



陳子慧

現代書法藝術



'Tao' from wei Tao

味道的「道」

'Wei' from the stage of a hundred tastes

百味舞臺的「味」

dcloy/05



'Tao' from wei Tao

味道的「道」

dc104/05  
(32)

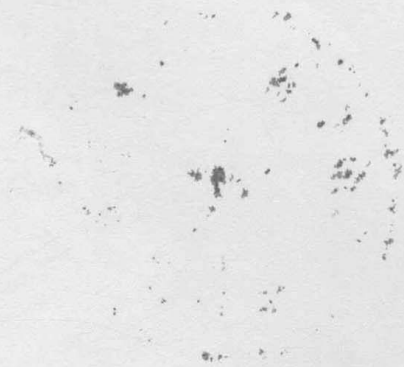
從百味舞臺到味道

From

[The Stage of A Hundred Tastes]

to

[The Taste of Tao]



David Chan Tsze Wei  
Contemporary Calligraphy Art

## 自序

陳子慧

上世紀九十年代初，在偶然的機會，我發現了人生的味道跟吃的味道息息相關。這種契機令我創作了百味舞臺。之后，我做了很多人世間的工作，走了很多人間道，我為前麗晶酒店創作了很多彩色的書法。不知道是否因為這個原因，人家稱我為彩書大師。大師我是不敢當的，在藝術面前，我永遠只是一個學生。至于是彩色還是黑白，并不重要，重要的是我把現代人的精神，即自由的精神，放到這個傳統的藝術上面。國泰航空公司用了我的書法來做航班裏餐單的封面，令很多人把餐單變成了一種收藏品，也有人拿了餐單，向國泰航空公司的機組打聽哪裏可以收藏到我的真迹。

這個也引起了一些傳媒的好奇，包括龍年的時候，CNN的兩道訪問。本世紀初，一家日本畫廊為我在東京辦了一個個人展覽。有一位日本女士，因為沒有辦法收藏她喜愛的作品（被人捷足先登），當場下泪等等事例，都使我受到鼓舞和感動。現在，我認為我應該把我的工作再推向一個新的境界。幾十年來，我一直有一個願望，就是體會到道家思想的精神，因為道家思想對中國藝術的影響是非常大的。單單魏晉南北朝的藝術，就能清楚反映出來，包括竹林七賢、二王……都展示了如何把內心的精神狀態跟外在的自然結合起來。這一種藝術的觀念，西方要到二十世紀才能在他們的作品中體現出來。味道就在這種心態下面產生的。「味」就是指用第一身來體會；「道」就是指自然之道。

2007年夏天

## Preface

David Chan

In early 1990s', in an unforeseen occasion, I found that the taste of life is highly related to that of food. This gave me the opportunity to complete an art project that I called 'The Stage of A Hundred Tastes'. After that, I completed many more art projects, and went through various stages of life. I created calligraphy in colour for the previous Regent Hotel, now the Inter-Continental. Maybe that is when people started to call me the 'Master of colour Calligraphy'. But for art, I regarded myself always as a student. It is not important whether the calligraphy is in black and white or in colour. For me, the most important is that I have the modern spirit, i.e., the spirit of freedom, and blend it into classical art.

Cathay Pacific acquired the right to some of my work from 'The Stage of A Hundred Tastes' as the covers of their in-flight menu. Those in-flight menus have turned into collectors' items, and there were passengers who enquired about purchasing the original art. This drew the media's attention, which led to interviews by CNN, including one in the year 2000 when people were interested to know more about China in the new century. When I had an exhibition in a Japanese gallery in Tokyo in early 2000, a Japanese lady was very disappointed to miss the chance in buying the art piece she wanted and wept in public. Through this, I realized that my art, which revealed my 'yi' (意) and views of seeing things purely and directly, could touch and move people immensely; this in turn touched and encouraged me.

Now, I think I should push myself to a new phase. Over the past several decades, I always have had a wish. I wish to experience, ever more strongly, the spirit of Tao that has had such a great influence on Chinese art through the ages. In any previous dynasty, say, the Wei, Jin or Northern and Southern Dynasties (魏晉南北朝 AD 220-581), you could see how the great artists, including the 'Seven Masters in Bamboo Woods' (竹林七賢) and the two 'Wangs' (Wang Xizhi 王羲之 and Wang Xianzhi 王獻之), had all demonstrated how they merged their inner spirit with that of nature. Such a concept has only appeared in the Western art as late as the 20th century. My 'Wei Tao' '味道' (the taste of Tao) is born so naturally under such circumstance. 'Wei' '味' (to taste) is a first person's experience and expression; and 'Tao' '道' is the way of nature.

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## 什么是書法？

首先，有一個‘意’，包括觀念、意念、情意。通過一個對象，也就是一個字，用中國的毛筆(柔軟而有韌度)，書寫在中國的宣紙(薄而吸水)上的一個過程。這個過程是不允許改動的。就是出了錯，也要讓觀眾看到。由于毛筆接觸與摩擦在宣紙上，出現了種種有意的、無意的、偶然的變化，產生了一種千變萬化超乎想像的效果。從下筆到收筆，就好像有人在紙上跳了一支舞，觀眾能清楚看到書法創作人整個創作的過程，意念的變化，感情的起伏。而這種藝術媒介，只有中國(或者受中國文化影響的國家)才有。

## 我的書法

幾十年前，人家稱我的書法為‘前衛書法’。我不懂什么叫前衛，但是我可以稱自己的書法為‘現代書法’。書法是一種古典藝術，它包含着一種非常嚴厲的自律精神與訓練，就好像古典芭蕾一樣。我有一個意圖與想法，即把自由的精神，也就是現代人的精神，融合到書法上面。所以我把很多現代藝術的觀念，比如說平面設計的觀念、色彩的觀念、電影剪輯的觀念，投射到這種古典的藝術上，希望它能出現一種新的變化，呈現出一種新的面貌，就好像芭蕾舞變成了現代芭蕾舞，歌劇變成了音樂劇。但是，我的做法一方面引起了傳統書法界的攻擊，另一方面，由于現代藝術界對書法的不甚了解，漠視書法在現代藝術中應有的地位，使其對我的工作采取了一種模糊的態度，是我以為極大的遺憾。其實，中國最有代表性的藝術就是書法。從蘇州的虎丘到拙政園，包括木雕與碑刻，可能超過了一千幅。故宮的三希堂裏，存放着乾隆皇認為世上最稀有的三件

寶貝，都是書法作品。相傳唐朝皇帝要陪葬的就是王羲之的蘭亭，也是書法作品。在中國，不管是過去還是現在，所有人都要學書法。從傳統上來說，學習的第一天，也就是學習書法的第一天。而在今天，書法不再普及的原因，基本上是因為十九世紀末中國國力衰弱，所有中國人都去學習西方文化，以為所有中國文化都是迂腐的、落后的。尤其是書法，不但被認為是没用的，還被認為妨礙了學習。其實，這個觀念是十分錯誤的。中國近代史上所有偉大的藝術，無一例外，學習西方藝術的，最終都要轉回到中國藝術上來，包括徐悲鴻、劉海粟和林風眠，他們通過對西方藝術的學習，然後經過比較，最終還是發現，中國藝術的概念是比西方的博大和精深的，也比較先進和優越。其中，書法是最能體現中國人對生命，對自然，對內心的一種自我的傳情達意的方法。西方人無法想像，中國幾千年以前就已經出現了一種即興半即興、抽象又具象的這樣一種具備表演性的造型藝術。可幸的是，我的作品普遍受到群眾的喜愛，這是我能引以為幸的，我要衷心的感謝多年來對我支持的所有朋友。

## What is Shu Fa (書法 Chinese Calligraphy)?

First, there is 'intention' (called 'yi' (意) in Chinese, meaning mood, inclination, desired outcome. The intention of a calligrapher is called 'biyi' (筆意) or 'intention of the brush'. This 'intention' is often attributed to, or thought to arise from, nature. For example, there is 'chunyi' (春意) or 'intention of spring' when the ice begins to melt and flowers bud.) It includes concept, intention and 'qingyi' (情意) ('qing' in Chinese, means sentiment, passion, love, sympathy, friendly feeling). Chinese calligraphy, then, is a process by which the calligrapher expresses his/her intention by writing a Chinese character on Chinese paper (a thin paper that absorbs water very quickly) using a Chinese brush (which is at the same time soft yet resilient). During the calligraphy process, the calligrapher experiences changes, both intended and accidental, and may end up with an effect out of anyone's imagination. Only this kind of art, which is uniquely Chinese, allows audiences to view the whole process of creation, from beginning to end, with every change of intention, all the ups and downs of emotion clearly visible: it is somewhat like dancing on paper.

## My Shu Fa

Decades ago, my calligraphy was said to be 'avant-garde'. I do not understand what 'avant-garde' is; instead I like to call my work 'contemporary Shu Fa'. Like ballet, Chinese calligraphy is a classical art; it demands discipline and practice. In contrast, contemporary art emphasizes on free form and spontaneity. So, in my work, I intend

to blend discipline with freedom. I use many visual art concepts, for example from the fields of graphic design, colour, and film, and incorporate them into the classical art of calligraphy. I wish to make a change, to express a new phase in calligraphy, similar to the change in ballet from classical to modern, and in music from opera to musicals.

However, my way of doing it has brought a mixed reaction. Some classical calligraphers think that I abandon the good old tradition, and attack it. Mostly, modern art circle don't know quite what to think of my work, as they don't understand calligraphy and don't see the importance of Chinese calligraphy in modern art or the modern world.

In fact, I believe calligraphy is the most representative form of Chinese art in history. As to how popular Chinese calligraphy is, in Suzhou (蘇州, the largest city in the world in the 15th and 16th centuries), between 'the Humble Official Garden' (拙政園) and 'Tiger Hill' (虎丘), there are over one thousand pieces of wooden and stone steles (with engraved calligraphy). 'Sanxitang' (三希堂) of the Imperial Palace, known as the Forbidden City, in Beijing keeps three art treasures that were regarded by the famous Emperor in 'Qing' Dynasty, 'Qianlong' (乾隆, 1711-99) as the most precious in the world and they are calligraphy. Legend says that the famous 'Lanting' (蘭亭), a piece of calligraphy in Running Script brushed by the famous calligrapher, 'Wang Xizhi' (王羲之), was kept in the tomb of the famous Emperor 'Taizong' of the Tang Dynasty (唐太宗).

In China, both the past and present, every person learns calligraphy. As a tradition, the first day of learning is also the first day of using the brush in writing. However, calligraphy nowadays is becoming less popular, mainly due to changes in people's attitude and thinking since the 19th century. Since the upsurge of Western economic power over the last 150 years, all aspects of Chinese culture have been regarded by the Chinese as outdated and backward. Chinese people wanted to understand more about Western culture and considered calligraphy not only useless but also a hindrance in learning.

Even so, those Chinese who had thorough knowledge of and were good at Western art realized and appreciated the tremendous breadth and depth of Chinese art. Hence, we saw famous Chinese painters, such as 'Xu Bei Hong' (徐悲鴻), 'Liu Hai Su' (劉海粟) and 'Lin Feng Mian' (林風眠) who learned Western art, came back to work on Chinese art. Among the Chinese arts, calligraphy is the best for expressing one's 'qing' and 'yi', for expressing one's inner self, and one's attitude towards nature and life. It is hard for foreigners to believe that, over several thousand years ago, an art form that is both impulsive and disciplined, abstract and yet concrete, already existed in China.

Luckily, the general public as a whole loves my calligraphy. I must sincerely thank all my friends who have been supporting me through so many years.

## 我怎樣創作

先有一個‘意’，這個‘意’通過筆接觸紙的第一筆開始，它在紙上出現的效果由于速度的快慢、力的大小、紙吸水的強弱，跟我原來的‘意’或多或少總會有一點出入，再加上在我原本的想像中第一筆的‘意’，真實在宣紙上呈現出來的形態——包括干濕的不同、快慢的筆觸效果、色彩濃淡的變化都是實實在在的在紙上真實呈現出來的。而這種真實呈現的形態會再度刺激原來的‘意’，下一筆的‘意’（次意）就會跟原本想像中的‘意’有出入了，所以或多或少必須要有一點改動來適應。而下一筆的筆觸又會出現同樣的變化，這個變化又會再度刺激原來那個‘意’及‘次意’，所以第三筆又出現了必須要出現的一些修訂來滿足前一筆的效果和引發下一筆的步驟。這種外物（紙上筆觸）與內心（原創意念）不斷衝突與平衡的結果也就是中國書法最具魅力的地方。但是由于書寫過程的速度太快，根本沒有時間給你一步一步去細想，所以我必須要平時勤于練習，把筆法（意識）轉化為本能（潛意識），把工具轉化為身體的一部分，那么在創作的時候就變成了一種本能的反映，一種意識與潛意識不斷反復作用的結果。我就是通過這種電光石火瞬間身體的啓動來創作的。由于時間那么短，速度那么快，所以我的精神必須要高度集中，在這種高度的集中的狀態裏，我可以忘記利益、忘記知識、忘記自我，重新回到一個混沌的世界。這個世界最能把真我（自然的我——天）呈現出來，所以整個創作的過程都是一種合乎自然（天）的美的標準。這個就是道家所追求的——洞悉內心、發現生命、回到自然、以天合天的觀念，而最終能取得一種自然與人的結合就是我認為的書法（道）

的最高境界。

我的書法就是‘本意’到‘筆’到‘紙’到‘形’再產生變化，改變了‘本意’（即出現新意），而這個‘新意’再度落筆，又出現了一種變化，這種變化繼續改變原本的‘新意’，出現一個更新的‘新意’——這樣反復作用的過程。

## The way I work

It all starts with a 'yi' (意). From this 'yi', my brush touches paper. Immediately, from this very first touch of the first stroke, the effect that appears may vary from the original 'yi' in my mind. The materialization of my 'yi' on the paper—determined by the speed of my brush stroke, the amount of water, the richness of colour—influences the feeling of my original 'yi' and may stimulate change—hence the second brush stroke. So I continue, every new stroke modified by the effect of the previous one. This outer stimulation (appearance of brush stroke on paper) and inner 'yi' go hand in hand, and the balancing towards a satisfying ultimate outcome is the charm and beauty of the whole process.

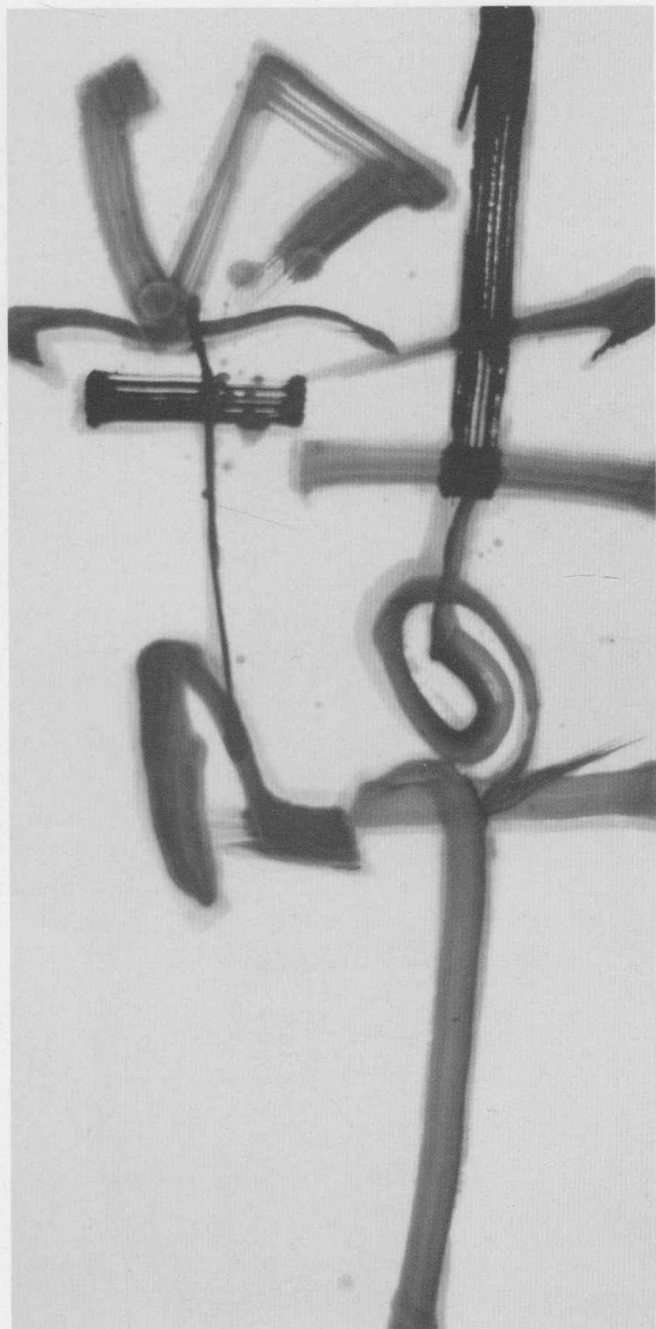
Because Chinese ink dries fast and Chinese paper absorbs quickly, the time to accomplish a piece of work is very short. I may need to work on the next stroke before the previous one has dried if I want to achieve a specific effect. It therefore allows zero time for stopping and thinking in most cases. This explains why practicing is vital: One must practice until moving the brush (the 'conscious') becomes, or comes from, basic instinct (the 'sub-conscious'). To the extent that the tool (the brush) becomes part of my body, during the process, an act becomes an expression of my basic instinct. And a piece of art is the outcome of the cooperation of my 'conscious' and 'sub-conscious'. Through the expression of my 'conscious' and 'sub-conscious' in a very short time span, I create my work. Within a short time span, quick,

spontaneous action demands absolute concentration. In this mood of high concentration, I forget everything, the gain and loss in our daily life, the 'know' and 'don't know', and myself. I come back to a world of 'hun dun' (混沌, a stage of chaos before the universe was formed). In this world, my 'real' self (the natural me—'tian' 天) emerges, and the process of creation then becomes a part of nature ('tian') and beauty. This is exactly the pursuit of Taoists: to understand the inner self, to discover the way of nature, and then to live in harmony with that nature ('tian'). It can be described as matching my 'tian' to the 'tian' of the nature. I regard this as the ultimate goal (the way—'tao') of calligraphy: to reach a stage of living in harmony with nature.

My calligraphy is a process that starts from an 'original yi', then proceeds to 'brush' to 'paper' to 'form'. That is one stroke. Then I make change—sensing that the 'original yi' has changed to a 'new yi', and from this 'new yi', then I start the second stroke. For the third stroke, and so on, there is a continuous change of 'yi' that ends only when the calligraphy is complete.

Nature and I become one.

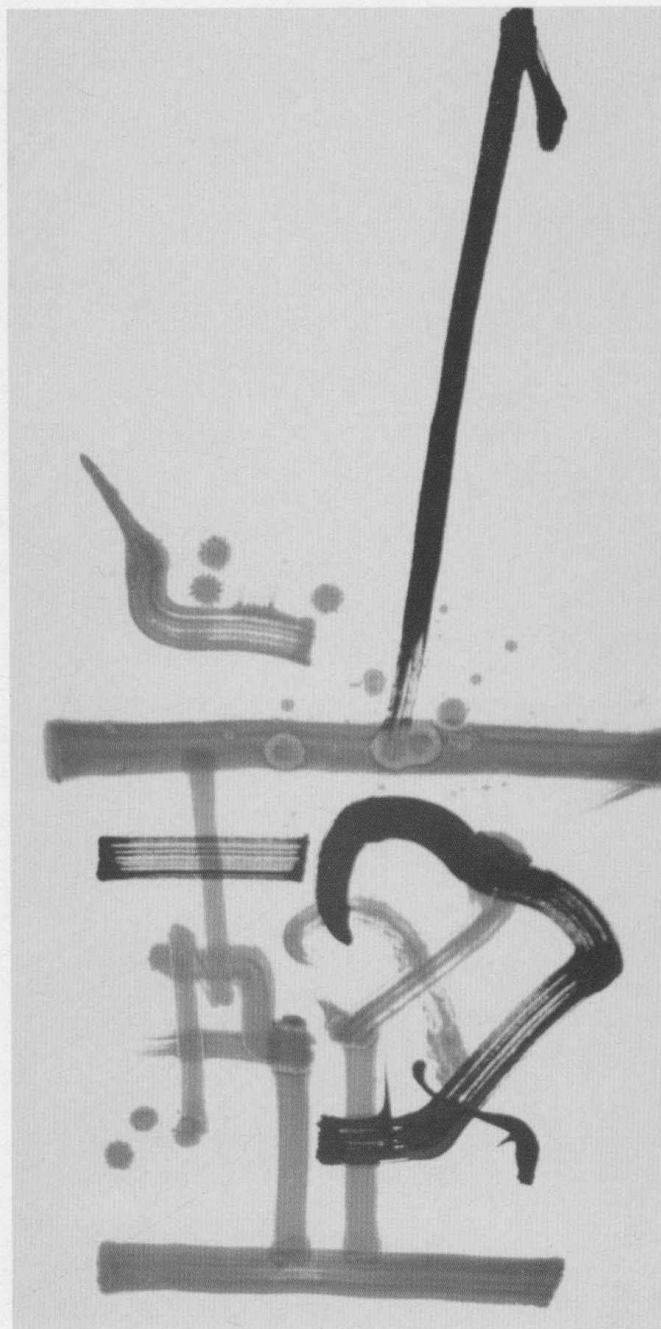
My soul being one with nature, and my calligraphy is in accord with the Tao.



140cm×70cm

苦 (hot)

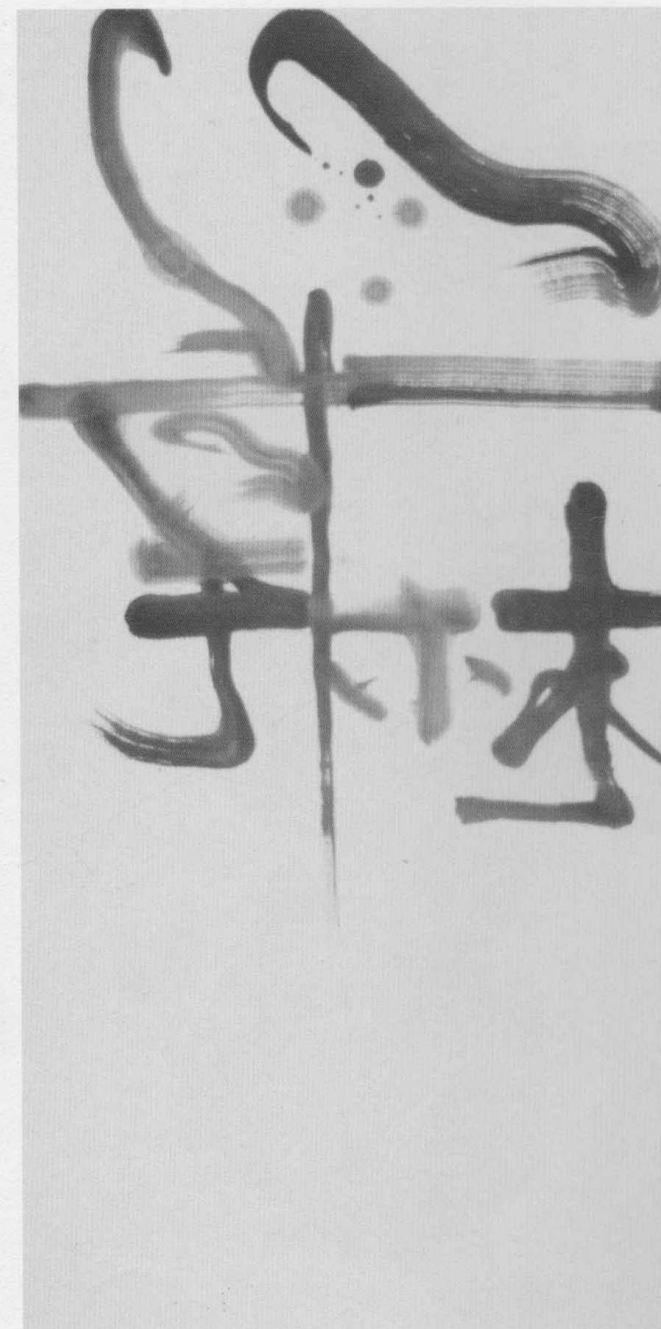
The hot and bitter taste



140cm×70cm

烫 (kuǐ)

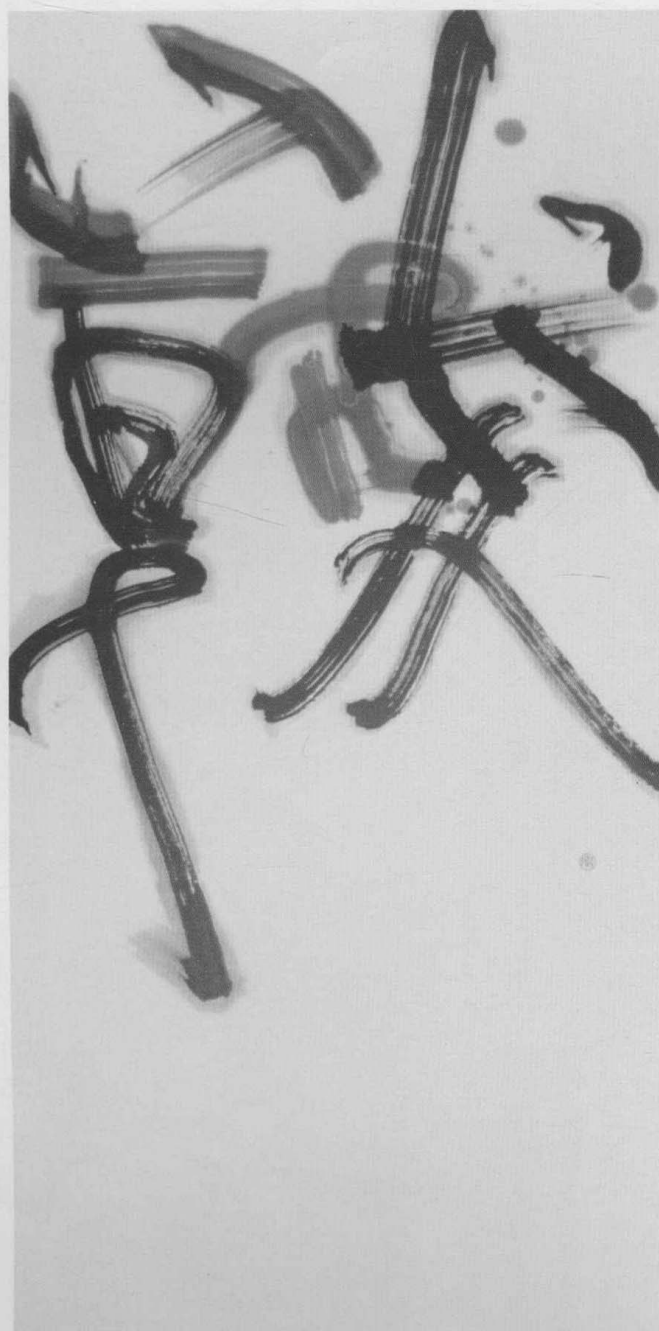
The stinging hot taste



140cm×70cm

麻 (xuà)

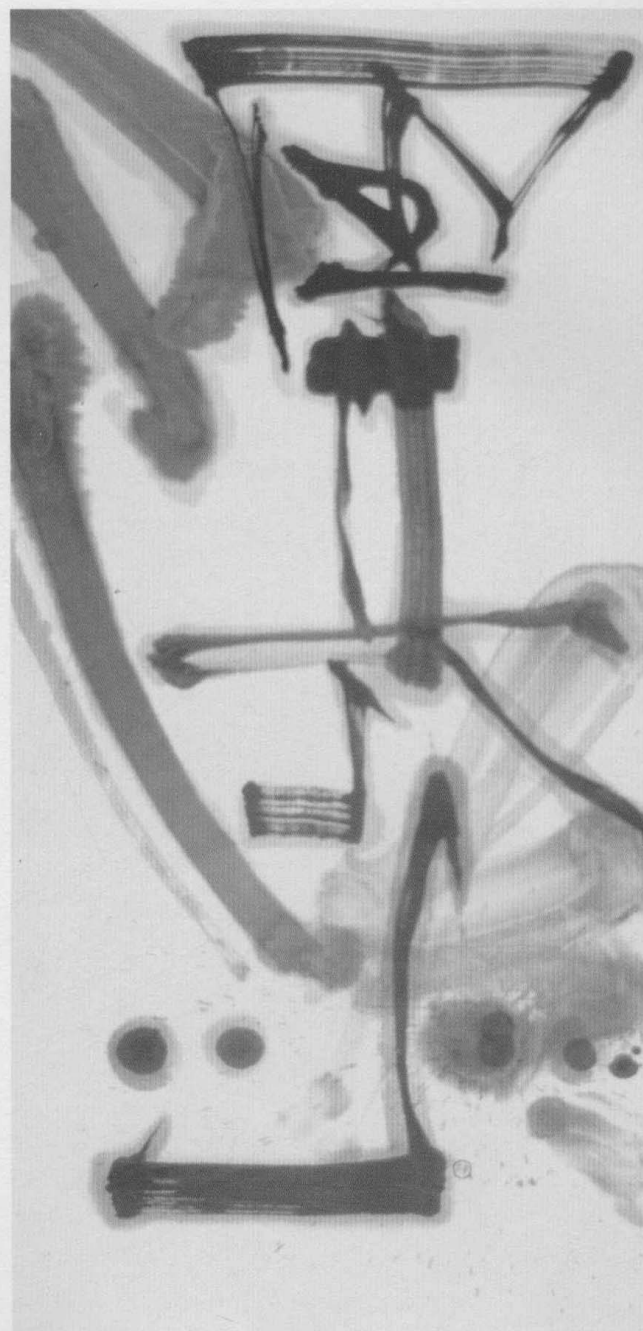
The numbing hot taste



140cm×70cm

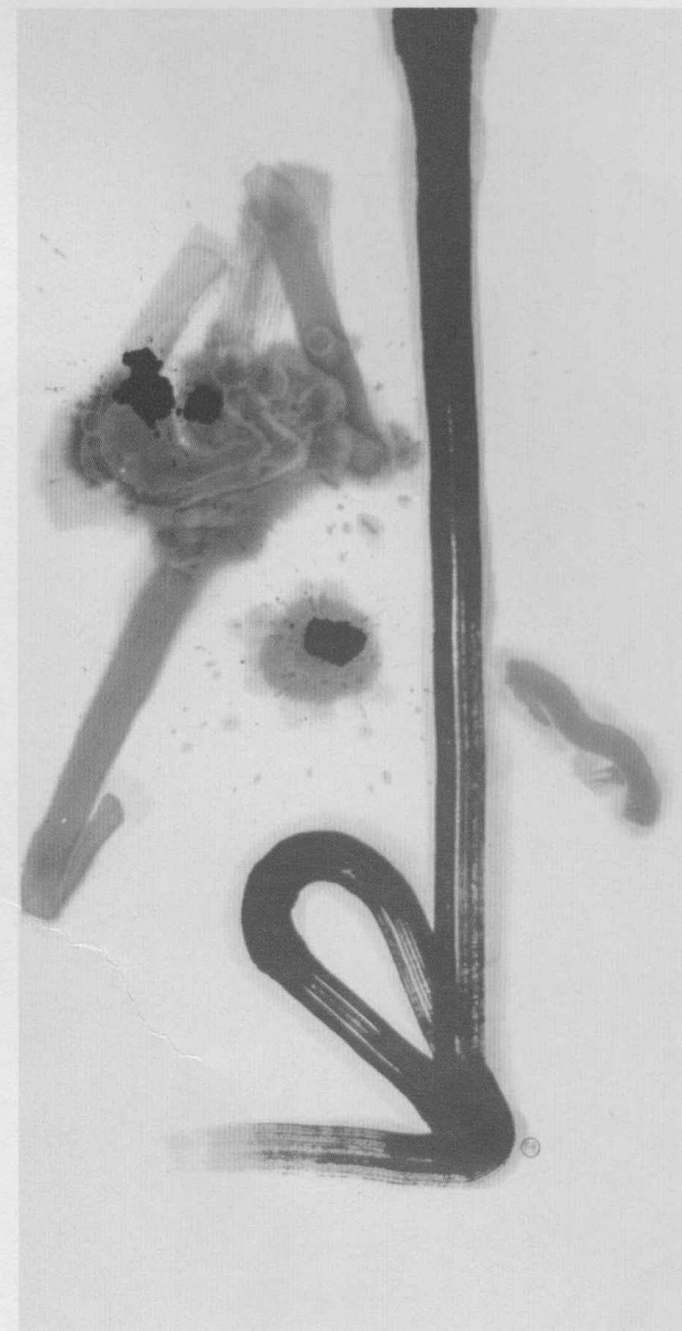
轆 (xú)

The hot and sour taste



140cm×70cm

爆 (bào) To quickly brown to golden yellow  
by extremely hot boiling oil

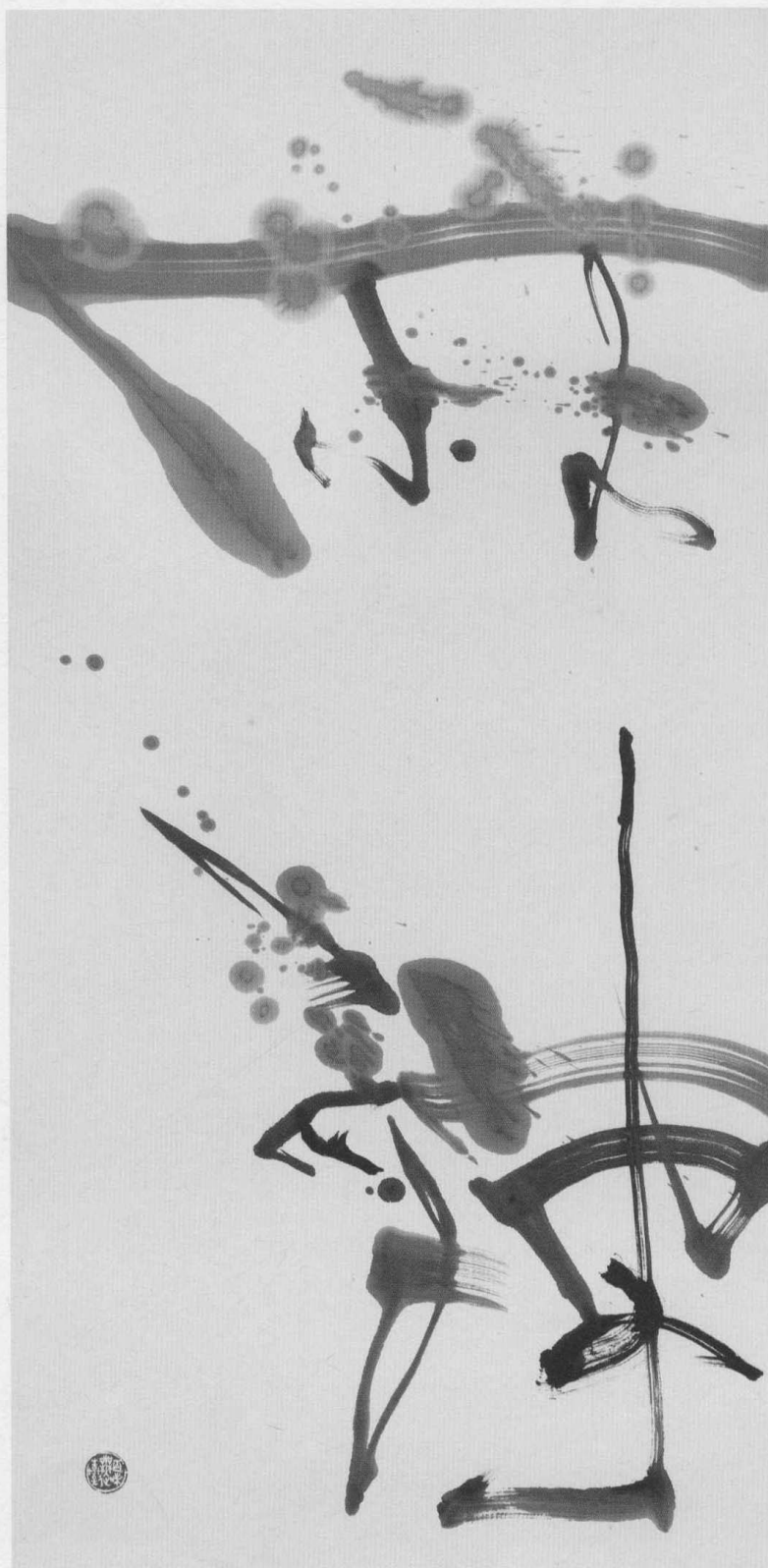


140cm×70cm

炒 (chǎo)

To sautee

麻辣 (ma la)    Numbing spicy



1380cm×690cm

