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RESUME

By combining examples of contemporary toy art, illustration, device art, digital artistic practices and through views of my own I will question the significance and development of traditional art in contemporary art creation and its impact on the my art.

The article consists of three parts:

In the first chapter, I will emphasize the embodiment of Chinese traditional art in Dunhuang art through the Dunhuang example. I will analyze how Dunhuang Buddhist art was formed and describe the architectures, sculptures and murals in Dunhuang Grottoes. For the murals, I will focus on the figure murals and story murals. Finally I will summarize the characteristics of Dunhuang art and its impact on contemporary art.

In Chapter II, I will analyze contemporary illustration art, toy art and device art through art works of artists such as Yoshitomo Nara and Maywa Denki from Japan, of contemporary China such as Perk studio from China, and Mars-1 from America.

In Chapter III, I will introduce my own art works as well as my own artistic views. For artistic views, I will analyze the importance of traditional art in contemporary art, the importance of art innovation and the way to carry on traditional art and create contemporary art works. Finally, I will present my own thoughts through art creation and the conclusion for the art study.

Keywords: Art, Chinese Traditional, Dunhuang, Illustration, Contemporary, Toy.

INTRODUCTION

I am a Chinese student studying art in Chicoutimi, Quebec. Chinese traditional culture is the education I have been receiving since childhood. Since I have come to Quebec, cultures from all over the world have been influencing me. Canada is a country with multiple cultures where different art cultures meet and merge. The environment has given birth to various art forms and cultures which are influencing our arts opinions and art creations.

I have been studying at *l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi* as a master of Art student since 2008. Due to my previous studies in China, I can easily distinguish the differences between Quebec and China. In China, more importance is attached to basic training, drawing and copying techniques. However, in studies at UQAC, teachers focus on students' comprehension of the arts. They respect students' opinions and prefer students with different ideas. They do not have any specific limitations on technique. Instead, teachers only provide suggestions about students' concepts and guide their personal interests. As a result, there are a lot of distinguishing creations generated from classmates.

It is in this context that I have selected Syncretism as a theme for my thesis project and my final exhibition, which is also the conclusion of my 2 years of study in Quebec. As theorist Roy Ascott argues that although Syncretism, which is historically understood as

an attempt to reconcile and analogise disparate religious and cultural practices [...] The syncretic process is not in any way to be confused with synthesis, in which disparate things meld into a homogenous whole, thereby losing their individual distinction. Nor is it mere eclecticism, which usually signals a wavering course of thought of only probable worth. In the syncretic context, extreme differences are upheld but aligned such that likeness is found amongst unlike things, the power of each element enriching the power of all others within the array of their

differences"¹.

This thesis and my practical works delve into Chinese traditional art and contemporary digital art. Writing this thesis in English in the milieu of a francophone University such as UQAC has been a kind of syncretism and a metaphor for my visual hybrid creations. Ascott continues to explain

That contemporary reality as syncretic will lead to significant changes in the way we regard our identity, our relationship to others, and the phenomenology of time and space. Syncretism not only destabilises orthodoxies and changes language, it may also result in the release of the self from the constraints of overweening rationality and totalising dogma."²

The process of writing has been syncretic ; since neither French nor English is my mother tongue and my Chinese logic and thought have produced a “Chinglish”³ thesis. A friend has been translating my chinese writings into English, retaining much of the chinese-ness. Then, my former “*Québécois*” English teacher “corrected” my chinglish text into a sort of “franglais”⁴ version” with no disrespect to her work. The resulting text retains much of the Chinese-ness in its expression and thought, with a touch of French, both breaking the rules of classic English grammar and syntax. We can see that Broken English has become a metaphor for contemporary culture and international artistic creation in the digital age. Again Ascott underlines that *syncretic reality* is both construed and constructed through new media art practice, which “is about breaking boundaries while maintaining cohesion, a most subtle

¹ Roy Ascott, *Syncretic Reality: art, process, and potentiality*, http://www.drainmag.com/index_nov.htm

² *ibid*

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinglish>

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franglais>

attribute that is as necessary in the aesthetic as in the social sphere."¹

At UQAC, I have learnt lot of things that I did not learn in China. I have also experienced different teaching modes of the two countries, of Chinese and Western arts and cultures. My work, although maintaining its *traditionnallness*, continuously accepts new arts, new media and cultures which are expressed in my art creations. These are also "Syncretic" for me.

Although current arts are diversified, artists from all over the world possess their own "art languages" to express their arts. The key point for me is whether these "art languages" can be perceived and received well by most of the audience. It is also what I have to probe into and pursue after in my future arts adventures.



Figure 1 Syncretic

¹ Roy Ascott, Syncretic Reality: art, process, and potentiality, http://www.drainmag.com/index_nov.htm

CHAPTER I

Tradition

Traditional Art

Buddhism and its associated arts originated in India and spread mainly through two routes. It traveled to the central Asia, China, Korea and Japan through the northern route and to the Southeast Asia through the southern route. It syncretized with local characteristics in each of the place it reached during the eastward.

Buddhist art has a long a history as Buddhism teach itself in China. Buddhism and its associated art are very important and influential sources in the development of arts in China. Only second to the traditional Chinese philosophic wisdom and teachings. The development and progression of Buddhist arts were primarily subject to the demand of its religious believing. Two of the most important characteristics of Buddhism were the worship of Buddha's image and the confirmation of protocols. The Buddhist arts developed in line with these traditions in order to help the preaching of teaching scripts and to assist the living in groups practiced by monks. The Buddha's sculpture was one of the most important aspects in Buddhist and in China it was often called the religion Buddha's Sculptures.

The religious paintings were mainly created to display the image of Buddhist and to illustrate the Buddhist's teachings, such as birth of Buddhist, legend of reincarnation, of penance, and enlightenment. At the beginning, Buddhism was a practical religion and did not appreciate the importance of sculpture and images. Since the death of Buddha Shakyamuni, believers started to worship his relics and processions, specially the tooth, after his cremation. They began to build pagodas to store these relics and painted murals and created sculptures to worship his teachings. The tradition of sculptures and image worship proceeded in earnest from then on.¹

Cave murals have symbolized the Buddhist arts in China. Dunhuang Cave art is the most famous. Today, the Art of Dunhuang is the religious art has already declined with the far escape of the religion, but art takes another form, it becomes the process where various cultural factors are blended and becomes the art style of the system. My thesis explains the

¹ Lin Ci, 《The Art of Chinese Painting》 2006, P49 This citation is an example of the prevalence of Chinglish. The text is from an English translation of an original Chinese text written, translated and published in China. The errors and deviations from correct English grammar and syntax in the text are cited here as published.

formation of the Dunhuang murals, the analysis of its art language, the changes that are brought on by time, and the influence it transcends on contemporary art.



Figure 2 Mao Gao Cave, China

1.1 Research methodology

Firstly, I researched the geographical location, historical and cultural background of Dunhuang. I also lived in Dunhuang for field study and visits during my holidays in the past three years. During that time, I interviewed with local residents and guides tour in Dunhuang. In addition to the borrowed guide notes, I also purchased a large amount of video information

and Image books to study the art characteristics of Dunhuang. From the research, I summed up the Chapter I, which has become background materials of my art creation.

1.2 The geographical environment and historical background of Dunhuang

The Silk Road¹ is world renowned. Dunhuang, as a bright gem in the ancient Silk Road, has been dazzling with its rich connotation and glorious history and attracting the attention of numerous native and foreign people for thousands of years. Dunhuang carries the history of communication between the West Asia² and China, reliving the history and telling us a thousand-year long story.

The emergence and development of an art is by no means an isolated event, which inevitably is closely related with its historical tradition, geographical location and the social factors interacting with it. Dunhuang is located in the southwest of Gansu Province and was standing as the last crucial border town on Silk Road before entering Western region. Dunhuang is the gathering point for Chinese people and Westerners. It is, simultaneously, busy and dynamic. To those messengers and businessmen from the West travelling across the deserts and undergone all conceivable hardships, arriving in Dunhuang an opportunity to communicate with Chinese people on religious, cultural and commercial issues. They all come from different countries, of different nationalities speaking different languages, representing different cultures, carrying different goods and trading in different ways. Meanwhile, the Chinese people come to Dunhuang from the inland and are able to communicate with Western

¹ Silk Road ,http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk_Road

² It must be said that at this time in history, the West was perceived not as European culture, but as India and the western part of the Indian Subcontinent.

people without having to go further.

Through these interactions between Chinese and Westerners, the trading of silk and fur was an important activity; silk was going out of China as fur was coming into it. More importantly, the four significant civilizations that are still alive, namely: ancient China India, Babylon and ancient Egypt¹ converged towards one city, Dunhuang.

In Dunhuang, the ancient cultural center of China's northwest region, the most important valuable contribution is the unique artistic Caves, namely, "Mogao Caves" formed through continuous construction for more than one thousand years. This world-famous ancient "art museum" records the shared history of art and civilization between ancient Western world and China, along with the marvellous miracle of the continuous development of the Silk Road through thousands of years. The Art of Dunhuang Mogao Caves is a collection of integrated arts of architecture, paintings, sculptures and mural paintings. If it is said that the thousand-year long existence of the Mogao Caves is a miracle, it also inferred that the miracle has directly benefited from the "Silk Road". The Silk Road, connecting the West and the East, integrated the Western culture and local Chinese culture at that time. With a profound cultural foundation, brilliant art was created here. It is a multicultural collection whose significance has reached far beyond the purely religious and art areas. It provided precious information and references for the study of ancient Chinese politics, economy, culture, military, geography, religion, social activities, ethnic relations, and cultural exchange. Thus, it can be definitely regarded as a rare cultural treasure trove and precious spiritual wealth.

¹ Four great ancient civilizations, Liang Qichao, 《The Pacific Ocean in the 20th Century》, retrieved wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cradle_of_civilization#Four_great_ancient_civilizations,

1.3 The Generation of Chinese Buddhism Culture

The opening of the Silk Road facilitated the exchange between Chinese and Western cultures. Civilization of the West was introduced continuously through the Silk Road into China. At the same time, the Chinese civilization affected the West more and more. In the first century AD, the prevalence period of Buddhism¹ in India, where it was then popular in Central Asia, continued inevitably to penetrate into eastward China along the Silk Road. Around the second century BC, Buddhism was formally introduced into China². In fact, earlier than that, Buddhism dominated in the folklore because of the opening of the Silk Road. However, before Buddhism was introduced into China, other traditional religious cultures had a dominant status in China. Buddhism, as a foreign religion, experienced strong conflicts and struggles with Chinese traditional cultures from the very beginning when introduced into China. In Chinese history, there has been a number of large-scale "anti-Buddhist movements". Thus, Buddhism, for its own survival, was continually modified on the perspective of its original characteristics, and absorbed Chinese traditional cultures in order to be adapted by the vast Chinese believers.

In addition, at that time in the North of ancient China, continuous wars led to a disaster-ridden society and Buddhist thinking applied to China situation enabled those who were deeply wounded from wars to obtain spiritual comfort and sustenance. Thus, it quickly spread and became popular. Many small dynasties of ethnic minorities in Northern China all advocated to Buddhism. The emperors not only provided strong supports to Buddhism, but also spent huge amounts of money to build pagodas and temples, excavate Buddha Caves, and

¹ Buddhism, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>

² Silk Road transmission of Buddhism, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk_Road_transmission_of_Buddhism

engrave figures of Buddha. It is also in such a historical environment that the construction of Dunhuang Mogao Caves was created. Engraving caves to practice Buddhism and worshipping was initially common in India where the weather was hot. Mountains caves could bring people coolness and comfort; for monks, those places were suitable to practice Buddhism. Because Buddhism is imported from India to China, the customs of Indian monks' practicing Buddhism were naturally introduced to China. Chinese monks imitated Indian monks engraving caves in mountains to carry out self-cultivation and worshipping of Buddhism.

Buddhism emerged from India, so did Buddhist art. It seems natural that the Buddhist art was introduced into China¹. However, the art communication is not as simple as the transferring of commodities for people to use. Because artistic works are produced by artists, unless those artists directly came to China from India, there would not be the same productions. If the local Chinese artists copied mechanically, there certainly would be differences. Thus, after a long period of transmission of Buddhist art from India through Central Asia into China, different styles were introduced. With the changes brought over time, the art styles with characteristics of different ages and the integration of Chinese national arts were established. Based on the succession of Chinese traditional arts, Chinese artists absorbed and integrated the creation methods of Indian Buddhist arts, and after a long period of changes, the Buddhist art with Chinese characteristics thus developed and formed.

To sum up, under the background of Chinese history and culture, Dunhuang maintained a special position in the exchange and interactions between China and western countries. Precisely because Chinese and foreign cultures were brought together here, the prosperity of

¹ Buddhist art in China, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_art#China

Buddhist art has continually been promoted in Dunhuang which promised Dunhuang to be an influential Buddhist city.

1.4 Reviews on Ancient Art and Culture in China from Dunhuang Caves

Dunhuang Mogao Caves are a comprehensive art integrating architecture. Paintings, sculptures, and murals are among the major subject can be regarded painted sculptures. Architecture can demonstrate space and environment of these works of art, while the content of Buddhist scriptures is exhibited through murals¹. In the following parts I will analyze on the characteristics of these three aspects and interpret how they reflect ancient Chinese culture.

1.4.1 The Architecture

Today, most of the ancient Chinese architectures no longer exist longer exist while murals in the Mogao Caves recorded and preserved for us a history of Chinese architecture developed through ten centuries. Buildings shown in these Caves are rich in types and contents. From the fourth to the tenth century,² a variety of building types designed on those murals pictures of palaces, Buddhas, and various residential architecture histories; from the fortresses to small huts; from the courtyard garden to roads and bridges on the outskirts of the town. Dunhuang murals can be called the Grand View of ancient architectures. In murals of Buddhist countries, grand palaces and pavilions are usually indispensable as symbols of the Buddhist Pure Land. People then could imagine Buddhist worlds only by observing the mundane world. In people's

¹ Mogao caves, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mogao_Caves

² Note form guided tours

lives, the ancient imperial courts were just like a paradise on earth. Therefore, painters always demonstrated the Buddhist world by using imperial building styles, or showing living conditions of Buddha by large-scale majestic Buddhist monasteries. Therefore, we can see the general appearance of the ancient Chinese royal buildings on these murals.

In the story-telling pictures of the cave No. 172 (Figure3), we can appreciate the ancient architectural styles dating of over a thousand years. Painters adopted a Birdseye view to show the magnificent structures of these of buildings. In the murals, the Buddha was taken as the central axis with symmetrical arrangements on both the left and right; the scene behind the Buddha primarily consists of a main hall of a Buddhist temple. The central main hall, the theme of the picture, shows an intensive, profound feeling; buildings on both sides, lower than the main hall, form a relationship between guests and the host of honour. The depiction of the group of buildings shows a relatively scattered order from the overall construction to detailed decorative parts; the overall style can be described as calm and magnificent, reflecting a purely natural and graceful beauty of the portrayal of ancient Chinese palaces. The No. 217 cave (Figure4), built between the year 705 and 706,¹ has a theme similar to that of No. 172 cave. The picture shows Buddha in the centre, surrounded by people who listen to him, preaching the Buddhist Laws. Behind Buddha stands a magnificent palace.

¹ Zhao ShengLiang, 2007. 《Dunhuang Art》 P14



Figure 3 Cave No 172, Tang Dynasty, Picture from 《China DunHuang》

The historical value of Dunhuang in the architectural history goes far beyond the murals. It took one thousand year to build Dunhuang Mogao Caves. During that period, architectural styles of various ages have more or less left behind a valuable heritage. More than 800 Caves and buildings out of the Caves demonstrate tens of thousands of different architectural types engraved in Dunhuang murals. Dunhuang Caves have not only reserved valuable image data of 1,000 years ago, but also made the architectural styles of cave itself a rare cultural relic. Caves are shrines for placing colourful religious sculptures and murals, also for the monks to engage in religious activities. In addition, the general believers can faithfully enjoy and appreciate Buddhist art, and participate in worshipping. Both practically and artistically,

Dunhuang Caves are valuable. The main theme in Dunhuang Caves is sculptures of Buddha. The surrounding walls are covered with a variety of murals, and at the top are decorative patterns. Decorative patterns cover the ground tiling without any omission, producing an independent "World of Buddhist Pure Land". It is because Buddhism aims at allowing people to enter into the Caves just like into the Buddhist Pure Land and imperceptibly get influenced by the beauty in the arts. Consequently, this could influence people to believe in the religion.



Figure 4 Cave No 217, Tang Dynasty, Picture from 《China DunHuang》

1.4.2 Sculptures

Among ancient Chinese sculptures preserved until today, large parts are Buddhist sculptures. It is precisely because of these that the main themes of Chinese sculpture history can be reconstituted. With its integrated system, color sculptures in Dunhuang Mogao Caves mark the history of the development of Chinese sculptures over a thousand years, and provide powerful data of information for understanding Chinese sculptures history.

Since Buddhism was introduced in China, statue production became a wide-ranged social practice due to the fact that statues were needed in the caves. Thereby, it greatly stimulated the development of sculpture art. We can imagine that the development of religion generated powerful social needs of Buddhist sculptures and paintings, leading to China's need to invest on more art craftsmen than any previous eras. Meanwhile the Buddhist figures transported from India and western regions became the imitation models, and the external shape attitudes and practices introduced a new fashion. However, with the development of Buddhism in China, struggling and conflicting with traditional Chinese cultures, the aesthetic taste of traditional Chinese art gradually penetrated into the Buddhist sculptures. Finally, after continuous blends and changes in the late Southern and Northern Dynasties to Sui and Tang dynasties, Buddhist sculptures were gradually established with distinct Chinese-style. Hence, with external shocks and integration of the arts, Chinese sculpture art evolved rapidly.

In China, the development of sculptures and paintings is different. When paintings were introduced into the royal palace and the higher social strata, the painting gained in popularity. By that time, sculptures still belonged to the folk group and the sculptors were considered as craftsmen. As early as in the Six Dynasty, literature of painting theory had already emerged,

while the sculpture theory did not yet exist. Unlike painters, the sculptors' names were not recorded in history books. So, though the literature of calligraphy and paintings were registered through various dynasties, the history of the development of ancient Chinese sculptures showed no records. The imbalance between painting and sculptures in Chinese art history reflects the prejudice of ancient art toward sculpture arts.

These historical conditions lead to rare reference information in the study of ancient Chinese sculptures, the ancient sculptors, sculpture techniques, sculpture aesthetics, and so on. Fortunately, Dunhuang Mogao Caves preserved more than 3000 sculptures of colored Buddha figures during various dynasties from the fourth century to the fourteenth century in China (including the Northern Wei, Western Wei, Northern Zhou, Sui, Tang Dynasties, Five Dynasties and Northern Song Dynasty, Western Xia, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, etc.), thoroughly reflecting the development process of the past thousand-year long Chinese sculpture arts. It can be regarded as the life history of Chinese sculptures. Dunhuang Mogao sculptures were excavated in sand rocks where no stone for carving was available. Thus, local materials, such as clay, were used to make Buddha sculptures. Sculptors used wood to make the sculptures' skeletons, clay to give them shape. Finally, the combination of painting and sculpture was created to complement the deficiency of clay. For thousands of years, Chinese artists demonstrated delicate artistic imagery through the adoption of colored sculptures displaying a unique charm in modern ages.

In order to render a religious atmosphere, sculptures inside the grotto have played an extremely important role. Colored sculptures in Dunhuang Mogao Caves exhibit religious statues with great limitations of subjects. A handful of figures repeated their appearance in

almost every grotto. Limitations in iconography are also significant and many statues are made following the same pattern. However, ancient sculpture artists have created abundant, varied and vivid artistic images. Especially in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, expressions and appearances of various characters are not the same. The same character showed its own special characteristics at different times and in different grotto.



Figure 5 Cave No 45, Group of painted clay figures Picture from 《China DunHuang》

For example, in the centre of Cave No 45 (Figure 5, Group of painted clay figures), we can see the figure of Buddha (Sakyamuni); on both sides of Buddha, are two disciples. Away from

the disciples are two Bodhisattvas, and two Dharmapalas. This is a well-preserved group of sculptures of the Tang Dynasty: the Buddha in the center, two disciples, two Bodhisattvas and two Dharmapalas are symmetrically arranged. Sakyamuni is solemn, quiet in the centre of the painted halo.

Brilliant colours are displayed behind the sculpture of Buddha, the Disciples, Bodhisattvas and Dharmapalas. All have distinctive personality characteristics and are shaped delicately. With their eyes looking down, it is conceivable that the ancient Buddhists entered the grotto and worshipped the Buddha kneeling down before those figures. At a lower position, they would see every sculpture looking at them kindly. Those groups of sculptures with Buddha as the centre range from 7 to as many as 10. According to a strict order arrangement, they also seem to symbolize a kind of significance hierarchy. Among those painted sculptures, we can see that artists apply realistic approaches in the representation of the spiritual world of trance. In figures like Bodhisattva, Dharmapalas and disciples, we can make out corresponding figures like the noble women of that era, commanding generals, monks well-read through the Buddhist scriptures.

Dunhuang Mogao Caves also express the magnificence of Buddha through some large-scale painted sculptures. For example, in Cave No. 96 and Cave No. 130 (Figure 6), large Buddha figures, respectively measuring up to 35 meters and 26 meters, were created; in Cave No. 148 and Cave No. 158 stands a 16 meter long reclined Buddha figures.¹

¹ Note form guided tours

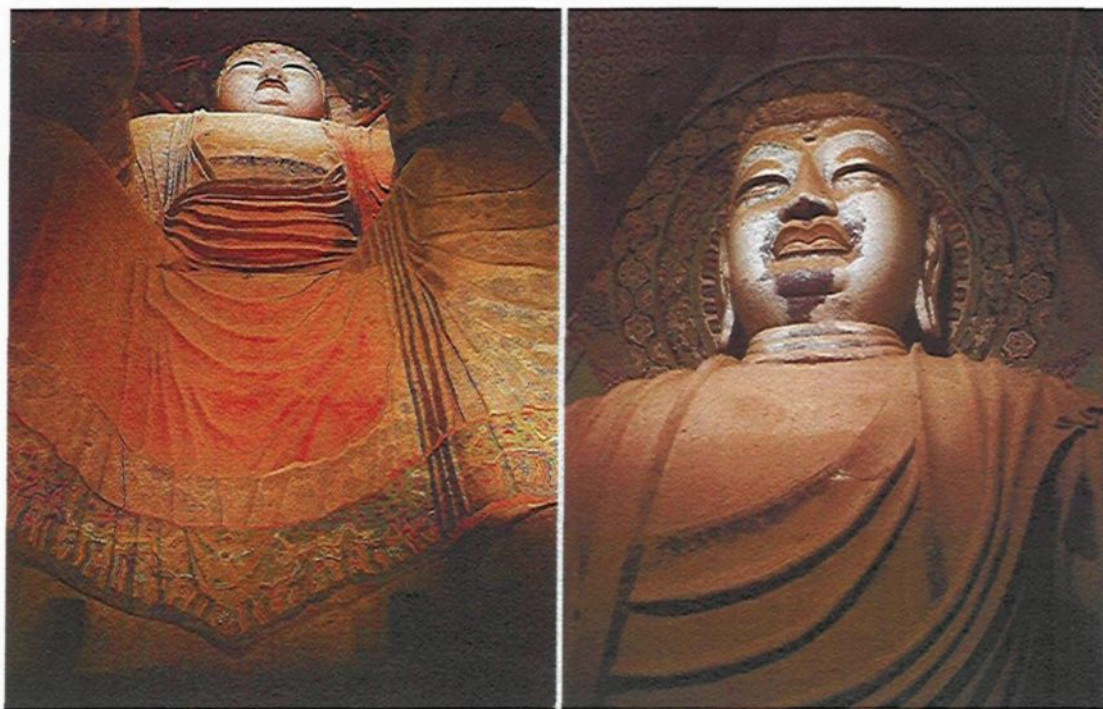


Figure 6 Cave No 96 and Cave No 130, large Buddha figures, Picture from 《China DunHuang》

Giant Buddha delivered a noble sense through its size for religious belief, and also embodied people's spirit of self-confidence. While rulers advocated making giant Buddha statues all over the country, it was also necessary to obtain a whole set of mature sculpture techniques and adequate financial support. From the well-preserved reclined Buddha in No. 158 grotto (Figure 7), the Buddha is demonstrated by an overwhelming body without roughness. The rounded face, half-closed eyes, natural facial expressions, and pleats in the clothing form a regular rhythm that reflect gentleness in details and masculine style in the whole form. Masculinity and femininity are perfectly integrated here, which generates the charm of Dunhuang painted sculptures, and performs characteristics of Chinese sculpture arts.



Figure 7 Cave No 158, large Buddha figures, Picture from 《DunHuang Art》

Buddha is the main theme of Caves, the object for worshipping. Through the sculptures of Buddha, Buddhism thoughts can provided with arts and imagination. Rulers in various Chinese dynasties were fully aware of its magical functions. With no hesitation, they spent a lot of human labor and material resources on it.

The goal of Buddhism propaganda with the statues was firstly to attract, touch emotionally and make people believe in Buddhism with the beauty of artistic images. Although these sculptures were used by ancient Chinese feudal rulers to promote superstitious ideas of

religion and as a legacy of the ancient works of art, those sculptures without exception are shining with the wisdom and creativity of ancient artists.

1.4.3 Murals

The total area of Dunhuang Mogao murals covers 450,000 square feet¹. Works of any ancient Chinese dynasties and any major eras can be found in Caves. From the 4th century to the 14th century², murals in Mogao Caves can be regarded as an image library of the development of Chinese Buddhism. Why is it called an image library? If we follow written records of Buddhist history completely, a figurative concept can be generated but we do not have access the impressions of Buddhism in people's minds at that time. Therefore, these murals are a valuable image library, just like a photo gallery in today's society.

Murals are divided into two categories, namely, figure murals, and story murals. The following is my detailed analysis of these categories.

1.4.3.1 Murals of Buddhist Figures

Before the introduction of Buddhism into China, figure painting in China often applied line drawing as a style, paying attention to the overall decorative function notwithstanding the lack of details in the drawings. They seldom gave enough emphasis on the proportion and realism of figures. After the introduction of Buddhism into China, in order to meet the need for religious worship, a set of rigorous specifications and norms were created pertaining to

¹ Mogao Caves Murals, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mogao_Caves#Construction

² ibid

Buddhist paintings. These norms were not only focused on religious needs, but also became a kind of technique for art form. The original Buddha portraits were drawn with imitation of the shapes of statues coming from India and Central Asia. Later Buddhist art with Chinese styles was gradually developed. Both the facial expressions of Chinese characters and people's clothes as well as accessories adopted Chinese styles.

Such as the figure of Avalokiteśvara in cave No 3, Thousands-arms and Thousands-eyes a avalokiteśvara (Figure 8). On murals, Avalokiteśvara was drawn by ink line sketch. With light colors and full, symmetrical characters, the whole shapes were delicate and accurate. "Thousands arms" arranged in dense, orderly, round-wheel shape. We can even distinguish a variety of different clothing materials. On the left of Avalokitesvara is Palden Lhamo. In the paintings, Palden Lhamo performed as Dharmapala's sister in ancient Indian mythology as the goddess of destiny, wealth and beauty. On murals, she wore decorations like flower ornaments, and dressed in ancient Chinese popular clothing, holding flowers in one hand while raising the other. The personage is plump and beautiful, dignified and noble. From the costumes of characters, the figure is consistent with images of ancient Chinese ladies.



Figure 8 Cave No 3 Thousands-arms and Thousands-eyes a avalokiteśvara

Buddhist murals in Dunhuang Mogao Caves also provide a lot of valuable information for the study of ancient Chinese music and dance. Currently, the understanding of music and dance is narrated in history books. Yet, music and dance are an art of ancient times that has disappeared. However, murals in Dunhuang Mogao Caves have retained the historical development of ancient Chinese music. It may seem a bit contradictory to say: Dunhuang murals are a "static" documentary of the history of Chinese music because murals cannot move, but they are an ongoing documentary. In these caves, there are more than 200 caves displaying musical themes, and more than 500 depicting different types of musical performances, they exhibit more than 40 of different types of instruments which include percussion instruments, string instruments and wind instruments.¹ They show the wealth of musical instruments reflecting China's impregnation of foreign music and culture that era. Those murals often depict scenes of hundreds of people playing music and performing dance which also reflects a strong national power in ancient China.² Such as cave No. 220 (Figure 9). In the murals, we can see a huge band consisting 13 members, each of them holding different instruments. The abundance of musical instruments is the portrayal of highly developed ancient Chinese music. We can observe these glamorous musical performances on the murals, but can only imagine the sounds.

Murals often represent groups of musical and dancing performance in Buddhist world. Although murals express the Buddhist music, the prototype of the music comes from the ancient royal music. The royal music usually came from the folklore or other countries. With

¹ Zhao ShengLiang, 2007. 《Dunhuang Art》 P67

² Ibid, P69

adaptation, the royal music demonstrates representative music and dance arts of China in that epoch. In the murals in cave No. 112 (Figure 9), dancers in those paintings are depicted with the left hand holding musical instruments, playing with their right hands turning behind, and right leg rising. Their left legs stand independently, playing musical instruments and dancing along with fast-paced melody. This is a very difficult dance movement and in the actual performance, it is just momentary, but the painter grasped with extreme accuracy this uniquely gracious pose and depicted it with exquisite painting techniques.

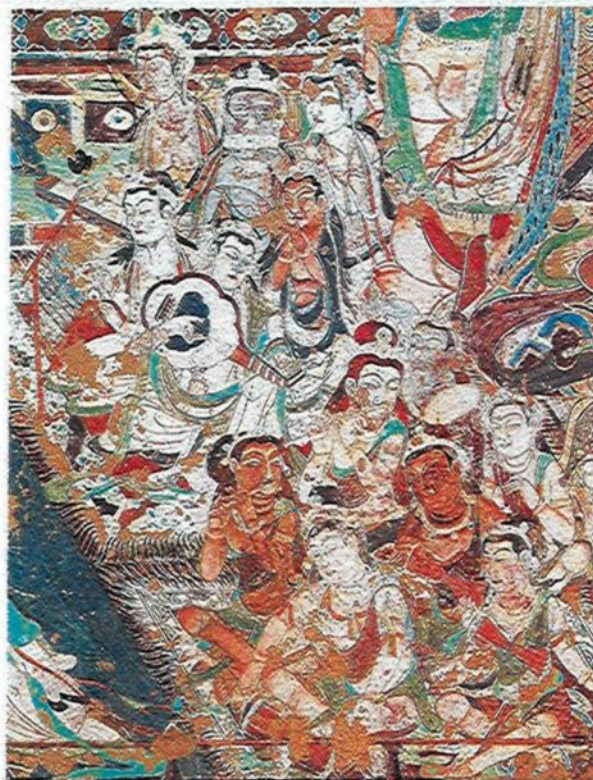


Figure 9 Cave No 220, Cave No 112, Dancer and Musicians, Picture from Wikipedia

1.4.3.2 Story murals

In addition to paintings reflecting Buddha figures, Dunhuang Mogao Caves also have murals depicting some Jataka Story to advocate Buddhism thoughts. Jataka Story murals are an important component of grotto murals, more attractive than the Buddha paintings. Story murals represent the beginning, development and outcome of a story in the art form of comic book. I will illustrate this part with examples. I will be describing a wall painting which represents a Buddhist Jataka of the Buddha incarnate in a golden gazelle, in cave No.257 in Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang in the Northern Wei Dynasty (A.D.445-534). Moreover, I will focus on this dramatic story in this static image to display the multiple cultures of both the historical and the society at the epoch the wall paintings were created.

The Ruru Jataka narrates the story of the Bodhisattva's birth as a gazelle and being betrayed by an ungrateful man who should feel indebted to the gazelle for saving his life from drowning. This wall painting in cave NO.257, like many other wall story paintings at Dunhuang, showed how the painter struggled to represent a narrative story in visual images. In short, 'the artist chooses particular scenes from the text and depicted these one after another without break in a continuous visual narrative, extending in the case from left to right.'¹

At the top wall painting, there is a gazelle with unused thick color, lying in the shade of the tree. It is the beginning of the story. The wall painting gives a detailed description of how the golden gazelle, which the Buddha birth as (called 'nine-colored deer' in Chinese folk version), first saves a man from drowning (low left of the wall painting). On the other side of this wall painting, the man bows down to thank the gazelle. He pledges his honor to keep the secret hide-out of the golden gazelle. But when the man goes back to his hometown and discovers this marvelous animal is very valuable for the Royal Family because the Queen contemplates the noble gazelle's fair skin, he changes his mind. He reports what happened between

¹ Laurence, S. 1956. 《The Pelican History of Arts》 P137

the golden gazelle and him to the Queen who is a greedy person eager to capture the wonderful gazelle (right of the wall painting). The man leads the way for the king and hunters to the gazelle's secret hideout. The gazelle is sleeping without any doubts on the fore coming events. In the centre of the wall painting is the turning point which shows a conversation of the gazelle with the king about the treacherous deed of the man. As well as the end of this sequential story, the gazelle appeals to the conscience of the king by exposing the treachery of the man, the king finally corrects the wrongdoing and gets the gazelle freed. The man is punished with a death sentence.¹

The wall painting (Figure 10), which is 60 x 595 cm in size, was created before the year 1500. Nevertheless, the colours are still vivid now. 'In Cave 257 the strong colors convey an intensity of feeling and a serene dignity....'² the red ground which enriched and enhanced the surface quality of the wall painting is a strong reference which we can read from the Jataka text. "When the king asks the treacherous man where is the golden deer, the man replies, 'the clump over yonder, within flowering saltree and mango, all the ground is as red as rouge, the deer must be found.' "³

¹ Xiurong, Z. 1991. P17-21

² De Silva, Anil. 《The Art of Chinese Landscape Painting in the Caves of DunHuang》. 1964. P13

³ Xiurong, Z. 1991. P13



Figure 10 Cave No 220. Picture from Wikipedia

As I was saying above, there is a Chinese counterpart of this Jataka is a story of the deer of nine-colours. In the traditional Chinese culture, numbers were used to describe things often in a figurative manner: the word 'five-colours' to mean multicolour, and there is no 'six-colour' in Chinese vocabulary. Here, the usage of "nine-colour" is purported to indicate the rarity of the gazelle. In this Chinese story, the gazelle is just such a rare treasure that one hardly comes across it in daily life.

As the painting shows, we can see these Jataka Story murals depicted in the form of story boards. For more than 1,000 years, this form of Story murals enjoyed a very important position in world art history. Step by step, many scholars gradually discovered the artistic value of the Dunhuang murals as the study of Dunhuang mural progressed. Victor H. Mair, a scholar in University of Pennsylvania wrote a book entitled *Painting and Performance*¹ in which a large part is on the study of the relation between Dunhuang story murals in the form of comic book and the performance of today's movie camera. He thought that the idea of frame-by- frame shots in modern films was borrowed from the concept of the continuous, interval storytelling approaches of Dunhuang murals. Thus, the significant impact of Dunhuang mural paintings is obvious.

These murals also show the integration of foreign Buddhist arts and Chinese local arts. In the long-term development of Buddhist arts, Chinese painting art has also been strongly encouraged to obtain a rapid development. Murals of Dunhuang Mogao Caves reflect one perspective of the development of the Chinese art of painting.

¹ 《Painting and Performance》, 1997. Victor H. Mair

1.4 Artistic characteristics of Dunhuang Caves

From the above analysis we can see that the art of Dunhuang Mogao Caves have preserved and assured the continuation of ancient art and the richest content for the longest times. I think it has the following characteristics.

1.4.1 Practicability

Caves were excavated with purposes. In these Caves, the painted sculptures and murals are designed for religious purposes. Some are built for monks' self-cultivation, some for the faithful worshipping. Artists create figures of Buddha for people's worshipping, or depicting murals with Buddhism stories, so that ordinary people are enabled to understand the meaning of Buddhist thoughts. Thus, the production of painted sculptures and murals is restricted by Buddhist thoughts.

1.4.2 Realism

Stories described in Buddhist scriptures are mainly the myths without real existence. However, in art of Dunhuang Mogao Caves and the images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas and disciples, we pick out many prototypes in the real world. Another example is the unparalleled magnificent palaces depicting a gorgeous paradise and scenes of musicians and dancers performing. This is exactly reflects the ancient imperial palaces, royal music, and dance in the real world. Buddhism creates a Buddhist world beyond mundane world. Yet, all of these imaginative materials are from real life.

1.4.3 Promotion

Because the art of Dunhuang Mogao Caves has a strong religious purpose, how to make esoteric Buddhist art easy to understand becomes the key of artistic creation. Artists always apply ways favoured by the masses, such as Chinese-style landscapes and other scenes in murals of Buddha. With such a public nature of Dunhuang art, it precisely enabled it to represent an era of mass aesthetic trend. Over 1000 years, changes of artistic styles of Dunhuang Caves accurately reflect the aesthetic sense of the mass public at all times.

1.4.4 Common features

The art of Dunhuang Mogao Caves shows a complete set of order and standards in its layout. Each grotto creates a complete "Buddhist world". Just like the arrangement of coloured sculptures: the Buddha is placed in the centre, and the both sides are sequencing disciples, Bodhisattvas, and Dharmapalas. Behind them are mostly large-scale murals, depicting the ideal state of Buddhist Pure Land. This requires close cooperation among architects, sculptors, and painters. These works are often based on some well-known artists and forming an artistic production team, who collectively produced grotto murals and sculptures so as to ensure the integrity of the art. In addition, the public also harboured ideas and expectations toward artistic works, which often affected the art. Thus in art creation, common features are greater than individual ones. In a sense, it may limit the personal performance of artists. But at the same time, a single artist cannot achieve the ambitious, profound team spirit.

1.4.5 Expressive attitude in technique.

The art of Dunhuang Mogao Caves has no fixed aesthetic ideological restraints, which is also a product of multiple sources. Dunhuang Mogao Caves were strongly influenced by Indian Buddhism. Many Indian monks came to China, bringing foreign sculptures, painting styles and techniques. Later, Chinese popular art styles also appeared in the Dunhuang art. These ancient artists absorbed a broad variety of styles in Dunhuang Art and created syncretic works. Dunhuang art from distinct times has clear characteristics of these times, and through that, the diversity of Dunhuang art has thus been formed. Its remarkable significance rests with no prejudice. It boldly absorbed all the suitable means for creation, so that nationality was not only preserved, but also enriched fields of traditional Chinese art.

Because of the above five characteristics, the murals and sculptures – works of art in Dunhuang – attracted an unprecedented amount of believers. The religious needs and public needs greatly stimulated the development of Chinese traditional art. Such an interaction with artists and the public formed a unique art era in the history of Chinese art, just like architecture, murals, and sculptures of the European Renaissance churches. During this period, the impact of Chinese Buddhist art had spread out, influencing surrounding countries, not only West Asia and India, but it also went beyond the eastern ocean to reach Japanese Buddhist art.

CHAPTER II

Today

Contemporary art

2.1 The connection between traditional cultural resources and contemporary artistic creation

As I intend to show in the following chapters, the state of art in today's global society is characterized by the interplay of tradition and innovation. Although the modernist 20th century including the Maoist Cultural Revolution aimed at resetting tradition, traditions and cultural roots which have been passed down from generation to generation are used more and more in contemporary arts in different manifestations. Each person may have its own interpretation of “tradition”. However, the defining of tradition is based on social factors.

If we look at the contemporary Chinese situation, since the past 30 years of reform, Chinese culture has become increasingly influenced by Western culture and has opened up, especially to American culture. During this process of contact with Western culture, Chinese nationals have gone through the complex process of fetishism, to suspicion and confusion. This impact process is often thought-provoking, and unavoidably makes us re-examine our traditions and roots.

I have found that the traditional cultural resources and contemporary arts are two aspects that have become interrelated. The former is a kind of heritage, as well as the basis and premises; the latter is inheritance of the former, as well as introducing development and

innovation.

Art is an expression of culture. Although contemporary art has become an international phenomenon, it is rooted in tradition, and artists' works are almost inseparable from their particular culture. While these cultures provide a concrete space for creation, expression, and the formation of meaning, they extend, change and develop with time. No matter if it is Western or Oriental art, they have developed step by step based on the national traditional cultures and arts. Although aesthetics and cultures vary from different countries and possess their own individuality, they are all part of the world art movement and constitute a world culture together. Therefore, the innovation of traditional culture has become necessary and inevitable. Today, we live in a highly modernized and informed society, and the inburst of new ideas as well as new concepts have brought an unprecedented impact on traditional culture and arts. In trying to describe syncretism, Roy Ascott refers the formula "both, both/and and either/or" as expressed by Marilyn Ferguson.

"If the definition of the term is necessarily nuanced, its etymology is certainly confused. According to Plutarch, syncretism refers to the ancient Cretan's decision to unite in the face of a common enemy (e.g. sun-kretismos). Subsequently, it has been taken to derive from the Greek sun-kerannumi meaning "mixing together". [...] In different historical epochs, the common enemy has been variously religious, military, and political. In present day cultural terms the enemy is habit – the passive, uncritical repetition or acceptance of behaviors, opinions, perceptions and values, and the enshrining as verities, metaphors that have passed their sell-by date. Habit is the enemy of art, impeding the search for new ways of being. The syncretic process is always an assault on habit, confounding the certainties and orthodoxies of unconsidered homogenizing convention. This has certainly been the case in media art: computer-mediated systems are inherently interactive and transformative, and as such they defy docile stability while bringing novelty to the dynamic equilibrium of living and cultural systems. After all, the first rule of cybernetics is to acquire 'requisite variety', and variety is the spice of syncretism."¹

¹ Roy Ascott, Syncretic Reality: art, process, and potentiality, http://www.drainmag.com/index_nov.htm

Contemporary artists seem to conduct artistic innovation with full use of traditional cultural resources. They change the traditional culture and habits that are in a sort of "sleep" state into a motion for artistic innovation and development, bringing a fresh atmosphere to the realm of art, and making it an important cultural phenomenon. Looking at the shifting globally influential countries on contemporary art, as well as the individual influential works of art, we can easily find unique social and cultural backgrounds and traditional cultural roots reflected within their "internationalization" artistic languages.

2.2 The 85 new wave art movement

Since the awakening from the sleep state provoked by the "85 new wave art movement"¹, Chinese contemporary art has quickly evolved into a sophisticated internationalised force.

The 1980s in China represented a kind of explosive answer to the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 70s, when China was not only cut off from the rest of the world, but was also forced to disown and renounce its own culture. Suppression of such a powerful culture could only be met with an equal and opposite force. The result of this explosive reaction was the '85 New Wave Movement. This search for new artistic language and dialogue sent artists in pursuit of multiple lines of enquiry. After decades of political movements, the line of modern Chinese artistic development had been seriously eroded, leaving only traces from which to reinvent a new culture. Forced to work almost from scratch, artists instigated a parallel and alternative contemporary art history to the West that brought Chinese art from strict socialist realism to mature experimental and conceptual practice in just a few years.²

¹ The 85 Movement was a group-movement because in only two years (1985 and 1986), seventy-nine self-organized avant-garde art groups, including more than 2,250 of the nation's young artists, emerged to organize exhibitions, hold conferences and write manifestos and articles about their art. A total of 149 exhibitions were organized by these groups within the two-year period. The movement continued to develop in 1987 towards a more provocative and conceptual direction, peaking in 1989 during the period of the China Avant-Garde exhibition.

² http://www.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid523_en.html

The famous Chinese art critic and curator, Gao Minglu¹ who coined the phrase "85 new wave", invited Xu Bing, Huang Yongni, Cai Guoqiang, Gu Wenda, Ding Fang, Zhang Dali, Jia Zhangke and other artists to exhibit using the subject of the "Wall" in 2005 and commemorate the 20th anniversary of the "Reshaping Chinese Contemporary Art". There are more than 90 works, including several important works that witnessed the onset of contemporary Chinese art history as well as new works created by artists for the "Wall" exhibition. The exhibition contains paintings, photography, device art, performance art, architectural design and other media which has been a successful attempt for Gao Minglu to promote the "Chinese brand" of contemporary art to the world.

In 2004, Gao Minglu published *The Great Wall in Contemporary Chinese Art*², mainly looking at chinese performance art, explained the historical background to the so-called "Discourse of the Great Wall", as well as citing artists' recreation of the Great Wall as a "symbol". In the exhibition of "The Wall: Reshaping Chinese Contemporary Art", he relates the Great Wall to the construction of chinese culture of more than 2000 years. In the 20th century, the national crisis and bloody realities of the Second Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s promoted the "Wall" as a symbol of Chinese nationalism enabling the Great Wall to enter into the realm of Chinese visual cultural creation. Since then, in different periods of the past decades, the Great Wall has constantly been given different meanings as an "art symbol". In a sense, we could say that it is the most recognizable symbol for people to understand China and

¹ Gao Minglu teaches in the Department of Art History, State University of New York at Buffalo.

² Gao minglu (2004), *The Great Wall in Contemporary Chinese Art*, east asia cultures critique 12.3 773-786 by Duke University

Chinese contemporary art.

Despite the controversy and *contemporariness* of the art works he chooses for the exhibition, Gao Minglu said: “In any case, I hope to respect history.” I feel that the examples in his articles that refer specifically to the performance art pieces of “The Concept 21 group” on Great Wall in 1988, “The Great Explosion” of Zheng Lianjie on Great Wall in 1993, or the “Ghosts Pounding the Wall” of Xu Bing to rub Great Wall in 1988, in which the bearing of a national soul could be taken as a kind of traditional culture.

Every nation in the world has its own unique form of traditional culture and traditional cultural content, thus building a specific ideology and values of that nation. The “dragon fire” built by Cai Guoqiang with the explosions of gunpowder is intended to “extend Great Wall for 10,000 meters”. This is a work to “rebuild Chinese identity in globalized era”. The combination of historical memory and contemporary interpretation becomes the creative heritage and foundation for the “Great Wall brand” of these contemporary arts. In my opinion, on one hand, these works appear with various visual styles, on the other hand, the meaning they convey to are diverse. Behind the works, there is a strong historical and philosophical support, a kind of dialogue between Chinese artists and history with the Great Wall as the basic medium.

2.3 Art toys: Art or Toys?

Today, twenty-five years after the 85 new wave art movement, we can notice the surfacing of art practices in China, influenced primarily from Japan, that have become interdisciplinary, blurring the borders of disciplines such as art and design and creating forms that reference

traditional forms as well global pop culture. The emergence and potential of the "Toy" as a creative platform can be examined as a link to contemporary art and traditional art as discussed in chapter 1. We can see that the toy as art is, on the one hand, a humoristic, ironic and superficial product exemplifying consumer values, but it is also a mode that can be reference to traditional art forms and mimic the strategies of mass production as well as the traditional idea of copying and perpetuating traditional forms.

In contemporary art, a large number of cross-border cooperation of artistic creation has brought a new derivative between toys and art: "Art toys". Art toys may also be seen as a "creative platform ", which are designed and produced by designers and artists. The size may range from a few centimetres to tens of meters. The materials used mainly include VINYL that is easy to shape, and sometimes also include plaster, metal and other materials. Different from commercial cartoon toys and stuffed toys, art toys will greatly integrate the artistic creation elements as critical cultural objects. The artists have been reproducing the images in their works, transforming those images into three-dimensional objects. In addition, artists and designers have also freely created based on fixed repetitive toy models, granting new connotations for those toys with no facial expressions, no themes and no stories. By showing different styles and ideas of toys, designers and artists can inject life and meaning in them with rich artistic content. Turning artistic works into vivid, lovely dolls, artists into the toy designers, and fashion brands into personality-based characteristics can be achieved through art toys which possess the potential to attain those features.

From the serial works of Andy Warhol and American or British Pop artists in the 50's and 60's to the inflatables of Jeff Koons and Paul McCarthy which prefigure the birth of art toys,

people have begun to wonder: is it a toy, fashion, or art? Is it much more appropriate to regard it as a work of art than a toy? Most images of these toys are derived and extended from the works of artists. Currently, artists engaged in art toy creation include the Americans: Futura, Mars-1, MCA, and DALEK; the Japanese: Murakami Takashi, and Nara Yoshitomo; the British: James Jarvis and Pete Fowler; the Spanish: Jaime Hayon; the Australian: Nathan Jurevicius; and Michael Lau in Hong Kong China and so on. People who have a little knowledge of the art community are often surprised at hearing that toys are being made in the name of these art, whether it be an individual artist or a company. Japanese artist Murakami Takashi once created a Miss Ko2 prototype which was auctioned in New York for 567.5 thousand U.S. dollars. At the time, it shocked all art and toy or art toy collectors. In 2007, the Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara created a 30 cm toy doll based on his earlier illustration work. It was called "Sleepless Night Sleeping", a limited edition of 300 priced at 1000\$ U.S. each. Six months later, the toys were sold at an auction in Paris for nearly 20 thousand dollars. Raymond Choythe, the CEO of Hong Kong Art Toy Brand TOY2R comments: "Those who buy our toys earn a high income with delicate quality of life because our toys are art toys. Art has always been highly position in people's minds; yet, we hope to bring the art to the public and toys. "¹

¹ Toy2R website, [http:// www.toy2r.com](http://www.toy2r.com)



Figure 11 Art toys (Perk, BAPE, and Michael Lau)

Japanese artist Takashi Murakami has taken traditional Japanese cultural resources and has used them as a leitmotif and technique of creation. Meanwhile, his works have been obviously inspired by digital art in information age. Murakami's style, called Superflat¹, is the expression of the *Otaku*² culture and shallow consumer values. Murakami's style is characterized by flat planes of color and graphic images involving a character style derived from design and *manga* and traditional Japanese art, especially the Ukiyo-e of the Edo period (1603-1867), and of course American culture.

"However attractive or persuasive the similarity between Edo culture and otaku

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superflat>

² *Otaku* (おたく) is a Japanese term used to refer to people with obsessive interests, particularly anime, manga, and video games.

culture seems, we should not forget the simple fact that otaku culture could not have existed at all without the influence of American subcultures. Manga, anime, tokusatsu (SFX movies), SF novels, computer games, all are of American origin and imported from the US with its post-war occupation policy. The otaku culture should not be seen as a direct successor of Japanese premodernity, but as a result of the recent "domestication" of post-war American culture, which was developing just at the same time with Japanese rapid economical growth and the recovery of national self-confidence in 1950s and 1960s. In this sense, otaku culture is essentially "nationalistic" though its characteristic and expression are far from those of traditional ordinary nationalism."¹

All of his two dimensional works, installations and animations skilfully integrate Japanese traditional elements with contemporary art concepts and digital art forms, which enabled the works to contain strong contemporary aesthetics, as well as clear, elegant, sober and simple national cultural characteristics. His works represents a recent artistic trend as a unique form of expression and the development of a visual language with distinctive personality, historical complexity and a *Japaneseness*.

¹ http://www.hirokiazuma.com/en/texts/superflat_en1.html



Figure 12 Takashi Murakami



Figure13 Takashi Murakami

Murakami's work, although based in visual art, has overflowed into the domain of design. While continuing his working as an artist, we has developed work in the context of products, for example, Louis Vuitton show rooms, comme des garçon T-shirts. If Andy Warhol turned consumer products into art, Murakami turns art into consumer products.



Figure 14 Takashi Murakami

2.2.1 PERK

In the wake of Murakami, the young Art Studio "PERK", located in Shanghai, China, involves two young artists, Haiyumei and WeiWei. The art works of "PERK" include illustrations, toys, clothing, equipment and animations. From its design-based foundation in 2004, their work has gradually increased its influence and has found its place in domestic and

international exhibitions as well as art media. "PERK" opened their shop, the *123 Shop*, in May of 2009 and mainly sells their own art products.

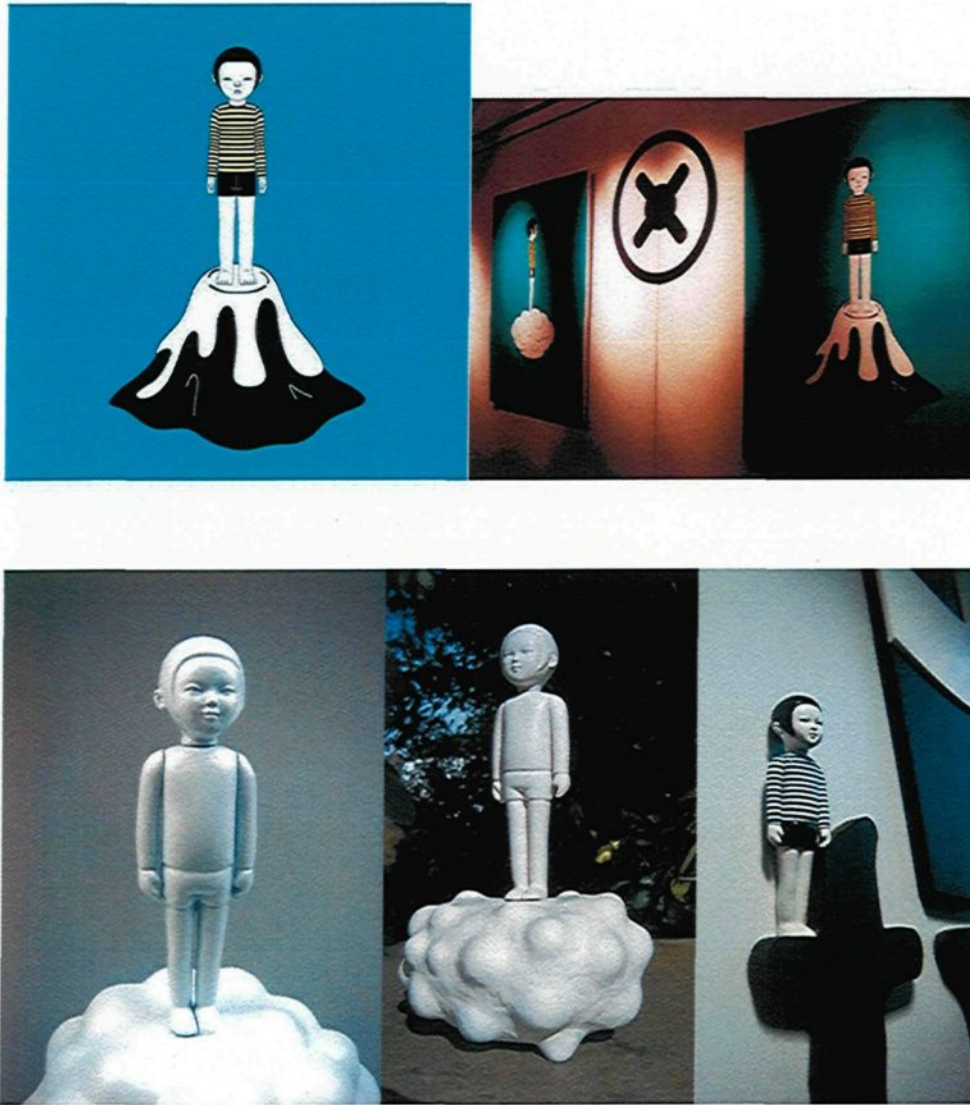


Figure 15 Volcano Boy and Perk Boy

PERK concentrates its production on a particular toy called "Perk Boy". The iconic toy derived from their "Volcano Boy" illustration in 2005. Perk Boy's style is a mix of

contemporary art aesthetics with traditional Chinese imagery. There are in total 5 kinds of “Perk boy” and they are dressed differently and each figure stands 10CM tall with movable arms and head. All of them have delicate facial features and neat hair like traditional Chinese painting. Each toy can be bought separately. So it may be best to think of “Perk boy” as an affordable work of art rather than a toy.

2.2.2 Yoshitomo Nara

Previously, I have seen a lot of Yoshitomo Nara's works both on-line and in books. Last year, when I visited New York, I was very fortunate to see the exhibition of Yoshitomo Nara Marianne Boesky Gallery.

Yoshitomo Nara is a currently well-known contemporary artist in Japan, whose works includes manga and animation, typical consumer products. Again, these works have been exhibited in Museum of Fine Arts in Europe, the United States and Japan, and have been most welcome among the public. Yoshitomo Nara's earlier works were mainly illustrations. In the late 1980s, he developed a style based on girls’ avatars. Yoshitomo Nara was rather fascinated by little girls with big heads and large eyes. Nara's work is characterized with the shaping of various emotions in the eyes. Among those works, a little girl with a squinty look is most famous, and the varying interpretations of the representation range from, insolence and anger, while others say it represents evil; the unfriendly look seems to say “what are you looking at? It is none of your business! ” In his paintings, protagonists in the background suggest loneliness and apathy that is captivating. Moreover, the look in the eyes of the little girls show the fear of children towards the world of adults, including loss, unknown, evil, love, and hurt,

homelessness...



Figure 16 the exhibition of Yoshitomo Nara

From his works, I can find traces like: the smooth crayons, comic-style lines or the appearance of naive young girls and pet-like animals. However, he added a cynical taste to the works by portraying these characters carrying weapons such as knives or guns which breaks their innocence. Sometimes, he paints children with knives in hands, and sometimes with head bands, bloody hands, or dogs with eyes closed and shedding tears. The injured and wordless animals seem to affect something in the heart and are not the same pure, cute animals they appear to be. In addition, Yoshitomo Nara's works contain almost no background, only

highlighting behind the figure. In the late 1990s, Yoshitomo Nara began to create three-dimensional works, turning the dogs or children in his paintings into large-scale art toys of three-dimensional sculptures. This, to me, is his most perfect expression of images of works.



Declaration of War - Never Ending Fight! - A knocked down dragged out fight! - Ash Night

Figure 17 Yoshitomo Nara

Yoshitomo Nara maintains the emotional affect as the most important aspect of his work, blending fantasy and reality in his painting. The works overall shape employs incomprehensible narratives, arbitrary and free painting gestures and spirited colours to form his own style. Yoshitomo Nara often illustrates quiet and lonely children in open space with the faint light to form the unique atmosphere of his works. Nara's paintings convey the idea of a self-contained world, a whole and unique consciousness. In his paintings, we can feel the elements of popular culture, and how profoundly those elements have impacted people's subconscious desire. Naturally, the images of Yoshitomo Nara's works show the superficial

"sweetness", such as a statue with a smooth, nearly perfect surface. The works adopt bright colours - mint green, cherry red, plum blue ... all of these languages sooner or later will remind each viewer of cartoons and animation movies. But this is like an outside sugar-coat wrapped in the layer of bitter pills, only making it easier to swallow. Today, Yoshitomo Nara's works have been collected by many museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art.

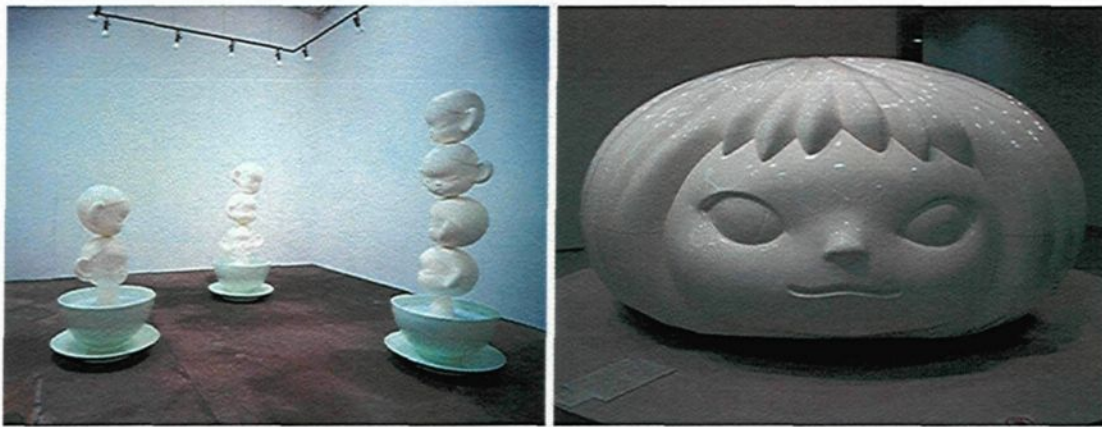


Figure 18 The exhibition of Yoshitomo Nara

2.2.3 Maywa Denki

The name comes from the electrical company owned by Tosa's father that went bankrupt during the 1979 world oil crisis¹. Maywa Denki was created in 1993, by Nobumichi Tosa and his brother Masamichi, this time as an artistic unit.

The world of Maywa Denki is a strange mixture of corporate irony, ingenious artistic invention and real technological innovation. Respectively, Masamichi and Nobumichi Tosa appointed themselves "president" and "vice president," and their company costume is blue

¹ http://www.maywadenki.com/english/00main_e_content.html

work wear, inspired by the typical uniform of Japan's small electrical companies that supported its fast growth in the 1970s. Each piece of Maywa Denki's art work is called "a product" and a live performance or exhibition is held as "a product demonstration", appearing on TV and in the mass media, and creating commercial products. Maywa Denki's promotion strategies are full of variety: exhibitions, live stages, performances, product music, videos, writing, merchandising toys, stationery, and electric devices. In 2001, the younger brother Nobumichi became president. In 2003, Maywa Denki won the Award of Distinction in the Interactive Art category of the Prix Ars Electronica and received high praise for its first overseas live performance in Paris.

The work of Maywa Denki is classified into 3 series: *Naki*, *Tsukuba* and *Edelweiss*. Although these series are distinct, there are bridges among one another.

"*Naki*: 26 fish and 26 ideas". Maywa Denki's invention uses sophisticated technology, complex process, unique appearance to production a no practical, operational complexity, but definitely whimsical "art product".

Naki is the first series developed by Nobumichi Tosa on the theme: "Who am I?" 26 objects in the form of fish refer to itself and its relationship with the surrounding world. His idea is that thinking process is like fishing: "*Fish*" (= idea) in the "*ocean*" (= person chaotic way of thinking), use "*fishing rod*" (=mechanical production technology) "*Fishing*" (= motivation) fishing into this world. Then Nobumichi Tosa tried to use this 26 fish to understand the "underwater world"(= himself).

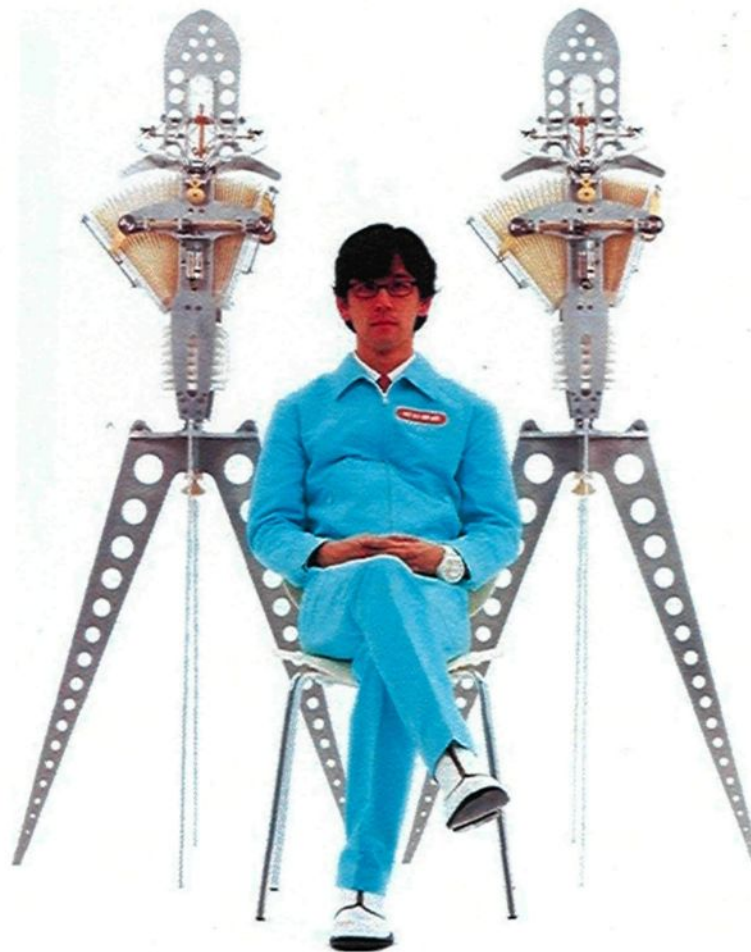


Figure 19 Nobumichi Tosa

Tsukuba is a series of musical pieces by Maywa Denki. The *tsukuba* music series was conceived to use the movement caused by motors or electro-magnetic devices using only 100 volts. Their sound is actually created by the physical knocking or vibration of the instrument onto another substance. Nobumichi Tosa thinks that the emergence of new technologies for

music generation, for example samplers, synthesizers and computers, have separated music from the material, leaving music simply as information that can only be listened to with speakers. The Tsukuba Music was created to turn our attention to music's origins; he thinks that music should come from materials. It should have a material sound.

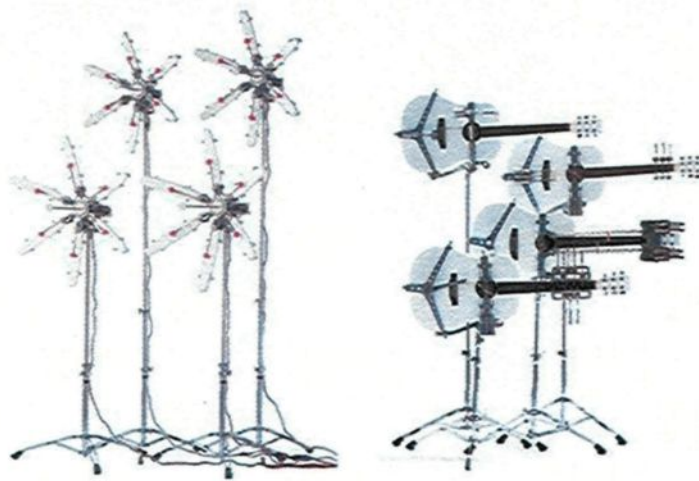


Figure 20 Tsukuba

Edelweiss is Maywa Denki's new series in 2000. This series is based on the new futuristic "Edelweiss Program" written by Nobumichi Tosa. It is his commentary on how consumerism has swallowed post World War II Japan to the point of absurdity. "Compared to a century ago, Japanese women today spend a lot of money and time trying to make themselves look beautiful," Tosa explains. "Our society has become so materialistic."¹ A reflection on the research of the ideal woman (female = flower), such as "womb", "gene", "exterior appearance", "fashion", "erotica", "maternal instinct" ect. Changed them into flowers, then from these flowers, Maywa Denki explores and tries to understand women.

I think Maywa Denki is an integrated art project, combining commodities and art shows (exhibitions, performances etc.). The creation of Maywa Denki has generated from a small idea, growing through an intense practice of drawing sketches², creating objects, electronics and metal machinery. Because of its unique nature, it becomes a unique "work of art", and a fantastic machine. The "art machine" of Maywa Denki is created through copies and mass production becoming commodities, toys, fashion publications and so on. As well, Maywa Denki participates in exhibitions (product display), performances (product model), and television shows and so on.

Maywa Denki has grown into a brand name and a real "Art Company" from an art duo and a mechanical and electrical workshop. All these kinds of presentations and productions are the art of Maywa Denki, which shows not only works of art but also the artistic life of Maywa Denki.

¹ Maywa Denki 明和電機ナンセンス＝マシーンス, 2004. P 17

² <http://www.maywadenki.com/blog/>

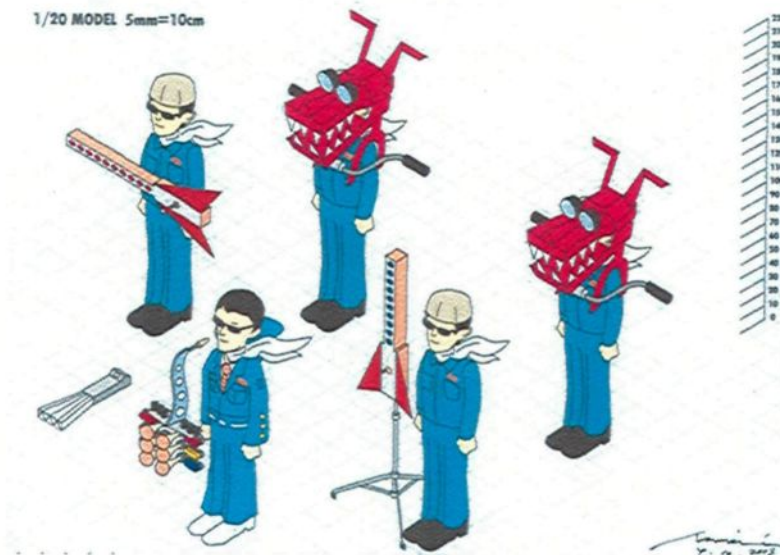
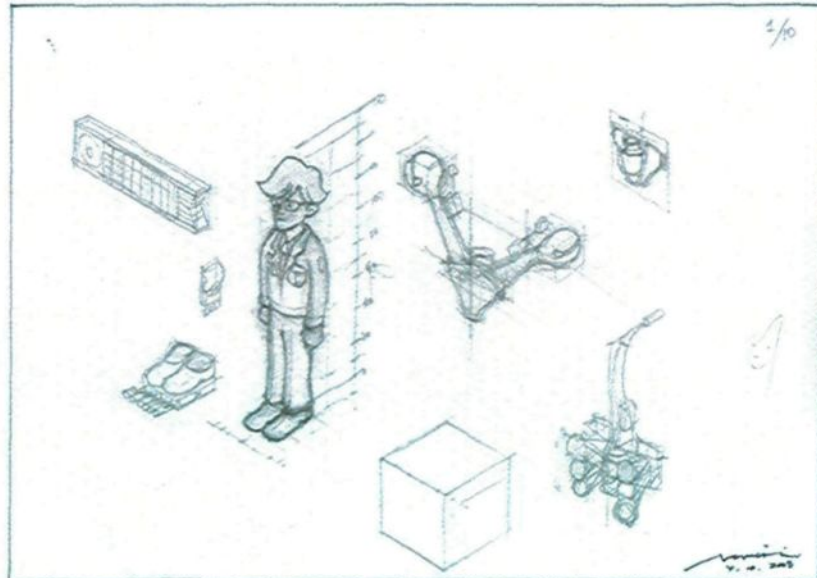


Figure 21 Maywa Denki

2.2.4 Mars-1

MARS-1 is an emerging painter and visual artist, working primarily on canvases and sculptures, many of his sculptures come from the canvases which is why I am drawn to his art work. In March of last year, I went to New York City, to visit his exhibition “Nuclear Mystic” in Jonathan LeVine Gallery.



Figure 22 Exhibition “Nuclear Mystic”

His unique imagery explores possibilities of otherworldly existences through highly developed, multi-layered landscapes. Often employing a fuzzy concept¹ aesthetic, Mars-1's art work has a sentient appearance, like a "*tulpa*" which in mysticism, is the concept of a materialized thought that manifests into physical form. His unique style has been described as urban-Gothic, sci-fi abstracted, quasi-organic form. His inspirations include: graffiti, animations, comic book characters, ufology, extraterrestrials, unexplored life, mysteries of the universe, alternate realities and the abstract quality of existence².



Figure 23 Tulpa

¹ A **fuzzy concept** is a concept of which the content, value, or boundaries of application can vary according to context or conditions, instead of being fixed once and for all. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuzzy_concept

² <http://jonathanlevinegallery.com/?method=Exhibit.ExhibitDescriptionPast&ExhibitID=6361D934-19DB-5802-E0E8187242DD5408>

CHAPTER III

My art practice and art opinion

My art practice



Syncretic

融會

Wei Zhao

Directeur: James Partak

Figure 24 Syncretic

3.1 Illustration

Most of my illustration works apply ironical views of real life social issues and often deals with social status, a recurring topic in Chinese society.

The series of illustrations with the theme of "RISE" was created for an art exhibition in Berlin. I referenced recent Chinese history, namely, the "Great Leap Forward movement" to reflect the creative theme "RISE". "Great Leap Forward movement" was carried out in China from 1958 to 1961 as a nationwide "rhetorical movement" led by Mao Zedong. The "Movement" was aimed at the pursuit of high-speed development of production in order to achieve the objectives of high industrial and agricultural indicators. It required that production of industry and agriculture should multiply in size several times more than previous levels. In fact, this was impossible to achieve. Yet, because of the erroneous leadership of the Chinese government, China resorted to "making false data". The most famous examples are the acclaimed declaration that farmers have been raising pigs as large as houses and producing peanuts as big as boats. A lot of these infamous exaggerations were depicted in the works of art and posters known as socialist realism, or rhetoric of propaganda which was the official art of the time. All of these myths have become creative elements in my work.

"Great Leap Forward movement" seriously became alienated from reality and brought serious consequences of counterfeiting in the whole China; eventually it led to a wide-range famine and huge death toll. On the other hand, its impact is very far-reaching; even today, decades after the Great Leap Forward, the Chinese society, as exemplified in the political realm, applies false data in pursuit of political achievements. Some parties and government

leaders, especially some of the major leaders, will brag using false data such as revenue, GDP, national income, and number games on even family planning. Similarly, some artists in China will plagiarize other peoples' works for personal exhibition in order to enhance their own reputation and interests. These artists are similar to people in China's "Great Leap Forward" period, never facing the truth. I intended this series of works, "RISE", to satirize those artists who plagiarise and other social issues in contemporary China.

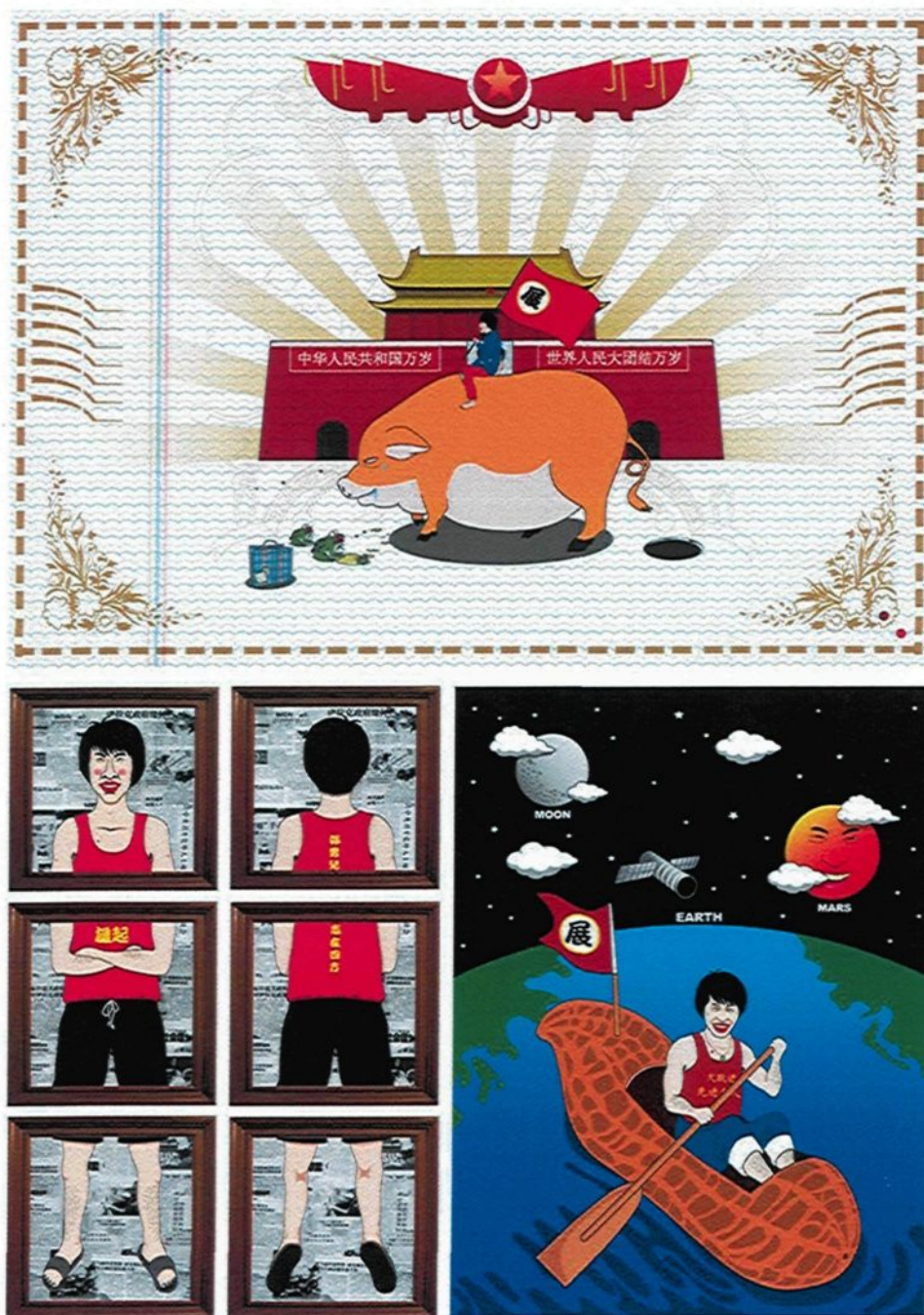


Figure 25 TigerTranslate Rise

3.1.2 LuoHan

LuoHan was a series of creations when I was in China in 2007. This series of works include toy designs and packaging, as well as some illustrations created for the toy LuoHan.

LuoHan is the abbreviation of Buddhist and a Sanskrit name *Arhat*. It suggests the worthy one, destruction of evil (not people but inner desires and passions), and the attainment of nirvana. They are disciples of the Buddha who are distributed on Earth; they vanquish enemies while spreading Buddhist thoughts. LuoHan has various images. Some are standing or laying, laughing or meditating. LuoHan has his own personalities and unique life background. For the LuoHan characters, there are some unifying characteristics, such as the big belly, high forehead, etc. These features have been perpetuated through previous creators, reflecting strong traditional Chinese cultural features.

The origin of my creation of LuoHan image as toys is to adjust the more common features of LuoHan model. Firstly, the round shape, a big belly, and the high forehead differentiate LuoHan's appearance with other toy images and reflect LuoHan's features as natural, spontaneous, generous and intelligent. I try to unify the external appearance into these general characteristics which basically consist of various sizes of spheres. This unique design not only has an traditional characteristics of national identity but also has elements of contemporary toy designs. This kind of design also facilitates the inscription of unique motifs on each toy, endowing individuality to a common model. In addition, the name LuoHan itself carries a certain mystery and this ancient Buddhist image and its connotations and denotations, once found in the caves and palaces in the past resonates in our present day lives.

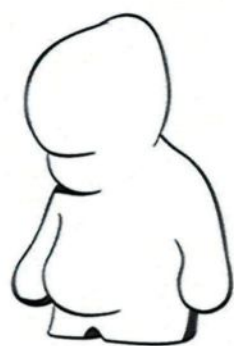


Figure 26 Luo Han

LuoHan toys are intended to be modified by the public who can inscribe their own motif, thus combining the creation of the public through my basic design, gaining more images and artistic charm (as in figure 19). Toys as a creative platform is the concept of my series of LuoHan toys.



Figure 27 Luo Han

3.1.3 East and West

Chinese traditional art has a long history of thousands of years during which diverse trends were developed. These have resulted in many creative techniques in the realm of aesthetics and spirituality. Chinese traditional art consists of a simple graphics, images suggesting movement, a language or style that I have learnt. Many Chinese artists have started their production by studying religious art. It is partly from these elements that my work has evolved.

In these works, I used the aforementioned traditional Chinese techniques merged with current digital techniques, namely vector graphics. Traditional representations of musicians, derived from theophanic figures, are seen as 3D vectorial representations, revealing the skeletal system, the structure of internal organs and the overall geometry of the composition. These digital images are printed on canvas and mounted on wood frames, referencing Western pictorial traditions.

I use contemporary notions of the virtual or cybernetic culture, translucent layers, natural elements and mechanical ingredients, fantasy and reality as syncretic illustrations to express the blending of Western digital media and Chinese culture. These works have a pervasive *chineseness* about them, however the internal workings are very digital.



Figure 28 West and East



Figure 29 West and East

3.1.4 Empty head man

I infused Chinese traditional figure styling into my own illustration works. “Empty Head Man” is the figure in the illustration “Body Language” that I made. Its appearance is very similar to the figures in Dunhuang murals mentioned in the first part of this thesis. I made “Empty Head Man” into a material object and opened its head as continuation of the creation.

Many people are always complaining that they are too ordinary: ordinary looks, ordinary achievements, ordinary characters and ordinary careers... So, they continuously try to copy or imitate from outstanding people, in the hope that one day they will be as excellent as them or even exceed them. However, during this process of imitation, they unconsciously lose their original individuality. As a result, they continue to feel dissatisfied about themselves and think they are too ordinary. With time, their remaining self-confidence slowly disappears in their speculation and suspicion. Finally, they suddenly understand that they are no longer the original self. In fact, we are always trying to change ourselves, but meanwhile, we forget that we are unique from the time we were born. Our personality and our thoughts can’t be imitated by other people. The biggest success of life is not to have a big success but to try by all efforts to realize one’s self.

Through the series of “Empty Head Man”, this work expresses the idea that everybody is unique; everybody has their own thoughts, like each model has different things in their head. This work can be taken as sculpture, or as a toy.

The piece is intended to have a participatory aspect to it. People are invited to add to the work that is based on the original model of “Empty Head Man”. They can add new colours to it, and express their own thoughts by placing new objects in the empty head. Although the

Empty Head Man is a proposal for participation and personal expression, thus poetic, an underlying aspect of this piece is the head as a recipient, a space to be filled with possessions through the arbitrary nature of consumer culture which in turn creates the dispossessed, emptiness.

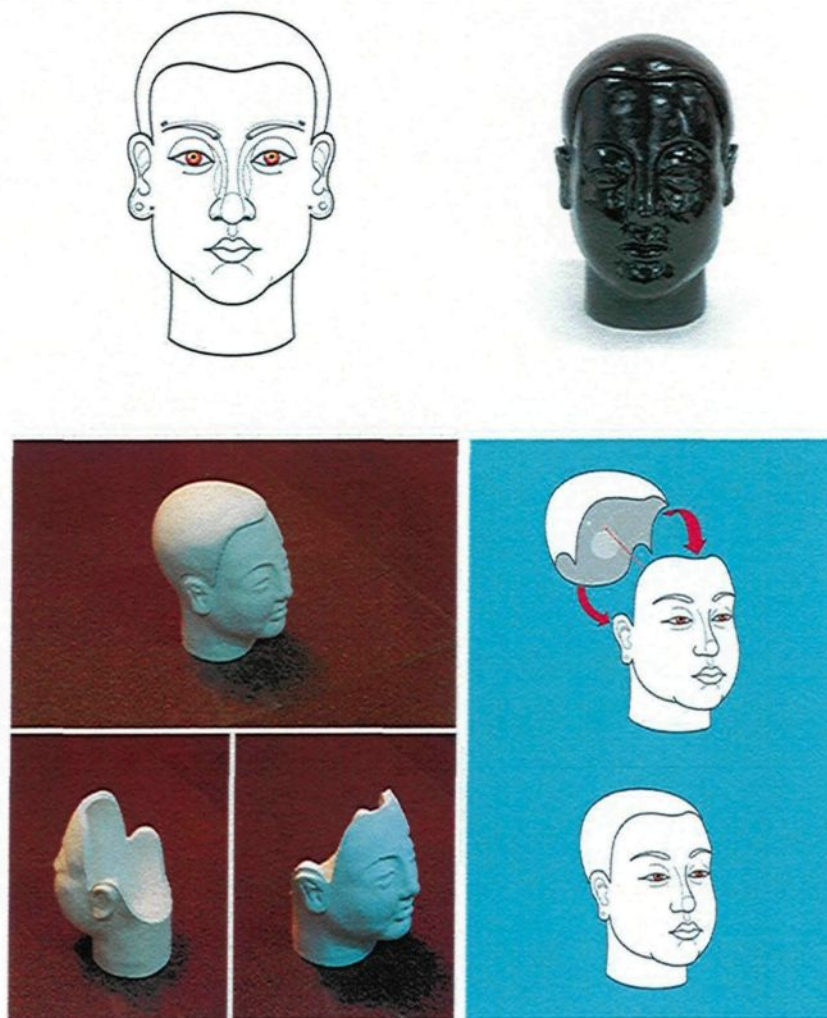


Figure 30 Empty head

3.1.5 Avatar

Avatar is a further two-dimensional exploration of the “Empty Head Man” work. Six digital prints provide a narrative for the piece expressing our innermost thought and feelings, which include happiness, enjoyment, depression, fear and disappointment. As well, the requisiteness of daily-life of each person is distinct from others. For instance, some like to lie down and read, some like to do exercise in the wild, some like to listen to music privately, some like travelling abroad, etc. Those situations mentioned above come from both the human nature and the outside-world. The “Empty Head Man” is the characterization of anthropomorphism, the symbol which is sent from people.

Since the "Empty Head Man" was created as a platform; the main aspect is not the figure of its face but the operable-head. It could be redesigned with new colors or new surfaces, and be reframed by putting something needed into the “empty head”. After this, the “Empty Head Man” becomes an “Avatar”, taking on particular ideas of different creators.

These are six illustration of “Avatar” are:

- a head full of vocabulary: These words also make up of my life and describe my feeling about life.

- Hands hold the head up. The hands could be regarded as mine or other creators’.

Every different "Empty Head Man" shows the different ideas of each creator.

- The process of putting a brain into a head is also thought as the step to recreate and review. I use translucent layers to draw “Empty Head Man’s body.

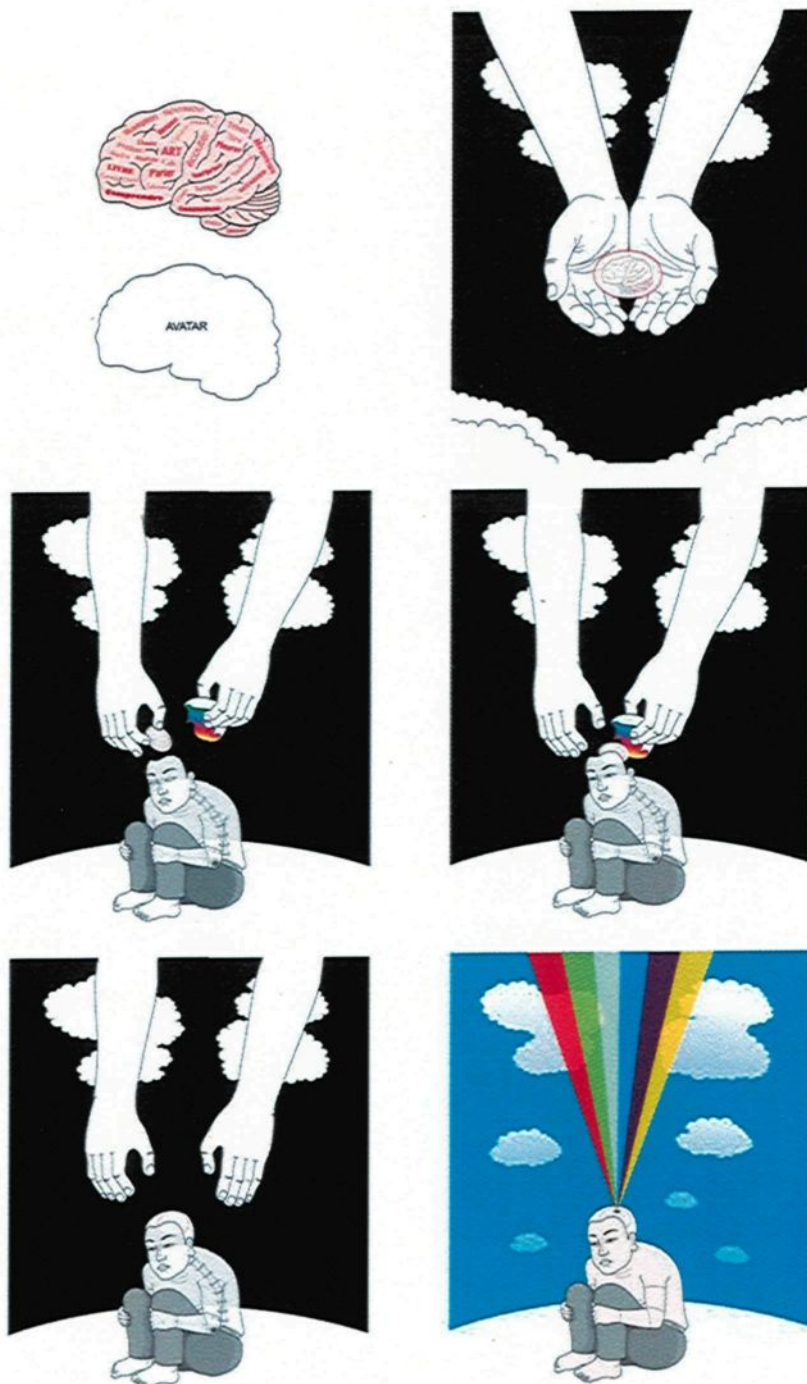


Figure 31 AVATAR

3.1.6 Body Language

This work includes 12 computer illustrations created with vector graphics and digitized newspapers (raster images) as backgrounds. These illustrations are divided into two parts. The first part is the "Empty Head Man". The second part is a "Body Formed by Wires". Through these works, I intend to express that "things can be seen without necessarily being true and real". In these works, even though the surface is an illusion of a real person, the interior, in reality, consists of a fishes' brain and of a body of wires. Things are not as they seem.

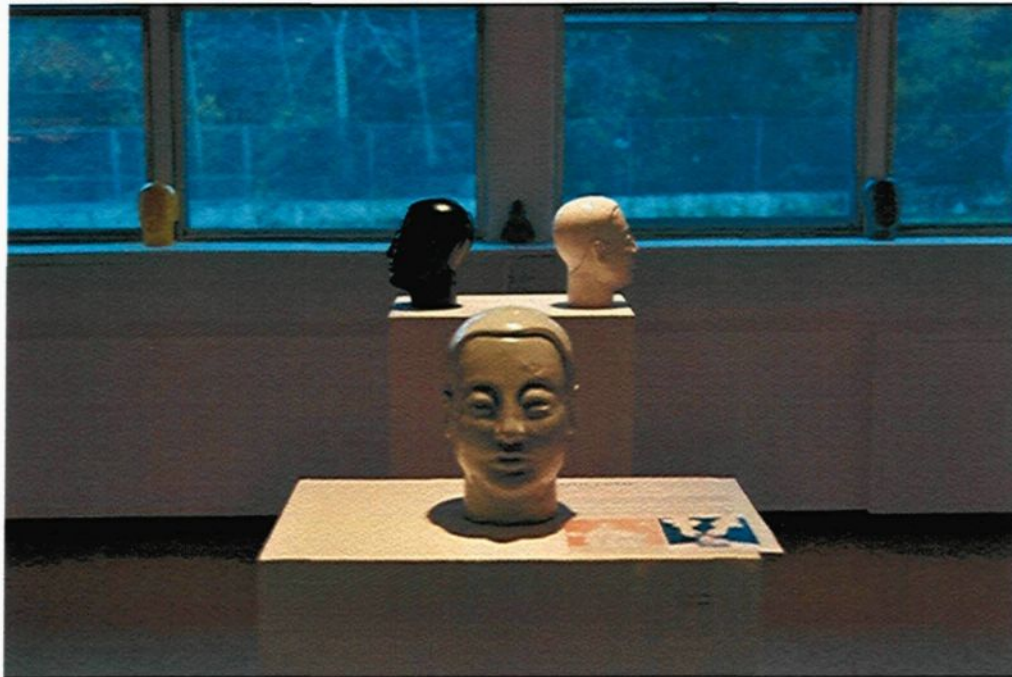


Figure 32 "Empty Head Man"

Along with Avatar, creation is seen as a poetic vision: the artist strives to find a way to project his insight on life, society and spiritual matters stemming from a sensuous experience as a starting point. These works, although they comment on the state of affairs on a mundane

level and analyse our society and culture, they also express the individual nature of the experience of the artist and those who participate in the work.

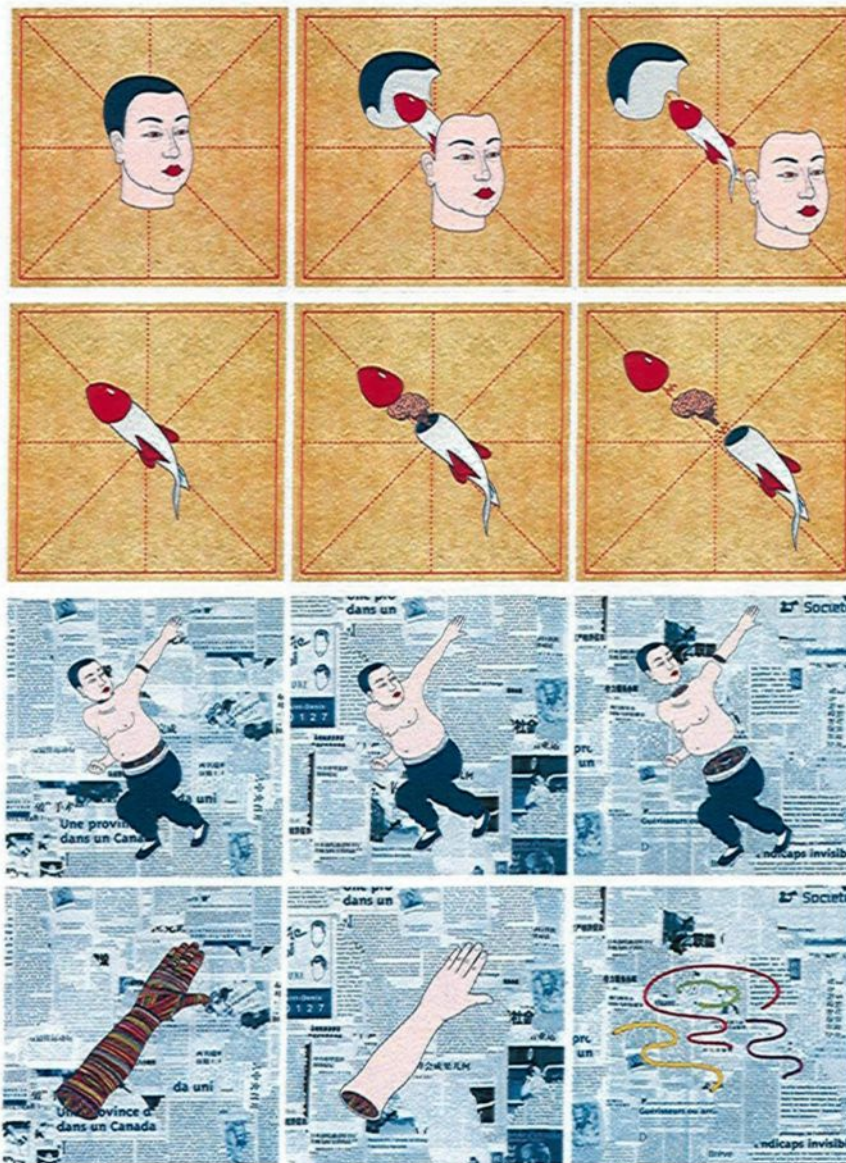


Figure 33 Body language

My art opinion

3.2.1 History and culture are the basis of artistic creation

Modern characteristics of things cannot be separated from tradition, and all modernity can find roots in tradition. History in any areas are equally important, as the internal soul of this area. The current existence must depend on the existence of history. History is recorded in the twinkling of an eye, and changes are generated from the present moment. Thus, concepts and ideas of people in modern ages have to learn from experiences of our predecessors. Art, as a discipline, as relatively independent practice activity, is a practice process of integrated application of multi-disciplines. Thus, creation of contemporary art is no exception, which both includes the reproduction of essence of traditional art and transformation of the traditional arts. I personally believe that: traditional art is profound; the inheritance of traditional art should start with external forms in order to grasp the inner spiritual essence. Only through profound understanding of traditional arts, can artistic creation become more meaningful.

Chinese traditional arts have a long history. After thousands of years, the rich and colorful national folk traditional arts has the commonalities and its own features, as well as the historical characteristics of stage, social hierarchical characteristics, ethnic diversity, and regional differences, etc. These artistic elements are the endless sources in my artistic creation. Therefore, I think my own artistic creation should inherit the traditional Chinese culture and I should actively and seriously study the essence of Western contemporary art.

From my own point of view, I face exchange and collision between the traditional Chinese art and Western contemporary art. For traditional cultures, I need to deal with them from

different angles and absorb the essence. I believe that with the basis of culture and traditions, the foundation of art creation can then be generated. At the same time, I need to grasp the developing trend of Western contemporary art, absorbing the essence of the art of other countries or other nations. Consequently, I can form the integration between tradition and modern, nation and the world, region and the globe to create visual art with Chinese connotations.

3.2.2 The importance of “integrity” in artistic creation

My understanding of integrity refers to important ethics and codes of conduct. The quality of "integrity" for a nation is a responsibility and quality; for an individual, it is a moral self-cultivation. "Integrity" is also essential for artistic creation. I think that artistic creation must and also need to adhere to "integrity". Artists should be concerned about today's social reality and social problems to reflect the mental outlook of modern people. There should be true feelings. This is the manifestation of an honest artist. In the artistic creation, we should seek truth from facts, which is also the manifestation of “integrity”. In my previous illustration work "RISE", I used some ironic expressions to depict the some unfaithful artists and some dishonest social phenomenon in China.

In the information age, people's pace of life has changed enormously, particularly in the developing China where everything is in "hyper-normal", accelerated development People have no time and awareness to focus on the inherent quality with a biased outlook on things. At the same time, artistic creation has also been affected; in many people's mode of thinking, the "integrity" is lost. The attitude towards learning of art is also developed in "hyper-normal"

acceleration. If the learning methods have given up "integrity", the meaning of learning art and artistic creation will also be given up. Many people in the artistic creation will ignore the process with all eyes on the result, ensuing in meaningless outcome. Ignoring the process with all eyes on the result leads to the segregation between essence of art and us. The level of understanding things will remain in the concept stage, which directly affects the attitude of artistic creation. Similarly, if a person does not care about his own learning throughout the process and only concern with results, the true meaning of learning will be ignored in some unrelated things that attract their attention away from the growth process. Therefore, we should hold real and honest attitude to adjust thinking and orientation in the art study and creations.

Throughout the creation process, the lack of "integrity" is also reflected as "insufficient attention to society, insufficient social experiences and insufficient cultural enrichment" and so on. The lack of the thoughts on the overall development of the art and over-pursuit of some accomplishments lead to the lack of "true feelings" in artistic creation, separating from social reality and social problems. The lack of accumulation of life and sharp observation is an important obstacle impeding someone's acquisition of higher artistic expressions.

3.2.3 How do I view my own creation?

In the thesis, I have mentioned several times the "creation process" and I always focused on it. For the whole process of the creation, I have the habit of using cameras and hand-painting to record. I always keep an open mind on the fact that this process has influence on the transformation of my own self. I try to use different media, means, and tools to be creative.

Facing my own works, I often ask myself: What is the main subject? What are my elements? What is the structure? What are my materials? What is the space? What is the process? What is the result? What should I get? What should I omit? What comes to my mind? What should be ignored? What should I see? What do I ignore to see? ... I like to interact with my works and keep asking questions, paying attention to details, and trying to grasp every possibility. My attention to details is the basis of success. The changes and improvement of my works are rewards for my efforts.

Some people think that as long as the works of art have good-looking appearances, artists are free to perform and express. Why "good-looking"? Can good-looking be the standard? The result of arts has no unified standard. I think "good-looking" should be the performance of the essence of art, also a creative purpose. And artistic creation must have a clear purpose in order to follow the direction of creation. The definition of art is not just its final form. A painting can be called as art; a photograph can be called as art; a pair of shoes or a building can be called as art. Purpose and objectives of each creation should be clear and unequivocal. Yet, the creation process is under the state of uncertainty, so it is essential to master the process. At the beginning stages of creation, my feelings and thoughts are very complex; in the process, I often feel the changes of my own emotions and the pain of constrained imagination; and then it is transformed into happiness and excitement after being released from the bondage of constraints. My works and I have been confronted throughout the creation process. The art practice has given me a lot of enjoyable surprises and new ideas. I also obtain a clearer understanding of the real purpose of artistic creation.

I hope I can take the initiative to think and solve questions. But sometimes, the state of not

thinking about anything is also good. When I cannot figure out main threads of an affair, my only action is "do". Artistic creation cannot just think from the form or the technical level, but rather to have more profound proposition of artistic creation in the creation process and have a real and specific understanding toward the purpose behind the proposition. When we have a final answer to the things we want to do, this is often the sign of a bad start. Because the process will change people's inherent state of understanding, people who ignore the process generally do not have the capacity of controlling and manipulating. Thus, I tried to note the logic in the creation process, and care fore details and sort them out rationally. I strived to unify things into an idea as much as possible. After, I position the target and then analyze the respective properties of things step by step. In the creation I showed this through vivid images.

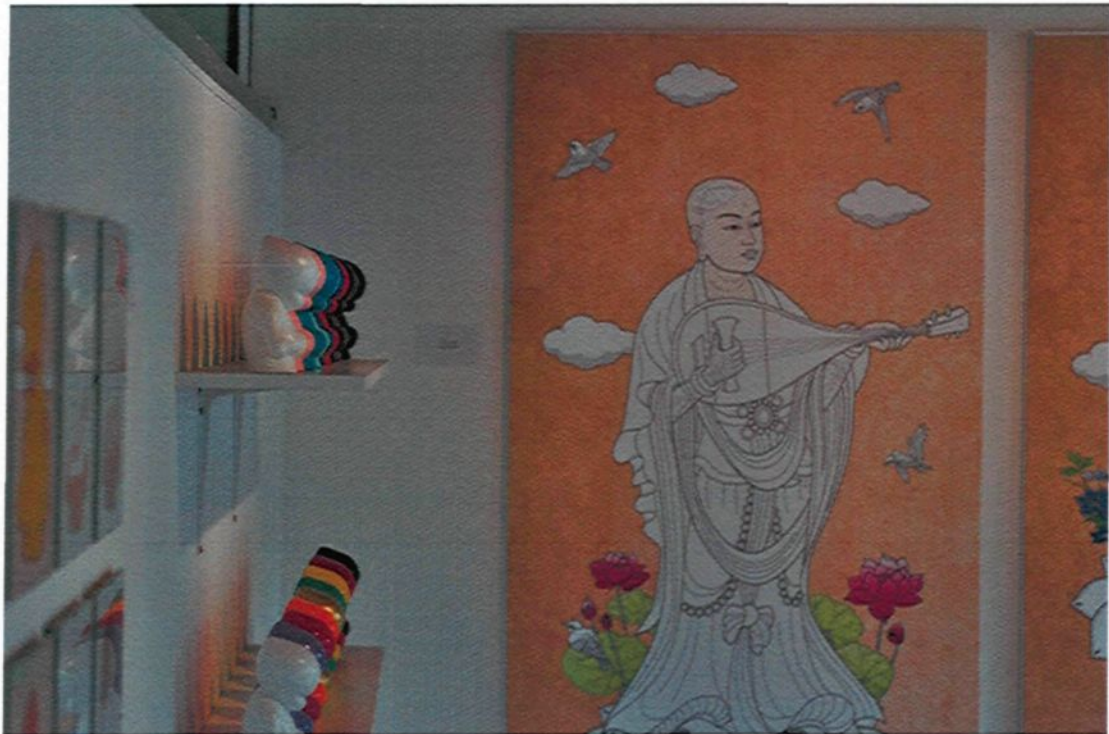


Figure 34 Syncretic

CONCLUSION

I have studied and learned design and Art for six years, including 4 years in China and 2 years in Quebec. I studied and researched on traditional arts of Dunhuang in China and its history of more than 1000 years, and I went to Quebec and Montreal with its history of 400-year. I visited a large number of art galleries in New York. My greatest feeling was: We must respect history and traditional culture, returning to the "origin of art", thinking and learning. The reason is very simple: right now people with any "innovation" are all drawing experiences of predecessors. History in any area is very important to the field. History is the inner soul of the field. Those who do not study history and do not respect history and traditional cultures will be rootless when looking at issues and researches, not to mention art. Thus, I like to study history and traditional arts. In the learning process I often feel the joy of imagination released from confinements. History and traditional arts have not restricted me; on the contrary, they enable me to learn more, from which I do not learn specific artistic methods or concepts, but rather insight and experiences of looking at things. I am guided to understand things from the inside to the outside. I think I can not simply analyze artistic creation from forms or technical levels, even if they are also very important to in-depth understanding of culture and expression. Art creation must not simply pursue the result, which would ensue deviation of the direction and neglecting the essence and content of artistic creation. The pursuit of the essence and meaning of art is the most important. When I visited murals and sculptures in Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, I often thought that what we were seeing is the surface of the murals and

sculptures, or the history of 1000 years behind these works of art. Those who understand history and traditional cultures will possess this "the second field of vision" and can see the value behind these works of art. In addition, only those artists who understand history and traditional cultures can create works of art with high quality.

With the coming of network information era, Chinese people's aesthetic demands have ushered in tremendous changes. All levels of ethnic and traditional arts are experiencing strong impacts from western culture and the arts. Information network enables developing China to get more comprehensive understanding of the world, and enables me to be more keenly aware that a nation's culture and art should not submit to others in order to get a position in world culture and art. Only those culture and art that do not follow other people's innovations can be real innovation. In the creation process of art, traditional, modern, ethnic or global things should be combined with one another in order to form a wide range of artistic styles. It is based on the idea of this modelling analysis that we are guided to consider the relationship between design and concept of this traditional style and contemporary art from the local to the comprehensive aspect. I hope that I can reflect new thinking and ideas in my own works, and pay attention to integrate the traditional Chinese design with contemporary styling language in the modelling process, and strive to not only embody the traditional culture, but also to have a sense of the times.

People always will consciously or unconsciously constrain their thoughts in limited knowledge and narrow-minded concepts. If all people are constraining themselves, creation will face many problems. In this degree, I think that discovery is more important than creation. Picasso said: "Art is not created, and only discovered". Though it is true, his words reveal a

profound reality. I am always reminding myself to discover more and more. I think that contemporary art should not be measured only by the results at the surface level, but rather should be concerned about whether it maintains a continued developing trend. When discovering, I devote myself in learning. Thus, I developed an attitude towards things: "try to discover and change the static things."

ADDENDA **CHINESE DYNASTY TABLE**

Shang Dynasty	c.16 TH -11 TH century B.C.
Western Chou Dynasty	c.11 th century-771 B.C.
Eastern Chou Dynasty	770-221 B.C.
Spring and Autumn Dynasty	770-475 B.C.
Warring States Dynasty	475-221 B.C.
Chin Dynasty	221-206 B.C.
Han Dynasty	206 B.C.-A.D.220
Three Kingdoms Dynasty	A.D.220-280
Western Tsin Dynasty	265-316
Eastern Tsin Dynasty	317-420
Southern and Northern Dynasty	420-589
Northern Wei Dynasty	445-534
Sui Dynasty	591-618
Tang Dynasty	618-907
Five Dynasty	907-960
Northern Sung Dynasty	960-1127
Southern Sung Dynasty	1127-1279
Yuan Dynasty	1279-1368
Ming Dynasty	1368-1644
Ching Dynasty	1644-1911

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