

A full-page photograph of Carina Lau, a Hong Kong actress and singer. She is smiling, with her eyes closed, and her right hand is raised to her forehead. She is wearing a black sleeveless dress with a white grid pattern and a colorful geometric necklace. The background is a solid dark grey.

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TOUR E FORCE

From film to fame,
Hong Kong icon Carina Lau
navigates stardom, her art,
and empowerment with
an open mind

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SMALL TALK

WALLACE CHAN

As his largest-ever retrospective exhibition debuts at the Shanghai Museum, jewellery designer Wallace Chan reflects on his 50-year career as a pioneering jeweller and artist, from humble beginnings as a gemstone carver to international acclaim

Your exhibition Wallace Chan: Half a Century at the Shanghai Museum spans 50 years of your career. How does it feel to see your life's work displayed in such a comprehensive manner?

This exhibition covers not only my life experiences from the past 50 years but also incorporates natural materials that have existed for ages, waiting for us to unearth them and utilise them to realise our creative visions. The Chinese name of the exhibition translates to "thousand years and millions of thoughts", which encapsulates this concept of bridging timeless materials with new-age creativity.

Tell us about the exhibition themes.

The first theme is Engraving & Embodiment. For me, sculpting is a form of spiritual practice—it's not merely carving with one's hands, but also sculpting with one's memory and willpower. Each material possesses its own unique character, representing different forms of existence. Each material demands its own unique approach, reflecting an intimate dialogue between the artist and the medium. The second theme is Entangling & Enchanting. When you're a creator, everything emerges from nothing—the entire world becomes a wellspring of inspiration. The creative process is similar to transforming the entangled into the enchanting. I often wonder: is one truly the architect of creation or merely a conduit, guided by the essence of materials or the whispers of some higher power?

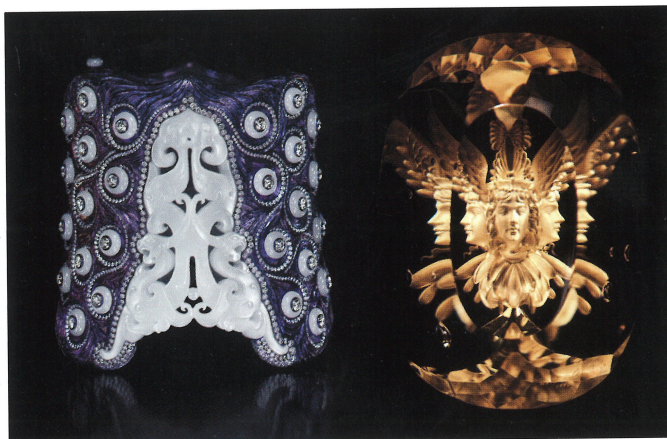
You often use titanium in your jewellery, and in this exhibition, it is used in the artworks as well. How has the innovative use of titanium influenced your creative style?

Titanium was discovered 200-odd years ago, but it wasn't until 40 years ago that it began to be used in the production of dental implants, pacemakers and artificial bones. It is the metal with the highest biocompatibility with the human body. It's incredibly light, weighing only a fifth of gold. Thanks to this

characteristic trait, artworks made from titanium are remarkably lightweight, giving us boundless possibilities for artistic innovation.

What are the challenges with using titanium?

Titanium's melting point can reach over 1,700 degrees Celsius, so finding suitable moulds for it is extremely challenging. We ultimately opted for ceramic, as it can withstand such extreme temperatures. But what we did not realise is that the high temperature needed for the casting process presented other difficulties, like airborne impurities contaminating the



metal, which compromised its quality. Little things like that throughout the whole process of creating the artworks can greatly impact the final creation.

Can you share a childhood memory that has impacted your creations?

Using ceramic as a mould for casting titanium reminds me of a childhood incident. I arrived in Hong Kong when I was four or five years old. I couldn't speak Cantonese and quickly became an outsider, and dropped out of school. My family was poor back then; my siblings and I had to take turns to eat as we had just one plastic spoon at home to eat soup. One day, I snuck to the adults' table and grabbed a ceramic spoon. It slipped from my grasp, shattering instantly. My parents were so angry, they punished me.



achieve the remarkable effect we see today.

The first gemstones created using this technique quickly caught the attention of a German gemstone supplier, who then introduced me to [global watch and jewellery trade show] Baselworld. This opportunity got me noticed by many renowned brands, and subsequently led to me becoming the first Asian to hold an exhibition at the German Gemstone Museum [Deutsches Edelsteinmuseum], in 1992.

Not too long after, the Wallace Cut was imitated by a century-old German jewellery brand, who immediately filed for a patent. Although I had limited resources at that time, I still managed to win the lawsuit. I remember the lawyer telling me I could claim monetary compensation from them. But I said: "As a Chinese person, I simply want justice."

As the first living artist to exhibit at Shanghai Museum East, what message do you hope to convey to visitors through this retrospective?

I want to inspire young people by showing that someone without formal education or professional training can, through sheer persistence, earn recognition from institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I hope they realise they're born no less capable than anyone else. You must remember that when you are determined, all your dreams are within reach.

I remembered how much I longed for an unbreakable spoon then, imagining it would have spared me the punishment. Now, having invented the use of ceramic moulds for titanium casting, it feels as if I've unwittingly realised that childhood dream.

What do you consider to be your most significant work?

It has to be the "Wallace Cut". This gem-cutting technique was my first invention that earned me international recognition. I got the inspiration for it from multiple exposure photography. Just like in photography, I wanted to use cutting skills to alter the refraction angles in gemstones, creating overlapping images.

To achieve it, I researched relentlessly for two years and seven months, precisely calculating the cutting angles to