

Ligang Wei

Peacock: Jade Green, 2014

Ink, acrylic and lacquer on paper
96 1/2 x 48 1/2 in (245 x 123 cm)

Artist Biography :

Born in Datong, Shanxi, in 1964, Wei Ligang has been at the forefront of contemporary ink painting's development from its beginning on the mainland, and he was one of the organizers of the June 1999 "Bashu Parade: '99 Chengdu Retrospective of Chinese Modern Calligraphy at the End of the 20th Century" exhibition. In 1981, at the age of 17, Wei was admitted to Nankai University in Tianjin to study mathematics. He became the president of the calligraphy society at the university, which enabled him to connect with leading local calligraphers. After graduating in 1985, Wei was assigned to teach mathematics at the Teachers' Training School in the industrial city of Taiyuan, but he succeeded in persuading the school to allow him to teach calligraphy in 1988. Wei Ligang moved to Beijing in 1995 to concentrate on his art. His training in mathematics has contributed to his abstract form of calligraphy. Many of his works are based on "Wei Squares," a formula inspired by the square framework printed on practice paper for the characters that students copy repeatedly when learning calligraphy. Different from his gold-ground paintings, in which individual brushstrokes are not discernable, the Wei Square calligraphic paintings subtly combine painting and calligraphy: the density of ink ranges from solid black with dry brushstrokes to pale grays. Wei Ligang constantly deconstructs and re-forms the characters in his paintings while hinting at traditional script-forms (such as formal, running, or "grass" script), thus declaring his deep roots in Chinese culture. His works were included in the pioneering exhibition organized by Gordon Barrass at the British Museum in 2002.