

LAI Chi Man

Born in Hong Kong in 1949, LAI graduated from the sculpture department of Taiwan Academy of the Arts (now Taiwan University of the Arts). He later travelled to Italy where he practiced sculpture at Henraux S.p.A., Carrara, which is famous for its quarries and sculptures. During this time, LAI had the opportunity to work alongside Henry Moore, Isamu Noguchi, and Pietro Cascella. After four years in Italy, he received a fellowship to further his education in Wyoming under the sculptor, Robert Russin. And, in 1980, he received his M.F.A degree in sculpture from University of Wyoming. During this period, he married Paulien Verhaak. In 1982, he was admitted as a member of the Beeldende Kunstenaars Regeling in the Netherlands. LAI returned to Taiwan in 1984 upon invitation to hold a teaching position at the Taipei University of Arts. Having experienced life in Hong Kong, Italy, the United States, the Netherlands, and Taiwan, LAI was able to foster a rich and diverse perspective on aestheticism. Nevertheless, it was always clear to LAI that he would return to embrace the Eastern spirit.

LAI declares, "Over the past thirty years in Asia, I have been constantly exploring and developing an artistic vocabulary. This echoes the evolution and depth of mankind's harmonic coexistence with nature. The roots for this resulting sculptural vocabulary can be traced to the six ways of constructing Chinese characters, whose forms echo the cultural virtues of an ancient tradition and reflect the essence of Eastern thought. Through such an approach, I contemplate Eastern philosophies regarding the relationships amongst mankind and nature. And, throughout the creative process, I use pictographs and meanings similar to those found in Chinese characters to express a message that transcends culture and communicates universal values."