Painted Screens: Image, Medium, and Beyond

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Introduction

Painted screens serve a dual purpose in Chinese history: blocking off the winds as a furnishing and providing aesthetic enjoyment as a painting-bearing object. Art historians of Chinese art have paid close attention to the Chinese painted screen and studied this image-bearing object of various kinds. As one of the earliest scholars on screen paintings, Michael Sullivan in "Notes on Early Chinese Screen Painting" provides a general history of screen paintings and introduces three major screens: single-panel screens (i.e., freestanding or seated screens), multi-paneled screens (i.e., folding screens), and screens attached to the couch (i.e., couch screens).[1] In "The Double Screen," Wu Hung builds off Sullivan's essay, offers a detailed survey of Chinese screens, analyzes those three types in more detail, and introduces a new screen—miniature screens on the bed (i.e., a pillow screen).[2] As more scholars have begun to pay attention to Chinese screens, those four major types of screens have been analyzed in greater depth as both paintings and furniture.[3] However, while scholars have developed concrete analyses of one single screen in isolation, the connections between the screens and their relations with the domestic and natural environment have not been thoroughly discussed. Following the pioneering research on painted screens and using *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* (fig. 1) as my major example, I argue that in an interior where multiple screens are arranged,

[1] Michael Sullivan, "Notes on Early Chinese Screen Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 27, no. 3 (1965): 239;242;246, https://doi.org/10.2307/3249073.
[2] Wu Hung, *The Double Screen* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10;52;154.
[3] For example: Sarah Handler, *Austere Luminosity of Chinese Classical Furniture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Xi Li, "To See or to Be Seen: Screen as a Mirror of Orthodoxy in the Tang and Song Dynasty," in *the Multivalent Screen: Materiality and Representation in East Asian Visual Culture*, ed. Chelsea Foxwell and Ping Foong (Chicago: Art Media Resources and Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2019).

painted screens should be viewed with each other and with the wider environment, all of which contribute to the essential viewing experience of the viewer.

Fig.1 Zhao Bosu, *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind*, ink and color on silk, Song dynasty (960-1279 CE). National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

In this investigation, I center on the painted master on the bed in *Reading Under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* and use the painting to examine how painted screens are used in daily life and their corresponding viewing experiences. To concentrate on the study of painted screens, this essay focuses on what is depicted in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* rather than viewing this fan painting as an artwork. As a scarce depiction of an open architecture, this fan painting is precious visual historical evidence and reveals comprehensive details of the interior space and the placement of painted screens. Using this valuable fan painting and other paintings, this essay analyzes painted screens from various angles—screen as a painting (its image), screen

as a furnishing (its medium), and screen as a component within larger environments (its diverse roles within the context). Moreover, diverging from the heavy emphasis on the visual in the traditional art history methodology, the presences of light, sound, and smell are highlighted when analyzing the function of each object in the painting.

The first section in this paper, "The Furnishing Program and the Pictorial Program", introduces in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* how paintings join together to simulate a landscape and how furnishings work with each other to ward off the winds from every direction. The next section, "The Lighting Program", focuses on how the light devices are used in the interior space and how lighting devices adjust the color saturation of pictorial representations. Because of those adjustable lighting devices depicted in the painting, this section also underscores the user's interactions with the painted furnishings based on direct visual evidence. The third section, "The Olfactory Program", elucidates how the flower bottle adds an olfactory dimension to the viewing experience of the landscape screen paintings. In the end, "Broader Implications" connects the painting with the existing historical accounts and further historicizes the previous analysis and visual evidence.

The Furnishing Program and The Pictorial Program

Wu Hung introduces the architectural concept of "program" in his books and coins art-historical terms based on this concept, such as "decorative program" and "ritual program."[4] In his usage, "program" refers to an overall relationship and design, highlighting how each element in a larger composition connects to each other.[5] This useful terminology helps to elucidate how the paintings on the screens connect to other painted furnishings (i.e., a "pictorial program") and how screens join together to protect the viewers from drafts in any direction (i.e., a "furnishing program"), both of which shed light on how painted screens are connected with each other and the wider environment in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind*.

Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind is an original silk fan painting that was later remounted on an album named "Yiyuan Cangzhen 艺苑藏真" in an attempt to protect the painting from exposure to air as well as provide a way of organizing the antiquities. A gray line right at the center of the painting suggests the traces of the stick of the bygone fan structure. In this fan painting, an exquisite pavilion is depicted on the halfway point of a hill, overlooking the tranquil mountains submerged in the misty background. As the waterwheels under the ad-hoc bridge made of a wood block reveal, there is a creek under the bridge running into the lake or river in the distance. With a roofed corridor to the left, this delicate pavilion indeed belongs to a larger villa extending to the left beyond the frame. Characterized by the windows and the open façade facing the landscape, this predominantly wooden pavilion could be identified as a "Xie" (榭). According to *Yuan Ye* ("The Craft of Gardens"), a Ming-dynasty architecture book, "Xie"

[4] See how Wu Hung coins terms such as "architectural program", "decorative program", "ritual program" in Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture.* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 137;196; 277.

[5] See how Wu Hung explains his use of "pictorial program" in Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989), xxii

refers to an architecture close to the scenery, especially to the water.[6] The framing made of pitch-black sticks at the outermost is a structure for holding the "grid fan" (geshan 格扇), which is often set up in the winter and taken down during the summer.[7] Here, they are removed to cool down the room's temperature, which also allows the sunshine to scatter over the interior. It is noteworthy that while this pavilion partitions the interior and exterior spaces, it also internalizes real scenery as a reduced two-dimensional view of the front façade in the interior space. In other words, the real scenery could also be considered a two-dimensional image from the master's perspective and could be considered a part of the pictorial program.

Fig.2 Zhao Bosu, *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* (details), ink and color on silk, Song dynasty (960-1279 CE). National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

[6] 计成 and 陈植, *园冶注释* (Zhongguo Jianzhu Gongye Chuban She 中国建筑工业出版社, 1988), 89.
[7] For more information on 格扇 during the Song Dynasty , see: Yang Zhishui 揚之水, *Songdai Huaping 宋代花瓶* (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhonghe Chuban Youxian Gongsi 香港中和出版有限公司, 2014), 81-90.

Fig.3 Zhao Bosu*, Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* (details), ink and color on silk, Song dynasty (960-1279 CE). National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

At the center of this built structure is a compound of three objects—a bed, a freestanding "seated screen" (zuoping 座屏), and a "pillow screen" (zhenping 枕屏). The "seated screen" refers to a freestanding, larger-than-life screen that can be placed on the ground. This painted seated screen bears a paper or silk painting depicting a luxuriant tree in a bird's-eye view with a faint horizon line at the lower bottom. Leaving the upper right nearly blank, the painter here adopts a triangular composition to make the dominant tree flank the master (fig.2). On the other hand, a "pillow screen" often appears in Song dynasty poetry and poems, predominantly referring to a miniature screen that is placed on the top of a bed to block off the wind. Based on the existing Song accounts, the Song pillow screen appears predominantly in three formats—blank (suping 素屏), painted silk or paper (huaping 画屏), and stone (shiping 石屏). Having closely examined a high-quality reproduction of *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* (fig.

3), this pillow screen best resembles a painted silk or paper screen. And the image resembles a landscape with a horizon line right in the middle, while having a tree on the right portion.

While those two screens exhibit delicate images to please the viewer's eye, they cannot be reduced to flat artworks that purely yield optical enjoyment. The Chinese screen is not an object for viewing's sake but has a double role as both furnishing and artwork. In "The Double Screen," Wu Hung proposes a potential way to best reconceptualize the nature of Chinese screens—"as an image-bearing object and as a pictorial image."[8] Wu's account indeed complicates a simple understanding of the Chinese screen as an artwork subject to gaze, attesting to the two distinct functions. For example, the painted screen as a furnishing has the function of warding off the winds. In both Tang and Song literature, blank screens are often featured as a dominant motif associated with a lofty figure, as manifested in Bai Juyi's *Three Songs: The Plain Screen Ballad*.[9] During the northern Song dynasty, Ouyang Xiu wrote a poem called *Calligraphy on Plain Screen* to reveal his pitiful life and how a black screen saved him from sandy winds.[10] To better conceptualize the complex roles or screen, it is essential to dig into its basic functions as furnishing or objects, then gradually take images they carried into account.

As Wei-Cheng Lin specifies in "Screens and Architectures," whereas Chinese screens are used as room dividers, their inherent mobility does not foster a clear differentiation but instead

[8] Wu Hung, The Double Screen (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 9.
[9] See 白居易's 三谣·素屏谣 in Peng Dingqiu 彭定求, ed., Quan Tangshi 900 Juan 全唐诗 900 卷 (Beijing Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 3168.
[10] See 书素屏 in Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修, Jushi Ji 47 Juan 居士集 47 卷 (Beijing Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 243.

invites an ambiguous space, which “offers a variety of possibilities.”[11] By focusing on the screen as a part of the architectural space, he reveals an essential feature of the screen—mobility. Whether a monumental screen is almost touching the ceiling or an ink screen is only covering the inkstone, it is never fixed to the ground to become an integral part of the architectural space, at least during the Song dynasty. Having a heavy base (baogu 抱鼓) to stabilize the screen on the ground against the wind, a large freestanding "seated screen" could still be moved with the help of two or more people. In many paintings around the Song dynasty, the gigantic screen appears in an outdoor setting, often close to a bed, such as *Whiling Away the Summer* (消夏图) (fig.4) and *Passing a Summer in the Shade of a Locust Tree* (槐荫消夏图) (fig.5). Those vivid depictions of using screens both in interior and exterior spaces attest to how seated screens can be accommodated to the user in a circumstantial setting.

Fig.4 Liu Guandao (fl. 1279-1300), *Whiling Away the Summer*, late 13th century, handscroll, ink and light color on silk. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

[11] Wu Hung 巫鸿 et al., *Wuhui Tongyuan 物绘同源*, ed. Wu Hung 巫鸿 (Shanghai Shuhua Chuban She 上海书画出版社, 2021), 196.

Fig.5 *Passing a Summer in the Shade of a Locust Tree*, (?) early Ming, album leaf, ink and color on silk. Palace Museum, Beijing.

This mobility is heavily accentuated by the pillow screen because of its portable size. In the aforementioned *Calligraphy on Plain Screen*, Ouyang Xiu voices his concern about his aged and vulnerable body during the tiring travel and offers his gratitude to the blank screen for protecting his head while sleeping. He extravagantly stated that "in my three-thousand-mile trip, what is most adorable is this thirty-centimeter blank screen, which has never been away from me."[12] His rhetorical use of "a three-thousand-mile trip" alludes to the lightness and convenience of the pillow screen, demonstrating the use of screens not only in domestic settings but also on the trip. Another Song poet, Zou Hao, reveals another setting for using pillow screens: "The ship's bow drills through the north wind; day after day, night after night, I close the short boat

[12] It says, "我行三千里，何物与我亲。念此尺素屏，曾不离我身". See Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修, *Jushi 居士集,* 24.

canopy; so many peaks and so many thoughts; all gathered together in the pillow screens".[13] Similar to Ouyang Xiu, Zou Hao entered a fatiguing excursion, losing himself in the endless attack of the north winds. The only thing that has secured him a safe sleep has been the use of the pillow screen. Although the pillow screen is not looked at when resting during the exhausting trip, it still serves as an aesthetic amusement for triggering a high-minded scholar's imagination, which presumably happens in the pre-sleeping meditation. Zou Hao makes us take a peek at the kaleidoscopic uses of the screen pillow: derived from the basic architectural semantics of warding off the wind, the screen pillow is never an unequivocal object in a fixed context yet keeps going through a multiplication of context-based modifications in its endless moving. In both poets' gratitude, the pillow screen's advantages are foregrounded: easy-to-transport, could stand at every horizontal surface even if it was shaking like a boat, and a trigger for imagination. Returning to Wei-Cheng Lin's proposition at the very beginning, since mobility offers a plenitude of possibilities to the screen, pillow screens with the greater portability could be placed in varied places and thus are endowed with corresponding functions in various contexts, for example, as visual entertainment during the trip as in Zou Hao's case.

In addition to the mobility of the screen, it is noteworthy that all other artifacts in the pavilion are also movable. On the bed, there is a black armrest (pingji 凭几) for the user to have a more comfortable reclining gesture, which has a long history in China for portable use. Although the white paint is almost imperceptible, the scholar's right hand is holding a white feathered fan (yushan 羽扇), based on the remaining traces of the brushstrokes. The bed itself, a

[13] Zou Hao 邹浩, *Dao Xiangji 40 Juan 道乡集 40 卷* (Beijing Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 384.

wooden structure with a presumably rattan surface, has four legs that turned slimmer as they went downward while having a design at the end—most likely a Ruyi-pattern (ruyi zu 如意足). This one-man-sized wooden-rattan bed indeed is light and could be moved, especially when the scholar wants to have a nap outside, as is evinced by *Passing a Summer in the Shade of a Locust Tree*. The pitch-black square-shaped desk (tiaozhuo 条桌) has two tenons (cheng 枨) between two legs on the left, which would also be the case for the right, stabilizing the structure of the desk. Echoing the title of the painting, "Reading in an Open Pavilion in Cool Wind," the desk exhibits an open book with resting books in the middle and also a pear-shaped white bottle (danping 胆瓶) with traces of green on the top, which is very likely to be a flower bottle. A "pear-shaped bottle" or literally "gallbladder-shaped bottle", refers to a form of bottle with a slim neck and rounded body that was popularized during the Song dynasty. The yellow vessel with a two-eared cap is presumably a “bronze ritual cauldron” (yiding 彝鼎), with newly made bronze free of oxidation or rusting and appearing in the natural color of the material—yellow. A "bronze ritual cauldron" is an all-encompassing genre for various bronze ritual cauldrons with different shapes and includes all the archaic and newly-made ones in this ancient design, which coincided with a growing predilection for antiquity. This joint, newly emerging trend of archaism and decoration of the desk (the practice often referred as qinggong 清供) during the Song dynasty would be the focus of the next section. As mentioned earlier, right next to the desk, near one end of the bed, are two hanging scrolls (lizhou 立轴) of similar size and format, presenting a paired landscape reflecting the images of two screens. It is very possible that there are two similar hanging scrolls on the left walls. The hanging scrolls could be rolled up for preservation or unrolled for exhibition, and they are highly adaptable for different placements. The moveable

desk, bed, screens, hangings, and decorations stand against the very idea of a "fixture" in this interior space but demonstrate the ad-hoc nature of those furnishings, symbolizing a shared taste and consensus between the users and the craftsman. This maneuverability therefore offers more possibility for interior space, inviting the master to apply his imagination and creativity.

Besides the mobility of the screen discussed above, another key feature of the screen as furniture is its ability to shield from the wind. In the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 to 220 CE), 900 years before the Song Dynasty (960 to 1279 CE), Liu Xi elucidates the meaning of the screen's name in *Explaining name: Explain Bed and Curtain*, "Screen [屏风, literally "block" and "wind"], meaning the ability to block off the wind".[14] This explanation symbolizes warding off the wind as one of the important functions of the Chinese screen. This crucial function was still vivid in the Song dynasty, as demonstrated in Xie Weixin's Book, written in the Song dynasty: "Screen is used for shielding from the wind as well as for blocking the view".[15]

[14] See 释名·释床帐 in LiuXi 刘熙, *Shiming 8 Juan 释名 8 卷* (Beijing Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 22.

[15] Xie Weixin 谢维新, *《Shi Lei Bei Yao》 Di San Ce《事类备要》第三册* (Shanghai Guji Chuban She 上海古籍出版社, 1992), 696.

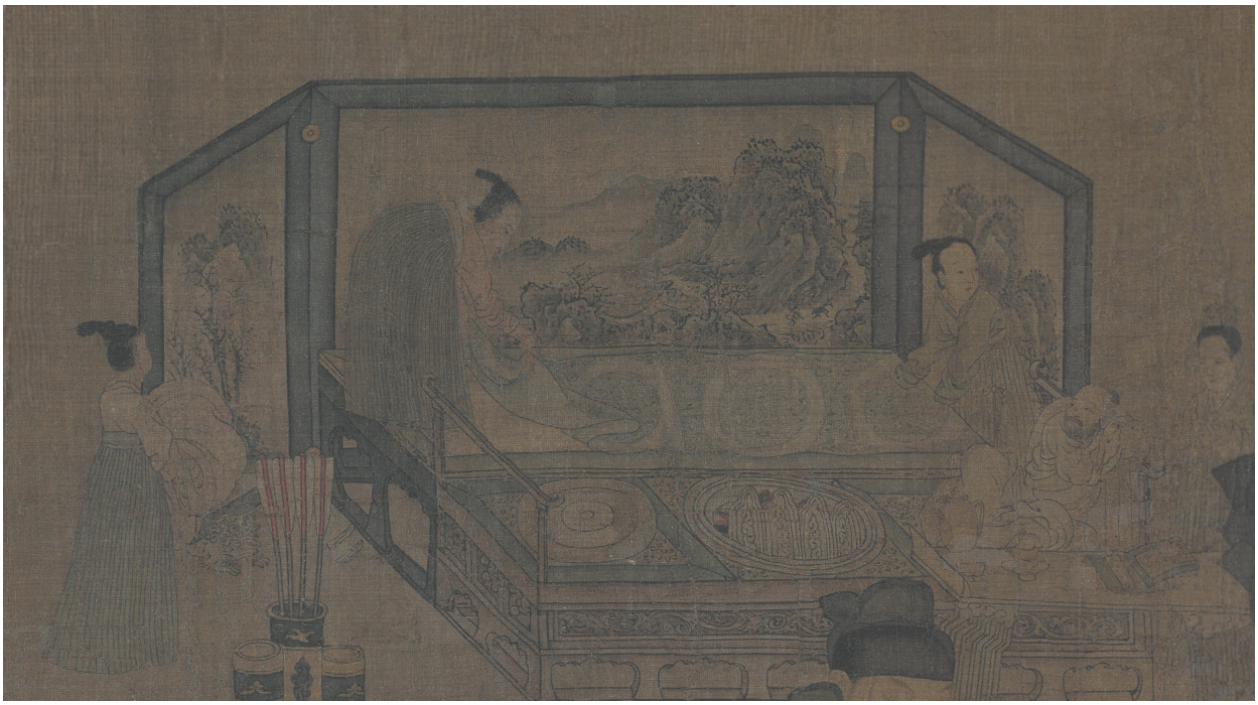

Fig.6 Attributed to Zhou Wenju, *Double Screen* (details), ink and color on silk, a copy of a 10th-century work, short handscroll. Palace Museum, Beijing.

The details of *Double Screen*, or "Chongping Huiqi Tu 重屏会棋图", help to illustrate the function of protecting from the wind (fig. 6). The image shown here is only a small portion of the double screen, which appears as an image mounted on the painted screen yet vividly depicts how the screen is used in daily life. In this painting, a bearded master is reclining on a couch attached to a bed, attended by four women—two preparing the bed, one delivering the blanket, and one standing behind the master. The fourth one, however, has a different head decoration than all three others and thus is more likely to be the wife. The couch has a built-in brazier with fire and black charcoal inside. This couch and the bed are presumably one installation, called a "brazier-bed (huolu chuang 火炉床), mentioned in Tang poet Yuan Zhen's *Sleeping During*

Travel: "Sleeping in bed as well as the guest's seat, all on this brazier-bed (火炉床)."[16] Because this brazier-bed has both a brazier and a bed, it is two-part furniture, just like the one in *Double Screen*. The bearded master is often associated with Bai Juyi, given a poem called *Casual Sleep* by him: "Placing my wine cup on my writing desk; placing my head on my arm before the brazier; In my old age, I am fond of pondering; So indolently, I am constantly nodding; My wife urges me to take off my black hat; And the servant girls spread the green coverlet; Then the situation is like a scene on a screen; Why take the trouble to paint an ancient sage?"[17] The brazier, the maid spreading the coverlet, the wife behind, and the master pondering all match with the painting. A large three-paneled folding screen close to the bed unfolds picturesque landscape paintings, within which a traveler is in the middle of a path, heading toward the faraway mountain. If the master were recumbent on the bed, his eye would see the traveler next to his head, which leads him to roam in the valley. Compared with the girl servant, this larger-than-life screen stretches toward the ceiling, blocking the wind from the back, the left, the right, and also the top, as the chilly winds may come from all directions. The only open façade faces toward the brazier, not only separating the warm wind from the cold one but also securing the warm streams to stabilize the room temperature when sleeping. The panoramic landscape painting envelops the recumbent body both literally and metaphorically, assuring the user's phantom encounter with the dreamland a safe and unhindered journey. Stemming from the sole demand of blocking off the wind, the folding screen envelops the user while simultaneously creating a panoramic pictorial program oriented around the master on the bed.

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[16] See 元稹's 旅眠 in Yuan Zhen 元稹, *Yuanshi Changqing Ji 60 Juan 元氏長慶集 60 卷* (Beijing Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 36.

[17] Based on Lawton's translation with modifications. Thomas Lawton, Chinese Figure Painting (Freer Gallery Of Art, 1973), 36.

The folding screen around the bed in *Double Screen* betrays a simple attempt—warding off the winds from varied directions—which is also featured in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind*. As the title suggests, the wind sometimes comes into this small pavilion. Under the bridge, where two boys are standing, there are two water wheels, alluding to a creek running into the faraway river. With the moist wind coming to this pavilion, screens are an important architectural component in shielding from the mighty winds, especially preventing the user from waking up during the nap. Compared to the woman on the left, the larger-than-life seated screen almost touches the ceiling, standing firmly to block the draft or other possible winds from the back. A small pillow screen closely protects the head of the master, warding off the wind from the right or around the head. This small set of screens works prominently in controlling the wind, forming a secure circle around the user. During the nap, the screens surround the master and predominantly function as furnishings, making the images a dispensable component in this particular setting. Those screens echoing each other, standing firmly as guards in the dark, were dismissed by the master while playing essential roles. Only when the first beam of light spreads on their surface and the master awakes do their images start to become prominent. The master could begin to gaze in a full circle, reexamining the simulated landscape surrounding the bed.

Resonating with this encompassing set of screens as wind-blockers and the surrounding landscape painting, all the images start to perform a panorama and formulate a pictorial program. As the furnishing program is oriented around the user, the pictures around it are also centered on the master and the presumed gaze. If starting from the seated screen, the viewer enjoys the view of a green tree and faraway scenery at the horizon. Turning clockwise, the pillow invites the

viewer to continue the journey in the most intimate way. Two hanging scrolls make the viewer look up and appreciate monumental natural creations. In viewing all the pictorial representations, the sounds from the real landscape never cease, including chirps, wind blowing, and water streaming. Through the seamless contemplation and natural sounds, the viewer is transported from a simulated landscape to a real one, seeing the animated landscape with nuanced moves. This enchanted journey will presumably continue to the left wall, with two hanging scrolls there and a delicate landscape echoing paired scrolls on the right. The ceaseless sounds and viewing experiences foster a coherent simulated landscape in the viewer's mind, dismissing the twilight zones and the boundaries of the framed images.

As Eugene Y. Wang reveals in his essay on the *Picture of a Turning Sphere*, "circularity" not only erases the beginning and ending but also offers an enclosure, giving rise to "an inward-turning spiral".[18] This provocative insight offers a new way to look at the panorama of the pictorial program—its elimination of the beginning and its partitioning of the space. Within the pictorial program comprised of a seated screen on the back, a pillow screen on the right, hanging scrolls on the right and presumably on the left wall, and a real landscape on the front, a circularity is performed and invites a successive viewing with a starting point and an ending point determined by the spectator at ease. The circularity, as Wang states, is also a form of enclosure, confining the intruding gaze within the pavilion and its front. Since all the paintings of furnishings face the painted viewer, those image-bearing furnishings are reduced to only images in the viewer's eyes. The pictorial program thus inserts a partition within the optical space, facilitating a blockage between the inside and outside. With the excessive pictures encompassing

[18] Wang Eugene et al., *Books in Numbers*, ed. Wilt Idema L. (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2003), 76.

the spectator, a deserted and private space is being foregrounded, letting the master and the peaceful nature peacefully confront each other.

This sense of solitude is further underlined by the one-adult-sized bed, which makes it only suitable for sole-viewership and solo activities. Facing outside, the seated screen blocks the mighty winds as well as the gaze of two women, presumably his concubine or wife. The seated screen also takes on a double significance as both wind blockers and as a boundary within masculine and feminine space. Consciously or unconsciously, the master could exercise his authority to manipulate the seated screen to define his masculine space, while the woman could only wait for it to recede. Therefore, as the seated screen foregrounds the dominant position within a household, it also symbolizes authority as well as the freedom of being alone. On the right side, the furnishing program wards off the servants, preventing them from looking at the master directly. In the overall composition, the outline of the pavilion separates both the women and the servant boys, leaving the master as the focal point. The painter of the fan painting makes the women whisper and the servants chat, juxtaposed with the master, who is the only one enjoying the beauty of the landscape and the one who can appreciate lofty spiritual gain from the mountain. As Confucius's famous remark among Chinese audiences shows, "The knowledgeable love waters, the benevolent prefer mountains."[19] It reveals that the appreciation of mountains and water is often correlated with higher spiritual merits and a transcendent mind. This deliberate composition adds another moral overtone to the fan painting, along with a patriarchal dimension. If this fan is used by a male audience, it could simultaneously dissipate the heat of summer and

[19] Kong Zi 孔子, *Lun Yu 10 Juan 論語 10 卷* (Beijing Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 13.

inspire an inward-contemplation just like a mirror as to its moral message—a lofty man should get intimate with nature physically or spiritually, immersed in nature instead of worldly affairs and ceaseless, invaluable chatting.

In Michael Sullivan's "Notes on Early Chinese Screen Painting", he states that "the painted screens […are] used by the major painters as vehicles for expression".[20] While Sullivan's proposition places a heavy emphasis on the painters and their creative freedom, it is also essential to point out that the painted screen is often a joint creation by both the users and the painters rather than a sole creation. During the Tang-Song transition, there were many Painters-in-Attendance (daizhao 待诏) in the royal court, serving to be commissioned by the royal family to fulfill the painting task. In the Song dynasty, Guo Xi, a well-known Painter-in-Attendance, was sent out to finish a screen painting in the Jade Hall, which is documented by his son named Guo Si: "Jade Hall's screen: [the emperor] let his beloved courtiers Zhang Shiliang deliver the imperial edict; […Guo Xi, you] should paint carefully."[21] Outside the court, song poet and painter Su Shi's account betrays another condition to have a painted screen: "Recently, Li Ming gained fame by painting landscapes with delicate brushworks; therefore, [I] asked for one scroll, extremely long, which could be used (keyong 可用) for a folding screen on a wooden bed."[22] Because it says "could be used", the painting maybe was designed to be a scroll but just later could be remounted on the bed. Equally significantly, Su's account explicitly signals that while

[20] Michael Sullivan, "Notes on Early Chinese Screen Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 27, no. 3 (1965): 239, https://doi.org/10.2307/3249073, 254.
[21] Guo Si 郭思, *Linquan Gaozhi Ji 林泉高致集* (Zhengzhou: Daxiang Chuban She 郑州:大象出版社, 2017), 173-4.
[22] See 答吴子野四首之三 in Su Shi 苏轼, *Dongpo Qi Ji 110 Juan 东坡七集 110 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 4781.

the bed and image could be completed by different persons, the user could do further modifications.

In Cheng-hua Wang's essay on a Song dynasty scroll painting, she notices the aforementioned Su Shi's account and offers an ingenious exposition: the handscroll is a stop-and-go viewing format that divides the expansive landscape into subframes verging on the width of the viewer's shoulder (about 50–60 centimeters), while Su Shi turns against the artist's own intention, viewing the scenery in its entirety rather than following the successive viewing convention.[23] Wang's exposition sheds new light on reading this material as well as underlines the tension between authorships in the finished artworks. While Li Ming, as the primary creator, designated the viewing sequence from right to left and made the painting based on the subframe in the width as the shoulder, the user as the secondary artist could manipulate the composition and the viewing protocol at ease, cutting the scroll into three pieces aligned with the folding screens on the bed.

Both Su Shi's and Guo Si's accounts attest to the interventions by the user, signifying a secondary authorship of the owner, which is also vivid in this fan painting considering their movability. The owner could not only reshape each single painted furnishing, including both hanging scrolls and painted screens, but also rearrange the pictorial program of the simulated landscape at will. In other words, the audience of the pictorial program is also the maker, shaping one's own viewing experience. The panoramic program never has fixed orders and combinations, always leaving it up to the master's decision in the final composition. The pillow screen could be

[23] Paola Borghese, *Raffaello and Zhang Zeduan. New Perspectives on Perspective.* (Firenze: Mandragora, 2021), 49-50.

placed on the right as well as the left of the bed, or even be dismissed from the program. The paired hanging scrolls on the right could be exchanged or placed on the left wall. If the wind is coming from the front, the seated screen could be placed at the entrance with the landscape painting facing the back. In the rich pool of combinations, the simulated panoramic landscape is also constantly redefined as the shifting relative positions twist the imaginative twilight zones while never forgetting the bed as the viewing center. Being intrinsically movable and ad hoc, those furnishings are never finished products and are always moving toward completion, turning against a determinative meaning and yet yearning for a terminal role in the holistic program.

In brief, as a part of the furnishing program, image-bearing furnishings, including the painted screen, encompass the painted viewer on the bed in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind*, especially for blocking off the wind. While being a part of the pictorial program, including the painted screen and hanging scrolls, the furniture resonates with this circularity and offers a panoramic simulated view for the master on the bed, which is a joint creation by both the artist and the user.

Fig.7 Attributed to Gu Hongzhong, *Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (details), (?) 12th-century copy of a 10th-century work, handscroll, ink and color on silk. Palace Museum, Beijing

The Lighting Program

Within the interior space of the pavilion, furnishings are organized around the bed to constitute a "furnishing program," while the images painted are also oriented around the perceived audiences to constitute a "pictorial program." However, those two programs are not self-contained and have penetrated each other in various ways. In particular, the consideration of lighting affects the placement of furnishings as well as the pictorial representation. By adjusting the lighting, one could change the color saturation of the pictorial representation and thus change its perception and interpretation. Consisting of natural lighting, artificial lighting, and light-

blocking devices, a “lighting program” is built, which appears in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* and other paintings from the Song dynasty.

Unlike a protected work in the glass cases at a modern museum with fixed lighting, the image carried by furniture in the interior space during the Song dynasty is under various lighting sources, many of which are manipulable. Before leading the discussion to the fan paintings, a section of *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (Han Xizai Yeyan Tu 韩熙载夜宴图), helps to illuminate this point (fig. 7). With the original work by Gu Hongzhong long vanished, *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* from the Beijing Palace Museum is the oldest and finest copy of this famous handscroll painting, which was completed around the Song dynasty. *Night Entertainment* depicts Han Xizai’s nighttime revels, delineating a domestic party scene. In the image, three-paneled folding screens are attached to the bed, with landscape paintings framed by exquisite blue silk. The right panel depicts a boat traversing to shore with a tree and distant mountain forming a triangular composition. The back panel seems to delineate a tree on the left, with the rest blank. A crumpled and swollen quilt recedes into the unseen, most likely depicting an erotic scene within the fabric. A larger structure is attached to this bed, and a surrounding red curtain is half open and tied by two bowknots. Presumably, this heterogeneous bed-concentrated installation is named Chamber-Curtained-Bed (gewei chuang 阁帏床), as mentioned in the Song account. Dong Yu, also from the Southern Tang dynasty when this painting was originally depicted and made, had one commission work from the Southern Tang court when serving as Painter-in-Attendance: "Dong Yu, [...] serving Li Yu as Painter-in-Attendance, paints on the

Sweet-Smelling Flowers Chamber-Curtained-Bed's screen (香花阁帏床屏)."[24] This outer structure of the bed and its curtain assemble a chamber and offer a private space, which matches this description. In front of this bed is a tripodal candlestick (dengqing 灯檠), which has a burning candle on top and a wax pan (zhupan 烛盘) in the middle to hold the wax. Between the candle and the wax pan, two drops of white oil are dripping down on the two sides of the steak. By manipulating the curtain and the shape of the opening, a user could control the light shedding on the landscape paintings. Likewise, to change the position of the candlestick, one could also control the strength and direction of the lighting based on how clear one wants the landscape to be. Noteworthy, the absence of the sun in Chinese landscape painting is very common, at least during the Song period, erasing the specific time within a day and blurring the temporality of landscape painting, which grants leeway for imagination. Take the painting on the right as an example—a boat is heading toward the shoreside. Without the sun, this boat could be imagined as appearing in the morning, noon, or evening, which respectively could mean leaving home, reaching a faraway land, or heading back home. With the red, warm lighting sent out by the candle, the boat seems to be arriving at sunset or sunrise. Placing dim lighting or no lighting, the boat is seemingly traversing during the night. Presumably, the original intention of dismissing the sun in Chinese history was to create an unworldly scene, a feeling of tranquility, and a sense of perpetuity, which resonates with the longing for immortal land and the fairytale of Peach Blossom Spring (taohuayuan 桃花源). But on such screens, the absence of the sun provides more space for constructing a story in the imagination. To recapitulate, by changing the curtain and

[24] Liu Daochun 刘道醇, *Songchao Minghua Ping 3 Juan 宋朝名畫評 3 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 17.

candlestick, the owner could change the color saturation of the pictorial representation and thus change its perception and interpretation.

Returning to *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind*, in such an open space, the lighting mostly comes from the outside. The desk is placed most closely to the wall; thus, one can read the book in sufficient lighting. Unlike modern fixed lighting, the natural sunlight is warm and ever-changing. Under the real sunlight from the outside of the pavilion, the landscape imagery is animated and takes on various manifestations. The master could move the seated screen on the front to block the sunlight or even move all the furnishings to the inner room to avoid the sunlight. By controlling the sunlight, the master changed the color saturation of the pictorial representation and thus its perception. In other words, the master could either appreciate the landscape paintings as depicting varied moments in a day or avoid the sunlight to enjoy the simulated view in relatively fixed lighting in the interior without sunshine. The architectural space, the furnishing programs featured on the seated screen, and the pictorial program have porous boundaries in between, infiltrating each other through the thread of lighting.

The Olfactory Program

While the lighting program could change the color saturation of the pictorial representation, smells could enhance the viewing experience by adding an olfactory dimension. For example, a flower bottle introduces the smell of nature and offers a multi-sensory experience of appreciating a landscape screen painting. Comprised of a flower bottle and incense burner, the

"olfactory program" in *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind* influences the arrangements of the furnishing program and the pictorial program at the same time.

As I mentioned above, the two artifacts on the right side of the desk are very likely to be a pear-shaped white flower bottle (danping 胆瓶) and a yellow "bronze ritual cauldron" (yiding 彝鼎) that was used as an incense burner—a versatile use developed during the Song period. In practice, placing olfactory devices beside the top of a bed is very common in the literature. Song poet Lu You's burning incense while napping, suddenly aware of an undissipated fragment, leaves two poems for fun: "The small screen and distant, smoky [烟] trees are scattered unevenly. As officials depart, it's time to relax and sleep. Who, like the fragrance in the incense burner [炉], concerns [my] solitude and remains with a companion until waking?"[25] In this poem, the poet burns incense beside a pillow screen, taking a short, smooth nap before the incense is exhausted. The incense of the Song period is made of natural materials, giving off the smell of nature, which echoes with the smoky tree in the first line. Also from the Song dynasty, poet Zhao Mengjian leaves his account: "The stamen and pistil have only been partly revealed; But the west wind has already carried it far and wide; [...] So it should be placed in a pear-shaped bottle and, at night, seated by the pillow screen."[26] As "the stamen and pistil" signal, the pear-shaped bottle is a flower bottle and placed beside the pillow screen, which could send out a natural fragrance when sleeping or facilitate sleep. Another anonymous poet wrote, "The pavilion is not large, yet free from vulgarity; The window is supported by bamboo stems; A few

[25] See 焚香昼睡，比觉香犹未散，戏作二首 in Lu You 陆游, *Jiannan Shigao 85 Juan 劍南詩稿 85 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 183.
[26] See 鹊桥仙（岩桂和韵 in Zhao Mengjian 赵孟坚, *Yizhai Shiyu 1 Juan 彝斋诗余 1 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 2-3.

paintings of Jiangnan's mountains are on display; A bronze ritual cauldron [彝鼎] burns exotic incense; A vase of fresh chrysanthemums in a pear-shaped bottle [胆瓶]."[27] What the poet portrays matches the fan painting very well: a small pavilion with landscape paintings, a clear mention of a pear-shaped flower bottle (danping 胆瓶), and a bronze ritual cauldron as an incense burner (yiding 彝鼎). Even though the poet does not mention whether the burner or flower bottle is placed beside the bed or not, this combination of an incense burner and flower bottle is still noteworthy information.

As evinced above, placing olfactory devices beside the top of the bed is a practice documented in Song literature. In this painting, a flower bottle sits beside the pillow screen, bringing a fragment of nature to the master—a branch of flower. Or occasionally, the master could burn the incense to enjoy the combined smell of natural materials. Even more notably, two servant boys are offering tea to the master, giving him both olfactory enjoyment as well as gustatory and somatic sensations of nature. With all the fragrances nature offers, the master could not only roam in the simulated landscape but also get in touch with the real smells of nature, fleshing out the pictorial representation with the aid of other sensory stimuli. Including the painted screens, the pictorial and furnishing programs are entangled and intertwined through this softening of sensory boundaries—a panorama beyond pictorial dimensions. This immersive experience for the viewer should be considered along with the analysis of the visual component of the painted screens.

[27] Zeng Zao 曾慥, *Yuefu Yaci 乐府雅词* (Liaoning: Liaoning Jioayu Chuban She 辽宁教育出版社, 1997), 202.

Broader Implications

Many references in the Song literature fit neatly with this painting, showing that the pictorial program and furnishing program could be arranged and perceived in association with literary tropes and social phenomena. One of the most important is the Song practice of "Four Pastimes" (siyi 四艺), which became popular in contemporary literature when discussing the lifestyle of the Song dynasty. It is mentioned in Wu Zimu's (吴自牧) account from the Song dynasty that "burning incense, making tea, hanging paintings, and arranging flowers are all leisurely activities that should not burden the household".[28] His statement signals four Song characteristic pastimes, which respectively match with an incense burner, tea utensils, hanging scrolls, and bottle flowers. The incense burner takes the form of a "bronze ritual cauldron," which is carefully placed on the pitch-black desk. The boy servant on the left is holding a yellow-and-black tray and tea utensils. Two pairs of hanging scrolls are hung higher than the pillow screen for the master to appreciate. The bottle flower on the desk is meticulously depicted with white paint. Taken together, they allude to domestic enjoyment that could be implemented by a single person and could potentially be enjoyed on the bed. Those four pastimes are not necessarily conducted one at a time but could be enjoyed at the same time. For example, the master could drink the tea and burn the incense while appreciating the hanging scroll he placed. These nuanced penetrations between sensory stimuli complicate the understanding of the artworks as self-contained visual enjoyments.

[28] Wu Zimu 吴自牧, *Mengliang Lu 20 Juan 夢梁録 20 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 120.

"Recumbent Travel" (woyou 卧游) is another literacy reference associated with the pictorial program depicted in this painting. Taking many manifestations in Chinese history, this word is attributed to Zong Bing (宗炳) (375–443 CE) from the Liu Song dynasty in a biography on him: "After falling ill, Zong Bing returned to Jiangling and sighed, ‘With old age and illness both upon me, I fear that it will be difficult to visit all the famous mountains; I must clear my mind and contemplate the Dao, traveling while lying down’; He then made paintings of all the places he had visited in his room."[29] His proposition defines the preliminary meaning of "woyou": traveling while lying down. During the Song dynasty, this "woyou" practice still existed, as evinced by Su Shi’s account: "I found an abandoned vegetable garden on a high hill in Dongpo, Huangzhou; after some repairs, I enclosed it with walls and built a hall named Xue Tang (Snow Hall); As the hall was built during the season of heavy snowfall, [I] painted snow on all four walls of the main hall without any gap; sitting or lying down, looking around, there was nothing but snow."[30] In this experience, Su Shi gained a place for him to build a new house named "Snow Hall", in which he creates a panoramic snow scene by painting the surrounding wall. Considering the experience of seeing the painted landscape when lying down, Su Shi’s practice heavily resonates with Zong Bing’s practice of "woyou". In the Song literature, the concept of "recumbent travel" is still mentioned, as evinced by Lu You’s poem, "The smoke from the circular incense on the quiet Yanliang has dissipated, and I have stolen a few moments of leisure; With three autumn-screens guarding my qin-shaped pillow, I lie down and travel [卧游]

[29] Shen Yue 沈約, *Songshu 100 Juan 宋書 100 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 1023.
[30] See 雪堂记 in Su Shi 苏轼, *Suwen Qishang 50 Juan 苏文奇赏 50 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 623.

to the mountains of Rangxi in my dreams."[31] In such a poem, the poet is surrounded by burning incense and folding screens, going on a spiritual journey like what Zong Bing did. In the painting, a panoramic pictorial program envelopes the user to facilitate simulated travel, which resonates with both the concept of "recumbent travel" and Lu You's poem.

The trope of "The Peach Blossom Spring" (桃花源) is a dreamland with an isolated community residing in an idyllic landscape while unknown to society, which was introduced by Tao Yuanming (365–427 CE) in one essay. This trope relates to sleeping and screens during Song, as shown by Pan Dalin's *Five Poems on Chen Dexiu's Four Seasons Pillow Screen*: "In the depths of the chaotic mountains, the blue waves flow, and on the opposite bank, willows hit a small boat; countless peach blossoms accompany the spring dream, and in the dream, I still travel to Wuling [武陵]."[32] In the story of "The Peach Blossom Spring", Tao Yuanming depicts an isolated dreamland residing in Wuling, surrounded by peach blossoms. By referring to those two distinct elements, Pan explicitly connects the pillow screen with the trope of "The Peach Blossom Spring". Moreover, his description adds another layer of meaning to the landscape depicted on the screen, turning such a worldly landscape into an idealistic fairyland. Similar accounts could also be found in Liu Chang's *For the Landscape Pillow Screen Gift of Wang Langzhong, an Official of the Ancestral Temple Department*.[33] Such connection between the landscape on the screen and "The Peach Blossom Spring" offers two possibilities for

[31] See 焚香昼睡，比觉香犹未散，戏作二首 in Lu You 陆游, *Jiannan Shigao 85 Juan 劍南詩稿 85 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 183.
[32] See 题陈德秀画四季枕屏图五首 in Sun Shaoyuan 孙绍远, *Shenghua Ji 8 Juan 聲畫集 8 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 39.
[33] See 祠部王郎中送山水枕屏作 in Liu Chang 刘敞, *Gongshi Ji 54 Juan 公是集 54 卷* (Beijing: Ai ru sheng shu zi hua ji shu yan jiu zhong xin 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2009), 139.

reconceptualizing the landscape image painted on the pillow screens: either the painter deliberately paints the landscape as if it were the one in "The Peach Blossom Spring," or the viewer imagines the landscape depicted on the furnishings as "The Peach Blossom Spring," which became a popular practice during the Song dynasty. No matter which interpretation is more aligned with the history, they both reveal the popularity of the trope of "the peach blossom spring" during the Song dynasty and the literal reference connected with landscape images.

Conclusion

While the painted screens were predominantly analyzed in isolation in the past, this essay serves to shed light on the connections between the painted screens and the larger environment. Being part and parcel of both furnishing and pictorial programs, painted screens yield not only an immersive simulated landscape but also a multi-sensory experience. In the furnishing program of *Reading under a Pavilion Roof in the Wind*, the bed and its user remain the focus, with the screens keeping off the wind, controlling the light, and securing a private space. In the pictorial program, the focal point is still the bed, with all pictures facing the master to foster a panoramic landscape. While the two programs seem to be separate, those image-bearing objects could not be reduced to a fixed meaning but instead played versatile roles in architectural and pictorial semantics, making the two programs resonate with and infiltrate each other. A flower in the bottle could be a decoration, while its smells introduce the viewers to the simulated landscape; a painted screen functions as a wind-blocker as well as being an essential part of the pictorial program; controlling the sunlight can change the color saturation of the pictorial representation;

and the sounds from the natural landscape accompany and enhance the viewing experience of the painted landscape and its transition to the real one.

This intertextuality is what makes artwork in the interior space intriguing, as it keeps repositioning itself within the shifting context and varying programs. Within such a space, even the master on the bed takes on a double identity as both the user and the secondary artist, confining oneself while extending oneself to the expansive space. In those two interlocking programs, the painted viewer could touch the painted screens, move them at will, or appreciate them from a distance. Such intimacy and immersiveness underscore the considerations of surroundings and shed a new light on studying the viewing experience of screen paintings.

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