

# Shay Wang

## Artwork Conceptual Plan

### Content

Critical investigation of <i>Chacmool</i> , Nadin Ospina	Screen 3
Formal qualities	Screen 4-5
Interpretation	Screen 6
Practical application	Screen 7
Objective for my own creative work	Screen 8
Reference	Screen 9



# A Critical Investigation Of:



Nadin Ospina

*Chacmool*

Stone

49 × 59 × 27 cm

(19.3 × 23.2 ×

10.6 inch

1999

Essex Collection  
of Art from Latin  
America,

[www.escala.org.uk](http://www.escala.org.uk),

accessed Feb

2019



# Formal Qualities

## Color, Texture and Material

The color of this piece is neutral color— it is the initial color of stones.

Because of the material (stone), the texture of the artwork is processed to be rough and old.

## Time

The time that when this artwork was made and the oldness brought by the texture are contradictory with each other— the time is near to 21st century while the texture is felt like it was from 1000 years ago.



## Size

The size of this artwork is 'abnormal' since it is neither as portable as the common toys of Mickey Mouse, nor as big and splendid as the general ancient objects of old cultures.



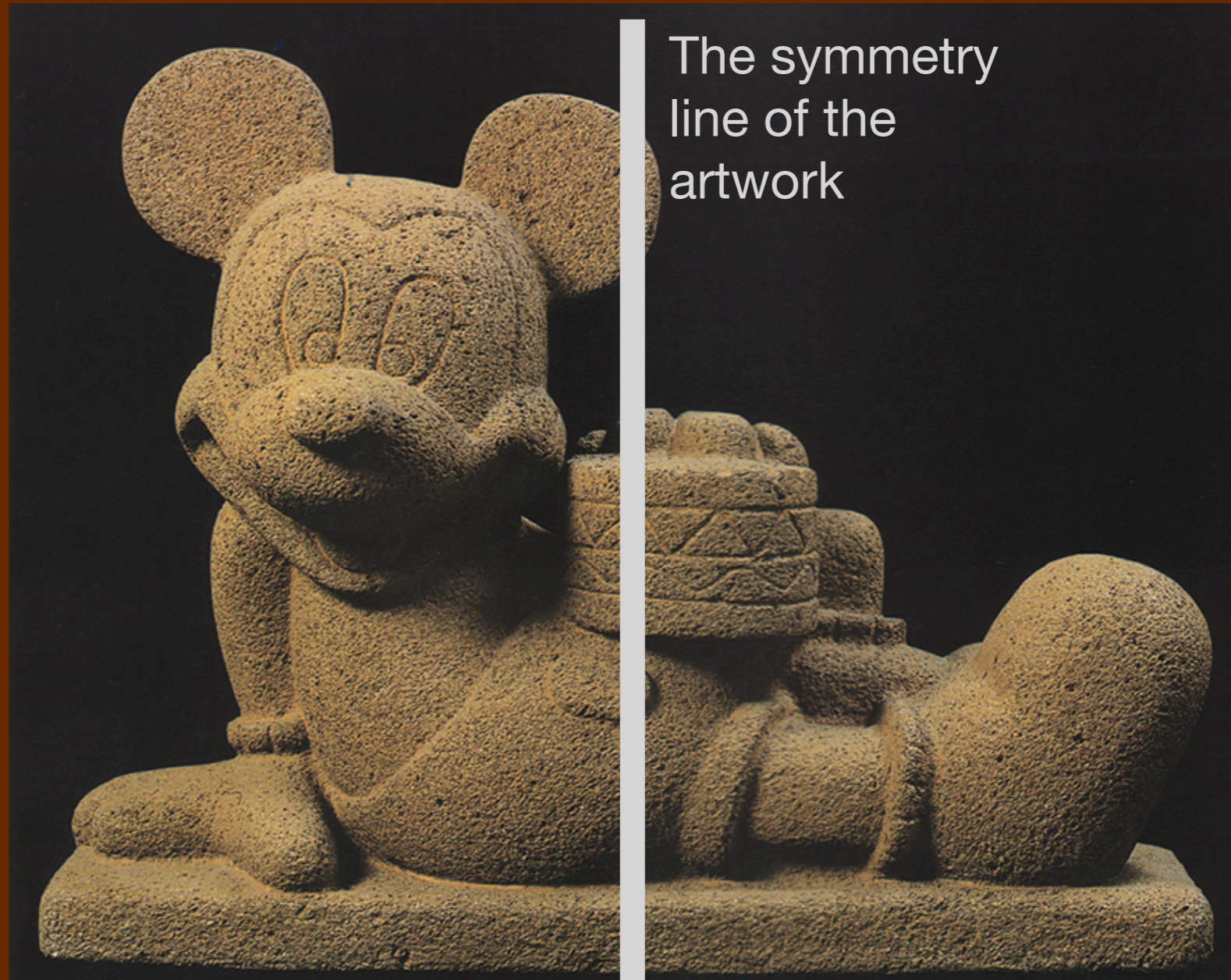


## Visual association

← This sculpture visually associates with the pre-Columbian sculpture chacmool.

## Balance and Emphasis

→ The artwork's frontal picture is not balanced. The left conspicuously weighs more than right: its one hand and its face are on the left, and the cheese burger with its another hand tends to be on left, whereas there's only another foot on the very right. And the lack of balance in the frontal picture makes an emphasis on Mickey's smiling face.



The symmetry line of the artwork



# Interpretation

## Critical Hypothesis

In *Big Art Small Art*, we know that the modern-day comic characters such as Goofy, Mickey Mouse and Bart Simpson are considered as emblematic of cultural colonialism to the native American cultures such as Maya, Olmecs and Aztecs<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore according to the background information above, I concluded that the artist expresses the general worries about the marginalization of traditional cultures and the conceptual clash of diverse cultures.

## Support

We can sense the conflict of the pop culture and the ancient one through the primitive color, texture and material of the sculpture and the unusual large-sized Mickey Mouse, the well-known comic character, which was commonly produced as portable toys.

The appropriation of the pre-Columbian sculpture chacmool on this artwork reflects a sense of marginalization.

This artwork used to be presented in a glass showcase as if it was a real antiquity exhibited in a history museum, which strengthens the conceptual clash of cultures on this piece, as it is believed that the pop culture could never be shown like a remain of an old culture.



The posture of this sculpture has a association with the ancient sculpture chacmool, which indicates the clash between the pop culture and traditional cultures.

The unbalanced frontal of the sculpture makes a major focus on Mickey's face, the representative of American pop culture, trying to make it dominant in the frontal picture, leaving a strong impression in viewers' minds and appealing the their worries about the overwhelming globalization with invasive pop culture, and the marginalization of traditional cultures.

# Practical Application

## **Conceptual contrast showed by strategies**

The artwork gave me inspiration to use creative strategy for expression to indicate the conceptual contradictory, just like how the artist himself used appropriation to reveal the cultural conflicts in the modern society.

## **Texture and Actual contrast**

The contrast between the pristine color and rough texture and the modern cartoon image inspires me to build a particular elements of design visually or physically to create a visual or real contrast such like this one in my design.

## **Balance and Emphasis**

The emphasis created by the frontal unbalanced picture gives me inspiration to create major focus on the picture of my design to attract the viewers' attentions.

## **Symbolism**

In this artwork, the Mickey Mouse is the symbol of pop culture and the ancient sculpting style is the symbol of pre-Columbian culture, which makes the cultural conflicts between conventional ones and new ones stronger. So I could also use the symbols of a certain ideologies, viewpoints or cultures to represent my objective in my design.



# Objective Statement

As I was able to access to the internet in a very young age, I used to wonder why my own culture was not a part of pop culture but American pop culture is a part of my daily life. Moreover I heard of some predictions of the overwhelming globalization in the 21st century through the medias, and most of them are related to pop culture somehow. Meanwhile, I heard quite a few of either extreme or neutral comments about the negative and positive aspects of pop culture.

One of the extreme perspectives said that the globalization makes the pop culture more invasive, since the advanced transportation and Internet have helped a lot. For instance a hybrid artwork, *chacmool*, mixed the famous cartoon character Micky Mouse, and the pre-Columbian sculpture the Chacmool together. Its creator made it as he wanted to express a worry in the society that someday all the toys in every country will be Disney-fied<sup>2</sup>, and people only eat the cheese burgers sold in McDonald's, resonating the fear and worries of losing the characteristics of their own cultures inside the viewers.

But there is also a positive viewpoint, the one that most of we the youngs prefer to, it indicated that the globalization has helped to expand the visibility of the ancient cultures. New technologies and forms of communication have contributed to spreading of pre-Columbian culture, and the advanced transportation allows more people to access to it immediately.

And the pop culture could indirectly bring the best out of other distinguishable cultures: the combined piece *chacmool* above, it not only allows Mickey to lend his popularity to the ancient figure, but also allows the Chacmool to endow Mickey with an aura of the sacred<sup>2</sup>. The interesting consequence of collision of the rough texture and the modern image inspires me to make a such visual contrast or collision in my own design.

And this artwork also suggests that no matter how prevalent and strong a predominant culture is, it will always be modified after entering another different one, the uniqueness of a culture is so strong that it cannot be homogenized. And the technique the artist used is appropriation, allowing the viewers to reflect, which inspires me to use expression strategies like juxtaposition to allow my audience to think more.

And the very difference between the 2 groups of viewers' standpoints (the younger generation and the older one) inspires me to re-contextualize the icons from varied time period to make conceptual contrast or collision as well.

I have thought this 2 standpoints for a while, until I finally figure out that **the globalization has contributed to representations of cultural uniqueness, and the mutual understanding between human cultures, which is the most important thing rather than the cultural conflicts or uniformity,** and I want to make the artwork that expresses this positive idea.

# References

1. *Big Art Small Art*, Tristan Manco, Thames & Hudson; 1 edition, October 14, 2014, page 165-167
2. Essex Collection of Art from Latin America, [www.escala.org.uk](http://www.escala.org.uk), accessed Feb 2019

# Image Credits

Nadin Ospina, *Chacmool*, 1999, Stone, 49 × 59 × 27 cm (19.3 × 23.2 × 10.6 inch), Essex Collection of Art from Latin America, [www.escala.org.uk](http://www.escala.org.uk), accessed Feb 2019