

shūfǎ

书法

Chinese Calligraphy



Calligraphy is an art of writing scripts , referring particularly to writing Chinese scripts with a writing brush . The Chinese calligraphy is a special art taking shape in a long course of practice and development of the Chinese scripts , It has both a practical value and an aesthetic value , and is an excellent traditional art .

The writing brush is the principal instrument for Chinese calligraphy . It was originated early in the primitive community . It has been discovered that various thin and thick , smooth and pretty lines were written with elastic brushes on pottery in the primitive Chinese society . Gradually writing scripts with a brush has developed into an art. This art involves mainly the technique of writing , the vigor of writing , the momentum of writing and the mood of writing . The technique of writing includes the writing of the starting stroke , closing stroke , curved stroke , straight stroke , mid-tip stroke , lateral tip stroke , apparent tip stroke , hidden tip stroke and the raising and pressing , turning and bending of the brush , etc ., The vigor of writing means the vigor of the strokes , robust or gentle .

A stroke shows a certain inner vigor . The momentum of writing means the tendency of the strokes . Strokes may not be continuous , but their tendencies are continuous . Dots and strokes can be written in different forms , but their tendencies are unified . The mood of writing means mood of the spirits and sentiments of the writer disclosed in the written scripts. In calligraphy, structure of the script involves the suitable, artistic arrangement of the strokes based on the form, and the writer's aesthetic interest. The principles of the artistic arrangement are : dense and sparse , void and full , slant and forthright , concentrated and scattered , proportional , harmonious , coordinated , etc ., These principles and the skills of the writer contributed to the beauty of the scripts to be appreciated by viewers .

Chinese calligraphy stresses the overall layout among words and lines. Beside the dense and sparse, proportional arrangement of the strokes of the words, a piece of calligraphy must have an overall harmoniousness that is not lack of changes. Especially the calligraphy of the cursive script and the running script often increases the interconnection between the words and the

continuity of the momentum in order to achieve music like rhythm. Beside the brush , ink and paper are also instruments of calligraphy . Together they produce varied effects. Calligraphists often pay much attentions to the methods for the use of



ink , which include the use of thick ink , light ink , dry ink , missing ink , wet ink , withered ink , swelling ink , etc .,

Calligraphy, the Soul of Chinese Fine Arts

Few nations in the world have calligraphy as a form of art. In China, calligraphy has a long history, is popular among its people, and has maintained a close relationship with Chinese cultural development.

Calligraphy looks simple. It seems as if anyone that can write Chinese characters on xuan paper 宣纸 (a high quality rice paper made for traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy) with a writing brush can become a calligrapher. But that perception is not true. Calligraphy is a form of art that involves a great deal of theory and requires many skills; so there are not many calligraphers that have reached the highest realm of calligraphy.

Calligraphy is a constructive art. The calligrapher creates his work with his handling of the ink and the writing brush. The black strokes and white space on the paper create a sense of beauty. For calligraphers, the writing brush 毛笔 is the extension of their fingers: the rhythm and strength of their writings are all controlled by their moods, and their calligraphy works are expressions of their sensibilities.

Calligraphy is an expressive art. Calligraphy is a practical art form. It can be used to write inscriptions on paper or inscribe wooden plaques or stone tablets.

Calligraphy manifests the basic characteristics of all Chinese arts. In Western fine arts, architecture and sculpture are the basis of the other formative, or visual, arts. In China, however, calligraphy and painting are leaders of the other art forms. When calligraphy and painting are mentioned together, calligraphy always comes before painting. Ancient Chinese sculpture was also influenced by calligraphy in that its defining characteristic lay in the composition of lines, and its decorative function is derived from the *Zhuan* (篆 seal characters) and *li* (隶 official characters) scripts in Chinese calligraphy.