

Lao Tzu Dreams of the LHC

The installation started as an observation of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest and most expensive scientific project to date. The LHC is a particle accelerator whose mission is to replicate the conditions of the universe during the first fractions of a second of the Big Bang, and to validate our current models explaining the nature of reality. Particular components of the LHC look strangely similar in form to the Ba Qua mirrors used in Feng Shui geomancy found throughout Asia that aim to properly align natural forces. Both the LHC and the Ba Qua mirrors aim to harness and understand the power of nature and yet are tools thousands of years apart.

Some of most recent observations of the quantum world are also very close to writings found in the ancient texts, such as the I Ching (Book of Changes) and the Tao Te Ching, such as the fundamental nature of all things being in movement and change. The number 8 has for long been considered lucky and primary to the Chinese as the trigrams represents all possible human and cosmic interactions. Eight has also become fundamental to our modern conditions, as the number has become the cornerstone of the binary code of our digital world (for example, 8, 32, 64-bit), and it has extended beyond into other areas of thought such as the 8-fold path in Buddhism.

This installation reconsiders the unique relationship between ancient texts and the most advanced cutting-edge frontiers of science and wonders if both are the same, as if Lao Tzu had once dreamed of such an experiment.

For a parallel to the lesson of atomic theory... [we must turn] to those kinds of epistemological problems with which thinkers like Buddha and Lao Tzu have been confronted, when trying to harmonize our position as spectators and actors in the great drama of existence.

– Neils Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*.

