

Centre for Continuing Education

Chinese/Japanese brush painting, philosophy and meditation for beginners

Janet Twigg-Patterson

Learn the basic brushwork through meditative practice, and gain an understanding of the philosophy behind this ancient form of painting. The course will contain the basic techniques and the 'four gentleman', bamboo, orchid, plum blossom and chrysanthemum.

We will be learning to use and appreciate the importance of the vehicle of breathing meditation and focussing on channelling our creativity through the awareness of the Universe or Ch'i (spirit) mind, heart, body to create the rhythmic spontaneity in "the way of the brush". In our busy lives today it is important to prepare oneself for painting. We often create in our own minds an obstacle that stops us from enjoying even half an hour of practice in between our everyday responsibilities. To enjoy this painting time (or indeed any part of our lives) we need to calm ourselves and we need to let go of entrenched habits preconceived attitudes, ideas, standards and judgements. We need to clear our mind to find the calm and the creativity within ourselves.

The mindful, meditative practice of the deliberate placement of our art materials is a very useful tool to begin our painting time. For example, we need to create a permanent space for our meditation and painting. Deliberately placing ink, water, brush and paper in preparation helps us to promote the calm we need. Meditation is not only to clear the mind of unwanted distraction but also to prepare our mind and body to absorb the subject matter to allow the flow of complete harmony through the Ch'i, mind and body to paper.

To begin learning Chinese brush painting one must be aware of the main principles. These principles are called the six cannons. The six cannons are vital in the demonstration and understanding of this form of painting.

The six cannons are:

1. Circulation of the Ch'i (breath, spirit, vital force of Heaven) produces movement of life
2. Brush creates structure
3. According to the object draw its form
4. According to the nature of the object apply colour
5. Organise composition with the elements in their proper place
6. In copying, seek to pass on the essence of the master's brush methods

(Quoted from the book "The Mustard Seed Garden – the Manual of Painting")

"The views expressed in this course/activity are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the views of The Australian National University"

The Australian National University

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Materials:

Janet can supply Chinese brushes, Chinese ink and Chinese student and other special papers (expect to pay approx. \$50)

Please bring:

- 2 white china or clear glass bowls (soup bowls are ideal)
- 2 white saucers

Please bring any other equipment you may already own that could be of use and a light lunch each day.

NB. This course will be held at Janet's own studio in Stirling.

Janet has been teaching Chinese brush painting for over 30 years and has had many exhibitions. Her interest in Chinese brush began during a posting to Malaysia where she studied the medium for 2 years and held an exhibition of her work. Upon her return to Australia she continued to study the techniques and also began to teach Chinese brush. She undertook two months intensive study in China in 2005, to extend her techniques. Janet's bird paintings are included in the Parliament House collection and she is a member of the ACT Wildlife and Botanical Artists group.

DATES/TIMES: 9.30am-4pm, Saturday & Sunday, 27 & 28 February

FEE: \$219 *no discount*

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