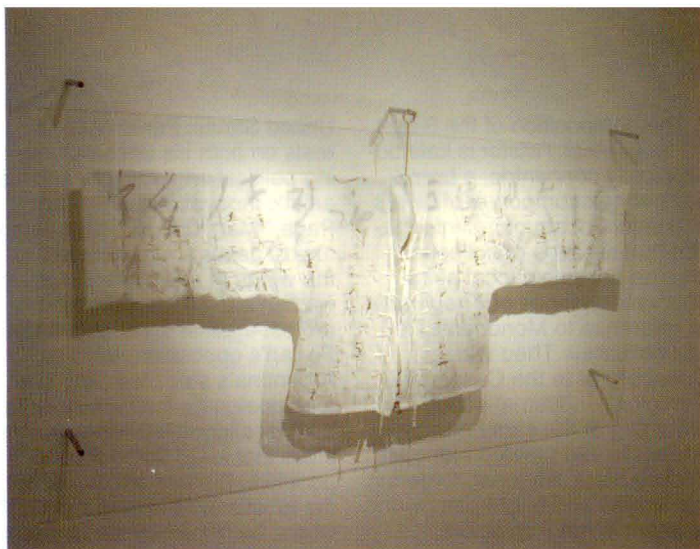


# Art in America

April 2005



Wang Tiande: *Chinese Clothes No. 04-D09*, 2004, silk cloth, burn marks, 29 by 81 inches; at Chambers.

## Wang Tiande at Chambers Fine Art

Wang Tiande, born in Shanghai in 1960 and educated at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, decided early in his career to eschew the newer methodologies sought out by his colleagues, and to search instead for a way to keep ink painting alive in a contemporary sense. "I struggled to find creative inspiration from deeply rooted traditions," he says in an artist's statement. "While my friends turned to oil painting, I redefined ink painting and calligraphy, the most value-laden of China's art forms."

"Made by Tiande," the artist's first solo show in New York, featured three related bodies of work. Some 30 bottles covered with pieces of ink-soaked rice paper make up the "New York" series, a volumetric study in grays and whites. For the "Digital" series (2002), scrolls and rectangular constructions of Xuan paper were burned with cigarettes. Underneath is a second layer of paper covered with ink calligraphy. The random characters, which are not readily legible and form no coherent statements, evoke an elusive reality and a vanishing literary tradition.

The "Chinese Clothes" series (2003-04), Wang's accompanying collection of translucent silk attire, comprises jackets and robes for men, with ties going down the middle of each garment, and women's dresses that open at the neck and button sideways to just beneath the shoulder. All are layered, inscribed and burned like the "Digital" works. At the show's opening, three young women wore sample gowns, creating an effect of ephemerality and beauty, conjoined values that resonate across Chinese history. Nostalgia was thus balanced by implicit social commentary. While the exquisiteness of this attire refers to a China that is no more, the cigarette burns bespeak a rougher and more up-to-date aesthetic. —Jonathan Goodman