

# The Transformation of Chinese Traditional Freehand Landscape Painting Into 3D Ceramic Art Based on Taoism

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## Abstract

Traditional Chinese landscape painting makes the natural landscape as the main subject of painting. It is influenced by Taoism and advocates the beauty of nature. With the rapid development of science and technology, A few young people are willing to understand the traditional aesthetics and philosophy. Modern Chinese artists in the field of ceramics still pay very little attention to Taoist aesthetics.

The purpose of this research is to study the aesthetic characteristics of traditional Chinese landscape painting, understand its significance; study the form of contemporary ceramic art, explore its connection with landscape painting, and transform 2D landscape painting into 3D ceramic art works. Through the ceramic art works, and reflect the environmental problems, trigger people's reflection, and require the harmonious development of man and nature.

There are three research methods for this investigation. The first is to obtain relevant theoretical data by analysing the literature. The second is to obtain data on the properties of clay and glaze through experimentation. The third is the practical creation, through the relevant theoretical knowledge and experimental data, to further improve the work.

The results of the research show the multidimensional expression of ceramic artworks. The ceramic artworks create a 3D art space that the audience can touch and feel. It expresses the Taoist philosophy in the aspects of craft, colour and material. This research is intended to provide a theoretical basis and practical experience for the future creation of ceramic art.

**Keywords:** Ceramic Art; Freehand Landscape Painting; Taoism

## Introduction

Freehand landscape painting is neither a simple treatment of nature paintings, nor is it a completely relative technique system to fine brush painting. Freehand landscape painting captures all things in nature from a more macroscopic perspective, emphasises the ink composition of pictorial thinking, and takes the natural scenery as a medium to express thoughts, feelings and aesthetic concepts(Chen, 2016). On the one hand, it conforms to the objective law of natural existence, on the other hand, it transcends the external appearance and expresses the artist's unique feeling and deep understanding of the whole of nature. Freehand landscape painting expresses aesthetic emotions and artistic ideas with pen and ink. The embodiment of charm cannot be separated from the concrete, tangible things, but it transcends its own image. The artistic image created by the artist unites the limited life and the infinite spirit (Meng, 2015).

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Taoism emphasises the harmony and unity between man and nature. It does not blindly strive for the mastery of techniques or the expression of temperament, but integrates the two together to achieve what Lao Tzu said: " Man follows the earth, the earth follows heaven, heaven follows the Tao, and Tao follows the nature. "The essence of freehand brushwork is to dare to go beyond the objective imagery and express the connection between the individual spirit and nature." (Yue, 2011)

In contrast to the aesthetic appreciation of traditional ceramic art, contemporary ceramic art no longer pays attention to the integrity and imperfection of the works. The tolerance of "defects" and "traces" provides the clay material with greater possibilities in the field of technological development, and the boundary of ceramic artistic expression has been broken. Ceramic artworks return to the simple origin of the earth itself, and judge the ceramic artworks with the concept of "things". The works remove the external attributes conferred by human and are created as pure aesthetic objects. Ceramic artworks are also artworks with a sense of space and sculpture, rather than simple furnishings and everyday utensils. This means that ceramic artworks jump out of the original "functional" and "container" creation restrictions, and that ceramic objects and their use are no longer necessarily related (Huang, 2004).

This research has the following Significance:

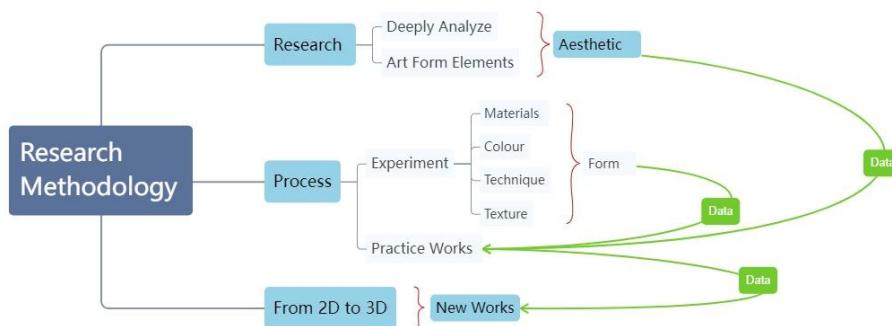
1. The transformation of landscape painting into ceramic art is not only a formal transformation, but also includes the content, space, philosophy and aesthetics and other dimensions of transformation, is a multidimensional interpretation of the traditional art of landscape painting and reconstruction.
2. The landscape painting transformed into ceramics will develop a new form of expression and art expression, enriching the artistic connotation and expression of ceramic creation.
3. Transformation from ceramic art combines aesthetics, philosophy, ceramic materials and other disciplines, thus realising interdisciplinary integration and innovation. Through ceramics artworks, social problems are reflected and people are encouraged to reflect on environmental issues and the harmonious and sustainable development of man and nature.

## **Research Objectives**

1. Inheriting and continuing the aesthetic thought of traditional painting and the philosophical thought of Taoism.
2. The research results are implemented from multiple dimensions of form, content and material as well as aesthetic value to realise a multidimensional interpretation and reconstruction of traditional art.
3. To reflect social problems through ceramic artworks, to make people reflect and raise their awareness of environmental protection.

## Research Methodology

There are three research methods for this investigation. The first is to obtain relevant theoretical data by analysing the literature. The second is to obtain data on the properties of clay and glaze through experimentation. The third is the practical creation, through the relevant theoretical knowledge and experimental data, to further improve the work.



**Figure 1** Research Methodology (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

## Research Experiment

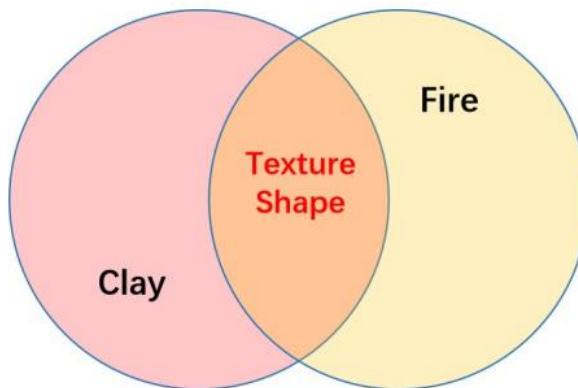
### Data Collection:

#### 1. Exploration of ceramic material properties

Ceramic art in material has specific restrictions, ceramic art works must exist in the participation of clay and fire. The dependence of ceramic art works on the material, as well as the pursuit of the material of the clay material itself, prompt artists to further explore the characteristics of the clay material, and further promote the process of the development of modern and contemporary ceramic art, which has become a special characteristics of the art expression. The properties of clay that is to take the characteristics of the material in account when creating;

- (1) To preserve the traces and process of communication with the clay;
- (2) To take into account the firing requirements, the shrinkage ratio of the material, the changes in surface tone and texture that occur with the action of the fire, and determine the final spatial form and shape of the work;
- (3) Through the participation of "clay" and "fire", the unique material sense, texture and expressiveness of ceramics are emphasised to complete the function of emotional expression and realise the artistic value of the works.

These are characteristics that other arts cannot have, because ceramic art has its own process and charm.



**Figure 2** Clay and fire (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

## 2. Properties of clay

In the 1950s, artists thought about the "object" of ceramics, and under the concept of aesthetic priority, in order to get rid of the inherent inertia of creative thinking, they returned to exploration of the meaning of the clay material itself, and explored the artistic art expression and aesthetics inherent in ceramic art itself, ceramic artists continue to explore the uniqueness of ceramics as a material. The ceramic material itself as an objective material existence has no fixed symbolic art expression and symbolic meaning, the use of the works should be directly related to the expression. Based on their thoughts and feelings about "earth", the artists have made a series of creations to make ceramics their own material aesthetics based on the sense of the existence of household utensils. The texture of the earth is removed from the externally decorated objects. The ancient Japanese ceramic tradition of respect for materiality and the philosophical realisation discernment of "imperfection" has provided modern ceramic artists with a wealth of inspiration in terms of materials, techniques, and styles (Lyu, 2000).

Clay materials are variable and show different flexibility under different humidity and external forces. In response to the soft and changeable nature of clay, a unique process has been developed. Artists use their hands and tools to twist, knead, and cut the clay material to give it a particular texture through external forces. Different clays have different properties, and by connecting with the clay, the artist has become increasingly skilled in ruling the art expression of the material, consciously exploring the connection with aesthetics and philosophy based on the cracks, folds, and other textures created during the process of deformation and shaping the clay, and uses the surface texture to express the characteristics of the ceramic material, and form a unified visual image to convey to others (Li, 2013).

## 3. The Meaning of Fire

The inclusion of "fire" gives the artist creativity, richness of variation and individuality and the work a unique artistic charm. Different clay materials have different properties at high temperatures. The complexity of the production process makes it necessary to maintain the modelling structure of the work in order to preserve the author's transient emotional and conceptual expression throughout the creative process. High temperatures cause a transformation between the soft and hard properties of the ceramic material, with a variety of accidents and changes in the process. The work is consciously deformed, cracked and collapsed to preserve the modelling form that the work naturally forms at high temperatures to make the creation of ceramic works more interesting.

In the expression of the works, the vitality of the works and the natural characteristics of the materials embodied by the interaction of the two natural forces of earth and fire merge with the artistic images spontaneously created by the artist and transforming them into the abstract art expression of expression inherent in ceramic art - material texture. The unique material art expression, it emphasises its unique artistic charm, fully explores the possibilities between form and material, and gives the ceramic works more cultural reflection and emotional expression.

#### 4. Experiments of ceramic materials (Figure 2)

**Table 1** Equipment

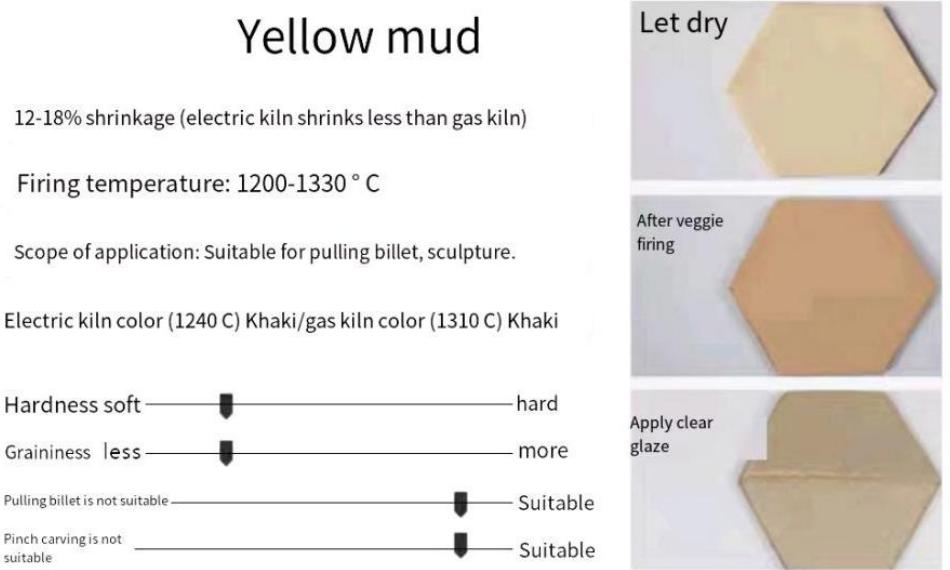
	<p>Electric kiln: Firing temperature range of 800 - 1230°, oxidation</p>
	<p>Gas kiln: Firing temperature range: 1300 - 1380°, reducing</p>

Source: Photographed by the researcher, 2023

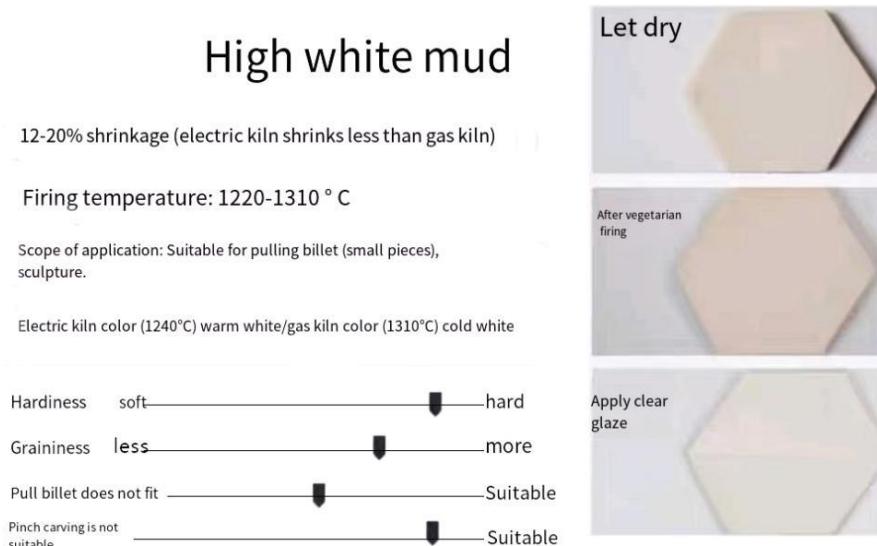
#### 5. Experiment of clay

Type of clay: clay is divided into porcelain clay and clay; different clay types have different properties. In this experiment, I selected several typical clays for experiments.

Samples of Clay:



**Figure 3** Experimental data and samples of the yellow clay (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

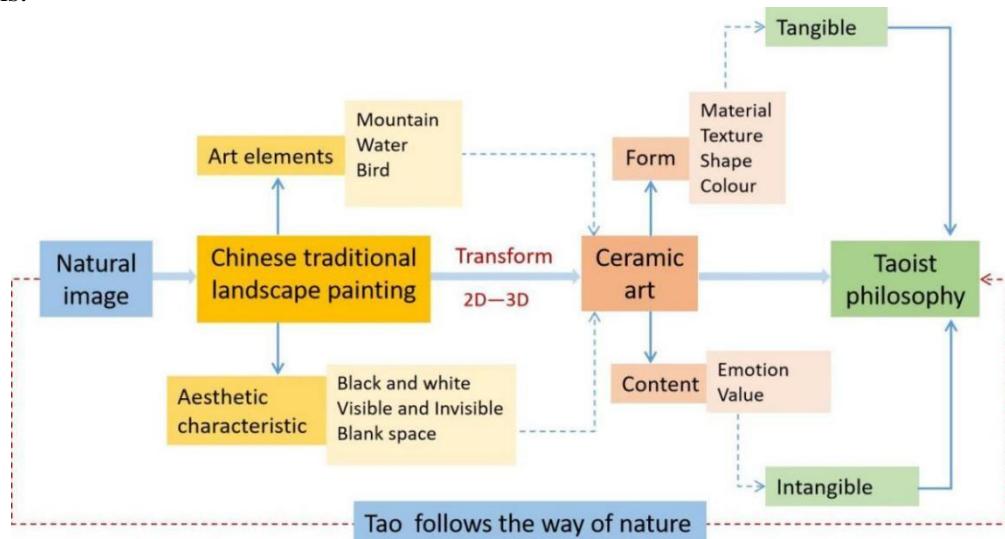


**Figure 4** Experimental data and samples of the high white clay (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

### 6. 3D ceramic art creation

Further research into the transformation of traditional Chinese painting into ceramic art. Refining and generalising of the elements of dots, lines and surfaces in Chinese landscape painting, recombining these elements and combining them with ceramic materials, completing the conversion from 2D to 3D, so that the works reflect the attributes of contemporary ceramic materials and Chinese aesthetics, and creating an art space for the audience to touch and feel through ceramic artworks. This multi-dimensional work has a stronger sense of vision, immersion and experience.

This section includes three aspects: the exploration of the properties of ceramic materials, the conversion of 2D painting into a 3D space, and the significance of 3D ceramic artworks.

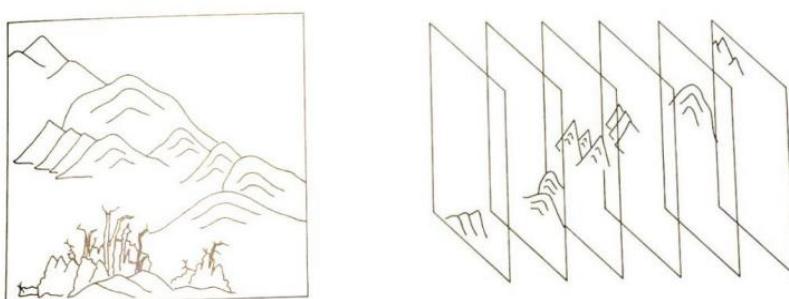


**Figure 5** 3D ceramic art work creation process (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

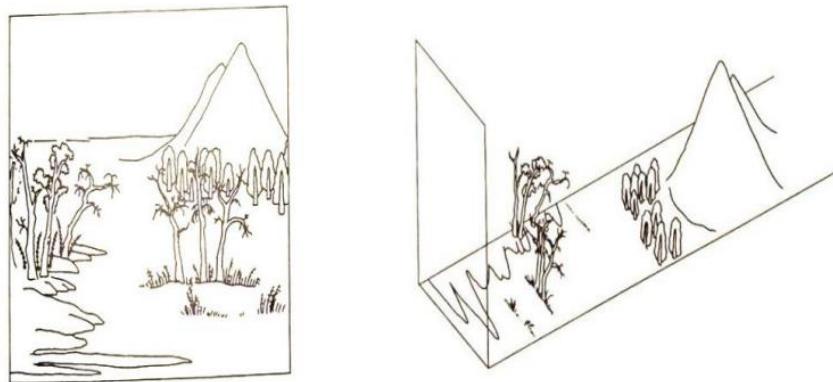
Traditional landscape painting focuses on the space and emotions of a two-dimensional picture, and ceramic art expands this concept by transforming it into a three-dimensional space.

#### 7. Multi-angled observation

Guo Xi of the Song Dynasty required painters to observe the natural landscape from multiple angles. He believed that painters must look at nature and the landscape from multiple angles to discover the beauty of nature and create an aesthetic picture. The reason for this is that the image of the natural landscape is not a single plane, nor is it fixed. The image of the natural landscape is variable. Only when we observe the beauty of nature from multi-angles that are appropriate to it, can we grasp the beauty of nature. The Painter's point and observation angle are different, and the aesthetic image that the landscape presents is also different. So the painter must view the natural landscape from multiple angles; from close-up, from a distance, from the front, from the side, from behind, towards the end, at dusk, on cloudy days, on sunny days, in spring and summer, in autumn and winter. In these different perspectives, a close-up view can grasp the characteristics of the landscape, and a distant view can grasp the momentum of the landscape (Ye, 1985).



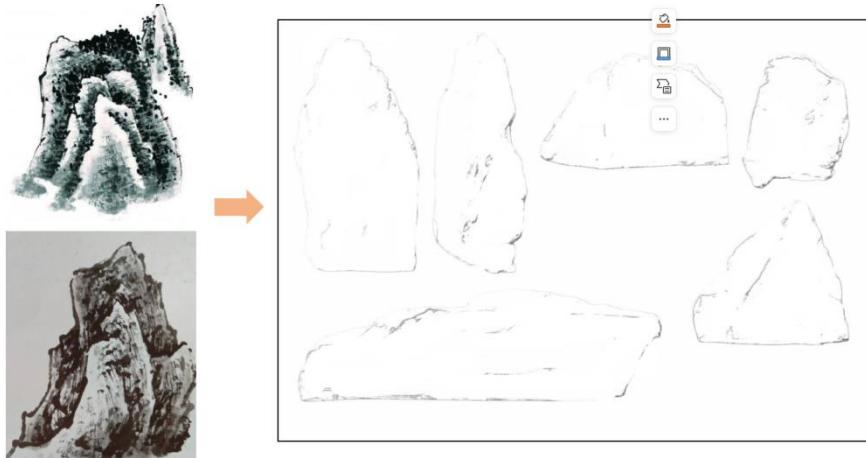
**Figure 6** Cutaway diagram (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)



**Figure 7** Space diagram (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

#### 8. Transformation of elements

Step 1: Based on the modelling of mountains and rocks in traditional Chinese landscape painting, the elements of mountains and rocks are refined and summarised.



**Figure 8** Sketch design (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

#### Step 2: Basic design

Basic design based on the sketch design with ceramic materials

Clay selection:

Based on the data and results of the experimental part of the clay, select high white clay for the foundation design.

Production process: clay sheet moulding and hand kneaded moulding

The expression of texture, which is mainly expressed through materials and techniques, i.e. the imprints that act on and influence the material, has both objective visual and tactile effects. The presence of texture can give a piece of ceramic artwork a unique state and convey a distinctive voice.

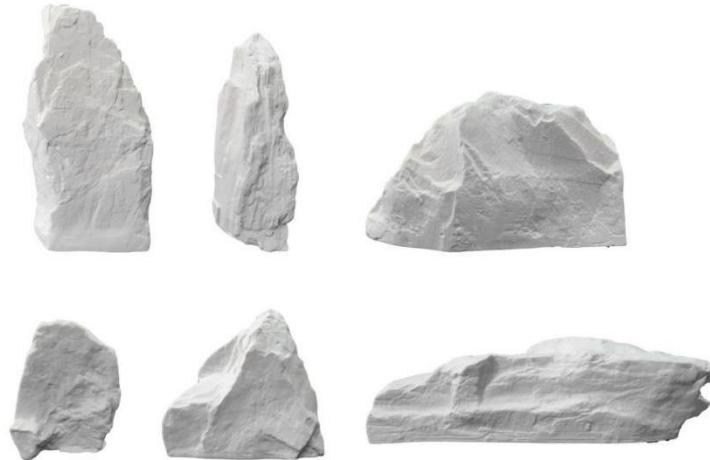
Drawing inspiration from nature, perfecting the artist imitation of nature in the perspective of their own ceramic art works more fully displaying the artist's subjective initiative. In the production of texture effects, the semi-dry billet on the surface of the billet is

mainly proceeded to produce the phenomenon of texture, such as: carving, embossing, patting, kneading and so on.



**Figure 9** Manufacturing proces (Source: photographed by the researcher, 2023)

Basic design effect: electric kiln 1230°C, oxidation flame

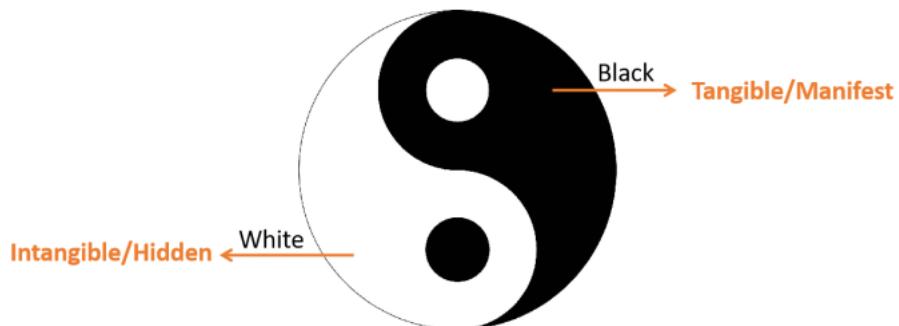


**Figure 10** Basic design effect (Source: photographed by the researcher, 2023)

#### 9. Transformation of colours

The aesthetics of the combination of black and white in traditional Chinese landscape painting is transferred to ceramic materials. The canon "According to nature, lay on the colour." Does not mean to pursue the external and natural colours of the copied objects, but to follow the principle of the five-colour system, which focuses on symbols, and is more concerned with the author's spiritual experience and the need to express his feelings. The essence and life of all natural things is "Tao". The "Tao" is the simplest, but it contains and generates the five colours of nature. The colours of ink and wash are as simple as the Tao, and are closest to the nature of nature, so the colours of ink and wash are most in line with the colours of nature (Ye, 1985).

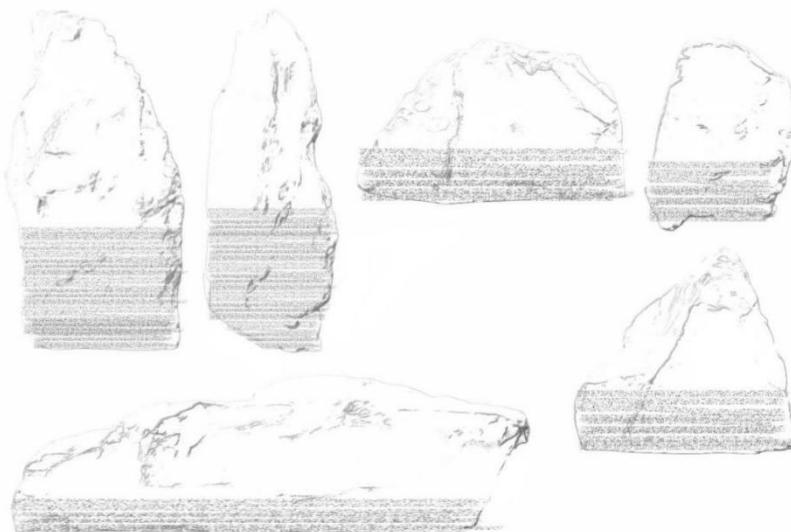
The Chinese tradition of black colour has been around for a long time. Black has always been the most commonly used and appreciated colour in prehistoric ceramics, pre-Qin paintings, living artefacts and costumes. Black was one of the earliest colours used in painting. The importance of ink for painting and calligraphy has never been shaken since its creation. Ink has always had a status independent of other painting pigments.



**Figure 11** Black and white (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

#### 10. Integrated decoration of painting and ceramics

The integrated decoration of paintings and ceramic materials is based on the determination of the transformation of elements and colours. Black, the visible content; white, the invisible content. Black is the trace left by the ink colour, such as the visible; white is the blank paper, the space in the picture that is not taken up by ink and brush, in other words, what we often call invisible, "although the blank is the invisible content, but visually gives us the feeling of infinite imagination.



**Figure 12** Sketch design (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

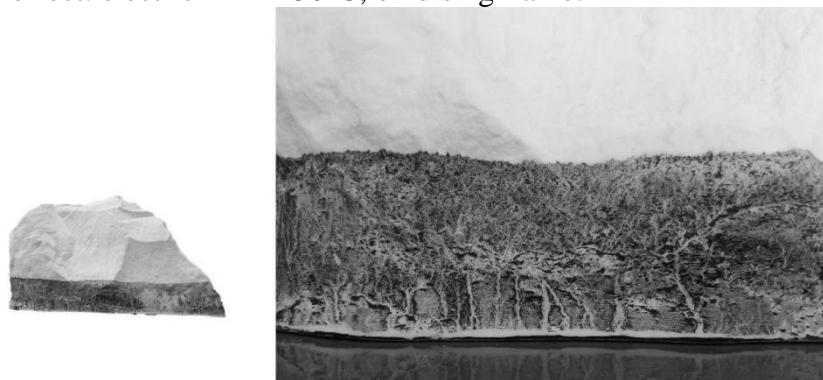
#### Process of the Craft:

With the flowing glaze, the elements of traditional Chinese landscape painting like mountains, water, clouds and mist are expressed in a painterly technique. The combination of glaze and ceramics is, painterly, traces, and with the most primitive brush strokes, the line is composed of dots, and the surface is composed of lines, the elements of traditional Chinese landscape painting are taken apart and reassembled one by one.

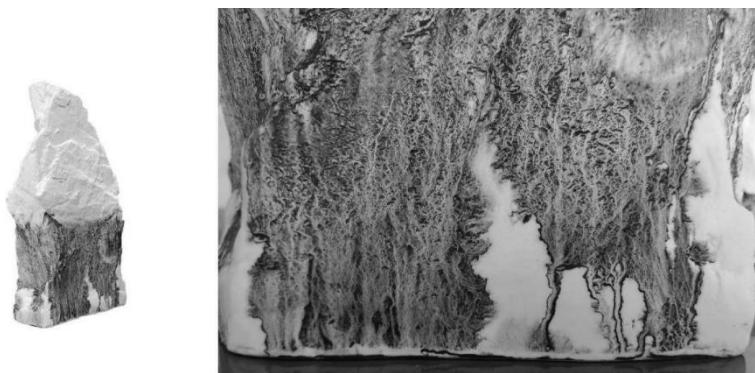


**Figure 13** Painting on the ceramic (Source: photographed by the researcher, 2023)

The characteristic of white space in landscape painting creates a blank space in ceramics, emphasising the aesthetic of "visible and invisible" and the naturalness of the work. Artwork effect: electric kiln 1230°C, oxidising flame.



**Figure 14** Artwork and partial effects (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)



**Figure 15** Artwork and partial effects (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)



**Figure 16** Artwork and partial effects (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

## 11. Summary of works

### (1) Black and White

Black and white face each other and unite in this painting. Black is the part of landscape painting: white is the beauty of the imagination. The black is painted so densely that it has a lot of content, and within it there is no lack of blank space to paint houses, a path, a tiny waterfall, and the white space behind the waterfall forms a path for people to walk on. Sometimes in a dense mass of black bushes, a piece of white is left, the formation of a wooden bridge, in dealing with small bridges, the brush is streamlined, black from the white of the bridge is also a bridge is also a road. The white colour protruding from the complicated black colour forms a path that runs through the mountain, and also looks like a small river flowing through the forest. The houses are different sizes and white and there is a small waterfall behind the bridge. The large white areas and the white behind the mountains are water and sky, giving the viewer the opportunity to imagine beauty.

White space has different structures and forms and serves different purposes. Part of the white space indicates the concavity and convexity, and indicates the yin and yang side of the mountain; part of the white space can indicate the clear water, and part of the white space can emphasise the posture of the trees.

### (2) Blank Space

As an important form of expression in traditional Chinese painting, "blank space" is an indispensable part of Chinese landscape painting, and also one of the important elements of the black and white system in traditional Chinese landscape painting. The use of "white space" is a good expression of clouds, mountains, mist and water in landscape painting, and provides a variety of possibilities for the space and layout of the picture, reflecting the unique aesthetic form of landscape painting.

White space does not mean a single white part, but a whole. Whether it is the part of the depiction or the white part, both are opposites and unity, which together constitute the effect of white space. As mentioned in Taoist thought, the "hidden" is the basis for the existence of the "manifest", and the "manifest" is the phenomenon of the existence of all things. They complement each other as a whole, face each other and influence each other. There is neither a purely depicted part nor a purely white part; there is neither a separate inside nor a separate outside, but the whole composed of everything that surrounds the work is the true meaning of the white space of the work. Relational elements are also contradictory elements, they are both

opposites and unities, none of them can constitute the " blank space" in the work when it exists alone.



**Figure 17** Final work effect (Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2023)

## Research Results

1. Traditional landscape painting pays attention to the space and emotion of 2D images and transforms into 3D ceramic artworks that create an artistic space that can be touched and felt, with a stronger sense of visual and experience (Table 2).

**Table 2** Expression of 3D ceramic artworks

Unity in wholeness and diversity	Diversity: Create irregular works, and emphasise diversity. Wholeness: Consider the spatial layout of the work, the distribution of front and back, width and height, so that it forms a unified whole.
Time and space	Traditional and modern: Combine traditional painting techniques and modern ceramic technology, reflect the circulation and change of time. Space: Emphasise the work's three-dimensional sense of the space, such as depth, and height, so that it has a stronger three-dimensional sense and sense of space.

2. 3D ceramic works are a kind of fusion expression. It is the integration of ceramic materials, technique, and form which realises the multi-dimensional interpretation and reconstruction of traditional landscape painting (Table 3).

**Table 1** Multi-dimensional interpretation of traditional landscape painting

Transformation of elements	Natural images in landscape painting, such as mountains, water, fish and three-dimensional ceramic works with a landscape. The pursuit of emotion in ceramic works is not to simply superimpose individual elements, but to integrate them organically. Choose simple shapes, emphasise the texture and structure of the work. Use the natural textures and colours of ceramics, such as cracks and colour variations, to give the work emotion. At the same time, incomplete or faulty techniques give the work an imaginative effect.
Integration of technique and craftsmanship	Glaze exploration: Use the glazing technique of ceramics to express the ink colour and of paint in landscape painting. Firing Technique: Choose ceramic materials in line with Taoist aesthetics, emphasise nature and simplicity. The combination of the material of the ceramic and the iceberg melting creates an expression of hardness and softness. This fusion of expression gives the work a unique texture and atmosphere.
Philosophical connotations	Combine the Taoist philosophy in landscape painting, “Harmonious development of man and nature” to create ceramic works with Taoist philosophical connotations. Through the ceramic works, The Taoist philosophical ideas are transformed into concrete art forms, such as the shape, texture and material of the works.
Dimension of space	The transformation of the two-dimensional space of landscape painting into the three-dimensional space of ceramics creates an artistic space that the viewer can touch, feel and immerse themselves in this multi-dimensional context gives the works a stronger sense of immersion and experience.

3. The changing of environment and climate are in a dynamic balance of opposition and transformation.

## Conclusions

1. Realised the multi-dimensional interpretation of traditional landscape painting.

The ceramic artworks are based on traditional Chinese landscape paintings and transform them into contemporary ceramic art. They not only simply superimpose the elements of mountains, water, birds and fish from traditional Chinese landscape paintings on the ceramic materials, but also integrate them organically with mud and glaze. It is not only a formal transformation, but also a transformation of multiple dimensions such as time and space. Combine tradition and modernity: combine the traditional techniques of ink painting with the expression of contemporary ceramic art; create a work of art that can be touched and felt, with a stronger visual sense and experience.

## 2. Realised multi-disciplinary integration and innovation

This research expresses the aesthetic characteristics of traditional landscape painting, "blank space", "black and white" and "Taoist philosophy", with contemporary forms of ceramic art, Taoist philosophy and traditional Chinese landscape painting are organically combined to realise interdisciplinary integration and innovation.

## 3. Enriched the research and practice of Taoist aesthetics.

Reflecting natural environmental issues through ceramic artworks. Industrialisation and urbanisation by humans have affected the environment and led to an imbalance in the ecosystem which in turn affects human life. The destruction of the environment leads to warming temperatures, which causes the ice to melt and affects biodiversity. Harmonious development of humans and nature is the key to maintaining balance.

Taoism focuses on the laws of nature and emphasises change and adaptation. Taoism is a view of opposites but interdependence, and the balance of Yin and Yang and mutual transformation are the laws by which things operate. Environmental and climatic change are in a dynamic balance of opposites and transformation.

## New Knowledge

1. Integrates the Tao philosophy and aesthetics into the creation of contemporary ceramic art, forming a personal style. Transformation from craftsman to artist.
2. The landscape painting and ceramic materials are integrated into the unique expression of ceramic art - landscape texture and material expression, and gives more cultural reflection and emotional expression to ceramic art works
3. From the philosophy of Tao to sort out the creative process of contemporary ceramic art, which is more rational and clear than the perceptual understanding of empiricism.

## Suggestions

### Theoretical Suggestions

Further Theoretical Foundations: Dive deeper into the theoretical connections between Taoist philosophy and ceramic art. Explore how Taoist concepts like harmony and simplicity can be systematically embedded into the ceramic design process to enhance aesthetic and philosophical depth.

Comparative Analysis: Conduct a comparative study of different artistic disciplines influenced by Taoist principles, not only within ceramics but across different forms of traditional and modern art. This could provide a broader understanding of Taoism's impact on art.

Integration of Psychology and Art: For the component on counselling competence, develop a framework that integrates psychological theories with artistic methods. This could include how artistic activities (like ceramic art) can be used in counselling practices to improve mental well-being and creativity among university counsellors.

### Policy Recommendations

Educational Policies: Recommend that university curriculums incorporate interdisciplinary courses that combine elements of philosophy, art, and psychology. This could help future counsellors and artists to gain a more holistic education.

**Support for Traditional Arts:** Advocate for policies that provide funding and resources for workshops and labs that specialize in traditional arts, ensuring the preservation and innovation of practices like ceramic art influenced by Taoism.

**Environmental Policies:** Encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly practices in art production, reflecting Taoist respect for nature. This could involve promoting the use of sustainable materials and technologies in ceramic art.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

**Longitudinal Studies:** Suggest conducting longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of integrating art and Taoist aesthetics into counselling practices. Assess how this integration affects counsellor effectiveness and client outcomes over time.

**Technological Integration:** Explore the potential of new technologies, such as 3D printing in ceramics, to innovate traditional practices and make them more accessible to a wider audience. Investigate how these technologies can maintain the essence of traditional aesthetics while enhancing artistic expression.

**Cross-Cultural Studies:** Recommend cross-cultural studies to understand how Taoist-influenced art practices like ceramics are adapted and perceived in different cultural contexts. This could help globalize the appreciation and understanding of Taoist aesthetics in art.

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