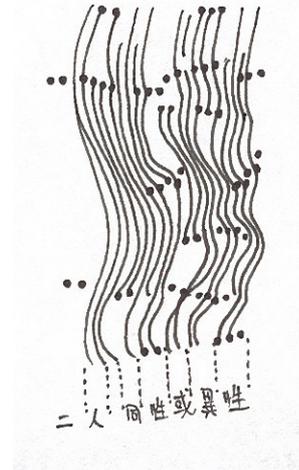


## Wai Pong Yu – an artist's statement

Calligraphy has always been thing and image, meaning and representation combined.

Whatever the starting point of the text for my drawings, I do not expect any specific form or representation to emerge. I just follow carefully the rhythm given by each previous line, and each new line will add a new rhythm as the work unfolds across the paper.

My drawing technique is in a sense mechanical. Starting with a phrase that may be Chinese or may be translated, the traditional Chinese characters making up the phrase are simplified into a form compatible with my drawing method. This method employs dots and vertical lines arrived at through a process of transformation by which the verticals are extended and the horizontals are changed into dots, created by a change in pressure of the pen, causing it to shed ink. The ideographs are stretched and extended in this way, and the sentence is repeatedly written towards the right until the whole of the chosen piece of rice paper is fully filled.



*Transformation - Example 1*

However, the finished effect is far from mechanical, and some say it reminds them of waves on the sea, or the wind in the corn, or even the weave of a prayer flag or the rings of a tree trunk, or of emotions projected into a fractured landscape, or meteorites appearing and disappearing in the sky.

I cannot explain this process. I can say I believe that I inject the unconscious me, which shows itself on the drawing. As I draw a line, its extension, its angle, its intensity, its proximity to its neighbour, all adjust themselves spontaneously. I may not even know for how long I have been drawing an individual line. So it is a form of mechanical process driven by an unknown source.

Despite the potential affinity with Zen, I don't choose to call it spiritual, as I am not engaging in a ceremony or a celebration. I draw my lines every day, and yet my drawing remains conscious, so it is not akin to automatism. To the contrary, I feel engaged and I feel happiness in drawing. It allows me to rest, but at the same time to train myself and build up my strength.

As do so many others, I have had to endure hunger, loneliness and tears. I can imagine I live in the lines that I draw, and in the words the lines are drawn from. I can feel they are chains of spells which give me protection. I hope that those who see my works may be drawn into them as I am, to find peace or understanding or nature, or whatever they will.

In them order, balance, life, tension, change, evolution, harmony, living together, nature, all find expression.

In the work "Same Sex Marriage", the rhythms, the tensions and their resolution emerge from the phrase:

**A marriage can be contracted by two people of different or the same sex**  
**二人同性或異性都可締結婚盟**

This statement is taken from the Dutch Civil Code Book 1 Article 30(1):



*"Een huwelijk kan worden aangegaan door twee personen van verschillend of van gelijk geslacht."*

These words became transformed into law on 1 April, 2001, when Holland became the first country to allow and perform same-sex marriage.

They reflect the spirit of a passage from Ji Gu's "Odes of Bei", (Book of Odes, translated by the Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren):

**I grasped your hand, together with you I was to grow old.**  
**執子之手 與子偕老**

In full:

*"In death or life (we are) separated and far apart;  
 With you I made an agreement:  
 I grasped your hand,  
 Together with you I was to grow old."*

Article 37 of Hong Kong's Basic Law states: "The freedom of marriage of Hong Kong residents and their right to raise a family freely shall be protected by law", so this Article is already capable of embracing and accepting same-sex marriage.

However, section 40 in the Marriage Ordinance (Cap 181) states that marriage "implies a formal ceremony recognized by law as involving the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others".

*Transformation - Example 2*

Homosexual couples are thus segregated and not accepted in the same institution. How can we make our Basic Law live up to its promise to embrace dignity and personal autonomy?

I wish there may be same-sex marriage in Hong Kong as I do believe homosexuals and heterosexuals are no different in terms of their affection and love for their lovers.

Through the stresses and difficulties of making progress in society, words become transformed and an image is drawn on a page.