



Analysis on the Contemporary Art Features of the Same Origin of Calligraphy and Painting

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Abstract. The homology between calligraphy and painting is a consensus in the development of Chinese calligraphy and painting art. In the artistic creation of painters and calligraphers, calligraphy and painting are inseparable. The "homology of calligraphy and painting" is an important theoretical summary of the characteristics of Chinese calligraphy and traditional painting in the Chinese art community. Its main connotations include homology of calligraphy and painting, integration of calligraphy and painting, and the use of calligraphy in painting. Since the rise and popularity of literati painting, the art of calligraphy and painting has become increasingly inseparable. This article takes the artistic characteristics of calligraphy and painting homology as the research object. It first sorts out the origin and development of the concept theory of calligraphy and painting homology in time, and then systematically analyzes and summarizes the specific artistic characteristics of calligraphy and painting homology. Drawing on philosophical aesthetics, Peircean semiotics, and phenomenological notions of embodied empathy, this paper further examines how contemporary artists reinterpret the homology through symbolic and deconstructive practices. On this basis, it focuses on the new ideas of contemporary artists in the practice of calligraphy and painting homology creation, which are connected by symbolic vision and semiotic reconstruction. Finally, the basic artistic characteristics of calligraphy and painting being of the same origin are summarized, which provide us with inspiration for the creation of calligraphy and painting being of the same origin under contemporary new practices.

Keywords: Calligraphy and painting are of the same origin, Development Status, Artistic features

1 Introduction

In China, calligraphy and painting possess inherent uniqueness in ideological connotation and artistic creation, sharing common origins and functional demands. Their developmental evolution has undergone a lengthy and complex transformation process. Since ancient times, extensive theoretical discussions and research findings have accumulated on the proposition of "the homology of calligraphy and painting". In their intertwined historical development, calligraphy and painting directly reflect the overall

aesthetic characteristics and Eastern artistic conception of the Chinese nation. They also epitomize the iterative renewal of Chinese people's universal perceptions of nature, society, politics, philosophy, religion, morality, literature and art amid historical changes, standing in sharp contrast with other cultural and artistic systems. Tracing the origin and evolution of the concept of "the homology of calligraphy and painting" represents a conscious process for humans to perceive the world and pursue the aesthetic beauty of national culture in artistic creation. The homology of calligraphy and painting boasts profound theoretical origins and far-reaching influence in the history of Chinese artistic thought. Centering on this core proposition, this paper elaborates on the homogeneous yet heterogeneous relationship between Chinese calligraphy and painting. The two arts cannot be artificially separated in terms of their emergence and development, as they share an intimate internal logical connection and feature homogeneity in essence while differing in form. From the perspectives of philosophical aesthetics and semiotics, the "homology of calligraphy and painting" is not merely a historical or technical consensus, but a manifestation of the Chinese pictorial turn of thinking. Philosophically, it reflects the Confucian concept of "the manifestation of the Dao through the forms of things"^[1] and the Daoist notion of "the union of nature and humanity"^[2], where in both calligraphy and painting serve as material carriers for spiritual expression. Semiotically, this paper draws upon Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic sign theory. Peirce distinguishes between the icon and the index. Icon signifies by resemblance to its object, such as a portrait or a pictographic character^[3]. The index, which signifies by a physical or causal connection to its object, like smoke as an index of fire or a brushstroke as an index of the artist's gesture^[3]. Within this framework, Chinese calligraphy and painting share a dual semiotic nature. It means their forms are iconic as they depict or suggest external objects, yet their lines are indexical as they bear traces of the artist's moving body. Thus, the homology thesis requires a theoretical reinterpretation beyond descriptive art history.

2 Current Research on the Homology of Calligraphy and Painting

2.1 Development and Historical Records of the Concept

The term *calligraphy* refers to the act of writing, written characters, and the derived art of writing. *Painting*, beyond the act of depiction, generally denotes *Dan-qing*—traditional Chinese painting categorized into landscape, flower-and-bird, and figure painting. Three prevalent viewpoints define the relationship between calligraphy and painting: homology, identity of form, and unity of principles. Though with different emphases, all acknowledge the close bond between the two artistic disciplines. Yuan means source and origin; Ti refers to ontology and essence; Fa denotes norms and aesthetic principles. Among the three, "the homology of calligraphy and painting" is the most widely recognized theoretical term in Chinese art history. It can be interpreted both from the perspective of artistic categorization and the shared ideological connotations of the two arts. Ancient primitive humans recorded their understanding of the

world through pictorial depictions, marking the inception of calligraphy and painting. The earliest textual records of their homology date back to pre-Qin philosophical classics.

The ancient mystical patterns *River Map* and *Luo Script* recorded celestial phenomena with simple black-and-white dots and vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines, embodying primitive people's worship of numbers, cognition of the universe, and adherence to natural laws—wisdom inherited by later generations. Modern renowned Chinese painter Zheng Wuchang noted that symbols such as knotting records, the Eight Trigrams, and early pictographs were primarily practical recording systems with no clear distinction between calligraphy and painting in essence. This era is regarded as the mixed period of calligraphy and painting [4].

The theory of “the identity of form of calligraphy and painting” was formally proposed in the Tang Dynasty. Zhang Yanyuan, a celebrated art theorist, stated: Cangjie, endowed with four eyes, observed celestial phenomena. By imitating the traces of birds and turtles, he established the structure of written characters... At that time, calligraphy and painting were undivided in form; the creation of symbolic imagery was initial and rudimentary. Writing emerged to convey abstract ideas, while painting arose to visualize concrete forms [5].

This records the legend of Cangjie inventing primitive pictographs by imitating natural forms to resolve the ambiguity of symbolic recording in ancient times. Zhang argued that writing and painting were indistinguishable at their creation, laying the theoretical foundation for the literati painting movement of the Song and Yuan dynasties. From a pictographic perspective, calligraphy and painting share the same origin but diverged in developmental paths.

By the late Song and early Yuan dynasties, Zhao Mengfu explicitly systematized the theory of “the homology of calligraphy and painting”. He argued that painting and calligraphy were not isolated arts but mutually complementary and nourishing. Advocating the literati painting style of learning from antiquity and pursuing spiritual resemblance over formal likeness, he distinguished literati painting from the realistic court academic painting and integrated calligraphic brushwork into his paintings. Wu and Zheng noted that his work *Xiu shi shu lin tu* fully adopted calligraphic strokes to depict natural objects, embodying his artistic philosophy [6]. Zhao Mengfu inscribed a poem on the painting: Rock textures follow the cursive flying-white stroke; tree trunks embody seal-script writing. Bamboo painting masters the eight calligraphic rules; Those who grasp this truth shall know calligraphy and painting are inherently one. This is the first explicit textual elaboration of calligraphy-painting homology in art history. The ancient text *Yin Oracle Scripts* also records that “its structural framework embodies both calligraphy and painting” [4]. In the Ming Dynasty, He Liangjun explicitly clarified their common origin, a concept widely adopted in subsequent discussions on calligraphy-painting relations [7].

2.2 Significance of the Homology Concept

The proposition of calligraphy-painting homology carries distinctive historical context and practical significance. Traditional Chinese painting was historically termed

Danqing, composed of mineral pigments represented by cinnabar and plant-based pigments represented by indigo. Before the Five Dynasties, paintings relied heavily on color application. The earliest extant landscape painting *Spring Outing* outlined landscapes with plain line drawing and layered ochre, azurite, and malachite green to enrich thematic expression, where the value of calligraphy in painting was initially explored.

From the Song and Yuan dynasties onward, literati scholars began engaging in painting, shifting focus from formal techniques to comprehensive artistic accomplishment. Integrating poetry, calligraphy, and seal carving into painting became prevalent. Literati participation greatly enriched the expressive techniques of traditional Chinese painting, culminating in artistic pinnacles unmatched by later generations. Su Shi's *Withered Trees, Bamboos and Rocks* employed calligraphic strokes to depict texture and personal sentiment, a practice followed by contemporary artists such as Wen Tong and Mi Fu. The Yuan Dynasty witnessed a flourishing of landscape and flower-and-bird painting by calligraphy-integrated painters including Zhao Mengfu, Huang Gongwang, Ni Zan, Wang Meng, and Ke Jiusi. Wang Meng's works were praised for "powerful brushwork unrivaled for five hundred years" [8]. After the Ming and Qing dynasties, integrating calligraphy into painting became an essential technical norm. Xu Wei and Chen Chun adopted cursive strokes; Wu Changshuo applied stone-drum seal script, whose sturdy, solemn linear style derived from his lifelong seal-script practice. Modern masters Huang Binhong integrated bronze inscriptions and Qi Baishi adopted seal script into painting. Meanwhile, artistic theories further developed: Li Kuchan proposed "Calligraphy reaches its peak in painting, and painting attains its ultimate standard in calligraphy" [9]. According to Xiong [10], Lu Yifei reached the pinnacle of his peony painting in his later years by incorporating calligraphic brushwork into painting, forming a distinctive style that integrates calligraphy and painting. Xiong also notes that his calligraphic practice informed his painting, and vice versa. Building on this observation, I argue that his works feature an organic fusion of painting and calligraphy, which are vivid, lively and endowed with inherent rhythmic charm. The theory and practice of calligraphy-painting homology have continued to deepen and expand.

3 Artistic Characteristics of Calligraphy-Painting Homology

3.1 Practical Origin of Calligraphy and Painting

The connotations of "calligraphy" and "painting" have been interpreted diversely throughout Chinese history, closely tied to the evolution of Chinese philosophical thinking and lifestyle. Both initially emerged as practical functional tools.

Before the separation of pictographs and characters, inheriting philosophical and moral principles was the core of ancient Chinese civilization. As an independent writing system had not yet formed, pictures served as substitutes for written language. In primitive societies, human communication relied on vocal sounds without characters, limited by sensory and physical expression. Abstract symbolic systems—including the Eight Trigrams, knotting records, and contract tokens—emerged

to convey faith and moral norms. Essentially numerical in nature, these symbols recorded natural phenomena with concise lines and images, combining to transmit information like primitive writing.

Surviving prehistoric rock paintings adopted imitation and generalization of natural forms to record real activities, possessing both textual and pictorial attributes as pictographic symbols with distinct pictographic and aesthetic value. There are two methods used in the creation of pictographic characters: detailed and rough. When depicting the external characteristics of the object being represented, it tends to be more realistic and pictorial. However, when only the general outline of the object being represented is depicted and the description of the object is only similar, it has freehand and symbolic characteristics^[11]. Primitive paintings, pottery patterns, and abstract symbols functioned for counting, record-keeping, and tribal communication, serving as crucial methods of knowledge inheritance and social cohesion. In terms of creative methods, the oldest Chinese characters are the same as rock paintings. Before the formation of text, primitive patterns were symbols with practical significance and used to identify certain things, achieving the purpose of preserving, revealing, or conveying relevant information through simulated images^[12]. Though early pictographs shared pictographic features, their limited expressive capacity drove the refinement into standardized pictographs, with calligraphy and painting still undifferentiated.

The Shang Dynasty saw the emergence of oracle bone script, the earliest systematic Chinese pictograph inscribed on turtle shells and animal bones for divination and astronomical record-keeping. Zheng Wuchang described oracle bone script as “embodied with vivid imagery and sentiment, embryonic forms of painting”^[4]. The character shu (𠄎) is defined as “to record,” combining the brush radical yu with the phonetic zhe^[13]. The oracle bone character for “writing” depicts a hand holding a writing tool, emphasizing the act itself. The evolution from oracle bone script, bronze inscriptions, seal script, clerical script to regular script simplified complex pictorial forms while retaining pictographic logic. Evolving from knotting records to the Eight Trigrams and then to pictographic oracle bone script, these symbols prioritized practicality with nascent artistic value, laying the groundwork for the independent development of calligraphy and painting.

3.2 Emotional Expression Through Lines

Calligraphy and painting converge in emotional expression, artistic conception, and spiritual charm, establishing an inseparable intrinsic bond. The pictographic logic of ancient writing persisted until the emergence of Han Dynasty cursive script. In their evolution, both writing and painting discarded redundant details and enhanced symbolic imitation, evolving from complexity to simplicity and from realism to symbolism. Pictographic symbols refined by ancient people gradually detached from primitive paintings to evolve into appreciable calligraphy.

Ancient writing systems, like oracle bone script, bronze inscriptions, stone-drum script, and small seal script. They are retained prominent pictographic features before the clerical script transformation. Han cursive script featured connected, abbreviated

strokes with unrestricted linear rhythm, separating itself from utilitarian writing and pursuing aesthetic expression. Its pictorial attributes diminished while symbolic connotations strengthened, with strokes transitioning from curved to angular lines. Viewers can perceive artists' emotions through calligraphic rhythm, pause, and momentum. Wang Xizhi's *Preface to the Lanting Collection* conveys leisurely intoxication through dynamic brushwork, rigorous structure, and elegant composition. Yan Zhenqing's *Draft of a Requiem to My Nephew* expresses overwhelming grief through chaotic revisions and unrestrained layout. Similarly, traditional Chinese painting employs lines for modeling and emotional expression, embodying national social consciousness and aesthetic taste. Unearthed murals and brick reliefs prioritize linework in depicting character traits alongside coloring techniques. Research on tree patterns in Han Dynasty brick reliefs reveals how schematic triangular patterns evolved into exaggerated curved lines to depict lush natural scenery^[14]. Gu Kaizhi's *Nymph of the Luo River* portrayed the goddess's grace and melancholy with delicate, silken linework. Xu Wei adopted cursive brushwork and splashed ink to depict grape vines and leaves, complemented by his inscribed poem to convey unrecognized talent and noble integrity. From a semiotic standpoint, the expressive line in both calligraphy and painting functions primarily as an index rather than merely an icon. As established in the introduction, an index bears a physical or causal connection to its referent. The brushline records the artist's kinetic body. Their rhythm, pressure, speed, and hesitation will thereby indexing the artist's emotional and mental state in real time. The iconicity of the line is its resemblance to an external object or visual form, and it is secondary to this indexical self-inscription. Phenomenologically, the viewer's act of tracing the brushstrokes with their gaze simulates the original creative gesture, generating an embodied empathy^[15]. This dual reading of line as both gestural index and formal icon constitutes the aesthetic essence of the same origin beyond historical convention.

3.3 Shared Aesthetic Evaluation Criteria

Emanating from the same cultural origin, calligraphy and painting both serve as criteria for evaluating literati's moral character and philosophical thoughts. Before the Tang Dynasty, painting was regarded as a mere craft despite skilled artisans. To distinguish literati creation from folk craftsmen and court professional painters, Wang Wei pioneered scholar painting in the Tang Dynasty—created and inscribed by literati for self-entertainment and emotional expression, also known as literati freehand painting. Drawing themes from poetry, landscape, and flower-and-bird paintings conveyed intellectuals' discontent with social reality and desire for seclusion. Wang Wei exemplified the integration of poetry and painting, praised by Su Shi as "Poetry contains painting; painting embodies poetry"^[16]. Zheng Sixiao's *Ink Orchid* used concise orchid imagery and inscriptions to symbolize moral integrity and nostalgia for the fallen nation. The rise of literati painting popularized the recognition of calligraphy-painting homology.

Beyond formal integration, both arts demand profound cultural cultivation, following the principle that "moral character determines artistic attainment". They share

analogous critical evaluation systems. Yu Jianwu of the Southern Dynasty innovatively proposed the "Nine Ranks Theory" in his calligraphy theory work "Shupin", which uses the official selection system structure of the nine rank system to evaluate books based on their rank. Later, it was widely used to judge the qualifications and character of talents. On the basis of this evaluation system for calligraphy, Tang Dynasty calligraphy and painting critics Li Sizhen and Zhang Huaiguan respectively classified calligraphers into nine levels in their works "Houshu Pin" and "Shudian", and further proposed "Yi Pin", "Shen Pin", "Miao Pin" and "Neng Pin" [17]. In later generations, the annotations and rankings of the "Four Ranks" were continuously organized, improved, and deepened. During the Qing Dynasty, Bao Shichen added "excellent works" to his book "Guochao Shupin". There are similar standards in painting. Ming dynasty calligrapher and painter He Liangjun also classified painting into "four grades" in his book "The Four Friends Studio Collection", including divine, exquisite, skillful, and elegant. [7]. Xie He's Six Principles of Painting remains the cornerstone of traditional Chinese painting criticism^[18]. 1. Spirit Resonance and Life Motion 2. Bone Method with Brushwork 3. Responding to Objects in Formal Likeness 4. Applying Color According to Category 5. Composing Layout and Positioning 6. Transmitting Models by Copying The six principles evaluate artistic vitality, brush power, modeling, coloring, composition, and copying technique, with spiritual resonance as the core essence relying on proficient execution of the other five principles. In modern art criticism, Xie He's "Six Principles" can be re-interpreted as an integrated system of aesthetic semiotics. Spirit Resonance is the transcendental signified^[19]. Which means an ephemeral, dynamic quality that cannot be directly represented but must be evoked through the other five principles. Bone Method with Brushwork serves as the technical and existential signifier^[3], where the brush-line embodies both structural integrity and somatic energy. This inseparability of the spiritual from the material, the signified from the signifier^[3], is precisely what distinguishes the Chinese evaluative tradition from Western formalist or mimetic critiques. Therefore, the shared criteria between calligraphy and painting are not merely analogous but ontologically grounded in the same semiotic logic of embodied expressiveness. Guo Ruoxu wrote in *Tuhua Jianshi Zhi* that the Tang Dynasty painter Zhang Zao once proposed "Learning from nature externally; Drawing from the mind internally"^[20]. Traditional Chinese philosophy advocates the unity of humanity and nature, where artists align inner spiritual temperament with the cosmos and it is a perpetual pursuit in both literary and artistic creation.

3.4 Identical Creative Tools

China is the only nation that employs the writing brush as a shared traditional tool for both calligraphy and painting. The earliest extant writing brush, unearthed from a Warring States Chu tomb in Changsha in 1954, features rabbit-hair bristles and a bamboo shaft, proving mature brush craftsmanship in the Warring States period.

Accustomed to calligraphic wrist movements, ancient literati naturally integrated calligraphic brushwork into painting, achieving an interplay of calligraphy and painting on paper. Zhang Yanyuan commented on Lu Tanwei's painting: "Executed in one

continuous stroke like cursive script, with unbroken rhythmic momentum”^[5]. He further validated the shared brush control, ink manipulation, and rhythmic continuity in calligraphy and painting by comparing Wang Zijin’s one-stroke cursive and Lu Tanwei’s one-stroke painting. Modern landscape painter Zhang Ding argued that the aesthetic cognition, evaluation, and practice of Chinese painting must originate from the cultural symbiosis of calligraphy-painting homology^[21]. Calligraphy and painting follow identical rules in ink application, pursuing vivid spiritual resonance. Zhang Yanyuan proposed the five ink tones: dry, wet, thick, thin, and dark^[5]. Modern master Huang Binhong summarized the definitive standards of brush and ink application as five brush techniques and seven ink methods. Varied ink tones depict virtuality and reality, spatial depth, and light contrast in landscape painting, infusing works with vitality. Calligraphy also adopts thick, thin, dry, and burnt ink tones with flexible linear variations to express artistic temperament. The shared brush and ink techniques distinguish Chinese painting fundamentally from Western art.

4 Practice and Application of Calligraphy-Painting Homology

4.1 Deconstruction and Innovation by Contemporary Artists

The functionality of books and paintings has undergone a transformation in the course of historical development, shifting from purely practical instrumental use to a coexistence of aesthetic and functional aspects. The consensus that both originate from the same source and are inseparable has profoundly influenced the Chinese people's cognition and practical direction towards books and paintings.

Both Chinese painting and calligraphy art can be termed as the art of "lines" in terms of their forms of expression. Both possess the spatial characteristics of linear movement when read and appreciated. Unlike Western drawing with focal perspective and a static viewing method, Chinese painting typically employs the method of scattered perspective to depict images on the canvas. As the viewer moves around and time progresses, the appreciation also follows suit. It can be seen from near to far, from the foot of the mountain to the sky, and from the wilderness to the market, embodying the concept of "viewing the mountains from every angle and the scenery shifting with every step"^[22]. In his green-colored silk painting *Emperor Ming Escaping to Sichuan*, the Tang Dynasty painter Li Sixun employs a visually panoramic composition, where the winding mountain paths among the lush and steep mountains echo the exhaustion and haste of the Tang Emperor Xuanzong and his servants during their escape. Emperor Minghuang is positioned in the lower right corner of the painting, riding a horse and about to cross a small bridge, but suddenly retreats due to an unexpected situation, pushing the scene to a climax. Ancient calligraphy and painting works are usually created on rice paper, and the writing order of calligraphy works generally follows a top-to-bottom and right-to-left pattern. The reading method is also to first view the writing lines as a whole from afar, appreciate their spatial composition and the rhythm of line ink colors, and the inherent information-carrying nature of the text also requires the reader's eyes to follow the writing order rather than reading from the opposite direction.

In 2001, Xu Bing, a contemporary artist and former dean of the Experimental Art School of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, created a mixed-media installation *Reading Landscape* based on the clue of the homology of calligraphy and painting. As shown in Figure 1, the artist chose a visual expression language combining text and physical installations of painting, creating a series of individual pictographic symbols that mimic the shapes of natural objects such as grass, birds, clouds, and water, making them readable like words and composable like radicals when arranged together on the ground and walls of the exhibition space. The pictographic characters visually connect with an oil painting hanging on the wall that simulates an outdoor landscape, and the readable landscape composed of the corresponding pictographic symbols in the exhibition space extends into the painting. The audience moves among thousands of plastic boards engraved with pictographic characters, experiencing an immersive journey into Chinese landscape painting that embodies the unique artistic conception of Chinese cultural landscapes. It represents another form of empathy between the self and the world, combining both spiritual and physical aesthetics. Xu Bing's *Reading Landscape* can be theoretically situated as a deliberate deconstruction and reconstruction of the calligraphy-painting homology. By creating legible yet non-existent pictograms that mimic natural forms, Xu reveals the arbitrariness^[23] underlying the seemingly natural iconicity of Chinese characters, echoing Derrida's critique of logocentrism^[24]. Simultaneously, his installation transforms the viewer from a passive reader of text or spectator of painting into an active wanderer within a sign-system, physically enacting Peirce's "unlimited semiosis^[24]." Thus, Xu's work does not merely apply the homology but critically re-examines its foundational semiotic premises, opening new pathways for contemporary practice beyond traditional brush-and-ink media.

Contemporary landscape painter Jiang Baolin has expressed the application of the texturing techniques of landscape painting beyond the traditional vocabulary of landscape, and has independently established a style of plain landscape painting. However, his landscape paintings still employ traditional calligraphic methods for expression. He believes that traditional landscape painting has reached a critical period of transformation, "requiring both brush and ink, as well as modernity"^[25]. To require brush and ink means to adhere to tradition and rules, while to require modernity means to create a realm distinctly different from that of the ancients. That is, the brush and ink must be very traditional, while the artistic conception and form must be very modern. Therefore, no matter what, the homology of calligraphy and painting runs through the entire development of Chinese art, and Chinese art will never exist independently without the two.

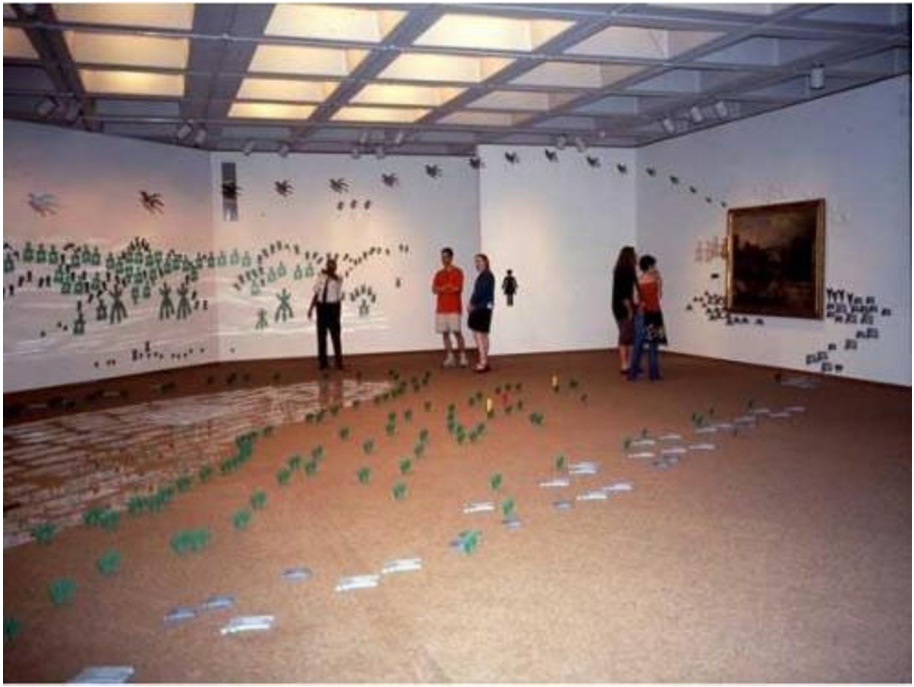


Fig. 1. Xu Bing, Reading Landscape

4.2 Uniqueness and Developmental Directions of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting

Calligraphy and painting are concrete mediums interpreting abstract thinking derived from observing the world, with their inherent homology rooted in distinctive Chinese culture. As Duan argues, it is impossible to determine the pronunciation of a Chinese character simply from its written form. Unlike the writing systems of most other languages, Chinese characters are not designed primarily to represent sounds, nor do they use an alphabetic structure. Instead, they originate from pictographic and ideographic principles, using visual images and symbolic combinations to express meaning, much in the same way as ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs ^[26]. Further research by Xu Buxue and Xu Liming verified the quasi-textual characteristics of Chinese characters from multiple dimensions ^[27].

The prevalence of calligraphy-painting homology in China, unique in global art history, stems not merely from the difference between ideographic and alphabetic writing but fundamentally from divergent modes of thinking. Chinese art is rooted in philosophy, constrained by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, emphasizing inner spiritual exploration on the basis of emulating nature. Western art is rooted in science, focusing on objective sketching and realistic representation. Western higher education prioritizes divergent thinking and oral expression, centering on auditory and visual communication. Chinese education takes language and literature as foundational dis-

ciplines, cultivating comprehension of abstract artistic conception and written expression. Chinese characters integrate pictorial imagery and abstract symbolism, anchoring ideological expression in readable text.

Cultural differences shape divergent perceptions of concrete imagery. Calligraphy-painting homology transcends technical skill to embody the spiritual carrier of Chinese culture. It represents the outcome of ancient people's observation, cognitive processing, and practical application of the objective world under the influence of traditional worldview.

Modern Chinese education initially adopted the Soviet model to cultivate scientific and technological talents. With rapid economic development, cultural and spiritual pursuit has grown increasingly prominent. For contemporary art practitioners, innovation without inheriting traditional Chinese aesthetics and culture is rootless. Art educators bear growing responsibilities in inheriting traditional aesthetics and brushwork skills, requiring comprehensive professional competence. In the digital era, integrating Chinese traditional thinking with diversified artistic expression has become an inevitable developmental trend.

5 Conclusion

Through a systematic chronological sorting of the concept of calligraphy-painting homology, an analysis of its specific artistic characteristics. Such as practical origin, line-based emotional expression, shared aesthetic criteria, and identical creative tools. And an examination of contemporary practices exemplified by Xu Bing and Jiang Baolin, this paper has moved beyond descriptive art history to integrate philosophical, semiotic, and art-critical perspectives. On this basis, the following theoretical dimensions are further elucidated. First, Philosophically, the homology is grounded in the Confucian and Daoist worldview of holistic correspondence between humanity and nature, wherein the brush functions as an extension of the mind. Second, Semiotically, drawing on Peirce and Derrida, calligraphy and painting share an iconic-indexical sign structure: their forms resemble external objects, which is icon, while their brush traces physically index the artist's embodied gesture. It is a semiotic foundation that contemporary artists like Xu Bing critically reconstruct. Third, From the standpoint of art criticism, Xie He's Six Principles as the shared evaluative criteria constitute a coherent system of embodied aesthetics, where Spirit Resonance emerges as the transcendental goal achieved through the materiality of brushwork. These integrated conclusions position the homology of calligraphy and painting as a living semiotic-philosophical paradigm that continues to evolve in contemporary practice. Future research may further explore its cognitive and neuroaesthetic dimensions.

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