



RICE PAPER

Enabling Context for Chinese Paintings

DESIGN PROBLEM



Chinese Artist/ Art Expert

Bada Shanren

prominent traditional Chinese painter of the Ming dynasty



Non-Chinese Viewer

museum visitor 1

Chinese art section, University of Michigan Museum of Art

“ The essence of art should not be judged by likeness to an object, but by the emotions and intelligence the art embodies. ”

“ It is too different, too far away from me. I need something more personal. ”

There is currently a disconnect between Chinese artists and experts and non-Chinese viewers of traditional Chinese paintings, largely due to the poor communication of the context necessary to facilitate aesthetic appreciation of this unique art form.

OUR APPROACH

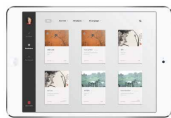
Our design, titled “Rice Paper”, helps bridge the cultural disconnect between traditional Chinese painting artists or art experts and non-Chinese viewers.



Artist/ Art Expert



Use the application to create a booklet highlighting key elements, artist bio, strokes, and motif



Make an electronic mockup of the booklet available in the in-app bookstore



Viewer



Select a booklet made by an artist/art expert and read in the in-app bookstore



Print the booklet on-demand (painting printed on rice paper)



Fast Distribution



Wide Audience



High Exposure to Translators



Tangible Experience



Authentic Feel of Ink on Rice Paper

Rice Paper complements a painting, attaching context that is otherwise lost. It helps Chinese painting artists and experts to express the values and meanings to a wider audience and enables non-Chinese viewers to explore the essence of the art and the culture with a tangible experience.

¹ Museum visitor photo credit: <https://flickr.jp/jngyEc>

TEAM

Hariharan Subramonyam

Yuncheng Shen

Samantha Lauren Jones

University of Michigan
School of Information

KEYWORDS

Interaction Design

Information Architecture

Participatory Design

User and Cognitive Models

Cultural Heritage

RESEARCH

• Participatory Design with Chinese Painter

We held a participatory design session with the director of the Wuhan Art Museum and prominent Chinese painter, Fan Feng. Our goal was to observe the approach that a Chinese artist would take and the elements that they would highlight when explaining a painting.



• Participatory Design with Cultural Educator

We also worked with Carol Stepanchuk, the Outreach Coordinator at the University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, to understand how Chinese paintings are taught in a non-Chinese context.



• Interviews with Museum Visitors

We interviewed visitors to the Chinese painting exhibits at University of Michigan Museum of Art and The Chicago Institute of Art.



• Interviews with Related Parties

We interviewed an amateur Chinese painter in Singapore, a China-based freelance translator focused on art, a Chinese dealer in Chinese paintings, a New York-based professional working with Asian Art auctions, an assistant professor in Shanghai Normal University School of Art, and a Manager of Museum Technology.

• Hands-on Painting Experimentation