



Big Thousand World

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
Specialization in Painting

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As an international student from an entirely different culture, I have experienced a sense of rejection living in a new society. Studying abroad was an escape from my reality and a denial of my culture. My thesis research is about repainting my reality by transforming common everyday objects to a surreal and exaggerated extent.

Instead of rejecting my reality, I choose to change my reality through artwork. Through my work, I acknowledge the terror of being rejected and accept my fears. This acceptance makes being rejected less horrifying because I am able to use my art practice to create a timeless space where I shape the world how I want.



Through my artwork, I invite the audience to connect with my painted reality and question their own knowledge systems and goals, as I portray figures living in a fog of habitual daily life with an urge to make meaning.

In particular, my artwork blends and explores themes of consumption and materialism in human life by depicting and exaggerating the comedic aspects of mundane activities. The symbolic meaning of skeleton is to free bodily discrimination and to erase identity, all the individual traits that relate to human concerns are absent and equally represented. More broadly, my use of the skeleton addresses Buddhist themes of the impermanence of being in an attempt to acknowledge mortality through a larger lens of interrelated phenomena.



My exaggerated and narratives of repainting reality find inspiration in the works of Francis Bacon, Hieronymus Bosch, Otto Dix and Yunfei Ji, where I recreate a sketchy and chaotic world that is seemingly violent yet plotted deliberately, to represent my worldview and indicate my concerns throughout the allegorical narratives.

I offer a dark reflection of being human in a shared reality, by exploring and encountering imaginary things that we are afraid of instead of running from them.

I use ink on rice paper as the main approach for my work, a traditional way of art making. It also offers a different perception of the world, where human existence is insignificant to the universe's sublimity. Traditional paintings always have an extraordinary richness and density of being timeless. The magic resonates within the tangible experience from viewing physically.



In addition to the physical artwork, I also created digital animation using similar line drawings to compose the motion pictures. It helps to unfold the layers of my paintings and investigates the visual relationship between traditional art and digital animation, bridging the contemporary art world with traditional

craftsmanship. Short animation can also be spread rapidly on the Internet, where to reach a wilder group of audience in this contemporary era.

Through my thesis research I learn to accept my fear and rebuilt the reality, to explore hidden meanings throughout life yet without spoiling the beauty of unknowing. If experiencing my artwork makes the audience recalibrate their views of reality and life, my goal is achieved.



Zhang_001 **The Bell** 2021 Ink on Paper 80x90 inches



Zhang_002 **Food Factory** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x40 inches



Zhang_003 **Split** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x65 inches

Zhang_004 **Hot Spring** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x118 inches

Zhang_005 **Root** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x61 inches



Zhang_006 **Big Thousand World** 2021 Ink on Paper 16x190 inches



Zhang_007 **Just another Rainy Day** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x50 inches



Zhang_008 **Party** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x20 inches



Zhang_009 **Mutation** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x82 inches



Zhang_010 **Cake** 2021 Ink on Paper 16x55 inches



Zhang_011 **The Show Must Go On** 2021 Ink on Paper 20x89 inches



Zhang_012 Animations 2021 Digital Film

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