

CHU Hing-wah

Suggested class activities for Junior Secondary

Artist: CHU Hing-wah

Level: Junior Secondary

Theme: Life in Society in Ink

Suggested length: 3.5 hours

Teaching concept:

Chinese painting is always associated with paper, brushes and ink, and depicts generally depict landscapes, portraits, and birds-and-flowers.

CHU Hing-wah excels in using traditional Chinese painting materials to depict the people and their lives around him. With a special touch of modernity, his signature techniques of painting in Chinese ink on the reverse of the paper and then integrating subdued colours to the front surface produces a harmonious effect to his work.

This course aims to help students appreciate the creativity and style of CHU's works by understanding his unique personal experiences. It encourages students to breathe new life into traditional Chinese painting with a touch of modernity.

Required background knowledge:

1. The students should have a basic understanding of how to draw buildings and streets.
2. They should possess basic knowledge about the materials used in Chinese painting.
3. They should be able to distinguish the value of colours.

Teaching goals:

1. Learn about CHU's painting style and themes of his work, as well as his influence on Hong Kong's art scene, through his video.
2. Compare CHU's works with traditional Chinese landscape and figure painting, and discuss students' feelings towards his works.
3. Draw inspiration from daily life experience.
4. Explore and understand master the techniques in using ink and colour on *xuan* paper.
5. Appreciate the visual effects of applying an outline in Chinese ink to the reverse of the painting.

Suggested class activities:

1. **Introduce CHU Hing-wah and his artistic style (Suggested length: 3 mins).**
Show the "[Artist Introduction ppt](#)" pp1-3

Born in Guangdong Province in 1935, CHU Hing-wah received the Urban Council Fine Arts Award – Painting (1989), Painter of the Year Award from the Hong Kong Artists' Guild Association (1992), etc. He also received an Asian Cultural Council fellowship, which enabled him to study fine art in New York in 1993.

A retired psychiatric nurse, CHU's early works depicted the mental anguish experienced by his patients, as well as the sense of inner isolation of urban dwellers. After retirement, he focused on depicting the people, landscapes and sentiments within his community. Although he uses Chinese painting materials such as *xuan* paper, brushes, pigments and ink, CHU does not refer his practice to traditional landscape or figure painting. Instead, he likes to express the feelings and issues of modern daily life. His extraordinary use of ink and colour adds a harmonious and dreamlike quality to his paintings, which has become a trademark of his artworks.

2. **Video viewing guide (Suggested length: 2 mins).**

- Pay attention to the themes adopted by CHU
- Pay attention to the materials he uses and the characteristics of his works.

3. **Play the “Artist Video mp4” (Suggested length: 15 mins).**

Select parts of the video, depending on your focus, pausing as needed to explain the content or ask questions.

Suggested Q&A:

- What are the major themes of his works?
(Society, buildings, people, dreams)
- What is a common feature of his ink paintings?
(Ink-coloured backgrounds)
- How does he create these backgrounds?
(He applies a layer of ink on the reverse side of the *xuan* paper.)
- What is his contribution to the art of Hong Kong? Can you give any examples?

4. **Appreciation of CHU's works (Suggested length: 5 mins).**

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp4-6

Show *Mother, Child and the Clock Tower* (《鐘樓·母與子》) or *Pui Kee Cha Chan Restaurant* (《培記茶餐廳》).



Mother, Child and the Clock Tower
(《鐘樓·母與子》) / 2009
Ink and colour on paper



Pui Kee Cha Chan Restaurant
(《培記茶餐廳》) / 2009
Ink and colour on paper

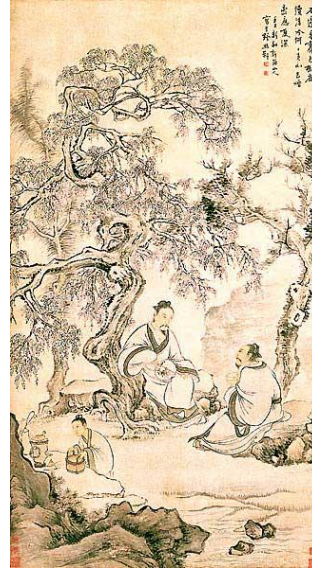
Guide the students to appreciate in the following steps:

- **Descriptions:** Describe the scenes depicted in CHU's works
(Scenes of Hong Kong, the Clock Tower, old tea restaurants (*cha chan teng*), cooked food stalls (*dai pai dong*) and neighbours).
- **Formal analysis:** What visual effects does the dark background produce?
(The dark background can evoke a sense of harmony, brighten up the scenes, highlight the visual features of objects, etc.)
- **Explanation:** Deduce why CHU chooses these scenes as themes.
(His life experience, a sense of nostalgia, his wish to conserve beautiful things, using flowers as a metaphor for beautiful girls, etc.)
- **Evaluation:** Do you like CHU's works? Why? How do you feel about them?

Show Chinese landscape (*shanshui*) paintings and portraits to encourage the students to appreciate different artistic expressions by comparing and contrasting CHU's works with traditional Chinese paintings.



Boating on a Willow Stream
 Shitao (1642-1707) / Not dated
 Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper
 127.5 x 54 cm
 Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art



Scene of Refined Scholars Chanting Poetry
 HUA Yan (1682-1756) / 1732
 Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper
 176.5 x 96 cm
 Collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art

5. **Group activities (Suggested length: 30 mins):**

Show the “[Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt](#)” pp1-4

Activity (1): Have the students try out visual effects on *xuan* paper by applying colours of various degrees of brightness and density and different brush stroke techniques.

Assign each group to explore value, density or brush stroke techniques

Wait until dry. Move on to activity 2 while waiting.

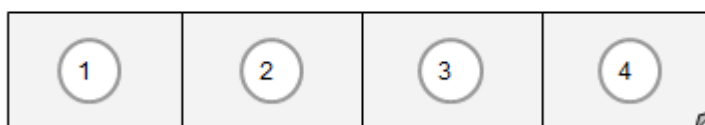
Activity 1:

Try out visual effects on *xuan* paper

Each group should try one kind of visual effects:

- Value: Add different amounts of white paint to other paint.
- Density: Add different amounts of water to the paint.
- Brush stroke techniques: Apply large strokes, or draw small dots, layers and lines

Try at least four variations of each visual effects!





Activity (2): Students adjust the density of colours and experience the effect created by applying ink of various densities on the reverse side of the paper.

Follow with a group discussion.

Activity 2: Adjust the density of colours and experience the effect created by applying ink of various densities on the reverse side of the paper

1. first pour a tablespoonful of ink into three glasses
2. and then add different amounts of water (e.g. a half, one or two tablespoons) to different glasses





3. apply ink of various densities on the reverse side of the *xuan* paper completed in activity 1 with a flat hake brush
4. apply ink and paints of different value and density to examine their visual effects

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6. Introduce the art-making process (Suggested length: 15 mins)

Show the “[Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt](#)” pp5-12, images taken from the “[Artist Video mp4](#)”.

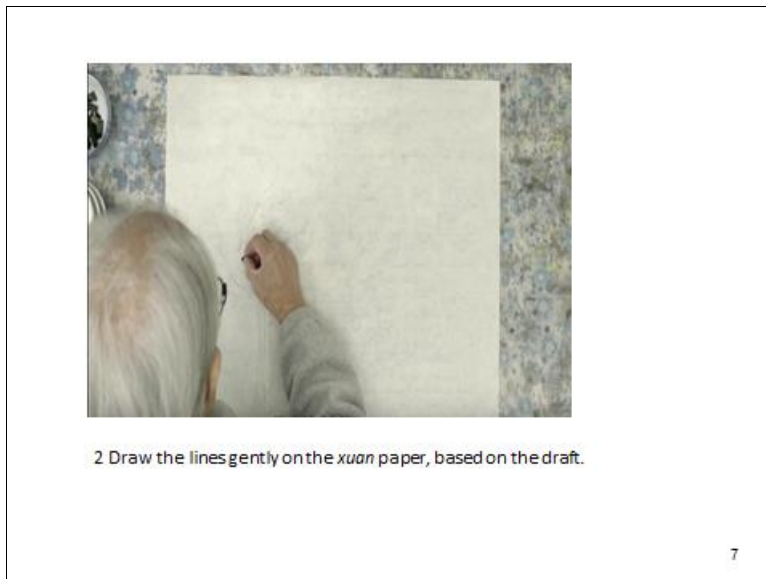
- i. Make a draft first. Refer to the pictures of buildings and simplify their contour lines. Identify their key features and draw them on the draft paper. Highlight the lines with a black marker. (Tip: The lines should not be too dense.)



1 Make a draft first. Refer to the pictures of buildings and simplify their contour lines.

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- ii. Place the draft paper under the *xuan* paper. The pictures on the draft paper will appear through the translucent *xuan* paper. Draw the lines gently on the *xuan* paper, based on the draft.



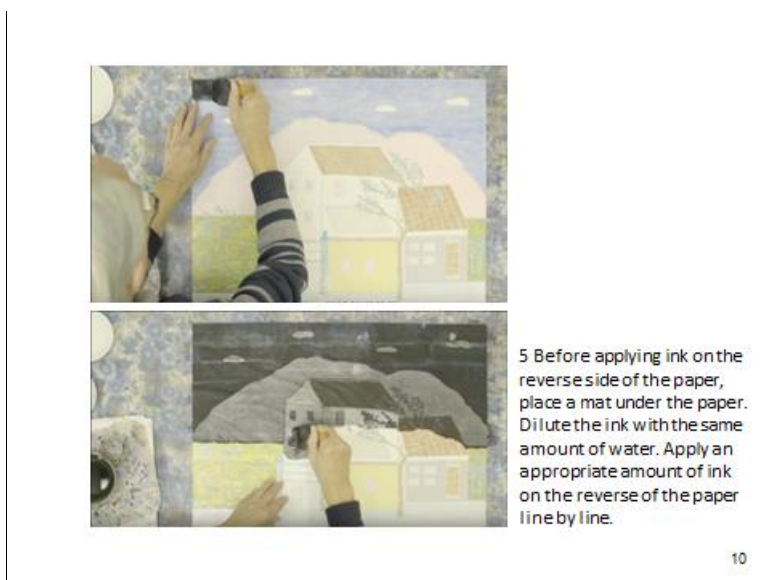
- iii. Colour the work: Dip the brushes in paint and remove the excess paint using the edge of the paint dish. Colour the picture dot by dot with the tip of the brush. Never paint in large strokes. (Tips: Add some white paint when blending the different colours. This can enhance the visual effect. The paint should not be too thin. It is suggested to blend two portions of paint with one portion of water. The contour lines in the colour blocks can be left uncoloured, so that the objects will be highlighted after applying ink on the reverse side of the paper.)



- iv. Wait until completely dry. Before applying ink on the reverse side of the paper, place a mat under the paper. Dilute the ink with the same amount of water. Apply an appropriate amount of ink on the reverse of the paper line by line. (Tips: *Xuan* paper breaks easily when wet. Apply the ink gently. First try applying ink on scrap *xuan* paper.)



- v. Place a clean sheet of cartridge paper under the *xuan* paper. Let it dry. (Tips: Place the cartridge paper on the *xuan* paper after applying the ink. Then turn over the *xuan* paper, together with the mat, and remove the mat gently.)





- vi. Finish. (Other reminders: The ink will cover the colour paint if you apply too much ink or if the paint is too thin. The teacher can suggest applying more colour paint when the paper is completely dry.)



7. **Class activity (Suggested length: 40 – 50 mins)**

Show the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp13-27**

Have the students create a piece of art on the theme “Life in Society”. Tell them to observe people, buildings and vehicles, focusing on their features, and then draw them by using colour paints of different densities and applying ink on the reverse side of the paper.

8. **Appreciation of the students' works (Suggested length: 5 mins).**

9. **Materials**

Xuan paper, Chinese painting pigments, Chinese ink, big and small ink brushes, flat hake brushes, mats, cartridge paper, A4 paper (for making drafts), pencils, black markers, water glasses.