

Exhibition: Abstract Chinese Painting by Tung Hing-Yee
Searching Dreams

[Analysis of his form with diagrams and background philosophy](#)

Introduction

In Hong Kong, there are many modernist Chinese artists continuing their traditional Chinese ink painting. Lu Shoukun¹ is the first Chinese artist making abstract art of Chinese ink painting in Hong Kong. Now, Tung Hing-Yee² is one of a follower and try to establish his own style with forceful creativity. In this exhibition (details see Appendix), he is at the forefront of contemporary arts, his work is also deeply rooted in the tradition of Chinese art, especially using Chinese ink painting medium. He introduces the exhibition “*Searching Dreams is using water and ink effects of Chinese medium in order to express contemporary abstract ideals by intricate composition. The works are the innovative use of dot and lines in red contrasting to the black ink in communicating the concept of the paintings’ titled*”.

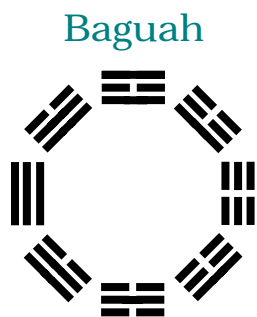
Picture Format

Picture format is the shape or proportions of the picture plane, which may be rectangular, square, circular, triangular, and so on. Western painting is based on perspective drawing in a rectangular style. Normally, horizontal dimension is larger than vertical in order to fit the human eyes’ image window. Some researchers determining the best proportion of frame is *golden section* (1.618:1). But the Chinese traditional paintings do not concern perspective view of the objects.

Tung's works paint abstract ideas in Chinese traditional hanging scroll style. This style of picture format breaks through the eyes' focus on perspective. The beholders' eyes should be watched by searching the subject of painting. This provides a free space for thinking about abstract meanings. This format characteristics are functional that also capture abstract language well.

Chinese Philosophy

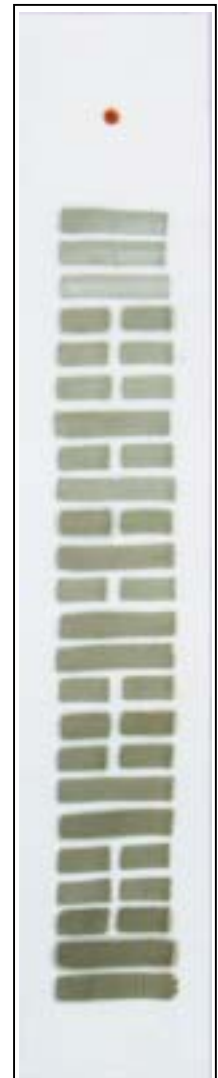
There are full of Chinese culture inside the Tungs' works. Here I choose the titled "Yin-Yang" painting as shown on the right hand side. This is a new arrangement of *Baguah*³, in order to fit the Chinese hanging scroll style



of picture format. *Baguah* is a traditional Chinese octagon code diagram, which is shown on the left-hand side. The symbol of ☰ means heaven; ☷ means earth; ☵ means water; ☲ means fire; ☳ means thunder; ☱ means mountains; ☶ means lakes and ☴ means winds.

This is a complete coding of three stripes, presenting in mathematics is 2^3 . So the abstract meaning of this painting presents the nature of the universe. The red dot as seem to be the beholder in his works.

The composition of Tung's works are illustrated by red dot and simple black lines. Because of the color red and black, the opposition offered by *yin-yang* are supplemented by oppositions between top and bottom (the composition metaphorically associated with heaven and hell). Tung is happy to acknowledge the Chinese philosophical source (*Yin-Yang*) on this abstract painting, has a good success.



Abstract Ideas

Most of the important paintings in this exhibition are entitled in Chinese philosophy: “Yin-Yang”; “Heavens and Earth”; “Morning Sunshine”... etc. Those titles could help beholders to understand the abstract ideas of Chinese philosophy in painting. In addition, Tung has a direct cultural link with China and takes Chinese elements as an important ingredient of his art. He feels the responsibility to inherit and extend Chinese culture within his works. Now he goes on his individualistic path, seeking private abstract language to interpret the Chinese philosophy. Anyway, I believe that some of Tung’s works reaches his target in this exhibition.

Notes:

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- ¹ A native of Guangzhou, Guangdong. Lu graduated from the Guangzhou University with a degree in economics. In 1948, he settled in Hong Kong. He devoted himself in painting traditional style, and later turned to painting in an abstract. He developed blending philosophical concepts of Taoism and Buddhism with Chinese ink painting techniques in a distinctive manner, which created significant impact in the Hong Kong art circle.
- ² A native of Shanghai. In 1962, he settled down in Hong Kong. He interests in travelling and captures the essence of natural scenes or objects and expresses it in his personal manner, such as his primitive art. Since 1987 started to teach Chinese painting in his studio. Paintings are in the collections of the Hong Kong museum of Art and the National Taiwan Arts Center.
- ³ It is a series of eight patterns of strips in a octagon, which consisting of arrangement of continuous and broken lines in three lines each, symbolizing changing balance of forces and used divination. The Chinese culture belief that they present all the nature of universe.