



*Research*

**Chinese Contemporary Women Ink Artist**

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**Abstract:** *This research paper focuses on the present situation and the future of Chinese contemporary women ink artist. The art of Chinese painting is famous as an ink painting and has a long history. There are many renowned male artists from modern times to the present, but we can find documentation of women ink artist. Chinese ink painting is known as Guo Hua, it means the country or national art but the problem is that why there are very few women artists has often been discussed, they did not get recognitions equivalent to male ink artists. The women artists of Chinese ink paintings are always forgotten or ignored. Nowadays the situation is developing, society thought process also changes. Chinese ink painting has many developed forms such as Traditional ink painting, Modern ink painting, Contemporary ink painting, Abstract ink painting, etc. The art environment of Chinese ink painting has entered a new era with new positive prosperity. Women ink artists have also become an important intensity that cannot be ignored in Chinese painting. Contemporary Chinese women ink artist artworks from the subject matter, concept, aesthetic vision, composition, color, all have women an intuitive understanding of social life and different feelings of artistic expression. This paper mainly discussed the challenge, present situation and importance of Chinese women ink artists in present era.*

**Keywords:** *Ink Art, Women Artist, Contemporary, Chinese,*

**1. Introduction**

Since around 4000 B.C. traditional Chinese work of art has grown consistently over a time of in excess of 6,000 years [1]. Its growth has inevitably reflected the many changes and maturity of time and social conditions of China. Ink painting is a kind of genre of Chinese painting. Ink painting is regarded as a traditional Chinese painting that is a representative of Chinese painting. In the form of basic ink painting artists used a fixed amount of water with ink and as well an excellent use of white space of paper but the advanced ink painting has many subjects which are

the combination of black and white with color. The latter is sometimes referred to as colorful ink painting. In Chinese ink painting, one of the unique art materials is an ink, ink is the main raw material, and the amount of water is cited as thick ink, light ink, dry ink, wet ink, charcoal ink, etc., the artist used for drawing different gradation or level of darkness of ink such as heavy black, light black or gray, etc. The ink painting has the artistic effect of mixing water and ink together. It can well reflect the attributes of water, ink and Xuan paper [2]. For example, when the ink and water are used to together on Xuan paper, there are layers of wet and dry ink and colors, which produced the special effect of transmission, impression, and texture, the artist used the ink seal as a signature on artwork. The characteristics of Chinese ink painting are belonging to realism in the surrounding area, abstraction in the space, delicate colors and rich artistic conception. The most significant element is in Chinese ink painting is “Spirit Resonance” one of the six principles of Chinese painting stated in the 6th century. It can be better understood by comparing Chinese ink painting to western oil painting. The paintings too want to convey a certain state of mind or emotion of the artist, so the artistic technique is less important than expressiveness. Chinese ink painting as a type of art has its own exceptional customs and history. It is accepted that the root of Chinese artwork has a place with the period of Chang Kuo (“Warring States”). However, its essential canons were recognized much later in the 5th -8th centuries [3]. It was the age when Chinese artists began to apply ink for painting. This period saw the origin of diverse trends in painting: the portrait genre, natural sceneries, as well as painting of animals and birds. The use of ink in traditional Chinese painting began around the Tang dynasty. After five generations of the Song Dynasty, the important position of ink use was established. Afterward, the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties developed greatly, and the method of ink used was gradually completed. There are many ink methods used in early paintings, including thick ink method, coking ink method, light ink method, splashing ink method, broken ink method, accumulated ink method, and sutra ink method. To sum up its essentials there are three methods: *broken ink*, *accumulated ink* and *splashed ink*.

Inside the Chinese ink painting as a subject matter artist generally used the “Nature” or elements came from nature. In no other cultural tradition has nature played a more significant role in the arts than in that of China. During the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties and the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the subject of painting moved to religion, while other artwork depicting historic figures and mythical influences additionally accounted as a big proportion. People can also found

the impression of different philosophies on Chinese ink art such as Tao, Confucianism, and Buddhism philosophy [4]. After that many artists also adopted a mountain and water, bird and flower as a vast painting subject the Sui and Tang Dynasties witnessed the development of Chinese ink painting. Landscape paintings, as well as bird and flower paintings, entered a grown-up stage of maturity, while religious paintings practiced their main time and became more reachable to the ordinary people. During the Five Dynasties and the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties, as the subject of the ink painting the focus of figure painting shifted to the daily life of the common people, while religious paintings started to decline. As a consequence, landscape painting and bird and flower ink painting became the mainstream of Chinese ink painting. The Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, landscape paintings and bird and flower ink paintings excelled further in different forms to become the mainstream of Chinese ink painting. Chinese contemporary ink painting is a new artistic thought based on the contemporary development of traditional Chinese painting. Chinese ink painting is the oldest continuously practiced method of image-making that includes historians, critics, and historiographers [5].

The concept of the meaning of contemporary ink painting contains two layers of meanings: *First*, it refers to its contemporary category in time, and specifically refers to the background of the times under the development of contemporary society, economy, technology, and culture in our contemporary past; *Second*, it refers to the expressive elements of ink painting, that is, the most basic ink material and form in traditional Chinese painting. Contemporary Chinese ink painting is in the form of artistic expression that exists between the interconnection between traditional art and modern art. However, when we carefully study and appreciate the relationship between contemporary ink painting and traditional spirit and the development of modern art in the context of multi-era culture, we seem to feel that contemporary ink painting is both a gap between traditional art and modern art. But Chinese contemporary ink art provides us one positive thing which is related to contemporary women ink artist, now many women artist start to study ink painting the same as male artists, art galleries, museums, and auction houses start to promote women ink artist [6].

## **2. Situation of Women Ink Artist in China**

The History of Yutai Paintings written by Tang Shuyu in the Qing Dynasty can be described as the first book on art theory dedicated to women ink artist, this book recorded hundreds of women

artists from various Dynasties. History of Chinese ink painting is full of many famous male artists but people cannot find any historical records of women ink artists. In the Chinese art scene in the last century, the achievements of male painters seemed to block the reputation of women painters. If measured by master-level standards, it is clear that women painters have failed to achieve it. Women's status in society is relatively low, especially before liberation. Opportunities are significantly less than men. Despite this, there are still many women who have received formal education in the homes from the family members or academically biased homes, and some of them specialize in studying painting. For example; Wang Shuhui is engaged with Xu Yanchen, Hu Jieqing is worked under in Qi Baishi, Yu Zhang Daqian, Chen Xiaocui learned from Feng Chaoran, Lu Xiaoman studied from He Tianjian, Pan Zhiyun , Jiang Cai, Gu Fei, they learned from a different master such as Wu Hufan, Chen Shizeng, Huang Binhong [7].

After the founding of New China, women's status has been significantly improved, and their opportunities for education have greatly increased. In the past 30 years of art development, women artists have gradually been exploring Inheritance or copying and imitating Western art have gradually formed the overall characteristics of inheriting and breaking through tradition, absorbing and drawing on Western art, and having a more mature and diverse style of self-painting. Women artists have also become a group that cannot be underestimated. They have full-time artists and also work in various schools or art research institutions. Their unique aesthetic awareness and creative spirit have influenced the development of contemporary Chinese ink painting [8].

### **3. Future of Chinese Contemporary Women Ink Artist**

In the contemporary art of China, women art is a kind of art which exists independently from male art, which has its own painting characteristics and expression, which makes women artist different from male artist. There is a kind of calm and emotional detachment in the unique works of women artists. The development of women artists is an inevitable development result of the traditionally male-dominated society, and now the contemporary women ink artist is who mainly draws many different forms of art including landscape painting as the main subject, the landscape painting is different from other paintings, it is a kind of Chinese ink painting, pay more attention to the performance of brush and ink. What outstanding achievements have women artist made in the history of contemporary painting, and the development of women artists and

the achievements of women's painting fill the gap in the history of Chinese art, and have written a chapter for the development of contemporary Chinese ink art. Since the Reform and Opening-up, Chinese society has entered a major transformation period. With the spread of visual culture into the era of images, the continuous incursion of aesthetic values of Western visual art has opened up a broader artistic vision for ink painters, and ink painting has also moved towards a diversified development path. In this past period, the language of ink landscape painting has also undergone significant changes, especially as the core element of ink, its aesthetic value and style has been fully acknowledged after many discussions. As an important part of art, women painting have their own unique perspective and expression. Nowadays many women artists start to practice very freely the same as male artists. Contemporary Chinese women artists have active figures in various art categories, not only in traditional national ink painting but also in emerging different art media. Chinese women artists have become a new power that cannot be ignored by the society. Owing to factors such as growth, schooling, cultural heritage, living environment, and aesthetic characteristics. Women images, compared with male artists, they are more about the expression of inner delicate emotions. These representations are especially evident in Chinese contemporary women paintings. Contemporary Chinese women ink artists were first pioneered by the "Post-50s" and "Post-60s" groups born around the 1960s like Ji Jingning, Pan Ying, Wei Hongyan, Jin Weihong, etc.

Ink art, as an art medium connecting tradition and modernity, provides women artists with a foundation for constructing new art forms. Of course, there is no art medium it is exclusively for men or women, but the gender differences and the social problems caused by gender differences, aesthetic standards, and differences in the angle of attention to things will inevitably make women ink artists form unique artistic language and art. Whether a work of art is modern does not depend on whether the artist uses new materials or new techniques and illustrations, but whether the artist gives up the value judgment standards of traditional art to establish a new attitude and understanding of the world Concept. The separation of ink art as a purely artistic medium from the traditional Chinese painting concept should be the best opportunity for every ink artist to realize his artistic modernity. In today's China, many women artists choose ink medium as their way of artistic creation because they have discovered the completely different elements of the visual experience of watching the world from other creative methods of ink and contemporary art and the potential possibilities of the ink art form and pre-empt it to the limit.

Modern and contemporary women artists are using different types of ink art language. According to the artist's language and medium can be divided into three categories such as:

- Traditional Language and Ink Medium
- A Mixture of Traditional Languages, Ink Medium and New Languages
- Experimental Language, Self-Expression, and New Medium

No matter how they are classified, it is just that they are pursuing different purposes and painting styles. Women ink artists who can have influence in any modern and contemporary environment in China have no distinction between high and low. The contemporary art form is shaped by very contemporary artists in the second half of the 20th century. The contemporary women artist has many global influences, culturally very different and technically very developed. These groups of Chinese women ink artists tried to combine various aesthetics, methods, concepts, ideas, and subjects all together with traditional Chinese ink art. Nowadays Chinese women artists as a whole, have an innate instinct to create an impact within their own social community whether it is large or small. Women artists are also giving the same contribution to the development of Chinese ink art the same as a male artist such as Luo Ying, Zhang Yirong, Qiao Yuan, Gao Rong, Peng Wei, Zhou Hongbin, Wang Zhibo, Hung Liu and many more.

#### **4. Chinese Contemporary Women Ink Artist**

Through the examples of Chinese contemporary women ink artist, scholar tried to explain the relationship between women's ink art practice and Chinese ink art.

**Peng Wei:** Peng Wei was born in 1974 is a contemporary Chinese artist from Sichuan, China. Beijing-based artist Peng Wei merges regular Chinese-style artwork with rice paper sculptures. Just like a state-of-the-art version of paper-mâché, Wei casts her rice paper artwork round objects such as shoes, boats, and model parts, together with the bust and legs. While her paintings are rendered in a traditional Eastern approach featuring Chinese landscapes, houses, and everyday rituals the sculptures variety is that of Western fashion-related objects. The combination of the two cultures is the artist's way of expressing her situation for the effect of globalization on China's cultural heritage. In the case of her boot sculptures, Wei collaborated with famed Italian shoe brand Sergio Rossi [9]. The Beijing-based artist's works frequently characteristic classical ink and color painting, depicting landscapes of trees, rivers, and pagodas.

Her work reflects on the effect of globalization upon China's cultural heritage, frequently also providing motif of trend and production. Her artwork is frequently placed on unconventional materials, such as the insides of shoes or molded torsos or legs made of rice paper, corresponding to the mannequins from which they have been modeled. One collection of works additionally obscured paintings of classical Chinese robes on paper and silk. Her mixed-media works deal with collective history, illustration, and replication, and often have a calligraphic element [10].

**Zhang Yirong:** Zhang Yirong was once born in 1979 in Shanxi, China. She first received her education in classical Chinese ink painting at a young age from her father, Zhang Xiubiao. In 2001, she received her BA from Communication University of China, Beijing and an MA from Peking University in 2008. Upon graduation, she spent eight years practicing beneath the internationally acclaimed artist Liu Dan. With his guidance, she has created meticulous artwork that displays her potential to capture painted subjects in super and analytical details. Her art, which often functions a feminine sensitivity and natural style, is swept up in a vast range of classical influences and inspirations from the Song and Yuan Dynasties, in particular, the Song Dynasty creative way of life of direct observation. Zhang's elegantly wrought compositions keep away from hackneyed subject matters and rather center of attention on the natural source of perfected beauty. She is recognized for her quietly state-of-the-art butterfly and flower painting. Her works are in the series of the Brooklyn Museum, New York and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, United States. She has had exhibitions in the US, China, and Hong Kong, consisting of our current group show in 2014, Beyond the Jade Terrace showcasing 4 young women Chinese artists and "One with the Universal" [11].

**Qiao Yuan:** Born in Yixing, Jiangsu, China in 1980, Qiao Yuan is one of the most gifted contemporary ink panorama artists in Shanghai. She received a BA from the College of Fine Arts of Nanjing University of the Arts in 2004. Prior to the completion of MA in the same college in 2007, she already received Silver Awards at the National Exhibition of Outstanding Ink Paintings by way of Young Fine Arts Tutors in 2004 and Jiangsu Meticulous Paintings Exhibition in 2006 respectively. Over the previous decade, she has explored a new point of view of Chinese typical landscape paintings by way of the use of blue and inexperienced mineral pigments. With the combination of the strategies of meticulous painting and freehand brushwork, one can find out particular layers and a satisfying environment in her works. She applies over

twenty layers of colorations on a skinny rice paper that provides richness to the simplicity. Qiao's paintings have been protected in numerous influential exhibitions consisting of the 5th Shenzhen International Ink Biennale in 2006 and the third Chengdu Biennale in 2007. Her works have been exhibited in most important art museums of Mainland China, together with the Art Gallery of China National Academy of Painting, Beijing; Shanghai Art Museum; Creative Centre of Fine Arts College, Shanghai University; Ningbo Museum of Art; Jiangsu Art Museum, Nanjing; Chengdu Contemporary Art Gallery; and Shenzhen Art Museum [12].

**Chu Chu:** Chu Chu is a carried-out ink painter, calligrapher, photographer, and oil painter. She is presently the Vice Secretary of Lanting Calligraphy Society and the Vice President of the Zhejiang female Calligraphers Association in Hangzhou. She was born in 1975 in Hangzhou and graduated from the Department of oil portray at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou in 2000, where she also obtained her MFA in new media in 2007 and in 2015 attained her Ph.D., in calligraphy underneath the tutelage of Wang Dongling. Since then, the artist has dedicated herself to ink portray and seeks to incorporate this artwork shape with pictures and calligraphy. She has obtained various prestigious awards in view that 2000 including the Shiseido Prize of Best Female Photographer, the Three Shadows Photography Award, Beijing, 2011; Yearly Cutting-edge Photographer, selected via [www.xitek.com](http://www.xitek.com), Beijing, 2010; Creative Award of New Media, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, 2006; Excellent Works Award, New Century Oil Painting Exhibition, Hangzhou, 2001; Excellent Works Award, Zhao Mengfu Prize, National Painting Competition, China, 2000. Chu Chu has been extensively exhibited, along with France, Germany, England, the United States, Japan, Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong. She used to be also blanketed in the essential modern-day calligraphy exhibition Writing Non-writing at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou. She is also deeply influenced by means of philosophies and classical texts. In each of her sequence titled Whisper of Trees and Magnolia Flower, she extracts certain parts from Chinese poems and texts that describe the relationships between human and nature, subtly incorporating them into the historical past of her ethereal snapshots of tree branches and flowers, evoking a feel of quietude and transience. This juxtaposition of images built instantly from a camera, collectively with the cautiously and slowly developed calligraphic characters offers interesting layers of meaning, as they efficiently combine two very one of a kind visible Languages, modern-day photography and general calligraphy[13].



**Cheuk Ka-Wai:** She was once born in 1989 in Hong Kong, Cheuk Ka-Wai practices a traditional gong bi method related to that of Zhang Yirong, while Hui Hoi-Kiu and Ling Pui-Sze assignment to take Chinese ink a step further into the realm of experimentation. Cheuk Ka-Wai is regarded for her surreal pix accomplished with meticulous gong bi technique. In her current seascapes, Cheuk uses a golden powder to decorate the ephemeral excellent of the finely detailed waves. She has been featured in quite a few main crew exhibitions in the latest years, which includes Ink Global (2017) and New Ink: An Exhibition of Ink Art by Post 1970 Artists from the Yiqingzhai Collection at Sotheby's Hong Kong Gallery in 2013[14].

**Zhang Xioli:** Zhang Xioli was born in 1989 in Guizhou, China. She established the Ms. Chu Lam Yiu Scholarship and moved to Hong Kong in 2008 to pursue higher education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where she received her BA with first honors in Fine Arts and Biology in 2014. Throughout the graduation show, she received Y.S Hui Fine Arts Award and Wucius Wong Creative Ink Painting Award. She is now pursuing graduate study at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. In her early series, Zhang's works replaced elements in Chinese landscape painting – trees, mountains, rocks and figures – with depictions of Lego bricks, as a contemporary way to create dialogues with tradition. In the —Boxed Landscape series, Zhang presented surreal landscapes inside small containers, using the traditional style of gong bi ink painting to depict memories and experiences. Particularly, her boxed landscape series correlates to the —subdivided flats housing problem in Hong Kong, which the artist experienced while studying in Hong Kong. Her current series —Private Collection is inspired by the concept of the Cabinets of Curiosities (Wunderkammer, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century), incorporating astronomy, physics, physiology, molecular biology, and even mathematical concepts. The small, boxed objects allow a window into the artist's imagination while expressing wisdom, poetry, and beauty [15].

In an end we can found that women contemporary artists adopted many styles, language, philosophy, inspiration, and medium but overall, they did not drop their personal cultural roots and history. They have a very sturdy connection with their culture and history. The juxtaposition between the two cultures is the artist's way of expressing her concern for the impact of globalization on China's cultural heritage. These all-women artist are using ink as a medium of expression.

## **Conclusion**

The great significance of art is not only to provide beautiful feelings but more importantly, it can show the artist's true feelings and inner world! Every good piece of art is not just an artist's work based on intuition and instinct, but also the artist's cultural accomplishments, traditional consciousness, basic skills training, mastery of painting materials, and understanding and perception of the current society. The art of women's ink painting has been gradually matured from the May Fourth Movement to today; the voice of women artists is now being to start the change with the importance of self-expression and identity in the art world. We are seeing that these artists are creating specific, positive signs of progress in the creative field that has been ruled by always male for centuries. Chinese women artist has played a significant role in the development of Chinese traditional art particularly ink art genre. If women want to achieve certain achievements in the cause of landscape painting, without their own efforts is not possible, want to create more mature works need to have profound knowledge literacy, broad vision of the pursuit, perseverance spirit, rich and excellent level of experience, this may be a difficult journey, but also face pressure from all sides, form your own artistic style.

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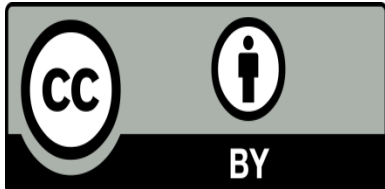
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## Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts to declare.



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