

Visualizing Kakadu national park from the perspective of Chinese landscape painting: a cross-cultural practice

Abstract

This practice-based project takes Kakadu National Park, a region undergoing ecological challenges, as the case study area to explore the interpretation of Australia's nature with Chinese artistic expression and the reaction to its shifting landscape. The visual art is employed as a tool to reflect natural beauty and a medium to express ecological care for Australia's environmental issues. It attempts to depict the iconic landscapes of Kakadu, including the wetlands, plateaus, savanna woodlands, mangrove forests, and escarpments through the lens of environmental aesthetics and the techniques of freehand brushwork. Guided by the principles of heaven-earth-human unity, the natural landscape is portrayed as an artistic ecology featuring wholeness, harmony and energy. However, the threats of climate change consistently affect the ecosystems of Kakadu National Park. In response to this issue, the study pays special attention to the landscape transformation in addition to its wild beauty. The research consists of intensive field study and further studio creation, resulting in an exegesis and an art exhibition. The exegesis not only discusses the interaction of climate, nature, and human in an ecological-cultural framework, but also documents the process of art creation from field sketching to completed artworks and personal reflection of environmentalism, creation, and aesthetics. The project demonstrates the adaptation of Chinese brushwork to Australia's nature to highlight its sublimity, diversity, and transformation. Furthermore, intercultural practice enhances climate communication while providing a Chinese perspective for Australian viewers to appreciate their landscape.