



*The loyalty trilogy – stage 1: tenacity*, 2015  
brush and ink and fibre-tipped pen on paper

*The loyalty trilogy – stage 2: surpassing*, 2015  
brush and ink and fibre-tipped pen on paper

*The loyalty trilogy – stage 3: relief*, 2015  
brush and ink and fibre-tipped pen on paper

La Trobe University, Geoff Raby Collection of Chinese Art.  
Donated by Dr Geoff Raby AO through the Australian  
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Photos: Jia De

In this triptych, three sheets of paper show the profile of a single figure with no clothing and no references to gender, culture or history. Drawn in fibre-tipped pen, the graphic figure is a two-dimensional, flat silhouette. The paper, less than A2 size, is reminiscent of paste-up posters, which reveals Wang's early training in 1980 in the printmaking department at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) and the influence of Chinese mural painting. Wang has also been influenced by Francesco Clemente, an Italian contemporary artist known for the flatness and two-dimensionality of his works on paper, which inspired Wang's development of his unique pictorial language as seen in this three-part series.

Throughout the three drawings, the stance remains unchanged; turned to the left, the figure raises a single fist in solidarity. In the first image, the figure seems to pledge allegiance to the written Chinese character for tolerance. In the second, the figure raises a fist to a bone as a dog bites off part of the standing figure's crotch. In the third, the figure salutes a bird flying away. They are titled *The loyalty trilogy – stage 1: tenacity*, *The loyalty trilogy – stage 2: surpassing* and *The loyalty trilogy – stage 3: relief*. The titles suggest a narrative structure of beginning with a promise, withstanding difficulty, concluding with a resolution. In contrast with the philosophical titles, the image of the figure's bitten and missing groin is humorous and surprising. The dog, traditionally a symbol of loyalty, has become a figure of harm. The implied violence creates a sardonic commentary on unfounded loyalty and the folly of unwavering dedication. The bizarre scenario reflects the absurdity of human self-sacrifice and adherence to the pursuit of higher ideals.

Soo-Min Shim, 2022