



## Wang Gongyi: Selected Works 2020-2024

14 November to 31 December 2024

Opening Reception: 14 November 2024, Thursday, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Venue: gdm (Galerie du Monde), 108 Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell St, Central, Hong Kong

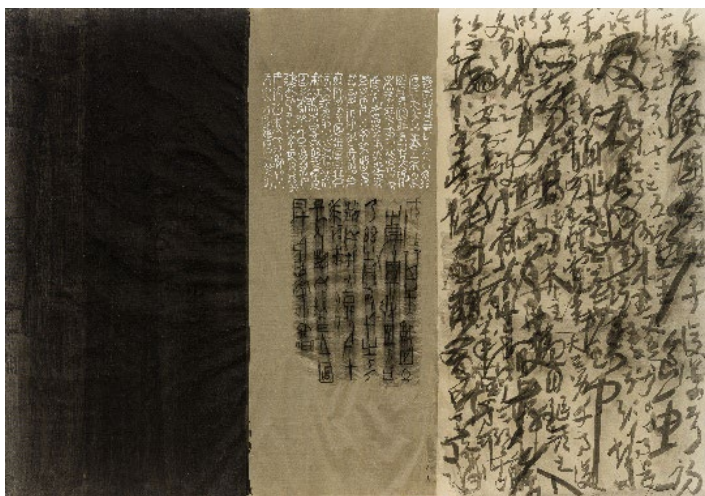
gdm Hong Kong is pleased to present **Wang Gongyi: Selected Works 2020-2024**, the artist's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Presenting eleven important works by pioneering Chinese artist Wang Gongyi, this exhibition includes the artist's iconic wild cursive calligraphy, Leaves of Grass series, and Winsor Blue series.

Wang Gongyi's works are imbued with vitality. Through bold brushstrokes, Wang captures the unfiltered essence of her subjects. Her lines are unrestrained, devoid of traditional conventions that often mark ink painters. Born in Tianjin in 1946, she has always discovered, evolved, and embodied an attitude unexpected of her age.

Since early in her career, she has demonstrated avant-garde ideas. In 1993, during her time in France, Wang created *Listen, Look, Taste, Smell, But Do Not Ask* as a reaction against the educational systems of the time, highlighting the tyranny of words. On a large piece of Xuan paper, Wang writes a series of conjunctions in black ink, repeating until most of the paper is covered in overlaid text. Twenty years later, she presented another iteration of this installation at the Zhejiang Art Museum, titled *Forgive Me for Being Free, Unconstrained by Reality* (2013). Much larger than the original, Wang created this piece with twenty other participants, encouraging them to write freely. Less structured in form and content, the words—and their meanings—in this version of the work are deconstructed. The result is a playful composition far removed from the rebellious nature of the original.



*Listen, Look, Taste, Smell, But Do Not Ask* (1993)  
Ink, Xuan Paper, Wood Sticks  
276 x 276 x 600 cm



*Old Monk* (2024)  
Ink and Clam Powder on Silk, 138 x 197 cm

Wang Gongyi's free-spirited attitude can also be seen in *Old Monk* (2024), a silk work that plays with different expressions of ink. In the piece, Wang writes various Chinese calligraphy scripts— oracle script, seal script, and cursive script. For the former, she used a tree branch to delineate each character, resulting in slower lines. For the latter, Wang copies (*linmo*) Buddhist monk Huai Su's "Eating Fish Script" (食魚貼). Huai Su lived during the Tang dynasty, an age of relative spiritual liberation and social freedom. In "Eating Fish Script," Huai Su details a seemingly trivial anecdote.

In Changsha, he ate fish. Travelling to Changan, there are no fish, so he can only eat meat. As a Buddhist monk, writing about breaking his vegetarian diet in such a blunt and casual way exemplifies Huai Su's radical departure from societal expectations and light-hearted spirit.



*Variation on Leaves of Grass: Queen Anne's Lace (2024)*  
Mineral Pigments and Pastel on Silk, 138 x 263 cm

Embodying the spirit of ancient Chinese artists, Wang often depicts the sights she encounters on her hikes, distilling her physical experiences into visual representations. Wang's romantic sensibilities draw her to the coincidences in nature. Inspired by a common wildflower found in Oregon, *Variation on Leaves of Grass: Queen Anne's Lace (2024)*, translates these temporary and intimate moments into wild brushstrokes that capture Wang's subconscious thoughts. Wang's creations are not limited by any set "goal," rather, they are in a constant state of flow.



*Landscape in Wild Cursive #1 (2024)*  
Ancient Ink, Mineral Pigments and Watercolor on Raw Xuan Paper, 145 x 360 cm

The term *yin yun* (氤氳) describes the interconnectedness of all things in nature and the dynamic chaos formed when *yin* and *yang* interact. When opposites—dry and wet brushwork, gentle and strong lines, sparse and dense hues—are interwoven, elements shift and coalesce, creating interactive landscapes with rich variations. Wang Gongyi actively seeks this flux and ambiguity in her work.



*Mountains and Rivers Without End* (2022-2024)  
Mineral Pigments, Watercolor and Pastel on Suzhou Pi Paper, 150 x 211 cm

In recent years, Wang has been experimenting with different lines. Informed by her background in printmaking, the strokes in *Landscape in Wild Cursive #1* (2024), are frenzied and raw. Wang used a dysfunctional paint-roller to create textured, sweeping lines. She then highlights them with streaks of ink from the Qing dynasty, which has a richer and darker color. Inspired by Fan Kuan's *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams*, Wang challenged herself to create shorter *cun*, or textured wrinkles, in *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (2022-24). The mineral pigments and pastel imbue these concise *cun* with an impressionist flair. In *shanshui* painting, *cun* is both a verb and a technique used to build texture and weight. If brushwork is the flow of an artist's breath, then each creation is a direct expression of their life. Wang Gongyi often combines traditional Chinese techniques with Western aesthetic elements, creating unconventional compositions. This playfulness is borne out of Wang's familiarity with standard forms and her constant desire to subvert accepted traditions.

Working with delicate mediums like ink, Suzhou Pi Paper, and silk, Wang guides her explosive marks in a way that compliments the mediums yet do not take away from the unbridled nature of her strokes. In her Winsor Blue series, Wang Gongyi masterfully layers vibrant blue watercolor to create depth and movement. The organic lines that appear between each coating of watercolor are enhanced by pastel highlights. Wang also utilizes clam powder and mineral pigments to create clearer, purer, and more transparent color results. There are crevices in her paintings—space where viewers can enter and breathe.

**Wang Gongyi: Selected Works 2020-24** showcase Wang's range and constant growth as an artist. Her fearless and unfettered spirit, informed by her appreciation of nature, translates into meditative and philosophically expressive works that pushes the boundaries of ink art.



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## About the Artist – Wang Gongyi 王公懿



Born in Tianjin, China in 1946, Wang Gongyi joined the Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House as an editor after the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, she pursued a master's degree in the Printmaking Department at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now the China Academy of Fine Arts) in Hangzhou, and after graduating in 1980 she stayed at the academy as a teacher. Wang Gongyi gained national recognition after being awarded first prize in the National Youth Fine Art Exhibition for her powerful suite of seven woodcuts depicting the Chinese revolutionary martyr Qiu Jin. In 1986, Wang Gongyi was invited by the French Ministry of Culture to study art as a visiting artist, and in 1992 she went to Aix-en-Provence and Lyon to further her studies in printmaking. After her residencies at the Museum of Oregon State University and the Pacific Northwest College of Art, she relocated to the United States in 2001 and has since been based in Portland.

Wang Gongyi's works are in many important institutions and collections internationally, including: Ashmolean Museum, UK; China Academy of Art; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Portland Art Museum, US; The National People's Congress, China; The National Art Museum of China; Shanghai Art Museum, China; USC Pacific Asia Museum, US; and Zhejiang Art Museum, China, among others. In 2022, Wang Gongyi's works were featured in Centre Pompidou's "Women Artists of the 20th Century" program.

## About the Gallery – gdm 燦樂

gdm is a Hong Kong-based art gallery founded by Fred Scholle in 1974. Originally opened as Galerie du Monde, gdm represents more than twenty artists, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their creative practices with a global perspective. The gallery has been acclaimed for its ground-breaking work in championing artists of postwar and contemporary movements such as Hong Kong's Circle Art Group, and Taiwan's Fifth Moon.

gdm Projects launched in 2008 which transformed the gallery with a new emphasis on contemporary art and dedication to supporting emerging and underrepresented diaspora artists engaging with cultural identity and conceptual practices. Fostering collaborations with curators and institutions worldwide — gdm operates a dynamic program that encourages imagination and risk-taking, driven to provide opportunities for artists to amplify their voices within their communities, and across platforms in the international contemporary art world.

To celebrate 50 years (1974-2024), gdm will open a new space in Taipei at the end of 2024. With its opening, gdm Taipei will launch "Siōng Tshinn," a special program that focuses on spotlighting emerging local talent, providing a platform for young, unrepresented Taiwanese artists to showcase their works. Through "Siōng Tshinn," gdm hopes to plant meaningful and lasting roots in the local art community.