Recovering the Movement of Calligraphy in Animation

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Abstract

This exegesis explores the way in which the gestural expressiveness of Chinese calligraphy can be recovered in the medium of animation. My animation, *Ink Dance* is based on traditional hand drawn calligraphy, combined with the live action of dancing to create a dynamic contemporary spirit. The flow of calligraphy can be compared to the dancing figure. Body movement and calligraphy can both present motion, gesture, rhythm and balance.

The main methodologies I use for my research are action research, case studies and art historical research. Through these processes, I develop a deeper understanding of the interaction between the varied genres in my investigation, and contextualise the relationship that I have explored between Chinese calligraphy and painting, animation and movement. I have used the time-based techniques of animation to evoke the qualities of transience and movement intrinsic to traditional Chinese aesthetics to create a compelling contemporary work.

As the visibility, value and dissemination of Chinese art escalates around the world due to the growth in the Chinese economy, and consequently the increase in its global economic and political importance, my research into the use of Chinese calligraphy in animation will promote understanding of the aesthetics of Chinese art within a cross-cultural, cross-media context.

To date, *Ink Dance* has been selected for screening at the Queensland New Filmmakers Awards, 2010 (Australia), KROK International Animated Film Festival, 2010 (Russia),
the International Animation Film Festival “Golden Kuker”, 2010 (Bulgaria) and will also participate in a group exhibition *Drawing and Animation* at the Gympie Regional Gallery, Queensland in 2011 (Australia).
Declaration

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Candidate’s Signature  _________________________________________________  (Zhi-Ming Su)

Date  ___________________________________
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Introduction

The worlds of art are multiple and varied but interconnected. Painting, sculpture, music, drama, architecture, photography, movies, animated films all affect and inspire each other, as can be seen for example in the influences of Japanese prints on the work of the Impressionists or calligraphy on the techniques of the Abstract Expressionists. Just like other genres, animated films need to absorb material and ideas from other artistic domains if they want to succeed in creating new imagery and continue to expand the medium’s boundless potentiality.

I have studied and practiced Chinese painting for over twenty years and have made three animated films for my Masters degree program in Taiwan. They are The Trace of Ink (2002), Wang Chuen Feng (2002) and Crossing Boundaries (2003). I used Chinese painting and calligraphy techniques in these works. For my Doctor of Visual Arts program, I have further explored the relationship between Chinese painting, calligraphy and animation. The unique aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy fascinates me; the simplicity of black-and-white colour creates a stunning visual element. It looks simple, ancient and modern at the same time. Calligraphy conveys the sense of abstract beauty and as well as legible meanings. It can present the fluent rhythm of a dance, or a strong image such as a large number of mounted and foot soldiers. When I started graduate school, I began to use Chinese calligraphy in my animations, because it afforded me the potential to create a characteristic Chinese animation style and emotional possibilities not dominant in western animation.

What attracted me to animation was that it allows free rein to imaginative concepts, and because it can express time, sound and story details in ways that live-action film or
paintings cannot convey. Although animation and movies share some common features and many overlapping areas of technical and mechanical development, the aesthetics of animated films are quite different from that of conventional movies, which it should be noted often depend on animation for their special effects. Animations tend to be more radical in their approach. Animation is made based on a series of single frames. It can mix and combine styles of visual effects and timing. As well, there may be flexibility in techniques and methods. It permits animators to break the rules of film production to create their own films without limits. Thus, they encourage experimentation more than films with 'flesh and blood' actors. My research will explore and analyse specific qualities of animation aesthetics made with calligraphy, text and other styles of art related to Chinese character writing.

Chinese calligraphy originated in the Shang Dynasty (1550 BC) and circulated through Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Vietnam (Li, 2001). The aesthetics of calligraphy have influenced many different art forms including: painting, architecture, literature, music and the performing arts. There are six different styles in Chinese calligraphy characters; they are oracle bone script, seal script, clerical script, semi-cursive script, cursive script and regular script (Jiang, 1997). Although the written features are quite varied, their writing frameworks can all be considered to be calligraphy and painting. That is why Chinese art critics use the theory “painting flows from calligraphy” and “calligraphy and painting have the same origins” (Li, 2001, p. 12) to state the close relationship between calligraphy and painting. In Chinese writing, some words were imitated from the natural images, such as sun, moon, water, fire, water and tree. They date back to the beginning of Chinese writing having lasted for five thousand years to modern times. I use several of these symbols to create an artistic animation. The main methodologies I use for my research are action research, case studies and art historical research. Action
research refers to my personal studio work experience in which I experiment with the movements and strokes of calligraphy, the gradation of ink and water on rice paper, dance performance, music, sound and the timing of animation. By exploring this research process, I refine the techniques through practice and adjustment of my studio work procedures. I use the case studies to demonstrate the handling of these techniques in historical and contemporary fine art. The artists I have selected include two calligraphers, Zhang Xu and Grace Tong, some pioneers of Chinese animation, the Wan Brothers, Cheng Tei-Wen and Xu Jingda, a contemporary Chinese animator Qiu Anxiong, the founder of a Taiwanese dance company Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Lin Hwai-Min and an American painter, Franz Kline. I then analyse the relevance of their works to the embodiment of calligraphic gesture in animation. The art historical research helps me to consolidate and compare knowledge in the history of art in different cultures, and to examine through the literature, artworks and films by observation, comparison and interpretation the relationship between the varied genres in my investigation, and to contextualise the relationship that I have explored between calligraphy, Chinese painting, animation and movement.

There has been little research into the way traditional Chinese calligraphy can be combined with animation. This spurs me to explore the scholarship through literature research and studio practice. As the visibility, value and dissemination of Chinese art escalates around the world due to the growth in the Chinese economy, and consequently the increase in its global economic and political importance, I believe my research into the use of Chinese Calligraphy in animation will help people understand the aesthetics of Chinese art within a cross-cultural, cross-media context.
The Western world has long been intrigued by the exoticism of Chinese culture and calligraphy. A recent example of this engagement can be found in the film, *The Pillow Book* (1995) directed by the Welsh film director Peter Greenaway. The script is based on a Japanese author Sei Shonagon’s (AD 966-AD 1017) well-known work *The Pillow Book*. This story is about the sensual and physical pleasure the heroine has experienced in her life documented through the calligraphy written on her face and body (Greenaway, 2010).

An exploration of the elegance of the written word is carried out through the beauty of calligraphy (Schneider, 2005). The sensations and memories expressed through language are shown to be bodily signs and are literally written on the body. In an interview with Peter Greenaway in 1997, the writer Christopher Hawthorne described the Pillow Book as a celebration of sex and text, of literature and the flesh. The two are intertwined in the movie, as in life (Hawthorne, 1997). Even though the material may be from an alien culture, the audience can sense the poetry of the calligraphy, although they may not be able to read the writing.

Art has the potential to be a universal language. It may at least attempt to integrate varied worlds. Globalisation and the expansion of capitalism to all the societies of the world encourages the dominance of Western values. The presentation of oriental aesthetics, which value harmony, poetics and transience, will allow Western audiences to appreciate and understand those aesthetics.
Chapter 1. Calligraphy and Chinese Character

Etymologically speaking, calligraphy means ‘beautiful writing’. In practical terms, it forms a fragile, unfixed barrier between art and the needs of expression, between drawing and the writing of signs.

(Jean, 1992)

Chinese art critics often cite the phrases “painting flows from calligraphy”, “calligraphy and painting have the same origins” (Li, 2001, p. 12). They are mentioned in the same breath and complement each other. Evidence can be seen of this in Chinese calligraphy and painting. Ink-and-wash paintings, usually monochromes, have always been one of the most important genres in the history of Chinese painting. The imagery involved can be abstract or concrete, but either way it has imbued Chinese fine arts with a deeper philosophical content. Chinese aestheticians have traditionally used the expression “Sublimating the exterior and amalgamating it with the inner heart” (Yang, 1999, p. 336) to describe various kinds of painting techniques. To achieve this, the artist must strive to fuse the depicted objective reality with his own subjective experience to grasp the specific moment in its truthful entirety.

The term ‘ink-and-wash’ is usually used to describe wash painting made with water and ink. “There are three basic requirements for this genre: simplicity, symbolism, and naturalness” (Yang, 1999, p. 340) The Chinese ink-and-wash tradition originated during the Tang dynasty, became firmly established during the Five Dynasties, and saw its heyday during the Song Dynasty. It continued to blossom and develop under the Ming and Qing emperors, and has preserved its vitality right into modern times. Relying mostly on the artist’s skill with the brush, the effectiveness of monochromes relies on
making the most of the ink’s expressiveness. The expression ‘ink is colour is ink’ implies that the subtle variations in the application of ink, its relative darkness or paleness, are the precise equivalent of variegated layers of colour in polychromatic painting, while the term ‘numerous shades of ink’ further stresses how the dazzling effect of a colourful picture can be skilfully imitated through fine variations in the lustre, brightness, dryness and other qualities of the black ink applied to paper (Yang, 1999).

Painting and calligraphy are produced with the same tools: the ink brush, ink stick, paper and ink stone make up “the four treasures of the studio” (Long, 1987, p. 81). These constitute essential equipment for the Chinese painter and calligrapher and different types of stroke may be achieved by using a variety of brushes. The tools are highly valued and have been used by artists and calligraphers to create the rich tradition of Chinese painting and calligraphy. The Biography of Mao Yin written by the poet Han Yu in the Tang Dynasty (618-907AD) describes in detail the function of the ink brush, ink stick, paper and ink stone (Jang, 1995). From this book, a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of the significance and development of traditional Chinese art may be gained.

The history of the ink brush dates back three thousand years to the In-Shang Dynasty (1550 BC) in He-Nan province China. Writings were found on ceramics and on animal bone, demonstrating that brush and ink had been used for writing during the In-Shang Dynasty (Jang, 1995). Brushes are generally classified into three sizes, large, medium and small. There are two main parts, the stalk and the head. The selection is a matter of taste, but generally, most stalks are made of bamboo. Other materials include ivory, jade, gold, silver, wood, ceramics and stone. The head may be made of hair from
different animals, such as wolf, sheep, rabbit, buffalo, deer and mouse. Some are even made from human baby hair. The first cut of human baby hair is supposed to bring good fortune. Two different types of hairs may be used together. It all depends on requirements and the artist’s personal taste. Different hairs have different functions and properties; soft hair can absorb more water, while harder ones can make a more textured stroke. The quantity of water and ink on the brush, the choice of brush and the speed of writing can create different results (Li, 2001).

Virtuosity with the ink brush is central to Chinese painting and calligraphy. Ink brushes are thick at the base and narrow towards the tip. They can create thick and thin lines in one stroke. There are different ways of dipping the brush in ink. The head may be completely immersed in thick ink, dipped in more dilute ink, or the brush may be dipped in water only with the tip dipped into the ink. There are different ways to use the ink brush when writing as well. When using a small brush, artists keep their elbow on the desk. With a larger brush, they have to move their whole arm. Some brushes may be much larger than water colour or oil painting brushes (Li, 2001).

There are three basic brush strokes: Wet brush strokes, when the brush is loaded with ink, the ink runs loosely onto the paper. With a medium brush stroke, the edge of the stroke is clear and clean. A dry brush stroke is created when there is a very little ink on the brush; the brush skims the paper, thereby allowing the brush to miss the paper in some places. This is called “flying white” (Long, 1987). With the brush held at right angles to the paper or moved obliquely using the side of the head different strokes may be created. Applying different pressure to the brush and using different quantities of ink and water produces different results. Moreover, “the technique of the brush stroke is
affected by whether the paper surface is rough, smooth, dull or glossy, more or less absorbent, so the techniques required may include a quicker stroke, a drier brush than usual greater control of the ink, thicker brushwork and a more all-over style” (Long, 1987, pp. 92-93).

The Ink stick is a mixture of carbon and glue, and its quality is significant to the artwork. Artists have to choose the ink stick carefully. A high quality ink stick produces varied tones of black, with rich tonal range from white to black and a fine, even texture. In the tenth century in the Nan-Tong dynasty (AD 937-975), the emperor valued the importance of the ink stick and established a government office for ink making. During the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279), some famous artists such as Su Tong-Po, Huan Tin-Jan, Mi Fo and Shi Tsan-yen, had valuable collections of ink sticks (Jang, 1995).

The ink stick, which is ink in solid form, is ground with water on an ink stone. The ink stone may be made of jade, ceramics, tile or copper. The stone ink stone has been most popular for thousands years for its beauty. It may be simply made or more ornate, decorated with carved images from nature while some may be inscribed with poetry. A good quality ink stone is finely textured and easily produces ink without damaging the head of the brush. Traditionally, the ink stone was kept as a family treasure and handed down to family members over generations (Li, 2001).

Over two thousand years ago during the Shi-Han dynasty (206BC- AD 23), paper was invented by the Chinese; representing an enormous contribution to human culture. Animal bone, bamboo, wood, bronze and stone were engraved with texts and functioned as books. In the Jan-Guo period (475-221 BC), a well-known scholar Huei-Shi always
carried books made of numerous sections of bamboo in chariots when travelling. Hence later generations described someone who is knowledgeable as ‘a scholar with five chariots’. But these materials were very heavy and not very practical. A new support was needed. Some people wrote on silk, which was light and easy to preserve but too expensive for everyday use (Jang, 1995). In the Tong-Han dynasty around AD 200, Tsai Luen, an official eunuch who was a knowledgeable and accomplished artist and artisan improved the quality of paper. He ground old, torn cloth, tree bark and old fishing nets in a stone mortar and mixed them with water, then pressed them flat to make a translucent paper (Li, 2001).

The paper for writing and artwork is called ‘rice paper’. High quality rice paper can absorb a great quantity of water and still remain firm and maintain its integrity; therefore it is suitable for calligraphy and Chinese painting (Long, 1987). The Chinese name for rice paper is ‘Shiuan Zhi’, which comes from Shiuan-Zhou-Fu the town in which it was produced in the An-Huen Province during the Tang dynasty. From the Tang dynasty to the Ching dynasty, rice paper was valuable and given as a gift to emperors who were patrons and admirers of the arts. Many famous artists such as Tsai Xiang and Su Tong-Bo in the North Song dynasty, Wang Si-Zhi (AD 321-379) in the Jin dynasty (AD 265-420) and Lee Ho-Zhi in the South Tang dynasty were greatly appreciated for their use of Shiuan Zhi (Jang, 1995).
Chapter 2. Pictographs and Scripts

The strokes in both the genres of painting and calligraphy are the same. Normally, a beginner starts to learn calligraphy with the character Yung which means ‘Eternity’. Yung provides a good example to practice the basic strokes, dot, horizontal stroke, turning stroke, right-downward stroke, hook stroke, left-downward stroke, right-upward stroke and vertical stroke. This practice applies to the different scripts of Chinese calligraphy. In the Chinese painting *Withered Vines and Sparrows* (1930) by Qi Baishi (1864-1957) (Qi, 2001) and the calligraphy *Four Models of Calligraphy of Classical Poems* by Zhang Xu (AD 658-747) (T. Chen, 2003), both artists used line to produce a rhythm represented by varieties of lightness, heaviness and speed of stroke. Writing is regarded as a way of painting. Calligraphy can be treated as an artwork in its own right, but it can also be incorporated into a painting. Hence calligraphy is called the art of the line (Jiang, 1997).

From the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279) calligraphy became an added element that the painter included in his composition. The inscription on the painting may denote the artist’s name and date, or the subject of the work, which may be in the form of a poem or a description of the work. It is addressed to the recipient if the work has been commissioned to commemorate an event or occasion (Lee Kong Chian Art Museum., Lu, & National University of Singapore., 1990). Qi Baishi inscribed a poem on the left hand side of the work *Withered Vines and Sparrows*, which accompanies an illustration of sparrows in cold weather.

The earliest form of calligraphy was pictorial. Ideograms were found inscribed on shell, bone and bronze vessels; they were simple representational images of natural
phenomena such as sun, moon, tree, mountain and man, which were the foundation of calligraphy developed through different dynasties. During primitive periods, humans lived in a totally natural environment. They observed nature and animals and recorded what they saw with pictures. They depicted the very common images of daily life. These pictures gradually changed and shaped the calligraphic scripts which developed through different history (Cameron, 1999, p. 40; Kwo, 1990).

Nature was the inspiration for primitive man who created the earliest pictographs and the calligrapher is also inspired by nature. The most famous Chinese calligrapher is Wang Xi-Zhi (AD 321-379). He was born in the Jin Dynasty (AD 265-420) and under the supervision of his calligraphy teacher Lady Wei, he learned calligraphy by practicing the foundation of each stroke and studying the natural world. Attention was paid to trees, withered vines, clouds, the wind, mountains, the ocean, raindrops, rocks and animals as well as the tension of shooting an arrow. The seasons, the life cycles of creatures and the understanding of nature all benefited his writing skills (Jiang, 2009).

Ceramics dating back five thousand years to the Da Win Ko culture were found in the An Huen Province in Middle Eastern China. A black ceramic pot was unearthed carved with symbols. The symbol has a circle above which looks like a sun, a curve below the circle, like a cloud, then below the cloud is a mountain with five peaks. This is the first recognizable character found in Chinese history. This symbol represents sunrise, dawn and means full of vigour and vitality. Hence, this symbol may be a picture, a character; it also may be a poetic sentence. This form of expression is similar to emoticons (letter and keyboard characters that represent facial expressions like happiness :-D, sadness :-(
and satisfaction ;-p or irony ;-) and many others) which we use today on mobile text or MSN online chatting (Jiang, 2003, 2009).

There are six styles of writing which have been the most influential in the history of Chinese calligraphy; they are oracle bone script, seal script, clerical script, cursive script, regular script and semi-cursive script (Tseng, 1993). Calligraphy is an important living cultural heritage. “The characters not only convey the language of thought but also, in a visual way, the artistic beauty of the thought” (Long, 1987, p. 9). The oracle bone script (1500-950 BC) is close to pictographic script, which was made with a brush first and then carved into the surface of shell and bone. The line is thin, stiff and straight as it is carved with a small knife (Li, 2001).

Seal script was invented by Li Si in the Qin Dynasty (221-205 BC); it transforms the pictographic script into a simple, elegant, abstract style which was evenly spaced. When the Qin emperor Qin Shi-Huang standardized writing, seal script was the only official script in the Qin dynasty. Clerical script was a document script, popular in the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC to AD 221). It was a simplified seal script in which the circular stroke became a square stroke, and the frame of the character was transformed from a rectangle into a square. Cursive script originated in the second century BC, also named ‘grass script’. The main feature of this style is that it is not executed carefully and neatly, it is done rapidly to save time and several characters are connected together without the ink brush being lifted from the paper (Tseng, 1993).

Another significant script that originated in the Hang period was regular script. This was developed from the round stroke used in seal and clerical scripts then transformed
into a square stroke, the style and the composition of the characters was converted into an even form from that was flatter and more horizontal. Regular script is the standard script used presently. Semi-cursive script is ‘Hsing-Shu’ in Chinese, which is a combination of cursive and regular scripts; ‘Hsing’ meaning ‘moving’ or ‘walking’. The style of script is used to take notes or to write a draft, as the brush movement is slower and cursive. This script is popular in administrative circles and favoured by artists (Tseng, 1993). The art of Chinese calligraphy has developed over three thousand five hundred years. During this long history it has played different roles: as a medium for the exchange of ideas; as a means of expressing thought and contemplation; as a method of conveying culture, regulation and law within and without society; and in its own right, as a unique plastic art (Li, 2001).

Other cultures worldwide have developed their own styles of calligraphy such as Persian, Hebrew, Mayan, Turkish, Arabic, Indian, Nepalese, Japanese, Vietnameses and Korean calligraphy. Hebrew and Arabic are free cursive scripts, similar to Chinese in that way. Latin and Greek calligraphy are used in English and European cultures. However, the Western scripts have more rigorous regulation of shapes in writing hence the writing is strict with the accurate order of the strokes (Jean, 1992).
Chapter 3. The Development of *Ink Dance*

I use calligraphy and Chinese painting techniques in my animation employing the characters for tree, mountain, water, woman and man to create the animation ‘Ink Dance’. The meaning of the five characters will become apparent as the viewer watches the film. The characters are drawn in oracle bone script and are known as ideograms or pictographs. They were created in the Shang and Chou periods (1550 BC). (Kwo, 1990). Each closely resembles a natural object or element. The character of tree looks like a tree, mountains look like mountains, others are effortlessly identifiable as well. For the viewer the images are clearly recognisable as script as well as iconic objects.

*Ink Dance* is five minutes and thirty-five seconds long. This length allows me to have enough screen time to develop and explore a number of different characters and concepts. Animation combines music, sound and time elements; it represents pictures in living motion. Hence, I intend to carry forward the fine tradition of the calligraphy and ink and wash through animation so that people can approach and appreciate the value of Chinese culture in a more accessible manner, and hopefully with a more engaging presentation than in the traditional display of calligraphy. In this way new life can be given to traditional art and the fine conventions continued. As in the animations made by Walt Disney *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) conventional animations are presented in a narrative manner with a clear storyline including a beginning, middle and an end. On the other hand, more adventurous animators such as Norman McLaren pioneered experimental animation. McLaren made *Alouette* (1944) with shapes cut from paper, *Fiddle-De-Dee* (1947) and *Begone Dull Care* (1949) produced by painting directly on film, and also applied the frame-by-frame skill to two live actors in the animation *Neighbours* (1951).
Instead of having specific storyline and dialogue in these animations, he explored the interaction of rhythm and music with the animation (Bendazzi, 1994).

In *Ink Dance*, I explore the poetry of imagery rather than using a traditional narrative style. Artistic concepts in Chinese art are more concerned with expressions of personal emotions and the creation of a poetic atmosphere, than a realistic depiction alone. The famous North Song Dynasty (AD 960-1127) poet Wang Wei was praised by the artist Su Tong-Po in his time. Su was very complimentary towards Wang’s work, saying his paintings were full of poetic imagery and his poems evoked picturesque scenes (Jiang, 1997). This is the ‘literate painting’ style of the Song Dynasty. My animation embodies the poetic grace and movement through ink and wash with calligraphy, painting and dancers. *Ink Dance* presents the beauty of calligraphy and extends and develops the animation *Crossing Boundaries* that I made in 2003 for my Masters degree in Taiwan. The calligraphic characters flow into each other and evolve into the natural elements depicted in Chinese paintings. By the transformation from characters to images, the audience can comprehend the relationship between Chinese characters and the nature and delicacy of calligraphy.

I refer to the idea that animation is like music, where single frames are like single notes and multiple notes create a chord. Multiple image layers, like I use, are equivalent to a ‘visual chord’. When you compose them together you create a movie film or musical score. The multiple layers I use in my film are in the beginning section of the calligraphy, the tree, water, woman and man sequences and the final credits sequence. Each layer represents a single ‘note’ as such, but by using varied layers, different individual elements influence to each other to create a visual harmony. The film is made
by connecting those multiple-layer frames. They enrich the visual movement and make the film full of rhythm and fluency.

My film starts with overlapping characters (Figure 1-2) in a dark tone. The characters I use are semi-cursive script and cursive script emphasising the flow and abstract beauty of writing, some of which are readable but not in a series or with any apparent meanings. Rather, it can be treated as an abstract motion graphic to guide the viewers into an imaginary world of the senses.

Following this animated introduction the title (Figure 3) *Ink Dance* written in both Chinese and English appears. The English makes the meaning of the characters clear and allows the words to resonate with the individual experience of Western viewers. Next, images of two hands emerge with five different characters superimposed on them. These are mountain (Figure 4), water, woman (Figure 5), man and tree. As the hands change position, the characters change as well. I use oracle bone script in my left palm.
and regular script in my right palm for the introduction of characters in my film, because their styles are precise and easy to distinguish for the audience. This section is pixellated, consisting of a series of still photographs that are recorded and re-shot frame by frame. Characters are painted by hand; hence I use two hands in my film and make the characters.

The character *tree* (Figure 6-8) grows larger then transforms into a flying bird then back into a tree again. Eventually, it grows tall to become a huge tree which covers the whole screen. The tree changes into abstract lines then becomes *mountains* (Figure 9-10). The mountains form three-peaks rising above the clouds then sinking back into the white mist. Small ink drops (Figure 11) appear after the mountains, like dancing musical notations. Each ink drop spreads out and becomes a huge ink spot then fades out in the air. *Water* (Figure 12) appears after the ink drops. The element of water is formed by a small dot, the extension of the dot becomes a line, and many moving lines become a
flowing river. The gestural shapes of the calligraphy are transformed into living elements of the natural world.

At the end of the animation stand a woman and man. The image of the woman (Figure 13), is a transformation of the river. The character of the woman begins with hand drawn images moving slowly at the beginning. These change into a female figure who starts to dance, then the calligraphy and the ink drops mix with the movement of hands. A live action female dancer (Figure 14) merges with the calligraphy (Figure 15). The calligraphy transforms into the character for man and then eventually changes into live footage of a dancing male figure (Figure 16). This dancing image merges with the calligraphy while fading out at the end of the animation.
Figure 15: *Ink Dance* (Scene 9), overlapping calligraphy

Figure 16: *Ink Dance* (Scene 10), man dances with calligraphy
Chapter 4. The Aesthetics of Sound

The two defining features of animated film, apart from creative invention, are sound and vision. When the soundtrack is added to a movie, it is as if a completely new work has been created. With animation, it is routine to do the visual parts frame by frame, but it is not possible to simultaneously record the soundtrack frame by frame, be it sounds, dialogue or music. However, this also means that animation can work without the restraints of more ‘realistic’ styles of movie making. When producing the soundtrack of an animation feature, no consideration needs to be given to sounds and background noises at the time of the actual production of the frames. The sound engineer starts with a completely empty tape that stands apart from the picture reel, and so the artist has absolute liberty for developing his creative ideas. This is the point at which different ideas about the creative process come into play. Some directors will attempt to make up for the missing live, on-the-set sound by ‘recreating’ something as similar as possible, while other artists relish the opportunity to fashion something completely new and be as creative with the soundtrack as with the visual part of the film. These added possibilities for the separate treatment of pictures and sound are a major reason for the highly creative potential of animation (Russett & Starr, 1988).

Unless one insists on using the silent movie (or pantomime) format, sound is an essential part of drama, movies and animated films alike. This is because sound communicates: even when the frame is almost completely dark, or dazzlingly bright, one can still convey a wide range of distinct emotions and dramatic effects simply by the volume of sound, or indeed by choosing to temporarily suspend all sound and revert to silent frames. No matter how you handle the details, sound is the invisible soul of animated films (S. Chen, 1999).
While making the storyboard of my animation *Ink Dance*, I constructed the sound in my mind; I could hear the rhythm flowing through the images. After I completed three and half minutes, about two thirds of my film, I had a discussion with the music composer Jimmy Ho, a talented young musician with a Chinese music background and western music education. Ho has a deep understanding of the style of music I intended for my film. The music conveys a contemporary atmosphere developed from a traditional style and created from a mixture of live recorded performances, sample recorded instruments and synthetic virtual instruments. String and percussion instruments play the main roles in the film. Sounds such as wind, water, the river, birds and insects evoke a feeling of harmony between the universe and nature, enhancing the imagery.

Images may dominate the music, but even more easily music can dominate the images. The score is by no means always limited to a supportive function, as music can be just as expressive as images. *Ink Dance*, opens with a black screen and silence for seven seconds then the music begins with the marimba percussion instrument, followed a few seconds later by the images. This creates a space for the audience to imagine what may happen before the images appear. Sounds are obviously much more than a simple acoustic phenomenon perceived through our sense of hearing. Sound is inconspicuously but inseparably linked with vision. Even the simple sound of a single piercing voice may cause a wide range of differing images to float to the surface of the hearers mind (Bordwell & Thompson, 2001). In *Ink Dance* there are three light and clear sounds of the triangle with the beginning of the calligraphy. This tells the viewer that a transition is going to happen. At the end of the male dance sequence, the triangle is heard again to indicate the end of the story. In the female dance scene, Ho emphasizes the music of the calligraphy rather than the movements of the dancer. This integrates the dancer more
closely with the calligraphy, so the viewer focuses more on the rhythm of the calligraphy.

Moreover, music or sound effects enhance the image. In the scene of the river, the sound of the water evokes a flowing river and makes the image seem more immediate. Sound also increases the understanding of the image. The music in the film is based on an oriental style; only certain instruments can convey its spirit. The Chinese ‘erhu’ string instrument creates the dreamily surreal atmosphere in the female dance sequence while bass drum and cymbals plays a Chinese opera melody to match the rhythm of the male Kung Fu performance.

I intended to make the dancing male scene the highlight of the animation and to interrupt the lyrical mood created by the female dancer, therefore in this scene I used exaggerated camera movement, zooming in and out to shoot the male dancer’s movements and to make the footage looked unbalanced and entangled with the calligraphy, expressing dynamic energy. Musician Jimmy Ho used music similar to the Chinese opera, with a very dramatic and strong rhythm to contrast with the music that was used in the other sections of my animation.

Movie scores serve a similar function: through varying of rhythm and intensity, different emotions and movements are expressed and underscored. Different musical scores can make a considerable difference in the viewer’s perception of the same visual scene. Music has a timeless quality that works at a much deeper, more subconscious level than mere pictures, superimposing virtual images and feelings on the visual
stimulations that we are usually more consciously aware of. What’s more, music can be
neatly interwoven with the plot, but just the same it can reach beyond the narrow
contems of a specific story to express more general and lasting notions. In other words,
the musical score is free to connect and disconnect with the immediate plot just as the
artist desires (S. Chen, 1999).
Chapter 5. The Aesthetics of Black and White and Empty Space

In my work *Ink Dance* I use only black and white. Black and white has been used in Chinese painting and calligraphy for thousands of years creating a simple and rich visual impact. The contrast of black and white is a vigorous visual element, in both ancient and modern art, not visually disturbed by other colours. ‘Black ink’ is not always identical to conventional ‘ink-and-wash’. The latter technique places a lot of emphasis on the importance of dilution with water to create its artistic effect, in particular through spontaneous spreading and the not entirely predictable patterns formed as the ink expands upon contact with paper. Tools and materials affect the conveyance of the visual effect. Compared to the tone of ‘ink-and-wash’, the colour of the ‘black ink’ is in singular gradation; the physicality of the writing and the emotional expression is weaker than the ‘ink-and-wash’. As the artist varies the water content the visual effects vary the rhythm of the artwork. Thus, my studio work is focused on the creation of an animation with the gradations of ink-and-wash as opposed to monotonous black and white.

In western contemporary art, black and white are used extensively in painting, sculpture, costume, architecture, graphic design, TV commercials and film. In describing or defining hue in western society, black, white and grey are neutral or achromatic colours. However, according to western colour theories, black is associated with power, luxury, death, bad luck, depression, mystery and night while white indicates purity, cleanliness, innocence, light and peacefulness. Gray mediates between black and white and indicates ambiguity (Feisner, 2001). In Chinese painting theory, the use of ink is a basic skill in painting and calligraphy equivalent to the use of colour.
in western painting. In Chinese calligraphy ‘Ink is colour’. The ‘five colours in ink’ and refer to the artist’s use of black and white rather than other colours. ‘Five colours’ here, means the various grey tones from very deep black to pale grey. They include dry, wet, thick, thin and black, from opaque to translucent. The Tang dynasty (AD 618- 899) artist Chang Yan-Uan was quoted as saying “within ink you can create all the colours” in his book *Famous Paintings in All Successive Dynasties* (Jiang, 2003, p. 129).

Space in Chinese painting is important; the eye interprets this space as the sky, clouds, mist, water, or land. This blank white paper creates interpretive freedom for the viewer, but it does not equate to ‘white’ as in traditional western colour theory. In Chinese art theory it signifies space, it creates depth and it is complementary to black (Jiang, 2009). Emptiness, void and transience are the key elements in oriental aesthetics. Calligraphy is written on paper, as time passes, eventually the paper will disintegrate, and the ink will fade. They will no longer exist. This concept does not only apply to the calligraphy and Chinese painting but also architecture, stage performance and music (Jiang, 2003). Empty space is in contrast to solids. In the philosophy of the Chinese I-Ching this is the balance of the energy Yin and Yan (Lee, 1988).

The use of the ink brush applied using different pressures and different speeds can create infinite variety in the quality of the line. Moreover, the use of ink in different densities produces different tones. In terms of the visual impression, in the animation *Ink Dance* the great variety of textures is conveyed with the simplest colour element. The use of black and white and calligraphy, especially cursive script, also play a role as a bridge between Chinese art and western art.
In the Tang Dynasty, cursive script replaced the readable function of the writing and some artists were less concerned with the traditional function of writing and use calligraphy as purely visually aesthetic form of expression. In the fifties, with the adventure of abstract expressionism in Europe and America, Action painters used bodily gestures to paint, spray and splash pigment onto the canvas. Some of these artists were inspired by Chinese calligraphy. In the abstract oil painting *Crow Dancer* (1958) the American artist Franz Kline (1910-1962) used black, grey and white in a similar style to that of Chinese ink and wash painting. With thick black lines, Kline skimmed the dry brush across the canvas to create the ‘flying white’ in the same manner as the traditional Chinese technique mentioned on page 8 (Jiang, 2009).

The features of Abstract Expressionism are spontaneity and a brush technique that is full of immediacy. Frank O’Hara observed: “The stroke and linear gesture of the painter’s arm and shoulder are aimed at an ultimate structure of feeling…” (Kline, 1994, p. 21). This is the manner in which action painters express their passion and vigour through painting. As Harold Rosenberg says “I found it in the active (ongoing) relation between the artist and the canvas, the canvas was regarded as a “mind” responding to the mind of the artist.” (Kline, 1994, p. 162) Kline’s oil paintings convey the dynamic of energy, though his working procedure was very cautious. As Manuel J. Borja-Villel noted:

> Although it is true that his paintings convey into the viewer a sense of dynamism, we also know that his working process was slow and that his canvases exude subtlety and are filled with nuances. He laboured carefully over every colour, including black and white, until he found the exact texture and tone he wanted.
The origins of the black-and-white oil painting style can be seen in some of Kline’s earlier small ink on paper drawings such as *Untitled* (1948), *Rice Paper Abstract* (1949) and *Untitled* (1950). He used monochrome to create volumes and shapes and never consciously restricted himself to a certain style or attempted to make the painting into an ideogram (Kline, 1994). Kline says “In using colour, I never feel I want to add to or decorate a black-and-white painting. I simply want to feel free to work both ways” (Kline, 1994, p. 162).

Other well known artists used calligraphy forms for example, Henri Michaux (1899-1984, France) who was inspired by Chinese ideographs in his art work *Movements* (1951); *Senza Titolo* (1952) by Hans Hartung (1904-1989, France), *Peinture 23 Mai 1969* (1969) by Pierre Soulages (1919- , France), *Number 27* (1950) by Jackson Pollock (1912-1956, USA), and *Samurai III* (1974) by Robert Motherwell (1915-1991, USA). They created their paintings in oil on canvas, but all their work reinterpreted the beauty of Chinese calligraphy. These artists were unfamiliar with Chinese writing; but they used the visual device of calligraphy to create their paintings (Li, 2001).

Chinese calligraphy is executed in a similar way to sketching in western art. The linear nature of Chinese calligraphy can be compared with Western drawing techniques. Each stroke of line represents ‘skeleton’ and ‘flesh’ as is the human body. This is also so in Chinese painting. With different strengths and varied speeds, the rhythm is revealed naturally. In the west, artists use line for drawing with pen, pencil or brush in single colour, or even with multiple colours. These works are usually regarded as sketches,
drawings or as drafts. Western drawings are often studies of the subjects in the preparation of a final work. However, in Chinese ink and wash painting, the artists use lines to create their works directly. The works are completed works, not merely to be treated as a sketch or drawing. The writing styles of Western and Far Eastern cultures differ. While many Western writers or artists prefer to rest both of their elbows and hands on the surface of the paper. Chinese and Japanese artists frequently write or draw without their hands and elbows supported in this way. They deem that with the free movement of the arm the artist’s spirit can run through their work unhindered (Rawson, 1989).
Chapter 6. Contemporary Roles for Calligraphy

As times change, calligraphy plays different roles for different reasons. One of the most significant events in modern Chinese history was the Cultural Revolution, a violent mass upheaval that caused social, political, and economic disorder from 1966 to 1976. Ink brush and calligraphy became the tools for “large character posters”, banners or signs, materials of class struggle and political violence (Sullivan, 1996). Countless reproductions of Mao’s portraits, writings and sayings were widely displayed on the streets. Calligraphy became the foremost cultural production and visual language of Mao’s time (Kocur & Leung, 2005).

During the twentieth century, the social and political uses of calligraphy have been radically changed. Calligraphy is no longer an art associated primarily with the traditional scholarly elite. Not only has calligraphy been employed as a tool of revolution, but it has become a popular amateur art practiced by people of all walks of life, and artists have found ways to use it to challenge traditions rather than perpetuate them.

(Ebrey, 2010)

In the late twentieth century, some Chinese artists built their reputations and pursued their freedom abroad. Some of them still used traditional calligraphy or ink wash techniques in their work. Xu Bing, a Chinese experimental artist, went to America in the nineties. Even while living in the west, he continues his interest in written words which bring to his work a philosophic dimension. Xu had a solo exhibition of his work titled
Tian Shu (A Book from the Sky) at the China Art Gallery in Beijing in 1988. Tian Shu was a large installation with plain printed black on white texts covering the wall and floor, and draping across the ceiling. The prints hung on the ceiling are in a more religious calligraphic style. The ones on the walls present the format found in daily newspapers. The viewer is surrounded by the installation. He redesigned the traditionally recognized components of Chinese characters and made them look familiar but unreadable. The abstract characters/symbols he created liberated Chinese speakers from the restrictions of accepted meanings (Sullivan, 1996). Another contemporary Chinese artist, Ma Desheng, went to Lausanne, Switzerland and creates paintings in Chinese ink. He said “We can never surpass the Ancients, but neither have we any choice but to risk taking new path” (Sullivan, 1996, p. 267). Young Chinese artists continue to challenge the uncertain future.

Calligraphy plays multiple roles in contemporary Chinese society, particularly as a link to tradition and as mentioned, in its use as a social and political tool during the Cultural Revolution. I have always been interested in calligraphy since I was a high school student. I have developed the concept of bringing calligraphy to life so that it is physically transformed into its meanings. The Chinese characters are layered onto hands and bodies to show how language influences the way people see the world both physically and metaphorically. Language is expressed in written characters, but also in spoken and gestural forms. Therefore, my contextual research is not only carried out by reading books and journals, but also by reviewing movies and animations. Calligraphy plays the main visual role in my work. The motion and mood of the calligraphy runs through the whole film, and, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, "painting flows from calligraphy", and is an extension of Chinese painting, so I use reference to Chinese painting in my work to intensify the poetics of the calligraphic characters.
Among the Chinese cultural regions, only Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong still use traditional script as a formal writing. Therefore, the Taiwanese people can have a conversation directly with the artists through the calligraphy that was written thousands of years ago. In Taiwan, the art of calligraphy is continued through education. Students learn calligraphy history and practice calligraphy writing in the elementary and high school. Several calligraphy competitions are held yearly. Calligraphy is also applied in daily life, on the signs of the shops, buildings and temples, bank seals and the Spring Festival couplets. The Spring Festival couplets are calligraphy written on strips of red paper, composed of two sentences which complement each other in sound and meaning to express New Year wishes. These form a main part of house decoration of the Chinese New Year for families in the rural areas, and even in the city people paste the Spring Festival Couplets on their gate panels on the lunar New Year’s Eve. These practices keep the culture alive.

A well-known Taiwanese calligrapher Grace Tong integrates the traditional calligraphy technique with her own style in writing. Tong was born in 1942 in Shanghai, and came to Taiwan with her family when she was a young child. She started learning calligraphy from her father in 1952. She completed high school and undergraduate education in art in Taiwan. In 1968 she went to America, studied a Masters degree in Art at the University of Massachusetts, majoring in oil painting with a minor in ceramics. During her degree at Massachusetts, she studied western aesthetic theory and tried to apply the concepts of western composition in calligraphy. After graduating in 1970, she worked as a graphic designer at the New York Magazine Company, and then came back to Taiwan in 1971 (Hun, 2004). Tong has been practicing calligraphy for over fifty years, attempting to preserve the traditional Chinese art of thousands of years. As a Taiwanese
artist, she is continually willing to explore the creation of her new unique style, not just following the examples of her forerunners. Most of her calligraphic works on rice paper are produced with large ink brushes and the size of the paper is normally larger than two metres by one metre. She works on the ground to prevent the ink drops dripping beyond control, as Jackson Pollock did.

Tong’s work serves as a model for my work; she makes excellent connections between calligraphy and painting and creates a contemporary mood from traditional art. The traditional skill is not just copied but assimilated into an individual style.

Traditional teaching of calligraphy stresses that one should begin one’s pursuit of the art by tracing and copying the works of the ancient masters. This way one may absorb the essence of their styles and lay a solid foundation for developing one’s own skills. Yet this approach also has its drawbacks, as it tends to foster an overly imitative attitude and restrains the artist’s individual development. Grace Tong breaks the grip of ancient calligraphic formulae: while her art is firmly rooted in the dynamic elegance of Yan Lukung (AD 709-785) and shows her intimate understanding of the subtle powers of brush and ink, she designs new and dynamic arrangements that give each of her works a powerful momentum and natural harmony. Her pieces combine calligraphy and painting to the point where the two become one, merging the ambiguity of expressive brushwork with the precise poetics of text (Tong, 1997).

Tong is a forerunner of contemporary calligraphy. She has never wholly succumbed to the influence of Western concepts or practices and she has remained faithful to her origins. She works to renew the old, traditional methods and approaches to originate a
new style that may initiate an original contemporary genre of calligraphy. Tong has brought calligraphy a new vitality.

In the composition of her works, she emphasizes ‘bubai’, or the arrangement of spaces. Not just the aesthetically pleasing execution and delicate balance of each single character is important, equal or more consideration is given to the overall structure of the entire calligraphy, with each smaller element a crucial piece that completes the well-rounded whole.

(Huang, 1993)

To achieve this well-proportioned composition, she employs thick, emphatic strokes contrasted with strokes that are delicate and sparse. The marks vary between different sized lines and shapes, between watery and dry strokes, between lighter, thinner and thick, dark use of ink, and expansive, sweeping strokes and more composedly accomplished ones. Tong invents lines with a dynamic rhythm which function as visual music. Grace Tong revels in the expression of the abstract. While in spirit calligraphy is a form of painting, it yet goes beyond painting in that Chinese characters are also signs that carry meaning. Tong has by no means stripped the characters of their significance, and all her art springs from her acknowledgment of the script’s universal beauty. In the work *Let your heart be open* (1996), she reinterprets the characters and gives them new forms that transcend traditional barriers and formal constraints, allowing their very soul and essence to become visible to the careful observer (Tong, 1997).

In her calligraphy exhibition in 1997 at the Eslite Gallery in Taipei, Tong’s works varied in size from two metres to four metres broad and up to two metres high. Her
works present a rich gradation of ink-and-wash with some red stamps interspersed amongst each of them. A feeling of silent musical rhythm of tremendous momentum could be sensed flowing on the paper. The physicality of the technique, using a very large brush to create the writing was very powerful. This was one inspiration for me to turn this still calligraphy into animation.

Grace Tong's calligraphy is lively and executed with vigorous flourishes; her energetic and committed attitude to calligraphy intrigued me. She has contributed more than thirty years of her life to promote Chinese calligraphy through exhibitions and publishing. She has made the old art come alive and become a vital art form once more, so that it is more acceptable to contemporary society.

When I worked as a graphic designer at Eslite Bookstore in Taipei Taiwan in 1997, I was in charge of installation and sign design for Tong's calligraphy exhibition at my company's art gallery. Direct experience of her powerful work influenced me greatly. I could imagine the physical strength needed to write with a huge brush to create the work. The enormous scale of the paintings made the calligraphic characters life size so that they were comparable to human bodies. I do not intend to copy Tong's style, but try to create a free and individual style of writing that will make the still image come alive. I learn from my forerunners, but eventually, through practice I hope to develop my own unique style.
Chapter 7. Animation and Ink-and-Wash Painting

Accounts of Chinese animation can be traced back to the traditional Chinese art of Shadow Puppetry in the Han Dynasty (206 BC– AD 220) (Yu, 2006). This technique used back-lighting to create the illusion of moving images. The puppeteer would operate the puppets which were made of donkey leather to create a show. The shadow puppetry had a great effect on the early Chinese animation style. These puppeteers created meticulous drama productions and character movements projected onto a flat plane. The beginning of Chinese animation was named Artistic Film. This is one of four film styles that exist in China. Artistic Films encompass animated film, puppet film, cut-outs film and origami film. These film styles did not have realistic stories; instead they displayed vivid images to show exaggeration, resemblance, symbolism and shape changing. This was to create an abstract world which absorbed the audience in fantasy and imagination. The stories reflected human life as well as dreams and aspirations.

The pioneers of the Chinese animation industry were represented by the four Wan brothers: the twins Wan Laiming (1899-1997) and Wan Guchan (1899-1995), Wan Chaochen (1906-1992) and Wan Dihuan (1907). They had been interested in the motion of figures since their childhood. The brothers made their first animation, *Uproar in the Art Studio*, in 1926. They also made the first Chinese feature animation, *The Princess with the Iron Fan*, in 1941 This eighty minute feature film was well accepted in China, Singapore and Indonesia (Bendazzi, 1994; Lent, 2001).

In 1960 a Chinese animation director, Te Wei and Qian Jajun made the first ink-and-wash animated film *The Tadpoles in Search of Their Mummy*. This was the premier
presentation of the art of calligraphy and animation together. Te presented the unique aesthetics of Chinese culture to the world. He created a number of works during his time at the Shanghai Movie Studio, including *The Tadpoles in Search of Their Mummy* (1960), *The Cowherd’s Flute* (1963) and *Mountain and River Nostalgia* (1988). The style of the three animations’ is based on the famous Chinese painters, Lee Kérán, Qi Baishi and Fu Baoshi. To this day, these works remain classics of ink-and-wash animation, critically considered as being unsurpassed by any other director and exemplary in both their production technique and their impressive imagery (Yu, 2006).

In 1985, animator Xu Jingda (known in artistic circles as ‘A Da’), used Chinese hieroglyphics (the earliest Chinese written words), to create a humorous film *Thirty-Six Chinese Characters*. The film uses early Chinese hieroglyphics combining natural images such as a mountain, a tree, a sun, a house, a person and an elephant. It indicates that there are no boundaries between Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting. The painting brush is based on the strokes of a Chinese character. While in spirit calligraphy is a form of painting, it goes beyond painting in that Chinese characters are also signs that carry meaning (Bendazzi, 1994). There is great scope for research in this field. We make sense of the world through images and words, so translating/ transforming Chinese written words for non-Chinese speakers will increase their awareness of oriental culture as a lived experience. In *Thirty-Six Chinese Characters*, the words are pictures, and characters as well. Through their performance, the audiences can understand the story without language.

There are a variety of techniques that have been employed in the history of calligraphy animation. In *The Tadpoles in Search of Their Mummy, The Cowherd’s Flute* and *Mountain and River Nostalgia*, they use cell animation for character movement, and use
Chinese painting, ink-and-wash for the background. The *Thirty-Six Chinese Characters* is also in 2D drawing style. *The Naughty* (1982), directed by Hu Jin-Qing, combined cut-outs as the characters and Chinese paintings as the background. More recent films *The Way* (2003), directed by Qing Huang, *Brush* (2005), directed by Lei Chen, and *Ode to Summer* (2003), directed by Ron Hui, are made with 3D computer techniques. They use 3D technology to imitate the material of ink-and-brush, creating entirely new, lifelike visual effects.

Whereas the forerunners of ink-and-wash animation drew the characters on celluloid or used ink-and-wash as the background images only, the skills I use are different from the forerunners, though I still present the Chinese style of drawing. All of my calligraphy and ink paintings were drawn on rice paper frame by frame, and then scanned and edited to make a film. For some scenes such as in the ink spray in the character ‘tree’, the water drops spray, and the girl with ink, the moving ink was drawn on the rice paper and captured in real-time on camera. In this way I can present the fresh and immediate movement of ink-and wash in my work. Instead of having the landscape or background elements remain static as in the earlier examples of Chinese calligraphy animation, I make them merge and flow.

The Chinese artist Qiu Anxiong (1972- ), an animator and painter, made two animations from 2006 to 2009, *The New Book of Mountains and Seas* Part 1 and Part 2 using 6000 ink-and-brush paintings. They were projected on a three-channel widescreen at “The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art” from 5 December 2009 to 5 April 2010 at the Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland, Australia. The animated project is based on *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, an ancient story about the geography of mountains,
rivers and the sea, and several amazing animals. The New Book of Mountains and Seas depicts the environmental degradation in the modern world caused by human technologies, such as warfare, human organ farming, industrialised animal farming and China’s damming of the Yangtze River. Presented as a wall-sized widescreen projection, the work explores the impact of manmade interventions into the natural world, which destroy the balance of the ecological environment. Qiu uses the sensitivity to nature of traditional Chinese painting techniques to illustrate the absurd modern predicament triggered by the misuse of technology and emphasised by the gigantic black and white mutating imagery (Stutchbury, 2009).
Chapter 8. Calligraphy and Dance

All the Chinese scripts have their value and aesthetic. In the six different styles of Chinese calligraphy characters, oracle bone script, clerical script, and regular script are more legible and functional while semi-cursive script and cursive script are unrestrained and expansive, especially the cursive script created during the Han dynasty. Cursive is written naturally and rapidly in a casual style. Cursive script is created through the artist’s subjective idea, turning the strokes into lines, making the writing become abstract and even lose its function of legibility. Cursive script creates its own unique free style by abandoning the restricting frameworks; it brings a high artistic level of inspiration to calligraphy.

The stroke of cursive script is full of facility and energy, and it is considered one of the most beautiful styles of writing in Chinese calligraphy. The Tang Dynasty calligrapher Zhang Xu (AD 658-747) is the most important cursive script artist in Chinese history. His style was named ‘wild cursive script’ for its freedom and fluency which is not restricted by the regularity of traditional writing (Tseng, 1993).

The key feature of his style was inspired by the sword dance of Gung Shung Da Niang. The speed of her dance and the beauty of the movement deeply influenced Zhang’s writing. Moreover, alcohol drinking is another factor that contributed to Zhang’s art. After becoming drunk, the alcohol released his mind and soul and the unique calligraphy aesthetics thus created produced his characteristic work. In terms of this point, it is more like an impromptu performance art and not simply calligraphy alone. It was created under heightened emotional conditions. We can imagine Zhang Xu moved
his arms and whole body to let the elegant strength of the calligraphy emerge from the ink brush (Jiang, 2009).

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre is a Taiwanese dance company, combining elements of Chinese cultural tradition with contemporary dance. In the works *Cursive* (2001), *Cursive II* (2003) and *Cursive III* (2005), cursive Chinese calligraphy was evoked by the 24 dancers using their bodies as virtual brushes performing on the stage.

The founder, choreographer and artistic director of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Lin Hwai-Min, has been fascinated by the artistic calligraphy for many years. He discovers a similarity between the bodies of his dancers and Chinese calligraphy, the initial energy. For him, traditional calligraphy is not only a sequence of characters painted in black ink on rice paper. Rather, it is traces of the calligraphers’ energy left behind from ‘dancing’ with brushes on the paper. This energy, he insists, must be felt, absorbed and transformed into dance movements.

(Lin, 2003)

In *Cursive*, the dancers move their bodies on the stage as brushes dancing on the surface of a page. Their performance unrolls like a scroll to interpret the rhythmic energy produced by both dancers and calligraphy (Anderson, 2003). Lin states that breathing plays a significant role in dance, for by breathing properly, dancers can move their bodies elastically. The dancers perform in dialogue with the calligraphy projected at the back of the stage in *Cursive*. Sometimes the characters were projected on their bodies to present a fluid interaction. *Cursive II* depicts the calligraphy in grey tones as a lyric poetry, using the dancers’ bodies as the brush strokes to release an abstract energy. *Cursive III* is the last episode of this series, evoking the ‘wild’ Kuang style of cursive.
Dancers set free their limbs and torsos in the manner of the unrestricted writing which flowed from the ink brush of the cursive calligrapher Zhang Xu. These dances transform archaic aesthetics into stunning modern motion.

Dancers move and calligraphers create their works with ‘Chi’ energy. Lin represents cursive script in dance as the movement of dancers similar to the flow of ink in calligraphy; dancing releases energy from the body as does the rhythm of calligraphy. Both are dynamic forms of expression. The calligraphy in Taoism expresses a natural truth:

If the mind and brush are united, the writing is calligraphy. If the Ying and Yang are combined, it's called the Tao. Thus, those who talk about the Tao of Chinese Calligraphy express themselves naturally from their hearts. If the person is not in accordance with this natural law, what he writes is not what his heart desires to communicate. The mouth (or writing) does not follow the heart. So we say Chinese calligraphy is the self-image of one's heart.

(Hough, n.d.)

The Cloud Gate Dancers use their bodies’ movement to suggest the ink brush as an embodiment of the calligraphy rather than imitating the shape of the calligraphy (Lin, 2003). The movement of the human body can be compared to the gestures of calligraphy. In my previous animation *Crossing Boundaries* (2003), I merged calligraphy and the human figure in live action to create a surrealistic sequence. In my current project I transfer calligraphy to the dancing figure. The flow of calligraphy can be compared to the dancing figure. Body movement and calligraphy can both present motion, gesture, rhythm and balance. My animation is based on traditional hand drawn
images (calligraphy), combined with live action of dancing to create a dynamic contemporary spirit. I use semi-cursive script overlapping with the live dancing footage to present the beauty of human motion through dancing and calligraphy. Chinese native speakers will be able to comprehend the meaning of the writing. Non-Chinese speakers however, can appreciate it as an art performance. In *Ink Dance*, the story telling is through visuals, sound and music, not through dialogue. This is a main distinguishing feature between animation and feature film and it applies to animations in both the east and west. There is no dialogue in Michael Dudok De Wit’s *Father and Daughter* (2000), Frederic Back’s *The Man Who Planted Trees* (1987), Alexander Petrov’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (1999) (Queiroz & Wiedemann, 2004), Xu Jingda’s *The Three Buddhist Monks* (1980), or Te Wei and Qian Jajun’s *The Cowherd’s Flute* (1963) (Bendazzi, 1994).

Practicing Chinese calligraphy is a form of meditation, with the body and mind which combines sending forth and retrieving the energy through your mind to the arm and body. The traditional Chinese martial art Kung Fu emphasizes both internal and external gestures. This vigour does not only come from the physical exterior, it also comes from the inner vibration, the energy or chi. “This is one of the reasons that Chinese calligraphy is known as “Heart Painting” or Mind Image” (Hough, n.d.). The artist can feel the movement that is triggered by breath, then the energy pushes forward the torso, arms and hands and courses through the whole body.

The movement and rhythm in calligraphy are also related to the different types of movement that may be seen in Tai Chi, the Serpentine dance and Ribbon dance. Tai Chi is referred to as the internal martial art and is regarded as a slow movement of dance. By
practicing regularly, an internal psychic energy is released, hence balance and harmony of the body and soul are created (Galante & Selman, 1981). The Serpentine dance dates back to the late nineteenth century; the dancer spins her body and long sleeves, looking like a flying butterfly. This form is similar to the traditional Chinese ribbon dance, and they are both performed with fluid, graceful and unrestrained motions (Greskovic, 1998).

Animators have often used dance to exploit the unconstrained movement made possible through the techniques of animation. Norman McLaren took advantage of the optical printer technique to create a poetic black and white experimental animation *Pas de Deux* in 1969, a film about the beauty of dance. McLaren captured two dancers dressed in white on a completely black background and floor. He used both front lighting and back lighting to make the outline of dancers’ figures clear. To give a slow movement effect, shooting was done mainly at 48 frames per second. The average number of overlapping images was eleven, created in a high contrast positive transferred by the original negative. Under the multiple exposures, the trace of the dancers’ elegant movements were revealed on the dark background (Russett & Starr, 1988).

The New Zealand born animator Erica Russell’s work *Triangle* (1994) integrates realistic body figures and abstract images, simple characters with powerful motion. She uses exaggerated movements of dance by squeezing, pulling and pushing to transfer the figures into different shapes. (Queiroz & Wiedemann, 2004). The rhythm of the music compliments the spontaneous drawings, some of which flow like Chinese calligraphy. The motion of the forms are varied, sometimes gentle sometimes full of strength. Her other two animations *Feet of Song* (1989) and *SOMA* (2001) also interpret the theme of dance.
Chapter 9. Studio Technique

My studio work research is an extension of my Masters in Taiwan. The focus remained on developing a non-narrative project with particular attention to the aesthetic poetry of images. This necessitated concentration on visual design and the flow of movement, along with detailed research into appropriate techniques for realising this uniquely hybrid approach to animating.

My animation studio project starts with a pencil sketch storyboard (Appendix I, p. 62-64) then the storyboard images are transferred, extended, and refined to A4 size paper (Figure 17-18). The movement test (pencil test) is done using the FlipBook software with a simple black & white (gray-scale) camera, which captures each of the drawings frame by frame and makes a sequence. This sequence is editable in the Flip Book software to ensure the timing is what I intended. The test helps me to adjust timing and creates a rough moving picture of my animation, wherein I can review and adjust the timing for functionality and readability for the overall sequence.

Figure 17: *Ink Dance* (Scene 4), mountain, pencil drawing (1)

Figure 18: *Ink Dance* (Scene 4), mountain, pencil drawing (2)

Figure 19: *Ink Dance* (Scene 4), mountain, ink drawing (1)

Figure 20: *Ink Dance* (Scene 4), mountain, ink drawing (2)
When timing is confirmed, I re-draw those pictures in ink on the rice paper (Figure 19-20). The main technique I use in my animation is ink on paper, which is the traditional way of doing calligraphy and Chinese painting. In this way, it presents the unique texture of the Chinese ink style. To recreate accurately the quality of the ink and paper textures, I scan each image I draw then edit them in After Effects software.

In my original storyboard (Appendix I, pp. 62-64), the structure was more complicated than in the final version (Appendix II, pp. 65-70), I made several changes in the storyboard. Firstly, in the beginning of the hands scene, I showed the six Chinese scripts in two hands, to indicate that Chinese calligraphy is created by hand, instead of only showing them on the paper. Secondly, in the tree scene, instead of showing two trees, I showed one tree in the hand only, to enhance the visual simplicity. After the mountains scene, a few water drops were added utilising the ink spray technique to represent the immediacy of a splash of water. Furthermore, I added a dancing female after the character ‘woman’, to contrast with the male dancing. The female is accompanied with gentle music while the male has powerful music. At the end I deleted the repeated tree scene and had the film end with the male dance, and followed the credits with calligraphy in the background. As calligraphy is the main theme, it is significant and more appropriate to make it run through the whole film and conclude with it.

In some of the images I intend to represent the spread of fresh ink (figure 21-22), so I do the test sequence drawing and then capture the trace of the final ink drawing under the camera. This technique is called *Pixilation*. *Pixilation* is a specialized technique in animation. The camera records sequential moving images of some natural or real-time event frame by frame. By composing these series of images the non-living object or material comes alive. This is called live animating. It can even be applied to human or
animal movement to represent a semi-continuous movement (Laybourne, 1998). This technique creates a broken series of movements displaying the flow of the ink. This skill is also applied in the hands scene with words in the beginning of my film. Another technique I use is capturing female and male live action dancing with a camera. I use a digital video camera for shooting, and then edit and compose the images with the ink and calligraphy layers using a computer.

![Figure 21: Ink Dance (Scene 3), character tree with ink](image)

![Figure 22: Ink Dance (Scene 5), a water drop spray](image)

Drawing ink on paper is very time consuming and needs many tests to control the ink quality. Different rice papers present different results of visual effects, depending on the material, thickness and absorbency of water. I tried many tests on different rice papers, such as Uen Ren Shu Hua, Sun Iun, Jiau Bai Suen, Te Ji and Jing He (Appendix III, p.71). Jing He rice paper absorbs and spreads water and ink evenly, so I used it to draw the river and the character ‘woman's’ scenes to emphasise the sense to fluidity of movement. For other scenes in my film I used Jiau Bai Suen rice paper for its rich surface on which the traces of ink appear clearly and naturally. This is important for clarity and legibility. The other three papers mentioned above have their own advantages but are not suitable for use in this work. The quantity of water usage and the speed of drawing make the results varied. In the Ink and Calligraphy Practices examples (Appendix IV, page 72), the upper right hand side (in figure a and b) of the paper uses less water on the brush while the upper left hand side of the same paper uses more water. They show the varied effects of wet and dry. The same skill applies to all the
drawings in my work. I make a judgement for each different sequence of my work according to the desired aesthetic affect required to enhance the visual meaning in each sequence. Other calligraphy exercises are shown on the same page. Normally, I have to practice the calligraphy many times, and then choose which example makes the strokes look natural and balanced for my work.

In early development tests for this project, I tried other techniques on computer using the softwares Photoshop, Flash and Painter. Photoshop and Painter are successful in imitating styles of drawing such as pencil texture or oil painting but none of them can present real ink texture very well. For this reason I decided to use the traditional way to do the drawing in my film. Ink on paper has a random outcome; hence I create the animation through practice and experimentation and dedicate myself to using the advantages of the ink. For the compositing and post-production, After Effects (AE) played an important role in my work in editing, to effectively realize the intended aesthetic sense of the production. By overlapping different layers of the hand drawn images, it created a dreamlike vision. This software is also useful for adjusting tones, contrast and further adjustments to timing based on the final outcome of the sometimes-random flow of ink. Using layers and various adjustments I can merge together the two different styles of images, drawing and live action dance.

Preserving the quality of the ink and paper is a principal issue. It is important to capture the details of the real texture and the unique beauty of the ink and wash on paper, so that the viewer can distinguish the difference from other styles of animation. To achieve this goal, all the images and calligraphy are scanned in high resolution, 600 x 600 pixels, in greyscale tone. I also set a widescreen ratio of 16:9 to give the image more depth and
breadth. The other technique I use is to capture the fresh ink while it drops on the paper using a professional Canon camera in a rostrum set-up and editing with Stop Motion Pro v7 software. These are good ways to convert high quality analogue images into digital form and it is more affordable than 16mm or 35mm traditional film production for students or independent animators.

As an example, in the shot of “mountains” in *Ink Dance*, the process began by storyboard, rescaling the small images onto A4 paper, then drawing the draft sequence of images presenting the shape changes. Each drawing is numbered from one to eighty in this case. Then I test the sketch draft using FlipBook software to see if the timing is suitable. In Australia, video format runs at 25 frames per second, so I hold each drawing for two or 3 frames, depending on the desired speed. The 80 drawings therefore create approximately 200 frames of footage, equal to about 8 seconds of screen time. The quality of FlipBook is low, however it is a quick way to do a timing test. It also allows editing within the software if the timing is not suitable. After I make sure the timing and the images are right, I re-sketch them on the rice paper then draw the final version in ink. The ink brush, ink and rice paper were bought in Taiwan. I tested three different rice papers in different thicknesses to see which one was better for this scene. I chose the thickest paper for its absorbability of water.

Drawing by hand on paper produces chance textures and accidental beauty, rather than the controlled drawing and ability to ‘undo’ on computer, therefore the most difficult task of my studio work is maintaining consistent water and ink control. The difference between Chinese painting and water colour painting is that after a Chinese painting is complete and when the rice paper is dry, the ink fades much more than in a water colour
painting. When drawing a number of Chinese paintings in sequence it is even more arduous to maintain their tonal consistency. Thus, I need to add more ink to some of the finished drawings if the tone looks quite different to the previous or next image. After adjusting the timing, and to keep the high quality, I export this sequence as an AVI format. When I complete all the sequences, I compose the images with music using Premiere software which can integrate sound and film footage together. With six audio tracks and three video layers, Premiere allows the director and editor to overlap and adjust both images and sound according to the aesthetic outcome desired. I did some subtle revisions between each of the scenes so they would merge and transfer into the other scene smoothly. Also I made sure the images matched the timing in the music and sound. The combination of traditional and Oriental aesthetics with computerized production methods further promotes the process of diversification in the field of mixed media animation, presenting Chinese culture to new audiences.

I spent 3 and half years completing my studio and exegesis work as laid out in the production schedule shown in Appendix V, page 73. In the first year of my study, I met with my primary supervisor Andi Spark once a week for my research project. I worked on both my studio work and exegesis writing equally from March 2007 to August 2009, and from September 2009 to the end of 2009, I mainly concentrated on my animation. I finished my animation production on the 3rd March 2010, and then completed my exegesis on 25 May 2010. During the creation of my animation, I wrote down notes about the structure and context that related to my exegesis writing. On the other hand, when I was reading and viewing the relevant texts films and animations, I was thinking about some of the skills I could apply to my own studio work, such as the composition, how to mix calligraphy and film, and how to integrate the sound and music into my
animation. In both the studio work and writing I took time for adjustment and re-editing. It took me about one year to finalise the concept and the story board and took me another two and half years to complete the whole research.
Conclusion

Chinese calligraphy has a unique cultural identity, as a plastic art, cultural media and the bridge for communication. The beauty of the strokes is inspired by the natural world. After thousands of years, many contemporary artists are still inspired by the tools and techniques of this ancient traditional art. The interplay of symbolic and natural interpretations of the script creates layered meanings that operate across cultures.

In the exegesis, the art historical research develops knowledge in Chinese calligraphy and painting and the capturing of movement through gesture. The restrained and subtle aesthetics of monochrome ink wash painting and calligraphy provides a model for contemporary practice based on rhythm, balance and harmony. The similarities between Chinese calligraphy, and drawing and action painting in the west are explored to establish a link between these cultures in their use of embodied expressiveness. The fluid brush strokes created by the calligrapher or painter can suggest poetic grace or powerful movement. In a similar manner, a dancer releases bodily energy that echoes the rhythm of calligraphy. The interweaving of text, painting and dance reflects the way in which meaning is embedded in lived experience.

To achieve my goal in Ink Dance of retaining the materiality of the ink wash technique, experimental methods were needed for the studio work. The creation of accidental beauty, in particular through spontaneous spreading and unpredictable patterns formed as the ink expanded upon contact with the paper represented an interplay of sensual and symbolic meanings. Through this particular practice and observational process the flux of lived experience was evoked. The interplay of material and technique in the testing of paper, water and ink, and the rhythm and flow of the writing are the traces of a
subjective consciousness rather than a duplication of realistic movement. Time is manipulated by the animator, transcending reality.

Animation is the art of interval, through the connection of individual images to create movement. It functions as music does in that it is made through the orchestration of separate notes (S. Chen, 1998). In animation the image is given motion by the series of frames, recovering the movement of its creation, so that the viewer can experience the material and poetic unfolding of the calligraphy through the animator's concept. The sound and music enhances the understanding of the gestural rhythm. Hence, rhythm, lightness, heaviness and speed of stroke of the calligraphy and ink and wash are represented vividly.

The transformation of traditional calligraphy into the highly technological medium of animation will aid in the dissemination of the harmonious aesthetics of Chinese art to cross-cultural audiences. I have used the time-based techniques of animation to recover the qualities of transience and movement intrinsic to the traditional aesthetics into compelling contemporary art.
Bibliography

European-Language Bibliography


### Chinese-Language Bibliography


Websites


<table>
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<tr>
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Appendix

I. *Ink Dance* Original Storyboard

![Storyboard Image]

*Ink Dance* is a traditional Chinese dance that features elements of calligraphy and martial arts. The storyboard illustrates the movement and flow of the dance, including various symbols, characters, and natural elements like trees and mountains.
water
→ woman
→ man → finish

background, another layer
(After Effects)

Woman

natural ink
accident

drawing
and thinking's
are born

at the same

words:
(different layers)

big → small
Under Camera:

Filming under Camera.

Words (different layers):

Man.

Small ➔ big ➔ man.

Chinese movement: male body.

Body + hand gesture: focus on hands.

Hands ➔ abstract ➔ become tree ➔ a round sphere.

Loves, understand, maintain.

Woman ➔ man (Tai-chi) ➔ tree ➔ end.

Romeo + Juliet.

Conflict, Romance, Harmony, Emotion.
II. *Ink Dance* Final Version Storyboard
<table>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Audio</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Black screen getting lighter</td>
<td>silence for 10 sec</td>
<td>10 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Curved script track down</td>
<td>gentle percussion and string instruments</td>
<td>5 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Characters overlapping and moving up and down</td>
<td>gentle percussion and string instruments</td>
<td>9 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Background is flashing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Characters appearing, background darkening</td>
<td>music getting slower</td>
<td>10 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chinese title appears, English title disappears</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 hands emerge in the dark</td>
<td>triangle before hands open</td>
<td>5 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 characters appear in both mountains</td>
<td>gentle hands rubbing sound</td>
<td>6 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hands open</td>
<td>gentle hands rubbing sound</td>
<td>4 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Characters' woman open again, character man show up</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>One hand moves out of screen, the other show character tree</td>
<td>silent</td>
<td>9 sec</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 2</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: hand fades out, character tree stays.</td>
<td>Audio: sound of wind appears (gentle)</td>
<td>Duration: 2 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: tree starts to move, ink appears.</td>
<td>Audio: sound of wind + light percussion</td>
<td>Duration: 7 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: ink moves on the 2 sides of tree.</td>
<td>Audio: bass drum comes up (join)</td>
<td>Duration: 7 sec</td>
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<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: tree becomes a flying bird background</td>
<td>Audio: bass drum + joint + flying wings sound</td>
<td>Duration: 7 sec</td>
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<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: ink fades off, tree grows.</td>
<td>Audio: insects sound + joint + light percussion</td>
<td>Duration: 9 sec</td>
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<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: tree keeps growing.</td>
<td>Audio: insects sound + joint + light percussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: growing bigger.</td>
<td>Audio: insects sound + joint + light percussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: tree covers the screen.</td>
<td>Audio: light percussion</td>
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<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: tree becomes abstract shape.</td>
<td>Audio: wind blows</td>
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<td>Scene 4</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: the shape is growing.</td>
<td>Audio: wind blows</td>
<td>Duration: 2 sec</td>
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<td>Scene 4</td>
<td>Shot #1</td>
<td>Action: growing wider. The tree covers the screen.</td>
<td>Audio: wind blows + a sound of bird</td>
<td>Duration: 3 sec</td>
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</table>
**Project Title:** Ink Dance

**Director:** Zhi-Ming Su

**Film Type:** Animation

**Duration:** 5 min 35 s

---

**Scene 4 Shot #1**

**Action:** Black screen appears mountain

**Audio:** Wind getting strong

**Duration:** 5 sec

**Scene 4 Shot #1**

**Action:** Mountain is getting clear

**Audio:** Wind getting strong

**Duration:** 2 sec

---

**Scene 5 Shot #1**

**Action:** White screen

**Audio:** Wind disappears

**Duration:** 2 sec

**Scene 5 Shot #1**

**Action:** Water drops appear

**Audio:** Water drop sound + marimba

**Duration:** 8 sec

---

**Scene 6 Shot #1**

**Action:** A dot comes up

**Audio:** Powerful river sound

**Duration:** 7 sec

**Scene 6 Shot #1**

**Action:** Dot becomes a line

**Audio:** Getting louder

**Duration:** 5 sec

---

**Scene 6 Shot #1**

**Action:** Line is moving another line appears

**Audio:** Turning gentle

**Duration:** 2 sec

**Scene 6 Shot #1**

**Action:** More lines joins in and moving

**Audio:** Turning gentle

**Duration:** 2 sec
Project Title: Ink Dance
Director: Zhi-Ming Su
Film Type: Animation
Duration: 5 min 35s

### Scene 6
Shot # 1
Action: moving lines like a river
Audio: turning gentle
Duration: 8 sec

### Scene 7
Shot # 1
Action: lines move up
Audio: gentle and slow
Duration: 5 sec

### Scene 8
Shot # 1
Action: move up and become circle
Audio: gentle and slow
Duration: 1 sec

### Scene 7
Shot # 1
Action: lines come down slowly
Audio: gentle and slow
Duration: 3 sec

### Scene 7
Shot # 1
Action: lines transform to the character woman
Audio: string music appears
Duration: 2 sec

### Scene 8
Shot # 1
Action: character is moving and start to dance
Audio: gentle and slow
Duration: 4 sec

### Scene 7
Shot # 1
Action: character is dancing and turning
Audio: gentle and slow
Duration: 4 sec

### Scene 7
Shot # 1
Action: character is getting smaller, ink comes up from her hand
Audio: gentle and slow
Duration: 3 sec

### Scene 8
Shot # 1
Action: black ink getting bigger and fade out
Audio: sound fade off
Duration: 0.5 sec

### Scene 8
Shot # 1
Action: 3 dots of ink appear
Audio: sound fade off
Duration: 1 sec

### Scene 8
Shot # 1
Action: dots getting bigger and clear then disappear
Audio: exhause instrument + percussion
Duration: 3 sec
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<td>Action</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<td>a hand appears</td>
<td>ink dots go up</td>
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<td>ink lines</td>
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<td>emerge and move</td>
<td>appear, moving</td>
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<td>Audio erhu +</td>
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<tr>
<th>Scene &amp; Shot # 2</th>
<th>Scene &amp; Shot # 2</th>
<th>Scene &amp; Shot # 2</th>
<th>Scene &amp; Shot # 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dances with</td>
<td>moves her</td>
<td>ink moves</td>
<td>calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ink again</td>
<td>body to the left</td>
<td>from right to</td>
<td>appears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio erhu</td>
<td>hand side</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>Audio erhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disappears</td>
<td>Audio bass drum</td>
<td>Audio bass drum</td>
<td>instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bass drum appears</td>
<td></td>
<td>fade off</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Duration         | 4 sec            | Duration         | 2 sec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene &amp; Shot # 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio erhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Duration         | 2 sec

**Project Title:** Ink Dance

**Director:** Zhi-Ming Su

**Film Type:** Animation

**Duration:** 5 min 35 sec

**Date:**

**Colour:**

**Page:** 6-5
**Project Title:** Ink Dance  
**Director:** Zhi-Ming Su  
**Film Type:** Animation  
**Duration:** 5 min 35 sec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Shot #</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Storyboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Shot #</td>
<td>Action characters moves and fade off</td>
<td>Animation white screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio erhu instrument</td>
<td>Audio silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration 5 sec</td>
<td>Duration 2 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Shot #</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Storyboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shot #</td>
<td>Action male dancer moves calligraphy show up (close up)</td>
<td>Animation a male dancer appears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio bass drum + cymbals (loud)</td>
<td>Audio bass drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration 2 sec</td>
<td>Duration 3 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Shot #</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Storyboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shot #</td>
<td>Action calligraphy comes closer, dancing male fades off</td>
<td>Animation calligraphy comes to the left hand direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio bass drum + cymbals (loud)</td>
<td>Audio bass drum + cymbals (loud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration 3 sec</td>
<td>Duration 4 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Shot #</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Storyboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shot #</td>
<td>Action calligraphy fade off, dancer</td>
<td>Animation calligraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio bass drum + cymbals (loud)</td>
<td>Audio bass drum + cymbals (loud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration 1 sec</td>
<td>Duration 1 sec</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Shot #</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Storyboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shot #</td>
<td>Action Cursive script moves in the dark (credit)</td>
<td>Animation gentle percussion + string music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audio silent</td>
<td>Audio silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration 5 sec</td>
<td>Duration 3 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Rice Paper Tests

a. Uen Ren Shu Hua rice paper

b. Sun Iun rice paper

c. Jiau Bai Suen rice paper

d. Te Ji rice paper

e. Jing He rice paper
IV. Ink and Calligraphy Practices

a. Ink on Jiau Bai Suen rice paper  
b. Ink on Jiau Bai Suen rice paper

c. Calligraphy on Jing He rice paper  
d. Calligraphy on Jing He rice paper

e. Calligraphy on Jing He rice paper  
f. Calligraphy on Jing He rice paper
V. Production Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working project</th>
<th>Time schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March - July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Reading of Relevant Writings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing my Film Script</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Viewing of Relevant films</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboarding my Film</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorizing and Analysing the Research Material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing my Animation and Shooting the Film</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-production and Sound Design on my Film</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exegesis writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Edit of my Film</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exegesis Final editing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book the Progress</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress:
- 10% in 2007
- 25% in 2008
- 35% in 2009
- 45% in 2010
- 65% in 2010
- 75% in 2010
- 85% in 2010
- 100% in 2010
VI. Blog

I have a personal BLOG *Jimmy's Australian Diary*, the website address is [http://jimmys-diary.blogspot.com/2010/08/animation-ink-dance.html](http://jimmys-diary.blogspot.com/2010/08/animation-ink-dance.html), it displays some basic information about *Ink Dance* and still photographs which were taken in my studio.