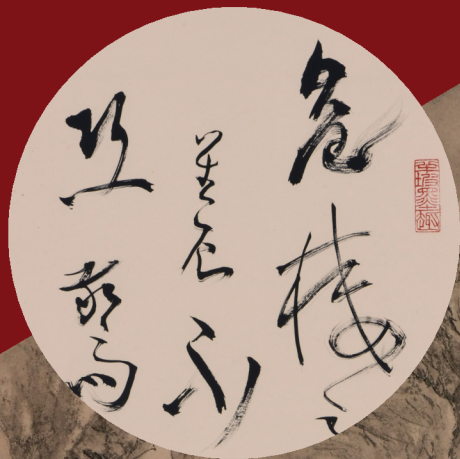




# Brushwork

Ink Art in the Stanley Museum of Art  
In collaboration with ARTH:3250  
Brushwork in Chinese Art  
Fall 2024



Calligraphic inscription in Chinese characters, likely a signature or title, with a red seal.

**All images courtesy of the Stanley Museum of Art**

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**Presenters:** Ollie Smith, Lila Eggerling-Boeck, Luke Krchak, Anna Jolie, Dana Larsen

**Introductory essay:** Amy S. Huang, Hannah Lang, Allana Lopez

**Label texts:** all class members

**Pamphlet design:** Alex Leonard, Jennie Villanueva

This exhibition is made possible by the Stanley Museum of Art and co-sponsored by the School of Art, Art History, and Design and the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies.

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Please visit our online exhibition catalogue at  
<https://amyshuang.wixsite.com/brushworkiowa/>



# Brushwork:

## *Ink Art in the Stanley Museum of Art*

Brushwork is at the heart of ink art from East Asia due to the main tool used by painters and calligraphers alike—the soft brush with fine tip known as Chinese calligraphy brush or Japanese sumi brush. This exhibition represents works of ink art in the collection of the Stanley Museum of Art, from seventeenth-century landscape painting, calligraphy and rubbing, Zen (or Chan) painting, and modern ink painting from the twentieth century. Chinese brushwork is a great lineage of artistic practice and canon in which everything from the tastes of the time to valued styles are preserved, rearranged, transformed, and adapted. Over the centuries, artists copied the works of old masters and then evolved their own distinct styles, a tradition that created centuries of legacies built on the techniques and aesthetic qualities of those who came before.

This exhibition is a student-led project. Members of ARTH:3250 Brushwork in Chinese Art (Fall 2024) created interpretive texts, artistic responses, and an exhibition catalogue. Given the course's focus on Chinese Art, the exhibition is anchored in works by Chinese artists but also includes a work from Japan that demonstrates the strong cultural ties between the two areas in art and religion. Moreover, it explores the legacy of ink art at the University of Iowa. Many of the artworks on view were created or donated by individuals associated with the university, including Hu Hung-shu, Ramon Lim, Nancy and Frank Seiberling and Virginia Myers. To emphasize Iowa's active community of ink artists, the exhibition catalogue also includes student artworks that respond to the traditions and practices of Chinese ink art. In this way, the project highlights the local living legacy of Chinese ink art.

This exhibition is made possible by the Stanley Museum of Art and co-sponsored by the School of Art, Art History, and Design and the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies. Our gratitude goes to Kimberly Datchuk, Sayuri Hemann, and the team at the SMA.

# Landscapes



Huang Xiangjian  
(Chinese, 1609-1673)  
*Scenery on the San-tu Pass*  
Dated 1657  
Hanging scroll  
77 x 22 1/2 in.  
Gift of Nancy Seiberling  
In memory of Frank Seiberling  
1991.7

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This landscape painting illustrates part of Huang Xiangjian's journey to reunite with his parents who were stranded in the hinterlands of Southeastern China during wartime. Part of a group of writings and paintings commemorating this difficult journey, this painting serves as a personal narrative and a broader commentary on the politically challenging time between the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Huang can often be seen holding an umbrella in his paintings of this subject matter. Here the artist uses textured brushstrokes to show scraggy rock formations that communicate the foreignness of the landscape and the urgency of his personal mission. This painting honors Huang Xiangjian's heroic journey and dedication to his family.

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# Calligraphy



Ramon Lim (Chinese American, born in the Philippines, 1933)

*Overnight in a Mountain Temple; Farewell to a Friend; Great Squares Show No Corners (illustrated)*

2007; 2010; 2018

46 1/2 x 22 in.; 37 x 19 in.; 36 x 16 in.

Gift of the artist

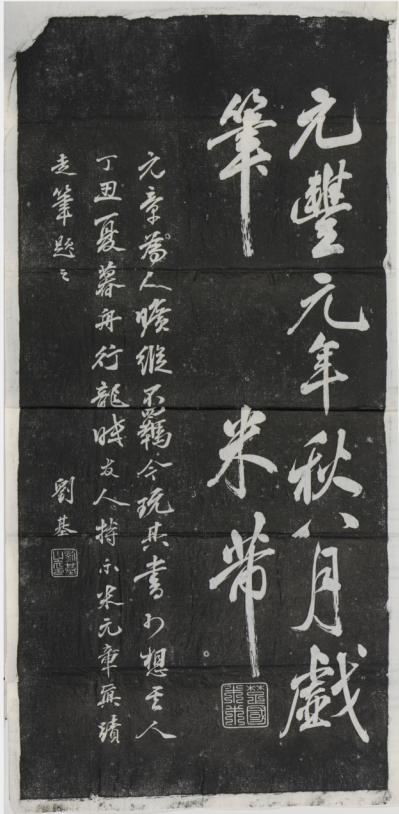
2023.38; 2023.40; 2023.42

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This group of scrolls represent the cursive calligraphy works by Dr. Ramon Lim, Professor Emeritus at the University of Iowa. Trained as a doctor and neurologist, Lim is also a poet, painter, and calligrapher. He specializes in cursive calligraphy, an abbreviated and expressive way of writing in Chinese. All three scrolls transcribe well-known texts from ancient China, ranging from works by Tang poets Wang Wei (701–761) and Li Bai (704–762) to Tao Te Ching (attributed to Laozi, 6th century BCE). Stylistically, Lim's cursive writing cites inspiration from both ancient and modern masters from China, reflecting his own interpretation of the calligraphic art tradition.

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# Rubbings



Attributed to Mi Fu  
(Chinese, 1051-1107)  
*Calligraphy rubbing*  
Late 20th century  
27 x 12 3/4 in.  
Estate of Virginia A. Myers  
2017.148

The white text on a black background seen in this piece is created by placing a sheet of paper on a carved surface and rubbing the paper with ink. Rubbings, one of the main ways to reproduce calligraphic works, contribute to the tradition of copying and preservation throughout Chinese history. This work is attributed to Mi Fu, an influential calligrapher and scholar during the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127). Mi Fu is famous for his dynamic running script writing, which is a semi-cursive style of Chinese calligraphy. The text here is the signature and date following Mi Fu's transcription of a poem by noted Tang Dynasty poet Cui Hao (704–754).

# Zen Paintings



Attributed to Sengai (1750-1837)

*Dragon*

n.d.

Sumi ink drawing in scroll format

67 x 12 in.

Museum purchase

1973.43

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This whimsical painting of a dragon bears a signature by Sengai, a Japanese monk painter associated with Renzai Zen Buddhism. Sengai's art was inspired by Zen painting from medieval Japan when Zen (or Chan in Chinese) Buddhism was introduced to Japan from China. He was also influenced by literati painting (*nanga*), a Japanese rendering of the elite Chinese art tradition. Looking from afar, the scribbly lines are hard to interpret, but as you get closer, the dragon and the clouds that surround it start to emerge. This work represents the humorous and uninhibited quality of Sengai's art. It also reflects the strong ties between art in China and Japan throughout the centuries.

# Modern Paintings



Liu Kuo-sung (Liu Guosong)  
(Taiwanese, born in Anhui, China, 1932)

*Peaks in Contemplation*

1967

Ink wash on paper

18 x 37 1/4 in.

Gift of Charles Read

1991.208

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During the early 1960s, Liu Kuo-sung began his exploration to create modern abstract art inspired by Chinese ink painting to reinvigorate this artistic tradition. He conducted a variety of experiments in painting techniques and styles, incorporating elements of Chan Buddhism and cursive calligraphy in his pursuit of a modern Chinese ink painting with a global perspective. Here, Liu adapts the tradition of landscape painting into an ambiguous topography made up of bold brushstrokes and seemingly organic forms. This work was created a few years before Liu first visited the University of Iowa in 1975 as a visiting professor. Liu's time in Iowa marks the encounter between UI and one of the most important Chinese artists of the 20th century.

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# Modern Paintings

Hu Hung-shu  
(Taiwanese  
American, born in  
Shanghai, China,  
1935-2015)  
*Separated*  
(illustrated) and  
*Soaring*  
1981 and 1983  
Oil on canvas  
44 x 34 in.  
and 34 x 38 in.  
Gift of Judy Hu  
2023.17 and  
2023.19



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Hu Hung-shu was a Taiwanese American artist, designer, scholar, educator, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Iowa. He served as the Head of Design at the School of Art and Art History from 1968 to 2003. *Separated* and *Soaring* are both expressive of Hu's desire to combine traditional Chinese ink painting aesthetics with modern artistic ideas. His contrasting use of white and black oil paints is reminiscent of water-based ink on paper commonly used in traditional Chinese art. Hu's painting is associated with the broader movement of creating a modern Chinese ink painting, as well as an exploration of abstract art in this context. Many modern artists in China aimed to extract the essence of a form without going completely abstract. Hu's experiments in abstraction are displayed in these works as they are pulling imagery from landscape elements through organic forms.

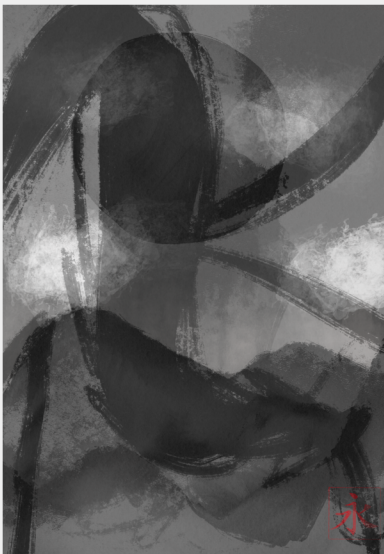
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# Creative Response

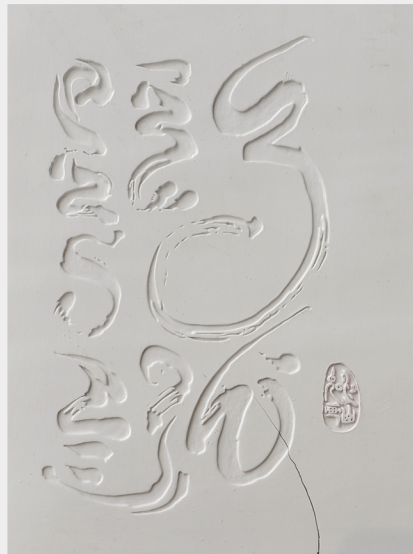
Course members use various mediums, including ink, watercolor, ceramics, and digital tools to create paintings, calligraphy, sculptures, and zines inspired by “Brushwork in Chinese Art.” Through their creative response projects, students explore the styles, aesthetics, and techniques of ink art and experiment on how these elements intersect with their own artistic practice.



Elise Dahan



Nichole Johnson

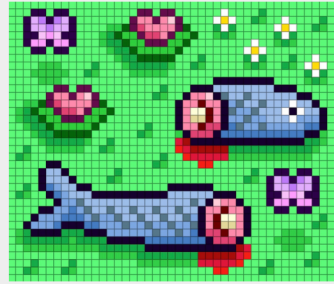


Maggie Adams

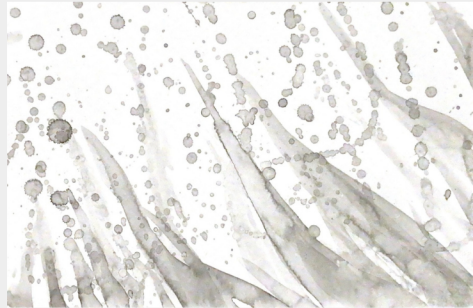
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Jennie Villanueva



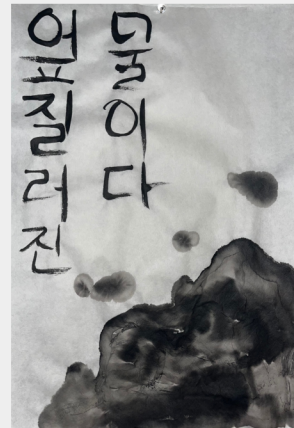
Kaitlin  
Smrcina



Feda Elbadri



Alex Leonard



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