

**Relating tradition to innovation within  
the Chinese arts: the application of  
digital technique to visual art**

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## **Abstract**

Along with the rapid development of technology and worldwide cultural exchange, there has been a conflict between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' within China. In the visual art area currently, the biggest impact would be that of digital technique on traditional art, especially painting. After many decades of chasing the 'global standard', and the concern that the so called national culture might be abandoned by the next generation, finding the link between the traditional and the modern becomes imperative for the Chinese. In order to make a contribution to this process, this study focuses on the potential of digital media in the context of traditional visual art, in particular on Chinese literati painting. This helps to create the connection between the older idea and more modern thinking.

Chinese literati painting is chosen for study here as it is not only referred to as the highest form of art in China but also reflects three thousand years of Chinese literature, philosophy and art history. Because of its background and the respect it receives from Chinese society, literati painting associates and shares theories and concepts with other art forms such as poetry, music and calligraphy. The concept of literati painting also was and is being applied to other areas such as garden design, opera, and education, and is more philosophical than scientific. Thus, Chinese philosophy, especially the major influences on literati painting, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Xuanxue, Chanism and Neo-Confucianism, is included as a vital part of this study.

Today's computer technology has the capability of operating simultaneously as a medium, a tool and a context, in addition to its organisational and interactive elements. The computer's technical ability enables it to produce images to simulate

almost completely traditional artistic techniques.<sup>1</sup> It can even appear to improve on them and many artists use computers for this reason. These same techniques of simulation are also likely to suggest to artists new means of changing the conditions of artistic creation and supporting innovation. This study takes advantage of computer technology to create literati art in different format in order to achieve a new means of artwork 'Wenren Shuma Yishu (digital literati art)'. A project was created as the practice part of the study to examine a way to present the literati art concept through a multimedia computer artwork. In order to take full advantage of digital technology, the study has explored different methods of creating digital artwork with a traditional concept and traditional approaches of presenting those works. The research assesses the history of literati art philosophies and the related visual development process, reflecting the aesthetic predisposition of such presentations in order to develop innovative approaches which combine the digital medium with the ideas and concepts of Chinese literati art.

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<sup>1</sup> From Lambert, Nicholas 'A Critical Examination of "Computer Art": Its History and Application' (Unpublished DPhil Thesis, Oxford 2003), ref <http://leonardolabs.pomona.edu/SearchDetails.aspx?UID=14>

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Traditional art concept in a digitalised era**

Every art form emerges relying on the development of society and technology at the time. Digital arts appeared along with the development and popularity of computer technology. Although the earliest digital artwork can be dated back to the 1960s, it was after the Apple Computer Company invented the Macintosh desktop publishing (DTP) system in the 1980s, that the digital arts field started to gain more and more attention.<sup>2</sup> The development of digital technology drove more artists to integrate their artistic talent with digital technique and depart from the conventional disciplines to use computer-based technology while computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) became more developed and popular. While digital technology is showing its ability to support industrial and commercial design, its unique visual presentation language has also been adopted in some artists' art works.

Digital technique brings excitement and visual novelty to artists. At the same time, because of cultural and technical differences, it shows some disadvantages in showing the same expression and emotion as the traditional visual arts, such as paintings. There are some misconceptions in both digital art and in Chinese traditional art, and because of this, it seems that digital arts can only work for certain themes and have no relationship to traditional art concepts. Through study of the cultural origins of traditional art, the potential for developing visual presentation and a sense of the aesthetic in the digital arts, as well as forming a bridge with the traditional arts, can be defined by adopting some fundamental delineations, colours, and cultural elements such as painting objects with recognised meanings. Using traditional arts, especially the literati art concept to

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<sup>2</sup> Christiane Paul, *Digital Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2003, p8-11

enrich digital artwork content and taking into account the tradition of literary achievement to fill the cultural gap in relation to the digital arts, these as the most logical ways of presenting Chinese traditional beauty in cyberspace. As the title of the paper shows, Chinese is the cultural background of the study, and so terms such as tradition or art refers to Chinese tradition or art unless specify otherwise.

The difference in the viewers' emotional response to traditional art, as compared to the digital, firstly comes from the difference in cultural origins. Taking painting as an example, traditional paintings are painted based on the depth of cultural and historical sources, which contain elements of both regional and national cultures. Traditional arts have many different forms; they contain a depth of cultural accumulation and histories; they reflect to a general, possibly nationwide psychological sensibility, customs, aesthetic outlook and aesthetic sentiment. The deep historical traditions, numerous style schools, huge amounts of regional cultural elements, as well as the form and cultural origins of the traditional arts, bring affinity and resonance to people psychologically. On the other hand, as a new art form, digital art was developed in a technological and manufacturing environment. Its aesthetic emotion has a lack of traditional culture base. The limitation of themes and presentation formats makes it seems unfamiliar and distance to some people. Secondly, the modern technologies involved cause differences in the approaches to the methods of creation and presentation. Apart from material and skill developments, techniques of traditional arts such as paintings have never faced such a big impact as that created by digital technology. As people still generally think that traditional culture only exists within traditional craft material and the traditional skills, it takes time for modern technology such as digital technique to effect the transformation and for its place to be recognised and accepted. A long history of traditional technique and ink style in paintings makes people accept the artistic value of traditional paintings. However, lack of

understanding and receptivity of the digital arts cause an emotional distance for viewers.

The digitalised graphic process is the keystone of digital art creation technology. As an important component, a vector graph presents images in 'hard edge' style which is suitable for graphic design, such as logo and standard font images. However, this 'hard edge' creates a cold and machine-like style. Bitmap (also known as Raster) is other major 2D graphic type for digital design, which is made up of pixels in a grid. Again, because of the requirement of digital technology, visual sense colours have to be transformed into digits. These digitalised neat and accurate visual styles make digital works seem to lack connection with traditional culture and artistic languages, which is also the defect of many contemporary digital art works. Moreover, the style of presentation is another factor that could cause different emotional reactions. Traditional painting went through a long period of development and transmutation, which brought into being many presentational forms and styles. These traditional artistic languages are easy to communicate with, as well as to create resonance with viewers. On the other hand, machine-like digital creation comes from different mode of thinking and causes disadvantage in presenting boarder and deeper meaning in Chinese philosophical sense. Take the 2008 Beijing Olympia candidature logo design (image in01) as an example, which is considered to be one of the most successful logo designs in China. It was created followed the theme of combining a traditional art style and modern digital technique. It took Han Meilin's (1936-) hand painted style to enhance Chen Shaohua's (1954-) digital graphic creation, which provides a good example of using the essence of traditional art to enrich digital art creation.





The winning point of this logo design is adopting cultural elements that include shape of Chinese knot (also called 'knot of one heart'), an association with philosophy of Taiji, and brush painting/writing visual style. Absorbing different culture elements and knowledge from other areas for the presentation of digital art is a way to develop digital arts. Integrating national transcendence traditional culture and art modalities is a way to enhance the charm and vitality of digital art design. Digital arts creation also has its own attractive quality. It provides a visualised approach for artists' creative constructs as well as maximising the assimilation of artists' thought and imagination into their art works. After people have overcome the initial wonderment of the abilities of digital technology, the question of the value of digital art remains.

Just as Western painting went through classicalism, realism, impressionism, abstract expressionism and so on since the Renaissance, Chinese paintings have also been through many schools of transmutation in the past. Change in an art form or style can be a long process with a complex background. Just as what many art forms have been through in history, although most people have accepted digital art as an individual art form, the argument about its value remains. Because of the commercial background of digital art design, some people perceive it superficially and without understanding. There are three major erroneous views about digital

arts. The first one is overrating the ability of computer technology. Considering the computer as an all-powerful tool is a deification, and an exaggeration of the power of digital technology. It is misleading for the discipline of creating digital art and its form of presentation. Taking simulation instead of original creation is a naive understanding of the relationship between digital simulative and creative abilities. Being aware of the expressive character of digital art creation and recreation is the way to use it to its biggest advantage. A second misunderstanding is 'commercial purpose'. As computer design has been widely used in commercial industries, the concept of computer arts seems to be lacking a grounding in art theory. Many computer art works are showing personal computer skill rather than an artistic outlook. From some articles and interviews of digital creation, such as 'When video picture meets traditional culture', 'Interview Xu Yi', 'Huang Ying's "Pond" and "Pond Rhyme"', circle techniques and methods used in creating artworks.<sup>3</sup> Art and culture have not been demonstrated in the digital world for long. Until now, it is still hard for many people to put digital art on to a higher artistic aesthetics plane. Along with developing digital arts and innovating its mode of creation, its artistic value will break the commercial impression and occupy a more important place in the realm of art. The third misunderstanding is the value of digital arts. Traditional arts are valued and more accepted for their historical sources, regional customs and their abilities to deliver certain artistic concepts. Compared to traditional art works, digital technology's mass production ability becomes a disadvantage in an artwork valued from psychological point of view. However, we should not recognise digital art creation as merely one kind of technology, but a new form of art, which has its own visual language and presentation style. Therefore, the value of digital art works should not be measured by using traditional values.

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<sup>3</sup> Zhao Ying, When Video Picture Meets Traditional Culture, Digital Age, 2007, 8<sup>th</sup> issue; Angela, Interview Xu Yi: Traditional Nation Always Brings Innovation In Beauty, Global Digital Magazine, Jiangsu Channel of Xinhua Net, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004, Yi Ming, Huang Ying's 'Pond' and 'Pond Rayme', BTV, 27 Oct 2005

Moreover, although the computer is also called 'electronic brain' in some languages, it still does not function in the same way as human brain does. Same as other art tools, the computer can be seen as an extension of the human brain, where the concept of an artwork emerges. There is no such thing as the 'perfect' form of art. The visual results that digital technology can bring to us are various. However, there are also disadvantages in terms of computer arts. The meaning of an artwork quite often depends on the cultural or educational background of the artist or viewer. The study takes culture and education as the premise of creating in order to make an innovation in artistic expression in computer art. Cultural connection in this study is the determining factor for creating a good piece of artwork. Lack of cultural and educational background is the current reason that computer art has less value in the Chinese fine arts field. Through this study, a new meaning for computer art may be demonstrated.

Showing educational background is considered to be the most important thing in Chinese literati art. Working out the connection between digital art and traditional artistic sources is one way to enrich the language of digital art and link the traditional and the modern in China. While many artists have incorporated current computer technology into their work to enhance their artistic visions – pushing the boundaries of their respective disciplines into the digital medium, this study focuses on making an extension of Chinese literati art into this new medium.



## **1.2 Extension of Chinese literati painting**

Since the nationwide reform and opening up campaign were launched 30 years ago, China has made tremendous changes to economic, political, cultural, social and other aspects of the country. People of my generation have witnessed these changes and been influenced by them. During these years, different opinions and ideas regarding tradition and innovation have emerged. These cultural activities and phenomena are usually influenced by new policies or nationwide/worldwide events, and are quite often controlled by group effects. Although the country has been making progress in many ways, each stage of the transformation has increased feelings of instability in society, causing anxiety, which in turn, triggers various questions, issues and arguments. Keeping one's distance from this anxiety is one way to help look at these phenomena objectively, and at the same time, appreciate beautiful aspects of the culture. While rapid economic development is the most remarkable achievement of the new period of reform and opening up of China, social changes have triggered issues of morality and responsibility. As a digital artist and new (Chinese) intellectual, innovating in digital and Chinese art is my motivation for this study.

Digital technology has gained great attention among Chinese people since personal computers became available in the 1980s. This interest in new technology has historical origins. The political and cultural decline promoted an attitude of learning from other countries and a desire to change in Chinese society during the late Qing dynasty. It was in the New Culture Movement (1915-1923) that this change spread to literature. In order to initiate modern Chinese literature, many scholars progressively rejected the previously respected classical writing and declared their determination to write as they spoke. Modern Chinese writing has not only helped more people to be literate but has also made other subjects easier to study. Adopting modern Chinese literature has had advantages of scientific popularisation,



which is believed to be the power that can save the country from foreign forces and make the country fully independent. It is also one of the key purposes of the New Culture Movement. Since technological development was recognised in the late 1970s, as the key for improving the quality of life, learning new techniques and technology have become highly popular in China.

*When Confucius went to the country of Wei, Ran You acted as his waggoner. Confucius observed, "How numerous are the people!" Ran You asked, "Since they are thus numerous, what more shall be done for them?" "Enrich them" Confucius replied. "And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?" Confucius answered, "Educate them."*

After three Five-Year<sup>4</sup> economic development strategies were successfully achieved in the mid-1990s, the content of public education started to change from scientific popularisation back to literature and philosophy. As a result, the term 'Spiritual Civilisation' was introduced. As the counterpart of Material Civilisation, Spiritual Civilisation refers to the achievements of the subjective world. It is the spiritual wealth created through human history, which includes thoughts, morality, education, science and culture. When culture, morality and thought become topics, ancient classics often play their role as references, as they are believed to contain the major achievement of spiritual civilisation for the Chinese. However, since times have changed, applying these traditions to modern life requires new interpretation of the meaning to be 'put into practice'. Promoting cultural and ideological progress does not reduce the value of material civilisation. On the contrary, spiritual civilisation is developed based on the achievement of material civilisation. In digital art, computer technology can be seen as the achievement of material civilisation.

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<sup>4</sup> The idea of the Five-Year plans began in 1953. Since then, certain goals have been set for achievement in each five-year period. The three Five-year economic development strategies here refer to the plans for 1980-1995.

**Applying the Chinese spirit to this available technology is the innovation of Chinese digital art and contributes to Chinese spiritual civilisation development.**

Relationship between tradition and innovation is not a new topic in China. Chinese artists have been making a variety of attempts in combining studying tradition and making innovation for over a century. After the modernism popularity, a 'neo-literati painting' trend became popular in the middle of 1980s. Those paintings with high attention in traditional style and 'brush and ink'<sup>5</sup> skill illustrated that Chinese painters have turned from anti-tradition attitude to reconsidering their artwork development with their background. However, this so called neo-literati painting practice cannot be considered to be successful, because it is simply renew the style and form of old literati paintings, which should be considered as refashioning literati painting. Brush and ink are very important in Chinese traditional painting principle, as they embody a concentrated reflection of visual character of Chinese painting. However, the brush and ink should not be perceived as a kind of skill or a form of method, more importantly, is to understand its spirit which is its philosophical background. Only with this spirit, a painting can be recognised as literati painting. The spirit of literati painting is to pursue and develop visual art with literary comprehension. And, from that, literati painting can be seen as the most ethos representative art form within Chinese traditional art. For literati painting, the whole literati spirit of traditional Chinese culture can be referenced as its spiritual source. Literati painting is the most glorious chapter in Chinese painting history. It reflects Chinese literatures, philosophies, and history, as well as an aesthetic standard which includes showing a painter's personality and morality. Because of its various functions, it is still the mainstream of Chinese painting today, even though scholars no longer occupy the highest level of the society. With the

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<sup>5</sup> 'Brush and ink' should be taken as one word which applies to the painting materials and instruments for traditional Chinese painting.

important position that the literati painting occupies in Chinese society, inviting it into the digital world has great significance for Chinese people.

When digital technology shows its ability in producing high-end products as well as in people's daily life, some art practitioners consider that digital technique is the core of the creation. It is just as Theodore Roszak (1933- ) suggested that, perhaps, like the unfortunate emperor, the computer has been overdressed with false claims made by those with something to gain by it. He raised the question:

*Is our capacity to think creatively being undermined by the very 'information' that is supposed to help us? Is information processing being confused with science or even beginning to replace thought? And are we in danger of blurring the distinction between what machines do when they process information and what minds do when they think?*<sup>6</sup>

For this concern, the best answer might be that 'technology is the engine and literae humaniores is the wheel'<sup>7</sup>. The reason that digital technology seems practical is not only because it is capable of achieving good visual quality but it can also be utilised by anyone for multiple purposes. How to treat and evaluate the impact that high technology brings to culture is a question that bothers many artists and art appreciators. Ignore the differences between computer and brush; they are just media standing between artists and their works after all. Media are just the physical ministrations of the art work; it does not represent the entire nature of art. Digital art cannot be seen as a pure technological achievement, nor perceived as a new technique. While visual beauty may be achieved, the more important thing is that the internal beauty is also presented.

In literati painting, internal beauty refers to the philosophical idea within the

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<sup>6</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Cult of Information: the Folklore of Computers and the True Art of Thinking*, University of California Press, March 1994

<sup>7</sup> Cao Wenbiao, *Science is The Engine, Literae Humaniores (Culture) is The Wheel*, Guangming Daily Press, Theory Section, 30 August 2003



artwork. Literati painting was started by scholars who were not professional painters but interested in art, and who used painting to present their understanding and belief, which they gained through study and life. For this purpose, the painting skill became less important than the concept, while colour, layout and painted objects played important roles in reflecting certain philosophical or moral ideas. When the spirit is the most important thing in the artwork, it is not too hard for Chinese to accept applying the same concept to a different artistic medium.

The artistic concepts of literati painting have been applied to other professions such as garden design, interior design and novel writing. Since the last century, this extension can also be found in caricature, animation, commercial graphic design and education. The power of this extension did not come from literati painting but from thousands years of literature. On the other hand, the visual expression in literati paintings in return made a great contribution to the continuity and popularity of these philosophy and literature. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, brush and ink painting style started to face the challenge from other painting styles, such as oil painting and watercolour painting.<sup>8</sup> 'Painting technique' then became the core argument for nearly a century. This argument includes two aspects. One aspect is which technique or method has more advantage. The other aspect is that whether the technique or skill should be the main focus for creating an artwork. The main reason of this argument is still going in Chinese painting society is because the concepts of literati painting have never been made clear.

While some people are still fighting for the position of 'brush and ink', some artists such as Liu Guosong (1932- ) and Wu Guanzhong (1919- ) suggest that artists and viewers should pay more attention to the artistic outcome rather than the method of creating the work. Originally 'brush and ink' was just one kind of method for

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<sup>8</sup> Cai Yuanpei, Speech for Beijing University Painting Technique Association, Beijing University Monthly Publication, 25 Oct 1919

painting.<sup>9</sup> However, some people take 'brush and ink' skill as the only standard by which to judge the painting, that is putting the incidental before the fundamental. Although skill in handling 'brush and ink' can help artists to express themselves in a certain way, it should not be used to restrict the method of creating literati art. Just as Wu Guanzhong argued: 'Method should be something to serve my idea and my artwork. New method should not be rejected if it can coordinate with the need of my work.'<sup>10</sup>

In order to find a place for digital art in the 'literati art' realm, the research part of this study has involved art history, the concept of traditional art, as well as some case studies. Since there is not clear guideline for creating literati art, this study clarifies the concepts and spirit of literati art from the history and philosophical background of each component of literati painting. A multimedia project has also been created to demonstrate the idea and examine the theory that the study proposes, which is the possibility of presenting literati art concepts with new presentation technique. From this practice, the aim of the study is not only to achieve continuity in relation to tradition of art concepts but also to demonstrate a new stage for both Chinese literati art and digital art.

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<sup>9</sup> Wu Guanzhong, Brush and Ink Equal to Zero, Mingpao Weekly, 1992

<sup>10</sup> Wu Guanzhong, Why I Said 'Brush and Ink Equal to Zero', Guangming Daily, 7 April 1999

## 2 Background of the study

A project was created to show the possibility of presenting the Chinese literati arts concept through digital technology. There are two important aspects to understanding the background of the project. The first one is to understand the components of literati painting. The second aspect is to understand the role of technology in the field of arts and this study.

### 2.1 Literati art concept

Chinese art history is one of the richest fields of cultural exploration, and painting is one of its most complex and beautiful areas. Reference to Chinese traditional art concepts can be traced back to Pre-Qin ( - 221 BC) classics<sup>11</sup>, including such ideas as 'white behind what to draw' commented on by Confucius (551 BC - 479 BC) and 'giving full swing' suggested by Chuang Tzu (369 BC - 286 BC).<sup>12</sup> Early art theory can also be found in 'Kao Gong Ji'<sup>13</sup> written in the Southern-Qi dynasty (479-502). Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, written work exploring formal art concepts appeared such as 'showing the spirit', 'using the shape to hold the spirit' and 'putting subjective thought and sentiment into painted objects', suggested by Gu Kaizhi (344-405) in the Eastern-Jin dynasty (317-420); 'Six Principles' written by Xie He (479-502) in the Southern-Qi dynasty, as well as suggestions such as 'Following nature spirit in heart' by Yao Zui (536-603) in the Southern-Chen dynasty (557-589).<sup>14</sup> Together they established the foundation of Chinese painting theories and concepts.

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<sup>11</sup> 'Pre-Qin classics' refers to all literature before Qin dynasty (221 BC - 206 BC). Some translate pre-Qin period as 'Early-Qin period'.

<sup>12</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects*, chapter 3: Sixty-four Dancers (Ba Yi); Zhuang Zhou (Chuang Tzu), *Zhuang Zi*, chapter 21: Tian Zifang

<sup>13</sup> The written year and author of *Kao Gong Ji* are unclear. Most researchers believe it was written in the Southern-Qi dynasty (479-502).

<sup>14</sup> Gu Kaizhi, *Introduction of Famous Paintings of Wei & Jin Dynasties* (Wei Jin Sheng Liu Hua Zan), Eastern-Jin Dynasty; Xie He, *Ancient Paintings Analysis And Record*, Southern Qi-Liang Period; Yao Zui, *Replenishing Paintings Analysis And Record*, Northern-Zhou Dynasty.



After that, Zhang Yanyuan (815-907) demonstrated his opinion on painting skill, conception, purpose and relationship with calligraphy in 'Famous Paintings from Past Dynasties', while 'Regarding nature as one's teacher outside and thinking spirit as one's origin inside'<sup>15</sup> was put forward by Zhang Zao in the Tang dynasty (618-907). Guo Xi's 'Flawless Taste in Nature' and Guo Ruoxu's 'Painting Stories' as well as some concepts suggested by Shu Shi, Zhao Mengfu and Ni Zan also made their contributions to the development of literati painting. In the Ming-Qing period (1368-1911), Wang Lv, Da Chongguang and Shi Tao have also made their contributions to literati painting based on previous concepts. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Qi Baishi, Huang Hongbin, Pan Tianshou, Pang Xun and Wang Chaowen expanded the literati art concept by widening the research area and adopting new research methods. Through their art concept development process, a high respected art form 'literati art' came in to being.

Over and above all these concepts, the key principle of literati painting is to present 'nature'. 'Nature' here does not mean the natural physical world, including plants and animals and landscapes etc. It means the essential qualities or characteristics by which something is recognised, or the complex of emotional and intellectual attributes that determine a person's characteristic actions and reactions. The concept of 'nature' contains philosophical connotations and is extremely important for Chinese traditional painting. For Chinese traditional literati painting, 'nature' is 'Tao', that is 'truth', 'beauty', and 'life'. It is important to mention that the 'Tao' here does not refer to the Tao in Taoism. Tao is a concept found in Taoism, Confucianism, and more generally in ancient Chinese philosophy. While the character itself translates as 'way', 'path', or 'route', or sometimes more loosely as 'doctrine' or 'principle', it is used philosophically to signify the fundamental or true nature of the world. The concept of Tao differs from Western ontology, however; it

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<sup>15</sup> Zhang Yanyuan, Famous painting in past dynasties - chapter 10: Tang Dynasty 2, Tang dynasty

is an active and holistic conception of the world, rather than a static, atomistic one. This 'fundamental or true nature of the world' is also referred to as 'the theory of everything'.

'Nature' in Chinese painting theory can be traced back to Lao Tzu (600 BC – 470 BC) and Chuang Tzu's philosophical arguments. Lao Tzu said: 'mankind emulates earth, the earth emulates the sky, the sky emulates Tao, the Tao emulates the nature.'<sup>16</sup> The word 'nature' in Chinese is composed by two characters 'Zi' and 'Ran'. 'Zi' means 'at one's ease' and 'Ran' means 'involuntary'. 'Tao emulates the nature' means 'nature' is the code of 'Tao' as well as the law of the universe. The natural world and human society can only be harmonious by following this law. Chuang Tzu expanded this theory and added man's temperament into it. Chuang Tzu regarded a lot of natural temperament that people showed in their social life as: 'Truth is good faith. Without that, cannot move others.'<sup>17</sup> Lao Tzu pointed out that 'clear the mind, see from the heart' is the way to hold 'Tao (nature)'.<sup>18</sup> Looking into 'Tao (nature)', one needs to have a clear frame of mind, which means the artist should have certain aesthetic mind. This concept was later expanded by Chuang Tzu to 'neglect oneself' and 'heart fast'.<sup>19</sup> These concepts influenced the way people appreciated painting as well as the way artists created their art works.

*A painting critic said: 'The wonderfulness lies in showing the spirit while keeping the shape. Work like this shows artist's ability.' When was asked: 'How to deal with "showing the spirit"?' Critic said: 'That is nature.' When asked him about 'nature'. He answered: 'The one who follows his true temperament.' (Dong You, Guang Chuan Painting Criticism, Section three Writing for 'Peony Flower' by Xu Xi, Song dynasty)*

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<sup>16</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), Daode Jing, chapter 25

<sup>17</sup> Zhuang Zhou (Chuang Tzu), Zhuang Zi, Chapter 31: Yu Fu (The Old Fisherman)

<sup>18</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), Daode Jing, chapter 10

<sup>19</sup> 'Neglect oneself' means someone intentionally forgets every thing in the world, including himself, in order to coincide with 'Tao'. (Zhuang Zi – Da Zongshi/The great master,") 'Heart fast' means clearing one's mind and looking things without prejudice. (Zhuang Zi – The world of mankind)



“Showing spirit” is showing truth; is being nature; and is came out from “Qi” (energy flow). When the painting is only focused on shape, there will not be a matching “nature”.<sup>20</sup> ‘Nature’ in Chinese painting is an important and complex definition. Nature’s position in Chinese painting can be seen in concepts such as ‘the wonderful part is the part matching nature’, ‘focus on the heart, understand nature through the spirit’, ‘painting is the creation of nature’, ‘from the appearance to catch the spirit’, ‘clear mind to feel the nature’, ‘use mountains to explain oneself’, ‘Hua mountain shows what my eyes see, what I see shows what is in my mind, my mind shows what kind of person I am’<sup>21</sup>, and so on. At some levels, it can be seen that to handle the concept of ‘nature’ is the way to handle Chinese literati painting’s essence and traits. Conversely, literati art should be created to show one’s thought and sentiment.

Although the same art concept has been applied to music, gardening design, opera, and many others art fields, painting is the only one that has an individual category ‘literati painting’. It was also because of the visual power of literati painting, this literati art concept became widely recognised as ‘Chinese art spirit’. This study researches the interactive relationship between literature and different literati arts through the study of literati painting history, philosophical background, style and themes.

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<sup>20</sup> Zhu Ziqing, *Argument of Lifelike And Paintinglike*, Zhu Ziqing classical literature criticism collection, Volume 1, P119, Shanghai Classical literature Publisher, 1981.

<sup>21</sup> Sun Guoting (265-420) – *Books spectrum* (Shu Pu), Zhang Yanyuan (Tang Dynasty) – *Famous paintings from past dynasties* – chapter 2.3, Sikong Tu (837-908) – *24 ways to understand Poetry*, chapter 13: spirit, Jing Hao (850-?) – *Principles of Brush Technique*, Zong Bing (375-443) – *Preface of Landscape painting*, Guo Xi (1023-1085) – *Flawless Taste in Nature* – chapter 1: *Landscape Instruction*, Wang Lv (1332-1391) – *Paintings of Hua Mountain* - Preface

### **2.1.1 Literati painting**

Just as there is a term for literati painting, there is a term for non-literati painting. The key division that needs to be emphasised here is one between men who were called academic painters, and those who were seen as painters in the literati tradition. Academic painters were highly skilled craftsmen, who aimed to achieve marvellous effects through their use of colours, realistic or highly conventional representations of people or things, spectacular detail, applications of shiny gold leaf, and so forth. The imperial court employed many such men, and others made their way in the world by selling their paintings to wealthy patrons and customers. Academic painters were professionals, both in their virtuoso skills, and in the fact that they depended on permanent employment as painters, or on selling their paintings to live. While many of these men were educated to some degree, few possessed the literary background of a literatus, and none made their way in life fulfilling the Confucian ideal of governmental service. Literati painters, on the other hand, were amateurs. Literati painters painted as a means of self-expression, much the same way they wrote poetry. While many fewer literati were accomplished painters than were poets (and painting was never an aspect of the exams), in every major place in China there were always many literati who either painted on the side, while playing the role of scholar-officials, or who, through wealth, could afford to devote themselves fully to the art of painting. Literati painting was conceived as a mode through which the Confucian Junzi (noble-character person) expressed his ethical personality. It was much less concerned with technical showiness. Literati painters specialized in plain ink paintings, sometimes with minimal colour. They lay great emphasis on the idea that the style with which a painter controlled his brush conveyed the inner style of his character - brushstrokes were seen as expressions of the spirit more than as matters of composition or skill in realistic depiction.

The number of literati and scholars attempting to paint appeared to increase since the Three Kingdoms period (208-280)<sup>22</sup>. Their creative attitude, object selecting and painting technique were different from general academic painters. Most of them were well read and full of sensitivity. Their paintings reveal their characters and capabilities in literatures. In the Wei-Jin period, Xuanxue (metaphysics) initiated the attitude of seeking nature and surpassing the profane. The spirit of joining with nature caused scholars' paintings to split political education. It laid the foundation for the establishing of a literati painting style. On the other hand, because of lack of formal training in painting, they were artistically freer, had more creative options and could use more initiative. They focused on handling and blending cultural background into their painting. They used painting to express their emotions and sentiments. From that, a unique style of literati painting was founded; and the social status of the art of paintings was raised.

While literati poetry was developing well during the Tang dynasty (618-907) on the basis of six dynasties of preparation, painting style did not become central to literati painting until later.<sup>23</sup> During the late Song dynasty, approximate after 1200, literati painting became an individual painting style. Although some people might find academic paintings show a higher level of skill and technique, many feel 'amateur' ink paintings of the literati are the highest form of art in China.

Literati painting is painting with literati sentiment, which expresses literati though. It does not belong to any of the Three Painting Schools (mountain-river, flower-bird and portrait) nor is it restricted by the technique of Gongbi or Xieyi. It is an intersection of Chinese painting in a broad sense. 'Literati painting is painting which contains a scholar's nature and interest; it does not focus on the skill, and should

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<sup>22</sup> Three kingdom period is also considered as from 184 to 280.

<sup>23</sup> Yang Li, 5000 years of China, Volume 2, Chapter 11: Art, Beijing Science & Technology Press, 1999



show an artist's thought.<sup>24</sup> According to Chen Shizeng's 'The Value of Literati Painting', the first goal of literati painting is to show the spirit. Form is not important. That said, even if the work does not show the high skill of a painter, as long as it contains some thoughts, it should still be called 'literati painting'. Literati painting is distinguished from boundary (architecture) painting and academic painting by showing literal, philosophical and sentimental context.

To separate their works from folk paintings and academic paintings, Su Shi brought out the name 'scholar painting' from the position of painters in the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). Dong Qichang (1555-1636) brought out the name 'literati painting' from the context of the painting in Ming dynasty. The School of literati painting was developed over a long period. Wang Wei's (701-761) water-ink painting was the first to be referred to as literati painting.<sup>25</sup> Because of his talent in art and literature, his painting style was followed by many others along with the way he presented his philosophical view of life and the world in paintings. Chen Shizeng (1876-1923) pointed out, 'There are four key elements within literati painting, which are personal morality, education, emotion and thought. Four of them together compose a good painting.'<sup>26</sup> Literati painting presents an artist's character and volition through certain painted objects such as mountain, river, plant, rock and so on. Literati painters take less care over likeness, but have more focus on verve. They place great emphasis on literature and calligraphy study in order to create artistic conception in their paintings. The literati painting is highly respected by the Chinese. It has a great influence on Chinese painting aesthetic thought as well as on the development of painting technique.

Since literati painting was started and developed by literati from many dynasties,

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<sup>24</sup> Chen Shizeng, *The Value of Literati Painting*, *Huixue Magazine*, Jan 1921

<sup>25</sup> Dong Qichang (1555-1636), *Causerie of Painting and Chan*, Volume 2, Chapter: *Hua Yuan (Source of Painting)*

<sup>26</sup> Chen Shizeng, *The Value of Literati Painting*, *Huixue Magazine*, Jan 1921

the visual language of literati painting has really become a 'language'. The term 'writing painting' and 'reading painting' reflect the role that literati painting plays. The same as other language, literati painting language also has its grammar in the way it is composed, and vocabularies such as the painting elements it adopts.

### **2.1.2 Colour in literati painting**

Starting from ancient time, colour has played an important role in Chinese painting. Until the Tang-Song period (618-1279), most paintings were in strong colours. The name 'Chinese painting' was not used until the Ming-Qing period. Painting was represented by using a two-colour name: 'Dan Qing (Red and Black)' which also means 'pigment' in Chinese.<sup>27</sup> From this, it can be seen that colour is an inalienable component of Chinese painting.

Long since the Wei-Jin period (220-419), the use of colour has become mature while the principle of the use of colour has been founded. The first theory of the use of colour, 'Ancient Paintings Analysis and Record', was written by Xie He in Southern-Qi. In the chapter 'Six principles', Xie pointed out the theory of 'Sui Lei Fu Cai (Employing the best colour with kinds)'. That is to say, colour should be placed according to the painted object. This theory inherited and summarised the early Chinese painting theory. It founded the principle of the use of colour at the same time posing the possibility of colour theory development.<sup>28</sup>

In the use of colour, Chinese painting went in the opposite direction from western painting. Chinese painting ignores objective environment, such as light effect. Chinese people believe colour was inherent in every object. Even in the dark (without any light), colours still existed the same as under the sunlight. Painting represents an 'inherent colour' between nature and selfhood. In Chinese painting, colour is notional as well as symbolic of the relevant social norm and 'inherent colour'.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Chen Chuanxi, *Chinese Mountain-River Painting History*, Tianjin People Arts Publisher, 2001

<sup>28</sup> Yang Tao, *Employing the Best Colour with Kinds in Chinese Traditional Painting*, Henan Institute of Engineering, 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> issue.

<sup>29</sup> Chen Jianjun, *Interpreting 'Application of Colours according to Categories'*, Zhejiang Normal University Press, Social Scene section, 2004, 6<sup>th</sup> issue

Colour was considered as the language of painting. This language went through a big change of outlook during the Tang-Song period (618-1276). In the Southern dynasty (420-589), Zong Bin emphasised the importance of colour in shaping objects' figures.<sup>30</sup> However, the theory of 'using colour to shape the figure' changed in the Tang dynasty (618-907). Zhang Yanyuan commented, 'grass and trees do not need pigments to give them colour; cloud and snow do not need ceruse to make them white', in 'Famous Paintings From Past Dynasties'. This comment confirmed that 'applying the black ink properly can present the five colours and show the spirit well'.<sup>31</sup> When the theory of using black ink to replace other colours was put into practice, 'show the spirit, regardless of colour likeness'<sup>32</sup> became the aesthetic pursuit and critical standard. Nevertheless, strong colour Gongbi painting was still the mainstream painting style in the Tang dynasty (618-907). According to 'Famous Paintings from Past Dynasties', there were seventy-two colours in use at the time. In the Song dynasty, Xieyi painting became more popular. Gradually, colour applied to painting became lighter and lighter; colour usage principles and methods were also changed. At the same time, the varieties of pigment were gradually reduced. According to Wang Yi's (1333-?) 'Knack of Writing Portrait', there were only over thirty colours available for painting in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368).<sup>33</sup> In the last century, the 1960-70s, common usage of colours became less than twenty. That is why some people misunderstood Chinese painting as 'non-colour' ink painting.

In fact, the change of colour used in Chinese painting symbolises the philosophical change in history as well as its influence on painting style. Until the Han dynasty

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<sup>30</sup> Kong Xinmiao, On Three Cultural Features of Ink Painting, *Journal of Literature, History, and Philosophy*, 2003, 5<sup>th</sup> issue.

<sup>31</sup> Zhang Yanyuan, *Famous Painting From Past Dynasties*, chapter 2.3, Tang dynasty

<sup>32</sup> Chen Jianzhai, *Black Water Ink Plum Flower (He Zhang Gui Chen Shui Mo Mei)*, Poem 4, *YongLe Canon*, Volume 2812, p761, Beijing Library

<sup>33</sup> Wang Yi, *Xie Xiang Mi Jue (Knack of Writing Portrait)*, Chapter: Colour Painting, republished on 'Yuan Dynasty Calligraphy and Painting Analysis', 2002



(202-220), Chinese colour paintings were mainly painted by using Five Elements of colour<sup>34</sup>, particularly black and red. In the Wei-Jin period, Buddhist philosophy influenced painting, which changed the preponderance of painting colours from black-red to green-blue. For that reason, Chinese colour paintings were more colourful (using 'shape-colour'<sup>35</sup>), which was shown in mural painting, lacquer painting, silk painting of academic landscape painting, and strong colour portraits and flower-bird painting. Properly speaking, green-blue landscape painting was still the mainstream style in the Tang-Song period. It was also during the Tang-Song period that black ink painting and light colour painting gradually became popular, especially in the Song dynasty (960-1279), when 'abstract colour'<sup>36</sup> became widely used in painting. During the Song-Yuan period (960-1368), the literati painting's colour style gradually became the mainstream of Chinese painting.

Colour style in literati painting is based on a philosophy context which is mainly blended from Zhuang (Chuang Tzu philosophy), Xuan (metaphysic), Chan (Zen), Original Confucianism and Lu-Wang theory<sup>37</sup> (mind study). On the other hand, blue-green landscape painting is based on the philosophical context which is a combination of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism as well as Five Elements colour theory. Green-blue painting was the one that started to show mixed philosophical background. Although it was not considered as literati painting at the time, it should be seen as the turning point of literati painting history which is also the Chinese art history. Green-blue painting was on the wane for two reasons: a political reason (external cause) and a philosophical reason (internal cause). The external cause came from a lack of support and advocacy from the royal academies and nobilities in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The internal cause can be seen

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<sup>34</sup> Further information regarding five-element colour system can be found in chapter 3.2.1

<sup>35</sup> 'Shape-colour' here applies to the general, inherent colour, such as the tree is green and the flower is red.

<sup>36</sup> 'Abstract colour' in Chinese painting means abandoning or diluting the colour. The definition can be seen in Wang Wenjuan's *Ink and Colour: Aesthetics source of colour used in Chinese painting*, p7.

<sup>37</sup> It is also called Lu (Lu Jiuyuan) Wang (Wang Yangming) Xin Xue.



in three aspects. The first one is Buddhism, which became much more localised. In other words, it integrated with other Chinese philosophies and became even more Chinese in style.<sup>38</sup> Another aspect is the development in Taoism philosophy, where the meaning of 'nature' was changed, while Philosophy Taoism (Dao Jia) transcended Religion Taoism (Dao Jiao). The third one is neo-Confucianism<sup>39</sup>, which opposed 'mind study (Xin Xue)' to the 'principle philosophy (Li Xue)'.<sup>40</sup> The changes in philosophies directly influenced the popularity of painting styles. It would be fair to say that compared to western painting, the colour outlook in Chinese painting is more philosophical than representational.

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<sup>38</sup> Further explanation for this 'Chinese style' of Buddhism can be seen in chapter 3.1

<sup>39</sup> Neo-Confucianism here refers to the time Confucianism divided into two different schools, Xin Xue (mind study) and Li Xue (principle philosophy).

<sup>40</sup> Wang Wenjuan, *Ink and Colour: Aesthetic source of colour used in Chinese painting*, Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2006, p210

### **2.1.3 Objects in literati painting**

Among the typical themes of Chinese art there is no place for war, violence, the nude, death, or martyrdom. Nor is inanimate matter ever painted for art's sake: the very rocks and streams are felt to be alive, visible manifestations of the invisible forces of the universe.<sup>41</sup> All objects appear on the painting to deliver a certain idea or reflect certain beliefs. Chinese painting is not painting, but symbolic of Chinese culture.<sup>42</sup>

Before the Two-Han period (202-220), there was no famous painter, but not because there was not good painting or because painters preferred staying anonymous. It was because painting was not recognised as 'art'. Around the end of the East-Han dynasty (25-220), presenting human moral judgement in created works became popular, which switched on the 'self-consciousness of art'<sup>43</sup>. The human moral judgement turned from government practicality to artistic appreciation during the Wei-Jin period.<sup>44</sup> People started looking at virtue from not only the 'Li (propriety)' of Confucianism but also the 'nature' temperament of Chuang Tzu philosophy in a poetic way. When the morality standard started to involve poetry and painting, nobilities became proud of being able to write and paint. Along with that, painting started to be recognised as 'art', and experience from good painters and the evaluation of painting were added into the 'culture system'.

When Taoism philosophy became popular, the natural elements, such as mountains, rivers and plants started becoming a popular subject of painting. What Chuang Tzu sought was a space to place his mind, an inner world where he could

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<sup>41</sup> "Arts, East Asian." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 28 Feb. 2008

<sup>42</sup> Chinese Painting online, <http://www.guo-hua.com>, 28 Aug 2007

<sup>43</sup> 'Self-consciousness of art' refers to the art without practical purpose.

<sup>44</sup> Xu Fuguan, Chinese art spirit, P91, Huadong General University Publisher, December 2001

free his heart. Natural elements or environment are more appropriate for serving this purpose. As Xu Fuguan commented, 'No one can place their inner world into another living person.'<sup>45</sup> In the Wei-Jin period, Chuang Tzu philosophy was taken into metaphysics. Therefore, the South-North dynasty (386-589) personages such as Zong Bin (375-443) and Wang Wei (415-453), who were influenced by Wei-Jin metaphysics, focused their painting evaluation standard onto landscape painting.<sup>46</sup> Sun Zhuo (320-375) said in 'Inscription for Yu Liang', 'Mr Yu's refined pleasure of a poetic mind was away from the mortal dirt. ... His spirit was clear as his mind was inside the mountain and river (landscape).'<sup>47</sup> Although these words were talking about Yu Liang (280-340), they reflected the universal understanding at that time.

When the natural elements (such as mountain, river and plant) and their symbolisations were living inside a tranquil mind and blended into one's life, the 'second nature' was created, and became part of aesthetics perception, reflecting moral ideals. The best way to present this realm is through painting which provides visual and direct-viewing perception. What the painting presents is 'artificial nature' which is the 'second nature' inside a painter's mind. This inwardness outpouring is not simply to simulate the nature elements, but to re-recognise the nature in order to share the wisdom and moral sense. Because of that, the concept of 'second nature' was taken into literati painting and developed later on.

Through nearly a thousand years of development, Chinese literati painting became an art form that reflects Chinese traditional artistic spirit with unique visual style. Painters used different objects, especially mountain, river and plant to reflect their thoughts and philosophical views of certain topics. 'Painting is the major carrier of

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<sup>45</sup> Xu Fuguan, *Chinese art spirit*, P135, Huadong General University Publisher, December 2001

<sup>46</sup> Zong Bing was the author of 'Landscape Painting Preface' (*Hua Shan Shui Xu*); Wang Wei was the author of 'About Painting' (*Xu Hua*)

<sup>47</sup> Liu YiQing (403-444), Sun Chuo's 'Inscription for Yu Liang', AD 340, *Shi Shuo Xin Yu* (Essays and Criticism), Chapter 14: Rong Zhi (Demeanour), Paragraph 24, notes and comments



the artistic spirit within Chinese culture.<sup>48</sup> The three major crutches of Chinese culture, Confucianism, Taoism and Chanism are three typical components of the Chinese artistic spirit. This influence can be seen in early written art theory such as Xie He's 'Ancient Paintings Analysis and Record' and Gu Kaizhi's 'Art Principle'. They paid particular attention to unity of form and spirit, which has a tendency towards 'writing spirit' and became literati painting's culture source of form and development. No theme would be accepted in Chinese literati painting that was not inspiring, noble, refreshing to the spirit, or at least symbolizing morality. Nor is there any place in the Chinese literati tradition for an art of pure form divorced from content, and the literati cannot conceive of a work of art of which the form is beautiful while the subject matter is unedifying. In the broadest sense, therefore, all literati art is symbolic, for everything that is painted reflects some aspect of a totality of which the painter is intuitively aware. At the same time, Chinese art is full of symbols of a more specific kind, some with various possible meanings. For example, bamboo suggests the spirit of the scholar, which can be bent by circumstance but never broken, and the lotus flower symbolizes creative power and purity amid adverse surroundings.

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<sup>48</sup> He Shiyang, Brief discussion of literati painting and its technique, 22 January 2007

#### 2.1.4 Layout in literati painting

Think of painting as a language and there are just limited ways in which elements can communicate meaning. Chinese literati painting uses not only objects and colour but also 'Margin Leaving' (blank space) to communicate with the viewer.

Traditional Chinese painting is painted without background colour. 'Margin leaving' is used as one of the components of painting. This employment of blank space seems on the surface to be a graphic design tactic; it in fact shows the artist's breadth of mind. The blank space is full of suggestions and leaves flexibility for viewers to perceive. It uses the simplest way to carry out the emotion of 'silence speaks better than sounds' and reflects a tacit understanding with viewers. It is important to comprehend the part that lies in concealing art. Take Ma Yuan's (1160/1165-1225) 'Fishing Snow Alone on a Cold River' as an example of using blank space to present the core meaning of the painting (image L01). The title of the painting was taken from Liu Zongyuan's (773-819) poem 'River Snow'. The key sentiment in the poem 'River Snow' is 'alone'. The painter left most of the paper blank and only painted a single person on a boat on the model of the water which is implied by 'margin leaving' rather than an actual painted river. Ma Yuan and Xia Gui (1195-1224) started 'One-corner' and 'one side' composition style in Southern Song dynasty (1127-1276).<sup>49</sup> Because of blank space's function in showing many possible meanings, this Ma-Xia style soon became popular (image L02).



L01



L02

<sup>49</sup> Richard M. Barnhart, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, Yale University Press, 1997, p133

'Margin leaving' has been a major character of Chinese arts.<sup>50</sup> Chinese painters have been using the philosophical meaning of 'margin leaving' to emphasise their style. The aesthetic function of 'margin leaving' is to initiate the viewer's relative association as well as spelling-out the intentions of the blank space. 'Viewers' imaginations and associations for the blank space supplement and expand the meaning of painting.<sup>51</sup> The blank space in painting is the small contact between the creator and the appreciator, which is the 'image outside the painting, voice outside the speech', which is the space for the appreciator to muse and apprehend. The concept of 'margin leaving' is not only applied in painting, it in fact appears in all kind of Chinese arts forms. It can be seen in calligraphy, paper cutting, landscape garden, music, opera, and so on.

Lao-Zhuang (Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu) philosophical thought is the major source of influence of the 'margin leaving' aesthetic outlook.<sup>52</sup> 'The air between sky and earth is just like the air inside a wind chest, which is invisible as well as inexhaustible, which comes out when there is movement.'<sup>53</sup> 'We join spokes together in a wheel, but it is the centre hole that makes the wagon move. We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want. We hammer wood for a house, but it is the inner space that makes it liveable. We work with being, but non-being is what we use.'<sup>54</sup> Because the part of 'emptiness', the part 'entity' can become working for certain purpose. Without 'emptiness', 'entity' will lose its inbeing. In Lao Tzu's opinion, everything in the universe is unification of 'emptiness' and 'entity'. Because of this 'unification', the energy can flow; the nature can circulate and change; the universe can continue endlessly. This thought has had a major influence on Chinese traditional aesthetics development. 'Unification of

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<sup>50</sup> Zong Baihua, *Take An Aesthetic Walk*, Shanghai People Publisher, 1981, p140; Ye Lang, *Chinese Aesthetics History*, Wenjin Publisher, 1996

<sup>51</sup> Wang Kewen, *Talking of Landscape Painting*, Shanghai People Fine Arts Publisher, 1993

<sup>52</sup> Ye Lang, *Chinese Aesthetics History*, Wenjin Publisher, 1996

<sup>53</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), *Daode Jing* – chapter 5

<sup>54</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), *Daode Jing* – Chapter 11



emptiness and entity' has been one of the most important principles in Chinese traditional aesthetics, which recapitulates Chinese traditional arts' major character.

Zong Baihua (1897-1986) clarified the position that 'margin leaving' holds in Chinese painting: "*Margin leaving" in Chinese painting is not just blank space. It is the space for the spirit of the universe to run and flow.*' Wang Kewen (1917-1993) also pointed out that 'margin leaving' is commonly used to represent sky, water, cloud and mist as well as the importance of using 'emptiness' and 'entity' to support each other: '*Using "white (blank space)" instead of "black (painted part)" is an important condition to incarnate certain artistic conception.*'<sup>55</sup>

'Written work cannot fully explain the (meaning in) language. Spoken words cannot fully explain the (thought in) one's heart.'<sup>56</sup> The 'margin leaving' sometimes is more important than the painted part. It quite often shows the crucial philosophical thought of the artist. As Lao Tzu said, '*The Tao that can be told is not the real eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the real eternal Name.*'<sup>57</sup> That is why Zong Baihua said, '*In Chinese painting, the heart of painter is placed at the unpainted part. The unpainted part is the part that shows the origin of Tao.*'<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Zong Baihua, *Take An Aesthetic Walk*, Shanghai People Publisher, 1981, p148; Wang Kewen, *Talking of Landscape Painting*, Shanghai People Fine Arts Publisher, 1993

<sup>56</sup> Yi Zhuan - volumn: Xici 1 - chapter 12, (*Notes and Commentaries of Thirteen Jings - Standard explanation of Zhou Yi (The Book of Changes)*, explanatory notes written by Wei dynasty Wang Bi, Jin dynasty Han Kangbo; edited by Tang dynasty Kong Yingda.)

<sup>57</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), *Daode Jing - Chapter 1*

<sup>58</sup> Zong Baihua, *The Birth of Chinese Artistic Realm, embodied in Realm*, Beijing University Press, 1987, p163

### 2.1.5 Conclusion

'Chinese literati painting' is a broad perception. As there is not a clear line between literati and non-literati, there is not an absolute standard definition of literati painting and non-literati painting. The exact time that literati painting was formed is unclear. However, through a long period of evolutionary process, 'literati painting' has become one of the painting schools in Chinese painting institutions. This school is defined by its culture and philosophy background, visual style, as well as relationship with other art forms such as calligraphy and poetry.

*Wang Xuezhong (1925-) once noted, 'Western painting places emphasis on skill and individuality, but far from philosophy and personal impression. Different from western painting, Chinese literati painting places emphasis on scholasticism and morality. In some ways, we can say that Chinese literati painting focuses on the Tao but not the tools, western painting focus on the tools but not the Tao.'<sup>59</sup> That is why literati painting puts morality and scholasticism first. Even a casual literati painting can at some level embody the spirit of Chinese culture as well as personal morality and educational background.'<sup>60</sup> (Chen Yupu, 2000)*

This comment might not be objective enough. However, it does point out some key elements of the literati painting, which are education/literature (especially classical philosophies) background, personal belief (such as morality standard) and that it is not limited to one type of painting instrument. Moreover, it reflects the position that literati painting and traditional culture hold in Chinese society and the way Chinese people feel about literati painting.

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<sup>59</sup> 'Tao' here means the philosophical context. 'Tools' here includes all physical things such as brush, pigment and painter.

<sup>60</sup> Chen YuPu, Mountain-River Painting Theory, Chapter: Self-Cultivation (Xiuyang), Li River Publisher, 2000

'Literati painting' has been topics of central interest in Chinese art circles. Many scholars and artists have posed their opinions about literati painting. Some praised, some disparaged. The discussion did not just start in recent years, as the topic has been discussed for centuries. Since the scholar-bureaucrat took the lead in the creation of painting, taste and interest in the field have changed, but the discussion of art concepts has never stopped. Because of the special position scholars hold in the literary and art areas, there are a lot of negative opinions against non-literati painting. Especially after Dong Qichang's 'Argument of Southern and Northern Painting Schools' was published, this 'literati opinion' became the most popular view in the Chinese art field.

Aesthetic significance within literati painting is irreplaceable. It should be seen as an aesthetic pursuit rather than a specialized field or method of expression.<sup>61</sup> It is a valuable legacy we gained from thousands of years' history. Its vital power is contained in the use of visual language and the spirit of Chinese culture.

Although the art of the literati only became increasingly refined and rarefied from the Song dynasty (960-1276) onward, the literati painting concept was developed from earlier painting concepts, philosophical thoughts, poetic theories and calligraphic principles. With the literati context shown, it can be seen as reflecting three thousand years of Chinese culture. Along with its development, literati painting shared the concept with others such as poem, music and calligraphy; and developed together as the literati art concept. Studying literati painting does not only mean paying attention to the visual beauty, but more importantly focusing on the spirit. By that, it means making artwork showing the knowledge, personal view of life and being bold in innovation.

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<sup>61</sup> Chen Shizeng, 'The Value of Literati Painting', *Huixue Magazine*, Jan 1921



Literati reformed painting objects according to their peculiar experiences in order to present individual character from their hearts. Therefore, the fundamental feature of literati painting is the individual freedom and subjective consciousness it presents. The proposition of 'poetry and painting sharing the same principle'<sup>62</sup> shows that the literati treat poetry and painting as the same method of expressing one's nature of the mind. Immanuel Kant classified art into direct-viewing art and thought-presenting art, where poetry is thought-presenting art and painting is direct-viewing art.<sup>63</sup> Although painting and poetry have different presentational forms, because of the literati painting's unique attribute, it works as both direct-viewing art and thought-presenting art in China.

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<sup>62</sup> Su Shi, *Su Shi Poetry Collection*, Volume 16, *Shu Yan Lin Wang Zhu Bo Suo Hua Zhe Zhi Er Shou* (Two poems for Shuyanlin Amir's painting)

<sup>63</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Forgotten Books, 1951, p135

## **2.2 Literati art concept in a new age**

The place that philosophy has occupied in Chinese civilization has been comparable to that of religion in other civilizations. In China, philosophy has been every educated person's concern.<sup>64</sup> In China, if a man was educated at all, the first education he received was in philosophy. Since literati painting was started by scholars, it was naturally based on the context of philosophy. The same concept also has been applied to other art fields, such as landscape garden design, seal design as well as pattern design, because of the social level scholars held in the society. Along with the development of new publishing technology, the same concept and style have been transformed into some new art forms.

### **2.2.1 Caricature**

Caricature became an art form around the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and beginning of the Public of China (early 20<sup>th</sup> century). The name 'Man Hua (caricature)' was first used on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1904. Then the name ceased to be used for a while until Feng Zikai used the name 'Man Hua' to publish his caricatures in May 1925. 'Man Hua' became the formal name for caricature.<sup>65</sup>

As the expanding of the traditional painting, water-ink painted caricature was the initial style of Chinese caricature, which still occupies an important position in the Chinese caricature field today. As new media such as newspapers and magazines became common in China, other painting instruments rather than brushes became more commonly used for caricature creating. Caricatures are sometimes used as an illustration of articles or poems. Quite often, caricature also expresses a topic individually. Apart from 'humour' and 'satire', 'sentiment' is also one of the major

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<sup>64</sup> Fung Yu-Lan, *Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York Free Press, 1966, Author's Preface

<sup>65</sup> Bi Keguan, *Chinese Caricature History*, Culture and Arts Publisher, 2006

themes as the continuance of literati painting concept, while the ink-painting style of caricature carries on with traditional literati painting technique. Some artists such as Chen Shizeng (1876-1923), Feng Zikai (1898-1975) and He Liwei (1954-) have made their contribution in carrying the literati spirit into the caricature field. There are also some early literati caricatures which can be found in the 'Peking Note-paper Collections' and 'Ten-bamboo Studio Note-paper Collections'<sup>66</sup>.

*What is 'literati caricature'? In my opinion, as the name shows, it should be something created by literate people, and show artistic conception, literature interests and the taste of traditional culture.<sup>67</sup> (Feng Zikai, 1922)*

Feng Zikai's caricatures are considered to be the model of literati caricature in China. 'Everybody has left / a crescent moon hangs on the water-like sky' was his first caricature. (image ca1) The name of the painting was taken from Xie Wuyi's poem 'Qian Qiu Sui – Sing for Summer View'.<sup>68</sup> The painting describes his state of mind after friends left the party. The crescent moon shone through the window as water flowing to the floor; time passed as water flowing; the sky looked like water.....and, there is one more thing like water, that is friendship.<sup>69</sup> The caricature was not painted in a large size. However, within the limited space, the creator's comprehensive attainment was presented. A good creation contains the artist's thought, knowledge, skill, moral quality and wisdom.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> It was partly published with the name 'Chinese Poetry Paper by the Master of the Ten Bamboo Hall' in English.

<sup>67</sup> Li Guangwen, Zikai Caricature – Model of Literati Caricature, Yuanyuan Caricature Magazine, 2004, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

<sup>68</sup> Xie Wuyi was poet from the Song dynasty. The year of birth and death are unknown.

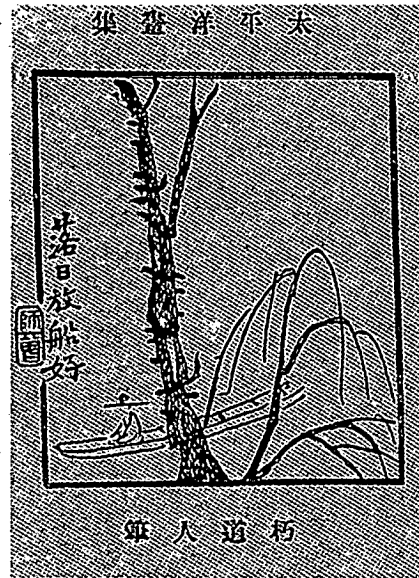
<sup>69</sup> The concept of 'water like friendship' came from Chuang Tzu's word: 'Gentleman's friendship is tasteless like water; commoners' friendship is sweet like sweet wine.' (Chuang Tzu – Mountain Wood)

<sup>70</sup> Li Guangwen, Zikai Caricature – Model of Literati Caricature, Yuanyuan Caricature Magazine, 2004, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition





ca1



ca2

Although the name 'Father of (Chinese) Caricature' was given to Feng Zikai, Chen Shizeng was the first person to publish caricature in publications.<sup>71</sup> 'Berth the boat well by sunset' was one of his published caricatures in Pacific Pictorial in early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Image ca2). The painting's name was taken from Du Fu's (712-770) poem 'Raining in the evening'. His imagination of the scene in the poem was presented in caricature painting, which painting technique seems simple and the painting seems clumsy. Chen Shizeng was one of the finest literati painters at that time. His caricatures did not aim to show the traditional painting technique, but to demonstrate a new way of presenting literati arts. He commented: 'Those people who painted in simple and clumsy ways to drop a hint or show deeper thought are caricaturists.'<sup>72</sup> His works and opinion about caricature influenced many other caricaturists of that time and of today, including the 'Father of (Chinese) Caricature', Feng Zikai.

Literati caricature inherits the concept of 'painting quality is moral quality' from the traditional painting concept. Instead of following the popular activity in the early

<sup>71</sup> Feng Zikai, Teaching Dairy, article on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1939, Chongqing Chongde Bookstore, 1944

<sup>72</sup> Chen Shizeng, Leap the Wall, 1909

Republic of China to simulate old paintings, Chen Shizeng and Feng Zikai presented literati sentiment in a new artistic form. The reason that Chen Shizeng's and Feng Zikai's caricatures stand out from other caricatures is because they put Chinese traditional culture style elements into their artworks as well as transferring and developing the literati painting concept into a new artistic realm.

Literati caricature is an interesting example of adopting the literati painting concept into a different visual art form. However, even great artist like Feng Zikai also found it to lack an ability in presenting artists' thoughts. 'Caricature's expressive force is weaker than poetry. When its representability is lower, it often needs help from poems and words. For example, the name of the caricature is very important. ... Most caricatures are explained and enhanced by their titles. There is nothing wrong with the art form of caricature. Compared to words, it is just less abstract and free.'<sup>73</sup> As the action of applying traditional art concept into a new art form of artwork was proposed and succeeded, it brought up the idea and possibility developing the traditional art concept with through up to date technology. This innovatory activity also helped to remove the restriction between tradition and modern in Chinese art society.

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<sup>73</sup> Feng Zikai, *Caricature Arts Appreciation*, 1935, embodied in *Feng ZIKai Literary Writing Collection 1-7*, Zhejiang Literature And Arts Publisher, 1996, Art Section – Part 3, P358

### **2.2.2 Animation film**

Chinese painting went through a long period of development to become today's 'many styles exist at the same time'. The form of traditional painting is facing the challenge of explaining the complex emotion in modern life. How to carry on the tradition while being innovative becomes many contemporary artists' concern. Transforming Chinese painting into a new technological world has been a long discussion.<sup>74</sup> Some early experiments have been done to show the possibility of combining traditional art style with new technology, including Shanghai Animation Film Studio's 'Where is Mama' (1960), 'The Cowboy's Flute' (1963) and 'Feelings of Mountains and Waters' (1988).

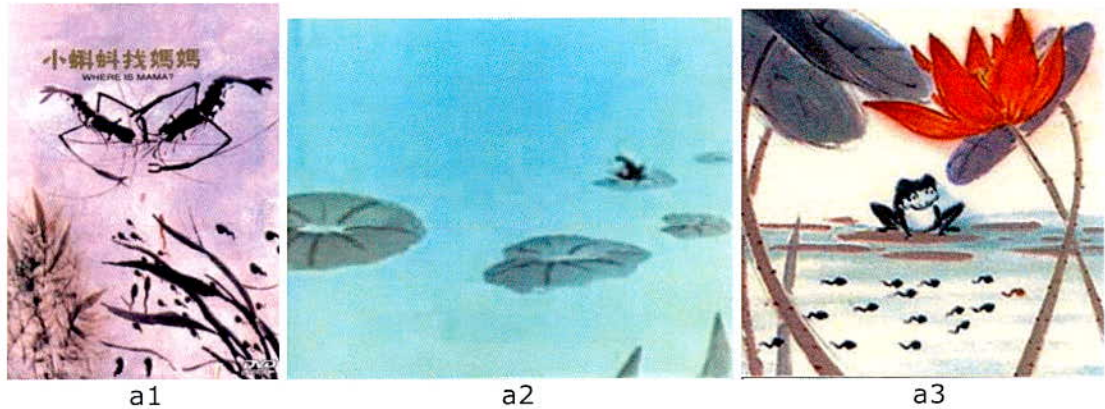
The film 'Where is Mama' was created in the year 1960. (image a1 - a3) The movie shows the combination of flawless cartooning techniques with Chinese artistic influences to produce distinctively Chinese animation. It is the first animation to use the Chinese ink painting of artist Qi Baishi as a style guide, looking less like stereotypical animation and more like a museum painting come to life. The visual novelty of the animation is largely what recommends it, since the story is a relatively simple affair. The story was based on the idea of 'where there is a will, there is a way'. The film focuses on a cloud of newly born tadpoles seeking their missing mother through an oddly predator-free world. They mistake a succession of animals for mother, garnering a new clue about their mother's appearance from each misunderstanding. Tadpoles seem silly to make that many mistakes in finding their mother. It is only because they did not consider the question in all its bearings. The story educates a common affair that sometimes, bad things could be done in good faith when the issue is not considered from all aspects. The film is

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<sup>74</sup> Ma Tao, 'Contemporary Concepts in Ink Painting and Related Thoughts', Arts Grand Sight, 2005, Issue 10



considered an excellent and innovative work that brings poetics, aesthetic and philosophical context together.



The film was produced by the film company 'Shanghai Animation Film Studio'. The visuals of this film are less than stunning. Once the novelty of the artistic style wears off, one can truly appreciate the incredible artistry that went into the film. Painting a translucent shrimp using Chinese ink painting techniques is challenging enough in itself, animating two of them smoothly at 24 frames a second without varying the weight of the inks requires an additionally astonishing level of technical virtuosity. The surface simplicity of the film masks a deceptive complexity. More than anything, this film is a triumph of technique. After watching this movie, the cultural critic Mao Dun (1896-1981) wrote a poem about the film in which he pointed out some of the critical views about the movie and the thought presented in it.

*Baishi's paintings are treasure of the world. They are handsome, leisurely and flesh.*

*Rongbao is expert in copying. Quite often the copies are passed for genuine.*

*The film industry caught me unawares by what they can accomplish. What they created should shock all ghosts and gods.*

*Famous paintings come to life .....*

*..... Do not laugh at the story for being stupid beyond belief, there is philosophical content inside, plus a quality suggestive of poetry or painting; it presents three kinds of beauty. (Mao Dun, 1960)<sup>75</sup>*

Although the film does not present the creator's dependent artistic style but simply copies Qi Baishi's painting for the film, this work is valued because of the initial attempts made by the pioneers who showed a new approach in blending the traditional art with the latest technology at that time. Following the same innovative spirit, there were some more works done later in the same direction following the technique used in the film.

Three years later, 'The Cowboy's Flute' was created by the same group of artists in the Shanghai Animation Film Studio'. (image a3, a4) This film uses even more beautiful and detailed Chinese ink paintings to depict the charming relationship between a young cow-herding boy with extraordinary flute playing skills and his faithful water buffalo. The boy falls asleep on a tree, and is soon dreaming that he has lost his buffalo. The dream sequence is delightfully whimsical, beginning with falling leaves that turn into butterflies and gradually lead the cow herder to a beautiful mist-filled valley. Here, the cow herder finally discovers his wayward animal, but the buffalo refuses outright to budge from his hiding spot, and eventually is attracted by the flute music that the boy plays. 'The Cowboy's Flute' eschews dialogue completely, opting to tell its story entirely through the animation and the accompanying music. The melding of the aural and visual experiences is nearly flawless, and the painted settings are far more grandiose and ambitious than those in 'Where is Mamma'. The closing montage of visuals features great flocks of birds, all painted in different ink painting styles, while the music builds to a

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<sup>75</sup> Mao Dun, 'Mao Dun Literature and Art Criticism Collection', Culture and Arts Publisher, 1981



crescendo. The effect is so dazzling that it comes as a surprise when the boy awakens from his dream at the end of the film.



a3



a4

The 'Cowboy's Flute' is an animated work that contains a lot of common objects and characters such as mountains, clouds, flowers, birds and human figures. All of these objects were gathered and presented within Chinese ink painting. The philosophical approach presented in this work was much more mature as compared with 'Where is Mama'. The animations are also very good at articulating certain traditional Chinese thoughts, especially the Taoist philosophies. There are some very important Taoist philosophies hinted at in the animations, such as: 'dream of a butterfly', 'back to nature' and 'the unity of heaven and humanity'. It is one story which contains many stories. Regardless of the philosophical content, the animation uses music coordinating with characters' movement and environmental change to make a poetic scene. The producer's educational background and personality are shown through the story and the style of the pictures, but the work was really created by the group.

Another important work in the same area is 'Feelings of Mountains and Waters' that was created in the year 1988. (image a5, a6) Titled after a phrase for landscape painting, this short film tells a simple tale of an impoverished and elderly scholar and a young girl who cares for him briefly in return for Guqin lessons. Any still from

the movie would serve as a beautiful painting in its own right, but this would utterly lose the charm of the astonishingly beautiful animation and the deeply moving musical accompaniment. As compared with the animation 'The Cowboy's Flute', this animation was created in a more unified visual style. In the animation the individual characters of the film director becomes sharper. The animation not only represents Chinese philosophy and morality, but also presents the animator's personal feelings and views in life.



a5



a6

The film uses no dialogue because there is no need for it. It bypasses language to tap into an emotional depth that cannot be reached through spoken words. The majority of the film features a beautiful Guqin accompaniment, but some of the most moving moments of the film unfold purely through the image to the sound of rushing winds or total silence. The emotional impact of the film is undeniable. The film is considered as a genuine masterpiece of animation on every level. Although the length of animation is less than 20 minutes, it is much more complex than the last two as the film not only shows the producer's education and life background, but also his personal sentiment and philosophical idea.

All of the above mentioned works have made valuable contributions because these works are pioneering attempts of relating arts and innovation and all of these three are animated by sequential paintings which took many skilled people a lot of time



to accomplish. In the recent years, with less painting-skilled artisans on the market, to achieve animation like these becomes much more difficult. As the use of digital technology becomes the new trend in artistic innovation, many artists and practitioners turn their exploring and researching direction to the computer arts area.<sup>76</sup>

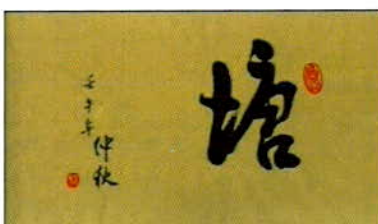
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<sup>76</sup> Zhang Zhiyi, 'Continuity of Ink Painting Animation', *Television Caption Effects Animation*, 2004, Issue 8

### 2.2.3 Digital Arts

Along with the popularity of computer technology, digital art became the new developing area which attracts most attention in the Chinese art realm. After a large amount of digital art works has been created, more people start to look at digital art as an individual art form. As the significance of traditional painting increased for Chinese people, many artists started to create brush-painting style digital art works around the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

'Pond Rhyme' is one outstanding digital artwork, which was created by Huang Ying in 2001. (image Tang 1-3) The visual style of 'Pond Rhyme' is similar to the animation film 'Where is Mama'. Huang Ying also chose to follow Qi Baishi's painting style for her creation. The idea of creating this piece is to produce something in the style of Chinese painting using digital technology. There is not a single line or a player appearing in the animation. The story simply shows a common aspect of nature, such as a fish catching and eating a dragonfly. Splash-ink Xieyi painting style mixed with Gongbi style brought a fresh visual look for the work. Brush painting together with a digital video editing technique shows a new cooperation approach for traditional artists and digital artists.



Tang 1



Tang 2

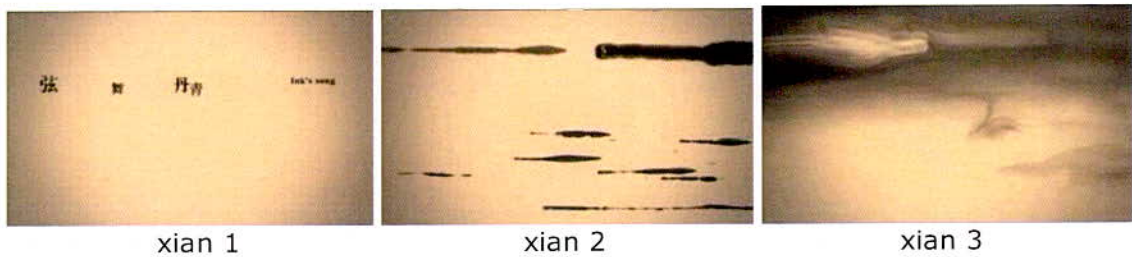


Tang 3

Among all pioneers' works, 'Pond Rhyme' shows a complete story with a nice visual accomplishment. However, this visual achievement was created from many actual paintings, which make the production process not so different from animation films made in the 1960s. In the same way as the animation film 'Where is mama', 'Pond Rhyme' was created simply by simulating Qi Baishi's painting style. Although the

name 'Pond Rhyme' is very poetic, the story it shows is simple and pointless. The creation only focuses on presenting painting visual style and nothing else. As Huang Ying said, 'it is just an experiment'.

Different from Huang Ying, Chen Zhuo did not need to work with other painters for his DV creation 'Playing String with Ink'. (image xian 1-3) The work was inspired by the classical piece of music 'A Stream Flowing Down From A High Mountain'. Chen Zhuo also took part of this music, the section 'Flowing Stream', as the background music for the animation. 'Playing String with Ink' combined traditional ink element with digital video language to explore and annotate the continuity of tradition in contemporary visual culture.



The animation used simple images and selected background music to compose a Chinese style artistic conception and sentiment. The artist paid special attention to the developing process from ink dot to trace, and then to ink stain. He used these changes to represent rhythmic variation and made the image and the music become one integrated piece of art. Although the animation is simply showing different ways of ink flowing on the paper, every single frame of the animation can be taken out as an individual poetic painting. The animation is full of literati sentiment, which has taken full advantage of digital technology to bring many art forms together to enhance each other.

While experiencing the capabilities of the computer along with witnessing the constant development of digital technology, many artists try to create Chinese style



digital artwork without accepting too much assistance from traditional painting tools. 'Ode To Summer' is considered to be the best-known example of these practices, as it made a critical contribution to Chinese digital visual arts. Because of this animation, a trend in the digitalising and three-dimensionalising of traditional art style came about in China. 'Ode' was created by IDMT (Global Digital Creations Holdings Limited) in 2003. This differs from 'Pond Rhyme' and 'Playing String with Ink'. 'Ode To Summer' was not painted but computer generated. These four minutes of animation were created and processed by experts from every division of IDMT. More traditional painting elements were adopted, including lotus, fish, rock, tree and belle.



xia 1



xia 2



xia 3

The intention of this work was to use 3D expressive force to create three-dimensional ink style animation. The visual symbols of the animation came from traditional water-ink painting. The most relevant factor to attract attention is 'margin leaving'. The blank space was decorated with calligraphy, a poem and a seal to enhance the feeling of 'Chinese painting style'. Every object in the animation was created in detail and placed with care within the screen. The visual result seemed to impress all viewers. Its success shows that computer three-dimensional water-ink<sup>77</sup> does not only expand the three-dimensional presentation language but also presents the movement space that traditional water-ink cannot create. The realm of hitsui in Chinese painting is not something computer technology can create. 'However, since the work is not created on the traditional Xuan paper (Chinese painting/calligraphy paper), the creation does not need to follow all the

<sup>77</sup> 'Computer three-dimensional water-ink' is a phrase that refers to Computer three-dimensional piece in Chinese water-ink painting style

rules in traditional painting. There are some things that need to be kept, some that could be changed, and some that might have to be let go.<sup>78</sup>

The computer is not just another medium for the artist. It also opens up another space for artists' works. It provides new possibilities for creative direction and inspires artists with new tools and a visual result. As digital technology is a new tool for artists, technical skill has been attracting more attention than artwork itself. Adopting the element factor from traditional art such as literati art concept could help spectators to turn their attention from the creating technique to the connotation of the work. When the same literati art concept has been applied to many other areas such as teaching skill and commercial design, it is time to adopt it into the digital art realm.

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<sup>78</sup> Angela, Interview Xu Yi: Traditional Nation Always Brings Innovation In Beauty, Global Digital Magazine, Jiangsu Channel of Xinhua Net, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004

#### **2.2.4 Conclusion**

Through the history of traditional arts, we can see that literati art is an 'open system' which can be expanded and developed by new techniques and consciousness. The meaning of this 'system' is the result of long national history. It also represents the character and soul of the nation. To extend the traditional art into the digital world, it is important that the outward appearance is interpreted relative to its meaning, so that the spirit of tradition can be perceived.

Although the outward appearance of literati art is not exactly the same in different history periods, nevertheless we can still see the underlying spiritual meaning within this variety of visual objects. Even after a long period of time, many artworks still present powerful vitality and move people in modern times. Because of the traditional artistic view encapsulated in literati art, this spirit has been passed down through many generations, as in the intention of Chinese philosophy.

Chinese traditional aesthetics emphasise the unification of the objective with the subjective. This unification means that everything is a harmonious whole; and everything follows the same rule of nature. Because of this philosophical view, Chinese artists tend to bring nature, human existence, art and morality together; they invest objects with their feelings put their sentiment onto objects and use the shape of objects to express them.

The idea of painters combined the arts of painting, poetry, and calligraphy by inscribing poems on their paintings during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) is to express the artists' feelings more completely than one art form could do alone. Digital technology on the other hand can further develop this idea of combining different arts to present more complex meaning, such as how 'Pond Rhyme' uses sound to enhance the effect; 'Playing String With Ink' uses flowing ink to explain



the rhythm of the music and its relationship with an inspiring scene, a steam flowing down from a high mountain; 'Ode To Summer' uses a beautiful woman reading out the poem to make the scene seem more classical. Although new technologies have great impacts on traditional arts, they also provide turning points for new developments. New conception and mode of thinking help us to look at traditional culture from different angles. At the same time, new technical materials help us to find more possibilities of creating art works in different forms. As long as the 'spirit' and 'meaning' is held, the artistic conception will show through no matter what art form it is in.

### **3 The project**

In order to examine the possible ways of presenting 'Shuma Wenren Yishu (literati digital art)', a multimedia project was created for the practical aspect of the study. The project contains four main parts: four animations located in different rooms of a building. These four animations present thoughts individually, and at the same time relative to each other, together producing an integrated idea. The project starts with simplicity where five basic painting colours<sup>79</sup> introduce the story; and ends with simplicity where a concise 'painting' shows at the end of the fourth animation. The project explains the idea that through different stages of study or understanding in life, the ending reflects the beginning (a fundamental of theory, Tao or way). True to the nature of this study, the project was created based on the literati art concept, which is often referred to as 'Chinese Art Spirit' in contemporary literature.<sup>80</sup>

#### **3.1 Context of the project – Chinese art spirit**

The study focuses on Chinese literati painting, which was developed based on Chinese philosophy. 'What exactly is "Chinese Philosophy" is confusing, but there is a common saying that every Chinese wears a Confucian hat, a Taoist robe, and Buddhist sandals.'<sup>81</sup> Chinese philosophy is mainly composed of Taoism (Dao), Confucianism (Ru) and Buddhism (Si/Fo). It reflects the way the Chinese view the world and life. In addition, it is the foundation of Chinese morality, literature, visual art, music and even the political system. In general, it would be true to say that these traditions did not demand exclusive loyalty. The Chinese have been happy to accept a blend of all three, taking from each tradition what is most appropriate for

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<sup>79</sup> This is the Five Colours which will be explained in chapter 3.2.1

<sup>80</sup> 'Chinese Art Spirit' refers to the spirit that literati art presents. Xu Fuguan, *Chinese art spirit*, Huadong General University Publisher, December 2001; Huang Hetao, *Chan and Chinese Art Spirit*, China Yanshi Publisher, 2006

<sup>81</sup> Rabbi Max Weiman, Article on womenlinks.com, 10 September 2006

their particular social or personal circumstances.<sup>82</sup> The cultural psychology of the 'Chinese art spirit' was constituted based on the constant blending of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. This 'constant blending' influences the structure of Chinese cultural psychology and artistic thought, which causes development and change in aesthetic sentiment.<sup>83</sup>

This chapter rightly focuses on the major influences on Chinese literati painting. Of all the systems of Chinese philosophy that have played a part in influencing literati painting, Confucianism is the one that cannot be ignored, as most scholars started their learning journey by studying it. The idea of using poetry to express one's Zhi (thought and sentiment) was shown in the 'Book of Poetry' and taken as a concept term in 'Zuo Zhuan (a commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals)' by Zuo Qiuming (556 BC - 451 BC). Confucius explained 'Zhi' as 'one's will set on the path of truth, holding onto that which is good, to stick to benevolent ways, finding relaxation and enjoyment in the arts'.<sup>84</sup> Yang Xiong (53 BC - AD 18) further extended this concept, stating that 'Language is the sound of the heart, penmanship is painting from the heart. Through the sound and painting, a person's character is shown.'<sup>85</sup> In order to express Zhi in painting, some natural elements became popular objects such as the 'four gentlemen' (plum flower, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum) in literati painting, to show the idea that 'an army's commander might be snatched, but a person's will cannot be snatched'.<sup>86</sup> Apart from 'Zhi', Confucianism's harmonious, purified, elegant temperament, gentle, self-control and moderate sentiment merge with Taoism and Chan to influence the literati painting style.

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<sup>82</sup> Mel Thompson, *Teach Yourself Eastern Philosophy*, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2003, p156

<sup>83</sup> Huang Hetao, *Chan and Chinese Art Spirit*, China Yanshi Publisher, 2006

<sup>84</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects* - chapter 7: Shu Er (expound on theories or writings of one's predecessors only)

<sup>85</sup> Yang Xiong, *The Yang Zi Discussion on Legalism* - Chapter 5: Wen Shen (Asking God), West-Han Dynasty

<sup>86</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects* - chapter 9: Zi Han



Although most scholars came from a background of Confucianism, Taoism<sup>87</sup> is considered to be the most important influence on literati painting. Taoism (Dao Jia) was one of the most important schools of thought among the 'Hundreds Schools'<sup>88</sup> in the Spring And Autumn-Warring States period (770 BC - 221 BC). This philosophical school was based on the text of 'Daode Jing (Tao Te Ching)' and 'Zhuang Zi (Huanan Zhenjing/Chuang Tzu)'. The core of Lao-Zhuang philosophy is Tao, which symbolises the harmony of the universe and its endless movement. Chuang Tzu explained: 'Tao cannot be heard; the one that can be heard is not Tao. Tao cannot be seen; the one that can be seen is not Tao. Tao cannot be spoken out; the one that can be spoken out is not Tao.'<sup>89</sup> Influenced by this thought, 'having hidden meaning between the lines, keeping the spirit outside the words'<sup>90</sup> was highly suggestive for poetic words as well as literati painting. Beauty of implication has been taken as one of the characters of literati painting in that it contains hints, haziness and multiple meanings. The beauty of implication consists in visualised figures. The shape and colour of the visualised figure reflects the spiritual sustenance of the artist's sentiments. However, this implication of beauty does not mean something visually heavy and complicated. On the contrary, 'the greatest music is silence, the most beautiful image is without paint'.<sup>91</sup> The sky and earth have great beauty because they contain no human attempt or effort. In taking the beauty of the sky and earth as a standard of appreciation, it would be possible to get the feeling of 'being free and unfettered as the sky and earth, and

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<sup>87</sup> Philosophy Taoism (Dao Jia) and Religion Taoism (Dao Jiao) are two different schools of Taoism. Although Religion Taoism also refers Lao Tzu as the highest master, their proposition is different from Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu's teaching. The Taoism in this paper refers to philosophical Taoism.

<sup>88</sup> The 'Hundreds Schools' (Zhu Zi Bai Jia) is the generic term of schools and representatives of different thoughts in Pre-Qin period ( - 221 BC). Some translate it as 'Selected Readings of Confucian and other Ancient Chinese Classics'.

<sup>89</sup> Zhuang Zhou (Chuang Tzu), Zhuang Zi (Huanan Zhenjing) - chapter 22: Zhi Bei You (Knowledge Rambling in the North)

<sup>90</sup> Chen Tingzhuo, Notes and Comments of Poetry From White-Rain Studio - Chapter 1, GuangXu 20<sup>th</sup> Year (1894) Printed

<sup>91</sup> Li Dan (Lao Tzu), Dao De Jing, chapter 41

being carefree and enjoying life'.<sup>92</sup> Finding beauty within nature is the way to understand what true beauty is. In order to reach this 'high standard of beauty', the idea that 'nothing on the earth can compete with simplicity'<sup>93</sup> became highly recommended for painting. This simplicity includes using fewer colours and objects in painting.

Although the Taoist philosophical view established the basic visual style in literati painting, literati painting did not rise in the age of Lao-Zhuang, but at the time Xuanxue was popular and Buddhism started to develop its 'Chinese character'. Xuan is also known as Wei-Jin Xuanxue as it was started and was especially popular in the Wei-Jin period. Xuanxue is a sub-discipline of Confucianism and Taoism. Its main theme is to study the very nature of being, similar to ontology, while not being the Chinese counterpart of it. The name Xuan means 'meta-', deep and profound; Xue is study. Literally speaking, Xuanxue is the study of the deep, profound or meta-nature of being or not being, the way, etc. Xuanxue advocates a 'Cherishing Non-being'<sup>94</sup> attitude of mind, such as 'The words cannot convey the meaning (in the heart)',<sup>95</sup> 'Focus on the spirit regardless of the form'<sup>96</sup> and 'Exceed the teaching and follow the nature'.<sup>97</sup> It stresses that painting should be something to amuse oneself, free one's spirit, and present stylistic of vigour with an artistic conception.

These theories were not widely presented in the Wei-Jin period painting style, but were adopted into literati painting later on. Zong Baihua once said: 'The definition of "natural beauty" in the Jin dynasty contains the artistic conception of great Chinese landscape painting! ... The southern (painting) school's core spirit was to

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<sup>92</sup> Zhuang Zhou (Chuang Tzu), *Chuang Tzu*, chapter 28 – Rang Wang (Kings who wished to abdicate)

<sup>93</sup> Zhuang Zhou (Chuang Tzu), *Chuang Tzu*, chapter 13 – Tian Dao (The way of heaven)

<sup>94</sup> Wang Bi was the master of 'Cherishing Non-being (Guiwu)' school.

<sup>95</sup> *Yi Zhuan* – Volume: Xici 1– chapter 12

<sup>96</sup> Wang Bi, *Explanations of Zhouyi*, Chapter Ming Xiang (Understanding the form/shape), Wei dynasty

<sup>97</sup> Ji Kang (223-262), *Shi Si Lun* (Argument of Right And Wrong of Public And Private)

present a free vision of breadth, which was also the custom handed down from the Jin.' 'The Wei-Jin period, a turning point, divided out two stages. Starting from the Wei-Jin period, aesthetic feeling turned into a new direction and presented a new ideal of beauty. This aesthetic concept believed 'new blooming lotus flower (metaphors simple but elegant)' was better than 'multicolour gold (metaphors flowery, heavy and complicated)'.<sup>98</sup> The spirit of Xuanxue, such as being simple and unadorned, peaceful, spacious, and a profound context, was part of the preparation for the later literati painting visual style. Moreover, the merging of the Eastern-Jin dynasty Xuanxue and Buddhism caused the advent of Chan, another major influence upon literati painting.

Chan (which is Zen in Japanese) was translated from Sanskrit 'Dhyana (Chan Na in Chinese)', which means meditation. Dhyana is one of the schools in Indian Buddhism, which was referred to as 'teaching outside the book'. This means that in addition to the classic sutra (Buddhist scriptures), there is also the principle of 'teaching from heart to heart without written words'.<sup>99</sup> According to Buddhist legend, Bodhidharma went to China in the Liangwu emperor's period (approximately 520-526) and became the primogenitor of Dhyana (Chan Zong<sup>100</sup>) in China.<sup>101</sup> After the fifth patriarch Hong Ren (601-674) died, Chan Zong was divided into two parts, the northern (Chan) school and the southern (Chan) school. The leader of the southern school, Hui Neng (638-713), who is also referred to as the sixth patriarch, then advocated self-understanding in nature (or inborn nature) and believed there was Buddhist nature inside each individual. The concept he carried out is called the 'Sixth Patriarch Revolution'. From this point, the Chan mainstream started following Hui Neng's teaching and Dhyana was no longer 'Chan

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<sup>98</sup> Zong Baihua, *Take An Aesthetic Walk*, Shanghai People Publisher, 1981, pp 35, 210, 220

<sup>99</sup> Hui Neng, *The Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch*, chapter 1: Xingyou Pin (the reason of becoming)

<sup>100</sup> Zong could be translated as school or sect.

<sup>101</sup> Yin Shun, *China Chan Zong History*, Shanghai Bookstore Publishing, 1992; Lai Yonghai, *Buddhism Teaching and Chan poetry - Chinese Buddhism Culture Explored*, China Youth Press, 1990; Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York Free Press, 1966



Na' but 'Chan'. At some levels, it would be true to say that Hui Neng was the actual primogenitor of the Chinese Chan School. 'The Middle Path school (Zhongdao Zong or Kong Zong) of Buddhism bears some similarity to philosophical Taoism. Its interaction with the latter resulted in the Chan or Zen school, which though Buddhism, is at the same time Chinese.'<sup>102</sup>

Chan Zong has an indissoluble bond with Taoism, which also likes to get close to nature. Through the tacit understanding with nature to gain complete enlightenment in Buddha-nature is one of the ways to achieve comprehension in Chan. Including an early period of meditation in mountain forests, the middle period of 'comprehending from daily life'; and the late period of 'question and answer' in 'literal Chan (Wenzi Chan)',<sup>103</sup> nature was Chan masters' most important comprehension object and topic.<sup>104</sup> They maintain that 'green bamboos are all Dharmakaya (Buddha's body or physical body); non yellow flower is not Prajna (wisdom)'.<sup>105</sup> This means Dharmakaya is present in all objects of nature and they all contain the Buddha-nature. The three stages of enlightenment in Chan also use nature as a metaphor for the degree of one's understanding.<sup>106</sup> The first stage is 'The uninhabited mountain is covered by fallen leaves; there is no trace of him anywhere'. This describes the situation of having trouble finding Chan's real figure. The second stage is 'Mountains are uninhabited, the water (river) flows and the flowers bloom'. This describes the stage of stopping one's desire, which seems to almost grasp the truth in Chan. The third stage is that 'The vast sky lasts through the ages, daily wind and moon (beautiful scene)'. This describes the moment that is eternity (eternity moment). As Yan Yu (Southern Song Dynasty) commented, 'The

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<sup>102</sup> Fung Yu-Lan, *Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York Free Press, 1966, p243

<sup>103</sup> Literal Chan (Wenzi Chan) is using poem to explain Chan principles or arguments.

<sup>104</sup> Zhou Yukai, *Chinese Chan Zong And Poetry*, Shanghai People's Publisher, 1992, P242

<sup>105</sup> (Si) Dao Yuan, *The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp* Published in the Jingde period, chapter 6, Song dynasty. Dharmakaya and Prajna are Sanskrit. In Chinese, they are Fashen and Bore.

<sup>106</sup> Li Zehou, *History of Chinese Ancient Thoughts*, chapter: The talking Zhuang, Xuan and Chan, People's Publisher, 1986 p208

important thing in Chan Tao<sup>107</sup> is making understanding through the spirit'. For an artist, 'only through enlightenment the expertise could be achieved'.<sup>108</sup> Influenced by Chan, the main themes of literati painting are being modest, connoted, natural, elegant, concise and cultivated.<sup>109</sup>

As Chan has significant influence in literati painting, the 'further development of Chanism'<sup>110</sup> – Neo-Confucianism<sup>111</sup> (Lu-Wang theory) unavoidably played a role in influencing literati painting. Lu-Wang theory is also called Mind Study (Xin Xue) which was started by Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and was completed by Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming (1472-1528). It was said that Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming had both experienced 'sudden enlightenment', and then believed their thoughts were valuable to the truth. Lu Jiuyuan explained the relationship between man and the universe as 'the universe's duty is one's duty; one's duty is the universe's duty' and 'the universe is my heart, my heart is the universe'.<sup>112</sup> Lu-Wang believed 'the heart (mind) is Li (principle/propriety)'. There is only one world which is the 'heart'. It is a person's heart as well as the universe's heart. There is no object or principle outside the 'heart'.<sup>113</sup> This means the 'Li' inside people's mind is 'inwit' which is inner light, as well as the original unification of the universe. Through introspection to get the 'inwit' (to illustrate illustrious virtue), the inner spirit can contain the whole world and legislate for the universe.<sup>114</sup> This theory emphasised the value, dignity and firmness of an individual. It applied to the 'original nature' in Chan as well as the 'Zhi' in original Confucianism. Lu-Wang

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<sup>107</sup> The principle and logic in Chan.

<sup>108</sup> Yan Yu, *The Canglang Poetry Critique*, chapter: Argument of Poetry, Southern-Song dynasty

<sup>109</sup> Sikong Tu, *Twenty-Four Poetic Styles*, Tang dynasty; Wang Wenjuan, *Ink and Colour: Aesthetics source of colour used in Chinese painting*, Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2006

<sup>110</sup> Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York Free Press, 1966, p280

<sup>111</sup> Neo-Confucianism has different definitions. In this paper, it refers to Lu-Wang theory (Lu-Wang Xin Xue / Mind Study). The common translation for Lu-Wang theory is Mind Study.

<sup>112</sup> Lu Jiuyuan, *The Complete Collection of Xiang Shan*, Chapter 33, 36

<sup>113</sup> Wang Shouren (Wang Yangming), *The Complete Collection of Mr Wang Wencheng*, Volume 1: Zhi Xing Lu (View of knowledge and behaviour), chapter 1: Chuan Xi Lu (Teaching and Learning)

<sup>114</sup> Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York Free Press, 1966, p308

theory suggested people should follow the true nature and release sentiment, emotion, mind and talent.<sup>115</sup> This theory was brought to a great height of development in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). 'In the Ming dynasty, many litterateurs and artists liked to dress as hermits or madmen. ... To rebel against the culture, many people found their inspiration and strength in the Ming dynasty Neo-Confucianism.'<sup>116</sup> In Lu-Wang's system, the mind itself is the nature, and it considers the presumed distinction between nature and the mind as nothing more than a verbal one.<sup>117</sup> The core influence on art by this trend of thought is: emphasizing that art originates from one's heart; focus on 'mind study' rather than 'study of old painting'; shaking off the shackles of 'Li Xue (principle philosophy)'; encouraging liberated personality and following the natural sentiment in order to get the freedom in one's own world.<sup>118</sup>

Although painting style in literati painting is based on a philosophical context, which is mainly blended from Lao-Zhuang, Xuan, Chan, Original Confucianism and Lu-Wang theory<sup>119</sup>, it does not mean other philosophical systems have no influence at all. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, these traditions did not demand exclusive loyalty. They took ideas from others in order to complete themselves or develop the new. Some other relative philosophical thoughts were mentioned in chapter two and others will be explained in the following parts of this paper.

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<sup>115</sup> Lu Jiuyuan, *The Complete Collection of Xiang Shan*, Chapter 35

<sup>116</sup> Fang Wen, *Image of Heart – Analysis of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Style and Structure*, 2004, Introduction p6

<sup>117</sup> The first 'nature' in this sentence refers to the nature explained in chapter 2.1. The second 'nature' in the sentence refers to the phenomena of the physical world collectively.

<sup>118</sup> Zhang Shaokang, *Development History of Chinese Literature Theory Criticism*, Volume 2, Beijing University Press, 1995, p190

<sup>119</sup> It is also called Lu (Lu Jiuyuan) Wang (Wang Yangming) Xin Xue (Lu-Wang Mind Study).



**Note: Background music of the project**

Although painting is the only literati art form that has a classified category, that is literati painting, music was the first art form used to show literati sentiment. 'Self-cultivation starts with learning poetry; grows with practicing Li (proprieties); completes with studying music.'<sup>120</sup> Music is often referred to as 'the tool for cultivating one's temperament'. As music is used to express one's sentiment, it is also used to move others. The style of music shows the composer's character, while 'self-cultivation' decides the way that a player performs. This 'self-cultivation' also determines the way an audience appreciates the piece. When a piece of music is applied for a certain purpose and to express or enhance a certain sentiment, Li is being practiced.

The Gu Qin was chosen for the 'beginning animation' of the project and the background music for the interactive scene because of its history and the philosophical meaning in its structural design. The name Gu means ancient; Qin means string instrument. The character 'Gu' was added to the name early last century to differentiate it from western instruments. As the oldest instrument, the Gu Qin has a very close relationship with Chinese philosophy and literature. The Gu Qin is usually 3 feet and 6.5 inches long, which implies 365 days.<sup>121</sup> The design of arched top and flat bottom symbolises the sky and earth. The original design of the Gu Qin was five strings which cater for the Five Elements, but it was developed into a seven-string instrument in the Zhou dynasty (1046 BC-221 BC). The two strings added represent literature and (physical) force.<sup>122</sup> The project uses a lively piece for the 'beginning animation' to enhance the feeling of 'endless interaction between the

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<sup>120</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), Analects, chapter 8: Tai Bo, 8.8

<sup>121</sup> Feet and inches here apply to Chinese measurement units. 3 feet and 6.5 inches is about 120-125 centimetres.

<sup>122</sup> The meaning of Gu Qin's design is much more complicated than this paper explains.

Five Elements'. The slower piece is set as the background music for the interactive scene to hint that the process of development in life requires careful consideration.

The Dizi was chosen for the animation 'Bamboo in the Wind' because it is not only made of bamboo but is also one of the oldest wind instruments that exists today. The material for making the Dizi changed from bone to bamboo over 4000 years ago, which is considered to be a progress of civilisation. The project takes this background of the Dizi to enhance the idea of the beginning of one's learning journey. The musical effect of this wind instrument also helps to emphasise the key element of this animation, the wind.

Because of its various styles, Gu Zheng was chosen for the animation 'Lotus flower'. There are nine major schools for Gu Zheng. Although the common standard for Gu Zheng design is 21 strings, 12, 13, 18, 23, 25 string Gu Zhengs also exist. The playing skills, performance styles and tuning standard of the Gu Zheng are different depending on the region. The Gu Zheng's colourful background caters for the idea described in 'Lotus flower'. The background music was taken from 'Night of Flowers and Moonlight by the Spring River' to highlight the idea of multiple options in life.

In order to raise the effect of 'conflict', the Pipa was chosen for the animation 'Snow Mountain'. The currently used Pipa was developed from the straight-neck and curved-neck Pipa. The development process of the Pipa was influenced by different but similar instruments which came from many ethnic groups and nations. This multi-cultural instrument became well developed in the Tang dynasty. Its flexibility in composition style made it highly popular for performances from court orchestra to folk musicals. The background music of 'Snow Mountain' was taken from 'Ambush on All Sides' which describes a scene of ancient battle. The background

music helps the animation to describe the multiple ideas in the mind and the battle in the head.

With its simple structural design and expressive musical effect, the Erhu was chosen for the animation 'Moon Above the River'. This two-string instrument was started in the Tang dynasty when luxuriance was the popular culture. The Erhu appeared just like Wang Wei's literati painting which turned its back on mainstream culture and presented the rich sentiment with a simpler style. Playing melodiously with the simple structural design requires complicated skill and many years of practice. The character of the Erhu caters for the central thought of animation 'Moon Above the River', that is to present complication through simplicity.

The chosen instruments are used in the project in the same order as they emerged in history, which corresponds to the idea that progress is made step by step.

### **3.2 Project description**

As digital technology today is providing new possibilities for creating computer-generated artwork, extending the literati art style into multimedia artwork is fascinating for many artists. A project has been created to demonstrate the fulfilment of practising the literati art concept in cyberspace. This involves not only creating literati artwork using computer technology, but also using methods such as animation and interactivity effects to present more complicated contexts for the artwork. For this purpose, some animations were linked into an interactive scene which invites spectators to take control of their exploratory tour.

The name of the project is 'Wind Flower Snow Moon (Feng Hua Xue Yue)'. It is a four-character idiom in Chinese that was created to express the idea that beautiful things appear in the four seasons, which are spring flower, summer wind, autumn moon and winter snow. These characters are not put in the same order in the idiom as the order of the four seasons for two reasons. One is for the purpose of rhyme, and the other is to imply that beautiful things appear in all seasons. For example, the moon appears in spring, and flowers bloom in summer, and so on. In keeping with the name, there are four major parts to the project: 'Wind', 'Flower', 'Snow' and 'Moon'. These four characters respectively indicate 'Moving', 'Growing', 'Conflict' and 'Tranquillity', which are taken to show how differently each stage of understanding in life or study progresses. Together, they present a journey of understanding the Tao (ultimate truth) or 'nature' in the Chinese philosophical sense.



### **3.2.1 Beginning animation: Structure of the universe and the spirit within**

Chinese philosophy originated, formed and rose during the Pre-Qin period ( -221 BC). While the ancient Chinese were fighting with nature for survival, they started thinking of their connection with their surroundings and built an awareness of the relationship between nature and mankind. Along with the sixty-four hexagrams of 'I Ching (Book of Changes)' and the Five Elements theory of 'Hong Fan (Major Pattern / Grand Norm)' that came out around the end of the Shang dynasty (1600 BC - 1046 BC) and the beginning of the Zhou dynasty (1046 BC - 256 BC), the initial stage of Chinese philosophy was founded.

The Book of Changes includes two parts: 'Yi Jing' and 'Yi Zhuan'. Together, they became the 'Zhou Yi (The book of Changes)' we read today. To avoid any confusion, the following part of this paper will use the names 'Yi Jing', 'Yi Zhuan' and 'Zhou Yi' instead of the commonly used English name 'I Ching'. Literally translated, Yi means change and Zhou means 'moving in cycles'. The 'Zhou Yi' views the universe as a natural and well-coordinated system in which the process of change never ceases.<sup>123</sup> Influenced by Yi Jing methodology, the Five Elements theory merged with Yin-Yang theory and started to have its 'circle' (the system of producing and restraining). As one of the most important thinking systems and major influences of Chinese traditional culture, the Five Elements theory has been chosen for the beginning of the project due to its significant in painting colour theory. Hexagrams and Yin-Yang philosophy are shown in the last animation to serve the idea of 'end-around' (circular progression, where the beginning becomes the end).

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<sup>123</sup> Li Xueqin, Notes and Commentaries of Thirteen Jings - Volume 1: Standard explanation of Zhou Yi Xici, Beijing University Press, 1999

To understand Chinese traditional culture is to understand its spirit. Ancient Chinese boiled down the construction of cosmic inventory to the 'Five Elements system' which emphasises the reciprocity and interactive relationship between metal, wood, water, fire and earth. The Five Elements system is one of the most influential theories in Chinese culture. 'Han Shu (Book of History) – Wuxing Zhi (Five Elements theory)' states that it can show the change in the world and the country.<sup>124</sup> Liu Xie commented: 'The core of the Five Elements system is the heart of the universe ... is the Tao of nature.'<sup>125</sup> Therefore, Pang Pu (1928-) referred to Five Elements theory as 'the framework of Chinese culture', and Gu Jiegang (1893-1980) referred to it as 'the pattern of Chinese thought'.<sup>126</sup>

The Chinese term 'Wu Xing' is usually translated as the Five Elements. They should not be thought of as static but as five dynamic and interacting forces. The Chinese word 'Wu' means 'Five' and 'Xing' means 'to act' or 'to do', so that the term Wu Xing, literally translated, means the Five Activities or Five Agents. They are also known as 'Wu De' which was referred to as the 'Five Powers' by Zou Yan (324 BC - 250 BC).<sup>127</sup> The Chinese word 'De' also means moral quality. The five powers were presented as five qualities in other philosophical systems such as humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and reliability in Confucianism.<sup>128</sup>

The opening movie starts with five Chinese characters appearing on the screen. These characters are 'Jin, Mu, Shui, Huo, Tu' that respectively mean metal, wood, water, fire and earth (Images ch01). They have been chosen for every beginning of the project because they have great importance in Chinese philosophy and for

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<sup>124</sup> Ban Gu, Han Shu – Chapter 27: Five-Element Theory, 62

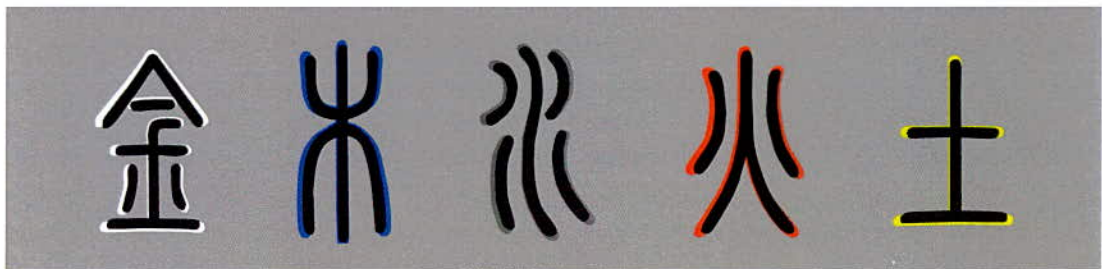
<sup>125</sup> Liu Xie, Wen Xin Diao Long – Chapter 1: The Origin of Tao, 502

<sup>126</sup> Pang Pu, A Study of Yin-Yang And Five Elements Theory, embodied in Langyou Collections, Shanghai People's Press, 1988, p356; Gu Jiegang, The History And Polity Under the Five Elements Theory, embodied in Gu Jiegang's Dissertation Collections - Volume Three, Beijing China Publishing House, 1996, p254, also embodied in Ancient History Discussions, Shanghai Ancient Books Publisher, 1982, p404

<sup>127</sup> Fung Yu-Lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, New York Free Press, 1966, p131; Zou Yan (Initiator of Yin-Yang School), The Circle of Five Powers, Warring States Period

<sup>128</sup> Yang jing, Explanatory of 'Xun Zi' – Chapter 6: Fei Shi'er Zi, Tang dynasty

Chinese people, who believe that the world is composed of these five elements and ruled by these five powers, and that a person should practise these five moral qualities. As 'in Chinese "a character is a character is a character" (Tzeng 1983)' <sup>129</sup>, each of the Chinese characters possesses and represents a single unit of meaning. The project uses these characters to imply the characters that these elements reflect. The Five Elements appear at the beginning of the project as a hint that to study and understand Chinese philosophy it is important to understand the dynamics of these elements that every factor in our life contributes to finding a balance and is the way to get a better result of self-development.



ch01

The opening scene presents these characters in such a way that the first character appears on screen and then the animation shows it transforming into the second character. The second character then appears on screen and the animation shows it converting into the third character and so on. The concept behind showing these characters converting in to one another is to portray the Chinese philosophy that there is a relationship between these five characters and each character plays a role in the creation of the other characters.

These elements are also characterised according to their functions. For example, wood is the most human of the elements. It is the element of spring, the creative urge to achieve - which can turn to anger when frustrated. It is associated with the capacity to look forward, plan and make decisions. Wood-energy is rising,

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<sup>129</sup> Comparing Writing Systems – Chinese Character Writing,  
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ozideas/writchin.htm>



expanding, and is the force of growth and flexibility. Fire is the element of heat, summer and enthusiasm; nature at its peak of growth, and warmth in human relationships. Its motion is upward. Fire is symbolic of combustion and this represents the functions of the body that have reached that fleeting moment of maximum activity, indicating that decline is then inevitable. This element is associated with the heart and related to the tongue. In the same way, the qualities of earth were also expended as the elements of harvest time, abundance, nourishment, fertility, and the mother-child relationship. This element is also regarded as central to balance and the place where energy becomes downward in movement. It is the symbol of stability and being properly anchored. Earth is associated with the spleen and related to the sense of taste. The fourth element among the five basic characters is metal, and Chinese people have a firm belief that metal is the force of gravity, the minerals within the earth, the patterns of the heavenly bodies and the powers of electrical conductivity and magnetism. Metal has structure, but it can also accept a new form when molten. There are also some general conceptions of water in Chinese philosophies. In particular, it is believed that water is the source of life on this planet. Likewise it is the fluid (the main component of the body) that nourishes and maintains the health of every cell. Water corresponds to the vital fluids, i.e. blood, lymph, mucus, semen and fat. Water has the capacity to flow, infinitely yielding, yet infinitely powerful, ever changing and often dangerous, with the capacity also to nourish and cleanse.<sup>130</sup>

In addition to using Chinese characters to hint at the moral qualities that the Five Elements present, the characters were used to represent a fundamental Chinese painting concept: 'writing and painting share the same evolutionary origin'. This concept has two connotations. One means Chinese characters and Chinese painting

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<sup>130</sup> Yang jing, Explanatory of 'Xun Zi' – Chapter 6, Tang dynasty; Tian Jiefu, Zi Si and Meng Zi's Five Elements Theory, embodied in Ancient History Discussions, Shanghai Ancient Books Publisher, 1982, p705



have a shared origin.<sup>131</sup> The Chinese characters were developed from carapace-bone-script which is a pictogram. In other words, Chinese characters were developed from simplified drawings. The most ancient Yinqi characters that started appearing in the Shang dynasty (1600 BC – 1046 BC) are not only calligraphy but also paintings. As Zheng Wuchang (1894-1952) commented, 'it (the time when Yinqi characters were in use) was the age of a mixture of calligraphy and painting.'<sup>132</sup> Ancient Yinqi characters were developed into Zhuan calligraphy and became the first formal 'Chinese characters' in the Qin dynasty. Zhuan calligraphy<sup>133</sup> was chosen for start of the project as it is the oldest character style used today and best represents the pictogram. The second meaning, 'writing and painting share the same evolutionary origin' is that there is a common principle between Chinese calligraphy and painting. This meaning became one of the significant theoretical bases for the development of literati painting. The 'origin' here not only means painting and calligraphy are both composed by lines and dots, but also that they all present the spirit of Chinese art – 'nature'.<sup>134</sup>

The Five Elements theory not only influenced later Chinese philosophical thoughts but also influenced early aesthetics theory. As part of the Five Elements theory, five-colour theory became the original source of primitive Chinese painting colour theory. Five-colour theory was applied to ceremony and life in the Zhou dynasty (1046 BC - 256 BC). However, systematised colour patterns and their evolutions were founded after the merger of Yin-Yang theory and Five Elements theory, which took place approximately between the years of 475 BC and AD 220 (from the

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<sup>131</sup> Zhang Yanyuan, *Famous Paintings from Past Dynasties, Volume 1 - Chapter 1: The Origin of Painting, Tang dynasty*

<sup>132</sup> Zheng Wuchang, *A Complete History of Chinese Painting, chapter 1.1: Origin of Painting, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing, 1985, p5*

<sup>133</sup> Some translate it as 'seal character' or 'seal script'.

<sup>134</sup> This is the 'nature' which explained in chapter 2.1.

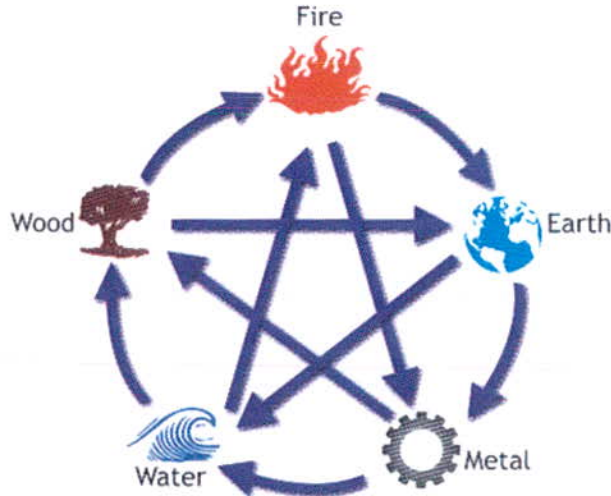
Warring States period to the Qin-Han period).<sup>135</sup> This five-colour system was produced from the Five Elements theory development. Therefore, the five-colour system can also be referred to as the 'Five Elements colour' system. The central theory of the Five Elements is the system of Producing and Restraining. This theory categorized everything in the world by their characters into five piles, which tend to have a relationship or links between them. Together these links form a system of balance.

In the producing circle, the wood is living in the dirt, and nurtured by the water, so water produces the wood. The wood can be burned, and be the source of fire, so the wood produces the fire. The fire, especially the lava in the earth, comes out and forms the dirt, the stone and the crust, so fire produces the earth. The metal is buried in the earth, so the earth produces the metal. Finally, the metal is sharp and separates the water from the earth and the air, and so produces the water. Altogether, they form into a circle, the producing circle, Wood-Fire-Earth-Metal-Water-Wood, and so on. Similarly, elements seem to restrain each other a restraining circle. The metal cuts the wood; the wood lives on the earth and controls the earth; the earth blocks and controls the water; the water can put out fire; and the metal can be melted by the heat of the fire. So we get the restraining circle, Metal-Wood-Earth-Water-Fire-Metal, and so on.<sup>136</sup> (image ch02)

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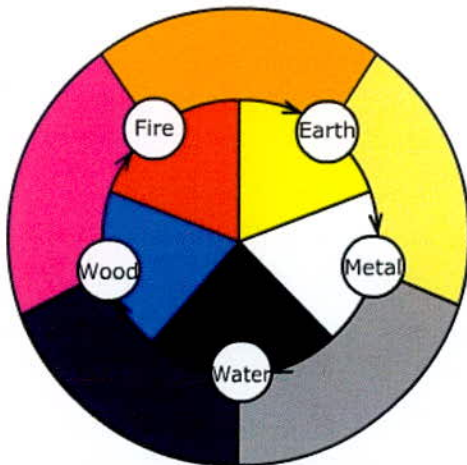
<sup>135</sup> Wang Wenjuan, *Ink and Colour: Aesthetics source of colour used in Chinese painting*, Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2006, p74

<sup>136</sup> Liu An (BC 179-BC 122), *Huai Nan Hong Lie (Huai Nan Zi / Huai Nan Wang Shu)*, Chapter 4: *Di Xing Xun (Forms of Land)*, West-Han dynasty; Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Volume 2, p13, Princeton University Press, 1953

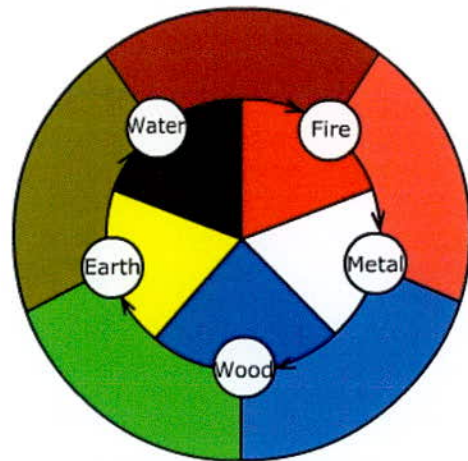


ch02

Developed from this theory, the five-colour system that represents the Five Elements was called 'Zheng Se (pure colours)'. These 'pure colours' are red, yellow, white, black and blue, which represent fire, earth, metal, water and wood. The colours that were developed from 'pure colours' are 'Jian Se (variegated colours)'. According to the Five Elements dynamic system, the 'variegated colours' can be further classified into interpromoted-relation variegated colours (image ch03) and restricted-relation colours (image cho4). From here, unlimited colour range can be produced as it said in 'Huai Nan Zi': 'The basic colours are not more than five. However, the possible development that results from these five colours is far more than we can think of.'<sup>137</sup>



ch03

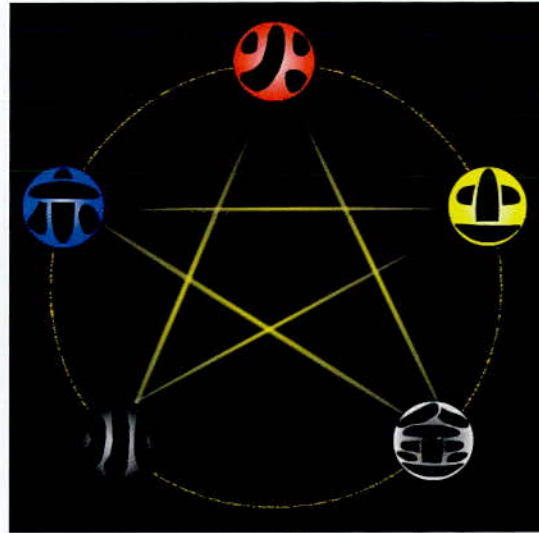


ch04

<sup>137</sup> Liu An (179 BC – 122 BC), *Huai Nan Hong Lie* (*Huai Nan Zi / Huai Nan Wang Shu*), Chapter 1: *Yuan Dao Xun* (The Origin of Tao), West-Han dynasty



Applying these five colours to the Five Elements (image ch02) and combining them with the five characters (image ch01), a dynamic and interactive relationship between the Five Elements became the opening movie of the project (image ch05).



ch05

The animation 'Five Elements' is used at the beginning of the project to produce the message that finding the relationship between the different characters will help us to step into the next stage of our life with less confusion and uncertainty. In this project, this relationship of characters includes the relationship between the personalities, painting elements, different formats of art, or factors in life.

The relationship of the Five Elements introduces the project as the starting animation of the story. Through the image of the Five Elements (image ch05), a building with surrounding trees and flowers appears at the end of the path (image be01). When the camera lands, the length of the camera shot changes and the path seems longer (image be02). This implies that having a full image of the destination is helpful for the final achievement, and the path to the goal sometimes seems longer than it actually is. In order to avoid taking too much time for the



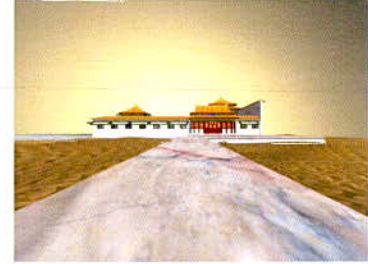
three-dimensional scene to be loaded, the trees and flowers disappear to produce a smaller file for the interactive part of the project (image be03).



be01



be02



be03

The starting animation ends here and control of the movie is handed over to the spectator. The performance of the computer determines the required loading time.

In the meantime brief instructions appear on the screen:

*Please wait for the computer to load the scene.*

*When the texts disappear, you can start your tour by using the 'right', 'left', 'up' and 'down' arrow keys.*

*The cursor changes shape when it is over contain objects. Clicking on these objects will activate certain actions or play key animations.*

*The project can be ended at any point by pressing the 'Q' key. However, the 'Q' key doesn't work while the animations are playing, and ending the project at different points will lead you to different endings.*

*Thank you for your patience.*

When the scene is loaded, the instructions disappear and the spectator takes control of the movement. A path leading towards the building becomes the starting point of the entire journey. The view of the starting point of the journey contains the idea of 'A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step'<sup>138</sup>.

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<sup>138</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), Daode Jing, Chapter 64

### **3.2.2 Main scene**

The main scene of the project is a building with four rooms (image mc01). Each room presents one of the major animations. These animations are linked by the interactivity function, which is controlled by the spectator. Together, they form the title of the project, 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon'. By exploring the scene, the 'beauty of the four seasons' will be experienced. Since the concept of 'four seasons' is quite often used to describe one's whole life or an entire journey of certain processes, the project took this meaning to present different stages in life and in the study process.



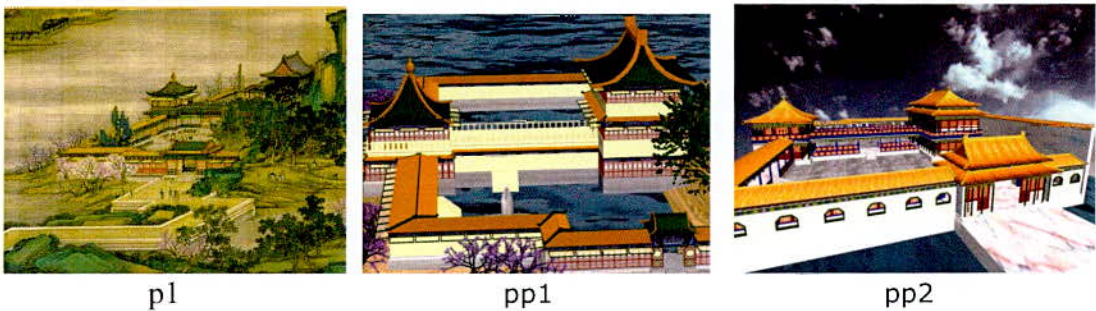
mc01

#### **3.2.2.1 Idea process**

Because of the history of literati painting, paintings from the Song dynasty (960-1276) are focused on particularly. 'Peace region over the river' is one of the most well-known paintings in the Song dynasty, and it is a good example of the 'spread-point perspective' used in Chinese painting. Although it does not belong to the 'literati painting category', the painter, Zhang Zheduan's innovation in the painting



is remarkable. Zhang worked for the Imperial Art Academy of the Northern Song Dynasty and was a specialist in Jie Hua (boundary painting)<sup>139</sup>. The painting is very detailed and has a unique style. Instead of painting a religious or aristocratic theme like others in the Imperial Art Academy, he used his brush to describe different social and cultural objects. The idea of being dared to apply the traditional methods to new subjects coincidentally matched the suggestion proposed within the new literati circle in 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century.



Considering the performance of current personal computers, the scene was created from just a small part of the painting (image p1). In order to respond to the starting animation, the details of the building were changed from the 'Peace region over the river' style (image pp1) to follow the design of the Forbidden City as it presents Chinese philosophy and art theory in many ways (image pp2). In the building of the Forbidden City, there are two major colours, yellow and red. Yellow was chosen for the roof and red for the walls of the rooms. The Forbidden City was constructed according to the Yin-Yang Five Elements<sup>140</sup> theory which has a major influence on almost all Chinese philosophical systems.

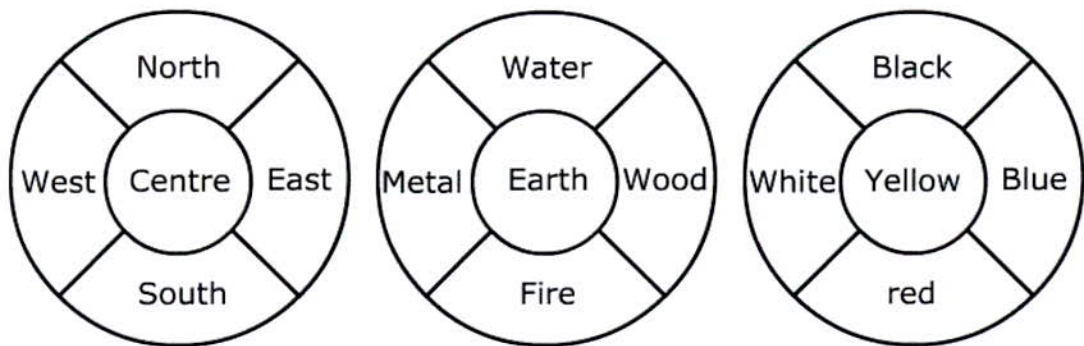
Developed from the Five Elements, there are five positions on the earth: east, west, south, north and centre. As earth is placed in the centre among the five positions so the yellow colour is considered as the pure colour for the centre (image ps01).

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<sup>139</sup> Jie Hua (boundary painting) is one kind of Chinese painting. It is painted by using ruler to draw lines.

<sup>140</sup> Since the Five Elements theory merged with Yin-Yang theory, they have often been referred to as Yin-Yang Five Elements theory.

'Yi Jing' explained the importance of the colour yellow from the perspective of the traditional Chinese philosophy that says: 'A gentleman should understand the principles within yellow which is on the centre position that refers to honesty and integrity. Presenting, practising and promoting the beauty of yellow is the nicest thing to do.'<sup>141</sup> Therefore, yellow has been regarded as the 'pure colour of the middle', a neutral colour and the most beautiful colour of all.



ps01

The other major colour used for the Forbidden City, red, is also one of the Five Colours and has a major significance in Chinese culture. Human beings recognised the beauty of the colour red from a very early stage, from the colour of fire and the sun. It was also one of the earliest used colours in art. The earliest ornament of humankind was believed to have been shells and animal teeth, which were dyed red as it is the colour of blood and was believed to hold the source of life and power by caveman. Many early frescos were also red. This colour is very close to human life in the sense that it gives hope and satisfaction to people; human feelings and emotions are closely associated with the beauty of this colour. In China, it is taken not only to represent visual beauty but has also been used for celebrations, because it imparts the messages of happiness and joy.

Though the reasons for using red and yellow as the major colours for the Forbidden City are understandable, at the same time there is an equally important question:

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<sup>141</sup> Yi Jing, Kun diagram – Wen yan



how to organise and arrange different colours so that they best fit the contents as well as the purpose of the architectural arts. The colour combination used in the art piece also represents the skills and aesthetic view of designers.

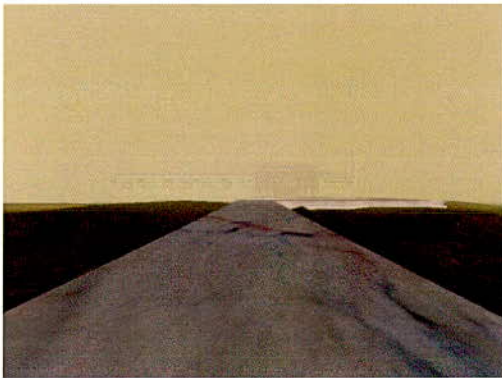
The Forbidden City was created with the intention of presenting the power and majesty of the emperor. The emperors mostly required their palaces to be huge and magnificent, so the designers and architects spent a lot of time on allocation plans and spatial organisation. Moreover, they also had to use antithesis in the employment of colours. Colour contrast means that there should be warm and cold contrast as well as complementary colour contrast. Red and yellow are warm colours, whereas blue and green are the cold colours. Colours directly opposite each other on the colour spectrum, such as red and green, yellow and purple, or blue and orange, when combined in the right proportions, produce neutral colours (white, grey and black) or white light. When complementary colours such as cold and warm colours are put together they set each other off and together become brighter, more vigorous and eye catching. At the same time, this set-up gives a neutralized look and brings balance to the entire creation. Colour contrast has been widely used in the Forbidden City, such as yellow roofs under the blue sky; green patterns above red walls; white pedestals with grey ground, and so on. Together, they create a colourful and magnificent environment.

The project 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' was created to present a new branch of literati art. At the same time, it attempts to add new elements and presenting formats into this very new 'Shuma Wenren Yishu (digital literati art)'. While some modelling and colour usage details were applied according to the Forbidden City, the surroundings and structure of the building were created according to the painting 'Peace region over the river'. This combination is another way to explain

literati art, which is the combination of poetic sentiment and formal education, and a withdrawal attitude with a desire of being accepted by society.

### 3.2.2.2 Finished work description

The interactivity part of the project begins with the spectator 'standing' at the end of a path which leads to a four-room building. The standing point can be changed by pressing the 'up', 'down', 'left' and 'right' arrow keys on the computer keyboard. The fog makes the entrance to the building seem unclear and distant in the scene (image mc02), which hints that at the start of the journey, the direction and destination of the journey might not be that clear. Although only a hazy image appears in front of the spectator, the path to the building is underfoot. The journey can be started with a intention to do so, and the distant building can be reached by following the path.



mc02



mc03

Although the path to the building is not very long, it is not straight (image mc03). The flexuous path reflects some unavoidable turning points in life. Before the spectator enters the building, the standing point can only be moved within the path. This was done to hint that discipline in life and study is essential for certain achievement, such as learning painting skills to become a painter. The path, with several turns, also hints that thoughts change before the goal is determined. As Confucius suggested, 'think before acting'. There are not too many turns on the path as Confucius commented that thinking too much can make heavy weather of



decisions.<sup>142</sup> Being careful but also brave during the unknown journey is important for achieving the goal in mind. After a few turns, the camera reaches the front door of the building (image mc03). The name of the building, which is also the name of the project, becomes clear to the spectator (image mc04).



mc03



mc04

When the spectator gets close enough, the front door can be opened by left-clicking the mouse on it. When the cursor rolls over some objects, it changes shape to let the spectator know that the object is a key to certain action. For the doors, the cursor changes to a closed-hand to represent the figure knocking. The cursor changes to a different shape for the different resulting actions, as Confucius believed that propriety (Li) is the foundation of a society. After entering the building, the spectator can either cross the yard or walk through the corridors to reach the 'Wind' and 'Flower' rooms on the ground floor (image mc05). The rooms have to be visited in the same order as the name of the project, 'Wind', followed by 'Flower', 'Snow', and finally 'Moon'. The names are hung above the door of each room and written in Chinese characters to indicate the theme and style of the room (image 06). There is a 'key object' in each room, which is the trigger for starting the animation of the room. Other objects placed in the rooms further explain the idea. These additional objects can sometimes be played or have to be played before

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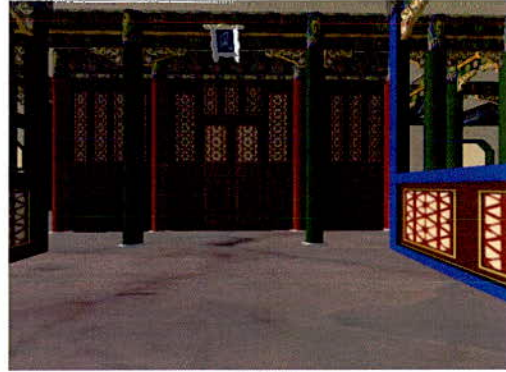
<sup>142</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects* – chapter 5: Gong Ye Chang



the thematic animation of the room. Therefore, the key objects usually look obvious to avoid any confusion or being missed.



mc05



mc06

The 'Wind' room is the left side room of the ground floor. As for the front door, the cursor changes when it is over the door of the room 'Wind', and the door opens after a single left clicking of the mouse. Image r1-01 shows the interior of the room. The key object of the room is obvious: a paper fan placed on the table. When the cursor rolls over the fan, it changes shape to fingers, to simulate the idea of touching, which is this project's way of telling the spectator that touching this object will lead the view into the scene of this picture. Before the fan is clicked, the picture on the fan is green bamboo wood, which is the first frame of the animation 'Bamboo in the Wind' (image r1-02). Four chairs in the room are decorated with black bamboo pictures to hint what the style of the resulting painting might appear to be on the key object.



r1-01



r1-02

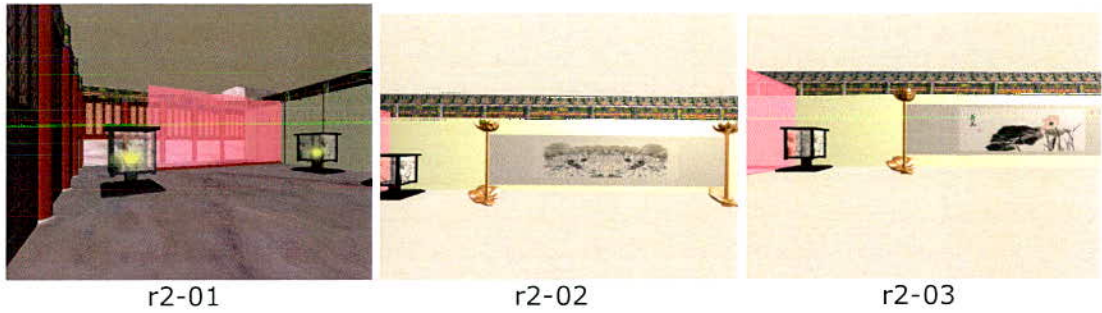
Once the fan is clicked, the scene will change from inside the room 'Wind' to the animation 'Bamboo in the Wind'. However, this function is only active when the camera is inside the room. The animation will not play if the spectator is 'standing' outside the room. This function is set for all of the rooms to avoid the animations starting to play accidentally. Having finished playing the animation, the scene turns back to the 'Wind' room. The picture on the fan changes to a bamboo painting with the name of the painting on the side (image r1-03), which is the last frame of the animation 'Bamboo in the Wind'.



r1-03

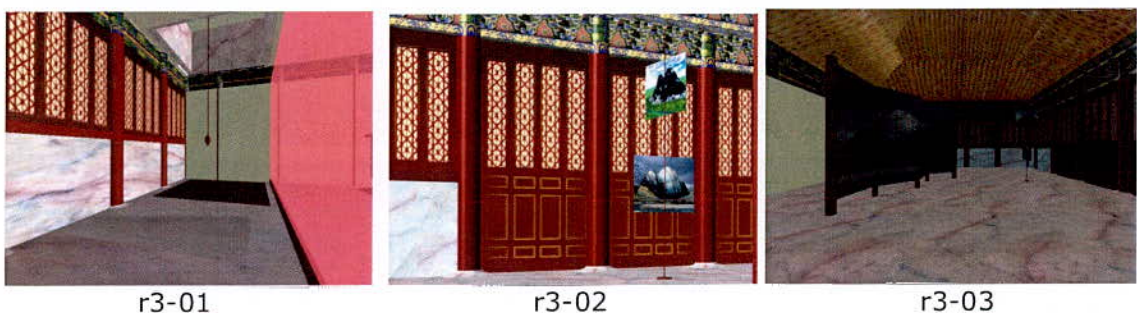
Once this animation has been played, the door of the second room 'Flower', is activated and can be opened by a single left-click on it. Unlike the 'Wind' room, the spectator has to get close in order to open the door. In the 'Flower' room, the key object is a large painting of a lotus pool, which is surrounded by four lanterns. Starting from this room, additional objects become more playful. The lanterns can be switched on by left-clicking the mouse on them. A lift behind the pink curtain is the only way to reach the first floor where the third and fourth rooms are located (image r2-01). However, the lift switch is not active unless the animation 'Lotus Flower' has been watched. As in the first room, the surrounding objects give a hint of the final painting style in the animation. To start playing the animation, the spectator simply needs to click the lotus pool painting (image r2-02).





After the animation 'Lotus Flower', the scene turns back to the 'Flower' room where the big painting changes from a lotus pool to a resulting painting of the animation. The switches for turning on the lanterns become inactive, to reflect the idea that 'the past can be reviewed but cannot be re-experienced'. The lift to the first floor is now ready to be used. However, it only moves up when the spectator stands right on it and 'pulls' the rope (image r3-01).

In the third room, the additional objects are pillars with images hanging on them. Unlike the rooms on the ground floor, images shown on the additional objects are not the same in this room. Images here are taken from different sections of the animation 'Snow Mountain'. After the images are clicked, they start whirling. Some whirl clockwise and some anticlockwise (image r3-02). The theme of the 'Snow' room is conflicting. Images whirl in different directions to reflect different thinking patterns and thoughts (memories and prospects) running inside the head. The key object in this room is a folding screen with a snow mountain image on it (image r3-03). Contrary to the last two rooms, the image on the folding screen is not shown in the first frame of the animation but an image close to the resulting painting of the animation.



Although the door of the 'Snow' room can be opened before the animation is watched, the spectator can only 'walk' around outside the room but cannot walk down to the bridge (image r3-04). After the animation, the picture on the folding screen changes to the painting 'Snow Mountain' with the painting's name and seal on the side.



r3-04



r3-05

Once outside the 'Snow' room, the fourth, 'Moon' room, is presented on the other side of the bridge (image r3-04). The key object of the room is a sparkling ball. There are four small balls with typical images from four animations floating above the sparkling ball (image r4-1). The room presents the idea of tranquillity of mind rather than tranquillity of the environment. In order to maintain peace in the mind, 'reviewing the past and studying the present'<sup>143</sup> are essential. For this reason, the sparkling ball only triggers the animation 'Moon above the river' after four small balls are clicked according to the order of the four rooms, 'Wind', 'Flower', 'Snow', 'Moon'. As each small ball is clicked in turn, it starts rolling. When all four small balls are rolling, the sparkling ball is activated and starts the animation after being clicked.

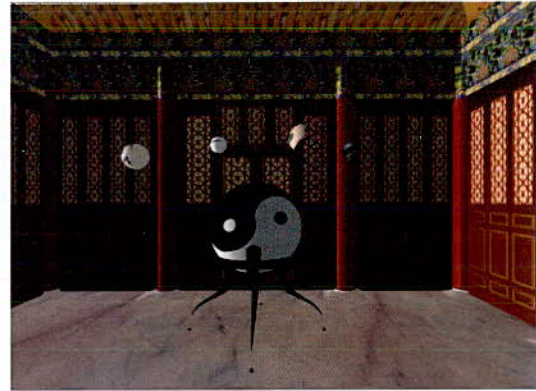
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<sup>143</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), Analects, chapter 2: To Govern (Wei Zheng)





r4-01



r4-02

After watching the animation, 'Moon above the river', the scene reverts to inside the 'Moon' room. The sparkling ball changes to a Yin-Yang ball, which symbolises the origin of force of the universe and the nature of Tao. When the spectator walks out of the 'Moon' room, the end of the project shows on the screen. A poem written by Wang Anshi links the four animations together to summarise and conclude the idea of this project. After the four animations have all been watched, the full poem of the ending can be reached after the spectator 'walks' out the fourth room, or by pressing the 'Q' key on the computer keyboard. However, if the 'Q' key is pressed before finishing exploring the building, the ending will come up in incomplete format according to the stage at which the 'life' or 'study process' is ended.

### 3.2.3 Wind

The Wind is invisible to the eyes. It is only eye catching when something is moving in the wind. However, when an object is moving, the trigger for that movement might not be the wind. When the wind is blowing inside one's heart, the bamboo in the heart can be blended but should not be blown away.

#### 3.2.3.1 Having bamboo in the heart

Of all the plants that appear in Chinese literature, bamboo is distinct due to its hollow trunk, joints, height and ability to grow in different districts and seasons. These characteristics match Chinese aesthetic taste and moral consciousness, such as an open mind,<sup>144</sup> integrity,<sup>145</sup> straightness and flexibility.

It is unique features make bamboo the embodiment and model of a noble-minded personality. The 'Book of Rites' was the first to personify bamboo and bring it into the area of social ethics: 'Rite for a person just like smooth hard skin for bamboo and heart (growth ring) for pine and cypress. They grow with the most important character in the world. Therefore, they do not change branches and leaves during the four seasons.'<sup>146, 147</sup> Bamboo was also personified with spirit, morality and personality in 'Qi Ao'. These qualities were considered the character of true gentlemen, which include being 'easy going', 'knowledgeable', having a 'free heart' and being 'magnanimous'.<sup>148</sup> Because of the beautiful features of bamboo as well as what it represents, many literati who wanted to separate themselves from the world, chose to live in bamboo woods. They regarded bamboo as a companion,

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<sup>144</sup> Open mind here also means being humble or modest.

<sup>145</sup> 'Bamboo joint (zhu jie) and 'integrity (qi jie) share a character Jie (joint) in Chinese.

<sup>146</sup> Dai Sheng, Book of Rites, chapter 8: Ritual Article, West-Han Dynasty (202 BC - 8 BC)

<sup>147</sup> 'Changing branches and leaves' means to languish. It is also a metaphor for personality metamorphosis.

<sup>148</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), Book of Poetry (Book of songs/odes during the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC - 6<sup>th</sup> century BC), Chapter 5: Wei Style, Poem 1: Qi Ao

friend, and an important element of their spiritual life.

'Flexible branches and leaves, dense phoenix tails, low dragon intoning...'<sup>149</sup>

Bamboo's beauty attracted painters to put it on paper. Because of what it represents, it became one of the literati painters' favourites. Its admirable characteristics are especially apparent in the wind. Thus, the theme of 'bamboo in the wind' is often used to represent the strength of holding one's mind.

*On a windy day, two monks were arguing about a flapping banner.*

*The first said, 'I say the banner is moving, not the wind.'*

*The second said, 'I say the wind is moving, not the banner.'*

*A third monk passed by and said, 'The wind is not moving. The banner is not moving.*

*Your minds are moving.'* (Hui Neng, *The Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch*, 676)

The 'mind' is the crucial factor in the result of personal qualities as well as the outcome of artwork. 'Having bamboo in the heart' (have a thought-out plan to cope with whatever may arise)<sup>150</sup> is the preparation for painting bamboo, as well as taking action towards targets in life. With 'bamboo in the heart', no matter how the environment changes, one's mind will remain firm and steady, as the poetry describes:

*The bamboo clings firmly to the mountain steep. In the chasm of rock it plants its root so deep. In spite of all beats, it stands still, not bending low. Whether from east, west, south or north the wind does blow. (Zheng Banqiao, The rock bamboo) (the poem for image b2)*

Image b1 is a painting with the same name 'The rock bamboo' painted by Luo Pin (1733-1799). The painter used different shades of ink to describe the distance and

<sup>149</sup> Cao Xueqin, *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Chapter 26, 1762

<sup>150</sup> Su Shi, *Story of Wen Yuke Painting Bamboo in The Tall Bamboo Valley*, 1079



lighting effect. Bamboo branches were painted section by section according to the joint. Darker ink was used to paint joints to intensify the nodal point as 'joint' in Chinese is associated with integrity and principles, which are the most important quality of personalities in a Chinese sense. It is also the most common way to paint a bamboo branch. Bamboo leaves were painted drooping down, with three of them in a group. Three leaves drooping down, looks like the Chinese character 'Ge (individual)'. Drooping down has the meaning of holding one's head down. Together they mean being modest. As Zheng Banqiao stated, 'Bamboo leaves humbly bow'.<sup>151</sup> Two other paintings which were painted by Zheng Banqiao (1693-1765) (image b2) and Sun Kai (late Qing dynasty) (image b3), were painted in the same way.



b1



b2



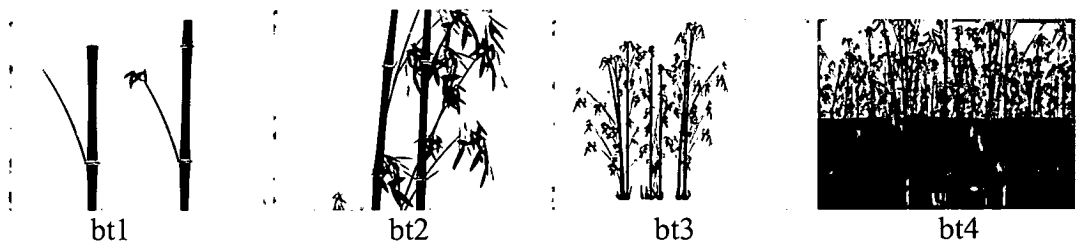
b3

The scene of animation 'Bamboo in the Wind' was modelled simulating the above procedure to help me get inside the feeling of painting bamboo and get the

<sup>151</sup> Dang Mingfang, Zheng Banqiao Couplets Collection, Section Eight – Painting Couplets, YueLu Publishing House, 2006



outcome in the style of literati painting. The branches were modelled from bottom to top, with the leaves modelled after the branches (image bt1). The animation starts with green bamboo woods and ends with a black-ink bamboo painting; it has leaves flowing down in the middle to depict the relationship between wind and mind, and from the reality to artistic outcome. However, as the final image was the main purpose of the animation, it was created before being extended into a scene of bamboo woods (images bt2, bt3, bt3).



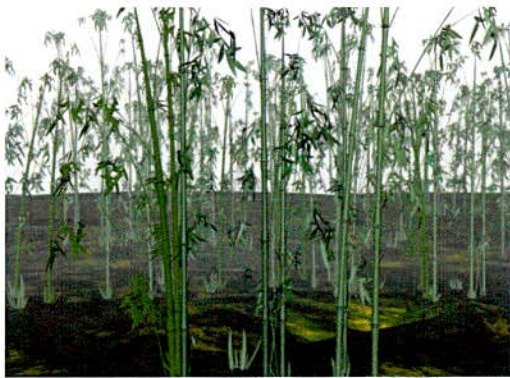
The foundation of the literati painting technique is calligraphy,<sup>152</sup> as the context of the painting is literature. Calligraphy is considered to be a direct performance of the personality. It is individual, as well as collective. It is conscious as well as subconscious. As Yang Xiong (53 BC - AD 18) stated, 'penmanship is the painting of the heart'.<sup>153</sup> Among the 'four gentlemen' (plum flower, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum), which are the four essential painting subjects that literati painters need to study, the technique of painting bamboo is the closest to calligraphy and presents the painter's personality most directly. Therefore, it is commonly the one literati begin with. As bamboo represents the foundation of morality and personal qualities in the Chinese sense, it has been chosen as the first part of the project 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon'.

<sup>152</sup> Since Chinese characters were developed from simplified paintings, this theory can also be understood as 'the foundation of calligraphy technique is painting'.

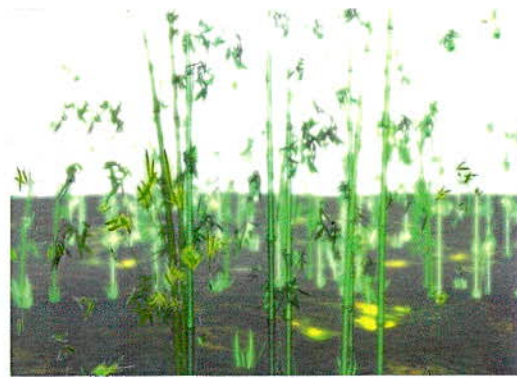
<sup>153</sup> Yang Xiong, *The Yang Zi Discussion on Legalism*, chapter 6: Wen Shen (Asking God), West-Han Dynasty

### **3.2.3.2 'Bamboo in the wind' animation description**

The animation starts with the camera flying inside a green bamboo wood. A group of bamboo trees are focused on (image bb01). After one circle of flying around these bamboo trees, some leaves are shed from the trees and begin flowing in the wind, before eventually falling to the ground. At the same time, the wood becomes brighter to hint at the mightiness of affection of the first inspiration (image bb02). The shedding of leaves hints that the change occurs when an idea crosses the mind, as the wood changes when the wind blows. The connectivity of the bamboo and wind can also be seen in this scene, that as the wind blows the leaves of the bamboo start shedding, and many of the bamboos also bend due to the pressure of the wind. It is an important and praised quality of bamboo that is portrayed in this scene, that it is flexible enough so it bends due to the wind and, at the same time, is strong enough to return to the same position.



bb01



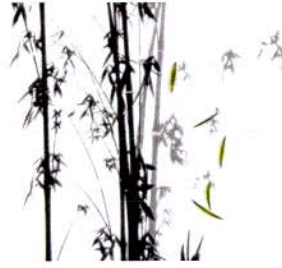
bb02

The falling leaves take some objects away from the scene. After the falling leaves disappear, only the group of bamboo trees focused on remain on the screen without ground or any surrounding. The colour of these bamboo trees changes from green to black as how they would be in the final painting (image bb03). The camera keeps moving around these bamboo trees. Every once in a while, some leaves fall down. The falling leaves gradually change colour from shining green to dark grey, which describes the changes inside one's head while refining the idea. Every time

leaves fall down, two bamboo trees disappear from the screen until only two are left (image bb04). These two bamboo trees are the chosen ones for the final painting and have the name of the painting written in calligraphy (image bb05).



bb03



bb04



bb05

This animation attempts to explain the very beginning of an artist's development. The starting scene of the animation where there are many bamboos present on the screen and the camera moves around them is the initial phase when an artist is not specifically focusing on a particular object but is looking at the objects around him to find an idea or stimulation. The animation reflects the way an artist transforms the real object into a painting. The other part of the animation is where the camera focuses on the bamboo trees from different angles as the artist places himself in every corner of the woods and merges himself with the environment. It shows how an artist takes the time to prepare an artwork. He looks at the real object many times from different angles to absorb its image in his mind and to understand each feature and aspect of that object. Many bamboos are shown at the beginning of the animation but their number goes on declining during the animation playing, which shows that over time, the artist eliminates many of the surrounding things from his mind to remain focused on a particular object or objects, so that he can concentrate very closely and can learn from that. After the first time leaves fall down, there are eight bamboo trees left on the screen but of these, six disappear, two by two, to show how an artist gradually focuses on the object which is more



inspiring or representative, as quality is much more important than quantity in literati painting.

The leaves keep falling down and every time the screen changes to respond to the falling leaves, this shows the development of the idea and the inspiration coming into the artist's head. The animation uses leaves flowing down to hint at the movement of the mind inside the artist's head. In the animation, the falling leaves change colour each time and their colour gets closer to the final piece of work from time to time. This shows how an artist develops his idea, and after going through different stages shows how the idea develops into an art piece based on the inspirations and observations that the artist receives from the scene. The gradual changes in the colour of the falling leaves shows that the ideas are gradually refined in the mind, and maturity develops over time in the thought and process that make the work an art piece.

In this animation the bamboo field presents the idea of an open mind where there are many ideas, thoughts and inspirations generated from the surrounding environment. Getting closer to some of the bamboo trees shows how a specific idea is picked up by an artist from many available ideas, and how the artist refines the idea and makes a general scene become an individual art piece. The falling leaves show the refinement and gradual maturity of the ideas and it also shows that creating an art piece is not a fast but a gradual process and an artist has to give considerable time to each phase of the idea development. In the initial phase the artist has to spend more time, and this is indicated by dedicating more than half of the animation time to flying around many bamboos and then focusing and moving around some of them. The rest of the development takes place in less than half the time of the animation. It shows that observation might take longer than shaping the idea. As in life, the conclusion comes after a long period of studying. But once

the idea is captured in the mind, the work process becomes relatively fast.

Although creating the final art piece seems to take less time, the time for creating an artwork should be considered by including all of the preparation time, as a simple answer might come from a complicated thought in life.

The end of the animation is a bamboo painting in black-ink colour. This painting is an expression of the early stage of a person. Bamboo is the first thing the Chinese literati artist learns because the painting skill closely relates to calligraphy. It is also the foundation of further personal development because of the morality it reflects. In this project, only when 'Bamboo in the Wind' has been watched, can the door of the 'Flower' room be opened.

### **3.2.4 Flower**

Flower in Chinese is 'Hua'. Apart from flower, 'Hua' also means variety, chaos and confusion. In the situation of 'Hua', the most important thing is to stand unwaveringly in the right position. The lotus flower was chosen for what it represents in Chinese philosophy, which is everything a person needs in the world of a community dazzling with a myriad of temptations.

#### **3.2.4.1 Live as the lotus flower**

The lotus flower is one of the oldest plants in the history of Chinese literature. The flower has more than eighty names in Chinese. The name 'He' currently commonly used, is also the oldest name, initially being recorded in the 'Chen Style' of 'The book of poetry'.<sup>154</sup> The earliest definition of 'He' can be found in 'Er Ya (Official Language)', the first lexicon in Chinese history.<sup>155</sup> Apart from the association with the way the lotus grows, 'He' is also a component of the words 'Heping (peace)' and 'Hexie (harmonious)'. Therefore, the lotus symbolizes being lenient, magnanimous, unhasty and not being moved by honour or disgrace. A bronze artefact 'Lotus and Crane Quadrangular Jar' (image af01) which was made in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC–476 BC) is currently kept in the Beijing Palace Museum. The jar was created in the shape of a lotus and decorated with dragons and a crane. It shows that the lotus flower was apotheosized and became a symbol of loftiness and sanctity.

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<sup>154</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *The Book of Poetry*, chapter 12: Chen Style, Poem 10: Ze Po

<sup>155</sup> Er Ya was written around the Qin-Han period (221 BC - AD 220). The author was believed to be Confucian. The book has been taken as part of 'Thirteen Classics' since the Southern-Song dynasty (1127-1279).





af01

The 'flower' in 'Flower blooms to show the Buddha'<sup>156</sup> of Buddhist sutras means lotus flower ('padma' in Sanskrit). Lotus flower is a holy flower in Buddhism heaven as well as the symbol of wisdom. When a person has a state of mind like a lotus flower, there is Buddha-nature in his heart. Then, he can stay clean in the turbulent world. Using the lotus flower to symbolize the purity of one's spirit can also be seen in some poetry such as Li Bai's (70-762) 'heart in the colour of a lotus flower', Meng Jiao's (751-814) 'Tao proves the heart of a lotus flower', Bai Juyi's (772-846) 'live as lotus flower who grows from water and above the water', Meng Haoran's (689-740) 'the lotus flower looks clean as the heart is not polluted', and so on.<sup>157</sup>

'Though growing up in black mud, it looks pure and clean; though shining upon branch water, it seems plain and dignified.'<sup>158</sup> Lotus shows its noble character through the way it lives, and is referred to as the gentleman among flowers. Qu Yuan (339 BC -278 BC) once stated that he would like to 'taking water caltrop and

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<sup>156</sup> Xuan Zang, Sutra of 'Master of Healing', chapter: Huixiang Buddhist Verse (Huixiang Jie), Verse 2, 663

<sup>157</sup> Xiao Difei, Glossary of Tang Poetry, Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 1983

<sup>158</sup> Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073), Love of Lotus, Zhou Dunyi Collection, Yueli Publishing House, 2002

lotus as his clothes'<sup>159</sup> to show that his strong political beliefs would not be changed by any outside forces. The lotus flower with its character of 'refusing to be contaminated by bad influence' and its beautiful appearance became one of literati's favourites. It is hard to overlook the lotus flower when Chinese visual art and philosophy are involved.<sup>160</sup>



h1



h2



h3



h4

The lotus grows in a clean and simple shape. It is usually described as 'no branch straggling out', which is also the metaphor for brief and neat in Chinese. In literati painting, the simpler the composition is, the better the effects it creates. For this requirement, lotus is usually painted with a clean background and very few objects on the paper as the images above show. Lotus painting usually takes one lotus as the main object and uses other objects to balance the colour and layout. A couple of leaves with one flower bud are the common objects accompanying the blooming flower. These additional objects are painted to enhance the topic. For example, Yun Shouping's (1633 - 1690) 'Lotus Flower and Reed' (image h1) uses reed to foil the simplicity of the lotus's shape; and Chen Hongshou's (1598-1652) 'Lotus and Rock'

<sup>159</sup> Liu Xiang (77 BC - 6 BC), The Odes of Chu, Ode: Li Sao, West-Han dynasty (202 BC -8 BC)

<sup>160</sup> Yu Xiangshun, Aesthetic Cultural Research on Chinese Lotus Flower, Bashu Publishing House, 2005

(image h3) uses rock to foil the softness of the lotus; Zhang Daqian's (1899-1983) 'Lotus Flower' uses foil and mass ink leaf to enhance the effect of neat and clean lotus flowers (image h2). Furthermore, the dragonfly is one of the most common creatures around the lotus pool. As it can fly, the dragonfly can easily be placed anywhere on the paper to enhance the layout of the painting. Many artists used one or two dragonflies to decorate their paintings such as Qi Baishi (1864-1957) did in his painting 'Lotus Flower' (image h4).



### **3.2.4.2 'Lotus Flower' animation description**

The animation starts with a lotus pool scene surrounded by rocks. Inside the lotus pool, many lotus flowers are blooming with some buds, lotus leaves, float grass, and duckweed growing through or above the water (image L01). This scene is a small reflection of a living environment which contains various factors and attractions. Unlike the last animation, this time, the animation starts with a 'Chinese painting look', as it reflects the second stage of art learning that the scene is showing in the artistic way to the artist. It also reflects that in this stage of life, a person starts to see the world from a personal point of view.

When a person first comes upon the stage, the world seems full of opportunities and choices. At the beginning of the animation, the camera flies around the lotus pool to imply the process of goal searching. After completing one round of the lotus pool, the camera focuses on one of the lotus flowers and zooms in to get a close look. While the camera focuses on the lotus flower, the flower's colour fades away to hint that the true face shows up when someone looks at it closely enough. The 'true face' means its basic shape without colour. A red dragonfly appears on the screen and flies onto the flower to imply the inspiration coming into one's head, while the single flower hints that the individual stands out from the surrounding. The dragonfly comes closer to different petals of the lotus flower one after the other, and then finally it settles near one petal but soon flies away from the screen (Image L02). After it flies away, all objects present around the flower disappear from the scene and only the flower remains on the stage. This symbolises the rudimentary idea starting to form inside one's head. While the camera is flying closely, the flower turns into a simple line brush painting style (Image L03).



L01

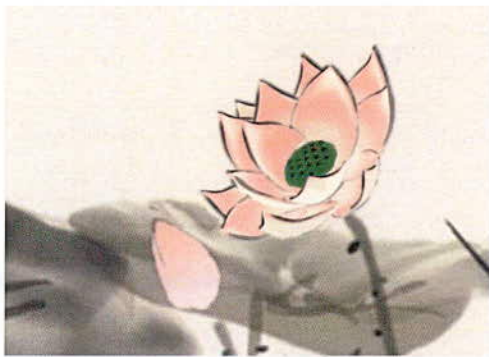


L02



L03

The camera then focuses on the flower and moves around it closely to view it from different angles. When the camera stops turning, the colour gradually shows on the flower and turns it pink. Some other objects such as leaves and float grass appear on the screen in black to decorate the scene and set off the pink flower (Image L04). Then, the camera moves away from the scene and takes a relatively distant view of the lotus flower. It now presents the view of a painting, and as part of the painting, the calligraphy of 'Lotus Flower' and the name seal are presented on the screen to finish the 'painting' right before the end of the animation (Image L05).



L04



L05

The animation of 'Lotus Flower' attempts to illustrate the story of a self-development path. Each individual reacts to the same situation, or appreciates the same object in his own ways depending on his background and emotion at the time. The beginning of the animation shows the scene with a certain look to reflect a Chinese painter's point of view. There are many lotus flowers present in the pool, which reflect the scattered thoughts of the person. Though one has the aim to

achieve a goal in one's life or create an art piece in one's mind, at the beginning the thoughts are not focused on a single idea or inspiration. The dragonfly flies onto the flower, and after touching different petals, it settles on one; that shows how an artist's eye searches around the scene to pick up the right object for the artwork or the person picks a definite goal in life. This search takes time and in this process there are often many ideas that come into one's mind, some of which might be skipped or take on the role of influencing. The settlement of the dragonfly on a petal of the lotus shows how an artist finalizes his subject of work after satisfying himself with the idea, or how a person finds his own way to achieve his goal in life.

The change in the flower's colour and shift into the single-line painted flower gives the animation a touch of the process of traditional Chinese painting. At this time, the colourless flower shows the incompleteness of the art piece of the work in progress and the artist adds certain creative concepts and skills to it. The turning of the flower through 360-degrees shows the consideration of right angles for the painting. While working on an art piece the artist looks around the main object to find out the perfect angle from where he can arrange and complete his work. The 360-degree turning view of the flower also shows many parts of the lotus flower's petals that were not visible from the front. It shows that an artist looks at the object from different angles so that its different aspects can be explored and studied, and that no aspect or feature of the object remains hidden and unexplored by the artist. As in life, it takes time to examine the possible ways of achieving a goal.

The lotus flower is chosen as the main subject of the second animation for a specific reason. In the first animation of the project the bamboo tree painting was used to imply a person's early stage of learning, and in the second animation of the project, a colourful flower painting is used to symbolize the feeling of someone



starting to make contact with the world and discover knowledge above life. The lotus flower here stands for the teaching that we should choose or follow. Selecting the lotus flower indicates doing the right things no matter how others act. At this stage of life, various choices are presented to us. The lotus flower explains to people how they can stand in the worst environment in the best possible way.

### **3.2.5 Snow**

Mountains are considered very powerful by the Chinese, as they are so big. They seem to support the sky and prevent it from falling down, as they are so tall. The image of standing on the ground and supporting the sky relates to the idea of integrity in the Chinese sense. Mountains seem to be stronger than others, as they stand still against the wind and maintain their shape in the four seasons. For the Chinese, remaining unchanged during the four seasons reflects a character of persistence and of being upright. The mountain is understood as a role model for standing for one's beliefs during times of conflict in life, and being magnanimous is however hard this is.<sup>161</sup>

#### **3.2.5.1 Breadth of vision like the mountains**

For over a thousand years, since the Tang dynasty (618-907), Chinese landscape paintings have been understood as both an intimate expression of nature and as a way of conveying profound emotions. Landscape paintings have traditionally been China's favourite paintings as they show poetry in nature. It is the 'nature of nature' that the artist tries to convey in a Chinese landscape painting. Therefore, it is not so much a portrait of a mountain but a composition of many elements of nature, that invite you to wander in imagination through the landscape. Literally translated, the Chinese characters for landscape mean 'mountain and water'. Almost all Chinese landscape paintings depict mountains and water, generally a river.

Ancient Chinese people viewed changes in nature closely in order to speculate and symbolise these natural phenomena; feel and study its beauty; and present its beauty richly. Landscape painting has been popular in China for over a thousand

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<sup>161</sup> Kong Yingda, *The Formal Definition of Shang Shu (Shangshu Zhengyi)*, Volume 18, chapter 23: Jun Chen, Wuxing Liu-Family Corporation, 1916

years because it not only represents landscapes but also contains sentiment, artistic conception and inner beauty. The name 'mountain and water' came from the way Chinese people understood and respected nature. Confucius took the mountain's and river's characters as a role model for morality and once said: 'The wise enjoy the waters, the benevolent enjoy the mountains.'<sup>162</sup> Han Ying (200 BC–120 BC) explained: 'The mountain is tall and big. Plants grow on it. Birds gather there. Animal rests on it. The mountain is generous to everyone. It stands between the sky and earth; surrounded by cloud and wind; gives peace to the world like the benevolent. Water flows through every possible path like the behaviour of a wise man; it flows from up to down like the polite; flows without hesitation like the brave; washes dirt away like one who understands his destiny; explores far and deep like the virtuous.'<sup>163</sup> This explanation influenced the appearance of landscape Poetry and painting.

Although Confucius raised the 'mountain and water' viewpoint in the Spring and Autumn period (770 BC –470 BC), mountains and rivers did not become objects of appreciation by poets and painters until the Jin dynasty (266-420) when southern China was widely developed. The Wei-Jin period was a liberal period that made phenomenal progress in art. Calligraphy, painting, sculpture, music, dancing and literature were all 'resplendent and unprecedented and established the groundwork and trend for posterity literature and art'.<sup>164</sup> Xuan Xue<sup>165</sup> was the major philosophical system in the Wei-Jin period. The central thought of this system is Lao-Zhuang philosophy. The desire to go 'back to nature' pushed the development of landscape painting. Gu Kaizhi and Zong Bing are two major exponents who initiated 'mountain and river' painting. In promoting landscape as an individual

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<sup>162</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects*, chapter 6: Yong Ye

<sup>163</sup> Han Ying, *Han Shi Wai Zhuan* (Philosophical understanding from *The Book of Poetry* ), approximate 150 BC

<sup>164</sup> Zong Baihua, *Take An Aesthetic Walk*, Shanghai People Publisher, 1981, p209

<sup>165</sup> Direct translation of Xuan is metaphysics. Xuan combined thought from Confucianism and Taoism (mainly Taoism), please see chapter 3.1.



painting theme, 'mountain and river' became an individual painting objects rather than the background of portraits or decoration of artefacts. After Wang Wei in the Tang dynasty, Jin Hao in the Five Dynasties period and Guo Xi in the Song dynasty brought it to a greater height of development, and 'mountain and river' painting<sup>166</sup> became very important in the Chinese painting institute.

Landscape painting is considered the most popular painting type as it not only contains rich historical sources, but also is the best response to Zhao Zao's suggestion, 'Regarding nature as one's teacher outside and thinking spirit as one's origin inside'<sup>167</sup>. Its principal feature is that it presents nature as an equally powerful teacher of aspects of personal character as one's own internal spirit.

Huang Binghong (1864-1955) described the preparation for painting landscape in 1948: 'There are four steps for painting landscape: the first step is climbing mountains and playing at the riverside; the second step is getting a close look; the third is making the scene like one's own; the fourth is thinking thrice before acting.'<sup>168</sup> Experiencing the scene personally is the first step in painting objects. 'Having a close look' not only means looking in detail but also making friends with mountains and rivers; taking them as teachers; and becoming personally connected with the scene. 'Making the scene like one's own' means that the painter should place the scene inside his own mind and find the spirit of the scene in order to present the real beauty of the landscape from his heart. 'Thinking thrice before acting' means making a preliminary sketch in one's mind, painting with thought, and painting while thinking.

The above preparatory steps are followed by 'creating the image', 'processing the image' and 'painting'. 'Creating the image' is to process the image that presents a

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<sup>166</sup> Landscape painting is the same as 'mountain and river' painting in the following part of the paper.

<sup>167</sup> Zhang Zao, recorded in Zhang Yanyuan's 'Famous painting in past dynasties' chapter 10, Tang dynasty

<sup>168</sup> Wang Bomin, Huang Binghong Painting Ana, Shanghai People Art Publishing, 1961, p9

blend of artist and the landscape. There are three essential points in creating the image. The first is objective. The objective of 'creating the image' is 'blending with nature, seeing nature as oneself'.<sup>169</sup> The second essential point is method. 'Travelling for ten thousand miles to collect a beautiful mountain for the draft'<sup>170</sup> and then 'creating ten thousand images in the mind, and using a brush to produce the final outcome for a thousand years'.<sup>171</sup> That means the mountain on the paper might not come from one scene solely; it might be the collection of many mountains. The painting makes this combination of 'the mountain' and artist's thought or sentiment last for over a thousand years. The third essential point is the result. The result of 'creating the image' is creating an artistic figure from the real object or objects. The artistic figure comes from the blending of the result of observing the scene and the artist's thoughts.

'Processing the image' means refining the artistic figure in the artist's mind. The 'image' in 'creating the image' is the beauty of an object in the artist's mind. The 'image' in 'processing the image' is the image being presented. It might not be possible to present the beauty in the mind on paper. Therefore, 'processing the image' is deciding which part should be kept or left. Parts that do not need to be presented and that cannot be presented should be abandoned. The image presents the key elements of the scene and the spirit of an artist's mind are marks of successful image processing.

'Painting' means the final result from the above preparations. The objective of landscape painting is to present a combination of landscape beauty and the artist's mind. It is presenting a super-physical 'mountain and river' spirit in order to hold an artist's thoughts and give life and soul to the painting.

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<sup>169</sup> Yi Zhuan – Volume: Xici, (Notes and Commentaries of Thirteen Jings – Standard explanation of Zhou Yi (The Book of Changes), explanatory notes written by Wei dynasty Wang Bi, Jin dynasty Han Kangbo; edited by Tang dynasty Kong Yingda.)

<sup>170</sup> Shi Tao, *Painting Ana* – chapter 8: Mountains, Qing dynasty

<sup>171</sup> Yao Zui, *Add to 'Painting Evaluation'*, Southern dynasty

Take 'Autumn colours on the Que and Hua Mountains' (image ms1), painted by Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), as an example. The painting was painted for his friend Zhou Mi (1232-1298) who could not go back to his hometown and wanted to see the landscape. Zhao Mengfu picked two famous mountains in Jinan for the painting and painted them from his memory. Que Mountain is located east of the Yellow river in Jinan. Hua Mountain is located west of the Yellow river in Jinan. The landscape on the painting shows two mountains depicted within a spatially integrated, physical environment. In this painting, effort at 'verisimilitude' (making things look realistic) has completely vanished. Mountains, trees, and grass are now rendered very simplistically, without attention to relative size. The interest has shifted from the landscape to the painter. It is his act of reinterpreting nature which is now the focus. This is a fundamental shift and it is central to literati painting. The painting is not devoted to nature but to the artist's response to nature. The scene and the painting become a means for expressing the artist's unique self and perspective.



ms1

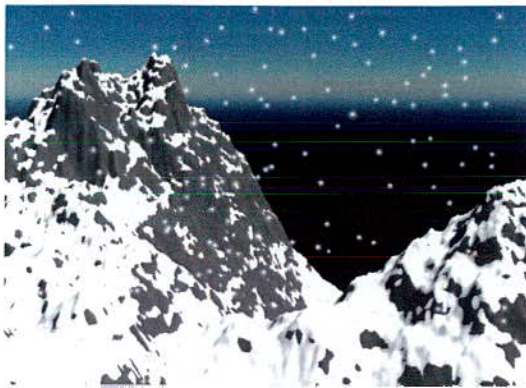
Chinese landscape painting is characterised by scene and sentiment, which are presented artistically by blending the artist's feeling with landscape beauty. It does not emphasise sensory stimulation and rational analysis but the harmonious blending of subjective and objective. A good landscape painting shows a scene that recalls an artist's mixed memories and sentiments.



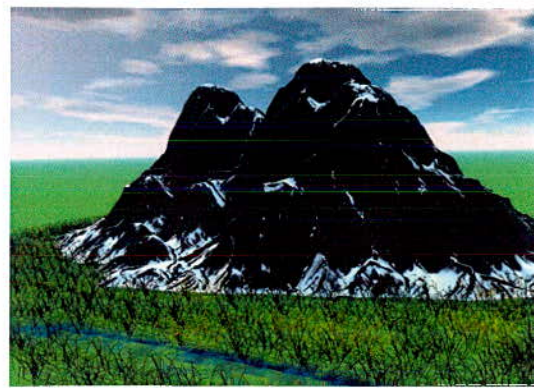
### **3.2.5.2 'Snow Mountain' animation description**

The animation 'Snow Mountain' aims to show the complications of life and in a person's self-development. Images in the animation were created based on the impression of Yulong (Jade Dragon) Mountain. The mountain is located in the Yunnan province of China, which is referred to as the 'home of the spring'. As the mountain is 5596 metres above sea level, there is snow on top of it during all four seasons. Evergreen plants grow on the middle and bottom part of the mountain, and the Jinsha river runs through the valley, Yulong mountain provides everything to support the sentiment in the 'Snow Mountain' animation. The animation contains three parts. One is the mountaintop, which focuses on 'snow'. The second is a panoramic view of the 'mountain', which was created using a different technique to enhance the contrast. The third part is the resulting image, which presents the prominent points of the mountain.

The animation starts with the scene of the mountaintop and the camera flying around the mountain. While the camera is flying around the mountaintop, snow starts to fall and gradually covers the mountain (Image mt01). The camera flies around the mountain to show different angles of the snowy mountaintop. Having finished showing the mountaintop, the camera changes position from above the mountain to the side of the mountain. From this perspective, the weather seems clear and the background changes to blue sky with some clouds. The camera view then moves down to show other parts of the mountain from the side. At the bottom of the mountain, there is a blue river running on the green ground. The camera moves away by remaining focused on the mountain and the grass at the bottom, and shows a complete view of the scene (Image mt02).



mt01



mt02

From the panoramic view, an image which shows some key elements of the scene appears on the screen (image mt03). Snowy mountaintop, blue sky with some clouds, green ground and a blue river together show the impression imprinted on the visitor's mind. Gradually, the image changes to the final painting (image mt04), as shown.



mt03



mt04

Unlike the two previous animations, this animation is divided into three parts, each using different visual styles as images mt01, mt02 and mt03 show. However, like the two previous animations, this one shows how effort, idea and thought are put together and become an art piece. The animation focuses on a special period of life or study process when a person starts combining his knowledge and progresses towards the upper level. It is the time when conflict and complexity are raised by learning from others and one develops one's own ways of doing things. In such a situation it is always a confusing matter for the person to make the decision about taking the next step and to struggle with different ideas and thoughts. 'Exploring

the old and deducing the new<sup>172</sup> is one way to make progress. The animation uses three different visual styles to reflect different aspects of this contradictory stage, and three different ways to analyse this particular situation. Contrary to the other parts of the project, the outcome painting is much more colourful, reflecting the critical point of life or study path as green-blue landscape painting is the turning point of literati painting history.<sup>173</sup> At the turning point of life, a firm mind is essential, as a mountain stands steady through time. In the chaotic situation of conflicting ideas in the mind, a broad-mind helps to blend all learning together to develop the new, just as the river flows over rocks and through mountains to reach the sea no matter how rugged the path is.

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<sup>172</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), Analects – Chapter 2 – Weizheng (Way to govern)

<sup>173</sup> See Chapter 2.1.2 and 3.2.5.1 and 3.1 of this paper.



### **3.2.6 Moon**

After various learning, having peace of mind is the highest achievement for Chinese philosophers. By fully understanding the origin of Tao, a man will have true peace of mind like the moon quietly hanging over the sky. By having a good understanding of life, a man will become indestructible, like the moon's reflection in the river. This achievement of understanding is often presented in a simple way. As Chinese literature is full of suggestions instead of statements, an artwork in simple style is full of possibilities and contains multiple meanings.

#### **3.2.6.1 Complexity hiding behind simplicity**

The artistic conception of literati painting is valued for its simplicity. Using one object to present ten ideas; using as few objects as possible to hint at the various potential scenes is its unique aesthetic appreciation pattern. 'The elegance of painting lies in simplicity. Simplicity is presented when dust is washed away and only clarity is left.'<sup>174</sup> 'The simpler the painting looks, the deeper the meaning it contains.'<sup>175</sup> 'Chinese painters' focus is the part without painting. The blank space is the truth of the universe; it is the artistic conception of the Yi (changes in the world).'<sup>176</sup> Chinese people feel that the innermost part of the universe is hollow, which is formless and colourless. However, this 'hollow' is the source of everything; it is the foundation of every movement; it is an endless creation capability. Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu called it 'Tao', 'nature', 'nothingness'. Confucianism called it 'sky'. Chanism called it 'empty'. Everything came from nothingness and towards the nothingness. Therefore, the blank space on the paper is the 'real spirit of painting'.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Yun Ge (Yun Nantian), Nantian Painting Epilog, Qing dynasty

<sup>175</sup> Shen Hao, Painting Dust, Ming dynasty

<sup>176</sup> Zong Baihua, The Birth of Chinese Artistic Realm, embodied in Realm, Beijing University Press, 1987, p163

<sup>177</sup> Zong Baihua, Take An Aesthetic Walk, Shanghai People Publisher, 1981, p148

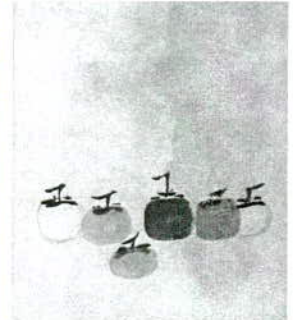
This simplicity not only means the simple layout of painting but also using fewer colours for the painting (image ms1). Guided by Lao Tzu's words: 'The five colours blind the eye. The five sounds deafen the ear. The five tastes spoil the palate.'<sup>178</sup> The water-ink (black ink mixed with water) colour style was taken as beyond the 'colours' (image ms2). Wang Wei also commented, 'In the landscape painting, the (black) ink style is the best.'<sup>179</sup> Water-ink produces extraordinary colour patterns, and such works are considered to be the most unadorned style, containing limitless possibilities of changes as 'Xuan' in Daode Jing explains. Xu Fuguan pointed out that water-ink colour is a colour without decoration and the 'origin of the "colours"' which was 'created by the holy sky'.<sup>180</sup>



ms1



ms2



ms3

This simplicity sometimes makes the painting seem childish. 'Returning to innocence and going back to nature' is the highest achievement of true understanding in life. Image ms3 is a painting by a Song painter who went by the pseudonym of Mu Xi, who is celebrated as the ultimate in painterly simplicity. Six persimmons are represented by ink lines and washes so elementary that it would seem like a schoolchild could have done them (the same type of comment later made of Picasso in the West) - yet the rendering and placement of the persimmons was an unprecedented artistic innovation. The concept of simplicity in literati

<sup>178</sup> Li Er (Lao Tzu), Daode Jing, chapter 12

<sup>179</sup> Wang Wei, Mountain And River Knack, Tang dynasty

<sup>180</sup> Xu Fuguan, Chinese art spirit, P221, Huadong General University Publisher, December 2001

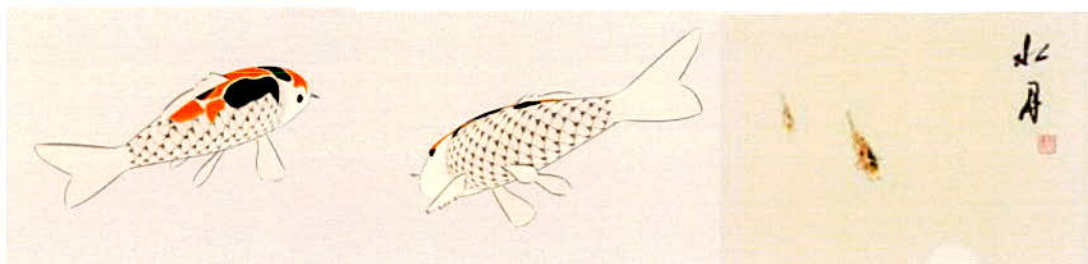
painting is the combination of Lao-Chuang philosophy, Xuan Xue, Chanism and Mind study. It is using non-colour to excel colour, invisible to excel visible, and even non-skilled to excel non-skilled. As Zheng Banqiao said, 'Being smart is difficult; being un-smart is even more difficult; the most difficult thing is turning from smart to un-smart.'

The animation 'Moon above the river' is the last animation of the project, and it is presented in the fourth room of the building. The lively part of the animation is two fish swimming in the river. As a common creature in the river, fish brought many inspirations to Chinese philosophers. The image of 'fishing man' can be found in much ancient Chinese literature and in many stories. The 'fishing man' here does not mean the fisherman in the common sense. It means 'the man who spends life or time next to or on the river'. If this explanation is taken further, the 'fishing man' means 'the man who learns from the fish or has the spirit of the fish', which hints at 'the man who understands the Tao'. The word 'fishing' has the hint of learning from or thinking as fish. The earliest image of 'fishing man' was presented in 'Zhuang Zi – Fishing Man'. The story used conversations between 'fishing man', Confucius and his students to point out that 'people should respect the wise men regardless of their occupations'. However, 'the wise' usually came out as 'fishing man' because of what the river represents in Chinese philosophy.<sup>181</sup> 'The Odes of Chu – Fishing man' was the first to give a clear philosophical connotation to the 'fishing man'. In that story, the fishing man became another name for a knowledgeable hermit. Being wise means to understand what true happiness is. True happiness comes from simplicity. In order to present this idea, the project changed the fish model from simply showing lively and happy fish (image fso) to black ink style fish (image fs1) to show a more complex meaning.

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<sup>181</sup> See the explanation of symbolic of river in chapter 3.2.5.1





fso



fs1

The 'fishing man' gains wisdom from the sky and earth (the universe). The universe is ruled by Yin and Yang. The fundamental premise of Yin-Yang philosophy is the concept of the unity of opposites. According to the theory of Yin-Yang, everything in the natural world is made up of two opposing aspects - Yin and Yang, and the constant changes of their relations are the root cause of the formation and development of the world. Unity of opposites is the general principle of the development of the material world. Yi Jing holds that Yin-Yang is both the fundamental law in the natural world and the origin of growth, development, decline, and all other changes. As the root of the universe energy, Yin and Yang are the consciousness of the wisdom in Yi Jing which divides everything into two.<sup>182</sup> As to what it says in Yi Zhuan: 'One Yin plus one Yang is the Tao.'<sup>183</sup>

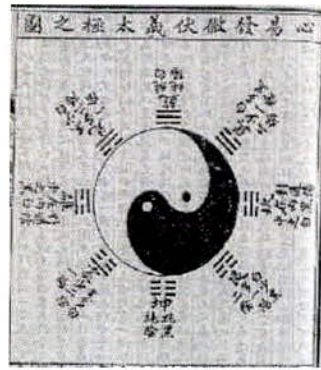
<sup>182</sup> Huang Kejian, From Morality Value to Understand Yin-Yang Philosophers – An Elucidation to Yin-Yang Five-Element Theory, Fujian Tribune, 2005, 5<sup>th</sup> issue; Li Zehou, Chinese Aesthetics History, Volume 1, Chinese Social Science Press, 1984, p82

<sup>183</sup> Yi Zhuan – Xici – chapter 1

The Yin and Yang represent all the opposite principles in the universe. Under Yang are the principles of maleness, the sun, creation, heat, light, Heaven, dominance, and so on; under Yin are the principles of femaleness, the moon, completion, cold, darkness, material forms, submission, and so on. Each of these opposites produces the other: the sky creates the ideas of things under Yang, the earth produces their material forms under Yin, and vice versa; creation occurs under the principle of Yang, the completion of the created thing occurs under Yin, and vice versa. This production of Yin from Yang, and Yang from Yin, occurs cyclically and constantly, so that no one principle continually dominates the other or determines the other. All opposites that one experiences - health and sickness, wealth and poverty, power and submission - can be explained by reference to the temporary dominance of one principle over the other. Since no one principle dominates eternally, that means that all conditions are subject to change into their opposites.<sup>184</sup> The best visual presentation for Yin-Yang theory is the Yin-Yang symbol (image yy1), which is also called 'Yin-Yang Fishes' or 'Yin-Yang Taiji image'.



yy1



yy2

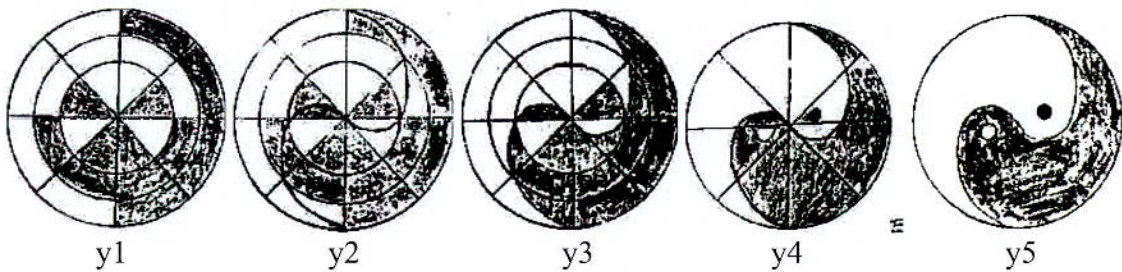


yy3

The commonly known 'Yin-Yang Taiji image' first appeared in Zhao Huiqian's 'Origin Meaning of Six Books', and was called 'Nature of Universe Flowing Image (Tiandi Ziran He Tu)'. Zhang Huang (1527-1608) took it into the 'Images of Books

<sup>184</sup> Richard Hooker, Yin and Yang, Chinese Philosophy, World Civilizations, 1996

Collection (Tu Shu Bian)' and changed its name to 'Ancient Taiji Symbol'. In the early Qing dynasty (1644-1911), when Gao Xuejun compiled the 'Yi Jing Annotation and Illustration', he put the developed image 'Image of Core of Yi With Fuxi Taiji (Xi Yi Fa Wei Fuxi Taiji Zhi Tu)' into the chapter 'Adopted Image of Zhou Yi (Zhouyi Cai Tu)' (image yy2). This image was developed from Zhu Zifa's 'Illustration of Eight Diagrams (Na Jia Zhi Tu)'<sup>185</sup> (image yy3) and Zhou Dunyi's (1017-1073) article of 'Explanation of Taiji Symbol'.<sup>186</sup> In order to dovetail image yy3 into yy2, a proportion of each part is the crucial issue. Yi Jing researcher Guo Yuyi published the derivative path in 1995 (I Ching Research Journal) as images y1-y5.



According to Guo Yuyi's finding, the image derivative process is as below:

1. Draw three concentric circles; divide them into eight sectors; use white and black to fill each cell according to the Lines Diagram. White is 'Qian (sky)' and black is 'Kun (earth)'.

2. Use a contrary 'S' curved line to link intersections from top to bottom.

3. Turn the middle two sections opposite.

4. Add fish eyes to the two sections mentioned in step 3. Delete lines of circles.

(from image y3 to y4)

5. Change waterdrop-like fish eyes to round spots. After deleting section lines, a final Yin-Yang Taiji symbol remains.

<sup>185</sup> It is same as Yang Jia's 'Fuxi Eight Diagrams Image'. So, it is also called 'Fuxi Eight Diagrams Image (Fuxi Bagua Tu)'

<sup>186</sup> Zhang Huiyan, Detailed Analyses of Illustrations of Yi, Qing dynasty



This Yin-Yang symbol is a good example of simplicity in the Chinese literati painting sense. The image only contains two basic colours, black and white. The design of the symbol is simplified but represents many thoughts and understandings. When it appears in the animation 'Moon above the river', it shows consistent meaning and the end in response to the beginning (of the project) (image fs2).



fs2

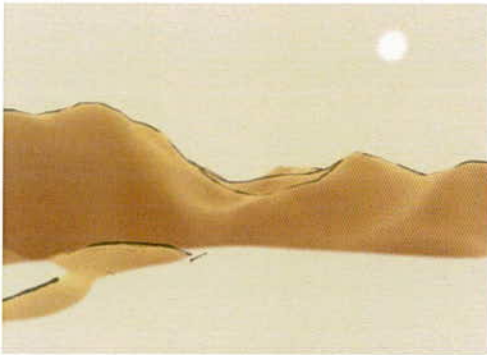
### **3.2.6.2 'Moon Above The River' animation description**

The animation 'Moon above the river' takes place in the fourth room of the building, the last that can be entered in the project. 'Moon above the river' not only shows another stage of life understanding but also plays a role in completing the idea of the project. In order to make a response to the beginning of the project, the Yin-Yang theory has been adopted to serve the idea of what simplicity means in Chinese philosophical understanding. Some objects were used to compose the animation, such as mountain, river, moon and fish.

The animation starts with the scene of the moon over a river which flows across mountains (Image m01). These objects represent some basic elements of the energy of the world, such as sky (air), soil and water. The original power of the world is the Yin and Yang, which are also the key elements that maintain the balance of the energy flow. In the scene, river and mountain represent soft and hard, running and steady; moon and mountain represent sky and earth, upper and nether; moon on the sky represents black and white, light and dark. The moon was chosen instead of the sun for various reasons. First of all, the moon is more poetic, with its soft light and appearance during the quiet night. Being poetic is an essential requirement of Chinese literati painting. Secondly, the moon represents an idea of 'completion' or 'the whole of...', which is one of the purposes of the animation in this project. As the moon usually comes out at night, the idea of the 'end of the day' also serves the meaning of 'finishing'. Thirdly, the moon symbolises virtue and personal quality in a Chinese sense. As Fu Shaoliang commented, 'At the stage of philosophical development, the moon was not only the main component of the sentiment but also contained a combination of individual will and eternal spirit.'<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Fu Shaoliang, Discussion of Moon Imagery And Philosophical Style in Li Bai's Poems, Shaanxi General University Journal, Philosophy and Social Science Section, Sep 1996, p43



m01



m02

After showing the whole scene, the camera soon changes to focus on one part of the river, where some fishes are swimming by (image m02). After the fishes disappear from the scene, a float drops into the river, which attracts two fishes to swim back to play around (image m03). While they are playing around the float, their figures and the whirlpool form the image of the Yin-Yang Taiji symbol (image m04).



m03



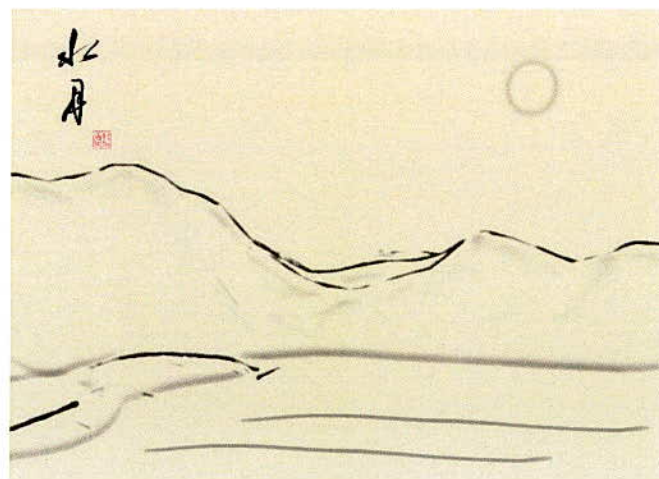
m04

The animation uses these two objects, whirlpool and fishes, as the key elements to show inspiration occurring inside the artist's head. The idea that 'all conditions are subject to change into their opposites' in Yin-Yang theory was used to imply that Chinese philosophy is a blended combination of many philosophical systems, every of them influencing every other and containing ideas from every other. It is the same situation in life, that no one's life is affected by only one factor. A person's



thoughts and understanding of the world are a combination of his life experience, which includes his education, living environment, things he witnessed or stories he heard, everybody he met, etc. It is same with the study process and achievement. A person chooses his school and subjects according to what he learnt in the past. This influences his interests and his view of the value of study. Thus, the core spirit of the animation is not Yin-Yang theory but the blending of philosophical views from three thousand years of Chinese literature history, which is the spirit of the literati art presented today.

After the two fishes link the idea to the Yin-Yang Fishes in the animation, the Yin-Yang symbol appears, and then increases in size until it covers the whole scene. While it grows, the symbol gradually becomes transparent and the mountain and river appear from behind the Yin-Yang ball. While the two fishes are swimming away from the float, the camera changes the view back to show the moon above the mountain and river. Then, the colours fade away and a line drawing style painting remains on the scene to present the simplicity in a visual way (Image m05). This part of the animation shows the idea of analysing the world through Yin-Yang, and then presenting Yin-Yang with the image of the world.



m05

Like the other animations, 'Moon above the river' also shows the process of how the scene is transformed into a painting. This process shows the way that a complex thought turns out to be a simple-looking painting. The 'Moon' and 'River' in the name of the animation implies the idea of 'Vasting sky last through the ages, daily wind and moon'<sup>188</sup>. They also imply the opposite conditions such as upper and lower, sky and ground, which is the concept of the Yin-Yang symbol. Using two fishes to introduce the Yin-Yang Taiji image, the animation started and ended with the scene of the moon above the river. The nature (in the heart) is nature as well as the original Tao which is ruled by Yin and Yang. The simplicity in the resulting painting (image m05) is another way to show the nature in a literati painting sense. No matter how complicated the development is, it is still based on the fundamental theory and presents the basic theory in many ways.

While the swimming fishes can be seen as the inspiration for the idea of the original Tao behind the scene, they can also be taken as imagination associated with the river. The result painting chose simplicity as its style for two reasons. One is to reflect a state of peace of mind, that is the understanding of simplicity which developed from complexity. The other reason is to expand the implication used in the animation. While the image seems simple, it has more possible ideas behind it. As the old saying goes, 'the more you can see the less you think'.

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<sup>188</sup> See chapter 3.1 - the context of the project: Chinese art spirit

### **3.2.7 Endings: Poetry is a speaking picture, painting is a silent poetry**

Poetry is an essential element in Chinese literati art. 'Painting in poetry and poetry in painting' has been one of the criteria for excellent works of literati painting.<sup>189</sup> This poetry in painting has two meanings. One is using poetry to enrich or explain the painting. This form came out in the early Chinese painting history. In the Eastern-Jin dynasty (317-420), Gu Kaizhi used different poems to point out the theme and thought in each section of his famous twelve sections painting 'Picture Scroll of Female Scholars'. Another meaning of 'poetry in painting' is taking the meaning of a poem into painting. This means presenting the meaning of the poem through the painting. Gu Kaizhi's 'Picture Scroll of the Luo River Nymph' is one example, which was painted according to the poem 'The Ode of the River Goddess'. Sometimes, painting was inspired by just one line of a poem. The line 'Fishing snow alone on a cold river' from the poem 'A River In The Snow'<sup>190</sup> might be the most popular title among literati painting themes, which was painted by Ma Yuan (1140-1225), Yuan Shangtong (1570-1661), Shen Zhou (1427-1509), Zhu Duan (Ming dynasty), Zhang Daqian (1899-1983) and more. Each artist painted the same theme with different objects and in their own style in order to show their understanding and feelings about the poem, and to emphasise the sentiment inside their minds.

A good inscription can enrich the connotation of the painting. The inscription in Chinese painting can mean using one line from a poem as the name of the painting, or a full poem to explain or highlight the meaning of the painting, or any words to name or conclude the painting. As Fang Xun (1736-1799) said: 'By using an

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<sup>189</sup> Su Shi, Dongpo's Remarks On Poetry and Painting, Chapter: Comment on Mojie's Painting of 'Blue Grand in Misty Rain', Song Dynasty

<sup>190</sup> Poem 'A River In The Snow' was written by Liu Zongyuan (773-819).



inscription<sup>191</sup> in a painting, the painting becomes more meaningful. Some complex thoughts or sentiments might not be presented fully in the painting. Putting in an inscription might help posterity to understand from whence it came.<sup>192</sup> Therefore, poetry is an important element in literati painting. The quality of the poem directly affects the success of the painting.

Wang Anshi's (1021-1086) seven-character cut-shorts poem 'Over the River' was chosen for the end of the project to conclude and further explain the idea of each section and the whole idea of the project.

*Over the north of the river, the autumn cloud seems to be getting clearer  
There still rain clouds linger in the evening sky  
Mountains are wreathed by mist and cloud. There seems no way through  
A faint gleam of sails appears on the river all of a sudden (Wang Anshi, Over the River,  
Northern Song Dynasty)*

Wang Anshi was a well-known poet in the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). He wrote many fine landscape cut-shorts after he retired. Even Huang Tingjian<sup>193</sup> (1045-1105) admired Wang's works: 'The verselets from Jinggong's<sup>194</sup> late years are beautiful, delicate and elegant.'<sup>195</sup> The poem 'Over the River' was inspired by the shadow of boats on the autumn river. The first two sentences describe the sky while the last two sentences describe the ground. In the first two sentences, the weather seems about to change from cloudy to clear. However, the sky unexpectedly changes, becoming covered by heavy rain clouds. The sky changes

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<sup>191</sup> The inscription, whether a word or a poem, is taken as part of the painting. It plays a role in layout as well as decoration.

<sup>192</sup> Fang Xun, *Shanjing Ju Painting Treatise (Shan Jing Ju Hua Lun)*, Qing Dynasty

<sup>193</sup> Huang Tingjian was famous poet and calligrapher in the Song dynasty. His was the founder of Jiangxi Peom School which was all the rage at the time.

<sup>194</sup> Jinggong is respectful form of address to Wang Anshi.

<sup>195</sup> Huang Tingjian, *Shaoxi Fishing And Living In Seclusion Thought Collections*, chapter 35, Song Dynasty

from thick weather to slightly cloudy and then changes again to overcast. This not only presents the change in the weather but also the change of the poet's mood. When the poet looks into the distance, although his vision was blocked by mist and cloud, some sailing ships appeared through the mist. The poet used the change of scene to present the weltanschauung that he learnt from life, which as Lu You (1125-1210) wrote in 'A Visit to a Village West of the Mountains', 'Where hills bend, streams wind and the pathway seems to end; After pasting dark willows and flowers in bloom, lies another village.'<sup>196</sup>

The poem 'Over the River' was broken down to inscribe the four main parts of the project and together to inscribe the whole project. The whole poem comes up on the screen after four animations have been played. However, the project can be ended at any point of the exploration by pressing the 'Q' key, where the 'Q' refers to quit. As the poem is used to inscribe the animations in order, ending the project before watching the animation 'Bamboo In The Wind' does not lead to the appearance of the poem. In this case, only an image of a cloudy sky appears on the screen (image e01). This is to hint that if a person gives up right after starting a journey, he will not receive much from this experience. The understanding he gains from life or study is like an overcast sky which is an unclear idea and full of confusion.

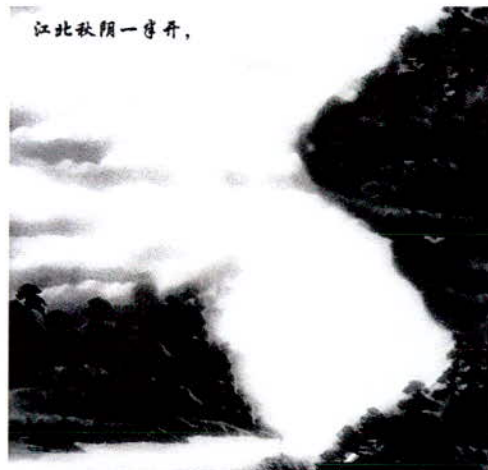


e01

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<sup>196</sup> Lu You, *The Collection of Lu You's Poems*, Yang Xianyi And Dai Naidie Verson, Chapter 1: A Visit to a Village West of the Mountains, Chinese Literature Publisher, 2009

If the project is ended after the animation 'Bamboo in the Wind', the first line of the poem 'Over the north of the river, the autumn cloud seems to be getting clearer' appears on the screen. As a result of this stage, the image on the screen is not only a cloudy sky but some parts of the mountain and ground appear through the cloud (image e02). This line of the poem works as a finishing touch. As the line describes, and the image shows, the early phase of study and life is just like the first time looking outside the window, where many things are hiding behind other buildings and trees, and waiting to be explored. However, one glance through the window gives us some idea about the outside world. That is why the image shows a limited view of the scene through the heavy cloud.



*Over the north of the river, the autumn cloud seems to be getting clearer*

e02

When the project ends after finishing playing the animation 'Lotus Flower', the first two lines of the poem 'Over the north of the river, the autumn cloud seems to be getting clearer / There still rain clouds linger on the evening sky' will be shown on the screen. Compared to the ending after the animation 'Bamboo In The Wind', the image for this ending seems clearer and contains more objects (image e03). The finishing touch for the animation 'Lotus Flower' is the second line of the poem 'There still rain clouds linger on the evening sky'. The animation 'Lotus Flower' hints at the idea of various possibilities and choices. Choosing the right direction or finding the right position to stand is the key score for this stage. Ending the project



at this point is just as the poem describes. Although the sky seems to be getting clearer, there are still some rain clouds which might worsen the weather condition. The image shown hints at the diversity of the world being discovered, but more development is needed in order to get a better or clearer image of the world.

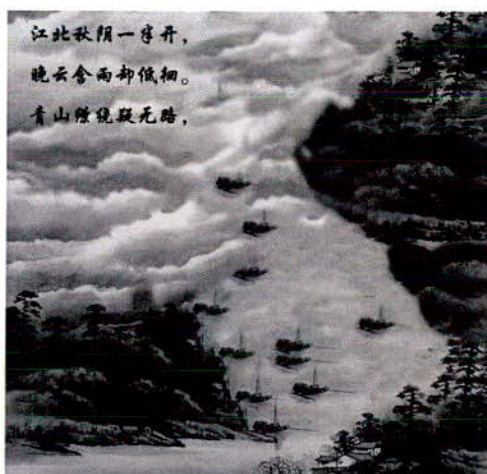


*Over the north of the river, the autumn cloud seems to be getting clearer*

*There still rain clouds linger in the evening sky*

e03

When the project ends after finishing playing the animation 'Snow Mountain', three lines of the poem 'Over the north of the river, the autumn cloud seems to be getting clearer / There still rain clouds linger in the evening sky / Mountains are wreathed by mist and cloud, there seems no way through' will appear on the screen. The third line of the poem 'Mountains are wreathed by mist and cloud, there seems no way through' is inscribed on the animation 'Snow Mountain'. This line portrays the situation of conflict, which is the same thought presented in the animation 'Snow Mountain'. The image for the ending at this stage is much clearer than the ending after the animation 'Lotus Flower'. As the spectator gets closer to the final ending, the clearer image hints that in real life also, when a person explores various experiences and is about to reach the final point of the journey, the understanding of life starts to become clearer for him and he also gets the feeling of gradual completion within himself. However, it is also much more difficult to step up from this stage. As the poem describes, 'there seems no way to through'.



e04

*Over the north of the  
river, the autumn cloud  
seems to be getting  
clearer*

*There still rain clouds  
linger in the evening sky*

*Mountains are wreathed  
by mist and cloud.  
There seems no way  
through*

If the project is fully explored, then the project ends after finishing playing the animation 'Moon above the river', and the full poem is shown as the final ending of the project. The image for this ending is clear and colourful (image e05). It shows that after reaching the final destination, the person can enjoy the full fruits of his efforts. The fourth line of the poem 'A faint gleam of sails appears on the river all of a sudden' inscribes the animation 'Moon above the river'. As the line describes, after some conflict in life and through continual study, sudden enlightenment will come, and clear understanding in life will lead to a clear direction to the destination. At the same time, the full four-line poem provides the finishing touch to the project. It describes the whole journey presented by the project. The early understanding, development and conflict in the mind the essential stages for final success.



e05

*Over the north of the  
river, the autumn cloud  
seems to be getting  
clearer*

*There still rain clouds  
linger in the evening sky*

*Mountains are wreathed  
by mist and cloud.  
There seems no way  
through*

*A faint gleam of sails  
appears on the river all  
of a sudden*

The design of the project to end at different points, thereby leading to different endings, hints at the idea that ending studying and exploring life at different stages will lead to different results in life and the level of study. The project shows that as in life, people can take control of their choices, and these choices have different consequences.



### **3.3 Analysis and evaluation**

The term 'Guohua' in Chinese has two meanings. One is short for 'Zhongguo Hua', which is the English term for 'traditional Chinese painting'. The other meaning is 'Guocui (the quintessence of a country)' that in the field of painting has been used as the equivalent of 'literati painting'. The reasons why literati painting has been considered part of the quintessence of China have been clearly shown earlier. They are its philosophical context, literary background, function as 'visual literature' and the personal qualities of the artist, its relationship with the accomplishments of the literati, and the way it reflects three thousand years of Chinese art history. Thus, the history of literati art is also the history of Chinese philosophy and literature. Although the major influences upon literati painting came from Lao-Zhuang, Xuanxue, Chan, Original Confucianism, Lu-Wang's theory (Mind Study), and their integration, other philosophical thoughts have also contributed to the development of literati art, such as the Five Elements, Yin-Yang theory and the philosophical aspects of Zhou Yi. Since every aspect of literati painting, such as painted objects, colour usage and layout, is applied for specific reasons, literati painting should be taken as 'visual literature' with particular 'grammar' and 'vocabulary'. The artist's view of the world and of life is reflected in the way the painting is 'written', just as that of the viewer is found in the approach to 'reading' the work.

As literati painting was started by literati, who were so-called 'amateur painters' for many dynasties, painting technique was not the main focus in creating a literati painting. This does not mean painting technique does not play a role in presenting an artist's ideas and sentiment. It means that the method of creating literati painting is flexible. For example, according to 'Famous Painting from Past Dynasties', Zhang Zao used bald brushes or fingers to paint. The decision to choose certain creative methods and art tools serves the purpose of an individual creation. Through some pioneers' work, the study demonstrates the possibilities of

presenting literati art's visual style and spirit through new media with different techniques. This study applies the theories in practice to create a computer-generated multimedia artwork and analyses some other works to help further understanding of the spirit of literati painting, whilst explaining the context of each part of the project. Because of the nature of the study and the media chosen for the project creation, the study does not pay much attention to the brush painting technique, instead concentrating on the visual result in the painting.

In order to take advantage of digital technology and innovative literati art, the project uses animations instead of written words to explain ideas behind the 'paintings' in different 'rooms'. Several pieces of music were set in the background to enhance the effect of the scene or animation, at the same time, to lend a poetic feel to the project. A three-dimensional and interactive scene was created to link four main 'paintings' together to tell a linked and integrated story. This three-dimensional interactive and responsive scene envelops the spectators in such a way that they hopefully feel engaged and captivated by the project. This experience is defined as distinctly different from the experience of looking at a painting on the wall as a detached observer. The poem, which appears at the end of the project, further expresses and concludes the thought behind the project, which shows a certain level of understanding of Chinese philosophy and artistic concept, whilst demonstrating the artist's ability to create a digital artwork based on this understanding. In Chinese literati art, Li (propriety) and music are integrated; calligraphy and painting share the same origin; poetry and painting share the same ethos. Music, painting, literature and calligraphy share the same artistic spirit; and their concepts are interconnected.<sup>197</sup> The project combines music, painting, literature, poetry and calligraphy through the medium of digital technology, which has the advantage of presenting this concept in a different format. In terms of

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<sup>197</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects* – Taibo; Zhang Yanyuan, *Famous Paintings from Past Dynasties*, Volume 1 - Chapter 1: The Origin of Painting



practice this project demonstrates the possibility of creating 'Shuma Wenren Yishu (literati digital art)', thus fulfilling the aim of the study to revitalise and transform an older but continuing Chinese artistic tradition through the use of an innovative medium.

On the other hand, in the theoretical sense, the research aspects of the study analyse and draw conclusions from the theories and concepts of literati art history. Based on this, the potential developmental pathway of literati art can be indicated. Similarly to the history of Chanism, some new philosophical ideas, which have entered China and become blended with traditional Chinese thoughts, might one day become an influence on literati art concepts. The development of technology might trigger new modes of presentation for literati art. Their appearance would be similar to the way Shuqing Manhua (literati caricature) and animation appeared in the past, and Shuma Wenren Yishu (literati digital art) does in the present. Along with changes of philosophy and technology, some changes in visual style, such as colour and layout, might occur, parallel to previous occurrences in the past. From the history and potential development of literati painting, the contribution of this study not only extends the literati art concept into digital space, it also links its past to its future.

The process of making the 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' was divided into three stages: still image, animation and interaction. These three stages of work were roughly managed within the first 3-4 years of the study. Literature and art concept studies were also carried out during the time of creating the project and the dissertation was completed afterwards. The result of each stage can be interpreted individually as literati art in the relevant format. As different formats of artwork have different effects on audiences, different feedback was received from these stages of the work. Since most audiences are artists and art students, the visual result of the



work is the key element to catch attention. As with other digital artwork, the adopted techniques are also focused on by many digital art practitioners.

Visual style is an essential part of this study as literati painting has its own language in terms of 'writing'. Although the paintings seem to be the 'result' of the animations, they were the first part to be examined in the process of creating the 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project. The 'still image' stage is for examining the rendering result of the scene. This is the stage at which all the resulting paintings were created. In a computer 3D environment, a still image can be taken from any angle while objects can easily be hidden or have their position changed. While allocating the position of the camera, the texture or colour of the objects can also be changed along with different rendering effects to examine the outcome. Because of this flexibility, more of the potentially resultant paintings can be examined. These painting-like computer generated images show the possibility of creating literati painting through 3D technology. An exhibition was held to find out audiences' reaction to computer generated Chinese painting. Although the Chinese style is interesting for many European audiences, most of them are more interested in the stage of interaction. The reactions of audiences show that the visual beauty of literati art is attractive regardless of the technique used to create it. Just as Chen Shizeng (1876-1923) widened the range of literati art by introducing it into caricature and the printing industry, the 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project introduced the same art concept into the 3D digital realm.

Once the resulting painting was chosen, the work on the second stage, animation, began. One of the advantages of using computers to create literati art is that the meaning of the work can be explained in different ways. This project chose to use animations to explain ideas behind paintings in different rooms. Since China has changed its focus to technology and economic development, classical literature has

received less attention from young students. Using animation to explain ideas is much more interesting and easier for young people to accept. While digital technology has been receiving significant attention in the country, the technique used to create this project has also become an attraction for young students. The moving picture makes the painting come to life, which is the idea that the film 'Where is Mama?' promoted. This approach tells a much clearer story without the requirements of classical literature study. Because of the attention that Chinese people pay to the new technology, 3D animation attracts people from different ages without explanation. Making 'Chinese' animation is strongly encouraged in China currently, as these painting-like animations cater for the tastes of Chinese audiences. However, audiences of other nationalities also accord a warm welcome to this visual style.

Apart from the visual style, one of the key purposes of this project is to engage with audiences. The interactive functions of this project were set up to explain literati ideas through new channels, as well as inviting audiences to be part of the project. While 3D animation shows audiences a 'live painting', 3D interactive scenes allow audiences to 'walk' into the painting and enjoy the view from different angles. When an audience's action is the way to get a project going, the project turns the audience's attitude from passive watching or listening into active participation. Once again, this stage of the project offers another approach to presenting literati sentiment and makes itself a new format of literati art. Together with other elements, such as animation and music, this multimedia project fascinates people of different ages and nationalities.

During these three stages of project development, some ideas have been changed. The original idea of this project was to make a scene that simulates the structure of reality but with a painting-like visual style. However, in reality, a bamboo wood or

lotus pool contains too many objects. Because of the importance of the visual result in this project, low polygon modelling was never an option. A huge number of high polygon models make the interactive scene become much harder to create and play with. Consider the performance of audiences' computers. The four main scenes have been changed into four animations, and all of the interactive functions happen within a building. As in literati art, everything is placed for a reason; the visual style and structure of the building were carefully designed in order to serve the meaning of the project.

While expressing one's sentiment is one of the key characteristics of literati art, a desire to be accepted by others coexists. The 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project was created to present a new branch of literati art. At the same time, it attempts to add new elements and presentation formats into this very new 'Shuma Wenren Yishu (digital literati art)'. While some modelling and colour usage details were applied according to the Forbidden City, the structure and surroundings of the building were created according to the painting 'Peace region over the river'. This combination is another way of explaining literati art, which is the combination of poetic sentiment and formal education, and an attitude of withdrawal with a desire to be accepted by society. The painting in each room shows the attitude of living inside the real world with the soul following the teaching of nature.

Unintentionally, the 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project contradicts a common attitude of literati artists, which is the combination of a desire to present one's thoughts and concern about the acceptance level of the artwork. This concern about the acceptance that the project might receive makes the work contain less personal sentiment and more general philosophical ideas. On the one hand, this project presents a typical literati attitude. At some level, it embodies the spirit of Chinese culture as well as personal morality and educational background. On the



other hand, the work is not careless enough to free one's spirit. This study uses the traditional literati art language to 'write' a project, which could more bravely develop the 'language'. Since the education system has changed significantly, scholars today receive very different teaching from ancient times. It should be acceptable to make some changes to literati art language, such as using new objects to symbolise new philosophical meaning. Although formality is not encouraged in literati art, this attitude of being unable to be free and easy somehow also reflects my background and experience in life.

Also because of concern about the acceptance that the project might receive, the project has adopted many approaches to explain the idea. Apart from animation, interaction and musical instruments, a poem comes up at the end of the project to enhance and conclude the idea. The poem in some ways links this digital project to the traditional mode and classicism, which gives a cordial feeling to many Chinese people. While using a poem to explain an artwork seems more appropriate to older audiences in China, it also brings the charm of the classical to young students. Although the idea of using the poem as the ending seems logical to most Chinese, it often raises questions among Europeans. Since the project uses animation for each part of the project, including the beginning, perhaps ending with an animation would be more expected. However, the process of creating 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project took quite a long time. Each part of the project was created under the influence of my emotions at the time, while the basic structural design was done at the very beginning. The use of the final poem seemed to be the best decision at the time. It is also the only part of the project that shows flat images. It unintentionally represents the philosophical idea of simplicity and serves the idea of 'end-around'.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Concept of simplicity and end-around can be found in chapter 3.2.6.1 and 3.2.1.

It was because of the capability of digital technology that the project could combine many approaches to explain ideas and meanings. However, while this technology is showing its potential in art development, questions regarding its restriction arise. Although progress in computer technology over the last four decades has been spectacular, there are still limits to its capability. The original project idea neglected this and it was therefore necessary to change during the process. On the one hand, being ambitious can help one to study more and achieve high standards for the project. However, being realistic is also important to get the project done. Some lessons could be passed on through this project. The creation of a digital art project should consider the hardware and software available to both the artist and audiences. Moreover, changes in computer art are quite often bound up with changes or developments in the digital industry. Development decisions of software, or changes that happen within or across organisations, affect the market and determine the availability or compatibility of the software. Because of uncertainty over the future of current creation tools, digital art techniques or skills might not be passed down through the generations as happened with traditional art. However, the idea of creating art in different formats, the spirit of exploration, and being innovative, are things that deserve to be maintained.

As the thesis explains, a literati art piece should be created with flexible techniques depending on the need. To limit the method or technique would only restrict the presentation of expressions and ideas. The 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project emerged from the idea of making literati art with digital technology, and promotes the attitude of inheriting cultural tradition and being free in the methods of creating literati art. According to this concept, future digital literati art can be created in various ways using any hardware, software or computer language.

For instance, the 'bamboo wood' scene could stand alone as an individual project and contain fewer objects in order to allow the audience to 'walk' inside the 'painting'. Lighting, sound and colour changes could take over the modelling task to create certain effects. Since literati art does not require reality to be matched precisely, scenes may be more abstract. Once the file is lighter, it is possible to run it as a 3D interactive project on most computers. Some older methods can also create an 'easy-run' environment, such as using sequence images instead of a 3D scene. This type of visual art creation is not as challenging as working on 3D environments, but the programming part might be an issue for most artists. Various applications and plug-ins are under development. A digital literati artwork can be created in any form within digital environment.

The way the 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project was created was influenced by the history of late last century. The most significant influences from the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are the catchphrase 'Master mathematics, physics, and chemistry, travel the world yet fear nothing' and the concept of 'spiritual civilisation'. The former emerged in 1978, and was believed to be the approach to achieve modernisation. Modernisation in China means working and living with updated technology. This attitude of keeping updating spread into all fields, including art creation. After the operating system Windows 95 came out, personal computers gradually became household appliances in China. This widespread use of computers made them common tools for most artists and their audiences.

It was also in the late 1970s that the term 'spiritual civilisation' emerged. However, it did not closely relate to classical culture until the 1990s, when Jiang Zemin (1926-) suggested elegant culture and the 2008 Beijing Olympic candidature logo was chosen. Spiritual civilisation, a term used to denote general intellectual activity, including ethics and morality, science and culture, like many other terms in



China, has a Chinese character. There are general definitions for spiritual civilisation such as 'intellectual and moral qualities', 'a civilisation which is culturally and ideologically advanced'; 'a civilisation with a high cultural and ideological level'; 'cultural and ideological progress'; and 'advanced culture and ethics'. These definitions show that history and traditional culture are gaining more attention in China. As part of traditional Chinese culture, maintaining and developing our spiritual civilisation have become an obligation for all Chinese people.

Because of the above background, creating a Chinese digital art style is strongly encouraged. It also provides the motivation for this project, which is to practice with new technology and contribute to cultural development. Since 3D interactivity is new in the field of digital art, examining the possibility of creating a project like 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' became a fascinating idea for me. It is also because of this historical background that the project received positive feedback in China without questions about the reason for combining traditional concepts with new technology. As mentioned in the introduction, every art form that emerges relies on the development of society and technology at the time. This very new digital literati art represents current Chinese cultural, educational, technological and economic status. The merger of digital literati art on the one hand represents a common historical event in China: after a certain time, everything in China will start to have a Chinese character. On the other hand, the popularity of the 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project shows the rise of national confidence, which has been ignored by the public for over two centuries. While the feedback that the project received from China indicates to an extent the popularity of the idea, the feedback received from some other nationalities indicates their lack of comprehension of this literati culture.

Although the literati sentiment is not recognised by many audiences, its visual beauty is welcomed by most people. Art is usually easier to accept than written words. It can be seen as an international language that can be translated into any kind of language. For example, the ancient Chinese often used music to show their understanding of a painting, or the other way round. Audiences can easily enjoy visual beauty without study and interpret what they see into what they like. Although literati art requires some understanding of Chinese philosophy and literature, like other traditional Chinese art, its basic functions are to present beauty and share this beauty with others. The Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and Qing dynasty (1644-1911) are the two periods in which literati painting received more attention from the royal court, when China was governed by so-called non-Chinese Chinese, who were Chinese by nationality but not ethnicity if looked at from our contemporary perspective. This part of history shows the possibility that cultural elements, such as language and custom, can be carried forward with the help of art.

Once attention is caught by visual beauty, the context has its chance to be explained. In literati art, the context is Chinese philosophy and literature, which are often rejected by many people for their involved style. Because of all the revolutions that happened in the past, especially during the last two centuries, classical literature has been distanced from modern society. Yet, these ancient classics are the foundation of Chinese culture. To maintain spiritual civilisation means carrying forward and developing this foundation with new knowledge. Many scholars have made their contributions by translating ancient classics into modern Chinese. Some interpreted the texts with their understanding of personal life; or applied the text to modern life to explain the concepts. This study took advantage of digital technology to expand an ancient art concept into modern life. By clarifying

the core spirit of the concept, this expansion shows the possibility of further expansion in the future.

The 'Wind-Flower-Snow-Moon' project, in its own way, responds to the call of constructing spiritual civilisation. It points out some good qualities in traditional teaching which deserve to be maintained and studied, such as having moral standards, doing the right thing in difficult situations, making unremitting efforts to improve oneself, and bringing harmony to life. During times of economic development, many people are eager for quick success and instant benefits. Low quality food and adulterated goods are all over the market. If events like the high frequency of death in coal mining disasters and deaths of babies from milk powder contaminated with melamine have not caused the alarm in society, hopefully the importance of morality and dignity can be notified through art.

Most teachings cannot be given without the help of written words. Long before the power of the press was recognised, the power of literature was obvious. In ancient times, literati often initiated or passively controlled change in society. Realising this power, Lu Xun (1881-1936) gave up his medical profession to become a writer in order to 'save the country'. As literature is not the only major in school nowadays, it is not necessary for educated people to be literati. The common name for these people is 'intellectuals'. Since being a writer is not very popular in the employment market, literature study receives less attention from students. Along with literature study, moral principles have been ignored with many teachers and students forgetting that one of the duties of intellectuals is to maintain healthy tendencies in society.

This study uses a computer art project to relate modern life to ancient classics in order to take advantage of both areas. Literati art contains some cultural sources

which are admired by the Chinese. Digital art represents the part of modernization with which Chinese people are fascinated. Digital literati art combines the literature context with computer techniques to enhance its meaning and show an example of linking the present and the past. The idea of adopting cultural elements into digital creation can be applied to any ethnic context. Art types like digital literati art can work as a bridge between nations. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, art 'can be seen as an international language'. In the digital art realm, audiences are usually attracted by artwork for its visual effects, entertainment function, idea or context. Interactive literati art can show the artist's thoughts and at the same time invite the audience to join in with the work. This process brings audiences close to the artwork and hopefully contributes to further development.



## **4 Conclusion**

### **4.1 Historical significance of literati painting**

There was no opposing relationship between literati painting and other styles of Chinese painting; they were just simply based on a different concept and served different purposes.<sup>199</sup> Understanding the positive aspects of literati painting helps to illustrate its significance. For that, it is important to know that 'influenced by Chan and Zhuang philosophy, the key element of literati painting spirit is "living in seclusion"' <sup>200</sup>. When the idea of 'living in seclusion' was chosen by a literary intellectual, literati painting became an art form that was distant or peripheral to mainstream society. This appears to be a passive attitude, as some literati chose to live in seclusion because of their lack of success in the imperial court. However, it also brought about some positive result, as Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975) said in 'A Study of History': 'The withdrawal makes it possible for the personality to realize powers within himself which might have remained dormant if he had not been released for the time being from his social toil and trammels. Such a withdrawal may be a voluntary action in his control; in either case the withdrawal is an opportunity, and perhaps a necessary condition, for the anchorite's transfiguration.'<sup>201</sup> While the one who withdraws stops striving for fame and gain, he can then sustain with his belief and express his point of view freely.

This idea of taking a step backwards to realise one's strength reflects the primacy of the growth of the mind. As a cultural phenomenon, 'living in seclusion' can be linked to assisting the mind in a Unitarian society.<sup>202</sup> In both the western and eastern worlds, all independent thinkers objectively become a challenge to civilised

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<sup>199</sup> Xu Fuguan, *Chinese art spirit*, P352, Huadong General University Publisher, December 2001

<sup>200</sup> Wang Wenjuan, *Ink and Colour: Aesthetics source of colour used in Chinese painting*, Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2006, P257

<sup>201</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Oxford University Press, 1960, p217

<sup>202</sup> Gen Bencheng, *Resisting Unitarianism Society: A Study of Chinese Hermit*, Dongjing Chuangjie Association, 1952

monopolisation or regime.<sup>203</sup> When literati painting rose in the Tang-Song period to show the distance from academic painting, it was an assisting strength against the regime. 'Living in seclusion' did not stand for a negative but positive activity. Only 'the brave' have courage and strength to live in seclusion, single-handedly representing the Tao of righteousness.<sup>204</sup> Zheng Sixiao (1241-1318) also commented that hermits were enthusiastic and able to bear loneliness. They conquered the unyielding with the yielding in order to gain a position like a hero that obliged the most powerful ruler and conqueror to show their respects.<sup>205</sup>

Zeng Zi once said: 'One who has received education and become intellectual cannot live without great breadth of mind and steady will, as he needs to shoulder heavy responsibilities through a long way.'<sup>206</sup> When there is no external restriction for morality, scholars can only persevere the internal integrity to maintain their viewpoint of orthodoxy. This attitude of integrity is more important than fame and gain did not only appear in Confucius's 'The superior man's object is not food but the Tao (truth)' and 'The Superior man is not anxious lest poverty should come upon him but anxious lest he should not get the Tao (truth)'. It was also shown in Chuang Tzu's preference for staying poor rather than losing dignity.<sup>207</sup> Chanism raised this individual integrity to an acme level: 'the heart is the land of Buddha'<sup>208</sup>. During the time that many scholars faced the dilemma situation in imperial court and eventually chose to live in seclusion, some demonstrated their positions by keeping themselves distant from the mainstream society, and literati painting style became their symbol of 'integrity worth more than life'. Although since the Qing

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<sup>203</sup> You Xilin, *People Who Illuminate And Guard The World – The Origin and Mission of Literature Intellectual*, Henan People Publisher, 1996, p169

<sup>204</sup> Fang Wen, *Image of Heart – Analysis Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Style and Structure*, Shanxi People's Art Press, 2004, p6

<sup>205</sup> Zheng Sixiao, *Record of Qingfeng Mansion of My Home*, embodied in *Literature Collection of Mr Zheng Suonan*, Taipei Xinzhong Bookstore, 1964, p1-2

<sup>206</sup> Kong Qiu (Confucius), *Analects – Chapter 8: Taibo*

<sup>207</sup> Chuang Tzu – Chapter 32: Lie Yukou

<sup>208</sup> (Si) Zhi Qian, *Weijiemo Jing (Vimalakirti-nirdesa-sutra / The Inconceivable Emancipation) – Chapter 1: Buddha's Kingdom*

dynasty, the literati art became part of the mainstream culture in China, showing the personal integrity (moral consciousness) and so called 'literati sentiment' are still the common themes of literati painting. In order to show the right spirit and sentiment, there is nothing haphazard in the painting, but everything is in its place and contributes to the effect of the whole.

Literati painting brought Chinese art onto a new stage because it satisfied the desire of presenting the transcendental importance of a person's soul, which is not only the tradition of literati painting but also the trend of Chinese contemporary artistic development. Especially in the computer art area, when the computer's technical ability enables images to simulate almost totally the traditional artistic techniques, the role the artist plays between the digital technology and the resultant artwork is to present the thought. For that, digital literati art could open up a new page for digital creation.

## 4.2 Summary of the study

This thesis proposes that art created through Chinese literature and philosophy may be termed 'Literati Art', in which personal sentiment operates simultaneously as context. According to this definition, the literati art technique can be flexible to each individual artwork's need. Along with technological development, many literati arts have been created through different mediums and tools. The study has taken the literati art concept into the digital art field to make an extension in literati art based on predecessors' developments. By using computer technology, the image-space described using software frees artists from the restriction of physical media, by providing a dynamic non-material environment, whose potentials may be realised in the resulting artwork. Because the computer provides the image-space and the tools for image making, it can be seen as a platform for literati art as in the same ways it has become a platform for architecture, music and design.<sup>209</sup> The digital basis of computer literati artwork raises questions about abandoning traditional art in this branch of visual art. Similarly, the dynamic nature of this medium makes it difficult to realise the artwork as a purely physical, static object, and its lack of permanence challenges accepted ideas of the preservation and propagation of art. By combining new presentation formats with traditional art spirit, the study is presented as a series of technological, artistic and theoretical developments that, taken together comprise this new field of visual art.

The study is dedicated to exploring an artwork-creating process that fosters the consideration of the literati art concept in digital space. This thesis has outlined a research journey from:

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<sup>209</sup> From Lambert, Nicholas 'A Critical Examination of "Computer Art": Its History and Application' (Unpublished DPhil Thesis, Oxford 2003), ref <http://leonardolabs.pomona.edu/SearchDetails.aspx?UID=14>



1. Chinese art concept and its history study. While doing so, the literati art concept was specially focused upon. Through analysing the literati art concept to clarify the definition of this branch of art.
2. Works were done to make continuity in traditional art in visual style, art spirit or both, and a new technology age has been analysed to point out the direction of this study.
3. A multimedia project was created to practise the theory addressed. The project shows a specific understanding in the literati art concept as well as a courageous innovation in both literati art and computer art.

In the preceding pages of this thesis, the conception and development of a complex literati art system has been extended well beyond the written representation of thoughts capable of distillation on paper or the computer screen has been described. The model of research-based arts practice presented in this thesis provides insight into the dynamic interaction between technology and aesthetic experience. The thesis described how the project 'Wind Flower Snow Moon (beauty in four seasons)' is situated within the dialog of art and culture, and how it was conceptualised and developed to relate to this context. How technology development might engage the extending of traditional culture through a process of defining certain art concepts was also described. This research addressed the idea that innovation could be achieved by eliminating the attitude of complacency and conservatism in existing methods.

### **4.3 Further Study: The development trend of literati art**

Since the May Fourth Movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the issue between modernization and nationalisation in China has been centring on a dual nature of enlightening the public and saving the country. This 'enlightening the public and saving the country' also means 'educating people with the new and saving the dying culture'. The weakness that the nation felt in the First and Second World Wars made the Chinese people realised that learning from others (other countries and cultures) was a way to save our own. During the last century, many foreign ideas and philosophical views have been studied. Making the innovation in art, especially in graphic visual art such as painting, has been a hot topic among artists and literati since then.

Back to the early Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the four-Wang<sup>210</sup> was highly respected in society. They had a wide circle of acquaintances, a lot of students, and a big influence among scholars. Their achievements were also admired by the royalty and many art practitioners. Therefore, they were classed as orthodox in Chinese painting society. They focused on painting skill and concluded practice principle from their painting experiences. They put a great effort to elevate southern school painting<sup>211</sup> into an awe-inspiring academic height. Their paintings influenced later periods, even today's. There is something wonderful in this highly-skilled 'brush and ink' painting. 'But it almost goes without saying that this approach to painting also had its dangers. ... The standards of painting remained very high throughout the subsequent centuries both in China and in Japan (which adopted the Chinese conceptions) but art became more and more like a graceful

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<sup>210</sup> The four Wangs are Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Hui and Wang Yuanqi.

<sup>211</sup> The term southern (painting) school were come out by Dong Qichang who classified painting school by which based on art practice (northern school) and which based on philosophical understanding (southern school).

and elaborate game, which has lost much of its interest as so many of its moves are known.<sup>212</sup>

Because of their influence, brush and ink techniques assumed great importance in the literati painting area. Although their works were sometimes referred to as literati painting, many literatures found their works were monotonous, hollow, and show lack of vitality and innovation. Because they painted without specific perception and ignored the nature of Tao, they could not reach anything higher than being skilled. It was not until early last century that a revolution of reviving literati painting was carried out by some artists and literatures, the spirit of literati painting became widely focus and the argument of importance of 'technique' and 'skill' started. One of the significance of this revolution is pointing out the spirit of literati art, such as in Chen Shizeng's 'The Value of Literati Painting'. Another significance is the adding of new elements into painting, such as Qi Baishi, who added a single warm colour (mainly vermillion, carmine, ochre or gamboges) in black ink painting. There was also a significant reevaluation in painting themes, such as Feng Zikai's genre painting, which depicted scenes of ordinary life with literati sentiment.

Along with the increase of culture exchange and influence in the worldwide art field, Chinese art theory has also been influenced, and started absorbing and integrating with other theory. Although art theory is the logical conclusion of art practice (creating and appreciating), no matter whether the artist admits or realises it or not, it also has some influence on art practice. Because of the cultural exchange, Chinese national artistic notion is changing and constantly updating while traditional art theory faces many kind of challenges. The changing areas in literati art include research range, research method, and art values. While literati art theory can be

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<sup>212</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Oxford University Press, 1960, P112



seen as a subfield of aesthetics and literature, its development promotes and interacts with aesthetics and literature. The study of literati art concept brings positive content to aesthetics and literature. At the same time, art concept also benefits from the development of aesthetics and literature studies. However, this interaction also reflects the impact between tradition and modern the most in China.

The impact between tradition and modern came from the uncertainty of Chinese people that started around the First World War. Until today, the process of modernization still brings conflict between tradition and modern, nationalisation and westernisation, localisation and globalisation. It is different from the suggestion of 'Chinese-Western fusion' in the May-Fourth generation<sup>213</sup>, neither the argument between 'brush and ink are zero' and 'guard the bottom line of Chinese painting' in the 80s of the last century, the exploration of contemporary ink-painting presents considerable consciousness of root searching and localising. After a few decades the upsurge in western modern art and post-modern art, artists who were once passionate about being in vogue became more mature and calm. Their root-searching is a collective 'unintentional' behaviour; it is a way of re-positioning themselves and their artwork. This root-searching does not mean copying the ancient painting like the Four-Wang did. It means realising and expressing one's own background and knowledge.

Take this study as an example. The project 'Wind Flower Snow Moon (The beauty in Four Seasons)' is a digital artwork based on the literati art concept, which shows a certain background of the creator. The sentiment and thought present in the work made the project become individual as an artwork. In some ways, the project could be commented on as a work influenced by this 'root searching' consciousness.

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<sup>213</sup> May Fourth generation is the generation that played the major role during the May Fourth Movement period. This generation could be considered as the time of 1900 – 1950.



However, as the times change, new philosophical thoughts and technologies evolved and developed in today's China. The philosophical background of literati art is being changed, which can be seen from many new translations and comments of ancient literatures. Some painting objects have changed their meanings in symbolising ideas. The conflict between traditional and modern might be ending, as the traditional thoughts and presentational style are being blending with the new. It is still too early to predict the exact changes that might settle into the literati art concept. It is just like at the halfway point of the animation 'Snow Mountain' of the project, and the room 'Moon' has not been entered. Until the end of 'Moon Above River', the ending result for this era of literati art would not be presented fully.

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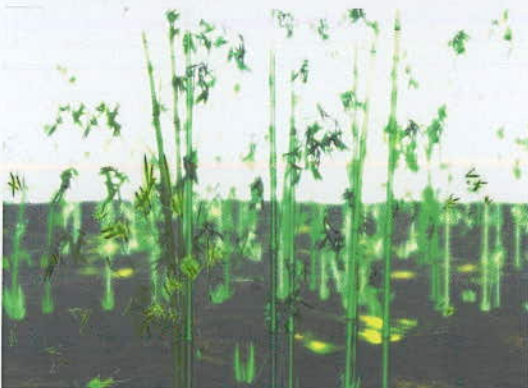
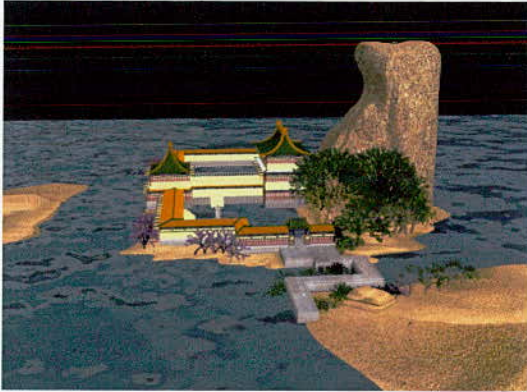
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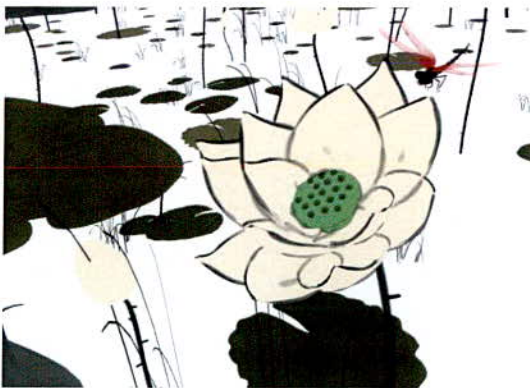
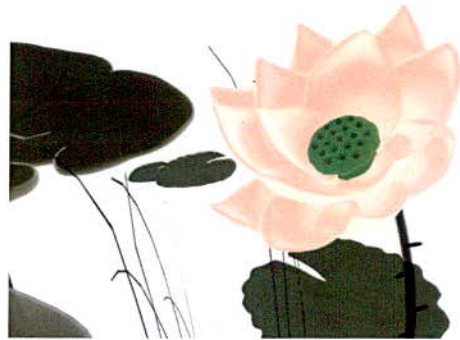
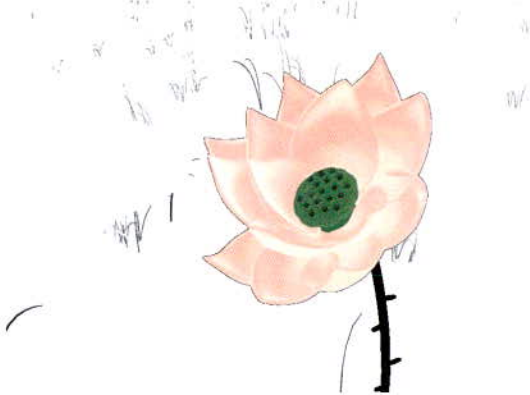
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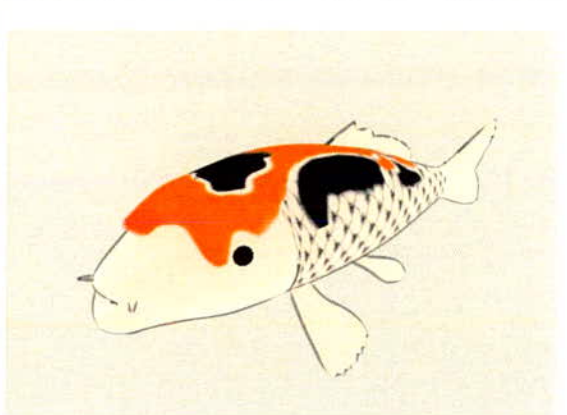
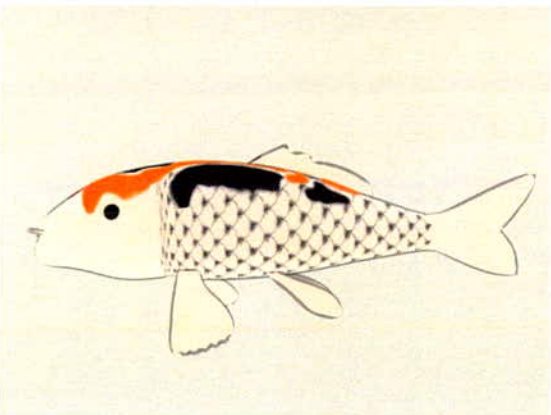
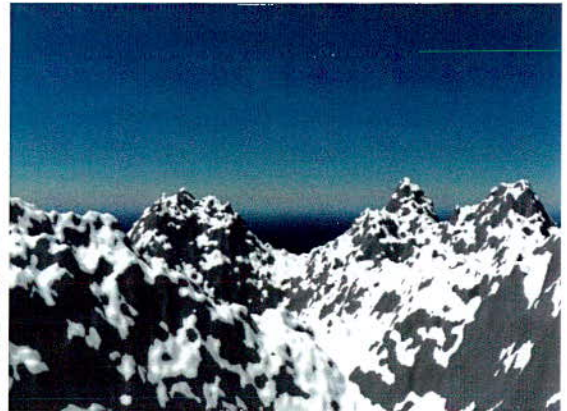


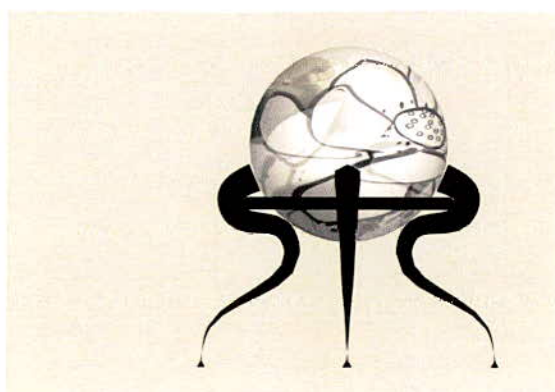
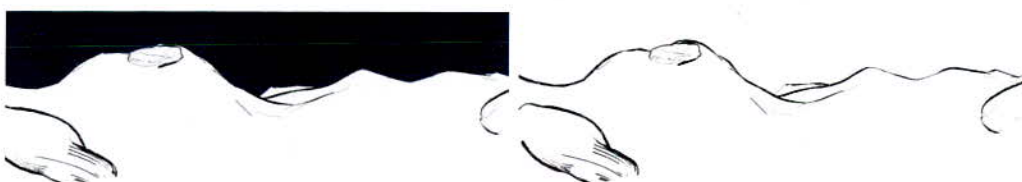
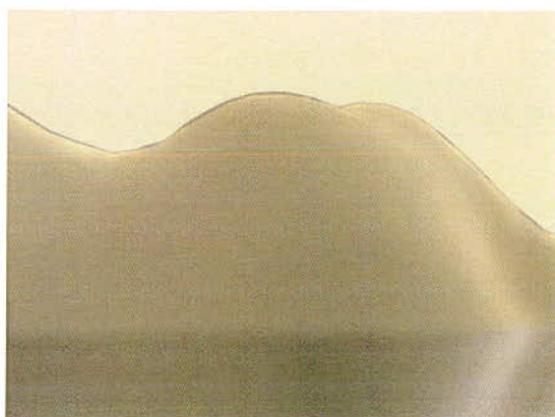
## Appendix A: Addition images from the project











風花雪月



## Appendix B: Lingo used in the project

### Room 'Wind':

`property` myPartRes,mycamera,modelRadius,camerabox,movefront,particle01

`property` move,handleCollision,F1,F2,R1,P1

`on` beginSprite `me`

`sprite(1).member.resetWorld()`

`F1 = 0`

`F2 = 0`

`R1 = 0`

`sprite(1).member.model("shanmiann").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)`  
`)`

`newbox = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("camera_box", #box, #front)`

`newbox.height = 10`

`newbox.width = 10`

`newbox.length = 10`

`newbox.lengthvertices=2`

`newbox.widthvertices=2`

`newbox.heightvertices=2`

`aa = sprite(1).member.newModel("camera_box", newbox)`

`set` camerabox=`sprite(1).member.model("camera_box")`

`set` mycamera=`sprite(1).member.camera[1]`

`camerabox.visibility=#none`

`camerabox.worldposition=mycamera.worldposition`

`camerabox.addChild(mycamera)`

`modelRadius = camerabox.boundingSphere[2]`

`mycamera.fog.enabled = TRUE`

`mycamera.fog.decayMode = #linear`

`mycamera.fog.near = 100`

`mycamera.fog.far =400`

`mycamera.fog.color=rgb("#CFC295")`

```

camerabox.addModifier(#collision)

sprite(1).member.registerForEvent(#collideAny,#handleCollision,me)
end
end

on mouseup me
loc = the mouseLoc - point(sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.left,
sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.top)
model = sprite(1).camera.modelUnderLoc(loc)
if not voidP(model) then
if getone(["frontR"],model.name) then
frontdoor
else

if getOne(["frontL"],model.name) then
frontdoor
else

if getOne(["room1R"],model.name) then
rd1
else

if getOne(["room1L"],model.name) then
rd1
else

if getOne(["gardenR"],model.name) then
gardendoor
else

if getOne(["gardenL"],model.name) then
gardendoor
else

if getOne(["shanmian"],model.name) then
shanzi

```

```
end if
end if
end if
end if
end if
end if
end if
end if
end
```

```
on frontdoor
F1=1
end
```

```
on gardendoor
F2=1
end
```

```
on rd1
R1=1
end
```

```
on shanzi
if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x<-107 then
  puppetSound "tomovie"
  go to frame 9
else
end if
end
```

```
on exitframe me
```

```
if F1=1 then
movefront
end if
```

```
if F2=1 then
```

```

movegarden
end if

if R1=1 then
movedoor1
end if

if keypressed(123) then
camerabox.rotate(0,1.5,0)

else if keypressed(124) then
camerabox.rotate(0,-1.5,0)

else if keypressed(125) then
move = vector(0,0,1.5)

else if keypressed(126) then
move = vector(0,0,-1.5)

else move = vector(0,0,0)
if move <> vector(0,0,0) then

t = transform()
t.rotate(camerabox.transform.rotation)
t.preTranslate(move)
rayMove = t.position

rayLoc = camerabox.transform.position

list = sprite(me.spriteNum).member.modelsUnderRay(rayLoc,
rayMove,1,#detailed)

if list.count > 0 then
d = list[1].distance
if d < modelRadius then move = vector(0,0,0)

end if

```



```
end if
camerabox.translate(move)
end
```

### **Room `Flower`:**

```
property myPartRes,mycamera,modelRadius,camerabox,movefront
```

```
property
```

```
move,handleCollision,F1,F2,R1,R2,R2light01,R2light02,R2light03,R2light04
```

```
on beginSprite me
```

```
sprite(1).member.resetWorld()
```

```
F1 = 1
```

```
F2 = 1
```

```
R1 = 0
```

```
R2 = 0
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("shanmian").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("huazhii").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
```

```
newbox = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("camera_box", #box, #front)
```

```
newbox.height = 10
```

```
newbox.width = 10
```

```
newbox.length = 10
```

```
newbox.lengthvertices=2
```

```
newbox.widthvertices=2
```

```
newbox.heightvertices=2
```

```
aa = sprite(1).member.newModel("camera_box", newbox)
```

```
set camerabox=sprite(1).member.model("camera_box")
```

```
set mycamera=sprite(1).member.camera[1]
```

```
camerabox.visibility=#none
```

```
camerabox.worldposition=mycamera.worldposition
```

```
camerabox.addchild(mycamera)
```

```

modelRadius = camerabox.boundingSphere[2]

sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position=vector(-
125.5062,22.9071,-12.2209)
sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.rotation=vector(0,90,0)

mycamera.fog.enabled = TRUE
mycamera.fog.decayMode = #linear
mycamera.fog.near = 100
mycamera.fog.far =400
mycamera.fog.color=rgb("#CFC295")

camerabox.addModifier(#collision)

sprite(1).member.registerForEvent(#collideAny,#handleCollision,me)
end

on mouseup me
  loc = the mouseLoc - point(sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.left,
sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.top)
  model = sprite(1).camera.modelUnderLoc(loc)
  if not voidP(model) then
    if getOne(["room1R"],model.name) then
      rd1
    else

      if getOne(["room1L"],model.name) then
        rd1
      else

        if getOne(["room2R"],model.name) then
          rd2
        else

          if getOne(["room2L"],model.name) then
            rd2

```



```
end
```

```
on rd1
```

```
  R1=1
```

```
end
```

```
on rd2
```

```
  if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x>94 then
```

```
    R2=1
```

```
  else
```

```
  end if
```

```
end
```

```
on hua
```

```
  if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x>131 then
```

```
    puppetSound "tomovie"
```

```
    go to frame 19
```

```
  else
```

```
  end if
```

```
end
```

```
on R2light01
```

```
  if not sprite(1).member.ModelResource("My Particle Resource01") THEN
```

```
    myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle  
Resource01",#particle)
```

```
    myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System01",myPartRes)
```

```
    mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
```

```
    mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
```

```
    myPartRes.blendRange.start = 10
```

```
    myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0
```

```
    myPartRes.emitter.numParticles =700
```

```
    myPartRes.lifetime =7000
```

```
    myPartSys.transform.position=vector( 183.905,20.315,-44.436 )
```



```

    mypartsys.rotate(0,0,0)

end if
end

on R2light02
    if not sprite(1).member.ModelResource("My Particle Resource02") THEN

        myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle
Resource02",#particle)
        myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System02",myPartRes)

        mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
        mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
        myPartRes.blendRange.start = 10
        myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0
        myPartRes.emitter.numParticles = 700

        myPartRes.lifetime = 7000

        myPartSys.transform.position=vector( 133.314,20.315,-44.436 )
        mypartsys.rotate(0,0,0)

    end if
end

on R2light03
    if not sprite(1).member.ModelResource("My Particle Resource03") THEN

        myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle
Resource03",#particle)
        myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System03",myPartRes)

        mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
        mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
        myPartRes.blendRange.start = 10
        myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0

```

```

myPartRes.emitter.numParticles = 700

myPartRes.lifetime = 7000

myPartSys.transform.position=vector( 183.905,20.315,57.683 )
mypartsys.rotate(0,0,0)

end if
end

on R2light04
if not sprite(1).member.ModelResource("My Particle Resource04") THEN

myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle
Resource04",#particle)
myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System04",myPartRes)

mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
myPartRes.blendRange.start = 10
myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0
myPartRes.emitter.numParticles = 700

myPartRes.lifetime = 7000

myPartSys.transform.position=vector( 133.3145,20.315,57.683 )
mypartsys.rotate(0,0,0)

end if
end

on LLight01
if not sprite(1).member.ModelResource("My Particle Resource05") THEN

myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle
Resource05",#particle)
myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System05",myPartRes)

```

```

    mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
    mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
    myPartRes.blendRange.start = 10
    myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0
    myPartRes.emitter.numParticles = 700

    myPartRes.lifetime = 7000

    myPartSys.transform.position=vector( 176.253,34.343,-26.355 )
    mypartsys.rotate(0,0,0)

end if
end

on LLight02
    if not sprite(1).member.ModelResource("My Particle Resource06") THEN

        myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle
Resource06",#particle)
        myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System06",myPartRes)

        mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
        mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
        myPartRes.blendRange.start = 10
        myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0
        myPartRes.emitter.numParticles = 700

        myPartRes.lifetime = 7000

        myPartSys.transform.position=vector( 176.253,34.343,32.669 )
        mypartsys.rotate(0,0,0)

    end if
end

on exitframe me

```

```

if F1=1 then
    movefront
end if

if F2=1 then
    movegarden
end if

if R1=1 then
    movedoor1
end if

if R2=1 then
    movedoor2
end if

if keypressed(123) then
    camerabox.rotate(0,0.5,0)

else if keypressed(124) then
    camerabox.rotate(0,-0.5,0)

else if keypressed(125) then
    move = vector(0,0,0.5)

else if keypressed(126) then
    move = vector(0,0,-0.5)

else move = vector(0,0,0)
if move <> vector(0,0,0) then

    t = transform()
    t.rotate(camerabox.transform.rotation)
    t.preTranslate(move)
    rayMove = t.position

    rayLoc = camerabox.transform.position

```



```
list = sprite(me.spriteNum).member.modelsUnderRay(rayLoc,  
rayMove,1,#detailed)
```

```
if list.count > 0 then
```

```
  d = list[1].distance
```

```
  if d < modelRadius then move = vector(0,0,0)
```

```
end if
```

```
end if
```

```
camerabox.translate(move)
```

```
end
```

### **Room 'Snow':**

```
property myPartRes,mycamera,modelRadius,camerabox,movelfront
```

```
property move,handleCollision,F1,F2,R1,R2,R3,L1,T1,T2,T3,T4,T5,T6,L2
```

```
on beginSprite me
```

```
  sprite(1).member.resetWorld()
```

```
F1 = 1
```

```
F2 = 1
```

```
R1 = 1
```

```
R2 = 0
```

```
R3 = 0
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("t01").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("t02").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("t03").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("t04").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("t05").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("t06").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("shanmian").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
sprite(1).member.model("huazhi").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
sprite(1).member.model("pinfengg").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
sprite(1).member.model("LSwitchh").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
```

```
newbox = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("camera_box", #box, #front)
newbox.height = 10
newbox.width = 10
newbox.length = 10
newbox.lengthvertices=2
newbox.widthvertices=2
newbox.heightvertices=2
```

```
aa = sprite(1).member.newModel("camera_box", newbox)
```

```
set camerabox=sprite(1).member.model("camera_box")
set mycamera=sprite(1).member.camera[1]
```

```
camerabox.visibility=#none
camerabox.worldposition=mycamera.worldposition
camerabox.addchild(mycamera)
modelRadius = camerabox.boundingSphere[2]
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position=vector(146.0240,22.90
71,-4.0433)
sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.rotation=vector(0,-90,0)
sprite(1).member.shader("pinfeng").blend=90
```

```
mycamera.fog.enabled = TRUE
mycamera.fog.decayMode = #linear
mycamera.fog.near = 100
mycamera.fog.far =400
mycamera.fog.color=rgb("#CFC295")
```

```
camerabox.addModifier(#collision)
```

```
sprite(1).member.registerForEvent(#collideAny,#handleCollision,me)
```

end

on mouseup me

loc = the mouseLoc - point(sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.left,  
sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.top)

model = sprite(1).camera.modelUnderLoc(loc)

if not voidP(model) then

if getOne(["room2R"],model.name) then

rd2

else

if getOne(["room2L"],model.name) then

rd2

else

if getOne(["room3R"],model.name) then

rd3

else

if getOne(["room3L"],model.name) then

rd3

else

if getOne(["LSwitch"],model.name) then

R2lift

else

if getOne(["t01"],model.name) then

Tu1

else

if getOne(["t02"],model.name) then

Tu2

else

if getOne(["t03"],model.name) then

Tu3

else

if getOne(["t04"],model.name) then

Tu4

else

if getOne(["t05"],model.name) then

Tu5

else





```
if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x>131 then
puppetSound "tomovie"
go to frame 29
else
end if
end
```

```
on R2lift
if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x>170 then
L1=1
else
end if
end
```

```
on Tu1
  sprite(1).member.model("t01").keyframeplayer.play()
end
```

```
on Tu2
  sprite(1).member.model("t02").keyframeplayer.play()
end
```

```
on Tu3
  sprite(1).member.model("t03").keyframeplayer.play()
end
```

```
on Tu4
  sprite(1).member.model("t04").keyframeplayer.play()
end
```

```
on Tu5
  sprite(1).member.model("t05").keyframeplayer.play()
end
```

```
on Tu6
  sprite(1).member.model("t06").keyframeplayer.play()
end
```

```
on exitframe me

  if F1=1 then
    movefront
  end if

  if F2=1 then
    movegarden
  end if

  if R1=1 then
    movedoor1
  end if

  if R2=1 then
    movedoor2
  end if

  if R3=1 then
    movedoor3
  end if

  if L1=1 then
    L2=0
    liftup
  end if

  if keypressed(123) then
    camerabox.rotate(0,0.5,0)

  else  if keypressed(124) then
    camerabox.rotate(0,-0.5,0)

  else  if keypressed(125) then
    move = vector(0,0,0.5)
```

```

else    if keypressed(126) then
    move = vector(0,0,-0.5)

else move = vector(0,0,0)
if move <> vector(0,0,0) then

    t = transform()
    t.rotate(camerabox.transform.rotation)
    t.preTranslate(move)
    rayMove = t.position

    rayLoc = camerabox.transform.position

    list = sprite(me.spriteNum).member.modelsUnderRay(rayLoc,
rayMove,1,#detailed)
if list.count > 0 then
    d = list[1].distance
    if d < modelRadius then move = vector(0,0,0)
end if
end if
camerabox.translate(move)
end

```

### **Room 'Moon':**

```

property myPartRes,mycamera,modelRadius,camerabox,movefront
property move,handleCollision,F1,F2,R1,R2,R3,L1,T1,T2,T3,T4,T5,T6,L2,R4

on beginSprite me
    sprite(1).member.resetWorld()

    F1 = 1
    F2 = 1
    R1 = 1
    R2 = 1
    R3 = 0

```

R4 = 0

```
sprite(1).member.model("t01").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("t02").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("t03").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("t04").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("t05").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("t06").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("Sphere05").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("Sphere04").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("Sphere03").keyframeplayer.pause()  
sprite(1).member.model("Sphere06").keyframeplayer.pause()
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("shanmian").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)  
sprite(1).member.model("huazhi").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)  
sprite(1).member.model("pinfeng").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000)
```

```
sprite(1).member.model("wall4room3").transform.position=vector(1000,1000,1000  
)  
sprite(1).member.model("liftfloor").transform.position=vector(182.1209,  
52.6200, -74.5384)
```

```
sprite(1).member.shader("Material #43").blend=0
```

```
newbox = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("camera_box", #box, #front)  
newbox.height = 10  
newbox.width = 10  
newbox.length = 10  
newbox.lengthvertices=2  
newbox.widthvertices=2  
newbox.heightvertices=2
```

```
aa = sprite(1).member.newModel("camera_box", newbox)  
set camerabox=sprite(1).member.model("camera_box")  
set mycamera=sprite(1).member.camera[1]  
camerabox.visibility=#none
```



```

camerabox.worldposition=mycamera.worldposition
camerabox.addchild(mycamera)
modelRadius = camerabox.boundingSphere[2]

sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position=vector(141.6457,
62.6000, 4.0431)
sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.rotation=vector(180.0000, -
57.5000, 180.0000)

sprite(1).member.shader("pinfengg").blend=95

mycamera.fog.enabled = TRUE
mycamera.fog.decayMode = #linear
mycamera.fog.near = 100
mycamera.fog.far =400
mycamera.fog.color=rgb("#CFC295")

camerabox.addModifier(#collision)

sprite(1).member.registerForEvent(#collideAny,#handleCollision,me)

myPartRes = sprite(1).member.newModelResource("My Particle
Resource",#particle)
myPartSys = sprite(1).member.newModel("My Particle System",myPartRes)

mypartres.colorange.start=rgb("#FFFC77")
mypartres.colorange.end=rgb("#B7FF99")
myPartRes.blendRange.start = 100
myPartRes.blendRange.end = 0
myPartRes.emitter.numParticles = 7000
myPartRes.lifetime =7000
myPartSys.transform.position=vector(-134.8165, 55.7941, -11.5962)
mypartsys.rotate(0,-90,0)
end

on mouseup me

```

```

loc = the mouseLoc - point(sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.left,
sprite(me.spriteNum).rect.top)
model = sprite(1).camera.modelUnderLoc(loc)
if not voidP(model) then
  if getOne(["room4R"],model.name) then
    rd4
  else
    if getOne(["room4L"],model.name) then
      rd4
    else
      if getOne(["room3R"],model.name) then
        rd3
      else
        if getOne(["room3L"],model.name) then
          rd3
        else
          if getOne(["LSwitch"],model.name) then
            R2lift
          else
            if getOne(["LSwitchh"],model.name) then
              R3lift
            else
              if getOne(["Sphere05"],model.name) then
                ball1
              else
                if getOne(["Sphere04"],model.name) then
                  ball2
                else
                  if getOne(["Sphere03"],model.name) then
                    ball3
                  else
                    if getOne(["Sphere06"],model.name) then
                      ball4
                    else
                      if getOne(["Sphere02"],model.name) then
                        YYfish
                      else

```



```
on ball3
  if sprite(1).member.model("sphere04").transform.position.y>62 then
    sprite(1).member.model("Sphere03").keyframeplayer.play()
    sprite(1).member.model("sphere03").transform.position.y=62.5
  else
  end if
end
```

```
on ball4
  if sprite(1).member.model("sphere03").transform.position.y<63 then
    sprite(1).member.model("Sphere06").keyframeplayer.play()
    sprite(1).member.model("sphere06").transform.position.y=63.9
  else
  end if
end
```

```
on YYfish
  if sprite(1).member.model("sphere06").transform.position.y<64 then
    puppetSound "tomovie"
    go to frame 39
  else
    go to the frame
  end if
end
```

```
on R2lift
  if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x>170 then
    L1=1
  else
  end if
end
```

```
on R3lift
  if sprite(1).member.model("camera_box").transform.position.x>170 then
    L2=1
  else
  end if
end
```



```
end if  
end
```

```
on exitframe me
```

```
if F1=1 then  
  movefront  
end if
```

```
if F2=1 then  
  movegarden  
end if
```

```
if R1=1 then  
  movedoor1  
end if
```

```
if R1=1 then  
  movedoor2  
end if
```

```
if R4=1 then  
  movedoor4  
end if
```

```
if R3=1 then  
  movedoor3  
  stairdown  
end if
```

```
if L1=1 then  
  L2=0  
  liftup  
end if
```

```
if L2=1 then  
  L1=0  
  liftdown
```

```

end if

if keypressed(123) then
    camerabox.rotate(0,0.5,0)
else if keypressed(124) then
    camerabox.rotate(0,-0.5,0)
else if keypressed(125) then
    move = vector(0,0,0.5)
else if keypressed(126) then
    move = vector(0,0,-0.5)
else move = vector(0,0,0)
if move <> vector(0,0,0) then

    t = transform()
    t.rotate(camerabox.transform.rotation)
    t.preTranslate(move)
    rayMove = t.position
    rayLoc = camerabox.transform.position

    list = sprite(me.spriteNum).member.modelsUnderRay(rayLoc,
rayMove,1,#detailed)

    if list.count > 0 then
        d = list[1].distance
        if d < modelRadius then move = vector(0,0,0)
        end if
    end if
    camerabox.translate(move)
end
end

```

## **Appendix C: The timeline of Chinese dynasties**

Xia Dynasty: Approximate BC 2070-BC 1600

Shang Dynasty: Approximate BC 1600-BC 1046

Zhou Dynasty: BC 1046-BC 221

Western-Zhou Dynasty: BC 1046-BC 771

---

Eastern-Zhou Dynasty: BC 770- BC 256

Spring and Autumn Period: BC 770- BC 476

Warring States Period: BC 475-BC 221

Qin Dynasty: BC 221-BC 206

Han Dynasty: BC 202- AD220

Western-Han Dynasty: BC 202-AD 8

Eastern-Han Dynasty: 25-220

Three Kingdoms: 220-280

Wei: 220-265

Shu: 221-263

Wu: 222-280

Jin Dynasty: 265-420

Western-Jin: 265-316

Eastern-Jin: 317-420

Sixteen Kingdoms: 304-439

Southern-Northern Dynasty: 386-589

Northern Dynasty: 386-581

Southern Dynasty: 420-589

Sui Dynasty: 581-618

Tang Dynasty: 618-907

Five Dynasties & Ten Kingdoms: 907-979

Song Dynasty: 960-1127

Northern-Song Dynasty: 960-1127

Southern-Song Dynasty: 1127-1276

Liao Dynasty: 916-1125

Western-Xia Dynasty: 1038-1227

Jin Dynasty: 1115-1234

Yuan Dynasty: 1271-1368

Ming Dynasty: 1368-1644

Qing Dynasty: 1644-1911

Republic of China: 1912-1949

People's Republic of China: 1949 – present