A Qualitative Research into Liminal Space Utilizing Art Expression to Illustrate the Elasticity

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Introduction

The starting point of this research is depression. It was given to that one of my closet friends was diagnosed six years ago, additionally one significant phenomenon had caught my attention while I was working in a local university as a student assistant. According to my observation during work period, students are more prone to getting depression regardless of the grade, age and gender. 'Depression' appeared as a noticeable word in my life which I had never thought of all of a sudden. Afterwards, when long term insomnia and irritability occurs to me, sometimes even the thought of dead is better often make me wondering if I got depression too. However people suspect catching one is a relatively common phenomenon, surprisingly over sixty percent (60.64%) respondents based on my questionnaire conducted in December 2020 within 94 valid responses had considered whether they got depression or not though without official diagnostic certificate. Ann Cvetkovich regarded depression in her book 'Depression a public feeling' as a cultural and social phenomenon, (Cvetkovich 2012) I can not stop asking what happened to us, to our society exactly?

Along with further exploration, it has been stated that severe or long lasting negative stress for instance, failure of or rejection from valuable event or person that exceeds the individual's competencies and capacities to mitigate the impact of loss (Beck & Bredemeier 2016: 597) which happens along side our lives is able to trigger depression, whereas before jumping into the hardly irretrievable depression directly, it was assumed that depression was not affected at once after the external force, a gradual process happens either to trigger genetic risk and depressogenic beliefs (Beck & Bredemeier 2016: 596) which helped me generating the process as a liminal space or "betwixt and between" state and better interpreting and formulating the 'rubber band model' idea. In this case assuming that either we are getting depression or on the way to get one, how do people cope with the negative thoughts and feelings? How do people treat pain in the current situation of rapid technology development? How do they experienced during the suffering? If melancholy happens to everyone inevitably, then what can we do about it without converting into severe consequences? And what can art do in this particular field?

Prescription for Being OK

Human beings are generated with various extents of flexibility, adaptability or 'elasticity', partially one of the reasons that helped us getting rid of melancholy and being attunement without getting depressed after every failure and rejection. Guy Winch, who is a psychologist and an author, had brought a few fresh ideas on TED show in October 2014 as guidances to maintain our psychological

health and emotional hygiene according to his study. Compared to physiological injuries like fallen down or broken legs, we sustain psychological injuries even more than we do physical ones as loneliness or failure and even harmful to distort our perceptions and scramble our thinking and suppressing the function of immune system to make us being vulnerable to kinds of illnesses and diseases. Yet studies have shown that even a two-minute distraction is sufficient to break the urge to ruminate or over digesting the negative experiences. He proposed several steps from noticing the emotional pain to confronting negative feelings in order to build emotional resilience and thrive. (Winch 2014) Not only the subtle positive inner hint and consciously control of overly ruminating are able to curb emotional bleeding to a certain extent, but also exercise owns the ability to protect our brain from neurodegenerative diseases like depression, Alzheimer's disease or dementia as well as normal cognitive decline in aging. Simply by increasing levels of neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin and noradrenaline which will immediately show effects on improving the ability to shift and focus attention after a single workout and gaining bigger and stronger hippocampus and prefrontal cortex where the two main areas are most susceptible to mental diseases will gain protective effects as well. (Suzuki 2017) These two people are among other psychologists and scientists who have prescribed for a better living for universal application.

Art, in this case has the ability to attune, convey and reflect. As Botton and Armstrong had claimed that 'art can put us in touch with concentrated doses of our missing dispositions, and thereby restore a measure of equilibrium to our listing inner selves'. (Botton & Armstrong 2016) Though art itself indicates a therapeutic effect inherently without professional therapy intervention based on studies as the long term follow-up analyses of receptive arts engagement research done by the English Longitudinal Study of Aging (ELSA) (Fancourt & Steptoe 2019) and the demonstration by researchers of the positive impact on promoting of good health and preventing of mental and physical health conditions. (Vaartio-Rajalin et al. 2020: 2) In addition, a substantial body of research, for instance marbling art experiment done in Turkey (Aktas O¨zkafacı & Eren 2020) and the implementation of origami (Chen & Yu 2014: 33), Calligraphy (Zheng et al. 2008) and Traditional Chinese Painting research (Zhang et al. 2018) has suggested the alleviate effect on depression and anxiety symptoms simply by engaging in art making. It has also been proved the effectiveness working as a bridge between patient and therapist in the art therapy process. (Aktas O¨zkafacı & Eren 2020: 2) Whereas the professional recovery therapy intervention arranged and

planned ahead for people who had been diagnosed either clinical depression or PTSD and the whole process needed to be completed under the professional guidance.

However the probability of people who get depression every year around the world continually growing unfortunately. It had been estimated by the World Health Organization (WHO) that depression will be the leading cause of disease burden by 2030 (WHO 2013) which is not that far from now and especially the COVID-19 pandemic will have an accelerate impact simultaneously. According to a policy brief on COVID-19 and mental health issued by the United Nations, the pandemic is highlighting the need to urgently increase investment in services for mental health or risk a massive increase in the coming future. (WHO 2020) "The impact of the pandemic on people's mental health is already extremely concerning," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. One study in Ethiopia, in April 2020, reported a 3-fold increase in the prevalence of symptoms of depression, for instance social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members, compared to estimates from Ethiopia before the epidemic. (WHO 2020) On the other hand, though people start to concern more about mental health, the number of qualified psychotherapists for conducting therapy are still far more less than it was ought to be and has an inappropriate proportion to the number of people who needs treatment, whereas among which less people choose to go to given to the high price and lack of tendency. Apart from that, it might be difficult to achieve the desirable consequence if the psychotherapy was held online instead of face to face after the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychotherapists are trained to be immune to tons of others' negative feelings and thoughts, but what if the massive broaden mental illness abruptly happened? Should we depend all upon the psychotherapy for mentally treating? What art had achieved in this field? How do people express miserable and how do they felt about it? In what circumstance made people being melancholy? Walking through others' rubber band liminal space is what this qualitative research had led. In order to create a comprehensive understanding, control group was divided from two dimensions within the overall participants, one is from the perspective of the capacity of drawing, another is whether has depressive symptoms or not.

Drawing Your 'Pain'

The arrangement of furniture in our living room, the daily choice of our garment, our handwriting or even just the scribbles which we make on a notepad while telephoning are outer expressions of inner qualities. (Seely & Reason 2008: 3) In order to better know how people experienced suffering during the liminal space and how painful experience becomes implicitly influential in the expression of inner qualities, data from a qualitative study into transitions related to art is presented

to illustrate how this analysis may help to shed light on the resilience and elasticity. In order to obtain more comprehensive information and to exam relationships among art, transition and elasticity, the research investigated the expressive experiences of 15 voluntary participants, with 11 female and 4 male volunteers from different regions of China and overseas, in the diverse context and background including students and workers from various disciplines. Informed consent was obtained while the data can only be used in research due to the partially private personal information with guarantees of anonymity.

The study was set with only one requirement which is paint when participants having negative thoughts or feelings. A few aspects were considered as reasons for utilizing drawing as a self-representation method to conduct the research. Firstly, most of human emotional experience and memory are non-verbal and the information obtained is mostly visual. This information is stored in our brain through image form which is difficult to be extracted by words. Furthermore, as it was suggested that people who are traumatized often unable to express their intense emotions verbally and cannot use the appropriate words and concepts because their vocabulary is limited for expressing the emotions they experience. (Meijer & Alexithmia 2006) Thereby visual methodologies were regarded as an appropriate method in order to probe the more subtle, affective and abstract aspects of experience. (Rose 2007; Pink 2006) On the other hand, in psychological field, the expressive art therapy can help individuals explore their hidden feelings in a supportive setting which is not used to analyze or solve a problem, nor is it about (striving for) perfection, it is a path to self-expression and a way to release one's feeling. (Vaartio-Rajalin et al. 2020: 1) Instead of initiating art as a therapy-based communication tool in this part of research, applying art form during the research is more about self-expression to symbolize the outline of inner pain and is the media through which we come to know ourselves, and let others know more of what we are really about. (Botton & Armstrong 2016) It is slightly different from what art acts as an assistant helping patients discover their own powers and arrange their relationships in a healthier way in art psychotherapy, (Aktas O¨zkafacı & Eren, 2020) yet it is about sharing the reflective function of making visible the feelings in the participant's inner world through artistic forms. Although the visual methodologies were adopted to conduct research, it is not aimed to exclude people who haven't learnt how to paint while having a tough time, though based on short interviews with the participants, several people are not confident with their painting skills. Whereas how do they express themselves through painting? How do they link inner qualities with painting? Whether ever

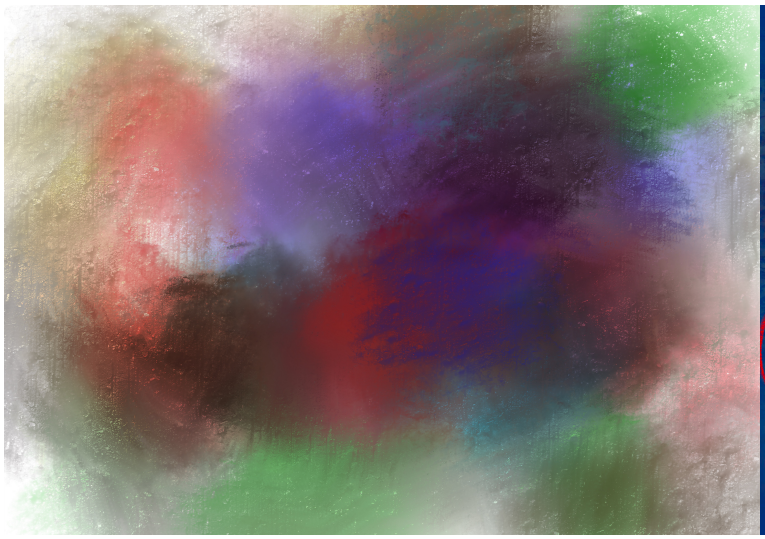
have learnt how to draw or not has any significant influence on the expression result is also worth considered in the further research. The distinction between people who don't know how to express by drawing and who does had brought diversity in the research to some extent.

Otherwise, in order to maximize comprehend the inside feelings, an 'instruction' approach without format limitations is encouraged concurrently which in return offering a large degree of expression from various perspectives. Crucially, writing is seen more as a complex, socially-situated set of meaning-making practices, it is about a process of making meaning which is not just about making texts, but is also about the making of our selves, in a process of becoming. (Gourlay 2009: 183) The similar art making corresponds with words research method has been conducted in exploring the liminal space of the Open Studio in art therapy education by Tess Crane and Libby Byrne (Crane& Byrne 2020), Giorgia Lupi's visualizing the mundane details of our daily lives (Lupi 2017) and postcard conversation by Jan Allen and Jean Rumbold as it was stated that the dialogue used both found images (postcards) and constructed ones, with written reflections connecting the images with aspects of the methodology and the experience of using it and this methodology gives access to 'inner landscape' awareness, thoughts and feelings, impressions and imaginings. (Allen & Rumbold 2004) A further explanation is applicable here that the simultaneous combination of words and images should not be regarded as the pedestrian museum background introduction which may leads to a misunderstanding. According to John Berger's Ways of Seeing who had brought a fresh ways of seeing paintings that each change of place added a new layer of meaning, for example the murals in cathedral and the printings at home. (Berger 1972) It has been recognized that though an individual's self-image is relatively stable, the evaluative component may fluctuate depending on his or her experiences. (Beck & Bredemeier 2016: 598) Therefore it is essential to recognize participants' creation combined with words in their specific environment or experience and linking the exact moment you see it with the moment they drew. The content creates either reflection of people or the research process, except for the painting itself I am also consciously aware of the stories behind, though the painting may not show a direct instinct with the feeling of melancholy, the story does.

Finding 1: Simple & Nature

The results of 'Paint when melancholy' or 'Drawing your pain' expressed in diversity from antagonistic type to concise type by self-representation participants which have shown various responds to negative feelings. Simple forms and shapes are widely used mostly by participants who

have not learnt painting but also by four others who have. Interestingly enough that bright colors as red, green and orange were used by three participants who all have an overseas education experience within opposite groups, whereas two of them gained a higher similarity from separate 'can and can not drawing' groups by using the collocation of opposite colors which brought a sense of conflict. Apparently not all the participant in the 'can not paint' group is painting in this way, nevertheless most of the work can be summarized as simple, specific and representational which usually indicate the tangible things that we can get or touch in the real life as a meadow or a chair. It



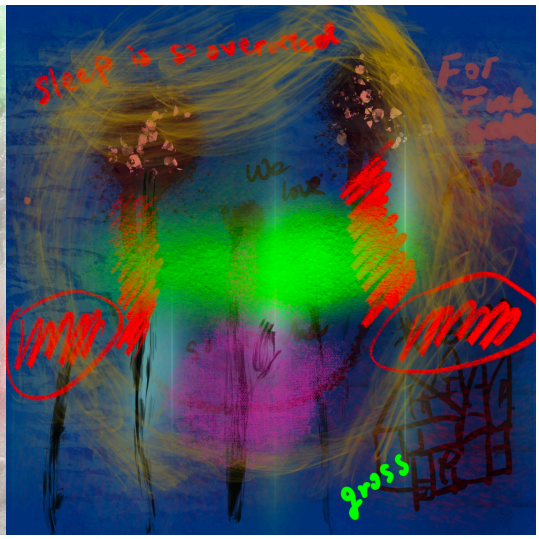


Figure 1: *Untitled* (Chen, 2022) digital drawing (left) Figure 2: *Untitled* (Jin, 2022) digital drawing (right)

is understandable the simplicity of most works, except for the lack of confidence and skills for 'new painter' group, is given to the lack of motivation associated of extra energy to maintain a more complicated task while gone through tough period. For example, Meng who is currently an art school fourth grade student facing the obstacles of final graduation work, mentioned in her interview that she would like to hang up all the troubles and escape from them, it is interesting how she describes the way when she has to face troubles:

> It's good to think that all the things you have to face to be hanged up all at once. It's good to be invisible. There should be no bad things. Reduce the burden, don't disturb yourself, knead up and hang up all the troubles, I don't want to think about them, and make myself out of reach. That's to escape and don't want to face these troubles…

Another interview with an art student Chen who is studying abroad in the United Kingdom reflected that self emotional control and self discipline is a matter of energy consumption which she tried to but tired of. The above repeated simple forms with various colors is what she brought me accompanied with the following words:

> I feel depressed, but at the same time, I don't want to continue this state and want to return to a positive state. … Emotionally, I feel that I just want to be alone. Mentally, I feel that I can't continue this state and try to enlighten myself.

Together with other six brief strokes, simplicity is one of the main characters that I get from those works. As it was stated in 'Art as Therapy' that art has a capacity to rebalance us and holds out the promise of inner wholeness (Botton & Armstrong 2016) which in other words that the art work we like or make represents what we are missing and looking for internal to some extent. Then I ask myself is 'simple' that we are hunger for while suffering or is complexity the real world that makes people get away from?

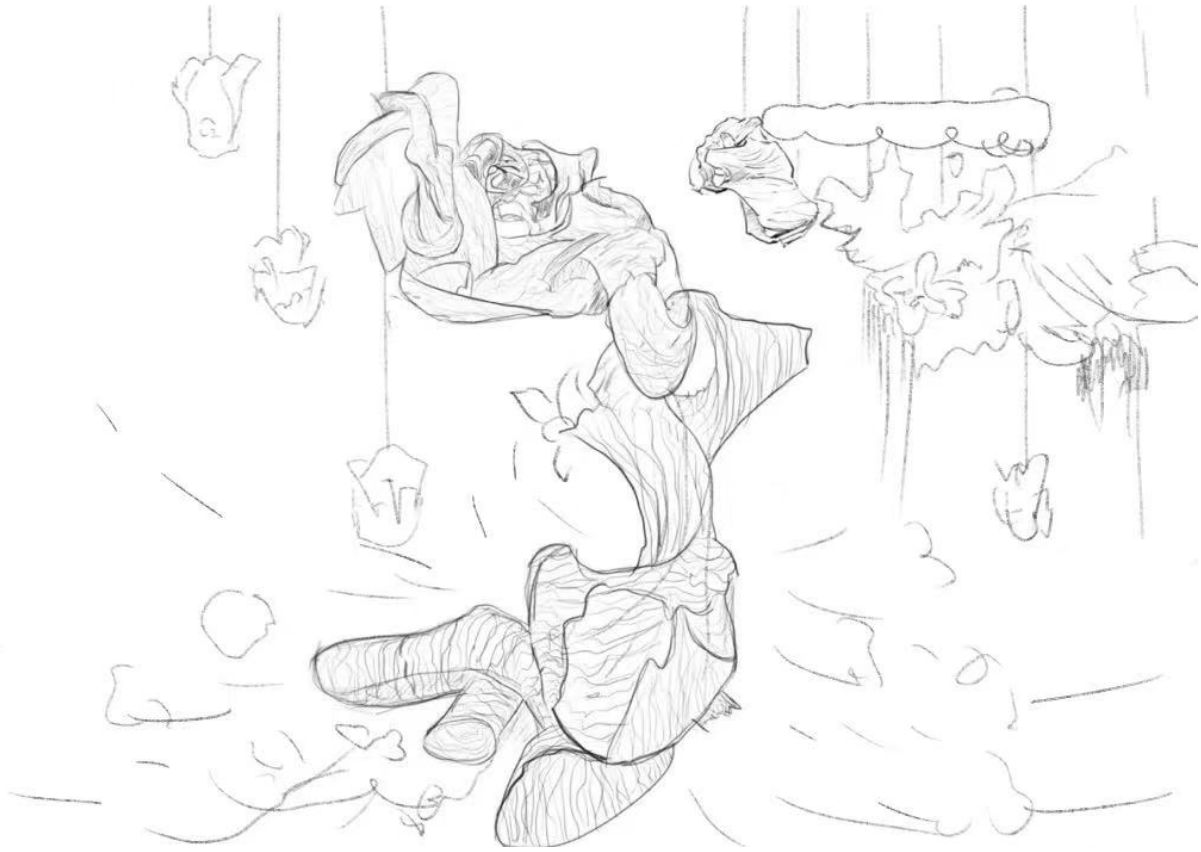


Figure 3: *Untitled* (Meng, 2022) digital drawing

Furthermore, both 'draw learner' and 'new painter' group revealed the theme of nature implicitly from representational mountain, flower to abstract ocean and tree. One participant Chao who was an art student and working as a HR currently mentioned in her interview that the nature especially ocean is where she get inspired from while she was exhausted and hold a similar vanish attitude to obstacles as Meng, however similar vanish attitude will be regarded as a consequence of disappointed feedback later in the research findings.

> Sometimes life is like snowball, extremely heavy and trivial. When I was exhausted, I let the cosmic sea pass and prayed for a moment of freedom to let the waves wash away the tension and anger…. The boundless emptiness of the sea is what I urgently need.

Nature is where she and most of the artists get inspirations and energy from not only in the art field as the striking jagged rock formation and a far-away clouds painted by Caspar David Friedrich (Botton & Armstrong 2016) or intimation and creation with leaves and stones by Andy Goldsworthy, but also other innovation and creation manufacture disciplines. We learnt from nature and gained energy from nevertheless we have psychological frailties connected with looking at nature. Our encounters with nature can be poignant because they remind us that nature is something we are always meaning to get more interested in, but rarely get around to actually attending to. (Botton & Armstrong 2016) What the authors meant is also what I prefer to express that we are getting far away from nature gradually especially under the developed technology interference and



Figure 4: *Untitled* (Chao, 2022) oil painting

forgetting simply ‘being’. In this case, the observation tower in Sweden which was designed by Antony Gormley and David Chipperfield appeared and the tower likewise sets up an opportunity for looking at and immersing in the nature. The correlation of such non-traditional art works to the underlying mission of art which is changing how we experience the world when we feel numb and insensitive about surroundings enhancing the sensory of ‘being' by creating a ‘liminal immersion space’ without extra distractions simultaneously which correspond to what Chao expressed in her art making process that:

> … In the way of painting, I prefer the expression of "recessive" and "poetic". The whole painting process makes me felt that I was slowly diluted by time until disappeared.

Nature is presented from another aspect by the participant Liang who is a graduate student working on lacquer painting. It is not only the painting itself reflected the elements of nature but the making process as well. Specifically, the process of making lacquer painting is regarded as the nature navigated which is different from other arts formation as computer or painter led. It is a journey that artist acting as a participant during making. The work he made reminds me of the peaceful Japanese countryside with high density of forest covering with snow, wooden houses and are partly hidden and partly visible in between cedars.



Figure 5: R*aging flames* (Liang, 2021) lacquer painting

Revealing the theme of nature from many aspects is not a coincidence to some extent, the role of nature in art has a reflection and alleviate function while participants are trying to look for an

answer or an exit either it is a ‘hanger’ or a ‘flush’ through nature. Andy Goldsworthy had stated that ‘We often forget that WE ARE NATURE. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we’ve lost our connection to ourselves’. (Goldsworthy 2015) Through the nature that shown in their works, they are actually looking for themselves and a brief time for simply ‘being’ in their work, imagination and ‘me’ without disturbance and obstacle while undergoing tough time.

Finding 2: Loneliness & Feedback

A further finding of the study was that loneliness as a common experience has suggested a weak connection related to geographic where the participant stayed at, echoing findings were stated by the psychologist Guy Winch that loneliness is capable to make us afraid to reach out (Winch 2014) and set boundaries for ourselves in order to rejecting more heartache and aching as a protective energy conservation to some degree. Examples can be found both within ‘can / can not paint’ groups especially those participant who studied or work alone away from hometown as Liang, the lacquer painting graduate student, described his experience of loneliness as:

> I rented a place in Tianjin. At that time, I was relatively alone. I need to create and basically spent most of my time on works. I was painting and making works in that small room. Apparently, no one to speak with from morning to night but only watching the sun rises until the sun sets at home. I felt that I was a lonely person isolated from other circles.

Another graduate student Chen who studied abroad as mentioned above also stated the sense of loneliness though she was surrounded by an ordinary social life:

> I feel lonely in a strange environment in England. I don't know whether it is due to a strange environment or new people and things. There are many people around but I still felt I am alone. Although the communication with classmates is maintained during the day, but the emotion will be cooled down when I return to the dormitory.

It is commonly recognized that loneliness can be accessible to everyone and is capable to create a deep psychological wound, working as a trigger distorting our perceptions and scrambling our thinking according to Guy Winch. (Winch 2014) However based on interviews with participants, there is lacking of an obvious implicit indication to sense lonely which means as Liang’s experience he chosen actively being alone whereas Chen achieving lonely in a relatively passive approach though she owned a normal social life. Either way is able to brought a sense of lonely, but why is it still occurred to us especially when we have access to friends and families at anytime anywhere we want by means of the developed technology? As if merely talking neither through which approach

seems not sufficient to confront the sense of loneliness, then what do we exactly expect from others through communication or social life to be fulfilled?

An implicit but instinctive feature arose through concluding the creations and writings of participants and that is ‘feedback’. It had been directly stated by one of the participants Chen in her concurrently writing that:

> The mood is tightened, but it is not out of breath. Lacking of emotional feedback, no interest, no desire for contact and communication.

Additionally the depictions via other participants’ experience suggested an expectation of corresponded feedback as well. As it was presented by Yu both in interview and work that the reason why she felt gloomy is the disapproved as a qualified teacher for children by her colleague and leader which revealed alternatively what she expected is a positive feedback from the leader and coworkers of her capability to handle the work.

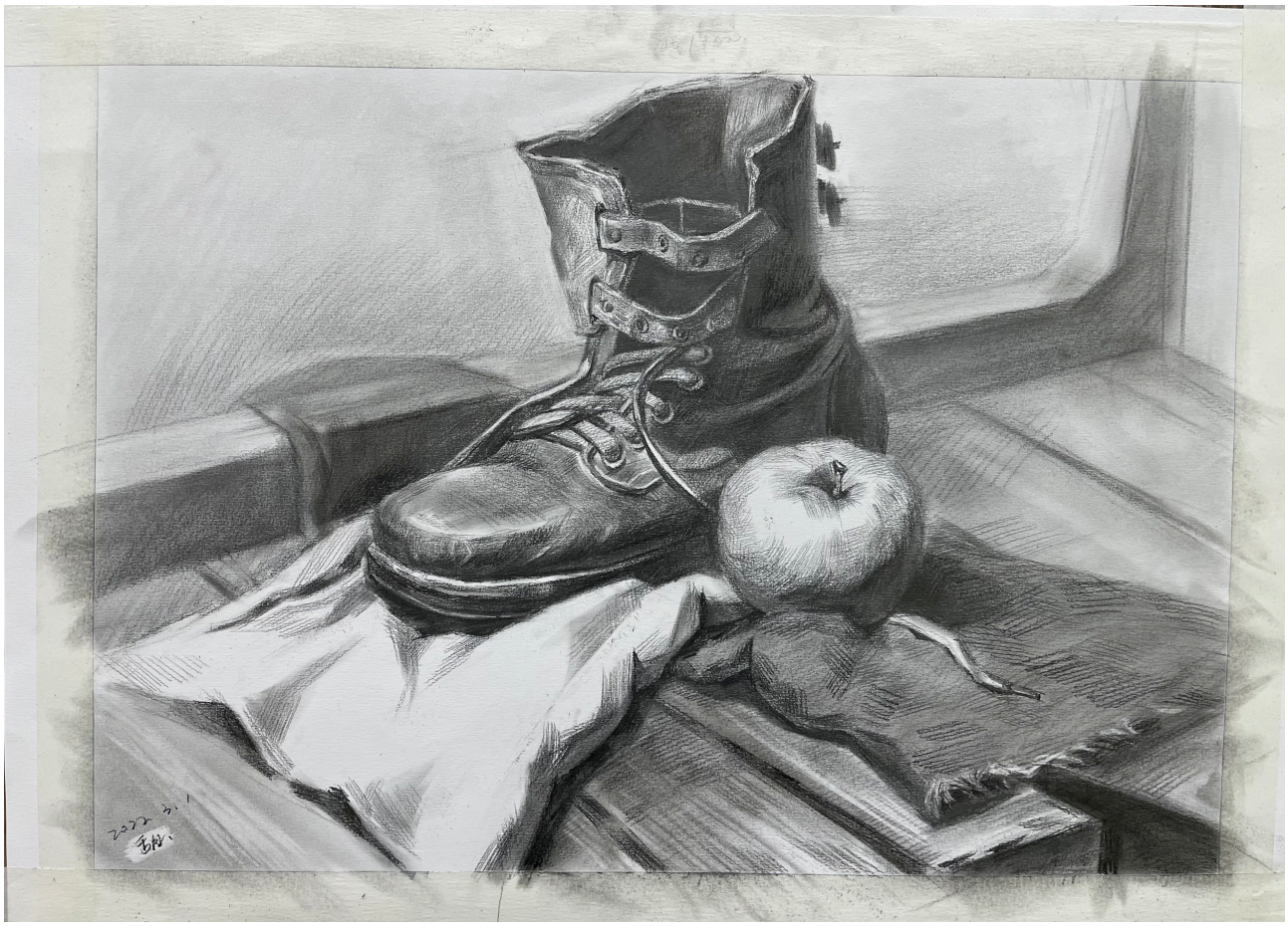


Figure 6: *Untitled* (Yu, 2022) black and white sketch

Trough a deep conversation with Cai, another participant who studies graphic design in Japan and experienced helpless when accomplished an assignment, it is obvious to notice that without 'feedback' he felt lost which he stated:

> It will be a little bit annoyed since there is no lucidity guidance from supervisor and no clear requirements thereby I need to find it all by myself. However in the end, the work will be evaluated by the teacher who did not provide a specific requirement and theme which makes me worried about the grade.

During this period, he questioned himself about what is the suitable art style since there is lacking of guidance and feedback neither right or wrong. Besides, the failure to enter the ideal school after his whole year hardworking alone in Japan made him hatred the life experience there and physically and mentally exhausted. What he had stated the emotional destabilization in the process of completing his work is similar to writing struggles which underline the indeterminate and unsettling nature of new students' experiences at university in Gourlay's threshold research. Similarly, the significant influential of feedback has also been demonstrated in the threshold research by several students who had reported specifically that anxiety goes alongside not knowing the writing requirements initially or suspicious of the right track until after the process was over and the time they got feedback. (Gourlay 2009)

Feedback plays a crucially essential part in our life which I just recognized. It does not indicate a simple signal bouncing back from others, but a corresponded satisfied reflection no matter it is a search for accomplishment or guidance to us. In the meantime, the feedback provider changes accordingly whether it is the whole world or one commendation. What we did online, for instance the thumb-up or likes of our posts, can be articulated as feedback request as well. Instead of a deep corresponded reflection, the 'thumb-up' mode provides a shallow but broader evaluation system which is relatively inadequate to the demander and result in a further quest for more 'likes' or getting more sensitive to unsatisfactory which in other words might explain why the number of likes is incapable to get rid of loneliness despite the amount of attendance. Communicate through internet can also be illustrated as 'Feedback' which probably cause anxiety if the opposite does not reply message especially in a romantic relationship. Feedback can be comprehend from a tangible perspective as an Olympic medal to Hanyu Yuzuru who is the greatest figure skating athlete from Japan. The failure to get medal in Beijing Winter Olympics made him miserable and was nearly destroyed him given to the missing of 'feedback' which he underlined in later interview that getting nothing though receiving abundant supportive from the whole world. Then if we look back at the initial question that why people still feel loneliness whereas under such well developed technology

era or a normal social life, it is partly because that deep inside we are lacking of a satisfactory feedback.

Finding 3: Limitations & Layers

Both drawings and writings provided by Dou and Huang suggest limitations and restrictions in terms of work and behave which was confirmed in the interviews with Liang and other participants as well. The expressions in their works conferred multiple layers of comprehension of limitation, nevertheless they also shared ‘limitation’ as a similarity inducement to negative feelings. Instead of painting, Huang chose nothing but simply one color as her work to indicate inner feelings and experience.

> It's hopeless and powerless. It's much worse than being lazy in the house on rainy days. It's disheartened and a pool of cement… it made me felt that I am in a crack between two floorboards.



Figure 7: *Untitled* (Huang, 2022) digital drawing

She represents her as being a crack in between two boards is an empathetic metaphor statement which made her felt being crushed to a certain shape but can not take a breath. Suffocating in two lines as a specific setting shape without possibilities to change and hope meanwhile. A similar feeling to Huang’s statement was generated from Liang’s recent art work making process, given to the limitations by the traditional standard of making lacquer painting which made him hard to make progress. Limitation can be articulated as an obvious boundary between ‘dream’ and ‘reality’ in Juan’s work which can not be leap over easily as well. Whereas in Dou’s work, a diverse explanation of ‘limitation’ was uncovered which means it also exists in the simplest, though she started drawing a straight line is for alleviating initially:

> When working and learning to be impetuous, I would like to draw straight line to calm down, but in the end, it will change from a straight line to chaotic or curve line since it is too tired to draw a straight line all the time, and my emotion will change from impetuous to calm and then to impetuous.

The notion of layers is also apparent in other images, with Vee's depiction of her depressive episode as a variety of favorite colors superimposed together layer by layer, stripe with stripe which multiple layers of disorderly stripes are scraped from different angles while on the top of all are mostly light yellow ones as background color for covering the muddled sublayer. The drawing partly revealed that the chaos and unbearable us was well covered underneath the bright and calm appearance. Whereas the lacquer making process present 'layer' from the movement perspective. It is a kind of painting format that emphasis layer overlapping layer. Each layer of lacquer requires sufficient time and enough patience to dry and appear, whereby in order to unfold the beneath layer, the upper layer needed to be polished off.

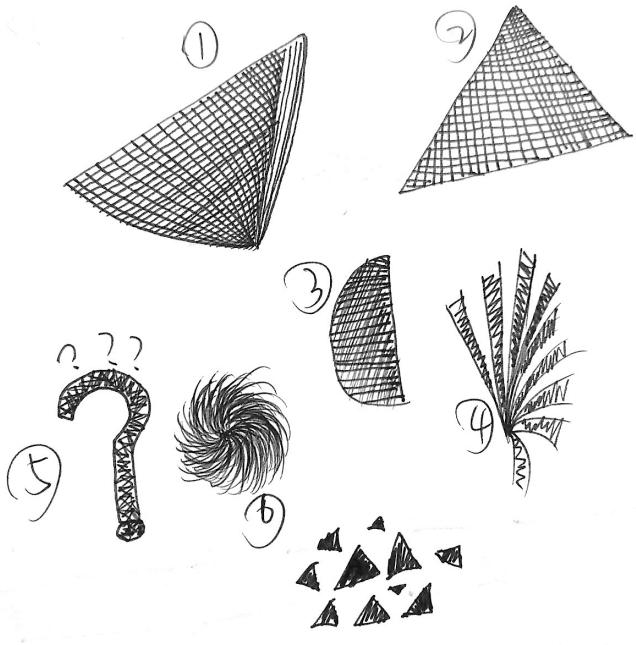


Figure 8: *Untitled* (Dou, 2022) ballpen sketch

The reason why 'limitation' appeared distinctly from these participants' statements is for the similarity to the cause of diagnosed depression as well as the rubber band model basics. Over stretching of the rubber band accelerates the process to a severe consequence thus limitation or a tipping point exists at somewhere during the stretching process while depend upon each individuals. As it was demonstrated by several studies that diversifying experiences is able to help people

achieve greater creative and professional success, however the extent of intensity is still an essential consideration (Ritter & Goclowska 2020) which in other words overly diversifying tends to uncontrollable circumstance. Then it is necessary to consider how to notice individuals' exact point of transition and how to increase the resilience for delaying crack?

The notion of layer pushes the rubber band model forward to a practical perspective which suggests a multiple dimension rubber band relationship with tangible and intangible stuffs, for instance relationship with another person or with technology simultaneously, rather than a single one. In common with the statements cited above, overly stretch to exceed a certain state has a negative effect on rubber band whether it relates to arts, to confidence or technology which up to what exact happened to the individual. Such mechanism is also appropriate to comprehend people who were dedicated to excessive perfectionism. Whereby the rapid development of science and technology assumed to be an excessive stretching process from the perspective of rubber band model which should attracted enough attention especially correlated to nature. In this case, the lacquer painting



Figure 9: *Untitled* (Vee, 2022) oil painting

by Liang accidentally visualize the association if I would say. Compared to the peaceful lower part of the painting, the two black blocks with red edges set strangely on the upper side above are like

two scars on the beautiful painting. These two monotonous blocks with edges and corners which can be articulated as sober technology are very discordant with the overall flow movement and naturally formed mottle though he did not deliberately convey such thoughts. Where is the limitation of technology? Are we accelerating the process to the exact crack point which is hardly known and controlled by human being? Put aside the high-end cutting-edge technology that has little to do with the majority's daily life and work, product as smartphone has pervaded nearly every inch of our life. Instead of bragging how brilliant the future will be with this irresistible trend, why not think about how stretching it is going to be and how proximity enough it had created to notice darkness of humanity through online live videos or controversial comments for instance which raised the possibility of being blamed by the world but for a daily trivial matter?

Discussion

In common with the research methods cited above, experiences are described through the drawing and words as well as undertaken the semi-structured short interview via chatting apps in terms which suggest indeterminacy, struggle and pessimistic emotion mostly presented by simple geometry duplicated shapes, intense colors, natural forms and multiple layers. As a matter of fact that the pandemic halts the progression to the whole world extent and radiated by several participants in the short interviews as well which was illustrated as partially the reason why people get even further from their dreams, a reason of homesick, lacking of social life and deferring admission associated with fierce competition. The resilience of human inherently and the rubber band model assisting to generate a thought that the pandemic might be a chance to rethink about the value of technology and the nature. ’Loneliness’ is what has been mentioned mainly by participants who had experienced diversifying experience like studying alone in an unfamiliar place like Liang, Jin and Chen, though under the convenience of technological means as smartphone the sense of loneliness still exists which generated to a consequence of lacking corresponded feedback based on the research. Studies report that sharing, feedback, and solidarity among group members during group psychotherapy has many benefits, especially decreasing loneliness, alienation, and distrust (Foy, Eriksson, & Trice, 2011; ID, 1995) echoing the significance function of profound feedback. On the contrary, online communication or judgment / comment system contains the action of ‘feedback’ though different from what had been proved of the effectiveness by conducting psychotherapy intrinsically and even amplified one piece of the story without fully perceiving the background and information.

Everyone experiences painful events that lead to sadness or anger as Cai who had been rejected by his dream school or based on Huang's unfriendly working environment, but these do not culminate in full-blown depression unless there is a perceived loss of what believed to be a vital investment as a trigger which exceeds the individual's competencies and capacities to mitigate the impact of loss. (Beck & Bredemeier 2016: 597) Furthermore multiple pressures from various aspects may also overload people as an environmental trigger which in other words both circumstances are capable to stretch excessively of one's innate elasticity and fracture the rubber band. In this case, the notion of layer can be depicted as multiple dimensional rubber band with manifold pressures acting upon. Arguably enough that the critical state still exists based on their experience as the 'rubber band' fracture extreme point which indicates diversity of the extent or elasticity of each person as individual's mentally limitation. Nevertheless it is believed that the incidence of depression is not triggered by merely once frustration given to the elasticity of "rubber band" or the resilience inherently for adapting and resuming, however the adversity has been linked with reduced volume of the hippocampus — a brain structure that plays a critical role in the neuropathology of depression (Campbell & MacQueen 2004) and exhibits greater sensitivity to stress and lower the "threshold" of being predisposed to depression. (Beck & Bredemeier 2016: 606)

Therefore according to the compensatory nature of art, simplicity as a jointly characteristic has shown as a pursuit in the participants' works accompanied with signs of the nature. Compared to the manifold layers of sophisticated reality including but not limited to the relationships with coworkers, leaders, lovers, parents or children, it is hardly incomprehensible an urgent appeal to a controllable life which had partly been reflected in Meng, Dou and other partcipants' drawings. A portrayal of a busy and complicated life is described as 'Work is frantic across three continents, the inbox is clogged with 200 messages every hour' (Botton & Armstrong 2016) which is capable to make people feel anxious merely imagining such ordinary and familiar picture. As it was stated previously that technological means as smartphones or chatting apps improved efficiency indeed, however the intensity of immersion in life is far beyond control as stretching abruptly and severely the rubber band which leads to a constantly chasing after updating and high efficiency life and living as a machinery. Additionally most of our communication is mainly based on technology especially under pandemic period, however the online communication is nearly ineffective to help us getting rid of the sense of lonely and most importantly dragging the social distance too close to notice imperfections on every individuals or to cause perfectionism anxiety as was demonstrated by Thomas Curran, the social and personality psychologist in 2018. (Curran 2018)

Rubber band model is mainly contributed as a forming or stretching progression to demonstrate the accumulation process of getting depression and the space built by stretching created a liminal space as an unstable state with possibilities. Then how to avoid circumstance becoming severe and uncontrollable during the stretching process even though sorrow is a part of human experience inevitable with more and more incentives? Besides if it is possibly to alleviate by conducting the rubber band model practically into the art domain or simply arousing attention to technological issues? How about stretching reversely the rubber band as a means of equilibrium?

Based on the comparison among psychotherapy experiments' sessions set specifically as *Making a Mask with Marbling, Free Marbling* from marbling art making experiment (Aktas O¨zkafacı & Eren, 2020) and painting therapy curriculum *Me in my heart, Me in other people's eyes* (Wang 2018: 4) in group painting therapy, a bold underlying conjecture can be inferred is that it might not merely the art itself revealed inherently therapeutic function in the process but also the simple and disassembled step by step with easily obtained purposive work mechanism assisting people fully immersed and concentrated in making a certain contribution to reform cognition and rebuild self-esteem and confidence as well. Additionally studies has suggested the purposeful activity has for decades traditionally been used in occupational therapy and/or rehabilitation. (Vaartio-Rajalin et al. 2020: 2) On the basis of inherent elasticity, the main aspect of reversing rubber band according to the conclusion is disassembling complexity or uncontrollable into small purposive pieces which you are capable to achieve and helping people immersed in 'being' especially underline the communication with hand movement like painting, writing and even craft making, such as weaving stated in Andrew Solomon's TED speech. (Solomon 2013) Immersion in 'being' an active relationship with hand movement and looking for a correlated feedback through disassembled making can generated as a practical practice for equilibrium. Nevertheless it is merely a hypothesis through the comparison among research, further exploration and discussion is needed for verifying.

Conclusion

Sorrow is written into the contract of life, (Botton & Armstrong 2016) it is part of human experience and allows us to more deeply understand other profound emotions, like beauty and joy. (Stephens 2014) Sublimation in art refers to the psychological processes of transformation, in which base and unimpressive experiences are converted into something noble and fine - exactly what may happen when sorrow meets art, (Botton & Armstrong 2016) however this part of work is mainly focusing on presenting the whole process of qualitative research associated with conclusion and

further interpret the rubber band model. Since the content became the process such painting methodology gives me an access to the participants' 'inner landscape' of awareness, thoughts and feelings, impressions and imaginings. Yet limitations still exist given to the small number of participants who are mostly from one country though some of them have the overseas experience.

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Appendix

Drawings by other participants



Figure 10: *Untitled* (Juan, 2022) pencil drawing



Figure 11: *Untitled* (Cai, 2021) digital drawing

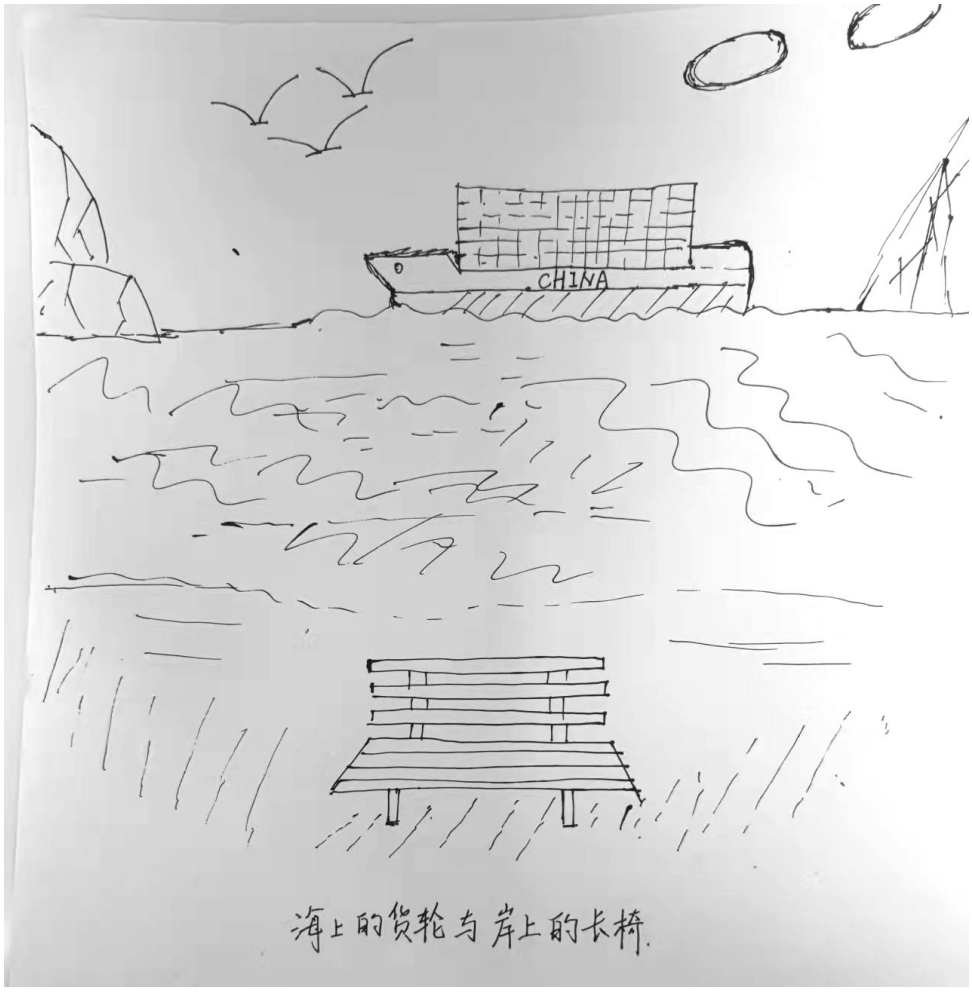


Figure 12: *Untitled* (Mao, 2022) pen drawing



Figure 13: *Untitled* 2 (Vee, 2022) oil painting

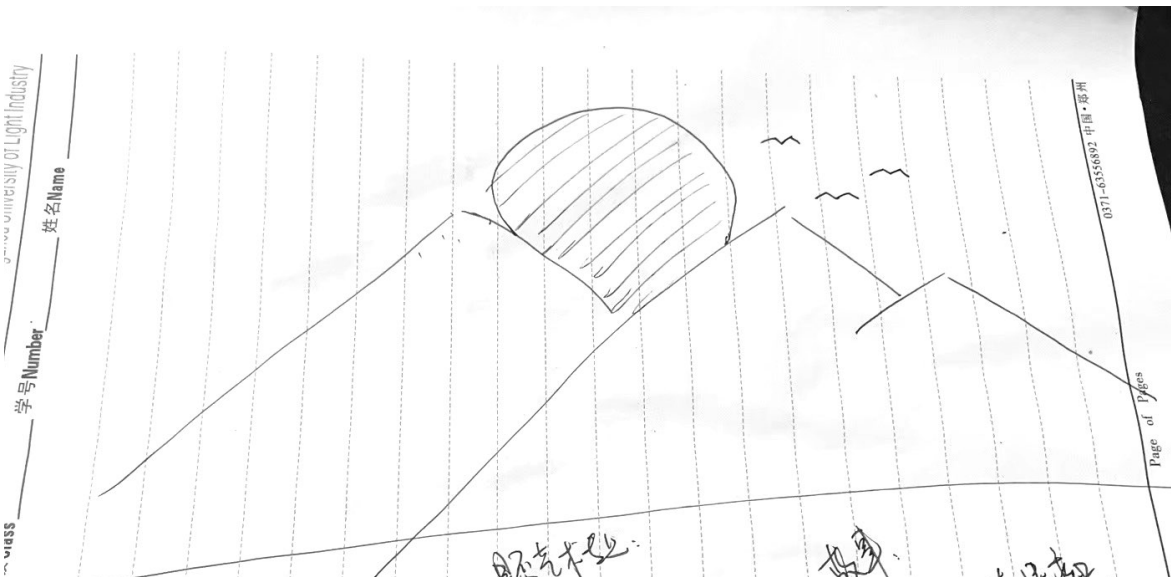


Figure 14: *Untitled* (Xing, 2022) pen drawing



Figure 15: *Release emotions* (Kang, 2022) pen drawing

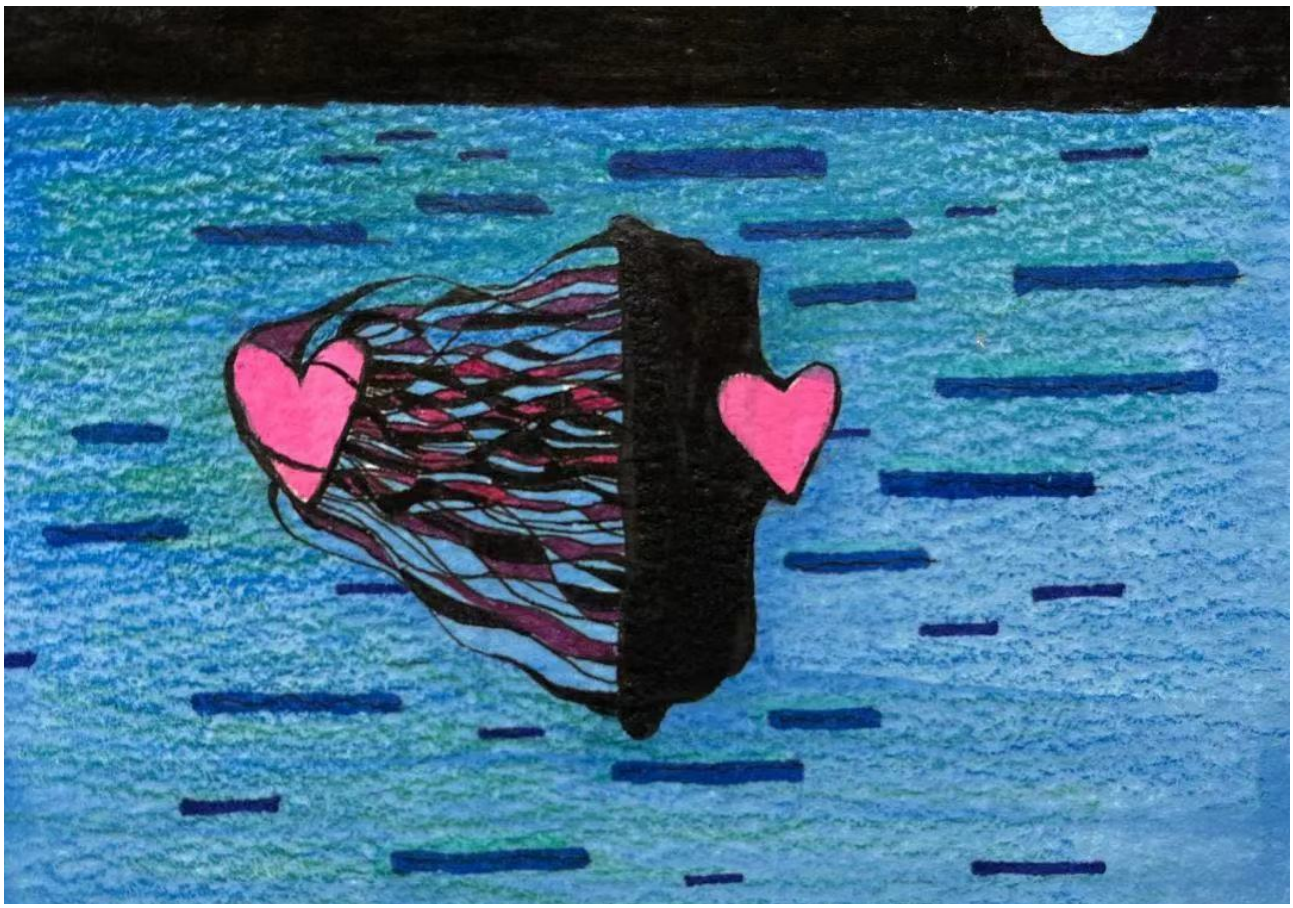


Figure 16: *Untitled*（Jia, 2022) pen drawing

List of Figures

Figure 1: *Untitled* (Chen, 2022) digital drawing

Figure 2: *Untitled* (Jin, 2022) digital drawing

Figure 3: *Untitled* (Meng, 2022) digital drawing

Figure 4: *Untitled* (Chao, 2022) oil painting

Figure 5: R*aging flames* (Liang, 2021) lacquer painting

Figure 6: *Untitled* (Yu, 2022) black and white sketch

Figure 7: *Untitled* (Huang, 2022) digital drawing

Figure 8: *Untitled* (Dou, 2022) ballpen sketch

Figure 9: *Untitled* (Vee, 2022) oil painting

Figure 10: *Untitled* (Juan, 2022) pencil drawing

Figure 11: *Untitled* (Cai, 2021) digital drawing

Figure 12: *Untitled* (Mao, 2022) pen drawing

Figure 13: *Untitled* 2 (Vee, 2022) oil painting

Figure 14: *Untitled* (Xing, 2022) pen drawing

Figure 15: *Release emotions* (Kang, 2022) pen drawing

Figure 16: *Untitled* （Jia, 2022) pen drawing