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Crossing Boundaries

飛越邊界：凌文建書法藝術

THE CALLIGRAPHIC WORK OF MANNY LING

CROSSING BOUNDARIES—THE CALLIGRAPHIC ART OF MANNY LING

飛越邊界：凌文建書法藝術

手製 / 數碼 *Handmade / Digital*
東方 / 西方 *East / West*
舊 / 新 *Old / New*
動 / *Energy / Stillness*
簡 / 繁 *Simplicity / Complexity*
抑制 / 自發 *Control / Spontaneity*



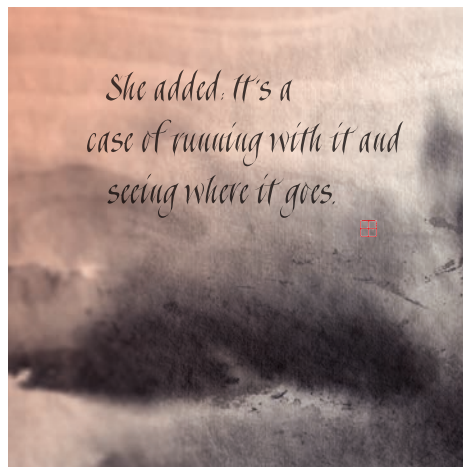
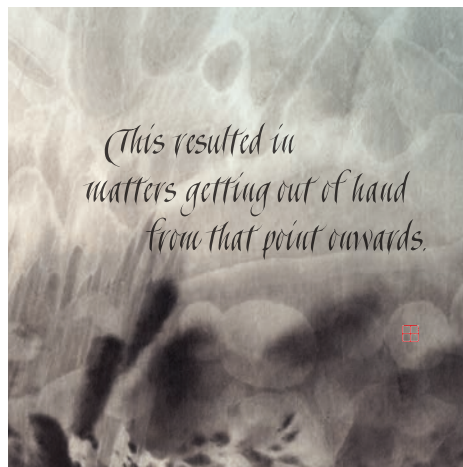
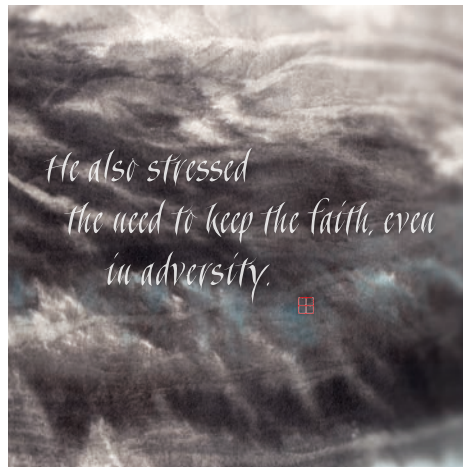
紙與墨的交匯，只是書法的軀殼 *Calligraphy is not just about the art of writing*
方寸間的美感，無法訴說出它的靈魂 *Nor is it just about beautiful writing*

一筆一畫暈染出別樣的生命 *When we write, we give birth to each stroke*
躍於紙上，走著屬於自己的軌跡 *And each stroke has a life and a path that are unique to itself*

具象的筆畫中暗藏著抽象的韻味 *Despite its abstract qualities, calligraphy is not an abstract form*
止的文字中跳躍著生命的活力 *Despite its stillness, calligraphy is a dynamic entity*

它是停駐在紙上自然的印記 *It is closely related to the forces of nature*
和人类的能量 *And the energies of the human being*

譜寫著和諧 — *It is about harmony*
生命的樂章 *The balance of life itself*



'Haikubot'

2015

Commissioned by NEoN Digital Arts

for the 2015 edition of the Festival in Dundee, Scotland

Exhibited at Nomas Projects (original haiku from the Dundee Courier

Newspaper Haikubot, programmed for NEoN by Albert Elwin)

Sumi ink, xuan paper, photoshop

Font Impetuous designed by Manny Ling

我站在地上，脊背挺直，敞開心扉與思 - 我呼吸著，感受到一股能量在血管中奔湧，充滿我心，流經我腦，到達我手。在筆與紙相觸的時候，我與它們全然合一了。

My feet are flat on the ground, my back is erect, my heart and mind are open — I breath, and sense the energy flowing through my veins, feeling it in my heart, travelling through my mind and into my hand. As the pen touches the paper — I am totally connected.

墨水與我的能量相互交融；二 密不可分，協力同工，渾然一體，噴薄而出

The ink and my energy are inter-mingled; the two entities are inseparable, they are working in unison, a unity — and out it pours!

書法於我，像是以線作畫。我在紙上走筆，憑直覺組合線條。書法也是捕捉線條本質的過程 — 它是一種生命與超越的表達。中國人稱這種意境為“氣韻生動”，指的就是線條有節奏的生命力和神韻

Calligraphy to me is like drawing with lines. I move the linear elements along the page and compose them intuitively. Calligraphy is also a process of capturing the essence of the line — it is an expression of life and beyond. In Chinese, they call this phenomenon ‘qi yun sheng dong’ (氣韻生動) — the rhythmic vitality and spirit of the line.

人們可以嘗試給這一過程賦與理智，但卻往往感到毫無意義。正是憑藉那種自然直覺的方式畫或寫，才創造出瞬間的標記，就像呼吸一樣自然

One could try and intellectualise this process but it feels pointless at times. It is the unforced but intuitive manner in which we draw or write that creates the instantaneous mark. It is as natural as breathing.

凌文建博士
英國桑德蘭大學高級講師

Dr Manny Ling HFCLAS
Senior Lecturer in Design, the University of Sunderland, UK

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This project would not have been possible without the kind support of my dear friends and colleagues at HKUST. The team at the Publishing Technology Centre, particularly Thomas Ng and Kin Wai Chow, and Alice Ho from the Library — thank you for giving me this opportunity to ‘return home’.

I am also extremely grateful for the assistance given by Professor Mike Collier, Professor John Strachan, Professor Ewan Clayton and Dr Diego Navarro. I am deeply honoured to be able to work with you all and I hope we will have many other opportunities to work together again.

I would like to offer my special thanks to Sue Cavendish, Tim Sokell, Dr Neil Ewins, Carl Gregg and Li Zhang for so generously giving up their own time to work on this project.

To Donna Barkess, Keith Nevens and Graham Mitchell and all the wonderful colleagues at the University of Sunderland — for your kind support, encouragement and believing in what I do.

Finally, to my family — Sue, Emily and Alex — “All my words are you”



Exhibition curated by Alice Ho from the HKUST Library and Thomas Ng from the HKUST Publishing Technology Centre

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FOREWORD

In welcoming this new exhibition from my colleague Dr Manny Ling, I am conscious that we are looking at the fruit of many years of exploration around his theme of crossing boundaries, East, West, hi-tech and low-tech, handwritten and computer generated. Gradually Manny came to find his own letterforms and way of writing, inspired by words and nature but grounded in a sense of movement that is his own, a quick, twisting flick, sometimes drawn out into a more fluttering or arching line. Behind it the slow volumes of sumi build, reminding us of longer cycles of time and creation.

In his day job Manny is a gifted teacher of graphic design, clear communication is paramount to him. His work in this exhibition crosses into new territory with his vertical calligraphy; it is *not* so easy to read, yet it *can* be read. In making work like those in the Basho scrolls, where Manny worked collaboratively with the sumi ink painter Christine Flint Sato, Manny moves his calligraphy towards abstraction. By initially disguising the letters we come to experience the work as a whole, visually, before we start to read. In this Manny mimics the effect that brush calligraphy has on many a western eye that cannot read the forms and so has to respond first to the visual and energetic composition — another nice crossing of boundaries: a clever switch in fact.

I feel fortunate to have Manny as a colleague at the University of Sunderland and as a partner in the work of our International Research Centre for Calligraphy, which Manny started and continues to direct. The particular impact of Manny's work here is documented in two contributory essays to this catalogue. Professor John Strachan, a poet and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Bath Spa University, describes Manny's early career leading up to their collaborations as poet and artist. This has been a seminal connection for Manny that led to new ways of working and thus to a body of work that underpins this exhibition. In the second essay Dr Diego Navarro, from the University of Carlos III in Madrid, documents how an extended residency at the International Calligraphy Research Centre, and his daily contact with Manny Ling, affected his own understanding of calligraphy and its potential in a University setting, transforming his own practice, course content and teaching.

Manny's love for calligraphy is deeply felt and has been generously shared.

I wish him all the success that his life and work deserve.

Ewan Clayton MA FCLAS MBE

Professor in Design, the University of Sunderland, UK

CROSSING BOUNDARIES / THE CALLIGRAPHIC WORK OF MANNY LING

Everyone who reads this essay writes. Everyone has a *hand*, so to speak. We all write: words on the page, symbols on a keyboard, and our signature on a document. But calligraphy, at least as it has traditionally been articulated in Western culture, is about more than the art of forming or fashioning letters. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'calligraphy' in three principal, closely interlinked, ways. The first sense is the best known: 'the practice, art, or profession of producing beautiful, ornamental, precise, or formal lettering with a pen or brush'. Sense two is plainer, and wider: 'a person's handwriting; a particular style or example of handwriting', while sense three is narrower, and confined to the 'fine arts': 'a particular style of brushwork or line work'. All three of these senses inform Manny Ling's work. Calligraphy, to him, is practice, art and profession, and his lettering should be considered (to borrow a phrase from the nineteenth-century English essayist Thomas De Quincey) as one of the fine arts. Certainly, as this exhibition so eloquently demonstrates, Ling produces 'beautiful' and 'ornamental' lettering. But, Ling's work is about more than simple beauty. As his mantra puts it, rather poetically, in the introduction to this book, 'Calligraphy is not just about the art of writing / Nor is it just about beautiful writing'. To Ling, it is much more, 'closely related to the forces of nature / And the energies of the human being'.

Ling's calligraphy is an art which resonates with more than the Western values articulated in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. His work involves the crossing of boundaries, fusions of culture, and the mixing of art forms. Born in the East, but educated in the West, Ling still retains the values of the East. A Chinese artist based in the West, but returning to the East for his inspiration, while at the same time bringing western ideas, notably from graphic design, digital media, technology and mixed media, to his practice. Ling was born in Hong Kong in 1966, and immigrated to the UK with his parents when he was ten years old. The family lived in London for a year and then moved to Stoke-on-Trent in 1977, after they bought a Chinese Take Away there. Ling's adolescence and early adulthood was spent in the famous Potteries district of the English Midlands. The artist lived in Burslem until he was 21, attended school and college there, and graduated with a First-Class Degree in BA (Hons) Design at the town's Staffordshire Polytechnic. The Potteries are an important place in British cultures of making (after all, no other English district, it should be pointed out, is named after a craft). Few go to Stoke-on-Trent for its beauty or sublime landscape; but the town is rooted in nineteenth-century crafts and industry and it is an appropriate place to have produced an artist such as Ling, whose work straddles traditions, looks backwards and forwards, and fuses art, design, and creative industries.

Ling then moved to the northwest of England to study for an MA in Design at Manchester Polytechnic, before moving to London to work for the typeface design company Letraset,

between 1990 to 1992. He then began his teaching career at the London College of Printing at Elephant and Castle. After that, Ling taught at Nottingham Trent University, before moving to the University of Sunderland in the northeast of England, where he has spent most of his academic career, latterly as the programme leader for the MA Design while also teaching on the BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme. For nearly twenty years, Ling has been one of the highly impressive roster of artists, ceramicists, designers, glass makers and sculptors associated with University of Sunderland and the historic city of Sunderland. Like Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland possesses a heritage which fuses heavy industry — in this case mining and shipbuilding — with the creative industries, notably in the ancient glass-blowing tradition which stretches back to the seventh century and the days of the venerable Bede at the Saxon church of St Peter's, to the modern National Glass Centre established at Sunderland in the 1990s. At the city's university, Ling has been responsible for developing and founding the International Research Centre for Calligraphy since 1999. He has been a pivotal figure, alongside his distinguished colleague Professor Ewan Clayton, in developing the education and research of contemporary British calligraphy.

British calligraphic art, and also *Chinese* calligraphic art, notably in Ling's use of East Asian materials, processes and traditions, resulted in his unique take on Western Calligraphy. In *philosophical* terms, time, space and embodiment are all crucial elements in his work. The notion of *ch'i* (the vital energy life-force that is within all of us) and how this is expressed through the act of writing is vital here. In *practical* terms, Ling takes forms from nature, but at the same time, is consciously trying to imitate the shapes of what an East Asian brush might create, and to develop them in innovative directions. The artworks displayed here use a variety of tools, from a hard steel nib to a soft hair brush. Many of the backgrounds of Ling's work are painted onto traditional Chinese *xuan* paper — made from rice straws and the bark of the sandalwood tree. Xuan paper is used for both Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting, and indeed for the fusion of both art forms, which are utilised in many of the works included in this magnificent exhibition. He employs Oriental brushes, some made with feather, some from bamboo — frequently a plain piece of bamboo beaten into shape — implements which provide a range of softness and thickness, flexibility and stiffness. Ling also uses traditional Chinese, or Japanese sumi ink sticks — wands to create his ink paintings, and wands to weave the spare magic of his ink lettering.

Ling's artwork tries to capture the emotions of the inner-self through the lines that he makes; much like a poet does with his or her words. As a scholar of the English Romantic poets, William Wordsworth and John Keats, with their fascination with subjectivity and self-expression, and as a poet fascinated in my own practice by the meaning of words, I see

Ling as an artist who works in the same cultural and imaginative space as myself. I first met Ling when I was Professor of English Literature at the University of Sunderland. I worked closely with him, and along with our distinguished colleagues Professor Mike Collier and Professor Brian Thompson in a series of works which responded to the Romantic poetry of Wordsworth in *Their Colours and Their Forms, Artists' Responses to Wordsworth*, an exhibition shown in the William Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere in 2013. We are both fascinated by the place where art and poetry meet, and by the powerful collaborative potential of artworks which hang words 'brushes with poetry' as the haiku poet and critic Susumi Takiguchi has wittily described them.

Ling and I worked closely for the first time in that show. One of our collaborations, 'Words are not like other creatures' 2013 (see p.15), featured my words *and* Ling's — my writing and his calligraphy (the two are inseparable):

Words are not like other creatures: they have demarcations unique
to themselves. They have dark carnalities of their own, inscapes of
beauty eyed inward.

Ling wrote in the catalogue to that exhibition that this poem inspired him 'to develop the unique calligraphic script' which he has developed more fully in this 2018 exhibition and which is so powerfully evident throughout this new show.

Ling's influence has strongly informed my own practice as a visual poet (and our work also featured in a 2017 exhibition on poetry and the visual entitled *Concrete Poetry*, which was shown at Corsham Court, Wiltshire in 2017). We worked closely with Professor Mike Collier, Professor Ewan Clayton and others in a co-curated exhibition *Wordsworth and Basho: Walking Poets*, shown in Japan at the Kakimori Bunko in Itami, Japan in 2016. This also explored the cross-continental potentialities of artistic dialogue between east and west, and responded to the Japanese poet Basho's twin preoccupations of writing and art. Basho's *haiga* paintings are echoed in Ling's show, not in figurative art, but in the more abstract and powerfully evocative artworks in this show. One of the works shown in Japan at the Wordsworth/Basho show is also included in this exhibition. 'Of Many, one' (see p.29) demonstrates Ling's creative engagement with my poetry, which themselves engage imaginatively with both the English and Japanese traditions, with both eastern and western cultural traditions.

There are more possibilities available to ink, than just words or, indeed, just drawing. Ling fuses his personal industry, his artistic intensity and self-discipline, with cultural products

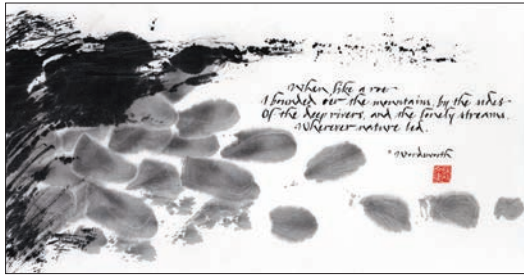


Fig. 1
 'Tintern Abbey'
 2013
 Words by William Wordsworth
 Calligraphy by Manny Ling
 Sumi ink, xuan paper

which simultaneously reach back hundreds of years into Oriental culture and European culture, while also looking forwards to the future of these cultures. Ling's illustrations of Wordsworth, such as 'Tintern Abbey' (2013) (fig. 1), span historical British culture with the culture of the East, while simultaneously looking forward to a future informed. Small wonder that this beautiful image was internationally recognised, winning the China Unlimited Creative Contest, held in 2015, which was sponsored by the Mission of China to the European Union to celebrate 40 years of EU-China Relations. It is entirely appropriate that Ling's image, a fusion of Western and Eastern artwork, should have been recognised in such a manner and in such a cross-cultural context.

Ling's work, in this wonderful exhibition show him reaching new heights of artistic achievement. They are the summation of his entire career trajectory in terms of making and illustrating, writing and drawing, linking words with abstraction. Ling has created a body of work, which uses a mixture of Chinese and Western approaches, materials and tools, culture and art. Dr Carol McKay has written about Ling's calligraphic approach in the catalogue to the exhibition *Their Colours and Their Forms* (p.54):

... that a poet transcribes his inner being through words and, as a calligrapher, he [Ling] tries to transcribe the poet's words into life. In this body of work, he wants the viewer to look beyond the calligraphy — to read the words transcribed — and he hopes that through this process, these letters and words will live on.

This is exactly what is achieved here. 'Crossing Boundaries' is an important moment in Ling's artistic career and in contemporary calligraphic art in general. Ling's formative years in Hong Kong had a profound influence on his upbringing and his attitude towards life and art. The Confucian ideas of honour, integrity and respect have in many ways shaped the way he approaches his art. Having an exhibition in Hong Kong some forty years later, shows him returning home. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology is to be commended for hosting this wonderful exhibition of the calligraphic work of Manny Ling. Significantly, his work fuses the artistic traditions of East and West in a fluid transition — from East to West, and now back again.

Professor John Strachan
 Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Bath Spa University, England

Reference

McKay, C & Strachan, J (2013) *Their Colours and Their Forms*, Arts Editions North & The Wordsworth Trust

THE STROKES WITH WHICH EMOTIONS ARE CREATED (SUNDERLAND, 2015)

The silent road to change

“Everyday is a journey and the journey itself is home”.

— Basho.

Only very rarely during a lifetime does the experience of the journey transcend all the senses, overcome all barriers, and become a source of inspiration and complete harmony. The exciting preparation of the itinerary and the work-plan, the expectation of discovery and exploration of an unknown terrain, are combined with a deep and sincere desire for professional and personal improvement. Just as thousands of artisans and apprentices did for centuries with their masters, quietly and patiently accompanying them in the subtle process of learning the techniques, the tools and the soul of their trade, so I set out on a journey that, by force, changed not only my knowledge but also my vision of the calligraphic activity in my double role of academic and practitioner.

As Richard Sennett (2008) pointed out in his well known book *The Craftsman*, the human impulse to do a job well-done for the mere desire to do it correctly is at the base of learning as well as professional and personal elevation. When that desire comes from the slow and balanced rhythm of the ink on paper, it creates a work full of expressive, aesthetic and communicative content. With this in mind, I needed to gain a deeper understanding of the practice and theory of calligraphy from within oneself. Hence, in April 2015, I undertook a five-week research residency in the International Research Centre of Calligraphy (IRCC) at the University of Sunderland, in England. The IRCC was founded by Dr Manny Ling in 1999 and it has, over the years, become one of the most important centres of calligraphic learning in the world. I knew this would be the place that would change my perspective about the art of calligraphy.

The very useful and valuable calligraphic skills and knowledge learnt in Sunderland were later revised and renewed in the International Calligraphy Symposium organized by Dr Manny Ling in Bruges, 2015. That moment among many colleagues, experts, practitioners and academics was for me, without doubt, the confirmation of a complete change in my perception of calligraphy work that had begun in Sunderland some months before. And now, years later, that experience continues to be a hugely influential, vital and professional. It is an example that I comment on with my students and colleagues here at the University in Madrid. An experience of inter-cultural, fluid dialogue and crossing of borders through a soft but deep path in which the lines of the stroke became emotion and the rhythm of the handwritten words became visual poetry. I wanted to know, and I found. These brief pages will try to record the fundamental milestones of that interaction between Dr Manny Ling and

myself, and review how his influence has been decisive for my calligraphic and paleographic work at the Carlos III University of Madrid in Spain.

Beyond the line and the silent hours at the table

As an associate Professor of Paleography, Calligraphy and Archival Science in Madrid, I planned the research residency in the IRCC at the University of Sunderland with the first-hand objective of seeing how a university's teaching and research programme focused on calligraphy was developed. I had previously known about the impact and reputation of the IRCC over many years and seen how, thanks to the drive of Dr Manny Ling, calligraphy research developed in Sunderland and had become an academic discipline highly valued in other parts of the world. I also wanted to live with colleagues in a university environment oriented towards teaching and research. From the very first moment, Dr Manny Ling and all the colleagues in the Design Department (Professor Ewan Clayton, Donna Barkess and Graham Mitchell, etc) provided me with a very warm welcome. These well-defined academic goals would soon end up transgressing those intellectual boundaries to become an integral and reforming experience of my approach to and conception of, calligraphic theory and practice.

I started to work in a bright space, with a comfortable work table and in an environment that was completely open to learning and interaction between teachers and students. Dr Manny Ling did everything possible from the first moment to make the stay pleasant for me. The way we interacted with each other was centred around an artisan and almost guild-based sensibility. Everything Dr Manny Ling did seemed connected; his ideas and creativity were shared openly between teachers, students and colleagues. This lack of working borders appealed to me and I embraced it whole-heartedly.

The fact that Dr Manny Ling treasured his deep experience of Oriental writing traditions propitiated something fundamental for me: the dialogue between two very different scriptural cultures. A dialogue that was nourished, in addition, by the continuous presence of students from other countries who shared their experiences with me every day. The borders between handwritten cultures disappeared as Dr Manny Ling penetrated technical but also philosophical components in calligraphic production. At my desk, I spent many hours — morning and evening — experimenting and pouring onto the paper the many teachings and new approaches that Dr Manny Ling proposed each day. His approach fitted perfectly with my own needs at that time: teaching and research alongside a deep artistic and creative connection with the daily calligraphic work.

The library at the University of Sunderland was well provided with key titles, both monographs and journals, and I remember well the number of hours spent consulting retrospective copies of publications not available in Spain in an ordinary way, including *Eye or Letter Arts Review*. Dr Manny Ling offered me other publications and copies, for example, the inspirational *The Edge* (Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society), a publication for which he is currently the Design Editor and occasional author. However, beyond the classes, the daily activity in the Design Center, the conversations with Dr Manny Ling and the continuous reflections about the calligraphic creation process subtly revealed a universe of formal and intellectual considerations about line and harmony that were really unknown to me. In fact, Dr Manny Ling was providing every day a series of influences and stimuli that would end up overflowing my senses. Last but not least, the permanent gallery space at the Design Centre established by Dr Manny Ling allowed us to exhibit our work and research. Thus, during my stay I was able to contemplate the creations of some of my fellow students who saw their academic effort crowned with an exhibition in the same place where they had studied.

West meets East, function meets expression.

I come from a very paleographic/calligraphic western tradition and in that moment, around the beginning of 2015, I needed a new perspective focusing on new approaches to calligraphy. I work with medieval and early modern manuscripts, reading its contents, analyzing the diplomatic form and providing a scientific knowledge about these scripts. The process is not creative at all. Here in Madrid, calligraphy is seen just as a means to understand the function of official or private handwriting in historical documents and contexts.

In fact, I had to teach new content to my students (future Archival and Special Collection's curators), new material coming from the integration of paleography and calligraphy. On my course in Madrid we consider handwriting in a very practical and utilitarian way as sources tracing the history and the incredible cultural heritage over the centuries of these manuscripts with no poetic or emotional approach at all. Learning paleography is one of the skills, abilities and knowledges that students must achieve in our Faculty. So, at the beginning of my stay in Sunderland, I could not imagine how relevant for me would be the approach and consideration of the pure act of writing that Dr Manny Ling displayed every day. In fact, the dichotomy within western calligraphy — that it is often perceived as a craft, where as in the East is the highest form of art — was a key point for me and made it possible for me to understand a step further: to explore how calligraphy is beyond craft but within the realm of art and how it can be applied to creation in, for instance, graphic design and digital media. That transition, from craft to artistic creation, was one of the most outstanding contributions that Dr Manny Ling introduced to me during those weeks.

The great challenge for me, and what I would eventually achieve, was how to integrate that spiritual vision of handwriting into the way we read ancient manuscripts through the Western calligraphic exercises with my students who had to work with medieval and modern documents. The fascination felt by Dr Manny Ling about how the practice of East Asian calligraphic materials connected to Western calligraphy was also a new perspective for me. The active and proactive use of Chinese or sumi inks and East Asian brushes and the explanations of the unique qualities of thin Chinese xuan paper or Japanese washi paper, caused a great impact on my limited knowledge of Western handmade paper. The collaborations between Dr Manny Ling and some other artists such as the Japanese sumi ink painter Christine Flint Sato, provided a clear evidence of the successful crossing of boundaries in the calligraphic creative process, resulting in numerous collaborative artworks, including the three scrolls 'Everyday is a journey and the journey itself is home' (Basho), which is shown here in the exhibition.

The true discovery

Despite its abstract qualities, calligraphy is not an abstract form

Despite its stillness, calligraphy is a dynamic entity

— Dr Manny Ling

Regardless of the continuous positive influences I was feeling in Sunderland, the most important one came right at the end of my stay. I was not aware at that moment but the academic and creative experience that Dr Manny Ling provoked was what I call the "great and true discovery" — the value of gestural freedom. I had a very formal way of understanding calligraphy and Dr Manny Ling showed me different ways of improving the expressive charge without reducing the technical perfection or the meaning of the message (semantic charge). In Sunderland I was able to break free of the frame and limitations of the 'complete and sacred adjustment to the perfection of normativity and rules' and I could cross my personal 'boundaries' in the calligraphic display, generating a new calligraphic expression based more on gestuality instead of formality/norms. New tools, new techniques and new approaches such as the pyrographic experimentation with hot glass on paper in the National Glass Center (University of Sunderland) were clearly ways of working to consolidate this deep change in the way I had understood calligraphy so far.

'Non stop walking to cross the boundaries'

Poetry is deeply anchored to the conception that Dr Manny Ling has of calligraphy. 'Crossing boundaries' is a very poetic way of understanding the several implications of crossing handwriting cultures (East and West). This trespassing of disciplines with subtle

approaches (traditional & digital) promotes a philosophical journey in which the balance between contrasts and contradictions is brought to the fore; complexity and simplicity; fast and slow; handmade and digital; east and west; old and new; energy and stillness; control and spontaneity. We are constantly reminded of the work of the calligrapher as a creator of powerful forms by integrating contrast with harmony; thick and thin; blank and colour; vertical and horizontal etc.

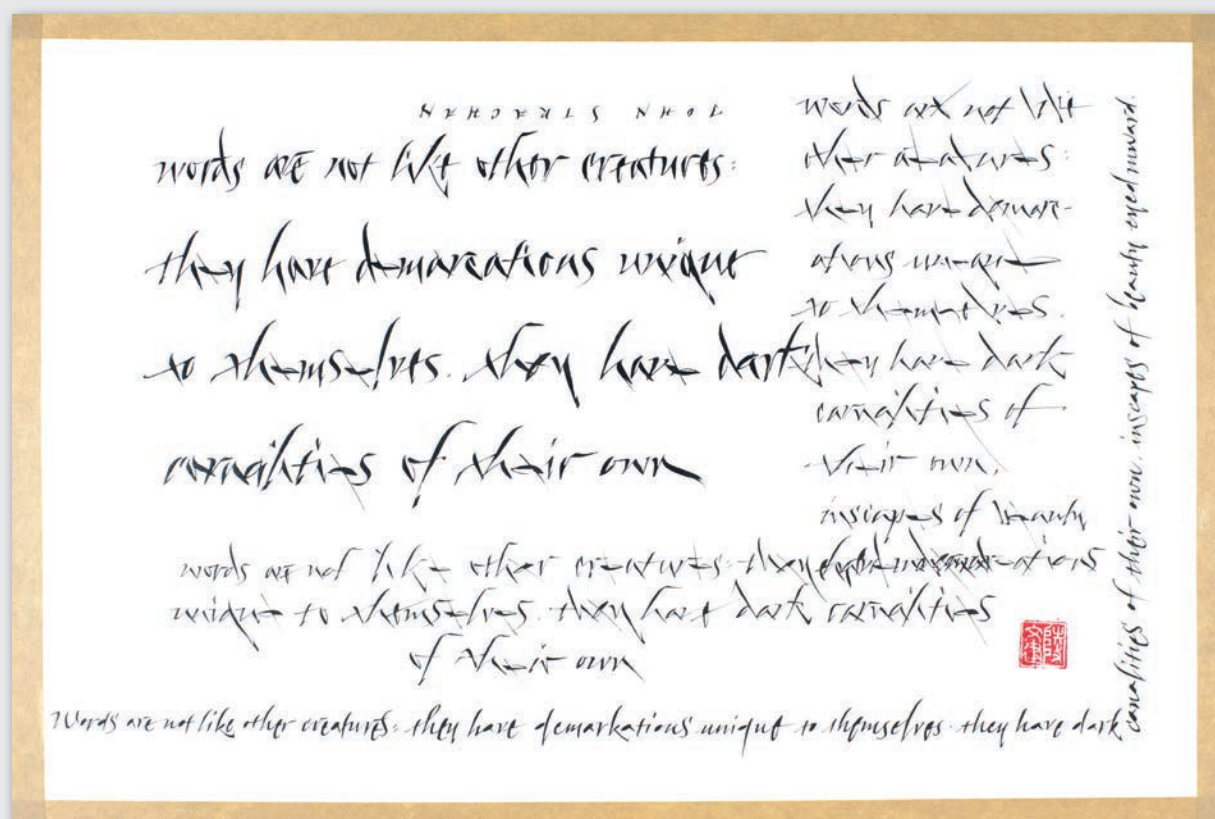
The wonderful work about Wordsworth and Basho developed by Dr Manny Ling allows me to conclude with an open door invitation to integrate poetry, spiritual and human values applied to calligraphic creation; to cross the boundaries in a very inspiring dialogue between (handwriting) cultures. Our practical and functional-based western model hides most of the time, the incredible weight of immaterial charge that handwriting (in general) and calligraphy (in particular) both offer. Through this endless road it is possible to discover another important crossed boundary — analogic and digital calligraphic design — which highlights an extraordinary versatility in both cultures. At this point, I could meet the combination of traditional techniques and digital media in several works and projects created by Dr Manny Ling for this exhibition; all of them made possible by a comparison between the value of traditional and digital artwork.

This interaction and separation of analogic/digital calligraphic work will soon to be applied to my new course on Digital Paleography that I will have to teach in two-years' time. The influence of Dr Manny Ling in the search for integrating cultures and approaches will be clear and then, once again, the sound of the strokes on paper and the rhythm of the line on the digital tablet screen will be pleasantly audible and visible to all those who love creating emotions through the art of calligraphy.

*Dr. Diego Navarro, Library and Information Sciences Department
University Carlos III of Madrid, Spain*

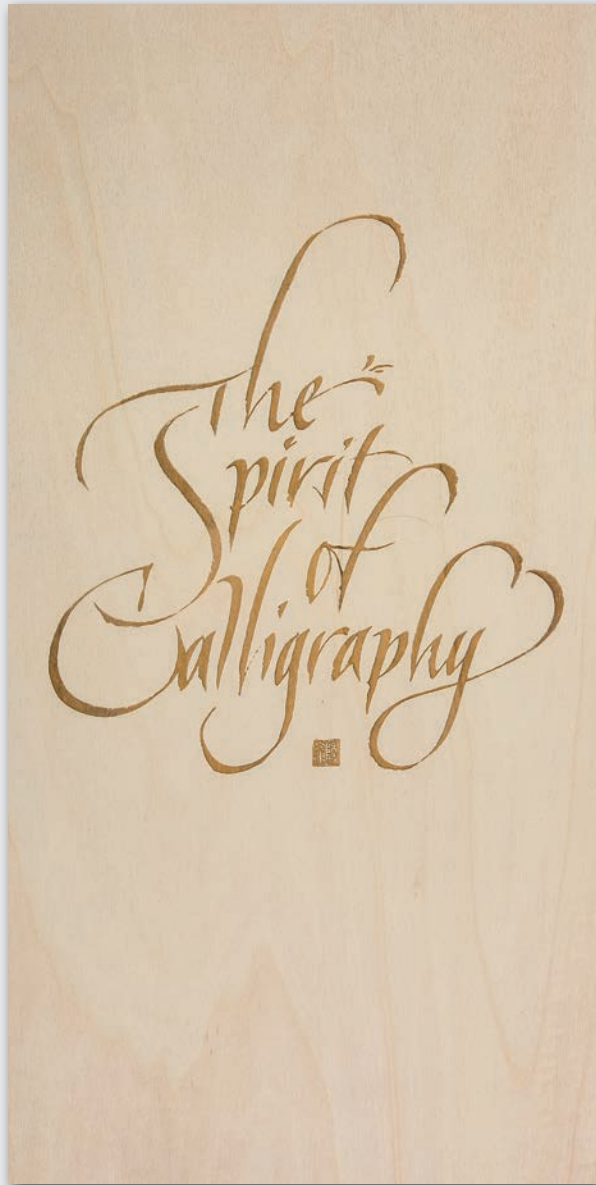
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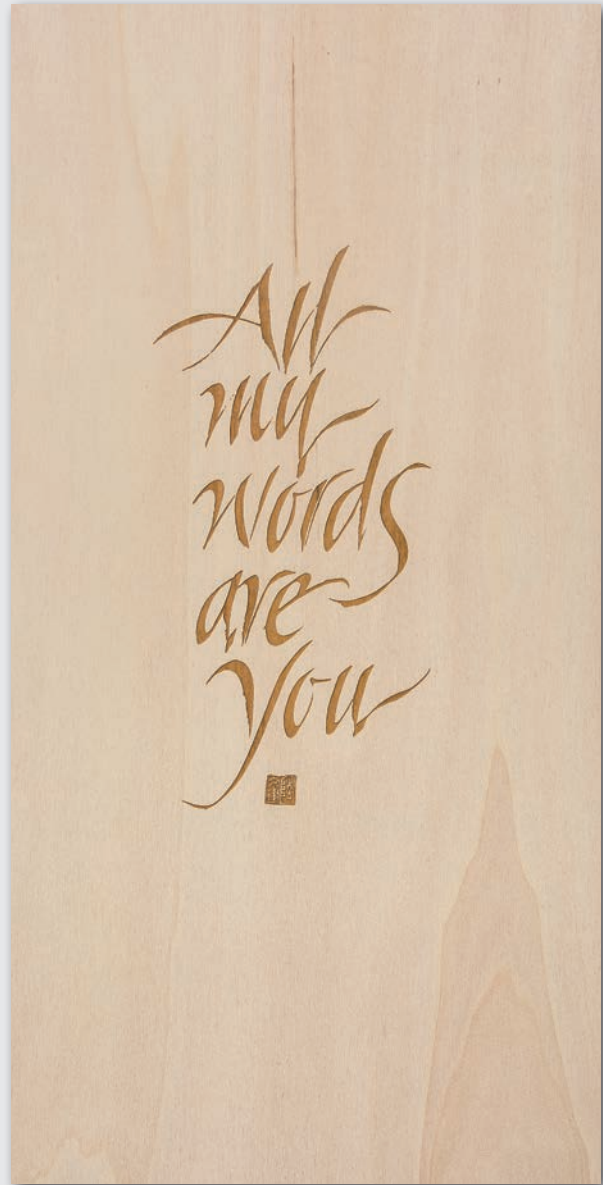


The words here by John Strachan evoked such vivid imagery that I struggled to find the right script to describe how I felt. At a moment, almost of despair, this script appeared out of nowhere. It really took me surprise. This is perhaps one of the most important pieces of work that I have created, even though it is only a piece of practice doodle.

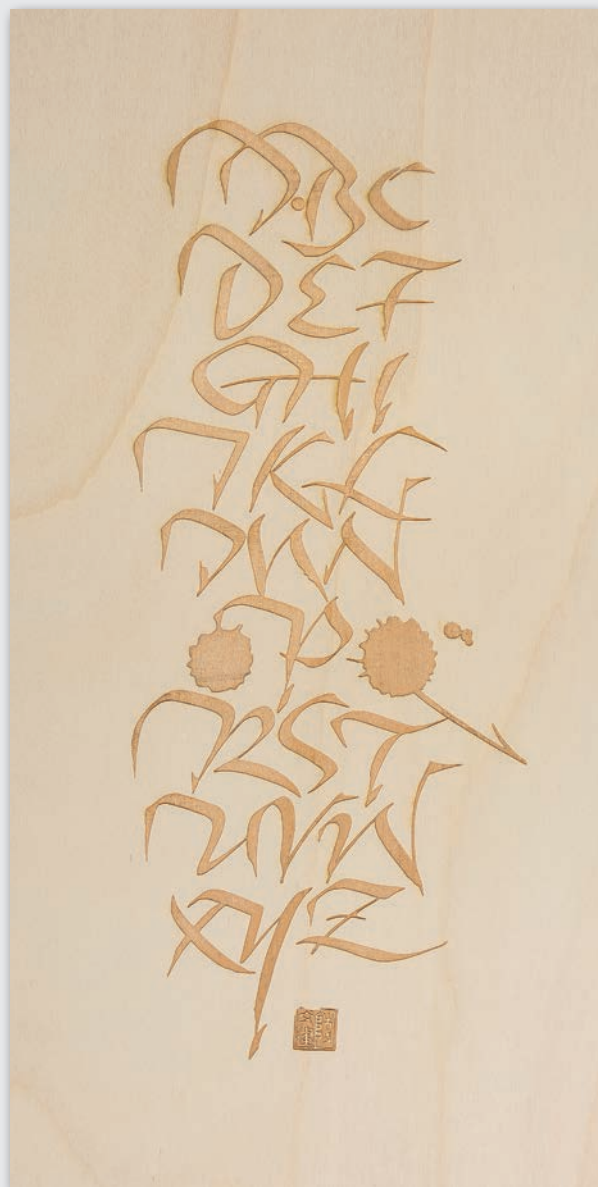
'Words are not like other creatures'
 2013
 Words by John Strachan
 Calligraphy by Manny Ling
 Sumi ink



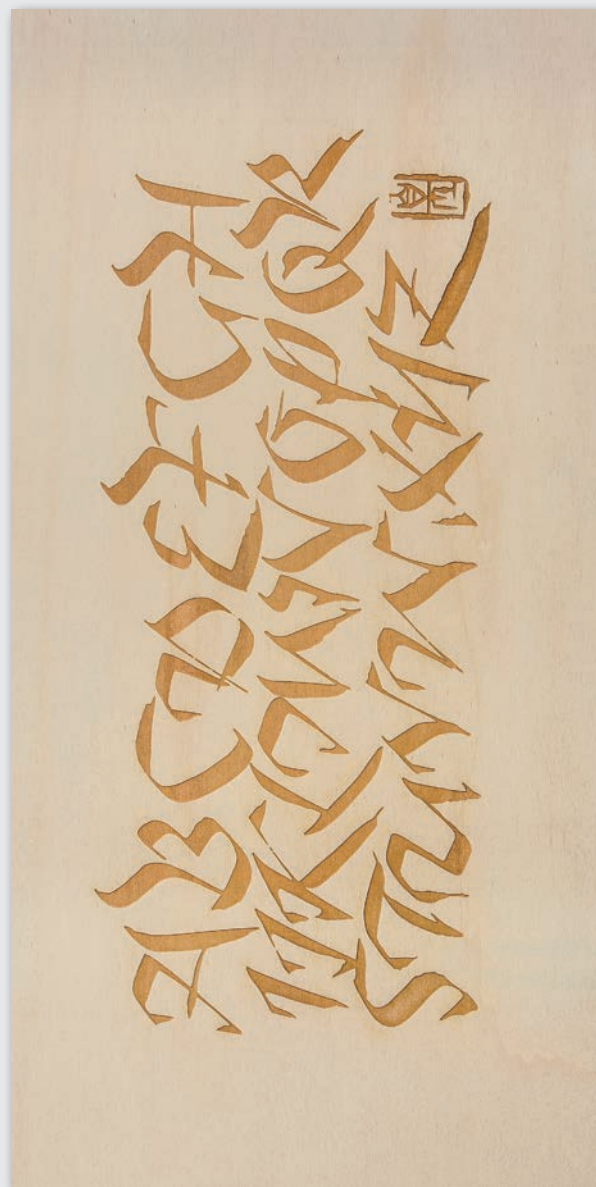
'The spirit of calligraphy'
2018
Words and calligraphy by Manny Ling
Laser-etched on poplar plywood



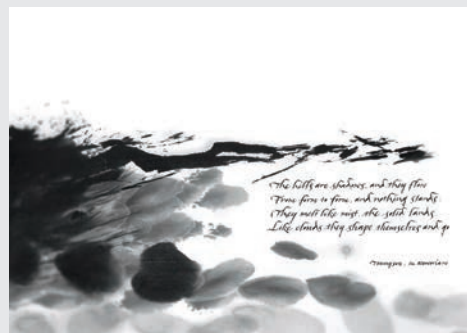
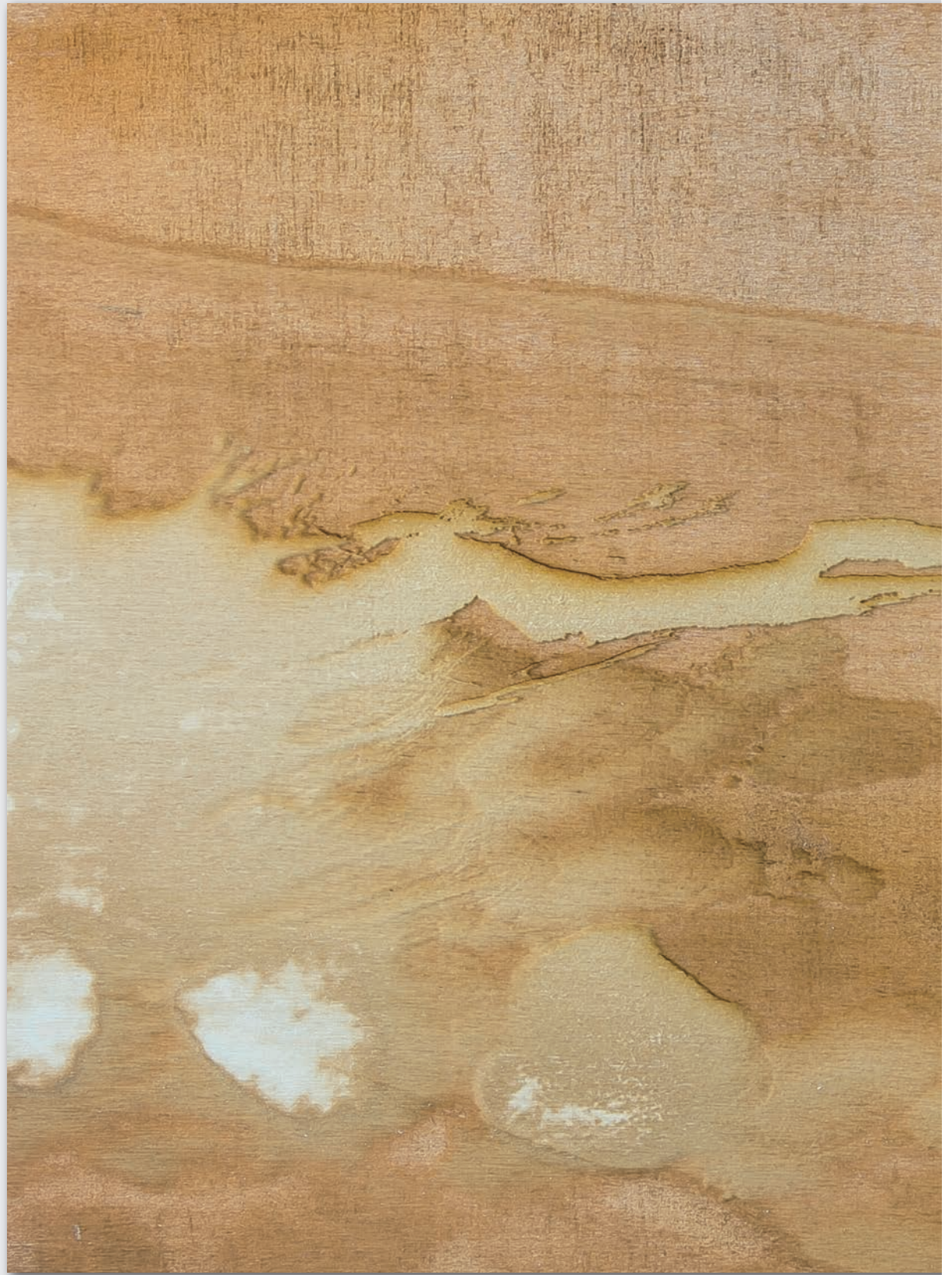
'All my words are you'
2018
Words and calligraphy by Manny Ling
Laser-etched on poplar plywood



'Alphabet 1'
2018
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Laser-etched on poplar plywood



'Alphabet 2'
2018
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Laser-etched on poplar plywood



'In Memoriam'

2018

Words by Lord Alfred Tennyson

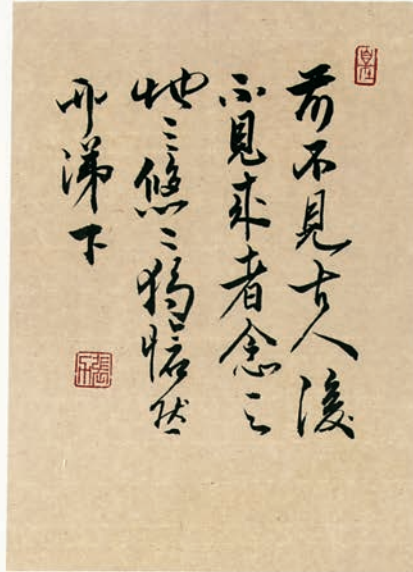
Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Laser-etched on poplar plywood

Original artwork (see left): Chinese ink, xuan paper

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands
They melt like mist the golden lands
Like clouds they change themselves and go

Langens in Memoriam



Witness not the sages of the past
Perceive not the wise of the future
Reflecting on heaven and earth eternal
Tears flowing down
Lament in loneliness

chenziang

'Ballad on climbing Youzhou Tower' (Above)
2018
Words by Chen Zi'ang
Chinese calligraphy by Li Zhang
Western calligraphy by Manny Ling
Chinese ink, xuan paper

'Ballad on climbing Youzhou Tower' ▶
2018
Words by Chen Zi'ang
Chinese calligraphy by Li Zhang
Western calligraphy by Manny Ling
Chinese ink, xuan paper

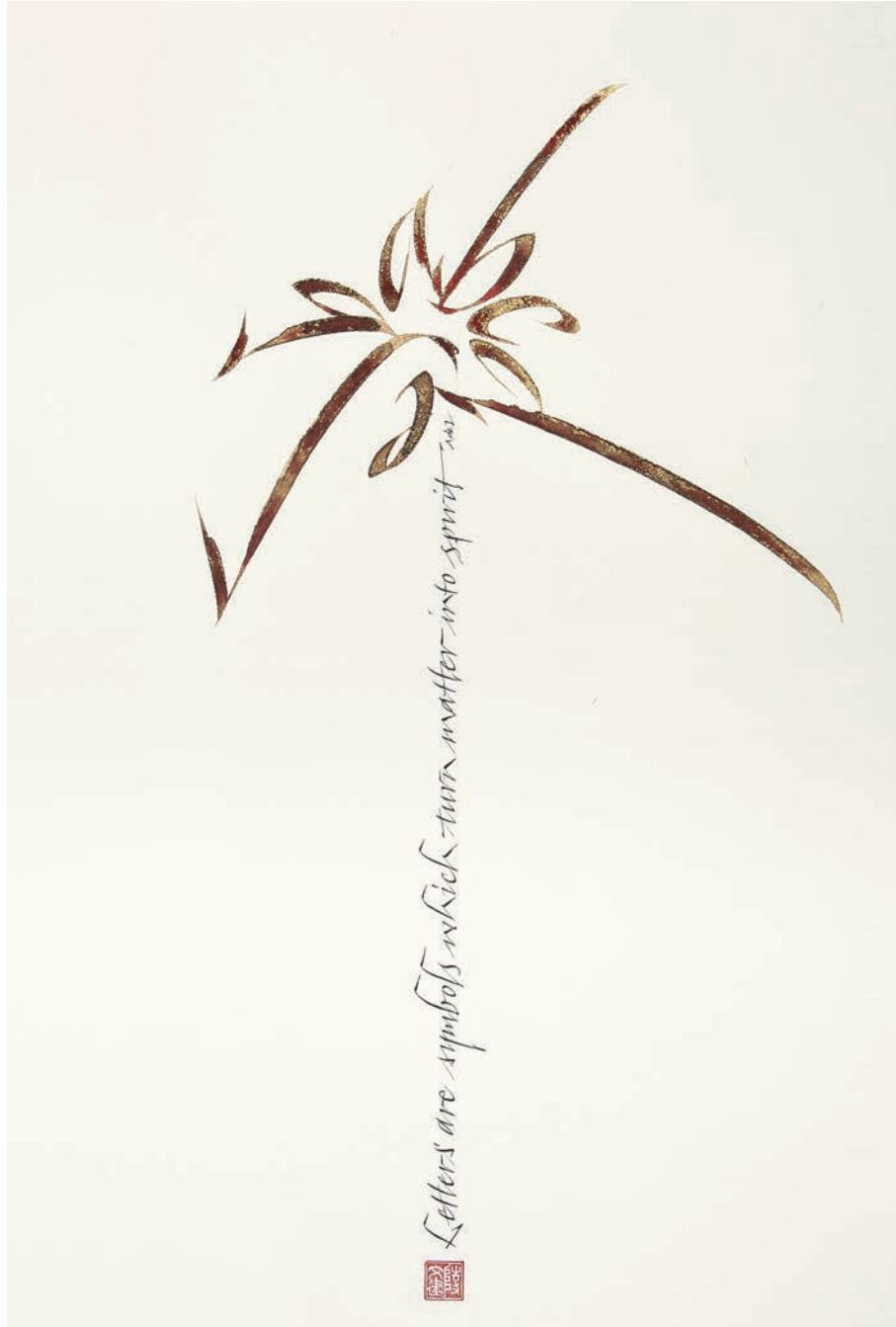
前不見古人後
不見來者念之
地之悠獨怆然
而涕下



Witness not sages of the past
Perceive not the wise of the future
Reflecting on heaven and earth eternal
Tears flowing down
Lament in loneliness

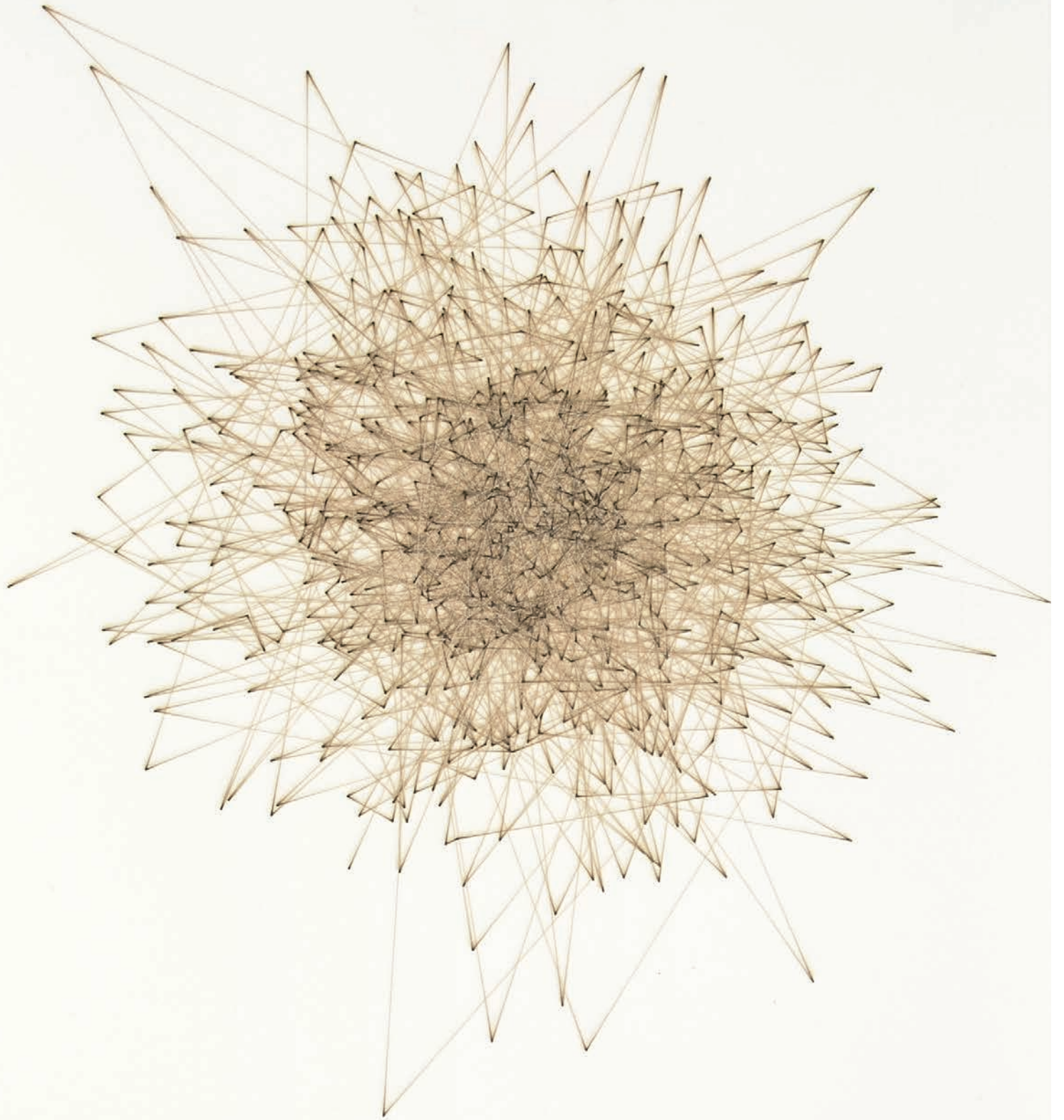


CHEN ZIANG



'Letters are symbols'
2018
Words by Alphonse de Lamartine
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Walnut ink, red acrylic ink, gold powder

'There is no simplicity without complexity' ▶
2018
Computational programming by Carl Gregg
Words and calligraphy by Manny Ling
Laser-etched lines on paper, Chinese ink

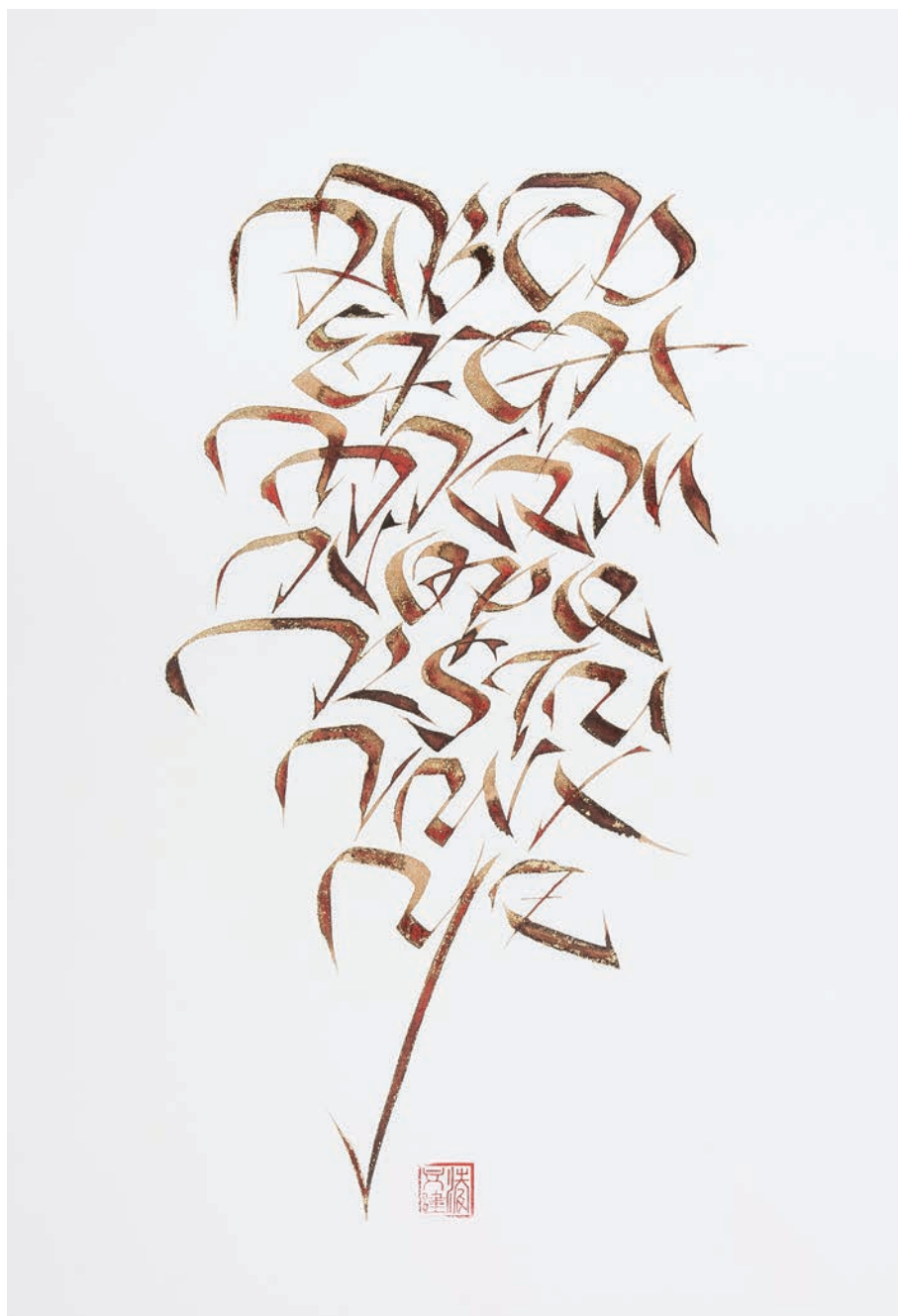


THERE IS NO
SIMPLICITY
WITHOUT
COMPLEXITY

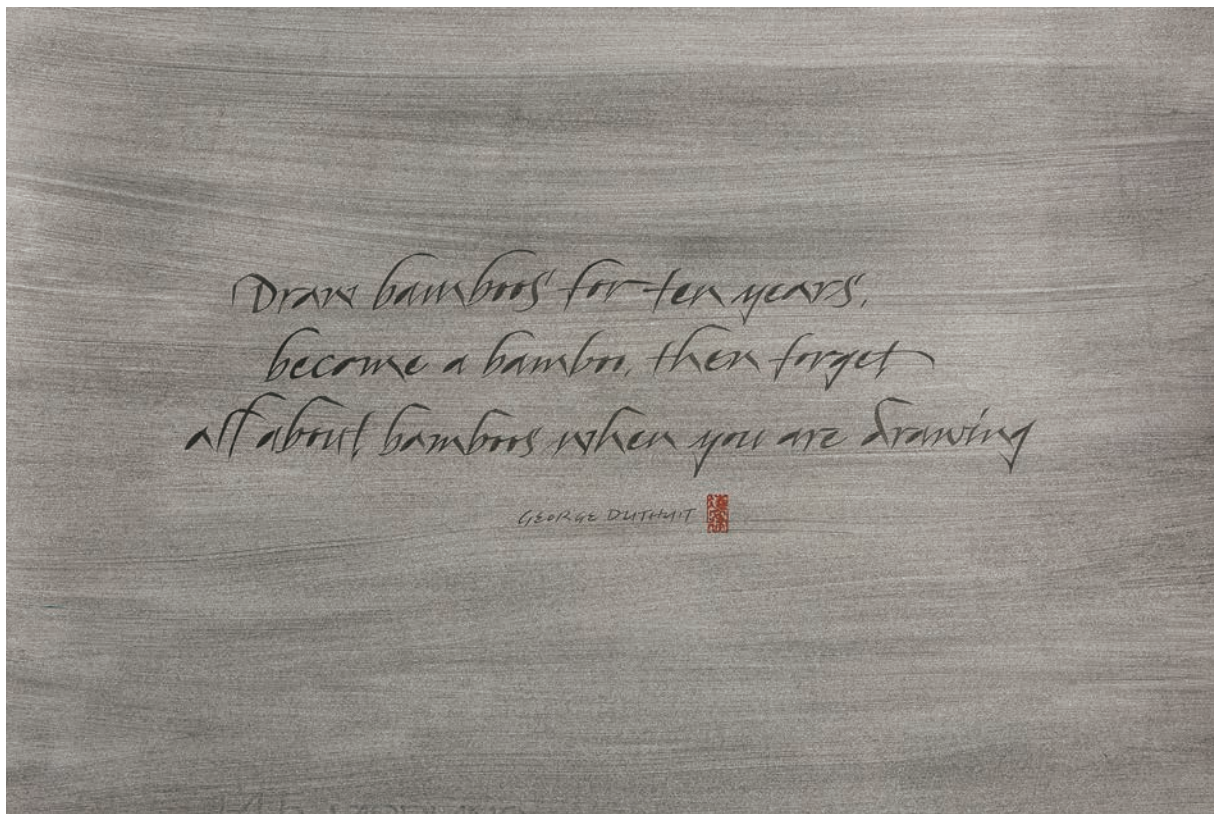




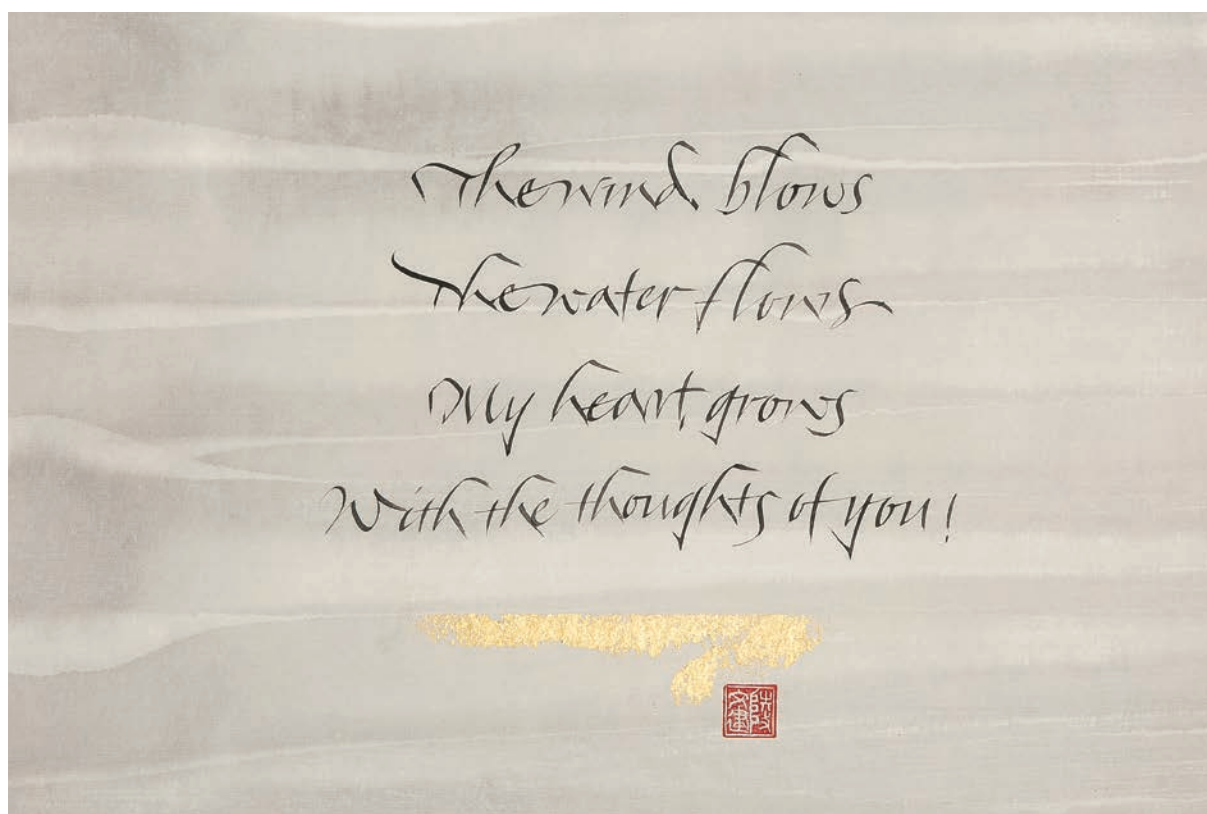
'Alphabet 3'
2018
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Walnut ink, red acrylic ink, gold powder



'Alphabet 4'
2018
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Walnut ink, red acrylic ink, gold powder



'Draw bamboos for ten years'
2018
Words by George Duthuit
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Chinese ink, paste paper



'The wind blows'

2018

Words and calligraphy by Manny Ling

Chinese ink, xuan paper, gold transfer,

This shall be for music

*I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-stone at night
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea*

*I will bring you gifts of gold with autumn leaves,
Precious gems and treasure troves with the buds of spring.*

*And this shall be for music, when no one else is near
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road before us and the roadside fir*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Of Many, One

To these who plant for profit, and are thrusting every other tree out of the way to make room for their favourite the larch, I would utter first a regret that they should have selected these costly trees for their vegetable manufactory. INVERDOROUGH, A GLIDE THROUGH THE DISTRICT OF THE LAKES, 1855.

Lortain's ancient, lowering
Over fair lit Whitbeck,
Glowing yew tree in the vale,
Casting its own darkness.

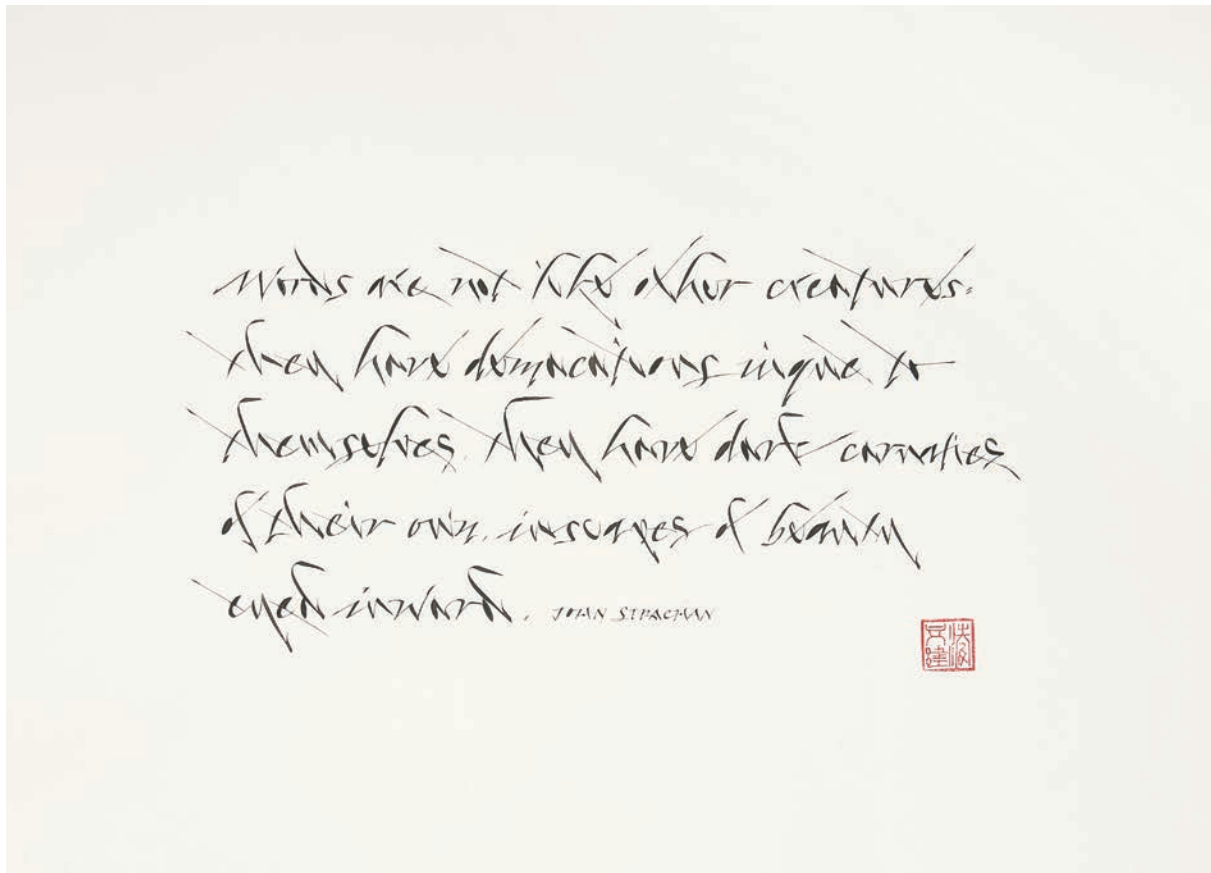
Whitlatter's woods and silence,
Glimmers in sheep-walks,
Red squirrels on larches,
Lovely looked on singly.

High, once barren hills
Clothed in vegetable manufactory
Pit props for the lead mines
Piles for the mansion piles.

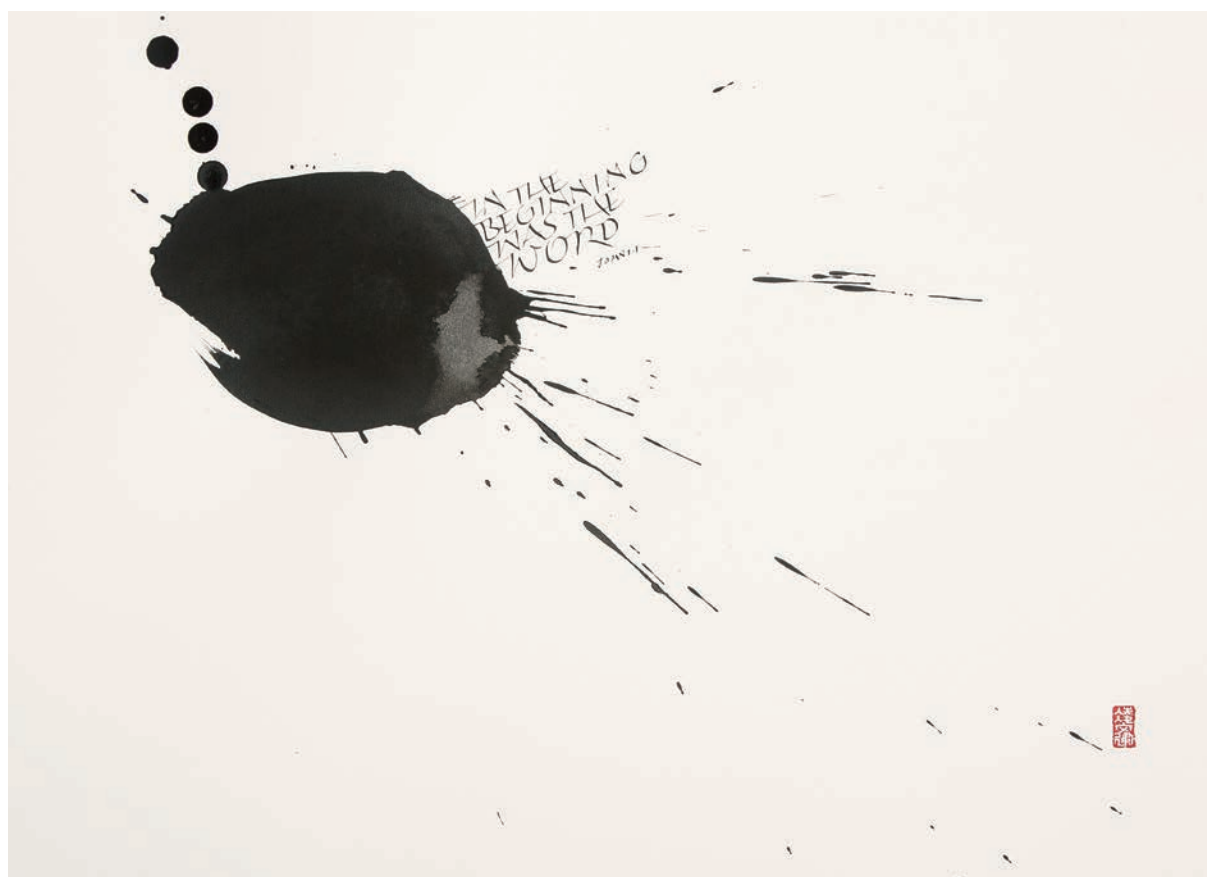
Cankers thiazing larch forests,
Chimneys from new throates,
Bracken fronds reddish in death,
The afforestation all long cold.

JOHN STRACHAN

Manny Ling



'Words are not like other creatures'
2018
Words by John Strachan
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Chinese ink



'In the beginning was the word' from John 1,1

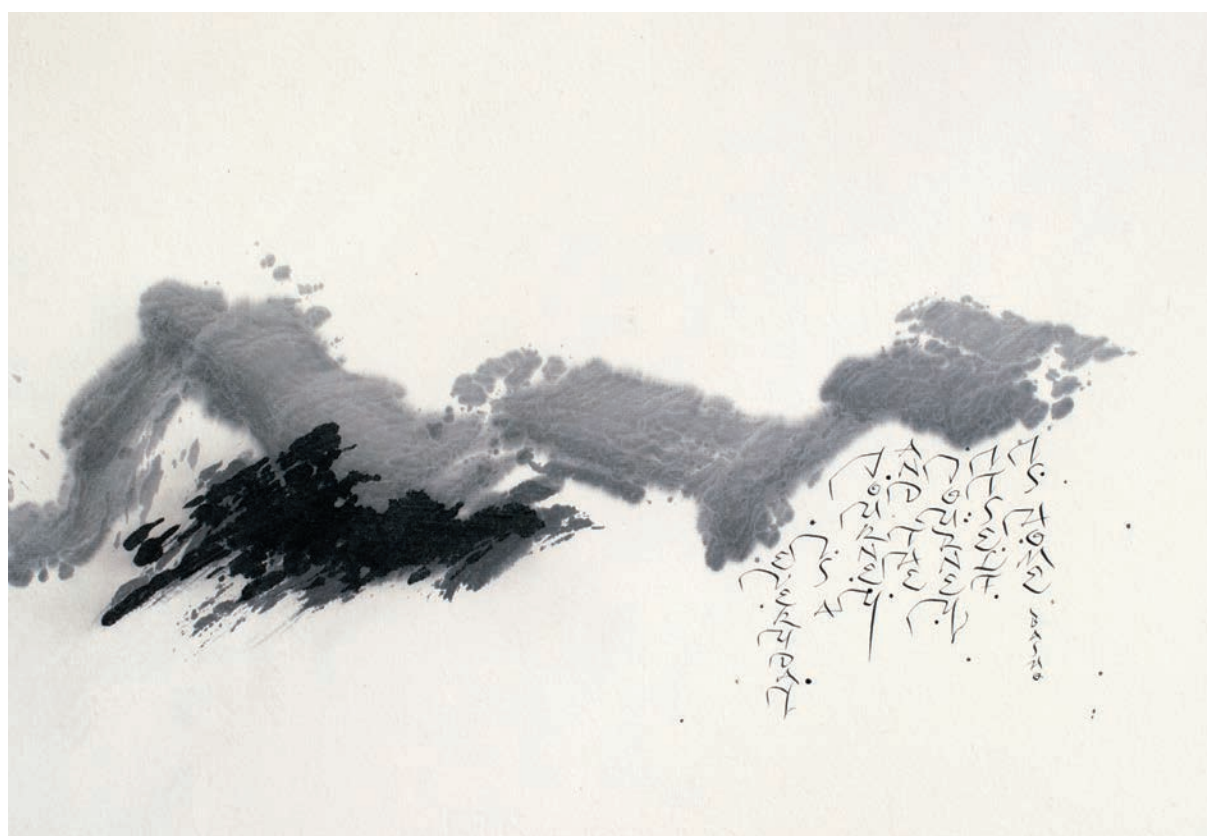
2018

Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Chinese ink



'All of you in one line'
2018
Words and calligraphy by Manny Ling
Chinese ink



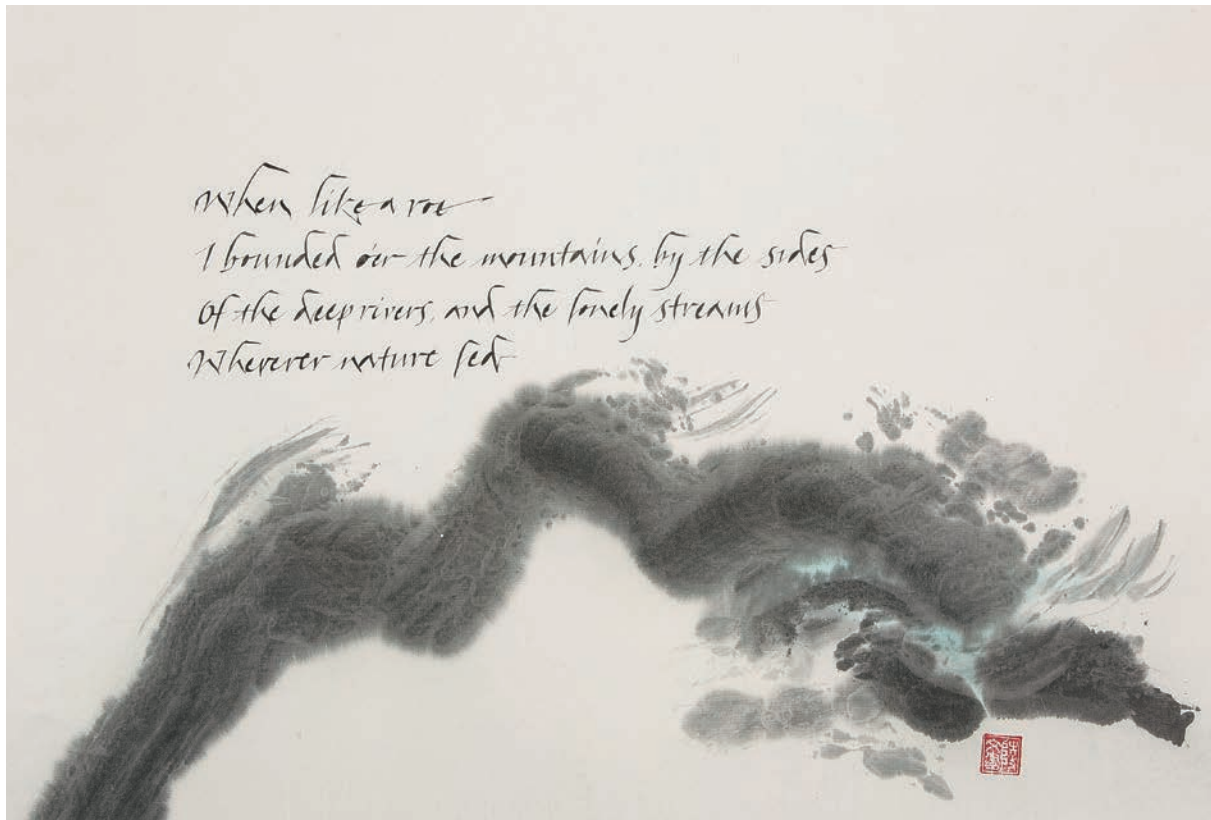
'Everyday is a journey and the journey itself is home'

2018

Words by Basho

Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Chinese ink, xuan paper, gold transfer



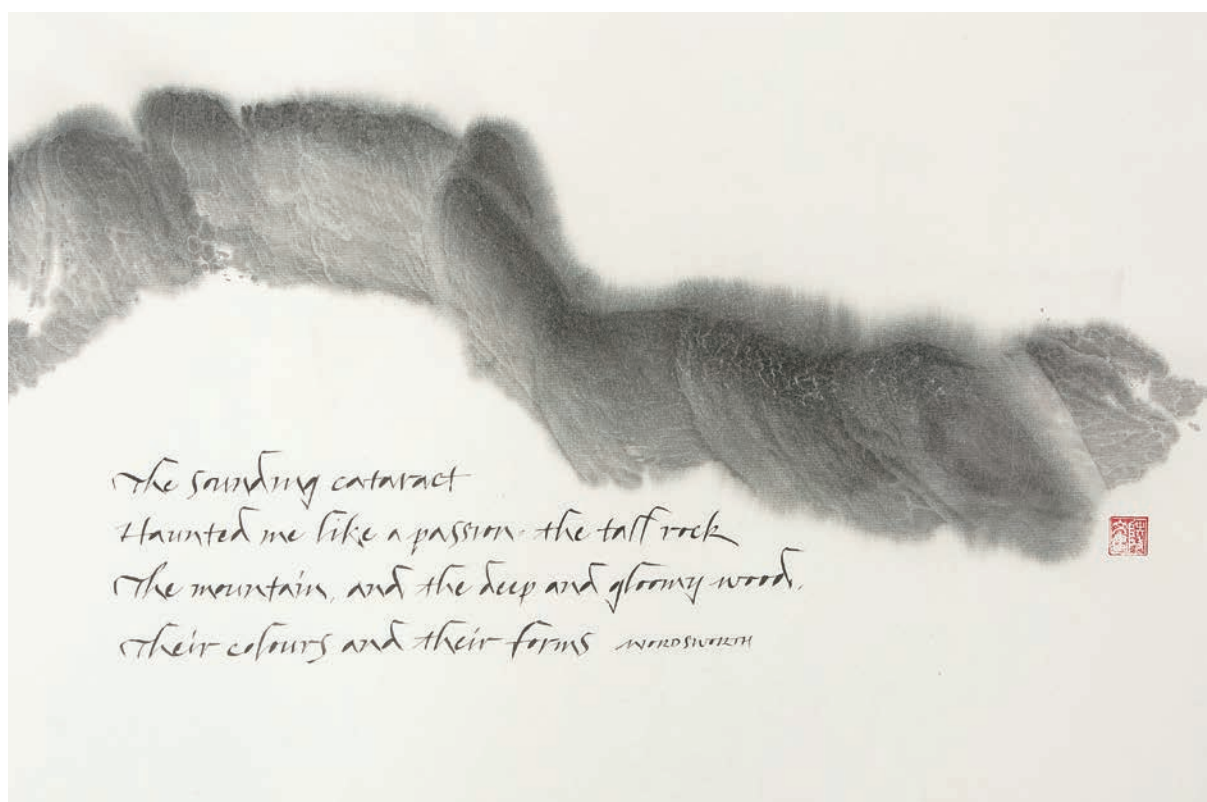
'Water lines'

2018


Words by William Wordsworth

Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Chinese ink, Chinese watercolour, xuan paper



'Mountain lines'
2018
Words by William Wordsworth
Calligraphy by Manny Ling
Chinese ink, xuan paper



'Every day is a journey and the journey itself is home' (3 x scrolls)

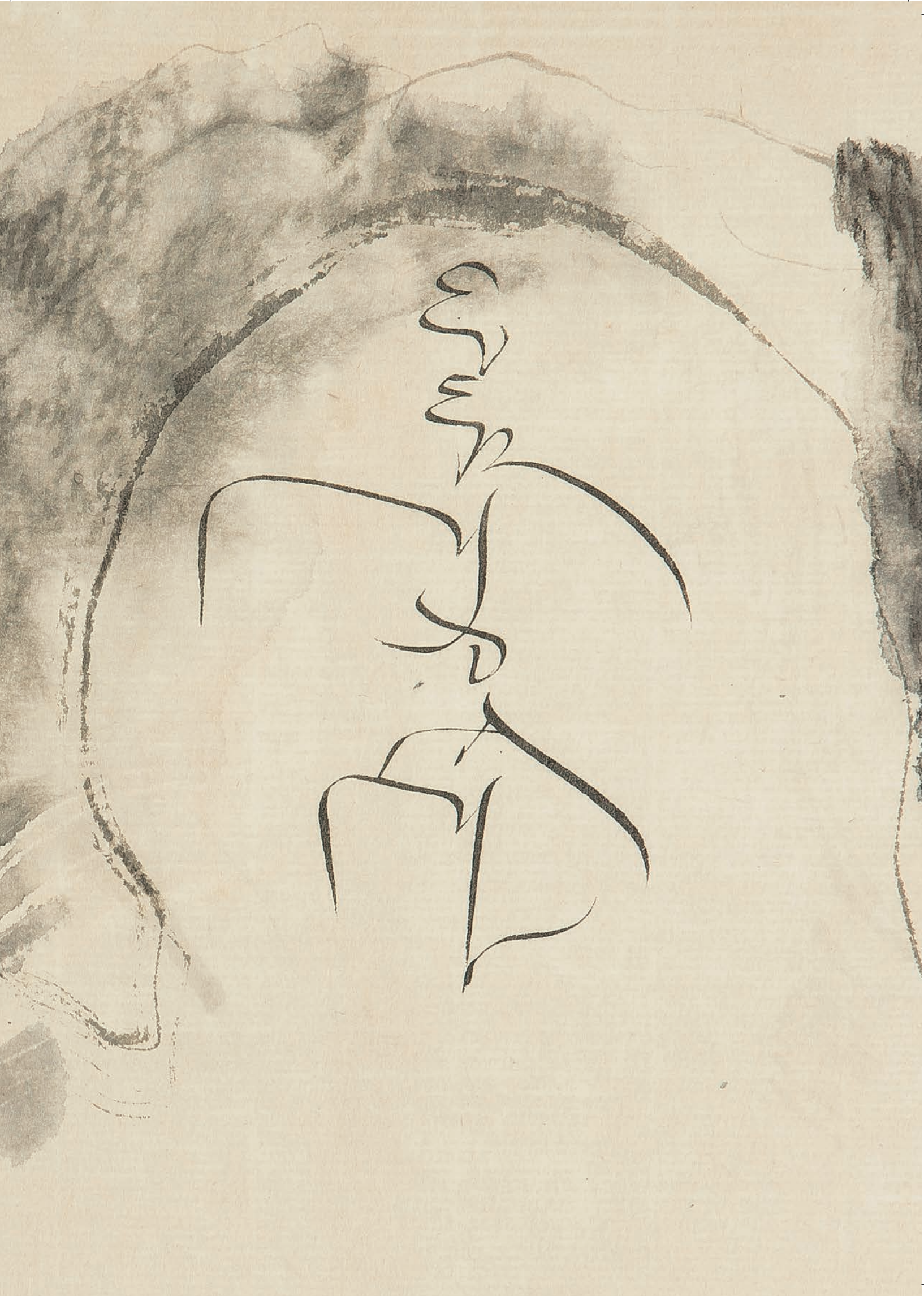
2016

Words by Basho

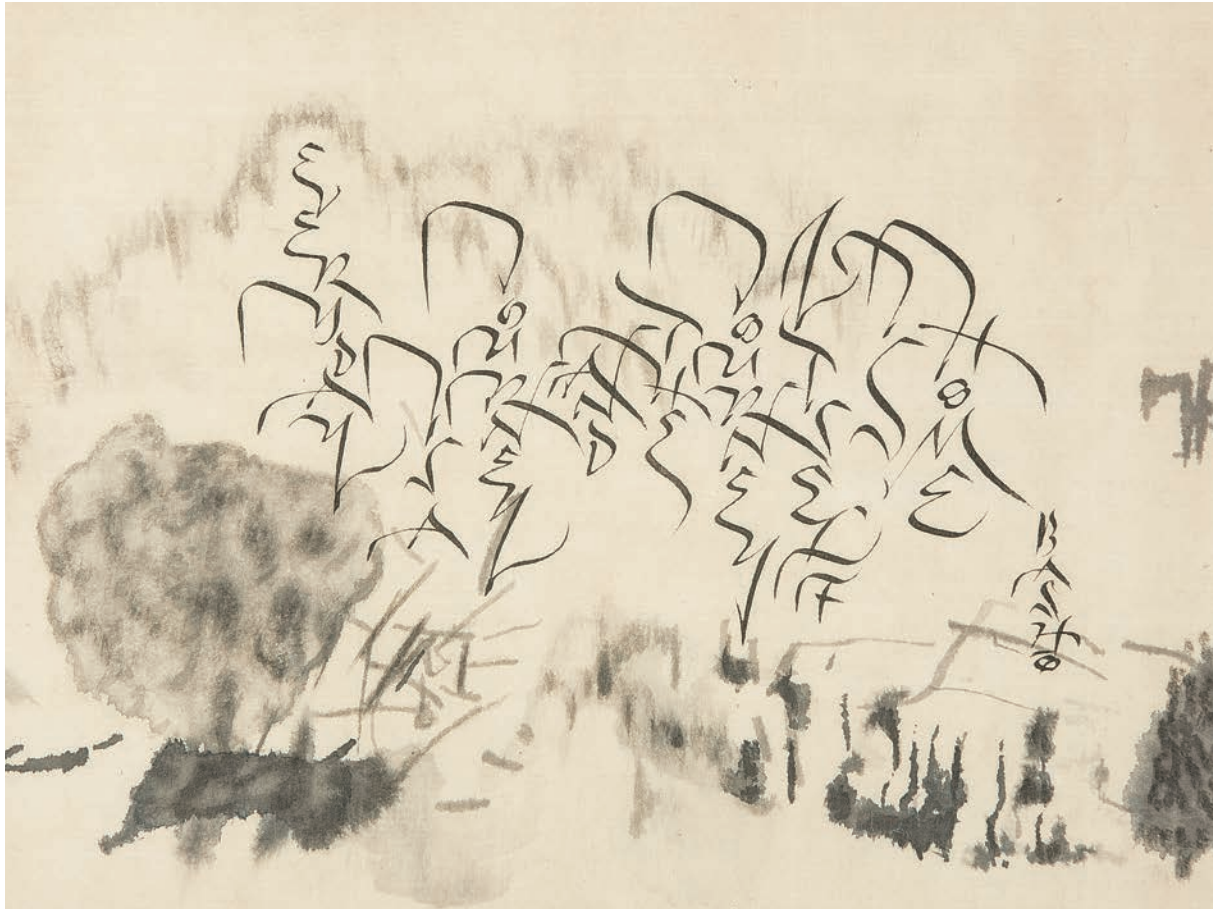
Sumi Painting by Christine Flint Sato

Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Sumi ink, Japanese paper



Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a signature or a name, written in dark ink. The text is oriented vertically and appears to be a name, possibly "John Doe".



'Every day is a journey and the journey itself is home' (3 x scrolls)

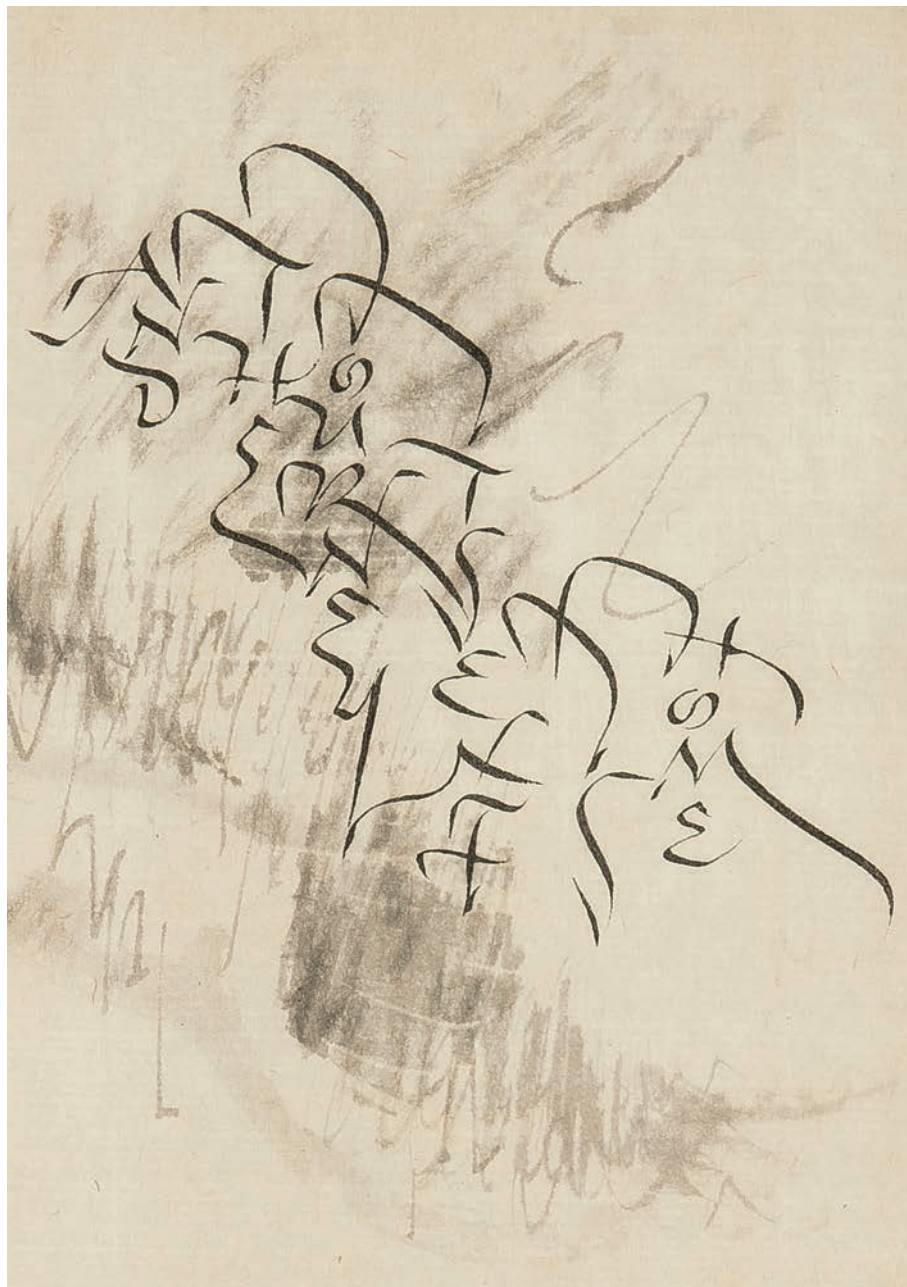
2016

Words by Basho

Sumi Painting by Christine Flint Sato

Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Sumi ink, Japanese paper



'Every day is a journey and the journey itself is home' (3 x scrolls)

2016

Words by Basho

Sumi Painting by Christine Flint Sato

Calligraphy by Manny Ling

Sumi ink, Japanese paper

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY / 藝術家簡介

凌文建博士，書法家、設計師和教育家。英國桑德蘭大學碩士設計課程負責人、高級講師，並擔任設計學博士研究主任、大學國際書法研究中心主任，主要從事書法、刻字、印刷設計及編輯設計方面的研究。

他是世界聞名的西方書法家，他的作品曾在英國、日本、法國、芬蘭、挪威和澳大利亞舉辦的諸多個展和群展中展出，還在很多主要出版物上刊登。2011年，英國書法與刻字藝術學會授予他“榮譽會員”名銜，以表彰他對西方書法發展所作的重要貢獻。2013年，他獲得由學生主導評選的教學獎——“最鼓舞人心的講師”。

他於2008年完成了博士研究，其重點是東亞和西方文化對西方書法的綜合影響。他的研究還涉及數碼媒體對這種傳統藝術形式的影響。

凌文建博士出生於香港，十歲時移民英國。作為中國人，研習西方藝術和設計，對他的人生產生了深遠的影響。他深深著迷於其作品的主題——“跨界”：手製與數碼、東方與西方、舊與新、動與靜、簡與繁、抑制與自發。

凌文建博士
博士“跨界書法”
設計學碩士和設計學學士(榮譽)(一等榮譽)
HFCLAS(英國書法與刻字藝術學會榮譽會員)
英國刻字交流協會榮譽會員
英國印刷學會榮譽會員

Dr Manny Ling is a calligrapher, designer and educator. He is the Programme Leader for MA Design and Senior Lecturer in Design at the University of Sunderland, UK. He specialises in calligraphy, lettering, typographic design, and editorial design. He has responsibilities as Director of Studies for PhD research in Design and he is also the Director for the International Research Centre for Calligraphy (IRCC) at the University.

He is a world-renowned western calligrapher and has exhibited in many solo and group shows in the UK, Japan, France, Finland, Norway and Australia. His work is also showcased in many major publications. He was made an Honorary Fellow by the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society (UK) in 2011 for his important contribution to the development of Western Calligraphy. He also won the Student-led Teaching Awards 'Most Inspirational Lecturer' in 2013.

He completed his PhD research in 2008 with emphasis on the integration of East Asian and Western cultural influences upon Western calligraphy. He is also interested in the impact of digital media upon this traditional art form.

Dr Manny Ling was born in Hong Kong and moved to England when he was ten years old. Being a Chinese person practising Western art and design has had a profound influence on his life. He is fascinated by the theme of 'crossing boundaries' in his work: the Handmade and Digital, East and West, Old and New, Energy and Stillness, Simplicity and Complexity, Control and Spontaneity.

Dr Manny Ling HFCLAS
PhD 'Calligraphy Across Boundaries'
MA Design and BA (Hons) Design (First Class Honours)
HFCLAS (Honorary Fellow of Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society), UK
Honorary member of Letter Exchange, UK
Honorary member of Typographic Circle, UK



