

The background of the cover is a traditional Chinese ink wash landscape painting. It depicts a mountainous terrain with a river or path winding through the valleys. The brushwork is expressive, with varying line thicknesses and ink saturation creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall style is characteristic of classical Chinese literati painting.

# 中國筆墨

## BRUSH AND INK IN CHINESE PAINTING

潘公凱 著  
(美)沈慧偉 译

外语教学与研究出版社  
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# Foreword

Among all the traditional arts in China, painting is the art form most closely intertwined with Chinese philosophies. It is generally acknowledged that Taoism with its naturalistic outlook has had a lasting influence on traditional Chinese painting. In terms of the form of presentation, ink painting that exploits "the infinite possibilities between black and white" emerged during the Tang Dynasty, reflecting not only the influence of the ancient yin-yang philosophy, which had by then found expression in pictorial art, but also the influence of Taoism and Chan Buddhism in the arts. Traditional Chinese painting changed in content and form as it progressed along with the general trend of Chinese culture that evolved. During its earlier stage of the Wei-Jin period through the Sui and Tang dynasties, the major subject matter was figures, of either Taoists, Buddhist deities or dignitaries with their female servants and horses or cows. Interest in landscape was not observed until the later half of the Tang Dynasty when it became a fully recognized genre and gradually rose to prominence during the Northern Song Dynasty. This change in artistic interest testifies to a theory in China's cultural history which defines that particular period as "an era of cultural transformation between the Tang and Song dynasties." After mid-Tang, religious deities gradually gave way to secular life and natural scenery. Soon afterwards, a longing for pastoral ideals or a reclusive lifestyle gained momentum during the Song and Yuan periods, especially among the scholar gentry class, which eventually became the dominant form of painterly expression. Such ideals were of course entirely different in form and content from the kind of art favored by the aristocracy, nobles and clan politicians which had been the main category in artistic creation up to that time. From a cultural standpoint, the new art forms that emerged reflected a big change in society and culture.

A distinctive feature in the aesthetic pursuit of Chinese painting is that it has never gone after the verisimilitude of an object to be depicted as its purpose. Instead, it seeks to convey the essence of it or a spirit perceived in things. This practice led to the establishment of a guiding principle that urges the creation of "a sense of vivacity"

# 序

古代艺术门类中,中国古代绘画艺术与中国哲学关系十分深厚,如一般认为道家的自然思想对中国古代绘画有长久的影响。在绘画艺术形式上,唐代出现的水墨画,其“黑白世界”,既是古代哲学阴阳世界观在绘画形式上的体现,又受到道家与禅宗的深刻影响。同时,古代绘画的内涵与形式,也随着中国文化的整体变化而变化。魏晋隋唐以佛道人物、侍女牛马为绘画的主题,对山水林石的欣赏则是在中唐以后,尤其是在北宋以后,中国文化史上所谓唐宋转型的说法,在这里又一次得到呼应。中唐以后的绘画,佛道人物的形象逐渐让位于人世景物,宋元士大夫对乡野理想化生活的思绪逐渐占据主导地位,与门阀贵族时代的士族意象全然不同,显示出社会文化的变化在艺术上的体现。

中国绘画的美学特色,始终不追求形似的摹写,而要求表达出事物的神韵,这就是“气韵生动”,成为从人物到山水描写的主导原则。而中国画的精神追求,在历史发展中亦有变化。如在其早期,仍然重视自然物景的客观描写和表现,即使在抒发主观感情时,也仍保持一种客观的态度,其区别只在表达客观之“形似”还是客观之“神似”。此后则不然,元代不再强调自然物体的“气韵生动”,而是突出画家自我的“胸中

in any work of art as a measure of paramount importance, be it figure or landscape. As an instrument for the expression of the mind, Chinese painting also underwent several stages. The earlier works were more concerned with the portrayal of nature as compared to works of later periods when artworks became increasingly expressive of the artist's inner world. However, even in the most daring and individualistic works of expression, there had never been a complete departure from recognizable forms. Nature was always retained. The difference between the two tendencies is only in how much resemblance to an object is presented versus how much spirit is injected. Things changed dramatically during the Yuan Dynasty when the main concern of the artist shifted from capturing the lifelikeness or "vivacity" of the depicted object to the expression of "lofty emotions felt at heart" by the artist. Chinese painting seeks to establish a spiritual environment or atmosphere based on the artist's imagination of an ideal world, one that embodies the state of mind or mentality of the artist. In the works of the Yuan scholar painters, however, what we see mostly are emotional statements of the artists, which are temporary feelings and reflections of the mind but not yet a particular type of mentality which has more stabilized characteristics. Progressing into the late Ming and early Qing period, painters began to speak to us in terms of their personal experience and their views towards life. The works of Badashanren and Shitao are good examples in which the artist's main interest is to share with us his personal interpretations of the world around him. Once again, the emphasis of expression shifted from such concerns as compositional force and tactical power of the voids to the indication of the artist's personality and mentality.

All these factors in the evolution of Chinese painting have been covered and reorganized in this book. The author has always maintained that the main drive guiding the course of Chinese painting has been the principles of the literati painting which has demonstrated a wide range of interest through different periods: figure painting as its main focus up to the Tang Dynasty, landscape as its major pursuit during the Song and Yuan dynasties, flower-and-bird that flourished in the Ming Dynasty, and freehand floral

逸气",即主观的精神。中国画力求表现一种精神的想象之境、想象的世界,这个世界也是艺术家理想的世界,或注入了他、体现了他的情思的世界。不过,元代文人的水墨画所要表达的,更多的是艺术家的心绪,心绪是一时之感悟和意趣,还不是标志稳定内心的心性范畴。到了明清之际,一般认为,如八大山人、石涛的画作重在自我个性的表现,其笔墨所着力表达的不再是气势,不再是空灵,而是表现其人生的体验意义、个体的内心境界。

这一切都在本书中被重新整理叙述。作者一贯认为,中国绘画的主线是文人画,文人画在唐以前以人物为主,宋元以山水为主,明以后是花卉为主,二十世纪是以写意花卉为代表。在本书中,作者以儒家的心性之学为趋归,对明清以来的绘画,提出了与以往不同的文化—美学解释,强调要在一般所说的画家的情绪、心境之后,更深入其人格、心性。作者指出,不是客观描写,而是主观表现才是中国绘画的主流特色。中国画的表达不重个体观念和情绪,而是表达了中国文化的人格理想,即不是一人一时一地的主观情绪,而是世代传承的文化传统、价值取向和人生理想。这也是作者不再用“个性”这样的范畴,而用“人格”或“心性”这样的范畴去把握这一时期笔墨范例



renderings that represent the latest achievements since the beginning of the 20th century. Drawing on the theory of the Neo-Confucian School of Mind, the author proposes in this book a new interpretation of paintings produced since the Ming and Qing dynasties. By encouraging the reader to look deeper into the characteristics of personality and moral of various artists with case studies, he has provided an enhanced cultural and aesthetic perspective different from the conventional approach of academic studies that tend to deal with only the emotional and subjective aspects of the artists. The author identifies first that, instead of objective representation, subjective expression has been the dominant characteristic throughout the history of Chinese painting. With that established, he goes on to expound the kind of subjectivity sought after in the Chinese approach to painterly expression—instead of hanging on the emotions and ever-changing state of mind of each individual artist, Chinese painters seek to establish communion with the viewer and with each other through a set of codes inherited from recognized masters generation after generation that signify their aspirations and ideals in life. The author approaches the examination of various exemplary models from the perspective of a shared “moral consciousness” and “mentality standard” and analyzes the famous artists in history as practitioners in groups. That is why he has dismissed the idea of treating them as isolated cases of “individual” uniqueness. While defining the entire course of Chinese art history as a gradual progression from seeking objectivity to subjectivity, the author points out that there have been three distinctive stages in the process. The first stage is set between the Wei-Jin period through the Sui and Tang dynasties when the focus of attention was on the “vivacity” of the object to be depicted. The second stage covers the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties during which the main efforts were on the capture of “atmosphere” through landscape or indication of scenery of an ideal world as a result of interaction between the subjective mind and objective nature which inspired it. The third stage encompasses the modern times when the focus of attention shifted to the expression of “class and taste” as a core value led by scholar painters. It is precisely on this issue of “class and taste” that the author has expounded on the significance of having

之内涵的主要原因。作者指出,中国画的历史发展,是一个从客观化追求到主体化追求的过程,其第一个阶段魏晋隋唐,以表现客观对象的“神韵”为价值核心;第二个阶段宋元明清,山水画的價值核心是主客观并重互动的“意境”;第三个阶段近代文人画的價值核心则是“格调”。正是在格调这一节点上作者作了充分发展,把“格调”发展为“心性”,以“心性”来把握近代以来文人画表达作者人格理想的特点,这也是本书的最重要之点。在我看来,作者所说的“人格”主要是以德性为中心的儒家人格,作者在本书中所强调的“心性”也主要是儒家特别是宋明理学所说的心性。在这个意义上,若说本书体现了作者的儒学的文化观,当亦不为过。

中国学术思想以哲学、宗教、思想为主要内容。在两千余年的历史中,在不同的历史时期,学术思想往往通过不同的形式或形态来取得发展,并形成其潮流的变化和阶段的区分。这使得我们常常用一个时期的主流学术形态来概括这一个时期的思想学术。比如,先秦是诸子百家争鸣的时代,我们就习惯把先秦称作“子学”的时代。两汉的思想主要是通过经学的形式发展的,我们就把两汉称作“经学”的时代。魏晋时期以玄学(新道家)的发展为主流,我

the right “mentality” and the “ideal personality” that characterize the achievements of scholar paintings in modern times, setting the underlining tone of the whole book. In my opinion, the type of “personality” deemed as a necessary quality by the author is based on the Confucian sense of virtue while the kind of “mentality” he emphasizes throughout the book refers to a clear cast of mind held as cardinal by the Neo-Confucian School of Mind. In this sense, therefore, it wouldn't be a far cry for me to say that the arguments presented in the book reflects the viewpoint of a Confucian scholar.

Chinese academic thinking draws on philosophy, religion and various schools of thought in its advancement throughout its recorded history of over two thousand years. During different periods of history, Chinese academic interests also shifted from one main thought to another as they developed, making it possible for us to identify the characteristic features of academic study with a major doctrine or school of thought prominent in a certain period. For example, the periods prior to the Qin Dynasty saw a multitude of philosophical schools and thoughts compete freely for dominance. We usually refer to the pre-Qin era as the “Age of Philosophers.” Academic thoughts during the Han Dynasty were developed through the study of Confucian classics and therefore the Han period is known as the “Age of Confucian Classics.” During the Wei-Jin period, Taoism experienced a revival and Neo-Taoism became a dominant school of thought. Thereafter, this period is known as the “Age of Metaphysics.” Buddhism flourished during the Sui and Tang dynasties, a period known as the “Age of Buddhism” in terms of academic thinking. Neo-Confucianism, with its several branches or schools of thought, dominated academic thinking throughout the Song, Yuan, Ming dynasties and lasted well into the Qing. Henceforth, we refer to these periods as the “Age of Neo-Confucianism.” Apart from the leading school of thought of a certain period, there were of course other minor schools that co-existed along with the one or ones in vogue. However, if we were to look for the substantial achievements or features that represent the spirit of a certain era, we are more likely to find them in the core philosophy of that era which played a dominant role in the then culture, and as such, inevitably impacted its arts and spiritual matters.

们就把魏晋称作“玄学”的时代。隋唐时期是中国佛教特别繁盛的时期，我们就把隋唐称作“佛学”的时代。宋元明清是理学（新儒学）占主导地位的时期，所以我们就把宋明称作“理学”的时代。当然，在每一时期，除了主流思想而外，还有别的思想存在，但是每一时期的主导的学术思潮，确实是这一时代的代表，在文化中扮演了核心的角色。因此，每个时代的主流思想，不能不对当时的艺术精神发生影响。当然，艺术家不仅受到同时代主流学术思想的影响，也会受到整个思想史上主流思想家的影响。如何把握艺术家与主流思想史的关系，与精神文化大传统的关系，应该是理解中国艺术史的重大课题。

就美学诠释而言，本书关注的重点不是魏晋隋唐时期，而是宋以后的时期。这个时期的文化受到宋明理学的深刻影响。宋明理学以其心性的理论与实践为核心，以探求人的本性、意识、情感、人格价值、人生意义为根本内容。儒家的心性论是其实践功夫的理论基础，而以心性论为基础的修身功夫，指向本性的自我实现、人格的自我完成，意识的自我修炼、境界的自我超越，以达到圣贤的人格境界。儒家的“超凡入圣”即超越凡俗的欲望追求以达到“极高明”的精神境界，与佛道不同，是以道德的提升与完美为人生的



Of course, the artist was impacted not only by one mainstream contemporary theory that dominated his time, but also by the main schools of thinking in history. It is a major task of academic endeavor in the study of Chinese art history to examine and correctly deal with the relationship between the artist and the prevailing mode of thinking during his time and that between him and the main traditions of philosophy in history. This seems to be where the key to a better understanding of Chinese art lies.

On the examination of aesthetics, this book focuses on the periods after the Song Dynasty rather than the earlier periods from Wei-Jin to Sui and Tang. Ever since the Song Dynasty, Neo-Confucianism has had a profound influence on all aspects of Chinese culture. Based on the study of the significance of the state of mind as its core theory and practical guide, Neo-Confucianism seeks to identify the ultimate truth in human nature, consciousness, emotions, individual moral and values, and the meaning of life. The Neo-Confucian School of Mind constitutes its fundamental principles that guide one's practice in life, aiming to achieve a state of perfection in self-realization, moral integrity and class, outlining a path that gives the ordinary human being the chances to transcend oneself and attain the virtues of a saint through self-cultivation. Such a path of "transcendence from the mundane to sainthood" encourages one to lift oneself from the worldly desires and attain a "lofty" state of mind. Different from Buddhism and Taoism, this Confucian philosophy seeks to achieve as one's ultimate purpose in life the fulfillment of an individual by maintaining a high standard of moral and constant improvement through cultivation and self-perfection. To assist the individual in attaining such a goal, the following books known as the "Four Confucian Classics" have outlines for one to reference, such as *The Doctrine of the Mean* with its emphasis on vigilance and caution, *Great Learning* with its emphasis on sincerity and diligence in learning, *The Analects of Confucius* with its emphasis on self-restraint and propriety, and *Mencius* with its emphasis on enhancement of character through self-awareness.

Literati painting emerged during the Song and Yuan dynasties due to the special spiritual pursuits of the Song and Yuan scholars. We may ask then, what does ink-brush painting that thrived throughout the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties have to do with the philosophy

根本目标和终极意义,而其修身功夫是以《四书》提供的条目为主体,如《中庸》的戒慎恐惧,《大学》的正心诚意、格物致知,《论语》的克己求仁,《孟子》的尽心知性等。

宋元的文人画,应与宋元士大夫的精神特质有关,那么我们也许可以问,宋元明清的水墨画和这一时期占主流学术地位的宋明理学有何关系?对此,本书给出了一个明确的回答。在本书中,笔墨的传统被作者理解为一种自我培养、自我塑造、自我修炼、自我超越的艺术形式,而这一切自我的修养又可归结为心性的体悟修养及其磨炼过程。这种理解与宋明理学的文化方向是一致的,表明明清艺术家作为文士,其文化追求受到了理学的深刻影响。在此种视野下,笔墨被认为是心性的表征,二者一致,笔墨典范与人格理想成为统一体。由是,笔墨系统所表达的,不是艺术家一时的心绪,而是其稳定的心性人格;不是个体性的感悟,而是更多地表达了整个文化传统的价值理想。与以往的美术史叙述不同的是,本书力求以深层的文化心理结构来探求笔墨的文化意义,强调重视水墨画笔墨的心性修炼意义。对心性修炼的重视,不仅是对这一时期作为主流文化的理学心性论对文人画士的影响的探索,也是对



of Neo-Confucianism that prevailed throughout the same period as the dominant school of learning? This book has given us a definite answer to that. The author regards the art form that relies heavily on the performance of brush-and-ink as a tradition that reflects individual progress in self-cultivation, temperament and level of transcendence and defines that one's artistic practice is in itself the very process of self-cultivation, modeling and consolidation of personality. This observation is consistent with the cultural orientation of Neo-Confucianism and explains that as men of culture, the scholar artists of the Ming and Qing dynasties were deeply influenced by Neo-Confucianism in their aspirations. From such a perspective, one's brush-and-ink is regarded as a manifestation of his mentality and one's works represent none other than his ideals and sense of moral. One's art and mind come into existence as a coherent unity. Therefore, what is expressed through the established system of language in brush-and-ink are in most cases discernable statements of a stable personality, either in search or in celebration of the ideals in line with traditional cultural values, rather than records of temporary spurs of sentiments felt by an individual. Different from previous writings on art history, this book seeks to examine the cultural significance of brush-and-ink by exploring the deeper layers of its cultural and psychological structures, highlighting the importance of the practice of ink-brush painting to one's cultivation of personality. This focused study on the cultivation of personality is an in-depth exploration of the impact on scholar painting by the mainstream philosophy of Neo-Confucianism of this period. It serves at the same time as an insightful explanation to the Confucian belief that one's literary work reflects his personality. Incidentally, this view of the functionality of art coincides with the views towards philosophy maintained by the contemporary French philosopher Pierre Hadot, who defined philosophy as a "way of life" and argued that its goal was to cultivate a constant attitude towards existence through "spiritual exercises." Conventional studies and research conducted by art historians and scholars of aesthetics tend to emphasize the influence of Taoism on Chinese painting and its aesthetic principles as a matter of the utmost importance. This book offers a different perspective. Here the author approaches the study of ink-brush paintings produced by artists since the late Ming and early Qing dynasties (with special attention to those who are prominent in modern

儒家的“文如其人”观念的深入诠释。并且，这一观念从艺术的角度暗合了当代法国哲学家哈多“把哲学界定为生活方式”、强调“哲学作为精神修炼”的观念。因此，与以往艺术史或美学史的学者多注重道家思想对中国绘画美学意趣上的重要影响有所不同，本书更注重从儒家心性、人格、修炼的角度体察明末清初以来特别是近代以来艺术家水墨画的精神内涵与实践意义。从而使得儒家心性和道家意趣一样可以成为中国画美学的文化内涵和基础，以此来诠释、传承传统水墨画的人文精神。这一凸显儒家艺术观的立场是本书的一大特色。显示出作者不仅是杰出的艺术家，而且有着强烈的文化意识和理论关怀。他在本书中所使用的概念如“心性”等，显然有取于宋明理学，显示出他对中国古代哲学不仅有着广博的知识，也有很强的理论的吸取和运用能力。

友人潘公凯教授，当代著名艺术家、艺术理论家，既从事于国画创作，造诣卓越深厚，又从事于美术史论的教学与研究，对中国古代绘画典范的研究亦达甚高水平。他对中国文人画笔墨的观察和悟解有其长期的艺术实践和艺术欣赏为基础，又有其对艺术理论与文化理论的长期思考、探索为基础，故其结论及其意义不限于绘画艺术，而关联着中国文化的自我意识



times) by examining their spiritual connotations and practical significance from the Confucian viewpoint of personality, cultivation and standard of moral. This investigation associates the Confucian element of personality to the art of ink-brush painting and in doing so the author has established that along with Taoist principles, Confucian values have also played a significant role in shaping the basic contents and principles of the aesthetics governing the creativity of Chinese painting as well as its course of progress and transition. This standpoint highlighting the Confucian view of art is a key feature of this book. It indicates that the author is not only an outstanding artist, but also a man with a strong cultural awareness and theoretical concern. The notion of "mentality" and other concepts applied in this book are obviously inspired by Neo-Confucianism, demonstrating not only the author's broad scope of learning of ancient Chinese philosophies but also his strong ability in the acquisition as well as application of theoretical knowledge.

A friend of mine, Professor Pan Gongkai is a famous contemporary artist and art theorist. Engaged in the teaching and research of art history, he is also active as a practicing artist of outstanding capacity. His research on the exemplary artworks of traditional Chinese painting marks a significant advancement on the subject. His observation and understanding of brush-and-ink perfected by Chinese scholar painters are based on solid grounds of decades of artistic practice and appreciation and are substantiated by his long-term study, contemplation and exploration of literary theory and artistic critique. Due to these factors, his conclusions and their significance are not limited to the art of painting. They are associated with the self-awareness of the identity of Chinese culture as a whole, its heritage and the concerns over its inheritance. Therefore, they are worthy of close attention for those who are engaged in the study of Chinese culture and Chinese painting. With his book *Brush-and-ink in Chinese Painting* now complete, he has given me the honor of writing the foreword. I am no expert in the field of traditional Chinese art, but I'd gain nothing if I were to decline. Therefore, I might as well read what he'd written in the book and jot down some notes as a reply to his kind trust in me for this honor.

与传承发展, 值得研究中国文化和中国绘画的同道深加重视。今其《中国笔墨》一书业已完成, 而属序于我。我对中国传统绘画本无研究, 辞而弗获, 因就读书的一些感想述之于上, 以答其美意, 并为之序。

陈 来

2016 年 11 月于清华学堂

Chen Lai  
Tsinghua University  
November, 2016



## Preface

The origins of a conscious pursuit for excellence in brushwork and ink rendition or brush-and-ink can be traced to the epoch of the Han and Wei periods from which the earliest works extant have come down to us. During this course of some two thousand years of history up to the 20th century, enormous changes have taken place in this persistent pursuit as it developed and evolved into a complex system of aesthetics rich in content and complete with sets of idioms and standards of its own. In the eyes of those who live outside Chinese culture, however, these changes might seem insignificant or too subtle to be even noticeable. Such a view has been held by many in the West, including distinguished sinologists who showed an interest in looking into this particular field but more often than not whose researches have been hindered by the lack of an equivalent or a similar phenomenon in the Western cultural structure that they could otherwise use as a reference. This is why a deep penetration from the outside into the legacy of brush-and-ink in Chinese art for a thorough understanding has been so hard. Within Chinese culture itself, people take it for granted that brush-and-ink serves as the basic means of expression for Chinese painting. When referred to among artists and connoisseurs, everybody knows more or less what is being discussed so there is no need to specify the definition of brush-and-ink. Levels of understanding may be different according to personal experience and capacity, but everybody understands what it is. Besides, anything that is classical and traditional has been pounded in China for the last hundred years or so to a point where few people are seriously interested in the details of such things. This is where the dilemma for the continuation of the legacy exists on the inside. The two factors mentioned above have resulted in the situation today where the study of brush-and-ink—the essence of Chinese painting—remains on a superficial level that it has been nothing more than just a general topic. Even though it has been the topic of a continuous debate for over a hundred years since the 20th century when it became an issue, in-depth academic examinations on the subject are rare. Especially

## 自序

从有画迹流传下来的汉、魏到二十世纪，在长达两千年的历史中，中国画的笔墨经历了一个复杂的发展过程。这种发展从中国文化系统之外的角度来看，似乎变化很细微，很不容易看出其中的文化深度，而且因为笔墨在西方文化体系中缺少相似的文化结构和文化氛围，造成卓有成就的汉学家也往往难以深入其中，这正是从外部认识中国画笔墨的困难之所在。而在中国文化内部，却又因为笔墨作为中国画的表达方式，是人们习以为常的常识，画家们和鉴赏家们或多或少都懂一些，所以没有必要一定把笔墨这个概念讲得那么清楚，每位艺术家都可以从自己的学养和功力的基础上去体悟。尤其是近百年的中国一直有言论在激烈地批判古典传统，以至于造成对笔墨的理解后继乏人，而这又是从内部探究中国画笔墨的困惑之所在。内外两方面的原因造成了二十世纪以来，虽然对中国画笔墨的争论延续了一百多年，然而至今为止，仍然处于对中国画的核心问题——笔墨——泛泛而谈的阶段，真正深入的学理性研究不多，尤其是缺乏在全球化的文化视野中对中国绘画笔墨问题的深入追问和未来学意义上的思考。因此，对中国美术界来说，笔墨问题研究的迫切性，可以用个不恰当的比喻：揭示中国笔墨的深层文化结构，对未来世界的意义，至



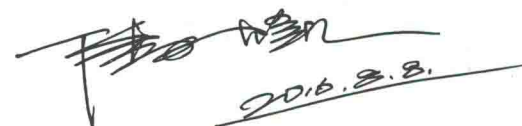
lacking is the type of inquiry into the how and why of Chinese brush-and-ink from a global perspective and a futuristic approach. Therefore, for those of us within the Chinese art circles, the urgency of the need to conduct in-depth researches to reveal the underlying structures and cultural significance of brush-and-ink in Chinese painting is, if I may use a not-so-appropriate analogy, but nothing less than trying to rescue some kind of rare species from extinction.

It is in response to the situation mentioned above that I feel compelled to do something about it. This humble book is intended to establish a general perspective of some basic ideas and ostensive features of the essence of Chinese painting—brush-and-ink—from which the English reader may gain an easier access at an academic level to this less familiar subject of traditional Chinese painting. It is also hoped that this book will provide a supplementary aid to students of art history as well as beginners learning Chinese painting in their study and contemplation of this art form. I am aware that many of the concepts presented in this book have only been briefly touched and that there is much room for improvement. Due to limitations of page and time, a more serious study and intensive discussion will have to come from another publication.

Pan Gongkai  
August 8, 2016

少不亚于拯救某个珍稀物种。

正是因为有上述的感慨，本书想做的是对中国画的核心问题——笔墨结构——作一个尽量浅显、普及的介绍，以便让英语读者对陌生的中国传统绘画有一个学理上理解的切入点；对于学习中国艺术史的中国学生和中国画的初学者，也提供一个学习、体悟的路径。由于篇幅有限，时间仓促，书中提到的观点、理念往往只是点到为止，未及铺展详述，简陋之处有待来日订正补充。



2016.8.8.



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# I

Chinese Brush-and-ink as a System of  
Symbols and Structures

中国笔墨的文化结构





# Brush-and-ink as a Mode of Expression

Brush-and-ink, or “B&I” for short, is the most frequently used and heard phrase in Chinese art history. It is still the topic of frequent discussions in art theory and critique among Chinese artists today. As a single word, brush-and-ink has several definitions. The first definition of B&I refers to the media which include all kinds of cone-shaped brushes and ink or sticks of ink made from soot. Once you have a brush and ink, you can paint or write on whatever substrate of your choice: bamboo strips, silk fabrics and paper. The second definition of brush-and-ink refers to the visual marks or graphic elements that Chinese art relies on for depiction, which may also be called the vocabulary of Chinese artistic expression that would include lines, dots, and shades of different values and so on. The Chinese artist speaks through this set of vocabulary to express his ideas and emotions. The third meaning stands for the cultural connotations and aesthetic qualities that B&I elements and patterns represent, which have been formulated throughout history with the participation of the Chinese intelligentsia and are usually allegorical and reflective of their tastes and ideals.

It is no doubt that if we were to define in modern terms, brush-and-ink is a visual language unique to Chinese painting. Just as oil painting, printmaking and watercolor have their respective modes and vocabularies of expression such as touch, color pigments, palette knife techniques, forms and space, B&I has its own set of technical variables. The intensity and richness of texture oil pigments afford and the fluidity and mingling effects watercolors offer are some of the distinctive features of the crafts. Some of the graphic basics are the same in art of the West or of the East, however, behind the visual elements, there are big differences in ideas and ways they communicate and function. In this regard, the greatest feature of Chinese brush-and-ink painting is the calligraphic quality in its execution, and the symbolic patterns thus formulated and used as idioms of expression.

The formulated patterns and idioms in Chinese painting are closely related to Chinese

# 笔墨作为形式语言

笔墨,是在中国绘画史中使用得最频繁的一个词。至今,笔墨仍然是中国画家们时时都在讨论的词汇与话题。“笔墨”这个词的第一层含义是指中国画使用的工具材料,各种锥形的毛笔和用炭黑做成的墨块。有了笔和墨,就可以在竹简、绢帛、纸张上面书写文字和绘画图形。“笔墨”的第二层含义是指中国画表现客体对象形态的形式语言。以黑、白、灰、点、线、面的不同组合来表达对象的形与神,也可以表达艺术家主体的构思与意图。“笔墨”的第三层含义是指在两千年来中国绘画发展中,由于文化精英的倡导与参与,笔墨在表现客体对象的同时,在程式化和书写化的双重作用下,逐步与客体对象的外形相疏离,从而获得的直接记录与表达艺术家主体心性的独立审美意义和独特的文化价值。

毫无疑问,用现代语言来指认,笔墨是一种中国画特有的视觉形式语言,如同油画、版画、水彩一样,笔触、色彩、刀法、形的塑造、空间的处理、油彩的凝重与肌理、水彩的流动与润化……都是作用于视觉的形式语言。这是东西方绘画的共同性。但其背后又有很大的不同:中国画笔墨的特点在于点划运动中的书写性和书写性得以建基的符号化程式的运用。

中国绘画的程式性特色与中国书法有深层的关

calligraphy. Calligraphy stands for the art of beautiful writing. However, because it is the written form of a language, the basic requirement is recognition. Within the scope of identifiableness, there is plenty of room for creativity. For two thousand years, Chinese painting has retained its original and basic method of portrayal characterized by outlines first and color fills or light-ink fillings next. This basic method has managed to remain as the dominant technique because of the expressive possibilities and richness of expression in the calligraphic use of brush-and-ink. It got so sophisticated as to have successfully suppressed the development of the chiaroscuro mode. Ever since the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), brush-and-ink has remained as the dominant mode of painting despite the fact that other forms and genres also exist in Chinese pictorial art. As expressive devices, other areas of technical know-how include choice of themes or contents, artistic license such as "inclusion vs. exclusion," application of color, principles of composition, poetic inscriptions and seals, even mounting formats and so forth.

联。书法，即文字书写的美术，是建基于字体符号的可识别性之上的。字符的可识别性是书法最基本的前提性要求。同时，这种必须具有可识别性的基本要求，又给书写动作中蕴含的主体精神性留出了足够的自由空间。两千年来，用笔与墨勾勒物像的外轮廓，在轮廓内填色或淡墨皴擦，这是中国绘画最基本的描绘方法。正是与书法用笔相关的勾线皴擦之法的充分成熟并日益获得主导地位，压抑排斥了光线明暗之法的应用与发展，所以，笔墨自元代以来演进成为中国画最重要最根本的形式语言。诚然，中国画的形式语言除了笔墨还包括更宽泛的范围，如内容的组织、形体的取舍、色彩的运用、构图的法则、诗款的配合、印章的装点，直至书画的装裱，都是形式语言的组成部分。