

Chinese Calligraphy and Ink Painting

Line: A line is the brushstroke of paint. It can include flowing curved lines, straight or angled geometric lines, or free-flowing contour lines. In Chinese calligraphy, the line helps express the "feeling" of the character. The Chinese character should express a flowing movement. Chinese ink painting uses the line element to demonstrate the same characteristic feeling of movement.

Value: Value is the high-to-low contrast that is seen in Chinese calligraphy and paintings. The flow and angle of the brushstroke creates the graded dark to light shadings found in good Chinese calligraphy and ink paintings. Chinese bamboo painting also uses the high-to-low value of ink color to create the value contrast characteristic of this style of painting.

Balance: Balance refers to the use of the canvas in a pleasing symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial layout in the completed work. Chinese calligraphy and ink painting demonstrate balance through the use of shaded values in the brushstroke, shapes that are appealing to the eye, repetition of similar shapes, and use of "white space." Chinese calligraphy and ink painting differs from many examples of Western Art in that it does not use all of the canvas to apply the art.

Composition: Composition is the sum of the principles of art that create the mass and space of the canvas into a finished work of art. A completed selection of Chinese calligraphy or ink painting will show a pleasing line in a flowing brushstroke, a graded shaded value in stroke color, and balance of line, shape, and space that is appropriate to the type of symmetry used.