



# **A Chinese Grid**

## **Combining Chinese and Western Approaches to Composition**

**By Jiashu Li**

Research submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial  
fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Design

May 13, 2019

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Written by Jiashu Li

Proofread by Suzanne Hardy

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Western researchers often choose classic Western paintings as research objects and less frequently consider the artistic works of other cultures. Similarly, Chinese studies have traditionally tended to focus on Chinese culture. At present, most Chinese domestic research on traditional Chinese painting is in the stage of theoretical analysis, which lacks practice-led research, let alone practice-based responses. This research project aims to study the commonality of composition between Chinese and Western styles, conducting a large number of experimental analyses through combining Western and Chinese compositions. It thus integrates aspects of Chinese and Western culture to discuss and analyse the visual aesthetics brought about by this particular compositional model.

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***PART ONE***

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature:

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I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Peter Gilderdale, for his generous help in completing this project. I would also like to thank my other supervisor Dr. Chen Chen for her great help in the progress of the project.

Zijian Zhang encouraged me to expand this project. With his theoretical support I have more ideas for experiments. Thanks for his support for my study.

Thanks also to Suzanne Hardy for proofreading the text.

This report not only aims at the grade, but also provides experimental support for more artists to participate in the study of Chinese and Western compositional design.

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No confidential material was used.

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The visual aesthetics and artistic judgments of Chinese traditional culture are different from those of the West, using Eastern symbolism to outline the framework of philosophy and aesthetics. The foundation of ancient Chinese aesthetics originated from Taoist philosophy, which emphasises the relationship between nature and human behaviour (the primordial state of all things)<sup>1</sup>. This helped form the concept of ancient ink painting and its specific painting formats. There is a pattern of visual aesthetics in the discussion of Chinese traditional ink painting. This project investigates that pattern and asks whether it could be integrated into contemporary graphic design. Chinese traditional ink painting reflects the design philosophy of ancient Chinese artists. The study of the concepts of the combined compositions of Chinese ink painting and the Western composition model provides more design ideas for modern graphic design.

The research is an exploration of the effects of Chinese graphic intuition as a compositional strategy within modernist practices in western graphic design. Therefore, this project analyses the compositional theory which exists in Chinese ink painting. It also looks at the historical process and the background history of how Chinese ink painting developed. Through testing and analysing the relationship between the composition of Chinese ink painting and that of modernist graphic design, the specific composition and techniques of expression used in Chinese ink painting are expanded upon. This report provides the context for my project, and analyses the relationship and unique visual aesthetics brought about by the integration of the two compositional models.

<sup>1</sup> Paul J. D'Ambrosio, "Chen, Yun 陳雲, The Essence of Zhuangzi's Philosophy 莊子哲學的精神," *Dao*, 17, no. 4 (2018): xx, doi:10.1007/s11712-018-9633-7.

Through comparing a Chinese and Western approach, it is proposed firstly that one can productively incorporate the concept of traditional Chinese aesthetic composition into graphic design using the English language. Secondly, the study introduces and expands on the Compositional Conceptual Design Theory, an extensive set of compositional theories analysing the composition of Chinese ink painting which Chinese designer Zijian put forward in 2015.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the inspiration and thinking behind the Western typographic grid is also analysed. Following this contextual section, the report then documents the concept and development of the design composition of this project, which includes the process behind the presentation of the work, the problems encountered in the project process, and aspects of the project that have potential for further development.

<sup>2</sup> Zijian Zhang, “The Compositional Conceptual Design Theory,” [创研综合设计研究所: 气韵设计理论] Ideaworks Synthesis Design Research Institute, 2015, <https://cargocollective.com/zijns>

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How can a Chinese Taoist approach be adapted as a compositional strategy and applied in a modernist western graphic design context?

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Chinese art historian Zuoja proposed that art elements of Chinese painting have penetrated more and more into modern graphic design, which recently has increasingly reflected the distinctive characteristics of the Oriental and Chinese unique national spirit.<sup>3</sup> Zuoja firstly analyses the differing understanding of aesthetics between China and the West, and chooses Zhuangzi<sup>4</sup> and Plato as the subjects of comparison, because their ideas have exerted considerable degrees of influence on later art, and my research builds on this analysis. Secondly, from the perspective of traditional culture and its historical background, this project analyses the philosophical and aesthetic concept of the creation of Chinese ink painting, and analyses the author's understanding of its layout with the Compositional Conceptual Design Theory as a reference. Finally, the grid system in Western composition is compared to that in Chinese ink painting, including some examples from Western (and Chinese) compositional design. The contextual review can also help the project expand its knowledge base and provide its background.

<sup>3</sup> Zuoja Cai, “The Research of Application on Ink Painting Artistic Conception of “Mutual Promotion between Virtual and Reality” in Modern Graphic Design,” (Master's Thesis, Hunan Normal University, 2012), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Zhuangzi (c. 369-286 BC) was a philosopher of the middle warring states period; his thoughts influenced the development of ancient Chinese ink painting.

Chuang Tzu, *Zhuangzi*, Longman Library of Primary Sources in Philosophy, (London: Routledge, 2016), 23.



## 6 Chinese aesthetics (literati painting) and Chinese ink painting

The understanding of Chinese and Western aesthetics has influenced the formation of different aesthetic concepts in later paintings and artworks. As a unique phenomenon in the development of Chinese art, literati painting is an inevitable product of the development of Chinese painting within a particular historical context.

Chinese traditional culture uses visual aesthetics and artistic judgments which are different from those of the West. In particular, Zhuangzi's aesthetic thought, as explained below, is one of the primary influences on the development of Chinese ink painting. Zhuangzi's philosophical and aesthetic thought, with its strong Taoist approach, is based on the idea that the Chinese ink painter must have the spirit of free creation. In the process of painting, the artist needs to express his thoughts through painting. Taoism advocates spiritual freedom, and influenced the field of painting in that ancient artists expressed their inner freedom through brushstrokes, composition, color, etc., and used painting as a method of expressing their thoughts. During the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.) with the support of the rulers, Taoism was promoted and developed. Many literati painters accepted the influence of Taoism. Zhao Mengfu<sup>5</sup> (1250-1322 A.D.) a painter and calligrapher, is typical of artists who worked in this dynamic and expressive Taoist manner (Figure 1).

<sup>5</sup> Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322 A.D.) moved away from the cruder style of the eighth century and is considered to have brought about a revolution that created the modern Chinese landscape painting.



Figure 1. *The Autumn in Que and Hua Mountains* by Zhao Mengfu. 1295 A.D.

A similar ancient philosophical underpinning can also be found in Western countries, where Plato,<sup>6</sup> during the Western Greek era, first explored beauty in the book “Greater Hippias”,<sup>7</sup> and argued that beauty has two concepts; one is the concrete aspect of beauty, and the other is beauty itself or the concept of it. This is also a philosophical perspective to explore in aesthetics. In China, there is a corresponding insight into aesthetics; Zhuangzi proposed in the “Essay on the Uniformity of all Things”<sup>8</sup> that beauty is eternal and free,<sup>9</sup> it therefore exists universally and does not depend on any specific things; form and wholeness, personality and self are the same.

Discussions of Chinese Taoist aesthetics and Western Platonic aesthetics originate from philosophy, but there are cultural and ideological differences between Chinese and Western aesthetic views. Liangzhi argues that Chinese Taoist philosophy focuses on life, whereas Western traditional philosophy focuses on reason and knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Pythagoras, another Greek philosopher, believed that numbers are the origin of all things, and the nature of things is determined by certain quantitative relations, and all things constitute a harmonious order according to a certain proportion of quantity. In contrast, in Chinese Taoist aesthetics, people are not only interested in the knowledge of external beauty,

<sup>6</sup> Robert G. Hoerber, “Greater Hippias,” *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, no. 92 (1964): 143-155, doi:10.1515/9781400835867-030.

<sup>7</sup> Socrates and Hippias begin to search for a definition of beauty.

<sup>8</sup> Zhuangzi advocates all things in one; this article shows Zhuangzi's negation of the secular and a yearning for the realm of freedom.

Ishii Tsuyoshi, “Reading Zhuangzi Qiwulun by the Discourse in Qing Dynasty: Another Approach to Reflecting Enlightenment,” University of Tokyo, 2011, [https://utcp.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/publications/2011/05/utcp\\_booklet\\_21/index\\_en.php](https://utcp.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/publications/2011/05/utcp_booklet_21/index_en.php)

<sup>9</sup> It can be explained that human beings and nature are in a harmonious whole. They are not two opposing sides and should not be treated differently. All things and human beings should build a harmonious whole and play the same role to make the whole more stable and harmonious.

<sup>10</sup> Liangzhi Zhu, “中国美学与西方美学的差异,” [The difference between Chinese aesthetics and Western aesthetics], *360 individual libraries*, accessed on January 15, 2018, [http://www.360doc.com/content/18/0115/15/1302411\\_722119921.shtml](http://www.360doc.com/content/18/0115/15/1302411_722119921.shtml).

and the psychological reality generated by the external object “aesthetic.” One of the challenges for the project is how to adapt the author’s thinking about Chinese ink painting to the Western background composition and realise a fusion of Chinese and Western compositional culture.

## 6 构图论(《六法》的构成理论)的提出: 从《六法》到《六法》的构成理论

This section reviews the Compositional Conceptual Design Theory, in which Zijian Zhang analyses the layout mode of a large number of traditional Chinese ink paintings, so as to obtain a set of systematic composition models.<sup>11</sup> Firstly, the thinking process of painting formed in Chinese history and the thinking and discovery of the author is introduced. Secondly, the application of the Compositional Conceptual Design Theory in this project is expanded.

The Southern Dynasty painter Xie He was influenced by Zhuangzi's philosophy and aesthetics. After studying the works of famous painters of the previous generation, he summarised six basic principles of ink painting: a dynamic style, forceful brush strokes, a life-like image, characteristic colouring, elaborate arrangement and imitation.<sup>12</sup> His view of painting lays the theoretical framework of philosophical aesthetics for the development of ink paintings of later generations.

During the Song dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), Chinese landscape painting had already been formed into a prosperous scene under the influence of the painting principles of the Southern Dynasty of Xie He (479 -502 A.D.).<sup>13</sup> Therefore, in the Compositional Conceptual Design theory, Zijian's

<sup>11</sup> Zijian Zhang, "Compositional Conceptual Design theory," <https://cargocollective.com/zijns/RESEARCH>

<sup>12</sup> "A dynamic style" means that a painting should let the viewer appreciate its vitality and charm. "Forceful brush strokes" is a line which can draw any shape with ease. "A lifelike image" means that the image should vividly capture the depicted form. "Characteristic colouring" refers to the use of colour according to the characteristics of the painting subject. "Elaborate arrangement" means that the composition should achieve a good overall effect. "Imitation" refers to copying famous works to improve painting skills.

Key concepts in Chinese thought and culture. "Six Rules of Painting." Accessed May 6, 2019, [https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu\\_show.aspx?shuyu\\_id=3712](https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu_show.aspx?shuyu_id=3712).

<sup>13</sup> "Six Rules of Painting," Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture, Accessed May 12, 2019, [https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu\\_show.aspx?shuyu\\_id=3726](https://www.chinesethought.cn/EN/shuyu_show.aspx?shuyu_id=3726).

analysis of the structures of ink painting starts in the Song dynasty.<sup>14</sup> First, he analyses the description of “wind” in the ink painting, *Double Happiness Diagram* (Figure 2), which also corresponds to the dynamic style in Xie He's, “Six basic rules.” At the same time, Zijian describes the direction of the flow of “water” (Figure 3), which is called “s-shaped” or Qi Mai.<sup>15</sup> In Chinese paintings, Qi Mai is the line of equilibrium running through the picture, which balances the relationship between different elements. He finds that the changes of water flow, wind direction, or the density of elements in some works of ink painting correspond to the balance of Yin and Yang in the symbol of “tai chi,”<sup>16</sup> which is also the Taoist thought of Zhuangzi.<sup>17</sup>

Zijian Zhang has noted three elements in the river and pavilion diagram (Figure 4), in which he believes that the composition has achieved balance by changing the wind direction. After analysing a number of Chinese Taoist ink paintings, he sums up a set of compositional models (Figure 5).<sup>18</sup> My project is based on these compositional models, noting similarities to Western modernist design. For example, I became particularly interested in Joseph Müller-Brockmann, and the movement that influenced him - constructivism. Constructivism was an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated in Russia beginning in 1913 by Vladimir Tatlin. In 1922, a Russian art theorist Aleksei Gan issued a Constructivist Manifesto. Typically, Constructivist art consists of three-dimensional and two-dimensional forms which are usually geometric,

<sup>14</sup> Zijian Zhang, “*Compositional Conceptual Design theory*,” 66-79.

<sup>15</sup> It has a variety of explanatory meanings, which can be interpreted in this report as the invisible airflow formed between elements in the ink painting that was discussed.

<sup>16</sup> Tai chi symbols have different meanings in different academic fields. In this project, tai chi symbols represent balance.

<sup>17</sup> Zijian Zhang, “*Compositional Conceptual Design theory*,” 74.

<sup>18</sup> Zijian Zhang, “*Compositional Conceptual Design theory*,” 66-79.

minimal, experimental, and rarely emotional. Constructivist works of art are often broken down into their basic elements. In my project I looked for simplicity and geometry, and used the golden section and both diagonal and triangular compositions. (Figure 7).<sup>19</sup> In Müller-Brockmann's graphic design, I observed the influence of constructivism, with the design prominently using geometric and simplified approaches to its typography and composition.

<sup>19</sup> "History and Characteristics of Constructivist Art," ArtHearty, last modified August 5, 2019, <https://arthearty.com/history-characteristics-of-constructivist-art>.

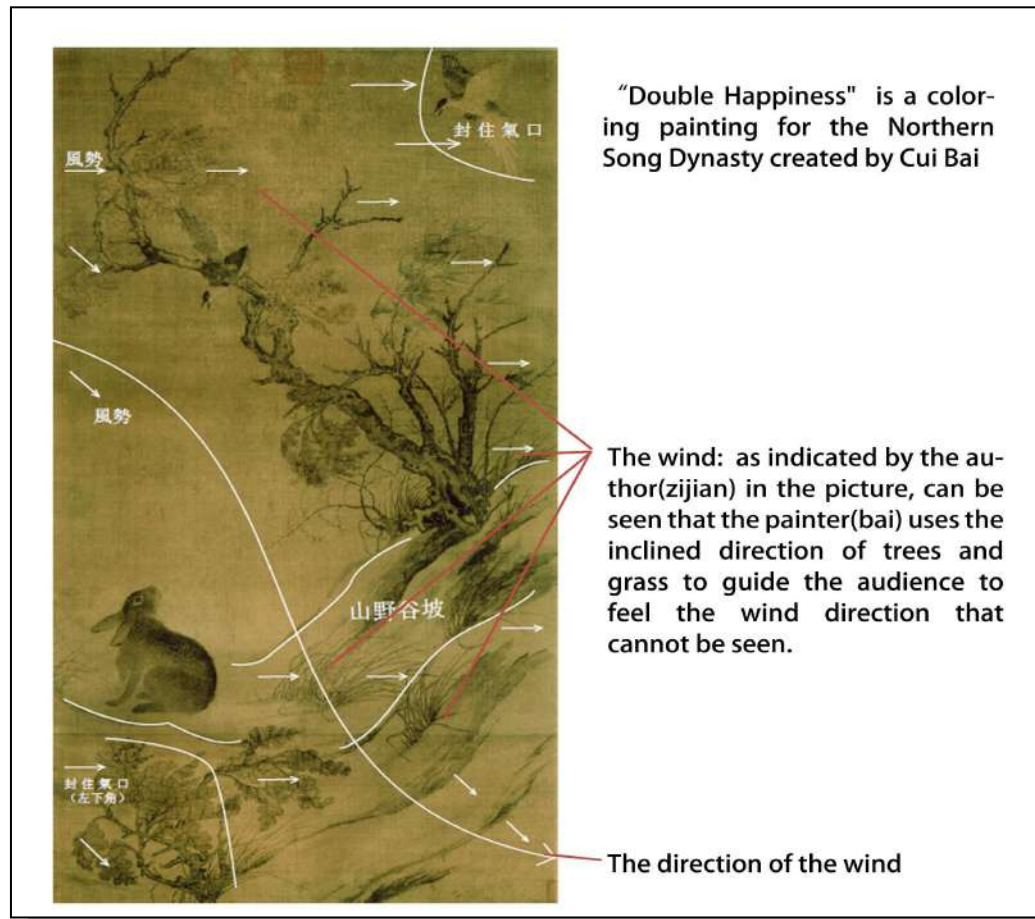


Figure 2. Zijian Zhang's analysis of Cui Bai's painting "Double Happiness".



Water: according to the author's(ziji-an) mark, it is clear that the water flow shows an S-shaped trend



松涧山禽图  
(This could explain the birds circling in the valley)

Figure 3. Zijian Zhang's analysis the painting “松涧山溪图 (This could explain the birds circling in the valley)”, artist unknown.



Figure 4. Zijian Zhang's analysis the painting “江天阁楼图 (This could explain the river and pavilion)”, artist unknown.

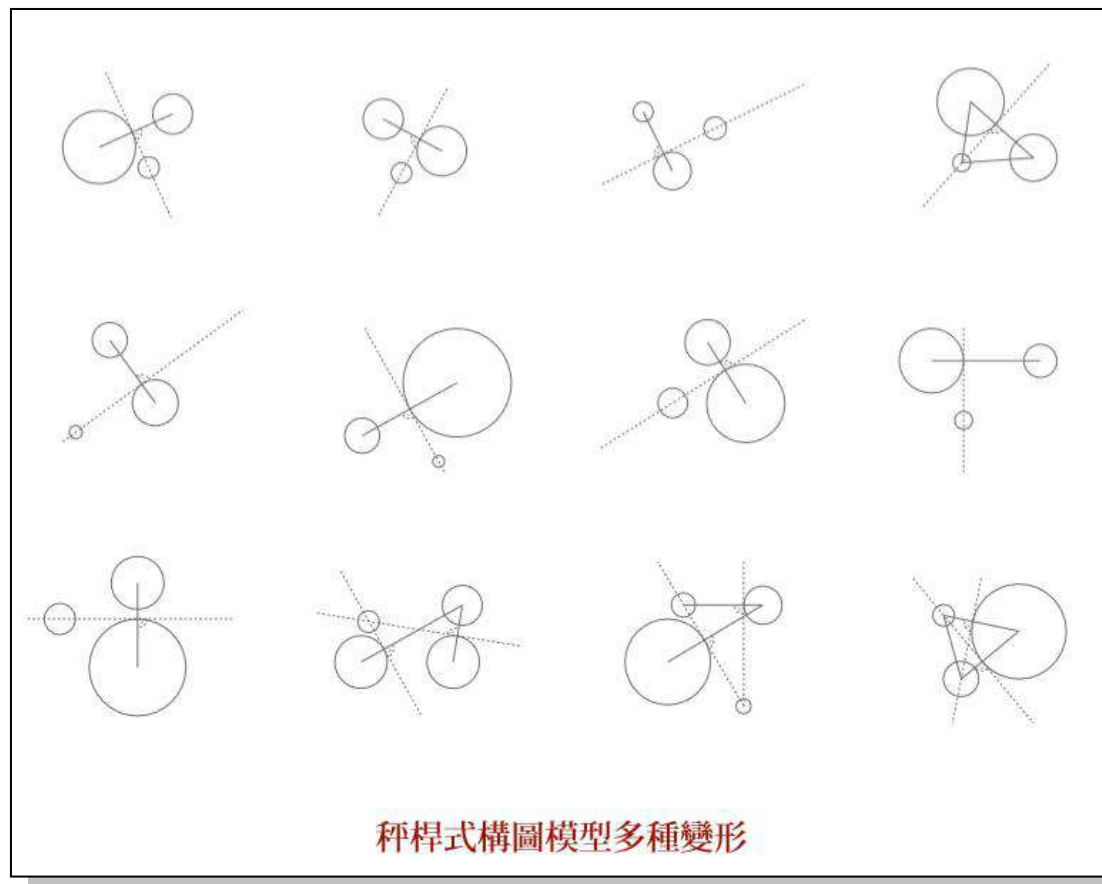


Figure 5. The models that form the basis of my analysis are derived from the compositional conceptual design theory of the author Zijian Zhang.

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In Western art works, we can find existing Western models of composition; such as the rule of third, the golden section, the diagonal composition, the triangle composition, etc. Comparing the rule of third and the golden section, in my opinion, the golden ratio is a more obvious manifestation of rigorous mathematical logic, it proposes that there is a mathematical ratio commonly found in nature-the ratio of 1 to 1.618.<sup>20</sup> So the golden section composition is more in line with the purpose of my project research, that is, whether the thinking framework of Chinese ink painting composition can be regarded as Western. Also the Golden Ratio is sometimes used in a grid system as, for example, in the handbook called *Grid Systems in Graphic Design*, where Müller-Brockmann introduced a systematic layout according to the Golden Ratio setting (Figure 7).<sup>21</sup> It is easy to read and logical to typeset.

*The grid system is an aid, not a guarantee. It permits a number of possible used and each designer can look for a solution appropriate to his personal style. But one must learn how to use the grid; it is an art that requires practice.*

—Joseph Müller-Brockmann

The standard grid system can be clearly typeset, but it also has fixed limitations. In this project, I used the changeable style of the Chinese ink painting model to break the fixed nature of the traditional grid system, and tried to expand the innovative combination of graphic design

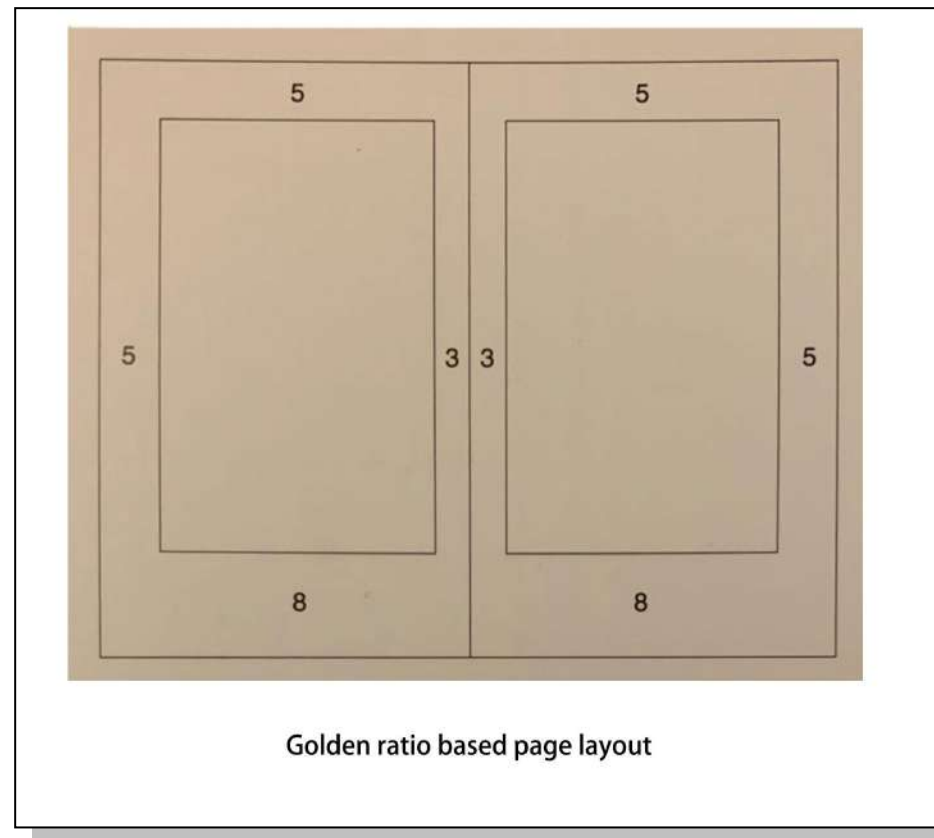
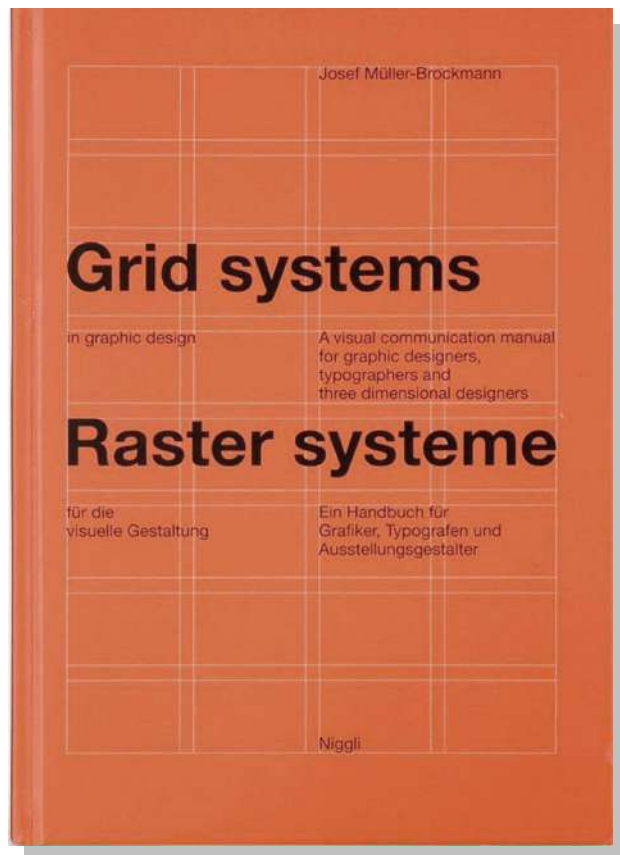
<sup>20</sup> Dianne, Mize. “A Guide to the Golden Ratio (AKA Golden Section or Golden Mean) for Artists,” *Art Tutorials*. Accessed on January 22, 2019, <https://emptyeasel.com/2009/01/20/a-guide-to-the-golden-ratio-aka-golden-section-or-golden-mean-for-artists>.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph, Müller-Brockmann. *Grid Systems in Graphic Design*, (Switzerland: Niggli, 1996), 23.

composition. In my project, these works utilise the golden section, using both diagonal and triangular compositions as resources.<sup>22</sup> In Brockmann's work, the prominent typographic and geometrical systems were framed within a geometric grid. Compared to Soviet constructivist work (Figure 8), his design makes the information easier to read, and allows viewers and readers to obtain effective results at the lowest cost (Figure 9). Brockmann explains his style very effectively: "With an arbitrary organization, the problem is solved more easily, faster and better. It also allows uniformity that goes beyond national borders (hence the international style!)"<sup>23</sup> When I realized that there is such a grid system in Western graphic design works, it seemed rigorous, expressing design aesthetics through geometry grid, while the composition art in Chinese ink painting pays more attention to humanistic thinking. Chinese and Western composition both shows the aesthetics of composition through different forms of expression.

<sup>22</sup> "History and Characteristics of Constructivist Art," ArtHearty, last modified August 5, 2019, <https://arthearty.com/history-characteristics-of-constructivist-art>.

<sup>23</sup> Rabiot Mathias, "Josef Müller-Brockmann "Swiss Style" - Graphéine," Agence De Communication Paris Lyon, last modified May 23, 2018, <https://www.grapheine.com/en/history-of-graphic-design/graphic-designer-muller-brockmann-swiss-style>.



Golden ratio based page layout

Figure 7. *Grid Systems in Graphic Design* by Joseph Müller-Brockmann.

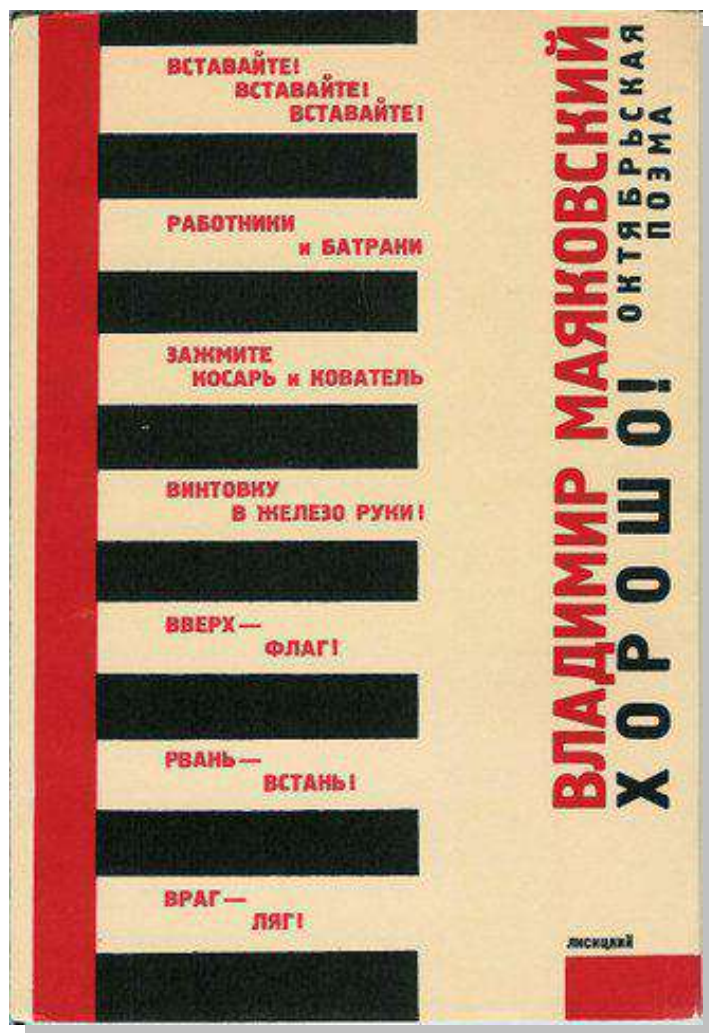


Figure 8. Book cover for Good! by Vladimir Mayakovsky, designed by El Lissitzky, 1927.



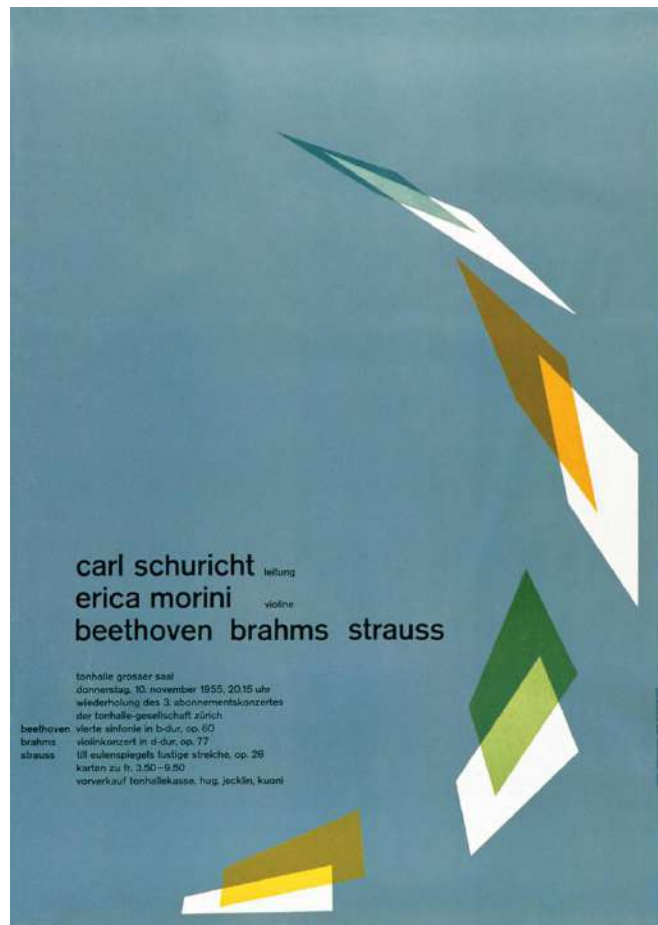


Figure 9. Graphic design by Müller-Brockmann.



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As Leedy and Ormrod indicated,<sup>24</sup> the review is meant to describe the theoretical perspective in the field of your interest and to help you familiarise yourself with previous research findings that may be of relevance to your research problem. This project aims to expand the relationship between the visual composition systems in traditional Chinese ink painting and systems of Western composition. Therefore, the early exploration was centred on the different art cultures of China and the West. According to the research scope of this project, a literature review of the history was necessary. Muratovski<sup>25</sup> suggests that historical reviews show an analysis of how theories and ideas have developed. In the mid-term of the project, the influence of different aesthetic views of Chinese and Western art works was explored and the aesthetics of Chinese ink painting were reviewed. There is also a reflection on the different aesthetics to further influence the different compositional models of Chinese and Western painting. This helps explain the research method and the resources that should be used, and clarified the thinking on the scope of the project research in the limited time available.

<sup>24</sup> Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. *Practical Research Planning and Design*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001), 66.

<sup>25</sup> Muratovski, Gjoko. *Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice*, (Sage, 2015), 33.

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This project aims to explore specific Chinese philosophical and compositional aesthetics found in traditional ink painting. In order to achieve this goal, **action research**, and **heuristic learning** will be used as the core methodologies for the project research. Also, **design experiences** and **experimentation** are used in trying to create a variety of compositional models, expanding the thinking, and making the design ideas more broad.

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Sagor noted that the main reason for engaging in action research is to help the “actor” improve his or her actions.<sup>26</sup> Action research has had a positive impact on my project. A basic approach is to

***Identify research questions--collect and analyze data--making--expand and develop--reflection and evaluation-- report results***

This is not a linear but iterative process (Figure 6).

*Artistic creation does not require the same language to express the foundations of academic research. Researchers are taking a special path,*

<sup>26</sup> Richard Sagor, *Collaborative Action Research for Professional Learning Communities* (Bloomington: Solution Tree Press, 2010), 231.

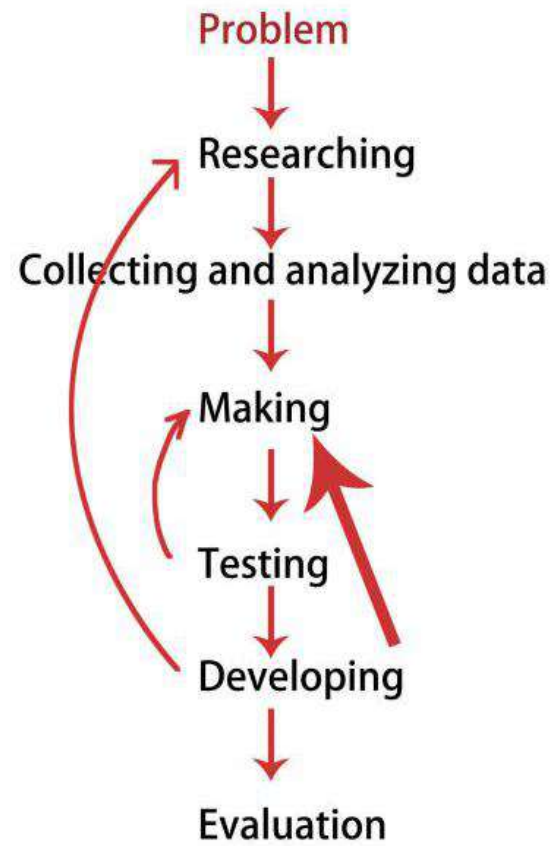
*they are defined in theoretical terms, and they try to stick to them and hope to achieve their goals. The artists don't always know what their goals are; when they arrive at their destination, they don't necessarily describe where they are going to get there.*

—Timo Jokela

Jokela emphasises that, as an artist himself, it is often difficult to talk about his work and the experience associated with the creative process.<sup>27</sup> The process of artistic creation is tortuous. Through action research, I analyze the problems raised by this project: How can Chinese Taoist graphic intuition be adapted as a compositional strategy and applied in a modernist western graphic design context? Then I open up ideas for the next step of creation. I draw on traditional Chinese conventions, with their ideological and cultural connotations, to firstly isolate a group of compositional methods from Chinese ink painting, then create a compositional model that combines Chinese and Western approaches, before testing this West/East hybrid model to then develop and expand the initial ideas. Swann emphasized that the design process clearly follows a familiar research process, which is primarily empirical, but more importantly, this design process is iterative.<sup>28</sup> Only by constantly revisiting the problem, reanalyzing the problem and synthesizing the revised solution can the results be achieved (Figure 10).

<sup>27</sup> Timo Jokela, Mirja Hiltunen, and Elina Härkönen, “Art-based action research – participatory art for the north,” *International Journal of Education Through Art* 11, no. 3 (2015): 437-438, doi:10.1386/eta.11.3.433\_1.

<sup>28</sup> Cal Swann, “Action Research and the Practice of Design,” *Design Issues* 18, no. 1 (2002): 53, doi:10.1162/07479360252756287.



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Figure 10: A specific action research process for this project . Designer: Jiashu Li

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Douglas and Moustakas explain that the generalised heuristic principle is the passion for problem solving and the perceptive judgment to try to understand the nature of certain aspects of life through the inner channels of the self.<sup>29</sup> Heuristic learning is about tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling and internalisation. Although I have not worked as a graphic designer before starting this degree, I studied animation during my undergraduate education. Therefore, the ideas of composition and grid may be considered as part of my tacit knowledge: that is the knowledge I did not know that I actually knew. In the process of testing a composition, I follow my intuition and indwell in the process of making, especially in the hand drawing and digital drawing process. I also consider this process as internalization, because I internalized the knowledge of Chinese and Western composition that I gained from the contextual review in the process of designing. My experiments can be seen as the evidence of this internalization. In addition, using heuristic learning as a methodology encourages a project with more reflective judgments in the process of exploration. In my project, I experience and create based on my personal interpretation and personal reflection process. As Sela-Smith demonstrates, heuristic learning requires participants-as-researchers to be concerned with the feelings of personal experiences to discover the meaning and value of research.<sup>30</sup> It relies on one's own understanding of the project as a process of iterative exploration, combining personal knowledge and the existing theory of composition in ink painting as the basis for developing a new theory of composition. Therefore, using this methodology not only allows me to seek deeper meaning in this process, but also self-reflection can make me realize the potential of this research project for me as a designer.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce G. Douglass and Clark Moustakas. "Heuristic Inquiry," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 25, no. 3 (1985): 39.

<sup>30</sup> Sandy Sela-Smith, "Heuristic Research: A Review and Critique of Moustaka's Method," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 42, no. 3 (2002): 53-58, doi:10.1177/00267802042003004.

## S o(r)n

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According to Press and Cooper, the design process explores the contexts, practice, and role of design, providing a basis for designers to reshape key design issues.<sup>31</sup> To do this, in this project, it is necessary to understand the drawing experience of the ancient Chinese landscape painter in ink painting, and analyse the composition and application of ancient famous ink painting works. Drawing on the design process of the ancient Chinese landscape painter and integrating the researcher’s own design experience and heuristic thinking, can help the project determine the direction of design and the next step of innovation.

A design process is necessary, as the project involves a large number of compositional designs with individually subjective ideas. Based on my previous design experience in animation, I used hand drawing to help me quickly find design ideas (Figure 11). Therefore, drawing the preliminary work can quickly find the design inspiration through a large number of hand-drawn sketches. In the early explorations, I drew a large number of compositional sketches on paper (Figure 12). Later iterations, where accuracy in relation to size and proportion was more important, utilised Photoshop and presented the ideas through digital painting (Figure 13).

<sup>31</sup> Mike Press and Rachel Cooper, *The Design Experience: The Role of Design and Designers in the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Routledge, 2016), 26.



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Figure 11. Previous sketches: Hand drawn manuscript for character design by Jiashu Li, 2014.



## Hand drawing

Figure 12. Hand drawing. Designer: Jiashu Li. In the initial stage, hand-drawn sketches provided me with more creative inspiration and provided some directions for the exploration.



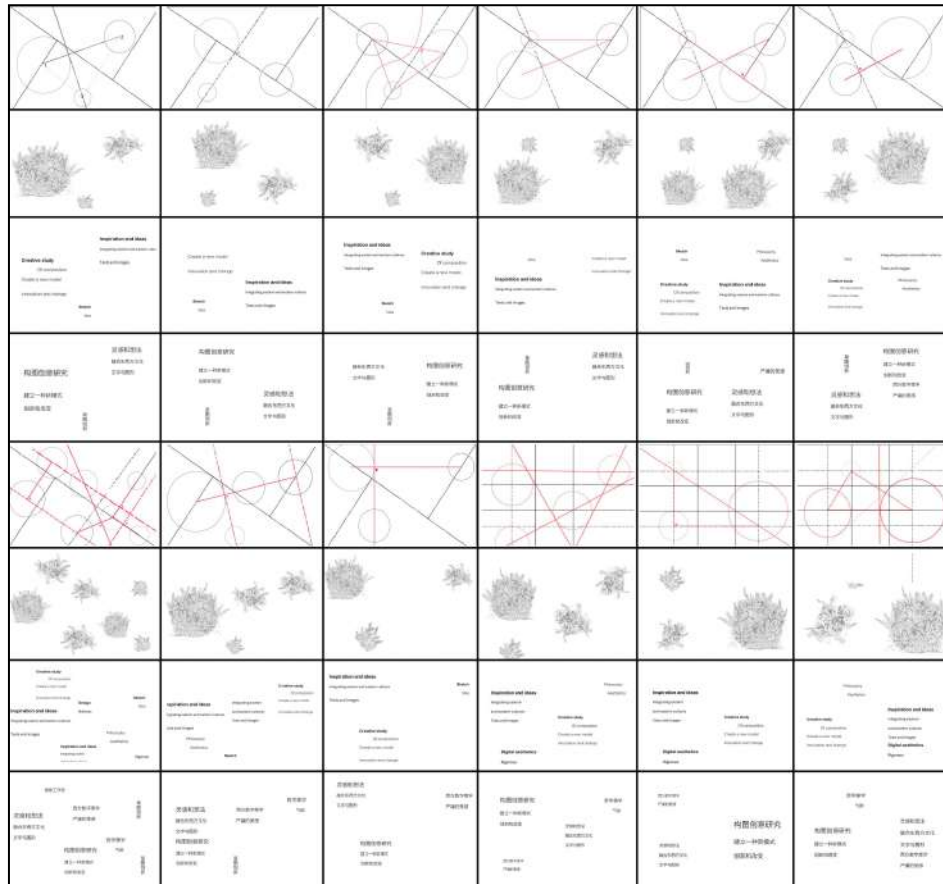


Figure 13. Digital designs. Designer: Jiashu Li. In this series of experiments, each composition is explored in three different ways, including one that explored the pure shapes and two that combined text in different ways.

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In order to develop an analysis and explore different concepts, a further test was used to verify the ideas put forward in the project. Thomke argues that “experimental processes are important because they help to discover and create knowledge that contributes to the development and improvement of products, processes, systems, and organizations. Put bluntly, without experimentation, we might still live in caves and use rocks as a tool, everything we use today will arrive through an organized experimental process over time.”<sup>32</sup> Experimental testing is no exception in design and links heuristic thinking with the action research process. This project explores the philosophical aesthetics of Chinese ink painting, analyses the thoughts on painting by ancient Chinese landscape painters and the influence of Zhuangzi philosophy. It also applies the theory to practice through self-heuristic exploration, and further expands and designs the composition model through multiple experimental composition tests (Figure 14).

<sup>32</sup> Stefan H. Thomke. *Experimentation Matters: Unlocking the Potential of New Technologies for Innovation*, (Brighton: Harvard Business Press, 2003), 26.



Figure 14. Digital drawing to test composition. Designer: Jiashu Li

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Bradley's understanding of the design concept is that it is the design idea that designers use as they plan how to solve the design problems facing them.<sup>33</sup> My project analyses the application of the compositional conceptual theory in this project, and then explores how to apply the four basic principles of ink painting into the composition. The design development is the process of further expanding that idea. This chapter therefore introduces the ways in which I attempted to integrate different cultural strategies, and tested my research question. This is done at the same time in the development process where a new layout of graphic design is created by expanding the integration of different cultures.

<sup>33</sup> Steven Bradley, "Thoughts on Developing A Design Concept," Vanseo Design, last modified December 23, 2010, <https://vanseodesign.com>.

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As noted in section 2.3 above, the compositional conceptual design theory is the theoretical concept of Chinese aesthetics by Zijian Zhang, a Chinese designer, through the study of Chinese ideas, thinking patterns, and emotional expression. The theory firstly establishes a basic composition conceptual model (Figure 15) by analysing the layout of traditional Chinese ink paintings (see page 20-22) and then evolved to establish a set of compositional conceptual models (Figure 16).<sup>34</sup> Through the analysis of “the compositional conceptual design theory”, the composition in the ancient ink paintings basically contains three parts, the size contrast between the elements, the distance between the elements: *the performance of the 虚实 (fullness and emptiness)* and the elements (see page 59-69). These can reflect the beauty of “the balance between all things” conveyed by Chinese Taoist thoughts (see page 17). This design thinking process is cyclic. Therefore here I analysed the relationship between the compositional conceptual design theory and the Western composition (see page 45-58). Then in the next part, I analyzed the influence of the three factors in Chinese ink painting (the size contrast between the elements, the distance between the elements: *the performance of the 虚实 (fullness and emptiness)* and the elements) on the Western composition (see page 59-69), and gradually integrated these existing factors into my design composition, so that I could realize the research purpose through self-heuristic learning.

<sup>34</sup> Zijian Zhang, “Compositional Conceptual Design Theory,” 74.

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Based on the summary of Zijian, it can be seen that there are three or more elements in his proposed compositional conceptual design model. Through some analysis and investigation of Chinese ink painting and the enlightenment of Chinese Taoist thoughts, I tried to observe the position of these elements in the compositional conceptual design model which appears to contain a hidden' philosophical aesthetics. My project is based on the analysis of this theory and it proposes the idea of using this compositional model as a practical strategy that can be applied to a Western approach to composition. It offers potential research value and can also support more researchers to study ancient Chinese culture. Therefore, in the processing of my project , the twelve different composition models were combined with the golden section, triangle composition and diagonal composition one-by-one (Figures 17,18,19).

First of all, I was testing whether I could adapt the compositional model existing in Chinese ink painting as a practical strategy within a western context. Therefore, the project is dominated by the Western composition model, and the compositional concept existing in Chinese ink painting is auxiliary. So in my design practice process, I changed the basic composition frame composed of “three-point balance” or “multi-point balance” (see page 22) in Chinese ink painting according to the points, lines and faces in the western composition model, and tried to observe whether this design change could affect the nature of Chinese ink painting composition, while still applying a critical approach to the results that retained a sense of Chinese Taoist intuition.

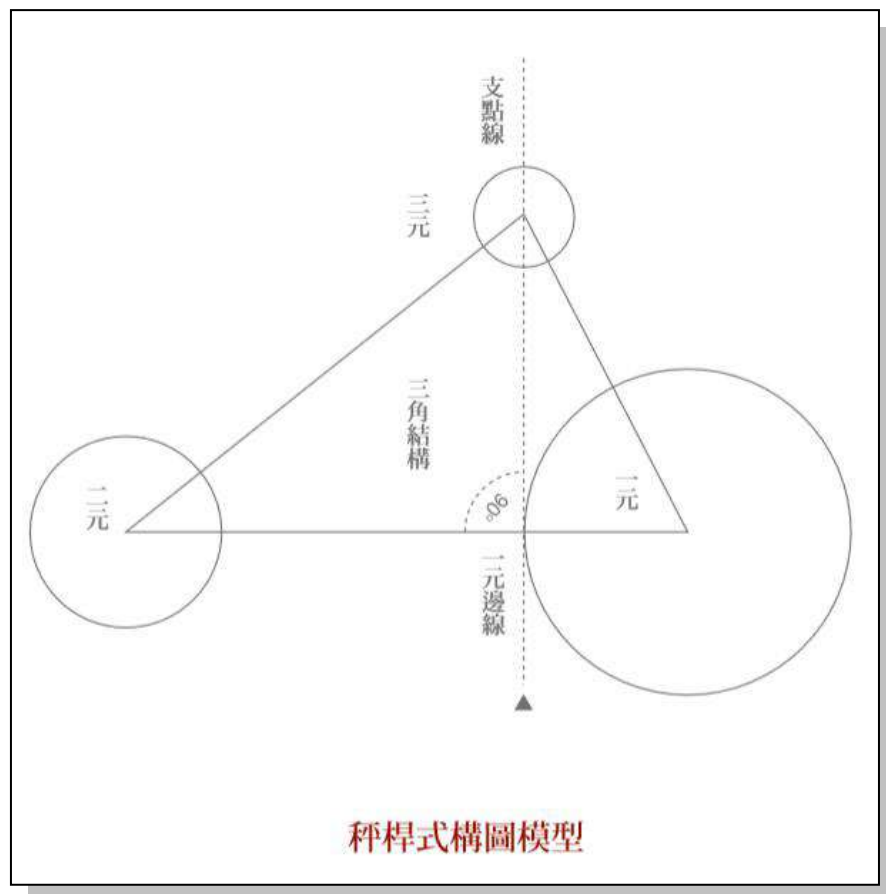


Figure 15. A basic compositional model by the author Zijian Zhang.

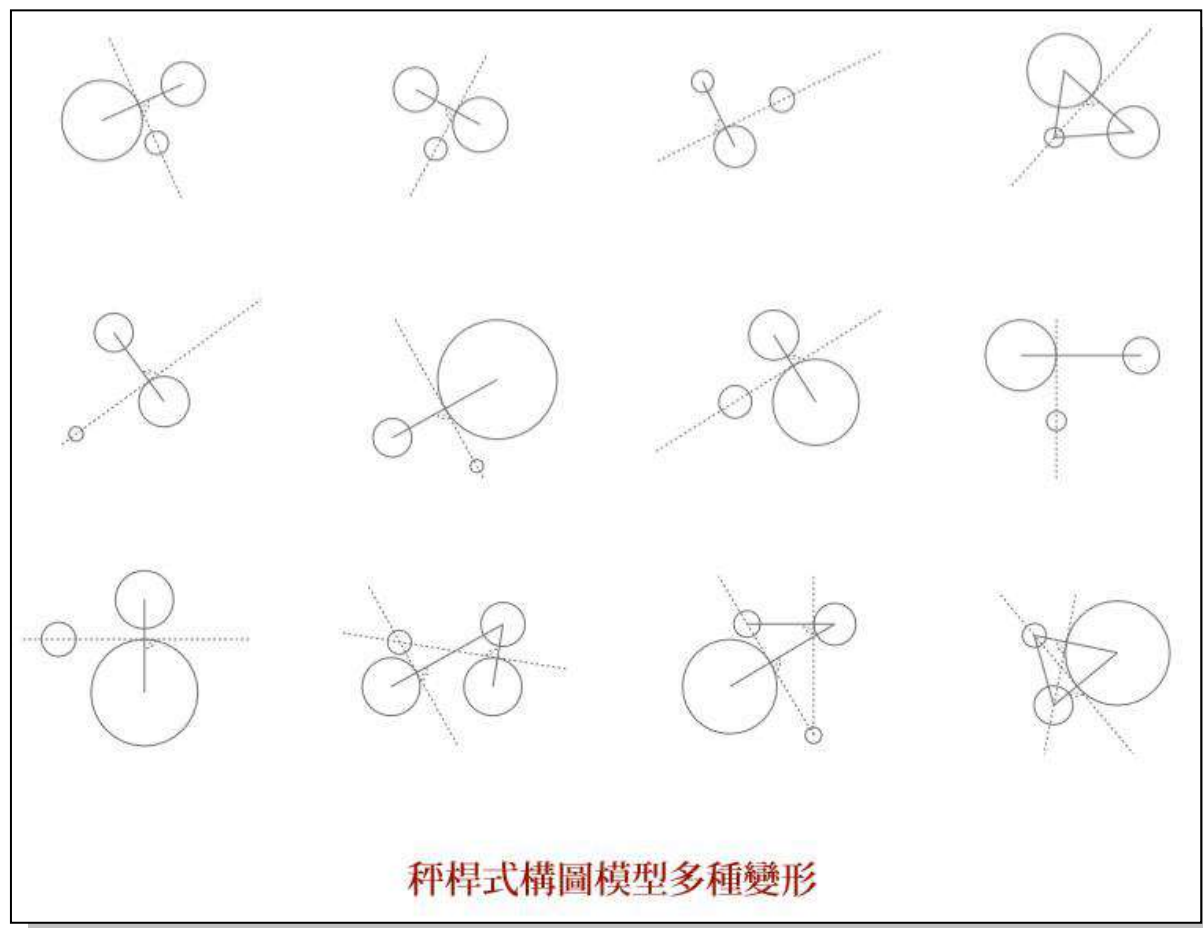
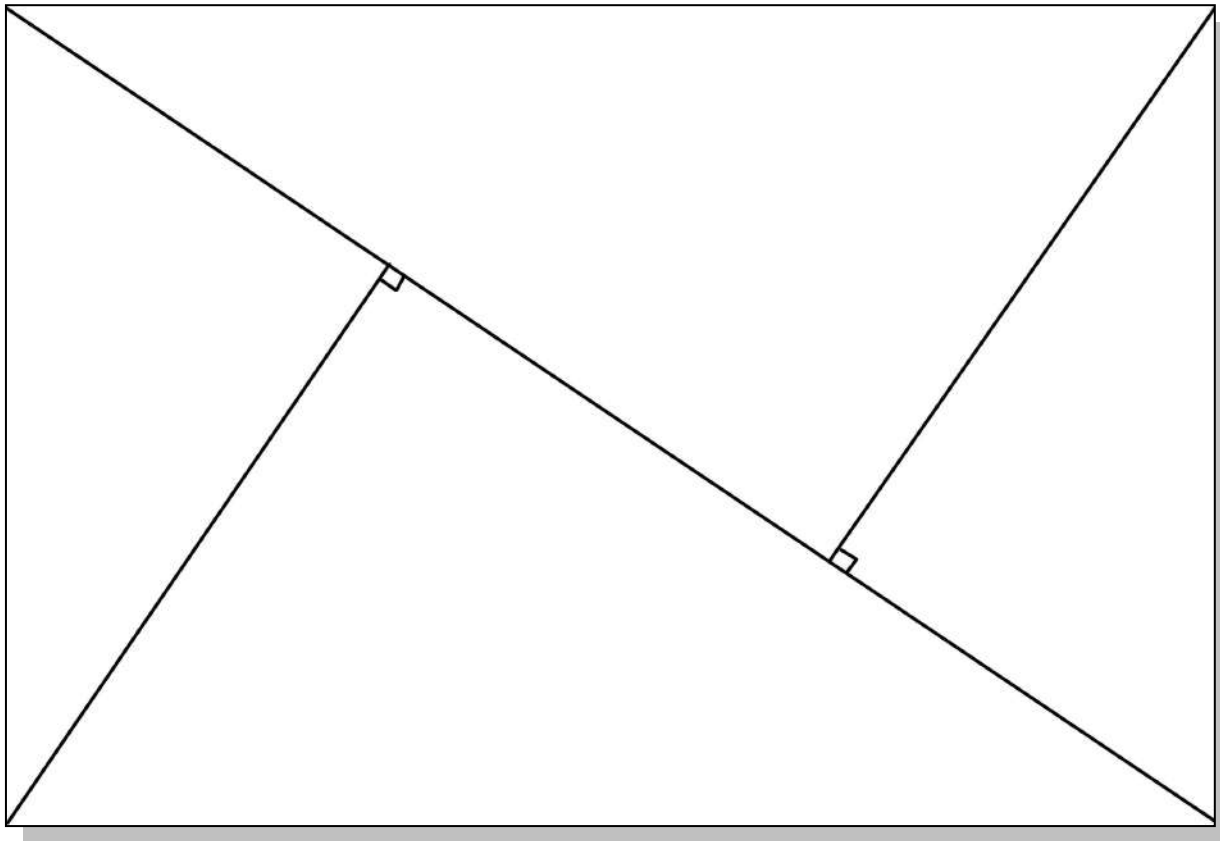


Figure 16. twelve different compositional models by the author Zijian Zhang.





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Figure 17. The example of the triangular composition. Designer: Jiashu Li.

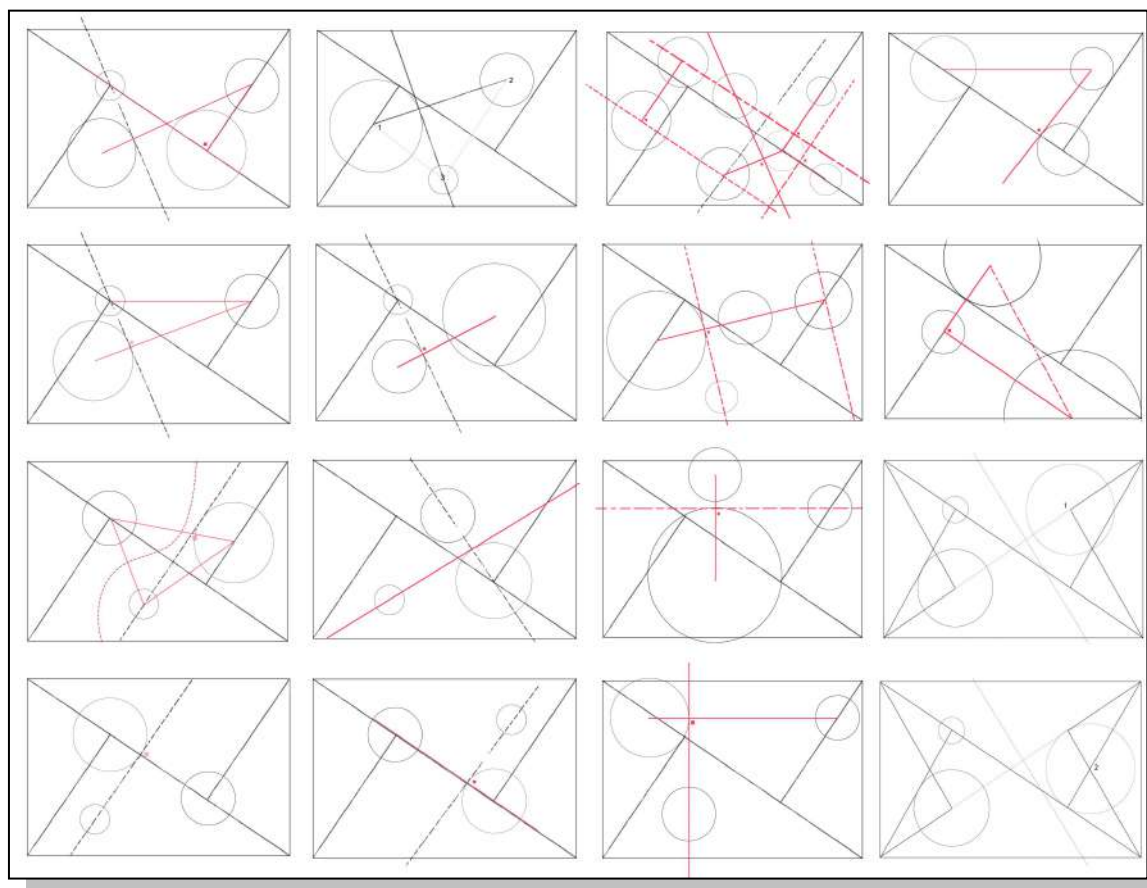
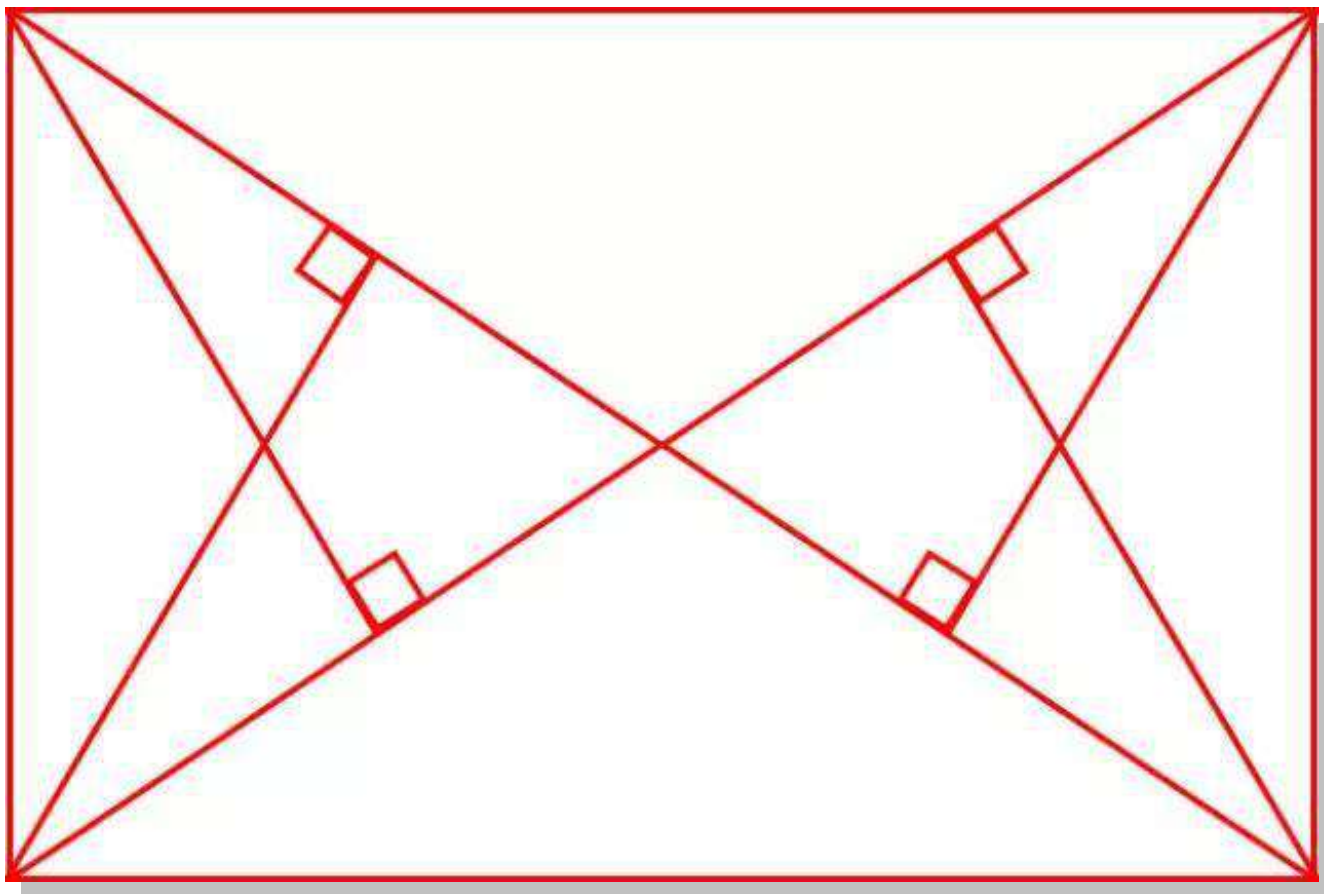


Figure 18. The combination of triangular composition and the compositional model in ink painting. Designer: Jiashu Li.

Figure 18: As shown in the figure, the circle in each hybrid composition represents an element, and the element can be a text, a picture or graphic. The Chinese compositional conceptual theory is used as the auxiliary of triangular composition. Therefore, the position of some elements in the hybrid composition is adjusted, relative to Zijian's model, according to the line, or the intersection point in the triangular composition. The red lines in each composition indicate the interrelationships between the elements. Whether this relationship can reach the basic principles outlined in Chinese ink painting needs to be explored in the next step.

In the test, I combined a western triangular composition (Figure 17) with the Chinese compositional conceptual model (represented here by the circles). I changed the three elements' position (represented here by the circles) of the Chinese basic conceptual model according to the points, lines and faces in the triangle composition, and then integrated the twelve Chinese compositional conceptual design models (Figure 16) into the triangle combination, so it can make many hybrid models. In this design process, I did not surround the three parts of the composition in the ancient ink paintings mentioned above (see page 44), so I may get a lot of practice design sketch works (Figure 18). This heuristic process helped generate more hypothetical compositions. For example, in Figure 18, by ignoring one of the three ancient ink painting principles (contrast, distance and fullness), one could test whether a hybrid model was still available. Secondly, one can test whether this approach serves as a compositional strategy in terms of my research question.



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Figure 19. The example of the diagonal composition.

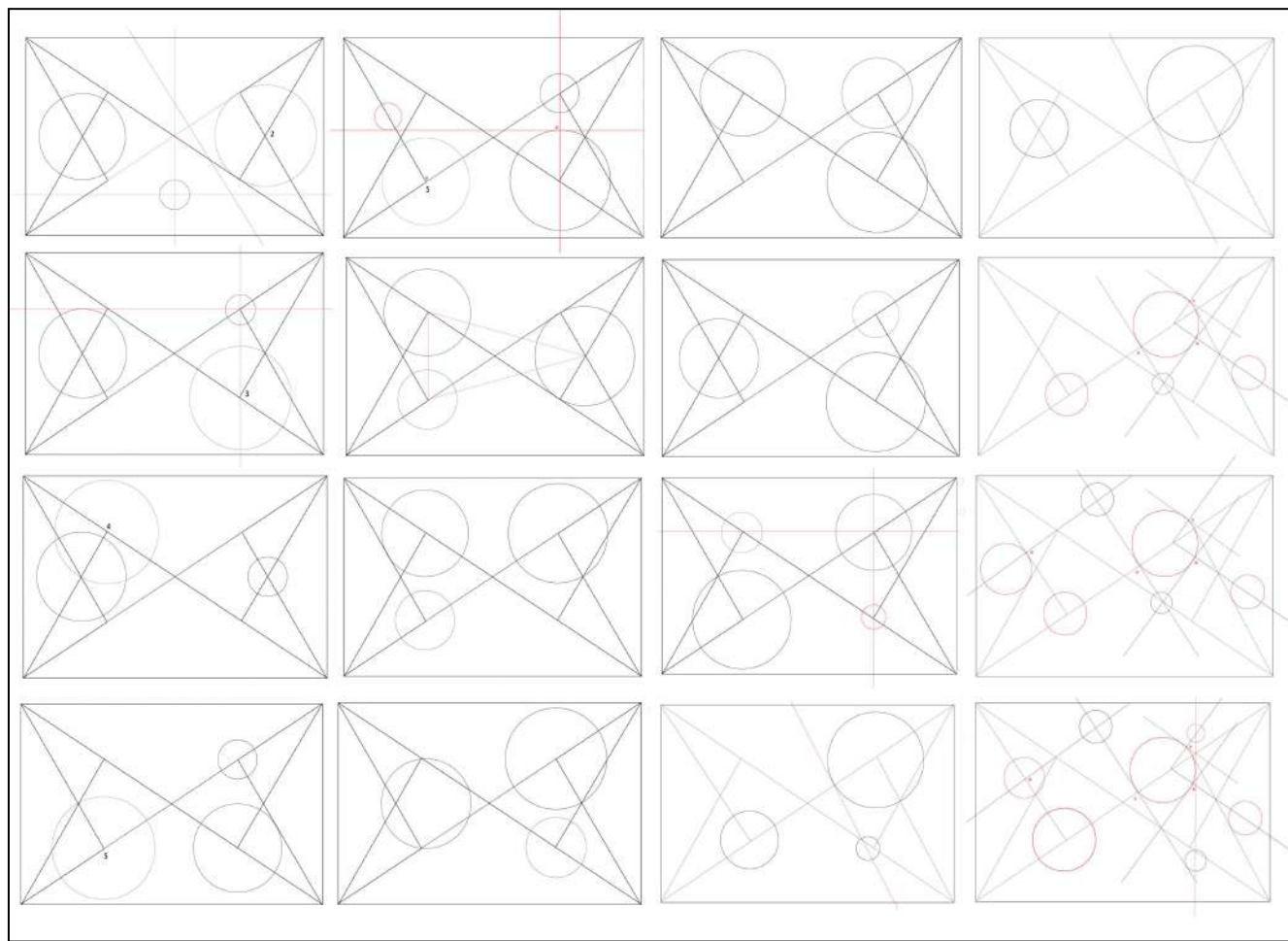


Figure 20. The combination of diagonal composition and the compositional model in ink painting. Designer: Jiashu Li.

In figure 20, when I started to try to mix the diagonal composition model and the Chinese concept design compositional model, I found that the diagonal composition model has more intersection points than the triangular composition model (Figure 17 and Figure 19), which meant I could try more design changes. As shown in the figure, I set the position of the element by the intersection point in the diagonal composition, and the size of the element is also set according to the intersection point of the diagonal composition. In some hybrid compositions, I set some auxiliary lines (red line) to draw the position of each element. During the design practice, I used the diagonal model as the background, the Chinese compositional conceptual design model as an aid, and still tested twelve different hybrid models.

As shown in Figure 20, the position of some elements changes according to the intersection of the diagonals. Therefore, I could iteratively test the hypothesis of whether all three elements of the Chinese conceptual design foundation model can be mixed to each existing intersection in the diagonal synthesis model to establish whether this hybrid model fully conforms to the thinking framework of painting composition influenced by Chinese Taoist intuition. And I also tried to mix the more complex Chinese compositional conceptual design models (Figure 22) with the diagonal composition because I think the diagonal composition model has more intersecting points, it could test whether the Chinese complex compositional conceptual design model also has the potential to be an auxiliary of the western composition model. Therefore, in Figure 20, I made three different complex hybrid models in the end, and each of which has different changes.

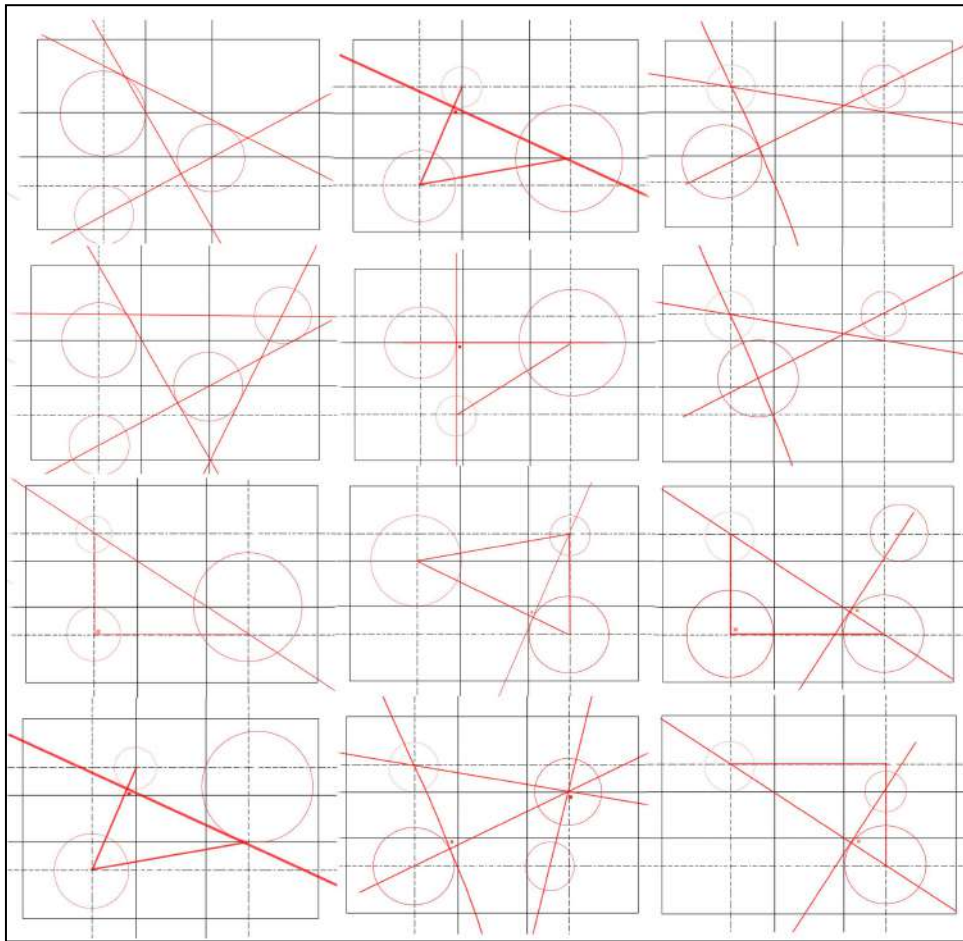


Figure 21. The combination of the golden section and the compositional model in ink painting. Designer: Jiashu Li

Figure 21: My design idea was to first draw the position of the element based on the golden section. With the Chinese compositional conceptual theory as an aid, a right-angled triangle can be connected between each elements (see Figure 15).

In the test of the golden section composition and composition conceptual model existing in Chinese ink painting, the preliminary thinking process is same as the hybrid triangular composition, and the diagonal composition, that is, starting from the basic model of Chinese composition conceptual design theory (Figure 15), then more extensive Chinese compositional conceptual design models (Figure 15) were mixed with the golden section (Figure 16). In this practice (Figure 21), I tested twelve different hybrid models, the position of each hybrid model still is based on the golden section, and the Chinese conceptual design model is used as an aid, so you can see there are some changes in the position of the elements in the hybrid composition. In the process of self-heuristic learning, I could explore whether the increase of the elements in this hybrid compositional model affected the key proportions of the golden section.



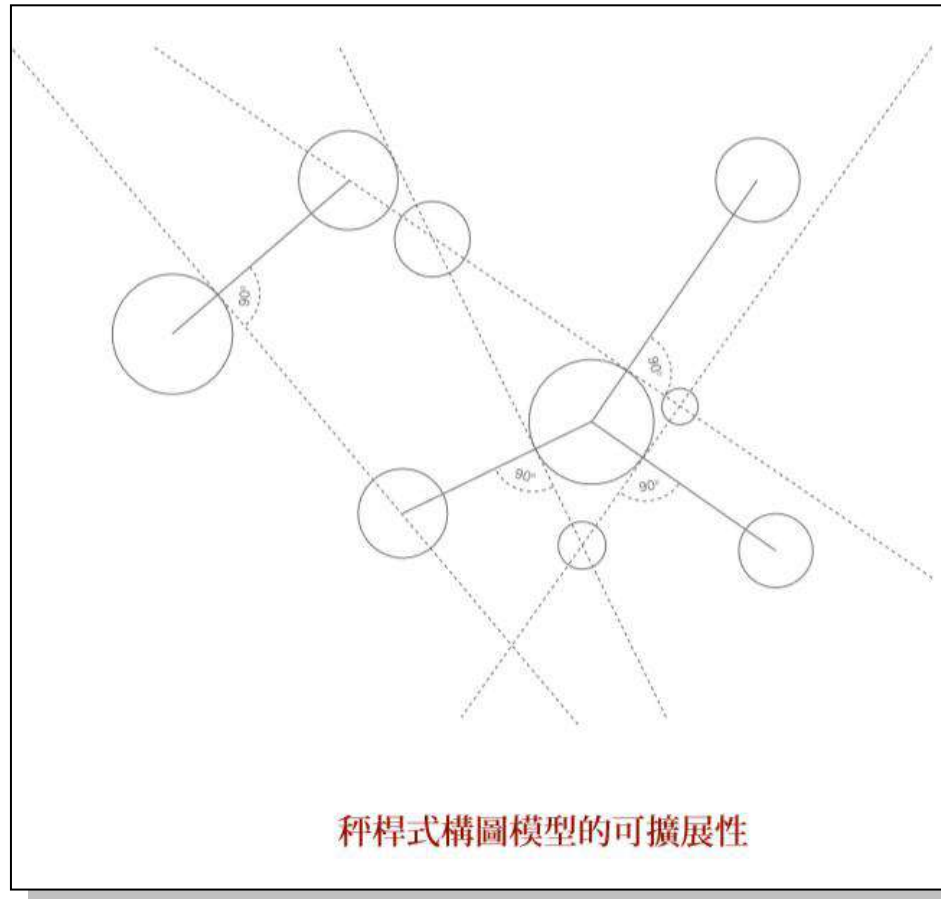


Figure 22. In this image, designer Zijian Zhang experimented with more than three elements. I drew on this concept in my experiments in figure 20.

At the beginning of the project, the graphic design grid system of Brockmann inspired my thinking. The author proposed a grid system that could arrange text and images according to its principles to create a visual aesthetic feeling. In this project, three different Western compositional models (golden section, diagonal composition and triangular composition) were chosen because these three models have different compositional characteristics, and in modern graphic design, these are the widely used and visually effective compositional models. In order to realise the idea of the project, the following question was asked: Is this hybrid form of Western and Eastern composition design feasible? A lot of experiments were performed. For example, the 90% adjacent point position of the composition model in Chinese ink painting is centred on the intersecting point of diagonal composition, or alternatively, the focal point position is set according to the diagonal (Figure 18, 20, 21) etc. It can therefore be seen that different typesetting methods were selected in each compositional experiment, resulting in different visual effects in the following tests. The feasibility of the composition design can be analysed through a large number of experiments to determine whether this hybrid form of Western and Eastern composition design is suitable for modern graphic design.

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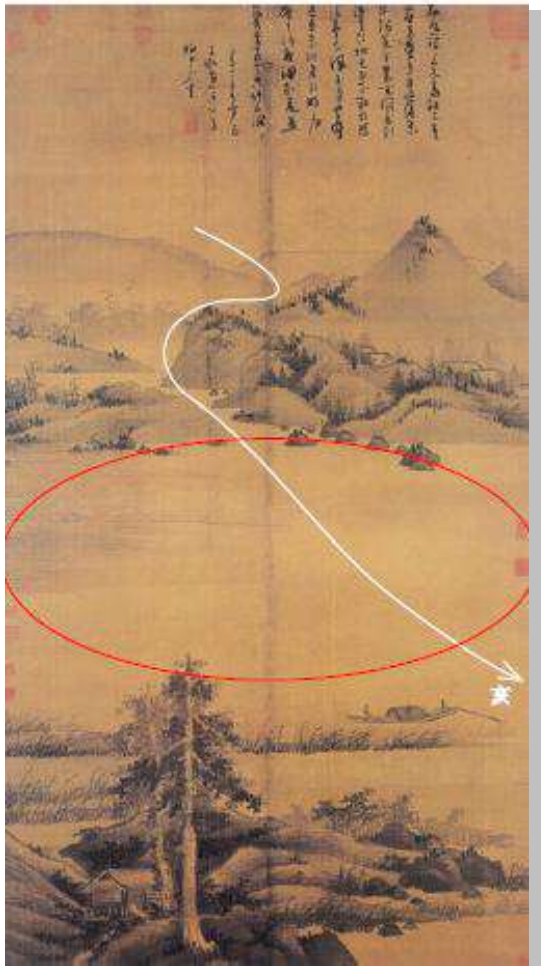
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One of the common compositional forms in Chinese ink painting is white space which is used as a unique visual language. In the ancient Chinese landscape painting below (figure 23), the artist draws attention to the white space (red circle) between the hills and the woods. In the Chinese Taoist thought, the white space is the effect of “fullness and emptiness”, which can be explained as the space without painting can still be expressing the visual aesthetics, the white curve can guide the viewer’s line of sight through the mountain to the woods. From a Taoist perspective, I think the “fullness and emptiness” white space in this ink painting makes “rhythm” in the composition, and the white curves seem to represent the movement of wind and water, that all make this ink painting full of “smart space”. Guang explains that through the contrast between “虚” and “实” in the picture, the reader is guided to appreciate the artist’s emotions and purposes, so that the viewer can understand them with his own subjective intentions against the “real” image in the picture.<sup>37</sup> The performance of white space is inseparable from the balance and density in the picture, so the three are combined in the test process to observe the relationship among them in the layout.

<sup>35</sup> In Chinese ink painting, the concept of “虚” represents the white space used; “实” is opposite.

<sup>36</sup> It can be explained as the loose or dense relationship between different elements in ink painting.

<sup>37</sup> Guang Yang, “论中国水墨画中的‘留白’对平面设计的启示” [Chinese Ink Painting in the ‘white space’ for Graphic Design Inspiration] *Graphic design*, no 1 (May 2016): 7.



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Figure 23. An example of an ancient Chinese ink painting, artist unknown

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As Lin indicated, 疏密 is an important compositional technique in Chinese painting, which refers to the opposite combination of “compactness” and “looseness” in the layout.<sup>38</sup> In this ancient landscape painting (Figure 24), there are six red circles marked (the density relationship). For example, in the lower half of this ink painting, the rock and wood are closely arranged, while the upper part is a white space in the ink painting. From the Taoist intuition, the white curve represents the direction of the wind and the water flow, guiding the viewer’s line of sight from top to down, which makes the composition of this ink painting have a sense of “rhythm”. This is also the aesthetic concept conveyed by Taoist thought in ancient China: 疏可跑马密不透风. This can be explained that there is a density relationship in the composition of ancient Chinese ink paintings, “compactness” and “looseness” is mutually restrained in one composition of ink painting, reaching equilibrium. Therefore, in my project, in order to test the “compactness” and “looseness” in the layout, in the tests (Figure 25), the layout in the picture was adjusted according to the golden section ratio, triangle composition or diagonal composition, and the layout was based on the relationship of the “density” in Chinese ink painting according to the compositional conceptual design theory.

<sup>38</sup> Lin Mu, “浅析中国画的构图” [Analysis of the composition of Chinese painting], *Art Science and Technology*, 3 (2017): 16.



d r o n o' o y z w o x ( y p ( r o z o . p y . w k n o y p ( r o 虚实 p) w x o : k x n o w z ( s x o : 4 疏密 ( r o n o x : s ( 1 . o w k ( s y x : r s z

This example (Figure 25) is based on the three Western compositional models. Each model in different line segments intersect and generate the intersection points or line. At the same time, the relationship between 'fullness and emptiness' and 'the density' in Chinese ink painting is considered. The focus of Western composition is to think proportionally, while the composition of Chinese ink painting is based on intuition. In the development of the design idea, thought was put into the rigorous proportion of Western composition being integrated into Chinese ink composition. For example, the focal points of the Chinese ink painting compositional model can be designed according to the intersecting point of the Western compositional model. This can be seen in Figure 25 which shows the focal points in different locations in the composition, which may cause different visual effects. These composition experiments are then used as a basis for the next development.

<sup>39</sup> In Chinese ink painting, the concept of “虚” represents the white space used; “实” is the opposite.

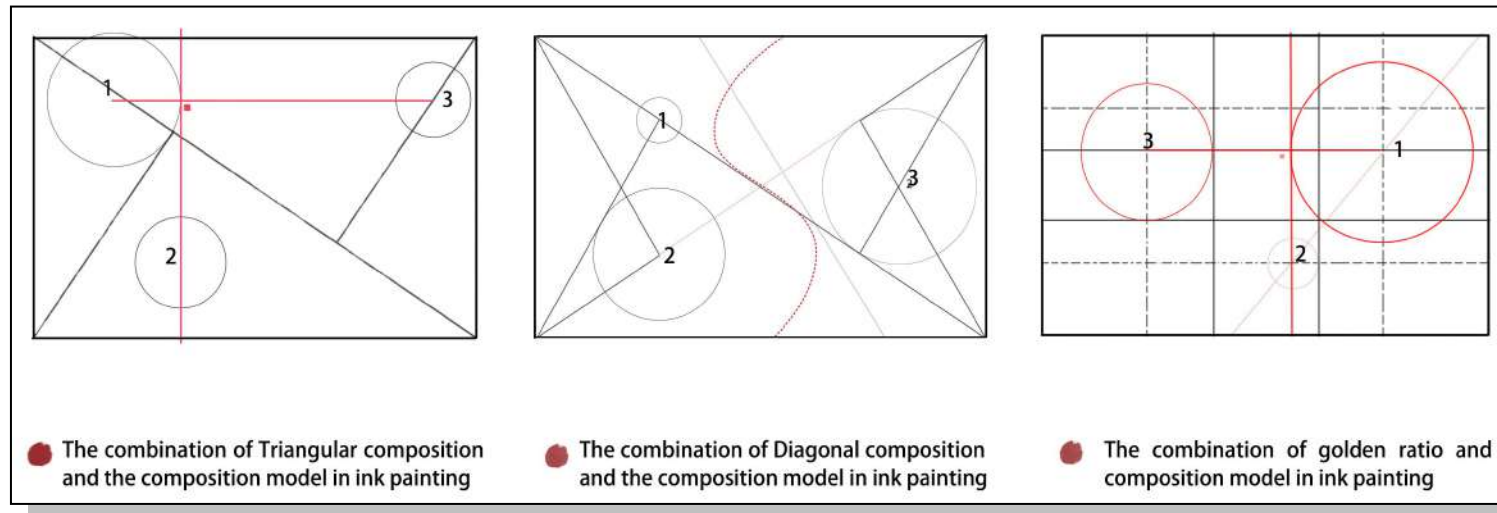


Figure 25. Examples of the combination of three different Western compositions and those in Chinese ink painting. Designer: Jiashu Li



Figure 25 shows three examples which test, in turn, the triangular, diagonal and golden section compositions. In this test, I adjusted the previously used hybrid composition (see pages 47-57). In the hybrid triangle composition, the red auxiliary line is used to adjust the distance between the three elements, and the elements still form a right-angled triangle (see Figure 15). The reason for drawing this way was to follow the Chinese compositional conceptual theory and explore the relationships between “fullness and emptiness” and “density” in Chinese ink painting. The hybrid diagonal compositions are very different, here, I was trying in the first image to break the traditional principles of Chinese ink painting (by placing the intersections on the diagonal intersecting points). I extended this to explore “fullness and emptiness” and the relationship with “density”. This relationship is evident through the red curving line. In the hybrid golden section composition, the red auxiliary line is used to adjust the distance of the three elements, and still form a right triangle between the elements, which still follows the Chinese compositional conceptual theory and the “fullness and emptiness” and the relationship of “density” in Chinese ink painting.

### **d r o n y x n o z ( y p ( r o 平衡 B k k x n o 7**

Lin also explains that equilibrium is another important method in the composition of the picture, which is also known as balance. In the art of modeling, it is a more aesthetic and more active form of expression than symmetry, that seeks change in unity.<sup>40</sup> The compositional conceptual design theory mentioned that the composition is balanced in ink painting, and is like the tai chi symbol (the black elements on the right contain white dots, and the white elements on the left contain black dots, which are unified and balanced).

### **d r o n o ' o y z w o x ( y p ( r o 平衡 B k k x n o 7**

The location of the elements in each composition was designed with the composition model being combined with the golden section, triangle composition and diagonal composition respectively. For example, though some of my tests set the position of elements according to the intersection of the lines in the Western composition (Figure 26), the balance in each layout is felt according to the researcher's subjective consciousness. Subsequently, a large number of composition layouts were tried to test the feel of the harmony and aesthetics of the picture, and to see how they altered its flow, (Figure 27).

<sup>40</sup> Lin Mu, “浅析中国画的构图,” [Analysis of the composition of Chinese painting], 16.

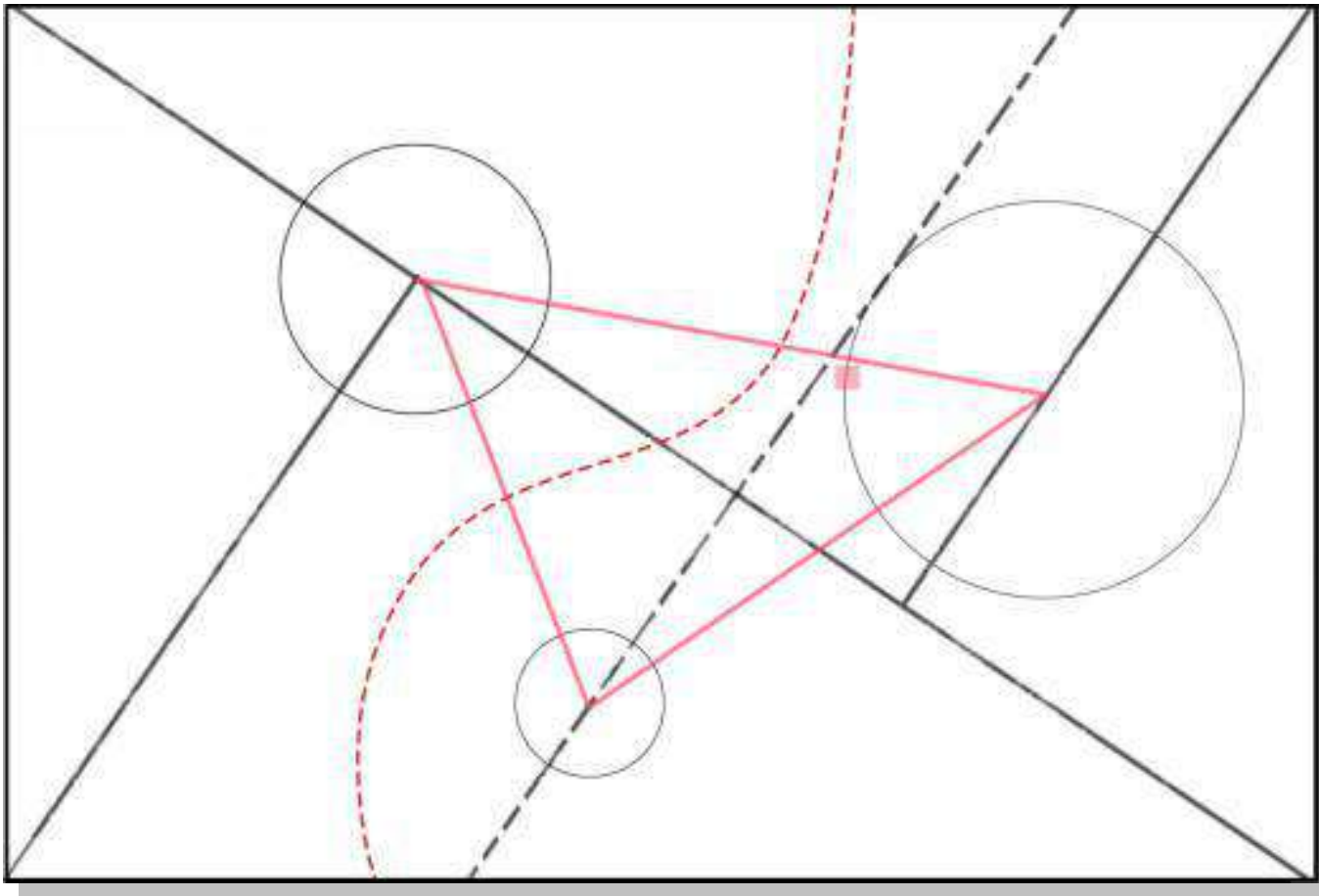


Figure 26. The combination of the triangular composition and Chinese ink painting composition model changes the position of the composition model elements in Chinese ink painting according to the intersecting lines in the triangular composition. Designer: Jiashu Li.

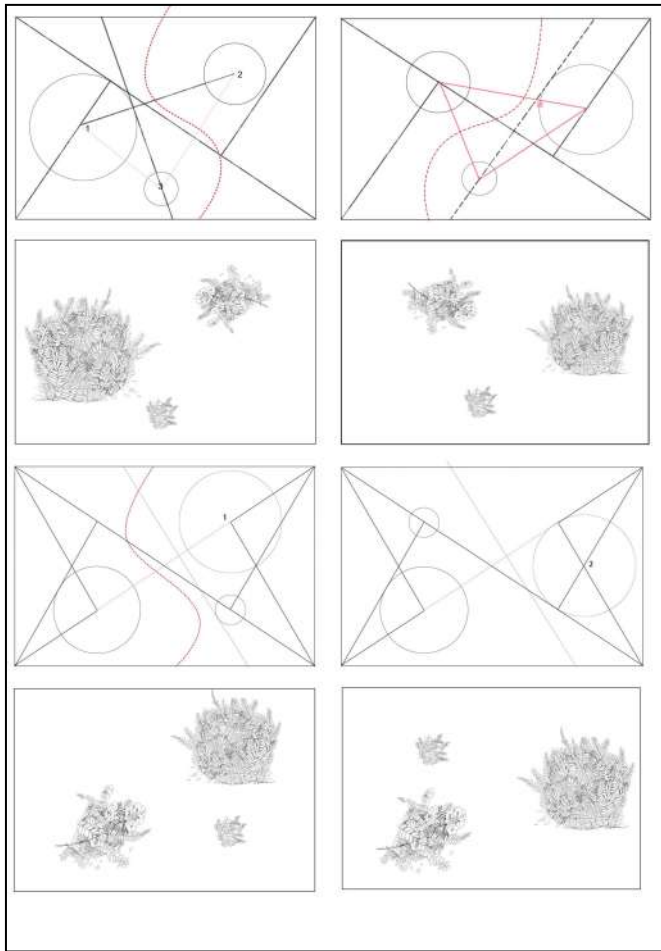


Figure 27. Some experiments testing whether the composition has a sense of balance when applied to a more specific context. Designer: Jiashu Li.

Figure 27: In the development of this step, the previously selected hybrid models are again adjusted differently (see pages 58-64). This was a heuristic and iterative process, where I repeatedly analysed and expanded my experiments to improve the hybrid composition. First, I drew a right-angled triangle (the composition above in figure 27) between the elements to make it conform to the Chinese compositional conceptual design theory and the relationship between “fullness and emptiness” and “density” in Chinese ink paintings (see page 58-64, Figure 15, Figure 16), then the red curve is used as the auxiliary line to adjust the position of the elements in the composition again, so that there is an “S” curve between the three elements, in line with the theory of balance (see page 65). Finally, I tested how these compositions worked once the geometric lines were substituted for graphic elements. This step led into the next phase of more complex testing.

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In the previous work, I analyzed three viewpoints in the composition of Chinese ink painting summarized by the compositional conceptual design theory. I developed a number of hybrid models through the previous work (see page 44), and I analyzed fullness and emptiness, the density relationship and balance in the medium term. Following Taoist thinking, the compositions in this step needed to balance fullness/emptiness and density and, to achieve this, I used ink elements to test the relationship between text and image in the layouts (Figure 28). The visual elements used in the composition are important. The use of ink elements should be consistent with the theme of the design work. As Yajun stated, the use of ink elements can make up for the lack of intuitive expression in the traditional ink painting and make it attractive to readers.<sup>41</sup> In this project, ink elements were used to test the more completed compositions to ensure that, when using western texts, there remained a link with traditional Chinese ink painting. The use of ink elements in the composition design complements the elements with Eastern characteristics, which is in line with the project's aims.

<sup>41</sup> Yajun Li, “试论中国水墨画对现代平面设计的影响” [Try to talk about Chinese ink and wash the impact of modern graphic design] (Master's Thesis, Shanxi Normal University, 2014). 25, <http://kns.cnki.net/kns/detail/detail.aspx?FileName=1014227061.nh&DbName=CMFD2014>.

design of composition (yixu ewox):

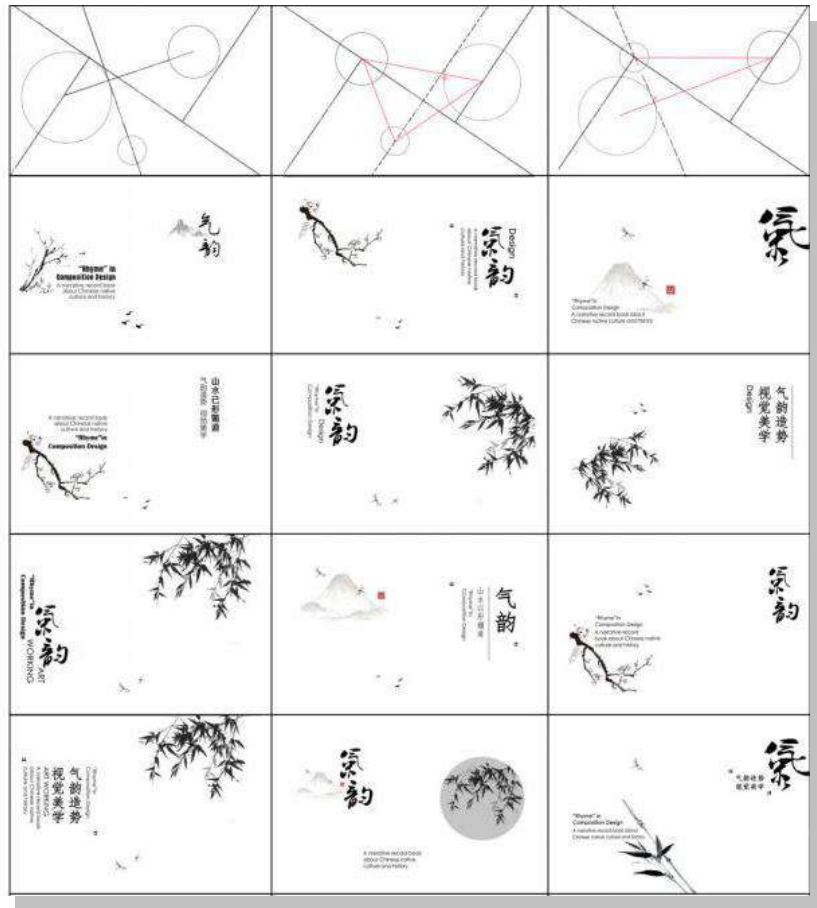


Figure 28. Testing different compositions using ink elements. Designer: Jiashu Li.

Figure 28: In the choice of elements, I tried to use some Chinese ink style fonts and graphics to match the theme, and in order to achieve the project's research purposes, so that the composition was not only based on one style element (i.e. Figure 27). At the same time, in order to better explain the rationale of hybrid composition and demonstrate its effects, I also chose to include Chinese fonts, English fonts and ink elements within the designs. In this iterative practice, I considered the limitation of the size of the circle (it represents the size of the element) in the hybrid composition which meant that the other elements in the design were also adjusted.



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As mentioned earlier, Müller-Brockmann published a book called *Grid Systems in Graphic Design*, which discusses in depth the application of a grid system in graphic design. The use of a grid as an ordered system implies systematisation and clarity, so this project attempts to use various methods to combine Chinese and Western grid systems. Each diagram has many possible ways to select areas that might contain text, and different ways to combine them. For example, if the lines of text follow a diagonal rather than a horizontal direction, the composition indicates the Chinese idea of balance and density relationship (Figure 29 & Figure 30). There are precedents for such cross-cultural combinations. Post-war Japanese Graphic Design practice would seem to have a potential resonance with the purpose of research in this project, as there is a close relationship, one that spans visual worlds, that is evident in the work of Shigeo Fukuda, Tadanori Yokoo, Ikko Tanaka. For example, in the handbook called *Awakening of design*<sup>42</sup>, Ikko Tanaka<sup>43</sup> outlines the ways that cultural changes have influenced all aspects of Japanese life, and design is no exception. In the Swiss design<sup>44</sup> centered on Müller-Brockmann, Tanaka argues that the relationship between words and pictures became more and more close. His works have absorbed this new design concept, and logic-based layout design has gradually appeared in Chinese characters and hiragana. Ikko Tanaka brings modern design concepts to Japanese traditional art, his art

<sup>42</sup> Ikko Tanaka, *Awakening of design* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2009), 31-42.

<sup>43</sup> Ikko Tanaka was a Japanese graphic designer, he created a style of graphic design that fused modernism principles and aesthetics with the Japanese tradition.

<sup>44</sup> Swiss design style, has been said International Typographic style, Due to the simple and clear style of the Swiss design, the communication function is accurate, so it is quickly recognized worldwide, becoming the most influential graphic design style after the war, and the most popular style in the world.

works have distinct personalities: elegance, purity and simplicity, and they combine traditional Eastern aesthetic concepts and Eastern and Western cultural characteristics (Figure 31).

**d r o n o' o y z w a x ( y p ( r o k z z w a k ( s y x y p k " o : ( o . x q . s n : 1 : ( o w ( y ( r s : z . y t o n t**

This project similarly combines elements of different cultures. It experiments with a large number of different hybrid composition designs, including text-based triangle compositions and picture-based Chinese ink painting composition. For example, in Figure 29, the content of the text is clearer, and the position of the picture highlights the theme, indicating that there is a possibility of coexistence in this hybrid form of Western and Eastern composition design. There are some hybrid design compositions, however, that are not feasible, such as those in Figure 30. In the final project it is shown which different hybrid compositions proved viable, and which did not.

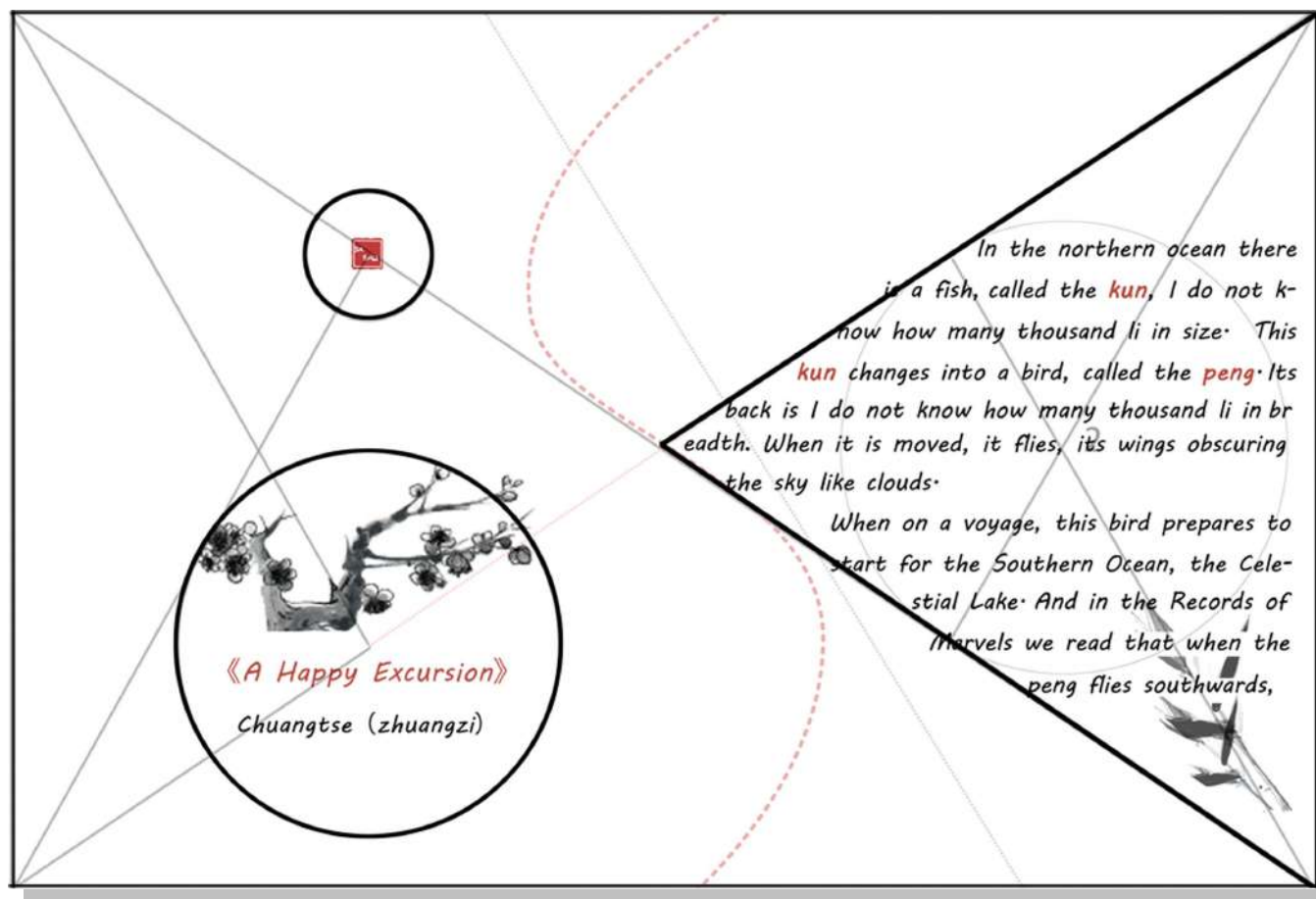


Figure 29. Testing the text content in the horizontal direction. Designer: Jiashu Li.

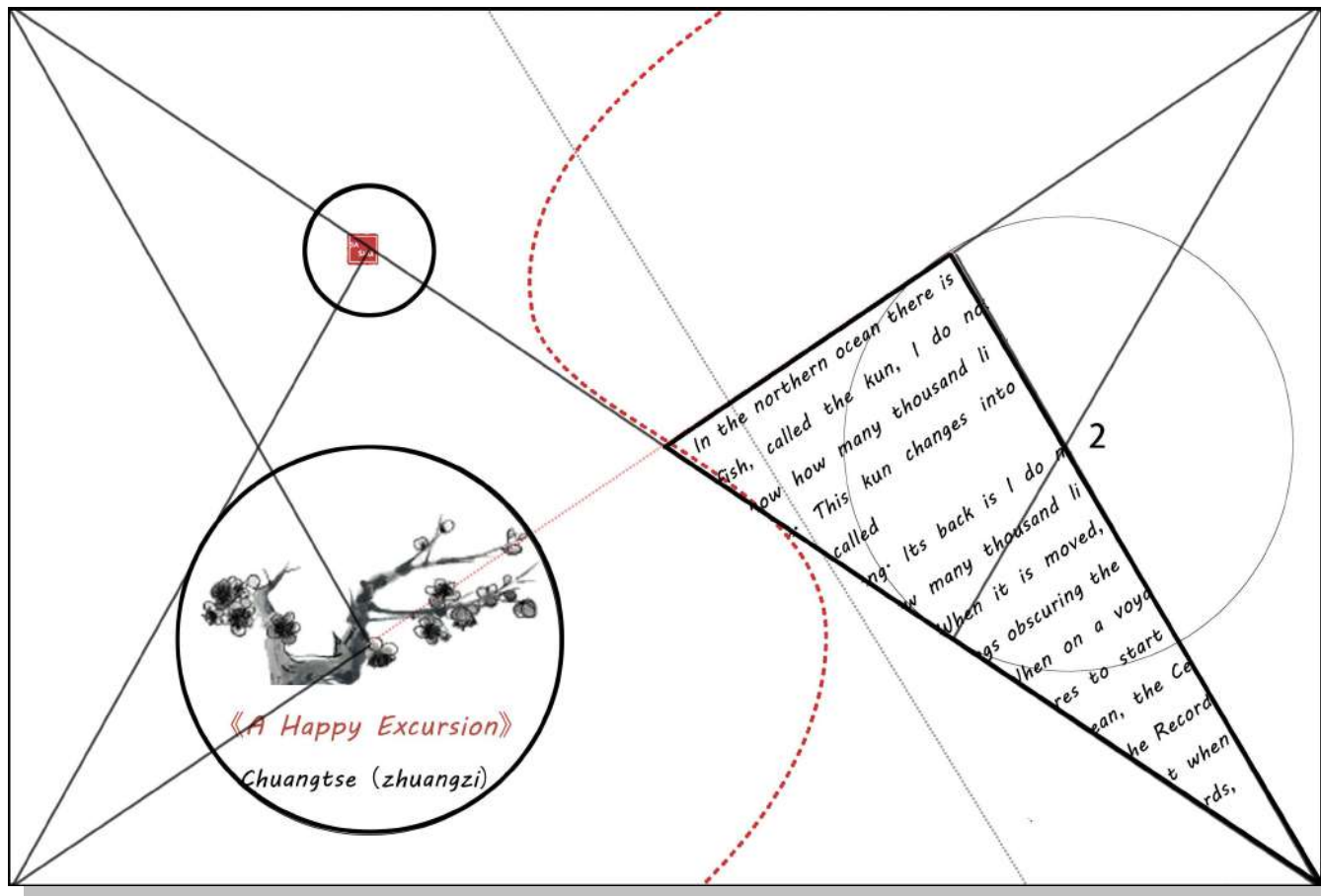


Figure 30. Hybrid form of diagonal and Chinese compositions. Designer: Jiashu Li.

Figure 29 and Figure 30: Based on the previous research results (see page 70), I only considered the circle in the compositional conceptual design theory to represent the position of the elements. In the development of this step, I used the triangle in the diagonal composition to show the position of the element and add text to the triangle.

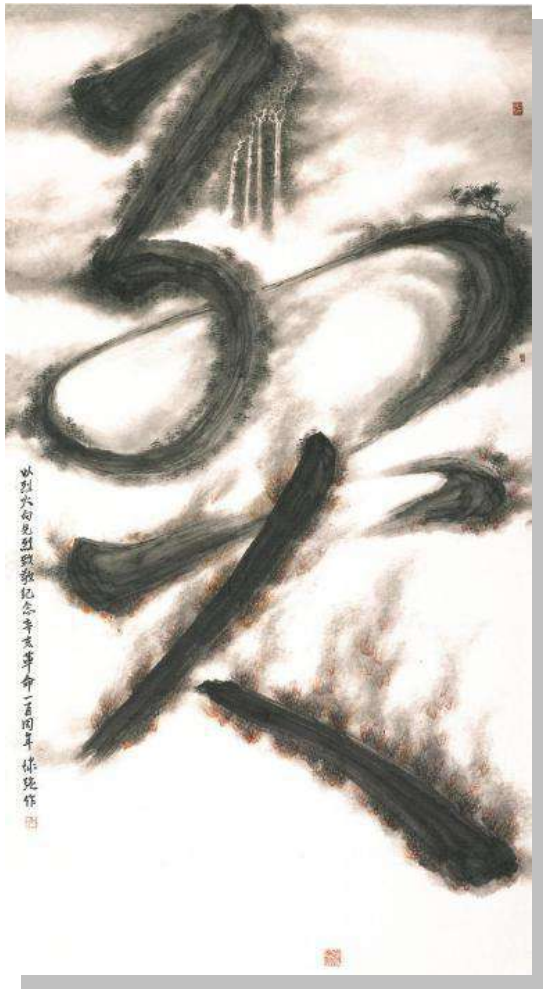


Figure 31. *Japanese dance* in 1981, length 1030mm, width 728mm, design by Ikko Tanaka, the picture is divided into four vertical divisions and three horizontal divisions, and then in the use of diagonal to form a triangle, square, circle, it only used the basic styling elements, but showing the dancer's rich expression.

## 6 Ds n) :: syx4F s n s x q: k x n b o:) v:

The influence of Chinese ink painting on modern Chinese graphic design is attributed to the extensive use of ink in the works of Hong Kong designer Kan Tai-Keung in the early 1980s (Figure 32). His art works embody the special visual beauty of Chinese ink painting. After that, many Chinese scholars have carried out theoretical analysis on the use of Chinese ink painting for reference and application to modern graphic design. Ding explained that ink painting is an important art form which is spreading in China; its expressive techniques and spiritual and cultural connotations have strong vitality and a great influence in modern graphic design.<sup>45</sup> Although many materials show that people pay more and more attention to Chinese ink painting, there are few theoretical studies, and few practice-based explorations. Therefore, this project carries out experimental research based on limited practical materials to provide an experimental basis for the composition research of Chinese ink painting.

<sup>45</sup> Ding Zhong, “中国水墨画对现代平面设计的影响” [The influence of Chinese ink painting on modern graphic design] (Master’s Thesis, Sichuan City Vocational College of Art and Design, 2017), 36-37. <http://kns.cnki.net/kns/detail/detail.aspx?FileName=YSPN201714019&DbName=CJFQ2017>



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Figure 32. "Fire," by designer Kan Tai-Keung



After the project was completed, it was found that the position of the three focal points in the twelve composition models could be changed, as mentioned in the compositional conceptual design theory. For example, in Figure 33-35, the position of the focal points in the conceptual model are designed according to the point of the diagonal composition, or designed according to the position of the diagonal focal points. The result makes two different compositions, nonetheless, the focal points of each layout are still related to each other, consistent with the concept of balance in the ink painting composition pattern. Another finding is that when the focal point of the compositional conceptual design model is designed according to different Western compositional models, the number of these will increase. This research finding can expand the compositional theory existing in Chinese ink painting, and also increases the applicability of multiple composition methods to modernist graphic design. It may also mean that more Chinese researchers can focus on the study of composition. My project stands in between Chinese and western cultures. This hybrid form of Western and Eastern design, has the potential to make contemporary design less limited to western composition, instead incorporating aspects of Chinese classical painting and philosophy. Thus, my research project can expand the field of Western graphic design.

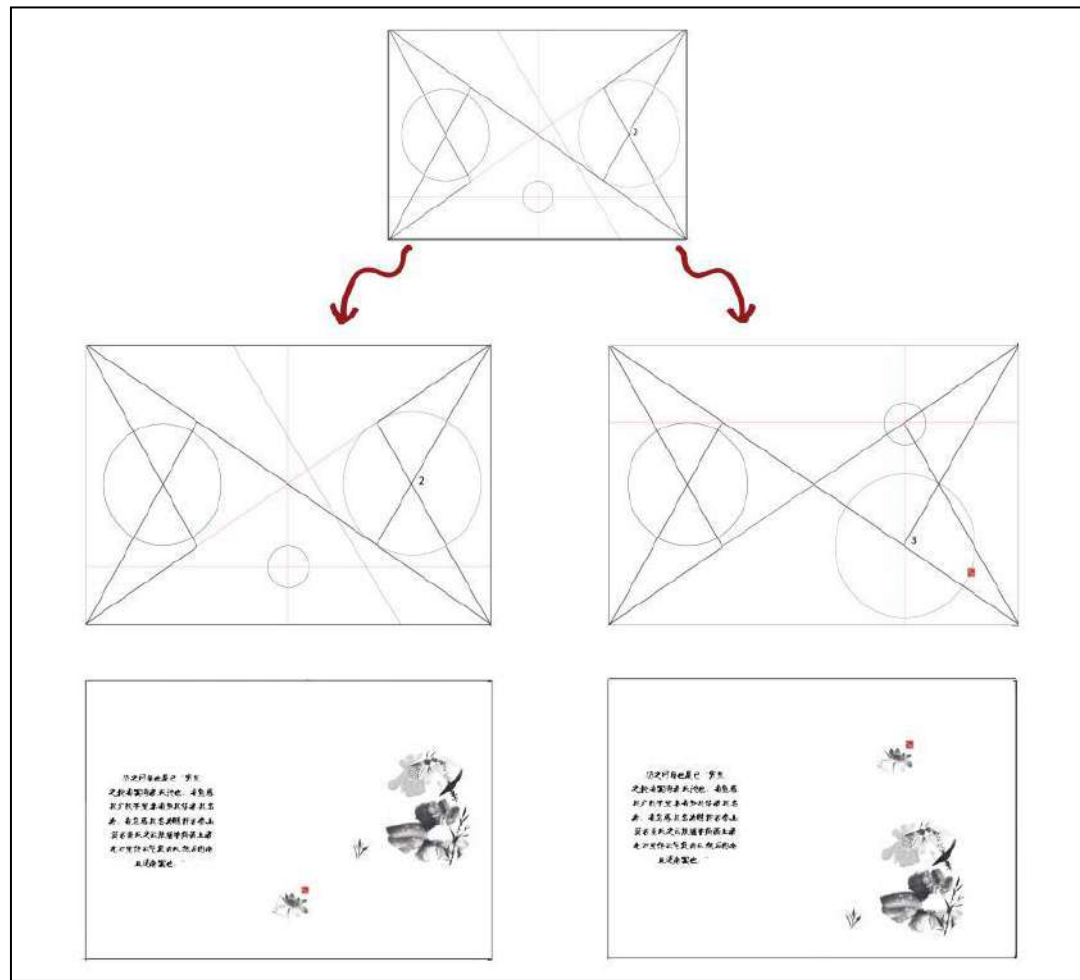


Figure 33 shows different iterations of the diagonal model in experiments I made for the book I created to test my theories. Designer: Jiashu Li.

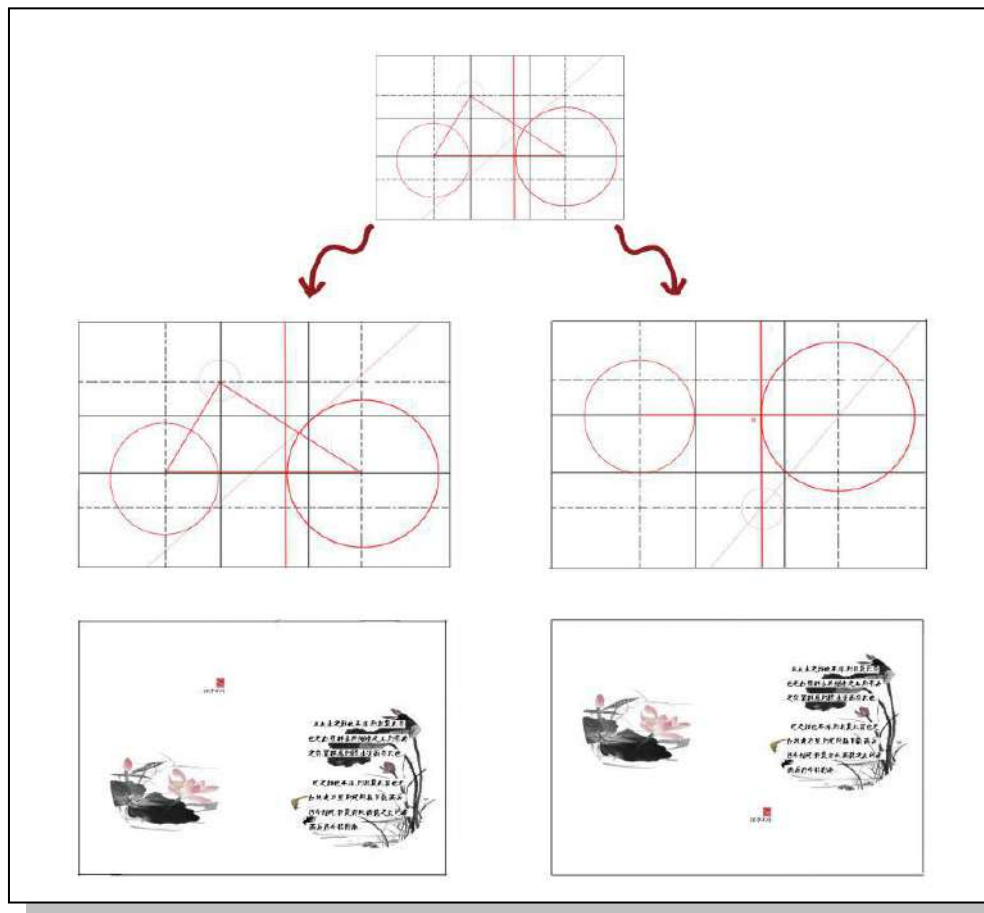


Figure 34. This shows further experiments, this time using the golden section model. Designer: Jiashu Li.

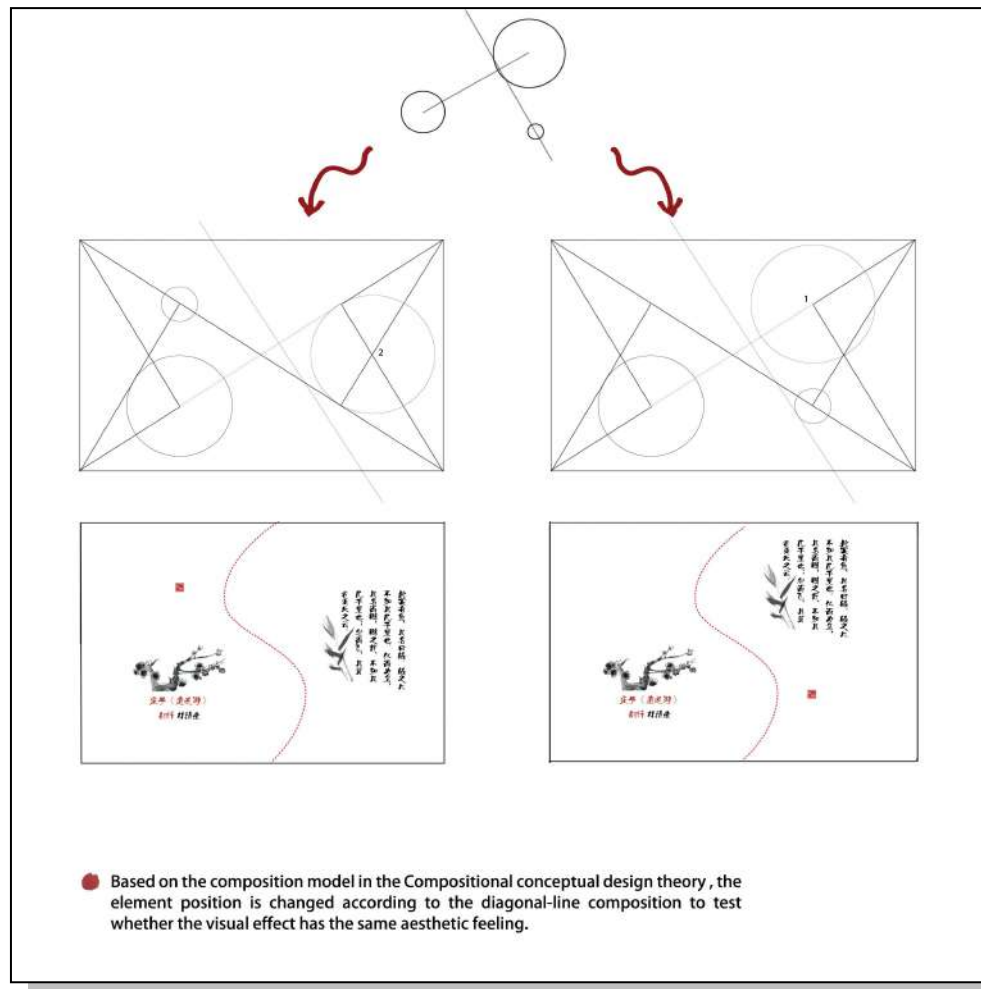


Figure 35. This shows how different versions of the diagonal composition relate to the original Chinese compositional theory. Designer: Jiashu Li.

In figures 33-35, I explored different compositions separately. Taking the hybrid diagonal composition (Figure 33) as an example, I adjusted the position of the elements in the composition, and the positions of the large and small elements are centered around the intersection of diagonals, so that there are still right triangles between the three elements, and then to further test the effect of this change, I incorporated text and graphics into the composition. By comparing the original hybrid composition with the adjusted hybrid composition, I found that the two compositions are reasonable, because they are both based on the Chinese compositional conceptual theory and Western composition.

Aiping suggests that the ink painting should be integrated into the concept of modern design.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, for the final exhibition, I chose to make a booklet by introducing a piece of Zhuangzi's "A Happy Excursion" as the display content (Figure 36), letting readers understand Zhuangzi's philosophical thinking and his influence on Chinese visual aesthetics. The design of ink elements echoes the content of the article; two different translations in Chinese and English are used to observe the composition more intuitively.

<sup>46</sup> Aiping Ma, "On the application of Chinese ink painting in graphic design," *Art Science and Technology*, 30 (2017): 12.

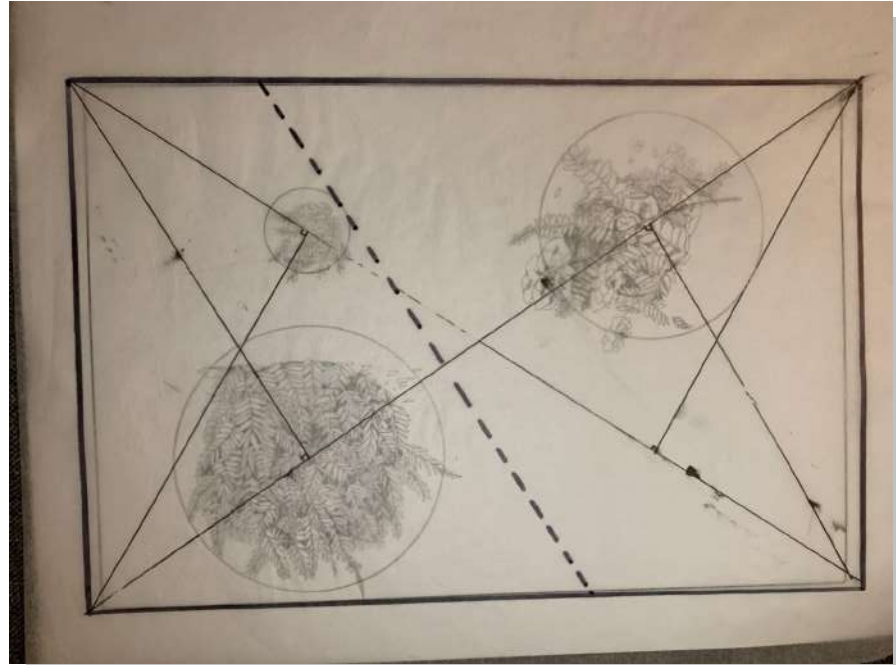
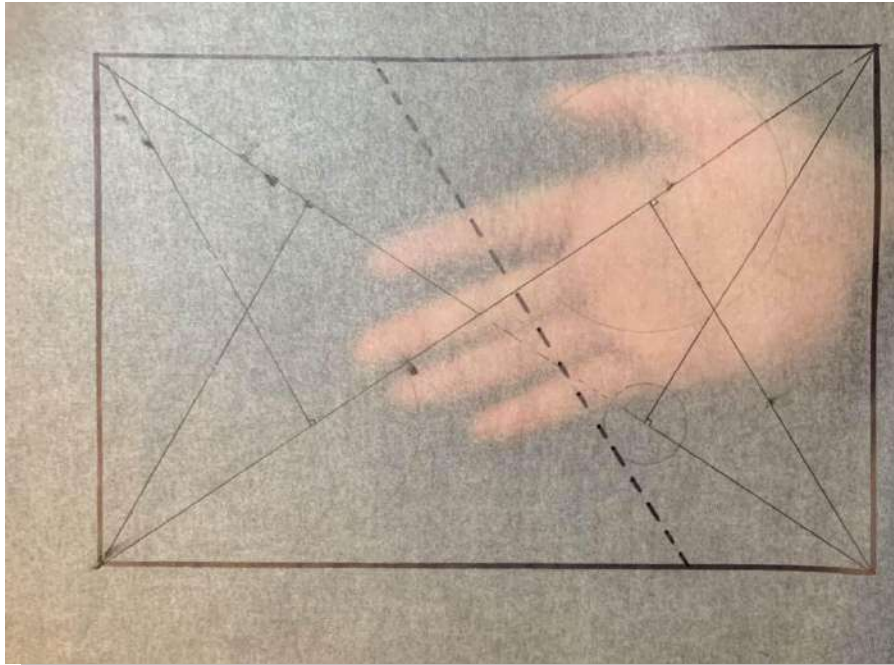


In Figure 36, the two different compositions are based on one hybrid composition model (see pages 73-75). In the hybrid composition of Chinese fonts, I chose a text box with a triangle in the diagonal composition, and considering the writing format has a top-down style in ancient China, I added this style to the typesetting of the text. In the English hybrid composition, the position of the text box is based on the Chinese compositional conceptual theory, this change makes the hybrid model run through the language, composition, text, graphics.



Figure 37. A final rendering of the booklet. Designer: Jiashu Li.





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Figure 38. The left single page uses translucent paper and the right single page displays text content. Designer: Jiashu Li.

In figure 37, I used Photoshop software to simulate the presentation of a booklet. In order to better demonstrate the hybrid composition, the translucent paper is used as the carrier material for the composition model. The plain paper displays the content and pictures of the article (Figure 38) using translucent paper to superimpose the compositional model over designed pages. This enables the reader to intuitively observe the visual perception brought about by the composition model.

In my opinion, a good graphic design work not only needs to consider composition, elements, etc., it is better practice to consider the relationship of culture and purpose of the project, as well as the ornamental value of the work itself. So how to balance all the factors in the composition and balance each other is an important issue. I combined text, pictures and composition, trying to show the potential of this hybrid model. I designed the book to demonstrate different compositional combinations, which took different combinations of composition. The Western compositional grid was the design inspiration and Chinese ink painting composition was the basis. This theory has been developed to a proof of concept stage. The focus is on the way the elements are composed rather than on the illustrations. One of the potential problems in the project is how to make the composition model integrate the text and image seamlessly. The two samples below (Figure 39-40) are representative of the final project.



Figure 39. The cover of the completed project. Designer: Jiashu Li.

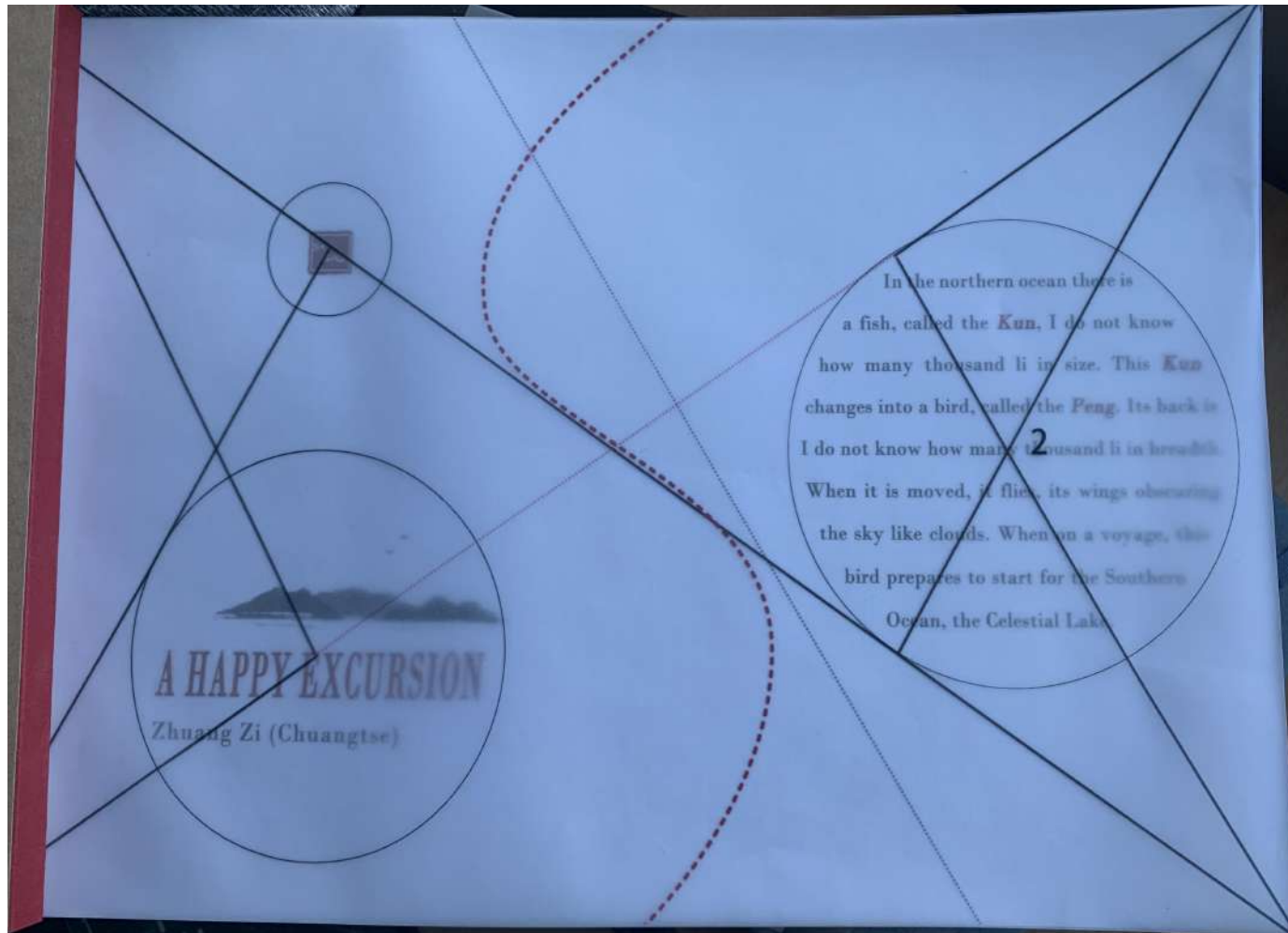


Figure 40. A page from the completed project. Designer: Jiashu Li.

In figures 39-40. In the final work, the cover is made of hard kraft paper, giving the design an ancient traditional color, as well as a hand-stitched binding method, making it similar to the ancient Chinese literati books. The contents of the booklet are in Chinese and English, echoing the purpose of the project, it shows the integration of different cultures.

## 6 结语 : syx

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Chinese art culture continues to offer much potential for contemporary designers: there are still many ancient art styles and design concepts worth exploring. In contemporary society there have been more and more Chinese researchers paying attention to traditional culture, and there are increasing numbers of design works integrating ink elements into modern graphic design. Art works combining art and modern design in this way create works that channel national culture. The compositional theory focused on in this project also deserves more attention, which is not only limited to theoretical discussion, but also needs more practical application. Through the practice of this project, I showed that the composition theory existing in Chinese ink painting can be used as an aid to Western composition. As digital technology brings cultures together, understanding the graphic language of another culture, and finding connections between it and ones own would seem to be increasingly important. This could be done in many ways, but composition is one, and the findings of my research could be applied not only to books and print, but also to the web and to apps. Certainly, I hope that through my practice I have demonstrated that such a fusion of compositional modes is feasible. And, overall, I hope that the research I have conducted can provide a practical and theoretical basis for researchers who pay more attention to Chinese traditional culture in the future.

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