



Words of Wisdom

A Solo Exhibition by Aaron Gan

WORDS
OF
WISDOM
AARON GAN

Acknowledgements

Like all books, *Words of Wisdom* wouldn't have been possible without the help and encouragement of my collectors and friends.

A heart-felt thank you to UOB for their invaluable support over the years.

Prologue

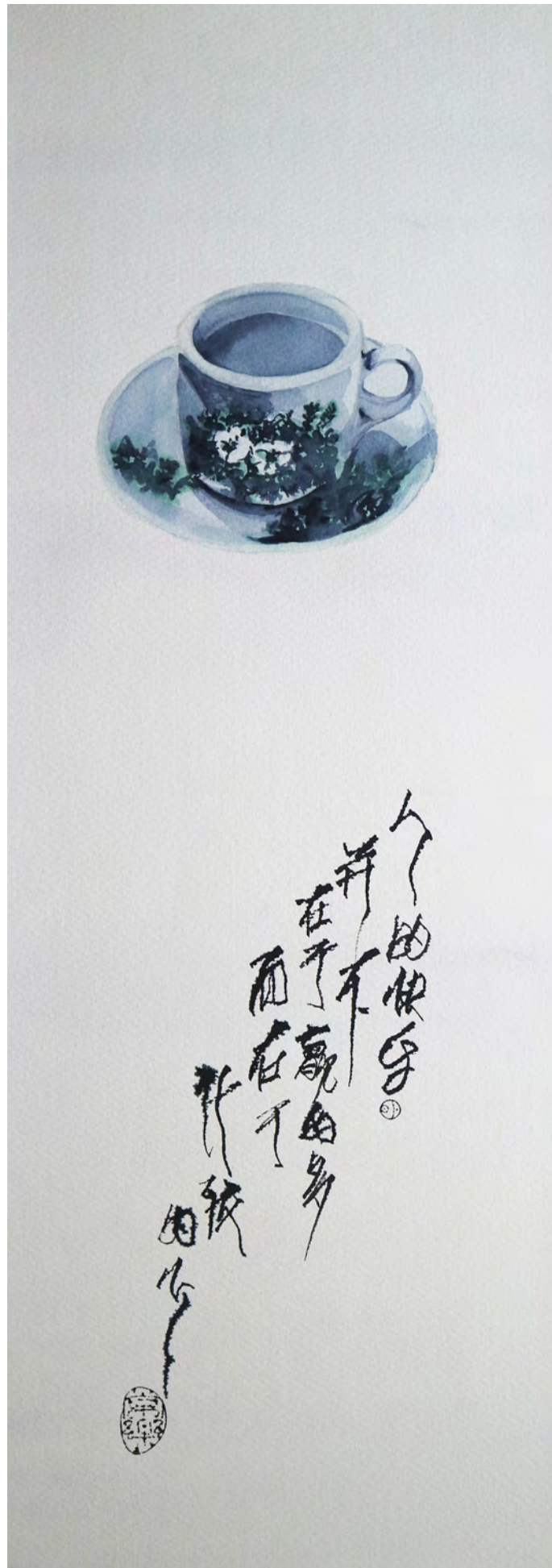
Aaron Gan

I have loved reading from young. There is a saying, "A smart man learns from his mistakes. A wise man learns from the mistakes of others." To me, reading was a way of learning and distilling wisdom from the experiences of others.

I try to start my day with a book in my hand and a cup of hot tea by my side. Over the years, I have collected phrases and anecdotes that I find meaningful or witty. Sometimes I use them as inspirations for my paintings.

Many of the phrases used in his book originate from the Chinese language. Please forgive the not-so-perfect English translations. The Chinese language is notoriously hard to translate due to its nuances.

I have put together some of my favourite phrases and paintings in this book. I hope reading them brings you as much joy and wonder as I did when I first read them.



人的快乐并不在于赢的多，而在于计较的少。

A person's happiness is not so much on how much he wins, but rather on how little he regards.

SIMPLE HAPPINESS

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023



其身正，不令而行；
其身不正，虽令不从。

INTEGRITY

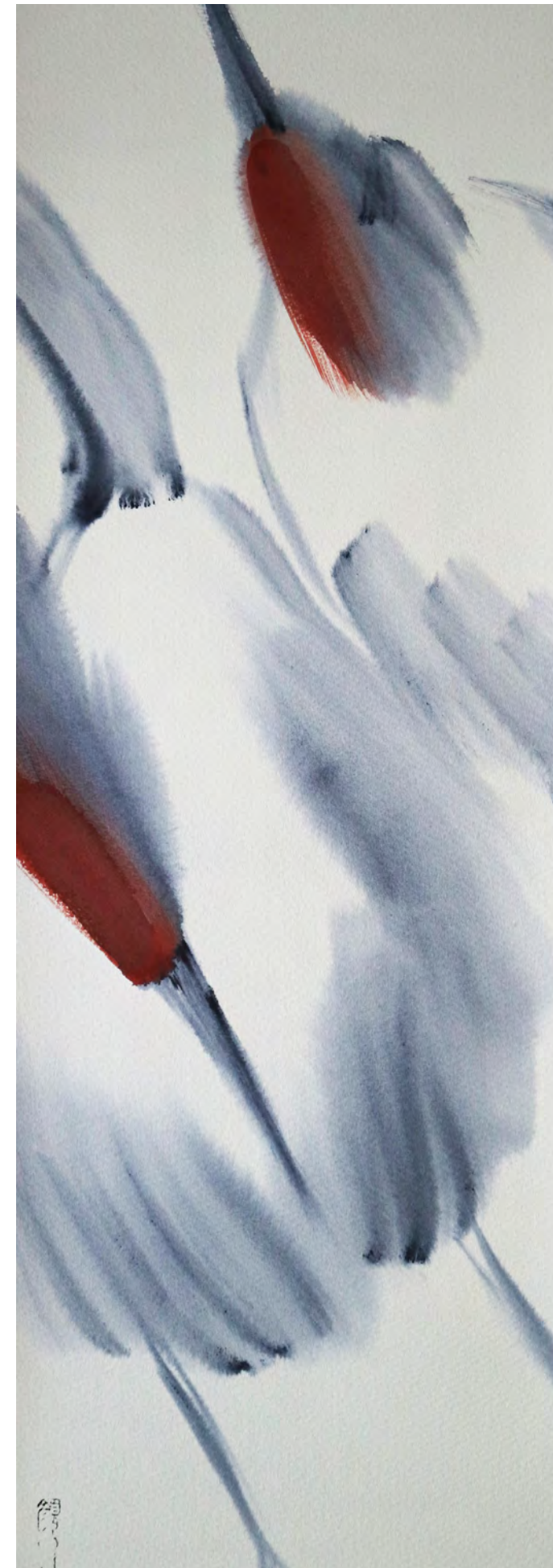
76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

If a leader's personal conduct is correct, everything will operate smoothly even if they don't issue orders.

If a leader doesn't behave in the correct manner, nobody will listen even if they do issue orders.

RECTITUDE

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023





父母在，不远游，
游必有方。

When one's parents are alive, one
does not travel far.

If it is necessary to travel, there
should be a definite direction.

HOME

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

对老婆的方法有三：

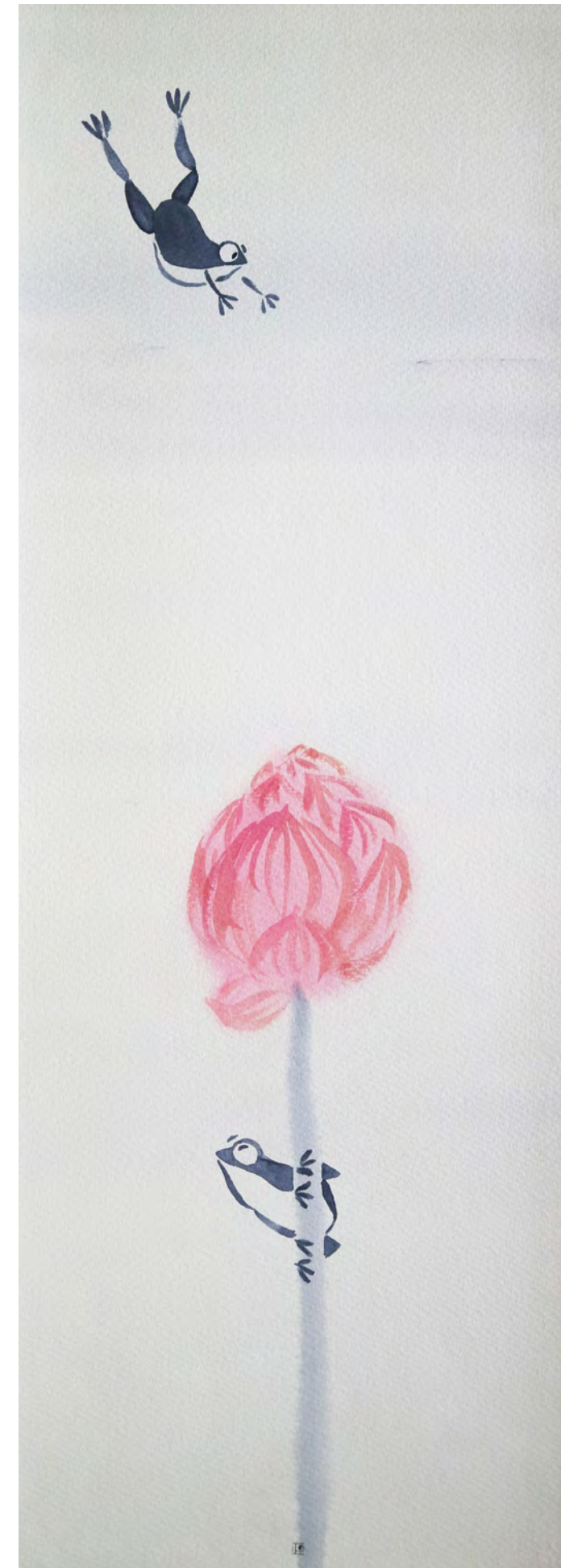
- 一，不要随便说好
- 二，不要随便说不好
- 三，不要随便问她这样好不好

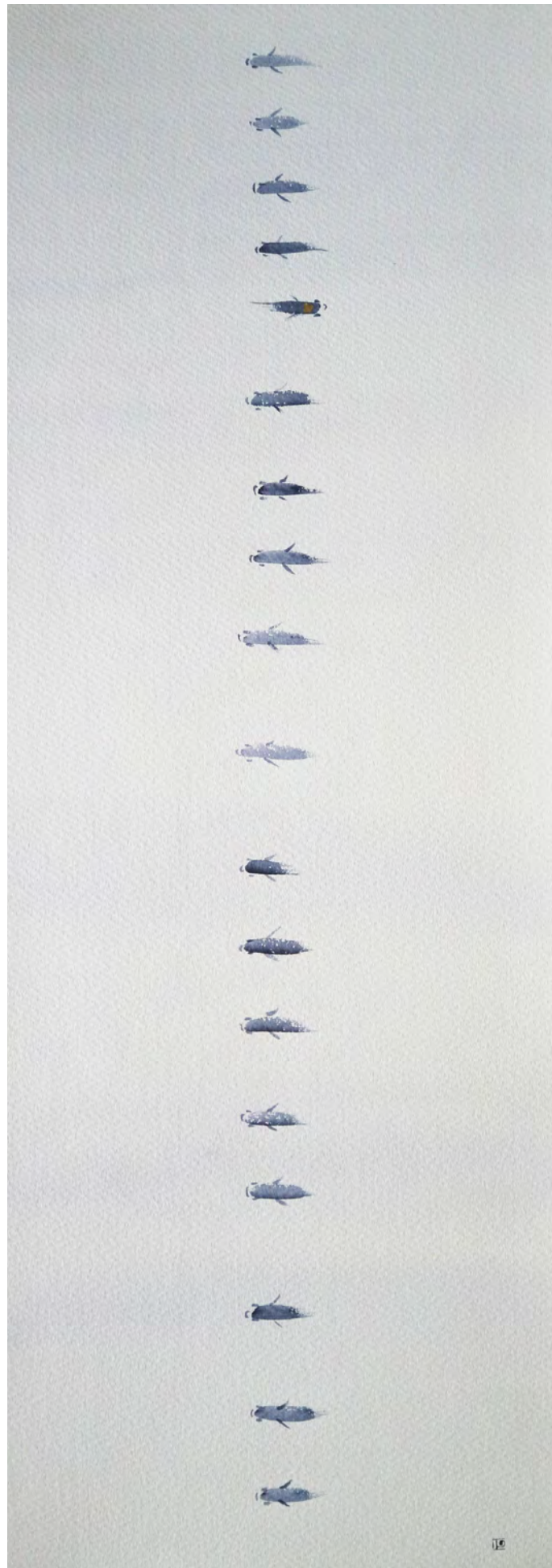
3 ways to a happy wife:

1. Don't keep saying it's okay
2. Don't keep saying it's not okay
3. Don't keep asking her whether
it's okay or not okay

LOVING UNION

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023





特立独行

The road less travelled

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2022

德不孤，必有邻。

Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbours.

VIRTUE

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2022





径路窄处，留一步与人行；
滋味浓的，减三分让人尝，
此是涉世一极安乐法。

When walking narrow by-paths, step
back a pace and let another pass.

When you have a stroke of good
fortune, surrender one-third of your
portion for the enjoyment of others.

This is the law for making one's way
through the world most comfortably.

COMPASSION

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023



EMPATHY

56 x 56 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023



夫唯不争，
故天下莫能与之争。

He does not compete, hence
no one under Heaven can
compete with him.

UNDERSTANDING ONESELF

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

不责人小过，
不发人隐私，
不念人旧恶，
三者可以养德，
亦可以远害。

Do not take others to task for minor
faults.

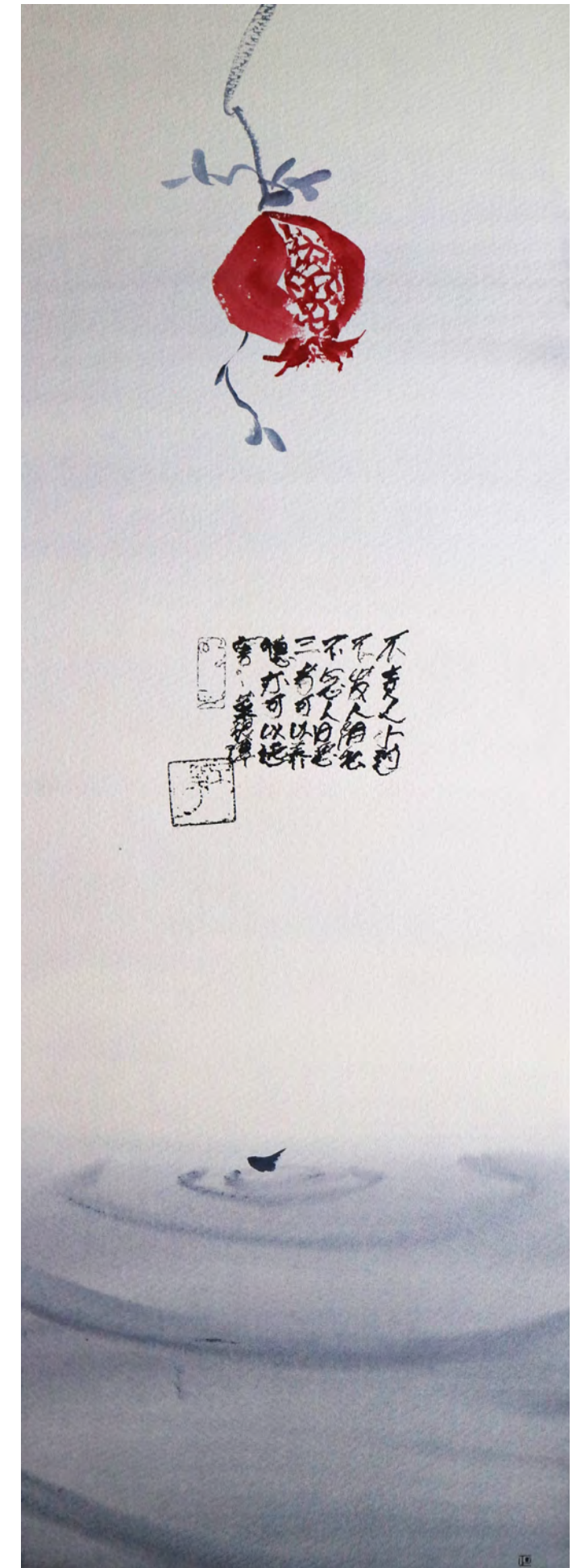
Do not reveal the secrets of others.

Do not nurse old grievances.

By sticking to these three precepts,
one will refine one's moral character
and keep harm at bay.

ENLIGHTEN

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023





HUMBLE

56 x 56 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

不患莫己知，
求为可知也。

One should not seek to be known to others,
but seek to acquire the qualities worthy of
being known.

有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎。

What a joy it is to have friends
coming from afar!



JOY WITH FRIENDS

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023



吃竹常乐

A man who knows contentment will be happy.

CONTENTMENT

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

手把青秧插满田，
低头便见水中天。
六根清静方为道，
退步原来是向前。

Planting the rice seedlings in the fields,
you catch the reflection of the sky in
the water when you lower your head.

As you move backwards sowing, you
are actually progressing forward.

SOW

76 x 28 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023





PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS

37 x 56 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

民之性，饥而求食，劳而求快，
苦则求乐，辱则求荣，
生则计利，死则虑名。



SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES

56 x 37 cm
Watercolour on paper, 2023

It is the nature of people,
when they are hungry, to strive for food;
when they are labouring, to strive for speed;
when they are suffering hardship, to seek enjoyment;
when they are in a state of humiliation, to strive for honour;
when they are living, to seek gains;
and when they are facing death, to seek legacy.



BIOGRAPHY

Aaron Gan is the 2015 UOB Painting of the Year, Gold Award, Established Artist Category, Singapore winner.

Born in Singapore in 1979, Gan graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce (Dean's List) from the University of Western Australia in 2003. In 2012, he gave up his corporate career to fulfil his childhood promise to become a professional artist.

Following his numerous sell-out shows, Gan's artworks have been collected and commissioned widely both in Singapore and internationally. These include The Prime Minister's Office, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Library Board, GIC, Wheelock Properties, Julius Baer, The Association of Banks in Singapore and others.

Gan's works have been presented to foreign dignitaries around the world. During Singapore's PM Lee's inaugural visit to the US in 2016, his painting "Balestier Road" was presented to US President Barack Obama.

In 2017, he collaborated with Nespresso on a regional media campaign spanning Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China.

In 2018, Gan was appointed the Art Ambassador for Faber-Castell, Singapore.

In 2020, he worked with Castiglioni del Bosco on their exclusive Zodiac wine label.

In 2021, his artwork "Charging Bull" was used for UOB's Lunar New Year campaign.

Words of Wisdom

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By Aaron Gan

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