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# The Imagery and Abstraction Trend of Chinese Contemporary Oil Painting

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**Abstract**---The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that Chinese painting is at least five thousand years old. Throughout history, Chinese artists have used light pink, gold and black colors in their work. The paper shows that sumi-e (Chinese national ink wash painting) is different from the European one. The authors show that calligraphy is inextricably linked to painting, use the same lines, materials, and tools. In China, paintings are not only artistic but also a literary style. The novelty of the study is determined by the fact that the authors of the paper highlight the aspect of the execution of oil painting without preliminary sketches. The expressiveness inherent in Chinese art is achieved through four values of the artist. It is revealed that each artist attaches great importance to the choice of their professional tools and approaches it with an increased level of responsibility. The practical significance of the study is in the fact that the paper shows the possibility of developing the culture of traditional oil painting. It is shown that two opposites must be combined at the same time: dark and light, large and small, dry and wet, short and long, rare and frequent. It is proposed to consider Chinese painting as the art of poets and philosophers.

**Keywords**---artistic, China, literary value, painting, oil art, traditional art.

#### Introduction

The aesthetic value of the Chinese landscape painting has been determined by the fact that a person, enjoying the image of "mountains and waters", comprehends the philosophy of human life, educates feelings, and also produces the purpose and principles of his/her own way (Geng, 2018). Moreover, it is namely this educational function of painting was one of the foundations of the Chinese model of aesthetic perception (Steger et al., 2019).

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The principles of "painting as poetry and poetry as painting" reached their peak in the Tang era (618-917), when unity and order were highly valued in the society (Xu et al., 2006). In the evaluation of painting, the main and mandatory was to comply with the law of "standard" and "criteria". Zhu Jing Xuan, based on the "six laws" of his predecessors, proposed four new categories of evaluation of paintings – "Shen, Miao Chen, Ih". The highest rating in this gradation was "Shen" ("divine"), it was attributed to the pictures of the first category, written in accordance with the established rules. Pictures of the fourth, the lowest category ("Ih"), in fact, did not deserve to be called painting (Li et al., 2017).

If the Khan's culture, the features of which was inherited by the dances, repulsed the "grandeur and elegance of the simplicity of the old style", the Tang culture brought this "elegance" to "Shine and radiance" (Zhuang, 2013). Improving various "standards", high-class, venerable artists have achieved a certain skill in the image of people and in other genres of painting (Lam, 2016). The circle of the "fathers portraitists" of the previous era (Gu Kaizhi, Lu Tang Wei and Zhang Sengyou) involved Tao Te Ching, the court painter, whose painting technique differed in sharp, bold strokes. His "Picture of the Farewell Ceremony of the Ruler, the Son of Heaven" may be an example of such a "magnificent" style. Contemporary critics of painting especially highlighted the ability of the artist to convey not only the "spirit" but also the "movement" on the canvas, thus emphasizing its superiority in the transmission of the slightest movements (Li Huan, 2019; Yang, 2021).

#### Literature Review

The Chinese painting owes the birth and formation of new principles of colorism, in particular, "ink color", as well as the emergence of the theory of "five colors" by Zhang Yan Yuan to the artists of the Tang Era (Hu, 1995). Essentially, it is a kind of reflection in the painting of the Taoist way of thinking, for which the determining factor is that the world is created by the mutual generation of "Yang" and "Yin", and the existing colors are also modified as follows. In the color scheme, ink represents Yin and white represents Yang (Yang & Xu, 2013). From the coloristic point of view, ink density is colorless "but "colorlessness" defeats "color", just as the world of "nothing" creates something" (Chen, 2019). Therefore, in painting, the colorless surface of the canvas can actually convey the reality of the nature of the objects depicted by changing the saturation, color intensity (Zhang, 2015). Thus, the artists, taking the "watercolors" of the five-color scale as a basis, were able to achieve a high degree of pictorial image and to create a sphere of "transparent purity and mysterious deep peace" in their works (Jelle, 2011; Wang et al., 2012).

With the affirmation in the practice of painting, the concept of the "watercolor conveys content of painting" entered the certainty of the Chinese painting, otherwise—"painting of learned men" (Guo et al., 2018). The oil painting turned to "writing" from just the "painting". And these artists inspired by the transfer of the "external similarity" moved to the embodiment of the "sphere of ideas", while developing the process of transition from "practical application" to "impractical" form of aesthetics (Paetzold, 2009).

In the Chinese painting, from the perspective of technique, the combination of painting and calligraphy is especially noticeable: "learned men" loved to wave a thin brush to recite poetry, playing with a pen, "tame" ink, for which they were nicknamed "ink guests" (Chen et al., 2013). Writing "free style" paintings allowed them, using the techniques of calligraphy (where, as you know, the strength and continuity of lines, harmony and elegance is especially appreciated), to achieve the heyday of the Chinese painting. But a full merger of the term's "ink" and "the laws of the brush", "ink" and "free style" was reached much later, in the 14th century (Lavallee & Robinson, 2007; Miliani et al., 1998).

## **Material and Method**

The paper uses the historical method, which determines the sequence of changing eras in Chinese painting and provides cultural and other prerequisites for the formation of a holistic perception of the culture of painting. The historical method ensures the possibility of forming a picture of the Genesis of the Chinese oil painting culture (Yan, 2012). The prerequisites of the historical method are the understanding of culture as a systematic development of the social environment that is evolving. At the same time, the paper explores the analogy of relative quality of the culture reflecting the history of society (Chiavari et al., 2006; Van Rees, 1987).

The method of literary analysis determines the amazing combination of painting in Chinese culture. In part, painting is perceived not only as a visual art, but also as a literary basis for identifying the possibilities of expressing an illustrative context in historical periodization (Geng, 2018). This formed the basis for the development of not only fine art, but also related artistic value formations (Hradil et al., 2003; Thorwarth et al., 2007).

## **Results and Discussion**

The Sung Period (906-1279) in the history of traditional Chinese painting is characterized by a gradual change in the "style of splendor" to "style of sophistication" (Yang et al., 2016). This was largely facilitated by the foundation of the "school of court painting" at the Imperial court, the masters of which had official status, and the emperors themselves often acted as critics of painting (Ma, 2019). The gradation of criteria for evaluating works of art has undergone fundamental changes. The Tang classification order of "Shen, Miao, Nan, Ih" proposed by Zhu Jing Xuan, now began with the "Ih" criterion, thus pushing "Shen" (divine) to the second position. A reformer of the style Huang Tingjian said that "Ih painting style" is difficult to forming. The brush gives a free stroke direction, and it does not fit into the framework of any laws" (Wang et al., 2015). The high quality of the "Ih" style, as the critics of that time said, is not in the laws of its technique, but in what cannot be taught (Zhang, 2013).

It should be noted that this style was not immediately got by "Palace painting" with its "official art" (Sheng & Wang, 2018). For example, the Emperor Vanson Zhao Ji, although he admitted the importance of the categories "Ih", he yet preferred "Shen", thus emphasizing the virtues (education, virtue, spirituality) of the "learned men". By the way, appreciating above all the norms of treatment, he

bowed before the painting by Huang Quan, giving special honor to his "Still Life with a Pearl and Birds" (Figure 1). Moreover, the picture by Zhao Ji "Hibiscus and Brocade Cock" still remains a model of "Ih" style. Although the genre priorities of the Song period were based on the landscape painting and the genre of "birds – flowers", portrait painting also became widespread among the "learned men" with their "palatial painting", and among the common people artists.



Figure 1. Huang quan, "still life with a pearl and birds"

The rise of "painting scholars" is associated with the period of the Yuan (1280-1368) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. In terms of content, the representatives of this school of painting in their picture highly appreciated the expression of "the spirit of a noble man" and "the spirit of a learned man", who opposed the ruling class suppressing educated people. In the painting technique, much attention was paid, as noted above, to the penetration of calligraphy into painting, especially "the laws of ink", which was noted as "weak", "thick" and "charred". In this period, the "free style" was finally formed, which was aimed at the "expression of ideas", "frank mood", the rapid careless stroke of the brush and along with others, "elegant style", which finalized the model of the traditional Chinese painting (Pintor et al., 2016; Asadi et al., 2019).

At the same time, the creative competition between the two dominant schools of landscape painting – "North" and "South" increased, thus emerging new concepts relating to the improvement of drawing techniques, "the law of brush and ink". The latter was the main creative method in the era of the Tang and Song dynasties; during the Yuan, it acted as a mediator in the transmission of joyful feelings, and with the advent of Ming "the law of the brush and ink" became the opponent of "aesthetic perception". The most different application of the law of "brushes and ink" has caused the emergence of two art groups – the Southern and Northern schools. The first preferred "coloring" ink drawing; a distinctive feature of the Northern school was a "rough sketch tool" – extracts of the contours of the mountains, mountain convolutions, and then retouching forms.

A characteristic feature of this period was a certain commercialization of painting. Sale of paintings by the "learned men", although it was considered as an occupation unworthy of a noble man, but objectively contributed to the popularization of art, and the development of painting of a secular nature. The Chinese national painting "sumi-e", having passed a centuries-old way of

development, formed the unique features under the influence of the "internal" creative competition of various styles and genres. However, starting from the 17th century it has been experiencing increasingly strong influence of the Western concepts of art. This influence is primarily associated with the missionary work of the Italian missionary Lee Shan Nina (1688-1770), who founded a new style -"joint jasper of China and the West". Thanks to his work, Chinese artists first became acquainted with such concepts as "light beam", "chiaroscuro", "sense of space" etc. Taking the classical basis of the Western art of painting "sumi-e" has acquired a new dimension. At the same time, for the deviation from the usual aesthetic model of the image, these innovations are difficult to perceive for the creative intelligentsia. Further opposition of the "traditional" (Chinese) and the "innovative" (Western) got various forms and manifestations. In particular, in the 19th century, it led to the emergence of two areas of national Chinese painting -Yangzhou (Wang Shi Shen, Li Chan, Huang Zhen, etc.) and Shanghai (Ren Ji, Wu Chang Sho, Ban Qiao). If "Yangzhou" professed the principles of "academic" painting by "brushes and ink", achieving, however, more individualization in style, the "Shanghai" took as a basis the Western techniques of composition and color, remaining true to the principles of the Chinese non-contoured drawing. Of course, the complex, ambiguous process of interaction between Chinese and Western pictorial traditions requires a separate thorough coverage.

The invaluable contribution of the national Chinese painting to the world of art is the unique method of "brush and ink", which has reached its perfection in painting of the "learned men", being demonstrated in the masterpieces of the 15–19th centuries, and unsurpassed examples of a harmonious combination of "spirit" (meaning) and the form of "ink paintings" (Figure 2 – Figure 8).



Figure 2. Lee Shannyn (1688–1760)



Figure 3. "Shehe Tu". Zhao Ji (1082–1135)



Figure 4. Zhao Ji (1082–1135)



Figure 5. Wang Wei (701–706)



Figure 6. "The Horses". Lee Shannyn (1688–1760)



Figure 7. Gu Kaizhi (346-407)



Figure 8. Chui Scroll, 3rd Century BC

After 1979, as a result of political changes in China, the world of art also began to change and become freer. Huge changes have occurred in the creative thought, the ideas of the authors, and the speech of their paintings. After all, all the styles of modern world art that came to China before, though replaced by socialist realism, but to some extent survived and waited to reopen the whole world for China. When again, at the same time, there were different schools of painting, the period of new realism began. Let us dwell on the formation of art at the end of the twentieth century, first of all, we will study the processes of transition from the era of Soviet influence to the establishment of Chinese neoclassical art open to mutual the transformations within the framework of the world intercultural interaction.

The period of "Scars of Art" and local art. From 1978 till 1979 was not only the start of the policy of reform and openness in China, but also the beginning of a new era of Chinese art. The political changes also influenced the development of culture, they have become a powerful factor in the transformation of all kinds of arts, and therefore oil painting. People's thoughts and ideas started to quit. At this time, there was a phenomenon of style called "scars of art".

There is reason to believe that the period between 1978-1984, which began shortly after the death of Mao Zedong (September 9, 1976), when Chinese art has not yet recovered from the pressure of the regime and is still in a state of shock, has made efforts to recover. The researcher, from our point of view, noticed a very important point: the opposition of this period to the formation of modern art. He

has not only kept for history the remarkable art that reflected the confrontation of socialist realism and Communist ideology, but also created the basis for later modern changes in contemporary art.

"Scars of art" is an artistic phenomenon that corresponds to the phenomenon of "wounds and scars of literature", they can be compared with the period of "thaw" in the art of the USSR. This style is a form of revision of cultural guidelines and the resulting accusation against the ten-year period of the "Cultural revolution". "Scars of art" were partly based on human instincts and emotions: looking back at their recent history, artists condemned the previous hypocrisy and total dependence. Wong Faye, exploring this period in the art of China, argued, "The trends generated by the Chinese painting of this time, "village realism" (the term designated as "local art") and "scar painting", reflected the desire for humanization of society and the healing of its wounds." Indeed, the majority of artists glorified the spirit of humanism and sought to portray the common man in its life. On the other hand, the Chinese mentality developed throughout history has also affected it. Prosekov gives it the following definition, "To think in Chinese means: to think in metaphors, typical situations that are in the mind in the form of proverbs, sayings, stable expressions and mainly come from historical experience. The mentality of the ordinary Chinese is manifested in the fact that he is unhurried in thinking, conclusions, trying to control his thinking and not to look for direct ways, he has a strong sense of duty." So, after a long period of total control of art and culture, artists in the period of reforms did not in a hurry and completely change the art of China, creating new directions, denying history, but resorted to the familiar realism, as one of the most expressive to illustrate the social changes of Chinese styles.

The researchers note the general cultural foundation of the policy of the reform and openness, which was reflected in the art: "no economic growth in such a huge, diverse and complex country, comparable to the whole continent, a country burdened with many problems that have accumulated over a century and a half of continuous and devastating disasters, would not have been possible without the action of the forces that go far beyond the economy. We are talking about the enormous cultural and historical potential of China, which has no analogues in any country of the modern world. This spiritual experience, unprecedented in its duration and variety of forms, is capable of becoming a productive force and of becoming a social matter. Actually, this is a confirmation of the truth that culture and art are the main goals for which the mankind is developing. In this sense, the modern economic miracle of China seems well-deserved – after all, it is based on the centuries-old Chinese culture.

The main leitmotif of "scars of art" is drama based on the revision of the value orientations and, as a result, the censure. The artists with all the revolutionary enthusiasm opposed the "great, majestic and ideal", against the "red light", against the regime of the Cultural Revolution, which was firmly rooted in art during the previous decade. From the perspective of the language of painting, this phenomenon was characterized by the use of cold gray and dark colors. According to Liu Minho, "scar arts" inspired the artists to look for hidden deep inner feelings, so that ordinary people in the paintings become heroes, to reveal the real life and the fate of the common people." As you can see, these aspirations can be

characterized by a desire to reveal the reverse side of the medal of life of the then Chinese society, which was earlier impossible because such attempts were simply persecuted and punished.

They felt the consequences of the movement, when young people were sent to the countryside for cultural education of the people, they could not avoid the pain caused by these ten years of disaster, and they chose a brush to use it to express internal emotions, showing in their works all the shortcomings of that era, revealing negative historical facts and rethinking the recent past. The founders of "Scars of Art" were representatives of the creative team and students of the Academy of Fine Arts from the Sichuan Province. In 1978, Gao Xiaohua painted "Why" – this work is considered one of the first in the style of "scars of art", art critics also distinguish it as one of the most remarkable (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Gao Xiaohua. "Why" (1978)

The theme of the work is the violence of the Red Guard during the "cultural revolution". The painting depicts a group of people sitting on the street after a fierce battle, they are all students, their faces look tired, the ground around them is bloody, littered with shells, newspapers and the like. One of the boys' head was bandaged: he was wounded. He looks at the front line, and the viewer understands what he thinks about himself, what he is doing here, and asks himself, is there any sense in this, and if there is, what is it in terms of history, humanity? The other boy has a "rebels" bandage. He sits cross-legged, his eyes are blurred. The injured girl lies on the ground, her body is covered with a flag mottoed "to attack with a feather and to defend with the weapon", her eyes look sadly at her companions. From the perspective of composition, the artist uses a top-down plan, creating an atmosphere that captures the feeling of oppression, according to the tragic theme chosen and painting technique. The artist used a lot of gray and worked with thick strokes, which, according to Lu Yun, "causes a feeling of depression and darkness."

Chen Songling in 1979 painted "The Last Month and the Last Day 1968. Snow", which is also known as the most typical work of "scars of art" (Figure 10). The painting depicts the battle of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. In order to recreate the scene of the tragedy, the artist depicted the cold snow and the ice soaked in red blood. The simple, hot young faces were numb, frozen in the heat of their battle. The artist, depicting the then brutal reality, subtly used the panorama, which made the work more tragic.



Figure 10. Chen Songling. "The Last Month and the Last Day 1968. Snow" (1979)

In addition to "Why" by Gao Xiaohua, the following striking examples are worth mentioning: "Ladder" by Chen Chunlin; "Father and Son" by Zhu June; "Our generation" by Chen Imine – they are all considered as masterpieces of "Scars of art". Influenced by the phenomenon of "scars of art", which grew into a national artistic phenomenon, the national creative style has also changed. The subject of creativity and the content of paintings acted as a political propaganda tool for so long, and to break this long-established trend it was necessary to make significant efforts. "Scars of art" became the cultural lever that not only flaunted the dark side of society, but also contributed to the assessment from a new position of the ten-year "cultural revolution", and strengthened socialist realism much earlier. Zou Yuezzin emphasizes: "the most valuable and the most difficult, perhaps, was that the artists faced the policy of propaganda of the "cultural revolution" and had the courage to completely reject it, to show and identify the existing problems: it shows that they began to understand reality, found a sense of criticism and the needs of the society."

So, after the end of the "cultural revolution", the artistic thought in China again returned to its true purpose, the artists began to focus on their internal feelings and needs and returned to normal reality. Realizing that the main role of "scars of art" was mainly in exposing and criticizing the "cultural revolution", it can be argued that the emergence of "local art" brought the art back to real life: the works began to manifest emotions, vitality, and found a new depth in the reflection of reality. Luo Zhongli (born 1948) painted the work called "Father" (Figure 11) in 1980. The painting depicts the wrinkled face of a man with swarthy skin, cracked lips, the expression of his face is generally simple-minded. In contrast to the recent trend and the demand for heroization of the characters in the paintings, Luo Zhongli simply flaunted the image of the complete joy of a simple farmer. This picture is filled with sincerity and sincere deep feelings to his native village. The author broke the trend of the "cultural revolution", and instead of political leaders and heroes of the struggle for Communist ideals, he depicted ordinary workers, peasants and soldiers, who became the heroes of his own, author's creative dogma, he lost the "red light" and the model of the "cultural revolution".

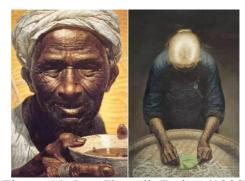


Figure 11. Luo Zhongli. Father (1980)

He worked in the style of photographic realism, showing the reality of those times by his means. He showed himself as a significant innovator, declared himself as an outstanding artist who painted pictures of ordinary people. His work was remarkable for its hyper-realistic image. Therefore, it can be ranked among the iconic representatives of "local realism". This is a man who created a striking contrast with the generally accepted historically established rules of painting in extreme conditions. His style, photographic realism, was so perfect and verified that often far surpassed in detail and artistry of photography, his works give a sharp visual effect, express emotion, and deeply amaze the viewer. A striking example of the representatives of the "local art" was also a painting by Che Duoling (born 1948). In 1981, his final painting was "The Awakening of the Spring Breeze" (Fig. 12).



Figure 12. Che Duoling. "The Awakening of the Spring Breeze" (1981)

An art critic Yang Wei believes that in this picture the author imitated the style of the American artist Conrad Wise, his sentimental realism. The painting depicts a pure image of rural girls. The nameless teenage girl lives in her world of youthful fantasies, she sits in the bushes and carefully peers somewhere into the distance, she is thoughtful, and next, behind her, there is a dog, whose gaze is also directed somewhere up, and a cow that stretched her head forward.

At three different angles, the three characters point their eyes, which gives the audience the opportunity to feel the breeze, the spring, with its inherent human dreams of the future. "Awakening of the Spring Breeze" reveals the sad and lyrical images and shows us another side of the Chinese local realistic art – the desire to put a man, his life, emotions and experiences, human understanding and

awareness in the center of the plot. This work allows you to look at the Chinese painting from a completely new perspective, instills a new aesthetic perception, which opens up new facets of it.

Other striking examples of "local art" is the works by Chen Danchin, a series of paintings called "Tibet" and the work by Zhang Xiaogang "The Rain Comes". An expressive feature of all these works is the image of ordinary people and their daily lives. They are shown sincerely and realistically. This visual perception not only unites people, the viewer and the artist, but also unites the social, artistic thought of China. It is safe to say that the style of "scars of art" appeared as a rebel against the "art of the cultural revolution" led to the dismissal of creativity from total control, resulting in the development of modern processes of formation of artistic thought.

"Scars of art" became a transitional stage to "local art". In the works of "local art" one can observe much higher level and depth of understanding. All the representatives of the "local art" refused from the political influence on creativity, and even if it is somehow reflected in their work, it was submitted truthfully. Political processes were portrayed as they really were. Also, artists have abandoned many other topics to emphasize the power of direct images of everyday life and the lives of ordinary people, the desire for naturalness, and the glorification of humanity. This period can be compared with the "Mobile School of Painting" in the Russian Empire of the 1860s, when there was a rise of the democratic movement that had a great influence on the development of the Russian painting. Thus, in 1863, a group of talented students of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts abandoned mythological and biblical subjects - a tradition that had been developed and had long existed in the Academy. They selforganized, began to study realism and paint in this style. In St. Petersburg, they founded the "Association of Free Artists", which later, in 1870, was turned into the "Mobile School of Painting". The members of the "Mobile School of Painting" were realists, believed that art should not be orchestrated. They took an active part in the transformation of painting.

The basic principle they fought for was the reflection of real life. Their works not only ridiculed the ruling class of the then Russian Empire, they showed the suffering of the rural and urban poor class, and created the image of a group of revolutionaries fighting for a new life. We can say that the artists of the "Mobile School of Painting" above all put the ideal of beauty of painting by Chernyshevsky, and his motto "Beauty is Life". They opposed the integration of the Western art into the Russian one, emphasizing the national features of painting to show the life and suffering of the people, considered it as their sacred duty to adhere to the spirit of realism. "Scars of art" and "local art" have chosen the same path.

Following the "scars of art" and local art" originated the so-called "conceptual art", which quickly became the main trend. The abstract and avaunt-garde works took a prominent place, which was not only an innovative phenomenon for China at the end of the twentieth century, but also indicated the choice of the general direction in modern Chinese art: it became a full-fledged, strong participant in the global artistic processes.

The artists who worked in this style still emphasized "individual consciousness" and "modern consciousness", but most of the works have already been made extremely realistic, the art of this period has ceased to be realism in the traditional sense. Neoclassicism was deeply influenced by the philosophy of surrealism and existentialism, so many works expressed modern ideas and new trends in the understanding of social and cultural processes. This once again proves that of all the styles, only realism still has a great influence and the largest number of followers in China.

In 1987, Shanghai hosted "The First Exhibition of the Chinese Oil Painting": most of the works presented there were made in the style of realism or on its basis. For example, paintings by Jin Shan "The Fruits", Xu Manao "My Dream", Dong Ciua "An Oriental Girl" and many others. It was an exhibition of works, including in the neoclassical style, it showed new directions in painting, showed that Chinese artists have started again on the way of knowledge of the European classical painting. Jin Shan (b. 1934) in 1955 attended the Maximov's oil painting courses, so most of his works dated to 1980, were made in the style of the Soviet socialist realism. Among them, the following works are worth mentioning: "The Conquest of the Muztagata Mountain", "A December Meeting", "The Great Campaign" and others.

After the 1980s, Jin Shan moved to the Western part of the United States, where he visited a large number of famous art museums and institutions. He also lectured at the Department of Oriental Art at the New York Municipal Institute. Influenced by the study of the modern American art of painting, his paintings began to transform and absorb the "neoclassical" style. Describing his professional path, he noted: "I studied painting for more than forty years, I remember this learning process was really very difficult for me. In 1953, when I graduated from the baccalaureate of the Central Academy of Painting, I did not have much contact with oil painting, but only had time to see several works of my teachers made in this technique. But in reality, faced with oil painting only in 1955, at the Maximov's oil painting courses, I had the chance to study and compare the system of the Soviet education, and the Soviet style of art. In the contour drawing, I understood and accepted the Western technique more, I realized such volume, space, color, and also other factors which were not much considered earlier. Another important aspect in the European painting was the source of light: if you model the work correctly, it will be very harmonious and will reflect the beauty, this is a characteristic of the European painting."

As you can see, Jin Shan confidently classifies the Soviet school of painting as the European one – after all, at that time in Europe there were several similar transformations, on the other hand, for China, which in artistic terms was influenced by the USSR for a long time, this experience was if not European, then at least, its replacement. After the reform of openness, Jin Shan traveled to Europe several times to see more masterpieces of the European masters directly. First of all, he was a Chinese who had been exposed to the national characteristics of the surrounding reality since his childhood, and received the traditional Chinese education. He was interested in the Chinese culture, calligraphy, history and collecting the Chinese works of art. And although most of his life he studied oil painting in Europe, the influence of the Chinese culture on

his own creative path was great and integral. He notes: "I always held my eyes on the works of the Chinese painting, this potentially influenced my own works."

Since the 1960s, his work "Chief Mao with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America" and later works have been on the same cultural and scenic plane, even the shapes of the lines on them are the same. Later he tried to combine the spirit of the traditional Chinese painting with the spirit of the European art, by combining the monochrome painting of the East with the bright colors of the Western painting, simple and elegant black and white tones with color. He said, "this was the main support for the adoption of some changes that did not affect the quality of work and the overall style, I must say that in my experience of oil painting everything was just the beginning, at that time I only put some effort and skills in order to make my creations the best, I tried to explore the new ways of the Chinese oil painting development." Of course, such a meaningful integration of the advantages of the Western painting, as well as the desire for a better study of the Chinese oil painting on the way to its entry into the latest world art space is absolutely natural, both for the period under study and for the latest art of China. Finally, the author notes the following important points: "Chinese oil painting is imbued with the spirit of the Chinese culture, and it is necessary to solve the problems of the modern oil painting in China; the feeling of mechanical production of creations are too strong, insufficiently expressed emotion, when studying the form and technique of painting, the most important should be the feeling of human existence." From these words it becomes clear that the most concerned artists were working to change the direction of painting in China: the most important here were the feelings, emotions, freedom of expression of the master. Obviously, there are two reasons for this: both it was caused by the long historical period of management of culture and art "from above", and the fear of losing such desired and obtained freedom in the maelstrom of global trends towards the commercialization of art.

Jin Shan in 1983 painted the picture called "A Tajik Bride". It can be followed by the radical changes in the style of the Chinese painting: deep black background highlights and emphasizes the main red color, which is also symbolic; the theme of the plot is a holiday; shawl covering the bride, begins at the top and falls to the underwear, the necklace around the neck looks luxurious. On the bride's head there is a wrap, outer edge of which is also dark red, almost Burgundy, and its red, ring, necklace and earrings together show the Tajik ethnic traditions. The bride is the center of everyone's attention. She has beautiful eyes, which show slightly suppressed joy, round and full lips, slightly sunken mouth: facial expression shows a sense of happiness and at the same time longing for a future family life. "A Tajik Bride" combines classic style, culture and national spirit of Tajiks, idealism of temperament, breaking the established canons of the portrait genre. It became a striking example of neoclassical painting – its creation was the first touch of the Chinese culture and the people with this artistic direction.

In "A Tajik Bride", Jin Shan moved away from the Chinese oil painting. When creating this portrait, he was guided mainly by the technology; the picture is different from impressionism, with its divided, contrasting colors, and condescending modernism. With the rationality inherent in Chinese art, it absorbed the classical elegance, calmness, softness, created by rich picturesque

three-dimensional layers and an open, intense image of beauty, which coincided with the orientation of the traditional Chinese aesthetics. The picture completely departed from the gloomy and rough "local art" of China.

Later works of the artist, such as "A Young Singer", "The Fruit", "The Girl in blue" and others, and, of course, "A Tajik Bride", which we considered as a landmark example, reached the height of the Western aesthetics in its model system, which, we can say, was the main task of many Chinese artists. Such manifestations of the elements of the Western painting in Chinese art created a new aesthetics. In all such works, Chinese painting was taken as a basis, but strict modern norms were applied to the models in the picture, to the expression of their emotions. We can say that Jin Shan invented a new way of oil painting with Chinese specifics.

In 1982, graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts. He is another representative of the unique neoclassical style of painting. Most of the characters in his works do not express their nature – this approach shows the inner spiritual desire of the artist. He studied the European classical art and looked for ways to better combine the Chinese and Western artistic ideas. In such paintings of 1987 as "The Outfit", "The Man with the Glasses", "The Gem" and others, we catch an expressive contrast with the neoclassical figures of the Jin Shan style.

Chao He mostly expressed the inner psychological component of the characters' images. Defining the origins of his work, he emphasized: "the wonderful art of Ancient Egypt, the art of Greece of the archaic period, the art of the early Renaissance, the art of the 1930s, as well as the art of primitive people of the ancient Mongolian steppes equally make my heart tremble – this is the art of Mankind. This wonderful art was with me throughout my youth, and I really wanted to at least get a little closer to it, but I was not just a follower of this mysterious era, I created a new image in my current era. I will create my own works of art, express my thoughts and feelings, raise my awareness in the lives of ordinary people. Thus, it is possible to achieve a highly sensitive form of art. I put my heart and soul into my works, they combine the magnificent natural landscape and human tragedy, creating a powerful emotion."

As you can see, Chao He, like most of the artists of that time, the work of some of the brightest representatives of which we have studied, prefers to turn to the ancient sources of art, rethinking them and using them in a transformed form for the image of the eternal human themes. This approach became popular not only because it was a clear guide to the intertwining paths in art, but also given the historical features of the late twentieth century in China. As for the reverse effect of art on history and society, it is appropriate to quote the opinion of the art critic Wong Faye: "the Art of that time stimulated the processes of emancipation of consciousness that took place in China, and took a direct part in them. It became a bridge to the Western art and Western concepts, questioned and attacked the foundations of the traditional Chinese and culture. In addition, it has created a new artistic language and new concepts of contemporary art, laid the historical Foundation for its development. After 1989, we can talk about the advent of a full-fledged era of the modern Chinese art." While agreeing with this periodization, we note that the influence of the processes that took place in the twentieth century on Chinese art is very significant until now.

#### Conclusion

Summing up our analysis of problems of the formation, development and features of the Chinese national art it is necessary to emphasize that the philosophical basis of aesthetic and semantic essence of "sumi-e"; its spiritual stimulus was Chan Buddhism, which incorporated the main principles of Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist worldview. The most important factor in the development and creative vitality of "sumi-e" is, on the one hand, inherent in the Chinese national consciousness trends to "continue and develop", "continuity and rethinking", and, on the other, – the continuous search for a simple, clear and concise form for the expression of the means of painting the deep meaning and emotional experiences of the artist. The highest place in the hierarchy of classical Chinese aesthetics is occupied by the doctrine of poetic design, which is based on the ancient philosophical idea of "great in small" and which uses for this purpose the symbolism and associative-allegorical language of poetry and painting deeply rooted in the minds of the Chinese.

The critical model of the national painting in different periods of its development was formed under the influence of the criteria of "beautiful", "perfect", developed over millennia, which were reflected in the creative competition of two style varieties "sumi-e": "gun-bi" ("diligent brush", "refined style") and "se-I" ("free style", "expression of the idea"), as well as in compliance with the main law of "brushes and ink". The aesthetic credo of "an idea born before the brush" found its main expression in the style of the se-i, which is still the measure of the painting's traditional "sumi-e" genres - "mountain - water", "birds - flowers" and "portrait painting". The quintessence of the Chinese fine art is landscape painting ("mountains - water"), the deep meaning of which is revealed through the interaction of the most important principles for the traditional way of thinking of the Chinese: "Yang" - the light, active principle of being ("mountains") and "Yin" dark and passive ("water"). A unique feature of this genre is the representation of non-living objects as endowed with life and feelings. This effect is achieved by a kind of visual space created by the "sumi-e" school, which allegedly includes the author himself.

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