

## Pen, Ink and Brush Strokes in Painting

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**Abstract:** Pen and ink and brush strokes occupy indispensable positions in painting. As one of the unique characteristics of traditional Chinese painting, “pen and ink” is a painting method created by painters to express the visual images of natural objects, which promotes the continuous development of Chinese painting. Different from the naming of brushwork in Chinese painting, western painting has its own appellation - brush strokes. As one of the unique languages of western painting, “brush strokes” will bring different pictures. Taking “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains” by Huang Gongwang and “Water Lily” by Monet as examples, this paper discusses in detail the different embodiment of pen and ink and brush strokes in traditional Chinese and Western painting and explores their similarities and differences.

### 1. Introduction

Pen and ink and “brush strokes” are two expression techniques of traditional Chinese and western painting. They are different but related. As the unique charm of Chinese painting, “pen and ink” is a carrier of the painter’s emotion, while “brush strokes” is a unique pen used in western painting, which occupies an indispensable position in painting. In Chinese painting, the word “pen and ink” can be decomposed into two meanings. “pen” refers to the tool in Chinese painting, and “ink” refers to the tool ink used in painting and its medium water; On the other hand, it is the general name of Chinese techniques. “Pen” usually refers to the brushwork of sketching, drawing, pointing and rubbing, while “ink” refers to the brushwork of drying, breaking, dialing, dyeing and accumulating. In Chinese painting, a painter can use a brush, add ink and wash, and then express his feelings for the world on paper or silk. In western oil painting, brushwork is called “brushstroke”. In western painting, “brushstroke” will be influenced by force, the speed of using the pen, and emotion when painting. “Stroke” has two meanings, one is the pattern and line formed after the brush touches the drawing paper; Another is to express artistic conception and emotion through the painter's brush. When a painter swings his brush strokes, the visual effects on the screen are different because of the different strengths of his pen.

### 2. The Embodiment of Pen and Ink in Huang Gongwang’s Works

For the artistic creation of painting, the technique of pen and ink is very important. Huang Gongwang was able to create the amazing “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains”, in which the perfect pen and ink technique is the key. “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains” is a paper-based ink painting with a unique artistic style. The ink is elegant. Huang Gongwang uses elegant style to depict the pleasant scenery in early autumn around the Fuchun River. Viewers can better experience the “autumn taste” through the picture. In the creation of “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains”, Huang Gongwang adopted the dry ink method. On the one hand, based on the traditional brushwork of literati paintings, the scenery was depicted and expressed through dry lines. The trees in the picture were full of thick ink and wet ink, while the landscapes were sketched with dry pen, gradually from light to thick, with light ink depicting and heavy ink ending [1]. The trees and landscapes in the picture formed a sharp contrast in ink use. The distant mountains and continents in the painting are dominated by light ink. The thick ink of trees and the light ink of mountains realize the organic combination of dryness, wetness and lightness [2]. In the artistic creation of “Dwelling

in the Fuchun Mountains”, Huang Gongwang used dry ink to make the whole painting more varied and rich in rhythm changes. Both the dry ink method and the wet ink method have realized the organic combination of pen and ink, making the scenery alive and achieving the effect of “form and spirit to have both”.

### **3. The Embodiment of Brush Strokes in Monet’s Works**

Monet, known as the father of Impressionism, suffered significant loss of vision from cataracts and affected his work. His most famous work, “Water Lilies”, a series of 250 oil paintings depicting his flower garden at Giverny shows how cataracts affected his work [3]. Monet’s numerous paintings show his own unique and changeable brush strokes. As one of the expressive languages of oil painting, brush strokes is an important part of oil painting creation. In oil painting, color, composition, modeling and so on are all based on the application of brush strokes, which is an indispensable element in oil painting creation [4]. Monet is a genius painter. He worships nature as a teacher, and has a strong pursuit of light and color in his bones, making him a generation of masters. In the form of brush strokes, Monet’s paintings mostly show light, shadow and color. In the seemingly casual and relaxed brush strokes, the water lilies floating naturally on the water surface are vividly displayed. In Monet’s “Water Lily” series, lotus and lotus leaves move with the wind, and the lake is quiet and dreamy. Monet tried to record the subtle changes of light and color quickly with short and intensive strokes. The strokes overlap constantly, the small strokes process the picture, a large number of complementary colors are used to describe the effect of light and shadow, and the instant visual images are fixed. The strokes are interlaced to form different spaces for water lilies. In composition, Monet takes a view of the water, and in color application and brush strokes, the brush strokes become larger, giving people a feeling of continuous scenery. “Water Lily” shows the space sense of the “Water Lily” and the texture of the pool water with larger brush strokes. The light and shadow are extracted from the figurative image and applied to the picture, showing the harmony between the works and the artist’s artistic conception with flexible brushstrokes.

### **4. Comparison of Huang Gongwang’s and Monet’s Work**

#### **4.1. Similarities-Pen and Ink and Brush Strokes Play an Important Role in Painting**

Chinese pen and ink and western brush strokes, although showing in different ways, both Chinese and western paintings express the painter's emotion to a certain extent. Painters put their own “feelings” into the “scenes” in their works, and blending scenes is the common goal that eastern and western painters always want to achieve. For example, Huang Gongwang's life is rough, and his “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains” contains elegant and secluded pursuit of life, and expresses his feelings by depicting the natural scenery. Most western paintings use brush strokes to achieve the organic combination of real emotion and natural scenery. For example, Monet, an impressionist painter, is the representative who walks out of the studio, paints pictures outdoors, and shows the real scenery of nature with a brush. The varied brushstrokes in Monet’s works not only express the light and shadow of nature, but also express the painter’s own emotions in his creation, making his works the representative of blending scenes.

#### **4.2. Differences-Forms of Expression of Visual Ways of Pictures**

Both Chinese and Western paintings express the painter’s subjective feelings and make a blending of scenes. However, due to the different cultural backgrounds between China and the West and their visual perception in the picture, The differences in perception have caused some differences between Chinese and Western paintings. On one hand, the perspective principle of western painting is “Everything looks small in the distance and big on the contrary”, while “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains” adopts “scattered point perspective”, which leads the viewer to see one side first and then the other side. Technically, the painter uses skillful and powerful pen and ink to describe the scenery along the Fuchun River, and the trees and stones in the picture are

dotted. Instead of using light and shadow to express volume, the creator uses simple ink to express objects in the painting, such as branches and mountains. In addition, the distant view and the close view echo each other, which shows the distant virtual view and the near real view well. On the other hand, western impressionists pay attention to rationality and humanism, light, shadow and color as well as observation of natural scenery under the influence of the thinking mode of “separating subject from object”. They also attach great importance to the reappearance of the shape and color of natural scenery. The visual way of European painting is always to see the “shape” and “color” of real scenery visually, and then reflect them in picture [5]. When creating, western painters focus on the changes of light, shadow and color in nature. For example, impressionist painters insist on going out of the studio to observe the scenery in nature. Monet is good at grasping instantaneous changes of scenery, such as its changes of light, shadow and color. The group painting “Water Lilies” shows different changes of scenery in an instant, which gives people enjoyment visually and reproduces the instantaneous changes of nature.

## 5. Conclusion

Although Chinese pen and ink and western brush strokes have different forms of expression, they both embody the harmony and unity of emotion and scenery. “Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains” adopts a scatter perspective, and adopts distant views and a close-range echo at the picture level. Technically, Huang Gongwang does not use light and shadow effects to express volume, but uses simple ink to express objects in the painting. However, the forms of western famous impressionist Monet’s brush strokes express typical western rational thinking and reproduce nature. Monet’s paintings capture moments of light and color statically with jumping brush strokes. Starting from the basic goal of painting, both Chinese and Western paintings express their emotions by painting, and achieve the effect of merging feeling with scenery.

## References

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