

ANDREA FESTA

Xintong Gao's practice is rooted in an ongoing investigation into the dynamics of movement and stillness—not only as physical states but as metaphysical conditions of being. He draws inspiration from Taoist philosophy, especially the concept of qi (氣), the vital, animating energy that flows through nature, matter, and consciousness. His work attempts to make this intangible force visible, translating it into visual rhythms, chromatic breathing, and spatial tension across the surface of the canvas.

His inquiry began as a philosophical exploration but has evolved into a pictorial language—one that bridges Eastern metaphysics and Western modernism, particularly the chromatic and kinetic breakthroughs of Italian Futurism and the spiritual abstraction of early 20th-century European avant-garde. He is especially drawn to artists and thinkers who have treated painting as a medium capable of expressing invisible structures of perception—from Umberto Boccioni's synthesis of form and speed to the gestural immediacy of Chinese ink painting, where a single stroke can embody the fullness of thought and breath.

In parallel, Gao studies Shan Shui (山水) painting, not only for its iconography of mountains and water but for its philosophical framework: a vision of the world where emptiness is as essential as form, and the void is not absence but potential. This relationship between the solid and the ephemeral is central to his compositions, where layered transparencies, spatial voids, and chromatic tensions evoke a flow that is felt rather than fixed.

His research extends into ancient cave painting, where primal gestures become evidence of memory, belief, and symbolic communication. In some of his recent works, he consciously echoes the faded silhouettes and rhythmic marks of these prehistoric images—traces that predate language yet resonate with universal meaning. For Gao, these gestures reflect a collective memory that has been increasingly dulled by digital acceleration. By reactivating these ancient visual instincts, he aims to propose a form of contemporary painting that is both timeless and deeply personal.

For Gao, painting becomes a meditative act—a choreography of brush and breath that unfolds between intention and surrender. Each work begins with a state of internal stillness and unfolds through a process of attunement, where he lets the movement of the body follow the internal rhythm of energy. He often reflects on the Taoist principle of Wu Wei (無為)—effortless action—as a guiding force in his practice. When painting, he aims to suspend control without relinquishing clarity, allowing gesture and material to arrive at a natural equilibrium.

In works like the Cyberbamboo series, his research culminates in immersive landscapes that reimagine the forest as a living interface—a matrix of flowing energy, line, and breath. The viewer is not positioned outside the space but within it, invited to navigate through rhythm, transparency, and vibration. Similarly, in the Untitled portrait series, the figure dissolves into energetic traces—not erased, but transformed—inviting reflection on the permeability of identity and the spiritual essence of presence.

Ultimately, Gao's goal is not to illustrate a fixed image but to create a space of resonance—a visual and emotional frequency that allows the viewer to pause, reflect, and reconnect with that which moves through and beyond us. In this space, painting becomes not just a window but a mirror: an encounter between spirit, matter, and perception.