虛白齋藏中國書畫館

Xubaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy
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1992年9月26日，香港藝術館「虛白齋藏中國書畫館」落成開幕，專門展示書畫收藏家劉作籌先生所捐贈的一批珍貴書畫。

On 26 September, 1992, the Hong Kong Museum of Art celebrated its inauguration of the Xubaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, designed to display the significant collection of traditional Chinese fine art donated by renowned collector Mr Low Chuck-tiew.

劉作籌像
Statue of Low Chuck-tiew
Low Chuck-tiew (1911–1993) was born in the Chao’an prefecture of Guangdong province. He received primary education in the municipality of Longhu for a year before joining his father in Singapore with his mother when he was nine years old. Following education in Singapore, he pursued further education in Shanghai, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Jinan University in 1936 and returning to Singapore to assist his father to manage the family business. After the war, in 1949 Mr Low arrived in Hong Kong as manager of Four Seas Communications Bank Ltd. He retired in 1986 and continued living in Hong Kong until 1993 when he passed away while visiting the Low ancestral grave in Singapore.

Mr Low’s father, Low Chia-heng was an avid collector and connoisseur of Chinese antiquities, thus nurtured his son’s interest in collecting Chinese painting and calligraphy. While pursuing his education in Shanghai between 1926 and 1936, Low Chuck-tiew became a student of the renowned bird-and-flower painter Xie Gongzhan (1885 – 1940) and landscape painter Huang Binhong (1865 – 1955), further contributing considerable influence on Low’s connoisseurship of Chinese painting and calligraphy.
蔭藏
Collection of Treasures

二次大戰期間，劉氏家族所藏文物於盟軍空襲時燬於一旦。1949年，劉先生到港工作，看見大批中國古文物因內地政治動盪而流落香港，且不斷流散海外。為使這些國寶留存海內，劉先生開始有系統地大力蒐藏；經年累月，漸漸建立了一個重要且享負盛譽的中國書畫珍藏。

During the final stage of the Second World War, the Low family art collection was disastrously destroyed in the allied bombing of Japanese occupied Singapore. In 1949, Mr Low arrived in Hong Kong where he witnessed large quantities of Chinese art relics brought by refugees fleeing political turmoil in China. Many art treasures were sold locally and then exported overseas. Anxious to keep these national treasures within the Chinese community, he started conscientiously collecting to assemble a systematic collection of significant art pieces. Over decades, he accumulated one of the world's most important collections of Chinese painting and calligraphy.

惠贈
Donation to the Public


劉先生之所以鍾情於明清交替時期的畫作，他自己有這樣的解說：「此百餘年間，人才濟濟雲興，畫畫爭奇競秀，心寫意造，妙極自然，是為中國藝術之又一高峰。」可見其慧眼之卓識，同時亦道出了這批書畫的歷史和藝術價值。

In 1989, Mr Low donated his considerable art collection to the HKMoA. In giving the collection to the Museum, he hoped to preserve his collection and make it available for public display and appreciation in order to maximise its educational value. This collection comprises several hundred Chinese paintings and calligraphy works dating from the Six Dynasties to the twentieth century. A particular strength of the collection lies in the Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties featuring representative works by masters of the "Wu School", the "Songjiang School", the "Four Monks", the "Orthodox School" and the "Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou". Masterpieces of the twentieth century by such masters as Wu Changshuo (1844 – 1927), Qi Baishi (1864 – 1957), Huang Binhong (1865 – 1955) and Xu Beihong (1895 – 1953) are also represented in the collection.
Mr Low himself explained his special preference for works of the seventeenth century, "For over a hundred years during this period, an extraordinary outburst of talented artists produced many superb masterpieces of painting and calligraphy. Those works created from their inner mind achieved a perfect vitality and captivating charm. Thus, another brilliant period in the history of Chinese art emerged." With clarity of vision and knowledge, Mr Low illumined the importance of developments during the transitional period of the Ming and Qing dynasties, which highlights the historical and artistic value of his collection.

齋名由來
Origin of the Xubaizhai Collection

劉氏藏品中有清代書法家伊秉綬 (1754 – 1815) 隸書題額「虛白」一幀，劉氏取其「虛室生白」、心境清靜之意，名其室為「虛白齋」，而收藏亦曰「虛白齋藏中國書畫」。

Low Chuck-tiew designated his collection of painting and calligraphy the “Xubaizhai Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy” after an appellation taken from a favourite calligraphy plaque, written by the Qing calligrapher Yi Bingshou (1754 – 1815).
藏品主要流派  Major Schools in the Collection

明代中期 (15至16世紀)  
Mid Ming period (15th – 16th century)

吴门画派  
The Wu School

吴门泛指位处江南的苏州和附近一带地区。元代以降，苏州成为文人画文化中心。明代中叶，「吴门画派」在這裏冒起，並在畫史上扮演了承先啟後的角色。畫派的領袖人物沈周 (1427 – 1509) 和文徵明 (1470 – 1559) 奠定以「吴门画派」為首的文人画傳統。他們的家族淵源和社會關係吸引了不少文人雅士參與雅集，舞文弄墨，令「吴门画派」於15世紀主導蘇州以至江南地區藝術。

16世紀中，蘇州尚有不少活躍的職業畫家，如唐寅 (1470 – 1524) 及仇英 (約 1494 – 約1552)，主要繼承了南宋院體畫的風格，時有表現文人畫的意趣。二人與文徵明論交，晉身蘇州士人圈子，與沈周、文徵明合稱「明四家」。

文徵明 (1470 – 1559)  
Wen Zhengming (1470 – 1559)

長林消夏圖  
Cooling off the hot summer

1540  
147.2 x 61 cm  
Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk
The Wu area of Suzhou and its vicinity was a centre for literati painting towards the end of the Yuan dynasty (1279 – 1368). The Wu School of painting emerged in mid Ming dynasty and played a significant role in passing on the prevalent literati style of painting. Shen Zhou (1427 – 1509), leader of the school, in association with Wen Zhengming (1470 – 1559) fostered a collective identity for early Ming literati painting under the designation of “Wu School” style. Both Shen and Wen came from prominent Suzhou families. They attracted a large group of learned men who assembled at elegant gatherings to exchange views and produce poetry, painting and calligraphy for mutual appreciation. Under those circumstances, the “Wu School” style of painting came to dominate Suzhou, and indeed the whole of Jiangnan during the fifteenth century.

Coexisting with the “Wu School” style in Suzhou were professional painters such as Tang Yin (1470 – 1524) and Qiu Ying (ca. 1494 – ca. 1552), who derived their techniques mainly from Southern Song academy style to some extent imbued with scholar-amateur tradition. Friends of Wen Zhengming, both Tang and Qiu were active in the scholarly circles of Suzhou and together with Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming are esteemed as the “Four Masters of the Ming dynasty”.

唐寅（1470 – 1524）
抱琴歸去圖
無紀年
水墨設色絹本立軸
74.5 x 37.5 厘米
Tang Yin (1470 – 1524)
Returning home with a qin
Not dated
Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk
74.5 x 37.5 cm
明代後期 (16至17世紀)
Late Ming period (16th – 17th century)

松江畫派
The Songjiang School

明代後期，畫壇領袖董其昌 (1555 – 1636) 帶動了松江地區 (今上海市) 的繪畫發展，形成「松江畫派」，繼蘇州「吳門畫派」後成為主流。「松江派」一詞最初是蘇州人對松江畫風的通稱，這裏所指的「松江畫派」乃一統稱，包含「松江派」及其他支流，以董其昌為代表，其他畫家包括孫克弘 (1532 – 1611)、陳繼儒 (1558 – 1639)、趙左 (約 1570 – 1633 後)、沈士充 (活躍於約 1607 – 1640) 等。董其昌所處的時代正值「吳門畫派」末流，他着力追求秀潤的筆調情趣及抽象化的造型，又倡議山水畫「南北宗」論。借佛門禪宗的「南北宗」分別作文人畫家與職業畫家的分野，從而推崇南宗諸家為摹仿對象，提倡不單純摹仿，更應取法傳統為創作規範，形成仿古新風，以繼承文人畫正脈。

趙左 (約 1570 – 1633 後)
秋江漁隱圖
1615
水墨設色紙本立軸
188 x 62.5 厘米

Zhao Zuo (ca. 1570 – after 1633)
Fishing on autumn river
1615
Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper
188 x 62.5 cm
During the late Ming dynasty, Dong Qichang (1555 – 1636), a native of Songjiang (within present-day Shanghai), became the most influential figure in Chinese painting and calligraphy. Led by Dong, the Songjiang School of painting finally eclipsed the “Wu School” and became the driving force steering development of the main painting style that followed. The term “Songjiang School” was named by Suzhou counterparts to represent the painting style flourishing in the Songjiang region. Centred on Dong Qichang, other artists included Sun Kehong (1532 – 1611), Chen Jiru (1558 – 1639), Zhao Zuo (ca. 1570 – after 1633) and Shen Shichong (act. ca. 1607 – 1640). During Dong’s lifetime, the “Wu School” was coming into decline and he sought to reinvigorate scholar-amateur traditions and establish aesthetic canons. Corresponding to the distinction of Northern and Southern Schools of Chan Buddhism in China, he designated Northern and Southern Schools of Painting with respective distinctions of professional and amateur artists. Dong considered painters of the Southern School models for the continuance of individualistic literati painting whilst forming new styles, not mere imitation, combining veneration of past masters with a creative and forward looking initiative and creating a place for the artists within tradition.

董其昌 (1555 – 1636)
山水行書合冊
1610
水墨金箋及紙本十對開冊 (選頁)
各39.5 x 32 厘米
Dong Qichang (1555 – 1636)
Landscapes and calligraphy in running script
1610
Album of ten double leaves (selected),
ink on paper or gold-flecked paper
Each 39.5 x 32 cm
清代初期 (17世紀)
Early Qing period (17th century)

四僧
The Four Monks

弘仁 (1610–1664)、髡殘 (1612–1673)、朱耷 (又稱八大山人) (1626–1705) 和石濤 (1642–1707) 四位畫家處於明清交替的紛亂時代，經歷坎坷。他們因不同原因都曾落髮為僧，後世稱之為「清初四僧」。四僧抗清意識強烈，以明裔民身份縱情於名山大川、詩詞書畫之中。他們的作品師法自然，既汲取前人技法，又有所突破創新，自成一格。弘仁作品以山水為主，筆法受元代倪瓌(1306 – 1374)影響，線條簡練，表現蕭疏枯淡之景；他亦喜畫梅花，脱俗清逸。髡殘能詩，擅書畫，描繪山水筆致蒼潤，章法嚴謹。八大山人山水花鳥皆精，造型清奇古怪，用筆寫意淋漓。石濤擅畫山水、人物、花果，筆墨恣肆，構圖奇特，意境深遠。基於各人的遭遇，四僧在作品中表現出強烈的情感，寄托亡國心志並抒發鬱鬱，具有鮮明的個性和藝術特色。

朱耷 (1626 – 1705)
荷花水鳥図
無紀年
水墨紙本立軸
117 x 52.5 厘米

Zhu Da (1626 – 1705)
Lotus and mallard
Not dated
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
117 x 52.5 cm
Four artists, namely Hongren (1610 – 1664), Kuncan (1612 – 1673), Zhu Da, alias Bada Shanren (1626 – 1705) and Shitao (1642 – 1707) lived through the chaotic transition from Ming to Qing dynasty. For various reasons, these four artists become monks upon the fall of Ming dynasty, thereby designated the “Four Monks” in Chinese art history. With strong anti-Qing sentiments, the Four Monks withdrew from society and immersed themselves in pilgrimage and artistic creation. Modelling their works after nature, they emulated techniques of preceding masters while developing their own styles. Hongren’s landscapes were inspired by Ni Zan (1306 – 1374) of the Yuan dynasty, using simple lines to evoke a solitary mood. Fond of plum trees, his depictions of the subject are delicate and engaging. Kuncan excelled at poetry, painting and calligraphy. His landscapes of intricate composition endow a sense of solemnity. Bada Shanren specialised in landscape and bird-and-flower painting, often with a subtly cynical inflection. He was known for his assured free form and swift strokes, with numerous subjects of peculiar form. A master of landscape, figure and bird-and-flower painting, Shitao applied bold and unconstrained brushwork to meticulous layouts, resulting in evocative scenes. Based on their different experiences and characters, the works of the Four Monks are distinctive in terms of individuality and artistic characteristic, reflecting the sorrow of being leftovers of the Ming dynasty and their wills while living in chaos.
正統畫派
The Orthodox School


王韜（1632–1717）及恽壽平（1633–1690）
山水花卉冊
1685–1686
水墨紙本及水墨設色紙本八開冊（選頁）
各21.8 x 29.8 厘米

Wang Hui (1632 – 1717) and Yun Shouping (1633 – 1690)
Landscapes and flowers
1685 – 1686
Album of eight leaves (selected), ink or ink and colour on paper
Each 21.8 x 29.8 cm
Early Qing dynasty saw the emergence of a group of artists who focused on the revitalisation of traditional style as formulated by Dong Qichang in the late Ming dynasty. Later known as the "Orthodox School", members include the "Four Wangs", namely: Wang Shimin (1592 – 1680), Wang Jian (1598 – 1677), Wang Hui (1632 – 1717) and Wang Yuanqi (1642 – 1715). Together with Wu Li (1632 – 1718) and Yun Shouping (1633 – 1690), these are collectively known as "Six Masters of Early Qing". Advocates for the revival of archaic styles among the painters of the Southern School, they sought to reinvigorate traditional painting techniques through the style of earlier masterpieces, integrating the descriptive landscapes and calligraphic brushwork of the Song and Yuan dynasties. Imperial favour, bestowed upon them during early Qing dynasty by emperors Kangxi (1654 – 1722), Yongzheng (1678 – 1735) and Qianlong (1711 – 1799), institutionalised the "Orthodox School" and extended the influence of their art through to the twentieth century.

王原祁 (1642 – 1715)
仿黄公望山水圖
1714
水墨設色絹本立軸
96.3 x 53 厘米

Wang Yuanqi (1642 – 1715)
Landscape in the style of Huang Gongwang
1714
Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk
96.3 x 53 cm
清代中期 (18世紀)
Mid Qing period (18th century)

揚州八怪
The Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou

清代中期，位處江蘇的揚州由於得鹽運之利而變得富庶，各種畫科及不同流派的畫風都得到全面的發展，其中以「揚州八怪」最為著名。脫名「八怪」，但眾說不一，被歸入「揚州八怪」的畫家達15人，包括華嵒 (1682 – 1756)、高鳳翰 (1683 – 約1749)、李鱉 (1686 – 約1760)、金農 (1687 – 1763)、鄭燮 (1693 – 1765)、李方膺 (1697 – 1756)、邊壽民 (1684 – 1752)、羅聘 (1733 – 1799) 等。這些畫家大多是來自揚州以外的地區，當中有很多都是文人畫家，並同時以賣畫為職業。他們的作為異於常規，在畫風上又與當時流行的「正統畫派」迥然不同而自抒個性，故曰「怪」。雖然他們的畫作多取材自普通常見的文人題材，但往往在作品中表現出對社會的深刻體會，使作品的內涵更為豐富。畫家為了投合揚州社會的時尚喜好，其作品內容、技巧等甘於謙遜，深受市場歡迎，可謂雅俗共賞。

鄭燮 (1693 – 1765)
墨竹
無紀年
水墨紙本立軸
125.9 x 44.4 厘米

Zheng Xie (1693 – 1765)
Ink bamboo
Not dated
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
125.9 x 44.4 cm
During mid Qing dynasty, Yangzhou, a city of Jiangsu province, prospered in the boom of the salt industry in surrounding provinces. The painting market flourished, corresponding to the rise of wealthy merchants. Among the different stylistic approaches, the “Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou” was a favourite of local patrons. Loosely defined under the term coined in the late nineteenth century for these unusual artists of the eighteenth century who had strong personalities at variance with the conventions of their own time, although the term became a description more of their artistic style rather than social eccentricities.

In total, there are altogether 15 artists under the term, including Hua Yan (1682 – 1756), Gao Fenghan (1683 – ca. 1749), Li Shan (1686 – ca. 1760), Jin Nong (1687 – 1763), Zheng Xie (1693 – 1765), Li Fangying (1697 – 1756), Bian Shoumin (1684 – 1752) and Luo Pin (1733 – 1799). Many of these artists were initially scholar-painters who followed literati tradition in their artistic pursuits. They became professional painters to sell their works in order to earn a living. In stylistic terms, paintings by the “Eight Eccentrics” differ greatly from those of the “Orthodox School”; rejecting orthodox painting conventions, they focused instead on a more expressive and individualist style. Conventional subjects were given a new dimension of latent meaning by the artists who lived close to the common people and were familiar with the social problems of and suffering of the people. The poignant subject matter of these unusual artists appealed to the new rich merchants of Yangzhou, wishing to establish the literati tradition of art collecting and appreciated the bold and expressive style with which the Eccentrics transformed traditional subjects.

金農 (1687 – 1763)
獨馬圖
1761
水墨紙本立軸
120.5 x 57.5 厘米

Jin Nong (1687 – 1763)
The lone horse
1761
 Hanging scroll, ink on paper
120.5 x 57.5 cm
Luo Pin (1733 – 1799)
Ghost amusement
1797
Handscroll, ink and colour on paper
26.7 x 257.2 cm
工作小組
香港藝術館虛白齋組及設計組

Production Team
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(一) 虚白之章

「虚白小草在人嚼」、「室虚白散生白光」
—— 刘松(1911–1993)

「虚室生白」出自《庄子·人间世》：‘疑彼
闻言，虚室生白，吾将不留。’此喻心无杂
念就能悟出‘真理’，生出智慧，也常用作
形容清静淡泊的境界。刘松作画常在一幢清
雅的庭院中设画案，创作一幅幅题有‘虚室生
白’的书法，他取其‘虚室生白’，心境清静之
意，名其室为‘虚白斋’。

(二) 書法家伊秉绶

伊秉绶(1754–1815)字祖似·号墨卿，晚号
默翁，为福建汀州人(今之福建连城)，因此
自称‘伊汀州’，谥号文端，曾任礼部尚书，
官至奉直大夫，兼礼部尚书。他为诗人、书
法家，尤好篆隸，掌舆地志，专精于碑

(三) 何謂隸書

中國書法可分為篆、隸、草、行，楷五種書體。
而‘隸書’是依隸書寫成。隸書最早是漢
人簡帛(生卒不詳)發明，他改變篆字筆劃的
圓筆為扁，求正平，隸書就這樣產生。
隸書的最特殊就是橫筆中的處筆有如篆
頭，收筆有如篆尾，字形方正，給人飛揚之
感。到了漢代(公元前206年—公元前220年)
公文書信上多用隸書書寫。東漢(25—220)
刻碑也是隸書，隸書的出現，結束了近兩
千年的古文字，亦開創了以後以美化作為的
書法藝術新紀元。

(四) 伊秉瑞之書法

伊秉瑞之書法，有傳與伊秉緯有關。伊秉緯任官
在職，喜歡遊藝藝術，常設宴招待賓客，官中
常有書法家為客人作書，伊秉緯時常先筆，命書
房以紙粉細墨和，製成鎮紙拓曲成圖，晾乾後再油
燜，燜透備用，吃時加水來煮煮即熟，加入配
料成為一碗爽滑可口的獨創，方便審客。此法
一經傳開，人們紛紛仿效，因而是伊氏傳
而得名。
(1) Definition of Xubai
An empty studio amidst the hustle and bustle; a chamber illuminated by spaciousness and emptiness
— Low Chwing-tieh (1911-1993)
The phrase “emptiness illuminates the chamber” was first recorded in the world of men by Zhuangzi, “Look at that closed chamber, in which brightness is born from emptiness. Fortune and blessings come again and again.” Metaphorically, it means that if you clear your mind, you will find truth and cultivation. It is also used to describe an ultimate realm of purity. Low Chwing-tieh owned a plaque written by renowned calligrapher Yi Bingzhou from the Jinjing period (1794-1800) of the Qing dynasty. Low named his studio Xubaihui after his beloved plaque, featuring the characters Xubai in clerical script for a tranquil state of mind evolved by the empty chamber.

(2) Yi Bingzhou the Calligrapher
Yi Bingzhou (1734-1815), who used the names Zusi, Moxing and Mo’an in later years, was a native of Tingzhou (now Ninghua), Fujian, thus also known as Yi Tingzhou. A successful candidate of the highest imperial examinations during the Qianlong period (1736-1795), he was appointed superintendent of the Board of Punishment and subsequently promoted to the post of Vice Director. He was also the Prefectural Magistrate of Huzhou and Yangzhou. A talented poet and writer, he was also a master of calligraphy specialising in seal and clerical scripts. Earning fame with his vigorous yet elegant style, he was a leading figure of his time.

(3) About Clerical Script
There are five scripts of Chinese calligraphy, namely seal (zhuo), clerical (xu), running (xing) and regular (ka) scripts. The Xubai plaque was written in clerical script, a form of calligraphy said to be a creation of Cheng Yao during the Qin dynasty in the third century BCE who transformed the round and symmetrical strokes of seal script into a flat, regular form that was easier and quicker to write, thereafter named xunhe, clerical script.

“Silkworm head” and “wild goose tail” are iconic features of clerical script. Characters are flat in a square form giving a sense of elegance. By the Han dynasty (202BC-220CE), most official documents and correspondence were written in clerical script, while monuments were also carved in clerical script during the Eastern Han period (25-220). The appearance of clerical script marked the end of the archaic script that had been used for nearly two thousand years. It also opened up an artistic direction for calligraphy afterwards.

The characters of the Xubai plaque by Yi Bingzhou are regular and flat. The strokes are of even thickness. Rendered with a concealed-tip brush movement, the bold strokes have magnificent strength. The traditional silkworm head and wild goose tail of clerical script are replaced by straight horizontal strokes, reflecting the calligrapher’s eclectic concept of modelling after ancient masters while breaking conventions, thus making revolutionary change to the clerical style.

(4) Calligrapher as Inventor — Creator of Yifu Noodles
Yifu noodles are said to be a creation of Yi Bingzhou who enjoyed feasting with the literati and poetic discourse when he was a government official. He hosted dinners so often that his cook ran out of new dishes. Then an idea came to Yi. He asked his cook to mix flour with eggs to make noodles and roll them into a cake. The cake was fried until crisp and put in the larder for future use. To serve, all that required was to add boiling water and other ingredients to make a bowl of delicious noodles. This convenient dish was perfect for entertaining guests and many people copied his recipe. After its origin, it was named Yifu noodles.