



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Artistic Performance of Ink Painting In The Digital Era

Tianyu Dong¹, Thawascha Dechsubha²

¹ Ph.D. Candidate, Semiotics and Cultural Studies Program, Academy of Arts and Philosophy Shinawatra University

² Ph.D. (Linguistics) Lecturer & Advisor, Semiotics and Cultural Studies Program, Academy of Arts and Philosophy Shinawatra University

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Oct 2, 2024 Accepted: Nov 17, 2024 Keywords Ink painting Ink painting challenges Evolution of artistic style	This paper explores the artistic expression of ink painting in the digital era, focusing on its impact on international art exchanges, challenges in the digital age, and characteristics in subject matter and technical innovation. Combining theoretical and empirical research, it analyzes data from historical documents and expert interviews. The study reveals that Chinese ink painting is gaining global prominence, reflecting the unique and universal aspects of the digital era. It highlights the art's role in cultural exchange and education, and how it bridges tradition with modernity and East with West. The research also discusses the future of ink painting in the context of globalization, technological integration, and ecological art, emphasizing its significance in cultural identity and innovation.
*Corresponding Author dongdong33128@gmail.com	

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has ushered in a new era for the traditional art form of ink painting, transforming its creation, dissemination, and reception. This paper, "The Artistic Performance of Ink Painting in the Digital Era," explores the impact of digital technology on ink painting, focusing on its evolution, the challenges it faces, and its role in international art exchanges. It delves into how this ancient art form has adapted to modern times, reflecting the unique characteristics of the digital age.

The reform and opening-up policy in China has been instrumental in liberating ink painting, leading to an artistic renaissance. The policy's relaxation has not only expanded creative opportunities for artists but also awakened the art market, facilitating the circulation and exchange of ink paintings. This shift has allowed individual artists to break free from traditional constraints, leading to significant changes in the subject matter and form of ink paintings. International exchanges have further enriched this art form by merging it with foreign artistic concepts and techniques, enhancing its global influence and promoting the integration of diverse art styles.

The paper also discusses the implications of the rapid development of science and technology on ink painting. The emergence of digital media has diversified artistic presentations, and the integration of art with technology has opened new horizons for ink painting. Artists are now using digital tools and platforms to extend their work's reach, gaining global recognition and appealing to a broader audience. This modern transformation of Chinese painting reflects the art form's ability to blend tradition with contemporary culture and aesthetics, positioning it as a significant player in the global art scene.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Development and Evolution of Chinese Digital Ink Painting

The beginning of reform and opening up, ink painting has been freed under the framework of national policies, ushering in an unprecedented artistic renaissance. The relaxation of cultural policies has provided

artists with a broad stage and unlimited creative space, and the initial awakening of the art market has provided unprecedented opportunities for the circulation and exchange of ink paintings. It is particularly worth mentioning that with the gradual advancement of the market economy and the increase in social openness, the creation and circulation of ink paintings are no longer dependent on the traditional official system. The creative freedom of individual artists has been greatly stimulated and released, and the subject matter and form of ink paintings have also undergone profound changes. Some artists have begun to try to combine traditional techniques with modern aesthetics to create new ink paintings with the characteristics of the times. At the same time, international exchanges and cooperation under the background of reform and opening up have brought new development opportunities to Chinese ink painting. The exchanges between Chinese and foreign artists have continued to increase, and the combination of foreign artistic concepts and expression techniques with traditional Chinese ink painting has given rise to a series of innovative artistic practices. The increase in artistic exchanges has also made ink painting gradually go international, forming a kind of artistic context with blurred boundaries, which has not only enhanced the influence of ink painting in the international art world, but also accelerated the integration and development of domestic and foreign artistic styles (Lu, 1999.p 97). The rapid development of science and technology has brought challenges and opportunities to traditional art. The rise of digital media has diversified the forms of artistic presentation, and the combination of science and technology and art has opened up new perspectives for ink painting. Artists use digital technology and network platforms to broaden the scope of dissemination, allowing ink painting art to spread rapidly around the world and attract a wider range of groups. At the same time, the application of new technology has also provided artists with more abundant creative means, promoting the comprehensive renewal and transformation of ink painting from form to content, from media to expression methods.

The modern transformation of Chinese painting is a term that has been used since the digital era of reform and opening up, that is, the transformation of the ancient tradition of Chinese painting to a modern society that keeps pace with the times. In the first half of the 20th century, the transformation of new Chinese painting began to rise. Unlike the revolutionary and sudden changes in the West, the artistic transformation of traditional Chinese culture was carried out with a neutral mentality, borrowing from the past to create the present, and introducing the new. In the mid-1980s, China entered a cultural boom. In the mid-1980s, China entered a cultural boom, which was an important reflection on the reform and opening up of traditional Chinese culture and contemporary culture. Li Xiaoshan's "My Views on Contemporary Chinese Painting" is an opportunity to bring ink art into the international reference system and international vision. In the past forty years, many artists have modernized certain attributes of "Chinese painting", including subject matter, composition, form, color, and painting standards, based on new understandings and artistic pursuits in the new cultural context. Chinese paintings such as "new landscape painting", "new flower and bird painting", and "new figure painting" are clearly different from previous Chinese paintings in terms of cultural connotation and artistic expression. These works all have distinct characteristics of the times. Artists at this time borrowed from Western modern and contemporary art to break through the rigidity, rigidity and staleness of ink painting, and to find a breakthrough that conforms to the aesthetics of the times. "New ink painting" as a new artistic tradition is gradually being accepted by people. "New Chinese painting" and "new ink painting" have both overlaps and differences. As an artistic tradition of more than 2,000 years in China, "ink painting" is worthy of our repeated study and discussion. In the global context, "ink painting" has been revitalized in the digital era, emphasizing the connection with tradition and the connection with the times (Cao, 2002.p.45).

After the Song and Yuan Dynasties, Chinese painting moved towards a new direction, and the regional style dominated by "literati painting" became the mainstream. This painting style, which is based on the literati paintings and literati values in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, gradually evolved into an aesthetic trend of "ink supremacy", including the establishment of tastes and evaluation criteria. As a product of a specific historical stage in the development of Chinese painting, literati painting has shown its particularity in the diversity of world culture. This regional influence has continued to spread to surrounding areas in the course of history. When literati passed the imperial examination and entered Beijing to become officials, they brought Jiangnan culture to the north, forming a sub-center centered on Beijing, and continued to radiate to the wider northern region. It is undeniable that the regionality and influence of literati painting actually have historical limitations - exclusivity and convergence. (Zhao,2021)

Modern ink painting is a striking artistic phenomenon in the Chinese painting world since the rise of the "85 Art New Wave" including abstract ink painting, experimental ink painting, expressive ink painting and other

forms. Modern ink painting is a striking artistic phenomenon in Chinese painting since the rise of the "85 Art New Wave". It includes abstract ink painting, experimental ink painting, expressive ink painting and other forms. In a broad sense, modern ink painting is a contemporary art form that integrates traditional Chinese ink painting with Western modern art concepts. While retaining traditional Chinese brushes, ink, paper and inkstones, it makes extensive use of some methods and concepts of Western modern art creation. It is also very different from traditional brush and ink concepts, and the pursuit of form is greater than the connotation of traditional brush and ink. What distinguishes modern ink painting from traditional ink painting is its humanistic connotation and spiritual pursuit, that is, it takes it as its responsibility to express the spiritual and psychological state and aesthetic taste of contemporary people. In 1993, the series "Modern Chinese Ink Painting at the End of the 20th Century" was published. It also marks the official launch of the concept of "modern ink painting". The concept of "modern ink painting" was officially put on the table. The reason why new ink painting is new is that it is compared with traditional ink painting. Ink painting essentially continues Chinese culture and spirit. It is different from Western paintings such as oil painting, watercolor, and gouache in terms of material. It forms a dialogue with Western paintings, thus promoting the desire for ink painting reform and completing the modern transformation of ink painting. The word "new" clearly indicates its character, which is not only reflected in its modernity and time immediacy, but also in a form of development, which has both vertical inheritance of tradition and horizontal contemporaneity, highlighting the development of the most innovative and diverse coexistence and color phenomena (Wu, 2012.p.89). The introduction of the reform and opening-up policy in 1978 marked a major transformation of China's social and economic structure. The social changes during this period not only had a profound impact on the economic field, but also provided new opportunities for the revival and development of traditional Chinese art. (Ji ,2018) As a treasure of traditional Chinese art, ink painting has ushered in a historical opportunity to break the old and establish the new under this background. It is facing the challenges of the intersection of tradition and modernity, and has also begun to accept the baptism and influence of the global art perspective. As one of the quintessence of Chinese culture, Chinese ink painting can be traced back to ancient China. With the evolution of the times, it has been passed down and developed by artists of different dynasties, forming a unique artistic style and technique. However, since the reform and opening up in 1978, Chinese society has undergone unprecedented changes. The changes in social, cultural, economic and other aspects of this historical period have had a significant impact on the development of Chinese ink painting, making its artistic characteristics and development path appear new richness and complexity. Especially with the advent of the wave of globalization and the rapid development of social informatization in the 21st century, the traditional artistic form and cultural connotation of ink painting have encountered unprecedented challenges, and also ushered in new development opportunities (Hu, 2013.p.95).

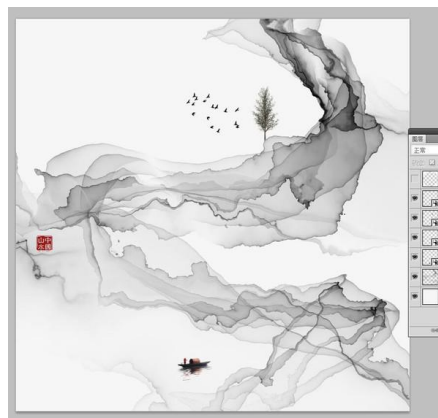


Figure 2. Chinese style digital ink painting design
Source: Huitu Network Technology Co., Ltd. (2018)

Digital technology has provided new means of expression and creative tools for ink painting (Figure 1) . Artists can freely explore and realize their ideas on digital platforms using devices such as computers, digital drawing boards, and simulated brushes (Abu, 2014). The application of this technology not only saves time and cost but also enhances artists' control over color combinations and visual effects (Abu, 2014). Moreover, digital ink painting can achieve effects that are difficult to attain in traditional ink painting, such as quick modifications and adjustments to the image, as well as the realization of more delicate and complex image details (Zhao, 2009).

The artistic expression of ink painting in the digital era is also reflected in its reinterpretation of traditional aesthetics. Digital technology allows artists to break through the physical limitations of traditional ink painting, creating works that possess a sense of modernity and futurism. For instance, through digital technology, artists can combine ink painting with other art forms such as animation and poetry, creating entirely new visual experiences (Zhao, 2009). This cross-media artistic practice not only enriches the expressive forms of ink painting but also injects new vitality into traditional art.

Furthermore, ink painting in the digital era also reflects the profound influence of contemporary society on visual culture. Against the backdrop of an era of information explosion, digital ink painting responds to the public's new demands for aesthetics and changes in aesthetic habits through its unique visual language and expressive techniques (Shi, 2008). This form of art not only satisfies the audience's pursuit of visual beauty but also promotes a renewed understanding and evaluation of traditional ink painting culture.

2.2 Cases of Combining Traditional Ink Painting with Modern Digital Technology

In the digital era, the cross-media art practice of ink painting is primarily reflected in the combination of traditional ink painting with modern digital technology, creating new visual and experiential methods. Here are some successful cases:

(1) Combination of Digital VR Panorama and Traditional Hand-Drawing: In "HIMmaterial: Exploring new hybrid media for immersive drawing and collage," Araújo et al. (2019) introduced a new hybrid art medium, Hybrid Immersive Models (HIM), which combines digital VR panoramas with physical manual spherical perspectives and deformative art, creating a new immersive art experience.

(2) Application of Virtual Reality Technology in Education: In "Immersive virtual reality (VR) for digital media making: transmediation is key," Mills and Brown (2021) investigated the creative design of three-dimensional virtual painting using VR headsets and sensors. Students experienced the complexity of immersion and three-dimensional representation by transforming and transferring story content across different media through this method.

(3) Digital Eco-Art: In "Digital eco-art: transformative possibilities," Coles and Pasquier (2015) discussed how new media artists interacting with nature through digital technology continue to explore their connection with the natural world. The LocoMotoArt project, as a standalone power system for media art practice in natural environments, demonstrates the interconnectivity between humans, technology, and nature.

3. Research objectives

- (1) Explore the impact of ink painting in the digital era on the international art exchange platform.
- (2) Investigate the difficulties and challenges currently faced by ink painting in the digital era.
- (3) Analyze the main characteristics of the subject matter, formal language, and technical innovation of ink painting in the digital era.

4. RESEARCH THEORY AND FRAMEWORK

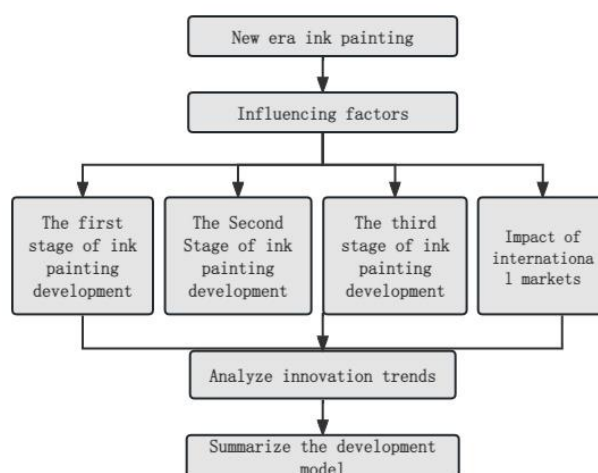


Figure 2. Research Framework of This Paper
Source: Created by the Researcher

The research framework for this dissertation is meticulously crafted to explore the artistic performance of ink painting in the digital era through a blend of theoretical and empirical methods (Figure 2). It commences with a robust theoretical foundation established via an extensive literature review, examining the historical progression and cultural essence of ink painting. This is followed by a mixed-methods research design that incorporates qualitative and quantitative approaches, utilizing comparative and thematic analysis to interpret data gathered from historical documents, expert interviews, and field observations (Lu ,2002). The empirical investigation is executed through a strategic sample selection of 100 art experts, critics, cultural scholars, art workers, and art school students, ensuring a diverse and representative dataset. Primary research tools include questionnaires, in-depth interviews, on-site observations, and literature reviews, which facilitate a comprehensive analysis of ink painting's characteristics and its response to the digital era's challenges and opportunities. Finally, the research concludes with a detailed analysis and interpretation of the findings, contextualized within the theoretical framework and existing scholarly dialogue. This phase elucidates the contributions of the study to the understanding of ink painting's evolution in the digital age, discusses the research's limitations, and proposes avenues for future inquiry to further the academic discourse on this traditional art form's modern transformation.

5. Significance of the study

(1) Academic and Cultural Significance : The study of Chinese ink painting from 1978 to 2024 holds profound academic and practical significance. Academically, this period of ink painting is not only a custodian of China's extensive artistic legacy but also a pivotal testament to the nation's cultural identity and quest for self-definition amidst its rapid modernization. This research delves into how ink painting has evolved as an art form, reflecting the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, and offering a fresh lens through which to examine contemporary Chinese art and its cultural underpinnings.

(2) Historical and Artistic Evolution : The artistic trajectory of ink painting during this era is a mirror to the broader social and historical transformations in China. It reveals the shifts in artistic expression and the adaptation of traditional practices to contemporary contexts. This period is instrumental in enriching the discourse of art history, providing a deeper comprehension of the stylistic mutations and technical advancements in ink painting. The study aims to construct a holistic developmental narrative that encapsulates the evolution, stylistic shifts, and innovative practices within the realm of ink painting.

(3) Market Potential and Global Cultural Impact : The distinctive characteristics of ink painting in the digital era are reflective of the cultural repercussions and artistic reactions to societal changes. This art form, with its blend of classical elegance and modern sensibilities, has garnered a unique position in the global art market. The study underscores the market potential of ink painting, driven by the demand for originality and culturally rooted art. It also explores the role of ink painting in modern society, its influence on academic and public aesthetics, and its capacity to inspire innovative artistic practices. The research further highlights the innovation and development of ink painting as a testament to China's cultural confidence and resilience in the global art renaissance, underscoring the distinct contribution and contemporary relevance of Chinese culture on the world stage.

6. RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Comparison of Techniques and Expression Methods Between Digital Ink Painting and Traditional Ink Painting

Table 1: Comparison of Traditional and Digital Era Ink Painting Techniques and Expression Methods

Comparison Category	Traditional Ink Painting	Digital Era Ink Painting
Tools and Media	Brushes, ink, rice paper	Computer software, digital devices

Comparison Category	Traditional Ink Painting	Digital Era Ink Painting
Expression of Color and Texture	Ink depth variations for light and texture	Precise color control, highlight effects
Creative Process and Modification	Fixed process, hard to modify	Easily adjustable and flexible
Reproduction and Dissemination	Unique, not easily copied or spread	Easily digitally reproduced and globally distributed
Artistic Style and Expression	Emphasizes artistic conception and cultural content	Emphasizes visual impact and modernity
Technology and Innovation	Traditional techniques, limited innovation	Advanced digital technologies, vast innovation space

Source: Created by the Researcher

As show in **Table 1**,The differences between digital ink painting and traditional ink painting in terms of techniques and expression methods are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

(1) Creative Tools and Media: Traditional ink painting primarily uses traditional tools such as brushes, ink, and rice paper, whereas digital ink painting relies on computer software and digital devices like tablet computers and styluses (Chong, 2016). This difference leads to fundamental distinctions in the expression methods of the two forms of painting.

(2) Expression of Color and Texture: Traditional ink painting uses variations in ink depth to represent different light and textures, emphasizing the fluidity of lines and the layering of ink tones (Chong, 2016). Digital ink painting, on the other hand, can easily achieve precise control of color and highlights, creating more vivid, pure, and smooth visual effects. Additionally, digital technology allows artists to make real-time modifications and adjustments, increasing the flexibility of creation (Piliip, 2024).

(3) Creative Process and Modifications: The creative process of traditional ink painting is relatively fixed, and once completed, it is difficult to modify. Digital ink painting, however, can be modified and adjusted at any time during the creative process, and even after completion, minor changes can be made (Piliip, 2024). This flexibility makes digital ink painting more free and open in creation.

(4) Reproduction and Dissemination of Works: Traditional ink painting has a unique non-reproducibility, with each piece being a one-of-a-kind artwork. Digital ink painting can be easily copied and disseminated electronically, which broadens the scope of the work's dissemination but also raises discussions about the originality and value of the work.

(5) Artistic Style and Form of Expression: Traditional ink painting focuses on the expression of artistic conception and the conveyance of cultural content, emphasizing the personal emotions and aesthetic pursuits of the artist. Digital ink painting, however, places more emphasis on visual impact and modernity, often employing bright colors and complex patterns to attract the attention of modern audiences (Chong, 2016).

(6) Technology and Innovation: Digital ink painting utilizes advanced digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, providing artists with more room for innovation. These technologies not only change traditional painting techniques but also bring new possibilities to artistic creation (Liu et al., 2019).

6.2 Artistic Expression of Ink Painting in the Digital Era

The impact of contemporary society on visual culture is particularly evident in the artistic expression of ink painting in the digital era. First, the development of digital technology has greatly changed the methods and media of artistic creation. In the digital age, artists are no longer limited to traditional painting materials and

methods but can utilize digital tools and virtual reality technology to create works (Li, 2023; Blazheva, 2021). For instance, Tilt Brush technology allows artists to create three-dimensional images using brushes in a virtual reality environment, making the expression of ink painting more diverse and three-dimensional (Blazheva, 2021).

Digitization has also influenced the ways in which art is exhibited and received. Traditional ink paintings are typically displayed in galleries or museums, while digital technology enables art to be showcased on online platforms, allowing audiences worldwide to access these works via the internet (Tvrdišić, 2022). This change not only broadens the audience for art but also alters the way people appreciate art, making the dissemination of art more extensive and convenient.

Furthermore, digitization has promoted a shift in creative thinking in art. In the digital era, artists can more easily experiment and make modifications during the creative process, making the process more flexible and open (Li, 2023). At the same time, digitization provides artists with new means of expression and creative space, allowing ink painting to incorporate more modern elements and techniques, resulting in artworks with distinctive characteristics of the times.

However, digitization also brings some challenges. For example, digitization may lead to the loss of the physicality of art, diminishing the originality and tactile sensation of artworks (Tvrdišić, 2022). Additionally, an overreliance on technology could weaken an artist's personal expressive abilities, making artworks overly commercialized and standardized (Wang, 2018).

In summary, the impact of contemporary society on visual culture in the artistic expression of ink painting in the digital era is manifested in the diversification of creation methods, the globalization of exhibition methods, and the modernization of creative thinking.

7. CONCLUSION

(1) Practical Outcomes and Cultural Significance : The study provides a systematic analysis of the characteristics and stylistic evolution of representative artists' works across different historical periods, highlighting the renewed vitality and expressiveness of ink painting in contemporary social and cultural contexts through in-depth case studies. It reveals the growing prominence of Chinese ink painting on the global art stage and its increasingly significant role in cultural exchange and art education. The research also illuminates the position of ink painting in modern life, its impact on public cultural identity, and how it serves as a cultural bridge between the art world and popular culture, as well as between the East and the West.

(2) Interdisciplinary Insights and Cultural Confidence : By employing an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on theories and methods from cultural studies, art history, aesthetics, and sociology, the study deconstructs the multifaceted cultural characteristics of ink painting. It predicts the impact of digital media and network technology on the future of ink painting, particularly in the context of globalization and digitalization. The research explores how ink painting can be both inherited and innovated, showcasing the artistic expression of cultural confidence in the face of technological advancements.

(3) Future Trends and Global Impact : The study anticipates new forms of ink painting that may emerge from the convergence of technology and art. It analyzes the market changes of ink painting art under globalization, the potential for gaining international discourse power, and the development trends of ecological art. The paper also identifies challenges and opportunities in the protection and dissemination of cultural heritage, the construction of innovative education systems, and the diversified development of the art market. In conclusion, the study's depth and breadth reflect doctoral-level academic pursuits, offering a new theoretical framework and empirical cases for understanding the social and cultural significance of contemporary Chinese art. It critically analyzes the traditional and modern transformation of ink painting, injecting new vitality into academic research and providing profound inspiration and guidance for its inheritance and development in the digital era.

8. The Development Trends and Future Prospects of Ink Painting in the Digital Era

The development trends and future prospects of ink painting in the digital era can be discussed from multiple perspectives. First, with the continuous advancement of technology, especially the development of Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies, artists can create more immersive and interactive artistic experiences. These technologies not only help artists construct complex environments

and scenes in the virtual world but also overlay digital elements in the real world, providing audiences with new visual and sensory experiences (El Hajj, 2023).

Furthermore, the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) also brings new possibilities to digital art. AI technology can assist artists in the creative process with idea generation, style imitation, and personalized customization of works, thereby increasing creative efficiency and expanding the boundaries of artistic expression (El Hajj, 2023).

On the technical level, the development of digital watermarking technology provides new solutions for the copyright protection and authentication of artworks. By embedding invisible digital marks in artworks, the originality and ownership of the works can be effectively tracked, which is of great significance for protecting the rights and interests of artists (Davis, 2011).

However, despite the convenience provided by technology, artists and museums also face some challenges in the process of digitization. For example, how to effectively preserve and display complex multimedia works, and how to ensure the integrity and accessibility of data during the digitization process are issues that still require further research and resolution (Giannachi, 2020).

In summary, the digital era provides a broad space and endless possibilities for the development of ink painting. By utilizing the latest technological means, artists can not only create unprecedented forms of art but also more widely disseminate and exchange their works on a global scale.

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