



Chinese Region 6 Brush Painters Society

Newsletter

Welcome to the April 2021 newsletter

What Have we Been Doing?

I have been sending emails from the BM, RA, Tate, The Art Society and Christie's on a regular basis to email members. Sadly, this information can't be made available to our postal members.



Wu Guanzhong—village life

We held our AGM via Zoom this year—to avoid having to use any of our precious painting sessions when the hall becomes available again.

Margaret presented her annual summary of CBPS Region 6 events and Sarah presented the financial statement. These have been sent to all members to assure those who could not attend have a record of our 200-21 position.

As you already know, you have free membership this year. Please remember to let us know if you change your email address, phone number or postal address.

We have asked Harefield library to advise us when the hall will be re-opened and have been assured that they will do this as soon as they can and that we will be charged £10 per hour rental.

Thursday group has closed down but we booked the hall for our usual dates for Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday groups. You will be advised by your group rep when the hall is going to reopen.

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.

Harefield is currently closed for events and activities because of Corvid 19 restrictions.

I will let you know as soon as it is due to reopen.

All of our classes are cancelled until it reopens.



Cau Jun—sky and sea

The first 3 subjects when we restart will be:

Pandas because I have found some lovely pictures by Wu Guanzhong and Wu Zhouren



Landscape basics

Flower and bird basics

The second 2 just to get us back into the swing of things

If you have any artists of subjects you would like to tackle—let me know..



Wang Jianan—Sketch made in China

Painting Banana Trees

We studied these with Wang Jianan whilst on holiday in Southern China some time ago. These notes came from that adventure.

Banana trees are one of the subjects that were studied by the serious scholar painters. In addition to forming the subject of paintings in their own right, banana trees or leaves are often painted with sparrows or as backdrops to figure or flower paintings.

Because of their nature, banana trees form dramatic, sweeping shapes. The older broken leaves form interesting lines and arcs and the trunks have interesting textures that allow the talented to show off their calligraphic skills.

You have a lot of options for picture development.

Composition

If your painting is of the leaves alone - either as the subject or as a supporting element - most of the following rules still apply.

If you are painting a banana tree as a supporting subject to figures in a figure painting, ensure you get the scale right but abstract them slightly and use less colour but ensure you get the shape and form correct.

If you are painting a Banana tree as the main

subject, work on a piece of paper that is at least A3 in size – you will need the room to create sweeping forms and strokes. When you have mastered the subject, you can create smaller pictures if you prefer them.

Think about the composition before you start. If you have more than one tree in the composition - which tree is in the front? Start with the front tree and work back. All of the darkest darks and lightest lights should be in this tree - it is the focus of your composition. The other trees should be created in mid tones and should be positioned to support this tree.

The proportions of the paper assigned to upward growing leaves and trunk should be 1/3rd to 2/3rds. Those leaves that hang down should occupy the lower 2/3rds.



Starting with the main tree, decide which way the leaves are growing, how much of each side of each leaf you can see (its posture); where it is growing from; how it relates to the other leaves around it. Which leaf is in the front? Start from this leaf and work back. Remember you don't need to paint every leaf but you need to have about 5 - all with different postures and ages - to create a good tree.

When you have the leaves in place add the trunk that you can see (how much is covered by leaves?) Avoid making the trunk straight or vertical. Create it using short variable length strokes - to create the texture.

Add any fruit or flowers that you can see.

When you have the main tree in place add the supporting trees avoiding parallel lines - especially when adding the trunks. Ensure that supporting trees start higher up the page and finish lower down. Ensure that the leaves tuck in behind the main tree in some places and overlap to avoid disconnection.

Add some short lines and dots at the base of the trees to indicate the undergrowth.



Mo Gu Style

Shades of Ink

Refer back to Jianan's sketch. Load an outline brush with light ink and lay in the centre stems of the leaves starting with the one at the front and thinking about their postures and relationship to

each other.

Try to create interesting natural shapes - avoid straight, horizontal and vertical lines.



Wang Jianan—Banana Trees (sketch)

Load the largest brush you have with water and dab on kitchen towel to remove the excess. Triple load it with ink. Pick up some ink and blend in up to 70% of the brush. Pick up a little more ink and blend up to 30% of the brush. Tip with ink and blend. You need to keep the brush relatively dry to get the texture of the leaves.

Use the brush slightly on its side to create the leaves as a series of strokes starting at the tip of the leaf and working back towards the stem as the brush gets lighter.

When you have the front leaf, double load the brush with slightly lighter ink (light and medium) and lay in the leaves behind.

Ensure that some leaves overlap the stem that some are new, some are mature and fresh and some are old and broken.

If you are including a flower and / or some bananas, make sure you keep the tones of ink balanced - don't make it too dark unless it is the focus of the painting.

Double load the brush with light/medium and dark/medium ink and keeping it fairly dry lay in the trunk as a series of variable length textured strokes.

When laying in trees behind the main tree, start again with the fore-most leaf and work back but only double load or single load the brush with lighter tones of ink. These trees should support the main tree not dominate it. Ensure that some of the leaves go behind the main tree. Add the trunk as before but this time double load with light and medium ink only.

Don't add bananas or flowers to supporting trees.

Adding or Using Colour

When you have your composition and your tonal picture sorted out you can add some colour. Better still, repaint the composition in colour.

Think about the mood you are trying to create. Don't add too many colours - keep it simple. Options to consider are:

Burnt sienna and indigo to create a late summer / early autumn effect with burnt sienna tipped with carmine for the flower and gamboge tipped with burnt sienna for the bananas.

Gamboge's and indigo for an early summer / late spring effect. Make sure you blend the gamboge's and indigo well to avoid too much yellow on the leaves. Use carmine blended to pink and tipped with carmine for the flowers and gamboge's tipped with blended indigo for the bananas.

Ink, burnt sienna and indigo for a winter effect. No flowers or bananas in this season unless you want to include some ink and brown bananas to indicate a bunch that was left unpicked.

If you prefer, you can paint a composition based on a flower with bananas supported by some leaves or another plant with Banana leaves as a back drop



Artist unknown

Lei Gu style

Load your outline brush with light ink and lay in the centre veins of the leaves starting with the foremost leaf and working back.

Load your outline brush with dark/medium ink and holding the brush at a slight angle lay in the foremost leaf as a series of variable length, working down from the centre stem to the edge of the leaf using variable length and width lines. Start at the tip of the leaf and working towards the stem working

on both sides of the leaf as you go - the ink will get lighter. Try not to reload the brush until you have completed the whole leaf. If you have to reload think about the tone of ink you require. Think about the shape of the leaf and how much of it you can see

When you have the main leaf, reload the brush and lay in the one behind it and then the next until you have all of the leaves. Keeping thinking about the posture - the shape you want - and how to achieve it.

When you have all of the leaves, add the trunk as a series of variable length variable width lines - to represent the texture. If required, add the flower and bananas using an upright brush.

Add any supporting trees using light/medium ink.

Adjust the composition as required. Leave to dry. You now have a completed bai miao painting.

Adding colour

If you want to add colour try not to be too constrained by the lines - you don't want to end up with a 'coloured in' effect.

Colours should be added when the line work is only just damp.

Use the colours relevant to the mood you are trying to create - use the combinations in the Mo Gu section as a guide - and apply them with a fairly wet brush to create a free effect.



Li Kuchan—Conversation

Traditional Shan Shui—Elements and Colors

Traditional Chinese landscape painting or shan shui (山水) if you prefer has a number of ancient underlying concepts that you may or may not be familiar with.

The colour theory is element based. Modern artist believe that only those works that follow the principles outlined below can be considered true Shan shui works.



Guo Xi—Early Spring

As you know, when Chinese painters work on a *shan shui* painting, they do not try to present an image of what they have seen in the nature, but what they have thought about nature. No one cares whether the painted colours and shapes look like the original object or not

According to Cheng Sui:

Shan shui painting is a kind of painting which goes against the common definition of what a painting is. Shan shui painting refutes colour, light and shadow and personal brush work. Shan shui painting is not an open window for the viewer's eye, it is an object for the viewer's mind. Shan shui painting is more like a vehicle of philosophy.

Traditional shan shui landscapes are painted and designed in accordance with Chinese elemental theory with five elements representing various parts

of the natural world, and thus have specific directions for colorations that should be used in 'directions' of the painting, as to which should dominate.

Direction	Element	Colour
East	Wood	Green
South	Fire	Red
NE / SW	Earth	Tan or Yellow
West / NW	Metal	White or gold
North	Water	Blue or Black

- Wood produces Fire
- Fire produces Earth
- Earth produces Metal
- Metal produces Water
- Water produces Wood.

Elements that react positively should be used together. For example, Water complements both Metal and Wood; therefore, a painter would combine blue and green or blue and white. There is a positive interaction between Earth and Fire, so a painter would combine Yellow and Red.

Negative interactions between the Elements are:

- Wood uproots Earth
- Earth blocks Water
- Water douses Fire
- Fire melts Metal
- Metal chops Wood

Elements that interact negatively should never be used together. For example, Fire will not interact positively with Water or Metal so a painter would not choose to combine red and blue, or red and white.

So, when you get back to landscape painting—have to think about this and see where it takes you.

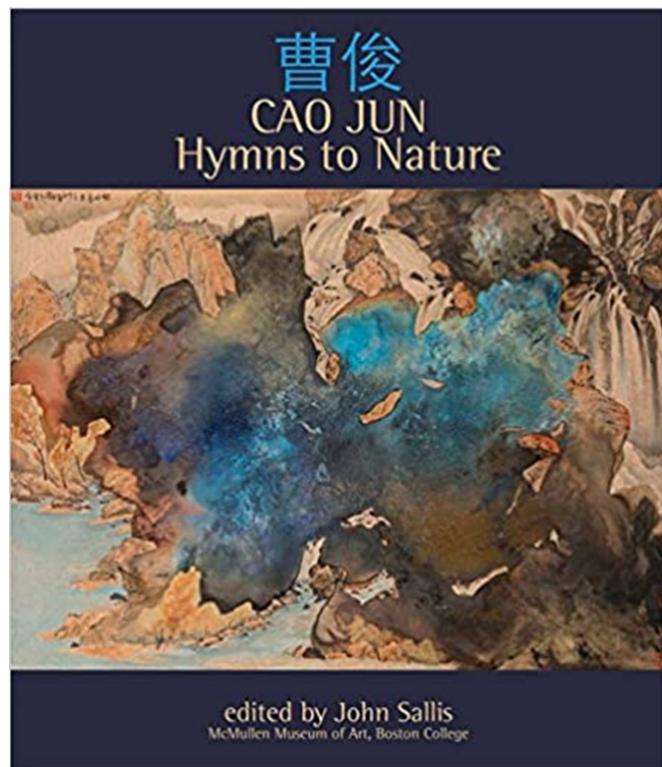


Chao Kan—a river journey with the first snow

Books

Cao Jun: Hymns to Nature Paperback – Illustrated. Published: 13 March 2020

by John Sallis (Author)



No contemporary artist has succeeded so thoroughly in blending classical Chinese art and modern abstract art as Cao Jun, an artist who has exhibited widely in China, as well as at the Louvre. Accompanying an exhibition at the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, this volume presents the art of Cao Jun for the first time in the United States. Featuring the artist's early wild animal paintings, to his landscapes, to recent explorations of space depicted abstractly, the book also showcases Cao Jun's calligraphy and ceramics.

Essays by Chinese and American scholars examine Cao Jun's art, showing how it is deeply rooted in the experience of nature and how it portrays our place within nature. The essays demonstrate also the way in which Cao Jun's art brings together classical Chinese painting with modern abstract forms akin to those of Western art. Yet Cao Jun's art foregoes simply fusing these traditions; it employs the techniques of Chinese ink and brush painting and uses ancient ink- and colour-splashing techniques to produce abstract forms.

Amazon price for the paper back version with free delivery £15.45

Exhibitions

Sadly, nothing to report yet! British Museum and Ashmolean Museum both still closed and not offering any events as yet.

Royal Academy are offering a David Hockney exhibition from may onwards celebrating the arrival of Spring—if you are interested.



As you know, David Hockney has an interest in Chinese art and I have always found his line work very Chinese inspired.

