



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**An Integrative Approach to New Chinese Ink Painting through
Digital Art**

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**Master of Arts
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An Integrative Approach to New Chinese Ink Painting through Digital Art

Liew Jia Xi

A thesis submitted

In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

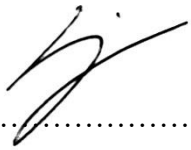
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Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
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2025

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.


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ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of traditional Chinese Ink Painting with digital art, addressing the tension between preserving cultural heritage and embracing technological innovation. By anchoring the research in Xie He's Six Principles (*liufa*)—a foundational theory of classical Chinese aesthetics—the study investigates how digital tools can reinterpret traditional ink techniques while retaining their philosophical and aesthetic essence. A qualitative approach combining visual analysis of historical and contemporary artworks, content analysis of artists' statements, and practice-led research was employed. The classical Chinese Ink Paintings and digital ink artworks were analysed to identify continuities and innovations in Chinese ink painting's theory. The study also documents the creation of *Borders Unbroken: The Soul of Salako Dayak*, a digital artwork integrating Salako Dayak cultural background with ink aesthetics, exhibited at UNIMAS's FACA Gallery. Findings reveal that digital technologies can preserve traditional aesthetics while enabling participatory and immersive experiences, fostering cross-cultural dialogue. However, challenges persist in balancing technological experimentation with cultural authenticity.

Keywords: Chinese Ink Painting, digital art, Xie He's Six Principles, cultural preservation, practice-led research

Pendekatan Integratif terhadap Lukisan Dakwat Cina Baharu melalui Seni Digital

ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini meneroka integrasi Seni Lukisan Dakwat Cina tradisional dengan seni digital, menangani ketegangan antara pemeliharaan warisan budaya dan penerimaan inovasi teknologi. Dengan berpandukan Prinsip Enam Xie He (liufa)—teori asas estetika klasik China—penyelidikan ini menyiasat bagaimana alat digital boleh mentafsir semula teknik dakwat tradisional sambil mengekalkan intipati falsafah dan estetikanya. Pendekatan kaedah campuran yang menggabungkan analisis visual karya seni sejarah dan kontemporari, analisis kandungan kenyataan artis, dan penyelidikan berasaskan amalan telah digunakan. Karya Seni Lukisan Dakwat Cina klasik dan karya seni dakwat digital dianalisis untuk mengenal pasti kesinambungan dan inovasi dalam teori Seni Lukisan Dakwat Cina. Kajian ini juga mendokumentasikan penciptaan *Borders Unbroken: The Soul of Salako Dayak*, sebuah karya seni digital yang menggabungkan latarbelakang budaya Salako Dayak dengan estetika dakwat, yang dipamerkan di Galeri FACA UNIMAS. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa teknologi digital dapat mengekalkan estetik tradisional sambil membolehkan pengalaman partisipatori dan imersif, merangsang dialog antara budaya. Namun, cabaran tetap wujud dalam menyeimbangkan eksperimen teknologi dengan keaslian budaya.*

Kata kunci: *Seni Lukisan Dakwat Cina, seni digital, Prinsip Enam Xie He, pemeliharaan budaya, penyelidikan berasaskan amalan*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Chinese Ink Painting, rooted in over two millennia of artistic tradition, embodies the philosophical and aesthetic principles of Confucianism, Daoism, and Zen Buddhism. Historically, it has served as a medium for expressing harmony between humanity and nature through techniques such as brushstroke dynamics, ink gradation, and the strategic use of white space (*xu shi*) (Z. Fan & Zhang, 2020; J. Zhang et al., 2020). However, in the contemporary art world dominated by digital and experimental forms, traditional Chinese Ink Painting risks marginalization, often dismissed as "archaic" or incompatible with modern technological advancements (Elkins, 2013; Gao et al., 2023). This tension between tradition and innovation underscores the urgency to explore how digital technologies can revitalize this ancient art form while preserving its cultural essence.

Previous studies have examined the integration of traditional art with digital tools, yet gaps persist in contextualizing Chinese Ink Painting within this paradigm. For instance, (W. Zhang et al., 2023) developed computational models to analyze the aesthetic principles of classical Chinese paintings, demonstrating the potential of digital frameworks to decode traditional techniques. Similarly, Fraser (2020) documented the rise of "experimental ink art" in China, where artists use digital projections and interactive installations to reinterpret ink aesthetics. However, these studies focus predominantly on Chinese contexts, neglecting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by diasporic communities, such as Malaysian Chinese artists, who navigate multicultural identities and localized traditions (Boey, 2022).

The broader scenario of digital art reveals a growing emphasis on hybrid practices that merge analogue and digital mediums. Innovations such as AI-generated brushstrokes (Chen, 2022), VR-enabled ink landscapes (Gao et al., 2023), and 3D-printed calligraphy (Liu et al., 2016) highlight the transformative potential of technology. Yet, few projects critically engage with the philosophical foundations of Chinese Ink Painting—such as Xie He’s Six Principles (liufa)—to ensure that digital adaptations retain the art form’s spiritual and cultural depth (Goldin, 2018; W. Zhang et al., 2023). This oversight risks reducing ink art to a superficial visual style rather than a holistic practice rooted in millennia of thought.

The need for this research arises from two interconnected imperatives:

- i. **Cultural Preservation:** As globalization homogenizes artistic practices, safeguarding region-specific traditions like Chinese Ink Painting becomes critical. In Malaysia, where the art form has evolved under multicultural influences since the early 20th century (Boey, 2022), digitization offers a pathway to document and reinterpret this heritage for future generations.
- ii. **Technological Innovation:** Digital tools provide unprecedented opportunities to expand the expressive boundaries of ink art. For example, interactive installations could allow audiences to manipulate virtual ink flows in real time, fostering participatory engagement with traditionally static forms (Deng et al., 2019).

This study addresses these needs by investigating how digital technologies can honor the theoretical and practical legacy of Chinese Ink Painting while enabling innovative expressions. By anchoring the research in Xie He’s Six Principles—particularly *Qiyun Shendong* (spirit resonance) and *Jingying Weizhi* (compositional harmony)—the project

bridges classical aesthetics with modern media, offering a model for culturally grounded digital art.

1.2 Problem Statement

Gao et al. (2023) observed in the contemporary art world, traditional Chinese Ink Painting is sometimes perceived as less relevant or considered 'archaic' in comparison to emerging art forms such as installation art, performance art, and digital media. While many artists and practitioners continue to uphold its aesthetic and cultural significance, the art form does not always receive equivalent attention within the broader discourse on innovation and modernity. As technology advances, the realization of computational aesthetics for visual representation has become increasingly important. Digital technology has enabled creative expression in ways that were previously unimaginable, offering new avenues for artistic innovation. However, the integration of traditional Chinese Ink Painting into digital art remains underexplored, leaving a gap in the understanding of how this ancient art form can adapt to and thrive in the modern technological landscape.

Pursuant to Liu(2025), emphasizes that despite early experiments with VR/AR/MR, there is still no robust framework for translating the subtle brush-stroke nuances and the philosophical Chinese ink painting concepts of “emptiness” and “spirit resonance” into digital media. While most computational work, as W. Zhang et al. (2024) note, emphasizes digitization, recognition, and stylistic analysis for preservation, the creative fusion that extends ink-painting techniques through generative or interactive digital tools remains largely untouched. While documenting how digital platforms have broadened distribution and invited new aesthetics, Dong (2024) points out a lack of research on leveraging interactive creation tools (e.g., real-time digital brushes that mimic ink diffusion) to innovate within the ink-painting tradition itself.

This gap not only underscores the urgency of re-examining traditional visual practices in light of digital transformation but also calls for a systematic inquiry into their potential convergence.

Accordingly, this study addresses the need to explore these avenues for creating meaningful and purposeful visual representations that honour the tradition of Chinese Ink Painting while embracing the possibilities of digital technology. By examining the integration of Chinese Ink Painting with digital art, this research aims to demonstrate how traditional art forms can be revitalized and reimagined in the digital era, ensuring their continued relevance and appreciation in contemporary society.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the essential elements of the Chinese Ink Painting theory can be adapted into digital art practices?
- ii. Why does Chinese ink painting hold a significant place in the development of digital art?
- iii. How can digital art be used to reinterpret the theoretical principles of Chinese Ink Painting?

1.4 Research Aims and Research Objectives

This study aims to establish a new context for Chinese Ink Painting in a digital approach through artistic practice, offering fresh insights into the potential for new interpretations of this art form. By experimenting with digital techniques, this research seeks

to create a new achievement in the study of Chinese Ink Painting, demonstrating how traditional art forms can evolve and remain relevant in the modern era.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To identify the essential elements of Chinese ink painting that contribute to the main criteria in the formation of digital art.
- ii. To explain the role of Chinese Ink Painting art in the development of digital art.
- iii. To propose an integrative design framework for the creation of digital artwork that explores the essential elements and theoretical significance of Chinese Ink Painting.

1.5 Scopes and Limitations

This study focuses on the formation of digital art within the context of Chinese Ink Painting, exploring the artistic elements, distinctive features, and painting techniques that define this traditional art form. The research examines how these elements can be adapted and reinterpreted using digital tools and technologies, offering new possibilities for artistic expression.

Although Chinese Ink Painting has been developing in Malaysia for some time, there is currently no established doctrine or set of digital artworks that fully integrate this traditional art form into a digital context. As a result, this study draws heavily on artistic research from overseas, particularly from China, where the integration of Chinese Ink Painting with digital art has been more extensively explored. This reliance on external

sources may limit the study's ability to fully address the local context of Malaysian Chinese Ink Painting.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the development of the local Chinese Ink Painting art field in Malaysia, particularly as a parameter for alternative contemporary art. Since its introduction to Malaysia in the early 20th century, Chinese Ink Painting has been directly influenced by traditional Chinese art forms from China (Boey, 2022). As a culturally specific art form, Chinese Ink Painting offers a unique perspective on embracing non-Chinese cultural arts and aligning with the digital age, particularly in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Through this exploration, the study also aims to foster a deeper appreciation for Chinese Ink Painting among a broader audience, particularly in Malaysia, where the art form has yet to fully integrate into the contemporary art scene. By bridging the gap between tradition and technology, this research hopes to inspire future artists and scholars to continue exploring the possibilities of Chinese Ink Painting in the digital age.

1.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 delineates the foundational concerns of the research by interrogating the perceived disjunction between traditional Chinese Ink Painting and emergent digital art practices. It articulates the significance of this classical medium, anchored in Confucian, Daoist, and Zen Buddhist epistemologies, and foregrounds its marginalization within contemporary creative discourses. The chapter critically surveys existing digital adaptations of ink painting, identifying a notable neglect of intrinsic aesthetic and philosophical tenets—such as *qi yun* (spirit resonance), compositional void, and brush vitality—particularly within

diasporic interpretations. In response, the study advances a set of research questions aimed at reframing digital engagement with Ink Painting beyond stylistic imitation, toward a culturally attuned synthesis. The overarching objective is to construct a conceptual framework that integrates digital design principles with the contemplative essence of Ink Painting, thereby fostering meaningful innovation while safeguarding intangible heritage.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature that forms the conceptual and aesthetic foundation for this research. The discussion begins with an exploration of Chinese Ink Painting in its traditional context, focusing on core theoretical and stylistic elements such as Xie He's Six Principles, the philosophical use of white space, and the prominence of landscape painting as a genre. The chapter then transitions into the realm of digital art, defining its scope and examining the diverse artistic practices that have emerged through the use of digital media. Building upon these foundations, the third section addresses the aesthetic integration of traditional and digital visual languages, drawing from East Asian philosophies to reflect on how old and new can coexist and evolve meaningfully. Finally, the chapter explores existing attempts and creative strategies for merging Chinese Ink Painting with digital art, featuring experimental works such as video installations, interactive media, and animated interpretations of ink traditions. Together, these segments provide a critical framework for understanding the cultural and artistic synthesis that informs this practice-led study.

2.2 Chinese Ink Painting Art in Conventional Context

According to Zhang et al. (2020), Chinese Ink Painting is a kind of painting using a traditional brush originating in China which consists of a variety of tones, darkness, and dry wet brush colours, achieved by brushing the differentiation of inkstick in water to change the density of the brush, brush absorption and pressure in a brush.

Chinese Ink Painting is a result of Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen Chinese ideology's great influence on creative aesthetics. These ideologies tend to hold that the part lives in the whole, emphasising the relationship between the component and the total (G. Wang et al., 2022). According to Cao & Kong (2014), in Taoist aesthetics, the harmonious integration of the subjective and objective dimensions between humanity and the natural world constitutes the highest ideal in landscape painting. This shows the spatial ambiguity and fluidity inherent in the visual language of Chinese Ink Painting are deeply rooted in Taoist cosmological principles. They also stated that the flowing water symbolizes dynamic morality, and mountains embody static virtue—nature, in the Confucian worldview, reflects moral traits through this conceptual pairing. These representations echo ideals of ethical introspection, restraint, and balance central to Confucian philosophy. Pursuant to Shen et al., 2024, Zen philosophy profoundly shapes the ethos and visual language of Chinese Ink Painting, infusing each gesture with spiritual depth and contemplative intention. Artists express Zen enlightenment through brush and ink, allowing unique imagery and expressive techniques to embody the essence of Zen thought. This influence manifests in a preference for visual simplicity and profoundness, where even the smallest marks carry deep spiritual affirmation. Emptiness plays a vital role, not merely as blank space but as a medium of emotional resonance and reflection, centring the soul and expressing a settled mind. Brushwork often exhibits spontaneity and detachment, with stylistic choices like bone-less painting and the omission of seals subtly rejecting ego in favour of fluid, intuitive creation.

Pursuant to B. Zhang (2017), the official beauty of Chinese Ink Painting mainly consists of special factors such as brush effects, special brushes, unique painting patterns, poetry, calligraphy, painting, stamping, way of coating, composition, and techniques as well as the style of the painter. Z. Fan & Zhang (2020) also stated that Chinese Ink Painting is

different from other genres of paintings in that they are primarily created with ink. For instance, artistic expressiveness and conception are significant in Chinese Ink Painting rather than traditional oil paintings are primarily concerned with complete realism and detail. Subtlety and implicit utilization of white space frequently reveal in Chinese Ink Painting. Chinese Ink Painting has traditionally been exhibited in a vertical, static form that limits the audience to a single and passive viewing angle (Deng et al., 2019). Conventional evaluations of the aesthetic value of Chinese Ink Painting are only possible by experts in qualitative using abstract words, the outcomes of these evaluations are therefore subjective and have a high degree of uncertainty (J. Zhang et al., 2020). Referring to Zhao (2019), Chinese Ink Painting also advocates cultural autonomy and significance of nationalism toward Chinese traditions. Under the indirect effect, scholar-bureaucrat is the principal genre of traditional Chinese Ink Painting (X. Wang & Cai, 2019).

Regarding the traditional subject matter, the Four Gentlemen, which is plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum are highly symbolic in Chinese ink painting, embodying the moral ideals and temperament of traditional scholars. Plum blossoms bloom in harsh winter, representing resilience and purity; orchids flourish in secluded valleys, signifying elegance, nobility, and inner strength; bamboo, hollow with joints, stands tall against adversity, symbolizing humility and integrity; chrysanthemums thrive under autumn frost, expressing detachment from worldly concerns and a quiet heroism. Together, these plants form a powerful visual and philosophical system, cherished and celebrated in classical Chinese art as reflections of personal virtue and poetic aspiration (Z. Zhang, 2003).

2.2.1 Six Principles of Chinese Painting Theory by Xie He

Referring to Bushell 2012, the Six Principles or *Liu Fa* of Chinese Painting were created by the critic-painter Xie He during the Southern Ch'i dynasty (479-501 A.D.). *Gu Huapin Lu*, also known as the "Classified Record of Painters of Former Times," is introduced through the Six Principles of Chinese Painting which recorded 27 ancient painters, with each level being further divided into 6 ranks from highest to lowest. In the eyes of Xie He, the painters such as Lu Tanwei, Cao Buxing, Wei Xie, Xun Xu and Zhang Mo been categorized in first rank among another 21 painters, all these painters from the age in between Three Kingdom and Liang Period. Over time, the Six Principles of Chinese Painting have undergone various interpretations and evolved to hold new and divergent implications. According to The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2002) in general, they can be summarized as follows:

Table 2.1: The Concept of Six Principles of Chinese Painting

Six Principles of Chinese Painting	Concept meaning
Creativity or Spirit Resonance or <i>Qiyun Shendong</i>	Its meaning is shrouded in mystery and intrigue, but one interpretation suggests that a painter must infuse their work with vitality and dynamism by aligning it with the essence of the natural world.
Structural use of the brush or <i>Gufa Yongbi</i>	The expression of the vital spirit through the brushstroke is a unifying element between painting and calligraphy, as both rely on the structural power and tension of the stroke.
Proper representation of form or <i>Yingwu Xiangxing</i>	The act of portraying form with fidelity to the object.

Specific coloration of those objects or <i>Suilei Fuchai</i>	Using colours in accordance with their traditional meaning and significance.
Corresponding to Composition or <i>Jingying Weizhi</i>	Arrangement and construct in placing and positioning.
Transmission of the old masters by copying them or <i>Chuanyi Moxie</i>	Refer to the tradition of reproducing ancient paintings for both technical training and to preserve them.

In the perspective of Goldin (2018), the Six Principles of Chinese Painting gained prominence almost immediately because of their succinct formulation, which allowed for a variety of fruitful interpretations, literati painters took them for granted and attempted to articulate them in their artworks in later centuries. These fundamental principles of Chinese painters' instruction and the criteria for critics' evaluations are embodied in these basic standards as time goes on. As the most influential aesthetic theory in the history of Chinese Ink Painting, the Six Principles of Chinese Painting did not come out of thin air but were developed from the various traditional concepts of thinkers, artists, and philosophers throughout history. Initially advocated by the native Chinese Taoist ideology of the unity of heaven and man, it has influenced every aspect of China's history and civilization for thousands of years, including the Classical Chinese Aesthetic. For example, the idea of "Flow of the Universe" from Taoism in Spring and Autumn Period, symbol as the beginning of Classical Chinese Aesthetics theory is influence indirectly to the idea of "Creativity or Spirit Resonance" from Six Principles of Chinese Painting in Northern and Southern Dynasties (Ye, 1985). The reason for this is that the "pneuma" of the picture is understood to be the outcome of the combination of the universe's energy flow and the artist's own pneuma, which is the life of art. After that, it's expanded to the concept of *Mengyang* propose

that in the very beginning and during the process of creation, thinking about the chaotic state of the universe, which from the idea of *Yihua* or also known as The Unifying Line in Qing Dynasty. The following timeline chart (Figure 2.1) and chart of continuity development (Figure 2.2) illustrate the indirect or non-indirect connections between the genesis, unfolding and summarization of Classical Chinese Aesthetics.

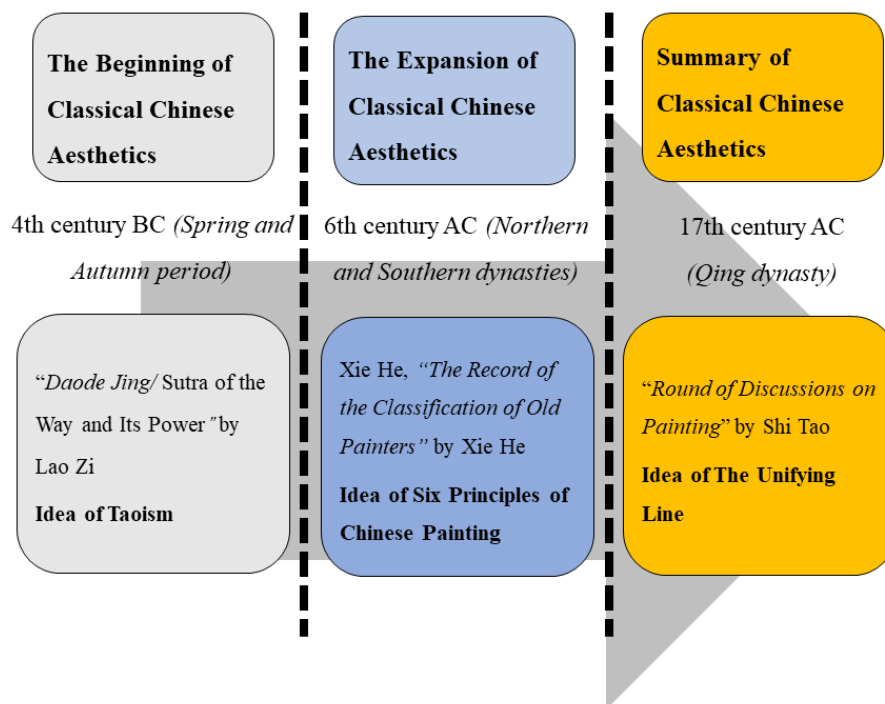


Figure 2.1: Chronology of significant theoretical thought on Chinese Ink Painting based on the flow of development lineage of Chinese Classical Aesthetics (Ye, 1985)

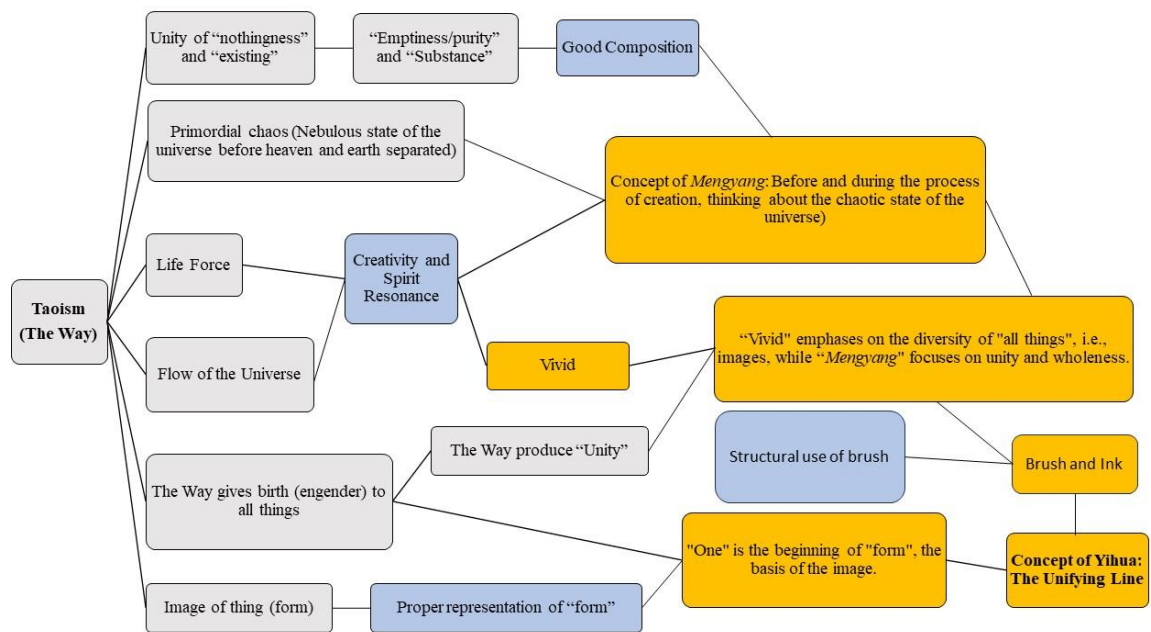


Figure 2.2: Flow chart of the continuity development of Chinese Classical Aesthetics theoretical thought based on the Figure 2.1

2.2.2 The Role of White Space in Chinese Ink Painting

In Xie He's Six Principles of Chinese Painting, *Corresponding to Composition* is essential to the aesthetic and methodology of painting, and the idea of it was originally derived from the Taoist idea of "Emptiness and Substance" or known as *Xu Shi*. According to the classical Taoist literature *Dao De Jing*, the concepts of emptiness and hollowness have practical uses, and by examining dichotomic elements, one can gain a deeper comprehension of visual information processing (Fan et al., 2022). According to Powers & Tsiang (2017), in the context of cultural dimension, the concept of insubstantiality and solid form are integral to Taoist theory, and over time they have acquired multiple levels of meaning that are reflected in the interrelated concepts of *Xu Shi* in art and literature. From a technical perspective which observed by Lin (2015), the black ink and white rice paper used in Chinese Ink Painting are considered binary opposites. In order to properly analyse Chinese Ink

Painting, white space is crucial. The use of huge, formless elements like clouds, rivers, and lakes, which are profoundly ingrained in Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, is prevalent in many well-known masterpieces. Based on the study of Z. Fan & Zhang (2020), White space and coloured space are given equal weight in the classical Taoist literature, which emphasises the ideas of emptiness. Both white space and chromatic space carry equivalent importance, even though this contradicts our cognitive intuition that favours chromatic space, also known as figure priority over the ground. The comparison made by Z. Fan et al. (2022) and stated while Western painting utilise rich colours with strong hue contrast and saturation, Chinese Ink Painting mostly use grey and black inks, supplemented by a few light colours with low hue contrast and saturation. White space is a component that lacks obvious semantic connotations but can nonetheless express a straightforward with imaginative vibe, is the most basic sort of sensory information (Z. Fan & Zhang, 2020). Additionally, it works as a rhetorical figure with a clear definition and an implied meaning. The purposeful design of the artist may become apparent to audience when they can identify the contents of the white space.

Although white space is purposely employed to transmit useful information and contribute to the composition of a painting in an objective and quantitative way, art experts have had difficulty proving this. So, Z. Fan et al. (2019) developed a computational saliency model to examine how viewers interpret visual information in relation to white space. In the study of Z. Fan et al. found that few of Chinese Ink Paintings by Wu Guang Zhong (b. 1919), a contemporary Chinese Ink Painting art master, have demonstrate that white space is more than just a silent setting: It is purposefully used to communicate certain information and has a big impact on how viewers appreciate that aesthetics. White space was used to represent snow shielding the mountain in Wu's *Snow Mountain*, their saliency model's findings

demonstrate that the attended regions were distant snowfields, which were represented by white space, and green regions beneath the mountain. Also, white areas are used in *Tianfu Terrace* to depict water. Natives describe to the terrace as "Mirror Field". Two white areas can be found in the top five visited regions by computing the salient model for *Tianfu Terrace*: the sky and the terrace. Curved lines representing the water and the sky next to the mountain are white spaces.



Figure 2.3: Calculated saliency result of *Tianfu Terrace* for the purpose of interpret visual information in relation to white space (Source: Z. Fan et al., 2019)

2.2.3 A Notable Genre of Chinese Ink Painting——Chinese Landscape Painting

Across Chinese history, landscape is a significant subject of cultural expression. The first known Chinese Landscape Painting is considered an autonomous genre, distinct from figurative painting during the Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern Dynasties. Pursuant to Bushell (2012), among Chinese Ink Paintings, perhaps the most accomplished are the landscape paintings, which exude a great love for nature, interpreting every aspect of it with such delicate charm, such sincere and vivid poetry. Chinese artists placed great emphasis on mood, often with meditative themes and small figures, as if human beings were immersed in their natural surroundings, stunning, or inspired by mountain and river scenery, or even sublimely impressed by the sublime (Bao et al., 2016). In the perception of Cao & Kong (2014), the cultural foundation of this genre primarily stems from the literary tenets of Taoism in the Taoist school. While many western ontological philosophies have a predominantly linear mode, the Taoist philosophy, as a representative of eastern ontology, highlights the significance of circulation. This is to say that the movement of the sky, earth, and humans are all interdependent and evolve in infinite, cyclical patterns (Zhou, 2020). The basic objective of Chinese Landscape Painting is to show viewers how the combination of heaven, earth, man, and history has placed mental restraints on them. The persistence and prominence of landscape as the dominant genre of Chinese Ink Painting can be attributed to the early belief in imagined mountain paradises that served as the dwellings of immortals as well as the subsequent practise of seclusion for spiritual training and outings for poetic inspiration. In the viewpoint of Diep (2017), it is common to observe depictions of mountainous landscapes shrouded in mist which to evoke a sense of a location that exists between the realms of heaven and earth in Chinese Landscape Painting. Numerous landscape paintings depict the "syncretism between heaven and man" and other lofty spiritual realms.

Such an aesthetic experience serves as a condensed portrayal of the imaginative concept of "telling doctrines with form" which fusing the natural and the human beauty. The Chinese do not prescribe chiaroscuro, but in their interpretation of real landscapes, the Chinese have occasionally been able to achieve the most subtle chiaroscuro effects in landscape paintings (Bushell, 2012).

Diep (2017) also give a remarkable Chinese Landscape Paintings such as *Lofty Mount Lu* by Shen Zhou (b. 1427), depictions of the human form are seldom present. On the rare occasion that individuals are portrayed, they are typically presented as being inconspicuous or small in comparison to the grandeur of the landscape that surrounds them. The painting depicts the grandeur of Mount Lu's towering peaks and cascading waterfalls (China Modern Contemporary Art Document Research Center, n.d.). Positioned at the base of the mountain, a scholar gazes up at the peaks that touch the clouds. Shen Zhou used this scene as his subject and utilized the distant-drawing technique of observing the mountaintop from the mountain's base, as detailed in *Lin Quan Gao Zhi*. Another example such as Guo Xi (b. 1020)'s *Early Spring* comprises multiple viewpoints from distinct perspectives. It comprises frontal view of the path leading into the distance (the path in the left middle section), upward view from below (the immense mountain in the central upper segment) and bird's-eye view of the faraway mountains (the mountains in the upper right section). *Early Spring* lacks a unified sense of space. Such techniques employed in the creation of these images impart a profound impression of vast, seemingly boundless space extending into infinity. Referring to Law (2011), the paintings in question depict mountains that dominate most of the composition, positioned at the centre and rising vertically like an immovable monument before the viewer. The distant clouds and mountains behind these formidable peaks are represented in ink washes, often fading gradually into the distance.

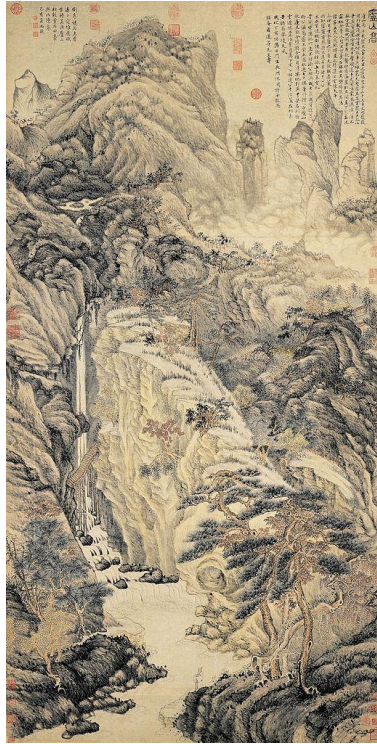


Figure 2.4: *Lofty Mount Lu* by Shen Zhou in 1467
(Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lofty_Mt.Lu_by_Shen_Zhou.jpg)

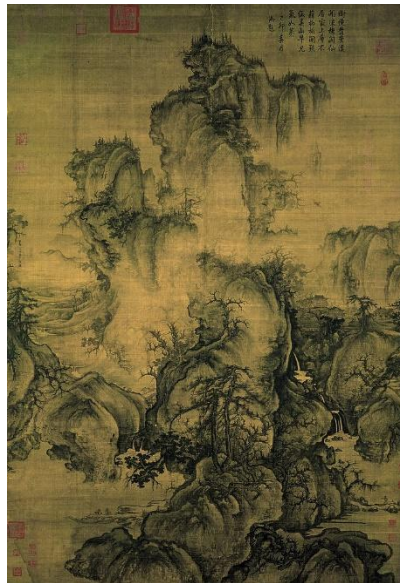


Figure 2.5: *Early Spring* by Guo Xi in 1072
(Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Guo_Xi_-_Early_Spring_\(large\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Guo_Xi_-_Early_Spring_(large).jpg))

2.3 The Scope of Digital Art

2.3.1 Definition of Digital Art

Pursuant to Paul (2015), artists have always been among the first to consider the culture and technology of their era, decades before the digital revolution were officially recognized, they were experimenting with the medium digitally. Installation; film, video, and animation; Internet art, networked art, and software art; virtual reality and acoustic environment are certain of the forms that a digital artwork can consider. In the synonymous of the term of digital art which assumed by Paul, Hasnul J Saidon (2003) define that electronic art is a combination of fine art, electronic media and computer technology that is present in the form of light art, video art and computer art. While Mokhtar (2013) conclude that include digital art, other terms such as multimedia art, interactive art, and computer art have developed a new type of applied art called new media art. Based on Paul's statement (2005), digital art opposes "objectification" and has traditionally changed the perception of "art objects" whereas art forms are time-based, dynamic, interactive, collaborative, customized and changing. Perloff (2003) elaborated the use of digital technology as a medium means that the work is produced, stored, and presented in a digital format that takes advantage of the possible existence of the medium. In a digital context, all digital media – text, images, visual or audio time data, shapes, 3D spaces – share the same digital code. This allows various types of media to be displayed using a single machine, namely a computer alone, where it acts as a multimedia display device.

2.3.2 Artistic Practices and Works in Digital Art as A Medium

In the perspective of Masri & Wan Abdullah Thani (2015), the technical aspect is one of the important components in electronic artwork which same goes to digital art. The

distribution of digital art has led to the development of several new approaches for the transmission of the arts employing technical methods such as magneto-optical recording, magnetic recording, and optical recording which stated by Du et al. (2010). According to Lucas et al. (2019), electronic technology is seen as a flexible medium that provides artists with a wide range of options for communicating their thoughts to audiences. In exploring the continuous breakthrough of material limitations, digital artwork is now able to interpret and elaborate from the traditional art forms in human perception to reach an unprecedented ultimate and immersive experience. From this perspective, Mokhtar (2013) described digital art is considerably more similar to new media art, which can be readily defined as computer-generated works.

Referring to Paul (2015), the realm of digital art installations is vast and diverse, encompassing a multitude of forms. These forms range from installations on a grand scale that utilize multiple projections, to video-based works that encompass the viewer into the imagery through live captures. For example, Jeffrey Shaw's "The Legible City" is an innovative and interactive work of art that immerses the audience in a virtual metropolis (Shaw et al., 2011). The experience entails pedalling a stationary bike through computer-generated, three-dimensional letters that form words and sentences alongside the streets. The Legible City replaces the physical architecture of cities such as Amsterdam, Manhattan, and Karlsruhe with text formations authored by Dirk Groeneveld. Navigating through these cities of words involves a journey of reading, with each path leading to diverse combinations of these texts and the spontaneous associations of meaning that come with them. Japanese artist Masaki Fujihata's "Global Interior Project" in 1996 , a networked multi-user environment that creates a mirror world in which the physical installation seems to become a map of a virtual world: the installation itself represents the architecture and construction of the virtual

space, was an attempt to combine the virtual and actual and fuse them in a world where one mirrors the other (Paul, 2015). The "Global Interior Project" creates comparable virtual and actual worlds that effortlessly converge, as its name implies, blurring the distinction between the outer and interior.

2.4 The Aesthetic of Integration and Remediation Theory

In the creation of contemporary art, there exists a set of doctrine that preserve the theories of traditional art and culture while breaking away from the traditional forms of artwork and innovating to develop new forms of art. For instance, the authors of “*See/Saw: Connections Between Japanese Art Then and Now*”, Ivan Vartanian & Kyoko Wada (2011), upon observing numerous occurrences where contemporary Japanese artists allude to traditional Japanese art, have identified a subtle yet pervasive trend that spans all genres and fields: the notion that the new is indistinguishable from the old, or that the old is indistinguishable from the new. They proved that contemporary and traditional art are on the same axis in Japan. Today, international cultural synchronisation had also been facilitated by the Internet. However, they found that even in other nations, there seems to be an increasing trend towards embracing the Japanese sense of the regional and domestic inherent culture at the same time. In Japan, the phrases *Maneru* (mimic) and *Utsusu* (copy) served as the main criteria for judging aesthetic expression. Compare this to the emphasis on originality found in many other countries' artistic traditions. It is worth mentioning that it has similarities with the "transferring and copying" also known as “Transmission of the old masters by copying them” in Xie He's Six Principles of Chinese Painting, the most influential art theory of traditional Chinese Ink Painting. So, by extension, it shows continuity in philosophy and thought throughout time, maintaining the old systems while gradually incorporating the new, and blending both in the ongoing process in Japan culture dimension.

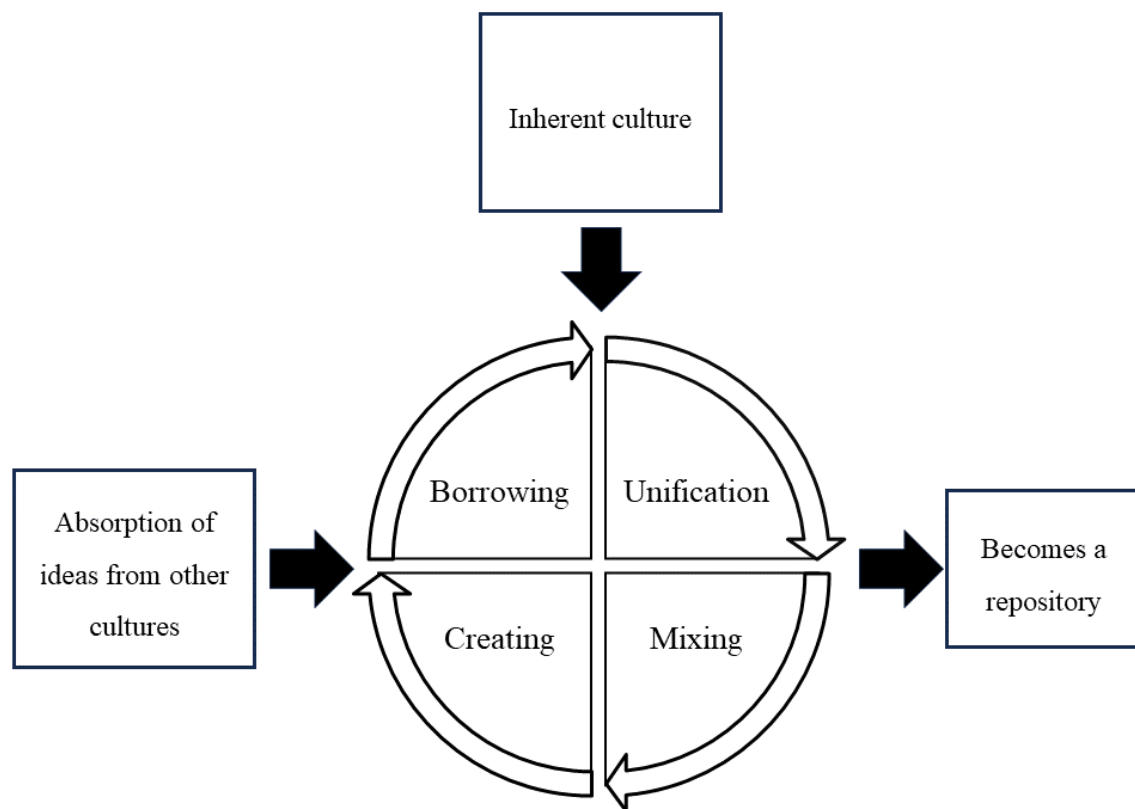


Figure 2.6: Process of the deriving new culture (repository) include art field based on the observation of Vartanian & Wada (2011)

Based on the above doctrine, contemporary Japanese artists create some examples of art on the same axis as their ancestors in the cultural dimension. Monochromatic expression by Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Pine Forest* emphasises the effect of black ink with the limitations in the colours and the variations in shading produced by the photographic medium used in 2001. Hiroshi did it in homage to the canon with the commonality, Tohaku Hasegawa's folding screen art *Sorin-zu byobu* from Azuchi-Momayama Period (around 1595). The shadow cast by the pine grove is dispersed as wind thrashes about the trees in a thick fog in Tohaku's artwork. The white space, which takes up most of the drawing plane in a monochrome, is revealed for deep and desolate. Sugimoto strives for a timelessness (or a

time before humans invented time) in his images, in contrast to Tohaku, who uses colourless ink markings to depict a transient setting.



Figure 2.7: *Pine Forests* by Hiroshi Sugimoto in 2001, Gelatin-silver print (photograph) (Source: <https://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/>)

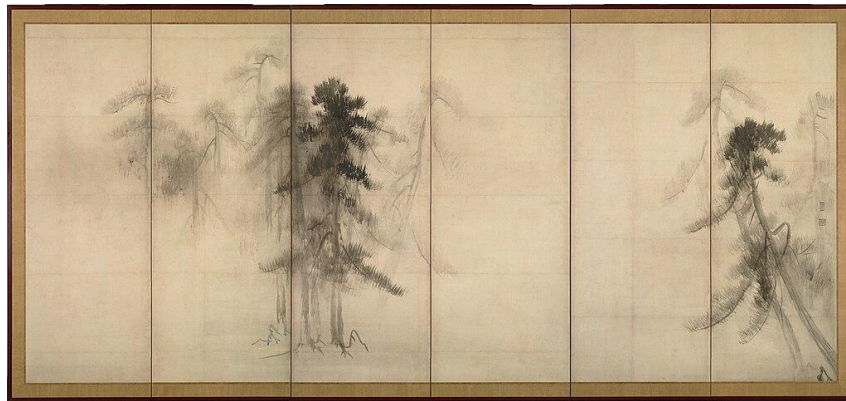


Figure 2.8: *Sorin-zu byōbu* by Tohaku Hasegawa in 1595, Sumi ink on paper (folding screen) (Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)

Besides that, Tenmyouya Hisashi produces a modern interpretation of the *musha-e*, a popular topic of *ukiyo-e* representing a warrior in battle, by imitating the posture of the heroic shogun. However, he chose a warrior from the cult favourite anime "Mobile Suit Gundam" to play the warrior and entitled *RX-78-2 Kabuki-mono 2005 Version* in 2005. Tenmyouya not simply employs conventional methods and modes of depiction, but also carries on the anti-establishment attitude of fighters like the Edo-era Kibukimono. Corresponds to the tale of heroism, the artwork of *Honjo Shigenaga parrying an exploding*

shell by Utagawa Kuniyoshi in Edo period are more appropriate in the context of *musha-e* which as the reference for Tenmyouya Hisashi.



Figure 2.9: *RX-78-2 Kabuki-mono 2005 Version* by Tenmyouya Hisashi, 2005, Acrylic and gold leaf on wood (Source: <https://www.artnet.com/>)



Figure 2.10: *Honjo Shigenaga parrying an exploding shell* by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Edo Period, Woodblock print (Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)

This integration can be seen as an alignment with the Remediation Theory which proposed by Jay David Bolter & Richard Grusin in 1998. refers to the process by which new media refashion older media forms—drawing from their aesthetics, structures, and cultural roles while simultaneously transforming them. Central to this theory is the "double logic" of immediacy and hypermediacy, which new media strive both to erase the presence of the medium (immediacy) and to heighten awareness of mediation itself (hypermediacy). Rather than replacing older media outright, remediation suggests a dynamic interplay—where digital formats incorporate, adapt, and even preserve traditional media, producing layered experiences that reflect evolving cultural values and technological innovation. In the view of (Arrivé, 2019), remediation is a fluid, reflexive, and culturally embedded process that

reshapes not only media forms but also viewer experience, institutional practices, and collective memory. It's less about replacing and more about reframing and recontextualizing. She suggests remediation isn't just about technological progress but also about preservation, memorialization, dramatization, and cultural memory in cultural and anthropological dimensions. While Pais & Frias (2012), seen remediation as a design strategy that hides media's influence. Through media displacement, artists reclaim visibility and critical awareness, turning remediation on its head to foster media literacy and aesthetic reflection. They explain in digital media, remediation often serves to mask the medium itself. Interfaces are designed to feel "natural" or "transparent," so users forget they're interacting through a technological layer. This aligns with the logic of immediacy—a desire to make the medium invisible, creating a seamless experience.

According to Winther-Tamaki (2018), traditional Asian ink aesthetics are reimaged through remediation, where newer media reinterpret ink's expressive qualities without necessarily using ink itself. Ink aesthetics are not static; they evolve through cascading chains of relocation and reinterpretation. For example, avant-garde calligraphers like Gu Wenda and Xu Bing use invented scripts and unconventional materials to challenge linguistic norms and cultural identity, while performance artists such as Zhang Huan smear calligraphy on their bodies to evoke memory and trauma. In another case, Hong Kong artist Wilson Shieh parodies ink traditions using soy sauce on paper, blending satire with homage. Digital artists simulate ink's fluidity through algorithmic brushwork, creating hypermediated experiences that mimic spontaneity and depth. These examples show how ink becomes a transnational, symbolic medium—remediated across photography, performance, and digital platforms—while questioning authenticity, authorship, and cultural ownership.

2.5 Integration of Chinese Ink Painting with Digital Art

In the perception of Elkins (2013), contemporary art exhibitions on an international scale tend to prioritize experimental art over Chinese Ink Painting, resulting in the marginalization of this art form. Its presence is minimal, if not entirely absent, in these exhibitions. Therefore, the experimental ink of the early 2000s emerged from a decade-long critique that started in the early 1990s, with artists challenging the restricted definition of ink art (Fraser, 2020). Liu et al. (2016) make a further explanation for this kind of art which utilizes traditional Chinese Ink Painting tools and materials, such as brushes, paper, and ink, the ink itself remains the most essential element in most of these artworks. According to Yeung (2013), in the 20th century, Chinese ink painting has undergone modernization and now digital Chinese Ink Painting art is a new direction that is being developed in the computer era. Many modern painters have experimented with alternative tools other than Chinese brushes for their Chinese painting art over the past thirty years. In the viewpoint of Duan (2020), In recent development, some contemporary artworks can exhibit a singular spirit that is unique to Chinese culture, regardless of the medium's choice or the primary expression method—ink, photography, or video—that they're using. When it comes to experimental ink, new media frequently comes into play as artists utilize video and installation techniques to enhance traditional flat ink painting which concluded by Fraser. Clarke (2008) concluded that the increased proximity of Chinese tradition to Western modernity still left gaps to be filled, but cultural hybridity was a common feature of the new Chinese Ink Painting. The evolution of Chinese Ink Painting from being static to becoming animated and interactive thanks to the adoption of new media technology (G. Wang et al., 2022).

A notable example study by Cheng (2024) was revitalized how traditional Chinese landscape painting, particularly Shan Shui (mountainous and aquatic scenery) through digital media techniques like VR, AI, and data visualization. It highlights how contemporary artists blend classical ink aesthetics with modern tools to create immersive, interactive experiences that reflect ecological concerns, urbanization, and transcultural dialogue. Projects examined reframe audience roles from viewers to co-creators, showcasing machines and viewers as collaborators in the art-making process. Ultimately, the study emphasizes how digital reinterpretation of Shan shui expands its cultural relevance, deepens its philosophical resonance, and repositions it as a living, evolving art form in global discourse. Beside that, in the projects of "Thousands of miles of rivers and mountains" located at the Forbidden City Beijing by Chen Yilin back in 2023, her works often transforms the expressive gestures of calligraphy and brushwork into immersive, interactive experiences. Like what B. Liu (2025) stated, through projects like InkFlow VR, Virtual Brush Projection, Calligraphic Echoes AR, and her collaboration on Pure Ink software, Chen Yilin seamlessly channels the calligraphic spontaneity and nuanced textures of traditional ink painting into immersive, interactive digital environments. By combining ultra-high-definition (UHD) projection systems with interactive motion capture technology, the exhibition creates an immersive visual-spatial experience across more than 1,000 square meters, thoughtfully arranged into thematic zones like "Scroll of Prosperity" and "Danqing Theater. Following is the comprehensive list of the example artists mentioned in the research paper by Cheng, 2024), along with their respective art practices:

Table 2.2: Featured Artists and Their Digital Chinese Ink Painting Art Practices

No.	Artist(s)	Artwork / Project	Art Practice Description
	Weili Shi	Shan Shui in the World (2016)	Uses algorithmic mapping to transform Manhattan's urban data into traditional Chinese ink landscape scrolls, blending urban geography with classical aesthetics.
	Lu Yao	New Landscape Series (2008)	Digitally composites photographs of construction sites into serene Chinese ink landscape-style images, reflecting on urbanization and memory.
	Victor Wong & AI Gemini	Escapism (2018), Far Side of the Moon	Collaborates with AI to generate ink paintings using environmental data and 3D lunar maps, redefining authorship and expanding Chinese ink landscape to extraterrestrial landscapes.
	Yongliang Yang	Artificial Wonderland (2010), Prevailing Winds (2017)	Creates digital composites of urban Shanghai that resemble Chinese ink landscape from afar but reveal dystopian cityscapes up close; uses video and motion to critique urban expansion.
	Yuxi Cao	The Vast Land (2017)	Alters Wang Ximeng's classic painting based on real-time PM2.5 pollution data, merging environmental activism with digital art.

	Wang Yi & Zhang Jun	Displaced Landscapes (2022)	Fuses Chinese ink landscape with cyberpunk aesthetics in immersive 3D environments, juxtaposing Eastern tranquillity with Western urban chaos.
	Hung Y.	Traveling Around the Fu-Chun River (2021)	VR experience of Huang Gongwang's painting, enhanced with AI style transfer to blend Eastern and Western aesthetics; includes eye-tracking for personalized interaction.
	Cheng, Dang & Yu	Fusion: Landscape and Beyond 2.0 (2023)	Interactive installation using generative AI and thermal imaging to merge urban skylines with Chinese ink landscape textures, responsive to viewer movement.

2.5.1 Video Ink Art Installation & Digital Interactive Ink Art installation

For instance, Pan Gong Kai's artwork "Melt" or known as "Snowing Melting into the Lotus", a type of projection that originated in Chinese Ink Painting, this transformation made it purely a conceptual and installation art form instead of being a form of Chinese painting anymore. Pan's inspiration for this composition stems from one of his large ink paintings, which depicts lotuses. The snow in the composition, on the other hand, is created using text from Pan's theoretical work, "On the Boundary of Western Modern Art." The art piece reflects Pan's preoccupation with the effect of Western art on traditional Chinese culture. The lotuses, which are withered, can be interpreted as representing traditional Chinese literati culture, while the snow serves as a symbol of the imposed exchange with the Western world (The Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design, 2014). Pan said is a kind of

borrowed relationship, a medium, just like a urinal (fountain) moved into an art museum by Duchamp. Even though this analysis was focused on a specific instance of Pan's Chinese installation art, Duan (2020) found that Chinese aesthetics holds that the art experience is not limited to a particular culture and that Chinese aesthetic thought is not unique to Chinese art practice; rather, its embodied, dynamic, relational, and non-dualistic features resonate with the traits of contemporary media art practices.



Figure 2.11: Video ink art installation *Showing Melting into the Lotus* by Pan Gong Kai
(Source: <https://pangongkai.artron.net/>)

While *Xuan Sheng* by Chen Xiang Bo is a large-scale digital interactive ink art installation that uses abstract Chinese ink as the fundamental element, combines the traditional Chinese scroll presentation form with the adaptation of employs contemporary new media digital interactive technology to bring traditional culture to life (S. Liu, 2021). This large-scale traditional Chinese immerses the viewer in a dynamic scene within a living, immense, and imposing space. This art practice expression is contrary from the former discourse that deny "digital + Chinese ink medium" is Chinese Ink Painting which only provide space for immersive viewing experience. This scroll is used in an interactive video

installation to interact with the audience and establish a cross-dimensional dialogue between tradition and modernity. When people walk into a specific area, the movement track will change the form of ink in the canvas in real time, in a vivid and interesting interactive way, allowing the audience to feel the beauty of oriental ink interest and experience the elegance of art creation together.



Figure 2.12: Digital interactive ink art installation *Xuan Sheng* by Chen Xiang Bo
(Source: <https://news.sina.com.cn/>)

2.5.2 Ink Video and Animation

In the study of Gao et al. (2023), depiction method to transform the final display form of traditional ink painting into a dynamic model which expound the progression and aesthetics in the dimensions of diffusion and time. The term "Metanalysis" is an original English word that denotes the processes of differentiation and redifferentiation. By utilizing an open-source mathematical model and a wall-linked projection installation which replicate the smooth and purposeful movements of ink paintings. The system has developed for installation and visualization can produce visual images by utilizing particle fluctuations. It involves the use of lines and circles to simulate ink diffusion. From this perception, the

concept of dynamic aesthetics is demonstrated to its greatest extent. This proof is fully interpreted in the art project of *Metanalysis*. The goal of this project is to use information technology and digital media to visualise the traditional ink and paper method of traditional Chinese Ink Painting. One of the artworks in the series of *Metanalysis*—*Dao Gives Birth to One*, suggests a wide range of potential connections between digital media and Chinese art. It establishes the digital atmosphere can be restructured to integrate traditional Chinese art and aesthetics, even though the standard Cartesian coordinate space used by most 3D modelling programmes is founded on Western European concepts.



Figure 2.13: Video installation *Dao Gives Birth to One* (*Metanalysis Series*) by Gao Ze et al. (Source: Gao et al., 2023)

Finally, contemporary Chinese transmedia artist Qiu An Xiong uses frame-by-frame Chinese Ink Painting to synthesize "ink animations". In the observation of Chang (2007), His first animation artwork *In the Sky* was conceived using the ink painting technique, which the artist worked on a single canvas to allow for gradual changes between each new image. The use of ink as a medium to create shifting chimaeras of the same scene as it melts and smoulders sends a powerful message about the transience of the physical world and the

inevitable nature of change. Among his animation artworks, *The New Classic of Mountains and Seas* are the most remarkable “ink animation” in 2006 that took part in the greatest established art biennale in China, Shanghai Biennale. This 25-minute long animation reportedly received the most viewers at the exhibition. According to Zhou (2020), Through the transformation of ancient Chinese iconographic symbols into modern visuals, Qiu's animation speculates on the state of humanity in present times in a grand manner. The work traverses several millennia and geographic spaces, offering a cross-cultural and transhistorical outlook. It superbly embodies the Taoist concept of "time over space" which is a pivotal idea in the Way of Ink. Yin (2006) found that Qiu's odd choice of medium and the vast and strange techniques that were projected onto the screen which contain its beautiful and poetic imagery reminiscent of traditional Chinese landscape paintings. Qiu applies roughly 6,000 acrylic paintings on canvas to produce this ink and wash animation, which isn't really an ink and wash. The concept behind this artwork is to examine the birth, growth, and decline of civilization through an Eastern perspective. It begins with the creation of water, followed by the emergence of intersecting footpaths, marking the start of civilization's inexorable journey through the ebb and flow of dynasties and the passage of time. Subsequently, the blackbird remains as a symbol of the vast Pandora's Box of industrialization being opened, unleashing significant transformations and a multitude of modern manifestations. This elucidates the impetus and lasting marks left by the ongoing evolution that coexists with postmodern society. Ultimately, what reverts back to a state of tranquillity is the human spirit.



Figure 2.14: Screen capture of ink animation video *The New Classic of Mountains and Seas* by Qiu An Xiong (Source: Zhou, 2020)

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the theoretical foundations that inform this study, tracing the continuity and evolution of Chinese Ink Painting principles and their resonance within digital art contexts. Through a systematic review of classical aesthetics—particularly Xie He’s Six Principles—the chapter established key conceptual pillars such as spirit resonance, compositional void, and brush vitality, which remain central to both traditional practice and contemporary reinterpretation. It also outlined the philosophical and spatial dynamics of white space and landscape composition, revealing the nuanced visual strategies that distinguish Chinese Ink Painting from other art forms. By examining the scope and medium of digital art, the chapter highlighted the expressive potential and technical diversity inherent in digital platforms, including interactive installations and ink animation. The aesthetic of integration, informed by East Asian philosophies and contemporary Japanese doctrine, offered a model for blending past and present visual systems. Finally, the analysis of existing

experiments in merging ink and digital media—including works by Pan Gong Kai, Chen Xiang Bo, Qiu Anxiong, and Yang Yongliang—demonstrated the feasibility and transformative possibilities of this fusion. Together, these insights provide the critical groundwork for developing a culturally anchored, technologically adaptive approach to Chinese Ink Painting within a digital paradigm.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study adopts a qualitative, practice-led research design to explore the integration of Chinese Ink Painting with digital art. Grounded in the framework of Xie He's Six Principles (*liufa*), the methodology combines visual analysis of historical and contemporary artworks, content analysis of artistic statements and documentation, and experimental artistic practice to address the research objectives. The chapter outlines the research design, data collection and analysis procedures, and measures to ensure validity and reliability, providing a transparent roadmap for replicability.

3.2 Research Design

The study employs a qualitative approach structured in three sequential phases (Table 3.1), aligning with the research objectives:

Table 3.1: Research Design Framework

Phase	Method	Purpose
Phase 1	Visual Analysis	Identify aesthetic criteria from Xie He's Six Principles in classical works
Phase 2	Content Analysis	Analyse modern artists' interpretations of ink theory in digital contexts
Phase 3	Artistic Practice	Create a hybrid artwork integrating findings from Phases 1–2

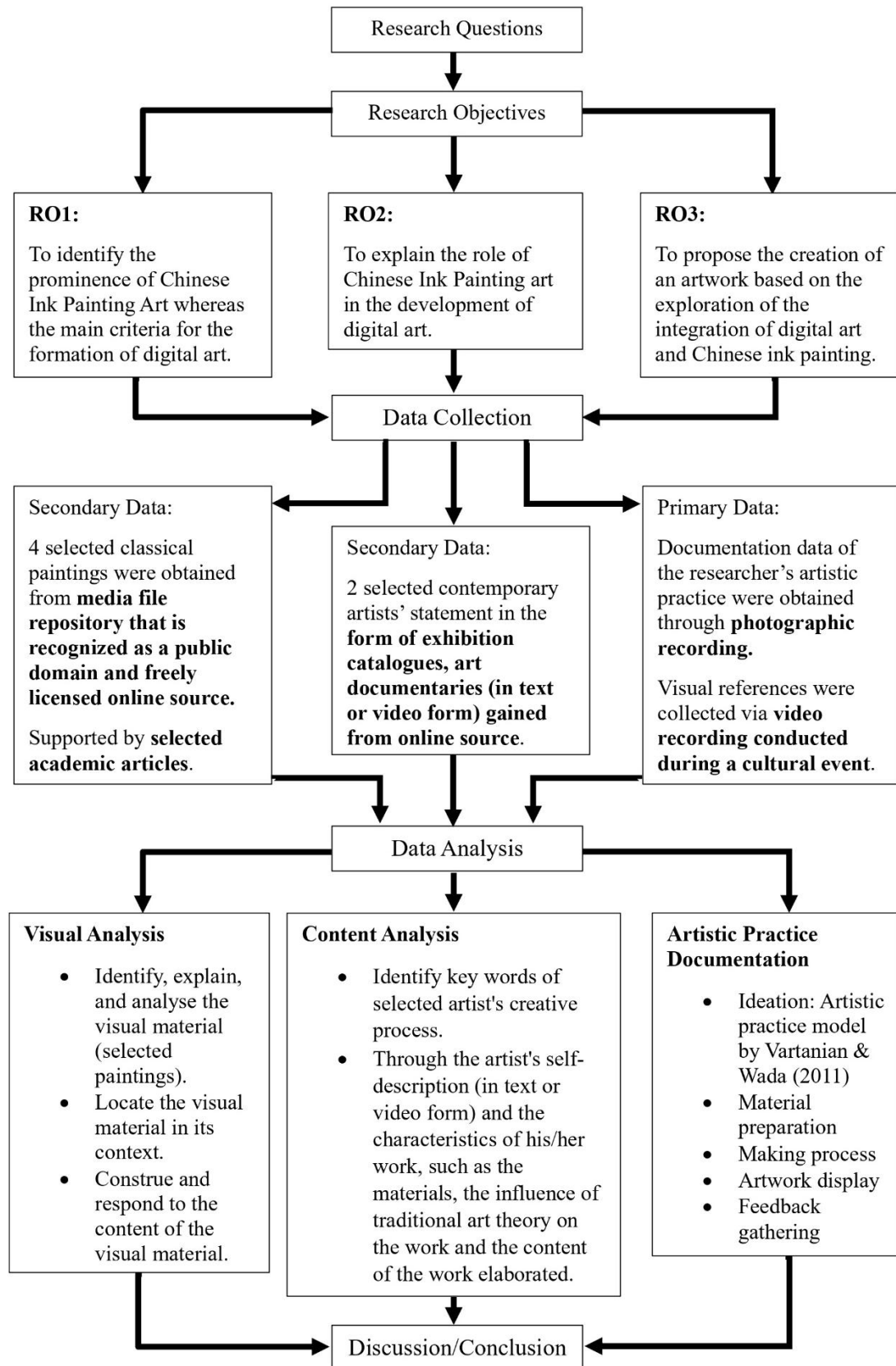


Figure 3.1: Flow of the study

This design ensures a systematic progression from theoretical analysis to practical application, enabling the study to:

- i. Contextualize traditional principles within digital art.
- ii. Critique contemporary adaptations.
- iii. Demonstrate innovation through practice-led experimentation.

3.3 Data Collection

The data amassed for this research is categorized into primary data and secondary data.

3.3.1 Primary Data

- i. Artistic Practice Documentation

The researcher works as an art practitioner or so called practice-led research, to collect first-hand information on the integration of digital art, i.e., from the sketch conceptualisation and production process until the final presentation of the work which to line up RO3. The realm of art documentation encompasses the generation and management of records that pertain to artists and their works (Gorichanaz, 2017). Like in wider contemporary culture, a document is commonly perceived to serve as substantiation of a given truth in art documentation. The field of documentation studies crosses the traditional dichotomy between documents and information, with a particular emphasis on the physicality of documentation (Kosciejew, 2018). This includes an examination of the material components, and the methods, processes, and combinations involved in the creation and manifestation of information.

- ii. Audience feedback from the researcher's exhibition

Collecting data from the population of a number can be achieved efficiently and cost-effectively through the use of questionnaires (Marshall, 2005). The acquisition of artistic feedback is not merely integral to the creative endeavour but also pivotal for fostering interpersonal connections within the community. Such engagement ensures that this artistic practice remains intertwined with those who have dedicated their time to observe the work and provide support. The feedback data will effectively address and fulfil RO3's overarching objective, which is centred around the study of artistic creation. It simultaneously offers significantly enhanced and more nuanced external input that enriches the overall analysis.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

This There were 4 sources of secondary data contextualizes primary findings within broader academic and cultural discourses, which is:

- i. Classical Chinese paintings

To achieve RO1, the provability for the selected 4 most common aesthetic criteria of Xie He's Six Principles have been consistently applied in the traditional Chinese Ink Painting art theory on the timeline, 4 among the most famous classical Chinese paintings will be the primary data samples for verification. The selection criteria for these classical Chinese paintings from various dynasties are based on strong cultural traces, such as quotations, inscriptions by famous artists from past dynasties, and seal authentication, etc. They have become works recognized by the worldwide Chinese art community as truly embodying the charm of Chinese art treasures (Baidu Baike, 2023). This can prove the existence of the selected 4 most common aesthetic criteria in the Six Principles to forming the traditional Chinese Ink Painting through the ages.

ii. Scholarly articles

The secondary data utilized in this investigation were meticulously extracted from a curated selection of scholarly articles pertaining to traditional Chinese ink painting, encompassing its technical amalgamation and methods of integration, thereby establishing a foundational framework to guide the research trajectory for the research objectives.

iii. Contemporary Chinese artists' exhibition catalogues and art documentaries

In RO2, the data will be gathered from the exhibition catalogues of contemporary ink artist, artist statement, and/or art documentaries (in text or video form). The data is inclusive of how digital art develops and its role within the artistic framework of contemporary Chinese Ink Painting. The ubiquitous nature of the internet has made obtaining secondary data in an accessible format more convenient than ever before (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

3.4 Data Analysis

i. The Visual analysis

For RO1, the method of visual analysis used to identify, explain, and analyse selected most famous Chinese paintings. Visual analysis refers to the process of interpreting and making meaning from visual media, such as images, videos, or other visual artifacts (Greyson et al., 2020). Möller et al. (2022) stated that it involves examining the visual elements, composition, context, and symbolism within the visual media to gain insights and understanding. The process of visual analysis involves qualitatively examining visual material, whether in its entirety or in fragments, while preserving its inherent characteristics to a significant extent. This method allows researchers to explore the ethical implications of showing and seeing in the context of appropriation. By locate and deconstruct these classical Chinese paintings in the context of the selected 4 most common aesthetic criteria in the Six

Principles theory by Xie He. Construe and respond to the content of the visual material subsequently with supported some past review journal papers.

ii. Content analysis

This method is to determine key words of 2 selected artist's creative process in RO2. In this analysis, through the artist's statement (in text or video form) and the characteristics of his/her digital artwork, such as the materials, the influence of traditional Chinese Ink Painting art theory on the work and the content of the work elaborated. This method useful in investigating various data sources, including textual, visual, and audio files (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). It involves analysing the content of the data to gain valuable insights and understand the underlying meaning. This analysis focuses on understanding who says what to whom, why, how, and with what effect which allows researchers to generalize and draw theoretical conclusions from the data while minimizing the loss of information (Downe-Wamboldt RN, 2009).

iii. Artistic practice analysis

Practice-led research refers to a research approach in the creative arts where the research process is initiated and driven by artistic practice, with questions, problems, and challenges emerging from the needs of practitioners (Smith & Dean, 2009). The research strategy is then carried out through practice, utilizing methodologies and specific methods familiar to artists and creative practitioners. The art making process will be based on the data results from the RO1 and RO2 to giving the concept ideas create digital art in the artistic framework of Chinese Ink Painting Theory. Such a practical approach could provide a complete doctrine which involves iterative processes, where the researcher engages in a

continuous cycle of creating, reflecting, and refining their practice in order to generate new understandings or outcomes (Mäkelä, 2007).

3.5 Validity

The correlation between the triumph of any research endeavour and its intended purpose(s) is apparent (Leavy, 2009). The methodology employed must be capable of supporting research objectives while effectively conveying research discoveries.

3.6 Reliability of Data

The authoritativeness and efficacy of any instance of art are not contingent upon its level of simplicity. Nevertheless, the terms "authentic" and "original" continue to be employed to describe the connection between the artwork and its originator (Roeder et al., 2007). The guideline for the art practice in this study as original is that it will not copy the concepts and ideas of existing artists' work.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to the design and execution of this study, ensuring that all research activities adhered to academic integrity and legal compliance. The following sections outline the ethical protocols implemented to address potential risks and safeguard the rights of all stakeholders involved in the research process.

3.7.1 Copyright and Intellectual Property

The use of artworks under the guidelines of copyright and intellectual property as following categories:

- i. Classical paintings

High-resolution digital reproductions of classical Chinese Ink Paintings were sourced from public domain archives (e.g., Google Arts & Culture) or used under fair use provisions for academic research.

ii. Contemporary works

Permission was sought from artists or institutions for the use of digital ink artworks. Where permissions were unavailable, only non-commercial, transformative uses (e.g., analysis, critique) were employed, in compliance with copyright laws. Publicly available artists' interviews and statements were used with attribution, ensuring that artists' voices were represented accurately and respectfully.

3.7.2 Participant Anonymity and Consent

The audience's feedback was collected with careful consideration for participant anonymity and consent. During data collection, feedback from visitors to the researcher's art showcase was gathered through anonymous QR-linked questionnaires. Participants were provided with clear information about the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and the assurance that their responses would remain confidential. Informed consent was a key component of this process, as the beginning of the questionnaire explicitly stated that the answers would be used solely for academic purposes. This approach ensured that participants were fully aware of how their data would be utilized and that their privacy and autonomy were respected throughout the research process.

3.7.3 Data Security and Confidentiality

Data security and confidentiality were prioritized throughout the research process to ensure the protection of all collected information. All primary and secondary data, including

questionnaire responses and visual analysis annotations, were stored on password-protected devices and backed up on secure cloud storage platforms, such as Google Drive, which utilized two-factor authentication for added security. Access to the raw data was strictly limited to the researcher and approved supervisors, ensuring confidentiality and preventing any unauthorized use or breaches. These measures were implemented to uphold ethical standards and safeguard the confidentiality of the research data.

3.8 Summary of Chapter

In summary, this study employs a qualitative, practice-led methodology rooted in Xie He's Six Principles to investigate the convergence of Chinese Ink Painting and digital art. It unfolds over three phases, visual analysis of classical masterworks to distil core aesthetic criteria; content analysis of contemporary artists' statements and digital experiments; and the creation of a practice-led hybrid artwork that synthesizes insights from the first two phases. Primary data comprise detailed documentation of the artistic process and audience feedback gathered via anonymous questionnaires, while secondary sources include public-domain reproductions of classical paintings, peer-reviewed articles, exhibition catalogues, and art documentaries. Data analysis combines interpretive visual and thematic content methods with an iterative cycle of making, reflecting, and refining, ensuring that every step directly addresses the research objectives. Rigor is maintained through clear alignment of methods with goals to guarantee validity, through original practice and transparent record-keeping to uphold reliability, and through comprehensive ethical protocols which including copyright compliance, informed consent, participant anonymity, and secure data storage, to safeguard all stakeholders. Collectively, these methodological components offer a transparent, replicable framework for reimagining traditional ink principles within contemporary digital art practice. This integrative approach not only bridges historical

aesthetics with emerging media but also positions artistic practice as a form of scholarly inquiry. By foregrounding both visual tradition and digital innovation, the study contributes a culturally grounded yet forward-looking model for transdisciplinary art research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction of Findings

This chapter synthesizes the empirical outcomes of the study, structured to align with the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. The findings are organized into three interrelated sections. First, section 4.1 addresses Research Objective 1 by systematically examining four classical Chinese ink paintings across dynasties to verify the enduring application of Xie He's Six Principles. Through visual and contextual analysis, this section demonstrates how these principles have historically shaped the aesthetic and philosophical foundations of Chinese ink painting, establishing their relevance as criteria for digital adaptation. Section 4.2 responds to Research Objective 2 by analysing works by Qiu Anxiong and Yang Yongliang, whose digital installations and animations reimagine ink aesthetics through technological innovation. Their practices illustrate how digital tools can amplify traditional principles and narrative depth while fostering immersive, cross-cultural dialogues. This section underscores the transformative role of Chinese ink theory in expanding digital art's expressive boundaries. By integrated with local context, section 4.3 fulfils RO3 by documenting the researcher's artistic practice which create a hybrid artwork integrates Salako Dayak cultural with digital projection, anchored in Xie He's compositional principles.

4.2 Analysis of Existence of The Four Most Common Aesthetic Criteria from "Six Principles of Chinese Painting" in Selected Chinese Ink Paintings

When exploring the domain of Chinese painting, individuals originating from the Occidental sphere must liberate themselves from their preconceived ideas and relinquish their artistic instruction, analytical customs, and any aesthetic burdens accumulated from the Renaissance up to the contemporary era (Bushell, 2012). It is essential to refrain from drawing parallels between the creations of Chinese artists and the celebrated masterworks embellishing the galleries of Western repositories, be they public or private. The preface “Classified Record of Painters of Former Times” also known as *Gu Hua Pin Lu* authored by Xie He delineates the "Six Principles of Chinese Painting", a set of principles of paramount significance within the domain of Chinese aesthetics (Goldin, 2018). The succinct nature of these criteria facilitated their widespread acceptance, fostering a multitude of possible interpretations. With the passage of time, literati painters familiarized themselves with these criteria, emphasizing their incorporation into their artistic pursuits.

4.2.1 Background of Selected Chinese Ink Paintings

The formation of the “Most Famous Classical Chinese Paintings” concept arose through three interconnected mechanisms. First, scholarly legitimization: Imperial catalogues like the Qing-era *Shiqu Baoji* also known as “Imperially Endorsed Sequel to the Treasured Cases of Art in the Palaces” canonized these works as cultural relics, embedding them within state-sanctioned art historiography (Tan, 2010), it is worth mentioning that its catalogue provides key coordinates for reconstructing the history of Chinese art collections around the world. Second, public pedagogy: Modern institutions, such as museums and textbooks, reinforced their status through exhibitions and reproductions, as seen in *The Night Revels of Han Xizai*’s frequent inclusion in Chinese art curricula, for example, the

contemporary chromogenic print artwork named *Night Revels of Lao Li* executed by Wang Qingsong in 2000, both artwork title and the composition refer to this ancient masterpiece (Yip, 2011). Third, nationalist cultural curation in modern China: In the 20th century, these paintings were reframed as emblems of China's artistic heritage, particularly after turbulent events like the rescue of *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* from Republican-era antiquities trafficking (Xue, 2022).

The selection of *The Nymph of the Luo River* by Gu Kaizhi, *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* by Yan Liben, Tang, *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* by Gu Hongzhong, and *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* by Wang Ximeng as representatives of the selected "Most Famous Classical Chinese Paintings" reflects a confluence of artistic, historical, and cultural criteria that define this unofficial canon. Artistically, these works exemplify groundbreaking techniques and stylistic innovations: *The Nymph of the Luo River* pioneered the brushwork known as *Ancient Hairspring Outlining*, a technique that uses a Chinese brush to create smooth, soft, narrow lines, reminiscent of spring silk (N. Li & Lu, 2024), merging poetic narrative with ethereal visuality. While *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* elevated blue-green mineral pigment (*qinglü*) landscapes to monumental scales, showcasing technical virtuosity by an 18-year-old prodigy (Ma, 2021). Historically, *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* serves as a rare visual record of Tang dynasty diplomacy, encapsulating the empire's geopolitical prestige (Yao, 2017), whereas *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* combines covert political surveillance with psychological realism, offering a voyeuristic glimpse into Southern Tang court intrigue (Powers & Tsiang, 2017). Culturally, these paintings embody philosophical and societal values: *The Nymph of the Luo River* intertwines Daoist mysticism with Confucian literati

sentiment (Fu, 2022; N. Li & Lu, 2024), while *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* symbolizes imperial authority over a harmonized natural order (Ma, 2021).

Produced by the renowned Eastern Jin Dynasty painter Gu Kaizhi, *The Nymph of the Luo River* (see Figure 4.1) is a narrative painting with 26 cm high and 646 cm long, that draws inspiration from Cao Zhi's literary masterpiece *The Nymph of the Luo River*. This extensive compilation, aptly named *Ode to the Nymph of the Luo River*, can be segmented into three distinct sections: encounter, affection, and parting (Fu, 2022). It effectively captures the authentic emotional tale of Cao Zhi and Luo Shen, while simultaneously delving into the melancholy and perplexity that arises from the divergent paths taken by mortals and deities.



Figure 4.1: Partial view of *The Nymph of the Luo River*
(Source: <https://artsandculture.google.com/>)

The artwork titled *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* (see Figure 4.2) created by an ancient architect, painter, and politician Yan Liben, is a painting on silk that depicts the amicable meeting between the Tang dynasty and Tibet. In the early years of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Taizong humbly learned from the experience and lessons of the fall of the Sui Dynasty, worked hard to govern, accepted advice from the public, and formulated positive policies in politics, economy, culture, and ethnic exchanges, which continuously enhanced the country's strength and reached unprecedented prosperity (Yao, 2017). It was against this background that the painting came into being. The prosperity and strength of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Taizong's inclusive and open national policy, and Tibetan's strong desire to learn from the powerful and advanced Tang Dynasty's subjective initiative made Sino-Tibetan culture created a new situation of integration.



Figure 4.2: *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy*
(Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)

The Night Revels of Han Xizai (see Figure 4.3) was painted on silk and is a typical long-scroll figure painting in fine brushwork and heavy colors. According to historical records, Li Yu, the late emperor of the Southern Tang Dynasty, wanted to appoint Han Xizai as prime minister (Song, 2017). To assess Han's appropriateness and ascertain his activities within his residence, Li secretly sent the court painter Gu Hongzhong, investigate on Han during the night banquet at Han's residence on late night and created this masterpiece.



Figure 4.3: Partial view of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai*
(Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)

A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains (see Figure 4.4) is mainly designed to cater to the needs of Zhao Ji, the emperor Huizong of Song Dynasty and can be roughly divided into four themes: travel, sightseeing, gatherings, and labour (Qiu et al., 2020). These themes are all based on real life, just like the reproduction of real scenes without any modification. Historical records prove that 17-year-old Wang Ximeng in Song Dynasty completed this masterpiece (Yu, 2017). Qiu et al. (2020) stated that the content of the entire painting is mostly derived from Wang Ximeng's own real-life feelings, but only appropriately added some of his own subjective imagination, changing the style of previous paintings that pursued mirage-like illusions. The long scroll panoramic composition can better highlight the thousands of miles of rivers and mountains.



Figure 4.4: Partial view of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains*
(Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)

4.2.2 Analysis from the Aesthetic Criteria of *Proper Representation of Form*

The initial aesthetic criteria places great emphasize on the transmission of “spirit” within both physical entities and human sentiments which can be interpreted vividly in traditional Chinese ink painting (W. Zhang et al., 2023). Regarded as the foremost aesthetic criteria, it served as the foundation upon which the subsequent aesthetic criteria were established. This necessitates artists to vividly portray the essence, style, and characteristics of individuals and objects (W. Li, 2015). The founder of *Six Principles of Chinese Painting*, Xie He dedicates considerable attention to the concept of "rhyme" in this aesthetic criterion. In this context, "rhyme" alludes to the exquisite beauty of refinement and the implicit and virtuous beauty imbued with profound emotions.

The vividness of rhyme is a complete process of aesthetic expression, and the beauty revealed by a painting full of vitality and elegance. *The Nymph of the Luo River* (see Figure 4.1) shows the humanity's pursuit and imagination of beauty is the beginning of the pursuit of painting. Therefore, women's body and appearance are often used to express the emotion of beauty. The process of women's deification is the expression of oriental fantasies and expectations for beauty since ancient times. In the *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* (see Figure 4.2), the painting vividly records information about the important historical event of the Sino-Tibetan marriage in the Tang Dynasty by depicting Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty Li Shimin receiving an envoy sent by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo. The characterization in *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* (see Figure 4.3) is vivid, sophisticated, and simple, which fully demonstrates the author's superb level of painting art creation. The banquet depicted in the masterpiece is immersed in drunkenness and wealth, on the contrary Han Xizai's lonely and desolate mood which lives in frustration and melancholy. Lastly, the overall landscape view of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and*

Mountains (see Figure 4.4) looks tranquil in at first glance, but on the contrary, it has a strong sense of life upon closer inspection. The utilization of the aesthetic criteria of *Creativity and Spirit Resonance* can be observed in masterpieces originating from different dynasties in ancient China, as demonstrated in the table provided.

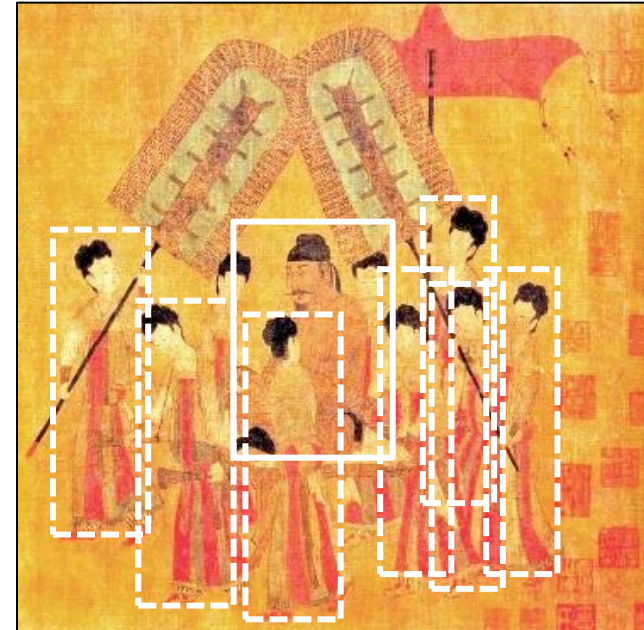
Table 4.1: Evidence of Proper Representation of Form Application in Various Dynasties in China

1. Artwork of <i>The Nymph of the Luo River</i> by Gu Kaizhi (Eastern Jin Dynasty)	2. Artwork of <i>Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy</i> by Yan Liben (Tang Dynasty)
Description	Description
Animal deities in exaggerated and reorganised external forms. 	In terms of the character's demeanour, it depicts Tang Emperor Taizong's dignified but self-contained character. 

The forms of medicines tree are constructing the fairy realm with the sacred mountains.



Size ratio of subject was adjusted according to the proportion or the degree of importance of different elements in the painting. Example: size of Tang Emperor Taizong bigger than other figures.



The ancient and clumsy characters are manipulated to portray goddess or high priests.



3. Artwork of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* by Gu Hongzhong (Five Dynasties Period)

Description

Figure of Han Xizai sitting on the bed, wearing a *Futou*, left hand naturally resting on the edge of the bed, looks pleased and relaxed.



4. Artwork of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains* by Wang Ximeng (Song Dynasty)

Description

The painting of the ship type is relatively rich, there are passenger boats, cargo boats, fishing boats, catamarans, pedal boats, small sampans and so on more than ten kinds.

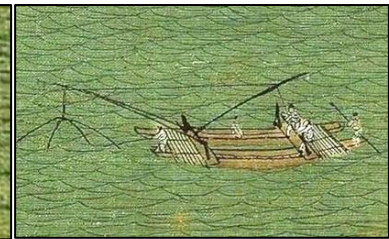
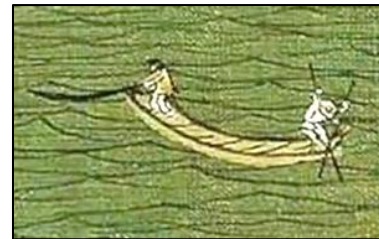
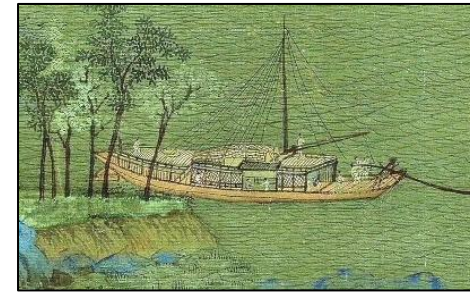
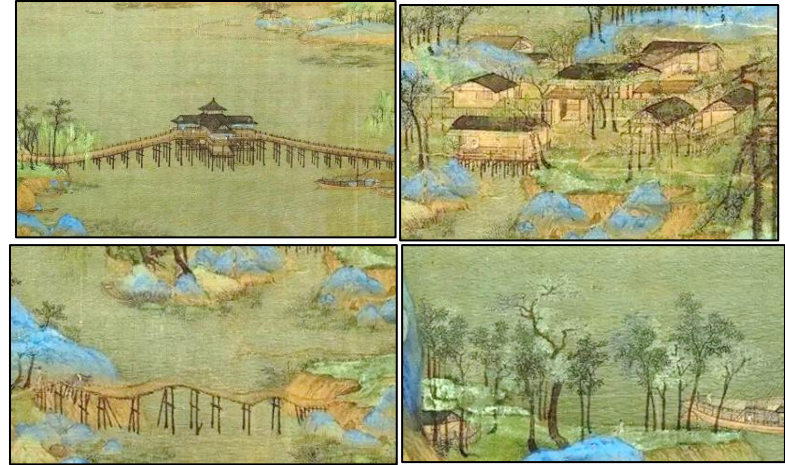


Figure of Han Xizai dressed in a white coat with bare chest and stomach, sitting cross-legged in a chair, wearing a *Futou* and holding a fan.



The bridge pavilion, trees, roads, and houses were portrayed detailly.



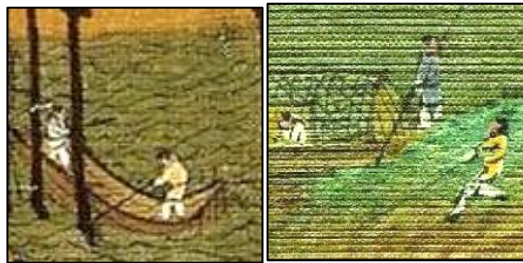
4.2.3 Analysis from the Aesthetic Criteria of *Creativity and Spirit Resonance*

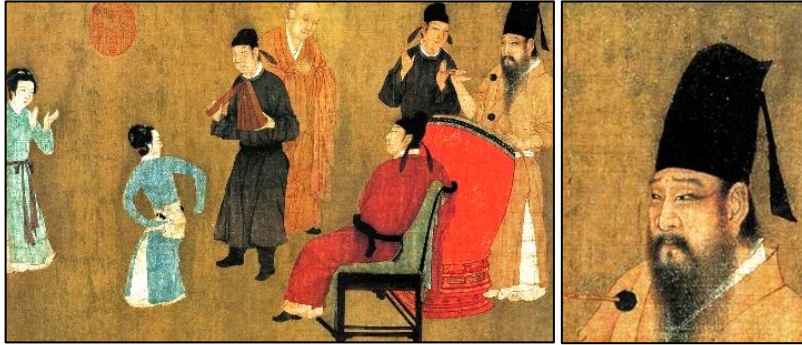
The initial aesthetic criteria places great emphasis on the transmission of “spirit” within both physical entities and human sentiments which can be interpreted vividly in traditional Chinese ink painting (W. Zhang et al., 2023). Regarded as the foremost aesthetic criteria, it served as the foundation upon which the subsequent aesthetic criteria were established. This necessitates artists to vividly portray the essence, style, and characteristics of individuals and objects (W. Li, 2015). The founder of *Six Principles of Chinese Painting*, Xie He dedicates considerable attention to the concept of “rhyme” in this aesthetic criterion. In this context, “rhyme” alludes to the exquisite beauty of refinement and the implicit and virtuous beauty imbued with profound emotions.

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Table 4.2: Evidence of *Creativity and Spirit Resonance* Application in Various Dynasties in China

1. Artwork of <i>The Nymph of the Luo River</i> by Gu Kaizhi (Eastern Jin Dynasty) Description This painting coupled with a love story that resonates with the viewer's emotions. But appreciating the female figures solely through a romantic lens or "male gaze" does not sufficiently explain the dramatic tensions and contradictions in the portrayal of the woman (N. Li & Lu, 2024). This painting can convey the mental state and inner activities of the characters in the picture and meet the requirements of character paintings that have both form and spirit (Fu, 2022).	2. Artwork of <i>Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy</i> by Yan Liben (Tang Dynasty) Description By depicting the size of proportion of each character, the artist conveys the national power and majesty of the Tang dynasty through artistic means and expresses the spirit and elegance of that era. Through ambitious military campaigns, the Tang dynasty extend its imperial control over distant regions such as Central Asia, Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet, and even parts of Siberia (Lockard, 2000).
3. Artwork of <i>The Night Revels of Han Xizai</i> by Gu Hongzhong (Five Dynasties Period) Description In whole banquet, Han Xizai's expression was solemn and depressed, which was in sharp contrast to the banquet where there was a feast of singing and dancing, showing Han Xizai's ambivalence and enriching the character's inner world.	4. Artwork of <i>A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains</i> by Wang Ximeng (Song Dynasty) Description Although the characters are as small as a bean, but the gesture of a thousand, vivid, and the shape of the dynamics of each deportment. 



This painting adds the ancient's flavour to the green mountains and waters sublimating it into a conscious "realm" of the aura.

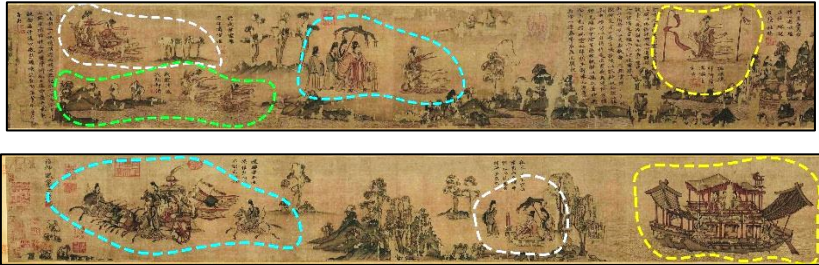
4.2.4 Analysis from the Aesthetic Criteria of *Corresponding to Composition*

In the aesthetic criteria of *Corresponding to Composition*, the concept of "void" also called *Xu Shi* or white space is a distinguishing feature of Chinese painting (W. Zhang et al., 2023). By leaving parts of the blank region intentionally, it will lead audiences' imaginations are stimulated and encouraged to fill in the gaps. It is crucial for painters to carefully consider the arrangement of the composition, treating the composition, thought process, and overall conception as interconnected elements that require thoughtful management (W. Li, 2015). Before embarking on a Chinese ink painting, it is essential to approach the composition with meticulousness and precision. A comprehensive and deliberate plan should be established prior to putting the brush to paper.

In *The Nymph of the Luo River* (see Figure 4.1), Gu Kaizhi skilfully manages every part of the picture to make it function reasonably. In order to integrate space with infinite time, he suppresses the depth of the three-dimensional space and highlight the infinity of the two-dimensional plane. In this process, it doesn't matter when protagonist in the painting appears or how many times she appears, because she seems to be wandering in the tunnel of time. The right side of the painting of the *Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* (see Figure 4.2) has a relatively dense and full outline; the inclined screen fan and the chariot that Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty rides on form a triangle composition which giving stability sense. While the layout on the left side of the picture shows a loose state of three people separated from each other which arranged from high to low to giving sense of extension. The artist deliberately left a large blank space between the two groups of figures, thus achieving a balance of centre of gravity. The function of the folding screen within the composition of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* (see Figure 4.3) extends beyond the mere expansion of time and alteration of space. It also assumes a significant role in the overall

rhythm of the artwork, blending both movement and stillness within the depicted scene, thus achieving a certain level of tranquillity that mirrors the internal fluctuations of the work and prompts contemplation. Lastly, according to the rhythmic changes of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains*' landscape composition (see Figure 4.4), the picture can be roughly divided into six parts. Each section is connected or echoed by the water surface, cruise ship, beach, and bridge. Depth in the painting, the twists and turns of the path also stretch out the deep space and disappear into the infinite and far-reaching space.

Table 4.3: Evidence of *Corresponding to Composition* application in Various Dynasty in China

1. Artwork of <i>The Nymph of the Luo River</i> by Gu Kaizhi (Eastern Jin Dynasty) Description This painting adopts a long-scroll coherent composition, scattered perspective, multi-person scenes, multiple episodes of depiction, viewed from different parts of the plot development type of composition.  The space after multiple superposition shows infinite accommodation. In the process of creating the compositional space, the painting space been extended infinitely and give the picture the imagination of white space. The main thread that runs the picture in chronological order, and the scenes unfold continuously over time according to the story recounted in <i>The Nymph of the Luo River</i>.	2. Artwork of <i>Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy</i> by Yan Liben (Tang Dynasty) Description There are thirteen people in the whole picture, but it is obviously divided into two parts, whether it is from the movements of the two sides or the expression of the demeanour of the two sides have the intention of contrast.  The left is sparse and static; the right is dense and rhythmic. 
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3. Artwork of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* by Gu Hongzhong (Five Dynasties Period)

Description

The folding screen is a clever design which plays an important role in dividing the picture.



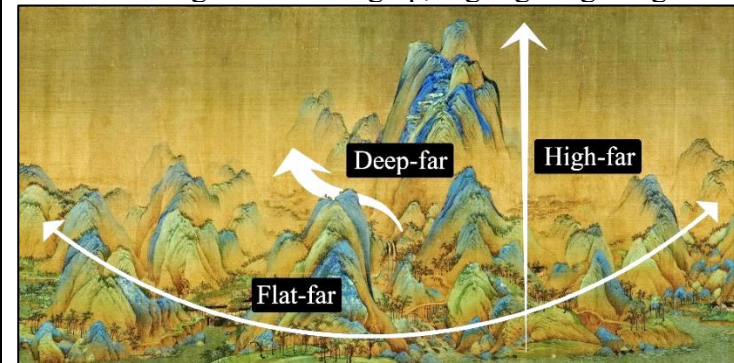
The fusion of "scattered perspective" and real time and space are based on the arrangement of the scenes with different visual angles in an orderly manner in one picture.

4. Artwork of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains* by Wang Ximeng (Song Dynasty)

Description

The overall composition draws on the "Three Distances Method" developed by Guo Xi (the famous artist in Song Dynasty), which is "deep-far", "flat-far" and "high-far" presenting a flat and distant effect. The "Three Distance Method" stand for:

- i. Deep-far: looking behind the mountain, emphasizing the depth of space.
- ii. Flat-far: looking from near to far, highlighting the vast horizontal space from left and right.
- iii. High-far: looking up, highlighting the grandeur.



4.2.5 Analysis from the Aesthetic Criteria of *Structural Use of Brush*

The art of calligraphy and painting shares a strong mutual influence, where every brush stroke carries its own distinct structure, texture, and significance (W. Zhang et al., 2023). Chinese ink painting has a time-honoured custom of prioritizing the utilization of a pen in calligraphy, resulting in its classification as an "art of lines." The depiction and portrayal of emotions are skilfully captured and accomplished through the implementation of a brush in calligraphy, resulting in the remarkable achievements seen in Chinese ink painting (W. Li, 2015).

Gu Kaizhi uses uniform and smooth lines to describe the objective objects in *The Nymph of the Luo River* (see Figure 4.1), injecting subjective emotions into the lines, and giving emotion and life to the objective objects in the picture. From a visual perspective, the use of lines adds to the spatial relationship and layer hierarchy of the picture. Gu Kaizhi's exquisite brushwork skills gave birth to the *Ancient Hairspring Outlining* method, which seems to be clumsy over skill, and airy such "spring silkworms spinning silk". The clothing patterns of most of the characters in *Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy* (see Figure 4.2) are relatively simple. But in the simplicity, the painter also paid full attention to the changes in the density of the clothing patterns. Different textures of clothing can also be expressed with different techniques of lines, so that they are not monotonous. Gu Hongzhong depicts the clothes of the characters in *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* (see Figure 4.3), in order to show the elegant and soft texture of the clothes, the author rationally uses soft lines, and makes each line arrangement and combination appropriately dense, and the tips of the lines will have a certain uneven characteristics can prevent the lines on the clothes from being arranged in parallel and at the same angle. The texture stroke or so called *Cun Fa* method combines hemp-fiber shading with axe-cut shading to express the texture, veins, and light

and dark changes of the rocks in the painting of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains* (see Figure 4.4). Other techniques are also used to depict the outline of the image, such as the boneless method for tree trunks, boundary painting for houses, freehand brushwork for distant mountains, and method and dot painting for hillside.

Table 4.4: Evidence of *Structural Use of Brush Application* in Various Dynasty in China

1. Artwork of <i>The Nymph of the Luo River</i> by Gu Kaizhi (Eastern Jin Dynasty)	2. Artwork of <i>Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy</i> by Yan Liben (Tang Dynasty)
Description	Description
The flowing wavy lines and curved lines are applied to outline the objects, which are extremely rhythmic, this outlining method so called <i>Ancient Hairspring Outlining</i>.	The technique of <i>Wire Outlining</i> which make the line texture is strong and fine but also appears calm and solid.

3. Artwork of *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* by Gu Hongzhong (Five Dynasties Period)

Description

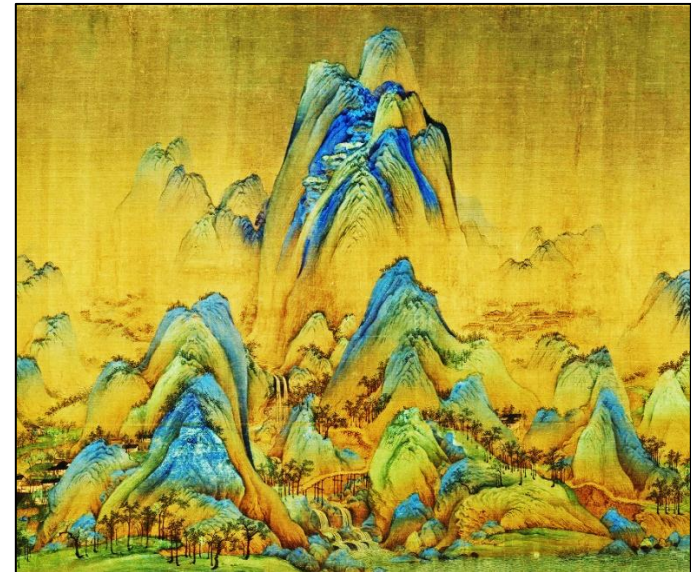
By skilfully utilizing different variations of the brush, such as lifting, stuttering, pressing, and setback, the lines can produce differences in rigidity and flexibility, thickness, and lightness in the picture. Overall, the artist mainly used the method of *Wire Outlining*.



4. Artwork of *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains* by Wang Ximeng (Song Dynasty)

Description

Texture stroke or *Cun Fa* to draw mountain rocks with the combination of *hemp-fiber shading* and *axe-cut shading* methods.



4.3 Reimagining Tradition: The Digital Reincarnation of Chinese Ink Aesthetics

The reference artworks involved in the analysis of artistic practice and its context are Qiu Anxiong's *the New Classic of Mountain and Seas* and *Journey to the Dark II* by Yang Yongliang.

The New Classic of Mountain and Seas by Qiu Anxiong is a 30-minute video animation that is skillfully crafted in the style of traditional Chinese ink paintings, showcasing a mesmerizing blend of artistic techniques and storytelling elements that captivate the viewer with its unique visual aesthetic and narrative depth. It's offering a unique viewpoint on the contemporary world that diverges from traditional knowledge symbol systems. Drawing from the narrative techniques of Chinese classical mythology, it portrays elements of the modern world while prompting inquiries into the nature of modern civilization. Through the integration of traditional Chinese painting techniques like Gongbi, Xieyi, Baimiao, and more, the film series expands the boundaries of ink painting and incorporates them into the realm of contemporary art. This fusion of styles, combined with hand-drawn animation, allows for a critical exploration of the real world through vivid and captivating imagery.

This 9 minute 50 seconds video installation with the pixel size of 12600×2160 was made by the young contemporary Chinese artist, Yang Yongliang. The photographic collages and videos depicting cityscapes bear a striking resemblance to classical Chinese ink paintings. Within this three-channel 4K video, the depicted scenes exude a sense of tranquillity, yet they also subtly expose the conflicts arising from the interaction between human society and the natural environment. This response is notably directed towards the swift pace of urban expansion in China.

4.3.1 Background and Inspiration Points of *New Classic of Mountain and Seas*

Inspired by the classical Chinese text, “Shan Hai Jing” or *The Classics of Mountains and Seas* (see Figure 4.5), Qiu's observation of the presence of numerous supernatural forces and disorderly deities in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* may be perceived as illogical by many. However, examining the contemporary world through the lens of this ancient text offers a fascinating perspective. During the era of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, the environment resembled a universe that existed prior to civilization, characterized by primitiveness and barbarity. Individuals of that time lacked the knowledge systems and societal advancements present today, resulting in a perception of the world steeped in ignorance. Through this uninformed viewpoint, the world appeared mystical, unified, and imbued with animistic qualities. Contemplating the scenario where an individual from this barbaric era encounters modern civilization prompts consideration of how the world might appear to them. Qiu posits a hypothetical scenario where an individual from an ancient or primitive society, exposed to contemporary technological advancements, might not conceptualize an airplane, a symbol of modern technological progress, as a creation of human civilization. Rather, this individual may perceive it as a monstrous entity.



Figure 4.5: Scrollable pages from volume five of the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, a Ming dynasty (1368–1644) woodblock printed edition (Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)

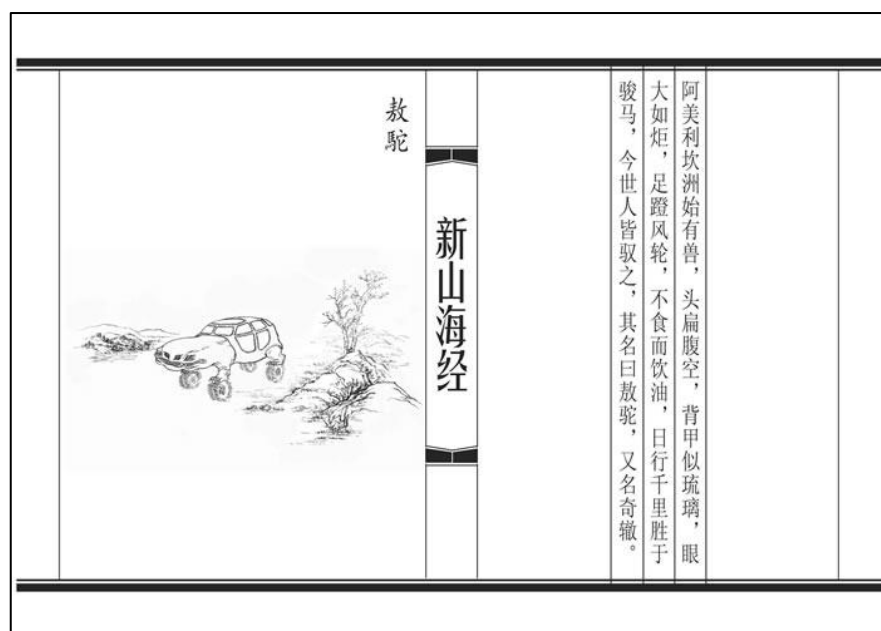


Figure 4.6: Portfolio of twelve woodblock prints; ink on paper in the series of *New Classic of Mountains and Seas 1* (Source: <https://www.quanxiong.net/en/article2006.html>)

4.3.2 Materials, Medium & Artistic Practice of *New Classic of Mountain and Seas*

The genesis of this creative process lies in the intricate designs visible on the prints, initially conceived through manual sketches. The meticulous endeavour of conceptualizing and visualizing these characters involved a meticulous exploration of each unique entity and contemporary phenomenon, culminating in a comprehensive array of designs.

Qiu perceived that mere flatness lacked excitement, prompting him to contemplate ways to imbue movement and narrative into it. Subsequently, as these creations amassed in complexity, the idea of translating them into an animated format emerged, with a focus on utilizing the characters to construct a coherent narrative and explore their storytelling potential.

At this juncture, Qiu has embarked on experimenting with the fusion of ink and three-dimensional artwork to investigate novel potentials. The initial two segments were entirely handcrafted, while the third segment demanded over three years to complete, entailing extensive modelling, set construction, debugging, and encountering numerous obstacles. Qiu remarked that oriental paintings encompass both virtual and tangible components, with a sense of distance but lacking specific coordinates. The primary challenge Qiu confront is how to integrate the three-dimensional realism of the Western art tradition with the artistic conception of Eastern ink in a nuanced manner, as well as how to navigate the balance between the virtual and real aspects within the realms of ink and three-dimensional art.

For visual aspect, Qiu in charge of overseeing the general concept, script development, creation of original artwork for animations, and the editing process. On the other hand, his assistant focuses primarily on the utilization of 3D technology, including tasks such as modelling, texturing, animating, setting camera movements, rendering, and more. Qiu would provide guidance on the desired effects, like depicting ink effects in a three-

dimensional space in the coordination with his assistant. Numerous experiments were conducted to achieve the desired results, particularly in adjusting lighting and textures. Additionally, he enlisted the help of several students to create architectural textures, as these types of textures are typically geometric and easier to manage.

Consequently, he turned to the art of animation, drawing inspiration from China's rich animation heritage, characterized by the use of ink as a medium for bringing stories to life. This led to ponder the possibility of creating an animation infused with the essence of ink, aligning with the Chinese cultural ethos and traditional thought processes. The notion of exploring this subject matter through the lens of ink animation resonated with Qiu as a deeply Chinese approach to storytelling that found intriguing and culturally significant.

4.3.3 The Content of the Work of *New Classic of Mountain and Seas*

Drawing inspiration from the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, an ancient Chinese text filled with enchanting tales and legends, the video series takes place in a “primitive” yet modern society. The artistic creations presented in this work are rooted in this ancient manuscript and utilize a specific link to tradition as the starting point for artist’s exploration. Drawing inspiration from the viewpoint of individuals from antiquity, he sought to analyse contemporary phenomena through their eyes. By adopting an age-old perspective, the series sheds light on overlooked phenomena, transforming them into mythical elements that can be observed from a distance, offering viewers a glimpse into "another world."

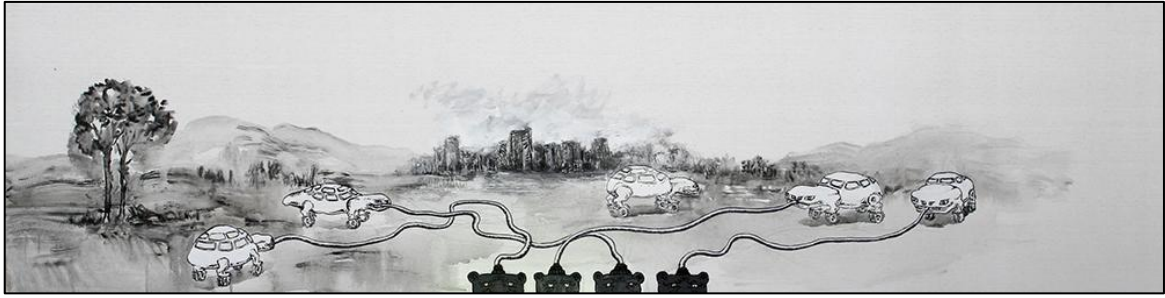


Figure 4.7: Animation Scene of *New Classic of Mountains and Seas 1*: car backed by cityscape, 2006 (Source: <https://yuanart.ch/qiu-anxiong/>)

New Classic of Mountains and Seas 1 explores the conflict of energy as its central theme, illustrating the alienation of individuals caused by modern industrial civilization and the clash of geopolitical interests it generates (see Figure 4.7). *New Classic of Mountains and Seas 2* delves into biotechnology and space technology, portraying the human dilemma resulting from advancements in science and technology at both the micro and macro levels. *New Classic of Mountains and Seas 3* envisions the future by depicting the myths surrounding the impact of the Internet on humanity in the upcoming information society (see Figure 4.8). In a city resembling ruins, engulfed in virtual holographic displays, inhabitants navigate between virtual and real existence, blurring the lines between the two. People immerse themselves in virtual entertainment and the fictitious realms they create, while real life transforms into a monotonous routine. Ultimately, the fabricated world collapses under the weight of reality, highlighting the intricate interplay between virtuality and reality, and introducing the existential paradox faced by humans in the age of information.



Figure 4.8: Animation Scene of *New Classic of Mountains and Seas 3: Metropolis*, 2013-2017 (Source: <https://yuanart.ch/qiu-anxiong/>)

“For instance, a car is essentially a tangible object, yet I am envisioning it. What label would be appropriate for it? Opting for an unconventional title such as the ancient text of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* would result in it being named "Aotuo" (see Figure 4.6). Nevertheless, this “Tuo” or *camel* in Chinese symbolizes a mode of transportation and is a living entity. Interestingly, the term originates from the German language, where a car is referred to as Auto. I proceeded to translate it and devise its nomenclature,” Qiu said. The depiction of the world and its diverse inhabitants in this approach is rooted in resemblance to existing knowledge, rather than an abundance of what can be classified as traditional "knowledge." This method of interpretation stands in stark contrast to contemporary practices, presenting a simplicity and directness that highlights a potential loss in our capacity for perception in today's society. Consequently, the act of representing concepts in such a manner becomes an intriguing prospect for Qiu, offering a refreshing perspective on understanding the world and its intricacies.

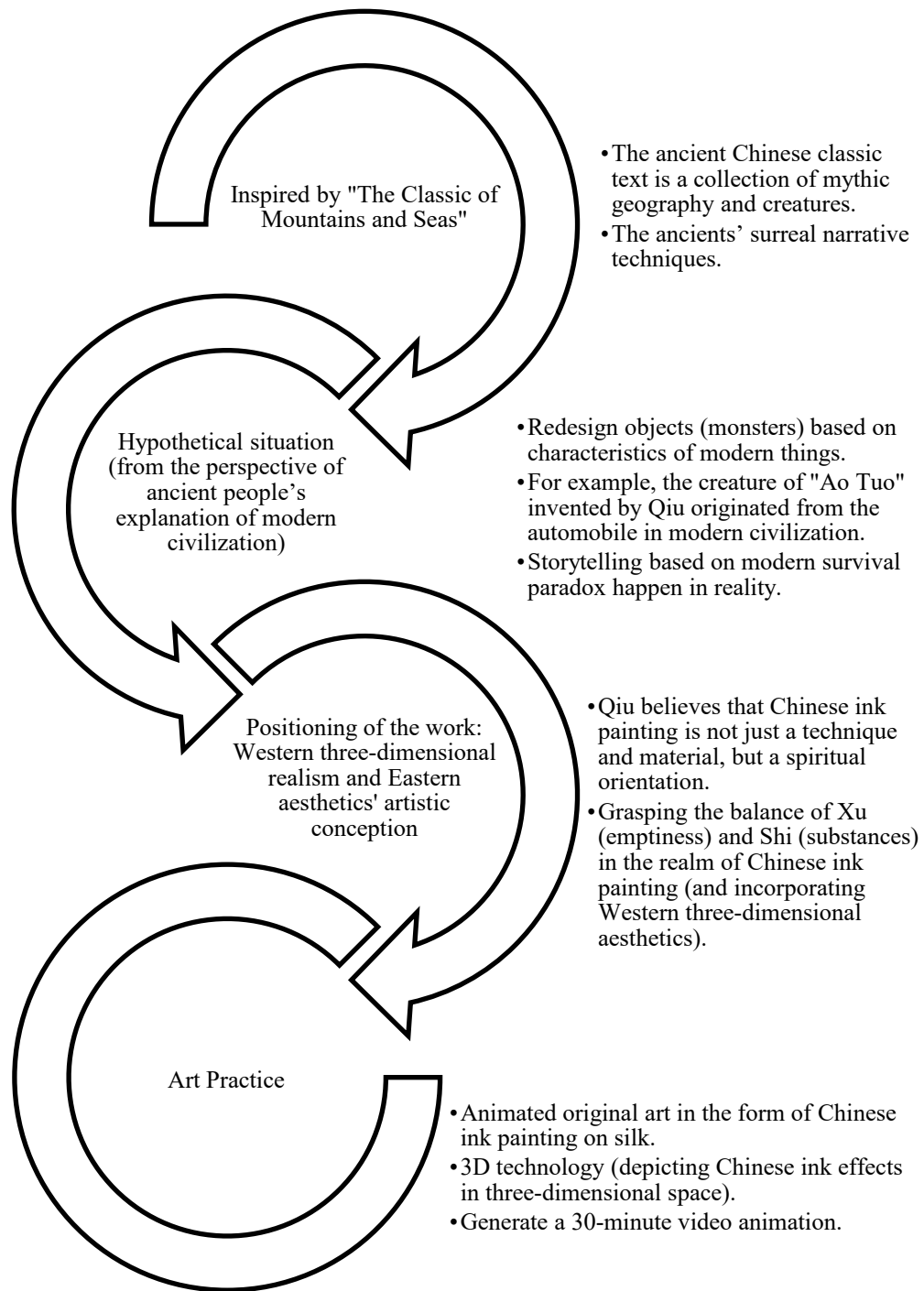


Figure 4.9: Flow of the art practice process of *New Classic of Mountains and Seas* by Qiu Anxiong

4.3.4 Background and Inspiration Points of *Journey to the Dark II* by Yang Yongliang

Yang's decision to pursue art initially stemmed from his struggle to convey certain ideas verbally. Born in Jiading, a quaint historic town on the outskirts of Shanghai, his upbringing stood in stark contrast to the bustling metropolis. In his artistic creations, one can observe numerous contradictions, reflecting his belief in embodying a paradoxical nature. The incorporation of classical and modern elements in his work signifies his appreciation for both the serene and the dynamic aspects. Yang's initial venture into referencing was Shen Zhou's *Lofty Mt. Lu* from the Ming Dynasty, which he subsequently reinterpreted in a unique manner. While appearing to adhere to a conventional painting style from afar, upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that urban elements recognizable to contemporary individuals constitute the composition. This piece appears to be a fusion of disparate elements or contradictory components that clash in a seemingly unrelated manner.

Growing up in Jiading had a profound impact on Yang, exposing him to various aspects of traditional Chinese culture such as traditional painting and calligraphy, which he diligently studied for almost a decade during his youth. Upon entering university, he delved into the realm of digital media (art) design, prompting a seamless integration of his past influences. An alternative perspective suggests that Yang's upbringing in the suburban setting made his transition to urban life a source of considerable external stress. This coincided with a period of rapid transformation in Shanghai during his college years. Upon revisiting Jiading years later, Yang observed a stark metamorphosis in the once-familiar environment, rendering his childhood memories obsolete. In 2010, Yang travelled to Greece for a month with the purpose of gathering and photographing material to produce a work that was relatively unique. One perception Yang had at the time was that Greece, like China, possessed a civilization with ancient roots. However, Yang noticed a striking similarity

between Greece and China during that period. The once grand and ancient civilization of Greece had all but disappeared, with only the Acropolis in Athens remaining in a somewhat original form, albeit poorly preserved. This situation resonated with Yang, as China also faces challenges in maintaining its numerous ancient cities, many of which are neglected or even ruined.



Figure 4.10: Video installation of *Journey to the Dark II* by Yang Yongliang at MGM Cotai Theatre, Macau, China in 2019 (Source: <https://www.yangyongliang.com/>)

4.3.5 Background and Inspiration Points of *Journey to the Dark II* by Yang Yongliang

The initial stage involves the gathering of photographic and video content, which is subsequently amalgamated using a computer to produce the final piece of *Journey to the Dark*.

Yang primarily utilizes Photoshop to incorporate a vast array of materials into the software for iterative actions and synthesis. The plethora of photographic works he creates stem from historical urbanization developments, thus embodying elements reflecting the evolving cityscape over recent decades. This practice was instigated by the occurrence of the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, which triggered a significant urban metamorphosis. Numerous structures were demolished and reconstructed, prompting Yang to amass a substantial collection of resources. Yang employed high-speed photography to give the images an "unreal" appearance, as the speed captured differs from that of real water motion. Subsequently, selected photographs underwent post-production enhancement. On expansive computer displays, Yang utilizes zooming to showcase the intricate process of overlaying numerous small photographs in order to construct and reflect upon an alternative reality. With the addition of clouds and adjustments to lighting to evoke a specific atmosphere reminiscent of traditional Chinese paintings.

Journey to the Dark was shot in Macau over a period of 8 days, incorporating over 40 video clips to achieve its final form. The predominant focus of the project revolves around utilizing Macao's distinctive architectural visuals to emphasize its unique cultural ambiance and regional characteristics. To enhance the overall composition, Yang Yongliang integrated footage from various locations such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Shanghai, among others.

The composition of the music for this piece was done by a musician who is a friend of Yang. Following a similar method as Yang, the musician began by capturing various real-world sounds. These sounds were later manipulated during post-production through stretching, distorting, or digital synthesis. As a result, listeners can experience the sounds in various altered forms. Moreover, the music is designed with 6 channels, facilitating the perception of distinct sounds originating from different spatial locations.

4.3.6 The Content of The Work of *Journey to the Dark II* by Yang Yongliang

Yang Yongliang posits that individuals exist within a space characterized by contradictions. He asserts that the artistic essence embodied in conventional Chinese paintings diverges from the reality of contemporary human existence, encompassing both the aesthetic framework and the ideals individuals aspire to.

Amidst an eerie techno backdrop, highways and vehicles are prominent amidst streams of light, while modern buildings and mountains are illuminated by flickering lights. Hovering above is a galaxy filled with twinkling stars. The cityscape and natural environment converge along the skyline, existing in a peculiar harmony. This video installation portrays a fading mountainous landscape juxtaposed with a bustling urban night setting. Gradually, the city encroaches upon the natural scenery, blending stars and lights into a singular entity. The past and future intertwine, showcasing both beauty and destruction in this digital artwork.

Journey to the Dark utilizes urban architectural imagery to create digital images inspired by the mountainous landscape style of the Song Dynasty. This can be seen as a modern continuation and expansion of the conventional Chinese painting tradition. At first glance, the artwork appears tranquil and serene, giving the illusion of movement without actual motion. However, upon closer inspection, the video reveals a dynamic and evolving scene. The process of urbanization not only fosters growth in a city but also presents certain challenges that demand contemplation. In ancient times, nature was celebrated through landscape depictions, and Yang Yongliang's landscapes prompt viewers to reflect on the current state of society today.

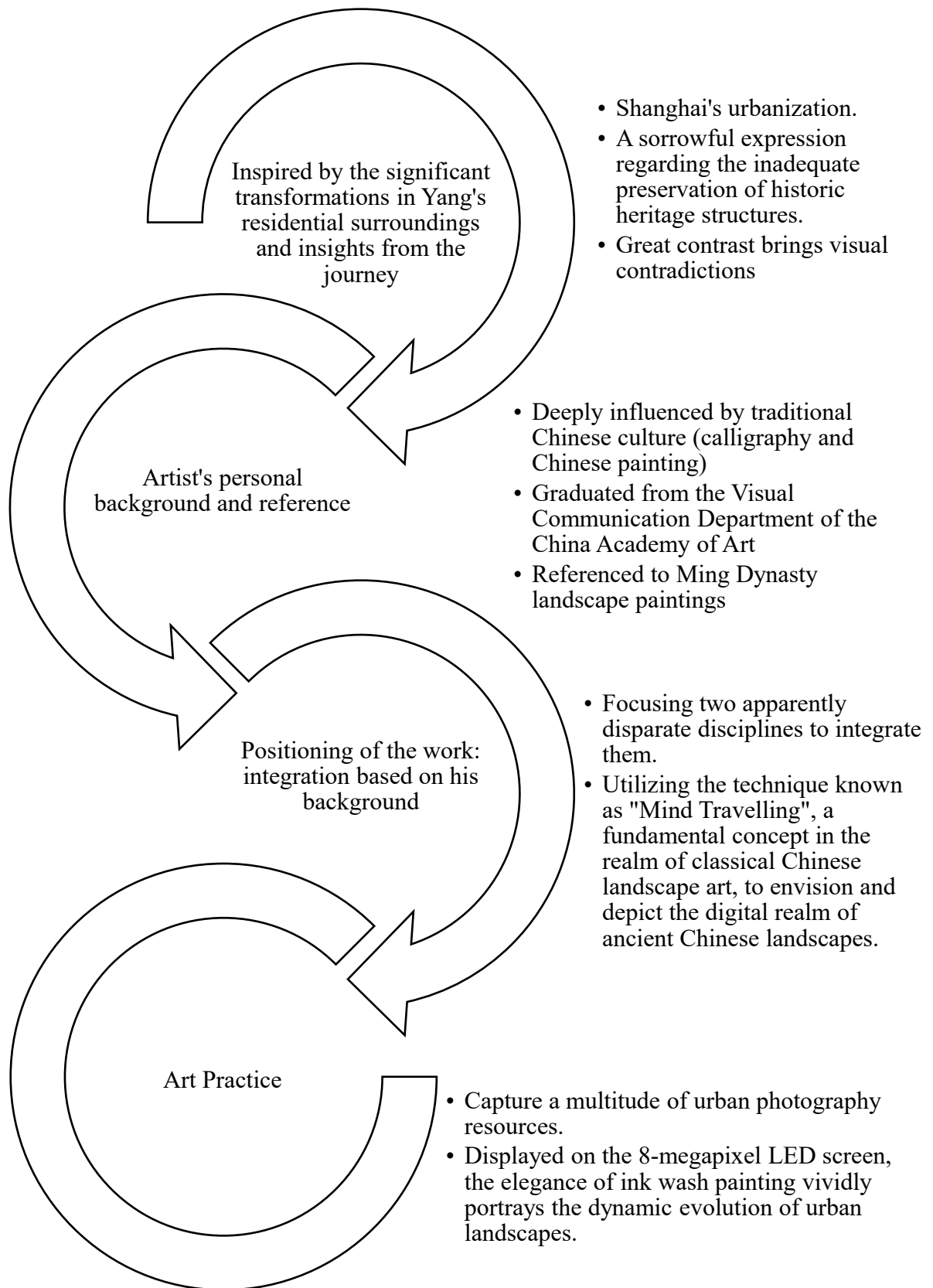


Figure 4.11: Flow of the art practice process of *Journey to the Dark* by Yang Yongliang

4.4 Artistic Practice by Researcher

According to the artistic practice framework delineated by contemporary Japanese artists as noted by Vartanian & Wada (2011) in Figure 2.6 (refer to page 20), four distinct processes are identified: "borrowing," "mixing," "unification," and "creation." In the artistic methodology of this inquiry, the initial stage, "borrowing," involves the assimilation of external cultural influences, specifically the indigenous Salako culture prevalent in Sarawak. The subsequent phase is "mixing," which entails the integration of intrinsic cultural elements, particularly the traditional artistic modality of Chinese ink painting within this context. The third stage, "unification," is characterized by the systematic and orderly amalgamation of all content elements into a singular inspirational entity, eschewing any semblance of disorder. Ultimately, the "creation" phase culminates in the art piece, representing the final output of this study's artistic endeavour, which exemplifies the adaptation of Chinese ink painting within the realm of digital art, thereby establishing a novel artistic form. The scholarly inquiry undertaken by the researcher delineates four parts in the framework of artistic practice; specifically, this framework encompasses the ideation phase, conventional media preparation, the systematic assembly of components or materials utilizing digital platforms, and the final display of the completed artwork.

4.4.1 Ideation Phase

In the geographical context of the research, the significance of local culture is paramount, and the integration of traditional Chinese ink painting into this cultural framework is of utmost importance. The researcher exhibits a profound interest in the Salako ethnic group situated in Borneo (not confined solely to communities within Sarawak, Malaysia or West Kalimantan, Indonesia). The Salako people in Sarawak originate from Mount Gajing, a mountainous region in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Situated near the

Salako (or Selakau) River at Singkawang district, this area served as their ancestral homeland. Migration to Sarawak was largely driven by political and geographical circumstances in past (Kaufman, 2007). The close proximity of Kalimantan to Sarawak significantly eased the process of migration and the establishment of Salako settlements in the region. Thus, determining to adopt this particular cultural identity as the thematic backdrop for the study.

At the initial conceptual stage of the researcher's digital sketches, the deliberate use of blank space on rice paper was intended to embody the philosophical essence of traditional Chinese ink painting—namely, the interplay between emptiness and substance. Subsequently, a fully rendered background painting was segmented into vertical scroll-like panels, arranged either in a hanging scroll format to evoke a sense of spatial depth and layering, or configured in a circular formation. The researcher sought to articulate the notion of emptiness, specifically by employing elements representative of the sea of clouds to align with the *Corresponding to Composition* as delineated in the “Six Principles of Chinese Painting.”

As for the ink brushwork, it may be executed using traditional ink techniques on rice paper, or alternatively, digital brushstrokes may serve as a viable option. However, in the ensuing artistic practice, it became evident that a hybrid approach—merging both traditional and digital brushwork—offers the most effective means of expressing brush lines that traverse temporal boundaries, bridging the classical and the contemporary.



Figure 4.12: Digital sketch for background of artwork by Adobe Photoshop

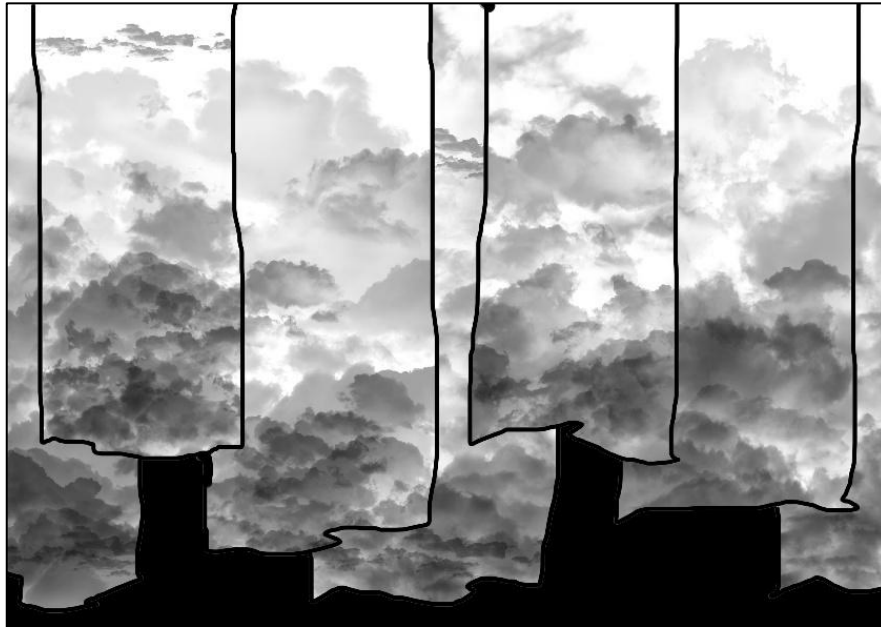


Figure 4.13: Digital sketch for art form ideation by Adobe Photoshop

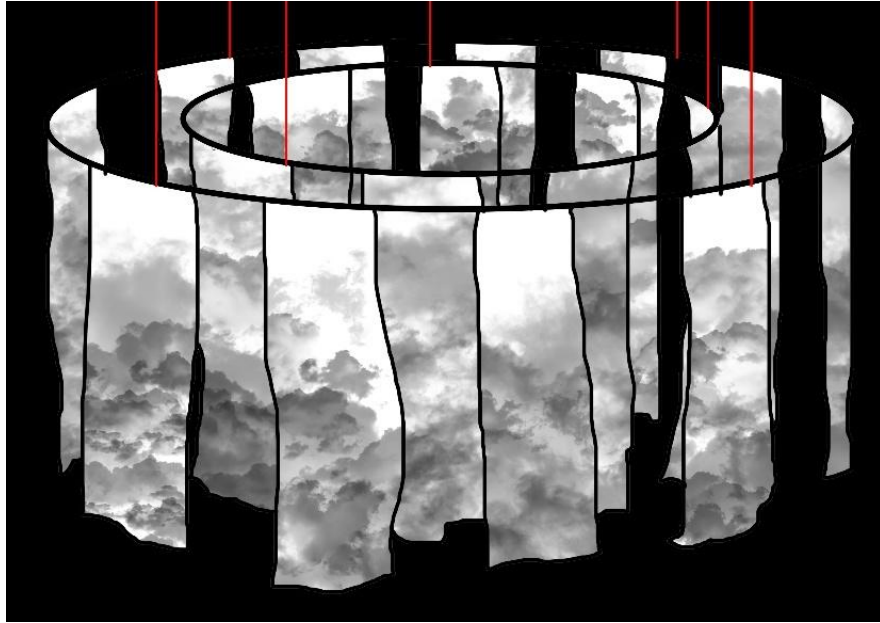


Figure 4.14: Digital sketch for art form ideation by Adobe Photoshop

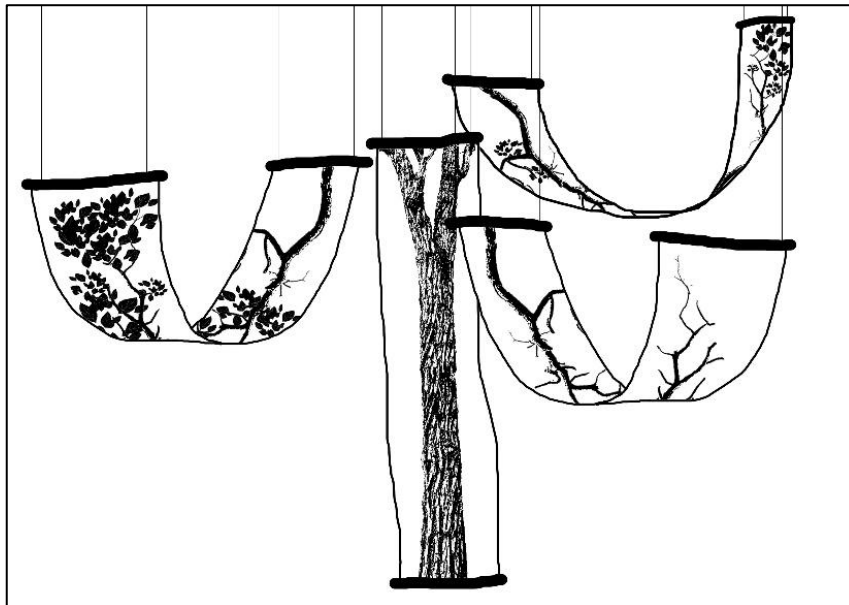


Figure 4.15: Digital sketch for art form ideation by Adobe Photoshop

Initial phase of the study, the researcher employed the sophisticated capabilities of Adobe Photoshop, a widely recognized graphic design software, to meticulously synthesize

and create the essential components, including but not limited to clouds, which served as a basis for the comparative analysis of various conceptual ideas in order to thoroughly elucidate and refine the ultimate visual manifestation of the illusionary artwork they aimed to produce. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that the dichromatic scheme of black and white serves not only as the most fundamental yet quintessentially symbolic cultural representation within the context of traditional Chinese ink painting but also reflects the profound philosophical underpinnings that are inherent in that particular artistic tradition.



Figure 4.16-17: Visual ideas for figure placement of artwork by Adobe Photoshop in both colour & monochrome

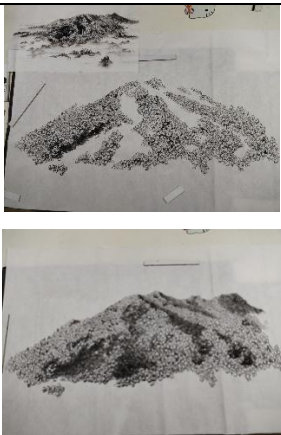
4.4.2 Material Preparation

The formation of the artwork is divided into two parts, the traditional materials, and the systematic assembly of components or materials using digital platforms.

4.4.3 Conventional Media Preparation

This particular segment of the discourse aims to elucidate the intricate processes involved in the creation and subsequent mounting of traditional Chinese ink paintings, which encompass a variety of historical techniques and cultural significance that have evolved over centuries.

Table 4.5: Making Process of Traditional Chinese Ink Painting

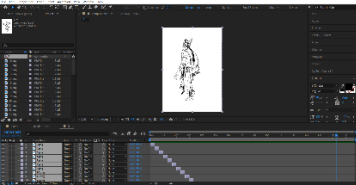
No.	Picture	Description
1.		To employ a conventional brush to meticulously delineate the contours of Pueh Mountain which located at the borderline between Sarawak and West Kalimantan, ensuring that both the illuminated and shadowed areas are distinctly represented on the rice paper.
2.		In a deliberate and careful manner, execute the action of inverting the painted rice paper so that its reverse side encounters the surface of the table where it is positioned.
3.		Incorporate the pad flour, the crystallization compound of potassium alum, and heated water to amalgamate and formulate the adhesive prior to executing the procedure of <i>Zhuangbiao</i> (Mounting).
4.		Utilize the concentrated glue on the transparent polymer substrate and subsequently employ manual application to distribute the adhesive along the brocade border. Next, employ brush with wide tip apply the diluted glue to the entire surface.
5.		Subsequently, it is imperative to cover the mounting paper and meticulously adhere it utilizing a roller. Concurrently, one must employ the mini broom to perform sweeping motions both horizontally and vertically in order to guarantee complete adhesion and eliminate any entrapped air within the

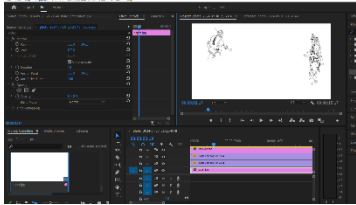
		substrate. Apply the concentrated glue on the edge of the mounting paper.
6.		The process of drying the painting necessitates a duration of one full day to achieve complete desiccation.
7.		After a day, use palette knife to separate the scroll from the table surface and finally tear it directly by hand.
8.		Chinese ink painting in traditional medium is mounted.

4.4.4 Systematic Assembly of Components or Materials Utilizing Digital Platforms

The subsequent table delineates the methodology employed in the amalgamation of dynamic visuals generated by scholars utilizing Adobe Photoshop and Adobe After Effects.

Table 4.6: The Process of Digital Art Practice by Using Software

No.	Picture	Description
1.		The researcher sampled the warrior dance of the Salako, the main ethnic group from the westernmost part of Sarawak, through video recording, at the <i>Minggu Perpaduan</i> cultural event held at the Kuching Waterfront on 29 June 2023. Each frame of the video was captured by taking screenshots, and these frames were used as traces drawing using the Brush Tool in Adobe Photoshop.
2.		Each frame of the previously tracked digital drawing is combined into a series of action combinations through Adobe After Effects.

3.		The finished Chinese ink painting was scanned into the computer and the image was cropped using Adobe Photoshop to obtain the mountain shape layer for the upcoming video projection.
4.		Then in Adobe After Effects, the researcher edited the characters action combination and the mountain shape layers into the same frame which serves as projection video.
5.		Subsequently, Added some foggy visual effects to the video.

4.4.5 The Final Display of The Completed Artwork

Upon the conclusion of the artistic endeavour, the resultant work was exhibited at the FACA Art Gallery, UNIMAS for a duration of six days from January 3 to January 8, 2025. In advance of this art showcase, the researcher undertook the initiative to create promotional posters, which were disseminated on Tik Tok and prominently displayed in the vicinity of the gallery. Throughout the course of the art showcase, a QR code was made available for attendees to scan in order to complete a questionnaire. The formulation of the questionnaire was meticulously aligned with Research Objective 3, as it aimed to garner participants' evaluative feedback regarding the appreciation of the artwork.

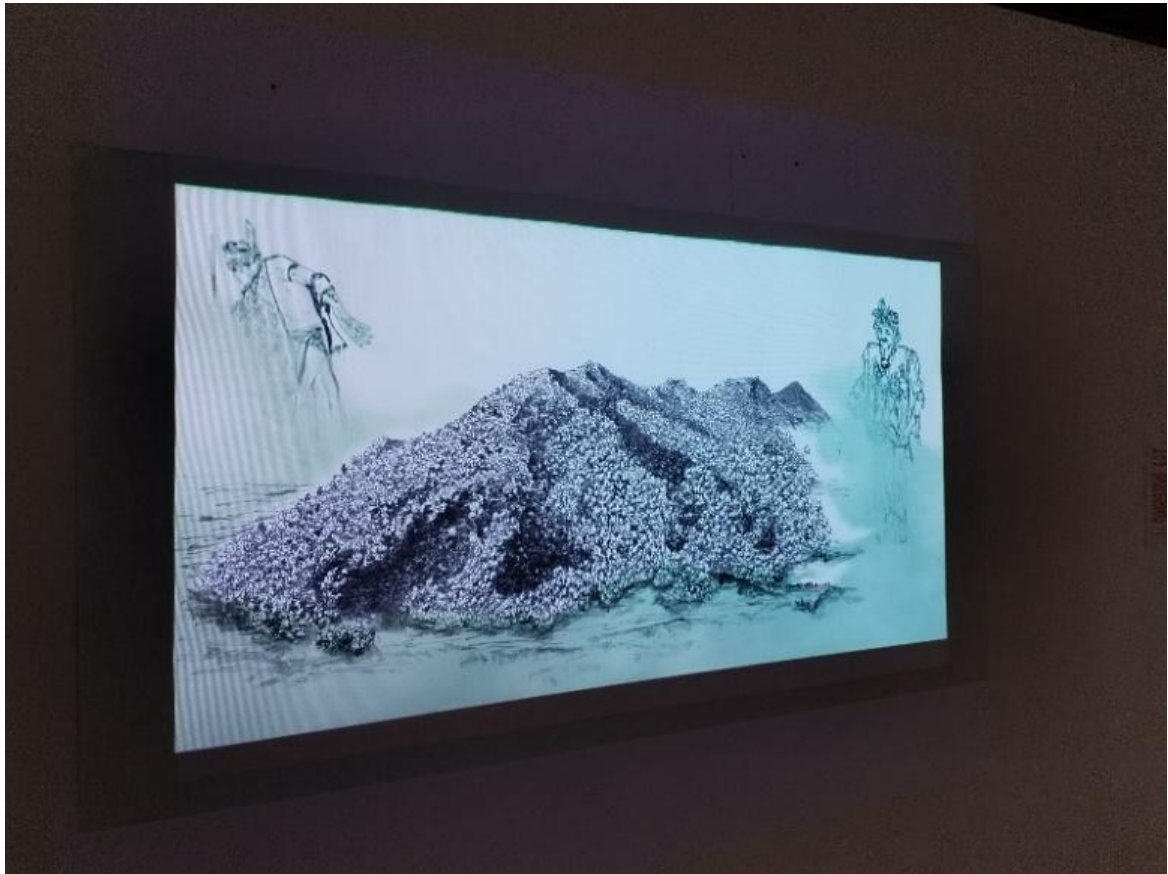


Figure 4.18: Video projection on Chinese Ink Painting with the title of *Borders Unbroken: The Soul of Salako Dayak*

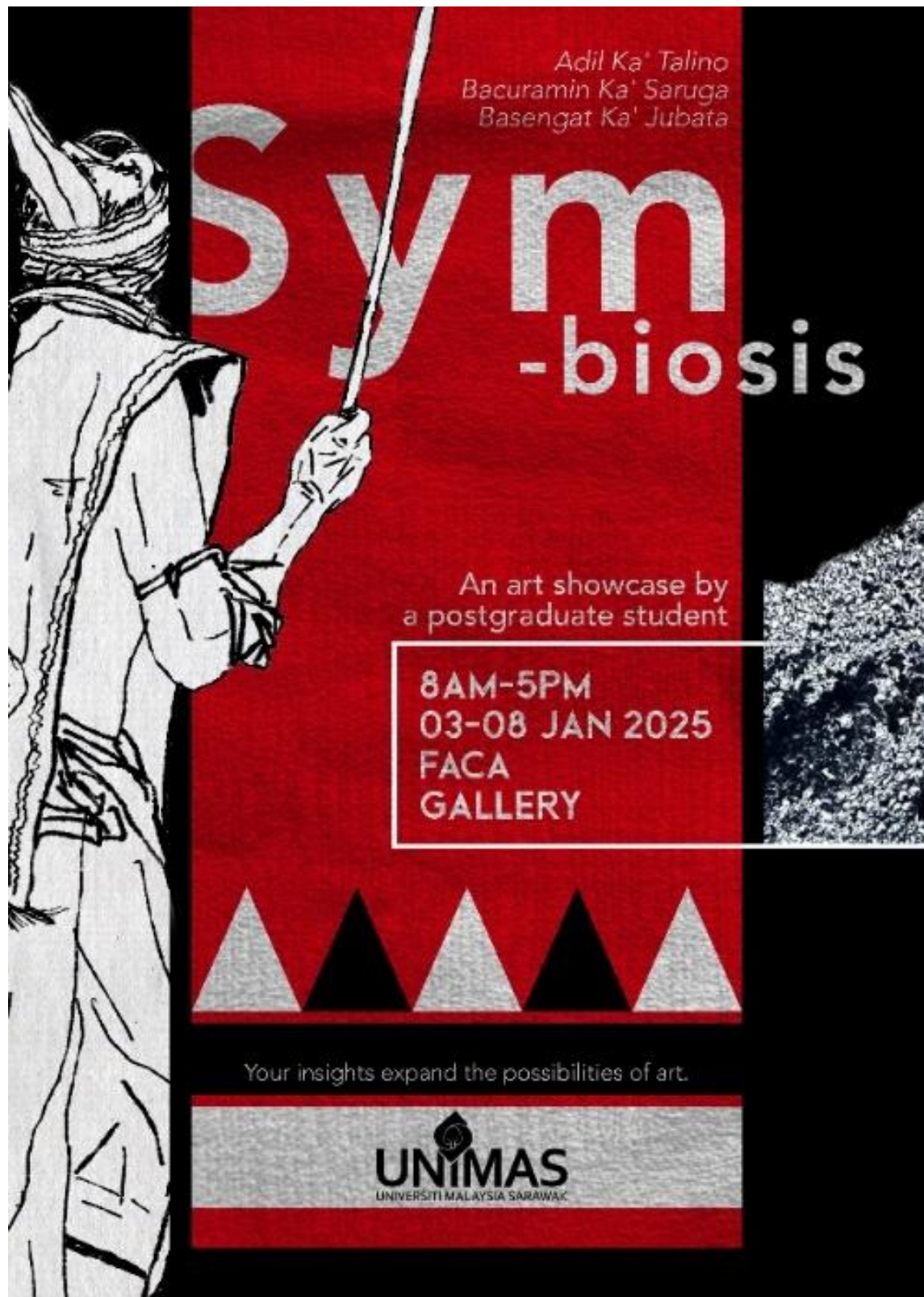


Figure 4.19: The promotional poster design for the art showcase



Figure 4.20: Promotional poster in front of the gallery

4.5 Feedback from the visitors

During the art exhibition, a total of 8 visitors responded to the research questionnaire, which enriched the overall analysis with external input. The small sample size limits external validity and precludes in-depth subgroup analyses. Consequently, these results should be viewed as an exploratory pilot rather than conclusive evidence. The limitation like given the six-day window of the exhibition and the reliance on campus-focused promotional channels (TikTok posts and on-site posters), the pool of potential respondents was inherently limited. Visitors were invited to scan a QR code to complete the questionnaire, but without in-person prompts or incentives.

The questionnaire was divided into 5 section which is General Information, Development of Chinese Ink Painting in the Era of Digital Art, Role of Chinese Ink Painting

in the Development of Digital Art, Feedback on the Integration of Chinese Ink Painting and Digital Art, and Final Comments and Suggestions. The insights garnered from the questionnaire will significantly contribute to the advancement of future artistic endeavours that amalgamate digital art with traditional Chinese ink painting.

As per the data presented in the subsequent chart of Figure 4.21, 37.5% of the respondents exhibit a high level of familiarity with the conventional artistic discipline of Chinese ink painting, 50% demonstrate a moderate degree of familiarity, while 12.5% indicate a lack of familiarity with this art form.

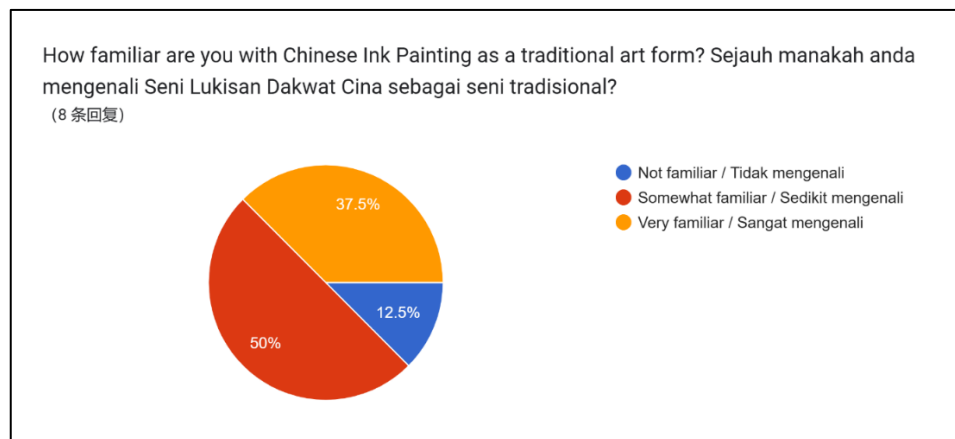


Figure 4.21: Statistic of familiarity of the traditional Chinese ink painting among the visitors

According to Figure 4.22, 75% of the attendees exhibit a substantial familiarity with digital artistic modalities, while 25% demonstrate a moderate level of acquaintance with such forms.

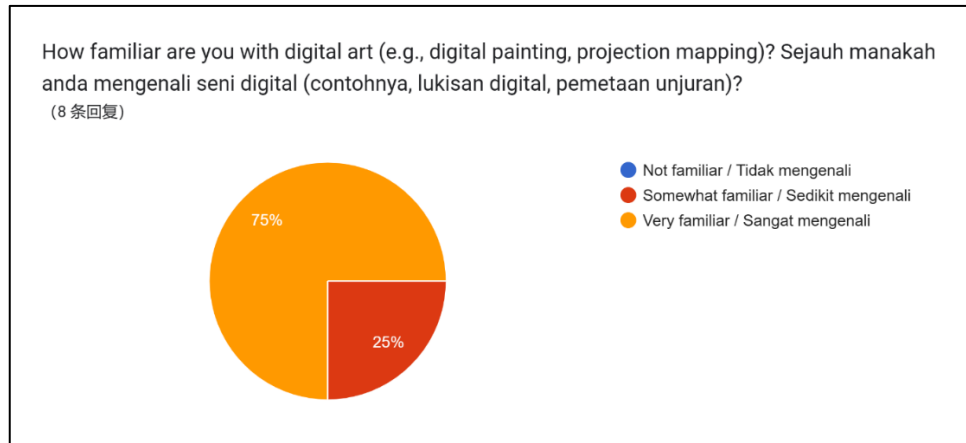


Figure 4.22: Statistic of the familiarity of digital art among the visitors

Within the concise overview of this general information, it can be inferred that digital art remains more prominent than traditional Chinese ink painting. This observation suggests that the art showcase's location indirectly influences the data presented. Situated at FACA Gallery UNIMAS, in Sarawak, Malaysia, the art showcase primarily attracts an audience of university students. This indicates that the educational framework for the students is increasingly oriented towards modern technology. In contrast, the appreciation of Chinese ink painting is often limited to the local Chinese community (especially traditional families or a small number of art enthusiasts of this art form), due to the influence of traditional Chinese Feng Shui philosophy, or individual systematic education in ink painting appreciation and techniques.

According to the data (see Figure 4.23), 37.5% of the audience perceive Chinese ink painting as highly significant in the contemporary art world, recognizing its potential for modern reinterpretation. Meanwhile, 50% consider it to hold moderate relevance, albeit with limited appeal. The remaining 12.5% of respondents express uncertainty regarding its

relevance. Overall, the data emphasizes both the need for educational efforts to bridge traditional art with contemporary relevance.

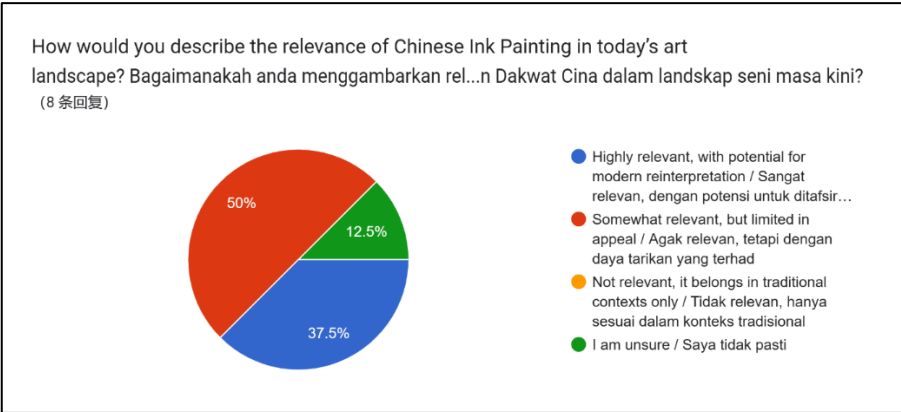


Figure 4.23: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the relevance of Chinese ink painting in today's art landscape

Most respondents (87.5%) believe that Chinese ink painting has the potential to evolve as part of the digital art movement, offering extensive opportunities for integration (see Figure 4.24). Conversely, 12.5% of respondents remain uncertain about its prospects. This data highlights that modern art practices can draw from diverse sources and be skilfully integrated, particularly through the application of technology.

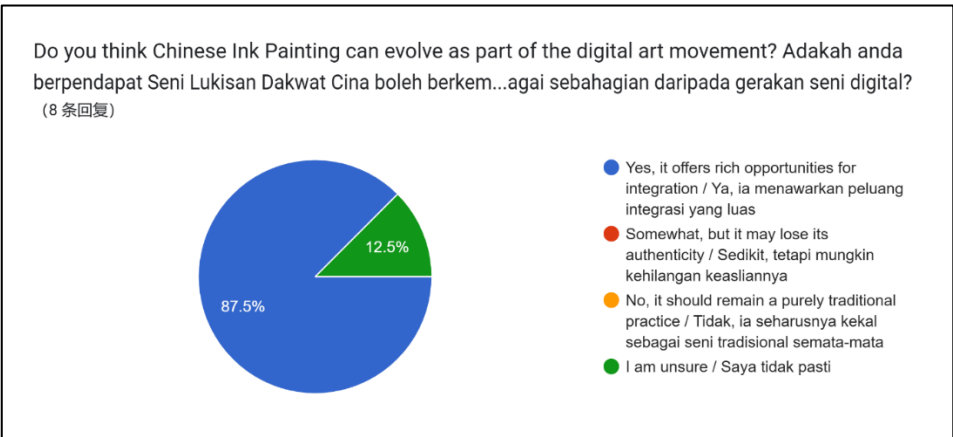


Figure 4.24: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the feasibility of Chinese ink painting evolve as part of the digital art movement

Figure 4.25 meticulously delineate the various facets of Chinese ink painting that are deemed to be most conducive to the realm of digital art, with the category concerning the "utilization of ink tones and textures" constituting a significant majority, specifically representing 62.5% of the total analysis. In addition, the categories labelled "brushstroke techniques," "philosophical themes," and "composition elements" are each observed to comprise an equal share of 50% within the overall framework of this evaluation. In summary, this data underscores the multifaceted potential of Chinese ink painting as a source of inspiration for digital art, with particular emphasis on its visual and conceptual elements.

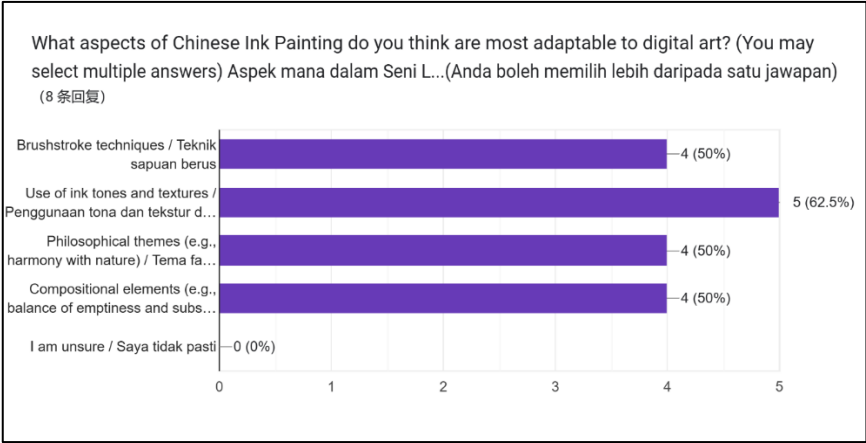


Figure 4.25: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the adaptability of the aspects of Chinese ink painting to digital art

According to Figure 4.26, 75% of the audience believe that the principles of Chinese ink painting can serve as a source of inspiration for innovation in digital art, indirectly offering a valuable creative framework. Meanwhile, 12.5% somewhat agree but perceive its application as limited, and the remaining 12.5% are uncertain. These challenges could involve technical constraints, gaps in knowledge, or the need for clearer demonstrations of how these principles can be effectively translated into digital mediums.

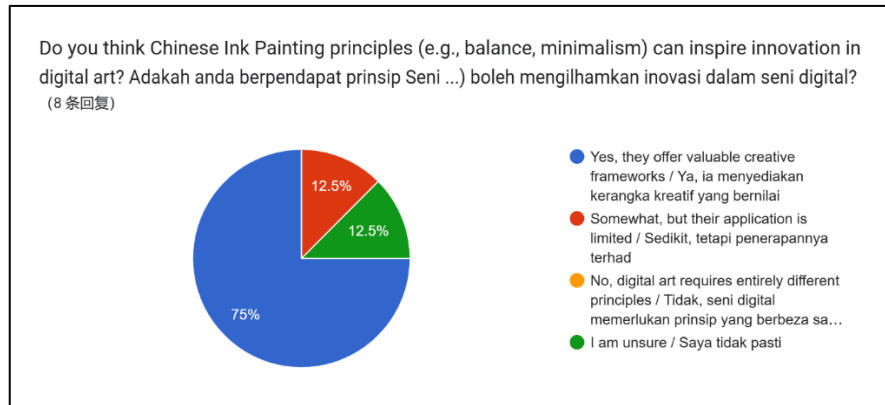


Figure 4.26: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the principles of Chinese ink painting serve as a source of inspiration for innovation in digital art

Integrating Chinese ink painting into digital art has an impact on the appreciation of digital art for 75% of viewers (see Figure 4.27), who believe it makes digital art more visually interesting. This suggests that traditional elements such as brushstrokes, ink tones, and compositional styles bring a unique aesthetic quality that resonates with visitors. While another 25% believe it enhances their appreciation by adding cultural depth, such integration not only improves the art's appeal but also fosters a deeper understanding of cultural values and histories. This reflects an opportunity to use culturally rich traditions like Chinese ink painting to engage audiences more effectively in digital art, fostering a blend of visual innovation and cultural storytelling.

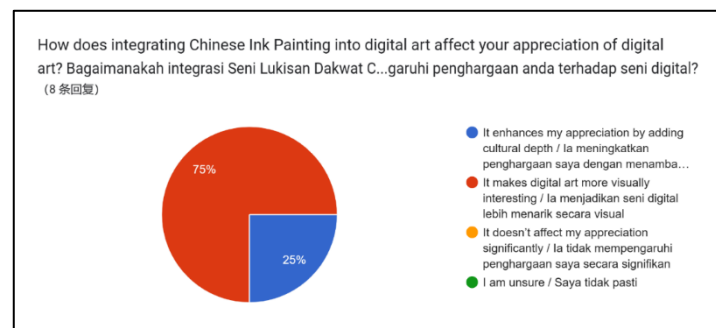


Figure 4.27: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the integrating Chinese Ink Painting into digital art affect their appreciation of digital art

In Figure 4.28 shows that 62.5% of the audience believe that Chinese ink painting plays a complementary role in enriching modern art forms in connecting traditional and modern art practices, this highlights its relevance as a tool for creative innovation and interdisciplinary exploration. However, the remaining 37.5% of the audience believe that it plays a core role in connecting cultural heritage and innovation. This perspective underscores the significance of Chinese ink painting as a critical medium for preserving traditional values while advancing new forms of artistic expression.

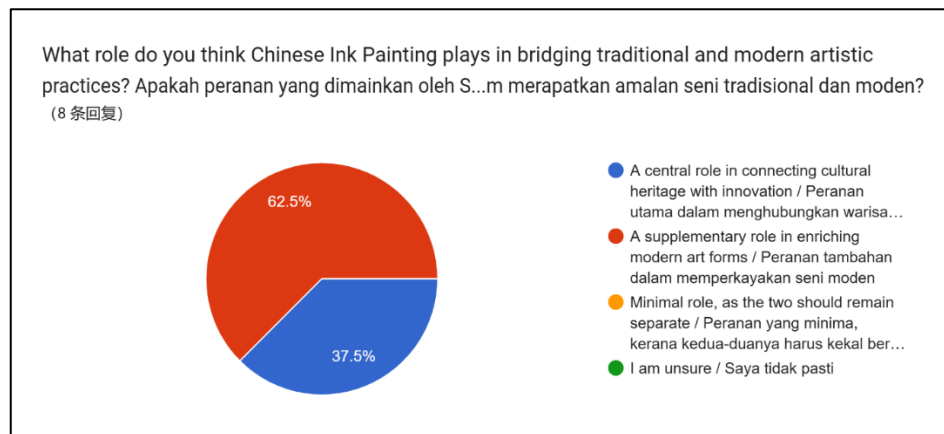


Figure 4.28: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the role of Chinese ink painting plays in bridging traditional and modern artistic

75% of the audience felt that the combination of Chinese ink painting and digital art was highly effective, achieving a meaningful fusion of tradition and technology (see Figure 4.29). This shows strong support for the approach as an innovative and culturally enriching practice. However, the remaining 25% considered it somewhat effective but in need of further refinement. This could involve refining techniques, enhancing the balance between traditional aesthetics and digital elements, or better addressing audience expectations.

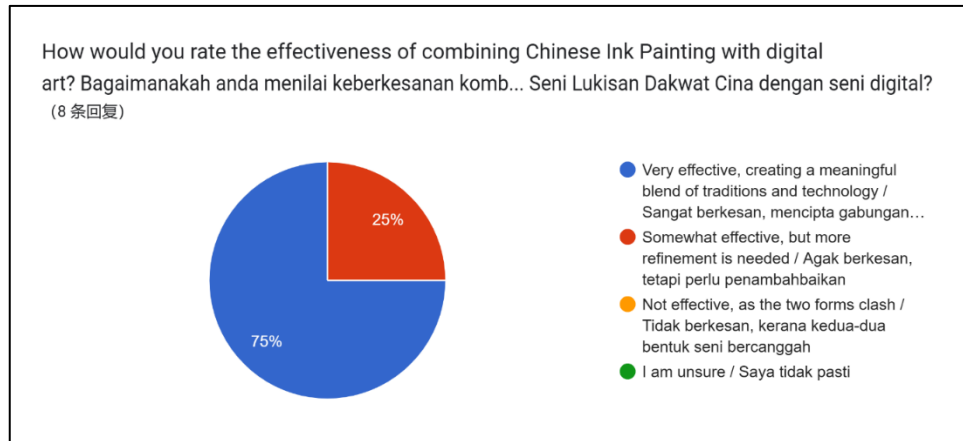


Figure 4.29: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the effectiveness of combining Chinese ink painting with digital art

According to Figure 4.30, 37.5% of viewers believe that the animation of brushstrokes and textures in Chinese ink painting stands to benefit the most from digital art technology, emphasizing the visual and dynamic potential of the medium. An equal proportion of viewers consider interactive or immersive experiences to align more closely with their expectations, this reflects evolving audience expectations for participatory and sensory-rich experiences. While the remaining 25% believe that storytelling and narrative expansion offer the greatest potential for enhancement, highlighting the potential for digital tools to convey the rich cultural and philosophical depth of Chinese ink painting in more accessible and engaging ways.

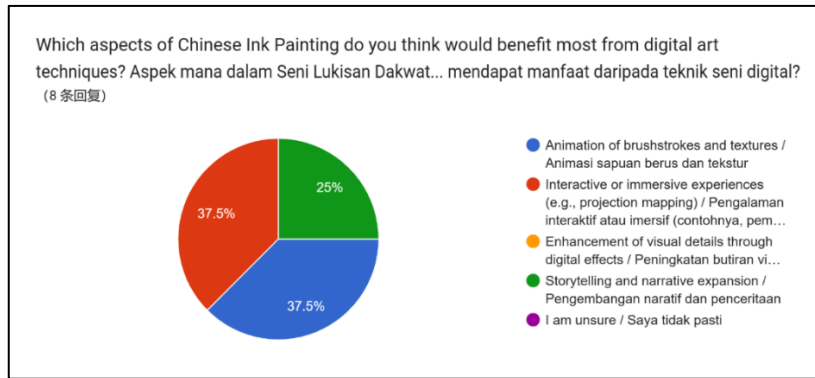


Figure 4.30: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the aspects of Chinese ink painting would benefit most from digital art techniques

37.5% of the public believe that the primary challenge of integrating Chinese ink painting into digital art lies in establishing a meaningful connection between the two forms (see Figure 4.31). Meanwhile, 25% identify preserving cultural authenticity as a key challenge. Additionally, 12.5% cite balancing traditional aesthetics with modern technology, and another 12.5% highlight capturing audience interest as significant challenges. The remaining 12.5% are uncertain.

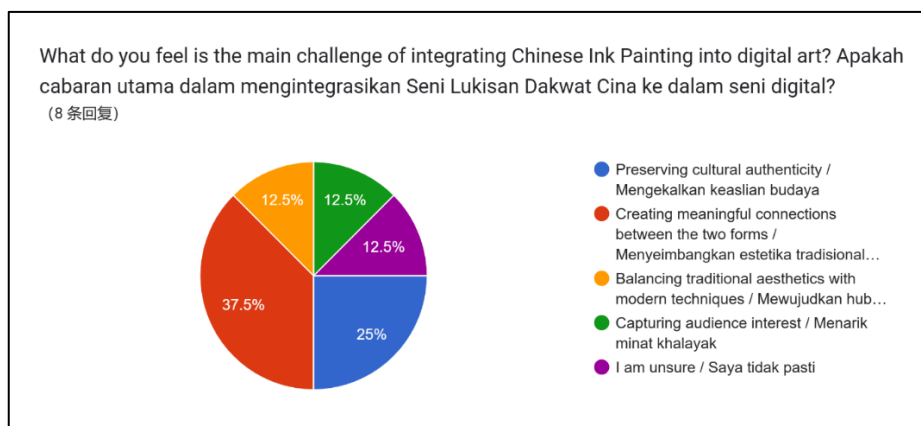


Figure 4.31: Statistic of the thought of visitors about the main challenge of integrating Chinese ink painting

62.5% of the audience expressed a desire to see more artworks that integrate traditional art forms, such as Chinese ink painting, with digital technology. This reflects a growing appreciation for innovative practices that preserve cultural heritage while embracing modern tools. 25% believe their interest depends on the quality of execution, which underscore the importance of skilfully balancing traditional aesthetics with digital elements to ensure meaningful and impactful outcomes. While the remaining 12.5% are uncertain, highlight a potential knowledge gap or lack of familiarity with how such integration could be effectively realized, signalling an opportunity for greater engagement and education (see Figure 4.32).

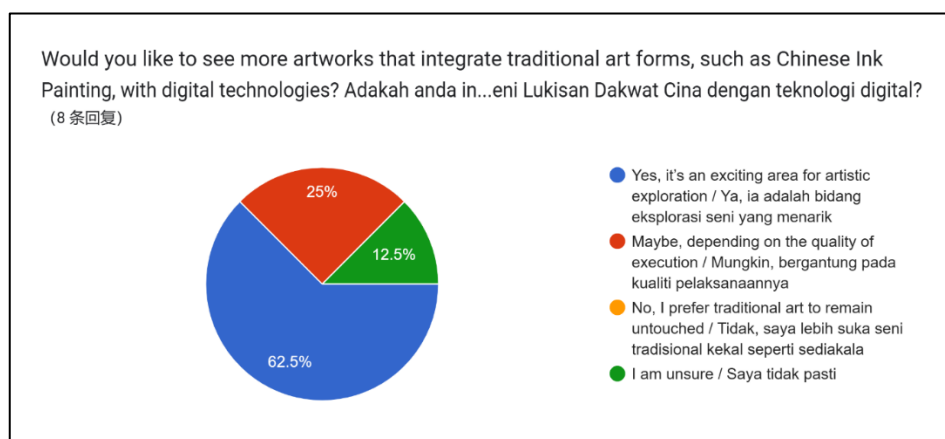


Figure 4.32: Statistic of the expectation of visitors about integrate traditional art forms with digital technologies in further time

Overall, visitors highlighted the vital role of traditional art in preserving cultural identity and heritage, as it provides a way to explore the historical stories and values of various cultures (see Figure 4.33). Many participants emphasized that blending traditional art forms, like Chinese ink painting, with modern digital techniques can make them more accessible to a global audience, ensuring these traditions are preserved and adapted in today's world.

There is a strong sense of hope that traditional art can be revitalized through contemporary methods, making it appealing to younger generations. This combination not only keeps traditional art alive but also enhances its relevance in the modern age. It opens up new ways to engage with art, fostering uniqueness and diversity in artistic expression.

Additionally, visitors expressed that adding more traditional art elements to modern techniques could significantly advance the art and design fields. The merging of traditional and digital approaches offers new perspectives, especially regarding colour use, perspective, and a comprehensive appreciation of art, thus enriching the creative landscape.



Figure 4.33: Final comments or suggestions by visitors

4.6 Summary of Chapter

This chapter demonstrates not only that traditional Chinese ink principles persist in contemporary works, but how they become the building blocks of digital art. The integration unfolds in three interlocking stages that bridge classical aesthetics with modern technology.

The first stage involves mapping classical criteria onto digital practices. Section 4.2 highlights how four pillars of Xie He's Six Principles—spirit resonance, form fidelity, compositional void, and brush structure—inform digital design decisions. These principles are translated into digital corollaries: *Qiyun Shendong* (spirit resonance) becomes generative noise functions that animate ink textures; *Yingwu Xiangxing* (form representation) is preserved through high-resolution scanning and vector outlines; *Jingying Weizhi* (compositional balance) is echoed in layered video-scroll layouts; and *Gufa Yongbi* (brush structure) is reimaged through custom brush-stroke programming in software like After Effects and Photoshop.

The second stage reimagines these principles through case studies of contemporary artists. Qiu Anxiong applies remediation theory by embedding hand-painted ink frames into 3D animated environments, fusing Eastern ink ethos with Western spatial logic. His animated “monsters” and mythic landscapes reference *Shan Hai Jing* while moving through generative textures. Yang Yongliang, on the other hand, leverages Song dynasty concepts like scatter-view and mind-travelling to digitally composite urban photography into mountainous silhouettes. His high-speed captures and Photoshop layering transform cityscapes into ink-wash panoramas, embodying *Qiyun Shendong* in pixel form.

The third stage centers on practice-led fusion by the researcher. Using Vartanian & Wada's “borrowing, mixing, unifying, creating” model, the researcher borrows Salako

Dayak theme, mixes them with Xu Shi (white-space) strategies, and unifies them into a multi-panel projection. The final creation aligns Xie He's compositional and brushwork principles with interactive video projection, allowing audiences to activate ink flows over rice-paper scans. This transforms Chinese ink from a static art form into a responsive digital medium.

Theoretical contributions are woven throughout. Xie He's Six Principles serve as both diagnostic and generative tools, ensuring digital works retain the philosophical depth of ink painting. Remediation theory explains why digital media do not replace ink but reframe it which honouring its rituals in new technological guises. Vartanian & Wada's model offers a practical roadmap for cultural integration, balancing respect for tradition with inventive leaps. Finally, practice-led research binds theory to making, showing that successful digital-ink integration requires iterative movement between conceptual rigor and hands-on experimentation.

Together, these strands chart a clear pathway: traditional ink principles guide every stage of digital production which from concept sketches and brush-stroke programming to interactive installations, to ensuring heritage and innovation coalesce into living artworks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study set out to explore how traditional Chinese Ink Painting anchored in Xie He's Six Principles which can be meaningfully integrated into digital art practices. In response to the first research question, "What are the essential elements of Chinese Ink Painting theory that can be adapted into digital art?", the study conducted a detailed visual analysis of four classical masterpieces. It confirmed that core aesthetic criteria such as spirit resonance (Qiyun Shendong), proper representation of form (Yingwu Xiangxing), compositional harmony (Jingying Weizhi), and brush structure (Gufa Yongbi), are not only foundational to traditional ink painting but also translatable into digital formats. These principles were mapped onto digital tools and techniques, demonstrating their adaptability and relevance in contemporary media.

Addressing the second research question, "Why does Chinese Ink Painting hold a significant place in the development of digital art?", the study examined the practices of Qiu Anxiong and Yang Yongliang. Their works exemplify how digital media can preserve and amplify traditional ink aesthetics while introducing new layers of meaning. Through animation, video installation, and digital compositing, these artists reimagined ink painting as a dynamic, immersive experience. Their approaches validated the hypothesis that Chinese ink theory offers a rich philosophical and visual framework for innovation in digital art, especially in contexts that seek to bridge heritage and modernity.

The third research question, “How can digital art be used to reinterpret the theoretical principles of Chinese Ink Painting?”, was answered through the researcher’s own practice-led artwork, *Borders Unbroken: The Soul of Salako Dayak*. This piece integrated Salako Dayak cultural motifs with Chinese ink aesthetics via digital projection and interactive media. The ideation and execution of the artwork were guided by the Six Principles, particularly the use of white space (Xu Shi) and compositional layering. The final installation allowed viewers to engage with ink-inspired visuals in a participatory format, transforming static brushwork into a responsive digital experience. Audience feedback confirmed that the fusion of traditional and digital elements enhanced appreciation and cultural resonance, fulfilling the third research objective.

In sum, the study achieved its aim of establishing a new context for Chinese Ink Painting within digital art. It demonstrated that traditional principles are not only preservable but also expandable through digital media. The researcher’s artwork served as a living embodiment of this synthesis, offering a culturally grounded yet technologically innovative model for future explorations in Malaysian and global art contexts.

5.2 Conclusion

This comprehensive investigation conclusively demonstrates that the fundamental essence inherent in traditional Chinese ink painting, specifically encapsulated in Xie He's Six Principles, serves as a continuous thread that weaves through both ancient and contemporary artistic expressions, thereby indicating that this art form evolves into a dynamic entity rather than remaining a static representation. In this scholarly exploration, the reference artists involved initially approach the interpretation of their artistic inspiration in a manner that is distinctly influenced by their individual backgrounds, thereby embracing

non-traditional modes of artistic expression, and subsequently employ the extensive scientific and technological knowledge that they have acquired to produce remarkably extraordinary works of art that challenge conventional boundaries. Based on art practices done by the reference artists and the framework of artistic practice model by Vartanian & Wada (2011), the researcher's innovative interpretation of Chinese ink painting within the realm of digital art, particularly through the lens of localized thematic elements, represents a distinctive and pioneering endeavour, and the insightful feedback garnered from visitors has established a foundational cornerstone that will undoubtedly serve as a significant anchor for future scholarly investigations in this field.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to advance the integration of traditional Chinese Ink Painting with digital art and foster its relevance in contemporary practice. First, encourage partnerships between traditional ink artists, digital technologists, and cultural institutions to explore innovative applications of Xie He's Six Principles in new media. Such collaborations could bridge technical expertise and cultural knowledge, fostering hybrid artworks that resonate with global audiences while preserving traditional aesthetics. Next, promote region-specific adaptations of Chinese ink painting, as demonstrated in this study's integration of Salako Dayak culture. Supporting artists to explore localized themes through digital ink art could enrich Malaysia's multicultural artistic identity and foster cross-community dialogue. Develop academic programs and workshops that combine traditional ink painting techniques with digital tools. Universities and art schools, particularly in regions like Sarawak, could incorporate such curricula to equip students with skills to innovate while honouring cultural heritage.

Besides that, establish digital archives and interactive platforms to document and showcase classical ink paintings. High-resolution scans, 3D modelling, and dynamic annotations could make these works accessible to a broader audience, ensuring their preservation and relevance in the digital age. In promoting this kind of art, leverage social media and digital exhibitions to democratize access to ink art. Platforms like TikTok or Instagram could host short-form content demonstrating the creation process, while virtual galleries might attract younger, tech-savvy audiences.

To enhance future exhibitions beyond simply increasing sample size, several strategic improvements can be considered. Extending the duration of the display and expanding outreach efforts, such as through email newsletters, student societies, and local art networks which can help attract a more diverse audience. Integrating brief on-site interviews or guided discussions alongside QR-based surveys may improve response rates and deepen visitor engagement. Additionally, tracking digital metrics like TikTok views and click-through rates offers valuable context for interpreting survey data within the broader scope of online interest. Segmenting respondents by discipline, age group, or prior exposure to Chinese ink painting enables more nuanced comparative analysis. Finally, conducting follow-up studies through community exhibitions and virtual galleries can reveal how different settings shape audience perceptions and feedback.

By implementing these recommendations, the timeless principles of Chinese ink painting can continue to inspire innovation, ensuring their vitality in an increasingly digital world while fostering meaningful connections between tradition and modernity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ambience of Exhibition



Figure 1: Video projection on Chinese Ink Painting with the title of *Borders Unbroken:*
The Soul of Salako Dayak



Figure 2: Poster and the questionnaire QR code next to the artwork



Figure 3: The questionnaire QR code next to the artwork