Taiwanese Visiting Artist Workshops

Taiwan Spotlight Project sponsored by the Taiwan Academy and UTSA’s East Asia Institute

About the Taiwan Academy

- To invite foreign universities and institutes to engage in cultural partnerships with Taiwan
- To promote international cultural exchanges and cultivate a greater interest in and appreciation of Taiwan’s culture worldwide

Learning about Taiwan and Chinese Studies through Calligraphy and Ink Painting

On November 14, 2013, the East Asia Institute hosted two hands-on workshops back to back on Chinese calligraphy and ink painting from 6:00-9:30 p.m. at UTSA as part of the Taiwan Series. The workshops were made possible with a very generous grant from the Taiwan Academy and conducted by Professor Chuan Chang and Dr. Shih-Chiung Hsiao, two visiting art masters from Taiwan. They were attended by 60 participants in a standing room only due to overwhelming popularity among the workshop attendees, a mixed group of audience comprised of families, college students and seniors of all types of background. Some of them even traveled from as far as Kerville to San Antonio for the workshop.

Top: Dr. Shih-Chiung Hsiao with a workshop participant showcasing her calligraphy fan
Left: Prof. Chuan Chang working with two workshop participants on ink painting
Top (from left): Dr. Hsiao signs and stamps his seal on a participant’s fan; participants practice ink painting; Prof. Chang demonstrates drawing a cabbage using a documentary camera.
“Writing Chinese characters using a brush pen was harder than I thought,” said Miyako Wallace. “Now I have even greater admiration for those that can write Chinese calligraphy as an art form. I am inspired to practice more after this.”

While the participants finished their calligraphy work, refreshments were served during the intermission. Soon after that the audience welcomed Prof. Chuan Chang to the floor who then began his part of the workshop.

Chang started his portion of presentation with a short lecture on the history of ink painting with works from past artists such as Xi Xu (徐熙: 886-975) of the South Tang Dynasty, Emperor Hui Zong (徽宗:1082-1135) of the North Sung Dynasty, and Tao Shi (石濤:1642-1708) of the Qing Dynasty. Chang’s workshop was very interactive. (as well as) The participants were asked to observe various styles and the content of the paintings and to express their own thoughts and the reasons to back up their observations. “I feel I have learned how to appreciate Chinese ink painting after this lecture,” said Darrel Johnson. “I have become more observant of the styles and the objects in the painting thanks to this workshop.”

Chang also utilized video clips to demonstrate how to draw fruit and vegetables besides using a documentary camera to exhibit how to draw with light and dark ink. “Chinese people like to draw oranges (橘 jú) as it symbolizes “luck (吉 jí)” and they also like to draw “napa cabbage (白菜 bái caāi) as its pronunciation is very close to “(good) fortune (財 caāi)” in Chinese language,” said Chang.

The workshop attendees then began their journey into the ink painting by practicing drawing fruit and vegetables before drawing permanently on a round paper fan provided by the workshop, on which they also wrote their name in calligraphy. The fan was then stamped with the artists’ seals with red ink. Everyone created their own style of ink painting and the feedback and reaction from the workshop attendees were very positive. The attendees not only were very excited in the process of creating their artwork, but also felt extremely satisfied with their own final art products.

At the end of the workshop, Chang’s and Hsiao’s solo exhibition art albums were raffled and given to the workshop attendees as a souvenir. Only a handful of the lucky ones received them. “I got 100% fun,” said Alexsandra Gruslova. “I am looking forward to another workshop that can help me understand Chinese art!”
Chinese calligraphy and ink painting have been treasured by the Chinese and throughout the East Asia for centuries. The art forms are closely associated with literature, nature, and philosophy. These two techniques bring out the ancient tandem of complex spirituality and unique beauty. Both forms take a lifetime of studies in order to achieve the mastery.

UTSA’s Taiwan Series is comprised of a Seminar Series, Lecture Series, Film Festival, Visiting Artist Workshops, Sinology Trivia Contest and Chinese Video Contest, and an art tour to the San Antonio Museum of Art to learn more about their Chinese art collection, Chinese history and culture. For more info about the entire Taiwan Series program, please visit the East Asia Institute homepage at http://www.utsa.edu/eai. All events are free and open to the public.

Dr. Shih Chiung Hsiao is currently a Fine Arts professor at Asia University in Taichung, an hour south of Taipei by high speed rail. Similar to Chang, Hsiao has also won various awards and exhibited his calligraphy works both within Taiwan and around the world. Hsiao is well known for his creative styles of combining traditions with modernism in his art works.

Prof. Chuan Chang is currently a Fine Arts Professor at Chung Jung Christian University in Chia Yi, a town about 2 hours south of Taipei. Chang has won numerous awards and has had many solo exhibitions to showcase his paintings. In addition, Chang has been featured in many art exhibitions both domestically and internationally. He is held in high regard for using lines and contrast in his paintings. Chang is an expert on drawing flowers and birds.

Taiwanese Visiting Artist Workshops were sponsored by

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Dr. Hsiao demonstrates calligraphy

Left: Dr. Hsiao demonstrates calligraphy
Right: Ocean by Dr. Hsiao

Left: Prof. Chang with his artwork
Right: Ocean by Dr. Hsiao