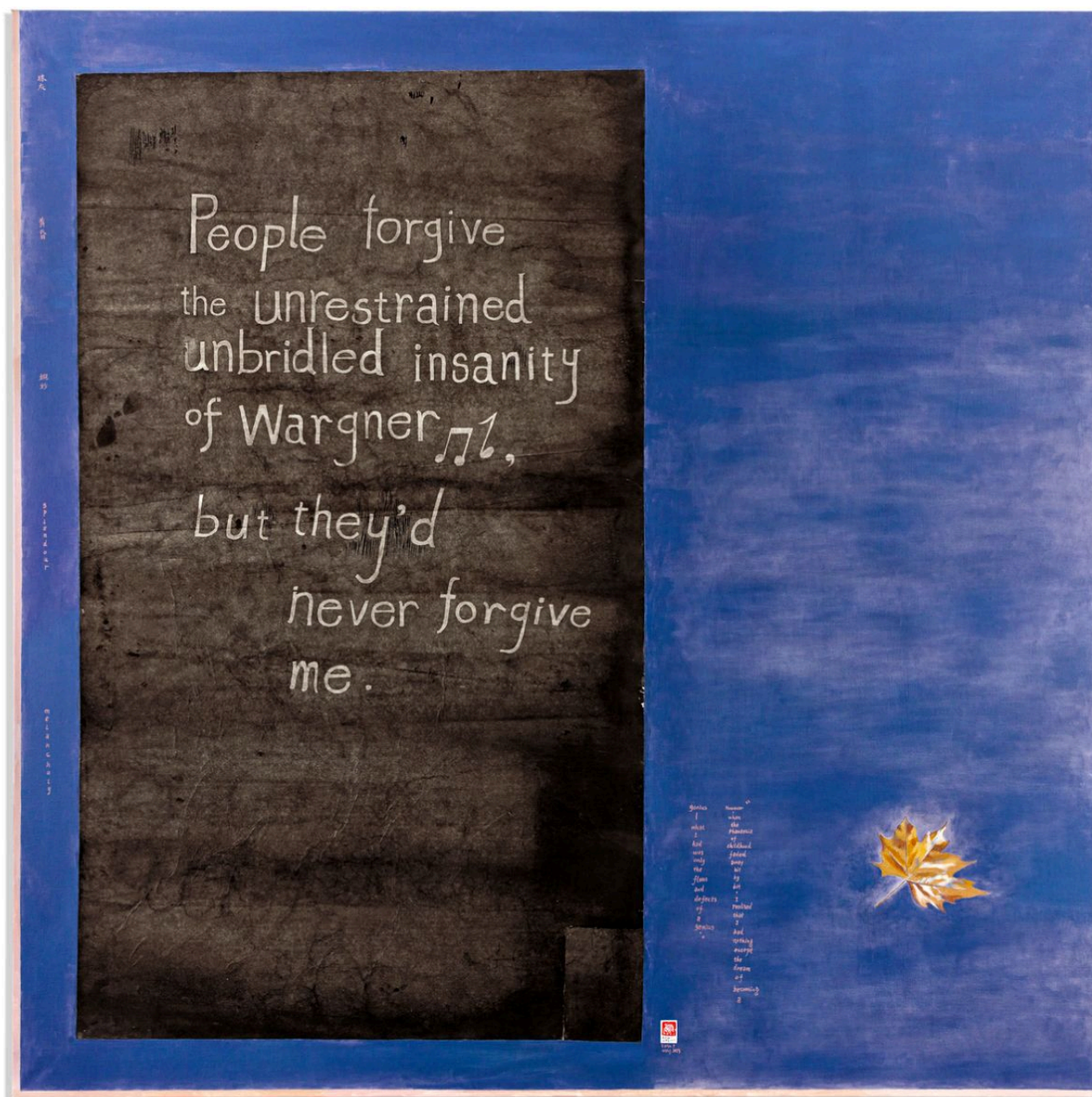


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RAM
上海外滩美术馆
ROCKBUND ART MUSEUM



Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *The Dream of Being a Genius*, 2023. Oil color, ink, ripe Xuan paper mounted on raw Xuan paper, book binding glue on linen canvas. Courtesy of the artist; Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam; Kayokoyuki Gallery, Tokyo; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Antenna Space, Shanghai.

Evelyn Taocheng Wang: *An Equivocal Contrast*

April 22 - July 9, 2023

A new exhibition of the Chinese diaspora artist presents 17 new works across two floors.

Taking inspiration from the experience of viewing a Chinese handscroll, the paintings reveal themselves slowly, and viewers read the images as they move throughout the space

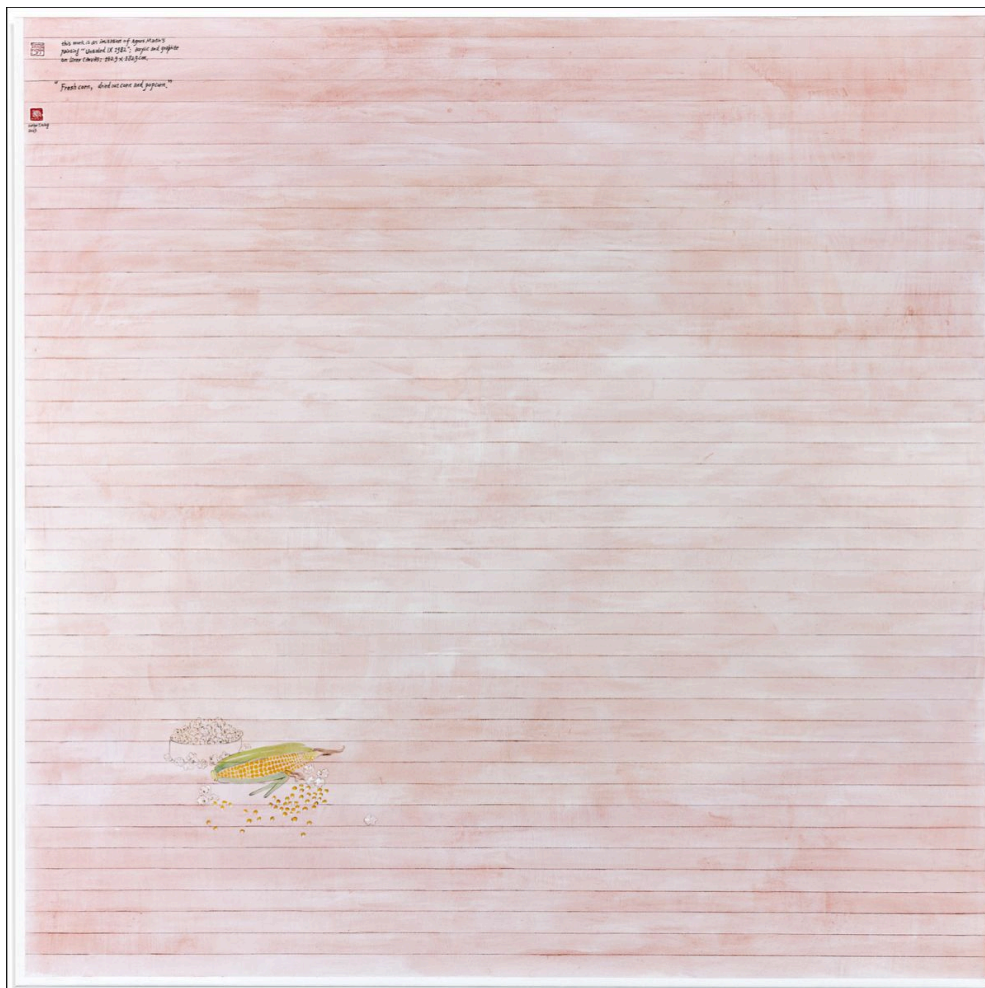
The Rockbund Art Museum (RAM), Shanghai, is pleased to present the first solo museum exhibition of the artist Evelyn Taocheng Wang (b. 1981) in Asia. A Rotterdam-based, Chinese diaspora artist, Wang is renowned for her striking blend of imaginative, layered, fragmented, and paradoxical narrations across various mediums, including painting, drawing, writing, and performance. As an immigrant artist from China who lives and works in the Netherlands, Wang makes work that is deeply rooted in the social context in which she finds herself. Her practice juxtaposes the philosophical and the everyday and merges the emotional, the poetic, and the autobiographical, intertwining transcendental concepts with seemingly superficial and absurd commentaries.

Curated by RAM Artistic Director X Zhu-Nowell, *An Equivocal Contrast* features 17 new works made by Wang for the exhibition, in addition to a loan of Agnes Martin's 1996 work "Peace". It builds upon two key themes in Wang's repertoire: her embodiment of the Canadian-American artist Agnes Martin (1912–2004) and of the Chinese-American writer Eileen Chang (1920–1995), both of whom were immigrants. Rather than appropriating their work, Wang adopts their personae – inhabits their characters – to create a readymade citation using irony, wit, or absurdism imbued with her own unique voice. Her work delves into age-old philosophical questions of individuality, authenticity, and self-representation, exploring what it is to be oneself, at one with oneself, or truly representing one's self.

Because Wang lives in between many different cultures, she constantly questions the idea of cultural authenticity, believing that this is elusive and that the more accurate condition of life is cultural complexity. This can be seen in every aspect of her practice, including her artistic techniques. For example, Wang's work deliberately mixes different media, including acrylic, gesso, pencil, oil, and Chinese ink on Xuan paper, linen canvas or silk. She questions the defined categories of art, such as painting and drawing, and plays with

different concepts and polemics of art history. To quote the artist: “I deliberately blur the dividing line between the *Guo Hua* (the cultural identity) and the universal term for artistic materials. This body of work plays with preconceptions about what painting is, how we create different languages to define it, and how boundaries and definitions blur when one takes the time to gaze at those ‘paintings’ or ‘posters’ or ‘rubbings’.”

An Equivocal Contrast is also an exploration of color, beauty, perfection, and desolation that unfolds through a multilayered imaginary dialogue between Eileen Chang and Agnes Martin, with the artistic mediation of Evelyn Taocheng Wang. The exhibition takes its name from Chang’s seminal 1944 essay, “Writing of One’s Own”, in which she reflects on the nuanced complexity of her characters. These equivocal figures are not heroes, but rather ordinary individuals who bear the weight of their times with earnestness. While they lack the closure of tragedy, they are imbued with a sense of desolation that reveals profound truths about the human experience. According to Chang, “Tragedy is a kind of closure, while desolation is a form of revelation.”



Evelyn Taocheng Wang, *Three Stages of a Corn’s Life and Imitation of Agnes Martin*, 2023. Acrylic, color gesso, ink, color pencil, graphite on linen canvas. Courtesy of the artist; Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam; Kayokoyuki Gallery, Tokyo; Carlos/Ishikawa, London; and Antenna Space, Shanghai. Photo by: Aad Hoogendoorn.

Taking inspiration from traditional Chinese handscrolls in which paintings are revealed and then enclosed slowly, section by section, with images and text intertwining to create a complex experience of looking and reading, Wang has designed this exhibition with images unfolding gradually across the second and third floors of the museum. This exhibition invites a slow reading in time and space, with each floor bathed in a different color and viewing experience. It envelops the viewer in a looking glass of complex art histories, searching for the elusive “triggered colors” and their varied interpretations. Chang and Martin are just two of a larger cast of characters in what Wang jokingly refers to as her “eye shadow palette of art history”. For her, each artist, such as Martin or Chang, has a particular color and character, which she likes to mix up and model to make a new color of her own. By considering these creative figures as readymade personalities and reimagining them in her own “make-up”, Wang challenges the modernist ideal of purity and truth, playfully critiquing modernism’s desire for authenticity. In *An Equivocal Contrast*, authenticity is constantly forged, revealed, and broken.

This exhibition overlaps with the previous exhibition of new work by [WangShui](#) (until 11 June), creating an interesting interplay between the two artists and a stimulating viewing experience throughout the spaces of the museum.



Evelyn Taocheng Wang at her opening performance at Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai.

About Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai

Inaugurated in 2010, the Rockbund Art Museum (RAM) is a contemporary art museum located on the Bund in Shanghai. The museum is housed in a historic Art Deco building from 1932 that was originally one of the first modern museums established in China. The landmark building was renovated by David Chipperfield.

In considering what it means to be an Asia-based contemporary art museum in the 21st century, RAM aims to explore the importance of “archipelago thinking”: connecting to artistic culture across Asia and beyond to gain richer perspectives on today’s challenges, practices, and networks within contemporary artistic practices. We wish to build constructive, creative relationships between multiple localities in Asia and different cultures globally, to create a hub for working with a broad range of artists, researchers, and scholars, and to dive into subtle and dense layers of new experiences with our audience.

With a strong reputation for an innovative curatorial approach, RAM experiments with different models of what an art project can be, from research to alternative learning programs, from exhibition-making to unexpected performative formats. By supporting bold contemporary art practices, we aim to recognize local histories while responding to global art challenges and social change.

RAM regards the role of exchange as an essential process for cultural growth, by building up a network of multi-regional, international, and cross-disciplinary partnerships. Through this process, we aim to cultivate diverse and deep-rooted connection to our audiences and communities, and also to different social and cultural organizations. With strong support from our board, patrons, and Advisory Committee, we strive to observe, learn, and pursue opportunities to develop original art projects that explore and engage with the multi-faceted elements of contemporary life.

www.rockbundartmuseum.org

International Press

For more information and interviews with Evelyn Taocheng Wang and RAM Artistic Director X Zhu-Nowell, please contact: Sarah Greenberg, Evergreen Arts:

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For image sheet please click [here](#)

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Chinese Press

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