

# Art Masterpiece: Bamboo In Wind and Rain, 1694 by Tao Chi

**Pronounced:** Dow-CHEE

**Keywords:** scroll, brushstroke, line, seals, tint, depth

**Scroll-** parchment or paper for writing or painting

**Brushstroke** - a line, shape or texture created by applying paint to a surface with a paintbrush in a particular way.

**Line** - an element of art; a continuous path of a point as it moves across a surface. A line can vary in length, width, direction, curvature or color

**Seal** - The red stamps found on Chinese artwork. Seals are marks of authorship or ownership belonging either to the artist or to later collectors. These are also known as 'Chops' and are usually carved out of stone. Red is the luckiest color for the Chinese, and it stands out on an artwork or a paper as important.

**Value** - the lightness or darkness of a color. Grey is a light value of black.

**Depth** - the apparent distance from front to back or near to far in a work of art. Techniques of perspective are used to create the illusion of depth in a two dimensional painting.

**Grade:** 5th grade

**Project:** Scroll Painting

**Powerpoint:** KGA website

**Video:** How to paint bamboo (6:26 min)

[www.vimeo.com/8005396](http://www.vimeo.com/8005396)

(mini lesson - have students watch before they paint)



## Meet the Artist (5 min):

- Over 300 years ago in China, during the Ming Dynasty, a boy named Chu Jo-Chi was born into the royal family. He was a 12th generation descendant of the first Ming Dynasty Emperor.
- When Chu Jo-chi was only fourteen years old, a new government, the Qing Dynasty came to power and threw out the old emperor, his family and his supporters. Chu Jo-Chi had to run away in order to escape death.
- Chu Jo-Chi was hidden by a group of monks in a Buddhist Monastery. For his protection, he changed his name to Tao-Chi, which means "The path of nature." The monks taught the young man to appreciate the beauty in the world around him. He began to write poetry and paint pictures of trees, rocks, birds and flowers. For hours he would sit on the floor with his paper on a low table before him. Using a bamboo brush and ink, he created nature paintings of great beauty.
- Until his death in 1707, Tao-Chi the monk roamed all over China observing nature and painting what he saw. He was different from other artists of his time; an independent

person who did not want to copy the art of the past. Often he tried new painting styles. Sometimes his paintings were filled with thick, black, swirling lines. Other times, his lines were thin and delicate.

- Tao Chi has long been recognized as one of China's finest artists. His talents were not limited to painting though, he was a fine calligrapher, poet, philosopher and landscape gardener.

#### **Discussion (10 min):**

- Does the painting give you a feeling of movement? Depth?
- Do you feel that the painting should have color? Or is it appealing in shades of black?
- What do you think the Chinese characters mean?
- Do you see the artist's signature seal?

#### **Project: Scroll Painting**

##### **Project Materials:**

White construction paper 12"x18". 1 per student  
Black construction paper, 12"x18", cut to 2"x6", 2 per student  
Styrofoam sheets  
Red ribbon or yarn  
Small brushes size 7, class set  
Large chubby brushes with stiff natural bristles, class set  
1" foam brushes, 2-3  
Black and red tempera paint  
5 oz Dixie cups, 3 for each table of students  
Paper plates, 1 per class  
Hole punch, 2  
Parent Letters, 1 per student  
White glue, (6-8 bottles)  
White scratch paper, half sheet and 2" squares  
Newspaper

##### **Advance Preparation:**

Cut white construction paper to 6"x17"  
Cut black paper to 2"x6"  
Cut styrofoam sheets into 2" squares, 1 per student  
Cut ribbon or yarn, 1 per student (12" each)  
Copy and cut Parent Letters for back of scroll

##### **Mini Lesson (10 min):**

- **WATCH THE VIMEO VIDEO** on how to paint bamboo. This video helps the students with technique.

- While the students are watching the video, pre-fill small cups with black tempera paint, enough to just cover the bottom of the cup. There will be 3 cups per table.
- One cup will contain only black paint.
- Add water to cup #2, filling up about 1/3 of the way.
- Add water to cup #3, filling up most of the way.
- Each table should have a cup of solid black, medium black and a light black. Test these to make sure that you have 3 values of black.
- Squeeze out red paint onto paper plate and use a foam brush to paint the seals.
- **When video is done**, pass out scratch paper, 2 sizes of brushes per student, then place cups onto newspaper in the center of each table.
- Point out to students the different values used in Tao Chi's artwork and the samples. Often objects in the distance will be a lighter shade than those closer to the viewer. Also, overlapping lines of different values gives the painting "depth".
- **Have students stand up to paint** just like the video.
- Encourage them to practice a variety of brush strokes on their scrap paper; making thin and thick lines, pushing and pulling the brush along the paper, pressing harder or very lightly. Make sure they don't 'scrub' the brush and ruin the bristles.

#### **Process (30-40 min):**

- Pass out the long white 'scroll' paper and Parent Letter. Have them sign their name to the Parent letter then glue to the back of the scroll.
- **Have them stand up to paint** just like the video. They may need to place their scrolls the long way on the desk so they can all reach the paint cups.
- Encourage them to select a subject from nature; a bamboo trees, mountains, a waterfall or even a flower.
- **First**, start by using the lightest black paint with the large brush - with just a little paint on the brush or it will puddle. If painting bamboo, they will hold the brush sideways (painting with the side not the tip) and make a stalk of bamboo by starting at the bottom of the page, starting and stopping the brush, upwards to the top of the page. They should leave just a bit of space between each start and stop for the 'knuckles'. They can make several stalks. This will be the background of the painting.
- **Next**, If they are painting bamboo, they will then use the medium black paint with the smaller brush. They should paint lines in the spaces for the 'knuckles' and then some single lines for the branches. They may also start painting some long skinny leaves, coming off the branches. This paint color will serve as the medium depth between the background and foreground.
- **Lastly**, If they are painting bamboo, they should then use the small brush with dark black paint to make more long skinny leaves. These will be in the foreground.
- Make sure they keep the painting simple, using only different types of lines. Portions of white background should show, rather than trying to paint the entire surface of the scroll.

- When they are done painting, have the students fold one piece of the black paper lengthwise on the top of the scroll, punch 2 holes in the top of the black part of the scroll, about 1 inch from each edge, then glue one to the top and one to the bottom of the scroll. (These will cover the front and backside.)
- Thread the red yarn through the holes so that the yarn and the knot hide behind the scroll.
- While the painting is drying they will begin their seals. Taking the 2"x2" foam square, the students will write their initials in the foam with a dull pencil or other blunt object, **BACKWARDS**. If needed they may use a small square of scratch paper, then transfer their initials by placing it face down and tracing onto the foam. They need to make their initials deep without cutting through the foam. Encourage them to use Asian characters if they know how to do it.
- Walk around with the red paint plate (or set up a station) and paint their seals using the foam brush. They may make a test print onto the scrap sheet if they want but you'll need to paint their seal again.

#### Clean up:

- Pour excess paint down the drain and throw away dirty paper cups.
- Thoroughly wash brushes with soap and water, blot dry, reshape bristles and store upright in caddy provided.
- Make sure all glue and paint bottles are closed tightly and stored upright in bin.
- Thank you for taking care of our supplies!

