

for continuing students

the dance 
of the eye

and 
the hand

more fundamentals of Chinese brush painting by Bob Schmitt

lesson 7

- Chinese painting theory:
the eight relationships

Assumptions behind the dance of the eye and the hand

As a teacher I begin with several assumptions.
Any student coming to me has 3 sets of skills to be nurtured.

First, the student has the skills of the eye - when they look at things, what do they see?

Second, the student has the set of skills of the hand - how are they able to connect what they see to the brush, the ink and the paper?

Third, the student has the set of skills of their heart/mind - how are their actions connected to the source of their energy, their spirit, the Qi?

It is from these assumptions that I now offer the dance of the eye and the hand.

These instructional videos with printable models are based on the concept that to learn Chinese brush painting one must train not only one's hand but one's eye as well.

The understanding is that continued learning is a tension between what the eye can see and what the hand can do.

And that the dance of the eye and the hand will always be in play.

That tension is always there.

Mastery is a process.

Not a destination.

Bob Schmitt

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About brush painter Bob Schmitt



I am a life long student and teacher of the traditions of Chinese brush painting.

I began my study of brush painting in 1962 watching what was then educational tv. I would sit in front of the tv after school with my brush and ink and learn basic forms. I practiced most of my life unschooled.

In the late 90s I was fortunate to begin to study with Lok Tok, Yitong Lok of Toronto and

Hong Zhang in Minneapolis—three incredibly gifted Chinese brush painters and teachers.

Since 1998 I have been a weekly student of Hong Zhang, a native of Shanghai, schooled there and now living in Bloomington, Minnesota.

I have also had a long distance relationship with Chinese master Lok Tok (now deceased) and his son Yitong Lok.

In 2001, all three of these teachers endorsed my beginning to teach Chinese painting to students here in Minneapolis.

Currently I have 40 students who before the COVID 19 pandemic came to my house for weekly instruction in Chinese calligraphy and paintings.

I also have a weekly painting practice.
To see more of my work, visit:

www/laughingwatertsstudio.com

The Eight Relationships (guan xi) in Chinese painting theory

1 主 賓
2 虛 實
3 疏 密
4 聚 散
5 開 合
6 濃 淡
7 幹 濕
8 黑 白

zhǔ
bīng
host
guest

xū
shí
void
solid

shū
mì
spacey
density

jù
sǎn
gathered
scattered

kāi
hé
open
close

nóng
dàn
dark
light

gāng
shī
dry
wet

hēi
bái
black
white

guān xi - relationships

In this album painting by Shen Zhou, how many examples of the relationships of host/guest and void/solid can you find?

主
賓

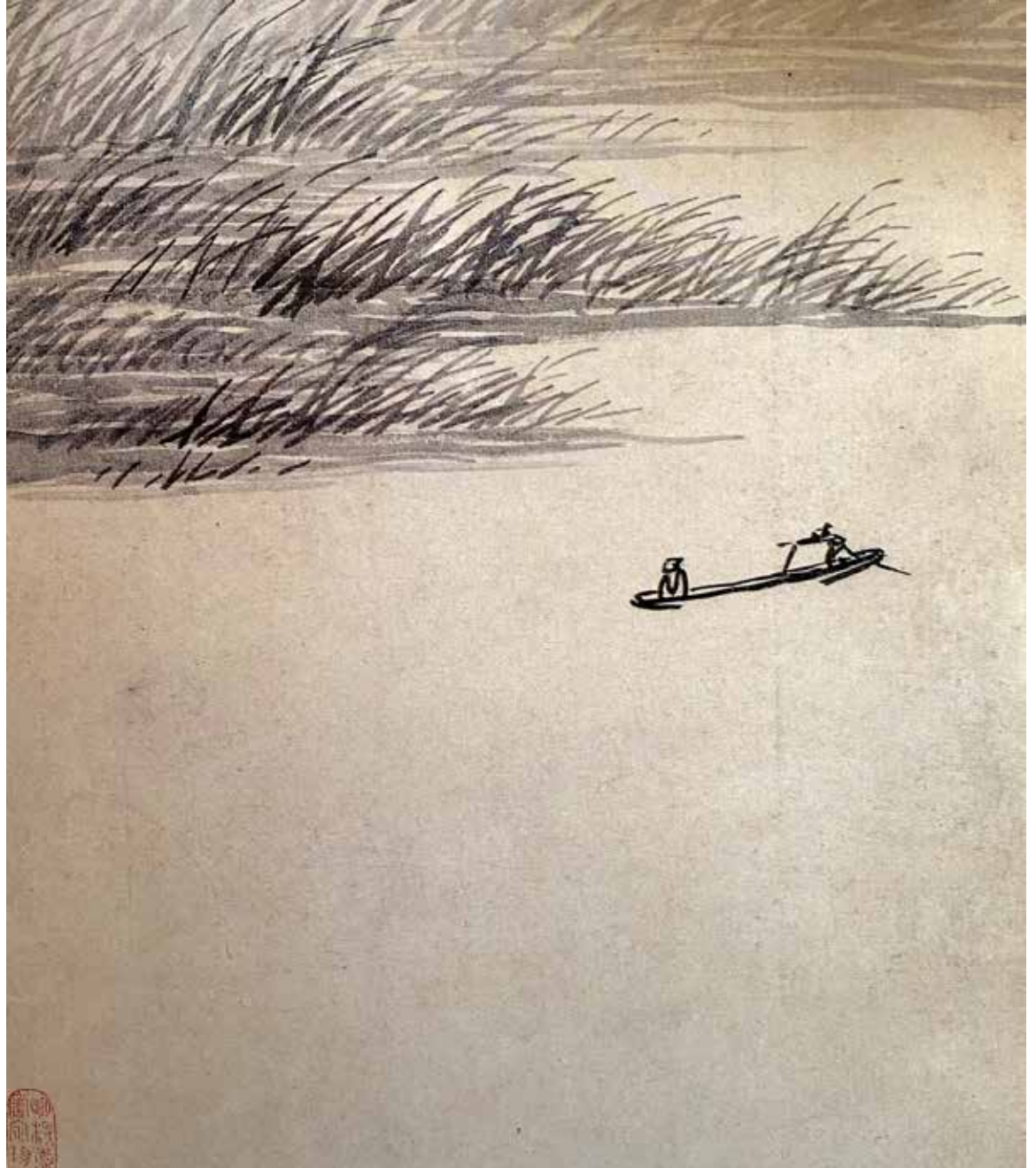
zhu
bing

host
guest

虛
實

xu
shi

void
solid

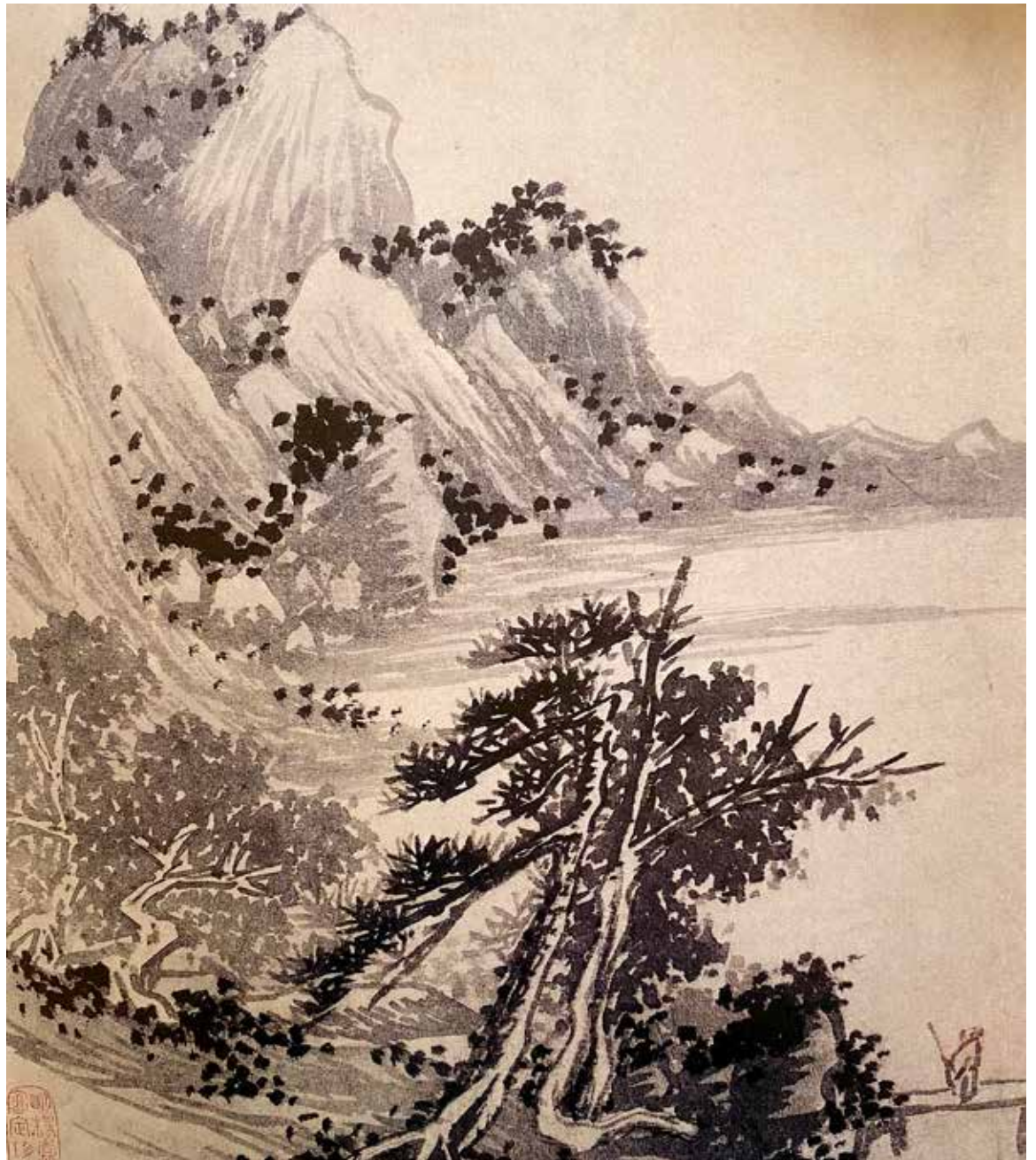


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