

Chinese
Brush
Painters
Society

Region 6

News Letter

Welcome to the January 2018 newsletter

Happy Year of the Earth Dog!



2018 Year of Dog

Have a wonder filled, happy, healthy and successful new year with lots of painting and exhibition visits!

What Have we Been Doing?

In October we tackled Large birds and animals in Lingnan style. It was interesting to look at how the artist, Au Honien—normally known for his landscapes—had achieved his results.



In November there was no Sunday class, instead we had a full day workshop with Qu Leilei and studies long format landscapes. Details can be found inside

In December we painted from the books in the library—because I forgot the pictures we were going to work from! It was interesting to see what people selected and we had some fun!



Sunday Workshops

Our meetings are held at Park Lane Village Centre in Harefield, UB9 6JB and are held on the first Sunday of every month.

Please note: we have offered our Sundays and Saturdays to Leilei who said he would try to teach 2 classes for us in 2018. We can no longer book extra Sundays as these are now booked by another group, so we have to accommodate these workshops through existing bookings. When Leilei chooses, we will let you have details.

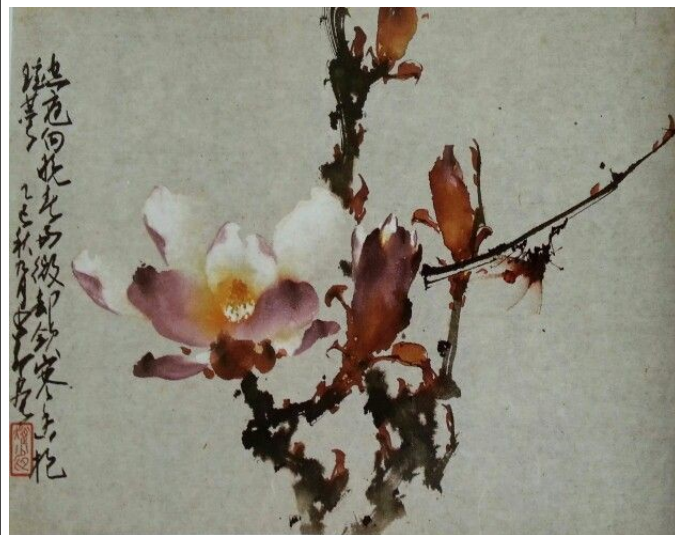
Future Sunday subjects are:

There will be no meeting in January

4th February—Winter Landscapes

4th March—The **AGM** The AGM will start at 13:00. There will be a number of CBPS related items on sale including tube colours.

8th April—Spring Flowers—please note this is **NOT** the first Sunday in the month which will be Easter.



6th May—Water landscapes



Sunday workshops cost £2 and start at 13:00 with a demonstration of the subject and guidance during the afternoon.

The pictures Qu Leilei used in his class in November



Both of the artist selected by Leilei were Ming Dynasty artists but they had very different styles.

Above, is the work of Shen Zhou and to the right is the work of Wen Zheng Ming. I sent you these via email before the workshop and if you didn't attend



the workshop and would like to have a go at following the instructions in this newsletter and the next one, you might find it easier to work if you print the attachments on the email I sent. If you can't find it, ask and I will resend.

We will start with Shen Zhou's painting in this newsletter and move on to Wen Zheng Ming in April (as as Shen Zhou's is more wintery)

Both artists were members of the Wu or Wumen School of art. The School was not an academy or educational institution, it was a group of southern Chinese artists united largely by the artistic theories of its members. Often classified as Literati, scholars, or amateur painters (as opposed to professionals), members idealized the concepts of personalizing works and integrating the artists into the art. A Wu School painting is characterized by inscriptions describing the painting, the date, method, or reason for the work, which is usually seen as a vehicle for personal expression. Shen Zhou (1427–1509) is usually cited as the founder of the Wu School.

Shen Zhou had two distinctive styles of work—very detailed fine work and very free (rough) expressive work. He is also known for developing the boneless style of flower painting.

Shen Zhou's strokes were always closely related to his calligraphy - he wrote his pictures—he did not paint them. He created them stroke by stroke.

Take a close look at the black and white picture. Look at its elegant composition.

The picture is between his fine and rough styles—elegant but not too fussy.

Fold it in half and you will see that the foreground occupies more than half of the picture and that the mid-ground (to the left) is behind the foreground.

The background is made up of 2 distinct layers, the front one has strong line work and the back one is boneless but still added stroke by stroke.

Use a a full length piece of semi-sized paper, half the width of the full sheet. You can use the other half on the other picture! In April .If you want to work smaller, no problem, just keep the same proportions when cutting your paper.

Use a medium sized calligraphy brush that can form a good point.

Use the ink that you prefer.

You might want to fold your paper in half and lightly crease it so that you can see how big your first tree needs to be.

Always start with the foreground's main feature—in this case the large trees on the right hand side. For old trees and branches use paler ink. For newer trees and newer branches use darker ink.

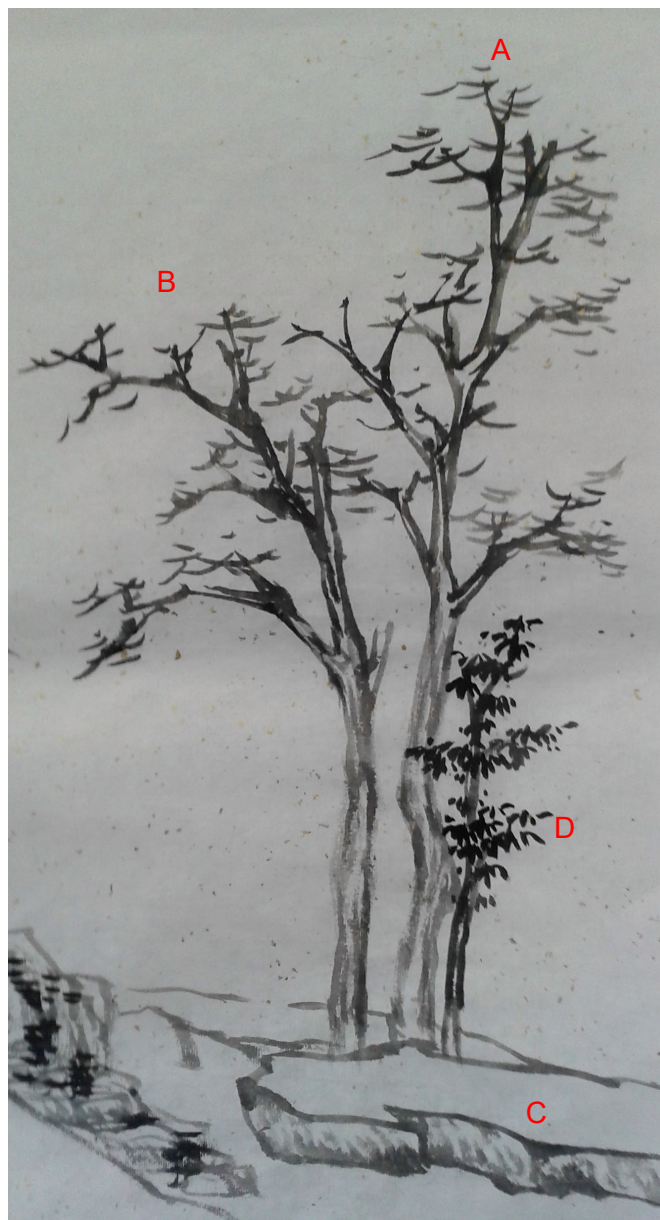
Remember there are at least 5 shades of ink:

- Burnt ink—very dark

- Dark ink—from the stone or bottle, diluted with a little water
- Medium ink—dilute dark with more water
- Light ink—dilute medium with more water
- Water ink—a lot of water and very little ink

You will need all of these 4 of these tones to replicate this painting. (No burnt ink)

Always know how much water and how much ink you have on your brush as each stroke needs to be readable.



Load your brush with light ink and make sure that the brush is not too wet.

Start with the large tree in the centre of the group (A) building it up starting at the bottom and working up from side to side using small variable length and width strokes. Add the texture as you go. Reload the brush as necessary. Keep your strokes distinct. Darken the ink slightly as you move up the tree to the main branches. Don't over do it! Add little touches of darker ink to the trunk whilst it is still damp. Again, don't over do it.

Check that the tree is the right size. Will it past the centre when its finished? Adjust if you need to.

Add smaller branches. Darken the ink and add the twigs using fine, curved strokes with positive starts and finishes—don't flick the brush.

Clean the brush and reload with light ink, again making sure the brush is not too wet. Add the second tree (B) using the instructions for tree (A).

Add the foreground on the right hand side (C) using light ink. Include the bridge in the mid section.

Load the brush with darker ink and add the trunk 3rd tree (D). Please note this is a tree. It is not bamboo. Darken the ink again and add the leaves. These are made up of 4 / 5 distinct long dot strokes grouped together at the growth point. With the point at the top of the leaf, press the brush down in the direction the leaf will hang. The leaves are not pointed so make sure you get a nice dot shape at the bottom. Lighten the ink and add some background leaves.

Using light ink, add the left hand foreground island using hemp strokes.

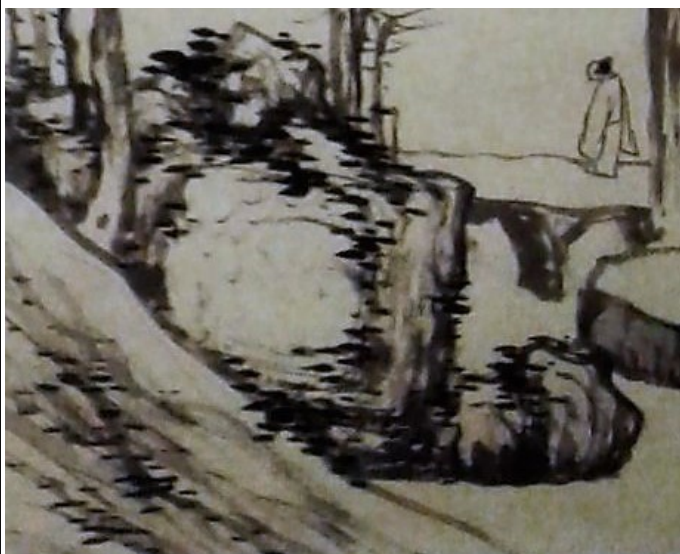
Add the middle foreground island using small vertical hemp strokes.

Add texture to the middle and right side islands using hemp strokes at the top and dot strokes at the bottom. Don't over do it.

Add the remaining foreground trees using the instructions for tree (A).

Add the scholar being careful to keep the brush dry.

Load the brush with dark ink and create ground cover using horizontal long dots, varying the size and position. Start at the top of the groups and work down. Load the brush with medium ink and add some further ground cover to the groups to add depth to the groups.



The mid ground is just above the centre of the picture. Load the brush with light ink and add the island using hemp strokes. Build up the overlapping structure using varied length slanting strokes.

Darken the ink and use horizontal long dots for ground cover varying their size and grouping them nicely.



Add the background starting at the foremost rocks (on the left). Load the brush with light ink and build up the structure using hemp strokes varying the position and orientation of the strokes to get the effects you are after. Build up the surfaces in a number of layers varying ink tone but keeping it light and keep the strokes distinct—take your time and let them dry a bit before the next layer. Use vertical long dots to create the lower textures and shadows and very few hemp strokes to create the upper textures. Use darker long dots to create the trees and foliage.

(Not shown on Leilei's version) add the background mountains using long dots only in a lighter tone of light ink—no lines. Start at the top of the structure and work down making sure that the brush isn't too wet or you will wreck the picture!

It was great fun to paint—I hope you enjoy painting it when you give it a try.

Born in the Year of the Dog—What sort of Dog are you?

The Chinese zodiac year starts from Chinese New Year, which occurs from late January to late February. Therefore, if you were born in January or February in the above years, you might be a Dog or a Rooster! You need to check the date for the start of Chinese New Year in the year you were born to be sure.

If you're born in a Dog year, you're a Dog, and the following are deemed lucky for you:

- Lucky numbers: 3, 4, 9
- Lucky colours: red, green, and purple
- Lucky flowers: rose, cymbidium orchids

So, which sort of Dog are you? The Animal is augmented by one of the five elements. These cause changes in the basic personality!

Type of Dog	Year of Birth	Characteristics
Metal Dog	1910, 1970	Conservative, desirable, cautious, and always ready to help others
Water Dog	1922, 1982	Brave and self-centred, even seemingly selfish; well-versed in dealing with financial
Wood Dog	1934, 1994	Sincere, reliable, considerate, understanding, and patient
Fire Dog	1946, 2006	Intelligent, hardworking, and sincere
Earth Dog	1958, 2018	Communicative, serious, and responsible in work

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Sneak preview of Leilei's next lesson.

A very different style of landscape by Pan Tianshou. Note the line drawn water. And non-traditional use of colour



Exhibitions

Ashmolean Museum

Qu Leilei: A Chinese Artist in Britain – the Official Opening

On Friday 24 November 2017 5.30, Angela Reich and I attended the official opening of Qu Leilei's exhibition of work from the 1980s until the present day at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. It was a very well attend event with many Oxford academics, Chinese fiends of Leilei and Caroline, members of the CBPS, and various dignitaries. There was lots of mingling and networking with people meeting up again after many years of absence. It was a very happy and friendly occasion.

In the introduction to the exhibition, Leilei explained that he works on a "series" over a number of years – where an idea or feeling triggers something that he wants to express in art and he responds to it in a series of paintings. That this exhibition is looking at the way in which life in the West has influenced his work and thinking over the last 30 years. That it contains examples from his 1985-1989 series – British Life, his 1990-1995 series – Sun in my Dreams, his 1996 to 1999 series – Here and Now Facing the Future, his 2000-2005 series – Everyone's Life is an Epic, his 2006-2010 series – Brush, Ink, Light and Shadow and his current series The Empire. Leilei then gave a very moving speech on how he sees the world and the way in which he tries to express his feelings about life and beliefs in his work. He explained that he had been unable to truly develop in China, because of the political situation, and that in the West he had found a way to express himself. He said that the thing that made him saddest was humanities fascination with the past. That today, we spend all of our time looking backwards at: what we did yesterday; what we did last week; what we did last year; what the ancestors did that was so much better than what we are doing now. We revere the past and put it on a pedestal above us. It is as if the future is of lower importance, less priority, below the thought horizon, and worth less consideration; that people are so busy looking back up at the past that they are walking backwards down into the future with no focus on how we can make "things to come" better than they are now and have been. He said this whilst walking backwards across the auditorium, bending his knees, getting closer and closer to the floor until he threw himself over and landed flat on his back to thunderous applause!

As Chinese brush painters, we spend a lot of time focusing on what past artist have done – trying to learn the techniques through copying the work of experts. I suspect we don't put enough thought into how we can take what we have learnt forward and create our own master pieces in the future. Stating in 2018, let's make an effort in our art—and start creating the future!

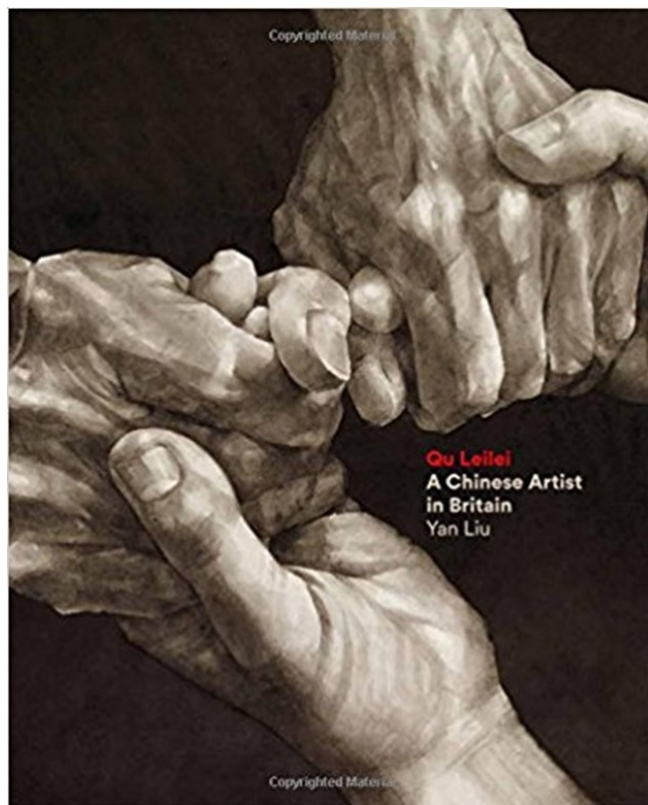
If you have time, please go to see the exhibition – you will love it. Also, if you go on to Leilei's page on the Ashmolean website at:

<https://www.ashmolean.org/event/qu-leilei-chinese-artist-britain>

They have some wonderful U-Tube videos of Qu Leilei. Watch the first one and when you get to the following screen, there are at least 2 more videos of Leilei's work. Well worth a look.

Books

There is a wonderful catalogue supporting Qu Leilei's exhibition a the Ashmolean and it is only £15. There are also post cards!



This catalogue is a retrospective, an overview of the body of work Qu Leilei has produced over the past 30 years i.e. up to the present day. Certain broad themes can be divined: a burning interest in the history of China, and what can be learned from it; a loving concern for human beings and their individual achievements; an absorption in the anatomy and depiction of the human body; an urge to warn against the perils of the world; and a heartfelt desire to integrate Chinese and western art practice and techniques. These themes have been pursued with dedication and ever-growing skills throughout the years.

Price £15:00 (it's available on Amazon too)

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