis in subject matter. Prevailing ideologies – socialist, nationalist, and Utopian – and the styles identified with them – Social Realism, Regionalism, and geometric abstraction – lost credibility in their eyes."[134] This is extended by Messinger who comments that,

"With the atrocities of World War II raising questions about humanity's place in the world, these artists developed a global awareness stimulated by many diverse and overlapping sources – among them, European modernist art, primitive art, mythology, psychology, and the mystical belief systems and art of the East."[135]

However, it was to be "the exposure to and assimilation of European modernism that would create the backdrop for which America's most advanced art would evolve."[136] Between the wars, New York offered some notable opportunities to assimilate recent artistic developments from Europe. Opening in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) enabled artists to see the quickly growing collection of works acquired by the director at that time, Alfred H. Barr Jr.[137]

The ideals of European modernism were also spread through teaching. The capitals of Europe were in turmoil during the post-war years, urgently rebuilding their economies, their war-torn cities and to achieve political stability. The climate for art

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[134] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London, Pall Mall P., 1970), 1
[135] Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: works on paper*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 9
[136] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London, Pall Mall P., 1970), 1
[137] In MoMA, the artists were able to see exhibition of Surrealism, Dada, Cubism and Abstract art etc. as well as the retrospectives of Matisse and Picasso, among there. There is also the Museum of Non-objective Art, which housed the impressive Kandinsky collection.

in Paris, the then art capital of the world, was disastrous. To escape Nazi persecution, many artists left Europe and fled to the United States, and direct contact with European artists in America thereby increased as a consequence of World War II.

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3.2 Primitive Myths and Symbols

During the years of The Second World War, many European artists sought refuge in the United States including Masson, Breton, Mondrian, Dali and Ernst. The Surrealists opened up new opportunities for artistic creation with their emphasis on tapping into the unconscious. A particular technique of the Surrealists for liberating oneself from the conscious was *"Pure Psychic Automatism"* – a direct mind-to-hand method in which automatic gesture achieved free control. Surrealism may be regarded as an important predecessor to Abstract Expressionism as a result of its emphasis on spontaneous, subconscious and automatic creation.

Early on artists such as Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko were trying to solve the dilemma of a timeless and powerful subject matter that equally avoided the political right and left in the developing stages of Abstract Expressionism. Eventually, they turned to Primitive art for inspiration and "employed automatism to reveal what they believed to be universal symbols that inhabited the inner mind."[138]

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[138] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London, Pall Mall Press, 1970), 62

3.1 *Pictograph*, 1942, Adolph Gottlieb   **3.2** *Baptismal Scene*, 1945, Mark Rothko, 48.3x35.6cm

During the early 1940s, artists such as Gottlieb and Rothko began to apply the myth-inspired elements in their paintings (Fig. **3.1** and **3.2**). In an October WNYC radio broadcast and a letter to *The New York Times* in 1943, Gottlieb, Rothko, and Newman claimed that they were "concerned with primitive myths and symbols that continue to have meaning today… only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless. That is why we profess kinship with primitive and archaic art."[139]

Stimulated by Jungian psychology's concept of the "collective unconscious" and its role in artistic creation, the Abstract Expressionists thinking diverged from the Freudian orientation of the Surrealists, "who generally illustrated dreams, hallucinations, and other such psychological experiences."[140] Gottlieb and Rothko

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[139] Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, (in collaboration with Barnett Newman), "Letter to the Editor," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1943, sec. 2, 9

[140] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London, Pall Mall P., 1970), 62

expressed further that "it is not enough to illustrate dreams."[141] Moreover, the reason they turned to the application of ancient myths was "because they are the eternal symbols upon which we must fall back to express basic psychological ideas... symbols of man's primitive fears and motivations, no matter in which land or what time, changing only in detail but never in substance."[142]

World War II had affected the artists deeply, making them painfully aware of the terror and fear that abound in times of violence. Recognising the tragic frailties of life, they therefore rejected any modern art, especially European art that sought beauty and pleasure, with Gottlieb dismissing, "an art that glosses over or evades these feelings is superficial and meaningless."[143]

3.3 *Pasiphae*, 1943, Jackson Pollock, 142.5x243.8cm

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[141] Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, "The Portrait of the Modern Artist," mimeographed script of a broadcast on *Art in New York*, H. Stix, director, WNYC, New York, October 13, 1943, 4
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.

3.4 *Oedipus*, 1942, Adolph Gottlieb, 86.4x66cm

Although many of their picture titles such as *Oedipus* and *Pasiphae* showed an interest in Greco-Roman myths (Fig. **3.3** and **3.4**), the New York School artists did not imitate the classical versions of Greco-Roman art. Instead, they attempted to depict the same spirit in forms that were coherent with their modern context. As Rothko once said,

> "Our presentation of these myths, however, must be our own terms, which are at once more primitive and more modern than the myths themselves – more primitive because we seek the primeval and atavistic roots of the idea rather than their graceful classical versions: more modern than the myths themselves because we must redescribe their implications through our own experiences."[144]

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[144] Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, "The Portrait of the Modern Artist," mimeographed script of a broadcast on *Art in New York*, H. Stix, director, WNYC, New York, October 13, 1943, 4

In order to achieve this modern mythic art, Gottlieb and Rothko turned to painting abstract-style works, learning from the abstract art of aboriginal peoples such as the Northwest Coast Indians. They proposed in their letter to the *New York Times*, to "favour the simple expression of the complex thought... the large shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal...to reassert the picture plane... [and] flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth."[145] They believed that by being abstract, simple, large and flat, they could achieve a mythic art that was both modern and primitive at the same time.

Later on, after abandoning the automatism technique, most of the Abstract Expressionists such as Pollock and Rothko changed their attitude towards pictorial content, resulting in the development of their individual mature styles.

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[145] Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, (in collaboration with Barnett Newman), "Letter to the Editor," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1943, sec. 2, 9

3.3 Concepts of Abstraction and Expressionistic Techniques

According to Shapiro, Abstract Expressionism has "an image of being rebellious, anarchic, highly idiosyncratic and, some feel, nihilistic."[146] The term "Abstract Expressionism" is a loose label to describe "a broad range of stylistic diversity within its framework of non-representational style."[147] The Abstract Expressionists were against the view that they had joined a school as each artist emphasized his or her own individual style. Furthermore, their works do not come across easily as a cohesive style, given that they range from Willem de Kooning's distorted and violent figures to Mark Rothko's simple quiescent colour paintings. Art historian Irving Sandler divides this artistic school into two primary categories in his book *Abstract Expressionism: the Triumph of American Painting* due to their diverse structure and technique.

"Perhaps the strongest cultural bond was a common aesthetic evolution: the rejection of existing realist and geometric tendencies, the attraction to Surrealist content and the technique of automatism, and – during the late 1940's and early 1950's – the achievement of new styles that could no longer be subsumed under existing labels. At first, it was difficult to determine sub-tendencies in Abstract Expressionism. Around 1949, however, it grew increasingly apparent that there were two main trends, gesture painting and color-field painting."[148]

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[146] David Shapiro, *Abstract Expressionism: A Critical Record*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 189-190
[147] Ibid.
[148] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London, Pall Mall P., 1970), 3

3.3.1 Gesture Painting

The independent and mature styles of Abstract Expressionists started to emerge after 1947, with one of the mainstream trends being gesture painting.[149] It is noticeable that artists such as Pollock eliminated representational imagery and created the style of an all-over field of free gestures and each detail of the picture surface painted with the same intensity. As George McNeil observed, this open field of interpenetrating shapes formed an overall "mass image", since "no single object or shape stands out from the total energy impact."[150]

The gesture painters rejected formal subject matter and placed emphasis on the intrinsic meaning of the painting and on what was expressed. De Kooning proclaimed, "Painting isn't just the visual thing that reaches your retina – it's what is behind it and in it."[151] Robert Motherwell also stressed the pre-eminence of content, which he defined as the expression of "reality as felt."[152] They also refused to have any preconceptions of meaning and regarded the creative process as an intense, unpremeditated experience where the subject and content would reveal itself when the painting was completed. By being true to themselves, as they regarded, and totally engaged with the act of painting, the final image of their particular creative experiences would eventually emerge, which Motherwell indicates as "the 'process arrested at the moment' when what I was looking for flashes into view."[153]

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[149] Also termed as Action Painting by Harold Rosenberg
[150] George McNeil, "Spontaneity," *It Is*, No.3, Winter-Spring, (1959), 15
[151] Willem de Kooning, "What Abstract Art Means to Me," *The New York Times*, 21 January, 1951, sec. 6, 17
[152] Robert Motherwell, "Personal Statement," in catalogue of exhibition *A Painting Prophecy – 1950*, David Porter Gallery, (Washington, D.C., February, 1945)
[153] Robert Motherwell, "Introduction," in catalogue of his show at the Kootz Gallery, (New York: April 28-May 17, 1947)

The gesture painters paid attention to directness, which Pollock commented on in his specific method to work on the floor as he created his first "drip" painting in 1947. This creative method allowed him, as he stated, "to feel nearer, more a part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from the four sides and literally be in the painting."[154] In addition, in an essay of 1952, entitled "American Action Painters" art critic Harold Rosernberg writes, "at a certain moment, the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act – rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze, or 'express' an object, actual or imagined."[155]

Furthermore, the gesture painters realised the importance of the unconscious in painting, but emphasis was also placed on choice and decision-making. This diverged from the automatists of Surrealism who left everything to chance. Although both artistic groups believed that they could tap into the unconscious's primary sources of subliminal energies by painting spontaneously, the gesture painters "rejected the Surrealist notion that the unconscious was a reservoir of images possessed of the profoundest truths about man, and that when such images were revealed – and they could only be disclosed accidentally – they divulged meaning automatically and infallibly."[156]

The gesture painters refused to accept images unconditionally without the process of their own decision-making, choosing to accept, reject or modify the images, as they

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[154] Jackson Pollock, "My Painting," *Possibilities 1*, No.1 (Winter, 1947-48), 79
[155] Harold Rosenberg, "American Action Painters", *ARTnews*, December 1952
[156] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), 96

wanted, with the artist's personality unifying all the creative actions in the art making process. George McNeil summarised the attitude towards spontaneity, when he said that it is this alternating between "conscious, continued ordering towards expressiveness... [and] spontaneous, subliminal 'destructions' which, enigmatically, are the most constructive steps in painting."[157]

Existentialism provided an additional theoretical frame of reference to replace Freudian and Jungian concepts, becoming part of the intellectual climate of that time. This view is expressed by de Kooning who mentions that, "We weren't influenced directly by Existentialism, but... we felt it without knowing too much about it. We were in touch with the mood."[158] The gesture painters, who emphasised choice, favoured Existentialism's concept of freedom more than Surrealist automatism, emphasising man's responsibility for his own fate and the major role he plays in shaping it. The "Existentialist thesis that 'being is doing' gave intellectual justification to an approach which emphasised *process* at the expense of *product*."[159] This then prompted the Abstract Expressionists to explore the implications of the discovery that "what was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event."[160]

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[157] George McNeil, *Spontaneity*, It Is, No.3, (Winter-Spring, 1959), 14
[158] Willem de Kooning, *Conversation with Irving Sandler*, 16 June, 1959
[159] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 6
[160] Ibid.

3.3.1.1 Jackson Pollock

Jackson Pollock[161] (1912-1956) remains probably the most notable gesture painter. His fundamental means redefined what it was to produce art and revolutionized the potential of all contemporary art that followed. His works redefined the categories of drawing and painting. Lee Krasner[162] (1908-1984) noted that, "his work seemed like monumental drawing, or maybe painting with the immediacy of drawing – some new category."[163]

During the 1930s, Pollock would paint in the regionalist[164] style, but he was also influenced by the Mexican muralists José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros when he attended the Siqueiros Experimental Workshop in New York in 1936. There he learnt to experiment with unorthodox media and techniques such as spray guns, airbrushes, enamel paints and poured paints, which he would apply in later works. Throughout his artistic career, Pollock used a diverse range of media including "pencil, coloured pencil, chalk, pastel, crayon, gouache, tempera, watercolour, watercolour pencil, ink, wax, enamel paint, and metallic paint... cardboard, handmade rag paper, laminated wrapping paper, rice paper, sketchpad covers, and typing paper."[165]

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[161] Born in 1912 in Wyoming, Pollock grew up in California, but moved to New York City with his brother in 1930 and studied under regionalist painter Thomas Hart Benton at Art Students League.
[162] The artist Lee Krasner married Jackson Pollock in 1945
[163] Lee Krasner, cited in B. H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 182
[164] Regionalism: an American realist art movement in the 1930s that depict scenes of everyday rural life
[165] Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 88

Pollock's use of these unconventional means is reminiscent of Tang Dynasty painter Wang Qia[166] (王洽, ca. 805) who when he was once drunk, placed the *xuan* paper onto the floor and used his hair or hands to draw instead of the brush.[167] Another similar example is Southern Song Dynasty painter Mu Xi[168] (牧谿, active 13th century) who used sugar cane pulp to draw his paintings instead of the brush. The difference with Abstract Expressionism however, is that these are only occasional cases in art history and did not form into a particular style or art movement.

From 1935 to 1942, Pollock met other artists including de Kooning and Gorky, and became aware of the work of Picasso and of Surrealism as a movement when he worked for the WPA Federal Art Project. From 1939 to 1942, he underwent Jungian psychotherapy to fight his alcoholism, beginning his abstract primitive myth art phase in the early 1940s. Pollock's paintings during this period reflect a change towards abstraction, and were depicted in a semi-automatist style in paintings such as *Male and Female* and *She-Wolf.* (Fig. **3.5** and **3.6**)

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[166] Tang Dynasty painter said to have invented the Splashed Ink Method. Legend has it that he must always drink first before painting, then splashing the ink on the paper and using his hair or hands to paint instead of the conventional brush.

[167] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art: Revised and Expanded Edition.* (Berkeley: University of California Press Ltd., 1997), 253

[168] Mu Xi is from the Sichuan province in China and active in the Southern Song period. He was a monk before and was good at painting Buddha statues, landscape, flowers, birds and human figures, mainly in the Literati painting style. Most of his works have found their way into Japanese Buddhist temples, greatly loved by the monks there.

3.5 *Male and Female*, 1942,   **3.6** *She-wolf*, 1943, Jackson Pollock, 106.4x179.2cm

Jackson Pollock, 186.1x124.5cm

By 1947, all representational imagery had disappeared in Pollock's painting and his radical new technique was developed by dripping and pouring paint on a large unstretched canvas that was laid on the floor where it could be accessed from all sides. Pollock also moves "further away from the usual painter's tools such as easel, palette, brushes. I prefer sticks, trowels, knives, and dripping paint or a heavy impasto with sand, broken glass and other foreign matter added."[169] Pollock's innovative technique of pouring and dripping varied paint is considered as one of the origins for the term 'Action Painting' along with the action of using the whole body to paint instead of merely artist's hand and wrist.

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[169] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 18

3.7 *Cathedral*, 1947, Jackson Pollock,
181.6x89.1cm

3.8 Jackson Pollock's action in the canvas

3.9 *Blue Poles*, 1952, Jackson Pollock, 210x486.8cm

Masterpieces such as *Cathedral* and *Blue Poles* illustrate the all-over style where the intention is to not have any focal point (Fig. **3.7** and **3.9**), and to preserve the integrity of the picture plane by treating the painting as an object in itself, and to be part of it during its creation. Pollock himself describes,

"When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fear of making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well."[170]

This method of Pollock's, along with his mind-set, is very different from that contained within the Chinese painting aesthetic theory of *yi zai bi xian* (意在筆先) as utilised by traditional Chinese painters and calligraphers. In this method, the whole picture, composition, art creation steps, and even the *bi* and *mo* methodologies are first visualized internally by the artist before he begins to paint.[171] This traditional Literati method is markedly different from the method by which an artist paints as he thinks or in Pollock's theory of painting, "without conscious intention".

We can observe Pollock's drawing skill in applying varied lines in '*Cathedral*', which composed mainly of black and white lines, with the rhythm of lines over this painting being evenly articulated. Art critic Frank O'Hara noted his "amazing ability to quicken a line by thinning it, to slow it by flooding, to elaborate that simplest of elements, the line – to change, to reinvigorate, to extend, to build up an embarrassment of riches in the mass by drawing alone."[172]

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[170] Jackson Pollock, *Possibilities 1: Problems of Contemporary Art*, Winter 1947-8 (New York: Wittenborn Schultz Inc., 1947)
[171] Zeng Chun Hai. *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*. (Taipei: Wu Nan Culture Enterprise, 2005), 298
[172] Frank O'Hara, *Jackson Pollock*, (New York: Braziller, 1959), 26

When replying to a question posed by Hans Hofmann, Pollock declared, "I am Nature"[173], a response which is similar to that contained within the Chinese painting philosophy of *tian ren he yi* (天人合一, Harmony between Man and Nature). According to Zeng, "there is no separating line drawn between nature and the experience of man as both belong to the elemental being of the universe."[174] This is to say that the artist strives to be one with nature when he is painting, and when that is achieved, he becomes nature, which is strikingly similar to Pollock's declaration.

Pollock believed that the process of creating the work of art was as important as the artwork itself. The artistic works were totally non-objective and highly performed with dynamic gestures in every inch of the painting, imbued with a release of energy. What seems to be an extreme reliance on accidental chance effects is actually the exploitation of chance. Pollock said, "When I am painting I have a general notion as to what I am about. I can control the flow of paint: there is no accident."[175]

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[173] Pepe Karmel and Kirk Varnedoe, *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, articles and reviews*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 28
[174] Zeng Chun Hai, *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, (Taipei: Wu Nan Culture Enterprise, 2005), 267
[175] Jackson Pollock, Narration in Namuth film, cited in Bryan Robertson, *Jackson Pollock*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1960), 194

3.10 *Easter and the Totem*, 1953, Jackson Pollock, 208.6x147.3cm

3.11 *Portrait and a Dream*, 1953, Jackson Pollock, 148.6x342.3cm

By 1953, Pollock felt he had exhausted his "drip" paintings and returned to more figurative paintings (see *Easter and the Totem,* Fig. **3.10**, and *Portrait and a Dream* Fig. **3.11**), returning to his old subject matter but without the all-over field composition. Troubled increasingly with alcoholism, Pollock's life was abruptly cut

short by a car crash in 1956, but the underlying ideas informing his Abstract Expressionism can be summed up in his statement in 1950 when he said that,

"I approach painting in the same sense as one approaches drawing; that is, it's direct. I don't work from drawings, I don't make sketches and drawings and colour sketches into a final painting. Painting, I think today – the more intimate, the more direct – the greater the possibilities of making a statement."[176]

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[176] Jackson Pollock, quoted in "Interview with Jackson Pollock," taped by William Wright, Springs, Long Island, New York, 1950; published in *Art in America* 53, No. 4 (August – September 1965)

3.3.1.2 Willem de Kooning

3.12 *Two Men Standing*, 1938,
Willem de Kooning, 154.9x114.3cm

3.13 *Man*, 1939, Willem de Kooning, 27.9x22.9cm

Willem de Kooning[177] (1904-1997) shared the effective leadership of New York gesture painting with Pollock. During the 1930s, his early works were mainly figurative, with one or two men or women in an interior setting. Paintings such as *Two Men Standing* show his early attempts to flatten the image and reconcile figure and ground (Fig. **3.12**). Around 1940, the theme of Kooning's painting began to concentrate on that of women, and his first Woman series of paintings such as *Seated Woman* and *Pink Lady* are composed of colourful ovoid and oblong shape (Fig. **3.14** and **3.15**). To treat the three-dimensional figures without compromising the picture

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[177] Willem de Kooning, born in 1904 in Rotterdam, received his early artistic training at Rotterdam Academy of Fine Arts and Techniques, and moved to New Jersey, United States in 1926. In 1927, he moved to New York City where he would befriend other artists such as John Graham and Arshile Gorky.

plane integrity, de Kooning minimised the role of modelling and started to isolate

separate human body parts and treat them as planes.

3.14 *Seated Woman,* 1940, Willem de Kooning, **3.15** *Pink Lady,* 1944, Willem de Kooning,
122x89.5cm   137.3x91.4cm

In 1945 and 1946, de Kooning created complex compositions such as *Judgement*

Day and *Pink Angels* (Fig. **3.16** and **3.17**). In *Judgement Day,* the high-pitched

colours of vivid pinks and oranges, and acidic yellows and greens are typical of his

works of that period. The abstract shapes in his paintings "suggest twisting

fragmented body parts – torso, limbs, eyes, mouths – without being specifically

human."[178] As de Kooning said, "even abstract shapes must have a likeness."[179]

Comparing these paintings to *Guernica,* we can see the influences of Picasso and

Surrealism in his *Pink Angels.* Different from his other Abstract Expressionist

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[178] Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper,* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 22
[179] Willem de Kooning, cited in Thomas B. Hess, *Willem de Kooning,* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 47

contemporaries, de Kooning maintained aesthetic ties with the "old masters" and never abandoned the human figure as subject matter for his paintings.

3.16 *Judgement Day*, 1946, Willem de Kooning, 56.2x72.4cm

3.17 *Pink Angels*, 1945,   **3.18** detail of *Guernica*, 1938, Pablo Picasso
Willem de Kooning, 132.1x101.6cm

De Kooning's next artistic phase was from 1946 to 1949, when his series of "black-and-white" paintings was created together with his explorations of biomorphic abstraction. Similar to his friend, the painter Franz Kline, he limited himself to merely using black and white household enamel paint in artworks such as *Black Friday* and *Attic* (Fig. **3.19** and **3.20**). Stephen Polcari described this form of composition as "a continuity of things both organic and inorganic in a space both indoors and outdoors."[180]

This series culminates in *Attic*, where "every element coheres to communicate what the artist has called a 'no-environment', an indefinable place that could be an interior or an exterior, a figure or nature... de Kooning fully realised his intention to use opposing elements to evoke an anxious balance that can be glimpsed only momentarily."[181]

3.19 *Black Friday*, 1948,

Willem de Kooning, 109.2x96.5cm

3.20 *Attic*, 1949, Willem de Kooning, 157.2x205.7cm

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[180] Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 280
[181] Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 24

Around 1950, de Kooning returned to his *Woman* series, and for which he is best

known. De Kooning's women are "monstrously ugly but seductive females – part

fertility goddess, part graffiti."[182] De Kooning began *Woman I* in 1950 but only

finished it in 1952 after numerous metamorphoses (Fig. **3.21**). It was an obsessive

image for de Kooning, about which he said that,

"The women had to do with the female painted through all the ages, all those

idols, and maybe I was stuck to a certain extent; I couldn't go on. It did one

thing for me: it eliminated composition, arrangement, relationships, light – all

this silly talk about line, colour and form – because the woman was the thing I

wanted to get hold of."[183]

De Kooning also incorporated collage elements into the Woman compositions. In

Woman I, the bright red mouth was cut out from a magazine cigarette advertisement

and pasted on. De Kooning wrote of its significance, "First of all I felt everything

ought to have a mouth. Maybe it was like a pun, maybe it's even sexual... it helped

me immensely to have this real thing. I don't know why I did it with the mouth.

Maybe the grin – it's rather like the Mesopotamian idols."[184]

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[182] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 24
[183] David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-modernism*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 268
[184] Willem de Kooning, cited in Diane Waldman, *Willem de Kooning in East Hampton*, exhibition catalogue, (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1978), 22

3.21 *Woman I*, 1950-2, Willem de Kooning, 192.7x147.3cm

3.22 *Woman IV*, 1953, Willem de Kooning, 174x148.6cm

While this form of disfiguration of de Kooning's had never appeared before in Chinese Literati figure paintings, a similar treatment of figures can be found in Qing Dynasty painter Luo Pin's[185] (羅聘, 1733-1799) *Ghosts* (鬼趣圖, Fig. **3.23**) paintings. In total, he made eight of these *Ghosts* paintings, with each of them having a different theme. According to Li, "In these paintings, he uses ghosts as a metaphor and social critique of the chaos of society at that time."[186] In his sixth *Ghosts* painting, where he draws a big ghost chasing after two smaller ghosts, he deliberately enlarges the proportions of the head of the big ghost and uses waster wash to blur the outline of the ghost. Although Luo Pin's disfiguration and abstraction of the ghosts in his paintings are far from that of de Kooning's Woman paintings (probably limited

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[185] Luo Pin was active in Yangzhou during the Qing Dynasty. He was one of the youngest artists of the China Yangzhou Art School and was a student of Jin Nong (金農, 1687-1764). His painting subject matter is very broad, not limited to just landscape or flowers and birds. His most famous paintings are his *Ghosts* paintings.

[186] Li Lin Can, *Chinese Art History*, (Taipei: Lionart Co Ltd., 2008), 291

by the Confucian philosophy of "The Doctrine of the Mean"[187] (中庸), that discourages artists from pursuing extreme forms of expression), there is perhaps a comparison that can be made.

3.23 *Ghosts*, Qing Dynasty, Luo Pin

In 1955, de Kooning started painting urban landscapes, such as *Easter Monday* and *Door to the River* instead of women (Fig. **3.24** and **3.25**), where he simplified his gestural lines and brightened his palette, with *Door to the River* being painted in a broad, expansive painterliness. In the 1960s, he resumed his *Woman* theme but by then they had become softer, more fluid and palpable such as may be seen in *Woman, Sag Harbor*, and *Clam Diggers* (Fig. **3.26** and **3.27**).

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[187] As translated by James Legge in 1893, in *The Chinese Classics: Volume 1*, (Phoenix Arizona: Simon Publications, 2001), 382. The goal is for moderation and to maintain harmony in balance.

3.24 *Easter Monday*, 1956, Willem de Kooning, **3.25** *Door to the River*, 1960, Willem de Kooning,
243.8x188cm   203.2x177.8cm

3.26 *Woman, Sag Habor*, 1964,   **3.27** *Clam Diggers*, 1963, Willem de Kooning,
Willem de Kooning, 203.1x91.2cm   51.4x36.8cm

In the 1970s, De Kooning achieved a synthesis of woman and the environment in
paintings such as *Whose Name was Writ in Water* and *Morning: The Springs* (Fig.

3.28 and **3.29**). A synthesis of figure and abstraction is achieved with a new level of integration of graceful flowing lines and allusions to his biomorphic forms. According to Everitt, "His great achievements lie in combining a personal content with a repudiation of style (in a sense of stylishness), and in marrying figuration to an extreme gestural manner."[188]

3.28 *Whose Name was Writ in Water*, 1975, Willem de Kooning, 195x223cm

3.29 *Morning: The Springs*, 1983, Willem de Kooning, 203.5x177.5cm

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[188] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 25

3.3.2 Colour-field Painting

The other direction taken by Abstract Expressionism was that of colour-field painting, which strove to remove all references to the past by painting large unified fields of varying colours with equal chromatic intensity. Notable colour-field painters such as Clyfford Still, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman abandoned recognizable imagery in their pictures and created an all-over colour field by the adjustment of colour areas as well as treating the painting surface as a unified field, in that respect similar to that of the gesture painters. After their previous semi-abstract biomorphic forms which were inspired by myth, they started to pursue symbols that were more universal and immediate, eventually culminating in a non-symbolic approach of, as Everitt says, "the all-over colour field as an assertion of the mystery of being."[189]

Newman used the term "sublime" and proposed a corresponding art of pure idea that sought to reflect both the mystery and inherent tragic nature of the human condition. Referring to Edmund Burke[190] for a definition of the sublime, Newman agreed that it was incompatible with beauty and its focus on perfection and quality, and was moved to reject the preoccupations with beauty in European art, including what he called the Greek ideal and its perfect forms. Newman wrote as follows that, "we are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia, legend, myth, or what have you, that have been the devices of Western European painting."[191] Newman argued that only by choosing to renounce the notions of beauty could the sublime be evoked. Nonetheless, even though Newman rejected

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[189] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 26
[190] Eighteenth-century Irish philosopher whose *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757; New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) influenced Newman's conception of the incompatibility between sublime and beauty
[191] Barnett Newman, "The Sublime is Now," *The Tiger's Eye*, No.6 (December, 1948), 52

European art on a whole for its pursuit of the perfect form, ironically, he also found

an alternative approach in its numerous styles, referring to the "Gothic or Baroque,

which consists of a desire to destroy form; where form can be formless."[192]

Similar to Newman, Rothko was concerned with achieving "transcendental

experiences"[193] in non-symbolic mythic or metaphysical art. In order to do so,

Rothko claimed that art would have to be free "of received images, ideas and

forms,"[194] and in 1949, he wrote that, "the elimination of all obstacles between the

painter and the idea, and between the idea and the observer,"[195] to achieve the idea

of transcendence, pursuing a form that would directly suggest so in his paintings.

Clyfford Still's perspective was similar to both those of Newman and Rothko, and he

also believed that painting had to have a new point of view to have value. Still felt it

was "imperative to evolve an instrument of thought which could aid in cutting

through all cultural opiates, past and present, so that a direct, immediate, and truly

free vision could be achieved, and an idea be revealed with clarity."[196]

In all, the goals of the colour-field painters were visionary. According to Sandler,

they sought to "create an abstract art suggestive of the sublime, of transcendence, of

revelation... to suppress in their art all references to familiar images in nature or in

past and present art, since such references would elicit predictable responses."[197]

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[192] Ibid.
[193] Mark Rothko, cited in Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), 149
[194] Ibid.
[195] Mark Rothko, "Statement on attitude in painting," in *The Tiger's Eye*, No.9, (October, 1949), 114
[196] Clyfford Still, "Letter to Gordon M. Smith", catalogue of an exhibition, *Paintings by Clyfford Still*, (New York: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 5 November – 13 December, 1959)
[197] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), 150

Colour-field painters strove to achieve the metaphysical experience of the sublime, and presented each painting as one unified and vast image with a highly expressive psychological use of colour. Despite denying all familiarity and received ideas, the colour-field painters' exploitation of the affective power of colour has its precursors in painters such as Henri Matisse and Milton Avery. Matisse had earlier noted the psychological effects of colour in itself that it can act "upon the inner sensibility like the sudden stroke of a gong."[198] The colour-field painters utilised this tendency, and they therefore pushed it to the extreme with large expanses of colour that overwhelmed the viewer's eye, where the direct immediacy stuns the viewer, "numbing him into a state of detachment from his everyday attachments."[199]

Another effect that the colour-field painters wanted to achieve was that of "infinity", which according to Burke, is one of the qualities of the sublime.[200] The vast all-over open fields of colour that they painted seemed to expand beyond the edges of the canvas, rather than being restricted in the picture boundaries. Moreover, in order to further intensify the sense of infinity, they reduced sharp outlines in their paintings and restricted abrupt contrasts of colour values. Instead, they preferred to apply close colours to create smooth transitions between areas of colours.

Besides easing smooth visual transitions and creating a visual effect of infinity, simplification of pictorial means also evoked the same impact reaction as that by primitive art. The colour-field painters admired this greatly "because they are simpler

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[198] Henri Matisse, quoted in Monroe Wheeler, catalogue of an exhibition *The Last Works of Henri Matisse*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 10

[199] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), 151

[200] Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757; New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 72

they are more profound, more important, and more valuable."[201] Robert Goldwater points out that "a simplification of technique and an omission of all detail, a deliberate suppression of nuance and overtone... [could lead to] a single, undifferentiated, overwhelming emotional effect."[202]

In terms of scale, around 1950, Still, Rothko and Newman began to do paintings that were more monumental, and which began to intensify the direct, immediate flooding of the viewer's eye with colour. They agreed with Burke that the "greatness of dimension, is a powerful cause of the sublime."[203] However, when creating works on a monumental scale, they were trying to create an effect opposite to awesomeness. As Rothko elaborates, while the historical function of large paintings was to be "grandiose and pompous", he wanted to be "very intimate and human. To paint a small picture is to place yourself outside your experience... However you paint the larger picture, you are in it."[204]

Furthermore, the all-pervading expanses of colour that cover the viewer's whole field of vision becomes a kind of environment, which has the effect of isolating the viewer from the outside environment. Viewing their paintings as environments, the colour-field painters were radical in the way their works were to be displayed, preferring their grand scale abstractions to be viewed in small rooms, in the manner of murals instead of paintings. In a statement for his 1951 exhibition, Newman wrote

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[201] Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, (New York: Vintage Books Random House, 1967), 251
[202] Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, (New York: Vintage Books Random House, 1967), 114
[203] Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757; New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 72
[204] Mark Rothko, Statement delivered from the floor at a symposium on *How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture,* at the Museum of Modern Art, (printed in *Interiors*, CX, No.10, 1951), 104

"There is a tendency to look at large pictures from a distance. The large pictures in this exhibition are intended to be seen from a short distance."[205] Consequently, as with Rothko, the large paintings become very intimate such that "the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other."[206] The viewer was thus forced to be more involved than one would normally be with a smaller scale picture.

[205] Barnett Newman, Statement made for his exhibition, (New York: Betty Parsons Gallery, 1951)
[206] Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757; New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 57

3.3.2.1   Clyfford Still

Among the three colour-field painters referred to here, Clyfford Still[207] (1904-1980) is considered to be the initiator of the colour-field abstraction trend, and was the first to exhibit pictures in this manner, in as early as 1947.[208]

Towards the end of the 1930s, he began to shift away from representational painting to abstraction when he started to simplify his forms. In the mid-1940s, he abandoned figuration permanently saying, "I have no brief for signs or symbols or literary allusions in painting. They are crutches for illustrators and politicians desperate for an audience."[209]

3.30 *PH-118*, 1947, Clyfford Still, 175.3x134.6cm

3.31 *1948-C*, 1948, Clyfford Still, 205.7x175.3cm

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[207] Still was born in 1904 in North Dakota. He studied in Spokane and Washington State universities, and graduated with an MFA in 1935.

[208] Clement Greenberg, "American-Type Painting," *Partisan Review*, XXII, No.2 (Spring, 1955), 190-3

[209] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 31

During the late 1940s, Still developed his mature style with a distinctive format that he kept till his death in 1980. His paintings contain both non-figurative and non-objective qualities, mainly involved juxtaposing various colours and surfaces in different arrangements, as Britt observed, often suggestive of foliage or stalagmites.[210] His painting imagery is logically organised and, as Lawrence Alloway highlights, "like the colour code of a map… not a key to somewhere else, but itself a land."[211] Although the landscape metaphor is a useful one, Still warns not to take it too literally, "The fact that I grew up on the prairies has nothing to do with my paintings, with what people think they find in them… I paint only myself, not nature."[212]

3.32 *1951-T No.2*, 1951, Clyfford Still, 203.1x91.2cm

3.33 *1957-D No.1*, 1957, Clyfford Still, 287x403.9cm

In this series of paintings by Still, perhaps because of my identity as a Chinese landscape painter, I instinctively recall the mountain forms of Chinese landscape

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[210] David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-modernism*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 272

[211] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 31

[212] Ibid

paintings. To me, the black forms in Still's *1957-D No.1* resemble mountain outlines and shadows (Fig. **3.33**). Particularly in the large black areas that are mixed with white areas, that echo the Chinese painting aesthetic theory of *xu shi*[213] (虚實). Song Dynasty painter Xu Dao Ning's[214] (許道寧, ca. 970-1051) *Fisherman on a Mountain Stream* painting depicts river and mountain scenery in autumn (Fig. **3.34**). If we just focus on the mountains on the left, we can observe some similarity with the forms in Still's painting *1957-D No.1*. On the other hand, modern Ink-wash painter Liu Kuo Sung's calligraphic lines in his *Big Brushstrokes* series vaguely resemble mountain forms. In paintings such as *Trees in Misty Rain*, Liu uses the large calligraphic lines to draw out the mountains, and then he tears the paper fibres to reveal streaks of white areas which are suggestive of mountain paths and waterfalls (Fig. **3.35**).[215] This is similar to the 'torn effect' appearance in Still's paintings such as *1957-D No.1*, although on a much smaller scale.

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[213] See section 2.2.5.2

[214] Xu Dao Ning was active in the Northern Song Dynasty and his early paintings emulated those of Five Dynasties painter Li Cheng (李成, 919-967), only developing his own style later on.

[215] See section 4.2.1.

3.34 *Fisherman on a Mountain Stream*, Song Dynasty, Xu Dao Ning, 48.9x209.6cm

3.35 *Trees in Misty Rain*, 1965, Liu Kuo Sung, 61x91cm

In comparison with Rothko and Newman, who organise their colours in relatively simple ways – Rothko's nebulous rectangles and Newman's large expanse of colours with thin lines – Still's colour arrangements are not as regular. Paintings like *1951-T No.2* and *1957-D No.1* show a 'corroded' colour-field with flame-like verticals that seem 'torn' off the painting to reveal different flashes of colours beneath (Fig. **3.32** and **3.33**). As observed in *1957-D No.1*, the four colours of black, yellow, white and red, with their different variations (dark blues and purples), are predominant in his work, with a tendency for darker shades in later years.

Another difference in Still's work as compared to that of Rothko and Newman is his application of paint onto the canvas. While Rothko and Newman generally apply thin layers of pigment wash of flat colours, Still crudely applies thick impasto to give a palpable variety of subtle depth and tonal shades across the painting surfaces.

Similar to Newman, Still had a high notion of art. His aim was to "purify the act of painting so that it can transcend itself and become a self-sufficient assertion of the sublime."[216]

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[216] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 31

3.3.2.2 Mark Rothko

Mark Rothko[217] (1903-1970) attended Yale University in 1921-3, but dropped out and moved to New York shortly after in 1925 where he would begin his artistic career at the Art Students League of New York under Max Weber.

3.36 *The Omen of the Eagle*, 1942,   **3.37** *Entombment I*, 1946, Mark Rothko, 51.8x65.4cm
Mark Rothko, 64.8x45.1cm

Observing in pictures such as *The Omen of the Eagle* and *Entombment I*, Rothko, like many of his peers, went through the primitive myth art phase, experimenting with automatism and Jungian biomorphic forms, painting compositions of plant, human and animal forms, which were arranged diagrammatically against soft light-filled backgrounds. Commenting on paintings in this manner, Rothko remarked that they expressed "a pantheism in which man, bird, beast and tree – the known as

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[217] Rothko was born in Russia in 1903, and immigrated to America in 1913 with his family at the age of ten. They eventually settled in Portland, Oregon.

well as the unknowable – merge into a single tragic idea."[218] In his later career, Rothko would then continue to develop this ideal into pure abstraction.

3.38 *No. 16*, 1949, Mark Rothko,
55.9x35.6cm

3.39 *Untitled*, 1948, Mark Rothko, 89.3x76.9cm

Rothko and Clyfford Still became friends when he travelled to Berkeley after his divorce in 1943. In 1946 he became influenced by Still's abstract landscapes of colour, and hence created his first transitional 'multiform' paintings. In paintings such as *No.16* and *Untitled*, Rothko had eliminated all figurative, surrealistic imagery and mythic allusions from his paintings, replacing them with freely composed and somewhat vague shapes of colour. He described them as more organically structured, with each block of colour holding its own life force and individual expression. These 'multiforms' would serve as a prelude to his mature 'signature' style of later years.

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[218] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 28

Rothko's mature output began from 1947 with works which are characterised by soft-focus blurs of colour. The absence of distinct lines contrasts greatly with those of the gesture painters such as Pollock, and similarly, when compared to Literati painting where the calligraphic lines are essential components. However, in a sense, Rothko's large areas of colour are similar to that of the *liu bai*[219] (留白) spaces in Literati painting. Although *liu bai* areas are literally not painted with any paint, we can view both the *liu bai* spaces in Literati painting and Rothko's rectangles, as empty non-figurative spaces filled with 'white' or 'colour' that invite the viewer to contemplate their content. In addition, these non-representational and non-figurative qualities of colour-field paintings are unlike Chinese Literati painting which is representational and figurative.

Rothko ultimately simplified his paintings into two or three rectangular areas of contrasting, yet complementary colours that stacked on top of one another. In paintings such as *Magenta, Black, Green on Orange*, the rectangles seem to float against a coloured ground due to their close tonal values and soft edges (Fig. **3.40**). Lowry describes that,

"The rectangles sometimes seem barely to coalesce out of the ground, concentrations of its substance. The green bar... on the other hand, appears to vibrate against the orange around it, creating an optical flicker. In fact, the canvas is full of gentle movement, as blocks emerge and recede, and surfaces breathe... shifting between solidity and impalpable depth."[220]

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[219] See section 2.2.5.2
[220] Glenn D. Lowry, *MoMA Highlights: 350 Works from The Museum of Modern Art, New York,* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 196

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3.40 *Magenta, Black, Green on Orange*, 1949, Mark Rothko, 216.9x163.8cm

Simultaneously, he began working on a monumental scale that would seem to overwhelm the spectator's vision. Although Rothko's compositional structure could be divided into different elements, he invented a method in which he could reassert the picture plane and preserve the artistic quality of an all-over "field". Firstly, there is no definite focal point of attention in his paintings; the rectangular soft-edge blocks of colour fill up the whole painting and serve to repeat and reinforce the shape of the picture. According to Messinger, "The rectangular shapes are separate entities that nevertheless interact with each other in synchrony to achieve a unified vision."[221] Secondly, he applied very thin layers of pigment and often in repeated very thin wash layers, where this process resulted in the texture of the canvas tending to show through and unify all the separate components in the pictorial surface. Britt

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[221] Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 118

suggests that, "With a touch of irony, he encourages a contradiction between the illusion of a cloudy depth and the hard, visible fact of a surface."[222]

The atmospheres of Rothko's mature works are passive and meditative, surrounding the viewer in "a quiet space, metaphorically equivalent to reverie."[223] This invites a surrender of self and evoking the transcendental experience of the sublime.[224] His remarkable use of colours is related to the aesthetics of the sublime as aforementioned. He also denied being an abstractionist when he said that,

"I was interested only in expressing basic human emotions — tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on. And the fact that a lot of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I can communicate those basic human emotions . . . The people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them. And if you... are moved only by their colour relationship, then you miss the point."[225]

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[222] David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-modernism*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 272

[223] David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-modernism*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 272

[224] Ibid.

[225] Mark Rothko, cited in Glenn D. Lowry, *MoMA Highlights: 350 Works from The Museum of Modern Art, New York*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 196

3.41 *Orange and Yellow*, 1956, Mark Rothko,   **3.42** *Black on Grey*, 1970, Mark Rothko,
231.1x180.3cm   198.1x168.2cm

Rothko followed this stylistic formula and compositional structure for rest of his artistic life, but his colours of his artistic production gradually became darker and somewhat morbid. Comparing to earlier paintings like *Orange and Yellow,* late paintings such as *Black on Grey*, foreshadow his unexpected suicide in 1970.

3.3.2.3   Barnett Newman

Barnett Newman[226] (1905-1970) started taking art lessons at the Art Students League in 1923 where he met and become close friends with Adolph Gottlieb. He would later go on to become close friends with Rothko, Still, and Pollock, and be at the centre of the New York art scene in the early 1950s. Despite his important role in the formative years of Abstract Expressionism, he only achieved recognition as an artist relatively late in his career.

3.43 *Onement I*, 1948, Barnett Newman, 69.2x41.2cm

Initially Newman was more of a writer and philosopher, teaching and writing catalogue forewords and reviews before painting *Onement I* in 1948, a work that he proclaimed to be a major breakthrough. In it, he had disposed of all overt subject matter, regardless of it being abstract or figurative, leaving only large areas of colour

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[226] Barnett Newman was born in 1905 in New York to Jewish immigrants from Poland, and studied philosophy at City College of New York, graduating in 1927.

"separated" by only a painted vertical strip, or "zip" as Newman called it.[227] Newman explained in 1962 that, "instead of using outlines, instead of making shapes or setting off spaces my drawing declares the space."[228] He further elaborates that the zip is "a field that brings life to the other fields, just as the other fields bring life to this so-called line."[229]

These stripes or "zips" would become an artistic signature of Newman. While initially the colour field and zip are seen separately, upon further contemplation, they are seen at the same time and simultaneously as dividing yet unifying the composition of the painting. Thomas Hess elucidates this as a strategy in 1969 when he said that, "You see the zip as a division, and the colour it divides becomes the main actor in the painting; or, you see the zip as the point of focus and the large colour areas as its medium; finally, you see both ways... Their simultaneous comprehension creates that third thing, which is the finished painting."[230]

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[227] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 27

[228] Barnett Newman, cited in John P. O'Neill, ed., *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 251

[229] Barnett Newman, cited in John P. O'Neill, ed., *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 256

[230] Thomas B. Hess, *Barnett Newman*, (New York: Walker and Co., 1969), 48

3.44 *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, 1951, Barnett Newman, 242.2x541.7cm

Newman's first eighteen-foot-long painting, *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, was exhibited in his second solo exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery in 1951 (Fig. **3.44**). This painting consists of a vast red expanse subdivided by five stripes or "zips" with a symmetrical square form in the middle of an overall asymmetrical composition. At the exhibition, Newman built a sign to guide viewers to move to engage directly and intimately with the work. According to Everitt, "the great expanse of red subdues the ego and inspires a kind of tranquil awe."[231] Consequently, if the viewer stands close to the painting, it becomes an engulfing environment that is broken by five thin zips that "may be seen as symbolizing figures against a void."[232]

The colour fields in his previous pictures were more variegated such as in *Onement I*, but became more pure and flat as in such as *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, when they were applied in smooth layers of cadmium red paint, leaving no textures of brushstrokes. Similarly to Rothko, this application of paint and drawing is very different to that of

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[231] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 27
[232] Glenn D. Lowry, *MoMA Highlights: 350 Works from The Museum of Modern Art, New York*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 195

gesture painting and as found in Chinese Literati painting where lines are critical elements of the paintings. However, for Newman, drawing was subordinate to colour and he wanted the viewer to experience the monumental and primitive impact of his paintings. According to Everitt, "The non-painterliness of Newman's technique... prevents the spectator from indulging himself in sensation. By its dryness and banality, it draws attention away from the experience towards the idea."[233] In comparison to traditional Chinese painters who paint to achieve a sense of a communion with nature and the Tao, and hope similarly that the viewer is able to experience this through the artist's painterly depiction of nature. In addition, Newman's non-focal point composition is the opposite to the preference outlined within the aesthetic theory of *bin zhu*[234] (賓主) in traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting, where 'monotony' is rejected in favour of a primary or first focal point to attract the viewer's attention, before then shifting to second, third, or forth sequentially.

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[233] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 27
[234] See section 2.2.5.2

3.45 *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow or Blue?* 1966, Barnett Newman, 190.5x121.9cm

3.46 *Here III*, 1965-6, Barnett Newman, 317.5x61x45.7cm

3.47 *Broken Obelisk*, 1963-7, Barnett Newman, 762x320x320cm

3.48 *Untitled*, 1960, Barnett Newman

Towards the end of his artistic career in his final decade, Newman made lithographs and also sculptures, such as *Here III* and *Broken Obelisk* (Fig. **3.46** and **3.47**), which are essentially three-dimensional "zips", and which begin to take on the form and dynamic of a single brush stroke (Fig. **3.48**).

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4 The Dialogue between Eastern and Western Art

4.1 The Influence of Eastern Art on American Abstract Expressionism

Since the time of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) and of Zheng He (鄭和, 1371-1433) before him, people from different corners of the world, through trade and travel, began to become aware of other civilizations, giving rise to a consciousness of the global. New interactions between different cultures and civilizations commenced and have continued until the present day.

According to Sullivan, "In many cases, artistic transmission occurs as a response to a conscious, and quite specific, need. The need may be deeply established, such as that fulfilled by Buddhist art in East Asia; or it could be as superficial and transient as sheer boredom and the hunger for something new."[235] This was the case for *Chinoiserie*, finding its place in Rococo ornament, but which disappeared with the arrival of subsequent fashion trends. Artistic transmission continues to grow, up until today, and increasingly during the last century due to the effects of globalization and technological advances such as the Internet and ease of air travel.

The history of artistic interaction of East and West is an enormous subject in itself, and it is neither necessary nor possible to completely illustrate it here. For the purpose of this thesis, I will be looking only at the relationships of aspects of Far Eastern art and Western twentieth-century painting. In addition, the particular

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[235] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, (Thames and Hudson, London, 1973), 256

interest in this case is the almost simultaneous emergence of Abstract Expressionism and modern Ink-wash painting in both West and East after the Second World War.

As mentioned earlier, New York was the cultural melting pot to where European artists fled and where some greatly influenced the development of Abstract Expressionism. Other foreign influences that helped shape Abstract Expressionism were Zen Buddhism and Eastern philosophies, Chinese and Japanese calligraphy, with the new emphasis on spontaneous gesture and the 'act of painting'. According to Sansom, "appropriating the notion of pure intention within the activity of mark-making (a key interest being Eastern art and in particular Chinese calligraphy), artists emphasised the qualities existing within the activity of painting – its 'happening'."[236]

In terms of the crisis in their subject matter, calligraphy suggested that the artistic process or 'act of painting' would be the content of painting itself. The diverse brushstroke is of the utmost importance in Chinese calligraphy. Everitt elaborates that the "painter-scribe abolishes the contradiction between subject and object, and, by concentrating on the process of sign-making, feels that he is actively participating in a continuous and potentially endless series of events (paralleling the cosmic process of generation and regeneration)."[237]

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[236] Matthew Sansom, *Imaging Music: Abstract Expressionism and Free Improvisation*, Leonardo Music Journal, Vol. 11, Not Necessarily "English Music": Britain's Second Golden Age (2001), 31
[237] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 5

4.1.1 Mark Tobey

It is strikingly similar in the objectives and methods between Oriental painting and certain key modern artistic movements that we can suppose that these radical Western artistic developments have, to some extent at least, been inspired by Far Eastern art and thought. The parallels are plenty but it was notably in the work of Mark Tobey[238] (1890-1976) that "Oriental art first struck a responsive chord in an American painter."[239]

According to Sullivan, Mark Tobey's defining moment appeared in "one autumn evening in 1935 at Dartington Hall, in the year following his fruitful visit to the Far East, and though his first exercise in 'white writing' looked to him like Broadway, it was unconsciously inspired by his experience of studying calligraphy in Japan."[240] His influences had been built up over the years from his first encounter of Japanese prints in Seattle in 1923, and met the Chinese artist Teng Kuei[241] (1900-1980). Tobey was first taught how to execute the Chinese brush and ink by Teng Kuei, and eventually stayed with him in Shanghai ten years later.[242] In addition, Tobey took a

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[238] Mark Tobey is a painter, poet and composer. He was born in Centerville, Wisconsin in 1890. In 1906, he was trained watercolor and oil painting at the Art Institute in Chicago. In 1918 Mark Tobey shifted to Bahaism which is Persian belief. From 1922 to 1925 he acquired a job as an art teacher at the Cornish School in Seattle. Moreover, his first solo exhibition took place in Chicago in 1928. He then moved to England and teaches at the Dartington Hall School in Devonshire from 1930 to 1937.

[239] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art: Revised and Expanded Edition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press Ltd., 1997), 263

[240] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art: Revised and Expanded Edition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press Ltd., 1997), 257-8

[241] Teng Kuei (滕圭) went to America to learn sculpture at Washington of University in 1923, and he then taught at this university after graduation in 1927. He also held exhibitions in some cities during the period while living in America. After 1931 he came back to China and taught in the Yan Jing University, simultaneously he also established the *Bai Ye Sculpture and Painting School* (白也雕塑繪畫館) in Shanghai, China.

[242] Willian C. Seitz, *Mark Tobey*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1962), 49

trip to Japan where he spent a month painting and practicing calligraphy in a Zen monastery outside Kyoto.

Shortly after returning to England, in his studio in Dartington Hall, Tobey "began to weave on paper an endless web of white lines on brown ground,"[243] thereby entering a new realm of practice, having broken through established Western conventions of pictorial space. He told columnist Louis Guzzo, speaking of the trip to China and Japan that preceded his artistic breakthrough,

"It's been said I was searching for new techniques. Nothing of the sort. I was really enjoying myself, learning to do things that interested me. When I returned to England I was disturbed. I began to daub on a canvas and I was puzzled by the result. A few streaks of white, some blue streaks. Looked like a distorted nest. It bothered me. What I had learned in the Orient had affected me more than I realized. This was a new approach. I couldn't shake it off. So I had to absorb it before it consumed me. In a short time white writing emerged. I had a totally new conception of painting. The Orient has been the greatest influence of my life."[244]

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[243] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art: Revised and Expanded Edition,* (Berkeley: University of California Press Ltd., 1997), 252
[244] Louis Guzzo, *The Seattle Daily Times*, May 3, 1957

4.1 *Soochow*, 1934, Mark Tobey

4.2 *Broadway*, 1936, Mark Tobey, 66x48.8cm

Although the result looked to him like Broadway instead of something Oriental, he later recalled the experience and said, "The calligraphic impulse I had received in China enabled me to convey, without being bound by forms, the notion of the people and the cars and the whole vitality of the scene."[245] Different from conventional representational paintings, Tobey's white writing style paintings are without a distinguishable centre of focus, or any single emphasized portion. Evoking a feeling of continuity, extending beyond the picture space, that Tobey described the all-over composition as "freed from form by the influence of the calligraphic."[246]

4.3 *Crystallizations*, 1944, Mark Tobey,
45.7x33cm

4.4 *Broadway Girl Head*, 1957, Mark Tobey,
59.7x39.4cm

[245] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 252

[246] Mark Tobey, *Exhibition Catalogue*, (New York, 1962), 50.

Without doubt, the Chinese artist Teng Kuei played a crucial role in Tobey's development in his formative years, teaching him calligraphy and Ink-wash painting techniques, as well as providing insight into the various Chinese artistic concepts and aesthetic theories. This new knowledge of Oriental art and thinking was very different from his Occidental cultural background and conditioning, having a large impact on him. Tobey recalled that, "I have just had my first lesson in Chinese brush from my friend and artist Teng Kuei. The tree is no more a solid in the earth, breaking into lesser solids bathed in chiaroscuro."[247]

In terms of the underlying influence of calligraphic manner in Tobey's artistic production, he once claimed that,

> "I knew when in Japan and China as I struggled with their sumi ink and brush in an attempt to understand their calligraphy... But it was there that I got what I call the calligraphic impulse to carry my work on into some new dimensions...With this method I found I could paint the frenetic rhythms of the modern city, the interweaving of lights and the stream of people who entangled in the meshes of this net[248]"

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[247] Willian C. Seitz, *Mark Tobey*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1962), 47
[248] Willian C. Seitz, *Mark Tobey*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1962), 51

4.5 *Transit*, 1948, Mark Tobey, 62.2x47cm   **4.6** *Meditative Series VIII*, 1954, Mark
Tobey, 45x29.8cm

In *Transit*, the calligraphic cursive-like brushstrokes cover the whole expanse of the dark brown background, with an overlay of white calligraphic brushstrokes. This picture is distinctly different from his other series of urban scenes. We can clearly observe that Tobey not only used the Chinese brush and ink media, but is also attempting to introduce Chinese calligraphic components into his paintings.

In Chinese calligraphy and in the Ink-wash tradition, the use of line is the dominant element, with colour playing a subordinate role to both traditions. Tobey subscribed to this way of working and tried to avoid the application of complex and vivid colours to maintain a linear manner. He states that, "Line became dominant instead of mass but I still attempted to interpenetrate it with a spatial existence. Writing the

painting, whether in colour or neutral tones, became a necessity for me".[249] In this regard, Tobey's notion of "writing" the painting is synonymous with Literati painting's aesthetic theory of *xie hua* (寫畫, literally "written painting")[250], which applies the extensive use of diverse calligraphic strokes in the whole painting. Eventually he goes on to be more direct and explicit in indicating this notion in the titles of his work such as "white writing".

With regard to Tobey's inspiration for his techniques of using white lines to show the outlines of objects instead of black lines, or the mixing of various tones of black and white lines in paintings such as *Worker* and *Meditative Series VIII* (Fig. **4.6** and **4.10**), according to Meng, we can draw parallels with the Chinese calligraphic tablet that uses white lines over black or dark coloured background as the form of expression,[251] and it is known that Tobey had collected some examples of Chinese calligraphic tablets.[252] There is a connection that may be made, especially when Tobey clarified, "I was interested in an idea – why couldn't structures be in white? Why did they always have to be in black? I painted them in white because I thought structures could be, should be light. What I was fundamentally interested in at the time was light,"[253] – utilizing media such as wax or other water-resistant material to draw his image, and then paint over with tempera, watercolour, or ink to reveal the white lines.

[249] Kuh Katharine, *The Artist's Voice: Talk with Seventeen Artists*, (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), 240

[250] See section 2.2.3

[251] Meng Ching Yuan, *The Impact of Eastern Culture on Mark Tobey—An American Abstract Expressionist*, (Taipei: Taipei Municipal University of Education), 103

[252] Ibid

[253] Rathbone E. Eliza., *Mark Tobey: City Paintings*, (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1984), 41

4.7 Cursive style *xin jing*, Tang Dynasty, Zhang Xu

4.8 *The Stone Tablet of Daqin Nestorianism[254] Disseminated in China*, 761A.D., Lu Xiuyan

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[254] In ancient China, 'Daqin' was a name for Rome, while 'Jingjiao' was a name for Nestorian sect of Christianity after it was disseminated into China in the 9th year of Zhenguan of the Tang dynasty (635

4.9 *New York Tablet*, 1946, Mark Tobey, 63.1x48.3cm   **4.10** *Worker*, 1943, Mark Tobey, 109.2x63.5cm

A.D.). The inscription on the tablet records the dissemination of the canon and ceremonies of Nestorianism in China during the 150 years since 635 A.D.

4.1.2 Robert Motherwell

Robert Motherwell (1915-1991) was one of the youngest members of the first generation of American Abstract Expressionist. He studied philosophy in Stanford and Harvard before studying art and art history at Columbia University under Meyer Schapiro. A lucid writer and eloquent speaker, he made a great contribution to the wider dissemination of ideas about Abstract Expressionism.

4.11 *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No.110*, 1971, Robert Motherwell, 208.3x289.6cm

In 1949, Motherwell began his longstanding series of paintings, *Elegies to the Spanish Republic*, and these works are generally considered to be his most significant paintings. This series which was originally inspired by the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), represents one of the most poignant meditations of modern art on a political theme. He usually utilised black paint diluted with turpentine to create a

visual shadow effect, and would paint ovoids and vertical rectangles that spread across these long strip-like backdrops.

4.12 *Untitled (from Lyric Suite)*, 1965, Robert Motherwell,   **4.13** *Untitled,* 1965, Robert
22.8x28cm   Motherwell, 22.8x28cm

In addition, Motherwell was under the direct influence of knowledge of Zen painting. Finding inspiration in the ideas and approaches of Zen painting, he once described his *Lyric Suite* series (Fig. **4.12** and **4.13**) as "unadulterated automatism. I took a thousand identical sheets of Japanese rice paper, an English watercolour brush, and common American inks, and worked perhaps forty at a session, without conscious preconceptions, and with no revision – that was the rule of the game."[255] The sheets would be placed on the floor where some would be done with sharp rapid strokes while others with slow flowing ones. After having completed 565, this series of paintings came to an abrupt end after the sudden death of his close friend, the sculptor David Smith.

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[255] Robert Motherwell, cited in H. H. Arnason, *Robert Motherwell*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1982), 154

Due to the textured absorbency of the Japanese rice paper, random effects would occur after spreading of the ink, which would also create blurred edges with halo effects on the painting surface. Dealing mainly with minimal colours of black and white, most of them were black gestural marks on white rice paper derived from his application of both automatic drawing and spontaneous gestures (Fig. **4.14**). The accidental spontaneous process that he adopts illustrates his affinity with Zen painting, which Messinger elucidates, when she says that "The motion is direct; the image is unmodified; the singular gesture links the artist and the image metaphysically, as it does for the Zen painter."[256]

4.14 *Untitled*, 1967, Robert Motherwell

4.15 *Black Mountain State I*, 1983, Robert Motherwell, 61.6x77.2cm

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[256] Lisa Mintz Messinger, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 70

4.16 *Patience*, 20th Century, Kasumi Bunsho Roshi   **4.17** *Enso*, 20th Century, Kanjuro Shibata

Unlike the all-over non-figurative compositions of Abstract Expressionism, paintings such as *Black Mountain State I* not only suggests, through the title, that the subject matter is of mountains, but also one can see that the three triangular abstract forms are strongly representative of mountain outlines (Fig. **4.15**). This is a significant departure from the totally non-representative Abstract Expressionist paintings and becomes a move back to figuration. In addition, the white empty spaces are also utilising the Chinese painting aesthetic theory of *liu bai*[257] (留白), with the black painted forms as solid (*shi,* 實) and the rest of the painting as void (*xu,* 虛)[258].

Like Pollock, Motherwell placed emphasis on the "act of painting" and images of the unconscious.[259] Motherwell viewed the process of painting as "an adventure,

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[257] See section 2.2.5.2
[258] Ibid
[259] Dawn Ades cited in David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-modernism*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 249-50

without pre-conceived ideas, on the part of persons of intelligence, sensibility and passion. Fidelity to what occurs between oneself and the canvas, no matter how unexpected, becomes central." [260] The idea of an unknown adventure and self-realisation draws a parallel with the Zen Buddhism's Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng's (慧能, 638-713) destruction of all documents that contain the rules and principles of Zen Buddhism. Hui Neng rejected pre-conceived ideas about rules of Zen Buddhism and principles from any written texts, and wanted people to attain *Satori*[261], or enlightenment, through the individual's personal experience and struggle. Nonetheless, this sense of an unknown adventure was contrary to the traditional Chinese painting aesthetic theory of *yi zai bi xian* (意在筆先), where the whole painting has already been visualised in the mind before the first brushstroke.

4.18 *Hollow Men Suite*, 1985-6, Robert Motherwell, 11.1x14.9cm

[260] Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1975), 21
[261] Satori (悟): Spiritual goal of Zen Buddhism

4.19 *The Circle, Triangle and Square,* Sengai Gibon (1750-1837)

4.2 The Influence of Abstract Expressionism on Ink-wash Painting

"Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting put the Oriental Ink-wash painter in a totally new relationship with Western art. Now suddenly calligraphic abstraction became respectable, and no serious critic would accuse Domoto Insho, Zao Wou Kii or Liu Kuo Sung of merely 'copying' Pollock or Kline, although these painters would in most cases admit that it was the impact of the New York school after the war that drove them to discover, or rather to rediscover, the Abstract Expressionist roots of their own tradition."[262]

4.2.1 Liu Kuo Sung

Liu Kuo Sung[263] (劉國松, 1932-), a crucial precursor and supporter of modern Ink-wash painting, is widely acknowledged as the main pioneer of the modern Ink-wash painting movement in Taiwan.

The establishment of Liu's distinctive individual artistic style dates from 1963 and began with his *Big Brushstrokes* series. The foundations of this series originated in the qualitative manner of the Chinese calligraphic line. The gestural brushstroke, swaying from the left to right and right to left, created an increasing dynamism in the calligraphic line and then evoked the abstract imagery of hazy mountains in the

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[262] Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 179

[263] Liu Kuo Sung is widely acknowledged as the main pioneer of the modern Ink-wash Painting movement. He was born in Bangbu, Anhui province in 1932 and moved to Taiwan with Nationalist Government in 1949. Liu completed his art training under the painter scholars such as Huang Jun Bi (黃君璧), Pu Hsin Yu (溥心畬), Liao Chi Chun (廖繼春), Chu Teh Chun (朱德群) at the National Taiwan Normal University.

pictorial space. The representational elements of mountain, waterfall, mist, and cloud might not have been his original intention, but these components of conventional Chinese landscape spontaneously emerge in this series, possibly a reflection of his mountaineering hobby or childhood memories of living in a riverside village.[264]

Liu acknowledged that this series of artworks were inspired and influenced by the Abstract Expressionist Franz Kline. At the same time, he realised that the art of Abstract Expressionist such as Kline, Pollock, and Tobey had striking similarities with the abstract quality of Japanese and Chinese calligraphy. Liu's insight came from studying the linear quality of *cursive script*, after thorough researching into traditional calligraphy.

According to traditional Chinese aesthetic theory, two main theories namely – '*From Calligraphy into Painting* (以書入畫)' and '*The Shared Origins of Calligraphy and Painting* (書畫同源)' - set up the fundamental rules of Literati painting. These rules state that the rich and diverse characteristics of the calligraphic line should be applied as the primary means of expression in painting. However, Liu's approach rejected this aesthetic tradition and made calligraphy the content of the painting itself, as opposed to being merely a tool or means by which pictorial elements of a painting may be depicted.

Liu encountered a precedent from historical sources in the form of a series of works by Shi Ge[265] (石恪, ca. 10th Century), *Second Zen Patriarch Cultivating His Hearts*

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[264] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *The Research of Liu Kuo Sung*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1996), 92
[265] Shi Ge (石格) from Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period to Northern Song (ca. 10th Century)

(二祖調心圖, Fig **4.20**).[266] Liu claimed that, "the qualitative brushstrokes used to outline the clothes of the monk, and the subject of the paintings that were painted (or written) by utilizing the technique of cursive script, was a discovery that had significant impact on his oeuvre."[267] This was a prior example showing how the abstract essence of traditional cursive script is elevated and enhanced, which can then be adapted into modern Ink-wash painting.[268] Hence, the cursive brushstrokes of Shi Ge and Kline's form of visual expression became references and inspiration for Liu's *Big Brushstrokes* series. Later, he would abandon the constraint of objectiveness found in the monk's clothes, and independently convey the artistic essence of *cursive script*, therefore modernizing the artistic visual language of *bi* and *mo*.

4.20 *Second Zen Patriarch Cultivating His Hearts*, 10th Century, Shi Ge, 35.5x129cm

Liu Kuo Sung further revolutionised modern Ink-wash painting through his innovations with painting media and experimental techniques. His earliest abstract

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[266] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *The Research of Liu Kuo Sung*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1996), 104

[267] The term '*From Calligraphy into Painting* (以書入畫)' generally refers to the application of regular (楷書) and seal (篆書) type calligraphic script forms in Ink-wash paintings, but not those of the cursive script.

[268] Ye Wei Lian, *Talk with contemporary artists-the development of Chinese modern Ink-wash painting*, (Taipei: Dong Da publishing Co Ltd, 1987), 223-276

works were executed on Western-style canvases using the media of plaster and oil paint. In 1962, however, he shifted to the ink and *xuan* paper of Ink-wash painting. Although returning to traditional media, he carried on with Pollock's free attitude towards painting media and techniques of application. For example, the lines in his *Big Brushstrokes* paintings stem from his continued experimentation with alternative media. It led him to eventually abandon the traditional Chinese brushes for a large gun barrel brush.

Liu is also noted for his invention of *Liu Kuo Sung* paper[269], achieved by plucking off the thick fibre when painting on picture plane and thereby creating some white organic-like fissures amidst the black ink. This resulted in a very natural and non-artificial visual effect, with the white fissures in the body of his black cursive brushstrokes. This approach echoes the void (*xu*, 虛) component of *xu shi* (虛實) aesthetic theory - where 'there is void (*xu*) there should exist solid (*shi*), and in solid (*shi*) there should exist void (*xu*)' and vice versa (有虛有實，且實中有虛，虛中也有實).

Furthermore, the S-shaped visual extension effect of Liu's paintings also echoes the traditional S-shaped composition of Chinese aesthetic theory of *shi* (勢). This methodology acquired the support of Li Zhu Jin (李鑄晉, 1920-), who formed the view that it was a link to American Abstract Expressionism that avoided direct imitation and maintained the aesthetic sensibility of traditional Ink-wash landscape painting, a view elaborated by Li Jun Yi when he said that, "In effect, he had

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[269] Working with a paper factory, he developed a specific paper type with thicker fibre content.

absorbed and hybridised the essences of two artistic traditions to create a new visual language."[270]

In 1966, Liu was greatly affected by Fan Kuan's (范寬, North Song Dynasty) masterpiece from ca. 14th century, "*Travellers amid Mountains and Streams*" (谿山 行旅圖), and went on to create his reinterpretations in the *Erect* (直立) series of paintings. This marked the start of his two-part composition series of paintings, which were similar to the composition of colour-field painters Mark Rothko (1903-1970) and Adolph Gottlieb (1903-1974).

Liu Kuo Sung maintains that works such as *Mid-autumn Festival (1969)* and other two-parts compositions had been inspired by the lanterns he had observed at Taipei's Longshan Temple (龍山寺) during the mid-autumn festival (Fig. **4.22**). However, such two-part compositions did not originate from Liu. In terms of chronology, Rothko's colour-field paintings such as *Green Red on Orange (1950)*, where two different rectangular colour blocks are laid over on top of one another on a picture, were created significantly earlier than Liu's *Erect* series and *Who's Inside, Who's Outside?* (1967, Fig. **4.24**). Later, Liu replaced the upper rectangle with a circular form, but the strong similarity of composition with smaller variations prompts scepticism that the works are unrelated to his experience with Chinese lanterns.

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[270] Li Jun Yi, *Selected Writings on Liu Kuo Sung*, (Taipei: History Museum, 1996), 21

4.21 *Untitled*, 1969, Adolph Gottlieb, 650x500cm   **4.22** *Mid-autumn Festival*, 1969, Liu Kuo Sung, 49.5x35.5cm

4.23 *Green Red on Orange*, 1950, Mark Rothko, 236.2x150cm   **4.24** *Who's Inside Who's Outside?* 1967, Liu Kuo Sung, 140.6x74.5cm

The contemporary Taiwanese artist Wang De Yu (王德育, 1937-) argues that "*Liu Kuo Sung and Adolph Gottlieb's works have many significant similarities such as a*

big disk floating above irregular clumps and a long painting surface. It would be an extension to simply reject this as pure coincidence...moreover, between 1966 and 1967; Liu toured America and Europe extensively due to a Rockefeller foundation scholarship. During this period, he must have seen many modern works and been inspired by them."[271]

In 1969, the Apollo Seven mission successfully completed its flight and sent back images of the Earth and moon, and which were widely published in the media. This inspired Liu to create a work with a circular cut-out to the upper portion of the paper where he applied some brushstrokes in a crescent fashion at the lower portion to imply the horizon line of the planet (Fig. **4.25**). This marks the beginning of his famous *Space Paintings* era, which lasted from 1969 to 1973. The works are a development of his two-part compositional style with a broader pictorial content to include iconography relating to outer space and the universe. As regards to painting media, Liu began to use spray guns and acrylic paints in his artistic creation, which led to chromatic transitions between the grey tones of traditional Ink-wash painting and the more Western vivid colours (Fig. **4.26**).

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[271] Wang De Yu, *Republic of China Fine Arts Symposium Proceedings: The Circular Image in Liu Kuo Sung's Paintings,* (Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1992), 104-106

4.25 *Moonwalk*[272], 1969, Liu Kuo Sung, 69x85cm   4.26 *Earth is Our Home*, 1971,

Liu Kuo Sung

In 1973, Liu abandoned the *Space Paintings* and began using a *Water Rubbing*[273] (

水拓) technique to create a new sequence of works. There is a large degree of change

involved in the *water rubbing* technique, which makes control very difficult.

However, after a long period of trial and error, Liu learnt how to control the random

nature of this process.[274] Li Chu Tsing described Liu's *water rubbing* technique,

"*Water rubbing* creates a very natural pattern and becomes an important element in

his composition. After the paper is dry one can add touches of brushed colour and

dye to complete the picture."[275]

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[272] *Moonwalk* is Liu Kuo Sung's only collage to date. The picture of the astronaut walking on the moon was a page taken out of a magazine.

[273] Liu's "*Water rubbing*" (水拓) technique: one first floats inks or colours on the surface of clear water in an open container. One lets the inks or colours slowly eddy around on the water surface until the intertwined lines of colour are pleasing. Then one momentarily lays the painting paper on the surface on the water, and the pattern of ink or colour is absorbed and thereby transferred onto the paper. *Water rubbing* makes a very natural pattern and becomes one important element in composition. After the paper is dry one can add touches of brushed colours and dyes to complete the picture.

[274] To more accurately grasp the *water rubbing* technique, Liu Kuo Sung experimented with a variety of different brands and models of inks, firstly observing their changes in water, and then subsequently adding oil and other chemicals to influence the rate of ink diffusion and ensuing marbleizing patterns.

[275] Li Chu Tsing, *The Confluence of Chinese and Western Art*, (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1990), 34

These new *water rubbing* paintings are apparently different from his earlier abstract landscape themes and space paintings. The marbleizing effects render colours less saturated and bright, giving a soft, gentle, flowing water effect. Many of the water rubbing works resemble dream-like landscapes, which comprise of atmospheric qualities of mountains, rivers, and clouds. Subsequently, he integrated the *water rubbing* techniques into his *Big Brushstrokes* work. For example, in *Heavenly Pond* (天池, Fig. **4.27**), in the centre and bottom left, *big brushstroke* rocks emerge from a *water rubbing* landscape base.

4.27 *Heavenly Pond* (天池), 1982, Liu Kuo Sung, 71.5x93.5cm

In 1987, Liu accidentally discovered the *Steeped Ink* (漬墨) technique. The non-figurative paintings created with this method are more abstract than his previous oeuvre. However, Liu adds concrete titles to these abstract pieces such as "*Sharp Change of the Lotus*" to directly express or describe the content of works. The titles of paintings project a mental image to the viewer to help connect with the paintings.[276] This is in contrast to Pollock who usually named his works by number so that viewers would experience his creations without any preconceived notions.

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[276] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *The Research of Liu Kuo Sung*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1996), 92

Lee Krasner (1908-1984) remarked that, "Jackson used to give his picture conventional titles... but now he simply numbers them. Numbers are neutral. They make people look at a picture for what it is... pure painting."[277] Additionally, we can observe from the titles given to this series of Liu's paintings that the themes are apparently Oriental, and relating to traditional Ink-wash subjects such as the lotus and landscape.

4.28 *Sharp Change of the Lotus* (荷之銳變), 1988, Liu Kuo Sung, 67x88cm

4.29 *Tree in the Mist on the Spring Hill*, 1990, Liu Kuo Sung

[277] Claude Cernuschi, *Jackson Pollock: Meaning and Significance*, (New York: Harper Collons, 1992), 129

After 1994, Liu's artworks became mainly hybrid in the sense that they employed and incorporated previous techniques, with the pictorial content becoming increasingly abstract in paintings such as *Spring Mountains Outside Rain on Window* (窗外春山窗上雨, Fig. **4.30**). However, in recent years, he has developed a new abstract language to express the ripple effects of water as in his *Jiu Zhai Gou* (九寨溝) (Fig. **4.31**).

4.30 *Spring Mountains Outside Rain on Window*, 1995, Liu Kuo Sung, 95x179cm

Huang appreciates the subtlety of beauty in ... in his work, a mixture which brought

4.31 *Autumn in the Sun Moon Lake* (日月潭之秋), 2007, Liu Kuo Sung, 67x136.5cm

Liu Kuo Sung, who extends the Chinese Ink-wash painting tradition, has been influenced by Western artists such as Pollock, Kline, and Gottlieb. He infuses Chinese Ink-wash painting with the Western vocabulary of Abstract Expressionism to create a wholly new version. His experimental spirit and continuous innovation with traditional Literati painting media and techniques through the assimilation of Western ideologies has modernised the Ink-wash painting tradition.

4.2.2 Chao Chung Hsiang

In the modern development of Ink-wash painting, Chao Chung Hsiang[278] (趙春翔, 1910-1990) is undoubtedly a pioneer. Since the 1960s, he had been an outstanding artist who had managed to maintain the aesthetic vocabulary of traditional Literati painting in the modernisation process of of Ink-wash painting. The influence of Western artistic movements[279] is clearly evident in the evolution of his Ink-wash works, including a close connection with Abstract Expressionism.[280]

In terms of media, Chao worked with a conventional brush on Chinese *xuan* paper in contrast to Liu Kuo Sung who had persisted in energetically pursuing materials and techniques that are foreign to traditional Ink-wash painting. What set Chao Chung Hsiang apart was the addition of acrylic paint to his work, a medium which brought with it material thickness and intensity of colour, both elements which are lacking in traditional Ink-wash painting. In particular, he made use of fluorescent greens and yellows, colours distinctly different from those in traditional Chinese painting and ones that would visually and conceptually challenge the monochromatic style of Ink-wash painting.[281]

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[278] Chao Chung Hsiang was born in 1910 in Henan province of China, and he studied at the National Hangzhou Arts Academy from 1935 to 1939. During those years, two of his tutors had a great influence on his artistic development. The first was Pan Tien Shou (潘天壽, 1897-1971); the other was Lin Feng Mian (林風眠, 1900-1991). After the civil war between the Nationalist and Communists, Chao Chung Hsiang chose to follow the Nationalist government and retreated to Taiwan in 1949. He then taught at the National Taiwan Normal University as an art professor. However, in 1955, when he was already 45 years of age, in order to better understand the trend of Western art, he went to Madrid to study. He later moved to Paris before finally settling down in New York in 1958. Even up to the 1980s, for reasons of teaching and solo exhibition commitments, he frequently transited between New York and Taiwan. Nonetheless, he spent around thirty years of his life residing in New York. It was only in 1990 when he returned to reside in Taiwan, and then died the following year from a virus infection.
[279] The Western artistic movements are Fauvism, Cubism, American Expressionism and Hard Edge.
[280] Chao Chung Hsiang went to Spain in 1955 and through Paris to New York in 1958. Abstract Expressionism was prosperous during the period. He then got acquainted with some Abstract Expressionists like Franz Kline, Mark Rothko.
[281] Ge Si Ming, ed., *Chao Chung Hsiang: An Eternal Searcher*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 2004),19

With regard to subject matter, Chao's work differs significantly from that of Liu Kuo Sung's abstract or semi-abstract landscape paintings. Chao Chung Hsiang preferred the freehand style of *'flower-bird painting'* rather than landscape paintings, and continued to paint figurative forms with significance in the East such as birds, bamboos, *tai chi* (太極) and lotus. This would be an acknowledgement of his Chinese identity and the cultural and contextual responsibilities of being a Literati. He would also often juxtapose or superimpose artistic elements of Western gestural painting, Chinese totemic symbols and conceptual allusions from Literati painting such as the *tai chi* or *I-Ching* (易經, *yi jing*) symbols in his work.

Although Chao had lived in New York City for almost three decades, he still held to the traditional aesthetic concepts of *bi mo* and the *xu shi* of Chinese Ink-wash painting. He followed the rule of *qi yun sheng dong* (氣韻生動, literally "Have a life of its own, be vibrant and resonant"), which is the first principle originating from Hsieh Ho's *The Six Principles of Painting*. However, Chao differs from Liu Kuo Sung's relatively extreme practices of *ge bi de ming* (革筆的命, or "the revolution of *bi*") and also opposes the traditional theory of *The shared Origins of Calligraphy and Painting* (書畫同源).

It is also worth noting that Chao did not concur with the traditional aesthetic concept of *yi zai bi xian*[282] (意在筆先, literally "concept before painting"). Instead, he advocated *bu yi zai bi xian* (不意在筆先, literally "absence of concept before painting), allowing the brush, loaded with ink and water, to discharge without restraint or pre-conceived design thereby creating an image that evolves

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[282] See section 3.3.1.1

spontaneously through the process of painting. The idea was to paint before resolving form, and which may be said to be a variant of automatic painting.

Chao may or may not have encountered Pollock's theory of painting 'without conscious intention' and there is no mention of the unconscious or the subconscious in his writings. However, one of his views holds strong parallels with Pollock's painting philosophy of "when I am in my painting, I am not aware of what I am doing. It is only after a sort of 'acquaintance period' that I see what I have been about." According to Chao's statements of *bu yi zai bi xian*, it is evident that his attitude is towards creativity freed from the restriction of traditional Ink-wash dogma.[283]

In terms of painting technique, Chao employed not only traditional *bi mo* skills, but also the drip painting techniques pioneered by Pollock. Having prepared different ink tones in advance, he would use gestural painting techniques to pour, drip, and splash ink on to *xuan* paper in a way that Pollock normally applied paint to canvas. Different tonal effects of ink would build up a visual pictorial space of foreground and background, such as *Benevolent Protection No.1* (慈暉普佑, Fig. **4.32**). In other works, he would splatter a layer of acrylic over the ink work to create additional depth, as exemplified by the painting *Yellow Splash with Four Candles* (Fig. **4.33**).

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[283] Clifford Ross, ed., *Abstract Expressionism: Creators and Critics*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), 139

4.32 *Benevolent Protection No.1*, 1983,
Chao Chung Hsiang, 185x176cm

4.33 *Yellow Splash with Four Candles*,
1989, Chao Chung Hsiang, 180x97cm

Compositionally in his paintings, Chao would not only apply the traditional Chinese aesthetic theory of *xu shi* (虛實) in some of his paintings by leaving void spaces in his pictures, but he would also apply Abstract Expressionism's all-over approach in his other paintings. The all-over approach, in which all areas of the canvas are designed to be of equal importance, deals with space in a manner entirely opposite to traditional *bin zhu* aesthetic, which considers the relationship between primary subject and subordinate elements in a picture. In his *Celestial Sky* (祭天圖, Fig. **4.34**), one notices that the red candles are arranged over abstract ink blocks without any proportional distinction or visual focus point. The painting *Blue Splash* is

another example in which the Western all-over field approach that has been applied to modernise Ink-wash painting (Fig. **4.35**).

4.34 *Celestial Sky*, 1984, Chao Chung Hsiang, 212x179cm

4.35 *Blue Splash*, 1988, Chao Chung Hsiang, 135.5x68cm

Additionally, a motif, emerging frequently in his oeuvre, would be a bird that has a severely distorted figure with eyes, beak and feathers that are markedly out of proportion. The angle chosen normally depicts one solitary eye, drawn as a circular shape in paintings such as *Peacock Rising* (霓裳舞衣, Fig. **4.36**) and *Frosty Night* (月落烏啼霜滿天, Fig. **4.37**).

4.36 *Peacock Rise*, 1972,   **4.37** *Frosty Night*, 1984, Chao Chung Hsiang, 87.5x69cm

Chao Chung Hsiang, 178x94cm

Scholars have various interpretations regarding the appearance of the bird; writer Xie

Pei Xia (謝佩霓) has speculated that the bird symbolises a male body[284] while

Professor Gu Shi Yong (顧世勇) of National Tainan University suggests that the bird

in his work implies the endless loneliness of Chao in exile, projecting feelings of

familial yearning.[285] While others have hypothesised on the significance of the

bird's presence, my preoccupation lies in determining the origin of the bird's

semi-abstract representation. There is no record of any other distorted figures in the

history of traditional Ink-wash painting. This artistic form of visual expression of

Chao parallels a similarity in approach of de Kooning's *Woman* paintings that were

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[284] Xie Pei Xia, *Chao Chung Hsiang: maintain between every thought,* (Taiwan national museum, 1994), 18

[285]Gu Shi Yong, *Chao Chung Hsiang's art: poems and thoughts as one,* (Taiwan national museum, 1994), 13

executed in the 1950s. The women in de Kooning's paintings gaze with protuberant circular eyes, laugh oddly with twisted teeth and wide-open mouths, or display exaggerated breasts. This has resulted in people speculating that Chao may have been influenced by de Kooning, whose *Woman* paintings were exhibited ten years before the first appearance of Chao Chung Hsiang's birds in 1963. This possibility is entirely plausible given the fact that he immigrated to New York City in 1958, and perhaps had been familiar with de Kooning's work.

4.38 *Woman I,* 1950-2, Willem de Kooning, 192.7x147.3cm

Both Liu Kuo Sung and Chao Chung Hsiang are pivotal figures in the shaping of a new language in modern Ink-wash painting. Both fuse Western Abstract Expressionism with traditional Chinese painting but in differing ratios, leading to recombining mixes that display different styles of Ink-wash painting. Liu's work integrates the Abstract Expressionism of Pollock, Kline and Gottlieb, while Chao Chung Hsiang cites Pollock and de Kooning. These two exemplars supplement and

substantiate my research intent for a hybrid art, evidencing the seemingly limitless possibilities through the combination of different aesthetic theories, techniques and forms of expression.

5 Further Development of Both Traditions

5.1 The Evolution of American Abstract Art

Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s was to become a major milestone in 20th century art history. However, and similar to other movements, it had its period of being regarded as 'at the cutting age' and by the end of 1950s, it was replaced by other trends in contemporary art practice such as Neo-Dada, Pop Art and Post Painterly Abstraction as tastes and fashion changed.

In October 1962, the Sidney Janis Gallery held an exhibition titled '*The International Exhibition of the New Realists*', which exhibited works of artists such as Yves Klein, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. A few years earlier, this gallery had also helped Abstract Expressionists such as Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko and Motherwell achieve their breakthrough into public prominence. According to Hess, "critics like Harold Rosenberg saw in this exhibition the dawn of a new era."[286] The new era of Pop Art had emerged and this shift in artists receiving support made the Abstract Expressionists feel somewhat displaced, Robert Motherwell, Adolph Gottlieb, and Mark Rothko subsequently terminated their contracts with the gallery.[287]

Neo-Dadaism is generally regarded as a transitionary phase from Abstract Expressionism to Pop Art. It was also an attack on the artistic concept of modernist painting[288] and the seemingly heroic and grand painterly gestures of Abstract

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[286] Barbara Hess, *Abstract Expressionism*, (Cologne: Taschen GmbH, 2009), 24
[287] Virginia M. Mecklenburg, *Modern Masters: American Abstraction at Midcentury*, (Washington: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2008), 61
[288] Clement Greenberg's notion of a piece of modernist art included the tendency towards abstraction, truth to the medium, and the evolution of flatness to eliminate any illusion of depth on a two

Expressionism. After World War II, in America's increasingly industrial and commercial environment, artists began to realise the potential of using normal objects in their everyday life and environment and took such things as their new subject matter. Two notable American artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns came to prominence at that time. Robert Rauschenberg once remarked, "Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two)"[289] This concept can be seen in his "*combine*" paintings such as *Bed* where he splashed the paints in an Abstract Expressionist manner over a pillow and quilt, but in a way which was entirely different from the purist heroic modernism of Abstract Expressionism (Fig. **5.1**).

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dimensional surface. In H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 6th Ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 518, 540

[289] Sam Hunter, *Selections from the Ileana and Michael Sonnabend Collection: Works from the 1950s and 1960s*, Catalogue of exhibition held at the Art Museum, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1985), 21

5.1 *Bed*, 1955, Robert Rauschenberg, 190x80x20.3cm

In addition, Jasper Johns' creations such as *Flag* and *Target with Plaster Casts* are also reactions against the grand purist ideals of Abstract Expressionists' art (Fig. **5.2** and **5.3**). His style was one of perceptual ambiguity and was also a visual dialogue between figuration and abstraction. According to Arnason and others, "Johns' flags and targets exemplify Pop art's concern with signs. They are unique, not mass-produced, objects. And yet, to paint a target is to make a target, not merely a

depiction of a target, which in its essentials resembles any other target. Such ambiguities were often exploited in Pop art."[290]

5.2 *Target with Plaster Casts*, 1955, Jasper Johns, 129.5x111.8x8.9cm

5.3 *Flag*, 1954-5, Jasper Johns, 107.3x153.8cm

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[290] H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 6th Ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 490

Pop Art American style appeared in the late 1950s, its most celebrated exponents being Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. They both employed aspects of mass popular culture and their works were also a reaction to the perceived personal elitist culture of Abstract Expressionism. David Anfam describes it as "Abstract Expressionism recycled through conventions taken from the mass media."[291] For instance, Roy Lichtenstein enlarged comic strips or advertisements in works such as *Whaam!,* and also satirised the Abstract Expressionists through his brushstrokes paintings such as *Big Painting No. 6* (Fig. **5.5**). According to Arnason and collaborators, "the artist's depictions of giant, dripping brushstrokes, meticulously constructed and far from spontaneous, are a comedic Pop riposte to the heroic individual gestures of the Abstract Expressionists."[292]

5.4 *Whaam!*, 1963, Roy Lichtenstein, 170x410cm

[291] David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 202
[292] H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 6th Ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 501

5.5 *Big Painting No. 6*, 1965, Roy Lichtenstein, 230x330cm

Like Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol focused on subjects from advertising or commercial products such as *Campbell's Soup Cans* and *Marilyn Monroe* (Fig. **5.6** and **5.7**) Using a mechanical silkscreen process to create portraits such as Marilyn Monroe, according to Arnason and co-writers, "… further emphasised his desire to eliminate the personal signature of the artist and to depict the life and the images of his time." [293] Also similar to Lichtenstein's brushstroke paintings, according to Varnedoe, Warhol also satirised Pollock with his *Oxidation Paintings;* Warhol and his assistants literally urinate like Pollock's drip painting method on canvases coated with reactive copper sulfides that oxidise and change colour.[294] (Fig. **5.8**)

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[293] H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 6th Ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 504

[294] Kirk Varnedoe, *Pictures of Nothing: Abstract Art since Pollock* (Princeton University Press, 2006), 203

5.6 *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962, Andy Warhol, 32 canvases of 50.8x40.6cm each

5.7 *Marilyn Monroe*, 1962, Andy Warhol, 50.8x40.6cm

5.8 *Oxidation Painting*, 1978, Andy Warhol, 193x132cm

In 1964, Clement Greenberg organised an exhibition titled '*Post Painterly Abstraction*' in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In his essay for this exhibition that displayed the work of young abstract painters, Greenberg wrote of "their reaction against the 'handwriting' and 'gestures' of Painterly Abstraction."[295] There were different styles of abstract art displayed in this exhibition, including Hard-edged painting, Op art and Minimal art, featuring artists such as Sam Francis, Helen Frankenthaler, Ellsworth Kelly, Kenneth Noland, Agnes Martin and Richard Anuszkiewicz. According to Arnason and Mansfield, "the directions and qualities suggested in the work of these artists... were to be the dominant directions and qualities in abstract painting in the 1960s."[296]

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[295] Clement Greenberg, cited in H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 6th Ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 519
[296] H.H. Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 6th Ed. (London: Pearson Education, 2009), 519

5.9 *Shining Back*, 1958, Sam Francis, 200x135cm

5.10 *Mountains and Sea*, 1952, Helen Frankenthaler, 220x297.8cm

5.11 *Red Blue Green*, 1963, Ellsworth Kelly, 212.4x345.1cm

5.12 *Beginning*, 1958, Kenneth Noland, 228.5x243.5cm

5.13 *The Tree*, 1964, Agnes Martin, 182.8x182.8cm

5.14 *Deep Magenta Square*, 1978, Richard Anuszkiewicz

Given that, there are so many different types of abstract art available now and that there is no general consensus that any of them are over-archingly representative as the dominant artistic movement of the times, as Abstract Expressionism was in the 1950s. Perhaps the term pluralism can be used to neutrally describe the further artistic developments of abstract art in the beginning of the 21st century.

5.1.1 Subsequent Generations of Abstract Painters

Dividing painting into two, with on the one hand the loud and outgoing camp of Pop artists such as Warhol and Lichtenstein, on the other hand, there are the artists such as Agnes Martin and Robert Ryman who make up the quieter end of contemporary abstraction with their versions and artistic manner of colour-field painting and Minimalism.

5.15 *Twin*, 1966, Robert Ryman, 192.4x192.6cm

Following are two contemporary artists that I feel are particularly relevant to my research and relate closely to my hybrid artwork. Brice Marden was chosen because he is an exemplar of the fusing of both Eastern and Western art, in particular, Chinese calligraphy and Abstract Expressionism. Terry Winters was chosen because he extends the Abstract Expressionist tradition and creates pictures that echo our modern times.

5.1.1.1 Brice Marden

The work of Brice Marden[297] (1938-) is an excellent precedent for the creation of
hybrid art in combining both Eastern and Western painterly traditions. Marden
stopped making figurative paintings and to paint only abstract paintings when he was
still studying at Yale University, having been influenced by the work of established
Abstract Expressionists such as de Kooning, Kline, Pollock and Rothko. With
encouragement from his tutors including Alex Katz and Jack Tworkov, he slowly
broke away from their influence to go on to develop formal strategies that would
characterise his early monochromatic paintings of the following decades. Marden
developed "a preoccupation with rectangular formats and the repeated use of a
muted, extremely individualized palette. He has described his early works as highly
emotional and subjective, despite their apparent lack of referentiality."[298]

In 1963, Marden moved to New York with his family and acquired a part-time job as
a guard at The Jewish Museum, which exhibited the first retrospective of Jasper
Johns in the winter of 1964. This was his first direct contact with Johns' work and it
would further his interest in gridded compositions and help to assert his attitude
towards the subject matter of painting. Klaus Kertess writes that Marden was visibly
impressed with "Johns' ability to create such a physically convincing unity of shape
and painted subject."[299]

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[297] Brice Marden was born in 1938 in Bronxville, New York. He received his BFA from Boston
University School of Fine and Applied Arts in 1961, and went on to obtain his MFA from Yale
University School of Art and Architecture in 1963.
[298] Guggenheim, *Artist Biography: Brice Marden*,
http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_bio_101.html (5 Dec 2010)
[299] Klaus Kertess, *Brice Marden Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 13

5.16 *Gray Numbers*, 1957, Jasper Johns, 71.1x55.8cm

Furthermore, he made his first monochromatic painting in 1964 and held his first

solo exhibition in 1966. His early monochrome paintings left a bare strip of canvas at

the bottom edge for oil and beeswax. The application of this medium was used in

Jasper Johns works in 1950s like *White Target*. Marden even says, "memento mori…

a concentration of feelings in layers. The drips memorized the feelings, the layers,

the colours. I always thought that was very expressionistic."[300]

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[300] Sol Ostrow, "Brice Marden," *BOMB Magazine,* 22, Winter (1988), 31-33

5.17 *White Target*, 1957, Jasper Johns, 76.2x76.2cm

5.18 *The Dylan Painting*, 1966, Brice Marden, 153.4x306.1cm

5.19 *Nebraska*, 1966, Brice Marden, 147.3x182.9cm

In terms of titles, Marden's paintings generally imply the names of people or places. For example, *The Dylan Painting* was named in homage to Bob Dylan[301], while *Nebraska* meant "the mysterious greens of Nebraska," seen when driving across the state that summer.[302] (Fig. **5.18** and **5.19**) During this period, human figures and landscapes are his primary references. According to Garrels, "memory and process, the immediacy of drawing from nature and the extended time of drawing and painting in the studio, are his means of transforming experiences and references into art."[303]

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[301] Bob Dylan (1941-) the highly acclaimed American singer-songwriter and a major figure in music for over five decades. During his early years, he also collaborated with former lover Joan Baez, sister of Marden's first wife, Pauline Baez. Both Bob Dylan and Joan Baez were prominent figures in the civil rights movement, singing together during the civil rights March on Washington on 28th August 1963.

[302] Brice Marden, notes, November 20, 1966

[303] Gary Garrels, *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 17

In the 1970s, there was a subsequent shift in Marden's artistic creations due to his several visits to the Greek island of Hydra. He changed his habitual use of colour from grey-based colours to more vivid colours and shifted to grander canvases influenced by the light and colour of the Mediterranean landscape. He also composed the paintings in multiple panels instead of independent single canvases. As Godfrey observed "even where the composition is symmetrical, the colour arrangements push the viewer away from a stationary central viewing position, insisting on lateral movement."[304]

Most importantly, the breakaway of Marden's artistic career from the monochromatic manner commenced in the 1980s under the influence of Chinese calligraphy and Asian culture. In 1983, his visits to Thailand, Sri Lanka and India evoked his interest in Asian culture and art that would consequently influence his paintings significantly in the following decades.

He collected volutes[305] in Thailand, and made drawings that were inspired by shell markings of volutes. At his wife Helen's suggestion, he visited the exhibition "*Masters of Japanese Calligraphy, 8th – 19th Century*" in New York in the following year. Afterward he became enchanted by the Japanese calligraphy and which led him to study first Chinese calligraphy, and then Chinese poetry. He was particularly attracted to works by Tang Dynasty hermit Han Shan (寒山, or "*Cold Mountain*"). Marden's interest in Eastern calligraphic vocabulary and Asian culture eventually culminated in his *Cold Mountain* series.

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[304] Mark Godfrey, "Brice Marden," *Frieze*, Issue 105, March (2007), accessed 05 December 2010, http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/brice_marden/
[305] A type of deep-water marine mollusks with colourful spiral shells

Han Shan, also known as Han Shan Zi, derived his name from spending his later years in the cold mountains. He is a famous Tang Dynasty poet and Zenist who had wrote more than three hundred poems, and which are held in high esteem particularly in Japan and in America. The proliferation of the Han Shan's poems in America can be largely credited to the work of Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac. Snyder's contribution is the translation of all twenty-four Han Shan's poems in 1956, which greatly influenced Kerouac. Kerouac then went on to publish his autobiographical novel of *The Dharma Bums* in 1958 in which he referred to Snyder's translations as introducing the Han Shan spirit and Zen practice of cultivation. On his title page, he wrote, "Dedicated to Han Shan".

The *Cold Mountain* paintings grew out of his *Couplets* series, whose skeletal structure was arranged according to that of a *Cold Mountain* couplet that consists of two vertical columns of five Chinese characters each[306](Fig. **5.21**). Marden's *Cold Mountain* paintings' were modelled against *Han Shan's* four couplet poems and hence had eight columns of five glyphs as his skeletal framework. His abstract glyphs not only echoed the fluidity of Chinese calligraphy but are also influenced by the shape of the volutes he had collected in Thailand and *gongshi*[307](供石, Fig. **5.23**), which he collected since his first visit to the rock gardens of Suzhou, China. "Marden's glyphs are not Asian characters or calligraphy per se; nor are they pictographs, or volute seashells... What his drawings and work books reveal is that the glyphs are all of those things."[308]

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[306] Couplet, (對聯, or *"dui lian"*) which is both traditional Chinese poetic and calligraphic format, comprises of two vertical columns of five or seven characters.

[307] *Gongshi* are natural stones that have a special quaint appearance. Ancient Chinese scholars liked to have these stones displayed on their tables for visual appreciation. For stone connoisseurs, of prime importance are the features of thinness (瘦), holes (透), wrinkles (皺), and channels (漏).

[308] Brenda Richardson, *Even a Stone Knows You*, in Gary Garrels, *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 87

5.20 *Calligraphic Couplet*, ca. 20th,   **5.21** *Couplet III*, 1989, Brice Marden,

Yu You Ren, 134x33cm   274x152cm

While calligraphic quality might have been the primary inspiration in Marden's

artistic development in the 1980s, he still made use of diverse influences in his later

art, one of them being de Kooning's "ribbon paintings" of the early 1980s.[309] (Fig.

5.22) While another influence stems from Pollock, where in the *Cold Mountain*

series (Fig. **5.24**), we can sense Pollock, not only in terms of appearance and style

but also in spirit.[310] This spirit was evident in a lecture that Marden delivered at The

Museum of Modern Art on 6th November 1989 when he said that, "the great thing

about Pollock… was his conviction that each work is part of a continuing quest."[311]

After his *Cold Mountain* series, Marden has continuously gone back to Asian art and

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[309] Gary Garrels, *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 23

[310] Brenda Richardson, *Brice Marden: Cold Mountain*, (Houston: Houston Fine Art Press, 1992), 45

[311] Brice Marden, quoted in ibid., 40-1

culture for inspiration as evidenced in his paintings, which show many different influences from not only calligraphy, but also Han Dynasty figurines, *gongshi*, Chinese painting, and tombstones.

5.22 *Untitled XII*, 1985, Willem de Kooning, 203x178cm   **5.23** *Gongshi* (Chinese Scholar Rock)

Another milestone in his artistic career is the paintings of *The Muses* series, produced in the early 1990s, where he infuses Greek mythological influence seamlessly with Asian influences and Abstract Expressionism (Fig. **5.25**). Although initially based on his father, the painting was eventually focused on his feelings of fatherhood instead, with both his daughters as his muses. This monumental painting not only spans across Marden's life and artistic production, but it also implies the hybridism of varied cultures and artistic styles.

5.24 *Cold Mountain 6*, 1989-91, Brice Marden, 274.3x365.8cm

5.25 *The Muses*, 1991-93, Brice Marden, 37.1x73.7cm

If we analyse the *Cold Mountain* series from a calligraphic perspective, I feel that the paintings are very similar to the *cursive script* (草書) in Chinese calligraphy. The thickness in Marden's lines varies and there is extensive use of *zhong feng*[312] and *shun feng*[313] with a little *ce feng*[314]. Also the continuity of the lines is similar to the *Lian Mian Cao* (連綿草) in *cursive script*, which refers to the calligraphic technique of writing several characters in one single stroke, linking them all together.

5.26 Detail of *Self Description Calligraphy* (自敘帖), 777, Huai Su, 28.3x755cm

5.27 Example of *Lian Mian Cursive Script* (連綿草)

In particular, I find the calligraphic manner and expression of Marden to be analogous to the cursive script calligraphy of the Tang Dynasty calligrapher, the monk Huai Su[315] (懷素, 725-785). This is partly because of the varying line thicknesses in Marden's lines, which have a maximum proportional difference of 3:1,

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[312] See section 2.2.2
[313] Ibid
[314] Ibid
[315] Huai Su was born in Hunan, China. He became a monk when he was young. He is a Tang Dynasty calligrapher known for his cursive script.

which is similar to that of Huai Su. In addition, Marden also uses a lot of *flying white* as well as different tones of colour in his lines, which are essential characteristics of both Chinese calligraphy and Ink-wash painting (Fig. **5.28**). On the other hand, the lines in his *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Second and Third Version* paintings are more uniform in thickness and more similar to the seal script of Chinese calligraphy. Also his lines are smooth and fluid without any sharp turns. This is similar to the *yuan zhuan* (圓轉, Fig. **5.30**) method in calligraphy, which avoids any sharp turns as in the normal *zhe* (折, Fig. **5.29**) method. This series of Marden's paintings may therefore be seen as being very similar to the calligraphic lines of the seal script.

5.28 Detail of Cold Mountain 6

5.29 *zhe* (Source: Ye Guo Shin)
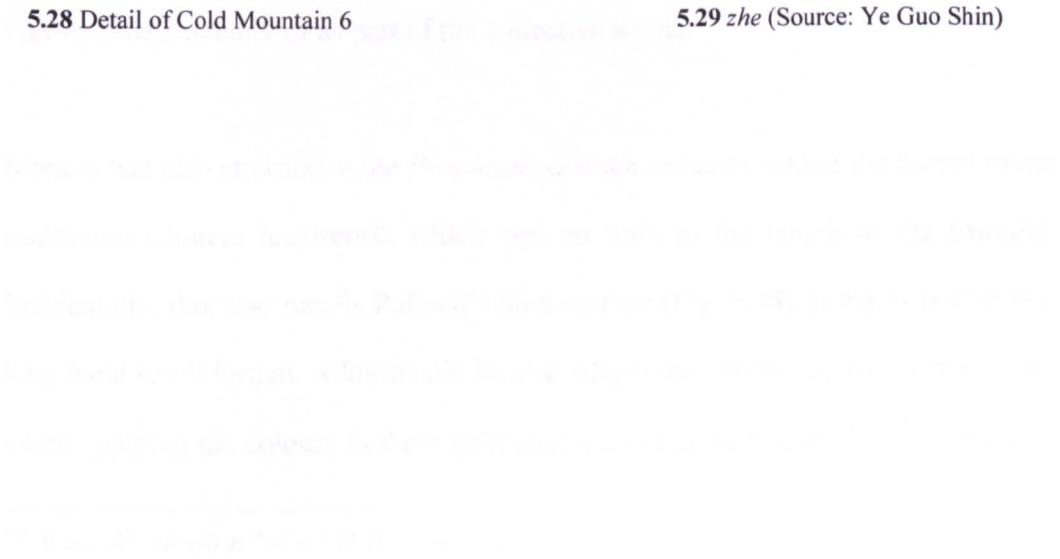
5.30 *Yuan zhuan* (Source: Ye Guo Shin)   **5.31** *Yuan zhuan* in detail of *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Third Version*

In his Tivoli studio, Marden devoted himself to his two most ambitious works to date – works which spanned over six years – *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Second and Third Version* (Fig. **5.33** and **5.34**). Both are over twenty-four feet in length and consist of six panels that explore the primary colours of the light spectrum. The six-part *Propitious Garden* paintings share a formal kinship with his previous six *Cold Mountain* paintings. The figures in the paintings are based on the forms of *gongshi* rock and their organisational format that alludes to that of the Chinese album[316], which is a folio of various sheets of paintings, but where each can be viewed independently or as part of the collective whole.

Marden had also envisioned the *Propitious Garden* series by taking the format of the traditional Chinese handscroll, which sets no limit to the length of the painting. Incidentally, this also recalls Pollock's *Summertime* (Fig. **5.35**) in that it is also in a long hand scroll format. Additionally he also adopts the concept of Taoist 'way' (道) when applying the colours in these paintings, according to Marden, having intended

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[316] It literally named as "*ce ye*"(冊頁) which is a Chinese album of painting or calligraphy.

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them to be complementary colours, "orange ground, blue figures, red ground, green figures. Everything was going to be Daoist[317], opposites, *yin yang.*"[318]

5.32 *Along the River during Qing Ming Festival*[319], Zhang Ze Duan, 24.8 x 528.7 cm

5.33 *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Second Version,* 2000-6, Brice Marden, 182.9x731.5cm

5.34 *The Propitious Garden of Plane Image, Third Version,* 2000-6, Brice Marden, 182.9x731.5cm

5.35 *Summertime,* 1948, Jackson Pollock, 84.8x555cm

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[317] Daoist, also known as Taoist as its other form of spelling

[318] Marden, B., *Michael Duffy interview on 17th January 2006, at Brice Marden's studio on West Street, Manhattan.*

[319] 清明上河圖, Famous handscroll measuring 24.8 x 528.7 cm by Song dynasty (960-1126) artist Zhang Ze Duan (1042-1107)

Brice Marden is an outstanding exemplar in the synthesis of different cultural influences especially from both abstract art and Chinese calligraphy; therefore he serves as an excellent case study and precedent for my own research.

5.1.1.2 Terry Winters

Terry Winters[320] (1949-) has taken over from where the first generation of Abstract Expressionists such as Pollock had left off, in the sense that he has modernised it with a contemporary method by integrating Abstract Expressionist painting into the world of the Internet.

When studying at the High School of Arts and Design, Winters visited the city's museums and experienced the remarkable excitement of art in New York in the 1960s, seeing works from Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art, to painting and sculpture by European modernists such as Joan Miro. He also saw architecture and design exhibitions, including the rotating shows of modern prints and graphic work of American artists such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. These experiences remained vivid in his mind and would help to lay the foundations for his future mature works. After gaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1971 from the Pratt Institute, he held his first solo exhibition as a fully matured artist at the Sonnabend Gallery in New York in 1982.

Winters was greatly influenced by the minimalist, monochromatic paintings of Brice Marden, but as he says, in the beginning, "a lot of the early work focused on biological and botanical processes."[321] From botanically inspired images such as *Morula III* (Fig. **5.36**) in the 1980s, Winters expanded the concerns of abstract art and went on to explore biological processes, mathematics and information

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[320] Terry Winters was born in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York. He first became serious with visual arts during junior high school when he enrolled at the High School of Arts and Design in Manhattan.
[321] Arcy Douglass, 2007, *Printmaking, Pollock and Poetics: A Conversation with Terry Winters* http://www.portlandart.net/archives/2007/04/printmaking_pol.html (Accessed 30 Oct 2010)

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technologies since the 1990s. According to Nan Rosenthal, "Winters is as interested in brain function and the structure of neural connections as he is in images of cybergeography he has found on the Internet."[322] This transition from what is confusingly called 'organic abstraction' in the 1980s to the current pure abstraction with complex grids like *Image Location*, which has parallels in the developments of Abstract Expressionist art (Fig. **5.37**). Rosenthal also advocated that "Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman, among others, moved from biomorphic Surrealist forms in the 1930s and early to mid-1940s to pure abstraction soon after that."[323]

When Winters merges his knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, primitive tribal art as well as the modern high technological computer graphics of today, his creations form a hybridity that blends together these two worlds into what may be thought of as a sort of discordant harmony. According to Douglass, Winters once claimed to be "interested in accessing the irrational realms that so much tribal work describes, but using contemporary means to get there."[324]

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[322] Nan Rosenthal, *Terry Winters: Printed Works*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 10

[323] Ibid

[324] Arcy Douglass, 2007, *Printmaking, Pollock and Poetics: A Conversation with Terry Winters* http://www.portlandart.net/archives/2007/04/printmaking_pol.html (Accessed 30 Oct 2010)

5.36 *Morula III*, 1983-4, Terry   **5.37** *Image Location*, 1997, Terry Winters,
Winters, 106.7x82.6cm   243.8x304.8cm

Just as his predecessors such as Rothko, whose concern at one time was to attempt to

create a mythological language, Winters quotes William Burroughs in wanting to

make "a new mythology for the space age. I'm interested in that happening –

whether by design or accident."[325] According to Winters, the resulting new imagery

had, "rather than a representational relationship to the world, a kind of isomorphic

relationship."[326] Winters is interested in how to create images of a parallel world of

cyberspace, which he describes as "the informational space out there. It's not

immaterial but incorporeal."[327] He wanted to depict this informational space that is

invisible but something that we can experience. This is similar to the first generation

of Abstract Expressionists such as Rothko who wanted to express their emotions

through the use of colour. In comparison, Winters' cyberspace is a whole parallel

world that reflects our very recent modern times, with the Internet not invented when

Pollock and Rothko were alive.

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[325] Arcy Douglass, 2007, *Printmaking, Pollock and Poetics: A Conversation with Terry Winters*
http://www.portlandart.net/archives/2007/04/printmaking_pol.html (Accessed 30 Oct 2010)
[326] Brice Marden, quoted in Nan Rosenthal, *Terry Winters: Printed Works*, (New York: The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 23
[327] Tony Godfrey, *Painting Today*, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 2009), 156

Moreover, Terry Winters is also a highly regarded printmaker, who first began working closely with fine art print publisher Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) based in Bay Shore, New York. The lithograph *Double Standard* (Fig. **5.38**) illustrated his ambition for prints, extending his *Morula* series by adding tendrils to the sporadic cells. Winters believed that prints held equal importance to that of any other medium in his work. In support of which he cites Barnett Newman who stated that, "lithography is not a poor man's substitute for painting or for drawing. Nor a...Translation of something from one medium into another... it is an instrument that one plays. It is like a piano or an orchestra; and as with an instrument, it *interprets.*"[328] Winters also argues that there is no hierarchy that ranks paintings and drawings higher than prints, and emphasises this point by exploiting the great variety offered by different print media to the artist.

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[328] Barnett Newman, "Preface to *18 Cantos,*" in John P. O'Neill, ed., *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 184

5.38 *Double Standard*, 1984, Terry Winters,   **5.39** *Pattern*, 2001, Terry Winters, 137.2x102.2cm
198.1x106.7cm

Lithographs such as *Pattern* show twisting networks of mesh that seem to extend out
of the painting edges to connect to the infinitely interconnected cyberspace. I quote
Winters on Abstract Expressionists when he said that, "they invented a world to be
explored, not to be moved away from, and one that's not exhausted, but barely begun
- a stepping stone into a place we can't imagine yet."[329]

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[329] Carol Diehl, "Thinking, mapping, painting: over the last decade, Terry Winters has increasingly
sought to translate systems of information—and the ways we think about them—into pictorial space."
Art in America, Apr 2005, Vol.93, Issue 4, (Brant Publications, 2005), 115

5.2 Nationalistic Fervour in Taiwan

During the 1970s, Taiwan was under international pressures from a number of directions, mainly stemming from its troubled relationship with China. In addition, America made something of a u-turn in its political stance, and began to distance itself more from Taiwan. At the same time, Taiwan continued to encounter setbacks in the arena of international relations with a breaking down of relations with Japan, and the question of the disputed sovereignty of Diaoyutai (釣魚臺) Islands. This caused considerable turmoil to Taiwan's political scene, which consequently generated a great sense of crisis and a new self-consciousness among its people. According to Zheng, the public began to consider about Taiwan's fate and future direction, causing a series of political, literary, and artistic campaigns on national homeland awareness.[330]

This political background, became the main catalyst that led to a wave or movement seeking artistic independence, the *Nativist* movement, and which impacted on the arts and culture of Taiwan. In the 1970s, it became popular among Taiwan's artists to depict local indigenous subjects in their paintings. Many artists therefore turned to wander amongst the local people, searching for villages, farms, and dilapidated walls, imbued with a strong nationalistic flavour, to feature in their paintings. Xie emphasised that this type of paintings and subject matter soon became the mainstream of Taiwan's paintings of the period.[331]

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[330] Zheng Hui Mei, *Taiwan Modern Art Series: Indigenous Realism Painting*, (Taipei: Taiwan Council for Culture, 2004), 18
[331] Xie Dong Shan, *History of Art Criticism in Taiwan*, (Taipei: Hong Die Culture Company, 2005), 187-190

This so-called Taiwan's *Nativist* movement mainly had two major impacts on Taiwan's art world. The first was the need for a critical review of modern Ink-wash painting of the 1960s. *Nativists* felt strongly that Western culture and Taiwan's culture were not the same, and accordingly historian Xie Dong Shan advocated that, "Following Western trends by blindly transplanting or imitating Western arts, will inevitably lead to the creation of empty, meaningless works of art."[332]

Another notable impact or effect of Taiwan's *Nativist* movement was the renewed interest in Taiwanese indigenous objects and the local environment. This movement is generally regarded as the awakening of Taiwanese's self-consciousness of their own identity[333], and awareness of the differences between foreign culture and local culture, and concern for the future direction of local mainstream culture. Ni advocated that in terms of Taiwan art history, the birth of the *Nativist* movement, apart from being a consequence of Taiwan's political setbacks in international relations, was also a result of the influence of American artist, Andrew Wyeth[334], and his regionalist style of painting.[335] (Fig. **5.40** and **5.41**)

Given the political situation at that time when many of Taiwan's allies were tending to turn their backs on the island, the type of patriotic sentiment that arose out of a sense of helplessness, was highly regarded by art circles of Taiwan. According to Xie,

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[332] Ibid

[333] Zheng Hui Mei, *Taiwan Modern Art Series: Indigenous Realism Painting,* (Taipei: Taiwan Council for Culture, 2004), 18

[334] Wyeth was chiefly a realist painter who painted in a regionalist style. Wyeth's work had an intricate realist characteristic composed with the imagination of a visual artist to create works that were popular with the American public, leading him to be sometimes referred to as the "Painter of the People". Wyeth's favourite subjects were the land and people around him, both in his hometown of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and at his summerhouse in Cushing, Maine. The colours he used were often less vivid and intense to represent his hometown environment. His subjects were usually solitary houses, housewives, old people, children, flora and fauna. Wyeth's artwork found its way into Taiwan during the 1970s.

[335] Ni Tsai Chin, *A Cultural Perspective on Taiwan Art,* (Taipei: Artists Publishing Co. Ltd, 2007), 60-61

this prompted many young artists, who had seen Wyeth's paintings or had been influenced by the various media publications[336] to seek out and draw local indigenous subjects in their paintings.[337]

5.40 *Christina's World*, 1948, Andrew Wyeth, 81.9x121.2cm

5.41 *London Grove*, 1943, Andrew Wyeth, 55.5x75.9cm

5.42 *Old House* (古厝), 1978, Xi De Jin, 64.3x102.3cm

5.43 *Yong Jing Yu Third Hall* (永靖餘三館), 1978, Xi De Jin, 57x76cm

As to the success of insemination of *Nativist* movement, one of the most notable artists was Xi De Jin[338] (席德進, 1923-1981). His contribution to art in Taiwan was

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[336] Wyeth was first introduced to Taiwan by two leading art magazines of the time, '*Lion Art*' and '*Artist*'. These two periodicals were very influential and featured Wyeth heavily, even arranging lectures on his work by other artists or academics and publishing his monographs.

[337] Ni Tsai Chin, *A Cultural Perspective on Taiwan Art*, (Taipei: Artists Publishing Co. 2007), 61

[338] Xi De Jin (席德進) stayed and travelled in Europe and America in 1962, and returned to Taiwan four years later. However, he had changed from a modern abstract artist into a Nativist painter who captures snapshots of Taiwan's local lifestyle scenes through his paintings. With Xi De Jin as a case study, we can see that after observing the differences between other foreign cultures, the eventual returning to ones familiar roots to search for inspiration and emotional dependence, is the main spirit of Taiwan *Nativist* movement.

through action, going deep into the villages amongst the people, taking efforts to depict scenes of Taiwanese rural life.[339] Zheng Shan Xi (鄭善禧, 1932-), another representative artist in this artistic movement, often depicted traditional country folk scenes and settings in the content of his paintings. In his painting *Banana Garden Cottage* (蕉園村舍), for example, there are melon sheds, field huts, bamboo forests and farmers. In *String Puppets* (提線魁儡), Zheng paints traditional puppets show and combines them with the traditional calligraphic inscriptions format, to voice his sadness at the dying light of traditional art.[340]

5.44 *String Puppets*, 1974, Zheng Shan Xi, 180x45cm   **5.45** *Banana Garden Cottage*, 1974, Zheng Shan Xi, 120.5x60cm

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[339] Zhen Hui Mei, *Xi De Jin*, (Taipei: Taipei Lion Art Publication, 1996), 63
[340] Zheng Hui Mei, *Real Art*, (Taipei: Art & Collection Group, 2007), 83-97

Meanwhile, still-life style paintings like *Transfer Depot* (調車場), and *Coir Shirt* (蓑衣) by Yuan Jin Ta (袁金塔, 1949-) meticulously detail a corner of a farm village, and the railway transfer depot with the distant Kee Long (基隆) harbour as a backdrop. We can thus see clearly from these paintings that artists of this Nativist era depict real-life Taiwan scenes realistically according to their actual appearance. This painting style is very different to that of traditional Chinese landscape paintings and is characteristic of paintings of this era.

5.46 *Transfer Depot*, 1976, Yuan Jin Ta,   **5.47** *Coir Shirt*, 1976, Yuan Jin Ta, 170x158cm
240x120cm

Another phenomenon brought about by the Nativist movement was the popularity of folk culture and folk artists.[341] The noted Taiwanese folk artists during the time

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[341] The term 'folk artist' refers to those artists who had never received a formal schooling. In their work, one can often perceive a different type of vitality when compared to the academic art institution style.

include Hong Tong (洪通, 1920-1987) of Tainan, and the sculptor Zhu Ming[342] (Ju Ming, 朱銘, 1938-), who is famous for infusing Chinese philosophy and *tai chi* (太極) as well as yin *yang* (陰陽) carvings into his sculptures.[343]

The compositional structure of Hong's oeuvre corresponds to Taoist teaching[344] and the *structural levels* are representative of the order of his consciousness.[345] (Fig. **5.48** and **5.49**) The individual colour and figure designs he used in his paintings derive from local folk sources, such as temple sculptures, religious iconography, and traditional puppetry. His paintings are often depicted with human figures with animal heads or animal bodies with human heads as described in folk legends, and express the relationship between humans, heaven and all living matter (Fig. **5.50**). According to Ni, in his paintings, there is not a clear distinction between humans, animals and plants.[346]

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[342] A.k.a. Ju Ming (朱銘, 1938-), born in Miaoli, and a famous Taiwanese sculptor since the 1970s. He used to be an apprentice to the craftsman Lee Chin Chuan (李金川) at the age of 15, and learned the traditional skill of carving religious figures in wood and painting. After five years, he completed his apprenticeship and became a student of the sculptor Yang Ying Feng (楊英風) who advised him not to worry about the carving techniques, and concentrated on capturing and transmitting the spirit and essence of the subject. Moreover, he also encouraged Ju Ming to exercise the Chinese martial arts "Tai Chi", which would become one of important theme in his creation.

[343] Only the works of Hong Tong will be discussed here, given the subject matter of the thesis.

[344] Taoist paintings are split into a series of levels, incorporating a number of 'Heavenly' and 'Earthly' levels.

[345] Hong Tong (洪通) was illiterate and did not undergo any formal art training. He was a psychic medium in a temple until the age of fifty, whereupon he suddenly decided to take up painting. The flora and symbols in his paintings are influenced by his previous existence, and his paintings invariably portray lively, mystical and religious imagery.

[346] Ni Tsai Chin, *Artists-Taiwan Art*, (Taipei: Artist Publisher, 1995), 25-26

5.48 *Untitled*, 1977, Hong Tong   **5.49** *Untitled*, 1977, Hong Tong

5.50 *Untitled*, 1971, Hong Tong

When the media[347], through magazines, first brought Hong to the public's attention

in the early 1970s; Hong became a household name and subsequently, the folk artist

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[347] April 1973, one of the most influential art magazines of that time, '*Lion Art*' (雄獅美術)
published a 'Hong Tong Special Edition', immediately capturing the attention and interest of the
global art world.

that was most representative of that period. In 1976, an international exhibition was organised for him by Taiwanese and American news agencies at Lincoln Centre where he exhibited over 100 paintings and caused consternation by insisting that not one could be sold. He explained, "My paintings are one family, they cannot be broken up, and have to be in one collection."

5.2.1 New Breed of Modern Ink-wash Artists

From the mid 1980s, the development of modern Ink-wash painting underwent a new period of innovation engendered by the curatorial roles of art galleries, cultural organizations and private collectors. Professor Li Zhen Ming (李振明, 1955-) observed that, "currently, Taiwanese society appears to have a fast-food type of shallow, floating, detached, and unstable character; However, from another perspective, it is just as vibrant, active, creative, and unrestricted. Artists now have a wider scope of freedom to express their ideals."[348]

This new freedom of increased possibilities influenced Ink-wash painting to move naturally into other directions to form a multiplicity of artistic expression. Various new forms of expression of Taiwanese modern Ink-wash painting were created, derived of observing societal changes from a critical perspective, with a number of more avant-garde modern Ink-wash painters experimenting with installation and video art. Zhang Yong Chun (張永村, 1957-), for example, was the earliest artist who began to explore installation artworks. In the 1990s, he created a series of coloured ink installation art pieces, exploring the interrelation of ink with industrial and post-industrial society. In his artwork, *Sea of Ink and the Monk*, he used large blobs of ink as the stage background and let dancers, wearing large blobs of ink on tight fitting clothes dance in the midst, and then capture images photographically as part of the process.

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[348] Li Zhen Ming, "Between Change and No Change—Taiwan Tsai-mo Development Discussion," in *National Taiwan Normal University, Ink-wash New Millennium—Ink-wash International Conference on Theory and Creation*, (Taipei: National Taiwan Normal University, 2002), 226

As a result, a multiplicity of various subject matters, forms, content, and technique became characteristic of Taiwan's modern Ink-wash painting, and because traditional Ink-wash painting tends to not reflect the current state of society today; the traditional artistic language has been and is being gradually abandoned by the younger Ink-wash generation.

5.2.1.1 Hong Gen Shen

Hong Gen Shen[349] (1946-) is a prominent painter scholar promoting modern Ink-wash art in Taiwan. Concerned with the direction and promotion of modern Ink-wash painting in southern Taiwan, in 1974 he established the *Shin Xiang Painting Group* (心象畫會), and then brought together modern painters in Kaohsiung to found the *Kaohsiung Modern Painting Association* (高雄市現代畫學會), as well as publishing a periodical to advocate modern Ink-wash painting. Hong declared that "his aim was to further the modernisation of Ink-wash painting."[350] After receiving a traditional Ink-wash painting training from the National Taiwan Normal University, he developed techniques and concepts pioneered by Liu Kuo Sung. From 1973 to 1976, he experimented with using plastic fabrics and wrinkled paper to rub varied tonal ink onto *xuan* paper in a spontaneous manner, applying the conventional *bi mo* to complete the work, such as *Remnant Scenery* (殘景, Fig. 5.51). This type of methodology, adopted from and inspired by Liu's '*water rubbing*' technique, enriched the textural and visual qualities of his paintings which is unachievable through traditional Ink-wash approaches.[351] Later on Hong briefly shifted to depicting figures in the local countryside with a manner of realistic and traditional monochromatic *bi mo* techniques during the rise of the *Nativist Movement*. His work, *Fading Years* (退色的歲月), for example, illustrates local farmers sitting on a former ox cart in the countryside, as a record of the local lifestyle in Taiwan's agricultural society at the time (Fig. 5.52).

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[349] Hong Gen Shan was born in the Pescadores in 1946 and graduated from National Taiwan Normal University in 1970. He taught art at a senior high school and is now a professor based in National Kaohsiung Normal University.

[350] Zhuang Xiu Ling, *Humanity landscape-the creative quality of Huang Gen Shen's art*, (Tainan: National Tainan University of Art, 2000), 54

[351] Zeng Su Liang, *Taiwan Modern Art Series: Image-Configuration Ink Painting*, (Taipei: Taiwan Council for Culture, 2004), 93

5.51 *Remnant Scenery*, 1975, Hong Gen Shen, 88x70cm   **5.52** *Fading Years*, 1980, Hong Gen
Shen, 68x44cm

Afterwards, he turned his attention to the critique of modern society and human interaction, and then produced a series of works which are in the manner of abstract, transformative, and distorted human shapes. According to Xie, "These blurry figures signify modern Taiwan's chaotic social and political environment, the interaction of blurry monochromatic figures conveying a sense of stifled depression and turmoil."[352] In *Streets and Lanes* (街頭巷尾, Fig. **5.53**), for example, Hong depicts the ills of modern society and the polluted urban environment of Kaohsiung, an industrial centre of Taiwan.

In these works, Hong's style clearly shifts towards semi-abstraction with intentionally disordered qualities such as heavy textured brushstrokes and unstructured composition. In addition, he applies considerable quantities of ink and

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[352] Xie Dong Shan, *Avant-garde Ink Painting~ the final let-out of Chinese traditional painting*, (National Taiwan Normal University, Ink-wash New Millennium—Ink-wash International Conference on Theory and Creation, 2002), 213

heavy paint to build up what he calls *hei hua* (黑畫, literally as *"black painting"* style). The application of dark colours, ink and thick paint to major areas of the pictorial surface is the major characteristic of *hei hua* (黑畫). This technique was originally unique to Hong's work, but was adopted by other Kaohsiung artists to become a defining characteristic of modern Ink-wash painting in the region. A number of academics believe that *hei hua* is connected to and references the local context such as the highly industrialized environment, and the long-term contamination of water and air. These social and environmental factors may have influenced the creative direction of Kaohsiung artists such as Ni Tsai Chin (倪再沁, 1955-) and Li Jing Sheng (李俊賢, 1957-).

In terms of the nature of qualitative brushwork, he appropriates the thick-black use of line taken from Chinese folk and religious printmaking in preference to employing the vocabulary of traditional calligraphy. Folk printmaking also known as *min su ban hua* (民俗版畫) is closely related to the folk culture, traditional customs and religious activities of China.

5.53 *Streets and Lanes,* 1993, Hong Gen Shen, 183x259cm

The diversification of new painting media was one of Hong's means of modernizing the Ink-wash tradition, employing a variety of non-traditional media such as plaster, gauze, gel, and acrylic pigment. Hong also continues to experiment with the techniques of assemblage, juxtaposing and superimposing paper and wood collage into his works, putting into practice his conviction that "the combined and extensive application of new tools and materials is the inevitable trend of modern Ink-wash practice."[353]

In comparison with the painter Huang Zhi Yang (黃致陽, 1965-) who retained the traditional *bi mo* in his modernist style and who will be discussed later in this chapter, Hong chose to abandon the *bi mo* aesthetic of the Literati school. He holds a belief that "it is better to exercise creativity than slavishly adhere to a traditional *bi mo* foundation; focussing solely on *bi mo* would restrict creative process of artists."[354] Additionally, the conventional element of *liu bai* rarely appears in his work; even if there are unpainted areas on his canvas, he goes against tradition by applying white paint onto blank space.

The painting philosophy of Hong has been named as *xin mo wu fa* (心墨無法), which translates as "artistic expression that originates from an artist's emotional being" rather than merely being restricted to traditional criteria of aesthetic theories, *bi mo* methodology, painting media and composition. This ideology derives from the seventeenth-century artist Shi Tao's[355] (石濤, 1642-1718) *wu fa zhi fa* (無法之法,

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[353] Hong Gen Shan, *2003 Kaohsiung Art* (Kaoshiung: National Kaohsiung Museum, 2004), 16

[354] Chang Shui Ping, *the Tragedy of Black Domain,* (Taipei: New Eco-art Environment, 1992), 9

[355] Shi Tao (石濤) was a famous individualist painter and theoretician of the Qing Dynasty known for his revolutionary formal innovations that went against traditional rigid painting conventions. He once remarked when asked about his artistic style, "I always use my own method".

literally "the method of nothing") which is from Shi Tao's (石濤) *Theory of Painting* (畫語論), and which means that the supreme artist should not be restricted by any principle of traditional aesthetic theory or technique, but should possess a complete traditional repertoire from which a new mode of expression can be fashioned. (至人無法，無法而法，乃為至法。蓋有法必有化，化然後為無法). Hong's *wu fa zhi fa* refers to two meanings: the first is to be free of traditional constraints, and the second is to use the diverse techniques and theories of ancient painters to create an individual style.

Hong Gen Shen discarded the constraints of traditional Literati aesthetics and techniques. He not only promotes a more liberal attitude to the application of diverse media and skills to enrich his artistic language, he also uses abstract form to comment on the social and political environment of Taiwan's modern society.

5.54 *Ink Border*, 2003, Hong Gen Shen, 163x574cm

5.2.1.2 Huang Zhi Yang

Huang Zhi Yang[356] (黃致陽, 1965-) is a prominent practitioner of modern Ink-wash painting and is well known for using the medium as a tool for socio-political criticism in the 1990s. He first achieved public acclaim for the work *Maternity Room* (尚孝形產房), in which abstract human-like forms are collected from organic shapes which are a combination of human, animal, bacteria and plant. These abstract forms were derived from the microscopic observation of plants and bacteria because Huang had observed plant cells and plankton living in symbiosis with plants using electron microscopy for artistic inspiration.[357]

5.55 *Maternity Room* (尚孝形產房), 1992, Huang Zhi Yang, (each) 150x520cm

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[356] Huang was born in Taipei and grew up there. He graduated from the Chinese Culture University in 1987 and represented Taiwan at the 46th Venice Biennale in1995. He moved to Beijing in 2006.
[357] Wang Chia Chi, "Huang Zhi Yang's aesthetic," *Modern Art 113*, (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2004), 37-38

These skeletal human-like shapes, interwoven with thick black lines, were deliberately drawn distorted and deformed, as well as exaggerating genital features to emphasise their violent and primitive nature.[358] The expressive painterly language of Huang's human-like figures is suggestive of de Kooning's *Woman* series. According to the curator and critic, Wang Chia Chi (王嘉驥, 1961-), "With reference to the content, these metamorphosed creatures symbolize Huang's questioning of human morality and values as well as the loss of identity; it therefore can be seen as his responses and criticisms after witnessing the chaotic politics and transformations in Taiwanese society in the 1990s."[359]

With regards to Ink-wash techniques, Huang adapted the Chinese Ink-wash monochrome tradition to depict these chimerical creatures, which are half-man and half animal. However, prior to 2007, his paintings were mainly executed in the monochrome Ink-wash tradition. Applying the methodology of *bi*, mainly *zhong feng* and *cun fa* techniques, Huang complies with scholarly tradition to echo his Ink-wash identity. Yang observed that, "Traditional *cun fa* technique is employed by painter Huang Zhi Yang to depict the wild and violent features of humans living in modern society, which is also an artistic experiment of the modernisation of *bi mo* methodologies."[360] More specifically, he also integrates traditional Chinese artistic components such as *liu bai* and *xu shi*, *luo kuan* and conventional painting media.

Huang also experiments with unconventional methods in his work. His approach is to suspend his works in three-dimensional space rather than the conventional practice of

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[358] Ni Tsai Chin, *A Cultural Perspective on Taiwan Art*, (Taipei: Artists Publishing Co., 2007), 163-164

[359] Wang Chia Chi, *Huang Zhi Yang 1998-2008*, (Taipei: Artco Books, 2008), 44-45

[360] Yang Ming Eh, "The Art of Huang Zhi Yang," *Modern Art 113*, (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2004), 53

fixing onto the walls. Consequently, in comparison to traditional methods, Huang's specific display of paintings creates a special sense of spatial field and maintains a different relationship with the viewer.[361]

After 1996, Huang collectively referred to his hybrid figures as 'Zoon', as if they formed a new species, with their own behaviour and rules. Compared to his previous distorted forms, the figures of the Zoon series are externally closer to a human body. Additionally, Huang remarked that "People living on earth are like a proliferation of bacteria, continually breaking down our space as microbes...although humans have always considered that the earth is under their domination. However, the forces of nature through the invisible influence of microorganisms directly affect human behaviour."[362]

After moving to Beijing in 2006, Huang created the Zoon: Beijing Bio (北京生物) series, a continuation of his concept of the "collective social portrait" and which has evolved since the 1990s depicting both his impressions of and reactions towards Beijing society (Fig. 5.56). Wang observed that, "In this latest manifestation, the corporeal form changes once again, as if after a continual cycle of reproduction, mutation and propagation, the single cell motif has metamorphosed into a flowering anthropomorphic tree."[363]

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[361] Xie Dong Shan, "Avant-garde Ink Painting – the final let-out of Chinese traditional painting, " in National Taiwan Normal University, Ink-wash New Millennium – Ink-wash International Conference on Theory and Creation, (Taipei: National Taiwan Normal University, 2002), 213
[362] Huang Chen, interview of Huang Zhi Yang., http://www.itpark.com.tw/artist/critical_data/91/563/262 , (Accessed 21 Dec 2010)
[363] Wang Chia Chi, Huang Zhi Yang 1998-2008, (Taipei: Artco Books, 2008), 29

5.56 *Zoon: Beijing Bio No.1-3*, 2006, Huang Zhi Yang, 140x400cm

After *Zoon: Beijing Bio*, Huang created the *Zoon-Dreamscape* (密視) series in which he employed both Pollock's gestural techniques and Ink-wash skills. Wang commented that,

"Since the format of this series was larger than ever, the artist habitually placed the work on the floor and moved his body back and forth to leave traces of the brush and ink on the paper, in a manner similar or close to Jackson Pollock. This expressionistic creative method combines the spirit of traditional Chinese ink painting and the action painting manner of Western Abstract Expressionism,

lending great immediacy and contemporariness to Huang's ink and wash works"[364]

Moreover, compositionally, the Abstract Expressionist all-over manner of the *Zoon-Dreamscape* series is unlike previous works where the anthropomorphic figure acted as the centre of visual focus. The pictorial surface of these paintings, such as the *Zoon-Dreamscape No.0832*, is blurred and vague as a result of the Pollock-esque technical approach of splashing and layering colour. Huang commented in an interview with Wang that "he had made extensive use of water in this series, firstly allowing water to 'flood' the picture, then applying colour after it dries. He then repeated this procedure many times to create gradation and visual depth."[365]

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[364] Wang Chia Chi, "Huang Zhi Yang's aesthetic," *Modern Art 113*, (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2004), 41-42

[365] Wang Chia Chi, *Huang Zhi Yang 1998-2008*, (Taipei: Artco Books, 2008), 49

5.57 *Zoon-Dreamscape No.0832*, 2008, Huang Zhi Yang, 240x140cm

Additionally, the effect of a foreground grid in a number of *Zoon-Dreamscape* paintings, such as *No.0801* and *No.0811* (Fig. **5.58** and **5.60**), is suggestive of Terry Winters' creations such as *Parallel Rendering 2* and *Image Location* (Fig. **5.59** and **5.61**) that translate systems of information into pictorial space. In Huang's paintings, the grids in the foreground combine with the brushwork 'chimerical' figures at the rear of the picture plane to create a visual sensation of pictorial depth.

5.58 *Zoon–Dreamscape No.0801, 2008*, Huang Zhi Yang, 475x280cm

5.59 *Parallel Rendering 2*, 1997, Terry Winters, 243.8x320cm

5.60 *Zoon–Dreamscape No.0811*, 2008, Huang Zhi Yang, 240x140cm

5.61 *Image Location*, 1997, Terry Winters, 243.8x304.8cm

Representative of the current generation of artists in the Ink-wash genre, Huang incorporates both Abstract Expressionistic qualities and calligraphic *bi mo* aesthetics to formulate his unique modern Ink-wash style.

6 Hybrid Artwork Analysis

With the aim of integrating both the painterly traditions of Literati Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism, I began to create my hybrid artworks by incorporating the various influences that I had appropriated since my arrival in London and my direct exposure to Western art. One of the obstacles that I faced was the difficulty in releasing myself from the constraints of the Ink-wash painting, having been trained to accept and practice in this Literati tradition for over twenty years. Hence, I analysed paintings from both the traditions of Literati painting and of Abstract Expressionism, and developed a Western scientific approach to break down a painting into three different aspects, which would allow me to differentiate whether a painting was more Oriental or Western. These three aspects are the painting materials, pictorial elements, and visual language respectively. They also represent the three directions of research inquiry through which I tried to innovate the Literati Ink-wash painting tradition.

In this chapter, there are ten of my paintings in the series, beginning with a fully Eastern Literati Ink-wash painting, and ending with my most Westernized hybrid painting. They chart the progress and transition from purely Oriental to an East-West hybrid, and each painting series is analysed and critically evaluated in a reflexive activity to locate it within current discourse and context.

Moreover, each painting series begins with a description of the steps and methods in creating the artwork. This basically concerns the physical aspects and explains the application of various media and the different techniques, and the order in which

they were applied to create the paintings. This is then followed by a critical analysis of the various inspirations, intentions, and influences that contributed to the creation of the paintings. A large part of these influences relate to my previous research on both the painterly traditions of Chinese Ink-wash painting and American abstract art.

Moreover, other influences such as my weekly walks in Hyde Park, or my conversation with Liu Kuo Sung when he was in London, are also mentioned as being relevant in articulating my artworks. The final part is the hybrid evaluation criteria table which is duly completed and analysed critically. This serves mainly as a checklist at the end of producing a new painting in order to evaluate progress towards my goal and to identity what can be improved and/or what else might need to be done. I then use this as a basis to compare and contrast with previous painting series. Through this process, new possibilities emerge that had not been considered previously, and it is this system for developing new learning which has kept me on track towards my objective of creating a new hybrid art.

6.1 Traditional Literati Landscape Painting

6.1 *Traditional Literati Landscape Painting*, 2009, Ye Guo Shin, 85x35cm

Production Stages

1. Very pale ink was first used to do a rough outline on the paper.

2. I then used the traditional *lan zhu bi*[366] (蘭竹筆) brush to draw the trees in the foreground, then use *pi ma cun*[367] (披麻皴) to draw the slope in the foreground, followed by using *ce feng* (側鋒) to draw the cliffs on the left.

3. Light ink was then used to paint the bushes behind the slope.

4. Using different variations of light and thick ink, the central main mountain and waterfall is then drawn with the *zhong feng* (中鋒) technique.

5. *Ce feng* (側鋒) was then used to draw in the mountain rocks on the left of the picture.

6. Different ink tones were then used to highlight the main mountain and the foreground slope with the traditional *dian tai*[368] (點苔) technique.

7. I then used traditional pigment and *chang liu bi*[369] (長流筆) brush to apply colour to the mountain rocks, and also used *hua qing*[370] (花青, cyanine blue) pigment to paint the background mountains.

8. Lastly, *luo kuan* (落款) is inscribed on the top left with my seal stamps.

Dimension: 85x35cm

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[366] *Lan zhu bi* (蘭竹筆): Chinese brush made of wolf hair with less absorbency. Normally it is applied to outline the shape of object in traditional Literati painting.

[367] See section 2.2.2

[368] When drawing rocks, normally after the brush textural strokes, the process of *dian tai* is applied to depict the trees or weeds on the rocks. Artists in the Northern Song dynasty normally did not use this technique. It was the Southern Song artists that started to use this technique to illustrate the wet rocks of Jiang Nan. Subsequently, the Yuan Dynasty Literati painters regularly used *dian tai* in their paintings.

[369] *Chang liu bi* (長流筆): Chinese brush made of sheep hair with high absorbency, and usually applied to large areas of Ink-wash in traditional Literati painting.

[370] Traditional blue pigment derived from plant extracts.

Materials

This painting uses traditional Ink-wash painting materials: *xuan* paper, Chinese

brushes *lan zhu bi* and *chang liu bi*, and traditional Chinese painting pigments.

Traditional painting techniques were used to do this painting by using the *lan zhu bi*

for the *cun fa* texture strokes, and the *chang liu bi* for spreading the ink and to apply

colour pigments.

Analysis

This picture is painted in the traditional Literati style. The mountains, rocks, trees,

clouds, and waterfall are all representative elements of the traditional Literati

landscape painting. In addition, aesthetic expressions in the painting such as *xu*

shi[371], *liu bai*[372], *three distances* perspective[373], the pursuit of *shi*[374] in pictorial

composition, the use of traditional colour pigments, the use of brush and ink

techniques, the traditional *cun fa*[375] texture of mountains and rocks, and the *shi shu*

hua he yi[376], are all essentially traditional forms of expression of Literati Ink-wash

painting.

The *cun fa* expression used for the rocks depiction in this painting is the *pi ma cun*[377],

which is generally used to depict mountains south of China's Yangtze river, where

the mountains' composition are more soil based and less rocky. This *cun fa* is also

executed with the traditional *zhong feng*[378] brushstroke. For the pictorial perspective,

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[371] See section 2.2.5.2
[372] Ibid
[373] See section 2.2.4
[374] See section 2.2.5.2
[375] See section 2.2.2
[376] See section 2.2.3.1
[377] See section 2.2.2
[378] Ibid

the traditional *Three Distances* perspective is used with the moving focal points of *High-distance*, *Deep-distance*, and *Level-distance*.

6.2 *Three Distances* of *Traditional Literati Landscape Painting*

6.3 *Shi* of *Traditional Literati Landscape Painting*

This painting uses traditional Chinese colour pigments, but the dominant form of expression is still the *five tones of ink*. The aesthetic principles of *yin yang* and *xu shi* are expressed here in the form of *liu bai*. In this painting, the sky, mountain paths, waterfall are all unpainted blank *liu bai void* spaces, to balance the *solid* physical mountains and trees. In term of *shi*, it is similar to application of Wang Meng's S-shape in his *Autumn Cottage* (秋山草堂圖)[379].

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[379] See section 2.2.5.2

The painting is also painted in the traditional format of *shi shu hua he yi* (詩書畫合一), with the text at the top left corner of this painting being a poem written in Chinese calligraphy, describing the magnificent mountain landscape scenery of this painting. The last line is the author's signature and seal, which is a very typical Literati form of expression.

The poem by Song Dynasty scholar Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-1101) in this painting describes the rocks at the foot of the mountain as a tiger crouching, while the reflection of the pine trees on the water is described as a dragon lurking in the water. The poem also asks the reader how far one's eyes can see and count the many mountain peaks in the distance.[380] The poem is metaphorically suggesting that people must have dreams and visions, and strive for higher ideals and success.[381]

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[380] My own translation, the original Chinese text is "丑石半蹲山下虎，長松倒臥水中龍。試君眼力知多少，數到雲峰第幾重"

[381] I used this poem to match the painting, which I gave as a gift to my Taiwanese friend, General Weng Meng Hui, congratulating him on his promotion to the rank of General, and through this painting and poem, wishing him higher success in future.

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	
Total			**3**		**0**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural	✓	Geometric dots Splattered	
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**6**		**0**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	
	Perspectives	Three distances	✓	No restriction	
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	
Total			**7**		**0**
Grand Total			**16**		**0**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

It can be easily seen from the hybrid evaluation criteria list, the *Traditional Literati Landscape Painting* scored full marks for being an artefact of the Oriental Ink-wash painting tradition. In terms of the painting materials used, the pictorial elements, and the visual language, it is entirely traditional and therefore attained no score in the column of American Abstract Expressionism. Hence, this painting is representative of the Eastern end of the spectrum, and the starting point of the hybridization of my artworks as I move towards the Western extreme of the spectrum when creating my new artworks.

6.2 Yin Yang and the Universe

6.4 *Yin Yang and the Universe 1*, 2009, Ye Guo Shin, 40x75cm

Production Stages

1. Traditional pigment and a little watercolour paint were used to draw out the Earth in the middle bottom of the picture.

2. I then used light ink tones to paint the mountain landscape on the right first.

3. Thick ink tones were then used to draw the trees and *dian tai* (點苔).

4. Layer over layer of light ink tones were applied to gradually darken the night landscape scene on the left side.

5. The totems in the background were then painted.

6. Lastly, *luo kuan*[382] (落款) is inscribed on the left with my seal stamps.

Dimension: (*Yin Yang and the Universe 1*) 40x75cm and (*2*) 75x30cm

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[382] See section 2.2.3.1

Materials

This painting is done on normal single thickness *dan xuan*[383] (單宣) paper with mainly traditional Chinese colour inks with a little watercolour. The brushes used were traditional *lan zhu bi* (蘭竹筆) and *chang liu bi* (長流筆)

Analysis

This series divides the painting surface into two halves, one half depicting night and the other half depicting day. The objective was to use traditional Literati painting techniques to render the experience of contemporary life. Although today's advanced technology has enabled instant communication between people in any part of the world. Nonetheless, the time difference between different places in the world still remains. In other words, when one half of the Earth is in darkness, the other half will be in sunlight.

In order to emphasize this point, I painted an image of Earth at the bottom of the picture. The globe was painted in a Western photo-realistic manner, with an aerial view perspective as well, something unheard of before the space age. The day and night traditional Chinese landscape scenes and the aerial photo of Earth are then juxtaposed together to form a strong visual effect by way of contrast.

Due to the Earth's rotation on an axis, we are therefore able to see changes in both day and night scenery. Regarding this as the starting point, day and night landscape scenes were drawn side by side in the background to not only show the contrast of *yin* (night) and *yang* (day)[384], but also to illustrate the cyclical nature of the Tao,

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[383] See section 2.2.1
[384] See section 2.2.5.1

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endlessly alternating between day and night in the abstract time and space of the painting. The red line separating both landscape scenes is the imaginary axis by which the Earth in the foreground rotates, and metaphorically acts as a revolving door in which day and night interchange as the Earth rotates.

6.5 *Yin Yang and the Universe 2*, 2009, Ye Guo Shin, 75x30cm

Yin Yang and the Universe 2 extends the abstract time and space of its predecessor and places a blue framed up day and night 'painting' in the physical painting itself.

The painting within a painting plays on the visual perception of seeming farther receding into the pictorial depth of the actual painting. The viewer, standing in front of *Yin Yang and the Universe 2* is not only looking at *Yin Yang and the Universe 2*, but also at the inner day and night painting 'further away' in the pictorial depths of the physical painting. In addition, the abstracted forms that vaguely resemble mountains in the background by the sides of the day and night 'painting', distort any perception of distance or proportion, and help to create an abstract world inside the painting.

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	
Total			3		0
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural	✓	Geometric dots Splattered	
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	✓
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			6		3
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	
	Perspectives	Three distances	✓	No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	
Total			7		1
Grand Total			16		4

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

Building on from the first painting series of traditional Literati landscape painting, this series of *Yin Yang and the Universe* still retains all elements of traditional Literati Ink-wash painting, but adds on innovations from the Western Abstract Expressionism paradigm. We can see from the hybrid evaluation criteria table that straight non-calligraphic lines have been introduced, as well as new modern day conceptions of space and planet Earth. This placing of a framed 'painting' within the abstract pictorial space in the real painting is a Western inspired innovation that starts to engage the viewer differently in terms of visual perspectives, pictorial content, and visual experience. Therefore, this painting series constitutes the first of my hybrid artworks and represents my first attempts at breaking out of the boundaries of traditional Ink-wash painting.

6.3 *Mirage Landscapes*

6.6 *Mirage Landscapes*, 2009, Ye Guo Shin, 45x70cm

Production Stages

1. A layer of thin glue is applied to the surface of the *xuan* paper.

2. The paper is soaked in water and drops of ink are dripped to spread on the paper for the marbleizing effect. This step was done repeatedly until a satisfactory marbleize pattern emerged.

3. After the paper is dried, the desired parts of the paper are cut out.

4. Traditional mountains and rocks are then added in, depending on the layout of the marbleizing effects

5. I then increased the pictorial depth by painting the abstract mountain in the bottom left corner foreground.

6. I then used the same ink tones as the marbleizing effects to paint the mountains in the background so that they blend in together.

Dimension: 45x70cm

Materials

This painting is done on normal single thickness *dan xuan* (單宣) paper that has a thin layer of glue applied on the surface. The brushes used in this painting were traditional *lan zhu bi* (蘭竹筆) and *chang liu bi* (長流筆)

Analysis

This is a modern Ink-wash painting done on traditional *xuan* paper for its great absorbency so as to be able to create the marbleizing effects of Liu Kuo Sung's *water rubbing* technique[385]. Chinese ink, besides its inherent status as a traditional medium for Ink-wash painting, was used for its fluidity to enable this *water rubbing* technique to be successful. Ink was also the choice of colour for the rest of the hand drawn mountains so as to be able to integrate smoothly without any colour clashes with the random marbleizing effects.

As mentioned earlier, contrary to the West where black and white are perhaps regarded differently, the Chinese regard black as a colour and use a variations of tones of black in painting. Similarly, in *Mirage Landcapes*, I have used five different tones of black in the painting. Strength and weakness of tone determine the power and character of the painting. Tone as an element also affects the atmosphere and mood expressed by the painting. In this painting, the mountains have a harder tone and therefore spatially protrude forward in the foreground while the marbleizing effects recede back into the pictorial space with their soft and light tone. The lighter and diffused areas of the marbleizing effects have the effect of giving light and

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[385] See section 4.2.1

space, hence creating an ethereal beauty extending beyond the boundary of the paper to the left.

6.7 *Aurora Borealis*

In addition, the marbleizing effects are similar to the heavenly aurora borealis, and as one views and follows its waves and wisps of grey, beginning to lose a sense of time and space. This is in line with the ethereal effect I wish to express about nature and the grandeur of the mountains. Although in a different form, the resulting experience is similar to that of Jackson Pollock's lines in his paintings as described by Levine,

> "To experience a work of Pollock's is to literally lose oneself in the rhythms, to forget all sense of ego... Pollock's sense of surrender to the canvas may be

seen as a metaphor for the obliteration of the ego and its release into a cosmic experience."[386]

Similar to Liu Kuo Sung and his analogy of playing chess where the artist reacts to the randomness of the marbleizing effects and creates his pictorial composition, I have also done similarly with the mountains. If observed carefully, one can tell that these are not real mountains, but the mountains of my imagination, as the rock textures are different throughout. Yet, somehow they seem to fit together harmoniously. This is achieved from my capturing of the essence or *chi*[387] of the mountains and my striving for the highest level of Chinese painting. As long as I can capture the *chi* (氣) of the mountains, even if they are not 'real', they would still come across as real mountains.

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[386] Levine, Edward M., "Abstract Expressionism: The Mystical Experience," *Art Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Autumn (1997), 24

[387] See section 2.2.5.2

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

Criteria		Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			**3**		**1**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural	✓	Geometric dots Splattered	
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**6**		**2**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	
	Perspectives	Three distances	✓	No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			**7**		**2**
Grand Total			**16**		**5**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

Mirage Landscapes constitutes the second in my series of hybrid artworks and starts to introduce forms of abstraction and spontaneity that are so characteristic of American Abstract Expressionism (gesture painting). Although there was some abstraction in the previous *Yin Yang and the Universe* painting series, I determined that it was inadequate in that it was drawn in deliberately and lacked dynamism and freedom. I felt that was a major critique of that painting series and sought to address it in this painting with the modern Ink-wash painting innovation of *water rubbing* technique.

We can see from the assessments in the hybrid evaluation table that this painting still possesses all the elements of a traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting, and although the score for pictorial elements in the Abstract Expressionism column has decreased in comparison with *Yin Yang and the Universe*, the visual language is becoming increasingly Westernized. The complex marbleizing effects give a sense of timelessness, having no apparent beginning and end, similar to that of Pollock's all-over paintings. Here I cite Pollock who once recalled that, "There was a reviewer a while back who wrote that my pictures didn't have any beginning or end. He didn't mean it as a compliment, but it was. It was a fine compliment."[388]

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[388] Jackson Pollock, quoted in David Britt, *Modern Art: Impressionism to Post-modernism*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2007), 265

6.4 Reminiscence

6.8 *Reminiscence 2*, 2009, Ye Guo Shin, 110x85cm

6.9 Production stages of *Reminiscence 2*

Production Stages

1. I experimented extensively with various types of *xuan* paper with the water rubbing technique of dripping ink droplets on the paper soaked in water, before choosing one of them as the base.

2. Selected parts of the previous *water rubbing* experiments are then cut out and

pasted onto the base *xuan* paper as a collage.

3. I then painted the landscape on the left and then the mountain peaks on the right followed by the snow mountains on the extreme right.

4. Orange and red acrylic paint were used to add in the colours and complete the picture.

Dimension: 110x85cm

Materials

Various types of *xuan* paper were used to experiment with the marbleizing technique. Thin layers of glue were applied to the various *xuan* paper before they were submerged in water. Only traditional Chinese brushes and ink were used, but some acrylic paint was used towards the end to complete the picture.

Analysis

Sheets of various sizes and types of *xuan* paper were stuck onto the base *xuan* paper to create this collage. Some were blank sheets while others already had marbleizing effects on them from previous processes. Mountains were then drawn in certain strategic places to complete the picture and create a modern Ink-wash landscape painting.

In Chinese painting, nature is the fountainhead of artistic inspiration with its inexhaustible variety of forms and patterns. According to Hearn, the aim of the

traditional Chinese painter is "to capture not only the outer appearance of a subject but its inner essence as well – its energy, life force, spirit."[389]

Traditionally, to achieve this, the artist must first be attuned to nature and the universal forces of Tao, which is its primal source. When the artist achieves a communion with nature, the artist becomes meditative and contemplative, according to Yu Tseng Tseng, with the emphasis being on "perception through contemplation of the world of nature until you merge with the universal."[390] Yu goes on to elaborate that Chinese painting is therefore a spiritual experience reflecting the "Chinese sublime view of nature in concert with the universe."[391] Yu goes on to elaborate when he says that:

To capture the essence (*shen*, 神) and to express its vital force (*chi*, 氣), as illustrated by Qi Bai Shi (1899-1983, 齊白石) with his shrimp paintings, the artist engages in a selective process of reducing the image to its bare essentials.[392] Again, according to Yu, this process is facilitated by the method of "painting indirectly from a mental image rather than directly from a scene or object."[393] Yu goes on to elaborate when he says that,

"In this way, unnecessary details are naturally eliminated. The goal is to paint not what the eye sees but rather what the mind knows; thus Chinese painting is less concerned with the appearance than the essence of things. Natural

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[389] Maxwell K. Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Painting*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 3
[390] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 2
[391] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 5
[392] Section 3.2.5.2
[393] Yu Tseng Tseng, Leslie, *Chinese Painting in Four Seasons: A Manual of Aesthetics & Techniques*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981), 3

images serve only as a point of departure, a vehicle for the expression of transcendental images, which ultimately reflect the basic idea of the unity of human beings with the cosmos."[394]

I spent two months in China hiking everyday to see and 'feel' the famous Huangshan Mountains. I did not make this painting when I was in China, but only after I returned to the urban environment of the city. As explained earlier, I attempted to capture the essence of the mountains by painting indirectly from memory. However, instead of the traditional way of painting only the same mountain, I have employed the visual arts-based research method of collage to revitalize the ways one can view a Chinese landscape painting. The new art also serves as a metaphor in creating new meanings out of selected images, in accord with Leavy on arts-based research practice when she cites that it provides the opportunity to "open up new dialogues among diverse people, provide new insights, enhance reflection, and offer a new way to critique a subject."[395]

When I was making the painting, in my mind were images of various facets of different mountains that I had toured in my two months in China. These images were being continuously recalled and blended together in my mind, creating a very ethereal world. Instead of the traditional practice of having a complete picture in mind before starting to paint the mountain, mine was a continuous flux of images endlessly fusing into each other that was dynamic and not static. I therefore decided to treat it like a motion picture and do a screen capture of one of the blended scenes.

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[394] Ibid.
[395] Patricia Leavy, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, (New York: The Guildford Press, 2009), 222

The collage method using various rectilinear pieces of paper was to give the notion of various photographic stills of different mountains. These were "snapshots" of the mountains that I had visited and the marbleizing effects of Liu Kuo Sung were used to link them all together (Fig. **6.10**); at the same time giving a wispy smoke effect that is suggestive of clouds and creates an ethereal ambience. The juxtaposition of black and white winter mountains and multi-perspectives also add to the surreal quality where there is no specific time and space.

6.10 *Thousands layers* (千層上), 1976, Liu Kuo Sung, 58.5x94.5cm

Many a time, I had to wake up very early when it was still dark to climb the mountains. We would therefore always see and experience the sunrise and which has frequently re-appeared in my memory. I have therefore reflected this in the abstract orange shapes in my painting, in the process energizing the painting and giving it more vitality.

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	✓
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	
Total			**3**		**1**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural	✓	Geometric dots Splattered	
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	✓
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**6**		**4**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	
	Perspectives	Three distances	✓	No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			**7**		**2**
Grand Total			**16**		**7**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

Reminiscence 2 constitutes the next extension of my artwork series and builds on the previous *Mirage Landscapes* painting series by applying the Western innovation of collage technique to attempt to push the abstraction factor in my paintings. This complements the random marbleizing effects and helps to break through the traditional composition and visual perspectives of Literati Ink-wash painting.

We can see from the scores of the hybrid evaluation table that this painting still possesses all elements of a traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting, but the score of the Abstract Expressionism column is slowly increasing to indicate an increasingly hybrid artwork. In this painting series, the lack of Western pictorial elements is addressed and the score has increased from two to four.

6.5 Rock and Roll Landscape

6.11 *Rock and Roll Landscape*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 106x96cm

6.12 Production Stages of *Rock and Roll Landscape*

Production Stages

1. A pencil sketch of the main mountain forms was first done on *xuan* paper.

2. The mountain forms are then painted in with black Chinese ink, together with a light blue for the sky above.

3. Overall purple undertones are then painted throughout the painting as a colour base.

4. The mid tone colours are painted in next, mainly at the mountain peaks at the top.

5. Coloured dots are then added into the picture to give it energy and dynamism.

6. Finally, the night sky and strong blues are painted in to complete the picture.

<u>Dimension</u>: 106x96cm

Materials

Shuang xuan (雙宣) paper, which is twice as thick and more absorbent than normal paper was used so that the ink could spread more easily. Both Chinese and Western brushes were used, and so was acrylic and watercolour paint.

Analysis

As I knew I would be using many more colours in this painting and that my intention was for the paper to absorb the colours and spread them better, this picture is painted on the more absorbent *shuang xuan* paper.

The forms are mainly of dark black shapes that look like tears or shadows of rock crevices. The shapes are very organic and random, with some being wavy and 'lethargic', while others have sharp and 'energetic' edges. For instance, the shapes at the bottom and top left of the picture have more volume and little movement, whereas the ones in the middle just off centre to the left are strong, forceful and 'fast'. This creates a dynamic composition and rhythm where the viewers eye races and slows down intermittently as it follows the contours of the shapes.

These black 'fissures' are spread throughout the painting with more at the base making it bottom heavy and less at the top making it look lighter. This gives it a vertical orientation and a notion of mountains, setting the scene for a modern Ink-wash landscape painting. One can also see the *Three Distances*[396] perspectives proposed by Guo Xi (ca. 1000-1090 郭熙), synonymous with Chinese landscape

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[396] See section 2.2.4

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painting. These three perspectives in one painting, create a mobile perspective where the viewer, in the same painting, simultaneously looks up at the mountain, looks down from the mountain, and looks beyond the mountain. The spectator's viewpoint is fluid, constantly shifting between different angles of vision, creating visual illusions of depth, height and expansiveness.

6.13 *Three Distances* of *Rock and Roll Landscape*

6.14 Different Perspectives of *Rock and Roll Landscape*

6.15 *Three Distances* of *Early Spring*, 1072, Guo Xi, 158.3x108.1cm

The role of colour here is to accentuate the lyricism of this painting. Adopting "Kandinsky's notion of the new harmony of 'opposites and contradictions'"[397], I have used non-traditional Literati painting colours such as purple as the predominant colour in the painting. This is illustrated in Kandinsky's two diagrams. In Kandinsky's terms, purple recedes back into the picture, creating pictorial depth.[398] Coupled with blue that recedes further and slight touches of yellow that stand out and

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[397] John Cage, *Colour in Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 159
[398] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 41

move towards the viewer, varying pictorial depths are created in the same painting. Complementing the various dynamic shapes, the various colours all over the painting create a rhythmic variation in pictorial focus and add to the lyrical atmosphere of the painting.

6.16 Wassily Kandinsky's First Antithesis

6.17 Wassily Kandinsky's Fourth Antithesis

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	✓
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			**3**		**2**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural	✓	Geometric dots Splattered	
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa		Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**5**		**3**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate		Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	✓
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi		No restriction	✓
	Perspectives	Three distances	✓	No restriction	
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	✓
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	
Total			**5**		**3**
Grand Total			**13**		**8**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

Rock and Roll Landscape is the first real break from tradition with no full score in the Ink-wash painting column. The mountain forms, as compared to those of previous painting series, are more abstract without the obvious use of calligraphic brushstrokes to depict the form of the mountains. They now consist more of shapes rather than lines and represent a departure from the line-oriented Literati landscape paintings of previous artwork series. One can also sense the spontaneity of these shapes in comparison to the deliberate nature of mountains in Literati paintings.

The bold use of colour is no longer representative of physical objects of reality, but is more expressive of the artist's emotions. This is more in tune with the non-representational and expressive nature of Abstract Expressionism. Overall, this is the most abstract painting so far, with the most dominant use of colour and is a milestone in the creation of my hybrid artworks creation.

6.6 Deep Snow

6.18 *Deep Snow*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 70x140cm

6.19 Production Stages of *Deep Snow*

Production Stages

1. The mountains are first sketched out in pencil as shown in fig.1.

2. The sketched out mountain forms are then cut out from the full sheet of *xuan* paper.

3. The finished cutouts are collected together.

4. The cutout sheets of mountain forms are then pasted onto a new sheet of *xuan* paper in its original position using weak glue.

5. The newly pasted sheet of *xuan* paper is then sprayed over with black ink.

6. Once all the cut out mountains have been coloured black, they are then removed and stuck onto another new sheet of *xuan* paper acting as a stencil.

7. Black ink is once again sprayed over the stencil.

8. The final painting is completed with some touching up with the Chinese brush manually.

Dimension: 70x140cm

Materials

This painting uses *shuang xuan* (雙宣) paper as the painting surface for its thickness and strength. The painting instruments used were *chang liu bi* (長流筆), Western brush and spray bottles. Ink is the only painting medium used.

Analysis

This is a modern Ink-wash painting done on traditional *xuan* paper using only ink as the painting medium. It is a monochrome painting that does away with any use of the Chinese brush. Therefore there are no brushstrokes in this painting, but one can still see semblances of calligraphic lines in the outlines of the shapes. This is similar to

some of Liu Kuo Sung's paintings such as *Wintry Mountains Covered with Snow*. Although his mountains are initially made up of huge sweeping brushstrokes, but after his unique technique of plucking fibres from the paper, one cannot really see the traditional type of Ink-wash painting brushstrokes anymore. I have pushed further in this direction, totally removing the use of the Chinese brush resulting in crisper forms with more visual impact.

6.20 *Wintry Mountains Covered with Snow*, 1962, Liu Kuo Sung, 84.5x55cm

There is also no use of other colours, which itself is in line with traditional Chinese aesthetics originating from Taoist influences. Lao Tzu (ca. 600 B.C. 老子), in the *Tao Te Ching*, proclaims that colour blinds and distracts one from the truth, the Tao.[399]

Cage claims that, "Reinhardt's black paintings, with their barely perceptible transitions from area to area, owe much to his reading of ancient Chinese philosophy."[400] Ad Reinhardt often quoted Lao Tzu and incorporated elements in his manifesto, "*Twelve Rules for a New Academy* (1957), Rule 6 was: No colors. 'Color blinds.' Colors are barbaric, unstable, suggest life, 'cannot be completely controlled' and 'should be concealed.' Colors are a 'distracting embellishment.'"[401]

6.21 *Abstract Painting No. 5*, 1962, Ad Reinhardt, 152.4x152.4cm

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[399] Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 12.
[400] John Cage, *Colour in Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 204
[401] John Cage, *Colour in Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2006), 204

We can see from Reinhardt's "black" paintings like *Abstract Painting No. 5* above that like Rothko, he explores the juxtaposition of close tones. According to Cage, this "induces the viewer to search out the edges and takes them again beyond the surface."[402] This is what I hope to achieve as well with the big black patch of 'sky' at the top of the painting. There are actually subtle nuances of 'black' in there that are only perceivable to a focused eye and at close range. As the Taoist Lao Tzu (老子) had written about the description of The Way in the Tao Te Ching (道德經), John Cage goes on to quote, "Even if we try to see the Way, it cannot be seen. In this respect it may be described as 'dim and figureless' … utterly vague, utterly indistinct, and yet there is something there."[403] According to Cage, this results in the viewer being 'absorbed' into this 'black hole' in a "protracted, meditative search that gives meaning to the works."[404]

Towards the bottom of the painting, the black tones start to differentiate more like the 'five tones' of traditional Ink-wash painting (*mo fen wu se* 墨分五色) to give texture to the mountains.

6.22 Five Tones of Ink (Source: Zhan Qian Yu , 2000, 68)

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[402] John Cage, *Colour in Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 107
[403] Ibid.
[404] John Cage, *Colour in Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 205

The strength of this painting comes from its simple strong contrast of form and void (*xu shi*), enabled through abstraction and omission of distracting colours and brushwork. The 'white' shapes are the Chinese *liu bai*[405] technique, which are actually empty spaces that suggest snow mountains as informed by the title. Also, by virtue of their colour differences, the white shapes appear to move to the foreground as forms, while the black shapes recede into the background space. This colour and spatial dualism is also an expression of the *yin yang*[406] philosophy of the unity of opposites, which contrasts with the one-sided extremism of Reinhardt's black paintings.

While traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting generally uses black lines to draw the shape of mountains over a white background pictorial space, my painting inverses this tradition and uses white spaces to form the shape of the mountain over a black 'background'. This is inspired by a unique characteristic of Mark Tobey as exemplified in his "white writing" paintings such as *Broadway Norm*, where there is a unique network of white lines that cover the non-white backgrounds of his paintings (Fig. **6.23**).

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[405] See section 2.2.5.2
[406] See section 2.2.5.1

6.23 *Broadway Norm,* 1935, Mark Tobey, 33.6x23.8cm

In terms of compositional structure in the painting, although the imagery still pertains

to reality, with the mountains at the bottom and the sky at the top, it is slightly

different to that of traditional Ink-wash landscape paintings (Fig. **6.25**). Shown below

is an illustration of how landscape Ink-wash paintings were composed in the Song

Dynasty period, with a strong emphasis on *bin zhu*[407] (賓主), and where there is a central focal point in the painting. My composition is just mountains from left to right at the bottom of the picture with no particular focal point. That whole matrix of white spaces or 'mountains' is seen as one object, as one focal point. There is no secondary *bin* (guest) focus. Things are simply as black and white, filled and empty, form and space, front and back. It is this dualistic simplicity that gives this painting its coherence and visual impact.

6.24 Traditional landscape composition

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[407] See section 2.2.5.2

6.25 *Forest in the Winter Moon Night* (月滿寒林), 1987, Chou Chen

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			**3**		**1**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural		Geometric dots Splattered	✓
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa		Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	✓
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**4**		**4**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	✓
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	
	Perspectives	Three distances		No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground		Infinity-sublime	✓
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			**5**		**4**
Grand Total			**12**		**9**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

The *Rock and Roll Landscape* was broken down into two strands to pursue further, with this painting, *Deep Snow*, being one of them. *Deep Snow* is a simplification of its parent painting to try and see how far I could simplify and abstract the shapes of *Rock and Roll Landscape* and using only the traditional black and white. The end result of *Deep Snow* is that it is, I believe, a bold painting with a strong visual impact that immediately arrests the viewer. It is intended that the shapes do not become too abstract but that they should have some semblance to the mountain form so that the painting could still be classified as landscape. The main focus was to see how far I could simplify the colours of black and white in a landscape Ink-wash painting. From the hybrid evaluation criteria table, we can see that I am approaching the middle of the spectrum where my hybrid artwork is mixed proportionately with Oriental (12) and Western (9) components.

6.7 A Source of the Earth

6.26 *A Source of the Earth*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 60x70cm

6.27 Production Stages of *A Source of the Earth*

Production Stages

1. The draft is first sketched in pencil.

2. Using different ink tones and different brushes (both Chinese and Western), I then drew the lines of the mountains and the *dian tai* (點苔).

3. Both Chinese and Western brushes were then used to apply different colour dots to the painting.

4. Finally, the large blue colour in the middle of the painting is painted in.

Dimension: 60x70cm

Materials

The painting materials I have used in this painting are *dan xuan* paper and canvas. Hand-held sprayers and *lan zhu bi* (蘭竹筆) and *chang liu bi* (長流筆) were used to apply the ink, acrylic and watercolour paints. Soft gel medium (diluted with water in a proportion of 1:5) was also used to apply onto the paper.

Analysis

In this painting, I glued the traditional *xuan* paper onto a canvas board. Through my experimentation in studio practice, I have realised that when a layer of glue is applied to *xuan* paper, the absorbency of the *xuan* paper is less, causing the ink to spread more slowly and therefore more evenly. This produces soft gradual tones on the surrounding edges creating tension with the hard and strong lines in the middle. The strong and full 'blackness' of the thick strokes in the middle are heavily contrasted with the rest of the painting and inadvertently draw the eye to its movement from the top left to the bottom right of the painting. The difference in 'speed' also adds to the dynamism with the 'fast' bold strokes in the middle drawing attention as the focal

point, in contrast with the 'slow' spreads of ink tones in the surrounding spaces. Changes in thickness and the meandering of these lines also create repetitions in rhythm that generate action because the eye follows the rhythm and jumps from shape to shape.

The two highly saturated black lines in the middle highlight the blue space defined in between due to the high contrast and sharp edges of the lines. It is similar to a work of Pollock's where, according to Levine, one can read Pollock's paintings as "opening up into an infinity of space which is suggested by the bare canvas".[408] However, it is more similar to the spatial effect created by works of Rothko where also according to Levine, the "extinction of movement results in an experience of quietude into which the observer can feel himself absorbed".[409] In this painting, the viewer is absorbed into the blue passive space in the middle of the painting. The activity in the rest of the canvas contribute to Pollock's sense of infinitude but accentuate Rothko's sense of infinitude in the passive blue space in the middle. In a sense, we have a unique mix of the visual experiences of both the gesture painters and colour-field painters in one single painting.

The main components in this painting are lines, or more specifically, brushstrokes. I drew inspiration from Liu Kuo Sung's paintings, including *Autumn Landscape* and *Dance of Spiritual Rhythm* (Fig. **6.29**). In them, Liu Kuo Sung uses big calligraphic brushstrokes to denote mountains and landscape. He then plucks the thick fibre threads off this special paper to create white streaks of 'cracks' into the large patches

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[408] Edward M. Levine, "Abstract Expressionism: The Mystical Experience," *Art Journal*, Vol.31, No.1, Autumn (1971), 24
[409] Edward M. Levine, "Abstract Expressionism: The Mystical Experience," *Art Journal*, Vol.31, No.1, Autumn (1971), 24

of black ink such that they resemble crevices in rocks and mountains.[410] During a conversation I had with Liu Kuo Song at his recent exhibition in London, he revealed that the inspiration for these paintings was from the Chinese cursive script[411] (草書) and the enlargement of this calligraphic stroke, a technique borrowed from Franz Kline.

6.28 *Contrast Fig 8*, 1952, Franz Kline, 41x51cm

6.29 *Dance of Spiritual Rhythm*, 1964, Liu Kuo Sung, 88.2x59cm

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[410] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *The Research of Liu Kuo Sung*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1996), 92

[411] There are numerous different styles or scripts of writing throughout Chinese history in which Chinese characters can be written. Some of the common ones used today are the regular script for printing, semi-cursive script for writing and cursive script as a purely artistic style where it has been abstracted to the mere suggestion of the basic character shapes.

6.30 *Onement III*, 1949, Barnett Newman, 182.5x84.9cm

Similarly, I have attempted to do the same by enlarging the cursive script (草書) in my painting, the most obvious being the two main strokes in the middle of the painting. However, to a lesser extent, I have also used the semi-cursive script[412] (行書) in varying degrees in the rest of the painting. This is in accord with the Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhong yong*, 中庸), which is an important aspect of Chinese philosophy. It complies with the tradition of Taoist philosophy and its belief in the balance of nature (*yin yang* concept[413]) through moderation in all things. On the other hand, these two curvy brushstrokes are possibly more synonymous with nature than the straight lines in much of 20th century Western art. (See Newman's

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[412] Ibid.
[413] See section 2.2.5.1

'zip' paintings, which are very abstract and removed from nature, as an outstanding example.)

In the painting *Second Zen Patriarch Cultivating His Hearts* (二祖調心圖, Fig. **6.31**), Shi Ge (ca. 10th century, 石恪) utilized the calligraphic stroke to draw out the wrinkles and outline of the Chan master's clothes.[414] We can see clearly that Liu Kuo Sung adapted this technique to his landscapes.[415] I have attempted to do the same in my painting by using brushstrokes from a poem by Wang Duo (1592-1652, 王鐸) in the cursive script (Fig. **6.32**).

6.31 *Second Zen Patriarch Cultivating His Hearts*, ca. 10th Century, Shi Ge, 35.5x129cm

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[414] Hsiao Qiong Rui, *The Research of Liu Kuo Sung*, (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1996), 104
[415] Ibid

6.32 *Semi-cursive script*, ca. 15th Century, Wang Duo

6.33 *Semi-cursive script* in *A Source of the Earth*

For colour, besides the traditional black and white of Chinese Ink-wash painting, in *A Source of the Earth*, being inspired by Kandinsky, I have borrowed the colours from his colour scheme as shown below.[416] I wish to utilize the "psychic effect"[417] of the

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[416] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 42
[417] Kandinsky talks about the psychological effects of colour besides the purely physical sensations. He calls this the 'psychic effect' of colour, which he speculates is through association. For instance, a "certain shade of red may cause pain or disgust through association with running blood." Kandinsky

colours as proclaimed by Kandinsky in his manifesto *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.[418]

In this painting, I have used blue, which is not only the representative colour of water that flows in the streams, but is also a colour that according to Kandinsky, "moves in upon itself, like a snail retreating into its shell, and draws away from the spectator."[419] It is painted in between the two dominant black strokes and effectively creating a virtual gorge in between the two main black strokes in the middle that draws in the viewer.

According to Moszynska, "by absorption in the picture plane with its glowing colour, the spectator could, if willing to be engaged, transcend the immediate surroundings and experience a sense of infinity."[420] A sense of the sublime can therefore be induced in the experience of the viewer, establishing a deeper connection and higher level of engagement between viewer and painting.

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claims that in such cases, "colour awakens a corresponding physical sensation, which produces a corresponding spiritual vibration that works upon the soul."
[418] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 23-4
[419] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 37
[420] Anna Moszynska, *Abstract Art*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1990), 165

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	✓
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	✓
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			**3**		**3**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural		Geometric dots Splattered	✓
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**5**		**4**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	✓
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	✓
	Perspectives	Three distances		No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi		Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	✓
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	✓
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			**5**		**6**
Grand Total			**13**		**13**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

A *Source of the Earth* builds on *Rock and Roll Landscape* to abstract the shapes into lines. The lines are now much less calligraphic and more gestural and spontaneous, creating a more surreal visual effect. The exception being the large blue 'river' flowing through the picture which is a Western innovation from colour-field painting. This is contrasted strongly with the random splatter of coloured dots all over the rest of the painting.

It is also the turning point where my hybrid artwork becomes more abstract and Westernized than Oriental. We can see from the hybrid evaluation criteria table that the score for visual language in Abstract Expressionism is now more than that of the Ink-wash painting column.

6.8 Snowy Night

6.34 *Snowy Night 2*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 131x75cm

6.35 Production Stages of *Snowy Night*

Production Stages

1. The background mountain is first drawn up and painted with black ink.

2. The blue night sky is then painted.

3. The syringe is used to dispense the white acrylic paint onto the painting, giving the branches a fluidity that is not possible with the conventional Chinese brush.

4. The white 'branches' are drawn in different phases, allowing the previous ones time to dry first.

5. I then used the Western brushes to flick white dots of 'snow' onto the whole painting.

6. I then touched up and reinforced some of the thicker branches.

7. Finally, colour dots are flicked onto the painting to arrive at the completed painting.

Dimension: 131x75cm

Materials

The materials I have used in this painting are *shuang xuan* (雙宣) paper, ink, *chang liu bi* (長流筆), sprayer, syringe, acrylic paint, watercolour paints and soft gel medium (diluted with water in the proportion of 1:5)

Analysis

I chose this type of *shuang xuan* paper whose absorbency and ink spread is less than normal *dan xuan* (單宣) paper. The paper thickness is approximately double that of normal *dan xuan* paper as the fibres in the paper are thicker. Therefore, this is a stronger type of *xuan* paper than can withstand the weight and thickness of acrylic and watercolour paints as normal *dan xuan* paper is more fragile and tears more easily.

Additionally, when applied acrylic paints have dried, they tend to crack and fall off the paper. Hence, I applied an initial layer of soft gel onto the *shuang xuan* paper before applying the paints. This preparatory step increases the tensile strength of the *shuang xuan* paper, which is also the application surface of acrylic paint. This also increases the adhesiveness between the acrylic paint and paper surface, so that the paint does not fall off once it has dried. I am thus able to create more hard-edged lines in my painting. This process also allowed me to achieve the first step of my painting to create a similar effect to Reinhardt's 'black' paintings as mentioned earlier in *Deep Snow*.

For my painting, instead of Reinhardt's rectangles of slightly modulated colour, mine are suggestive of mountain shapes, especially in the upper half of the painting,

therefore conforming to Chinese landscape painting subject matter and Chinese aesthetic philosophy of trying to achieve the Tao in painting.[421]

Different from traditional Chinese Ink-wash painting, I then proceeded to use white acrylic paint to draw white lines on the painting, set against the dark background. Similar to *Deep Snow*, this was inspired by Tobey's *"white writing"* paintings.[422] The white lines in my painting are of varying thicknesses and length, branching out all over the painting and extending out of the edges, therefore suggesting a space outside the frame of the physical painting. The multiplication of white lines create structure and in this case, that of branches of a symbolic tree. Just like Tobey who drew the white lines to express the 'frenetic pulse of lights' in New York Broadway, my white lines are symbolic of the *chi* (the life force, 氣) in nature.

6.36 *Broadway 1936*, Mark Tobey, 66x48.8cm   **6.37** *Shi* of Snowy Night

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[421] Refer to *Deep Snow*
[422] See section 4.1.1

The dynamism and energy of the white lines were inspired partly by Chinese calligraphic cursive script (草書) and Jackson Pollock's gesture painting. Instead of the traditional brush, I used different sizes of syringes to paint the lines, however, in the process, I applied the techniques of calligraphic cursive script (草書), conveying the speed and rhythm of traditional Chinese calligraphy. However, unlike Jackson Pollock's method by which the lines appear to be random in every direction, mine have a generally vertical orientation with the lines at the top moving to the right like tree branches swaying in the wind. The fluid white lines come alive and capture *chi*, thereby showing the *shi* (勢) of the painting (Fig. **6.37**). According to Rowley, "when looked at as a whole, appears as if done with one breath... One may say that the breath of the spirit (*Chi*) is in the *Shi*".[423]

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

6.38 Influences of *Snowy Night* 2

The four images above illustrate my attempts to capture influences that constitute my 'white writing'. The first is the traditional print making of stone tablet, and that was used in ancient China where the calligraphy were carved into stone tablets and like a seal with recessed cavities, was then 'printed' onto paper. The second painting is

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[423] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 37

painted in a traditional Literati manner with the branches, while the third is a blown-up detail of Jackson Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30.* We can infer the Chinese *shi* in Jackson Pollock's blown-up and this is applied to my own painting.

I then added white dots of varying sizes all over the picture. The brush I chose to use is *chang liu bi*. This means that the brush reservoir can hold more water and paint. This allows me to flick the brush and splatter the paint onto the painting with varying strengths and speed. This action creates dynamism in the painting, and dots of varying size create the pictorial illusion of depth in the picture (Fig. **6.39**). Some of my dots are also slightly varied by their relationship with the white branches, with some behind the branches, some in front and some beside. Dots that are further away are also less saturated in colour and smaller to create the pictorial illusion of depth in the painting. It also complements the white lines to create a 'moving focus' which induces the viewer's eye to move all over the painting, following the lines and dots. (Fig. **6.40**)

6.39 Dots of varying sizes create pictorial depth in painting

6.40 Dots of different shapes and sizes create direction and depth

The Chinese view dots, or as translated into Mandarin, *dian* (點) differently from those in the West. In the West, the dot is a point, which when magnified, is basically a round circular patch of paint. The *dian*, on the other hand, does not subscribe to this convention, choosing to emphasize on 'dotting' or *dianfa* (點法) instead of the actual form and colour of the dot (Fig. **6.41**). This essentially comes from a linguistic difference between both languages with regards to the use of the word dots or *dian* (點). The English language differentiates the noun 'dot' from the verb 'dotting', but this same word *dian* (點) can be used interchangeably in the Chinese language, hence the confusion.

Therefore, when the Chinese paint dots, they place more emphasis on the dotting of the dots and hence the movements and energy in the dots, in contrast to the often motionless, geometrically circular dots in Western paintings. As Kandinsky puts it, "the point carries only one tension within it and it can have no direction."[424] Kandinsky argues that the dot has a concentric tension and "it maintains itself firmly in place and reveals not the slightest tendency to movement in any direction whatsoever, either horizontal or vertical." [425] Chinese dots are, however, non-geometric and always have direction due to the application by brush. There is an excentric tension and suggestion of movement in Chinese dots. My dots convey this raw energy and direction from the way I flick my brush and splatter the paint onto the painting. It helps to make my painting more highly charged than would conventional dotting techniques of Chinese antiquity.

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[424] Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), 58
[425] Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), 32

6.41 (Dots in Chinese landscape painting) *Landscape*, ca. 16th, Shi Tao

Lastly, a burst of abstract energy is injected in the form of coloured dots all over the

painting. This is a push of the traditional Chinese notion of predominantly using only

black and white in the painting. In this painting series, I have borrowed "Kandinsky's

notion of the new harmony of 'opposites and contradictions'"[426]. In a consolidated

version showing the different colour antitheses (Fig. **6.42**), one can see that black and

white are the two polar colours with six others in the middle. I have adopted these

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[426] John Cage, *Colour in Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 159

colours as my palette to modernize and advance the colour harmony in my modern

Ink-wash paintings.

6.42 Wassily Kandinsky's Four Antitheses

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	✓
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	✓
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			**3**		**3**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink		No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural		Geometric dots Splattered	✓
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan	✓	Artist signature	
Total			**4**		**4**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	✓
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai		All-over painting	✓
	Structure	Shi	✓	No restriction	
	Perspectives	Three distances		No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi		Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	✓
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			**4**		**5**
Grand Total			**11**		**12**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

Snowy Night represents another positive milestone in my hybrid artworks. Although still on the theme of nature, this is a new innovation in the tradition of Literati painting with the mountains reduced to just shadows in the background, and white tree branches spanning across the whole picture. This is my first all-over painting, and which pushes me further towards the Western end of the spectrum of hybrid artworks. The use of coloured dots is now more matured as well. Together with the gestural white branches, the energy and dynamism of this painting is much more than any of my previous hybrid artwork series. The scores of the hybrid evaluation criteria table illustrates that this painting has already crossed the mid-point mark and is now more Westernised (12) than it is Oriental (11).

6.9 Let Go

6.43 *Let Go*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 140x75cm

6.44 Production Stages of *Let Go*

Production Stages

1. The first step was the composition and sketching of the different elements of the painting such as the birds and brick wall.

2. I then used the traditional Chinese brush and applied diluted ink to outline the grout lines of the brick wall.

3. I then used the syringe and black acrylic paint to accentuate the brick grout joints.

4. I then used the Chinese brush to flick dots of ink onto the painting to create the wall texture.

5. Different tonal values of ink are flicked onto the brick wall to give it a more uneven texture and make it more realistic.

6. The semi-finished brick wall is then allowed to dry first.

7. The birds are then given colour using acrylic paints.

8. A cutout of a nude female body is placed above the brick wall, acting as a stencil.

9. The rest of the wall is sprayed with ink except the areas under the cutout, letting the outline of the female form 'come out' in the brick wall.

10. A second layer of ink is then sprayed over the whole brick wall to blur and mask the nude female body's outline.

11. The syringe is then used again to draw the trees swaying in the wind behind the birds.

12. Acrylic ink is used instead of the traditional Chinese ink and more than one colour was used to give visual depth to the cluster of trees.

13. The same flicking of dots of ink and colour is administered to the background to give it a windy feel with leaves fluttering in the air.

14. The red sun is painted in and the inscription seals are then stamped onto the painting to complete the picture.

Dimension: 140x75cm

Materials

This painting uses *shuang xuan* (雙宣) paper as the painting surface for its thickness and strength. The painting tools used were syringes, Chinese brushes, Western brushes, and spray bottles. Painting medium used were ink and acrylic paints.

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<u>Analysis</u>

For this painting, the syringe was mainly used instead of the brush to draw the lines in the picture, such as the trees in the background and the black grout lines of the brick wall in the foreground. For the cluster of trees in the background, I still used the traditional aesthetic concept of five tones of ink (*mo fen wu se* 墨分五色) to ensure differentiation and to avoid visual monotony. The difference is that these different tones of grey were not achieved by the traditional method of varying the amounts of water and ink, but through the use of different shades of acrylic grey paints. As the paints are acrylic based, they are thicker and when applied on the paper surface, make the trees look more solid. Although I used the syringe to apply the black grout lines of the brick wall, but from these black lines, one can see that I have used the *yi po san zhe*[427] (一波三折) calligraphic technique to 'write' these lines.

Using different type of syringes to paint is very complex and requires significant control in many aspects. Some factors to consider are the tones and concentration of the ink, derived from the proportion of ink to water, as well as that of acrylic paint to achieve a suitable concentration. The thickness of the paper and its strength and absorbency must also be taken into account, as well as addressing the issue of different syringe needle opening sizes in relation to the fluidity of the paint medium, in conjunction with the speed of moving the syringe across the paper. In adopting this form of painting I was inspired by the work and ideas of Liu Kuo Sung and Jackson Pollock.

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[427] See section 6.10.

The modern Ink-wash painter Liu Kuo Sung, believed strongly that the only way for the new generation of Ink-wash painters to save the Chinese Ink-wash painting tradition from becoming obsolete, was to *"ge zhong feng de ming* (革中鋒的命)", meaning to reform the traditional Chinese brush.[428] The other inspiration came from Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock and his radical act of removing the canvas from the easel and placing the un-stretched canvas on the ground.[429]

Additionally, I also believe that an artist has the right to use any type of tools, materials or techniques to construct one's own artistic language to express one's art. This is not to say that traditional tools or techniques are now obsolete and useless, but that once an artist breaks the boundaries of traditional tools and techniques, the form and artistic language of the new artwork will be differently complex and more extensive.

The traditional Chinese aesthetic concept of *liu bai* (留白) is utilised for the sky in this painting. As aforementioned, the characteristic use of *xu shi*[430] (虛實) is an aesthetic concept derived from ancient Chinese philosophy originating from *yin yang*. The blank space, or *liu bai*, representing *void*, is the empty space of the picture where nothing is painted in; however, according to Zhan, this also represents the infinite imagination and sense of space[431]. As the lower two-thirds of the painting has already been filled with the black ink brick wall to represent *solid* in Chinese aesthetic theory, I contrasted the top with *void* to balance the picture.

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[428] Liu Kuo Sung, "My Viewpoints to the Development of Modern Ink-wash Painting," in *Taipei Modern Art II*, (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1993), 134
[429] See section 3.3.1.1
[430] See section 2.2.5.2
[431] Zhan Qian Yu, *Chinese Painting*, (Taipei: Art Book Company, 2000), 210

The *luo kuan* (落款, inscription) in this painting is also a special feature. Unlike traditional Literati painting where artists inscribe poems in the blank *liu bai* space, I adopted the Western style of just leaving the signature. The difference is that I intentionally hid my signature in an inconspicuous spot in the brick wall. The signature will remain hidden unless the viewer deliberately attempts to find it in the picture, as it is not in its usual place as conventional Ink-wash paintings.

This approach is similar to the Southern Song painter Fan Kuan's (范寬, ca. 960-1030) *Travellers Among Mountains and Streams*, where he shrinks his signature and hides it amongst the leaves in the trees (Fig. **6.45**). The main reason for concealing my signature is that I feel that this picture is complete in itself. I do not want my signature to destroy the composition of the painting, because if I were to adhere to Ink-wash painting tradition, I would have to inscribe my signature in the blank *liu bai* space at the top of the painting. However, by doing so, this would destroy the visual experience of the endless sky extending infinitely out of the painting boundaries. In addition, the bright red of the signature seal would reduce the impact of the intensity of the birds' colours and interfere with the harmony of the whole picture.

6.45 Signature in *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams,* 11th century, Fan Kuan, 206.3x103.3cm

After the black lines of the brick wall have been 'drawn' out using the syringe, I then used the Chinese brush to flick and splatter ink to create the texture of the wall. This is the gesture technique borrowed from Pollock in his gesture paintings. By using the gestures of my whole arm and sending shots of ink through the air and splattering onto the painting surface, the end result is spots of ink that show the momentum, energy and direction when they impact onto the paper. This creates energy and dynamism in the picture when the viewer looks at the painting, which is a totally different visual experience to that of traditional Literati paintings.

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	✓
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	✓
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			3		3
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational	✓	Abstract	
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural		Geometric dots Splattered	✓
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	✓
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan		Artist signature	✓
Total			4		5
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	✓
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	
	Structure	Shi		No restriction	✓
	Perspectives	Three distances		No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi	✓	Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	✓
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground	✓	Infinity-sublime	✓
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite	✓	Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			5		6
Grand Total			12		14

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting   CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

The important contribution of this painting series is the change in subject matter. There is no longer the critically essential mountains and streams of the traditional Literati painting, but a brick wall of London Hyde Park. Although in *Snowy Mountains*, the mountains had started to disappear and become only shadows in the background, but they were still remnants of the Literati tradition. According to the scores in the hybrid evaluation criteria table, besides the style of the painting becoming more Westernized, the pictorial elements now comprise of more Western elements than Oriental ones. This pushes it further along the spectrum towards the Western end. The ultimate goal is to create a hybrid artwork series where the elements in the picture are not only no longer Oriental but the style in which they are drawn is also Westernized.

6.10 Universe in Stillness

6.46 *Universe in Stillness 2*, 2010, Ye Guo Shin, 91x116.5cm

6.47 Production Stages of *Universe in Stillness 2*

Production Stages

1. The radial bands are first drawn up in pencil.

2. The different greys are then painted in the different bands to form a varied coloured radial grid.

3. The mesh grid is then drawn up on transparency film.

4. This is then cut up and overlaid onto the radial grid.

5. The cut out areas of the mesh grid overlay is then painted in with medium magenta acrylic paint.

6. Finally, the different coloured 'streaks' are painted in with the Western paintbrush.

Dimension: 91x116.5cm

Materials

The painting surface materials I have used in this painting is *shuang xuan* (雙宣), I chose this type of paper to work on because I intended to apply thicker acrylic paints and Chinese ink than I would normally used. I have also used both the Chinese *chang liu bi* and the Western paintbrush, together with acrylic paints, watercolour paints and soft gel medium (diluted with water in a proportion of 1:5)

Analysis

Traditionally, the Ink-wash painting is first painted on the *xuan* paper first before mounting on a thicker paper, but here I have reversed the process by mounting on the canvas first before painting the picture. In this case, I used a non-traditional method of pasting the *xuan* paper onto a stretched canvas before painting. I adapted this non-traditional approach because *xuan* paper is very soft and breaks easily. Even

though it is twice as thick, it still will not withstand the pressure applied by layers of acrylic paint. If the *xuan* paper was not pasted onto the firm canvas, it would become wrinkled and tear. Next, I would apply a layer of the dilute soft gel medium as usual to reduce the absorbency and spreading effect. This also makes the paper stronger to withstand the thick acrylic paint. It also increases the adhesiveness between the *xuan* paper and acrylic paint, because from previous experience, without the layer of soft gel medium, the dried acrylic paint would fall off from the paper.

In this painting, I have used both Chinese and Western brushes. As the Chinese brush is more water absorbent, it is more suitable for thinner layers of paint spreading. While the Western paintbrush has stronger brush bristles that can absorb thicker paint mediums to apply layer over layer. Therefore, in this painting, roughly two-thirds of the painting was done with the Western paintbrush while a third is done with the traditional Chinese brush.

This painting is in the form of modern Ink-wash painting that echoes American Abstract Expressionism. It has two unique characteristics. The first one is that it uses the flow of bright colours to direct the vision of the viewer, giving the seemingly calm painting a dramatic visual tension that draws the viewers' eyes into an infinite abyss.

I chose this particular colour for two reasons. Firstly, according to Kandinsky, the colour red "rings inwardly with a determined and powerful intensity. It glows in itself, maturely, and does not distribute its vigour aimlessly."[432] Again, Kandinsky advocated that cooler red (medium magenta) is not as warm and passionate as red,

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[432] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 40

"but it is always pure, like the fresh beauty of the face of a young girl."[433] This comes out continuously from the painting, attracting the viewer towards it. The second reason is that medium magenta is not a traditional colour in Chinese Ink-wash painting. In terms of visual effects, it is a more Westernized colour.

In this painting, I have adopted the traditional concept of five tones of ink (*mo fen wu se,* 墨分五色) to paint the circles. What is different from Literati painting tradition is that besides using Chinese ink, I have also used the Western grey acrylic colours to draw the different circles, giving it more colour nuances. As for the white circles, besides the traditional *liu bai,* I have also applied white acrylic colour to paint one of the circles. The resultant visual effect is that the 'whiteness' of the traditional *liu bai* circles seems to be less white and possess a subtle tinge of 'greyness', giving it another level of colour variation making the painting more visually interesting.

In the background vortex of the painting, it was mainly done using traditional Ink-wash techniques. However, overlaid on top of the vortex are bright vivid colours that are more contemporary in comparison to the dark ink colours of traditional Literati painting. Therefore, when both of these overlap across the whole picture, it creates an alternating near-far kind of spatial sense, and not just an all-over effect. We can see the lower part of the painting as the essence of Chinese Ink-wash painting and the floating web above as analogous to the electronic media web that is a contemporary phenomenon of globalization and technological advancement.

This painting seeks to convey an endless universe, where space is infinite, forever extending outwards. In there, time has no beginning or end. This concept is similar to

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[433] Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art,* (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 41

Mark Tobey's views which were revealed in an interview with Seitz when he said, "I didn't want finalities anymore, I wanted the endless extensions, I couldn't stand the separation between space and figures anymore. I had to demolish it in some way with movable lines and vortexes. My idea is to have one plane with different dimensions with that plane."[434] Nonetheless, where this painting differs from that of Mark Tobey is that Tobey's painting does not have any focal points while there is a very dominant one in *Universe in Stillness 2*. Mark Tobey uses the moving focus technique, and what I have adopted is similar to the *level-distance*[435] perspective of the *Three Distances* perspectives.

6.48 *Canticle*, 1954, Mark Tobey, 48x29.9cm   **6.49** *Orange and Tan*, 1953, Mark Rothko, 206.4x160.7cm

Two types of experience are possible when viewing this painting. The first is that the painting feels as though it is moving towards the viewer, while the other feeling is

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[434] Paul Cummings and Paul Jenkins, *Mark Tobey: Painting 1920-1960*, (New York: Yoshii Gallery, 1994), 11-12
[435] See section 2.2.4

that the viewer is being drawn into the painting's pictorial space. Again, according to

Jensen, this is similar to what Rothko describes when he said that, "...two

characteristics exist in my paintings, either their surface are expansive and push

outward in all directions, or their surfaces contract and rush inward in all directions.

Between these two poles you can find everything I want to say."[436]

This layering of my lines mesh over the circular grid resonates with Terry Winters

lithographs such as *Graphic Tablet* (Fig. **6.50**). According to Godfrey, this "takes the

grid, a format often used in the 1960s to emphasise the flatness of the canvas, and

modulates it so as to create instead deep but indeterminate space."[437] These grids are

not objects but fields spread across the whole canvas, and Godfrey states that, "depth

is created partly by changes in colour and by contrasts between the thick and thin

networks of lines, as well as by the viewer's awareness that these works have been

constructed in layers."[438] Similarly in my painting, the monochrome radial grid

below and the brilliant mesh-like grid above create pictorial depth both in terms of

differences in colour as well as shape and thicknesses of lines.

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[436] Alfred Jensen, "Interview with Mark Rothko on June 17, 1953," cited in James E. B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 301
[437] Tony Godfrey, *Painting Today*, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 2009), 156
[438] Ibid.

6.50 *Graphic Tablet*, 1998, Terry Winters, 243.8x304.8cm

6.51 *Amplitude*, 2000, Terry Winters, 107.6x84.6cm

6.52 Radial Grid and Mesh Grid in *Universe in Stillness 2*, Ye Guo Shin

In Winters's *Amplitude* (Fig. **6.51**), the wire frame-like grids that twist through the painting not only create and twist space, but also seem to extend out of the canvas borders into infinity. My mesh grid also distorts the pictorial space but in a different axis, and extends outwards in an organic rhizome-like manner, into the world beyond (Fig. **7.53**). Winters's had been interested in Deleuze's work for some time and in his book *A Thousand Plateaus*, Nan Rosenthal states that, "Deleuze uses the rhizome to exemplify the absence of hierarchy in the contemporary world, where there is no longer a path from God above to humanity below but rather a network within which you may take an infinite number of paths to get from point a to point b."[439] Just independently seeing the mesh grid on its own will not give you much direction to go inwards or outwards, but when I overlay that over the radial grid and add the coloured 'streaks' to show direction, the viewer will be drawn into the deep, indeterminate space.

According to Godfrey, Winters' work "act as both critique of and homage to Pollockian all-overness. On the one hand, these are paintings with very definite, often heavy marks; on the other, the final composition seems arrived at

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[439] Nan Rosenthal, *Terry Winters: Printed Works*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 28-29

uncertainty."[440] I feel that *Universe in Stillness* is similar. When Jackson Pollock started dripping paint and doing his action painting, he showed the freedom implicit in the process, but he closed it down because he brought it to the extreme by doing it so well and beautifully. According to Arcy, "he invented an image that he couldn't keep repeating. He needed to move on and open up the image he'd invented to other approaches."[441] Just as Winters has done and I have sought similarly to build on Pollock's work and expand the abstract language that he had shown us.

Undoubtedly, traditional Ink-wash painters follow the guidance of the aesthetic theory of *shu hua tong yuan*[442] (書畫同源) and emphasise the relationship between the two. *yi po san zhe* (一波三折) is a calligraphic terminology which refer to the twists and turns in a calligraphic line. When using the brush to draw a calligraphic line, the brush head makes three or more tiny changes in direction to create subtle variations in the calligraphic line. This translates into the rhythm and asymmetrical qualities of calligraphy, which is a necessary skill of a Chinese calligrapher. Below are two examples of *yi po san zhe* in the calligraphy of both renowned artists Zhang Da Qian (張大千, 1899-1983) and Tai Jing Nong (臺靜農,1903-1990).

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[440] Tony Godfrey, *Painting Today*, (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 2009), 156
[441] Arcy Douglass, 2007, *Printmaking, Pollock and Poetics: A Conversation with Terry Winters* http://www.portlandart.net/archives/2007/04/printmaking_pol.html (Accessed 30 Oct 2010)
[442] See section 3.2.3

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6.53 *Yi po san zhe* in *Calligraphy, 1947,* Zhang Da Qian

6.54 *Yi po san zhe* in *Calligraphy,* ca 20th, Tai Jing Nong

6.55 *Yi po san zhe in Universe in Stillness 2*

In this painting, and informed by my calligraphic background, I have infused the quality of the *yi po san zhe* into the pink mesh of lines (Fig. **6.55**). In the West, artists have also utilised this calligraphic sense of rhythm of lines in their paintings. For instance, with regard to his various *"white writing"* paintings, Mark Tobey said that, "to paint the frenetic rhythms of the modern city, something I couldn't even approach with renaissance techniques. Through calligraphic line I was able to catch the restless pulse of our cities today."[443] Therefore, we can see that Mark Tobey also uses the calligraphic lines and its associated sense of rhythm to achieve his desired visual effects.

When viewing this painting, the movements of these more concrete 'streak' forms, resonate with the viewer to convey the experience of travelling through pictorial time and space. In other words, while being immersed in the painting's visual atmosphere, the viewer's eye will subconsciously follow those 'streaks' into the pictorial space beyond. The painting adopts a one-point perspective where objects are smaller when further away, which indirectly helps to extend the pictorial depth of the painting. On the other hand, the top and bottom of the mesh, together with the accompanying streak, increase the pictorial depth of the painting. This gives viewers a clearer sense of space, so that despite being immersed in this complex mess of lines and colours, the viewer will not get lost and can still travel in the right direction. This idea was inspired from the relationship of dots and painting surface, derived from my previous painting *Snowy Night*.

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[443] Katharine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talk with Seventeen Artists*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 236

Hybrid Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Ink-wash Painting		Abstract Expressionism	
Painting Materials	Surface	Xuan paper	✓	Canvas	✓
	Medium	Ink Traditional Pigment	✓	Watercolour Acrylic Oil	✓
	Tools	Chinese brush	✓	Western Brush No restriction	✓
Total			**3**		**3**
Pictorial Elements	Subject Matter	Representational		Abstract	✓
	Colour	5 Tones of ink	✓	No restriction	✓
	Dots	Calligraphic dots Textural		Geometric dots Splattered	✓
	Lines	No straight lines Calligraphic Cun fa	✓	Straight lines No restriction	✓
	Shapes	Non-geometric	✓	Geometric None (CF)	✓
	Signature	Literature Luo Kuan		Artist signature	✓
Total			**3**		**6**
Visual Language	Technique	Bi Mo Deliberate	✓	Gestural Colour-field Spontaneous	✓
	Composition	Bin Zhu Liu Bai	✓	All-over painting	✓
	Structure	Shi		No restriction	✓
	Perspectives	Three distances		No restriction	✓
	Rhythm	Xu Shi Shu Mi		Dynamic movement (GP) Direction (GP)	✓
	Pictorial Space	Background-foreground		Infinity-sublime	✓
	Viewer's Engagement	Follows path in painting Finite		Gets lost in painting Infinite	✓
Total			**2**		**7**
Grand Total			**8**		**16**

Legend

GP – Gesture Painting CF – Colour-field Painting

Evaluation

We can see from the hybrid evaluation criteria list that *Universe in Stillness* has achieved a full score in the Abstract Expressionism column. It is a predominantly Western painting with very little traces of traditional Ink-wash painting elements in it. If one did not see the Chinese characters of the artist signature, or recognise that the paper was the traditional *xuan* paper pasted on the Western canvas, one would probably not know that this had anything to do with Chinese Ink-wash painting. This is definitely the most Westernized of my series of paintings and builds upon all the lessons learnt from previous painting series, such as the colours, all-over composition and spontaneity of gesture painting.

Contrasting this with the very first *Literati Landscape Painting* series where it scored full marks in the Ink-wash painting column, we can see that this painting is more of a development of the Abstract Expressionism tradition and not the Oriental Ink-wash painting tradition. Nonetheless, I do not wish to totally eliminate all the Eastern aspects of this painting as I am ultimately striving for a hybrid art and not a pure Abstract Expressionist painting like that of Terry Winters or Brice Marden. I still wish to retain my Oriental roots, although now reduced to being only traces in this painting series. Nevertheless, I have now progressed from the Eastern end of the hybrid art spectrum to the Western end. My new artworks illustrate the varying degrees of hybridity, with *Yin Yang and the Universe* and *Mirage Landscapes* being more Oriental, while *Snowy Night*, *Let Go* and *Universe in Stillness* are more Westernised.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Results of The Studies

In an age where technologies such as air travel and the Internet have greatly quickened the pace of globalisation, the traditional Ink-wash tradition has changed to adapt to this increasingly globalised context. Where art is a reflection of the character of the times, in today's cross-cultural world, with all its diversity, innovation, and globalization, new styles of modern Ink-wash painting have emerged.

There are various noteworthy similarities between modern Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism. Both emerged shortly after World War II, and had also evolved to some extent from a situation of political censorship of artists' creative freedom. In addition, they both used abstraction as the means of liberating art in their own political backgrounds, to shift the artistic concern from representation to expression. These two genres might broadly be called as Eastern and Western painterly traditions, and the important link between them is that both cultures influenced one another significantly, leading eventually to the development of both artistic styles, where notable abstract painters such as Mark Tobey and Brice Marden were influenced greatly by Chinese calligraphy, while modern Ink-wash painters such as Liu Kuo Sung and Chao Chung Hsiang embraced Abstract Expressionism.

This interaction of ideas and mutual appreciation between East and West is not something new, and indeed it has been active for centuries. Due to technological innovation in both travel and information communication, the speed of the East-West

exchange has increased dramatically and it is the main reason for the almost simultaneous emergence of modern Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism after the Second World War. This cultural exchange and mutual learning is the foundation of and inspiration for my research project, prompting me to investigate both painterly traditions, and then extract relevant and appropriate artistic elements of each tradition, to integrate them further to create a new hybrid art with a more contemporary form.

Modern Ink-wash painting is an innovation of the traditional Literati painting tradition, and this new genre has undergone significant developments in Taiwan since the early 1950s. In terms of the application of brush and ink, media usage, subject matter and presentation formats, modern Ink-wash painting has pushed the boundaries of traditional Literati painting, the most typical and dominant form of Chinese painting since the Yuan Dynasty. The Literati Ink-wash painting tradition is the precursor and foundation upon which modern Ink-wash painting is built, and its unique characteristics are determinants of what makes a painting Chinese Ink-wash style. A critical analysis of traditional Literati painting was thus conducted to collect empirical data on its components such as the media, techniques and aesthetic theories.

The materials and tools which Literati painters used have been consistent throughout the centuries and are known as the *Four Treasures* – *bi*, *mo*, *zhi*, and *yan*. Companion to those is the unique characteristic of Literati painting, its *shi shu hua he yi* (詩書畫 合一) that integrates classical literature, calligraphy, and painting into one picture. This was an important approach of the scholar-artists who were expected to be highly

cultivated and at one with nature, as opposed to just merely depicting visual phenomena.

The aesthetic theory of *shu hua tong yuan* (書畫同源) refers to Chinese painting and calligraphy – arts originating from the same source as they both comply with the same aesthetic principles and utilise the same types of media and techniques. *Bi* and *mo* methodologies are the significant techniques and means of expression in a Literati Ink-wash painting, and more specifically, the uses of textural brushstrokes are termed *cun fa*.[444] In addition, pictorial perspective is also an important criterion with the noted *Three Distances* perspective theory of Guo Xi as an important component, allowing the viewer three different perspectives in the same picture.

Nonetheless, it is the philosophical approach and aesthetic theories of Literati Ink-wash painting that contribute to its Chinese character and identity. Chinese painting philosophy is interrelated with Taoism and Confucianism philosophy. The Chinese believed in "oneness of spirit and matter" and used painting as a way of expressing the harmony of Tao that is present in nature. This unique philosophical concept gave rise to various aesthetic concepts such as *tian ren he yi*[445] (天人合一), *yin yang*[446] (陰陽), *xu shi*[447] (虛實), *shi*[448] (勢), *liu bai*[449] (留白), as well as Hsieh Ho's *Six Principles of Chinese Painting*, the cornerstone of Chinese aesthetic theory for centuries.

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[444] See section 2.2.2
[445] See section 2.2.5.1
[446] Ibid
[447] See section 2.2.5.2
[448] Ibid
[449] Ibid

American Abstract Expressionism, on the other hand, is a totally different artistic language. If Literati Ink-wash painting can be seen as somewhat restrictive in terms of its media usage, subject matter, *bi mo* techniques, and presentation format, Abstract Expressionism is totally the opposite. Although most of them stuck with the conventional canvases, paints, and Western brushes, Abstract Expressionists were free to use any materials. There was no rule that dictated how an Abstract Expressionist painting should be painted or how it should be presented. In fact, Abstract Expressionism is only a loose term to describe a diverse range of artistic styles within its non-representational framework. Just as Irving Sandler argued, "perhaps the strongest cultural bond was a common aesthetic evolution: the rejection of existing realist and geometric tendencies, the attraction to Surrealist content and the technique of automatism."[450]

Nevertheless, there were still some qualities that were held in common such as the all-over composition, abstract subject matter, spontaneity and the expressive. By 1949, it had become apparent that there were two main sub-trends of gesture painting and colour-field painting in Abstract Expressionism. Jackson Pollock had innovated the highly dynamic and gestural method of painting, and his distinctive approach of stepping into the 'arena' of the painting and spontaneously creating his paintings was liberating. Pollock set the mark for others to follow in redefining the possibilities for the creation of new artworks. On the other hand, colour-field painters such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, discarded recognisable imagery and used expressive colours to evoke the metaphysical experience of the sublime. The scale of their works was generally large with unified images of colour to draw the viewer into the

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[450] Irving Sandler, *Abstract Expressionism: The Triumph of American Painting*, (London, Pall Mall P., 1970), 3

pictorial space of the painting. Both versions of Abstract Expressionist paintings attempted to achieve some form of 'infinite' experience of the viewer either by the endless movements in Pollock's gesture paintings or in the vastness of Rothko's colour-field quality.

The aim of my research is to produce a new hybrid art that comprises both elements of Western and Eastern aesthetics and to establish new paradigms in the visual arts culture. Hence, I adopted a three-stage approach in my research methodology. A useful tool that I have employed is the *Hybrid Evaluation Criteria* table, which is used for critically evaluating how hybrid my artworks were and whether they were more traditional Literati in style and content or more Abstract Expressionist.

In my hybrid artwork analyses, the format I have adopted is to first describe the different production stages in the creation process, followed by a summary of the media usage, critical analysis of my artwork, and finally ending with the hybridism evaluation of the painting. This standardisation of format provides a clear presentation of the creative process of my art creation.

The time chart below shows the process of evolution in creating my hybrid artworks. With the Chinese *Traditional Landscape* as the start, this then slowly evolves to *Universe in Stillness*, which has the most influence from the West. My artwork comprises a range of paintings between both the extremes of *'Traditional Literati painting'* and *'American Abstract Expressionism'*. With different paintings leaning towards either end, knowledge learnt from critically evaluating each of the painting series resulting in either a horizontal extension of new improved variations or a vertical extension of a new painting series. From an indicative scale of 1–10 where 1

is a fully traditional Literati painting and 10 refers to a fully Western painting, we could say that the objective of my thesis is to create hybrid artworks of a scale between 2–9. As seen from the time chart below, the *Traditional Landscape* would have a scale of 1 while *Universe in Stillness* has a scale of 9.

7.1 Time Chart of Hybrid Art Creation Process

As evidenced above, I have achieved the research objective of investigating the mutual appropriation and hybridity links and connections of Oriental Ink-wash painting and American Abstract Expressionism. Consequently, this enables me to develop a new hybrid art style and paradigm in visual arts.

In the process, I have extended the traditional Ink-wash painting tradition through formal and stylistic innovations. This formation of a new hybrid art style constitutes part of my contribution to new knowledge. Additionally, the use of the hybrid evaluation criteria table is a new methodological approach to potentially creating new hybrid artworks that encompass both Eastern and Western physical, intellectual, and aesthetic elements. Perhaps the different combinations can be confusing, but I have set up a framework which helps in developing hybrid artworks that fuse Ink-wash painting and Abstract Expressionism aspects.

7.2 Limitations and Further Research

Further studies can be conducted to further develop the usefulness of this model. For example, a more recent painterly tradition such as Pop Art could be added for comparison to increase the possibilities of hybridism of the new artworks. One of the original traditions could also be replaced to create different hybrids of art. For example, we are able to create a hybridity of Pop Art and Ink-wash painting through this framework. The possibilities are endless depending on the different combinations of painterly traditions.

Most importantly, I am a Taiwanese modern Ink-wash painter who is aware and proud of his cultural heritage and national identity. Although operating in an increasingly international context, I still value my Oriental roots and wish to preserve them, while I respond to the modern context of the present day. Therefore, I do not push, or wish to push, my hybrid artworks to the extreme Western end of the spectrum as that would make it an Abstract Expressionist painting instead of a modern Ink-wash painting. My domain is still in Chinese Ink-wash painting, but with a wish to modernise it by adding Western formal and stylistic elements in my paintings. However, my ultimate aim will always be to achieve – the essentially Chinese notion of being in communion with Nature and expressing the harmony of Tao.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Chronology

XIA DYNASTY (夏代)	ca. 2100 – ca. 1600 B.C.
SHANG DYNASTY (商代)	ca. 1600 – 1046 B.C.
ZHOU DYNASTY (周朝)	1046 – 256 B.C.
Western Zhou	1046 – 771 B.C.
Eastern Zhou	770 – 256 B.C.
Spring and Autumn period	770 – 476 B.C.
Warring States period	475 – 221 B.C.
QIN DYNASTY (秦朝)	221 – 207 B.C.
HAN DYNASTY (漢朝)	206 B.C. – A.D. 220
Western (Former) Han	206 B.C. – A.D. 9
Eastern (Later) Han	A.D. 25 – 220
SIX DYNASTIES (六國)	220 – 589
Three Kingdoms	220 – 265
Western Jin	265 – 316
Eastern Jin	317 – 420
Northern and Southern Dynasties	420 – 589
SUI DYNASTY (隋朝)	581 – 618
TANG DYNASTY (唐代)	618 – 907
FIVE DYNASTIES (五代)	907 – 960
LIAO DYNASTY (梁朝)	916 – 1125
SONG DYNASTY (末朝)	960 – 1279

Northern Song	960 – 1127
Southern Song	1127 – 1279

JIN   DYNASTY (金代)   1115 – 1234

YUAN   DYNASTY (元代)   1271 – 1368

MING   DYNASTY (明代)   1368 – 1644

QING   DYNASTY (清代)   1644 – 1911

REPUBLIC and PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC   1912 –

Appendix 2: Artists by Period

Pinyin	Date	Chinese	Zi (style name) or Hao (sobriquet)

TANG DYNASTY (唐代)

Pinyin	Date	Chinese	Zi (style name) or Hao (sobriquet)
Wang Wei	699-759	王維	Mo Ji (摩詰)
Huai Su	725-785	懷素	Cang Zhen (藏真)
Wang Qia	ca. 805	王洽	Ink Wang (王墨) Wang Mo (王默)

FIVE DYNASTIES AND TEN KINGDOMS (五代十國)

Pinyin	Date	Chinese	Zi (style name) or Hao (sobriquet)
Jing Hao	ca. 910-977	荊浩	Hao Ran (浩然) Hong Gu Zi (洪谷子)
Li Cheng	919-967	李成	Xian Xi (咸熙)
Dong Yuan	ca. 934-962	董源	Shu Da (叔達)　Bei Yuan (北苑)
Li Tang	active ca. 960-985	李唐	Xi Gu (晞古)
Ju Ran	active ca. 960-985	巨然	
Shi Ge	ca. 10th	石恪	Zi Zhuan (子專)

SONG DYNASTY (宋代)

Pinyin	Date	Chinese	Zi (style name) or Hao (sobriquet)
Xu Dao Ning	ca. 970-1051	許道寧	
Wen Tong	1019-1079	文同	Jinjiang Daoren (錦江道人) Xiaoxiao Jushi (笑笑居士) Shishi Xiansheng (石室先生)
Guo Xi	ca. 1020-1090	郭熙	Chun Fu (淳夫)
Fan Kuan	active ca. 1023-1031	范寬	Zhong Li (仲立) Chung Zheng (中正)
Su Shi	1036-1101	蘇軾	Zi Zhan (子瞻) Dongpo Jushi (東坡居士)
Mi Fu	1051-1107	米芾	Yuan Zhang (元章) Nan Gong (南宮) Lu Men Ju Shi (鹿門居士)
Zhang Ze Duan	active early 12th c.	張擇端	Zheng Dao (正道) Wen You (文友)
Liang Kai	ca. 1140-1210	梁楷	Feng Zi (瘋子)
Ma Yuan	active before 1189, after 1225	馬遠	Qin Shan (欽山)
Mu Xi	13th c.	牧谿	Fa Chang (法常)
Qian Xuan	ca. 1235-before	錢選	Shu Nju (舜舉) Yu Tan (玉潭)

	1307		
Zhao Meng Fu	1254-1322	趙孟頫	Zi Ang (子昂) Song Xue (松雪) Ou Bo (鷗波)
Huang Gong Wang	1269-1354	黃公望	Zi Jiu (子久) Yi Feng (一峰) Dachi Daoren (大癡道人)
Wu Zhen	1280-1354	吳鎮	Zhang Gui (仲圭) Meihua Daoren (梅花道人)
Ke Jiu Si	1290-1343	柯九思	Dan Qiu Sheng (丹丘生)
Ni Zan	1301-1374	倪瓚	Yun Lin (雲林) Jingming Jushi (淨名居士)
Wang Meng	ca. 1308-1385	王蒙	Huanghe Shanren (黃鶴山人) Xiangguang Jushi (香光居士) Huanghe Shan Qiao (黃鶴山樵)

MING DYNASTY (明代)

Dong Qi Chang	1555-1636	董其昌	Xuan Zao (玄宰) Si Bo (思白)

QING DYNASTY (清代)

Hong Ren	1610-1664	弘仁	Jianjiang (漸江) Jiang Tao (江韜) Meihua laona (梅花老衲)
Gong Xuan	1618-1689	龔賢	Qi Xian (豈賢) Banmu (半畝) Ban Qian (半千) Chai Zheng Ren (柴丈人) Ye Yi (野遺)
Ba Da Shan Ren	1626-1705	八大山人	Ren An (刃庵) Zhu Da (朱耷) Xue Ge (雪介) Ge Shan (介山) Shu Nian (壽年) Ren Wu (人屋)
Yun Shou Ping	1633-1690	惲壽平	Zheng Shu (正叔) Nan Tian (南田) Yunxi Waishi (雲溪外史) Baiyun Waishi (白雲外史) Dongyuan Caoyi (東園草衣) Ouxiang Sanren (甌香散人)
Wang Yuan Qi	1642-1715	王原祈	Mao Jing (茂京) Lu Tai (麓台) Xilu Houren (西盧後人) Shishi Daoren (石道師人)
Shi Tao	1642-1718	石濤	Zhu Ruo Ji (朱若極) Yuan Ji (原濟) Dao Ji

			(道濟) Da Di Zi (大滌子) Qingxiang Laoren (清湘老人) Qingxiang Yiren (清湘遺人) Kuhua Heshang (苦瓜和尚)
Tang Dai	1673- after1752	唐岱	Yu Dong (毓東) Jing Yan (靜巖) Zhi Sheng (知生) Mo Zhuang (默莊)
Luo Pin	1733-1799	羅聘	Dun Fu (遁夫) Linag Feng (兩峰) Hua Zhi Si Seng(花之寺僧) Yi Yung He Shang (衣雲和尚)
Lin Jue	active ca.1796-1850	林覺	Ling Zi (鈴子) Wo Yun Zi (臥雲子) Mian Yue Shan Ren (眠月山人)
Zhung Jing Fu	active 18th c.	莊敬夫	Gui Yuan (桂園)

REPUBLIC and PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

Qi Bai Shi	1864-1957	齊白石	Weiqing (渭青) Qi Huang(齊璜) Chunzhi (純芝) Baishi (白石) Baishi hanren (白石山人) Binsheng (瀕生) Kemu Laoren (刻木老人) Muren (木人) Ji Ping (寄萍) Sanbai Shiyin Fu-weng (三百石印富翁) Xingziwu Laomin (幸子塢老人) Jieshan Weng (借山翁)
Huang Bi Hong	1865-1955	黃賓虹	Pucun (朴存) Huang Zhi (黃質) Binhong (賓虹) Yuxiang(予向)
Pu Hsin Yu	1896-1963	溥心畬	Xinyu(心畬) Pu Ru (溥儒) Xishan Yishi (西山逸士) Xichuan Yishi (西川逸士) Hanyutang Zhuren (寒玉堂主人)
Pan Tian Shou	1896-1963	潘天壽	Tian Shou (天授) Da Yi (大頤) Ashou (阿壽)
Huang Jun Bi	1898-1991	黃君璧	Yun Zhi (韞之)
Zhang Da Qian	1899-1983	張大千	Jiyuan (季爰) Zang Yuan (張爰) Daqian (大千) Dafengtang (大風堂)
Teng Kuei	1900-1981	滕圭	Bai Ye (白也) Bing Gen (炳根)
Li Feng Mian	1900-1991	林風眠	
Tai Jing Nong	1902-1990	臺靜農	Bo Jian (伯簡) Chuan Yan (傳嚴)
Fu Bao Shi	1904-1965	傅抱石	Cheng Sheng (長生) Rui Lin (瑞麟)
Li Keran	1907-1989	李可染	
Chao Chung	1910-1990	趙春翔	

Hsiang

Li Zhong Sheng	1911-1984	李仲生	
Hong Tong	1920-1987	洪通	
Zao Wou Ki	1921-	趙無極	
Xi De Jin	1923-1981	席德進	
Yang Ying Feng	1926-1997	楊英風	Yu Yu (呦呦)
Zheng Shan Xi	1932-	鄭善禧	
Liu Kuo Sung	1932-	劉國松	
Feng Zhong Rui	1933-	馮鍾睿	
Zhu Ming	1938-	朱銘	
Zhou Cheng	1941-	周澄	Chen Bo (蓴波)
Yuan Jin Ta	1949-	袁金塔	
Li Zhen Ming	1955-	李振明	
Ni Tsai Chin	1955-	倪再沁	
Zhang Yong Chun	1957-	張永村	
Li Jing Sheng	1957-	李俊賢	
Huang Zhi Yang	1965	黃致楊	

Appendix 3: Chinese Terminology

TERMS	ENGLISH	CHINESE

CHAPTER 1

TERMS	ENGLISH	CHINESE
Shi Shu Hua He Yi	(Traditional three-fold character of Chinese Ink-wash painting)	詩書畫合一
Shuimohua	(Ink-wash painting or Ink painting)	水墨畫
Guohua	(National painting)	國畫
Shui	(Water)	水
Mo	(Ink)	墨
Zhong Guo	(China)	中國
Wen Hua Da Ge Ming	(The Cultural Revolution)	文化大革命
Han Ren	(Han Chinese People)	漢人
Zhejiang	(Province of China)	浙江
Fujian	(Province of China)	福建
Maguan Tiao Yue	(The Treaty of Shimonoseki)	馬關條約
Zhong Ri Jia Wu Zhan Zheng	(First Sino-Japanese War)	中日甲午戰爭
Jiao Cai Hua	(Nihonga painting or Japanese Painting)	膠彩畫
Du Hai San Jia	(Three masters of Chinese Ink-wash painting from across the strait)	渡海三家

| Fifth Moon | (Art association) | 五月 |
| Eastern | (Art association) | 東方 |

CHAPTER 3

Yi Shu Ru Hua	(From Calligraphy into Painting)	以書入畫
Shi Qi	(Noble character of the Literati)	士氣
Si Jun Zi	(Known as the 'Four Gentlemen' – plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum)	四君子
Qian Jiang	(A monochromatic form of expression involving the application of very light layers of colour on ink foundations.)	淺絳
Shi Lu	(Mineral green)	石綠
Shi Qing	(Mineral blue)	石青
Zhu Sha	(Vermilion)	朱砂
Zhu Biao	(Orange-red)	朱膘
Zhe Shi	(Sandy beige)	赭石
Bai Fen	(white)	白粉
Hua Qing	(Cyanine blue)	花青
Teng Huang	(Cadmium yellow)	藤黃
Bi	(Brush)	筆
Ruan Hao	(Soft-hair)	軟毫

Ying Hao	(Hard hair)	硬毫
You Yan Mo	(Ink made by smoking tung oil)	油煙墨
Song Yan Mo	(Ink made by pine resins)	松煙墨
Zhi	(Xuan paper)	紙
Sheng Zhi	(Raw paper)	生紙
Shou Zhi	(Processed paper)	熟紙
Dan Xuan	(Thin Xuan paper)	單宣
Shuang Xuan	(Double layer thickness of Dan Xuan)	雙宣
Jia Xuan	(Thickness lies in between Dan Xuan and Shuang Xuan)	夾宣
Yan	(Ink stone)	硯
Bi Fa	(Bi Methodology or Brush Methodology)	筆法
Shi Ba Miao	(Eighteen Brush Forms)	十八描
Cun Fa	(Texturing brushstrokes)	皴法
Ku Hua P'in Lu	(Notes and Criticism of Ancient Painting)	古畫品錄
Gu Fa	(Structural brushwork)	骨法
Zhong Feng	(Brush is gripped with the shaft aligned perpendicular to the picture so that the tip of the brush remains in the centre of the line)	中鋒
Ni Feng	(Brush is pushed against the paper in the direction of the brush-tip with the shaft set at an angled of less	逆鋒

than 80 degrees to the picture surface)

| Ce Feng | (Shaft of the brush is positioned at an angle of up to 80 degrees to the paper) | 側鋒 |

Ce Feng — (Shaft of the brush is positioned at an angle of up to 80 degrees to the paper) — 側鋒

Shun Feng — (Brush shaft is inclined against the holding hand during the stroke so that the tip of the brush is concealed within the furrow) — 順鋒

San Feng — (A brushstroke employing a broken brush where the hairs have been pre-spread in advance, resulting in a series of short forked lines) — 散蜂

Pi Ma Cun — (One of the techniques of painting rocks using repetitive arc-like lines from top to bottom, weaving together from left to right. Mostly used to depict the Jiangnan mountain scenery which has more soil than rocks.) — 披麻皴

Fu Pi Cun — (This type of cun fa is drawn with *ce feng*, like an axe cutting through rocks, mainly used to depict texture of hard rock boulders. This technique is often used by Southern Song landscape painters.) — 斧劈皴

Zhe Dai Cun — (This technique was developed by Ni Yun Lin. The drawing method is to first use *shun feng* to draw a long horizontal line, then run down in the direction of ninety degrees. Using several groups of these overlapping brush strokes creates a visual effect like folded tape.) — 折帶皴

Fei Bai — (It is known as flying white or dry brush. A technique derived from calligraphy. When writing calligraphy, due to ink not completely flowing out of the brush tip, resulting in dragging lines or *liu bai* visual effects. This technique can be achieved by *san feng* technique or by accelerating the speed of the brush stroke.) — 飛白

Bao Shi Zhou	(Fu Bao Shi used the *san feng* technique to depict structure of the mountains and texture of the rocks, creating his own unique style of *cun fa* named after him.)	抱石皴
Bi Fa	(Mo Methodology or Ink Methodology)	墨法
Mo Fen Wu Se	(Ink classification into five colours)	墨分五色
Qi Mo Fa	(Seven Methods of Ink)	七墨法
Ji Mo	(Accumulated Ink Method)	積墨
Po Mo	(Broken Ink Method)	破墨
Nong Po Dan	(Thick over Thin)	濃破淡
Dan Po Nong	(Thin over Thick)	淡破濃
Po Mo	(Splashed Ink Method)	潑墨
Jiao Mo	(Scorched Ink Method)	焦墨
Bin Zhu	(Focus of a painting: there will be a main theme, a sub-theme and accompanying ornamentation)	賓主
Zhu	(Host)	主
Bin	(Guest)	賓
Shu Hua Tong Yuan	(The Shared Origins of Calligraphy and Painting)	書畫同源
Qu Shi	(Acquire the Shi)	取勢
Xie	(Write)	寫
Xie Hua	(Writing the painting. Artists apply calligraphic	寫畫

techniques to draw the pictures or integrate the calligraphic qualities into their paintings)

San Yuan Fa	(Three Distances or Three Types of Mountain Perspectives)	三遠法
Gao Yuan	(High-Distance)	高遠
Shen Yuan	(Deep-Distance)	深遠
Ping Yuan	(Level-distance)	平遠
Xiang Yu Bu Xiang Zhi Jian	(A feel of resemblances as well as disparities between their inner beings and the natural world)	像與不像之間
Ke Xing, Ke Wang, Ke Ju, Ke You	('Where one can walk', 'where one can view', 'where one can live' and 'where one can travel')	可行,可望,可 居,可遊
Dao Jiao	(Taoism)	道教
Ru Jia	(Confucianism)	儒家
Tian	(Heaven or God)	天
Di	(Earth)	地
Ren	(Man)	人
Tian Ren He Yi	(Harmony between Man and Nature)	天人合一
Dao	(Tao or The Way)	道
Shen	(Spirit)	神
Meng Zi	(Mencius)	孟子
Chi	(The vital force inherent in all things and the	氣

fundamental source of all beings, sentient and non-sentient, and of all movements and interactions)

Yin Yang	(Yin and Yang are opposing forces that need one another for completeness)	陰陽
Qi Yun Sheng Dong	(Resonance of vital force, vibrant and moving)	氣韻生動
Gu Fa Yong Bi	(Demonstrate good brushwork providing a sound structure)	骨法用筆
Ying Wu Xiang Xing	(Bear some likeness to the nature of the subject)	應物象形
Sui Lei Fu Cai	(Employ hues that answer the needs of the scene)	隨類賦彩
Jing Ying Wei Zhi	(Possess a well thought-out composition)	經營位置
Chuan Yi Mu Xie	(Respect and learn from tradition)	傳移模寫
Xu Shi	(Void and solid)	虛實
Xu	(Void)	虛
Shi	(Solid)	實
Liu Bai	(Empty spaces in Ink-wash painting)	留白
Xu Zhong You Shi	(Shi in Xu)	虛中有實
Shi Zhong You Xu	(Xu in Shi)	實中有虛
Shu Mi	(Sparseness and denseness)	疏密

Shu	(Sparseness)	疏
Mi	(Denseness)	密
Mi Chu Qiu Shu	(Seek sparseness in the dense)	密處求疏
Shu Chu Qiu Mi	(Seek denseness in the sparse)	疏處求密
Mi Chu Jia Mi, Shu Chu Jia Shu	(Add denseness in sparse areas, and add sparseness in dense areas)	密處加密，疏處加疏
Shi	(The Shi in Chinese Ink-wash painting refers to a more suggestive, implicit expression of direction and movement)	勢
Zhang	(Outward radial stretch)	張
Lian	(Convergence of energy into a focused centre)	斂
Hua Niao Hua	(Flowers and Birds Painting)	花鳥畫
Shen	(Stretch)	伸
Shou	(Pull)	收
Yin	(Lead)	引
Xie	(Flow)	瀉
Xu Zhong You Shi, Shi Zhong You Shi	(Where there is void (Xu) there should exist solid (Shi), and in solid (Shi) there should exist void (Xu))	虛中有實，實中有虛

CHAPTER 5

Wu	(Satori or spiritual goal of Zen Buddhism)	

Shui Tuo	(Water Rubbing)	水拓
Zi Mo	(Steeped Ink)	漬墨
Tai Ji	(Tai Chi)	太極
Yi Jing	(I Ching or The Book of Changes)	易經
Ge Bi De Ming	(Revolution of the Bi)	革筆的命
Yi Zai Bi Xian	(Conception before painting)	意在筆先
Bu Yi Zai Bi Xian	(Absence of conception before painting)	不意在筆先

CHAPTER 6

Han Shan	(Cold Mountain)	寒山
Gongshi	(Natural stones that have a special quaint appearance. Ancient Chinese scholars liked to have these stones displayed on their tables for visual appreciation)	供石
Dui Lian	(Couplet)	對聯
Lian Mian Cao	(Calligraphic technique of writing several characters in one single stroke, linking them all together)	連綿草
Yuan Zhuan	(A calligraphic line without sharp turns)	圓轉
Zhe	(A calligraphic line with sharp turns)	折
Ce Ye	(Chinese album of painting or calligraphy)	冊頁
Diaoyutai	(Group of islands Northeast of Taiwan)	釣魚臺
Keelung	(A major port city of Taiwan)	基隆

Xin Mo Wu Fa	(Artistic expression that originates from an artist's emotional being rather than is merely restricted to traditional criteria of aesthetic theory, bi mo methodology, painting media and composition	心墨無法
Zhi Ren Wu Fa Wu Fa Er Fa, Nai Wei Zhi Fa. Gai Yu Fa Bi Yu Hua, Hua Ran Hou Wei Wu Fa	(The supreme artist is not restricted by any principle of traditional aesthetic theory or technique, but should possess a complete traditional repertoire from which a new mode of expression can be fashioned)	至人無法，無法而法，乃為至法。蓋有法必有化，化然後為無法
Wu Fa Zhi Fa	(The method of nothing)	無法之法
Hei Hua	(Black painting style)	黑畫
Min Su Ban Hua	(Folk printmaking)	民俗版畫

CHAPTER 7

Lan Zhu Bi	(Chinese brush made of wolf hair with less absorbency. Normally it is applied to outline the shape of object in traditional Literati painting.)	蘭竹筆
Chang Liu Bi	(Chinese brush made of sheep hair with high absorbency, and usually applied to large areas of Ink-wash in traditional Literati painting.)	長流筆
Luo Kuan	(Calligraphic inscription of Ink-wash painting)	落款
Dian Tai	(When drawing rocks, normally after the brush textural strokes, the process of Dian Tai is applied to depict the trees or weeds on the rocks. Artists in the Northern Song Dynasty normally did not use this technique. It was the Southern Song artists that started to use this technique to illustrate the wet rocks of	點苔

Jiang Nan. Subsequently, the Yuan Dynasty Literati
painters regularly used Dian Tai in their paintings.)

Lao Zi	(Lao Tzu, a Chinese philosopher)	老子
Zhong Yong	(Confucian Doctrine of the Mean)	中庸
Dian	(Dot)	點
Dian Fa	(Dotting or the technique of applying Dian in Ink-wash painting)	點法
Yi Po San Zhe	(A calligraphic terminology which refers to the twists and turns in a calligraphic line)	一波三折
Ge Zhong Feng De Ming	(The revolution of Zhong Feng)	革中鋒的命

CALLIGRAPHY SCRIPTS

Cao Shu	(Cursive Script or grass script)	草書
Xing Shu	(Semi-Cursive Script or running script)	行書
Kai Shu	(Regular script)	楷書
Li Shu	(Clerical script)	隸書
Zhuan Shu	(Seal script)	篆書

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