

Program Name: Chinese Brush Painting

Artist: Valda Hsu

## Special Requirements:

15 plastic tub containers for water; 12"x18" newsprint (at least 2 sheets per student); paper towels; each table should be lined with newspaper. Artist will provide brushes, watercolor cake sets, and Chinese ink. All workshops must take place in the same room. 30 minutes needed before first workshop for set up and after last workshop for clean-up.



## Workshop Description

Teaching Artist Valda Hsu demonstrates the connection between Chinese characters and painting with a Chinese brush. She creates an environment that introduces students to the Chinese language and culture while they participate in painting animals, trees, and other traditional subjects from nature.

This program introduces students to the tools, techniques, and aesthetics of Chinese brush and ink painting. Valda Hsu explains the virtue of simplicity and the importance of empty (negative) space in composing a picture.

Students will learn to write their names using ideograms. They also make a signature stamp, known

as a *chop*, to sign their work as Chinese painters do.

Valda Hsu correlates Zen brush styles and Chinese calligraphy to Western principles and design elements. The styles are related because each stroke is contemplated and essential and gives the picture a meaningful shape and spiritual feeling.

Valda's objective is to have the students express themselves by creating original characters based on ancient pictograms that are incorporated into new compositions and designs.

## Educational Objectives & Standards

Students will:

- Examine the similarities of stylistic and pictorial concepts of Chinese calligraphy and painting
- Experience the unique painting technique utilized in Chinese brush painting

National Visual Art Standards:

- Know how visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements are used in various art forms

Behavioral Studies

- Understand that group and cultural influences contribute to human development

## Artist Bio: Valda Hsu

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Valda Hsu was born and raised in Taiwan. She came to America in 1983 to attend college and study art. After more than four years of rigorous study she graduated from Art Center College of Design with honors.

After her graduation, Valda left Pasadena to work for Hallmark Cards Inc. as an in-house designer. After six years of honorable service, on the eve of her promotion, she quit

her job to raise her two children, Chi-ping and Matthew, and become an art teacher. Some of her students loved art so much that they have pursued careers in art. She has taught art for 10 years. She is also currently involved in teaching the Mandarin Chinese language and culture.

## List of Resources:

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### Books:

#### Fun With Chinese Characters 1-3

by Tan Huay Peng  
Master Communications Inc,  
February 2004  
ISBN: 1932457003

#### Yani : the brush of innocence

Hudson Hills Press in association with the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City :  
Distributed in the U.S. by Rizzoli; 1st ed. edition  
ASIN: 1555950167

#### China: Empire of Living Symbols

by Cecilia Lindqvist  
Perseus Books Group;  
(November 1, 1991)  
ASIN: 0201570092

Contact KCYA for more information about this and other programs

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## Vocabulary

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**Inscriptions:** A seal or stamp

**Fei Bai:** “flying white,” a swift brush stroke that creates white lines inside the brush mark

**Gong Bi Style:** A slow, painstaking approach meaning “working brush”. This style makes use of outlining techniques with extremely fine brushes followed by building up washes of color. This style is opposite of *Xie Yi* style

**Xie Yi Style:** “freely brushed” or “write the idea or essence,” this style of Chinese brush painting shows a single idea with a few strokes

### *The Four Gentlemen*

**Bi:** brush

**Mo:** ink stick

**Yan:** ink stone

**Zhi:** paper

## Post-Workshop Activities

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1. A Chinese artist’s signature is called a *Chop*, but Chops are used in Chinese society for other reasons as well. Ask students to design their own Chops. How many ways can they use them in the classroom (or the school) to identify themselves? Why is their signature important? What does it mean to place one’s signature on a letter or work of art?
2. Ask students to describe the qualities that will allow them to recognize *Xie Yi* style Chinese brush painting.



Yin style chop



Yang style chop