A STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL LANGUAGE IN CHINESE INK WASH

PAINTING FROM TRADITIONAL PAINTING TO CONTEMPORARY PAINTING

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การศึกษาพัฒนาการของภาษาภาพในผลงานจิตรกรรมหมึกจีน
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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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BY

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Author	ZUO CHEN
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This study explores the visual language characteristics of traditional Chinese ink painting and contemporary ink painting, as well as their development trends in the context of globalization and modern artistic movements. The research sample included 30 traditional ink paintings from six periods spanning from the Sui and Tang Dynasties to the modern era, along with interviews with 8 contemporary ink painting artists and 2 art critics. The study adopted a literature review and semi-structured interviews for data collection, and employed iconographic analysis and thematic analysis for data interpretation. The research findings are as follows:1. The visual language of traditional ink painting centers on brushwork, composition, and aesthetics, pursuing the artistic ideal of "harmony between form and spirit". It is deeply influenced by Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist philosophies, resulting in a unique system of artistic expression.2.The visual language of contemporary ink painting has undergone significant transformation, featuring more diverse themes and compositions, as well as the integration of modern artistic elements into brushwork techniques.3.Gombrich's "Schema and Correction" theory provides a systematic analytical framework for the evolution of the visual language of ink painting.

Keyword : Chinese Traditional Ink Painting, Chinese Contemporary Ink Painting, Visual Language, Cultural Inheritance

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUTION

1.1 Background to the study

As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, traditional Chinese ink painting has a long history and deep cultural heritage. Since the Tang Dynasty, Traditional Chinese ink painting has gone through several dynasties and generations, and its development has been closely connected with the changes of Chinese society.

However, with the rapid development of modern society and the impact of Western culture, the "internationalisation" and "globalisation" of the city inevitably bring about a strong impact of Western cultural thinking, and thus trigger the collision and fusion of Chinese and Western artistic thinking. Chinese ink painters are keenly aware of the pressure and opportunities brought about by the development of multiculturalism, and have begun to re-examine the "timeliness" of traditional Chinese ink painting. For example, how to stand in the global perspective to examine the modern transformation of traditional ink painting, how to maintain the unique oriental national cultural characteristics in the process of transformation of ink painting language, etc. are the propositions of the times for Chinese ink artists to strengthen the dialogue with the world and participate in the international competition. The inheritance and development of traditional Chinese ink painting is facing many challenges. Contemporary ink painting was born in such a background, and the shift of its visual language is the crystallization of the dialogue and collision between Chinese and Western art. In the new social and cultural environment, contemporary artists try to break through the limitations of traditional ink painting and explore more diversified and international ways of expression.

In the early 1980s, profound social changes were taking place in all walks of life, and the traditional ink and wash language form could no longer satisfy people's aesthetic ideals and spiritual pursuits, and a variety of new ideological concepts and graphic styles gradually came into people's view. The "85 New Wave Art Movement" was an art phenomenon that appeared in such a background, and the artists' awakening of

self-consciousness prompted them to begin reflecting on tradition and constructing a new ink painting language system. In the 1990s, the process of urbanisation advanced at a high speed, the mainstream culture and the elite class no longer occupied a dominant position, the social and cultural development became more and more diversified, and people's aesthetic interests became more and more secular and popular. Artists were also inspired by this social and cultural change, and some of them began to pay attention to the urban life around them, and their works gradually appeared to express the mental state and thoughts and feelings of urban people. These works are different from the works with the meaning of reflection and reconstruction in the 80's. They have distinctive urban cultural characteristics because they reflect people's clothing, food, housing, behaviour and humanistic environment in real life, and they have become a new direction for the development of modern ink art.

In the 21st century, along with the transformation of Chinese society and culture, ink painting itself also needs the development and innovation of its own formal language. Since its transformation and development is based on the foundation of the traditional Chinese ink painting language system, this paper starts from the excavation of the generation of the traditional ink painting language, and analyses and organizes its development lineage, as well as the linguistic structure and aesthetic ideals of different periods, in order to achieve the purpose of clarifying the connotations and development logic of the language. Therefore, this paper starts from the excavation of the traditional ink art language generation, and through analysing and collating its development lineage, language structure and aesthetic ideals in different periods, it aims to clarify its linguistic connotations and development logic, in order to trigger the attention and criticism on the transmutation of the ink painting language, and to seek for a more adaptive and long-term development idea and way. (Figure 1)

This paper is based on Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction (Gombrich, 2012), which, as an interdisciplinary theory, provides new perspectives and methods for the study of the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese ink painting. Through the application of the schema-correction theory, we can systematically sort out

the development history of traditional Chinese ink painting and its evolution law in contemporary times, and deeply investigate its inner schematic structure and artistic characteristics. This not only helps to promote the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese ink painting, but also helps to enrich and develop the theoretical systems of art, aesthetics, psychology and other related disciplines.

Although there have been a number of studies on traditional ink painting, there is a gap in the research on the application of schema-correction theory in its field. Therefore, this study aims to explore the application of schema-correction theory in the field of traditional ink painting, with a view to providing new theoretical perspectives for research in this field.

Therefore, under this opportunity, studying the shift from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting's visual language will help to deeply explore its inherent schematic structure and artistic value, provide theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting the inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional culture, and also help to enhance the international influence and competitiveness of Chinese culture.
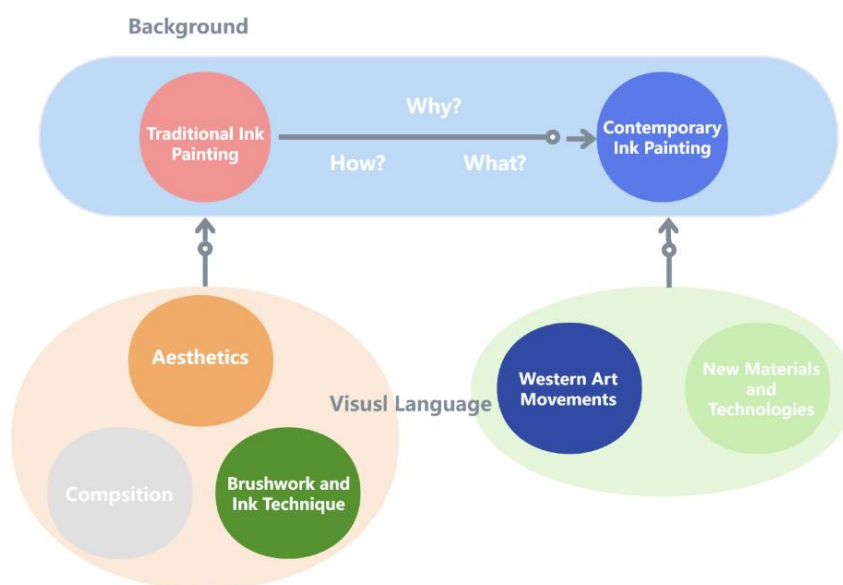
Figure 1 Research Background

Source: Created by Author

1.2 Objective of the Study

The progress of society and the development of art have led to the emergence of a new schema of traditional Chinese ink painting, how has this schematic feature evolved in different historical periods, and does this evolution show a certain pattern? What are the differences in visual language between traditional Chinese ink painting and contemporary ink painting?

What changes in the socio-cultural context do such differences reflect? How do socio-cultural factors affect the transmission of traditional ink painting iconography, and are modes of correction affected by social changes and cultural perceptions?

Can the theory of Schema and Correction provide a reasonable and powerful theoretical framework for explaining the inheritance and development of schema in traditional ink painting? In contemporary ink painting, how can artists use the theory of schema-correction to promote the evolution of ink painting and reflect modern aesthetics and concepts in their creations?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following research objectives were established:

1. The aim is to study the visual language of traditional and contemporary Chinese ink painting. It explores the main features of their themes, compositions, brush and ink techniques and psychological symbols. The aesthetic spirit behind them and the psychological symbolism of the artists.

2. The aim is to study the evolution of the visual language from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting, and to provide new research ideas. Explore how the visual language has changed from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting. Focuses on the motivations behind these changes, including socio-cultural factors, technological advances, and changes in the artists' personal experiences. Use Ernst Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction to explain the development of Chinese ink painting and the transformation of visual language in contemporary ink painting, and to provide new research ideas for contemporary art creation and criticism.

1.3 Significance of Research

The significance of this thesis, which takes the visual language shift of Chinese painting from traditional ink painting to contemporary ink painting as the object of research, is mainly as follows:

Firstly, it is conducive to promoting art history and cultural research. Through analysing and organizing the development of Chinese ink painting and its language structure and aesthetic intention in different periods, we can achieve the purpose of clarifying its linguistic connotation and development logic, in order to trigger attention and criticism on the transmutation of the language of ink painting, and to seek for a more adaptive and longer-term development ideas and ways.

Secondly, it promotes the development of interdisciplinary research. The application of psychology's Schema and Correction theory to art history research promotes the development of interdisciplinary research and provides empirical research cases for the integration of art and psychology.

Thirdly, inspiration for contemporary art practice. Helps artists, art critics, and audiences better understand and evaluate contemporary ink painting, especially in terms of innovative methods and cultural significance. And it demonstrates how to maintain and develop traditional art in modern society, providing theoretical support for the innovation and adaptation of traditional art.

After the completion of this research project, it can also be applied to other types of paintings in the same way. Art is not a complete imitation of nature, but a process of constant revision of schema according to experience, reaction, and external needs, etc. The diversity of artistic styles and patterns is the result of not adhering to the traditional schema, and the Schema and Correction is an important reason for the continuation of art. The Schema and Correction is also an important reason for the continuity of art.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The core objective of this study is to explore and explain the shift in the visual language of Chinese painting from traditional ink painting to contemporary ink painting,

and the inheritance and development of schema. It includes three aspects.

Firstly, the research field is the visual language of Chinese ink painting; secondly, the research problem is the shift from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting's visual language. Thirdly, the case study method is carried out.

The theme of the study is the visual language of ink painting. In the early stages of learning and creation, artists establish their initial schema by mastering the basic visual language (theme, composition, brushwork-and-ink techniques), a process that involves an understanding of painting techniques and methods of expression.

The issue under study is the shift from traditional Chinese literati ink painting to the visual language of contemporary ink painting. In it we can gain a deeper understanding of how artists use and develop visual expressions in their works. This connection involves how artists create works based on their initial visual frameworks (schemas), and how these visual languages are corrected and developed in response to socio-cultural factors, technological advances, and the artist's personal experiences.

1.5 Definition of Terms
1.5.1 Schema and Correction Theory

The theory of Schema and Correction can be said to be a dynamic evolutionary process that governs the reproduction of the visible world by visual art. The artist learns schemas from the works of his predecessors and observes nature with them, and then simply files, selects, and processes them according to his mental orientation, which is also known as the process of "projection", in which the visual perception transfers the schemas in the concept into random, vague, and uncertain visual materials, thus producing a kind of visualisation. "In this process of "projection", the visual perception moves the schema in the concept into the random, vague and uncertain visual materials, thus creating an expectation of its visualisation. In response to a variety of external stimuli, this expectation is adjusted and corrected until it is initially confirmed and validated. In this process, the schema is constantly moving towards clarity and certainty, and the concrete image is "corrected". Gombrich summarises this perceptual process of generating expectations and making corrections as the Schema and Correction process.

Gombrich summarised this perceptual process of generating expectations and making corrections as the Schema and Correction process. By constantly correcting the schema, the artist's style develops and changes over time, which also explains the phenomenon of stylistic change in art history.

1.5.2 Traditional Ink Painting

From the point of view of ink and wash materials and media, all paintings drawn with water and ink (including all kinds of paintings drawn with or without brushes, traditional or modern) can be called "ink and wash paintings". Traditional Chinese ink painting refers to the type of painting that uses water as the mixing agent, ink as the main pigment (or ink alone), brush as the main tool, and line as the main modelling means, and is drawn on Xuan paper (or silk), which originated in the Tang Dynasty, continued to develop in the Song Dynasty, reached its peak in the Yuan Dynasty, and gradually became the mainstream of the form of painting in the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

1.5.3 Contemporary Ink Painting

Contemporary refers to the time since the founding of New China in 1949, but contemporary ink painting is the sum of all the new art forms that explored the modern turn of Chinese painting after the "Eighty-five Years' Civic Trend", which does not refer to a certain art school or style alone, but refers to all the new art schools with modern qualities that appeared in the scope of China's art development between the 1980s and 1990s. It is a general term for all the new art genres that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in the context of China's art development, which have the qualities of modernity. Contemporary ink painting in this article mainly refers to four major schools of painting - the Continuing Traditional Ink Painting School, the Expressive Ink Painting School, the New Literati School and the Experimental Ink Painting School.

1.5.4 Visual Language

Visual language in painting is a non verbal communication method that conveys ideas, emotions, and concepts through visual elements. This language utilizes shapes, colors, lines, textures, space, and other visual elements to express the artist's intentions and creative themes. Visual language is the key to understanding and analyzing a

painting, as it encompasses all visual aspects of the work. This article mainly analyzes the theme, composition, brush-and-ink techniques, and psychological symbols of artists in artistic works.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, with the revival of traditional Chinese culture and the global art market's attention to traditional Chinese art, the transformation of Chinese painting, especially literati ink painting to contemporary ink painting, has become a hotspot in art history and visual culture research. Ink as an artistic language has an irreplaceable role in the spiritual life of contemporary people, both due to the adaptation of the spiritual needs it corresponds to and due to the functional characteristics of the ink language (Pi, 2011).

The development of Chinese painting is a transformation of its deep cultural heritage and art form. From traditional literati ink painting to contemporary ink painting, the change of its visual language not only reflects the evolution of the art form, but also maps the changes in society, culture and philosophy. Especially under the concept of schema-correction, this change is particularly prominent.

Based on the keywords, this paper defines Schema and Correction theory, traditional ink painting, contemporary ink painting, and visual language. The theory of Schema and Correction is the theoretical foundation guiding the research framework, and the visual language of ink painting is the object of this study, from literati ink painting to contemporary ink painting, the visual language shift indicates the development of painting in the new environment. "The shift from literati ink painting to contemporary ink painting illustrates the development of painting in the new environment, and the theory of Schema and Correction theoretically verifies the possibility of the transformation of visual language.

2.1 The Schema and Correction Theory

The concept of "schema" was first put forward by Kant, who believed that there is a kind of a priori category in the human mind that is beyond experience, and that there exists an innate structure or archival system in the human brain, where the subject

synthesises and organises the perceptual material from the object through the a priori schema system to recognise, experience and perceive the world around us. He is more from the philosophical aspect of logical reasoning discursive derived from the subjective use of a priori schema to synthesise the phenomenon of miscellaneous, this subjective one-way role of the schema doctrine, by the Swiss psychologist Piaget selective absorption, the development of subjective-objective interaction epistemological doctrine, in addition to the person's a priori genetic schema, and after the knowledge and experience of the continuous intermingling of the development of a developmental cognitive schema constructed. Gombrich scientifically absorbed the theory of "schema" and applied it to the study of art history. At the beginning of their creation, artists need to have a conceptual schema to guide them in sketching out the scene, and then process and create a new imitation schema, without which they cannot imitate nature. Artists need to make a conceptual schema first, and then make constant corrections to the conceptual schema according to the matching of reality, and finally create a set of schematic models that meet the real prototype, and subsequent artists will inherit their former schematic models and match, process and create according to their social environment and cultural paradigms, and such a set of schematic models structured in accordance with the tradition of the system to form the "schema" of art. This system of schematic models based on tradition forms the concept of "schema" in art, which makes the styles of different periods have their relative consistency (Q. Wang, 2016).

2.1.1 Origin of the Idea of Schema and Correction Theory

1. Kant's Concept of Schema

"The classical German philosopher Kant first proposed the concept of 'schema', which he introduced into the field of philosophy, thus making it manifest in the field of his a priori philosophy and making it a term with its own semantics that has been studied and used by later generations". (Q. Wang, 2016) "The concept of 'schema' can be traced in Kant to a paradigm hidden in the depths of the human mind, and all kinds of images can only be realised by virtue of and in accordance with the paradigm of 'schema' of construction in order to be realised" (Wang, 2010). Kant's schema theory is

the philosophical theoretical source of art history, which developed from epistemology to aesthetics as an extension of philosophical thought, and then merged into various new ideas to present the present-day plurality of development, expanding in terms of validity and universality of interpretation (Meng, 2016).

The notion of "scheme", with a certain a priori connotation, can be traced back to Kant. However, in Gombrich's case, the notion of schema is less a priori and refers more to a pattern of ideas that are left as memory traces in the brain by experience and learning. The contradiction between "seeing" and "knowing" is explained by the notion of schema: "seeing" is subject to "knowing" (i.e., the preconceived schema accumulated in the previous experience), and the traditional constraints are reflected in the dominant role of the schema of the previous experience. In this sense, Gombrich argues that art is not only or primarily a representation of the visual image, otherwise it would not be possible to account for the emergence of different styles (Chu, 2012).

Gombrich followed Kant's idea of the a priori schema and made a series of rational adaptations to it. He combined practical experience, traditional knowledge, the logic of fame and fortune, and interests and many other aspects on the basis of the a priori concept, and integrated the knowledge of modern psychology and iconography, to form a full-fledged, historical and historical conception of the schema plus corrections to the history of art, and to apply it to the research field of image cognition (Q. Wang, 2016).

Gombrich inherited Kant's idea of "schema" and extended it to a certain extent. Based on Kant's concept of schema, he combined the knowledge of psychology and iconology, and formed the "schema - correction" theory with his personal style, and applied it to the study of image cognition (Jin, 2022).

Immanuel Kant first introduced the concept of schema in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Jin, 2022).

2. The theoretical influence of the British Warburg School

"In the field of art history, it was Emanuel Loewy, his mentor Julius von Schlosser, and Aby Warburg, founder of the Warburg School, who realised the problem of schema

before Gombrich" (Chu, 2012).

Aby Wahlburg is known as the "father of iconography", he will iconography from the pure art history research to liberate, so that art research integration of other humanities into a comprehensive cultural research, therefore, "iconography" method is also known as the "Wahlburg Method" (Q. Wang, 2016).

Gombrich explores the cognitive approaches and methods associated with the visual arts, based on the research methods of the Warburg School (Q. Wang, 2016).

Gombrich is a practical implementer of the Vaalborg research method, in many studies in the field of visual arts cognition, he synthesised knowledge from many fields and disciplines to develop a rich argument for his theory, and this method of argumentation makes his theoretical doctrines more fascinating. In short, the theoretical ideas and research methods of the British Warburg School play an important role in Gombrich's many research methods and theoretical ideas (G. W. Wang, 2016).

"Gombrich greatly appreciated the motto of German art historian Aby Walburg: 'The word to image'" (Mu, 2014).

In the Schema and Correction theory, Gombrich absorbed the knowledge of psychology from the theoretical system of Rudolf Arnheim. In his book *Art and Illusion* Perception, he boldly applied psychological theories to the study of visual images. Gombrich's theories were based on Arnheim's research, and Arnheim's Tower Psychology opened up a new perspective for Gombrich (Jin, 2022).

3. Popper's epistemology

Sir Karl Popper's influence on Gombrich was extremely far-reaching, and the two drew on each other's academic theories and influenced each other, resulting in a deep friendship. His theory encompassed falsificationism, a theory that Gombrich drew upon and applied to the cognitive aspects of the visual arts, and the concepts of conjecture and refutation were at the origin of schema and correction theory (W. Wang, 2016).

Popper's philosophy consists of two important parts: the method of trial and error, the principle of falsificationism; and situational logic. Both principles are equally applicable in the study of the natural and social sciences, and are, according to Popper,

elements that must be strictly adhered to as a critical rationalist' in order to move infinitely closer to the truth. Gombrich's "Schema-Correction" and "The Logic of Vanity Fair" are closely related to it, having arisen directly under the influence of Popper's philosophy (Hu, 2011).

Among them, in the field of art psychology and image cognition, Gombrich put forward the theories of schema and correction and "making and matching" based on Popper's trial-and-error method and epistemology; in the field of art history and style history, Gombrich put forward the "the logic of vanity fair" based on the logic of Popper's situation; in the area of artistic value, Gombrich adhered to Popper's anti-essentialism, anti-subjectivism, and anti-relativism, and rigorously criticised traditional aesthetics, insisting on the objectivity of artistic value (Liu, 2008).

Artists create artworks based on an existing schema. This schema is a ready-made attempt or conjecture, which may or may not match reality very well. The artist, on the other hand, corrects it according to the principles of reproduction at his disposal, and the result of such a modification constitutes a new schema; and the new schema will be further modified, and so on. So evolving, this is the process by which the artist learns the technique of reproduction, expressed in the following formula: work 1 (reproduction 1) $\longrightarrow$ schema $\longrightarrow$ correction $\longrightarrow$ work 2 (reproduction 2), which, as is obvious, is the result of the "substitution" of Popper's formula of the trial-and-error method used for the process of the development of scientific knowledge. Importantly, Gombrich did not apply this formula rigidly to the field of art; he analysed the phenomenon of vision in art in detail, concluding that 'this description of the way in which scientific activity is carried out applies very well to the history of visual discovery in art.' Indeed, it is precisely this procedure that we have illustrated by summarising the formula for schema and correction (Liu, 2008).

Gombrich's Schema and Correction theory is deeply influenced by Popper's related theories, who proposed the principles of "searchlight theory", "falsification theory", and "trial and error". Inspired by Popper's theories, Gombrich believed that visual perception is similar to cognitive processes, and is also an active exploration and

continuous process of error correction. As Popper emphasized, each observation is the result of posing a question to nature, and each question implies an experimental hypothesis (Wang, 2010).

"Popper was a famous philosopher of science whose theory of 'falsificationism' was formulated with great resonance at the time. Gombrich's theory of art history was corrected and refined under the principles of falsificationism" (Hu, 2011).

"Gombrich, under the influence of Popper's philosophy of historical criticism, put forward the theory of "schema-correction" according to Popper's theory of "trial and error", which corresponds to the development of art history, and pointed out that schemas are constantly corrected by artists in the course of historical development" (Jin, 2022, pp.12-13).

4. Arnheim's Gestalt Psychology

Both Gombrich and Arnheim emphasize the cognitive subject's ability to have autonomy, initiative, and integrate visual information from the object in their understanding of dry visual art. They both explore the cognitive patterns of human self-awareness towards visual art from a psychological perspective. Vertical analysis of the formation process of cognitive patterns in visual art, integrating social, humanistic, scientific and other disciplines from the historical perspective of art development, systematically sorting and summarizing the subject's cognition, concludes that people in any era and region cannot escape the influence of conceptual schemas in their cognition of visual art. Only with knowledge in their hearts can they perceive the external world, and this schema system is constantly enriched, developed, and changed based on specific experience and knowledge. This constantly revised schema system runs through the entire art history and is also one of the core elements why people can complete cognitive behavior in visual art, and work together with the viewer's expectations and projection mechanisms to complete cognitive cognition of visual art (W. Wang, 2016).

Gombrich, as a representative of the cognitive school of art psychology, gives full recognition and high evaluation to Arnheim's relevant theories. However, unlike

Arnheim, Gombrich did not stay on the level of co-temporality, but on the basis of fully absorbing the essence of Arnheim's theory, he focused more on grasping the role of the accumulated imprints of human experience in cognition from the dimension of ephemerality. Thus, in a certain sense, Gombrich puts Arnheim's horizontal analysis of visual images into the long river of human history and culture for in-depth exploration, so that the relatively independent but richly-connotated "diagram" is integrated into the long historical and cultural evolution, and thus gradually perfected into an ever-evolving "schema" (Wang, 2010).

5. Piaget's Cognitive-Development Theory

He advocates that people's cognition of things is actually in a progressive state and constantly developing. His epistemology of proof actually refers to the active cognition adopted by humans in the process of external cognition of things, affirming the cognitive subject's autonomous exercise of agency.

This idea was absorbed by Gombrich and applied to the cognitive research related to visual arts, and in this way he argued that people's understanding of visual arts is in fact in a process of continuous development. Our cognition of visual art is based on experience and is constantly adjusted according to reality, eventually forming a schematic cognitive system that tends to be perfected. Later schemas will replace the old ones because they are more in line with reality (W. Wang, 2016).

Jean Piaget, based on Kant's research on the psychological processes and structures involved in the development of children's epistemology, proposed that humans use "schema" as the basis and achieve equilibration with the environment through "assimilation" and "accommodation". Accommodation will generate new schemas or change existing schemas, which means that the process of increasing experience will generate a cognitive schema for development (Jin, 2022).

2.1.2 Principles, Process of Schema and Correction Theory
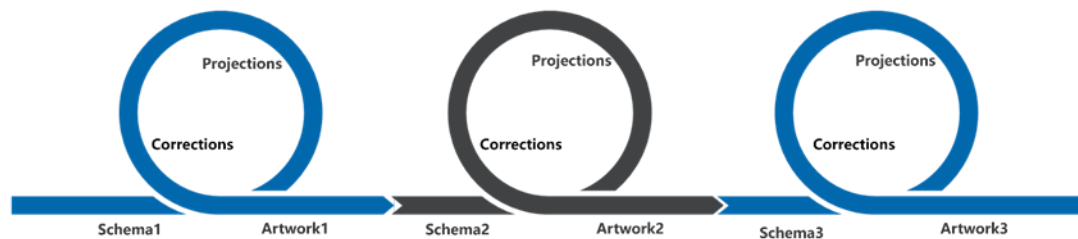
Figure 2 The process of Schema and Correction Theory

Source: Created by Author

While schema acts as an irresistible force controlling people's appreciation and creativity, Gombrich goes a step further and points out that schema is not the same as the work, or even what one sees. It is simply deep within the idea, always waiting and providing a template from which one can make choices when perceiving external things, or when creating art. In the transition from the conceptual schema to the realized schema, Gombrich argues that there is also a rather complex process of schema, projection, correction, and reproduction of the schema, and discusses this process in great detail (Wang, 2010). (Figure 2)

1. Projection

"The mechanism of projection is one of the most important factors in the realisation of conceptual schemas, and the human brain's stored categorisation system gives us the tendency to project familiar images of objects to the outside world" (Gombrich, 2012).

It is both a perceptual ability to respond actively to stimuli dictated by the subconscious mind, and an essential psychological basis in image-making. According to Gombrich, such projective activities were frequent with primitive man, who adapted or distorted these images until sorcery required a specialised technique for their production, and art arose from the combination of perceptual images and certain

processing techniques (Zhou, 1987).

Artistic creation cannot be separated from the creator's own imagination and emotional "projection". "Projection" is a psychological phenomenon, but also a psychological term, as a psychological category, modern psychiatry has used the famous inkblot experiment - "Rorschach test" to test the projection theory of people's personality. test people's projective theories of personality. The projection theory has also been used in the psychoanalysis of Freud and Jung. These previous related concepts and theories also provided the theoretical basis for Gombrich's in-depth study (Zhou, 1987).

Gombrich further pointed out that, in the perceptual process, only rely on the filing role of the schema is not enough, but also need to participate in the "mental orientation" function. Mental orientation is a preparatory state of mental activity, which determines the tendency of people's subsequent mental activity and, of course, the final choice of perception. Gombrich calls this process of filing, selection and processing simply "projection". This is an important psychological function. In "projection", visual perception transfers conceptual schemas into random, vague, and uncertain visual materials, thus creating a tendency to visualise them, but in the creation or appreciation of a work of art, this tendency does not only remain on the surface of the external form, but the subject also projects his emotions onto this polysemic material. its emotions onto this polysemic object (Wang, 2010).

"The process of schema realisation can thus be attributed to the 'projection' mechanism at work. According to Gombrich's account, under this 'projection', antecedent experience figurates visual material through the filing action and mental orientation of preformed schemas and subconsciously subsumes inanimate shapes into animate categories" (Wang, 2010).

Human perception, governed by antecedent experience, classifies and files the impressions of received stimuli according to a schematic system, and in the cognitive process of visual arts we are accustomed to use conceptual schemas to analyse the information conveyed by the visible world. Thus, conceptual schemas guide human

perceptual predictions, and the projection mechanism is completed when the prediction matches reality. We are accustomed to projecting a familiar image onto a similar shape and rationalising it accordingly, and this tendency of our mind makes us consciously read a vague and meaningless image as a familiar image pre-existing in our mind. In the process of perceiving images, the projection mechanism needs to work together with mental orientation in order to be effective. Mental anticipation is the preparatory stage for the formation of the projection mechanism, and people will focus on similar images in the environment due to strong anticipation. Therefore, artistic creation is subjective and selective, and art appreciation is also inseparable from prior memory (W. Wang, 2016).

To some extent, the behavior of the subject in reproducing the object cannot be separated from our guidance and projection mechanism. Artists have proposed many related theoretical theories based on this, such as Alberti's art originated from accidental shapes, Leonardo da Vinci's inspiration for invention and creation, and Coenz's ink prompts the theme of landscape painting. These theories generally indicate that the projection mechanism can stimulate human creative imagination, and the active and selective tendency of psychological orientation affects our perceptual attitude and visual prediction (Q. Wang, 2016).

Gombrich put forward a proposition "making will come before matching" , which can also be expressed as "creation before reference" . Its conception can be interpreted in two ways: from the viewpoint of the macro process of historical development, the construction of the preformed schema through projection comes first, and then there is the generation of imitation and reproduction art; from the viewpoint of the specific process of image making. It is always projected and modelled from experience and schema, and then adjusted and corrected with reference to the visual stimulus to achieve equivalence and match with the appearance of the object, a proposition that later became a famous saying in the discussion of reproduction art (Zhou, 1987).

The artist's demand for guided projection from the viewer was a turning point towards the enigma of 20th century visual art-making (Gombrich, 2012).

2. Corrections

Inspired by Popper's "searchlight theory", "falsificationism", "trial and error principle" and other such theories, Gombrich argued that visual perception is similar to cognitive processes, and that it is also a process of active exploration and continuous error correction. Gombrich believed that visual perception is similar to cognitive process, which is also a process of active exploration, and continuous debugging and correction (Wang, 2010).

As Popper emphasises, every observation is the result of a question we ask of nature, and every question implies an experimental hypothesis. We look for something because our hypothesis leads us to expect certain results, to see if it fits the hypothesis, and if it doesn't, we have to correct the hypothesis, test it again as closely as we can against observation, we try to prove it doesn't hold up to test it, and the hypothesis that is left behind in the process of detachment is the one that we think qualifies for the time being as holding water (Zhou, 1987).

In this sense, visual perception can be fundamentally viewed as a correction of expectation. When the stimulus information enters the visual channel and does not match or even conflicts with this expectation, visual perception will continuously adjust the expectation according to the environment (Wang, 2010).

Psychology believes that human beings have the ability to obtain appropriate interpretations from a variety of clues, through trial and error, through contextual logic, through spatial and temporal clues, and a series of thought patterns, we will unconsciously seek interpretations that meet the consistency test, such as the lack of clues to find consistent interpretations, we will endeavour to find a framework of reference that can meet the consistency test, so that we can correct our previous expectations, until the same expectations and projections are formed. We will then try to find a frame of reference that can meet the consistency test, so as to correct our previous expectations, until we can form an appropriate answer that matches our expectations and projections (Q. Wang, 2016).

Inspired by the principle of trial and error, Gombrich believed that visual perception is also a continuous process of error correction, and the proactivity of

perception is reflected in its starting point from the "problem" - seeking, confirming, or denying a specific stimulus information, thus it also has the characteristic of falsehood. Therefore, perception can fundamentally be seen as a correction of a certain kind of foresight, constantly adjusting expectations according to the environment, especially the stimulus information entering the visual channel and this foresight and expectation are established on the basis of a "preformed schema". Gombrich summarized it as the Schema and Correction formula (Zhou, 1987).

Thus, in Gombrich's theory, the process of schema realisation is explained in a more systematic way: Due to the vigour of perceptual exploration and the influence of prior experience, people develop a specific mental orientation during visual activities. This mental orientation interacts with the preformed schema to form a particular perceptual expectation. In visual activity, the subject constantly seeks visual stimuli corresponding to this expectation from the external world. In turn, the expectation is adjusted and corrected according to the multitude of external stimuli until this expectation is initially affirmed and confirmed. In this process, the schema becomes clearer and more certain, while the visual stimuli are further differentiated from "outlines" to "suborders" through the classification function of the filing system. Gombrich summarised this perceptual process of generating expectations and making corrections as the process of "preformed schema - correction", and the proposal of the formula of schema and correction further improved Gombrich's relevant theories (Wang, 2010).

2.2 Traditional Chinese Ink Painting

The reason why Chinese ink and wash has finally developed its own path lies in the precipitation and accumulation in the process of historical formation, solidified the factors that are in line with our nation's living habits, aesthetic fashions, ways of thinking, and spiritual allegories, and at the same time changed, or even categorically rejected, the emotional or rational factors that did not fit into this chain of circumstances (Wei, 2010).

2.2.1 Traditional Ink Painting Origin, Development

The definition of "ink painting" is explained by *Etymology* (He et al., 2015) as "a

painting made exclusively with ink and water without colour". Shen, R.J. (1987) explains it as "a type of Chinese painting made purely with ink and water with three basic elements: simplicity, symbolism, and naturalness. It is said to have begun in the Tang Dynasty, became established in the Five Dynasties, and flourished in the Song Dynasty.

1. Origin of Ink Painting - Before Tang Dynasty

The emergence of Chinese ink painting can be traced back to the Warring States period, the Warring States silk painting of the figure of the Imperial Dragon, using a brush to outline and halo on silk, the phoenix bird has a subtle change in grey tones in the part of the body, is the light ink halo technique to get the effect (Kong, 2008).

The emergence of Chinese ink painting can be traced back to the Han Dynasty, in the mural paintings of Han tombs in Pinglu, Shanxi Province, there have been ink and light colour landscape paintings, and in the mural paintings of Han tombs in Wangdu, Hebei Province, there are purely ink and wash paintings of the characters of the "Registrar" and the "A petty official" (Han, 2015).

2. The Creation of Ink Painting - Tang Dynasty and Five Dynasties Period

The Tang Dynasty was a time when figure painting was very popular, with steady socio-economic and cultural development and increasing prosperity. Landscape painting, flower and bird painting have gradually developed and matured, religious painting can be said to be the peak of excellence, and there is a tendency of secularisation; most of the figure paintings show the life of the aristocrats, and there is a sense of the times in the figure modeling (Kou, 2006).

Wang Wei (2016) wrote in *A Treatise on Landscape Painting*:"In the art of painting, ink and wash are the most superior, reflecting the nature and achieving the power of creation and transformation". This indicates the high regard for ink and watercolour paintings during the Tang Dynasty. After the Middle Tang Dynasty, ink and watercolour landscape painting continued to develop with a strong momentum, represented by artists such as Zhang Zao, Wang Mo and others (Kou, 2006).

During the "Kaiyuan" and "Tianbao" dynasties, Tang figure painting entered its heyday. Among them, the most influential was Wu Daozi (Kou, 2006).

The period from the end of the Tang Dynasty to the Five Dynasties was a time when landscape painting accumulated and underwent great changes. Jing Hao was mainly active at the end of the Tang Dynasty and the beginning of the Five Dynasties, Guan Tong at the beginning of the Five Dynasties, Li Cheng at the beginning of the Five Dynasties, and Fan Kuan at the end of the Five Dynasties and the beginning of the Song Dynasty (Fan, 2008).

Among the figure painters of the Five Dynasties period, there were two representative painters, one was the monk Shi Ke who pioneered rough-brush, large-format, ink figure painting, and the other was the monk Guan Xiu who pioneered distorted figure painting (Kou, 2006).

3. Ink Painting Completed in Evolution - Song Dynasty

The two Song dynasties were the mature period of ink painting. During the Five Dynasties and the Song dynasty, figure painting gradually turned to depicting secular life, and religious painting became more and more depressed, while landscape painting, flower and bird painting became the mainstream of the painting world day by day. Literati painting was also gradually formed and steadily developed, and the emergence of literati painting and its painting theory played a positive role in promoting the development of Chinese painting, especially landscape, flower and bird painting. In addition, the paper-making industry of the Song Dynasty was already quite advanced, and the use of rice paper as painting material played a very important role in bringing out the effect of ink and brush. And it became the main painting material for the later generations (Kou, 2006).

During the Song Dynasty, there were many famous artists and works of classic ink painting. For example, in landscape painting, Jing Hao, Guan Tong, Dong Yuan, Ju Ran, Li Cheng, Fan Kuan, Ma Yuan, Xia Gui, and so on, whose ink and wash paintings have had far-reaching influences on later generations until today. In bird and flower painting, with the popularity of bird and flower painting subjects such as pine, stone, plum, bamboo and orchid in literati paintings, there appeared literati painters such as Wen Tong, Su Shi, Yang Wujiu, Zheng Sixiao and other artists who used bamboo,

orchids and plums in ink as their subjects, and who advocated the subjective interest of ink and brushwork and formal interest, which led to the gradual emergence of the "Scholar's Paintings". Another example is the Southern Song Dynasty monk Muxi's style of ink and watercolour bird and flower painting, which laid the foundation for the further development of ink and watercolour bird and flower painting in later generations (Han, 2015).

The Song Dynasty was the peak period of flower and bird painting, and there was a wave of artistic thinking in the painting world that emphasised "reason" over "form", which is the theory of "literati painting" in the history of painting. This is the theory of "literati painting" in the history of painting. It is marked by the fact that plums and bamboos in ink and water became independent painting subjects, and its representative figures are Wen Tong, Su Shi, Yang Wujiu, Zhao Mengjian, Zheng Sixiao, and so on (Kou, 2006).

The gradual formation of the Song Dynasty ink painting style and the rise of literati painting is inseparable, and the rise of literati painting and the ideology of the traditional literati since the Northern Song Dynasty has a direct relationship with the ideology of the literati and the formation of the values of this literati ideology and the literati played a theoretical role in paving the way for the Southern Song Dynasty, and even the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasty literati paintings, and thus in a certain sense contributed to the further development of ink painting (Han, 2015).

The characteristics of "literati painting" are the rejection of realistic imitation of nature and the manifestation of inner experience; the "free use of the brush" based on literacy, artistic training and intuitive experience; the restriction of brush, ink, paper and inkstone to the use of utensils; the combination of calligraphy and painting; and the existence of a stable and categorised pictorial style (bird and flower painting, landscape painting, figure painting, etc.). Within "literati painting" there are many tributaries and schools of thought, and the influence of Zen and Taoism on its spirit is on a par with that of orthodox Confucianism (Lu & Michael, 2012).

4. Ink Painting by Literati Scholars at its Peak - Yuan Dynasty

After entering the Yuan Dynasty, with the widespread use of Xuan paper, which gradually became the main material for painting, the unique ink bleed effect of Xuan paper contributed to the rapid development of ink painting after the Yuan Dynasty (Han, 2015). "In the Yuan dynasty, painters mostly used half-baked paper such as hemp paper, and the use of this paper, in contrast to the Song dynasty's gaudy and neat style of courtyard-style painting, became a tool for Yuan painters to pursue a high degree of elegance and elegance, which made Chinese landscape painting embark on a peak of lyrical writing" (Wang, 2005).

If Su Shi was an active advocate of cultural painting, then Zhao Mengfu of the Yuan Dynasty was the pioneer of literati painting. He put forward the "Theory of the Homology of Painting and Calligraphy", advocated the integration of calligraphy into painting, and advocated the "realistic" style of the Southern Song Dynasty's courtyard paintings. His representative work is "Scattered Trees by the Rock" (Kou, 2006).

Yuan Dynasty ink and landscape paintings, represented by "the Four Yuan Schools" - Huang Gongwang, Wu Zhen, Ni Zan and Wang Meng, emphasised brushwork and ink, and pursued the "natural grace". Huang Gongwang's Dwelling in "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains", Wu Zhen's "Fisherman", Ni Zan's "A Scroll of Six Sublime Trees", and Wang Meng's "Dwelling in Reclusion in the Bian Mountain" are representative of this group (Fan, 2008).

Yuan Dynasty ink and bird painting appeared in the ink-based, calligraphy into the painting, light colours, brushwork or both work with the writing of ink and bird painting - "ink painting ink bird" school, the representative painters for Wang Yuan, Bian Lu, Chen Lin and so on. Their representative works are Wang Yuan's "Bamboo and Stone Poultry Painting", Bian Lu's "Peaceful Living" and Chen Lin's "Wild Duck by a Brook" (Kong, 2008).

For a variety of reasons, the Yuan Dynasty ink figure painting achievement is not as good as the Tang and Song Dynasties, only the portrait painting achievement is more prominent, represented by Wang Duo, whose representative as "Portrait of Yang Zhuxi" as representative (Wang & Hu, 2008).

5. The Period of Ink Painting Unifying the World - Ming Dynasty

In the Ming Dynasty, the imperial court established a painting academy, and the emperor also loved painting. Painting creation reached its peak. And there are also numerous ink painting schools centered around the region or differentiated by style (Kou, 2006).

The Ming Dynasty was a period of divergence and flux in Chinese painting, with a wide variety of styles and colours. By the end of the Ming Dynasty, all styles of Chinese painting had basically emerged. Ink and wash painting and freehand painting showed more diverse characteristics, freehand ink and colour painting gradually emerged, gradually became a pattern, but also more common. During the Ming Dynasty, there were four main schools of painting, namely the Zhejiang School, the Wumen Painting School, the Huating School of Landscape Painting and the Songjiang School. Figure painting, landscape painting, and flower island painting were all very popular in the Ming Dynasty, and ink-play painting was very popular among some literati painters, and flower and bird paintings based on the four gentlemen of the plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo were extremely common. Among the Ming painters who were good at painting with ink and wash, Dai Jin, Wu Wei, Lan Ying, Bian Jingzhao, Lu Ji, Lin Liang, Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, Qiu Ying, Tang Yin, Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, Chen Chun, Xu Wei, Zhou Zhiwei and so on (Han, 2015).

6. The Period of Traditional Literati Painting with Ink Freehand Brushwork Style - the Qing Dynasty

In the painting world of the Qing Dynasty, whether it was the orthodox "Four Kings", the surviving painters, or the "Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou" and other painting schools, they were all interconnected in the traditional literati painting system, inherited and established their own positions, forming their own styles. In terms of subject matter and content, ideological taste, and brush and ink techniques, each had different pursuits. Landscape painting still maintained its mainstream trend and gradually showed signs of high patternization, entering a new stage of continued development of literati painting. After the mid Qing Dynasty, ink wash flower and bird painting gradually

became the traditional mainstream style of literati painting, while the Yangzhou painting school's freehand brushwork flower and bird painting became the mainstream style of literati painting. The art style gradually became the mainstream of flower and bird painting in the Qing Dynasty (Kou, 2006).

Among the ink landscape paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the most famous are the "Four Kings, Wu and Yun". The "Four Kings" are Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Hui and Wang Yuanqi. The "Wu and Yun" refers to Wu Li and Yun Ge. The Ming and Qing dynasties also saw the emergence of a special group of landscape painters, most notably the "Four Monks" and Gong Xian and Fang Yizhi. The "Four Monks" are Bada Shanren, Hong Ren, Kun Can and Shi Tao (Fan, 2008).

After the middle of the Qing Dynasty, ink and bird painting gradually became the mainstream style of literati painting. The representative figures were Shi Tao and Bada Shanren. The "Eight Monsters of Yangzhou", which appeared in the Qianlong period, were a unique school of painting in the Qing Dynasty after Shitao and Bada Shanren (Kong, 2008). At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, in order to adapt to the needs of the emerging citizen class, some literati painters who lived in Shanghai and made a living by selling their paintings, sought to advance with novel painting techniques and aesthetic interests, and influenced each other to form a new style with the characteristics of the times, which is called the "Shanghai Style"(of Paintings), or the "Hai School" for short (Kou, 2006). Zhao Zhiqian is usually regarded as the founder of the Hai School. "He was a master of seal carving, and used the appearance of the Northern Tablet in his calligraphy to create a unique style, which he incorporated into his paintings. His brushwork developed a square, hard and strong style" (Kou, 2006). There were many Hai School painters, but the most famous were Ren Xiong, Ren Kaoru, and Ren Yi, known as the "Three Ren of the Sea". During the heyday of the Hai School, most of the painters were known for their bird and flower paintings, such as Xu Gu and Hua Xinluo (Kong, 2008).

7. Modern Ink Painting Expanded in Restriction - Modern Times

In the late Qing Dynasty and the Modern Times of China, Chinese culture

developed in the midst of a deep national disaster, and in the contact and collision with Western culture, it was in a state of acceptance, absorption and integration (Kong, 2008).

The flower and bird paintings among them adopt the artistic principle of maintaining a constant "spiritual resonance of rythmic vitality" and choose Western art, while the essence of maintaining a constant "brush and ink" absorbs Western colors as their development characteristics. The inheritance and transformation of traditional flower and bird painting forms caused by this are the major freehand brushwork forms that inherit the traditional significance of literati painting, represented by Zhao Zhiqian, Xu Gu, and Wu Changshuo, which continue to steadily develop. At the same time, the minor freehand brushwork forms, represented by Ren Bonian, have emerged with new features (Kong, 2008).

The strong invasion of Western culture led to the eastward spread of Western learning, from artifacts to institutional reforms, cultural democratic enlightenment, and the infiltration of Western learning into various levels and aspects of society. Zhang Taiyan (2006), a philosopher from the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China mentioned in his book "*Qiu Book"* that Western painting optics "use optics to take the form and scenery of people and objects, and people must have images above. Those who have just arrived at the beginning of their travels will be punished by law enforcement officials." He pointed out the shortcomings of Chinese art, stating that "although the achievements of ancient times are small and beautiful, compared to the West, they are still not entirely empty and accumulated." In this chapter, he strongly advocates using the West to understand China". Renowned scholar Wang Guowei (2016) was deeply influenced by Kant and Schopenhauer, who believed that art should not be attached and gain detached and independent value, and insisted that "the characteristics of art value concrete rather than abstract", emphasizing the authenticity of art. Cai Yuanpei advocated for scientific aesthetic education while proposing "aesthetic education replacing religion" (Cai, 2014), emphasizing the integration of science and art. "Knowledge and emotions should not be neglected, but science and art

should not be neglected" (Hu & Liang, 2014). "Incorporating scientific methods into art" (Sun, 1968) emphasizes the advantages of Western art. Chinese artists can draw on and advocate the application of a scientific attitude to study the issues of art creation (Jiang, 2018).

In the camp of inheriting Chinese traditional ink painting, it is also divided into two types of ink paintings: one type is to inherit the tradition of Ming and Qing Dynasty, represented by Wu Changshuo, Qi Baishi, Huang Binhong, Pan Tianshou, etc.; the other is to inherit the tradition of Jin, Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasty, represented by Chen Hengke, Zhang Daqian, Wu Hufan, Fu Baoshi, etc (Kou, 2006).

The other "reformist" school is mainly because "with the flourishing of the modern academic trend, a large number of foreign students returned home from overseas and transplanted Western art to China on a large scale, which invariably constituted a situation of rivalry with Chinese painting, and thus the exclusivity of the traditional Chinese painting was greatly challenged. In this way, the exclusivity of traditional Chinese painting was greatly challenged" (Kou, 2006). The representative painters are Xu Beihong, Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, Chen Shuren, Lin Fengmian, Liu Haili and so on (Kong, 2008).

The development of ink painting is matured by the continuous progress and perfection of ink painting techniques. Tradition is developing, like a big river with a long source, we cannot cut off its source or block its flow. The result of innovation must be in accordance with the law of natural development of Chinese ink art, and must be the inheritance and development of Chinese character (Kou, 2006). "The fine tradition of ancient Chinese painting is not only being inherited, but it is continuing to flourish on the basis of fresh subject matter and fresh painting techniques" (Zheng, 1988).

2.2.2 Characteristics of the Visual Language of Traditional Ink Painting

In the long process of development and evolution, traditional Chinese ink painting has accumulated a wealth of practical experience and aesthetic theories. These experiences gradually formed an artistic language or image symbols with common characteristics, and then formed aesthetic concepts and expression

techniques with oriental national characteristics. These include modelling, ink and brushwork, composition and colour, all of which have become the visual language that distinguishes Chinese painting from Western painting (Wang, 2019).

1. Modelling

"Before creating a painting, you should have a clear mood and emotion, and when creating a painting, you should express the mood and emotion clearly (Zhang, 2007). The importance of meaning before the brush is fully explained, and it can be said that "meaning" is the soul of ink painting.

The value of ink painting lies in freehand brushwork. Specifically, freehand brushwork is an artistic technique that summarizes and extracts the essential image features of objects based on the inner meaning of the experience object, and through imagination, synthesizes and sublimates the characteristics of the aesthetic object, thereby expressing the painter's true feelings and intentions towards objective things (Kou, 2006).

Line is the main expressive language of Chinese painting. Ink painting focuses on the essence of the object, on expression, on spirit, on the expression of emotion, on the pursuit of formal beauty, etc., all of which are centred on modelling with line. It can be said that the use of line as the basic means of modelling, and the criteria of evaluation of the line itself, is one of the most important features of ink painting (Kou, 2006). The use of line drawing as a method of sketching focuses on the texture of the line, especially when combined with the line in Chinese calligraphy, emphasising the written nature of calligraphy, which not only adds to the texture of the line, but also allows the line to express traditional Chinese culture, making the line more varied and rhythmic (Chang & Ma, 2023).

Western painting also has certain art that uses line to express, but the line of Western painting is fundamentally different from the line used to model Chinese ink painting. The line in Western painting is mainly for the accurate depiction of the object's realism, only the face of the turn, compression, generally only play the role of indicating the outline, subordinate to the object of expression. Between the lines of ink painting

and the form it depicts, there is no necessary dependence, thus gaining greater freedom, with the aesthetic value that exists separately from the form, thus making ink painting more aesthetically appealing, which is unique to oriental painting (Kou, 2006).

"Throughout history, ink painting has always inherited the tradition of linear modelling, and has gradually formed a whole set of art systems including theory and techniques" (Kou, 2006).

2. Brushwork and Ink Techniques

The use of brush and ink cannot be separated, so it is called "brushwork and ink techniques". In the Ming Dynasty, Mo Shilong (2020) wrote in *Painting*: "The ancients said: 'There is a brushwork and ink techniques, and the two characters' brushwork and ink techniques' are unfamiliar to many people. How can a painting be without a brushwork and ink techniques? "

Brushwork and ink is an effective way to express thoughts and feelings by shaping artistic images with brushwork and ink, and it is the most important form of language in ink painting. Huang Binhong said: "The true essence of Chinese painting lies in brushwork and ink techniques, and there is nothing else" (Kou, 2006).

Zhang Yanyuan (2007) of the Tang Dynasty mentioned in his *History of Famous Paintings across Dynasties* that "the image of the object must lie in the likeness, and the likeness must be complete with its bones, and the bones and the form are all based on the intention, which is attributed to the use of the brushwork techniques."

The change in pen use lies in the lines, which contain the profound cultural and unique aesthetic psychological complex of China, as well as the cultivation of Chinese calligraphy and the unique mastery and cultivation of pen and ink. In a sense, brushwork is the most distinctive language form in ink painting art (Kou, 2006).

The tradition of using ink originated in the Tang Dynasty, when Wang Wei and Jing Hao (Jing, 2016; W. Wang, 2016) said, "Water overshadows ink seals and revitalizes the Tang Dynasty." Due to the creation of ink painting techniques, ink painting emerged, making it an important component of ink painting. The importance of ink painting lies in the following aspects: firstly, "ink is the filling of the brushwork

techniques", "the brushwork techniques is not ink and cannot be reconciled"; Secondly, the pen displays qi, while ink generates rhyme, which cannot be separated from ink techniques. Thirdly, under certain conditions, it manifests as a color effect. Zhang Yanyuan (2007) stated that "using ink to create colors is one's pride. If one intends to use five colors, then the object will behave well" (Kou, 2006). Ink painting is not only a form of expression in painting, but also a cultural phenomenon that reflects a spiritual interpretation and cultural inheritance of traditional Chinese culture. The definition of "ink wash" goes far beyond its literal meaning. In its formation and development, it encompasses and releases the profound cultural heritage of the Chinese nation, which has distinct national characteristics (Han, 2015).

3. Composition

Pan Tianshou (2017) said: The composition of Western painting often comes from sketching scenes, often choosing objects and positions, rather than the author's active management of the layout.

Composition has two meanings, broad and narrow. Broad refers to the entire process of painting creation, including three steps: conception, image acquisition, and composition. Narrowly defined, it refers to the method of forming graphics, which is to organize relevant image elements in a reasonable manner to conform to the laws of beauty. Composition, Gu Kaizhi of the Eastern Jin Dynasty called it "Zhichen Bushi", and in Xie He's "Six principles of Chinese painting" of the Southern Dynasty, it was called "Management Position". "Business position" is extremely important in the "Six principles of Chinese painting", and Zhang Yanyuan of the Tang Dynasty believed that it was the "essential element of painting"; Li Rihua of the Ming Dynasty said, "Most painting techniques prioritize the arrangement of imagery."; During the Qing Dynasty, Zou Yigui also said, "In terms of the Six principles of Chinese painting , business position should be the top priority," all of which illustrate the importance of composition in painting (Kou, 2006).

Composition is extremely important. Designing a good composition requires a combination of theory and practice. Composition is the use of graphics to build the

layout. When composing a picture, not only should consider the shape of the object itself, but also consider whether the shape of the blank space left outside the shape is in line with the aesthetics (Zhao, 2023).

"Composition involves a wide range of content, there are many laws, but all changes do not change, the core of which is that the picture should feel comfortable and natural. The composition of a really good painting should be random, improvised, and born out of the law" (Kou, 2006).

The traditional rules and characteristics of Chinese painting composition are the foundation of the aesthetic taste of Chinese painting, and the core value embodiment of Chinese painting in maintaining national painting characteristics. No matter how boundaries are broken in the composition form, as long as the above rules and characteristics are followed, the aesthetic taste presented in the picture will not lose the meaning of Chinese painting. This is particularly important in the current creation of Chinese painting (He & Yue, 2023).

Composition in the context of the times can be a window through which questions about the development of Chinese painting are revealed, and a positive response is given to the sense of self-confidence in national painting (Du, 2023).

4. Colour

The "black and white strategy" of Chinese painting comes from the traditional philosophical concepts of yin and yang, black and white, and Lao Zi's "To get the essence of relationship between white and black", which became the law of black and white in painting, and thus developed a variety of contrasting relationships in Chinese painting. Black and white has become one of the aesthetic subjects of Chinese painting" (Xu, 2015).

A Chinese ink painting is a traditional painting in which no colour other than ink (including white) is applied. This is a relatively absolute interpretation. But there is also a relatively broad interpretation, that is, the whole tone of the picture to ink-based, in the shape of the form mainly through the ink to complete rather than colour, only in the appropriate position of the form and impose a small amount of colour, the formation of

ink and colour effect, this light colour on the ink to play a role in the role of supporting the ink, and visually will never affect the ink rhyme changes, but rather a better way of highlighting the spirit of the brush and ink, this point! With the application of colour "degree" related, that is, often said "Colour and ink complement each other" (Han, 2015).

"Ink painting, as the name suggests, is based on ink, with the ink changes in ink to replace the role of colour, but it does not mean that ink painting is not to use colour, the rational use of colour can make the ink and colour complementary and brighten up, which is also one of the ways to develop modern ink painting" (Kou, 2006).

Ink is the main form of color presentation in traditional ink painting. This simple relationship between black and white constitutes the most unique form of ink painting, which conforms to the theory of yin and yang in traditional Eastern philosophy and reflects the aesthetic psychology and value trends of Easterners. To sum up, ink has two functions: firstly, it plays an important role as a color, and secondly, it contains rich emotional connotations, which is the key to forming "qi yun"(spirit resonance) (Kou, 2006).

Traditional ink painting pays special attention to the importance of ink and colour in expression, but at the same time does not exclude the use of other colours, colour has always maintained a certain status and has not completely withdrawn from ink painting. In the long-term practice of ink painting, a set of unique rules has been formed, which is manifested in the emphasis on the concept of big colours, i.e., the colours of the natural world, based on the feelings of life as a whole and rational generalisation (Kou, 2006).

Ink painting is a painting art that has been continuously developed and improved in the process of development and change. So far, it is not just a painting style, but more importantly, it adheres to and contains the inherent spiritual qualities in traditional Chinese culture. This spiritual quality has become the life standard that literati and intellectuals throughout history have adhered to. It is a spiritual admiration for the beauty of nature, a transcendence of the "brilliant extreme, returning to simplicity" situation, and a pursuit of simplicity and simplicity, as well as a perfect state of life (Han,

2015).

2.2.3 Philosophical System and Aesthetic Ideology of Traditional Ink Painting

The spirit of Chinese art nurtures the practice of rites and music indoctrination, which was elaborated by the pre-Qin scholars, especially Confucianism, to form the idea of lile. The views of Confucianism and Taoism on the indoctrination of rites and music are different, and it is the different differences that form the complementary way of thinking of Confucianism and Taoism, which promotes the development of the spirit of traditional Chinese art. The aesthetic realm pursued by Confucianism and Taoism is the main ideological root of the formation of the spirit of Chinese art, and the later Zen thought and the pursuit of the aesthetic realm also further enriched and developed the spirit of Chinese art, so that China's artistic qualities have become even more ethereal and mysterious, ethereal and profound (Wang, 2019).

1. Confucianism - "the Beauty of Neutralization and Harmony"

"The absence of joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness is called the middle; when they arise, they are all in the middle section, which is called harmony. The middle section is the fundamental principle of the world, and the harmony section is the ultimate way of the world. To achieve harmony, what is the position of heaven and earth, and what is the nurturing of all things?" (Confucius, 2015) "The inner emotions of human nature that are not revealed can be called 'zhong', and when expressed, they conform to the norms of 'li' and are called 'he'. For works of art, 'zhong' can be said to be an interpretation of the aesthetic purpose of the 'mean'" (Han, 2015).

"Zhong" means right, appropriate, and in place. "Harmony" means perfection, unity, and harmony. The beauty of harmony in painting requires the handling of various contradictions and opposing factors within the work. These factors should not be "excessive" or "inferior" in the process of interaction and influence, and should be harmonious and moderate to achieve an ideal state that is just right (Han, 2015). Without bias, it is called "harmony"; Difficulty is called mediocrity. The middle is the right path of the world. The Mean is the Theorem of the World (Confucius, 2015).

"Harmony" is one of the important concepts in ancient China. "A gentleman is

harmonious but different, while a petty person is harmonious but not harmonious" (Confucius, 2021). "Joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness are both emotions. If they are not expressed, then the nature is also. There is no bias, so it is called the middle. When they are expressed, they are all in the middle section, and the emotions are also positive. There is nothing wrong with them, so it is called harmony" (Zhu, 2011). Therefore, in Confucian thought, Confucius' concept of "the beauty of harmony" actually explains a kind of beauty of the mean in human nature (Han, 2015).

The beauty of Neutralization and Harmony, whether in the moral or philosophical realm, or in artistic works and real life, has immeasurable value and significance. From an aesthetic perspective, the beauty of harmony is a reflection of Confucius' philosophy of the mean in aesthetic thought, and is one of the most influential, wide-ranging, and far-reaching aesthetic ideas in China's later generations. On the other hand, in traditional Chinese painting works, the aesthetic concept of the beauty of harmony also permeates the pursuit of aesthetic realm in artistic works, and is expressed through brushstrokes, shapes, coloring, and composition, creating a harmonious aesthetic realm. The essence of the beauty of harmony in Buddhism and Confucianism is consistent (Han, 2015).

In addition, in terms of the form of Chinese painting, Mr. Qi Baishi said, "The beauty of painting lies between similarity and dissimilarity. Being too similar is vulgar, not like it is deceiving the world." This statement clearly expresses a question about the aesthetic pursuit of painting's form. The beauty between similarity and dissimilarity is a kind of moderate beauty, and its source is the "beauty of harmony" advocated by Confucianism (Han, 2015).

Ink painting, as a painting style that uses pure ink, to some extent, is more in line with the aesthetic concept of harmony. This painting technique that replaces complex color changes with simple ink and wash changes gives people a different aesthetic visual experience (Han, 2015).

2. Taoist philosophy - " Harmony Between Heaven and Humanity"

"Advocating the beauty of nature is the aesthetic philosophy of Taoism, which

organically links beauty with the Tao and advocates a return to the natural realm of heaven and earth" (Men, 2024).

"Regarding 'Dao', Laozi was the first to propose the philosophical viewpoint of 'Dao follows nature'. He believed that 'Dao' is an independent entity that exists outside of heaven and earth, and is the first of all things" (Han, 2015).

Laozi said, "There is a mixture of things, born naturally. Silent and solitary, independent and unchanging, and able to travel around without danger, one can become the mother of heaven and earth. I do not know its name, but the word" Dao "means" great ". The word" great "means" passing ", the word" far "means" far ", and the word" far "means" reverse ". Therefore, the Dao is great, the sky is great, the earth is great, and the person is also great. There are four great things in the domain, but one of them resides. People follow the earth, the earth follows the sky, the heaven follows the Dao, and the Dao follows nature." From this, it can be seen that "nature" refers to a natural state of existence, which is: A state of governance by inaction, where "nature" refers to "inaction". Non action is not inaction, but emphasizes following the laws and regulations of nature, making human development consistent with nature (Han, 2015).

In traditional Chinese ink painting, the representative "literati painting" proposes the expression of "spirit", "meaning", "emotion", "thought", "qi", and "rhyme", which are not entirely subjective self-expression of the painter but belong to the expression of "Dao". It is believed that "Dao" is the natural law of everything and the origin of the universe (Han, 2015).

The Tao Te Ching (2021) states: "The Tao generates one, one generates two, two generates three, and three generates all things. All things bear yin while embracing yang, and the Qi is in harmony". And "one" is unified in the Tao, which can be understood as belonging to truth and laws. "The beauty of neutralization and harmony" refers to the general laws of development that both the natural things as objects and the human beings as subjects follow in the process of common development. As the saying goes, "Heaven and earth coexist with me, and all things are one with me" (Han, 2015).

The realm of forgetting things between humans and nature, and having oneself

within oneself is the inherent pursuit of traditional literati ink painting art, which is the "meaning, spirit, and qi" of Chinese painting theory. It is the connotation of "Dao" and the expression of the "the beauty of neutralization and harmony" thought in ink painting. Therefore, the spiritual purpose of traditional Chinese ink painting is "the beauty of neutralization and harmony" (Wang, 2019).

3. Buddhist Philosophy - "The Beauty of being Detached from One's External State"

As one of the schools of Buddhism in China, Zen originated from Bodhidharma and flourished before the sixth ancestor Huineng. "Zen Buddhism achieves the state of 'pure Dharma body' by pursuing the concept of 'seeing the truth from one's own heart as one's true nature'. This is an ideal realm of life, which is in line with the thoughts of ancient Chinese Taoism and an aesthetic realm of harmony and unity between humans and nature" (Han, 2015).

Zen emphasizes "formlessness", which means that the external manifestation of things is not their essence. To explore their essence, one must break free from the limitations of external things. The ideas advocated by Zen Buddhism are in line with the psychology of ancient literati and scholars, and have influenced their aesthetic taste. They view paintings as carriers of personal emotions, thereby showcasing their inner world and pursuing aesthetic tastes and artistic realms such as "purity, emptiness, ease, and Zen" (Wang, 2022).

Zen Master Huineng once said, "My Dharma has come from above, and every step has established the concept of non mindfulness as the sect, non form as the body, and non existence as the foundation". This "three nothings" can be regarded as the core concept of Zen and the foundation of Zen aesthetics. In the late Tang Dynasty, Master Huangbo Xiyun once said, "If you don't leave, if you don't stay, if you don't stay, if you don't move freely, it's nothing more than a Taoist field". These Zen ideas have had important implications for aesthetic activities, painting creation, and poetry writing after the Tang Dynasty (Han, 2015).

As Wang Shizhen (2006) said, in terms of artistic creation and appreciation, "one

must be as good as the Zen masters say, 'neither sticky nor detached, neither neither neither detached nor detached." The ultimate form of this unity and integration is "nothingness", which ultimately elevates to the highest artistic realm of forgetting things and me (Han, 2015).

Zen is the ultimate stillness in motion, as well as the ultimate movement in stillness. Silence and constant illumination, constant stillness in reflection, and a balance between movement and stillness, exploring the origin of life. Zen is the brilliant expression of philosophical and artistic realms by Chinese people who have come into contact with the teachings of Mahayana, realizing the depths of their own souls. The serene view and the leaping life constitute the dual elements of art, and also constitute the spiritual state of "Zen" (Zong, 2020).

"Mr. Zong's passage elucidates the relationship between Zen and artistic realm in terms of aesthetic realm. This artistic realm, which has been elevated by the integration of Zen, has become an excellent coordinate for many ancient and modern artists' physical and mental aspirations and character pursuits" (Han, 2015).

The formation of traditional ink painting has undergone six significant historical stages——Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties (Origin and Development). Throughout its long evolution, it has been influenced by the three major schools of thought——Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism——gradually developing a unique aesthetic philosophy (Aesthetic Thought). This philosophical system not only established the artistic spirit of ink painting but also shaped its visual expression (The Visual Language). In terms of visual language, ink painting is characterized by four major elements: form, brushwork and ink techniques, composition, and color. This overall framework reveals how traditional ink painting has developed into a distinctive artistic system through the interplay of historical evolution, aesthetic concepts, and visual expression. (Figure 3)
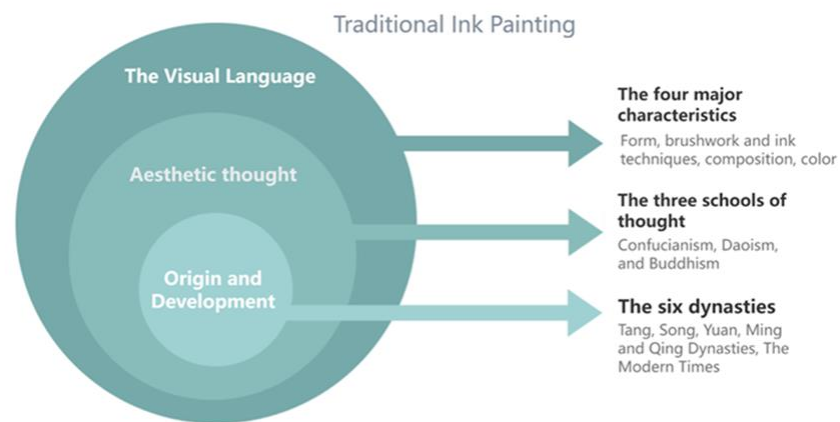
Figure 3 The Structural Framework of Traditional Chinese Ink Painting

Source: Created by Author

2.3 Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting

In *Sea of word* (Chen, 2022), the interpretation of ink painting is as follows: "Ink painting refers to the pure use of ink in Chinese painting, which began in the Tang Dynasty, developed in the Song Dynasty, flourished in the Yuan Dynasty, and has continued to develop since the Ming and Qing Dynasties. With the brush technique as the mainstay, it fully utilizes the function of ink painting to achieve the artistic effect of 'water halo ink seal' and 'combining five colors', and occupies an important position in the history of Chinese painting."

The expressive language of modern ink painting is directed to express the spiritual outlook and aesthetic pursuit of modern people, and to display the real life and inner world of modern people. It is the sum of all the new art forms that explored the modern turn of Chinese painting after the New Wave of the Eighty-Five Years of Art, and it does not refer to a single art school or style, but to all the new art schools that emerged in the scope of China's art development from the 1980s to the 1990s, with the qualities of modernity (Wang, 2019).

Contemporary ink and wash is not born out of thin air after traditional ink and

wash and modern ink and wash. Contemporary ink and wash, on the other hand, has relative independence, distinguishing itself from the traditional ink and wash's programmed art form and language, as well as from modern ink and wash's tendency to conform to the trend of art innovation and focus only on the ontology of art and elite art (Jiang, 2018).

2.3.1 The Background of Change and Development of Contemporary Ink Painting

Contemporary ink painting, as a new art tradition, has gradually been accepted and become a part of history, a process similar to that of realistic ink painting, from its creation to its acceptance until it became a part of the tradition (Lu, 2017).

1. Driven by Reform and Opening Up

The comprehensive development of reform and opening up and the frantic influx of Western philosophy and art contributed to the emergence of modern ink painting in such an era and cultural context (Jiang, 2018).

The exploration of modern ink painting was interrupted for a period of time by the Cultural Revolution. It was not until the latter part of the reform and opening up period that the new wave of art swept inland. This period became a time of "East-meets-West fusion" (a gradual fusion of ideas and forms) and a state of relative openness after the suppression of the Cultural Revolution (Shangguan, 2020).

Out of the goal of pursuing artistic modernisation and diversification, artists in general and young people in particular have taken the opportunity of reflecting on the Sixth National Art Exhibition not only to greatly sublimate the academic issues explored in the previous years, i.e., from criticising the determinism of the subject matter to advocating democracy in art, and from critiquing the monotonous mode of creation to emphasising the individuality of creativity, etc., but also to express their strong dissatisfaction with the consistent mode of art exhibitions for several decades Strong Dissatisfaction (Lu, 2017).

The artists tried to carry out subversive counterattacks to the traditional culture and art and decomposition, and attempted to break through the revolutionary and socialist themed creative forms, to explore and call for modern art, and to provide a

basis for the formation of the discourse of "modernity" in modern ink painting (Lu, 2013).

The ideological origins of the "85 New Wave Art Movement" can be traced back to the spirit of science and democracy advocated by the May 4th Movement, but it would not have been possible without the ideological liberation movement and the political climate of reform and opening up that took place in the 1980s (Lu, 2017).

2. The Drastic Impact of Western Philosophical Writings

A large number of modern art theories, philosophical works and methodological books were translated and published, and after the cultural hunger of the Revolution, artists' artistic vision was strongly impacted by the introduction of such a new and unfamiliar culture (Jiang, 2018).

The values embodied in Western modern art were already accepted by many young artists at that time. Coupled with the fact that Western modern art was considered to be of great practical significance in expanding new aesthetic fields, spreading modern concepts, enlightening new ways of thinking, encouraging the spirit of creativity, and renewing national consciousness, it became an inevitable reference point for many young artists (Lu, 2017).

The exploration of Chinese modern ink and wash is not a natural extension and growth from the traditional Chinese cultural lineage, but a result of the evolution spawned under the influence of Western culture. Many artists are keenly aware that the cultural process of "anti-tradition" and "convergence with the West" has opened people's horizons, and many art forms have imitated the West in terms of concepts and styles of expression, but at the same time, it has also caused the problem of "de-Chineseisation". As a result, many works have traces of direct imitation of Western modern art in terms of both expression and conception, resulting in a modern visual effect and copying style of painting in the language of expression (Wang, 2019).

The visual experience and vision of the ink artists changed, and after a short period of confusion and distress, they boldly drew on Western modernist art, taking the aesthetic culture of Western art as the criterion, and started to explore and develop the forms of ink language, on the basis of which the traditional ink painting could be

transformed successfully and increase the possibilities of entering the modern era smoothly (Jiang, 2018).

In this context, modern ink and wash attempts to break through the closed artistic framework and formal confinement of traditional ink painting, seeks to re-deconstruct and transform the artistic content and form, deviates from the traditional normative outlook, and creates a new type of artistic subject. Taking innovation and experimentation as the base, modern ink and wash distances itself from the politically instrumentalised art style, and without going beyond the condition of painting materials, it contributes to the expansion of ink painting into ink art, and injects modern factors into it to explore its modern visual form, and thus modern ink and wash came into being (Jiang, 2018).

2.3.2 The Expression of Contemporary Ink Painting

Judging from the content of their works in this period, they are based on the reality of the rapid modernisation, marketisation and internationalisation of Chinese society, pursuing their own true experiences and feelings, and making their own responses to the reality under the artistic intuition of sincere heart and self-feeling. Ink painting at this stage can be broadly divided into four categories in terms of linguistic expression: First, the continuation of traditional painting school; second, the expressive ink painting school; third, the new literati school; and fourth, the experimental ink painting school (Wang, 2019).

1.the Continuation of Traditional Painting School

The continuation of traditional painting school is mostly the inheritors of the literati painting tradition, who advocate newness, but follow the self-discipline of artistic development, i.e. inheritance, and evolve from tradition. Representatives of this school are the painters Qi Baishi, Huang Binhong, Pan Tianshou and Qiu Shiming (Kou, 2006).

Since the twentieth century, traditional Chinese painting has been fiercely challenged by Western concepts, and brushwork and ink have been constantly questioned. Painters held high the banner of "using the foreign for Chinese and the ancient for the modern", absorbing the decent modelling concepts of Western scientific

realism and integrating them into traditional Chinese brushwork and ink; advocating sketching, advocating art to face the real life, and re-establishing the aesthetic relationship between art and reality, which injected fresh blood into the realistic figure painting (Li, 2010).

"Pan Tianshou He was another outstanding figure of the traditional school after Wu Changshuo, Qi Baishi, and Huang Binhong. Pan Tianshou at first strongly emphasised the 'mixing' and 'combining' of Chinese and Western paintings, but later repeatedly stressed that 'Chinese and Western painting should be distanced'. He also said: 'I have never been in favour of the path of 'Western painting' in Chinese painting. Chinese painting should develop its own unique achievements and win with its speciality'. 'The new culture of the future should be developed on the basis of national heritage and national forms'" (Kou, 2006).

2. The Language Form of Expressive Ink Painting

Expressive ink painting, as a branch of modern Chinese ink painting, emerged in the early 1980s and became popular in the mid-1990s. The expression of ink painting actually borrows the Western words "tension" and "expression" to expand the expressive power of painting language. The tension and expression have expanded the psychological expression space of ink painting, changed the intensity of aesthetic perception, and also expanded the traditional evaluation standards of "elegance, spirit, wonder, and energy" in ink painting (Wang, 2019).

Expressive ink and wash, mainly influenced by Western Expressionist art, is a logical development of Chinese style of writing in modern times. In addition, from the point of view of their way of exploring the "modern transformation of ink art", most of the expressive ink artists are more concerned with modern urban culture, more concerned with the expression of the life and psychological state of the urban people, and emphasise on the reflection of the urban consciousness in the ink and wash, and take the expression of the urban state as a better way of cutting the ink and wash into the modern era, so some critics also regard this category of artists who are concerned with the urban state as the better way to enter the modern era.Therefore, some critics call

this kind of expressive ink and wash that focuses on urban themes Urban Ink and Wash (Zhu, 2013).

After borrowing expressive art from the West, ink artists of the 1980s aligned themselves with the strong imagery of traditional Chinese ink painting and shifted from traditional realistic ink painting to expressive ink painting, which has a modern flavour. This form employs Western visual symbols and icons, and uses expressive materials such as ink, brush and rice paper to create images (Jiang, 2018).

Expressive ink and wash is a product of combining the unique spirit of Chinese ink and writing with Western expressionist art, which pursues visual tension and freedom of mind without completely abandoning the traditional Chinese language of ink and brush, and is mainly characterised by enhancing the visual impact of the formal language of ink and wash paintings to express people's life emotions and aesthetic consciousness (Bai, 2021).

"Unlike traditional ink and wash which escapes from the self and reality, expressive ink and wash not only focuses on the self and reality, but also emphasises endless inquiries into the complex spiritual contradictions of body and mind, life and death, consciousness and subconsciousness, ego and transcendence, nature and life, state of existence and life needs" (Lu, 2017)."From the perspective of artistic expression, expressive ink and wash reverses the gentle and elegant artistic style of traditional ink and wash, and pursues a visually impactful picture effect, which as a result largely responds to a newly growing aesthetic need" (Lu, 2017).

Mr. Jia Fangzhou (1999) summed up: Firstly, it does not rely on rational participation, no pre-design, and no programmed brushwork; second, expressionist artists are a group of people who are extremely sensitive to the living environment, so most of their works are based on the theme of life and life, and the style of their works is highly individualistic, but with similar spiritual orientation; third, in terms of the means of expression, the works are made through strange shapes, clashing colours, and the use of a variety of techniques.

In the mid-1980s, the "85 New Wave Art Movement" had a great impact on the

country, and "some realistic painters have been thinking about how to transform the traditional ink and wash language to conform to people's modern aesthetic tastes, and trying to transform the times through continuous experiments, so as to make their works have modern style and characteristics" (Wang, 2019).

In the mid-1990s, a number of exhibitions on the theme of expression were held across the country, giving a strong impetus to the development and evolution of ink and wash. In particular, the second exhibition "Experiments in Tension" was held from 1 to 5 November 1995 at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. What "tension" emphasises is visual impact. This means the expansion of the first impression created by the large structure of the work when viewed from afar; "Expression" emphasises the directness of spiritual expression, i.e., the restoration of the mind that has been modified by cultural deposits, and the return of the personality that has been overly disguised by the commercial society to its original appearance. This means a truer correspondence between brush and ink movement and individual spirit (Liu, 1995). From this we can see that the meaning of expressive ink and wash is very clear, "very much emphasis on the expression of visual tension and the freedom of expression of the mind, this tension of the picture is not only the exploration of the form of composition, but also corresponds to the artist's conceptual thinking, and it is the best way for painters to express the expression of their thoughts" (Wang, 2019).

"Expressive ink and wash is the mortal enemy of traditional Chinese painting, which has shaken the foundation of traditional Chinese painting from the roots" (Li, 1996).

Since the 1990s, expressive ink painting has gradually become a trend, with representative painters such as Li Xiaoxuan, Wang Yanping, Hai Rihan, Chao Hai, etc. The expression of ink emphasizes the freedom of expression and the tension of image, and does not exclude the language of expression based on pen and ink, without cutting off the connection with tradition from the fundamental bloodline (Wang, 2019).

The expressive ink and wash artists endeavour to intervene in the present to seek for the contemporary transformation of ink and wash. Obviously, in the process of development, the artistic concepts of expressive ink and wash reflect a realistic view of

the ontological spirit of the self and the society (Wu, 2021).

3. The Language and Form of New Literati Paintings

The concept of "New Literati Painting" is regarded as an important art phenomenon developed after the "85 New Wave Art Movement" (Bai, 2021).

New literati painting was formally named after 1989, and in a short time the group grew rapidly, with a group of painters represented by Wang Mengqi, Zhu Xinjian, Li Laoshi, Liu Ergang, Xu Lele, Chen Ping, Tian Liming, Jiang Hongwei, etc. (Lu, 2017).

"The air and cynicism of the contemporary literati is also reflected in the neo-literati picture, but it's more about expressing the cultural landscape and spirituality of contemporary people" (Wang, 2019). The ink and wash artists no longer focus on the survival and righteousness of the nation when facing society directly, but have become a reflection or mockery of ordinary individuals from a level perspective; From a carrier of modern artistic innovation, to a desk sketch that expresses ordinary life in a personalized way, the painting reflects the cynical attitude and humorous atmosphere of contemporary literati (Bai, 2021).

"The New Literati Painting is not a group thing, he needs the continuous efforts of generations of painters" (Liu, 2011)

The concept of "New Literati Painting" is at least a hint that "Literati Painting" can make a comeback, and furthermore, a hint of the strong vitality of the Chinese painting tradition and its charm (Pi, 2011). What the New Literati painters want to do is to improve the traditional painting language system within the tradition, to break its balance, and to transform it into a new modern language structure (Wang, 2019).

"The inheritance relationship between New Literati Painting and Traditional Literati Painting mainly lies in the emphasis on the brush and ink techniques and the literati atmosphere, and the elegant style as well as its playfulness, not in the face of the realities of the big problems and the manifestation of the grandiose social events, but mainly emphasises on a kind of entertaining after-dinner entertainment for the literati, and the artistic enlightenment is reflected from the inactivity" (Wang, 2019).

In the early stages of the development of New Literati Ink Painting, despite a

great deal of criticism, it still has its own specific value as a way of modernising and transforming traditional ink art (Bai, 2021).

It can be seen that the new literati painters have tried to innovate in their inheritance and made useful attempts in language expression, which have gradually formed a new tradition with the characteristics of the times, injecting modern genes into ink painting, adding new vitality, and realising the transformation of form and language from tradition to modernity (Wang, 2019).

4. The Language Form of Experimental Ink Painting

The concept of experimental ink painting emerged in the 1990s, and the interpretation of experimental ink painting was first published in the second issue of *Guangdong Artists* edited by Free Huang Zhuan and Wang Huangsheng in 1993. At that time, it did not refer to a single type or style of painting, but rather to all new ink painting works that attempted to surpass traditional literati and realistic ink painting. It also referred to the ink painting creation of a new language form that was on the edge and not recognized at that time (Wang, 2019).

Experimental ink carries a strong experimental or experimental character, which is formed and developed in modern ink and shall be a modern ink form (Jiang, 2018).

"Experiment" is interpreted in the dictionary as "an experimental activity carried out to test whether a theory or hypothesis has the desired effect". Wang Huangsheng believes that "experimentalism" in ink and wash is a breakthrough and transcendence of the traditional development of the basic line and law, and that the purpose of experimentalism is to impact on the integrity of the traditional appearance of the form, and to carry out new explorations and new attempts in a maverick manner (Si, 2001). The "experimental ink and wash", in their view, did not specifically refer to a certain type or style of ink and wash painting, but rather referred to all the new ink and wash works that appeared at that time and were at the margins (Wang, 2019).

Experimental ink and wash, which abandons the heavy burden of brush and ink, and paints on a flat surface with mixed materials, tries to establish a set of art system that is different from traditional ink and wash. Since most of the experimental ink artists

have experimented with purely abstract language, their works also present abstract characteristics, so some critics also call it abstract ink (Zhu, 2007).

Experimental ink and wash artists have boldly explored the expressiveness, innovative patterns, and the possibility of integrating "ink and wash" with other contemporary art materials, as well as the possibility of introducing contemporary art, by drawing on the concepts and methods of Western modern and postmodern art (Zhu, 2013).

There are two main forms of expression for experimental ink painting, which are based on flat shelving, using comprehensive materials and techniques. The creation of flat shelves also has two visual characteristics: the first is the construction of patterns. The second is to emphasize the complex manual labor process, which creates meaningful trace images (Z. J. Liu, 1993).

Contemporary ink and wash, regardless of the name adopted, whether it is called modern ink and wash, experimental ink and wash, abstract ink and wash, or conceptual ink and wash, all these concepts have changed their prefixes and retained "ink and wash", which indicates that the linguistic symbols of ink and wash have their own specificity, representing the characteristics of a national culture and the character of the Oriental nation. The new ink forms show that modern ink not only distances itself from tradition, but also carries certain contemporary values centred on the spirit of oriental art (Wang, 2019).

2.3.3 Spiritual Direction of Contemporary Ink Painting

From the very beginning, the change of ink painting in the 1980s was not simply a question of art form, but one that involved sociology, culture, and even ideology (He, 2011).

The first is the dispute between tradition and modernity. In the development of Chinese modern art in the 20th century, the question of how to deal with tradition and modernity has always been the dominant discourse in cultural modernity (He, 2011). After entering the modern cultural era and cultural context, the object of the debate on Chinese ink painting is no longer Chinese painting or ink painting, but modern ink art

(Wang, 2019).

There were two peaks, one during the "85 New Wave Art Movement" and the other during the "85 New Wave Art Movement". Though there is a big difference in the cultural context at the beginning of their creation, there is a similarity in their essence, that is, under the impact of modern Western culture, how to respond positively to traditional Chinese culture, and hope to find a different path of development from modern Western art (He, 2011). The expression of ink language in modern cultural contexts is combined with contemporary cultural contexts, and many individualised works possess a new visual impact, and their common spiritual point of view is to reflect on the loss of the natural attributes of human beings brought about by the development of modern industry and high technology (Wang, 2019).

Next is the issue of subjectivity. Its spiritual essence still lies in defending "human" and "humanism". Critic Gao Minglu once divided the artistic creation from the Cultural Revolution to the new wave stage into three periods: the humanitarian period, the humanistic period, and the humanism period (He, 2011).

From the viewpoint of humanistic content and expression of modern ink painting, firstly, what they advocate and promote is the positive and enterprising state of mind of modern people under the influence of modern industrial civilisation. Secondly, they pay more attention to the city and the state of human beings in terms of content, and the urban landscape brought by the urbanisation of the countryside. Thirdly, compared with traditional ink painting, modern ink painting has made great breakthroughs in the form of painting composition, brushwork tools, material technology, colouring and production, and is freer and broader in terms of artistic creation concepts, themes and methods(Wang, 2019).

Third, the construction of an "imagined West". After the reform and opening up, the anxiety of modernity forced us to find a blueprint, and this blueprint is the material civilisation and modern culture of the West (He, 2011).

Judging from the contents of the works in this period, they are based on the reality of the rapid modernisation, marketisation and internationalisation of Chinese

society, pursuing their own true experiences and feelings, and making their own responses to the reality under the artistic intuition of sincere heart and self-feeling. Judging from their early experimental works, they still maintain a strong influence of Eastern cultural traditions. They are also critical of Western cultural rights, and at the same time borrow Western modern and post-modern artistic experience and language to deal with Chinese reality in an enlightened manner (Wang, 2019).

2.4 The Visual Language Turn of Contemporary Ink Painting
2.4.1 Modern Transformation of Traditional Art Spirit

What are modern spirit, modern concept and modern personality consciousness? That is: 1. the aggressive spirit of modern people closely related to modern industrial civilisation, and the spirit of competition and struggle; 2. the art concepts associated with Western modernism (such as abstraction, expressionism, abstract expressionism, etc.); 3. the modern humanistic character, a strong sense of individuality, critical consciousness, sense of concern, etc.

The spirit of Taoism and Zen contained in literati paintings can also be transformed in modern times, that is, injected into the spirit of reform, the spirit of the world, the spirit of criticism, and become a new spirit of unity between man and nature, a new faith, a new religion of nature, a kind of sacred worship of the individual and the Tao of Heaven (infinite, eternal, ultimate, unknowable, mysterious) in the state of mutual intersection (X. C. Liu, 1993).

1. Background and Context of Artistic Spiritual Transformation

The development of Chinese contemporary art played a role in the development of modern ink painting, and the revolutionary theme of "red light" in the 1970s influenced the spread of realism in the principle of the "three emphases" (Zhao, 2014).

The "85 New Wave Art Movement" in Chinese contemporary art brought together a group of young and energetic avant-garde artists who, under the influence of Western aesthetics and philosophical concepts, realised the ontological return of artistic exploration (Zhao, 2014).In the 1980s, the initial formation of the modern ink and wash form, it tries to think about the relationship between ink and wash art and life, and

criticise the traditional ink and wash in the existence of the concept of lagging behind and the art form for the service of politics (Jiang, 2018). In the early 80s of the last century, profound social changes were taking place in all walks of life, and the traditional ink and wash language form could no longer satisfy people's aesthetic ideals and spiritual pursuits, so various new ideas and graphic styles gradually came into people's view. The "85 New Wave Art Movement" was an art phenomenon that appeared against this background. The artists' awakening of self-consciousness prompted them to reflect on tradition and construct a new ink painting language system (Bai, 2021).

However, it seems that the awakening of the 1990s and the changes brought about by this awakening were even more violent, and the installation art, experimental art and other forms of art that became mainstream in the 1990s were changing in a diversified cultural environment, which provided possibilities for the development of modern ink and wash (Zhao, 2014).In the mid-1990s, a more open cultural environment prompted the transformation of modern ink and wash forms into contemporary ink and wash forms. Contemporary ink and wash artists began to rethink how ink and wash could enter the contemporary era, and how to establish an independent cultural and spiritual pivot with new forms (Jiang, 2018). In the 1990s, the process of urbanisation advanced at a high speed, mainstream culture and the elite class no longer dominated, social and cultural development became increasingly diversified, and people's aesthetic interests became more and more secular and popular. Artists were also inspired by this social and cultural change, and some of them began to pay attention to the urban life around them, and their works gradually appeared to express the mental state and thoughts and feelings of urban people (Bai, 2021).

In the 21st century, with the transformation of China's social and cultural patterns, the ink painting ontology also needs to develop and innovate its own formal language (Bai, 2021). The national self-esteem inspired by the discrimination and oppression of the weak cultures of the East by the strong Western cultures, which was already evident at the beginning of the 20th century, has once again become an important criterion for our behaviour in international cultural exchanges since the reform and opening up of

China in the new era (Pi, 2018).

The technological revolution brought about by industrialised societies requires us to look back at our traditional culture, to discover its spiritual foothold, and to search for the cultural spirit and traditional cultural lineage with Chinese characteristics (Wang, 2019).

2. Methods and Approaches to the Transformation of Artistic Spirituality

"It is generally recognised that Chinese society began to evolve towards modernity in 1840, whereas Chinese philosophy, aesthetics, literature, art and other academic ideas were delayed by 60 years, and only began their modern transformation at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century" (Wang, 2019).

"In general, the spirit of traditional Chinese art is embodied in four aspects: firstly, the spirit of reason in sensual activities; secondly, the spirit of life in the form of aesthetics; thirdly, the spirit of joyfulness in natural landscapes; and fourthly, the spirit of freedom in the reality of the environment" (Wang, 2019).

The modern transformation of the spirit of Chinese art takes place through four main ways: first, the transformation of the spirit of art in the political movement. Because politics needs art, art and politics need to be closely linked, so that art can carry out its own transformation with the help of political movements. The second is the transformation of the spirit of art in the cultural movement, because art is the best of culture and the concentrated expression of the spirit of culture. The transformation of the language of art forms carries with it the flavour of the new era and the taste of contemporary life, and this is also the first task of art to revolutionise culture (Wang, 2019).

We must face tradition, recognising its irreversible inertia and customary role, while at the same time accepting the challenge of giving it a modern meaning. Tradition is a source of living water that is rushing at our feet. It will be reborn through transformation. Is there any doubt about that (Chen, 2006)?

Thirdly, the establishment of a Western-style education system and the introduction of aesthetic education guidelines promoted the development of modern art

education. The influx of Western modern populism and modern aesthetic thought was the main external reason for the transformation of artistic thought (Chen, 2006).

The dialogue between the local and the global is another important driving force in the development of experimental art in China, inspiring experimental artists to explore their own identities, expanding their visual vocabulary, making traditional Chinese artistic concepts and forms part of the global contemporary art scene, and combining an understanding of international artistic trends with a concern for the reality of China (Wu, 2003).

Fourthly, with the in-depth exploration of academic research and aesthetic studies, this is a reasonable way for the modern transformation of the spirit of Chinese art. The implementation of new-style education and the rise of modern aesthetic research have played a significant role in the modern transformation of the spirit of ancient Chinese art (Wang, 2019).

3. Art Criticism Standards and the Construction of Aesthetic Theory System

After the emergence of modern aesthetics in China, the aesthetic standard of literary criticism was gradually established. What are the standards and specific requirements of aesthetic criticism of literature and art? Combined with Cai Yuanpei's theory and the critical thinking of aestheticians at that time, it can be summarised into three aspects: the form of beauty, the ideal content, and the relationship between the two. Specifically, the generation of aesthetic standards is discussed from three angles: form, content, and the relationship between content and form (Wang, 2019).

The first is form, which is the basic form of beauty. The form should be in accordance with the conditions of beauty, be able to fully express the free expression of emotions and have originality. Therefore, the conditions of beauty include the basic principles of expression in the language of painting (Wang, 2019). According to the painter Liu Zijian (1993), The so-called artistic method is a technical operation based on the attitude towards the chosen medium.

The second is the content, which holds the ideals of man. The content of painting creation is only a true reflection of the objective existence. The content chosen

by the artist to be on the screen should have a certain representativeness, a certain painting expressiveness, and also a certain sense of form conforming to the needs of artistic beauty creation. All these elements are the content that needs to be created artistically with emotion as the starting point (Wang, 2018). Lang Shaojun (1994) states: "I thought it was incredible to recreate a language system outside of the language of brush and ink that could convey the richness of the spiritual world and was comparable to the ancient ink and wash.

Thirdly, the bond that unites content and form - emotion. The creation of artistic form, i.e., the form of beauty, is to express emotion, so that emotion can be freely expressed. The relationship between form and content in aesthetics is transformed through emotional activity constitutes a work of art (Wang, 2019). The original motivation for the transformation of ink painting was still the attempt of artists to express themselves through ink art in the face of the rapidly changing Chinese society, and to seek their personal inner emotions and spiritual expression within the unified group mentality and ideology (Yin, 2003).

Firstly, based on the context of globalisation, under the framework of localisation and globalisation, nationalisation and westernisation, we should re-examine the characteristics of the local culture, and pay attention to the art historical logic of the development of contemporary ink and wash. Secondly, artists should pay attention to their personal creative methodology. Thirdly, contemporary ink and wash presents diversified art forms, and "crossover" has become a common phenomenon (Hu, 2011).

2.4.2 The Continuity and Turning of the Literati's Traditional Brushwork and Ink Language

Ink painting underwent two major changes in the twentieth century, both of which were aimed at changing the traditional aesthetic mode and the programmed aesthetic habits of literati painting by integrating Western forms of expression with traditional Chinese painting. The first change, led by Xu Beihong, occurred in the 1920s. He mainly adopted the Western method of photorealism to transform the traditional pictorial habits of ink painting. The second change was initiated by Lin Fengmian, beginning in the 1930s, and was based on the Western modernist form of painting as a

paradigm, leading ink painting towards ink expression (Wang, 2019).

"These two forces, promoted by the '85 New Wave Art Movement', formed a new force of Chinese and Western hybridisation, mixing and diversification. It was under the influence of these two new forces that the new era ink artists produced their later exploration of modern ink art" (Wang, 2019).

Specifically, the modern transformation of Chinese painting had its genesis in the revolutionary art movement of the May Fourth New Culture Movement. So far, it has had a practical process of nearly a hundred years. During this period, there have been several ups and downs, full of ups and downs. Roughly speaking, there have been three climaxes(Chen, 2006).

1. The Realistic Language Borrowed from Western Studies in the East

The first climax occurred between the 1920s and the 1940s, before the liberation. Among them were the well-known Lin Fengmian, Xu Beihong, Liu Haisu, Li Luogong, Xie Yun, Zhao Wangyun, Jiang Zhaohe, and the "Three Lingnan Masters" (Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifeng, Chen Shuren). At that time, there were already three tendencies:

A. The Compromise School, which could be represented by the "Three Lingnan Masters"(Chen, 2006);

B. The School of "Transforming the East with the West", represented by Xu Beihong, advocates for the transformation of Chinese painting with "realism", which was also advocated by Chen Duxiu and others back then (Chen, 2006).

The language of realistic modelling, if viewed historically, has long been present in traditional Chinese painting and has continued for millennia in the tradition of ancient Chinese painting, but not in the tradition of depicting the volume of light and shadow, as is generally the case in the West (Wang, 2019).

Xu Beihong to Western light and shadow realistic modelling view to transform the traditional ink painting. Its content is mainly the use of Western realistic light and shadow and sense of volume modelling to scientific, in-depth portrayal of the image, and sketch as the modelling of the basic training, in particular, to strengthen the realistic expression of the figure painting (Wang, 2019)

The "Fusion of Chinese and Western" school, represented by Lin Fengmian, advocated the use of "the strengths of the West and the development of forms" to express our own "internal emotional needs", thus realising the "renaissance of Chinese art". "The revival of Chinese art". At that time, Cai Yuanpei also asserted that "this is the age of East-West cultural fusion" (Chen, 2006).

C. The "Total Westernization" faction: Culturally, Hu Shi should be the representative, while artistically, the "Juelan Society" and its members can be used as examples (led by Ni Yide and Pang Xunchai). At that time, academic debates were extremely intense, and artistic practice was also very active. Later, most of these artists became pioneers in the history of modern Chinese art and achieved a generation of masters (Chen, 2006).

2. Language Shift From Realism to Expression

The second climax occurred in the 1950s and 1960s after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Innovation and conservatism are almost simultaneously pursued. A group of outstanding representatives also emerged, such as Fu Baoshi, Guan Shanyue, Shi Lu, Qian Songdao, Li Keran, Liu Wenxi, Fang Zengxian, Lu Chen, Zhou Sicong, and so on. Among them, the most representative and tragic one should be Shi Lu. In the second climax, Li Keran eventually achieved "good results" and became a master of the innovative (or new Chinese painting) movement (Chen, 2006).

The first phase was the 1980s, during which Chinese art was impacted by the artistic trends since Western modernism, which triggered drastic changes. Nowadays, it seems that this impact is mainly on the concepts, styles and patterns of art itself, and Chinese art has also appeared to respond to the impacts of Western art by changing its characteristics (Fan, 2003).

Expressive ink painting emerged in the early 1980s and flourished in the mid-1990s. In terms of artistic style, it is a logical evolution of the traditional Chinese-style freehand painting in the development of modern society. As a language of artistic presentation, expressive ink painting has not fundamentally severed the bloodline connection with tradition, and it is easier for people to accept the customary language of

ink painting and the interest of the times (Wang, 2019).

The current group of ink and wash exploration is mainly concentrated in art colleges and universities. They aspire to improve tradition and lead the trend, and their way of exploring ink and wash language is mainly to draw on the concepts and techniques of Western expressionism. In the early 1930s, Lin Fengmian was the representative. After the 1960s, in Beijing, Zhou Sicong and Lu Chen were the representatives, and in the south, Li Shinan was the representative. They all vigorously promoted the modern transformation of ink language. In the mid-1990s, multiple exhibitions with expressive themes effectively promoted the evolution of expressive ink, and the attention and discussion of art theorists on expressive ink greatly enriched the literature on expressive ink. By the 1990s, expressive ink had formed a team, with representative painters such as Zhou Jingxin, Wang Yanlin, Li Xiaoxuan, Wang Yanping, Hai Rihan, Chao Hai, Tian Liming, etc. The emergence of expressionism in ink and wash painting has led to its cultural criticism targeting, sweeping away the literary weakness and lethargy of literati painting. With the spiritual strength of new era cultural communicators and innovative visual language, it forms a new force in modern ink and wash painting (Wang, 2019).

3. Language Exploration of Modern Experimental Ink Painting

The third climax appeared in the 1980s and 1990s after the reform and opening up, and continues to this day (Chen, 2006).

The 1980s was the period of the greatest change in Chinese ink painting, which can be roughly divided into three stages. The first phase was the early 1980s, from 1980 to 1984. The second stage is the middle period, from 1985 to 1986. The third stage is the later period, 1987 to 1989 (Wang, 2019).

In the 1990s and the inter-century period, Chinese art was influenced not only by internal artistic factors, but also by new trends in international culture (Fan, 2003).

From a macro cultural perspective, the period from 1980 to 1984 was a reserve period for a significant shift in cultural concepts. From 1985 to 1986, individuals and groups expressed their personalities through various ink and wash languages emerged.

From 1987 to 1989, the youth art movement gradually came to an end. The concept of new literati painting was proposed, and since 1987, exhibitions and continuous academic discussions have been held, causing a great response in China. From this, it can be seen that under the influence of new concepts, the changes in formal language in the Chinese painting industry after the 1980s naturally became a trend to move forward (Wang, 2019).

From the perspective of the history and logic of the development of Chinese ink painting, modern ink painting has a significant contribution advantage as a whole. Moreover, the brush and ink system of Chinese ink painting itself is closely related to the cultivation of personality and character, and has a complete evaluation system (Wang, 2019).

Contemporary ink painting has been influenced by the Reform and Opening-Up policy and Western thought in its development. In terms of spiritual direction, it places greater emphasis on the mental state of modern individuals, urban landscapes, and a more liberated creative approach. Its visual language continues to evolve, showcasing diverse artistic expressions. (Figure 4)
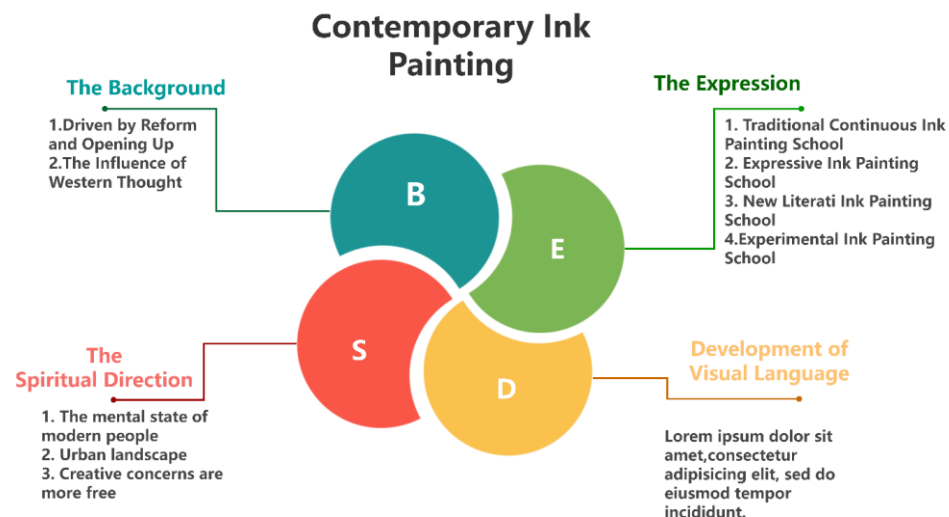
Figure 4 Key Aspects of Contemporary Ink Painting Development

Source: Created by Author

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative one, aiming at exploring the shift in the visual language of Chinese painting from traditional ink painting to contemporary ink painting under Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction, as well as the (cultural) factors that have influenced the shift.

3.1 Research Methodological

3.1.1 Schema and Correction Theory: A Conceptual Explanation

The concept of "schema" was first put forward by Kant, who believed that there is a kind of a priori category in the human mind that is beyond experience, and that there exists an innate structure or archival system in the human brain, where the subject synthesises and organises the perceptual materials from the object through the a priori schema system to recognise, experience and perceive the world around us. He is more from the philosophical aspect of logical reasoning discursive derived from the subjective use of a priori schema to synthesise the phenomenon of miscellaneous, this subjective one-way role of the schema doctrine, by the Swiss psychologist Piaget selective absorption, the development of subjective-objective interaction epistemological doctrine, in addition to the person's a priori genetic schema, and after the knowledge and experience of the continuous intermingling of the development of a developmental cognitive schema constructed. Gombrich scientifically absorbed the relevant theories of "schema" and applied them to the study of art history, and his Schema and Correction theory was developed by Gombrich in 1960 in his book Art and Illusion. The Schema and Correction theory was first proposed by Gombrich in his book Art and Illusion in 1960, and was continuously developed in the following studies.

The theory of Schema and Correction can be said to be a dynamic evolutionary process that governs the reproduction of the visible world in the visual arts. The artist learns schemas from the works of his predecessors and observes nature with them, and

then briefly files, selects, and processes them according to his mental orientations, which is the process of "projection" (the projection mentality can be influenced by socio-cultural factors, technological advances, and the artist's personal experience). "In this process of "projection", the visual perception moves the conceptual schema into random, vague and uncertain visual materials, thus generating a kind of expectation for its visualisation. In response to a variety of external stimuli, this expectation is adjusted and modified (in art, the modifications are generally obtained from the subject matter, composition, brushwork and psychological symbolism), until the expectation is met with a predetermined experience that is in line with the existing one. In this process, the schema is constantly moving towards clarity and certainty, and Gombrich sums up this perceptual process of generating expectations and making corrections as the process of "schema-correction". By constantly revising the schema, the artist's style develops and changes over time, which explains the phenomenon of stylistic change in art history.

Therefore, the research methodology of this project is based on Gombrich's Schema and Correction theory as the core theoretical framework (Figure 5), and the four steps of the artwork reproduction process: artwork, schema, projection, and correction as the research process, as well as a cyclical approach to the argument. A variety of methods such as literature review, case study, theoretical derivation, interviews, etc. were used to design the study. The process formula can be expressed as:

Schema$\longrightarrow$ Projection$\longrightarrow$ Correction $\longrightarrow$ Artwork (Schema Reproduction)
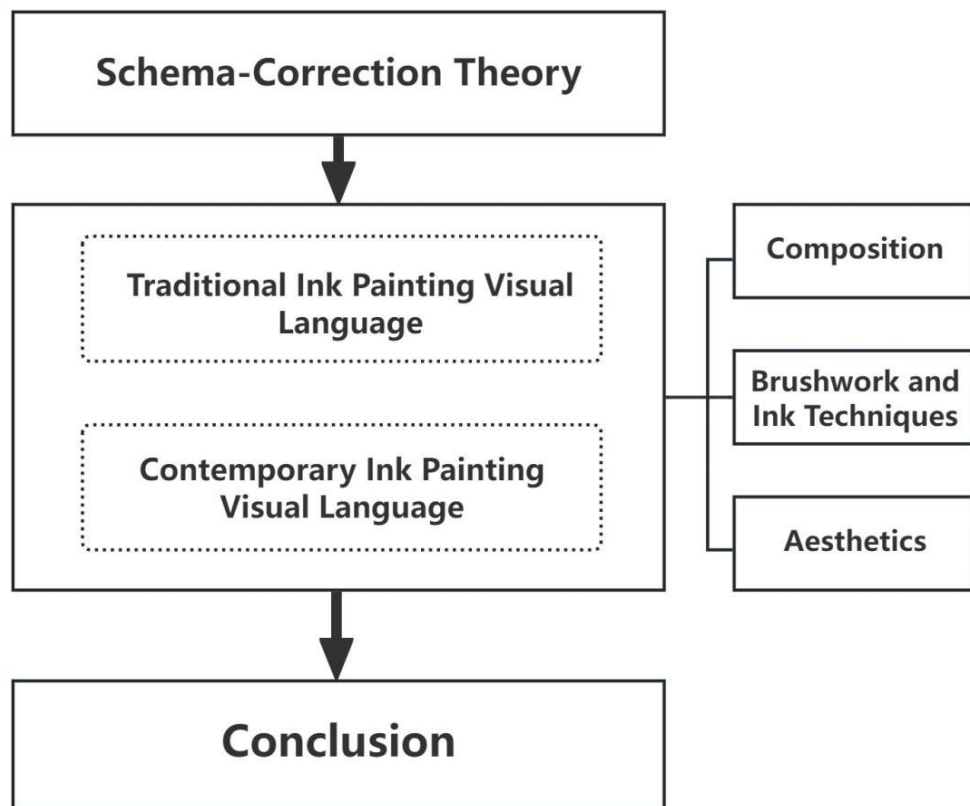
Figure 5 Theoretical Framework

Source: Created by Author

3.1.2 Research Framework

The entire study was conducted through case studies. At the centre of each step of the research are the research objectives. A case study is a research method that explores and understands a complex phenomenon or issue through the in-depth study of one or several cases. The aim is to grasp the inner logic and diversity of complex phenomena through a thorough analysis of the cases.

In the literature review and case study, the purpose of how the Schema and Correction theory was applied was addressed. The result was a "schema-projection-correction" research process.

The second objective is at the heart of the research, using a process of multiple

rounds of research into complex problems. In order to clearly explain. In order to understand the motivation of the evolution of visual language in contemporary ink painting, how it evolves in contemporary ink painting, and the development trend of contemporary ink painting, we have developed a literature analysis method and an interview method. In order to understand the motivation of the evolution of visual language in contemporary times, how visual language evolves in contemporary times, and the development trend of contemporary ink painting, the literature analysis method and the interview method were developed.

Firstly, by means of literature analysis, the origin, development and characteristics of the visual language of traditional ink painting, and the background of the change and development of contemporary ink painting, as well as the expressive forms of contemporary ink painting, are collated. Then we will conduct semi-structured interviews with representatives of several different forms of contemporary ink painting, and the expected results are as follows

Find out what are the main characteristics of the themes, compositions, brush and ink techniques and psychological symbolism in the works of various contemporary artists. And from this, explore how the visual language has changed from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting. Focus on analysing the motives behind these changes, including social and cultural factors, technological advances, and changes in the artists' personal experiences. (Figure. 6)
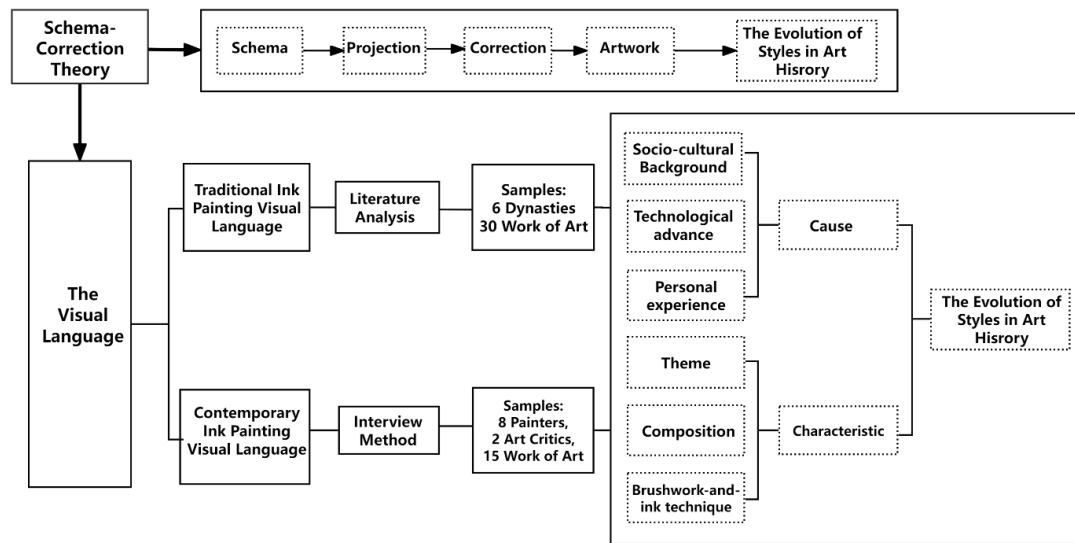
Figure 6 Research Framework

Source: Created by Author

3.2 Research Process

3.2.1 Traditional Ink Painting

3.2.1.1 Research Objectives

The progress of society and the development of art have led to the emergence of new patterns in traditional Chinese ink painting. How have such patterns evolved in different historical periods, and does this evolution show a certain pattern or pattern? What are the differences in visual language between traditional Chinese ink painting and contemporary ink painting?

After trying to construct a model of the visual language characteristics of traditional ink painting, the author attempts to systematically sort out and analyze the published literature using iconography and documentary analysis, aiming to study the visual language of traditional Chinese ink painting, in order to explore what are the main characteristics of the painting in terms of theme, composition, brushwork and ink techniques, and psychological symbolism, as well as to reveal its developmental lineage and to analyse the motives behind the changes, including socio-cultural factors The study also reveals the developmental chain and analyses the motivations behind these

changes, including socio-cultural factors, technological advances, and changes in the artists' personal experiences.

3.2.1.2 Study Design

1. Research Questions

Against the purpose of the study, the following five research questions were formulated:

1). What is the general theme chosen for traditional ink paintings?

2). What is the compositional form of traditional ink painting?

3). What are the aspects of brush and ink techniques in traditional ink painting?

4). What is the artist's inner activity in the process of painting or what spirit is he trying to convey through the object?

5). Have socio-cultural factors and technological advances had any impact on the development of the visual language of traditional ink painting?

6). The five research questions above were synthesised to carry out image literature search, screening and analysis.

2. Research Objects

Based on the literature review, for the origin and development of traditional Chinese ink painting, the collection of samples is established to be divided into six dynasties, namely, the Tang Dynasty and the Five Dynasties period, the Song Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China, and the modern era, and from each dynasty a list of 2-6 representative painters is established based on the three specialisations of traditional Chinese painting, and from each painter, 2-5 representative pieces of work are selected as the sample of the study. Each sample needs to meet the following conditions. (Tabel 1)

Table 1 Traditional Chinese ink Painting Sample Standards

Sample	Standard
Artists	1. The artist's style of painting belonged to this dynasty at the peak of his artistic career or for most of his artistic career.

Table 1 (Continued)

Sample	Standard
Artists	2. The artist's artistic achievements need to be recognised by historians. For example, when a certain dynasty is mentioned, the ink painter who comes to mind is him.
	3. The artist's art of painting has had a profound impact on later generations.
Works of Art	1. There are definite surviving works. The work has been catalogued or a definite provenance can be found on the Internet.
	2. whose paintings have been demonstrated by historians to be uncontested.
	3. His representative works are determined to be the highest peak of his artistic career or representative of the characteristics of his painting art, and have a profound influence on future generations.

3. Research Methods

Chinese traditional ink art, the visual language presented in traditional Chinese painting art is the product of long-term historical experience and social life, highlighting the deep human consciousness and cognitive culture. With the help of schema theory, we can interpret the material and visual culture from a psychological point of view, and explore the hidden "social concepts" behind the ink painting art.

Kant believed that images and schemas are closely linked, and that images, as representations of visual culture, are subject to the intervention of schemas in the process of being recognised by the human brain, and that different people's cognitive schemas form different perceptual outcomes. Jean Piaget believes that the composition of schema is the combination of human cognitive structure, of which schema is the cognitive unit. Gombrich, based on the former thesis, puts forward a new viewpoint from the perspective of ephemerality, that the formation of schema is the result of historical

experience and cognitive accumulation, not innate.

To sum up, this chapter applies Gombrich's theory of "Schema-Correction", aiming to investigate what were the main "Schema" of the visual language of traditional Chinese ink painting in each dynasty, and how they were reflected in the subject matter, compositions, techniques of brushwork and inking, and psychological symbolism. The aim is to study what the main "schema" of the visual language of traditional Chinese ink painting were in each dynasty, and how they were reflected in the themes, compositions, brushwork and ink techniques and psychological symbols.

The analysis of the literature of the pictures in the article adopts the research method of iconography, iconography is a branch of art history, used by the German cultural historian Aby Wahlberg, the German-American art historian Panofsky and his followers, which is used to reveal the social, cultural and historical background of the themes and motifs of the visual arts, and its emergence as a counterbalance to the formalist approach to the history of art, which emphasises the study of themes and symbols and cultural significance of a work of art. Emphasising the study of the subject matter, symbolic meaning and cultural significance of works of art, the iconographic approach is a method of research that draws on all accessible pictorial or textual sources to explore the meaning of a work of art as it once was.

This study focuses on the core issue of "the visual language characteristics of traditional Chinese ink painting", starting from the Sui and Tang dynasties after the emergence of traditional Chinese ink painting, and then going through six periods, namely, the Five Dynasties and the Song Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, and the Modern Times, to analyse the main characteristics of the visual language of ink paintings in each of these periods and their underlying aesthetic spirit and the psychological symbolism of the artists, with the help of graphic analysis. The main features of the visual language of ink painting in each period, as well as the aesthetic spirit behind them and the psychological symbolism of the artists, are analysed in terms of theme, composition, brush and ink techniques, and psychological symbolism.

From this, we can derive the basic schema of traditional ink painting, which becomes the basic framework for viewers to understand and appreciate ink painting.

3.2.2 Contemporary Ink Painting

This paper focuses on the actual acquisition of first-hand case data through open-ended semi-structured in-depth interviews, on the basis of which the qualitative research method of thematic analysis was used to fully analyse the text of the interviews, and combined with the case study method to analyse the characteristics of the visual language of contemporary ink paintings and the development of the development of the vein.

3.2.2.1 Research Objectives

The progress of society and the development of art have led to the emergence of new patterns in traditional Chinese ink painting, what is the development or evolution of such patterns in contemporary times, and what social and cultural background changes does this development reflect? How do socio-cultural factors affect the inheritance of traditional ink painting's schema, and is the mode of revision in the theory of Schema and Correction affected by social changes and cultural concepts?

After trying to construct a model of the visual language characteristics of contemporary ink painting and the development of visual language characteristics from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting, the author attempts to use interviews or learn about the various painting psychology and painting styles of contemporary ink painters from various sources, aiming to study the visual language of contemporary ink painting in China in order to explore what are the main characteristics of the painting in terms of subject matter, composition, brushwork and inking techniques, and psychological symbolism.

And to understand and analyse whether contemporary ink painting is influenced by traditional ink painting, aiming to explore how the visual language has changed from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting. Focus on analysing the motives behind these changes, including social and cultural factors, technological advances, and changes in the artists' personal experiences. It also uses Ernst Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction to explain the development of Chinese ink

painting and the transformation of visual language in contemporary ink painting, and to provide new research ideas for contemporary art creation and criticism.

3.2.2.2 Research Design

1. Selection of Research Subjects

The design of the case study mainly includes two aspects, one is the selection of cases and the other is the acquisition of research information. In terms of case selection, unlike the "representativeness" criterion of quantitative research, case studies are mainly based on the principle of "typicality" for the actual sampling of case study subjects, and are mainly characterised by a focus on the quality rather than the quantity of case information.

Corresponding to the typicality sampling of this study, the core object of this study is contemporary ink painters, establishing that the sample collection comes from the four main schools of contemporary ink painting genres - the traditional continuation ink painting school, the expressive ink painting school, the neo-literary painting school and the experimental ink painting school (Table 2). Due to the limitations of research time, data collection, and our own research conditions, two artists (experts) from each school were taken as sample representatives for interviews in this case. And two ink painting critics (experts) were taken as sample representatives for interviews. (Table 3)

Table 2 Contemporary Chinese ink Painting Sample Standards

Sample	Standard
Artists	1. The artist painted in this style at the height of his or her artistic career or for most of his or her artistic career
	2. The artist's artistic achievements need social recognition. Such as a member of the Chinese Artists Association, or major art school teachers, and although there is no social title, but frequently in the national exhibition awards;

Table 2 (Continued)

Sample	Standard
Artists	3. The paintings that have been exhibited in the exhibitions held by this school of painting are representative of the style and type of this school of painting and have made a wide impact on the society.
Art Critic	1. Art critics who have publicly commented and discussed the development of contemporary ink painting on public social media;
	2. Scholars with deeper research on traditional Chinese ink painting and contemporary ink painting who have published collections of essays.

Table 3 List of Specific Interviews on Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting

Type of Painting	Representative Individual	Eligible
Continuing the traditional ink painting school	Liu Yuanxi	Freelance artist; held solo exhibitions of ink paintings
	Lu Shang	Taught at the China Academy of Art; held solo exhibitions of ink paintings
Expressive Ink Painting School	Li Xiaoxuan	Professor of Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, doctoral supervisor, member of China Artists Association
	Zhang Liang	Lecturer at Hanshan Normal College, Member of China Art Association
New Literati School of Painting	Zhang Sunzhe	Teaching of Nanjing Art Institute, Postdoctoral Fellow of School of Art and Archaeology, Zhejiang University University

Table 3 (Continued)

Type of Painting	Representative Individual	Eligible
	YangYishu	Lecturer at Yunnan Art Institute; Member of China Artists Association
Experimental Ink Painting School	Zhang Yujin	Associate Professor, College of Fine Arts, Hanshan Normal University
	Jin Dawei	Researcher, Institute of Chinese Pictorial Flower and Bird Painting; Director of Zhejiang Chinese Bird and Flower Painters Association Bird and Flower Painters Association
Art Critic	Lu Hong	Member of China Artists Association, Visiting Professor and Master's Tutor of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute and Hubei Fine Arts Institute
	Wang Huangsheng	Currently a professor and doctoral supervisor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. General Director of the Art Museum of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and Director of the New Museology Research Center

2. Sources of Data Collection

Data collection is the key to a good research study, in order to better collect effective and feasible case data and information, the author's data collection of case information is mainly through the following ways.

1). Review of Literature. Literature mainly consists of remarks, interviews, and essays related to ink painting published in public by the above interviewed experts.

2). Web Search. The web search focused on video and audio as well as web interviews and essays related to ink painting published on the web by the above interviewed experts.

3). Interview Survey. The survey was primarily conducted by using semi-structured interviews with ink artists and ink art critics.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Visual Language of Traditional Ink Painting: Memory Projection and Schema
Reproduction of Traditional Ink Painting Art

In the theory of the origin of art, Aristotle proposed that "art originates from
imitation", and imitation is the prerequisite for reproduction. Schema refers to the
cognitive structure of the human brain, and is the basic tool of the artist in the early
stages of creation. It usually originates from the traditional art language, style or the
established symbolic representation of a certain visual form, and may be the artist's
personal customary method, or absorbed from the predecessors or contemporary art
genres. At this stage, the schema provides a framework within which the artist can begin
their work in an organised manner.

How to transform the ideology and cultural symbolism contained in ink art
through the material medium actually achieves the purpose of schema reproduction.
The term "schema reproduction" refers to the artist's reproduction based on existing
visual experience, traditional norms or inherent expressive techniques. These schemas
are usually the result of long-term accumulation and learning, and may come from
artistic training, social acquisition or historically inherited modes of expression. They
provide a preliminary framework or template for artistic creation.

Here "schema reproduction" contains two meanings: firstly, the ink artist creates
works of art with ink painting as the carrier according to individual cognition and life
experience, which is the process of schema reproduction; secondly, the viewer,
according to his own understanding and judgement, consciously interprets the cultural
connotations behind the works of art with ink painting, which is also the process of
schema reproduction. This process is also a schematic reproduction. Therefore, the
inheritance and transformation of ink art can be reproduced schematically through the
composition and the art of brush and ink in the picture, with the help of some material
objects. In other words, while observing the image, the viewer's mental prior experience

will form a "preformed schema", which will prepare him to enter the preparatory state of observing the image, perceiving the object through visual perception, and then completing the process of schema reproduction.

"Memory projection" refers to the artist's projection of past visual memories, personal experiences and subjective imagination into the current creative process. This kind of projection is not mere imitation, but the artist reconstructs what he/she has observed in his/her memories and incorporates them into his/her creation.

For "projection", the common meaning of "projection" is that the creator presents his or her subjective thoughts in the form of a work, i.e., the subject's thoughts are projected onto the object. Gombrich in "Art and Illusion" mentioned two concepts of mapping, i.e. "retinal projection" and "psychological projection", he thinks that projection is inseparable from human perception and psychology, and it is the human psychology that influences the choice of projection. The process of "seeing" in the human brain is a complex mechanism, and the implicit concepts behind visual manifestations support the completion of visual behavior. Memory projection involves personal visual experience and subjective feelings, with more emotional colours and personalised expression. Traditional ink painting is one of the important carriers of traditional Chinese painting to carry regional culture. The creator uses ink painting as a medium to reflect the emotional intention of the subject's thinking through the art of composition and brush and ink techniques, which is consciously projected in the creation of ink painting, and the viewer unconsciously searches for the "common characteristics" of the artistic expression through the visual form and creates emotional resonance. The viewer unconsciously searches for the "common characteristics" of artistic expression through the visual form and produces emotional resonance. (Figure 7)

This process equation can be expressed as:

Schema⟶ Projection⟶ Correction ⟶ Artwork (Schema Reproduction)
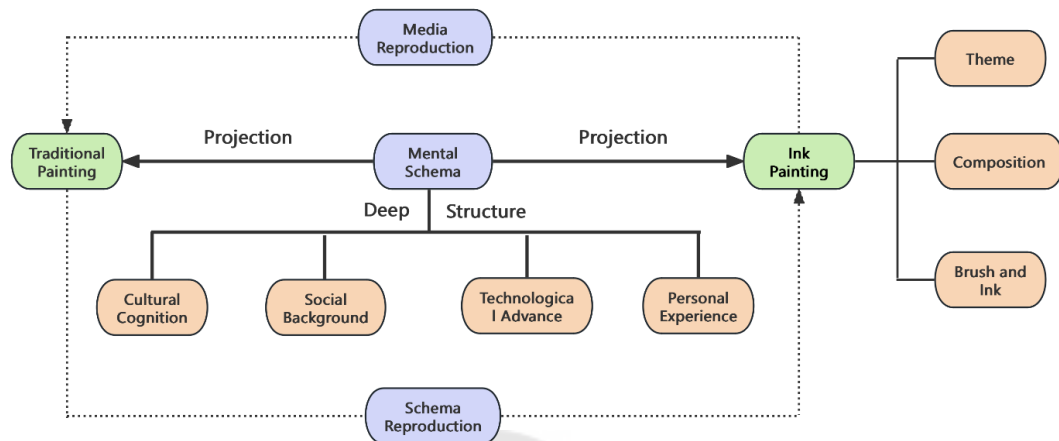
Figure 7 Schematic Representation of Schema Reproduction and Memory Projection

Source: Created by Author

4.1.1 Research Process

In order to do a good job of analysing the literature (images) for the study, the author went about the study in four main stages.

The first stage is the preparation stage of literature analysis and research, which lasts from July 2023-June 2024, this stage focuses on reading a lot of literature (images), making notes, memos, and classifying the literature. The second stage is the selection stage of the literature, the time from March-July 2024, the sample of the classified samples in accordance with the criteria for the selection of samples, the useful literature as a material, and the useless abandoned. The third stage is the data entry and the related data coding stage, which lasts from June-September 2024. The fourth stage is the stage of data collation, analysis, summary and writing, which lasts from June-December 2024. The process is described below:

The first stage is the preparation stage of literature analysis and research: through reading a large number of literature (images) related to traditional ink painting, the author established the development of traditional ink painting, from the Sui and Tang dynasties when ink painting appeared, through the Song Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty, the

Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, and the modern period, and the samples of the literature (images) were selected from these six periods.

The second stage is the selection of literature: the author focuses on the core proposition of "Characteristics of the visual language of traditional Chinese ink painting", based on Pan Tianshou's *History of Chinese Painting*, Wang Bomin's *History of Chinese Painting*, Chen Shizeng's *History of Chinese Painting*, Zheng Wei's *History of Chinese Painting*, Hong Zaixin's *History of Chinese Fine Arts*, and Wang Xun's *History of Chinese Fine Arts*, Fan Bo's *History of Chinese Painting Art Specialised in Figures Volume*, Wang Huangsheng and Hu Guanghua's *History of Chinese Painting Art Specialised in Landscapes Volume*, and Kong Liuqing's *History of Chinese Painting Art Specialised in Birds and Flowers Volume of Chinese Traditional Ink Painting Artists*, to select eligible image samples and to create a chart table. The specific data statistics are listed in the table below. (Table 4-9)

Table 4 Summary of Information on Traditional Ink Painters and Representative Works - Sui and Tang Dynasty

Dynasty: Sui and Tang Dynasty		
Category	Painter	Representative work
Landscape Painting	Wang Wei	Snowy view of the Riverbank
	Jing Hao	Scroll of Mount Lu
	Guan Tong	Travelling in the Guanshan Mountains
Total	3	3

Table 5 Summary of Information on Traditional Ink Painters and Representative Works - Song Dynasty

Dynasty: Song Dynasty		
Category	Painter	Representative work
Figure Painting	Liang Kai	Immortals in Ink and Wash
Landscape Painting	Fan Kuan	Travelling in the Streams and Mountains
	Guo Xi	Early Spring
	Ma Yuan	A picture of a carved platform looking at the clouds
	Xia Gui	The Forest Dwelling in the Smokey Mountains
	Yang Wujiu	Four Plums Scroll
	Zhao Mengjian	Scroll of Narcissus
Total	7	7

Table 6 Summary of Information on Traditional Ink Painters and Representative Works - Yuan Dynasty

Dynasty: Yuan Dynasty		
Category	Painter	Representative work
Landscape Painting	Huang Gongwang	Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains
	Ni Zan	The Six Gentlemen
Birds and Flowers Painting	Li Kan	Peace in the Four Seasons
	Zheng Sixiao	Ink and Orchid
	Wang Mian	Ink and Plum Scroll
Total	5	5

Table 7 Summary of Information on Traditional Ink Painters and Representative Works - Ming Dynasty

Dynasty: Ming Dynasty		
Category	Painter	Representative work
Landscape Painting	Shen Zhou	Mount Lushan High Picture
Birds and Flowers Painting	Chen Chun	Ink Brush Flowers
	Xu Wei	Ink Grapes
Total	3	3

Table 8 Summary of Information on Traditional Ink Painters and Representative Works - Qing Dynasty

Dynasty: Qing Dynasty		
Category	Painter	Representative work
Landscape Painting	Shi Tao	Cloudy Mountain
Birds and Flowers Painting	BaDa ShanRen	Scroll of Waterfowl with Lotus and Stone
	Jin Nong	Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms
	Zheng Xie	Gift For Apricot Blossom Owner Bamboo and Stone Picture
Total	4	4

Table 9 Summary of Information on Traditional Ink Painters and Representative Works -
Modern Times, and the Number of All Works

Dynasty: Modern Times		
Category	Painter	Representative work
Landscape Painting	Huang Binhong	A Visit to Shu and a Painting of a Clumsy Brush
Birds and Flowers Painting	Qi Baishi	Shrimp scroll
	Pan Tianshou	Scroll of Bago Cliffs and Stones, The Turquoise Scroll, Eagle's Commanding Gaze Hanging Scroll, Plum Blossom and Plantain Scroll, Plum and Crane Scroll
	Xu Beihong	The Great Horses
Total	4	8
Grand Total	26	30

The third stage of image data collation and interpretation: according to the 30 images identified above, obtain high-definition images from the "Chinese Treasures Gallery" (website: http://www.ltfc.net). For images not included in the "Chinese Treasures Gallery", continue to search on the Internet or books, but to ensure the quality of the images.

The fourth stage of data collation, analysis and summary and writing stage: this stage mainly adopts the research method of iconography to analyse the selected pictures of art works iconographically. Respectively, from the choice of theme and composition, brush and ink techniques and psychological symbols in the ink painting works, the iconographic methods of pre-imaginative analysis, iconographic analysis and iconographic analysis are used to analyse them and to be able to come up with the basic schema of traditional ink painting.

4.1.2 Individual Sample Schemas, Projections, Corrections and Schema
Reproduction Processes

　　1. Sui and Tang Dynasties

　　　　(I) Wang Wei, *Snowy View of the Riverbank*

Silk, ink and light colours, 24.8✕162.8cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 8 Wang Wei, *Snowy View of the Riverbank*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 9 *Snowy View of the Riverbank* (Detail: Trees and Birds)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 10 Zhan Ziqian, *Spring Tour*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. *Snowy View of the Riverbank* (Figure 8) adopts a horizontal scroll composition with two opposite banks. The mountains in the distance and the riverbank near the river form a relative style. The mountains in the distance are rendered in light ink, supplemented by white space, forming a vague sense of uncertainty, and the depiction of black crows adds a sense of loneliness. In the near scene, the snow-covered riverbank is expressed in white, creating a peaceful and ethereal atmosphere.

Brushwork Techniques. *Snowy view of the riverbank* the rocks and trees with concise brushwork and light ink outlines (Figure 9). The lightness of the brush strokes avoids complicated lines, giving the painting an ethereal and deep meaning.

Ink Techniques. In this work, only light ink is used to express the outlines of the scene, and the coldness of the snowy landscape is presented through a large amount of white space. The white space is both a blank space and an extension of the meaning of the painting. Through these "blanks", the viewer can feel that there is infinite space for imagination in the painting.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. Wang Wei was not only a painter, but also a famous poet. He injected poetic and philosophical thoughts into his works. The silent snowy landscape of *Snowy view of the riverbank* not only depicts natural scenery, but is also an artistic expression of a tranquil state of mind. Dong Qichang (2007) said, "The painting of the literati began with Wang Yuancheng." Zhang Yanyuan (2007) described Wang Wei's paintings in the Record of Famous Paintings Throughout the Ages: "Wherever he wrote, he got the real state of the mountains and rivers, and the strange shape of the trees and rocks," and "poetic and picturesque, very much out of the world," and "the poetic and picturesque.

The integration of personal emotions. Wang Wei's works are deeply influenced by Zen thought, and he incorporates his own feelings about nature and life into his paintings, showing a free mind that is not bound by the world. In his creations, he based on the visual experience in his memory, and projected his individual feelings onto the picture through artistic techniques. This projection is not a mere reproduction, but a reinterpretation and reconstruction (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

Ink and wash (landscape) painting emerged. In terms of ink, Wang Wei broke through the early landscape painting pattern of colouring (Figure 10), using black and white ink colours and integrating brushwork into the picture, correcting the early landscape painting technique of outlining and filling in colours. At this point, ink painting began to enter the history of traditional Chinese painting.

The deepening of the combination of poetry and painting. As both a poet and a painter, Wang Wei incorporated poetry into his paintings, making the images a model of "poetry in paintings and poetry in paintings", "Taste the poetry of Mochizuki, and there is a painting in the poem; see the painting of Mochizuki, and there is poetry in the painting." The painting is a model of "poetry in painting". The light colours and simple composition of *Snowy view of the riverbank* not only reflect a deep understanding of nature, but also demonstrate the artist's unique Zen spirit in his artistic creation.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Description. The work outlines the distant mountains and trees through light ink, and the river bank expresses the snow scene with white space, the picture is simple and ethereal, conveying the silent beauty of nature. The composition of the whole painting presents the effect of an empty foreground, a vague mid-range, and a pale distant scene.

(II) Jing Hao, *Scroll of Mount Lu*

Silk, ink and watercolour,185.8✖106.8cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 11 Jing Hao, *Scroll of Mount Lu*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 12 *Scroll of Mount Lu* (Detail: Three Brushwork Techniques)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The panoramic composition of *Scroll of Mount Lu* (Figure 11) shows a complete landscape painting. The top of the painting peaks towering, showing the lofty and solemn mountains and rivers; the middle section of the meandering stream, creating a deep and quiet atmosphere; the foreground of the pine pale and strong, and the village houses echo each other, adding the breath of life and the sense of harmony of nature.

Brushwork Techniques. Jing Hao uses three main techniques in his paintings: sketch Techniques, cun techniques and rendering techniques (Figure 12). Sketch Techniques. The outline of the rocks is sketched with a medium brushwork, the lines are strong and powerful, showing the hardness and stability of the rocks. Cun Techniques. The first "PhiMa Cun", with fine lines to depict the texture of the mountains and bumpy changes, so that the rocks have a sense of hierarchy and texture. Rendering Techniques. On the basis of the chapping method, the light ink is used to stain the rocks several times, showing the shadows and volume of the rocks, giving the picture a rich

and vivid atmosphere.

Ink Techniques. Jing Hao uses a combination of ink and wash, highlighting the changes in the shape of the mountains. The ink is richly layered, the distant mountains are dyed with light ink to express the ethereal and far-reaching sense, while the near scene is delicately carved through the chapping to show the texture and heaviness of the rocks, the use of ink and wash techniques fully reflects the spatial depth of the picture and the natural vitality of the picture.

2. Projection

The expression of natural mood. *Scroll of Mount Lu* is not only a landscape painting, but also the artist's emotional attachment to the sublimity and tranquility of nature. The depiction of mountains and valleys in the painting shows the majesty and beauty of nature, while the streams and villages reveal the harmonious relationship between man and nature. Through panoramic compositions and delicate techniques, Jing Hao combines the magnificence and serenity of the landscape, conveying reverence and praise for nature (Wang & Hu, 2008).

Integration of individual emotions. As an important painter of the five dynasties period, Jing Hao incorporated his own deep understanding of landscape and aesthetic perception into his creations. He was not only concerned with the true representation of natural forms, but also focused on expressing his telepathic feelings towards nature through artistic techniques. The white space and empty space in his paintings allow the viewer to freely imagine and construct a personal state of mind about nature.

3. Corrections

The exploration of panoramic composition. The painting of *Scroll of Mount Lu* reflects the innovation and correction of landscape painting in the five dynasties period. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, landscape paintings gradually transitioned from symbolic depictions to realism, and Jing Hao's works further developed on this basis, systematically expressing a sense of space through the "Three Distant Methods" (flat, high, and deep) to present a more complete panoramic layout of the landscape. This panoramic composition opened a new stage in the development of Chinese landscape

painting and provided a model for landscape painting for generations to come.

Refinement of techniques. Jing Hao's use of "cun techniques" is an important breakthrough in the technique of Chinese landscape painting, correcting the traditional "outlining" as the main mode of expression, so that landscape painting from a single line depicting the development of chapping, dyeing a combination of rich forms of expression. The cun techniques not only enhanced the texture and hierarchy of the picture, but also laid down the basic technique for Chinese painting to express the texture of natural rocks and mountains, providing a technical basis for the mature development of landscape painting.

4. Artwork (Schema Reproduction)

Image description. This picture is a panoramic composition, the picture is painted in the mountain peaks towering into the clouds, and the main peak is located in the central axis, winding mountain paths, upright pines, resulting in a kind of artistic effect of the mountains, so that the mountains have a sublime temperament, but also because of the vision is very broad, similar to the ancients said that the high vista. And then to the rocks and waterfalls of the fine white line, to highlight the qualities of the northern landscape, the picture is quite rich sense of force. Because the artist attaches importance to the ink halo, so the beauty of the misty mountains is presented to the fullest.

(III) Guan Tong, *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains*

Silk, ink and watercolour, 144.4✖56.8cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei
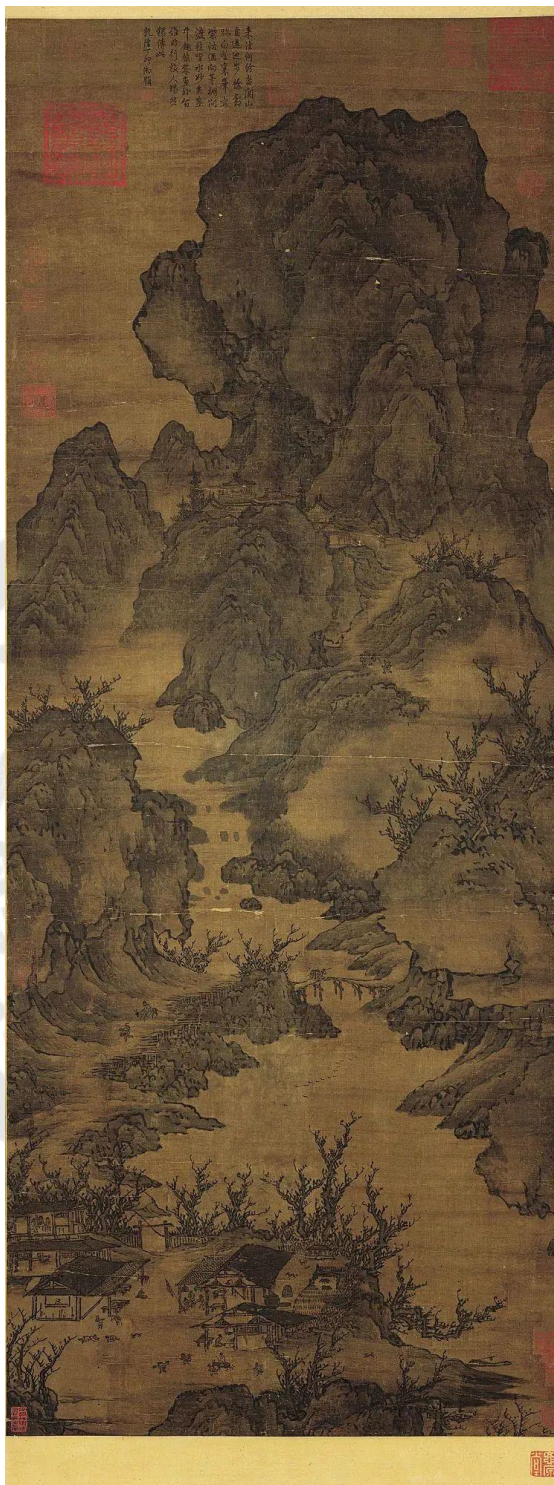
Figure 13 Guan Tong, *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)
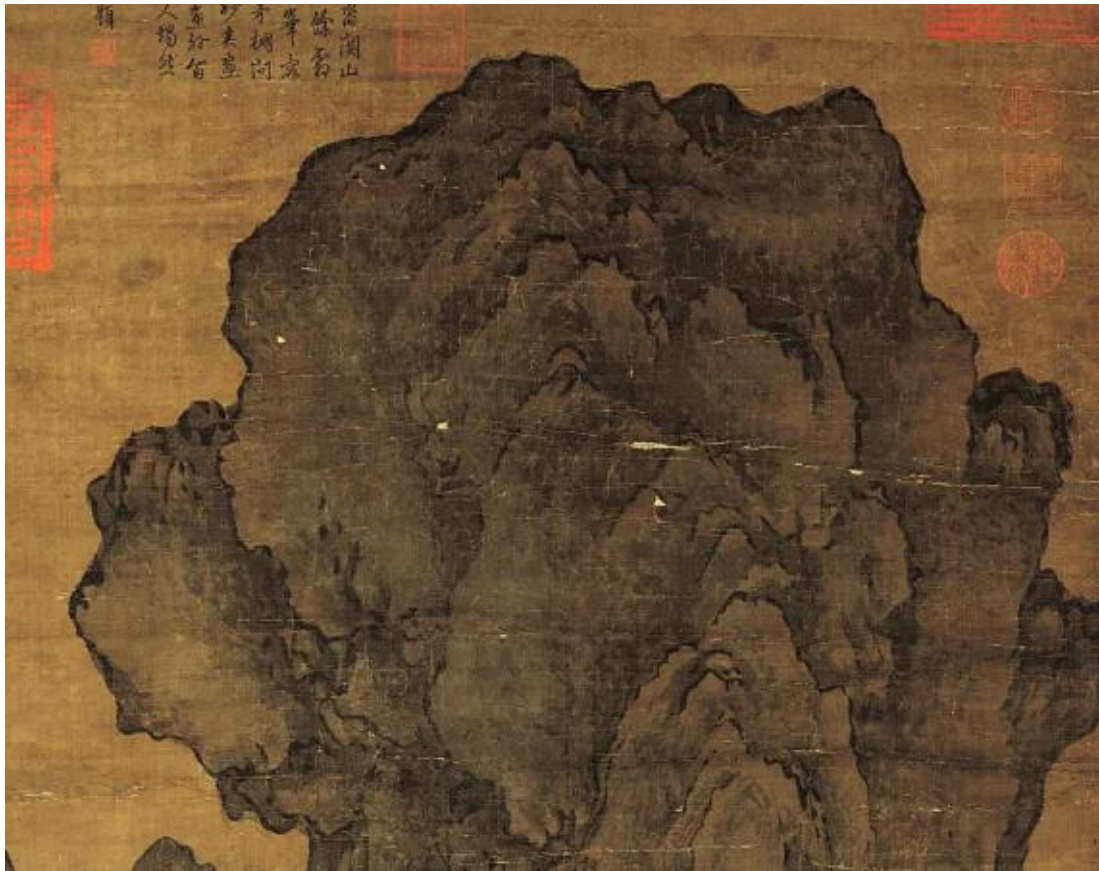
Figure 14 *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains* (Detail: Rocks and Stones)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Guan Tong's *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains* (Figure 13) adopts a panoramic composition, organically combining mountains, water, roads and travelling figures to form a complete and rich picture structure. The foreground depicts stone paths and pedestrians, the middle view shows deserted villages and wild shops, and the distant view unfolds with rolling mountains. This hierarchical composition not only reflects Guan Tong's profound observation of natural mountains and rivers, but also lays the foundation for the initial formation of panoramic landscape paintings.

Brushwork and ink technique. Guan Tong has adopted the unique "dot cun technique" in the expression of rocks and stones (Figure 14). This kind of chapped lines are simple and strong, rich in power, can accurately express the solid and heavy texture

of the rocks. Meticulous brushwork, first outline the appearance of the stone in the chapped stone texture, and finally stained with light ink layer by layer, so it seems heavy and tough. The rocks are as solid and full of texture as "scraping iron cun technique", with the characteristic style of Guan Tong landscape painting.

2. Projection

In Guan Tong's *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains*, the artist not only depicts the majesty of natural mountains and rivers, but also incorporates his observations of life and culture. The travelling figures, deserted villages and wild shops, and the wine flags fluttering in the wind in the painting show the rustic interest of life in the mountains (Figure 11), and project the artist's profound thoughts on the harmonious coexistence of nature and humanity. This expression of the interdependence of nature and society gives the picture both the tension of natural beauty and humanistic meaning, reflecting the high degree of maturity of poetic expression in Northern Song landscape painting (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

Focus on the combination of nature and humanity. Guan Tong broke away from the tradition of purely representing natural landscapes in previous generations of landscape paintings, and innovatively combined humanistic elements with natural landscapes, making Guanshan *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains* full of vitality and cultural depth. He corrected the single mode of depicting "pure nature" in previous landscape paintings, and by adding travellers, villagers and scenes of life, the landscape paintings moved from purely natural aesthetics to a higher level of humanistic concern. The pictures not only show the magnificent beauty of nature, but also express the philosophical thinking of harmonious coexistence between human and nature.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Guan Tong's *Travelling in Guanshan Mountains* is a panoramic composition presenting a picture of magnificent landscape and simple life. In the picture, the mountains are surrounded by clouds, the stone paths are winding, the village shops are dotted among them, and the travellers are constantly moving around, outlining the

unique style of landscape painting in the Northern Song Dynasty. The simple and powerful brushwork and the richly layered ink technique make the picture full of momentum, but without losing its subtlety and flavour. By reproducing this schema, Guan Tong provided a new paradigm for the composition and expression of landscape painting for future generations, and his paintings reflect a perfect combination of artistic innovation and philosophical connotation.

2. Song Dynasty

(I) Fan Kuan, *A Journey to the Streams and Mountains*

Silk, ink and watercolour, 206.3✖103.3cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 15 Fan Kuan, *A Journey to the Streams and Mountains*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The painting (Figure 15) adopts a panoramic composition, with the huge mountain as the visual centre, creating a magnificent and shocking visual effect. This "central" composition naturally focuses the viewer's eyes on the centre of the picture, making the mountain peaks the core of the picture. The painting employs the "three distances method" - the low hills and trees in the near distance, the steep cliffs in the middle distance, and the cascading mountains in the far distance.

Brushwork techniques. The artist adopts the unique "rain-dotted cun" technique, using dense ink dots to express the texture of the surface of the rocks. The ink dots, like raindrops, make the texture of the rocks more rugged and layered, enhancing the three-dimensionality and heaviness of the picture.

Ink techniques. The artist expresses the shadows and layers of the mountains through changes in the depth of the ink colour. The close-ups are depicted in light ink so that the trees and low hills are clearly visible; the middle and distant views are rendered in thick ink, creating a sense of deep space and a calm atmosphere.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. The painting is not only a landscape painting, but also a projection of the artist's emotions and thoughts. Fan Kuan expresses his reverence and love for nature through the high mountains and rivers in the painting, and also shows the ancient people's thoughts on the relationship between man and nature. The contrast between such huge mountains and tiny figures and houses not only reflects the majesty of nature and the insignificance of human beings, but also conveys the painter's philosophical thinking about the meaning of life. The painting seems to be a tribute to the eternal order between heaven and earth, and also reveals a spiritual realm of inner peace and transcendence. (Guo, 2021)

3. Corrections

Panoramic composition flourished. Fan Kuan improved and deepened the panoramic landscape paintings of the Five Dynasties period in *A Journey to the Streams and Mountains*. He broke through the traditional way of composing landscape paintings by placing the huge mountain peaks in the centre of the picture, making the

visual focus of the picture more concentrated and the tension stronger.

Brush and ink techniques. In the ink and brush technique, the use of "raindrop cun techniques" greatly enriched the texture of the mountains and rocks performance, compared with the earlier simple texture of the mountains and rocks painting, Song Dynasty landscape painting is more fine, real, reflecting the Song Dynasty art in pursuit of nature and details.

4. Artworks (schema reproduction)

The picture of *A Journey to the Streams and Mountains* outlines the rough texture of the rocks and stones through "raindrop cun techniques"; the trees and houses in the near view are depicted with light ink, which looks clear and real; the cliffs in the middle view are thick and three-dimensional; and in the distant view, the overlaying of thick ink creates a sense of magnificence of the overlapping mountains and peaks. The painting as a whole presents a spatial layout with an open foreground, an upright mid-range, and a deep distant view, shaping the magnificent beauty of natural mountains and rivers.

(II) Guo Xi, *Early Spring*

Silk, ink and light colours, 158.3✖108.1cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 16 Guo Xi, *Early Spring*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)
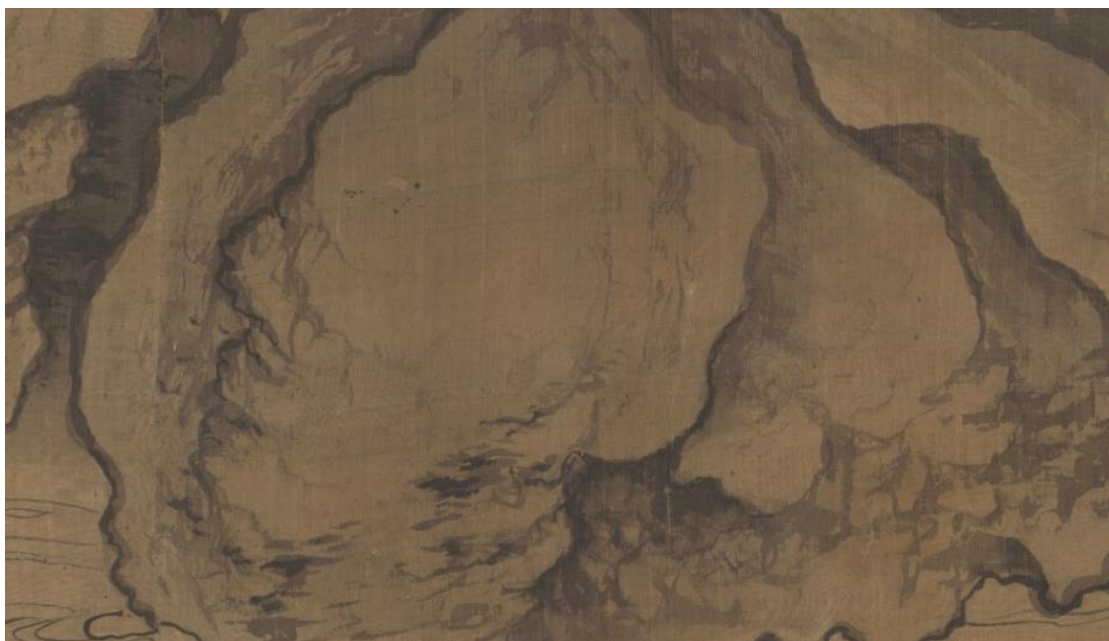
Figure 17 *Early Spring* (Detail: Rolling-Cloud Cun Techniques)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 18 *Early Spring* (Detail: Crab Claw Branch Techniques)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Early Spring* (Figure 16) adopts a panoramic and central composition, combining the vastness and concentration of the landscape. From close-up to distant view, the picture is clearly layered, showing a complete natural landscape. The peaks of the mountains are located in the centre of the picture, and the heights are staggered, with the centre as the visual focus, attracting the viewer's attention and enhancing the visual impact of the picture at the same time.

Brushwork techniques. In the picture, the rocks and mountains are cun techniques with soft lines and changing strokes to portray the texture and thickness of the rocks and mountains; the branches of the trees use the crab claw branching method, with strong and powerful lines, as if the crab claws are drooping, presenting a combination of strength and beauty.

Ink techniques. The ink is clear and clean, with rich layers. The distant mist is

expressed through light ink and white space, and the mountains reveal a misty mood of smoke and clouds.

2. Projection

The painting was created in the fifth year of Emperor Xining of the Song Dynasty, during the period of Wang Anshi's reforms, and the political atmosphere and cultural trends of the period had a profound impact on Guo Xi's work.

Political atmosphere. The early spring scene depicted in *Early Spring* alludes to the initial results of the political reforms of the time, and the vibrancy of the picture echoes the new atmosphere brought about by the reforms.

Cultural trends. During the Northern Song Dynasty, literati painting gradually emerged, emphasising the combination of poetry, calligraphy and painting, and pursuing the expression of mood and emotion. The landscape in *Early Spring* is not only a true reproduction of nature, but also a portrayal of the ideal state of the literati, reflecting their pursuit of natural harmony and political ideals.

Spirit of transformation. The landscape images in the paintings have both the majesty of northern landscapes and the beauty of southern landscapes, reflecting the exploration and attempts to integrate northern and southern cultures during the Northern Song Dynasty. This integration is not only geographical, but also cultural and ideological, reflecting the profound connotation of the change of the times (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

Representation of Seasons and Atmosphere. Guo Xi's representation of the seasons in *Early Spring* reaches new heights. In contrast to the landscape paintings of the previous dynasty, which were not characterised by any obvious seasonal direction, he accurately expresses the atmosphere of early spring through the treatment of mist, light and shadow, and the rocks and mountains. The contrast between the haze of the distant view and the clarity of the near view gives the picture a sense of seasonal layering and the changing character of the natural landscape.

In terms of brushwork and ink techniques, "Rolling-Cloud Cun" Techniques (Figure 17) is to outline the rocks and stones with a wet brushwork, with soft and

rounded lines that resemble clouds, and then chafing the tops of the rocks and shady concave parts of the rocks and stones with curling brushwork, creating a cloud-like and ethereal shape of the mountains. This technique not only gives the picture a sense of dynamism, but also adds a kind of hazy beauty. "Crab Claw Branch" Techniques (Figure 18) is characterised by the drooping branches of the trees like crab claws, and in *Early Spring*, this technique is used to depict the miscellaneous trees in the mountains, with gnarled trunks and branches stretching out in different shapes and forms, which not only demonstrates the vitality of the trees, but also gives the picture a sense of rhythm and dynamism. It shows the vitality of the trees and gives the picture a sense of rhythm and dynamic beauty.

4. Artworks (schema reproduction)

The *Early Spring* shows the magnificence and spirituality of early spring landscapes through the curling-cloud cun techniques rocks, the crab-clawed trees, and the distant mountains depicted in light ink. In the picture, the mist and clouds in the distance, and the trees and river in the near scene are clearly visible, creating a majestic and dynamic realm. The overall composition of the picture is dominated by the centre, with towering and staggered mountain peaks, which has both visual impact and shows the far-reaching meaning of nature.

(III) Ma Yuan, *A Picture of a Carved Platform Looking at the Clouds*

Silk, albumen, light colours, 25.2✖24.5cm, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA

Figure 19 Ma Yuan, *A Picture of a Carved Platform Looking at the Clouds*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 20 *A Picture of a Carved Platform Looking at the Clouds* (Detail: Person)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. *A Picture of a Carved Platform Looking at the Clouds* (Figure 19)

adopts the typical composition of the Southern Song Dynasty's "corner landscapes". The main buildings and figures are located in the lower left corner of the picture, while the upper right corner is left blank, with only light ink to represent the distant mountains and clouds.

Brushwork techniques. The picture is sketched with thick brush strokes in the middle and side fronts, and the lines are concise and powerful. The distant mountains are dotted with a small amount of chapping to enhance the sense of hierarchy.

Ink techniques. In the work, light ink is used to express the distant scene, and thick ink is used to highlight the subject in the near scene. Large areas of white space create an ethereal atmosphere like a snowy landscape.

2. Projection

Artistic Conception and Emotional Expression. Ma Yuan uses the scenes in his paintings to project his perceptions of nature and life (Figure 20). The angular composition and large areas of blank space in " *A Picture of a Carved Platform Looking at the Clouds*" symbolise the insignificance and powerlessness of human beings in nature, but it is also a metaphor for the spiritual pursuit of transcendence. The figures on the platform are facing the sea of clouds, showing an inner world of solitude and tranquillity, which implies the inner emotion of the Southern Song literati in their pursuit of spiritual liberation and philosophical reflection. The sea of clouds and the blank space in the painting not only show the emptiness and vastness of nature, but also provide the viewer with space for emotional extension and poetic imagination (Wang & Hu, 2008). Wu Qizhen's (2000) *Records of Painting and Calligraphy* says: "The painting method is simple and high, and the interest is more than enough."

3. Corrections

Compositional corrections. Ma Yuan broke away from the traditional composition of panoramic landscape paintings since the Five Dynasties in The Carved Platform Looking at the Clouds, condensing the scene to the corners of the picture and emphasising the expression of local scenery. This "corner landscape" composition represents a new style of landscape painting in the Southern Song Dynasty,

demonstrating the artistic concept of "less is more" and highlighting the poetic expression of the natural landscape.

Corrections in brushwork and ink. Unlike the Five Dynasties landscape painters, who focused on delicate depictions, Ma Yuan simplified the lines and the language of brush and ink, conveying the deep meaning of nature through generalised depictions and refined brushstrokes. His concise language of brushwork and ink corrects the overly complicated forms of expression in the traditional style of painting, and focuses more on the resonance of the viewer's emotions and the conveyance of the natural atmosphere.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The distant mountains and the sea of clouds are outlined in light ink, and the figures and houses on the carved platform are highlighted by the corner composition. The large area of blank space strengthens the sense of emptiness in the picture and creates a far-reaching mood of nature. The mountains in the distance are hidden, while the building lines in the near view are strong and powerful, forming a visual effect of contrast. The figure, though small, is the focal point of the picture, forming a strong contrast with the carved platform, symbolising the loneliness and philosophical contemplation of mankind in the midst of nature.

(IV) Xia Gui, *The Forest Dwelling in the Smokey Mountains*

Silk, ink and wash, 25✖ 26.1cm, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 21 Xia Gui, *The Forest Dwelling in the Smokey Mountains*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 22 *The Forest Dwelling in the Smokey Mountains* (Detail: Brushwork Techniques)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The scene is set in a corner of the landscape, with the trees and rocks in the foreground clearly outlined in thick ink, creating a strong visual focus. In contrast to the foreground, the rear view is painted in light ink, with smoke and clouds shrouding the mountain peaks, creating a distinct spatial hierarchy of distance and proximity. (Figure 21)

Brushwork techniques. In this work, Xia Gui employs the big axe cun techniques and the iron line drawing techniques to show the rigidity of the rocks and the uprightness of the trees. The trunks of the trees and rocks in the foreground are heavy with powerful and thirsty brushstrokes (Figure 22). In the back, the clouds and smoke are depicted with light and quick brushstrokes.

Ink techniques. The variations of the ink colours in the painting are its distinctive features. The foreground is expressed in thick ink, with bold and powerful lines and clear layers of rocks and trees; the back view is gently rendered in light ink, with smoke and clouds blending with the mountains in a blurred and distant manner.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. Xia Gui's *The Forest Dwelling in the Smokey Mountains* expresses the Song literati artist's unique understanding of landscape imagery through the use of angular framing and contrasting shades of ink and colour. Rather than simply reproducing nature, the painting combines the artist's individual emotions with natural imagery through a clever combination of brushwork and ink. The heavy ink in the foreground demonstrates the vitality and power of nature; the light ink in the background triggers people's reverie of distant landscapes, reflecting a tranquil state of mind that is transcendent. This atmosphere is the artistic expression of the artist's profound thinking about nature and life (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

Xia Gui broke away from the traditional panoramic composition of landscape paintings, which reproduced the actual scene, through the use of marginal composition and ink techniques. His works corrected and deepened the way of creating landscape paintings in the Southern Song Dynasty, and were more dynamic than Ma Yuan's

"corner landscapes". Xia Gui's use of ink and brushwork is even more effective, and the interplay between ink and water not only reveals the vitality of nature, but also enhances the flexibility and interest of the picture. This innovation gave the landscape paintings of the Southern Song Dynasty more possibilities for artistic expression.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The painting *The Forest Dwelling in the Smokey Mountains* shows the layering of trees and rocks in the foreground in thick ink, and the distant mountains and clouds in the background in light ink, forming a spatial layout with a sense of relaxation and tension. The large area of white space in the painting gives the viewer a sense of freshness and breathability, and also adds unlimited space for imagination to the picture. The use of light and dark ink, the layout of the corners of the scene, and the clever combination of white space create a unique serenity and depth of landscape painting, making it a classic of Song Dynasty landscape painting, where "less is more".

(V) Yang Wujiu, *Four Plum Scrolls*

Paper, ink and watercolou, 37.2✖358.8 cm, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 23 Yang Wujiu, *Four Plum Scrolls* (Detail: Plum Blossoms Unopened)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 24 Yang Wujiu, *Four Plum Scrolls*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Yang Wujiu's *Four Plum Scroll* (Figure 24) adopts a segmented composition, dividing the four plum blossoms into four stages: plum blossoms unopened (Figure 23), about to bloom, in full bloom, and about to wither. This composition expresses the different moments of the plum blossom's life by intercepting the most representative part of the blossom, and the picture is coherent and full of storytelling.

Brushwork techniques. The main trunk of the plum branch is sketched with a medium side stroke, and the withered brushes are flying white to show the pale and strong texture. The main trunk is drawn with a medium side stroke, which is both rigid and soft, implying toughness. The young branches are drawn with a centered brushstroke, revealing a fine, supple line. Yang Wujiu gives his brushstrokes a unique vitality through the natural physiological structure of the plum branches, making the picture both vivid and inherently rhythmic.

Ink techniques. The work has distinct layers of ink colours, with the main trunk using a combination of medium and light ink to show a sense of old age; the young branches are meticulously depicted in light ink, reflecting the soft texture; and the petals and calyx of the plum blossom are dotted with thick ink to further enhance the contrast and three-dimensionality of the picture. Through the progression of ink colours, the plum blossom image is distinct and full of changes, vividly reproducing the vitality and beauty of the plum blossom.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. Yang Wujiu's *Four Plum Scroll* not only depicts the natural beauty of plum blossoms, but also projects the artist's understanding and pursuit of the cycle of life and the spirit of plum blossoms. The four stages of plum blossoms symbolise the different stages of life, from the first birth to the withering, reflecting the philosophical reflection of nature. At the same time, the plum blossom is often characterised in Chinese culture as noble, unyielding and resilient, which is fully reflected in the painting (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

In his paintings, Yang Wujiu has corrected the panoramic and marginal compositions of his predecessor's bird and flower paintings by intercepting the branches of plum blossoms into representative segments, and showing the artistic characteristic of seeing the big in the small by folding the branches in a way that is not only more concentrated but also more compact within the limited space. This method not only makes the picture more concentrated and compact in the limited space, but also highlights the unique flavour and vitality of plum blossoms.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Yang Wujiu's *Four Plum Scroll* is composed in sections of folded branches, presenting the four branches of plum blossoms in four states: not yet in bloom, about to bloom, in full bloom, and about to wither. The strong trunk is outlined in white with withered brushstrokes, showing the beauty of the dragon's horn-like strength; the delicate branches are depicted with soft brushstrokes, which are elastic. The layers of ink colour vary from light to strong, forming a rhythmic change in the picture. The contrast between the snow-white plum blossoms and the thick ink strokes makes the picture simple and ethereal, but also full of vitality and flavour. The whole work not only reproduces the natural form of plum blossoms, but also incorporates the artist's profound thoughts on life and nature, adding a new dimension to the form and connotation of Song Dynasty flower and bird paintings.

(VI) Zhao Mengjian, *Scroll of Narcissus*

Paper, ink, 24.5✖670.2 cm, now in the Tianjin Museum of Art
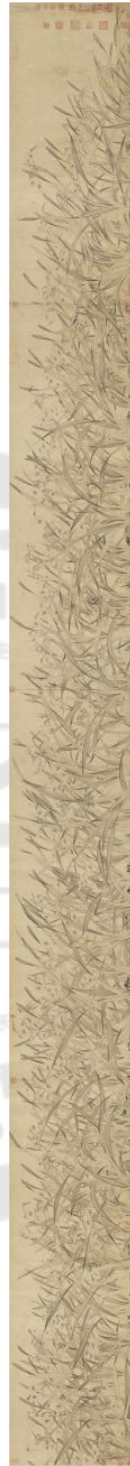
Figure 25 Zhao Mengjian, *Scroll of Narcissus*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 26 *Scroll of Narcissus* (Detail View)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Scroll of Narcissus* (Figure 25) adopts a horizontal scroll composition, with a height of 24.5 cm and a horizontal width of 670.2 cm. The natural growth of the narcissus is expressed through the compositional technique of continuous "slope after slope, slope after slope". The scroll is divided into three sections, each of which has a soil slope as its base, in which daffodils are clustered, showing a natural rhythm of sparseness and density.

Brushwork techniques. The artist first outlines the dynamics of the daffodils throughout the scroll, then renders the front of the leaves in light ink and dots the stamens in thick ink, while the grasses are written in medium-brushwork and thick ink, with a strong, calm and varied brushwork. (Figure 26)

Ink techniques. The main narcissus leaves are rendered in light ink, creating a fresh and elegant style. While the thick ink dots on the stamens enhance the three-dimensionality and visual centre of the flowers.

2. Projection

An expression of nature and the spiritual world. Through the *Scroll of Narcissus*, Zhao Mengjian projects his profound observation of nature and his pursuit of the spiritual realm. Narcissus is not only a plant, but also a carrier of the artist's thoughts and feelings. In the painting, the vitality and sparse layout of the narcissus seem to tell the story of the order and harmony of natural growth, showing the artist's praise for life and nature. At the same time, the elegant style of the painting also reflects Zhao Mengjian's aesthetic pursuit and spirituality of purity. Every detail of the painting is

infused with the artist's perception and respect for the vitality of nature, making the work not only a realistic reproduction, but also a spiritual sublimation. Through the variation of brushwork and ink and the clever design of the composition, Zhao Mengjian expresses his unique understanding of nature and the laws of art (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Compositional Correction. Unlike the folded-branch composition common in traditional flower and bird paintings, Zhao Mengjian adopts a scroll-like, long-scroll composition in the *Scroll of Narcissus*, combining the natural growth state of the narcissus with the rolling earth slopes. The flowers and leaves of the daffodils in the painting are intertwined and echo each other in a complex and orderly structure, breaking the limitations of traditional composition. This breakthrough not only demonstrates the artist's superior layout ability, but also enhances the coherence and sense of wholeness of the picture.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The work unfolds in the form of a horizontal scroll, outlining the outlines of the daffodil leaves with light ink and colouring the stamens with thick ink, creating a fresh and ethereal picture effect. The soil slope at the bottom of the picture carries the vibrant daffodil bushes, and the sectional layout is natural and orderly, sparse and dense, with a sense of rhythm. Through the flexible use of brush and ink and the exquisite design of the composition, the whole picture expresses the vividness of nature and the transcendence of art to the fullest, conveying a harmonious and beautiful natural mood.

(VII) Liang Kai, *Immortals in Ink and Wash*

Silk, ink, 48.7✖27.7cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 27 Liang Kai, *Immortals in Ink and Wash*

Source: China Treasure Gallery, (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 28 *Immortals in Ink and Wash* (Detail View)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Only the figure of the immortal is depicted in *Immortals in Ink and Wash* (Figure 27), leaving the background almost completely blank. This minimalist composition directs the viewer's attention to the immortal, generating unlimited space for imagination. The composition is full of dynamism, as if the immortal enters from the left side of the picture, with a slightly tilted body, a natural and relaxed posture, and his robes fluttering in the wind, creating a dashing and ethereal temperament.

Brushwork techniques. Liang Kai employs a "Jian Bi" technique, with bold and unrestrained strokes. The robes and hair of the immortals in the painting are basically expressed in the form of large, sideways strokes, revealing the image of the immortal's Taoist spirit. This brushwork is simple and expressive, conveying a natural and fluid artistic effect. (Figure 28)

Ink techniques. Liang Kai boldly expresses the robes and images of the Immortals with a splash of ink. The large area of splashed ink penetrates the paper surface, producing a natural halo effect and forming rich variations of ink rhythms. The spontaneity and exuberance of ink-splashing complements the dashing and uninhibited temperament of the immortal in the painting, which is full of the beauty of freedom and spirituality.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. In *Immortals in Ink and Wash*, Liang Kai projected his perception of Taoist thought and the spirit of nature through the combination of splashed ink and reduced brushstrokes. The dashing and flowing figure of the immortal not only symbolises a transcendent attitude towards life, but also reflects the inner feelings of Song literati painters in pursuit of spiritual freedom. The blankness and unrestrained brushstrokes in the painting allow the viewer to imagine the vastness of heaven and earth and the vastness of life outside the picture, demonstrating the profound mood of Song Dynasty figure painting (Fan, 2008).

3. Correction

Liang Kai's works are of transformative significance in the history of Song figure painting. His "Jian Bi" technique broke with the tradition of meticulous realism of the Five Dynasties period, weakening the depiction of details and strengthening the expressive power of the brush and ink. This artistic approach paid more attention to the conveyance of charm, shifting the aesthetic of figure painting from realism to realism. Liang Kai's unrestrained brush and ink style corrected the cumbersome painting language of his predecessors and created a freer and more spontaneous form of artistic expression.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

In *Immortals in Ink and Wash*, Liang Kai uses a large area of splashed ink and concise lines to portray the image of the immortal, leaving the background blank to highlight the ethereal beauty of the picture. In the picture, the robe and hair of the immortal are depicted in free ink splashes, conveying a relaxed and free temperament. The composition of the whole painting is simple and full of dynamics, fully reflecting the artistic pursuit of Song literati paintings in pursuit of natural mood and individual expression.

3. Yuan Dynasty

(I) Ni Zan, *Six Gentlemen*

Paper, ink and wash, 61.9✖33.3cm, now in the Shanghai Museum

Figure 29 Ni Zan, *Six Gentlemen*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Six Gentlemen* (Figure 29) adopts a "three-parts composition", with the picture divided into a close-up view, a middle view and a distant view. The near view depicts six hardy trees in a staggered layout; the middle view is handled with a large amount of white space, as if it were clouds or water, creating a quiet and faraway mood; and the far view is the mountains that can be seen faintly above the picture, expressing a long and silent atmosphere.

Brushwork and ink techniques. *The distant mountains of the Six Gentlemen are drawn with long, full, dry brushwork*, and then using simply cun techniques with light ink, near the rocky slopes, the ink colour is the same as that of the distant mountains and rocks, is also drawn with dry brush, but with heavy ink moss dots, with using more cun techniques to strengthen the sense of the thickness of the slopes of the mountains and rocks, which embodies the traditional treatment of "the stone is divided into three sides". Then use light and heavy ink to draw the branches of the trees, the trunks of the trees slightly dyed with heavy ink, the leaves of the six trees were dyed with light ink and heavy ink to differentiate, so that the denser foliage naturally divided into levels, fresh and natural.

2. Projection

The integration of individual emotions. The *Six Gentlemen* is not only a landscape painting, but also an embodiment of Ni Zan's philosophical reflections on life and nature. The six trees standing proudly in the picture symbolise the noble character pursued by the artist, and show the spirit of perseverance. Ni Zan's paintings are heavily influenced by the painting style of the Song and Yuan literati, and through his simple compositions and light ink and brushwork, he expresses a state of mind that is far removed from the world, serene and indifferent. This projection is both a reproduction of nature and an artistic expression of the painter's inner world (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

The innovation of three-parts composition. In *Six Gentlemen*, Ni Zan corrected the traditional panoramic and marginal compositional patterns of landscape painting by proposing "a broad and distant style on both sides of a river." The layout is centred on a

large area of white space, separating the near, middle and far views, presenting an overall effect of sparseness and silence. This innovation makes the picture more simple and ethereal, and strengthens the artistic expression of the picture.

The symbolism is deepened. The six trees in the painting - pine, cypress, camphor, nan, acacia and elm - not only have natural beauty, but also imply the artist's pursuit of noble character. Their toughness and uprightness symbolise the quality of uprightness and purity, defying adversity. The integration of this symbolism gives the painting a deeper spiritual connotation.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Six Gentlemen* Painting outlines distant mountains, trees and riverbanks through simple ink and brushwork, presenting a fresh and natural aesthetic. The contrast between the light ink and cun techniques the distant mountains and the heavy ink and colour of the trees; the large area of blank space injects a sense of tranquillity into the space. The composition of the whole painting combines the trees in the near view, the white space in the middle view and the mountains in the far view, which shows the unique "three-parts composition" of Yuan Dynasty landscape painting and creates a remote and sparse artistic mood.

(II) Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*

Paper, ink and watercolour, 33✖636.9cm, (Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains - The Remaining Mountains, now in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, and Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains - Scroll of the Useless Master, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei)
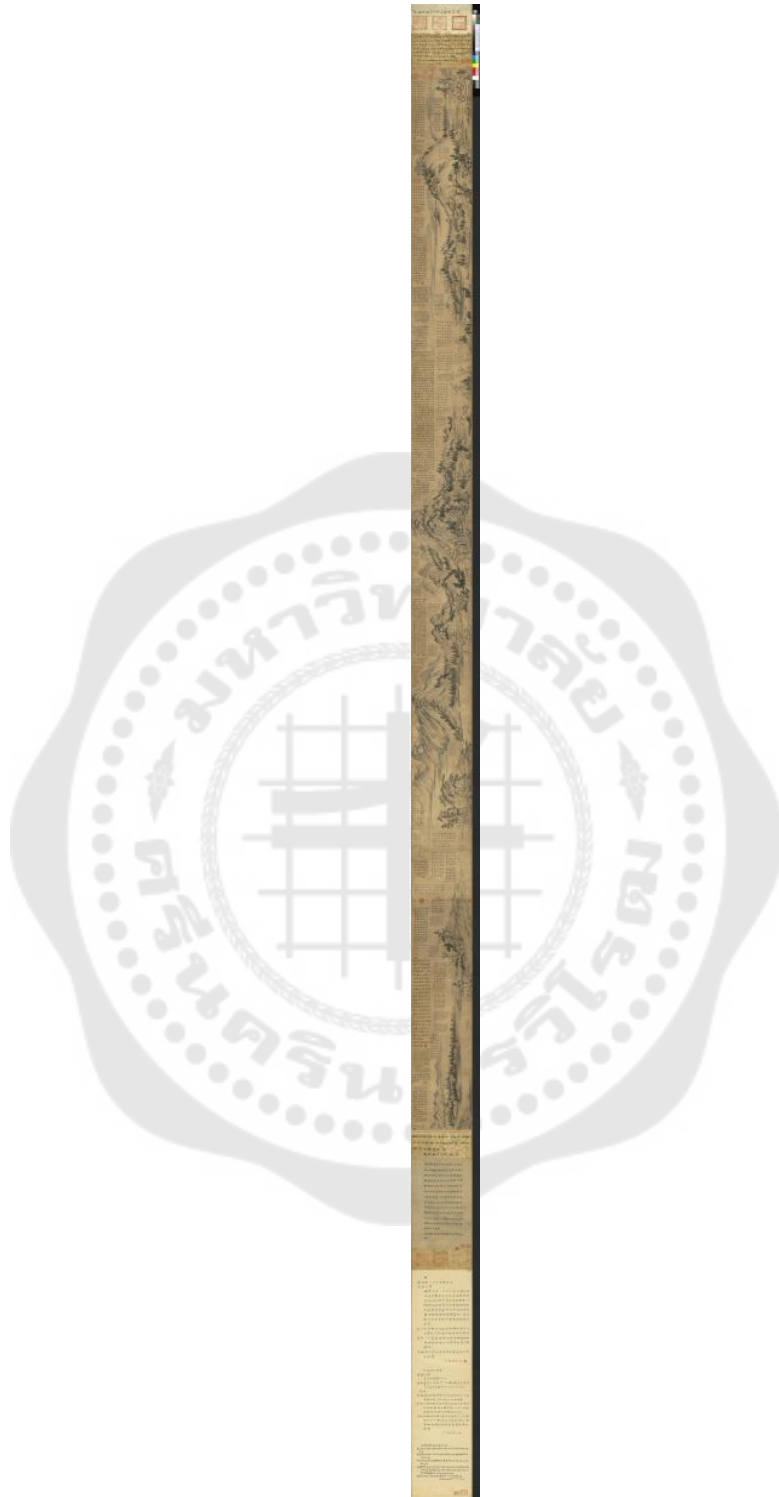
Figure 30 Huang Gongwang, *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 31 *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (Detail: Trees)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 32 *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (Detail: Pima Cun Techniques)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (Figure 30) adopts a "broad-and-distant compositional" technique, which contrasts sharply with the "high-and-distant composition" of Fan Kuan in the Northern Song Dynasty. The painting as a whole can be divided into two parts, the river and the mountains, with a clear distinction between near and far. The mountains and rocks are overlapping, the river is calm and spreading, and the villages are dotted in between, presenting a peaceful and open natural mood.

Brushwork techniques. The artist uses a concise brushwork, the trees with a few strokes to outline the main outlines (Figure 31), the rocks are mainly long Pima cun techniques, soft and smooth brushwork, rhythmic lines (Figure 32). Pima cun techniques through the centered brushstroke, dry and wet, thick and light combination, constituting a delicate and rich sense of hierarchy.

Ink techniques. Huang Gongwang made full use of the ink colour changes, through the dry brush, and light ink alternately, showing the beautiful and moist texture of the landscape in Jiangnan. The contrast between light and darkness of the mountains is highlighted through layers of haloing, and the use of blank space makes the river appear ethereal and far-reaching.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. Through *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, Huang Gongwang blends natural landscapes with his personal emotions, projecting the literati's pursuit of the spirit of tranquillity and distance. The painting depicts a view of the Fuchun River in the Tonglu area near Hangzhou, with rolling hills, calm river waters, and sparse villages, expressing the literati's yearning for an idyllic life and love of nature. Rather than depicting the actual scene, the painting is an expression of the painter's state of mind through artistic techniques. This reconstruction and reinterpretation of nature reflects the artistic characteristic of the literati painters of the Yuan Dynasty to express their feelings through painting (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

The deepening of the broad-and-distant composition. Huang Gongwang's "broad-and-distant composition" is more expansive and peaceful than the "high-and-distant composition" of the Northern Song Dynasty, no longer focusing on the prominent depth, but rather transmitting a quiet mood in the horizontal openness. This composition is in line with the Yuan literati on the natural landscape "serenity" the spiritual pursuit of far-reaching, and at the same time show the literati painters on the landscape painting form of innovation.

The mature use of Pima cun techniques. As a representative technique of Huang Gongwang, "Pima cun techniques" is fully demonstrated in Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains. What is Pima cun techniques? It is because the surface of the mountain seems to be covered with hemp strands. The artist uses a centered brushstroke to outline the round and tough lines, following the veins and structure of the mountains, making the picture appear rich in layers and texture. Pima cun techniques not only

expresses the beauty of the landscape in Jiangnan, but also conveys the artist's inner ease and calmness.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains presents the natural beauty of the Fuchun River around Tonglu, Hangzhou, in a "broad-and-distant composition" composition and a long Pima cun techniques. In the painting, the river is wide, dotted with village houses, and anglers are boating in between; the texture of the rocks is clear, and the trees are simple and charismatic. The painting combines concise lines with rich ink colours, creating a quiet and far-reaching mood through the clever use of layers of coloring and blank space.

(III) LiKan, *Peace in the Four Seasons*

Silk, ink, 131.4✖51.1cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei
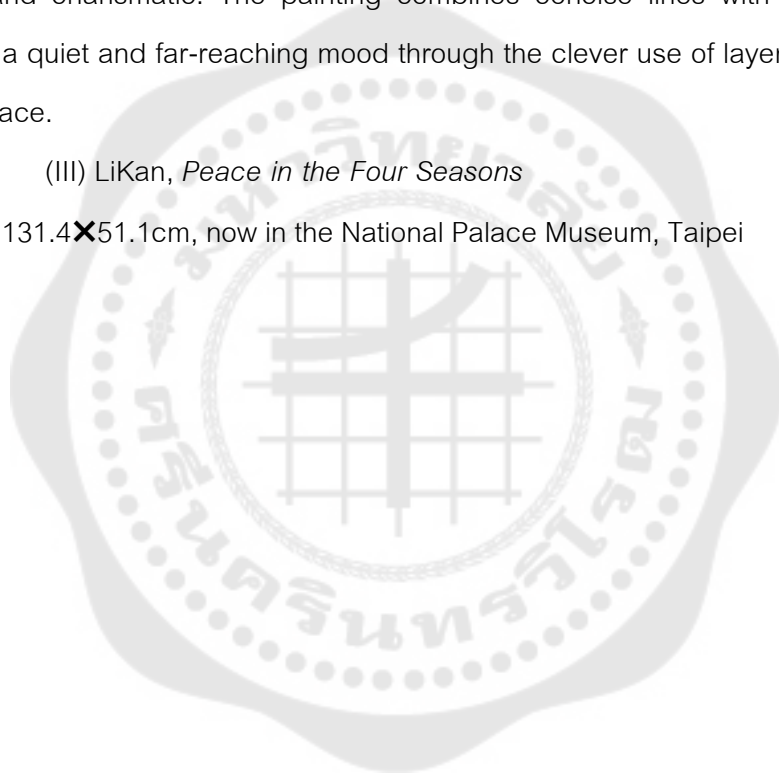
Figure 33 LiKan, *Peace in the Four Seasons*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 34 *Peace in the Four Seasons* (Detail: Broken Ink Method)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Bamboo forest layout. The *Peace in the Four Seasons* (Figure 33) adopts the composition form with bamboo forest as the main body, and the tall and upright bamboo forest becomes the main skeleton of the picture. The arrangement of the bamboo trees is staggered and layered, which not only shows the vitality of the bamboo forest, but also gives the picture a sense of rhythm and movement. The whole painting creates a natural flow of rhythm through the posture of the bamboo forest.

Brushwork and ink techniques. In the picture, the artist uses the centered brushstroke to draw bamboo poles and bamboo trunks, and the side stroke to draw bamboo leaves and stones. The artist also uses the broken ink method, i.e. adding thick or light ink to the wet ink before it dries, so that the ink colours blend naturally and are richly layered (Figure 34). Through this technique, the bamboo branches and trunks show natural light and shadow changes and rich texture, giving the picture a three-dimensional sense and vivid expressiveness.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. The *Peace in the Four Seasons* combines his personal feelings with the natural scenery through the form of bamboo and the overall layout of the painting. Bamboo symbolises toughness, purity and humility in traditional culture, and this symbolism is not only reflected in the image of bamboo forest, but also conveys the artist's aesthetic interest and life thinking through his brushstrokes and compositions. The tranquil and lofty mood created in the painting reflects the inner clarity of the artist and his pursuit of transcendence (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Using objects as metaphors. Flower and bird paintings of the Yuan Dynasty often use scenery to express emotions or meanings. The *Peace in the Four Seasons* conveys the qualities of fortitude, purity and humility of a gentleman through the bamboo forest, reflecting the artist's pursuit of character cultivation. In contrast to previous bird and flower paintings, in which objects only functioned as elements of the picture, this work focuses more on the compatibility of the scene with the painter's inner world.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Peace in the Four Seasons* outlines a tall and straight bamboo forest through the broken ink method, in which the bamboo postures are distributed in a staggered manner to form the main structure of the picture. The riverbank and the sky are shown in white, providing natural echoes and contrasts with the bamboo forest, creating a simple, clear, ethereal and far-reaching effect. The overall composition shows the rich vitality of the foreground, the dynamic rhythm of the middle scene, and the peaceful atmosphere brought by the blank space, fully conveying the beauty of the fusion of nature and art.

(IV) Zheng Sixiao, *Ink and Orchid*

Paper, Ink, 25.7✖42.4cm, now in the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, Japan

Figure 35 Zheng Sixiao, *Ink and Orchid*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)
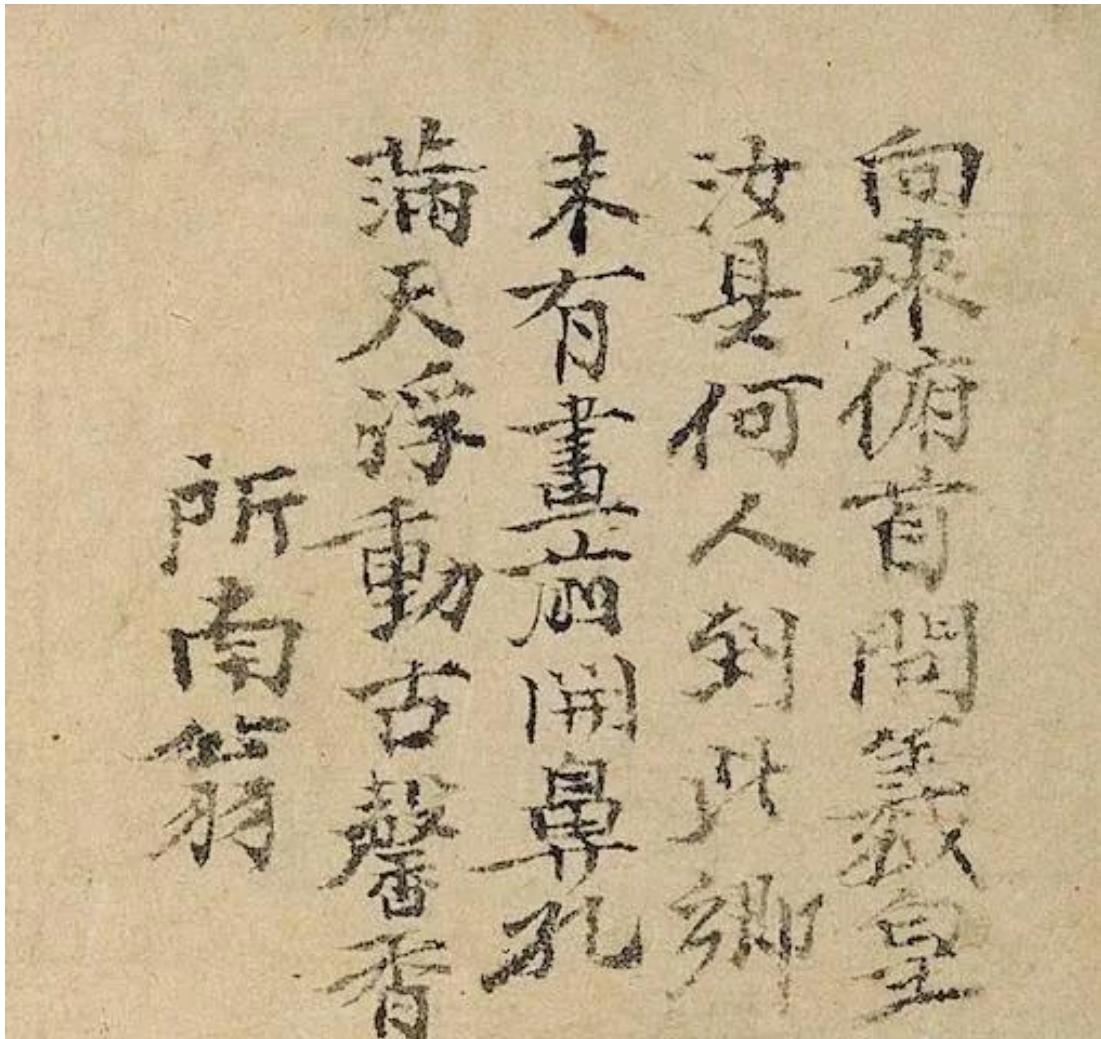
Figure 36 *Ink and Orchid* (Detail: Inscription)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Ink and Orchid* (Figure 35) adopts a simple and concentrated composition, placing the two orchids in the centre of the picture and distributing the leaves symmetrically from left to right, forming a balanced and stable visual effect. The composition highlights the main body of the orchids and weakens the background elements, making the picture simple and clear, and demonstrating the artistic characteristic of "less is more."

Brushwork techniques. The brushwork of *Ink and Orchid* is extremely concise.

The artist sketches the orchid leaves with a straight stroke in the middle and side fronts, and the lines are smooth and powerful, showing both the rigidity and flexibility of the orchid leaves as well as their natural spreading vitality.

Ink techniques. The inkwork techniques in the painting is mainly simple and concise, expressing the three-dimensionality and texture of the orchids through different shades of ink colours. Wet ink and dry ink are used alternately, and the ink colours of the orchid leaves are in appropriate shades, adding a sense of hierarchy to the picture. The large amount of blank space makes the picture more airy and spacious, and at the same time strengthens the meaning of the orchid's solitude and elegance.

2.Projection

Zheng Sixiao's *Ink and Orchid* is not only a flower painting, but also a projection of the painter's personality and spirit. On the right side of the picture, Zheng Sixiao writes: I have always looked down and asked Hsi Huang, who are you to this country; I have not opened my nostrils in front of the painting, and the sky is full of floating ancient fragrance (Figure 36). In the lower left corner of the painting, there is a seal in clerical script: Seek, but not, do not seek or with, old eyes wide open, clear wind for all time. As one of the "Four Gentlemen" in Chinese tradition, the orchid has always symbolised the character of purity, resilience and indifference to fame and fortune. This symbolism has been strengthened in Zheng Sixiao's works, and the artist sends the pursuit of an ideal personality and a transcendent attitude towards worldly fame and fortune through the image of the ink orchid (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Emphasis on the main subject. The *Ink and Orchids* highlights the main image of orchids in the composition, and the two orchids in the centre of the picture become the visual focus with simple and clear lines and tense gestures, avoiding over-rendering of the background or other elements. This simplified treatment corrects the tendency of overly complicated depiction of the subject matter in the paintings of the previous generation, reflecting the artistic pursuit of "Simple yet sophisticated" in Yuan Dynasty flower and bird paintings.

Using objects as metaphors. Orchids are not only natural objects in Ink and Orchid, but also symbols of the artist's spiritual world. Through refined brushwork and clever composition, the artist gives the orchid a noble and gentlemanly temperament. This technique of "using objects as metaphors" deepens the ideological connotation of the work and creates a model of "Gentleman painting" in the Yuan Dynasty.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Through the concise depiction of orchids and the use of a lot of blank space, *Ink and Orchid* creates a simple and spacious picture effect. The orchid in the painting has smooth lines and elegant posture, and the layers of the leaves are expressed in light and dark ink, supplemented by delicate strokes to show the softness and toughness of the orchid. The contrast between the white and ink colours conveys the beauty of the orchid's solitude and elegance, and at the same time provides the viewer with unlimited space for imagination, demonstrating the artistic charm of Yuan Dynasty flower and bird paintings, which is "minimal yet meaningful".

(V) Wang Mian, *Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms*

Paper, ink, 114.8✖26 cm, now in the Yale University Museum of Art, USA

Figure 37 Wang Mian, *Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 38 *Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms* (Detail: Inscription)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The composition of the *Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms* (Figure 37) presents a contrast between the elaborate and the ethereal. The two main plants form the basic structure of the picture, with one extending to the upper right and the other drooping down to form a beautiful S-shaped line. The upper part of the picture is

densely interlaced with branches and leaves, and the plum blossoms are layered on top of each other, creating an "impermeable" visual effect, while the lower part of the picture has a large area of blank space, revealing a contrasting layout of "sparse enough for a horse to walk through", which makes the picture both complex and rhythmic, with proper sparseness and visual tension.

Brushwork and Ink techniques. Wang Mian demonstrates extremely delicate brushwork techniques in his works. He used heavy ink on the side stroke to express the thickness and strength of the branches of the plum tree, then used light ink on the middle stroke to outline the flowers, and finally used thick ink to draw the stamens and calyx. This brushwork techniques not only makes the plum blossom form vivid, but also highlights the noble and lonely temperament of the plum blossom in the contrast between light and dark. The contrast between the powerful brush strokes of the branches and the delicate and elegant depiction of the flowers demonstrates a high degree of fusion of brushwork and inkwork techniques.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. In the *Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms*, Wang Mian used the plum blossom as a vehicle to express the emotions and spiritual pursuit of the literati in their pursuit of high and pure character. Plum blossoms symbolise the independent spirit of not yielding to the cold and not tending to influence, which perfectly matches the painter's personal ambition and character. The dense branches and elegant flowers symbolise the artist's celebration of vitality in the midst of winter, and at the same time are a metaphor for the resilience and self-respect of the literati. The painting is not only a depiction of natural beauty, but also a poetic projection of personal feelings and philosophical thoughts, demonstrating the artistic tradition of Yuan Dynasty literati paintings of," "using objects as metaphors" (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Full composition. Wang Mian's *Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms* breaks away from the traditional flower and bird painting habit of "folded branches" or vertical composition, and uses the dense interweaving of branches to form a full composition.

Plum blossom branches on the spring like the sea of the momentum of the sky, flowers of ice and jade in the ten thousand jade competing for glory, coupled with the full title of the poem, the whole picture presents a sense of airtight. It is a concrete expression of the new style of ink plum in the Yuan Dynasty.

Skillful use of inscriptions. The blank space at the bottom of the picture is filled by Wang Mian's calligraphic inscription of a poem, integrating the inscription with the picture. The square form of the poem and the seal visually balances the dense plum branches, while the content echoes the noble mood of the plum blossom. Unlike his predecessors, whose inscriptions served only as records, Wang Mian's poems became an integral part of the picture, promoting a literati style of painting that combined poetry, calligraphy, painting, and sealing, and forming a far-reaching artistic influence. (Figure 38)

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Scroll of Ink and Plum Blossoms shows the beauty of the plum blossom's elegance and resilience through the use of appropriate ink colours and sparse and dense compositions. The upper part of the picture is densely covered with branches, and the plum blossoms are clearly visible and full of power, the lower part of the picture is left white, which adds a sense of emptiness to the space. Dense and blank space contrast with each other, and the poetic inscription is integrated with the picture, together creating a poetic artistic atmosphere, which became a model work of "gentleman painting" in the Yuan Dynasty.

4. Ming Dynasty

(I) Shen Zhou, *Mount Lu High Scenery*

Paper, ink and light colours, 193.8✖98.1cm, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 39 Shen Zhou, *Mount Lu High Scenery*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 40 *Mount Lu High Scenery* (Composition Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

廬山高

廬山高，高乎哉！鬱然二百五十里之盤踞，岌乎二千三百丈之崔嵬。謂即敷淺原，培塿何敢爭其雄。西來天塹濯其足，雲霞日夕吞吐乎其胸。迴崖沓嶂鬼手擘，澗道千丈開鴻濛。瀑流淙淙瀉不極，雷霆殷地聞者耳欲聾。時有落葉於其間，直下彭蠡流霜紅。金膏水碧不可覓，石林幽黑號綠熊。其陽諸峰五老人，或疑緯星之精墮自空。陳夫子，今仲弓，世家廬之下有元厥祖遷江東。尚知廬靈有默契，不遠千里鍾于公。公亦西望懷故都，便欲往依五老巢雲松。昔聞紫陽妃六老，不妨添公相與成七翁。我嘗遊公門，仰公彌高廬不崇。丘園肥遯七十載，著作白髮如秋蓬。文能合墳詩合雅，自得樂地於其中。榮名利祿雲過眼，上不作書自薦，下不公相通。公乎浩蕩在物表，黃鵠高舉凌天風。成化丁亥端陽日，門生長洲沈周詩畫敬為醒庵有道尊先生壽。
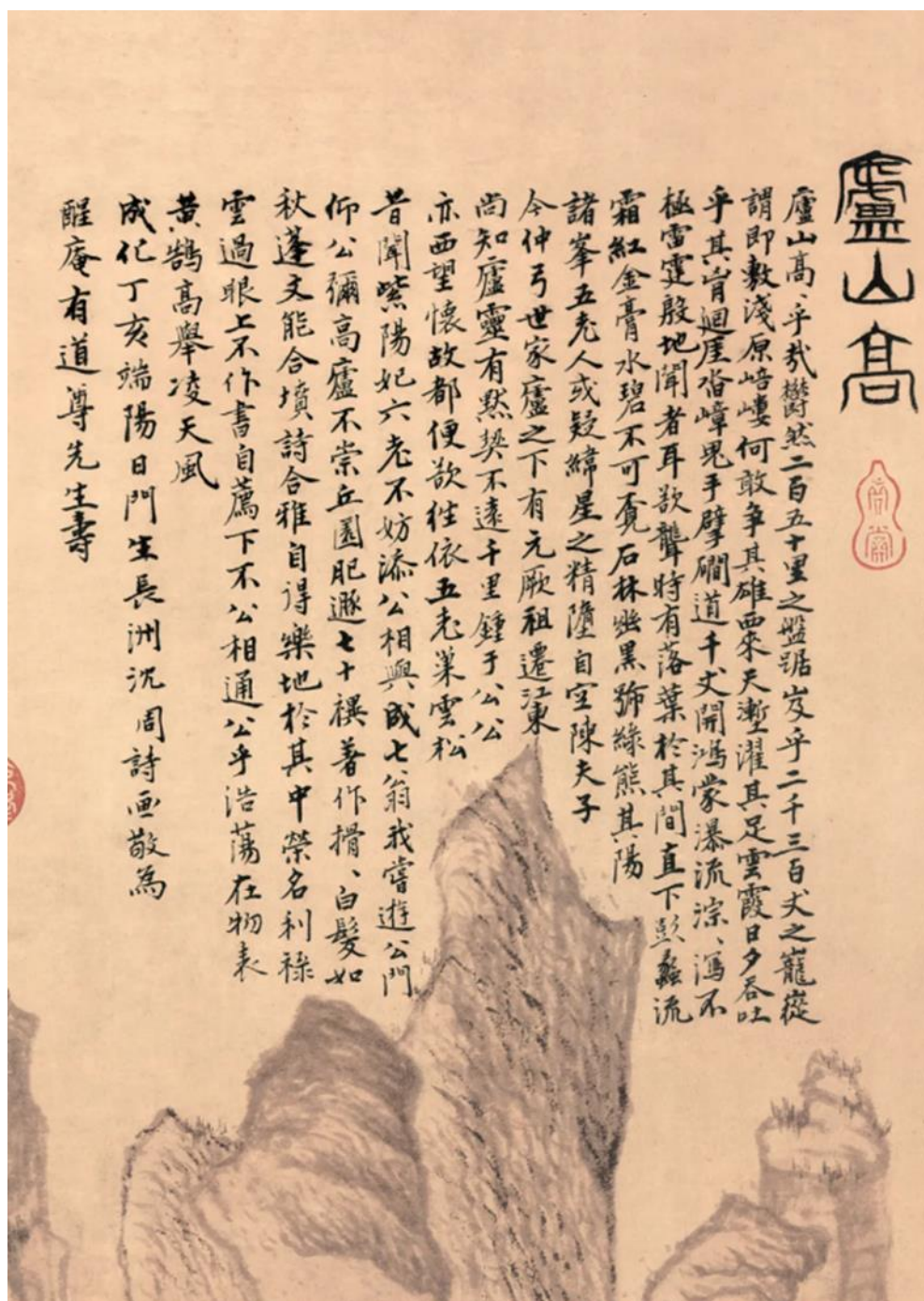
Figure 41 *Mount Lu High Scenery* (Detail: Inscription in the Upper Right Corner)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 42 *Mount Lu High Scenery* (Detail: Cun Techniques)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Shen Zhou's the Mount Lu High Scenery adopts the "S-shaped" composition (Figure 40), with the winding mountain through the top and bottom of the picture, showing the dynamic rhythm and spatial hierarchy. The majestic mountain extends upwards from the bottom of the painting, cascading up to the top of the painting, creating a far-reaching and expansive visual effect between the clouds and mist. This composition cleverly guides the viewer's eyes to linger between the mountains and the water, experiencing the overall rhythm of the picture.

Brushwork techniques. The work uses a variety of cun techniques such as Pima cun techniques, Ox hair cun techniques and Jiesuo cun techniques, depicting rocks, grass and trees with fine and delicate lines, giving the picture a strong sense of texture and three-dimensionality. Through the alternate use of cun techniques, different areas of the mountains show the rhythm of lightness and urgency, with clear hierarchy, and the brush strokes are delicate with power. (Figure 42)

Ink techniques. Shen Zhou in the *Mount Lu High Scenery* using light reddish-red colours, combined with light ink and thick ink layers of change, so that the rocks and trees have the contrast of reality, depth, intensity and lightness. The mountains in the distant view are depicted in light ink, supplemented by white and light-red colours, showing the hazy sense of clouds and mist in the mountains; the grass, trees and rocks in the near view are outlined in thick ink, which strengthens the detailed expression and the depth of vision.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. The *Mount Lu High Scenery* is not only a landscape painting depicting the natural landscape, but also full of humanistic feelings and symbolic imagery. Through the image of towering Mount Lu, the painting symbolises the high character of his teacher Chen Kuan and the depth of learning. Works of high mountains and flowing water-like mood, expressed Shen Zhou to the teacher's respect and gratitude, but also sent his teacher's long life as Mount Lu, the immortal pine of the good wishes. Shen Zhou injected his own perception of nature and

humanistic concern into his paintings, reflecting the spiritual connotation of "expressing emotions through landscape" in literati painting (Figure 41). This fusion of emotion and natural landscape demonstrates the artistic height of literati painting in the Ming Dynasty (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Corrections

Deepening of traditional innovations. Shen zhou in the *Mount Lu High Scenery* in the "s-shaped" composition, which is the previous generation of landscape painting in the "three-parts" or panoramic composition of innovative correction. The s-shaped composition breaks through the traditional planar layout, with flowing lines and twists and turns of the mountain to break the picture of the sense of static, to create a natural and rhythmic spatial effect. It creates a natural and rhythmic spatial effect. This innovation not only enriches the hierarchy of the picture, but also enhances the dynamic visual expression.

The expression of humanistic connotation. In the content of the painting, Shen Zhou broke through the mode of purely recording the natural landscape, and closely combined the landscape imagery with personal feelings and cultural connotations. He borrowed the towering magnificence of Mount Lu to symbolise the greatness and longevity of the teacher's grace, and this technique of expressing emotions through objects gave the work a deeper spiritual connotation.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Mount Lu High Scenery* presents the meandering and layering of the mountain in an S-shaped composition, which is dense but not cluttered. In the painting, the distant view shows the misty feeling of clouds with light ink and white space; the middle view depicts rocks and stones with light reddish-red cun techniques, creating rich spatial levels; and the near view outlines the grass, trees and foothills in detail with thick ink, showing the vitality of the natural landscape. The picture as a whole presents a scene of high mountains and deep ravines, filled with clouds and mist, conveying a fresh and ethereal natural beauty and humanistic emotions blended with the artistic realm. (Figure 39)

(II) Chen Chun, *Scroll of Flowers*

Paper, ink and wash, 32.5✕503cm, now in the Tianjin Museum

Figure 43 Chen Chun, *Scroll of Flowers*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Chen Chun's *Scroll of Flowers* (Figure 43) adopts the composition of "scattered perspective". The picture is not limited to a single viewpoint, but through a multi-layered spatial layout, the flowers are shown to the viewer from different angles. The sparse and dense distribution of flowers in the painting not only reflects the depth of space, but also fills the picture with natural vitality.

Brushwork techniques. Chen Chun paints flowers with a rough and spontaneous brushwork, using a combination of centre and side strokes, and outlining the form of the flowers with concise and decisive lines. His brushwork is full of calligraphic flavour, and his lines are smooth without being obsessed with details, so that the picture shows the vitality and spirituality of the flowers in its simplicity.

Ink techniques. Chen Chun uses a combination of thick and light ink, which is layered yet integrated. This free variation of ink colours not only reflects the texture of the flowers, but also gives the painting a fresh and relaxed mood.

2. Projection

Chen Chun's *Scroll of Flowers* is not only a painting of flowers and birds, but also a projection of his personality and emotions. The casual and unrestrained brushwork and layout of the painting reflect the artist's keen observation of the beauty of nature in life and his inner sense of leisure. After losing his official career, he pursued a life of indifference to fame and fortune. His works are full of a leisurely and leisurely temperament, reflecting a free spirit that is not bound by the world (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Chen Chun has corrected the pattern of over-precise drawing in his previous flower and bird paintings. He adopts the artistic style of "scattered" and "light", avoiding the feeling of overly dense or heavy images through light ink and sparse brushwork. This style is different from traditional bird and flower paintings, which are more dense, and shows more simple and dynamic flower forms, emphasising the expression of the mood and the lyricism of the art.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

In *Scroll of Flowers*, through the use of light ink and the appropriate composition, Chen Chun presents a refreshing painting. The different kinds of flowers in the picture are either standing up or hanging down, with different dynamics, showing the vitality of nature. In the alternation of brushwork and inkwork techniques, the softness of the light ink rendering and the power of the burnt ink dots complement each other, forming a picture that is both simple and full of rhythm. The whole work not only depicts the natural beauty of flowers, but also conveys the artist's praise for the vitality of flowers and the spirit of nature, making it a model of freehand brushwork in flower-and-bird painting.

(III) Xu Wei, *Ink Grapes*

Paper, ink and water, 165.4✖64.5cm, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing
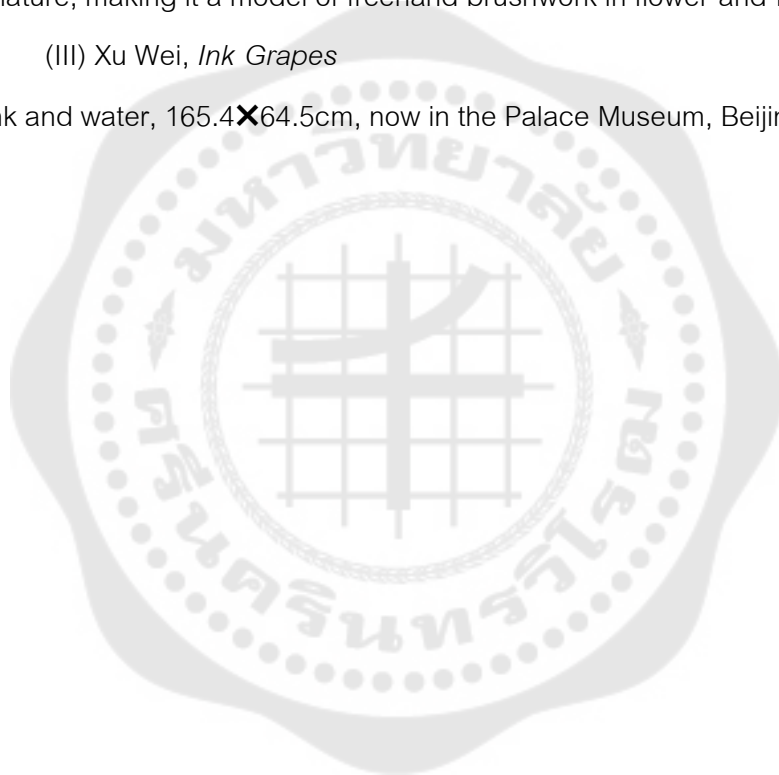
Figure 44 Xu Wei, *Ink Grapes*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 45 *Ink Grapes* (Detail: Glue Ink Method)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Ink Grapes* (Figure 44) adopts a free and dynamic form of composition, in which the vines, leaves and fruits are distributed in a casual manner, full of natural vitality and relaxation. There are a lot of blank spaces in the picture, which contrasts with the changes in the intensity of the ink colours and enhances the sense of space and depth of the picture. This flexible composition breaks the strict layout of traditional flower and bird paintings, making the picture more expressive and personalised.

Brushwork techniques. Xu Wei outlines the branches and vines with lines of different thicknesses, which are as rhythmic as calligraphy, showing a flowing vitality. The extending lines add dynamism and vigour to the picture, creating a swaying and

graceful visual effect.

Ink techniques. The painting uses Xu Wei's unique "glue ink method", in which the ink is mixed with an appropriate amount of glue to make the ink thicker, muddier and more layered. The light ink is used to express the fruits and leaves of the grapes, while the thick ink is used to strengthen the outlines and details, and the natural of the thick and light ink colours gives the picture a special flavour of blending ink and water. This technique not only enhances the fun of ink painting, but also gives the picture a more vivid visual feeling when expressing details. (Figure 45)

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. In *Ink Grapes*, Xu Wei incorporates his own individual emotions into the painting, projecting his deep understanding of life's misery. The full-bodied grapes in the picture sway in the wind, vaguely revealing a sense of sadness; the blending of light and thick ink conveys a whispering whimper. The unrestrained ink and watercolour is just like his turbulent and unrestrained heart, while those smooth strokes are the artistic expression of his chest. This emotional projection goes beyond the simple reproduction of real scenery, transforming the complex emotions of personal suffering and life into a strong artistic impact (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

A breakthrough in composition and expression. Xu Wei broke away from the accurate reproduction of objects in traditional Ming Dynasty bird and flower paintings, and instead emphasised the mood and expressiveness of the picture. His compositions are unconventional, focusing on dynamic presentation and spatial tension, making the picture more free and dynamic. Through the extension of the branches and the clever use of blank space, he corrected the rigid pursuit of formality in traditional painting and created a more lyrical way of expression.

Innovations in techniques. In terms of inkwork technique, Xu Wei used the gum ink method to correct the inking methods of the previous dynasty. By adjusting the ratio of ink to glue, he created a thicker and more textured ink effect, resulting in richer layers and a more natural interplay between shapes. This technique enhanced the interest and

expressiveness of ink painting and injected a new vitality and vigour into Ming flower-and-bird painting.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The picture outlines the grape vines and fruits with casual brushstrokes, with thick and light ink colours, natural twists and turns of the branches, and light and agile leaves. The large amount of blank space makes the picture appear ethereal and imaginative. The grapes in the picture seem to sway in the wind, and the mixture of thick and light ink conveys a sense of misery and sadness, while the unrestrained brushstrokes and vivid ink colours present a kind of flaunting of vitality. The entire work is free in composition and far-reaching in meaning, fully demonstrating Xu Wei's extraordinary creativity and emotional expression as a painter, as well as being the peak of the Ming Dynasty's flower and bird painting art.

5. **Qing Dynasty**

(I) Bada Shanren, *Lotus and Rock Waterfowl Scroll*

Paper, ink and wash, 127✖46cm, now in the Palace Museum

Figure 46 Bada Shanren, *Lotus and Rock Waterfowl Scroll*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 47 *Lotus and Rock Waterfowl Scroll* (Composition Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

Figure 48 *Lotus and Rock Waterfowl Scroll* (Detail: Waterfowl)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Lotus and Rock Waterfowl Scroll* adopts a highly generalised and concise composition, with only three elements in the picture: lotus leaves, waterfowl and a solitary stone. Through the clever use of blank space, these three elements maintain full independence and form an echoing relationship in the picture. The space between the lotus leaves, the water birds and the solitary stone is staggered, giving the whole picture an effect of both openness and harmony. While each element exists independently, they also work together to build a complete artistic whole. (Figure 47)

Brushwork and Ink techniques. Bada Shanren uses concise lines and brushwork to outline the blockiness of the lotus leaves and the lines of the lotus trunk, and at the same time depicts the solitary stone and the water birds with delicate and rhythmic brushwork. The thick and light ink splash technique is used to express the heaviness of the stone and the movement of the lotus leaves, while the large amount of white space expresses the ethereal and distant nature of the picture. This minimalist brushwork avoids complicated details, but conveys the artist's emotion with strong expressiveness.

The lotus leaves, lonely stones and water birds complement each other, presenting a simple, lonely and cold temperament in the picture.

2. Projection

Artistic conception expression. As a relic of the late Ming Dynasty, Bada Shanren projected his deep personal feelings and existential situation in the *Lotus and Stone Waterfowl Scroll*. The lotus leaves in the picture symbolise purity and independence, while the solitary stone and the waterfowl convey a feeling of loneliness and coldness. Through simple graphic elements, Bada Shanren has deeply integrated his solitude and struggle against reality into his works. The isolation of the lotus leaf and the water bird standing alone are metaphors for the painter's inner feelings (Figure 48), showing his helplessness towards the social environment of the Qing Dynasty and his insistence on his own spiritual world (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Segmented composition. When Bada Shanren created the Lotus and Stone Waterbird Scroll, he corrected the "multi-element stacking" mode of traditional flower and bird paintings, and adopted the "segmented composition" technique (a combination of point, line, and surface compositional techniques), focusing on the combination of lotus leaves and waterbirds in the picture. This composition not only makes the theme more prominent, but also strengthens the visual centre and enhances the tension of the picture in a simple form.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Lotus and Stone Waterfowl Scroll* depicts lotus leaves and a solitary rock through alternating shades of ink, while the waterfowl is rendered with concise lines that capture its expression. Large areas of blank space create an ethereal and profound atmosphere. The composition achieves a perfect balance between segmented details and overall harmony, conveying a sense of solitude and tranquil beauty. The composition of the whole painting shows a perfect combination of local cutting and overall harmony, conveying a sense of solitude and serenity. Although the elements of the picture are simple, the connotation is far-reaching, which is a unique interpretation of

nature and life. The work projects Bada Shanren's inner solitude and resistance into the picture through minimalist expression, building a fresh, deep and philosophical art world, which has become a classic of Qing Dynasty flower and bird paintings. (Figure 46)

(II) Shi Tao, *Cloudy Mountains*

Paper, ink and light colours, 45.1✖30.8cm, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 49 Shi Tao, *Cloudy Mountains*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 50 Shi Tao, *Cloudy Mountains* (Detail: Cloudy)

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The *Cloudy Mountains* (Figure 49) adopts a flexible and varied composition, breaking away from the traditional "three-distant methods" structure. The peaks of the mountains are arranged in a staggered manner, with distinct layers in front and behind, creating a picture that is both harmonious and rich in details. The distant mountains in the painting are depicted in light ink, which is hazy and mysterious, as if they are gradually hidden in the clouds; while the near mountains are represented by heavy and powerful brushstrokes, which highlight the texture and three-dimensionality of the rocks, forming a sharp contrast with the distant mountains.

Brushwork and ink techniques. The brushwork is unrestrained and varied, with Shi Tao outlining the outlines of the mountains through a combination of thick and thin

lines. The lines of the near peaks are strong and powerful, and the thick ink emphasises the close-up view, showing the texture and hardness of the mountains and rocks; while the distant mountains are painted with light and smooth strokes and light ink, and the lines are soft, combining with the blank space to bring out the ethereal clouds and mists.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. Shi Tao's *Cloudy Mountain*s is not only a depiction of natural landscape, but also incorporates the artist's strong personal feelings and thoughts. The alternating clouds and peaks in the painting symbolise the vagaries of nature and life, as well as the artist's inner pursuit of freedom and tranquillity. With Zen Buddhism as his background, Shi Tao conveyed his philosophical reflections on all things natural through the representation of mountains and landscapes. Through the imagery of clouds and mountains, he expresses the transcendence of worldly constraints and the purification of the mind, allowing the viewer to feel a profound artistic mood (Wang & Hu, 2008). (Figure 50)

3. Corrections

Innovation in composition and layout. Shi Tao's compositions modified the traditional Three-Distant Method model, adopting a more flexible layout. He broke the fixed spatial expression in his paintings by interspersing clouds and mist, and arranging mountain peaks in a staggered manner, so that the picture shows overall harmony and is full of detailed changes, which enhances the fun of viewing.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Cloudy Mountains expresses the layering and spatiality of landscapes with varying ink colours and flexible compositions. In the painting, the distant mountains are depicted in light ink, blending into the light and misty clouds, presenting a hazy and mysterious appearance; the near mountains are outlined in bold lines, with a full sense of texture and three-dimensionality. The blank space of the clouds and mist provides the basis for the profoundness of the space and the serenity of the picture. The whole painting shows Shi Tao's deep understanding of natural landscape, and at the same time conveys the painter's inner spirit of freedom and a transcendent attitude towards

the world, making it an exemplary work that expresses his personal feelings in landscape painting of the Qing Dynasty.

(III) Jin Nong, *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms* - One of Them

paper, ink and wash, 23.2✖33.3cm, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 51 Jin Nong, *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms* - One of Them

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. One of the *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms* compositions is simple and highly personal, the eaves of the house are painted in a diagonal way, the white wall takes up most of the picture, the plum blossom in the upper right corner is painted in a complicated way, forming an opposite side to the large area of white wall, and a curved branch of the plum is shown in a downward curved shape, interacting with the white wall, and the overall picture is rhythmic and fluent, with layers of sense of hierarchy, and also appearing to be ethereal and full of rhythms.

Brushwork and Ink techniques. The plum blossom branches and eaves in the picture are outlined with simple lines, without detailed depiction, appearing very minimalist. The branches are depicted with broken brushstrokes, and the lines are staccato and strong, while the plum blossom dots are extremely simple, sometimes presenting an almost white-drawing effect, giving the picture a more realistic style.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. One of the *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms* is not only a realistic work, but also a lyrical artistic expression. Jin Nong incorporated his own perception of the elegance and solitude of the plum blossom into his paintings, conveying a serene and noble emotion through the picture. His plum blossom paintings often exude a strong personalised temperament, which is closely related to his unique artistic thinking. The resilience of the plum blossom symbolises the inner perseverance of the literati, while the simplicity of the composition and the white space project the painter's pursuit of inner purity and spiritual transcendence (Kong, 2008).

3. Correction

A breakthrough in traditional composition. In his composition, Jin Nong breaks away from the complex background of traditional bird and flower paintings and adopts a minimalist approach, juxtaposing two seemingly unrelated elements, the plum blossom branch and the eaves of the house, to form a contrast and dialogue between the static and the dynamic, the rigid and the soft. This composition not only emphasises the echo between the elements of the picture, but also gives the work a more thoughtful and rhythmic feel.

The fusion of calligraphy and painting. The vertical inscription on the left side of the painting employs Jin Nong's signature calligraphy style, with a heavy and personalised script that echoes the branches and trunks in the painting, creating a sense of visual balance. The inscription is no longer an independent element attached to traditional Ming dynasty flower and bird paintings, but becomes part of the picture as a whole. This combination of calligraphy and painting corrects the traditional separation

of calligraphy and painting, giving the painting a stronger sense of wholeness and artistic impact.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

One of the *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms* vividly conveys the cool and solitary mood of plum blossoms through minimalist composition and brushwork and inkwork expression. The painting uses ink to outline the branches of the plum blossom and the eaves of the house, and uses a lot of blank space to express the ethereal nature of the background; the overall style is extremely simple and full of flavour. The plum blossoms in the foreground contrast with the quiet eaves of the house, creating an artistic atmosphere of profound serenity and elegance. Jin Nong's work is not only a masterpiece of Qing Dynasty flower and bird painting, but also demonstrates his artistic achievement in combining calligraphy and painting with innovative composition. (Figure 51)

(IV) Jin Nong, *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms - The Second*

Paper, ink and wash, 23.2✖33.3cm, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing
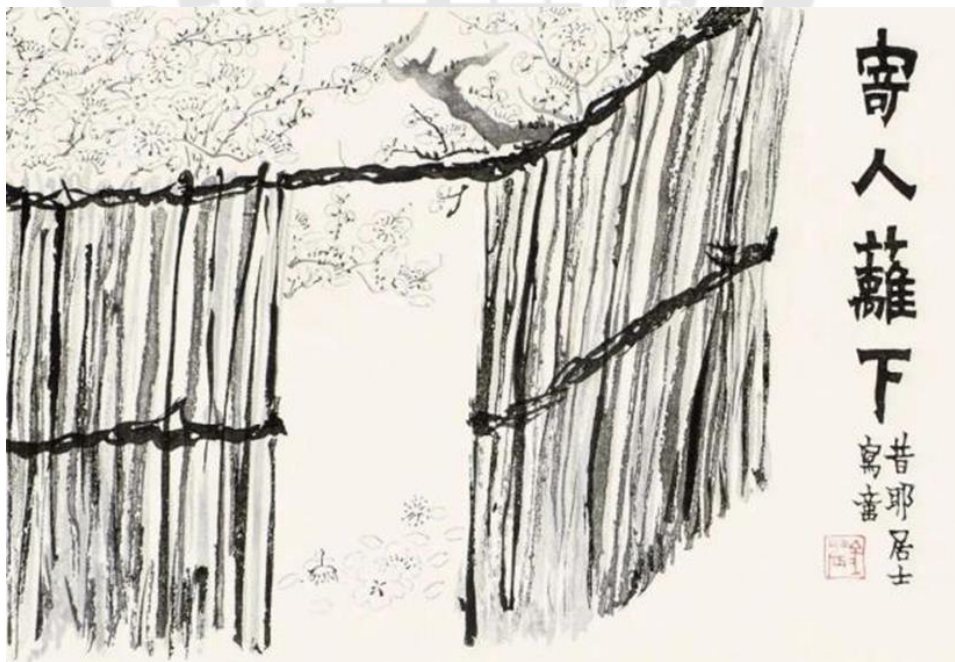
Figure 52 Jin Nong, *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms - The Second*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. In the picture, the fence extends from the right side to the middle of the picture, serving as the skeleton of the picture and forming a stable structure. The branches of the plum blossoms poke out from the gaps in the fence, breaking the stillness of the picture and making the overall composition full of vitality and movement. A lot of blank space is left in the picture, which not only sets off the blanks and elegance of the plum blossoms, but also fills the picture with poetry and space for reverie.

Brushwork techniques. The fence in the painting is sketched with bold strokes, with concise and powerful lines, while the branches and flowers of the plum blossoms are expressed with delicate and soft strokes. The contrast between the thick and thin lines makes the fence look hard and the plum blossoms look soft, forming a sharp contrast between the two, which not only maintains the balance of the picture, but also enhances the visual sense of hierarchy.

Ink techniques. The use of ink in the painting is extremely elaborate, with the fence written in thick ink, making it look heavy and deep, while the branches of the plum blossoms are dyed in light ink, creating a light and transparent effect. Most of the plum blossoms are expressed in blank, contrasting with the branches in light ink, making the plum blossoms appear white and flawless.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. Jin Nong's work is not only a realistic painting, but also carries the artist's profound emotional projection. The fence in the painting symbolises bondage, while the plum blossom peeking out from the fence symbolises the artist himself, who still maintains his noble temperament in the face of adversity. The inscription "Living Under Another's Roof" directly conveys the artist's repression and self-deprecation, revealing his helplessness towards reality. The work as a whole is full of strong personal emotions and philosophical thoughts, with poetic qualities of expression (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Compositional innovation. He breaks through the symmetrical composition

common in traditional flower and bird paintings, and adopts a fence to cover part of the plum blossom branches and trunks, which makes the picture more layered and interesting, and avoids the dullness of traditional paintings that are too neat.

Intensification of emotional expression. Through the dialogue between the fence and the plum blossom as well as the punctuation of the inscription, Jin Nong transforms the mode of traditional flower and bird paintings, which simply depicts natural scenery, into a way of expressing one's inner feelings, making the spiritual connotation of the work deeper.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Jin Nong's *Three Perfections of Plum Blossoms - The Second* is a masterpiece that blends emotion into scenery. The picture presents a cold and lonely picture by outlining the rough fence in thick ink, depicting the branches of plum blossoms in light ink, and leaving a lot of blank space to show the plum blossoms in the snow. The contrast between the fence and the plum blossoms symbolises the tension between bondage and freedom. The inscription "Living Under Another's Roof" complements the content of the painting, making the whole work poetic and full of the artist's personal expression. The painting as a whole demonstrates the heaviness of the thick lines in the foreground, the dynamism of the plum blossoms in the middle scene, and the ethereal atmosphere created by the leftover blank space, perfectly interpreting the stylistic characteristic of Qing Dynasty flower and bird paintings, which is expression of strong personal feelings. (Figure 52)

(V) Zheng Xie, *Gift for Apricot Blossom Owner Bamboo and Stone Picture* Paper, ink and wash, 175✖92cm, now in the Shanghai Museum

Figure 53 Zheng Xie, *Gift for Apricot Blossom Owner Bamboo and Stone Picture*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The picture adopts a vertical composition, with the bamboo

growing in a slightly inclined direction, and the bamboo trunks and leaves are interlaced, full of dynamism and vitality. The stone in the painting has a simple outline as the bottom support, which contrasts with the animation of the bamboo and further enhances the visual tension of the picture. The inscription inside the cracks of the stone, on the one hand, forms the same support as the stone, and on the other hand, fills up the gaps in the stone, echoing the dense bamboo leaves.

Brushwork and Ink techniques. The bamboo trunk and leaves are sketched in thick ink with a side stroke, and the lines are strong and crisp, showing the vitality and resilience of the bamboo. The bamboo in the distance is handled with light ink, making the picture layered, close to the real and far away from the virtual, rich in a sense of space. The stones are chapped with light ink, the edges are left white, and the strokes are concise and precise, forming a contrasting relationship between lightness and heaviness, which mirrors the bamboo's handsomeness.

2. Projection

Expression of artistic conception. Zheng Xie's Gift For Apricot Blossom Owner Bamboo and Stone Picture is not only a painting that expresses nature, but also a projection of the painter's inner feelings and outlook on life. The bamboo in the painting responds to the wind and rain with an upright posture, symbolising the artist's resilience in the face of adversity. This resilience is not only an ode to the power of life, but also conveys a state of mind of tranquility and self-control. The strength and poetry vaguely conveyed in the bamboo and stone images enable the viewer to feel the artist's profound thoughts and feelings about nature and life when appreciating the works (Kong, 2008).

3. Correction

Psychological Expression. Resilience and Serenity. This painting expresses the artist's inner resilience through the upright form of the bamboo. The bamboo is often swayed by the wind but always maintains its upright posture, showing the artist's inner strength.

The combination of calligraphy and painting. In the picture, his inscriptions

adopt his characteristic "Liu fen ban calligraphy", with almost half of the space next to the bamboo on the lower left being filled with dense inscriptions, which is a correction of the habit of leaving a large area of blank space in traditional paintings. The combination of calligraphy and painting not only does not upset the balance of the picture, but also enhances the overall sense of the picture. It has the power of calligraphy and is in harmony with the style of the bamboo and stone painting.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The work uses thick ink to outline the bamboo trunk and leaves, and the dynamics and layers of the bamboo are shown through the ink method that is suitable for both thick and light. The stone is depicted with concise light ink chapping, and the edge is left white to contrast with the bamboo. The overall picture is fresh and natural, conveying the resilience of life and the beauty of tranquility. The inscription on the lower left is highly unified with the content of the picture, making the whole work both expressive of painting and full of the power of calligraphy, which is a typical representative of Zheng Xie's bamboo and stone paintings. (Figure 53)

6. Modern Times

(I) Pan Tianshou, *Scroll of Bago Cliffs and Stones*

Paper, ink and light colours, 261✖143cm, now in the Pan Tianshou Memorial Hall

Figure 54 Pan Tianshou, *Scroll of Bago Cliffs and Stones*

Source: China Treasure Gallery, (https://www.ltfc.net/)
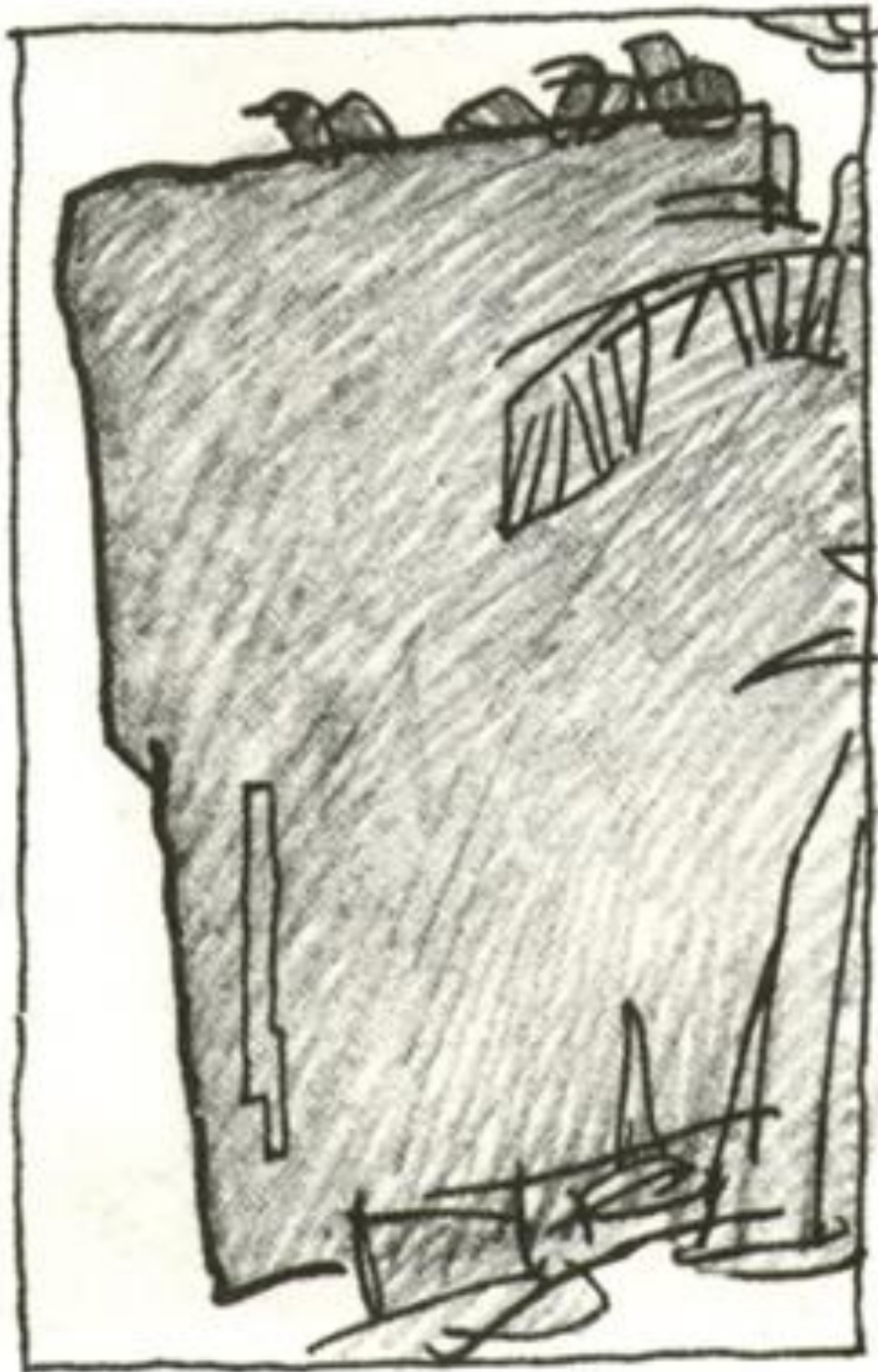
Figure 55 *Scroll of Bago Cliffs and Stones* (Composition Structure Analysis Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

1. Schema

Composition. The *Scroll of Bago Cliffs and Stones* shows the aesthetic meaning of "uniqueness" with a unique composition. The picture adopts a vertical composition, with the cliff stone as the main body and the pugilist perched on a corner of the cliff stone, forming a spatial layout with a false top and a solid bottom. The slightly tilted lines of the cliff stone give the picture a strong sense of movement. The edges and corners of the picture are especially well handled, with white space cleverly interspersed with the real scene, enhancing the rhythm and visual tension of the picture.

Brushwork techniques. In terms of brushwork, Pan Tianshou outlines the outline of the cliff stone with a bold, strong, and powerful line, demonstrating the rigid qualities of the cliff stone. The depiction of the bago, on the other hand, expresses its agility through delicate brushwork, forming a strong contrast with the cliff stone and balancing the picture in opposition. (Figure 55)

Ink techniques. The cliffs and rocks in the painting are partly outlined in thick ink and partly rendered in light ink, presenting variations in ink levels and spatial depth. The bago are dotted with heavier ink, becoming the visual centre of the picture. The use of a large amount of blank space not only highlights the main body of the object, but also creates an ethereal environment, adding a serene and profound mood to the work.

2. Projection

The spirit of literati painting. Influenced by the tradition of literati painting, Pan Tianshou projects individual emotions into his paintings, reflecting the poetic and contextual beauty of Chinese painting. Cliff stones symbolise toughness and calmness, while bago symbolises the spirit and vitality of life. Bago perches on top of the cliffs and rocks, seemingly merging with heaven and earth, conveying the artist's ideal of transcending the mundane and pursuing spiritual freedom (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

The transformation of reality and emptiness of objects. Instead of using thick ink to express the heaviness of the cliffs, the simple lines and large areas of white space are used to create the effect of the real and the imaginary. This technique of "turning the real into the imaginary" reduces the visual weight of the cliff stone, makes the picture more

light and spatial, and at the same time strengthens the expression of the spiritual dimension, which is in line with the aesthetic demand of modern ink painting in pursuit of the mood.

The embodiment of modern compositional consciousness. In the modern period, artists gradually broke away from the constraints of traditional painting and turned to explore more formal innovations. Pan Tianshou's method of "turning the real into the imaginary" in his paintings is not only a way of dealing with objects, but also an expression of modern compositional consciousness. Through simplification and abstraction, Pan Tianshou transforms the materiality of traditional landscape painting into the expression of imagery in modern art. This transformation is a major formal and spiritual correction of the painting, and reflects the unique path of modern Chinese painting in the context of global artistic thinking.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Scroll of Bago Cliffs and Stones* uses bold and powerful lines to outline the cliffs and rocks, and delicate brushwork to depict the Bugsy. The cliffs and rocks are rendered with distinct layers in light ink, while the Bugsy is dotted with thick ink and colouring in a lifelike manner. A great deal of white space is left around the cliffs and rocks and the pachyderms, making the picture appear ethereal and profound. The composition of the whole painting is compact and full of changes, showing strong vitality and spiritual connotation, which has the beauty of traditional writing and highlights the innovative interest of modern ink painting. (Figure 54)

(II) Pan Tianshou, *Pine and Stone Scroll*

Paper, ink and light colours, 179.5✖140cm, now in the Pan Tianshou Memorial Hall

Figure 56 Pan Tianshou, *Pine and Stone Scroll*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

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支撑

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Figure 57 *Pine and Stone Scroll* (Composition Structure Analysis Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

1. Schema

Composition. The *Pine and Stone Scroll* adopts a inclined composition, with the main trunk of the pine tree tilting to the right, creating an obvious dynamic tendency that

breaks the principle of stable and symmetrical composition in traditional landscape paintings. In order to balance the dynamic tendency of the picture, Pan Tianshou designed two opposing forces in the composition: the boundary of the picture on the right side forms a support for the pine tree, while the exposed roots of the pine tree in the lower left corner are deeply rooted in the soil, providing a strong support and enabling the picture to achieve a delicate balance between force and force. At the same time, a half-pine tree on the left side and the inscription in the upper left corner also serve to balance the visual centre of gravity, guiding the flow of the viewer's eyes, thus creating an open but harmonious spatial layout. (Figure 57)

Brushwork techniques. Pan Tianshou's brushstrokes represent pine trees and rocks with bold and powerful strokes, and his lines are strong and robust, with a very "hard" texture. His brushwork is concise with a sense of power, and the combination of thick and thin lines strengthens the momentum of the pines, while also making the picture full of tension and movement. The treatment of pine needles and trunks emphasises the details and creates a strong visual rhythm through the combination of sparseness and density.

Ink techniques. In the use of inkwork, Pan Tianshou expresses the calmness of the main trunk and the lightness of the branches and leaves of the pine tree through the contrast between thick and light ink. In the depiction of the stones, a combination of blocks and lines are used to create a sense of volume and textural effect with cun techniques and light ink stains. The blank space in the picture further highlights the unique posture of the pine stone, and the ethereal sense of space makes the picture full of flavour, leaving space for the viewer's imagination.

2. Projection

Pan Tianshou's Pine and Stone Scroll conveys a sense of vitality and natural strength. The tilted composition and strong momentum in the picture not only express the dynamism of natural objects, but also convey the artist's deep understanding of the natural world, "there is stillness in movement, and movement in stillness". This expression contrasts sharply with the "static aesthetics" of traditional landscape painting,

demonstrating Pan Tianshou's modern thinking in his artistic creation. The leaning pine tree seems to persist in growing against the wind, a metaphor for the tenacious will to live and the unyielding spirit, which coincides with the painter's pursuit of individual strength and modern spirit (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

In his works, Pan Tianshou breaks away from the traditional principle of "neutral and balanced" composition, and uses tilted composition as a kind of artistic language to strengthen the sense of dynamism and tension. This composition emphasises "dynamic balance", giving life and impact to static objects. At the same time, through the subtle handling of details, he retains a sense of stability and power in the midst of the intense dynamism of the picture. For example, the firm roots of the pine tree and the support of the border of the picture together constitute the stability of the picture structure, avoiding visual imbalance.

In addition, Pan Tianshou explored a new balance between realism and spontaneity in the context of modern art by combining the techniques of traditional landscape painting with a modern sense of composition. This technique not only continues the traditional aesthetic spirit of Chinese painting, but also incorporates strong individual emotion and modernity, providing a new direction for the modern development of Chinese painting.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Through the boldly tilted composition and blank treatment, The *Pine and Stone Scroll* presents a vigorous and tension-filled natural beauty. The main trunk of the pine tree is tilted to the right, and the branches and leaves show a dynamic sense of extension in space, while the inscription in the upper left corner of the picture and the root system in the lower left corner together form a counterforce, balancing the instability caused by the tilt. The pine trunks depicted in thick ink, the sparse pine needles, and the stones stained in light ink form a dynamic picture full of vitality. The entire work presents a visual effect that combines motion and static, not only reflecting the sense of power of natural objects, but also demonstrating Pan Tianshou's unique understanding

of artistic composition and expression of mood. (Figure 56)

(III) Pan Tianshou, *Eagle's Commanding Gaze Hanging Scroll*

paper, ink and light colours, 347.3✖143cm, now in the Pan Tianshou Memorial Hall

Figure 58 Pan Tianshou, *Eagle's Commanding Gaze Hanging Scroll*
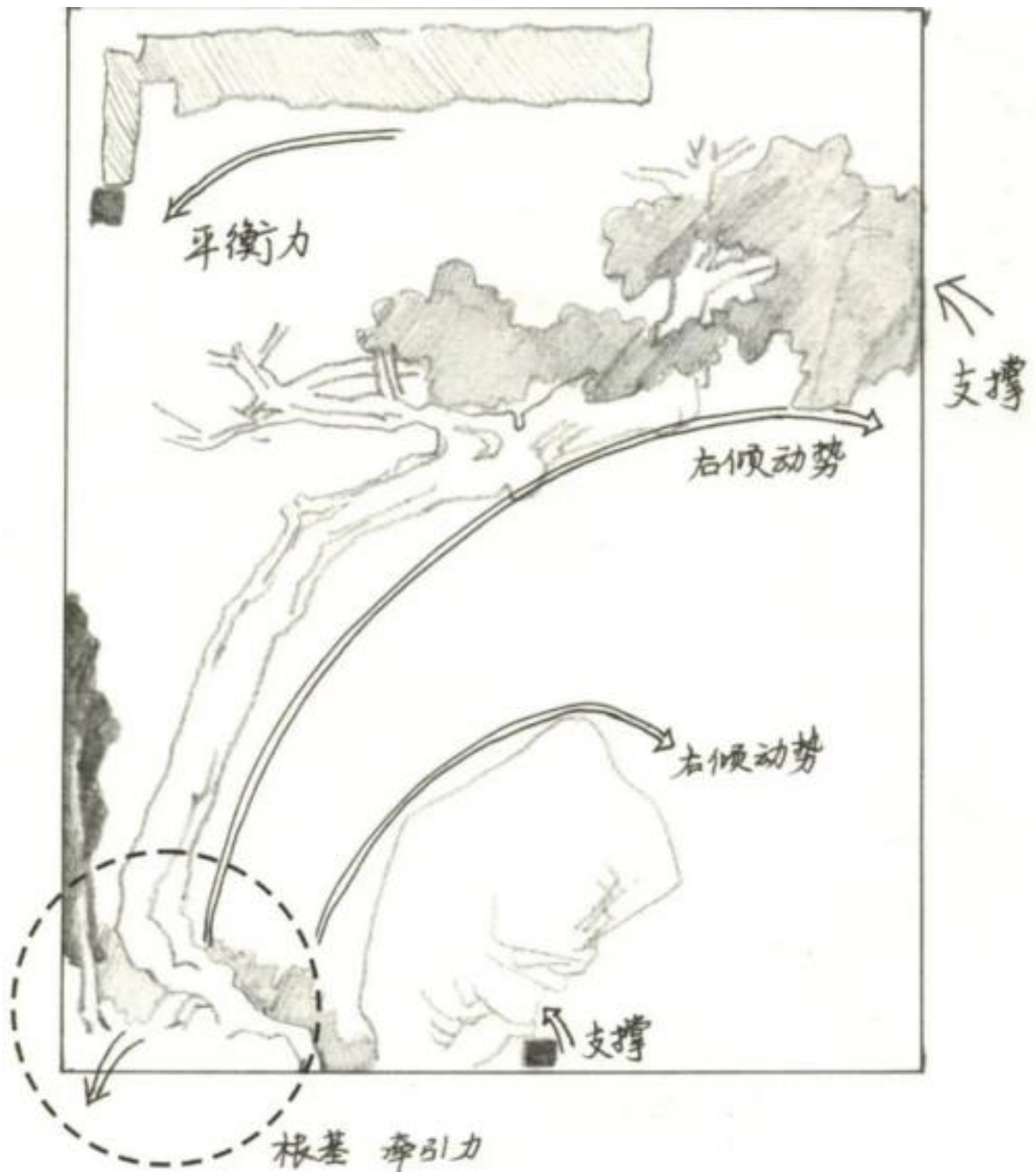
Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

視线

画边支撑的力

支点
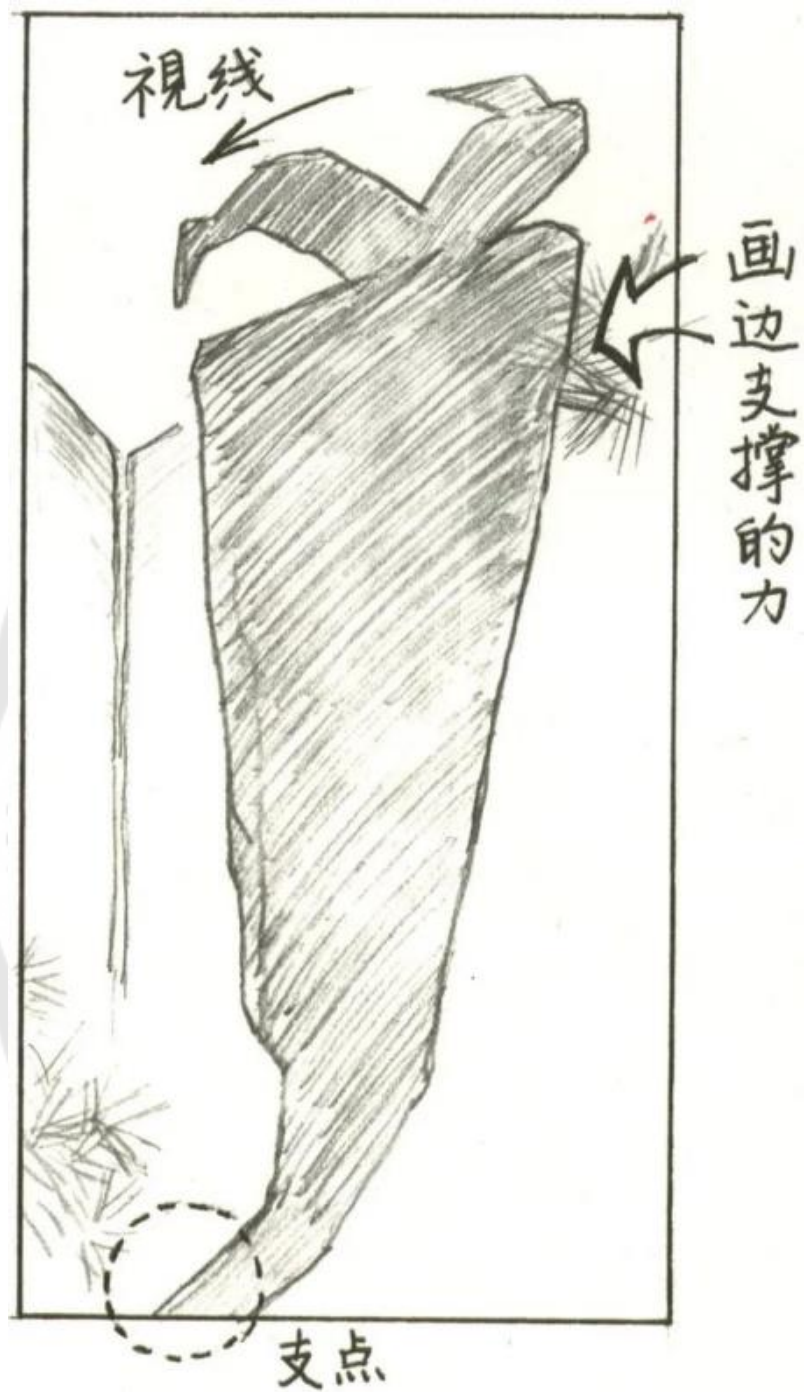
Figure 59 *Pine and Stone Scroll* (Composition Structure Analysis Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

1. Schema

Composition. The boulder in the picture is wide at the top and narrow at the

bottom, tilting to the right, creating a sinister and dynamic visual effect. In order to balance this momentum, Pan Tianshou has constructed a supportive relationship with the boulder by extending the pine branches in the upper right of the painting, which are connected to the boulder's inclination. In addition, the two vultures on the boulder, one looking down and the other turning its head to the left, subtly draw the viewer's gaze to the left. The moss and weeds at the bottom of the picture act as a fulcrum, reinforcing the sense of stability. These elements interact with each other to form an overall composition that combines movement with stillness, and adventure with balance. (Figure 59)

Brushwork techniques. Pan Tianshou uses a strong and powerful brushwork to outline the boulder in his Male View Axis, with rough and concise strokes that show the hardness and weight of the stone. The pine branches and vultures are depicted with detailed and tense brushstrokes, with the delicacy of traditional brushwork and the spontaneity of freehand writing. The weeds and moss in the picture are outlined with flexible and varied lines to show the details and enhance the natural texture.

Ink techniques. The use of ink in the work emphasises the contrast between light and dark, with the surface of the boulder presenting a sense of three-dimensionality and heaviness through the layers of different shades of ink. The pine branches are rendered in thick ink, creating a strong visual impact, while the weeds and mosses on the soil slope are lightly swept in light ink, adding a sense of hierarchy and vitality to the picture. The combination of thick and light ink and blank space makes the picture both powerful and ethereal.

2. Projection

Pan Tianshou's bold compositions and brush and ink techniques in *Male View Axis* project his deep understanding and expression of the vitality of nature. The boulders in the picture, though precipitous, are supported by pine branches and soil slopes, showing a tenacious balance, and this "coexistence of danger and stability" not only reflects the power of nature, but also metaphorically demonstrates the resilience and wisdom of human beings in the face of danger. The two vultures in the painting

have different postures, with a certain sense of solitude and overlooking, reflecting the artist's reverence and contemplation of the spirit of natural life. Pan Tianshou incorporated his personal emotions and philosophical reflections into his paintings, forming a strong subjective expression (Pan, 2017).

3. Correction

Pan Tianshou redefined the traditional Chinese painting concept of "balance and symmetry" in the *Male View Scroll*. He breaks the static compositional order by "leaning and supporting", and creates tension and dynamism in the picture by seeking balance in imbalance. This way of composition is not only an innovation of the traditional rules of composition, but also reflects his profound pursuit of the mood and power of the picture. Pan Tianshou's works carry the spiritual core of traditional Chinese culture, while drawing on the formal language of modern Western art, demonstrating the fusion and innovation of Chinese and Western art in a modern environment.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

In the Male View Axis, the giant boulder is depicted with bold brushstrokes and thick and light ink colours, presenting a sinister and powerful image. The extension of the pine branches and the posture of the vulture subtly enhance the dynamism and tension of the picture. The moss and weeds at the bottom of the painting are lightly swept with light ink, echoing the heaviness of the boulder. The overall composition demonstrates Pan Tianshou's unique interpretation of the power of nature through the combination of tilted momentum and supporting elements. The work is not only a static landscape painting, but also an artistic expression of dynamic vitality and spiritual symbolism. (Figure 58)

(IV) Pan Tianshou, *Plum Blossoms and Banana Leaves Scroll*

Paper, ink and light colours, 183×50.7cm, now in the Pan Tianshou Memorial Hall

Figure 60 Pan Tianshou, *Plum Blossoms and Banana Leaves Scroll*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

Figure 61 *Plum Blossoms and Banana Leaves Scroll* (Composition Structure Analysis Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

1. Schema

Composition. In the picture, the wide and flat plantain contrast with the slender and dynamic branches of the plum blossom, and the two main objects belong to different areas of the picture, showing a significant planar division effect. This division not only gives the picture a sense of hierarchy, but also enhances the interaction between the objects. Pan Tianshou places the banana in the foreground of the picture, forming the centre of visual gravity with its heaviness, while the plum blossom resides in the back view with its light and delicate branches to open up the hierarchy of the space between the front and back. The overall composition cleverly creates a sense of depth and dynamism through the superposition and division of planes, in line with the exploration and expression of spatial forms in modern art. (Figure 61)

Brushwork and ink techniques. The banana leaves is drawn with strong lines and heavy ink, showing the heaviness and tension of the object; while the plum blossom is outlined with agile strokes, with detailed lines and no loss of flavour, showing the resilience and elegance of the plum blossom. The contrast between the two different brushworks in the picture not only shows Pan Tianshou's diversity in painting language, but also enhances the expressiveness and emotional tension of the objects in the picture.

2. Projection

Pan Tianshou's *Plum Blossoms and Banana Leaves Scroll* is not only a depiction of nature, but also an artistic projection of individual emotion and philosophical thinking. The plum blossom symbolises resilience and purity, while the banana leaves shows tolerance and inclusiveness, and this contrast maps out the artist's deepest thoughts on the tension of life and emotional balance. Through the interaction and division between the objects in the picture, Pan Tianshou conveys the beauty of harmony in dynamics. This expression of mood is not only a presentation of nature, but also a projection of the artist's personality and culture (Kong, 2008).

3. Correction

In *Plum Blossoms and Banana Leaves Scroll*, Pan Tianshou corrected the traditional concept of "harmony and unity" in Chinese painting. Formally, he breaks away

from the balanced aesthetics of traditional landscape painting and creates visual conflict and tension through asymmetrical relationships between objects and plane division. The work combines the spirit of traditional writing with a modern sense of form, so that the picture reaches a new balance between motion and stillness, and between emptiness and reality. This composition reflects Pan Tianshou's profound thinking about the fusion of Chinese and Western art, especially the innovation and development of traditional art forms in a modern environment.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Plum Blossoms and Banana Leaves Scroll* presents the contrasting beauty of plum blossom and plantain through diverse artistic languages. In the picture, the broad banana leaves are depicted in thick ink, occupying the lower part of the picture, forming a visual contrast with the slender branches of the plum blossoms; while the plum blossoms are lightly depicted in light ink and scattered at the top of the picture, making them appear ethereal and poetic. The whole work shows a high degree of formality in terms of plane division and spatial hierarchy, conveying the artist's deep understanding of nature and life, and highlighting the uniqueness of his personal style. (Figure 60)

(V) Pan Tianshou, *Plum and Crane Scroll*

Paper, ink and light colours, 142✖44.7cm, now in the Pan Tianshou Memorial Hall

Figure 62 Pan Tianshou, *Plum and Crane Scroll*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)
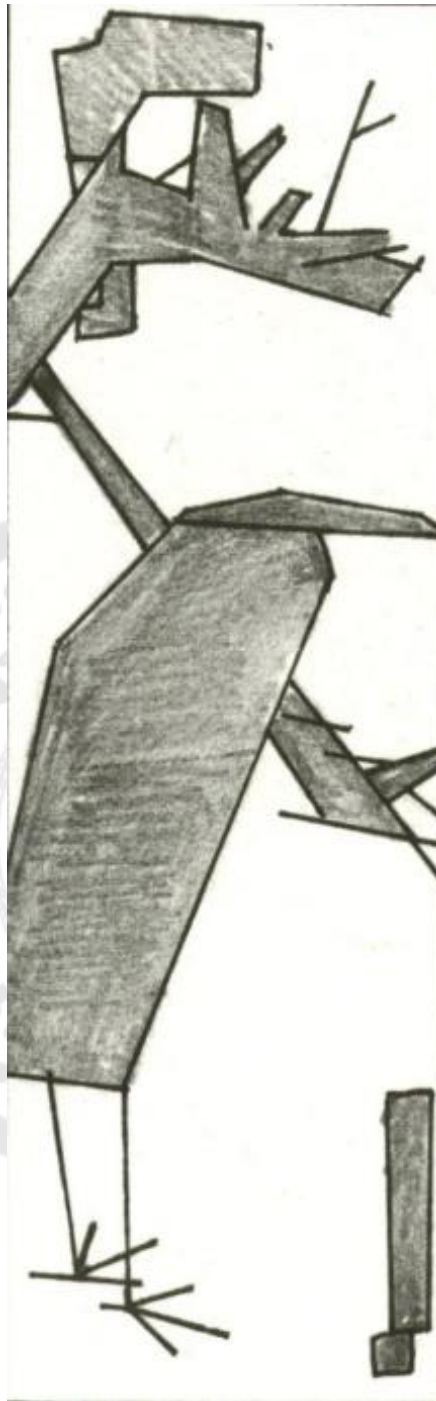
Figure 63 *Plum and Crane Scroll* (Composition Structure Analysis Diagram)

Source: Created by Author

1. Schema

Composition. In *Plum and Crane Scroll*, Pan Tianshou adopts a unique "skeleton

combination" composition. Through the clever distribution of the plum blossom branches, the crane and the blank space, the picture shows a deep understanding of spatial layout. The plum blossom branches outlined in ink lines and the crane's feet form the skeleton of the painting, while the crane's body is painted in thick ink, adding weight and stability to the painting. The design of blank space forms a strong contrast with the ink lines and ink blocks, making the picture layered and rhythmic in its simplicity. (Figure 63)

Brushwork techniques. Pan Tianshou is known for his stiff brushwork, " iron strokes and silver hooks", which is strong and powerful, with lines full of bones. The branches of the plum blossom and the feet of the crane in the painting are outlined with tough, strong lines, emphasising the beauty of the "bones" of the object. This aesthetic pursuit of "line as bone" permeates his creations, reflecting the firmness of Pan Tianshou's artistic style.

Ink techniques. In terms of inking, Pan Tianshou focuses on the contrast of ink colours and the creation of layers. The crane's body is painted in thick ink, contrasting with the plum branches outlined in light ink, further enhancing the visual impact of the picture. At the same time, the large amount of white space not only adds a sense of dynamism to the space, but also gives the viewer more room for thought and imagination.

2. Projection

In the picture, the plum blossom symbolises resilience and purity, while the crane signifies longevity and good fortune. The combination of these two kinds of imagery in the picture expresses the painter's yearning for the resilience and sublime realm of life, and also conveys his reverence and admiration for the vitality of nature. The hard lines and thick ink layout of the painting reflect the painter's own upright character and artistic spirit. Through the depiction of symbolic objects, Pan Tianshou integrates his personal emotions with natural imagery, enabling the viewer to feel deep emotional resonance and philosophical reflection while enjoying the painting (Kong, 2008).

3. Correction

Pan Tianshou corrected the concept of "flat layout" in traditional Chinese painting. He replaced the traditional static equilibrium with the compositional method of "skeleton combination", taking the interaction between objects and the sense of spatial hierarchy as the core of picture expression. This innovation not only enhances the three-dimensionality of the picture, but also gives traditional ink painting a stronger expressive power and a modern sense. In addition, he breaks through the traditional brushwork's reliance on fine depiction by using strong brushwork and ink colours of appropriate intensity, emphasising the dynamic balance between writing and expression. This bold correction of traditional techniques established Pan Tianshou's important position as a representative of modern Chinese painting innovation.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

In the *Plum and Crane scroll*, the crane's body, painted in thick ink, is the centre of the picture, and the plum blossom branches extend in all directions with stiff lines, forming the skeletal structure of the picture. The ink lines of the crane's feet and the branches echo each other and contrast with the large areas of blank space, making the picture ethereal with a strong beauty. The overall composition has a clear hierarchy between the foreground and background, with the plum blossom and the crane reflecting each other in a way that conveys the tranquility and vitality of nature. The picture not only has a unique visual impact, but also embodies Pan Tianshou's deep understanding of life and nature, making it a classic work that combines tradition and modernity. (Figure 62)

(VI) Qi Baishi, *Shrimps*

Paper, Ink and watercolour, 101✖34cm, now in the Xu Beihong Memorial Hall

Figure 64 Qi Baishi, *Shrimps*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. Qi Baishi's *Shrimp* adopts a simple and dynamic composition form, showing the natural dynamics of shrimp swimming in the water. The shrimp in the picture extends from the upper right corner to the lower left corner in a natural arc, forming a flowing rhythm of the picture. This layout reflects Qi Baishi's unique pursuit of overall dynamism and rhythm.

Brushwork techniques. Qi Baishi's *Shrimp* paintings are distinguished by their precise and smooth brushwork. The long whiskers and legs of the shrimp are outlined by concise ink lines, which are smooth and natural, fully reflecting the calligraphy skills and the "bones" of the brush. The body part of the shrimp is dyed with light ink, which is both simple and expressive, presenting the transparent texture of the shrimp and enhancing the visual hierarchy of the picture at the same time.

Ink techniques. The most distinctive feature of *Shrimp* is the use of broken ink method. The head and body of the shrimp are rendered in light ink, forming a translucent sense of lightness, while the eyes and brain of the shrimp are strikingly portrayed in thick ink, and the appropriate haloing effect strengthens the three-dimensionality and dynamism of the shrimp. The broken ink method not only gives life to the shrimp in the changes in the layers of ink colour, but also enriches the overall expressiveness of the picture.

2. Projection

Qi Baishi's *Shrimps* not only depicts the form of shrimps, but also projects the artist's love and observation of natural life. The shrimp's animated, transparent posture, as if swimming in the water, demonstrates Qi Baishi's ability to transform the details of life into artistic expression. He captured the dynamics of the shrimp in his daily observation, reproduced the vitality of nature with a few brushstrokes, and used it to express his profound thoughts on the power of life. The work conveys the natural philosophy of "vitality" through its dynamic composition and smooth brushstrokes, echoing Qi Baishi's philosophy of simplicity and love of nature in his art (Kong, 2008).

3. Correction

Dynamic compositional layout. Qi Baishi broke through the static, symmetrical

layout mode in traditional flower and bird paintings, and created a sense of flow in the picture through the dynamic modelling of the curved arrangement of shrimps. This layout not only shows the vitality of nature, but also enhances the overall sense of space and rhythm of the picture.

Innovative use of the broken ink method. Unlike traditional Chinese painting, which focuses on detailed outlining, Qi Baishi demonstrates the transparent texture and dynamism of the shrimp through the broken ink method. The contrast between light and thick ink not only visually enhances the three-dimensionality of the shrimp, but also infuses the work with a strong modern ink expression. This technique corrects the limitations of traditional bird and flower paintings in the use of ink, bringing them closer to the reality and dynamics of nature.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Shrimps* Painting depicts the vivid form of the shrimp with a few brushstrokes, and through the dynamic curved composition, the picture displays a smooth rhythm and dynamic vitality. The body of the shrimp is dyed with light ink, the long whiskers and legs are outlined with smooth lines, and the broken ink technique of combining thick and light ink enhances the three-dimensionality and transparency of the shrimp. The blank space in the picture makes the shrimp more prominent and at the same time gives the viewer unlimited space for imagination. The overall simplicity of the work is extremely expressive, successfully conveying the combination of natural vitality and artistic subtlety. (Figure 64)

(VII) Huang Binhong, *A Visit to Sichuan and a Painting of a Clumsy Brush* Paper, ink and light colours, 54✖ 26cm, now in the Nanjing Museum
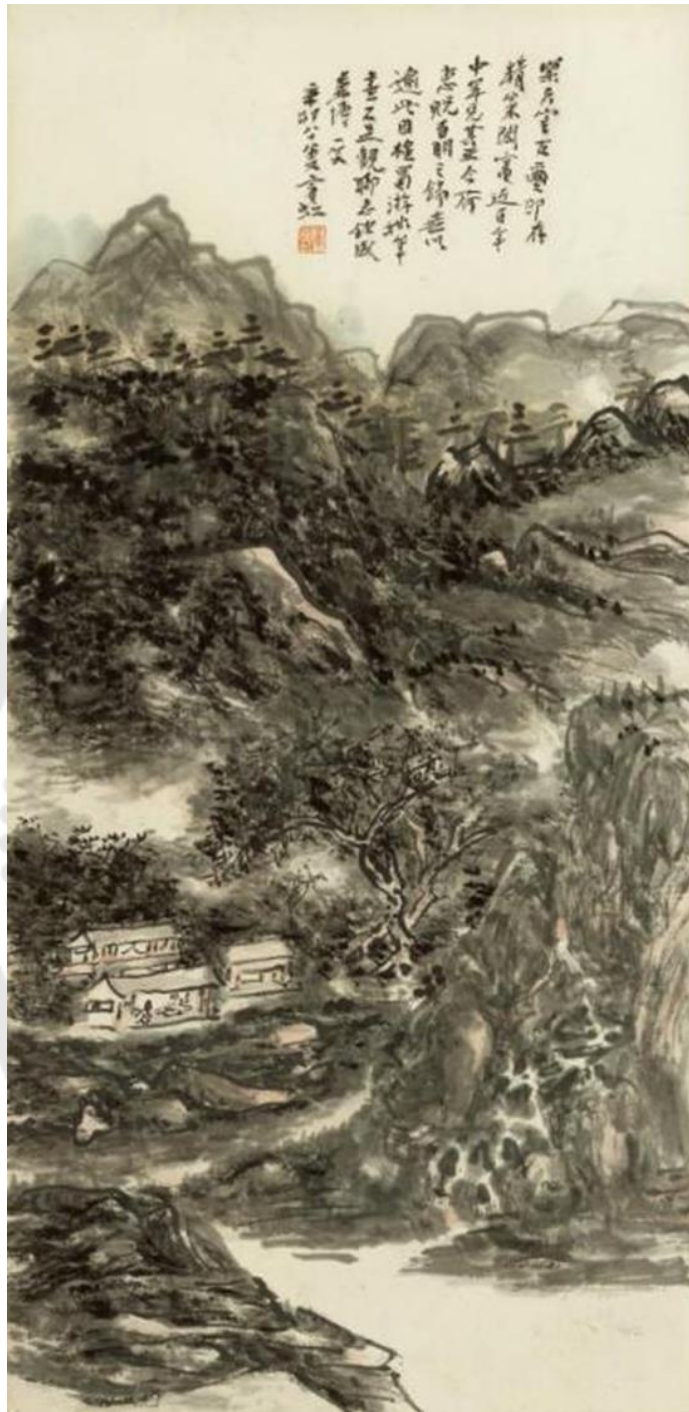
Figure 65 Huang Binhong, *A Visit to Sichuan and a Painting of a Clumsy Brush*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The composition of *A Visit to Sichuan and a Painting of a Clumsy Brush* presents a sharp contrast between density and emptiness. The rocks and trees are piled up in layers of heavy ink and brushwork, dense and rich in texture, showing the heaviness and solidity of the mountains. The large area of blank space in the picture creates an empty and far-reaching mood. This alternation of density and emptiness makes the picture richer in terms of layers and a stronger sense of space.

Brushwork techniques. Huang Binghong's brushwork is based on the "five strokes" method, namely, flat, rounded, reserved, heavy, and varied. He used bold and powerful lines to outline the rocks and mountains, and at the same time, he used delicate and soft lines to depict the branches and leaves of the trees and the paths between the mountains, which not only expresses the overall majestic momentum, but also gives the picture a wealth of details.

Ink techniques. He uses the "seven ink" method: thick, light, broken, splashed, stained, burnt, and hung, and through the changes in thickness and multi-layered ink accumulation, he expresses the heavy texture of the rocks in the picture to the fullest extent. In particular, the superposition of thick ink with persistent ink creates the visual effect of "light in black", which further strengthens the sense of space and expressiveness of the picture.

2. Projection

Huang Binhong's The *A Visit to Sichuan and a Painting of a Clumsy Brush* not only depicts the majestic landscape of Shu, but is also a reflection of the artist's outlook on life and aesthetics. He infused his works with his profound observation and perception of nature, and through the treatment of the heaviness of the rocks and the blank space, he conveyed his reverence for the vastness of the earth and sky and the permanence of the landscape. The "denseness" and "emptiness" of the work not only express the abundance and vastness of nature, but also imply the concept of "balance between yin and yang" in traditional Chinese philosophy. The intricate superimposition of ink colours in the painting, as opposed to the empty blank space, expresses the profound philosophy of opposites and unity of all things in nature. Huang Binhong used

his brush to express his inner feelings about the landscapes of Shu, closely combining his emotions with his artistic creation, making the painting an externalisation and reconstruction of the artist's thoughts (Wang & Hu, 2008).

3. Correction

In terms of brushwork and inkwork techniques. He innovatively applies the "layered ink method" and "over-night ink method" to express the sense of volume and heaviness of the rocks and mountains through the superimposition of multiple layers of ink. This technique breaks through the traditional landscape painting's single pursuit of "light ink and blank space" and gives the picture a richer visual effect.

In terms of composition. He paid attention to the layout of "dense" and "empty", so that the picture has both local thickness and overall ethereal, breaking the limitations of traditional landscape painting in the reproduction of the actual scene. Huang Binhong elevated the expressive power of landscape painting to a new realm through meticulous brushwork and changes in the layers of ink colour.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The composition uses layers of accumulation ink and overnight ink to convey the solidity and weight of the mountains and rocks, while blank spaces are employed to evoke the depth and ethereal quality of Sichuan's landscapes. The contrast between the dense rocks and the empty blank space in the picture presents a combination of majesty and grandeur with tranquility and remoteness. The lines are concise and varied, and the change from roughness to delicacy demonstrates the artist's great skill. The whole painting is not only a landscape painting, but also a materialisation of the artist's thoughts and artistic concepts, conveying the beauty of the fusion of nature and philosophy of life. (Figure 65)

(VIII) Xu Beihong, *The Great Herd of Horses*

Paper, ink and light colours, 61✖108cm, now in the Xu Beihong Memorial Hall

Figure 66 Xu Beihong, *The Great Herd of Horses*

Source: China Treasure Gallery (https://www.ltfc.net/)

1. Schema

Composition. The picture adopts horizontal dynamic composition, in which the horses have different postures and gestures. The whole picture shows a strong sense of rhythm and movement.

Brushwork and ink techniques. Xu Beihong's brushwork focuses on combining the volume of the object with the relationship between light and dark, showing the power and dynamics between thick and thin changes. The painting uses a combination of thick and light ink to express the volume and texture of the horse. Thick ink is used for the key parts of the horse, such as hooves, mane, tail, etc., to emphasise its sense of power and dynamics; light ink expresses the undulation of the horse's muscles and the layers of light and dark, increasing the three-dimensionality and vividness of the picture. In addition, the use of large amounts of white space in the background creates a strong contrast between black and white, injecting visual impact into the picture.

2. Projection

In *The Large Herd of Horses*, Xu Beihong projects his reflections on life and vitality onto the canvas. As the central subject of the painting, the horse not only symbolizes the essence of natural life but also serves as a tribute to freedom, vigor, and vitality. The work demonstrates the artist's deep observation of animal forms and his emotional resonance with them, blending the dynamic depiction of the herd with his inner spiritual aspirations. Striking a balance between realism and expressiveness, Xu Beihong uses horses as a medium to integrate the expressive spirit of traditional Chinese painting with the realistic techniques of Western art, showcasing his unique understanding of the relationship between tradition and modernity in art (Kong, 2008).

3. Corrections

Fusion of Chinese and Western techniques. The works combine the realistic style of traditional Chinese ink painting with the realistic techniques of Western drawing. Xu Beihong combines the structural awareness of drawing with the ink and brushwork of Chinese painting. The horses' forms are both evocative and simple, and the texture of their muscles and hair is expressed through soft layers of ink. The dynamic layout and detailed depiction of the horses fully reflect the fusion of Chinese and Western techniques.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

In the work, Xu Beihong depicts a group of horses with different postures with refined lines and ink colours. The composition is a combination of static and dynamic, with the horses in the foreground in high spirits, and the horses in the background appearing indistinctly, forming a distinct sense of hierarchy and rhythm. The manes and tails of the horses are painted with burnt ink, which is dynamic and full of vitality, while the muscles are dyed with light ink, showing a delicate texture. The dynamic composition, flexible brushwork and combination of light and dark ink show the vitality of the horses and the tension of nature, which not only continues the tradition of Chinese painting, but also integrates the spatial expression and structural beauty of Western painting, which is a fusion of the East and the West in the modern development of Chinese painting. (Figure 66)

4.1.3 The Application of Schema and Correction Theory in the Visual Language
Art of Traditional Ink Painting

Table 10 The Use of Schema and Correction Theory in Traditional Ink Painting Visual
Language Art

Dynasty	Process: Schema-Projection-Correction-Schema Reproduction
Sui and Tang Dynasties	Wang Wei established a poetic approach to landscape painting, integrating painting with poetry. Meanwhile, Jing Hao and Guan Tong refined panoramic compositions, using detailed cun techniques to enhance the solidity of nature, laying the foundation for later landscape painting traditions
Song Dynasty	The Song Dynasty marked the peak of landscape painting. Fan Kuan and Guo Xi adopted grand panoramic compositions and developed the "Three-Distances Method," enhancing spatial depth. Ma Yuan and Xia Gui, on the other hand, emphasized partial views and blank space to create tension and mood. In flower-and-bird painting, Yang Wujiu and Zhao Mengjian pioneered independent compositions and layered ink color techniques, further diversifying the genre.
Yuan Dynasty	During the Yuan Dynasty, literati painting flourished. Ni Zan's "three-part composition" pursued extreme simplicity, while Huang Gongwang introduced layered perspectives to enrich spatial expression. Li Kan, Zheng Sixiao, and Wang Mian used objects like bamboo, orchids, and plum blossoms as metaphors, deepening the symbolic meaning of ink painting.
Ming Dynasty	The Ming Dynasty saw the introduction of "scatter perspective" by Shen Zhou, creating a freer and more dynamic composition. Chen Chun and Xu Wei broke away from rigid forms, emphasizing expressive brushwork and emotional spontaneity, further advancing the xieyi (freehand) style.

Table 10 (Continued)

Dynasty	Process: Schema-Projection-Correction-Schema Reproduction
Qing Dynasty	In the Qing Dynasty, painters such as Bada Shanren and Shi Tao infused personal emotions into their compositions. Bada Shanren used blank space and solitude imagery to convey a sense of loss and discontent, while Shi Tao stressed the dynamic rhythm of brushwork, advocating that "brushwork and ink should follow the times." Zheng Xie combined inscriptions with composition, making calligraphy an integral part of literati painting.
Modern Times	In modern times, Pan Tianshou introduced modern compositional awareness, breaking traditional layout conventions. Qi Baishi used the broken ink method to depict ordinary subjects with deep emotions, while Huang Binhong employed layered ink accumulation to express the cultural continuity of landscape painting. Xu Beihong blended Western realism with traditional Chinese techniques, expanding the boundaries of Chinese ink painting.

As shown in the table (Tabel 10), analyzing the development of traditional Chinese ink painting through Gombrich's "schema-and-correction" theory reveals a process of gradual evolution. Artists from different historical periods inherited the schemas (visual conventions and forms) of their predecessors and, through innovation and modification, developed new schemas. From the early "panoramic" compositions to the modern integration of expressive and realistic styles, artists in each era have responded to the changes of their time by revising the existing schemas, ultimately creating a rich and diverse tradition of ink painting. Innovations and refinements in composition and brushwork techniques have continually propelled the art of Chinese ink painting forward.

4.1.4 Summary: Characteristics of the Visual Language of Traditional Ink Painting

1. Scattered perspective and panoramic layout, making good use of blank

space and pursuing balanced beauty. Traditional ink painting compositions often use scattered perspective and panoramic layout, making effective use of blank space to create artistic conception and pursuing the beauty of balanced imagery rather than mechanical symmetry.

2. Usual use of lines, emphasis on the five colors of ink, and the usual technique of freehand brushwork. In terms of brushwork and ink techniques, traditional Chinese ink painting is usually based on line, mainly using sketch and cun techniques, and attaches importance to the "five colors of ink" and is usually based on the technique of freehand brushwork.

3. The pursuit of the philosophical idea of "Harmony Between Heaven and Humanity" and the psychology of the harmony of things and oneself. Aesthetically, traditional Chinese ink painting pursues the philosophical idea of "Harmony Between Heaven and Humanity," as well as the integration of things with oneself and the psychology of the fusion of imagery and symbols.

To sum up, the visual language of traditional Chinese ink painting emphasises the beauty of the composition's mood, the richness of the layers of ink and brushwork, the profoundness of the connotation's symbols, as well as the dynamic fusion of tradition and innovation, which reflects the deep heritage of Chinese culture and artistic uniqueness.

4.2 Characteristics of Contemporary Ink Painting Visual Language: Schema Reproduction and Schema Correction in Contemporary Ink Painting Art

In the creation of traditional Chinese painting art, ink painting, as one of the traditional arts, can give a rich meaning to traditional painting. Rudolf Arnheim, in Art and Visual Perception, applies Gestalt psychology to the analysis of visual art. He believes that art creation is based on perception, which makes a certain connection between human emotions and art forms, and that the elements of ink painting creativity become a direct medium for the transmission of information, and that the formation of the elements is a direct mapping of the creator's mental schema, which reflects the shared cultural cognition of the creative subject-object inter-ness, social background,

technological progress, and personal experience. At the same time, the deep structure of "schema" mentioned above has certain common characteristics, therefore, the visual presentation of ink art can stimulate the cognition of human mind, so as to understand the expression of ink art according to the subjective intention of one's own initiative, and this process is the process of "schema reproduction."

And in the actual creative process, the artist will reflect on the limitations of the schema by observing natural or real objects. This observation is not only of physical reality, but also of psychological reality and emotional perception. Through such observation, the artist is able to recognise the inadequacies of a schema, such as the fact that a particular schema may be too conceptual to convey the details or uniqueness of the object depicted.

Once the deficiencies of the schema are realised, the artist begins to "correct" it. This process of correction may be gradual, starting with small adjustments, such as adjusting lines, proportions, or details of light and shadow. Through these small corrections, the artist continues to bring the work closer to their observations and experiences. This correction is not a mechanical correction of errors, but a reflection and reshaping of form and content. The goal of the correction is to make the artwork more in line with the visual or emotional criteria in the artist's mind. After many corrections, the artist may form new schemas. These new schemas are no longer mere imitations of reality, but a combination of a rational reproduction of reality and the artist's subjective creativity. The new schemas become part of the artist's personalised expression and may also have a profound effect on later creations. At this stage, the artist often develops a unique style.

Unlike ancient painters, contemporary ink painters live in a modern society of globalisation and multiculturalism, and the objects and contents of their creations are often influenced by modern life, technological development, urbanisation, and global cultural exchanges. As a result, their observations are no longer limited to natural landscapes or traditional subjects, but are more broadly focused on the changes and mental states of contemporary society. This new observation leads them to discover the

inadequacy of traditional schemas. For contemporary ink painters, Gombrich's process of "schema-correction" is embodied in the combination of tradition and modernity. By observing modern reality and reflecting on the limitations of traditional schema, they make corrections in terms of medium, technique and concept, and then form a new artistic language and personal style. This process of correction is not static, but continuous, accompanied by the artists' constant reflection on society, culture and personal experience, which promotes the development and innovation of ink art in the contemporary context. (Figure 67)
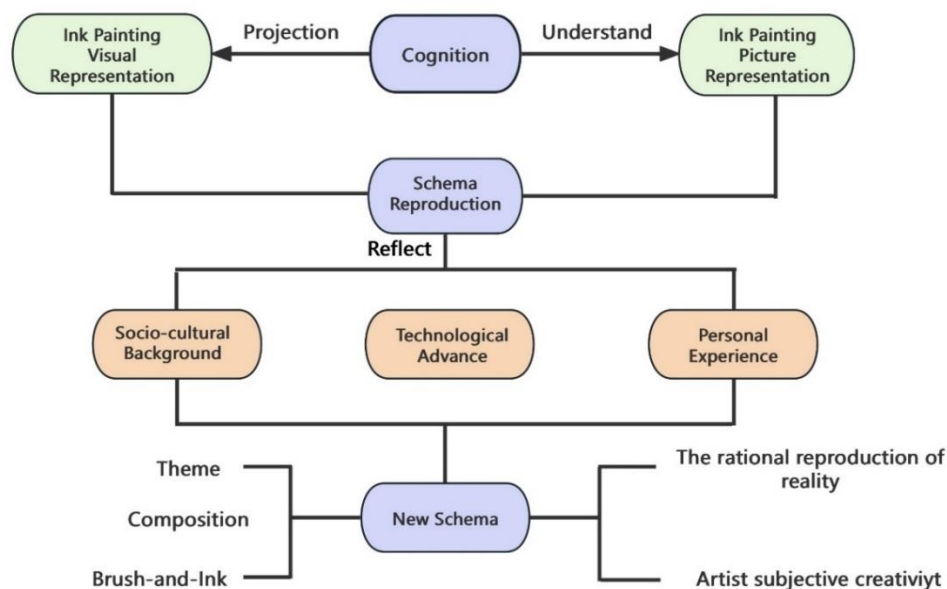
Figure 67 Schematic Diagram of Schema Reproduction and Schema Correction

Source: Created by Author

4.2.1 Research Process

In order to do a good job of case study research, the author went about the research in four main stages.

The first stage is the preparation stage of interview research, from March to July 2024, which mainly involves designing interview outlines, drawing up interview protocols, and soliciting opinions and suggestions from experts, scholars, and tutors, as well as

conducting preliminary test interviews and repeatedly revising the interview outlines and protocols. The second stage is the interview implementation stage, which lasts from June-July 2024, contacting to identify the interview candidates and conducting the interviews. The third stage is the data entry and related data coding stage, which took place from June - September 2024. The fourth stage was the data collation, analysis, summarisation and writing stage, which took place from June 2024-December 2024. The process is described below.

1. Data Collecting

The first stage of the preparation of interviews and research. The author designed a preliminary interview outline based on the core proposition of "the development of visual language from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting", according to the relevant theories of fine arts, and listened to the opinions and suggestions of the tutor group as well as the relevant experts and scholars, and at the same time, invited two ink painters to do the test interviews. At the same time, two ink painters were invited to do the test interviews. Finally, according to the feedback and suggestions from the tutor group as well as the above experts and scholars, and the leaders of the university and the academy at both levels as well as the interviewed deans, the interview outline was revised and improved, and the interview programme was determined respectively (see Appendix).

The second stage of the interview implementation stage. The implementation stage of the interview is really a test stage, in addition to the artist to accept the interview, how to get the real data based on the question which is extremely critical, especially during the interview process to talk about the ink masterpieces, modest people say there is no masterpiece, are casually drawing, the feeling that it is the same as the usual work, which is a lot of artists interviews talked about. In this case, how to guide is the key? This is in addition to their own to be modest to ask for advice, but also to have an understanding of the artist's life and painting career can be. After interviewing the two artists in person, the author changed the interview strategy, originally face-to-face interviews, and later took the telephone interviews and email interviews. By changing the

way, the effect was unexpected, the artist even sent his masterpieces or usual paintings in the attachment. In the interviews that lasted two months, the author interviewed 6 ink artists and 2 ink critics, among which 2 were interviewed in person, the interview time was about 40-50 minutes; 1 was interviewed by phone, the interview time was about 45 minutes; 5 were interviewed by email. There are also 2 others who collected his published papers through the internet or accepted interviews from other journal publishers. Whether the interviews were conducted in person, by phone or by email, the author clearly explained the purpose and content of the interviews before the interviews began or in the emails, and promised to keep the interviewee's organisation or personal information anonymous. All interviews were conducted according to the pre-designed interview outline. The statistics are shown in the following table. (Table 11)

Table 11 Summary of Information from In-Depth Interviews with Artists and Critics on the Representation of the Visual Language of Contemporary Ink Painting

Interview Number	Time of Interview	Interview Format	Interviewees	Interview Duration (minutes)
A01	2024.6.26	Face-to-face	Artists	42
A02	2024.6.28	Face-to-face	Artists	51
A03	2024.7.2	Telephone	Artists	48
A04	2024.7.2	Email Interviews	Artists	
A05	2024.7.6	Email Interviews	Artists	
A06	2024.7.12	Email Interviews	Artists	
A07	2024.7.7	Collection of Information	Artists	
A08	2024.7.10	Collection of Information	Artists	
B01	2024.7.19	Email Interviews	Art Critic	
B02	2024.8.10	Email Interviews	Art Critic	

The third stage of data entry and related data collection. This stage is mainly to organise the in-person interviews and telephone interviews into textual materials in their original form, the two artists interviewed in person and one artist interviewed by telephone agreed to the recordings, with a total recording length of nearly 3 hours, and collated textual materials of nearly 30,000 words, and the textual material of the five artists and critics interviewed by mail was summarised and collated into nearly 40,000 words.

The fourth stage of data collation, analysis, summarisation and writing. This stage mainly adopts the thematic analysis method in qualitative research to collate and analyse the original data. It also applies the theory of "schema-correction" to find out whether the contemporary ink painting schema has undergone any necessary "correction."

2. Data Familiarization

This study through the implementation of the above 10 interviewees interview, obtained more than 125,000 words of the original interview text, in the analysis of the interview text, this paper uses in the form of Grounded Theory is more similar to the Thematic Analysis, the main reason for such a choice is that the Grounded Theory is generally not the theoretical framework predetermination and research hypothesis. The main reason for this choice is that Grounded Theory generally does not carry out theoretical frameworks and research hypotheses, but starts directly from actual observation, emphasising theoretical abstraction and construction through the acquisition of first-hand information, which is obviously inconsistent with the actuality of this paper. The research in this paper is mainly to test the research hypotheses within the analytical framework based on theoretical deduction, so that the analysis of the interview text should be based on the principle of interpretive interpretation with clear goal orientation, in which the thematic analysis method with narrative analysis as the core is fully compatible with this study.

Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (i.e., themes) in data in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It generally

organises and describes textual data in some detail through operationalised steps or procedures in order to achieve cohesion and sublimation of large, fragmented, and even colloquial research data.

In the practical operation of the thematic analysis method, it consists of the following six progressive steps: familiarisation with the data, initial coding, searching for themes, examining the themes, naming the themes and generating the report (Braun & Clarke, 2012). By familiarising oneself with the material, I mean reading, reflecting on and annotating the text of the interviews on a repetitive basis, based on the transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews.

The familiarization of the interview data was accomplished in three ways. Firstly, as the text of the interviews in this study was carried out by the author herself, not only did she repeatedly polish and revise the outline before the interviews, but also manually mark and annotate the content of the interviews during and after the interviews, so that the data itself had already initially achieved the purpose of "familiarization". "Secondly, as the interviews were mainly conducted online and recorded, they could be converted into text automatically with the help of relevant tools to improve work efficiency, and then proofread manually to ensure the quality of the text. There were also email interviews where the authors had read the responses over and over again. Thirdly, as the interviews before and after this study or the collection of information on the interviewees were 10 subjects in total, and the interview information of each subject was independent, it was necessary to merge them according to the outline questions, and the process of merging the information was also the final "familiarity" process of the interview information. The process of combining data is also the final "familiarization" process of the interview data.

The coding scheme was designed according to the needs of the study, based on the categories defined in the interview outline. Usually, the design of the coding sheet is based on the analysis of relevant literature and the results of previous studies. The method is characterized by its ease of comprehension and manipulation, as well as the ease of aggregating and analyzing primary sources. For this purpose, artists and

critics were coded in two categories, A and B. Artists' interview materials were coded A1 - A6; critics' interview materials were coded B1 and B2; and the materials of the two artists collected from the network were coded N1 and N2. The details are shown in the following coding table. In the process of compiling and analyzing the interviews and collected materials, the writing of the thesis was initiated at the same time. (Table 12)

Table 12 Summary of artist and critic interview materials and related information collection codes

Type of Information	Data Code
Artist Interview Materials	A1-A6
Critic Interview Materials	B1-B2
Artists synthesise the literature	N1-N2

3. Initial Coding

The coding on this basis is the premise and foundation of the search for themes, which is no different from the coding of the rooted theory in operation, and is an in-depth excavation of the semantic content of the original data and the potential characteristics of the full extraction, so as to realise the text of the interviews to the maximum extent possible to refine the textual information and conceptualisation of the operation.

The coding details of the thematic analysis method vary depending on the purpose of the study, which specifically contains two types of data-driven coding and theory-driven coding, the difference between the two is that the former ultimately results in data-dependent themes, while the latter tends to be associated with a specific problem or theoretical framework. As this study is guided by a theoretical framework for testing research hypotheses, a theory-driven coding approach should be adopted for this paper. The core of this coding approach is that the coding should follow the research theme, i.e. purposefully searching, extracting and summarising the target content in the interview text, a typical example of coding in this study is shown in the table below. (Table 13)

Table 13 Example of initial coding of interview text

Original Text	Preliminary Code
There is a certain degree of randomness in the choice of the subject matter of the painting, and apart from the purposeful need to do some copying and sketching exercises, the creation of the painting is generally done on the spur of the moment and with feeling (A06)	Randomness in the selection of drawing themes
The themes of my paintings are usually divided into two main lines, one is to express Yunnan and Chaoshan, which have more regional characteristics, and the second is to create traditional ancient landscapes, both of which are related to my life and study experiences (A05)	The choice of subject matter for the paintings is related to their own experiences
I will continue to continue the previous creative habits in each creation, but also let the work have a new point of view, so that I can continue to refine and enrich my own painting language, but also to maintain the style of the new, to prevent visual fatigue, and constantly be able to break through the weaknesses, to solve new problems (A05)	The aim of creation is to maintain your own style and to innovate
Brushwork and ink is the core issue of Chinese painting, it is not something that can be overthrown just because we want to, it is the most convenient way for us to express our emotions (N01)	Brushwork and ink is the most important technique in Chinese painting
We are born in this multicultural era, it is impossible not to be influenced by Western painting, but regardless of the East and West, there is a commonality in the greatness of the human spirit, and I am more influenced by the spiritual power of these world-class masters to seek truth, goodness and freedom (A06)	In contemporary times traditional ink painting can be influenced by Western painting

Table 13 (Continued)

Original Text	Preliminary Code
It feels more convenient, and the ideas are becoming more and more diversified with the development of the information age. I think this kind of information stimulation, if utilised well, can be well applied to one's own creations and become one's own elements (A02)	In contemporary times, the diversity of information can be used in the creation of one's own paintings

In this study, a comprehensive coding of the interview text was carried out through the coding method described above, using Excel as a tool, and after the actual operation, this study initially obtained a total of 132 valid codes, on which the search for themes will be based.

4. Theme Identification

The search for themes is the collation and summarisation of similar or related codes, in this sense the process of searching for themes is the process of combining semantically similar or related codes and abstracting their common themes on this basis, the result of searching for themes is the formation of a tree-like Thematic Map, which describes the complex relationship between the themes and the codes belonging to the theme. It describes the complex relationship between the themes and the codes belonging to the themes.

The search for themes actually involves the differentiation, merging and reabstraction of codes, the result of which is generally a thematic map. Due to the large number and coarseness of the codes obtained in the initial coding session, they are not presented here as thematic maps, but rather as tables.

In the expression of the theme, this study set it as a three-level theme, that is, the first-level theme under the second-level theme, the second-level theme under the third-level theme, and the third-level theme corresponds to the specific code, so as to complete the search for the theme and the generalisation of the theme. The

correspondence is shown in the table below. (Table 14)

Table 14 Initial coding of interview text

Theme	Category	Code
Theme Selection	Visual Presentation	All the languages of painting, including form, composition, technique, tone, brushwork and ink, and other formal languages serve the visual presentation of the image
	Realistic Emotions	The choice of the theme of the painting is somewhat random, and in the creation of the painting, it is usually on the spur of the moment, with feelings.
	Reinterpreted Tradition	In terms of technique and composition, I have developed a certain muscle memory of what I usually learn and will subconsciously apply it.
	Unique Style	The human environment under the city, the obstacles of communication channels between people, the emotional collision of people and the increase of emotional distance, cynicism and other human problems that lead to the etiology of human nature and all kinds of social phenomena have naturally entered into my creative perspective.
Composition Choices	Visual Impact	Compositional thinking should first highlight the theme, against the current, never say die, reflecting the Chinese people for thousands of years, indomitable, rise to the challenge.

Table 14 (Continued)

Theme	Category	Code
Composition Choices	Spatial Composition	In addition, we will also combine our own painting habits and styles, choose techniques that can naturally and smoothly express our creative ideas, paint what we are familiar with and use the techniques that we are good at, and continue to practice and explore to find the most suitable bytes of expression and form our own artistic language.
	Fusion of Tradition and Modernity	A measured assimilation of Western paintings can have forms and modelling that are compatible with your own mentality.
	Emotional Expression	When it comes to composition and choice of technique, it is usually led by the theme of the painting and the expression of emotion.
Brushwork and Ink Techniques	Texture and Layers	The initial intention of this work is to express the lush, high sky and low clouds on the plateau in summer, while the verdant green mountains become stronger and richer under the reflection of the sky and clouds, more majestic and spectacular. So this time I am in the customary line-based outline chapped, boldly carried out a large area of ink, presenting a large black and white.

Table 14 (Continued)

Theme	Category	Code
Brushwork and Ink Techniques	Personal Style	For example, there is definitely excitement when creating, there is a sense of passion, when inspiration strikes, anticipation and enthusiasm for what is about to begin, and an impatience to put the ideas in your head into practice. The time of creation is also often a kind of relaxation and decompression, not to mention painting ancient landscapes and sketching, painting as a way of relaxing and releasing pressure, enjoying the peace of mind brought by the creative process, of course, the content of the painting record also affects my psychological feelings, which is related to the narrative situation at that time.
	Thematic Alignment	For example, if you are painting Yunnan landscapes, usually on a large scale, you will use full compositions, heavy tones, splashes of ink and colour, and some special techniques; if you want to express a quiet mood, you will also choose the brushwork technique; if you are expressing ancient landscapes, you will surely choose the more traditional or programmed schema, and the more traditional ink and brushwork techniques.

Table 14 (Continued)

Theme	Category	Code
Brushwork and Ink Techniques	Cultural Heritage	Even in the face of the chaotic art situation nowadays, I have never lost my rationality, which is also the reason why I still stay in "ink and brush". No matter how fashionable and powerful the heterogeneous culture is, the most important thing for an artist is to be rooted in his own soil, focusing on the exploration of regional cultural resources and the excavation of cultural kernel, and it is not pedantic to look for a breakthrough possibility from one's own cultural background, this is a kind of enlightenment, which is also a characteristic of my ink painting different from other ink painters.
Socio-Cultural Background	Environment and values	The presentation of traditional ink and wash in the contemporary context will inevitably incorporate the scenarios and elements of modern and contemporary life into the paintings, naturally reflecting the characteristics of the times.
	Aesthetic Concepts	The fusion of Chinese and Western painting concepts and languages, the innovation of techniques and patterns, cross-media and multi-dimensional explorations are all phenomena that have taken place or continue to take place in the contemporary context of traditional ink painting.

Table 14 (Continued)

Theme	Category	Code
Socio-Cultural Background	Creative Impact	The contemporary cultural environment and the Western concept of painting still have a multifaceted impact on my creativity.
	Globalisation and Diversification	Traditional Chinese ink painting, with its rich history and unique artistic value, has shown a variety of possible directions in its contemporary development, such as the inheritance and development of tradition.
Technological Advance	Tool Innovation	The characteristics of different materials and the combined use of techniques can inspire me to break out of my routine and experiment with unique expressive techniques and styles.
	Technique Innovation	The new painting materials offer me more forms of expression and effects.
	Exhibition Mechanism Reform	Western exhibition mechanisms and art evaluation systems have also had an impact on the way Chinese paintings are displayed and disseminated.
	Dissemination Enhancement	Feeling more convenient, and thinking more diverse with the information age
Personal Experience	Life Experience	The direction of these two creations are related to my life and learning experience, I am a Yunnanese, and now I am working and living in Chaozhou, of course, I have a deeper and more profound feeling for these two places, and also stored a lot of visual experience in my mind.

Table 14 (Continued)

Theme	Category	Code
Personal Experience	Education History	In the last century, art education was almost exclusively in the major art academies, resulting in the formation of the so-called Contemporary Academic School of Painting. In the last two decades, on the contrary, many painters have been transferred to various municipal painting academies, thus three groups of painters have emerged.
	Personal Emotion	Traditional ink and wash in contemporary times should definitely reflect contemporary society and human nature, and be committed to the profound revelation of universal human nature, so that the works are not only confined to traditional themes and moods, but also reflect the thoughts, feelings and living conditions of people in contemporary society, so that the audience can have empathy.
	Contemporary Environment	It has been said that the images I show are particularly like the vulgar citizens of Tianjin, and in a sense, these images best reflect the face of the city as a whole.

5. Theme Review and Refinement

Checking the theme is done on the theme map as mentioned before, it is to check the appropriateness of the theme to ensure the authenticity of the theme on the one hand, and the connotation and boundary of the theme on the other hand to ensure

the richness of the theme and the clarity of the boundary, if there are some key issues identified during the theme checking process, it is necessary to carry out iterative coding and theme searching in order to form an appropriate theme. Therefore, the process of summarising and checking the themes from the coding is an iterative process, and there is even a more complex recursive operation, which means that the theme checking is passed only when the theme is stabilised.

The three levels of themes shown in the table above have clear boundaries and meanings, all meet the criteria for theme selection, and the meanings of each theme are explained by exemplary coding, so the above theme search is appropriate.

6. Theme Naming and Definition

Following the examination of the theme is the naming of the theme, i.e. a more abstract and research-relevant conceptualization of the nature of the theme identified in the previous steps, especially to solidify its connotations and extensions.

The named thematic map is the final thematic map, which represents the totality of useful information from the interview data. After this, the final writing of the research report or the actual testing of the research hypotheses can be carried out. In analyzing the data from the interview texts of this study, the above six steps will be strictly followed in order to mine, condense and abstract the potential patterns within the interview texts.

In fact, Table 15 has already completed the naming of themes while theme searching, but due to the excessive coding when searching for themes it is not appropriate to display them in the form of theme maps, so they are temporarily replaced by the form of a table, which is transformed into the form of theme maps here.

In the thematic map shown below, it is divided into two categories: the characteristics of the visual language of contemporary ink painting and the reasons for the formation of the characteristics of the visual language of contemporary ink painting (Figure 68,69). Characteristics are mainly classified from three nodes, namely: "theme selection," "composition choices," and "brushwork and ink techniques". Reasons are categorised at three points: "socio-cultural background," "technological advance," and "personal experience".
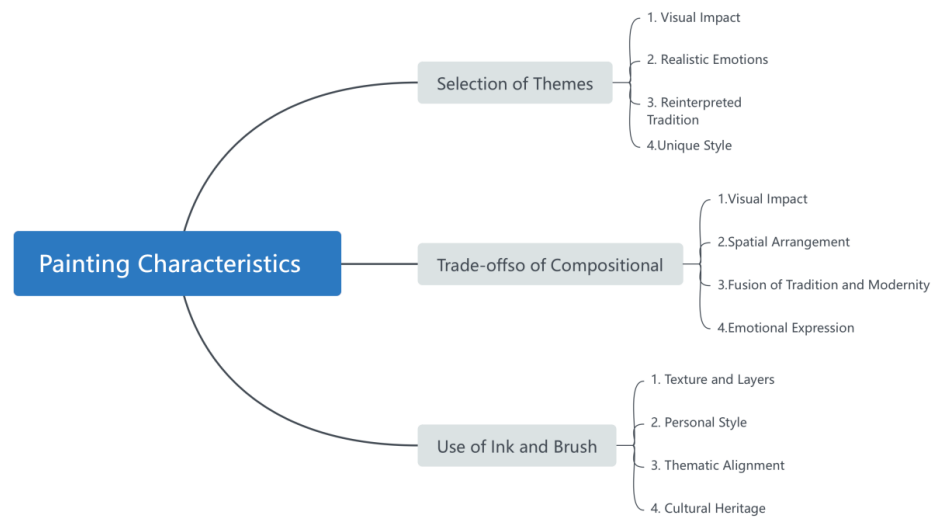
Figure 68 Contemporary Ink Painting Visual Language Characteristics of Theme Maps

Source: Created by Author
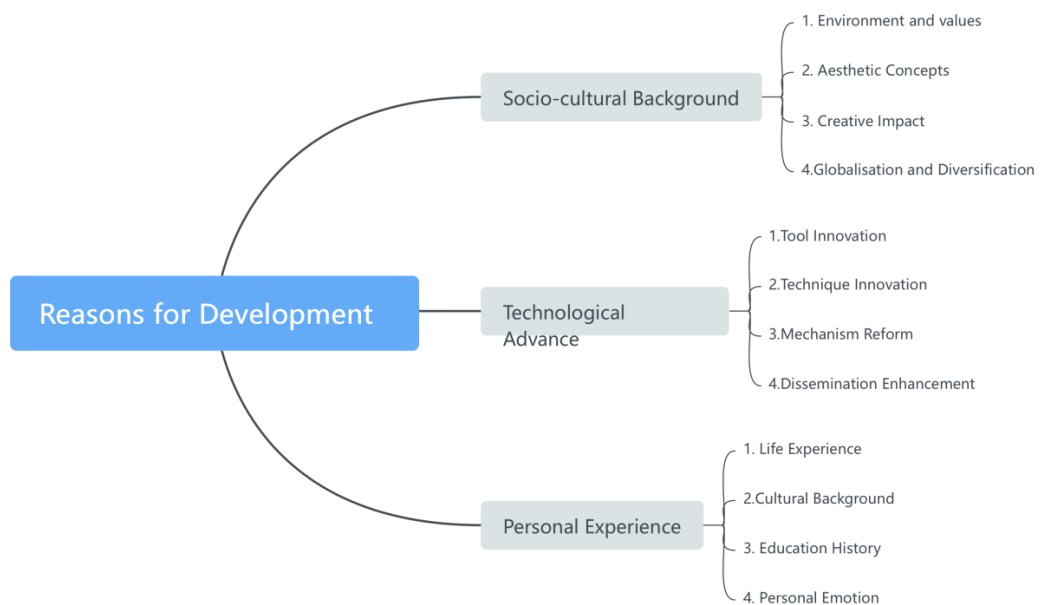
Figure 69 Thematic Map of the Reasons for the Formation of the Visual Language of Contemporary Ink Painting

Source: Created by Author

7. Research Report Generation

The remainder of this chapter will provide empirical evidence and explanations of the characteristics of the visual language of contemporary ink painting and the reasons for its formation based on the above thematic maps, the logical relationships between the various levels of themes, and the original interview texts corresponding to the third level of thematic coding.

4.2.2 Individual Sample Schemas, Projections, Corrections and Schema Reproduction

4.2.2.1. Themes Selection

The choice of theme has a crucial influence on contemporary ink artists in forming their own artistic style of painting. The theme not only determines the content and expression of the work, but also directly affects the formation and development of the visual language of the picture.

(I) First of all, the choice of different themes will lead to different treatments of composition, colour and technique by painters, which will show visual images with contemporary characteristics and display a different visual presentation from the traditional style.

Figure 70 Li Xiaoxuan, *The Bus,* 320×1000cm, 2013

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition, Brushwork and Ink Techniques. Adopting a complex and richly

layered composition with horizontal carriages as the main body, *The Bus* presents a crowded and divided space through dense figures and modern technological symbols. The dynamics of the figures in the picture are intertwined with each other, standing and sitting, creating a strong visual tension. Fine line drawings outline the physical contact and distance between passengers, enhancing the depth of the image. The technological symbols in the background are intertwined with the complicated details inside the carriages, creating a sense of fast-pacedness and detachment unique to modern society.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. The artist said in the interview that he wanted to convey a deep reflection on the fast-paced life of modern society through the dense image of passengers and the metaphor of modern technological symbols in his work. The people in the carriages seem to squeeze each other but are isolated from each other, showing a grey urban atmosphere. This atmosphere seems to imply the dreariness and depression that pervades the crowded modern city life, revealing the collective anxiety and interpersonal alienation hidden in the rapidly developing society. Through this metaphorical expression, Li Xiaoxuan subtly criticises the social problems brought about by modernisation, and at the same time embodies the traditional artist's concern and reflection on reality.

3. Corrections

In his works, Li Xiaoxuan combines traditional ink techniques with modern themes to form a unique visual language. In terms of brushwork, he employs meticulous and rhythmic line drawings to bring out the dynamics and expressions of the characters in his paintings. The changes of wet and dry ink and the contrast of line thicknesses give the picture a rich sense of hierarchy. The modern symbols in the background of the picture are blended with the small details of the figures, making the traditional art show a strong sense of the times. In terms of composition, he breaks away from the ethereal layout of traditional landscape paintings and instead shows the crowdedness and order of the carriages with elaborate details, highlighting the unique atmosphere and

oppressive feeling of modern society.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The Bus shows a crowded car scene through delicate line drawing, in which the characters are in different forms, either standing or sitting, and their movements and expressions are fully expressed through precise lines. In the background, modern technological symbols are intertwined with the figures, making the whole picture full of contemporary flavour. The combination of ink and fine lines conveys a deep sense of depression and loneliness. The overall layout of the picture is complicated but orderly, showing Li Xiaoxuan's keen observation of modern society and innovative expression of artistic language. (Figure 70)

(II) Contemporary artists often choose themes that reflect social realities and the heart of the individual. The choice of these themes by these artists makes their works not only have aesthetic value, but also carry profound ideological connotations.

Figure 71 Li Xiaoxuan, *Stocks Stocks,* 278×125cm×5, 1999

Source: Provided by the Artist

1.Schema

Composition. Li Xiaoxuan's *Stocks Stocks* adopts a compact and dense composition, with the stock market at the centre of the picture, and many figures and modern trading equipment forming a complex but orderly scene. The images of

stockholders, traders and guards are distributed in the picture, intertwined but independent of each other, creating a busy and chaotic social atmosphere. By focusing on the point of view, the image presents a strong sense of oppression, symbolising the tension and complexity of the modern capital market.

Brushwork Techniques. The lines of the work are sharp and very tense, and the strokes are fine and dynamic. The characters and the background of the painting are represented by meticulous line drawings, portraying the expressions and movements of the stockholders as well as the details of the trading equipment. This combination of exaggerated and fine brushwork further strengthens the emotional tension of the characters in the picture, showing the artist's precise expression of the anxiety of human nature in modern society.

Ink Techniques. The use of ink colours has a strong layering and contrasting effect. The artist distinguishes the layers between the figures and the background through variations in shades of ink. The modern trading equipment in the background is expressed in light ink, becoming a symbol of the depressing atmosphere, while the figures are outlined in thick ink, highlighting their inner anxiety and desire for wealth. The overall ink colouring of the painting is appropriate, making the painting complex but not disorganised, and further rendering the complexity and uneasiness of the capital market.

2.Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. The artist said in the interview that he wanted to reflect the reflection on the operation of capital in modern society through his works. The stock market scene in the work symbolizes the society's fervent pursuit of wealth, opportunities and capital, while the expressions and body language of the stockholders, traders and other characters reflect the different attitudes of different social classes towards capital. From anxiety to anticipation, from frenzy to loss, every detail reflects the artist's concern and criticism of the endless desires of modern society. This kind of projection is not only a reproduction of reality, but also a kind of emotional interpretation, revealing the collective anxiety and spiritual dilemma hidden behind the social development.

3.Corrections

Theme deepening and detail innovation. In the process of creation, Li Xiaoxuan deepens the theme of the work through the adjustment and innovation of details. Compared with the traditional ink paintings, which are mostly composed of natural landscapes, the artist chooses the capital market as the theme, which is full of modernity, and shows the infinite possibilities of traditional ink techniques in expressing contemporary social issues. The artist's exaggerated and distorted treatment of the figures makes the picture dramatic, and avoids losing control of the picture through precise line control and intricate detailing. In addition, the use of ink colour skillfully blends the traditional variations of intensity and lightness with the symbols of modern themes, which strengthens the visual impact of the picture.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Through dense lines and a combination of thick and light ink colours, the artwork outlines a busy scene in the stock market, showing the anxiety and struggle of the characters in the modern capital market. The exaggerated expressions and dynamic details of the figures in the picture express the tension of stock market transactions, while the cold lines of the background equipment reinforce the control and bondage of technology and capital on people. Through the combination of modern themes and traditional techniques, the whole painting successfully reproduces the mental state of contemporary society in the face of wealth and desire, constructing a masterpiece of art full of thoughts and profound metaphors. (Figure 71)

(III) The influence of the choice of theme on the visual language of the picture is also reflected in the reinterpretation and application of traditional elements. Contemporary ink artists often seek inspiration from traditional culture and contemporary life when choosing themes.

Figure 72 Yang Yishu, *Theatre,* 100 x 200cm, 2022

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. "Theatre" adopts a dramatic and stage-like composition. The five women in the picture form a relative and independent relationship, and the background is treated with a gradation of light blue and green, creating a sense of space that is both hazy and deep. The gestures of the figures, the dynamics of the animals and the decorative patterns constitute the main visual elements of the picture. The relationship between the women and the animals is close, but at an appropriate distance, creating a sense of dialogue. Through this layout, the work perfectly combines tranquility and drama.

Brushwork Techniques. Yang Yishu employs the fine depiction techniques of traditional brush painting, especially in the facial expressions of the characters, their hair, and the details of the animals, demonstrating solid modelling ability. In addition, the geometric patterns on the figures' clothing, such as checkerboard grids and swirl patterns, break the homogeneity of traditional ink painting and give the images a more

decorative and design-oriented feel.

Ink Technique. The treatment of the background combines the halo technique of traditional ink and the color gradation of modern painting. The light blue-green background deflates the boundaries of the scene, giving the viewer a dreamy sense of the stage. The characters and animals, on the other hand, with their delicate lines and precise modelling, form a contrast between reality and reality with the background, enhancing the spatial hierarchy of the picture.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. The artist said in the interview that she wanted to express her deep thoughts about life and social roles through her works. The "Theatre" in the painting is a metaphor for the stage of life, and the animals in the hands of the five women symbolise different social roles and destinies. For example, the eagle symbolises freedom, the snake symbolises temptation, and the lizard symbolises the ability to adapt to the environment. The non-interference and separation between the figures symbolise the loneliness and potential interaction of human beings in society. Through the details and arrangements in the picture, the artist projects his observation and perception of the complexity of life, and at the same time guides the viewer to think about his own role and position in society.

3. Corrections

Yang Yishu combines traditional and contemporary techniques in Theatre, innovating and deepening the traditional Gongbi ink painting. She breaks away from the purely realistic or pictorial mode of traditional ink painting, and gives the picture a stronger sense of design and modernity through decorative textures and details. At the same time, the combination of real and imaginary makes the picture have a dreamy flavour, and also conveys a subtle narrative and symbolism. In terms of composition, she meticulously adjusts the relationship between figures and animals, avoiding simple figurative representation and enhancing the depth of thought through metaphor.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Theatre* presents a strong metaphorical and theatrical image through the

bokeh of the light blue-green background and the detailed representation of the five women holding the animals. The decorative patterns of the figures' clothing complement the vivid shapes of the animals, further enhancing the narrative and symbolic nature of the image. The whole painting builds a quiet dramatic scene, conveying a deep reflection on life and role-playing. This fusion of "poetic" and "dramatic" creativity demonstrates Yang Yishu's unique artistic perspective and expressive power. (Figure 72)

(IV) The artist's personal experience and emotional experience can influence his choice of subject matter for his paintings, thus further influencing his painting style.

Figure 73 Zhang Liang, *Shadow of Clouds in High Mountains,* 235cm x 175cm, 2019

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

The *Shadow of Clouds in High Mountains* adopts the compositional form of landscape painting from a top-down perspective, creating a grand sense of space through the combination of near and far levels. The distant view is dominated by the vast mountains, using deep ink colours to express the lofty texture of the mountains, supplemented by layered chapping to show the texture and strength of the rocks. The middle scene is embellished with green, highlighting the vitality of the earth, making the picture more vibrant. In the near scene, the combination of wet and dry strokes depicts the undulation of the foot of the mountain, increasing the sense of hierarchy and depth of the picture. At the same time, the use of golden yellow in the sky breaks the traditional ink painting habit of using light ink to express the sky, and forms a strong contrast between warm and cold with the ink-coloured mountains, making the picture not only sedate and powerful, but also full of sacred and lofty atmosphere.

2. Projection

Expression of Artistic Conception. The artist said in the interview that *Shadow of Clouds in High Mountains* is not only a depiction of the natural landscape of Yunnan, but also a deep projection of the painter Zhang Liang's feelings towards his hometown. The high mountains symbolise strength and toughness, while the fluttering clouds symbolise change and flow, the combination of which creates a serene and majestic mood, demonstrating the philosophical idea of "the greatness of heaven and earth" in Chinese landscape painting. This mood not only expresses the greatness and changes of nature, but also reflects the artist's profound thinking about the harmonious coexistence of life and nature. In his creations, the artist focuses on integrating the memories and emotions of his hometown into his paintings, using the mountains and clouds as a medium to convey his infinite love and respect for his hometown's scenery. This emotional projection, beyond the simple reproduction of scenery, gives the paintings a lofty spiritual connotation.

3. Corrections

Innovation and deepening of imagery expression. When Zhang Liang created

Shadow of Clouds in High Mountains, he broke through the convention of traditional landscape paintings that use a single ink colour to express the scenery, and innovatively used a combination of ink, green and golden yellow. Among them, the ink colour is used to show the texture and calmness of the mountains, the green colour injects life and vitality into the picture, and the golden-yellow sky gives the painting an aura of sanctity and hope. In terms of technique, the artist combines traditional chapping and wet and dry brush and ink techniques to express the texture of the mountains and the fluidity of the clouds. He does not stick to the details, but conveys the sublime mood of nature through the expression of white space, colour contrast and layering. Such corrections and innovations allow the works to retain the beauty of traditional landscape painting, while presenting a strong personal style and contemporary artistic perspective.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The image of *Shadow of Clouds in High Mountains* depicts distant mountains through deep ink colours, green embellishes the middle scene, and golden yellow renders the sky, constituting a magnificent picture with a layered effect. The whole painting presents a layered effect of delicate foreground, vibrant mid-range, and vastness in the distance. Through the overhead perspective and the compositional technique of combining near and far, the picture shows the majesty and unpredictability of Yunnan's landscape. The power of the mountains and the fluidity of the clouds complement each other, giving the painting a sublime and serene mood. The work is not only an artistic presentation of the natural landscape, but also an artistic expression of the painter's profound feelings towards his hometown landscape, demonstrating the perfect fusion of nature and emotion. (Figure 73)

4.2.2.2. Composition Choices

Composition, there are two meanings, broad and narrow, the broad sense refers to the whole process of painting creation, including the idea, image, composition of the three steps, and its narrow sense refers to the composition of the graphic method, is the related image elements are reasonably organised, so as to make it conform to the law of beauty.

The choice of composition has a crucial influence on contemporary ink artists in forming their own artistic style of painting. This choice not only determines the overall layout and structure of the picture, but also reflects different visual languages and artistic expressions.

(I) First of all, the composition choices determines the overall layout of the picture and the visual centre of gravity, thus affecting the visual effect of the work and the viewer's emotional experience.
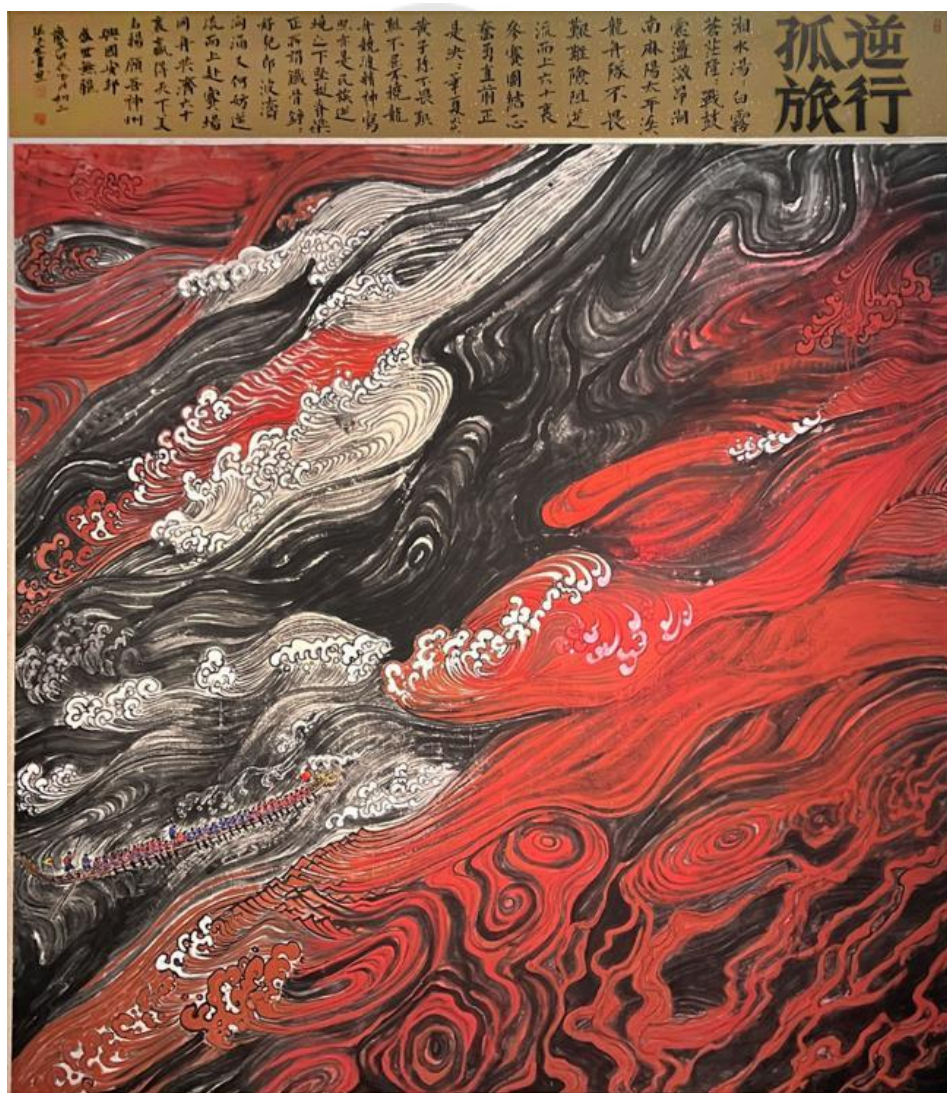
Figure 74 Zhang Yujin, *Lonely Journey Against the Grain,* 220cm×200cm, 2024

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. The *Lonely Journey Against the Grain* adopts a diagonal layout, and the picture is composed of flowing wave-like lines, presenting a strong sense of upward or countercurrent motion. The black and red waves are intertwined and undulating, as if symbolising the surging power of nature. This dynamic form of composition fills the whole picture with visual tension, creating a sense of flow and tension, allowing the viewer to feel a strong emotional resonance. The starting point in the upper left of the picture extends to the lower right, creating a sense of visual guidance, and the viewer's eyes move with the rhythm of the waves, experiencing the "retrograde" imagery.

Brushwork Techniques. The waves in the work are outlined with rough lines, with smooth and rhythmic strokes. The overlapping of the black and red waves shows the collision and conflict of power and enhances the visual impact. The boat in the painting is drawn with delicate brushwork, showing a very different texture and contrast with the waves, highlighting the boat's insignificance and determination in the face of natural forces.

Ink Techniques. The image conveys tension and confrontation through the contrasting colours of deep black and bright red. Black symbolises the deep and oppressive feeling of natural power, while red expresses inner passion and courage. The strong contrast of colours not only enhances the visual tension, but also deepens the emotional mood of the work. In addition, the white space between the waves enhances the sense of hierarchy and provides a buffer for the viewer.

2. Projection

The artist said in the interview that he injects his life experience and emotions into his paintings, presenting an indomitable spiritual strength through the contrast between the waves and the boat. The waves symbolise the dilemmas and challenges in life, while the boat represents the individual's struggle in these dilemmas. The whole painting projects the loneliness and resilience of human beings in the face of adversity through the expression of natural forces, and expresses the artist's thoughts on the

meaning of life.

3. Corrections

Innovation and breakthrough in composition. Zhang Yujin abandons the smooth composition of traditional landscape paintings and chooses a diagonal layout, which strengthens the sense of movement and tension. This compositional breakthrough not only enhances the expressive power of the picture, but also makes the theme more distinctive and emotional. The contrast between the smallness of the boat and the grandeur of the waves deepens the dialogue between man and the forces of nature, giving the painting a stronger impact and infectious force.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

Through the contrast between the flowing wave lines and the black and red colours, The Lonely Journey Against the Grain presents a magnificent scene of man and nature struggling against each other. The composition is bold, with dynamic lines throughout, enhancing the sense of visual flow. The tiny boat stands between the waves, looking lonely and determined, becoming the emotional core of the whole painting. The black and red contrast of the waves not only enhances the visual impact, but also conveys a strong emotional force. Through the simple but powerful form, the whole painting shows the theme of *Lonely Journey Against the Grain* and gives the viewer a deep thought about life and perseverance. (Figure 74)

(II) Secondly, the compositional choices reflect the artist's understanding and use of picture space.

Figure 75 Zhang Liang, *Spring Rising at Xiangqiao,* 136x 68cm, 2024

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. The *Spring Rising at Xiangqiao* adopts a distinctive three-part composition, showing the layering of the foreground, mid-range and distant views. In the foreground is a leafy safflower tree, delicately depicting the dynamics and vitality of the branches and flowers. In the mid-range, there are bridges across the Xiangjiang River and clusters of ancient buildings, showing a bustling cityscape. The distant view presents hazy mountains and water, with the sense of hierarchy gradually diminishing as the view is pushed farther away, presenting a sense of spatial depth that combines near and far. This layout not only reflects the sense of depth in traditional landscape painting, but also guides the viewer to gradually explore the richness of the mood in the picture from the foreground to the distant view.

Brushwork and Ink Techniques. The strong ink of the safflower trees shows the vibrancy of spring. Bridges and ancient buildings are outlined in light ink, which is simple and subtle, giving a sense of spatial expansion. The large areas of white space in the painting, especially in the part of the river and distant mountains, not only strengthens the pictorial meaning of "the real and the imaginary", but also adds a foggy atmosphere, making the whole city seem to be covered by the spring fog, presenting a

mysterious scene. The use of ink and the combination of blank space deepens the sense of space and serenity of the painting.

2.Projection

Artist Zhang Liang said that the reason why he chose to paint Xiangzi Bridge was because at that time he had just come to the city of Chaozhou and lived beside Xiangzi Bridge, where he witnessed the scene of spring full of red flowers and spring rising water. Through this painting, the artist wanted to express the vitality of spring and his love for the beauty of the Han River. He chose to leave a blank space in the part of the bridge and the river to give the picture room to breathe. This large area of white space composition makes the picture richer and more layered, showing the vastness of nature and highlighting the humanistic charm of the city. Zhang Liang demonstrates the beauty of Han River's spring through his depiction of the rising spring on Xiangqiao Bridge, projecting his own deep love for the vitality of spring and for this land.

3. Corrections

In Spring Rising at Xiangqiao, Zhang Liang successfully blends poetry with the painting, conveying his understanding and feelings about the vitality of spring and the natural landscape. Unlike traditional landscape paintings that "reproduce the actual scene", he cleverly uses white space and light ink to break through the constraints of precise drawing, and adopts a minimalist form to show the mood of nature. The large area of white space makes the picture full of breathability, which not only enhances the sense of spatial depth, but also adds a sense of mystery and movement to the picture, reflecting Zhang Liang's unique Zen conception in his art creation.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Spring Rising at Xiangqiao* shows the vitality of spring and the harmony of the natural landscape by sketching distant mountains, saffron trees, bridges and architectural complexes with delicate brushwork. The saffron trees in the foreground are combined with bridges and buildings in the middle view, while the distant view is presented with hazy mountains and water, forming a rich sense of hierarchy. The picture is simple and ethereal, and the use of white space gives the whole painting both a

sense of natural vastness and highlights the humanistic charm of the city. Through this kind of schema reproduction, Zhang Liang successfully conveys his feelings and thoughts about the spring rising scene in Xiangqiao, and projects his own artistic style and feelings into the painting. (Figure 75)

(III) In addition, the innovation and choices in composition also reflect the artist's thinking and fusion of tradition and modernity.

Figure 76 Zhang Yujin, *Worried about our motherland,* 175×80cm ,2022

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. This work adopts a vertical layout, breaking away from the horizontal spreading composition of traditional landscape paintings, with the lower part of the picture concentrating on buildings and vegetation, giving the viewer a bottom-up visual guidance. As the eye moves upwards, the viewer gradually reaches the high point in the centre of the picture. This vertical layout gives the work a strong sense of space and three-dimensionality. At the same time, the large amount of white space in the upper part and both sides of the picture makes the main part more prominent and provides enough space for the blank area, which enhances the far-reaching meaning and simple atmosphere of the work.

Brushwork and Ink Techniques. Zhang Yujin's concise sketches of trees, stones and buildings, as well as his use of ink splashes and ink pooling for large areas of water, give the whole picture a modern feel without losing its traditional flavour.

2. Projection

Through this painting, artist Zhang Yujin said that he wanted to express the fusion of traditional and modern art in his painting. He hopes to add visual impact by using modern composition while maintaining the layout of traditional landscape painting. Meanwhile, in terms of colours, the predominantly green colours tone down the black and white silence, conveying a kind of natural vitality and life force. We hope that the viewers can feel a fresh and far-reaching mood from the painting.

3. Corrections

In the process of creation, the artist breaks through the limitations of traditional landscape painting and incorporates the spatial expression of modern art. He breaks the traditional visual pattern through vertical layout and creates a new spatial experience. In addition, the blank parts of the picture are not simply left as contentless blanks, but are carefully conceived to become part of the work, enhancing the wholeness and depth of the picture. In terms of colours, the use of green tones in contrast to the stoicism of black and white reflects the vitality and life force of nature, further deepening the emotional expression of the work.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The overall vertical layout of the work is dominated by the contrast between the blank area and the main part, which constitutes a unique sense of hierarchy and space in the picture. The variation of ink colours and the delicate expression of the brushstrokes make the picture have the tranquility and profoundness of traditional landscape painting, but also incorporate the visual impact of modern times. Through innovative composition, free strokes and layered ink, the whole painting presents natural vitality and far-reaching philosophical mood, bringing a strong emotional experience to the viewer. This way of artistic creation, which combines tradition and modernity, makes Zhang Yujin's works both historically accumulated and shockingly modern. (Figure 76)

(IV) Finally, the compositional choices are closely related to the artist's personal experience and emotional experience.

Figure 77 Lu Bing, *River, Moon, Pine and Wind,* 362cm x 645cm, 2022

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

This work adopts the traditional three-part layout, with the pine tree, the figure and the tiger as the main visual elements. The figure is located in the centre of the

picture, sitting in a meditative posture, opposite to the pine tree and the tiger on both sides. The pine tree and tiger are distributed on the left and right sides of the picture, following the principle of symmetry in traditional landscape painting, which maintains the stability of the picture and at the same time creates a space for interaction between the various elements. The large area of white space in the background of the painting, especially behind the pine tree and the distant water, enhances the sense of space and stimulates the viewer's imagination. By taking this kind of blank space, the artist successfully extends the mood of the picture, enabling the viewer to find an emotional connection between reality and reality.

2. Projection

Artist Lu Bing said that he wanted to express a kind of loneliness and reflection in this painting. The figure in the painting sits in silence, facing the tiger, symbolising the complex relationship between man and nature, and reflecting the artist's contemplation of the relationship between self and tradition in his traditional studies. He uses the tiger as a symbol of strength, suggesting the suppression or challenge he faces within himself; the pine tree symbolises firmness and unyieldingness, echoing the figure's meditation and showing a dialogue with nature and self.

3.Corrections

The artist's *River, Moon, Pine and Wind* demonstrates his profound artistic skills and unique expression of emotions through his classic composition, use of monochromatic colours, and skilful control of traditional brush and ink techniques. The innovative choice of composition not only reflects his solid foundation in traditional painting, but also conveys the artist's profound thoughts on self, nature and traditional culture through the combination with his personal emotional experience. The fusion of solitude, power and nature in his works demonstrates Lu Bing's unique understanding of ink painting and reflects his artistic exploration between tradition and modernity.

4.Artwork (schema reproduction)

Through the traditional three-part layout of *River, Moon, Pine and Wind*, the distribution of pine trees, figures and fierce tigers creates a visual balance and

interaction. The treatment of blank areas and the simplification of the background make the emotional expression between the figures and nature more prominent. The whole work presents a structure that is both stable and full of tension, and the viewer feels a deep inner dialogue and emotional expression from the contemplation of the figure to the lurking of the tiger and then to the toughness of the pine tree. The pine tree in the picture symbolises toughness, the tiger symbolises suppression and strength, and the figure's meditation is an introspection and confrontation of these symbols, expressing the artist's profound thinking and emotional outpouring between traditional learning and personal feelings. (Figure 77)

    4.2.2.3. Brushwork and Ink Techniques

    (I) Firstly, the use of brushwork and ink determines the texture and layering of the picture.

Figure 78 Lu Bing, *Portrait of Huang Binhong,* 38cm×28cm, 2020

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. The *Portrait of Huang Binhong* adopts the traditional layout of a portrait, with a simple and clear overall structure. The figure is located in the centre of the picture, with deep eyes and serene face, showing the artist's high concentration and contemplation on the figure. The background around the figure is handled with white and light ink, highlighting the main image and increasing the sense of spatial extension. In this way, the composition of the picture shows a strong contrast between the figure and the background, making the viewer's eyes focus on the figure's facial expression and his inner emotional world. Through this layout, the whole picture conveys the figure's deep thinking and peaceful state of mind.

Brushwork and Ink Techniques. Traditional ink and wash is concerned with the diverse variations of brush and ink, and the artist has enhanced the texture and layering of the image in this painting through the techniques of alternating thick and light ink, and combining wet and dry ink. For example, thick ink is used to depict Huang Binhong's facial features, clothing, or the outlines of books to emphasise his image, while light ink is used to render the background, creating a soft and serene atmosphere. The alternating use of dry and wet brushes increases the dynamic effect of the image, making it visually more vivid and three-dimensional.

2.Projection

Artist Lu Bing said that he created this painting to pay tribute to Huang Binhong, a great artist, and he wanted to express the spirit and wisdom of Huang Binhong through his own ink techniques. He depicts Huang Binhong's demeanour and expression with brushwork that varies in intensity, dryness and wetness, showing the character's serene, wise and introspective temperament, and expressing his respect for this artistic predecessor.

3. Correction

In terms of composition and brushwork and ink techniques, Lu Bing breaks through the single reproduction method of traditional portraiture. By cleverly combining the inner emotions of the character with the external image, he innovatively integrates

the "spirit of the character" with the "features of the appearance", achieving a balance between "resemblance" and "likeness". The balance between "divine resemblance" and "physical resemblance" is achieved. Through careful correction of details, Lu Bing not only retains the steadiness and delicacy of traditional portraiture, but also introduces the expression of personal emotions, giving the works a new vitality based on traditional techniques.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Portrait of Huang Binhong* successfully presents the profound expression and calm temperament of Huang Binhong through the variation of thick and light brushwork, delicate line treatment and the technique of leaving white space. The outline of the figure's face and clothing is outlined by thick ink, highlighting the three-dimensionality of his image, while the background creates a serene atmosphere through the use of white space and light ink. The overall composition is simple yet refined, conveying the character's spirit of perseverance and serenity. The variations in ink and brushwork and emotional projection in the picture make this portrait not only a reproduction of an image, but also a profound expression of the character's inner world, presenting the artist's unique interpretation of Huang Binhong's spiritual temperament. (Figure 78)

(II) Secondly, the use of brushwork and ink reflects the personality and creative style of the artist.

Figure 79 Yang Yishu, *Phantom Dream,* 200×125cm, 2021

Source: Provided by the Artist

1.Schema

Composition. The *Phantom Dreams* adopts a dreamy composition, with a strong visual contrast between the female figure and the coiled snake in the centre of the picture. The woman's body presents gentle curves, while the snake's form is more complex and tense, and the contrast between the two enhances the drama of the picture. The woman's pose is hazy and dreamlike, symbolising her in a state of intertwined reality. The lightly rendered background further enhances the dreamy atmosphere of the work through blurred edges and layering. The layout of the entire image allows the contrast between the figure and the snake to be highlighted, while also leaving a large amount of blank area for the viewer to feel an endless space for

contemplation.

Brushwork and Ink Techniques. The artist uses a brushwork and ink technique, first outlining the figure and then filling it with ink to show the strong contrast between the figure and the snake. The women's costumes are covered with large black ink surfaces, while the snake is portrayed through delicate lines with intricate textures. This contrast in brushwork allows the tension between the figure and the snake to be highlighted. The combination of soft lines and the detailed texture of the snake's body, curves and straight lines, shapes the beauty of the image's movement and conveys a sense of conflict and drama of different emotions.

2.Projection

Artist Yang Yishu says that in her paintings, she wants to express that the characters in her paintings are hovering at the border between dream and reality, showing a state of incomplete wakefulness, as if they are sleeping or trapped in a nightmare. This blurred appearance is the state of "dream", symbolising the inner confusion or emotional struggle of contemporary people. Through this emotional projection, the artist makes the viewer wander between the border of dream and reality, reflecting on the individual's identity and psychological dilemma in contemporary society.

3. Corrections

In terms of composition and presentation, Yang Yishu breaks through the traditional ink painting form, combining realism and realism, and innovatively presents the contrast between the blurriness of dreams and the clarity of reality. Through the fluidity of the ink and the changes in the sense of hierarchy, the work not only depicts the scene of the dream, but also expresses the psychological state and emotional entanglement of the individual. The picture does not overly portray every detail, but expresses the complex inner world and the conflict of social reality through a minimalist approach.

4.Artwork (schema reproduction)

The artwork creates a strong sense of dramatic conflict through the variation of

thick and light ink colours and the combination of lines and blocks. The soft curves of the woman contrast with the complex texture of the snake, while the background creates a dreamy haze through the flowing ink technique. The composition of the whole painting shows the tension between the figure and the snake, while at the same time leaving abundant blank areas, making the whole picture full of endless space for reflection and highlighting the blurred border between dream and reality. (Figure 79)

(III) In addition, the use of brushwork and ink is closely related to the theme of the work. Different themes require different techniques of ink and brushwork expression.
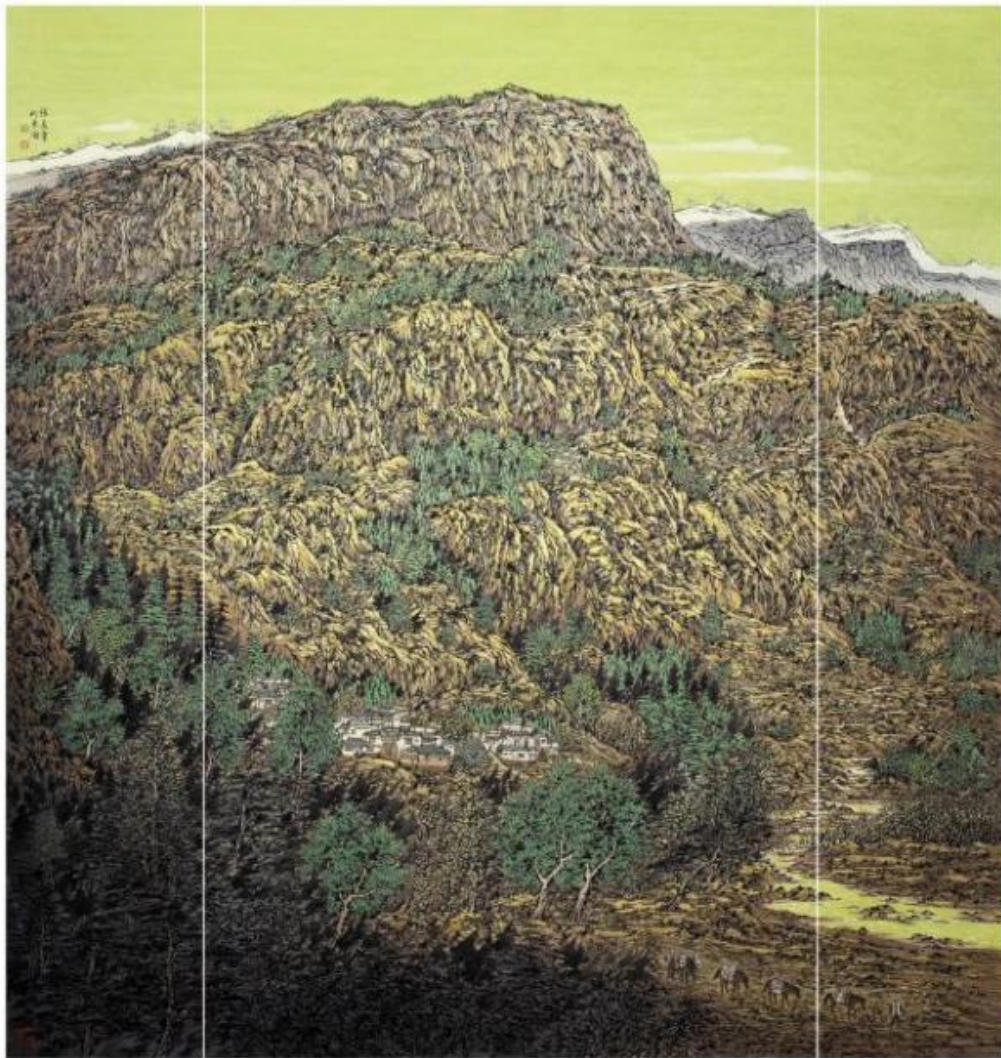

Figure 80 Zhang Liang, *Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain,* 200×125cm, 2021

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. The *Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain* adopts a typical landscape painting composition, presenting the front-to-back hierarchy of mountains and trees. In the centre of the picture is the majestic Wumeng Mountains, whose towering stance is rendered in gradual ink colours with distinct layers, showing the solidity and sense of timelessness of the mountains. The distant mountains are rendered through light ink, creating a contrast between near and far. The trees and rocks in the foreground are outlined through variations of wet and dry brushwork, creating a strong sense of three-dimensionality and layering, while the background is rendered in a lighter brushwork to present the vitality and hope of spring.

Brushwork Techniques. The trees, rocks and mountains in the painting use a clever combination of wet and dry brushwork. The branches and leaves of the trees are depicted using wetter brushstrokes, showing the softness and vitality of the trees in early spring. The texture of the mountains, on the other hand, uses dry brushstrokes to show the hardness and roughness of the mountains. This alternation of wet and dry brushwork not only enriches the texture of the picture, but also conveys the unique characteristics of different natural elements.

Ink Techniques. The mountains in this work are depicted in the cumulative ink method, with layers of overlapping ink colours showing the texture and heaviness of the rocks. This technique not only strengthens the solidity of the mountains, but also echoes the theme of the work, highlighting the loftiness and immortality of the Wumeng Mountains. The use of accumulated ink layer by layer also makes the contrast between light and darkness of the rocks more distinct, giving a sense of depth to the vision.

2. Projection

Artist Zhang Liang said that this work is largely influenced by traditional ink painting in terms of the expression of the language of ink and brush, although the schema is relatively modern with a flat decorative effect, but in the overall layout of the landscape and the expression of the mood of the Five Dynasties and Northern Song Dynasty panoramic landscape style. The techniques used in the painting expression are

more traditional, and also strengthen the use of brush painting techniques such as line drawing and haloing in the expression of landscape painting.

3. Corrections

In his works, Zhang Liang breaks away from the traditional "realistic reproduction" model of landscape painting, combining modern compositional concepts with traditional brush and ink techniques. He creates a strong visual impact through the layered ink accumulation method and the use of wet and dry brushstrokes, and conveys a poetic inspiration through the minimalist treatment of natural details. This correction is not only reflected in the technique, but also deepened in the expression of emotion and conveyance of mood.

4. Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain* expresses the heaviness of the mountains with a calm cumulative ink method, while the trees are sketched with wet brushstrokes, creating a vibrant early spring atmosphere. In the picture, the texture of the mountains is reflected through the layering of ink colours and the alternation of wet and dry brushwork, while the trees show the softness and vitality of spring in the depiction of their branches and leaves. The overall composition of the work is simple and layered, and the contrast between the near and far scenes gives the whole picture a strong sense of depth, resulting in a powerful, poetic and decorative landscape painting. (Figure 80)

(IV) In addition, the use of brushwork and ink reflects the artist's cultural background and artistic heritage.
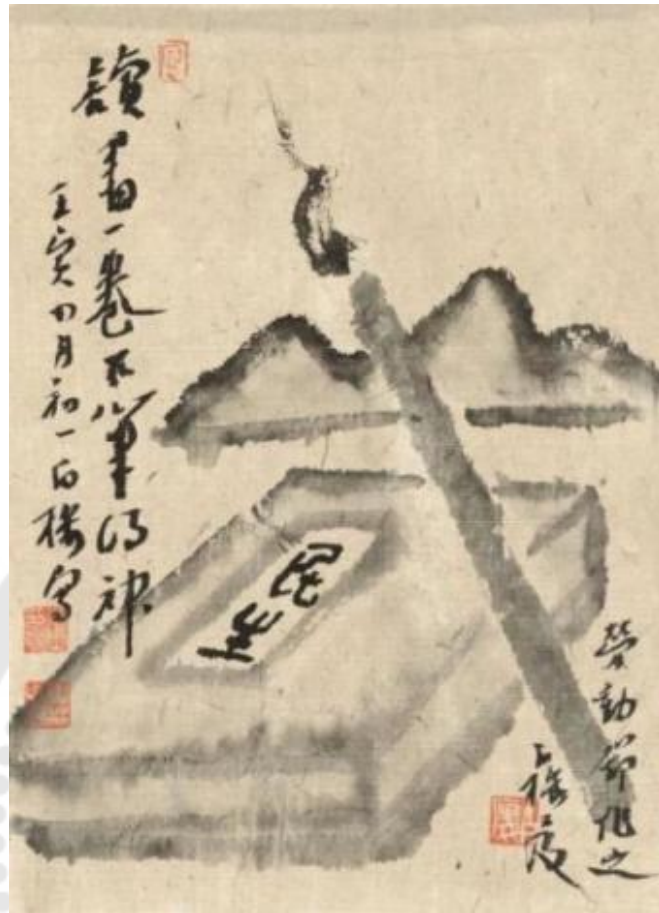
Figure 81 Liu Yuanxi, *People's Livelihoods,* 38cm x 28cm, 2023

Source: Provided by the Artist

1. Schema

Composition. The books and candles as the main elements in the picture present contrasting static and dynamic. The depiction of the book reflects the importance of knowledge in Confucian culture, while the flame of the candle represents the vitality and change of life. The overall composition is simple and powerful, and through the arrangement of these symbols, the image creates a deep sense of visual hierarchy. The contrast between the dynamics of the flame and the static book gives the image a sense of tension and animation, conveying the philosophical meaning of balance and contrast.

Brushwork and Ink Techniques. In the use of brushwork, the artist employs the

traditional ink technique, presenting the vividness of the flame and the steadiness of the book through the change of dry and wet brushstrokes. The flames are depicted with dry brushwork, reflecting the dynamic changes and vibrancy of the flames; while the books and candles are painted with thicker medium ink, expressing their calmness and weight. This variation of dry and wet brushwork not only enriches the texture of the picture, but also expresses the philosophical dialectic of nature and culture, stillness and movement through visual conflict.

2.Projection

Artist Liu Yuanxi says that his works are imbued with Confucianism, and that his passion and confidence in traditional Chinese culture is reflected in his use of every brush and ink. Confucianism emphasises the importance of "cultivating one's moral character, aligning one's family, ruling the country and pacifying the world", and the books and candles in Minsheng are symbols of knowledge, education and cultivation of moral character. This core view of culture and education as the well-being of the people has always occupied an important place in China's cultural heritage for thousands of years.

3. Corrections

Minsheng reflects the artist's innovation and heritage in its composition and brush and ink techniques. Through simplified forms and delicate techniques, the artist breaks through the limitations of traditional ink painting and skilfully combines Confucianism with the art form of literati painting. Through the use of fine ink techniques and the projection of cultural symbols, the artist has accomplished a perfect fusion of tradition and modernity, conveying an artistic taste that is uniquely personal. Innovation is reflected in his creative use of traditional techniques and contemporary interpretation of ancient Confucian thought and cultural education.

4.Artwork (schema reproduction)

The *People's Livelihoods* presents the philosophical depth of culture and life through the use of simple composition and layers of ink colours. The book and candle in the picture are presented in heavy ink colours and alternating wet and dry brushwork

respectively, with the lightness of the flame contrasting with the calmness of the book. The overall picture shows layers of thick and light ink colours, and the overlapping brushstrokes make the picture full of both quiet philosophical thinking and vivid natural expression, ultimately presenting a work of art rich in depth and tension. (Figure 81)

4.2.3 Reasons for the Formation of Visual Language Schema Characteristics of Contemporary Ink Painting

Any nation in the world nourished by different cultural backgrounds will produce a visual art expression of its own, Chinese ink painting is a unique form of artistic language and spiritual concepts produced in the traditional Chinese cultural system. It is compatible with the social form of the cultural region to which it belongs, and serves the functional requirements within the social form.

4.2.3.1. Socio-cultural Backgrounds

1. Firstly, the social and cultural background determines the environment and values in which the artist lives, which has a profound influence on his painting style and creative concept.

Contemporary ink artists living in modern cities are often influenced by fast-paced lifestyles, modern technology and multiculturalism. This social background prompts them to focus on modern urban landscapes, social issues and personal experiences in their creations, resulting in a contemporary visual language. Their works may take on a more abstract, simple and figurative style, expressing the complexity and diversity of modern society through modernised compositions and brushwork.

Zhang Liang, a representative painter of the Expressionist School of Painting, has pointed out in an interview that traditional Chinese ink painting presents diverse directions of development in the contemporary context, including inheritance and innovation of tradition, fusion with other art forms, combination of Chinese and Western painting concepts, and diverse exploration of techniques and forms. Traditional ink and wash naturally incorporates the scenarios and elements of modern life in today's development, showing the characteristics of the times. For example, some contemporary artists express modern cityscapes and social phenomena on the basis of traditional techniques, giving ink works a new contemporary flavour.

2. Secondly, the social and cultural background influences the aesthetic concepts and aesthetic interests of artists.

Different cultural backgrounds nurture different artistic traditions and aesthetic ideas. Contemporary ink artists grow up and create under this cultural background, and their works naturally reflect these aesthetic concepts.

Zhang Liang, a representative painter of the Expressionist School, said in the interview that contemporary painters should continue to pursue innovations in technique and form, and integrate diversified artistic concepts in order to adapt to social and cultural changes. In response to different themes and environments, artists have explored new techniques and injected logical thinking from Western art to enrich the forms of expression and subject matter of ink painting, while maintaining the unique qualities of Chinese painting. With the development of technology, cross-media experiments such as digital technology and installation art have also opened up new exhibition space for ink painting. Overall, traditional ink painting in contemporary times should not only reflect human nature and social reality, but also satisfy the aesthetic needs of the audience through diversified styles and themes, in order to show the thoughts and emotions of contemporary people and trigger the resonance of the viewers.

3. In addition, history and tradition in the socio-cultural context also have an important influence on the artistic creation of contemporary ink artists.

China's long artistic tradition and rich cultural heritage provide contemporary ink artists with rich creative materials and sources of inspiration. For example, some artists absorb the essence of ancient literati paintings in their creations, passing on and promoting traditional culture through the use of brush and ink and the expression of mood. This inheritance and re-creation of traditional culture makes the works have deep cultural connotation and historical background in visual language. At the same time, the artist also brings new life to traditional art through innovation and change, forming a unique modern ink and wash style.

Liu Yuanxi, a traditional continuationist ink artist, said in the interview that tradition is an accumulating process, and its definition varies in different times. In the

development of contemporary ink painting, tradition can be enriched through various experiments, but it is always necessary to adhere to brush and ink as the core foundation.

4. The diversity of social and cultural backgrounds and the trend towards globalisation have also had a significant impact on contemporary ink artists.

The openness and exchanges of modern society enable artists to come into contact with different cultures and art forms, thus enriching their creative horizons and methods of expression.

Artist Liu Yuanxi said in the interview that in today's multicultural era, artists are inevitably influenced by Western painting, but many are more inspired by the masters' common pursuit of truth, goodness, beauty, and freedom of spirit, and that these great spirits of human commonality are at the heart of the influence.

Artist Zhang Liang also said in the interview that artists' creations, under the multiple influences of the contemporary cultural environment and Western concepts of painting, tend to make breakthroughs in their ways of thinking and forms of expression. The techniques of realism, perspective, light and shadow in Western painting, as well as modernist and post-modernist art concepts, such as abstraction and conceptual art, have prompted them to experiment with the expression of form, content and meaning, driving deeper thinking about the traditional Chinese painting's ways of expression and perspectives of observation. Taking the creation of landscape paintings as an example, the traditional three distant methods and spatial order have been replaced by more planar and decorative schema compositions, and the sense of form and composition has become more prominent. At the same time, the diversification of the cultural environment has made the subject matter no longer limited to the traditional categories of landscape, flowers and birds, but also urban landscape, social phenomena and individual emotions have gradually become the subject of creation. Influenced by western art's concern for social and personal expression, many artists pay more attention to the true reflection of contemporary life and personal feelings in their works.

Social and cultural background has an extremely important influence on

contemporary ink artists to form their own painting style, and this background will reflect different visual language of the picture, giving the work a unique atmosphere of the times and cultural connotations.

4.2.3.2. Advances in technology

1. Technological advances and the refinement of painting materials have had an important impact on ink artists.

Advances in modern technology have brought about synthetic paper and a variety of new inks that differ from traditional materials in terms of absorbency, durability and colour expression. Ink painters using the new materials need to adapt their techniques to the characteristics of these materials.

Artist Liu Yuanxi said that the development of modern technology has made the pigments more diverse and precise, giving artists more choices in the use of colours and enriching the colour levels of their works.

Artist Zhang Liang talks about how the advancement of painting materials and the improvement of techniques have also brought a new look to his painting language. He said that the advancement of art materials and the improvement of techniques have, to a certain extent, provided creators with new forms of expression and effects. For example, new water-soluble pigments, such as acrylics and watercolours, which are highly compatible with ink and watercolours, with more vibrant and long-lasting colours and richer textures, have enabled artists to explore larger sizes and more intricate works that transcend the limitations of traditional materials. These new materials and techniques stimulate the creators' curiosity and spirit of exploration, inspiring them to break the mould and develop unique expressive techniques and styles.

Artist Yang Yishu says she uses new technology in her paintings. In her daily work, the artist not only relies on traditional brushes and paper, but also combines it with digital technology to create and record her work. With the help of high-resolution scanners and digital cameras, the details of her works are captured in fine detail, ensuring that they are perfectly reproduced even after many years.

2. In addition, new materials have inspired innovations in ink painting techniques.

Modern ink painters try to integrate acrylic paint, airbrush technique and other western painting materials into ink painting, forming "ink and wash mixed-material painting." This technique combines the beauty of the mood of traditional ink painting and the expressive power of modern materials to create new visual effects and art forms.

Jin Dawei, an artist of the Experimental Ink School, uses his painting the *Plum* to illustrate that the emergence of new materials has inspired his ink paintings. (Figure 82)

Figure 82 Jin Dawei, *Plum,* 40cm x 45cm, 2022
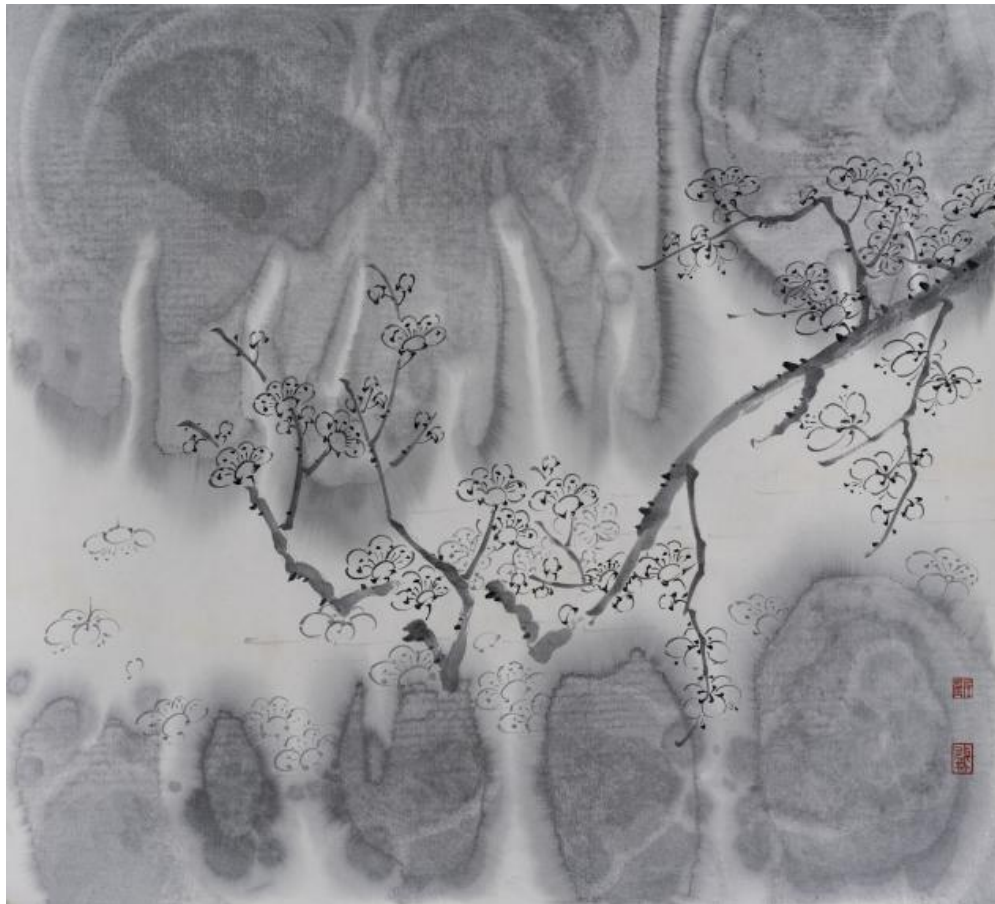
Source: Provided by the Artist

He said that in his works, the background is treated with texture and occasional large-scale rendering. Ink of different thicknesses is poured onto the tabletop and covered with paper, so that the slightly thicker overlay-backed paper allows the ink to seep naturally, forming a smooth texture like that of a stone, which follows the laws of

natural growth and carries with it a distinctive style of brushstrokes. New materials such as overlay paper have also made this effect possible. This paper is thicker and does not bleed as easily as rice paper. The artist explores a completely different visual effect from traditional plum blossom paintings while following the traditional use of the brush.

3. Enabling ink painting to be displayed on a wider platform and promoting its dissemination in the international art market. Enhances the influence and recognition of contemporary ink painting.

For example, artist Zhang Liang talked about the influence of the contemporary painting environment and the introduction of Western painting concepts on his own painting creation, saying that the Western exhibition mechanism and art evaluation system have had an impact on the display and dissemination of Chinese paintings, promoting changes in the form and size of the works on display, which are no longer confined to the traditional scrolls, hanging scrolls, or fans, but more often use the large format suitable for the modern art museums (Figure 83). At the same time, this influence has also brought certain challenges, namely how to maintain the traditional characteristics of Chinese painting in fusion, or how to dig deeper into traditional cultural connotations in innovation. On the whole, the moderate absorption of the beneficial elements of Western concepts has had a positive effect on his Chinese painting creations.

Figure 83 Modern Chinese Painting Exhibition Hall

Source: Internet

4. Modern technology has improved the ability to preserve and disseminate works of art.

High-quality scanning and printing technology allows reproductions of ink paintings to retain more detail and texture, while the popularity of the internet and social media has enabled ink paintings to be disseminated faster and more widely, attracting a wider audience and enthusiasts.

Zhang Sunzhe, a representative artist of New Literati Paintings, says that modern technology has allowed his paintings to be seen by more people, and that modern technology has enabled his works to be quickly disseminated globally. Through social media and art sharing platforms, works can be appreciated by thousands of people in a short period of time. This instant and wide dissemination not only expands the audience, but also provides more opportunities for artistic exchange, enabling him to interact more easily with artists around the world, so that he can absorb different artistic concepts and

creative techniques, and further enrich and refine his own artistic style.

The application of new materials not only expands the techniques and forms of expression of ink painting, but also makes this traditional art take on a new vitality on the modern art stage. In the process of exploring new materials, painters continue to innovate and make breakthroughs, so that the art of ink painting always remains vibrant. Through the continuous development of materials and techniques, traditional Chinese ink painting has not only inherited the ancient cultural essence, but also incorporated the innovative elements of modern art, and continues to show its unique charm in the forest of world art.

4.2.3.3. Artist's Personal Experience

An artist's personal experience does have a profound influence on the formation of his or her painting style. An artist's life experience, cultural background, educational history and personal feelings can all be reflected in his or her works and become an important part of his or her artistic style.

1. Firstly, an artist's upbringing and cultural background have a subtle influence on his or her artistic style.

During their formative years, traditional Chinese ink painters are often imbued with traditional Chinese cultural and philosophical ideas, such as Confucianism, Taoism and Zen thought, which are reflected in their works by their focus on mood, the pursuit of natural harmony, and the importance of inner perception. The artist expresses his understanding of nature and life through painting, and this cultural accumulation becomes the foundation of his artistic style.

As the artist Zhang Liang said, he has been continuously creating Chinese landscape painting as his main genre for more than ten years. The themes of his works are related to regional and specific subjects, such as the characteristic landscapes of Jiangnan, Lingnan, and the north, as well as specific propositions such as modern cities, red themes, and local cultures. In addition, his creations also include non-propositional ancient landscape. His creations are divided into two main directions: works that express the regional characteristics of Yunnan and Chaoshan, and works that focus on

traditional ancient landscapes. Being a native of Yunnan and now living in Chaozhou, he has a deep visual memory of these two regions, which inspires a wealth of creative ideas. In his teaching, he continues to refine his brush and ink techniques as he studies and lectures on traditional classics, as well as gaining creative inspiration.

See his works *Xiangqiao Spring Rise* (Figure 75) and *Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain* (Figure 80) each period is different, experienced different environment and cultural background, the works reflect a different outlook.

2. Secondly, the artist's educational experience and mentorship also have a significant impact on his or her painting style.

In traditional Chinese art, the transmission from master to disciple is very important. An ink painter is usually influenced by his master, learning traditional techniques and aesthetic concepts. In the process, the artist not only inherits the traditional techniques, but also builds on them with personal innovation and development.

In the interview, artist Zhang Liang explains in detail the creation process of his work *Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain* (Figure 80), because of the traditional ink painting teaching at school and the influence of his teacher's paintings, the final work presents an organic combination of traditional technique and contemporary schema.

Artist Zhang Liang mentioned that the painting *Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain* originated from his memories of visiting Wumeng Mountain. in early spring 2015, he and his friends travelled to the Sedan Chair Snow Mountain in central Yunnan, and were deeply impressed by the majesty of the Wumeng mountain range, and were reminded of the Northern Song Dynasty painter Fan Kuan's *A Journey to the Streams and Mountains* (Figure 15) and Guo Xi's *Early Spring* (Figure 16), in which the resilience of the mountains and rivers and the springtime scenes inspired him to create this piece. He decided to create the painting in the style of Gongbi Heavy Colour, and in his choice of colours he drew on the techniques of his master's tutor, Huang Yue. Using exaggerated warm green tones, intentional brush strokes and a variety of colouring techniques, the picture gradually takes shape. In terms of overall composition and

expression of mood, he drew on the panoramic landscape style of the Five Dynasties and the Northern Song Dynasty, and at the same time, he was influenced by traditional ink painting in terms of brush and ink techniques, focusing on the application of line drawing and haloing brushwork techniques, but the overall schema is with a modern, flat, decorative effect.

3. In addition, an artist's personal and emotional experiences are often directly reflected in his or her work.

Artists are often inspired by the experiences they have had in their lives, the people and events they have encountered, and the emotional turmoil within them.

Artist Li Xiaoxuan's artwork is filled with this sense of sadness because of the painful experience of several loved ones passing away in a short period of time.

Li Xiaoxuan mentioned that as early as the early 1990s, he created the *Night, Pursuit* series of works (Figure 84, 85), which expresses a kind of deep nostalgia for departed relatives. When he visited the Earthquake Cemetery every year to visit his parents' graves, he saw the graves of his friends and relatives and felt a strong desire to see them "come to life". He even wrote that he wanted to "open the exits of the graveyard so that the souls can enter and exit freely", an emotion full of loss, but at the same time containing a deep longing for family love. The relationship between black, white and grey in the large areas of the picture, and the instability of the space all show the author's disturbed inner world. It shows that the artist's personal experience and emotional experience are often directly reflected in his works.

Figure 84 Li Xiaoxuan, *Legacy*, 200cmx250cm,1985

Source: Provided by the Artist

Figure 85 Li Xiaoxuan, Much thought, Sometimes Necessary, 200cmx250cmx2,1985

Source: Provided by the Artist

4. Finally, the artist's interaction with the environment of the time also had an impact on his or her painting style.

Social changes, political upheavals and cultural exchanges all have a profound impact on the artist's creations. Artist Li Xiaoxuan said that only after experiencing the unusually frenzied stock market of the 1990s can one express paintings that bear a strong imprint of the era, and that the artist continues to pay attention to society in his creation of *Stocks, Stocks*, and expresses the theme through the unique intuitive expression of art. He points out that the painter's task is not to write a social investigation report, but rather, with the help of symbols and phantasmagoric representations, it is enough to leave these images on the paper, thus triggering the viewer's thoughts. (Figure 71)

In short, an artist's personal experience is an important factor in the formation of his or her painting style. Through artistic creation, artists not only express their personal experiences and emotions, but also promote the development of art forms and styles in their continuous exploration and innovation. This profound interaction between personal experience and artistic creation gives each artist's work a unique style and individual charm.

4.2.4 The Application of Schema and Correction Theory in Contemporary Ink Painting Visual Language Art

Table 15 The Use of Schema and Correction Theory in Contemporary Ink Painting Visual Language Art

Feature	Concrete Analysis
Theme Selection	Visual Representation Contemporary ink painting often employs complex, layered compositions and dynamic lines to convey themes of urban detachment and social issues. Artists integrate modern subject matter into traditional ink painting, using fine line drawing and contrasts between ink tones to enhance the sense of the times. Additionally, compact compositions and the interplay of thick and light ink layers intensify the works' critical perspective on social anxiety and emotional depth. Some works adopt dramatic compositions, fine brush techniques, and backgrounds blending reality and imagination, creating multiple symbolic roles and metaphors for life's stage, further enriching the narrative.
Composition	Spatial Arrangement Innovative composition is a defining feature of contemporary ink painting. For example, diagonal layouts with wave-like black-and-red contrasts symbolize struggles in life, loneliness, and reflections on adversity, creating a strong visual impact. Moreover, a tripartite composition combining reality and illusion, with saffron trees set against white space, evokes a poetic fusion of nature and humanity. Some works employ vertical layouts with significant white space, blending splashed and accumulated ink techniques to harmonize traditional and modern spatial expressions. These adjustments break away from conventional composition methods, lending the artwork a heightened sense of poeticism and philosophical depth.

Table 15 (Continued)

Feature	Concrete Analysis
Brushwork and Ink Techniques	Emotional Expression In terms of brush and ink techniques, artists use compositional white space to highlight the main subject and enhance visual layering, thereby conveying a sense of tranquil wisdom and introspective temperament. Additionally, some works employ fantastical layouts that merge reality and illusion, symbolizing the boundaries between dreams and reality while exploring inner emotional struggles. Landscape paintings continue the traditional approach of clear foreground-background separation and the combination of wet and dry brushwork. However, modern compositions integrate minimalist details, imparting a more ethereal aesthetic
Cultural Heritage	Modern Innovation Contemporary ink painting not only carries forward Confucian ideals and literati painting traditions but also incorporates both static and dynamic elements to imbue works with philosophical meaning. For instance, books and candlelight symbolize knowledge and self-cultivation, reflecting Confucian influence. At the same time, decorative design elements are introduced, breaking traditional ink painting structures and presenting a modern interpretation.

The above table shows that Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction is of great value in analysing the visual language of contemporary ink painting. Since its emergence, contemporary Chinese ink painting has been evolving on the basis of traditional ink painting schema (visual conventions and forms), and painters of different painting genres have made innovations and corrections to the traditional schema in the

process of inheritance and development, thus promoting the progress of ink painting. Whether through modernisation of composition, innovation of brush and ink techniques, or deepening of emotional and cultural connotations, the artists of this era have responded to the changes of the times by giving new life and expression to ink painting. Through the continuous correction of this schema, contemporary ink painting has gained new vitality in the context of modern art, achieving the fusion of ancient and modern, and the harmonious dialogue between tradition and modernity. (Tabel 15)

4.2.5 Summary: Characteristics of Contemporary Ink Painting Visual Language

1. Diversity of theme selection. Contemporary ink painting shows a more diversified form of expression in the choice of themes. Painters not only choose themes that reflect the social reality, but also express their personal inner feelings through the presentation of themes. By reinterpreting traditional elements, artists not only continue the cultural background of ink painting, but also give it modern connotations, displaying visual images with contemporary characteristics. At the same time, the projection of personal experiences and emotions gives the works a unique style and depth.

2. Compositional Innovation and Emotional Expression. The composition of contemporary ink paintings is often more free and impactful. Through the subtle layout and innovation of the picture space, artists can effectively express their personal feelings and thoughts, and find a balance between tradition and modernity. The visual impact of the composition, the spatial layout and the expression of emotions work together to create a strong visual effect and emotional resonance for the viewer. In addition, the integration and innovation of traditional compositional elements in the picture highlights the thinking of integrating the ancient and the modern.

3. Multiple use of brushwork and ink and sense of hierarchy. In terms of the use of ink and brush, contemporary ink painting emphasises the creation of rich texture and layering through delicate layers of ink and contrasts of intensity and lightness. The artist's personality and creative style are expressed through the use of ink and brush, especially the combination of traditional ink techniques with modern techniques to show the depth of the theme and emotion of the work. The innovative use of ink and brush is

not only limited to the presentation of images, but also makes a breakthrough in visual and emotional communication.

       4. Cultural heritage and modern interpretation. Although contemporary ink painting presents a more modern outlook, cultural inheritance is still one of its core. Through the delicate changes of ink and brushwork techniques, the artist expresses his respect for traditional culture and contemporary interpretation, reflecting the combination of cultural background and the pulse of the times. Especially the integration of cultural elements such as Confucianism and traditional philosophy makes the works more cultural depth.

       Overall, the visual language of contemporary ink painting breaks through the boundaries of tradition to create an art form with a sense of modernity, while maintaining respect and innovation for traditional culture and artistic techniques. This linguistic expression that straddles tradition and modernity allows ink painting to continue to be revitalised in the context of contemporary art.
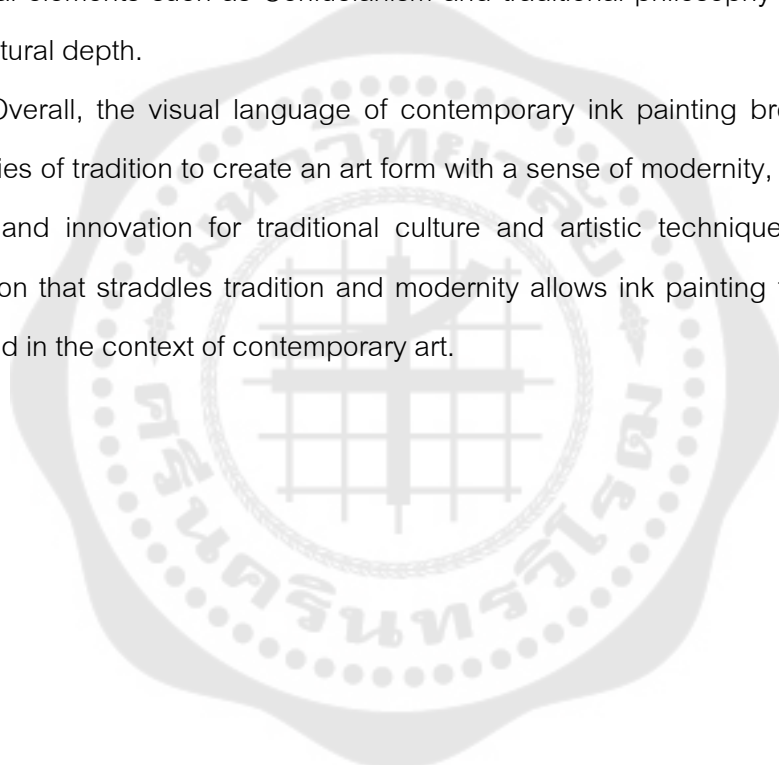
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Brief Summary of the Study

  5.1.1 Background and Objectives of the Study

    As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, the visual language of Chinese painting has undergone continuous evolution and development at different stages of history. From the "combination of poetry and painting" of the Sui and Tang dynasties to the "literati painting" of the Yuan dynasty, and then to the modern fusion of Chinese and Western creative styles, traditional ink painting has formed a rich and diverse form of artistic expression.

    With the deepening of globalisation and multiculturalism, contemporary ink painters, on the basis of inheriting the tradition, have expanded the visual expression and cultural connotation of Chinese painting through the innovation of composition, the multi-layeredness of brush and ink techniques, and the diversity of psychological symbolism.

    This paper is based on Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction, which, as an interdisciplinary theory, provides new perspectives and methods for the study of the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese ink painting. Through the application of schema-correction theory, we can systematically sort out the development history of traditional Chinese ink painting and its evolution in contemporary times, and deeply investigate its inherent schematic structure and artistic characteristics, and on the basis of which we can carry out innovation and development. This not only helps to promote the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese ink painting, but also helps to enrich and develop the theoretical systems of art, aesthetics, psychology and other related disciplines.

    The progress of society and the development of art have led to the emergence of new patterns in traditional Chinese ink painting, how have such patterns evolved in different historical periods, and does this evolution show a certain pattern or pattern?

What are the differences in visual language between traditional Chinese ink painting and contemporary ink painting?

What changes in the socio-cultural context do such differences reflect? How do socio-cultural factors affect the transmission of traditional ink painting iconography, and are modes of correction influenced by social changes and cultural perceptions?

Can the theory of Schema and Correction provide a reasonable and powerful theoretical framework for explaining the inheritance and development of schema in traditional ink painting? In contemporary ink painting, how can artists use the theory of schema-correction to promote the evolution of ink painting and reflect modern aesthetics and concepts in their creations?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following research objectives were established.

1. The aim is to study the visual language of traditional and contemporary Chinese ink painting. It explores the main features of their themes, compositions, brushwork and ink techniques and psychological symbols. The aesthetic spirit behind them and the psychological symbolism of the artists.

2. The aim is to study the evolution of the visual language from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting, and to provide new research ideas. Explore how the visual language has changed from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting. Focuses on the motivations behind these changes, including socio-cultural factors, technological advances, and changes in the artists' personal experiences. It will also use Ernst Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction to explain the development of Chinese ink painting and the transformation of the visual language in contemporary ink painting, and provide new research ideas for contemporary art creation and criticism.

5.1.2 Research Methods

This is a qualitative study that aims to explore the development of the visual language of Chinese painting from traditional ink painting to contemporary ink painting, and the (cultural) factors that have contributed to its development.

1. We employed a literature analysis method to study the core issue of "the characteristics of the visual language of traditional Chinese ink painting." Documents and images related to the subject were collected from the Sui and Tang dynasties, when traditional Chinese ink paintings first appeared, through the Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing, and modern periods, a total of six periods. From each dynasty, a list of 2-6 representative painters was established according to the three professional directions of traditional Chinese painting, and 2-5 representative works were selected from each painter, for a total of 30 ink paintings as research samples. Then, the iconographic analysis method is used to figure out how the visual language of ink painting changed from traditional to modern times by looking at the most important paintings from each time period by well-known artists.

2. The interview method was used to study the issues of "visual language characteristics of contemporary ink painting" and "the development of visual language characteristics from traditional Chinese ink painting to contemporary ink painting". The interviews were conducted with artists representing the four main schools of contemporary ink painting—Traditional Continuous Ink Painting, Expressive Ink Painting, New Literati Painting, and Experimental Ink Painting, and two artists (experts) and two ink painting art critics from each school, for a total of 10 experts as the representatives of the sample. The content includes the characteristics of the visual language of ink painting, the influence of social and cultural backgrounds, and artistic personal experience.

The results of the analyses in this study will provide new ideas for the innovation and inheritance of traditional Chinese ink painting at both the theoretical and practical levels and, at the same time, offer references for modern art creation and cultural communication practices.

5.1.3 Results

5.1.3.1 Characteristics of the Visual Language of Traditional Ink Painting

Table 16 Characteristics of Traditional Ink Painting Visual Language

Visual Language Performance	Characteristics
(Art) Composition	1. Scattered perspective and panoramic layout
	2. Blank space 3. Balanced beauty
Brushwork and Ink Techniques	1.Line (sketch and cun techniques)
	2.Five colours of ink 3. Freehand brushwork
Aesthetics	1.Harmony Between Heaven and Humanity
	2.The psychological integration of things and oneself

1. Traditional ink painting compositions often use scattered perspective and panoramic layout, making effective use of blank space to create artistic conception and pursuing the beauty of balanced imagery rather than mechanical symmetry (Zhang, 2021).

Unlike Western linear perspective, which focuses on the focal point, Chinese ink painting adopts scattered perspective, showing the picture through multiple viewpoints, with flexible and layered space. In Chinese paintings, the composition is based on the idea of the harmony between reality and emptiness, where the emptiness (e.g., blank space, clouds and mist) leaves breathing space for the reality (e.g., rocks and trees), thus revealing an infinite beauty of the mood (Kou, 2006). Emphasis is placed on the balance of imagery rather than mechanical symmetry, and the distribution of points, lines and surfaces creates a dynamic composition. The characteristics of the traditional law of composition in Chinese painting is the foundation of the aesthetic interest of Chinese painting, and it is the core value of Chinese painting to maintain the characteristics of national painting (He & Yue, 2023).

2. In terms of brushwork and ink techniques, traditional Chinese ink painting is usually based on line, mainly using sketch and cun techniques, and attaches importance to the "five colors of ink" and is usually based on the technique of freehand

brushwork (Wang, 2019).

Outlining lines is the basis of modelling in Chinese painting, conveying the shape and spirit of the object through smooth lines. In landscape painting, the chapping technique uses vivid brushstrokes to enhance the texture and three-dimensionality of the picture. Chinese painting attaches importance to the "five colours of ink", i.e., the richness of the layers and the three-dimensionality of the ink through the changes of ink intensity, dryness and wetness. The Chinese painting method emphasises the free and unrestrained expression of emotions, and the use of concise strokes to write God in shape.

The variation of the brush lies in the line, and the line contains the deep Chinese culture and the unique aesthetic psychological complex of the nation, and naturally, it also contains the cultivation of Chinese calligraphy and the unique mastery and cultivation of the brush and ink. In a sense, brushwork is the most characteristic form of language in the art of ink painting (Kou, 2006).

The use of these brushwork and ink techniques demonstrates that "ink" is not only a form of expressive language for painting, but also a cultural phenomenon, which reflects a kind of mental interpretation of the spirit of traditional Chinese culture heritage.

3. Aesthetically, traditional Chinese ink painting pursues the philosophical idea of "Harmony Between Heaven and Humanity," as well as the integration of things with oneself and the psychology of the fusion of imagery and symbols.

The aesthetic idea of Taoism is to revere the beauty of "nature", which organically links beauty with Taoism and advocates a return to the natural realm of heaven and earth (Men, 2024). "Ink and wash condenses the pursuit of the highest character and life ideals of the Chinese sages on many issues of aesthetics, and ultimately conveys a realm (Han, 2015).

Xu Wei's *Ink and Grape* Painting (Figure 44) demonstrates the philosophical idea of "unity of heaven and man" and the psychological image of "harmony of things and self" in traditional Chinese ink painting through his unique language of ink and brushwork and compositional style, giving the painting a profound symbolic meaning

(Kong, 2008).

The vines, leaves and fruits in the painting are distributed in a natural and spontaneous manner, and the free and dynamic composition breaks the strict layout of traditional flower and bird paintings, showing a state of life that is in tune with nature. This spontaneous, yet profoundly meaningful layout reflects Xu Wei's unique understanding of the impermanence of life and the laws of nature. The branches and vines in the painting seem to sway in the wind, symbolising the resilience of life in the midst of hardship.

The inscribed poem in the upper left corner of his painting demonstrates his state of mind, "Half a life of despondency has become a half-decade old man, independent in his study listening to the whistling evening wind. There is a pearl at the bottom of the brush but no place to sell it, so it can only sit idle in the wild vines of panic." "Pearl" refers to the grapes, the author borrowed the grapes painting nowhere to sell, expressing his own no one appreciation, ambition unrewarded unlimited feelings and old age, lonely and desolate feelings.

This expression of aesthetic interest makes *Ink and Grapes* an exemplary work of "fusion of imagery and symbolism" in Chinese ink painting, which transcends the mere depiction of scenery and gives the picture a profound spiritual connotation and infectious power.

Aesthetically speaking, the interpretation of "ink" has gone far beyond its own literal meaning, and in the process of its formation and development, it encompasses and releases the deep humanistic heritage of the Chinese nation, which has distinctive national characteristics (Han, 2015).

5.3.1.2 Characteristics of the Visual Language of Contemporary Ink Painting

Table 17 Characteristics of Contemporary Ink Painting Visual Language

Visual Language Performance	Characteristics
(Art) Composition	1. Creativity 2. Emotional Expression
Brushwork and Ink Techniques	1. Multiple Use 2. Layering
Aesthetics	1.Multiplicity of Aesthetic Imagery
	2.Relationship with Traditional Ink Painting
Contemporaneity	1.Cultural Heritage 2. Modernity Interpretation

1. Compositional Innovation and Emotional Expression.

Contemporary ink paintings tend to be more free and impactful in their compositions. Through the subtle layout and innovation of the painting space, artists are able to effectively express their personal emotions and thoughts and find a balance between tradition and modernity. The visual impact of the composition, the spatial layout, and the expression of emotions work together to create a strong visual effect and emotional resonance for the viewer. In addition, the integration and innovation of traditional compositional elements in the picture highlight the thinking of integrating the ancient and the modern.

Zhang Yujin's work *Lonely Journey Against the Grain* (Figure 74), demonstrates a breakthrough in tradition and a fusion of modern spirit in contemporary ink painting through bold compositional innovation and strong emotional expression.

2. Multiple uses and layers of brushwork and ink techniques.

In the use of brushwork and ink techniques, contemporary ink painting emphasizes the creation of rich texture and layering through delicate layers of ink and contrasts of intensity and lightness. The artist's personality and creative style are expressed through the use of brushwork and ink techniques, especially the combination of traditional ink techniques with modern techniques, which expresses the depth of the theme and emotion of the work. The innovative application of brushwork and ink

techniques is not only limited to the presentation of images but also makes a breakthrough in visual and emotional communication (Ren, 2024).

Lu Bing's work *River, Moon, Pine, and Wind* (Figure 77) demonstrates the unique charm of contemporary ink painting in terms of texture and emotional expression through the subtle use of brushwork and ink techniques and layered expression.

3. Diversity in aesthetic imagery.

Contemporary ink painting shows more diversified forms of expression in terms of aesthetic imagery. Painters not only choose themes that reflect social reality but also express their personal inner feelings through the presentation of themes. By reinterpreting traditional elements, the artists not only continue the cultural background of ink painting, but also give it modern connotations, displaying visual images with contemporary characteristics. At the same time, the projection of personal experiences and emotions gives the works a unique style and depth.

With the diversity of psychological expression at its core, Li Xiaoxuan's *The Bus* (Figure 67) fully demonstrates the unique charm of contemporary ink painting in terms of emotional expression and social concern (Lu, 2017).

4. Cultural inheritance and modern interpretation.

Although contemporary ink painting presents a more modern outlook, cultural inheritance is still one of its core elements. Through the delicate changes of brushwork and ink techniques, the artist expresses his respect for traditional culture and contemporary interpretation, reflecting the combination of cultural heritage and characteristics of the times. Especially the integration of cultural elements, such as Confucianism and traditional philosophy, makes the works more culturally deep.

Yang Yishu's work *Theatre* (Figure 72) is centered on cultural heritage and modern interpretation, demonstrating the dual innovation of contemporary ink painting in terms of technique and mood.

5.2 Disscusion of the Results

5.2.1 Discussion

1.The Importance and Modern Value of Ink Painting

The Cultural Significance of Ink Painting. A Symbol of Literati Painting and the Continuation of Traditional Culture. The emergence of ink painting marked the formation of literati painting. It is not merely an artistic form but also a medium through which Chinese scholars express their thoughts and emotions. From the Tang and Song dynasties to the Ming and Qing dynasties, literati artists used ink painting to convey personal sentiments, philosophical perspectives on life, and social ideals. This characteristic remains relevant in the modern era. Traditional Chinese culture, particularly Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, has profoundly influenced the development of ink painting. Therefore, in the context of globalization, ink painting is not only an important symbol of Chinese cultural identity but also a unique medium for international artistic exchange.

The Depth of Thought in Ink Painting. A Timeless Spiritual Value. The significance of ink painting lies not only in its techniques and visual expression but also in the profound spiritual world it embodies. In contemporary society, rapid technological advancements and an overwhelming influx of information have led to increasing fragmentation and anxiety in people's spiritual lives. The philosophy embedded in ink painting offers a remedy to this predicament. Emphasizing inner cultivation and the expression of artistic conception, the creative process of ink painting requires a state of deep focus, which itself serves as a form of spiritual practice, aligning with the modern psychological concept of "flow." Additionally, through variations in ink tones, ink painting constructs an aesthetic space that invites viewers to experience tranquility and spiritual transcendence. Consequently, in contemporary society, ink painting is not only appreciated as an art form but also widely applied in meditation, psychotherapy, and art therapy, showcasing its timeless spiritual value.

The Artistic Uniqueness of Ink Painting. Innovation and Integration in the Global Art System. Despite the emergence of various new artistic media and forms of expression in modern times, ink painting maintains a significant position in contemporary art due to its distinctive visual language and aesthetic approach. First, the concept of "brushwork and ink" is a fundamental element that differentiates ink painting

from Western artistic traditions. Techniques such as "five colour of ink" and "integrating calligraphy into painting" create a unique artistic expression. Second, the aesthetic principles of ink painting, emphasizing "vitality and spirit" and "balancing emptiness and substance," contrast sharply with Western painting's focus on "light and shadow structure," offering a new perspective for global artistic thought.

2. Significance and Contribution of Research Results

This study systematically analyses the development of the visual language of Chinese ink painting from traditional to contemporary through Gombrich's theory of Schema and Correction, and reveals the dynamic logic behind the evolution of the visual language. The visual language of traditional ink painting is mainly embodied in brush and ink techniques, thematic imagery and compositional features, while contemporary ink painting has achieved diversification of artistic expression through constant revision of schema. This study not only verifies the applicability of the "Schema-Correction" theory in the study of Chinese ink painting, but also expands its theoretical boundaries in explaining the development of cross-cultural art.

Specifically, this study points out that contemporary ink painters, in the cultural context of globalisation, have fused the expressive techniques of Western art with traditional Chinese aesthetics to create a visual language with modern qualities. This finding provides a new case study to support the theory of "Schema-Correction", showing that the revision of traditional schema is not a simple technical adjustment, but a reconstruction of cultural meaning. This theoretical contribution will help to advance the fields of art history, visual culture studies, and cross-cultural communication.

3. Dialogue of Findings with Existing Literature

The results of this study are both consistent with the existing literature and reflect a sense of supplementation and expansion. While most of the existing studies focus on the artistic characteristics of traditional ink painting or the innovative forms of contemporary ink painting, this paper comprehensively analyses the path of visual language transformation through the analysis of samples from six historical periods and four major contemporary genres. For example, unlike previous studies that only

emphasise the "spirit of ink and brushwork", this paper analyses in depth the specific impact of social and cultural contexts, technological advances and artists' personal experiences on the modification of schema.

In addition, the paper also adds a cross-cultural perspective to the analysis of the transformation of visual language. In contrast to the generalised discussion of the influence of "Western Learning" in traditional literature, this paper reveals the direct effect of Western artistic trends such as Abstract Expressionism on the innovation of contemporary ink painting's visual language through concrete examples. For example, the simplification of traditional brush and ink in the New Literati School and the bold experimentation with colour and material in the Experimental Ink Painting School demonstrate how traditional schema has been redefined in the globalised cultural context.

4. Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement

Despite the important results of this study, the following limitations remain.

Limitations of Sample Size. Due to time and resource constraints, the sample selection for traditional ink painting focuses on a total of 30 works from six periods from the Sui and Tang dynasties to the Republic of China, while contemporary ink painting focuses on the perspectives of eight artists and two critics from four major genres. Such a sample size may not be sufficient to fully encompass the rich diversity of Chinese ink painting, especially in terms of regional styles and individual artist creativity.

Subjectivity of the research method. The semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis methods used in this paper may bring a certain degree of subjectivity due to the researcher's interpretations, despite the fact that they can dig deeper into the subjective intentions of the artists. The implementation of cross-validation, while increasing credibility, still cannot completely eliminate research bias.

Limitations of cross-cultural analysis. In exploring the influence of Western art on contemporary ink painting, the analysis in this paper is mainly based on the perspective of Chinese artists and lacks direct interviews and dialogue with Western artists and critics. This may make the analysis of cross-cultural influences lack bi-directionality and

comprehensiveness.

To address these limitations, future research should pay attention to, expanding the sample size to cover more historical periods, regional styles and more genres represented. Combine quantitative and qualitative methods, such as using computer vision technology to quantify changes in visual language characteristics. Strengthen cross-cultural comparative research, and explore the international influence and acceptance of contemporary ink painting through interviews with Western artists and critics.

5. Implications for Theory and Practice

Through the dynamic perspective of Schema and Correction theory, this paper not only deepens the understanding of the evolution of the visual language of Chinese ink painting, but also provides practical insights into contemporary art creation and cultural communication.

Implications for Artistic Creation. The research in this paper shows that the key to artistic creation lies in balancing tradition and innovation. Contemporary ink painters can explore more contemporary ways of expression with the help of multiculturalism and modern technology on the basis of inheriting traditional patterns. For example, the use of digital media or augmented reality technology to expand the expression of ink painting, so as to maintain its competitiveness in the global art context.

Implications for cultural communication. This study reveals that the transformation of the visual language of ink painting, as an important carrier of Chinese culture, reflects the dual needs of cultural confidence and cultural adaptation. In the context of globalisation, the promotion of ink painting should focus on the combination of its traditional aesthetic value and modern visual expression, and strengthen its influence in the international art market through exhibitions, digital platforms and international art festivals.

Implications for Education and Research. In the field of art education, the research in this paper provides new perspectives for the design of ink painting courses. Teaching should help students understand the theory and method of schema revision

through case studies and practical creation. At the same time, the research results of this paper also provide reference for the research of other traditional art forms, further promoting the development of interdisciplinary research.

5.2.2 Contribution

Based on the theory of "Schema and Correction," this study suggests a new way to look at how the visual language of Chinese ink painting has changed over time. It also comes up with the following key knowledge points through systematic sorting and empirical research.

A logical model for the development of visual language in traditional and contemporary ink painting.

This study constructs a logical model for the development of visual language by integrating the historical literature of ink painting and contemporary art practice. The model consists of three core phases: 1. The tradition stage. "Perfect unity of form and spirit" centers the visual language, emphasizing composition, brushwork and ink techniques, and aesthetics. 2. The transformation stage. As society and culture change, technology improves, and artists' own life experiences shape their visual language, creating new ways to express themselves and different aesthetic settings. 3. The innovation stage. In this age of globalization, artists change the visual language to fit the times by coming up with new ways to use old patterns. This reflects the spirit of the times and the global vision. (Figure 86)

This study examines the application path of schema-correction theory in ink painting.

The theory of Schema and Correction effectively explains the evolution of the visual language of ink painting. Specifically, it includes: 1. Schema construction. In traditional ink painting, the formation of the schema stems from cultural experience and artistic practice, and it manifests through visual language. 2. Schema correction. Contemporary ink painting amends the traditional schema in terms of composition, brushwork and ink techniques, and aesthetic concepts, reflecting the changes in the socio-cultural and technological environments. 3. New schema generation. The

corrected schema forms a new visual language, which provides the impetus for continuous innovation in artistic creation.

The structure of the model clearly shows how the visual language of ink painting has changed and grown from traditional to modern ink painting. This gives us a theoretical framework for the future growth of ink art.
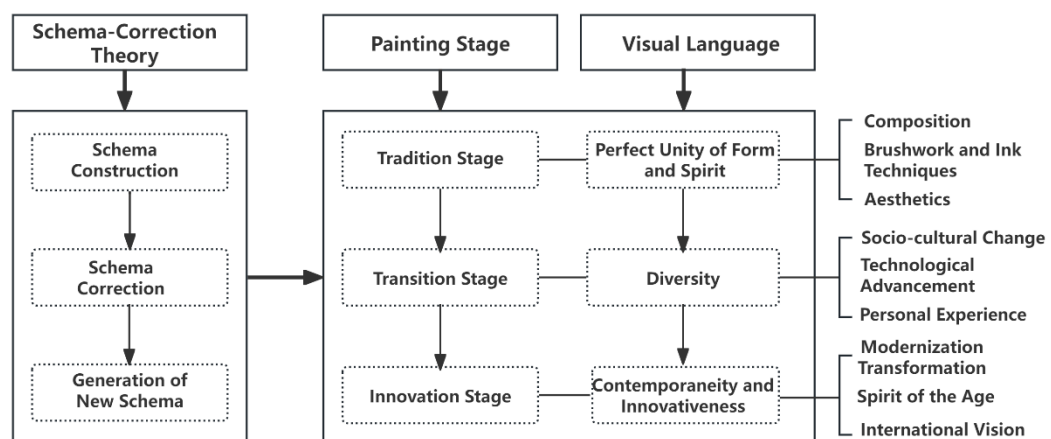

Figure 86 Logical Model for the Development of Visual Language in Ink Painting

Source: Created by Author

5.3 Recommendations for Future Studies

Based on the objectives and results of the study, the researchers make the following recommendations.

1. The thesis systematically discusses the characteristics of the visual language of Chinese ink painting and makes suggestions for artistic practice. Contemporary ink painting creators should continue to pay attention to cultural integration in the context of globalization and explore more contemporary ways of creation with the help of digital media and technological means. Artists should also explore traditional cultural resources to create contemporary works with oriental aesthetic qualities.

2. The thesis carefully looks at how the visual language of Chinese ink painting has changed over time using the theory of "Schema-Correction" and suggests ways that

this theory could grow. Future research can combine more theoretical frameworks to deepen the explanation of the development of the visual language of Chinese ink painting. Simultaneously, we can explore the applicability of the "schema-correction" theory to other art forms.

3. This paper discusses the development of the visual language of Chinese ink painting and makes suggestions for cultural dissemination. It is suggested that the international promotion of ink painting be strengthened and that the international influence of ink painting be enhanced through the planning of international exhibitions, collaborative creative projects, and digital dissemination. Emerging technologies such as AR/VR can also be used to enrich the display forms of ink painting and enhance the audience's sense of immersion and participation.

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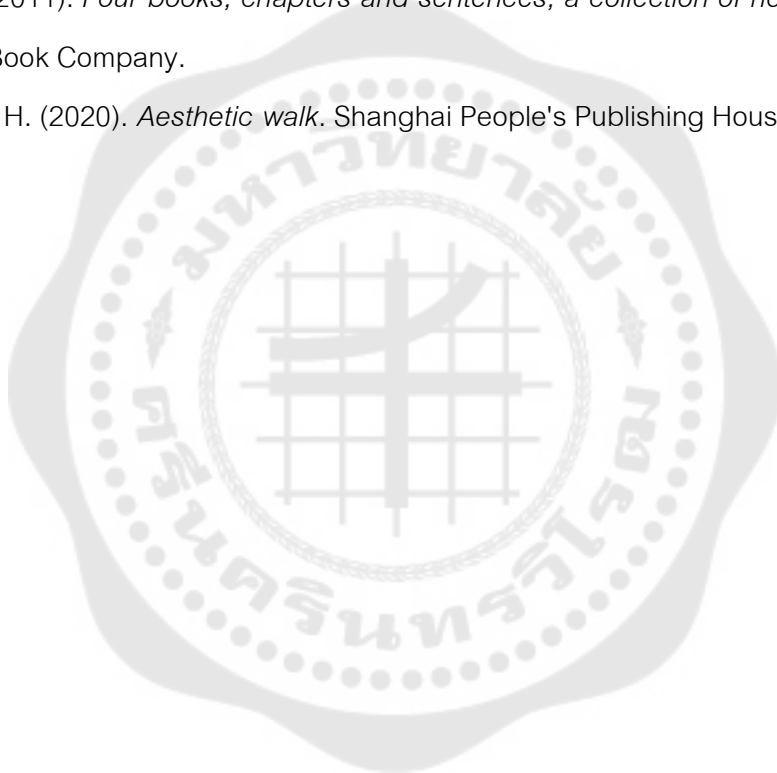
APPENDIX

Interview Questions

I. Artists

1. How do you generally think about the theme matter of your paintings when creating your work? How do you choose your composition and the techniques you use? What kind of mental thoughts (activities) do you have during the process of painting?

2. We know that the ink work "XXX" is your masterpiece, based on what kind of situation (mood, inspiration), which made you want to create such a work, and how did it bring about an impact on your art career? (Change of mindset?)

3. When creating the ink works of "XXX" or your other ink works, have you been influenced by traditional ink painting? For example, in the choice of subject matter (theme)? For example, in the composition? The use of brush and ink?

4. In today's society, the environment and concepts of painting have begun to change, especially the introduction of some concepts of Western painting, has this had any influence on your creation? What impact has the advancement of painting materials and the perfection of painting techniques had on your creation?

5. What do you think is the future development of traditional Chinese ink painting? And what is the way out for contemporary ink painting? How to look at the modern transformation of traditional ink painting from a global perspective? How to maintain the unique oriental national cultural characteristics in the process of transforming the language of ink painting?

II. The Critics

1.As an art critic, you can be said to have spent your entire life researching, experiencing, disseminating, and adhering to art. How did you embark on the path of commenting on Chinese ink painting art? What inspired you to engage in research onChinese ink painting art? How do you position yourself?

2. In your opinion, what are the main influences of traditional ink painting on contemporary ink painting? Where do you think the beauty of contemporary Chinese ink painting is mainly reflected? How to understand elegance and vulgarity, beauty and

ugliness in Chinese contemporary ink painting?

3.Since modern times, Western learning has impacted China and has not undergone significant changes to this day. But now, the research in the field of Chinese painting is mostly influenced by the West, even using the West as the standard. So, how do you view the introduction and transformation of Western painting concepts in Chinese painting (ink painting) over the past century?

4. In your opinion, what should be the relationship between Chinese painting (ink painting) and Western painting? In the face of the impact of Western painting theories, how should we re-establish the main position of Chinese painting?

Interviews with Artists Introduction

1. Liu Yuanxi

2. Lu Shang

3. Li Xiaoxuan

4. Zhang Liang

5. Zhang Sunzhe

6. Yang Yishu

7. Zhang Yujin

8. Jin Dawei

Liu Yuanxi

Born in 1989 in Haiyang, Shandong, graduated from the Department of Chinese Painting at the China Academy of Art. He is currently working at the China Academy of Art and serves as the executive editor of *Hushan Zhi*, as well as the vice president of the Jin Yi Society at the China Academy of Art.
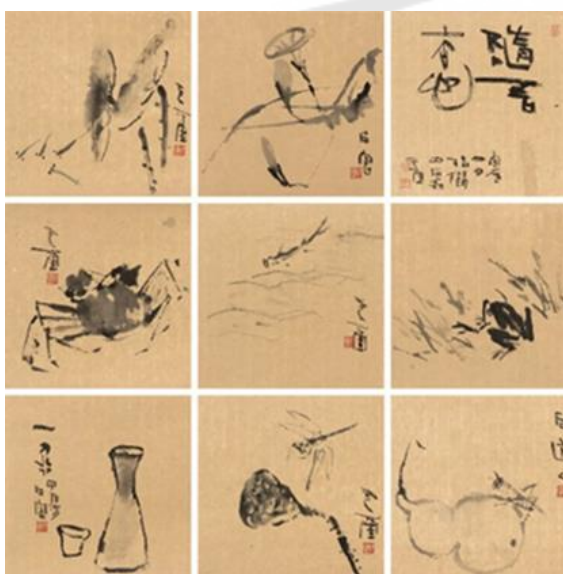
Sui Wu Yi Ce
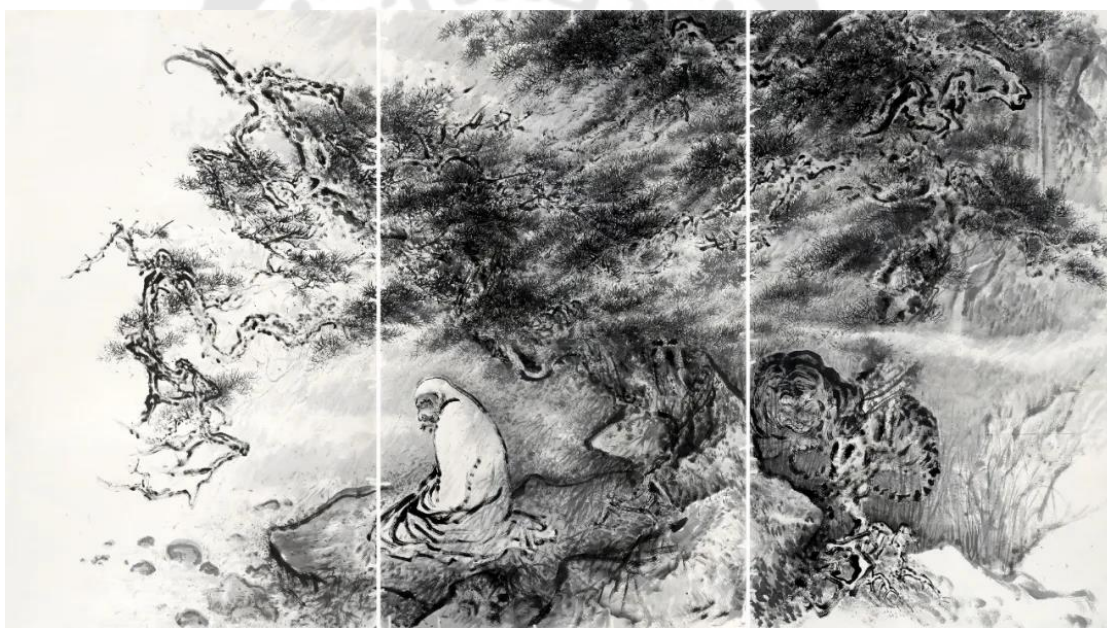23cm × 23cm × 9
2024.3

Plum and Stone
34cm × 31cm
2018.9

Lu Shang

Originally named Lu Bing, was born in 1990 in Anhui. He is currently a distinguished lecturer at the School of Continuing Education of the China Academy of Art and Hangzhou Buddhist Academy, as well as a member of the Zhejiang Figure Painting Research Association.

River, Moon, Pines, and Wind

362cm × 215cm × 3

2022

Li Xiaoxuan

Born in 1959 in Hangu District, Tianjin. Former Dean of the School of Chinese Painting at Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, Master's and Doctoral Supervisor, Full-time Researcher at the China National Academy of Painting, and Member of the China Artists Association.

The Bus
320cm×1000cm, 2013


Stocks. Stocks
278cm×125cm×5, 1999

Zhang Liang

Master's Degree from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Lecturer at Hanshan Normal University, Member of the China Gongbi Painting Society, Member of the Guangdong Artists Association, Member of the Guangdong Chinese Painting Society, Artist of the Guangzhou National Young Talent Cultivation Program

Shadow of Clouds in High Mountains
235cm×175cm
2019
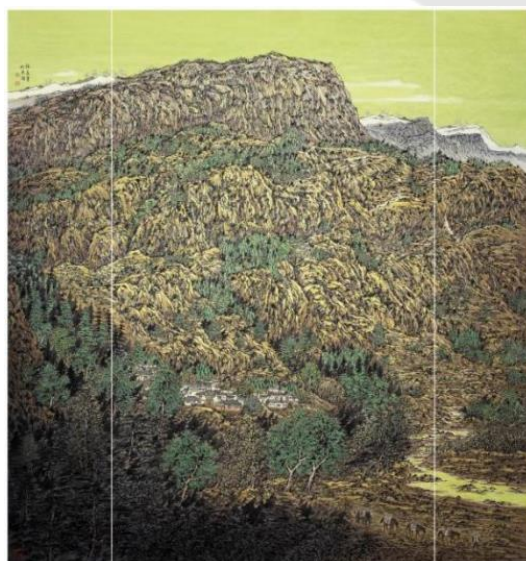
Early Spring in Wumeng Mountain
200cmx215cm
2021

Zhang Sunzhe

Graduated with a Ph.D. from the Graduate School of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2020 and is a postdoctoral researcher at the School of Art and Archaeology, Zhejiang University. Currently a lecturer at Nanjing University of the Arts.

Mooring
48 × 36 cm
2024

Light of the Abyss · Fendouzhe
235cm × 200cm
2024

Yang Yishu

Currently employed at Yunnan Arts University. In 2023, began pursuing a Ph.D. at the China Academy of Art.

Member of the China Artists Association and the China Gongbi Painting Society.
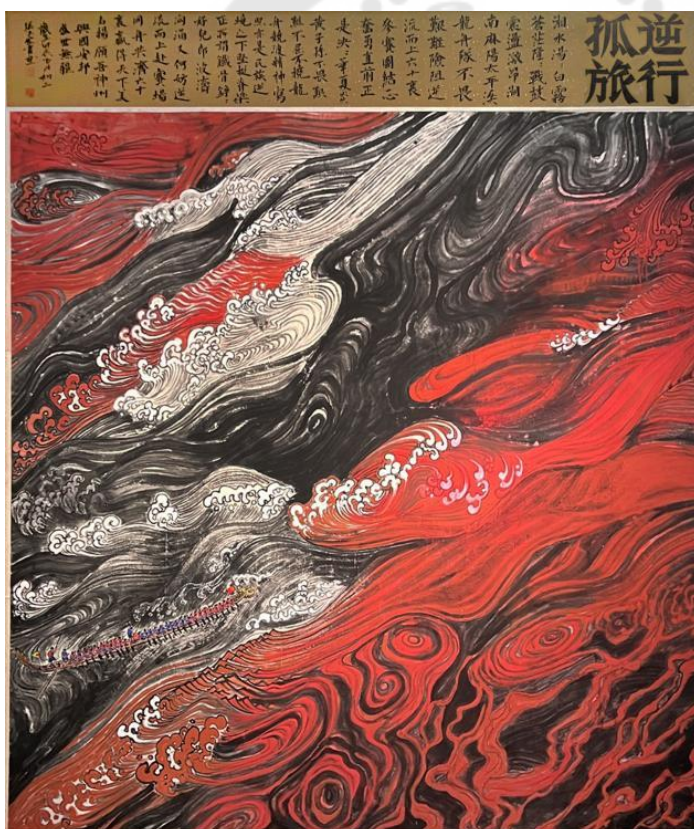
Theatres
100cm×200cm
2022

Phantom Dream
200cm×125cm
2021

Zhang Yujin

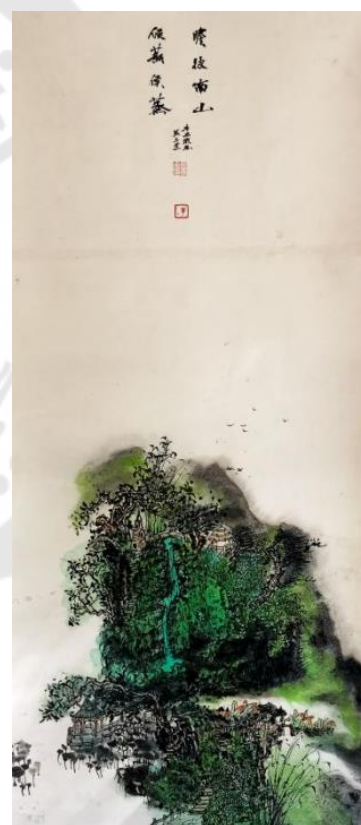Associate Professor, College of Fine Arts, Hanshan Normal University.

Member of Guangdong Artists Association.

Lonely Journey Against the Grain

220cm×200cm

2024

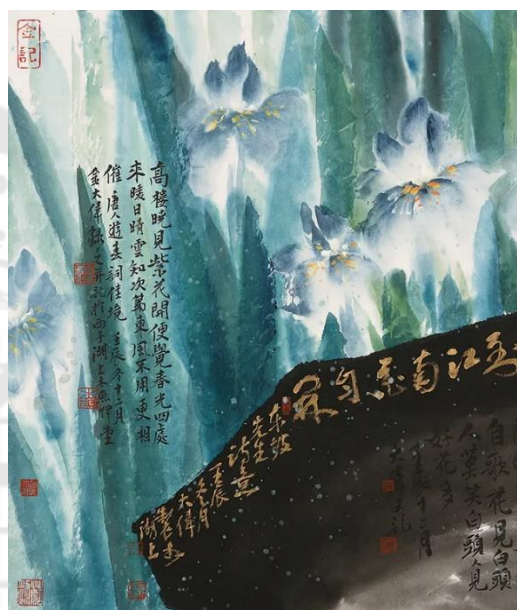*Worried about our motherland*

175cm×80cm

2022

Jin Dawei

Currently a member of the Zhejiang Artists Association, Director of Zhejiang Province Chinese Bird and Flower Painters Association.

Spring Arrives in Jiangnan, Flowers Bloom Naturally
136cm×68cm
2012

With Spring's Arrival, Flowers Bloom for Heroes
200cm×135cm
2021

Interviews with Art Critics Introduction

1. Lu Hong

2. Wang Huangsheng

Lu Hong

Currently a distinguished professor and master's supervisor at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Executive Director of Wuhan He Art Museum, National First-Class Artist, Member of the China Artists Association, and Executive Director of the China Sculpture Society.

Published Books:

Modern Ink Painting: Twenty Years (1979–1999), 2002

Chinese Contemporary Ink Painting: 1978–1999, 2017

History of Chinese Contemporary Art 1978–1999, 2013

History of Chinese Contemporary Art 1978–2018 (university textbook), 2021

Art of the Cultural Revolution and Post-Cultural Revolution Era (1966–1978), 2014

History of Chinese Contemporary Art 2000─2019, 2023

Wang Huangsheng

Ph.D. in Fine Arts. Currently a professor and doctoral supervisor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. General Director of the Art Museum of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and Director of the New Museology Research Center.
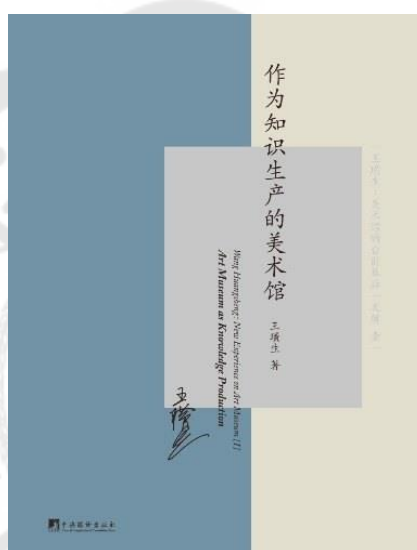
Publications:

The Art Museum as Knowledge Production (Central Compilation & Translation Press)

Wang Huangsheng: Tracing the Pearl River 1984 (Guangxi Normal University Press)

Wang Huangsheng: Boundary/Space (Hebei Education Press)

Solo Exhibitions:

Wang Huangsheng: Breathe (Long Museum, Shanghai)

Wang Huangsheng: Tranquility Between Heaven and Earth (National Art Museum of China)

Chinese Ink Wash Painting Terminology Explanation

1. Gongbi (工笔, Meticulous Brushwork)──A highly detailed and precise painting technique that uses fine, controlled brushstrokes to render subjects with accuracy. It is commonly found in figure and bird-and-flower paintings, often featuring vibrant colors and intricate details.

2. Xieyi (写意, Freehand Brushwork)──An expressive painting technique that emphasizes capturing the spirit or essence of the subject rather than precise details. It is characterized by bold, fluid brushstrokes and is widely used in flower-and-bird and landscape painting.

3. Junzi Hua (君子画, Gentleman's Painting)──A category of Chinese painting that uses symbolic subjects such as plum blossoms, orchids, bamboo, and chrysanthemums to represent noble character traits associated with the ideal gentleman (junzi).

4. Wenren Hua (文人画, Literati Painting)──A painting style created by scholars and literati, emphasizing calligraphic brushwork, poetic expression, and personal artistic vision. Literati paintings often feature poetic inscriptions and seek to capture a deeper intellectual or emotional resonance rather than mere realism.

5. Jianbi Hua (减笔画, Reduced Brushwork Painting)──A minimalist ink painting approach that uses the fewest possible brushstrokes to depict a subject. It focuses on simplicity and atmosphere, with notable examples including Liang Kai's Immortals in Ink and Wash.

6. Xuan Paper (宣纸, Xuan Paper)──A high-quality paper specifically designed for Chinese calligraphy and ink painting. Produced primarily in Jing County, Anhui Province, Xuan paper is known for its strong absorbency, durability, and suitability for ink spreading and color layering.

7. Tiba (题跋, Iinscription and Colophon)──Poetic or critical commentary written on a painting or calligraphy work. These inscriptions often include the artist's thoughts, historical context, or appreciation from later collectors, enhancing the cultural value of the artwork.

8. San Yuan Fa (三远法, Three Perspective Methods) ——A compositional technique in Chinese landscape painting that creates spatial depth through three perspectives:

1) Gaoyuan (高远, High distance): The viewer looks up at a towering mountain.

2) Shenyuan (深远, Deep distance): The viewer's perspective follows a receding path into the landscape.

3) Pingyuan (平远, Level distance): The landscape extends horizontally with distant elements fading into the background.

9. Bianjiao Shanshui (边角山水, Corner Composition Landscape Painting) ——A compositional approach in Chinese landscape painting where the main elements are placed in one corner of the painting, leaving large areas of blank space to evoke a sense of vastness and openness.

10. Quan Jing Shanshui (全景山水, Full-view Landscape Painting) ——A landscape painting format where the entire scene is depicted in a grand, panoramic view, typically featuring mountains, rivers, and human settlements to create a comprehensive and immersive visual experience.

11. Zhezhi Huaniao Hua (折枝花鸟画, Broken-branch Bird-and-flower Painting) ——A composition style in Chinese bird-and-flower painting where flowers, branches, or plants appear as cut or cropped rather than part of a full tree or landscape. This format emphasizes decorative elegance and dynamic composition.

12. Liu Fen Ban Shu (六分半书, Liu Fen Ban Calligraphy) ——A unique calligraphic style attributed to Zhao Mengfu, characterized by a balance between kai (regular) and xing (semi-cursive) scripts, achieving both structure and fluidity. The name implies that the script is slightly freer than standard regular script but not fully cursive.

13. Cunfa (皴法, Cun Techniques) ——A brushwork technique in Chinese landscape painting used to depict the texture and volume of mountains, rocks, and trees. Different types of texture strokes simulate various rock textures, such as hardness, roughness, or dampness.

14. Juan Yun Cun (卷云皴, Rolling Cloud Cun Techniques)——A type of texture stroke characterized by smooth, curved lines resembling rolling clouds. It is often used to depict soft and rounded mountain forms.

15. Pima Cun (披麻皴, Pima Cun Techniques)——A texture stroke resembling strands of loosely scattered hemp fiber. The long and layered brushstrokes are commonly used to depict the moist and weathered rock surfaces of southern China.

16. Niumao Cun (牛毛皴, Ox-hair Cun Techniques)——A technique using dense and short strokes resembling ox hair. It is frequently applied to represent rugged and dry rock surfaces.

17. Jiesuo Cun (解索皴, Unraveling Rope Cun Techniques)——A texture stroke technique where interwoven lines resemble loosely twisted ropes. It is often used to depict jagged and solid mountain formations.

18. Dianzi Cun (点子皴, Dot Cun Techniques)——A texture technique using small, concentrated dots to depict the rough surface of rocks and trees. This technique is particularly effective for portraying moss-covered stones or the texture of old tree bark.

19. Yudian Cun (雨点皴, Raindrop Cun Techniques)——A texture stroke resembling falling raindrops, created with short, vertical brushstrokes. It is often used to depict weathered rock surfaces and adds a rhythmic texture to the painting.

20. Po Mo Fa (破墨法, Broken Ink Method)——An ink technique in Chinese painting where dark ink outlines are applied first, followed by lighter ink washes before the initial strokes dry. This creates natural blending effects, enhancing tonal variation and depth.

21. Jiao Mo Fa (胶墨法, Glue-ink Method)——A method of mixing ink with glue to create a glossy and smooth texture that prevents ink from spreading. It is frequently used in meticulous brushwork (gongbi) paintings where precise ink control is required. Xu Wei often used it in his freehand brushwork paintings.

22. Mo Fen Wu Se (墨分五色, Five Colours of Ink)——A principle in Chinese ink painting that classifies ink into five gradations based on intensity:

1) Nong (浓, Dense)——Pure black ink.

2) Zhong (重, Heavy)──Slightly diluted but still dark.

3) Dan (淡, Light)──Mid-tone ink, noticeably lighter.

4) Qing (清, Thin)──A very diluted, soft gray tone.

5) Jiao (焦, Faint)──Barely visible ink, used for subtle details.

This concept emphasizes the tonal variations in monochrome ink painting.

23. Ji Mo Fa (积墨法, Layered Ink Method)──A technique where multiple layers of ink are applied gradually, allowing each layer to dry before adding the next. This method enhances depth, texture, and richness, often used in landscape painting to depict misty muntains or water.

24. Su Mo Fa (宿墨法, Over-night Ink Method)──A method that utilizes pre-prepared or aged ink, which has a drier and softer texture compared to freshly ground ink. This technique allows for subtle variations in tone and is often employed to create atmospheric effects in ink paintings.

25. Xie Zhua Zhi (蟹爪枝, Crab-claw Branches)──A painting technique for depicting tree branches, where the branch structures resemble the shape of crab claws. It is commonly found in Song and Yuan dynasty landscape paintings, particularly in depictions of winter trees or pine branches.

26. Goule (勾勒, Outline Drawing Technique)── A fundamental brush technique in Chinese painting where the artist uses fine lines to delineate the contours of an object before applying shading or color. It is widely used in gongbi (meticulous brushwork) painting.

27. Ranse (染色, Color Washing Technique)──A painting technique in which diluted ink or color pigments are applied in layers to create smooth tonal transitions. This method is commonly used in both gongbi and xieyi (freehand) styles to enhance depth and texture.

28. Liubai (留白, Blank Space)──A fundamental aesthetic principle in Chinese painting where parts of the paper are intentionally left unpainted to suggest openness, emptiness, or negative space. It enhances balance, movement, and poetic expression within the composition.

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