

An Artist Statement on the Collaborative Drawing Project: *Same Line Twice*

Everything which has been expressed by Hung Fai's lines would have been thereby obliterated by them. The stern, unbending timeline whose invincible penetration lines up all individual dots marked for execution, is also tortured by the rage of an aspiring revolutionary. His hands perch on the top of the Great Ruler. Brooding over the passing of time and its oppression, he presses it firmly. Flood and conflagration arise underneath this blunt blade. No matter how helpless or heroic these dots were, their characters would only be collectively recognized as burnt ash or drowning dirt. In the depth of an intrinsic grey, water dooms and animates the last remains of time and spirits. What is left after the water has evaporated is sediment finely carved by a wrathful force.

Wai Pong-yu craves a distant dimension which he can call home. Stretching along a zone of extended present from then to now, his empathy visualizes an invisible tethering between himself and segregated life forms. Each undulation echoes with the flow of his contemplation. In the vastness of an intrinsic grey, his intuition whispers to conjure up ancestral spirits who might see an entire territory as home. His sense of belonging has extended to this undefined sequestered space where solace is woven out of darkness and light. Without any plan, he sets sail along the perfect edge of the paper. This first constitutive line is nevertheless a flawed reflection of an unreachable dream shore. The spirits evoked are inhaled into the dry earth where they travel like ripples across the sea. Water was once their home. Now it seeps into the papers with its virulent and pervasive passion. His intuitive evocations are ruined. Some water has become a distant glow shining through the shades of sighing incantations. What is revealed after the water has receded is a monument to the pulses of their existence.

To understand the stories of love and tragedy among the deities in Latin verses, Wai Pong-yu highlighted the words and phrases in rainbow colours in order to read the texts in English. Red takes the lead in a sentence, blue is read last. The study of Latin texts requires him to investigate the meanings of many individual words, and the changes of word endings which provide the structure for understanding. Colourful highlights represent the act of portraying individuals, in contrast to Hung Fai whose lines effaced individuals and were themselves effaced. Wai Pong-yu's individuals are immortal beings and mortals whose fictional stories continue to reflect the value of our lives in the present age. Though there are variations of these stories in different languages in the context of different historical backgrounds, what these mythological stories teach us remains unchanged. Hung Fai is concerned about mortal individuals in secular human history. Their characters are often based on judgment, which changes according to new perspectives and new evidence. Hung Fai's sympathy towards forgotten civilians and heroes suffering through the relentlessness of time coincides with his personal experience. When both artists translate their feelings regarding these two types of stories into lines by using the same tool, a ruler, they confront the same irony. While Hung Fai draws with compassion, he himself executes the violent press: while Wai Pong-yu arranges stacks of lines resembling paragraphs and footnotes, nothing is readable.

The blank gap is a mystery. It has evolved to become an ambiguous multi-functional space which itself can be seen as containing consciousness. At the beginning of the collaboration, it appears to be a barren zone where neither of the artists dares intrude. It begins without any given meaning. When a gap in *Same Line Twice 4* slowly takes shape like a cascade, which seems to contain moving substances, it attracts Hung Fai and Wai Pong-yu to maintain its form. It becomes a place for manifestations of lines. Communication becomes diverse. In *Same Line Twice 8*, dots have turned the gap into a battlefield. Until the last moment, it remains a rift of assimilation for lines. In the next drawing *Same Line Twice 9*, it has become a frame which forces both sides to reconcile. The truce appears to be valid as long as the hiatus of communication lasts. What gives rise to doubts are the jagged and hairy edges, which emerge and are dissonant with the peaceful frame. A force appears to tear *Same Line Twice 10* apart or it seems that the middle section can no longer withstand a rising power; in consequence, it bursts apart. This empty space does not belong to either artist. It bends and curves as if it follows its own will. Consciousness might have been seeded when, at the commencement, both artists had to see themselves as strangers. The absence of familiarity is not a total absence of affinity. Unfilled white space can receive and interact with the energy of gestures. As more lines collide and overlap, it gains a meaning to its existence. Eventually, what inhibited the space in compulsion to serve as a communicative medium is inhibited by it. When it has found itself, it uttered the bold assertion of its presence. A blank space could have metamorphosed from a mere visual element into a third collaborator.

Hung Fai and Wai Pong-yu were born on 18 September. They studied in the same school of fine arts. They exhibit in the same gallery. They persist in drawing lines repeatedly to express and intensify their pain, and by this process they are paradoxically relieved. The repetition and awareness of this paradox in themselves and in each other creates nuances in their perception of the same lines. These subtle differences are seen in the density, the speed and the luminosity of their respective lines. An overview of the work might suggest mildness, order and simplicity at one end of the continuum to passion, antagonism and complexity at the other. Drawing is a process of finding and discovering these distinctions in the artists' intricate and subconscious minds. It is invariably a journey of bitterness and struggle, exhausting each artist with the intensity of his emotions. When a drawing is displayed on a wall, such intensity becomes a centre of gravity by itself, which seems to generate an opposite power against the gravity. The drawing is then bound with a sense of resolved harmony in its orientation and position. This relationship manifests an affinity within paradox and contradiction. A line can be a barrier against all interpretations but it can also act as an invitation to a multitude of possibilities, as long as the antagonism accompanying the artists' persistent engagement with disparate and dichotomous values banishes nothing.