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American Culture and Chinese Material

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Abstract:

To me, painting is a tool, a tool that helps record my feeling like a diary. When I watch my paintings, the past memory is vivid. The art education I used to have is quite limited and misguided. The sequence likes “fast food ” or “assembly line” .With inadequate education. My painting skill is limited on drawing model instead of having a idea. To me, this is a curse to push me to stick on traditional painting materials and improve my skill, I wish with better drawing skills I could be more confident to handle my drawing, and also liberate my creativity.

I am happy to do painting. it is a good way to neglect the fact that I am grown up, Perhaps that is why I make most of my painting works in comic style, I am pretty relaxed and enjoy when painting like this style.

I. Sculpture

The most difference between art college in china and US is way to select student. Not like art college in US, art college in china never accept student’s portfolio. They give certificate to those students who get a higher grade in enrollment examination, The examination usually requires student finish a sculpture sketch, gouache and figure drawing in 5-6hous. As a result of this examination, everyone include me forced to dedicate all of our energy in sketch and gouache at high school. My creativity and self-awareness was buried after years of drawing training. In order to reflect my introspection about my education experience. Sculpture become my theme. In

real world, those sculptures are most common seen subject in my high school studio, It is part of my memory in high school. In other hand, The sculpture was a symbol of misleading art education of china.

In the figure1 figure2 figure3 and figure6, I draw a huge sculpture which represent a big obstacle, for student who wants to learn art in china has to overcome this “sculpture test”.

On figure 01, a student reluctantly climbing a sculpture, The rear side of sculpture likes cliff, makes the student hard to reach the top.

On figure 02, a student is drawing on a sculpture, this sculpture is so big that he can barely draw on a corner. When I was learn to drawing sculpture in high school, Sometimes, I felt that I would never be able to finish it, there are endless detail on sculpture wait to draw, it is like facing a task that will never be done.

After many hours of drawing, drawing can make people so nervous. most of the time, I was not allowed to leave the studio in high school without permission, After so many days drawing ,It was a quite exhausted experience, figure 04 and figure 06 was a scene that how I finished my work under pressure.

II. Distortion Animation Character

I like bodybuilding, It is more than a sport to me , but a life experience. It started when I was a middle school student I noticed a fitness magazine. I was attracted by the model on that magazine. The image of huge muscle was so amazing, I quickly become a fans of bodybuilding. Just like many boys admire a superhero or action star, I admire the visual motivation stimulate by gym muscle. I dreamed to have a muscular body. I was so fanatic that I even drawing muscle

copy from anatomy book at high school high, It was so funny that I used to believe I could become one of strongest person in the world. When I grown older, after competing in bodybuilding game, I realize that my fantasy to bodybuilding is originally created by some kind of irrational desire in my mind, the bodybuilding industry are no different from any other sport industry, sportsman is part of the industry, they are content and topic creator, behind every athlete were groups of sponsor. Media. fans and customer. starring at this real world of bodybuilding, I questioned myself what is exactly I am looking for in this sport. Do I wish to show my talent to others or I want to be part of this industry making a living on it? Those question are existing until I start my art education again, I could give an answer as a drawer. My drawing is a reflection of my self awareness, Those cartoon character with super real huge muscular figure reveal emotion suppressed during my childhood. Child in Chinese family are always suppressed on self conscious by family member. As I grow, I didn't had any education from family or school to help me understand sex or build appropriate attitude in interpersonal relation, What parents ask children to do is to keep advantage at school. In lacks of self awareness, radical thinking and emotion breeding. My childhood experience could be a clue to find out what I want from bodybuilding. absolutely I was influenced by many superficial advertisement or entertainment media. Fitness industry and entertainment products transfer misleading idea, they sell fitness motivation and illusion to people, But to explain my fanatic on bodybuilding, I have to go back to childhood. Those well-know animation character represent the my childhood life, their exaggerated figure is the symbol of irrational desire for strong body, this strong body means power and rights. In my subconscious, some kind of radical emotion controls me. When parents using law of jungle and radical emotion pushing child to his limit, The by-product is making teenage like a little monster ,losing the ability to find self awareness.

When I grow up, I couldn't make rational thinking, sliding into some kind of fanaticism, same feature would probably similar to some teenager who was living in Nazi or culture revolution period. In this occasion, The only purpose of one's life is to find out a enemy to destroy or, with so much fury and desire to be better than other person , weight lifting is like a weapon to me, In my subconscious I wish to use it strengthen myself and destroy other's confident, that is a lift for seeking advantage. Fanatic to bodybuilding makes me become a member of Nazi or culture revolution. in Fig 7,a muscular cartoon character standing like a Nazi, The huge injector is his weapon to make himself strong, he is eager for power. This is a process of replacing self awareness with a egoism. Fanatic in Bodybuilding is fanatic in superiority.

But fanatic will come to a end when self awareness rise. I asked myself why I need bodybuilding, who I am. Making a self portrait is the journey to awake my self ,(Fig 8) It is a portrait with a anxious face. In this portrait a person has some doubts in his mind, but he started trying to find a answer by his own, so has less anger on the face.

Another reason for choosing animation character is to make a sense of humor and iron joke. The characters I choose are originally cute and smart. However, with exaggerated bodybuilding figure, they looks weird. In the surface, It is fanatic for bodybuilding and misleading fitness marketing create those monster, The subtext in those distorted animation body was a reflection of my irrational emotional in childhood.

The Japanese Artist Ishida Tetsuya inspired me a lot. He has a good skill which makes his surrealism painting believable and attractive on visual expression. The theme is ironic. He revealed an unhealthy society by drawing distort citizen and common utensils. His theme is harsh and pessimistic. The color and pattern is realistic .

While I accept Tetsuya's style of realism, I reduce the severity of the criticism. I am not a sober artist, so on my painting, characters have a cute face, except for Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. The cute face might reduce the degree of satire when people watching my painting. But the realistic muscle reminds audience that under those cute things was a series of real life.

American dream in China

Chinese has American dream too, and had it for years. For Intellectuals, The Qinghua university which is most advanced university that donated by American was a monument of American dream, It contains all their fantasy about advancing technology from American. For elder folks, What represent American was Coco-cola, that is a drink made by factory not by hand. For us, who were born in 90s, Ameican is abstract and complex. The more sources of information we have, The more mysterious American is, We are influenced by Hollywood movie, some are fans of NBA star, rich kids bought their iphone1.

After been living in American for 4 years, I believe that what Chinese think of American is a reflection of our own desire. Before I come to American, I imagine this country is a land with powerful people, I watch WWE and saw strong man like Jhon Cena, I watch hollowood movie, there are so many American flags, American houses which looks big and American cars which is also big on screen. Although I have never met any American that time. All American seems to be big and tall, And American appeared to be violent like wrestling star Jhon Cena. It is interesting that for young people in china,

they have variety of fantasy of American, some seems afraid, as they saw Gulf War from news, some are very optimistic and planned to go to American to see what this country looks like. I think if I want to find a symbol to reflect my fantasy of American, It must be Jhon Cena. In(Fig12)(Fig13)(Fig14). He is a superhero in this world. On the fact of it, I believe American is always related to individualistic heroism consist of violent and Justice, But deep inside the drawing, it is a teenager's fantasy of violent and rebel. From a first person perspective I think American is a ideal media which allows Chinese put their own desire in it. That is why so many Chinese talking about how American like, although most of them have never been there. By staying in American, having more contact with American people I realize there is a egocentric tendency deeply root in every Chinese, it is hard to be noticed, So I want use Jhon cena again to visualize this egocentric tendency, In (Fig15).Jhon cena dressed like a Chinese warrior who is still holding a chair from wrestling stadium. Such misunderstanding could happens to every Chinese when they trying to understand American. American is a mirror to help me take look at myself.

Political

In politic field, Chinese has little freedom in make comment and publish, It is very different from American. But Chinese still need to talk politic on social media. Chinese seems to find a way to avoid censorship. By using foreign culture as a metaphor.I think to understand how Chinese think about their own life is by listening what they say about other country's life. Such phenomenon could find in any field. To make fun of it, I make a example by drawing (Fig16)(Fig17) There are no room to talk chairman Xi on blog,

Donald Trump a replacement of him, who is a representation of very controversial politician. To talk more sensitive topic, such as how Mao become a rebel and destroy former administration, Jhon Rambo is his replacement. It is ironic that there is a group of genes in Chinese culture, which is always tend to talking some foreigner but you can translate it knowing what are subtext hiding in it.

Conclusion

My drawing is like a history of my growing, It is a record of memories. In this record I try to find other perspective to explain my life, meaning I have to find some emotion buried in the details, some subconscious I didn't noticed. This journey starts from family, went through the periods of high school education, later, my drawing include some feeling of nostalgia and criticize of how a Chinese use American as a fresh environment to explore himself. This journey haven't come to a end, With my skill improving, I would keep drawing some violent, surreal character, those character might be from cartoon or real world.

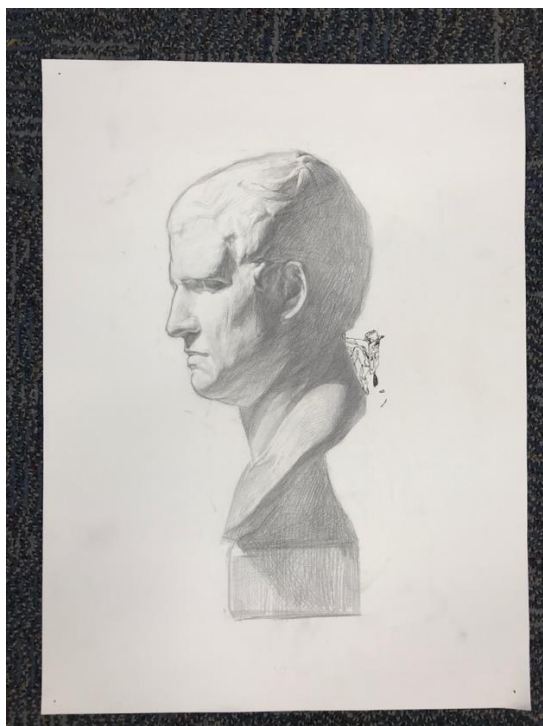


Fig. 1. Li Ke. Sculpture 01,Pencil ink , 18''x 24''



Fig. 2. Li Ke, Sculpture 02, Pencil ink , 18''x 24''



Fig. 3. Li Ke, Sculpture 03, Pencil ink , 18''x 24''

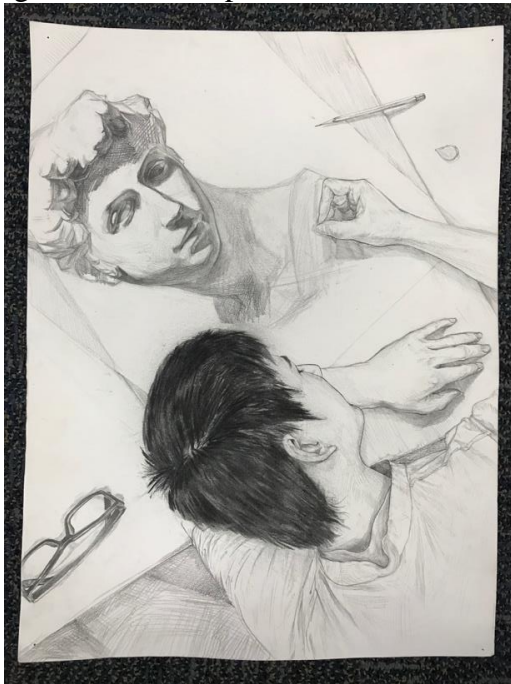


Fig. 4. Li Ke, Sculpture 04, Pencil , 18''x 24''

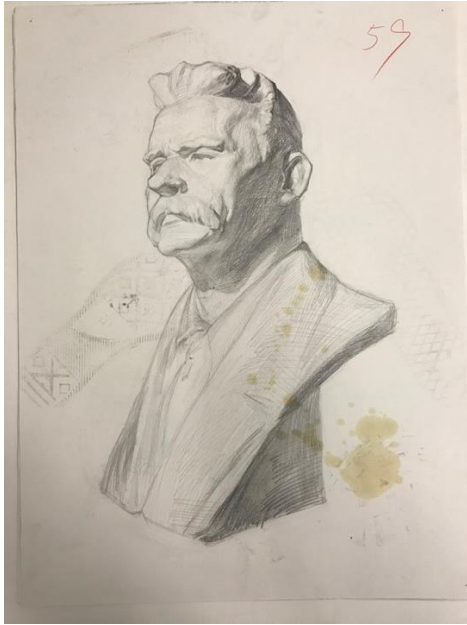


Fig. 5. Li Ke, Sculpture 05, Pencil , 18''x 24''



Fig. 6. Li Ke, Sculpture 06, Pencil ink , 18''x 24''



Fig. 7. Li Ke, Muscle Animation Character 01 , ink , 32''x40



Fig. 8. Li Ke, self Portait, pencil , 9''x 12''



Fig. 9. Li Ke, Muscle Animation Character 02 , ink , 22''x 30''

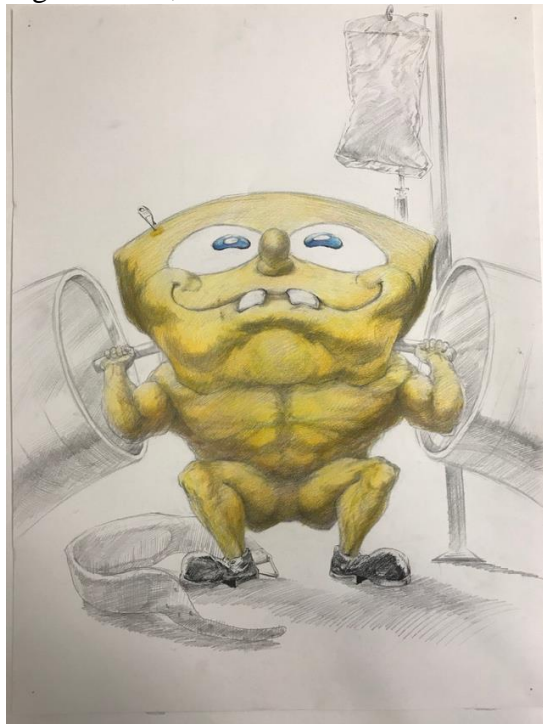


Fig. 10. Li Ke, Muscle Animation Character 03, color pencil, pencil , 18''x 24''



Fig. 11. Li Ke, Muscle Animation Character 04, pencil , 18''x 24''



Fig. 12. Li Ke, Jhon cena 01, Ink, Pen , 18''x 24''



Fig. 13. Li Ke, Jhon cena 02, Ink, watercolor , 18''x 24''



Fig. 14. Li Ke, Jhon cena 03, Ink , 18''x 24''



Fig. 15. Li Ke, Jhon cena 04, Ink, 33''x 44''

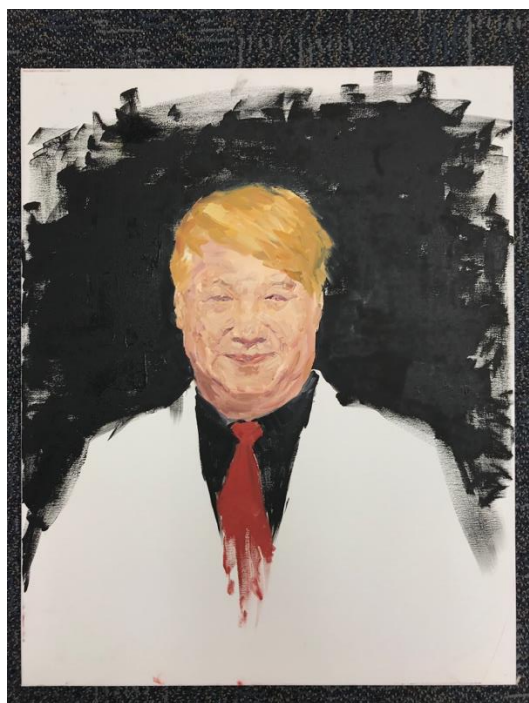


Fig. 16. Li Ke, Xi and Trump, oil, 24''x 36''



Fig. 17. Li Ke, Chairman Mao, Ink, 24''x 36''