

# FUNG MING CHIP

EXPERIMENTAL CALLIGRAPHY

NOVEMBER 20, 2013 – JANUARY 11, 2014



蘭庭



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Cover:

**Army Hospital, Pile Needle script** (detail)

2001, 48 x 24 inches

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PREFACE

**FUNG MING CHIP**  
Experimental Calligraphy

*Shufa*, the practice of calligraphy, is a creative art of the written word bearing the weight of thousands of years of tradition. To challenge *Shufa* tradition is no easy task. Fung Ming Chip has done exactly that. The ultimate autodidact, Fung Ming Chip (aka Ming), uses a breath-taking range of idiosyncratic styles to push the boundaries of calligraphy. Ming has explained that he did not truly become an artist until the ripe age of 30, although he dreamt about it as a child.

Born in Guangdong, his family moved to Hong Kong in 1956. He completed primary school and began to work. This lack of formal schooling freed Ming from the constraints of convention. He writes his own poetry and chooses from those poems what to brush, depending on his frame of mind. But it is more than that; he has created over a hundred different script styles, perfecting in his creative eye exactly how he wants the effect. For Ming, the act of creating *Shufa* is akin to breathing, something that he must do to live.

The poem “Post Marijuana” is brushed in several versions in the show. The first line reads:

The euphoria that follows marijuana  
The twisting and turning  
Stretching into empty space  
Craziness and chaos intermingling  
Mixing good and evil ...

The twisting and turning and stretching into empty space are all attributes of the brushwork in the several versions; however, each is completely different in overall brush “style” – wet versus dry, thick versus thin, dark versus light ink. Ming succinctly translates the abstract “emotion” of the poem using different brushwork vocabularies. His genius lies in his ability

to give complex emotional import to simple lines and ink using a series of different strokes through time and space. While the characters' meaning is still an essential component to his work, Ming has made the leap from literal meaning to open up the brushwork to even more creative freedom. This is the essence of *Shufa*.

M. Sutherland Fine Arts presents the inaugural solo show of Fung Ming Chip in New York City, Nov 20, 2013 – January 11, 2014. Ming has participated in numerous solo and group shows around the world. His works are part of major museum and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Ming's scholarship on aesthetics and the art of calligraphy rivals any PhD. He has written extensively on the subject and also has participated in various art symposia throughout the world.

Martha Sutherland

## ARTIST STATEMENT

### MUSE FROM WITHIN

No one believes me, even myself. Most people cannot imagine that calligraphy could be this way. I don't believe it, but I conceived it. Everything seemed fated, but in the beginning, I didn't know it. Fate provided a very special path for me. In the early years, I thought nothing was more thrilling than fighting destiny.

In 1977 my entire family moved to New York from Hong Kong. My first job in New York was driving in Chinatown, delivering provisions to restaurants, and very routine. Who could have imagined that after so many years I could be an artist?

Finally my childhood fantasy became reality.

No one believes me when they hear of my academic background. Half of my friends have their PhD. When asked where I studied, who I studied with or other credentials I hold, when I reply, their response often is, Are you serious?

After primary school, I began to work. By the time I approached 30, I saw my future, like a movie I had seen so many times before. Everything was fixed, predictable and dispiriting. Was this my life? Reflecting on that juncture, I think maybe I shouldn't ask what is the meaning of life.

I don't believe it. How come freedom is so difficult to attain? I walked in a lonely land without any support, rejected by my wife and parents, in the alley with art and my shadow. When I look back today, I can't believe the huge sacrifice it took to gain the little piece of freedom to do what I wanted to do.

Following my own artistic instincts, I was met by adversity, cynicism and doubt all around. Calligraphy friends especially looked down on me. To them, the line I created was so simple and easy that anyone could make it. But they didn't realize the challenge in arranging simple lines together in order to make it all work. The line was not the primary factor, and to succeed, required theoretical development and technical reconstruction.

No one believes it. Not because the lack of formal education liberated me from the mental box that the system puts on so many people. The result of this freedom is to construct something progressive through creative exploration. I came to understand the meaning and technique behind and beyond the tradition of calligraphy.

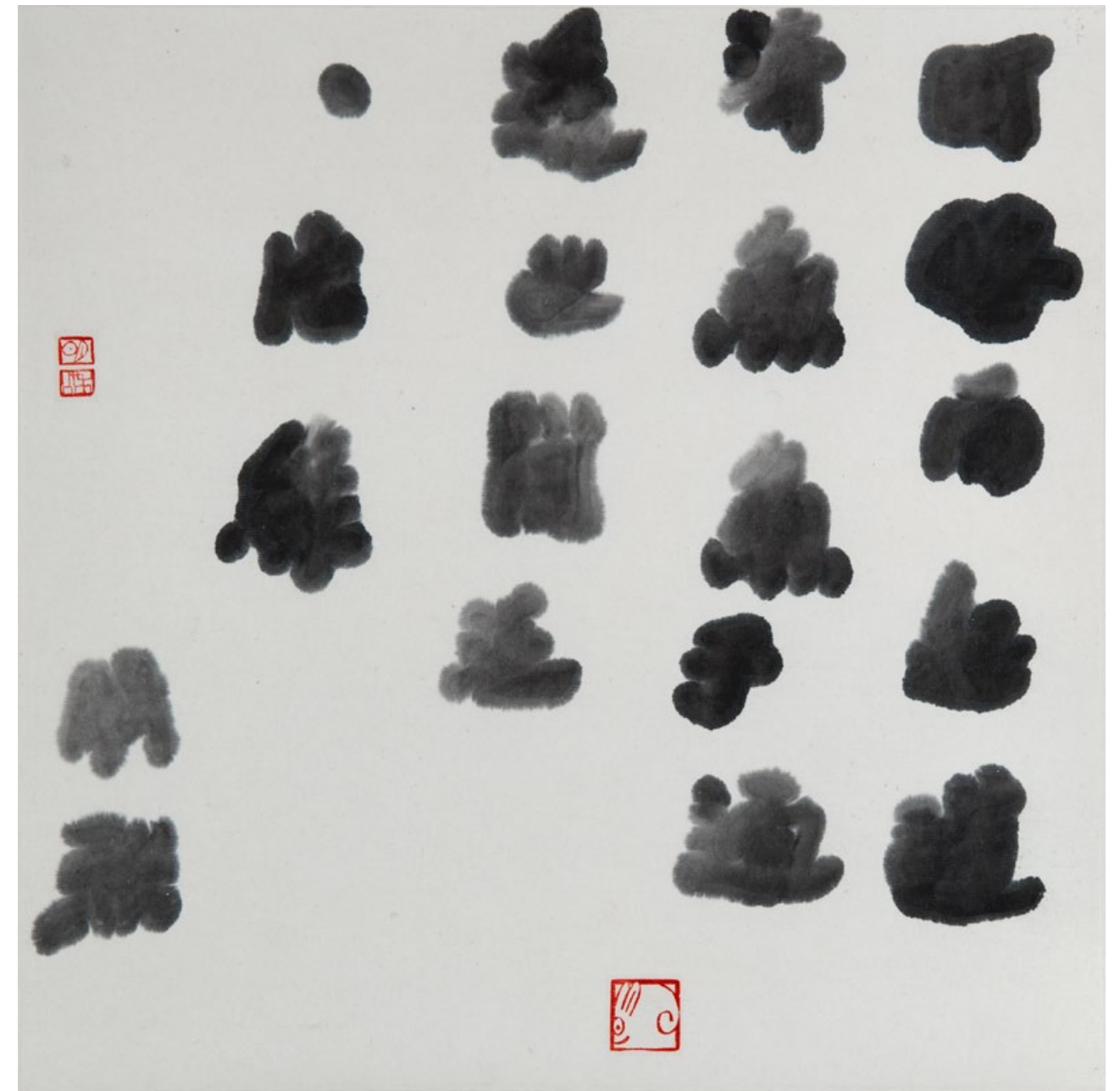
No one believes I could create so many different script styles, especially those who understand that calligraphy comes from internal senses. Some may appreciate my work from the aesthetic aspect or theoretical viewpoint; they may grasp the contribution of my work to the evolution of calligraphy development, but this is only one dimension. It is my history, the number of places and various locations I've lived, the experiences I've encountered, how extreme my life has been which has fed me. How could I enjoy a living hell? How could I stay in heaven with a devil?

Fate revealed her unique sense of humor by offering me all this as my muse that I love.

Fung Ming Chip

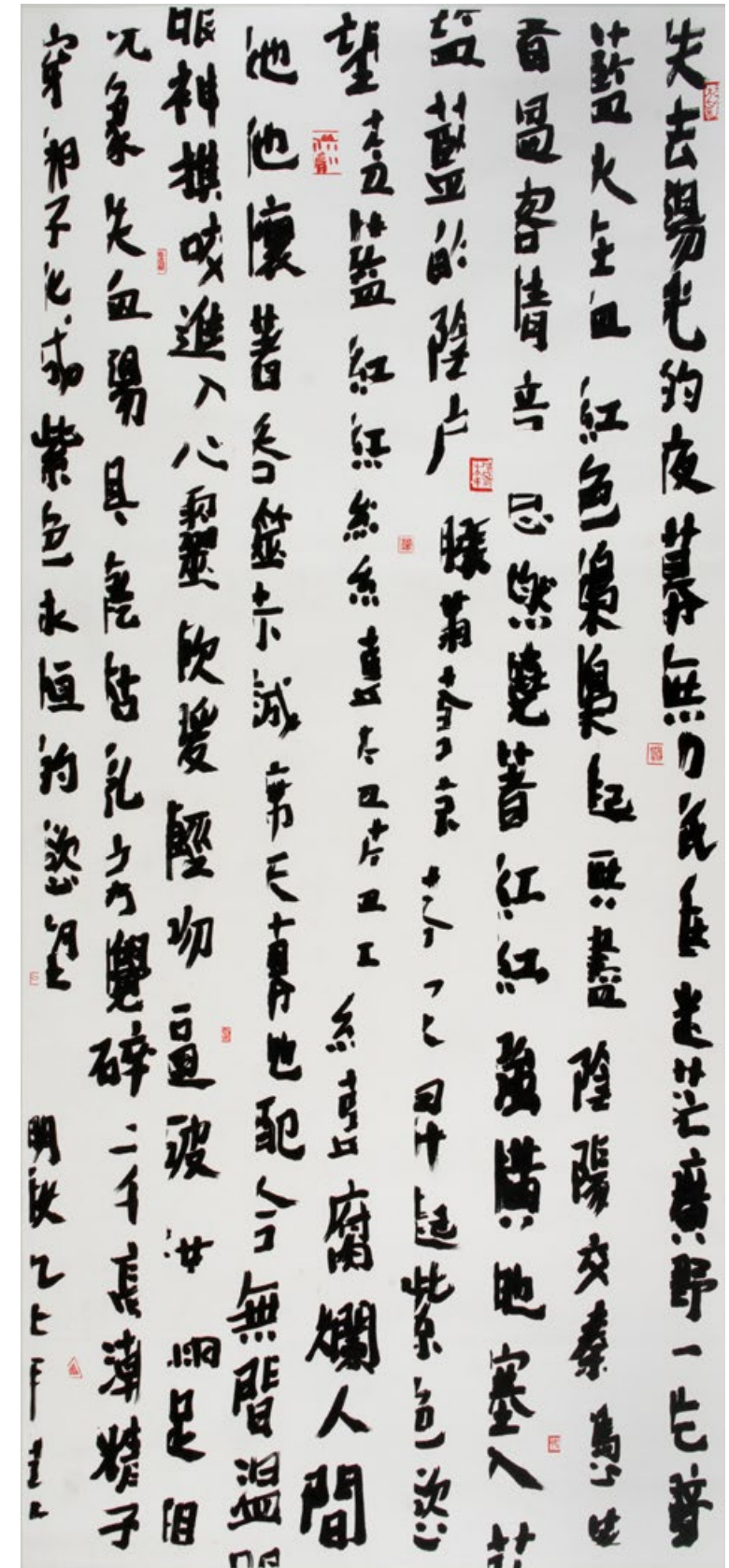
**"Green"**

*ting tung*  
*Ripple rises*  
*Fishes between transparency*  
*Kicks a green reflection*



**Green, Form Script**

1997, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 13 ½ x 13 ¾ inches



**Purple Desire, Half Script**

1998, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 72 x 36 inches



**"Wave"**

*Wide ocean rumbling beneath finger tips*

*Struggling, tumbling*

*Desire crashing crashing*

*Legs open*

*Welcoming a single echo*

*Single bed, single pillow*

*Sinking time and distance*

*Stroking painful longings*

*Spasms segment emotion*

*Searching entire body*

*Orgasm sections skeleton's*

*Three thousand waves*

**Wave, Ink Script B**

1999, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 26 ½ x 27 ½ inches



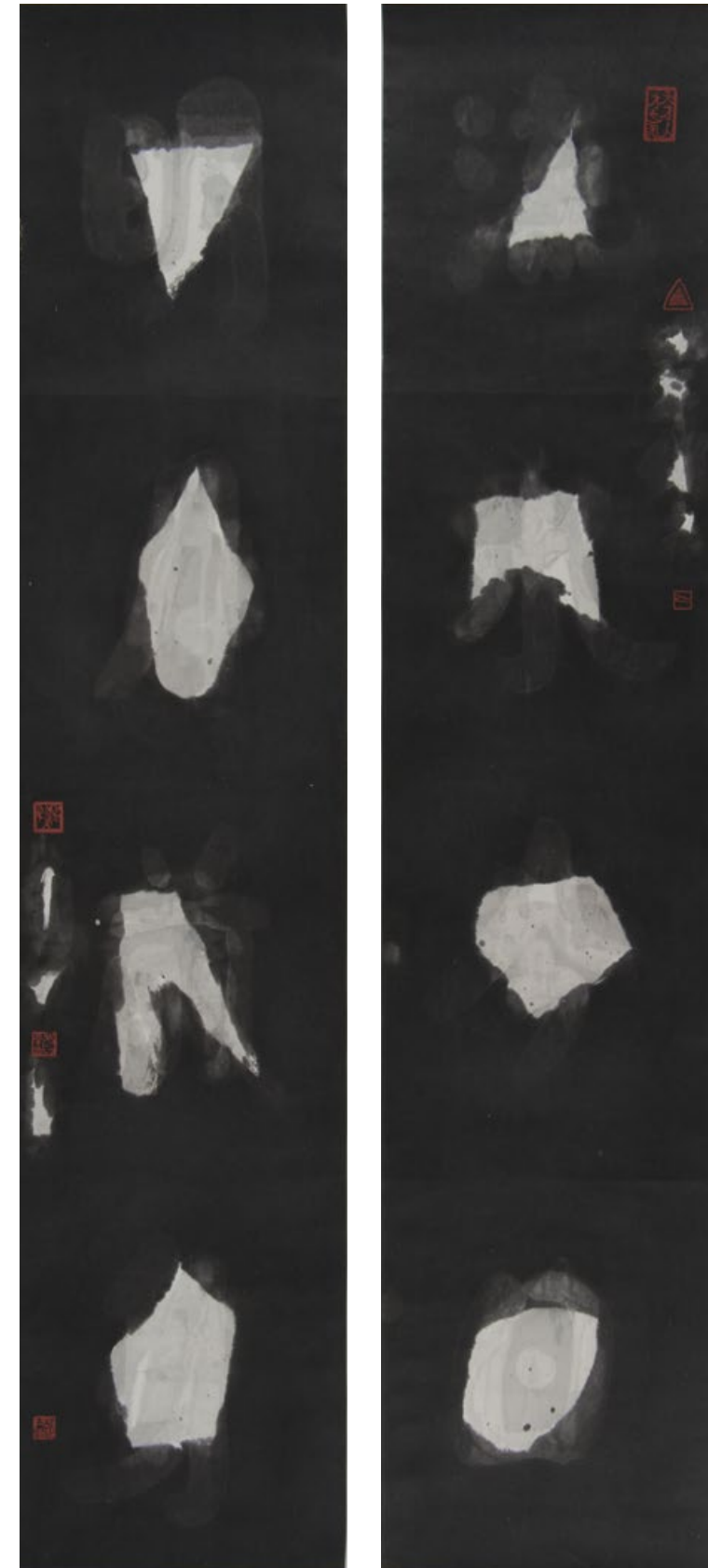


**"Light"**

*Running water today  
Moon is previous life*

**Light, Form Script**

1999, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 48 ½ x 23 inches



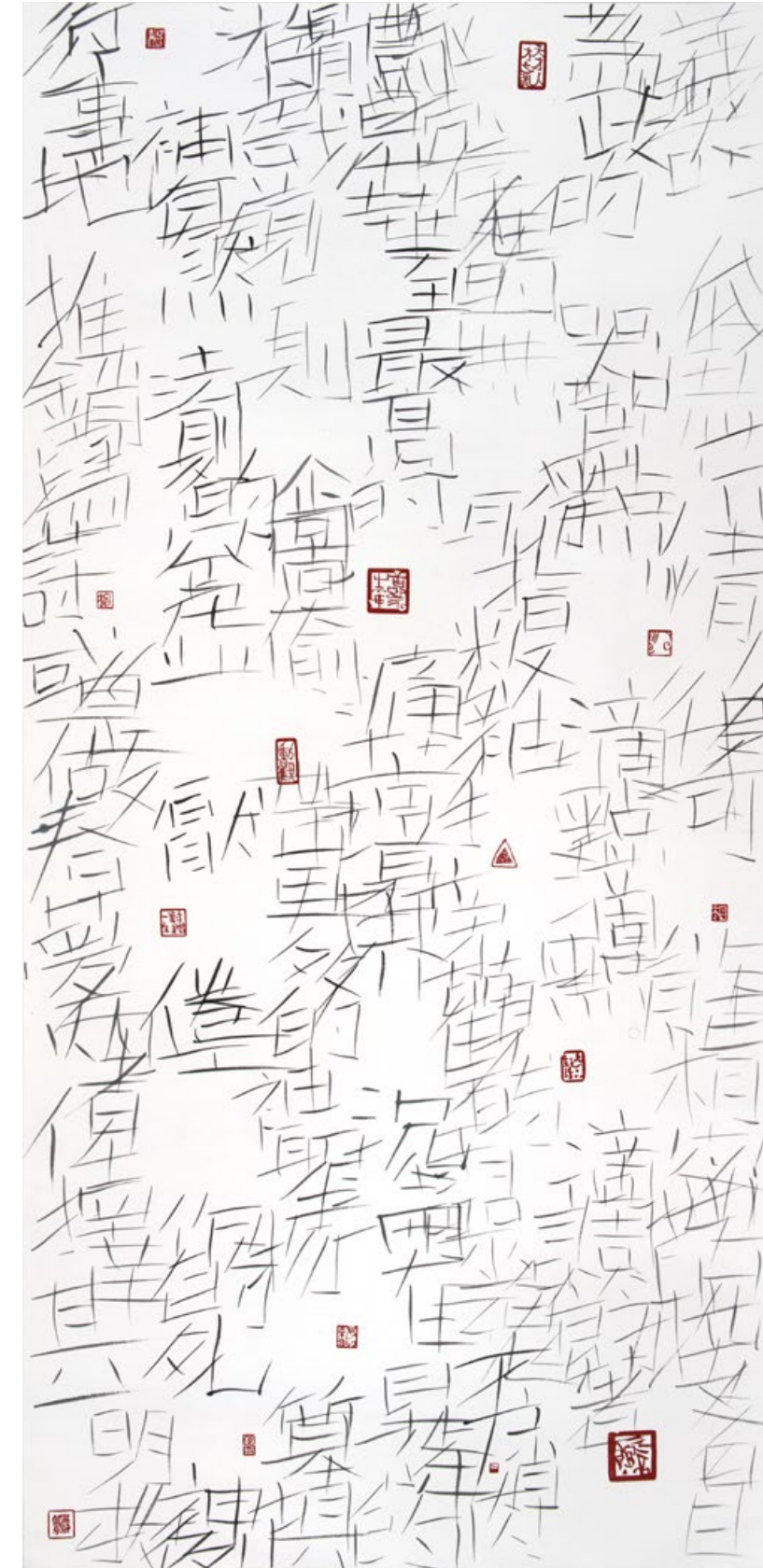


**"Army Hospital"**

*Sucking octopus machine  
Only capable emotionless  
Precisely connected unconnected organ  
plop plop, drip drip, plop drip, plop drip  
Re-adjust ennui index of carcass  
Estranged soul  
despises body raised up to highest painful stage  
Just concentrating on the street map of purgatory  
Falling into the game of up or down  
Purposely smuggling in more saint material  
Filling the void of nature's order  
Grim Reaper sick of work  
Routinely selling  
Poems or wet dreams  
Choose between the two*

**Army Hospital, Pile Needle script**

2001, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 48 x 24 inches





**God/Demon, Different Double Script**

2001, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 71 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 35 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches



**"Accidentally Passing"**

*Strong or weak spirit  
Follow the whirling engine  
Steadily crossing the equator  
Quantity quality and pattern are overpowered  
Fooling the physical structure  
Confusing time and focusing distance  
Inverting moon and star  
Freezing ideology  
Existing will  
Exceeding body's limit  
36,000 feet up  
Looking down at living earth  
Searching for unknown future  
Looking over to sky  
Shrinking eternity  
Thinking ahead  
Why is there no darkness*

**Accidentally Passing, Single Brush**

2001, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 34 ¾ x 35 ½ inches



**"Buddhist Heart Sutra"**

*Without form there is no emptiness.*

*Without emptiness there is no form.*

*Form is then emptiness. Emptiness is then form.*

*Feeling, thought, volition and consciousness are also like this.*

*Scriptura, all these dharmas are phenomena,*

*No created, not destroyed,*

*Not defiled, not pure,*

*Not increasing, not decreasing.*

*These empty Dharmas are without past, without future, without present.*

*Therefore in emptiness,*

*No form, no feeling, thought, volition, consciousness,*

*No eyes, ears, tongue, body, mind,*

*No listening, smelling, tasting, touching,*

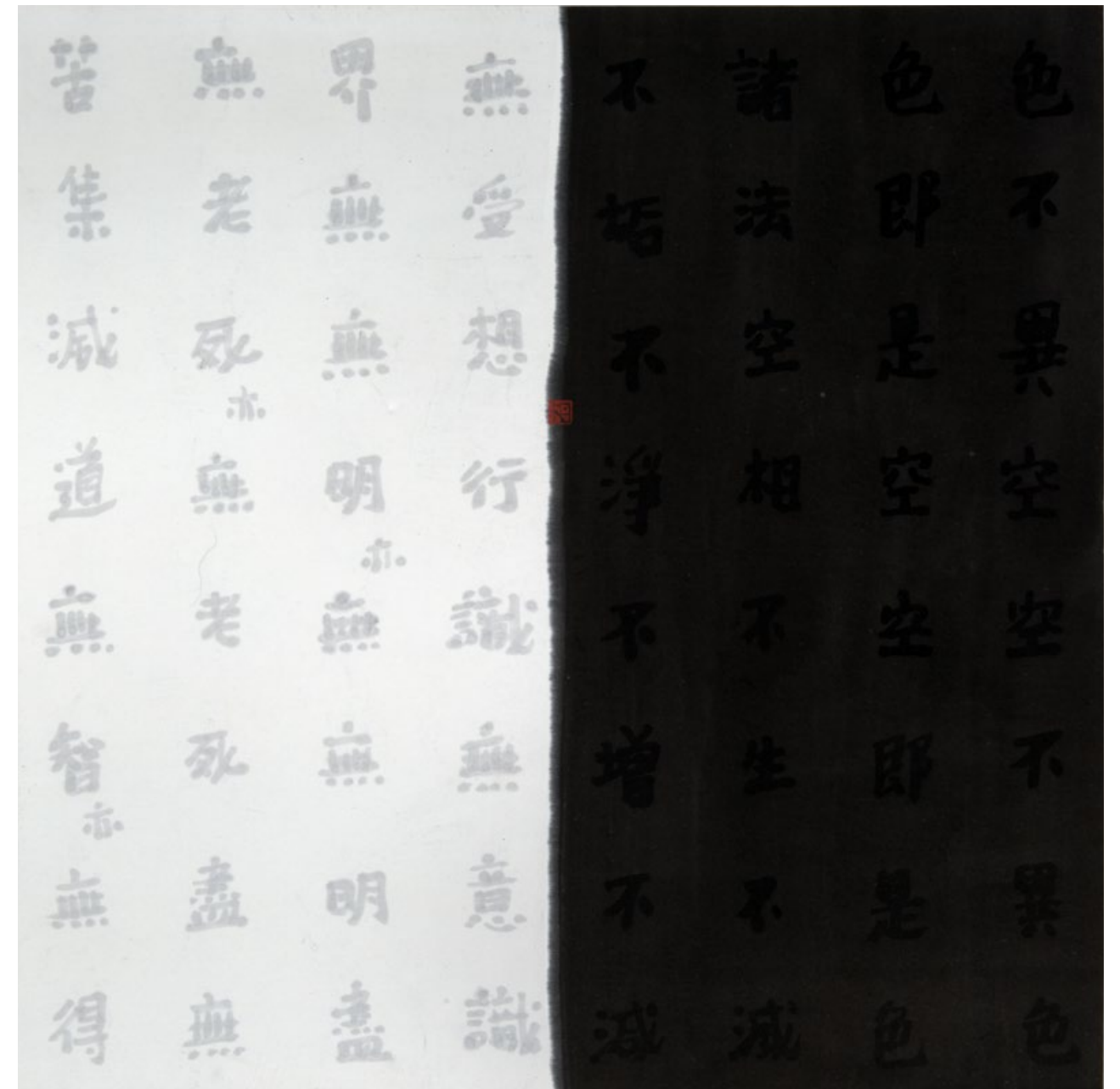
*No world to be observed up to no world to be perceived,*

*No ignorance also no end to ignorance*

*Up to no old age and death and no end to old age and death,*

*No suffering, craving, annihilation, path.*

*No wisdom also no attainment.*



**Buddhist Heart Sutra, Day Night Script**

2001, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 27 x 27 ¼ inches

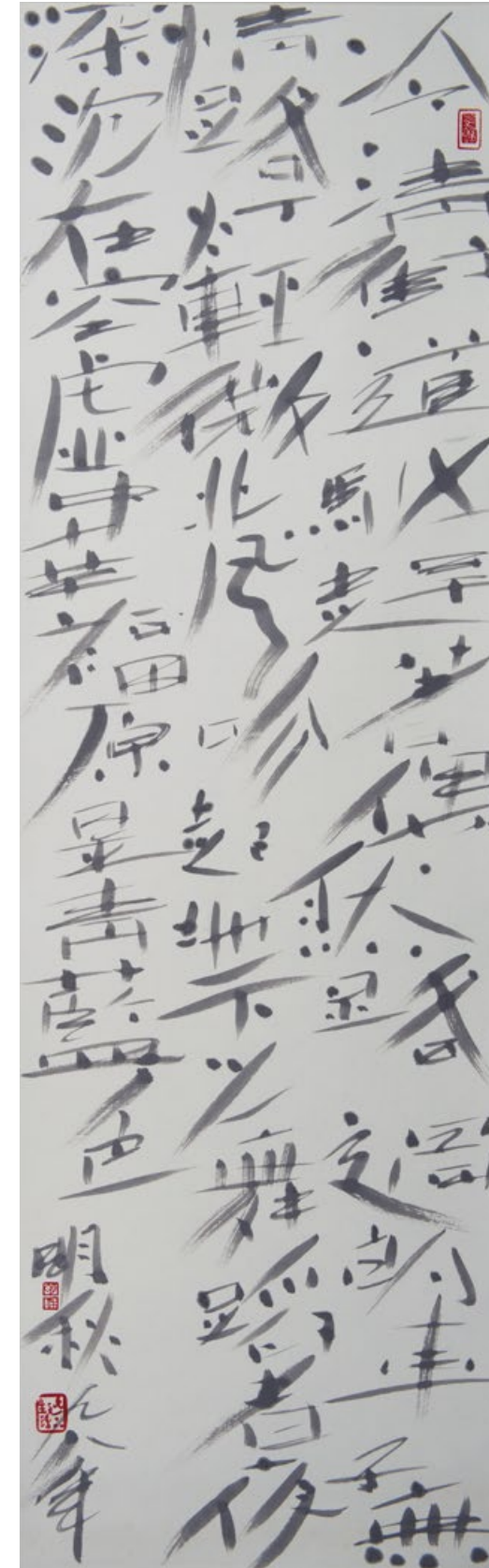


**"Night"**

Freezing quiet streets  
Whipping away  
Occasional passing cars  
Heartless street lights  
Faint north winds  
Revives the dancer with a kiss  
Night  
Deep within the emptiness  
Fortunate  
Previously  
it was  
The color turquoise

**Night, Bamboo Script**

2002, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 48 x 12 inches



**Demon, Buddha, God, Devil, Halo Script**

2003, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 53 ¾ x 13 ¼ inches

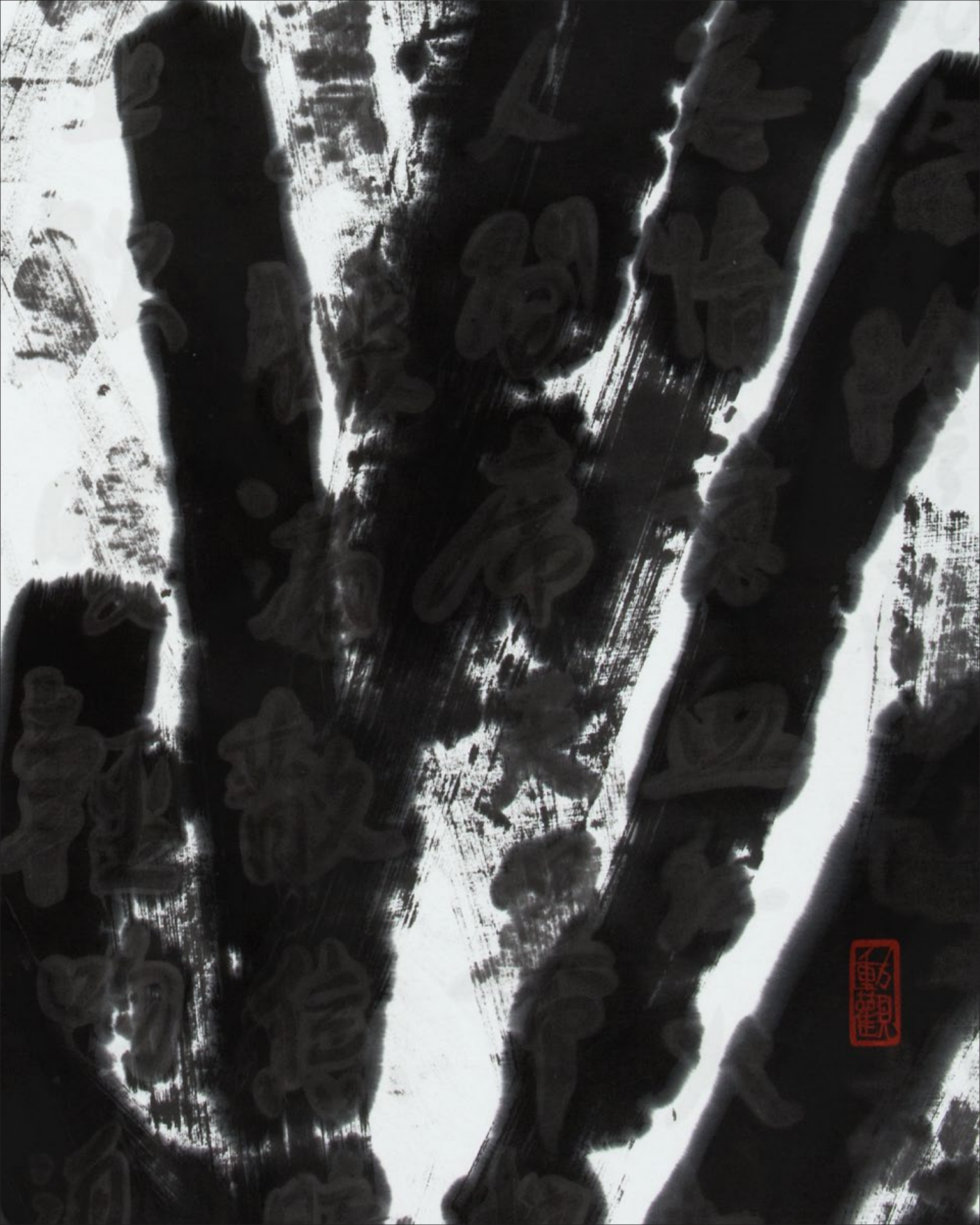
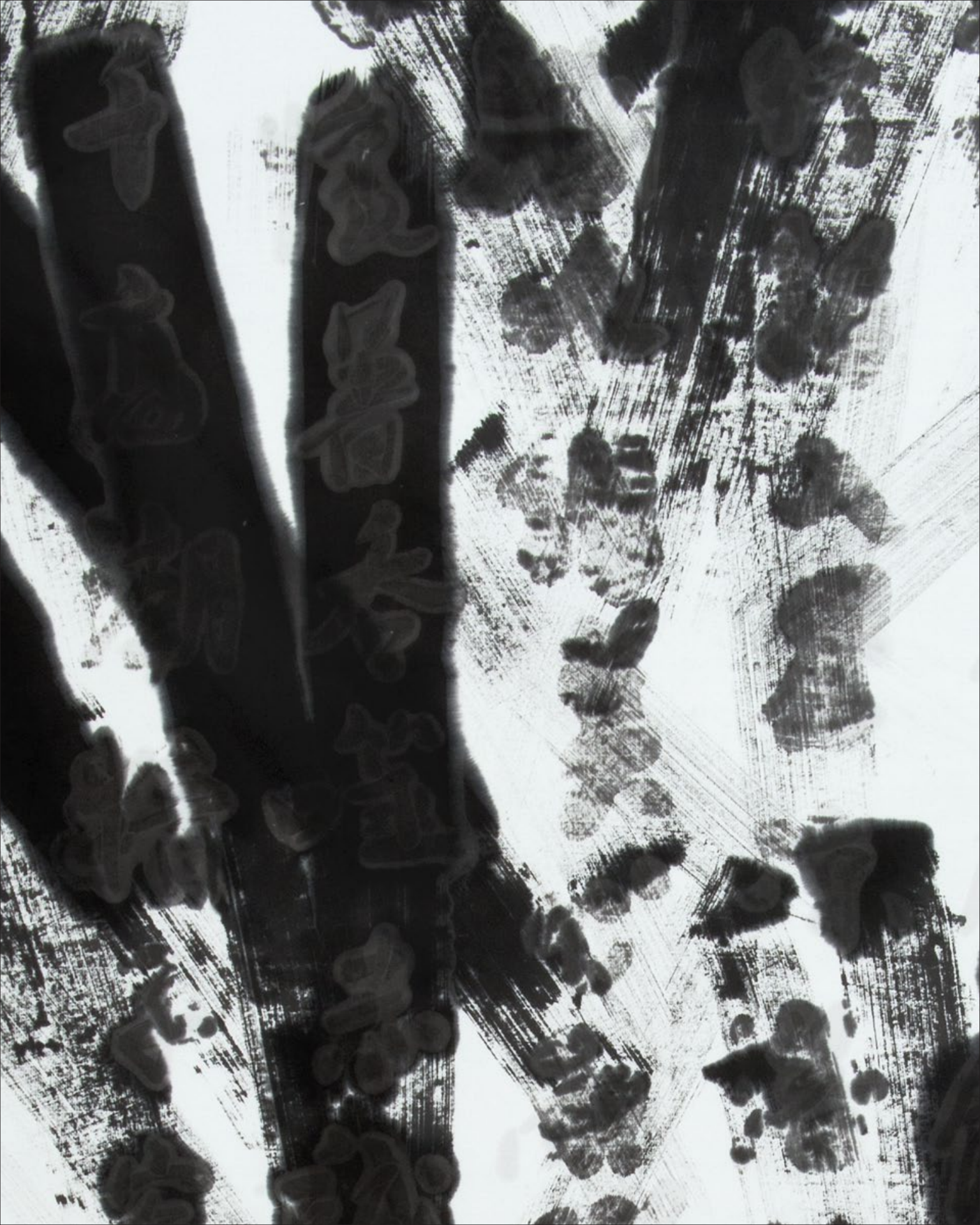


**Purple Desire Shadow and Sand Script**

2003, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 48 x 24 inches









***"Post-Marijuana"***

*The euphoria that follows marijuana  
The twisting and turning  
Stretching into empty space  
Craziness and chaos intermingling  
Mixing good and evil  
Moving on and on  
Beyond the sense of value  
Breaking the shackles of the prisoner's age of time  
Striding towards the edge of the night  
The furthest edge of life  
Treading, spinning  
Consciously sinking to the bottom  
Detached from the soul  
To become a saint*

2004, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 72 x 36 inches



麻後的幸福掙扎

空虛空間交錯

在斜成一片

但意義之外踏破

的囚籠邁向夜的

的盡頭。· 踏起是

車身又自覺地沉

底靈魂

起脫得成不



**"Post-Marijuana"**

The euphoria that follows marijuana  
The twisting and turning  
Stretching into empty space  
Craziness and chaos intermingling  
Mixing good and evil  
Moving on and on  
Beyond the sense of value  
Breaking the shackles of the prisoner's age of time  
Striding towards the edge of the night  
The furthest edge of life  
Treading, spinning  
Consciously sinking to the bottom  
Detached from the soul  
To become a saint

**Post Marijuana, Solar Script**

2006, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 27 ¼ x 27 inches









**"I Am Who I Am"**

*I am who I am  
Change Me No One Can*

**I Am Who I Am, Rubbing Script**

2006, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 71 x 9 inches



**"Wave"**

*Wide ocean rumbling beneath finger tips  
Struggling, tumbling  
Desire crashing crashing  
Legs open  
Welcoming a single echo  
Single bed, single pillow  
Sinking time and distance  
Stroking painful longings  
Spasms segment emotion  
Searching entire body  
Orgasm sections skeleton's  
Three thousand waves*

**Wave, Shadow Script**

2006, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 48 x 24 inches



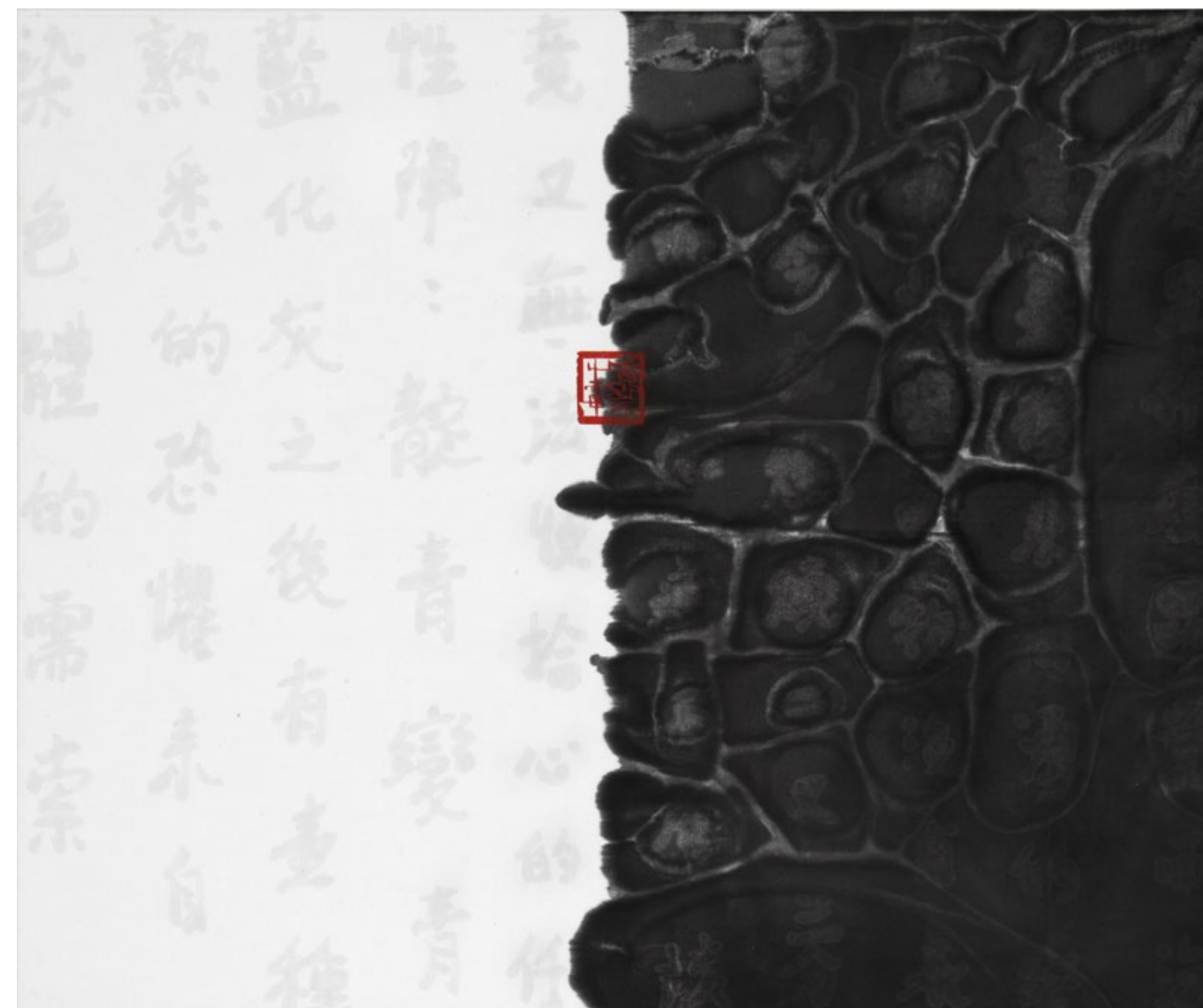


**"The Rules"**

What is love?  
Expensive and meaningless  
Ultimately a wave of emptiness  
Yearning for something to bite  
Unpromised night  
Burning two and one third's human body  
Knowing should not but no way to control  
Indulging the heart  
After turquoise becomes blue becomes gray  
become familiar fear  
From the desire of DNA

**The Rules, Transparent and Transfer Script**

2007, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 21 ¼ x 27 inches



**"Interlude in Time"**

*Quiet dance floor  
Rhythm in blue  
Circling around  
After tenderness  
After passion  
Time is placed in a place  
Without reflections  
Without expectations  
7,900 years later  
Embrace you in smiling purple*

**Interlude in Time, Border Script**

2008, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 68 x 9 ½ inches



**"Landscape G"**

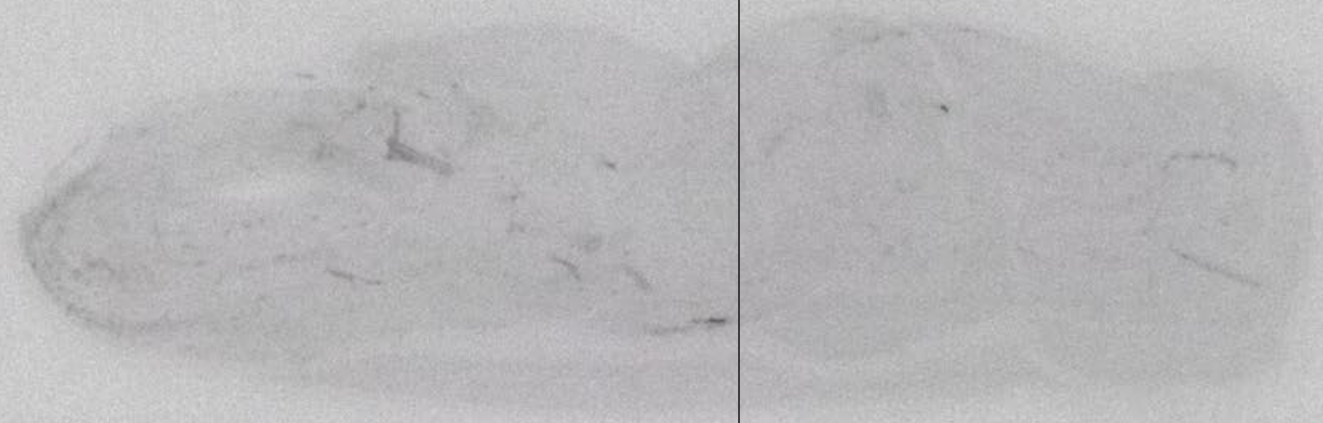
*Glistening sea  
Cloud wisps leisurely drift by*



**Landscape G, White on White**

2008, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 13 ¼ x 13 ¾ inches





**"Accidentally Passing"**

*Strong or weak spirit  
Follow the whirling engine  
Steadily crossing the equator  
Quantity quality and pattern are overpowered  
Fooling the physical structure  
Confusing time and focusing distance  
Inverting moon and star  
Freezing ideology  
Existing will  
Exceeding body's limit  
36,000 feet up  
Looking down at living earth  
Searching for unknown future  
Looking over to sky  
Shrinking eternity  
Thinking ahead  
Why is there no darkness*

**Accidentally Passing, Folding Script**

2009, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 53 ½ x 13 ¾ inches





**Chan, Reflection Script**

2009, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 27 x 13 ¾ inches



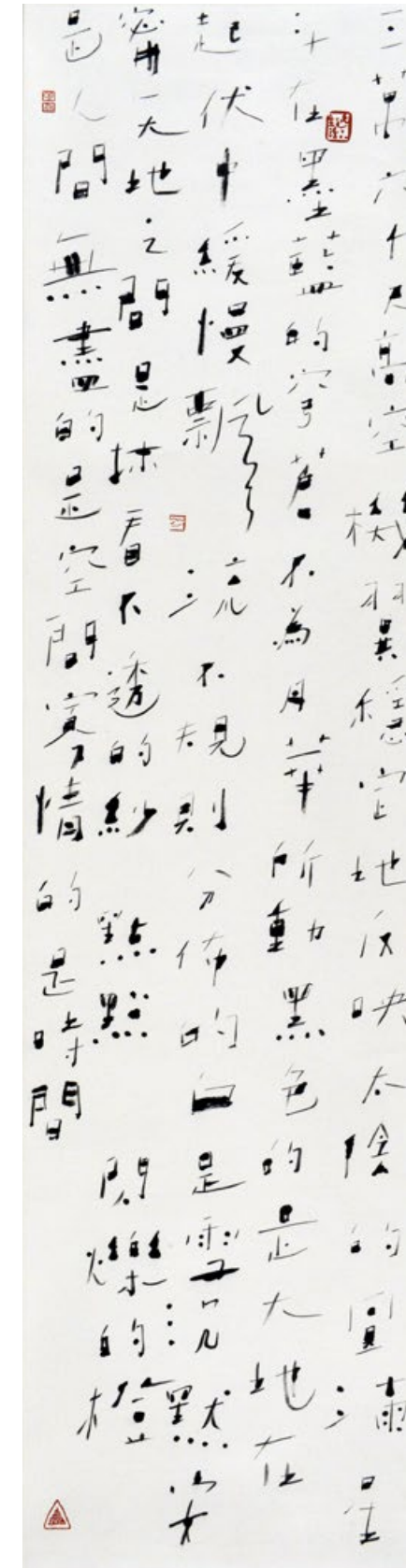


## "Departure"

Thirty six thousand feet high  
Full moon's reflection stable on the wing  
Dark blue sky holds constellations  
Protected from the moon  
black is the land  
Slowly swept away in undulation  
white is the snow in irregular patches  
Quiet stable horizon  
Provide a mysterious mesh  
Orange's flickering spot  
Is terrestrial  
Endless is the space  
Heartless is the time  
Seven hundred sixty three kilometers speed  
Abandon the eerie night  
Running towards newborn dawn  
Red between sea and sky  
Begin circling lunar to solar  
The puff thing is  
Still sleeping cloud  
The first ray  
Can't wake the emotion of earth  
But project the shadow of the land  
Longing is borderless  
The rest is  
Infinitely transparently cyan

### Departure, Music Script

2011, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 54 ¼ x 13 ¾ inches



**"Song of the Night Walker"**

Freezing inside glove  
Cooling the silent street light  
Smoke ribbons rise from the heat of the lip's corner  
Gallop pace  
Unable to break streams of tears  
Stranger's shadow passes  
Doesn't care about the drops  
Falling  
Down

**Song of the Night Walker, Scatter Script**

2011, ink on paper, mounted as hanging scroll, 72 x 12 ½ inches









FUNG MING-CHIP

Born in Guangdong, China in 1951. Raised in Hong Kong. Worked after completing primary school. Moved to New York in 1977, living between New York, Hong Kong and Taiwan since 1986. 2006 settled down in Hong Kong.

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 1982 “Lenscape”, American Library, Presented by American Consulate, Hong Kong, China
- 1986 “The Seal 1975 - 1985”, Asian Arts Institute, New York, USA
- 1993 “Variations of Seal Carving”, Taipei County Cultural Centre, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1999 Tsing Hwa University, Hsin Chu, Taiwan  
Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan  
“Caligrafia Chinesa de Fung Ming-Chip, ” Fundação Orient, Casa Garden, Macau, China
- 2004 “Rational Line”, Jesus College, Cambridge University, UK
- 2012 To Be & Not To Be, The Private Museum, Singapore
- 2013 Sin Sin Fine Art, Hong Kong, China  
M. Sutherland Fine Arts, New York, USA

Selected Group Exhibitions:

- 1984 “Small Works Exhibition”, Washington Square East Galleries, New York University, USA
- 1996 Asia Pacific Heritage Month, Mass Transit Authority Headquarters, New York, USA
- 1999-2002 “Power of the Word” (International traveling exhibition)
- 2000 “New Perspective on Contemporary Calligraphy – A Dialogue with Modern Sinitic Writing Art”, Taiwan Museum of Art, Taichung, Taiwan
- 2001 “China Without Borders”, Goedhuis Contemporary at Sotheby’s, New York, USA
- 2002 “Paris-Pekin”, Espace Cardin, Paris, France  
“China”, Museum Saap, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2005 “The Act of Writing and of Non-Writing: The Open Space for Chinese Calligraphy”, International Exhibition of Modern Calligraphy 2005, Hangzhou, China  
“The Painted Word: Language as Image in Modern Art,” Lafayette College, Pennsylvania, USA

- 2007 “Made In China” Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Denmark, and Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2008 New Ink Art: Innovation and Beyond, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong, China  
Shenzhen Ink Biennial, Shenzhen Museum of Art, Shenzhen, China  
Looking for Antonio Mak, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong, China
- 2009 Calligraffiti, Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA, USA
- 2010 Writing/Non-writing, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China  
Ink Art vs Ink Art, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- 2011 Ink Art vs Ink Art, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong, China
- 2013 Noirs D’Encre. Regards Croisés, Fondation Baur Musée des Arts D’Extreme-Orient, Genève, Switzerland

Special Projects:

- 2004 Artist in Residence: Jesus College, Cambridge University, U.K.
- 2007 Mural: “Inner Universe”, Center for Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
- 2008 Les Poèmes du Mandarin Tableware Collection, Hermès, France

Selected Public and Private Collections:

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA
- Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, CA, USA
- Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge, MA,USA
- Princeton University Art Gallery, Princeton, NJ, USA
- Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME, USA
- White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia
- Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, England
- The Olenska Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland
- Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
- Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong, China
- United Airlines, Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong, China
- China Club, Hong Kong, China
- Mobil Oil, Hong Kong, China
- Fundacao Oriente, Macau, China
- The Ullens Collection
- Uli Sigg Collection