



ART FRONTIER

An International Art Journal / Vol.1, No.3 & No.4 Jul.-Sep., Oct.-Dec., 2023

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To cite this article: Hui Pang, “The Formation Process and Artistic Value Study of Baoshi Cun,” *Art Frontier* 1, no.3 & no.4 (December 2023): 111-123, <https://doi.org/10.64212/PYUB8235>.

DOI: 10.64212/PYUB8235

ISSN: 2835-5490

EISSN: 2836-841X

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This article has undergone double-blind peer review.

Website: www.artfrontier.org

Email: artfrontier2023@outlook.com

Publishing Frequency: Quarterly (March, June, September, December)



The Formation Process and Artistic Value Study of Baoshi Cun

Hui Pang

Abstract

Brushwork (Cun) is a fundamental concept and technique in the history of Chinese landscape painting. Fu Baoshi, a prominent artist in modern Chinese art, creatively developed his distinctive Baoshi Cun technique while building upon this foundation. This technique has gained unanimous recognition from experts in artistic creation and theory. The Baoshi Cun technique repetitively depicts the intricate textures and undulations of mountain rocks, effectively expressing the beauty and solitude of the autumn landscape rationally and emotionally. The artistic value of Baoshi Cun lies in its personalized and innovative expression through different stages of the artist's life and its contribution to the inheritance and development of traditional landscape painting techniques. Fu Baoshi's works seamlessly blend the essence of traditional culture with modern aesthetic ideals, showcasing a deep reverence for natural landscapes and the conveyance of philosophical and emotional perspectives on life. Based on the theoretical and practical foundation of Fu Baoshi's Baoshi Cun, this paper analyzes this artistic technique's historical and future significance. This research can further advance the artistic language of Chinese landscape painting and the modern interpretation of traditional art.

Key Words

Fu Baoshi, Baoshi Cun, artistic value, inheritance, landscape painting

Introduction

Fu Baoshi (1904-1965) is one of the significant artists in the modern Chinese art scene, renowned for his historical and narrative subjects in landscape and figurative painting. Fu Baoshi's art is closely intertwined with his distinctive technique known as Baoshi Cun. In our ongoing discussion about Baoshi Cun, it is crucial to understand where Fu Baoshi's brushwork, or cun, originated and what characteristics make it timeless. Fu Baoshi's brushwork is a technique frequently employed to represent the texture and quality of rocks in traditional Chinese landscape painting. He meticulously observed the forms and textures of natural rock formations and reproduced them on his canvases using brushwork. He excelled in capturing the nuances and features of these

rocks and, through brushwork, made them come alive, allowing viewers to experience the authenticity and beauty of natural landscapes. The transmission of this technique not only demonstrates the historical continuity of Chinese painting and reflects Fu Baoshi's respect for and commitment to the preservation of traditional art. Fu Baoshi's brushwork is a manifestation of his artistic style. Through this unique technique, he conveyed his profound insights and emotional experiences regarding landscapes. His skillful use of brushwork techniques and artistic expressions imparts his works with unique emotions and profound meanings, enabling viewers to connect with his distinctive interpretation and representation of the natural world.

1. From Japan to Jingang Slope: The Origins of the Baoshi Cun Technique

Japan, a nation actively Westernizing and embracing the concept of “leaving Asia and entering Europe” since the Meiji Restoration, became saturated with Western cultural influences throughout its culture and social life. It had become a meeting point and reservoir for both Eastern and Western cultures, where the collision and elevation of these two cultural streams occurred. In this context, Fu Baoshi’s early experiences studying in Japan were influenced by this cultural milieu. Japan had a long-standing reverence for Chinese culture and even considered it their cultural ancestor. Today, Japan still preserves many relics from the Tang and Song dynasties of China. Notably, a substantial number of Japanese elites were enthusiastic about studying Chinese painting from the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties, and Fu Baoshi’s mentor, Kanehara Shogo, was a typical representative of this group. When Fu Baoshi studied in Japan, he undoubtedly encountered Western culture and Western artistic content previously unfamiliar to him. His immersion and learning over more than three years led to a clear understanding of the distinctions between Eastern and Western art. He observed that Western painting was a fusion of color and surface, while Chinese painting was akin to a symphony of lines and dots.

Fu Baoshi had already conducted in-depth research into Eastern culture, and when he came into contact with Western culture, he firmly grounded himself in the East, selectively absorbing elements from the West and incorporating them with purpose. In addition to studying art history under Kanehara Shogo, he also learned Japanese painting from mentors like Kawasaki Kotora and Kobayashi Chōkyo, and oil painting from Nakagawa Kigen. During his time in Japan, artists like Yokoyama Taikan and Hishida Shunso, affiliated with the Japanese Academy of Fine Arts, moved away from traditional line-drawing techniques. They developed a style characterized by a delicate ambiance that harmonized with nature, emphasizing elements such as air, light, and color. They merged Western concepts and techniques with their own, utilizing special tools like the empty brush and exploring non-traditional techniques like lineless painting and lineless drawing, leading to the creation of a style known as Mōrō-tai. This had a significant impact on Fu Baoshi’s creative thinking. Yokoyama Taikan personally attended the opening ceremony of Fu Baoshi’s exhibition in Japan, purchased his works, and offered his support, greatly exciting Fu Baoshi, especially during financially challenging times. Yokoyama Taikan was an outstanding representative of the Mōrō-tai painters and held a disting-

uished position as a master. His presence undoubtedly boosted Fu Baoshi’s confidence in his artistic endeavors, playing a role akin to a prelude, introduction, and inspiration in Fu Baoshi’s practice and exploration of the dispersed brush technique during his eight years at Jingang Slope in Chongqing, leaving an implicit yet profound influence.

Regarding the origins of Baoshi Cun, there is a relevant account in Fu Baoshi’s *Preface to the Chongqing Exhibition in the Year Renwu (1932)*: “The area around Jingang Slope, which was the center of my activities for many miles around, offered endless scenic beauty. Every plant, every hill, and every valley served as a model for my painting. The landscapes with their mist and grandeur were something that those of us who indulged in the southeast dared not imagine...Furthermore, the experience forced me to adapt and change my habitual techniques and methods to meet the requirements of the paintings, such as painting trees, coloring mountains, and brushwork for rocks. The issue of personal success or failure is one thing, but my experience deeply convinced me that this is the first step in breaking the constraints of brush and ink.” From this perspective, it appears that Baoshi Cun owes its development to the landscapes on the outskirts of Chongqing, particularly the Jingang



Figure 1. In 1935, Naohiko Masaki, the director of the Imperial Academy of Arts in Japan, visited Fu Baoshi’s solo exhibition of calligraphy, painting, and seal engraving.

Slope.

From the spring of 1939 to the autumn of 1946, Fu Baoshi and his family resided in a thatched cottage on Jingang Slope in Chongqing. This location featured magnificent mountain terrain, swirling mists, and lush and untamed vegetation without losing its graceful charm. The cottage situated to the left of Jingang Slope and backed by several pine and cypress trees, surrounded by bamboo groves, resembled a magnificent painting. Despite the challenging living conditions, Fu Baoshi dedicated himself to studying and creating Chinese painting. His brushwork technique, which inherited traditional Chinese landscape painting methods, skillfully captured the texture and texture of the rocks at Jingang Slope. He deeply admired the ideology of the ancient Chinese painter Shi Tao and innovated upon and developed his concepts. Drawing from, integrating, and innovating resources from both Eastern and Western

cultures, Fu Baoshi created a distinctive style combining traditional Chinese landscape brushwork elements. This resulted in the creation of the atmospheric Baoshi Cun, which can be likened to the spirit he expressed in his inscription: “I have traveled to Sichuan for nearly five years, residing beneath Jingang Slope in the western suburbs. Recently, it has been raining for ten days straight, and the low house constantly drips, intensifying the sentiments of a traveler.”

2. Innovations of Baoshi Cun

Baoshi Cun relies on capturing the essence of nature, displaying grandeur and diversity, and manifesting a natural spontaneity. It closely combines water, ink, and color, splashing and splattering ink with myriad transformations. It simultaneously employs various brushwork techniques to achieve a unified and powerful



Figure 2. Fu Baoshi. *Night Rain In Ba Shan*. Ink and color on paper, 105×60cm, 1943.



Figure 3. Fu Baoshi. *The Setting Sun Causes Chaos on the Billowing Sails*. Ink and color on paper, 104.5×39.7cm, 1943.

effect. Baoshi Cun evolved from using a unique brush known as the dispersed tip brush and a corresponding technique. This specialized tool trimmed the central part of a brush's core, causing the bristles to splay and the brush's base to remain flat. The brush tip is utilized to create lines and blocks that are both rugged and smooth, evoking the essence of "dry autumn winds" and "moist spring rains". The distinctive brush and brush shape are maximally harnessed, allowing the brush's capabilities and potential to shine. The dispersed tip brushwork serves as the vessel for Baoshi Cun. Fu Baoshi applied greater pressure and used a chaotic bristle movement to let the brush tip press down, the brush body and even the brush base touch the paper, and then slightly twisted the brush handle. This caused the bristles to spread naturally, splitting a single stroke into multiple, forming a unique brush shape called the dispersed tip blossoming brush. Fu Baoshi varied his brushwork, sometimes inverting the brush tip with a dispersed tip to create steep mountain terrain and sweeping the brush horizontally to depict jagged rocks. His technique involved flicking and tilting the brush in various ways, creating a dynamic, interconnected pattern that conveys an overall sense of vigor. In brushwork, he boldly broke free from traditional hatching, rubbing, stippling, and coloring techniques. He discarded conventional brushstroke patterns and challenged the norms of center, edge, or combined center-



Figure 4. Fu Baoshi. *Guests Arriving in Wind and Rain Year*. Ink and color on paper, 61.5×49cm, 1943.

edge brushwork in portraying the bone structure of his landscapes, thereby breaking through traditional barriers. Fu Baoshi's Baoshi Cun represents a revolutionary approach to Chinese landscape painting, incorporating innovative brushwork techniques and harnessing the full expressive potential of the brush.

Dispersed tip brushwork and Baoshi Cun share the same artistic lineage, with their essence being consistent. However, Fu Baoshi's dispersed tip brushwork represents a groundbreaking creation in twentieth-century modern aesthetics, characterized by its pioneering and contemporary nature. Dispersed tip brushwork, with its free and dynamic brushwork, breaks away from the fixed patterns of traditional landscape brushwork techniques such as hatching, stippling, and outlining. Its irregular, occasional, and spontaneous brushwork excels in conveying the interplay of light and shadow and the overall appearance of mountains and rivers in a way that traditional line-based techniques cannot match. The significance of dispersed tip brushwork lies in its ability to directly shape specific features, such as rock formations and forests, without outlining mountain contours and general forms. Traditional hatching and stippling can be achieved in a single stroke of the dispersed tip brush, forming a unique and self-contained image. Dispersed tip brushwork is characterized by its fast-paced, sweeping, and swirling movements, brimming with dynamism and power, especially emphasizing a sense of movement far surpassing what traditional brushwork can achieve. It possesses an entirely distinct aesthetic character.

The term "dispersed tip brushwork" is described in detail by Fu Xiaoshi and his brother Ershi. They said, "When Fu Baoshi paints, he sometimes allows the brush tip to spread out, and at other times, he narrows it down. He occasionally lays the brush down to create large ink areas and then lifts it to produce tall, straight lines. The moisture level of the ink, the weight and speed of the brushwork, the thickness and flexibility of the lines, the presence and absence of objects magically appear beneath the spell of a single brush with dispersed tip." This description illustrates the dynamic and versatile nature of Fu Baoshi's dispersed tip brushwork, where he expertly wields the brush to create various effects in his paintings. Fu Baoshi's dispersed tip brushwork is bold and unrestrained, sweeping the mountains with a dynamic and powerful touch. This approach imbues the paintings with a sense of movement and conveys a powerful spiritual force. The liveliness in the paintings is what makes them so emotionally compelling. Fu Baoshi's dispersed tip brushwork goes against the trends of his time, as he uses sharp and sweeping brushwork to



Figure 5. Fu Baoshi. *The Beauty's Excursion*. Ink and color on paper, 61.7×219cm, 1944.

create a strong sense of motion. What's more significant is that even though he paints in the traditional ink and wash style depicting landscapes and natural scenes such as listening to springs and waterfalls, exploring secluded places, and listening to the sound of the qin (a musical instrument), his dispersed tip brushwork infuses each scene with a unique temperament.

The dynamic quality of Fu Baoshi's art can be summarized as "if the mountains move, the waters move, the clouds move, the trees move, the brush moves, and the heart moves". Everything is in perpetual motion, akin to dragons and serpents dancing. The dynamism of dispersed tip brushwork is indeed distinctive in conveying emotions. It can be fast or slow, wide or narrow, creating the impression of broken lines that are connected in essence. This approach exudes a sense of freedom and charm, emphasizing the lively and passionate emotions it conveys. Fu Baoshi's figure paintings are also imbued with this sense of motion. For example, his 1944 work *麗人行* (*The Beauty's Excursion*, Figure 5). The women in this painting are graceful and vibrant, detailed without overly meticulous. While they may seem static on the surface, they are full of a sense of movement, making this piece a true masterpiece. The women in *麗人行* (*The Beauty's Excursion*) exhibit a sense of motion as they walk together. Their depiction, including their hair and clothing, is also achieved with dynamic, spontaneous brushwork, which adds to the overall sense of movement. This vibrant sense of motion can even be found in the painting's portrayal of gentle and graceful women, a testament to the dynamic and energetic nature of the artist's brushwork and emotions.

3. Views of Baoshi Cun in the Eyes of Fu Xiaoshi and Fu Ershi

Fu Baoshi's painting technique, known as Baoshi Cun, can be most accurately summarized in the phrase: "Fierce brushwork, seeking extraordinary peaks; Unrestrained

freedom, going with the flow; Spirit precedes intent, intent precedes the brush; Bold start, careful finish!" "Unrestrained freedom, going with the flow." According to Fu Xiaoshi and Fu Ershi, the two brothers think that the uniqueness of the splashed brushwork technique lies not in its special brushwork but in the artist's state of mind during the creative process. The primary requirement for painting is the artist's passion. When the artist's passion is burning, they can create truly moving art. Their father once said that when he painted, he only thought about how to express his emotions fully and intensely.¹ "Spirit precedes intent, intent precedes the brush." They also mentioned, "Our father used his 'spirit' to guide his brush while painting. This 'spirit' is akin to a state of being intoxicated and obsessed, a creative flow he couldn't control. It's like the heroic spirit of a soldier charging into battle."² Because painting expresses the artist's subjective emotions, this wild and passionate nature within Fu Baoshi gave rise to the powerful dynamism and intense emotions in his splashed brushwork creations, leading to landscapes bursting with life. It seems that rather than the movement of wind, rain, and clouds attracting Fu Baoshi and giving rise to the splashed brushwork technique, Fu Baoshi's untamed passion allowed the flying splashed brushwork to find its foundation in the wind, rain, and clouds. It's the resonance between passion and the elements, a harmonious interaction between heaven and humanity through art, resulting in everything coming to life.

Boldly start, carefully finish: "From its bold depiction of vast ink-splashed landscapes to its portrayal of minute, centimeter-sized figures, all exhibit a uniquely modern charm." Fu Baoshi admired classical aesthetics but immersed himself in the modern currents without hesitation. His splashed brushwork technique was influenced by the trends of modern realism, evolving to meet the demands of representing light and form. At the same time, although its form greatly differs from traditional brushwork, it shares a spiritual continuity



Figure 6. Fu Baoshi. *Playing Chess in the Water Pavilion*. Ink and color on paper, 37.4×144.3cm, 1945.

with traditional ink art in terms of “vivid qi and rhyme” and the application of “bone methods” in brushwork. Yet, it breaks free from classical norms in its inner essence, achieving a modern transformation and creative significance. The power, grandeur, and lofty spirit embodied in Fu Baoshi’s scattered brushwork break away from Confucianism’s gentle and profound aesthetics, transcend the transcendental and serene meanings of Taoism and Zen and defy the aesthetic tastes of classical painting. They exhibit a vibrant modern vitality even in subjects featuring classical figures and landscapes. Fu Baoshi’s work is an outstanding example of the construction of a modern form in twentieth-century Chinese painting. Fu Baoshi, the artist with a “poetic heart”, often becomes intoxicated with his art, letting his heart, emotions, and feelings flow freely in his creative process. His core philosophy of “Its mandate is only new” allows him to express his boundless art without adhering to rigid rules. The poetic and vivid scattered brushwork embodies the formal beauty of Baoshi Cun. When the artist’s true self deeply merges with the landscapes and figures, the unity of form and spirit, heart and trace, creates profound inner beauty with a specific genetic code. This is why many later artists who try to master Baoshi Cun only grasp its surface without truly inheriting its essence.

Because Fu Baoshi was unique, his profound impact elevated Chinese painting aesthetics and techniques. He brought a significant systemic transformation that earned him a lasting place in art history. Fu Baoshi’s historical value is profound because he opened up a new era in the way traditional Chinese painting observes and represents nature through his bold and profound artistic exploration. As Fu Baoshi’s sons recalled, “When our father first appeared in the Chinese art scene with an entirely new approach, he faced criticism and mockery from some people. The deeper you delve into tradition, the more you can truly appreciate its value. Only by understanding what tradition is, what constitutes excellent tradition, and recognizing the vitality of tradition through generations of dedicated individuals who uphold its essence while discarding the superficial can you realize that tradition continually evolves and is enriched by the contributions of each generation.” Fu Baoshi’s legacy lies in his ability to both respect and reinterpret traditional Chinese painting, breathing new life into an art form that is, at its heart, constantly evolving.

The historical contribution of Fu Baoshi’s art lies in this aspect: He abandoned the traditional literati painting approach, which involved observing nature in a monotonous, abstract, and programmatic manner from a distant perspective. Instead, he adopted a more direct

and immersive approach to observing nature, bridging the gap between humans and nature and returning to the traditional concept of “harmony between man and nature” from a fresh perspective. Firstly, He abandoned the fixed routines of literati brushwork, breaking away from the age-old model of line-based representation. Instead, he employed the scattered brushwork technique to create forms directly, shifting from a linear mode of thinking to a more holistic approach, which is the most essential guiding principle and core of his art. Secondly, he boldly replaced the central lines with the scattered brushwork technique. He also liberally employed a more natural ink rendering method, departing from traditional literati ink painting techniques to increase the sense of sunlight and air in the artwork. This seamless integration of the ink rendering technique with his unique scattered brushwork technique reinforced the surface representation, enhanced the affinity with nature, and marked a significant modern breakthrough in the technical form system. Thirdly, Fu Baoshi abandoned the external form of literati ink and brush painting, gave up the traditional brushwork structure, yet still upheld the essence of traditional ink and brush—that is, expressing the subjective spirit and emotions through various factors such as the rhythm, speed, force, and cadence of brushwork using dots and lines. Fourthly, Fu Baoshi maintained the inherent spiritual quality of brush and ink as a form of expression. Yet, he discarded the traditional connotations within the spirit of brush and ink, such as being moderate, plain, elegant, austere, serene, and silent, attributes typically associated with classical Confucian and Daoist aesthetics. Instead, he embraced a modern sense of sublimity, fervor, passion, exuberance, abandonment, joy, and freedom. In this way, Fu Baoshi’s art was born from classical tradition regarding observational methods, modes of expression, and spiritual connotations. Still, it broke free from the constraints of classical tradition to present a thoroughly modern spirit and form. This modern spirit is evident even in his paintings of classical themes, such as *The Beauty’s Excursion*. Fifthly, after Fu Baoshi’s groundbreaking “散鋒”(sǎn fēng) brushwork surprised, perplexed, and received criticism and admiration from people, it triggered a significant wave of change in modern and contemporary Chinese landscape painting. Many artists started to adopt a new approach characterized by using large ink washes, free-spirited and non-traditional techniques, and focusing on block-style painting instead of traditional line-based contours and modeling. Fu Baoshi can be credited with opening the floodgates, initiating a significant shift in how landscape painting was executed. This breakthrough

formed a revolutionary transformation in the artistic language and style of modern and contemporary Chinese painting. Fu Baoshi established his unique visual language system and boldly revised and recreated the traditional artistic conventions.⁴

4. The Mystery of Baoshi Cun and Brushwork

Fu Baoshi’s Ba Shu Landscape vividly conveyed his exceptional talent early in his career. During this period, his works with the theme of the Three Gorges reflected Fu Baoshi’s unique spiritual temperament and personal characteristics, often described as the traits of a “genius”, a “man of talent”, and a “sage”. He deeply captured the soul of the Ba Shu region’s mountains and rivers, showcasing the profound spiritual elevation of Fu Baoshi’s thoughts and consciousness. In 2018, a painting by Fu Baoshi with a theme related to Du Fu’s poetry was auctioned in Tokyo, Japan. The painting featured an inscription that reads: “即從巴峽穿巫峽，便下襄陽嚮洛陽” which can be translated as “Passing through the Ba and Wu Gorges, heading from Xiangyang to Luoyang”. A Japanese collector originally purchased this artwork in 1966 at a Beijing Rong Bao Zhai antique shop for 240 Chinese yuan. Fifty-two years later, it reappeared in the Japanese auction market. Fu Ershi, upon receiving this painting, pointed to it and said: “Fu Baoshi had a great fondness for incorporating the Wu Gorge into his paintings. He handled it skillfully, capturing its majestic momentum. In a small format, he could depict the rapid flow of boats and oars in the gorge, instantly creating the sensation of traveling a thousand miles. The brilliance of this painting lies in a single character, ‘急’(jí), which vividly portrays the urgency and yearning in Du Fu’s heart upon hearing that his hometown had been recovered and he was anxious to return.” The painting employs a technique that combines near-real and distant-virtual elements. Mountain ranges dominate the right side of the composition, while the left side introduces a mid-ground, creating an exquisite layering effect. The foreground uses rich ink and green and blue strokes to depict the ruggedness of the rocks and mountains. As you move from the foreground to the background, the ink shades gradually change, with the mountains becoming more treacherous and shrouded in mist and clouds around the mountain slopes. The brushwork is bold and finely detailed, exuding a strong poetic sentiment. In the river, you can faintly discern the danger of sandbanks, with tiny white sails drifting off into the distance and disappearing into the horizon. Within the blending of ink tones and shades, the mountains and river intricately contrast the real and the



Figure 7. Fu Baoshi. *Plateau Spring News*. Ink and color on paper, 28.2×40cm, 1955.

virtual, light and dark, motion and stillness, creating a magnificent and varied landscape. The 抱石皴 (Baoshi Cun) technique in this work has matured, with the artist adeptly using 拖泥帶水皴 (a brushstroke technique) to create near, mid, and far elements. The painting alternates between 江水波濤幹皴 (a technique for depicting river waves) and light ink application, using the power of brushstrokes to create a sense of freedom and expressiveness. The winding mountain ranges, towering peaks, and numerous boats, both singular and in groups, move from near to far, highlighting the vibrancy of the mountains and river. Everything is in motion, as described by the repeated line, “兩岸猿聲啼不住，輕舟已過萬重山” (The cries of the apes on both banks never cease; the light boat has passed ten thousand mountains). Ershi emphasized twice, “masterpiece, a small painting, but a vast world!”

In the 2018 Beijing Poly International Auction, a group of pages featured the works of the New Jinling School painters, Fu Baoshi, Qian Songyan, and Song Wenzhi. Fu Baoshi’s *Listening to Waterfalls in the Stream and Mountains* (Figure 8) stands out as the most splendid

among this set of paintings created for Deng Tuo. The upper half and lower left corner of the composition feature two sets of waterfalls, while a massive boulder in the center connects the two waterfall sets and implies the relationship between the flowing waters above and below. Two scholar figures atop the boulder enhance the grandeur of the waterfalls and create a poetic ambiance, perfectly aligning with lines such as “Amidst them, two scholars sit up high” and “Both gentlemen return to the east of the river”. Immersed in this scene, one can truly “hear the sound”, as reflected in their gestures and expressions. Fu Baoshi employs light ink and a scattered brushwork technique to sweep out the flowing springs and waterfalls’ swift and tumultuous water flow. He uses heavy ink to depict the exposed giant rocks at the water’s edge, portraying them with significant volume, bold outlines, and cross-hatched strokes. His brushwork appears effortless, but it is based on a well-considered approach, delivering a powerful visual impact with a heightened sense of realism. Fu Baoshi effectively combines rain and springs, using techniques like hatching for water, breaking brush points, and sweeping for rain to



Figure 8. Fu Baoshi. *Listening to Waterfalls in Streams and Mountains*. Ink and color on paper, 32×37cm, 1962.

create a wondrous and uncluttered watery realm. The upper half and the lower left corner of the painting depict a series of cascading springs, forming a torrential water system. In the middle, a towering giant rock intermittently hides, revealing the water flow. The scene alternates between water crashing onto the rocks, misty rain, and rushing rapids. Rain, mist, springs, and water all swirl and unfold under the artist's brush, allowing creativity to flow freely. The painting doesn't show distant mountains or the complete mountain profile but focuses on a specific segment. The distant waterfall takes on a vague and hazy appearance but maintains a clear layering, while the nearby streams reflect light, creating sparkling silver ripples and splashing crystal droplets. Particularly, the use of dense ink, broken brush points, and detailed tree painting in the foreground creates depth and enhances the overall vividness of the ink painting. The two high-spirited figures wear plain clothing with finely detailed textures in their garments and facial features. They stand by the waterfall, pointing and engaging in conversation, exuding an almost lifelike presence, forming a delightful contrast with the moun-

tains and rocks.

In Fu Baoshi's works featuring waterfall themes, he often includes scholars or literati dressed in ancient attire. This serves two primary purposes: First, it allows the viewers to immerse themselves in the scene, experiencing the landscape's grandeur and beauty as if they were there. Second, the smallness of the human figures in contrast to the vast and majestic natural surroundings, enhances the grandeur and magnificence of the landscape. Here, the rugged mountains, cascading waterfalls, drifting mists, and scholarly figures create a symphony of contrasts between motion and stillness, reality and illusion, and openness and density in the experience of listening to the waterfall. In 1960, during a visit to Beijing to attend the Third National Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers and after a cordial meeting with Chairman Mao Zedong, Fu Baoshi was elected as the Vice Chairman and Executive Director of the Chinese Artists Association on 9 August. According to Fu Baoshi's inscription, the painting *Boating on the Red Cliff* (Figure 9) was created during a visit to the renowned painter Huang Zhou's home on 12 August



Figure 9. Fu Baoshi. *Boating on the Red Cliff*. Ink and color on paper, 105×60cm, 1960.

1960, and it was presented as a gift to Shen Jiongyan, a good friend of both Fu Baoshi and Huang Zhou.⁵ On that

day, in the company of Huang Zhou and other notable figures, Fu Baoshi spontaneously created the painting *Boating on the Red Cliff* at Huang Zhou's home. Shen Jiongyan, who was present, was the Vice President of the Jiangsu Provincial Academy of Chinese Painting, where Fu Baoshi served as the President. Fu Baoshi, adept at seal engraving, didn't have a seal with him that day. Still, after enjoying a hearty meal and wine, he spontaneously painted the Baoshi white inscription seal in vermilion ink, adding a final touch to the artwork. The inscription reads: "Created on the noon of August 12, 1960, at Comrade Huang Zhou's home, and presented to Comrade Shen Jiongyan. Zhou Huaimin and Yaming were also present. Fu Baoshi inscribed it."

Observing this painting, it's as if one can see Fu Baoshi, spurred by wine and inspiration, taking off his robes, grabbing a brush, and igniting the "law of nature" within himself. With Red Cliff as the theme, he applies scattered brushwork and ink control with varying degrees of thickness. His strokes move up and down like swirling winds, creating an impression of water rushing. Light and dark ink washes are blended masterfully to push the distant scenery back, forming a cliff towering beneath the sky. A small boat leisurely glides past while a gentle breeze arrives, and the scholars appreciate the scene, savor wine, and compose poems. Suo Shi appears in the painting with a solemn and deep expression full of charm. The other two scholars maintain a humble and innocent demeanor, mixing respect with a sense of serenity and a hint of intoxication, creating a dreamy and surreal atmosphere. The contrast between the Red Cliff's oppressive presence and the scholars' joyful emotions is vividly depicted. The painting vividly conjures the historical allusion to *Nian Nujiao: Boating on the Red Cliff* and is beautifully executed with dense ink and vermilion washes using scattered brushwork. It's an extraordinary example of finding subtlety in grandeur, sincerity in vitality, and passion in spontaneous creation.

5. Baoshi Cun and Expression of Emotions

The River All Red (Figure 10) is one of the themes Fu Baoshi excelled in his fine art creations. In May 2013, at a Beijing Poly Auction event, a crowd of people gathered, their excited gazes focused on Fu Baoshi's 1962 masterpiece *The River All Red*. The auction hall, telephone, and online bidding were highly competitive, and the initial bid of two million RMB was quickly surpassed. The bidding prices rose rapidly, turning the entire night into a joyful celebration. Ultimately, *The River All Red* was sold for 16.7 million RMB, leaving the audience in awe of the buyer. The background of *The*

River All Red is based on a poem by the Song Dynasty anti-Jin military leader Yue Fei. This poem expresses the author's grief for the fall of the Central Plains, his lament for the loss of previous achievements, and his unfulfilled aspirations. The poem carries a passionate and heroic tone. Originally, Fu Baoshi had chosen this subject as a theme during the war, and in 1962, he created a new version of this work. In the painting, Yue Fei is depicted standing by the rail, wearing armor and a war robe, his head covered with a helmet and a red tassel that resembles flames. He holds a precious sword and "lifts his gaze, looking up at the sky while letting out a long roar". This painting captures the spirit and temperament of Yue Fei, a renowned military strategist, poet, and heroic figure from a bygone era.

The figures are outlined using ochre, stone green, and indigo lines, contrasting warm and cool tones. The river surface boldly employs cinnabar for textural strokes, and the red background depicts glistening waves. It prominently highlights Yue Fei, who is seen in the foreground, drawing his sword. Additionally, the fusion of colored ink, ink, and water on the rice paper creates a diverse range of ink textures and paper grains. Beneath the railing, distinct red flags are fluttering, echoing the *Full River Red* in the upper part of the composition. This imparts a strong sense of national spirit, leaving a vivid imprint of the era on this artwork that draws inspiration from the past to reflect the present. By the late 1980s, this painting was treasured by a prominent collector in Hong Kong. In 1981, while giving a lecture at the invitation of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Xie Zhiliu had the opportunity to appreciate this exquisite piece. Overwhelmed by its beauty, he couldn't resist adding his seal, Zhiliu, to the artwork. Undoubtedly, Xie Zhiliu, when he first viewed this painting, was deeply moved, desiring to leave his mark on history alongside this remarkable work.

Fu Baoshi was a master at depicting rainy scenes, earning him the nickname "Under the wind and rain of Mr. Fu, half of the mountains and rivers come with traces of rain", which translates to "In the paintings of Mount Zhongshan by Fu, half the mountains and rivers come with rain". His work *Scenery of Zhongshan* (Figure 11) from 1965 is undoubtedly one of his finest showcases of painting rain scenes. Through the depiction of the rainy scenery over Zhongshan Mountain and the surface of the Yangtze River, he consistently applied ink in solid and line forms. He employed his unique techniques for portraying rain scenes, including the spray alum water method, breaking the brush to sprinkle alum method, sweeping rain method, cunshui method, and dotting method. These techniques were

skillfully employed to convey the effects of a thunderstorm. Fu Baoshi first used a broken brush with sprayed alum water to create the entire background, starting from the bottom left corner. He used heavy ink to depict the mountains and used the edge of the brush to sweep the foggy river surface in the distance. In the river, he added large wheels and many passing boats and factories, capturing the thriving atmosphere of the region. The combined elements of rain, mist, wind, river, and mountains formed a hazy water world, moist and elegant, portraying the picturesque scenery of Jiangnan in all its splendor. This particular artwork was hanging on the walls of the Fu household at the time of his death; it was not yet signed, but based on the painting techniques, it is undoubtedly one of Fu's masterpieces.

In 2015, at the largest Chinese art center in Carmel, California, two exquisite paintings by Fu Baoshi were discovered. One is the *Poetic Sentiment of Du Fu* (Figure 12), a vertical scroll measuring 43 cm×68.5 cm, approximately 2.65 square feet. The painting depicts dense forests, verdant mountains, and a stream between the hills. The cascading stream winds through the misty mountains, creating a magnificent natural landscape. In



Figure 10. Fu Baoshi. *The River All Red*. Ink and color on paper, 38×27cm, 1962.



Figure 12. Fu Baoshi. *Poetic Sentiment of Du Fu*. Ink and color on paper, 43×68.5cm, 1962.



Figure 13. Fu Baoshi. *Poetic Essence of Mao Zedong's "Nian Nu Jiao · Kunlun"*. Ink and color on paper, 34.4×50cm, 1963-65.

the painting, a scholar rides a donkey along a mountain path, leisurely enjoying the open wilderness, lost in the beauty of the landscape. The gentle breeze rustles his Buddhist robe, and the sound of the waterfall accompanies his footsteps. A sense of vitality and poetic ambiance comes to life within the serene mountains. Standing in front of the painting, it's as if one can see Master Fu enjoying a drink, freely wielding his brush, employing traditional techniques like luan chai xun (chaotic firewood texture), luan ma xun (chaotic hemp texture), and tuo ni dai shui xun (dragging mud and water texture). He boldly uses ink to create a harmonious composition, making the whole image feel naturally integrated and highlighting the master's artistic prowess.

Another remarkable artwork by Fu Baoshi is a painting titled *Poetic Essence of Mao Zedong's Nian Nu Jiao · Kunlun*, measuring 34.4 cm×50 cm, approximately 1.5 square feet, inspired by a poem by Mao Zedong (Figure 13). The calligraphy on the painting reads: "Flying up the Three Million Jade Dragons, stirring the cold throughout the sky", taken from Mao Zedong's poem, "Nian Nu Jiao - Kunlun". This painting vividly portrays the Chinese Red Army's challenging journey through snowy mountains during the Long March, in line with the poem's description of a "world covered in snow, vast wilderness, and the high plateau's cold where cooking grains was interrupted". The artwork exudes grandeur, magnificence, and a sense of determination. The artist employed bold and expressive brushwork using pure ink. The snowy mountains dominate the composition, and the foreground is created with vigorous brushwork, dense ink layers, and textured strokes. The distant mountains are depicted with lighter ink and dry brushwork, incorporating techniques like smudging, staining, and texture. The entire painting conveys a somber and silent atmosphere, with the silent mountains

and the silver-white world of ice and snow permeated with a chilling aura. This conveys the determination and resilience of the Chinese Red Army, echoing the lines from Mao Zedong's poem: "We are even more delighted when we see a thousand miles of snow on Minshan Mountains; after the Red Army, all of us are in high spirits."

Fu Baoshi's extraordinary achievements resulted from his relentless struggle against adversity. He saw hardship not only as a source of wealth but also as a driving force. During his period at Jingang Slope, Fu Baoshi's artistic career, despite its difficulties, felt like he had entered another world. He soared freely through the skies and swam in the boundless sea. He dedicated his heart and soul to embracing Shi Tao's art, fostering innovation and further development. He aimed to "explore every peak and sketch the grand panorama" and to "paint the vast landscapes in intricate detail" by dedicating himself wholeheartedly. With unwavering commitment over eight years, he employed techniques such as, "Fierce brushwork, seeking extraordinary peaks; Unrestrained freedom, going with the flow; Spirit precedes intent, intent precedes the brush; Boldly start, carefully finish" and explored every extraordinary peak. He painted with unrestrained freedom, letting his inspiration flow. His brushwork was masterful, with confidence and careful precision. In terms of artistic conception, fortune, passion, and classic contributions, his Baoshi Cun technique reigned supreme, resounding throughout the art world. He broke free from centuries, even millennia, of traditional Chinese painting methods. If he had continued in the same spirit as the Jingang slope period, he could have created numerous timeless masterpieces, following in the footsteps of Huang Binhong, Qi Baishi, and Zhang Daqian. This would have elevated contemporary Chinese art to even greater heights.

Today, the largest collections of modern masterpieces in the Forbidden City Museum and the Nanjing Museum are composed of works by Fu Baoshi. Overseas, Fu Baoshi's works are not only housed in institutions like the British Museum in London, the Kunsthaus Zurich in Switzerland, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery in Prague, the National Museum in Sweden, and the Musashino Gakuin University in Japan but are also treasured in private collections. Shi Tao served as Fu Baoshi's spiritual mentor, and his principles, such as, "I use my methods" "exploring every extraordinary peak and sketching the grand panorama" "brush and ink must adapt to the times" and "emphasizing the grandeur" have become integral to Fu Baoshi's artistic spirit. Throughout his

life, Fu Baoshi worshipped Shi Tao, studied Shi Tao, innovated based on Shi Tao, and developed Shi Tao. His Baoshi Cun technique has become synonymous with his groundbreaking artistic contributions, forever etching his name in history.

The North American Fu Baoshi Research Association

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ENDNOTES

1. Pang Hui interviewed Fu Xiaoshi at the Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) office, located at 29 2 Longjiang Road, Nanjing, in 1992.

2. Pang Hui interviewed Fu Xiaoshi at the Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Chinese

People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) office, located at 29 2 Longjiang Road, Nanjing, in 1992.

3. Pang Hui visited the home of Fu Ershi in Nanjing in 2011 for an exchange of ideas.

4. Lin Mu, *Biographical and Critical Appraisal of Fu Baoshi* (Shanghai: Shanghai Calli-

graphy and Painting Publishing House, 2005), 68-69.

5. Huang Zhou (1925-1997), originally surnamed Liang, with the courtesy name Gantang, was known for his expertise in figure and animal painting.

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“抱石皴”的形成理路與藝術價值研究

龐輝

摘要：“皴法”是中國山水畫史上的核心概念與技法，作為中國現代繪畫藝術史上的重要畫家傅抱石在繼承基礎上創造性地開拓出獨具個性“抱石皴”技法，已經獲得藝術創作與藝術理論領域專家的一致認可。“抱石皴”技法通過重復描摹山石紋理的斑駁與起伏，在“理與情”雙方面表達了寒秋季節中山水之美與孤寂的情感。“抱石皴”藝術價值在於其人生幾個重要階段繪畫藝術探索中的個性化與創新性的表達方式，以及對傳統山水畫技法的傳承和發展。他的作品融合了傳統文化的精髓和現代審美觀念，展示了對自然景觀的敬畏和人生觀情感的傳遞。本文立足傅抱石“抱石皴”的理論與實踐基礎上分析這種藝術技法的前生後世，該研究可以進一步發展中國山水畫的藝術語言以及傳統藝術的現代演繹。

關鍵詞：傅抱石；抱石皴；藝術價值；傳承；山水畫