

for continuing students

the dance



of the eye

and



the hand

more fundamentals of Chinese brush painting by Bob Schmitt

fall 2020 **lesson 5**

- use of dots
- variations in painting dots

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

What are dots?

Dots are perhaps the hardest thing to explain in the teaching of Chinese painting. This is because they are nothing and everything. They can be moss, rocks, leaves, odd growths on trees, many things.

But it is best not to think of them as anything literal or concrete.

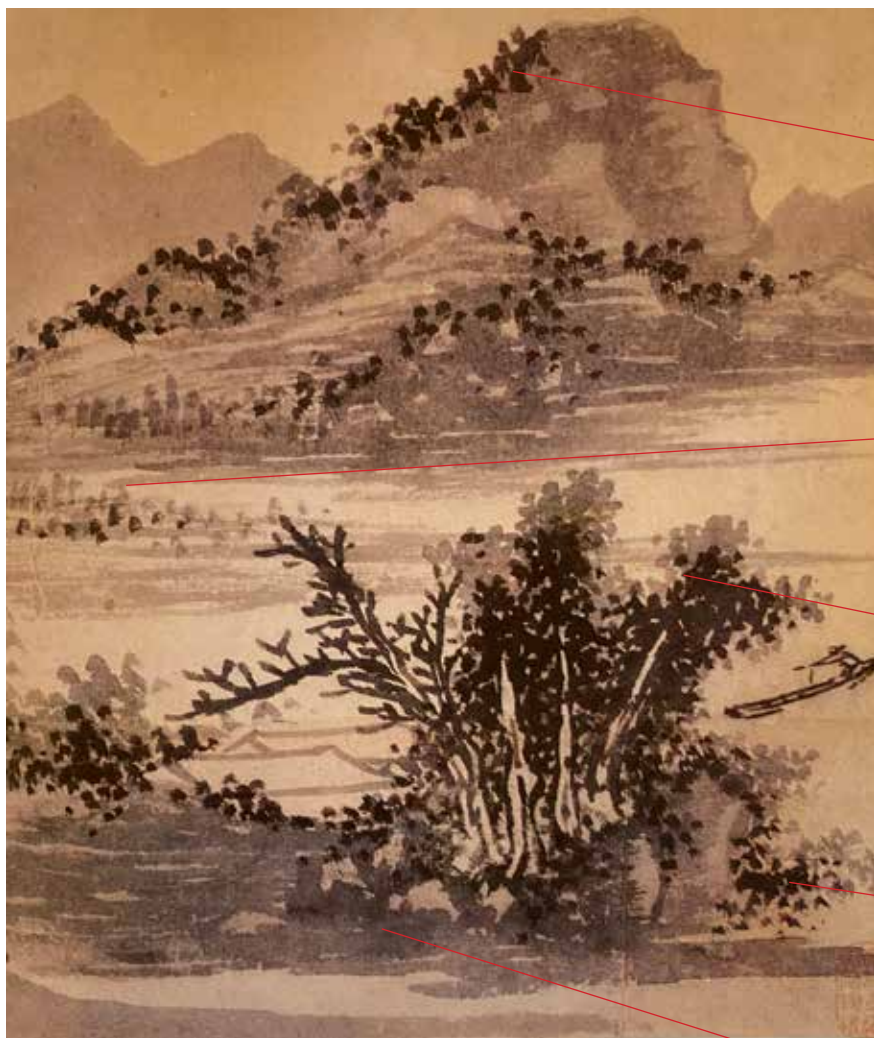
I find it helpful to think of them as energy points.
Or punctuation.

Their use is to add, close, open, control the energy in the painting.

The best way to understand about dots is to look at how they are used in paintings.

On the following pages are examples by 2 painters who were known for their dots: Shen Zhou and Shi Tao. They are also 2 of my favorite Chinese painters.

One painting / at least 5 uses of dots



dots on mountains

dots as trees

dots as leaves

dots as plant life

dots as shading

**Dots come in many types, sizes and groupings.
Here are a few examples from The Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden**



rice dots



pepper dots



dots in form of 介 (jie)



mouse track dots



plum blossom dots



dots in form of 个 (ge)



dots as pine needles



dots as hanging vine



chrysanthemum dots

How many types of dots,
how many of their uses can you find in this painting by Shen Zhou?



How many types of dots,
how many of their uses can you find in this painting by Shen Zhou?



A much more complicated and sophisticated use of dots by Shi Tao.
How many types of dots, how many of their uses can you find?



Even more sophisticated use of dots by Shi Tao.
How many types of dots, how many of their uses can you find?



Dots appear in more than just landscapes. Here they are in a bamboo and plum painting by Shi Tao. Look carefully. How are they being used?



豈言竹葉有定瀟零則不類於是小上枝上加
以刻劃而生意盡矣子竹取法於寶堂豈學夫
畫竹不作筍尚有何瀟可拘龍風滴露觀者
正當尋其生韻耳 清湘石濤濟一枝下

苦難細碎肯能結靈谷山會蛟蟻爭於織晴烘肌骨
執臘拚九畫玉肌豈兩升熟酒醉人醉十里香
茅姓客園日暮若懷好句隨影隨白鳳入鷗

Finally one more example by Shi Tao.

Among other uses in this piece, dot are also bring used to show the rhythm of the water and the direction of the wind.

