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Provisional Urban Council, Hong Kong
香港藝術館
Hong Kong Museum of Art

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Xuebaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy
2/F, Hong Kong Museum of Art
10 Salisbury Road
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

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Xuebaizhai Section, Hong Kong Museum of Art
Curator: Christina Chu
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虞白齋藏中國書畫館
Xuebaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy
虚白齋藏中國書畫

虚白齋的收藏對於書法與繪畫的重要性，以及其價值，是無可估量的。其收藏的範圍廣泛，從古代到近代，從書法到繪畫，都涵蓋無遺。在這樣的背景下，虛白齋藏的書畫，不僅是藝術的珍品，更是文化的重要遺產。

吳門畫派

吳門畫派，是中國明清時期的重要畫派之一。它源於唐代，興於宋元，盛於明清，延續二千餘年，影響極遠。吳門畫派的代表人物有文徵明、唐寅、仇英等，他們的畫作以山水、花鳥、人物為主，風格獨特，意境深遠。

董其昌與松江畫派

董其昌（1555—1636），是明清時期的重要畫家，以山水畫著稱。他以松江畫派之名聞天下，其畫作注重意境，意境深遠，風格獨樹一幃，對後世畫壇影響極大。

董其昌與吳門畫派

董其昌與吳門畫派的關係，主要表現為兩派在風格上的相互影響。吳門畫派的畫風深受董其昌之影響，董其昌的山水畫風格也被吳門畫派所吸收，兩派在畫風上互相影響，互相促進，共同開拓了中國畫的新局面。

董其昌與虛白齋藏

董其昌是虛白齋藏的重要收藏家之一，他在虛白齋藏的收藏中佔有重要的地位。董其昌的畫作被虛白齋藏收藏，為虛白齋藏增添了無可估量的藝術價值。董其昌的畫作被虛白齋藏收藏，為虛白齋藏增添了無可估量的藝術價值。
正統派
董其昌畫風與以「四王」為首的「正統派」畫家密切相關。他推崇「四王」的風格。他的畫風受到王原祁（1642—1715）、王原（1654—1722）、王原（1680—1753）及嘯龍（1711—1719）影響。董其昌畫畫風格與乾嘉畫家異，並且影響著晚康、道、咸三朝畫家，使其正統派畫風成為風去後，浙派風格失去大創，為後人所不喜。
The Xuebaizhai Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy

On 26th September, 1992, the Hong Kong Museum of Art celebrated the inauguration of the Xuebaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy. The Gallery was specially designed for the display of the largest donation of art work the Museum has ever received. The donation came from Mr. Low Chuck Tiew (1911—1993), a famous collector of Chinese painting and calligraphy.

Born in the Chao’an county of Guangdong province, China, Low spent his childhood in Singapore. Low’s father was a collector and connoisseur of Chinese antiques including painting and calligraphy, thus nurtured his interest in the subject.

Low acquired a bachelor degree in Economics from the Jinan University, Shanghai, China in 1936. During his days in Shanghai, he learned painting from the flower-and-bird painter Xie Gongzhan (1885—1940) and the landscape painter Huang Binhong (1865—1955). Under Huang’s instruction, Low became interested in connoisseurship and began collecting painting and calligraphy.

After graduation, Low returned to Singapore. During the Second World War, Low’s family collection was lost in an allied bombing. In 1949, he came to Hong Kong to serve as manager of the Four Seas Communication Bank Ltd. He saw a large quantity of Chinese art relics being brought to Hong Kong from China at that time. A lot of art treasures were sold overseas. Anxious to keep these national treasures within a Chinese community, Low started collecting conscientiously in order to assemble a systematic collection. He designated his collection “The Xuebaizhai Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy” as a namesake for his favourite plaque of calligraphy written by the Qing calligrapher Yi Bingzhao (1754—1815).

In 1989, Low donated his collection to the Hong Kong Museum of Art. 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 maximize its educational value. Never before has a collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy of such significance and magnitude been donated by a private collector to a public museum in the world.

The donation of this precious collection to the Urban Council reflects a growing confidence in the Museum on the part of the territory’s cultural community. The inauguration of the Xuebaizhai Gallery is an acknowledgment of the lofty gesture of turning a private collection into public collection. The legacy of the Xuebaizhai Collection provides the Hong Kong public an opportunity to appreciate some of the masterpieces of Chinese painting and calligraphy. To maximize the aesthetic and educational value of the collection, the Museum has been organizing thematic exhibitions and related activities. In viewing the Xuebaizhai collection, we wish to pay tribute to Mr. Low who had made his lifelong effort in the advancement of Chinese culture.

The Wu School

Suzhou was a centre for literati painting towards the end of the Yuan dynasty. The Yuan style was passed on to the Ming by intermediaries such as Du Qiong (1397—1474) and Xie Jin (late 14th—early 15th century). The preservation of the Yuan painting style by these men served as linkages between the Yuan masters and their Ming inheritors.

Shen Zhou (1427—1509), a student of Du Qiong and Liu Jue (1410—1472), together with his student Wen Zhengming (1470—1559) fostered a collective identity for early Ming literati painting under the designation of the Wu School style. Both Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming came from prominent families in Suzhou. They attracted a large group of learned men who assembled in elegant gatherings to exchange views and produced poetry, painting and calligraphy for mutual appreciation. The social ambiance and the lifestyle of learned society gentlemen were most conducive to the consolidation and propagation of ideas and social conventions. It was under those circumstances indeed the whole of Jiangnan in the fifteenth century.

Coexisting with the Wu School style in Suzhou were other professional painters such as Zhou Chen (ca. 1450—ca. 1535) and his students Tang Yin (1470—1523) and Qiu Ying (ca. 1494—ca. 1552). Both Tang Yin and Qiu Ying were friends of Wen Zhengming and moved within the same scholarly circles of Suzhou. Their paintings bridged the gap between literati and professional painting. Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming together with Tang Yin and Qiu Ying are esteemed as the "Four Ming Masters".

Shen Zwou’s students include Hou Maogong (late 16th—early 17th century), Zhang Hong (1577—ca. 1652) and Mi Wanzhong (1570—1628). Succeeding generations of the Wu family include Wen Peng (1498—1573), Wen Jia (1501—1583), Wen Boren (1502—1575), and many others. Lu Zhi (1496—1576) and Chen Chan (1483—1544) were Wen Zhengming’s most outstanding students. As a result of their collective effort, the influence of the Wu School style of painting spanned generations to the Qing Dynasty.

Dong Qichang and the Songjiang School

Dong Qichang (1555—1636) in Songjiang further explored the idea of the literati painting. The artistic theory and practice of Dong were consolidated and propagated in elite circles. Together with Mo Shilong...
(1537—1587) and Chen Jiru (1558—1639), Dong advocated the Northern and Southern Schools of Painting, a division which corresponds to the Northern and Southern Schools in Chan Buddhism in China and equated the distinction between the professional and amateur painters. In his exaltation of the past masters, he considered painters of the Southern School exemplary models for emulation.

Dong's dominance eventually eclipsed the Wu School and became the driving force in steering the development of the main trend of painting in the Qing period. Dong inherited a rich repertoire of past forms and styles from which he selected to expound what he considered viable artistic styles. Zhao Zuo (ca. 1570—after 1633) and Shen Shichong (act. ca. 1607—1640) are profoundly influenced by Dong. They occasionally acted as Dong's "daibhi" (ghost painter).

Nine Friends in Painting

Other artists influenced by Dong include Wang Shimin (1592—1680) and Wang Jian (1598—1677), Li Linfang (1575—1629), Cheng Jiayi (1565—1644), Yang Wencang (1596—1646), Zhang Xuezeng (act. ca. 1630—1650), Bian Wenyu (act. 1611—1671) and Shao Mi (act. ca. 1620—1660). Together with Dong they were referred to as the "Nine Friends in Painting" after an undated poem entitled "Hauzhong Juyou ge" (Ballad of the Nine Friends in Painting) by the late Ming and early Qing poet Wu Weije (1600—1671). All the Nine Friends were poets, painters and scholars.

The Four Monks and The Huangshan School

Similarly influenced by Dong Qichang, a group of monk-painters referred to as the "Four Monks" emerged with distinctive artistic profiles. They were Hongren (1610—1664), Kuncan (1612—1673), Zhu Da (1626—1705) and Shitao (1642—1707).

Hongren from Shexian, was credited as the founder of the Xin'an School. Together with Wang Zhirui (died ca. 1657—1659), Sun Yi (died ca. 1658) and Zha Shibiao (1615—1697), they are referred to as the "Four Masters of Xin'an". The Xin'an masters were a group of outstanding painters from the Anhui province particularly around the Huizhou, Xuancheng and Wuhu counties. They shared a common preference for depicting the Mount Huang. Many of them paid tribute to Ni Zan (1301—1374) in their pictorial depictions. These artists are also referred to as the Huangshan School.

Many of these artists who did not acknowledge the Manchu rule lived as recluses and were referred to as "yimin" (left-over people). The individualist painter Gong Xian (1619—1689), the foremost member of the "Eight Masters of Nanjing", joined the other "yimin" painters in Nanjing. In his constructive mode of building forms Gong Xian makes ingenious adaptation from Dong Qichang, and then enriched his forms by heavy illusonistic shading.

The Orthodox School

Dong Qichang's invocation of orthodoxy and his exultation of antiquity gave ascendency to the Orthodox School championed by the "Four Wangs", namely: Wang Shemin, Wang Jian, Wang Yuanqi (1642—1715) and Wang Hui (1632—1717). Together with Wu Li (1632—1718) and Yun Shouping (1633—1690), they are collectively known as the "Six Masters of Early Qing". They assumed a position of supremacy in early Qing as a result of imperial favour bestowed upon them by the emperors Kangxi (1654—1722), Yongzheng (1678—1735) and Qianlong (1711—1799).

The influence of their art spreads far and wide. The repercussion of the immense popularity of the orthodoxy style was that creativity was stifled and soon this kind of orthodoxy was to lead to resistance from artists with independent minds.

The Individualist Painters and the Eccentrics of Yangzhou

The independent minds amidst waves and current of mainstream styles in the Ming and Qing can be observed in a number of painters. Xu Wei (1521—1593) plowed along his own path and asserted a strong personal style with his spontaneous use of brush and ink. Chen Hongshou (1598—1652) brought a new mannered outlook to figure painting by reworking earlier styles while Gao Qipei (1660—1734) displays a marked originality and virtuosity in his finger paintings. Eccentric painters from Yangzhou include Hua Yan (1682—1756), Gao Fenghan (1683—ca.1749), Li Shan (1686—ca.1760), Jin Nong (1687—1763), Huang Shen (1687—1722), Zheng Xie (1693—1765), Li Fengying (1693—1754), and Luo Pin (1733—1799). The boldness of their compositions and exaggerated depiction of their subjects sow seeds of transformation in later Chinese painting.
distinguished himself with a highly personal style of “wild” cursive script.

Zhu Yumin and his younger contemporary Wang Chong (1494—1533) who was influenced by Zhu, sought to incorporate a kind of simplicity and “primitivism” in the carved copies of “jiasi” (copybook) of Wei and Jin masters and rubbing from some of these samples. Wang Chong achieved great fame in calligraphy and commanded as much respect as Zhu Yumin and Wen Zhengming.

During the middle Ming, Dong Qichang restored the glory of Songjiang calligraphers by overtaking the dominance of Suzhou calligraphers. Dong pursued a conscientious study of ancient sources in calligraphy. His calligraphy reveals his complex absorption of ancient sources, combining the simplicity and ease of the tradition of the Two Wangs with the firmer brush articulation of the Tang masters, Yan Zhenqing (709—785) and Liu Gongquan (778—865).

Dong Qichang’s authority was respected in the Jiangnan area and the imperial precincts. The Kangxi Emperor endorsed Dong’s calligraphy and instilled it as a model for examination candidates. The style retained favour in court circles during the Qianlong era, and continued to be practiced by individuals outside the court throughout the remainder of the Qing period.

Dong Qichang, together with Zhang Ruigu (1370—1644), Xing Tong (1551—1612) and Mi

Wanzhong (1570—1628) were considered the four greatest calligraphers of his time.

During the late Ming, Wang Duo (1592—1652) and his younger contemporary Fu Shan (1605—1684) were particularly known for their running and cursive scripts. Their cursive writing has been characterized as “sunmian cao” (continuous and unbroken cursive). Their stylistic writing is emblem of the late Ming early Qing calligraphers’ unique contribution to the development of the cursive script.

Staying aloof from the creative experimentation of contemporary cursive writers, Zheng Fu (1622—1693), a seal carver and calligrapher specializing in clerical script, searched for inspiration beyond the Tang in his study of the rubbing of Han stele. He trekked back to early models to rediscover the aesthetic possibilities of early scripts. Zheng Xie, one of Zheng Fu’s followers, incorporated characteristics of the four major types of calligraphic scripts: the archaic clerical, standard, running, and cursive scripts. Some people called his style “liu” (the cursive style of the clerical script). Zheng himself named it as “liuyunshu”, meaning “nifty-five per cent standard script”.

The jiaoxue (Metal and Bronze School) or bezue (Stele School) flourished after Zheng Fu and matured in the middle Qing in the person of calligraphers such as Yi Bingshou. The archaic revival brought about by the Stele School exerted profound influence. The inquisition into the aesthetic possibilities of the stele style influenced Jin Nong, Zhao Zhiqian (1829—1884) and Wu Changshuo.

Christina Chu