

Abstract

The focus of this article is a handscroll of ink chrysanthemums attributed by signature to the painter Xiang Shengmo (1597–1658), and composed for the Fujianese collector Yu Junshen (1628–after 1697), who at the time was living in Nanjing, the centre of Ming loyalists (*yimin*) during the second part of the seventeenth century. After analyzing the various elements that challenge the current attribution to Xiang Shengmo and reattributing this painting to a less famous master of the time, the article highlights the very specific context of its creation and undertakes an analysis of the picture's formal aspects and symbolic dimension. It then turns to a detailed discussion of some of the colophons, composed by famous loyalists of the time, to consider how they responded to the dynastic transition. The argument concludes that although the painting is not by Xiang Shengmo, it is, nonetheless, an important work, emblematic of the pivotal moment of shift of the Nanjing's *yimin* community from a position of active resistance towards the recently established Qing dynasty to a condition of passive resistance of the new rule, symbolized by a lifestyle of social and political withdrawal.

Keywords: *yimin*; Ming-Qing transition; Chinese painting; chrysanthemum; Xiang Shengmo; reattribution.