

**Dissertation Review by Professor Coral Lambert**

**2/2/2023**

**PROMOTER'S OPINION PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DOCTORAL PROCEDURE OF**

**MUCHUAN WANG** in the Field of Art: in the Discipline of Fine Arts and Art Conservation.

It has been a privilege to read and assess Muchuan Wang's extensive doctoral thesis. I was immediately struck by his rigorous and unique approach to his specific subject. His subject of the I Ching is ancient, yet he has brought a new attention to the concept and role it plays in the discipline of fine arts today, he is enabling us to look backward in order to move forward.

My assessment of Wang's dissertation is based on my career as a professional sculptor in the field for over 30 years. I am a practicing sculptor as well as Professor of Sculpture and Chair of the Sculpture Dimensional Studies Division at the School of Art and Design, Alfred University, NY which is a NASAD accredited institution within the USA. I am a recent recipient of the prestigious International Sculpture Center's Outstanding Educator Award.

Mr. Muchuan Wang was born in 1974 and holds an MA from Northeast Normal University in Changchung, China. He started studies at the Doctoral School at the E. Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław in 2019 where Mr. Wang conducted an interdisciplinary, intercultural research in the field of sculpture. His dissertation titled 'Inner and Outer Relations from the Book of Changes (I Ching)' is carried out within the contemporary field and discipline of Fine Arts and Art Conservation. At the outset of the dissertation, he presents The Book of Changes, which is one of the oldest Chinese classical texts representing indigenous Chinese cosmology and culture. In further analysis, he focuses on two ideas drawn from this Book - Yin-Yang and the Five Elements which have become key to the implementation of his work in the doctoral procedure.

Using elements derived from his native culture of China he questioned and conducted very thorough written and visual research in both material and technical approaches. For example, his explorations using tissue paper, light and projections resulted in a new body of work examining 'shadow and light'. In essence shadow and light being an equivalent to solid and space in sculptural practice: he defined this as a Yin - Yang made physical. He used a variety of methods to explore theories and apply them in a practical way to create new sculptural works, such as collection, open studio practice, workshops, technical and material experimentation, case studies, observation and analysis. At the time making meticulous observations whilst seeking questions and becoming aware of signifiers linking Chinese and Western cultural connections. These diverse approaches are evidence of thorough research and engagement with the topic. His inclusion of others through workshops in developing his sculptural and written works is testimony of his openness and curiosity. I can see how his experiences of sharing and dialog could translate beyond China and Europe into other countries where cultures intertwine. Wang's artistic work reinvigorates the classic notion of positive and negative in sculpture. He also brings a new critical voice to the conversation that probes the 'Five Elements' in the Book of Changes

by using diverse and distinct materials such as clay, metal, paper, light, water and glass. Each of these materials has a different resonance and meaning within the Book of Changes which is perhaps different to how a Western eye may look at the hierarchy of materials. Hierarchy of materials is a current discussion in contemporary art for example in the art world the material of Bronze is often seen as the most precious and valuable, it is a permanent material with a 5000 year history and weight. Wang's dissertation asks us to look at materials in a different way with a renewed value judgment. It reexamines the Yin-Yang concept in conjunction with the Five Elements and its relationship bringing forth the ancient into contemporary sculpture.

Overall, the written part is well researched and contextualized within the field of contemporary sculpture. Wang has thoroughly considered his topic through different lens and cultural backgrounds. He has referenced western artists who have utilized elements of Chinese culture such as Brancusi, John Cage and Bill Viola. He has recognized the importance of these precedents as they provide key building blocks to the conversation. The focus of the dissertation has great potential to facilitate discussion and activities beyond Europe and China to other countries in support of intercultural art.

Muchuan Wang has excelled in artistic, didactic and organizational achievements as reflected in his contributions through teaching workshops in Poland and China in the art of metal casting, figure modelling and material exploration related to his dissertation. In my opinion these activities were extremely valuable in Wang's development of his dissertation and important skills which he has been used to gather research and test theories in a practical sense. His sculptural work has been shown internationally in prestigious venues and at conferences. The number and quality of his achievements on his resume are impressive, especially at this stage in his career. The visual work and dialog that that dissertation posits is an extremely valuable contribution to contemporary sculpture. I look forward to Wang being able to share the work in the field of contemporary sculpture internationally.

Based on my reading and analysis of the concept and the realization of Wang's dissertation as well as taking into consideration the creative output of sculpture using different materials and techniques, I highly recommend an academic Ph.D. title in the field of Fine Arts and Art Conservation to be granted to Muchuan Wang.

Your Sincerely,

*Coral Lambert*

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**Coral Penelope Lambert (She/Her)**

SDS Chair 22/23

Professor of Sculpture Dimensional Studies. Director, National Casting Center Foundry

P 917-685-7733

E [jlambertc@alfred.edu](mailto:jlambertc@alfred.edu)

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**Alfred University**

NYSCC School of Art + Design

2 Pine Street, Alfred, NY 14802

[www.alfred.edu](http://www.alfred.edu)