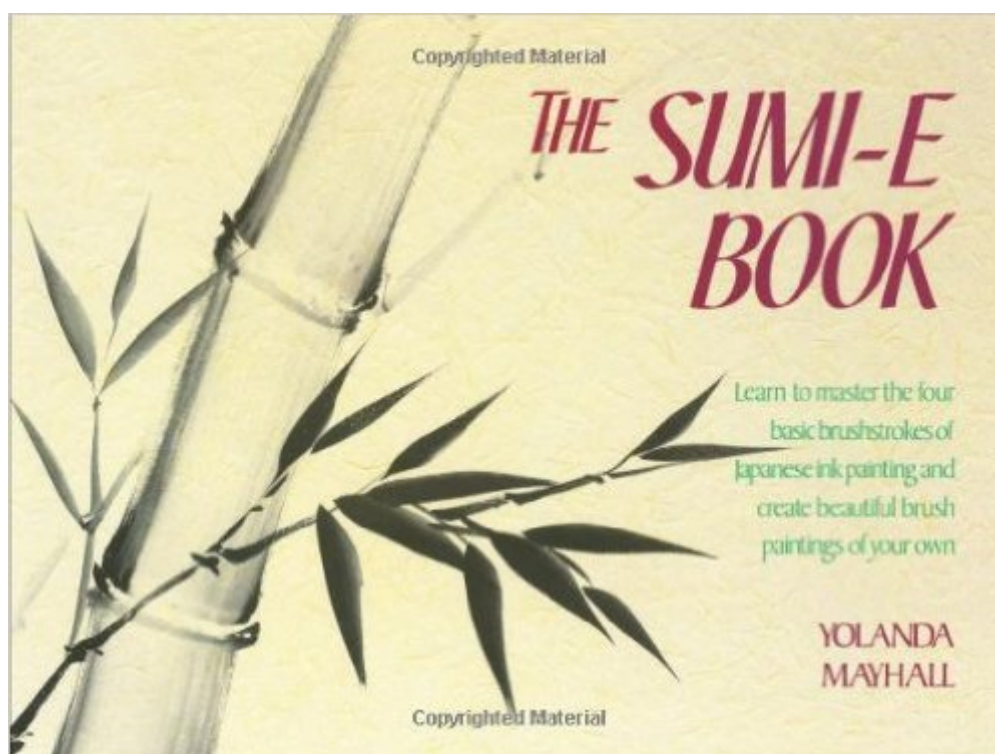


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# The Sumi-E Book



## Synopsis

This ancient Japanese technique is ideal for teaching art to the beginner because the student is quickly able to create successful pictures with four basic brushstrokes. Mastery of Sumi-e leads to new levels of creativity.

## Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

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Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (61 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

In all honesty, Sumi-E is best learned from a teacher in a live workshop. The combination of exacting brushstrokes, meditative attitude & free, almost unconscious, expression is difficult to take out of a book alone. Sumi-E has an intimate connection to Zen practices. But that said, in the absence of a teacher, Yolanda Mayhall's book is the best I've seen. Her purpose here is to get you started on the right path - & in Sumi-E, the right path means everything. The "Four Gentleman" brushstrokes & their basic variations are the substance of The Sumi-E Book. Bamboo, Wild Orchid, Chrysanthemum & Plum Branch represent "all the forms in the universe." One could endlessly write haiku on those four natural forms, so why not paintings, too? This book is as clear as a mountain brook & as gentle as a breeze. Successfully achieving a bamboo branch & leaf (& you will succeed) is enough to draw you onward down that right path. Even children can grasp the basics of these strokes using inexpensive brushes & watercolors, & they will wonder at the simplicity of it. Just as poets return again & again to haiku in order to sharpen their observation skills & sense of economy, all artists will reap large benefits from the spare, mono-chromatic beauty of Sumi-E that will enrich your other mediums & quiet your mind as well. Highly recommended. Bob Rixon

I highly recommend Yolanda Mayhall's book for those who want to ease into bamboo ink painting for pleasure. I had heard that learning how to paint the "four gentlemen" (bamboo, chrysanthemum, plum blossom, and orchid) would give me the strokes I need to do any painting. As a beginner, I didn't fully realize the meaning of this until I discovered Mayhall's book. She has specific, simple instructions on doing the basic strokes. Then she has "Related Strokes" sections in her book. There she shows how these simple strokes can be used to paint a variety of subjects from dragons to squirrels to people. My brush is freer and my range of subjects wider since discovering her book.

This is a very practical book for the beginning student of Chinese or Japanese brush painting. Clear, simple and precise illustrations show how to execute the traditional "four gentlemen"- bamboo, orchid, chrysanthemum, and plum. Students will learn such important concepts as how to achieve depth by double dipping the brush into a darker tone of ink, how to achieve movement by varying the pressure on the brush and how to achieve texture by varying the amount of moisture in the brush. The bonuses of this book are the examples of other forms one can make using related strokes. For example, after mastering the bamboo leaves one can easily paint a bird, lizard, or butterfly. After mastering the orchid leaves one can use the same strokes to paint fish, underwater grasses, and water lilies. Once students gain confidence they can naturally go on to master tiger lilies, rocks, mountains, and pine trees, all beautifully illustrated in this book....

I highly recommend this book to anyone who would like to start doing Japanese Sumi-e Painting. I had to learn all by myself, and I must say that this book in particular has made my journey a little more easier. I found the Author-Painter very professional in the way that she always tries, with her step by step method, to make it easy for the beginner to get along. It is so well explained, that you just can't go wrong. On the other hand, I also think that this beautiful book is in itself a Work Of Art, due to that the paintings you find inside are unique, very personal, and not a patterned copy. I heartily thank the friend who gave it to me, and have always wished it had a second part.

Calligraphy and brush painting are not easy to learn WITH an instructor; learning from a book is daunting at best. Yolanda Mayhall's book is as close to having an instructor as any I have found - and I have tried many books. Her style is informative without being pedantic, guiding gently without drifting into boredom. If you take nothing else away from reading her book, you will realize that art is not "taught", it must be appreciated, understood, to be learned. Like a foreign language, sumi-e demands inspection and appreciation before you can begin to replicate it! Even those who can read

printed Japanese will have difficulty understanding how the strokes are created. Those impoverished by a lifetime of penmanship will find the basics of "brushmanship" as foreign as Japanese language! Never fear! This book will lead you gently through the process. From preparing ink to holding the brush to creating those first tentative strokes, this teacher is at your side. She will guide you through the strokes of the "four gentlemen" at the core of brush art. Bamboo leaves will give way to the orchids, birds, mountains and waterfalls all illustrated so beautifully in her book. Remember that brushwork requires practice. I have used many a fat Sunday newspaper as an inexpensive substitute for rice paper (a point worth remembering to all the "grasshoppers" out there). Practice makes perfect. Yolanda will inspire you to practice and lead you through the levels until you could paint bamboo in your sleep! I have yet to find a live teacher who can inspire me to improve my brushstrokes like Yolanda can in her book.

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