

Program Name: The Word-Picture of Chinese Calligraphy Writing

Artist: Valda Hsu

## Special Requirements:

“18x11” newsprint (at least 2 sheets per student); paper towels; each table should be lined with newspaper. Artist will provide brushes and Chinese ink. All workshops must take place in the same room. 30 minutes needed before first workshop for set up and after last workshop for clean-up.

## Workshop Description

Teaching Artist Valda Hsu demonstrates the connection between Chinese characters and painting with a Chinese brush. She creates an environment that introduces students to the Chinese language and culture while they participate in learning Chinese calligraphy.

This program introduces students to the tools, techniques, and aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy. Calligraphy has been practiced in China for over 5,000 years and is considered the most revered art form in China. This fascinating art form possesses unique structures and design elements that have survived through time. Students will learn about the tools used to achieve this

work and about the pictographic elements of the characters.

Valda Hsu correlates Chinese calligraphy to Western principles and design elements. The styles are related because each stroke is contemplated and essential and gives the picture a meaningful shape and spiritual feeling. Chinese culture is revealed through each character, like a miniature illustration of the word it represent that later evolves into the more abstract and sophisticated art form.



## Educational Objectives & Standards

Students will:

- Learn calligraphy with bamboo brush technique.
- Identify simple characters and practice eight basic stroke variations.
- Create motifs, sayings or short poems.

National Visual Art Standards:

- Know how visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements are used in various art forms

Behavioral Studies

- Understand that group and cultural influences contribute to human development

## Artist Bio:

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Valda Hsu was born and raised in Taiwan. She came to America in 1983 to attend college and study art. After more than four years of rigorous study she graduated from Art Center College of Design with honors.

After her graduation, Valda left Pasadena to work for Hallmark Cards Inc. as an in-house designer. After six years of honorable service, on the eve of her promotion, she quit her job to raise her two children, Chipping and Matthew, and become an art teacher. Some of her students loved art so much that they have pursued careers in art. She has taught art for

10 years. She is also currently involved in teaching the Mandarin Chinese language and culture.

## List of Resources:

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### Books:

Fun With Chinese Characters  
1-3

by Tan Huay Peng  
Master Communications Inc,  
February 2004  
ISBN: 1932457003

Yani : the brush of innocence  
Hudson Hills Press in  
association with the Nelson-  
Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas  
City : Distributed in the U.S. by  
Rizzoli; 1st ed. edition  
ASIN: 1555950167

China: Empire of Living  
Symbols  
by Cecilia Lindqvist  
Perseus Books Group;  
(November 1, 1991)  
ASIN: 0201570092

The Way of Chinese Characters  
by Jianhsin Wu  
Cheng & Tsui Compnay  
ISBN: 9781622910465

Chinese Calligraphy—Standard  
Script for Beginners  
by Qu Lei Lei  
British Museum Press  
(June 21, 2004)  
ISBN-10: 0714124257

Contact KYA for more  
information about this and  
other programs

816.531.4022  
KYA.org

## Vocabulary

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**Pictogram:** conveys meaning through its pictorial resemblance to a physical object.

**Qi:** the circulating life force whose existence and properties are the basis of much Chinese philosophy and medicine.

**Shu Fa:** The local name for calligraphy in China, literally "the way/method/law of writing"

**The Eight Basic Strokes:** explain

how to write eight common strokes in regular script which are found all in the one character. It was traditionally believed that the frequent practice of these principles as a beginning calligrapher could ensure beauty in one's writing.

**The Four Treasures of Scholars**

**Bi:** bamboo brush

**Mo:** ink stick

**Yan:** ink stone

**Zhi:** rice paper

## Post-Workshop Activities

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1. A Chinese artist's signature is called a *Chop*, but Chops are used in Chinese society for other reasons as well. Ask students to design their own Chops. How many ways can they use them in the classroom (or the school) to identify themselves? Why is their signature important? What does it mean to place one's signature on a letter or work of art?

Yin style chop

Yang style chop

