



Rethinking The Development Of Chinese Ink And Wash Painting In China After 1985: The Emergence, Evolution And Significance Of Contemporary Chinese Ink And Wash Painting In China

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Citation: Wang, Suyimeng, Safrizal Bin Shahir (2024), Rethinking The Development Of Chinese Ink And Wash Painting In China After 1985: The Emergence, Evolution And Significance Of Contemporary Chinese Ink And Wash Painting In China , Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30(6), 1015-1025

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i6.5435

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Since the 20th century, the influence of foreign thoughts on Chinese art and culture is obviously an inevitable trend under globalization (Lu, 2006). This study focuses on the artistic creation of Chinese ink and wash painting. It reviews the relevant archives and documents about history of Chinese contemporary art, and systematically sorts out findings about its emergence, evolution and significance since the movement of "85 Art Trend" taken place in China. Chinese artists, especially young artists, "imitation" to learn to (re)interpret contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting art by adopting Western art elements. After "85 Art Trend", Chinese art began to breakthrough and be featured on international art platform, including Chinese contemporary ink art. Besides painted local Chinese art element, with local originality, it explores and reflects the influences of Western art on Chinese ink art. Its development from traditional to contemporary was reviewed through analyzing the changes in the forms of artworks created at different periods. This study uses qualitative methods to collect and analyze secondary qualitative data. Based on the findings, the study investigates the possibilities for the future development of contemporary Chinese ink art towards strengthening confidence of Chinese community in art and culture.

Key words: Contemporary ink and wash painting art, emergence, evolution, significance, China

1.0 Introduction

Ink painting is a typical Chinese art symbol, which occupies an important position in the history of Chinese art and affects the artistic creation and aesthetic pursuit of Chinese artists. However, under the impact of foreign art and culture, among contemporary artists, Chinese ink and wash painting artists have made various explorations in terms of concept, form, or technology on how to cope with the challenges of various artistic cultures, get rid of the difficulties of their own creation and achieve new breakthroughs. Through continuous artistic creation practice and theoretical innovation, Chinese contemporary artists hope that Chinese ink and wash painting can re-examine the essence of traditional art, leverage its advantages and create in accordance with modern aesthetic pursuit. Inheritance and development are interrelated. The exploration of Chinese ink and wash painting has always been an important issue of concern among Chinese art communities. There are changes along its development, injected with new vitality which has given contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting a broader scope for development.

The development of Chinese ink and wash painting art is based on traditional Chinese aesthetic concepts. The common intention of creation is simply to produce work with profound meaning, as a representation of the ideal state of human beings, expressing philosophical thoughts and symbols or basic characteristics of absurdity. Artworks are typical images to express thoughts, with perceptible and concrete subjects. The interpretation of images is recorded in works such as Lunheng's "Luan Long by Wang Chong" in the Han Dynasty; "Wen Xin Diao Long Shen Si" by Liang and Liu Xie of the Southern Dynasty; "Yi He" by Ye; "Tong

Yun” and “Nine Diaries of the Yuan and Ming Brothers” by Huang Tingjian in Song Dynasty (Yu, 1986). Artworks reflects human consciousness where artists have injected his own emotional rendering, causing the paintings more vivid.

In creation of Chinese ink paintings, artists focus on the combination of ink techniques and representation of ink colours. Guo Xi, artist in the Tang Dynasty recorded in her book, titled "Record of Brush Techniques". She summarized various creative techniques, such as texture, shading, brush, point, etc. However, Jing Hao pointed out the intensity and lightness; and the darkness and brightness of objects in painting. In modern times, Huang Binhong proposed: thickness, lightness, accrued, burnt and broken (Yu, 1986). Overall, the development of Chinese ink and wash painting art is mainly based on ink, supplemented by colours, while the traditional Chinese ink and wash painting merely focus on water and ink.

However, when ink painting developed into the 20th century, its creation and development become complex and diverse. The reason is due to the preservation of traditional characteristics and cultural identities in contrast with the innovation of ink painting since the 20th century, with influence from the Western art. Xu Beihong introduced Western sketch and anatomy into Chinese ink and wash painting and broadened the concept of Chinese ink and wash painting creation. Pan Tianshou introduced the unique shape of the West, but insisted on using traditional ink techniques (Pan, 1983). Lin Fengmian painted watercolour paintings in the way of fauvism, which shows that the practice of ink and wash painting development is bold. In the 1950s, during the "transformation of traditional Chinese painting", artists advocated the value of traditional Chinese paintings, artists' viewpoints and aesthetics. At the end of the 1970s, China's reform thoroughly, ushered in reform opportunities for the development and promotion of Chinese ink and wash painting to another phase. In general, traditional Chinese ink art emphasizes brushes and ink, while contemporary Chinese ink art emphasizes the creation of artistic language and the pursuit of spirit. The key to the reconstruction and breakthrough of ink painting is the expression of the artist's personality, will and thought. The style of Chinese ink and wash painting is changing rapidly. The influx of Western art in the 20th century has brought new perspectives and new methods to the development and change of Chinese ink painting. Even though there are many disputes about the development of ink painting, artists are trying to find the suitable way in developing contemporary ink and wash painting art in China. It is necessary to promote the integration of Chinese local culture and innovative elements learnt from foreign art, on the basis of preserving the national traditional artistic and cultural concepts and ideology.

2.0 Methodology

This study mainly uses qualitative research methods to collect and analyze research data and information. The purpose of this study is to compile relevant historical background data and information through extensive review of various forms of relevant archives and records (i.e. written materials, photo records, audio and video files, artwork images, art publications, etc.). This study attempts to systematically sorting out the development process, from its emergence, evolution and significance of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting art. This paper summarizes and outlines the characteristics of Chinese contemporary ink painting, and next, investigate and analyse the impact of foreign art on Chinese contemporary ink and wash painting since 1985. This study focuses on the creative style and artistic characteristics of contemporary Chinese ink artists in China, systematically analyzes the artistic value and aesthetic characteristics of contemporary Chinese ink paintings. Finally, from the perspective of artists, this paper studies the techniques and theoretical values of contemporary Chinese ink painting, as well as the future development direction of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting in China.

3.0 Findings and Discussions

Rooted in China with long history and national artistic identities, implying respect for nature and people's creativity, Chinese ink and wash painting art is considered as China's most important artistic and cultural heritage. Under the globalization of art,

Chinese ink and wash painting art were continuously practiced and innovated by Chinese artists. There are unique creative methods and artistic language applied in the process of its development since the emergence and evolution of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting art, which is of great significance to the innovative development of contemporary ink and wash painting art in China.

3.1 Emergence of Contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting in China

Chinese ink and wash painting art was emerged in the Tang Dynasty, developed in the Five Dynasties, and reached its peak in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, and continued to flourish in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (He & Na, 2002). In the contemporary development, the artistic value of ink painting art has been further improved. Ink painting art pays attention to the flexible use of brush and ink. Artists use the combination of brush and ink to express aesthetics. For example, Wang Mian, an artist of the Yuan Dynasty, pointed out in the "Ink Plum Painting" The major concern should be the interesting elements in painting. Using ink and wash in the painting, the artist painted the fragrance of plum flowers, fully expressing his love and pursuit of ancient Chinese ink and wash painting. The development of painting art and social prosperity in the Tang Dynasty

contributed to the emergence of Chinese ink painting. Under the promotion of various aspects of Chinese art during this period, the development of ink painting art has reached a higher level. Zhang Yanyuan, an artist of the Tang Dynasty, explained in his publication titled "Records of Famous Paintings of the Past Dynasties" that paintings before the Tang Dynasty were particularly colourful. In the Tang Dynasty, artists used ink flexibly on the screen (Lu, 1992). Therefore, Chinese ink and wash painting is constantly changing and developing in the process of creation and practice.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kang Youwei and Chen Duxiu both advocated the integration of Chinese ink and wash painting art and Western art (Lv, 2000). Wu Guanzhong actively promoted integration of Chinese and Western art in the context of China's reform and restructuring, and combined with national art innovation to lead a new direction in the art field (Lu, 2002). That is how "Contemporary ink and wash painting in Chinese Mainland" started. Since 1949, China has held the first national art exhibition, which has promoted a new Chinese painting movement (Lv, 2000). This movement mainly focused on the content of painting, but due to the over-unification, the second reform was carried out in 1953. This second movement focused on the disputes between traditional and modern, new and old, and Chinese and Western art (Lv, 2000). Around 1954, China formed a contemporary style of ink painting. During this period, the discussion of ink painting mainly focused on brush and ink (Zhang, 2000). In the early 1960s, Lin Fengmian, Shi Lu and others learned Western painting from different perspectives of ink painting (Lu, 2002). From the overall situation of the development of Chinese ink painting art after 1985, the outbreak of the "85 art trend" was mainly affected by the Western art and cultural trend, that influenced the creation concept of Chinese ink painting (Gao, 2008). At this time, Chinese contemporary experimental ink painting became the mainstream. The creative method is to transform the composition, shape and colour based on the artistic framework of traditional ink painting and realistic ink painting. It is obviously different from traditional ink painting and realistic ink painting before the reform and restructure, especially in terms of artistic connotation and artistic expression (Lu, 1993). The development process of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting is so far complex and controversial.

In 1984, 3239 works were exhibited at the 6th National Excellent Works Art Exhibition, the largest since the founding of the People's Republic of China. To some extent, the exhibition reflects the breakthrough trend of the art world, and is considered as "the end of a creative era" (Lu, 2002). In 1985, Robert Laushenberg's works of art were exhibited on tour. The advancing Chinese Youth Art Exhibition was exhibited in Beijing, marking the beginning of the "85 Art Movement" (Gao, 1997). This "85 Art Movement" comprehensively, deeply, and persistently launched a discussion on how Chinese contemporary ink painting should respond to the impact of western art, and advocated the establishment of Chinese contemporary ink painting based on the principles of openness, diversified development and mutual integration, which has attracted great attention from the national art and even academic circles. With experts and scholars in the art circle as the main body and strong theoretical force, the scientific criticism of contemporary Chinese ink painting will be carried out to promote the development of contemporary Chinese ink painting.

Pi Daojian proposed a combination of ink and wash language in a new context (Pi, 1998), Lang Shaojun advocated diversification (Lang, 2002), Wu Guanzhong advocated the integration of Chinese ink and wash painting and western art techniques (Wu, 1998), Peng De proposed that artists should face up to the ink and wash crisis (Peng, 1985), Zhang Qiang said that because art pursues modernization and diversification as the goal, art should promote art democracy (Zhang, 1987), Jia Fangzhou advocated eliminating cultural differences and moving towards the world (Jia, 1987). Zhou Shaohua pointed out that Chinese painting should be innovative, which is the responsibility of a new generation, and required many innovative artists to form a group to make a historic breakthrough (Zhou, 1985). Gu Wenda, starting from a new artistic expression, not only boldly separated the pen from the ink, but also regarded the ink block as a unique painting technique, He also pointed out that to express the techniques of Chinese contemporary ink painting with the concept of western modern art, even under the impact of western art concepts, Chinese contemporary ink painting can also find an innovative route (Gu, 1985). Li Xianting pointed out that Chinese ink painting and calligraphy are linked, and may find an aesthetic concept that can convey the Chinese people (Li, 1988). Jiangsu Pictorial aims at academic, national and modern, "Based on the present, facing the youth, and moving towards the future", closely follow the development of Chinese contemporary art (Li, 1995). After more than five years of great discussion, at the artistic and cultural level of creative techniques, creative concepts, philosophy, aesthetics, thoughts, etc., the Chinese contemporary ink painting has been seriously, conscientiously and carefully combed, clarified and reflected theoretically, which has opened up the connotation of Chinese contemporary ink painting creation, and made the national art circle more and more clear and clear aware of the concept of Chinese contemporary ink painting creation. Chinese contemporary ink painting is a breakthrough of tradition. Integrating the elements of western art in creation allows artists to explore creating art freely and innovatively. Through the discussion on how to develop and breakthrough contemporary Chinese ink painting, we increasingly see that the creation of contemporary Chinese ink painting is becoming more and more popular in the Chinese art circle.

Along the "85 Art Trend", the development of contemporary ink and wash painting has emerged and caused controversy among Chinese art world during 1985. Firstly, we have seen the intense controversy between the criticism on traditional verse contemporary and the concerns of aesthetic quality of contemporary ink paintings. Secondly, Chinese ink painting art was named differently according to the different creative approaches adopted by different artists, such as traditional ink painting, modern ink painting, contemporary

ink and wash painting and experimental ink painting. Thirdly, Chinese ink and wash painting art representing Chinese culture with special spiritual attributes and different artistic language characteristics. There are various challenges and difficulties in sustaining or developing Chinese ink and wash painting art in China under the different social and cultural development at different period. The major controversy during emerging stage is why Chinese ink and wash painting art break through the tradition. However, the emerging process lays a solid foundation for promoting contemporary art criticism and theoretical innovation.

Reviewing the development of modern ink painting, artists hold different views. Artists such as Lin Fengmian, Xu Beihong, Li Keran, Jiang Zhaohe and Shi Lu represented modern ink painting artists. These artists have different artistic concepts and painting skills, but they shared the same modern spirit in terms of consciously innovating from the tradition. For example, Lin Fengmian's art is never about politics. His inspiration comes from the traditional spirit of literati and folk art and Western modern art. Lin Fengmian's artistic creation has brushed up new expression approach for ink painting. The art of Li Keran and Shi Lu had not only refreshed the artistic language, but also contributed new era attributes and modern cultural connotation in landscape creation. Before the 1980s, few artists keen on innovation in Chinese ink painting. After the 1980s, more artists began to breakthrough along the development of ink painting art in China. However, there are still ongoing disputes (Lu, 2002). Chinese artist Liu Guosong and Chinese artist Wu Guanzhong, both living overseas, are representatives of modern ink artists. Their ink practice represents a sense of modernity. However, their ink and wash art forms are similar to traditional ink and wash paintings. Thus, their art were not popularized in the 1980s. However, with the strong impact of Western culture, the artist's artistic style has been integrated into Western and contemporary artistic concepts. If artists do not value traditional or local art and culture, gradually, the Western art expression may replace Chinese art. Facing the dilemma of how to develop Chinese ink art, the future of ink painting art in China have been continuously debated by artists for many years.

History has proved that before the Qing Dynasty, the concept of "Chinese painting" never appeared in the history. After the Qing Dynasty, in facing the impact of Western culture, artists used the word "Chinese painting" to define the boundary between Chinese and Western art. This reflects the urgent situation of art development at that time. Although the term "Chinese painting" can be distinguished from Western painting, it is still complex in the field of Chinese art. Theorists continue to argue about naming it as "Chinese painting" or "ink and wash painting" (Yu, 1984).

The concept of "Chinese painting" is vague. Whether the artistic form and language contained in "Chinese painting" are in line with the development of Chinese art and culture is the concern of artists. In short, Chinese painting presents new painting language and form, including Chinese local art culture and aesthetic concepts. The development process of Chinese painting is complex. The development of ink painting has traditional elements and is rooted in national culture. Therefore, to study the development of contemporary Chinese ink painting, artists need to discuss from its rich cultural background perspective.

According to the development records of art history, ancient Chinese ink and wash painting is called "Danqing", which means painting and colour. In "Lu Lingguang Tang Fu", Wang Yanshou of the Eastern Han Dynasty wrote about immortality (Pan, 1997). In the Tang Dynasty, Zhang Yanyuan wrote about records in famous paintings of all dynasties (He, 2002). Since the mid-1980s, ink painting has become a symbol (Zhu, 2009). When creating ink painting, artists combine ink painting creation techniques with theories. Therefore, the scope of ink painting has expanded, and the concept of ink painting has become popular and modern. Ink painting at that period broke through the tradition and was not limited by the traditional ink painting techniques. Wu Guanzhong's article "Ink equals zero" and Zhang Ding's article "Hold the Bottom Line of Chinese Painting" are both arguments about Chinese painting and ink painting (Shao & Sun, 2008).

The concept changed from Chinese painting to ink painting is essentially to expand Chinese painting towards contemporary and to find the context for the development of contemporary ink painting. In other words, ink painting must be rooted in tradition and fully develop China's art and cultural identities. On the other hand, it expanded the new ideas of artistic creation brought by the contemporary diversified development environment. Many artists have discussed the development of ink and wash art, such as Li Xiaoxuan, Liu Qinghe, Tian Liming, Li Laoshi and Lvpeng. How to retain the charm of Chinese painting in ink and wash creation is significantly important (Lv, 2000).

After the "85 New Art Trend", Li Xiaoshan advocated extreme Westernization, criticized the stagnation of Chinese painting art, and referred the issue of Chinese painting creation to the academic community for reconsideration and discussion. Chinese art circles are influenced by Western culture. The artist raised the issue of the development of art and culture, and replace the concept of Chinese painting. From the perspective of development, replacing "Chinese painting" with "ink painting" is a progress (Li, 1985). Therefore, the establishment of the concept of ink painting reflects the strategies of Chinese artists to cope with the influence of Western art and culture since the 1980s. The significance of this strategy lies in preserving the ink and wash characteristics of traditional Chinese art, while expressing the hope that ink and wash painting will be recognized by the international academic community.

3.2 The Evolution

The Artistic Expressions of Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting

The development of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting is long and profound. It underwent the most explorative process in creation. Contemporary ink and wash painting creation has various forms of language expression. Firstly, contemporary ink and wash painting artists focus on the spiritual state of contemporary society and trying to break through from the traditional brush and ink norms. Also, the creation techniques and concepts that integrate Western painting elements. Secondly, contemporary ink and wash painting is quite different from traditional ink painting and language form. As previously analyzed, from the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the unique language norms of literati painting, such as the use of brush and ink skills, composition and layout, and the use of colors, gradually taken shape. Contemporary ink and wash painting uses all available materials as external means and comprehensive materials for creating visual effects of works, and even turns ink and wash painting from plane to space, expands the painting form of ink and wash painting, and constructs a new artistic language, which is not only beyond traditional ink and wash painting but also different from Western art culture. Contemporary ink and wash painting in the form of painting composition, brush methods and tools, colors used. The application of material has been greatly innovated, with more extensive concept, method, and theme of artistic creation. Thirdly, contemporary ink and wash painting pursues the spiritual form and aesthetic pursuit of contemporary expression. Contemporary ink and wash painting applied the language of traditional ink painting to convey the contemporary spiritual interest. Contemporary ink and wash artists regard artistic creation as a spiritual expression rather than a standard of painting art. Contemporary ink and wash representing Chinese cultural forms and aesthetic concepts, and the manifestation of the integration and globalization of traditional and contemporary, local and world cultures (Wu, 2005).

Compared with the traditional literati painting, contemporary ink and wash painting is essentially a new language form of the transformation of ink painting art. Since 1985, the "85 Art Trend" has largely contributed to the formation of diversified art innovation in China, bringing new artistic techniques and aesthetic principles to contemporary Chinese ink painting. The performance art performed by artists using rice paper and ink painting is nothing more than a pleasant rebellion against traditional ink painting. They are not concerned about the innovation and development of ink painting, but about the innovation of ink painting since the "Cultural Revolution" by means of ink painting. The main representative artists are Wu Guanzhong, Gu Wenda, Zhu Xinjian, Li Laoshi, Liu Ergang, Tian Liming, Zhou Sicong, etc. Among them, Gu Wenda used the characteristics of ink and wash materials in his huge painting with the theme of "Chang Shen", trying to force the spirit of Western modernism into the Chinese literati painting tradition (Figure 1).

Especially after 1989, contemporary artists continued to hold seminars and exhibitions on the development of contemporary ink painting, forming a very influential art group in China. Their works pay attention to the technique of brush and ink, not only inherits the language of ancient literati's brush and ink, but also enriches the artistic innovation of the new era (Lu, 2002).

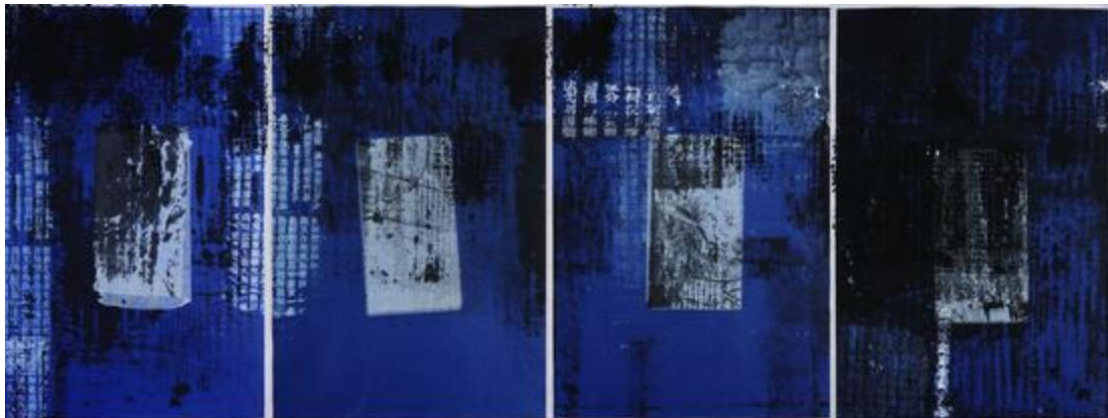


Figure 1: Gu Wenda, The World of Silence, 1985. Ink. 276 cm x 175 cm. (Source: Wu, 2014)

The spiritual realm of the traditional literati pursues the detached attitude of life away from the mundane, while the contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting pursues the artist's spiritual experience and the quality

of life. The artist Pi Daojian pointed out in the dialectical article of "New Scholar Painting" that the language of contemporary ink painting is diverse, and artists tries to improve from the traditional painting language by working beyond its balance, and exploring the different or new language form of contemporary ink and wash painting art (Pi, 2011).

From the perspective of subject matter and content, contemporary ink and wash painting artists are not satisfied with the subject matter of traditional ink and wash painting, and artists are more inclined to paint the living conditions and cityscapes. From the perspective of technical expression, artistic creation is mostly based on the block surface of ink, or the shape of color, which breakthroughs from the traditional standardization of brush and ink. In terms of painting tools, the tools and materials used in traditional literati painting are mainly brush, ink and rice paper, while contemporary ink and wash painting artists use some new materials and tools to paint, which makes the picture having greater impact and texture. For example, gouache and transparent ink are mixed for painting, and ink, acrylic, gouache, rock color, etc. are integrated with each other to create image traces by rubbing, pasting, shaping, etc. As shown in Figure 2, Chen Xinmao explored this "modern" field using the "traditional" brush and ink. The space created in his paintings not only integrates the elements of traditional and modern artistic creation, but also connects physical material and spiritual intellectual. He is neither as radical and avantgarde as others, nor as conservative and outdated as others, but he respects his own inner spiritual world experience and firmly decided his own creative ideas (Wu, 2014). These are the promotion and attempts of contemporary ink and wash painting artists to carry out language transformation of traditional ink painting. Since the 1990s, the contemporary ink and wash painting has not only expanded the tradition in ink materials and techniques, but also made new progress in the image structure. The brush and ink is no longer the center of artistic expression, but one of the ways of expression of various artistic elements. It has gained new meaning in a more complex and diverse language system. Different from the lyric and poetic harmony of traditional ink painting, the creation of contemporary ink and wash painting adopts nonlogical expressions such as misappropriation, variation, dislocation, collage, abstraction, and new field of artistic language (Gao, 1997).



**Figure 2: Chen Xinmao, Blue History Book, 2009. Ink, acrylic & mixed medium
70cm x 50cm (Source: Wu, 2014)**

After 1995, visual tension, expressiveness and other words became popular in the art world, and became the words to evaluate whether ink painting was innovative (Lu, 2017). The "Symposium on Contemporary Chinese Ink and Wash Art Towards the 21st Century" and its related exhibitions held in Guangzhou in 1996 prompted a number of young and middle-aged art critics to participate in the conference, such as Liu Xiaochun, Lang Shaojun, Pi Daojian, Wang Huangsheng, Li Weiming, Yin Shuangxi, Gu Chengfeng, Huang Zhuan, Lu Hong, Sun Zhenhua, Guo Xiaochuan, Huang Du, Pi Li, etc. It successively published many theoretical researches and review articles on ink and wash paintings. Through many important art exhibitions, such as the "Shanghai Biennale" in 1998 and the "China Experimental Ink and Wash 20" held by the Guangdong Art Museum in 2001, the popularity of contemporary ink and wash painting art language has become the most important artistic phenomenon in China since the middle and late 1990s (Gao, 1997).

What contemporary ink and wash painting advocates is tension and expression, which is self-evident. It is influenced by the artistic concepts and forms of expression of

Western art schools. The artists want to further develop the art of ink painting, yearn for new forms of artistic expression, and fully reflect the expression of artists' free thinking. It is the continuous attempts of Li Jin, Li Xiaoxuan, Liu Qinghe, Liu Zijian, Liu Jin'an, Zhou Jianping and other modern ink artists. Their dedication to art further attracted a group of important critics to pay attention to the modern transformation of Chinese ink and wash painting (Yin, 2006). For example, Liu Zijian's ink painting as shown in Figure 3. It obviously breaking through the tradition, deconstructed the linear techniques of traditional ink painting creation with large areas of ink blocks, and added some harsh antagonistic elements to the painting, which is conducive to expressing the sense of power, speed and impact. The painting depicts his very firm direction in further

exploring ink and wash painting art, and also in developing his own style in contemporary ink and wash painting.



Figure 3: Liu Zijian, Tianchan, 2020. Ink. 880 cm × 180 cm (Source: Yin, 2006)

Contemporary ink and wash painting emphasizes the expression of the tension between visual transmission and freedom in forms or images. It does not exclude the expression language with ink as the main body. Fundamentally, contemporary ink and wash painting is not completely separated from the inheritance of ink painting. Therefore, from the perspective of contemporary ink and wash painting forms, it is the combination of Chinese artists' artistic aesthetic innovation and Western artistic elements. The performance characteristic of contemporary ink and wash painting is to express the spirit of contemporary artists and contemporary people with the performance strength of ink language. In today's Chinese painting world, objectively, contemporary ink and wash painting continues the creation of traditional ink painting. Nevertheless, contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting has become a unique art by carrying forward the passion of life and expressing the tension of ink painting (Jia, 2001).

Contemporary ink and wash painting pursues the spiritual form and aesthetic pursuit of contemporary expression. The artistic and cultural situation and people's aesthetic tendency evolve with the changes of the times. The traditional aesthetic concept has lost the aesthetic recognition of contemporary society. Thus, the traditional ink painting also lacks the expression of free spirit. Although traditional ink painting artists are also constantly trying to create new themes. However, due to the standardization of language structure, they failed to adapt to the spiritual experience of contemporary society. Under the development of global art and culture, Chinese contemporary artists are also constantly adapting to the trend of the development of art and culture, expressing the spiritual form and aesthetic pursuit of contemporary ink and wash painting innovatively through local art creations.

Contemporary ink and wash painting artists explore language expression from the perspective of painting. From the perspective of conceptual language symbol analysis, contemporary ink and wash painting is the diversion and reference of Western art concepts, and is an attempt to new art expression techniques. The ink and wash painting artists use the texture traces of the change, direction, and strength of ink colour to innovate in presentation of colours, shapes, brushworks and styles, towards building visual impact. For example, Zhang Yu (see Figure 4 & 5), Wang Chuan (see Figure 6), Shi Guo (see Figure 7), Wang Tiande and others use abstract techniques to express things and abstract artistic treatment in a general way. The artist uses simple brush and ink language to create fantastic ink and wash paintings, with the freely scattered brush and ink lines convey the inner realm of selflessness and freedom. This is the embodiment of the artist's spiritual realm. They express their creative feelings in a spiritual abstract language. At the same time, it is also the inheritance and development of the traditional spirit of brush and ink art in China (Lu, 2017).



Figure 4: Zhang Yu, Capriccio, Chapter 6, Regret, 1993. Ink & Gouache. 70cm x 70cm (Source: Lu, 2003)



Figure 5: Zhang Yu, Lingguang No. 52: floating residual circle, 1998. Ink. 200cm x 100cm (Source: Lu, 2003)



Figure 6: Wangchuan, No · 39 · 1997, 1997. Ink. 90cm x 180cm (Source: Lu, 2003)

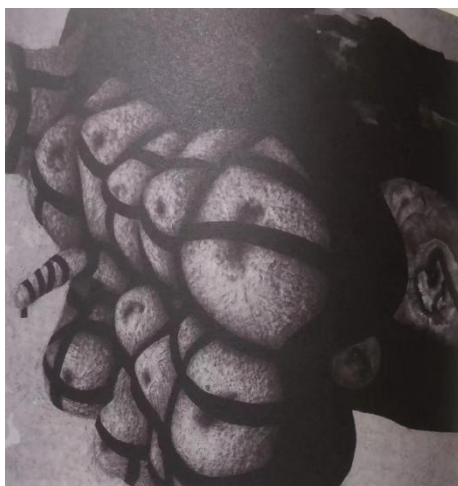


Figure 7: Shi guo, Hump packaging No · 3, 1999. Ink. 138cm x 138cm (Source: Lu, 2003)

Contemporary ink and wash painting art further enriches art academic in China. Artists' artistic innovation shows the transformation of the artistic language of contemporary ink and wash painting. In the process of pursuing the current practices, Chinese contemporary ink and wash painting artists draw on and integrate Chinese and Western art elements. Chinese contemporary ink and wash painting not only completely transcends the inherent theme, image presentation or ink processing of traditional ink and wash painting, but also empowered artists to create art more freely. In fact, as a new artistic creation, contemporary ink and wash painting has not only been gradually accepted by people, but also achieved quite excellent results in the new

century, which is enough to show that contemporary ink and wash painting is not a layer of unchanged, but created. It also shows the artist's spiritual form and aesthetic pursuit.

As for the summary of the prospect and development trend of contemporary ink painting art, Jia Fangzhou summarized in into three characteristics. Firstly, contemporary ink and wash painting does not rely on the rational painting of artists, but on the passion and state of life; Secondly, the style of contemporary ink and wash painting works is very personalized; Thirdly, in the way of expression, through free painting modeling and collision of colours, the painting has more visual tension (Jia, 2001).

In the context of global diversified development, contemporary ink and wash painting is both inheritance and developing innovation of traditional art and contemporary art. It reflects the aesthetic and spiritual manifestation of contemporary ink and wash painting artists' artistic creation. From the content of works in this period, contemporary ink and wash artists painted the integration of the rapid development of Chinese society and the international diversified growth, using an enlightened attitude to integrate the Western art elements and post-modern art experience and language.

3.3 The Significance

Today, contemporary ink and wash painting has breakthrough from the conventional painting style but continues the tradition. Contemporary ink and wash painting integrates a variety of artistic ideas, artistic elements, and aesthetic creation style. It mainly expresses the spiritual connotation. Art is always developing alongside with the progress of development among society, in adapting to the environment or atmosphere of a particular era. From the analysis of the development of contemporary ink painting, both in connotation and form, it reflects the wisdom and spiritual needs of human progress. At the same time, it also shows that China's progress in the field of art and culture is consistent with modernization.

The art of Chinese ink and wash painting is undergoing aesthetic reform in line with the times. The key to explore the development and promotion of contemporary ink and wash painting art lies in whether artists can integrate with Chinese art culture in the context of international art. In short, we should seek opportunities for development of art and culture, and seek and grasp the spirit and artistic quality of oriental artists. Without tradition, civilization is impossible; But without breaking through from the tradition, progress is also impossible (Yin, 2014). Therefore, study and understand the tradition in the development of contemporary Chinese ink painting relevantly build art and culture self-confidence among Chinese art practitioners. From the perspective of development history, any art language cannot be separated from local culture, and it has occurred and evolved from the tradition. Ink and wash language represent China's unique spiritual connotation and artistic expression. Contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting also evolves alongside with the development of economy and aesthetic concepts of the times. However, the development is more meaningful only if it relates to the local art culture and artistic spirit. In the process of the development of contemporary ink and wash language, artists have put forward new problems to deal with in responding to the impact of Western art and culture. In adopting or adapting the foreign art and culture, we should critically analyze and selectively learn from the reasonable and beneficial perspectives, while discard the unreasonable or irrelevant aspects. With the development of society and frequent international art and cultural exchanges, the development of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting shall seek a practical and suitable direction or approaches in development towards better serving the contemporary society without ignoring the preservation of Chinese local art and culture identities.

4.0 Conclusion

Chinese contemporary ink and wash painting continues its tradition and continues to convey the new ideas and aesthetic concepts of Chinese contemporary art to the world in various forms and media. Contemporary Chinese ink painting, as an artistic symbol of innovation in the new era, while facing the state of the integration of multimedia, interdisciplinary and diversified art in the world today, it requires not only the exploration and innovation of contemporary artists, but also the attention, support and promotion of relevant stakeholders among society. Only by making efforts to innovate can the development of contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting be relevantly promoted.

Chinese contemporary ink and wash painting art has become one of the categories of contemporary Chinese art. It has gradually formed an abstract aesthetic identity of Chinese art and culture. In the process of development, Chinese contemporary ink and wash painting is still full of various ambiguities, contradictions, and controversies. Therefore, the study of contemporary ink and wash painting should not only be based on the development of artistic language, but also emphasizes the results of every exploration and debate of artists across the art platforms.

Looking back on the past, the evolution of literati painting has produced many famous artists, such as Mi Fu, the four Yuan schools, the four monks and the four kings. The evolution of Chinese ink and wash painting has also produced many artists who maintain the traditional concept of ink painting creation, such as Wu Changshuo, Huang Binhong, Qi Baishi, Pan Tianshou, and a number of artists who combine Chinese ink and wash painting creation techniques with Western artistic elements, such as Xu Beihong, Lin Fengmian Liu Haisu, Fu Baoshi, Li Keran, Wu Guanzhong, etc. However, today, the evolution of contemporary ink and wash painting artists such as Gu Wenda, Liu Zijian, Zhang Yu, Shi Guo, Chen Xinmao, Liu Guosong, Hu Youben, Nanxi, Shaoge, Wang Fei, Yan Binghui, Zhang Jin, Zhou Shaohua, etc., have become the highlights in Chinese art world.

Over time, with advances in science and technology, and changes in artists' artistic concepts, more contemporary ink and wash artists began to express the connotation of their art through different creative methods, laying a solid foundation for contemporary ink and wash innovation. The continuous changes in the artistic language and artistic creation methods of contemporary ink and wash painting have significantly breakthrough from the boundary between contemporary ink and wash painting and other types of art. In the new era of inclusiveness, contemporary Chinese ink and wash painting art presents an artistic style that keeps pace with the times. In addition, blending into the contemporary Chinese artistic and cultural life with a new dimension, it keeps pace with the new era, reflects the spiritual pursuit of the contemporary society, and present the creativity and the quality of life of contemporary society in China towards highlighting the Chinese innovative artistic identities and national spirit in the process of globalization.

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