

Shanshui – Chinese Landscape painting

Although China during the Tang Dynasty (618 – 906) was well known to many travellers and traders from many countries, this knowledge was lost with the collapse of the Tang.

Before **Marco Polo** travelled to China in the **13th century** there only a vague knowledge of an exotic land which was the source of silk. It was not until the 20th century that archaeologists have begun uncovering Chinese history.



The Chess Pavilion by
Hedda Morrison, shot at
Hua Shan.



Dynasties from the Tang Dynasty on

Tang Dynasty 618 - 906

Five Dynasties / 10 Kingdoms 907 – 959

Sung Dynasty 960 - 1279

Northern Song Dynasty 960- 1127

Southern Song Dynasty 1127 – 1279

Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty 1279 - 1368

Ming Dynasty 1368 - 1644

Qing (Manchu) Dynasty 1644 – 1911

Republic of China 1911- 1949

People's Republic of China 1949 -



Map of Tang Dynasty China

Inventions Made in China.

Some of humankind's greatest and most world-changing inventions were made in China.

For centuries Chinese technology and science were the most advanced in the world.

In the Middle Ages (500-1400), many Chinese inventions were transported along the Silk Road to Europe where many had a huge impact.

Chinese inventions include:

paper, printing, gunpowder (and fireworks), the compass, paper money, silk, porcelain, the paintbrush, boats equipped with the water-tight buoyancy, kites, umbrellas and the wheelbarrow.

Ladies processing new silk, early 12th century painting in the style of Zhang Xuan, Song Dynasty



The Diamond Sutra, the world's oldest printed book, published in AD 868 during the Tang Dynasty (618–907)



REVISION - REMEMBER THAT:

The **Middle Ages** in the West, with a time frame of 500 – 1400 approximately, was also known as the Medieval period.

It was followed by **The Renaissance** 1400- 1600.

The church became very wealthy during the Medieval period and was prepared to spend lavishly on art.

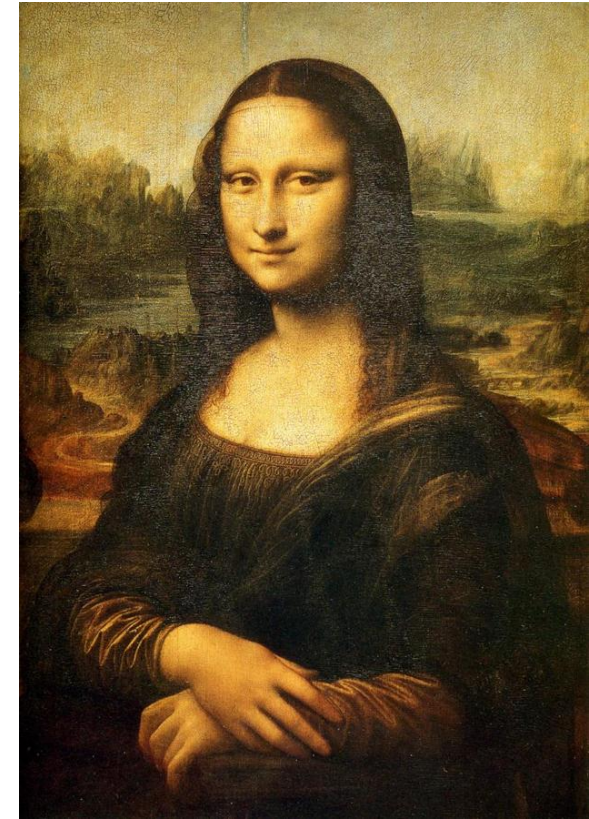
Medieval art was largely religious, stylized (simplified), decorative and two dimensional.



Detail of The Wilton Diptych c. 1400, a painting of the Medieval period.



The central panel of Duccio's huge altarpiece for Siena Cathedral 1308-1311, tempera & gold on wood, 213 x 396 cm



Mona Lisa Leonardo da Vinci
1503 – 1507 oil on wood
77 x 53 cm



Chinese landscape painting - *shanshui*

The Chinese term for 'landscape' - *shanshui* - is made up of two characters meaning 'mountains and water'. Mountains, rivers and often waterfalls are prominent in Chinese landscape painting, and usually centred on mountains.

Chinese landscape painting is linked with the philosophy of Daoism, which emphasizes harmony with the natural world and how minor the human presence is in the vastness of the cosmos. It also had strong links to Buddhism.

In China, landscape painting occupied the highest status in the hierarchy of genres.

This was in stark contrast to the status of landscape painting in the West, where it was regarded as of lower status than other genres until the 19th century.

Woods and Valleys of Mount Yu 1372

Ni Zan (1306–1374)

Yuan dynasty (1271–1368),

Hanging scroll

ink on paper 95.3 x 35.9 cm

“In Chinese art, painting and writing are indivisible.

Writing puts into writing what the mind's eye sees – and painting puts into images what the mind's eye sees.

In the great Chinese tradition, calligraphy is regarded as the highest of all art forms, followed equally by painting and poetry – the “three perfections”.

Both writing and painting are constructs of the imagination and not about imitation or resemblance.” (Edmund Capon 2008)

Rather, they are expressions of the mind and heart of the individual artists.



The autumn mountain at sunset
1735 FANG Shishu
(1692–1751) Qing dynasty
hanging scroll; ink and colour on paper
124 x 61 cm image
227 x 82 x 92 cm scroll AGNSW



The Difference Between Chinese and Western Painting

In China, calligraphy and painting evolved together and thus painting, the graphic arts and poetry became intertwined in a way that they never did in Europe.

Scholars often collaborated to demonstrate the three perfections. One might paint a scene and another would add poetic inscriptions in elegant calligraphy.

The Difference Between Chinese and Western Painting

Calligraphy and painting were seen as amateur pursuits of educated scholar-artists. Generally the great Chinese painters were first of all, government officials, scholars and poets, and were usually skilled calligraphers.

This contrasts with the role of the artist in the West. In the Middle Ages, artists were regarded as craftsmen, as artisans belonging to guilds, and then in the Renaissance as professionals who were commissioned to produce artworks.



Scholar by a Waterfall

Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279)

late 12th–early 13th century

Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190–1225)

Album leaf: ink and colour on silk 25.1 x 26 cm

The Difference Between Chinese and Western Painting

The spiritual, philosophic and expressive aspirations of Chinese painters were much higher than those of Western painters.

Emphasis was placed on the spiritual qualities of the painting and on the ability of the artist to reveal the inner harmony of man and nature, as well as the insignificance of man in the sublime mountain landscape, as perceived according to Daoist and Buddhist concepts.

Chinese depictions of nature are rarely simply representations of the external world.

Rather, a Chinese landscape painting is an expression of the mind and heart of the artist.

Facing the Moon Ma Yuan (c.1160-1225) an influential painter of the Song Dynasty (960–1127)

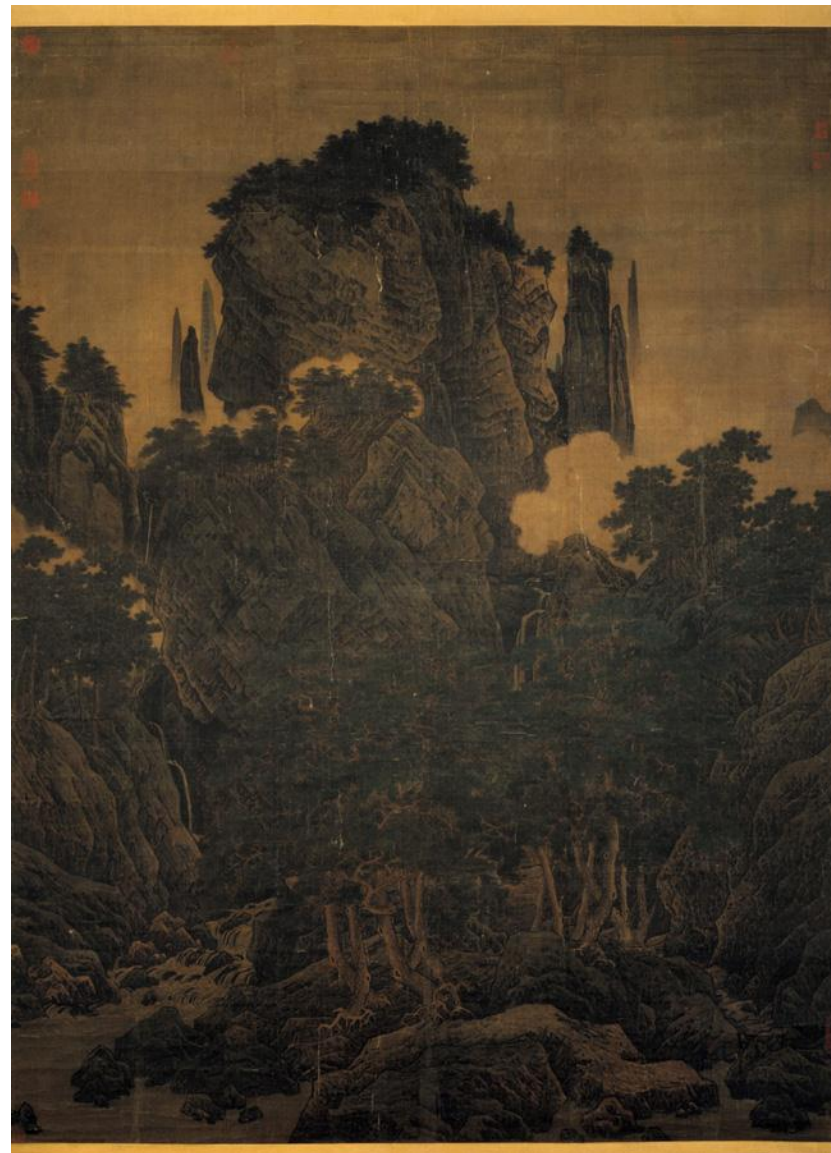


The Difference Between Chinese and Western Painting

From the 11th century on, landscape in Chinese painting has held the same dominant position that the human figure held in the West from the Renaissance on (1400-1600).

In China there was an emphasis on the immensity of nature rather than the concern with the human figure, history and the human condition as in the West.

An artist such as **Leonardo da Vinci** with his notebooks and anatomical sketches or **Monet** with his studies of light and shade upon a haystack would, to the Chinese **scholar-artists**, show concern for superficial outward appearances, while they themselves were concerned with the inner philosophical truths which lay behind appearances.



Wind in Pines Among Myriad of Valleys

Li Tang (c.1050-1130), Northern and Southern Song dynasties (960-1279)

Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk

188.7 x 139.8 cm

The Difference Between Chinese and Western Painting

Typically, paintings and calligraphy are created by an artist on sheets of paper or silk laid on a flat surface.

Paintings and works of calligraphy appear as hanging scrolls and hand-scrolls unrolled on table tops, album leaf paintings, or on fans. They are not framed but mounted on silk.

Chinese painting in general is seen as an extension of calligraphy and uses the same brushstrokes and soft inks which can create moody evocative images – rolling mists, stormy clouds.

The colours are restrained and subtle and the paintings are usually created in ink on paper, sometimes with a small amount of watercolour.

The Chinese artist also rejected the changeable qualities of light and shadow as a means of modelling, along with opaque pigments to conceal mistakes. Instead, he relied on line—the indelible mark of the inked brush.



A highly decorated badger hair brush of the Ming dynasty.



Inkstone in the shape of a pond



Mountains and Pines in Spring (Part) Mi Fu
(1052-1109 Song Dynasty)

**Chinese artists
learned by copying
the work of the
great artists of the
past whom they
revered.**

Landscape in the style of Mi Fu

Xinlo shanren(1682–1756)
Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911
hanging scroll ink on paper
Art Gallery Society of New South
Wales

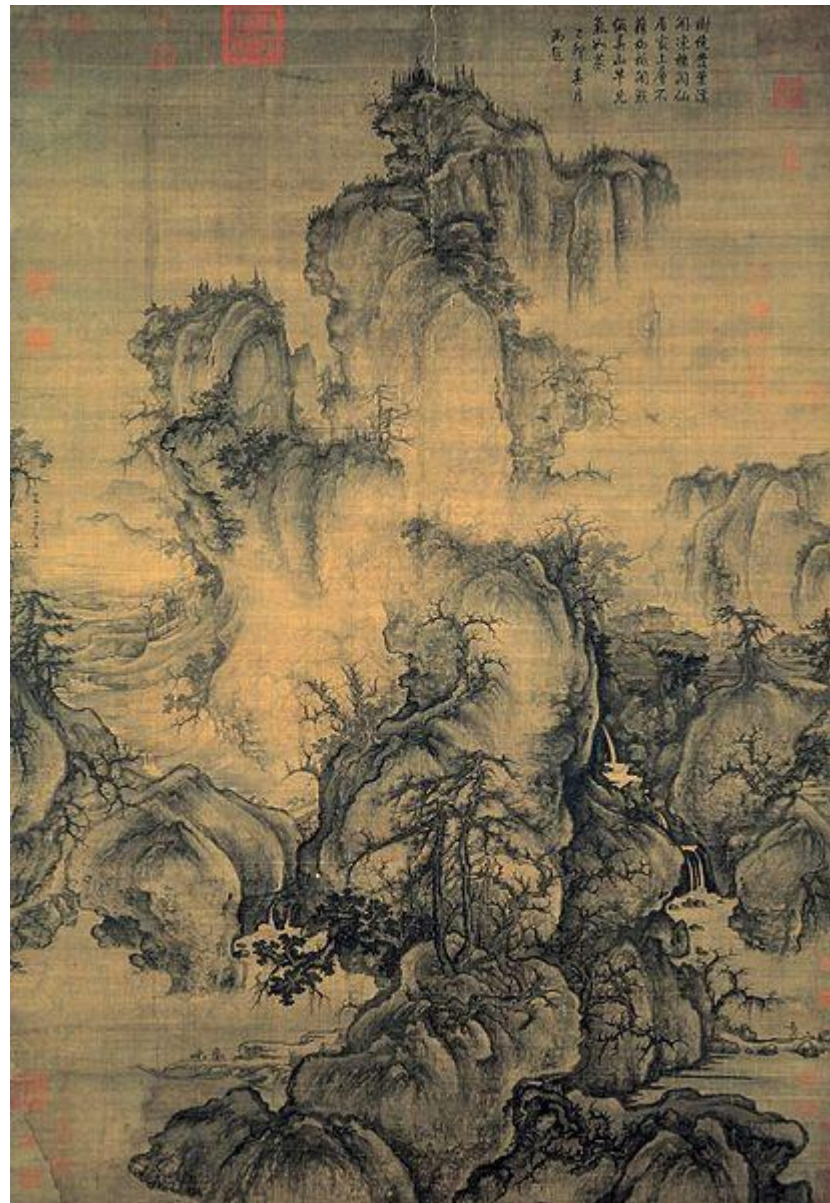


Mountains in Chinese landscape painting

From a very early time great mountains were regarded by the Chinese as embodiments of mysterious power and were viewed as the homes of immortals.

They became a profound source of inspiration for artists.

The aim was to capture the inner essence as well—its energy, life force, spirit.



Early Spring 1072 by Northern Song
Dynasty artist **Guo Xi** (c.1020 – c. 1090 AD)
Ink and light colours on silk 158 × 108 cm

Many mountains were objects of imperial worship, with emperors of successive dynasties praying to mountains, including the Five Sacred Mountains at imperial altars to ensure the prosperity of the state.

The close conceptual link between mountains and sacred power became an endless source of inspiration for artists, endowing their works with spiritual auras.





According to Daoist beliefs that go back as far as the early 6th c BCE, nature is a living body, imbued with a life force, or energy – qi.

Mountains are sites where the cosmic vital energy is most refined. In these mountains one could encounter immortals.

The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour, Scroll

Three: Ji'nan to Mount Tai

Qing dynasty (1644–1911)

1698

Wang Hui (1632–1717) and assistants

Handscroll; ink and colour on silk

67.8 x 1393.8 cm

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1979.5>

Although most Chinese intellectuals were not committed **Daoists** they were attracted to the **Daoist** idea of the **mountain** being the home of immortals as a counter-image to world reality.

In addition to the **Daoist** hermitic practice of seeking spiritual freedom in the **mountains** away from the restraining social order, there is the **Confucian** parallel wherein one takes refuge in the mountains to escape from the society, ruled by foreign invader or corrupt governments, one cannot accept from a Confucian point of view.

Also, the idea of a hermitic life fits easily with **Buddhist** concepts. Scattered throughout the mountains, **Buddhist** monasteries offered shelters wherein one could take refuge to escape from society.



Buddhist Temple in the Mountains, 11th century, ink on silk



Summer Mountains

Qu Ding (active ca. 1023–ca. 1056)

Song dynasty (960–1127)
11th century

Handscroll
ink and pale colour on silk
45.4 x 115.3 cm

Viewers of Chinese landscapes are meant to identify with a human figure in the painting, allowing them to "walk through, ramble, or dwell" in the landscape.

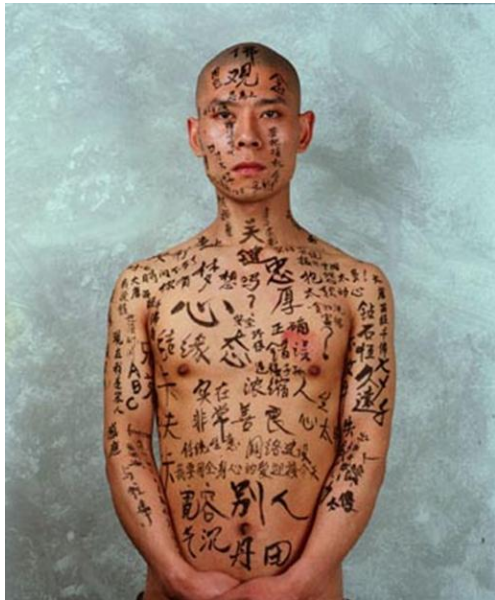
In this landscape, lush forests suffused with mist identify the time as a midsummer evening.

Moving from right to left, travellers make their way toward a temple retreat, where people are seated together enjoying the view.

Above the temple roofs the central mountain sits majestically.

Some Chinese artists who are today working in the classical Chinese landscape and / or calligraphy genres but in a contemporary manner.

**HUANG
YAN**
(1966-)



Chinese Australian
artist **GUAN WEI** .
Born 1957, China



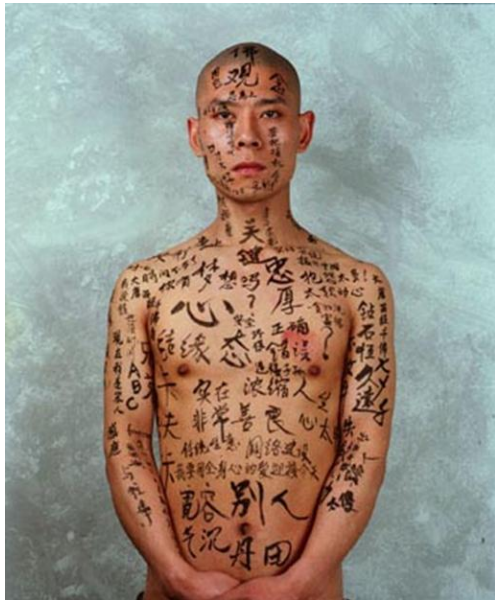
Xu Bing 2011

Works by **ZHANG HUAN** and **XU BING** who
work with Chinese calligraphy.

Refer to the end of the powerpoint for more on these
artists.

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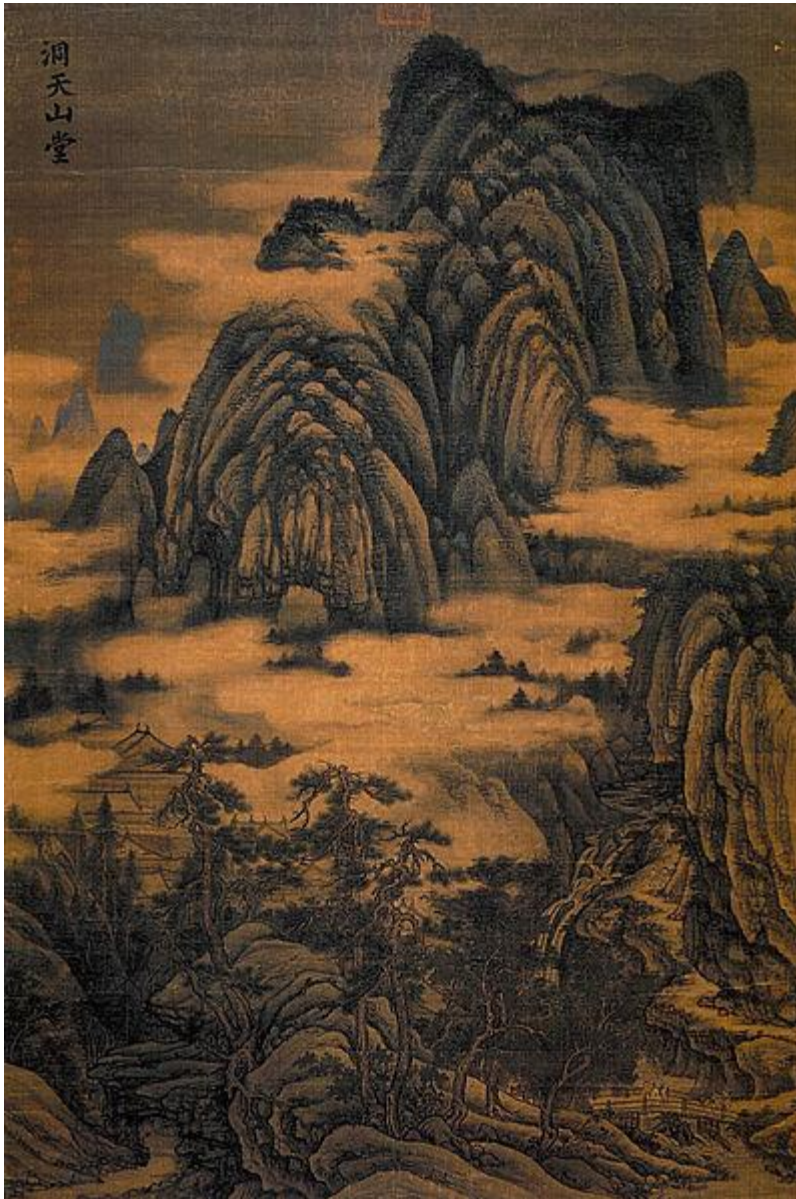
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Painting by **Dong Yuan** (c. 934–962).

A BRIEF HISTORY

Tang Dynasty

By the late Tang Dynasty (618-906), landscape painting had evolved into an independent genre that embodied the universal longing of learned men to escape their everyday world to commune with nature.

As the Tang dynasty disintegrated, the concept of withdrawal into the natural world became a major thematic focus of poets and painters.

Faced with the failure of the human order, learned men sought permanence within the natural world, retreating into the mountains to find a sanctuary from the chaos of dynastic collapse.

“Modes of landscape painting then took shape in the Five Dynasties period (907-960) with variations based on geographic distinctions. For example, [Jing Hao \(荊浩\)](#) and [Guan Tong \(關仝\)](#) depicted the drier and monumental peaks to the north while [Dong Yuan \(董源\)](#) and [Juran \(巨然\)](#) represented the lush and rolling hills to the south in Jiangnan (south of the Yangtze River).

<http://www.chinaonlinemuseum.com/painting.php>



Landscape painting by **Dong Yuan** (ca 934 – ca 962) - a painter active in the Southern Tang Kingdom of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period.

Song Dynasty 960 - 1279

During the Song Dynasty (960–1279), landscapes of more subtle expression appeared.

Immeasurable distances were conveyed through the use of blurred outlines, mountain contours disappearing into the mist, and impressionistic treatment of natural phenomena.

There was a quality of both solemnity and tranquillity.

Travellers Among Mountains and Streams

Fan Kuan

1254–1322 A.D.

hanging scroll

ink and colours on silk

155.3 × 74.4 cm

[Landscape Painting in Chinese Art | Thematic Essay | Heilbrunn ...](#)

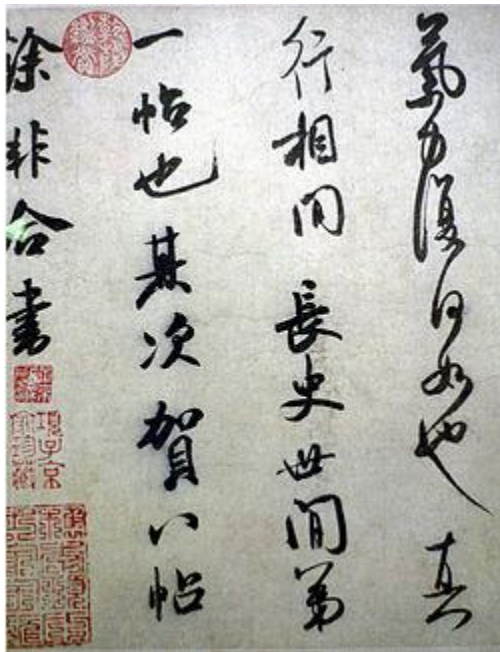




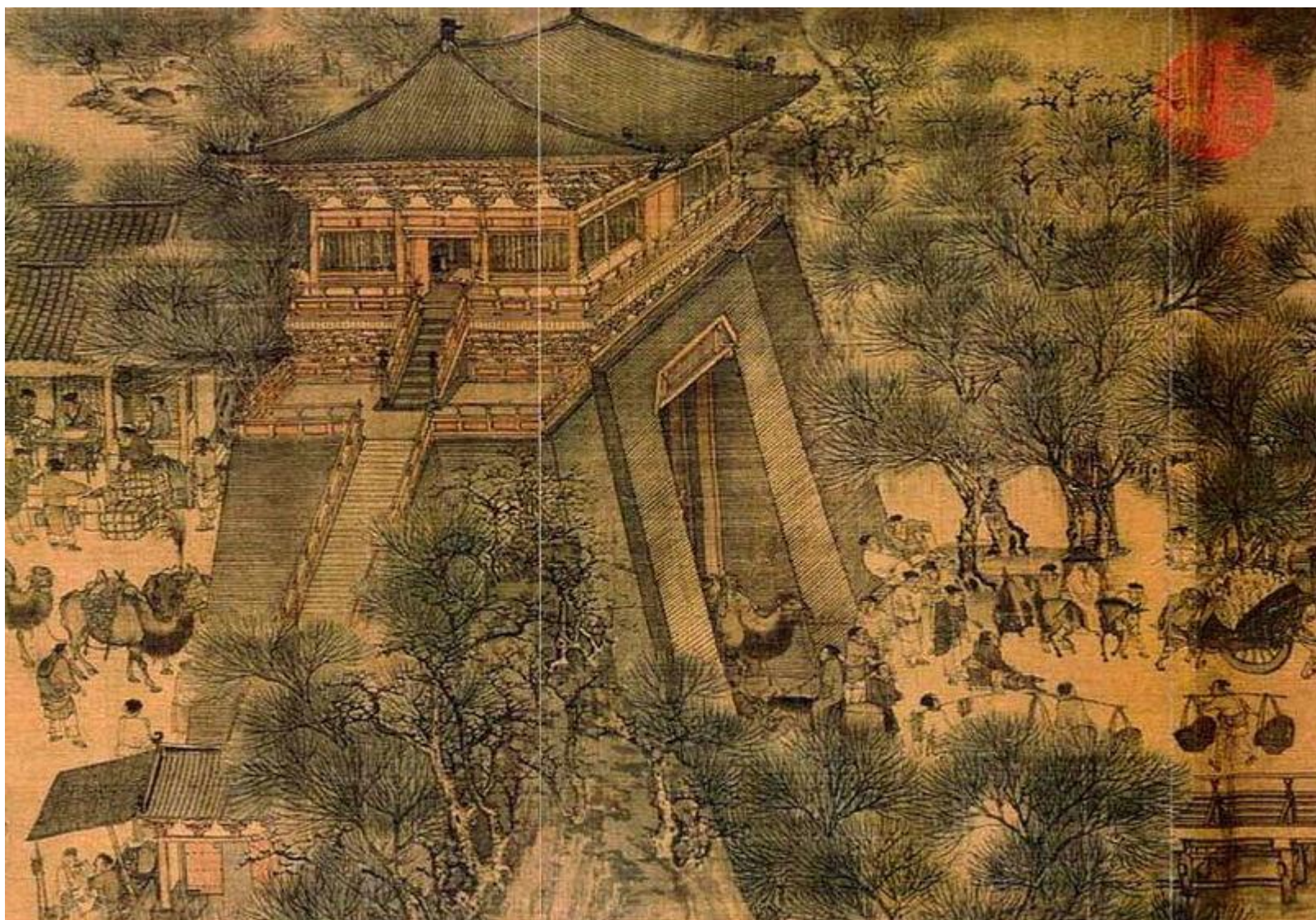
Mountains and Pines in Spring (Part) Mi Fu
(1052-1109 Song Dynasty)

Mi Fu (1052-1109), an 11th-century scholar-artist. He was instrumental in formulating the literati (wenrenhua) theory that the value of a painting lies not in its simulation of nature but in its transformation of nature into a vehicle that expresses the character and mood of the painter.

For centuries this theory shaped the style of the scholar-amateur literati artists who worked in ink only. They scorned mere representation.

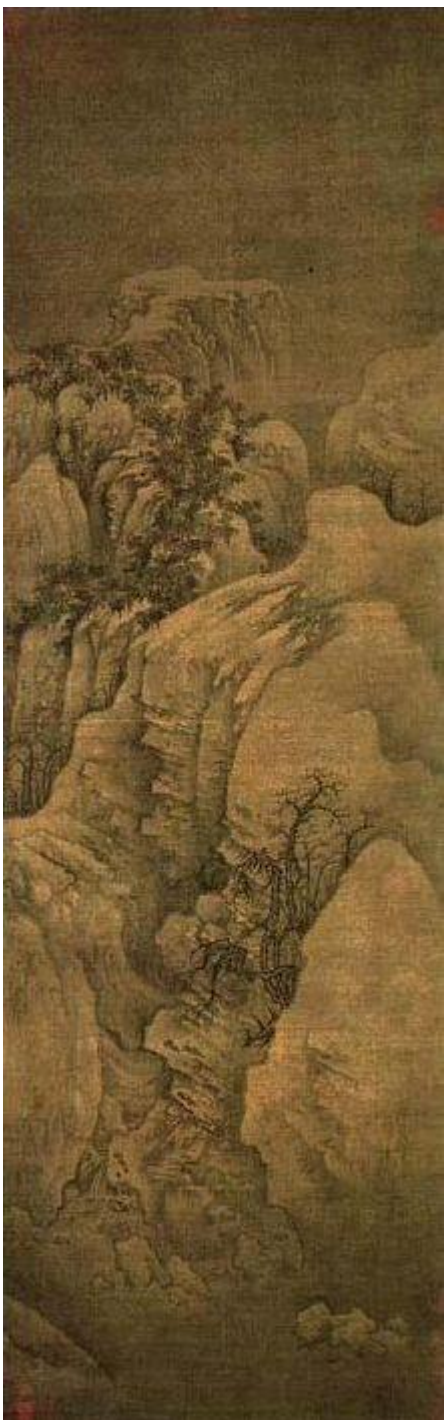


Calligraphy by Mi Fu



Detail of *Along the River During Qingming Festival*" Zhang Zeduan
early 12th century

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhang_Zeduan

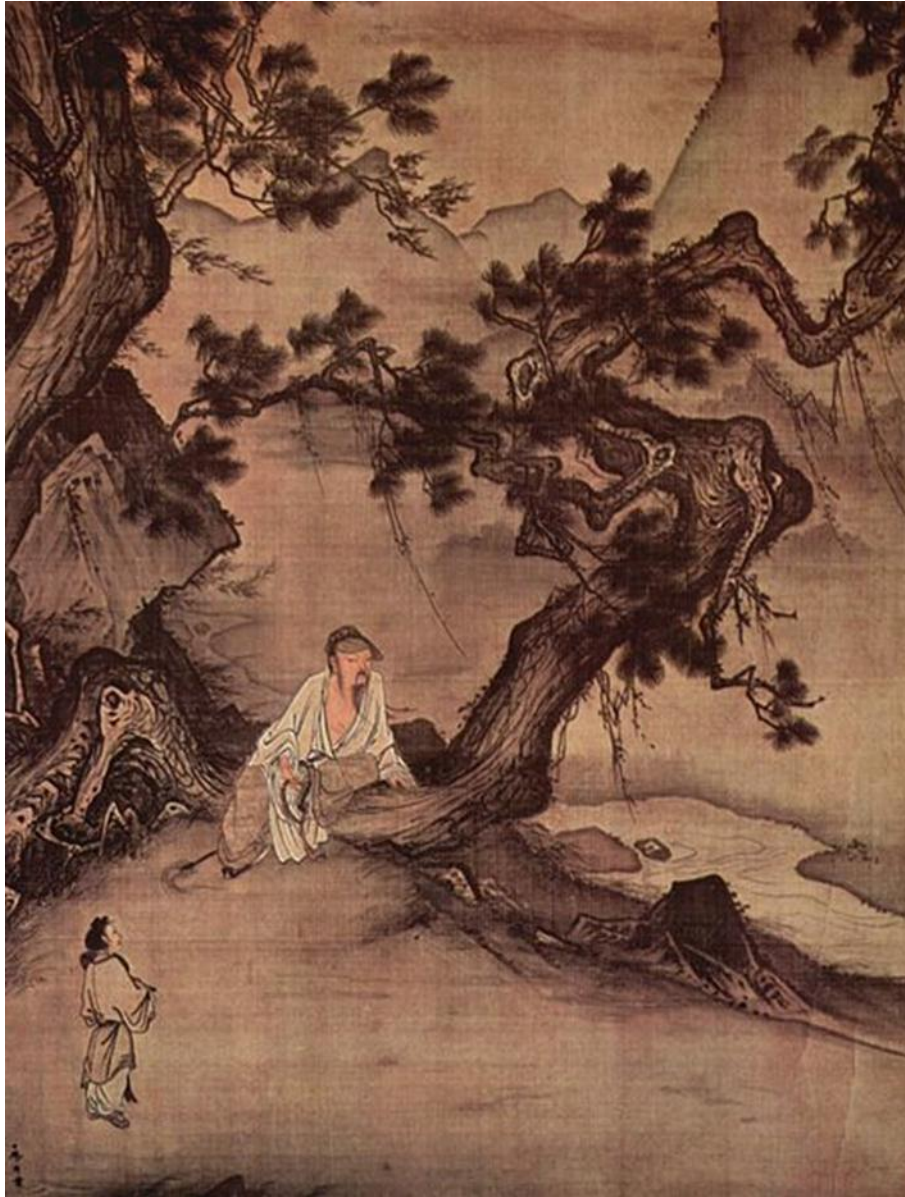


Guo Xi, a **Northern Song** Dynasty painter, has been well known for depicting mountains, rivers and forests in winter.

This piece from the 11th century shows a scene of deep and serene mountain valley covered with snow and several old trees struggling to survive on precipitous cliffs.

Guo Xi, a representative painter of landscape painting in the Northern Song dynasty, has been well known for depicting mountains, rivers and forests in winter. This piece shows a scene of deep and serene mountain valley covered with snow and several old trees struggling to survive on precipitous cliffs.

Song Dynasty 960 - 1279



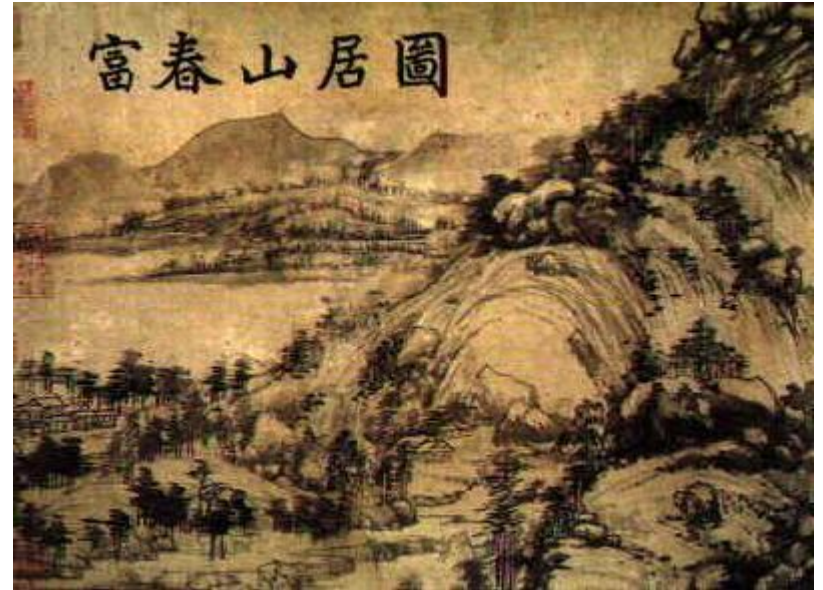
Listening to the Wind by Ma Lin, 1246.

Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty

1279 - 1368

With the fall of the Song dynasty in 1279, and the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty by the Mongol conquerors, many court and literary artists retreated from social life, and returned to nature, through landscape paintings.

Under this Mongol dynasty, many educated Chinese were barred from government service, the model of the Song literati retreat evolved into a full-blown alternative culture as this disenfranchised elite transformed their estates into sites for literary gatherings and other cultural pursuits.



Huang Gongwang

Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty 1279 - 1368

Proud of their status as amateurs, scholar-artists created a new, distinctly personal form of painting in which expressive calligraphic brush lines were the chief means employed to animate their subjects.

Another distinguishing feature of what came to be known as scholar-artists' painting is its learned references to the past.

The choice of a particular antique style immediately linked a work to the personality and ideals of an earlier painter or calligrapher. Style became a language by which to convey one's beliefs.



Huang Gongwang

Yuan Dynasty 1279 - 1368

Wu Zhen lived the life of a recluse.

He was not very famous or successful during his lifetime, but in the Ming period he came to be designated one of the Four Great Masters of the late Yuan dynasty and his style was favored by many Ming painters, most notably Shen Zhou (1427–1500).

Wu was fond of doing "ink plays," and his drawing shows a cartoonlike simplicity and directness.

Accompanying the hermit-fisherman, a symbol of the Yuan unemployed scholar-artist, is Wu Zhen's poem:

*Red leaves west of the village reflect evening rays,
Yellow reeds on a sandy bank cast early moon shadows.
Lightly stirring his oar,
Thinking of returning home,
He puts aside his fishing pole and will catch no more.*



Fisherman

ca. 1350

Wu Zhen (1280–1354)

Handscroll

ink on paper 24.8 x
43.2 cm

Yuan Dynasty 1279 - 1368

Going beyond representation, scholar-artists imbued their paintings with personal feelings.

Painting was no longer about the description of the visible world; it became a means of conveying the inner landscape of the artist's heart and mind.

This immediately distinguished their art from the colourful, illusionistic style of painting preferred by court artists and professionals. Such craftsmen might be skilled in capturing an individual's likeness but they could never hope to convey the deeper aspects of a man's character.

The Simple Retreat

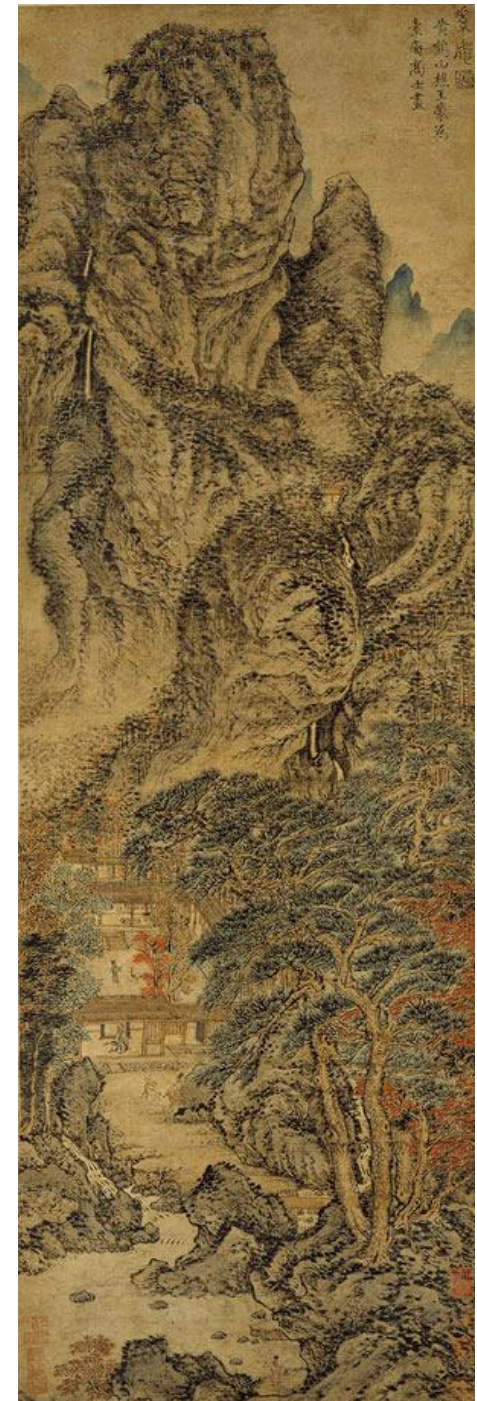
ca. 1370

Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385)

Hanging scroll ink and color on paper

(136 cmx 45 cm)

Signed: "The Yellow Crane Mountain Woodcutter Wang Meng painted this for the lofty scholar of the Simple Retreat"





The Simple Retreat

ca. 1370

Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385)

Hanging scroll ink and color on paper
(136 cmx 45 cm)

Signed: "The Yellow Crane Mountain
Woodcutter Wang Meng painted this
for the lofty scholar of the Simple Retreat"

“**Wang Meng** depicted scholars in their retreats, creating imaginary portraits that capture not the physical likeness of a person or place but rather an interior world of shared associations and ideals. He presents the master of *The Simple Retreat* as a gentleman recluse.

Seated at the front gate of a rustic hermitage, he is shown holding a magic fungus, as a servant and two deer approach from the woods. In the courtyard, another servant offers a sprig of herbs to a crane.

The auspicious Daoist imagery of fungus, crane, and deer as well as the archaic simplicity of the figures and dwelling evoke a dreamlike vision of paradise.

In creating this visionary world, Wang transformed the monumental landscape imagery of the tenth-century master Dong Yuan.

Rocks and trees, animated with fluttering texture strokes, dots, colour washes, and daubs of bright mineral pigment, pulse with a calligraphic energy barely contained within the traditional landscape structure. Encircled by this energized mountainscape, the retreat becomes a reservoir of calm at the vortex of a world whose dynamic configurations embody nature's creative potential but may also suggest the ever-shifting terrain of political power.”

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/L.1997.24.8>

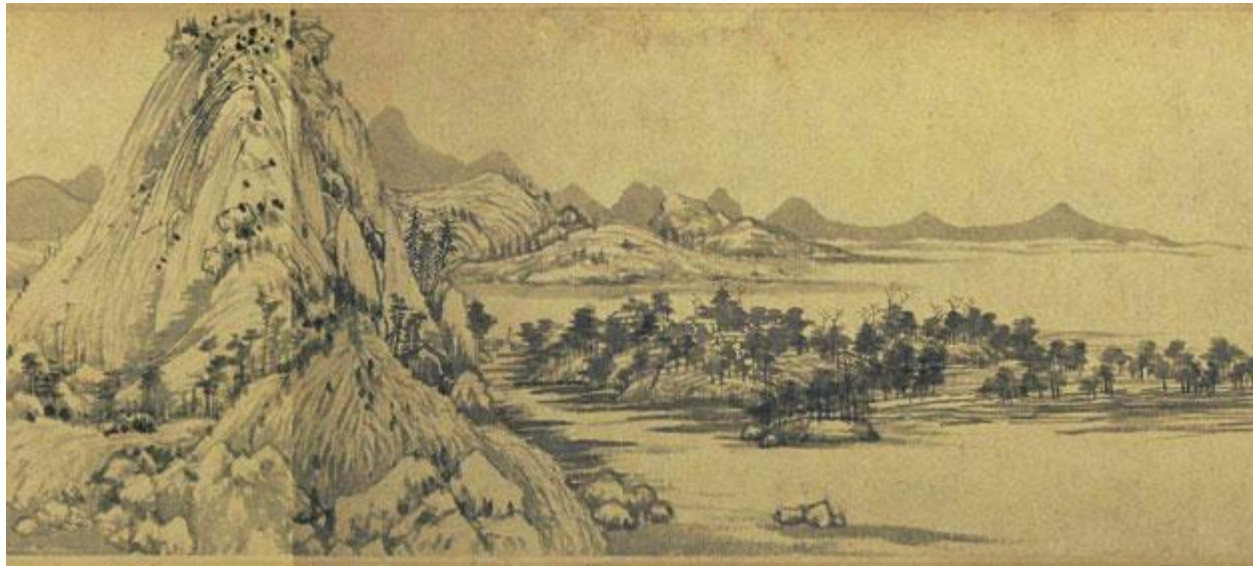
Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty 1279 - 1368

Zhao Mengfu was a scholar-artist during the Yuan Dynasty. His rejection of the refined, gentle brushwork of his era in favour of the cruder style of the 8th century is considered to have brought about a revolution that created the modern Chinese landscape painting.

The later Yuan dynasty is characterized by the work of the so-called **Four Great Masters**.

The most famous of these was **Huang Gongwang** (1269-1354) whose cool and restrained landscapes were admired by contemporaries, and by the Chinese literati painters of later centuries.

Another of great influence was **Ni Zan** (1301-1374), who frequently arranged his compositions with a strong and distinct foreground and background, but left the middle-ground as an empty expanse. This scheme was frequently to be adopted by painters.



Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains detail Huang Gongwang c. 1350



Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains



Wind among the Trees on the Riverbank 1363
 Ni Zan (1306–1374)
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
 23 1/4 x 12 1/4 in. (59.1 x 31.1 cm)

Yuan Dynasty painter-poet **Ni Zan** painted virtually the same composition his entire life—a grove of trees on a rocky foreground shore juxtaposed with distant mountains—and the subtle variations in each iteration reveal changes in his circumstances and state of mind.

This desolate landscape, done for a fellow scholar-artist, **Yu Kan**, undoubtedly reflects Ni's bereavement at the recent death of his wife and his growing sense of isolation.

His poem reads:

On the riverbank the evening tide begins to fall;
 The frost-covered leaves of the windblown grove are sparse.
 I lean on my staff—the brushwood gate is closed and silent;
 I think of my friend—the glow is nearly gone from the hills.



Woods and Valleys of Mount Yu
 1372



Having lost or given away everything he ever owned, he did his best to forget his worries. He roamed the lakes and mountains, leading a recluse's life.

Woods and Valleys of Mount Yu, executed two years before **Ni Zan's** death, expresses the painter's contentment in the life of a recluse. The poem ends with the lines:

*We watch the clouds and daub with our brushes
We drink wine and write poems.
The joyous feelings of this day
Will linger long after we have parted.
The dry but tender brushwork is aloof and restrained.
There is a tranquil luminous quality about the painting
that makes it one of the most fully realized works of the
artist's later years.*

Woods and Valleys of Mount Yu 1372
Ni Zan (1306–1374)
Yuan dynasty (1271–1368),
Hanging scroll
ink on paper 95.3 x 35.9 cm

Ming Dynasty 1368 - 1644

During the Ming Dynasty , when Han Chinese rule was restored, **court artists** produced conservative images that revived the Song metaphor for the state as a well-ordered imperial garden, while **literati painters** pursued self-expressive goals through the stylistic language of Yuan **scholar-artists**.

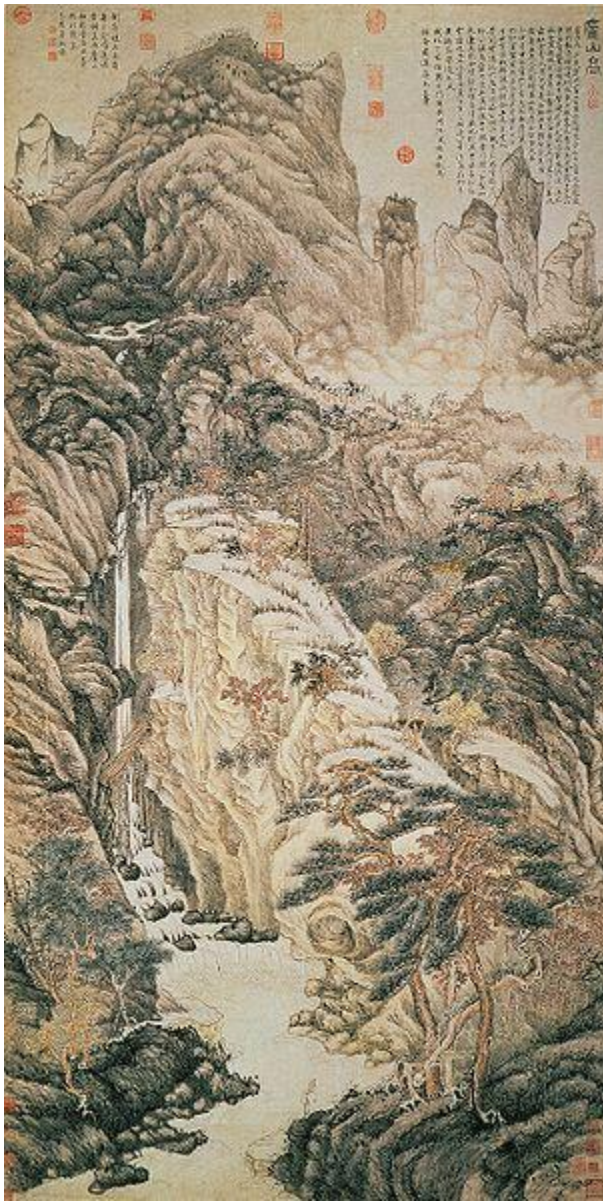
Shen Zhou (1427–1509), the patriarch of the **Wu** school of painting centered in the cosmopolitan city of Suzhou, and his preeminent follower **Wen Zhengming** (1470–1559) exemplified Ming **literati** ideals.

Both men chose to reside at home rather than follow official careers, devoting themselves to self-cultivation through a lifetime spent reinterpreting the styles of Yuan scholar-painters.

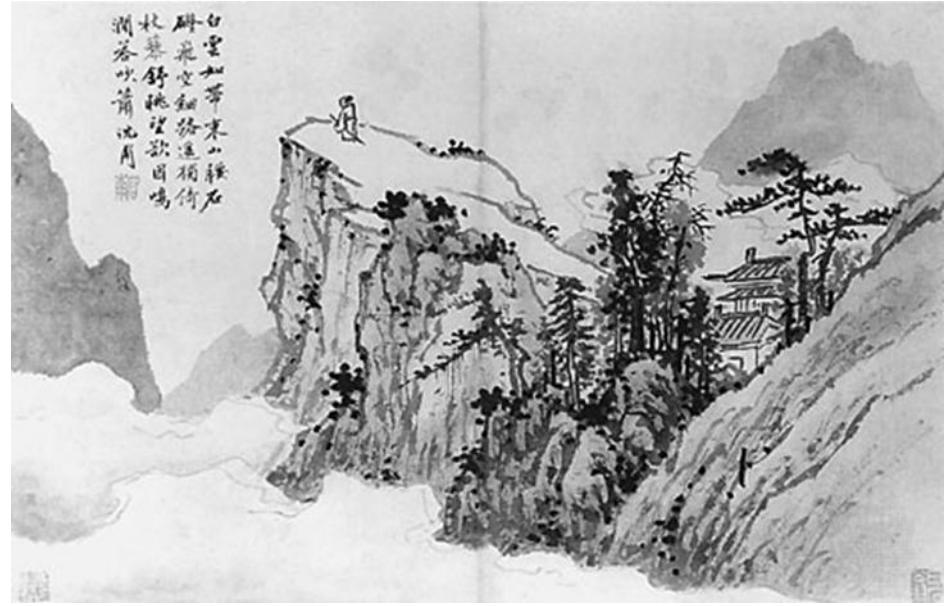


Wen Zhengming
Old Cypress and Rock, 1550

Handscroll
ink on paper
26.04 x 48.9 cm



Lofty Mt. Lu 1467 by Shen Zhou



Painting and poem by Shen Zhou 1427–1509) **Ming Dynasty**

Poet on a Mountain c. 1500.

*White clouds encircle the mountain
waist like a sash,
Stone steps mount high into the void
where the narrow path leads far.
Alone, leaning on my rustic staff I gaze
idly into the distance.
My longing for the notes of a flute is
answered in the murmurings of the
gorge.*

Qing (Manchu) Dynasty 1644 - 1911

The early Qing dynasty developed in two main strands: the **Orthodox** school, and the Individualist painters,

both of which followed the theories of **Dong Qichang**, but emphasized very different aspects.

The **Four Wangs** including **Wang Jian** (1598-1677) and **Wang Shimin** (1592-1680), were particularly renowned in the **Orthodox** school, and sought inspiration in recreating the past styles, especially the technical skills in brushstrokes and calligraphy of ancient masters.

The younger **Wang Yuanqi** (1642-1715) ritualized the approach of engaging with and drawing inspiration from a work of an ancient master. His own works were often annotated with his theories of how his painting relates to the master's model.



Landscape after Juran Wang Jian (1598-1677)

Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

The **Individualist** painters included **Bada Shanren** (1626-1705). They drew more from the revolutionary ideas of transcending the tradition to achieve an original individualistic styles.

As the techniques of colour printing were perfected, illustrated manuals on the art of painting began to be published. **The Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden**, a five-volume work first published in 1679, has been in use as a technical textbook for artists and students ever since.

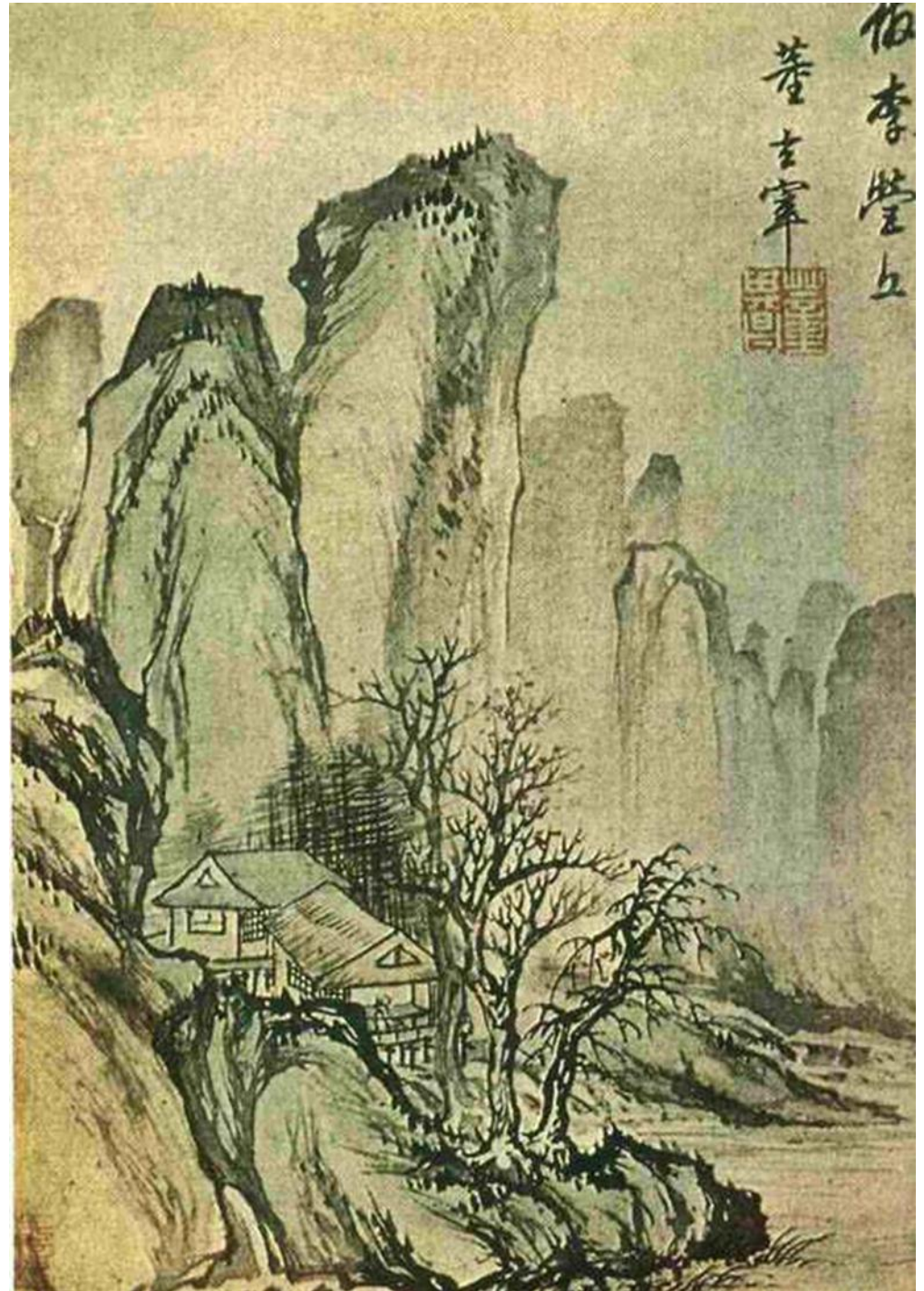


Dong Qichang *Wanluan Thatched Hall* 1597
hanging scroll ink and light colours on paper

Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

Morally charged images of
reclusion
remained a
potent political
symbol during
the early years of
the Qing
Dynasty, a period
in which many
Ming loyalists
lived in self-
enforced
retirement.

Wolf Mountain Dong Qichang Date Unknown





Wooded Mountain at Dusk Kun Can (detail)
1666 Qing Dynasty



Embarking on the journey
HUANG Yi
(1744–1801)
hanging scroll, ink on paper
59.4 x 26.8cm AGNSW



1664 by the Qing Dynasty painter, **Kun Can**

Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

The poem reads:

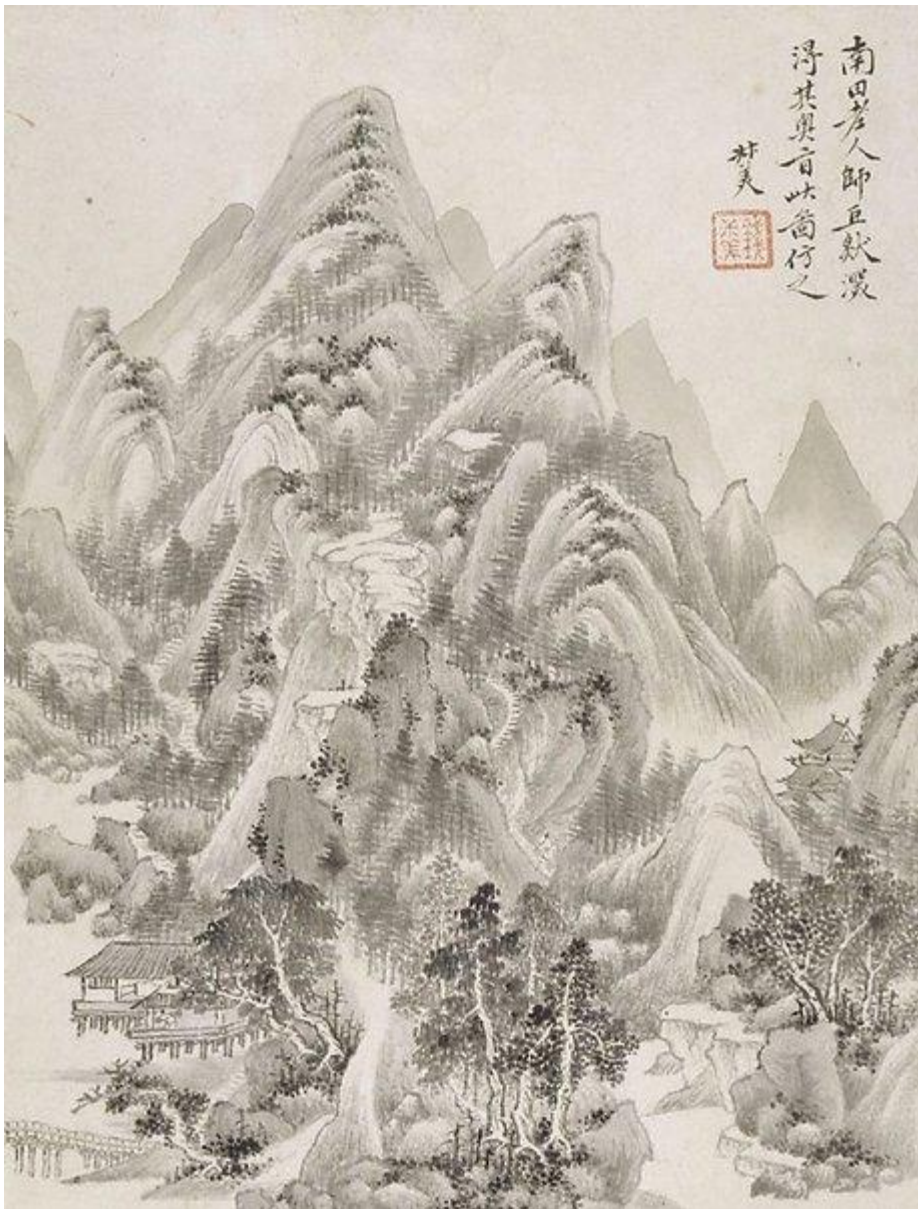
*Thin mists fade at sunset,
The smooth lake ripples like green jade.
The autumn is arriving, from the
mountain ridges where tumi [a Chinese
wild bush] grows,
A man is walking across the bridge.
The colours of the trees block the view
of the serene sky,
The ringing bells indicate an old temple
afar.
The westerly wind blows through one's
hair,
It is time to sail off, rowing a boat made
of magnolia.*

A poem by the later artist Wang Zhen (1867-1938) appears on the side of the scroll. Wang's poem is written on the mount and is an allusion to his Buddhist faith:

*'Strolling along the Western banks of the stream,
With the autumnal clouds filling the gully,
While hearing the sounds of bells fading into the clouds
One suddenly realizes the truth of Chan Buddhism.
Inscribed by Wang Zhen, white dragon hermit, in the year renxu.
[1922]'*



The autumn mountain at sunset
1735 **FANG Shishu**
(1692–1751) Qing dynasty
hanging scroll; ink and colour on paper
124 x 61 cm image
227 x 82 x 92 cm scroll AGNSW



Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

QIAN DU

1763–1844

Landscape after Juran

album leaf

ink on paper

31.7 x 24.2cm image



The isolation of the figure in this painting by [WANG Jianzhang](#), the mountain, and the magic fungus, all evoke the Daoist idea of individuals seeking spiritual freedom and immortality in the great mountains.

The poem reads:

*Trees on the cliff cage clouds, half moist.
The brushwood gate beside a steam is
newly opened.
Facing the dawn, I seek for a poem, all
alone;
As I gather fungus the sun sets, and I
return.'*

Returning Home from Gathering Fungus

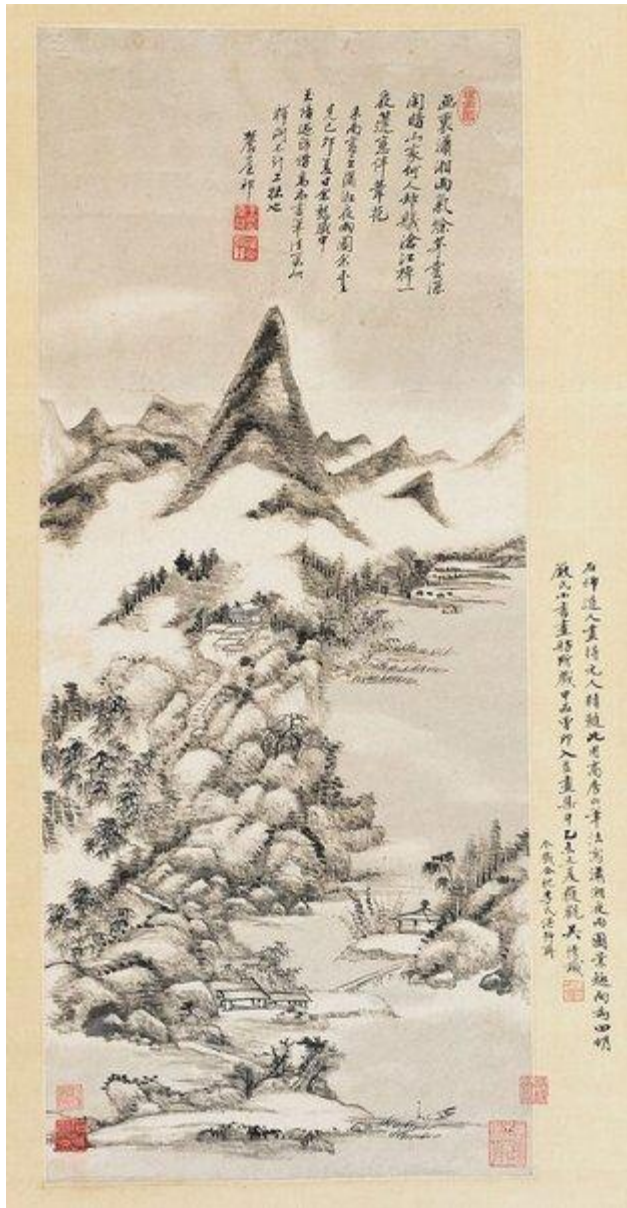
1628

Qing

hanging scroll; ink and slight colour on paper

85.4 x 51.2cm

AGNSW



Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

Night Rain at Xiao and Xiang River

WANG Yuanqi (1642–1715)

1699

Medium

hanging scroll, ink on paper

81.3 cm x 34.5 cm



Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

River and sky shrouded in the mist of sunset rain

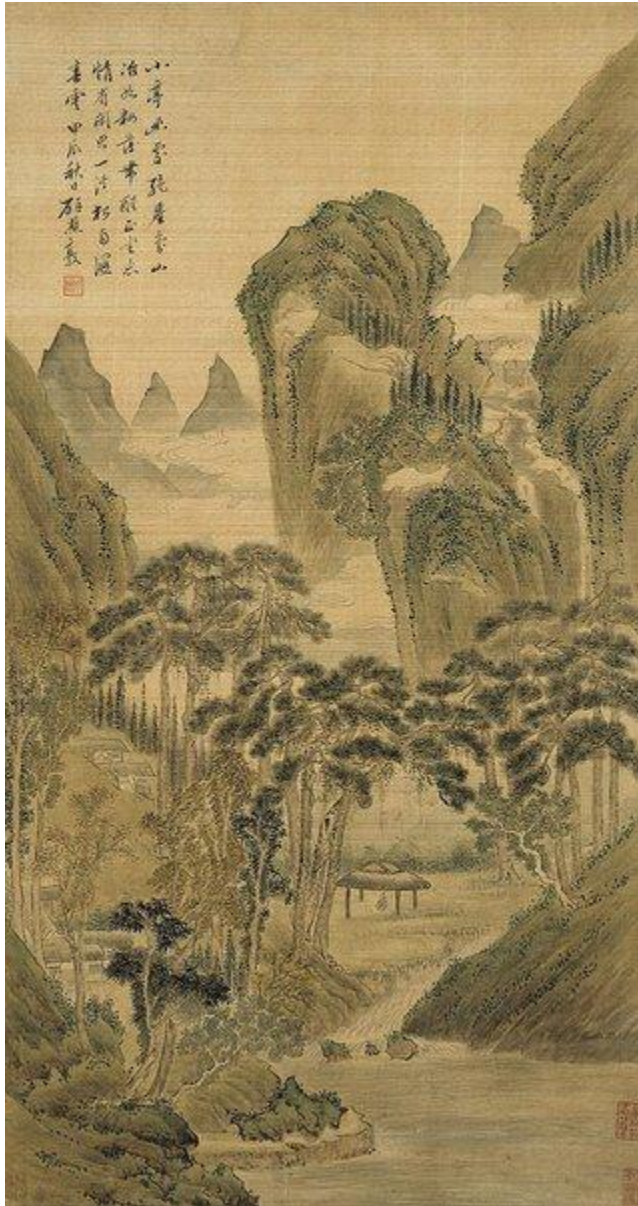
Kangxi 1662- 1722

hanging scroll

ink and colour on paper

57.8 x 22.9cm

Art Gallery Society of New South Wales



Qing Dynasty 1644 - 1911

ZHANG Peidun (China 1772–1846

1844

hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk

82.5 x 44 cm

Once poetic inscriptions had become an integral part of a composition, the recipient of the painting or a later appreciator would often add an inscription as his own "response." Thus, a painting was not finalized when an artist set down his brush, but it would continue to evolve as later owners and admirers appended their own inscriptions or seals.

Most such inscriptions take the form of colophons placed on the borders of a painting or on the endpapers of a hand-scroll or album; others might be added directly on to the painting. In this way, a painting was embellished with a record of its transmission that spans more than a thousand years. To "read" a Chinese painting is to enter into a dialogue with the past; the act of unrolling a scroll or leafing through an album provides a further, physical connection to the work. An intimate experience, it is one that has been shared and repeated over the centuries.



Three Friends of Winter **Ma Yuan** (c.1160-1225)

A contemporary Chinese artist who is working in the classical Chinese landscape genre but in a contemporary manner is **HUANG YAN**.

Born 1966



Huang Yan
Chinese Landscape: Tattoo No. 6
1999 - Color photograph
1 ft. 7 in. x 2 ft. - © Sigg Collection

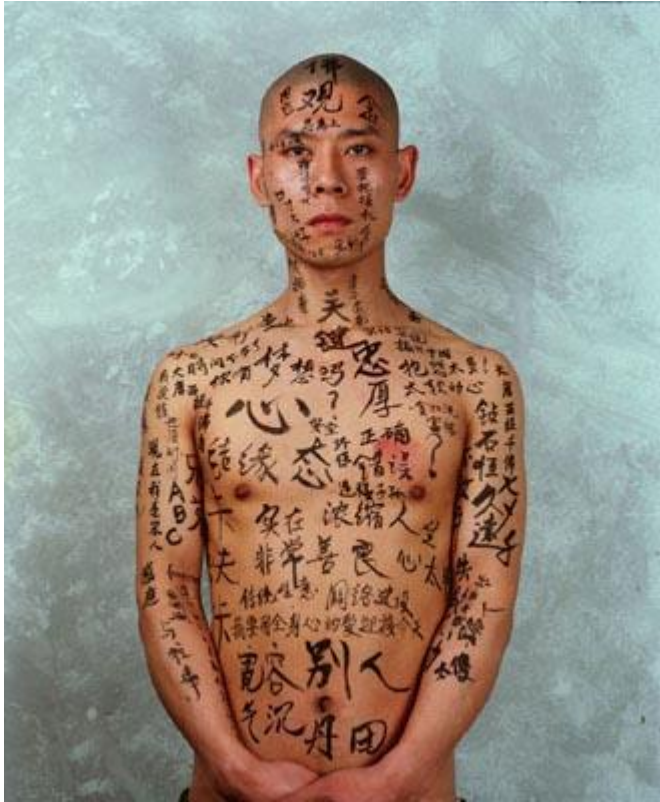
He is particularly known for his series of landscape on body works which are classical Chinese landscape paintings directly painted on the body or face of the artist.

Refer to the end of the powerpoint for more on Huang Yan.

<http://www.galerieloft.com/huang-yan%E9%BB%84%E5%B2%A9#>



A contemporary Chinese artist who is working with Chinese calligraphy is **ZHANG HUAN**.



1/2 TEXT 1998.

C-type photograph on Fuji archival paper

124.46 x 104.14 cm

A contemporary Chinese Australian artist who is working in the classical Chinese landscape genre but in a contemporary manner is GUAN WEI .

Born 1957, Beijing, China



Unfamiliar Land
Guan Wei 2006





Guan Wei - "Bird Island No.3", 2011 - Acrylic on linen - 65 x 80 cm. - Courtesy of the artist and Chan Hampe Galleries.
 "Bird Island" an exhibition of recent works by Guan Wei on view through August 6th at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore.



Guan Wei - "Bird Island No.2", 2011
 Acrylic on linen - 65 x 80 cm. Courtesy
 of the artist & Chan Hampe Galleries.
 At the Raffles Hotel in Singapore.



Another contemporary Chinese artist who is working with Chinese calligraphy is **XU BING**.

Born 1955, Chongqing, China Currently lives in New York City

Xu Bing is a contemporary Chinese artist associated with the New Wave of Fine Arts movement. Since its inception in 1985, the movement has produced art denouncing political oppression.

A book from the sky 1987-91 is composed of bound books covering the floor. Reams of paper are draped overhead, and recall the daily papers in China which are pasted up for all to read. These reams display thousands of characters that were carved by Xu Bing and then printed by a traditional Chinese press in Beijing. Paradoxically, all of the characters were invented by the artist.



XU BING

2011

The work infers that the aim of printing, which is to spread knowledge, has been subverted.

This work critically questions the notion of power and the collapse of political dialogue through the written word — a symbol of history and culture in China.

This magnificent installation symbolises aspects of the old and the emerging China. While the medium and technique are traditionally Chinese, the scale and intent of the work align it with contemporary artistic practice.



A book from the sky 1987-91:

Woodblock print, wood, leather, ivory

Four banners: 103 x 6 x 8.5cm (each,

folded):19 boxes: 49.2 x 33.5 x 9.8cm (each, containing four books)



Carved wooden printing block used in making *book from the sky*
http://www.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid253_en.html

Xu Bing, spent long periods studying traditional Chinese printing methods. He decided to use a typographic style perfected during the [Song Dynasty](#) (960-1279 CE) giving it an archaic quality. He also spent much time researching calligraphy, ancient characters, and the history of books before beginning the work.

Xu Bing originally titled his creation *A Mirror to Analyse the World: The Last Book of the End of the Century* (Xi shi jian - shiji mo zhuan) but artists and critics came to refer to it as *Tianshu*, which can be translated from Mandarin either as "book from the sky" or, more literally, "heavenly book" (Doran, 2001). <http://teachartwiki.wikispaces.com/Book+from+the+Sky--Xu+Bing>

The White Rabbit Collection is one of the world's largest and most significant collections of contemporary Chinese art. Founded by Kerr and Judith Neilson, it focuses on works produced after 2000.

30 Balfour St Chippendale Sydney NSW

Thursday – Sunday

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

[White Rabbit Gallery](#)

Addendum

Saturday, 23 April 2011

Two pieces of a torn 660-year-old painting held by Taiwan and China will be reunited for the first time in centuries at an exhibition at Taiwan's national museum, in a sign of warming ties between the rivals.

The main part of *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*

by Chinese landscape painter Huang Gongwang, has been stored in Taipei's Palace Museum since 1949, when the two sides split during a civil war. The other part of the 20-foot-long painting will be shipped from a museum in China's Zhejiang province. The 40-day exhibition is seen as a show of support by China for Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou.



Handscrolls –are used for horizontal paintings and calligraphy. Although often displayed fully opened in modern museums, this format was traditionally viewed section by section, unrolling and rerolling a portion at a time, moving from right to left. Separate pieces of paper are often appended to the mounting after the work of art (which can be on numerous sheets of paper or silk arranged end to end) to provide space for later viewers to inscribe commentaries. The entire mounting is attached to a wooden dowel at the end on the far left, on which the handscroll is wound. The right edge of the handscroll typically has a length of woven silk to serve as a wrapper when it is closed, as well as a ribbon and clasp to secure the roll.



Ming Dynasty, dated AD 1544

The scroll begins with a calligraphic frontispiece, written in large seal script. Frontispieces like these were in use as early as the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368). It is followed by a small painting which depicts the Hall set within a garden by the riverside. This was a subject that had long been associated with the painters of the Wu school. The scroll continues with the *Zhoujintang ji*, a piece of calligraphy written by Chen in running script.

Hanging scroll—This format is used for vertical compositions. The completed image is mounted onto a paper backing, then framed with decorative silk borders. The silk mounting is attached to a wooden rod at the bottom to provide the necessary weight, so that the whole will hang smoothly on a wall. This rod also helps to roll up the painting for storage. A hanging scroll is suspended from a cord tied to a thin wooden strip attached to the top of the silk mounting. In Japan, paintings are traditionally mounted with more borders of different colored material than in China. Furthermore, two hanging silk streamers are suspended from the tops of the hanging scroll mountings, a practice that is probably an archaic holdover derived from early banners.



The autumn mountain at sunset
1735 FANG Shishu
(1692–1751) Qing dynasty
hanging scroll; ink and colour on paper
124 x 61 cm image
227 x 82 x 92 cm scroll AGNSW

Album—are made up of relatively small square, rectangular, or fan-shaped paintings or calligraphy mounted onto individual pages and then assembled in a booklike structure (viewed from right cover to left). Collections such as this can be assembled by artists or collectors and are organized according to a specific artist, period, or subject matter.



Landscape in 'boneless' style by **Hu Youkun**, an album leaf painting

Fan—Traditionally, oval fans made of stiffened silk mounted on a bamboo stick were used in China. Folding fans, made of folded paper braced by thin bamboo sticks, are thought to have been developed in Japan and Korea and then exported to China, probably during the Ming Dynasty.

The surfaces of these fans were often decorated with small-scale paintings or calligraphic inscriptions. To better preserve the work of art, fans are often removed from their bamboo frames and mounted onto album leaves.



Although this painting is by the artist **Wang Hui**, the influence of Ni Zan (1301-74) is clear. The clump of trees, the empty pavilion in the foreground and the horizontal strokes and ink dots depicting the mountains are all typical of the Yuan master. In fact, Wang Hui comments: 'All of Ni Zan but not all of Wang Hui is contained in this'. Wang Hui was one of a group of painters known as the Four Wangs: orthodox masters of the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Linear perspective was introduced by Europeans. The Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci criticized Chinese art in the 16th century for its lack of perspective and shading, saying it looked "dead" and didn't have "any life at all." The Chinese for their part criticized oil painting brought by the Jesuits as being too lifelike and lacking expression.

Sculpture, which involved physical labour and was not a task performed by gentlemen, never was considered a fine art in China.

http://elearning.npm.gov.tw/chinese_paintings_en/L01/index.htm