

Biography



Wu Ching Ru, of Taiwan aboriginal lineage, was born on 17 August, 1961, in the urban township of Fenglin in the Huatung Valley of Eastern Taiwan. From childhood she was taught the tribal traditions of her ancestors and, above all, the love and respect of all living things. It is no surprise that by the time Wu was 17 she had already developed a passion for the art of flower arranging, with its emphasis on simplicity, elegance, and harmony. Her love and appreciation for the immense beauty of Creation became the common link in each of

her works. Driven by this passion Wu went on to study design and oriental humanities.

Wu Ching Ru completed her studies in 1984 and married soon after. She then moved to live in the United States where she stayed for two years. There she began to express herself through painting and calligraphy, while exploring the differences between Eastern and Western aesthetics. It was this contrast that inspired Wu to create a new kind of oriental beauty.

In 1993, Wu moved to the Netherlands, where she studied Western sculpting and bronze casting. This was quickly followed by her first public exhibitions - held in Europe to great acclaim - and by 1996, Wu had made the decision to become a full-time sculptor and artist.

In 2002, Wu was signed by the prestigious Halcyon Gallery, London, in a relationship that



lasted 20 years. These next decades were a whirlwind of creativity, with 50 solo shows throughout Europe and Asia.



Figure 1: Pro Terra et Natura, Little Rock, AR

Today, Wu's work can be found all over the world, both in private homes and gardens and in public parks and squares.

Her artwork features in significant collections across the world, including those established in the United Kingdom, the USA, continental Europe, The Middle East, and Asia. Multiple works are on permanent display in museums in China and 12 monumental public sculptures have been installed in 3 continents.

While the subject of Wu's work clearly reflects her passion for Asian history, legend and religion, her process is deeply influenced by it too. 'I become entirely engrossed in my subject. I shut out the outside world which, in oriental philosophy, is extremely important. Only when you can completely concentrate are you at peace with yourself.'

This personal connection is apparent in Wu Ching Ru's art. Wu's international journey and, at times, feelings of displacement are often present in her work. But it is these experiences that drove Wu to take what

she had learned in Europe and America back to her own culture and to create a bridge of communication between East and West.

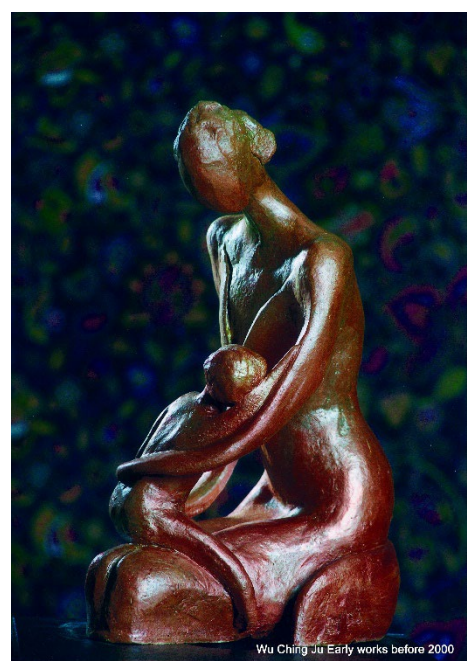


Figure 2: Fu Lu Shou, Xintiandi, Shanghai

A beautiful manifestation of this determination is Wu's Fountain of Blessings, a public installation in Xintiandi Shanghai that merges oriental tradition and myth with Western techniques.

This sculpture group has become one of the most photographed in China.

Other works, her Mother and Child bronzes, are a celebration of motherhood, while also touching on the feelings of the orphan, reflecting on both her childhood and a career that has taken her far from home.



Wu Changshuo Early works before 2000



Figure 3: *Pro Terra et Natura* (13m), LiuJiaZui, Shanghai

From 2008 Wu lived and worked mostly in Shanghai. Then in 2011, her creation *Pro Terra et Natura* was selected for public placement in Lu Jia Zhui Central Park, located in Shanghai's financial district.

The thirteen-meter-high installation was selected from over one thousand proposals to be placed in the green oasis at the base of three of the most imposing skyscrapers in China. *Pro Terra et Natura* features two winged mythical figures, representing Earth and Nature, their grace and placement demonstrating their delicate relationship with our world amidst the deterioration of our natural environment.

The installation of these two sculptures coincided with Major exhibitions of Wu's work in China. The monumental work is now recognized as an official landmark of the city. Drawing on her lifetime love of nature, *Pro Terra et Natura* captures serenity, hope, and harmony to convey its important message of environmental conservation through its monumental form.

This recognition of Wu's art didn't make her complacent. Starting in 2012, Wu took inspiration from Zen philosophy to begin creating works that capture the pursuit of enlightenment and the search for the true self, free from modern life's distractions. Her perception of Zen is not necessarily religious, but rather an identity and principles that guide her on a deeply personal level.



This philosophy is represented in her body of work *Beyond Zen*, which featured in Halcyon Gallery's 2017 summer exhibition, *Water and Bronze*. Each art piece skilfully captured the intangible concept of the spiritual journey in the hard and unpredictable material of bronze.

That same year during the 2017 BRICS international relations summit in Xiamen China, the Chinese government brought together a collection of outstanding works covering the last 800 years of Chinese art. The collection featured Wu's one-and-a-half-meter bronze sculpture *Endless*, from the *Beyond Zen* series, a natural choice to capture the continuous evolution of the oriental tradition and aesthetic for modern times.

It was during these last busy years that Wu experienced life-threatening health issues and was hospitalised for an extended period in her native city Hualien. After a long recovery period at a mountain retreat, Wu Ching Ru and her family decided to stay. Wu now works from her studio located in the mountains near where she grew up.

Amidst the beauty of nature, at home once again, she has embarked on her next journey: the next chapter of her environmental awareness and protection programme, featuring beautiful sculpture and global installations.

And according to Wu, these initiatives always start at home, with yourself.



Figure 4: Wu Ching Ru, Hualian, Taiwan