

Work-based Project Study Transforming Research Finding Through Art Form

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Introduction

As it was discussed in the earlier research, broader contents as feedback, nature and other elements which has been demonstrated in the qualitative research came to mind for not only eliminating the discrimination of depression and trying to alleviate but also help to rebalance the society and ourselves. However how to transfer the idea and research findings, in what art form and how to deliver them through art form is what I am considering next.

Exhibition

Exhibitions related to depression had been held both in Shanghai and Xian in 2021. The exhibition in Shanghai Black Museum called 'What is abnormal?' (2020-2021) revealed the inner side of depression and obsession etc. to the public. It mainly shows the items such as the drugs people used to eat or the letters they wrote before suicide donated by the individuals with depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder. In order to make the viewer better understand, part of the exhibition also uses art forms that turning invisible emotions into tangible objects, such as a bed full of needles and one washbasin full of fake blood which can bring depressed feelings to viewers however telling the audience that we are the same. To a certain extent, the exhibition brings visitors a personal experience, and let them know more about what happened exactly to those who have experienced depression through the donated items, although these specific forms can bring a certain degree of shock, the implication is still a little straightforward and simple. These two exhibitions showed the

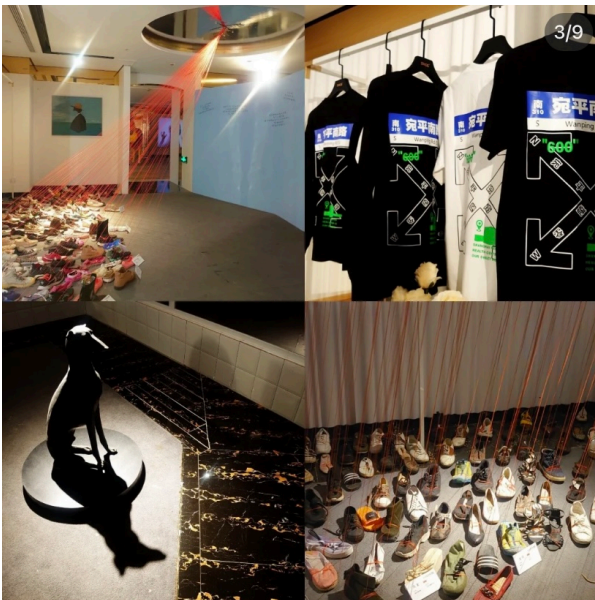


Figure 1: *What is abnormal?*. (2020) [digital image]



Figure 2: *Smile Depression?*. (2021) [digital image] (right)

real feelings and experiences though works were mostly about how abnormal the illness was and making it much more scared for the public from my point of view.

Therefore, the exhibition I devised initially was mainly concentrated on the opportunities and possibilities that depression has brought in the liminal space instead of illustrating how painful it is. Through the form of eye contact interaction and translation of mental world into performance to help people learn more about depression and to eliminate the social phenomenon of discrimination against depression. However with the deepening of the research, it is found that such way of expression is somewhat superficial. The idea I want to brought is a sense or awaken of rethinking oneself, finding the voice of inner peace in the noisy society at the same time to recall the power of 'slow' and compete with the fast growth society. To simply being and peaceful inside of the liminal space my work has created. As the qualitative research has stated previously, feedback, nature or loneliness can be articulated as one of the elements that can affect pulling and stretching in the rubber band model which can also as the exhibition elements for articulating the main theme.

Rebalance

We can understand the particular imbalances of a historical period by considering which artworks have achieved new popularity within it. (Botton & Armstrong 2016) I can not help to ask, what we have missed today and what we have got, besides what do we need in the coming future. The massive amounts of people suffered by depression or depressed symptoms is not a positive sign of the coming future which is also my research starting point. Why is this phenomenon happens and what might be the causes of such can not be underestimated phenomenon, let alone the relatively negative effects the pandemic has brought simultaneously.



Figure 3: Antony Gormley & David Chipperfield. *Kivik Pavilions*. (2008). [digital image]

As it was stated previously in the rubber band model that if we regard the whole society as a rubber band, technology as one of the elements has stretched the band in an unstoppable state out of the balanced shape, dragging the society into a lot less tangible world, in the meanwhile comes with new ideas as NFT or Metaverse which is virtually from head to toe. The adaptability, an ancestral distinction of human intelligence (Cogdell 2009: 97), seems no longer enough to get the pace of rapidly growth from manifold layers in the society. In this case, Paola Antonelli who is the Senior Curator of the Museum of Modern Art put forward that in order to meet today's instant 'disruptive' variations in rhythm something stronger is needed and that is elasticity. (Cogdell 2009: 97) In this case, the Antonelli's elastic mind is to stretch one's limit to adapt to rapid growth technology, on the contrary mine is how to rebalance one's rubber band. However limitation still exists as well as rubber band.

One indispensable element in adaptability is time, for instance one person needs enough time to get used to a strange place or a fresh student go to university first time, whereas how long the time people spent for granted is depended on individuals. However what will happen if things around have developed overly fast for an individual? What if it is not a minority? If we think back about the question that what we have missed and what do we need? As a human being, is the overly fast uncontrollable growth really the best for all in the future? Is it what we need? In the fast growth society what have we lost? What is more, the uncontrollable growth speed might be partly the reason why increasingly people suffered mentally illness or symptoms nowadays. From my point of view, stressful and less time for recovery may lower the elastic coefficient of most rubber bands as well as people's self-regulation.

Fast means less time, therefore instead 'slow' might be a missing portion. A work of art helps return to us the missing portions of our characters. (Botton & Armstrong 2016) In the book of 'art as therapy', writers had introduced the observation tower in Sweden made by Antony Gormley and David Chipperfield which gave people an opportunity for looking at and immersing in the nature. (Botton & Armstrong 2016) It correlates non-traditional art works to the underlying mission of art, that is changing how we experience the world when we feel numb and insensitive about surroundings. Another work about slow is a set of lacquer works which takes long time and patience to complete. The artist had repeatedly made many commonly used daily necessities as bowls to compete with the fast paced consumer life.

Testing

Then how to transfer the idea into art works? Speaking of rubber band, string has come to mind. The work of Chiharu Shiota has gave me a lot inspirations. Therefore I tried to made a test as a starter to respond to the idea and the media.



Figure 4: Chiharu Shiota. *Between us.* [digital image]



Figure 5: Ming Yan. [String handmade]

Imagining the colorful strings are creating a liminal space instead of on a small board, while people walking into the string space, the complex overlapped strings are not only shows the inner complexity of depressed individuals but also the connected relationships between people. I did not consider a lot while conducting this work which in other words my mind follows hands as it was stated that there is an urgent need for spontaneous and considered aesthetic responses to our world. (Seeley & Reason 2008: 8) Though it was a simple test lacking of deeply thinking, it still has



Figure 6: Ming Yan. [String handmade]

something to do with immediacy, with intuition, with a sort of transparent connection between oneself and what one does (Seeley & Reason 2008: 8) just as I did while making the string board test. While I was making it, hands or exactly the tuition leads my mind. Why I am doing this in such a way? Why I put the string on this nail? I am not doing it because of any visual effect, I am doing it because there is something about that motion that is calling me. (Seeley & Reason 2008: 8)

Technology is always one of the main issue I am discussed about. Therefore, another kind of exhibition idea came up in order to let the public sense the difference between technology and

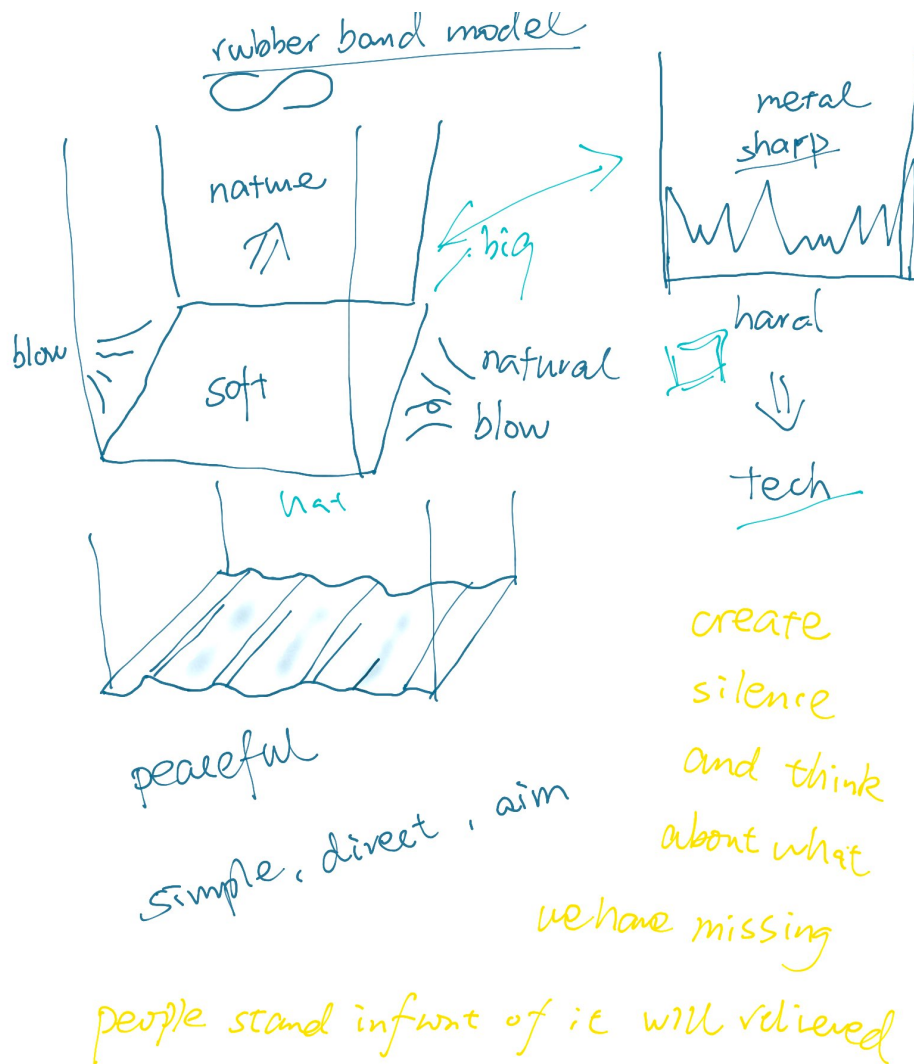


Figure 7: Ming Yan. [digital image]

nature or in other words simply recall a reflection of what have we lost nowadays and what we have missed under the rapid developed society. To find the answer in the art work and find the inner peace. In this idea, a soft colored textile is set in the room instead of outside to imply that we human beings who lived indoors all the year round yet still need to find a peaceful place inside. The light soft textile will cause ripples when people walk around which indicate the natural movements as leaves falling. Compared to the natural like textile, another is a sharply made technology implicated art work to indicate the cold and sharp side of technology. Viewers can have a comparison between these two works' characters, furthermore cause people to rethink about the existing technology usage problem.

Conclusion

In my next year's study, I will mainly concentrated on conveying ideas and findings generated from previous research by various artistic forms including but not limit to drawing, art making and interaction as part of the exhibition. Finding the most suitable expression format through different testing methods and experiments. In order to better complete the art work, the process will be arranged as firstly research for finding more possibilities of illustrating the work, then testing for transforming my idea and thoughts into tangible art work, lastly making the final test real.

Reference

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