

**Research project**

**Design and Intuition: An exploration of intuitive strategies  
for interior designing in China**

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

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 used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), 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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## **Abstract**

Most theories of intuition are psychologically or cognitively based rather than culturally focused; however, culture shapes the way we understand the world and intuition grows from this accumulated knowledge. This research investigates intuition in design and draws from traditional aesthetics, techniques, and values to explore and articulate strategies to enable a more contemporary and intuitive approach to interior design in China.

Design concepts constitute a fundamental element of artistic design and typically emerge through two seemingly conflicting approaches: intuitive and rational thinking. While rational thinking relies on explicit knowledge and is well-suited for logical reasoning, intuitive thinking draws from tacit knowledge, operating on an instinctive or subconscious level. In practice, intuitive thinking plays a crucial role in various stages of the design process, exerting a substantial influence on the ultimate impact of designs. Therefore, it is essential to understand how intuitive thinking can effectively be applied in the field of design.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Application of the theory of intuition in interior design

In the domain of interior design, the amalgamation of artistic ingenuity and utilitarian purpose converges and gives rise to spatial constructs that transcend mere physical forms. Within this intricate tapestry of creativity and function, intuition enigmatic force exerts its influence. While it is often subtle, yet profoundly transformative.

Intuition, operating as a cognitive phenomenon, materialises as an inherent capacity for swift and instinctual information processing and responses, empowering designers to make prompt decisions and design selections. Within the multifaceted landscape of interior design, intuition stands as the conduit through which designers gain direct insights, an ability to achieve immediate comprehension devoid of observation or rationalization. As Princeton University psychologist Daniel Kahneman asserts, intuitive thinking resembles perception—rapid and effortless—while deliberate thinking mirrors reasoning—scrutinising and analytical (Kahneman, cited in Myers, 2002). It simultaneously emerges as an inconspicuous orchestrator, steering design choices, sowing the seeds of innovative concepts, and infusing vitality into the concept and its realisation.

This thesis describes a journey, into the complex process of intuition within the realm of interior design, with a specific emphasis on its utilisation within the diverse and rich contexts of China. The cultural heritage of China, stretching over thousands of years, is a distinctive aesthetic tradition, with codified practices for every aspect of life, including interior design. This study aims to shed light on the harmonious dance that unfolds between design intuition and the unique cultural values, aesthetics, and traditions that form the essence of Chinese design. It goes beyond a simple investigation of intuitive technique, the goal is to explore how intuition interacts with these distinct elements and how it can extend and add to the character of the interior

design.

### **1.1.1 Defining Intuition in Interior Design**

Central to this exploration is the process of intuition. In the realm of interior design, intuition transcends mere instinctual hunches or fleeting gut feelings. It encompasses a range of intricate cognitive processes, including the recognition of patterns, unspoken knowledge, experiential insights, and an innate grasp of spatial relationships. This intuitive acumen operates beneath the surface, guiding designers through the labyrinthine choices of materials, colour palettes, spatial configurations, and ultimately, the multitude of decisions culminating in cohesive and functional interior spaces. It's worth noting that the concept of intuition has sparked debates within academic circles. Office (2005) underscores the difficulty in pinning down a precise definition of intuition, while concurrently acknowledging its integral role in thinking and decision-making. Brietenberg (2017) accentuates the opinion that some view intuition as the exclusive source of innovative designs, while others remain unconvinced of its practicality. It's undeniable that intuitive design without subsequent critical reflection can yield unfavorable outcomes. Intuitive decisions that undergo analytical scrutiny in line with predefined criteria can lead to original design strategies and outcomes.

The presence of intuition within design is neither novel nor exclusive to any culture. Intuition is a crucial checkpoint in human decision-making (Myers, 2002). It's the ubiquitous underpinning that shapes design results across diverse cultures. The application of intuitive strategies is profoundly framed by cultural contexts, engendering an interplay between intrinsic cognitive processes and distinct cultural traditions. This interplay takes on an absorbing dimension, drawing from centuries-old philosophical roots, artistic heritage, and deeply ingrained traditions of Chinese culture.

Indeed, intuition's role in design transcends temporal and spatial boundaries, constituting a fundamental strand woven into the fabric of human creativity and

cognition.

### **1.1.2 Cultural Values, Aesthetics and Intuitive Strategies**

China's rich cultural values and aesthetics provide a diverse and vibrant backdrop for the world of interior design. In Chinese philosophy, the principles of harmony and balance are an integral part of the design process. This has given rise to intuitive strategies that extend beyond mere practicality to capture the emotional essence of spaces. A prime example in this context is Feng Shui, a practice with origins dating back to ancient times. The earliest recorded mention of Feng Shui can be found in Guo Pu's "Cangshu" or "Book of Burial" from 276-324 AD, marking a significant moment in its historical documentation (Magli, 2019). Feng Shui covers the theory of yin and yang, the doctrine of gossip, and the concept of qi. While the yin and yang theory represents the interplay between opposing forces, the doctrine of gossip embodies the careful balance of substance interaction. The qi concept comes to life in the synchronisation of time, place, and people (Choi, 2013). Meanwhile, Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese tradition with deep cultural and historical roots (Lam, 2009), impacting all facets of life, from city planning to mental well-being, and reflecting the belief in the interconnectedness of humans and nature. In interior design, Feng Shui directs the layout of spaces, the selection of colors and materials, and the positioning of objects (Morris, 2015) to enhance positive energy and harmony. A guiding principle for design decisions. Designers deftly balance different elements, creating spaces that emanate a strong sense of unity.

Cultural symbolism, another facet of intuition-driven design, adds further depth. Time-honoured symbols like the dragon, phoenix, or lotus are seamlessly incorporated into design elements, infusing spaces with meanings that hold cultural significance. This intuitive integration of symbols evokes echoes of ancient imperial palaces where such motifs carried weight (He, 2023). Guided by intuition, designers skillfully weave these symbols into the design narrative, imbuing spaces with layers of meaning and a profound cultural identity. The dragon, symbolis power and prosperity, and the phoenix,

renewal, and elegance. They converge harmoniously within design choices, paying homage to a cultural heritage that spans generations.

Ultimately, China's vibrant cultural fabric breathes vitality into intuitive design strategies. Within this dynamic interplay, contemporary interior designers navigate intuitively, drawing from both timeless wisdom and contemporary perspectives. The result is spaces that not only function effectively but also deeply resonate with the essence of Chinese culture.

### **1.1.3 Tradition and Modernity: An Intuitive Symbiosis**

A distinctive feature of contemporary Chinese interior design is the interplay between tradition and modernity.

#### **1.1.3.1 The formal use of traditional cultural elements in interior design**

Interior designers, in the process of designing interiors, often describe and shape the colour, texture, structure, and layout of the interior according to their own aesthetic orientation and professional design knowledge, which can be enhanced using traditional cultural ideas (Yi, 2008). In the process of interior designing, Chinese designers often dig deeply into their traditional culture and historical heritage to create innovative design works in line with Chinese characteristics.

While designers carry out interior design, they often consider the cultural context and background along with the traditional and regional culture, and reasonably integrate them into the design to "make the design more compelling."

A sense of connection is needed to achieve "integration of matter and mind." (Yi, 2008).

### **1.1.3.2 The use of traditional cultural elements in interior design content**

The considered use of traditional cultural symbols can make interior decoration more meaningful. As these graphic symbols developed, their content changed. Layering and combining the contents of these elements and symbols and using them appropriately in interior furniture, surfaces, furnishings, artwork, doors, patterns, windows, screens, and partitions can enhance the artistic sense of the entire interior space. These elements and symbols can be used both directly and indirectly, in the amplification, re-organisation and refinement of interior space, along with the use of advanced design technologies, and new decorative materials, to achieve innovation in the integration of traditional cultural content indoors.

The use of colour in interior design is one of the most important factors. Colour can improve the texture and comfort of an interior design. Therefore, in the design of spatial layout and spatial organization, it is necessary to consider the effect of colour.

### **1.1.3.3 Interior design incorporates traditional Chinese cultural heritage.**

Hundreds of years of social and historical development have formed a unique and complex traditional culture. This rich historical background has given rise to diverse interior design styles, and numerous design methods. Traditional culture has a certain influence on contemporary Chinese interior design, and culture is the cornerstone of design principles. Some interior design solutions in China combine traditional Chinese culture with modern style, which is the so-called new Chinese design style (a commonly used design style in China, a new era of revival of Chinese traditional culture). For example, in interior design, furniture matching is a combination of classical furniture or modern and classical furniture.

## **1.2 Experiments on the Application of Intuition in Interior Design**

Intuition plays a pivotal role in the creative process (Policastro, 1999), yet a consensus regarding its mechanics and definition remains elusive (Bastick, 2003). This ambiguity extends from the conceptualisation of intuition to its practical cultivation. However,

without a clear grasp of the nature of intuition, its effective application in interior design becomes a challenge. How can one harness and cultivate a phenomenon if its occurrence remains unrecognised?

Early on, the enigma surrounding intuition gave rise to mystification (Atkinson & Claxton, 2003). However, such mystification doesn't seamlessly align with interior design. Postmodernists contend that intuitive truths hold their validity in complex mental landscapes, whereas rational analysis delineates truth (Myers, 2002). It can be seen from this that rational analysis is the primary factor in intuitive thinking. Meanwhile, the crux of this project lies in creating spontaneously from simple, easily accessible materials while seamlessly weaving in distinctive Chinese elements – materials, symbols, and techniques. The end goal is to manifest these designs within interior spaces, granting them a unique and non-traditional yet culturally resonant style.

The intent of the research is to explore the impact of intuition on interior design, exploring how everyday objects can be reimaged through a contemporary, intuitive direct and compelling design lens. The objective is to let intuition guide aspects of the design process. Accomplished interior designers achieve success due to their experience and ability to distil their work and synthesise it. Consequently, while the emergence of intuition in the design process is a phenomenon that is common to all designers experienced each designer's intuition varies with each design. This discrepancy arises from their diverse experiences, causing the intuition of the designer to differ to a greater or lesser extent.

This study predominantly employs a fusion of Chinese pigments, ink, traditional paper, fabric, and thread, culminating in a novel physical manifestation that expresses intuitive compositions for indoor settings.

Interior design transcends mere colour and material variations; its depth arises from the layering and fusion of elements and symbols in the intricate details. This integration

can be applied to interior furniture, book design, wall surfaces, decorative arts, and door modelling. Traditional patterns and art windows, screens, and partitions can be incorporated, accentuating the artistic ambiance of the interior space. These elements and symbols offer both direct and indirect possibilities, fostering innovation through magnification, segmentation, methodical re-organisation, abstraction, and other refinements. Design technology and novel decorative materials further amplify innovation in the infusion of traditional cultural content into interior spaces.

As contemporary society progresses, many Chinese interior designs have assimilated international standards, inadvertently shedding their distinct Chinese characteristics. This master's research endeavors to harmonise intuitive expression with diverse materials, culminating in design experiments primed for application in interior design. It represents a cornerstone of this study.

This research underscores the often-overlooked aspect of surprise that imbues everyday objects. The effect can be astonishingly beautiful through seemingly casual combinations. This research suggests that if an interior designer combines a curiosity in their daily life along with a diligent focus on detail it can pave the way for a more profound integration of intuitive thinking.

In essence, this research explores the role of intuition in design, drawing inspiration from traditional aesthetics, techniques, and values to reveal strategies for a more contemporary and intuitive approach to interior design. Design concepts, fundamental to artistic design, are typically shaped by intuitive thinking and rational thinking, two seemingly opposing methods. The latter, driven by explicit knowledge, is well-suited for logical tasks, while intuitive thinking relies on tacit knowledge, as it employs an instinctive or subconscious approach. Intuitive thinking significantly influences various stages of the design process, emerging as a crucial element in determining the final design outcome. Therefore, the application of intuitive thinking in design work is paramount.

In this master's study, through my design experiments, I have endeavored to integrate commonly used materials with interior design. Guided by the concept "from life to life" (Tolstoy, 2023) I have applied my intuition in these experiments, showcasing the results to enhance their applicability in indoor spaces. The research emphasises that intuitive thinking is an indispensable facet of design thinking, expediting designers to attain greater design heights and thereby improve the impact of their design. The seven experiments I conducted involved the amalgamation of traditional Chinese materials with other objects, revealing the inevitable connection between intuitive thinking and interior design, particularly in the context of interior design techniques by Chinese interior designers.

## 2. Literature review

Interior design goes beyond mere decoration, seeking to enhance indoor spaces by blending functionality and aesthetics, with a profound impact on people's emotional well-being (Ching & Binggeli, 2018). Throughout the creative journey of the interior designer, intuition takes center stage as an indispensable compass, guiding the designer through an intricate maze of choices and decisions. To understand and further the unique nature of Chinese interior design, this project explores the value of taking an intuitive approach. It aims to reveal the influence of a vibrant Chinese cultural context that illuminates the intricate connections that leave a lasting impression on the practice. Chinese designers can skillfully blend the traditional with the contemporary, guided by their intuition, to enliven unique interior spaces. This review investigates various theories of intuition, approaches taken by leading Chinese designers and how they have utilised different intuitive approaches.

Defining intuition is challenging, yet it is widely acknowledged as a crucial element in thought and judgment for most individuals. (Officer, 2005). Hogarth (2001) describes intuition as an automatic processing of information that operates outside of our conscious awareness, working memory, and often our attention. It is heavily influenced by a person's unique life experiences. Additionally, intuition is closely connected to emotions (Hogarth, 2001 Dane & Pratt, 2006). As part of the subconscious or tacit system, intuition is not always consciously accessible (Hogarth, 2001). Nevertheless, it allows individuals to gain insight into the complexities of systems. In the field of interior design, many decisions are made intuitively, even though the process of reaching a solution can be rationalised. Intuition is inherently linked to our incidental experiences, memories, and implicit thoughts. Design intuition draws upon the entire breadth of designers' experiences, not solely on the relevant information they consciously isolate (Solovyova, 2008).

Koryate places significant trust in the intuition that guides human behavior,

emphasising that people tend to unquestioningly rely on their metacognitive judgments and intuitions. They often assume the validity of their cognitive senses and use these feelings as the basis for their actions (Koriat, 2000). In the realm of design, intuition is regarded as a mysterious phenomenon (Officer, 2005) and has been conceptualised in various ways, one of which is to view intuition as a form of tacit knowledge derived from experience and practice. Designers engage with design problems repeatedly, extracting experiences and integrating them with reality to solve other design challenges. This process generates a series of intuitive reactions, which are characterised by their intuitive, rapid, and efficient nature. However, it is important to note that these quick and efficient methods are not the result of conscious deliberation or decision-making.

Another perspective on intuition in design focuses on pattern recognition. Intuition refers to our capacity to obtain direct knowledge, enabling immediate insights without the need for observation or reasoning. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman from Princeton University describes intuitive thinking as perception—rapid and effortless (Kahneman, 2002). In contrast, deliberative thinking resembles reasoning—critical and analytical. Designers cultivate an intuitive ability to recognise patterns within design problems and draw from their past design experiences. This pattern recognition aids in identifying similarities, analogies, and solutions that may not be readily apparent through rational analysis.

Numerous theories and models have been suggested to elucidate the essence and workings of design intuition. These theories offer a structure for comprehending the utilisation of intuition by designers in the creative process. Key theories and models of intuition include:

Bounded Rationality Theory, introduced by Herbert Simon (1990), focuses on the rational choices made by decision makers while considering their cognitive limitations, such as restricted knowledge and computational abilities. This theory, central to the

behavioral approach in economics, examines how actual decision-making processes impact the decisions reached. According to bounded rationality, designers rely on simplified mental models to navigate the expansive design space and arrive at satisfactory solutions. Intuition assists designers in making quick and adaptable decisions within the confines of their cognitive resources.

The Recognition-Primed Decision-Making (RPD) model, proposed by Gary Klein (1993), asserts that intuitive decision-making occurs through the recognition of patterns and retrieval of relevant past experiences. Designers leverage a wealth of design examples and prior problem-solving experiences to identify patterns and make intuitive choices. The RPD model emphasises the significance of expertise and the rapid generation of mental simulations to support intuitive design decisions.

The dual-process theory outlined by Groves and Thompson resonates with my understanding of design intuition. It is consistent with the view that intuition is not simply a product of subconscious or automatic thinking, it involves a duality that includes both intuitive and analytical processes (Groves & Thompson, 1970). In design, the intuitive aspect relies on the rapid recognition of patterns and the use of heuristics to make quick, almost instinctive decisions. This is consistent with the concept that intuition often serves as a starting point, helping designers quickly address complex design challenges. However, what is particularly important about the theory is its recognition of the complementary relationship between intuition and analytical thinking in the design process. It recognises that intuition can provide valuable insights and initial solutions, which can then be analysed more systematically and thoughtfully. This dual-process approach emphasises the importance of combining intuition and analytical thinking to arrive at comprehensive and effective design solutions, a perspective I firmly support as it relates to design.

At the same time, intuition holds a crucial role within the realm of Chinese interior design. It serves as a fundamental tool for infusing these spaces with cultural

authenticity and aesthetic allure. With deep roots in cultural elements, Chinese interior design intuitively bridges the traditional and contemporary, allowing designers to seamlessly integrate cultural symbols, colour symbolism, and traditional craftsmanship into their creations. The outcome is spaces that not only possess visual appeal, these spaces also carry profound cultural significance. Intuition, as the linchpin for comprehending and interpreting these cultural facets, empowers designers to craft interiors that harmonise with the essence of Chinese culture while accommodating modern demands. Thus, intuition remains an enduring and fundamental instrument to achieve harmony, balance, and a deep connection with nature in the context of Chinese interior design.

Nonetheless, much like designers worldwide, Chinese interior designers possess the remarkable ability to approach intricate and ambiguous projects with optimism and confidence, adapting to evolving constraints, and rendering real-time aesthetic judgments based on intuition. Furthermore, they rely on intuitive strategies to navigate the complexities of their profession. In the field of Chinese interior design, the capacity to swiftly generate design concepts, discern patterns, and harness experiential wisdom assumes particular significance.

Chinese interior design is influenced by cultural and aesthetic traditions, such as the principles of feng shui harmony and the balance of yin and yang. Chinese designers make ample use of "Wu,"( 无 , It does not refer to a design behavior or design performance, it refers to a design concept, which is a moderate design that respects people and nature under the guidance of the Eastern philosophical concept of "nothing".) and it refers to intuitive imagination through metaphors. It is the process of exploration, creation, and discovery. In this context, intuition (heuristic) serves as the process, imagination (via metaphor) acts as the mechanism, and insight is the outcome. Intuition based on "Wu" constitutes the core process of creative cognition, encompassing gradual and sudden sub-processes, as well as conscious and subconscious subprocesses (Pretz & Totz, 2007). Additionally, intuition plays a vital

role in aligning design with cultural values as designers rely on their understanding of cultural symbolism, spatial arrangement, and energy flow. Intuitive strategies enable designers to create harmonious and culturally resonant interior spaces.

Furthermore, theories and models of design intuition can serve as a reference for the education and training of Chinese interior designers. By recognising the significance of intuition and integrating it into design curricula, educators can nurture and cultivate the intuitive abilities of designers. Placing emphasis on intuition enhances their design expertise and enables them to develop innovative and culturally sensitive interior designs.

In conclusion, the literature explores various concepts of intuition in design, highlighting its role as a non-analytical mode of thinking that involves pattern recognition and expertise. Theories and models such as bounded rationality, cognition-guided decision-making, and dual-process theory elucidate the mechanisms underlying the intuitive design process. These theoretical frameworks are applicable to the field of interior design in China, where intuition aids in merging design with cultural traditions to create harmonious interior space.

## **2.1 Intuitive strategies in interior design**

Intuitive Strategies in Interior Design encompass a variety of techniques employed by designers to develop functional, visually appealing, and user-centered spaces. These strategies are employed in all stages of the design process, including ideation, spatial organisation, material selection, and consideration of user needs. For instance, Ieoh Ming Pei's interior design for the Suzhou Museum in China exemplifies an effective use of intuitive strategies in interior design. First, ideation: Pei instinctively employs sensory elements to create meaningful and captivating environments. As such considerations including colour, lighting, texture, and acoustics are considered to evoke sensory experiences and influence the mood and well-being of users. Second, spatial organisation since intuitive spatial configuration involves the designer's skill in

manipulating space, form, and layout to optimise functionality and enhance the user experience. Factors including spatial flow, proportions suitable for human scale, and the arrangement of elements are carefully considered to establish harmonious and intuitive spatial arrangements. Third, material selection: user-centered design plays a significant role in intuitive interior design strategies. Designers have a natural understanding of users, considering their behaviors, desires, and cultural context, thereby creating spaces that meet their needs and enhance their overall experience.

Additionally, consideration of user experience: the selection of materials and textures is approached intuitively. Designers consider the tactile qualities of materials, instinctively choosing those that contribute to the desired atmosphere and convey the intended user experience. They pay attention to both visual and tactile aspects, aiming to create a cohesive sensory environment. These intuitive and practical approaches are applicable across various fields, including residential, commercial, hospitality, and healthcare spaces.

The Chinese Folk Art Museum, designed by Kengo Kuma, offers another illustrative case. This distinctive museum structure takes on a unique form, harmonising with the mountain landscape, resembling the fluidity of clouds and water. Throughout the museum, encompassing both its exterior and interior spaces, a colour scheme dominated by black, white, and gray has been thoughtfully selected. Within the museum's interior, one frequently encounters traditional Chinese artistic elements, including items like Chinese calligraphy, paintings, screens, and ceramics, which serve as a means of showcasing the abundant history and artistic achievements of Chinese culture. The prevalent use of wooden furnishings is a homage to traditional Chinese craftsmanship and design, with finely carved wooden chairs and tables contributing an authentic touch to the museum's internal spaces.

Concurrently, the museum has meticulously designed its exhibition layout to mirror the

progression of Chinese history and culture. Exhibits can be structured either in a chronological or thematic manner, offering visitors the opportunity to delve into diverse facets of Chinese folk art. The utilisation of natural materials, such as bamboo, silk, and stone is commonplace in the realm of interior design, fostering a sense of harmony and equilibrium in line with traditional Chinese principles. Furthermore, certain areas incorporate traditional Chinese paper lanterns and distinct lighting fixtures, creating a warm and inviting ambiance throughout the museum.

An additional layer of significance is added through the integration of Feng Shui principles into the interior design, ensuring that the space emanates positive energy and remains in tune with nature. Evidently, these thoughtfully chosen design elements within the Chinese Folk Art Museum work in harmony to provide a comprehensive and culturally immersive encounter for museum visitors, enabling them to delve into the splendor of Chinese folk art.

Inside, the museum's interior design showcases various aspects of Chinese life and culture, drawing inspiration from the country's rich heritage of crafts such as woodwork, painting, ceramics, weaving, printing and dyeing, and shadow puppetry. It serves as a repository of traditional Chinese wisdom, reflecting the nation's material civilisation and unique way of life, where tea and rice are staple foods, hemp and silk are used for clothing, bamboo and pottery are essential materials, and forests and springs are cherished residential resources. The overall concept revolves around preserving, revitalising, and perpetuating Chinese handicraft culture. It aims to reconstruct the oriental design system and cultural production in the context of globalisation, thus promoting and extending Chinese aesthetic values and cultural spirit to contemporary life.

The intuitive approaches employed in interior design are deeply influenced by the cultural context and aesthetics, and the Chinese design context possesses its own

distinctive impact. An exemplary case illustrating this is the renowned Chinese designer Wang Shu's masterpiece, Shui'an Shanju, situated in the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, China. This architectural marvel features a wavy black tile roof and yellow earth walls, reminiscent of a water town (Water town is a Chinese description of a place with a rich and abundant environment like a landscape painting, with mountains and water. In China it also refers to Watery Towns in Southern China) blended with the charm of a mountain village, while maintaining a contemporary appeal through its clean lines and dynamic spaces. Within the interior design, the designer skillfully utilises Fengshui principles—a significant aspect of Chinese culture. In traditional Chinese Fengshui, an auspicious building must harmonise with its surroundings ("mountains and rivers") to enhance luck and well-being. The interior is thoughtfully divided into multiple rooms, each serving distinct functions, and the varying visual and spatial experiences encountered during movement contribute to an overall "landscape" within the design. In essence, the designer instinctively integrates Feng Shui principles into the design process, considering factors like spatial arrangement, energy flow, and the incorporation of symbolic elements.

Moreover, cultural aesthetics and symbolism hold vital roles in shaping intuitive strategies within Chinese interior design. Designers are culturally and instinctively led to choose colours, materials, and patterns that hold cultural significance, evoking a profound connection with nature and crafting spaces that resonate with Chinese cultural values.

Within it's the Suzhou Museum, the Folk Art Museum, and the Shui'an Mountain Area, Chinese culture is seamlessly interwoven into these designs. Over the course of extensive cultural accumulation and influence, designers gain a deeper understanding of Chinese design elements and unique approaches, thereby creating a distinctive design identity that embodies a distinctly Chinese aesthetic and philosophy. This foundation allows for an exploration of the distinctiveness of intuitive strategies in

Chinese interior design and their profound impact on the resulting design outcomes.

## **2.2 Cultural influence on interior design in China**

'Intuition,' as defined by Wilder in 1967, refers to the accumulation of attitudes, comprising beliefs and opinions, that are shaped by a combination of personal and cultural experiences (Wilder, 1967). Nevertheless, most formal theories on intuition tend to focus on psychological or cognitive aspects rather than cultural dimensions.

Cultural knowledge forms the fundamental framework for the way individuals comprehend and interpret the world, and it influences their perceptions and responses to various situations. Personal and collective experiences contribute to the refinement and adaptation of this cultural knowledge. They provide firsthand evidence of cultural principles in practice, either reinforcing established beliefs or, in some instances, challenging them.

Intuition, in essence, draws upon this amassed knowledge and experience to assist individuals in making swift, often unconscious judgments or decisions. It is malleable, shaped by both cultural norms and personal experiences, facilitating individuals in navigating their social and physical surroundings.

It's essential to recognise that the interplay between these factors can significantly differ from one person to another. Diverse individuals may possess distinct cultural backgrounds, experiences, and intuitions, resulting in a variety of perspectives and decision-making processes. Moreover, the degree to which individuals rely on intuition versus rational thinking can also vary, influenced by their unique dispositions and the specific context they encounter.

The process of enculturation assumes a pivotal role in molding designers' knowledge and intuition. It enables them to assimilate cultural elements seamlessly into their work. In the realm of Chinese interior design, this process holds particular significance, as it

entails the absorption of a rich cultural heritage into a designer's tacit knowledge. Diverse background conditions during the cultural adaptation process can lead designers to assimilate distinct factors, ultimately enriching their intuitive design strategies. These background conditions encompass the impact of Chinese culture on interior design, the application of intuitive design strategies, and the fusion of traditional culture and modernity.

### **2.2.1 Relationship Between Cultural Knowledge and Intuition in Design**

The relationship between cultural knowledge and intuition in design is a complex and symbiotic one, especially while considering creating culturally resonant spaces (Macaulay et al., 2000). Different relationships arise, such as cultural knowledge as a basis, influence on design choices, intuitive design strategies, interaction with personal experience, intuition as a cultural filter, diverse perspectives and the balance of intuition and rationality.

#### **Cultural Knowledge as a Foundation**

Cultural knowledge serves as the foundational cornerstone in design, necessitating a profound understanding of a culture's historical context, traditions, and customs. It involves delving into the annals of history to fathom the evolution of art, architecture, and design within that culture, allowing designers to reference, reinterpret, or challenge historical design elements in contemporary settings. This knowledge extends to symbolism, aesthetics, and architectural heritage, where designers must be fluent in the symbolism of colours, symbols, and patterns, as well as the unique aesthetic principles that guide notions of beauty, proportion, and balance. Additionally, a comprehensive understanding of architectural styles that hold historical significance within the culture is vital. Spatial considerations, ethical values, and user experience are also integral to cultural knowledge, requiring designers to comprehend the preferences for spatial arrangements, furniture placement, and room layouts within different cultures, and to be aware of that which is considered respectful and appropriate in terms of communal spaces, furniture arrangement, and the use of symbols or art with cultural or religious

significance. Ultimately, cultural knowledge is about enhancing the user's experience by understanding how people from a particular culture interact with their environment, ensuring that designs are not only functional they are also deeply meaningful and culturally resonant, effectively communicating with the intended audience.

### **Influence on Design Choices**

Influence on design choices is a multifaceted process driven by a myriad of factors that collectively shape the outcome of a design project. Cultural influences play a pivotal role, as they imbue designs with the essence of a specific cultural context, informing choices related to color, symbolism, spatial arrangements, and aesthetics. Architectural traditions and historical references also influence design choices, guiding decisions regarding structural elements, materials, and decorative details. Moreover, the intended purpose of a space, whether it is a communal gathering place, or a private residence, profoundly impacts design choices by dictating the spatial layout, furniture selection, and overall ambiance. Environmental and sustainability considerations increasingly influence design choices, promoting the use of eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient solutions. Furthermore, technological advancements have revolutionised design, enabling innovative choices in lighting, automation, and material applications. Ultimately, the interplay of these factors, in conjunction with the designer's creative vision and the unique needs of the client, harmoniously shapes the holistic tapestry of design choices, resulting in spaces that are not only functional and aesthetically pleasing they are also culturally resonant and environmentally responsible.

### **Intuitive Design Strategies**

Intuitive design strategies represent a dynamic and innovative approach to the creative process, rooted in the designer's ability to draw from accumulated knowledge, both personal and cultural, to make swift, often subconscious judgments. These strategies encapsulate an intricate dance between the designer's internalised cultural influences, artistic sensibilities, and the specific requirements of a project. They integrate historical

and cultural references, draw from architectural traditions, symbolic meanings, and aesthetic principles, to craft designs that are not merely functional, they resonate with a profound cultural and historical context. The use of colour, spatial arrangements, and materials is guided by an intuitive understanding of the way these elements elicit emotions and convey meaning within a given culture. This intuitive design process, while deeply rooted in tradition, is also forward-looking, adept at incorporating modern technologies, sustainable practices, and contemporary sensibilities. It is a fluid, adaptive, and deeply personalised method of creation, ultimately resulting in spaces that encapsulate the essence of a culture, evoke emotions, and serve the needs of the contemporary world.

### **Interplay with Personal Experiences**

The interplay with personal experiences in design is a rich and multifaceted dynamic where the designer's individual life journey becomes a powerful source of inspiration and innovation (Dorst, 2015). Personal experiences, whether they are rooted in one's upbringing, travel, or unique life events, imbue design with a distinct narrative and emotional depth. They infuse a designer's work with a genuine and authentic touch, allowing the spaces created to tell a compelling story and resonate on a personal level with the users. These experiences often act as a wellspring for creativity, enabling the designer to draw on memories, encounters, and cultural exposures to craft designs that are meaningful and relatable. The fusion of personal experiences with design choices yields spaces that evoke emotions, trigger memories, and create a sense of connection with the people who inhabit them. This interplay is a testament to the deeply personal nature of design, where the designer's unique life path becomes an integral part of the creative process, resulting in spaces that are not only aesthetically appealing but are also deeply resonant and emotionally charged.

### **Intuition as a Cultural Filter**

Intuition as a cultural filter represents the intricate process through which a designer's creative decisions are inherently shaped by their cultural background and experiences.

It acts as a cognitive lens through which the designer naturally filters design choices, imbuing them with cultural context and relevance. This filter operates subconsciously, allowing the designer to draw from their accumulated cultural knowledge, values, and personal experiences while making decisions about aesthetics, spatial arrangements, materials, and symbolism. Intuition as a cultural filter integrates cultural references, historical contexts, and regional nuances, ensuring that the resulting design is not only functional it is also deeply rooted in its cultural setting. This intuitive filter is instrumental in creating designs that resonate with the intended audience, evoke emotions, and effectively communicate the values and heritage of a particular culture, ultimately transforming spaces into culturally meaningful and authentic environments.

### **Diverse Perspectives**

Diverse perspectives in design represent a transformative force, emphasising the importance of incorporating a wide range of viewpoints, backgrounds, and experiences into the creative process (Grocott, 2022). It acknowledges that design, as a reflection of the human experience, is enriched while it encompasses a multiplicity of cultural, social, and individual perspectives. Such diversity not only broadens the creative palette it also fosters innovation and inclusivity, resulting in designs that resonate with a wider audience. By embracing diverse perspectives, designers can more effectively respond to the complex and evolving needs of an increasingly globalised world, ensuring that their creations are not only aesthetically appealing they are also culturally relevant and socially aware. This inclusive approach to design is instrumental in breaking down barriers, promoting empathy, and ultimately create spaces that celebrate the rich tapestry of human diversity, thereby making design more meaningful and accessible to a broad and varied spectrum of individuals.

### **Balance of Intuition and Rationality**

The balance of intuition and rationality in design is a delicate equilibrium where the designer's creative instincts and logical thinking intersect to produce thoughtful and innovative solutions. Intuition serves as the driving force behind the initial, often

visceral, design ideas, allowing the designer to draw from accumulated knowledge, personal experiences, and cultural influences (Crilly, 2015). Rationality, on the other hand, provides the critical framework for refining and structuring these ideas, ensuring they meet functional, practical, and ethical criteria. This dynamic interplay between intuition and rationality enables designs to transcend mere aesthetics, addressing the complex and ever-evolving demands of the contemporary world. It ensures that while a design may be emotionally resonant and culturally meaningful, it is also efficient, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of the users. Striking this balance is an art in itself where the designer's intuition guides the creative journey, while rationality acts as the compass, ensuring the final design is visually compelling and also purposeful, reliable, and holistic.

### **2.2.2 Traditional Aesthetics and Values Informing Contemporary Interior Design in China**

The Chinese art and design education system is similar to many other educational systems, since traditionally it has placed a strong emphasis on technical proficiency and conventional techniques. Nevertheless, there is a rising awareness of the significance of nurturing inventive and instinctive methods within contemporary art and design education in China. In recent times, the Chinese government has displayed a keen interest in promoting originality and ingenuity within the education sector. This has led to the introduction of policies and initiatives aimed at cultivating creativity and artistic expression. The burgeoning contemporary art landscape in China, featuring internationally acclaimed artists and designers, has created a more fertile environment for advocating intuitive and innovative approaches within art and design education. Consequently, traditional aesthetics and values act as a deep source of inspiration for contemporary and intuitive interior design in China.

#### **Cultural Identity Preservation**

Preserving cultural identity through traditional aesthetics and values stands as a cornerstone in the realm of contemporary interior design in China. This commitment is

a testament to the enduring importance of China's profound heritage, where designers draw extensively from a deep reservoir of traditional aesthetics, architectural conventions, and cultural principles to craft spaces that are not just visually captivating they are also deeply resonant with the culture. It involves a seamless and harmonious interaction between historical context and the demands of the modern world, where age-old elements like symbolic motifs, color meanings, and intricate craftsmanship seamlessly find their place in innovative design concepts. This merging of tradition and modernity culminates in interiors that serve as a reflection of China's distinct cultural language and essence, fostering a connection to the past while embracing contemporary innovations. The commitment to preserving cultural identity guarantees that Chinese interior design remains firmly rooted in its cultural heritage, presenting spaces that capture the beauty, symbolism, and values of Chinese culture while adapting to the evolving needs and preferences of contemporary society.

Designers, deeply inspired by traditional aesthetics rooted in China's rich history, go beyond surface-level understanding. They fully immerse themselves in the essence of Eastern Wisdom Philosophy, which encompasses elements like Zen Buddhism, the "Balance of Yin-Yang," and "Wu." This deep dive enables designers to create contemporary interpretations that pay tribute to tradition while embracing the spirit of modernity.

### **Modern Reinterpretation of Tradition**

Designers skillfully blend traditional design elements with a modern sensibility. This results in innovative and intuitive designs that bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. The intuitive approach empowers designers to address the tension between preserving cultural heritage and embracing contemporary design trends.

### **Cross-Cultural Influence**

As globalisation continues to progress, Chinese interior design is increasingly influenced by cross-cultural communication and global design trends. Designers

intuitively integrate elements from different cultures, adjusting and reinterpreting them to suit the Chinese environment. This cross-cultural exchange stimulates the development of intuitive strategies that reflect the fusion of traditional and contemporary influences.

### **2.2.3 The Enculturation Process**

Pheysey suggests that disparities exist in the way Western and Eastern societies perceive the significance of things. Western cultures tend to analyse events through the lens of science and practicality, whereas Eastern cultures align with nature and accept events as inherent aspects of life (Pheysey, 2002). Furthermore, she underscores that a substantial portion of individuals' knowledge resides in the subconscious, only emerging into consciousness once the right conditions are met. While Western scientists acknowledge this, the East leans more towards intuition. In essence, Eastern societies tend to have a higher degree of acceptance for intuitive decision-making compared to their Western counterparts. However, whether in the West or the East, the process of acculturation plays a pivotal role in shaping the way designers assimilate cultural knowledge and integrate it as an intrinsic part of their design intuition.

**Cultural Immersion:** Designers immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of their culture, delving into its philosophical principles, symbols, color symbolism, and traditional craftsmanship. Through deep study and contemplation, they develop a profound understanding of these elements.

**Firsthand Experience:** Personal and collective experiences further enrich and modify their cultural knowledge. These experiences provide real-world examples of cultural principles in action, whether through participation in traditional ceremonies, rituals, or the observation of cultural practices. These experiences act as living evidence, reinforcing or challenging established cultural beliefs.

**Influence on Design Intuition:** The enculturation process equips designers with a deep well of cultural knowledge and experiences. As designers engage in their creative process, they naturally draw upon this accumulated cultural knowledge. This process shapes their intuitive design strategies, enabling them to make quick, often subconscious decisions that align with the cultural context in which they are working.

**Diverse Perspectives:** Different designers may have varied enculturation processes due to their individual backgrounds, experiences, and cultural influences. This diversity in the enculturation process leads to a wide spectrum of design perspectives and solutions.

In the realm of Chinese interior design, the enculturation process is instrumental in shaping how cultural knowledge is absorbed by designers. Over time, this knowledge becomes an intrinsic part of their design intuition. It profoundly influences their design choices, enabling them to create spaces that authentically reflect Chinese culture while seamlessly incorporating modern elements. The interplay between tradition and modernity underscores the dynamic nature of this relationship, as it continues to shape the design intuition of Chinese interior designers, resulting in spaces that are not just aesthetically appealing they are also deeply culturally meaningful. This process is a testament to the enduring allure and timelessness of Chinese interior design.

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter describes the methodology applied in this study. The research investigates the applicability and feasibility of a range of intuitive strategies that could be applied to interior design. This practice-based inquiry, informed by research into theories and uses of intuition in design, aims to produce works that combine neglected and overlooked everyday materials with traditional Chinese elements that are combined and integrated. This approach juxtaposes chance and gestural elements with tradition and aesthetic decision in a set of experiments that could inform the basis for the further development of intuitive exercises for students and designers. The methodology chosen for this thesis contributes to the production and practice, and Chinese ink and cotton thread are central to this materially grounded investigation.

The research utilises secondary sources for contextual research, as well as primary research collecting qualitative and quantitative data, along with creative practice-based research aimed at providing a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. This approach has allowed for a nuanced investigation into the theories and cultural context of intuition, the subjective experiences of designers and the potential of intuitive design strategies. This experiential first-person practice approach involves personal data collection through reflective practice (Schön , 1991).

#### **3.1 Overall methodological framework**

To understand the application of intuitive thinking in design, especially in interior design, two methodological strategies were used, in addition to a Literature review to identify the theoretical understandings of intuition through different disciplinary approaches and across cultural contexts.

##### **3.1.1 Qualitative research**

The research utilised a questionnaire to investigate how designers in both China and New Zealand perceive and utilise intuition in their design practices. To delve into this

topic, the study harnessed the expertise and insights of eight design professionals. The primary goal was to develop a more profound comprehension of the intuitive techniques employed by design experts operating within two distinct cultural environments. This investigation sought to uncover insights into the diverse approaches and the harmonisation of design methodologies and intuition. This methodology finds support in the observations of design practices, as exemplified by Hamilton (2017), who acknowledges that designers often possess knowledge derived from experiential learning that exists beyond their conscious awareness. This highly personal and subconscious knowledge frequently guides their design decisions, even while the source of their discernment and thinking remains implicitly understood.

For the selection of experts, a group consisting of interior designers, architects, design educators, graphic designers and design artists was identified. Participants with extensive experience in the field and expertise in integrating intuitive strategies into the design process were identified and approached. A total of eight experts were selected based on their experience and reputation as design practitioners. A questionnaire format was used as it was more convenient for these busy professionals, some of whom were based overseas instead of interviews. This process aimed to understand the views of designers who have been engaged in the design industry for many years and the importance of intuitive thinking in design. It involved questions on the cultivation and development and the where and how of intuitive thinking in their design. The questionnaire comprised 11 questions; including multiple-choice questions and there were extensive opportunities for comment.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit participants' experiences, thought processes, and decision-making strategies. The questionnaires were sent by email, which provided participants with the convenience of completing them at their own pace. Some of the experts followed up with further correspondence. The questionnaire responses served as the primary data source, offering valuable insights into the designers' intuitive strategies and the underlying principles driving their design decisions.

To complement this primary data based on expert feedback, secondary data sources such as design publications and academic literature were also reviewed. These sources provided a broader perspective on the topic and enriched the analysis by offering additional insights and context.

Qualtrics software was utilised to organise the data, ensuring accuracy and efficiency in the analysis process. The collected expert information was analysed via the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and categories in the responses to the questionnaire that reflected participants' intuitive strategies. Iterative coding, continuous comparison, and thematic refinement were employed until understanding and insights were gained.

While an ethics application was not required for collecting expert opinions the ethical principles and guidelines were followed throughout the study. Information about the research was sent to all the experts providing a clear understanding of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and the confidentiality of their information. To protect participant privacy and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned, and all personal identifying information was removed from the transcriptions and analysis, with only a few exceptions, such as those who were happy to be identified.

By employing a qualitative approach backed up by a review of secondary sources this study aimed to provide insights into the use and value of intuition in design practice.

### **3.1.2 Limitations of the qualitative research**

Some inherent limitations to the study were recognised, for example, the relatively modest scale of the expert interviews via the questionnaire. In addition, the demographic composition predominantly centered on designers with 5-10 years of experience, potentially leading to age related biases. However, this study was not intended as a population-based survey of designer's attitudes to intuition, it was

intended as a way of gaining better understanding of individual designers' perspectives on intuition and its use in the design processes. The opinions of experts served primarily as a point of reference to correlate with information from secondary sources.

Unraveling the intricacies of the intuitive process presents another challenge. This complexity emanates from the fundamental abstract nature inherent in intuition (Meggers, 2016). The study recognises the limitations regarding the generalisability of findings. This constraint stems from the distinct attributes of the sample, which may not comprehensively represent the broader population and the individual nature of design and practice-based inquiry.

However, by adhering to this multifaceted research approach, the study aspires to unearth different layers of intuition within the sphere of interior design in China. Through this exploration, the research endeavors to enrich the field's comprehension of this intricate cognitive phenomenon. The insights gleaned from this research, strives to foster a better understanding of intuition and how it intricately intertwines with the complex tapestry and discernment of the designer in the creative process.

### **3.1.3 Practice-based research through materials-driven design and manufacturing**

The inherent enigma surrounding intuition suggests certain lines of inquiry. Limited research has specifically been dedicated to the exploration of intuition (Bastick, 1982). To address this issue from a designer's perspective, and to reflect my evolving comprehension of intuition, I undertook a series of experiments during the research period. These experiments aimed to elucidate the interplay between accessible everyday materials, functioning as a conduit through which the research journey unfolded. The process involved identifying commonplace substances within my immediate surroundings. I integrated them with traditional Chinese inks, pigments, and techniques to generate outcomes and their procedural trajectories. This experimental blueprint hinged on real-world elements and leveraged authentic encounters. It stands

in contrast to other research endeavors, like studies on knowledge transfer (e.g., Berry & Broadbent, 1988; Dixon & O'Reilly, 2002), which often featured contrived tasks. The pervasive connection wherein material encounters guide the creative process is a recurrent hallmark in the realm of interior design.

This investigative framework melds two distinct methodological approaches, channeling intuition into the realms of analysis, amalgamation, and the crafting of commonplace materials alongside traditional Chinese elements. This fusion contributes to the eventual genesis of the product, fostering a creative synergy that resonates within the design's final manifestation.

### **3.2 Methods in practice-based research**

Within the confines of the chosen methodological framework, a variety of distinct research approaches were utilised.

#### **3.2.1 Heuristics experimentation**

Engaging in experimentation involves extracting deeper insights from a specific subject than traditional methods of learning can provide, surpassing mere observation (Rousmaniere, 1906). This method holds paramount significance because, within the domain of interior design, it becomes imperative to substantiate the presence of intuition through practical experimentation.

In my approach, experiments, often associated with scientific processes and characterised by objective procedures, take on a heuristic nature. Heuristics are indeed explicit, premeditated mental shortcuts and strategies employed by individuals to streamline their decision-making and problem-solving. They represent well-considered, rule-based approaches to make judgments efficiently. In contrast, intuition typically operates at a deeper, subconscious level and takes on a more holistic form, relying on one's intuitive sense, hunches, or instincts.

The intriguing aspect is that heuristics can influence and guide intuitive judgments. While heuristics involve the conscious application of specific rules or methodologies to reach rapid decisions, intuition generally taps into an individual's combined reservoir of conscious and subconscious knowledge and experience. This implies that heuristics can sway the course of intuitive thinking, especially while an individual intentionally applies certain mental shortcuts.

Both heuristics and intuition serve as indispensable instruments in the realm of decision-making across a spectrum of challenges. Their relative importance hinges on the specific context and the personality of the person involved. For instance, some situations may lean towards a reliance on heuristic-based decision-making, while intuition might take precedence in others, particularly if the available information is ambiguous or incomplete. The concept of a "gut feeling" frequently aligns with the intuitive facet of decision-making, where individuals rely on an innate sense of right and wrong without consciously adhering to explicit rules or shortcuts (Hodgkinson et al., 2009). Nonetheless, intuition can also operate autonomously from heuristics if it hinges on a broader and more visceral sense of that which feels right or accurate. In such instances, intuition prevails over heuristics and proves to be the superior decision-making tool.

These heuristic experiments not only aid in exploring the essence of the experiments themselves they also facilitate the examination of the experiment outcomes. This constitutes a knowledge-generating pursuit within my research, where I investigate how to incorporate intuition as an artistic element within my installations. This exploration extends beyond my personal objectives and has the potential to intersect with the field of interior design.

Moreover, heuristic experiments offer a rapid and adaptive mechanism, that is ideally suited for the exigencies of this project's time frame (Morton & Pentico, 1993). While these experiments may not yield optimal samples in a strict sense, they furnish a

sufficient knowledge base to facilitate swift decision-making. This attribute proves advantageous, allowing the research to swiftly assess diverse aesthetic options and foster an intuitive knowledge reservoir. This reservoir can then guide more extensive investigations into specific options, enhancing the depth of subsequent research endeavors.

### **3.2.2 Prototyping**

Prototyping pertains to fabricating tangible material specimens to guide research development by conducting preliminary assessments of the process (Coughlan & Canales, 2007). This strategy resonates closely with my heuristic experimental method, particularly in the context of interior design, wherein intuition serves as a crucial element. The prototypes fashioned through this process serve as valuable inputs, steering subsequent experiments and influencing the selection of aesthetic avenues for the ultimate installation and realisation of the prototype.

Within this investigation, all the experimental samples stemming from intuitive processes are construed as prototypes. In turn, the final realisation represents a process that involves refining and curating these prototypes. The chosen prototypes are those that have exhibited a noteworthy level of aesthetic quality. Consequently, the journey encapsulates the iterative progression of experimenting and the meticulous elevation of chosen prototypes into a harmonious final embodiment.

### **3.2.3 Reflection-and-in practice**

The concept of "reflection in practice," first proposed by Donald Schön(1983) and outlined by Richardson and Maltby in 1995, encompasses a form of reflective practice. According to Rigano and Edwards in 1998, this practice involves tapping into the collective project experience and reinterpreting available information to foster the creation of novel insights and knowledge. This intricate process dictates that the progression observed during the study period of this research project is profoundly influenced by the acquisition of knowledge across diverse project phases. The

subsequent reflection on this amassed knowledge delves into its implications and contributions to the research objectives. Thus, the synergy between accumulating knowledge, reflective contemplation, and adaptive adjustments is pivotal in shaping the developmental trajectory of the research project, ensuring its alignment with the overarching research aims.

### **3.2.4 Development of criteria**

Throughout the research journey, I refrained from establishing any predefined benchmarks due to the abstract nature of intuition, as highlighted by Tieszen and Tieszen in 1989. Given this inherent abstraction, it was not unfeasible to establish qualitative standards for its regulation. Many of the experiments unfolded within an environment characterised by randomness and uncontrollability. Furthermore, the nature of these experiments inherently precludes the recreation of identical results, even while working with the same materials. While the absence of experimental standards might be apparent, the experimental process itself serves as a guide for reflecting upon the outcomes of this empirical practice.

The essence of this design experiment lies in its utilisation of frequently overlooked items, primarily of natural origin. This approach is markedly inclined towards incorporating elements from the natural realm and orchestrating their harmonious fusion. The synthesis of points, lines, and surfaces emanates from this integration, effectively bridging the gap between the decorative facets of interior design and generating enhanced aesthetic outcomes. Pham's observations in 1999 underscore the contemporary yearning for objects that encapsulate heightened artistic allure. This proposition advocates revisiting commonplace materials readily accessible and orchestrating their novel combinations, offering individuals a rejuvenating encounter with familiar components. It isn't predicated on the continuous development of novel materials.

### **3.2.5 Aesthetic material criteria**

The following dimensions were considered in developing the creative experimental works.

**Colour:** Within the ambit of seven design experiments, the primary mediums employed encompass Chinese inks and Chinese pigments. This artistic palette manifests itself in a range of dominant colours, notably including black, blue, green, yellow and red.

**Texture:** The texture narrative across these seven experiments is enriched by the presence of distinctive elements such as sand imprints, fire-induced marks, and imprints of denim and seams, alongside the innate textures exhibited by pine bark.

**Smell:** The experiment delving into the amalgamation of Chinese Calligraphy involves a unique olfactory dimension. The latter stages of this experiment incorporated the use of fire, where the residual warmth of a specific plant's fruit was harnessed to delicately singe the paper's surface in varying degrees. This process infuses the surrounding environment with a distinctive fragrance, characterised by the interplay of rosin, ink and paper.

**Pattern:** While the outcomes of each individual experiment exhibit their own distinctiveness, a common thread prevails—each outcome seamlessly fuses Chinese elements or production methodologies. This consistent thematic thread underscores the intention to weave together diverse aspects of Chinese heritage together, thereby encapsulating a unifying motif amid the experimentation's diversity.

### **3.2.6 Material selection (Chance and Traditional)**

As for the choice of materials, my preference predominantly leans towards traditional Chinese materials and inconspicuous everyday items found in my surroundings. In alignment with the nature of my artistic exploration, I have opted for materials that have strong connections to Chinese heritage. To illustrate, my experiment revolves

around the use of essential elements like pens, ink, paper, and Chinese paint, which have deep roots in early Chinese culture. The pens I employ are crafted from branches, leaves, and flowers plucked from ubiquitous plants. My selection of rice paper, a cultural treasure in China's heritage, reflects my commitment to traditional papermaking methods. Furthermore, I utilise conventional Chinese ink and pigments derived from China's distinctive minerals, renowned for producing vibrant and dynamic colours.

Regarding the choice of production techniques, my inclination aligns with traditional Chinese craftsmanship, particularly the tie-dye stitching technique attributed to the Bai ethnic minority in China. In some instances, my experiments involve a fusion of random splicing and stitching techniques applied to Western denim fabric. Additionally, I explore the integration of traditional paper with textual elements. In select experiments, I adapt canvas as a medium, minimising the need for supplementary materials like adhesives to maintain an authentic artistic approach.

### **3.2.7 Documentation**

Utilising documentation, this research records the application of intuition within interior design while simultaneously informing the course of the research. As distinct artworks materialised at each project juncture, a diverse array of documentation techniques was employed. Each experiment found its designated spot within separate cardboard containers, labeled to reflect their respective names. To chronicle both the evolution and outcomes of these experiments, concise written notes were crafted and subsequently nestled within the same cardboard repository housing the experimental artifacts. This strategic arrangement guaranteed convenient access during the analysis phase, facilitating a comprehensive evaluation of the experiments.

During the consolidation of a conclusive representation incorporating the various experiments, a Word document served as the medium of choice. This document methodically cataloged all undertaken experiments, accompanied by detailed insights

into their aesthetic attributes and progressive stages. These experimental undertakings encompassed a wide spectrum of procedures, encompassing writing, erasing, scraping, dripping, filling, rolling, paper burning, splicing, and sewing. Through this meticulous documentation, I've established a robust framework to distinguish between distinct experiments, predicated on their specific processes and the developmental stages they reached. This comprehensive record-keeping mechanism significantly contributes to the comprehensive understanding and effective analysis of the experiments conducted.

### **3.3 Phases of the project: Overview**

In this research endeavor, I orchestrated a series of seven experiments to holistically exemplify the practical application of intuition within the realm of interior design.

The key constituents employed in these experiments primarily encompass the subsequent materials: traditional Chinese ink, Chinese pigments, cotton thread, and fragments of bark.

#### **First Experiment: Free-Form Brushing**



**Fig.1. Free-Form Brushing Project experiment diagram**

For this initial experiment, I utilised non-handmade brushes to randomly apply strokes on China's intangible cultural heritage paper. This process aims to channel intuitive impulses onto the canvas.

### **Second Experiment: Fusion of Chinese Calligraphy**



**Fig.2. Fusion of Chinese Calligraphy Project experiment diagram**

The second experiment involves intertwining traditional Chinese paper with intricate Chinese characters, cleverly amalgamating techniques such as plant burning, weaving, and knotting in tandem with threads.

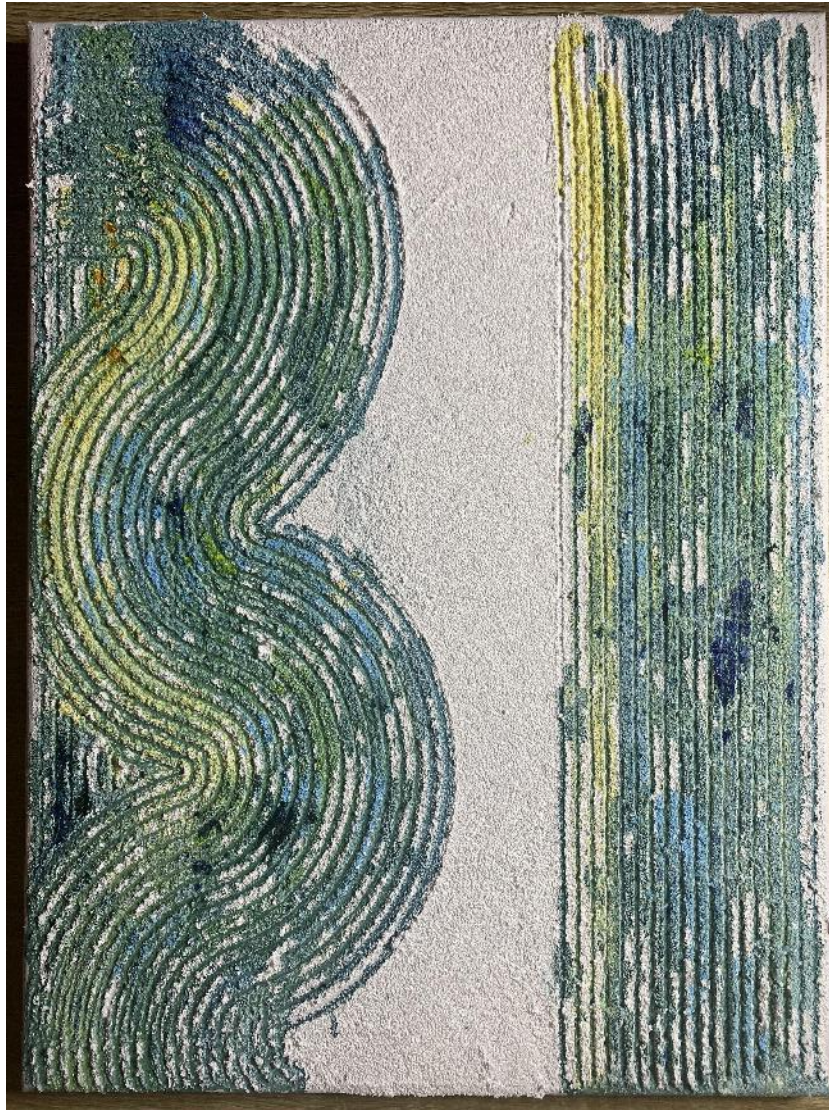
### **Third Experiment: Glass Sphere Trials**



**Fig.3. Glass Sphere Trails Project experiment diagram**

Experiment with three harnesses the trails left by three glass spheres of varying sizes as they traverse the canvas. These paths are further imbued with the application of Chinese pigments, enhancing the artistic effect.

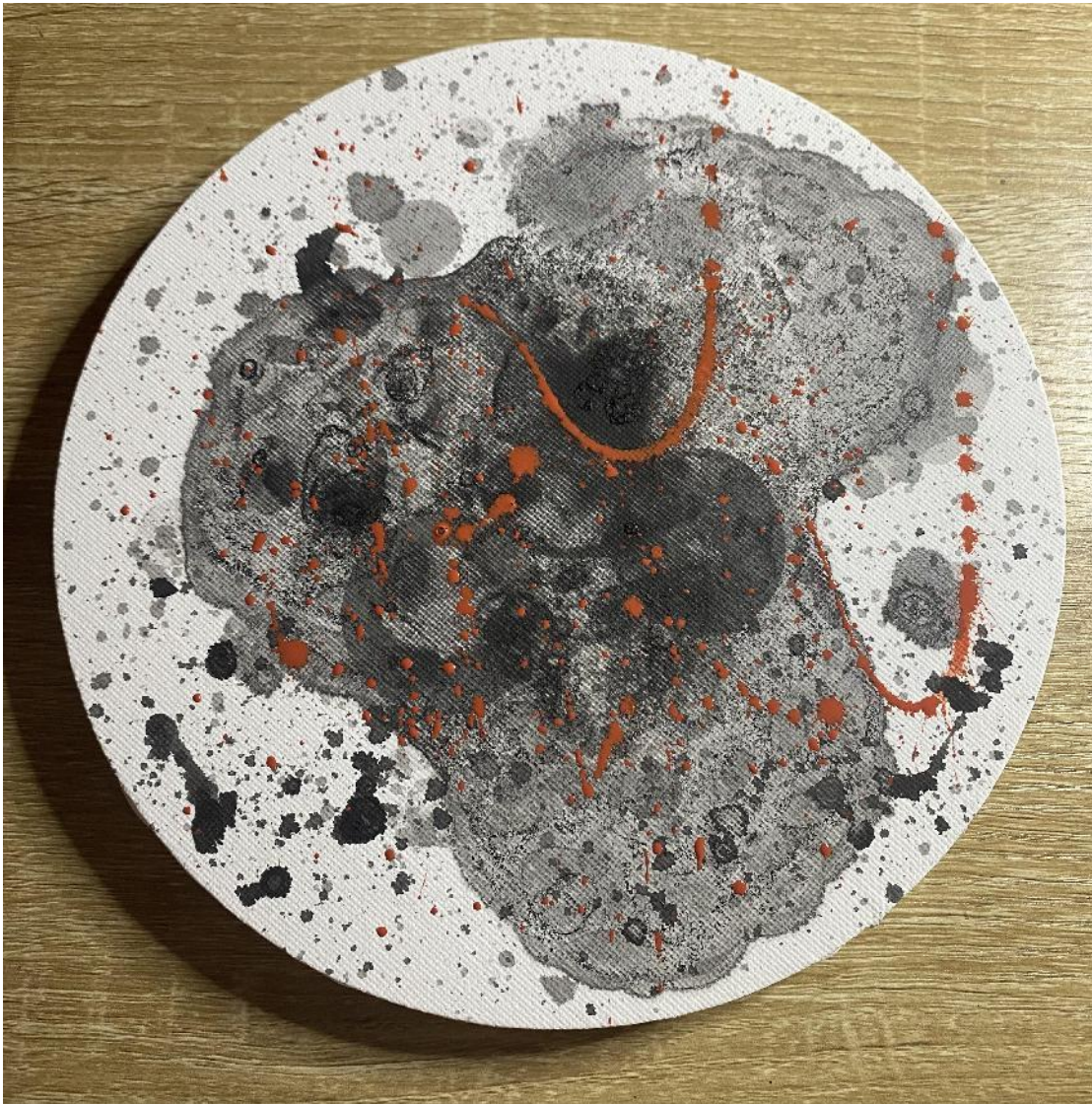
#### **Fourth Experiment: Fluid Pigment Sands**



**Fig.4. Fluid Pigment Sands Project experiment diagram**

Utilising a fusion of Chinese pigments and quartz sand constitutes the fourth experiment. The process involves delicately dripping enriched pigments, creating a dynamic interplay of colours and textures.

**Fifth Experiment: Ink Infused Bubbles**



**Fig.5. Ink Infused Bubbles Project experiment diagram**

The fifth experiment melds ink with dish soap, yielding spontaneous patterns of foam on the canvas. This innovative technique yields captivating and unpredictable outcomes.

#### **Sixth Experiment: Denim Collage**



**Fig.6. Denim Collage Project experiment diagram**

Experiment six centers on the art of stitching and juxtaposing denim of various hues with cloth bearing traditional Chinese script. This unique combination is orchestrated in diverse formations, producing visually arresting effects.

### **Seventh Experiment: Pine Bark Arrangements**



**Fig.7. Pine Bark Arrangements Project experiment diagram**

The final experiment entails the arrangement of individual pieces of pine bark. Each piece possesses distinct attributes that can be combined to incorporate additional properties, such as colour and shape, into the final composition.

The crux of these creative endeavors lies in the fusion of intuition with easily accessible materials. This synergy, coupled with acquired knowledge, culminates in the crafting of installations that resonates with my professional identity as an art installation designer.

Each of the seven experimental ventures involved meticulously selecting its materials, and the possibilities within each experiment extend into further iterations. For instance, modifications to materials or their quantities exert direct influence over the ultimate experimental outcomes. The intricate interplay between intuition and materials propels the transformative journey of these experiments, unveiling an array of potential artistic

manifestations.

### **3.4 Summary**

In this section, the research methodology for the study is elaborated upon. The primary objective of the research is to explore the practicality and viability of intuitive design strategies in the field of interior design. The methodology integrates practice-based inquiry with a foundation in research theories and the utilisation of intuitive techniques. This approach involves the fusion of overlooked everyday materials with traditional Chinese elements, emphasising the combination and integration of these elements. Chinese ink and cotton thread serve as central components in this materially grounded research.

The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, complemented by secondary sources and creative practice-based research, to offer a fuller understanding of the subject. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of designers and the impact of intuitive design strategies, alongside more objective information. Personal data collection through reflective practice is a pivotal aspect of this experiential, first-person practice approach.

The following chapter will discuss the experimental phase and showcase the utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how the intuitive strategies inherent in Chinese design might impact the field of interior design.

## 4 Research practice

### Overview

This chapter delves into the intuitive aspects of the design process and explores seven distinct and interconnected experiments, previously described in the methods section of the previous chapter. These experiments include the following

**Experiment 1:** Free-Form Brushing

**Experiment 2:** Fusion of Chinese Calligraphy

**Experiment 3:** Glass Sphere Trials

**Experiment 4:** Fluid Pigment Sands

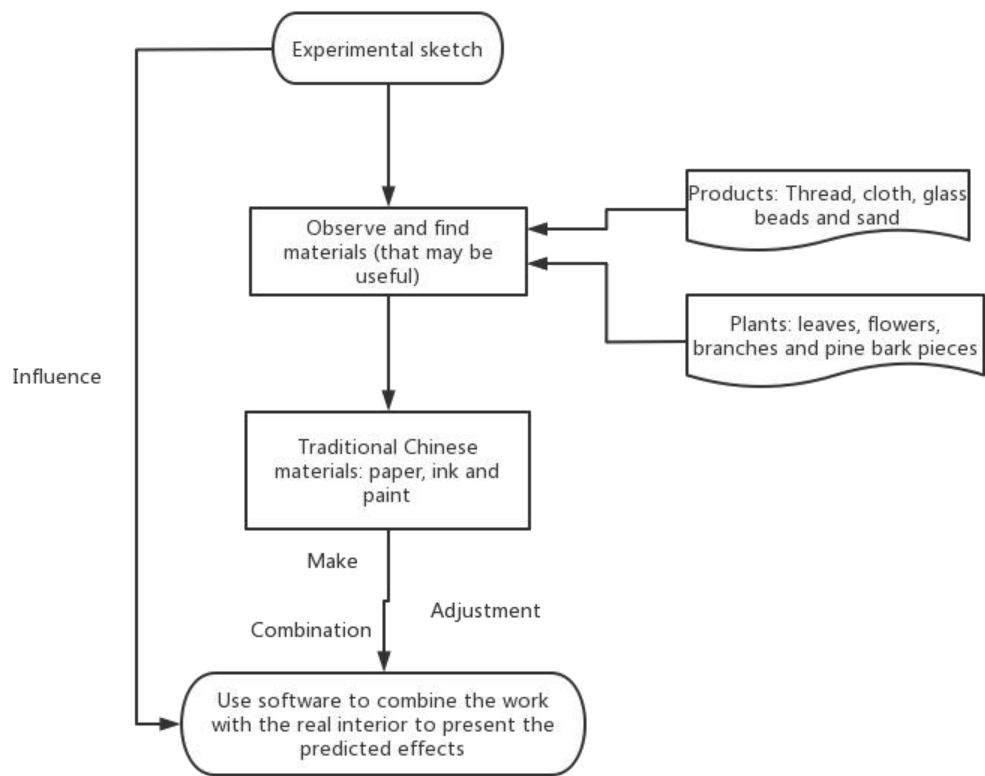
**Experiment 5:** Ink Infused Bubbles

**Experiment 6:** Denim Collage

**Experiment 7:** Pine Bark Arrangements

In these seven experiments, diverse elements, such as cotton threads, traditional Chinese materials, pigments, Chinese inks, traditional papermaking, and cloth pieces were employed in various combinations. Many of these experiments were carried out spontaneously and without deliberate planning. They explore ways that intuition can pave the way for innovative approaches to interior design, particularly within the context of China.

### Overall experimental steps



**Fig.8. Overall experimental steps diagram**

The essence of this experiment draws inspiration from everyday life and is inherently linked to the realm of living spaces, merging seamlessly with intuitive thought processes. This experiment is rooted in these concepts.

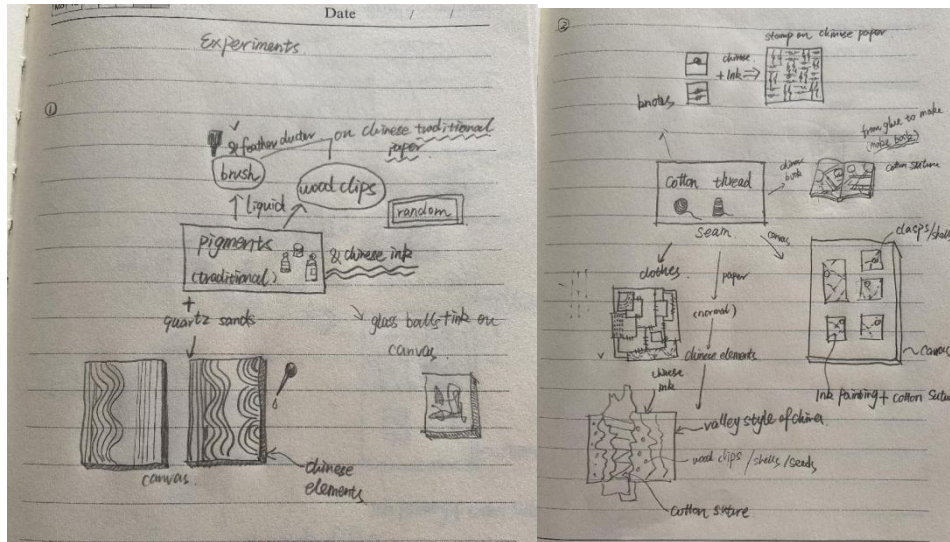


Fig.9. Experimental sketch

### 4.1 Experiment 1: Free-Form Brushing

Through this process, I elucidate my approach to material selection and crafting, employing specific movements and brush techniques to blend in intuitive elements. Each material is fashioned in a singular instance, resulting in distinctiveness. To enhance the aesthetic appeal, the ultimate creation is adorned with natural shells, bestowing a sense of natural beauty upon it. Ultimately, this artwork integrates into the overall interior design.

Given the organic nature of both the materials employed and the production methods used, the artwork achieves a seamless integration of natural elements. The pronounced black and white contrast not only serves to skillfully convey a heightened sense of space it also allows for a flawless synergy with home furnishings and surroundings. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, this artistic creation proves to be an adept solution for transforming mundane walls into dynamic focal points, injecting vibrancy and visual intrigue into the living space.

#### 4.1.1 Experimental preparation

The main purpose of the initial experiments was to investigate the ability of Chinese ink to produce diverse aesthetics by utilising a variety of materials and capturing the

spontaneous traces produced by random friction between pen and paper. It is worth noting that throughout the exploration process, all materials maintained their original texture, unchanged state, and did not contain any chemical adhesives. This thoughtful choice serves a dual purpose to preserve the intrinsic qualities of the material, and also to foster intuitive thinking.

The intuitive thinking developed in this process involves gestural movements, allowing the natural flow of the material to guide the creation of the pattern. I interacted dynamically with the medium, reacting intuitively to unfolding patterns and textures. By letting go of strict control and embracing the organic tendencies of the materials, a space for spontaneous expression and creative exploration opens in the process of experimentation.

Furthermore, the overall goal of the experiment goes beyond the mere act of creation. The goal is to utilise intuitively guided movement and seamlessly integrate natural elements into the artwork. This intentional integration ensures that the final piece is not only visually appealing it is also uniquely harmonious with its environment. By complying with the principles of intuitive creation and allowing the inherent qualities of materials to shine through, artworks become eye-catching additions to interior designs, transforming spaces with their authentic, nature-inspired aesthetics.

However, in the initial stages of this creative exploration because I wanted to find some products of nature, because they are unique, because no two identical leaves can be found in nature, this led me to different parks and coastlines where I intentionally sought out a myriad of materials, including shells, leaves, tree trunks, flowers, and feathers (see Figure 10). The selection of these materials was guided by careful consideration of several criteria. Each project chosen plays a unique role in the envisioned artistic process.

Criteria for material selection involve a balance between spontaneity and deliberate

intention. While there is a degree of spontaneous response to the fascinating elements found in nature, there is also a premeditated awareness of the aesthetic and tactile qualities required. The inherent texture, shape, hardness, and colour of the collected materials become integral factors in the making of the brushes, influencing the final expression of the artwork.

The decision-making process during these collection trips is dynamic. Certain materials were selected for their unique hardness, responding to the envisioned range of brushes from very soft to very hard (shown in Figure 11). The appeal of these materials lies in their visual appeal, and also in their potential to contribute diverse and nuanced characteristics to the brush, influencing the strokes and marks they later create on the canvas.

It is important to note that the collection phase involves a degree of open-ended exploration. While I had a general idea of the artistic direction I wanted to pursue, the specific details of each material application were not completely predetermined. The collecting process is therefore a dual exploration—responding spontaneously to the beauty of nature while keeping in mind the intended artistic outcome. This intentional and flexible approach allows for a harmonious blend of serendipity and purpose in the creative journey.



**Fig.10. Choice of brush material**



**Fig.11. Finished brush head**

To assemble the brushes, materials were affixed using threads, and layers of materials were incrementally added. The most challenging aspect involved the creation of pine needle brushes, as they secreted a sticky substance during the process, causing some of the bundled threads to adhere together, thereby affecting the production process. Crafting the pen holder posed its own set of challenges, given the varying lengths of branches. To ensure uniformity, I selected five distinct branches and trimmed them to similar lengths. The pen holders were fashioned from materials, such as bamboo, poplar, sycamore, and others, ensuring that each brush had a unique combination of brush and handle (Fig 12). I secured the final bundle length with thread, approximately 5cm long, using the same binding material for all the brushes. This step was instrumental in achieving a harmonious appearance among the five brushes.



**Fig.12. Finished brush**

The paper I selected was a traditional Chinese paper, characterised by its distinctive features. This meticulously handcrafted rice paper originates in Anhui, China, and incorporates hemp fiber into its composition. The production of this paper upholds time-honored methods, enhancing its suitability for writing with a pen. The marks created while brushing with ink and gently rubbing the paper's surface attest to its quality (Figure 13).



**Fig.13. Rice paper with hemp fiber**

#### **4.1.2 Description of experimental process**

To initiate the process, I positioned the rice paper atop a sheet of white paper, a step that aids in showcasing more distinct brush strokes. Subsequently, I commenced the experiment by employing various brushes to randomly stroke the rice paper of identical material. This technique served to highlight the unique attributes of each brush—whether they were sharp, soft, lively, nervous, anxious, or enthusiastic (Fig 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19). These qualities became palpable while grasping the penholder with my fingers, accompanied by the soothing aroma of ink, providing a sense of comfort.



**Fig.14. Sharp strokes**



**Fig.15. Soft strokes**



**Fig.16. Lively brushstrokes**



**Fig.17. Nervous  
strokes**



**Fig.18. Anxious  
strokes**



**Fig.19. Passionate brushstrokes**

In the subsequent stages of this creation, a considered approach guides the transformation of individual artworks into a cohesive composition. The decision to compress the finished artwork into a ball (shown in Figure 20) was a purposeful choice designed to enhance the texture of the paper. This step was driven by the desire to introduce a tactile quality to the surface that would add depth and complexity to the overall composition.

The unfolding and subsequent folding of paper into similarly sized squares or rectangles (as shown in Figure 21) is a thoughtful continuation of this tactile exploration. The aim here is to introduce a geometric structure while maintaining a sense of flow. The decision to fold the paper in this way was not arbitrary, it was a conscious effort to balance spontaneity with a sense of order.

The use of thread to sew the papers together, combined with the incorporation of canvas into the process (as shown in Figure 22), serves both a functional and aesthetic purpose. This stitching technique not only unifies each sheet it also adds a layer of depth and cohesion to the artwork. The reason for choosing to incorporate canvas into the composition was the desire to introduce different textural elements and enhance the structural integrity of the piece.

At the same time, the addition of seashells as a decorative element (shown in Figure 23) was a nuanced decision aimed at incorporating natural elements into the composition. This is not just an automatic or decorative gesture, it is also an act, an intentional effort to harmonise the tactile qualities of the shells with the overall textural narrative of the artwork. The shells, carefully selected for their shape and aesthetic resonance, serve a dual purpose enhancing visual appeal contributing to the tactile richness of the final piece.

Essentially, every decision at this stage is guided by thoughtful consideration of texture,

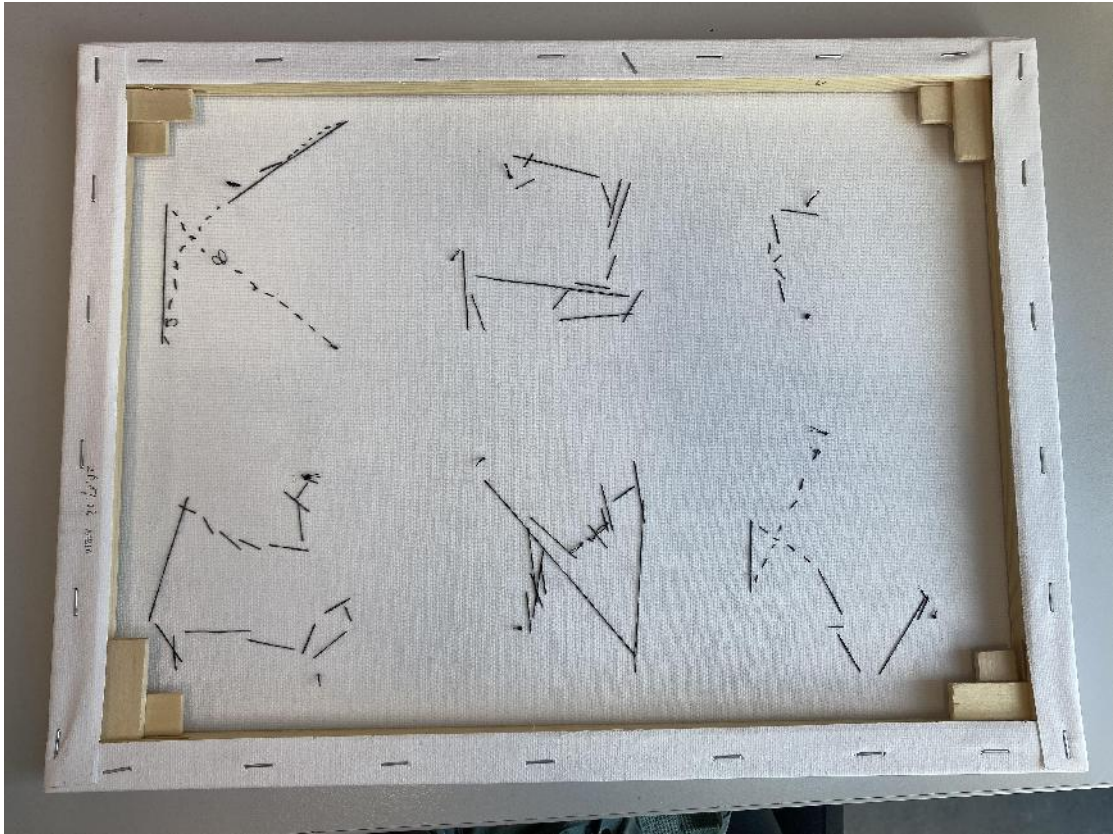
structure, and the harmonious integration of natural elements. The process is a conscious exploration, with decisions made to enhance the overall sensory experience of the artwork.



**Fig.20.Rice paper balled and unfolded**



**Fig.21. Folded works**

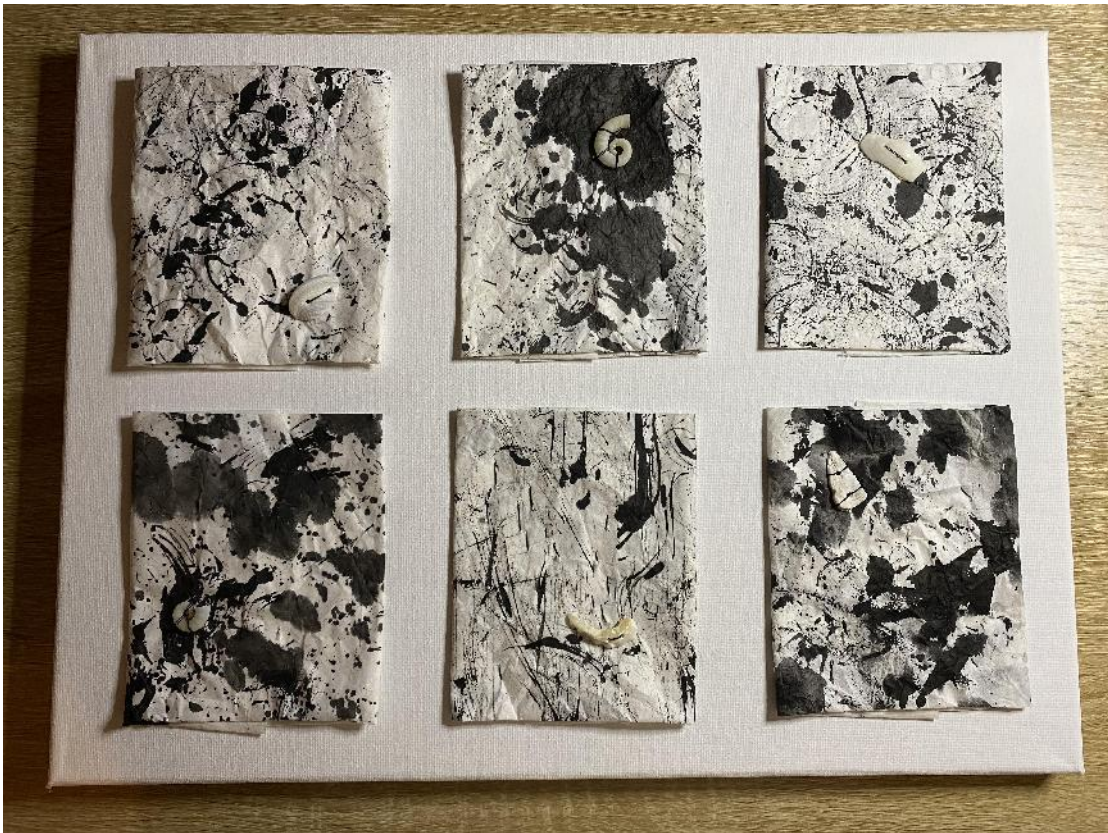


**Fig.22. Back side after stitching**



**Fig.23. Partially added shells**

During the sewing process, the black thread created a striking contrast with the imagery on the paper. This contrast arose from the thread's matte quality juxtaposed with the paper's non-matte surface. Consequently, this not only altered the texture and feel of the composition it also introduced variations in light, shadow, and color. Within the symphony of black, white, and gray, this experimental artwork was completed. It stands as a one-of-a-kind creation, impossible to replicate (Figure 24).



**Fig.24.Experiment 1 final product**

#### **4.1.3 Conclusion**

Experiment one was conducted as a way of exploring the interplay between intuition and physical elements. Drawing upon knowledge and insights gained from previous endeavors involving Chinese ink, I embarked on a series of actions. These actions involved understanding the ink-to-water ratio and combining brushstrokes to express

my creations on canvas. Notably, all brushstrokes were executed spontaneously, devoid of deliberate control over brush strength or ink quantity. Six distinct ink marks emerged as a result. These marks could be presented individually or as a collective, I opted for the latter approach. The outcome of this experiment found its place as an element in an interior decor (Fig 25).



**Fig.25. Indoor physical representation of experimental works**

Leveraging software such as Photoshop (PS), this interior presentation takes on a distinctive Chinese style. These experimental actions stem from my grasp of the tactile sensations associated with plant life and the amalgamation of ink and wash techniques—an embodiment of intuition. It's crucial to acknowledge my personal orientation and aesthetic biases in this creative process, yet creation guided by intuition often unfolds organically over time. This sensation is instantaneous, intertwined with a considerable degree of subjective judgment. Consequently, subsequent experimental undertakings also encompass further exploration of ink, aimed at more effectively showcasing the allure of Chinese ink.

## 4.2 Experiment 2: Fusion of Chinese Calligraphy

Within this section, I delve into the intricate process of material selection and crafting techniques, intertwining intuitive elements through purposeful movements and calligraphy methods. The fusion of thread, ink, and another variant of traditional Chinese paper forms the core of this experimental work, yielding a distinctive artistic creation.

The decision to present the final piece in the form of a book is a key aspect that adds layers to its overall aesthetic. The delicate beauty emerges from the meticulous craftsmanship and the use of materials known for their refined qualities. The incorporation of thread, ink, and traditional Chinese paper is orchestrated with precision to evoke a sense of elegance and subtlety.

Simultaneously, the infusion of an 'industrial sensibility' is manifested through the deliberate design choices offering a touch of modernity and urban edge to the artwork. The choice of materials and crafting techniques may draw inspiration from industrial aesthetics, incorporating elements that resonate with a contemporary, urban vibe.

The convergence of delicate beauty and industrial sensibility within this artistic piece creates a unique visual language. It's an intentional blending of refined craftsmanship with modern, industrial influences. The final creation, presented in the form of a book, becomes a harmonious synthesis of these seemingly contrasting elements. This intentional juxtaposition is designed to captivate visually and also to evoke a thoughtful dialogue between traditional elegance and contemporary urban aesthetics. In doing so, the artwork seamlessly integrates into the broader context of interior design, offering a distinctive and captivating presence that transcends traditional boundaries.

#### 4.2.1 Experimental preparation and experimental process

A key objective of the initial experiment was to illustrate how Chinese ink painting can convey a distinct essence through calligraphic brushstroke techniques. Dating back thousands of years, calligraphy holds a rich history, initially commencing with Chinese characters and evolving into a multitude of methods and styles (Chen, 2011). This experiment serves to showcase the essence of Chinese style. Simultaneously, while integrated with age-old Chinese binding techniques, it more effectively embodies a unique Chinese aesthetic.

During the preliminary phase, while in the process of selecting traditional Chinese paper: rough edge paper, I encountered a specific type of rice paper (Fig 26). It differs from bleached paper and is commonly used for calligraphy and painting practice. In the context of traditional Chinese perception of paper, it aligns with materials utilised for enlightening purposes.



**Fig.26. Traditional Chinese paper: rough edge paper**

Within the experimental phase, I layered multiple sheets of this paper, locating the central line and employing a needle and thread to bind them in the fashion reminiscent of ancient Chinese books. Threads were woven to create fruit and leaf motifs at the work's conclusion (Fig 27). After one to two additional weeks of calligraphy and

painting, the initial step of this experimental work was completed. I harnessed various calligraphy styles, including thin gold style, regular script, running script, cursive script, and others. Additionally, I incorporated excerpts from the Mustard Seed Garden, a traditional Chinese painting manual. This fusion effectively reflects the marriage of Chinese calligraphy and painting (Fig 28).



**Fig.27. Book binding and decoration**

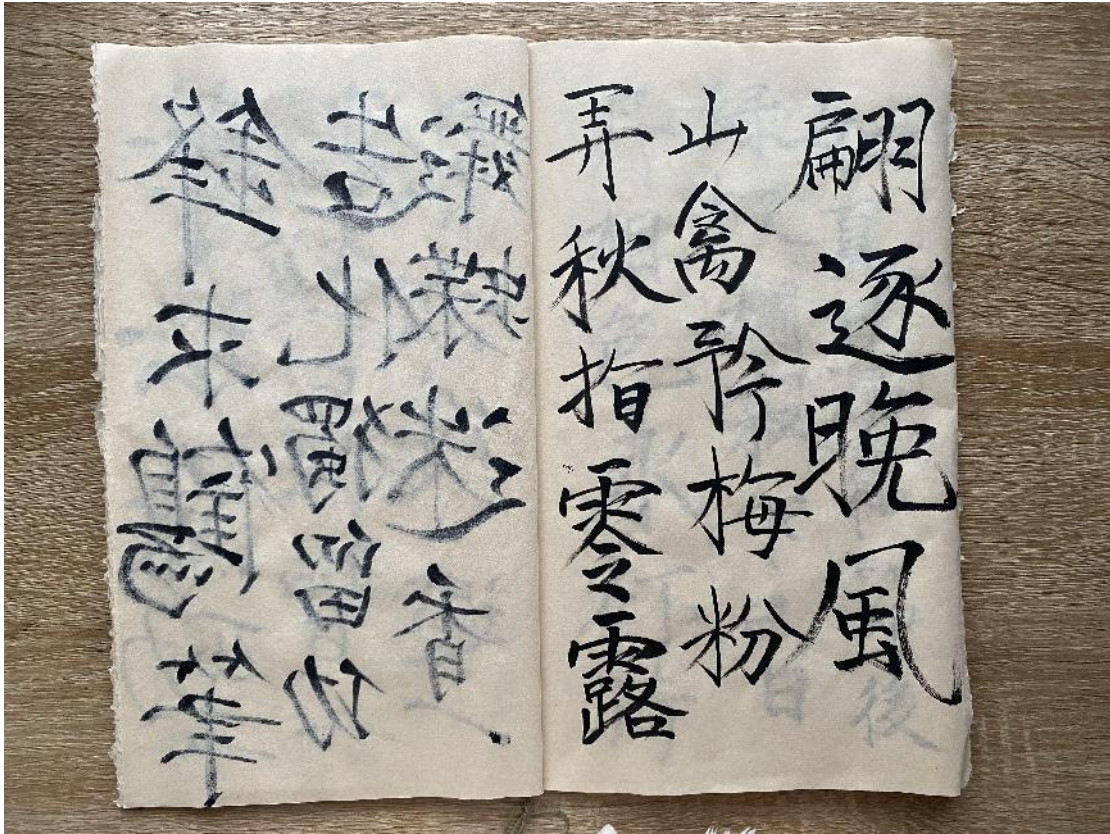
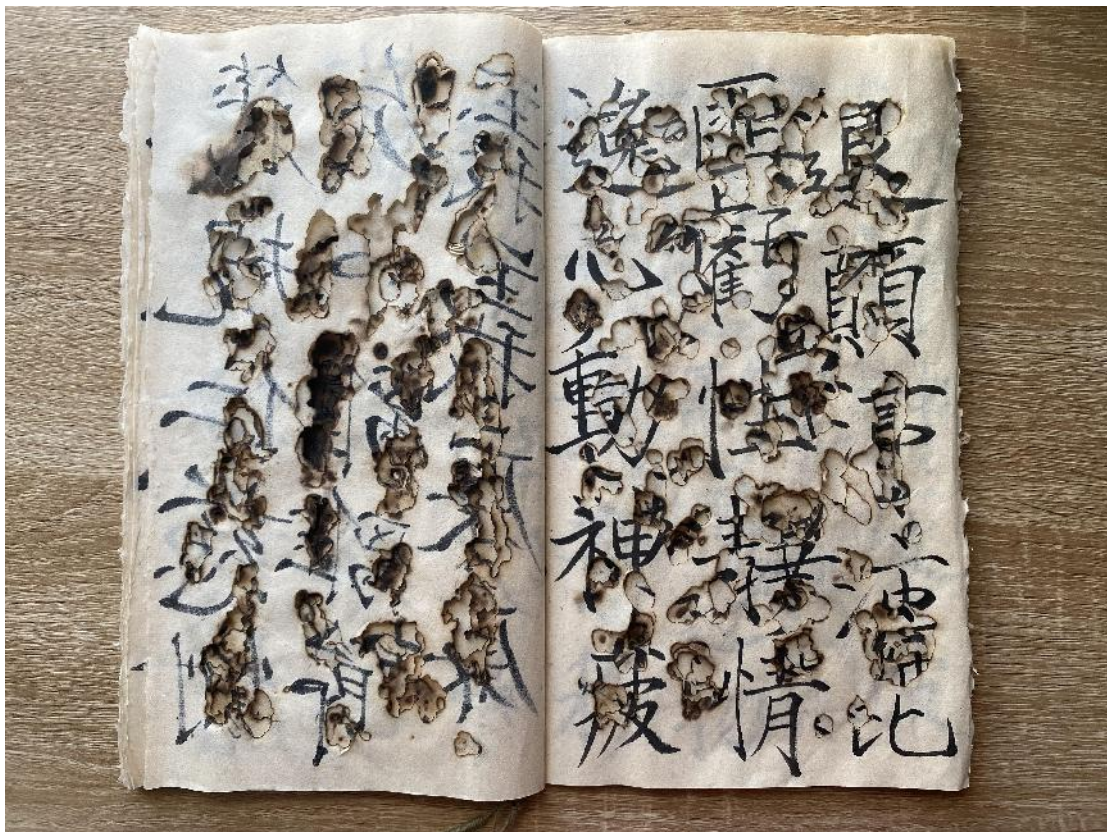


Fig.28. Book full of calligraphy

While in search of materials, I discovered the fruit (or possibly the flower) of a plant (Fig 29), which I subsequently collected, dried, and roasted over fire. In the presence of the residual heat from the plant, it was combined with the experimental work, yielding distinctive fire traces (Fig 30). These marks are imbued with the scent of burning vegetation and paper, gradually releasing their fragrance with each turn of the page.



**Fig.29. Plant fruits (or flowers) for experimental roasting**



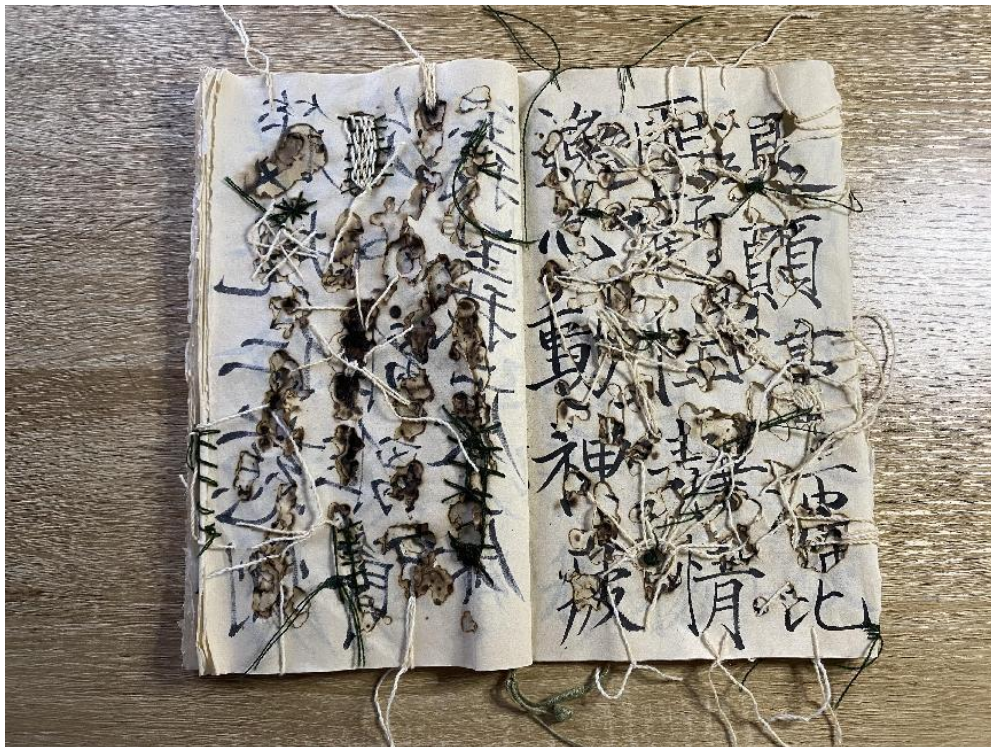
**Fig.30. The baked work**

To conclude, these burnt perforations were meticulously stitched with threads, with

some sections intricately knitted, incorporating techniques like cross knitting and interspersed knitting (Fig 31). This approach infused the overall experimental work with a synergy of points, lines, and surfaces, effectively showcasing the distinctive characteristics of the piece (Fig 32).



**Fig.31. Sewing and knotting**



**Fig.32. The final product of Experiment 2**

#### 4.2.2 Conclusion

Experiment two examines and explores the subtle interplay between intuition and the basic elements of Chinese calligraphy. Drawing on the knowledge and insights I had accumulated from my previous studies of Chinese ink painting, I embarked on a purposeful exploration. This exploration involved a series of deliberate actions designed to master the intricate proportions of ink and wash, blending it seamlessly with calligraphy to convey my artistic expression in my carefully crafted book.

A noteworthy aspect of this experiment was the dedication to completing all calligraphy and painting in a single smooth stroke with minimal modifications or changes. This intentional approach is rooted in the desire to preserve the spontaneity and authenticity of the artistic process. By limiting modifications, I let the brush move intuitively, capturing the essence of the moment and infusing each stroke with a sense of immediacy.

At the same time, the integration of fire-burned plant materials introduces an element of unpredictability into the creative process. The baking process gives these materials unique properties, resulting in traces of varying lengths and depths (shown in Figure 33). This unpredictability adds an interesting layer to the artwork, fostering a dynamic dialogue between controlled technique and the serendipitous results of the baking process.

The decision to adopt this form, characterised by fire-fired plant material, goes beyond the realm of artistic expression. It fits the industrial aesthetic commonly seen in interior design. The marks left by the firing process have a weathered charm, evoking a sense of history and uniqueness. This deliberate integration of industrial aesthetics enriches the overall decorative style and blends harmoniously with the Chinese style inherent in the experimental works.

In essence, the intuitive thinking incorporated throughout Experiment 2 served as a guide, resulting in a synthesis of thoughtful technique and spontaneous expression. This thoughtful integration deepens the artistic narrative, and it also contributes to the cohesive and unmistakable decorative style that illustrates the experimental pieces.



**Fig.33. Detail of fire marks**

With the assistance of software like Photoshop (PS), this experimental work transcends traditional presentation boundaries. It can be skillfully showcased in framing and display arrangements (refer to Fig 34), while simultaneously extending into three-dimensional space (as depicted in Fig 35). This innovative use of software imparts a sensation of the artwork as both separate and connected, from a spatial standpoint and also in terms of its interaction with the viewer's perception and the surrounding environment. The digital realm facilitates a dynamic interplay between the individual elements of the artwork, creating an immersive experience that blurs the lines between traditional two-dimensional presentation and a more expansive, multidimensional visual encounter.



Fig.34.Framing and display of works

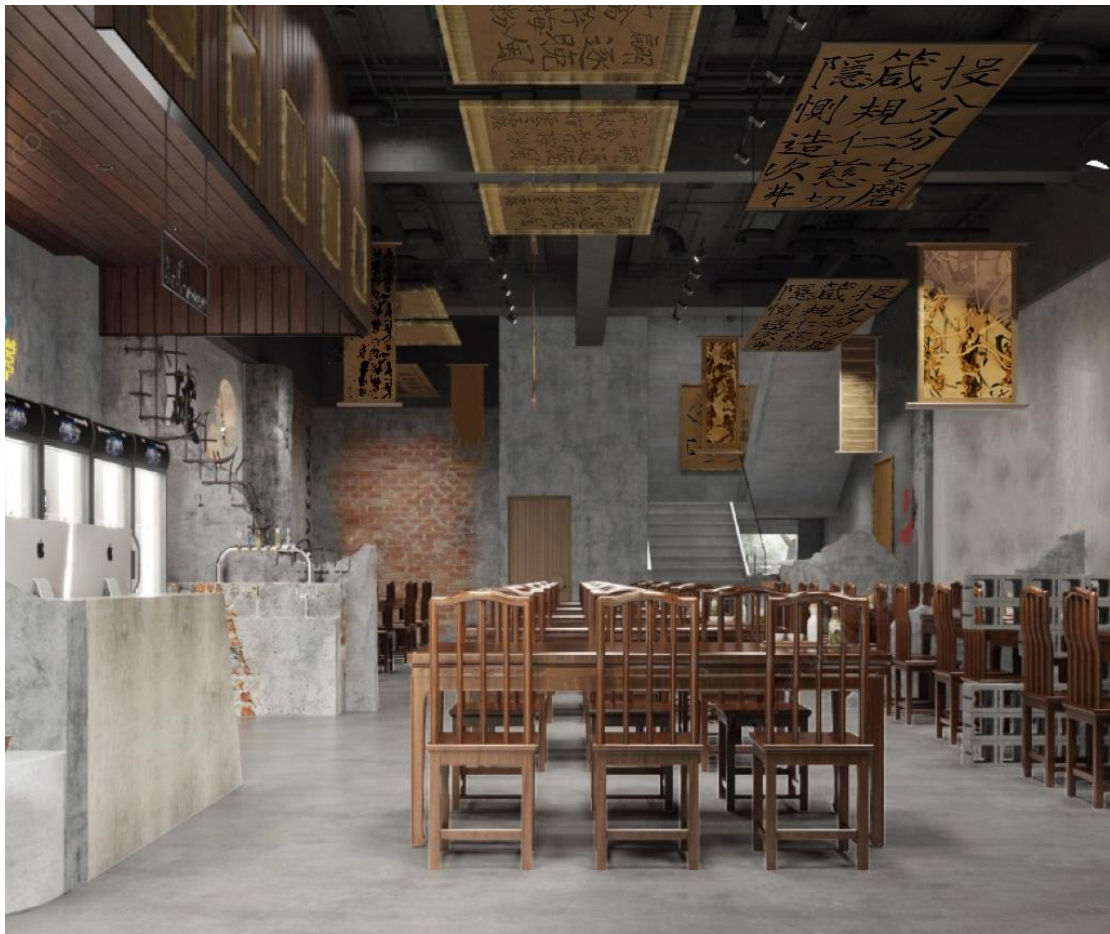


Fig.35. Three-dimensional space rendering

### **4.3 Experiment 3: Glass Sphere Trials**

Within this section, my methodology for material and technique selection is elucidated. The overall creation takes shape through the unpredictable movement of glass beads and the infusion of Chinese pigments. This work consists of two pieces, one characterised by a taut composition, while the other exhibits a more relaxed arrangement. Nevertheless, the underlying creative principle remains consistent. Every ink line on the artwork traces the path of one of three glass beads rolling freely, enhancing the appropriateness of intuitive application through the action of another material form and infusing it with captivating beauty. Ultimately, this artwork integrates into an interior design giving the space aesthetic appeal infusing it with a rhythmic quality.

#### **4.3.1 Experimental preparation and experimental process**

The primary objective of the initial experiment was to showcase alternative expressions resulting from the fusion of ink and pigment in Chinese ink paintings. I departed from the conventional practice of exclusively creating Chinese ink paintings on rice paper. Instead, this experiment exemplifies the amalgamation of uncontrollable ink traces and managed colour filling, thereby better accentuating the allure of traditional Chinese materials consisting of ink and pigment.

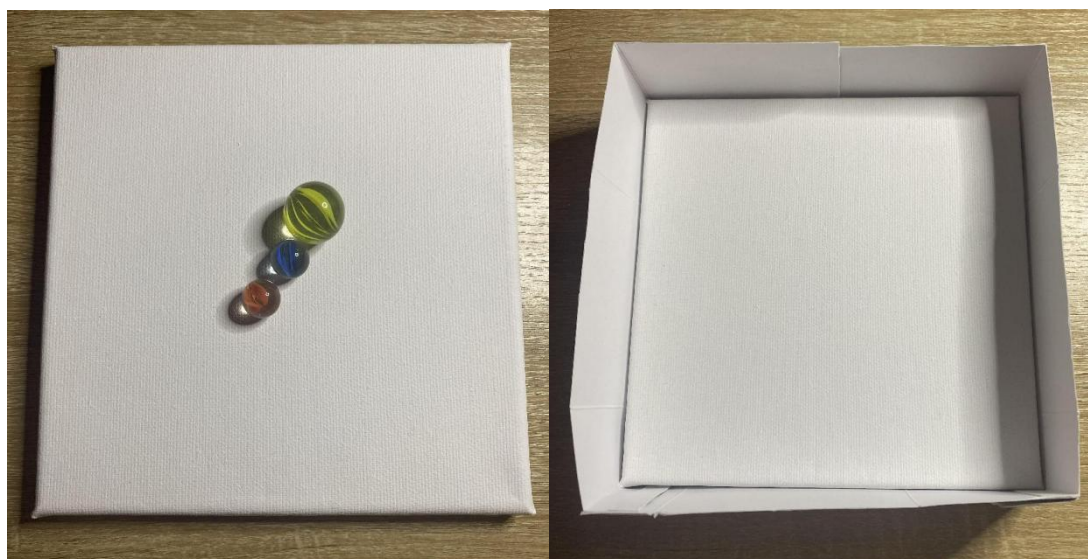
In the early stages, for the sake of portability, I opted for bottled ink and tube-shaped Chinese landscape painting pigments. However, if I were to adhere to a more traditional approach, the preferable choice would be an inkstone and ink stick. The ink stick is rotated on the inkstone after adding water, resulting in a more traditional ink texture. As for pigments, they are contained in small porcelain bowls, derived from natural minerals, they offer a more natural and vibrant color palette. It's noteworthy that the classification of light pigments comprises only three colors: red, cyan, and green. These three colors serve as the fundamental hues in traditional Chinese pigments. Nonetheless, my work features a total of seven colors: first cyan (头青),

third cyan (三青), first green (头绿), third greens (三绿), brown, and cinnabar (Fig 36). These pigments are commonly employed in heavily coloured Chinese paintings.



**Fig.36. Chinese Pigments and Colors**

Subsequently, I procured three glass beads from a store, consisting of one large and two small ones. I prepared a 20cm x 20cm canvas (Fig 37) and framed a square area with cardboard to better constrain the movement of the glass beads within its boundaries.

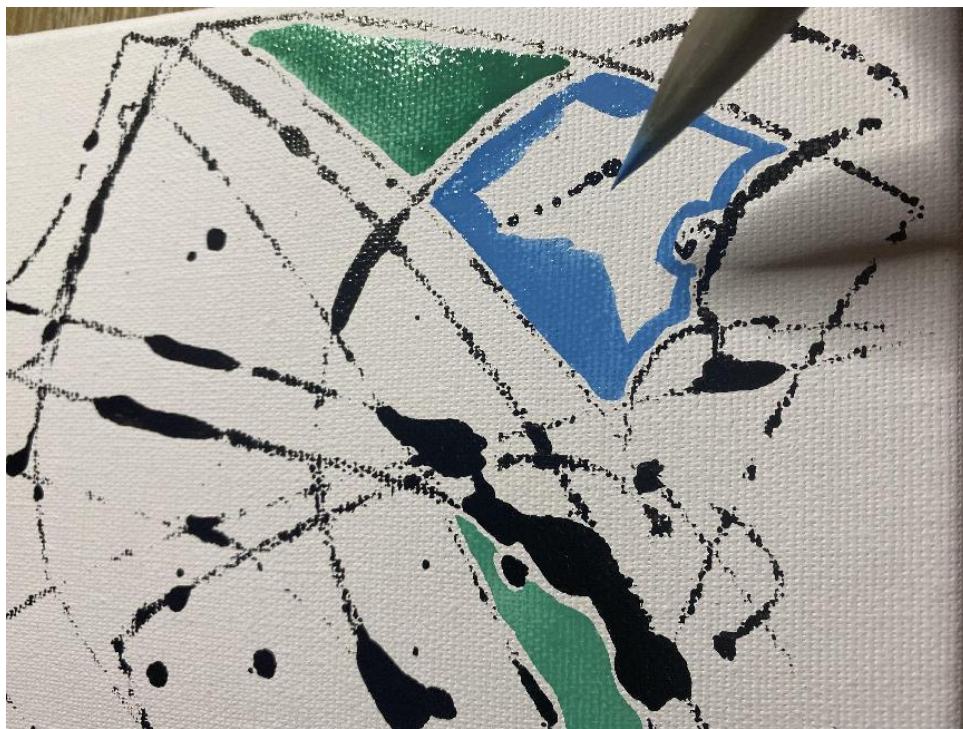


**Fig.37. Glass beads and surrounding canvas**

During the experimental phase, I introduced the ink into a small bowl and thoroughly mixed it with the three glass beads. I then placed this mixture onto the canvas enclosed by rigid paper and commenced shaking the canvas, allowing the glass beads to roll freely and imprint numerous rolling marks (Fig 38). After an overnight drying period, I initiated the colour filling the following day (Fig 39). Despite having only seven colors at my disposal, I applied them randomly, infusing dynamism into the composition.



**Fig.38. Traces of rolling glass**



**Fig.39. Fill in color**

In summary, propelled by the rolling action of the glass beads and the interplay of

colours, the entire artwork assumes a discernible rhythmic quality. The dots, lines, and surfaces (Fig 40) that emerge within the composition are spontaneous creations, further underscoring the intuitive artistic process imbued with delight.



**Fig.40. The final product of Experiment 3**

#### **4.3.2 Conclusion**

Experiment three is geared towards delving into the intricate interplay between intuition and the fundamental elements of Chinese ink painting. Leveraging the knowledge and insights garnered from my previous exploration of Chinese ink painting, I embarked on a series of deliberate actions. These actions encompassed understanding the precise ratio of ink and Chinese paint to water, translating it onto the canvas in a comprehensive manner, and incorporating the free-flowing strokes of glass beads to craft a series of vibrant and rhythmic compositions. Simultaneously, the two artworks established a stark contrast: one exudes stillness while the other pulsates with dynamism; one maintains a relaxed demeanor, while the other brims with tension; one dances to a brisk rhythm, while the other embraces a weighty cadence. Such contrasting pieces can significantly elevate the aesthetic appeal of interior spaces, transforming mundane areas or even walls into captivating focal points. This interplay occurs against the backdrop of the canvas, exuding a distinctly Chinese aesthetic.

With the assistance of software, such as Photoshop (PS) within the realm of spatial

design, this experimental work extends not only the confines of the works that are framed and displayed in the space (Fig 41). It also gracefully expands into three-dimensional space, imparting a sense of harmony and uniqueness to viewers (Fig 42).



**Fig.41. The works are framed and displayed in the space**



**Fig.42. Display of works of interior space**

#### 4.4 Experiment 4: Fluid Pigment Sands

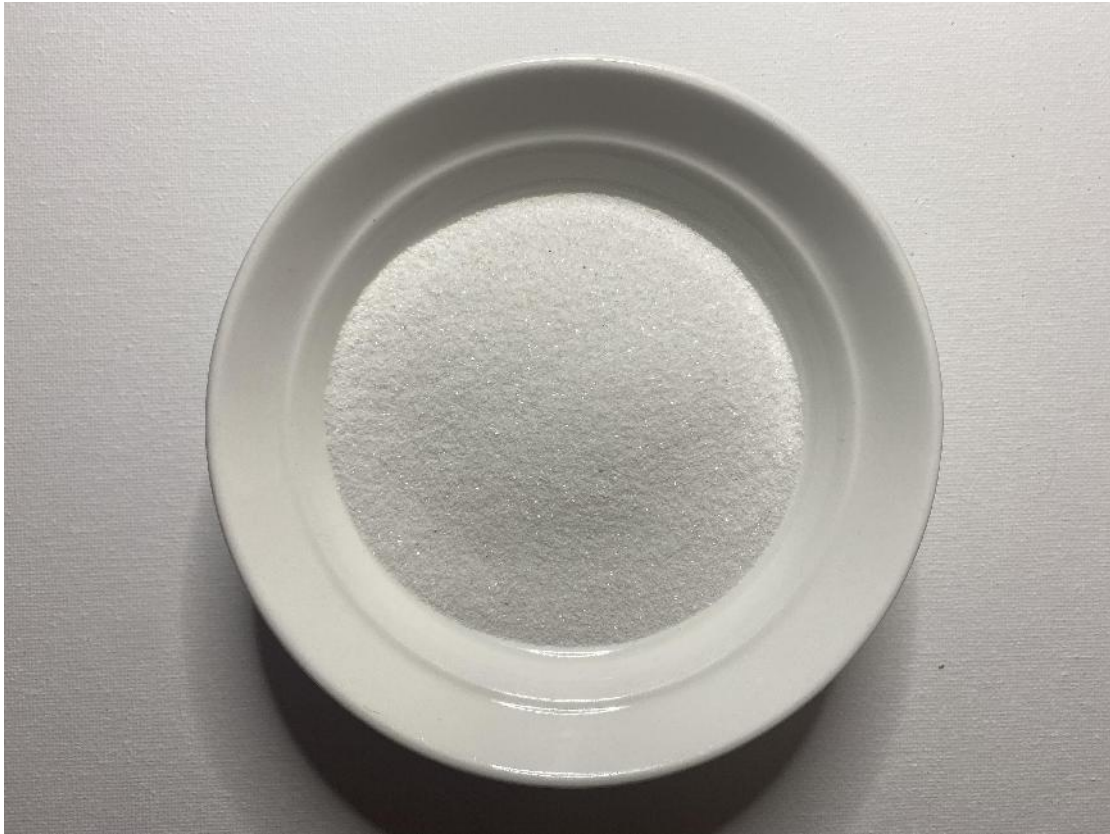
In this segment, I will elucidate my approach to material selection and craftsmanship, harnessing intuitive thinking to sculpt shapes from quartz sand through deliberate movements with specialised tools. My primary palette consists of cyan, green, and yellow—the predominant colors of China. These hues are transformed into a fluid state by adding water. I then employ a dropper to delicately release these colors onto the sand-drawn shapes, thereby infusing the artwork with vibrant and dynamic shades. Through the process of mutual fusion and color transformation, the final creation radiates life and vitality, seamlessly integrating into interior spaces and imparting a sense of vitality to those within.

##### 4.4.1 Experimental preparation and experimental process

The primary aim of the initial experiment was to showcase the diverse expressions arising from the fusion of pigments and other materials within the context of Chinese landscape paintings. In the early stages, I scouted for suitable base materials, considering beach sand, salt gravel, and quartz sand (Fig 43) (Fig 44) for their potential. After conducting thorough comparisons, I eventually opted for quartz sand as it aligned more closely with the initial experimental sketch I had envisioned.

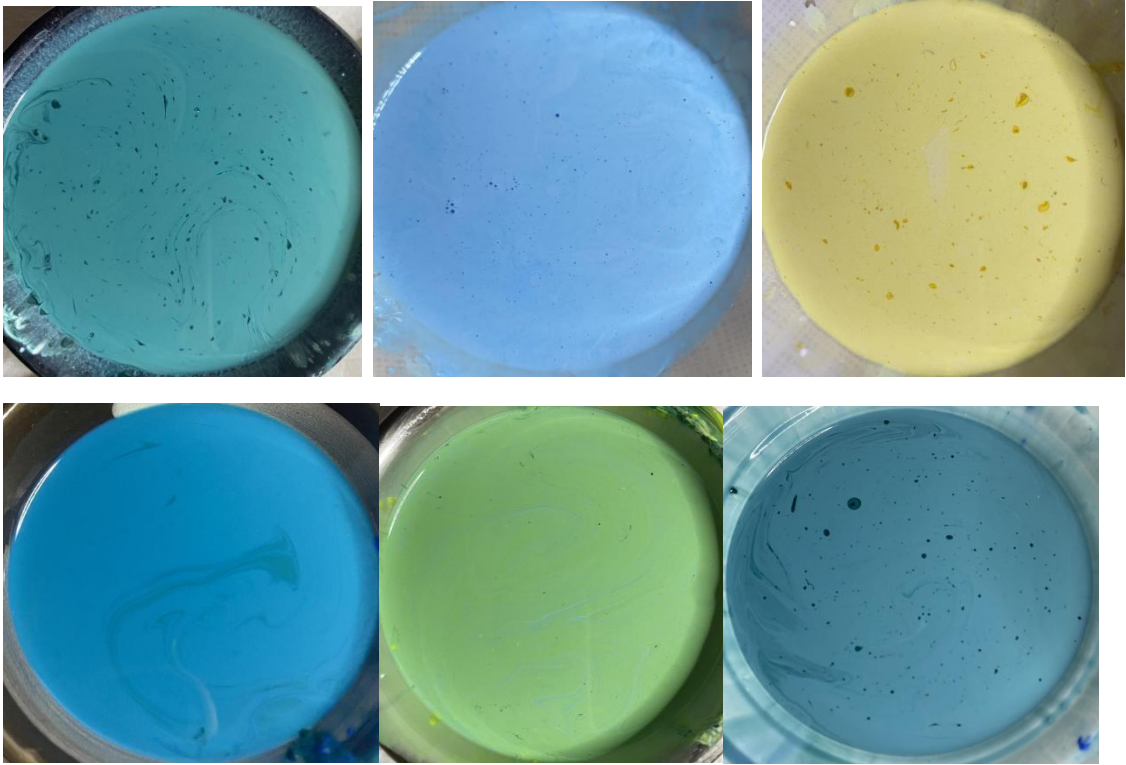
	Color	Staining condition	Melting conditions	Granular	Texture
Salt gravel	white	medium	yes	uniform	hard
Beach sands	mixed colors	medium	no	uneven	medium
Quartz sands	white	strong	no	uniform	hard

**Fig.43. Material comparison**

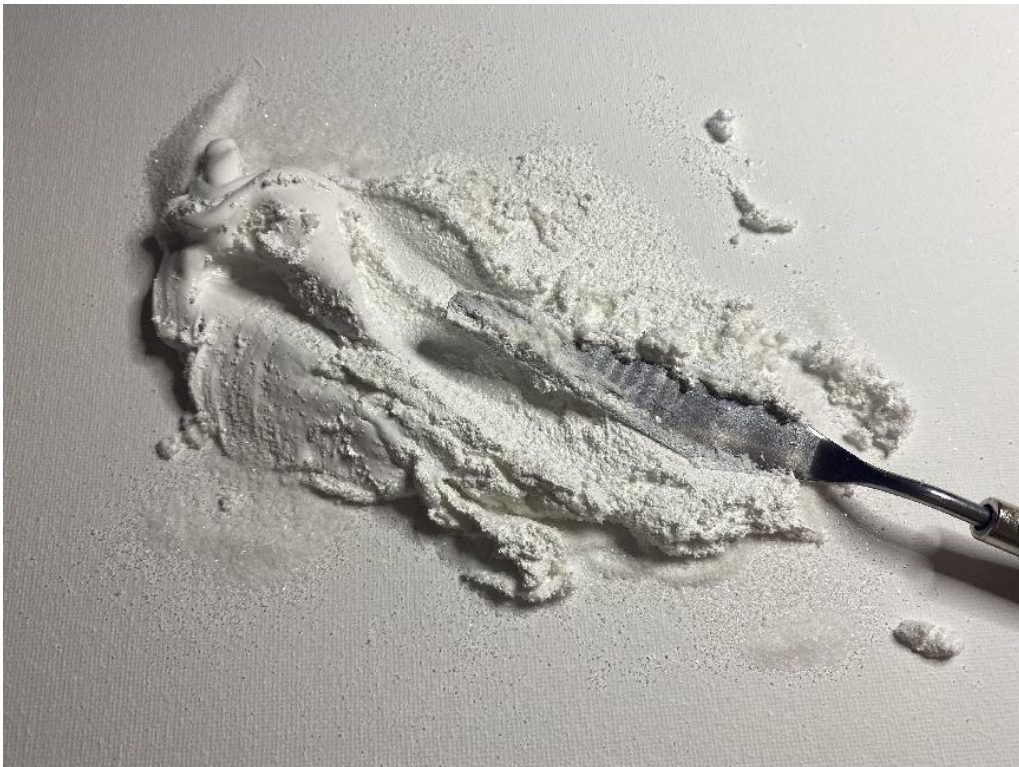


**Fig.44 Quartz sands**

Subsequently, I prepared three colors and combined them in pairs to yield the six colours required for the experiment (Fig 45). I thoroughly mixed these colors with water for later use. During the experimental phase, I blended quartz sand and white acrylic paint in a 1:1 ratio (Fig 46). Acrylic paint possesses excellent adhesive properties and dries relatively quickly. I applied this mixed material to the canvas using a scraper. Given the granular nature of quartz sand, I had to gradually spread it from the center toward the outer edges (Fig 47). While covering the canvas surface entirely, I utilised a triangular-shaped scraper. To facilitate the colour dripping step, I positioned the canvas vertically or tilting it on the table to capitalise on gravity (Fig 48).



**Fig.45. Six desired colors**



**Fig.46. Acrylic paint and quartz sand mixed**



**Fig.47. In the process of paving**

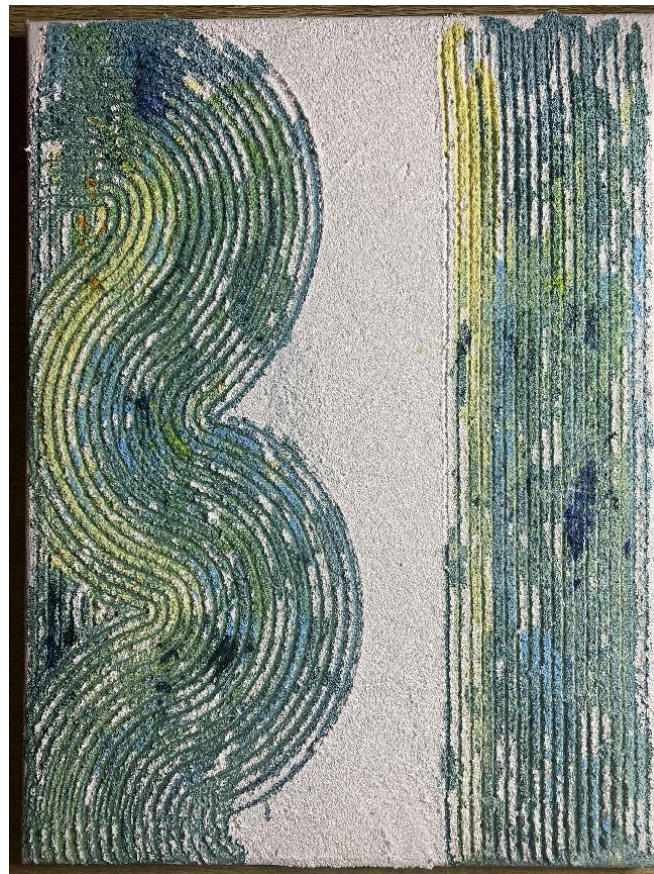


**Fig.48. Drip color after effect**

I then proceeded to the next phase, employing a dropper to randomly select colours and deposit them onto the grooves and ridges of the artwork. These colours would flow

along these natural contours towards the table. I repeated this process until the artwork was completed. With each repetition, the colors blended, and due to the variability in the amount of colour dropped by the dropper, the resulting colours on the canvas were rich, vibrant, and vivid. This experiment effectively underscores the notion that pigments in Chinese landscape paintings shine most brilliantly if the limitations on color mixing ratios are removed.

In summary, the colours meld together under the influence of the ridges and grooves, creating a stark contrast across the entire experimental work. This composition embodies a spontaneous creation guided by lines—both straight and wavy—placing a heightened emphasis on the enjoyable and intuitive artistic process (Fig 49).



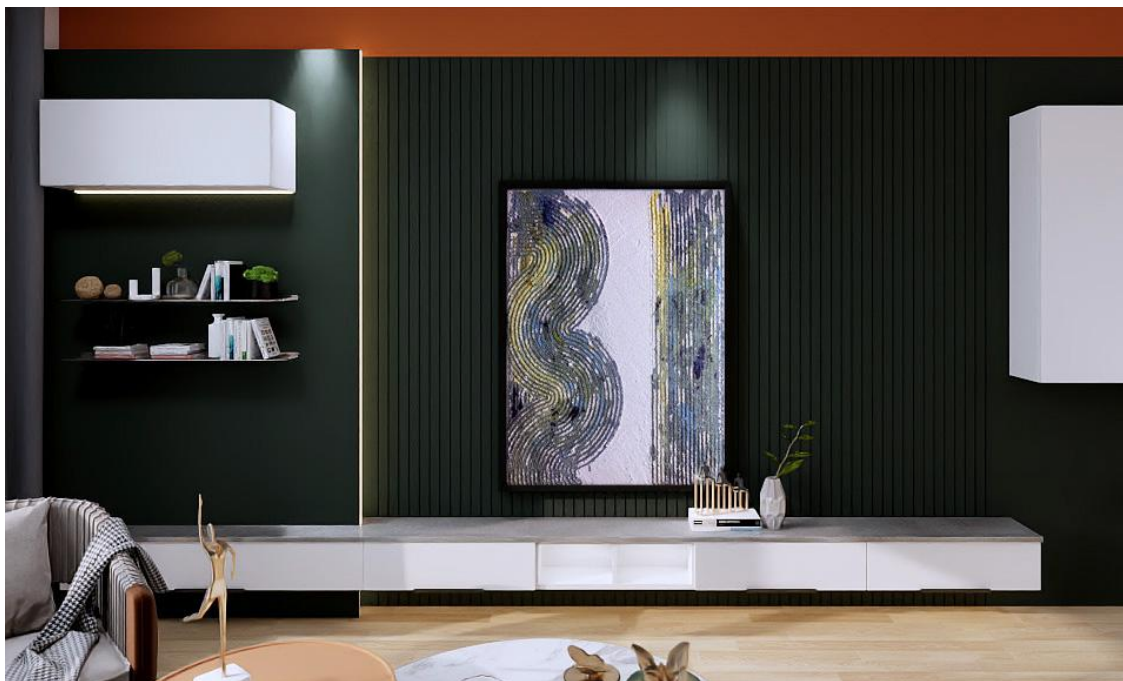
**Fig.49. The final product of Experiment 4**

#### **4.4.2 Conclusion**

Experiment four was conceived to explore the intricate interplay between intuition and

the pigments, alongside other elements, inherent in Chinese landscape painting. Building upon the knowledge and insights derived from my prior exploration of pigments in the context of Chinese landscape art, I embarked on a sequence of purposeful actions. These actions entailed comprehending the precise ratio of Chinese paint to water, expertly transferring it onto the foundation of quartz sand, and employing a dropper to meticulously dispense the paint onto the shaped base, culminating in the creation of a series of vibrant and rhythmic compositions. Within this process, the interplay of colours with the substrate and the fusion of colours with one another manifestly underscore the intuitive approach, thereby engendering distinctive experimental artworks. The entirety of this experimental work unfolds seamlessly in a single continuous process, and the flowing imagery exudes a quintessential Chinese essence.

With the aid of software like Photoshop (PS) and other tools within the realm of spatial design, this experimental work is showcased within various spatial contexts. It serves not only as an ornamental painting (Fig 50) and also as a versatile background or cultural wall (Fig 51).



**Fig.50. The works are framed and displayed in the space**



**Fig.51. The versatile background or cultural wall**

#### **4.5 Experiment 5: Ink Infused Bubbles**

In this segment, I will elucidate my choices of materials and my approach to the creative process, driven by intuitive thinking. I harness the ink-like texture formed through the natural rupture of bubbles. By incorporating water and detergent, I achieve a spectrum of colours within the foam, ranging from black to gray. Subsequently, as I introduce gas, the foam coalesces into clusters, and I closely observe its eruption process. Then, I introduce a stroke of Chinese cinnabar color, infusing the experimental work with even more vibrant and dynamic hues. Through a process of harmonious merging and colour metamorphosis, the final creation emanates with vivacity and vitality, seamlessly integrating into interior spaces and imbuing them with a lively atmosphere.

##### **4.5.1 Experimental preparation and experimental process**

The primary objective of the initial experiment was to showcase the unique expression resulting from the fusion of ink and gas in the context of Chinese ink paintings. This

marked a departure from the conventional practice of exclusively crafting Chinese ink paintings on rice paper. Instead, this experiment encapsulates the uncontrolled ink traces and the capricious flicks of color, thereby accentuating the allure of the traditional Chinese material: ink.

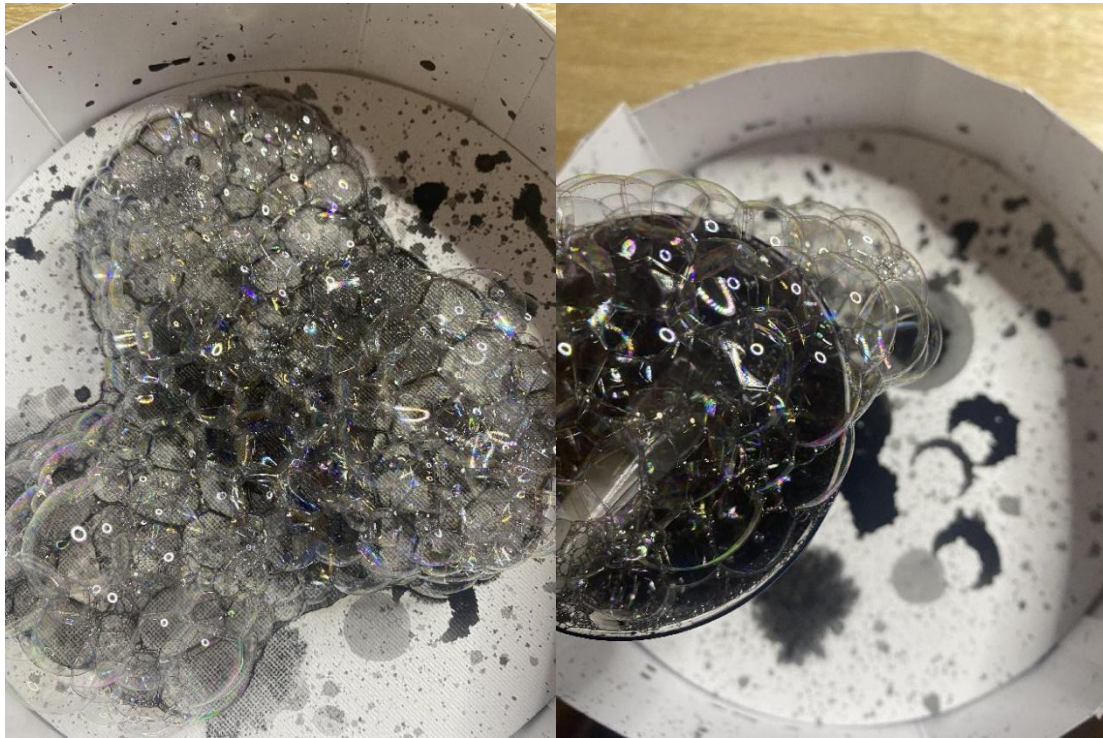
For this experiment, I employed a material consistent with previous trials, Chinese ink. However, in this instance, I combined ink with detergent (Fig 52) and prepared two bubble solutions in varying proportions—one yielding black bubbles and the other producing gray ones.



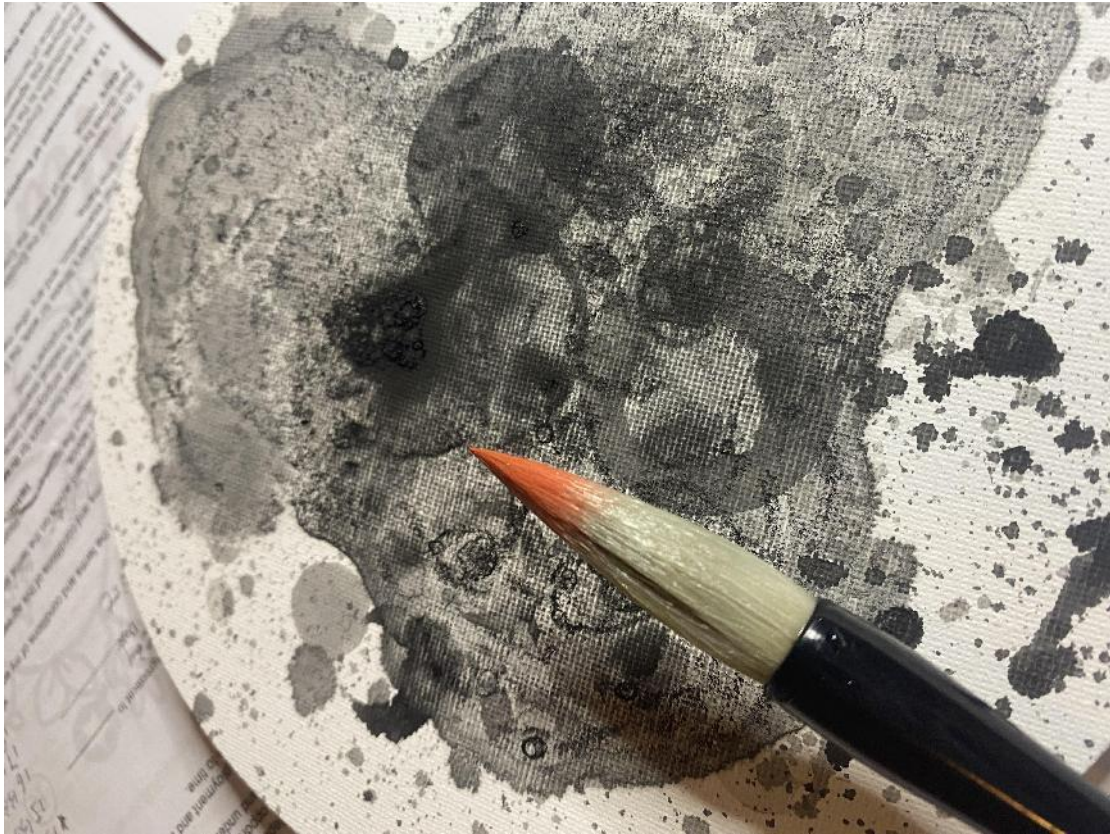
**Fig.52. Detergent-added ink**

During the experimental phase, I encircled a 20cm diameter canvas with rigid paper to prevent the ink from spreading beyond its designated area after the bubbles burst. Subsequently, I introduced gas into the cup containing the bubble solution, generating a profusion of bubbles. I carefully positioned these bubbles onto the canvas (Fig 53) and repeated this process, including a shift to a gray bubble solution. Ultimately, after a

night of drying, the image emerged with shades of black, white, and gray. Recognising the need to infuse some vibrancy into the somewhat monotonous image, I experimented by adding a touch of cinnabar (Fig 54), which imbued the entire composition with increased brightness and vitality.

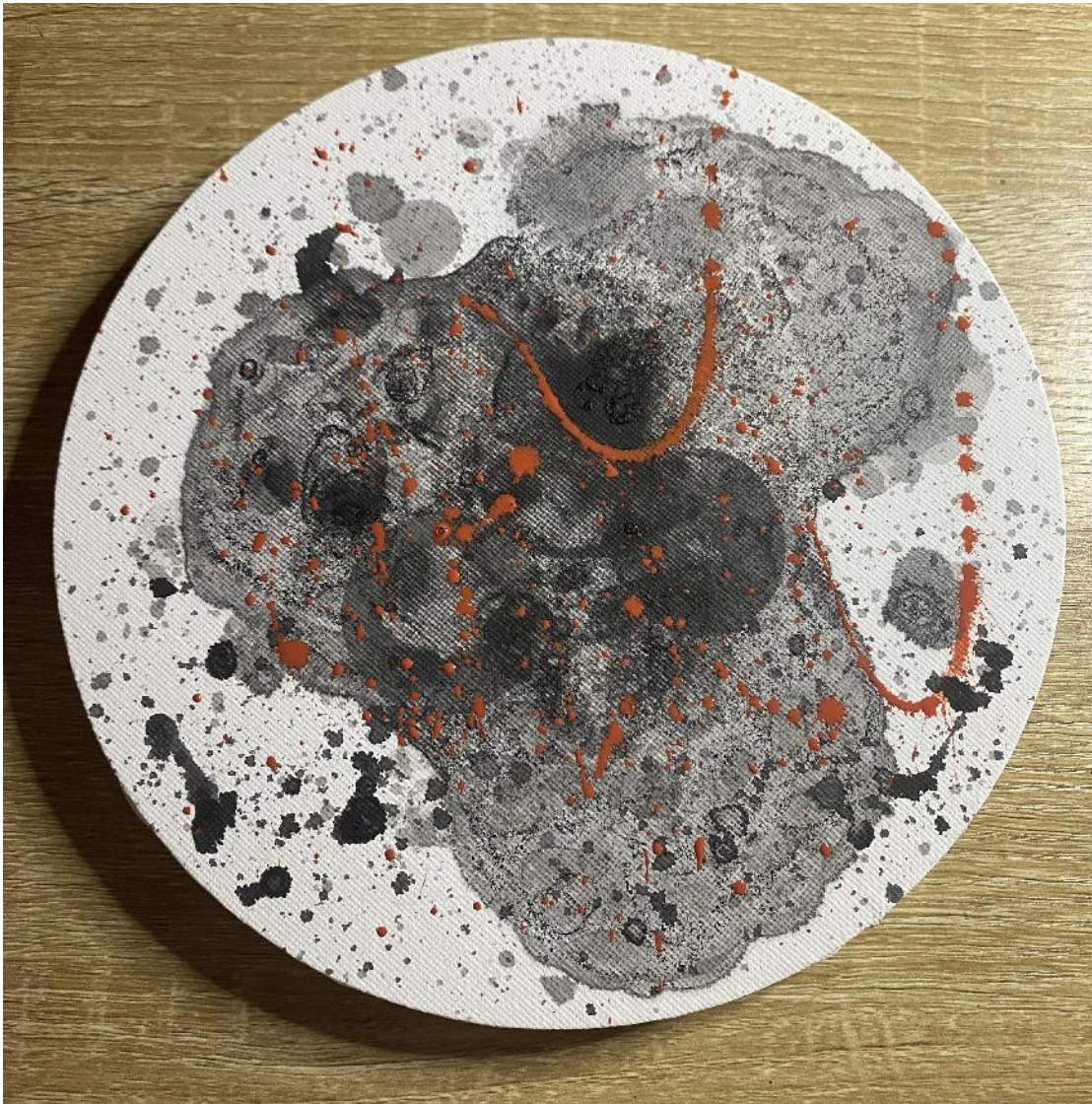


**Fig.53. Ink bubbles and canvas**



**Fig.54. Ready to throw color in**

In summary, once the ink bubbles burst, they leave traces on the canvas, and the layering of the image varies due to the sequence of bursting. This experimental work proved to be gratifying in terms of the final visual outcome and also throughout the experimental process, during which intriguing observations were made. The bubbles take on colour when illuminated by light, and owing to the presence of ink, the entire process of bubble bursting involves a fusion of color and black-and-white elements, resulting in an intuitive, spontaneous and enjoyable artistic process (Fig 55).



**Fig.55. The final product of Experiment 5**

#### **4.5.2 Conclusion**

Experiment 5 sets out to conduct an exploration of the interplay between ink and detergent within the realm of Chinese ink painting. Fueled by my curiosity regarding unconventional ink applications, I initiated a sequence of experimental maneuvers. These maneuvers necessitate giving close attention to the ink-to-water and detergent ratios, along with the introduction of copious amounts of gas, all while carefully observing the canvas. The goal was to craft a dynamic experimental artwork. In this creative process, the ink hues within the bubbles and the addition of cinnabar towards

the end harmoniously resonate and merge, emphasising the intuitive methodology and yielding a distinctive experimental result. The entirety of this experimental endeavor unfurls as a continuous process, and the flowing imagery emanates a quintessential Chinese essence.

Leveraging software tools like Photoshop (PS) and other resources within the field of spatial design, this experimental work is showcased across a range of spatial contexts. It serves not only as a decorative painting (Fig 56) and also as a versatile indoor adornment, or in other decorative roles (Fig 57).



**Fig.56. Decorative painting expression**



**Fig.57. Decorative carpet**

#### **4.6 Experiment 6: Denim Collage**

In this segment, I elucidate my choice of materials and the methodology guiding my creative process, which is rooted in intuitive thinking. I procured multiple pairs of jeans in various colors from a second-hand store, disassembling them to obtain a diverse array of denim swatches. Subsequently, I employed the seams in a tie-dyeing technique of the Bai ethnic minority in China to artfully combine and splice them together. Notably, this splicing process eschews the use of adhesives, relying entirely on meticulous seaming. The resulting texture of the final product mirrors that of denim, thus achieving two significant outcomes: infusing the interior space with an assortment of distinctive Chinese colours while forging a unique connection between denim and Chinese aesthetics.

##### **4.6.1 Experimental preparation and experimental process**

The primary objective of the initial experiment was to showcase the stitching technique

inherent in traditional Chinese tie-dyeing craftsmanship. The Bai ethnic minority in China is renowned for their proficiency in tie-dyeing, and I chose to employ one of their primary methods: stitching, folding, binding, and then dyeing denim of various colours. Throughout this sewing process, I not only enjoyed the act of sewing I also appreciated the beauty of these traditional Chinese techniques.

Initially, I was drawn to jeans of varying colours while I was perusing second-hand stores. Many of these garments bore the marks of a long and well-lived life. I purchased them and meticulously disassembled them into individual fabric pieces (Fig 58), retaining the imprints of the lives they once adorned. I also acquired thread in various colours, encompassing both cotton and wool varieties.



**Fig.58. Different colors of denim**

During the experiment, I arranged denim pieces of assorted sizes, stacking them to form a square with smaller pieces on top and larger ones below. I secured them with pins to ensure they retained their shape while I sewed (Fig 59). I then employed various stitching methods to connect the denim swatches, including snowflake patterns, small floral designs, large floral motifs, cross patterns, subtraction patterns, and

side-by-side stitching (Fig 60). Finally, I used two small, tie-dyed pieces to complete the entire artwork, providing the finishing touch. This experiment demanded significant time, particularly due to the intricate sewing process.



**Fig.59. Denim layout**



**Fig.60. Sewing pattern**

In summary, this experimental work is marked by the interplay of different shades of denim, accentuated by the seams and the imprints of life. The result is a highly detailed piece that further underscores the intuitive artistic process, replete with vitality (Fig 61).



**Fig.61. The final product of Experiment 6**

#### **4.6.2 Conclusion**

Experiment six is designed to investigate the interplay between Chinese quilting techniques and Western denim. To delve into the intricacies of sewing technology, I applied six distinct sewing techniques to a final piece measuring 65cm by 65cm. I also employed various methods of overlapping the sewing patterns. In total, the entire artwork incorporated eight distinct sewing techniques, with absolutely no use of adhesive. The meticulous sewing method creates a stark contrast with the denim, which bears the imprints of life. This experimental work strikes a harmonious balance

between precision and vitality, offering viewers a refreshing experience. The complete experimental process involves ten consecutive stages, with each stitching detail reflecting a distinct Chinese style.

Leveraging software tools like Photoshop (PS) and other resources within the field of spatial design, this experimental work is showcased across a range of spatial settings. It serves as an ornamental painting (Fig 62) and also as a versatile interior decoration that can be employed as a throw pillow or for other decorative purposes (Fig 63).



**Fig. 62. Decorative painting expression**



**Fig.63. Decorative pillow**

#### **4.7 Experiment 7: Pine Bark Arrangements**

In this section, I elucidate my selection of materials and the methodologies that underpin my creative process, which are grounded in intuitive thinking. This experiment differs from the previous one in a significant way—I opted not to employ Chinese ink and Chinese paint. Instead, I chose pine wood blocks that I gathered from the roadside. The choice of pine wood is deliberate, as in the realm of Chinese landscape paintings, pine trees hold a prominent position as one of the most favored tree species for artistic expression. This selection is rooted in the belief that everything should possess a distinct and meaningful conceptual essence (McMahon, 2003), and this includes pine trees.

In Chinese classical literature, the pine tree is often depicted as a symbol of the ideal gentleman, representing virtues such as self-discipline and perseverance. Each piece of pine wood I selected is a result of the natural shedding of pine bark during the tree's growth, and each piece boasts a unique and unrepeatable shape. By affixing these

pieces to the canvas, they collectively create diverse forms and directions, thereby generating distinct textures and providing viewers with a unique visual experience. This experimental artwork has the capacity to infuse various distinctive Chinese beliefs into interior spaces.

#### **4.7.1 Experimental preparation and experimental process**

Even though the primary objective of the initial experiment was to showcase the distinctiveness of each individual piece of pine wood, I stumbled upon unexpected results as I combined them together.

During the initial phase of material selection, I came across pine wood blocks that greatly appealed to me. I collected two such blocks of differing sizes—one larger and one very small. Ultimately, I chose the larger one (Fig 64) due to the difficulty in integrating the smaller one. Over time, the smaller block tended to attract numerous small bugs.



**Fig.64. Collected pine wood pieces**

During the experimental stage, initially I arranged the pine wood blocks on the canvas in a rudimentary manner (Fig 65). The outcome was rather ordinary, as the uniformity of their placement led to minimal variation. The overall composition appeared dull and rigid. However, drawing inspiration from Van Gogh's painting "Starry Night," I reorganised the pine wood blocks and affixed them to a 45cm by 35cm canvas using white latex. This transformation infused the entire artwork with newfound vitality and liveliness.



**Fig.65. Initial placement**

In summary, many Chinese individuals possess a unique sentiment towards pine trees, and this sentiment was fully encapsulated in my experiment. I deliberately employed different arrangements and spacing for the pine wood blocks (Fig 66), imbuing the entire composition with a distinctive rhythm. The spontaneous creation of points, lines, and surfaces within the artwork (Fig 67) further underscores the enjoyment and intuitive nature of the artistic process.



**Fig.66. Arrangement of pine wood blocks**



**Fig.67. The final product of Experiment 7**

#### **4.7.2 Conclusion**

Experiment 7 aimed to explore the influence of pine on my creative instincts, leading to the careful selection and examination of pine blocks. Guided by intuitive thinking, I translated the arrangement and placement of these blocks onto the canvas. Using white latex as a binding agent, I effectively showcased a textured and substantial decorative

element, infusing the artwork with a sense of natural beauty that is both environmentally conscious and design oriented. Additionally, this approach contributes to enhancing the spatial ambiance within indoor environments, elevating both the aesthetic and comfort aspects.

This experimental piece is showcased in various spatial settings using software tools such as Photoshop (PS) and other resources from the field of spatial design. It not only serves as an embellished painting (refer to Fig 68) it also functions as a versatile interior decoration with multifunctional utility, including applications for indoor flooring (as depicted in Fig 69).



**Fig. 68. Decorative painting expression**



**Fig.69. Indoor applications**

## 5. Analysis of Expert Feedback

### 5.1 Overview of the sample

The analysis and findings reported in this chapter are based on a questionnaire containing 11 open questions answered by eight respondents. This qualitative research explored the way intuition is understood by designers in term of how and when it is utilised and its effects on the design process. All the respondents were adults aged 18 years of age or older working in the design profession. The data encompasses demographic details (such as professional background, work location, years of experience, and professional roles), the significance of intuition in design, its practical implementation, and methods for nurturing intuition, among other aspects.

#### 5.1.1 Disclosure of personal information



Figure 70. Disclosure of personal information (screenshot 1)

### 5.1.2 Respondents by occupation

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Interior designer	25.00% 2
2	Architect	12.50% 1
3	Design educator	25.00% 2
4	PhD student	12.50% 1
5	Other* (please detail here)	25.00% 2
6	Product designer	0.00% 0
		8

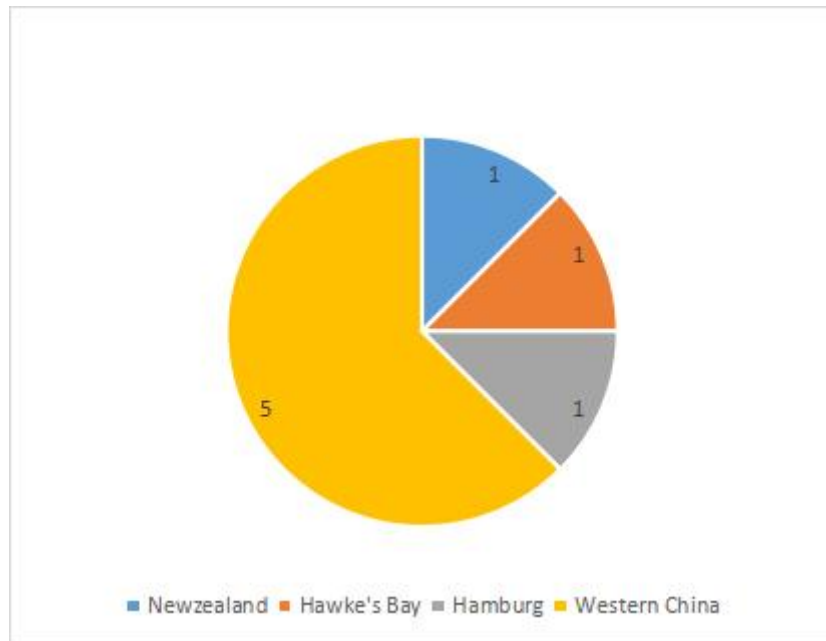
Figure 71. Respondent's by occupation (screenshot 2)

### 5.1.3 Respondent's year of employment

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Under 5 years	0.00% 0
2	5-10 years	50.00% 4
3	10-20 years	25.00% 2
4	More than 20 years	25.00% 2
		8

Figure 72. Respondent's year of employment (screenshot 3)

### 5.1.4 Respondent's workplace



**Figure 73. Respondent's workplace (screenshot 4)**

According to Figures 70 to 73, only one of the eight interviewees was unwilling to answer the question anonymously. These eight designers include interior designers, architectural designers, design educators, and so on. (graphic design teachers, designers and artists), and while most have worked for between 5-10 years, while two people have worked for 10-20 years and more than 20 years, respectively. The designers work in New Zealand, Hamburg and cities in western China.

### 5.2 Define intuition.

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Reacting instinctively without the need for conscious reasoning	50.00% 4
2	A response based on feeling farther than logic	37.50% 3
3	Knowing something without proof or evidence	0.00% 0
4	Sensing rather than knowing	0.00% 0
5	Other* (Please add you definition here)	12.50% 1
		8

**Figure 74. Define intuition (screenshot 5)**

Figure 74 shows that half of the experts believe that intuition is an instinctive reaction without the need for conscious reasoning, and another smaller group believes that intuition is a reaction based on feelings that transcend logic. Only one person suggests that intuition is a reaction that transcends conscious and logical proof or reaction.

### 5.3 The importance of intuition in the design process

1	Not at all important	0.00%	0
2	Slightly important	0.00%	0
3	Moderately important	0.00%	0
4	Very important	50.00%	4
5	Extremely important	50.00%	4
			8

**Figure 75. The importance of intuition in design (screenshot 6)**

Figure 75 shows that all respondents agreed that intuition is indeed important in the design process.

#### 5.3.2 The special importance of intuition at work

Can you say why intuition has this particular level of importance in your p...

Intuition is the designer's response to the experience accumulated over a long period of time, which can be the first impression of a certain concept in the brain, which is different from the stereotype.

Intuition resides in the subconscious, going beyond the surface of rational thought. Deep in the subconscious we are removed from the distracting clutter and beguiling nature of surface life. It is only here that we can access true creativity.

设计有其内在逻辑，基于从业经验和多年的专业基础，直觉有助于快速建立对设计对象的认知，并准确做出设计反馈。  
Design relies on its inherent logic, and intuition, shaped by years of experiences, aids in swiftly grasping design concepts and offering precise feedback.

It allows me to be not bound to a certain logic at the beginning phase of a project and helps me to think outside the box  
It prepares for early-stage design, add value in customer communication, guides mind map creation, and forms a valuable foundation for design development.

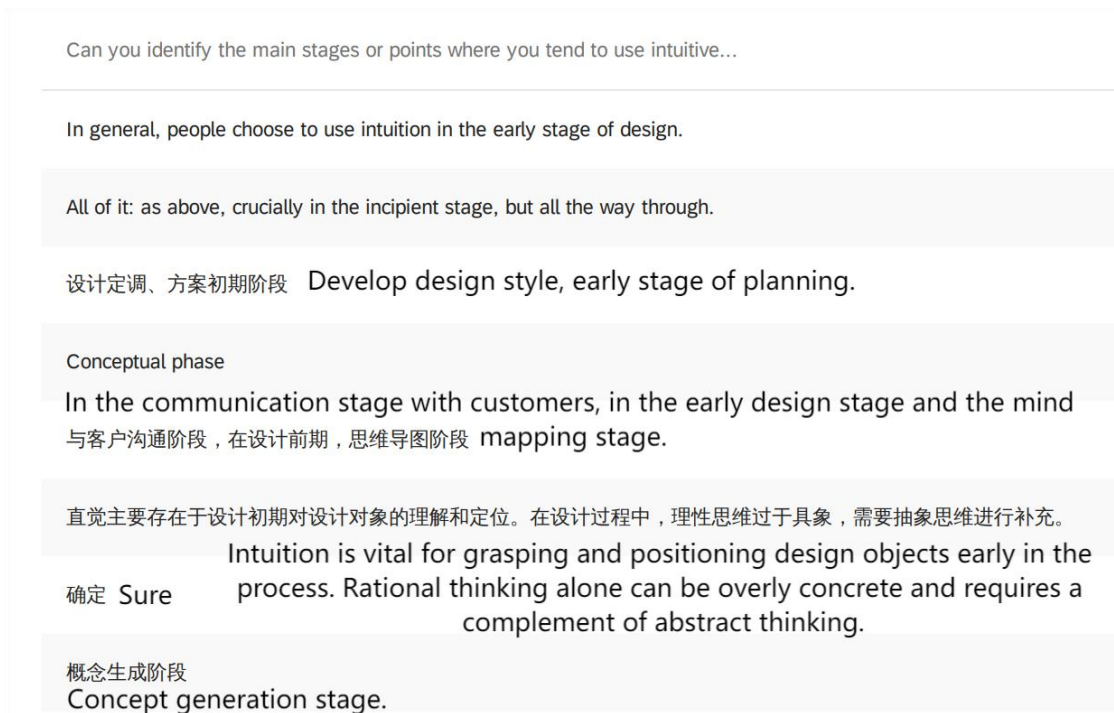
可以为设计前期做重要准备，在于客户沟通过程中可以提供更多参考价值，为思维导图的展开提供先导，为设计展开提供有价值的基础

**Figure 76. The special importance of intuition at work (screenshot 7)**

Figure 76 shows responses that recognise that intuition is a product of the designer's

extensive accumulated expertise, residing within the subconscious mind. It transcends mere rational thinking and proves valuable in promoting creative thinking beyond conventional boundaries. In contrast to preconceived notions, intuition was identified by one designer as also serving as an effective means of communication with clients.

### 5.3.3 Stages of using intuition in the design process



**Figure 77. Stages of using intuition in the design process (screenshot 8)**

Figure 77 shows that most participants in the survey used intuition to make choices in the early stages of design, from which it can be proposed that intuition plays an undeniable role in ideation and design development.

## 5.4 Cultivation of intuition

Are there any conditions, techniques or methods you have developed or adopt...

---

Accumulate more in daily work, study and daily life, which will erupt one day in the future.

Allow the "unguarded moment". Leave an idea lying around, live with it, and then one day you might suddenly find yourself catching a glimpse of it in a wholly new way. And that insight is the closest you will get to an objective clarity, devoid of ego and outside influence. Intuitive thinking is also haptic, a knowledge embedded in the body, laid down in the fabric of muscles by repetitive manual work.

暂无 None yet

brainstorming and work with a lot of visual materials

思维导图 Mind Mapping

有, 利用参数化设计可以使工作更加高效、可控、直观  
Yes, using parametric design can make work more efficient, controllable and intuitive.

积累经验, 多参观 Gain experience and need visit more design exhibitions.

有 Yes

**Figure 78. Cultivation of intuition (screenshot 9)**

Figure 78 shows that Intuition is considered a transformation of a generative process. Through the daily accumulation of relevant experience and knowledge, designers can enhance their insights and better approach an objective and clear approach. Intuition is knowledge embedded in the body. Once formed, it's like what's called "muscle memory." It follows that intuition's emphasis on daily accumulation means that regular engagement and learning are critical to honing intuitive abilities.

## 5.5 The possibility of intuition being eliminated from the design process.

#	Field	Choice Count
1	No	62.50% 5
2	Yes* (Can you identify these exclusion points here)	37.50% 3

8

**Figure 79. The possibility of intuition being eliminated from the design process (screenshot 10)**

Figure 79 shows that the most participants recognised that intuition runs throughout the entire design process. Three individuals suggested that intuitive thinking can't be used in all stages of the design process, because sometimes it is necessary to develop a design according to legal specifications. Such work requires systematic, logical thinking. Therefore, intuition can be used selectively rather than completely throughout the design process. This is also a choice that varies from person to person.

## 5.6 Intuitive feedback

Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to include?

Intuition has an indispensable role in design, and it can help designers work more efficiently

Rational or logical design is engineering, intuitive design is art. That is the difference. Engineering is built on what we know. Art extends what we know.

没有 None

无 None

好的直觉是需要长期的知识沉淀和经验的积累 Good intuition requires long-term accumulation of knowledge and experience.

**Figure 80. Intuitive feedback (screenshot 11)**

Figure 80 shows that intuition plays an indispensable role in design, as it can help designers work more effectively. While rational or logical design is engineering (Tribus, 2013), while intuitive design is art (Mortensen, 2019). While Engineering Design is mostly built on what is known, Art expands what we know. As the result, successful design involves a delicate balance between reason and intuition, taking advantage of engineering precision and artistic creativity. This nuanced approach is critical to solving the various challenges inherent in the design process.

## 5.7 Summary of findings

The survey to gather the opinions of expert designers about intuition confirmed the importance of intuition in the design process. While some designers recognised those

certain parts of the design process required logical thinking (especially technical areas), all respondents acknowledged the use of intuition in design development as fundamental.

The interviewees in the study include native New Zealanders, Chinese and Chinese who have lived in Germany for a long time. Although their regions are different, they have the same or similar ideas in using intuitive thinking in design. They also stated that the research results confirmed the idea that intuitive thinking is an indispensable and important aspect of the design process. Designers believe intuition is a valuable instinctive response and it does not always require conscious reasoning. It plays a vital role in the early stages of design, especially during the conception and development stages. Furthermore, it is seen as the result of expertise accumulated subconsciously by the designer. Intuition helps promote creative thinking beyond traditional boundaries and serves as a means of effective communication with clients

Overall, the research findings confirm that intuition is highly regarded in the design field and is recognised as an indispensable element for successful and creative design work.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

In this chapter, the project's limitations are explored, detailing technical challenges and time constraints encountered in seven distinct experiments. These challenges range from material shedding and calligraphy skill constraints to issues with glass balls and sedimentation in pigments. Adaptive strategies and problem-solving approaches are evident in response to these challenges, showcasing the experimenter's dynamic and efficient engagement. The outcomes of the project, influenced by artistic inspirations from Tony Cragg and Max Ernst, are discussed, highlighting the project's emotional and sensory engagement. The chapter concludes by emphasising the applicability of the project's findings to Chinese interior design, showcasing its potential impact on the field and expressing the joy of learning and exploration reignited throughout the experimental journey. Additionally, the unanimous agreement among designers on the significance of intuition in the design process, as revealed in the survey findings, further underscores the project's contributions to design knowledge.

### **6.1 Project Limitations**

The seven distinct experiments explored within this project were accompanied by various technical limitations. For instance, in Experiment 1, during the brush crafting process, the selection of materials led to the shedding of certain long dry grass and leaves. Some leaves even fractured due to excessive force, necessitating the adoption of more pliable dry leaves, albeit at the cost of significant effort to firmly secure them firmly. This resulted in a time-intensive procedure, ultimately yielding the desired outcome.

In Experiment 2, despite my Chinese heritage, my calligraphy skills were constrained, compelling me to convey only the most rudimentary forms. The ultimate recourse was to employ straightforward joining and stitching techniques. Experiment 3 introduced glass balls, chosen somewhat arbitrarily, as my initial contemplation revolved around the use of wooden balls. The glass balls' sleek surface posed challenges, inducing

irregular ink staining and a slight deviation in the rolling trajectory. The final output fell short of complete satisfaction, characterised by a spontaneous and intuitive process devoid of a deliberate quest for uniform rolling trajectories.

Experiment 4 presented its own set of hurdles. In the process of mingling Chinese pigments with water, sedimentation occurred if left unused for even brief intervals, this adversely affected the visual appeal of the artwork. To address this issue, adjustments were made, that involved thorough pigment stirring and immediate utilisation within the initial minutes to mitigate sedimentation.

Experiment 5 encountered complexities in deploying bubbles to illustrate ink traces, chiefly owing to the detergent's viscosity. Initially, the bubbles manifested as mere black circles devoid of rings, a consequence of an unfamiliar detergent density. The meticulous addition of water was necessary to pinpoint the precise proportion and ultimately convey the bubble traces on the canvas.

Experiment 6 demanded substantial time for cutting the denim fabric and subsequent sewing. Sustaining uniform dimensions during the sewing phase proved challenging, leading to protracted sewing and disassembly periods. To enhance efficiency, I resorted to outlining approximate ranges with strokes. Nonetheless, in the ultimate stitching, divergent stitching methods were employed, successfully attaining the desired appearance and effect.

In the concluding Experiment 7, the pine wood blocks, procured in the project's early stages, had accumulated pests due to extended storage. Consequently, new blocks were obtained, albeit in a somewhat moist state, necessitating a three-day sun-drying process before resuming the experiment. These limitations prolonged the experimental timeline, extending it beyond just a week or two to over a month.

In future research endeavors, it will be advantageous to accord heightened significance

to conceptual aspects and not solely concentrate on experimental materials. The prospect of conducting thought experiments to elucidate the application and repercussions of inductive intuition holds the promise of yielding valuable insights.

## **6.2 Survey and Project outcomes**

The survey findings revealed unanimous concurrence among the eight participating designers, originating from both China and New Zealand. They collectively affirmed that surface intuition has its roots in empirical knowledge. It was widely recognised that individuals can engage in intuitive processing predominantly since they possess antecedent experiential knowledge to draw upon. Intuition, often functioning at a subconscious level, remains elusive for verbalisation and recall, rendering it arduous to explicate the decision-making process grounded in intuition. Nevertheless, its efficiency surpasses that of conscious cognitive processing, often yielding expedited outcomes. Designers universally underscored the paramount significance of intuition in the design process. Esteemed New Zealand designer David Trubridge (2023) conveyed this perspective, asserting that intuition resides within the subconscious, transcending the realm of rational thought. He contended genuine creativity blossoms deep within the subconscious, liberated from the disruptions of the tumultuous surface-level existence.

My exploration of artist Tony Cragg's oeuvre ignited a plethora of experimental ideas, predominantly centered around the concept of unearthing beauty in life. It underscored the notion that many facets of beauty can be summoned through the astute arrangement of original materials, varying elevations, or distinctions in hues and do not necessitate artificial augmentation. Additionally, my research drew inspiration from another luminary artist, Max Ernst, whose artistic creations are notable for a profusion of chromatic splendor, fluid brushwork, and figurative expressionism. Ernst's works exhibit a remarkable visual impact, leaving an enduring and profound impression upon observers. The artistic endeavors of these two luminaries served as a fertile wellspring of inspiration for the seven experiments conducted within this study, substantiating and

fortifying these intuitive concepts.

Intuitive discovery often thrives upon prior experiences and serendipitous encounters with raw materials germane to the ongoing experiment. This experimental odyssey was characterised by the amalgamation and harnessing of diverse materials, underpinning the concept that intuition operates at a subconscious level. This unique attribute is conspicuously manifested in the absence of identical components within this experimental work. Whether it be the intricate fire patterns, the imprints of bursting bubbles, the unrestrained fusion of traditional Chinese color schemes, or the interstices and voids born of the assembly of pine wood blocks, each element boasts its own distinctive attributes and idiosyncrasies. Throughout this creative journey, I derived profound gratification, through auditory engagement occasionally, and not solely through visual, olfactory, and tactile sensations. These experiences engendered substantial enjoyment and they align with Helander and Khalid's (2006) observation that mild positive emotional stimulation triggers the release of dopamine, the "feel-good" hormone. Moreover, these objects incited heightened engagement and physical exploration.

In both the initial and subsequent phases of the experiments, I harnessed Photoshop (PS) to seamlessly integrate the outcomes within authentic real-world settings, cultivating an ambiance imbued with precisely the right atmosphere. Despite the amalgamation of materials from both Chinese and Western provenance, the primary aim was to underscore that the application of intuition transcends Western contexts and is equally germane to the domain of Chinese interior design.

With years devoted to the study of interior design, these experiments rekindled the joy of learning and exploration, fostering interaction with a diverse array of materials and delivering immense satisfaction. In the words of Csikszentmihalyi, this immersive state of engagement, referred to as "flow," involves which entails being so deeply engrossed in an activity that all other considerations recede into insignificance, impelled solely by

the intrinsic gratification derived from the activity itself (1990). I firmly believe that this gratifying experiment, employing a myriad of strategies, seeks to influence not only the experimenter it also seeks to manifest its applicability within the domain of Chinese interior design.

### **6.3 Future Areas of Research**

This project has the potential to further advance intuitive artistic creations by exploring the amalgamation of traditional Chinese materials with serendipitously acquired local materials. This endeavor is not solely concerned with materials; it is imbued with intuitive thinking and experimental application, culminating in its manifestation within Chinese interior spaces.

To gain a more profound comprehension of intuition, several of aspects would require further research and experiments that can effectively garner intuitive thinking, thus delving more deeply into the abstract concept of intuition. Envisioned future research directions include the following.

**Cross-Cultural Comparative Study:** Undertaking cross-cultural investigations to carefully examine the variances in the intuitive design process across diverse cultural milieus. This inquiry will examine the presence of culture-specific forms of design intuition and their influence on creative outputs.

**Augmenting Design Education:** Exploring strategies for infusing intuitive design principles into educational curricula. Pioneering inventive pedagogical approaches geared toward nurturing and harnessing students' innate intuitive design aptitude.

**Neuroscientific Exploration:** Collaborating with neuroscientists to conduct neuroimaging studies during design tasks, with the aim of unraveling the neural mechanisms underpinning design intuition. This initiative is poised to furnish invaluable insights into the cognitive processes involved.

**Advancements in Design Tools and Technology:** Pioneering the development of intuitive design tools and software engineered to empower designers in unleashing their intuitive capabilities. The potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning to augment intuitive design procedures will be explored.

**Human-Centric Design Examination:** Investigating the role of intuition in user-centered design methodologies, elucidating how designers can effectively empathise with end-users and intuitively cater to their requisites and preferences.

**Synergy of Design Thinking and Intuition:** An exploration of the converging realms of design thinking methodologies and intuitive design processes, investigating how these paradigms can synergistically catalyse innovation.

**Design Intuition within Specific Disciplines:** Immersing in particular design domains such as interior design, industrial design, graphic design, and architecture, with the intent of unveiling the distinctive manifestations of intuition within each realm.

**Collaborative Design Dynamics:** Unpacking the role of intuition in collaborative design efforts, elucidating whether design teams harness collective intuition and the consequent implications on design outcomes.

**Sensory Design Investigation:** Investigating the influence of sensory experiences (visual, auditory, tactile, and so on) on intuitive design, elucidating how designers exploit sensory cues to augment their intuitive decision-making.

**Ethical Dimensions of Design Intuition:** Pondering the ethical facets of intuitive design, including potential biases and inadvertent consequences. Conceiving a moral framework for conscientious intuitive design practices.

**Assessment of Intuitive Design Outcomes:** Developing quantifiable metrics and appraisal methodologies tailored to intuitive design processes, with an aim to quantify the impact of intuitive design on user satisfaction, ingenuity, and problem-solving acumen.

**Real-World Application:** Applying intuitive design tenets to tackle tangible design quandaries, for example sustainable design, healthcare design, and urban planning, followed by an appraisal of their efficacy in resolving multifaceted issues.

**Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration between designers and experts in fields such as psychology, anthropology, environmental science, and more, to garner multifaceted insights into intuitive design.

**Longitudinal Exploration:** Launching longitudinal studies to trial the maturation of designers' intuitive competencies over time and the consequential impact of experience on the intuitive design process.

**Cultural Adaptation:** Delving into the domain regarding how designers adapt their intuitive processes to align with cultural predilections, norms, and values in global design endeavors.

The research framework encompassing these 15 concepts highlights the complex and protracted nature of inquiry into the realm of intuition. It underscores the notion that a thorough grasp of intuitive thinking is essential to gain deeper insights into people's design thought processes within specific cognitive paradigms. This endeavor is not merely a research undertaking; rather, it represents a journey of self-improvement for a designer. Thus, I perceive these envisioned research trajectories as a constellation of enticing opportunities to embark on an in-depth exploration of the intricacies intrinsic to the intuitive design process. Moreover, they promise to augment our comprehension of the way intuition can serve as a potent catalyst to fuel innovation, nurture creativity,

and formulate solutions anchored in user-centric design principles. As the domain of interior design continues its evolution, forthcoming designers will grapple with the ongoing challenge of incessantly innovating, assimilating novel elements, and refining and elevating time-honored classics.

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## Appendix 1.

### Questionnaire

#### Using intuitive thinking in design.

1. I agree to take part in this research. I ask that the information by me will be treated

as

- Anonymous
- Attributed to me in the thesis pending my approval of any citation or related commentary.

2. How would you describe your professional role?

- Interior designer
- Architect
- Design educator
- PHD student
- Others \_\_\_\_\_
- Product designer

3. How many years have you worked professionally in this field?

- Under 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years

More than 20 years

4. What is the main city or region you work in?

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5. How would you define intuition:

Reacting instinctively without the need for conscious reasoning.

A response based on feeling farther than logic.

Knowing something without proof or evidence.

Sensing rather than knowing.

other (please add you definition here)

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6. How important is intuition in your design process?

Not at all important

Slightly important

Moderately important

Very important

Extremely important

7. Can you say why intuition has this particular level of importance in your process?

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8. Can you identify the main stages or points where you tend to use intuitive thinking during your design process?

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9. Are there any conditions, techniques or methods you have developed or adopted to enable you to work more intuitively?

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10. Are there any stages or points in the design process where intuitive thinking should be excluded?

No

Yes (can you identify these exclusion points here) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to include?

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