Process Portfolio

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*,
Porcelain,
36cm x 48cm x 61cm, 1917

a.k.a. Naturalism

Critical Investigation:

In the past, Art had many restrictions. However, in the artwork called *Fountain*, Marcel Duchamp has challenged the definition of abstraction and the definition of art. By exhibiting some "ugly"thing(but with a beautiful name), the artist offers another definition of art. Also, people used think artwork can only be created by the artist personally. What Duchamp did, however, was selecting the work as an artwork. Meaning that an artist doesn't have to act but to select.

How does Duchamp's artwork inform mine?
In my artwork, I am going to challenge the definition of naturalistic just like Duchamp challenged the definition of art.

What is the definition of naturalistic?
Naturalistic--an artwork that with all the elements are shown as we would see them in the natural observable physical environment.

Chuck Close, *Big Nude,*
117cm x 253cm,
Oil on canvas, 1967

Leonardo da vinci,
Mona Lisa ,
77 cm × 53 cm,
Oil on poplar panel,
1503-06

But why can't we say that the artwork created by Close near by is also an naturalistic? This question will be answered "yes, you can" if Close is a person that can only see black and white.

People always think only the artwork like *Mona Lisa* can be called as naturalistic artwork.

How can we tell *Mona Lisa* drawn by Leonardo da Vinci is not an abstract artwork? What if that is not the real thing da vinci saw?

These investigations arouse my interest of creating an naturalistic painting without wearing glasses. I try to create a blurry work first, but it doesn't look good. I think I am lack of basic drawing skill, because even the facial structure and skin color are problematic. Therefore, I want to improve the technique of painting things blurry by practising drawing traditional naturalistic painting first.

A totally black picture
If what I said for Chuck's artwork is correct, I can also say this black image is also a naturalistic work of a pig, because the person who created it is blindness or observed it in the dark.

A watercolor painting created by me in 2018, 40cm x 50cm

Naturalistic Drawing

*The subject is a woman I know in real life

Steps Shown

A photo of a Hani minority woman taken by me in 2017, 1620 x 1080

The reason of choosing this picture is because, the brush strokes, unlike the face of a child, the face of an elderly person has many wrinkle, which tests the artist's mastery of wrinkles and textures. Secondly, drawing an elderly person can help me understand the relationship between muscle and muscle, because there are many complex muscle lines on the face.
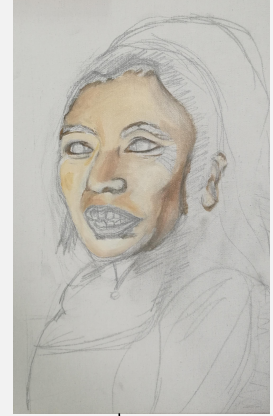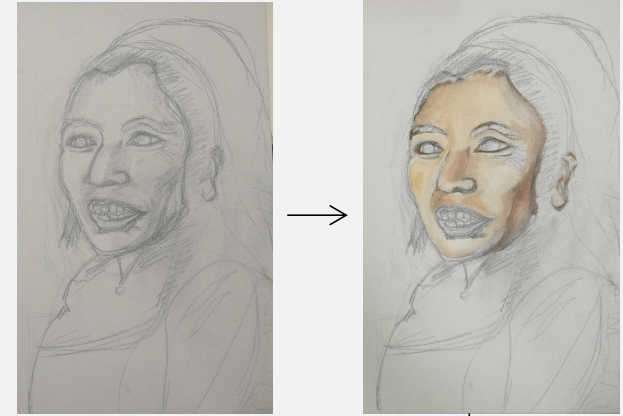
Firstly, sketch the portrait with pencil and mark out the light area and the dark area. Secondly, mix carneose and brown with 20% turpentine to paint on the light area and the dark area. Thirdly, filling details with small fur brush, add 20% turpentine to make the texture of the skin smooth. Fourthly, use big fur brush to paint the background with no turpentine added. The rough and thick texture of background can form contrast with the smooth texture of the figure. There have no 100% intensity color been used. The black area is not totally black and the white area is not totally white. For example, although the hair looks black, the color is a mixture of brown and white.
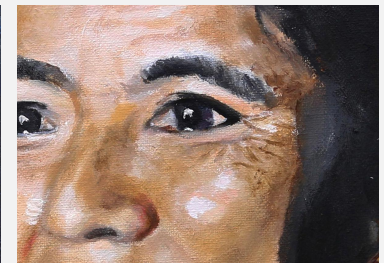
Detail View (Above)

*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component.
Oil on Canvas, 50cm x 40cm (Left)

What Can Be Improved

To assess naturalistic oil painting. I put the original picture and the painting I created in to photoshop. Overlapping them together to see their overlap rate. Set the upper layer as 50% transparent rate.

The structure is not accurate enough, the face my work is longer than the original work, which causes the position of the left eye in my work is higher than the original work. Also, the face in my work is wider than the original work, which causes the noise is not complete overlap with the noise in the photo.

Secondly, the brown in the original work has more red. Mine has more yellow, which makes the skin doesn't look like an alive person's.

Now I have the basic skills of drawing naturalistic painting. Next I am going to draw naturalistic things blurry.

**I sum up several features when I see things without my glasses.**

1. Everything is blurry and has no detail.
2. Objects are more rounded and without clear edges.
3. The structure of object is confusing(the structure of closer object will apply to the further object).

A photo I took that imitates the scene I see with glasses

A photo I took that imitates the scene I see without glasses
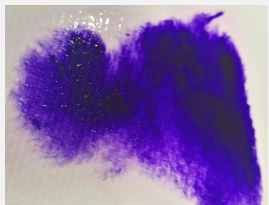

wet (very wet)-on-wet   wet-on-dry   dry-on-dry

It looks like wet(very wet) - on - wet can create the blurry effect.

A watercolor painting I drew that imitates the scene I see without glasses

I thought watercolor is the best material to show blurry. I tried to add many water to blurry the image, however, the color then became transparent. The "blurry" here is more like "bleeding", which is different from the blurry caused by bad sight. So I want to explore what kind of materials are able to emphasize the blurry effect first.

Technique Exploration
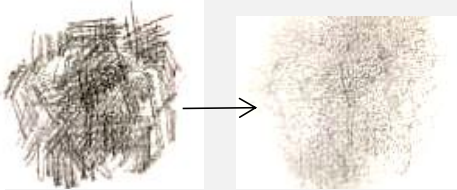
The effect of using my fingers to smear the paint

Materials Exploration

Oil painting

Watercolor painting

Marker painting

After trying different materials, I find that oil painting has the best smooth effect. Because the watercolor and marker are not completely opaque. The underneath layer and edges will be shown.
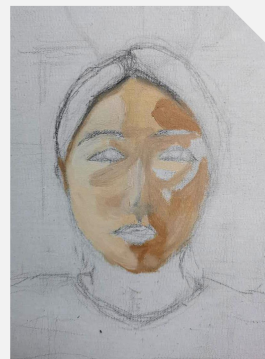
Instead of using brush, in this artwork, I will use my fingers to smear. So that creates the blurring feeling.

In this portrait practice, I use the conclusions I got from the above investigations. The painting looks little more blurry and has less details.
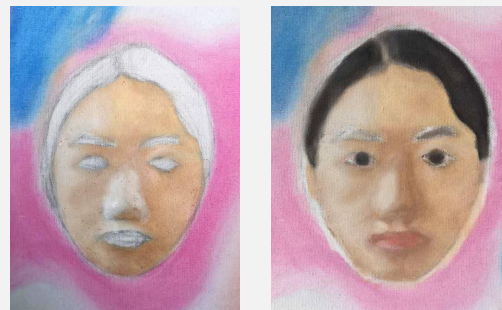

A selfie I took

Although this portrait practice has limited details, it doesn't look blurry. Maybe that is because the painting is too geometric.
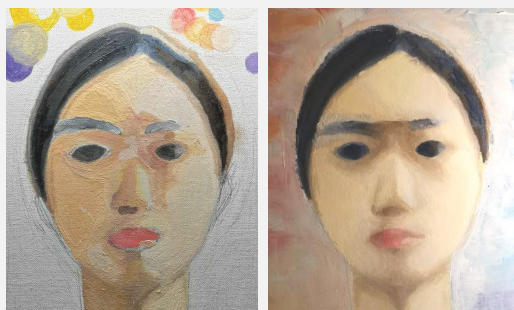
This portrait practice is much more better than the previous. It is blurry and less details shown.

About the design - 1. I use non-objective biomorphic shapes to represents the rounded and less detailed objects. 2. The background and my body blend (fuse) together which reflects the confusing structure and relationship between objects. About the creating process - I will take off my glasses during the painting to show that although the final work looks blurry, it is still the naturalistic thing that I see.


An oil painting I drew on canvas, 40cm x 50cm

Improvement upon the previous design

A photo of the city's night
I took in 2019,
1620 x 1080

In this design, I not only keep the previous ways of design, but also add real world scene to more creatively show when I take off my glasses, I am "lost" in the world. The reason I choose a night scene is because I have the worst sight in the night. So that it can show the blurry feeling more.
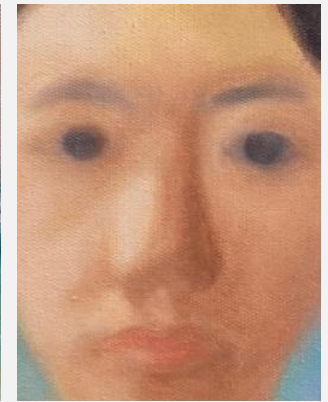
a.k.a. Naturalism

Detail View
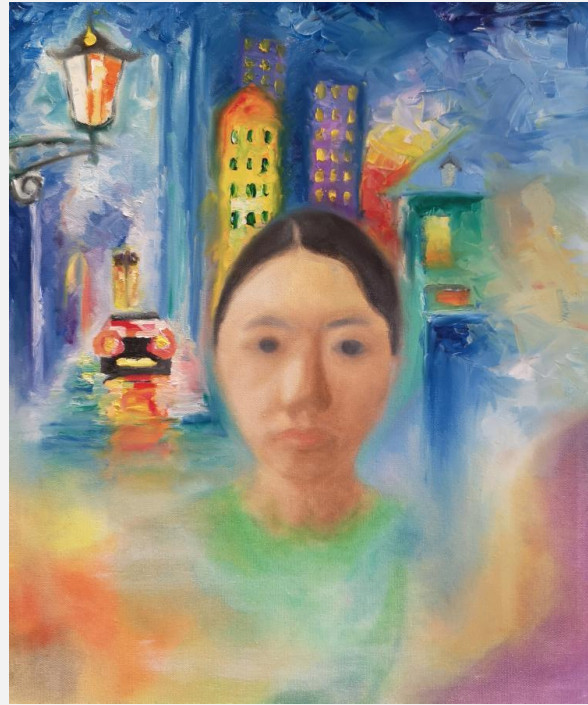
Detail View

* An oil painting I drew, 50cm×60cm
* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component

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Unclear structure shown

Blurry and impasto painting techniques show the softly and harshly lit subjects

The background and my body blend (fuse) together

Conjoined Twins

To better portray myself, I believe the things I love is best way to show my personality.
Things I love:
Rap/ Bbox/ EDM/ Chinese Calligraphy/ Chinese Painting/ Classical Guitar/ Kungfu

Hip-hop Culture ➕ Chinese Traditional Culture

Normally, hip-hop and Chinese tradition seem like two contradict extremes. For example, hip-hop represents modern and pop culture and things like calligraphy and Kungfu represent tradition. hip-hop is from America and another is from China. The most important is the essence of hip-hop is against tradition. However, I believe I am a combination of these two different cultures. And I am the example that proves hip-pop culture and traditional culture can co-exist.

Chinese traditional calligraphy has more than thousands years of history. The calligraphy writtern by Wen relates to the old way of making a rubbing onto paper of stone carved characters, which reverses the value. The text will be *Orchid Pavilion,* which is the most well known running script writtern by Wang Xizhi. (Joseph, p.231)
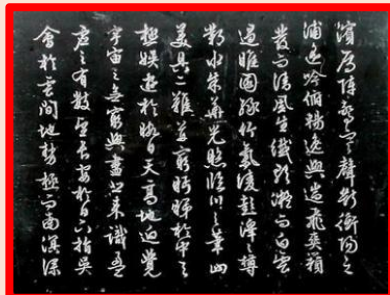
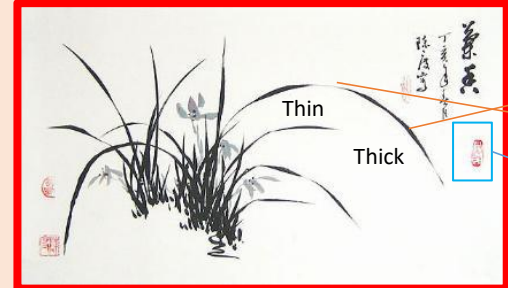A calligraphy written by Wen Zhengming, Ink on rice paper, 1500
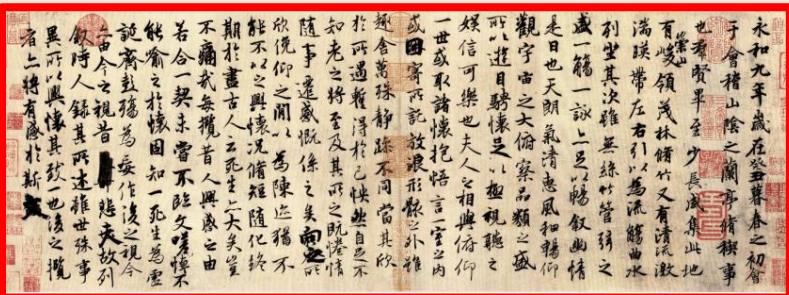
Wang Xizhi, *Orchid Pavilion*, copied by Feng Chengsu (617–672) Ink on rice paper, 24.5 x 69.9 cm, 353 CE

The color of Chinese opera mask symbols different personality. For example, red represents loyalty, black represents positiveness, green represents brave. My "mask" is colorful, representing I am complex person.

Peking Opera Mask, 500x500 jpeg

Rap and Box symbol Hip-hop culture, the artists usually wear hat and oversized cloth, holding a microphone and do the special gesture, and having tattoo on their skin.

Joseph Okpako, *Eminem performs on stage,* 2013

Thin

Thick

Chen Du, *Chinese Orchid*, 26cm X 15cm, Ink on rice paper, 2007

This is a Chinese traditional painting of Orchid. I use the Orchid leaf as the wire of microphone.
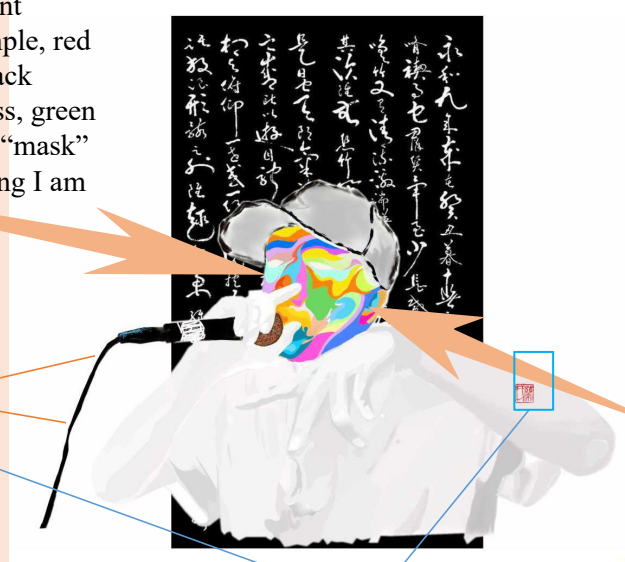
To prove an artwork belongs to one or to suggest it is finished, the artist prints a red stamp on the artwork.

Brett Webb, *Krush"MSK"ICR*, Marker on wall, 1994

Graffiti is one of the most well know street culture. Artists normally use colorful paints to make the artwork more expressive.

A stonecut made by me in 2015, 2.5cm x 2.5cm
* This is outside the course time period so I don't expect credit for the stone carving part
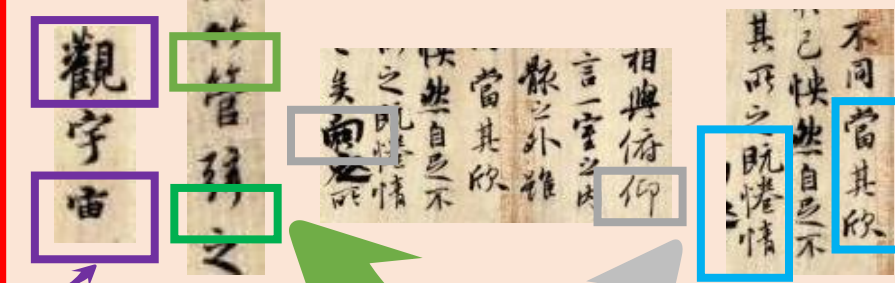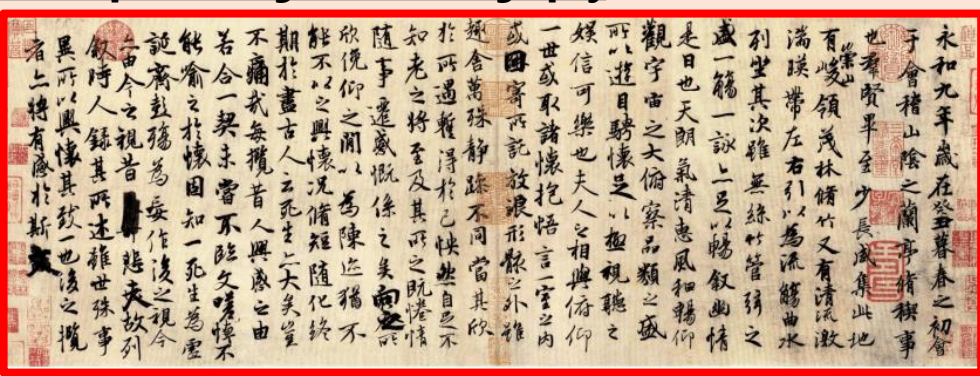
In this design, I choose to draw a self-portrait and include both hip-hop and Chinese traditional elements.
Hip-hop (modern): hat/ microphone/ the body pose/ graffiti/ oversize shirt/ tattoo/ Colorful/ collage/ digital painting
Tradition and literati culture: Chinese traditional calligraphy/ stamp/ Black & White & gray/ Orchid leaf microphone wire/ brush texture/ bleeding ink/ Peking Opera Face

# Technique Investigation of Calligraphy

Wang, Xizhi, *Orchid Pavilion*, copied by Feng Chengsu, Ink on rice paper, 24.5 x 69.9 cm, 353 CE

Orchid Pavilion wrote by Wang Xizhi is probably the most well known and the best masterpiece of running character calligraphy in the world. By looking at this artwork, I conclude several criterions of writing a good running calligraphy work. .

Criteria of a good calligraphy work that I learn from *Orchid Pavilion*

The variety of size of words (Rhythm)

The transition between words (Fluency, like flowing water, coherent)

Dried up and wet (Distinct layers, rhythm)

The variety of arrangement of density (Rhythm)
It also should be within a grid structure, to emphasize the unity of whole work.
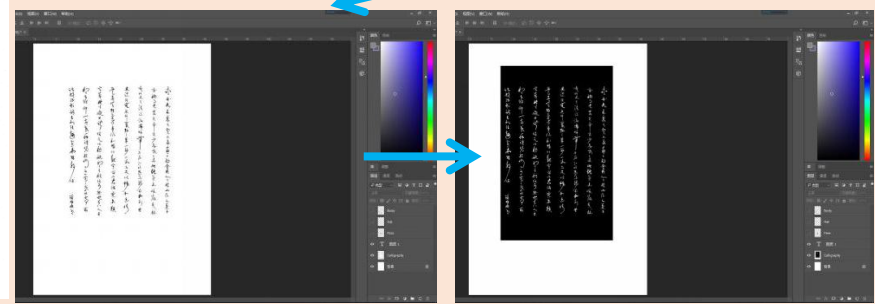
Work in Process
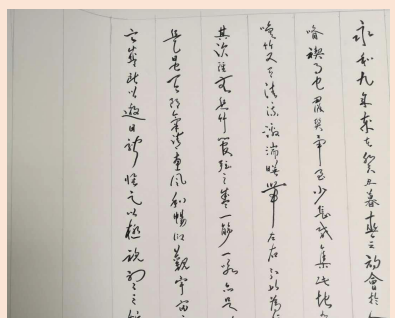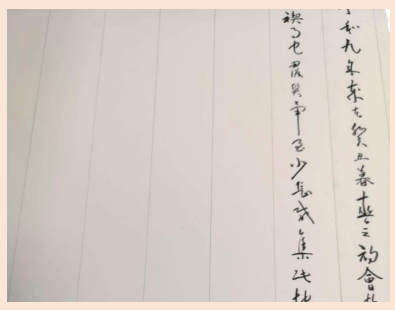
Calligraphy requires one-time completion which is my biggest difficulty. Because it was easy to write a wrong word or the ink bleeds out.
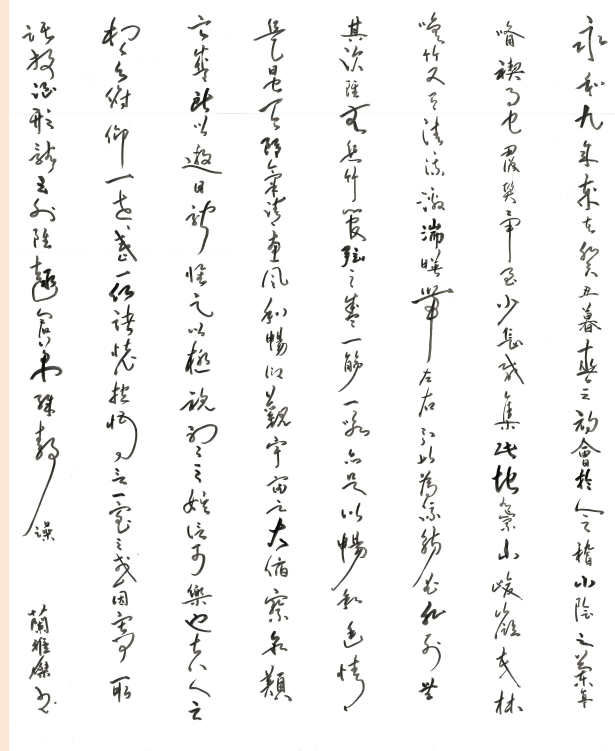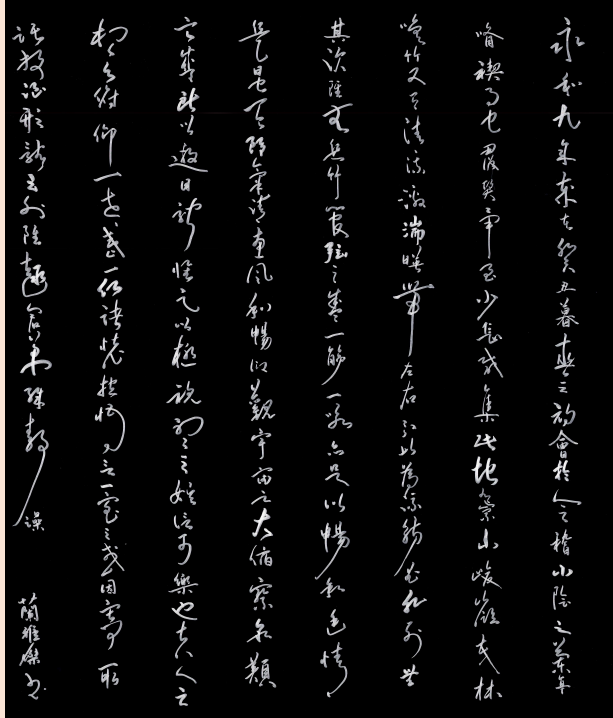

Rendering of *Orchid Pavilion* I wrote, 42cm×59.4cm
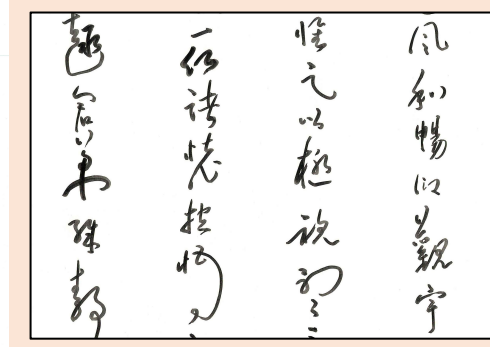
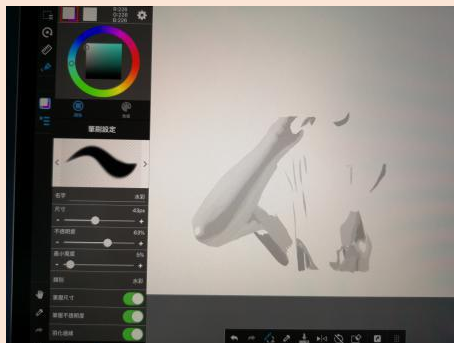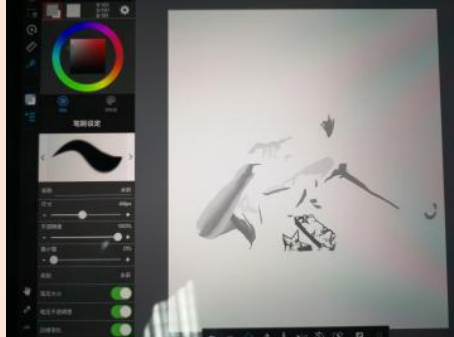

Detail View

I scaned the *Orchid Pavilion Copy* in digital file. Then drag it into Photoshop. Press "Ctrl + I", make the white background black words into black backgroung white words.

Background layer-Inverted scan of my own calligraphy brushwork，42cm×59.4cm


Use digital painting app MediPaint to paint the body self-portrait based on the naturalistic painting skills I developed in the previous works.

Digital, printed on paper, with red stamp. Use of Photoshop. Background layer-Inverted scan of my own calligraphy brushwork 42x59.4cm which features the text of a classical poem written by Wang Xizhi in AD353. Next layer-Digital painting done in MediPaint. The total size is 1000 x 800

Improvement upon the previous design

I add more bleeding elements, to enforce the literati culture. Also, I changed the colorful face into myself portrait in *a.k.a. Naturalism. B*ecause that face is the result of using new thought to challenge the old thought. By doing so, the hat becomes skewed which is the standard dress look of rapper and bboxer. Furthermore, I decide to print the self portrait out and then seal diagonally, because my arm has diagonal, to do so, can let the stamp more like a tattoo on the skin.
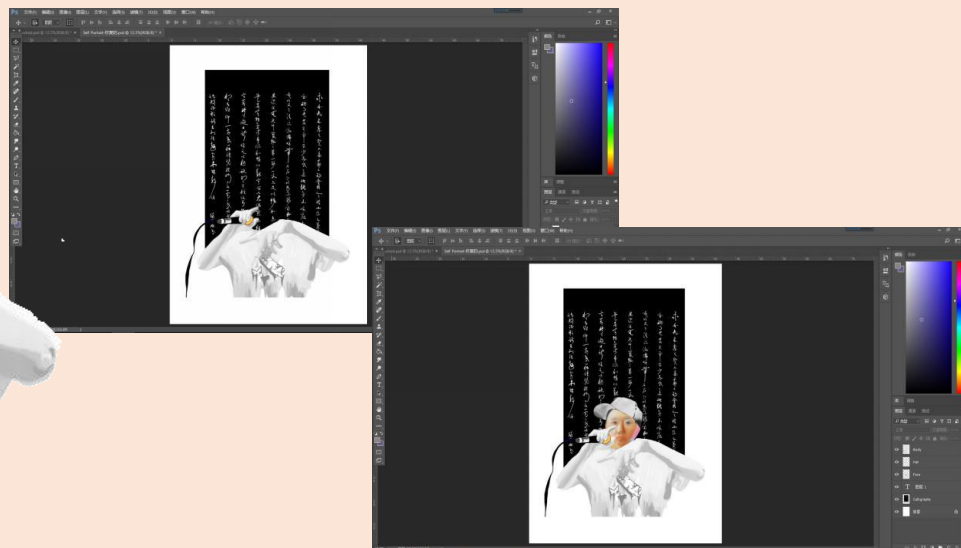
Conjoined Twins

Detail View

*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component.

Digital, printed on paper, with red stamp. Use of Photoshop. Background layer-Inverted scan of my own calligraphy brushwork 42x59.4cm which features the text of a classical poem written by Wang Xizhi in AD353. Next layer-Photo of the blurry face I painted in Artwork 2. Next layer-Digital painting done in MediPaint. Next layer-Red stamp on the figure's arm. The full view image is a picture of a picture because the red stamp is applied after the printing. The detail view is from the digital file. The total size is 42cm×59.4cm

a.k.a.Calligraphy

Bleeding ink are normally be seen as an error in a Calligraphy work. Nonetheless, I believed bleeding ink brings extra attention to the motion or act of making the calligraphy. This can add an extra layer of expression to the calligraphy. Informing from Duchamp's *Fountain* in this artwork, I intended to write a Calligraphy with bleeding ink, which challenge the definition of calligraphy. The running calligraphy is supposed to "run", but "bleeding" is also a type of "running". Therefore, why can't ink bleeding be accepted ?

Content

Normally, the content in a Chinese traditional calligraphy is a poem. The poem I chose is named *Ti Xi Lin Bi* written by Sushi. The text is "Seen as the peak on the side of the ridge, the distances and heights are different. I don't know the true face of Lushan Mountain, only because I am in it." This tells us that because people are in different positions and have different starting points, their understanding of objective things is inevitably one-sided. To understand the truth and panorama of things, we must go beyond narrow scope and get rid of subjective prejudice. Which serves the objective and the relevance-instead of being exclusive, extreme contrasts can be co-existing.

I will use the Chinese traditional running calligraphy technique that I learned in *Conjoined Twins* in this work. Therefore, I will get the skill to make both big size and samll size calligraphy.

Work in Process

A photo of practicing running calligraphy I took

Since my daily writing and the calligraphy I wrote before are all in regular size, controlling the size of each character on such a big paper is hard for me in the beginning.

Traditional Chinese Calligraphy Practice

Work in Process

Criteria of a good calligraphy work that I learn from Orchid Pavilion

The transition between words (Fluency, like flowing water, coherent)

Dried up and wet (Distinct layers, rhythm)

The variety of arrangement of density (Rhythm)

The variety of size of words (Rhythm)

I use the same style, material, content and stamp as my traditional running calligraphy work shown on the left, excepting I add water when I am writing on the calligraphy to create bleeding of the ink which is only semi-controlled.

Exploration of Ink Bleeding

In *a.k.a. Naturalism*, I have explored the "bleeding" in watercolor by adding many water. Here I am going to explore the two different situations of adding water to see which one has a better effect of ink bleeding.
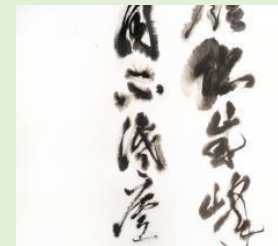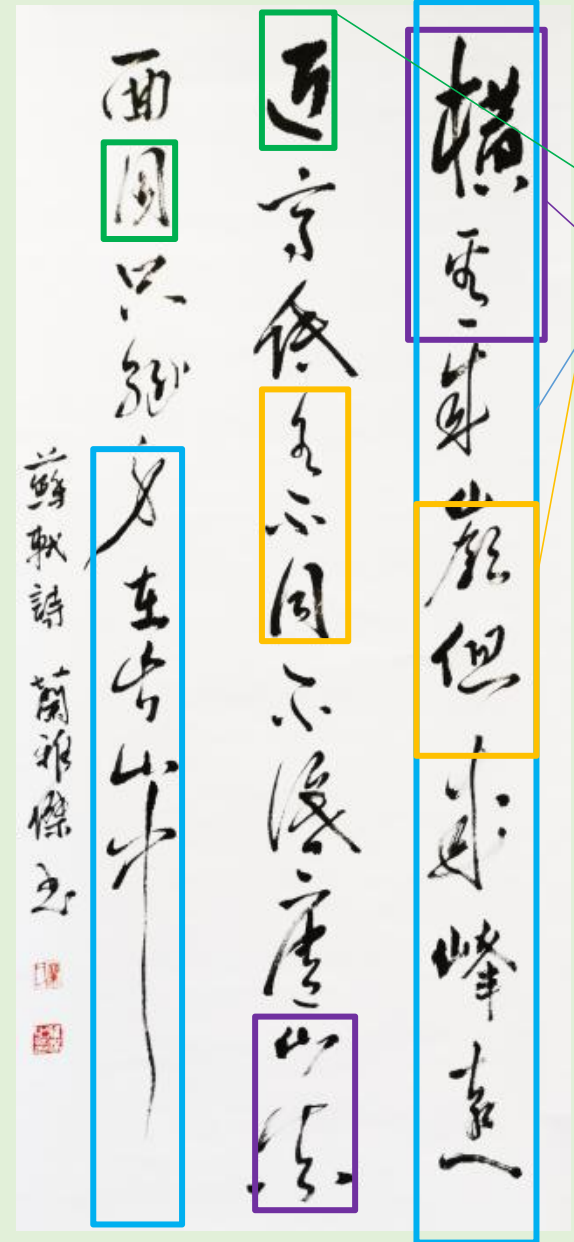
Add water after the ink is dry

Add water while the ink is wet

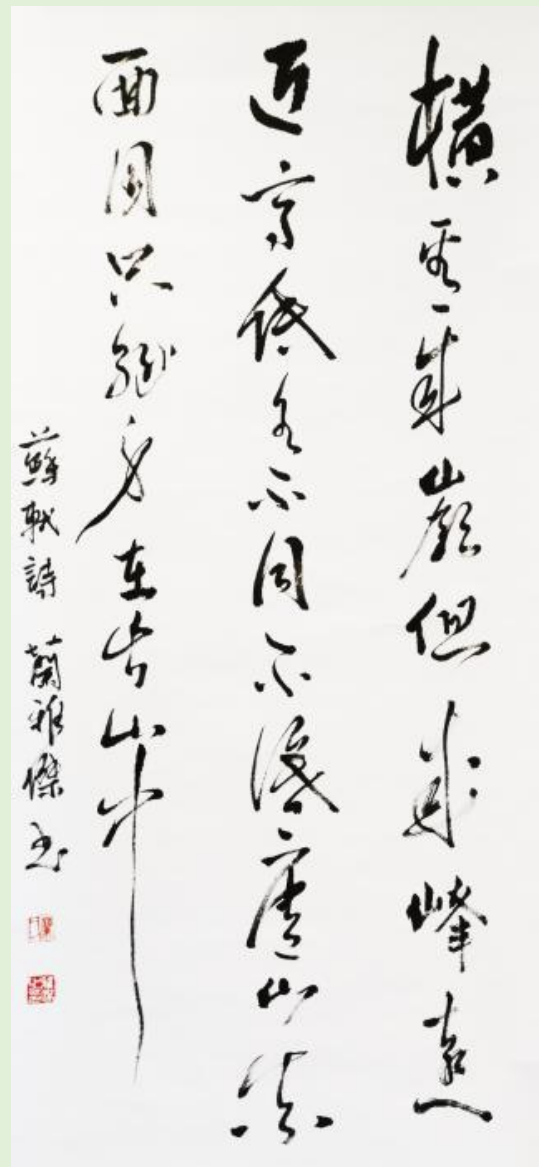I think both of them show the ink bleeding, so I will use both of ways.

*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component
A traditional running calligraphy work of poem Ti Xi Lin Bi I wrote, Ink, calligraphy paper, stamp, ink-pad, 60cm×165cm

* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component
A non-traditional running calligraphy work of poem Ti Xi Lin Bi I wrote, Ink, calligraphy paper, stamp, ink-pad, water, 60cm×165cm

a.k.a. Calligraphy

*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component
A non-traditional running calligraphy work of poem Ti Xi Lin Bi I wrote, Ink, calligraphy paper, stamp, ink-pad, water, 60cm×165cm

*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component
A traditional running calligraphy work of poem Ti Xi Lin Bi I wrote, 60cm×165cm, Ink, calligraphy paper, stamp, ink-pad

In the previous explorations, I explore the idea of bleeding in 2D way. Next, I want to use 3D way to present it.
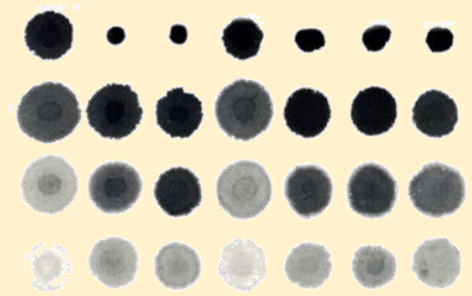
Exploration of ink bleeding I did

Temperature of water, amount of ink, force of writing and material of Calligraphy paper are the key elements of ink bleeding. When making calligraphy if you allow the ink to bleed this brings extra attention to the motion or act of making the calligraphy. This can add an extra layer of expression to the calligraphy.

One is the basic form of calligraphy, since this will be an experimental artwork, I want to use the bleeding on one to show the nature of bleeding.

Character "one" in Chinese traditional calligraphy I wrote

In Daoist thought, the concept of "one" leades to the concept "two" which leads to the concept og "three" which leads to everything. This makes me to think that many bleeding one overlap together and are able to be rotated. So that show a complex space that made by ink bleeding.

$$1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 .... \infty$$

Work in Process

The photo of calligraphy after scanned, and I want to remove unneeded part in the Photoshop so that when it printed on plate other places can be transparent
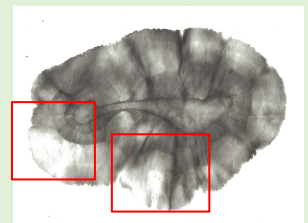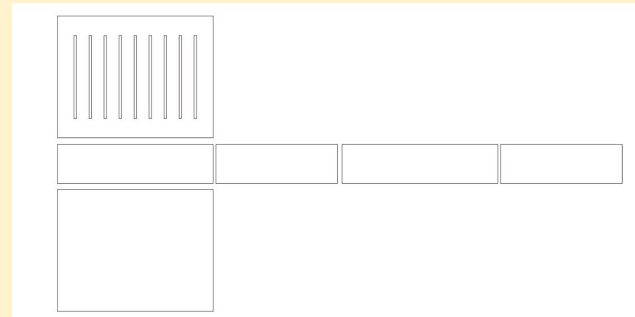

Press "W",and click white area, it can automatically be removed. However, since there is light value in the needed part which is very close to the color of white, it will also be remove, which is not good.

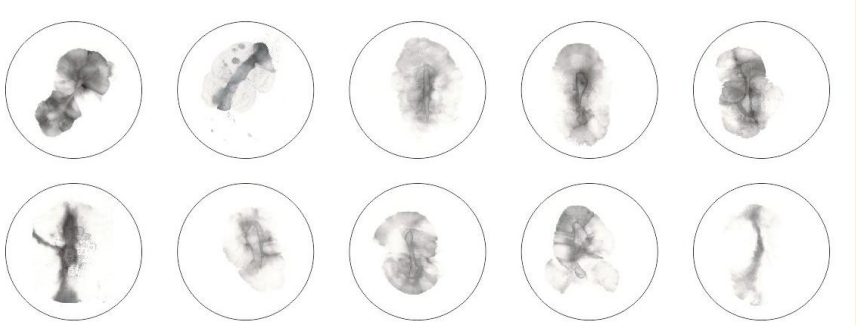So I press "L" and use this tool to carefully select the area I need.

By changing elements that cause ink bleeding, I wrote many "one" with ink bleeding. And I selected ten of them which are more natural and them out. Then printed them on acrylic plate. Since the acrylic plate is transparent, bleeding part can over lap.

As more plates overlap, the more grey it gets. That is to say, in the end, the white and black will mix together and allude the chaotic in the space. The shape of plate will be circle. Therefore, it will be like "Yingyang" which represents the coexistence between two extremes: rightness and error.

Single plate front view

muti-plates aside view

A progression of Yingyang formation I drew

Box Design

Box can make the overlapping stable. Also this box allows people to put in, take out or rotate the plates.

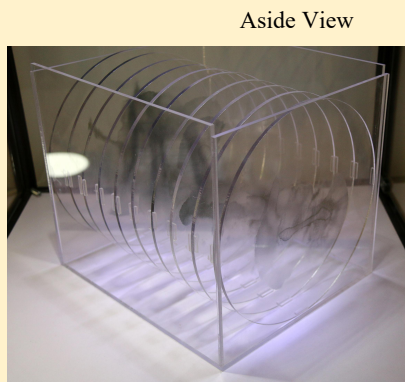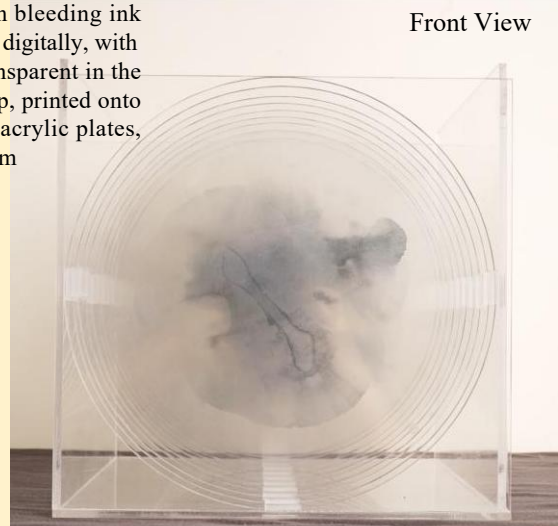The structure of the box I drew on Photoshop

Grey Space

Aside View

Front View

*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component Acrylic plate and display box manufactured for me by Aolis Co. according to my diagram's specifications. Inkbrush calligraphy written on paper with bleeding ink and then scanned and digitally, with white areas made transparent in the layer using Photoshop, printed onto the individual round acrylic plates, 25cm×25cm×30.6cm
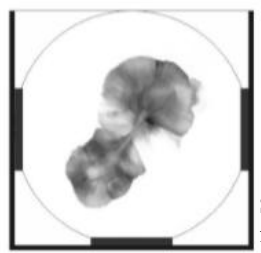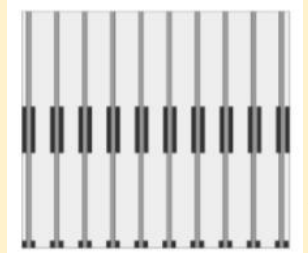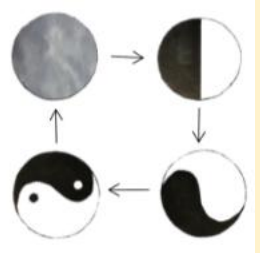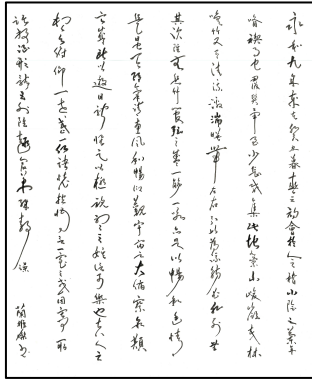
Development of Ideas
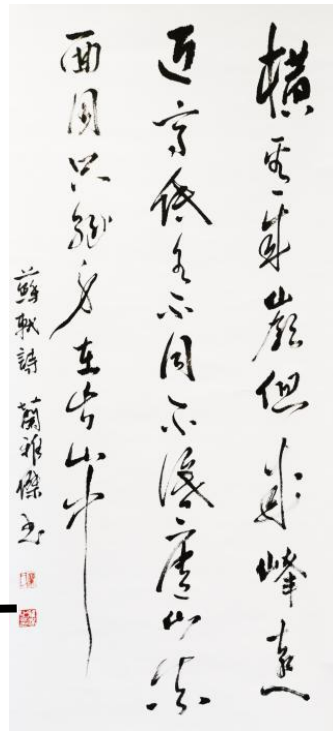

Artwork 1 *Naturalism*
*A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component.

Rendering of *Orchid Pavilion*

Artwork 2 *a.k.a.Naturalism*
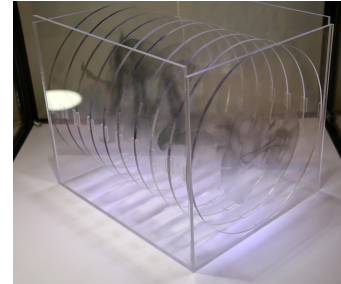* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component

Artwork 3 *Conjoined Twins*
* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component

Artwork 4 *Calligraphy*
* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component

Artwork 5 *a.k.a.Calligraphy*
* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component

Artwork 6 *Grey Space*
* A Final Artwork which is included in the Exhibition Component

My six artworks explore the relationship between extremes such as dry and clean use of ink vs. use of wet ink in a way that bleeds, hip-hop and classical Chinese literati stylization, assisted and unassisted vision. And that is why in my exhibition I arranged those artworks with contrasting concepts next to each other progressively from natural and direct to more conceptual, for emphasizing the contradiction. Motion is a very important strategy for expression in my work. I used biomorphic elements, dripping, bleeding, progressions, cursive script, and different types of "running" to show the motion. So that the accidental beauty can create contrast to the conventional ideology. Foundation of technique skills were shown in writing traditional calligraphy of running character in Artworks 3 and 4 and the naturalistic oil painting portrait in Artwork 1. My oil painted blurry face in Artwork 2 is digitally incorporated into Artwork 3. Staring at it can actually give a blurry feeling. I combine the traditional materials - Chinese traditional ink and oil painting - with unusual support - digital drawing and layered acrylic plate, to continue the co-existence of the contrast extremes.

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