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Ages of Model-calligraphy School:  
Selected Calligraphy Works from the Museum Collection

盧白齋藏中國書畫  
Xuhaizhai Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy

教育小冊子（第十八輯）  
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引言

「帖」原指用毛筆寫在小箋上的文字，著即書信、便箋。統稱「尺牘」。東漢後，中國的書畫工具發生革命性的改變，「紙」漸漸取代縷帛和竹簡，成為主要書寫材料。毛筆在紙上留下自由飛動的筆畫，大大增强了書寫的表現力。及至魏晉時代，以行、草書體作尺牘風靡當時的文人，書法亦成為藝術表現的方式。

東晉王羲之（303－361）、王獻之（344－386）所形成的「二王」書風經過歷代流傳後演成主流，他們留下的書繪，主要是信札、便箋。唐宋時（858－1272）謂：「吾人之書法惟曰帖」。（《廣藝舟筆記》）概括地指出晉人書帖乃帖學的源流。

北宋淳化三年（992），宋太宗趙光義（939－997）親力搜求先賢名跡，並精選作品刻印成歷史上首部皇家規定的書法帖本——《淳化閣帖》，簡稱《閣帖》。「淳化」為年號。「閣」乃貯存地點。「閣閣」。《閣帖》可說是刻印書法作品集的鼻祖，後世不論皇室或私人刻印的書法集，均稱「帖」，以「帖」為基礎，成為後千年的書法學術的不二法門。《閣帖》共分十集，而「二王」及其後人的書繪亦佔了一半，這意味着王羲之書風深深影響著後世的帖學發展。

近代書法書論家沙孟海（1900－1992）在《近三百年的書學》文中提出帖學就是「以晉唐行草小楷為主」，並將唐明兩朝以來的書學，劃分為「於二王範圍內求活動的」和「於二王以外另闢一條路徑的」兩大主流，影響至今。

此次展覽以「帖學的世代」為題，精選遠古齊至近代館藏歷代書法，概況展現臨帖風氣對千年來書法發展的深遠影響。

Introduction

In the old days, tie denotes a note or a letter written on a small piece of silk. By the late Eastern Han, paper gradually replaced silk and bamboo slips as the main writing material following a revolution in writing implements. Since paper allows and captures better the swift movement of the writing brush, calligraphy evolved in time into an expressive means. By the Wei-Jin period, calligraphy had acquired the proportions of an art form thanks to the literati’s predilection for writing their letters in the running and cursive scripts. Collectively known as the Two Wangs, Wang Xizhi (303–361) and his son Wang Xianzhi (344–386) of the Eastern Jin have become virtually the eponyms of mainstream calligraphy and their works the origins of tie that have since then taken on the extended sense of model-calligraphies as suggested by Kang Youwei (1858–1927) in his Further Essays on Poetics and Calligraphic Arts.

In the third year of the Chunhua reign (992) of the Northern Song, Zhao Guanqi, or Emperor Taizong (909–977), had calligraphy made of selected ancient calligraphic masterpieces in his imperial collection for woodblock-printing the first ever imperial compendium of model-calligraphies—Model-calligraphies from the Chunhua Archive, named after his reign title and the depository of the original carvings. From then on, calligraphic carvings whether by the court or private individuals have accordingly been named tie, or model-calligraphies, and copying them the undisputed first step in learning calligraphy. Of the ten volumes that make up the groundbreaking compendium, works by the Two Wangs account for half, foreshadowing their importance to the development of the model-calligraphy school.

Sha Menghai (1900–1992), an artist-scholar of our time, states in "The Study of Calligraphy in the Last Three Hundred Years" that the origin of model-calligraphies mainly refer to the running, cursive and small regular scripts of the Jin-Tang period, thereby highlighting the perpetuation of the Jin legacy in the Tang dynasty. He further divides the model-calligraphy school of the Ming and Qing dynasties up till modern times into two main streams: one that worked within the Two Wangs’ tradition and the other that sought to open up a new path separately.

Featuring a selection of ancient calligraphies in the collection of Xubaizhai and the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the current exhibition "Ages of Model-calligraphy School: Selected Calligraphy Works from the Museum Collection" aims to present a broad-brush picture of the far-reaching influence of model-calligraphies on the development of this special art form.
陳與義是北宋徽宗至南宋高宗時的名臣，南宋後曾任職兵部及江漢地方官員。這封信是寫給一位地方武官，內容談到「湖廣西路」一帶有蠻族之患，希望對方盡快出兵剿滅，由此聯想到宋代朝庭內尚有許多地方浩患，若遲遲無策，則平定江山亦岌岌可危。

Chen Yuyi, a prominent courtier whose service spanned from the reign of Huizong of the Northern Song to that of Gaogong of the Southern Song, served in the Ministry of War and in the Jiang-Huai area during the Southern Song period. This letter is addressed to a local military officer, beseeching him to send troops to eradicate bandits harassing the environs of Lake Dongting in Hunan province. Since the lake connects with waterways leading to the capital Lin'an, he continues, should the bandits instigate any rebellion against the court, the consequences will be dire.

唐鈕 Tang Di (1206 – 1364)
《宋元兩朝集，行書書法發》
Calligraphy by four masters of the Song and Yuan dynasties — Five poems in running-regular script

畫家唐鈕寫了五首詩贈給四明和吳林兩位僧人朋友，詩的内容都是與禪門之法，探訪僧友和自己靜修有關，他以楷行書寫，字體工整秀麗，字割修整外拓，正是歐陽詢（557 – 641）的遺風。

The painter Tang Di composed five poems on preaching Buddhism, visiting monks and engaging in private retreats, and sent them to his monk-friends Sichuang and Xuelin. Written in the regular-running script, the calligraphy is reminiscent of Ouyang Xun (557 – 641) in the primness and elegance characterised by a compact core and extended strokes in the characters.

張仲維 Zhang Zhongshou (1256 – 1320)
《宋元兩朝集，行書書法發》
Calligraphy by four masters of the Song and Yuan dynasties — Calligraphy after Wang Xizhi in running script 1319

The painter Zhang Zhongshou composed five poems on the practice of Daoism, interacting with monks and engaging in private retreats, and sent them to his monk-friends Sichuang and Xuelin. Written in the running script, the calligraphy is reminiscent of Wang Xizhi (307 – 365) in the primness and elegance characterised by a compact core and extended strokes in the characters.
The letter above contrasts starkly with this sent by Zhang Zhongzhou to two Daoist friends. It begins with a copy of Wang Xizhi’s *Prolonged Separation*, which contains winter greetings to a friend, as an analogy to the exceptionally cold late spring at the time. Zhang’s impeccable mastery of the flowing grace of Wang Xizhi’s cursive script with hints of the clerical script is evident in the consistent style that runs throughout the copied and the original parts of the letter. Pasted side by side, with the former written in sweltering heat and the latter in biting cold, the former addressed to Buddhists and the latter to Daoists, the former written in the regular script and the latter in cursive, the former from the Tang dynasty and the latter from the Jin, the previous letter by Tang and this one by Zhang make interesting specimens for immediate comparison.

The original text “Poem on the Shuiz Spring Stone Carving” written by Ouyang Xia (1007–1072), a celebrated Northern Song writer, describes the Shuiz Spring in Mount Langyue in Xuxian, Anhui province. Now lost, a stone inscribed with a text written by Li Yangbing (ca. 721 – 787), a renowned Tang calligrapher in the seal script, used to stand next to the spring as alluded in the title while Mount Langyue was exactly the place that inspired Ouyang Xiu’s famous “Record of the Pavilion of the Old Drunken”.

Believed to be from Zhao’s mature period, the exhibit shows borrowings from various masters including Zhao Jie (1082 – 1135), Huang Tingjian (1045 – 1105), Zhang You (151 – 230), the Two Wangs and Monk Zhiyong (active 9th century). At once rounded in strokes and swift in tempo, now broad and now slender, the merger of schools and masters that had come under the influence of the Two Wangs have been perfectly blended into an organic whole through his unfettered and fluid execution. It therefore comes as no surprise that this piece had been praised by Wang Wenzhi (1730 – 1803), a pre-eminent calligrapher of the Qing, to be a masterpiece by Zhao, who had achieved robustness and elegance through familiarizing himself with the Two Wangs tradition.
Poems on Fallen Flowers is a collection of ten poems written by Wen Zhengming’s teacher Shen Zhou (1427–1509). Eventually, a set of 60 poems was formed together with the responses composed by Xu Zhengqing (1479–1511) and others. The poems were nearly copied and the sensation they stirred up in the Wu literary circles recorded in an inscription, both by Wen Zhengming, who was widely acclaimed in the Wu area especially for his small regular script in his thirties and forties. Written in the year jiashu (1504) during the Hongzhi reign of the Ming dynasty, this early piece is infused with vestiges of Zhao Mengfu in the strict adherence to rules to achieve solemnity and propriety underlined by uniformity.

Fables on the Restitution of the Great Tang Dynasty in modern script (section): ca. 1655–1610

董其昌的書法融合了晉、唐、宋、元各家的風格而集其大成。董其昌在書法上的成就主要表現在對書法審美的體認和書法藝術的發展上。董其昌的書法充滿了詩意和禪味，表現出一種超然物外、脫離塵世的境界。董其昌的書法作品風格獨特，深受當代書畫家和書法愛好者的喜愛。
In consummating the stylistic essences of Jin, Tang, Song and Yuan masters, Dong Qichang played a pivotal role in shaping the calligraphic scene of late Ming right into the Qing period.

*Emulation on the Restoration of the Great Tang Dynasty*, a copy of the Tang master Yan Zhengqing's (709–785) classic work of the same title inscribed on a stone, is a masterpiece from Dong Qichang's late period. The piece is made up of three parts. The first is the copy itself, the second a narrative account with the calligrapher's observations, and the third a commentary on various theories surrounding the Tang masterpiece.

With the exception of the copy, the calligraphy is basically an original creation that freely blends the regular, running and cursive scripts into one. Graceful and faultlessly written, the characters are invigorated by a momentum that is particularly pronounced in the run-on and turning strokes. The sparse composition effected by well-spaced strokes, characters and rows is a groundbreaking invention to conjure a strong sense of ease and otherworldliness. Such unprecedented treatment marks the watershed in the stylistic preference between the late Ming and the Qing.

One favoured by Emperor Kangxi (1654 – 1722) and the other by Emperor Qianlong (1711 – 1799), Dong Qichang and Zhao Mengfu exerted the greatest influence outside the Two Wangs on the development of calligraphy in the Qing. As adored by the royals, a prim and elegant style also known as "chancellery style" was established and widely employed in imperial edicts and official documents as well as civil examination answers.

Wang Wenzhi, a leading calligrapher from the Jiangnan area in the Qing dynasty, came third in the palace examination held in the 35th year of the Qianlong reign (1770) and earned himself the title of fudaya. As far as calligraphy is concerned, his first models were Mi Fu (1051 – 1107) and Dong Qichang before he turned to the Two Wangs and Li Yong (678 – 747) for further enlightenment. Well-controlled and compactly structured, his calligraphy manifests his steep knowledge of Jin-Tang model calligraphies. His faithful copying, however, did not lead to mechanical triteness. Instead, his primarily angular strokes are unimpeded and devoid of hesitation. Known by his contemporaries as Tainhua the Light Ink; he was considered a worthy torchbearer of Dong Qichang's light ink methods.

Liu Yong, Grand Secretary of the Eastern Hall equivalent in rank to prime minister, excelled in the regular and running scripts. Modelling on Yan Zhenqing and Dong Qichang, he won the accolade of Four Masters of the Qianlong period together with Wang Wenzhi and others for his unaffected brushwork and generous use of ink. He also earned himself the epithet of Prime Minister the Dark Ink.