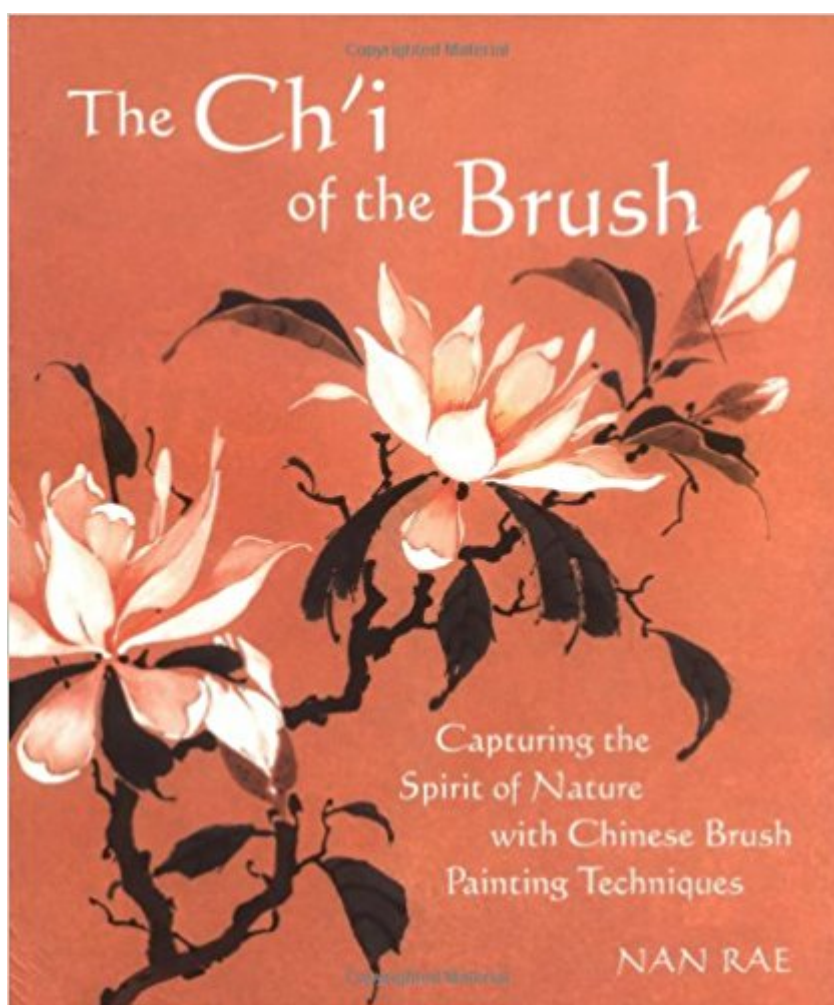


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The Ch'i Of The Brush: Capturing The Spirit Of Nature With Chinese Brush Painting Techniques



Synopsis

The Chinese have a saying, "From heart to arm . . . to hand . . . to brush . . . to paper." This epitomizes the concept of Hsieh-i, or the "written idea," the spontaneous, expressive approach to Chinese brush painting known as the Literati, or free-form style. In *The Charm of the Brush*, artist Nan Rae illustrates the fundamental elements and traditional motifs of the Literati style, which seeks to transcend the mere representation of a subject to capture its *chi*, or life force, by using a minimum of brush strokes for maximum effect. In the Literati style, no sketches are prepared and no models are used; instead, the artist paints with rapid, intuitive movements of the brush that convey his or her "mind image" of the subject. Nan Rae's unique approach to Chinese brush painting combines the grace of the Literati style with an impressionist approach to color. In Part 1, "Preparing for Your Journey," Rae discusses the creative roots and various styles of Chinese brush painting, as well as the materials, techniques, and state of mind needed when approaching this intuitive painting style. In Part 2, a series of step-by-step worksheets demonstrates how to paint "Enchanting Flowers" (iris, wisteria, magnolia, and others) as well as "Captivating Creatures" (panda, bird, crane, dragonfly, and more). Finally, "Finishing Touches" shows how to mount a completed painting and add traditional Chinese seals. Interest in Chinese brush painting is strong. The presentation of traditional motifs makes this painting style accessible to artists at all skill levels. Filled with lush, full-color artwork in a charming, sophisticated package.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Chinese have a saying, "From heart to arm - to hand....to brush....to paper." This epitomizes

the concept of Hsieh-i, or the "written idea," the spontaneous, expressive approach to Chinese brush painting known as the Literati, or free-form style.

Nan Rae trained as an artist in the Western tradition at the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Colorado. A visit in 1980 to Monet's home in Giverny inspired her study of Chinese brush painting, and she has taught its techniques since 1984. She lives in Burbank, CA.

I liked her enthusiasm. Like she says, copying is the first step before trying your own creativity, so nothing wrong if she has copied the ancient Mustard Green classic examples. What I liked best was the spirit and attitude she conveys. There are a few places where I wish she had given a few more details of the brush stroke (for example, when painting the curled leaves). I find this book both enjoyable and instructive. I am finding it useful to move away from my stilted and contrived manner (I'm a beginner to watercolour and Chinese in particular).

Chinese brush painting may look easy, but as a novice painter, I can tell you it isn't. Nan Rae's book, however, goes a long way toward making the difficult so much easier. She starts with the basics and clearly explains what paper and brushes and ink to use, and, most important, exactly how to use them, taking pains, for instance, to explain how to grind the ink and how to hold a brush. One of the most difficult aspects of Chinese brush painting is learning to control the amount of water on the brush. Ms. Rae takes you step-by-step through the process, clearly describing the difference between a dry brush, a medium brush and a wet brush. She covers a variety of subjects--flowers, animals, birds--and clearly explains each step. My copy of the book is heavily underlined and highlighted, and whenever I find myself having difficulty I go back and review the many tips she provides. You won't go wrong with *The Ch'i of the Brush*.

Good book for beginner.

Love it!

Chinese brush painting is difficult if you lack enough experience with watercolor painting (I have painted with acrylics mainly). The pictures in the book are beautiful and the book is good as just a coffee table book to look at if you are a curious person and wonder how Chinese (or Japanese) painting is done.

This is a book filled with beautiful art. From the helpful detailed instructions for the beginner to the inspirational techniques and compositions for the experienced artist, this is the one book you must have on oriental brush painting. I teach brush painting and every student lights up when they look through this book. This book goes to every class I teach and every student wants a copy to take home. I have many books on brush painting but this is one I will always treasure.

What a delightful treat for painters of all stages!!! Nan Rae's book is a very lively and spiritual work that draws you to her obvious passion for her art. I'm a beginning painter and have bought several brush painting books. The Ch'i of the Brush is a very dedicated book with beautiful illustrations that are easy to follow-her directions and explanations make you feel that she were giving you the lessons right in your own home!! This book gives you an exciting confidence and enthusiasm for the art that makes you want to learn all that you can do. The histories and works included are very appreciating and thorough--very interesting to read. Plus, the most beautiful part--Nan Rae's wonderful illustrations and paintings are displayed page after page and her happy spirit lifts right off of those pages!! If you could pick only one book on Chinese Brush painting, this is definitely the one to have.

"The Ch'i of the Brush" is the first book from renowned artist Nan Rae. Greatly sought as both a lecturer and instructor, she has used her teaching skills to create a book about Chinese brush painting that is filled with easy to understand lessons illustrated with dozens of her beautiful paintings. According to the author Chinese brush painting is a spontaneous style that treats a blank piece of paper as an opportunity for adventure. We are advised to "be daring" and "embrace the unexpected." Good advice for artists of all skill levels. A variety of painting techniques are explained with easily understood but detailed text. If you have labored with layers of paint in other styles and media, just imagine how refreshing it is to use a single stroke to paint a full leaf, bud or petal in multiple colors! This is called color blending and is one of many key techniques described in the book. Flower lessons include narcissus, wisteria, peony, iris, lotus and Chinese magnolia. Additional lessons include pandas, birds, cranes, insects, fish and more. There are also sections about Chinese signature seals or chops and instructions about preparing your artwork for framing. Tools and materials are explained with photos rather than illustrations. Thankfully there is a list of suppliers of authentic Chinese brushes and paper. Both are necessary to achieving the techniques perfected by the Chinese over an amazing 800 years. Nan Rae has an infectious enthusiasm for

Chinese brush painting as well as for instructing others. Following her lead will open the door to a memorable journey. Regardless of any past experience with art, "The Ch'i of the Brush" will inspire anyone and everyone to paint.

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