

山水

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**The Art of Hu Jiang: A Brief Discussion on the
"Four-Word" Approach that Calligraphers and
Painters Must Uphold**

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A Brief Discussion on the “Four-Word” Approach that Calligraphers and Painters Must Uphold

翻译浅谈书画家须坚守的“八字”方略：自信、自知、自明、自我

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书画之道，由技入艺，由艺臻道。其漫漫修远，非惟天赋与勤勉可成，更须一份清醒的持守、一种审慎的取舍。纵观古今大家之路，可凝练出艺术家当恪守之“八字”心法：自信、自知、自明、自我。四者相生相续，层层递进，互为表里，构成从砥砺笔法到确立风骨的内在支撑。

The Way of calligraphy and painting proceeds from technique to art, and from art to the Dao 道. It's a long and arduous path that cannot be achieved by talent and diligence alone; it also requires a lucid steadfastness and prudent discernment. Observing the trajectories of masters past and present, one may gain a “Four-Word” Approach for artists to abide by: self-confidence, self-understanding, self-illumination, and selfhood. These four elements are mutually generative and progressive, interrelated within and without, forming the inner support that guides one from the refinement of brushwork to the establishment of artistic character.

一、自信：艺术航程的定力之锚

自信，乃书画家的初心所系、动力之源。它源于对艺术的赤诚与不舍，发为一种“千磨万击还坚劲，任尔东西南北风”的笃定。此自信，非盲目自大，而是于众声喧哗之中，犹能护持内心一方净土，对所选之路深信不疑。笔下方有真气，墨中自见乾坤。它是艺术生命得以扎根、延展的第一块基石。

I. Self-Confidence: The Anchor of Resolve in the Artistic Voyage

Self-confidence is tied to the artist's original aspiration and serves as the wellspring of motivation. It arises from sincere devotion to art and manifests as the steadfastness of “remaining unyielding despite countless trials, letting winds blow from all directions.” This confidence is different from arrogance; rather, it is the ability to preserve an inner realm of purity and maintain firm faith in one's chosen path in the midst of various noises. Only then does a universe unfold within the ink with brushes. It is the first cornerstone that allows artistic life to take root and extend.

二、自知：清醒前行的度量之尺

自知，是自信之上的理性之光。它要求艺术家以冷静之心，审视己身之段位与边界。面对赞誉，能察不足而怀谦逊；遭遇批评，能辨虚实而不沮溺。既不因一时之名而目无余子，亦不因一时之挫而轻弃所学。这份澄澈的自我认知，是避免沉溺虚名、确保步履坚实的“内在罗盘”，使每一次探索皆落在实处，每一程跋涉皆有方向。

II. Self-Understanding: The Measure for Clear-Sighted Progress

Self-understanding is the rational illumination built upon self-confidence. It requires the artist to examine their own level and boundaries. In the face of praise, one recognizes deficiencies and remains humble; when encountering criticism, one discerns truth from falsehood without sinking into discouragement. One neither becomes blinded by fleeting fame nor abandons one's learning due to temporary setbacks. This lucid self-awareness serves as an “inner compass,” preventing indulgence in hollow reputation and ensuring that each step remains steady and grounded—so that every exploration is firmly rooted in reality and every journey proceeds with clear direction.

三、自明：悟性开启的智慧之灯

自明，关乎艺术悟性的唤醒与运用。明师指路固然珍贵，然机缘终有尽时。更多时刻，艺术家须倚仗自家“灵明”去参悟：于经典法帖中窥笔法之精微，于山川草木间感造化之生意，于世事浮沉里悟人生之幽微。此种“自明”之力，是将外来滋养内化为心源活水之关键，亦是由“师迹”而入“师心”、由“学人”而成“作者”的必经津梁。

III. Self-Illumination: The Lamp of Wisdom Awakened by Insight

Self-illumination concerns the awakening and application of artistic intuition. While guidance from great teachers is precious, such opportunities are limited. More often, artists must rely on their own inner illumination to comprehend: perceiving the subtleties of brushwork in classical calligraphy, sensing the vitality of creation in mountains, rivers, plants, and trees, and discerning life's profundities amid worldly vicissitudes. This capacity for self-illumination is the key to internalizing external nourishment into the living spring of one's mind. It is also the essential bridge from “following the teacher's traces” to “grasping the teacher's spirit,” and from being a learner to becoming a creator.

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四、自我：艺术生命的个性之花

自我，乃“八字”方略之归处，亦为艺术追求之巅。它意味着，在深入传统、博采众长之后，终须完成“化合”与“蜕变”，淬炼出独属于自己的艺术语言与精神面目。正如师爷李可染先生所言：“要以最大的力气打进去，以最大的勇气打出来。”打进去者，厚积也；打出来者，薄发也——将古今法乳、万物神采，一一融会贯通，落于纸上者，终是自家胸次、自家性情、自家对这个时代的感应与应答。这不可更易的“个性”，方是艺术家立于艺术史中的真正凭证。

IV. Selfhood: The Flower of Individuality in Artistic Life

Selfhood is the ultimate destination of this “Four-Word” Approach and the summit of artistic pursuit. It means that, after deeply engaging with tradition and widely assimilating diverse strengths, one must ultimately achieve synthesis and transformation, forging an artistic language and spiritual identity uniquely one's own. As my mentor Li Keran once said: “Exert the greatest effort to enter in, and muster the greatest courage to come out.” To “enter in” is to accumulate deeply; to “come out” is to release with concentrated force. When the nourishment of tradition and the spirit of all things are thoroughly integrated, what appears on paper is ultimately one's own temperament, disposition, and response to the spirit of the age. This irreplaceable individuality is the true credential by which an artist stands within art history.

“自信、自知、自明、自我”，是我数十年来亲承陈金章、李宝林、刘华生、冯柏乔诸先生教诲，心中日渐澄明的心悟；亦是自2017年承蒙暨南大学蒋述卓教授、程国赋教授、邱向欢教授等鼎力相助，创办“胡江山水研学小小班”以来，于历届学员的成长与进益中，不断印证、不断深化的体认。

“Self-confidence, self-understanding, self-illumination, and Selfhood” are insights that have gradually become clear in my heart through decades of personal instruction from masters such as Chen Jinzhang, Li Baolin, Liu Huasheng, and Feng Boqiao. Since 2017, with the generous support of Professors Jiang Shuzhuo, Cheng Guofu, and Qiu Xianghuan of Jinan University in founding the “Hu Jiang Landscape Art Study Class, (胡江山水研学小小班)” these principles have been continually validated and deepened through the growth and progress of successive cohorts of students.

由1976年至2026年，匆匆五十载。这“八字”心法，是我从艺半世纪于创作、游历、教学诸境中所感所验、屡经磨砺而后凝成的一点心得。我渐渐明白：自信予其动力，自知正其航向，自明启其慧根，自我立其风骨。四者环环相扣，终成一闭环——这，便是艺术心智从蒙昧走向澄明、从依附走向独立的内在路径。

From 1976 to 2026, fifty years have swiftly passed. This “Four-Word” Approach is a condensation of my half-century of artistic practice, travel, and teaching—tested repeatedly through experience and

reflection. Gradually, I have come to understand: self-confidence provides motivation; self-understanding corrects the course; self-illumination awakens wisdom; and selfhood establishes artistic character. Interlocking in sequence, they form a complete cycle—the inner pathway by which artistic consciousness moves from obscurity to lucidity, and from dependence to independence.

守住这“八字”，便是守住一条从技法到精神、从承继到开创的正道。于此道上，书画家方能完成从“技”至“艺”、从“众”至“我”的根本跃升，最终留下那既属于自己、亦无愧于这个时代的笔墨印记。

To uphold this “Four-Word” Approach is to safeguard the rightful path from technique to spirit, from inheritance to innovation. Along this path, calligraphy and painting can achieve the fundamental leap from “technique” to “artistry,” from “the masses” to “the self,” ultimately leaving behind brushstrokes and ink marks that are both uniquely their own and worthy of this era.



Green Mountains and Rivers 《江山叠翠图》 30x1300 cm (section)

