

## Exhibition features Kwong Lum's unrestrained freehand cursive calligraphy



Lum's calligraphy written on excerpts from Mao's poems.

**NEW YORK, NY.-** One of the most intriguing aspects of Kwong Lum's prolific output as an artist is his ability to weave images from the East into the West and to find amazing correlations between the two. He uses calligraphy in a present pictorial space in an innovative new way.

For Lum to work this way with such confidence and alacrity, he needed to perfect the traditional way of the brush. His inspiration came from the great Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu who spoke often about being "formless" and "nameless" and who advocated against superficiality and artifice. His Taoist philosophy recommended going deeply nature to locate the center of one's being. In doing so, the artist could understand the way of the brush by evoking the spontaneity of nature and thus go beyond the visible world of artifice.

His way of making calligraphic writing into free-flowing pictorial signs by relinquishing the conscious structure behind ideographic signs. "Unconstrained Freehand Cursive Script" so as to rediscover and redefine the principles put forth in the Wei and Jin Periods by the art critic Xie He who incited, at the time, a radical new way of thinking about calligraphic art.

Lum acknowledges that while he is philosophically grounded in the work of Lao-Tzu, it was his disciple Chuang-Tzu who took the concept of spontaneity to new heights of expression. To find spontaneity in art the artist must discover the laws of nature within himself. Later, the Northern Song art critic Guo Xi further elaborated on the identification with nature by persuading artists to feel the rhythm of rivers, mountains, and passing clouds as internal structure. According to Guo Xi, the artist perfects himself by becoming one with nature.

Lum understood the profundity of this concept as he broke away from writing in the traditional sense. By forging the meaning of the individual sign, the function of calligraphy emphasizes "floating clouds" and "immortal dancing" -- in essence, the ecstasy of mind and body conjugated through the unbridled spontaneity of the brush.

Exhibition sponsored by Chinese American Cultural & Arts Association, opened on Saturday, 10/31. Virtual viewing at [www.gianguanauctions.com](http://www.gianguanauctions.com)