

王冬齡：磅礴有象
WANG DONGLING:
ENTANGLED ENERGIES

開幕 Opening Reception

23/9 週六 SAT 2-6pm

展覽至 Exhibition runs till 1/11/2023

hanart
TZ Gallery
漢雅軒

2/F Mai On Ind. Bldg.
17-21 Kung Yip St.
Kwai Chung, Hong Kong

hanart@hanart.com
+852 2526 9019
www.hanart.com

Wang Dongling 王冬齡 (b.1945) Xiang Yun: The Unity of Existence [detail] 《相融》[局部] 2013 Ink on Paper 180 x 97 cm

WANG DONGLING: ENTANGLED ENERGIES

ARTIST RECEPTION: 23 September 2023, Saturday, 2-6pm
Exhibition runs till 1 November, 2023

HANART TZ GALLERY
2/F Mai On Industrial Building
17-21 Kung Yip Street, Kwai Chung, Hong Kong
T: +852 2526 9019
E: hanart@hanart.com



Hanart TZ Gallery is honoured to announce the opening of “ENTANGLED ENERGIES”, a solo exhibition of works by eminent calligraphy master Wang Dongling, on Saturday, 23 September 2023 (Exhibition runs till 1 November).

The exhibition features a range of Wang Dongling’s latest works, including a monumental “Entangled Script”, *2 Tea Poems by Su Shi*, measuring 5 meters long. “Entangled Script” is the culmination of Wang Dongling’s lifelong pursuit of an art that is both universal and Chinese, forward-looking, and firmly grounded in the past.

Another highlight of the exhibition is a set of calligraphies written on transparent coloured acrylic. Through interaction with the lighting of the space, the rhythm and momentum of the calligraphy are transformed into an encompassing realm of aesthetics, allowing the audience to experience the tension inherent in the “Entangled” calligraphy as an impact in public space.

In collaboration with media artist Jeffrey Shaw, the exhibition includes a special feature of two video installations. The videos capture Wang Dongling’s writing process, and translate the dance of the writing brush into a ritual performance.



Exhibition View, Griffin Court, Art Institute of Chicago, 2018



"Wang Dongling: Ink. Space. Time", The Heong Gallery, Downing College, Cambridge, 2023

The emergence of Wang Dongling's Entangled Script into the world of calligraphy represents a key aesthetic and conceptual breakthrough on many levels, both microcosmic and macrocosmic. In the first sense, it is a defining moment in Wang's artistic practice. In the second sense, it opens new entryways into deeper and more authentic understanding of the nature of Chinese calligraphy.

The kind of contemporary calligraphy we generally talk about today has departed from the classical kind that is rooted in refined cultivation or classical learning. It is also practiced in an era far removed from the days when the brush was a daily tool. Today when we talk about the “art” of calligraphy, we cannot avoid placing it in a comparative context with modern schools of Western art; yet at the same time, we must be vigilant. Today's historical mission is to recover a deeper appreciation of the tradition of calligraphy from within the field of what Western civilization defines as “art,” and in so doing, to prevent this field from overtaking the roots of Chinese culture.

Clues leading into calligraphy's deeper layers of meaning are embedded in Wang Dongling's art—even in the title he has chosen for this series of works, which in Chinese is *luan shu*. In English the character *luan* is conventionally translated as “chaos”, emphasizing the idea of primordial chaos, a state without order or rules. But Wang's use of the word *luan* would be more accurately understood as an example of what in linguistics is called an “auto-antonym” (*fan xun*)—a word that has two opposing meanings. Ancient lexicons such as the “*Er Ya*” recognize the existence of multiple auto-antonyms in Chinese. Thus, while one definition of *luan* is “chaos”, its opposite definition is *zhi*, “to bring things into order”, and by extension to govern, to manage. A river is harnessed (*zhi*) by dredging water, jade is obtained by careful extraction (*zhi*), and silk threads are untangled from the cocoon. Metaphorically speaking, “tangled silk threads” denotes knotted, unravelled disorder. In order to disentangle the threads and untie the knots, one must follow the clues and retrace to the source.



“FROM INCEPTION: Wang Dongling 60 Years of Calligraphy”, Zhejiang Art Museum, Hangzhou, 2021

In interpreting Wang Dongling's Entangled Script calligraphy from this perspective, I am reminded of a challenge proposed by my friend Zhao Guangchao, "How To Disentangle a Five-Thousand-Year-Old Knot". The core of Chinese culture is the written word, and it began millennia ago with the tying of knots for record keeping. Over the centuries many different forms of writing and script types have appeared. Yet today, traditional calligraphy is facing a crisis unprecedented in its long history, we are obliged to ask: How should calligraphy, as a "visual art" based on words, treat the "word" itself? When "writing" is no longer just a tool for describing events and intents, but a vehicle for expressing personal emotion and articulating sensibility, how can "calligraphy" find its way back to reintegrate with a word's innate meaning? How to return to the foundation of writing, to the original genius that brought comprehension to the primordial chaos, causing "heaven to rain tears and the gods to wail"? Is not this the pursuit calligraphy should seek? And is it not in the spirit as what modern art defines as the "radical act" of art?

The deeper significance of "untying a five-thousand-year-knot" is to prompt the calligrapher to release the rope from its "knotting" of the word, to disentangle the structure that has obscured it from the original order, and return it to the brushstrokes and lines before the word was formed. Here, at the site where *yin* and *yang* intersect, might the calligrapher-artist reinvent the "order" that came of "chaos", and in so doing unlock the secret of words.

This is Wang Dongling's process. And it is here that we find insights both into "entanglement" and its auto-antonym.

Chang Tsong-Zung

(Excerpt from presentation at the calligraphy symposium *Dao Xiang*, 2016)

Translation by Valerie C. Doran



SHAN-SHUI (in collaboration with Jeffrey Shaw), Lichtsicht 7 Projection Triennale, Bad Rothenfelde, Germany, 2020