

‘Shu-Fei-Shu’: A Digital Strategy for Modernising Chinese Calligraphy

Yuan Hsun Chuang

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Introduction

Part 1: Theoretical Analysis

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Chapter 1 | Literature Review |
| | 1. The Discussion of Modern Chinese Calligraphy |
| | 2. Practical Examples of Computing/Digitalizing Traditional Chinese Calligraphy |
| Chapter 2 | Historical Review |
| | 1. The Development of Chinese Characters and Calligraphy |
| | 2. The Aesthetics of Traditional Chinese Calligraphy |
| | 3. The Challenge of Chinese Characters and Calligraphy |
| Chapter 3 | Case Studies |
| | 1. ‘Personalized Traditional Calligraphy’ |
| | 2. ‘Multi-Image’ Calligraphy |
| | 3. ‘New Calligraphic Art’ |
| Chapter 4 | Theoretical Conclusion |

Part 2: Practical Strategy

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Chapter 5 | Track of Experiments |
| Chapter 6 | Final Work—Shu-Fei-Shu |

Bibliography

List of Illustrations

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ABSTRACT

Chinese calligraphy has undergone a revolution over the last decade. The traditional brush and ink have been replaced by various materials and tools, and artists have been transforming calligraphy both technically and conceptually. Through the use of various graphics programs and pressure-sensitive stylus tablets, the aesthetics of calligraphy have shifted into the postmodern era. Two important questions are addressed in this research: firstly, in the journey from paper to new media how has calligraphy changed? And secondly, what kinds of new values are propagated in the art of calligraphy today?

I undertook a thorough overview of the field then in response I produced a creative project titled Shu-Fei-Shu. The primary aims of Shu-Fei-Shu are to theoretically articulate and practically present artistic approaches to modernising Chinese calligraphy in the media age.

The first section of this project is a theoretical and critical analysis of the historical developments, relative literature and key art works of modern calligraphy. In the end of this section, I concluded that the concept of ‘digital-generation’ is a strategy for modernising Chinese calligraphy. Also I argued that three main genres can be identified as, namely: ‘illegibility’, ‘digital mosaics’ and ‘interaction’, within this new digital calligraphic form.

In the second section, I present my artistic experiments, which I have done through out the process of research, and lastly, my final multimedia work, Shu-Fei-Shu. It is an interactive web site that offers users a platform to browse, learn and create their own digital calligraphy on line.