

Mou Zhu

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ABSTRACT

My work considers the comparison of Chinese culture and American culture, censorship, and educational issues in China. Like many other international students and foreign workers, my decision to go back to my country or not is a real dilemma. My grandfather recently wrote me a letter about a lost turtle that had returned to our house as a reminder for me to return to China after my studies. Added to that, the most influenced art teacher in my life recently passed away. I miss my family and friends, but most of my work will be censored in China if I return. This experience has led me to make my thesis work: *Guī*. My research is about the meaning of *Guī*. My thesis work became an autobiography, with its roots in my childhood.

INTRODUCTION: *Guī*

Meaning of *Guī*

Guī is the title of my thesis exhibition. *Guī* is Pinyin, the official alphabetic writing system to transcribe Chinese characters into Latin-based script. *Guī* is the first tone of *Gui*, and the sound of *Guī* is high and level. It means “return” in Mandarin, as well as “turtle.” (Xin)

Double Meaning of Turtle

Being Chinese, I think turtles often represent Chinese culture. Turtles symbolize longevity. As a symbol of praying for longevity, stone turtles were placed in front of ancient Chinese sites, temples, and palaces. On the other hand, “turtle” is a rude swear or profanity. Turtle, pronounced as “Wangba,” means “cuckold,” a man with a wife who cheats on him. The meaning of the “turtle egg” or “son of a turtle” is the same as the meaning for “bastard” or “son of a bitch.” (Dodson) “Turtle” has two totally different meanings, one that is controversial, and controversial art is an artform that I really appreciate. On the other hand, in that turtles represent a long life, I see using the turtle as my theme as wishing for my work to have a long life. Turtles came from the past and have existed for millions of years; they bring with them the things that they saw and heard to the present and the future.

Oracle Bone and I Ching

As a Book Arts student, I am also concerned about the evolution of books in China. Turtle shells were not only the earliest material for text, but also the beginning of I Ching, an ancient Chinese text used to predict the future. In China, the earliest text, called the Oracle bone, was carved on ox bones and turtle shells. (Fig.1) The earliest material for recording text was the turtle shell. (Wu) Turtles were not only the carriers of cultural heritage, but also witnesses to cultural evolution.

In ancient times, before important activities were held, a wizard would roast a turtle shell and then practice divination based on the way the lines split on it. According to this logic, people invented the I Ching. The I Ching stresses that Wuji (nothing) generates *Tai Ching*, and *Tai Ching* generates two complementary forces, a balance of opposite. Their forces generate four aggregates. The four aggregates generate eight trigrams, and the eight trigrams generate sixty-four hexagrams. I Ching reveals the natural laws of the world and people used sixty-four hexagrams to predict good and bad



Fig.1 Oracle bone, Tencent, Web. June, 2009

fortune.(Balkin) The turtle symbolizes an old man, who knows everything from the past to modern times, so he ought to have the ability to predict the future.

Exhibition View

I use idea of turtle shell from I Ching to explore my personal story: my childhood, my art teacher's recent death, and my struggle to decide whether to go back to China or not. In the exhibition, I have two writings to hang on the wall: my grandpa's letter reminding me to return to China and my primary school essay about Jialin Xu, my first and most important art teacher, who just died. (Fig. 2) Both the letter and essay



Fig.2 Mou Zhu, *Guī*, 2013, mixed media, installation view.

have been translated into English, and are side-by-side. They are used to bring my audiences into my personal story. The third element of *Guī* is a sculpture installation, made of turtle shells in different materials. I place three hundred and twenty-eight of turtle shells on a low 80 by 80 inch square platform in the gallery. Six groups of turtle shells of different materials—glass, wax, plaster, fiber reinforced plastic (fiber glass), paper, and the real turtle shells— are placed in a spiral, suggesting the circle of life. There are sixty-four of each material, referencing the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching, except the glass for which there are only eight, also referencing the I Ching.

LIFE IN CHINA

The Person Who Influenced Me Most

When I was a nine, I began studying painting with my first art teacher, Jialin Xu.

Studying with Xu was my happiest memory during that time. Xu taught me marker cartooning, paper cutting, printmaking (with foam board and wood), coloring, pen draw-



Fig.3 Mou Zhu, *Colorful Tree*, 1997, marker on paper.

ing, and so on. He also took me out on painting trips in other cities, such as Beijing. During that time, I often took part in children's artistic activities and competitions. During this time I would learn the topic of various activities and competitions and do some sketches. Xu assisted in the development my sketches, such as giving me suggestions for the materials, ideas and composition. I was happy when I learned different skills. I remember I made an artwork, *Colorful Tree*, when I was ten, with Xu's guidance and got the gold award in the one of the Chinese children's drawing competitions. (Fig. 3)

Chinese Education System

Mao quoted Lenin: "Art should be a cog in the wheel of revolution. Chinese art should celebrate its heroes, workers, peasants and soldiers." After the founding of a new China in 1949, the Chinese government and the Soviet government signed the "Treaty of Friendship and Alliance Between the Republic of China and the U.S.S.R." to create a political, economic and military alliance between the countries. The Soviet Union was the world's first powerful socialist country. The Chinese wanted to study the Soviet Union, including its culture and arts. The time period from 1949 to 1957 was a time of copying and re-planning the Soviet education mode. The Chinese government, in order to learn more from the Soviet Union, sent a group of experts and young students to study in the Soviet Union. (Andrew) Meanwhile, the Soviet government sent their artists to China to give lectures and set up painting training classes.

The teachers who participated in the Soviet painting training classes came back to their schools to promote the former Soviet Union art education system and methods. Chinese teachers were rarely introduced to Western painting. Actually, they knew little about Western painting: Impressionist, Fauvist, and Cubist paintings were all strange.

Because of the political environment of the time, some of the artists who knew a number of Western paintings did not dare to introduce them. Therefore the Soviet Art Education system as the core teaching methodology rapidly become the single Chinese teaching system. (Lv) Entrance examinations for the fine arts academies included a pencil sketch examination (of a plaster head portrait or a real head portrait), a pencil drawing examination (of three poses) and a painting examination (a portrait or still life).

My mother thought I needed to take those examinations and thought that I was no longer a child when I was 12 years old. On the recommendation of her friend, she changed my art teacher. My happiness ended in 2000. My new teacher told me that if I wanted to be an artist, I would have to exercise my painting skills. From then on, I began to practice pencil sketches and gouache painting. The reason was very simple: if I wanted to be an artist, I must take the entrance examination to enter the academy of fine arts. I remember I went to an art training school every weekend. I felt bored, but I had no choice. Before the art entrance examinations, I went to a training studio in Beijing for about six months to practice my examination techniques. During that time, I stayed in the studio

for about 15 hours every day. When I came back to the dorm, I still needed to finish a daily sketch for homework. I did not sleep more than six hours a night. After the hard training, my examination skills improved rapidly. During those six years, the only art skills I learned and practiced were pencil drawings, pencil sketches and gouache painting.

I received a high score on those art examinations and entered one of eight institutions of higher art education in China, the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute. I chose the Printmaking Department because I was interested in the printmaking I learned with Jialin Xu. I assumed that I would no longer practice boring foundational painting skills but, surprisingly, my teachers still emphasized the former Soviet Union's fine arts teaching philosophy: drawing skills are the basis of fine arts. However, I finally learned different printmaking techniques. (Fig. 4) I also wanted to use some film techniques to create artwork. But my teacher told me that according to the outline of the Chinese Ministry of Education, my work must be related to the course. For my undergraduate thesis show and thesis writing, I had to make thesis work and write a thesis paper related to my major. I remember my teacher told me that if I were not in compliance with the requirements, he would fail me. Additionally, my college also had many rules to limit thinking. Not only did one have to make a work related to one's major, but also he/she could not make an anti-communist political work.

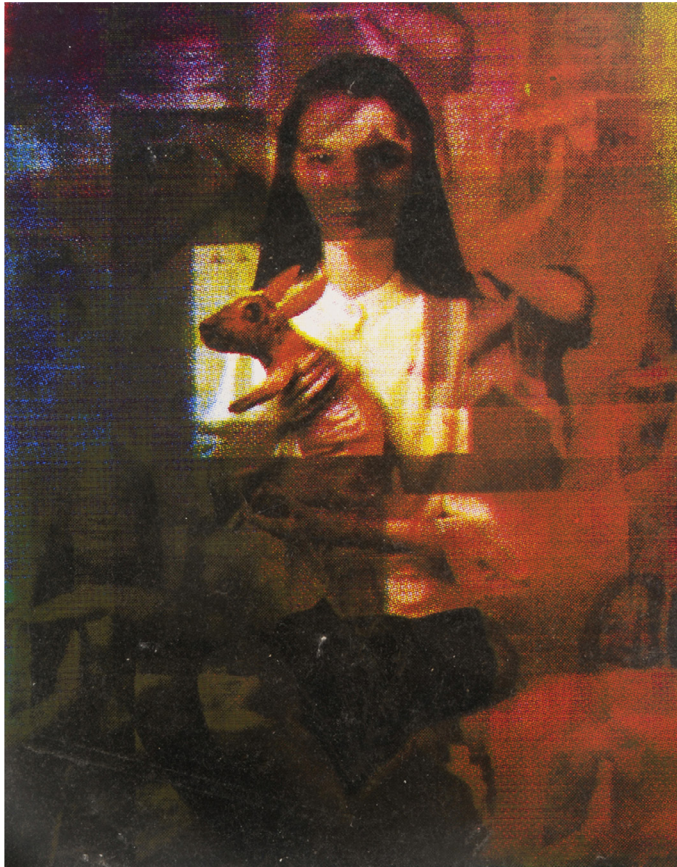


Fig.4 Mou Zhu, *For Elise*, 2009, screen printing, 39cm x 54cm.

Inspired by Xu Bing

I learned about Xu Bing's works during my college studies. Xu Bing's *A Book From the Sky* affected me a great deal and pushed me into the direction of making books. (Fig. 5) This seminal and monumental installation was shown at the National Museum of Art, Beijing. In the catalog for the exhibition, this installation is described as,

“Hundreds of meters of scrolls hung from the ceiling or pasted on the walls, and texts bound in an ancient fashion were displayed on the ground. Every detail of the piece was exquisite and perfect: the carved characters, the printing, the binding, and the meticulous design, as well as the thoughtful installation itself, which drew viewers in to enter an esoteric labyrinth. However, the viewer could not recognize the characters. The Chinese-like pseudo-characters were, in fact, unreadable. This piece was widely acclaimed by both Chinese critics and the international art community for its creative manipulation of Chinese characters, its impressive presentation and obsessive craftsmanship.”(Xu)



Fig.5 Xu Bing, *A Book From the Sky*, 1988, mixed media, installation view. Courtesy of the University Art Museum, State University of New York at Albany.

Xu Bing spent a lot of time creating a new language and carving thousands of characters by hand. This was the first time that I saw a book as a big installation. In my undergraduate studies, I spent much time practicing drawing skills, so I knew that I did not have the ability to create some characters like Xu Bing. However, I did try to use the elements of traditional Chinese culture and make installation art.

I made a work titled *New Edition Chinese Book* in my undergraduate thesis show. (Fig. 6) I made this work because when I was a high school student, my Chinese language book was boring. I had the idea to combine old Chinese language books and new Chinese language books. I thought that it would make the subject more interesting for students.

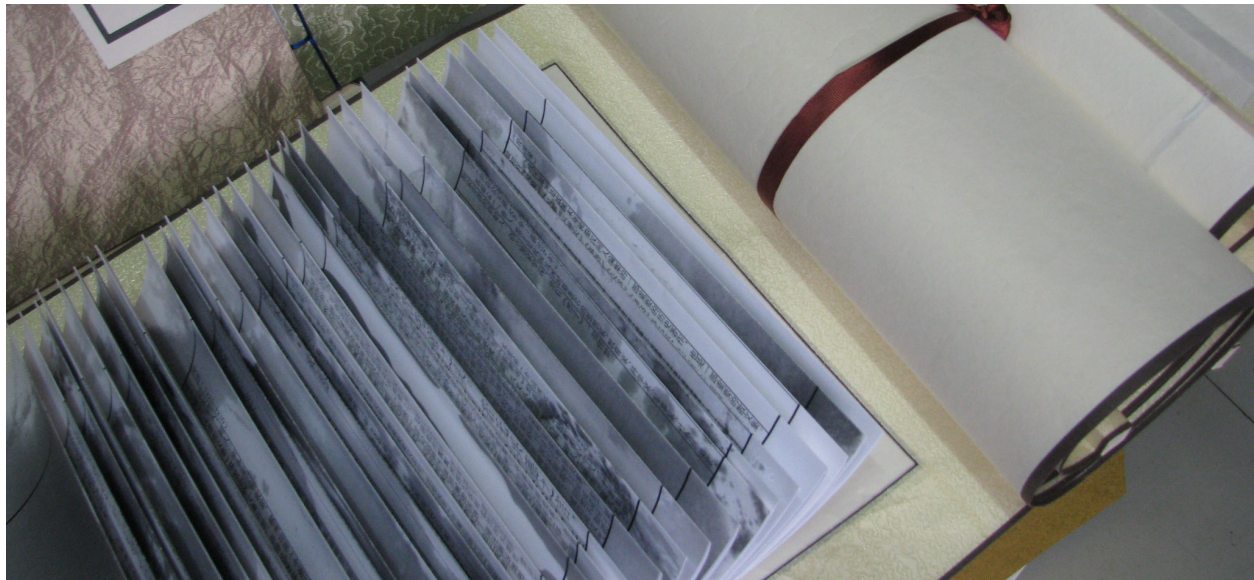


Fig.6 Mou Zhu, *New Edition Chinese Book*, 2010, mixed media.

I combined two Chinese traditional bookbinding styles, one is a scroll binding and the other is “whirlwind” binding (or “dragon scales” binding), to describe “the overlapping sheets of paper” within the book.(Bookbinding) Inside the book, I used the traditional Chinese printing orientation, running from the top to the bottom instead of from side to side. I also added background effects using ink.

In the exhibition, I made my installation piece look like a high school classroom. Into the wooden floor, I carved a record of students’ Internet chat. I also wrote Chinese poems on the blackboard and used pages from my old Chinese language books to cover the chairs and desks. In addition, I used the MP3 download of the old book to play the reading of the Chinese book. (Fig. 7)



Fig.7 Mou Zhu, *New Edition Chinese Book*, 2010, mixed media, installation View.

In the book *Where Heaven and Earth Meet: Xu Bing & Cai Guo-Qiang*, Xu Bing mentioned that Andy Warhol was a printmaker. Zhang Zhaohui states, “Warhol’s use of graphic art to duplicate and repeat commercial icons inspired Xu Bing to rethink the conventional woodcut. He came to realize that conventional woodcuts had nothing to do with the rapidly shifting world and our daily life.”(Zhang) In order to follow Xu Bing’s success, I decided to study abroad. Before I graduated from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, I thought if I wanted to be a real artist, I should go abroad and continue my art career without limitations. I called the dean of the Printmaking Department, and he recommended that I go to the United States, Germany or Japan. Since the United States is one of the freest countries in the world, I chose the United States.

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

Limitless

When I stood in the exhibition hall of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, I was full of curiosity and felt a huge attraction to the contemporary artworks. What is contemporary art? I searched most of the dictionaries but there is no exact definition of this term. In my mind, contemporary art emphasizes an artist's ideas, values, personality, and experimental creation. None have anything to do with drawing skills. For instance, Marcel Duchamp's famous artwork, *Fountain*, is a modern and conceptual artwork of a men's urinal. Duchamp does not require painting techniques to finish it.

When I started at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, one of my first projects was to make art comparing the price of consumer goods in Mainland China and the United States. (Fig. 8) Unexpectedly, the teachers at the University of the Arts actually encouraged my thoughts. I felt more freedom.



Fig.8 Mou Zhu, *Wow*, 2011, ink on French paper, 5inch x 5inch.

Also, I could use Facebook, Twitter, Google and so on, which the Chinese government blocks in Mainland China. I could search for any information without the “Green Dam,” which the Chinese government uses for filtering words and images as well as web addresses. On January 12th, 2010, Google refused to cooperate with the Chinese government’s censorship, by blocking the so-called illegal and harmful information. Google had to announce its withdrawal from the Chinese market. In the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Nicholas Carr mentioned that Google has changed the way of we write and think. (Carr) In China, because the Chinese people could search Google for some so-called illegal or harmful websites, the Chinese government believes Google might affect the people’s judgment. In order to manage the country, they blocked Twitter, YouTube, Bing, Flickr, Opera, Live, Wordpress, Blogger and so on. The heavy online censorship in China made us stupid, not Google.

Ai Weiwei

An artist that greatly influenced me at this time was Ai Weiwei. Ai Weiwei focuses on the people’s rights, public surveys and the corruption of the Chinese government. His friends questioned, for example, if the death toll in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake was reported correctly by the Chinese government. He participated in the investigation of the real death toll and the Sichuan schools corruption scandal following the collapse of poorly built schools, called “tofu-skin schools,” but reports of the investigation were

restricted by the government. He felt helpless, so he created some artworks about this earthquake. In 2010, he brought his *Sunflower Seeds* to the Tate Modern in London and showed them to audiences from all over the world. (Fig. 9) Some people say this is the most expensive artwork, made of the most individual pieces in the history of art. Ai Weiwei used one hundred million handmade ceramic sunflower seeds to suggest what the individual is. These seeds look the same from the far away, but you will find small differences when you take a close look. Each one is an independent piece. It reflects that Ai Weiwei cannot forget the death list in the Sichuan earthquake. All seeds are individual objects, which suggests that every life is precious and cannot be forgotten.



Fig.9 Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, mixed media, installation view. Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern.

After the collapse of many schools, caused by the earthquake and the death of thousand of young students, one could see bags and study material strewn everywhere. Ai Weiwei wanted to use the backpacks to make works. First, he created a 55-foot-long undulating snake using 360 children's backpacks. Belonging to children who died because of the poor building codes, attributed to local corruption. In another part of this work, Ai Weiwei created the Citizens' Investigation project with the goal of compiling a list of all the children who died in collapsed schoolhouses. The list, which records the name, year, class, and sex of each victim, has grown to include over 5,000 names. The names were printed in ink on white paper and were displayed on the wall. He also made another backpack work in Germany. He used backpacks to make a wall that spells out a sentence through the placement of colored ones. The sentence is a quotation from the mother of one of the victims: "She lived happily for seven years in this world."

Stupig, Shitizen and Smilence

Like Ai Weiwei, in my first Work-in- Progress show I used different media, materials and techniques to present various Chinese issues. I come from Sichuan, where Ai Weiwei did his earthquake research. I made a series of artworks inspired by artistic censorship and the issue of Chinese education system. *Shitizen* is a series with three pieces, *Stupig*, *Shitizen* and *Smilence*. Each piece measures 40 by 60 inches and has a big circle in the upper half.

My first piece was *Stupig* (*Stupig* is “Chinglish” for the combination of the words stupid and pig. It is most commonly used to describe beings of immense stupidity). (Fig. 10) I had a great imagination when I was a child and I was very interested in drawing/coloring. I was “stupig” and just followed what my teacher said, that drawing skills are very important if you want to be an artist. In the middle of the picture, there is a big black circle, which represents the beginning of my boring life. And around the circle, I used crayon to create colorful abstract flat shapes to represent my happy childhood.

The second is *Shitizen*, (*shitizen* is “Chinglish” for the combination of the words shit and citizen) which refers to those people who are officially citizens but treated unjustly by their government as if they are just indentured servants or even slaves. (Fig. 11) In Thomas McEvilley’s essay, “Art History or Sacred History?” he proposes the idea that from the Middle Ages to the Sixteenth or Seventeenth Centuries, art was dominated by religion. Artists were controlled by the Pope, and they did not have creative freedom. This reminds me of China today, which restricts the artists’ creative freedom and subject, or topic. Chinese visual artists cannot make works critical of the Chinese government; if they do, they may be arrested by the *departymment*. The *departymment* (*departymment* is “Chinglish” for the combination of the words department and party) is the most mysterious department in China. It is in charge of almost everything and can never be found when needed. It blocks some websites, such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter.



Fig.10 Mou Zhu, *Stupig*, 2011, crayon on foam-core, 40inch x 60inch

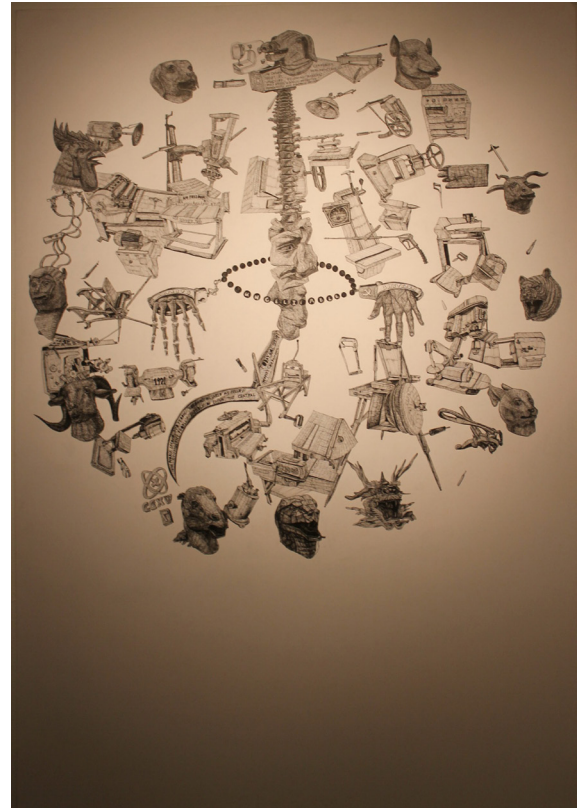


Fig.11 Mou Zhu, *Shitizen*, 2011, micron pen on foam-core, 40inch x 60inch.

Chinese artists have democrazy, Democrazy, the Chinglish, compound of democracy and crazy, is an illusory system of government in which people choose their rulers by voting for them in elections, which only exist in the imaginations of a few Chinese. They can only smile, which means smile and keep silent, and is used when you know the answer, but do not want to say it or there is some force stopping you. Even if your artworks have been created and you want to participate in exhibitions, your works will

never pass the censors.

Shitizen took me more than one hundred hours to draw with micron pens. I drew a very detailed work to show my drawing skill and satirized the Chinese art education system and censorship. The big black circle that represents the boring life in Stupig became a detailed circle of censorship and limitation, which represents my college life. I rendered many different images to represent art and artists that had been censored by the Chinese government, for instance, artist tools, artist machines, Ai Weiwei's head sculpture of twelve Chinese zodiacs and so on.

The third piece in this series was *Smilence*. (Fig. 12) This piece was conceptual and inspired by Marcel Duchamp. He was the first person who proposed the concept of the "Ready-Made." He shifted his attention from the visual elements of art to the expression of content. He emphasized functional issues rather than the formal structure. Duchamp believed that the concept of aesthetics has nothing to do with art, so anything could become an artwork. I used a round mirror that I bought at IKEA and put it on the wall at the same height as the circle on the other two pieces. And I signed my name at the corner of the mirror and used string to make a square the same size as the other two pieces. I used the mirror to represent real-time. If you change anything in real life, it can immediately be reflected in the mirror. In the mirror, nothing will be blocked, censored,

or limited.

At present the Chinese government realizes that contemporary art is a big commercial opportunity. But censorship still exists in the art arena. Early in 2012, Communist Party members gave an exciting proposal in the National People's Congress to move the ideology of the Communist Party out of school teaching materials. I wish that the Ministry of Education of China would pay more attention to creative thinking.



Fig.12 Mou Zhu, *Smilence*, 2011, mixed media, 40inch x 60inch.

At the second Work-in-Progress show, I made an installation work with film, also inspired by Ai Weiwei. Ai not only tried different skills and techniques, but also moved from art to other fields. He is a real contemporary artist in my mind. Not only did he participate in the investigation of the real death toll in the Sichuan earthquake and make films, such as *Lao Ma Ti Huaer*, about the Sichuan school corruption scandal following the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, he also collaborated with Swiss architects

Herzog & de Meuron as the artistic consultant on the bird nest, the Beijing National Stadium for the 2008 Olympics.

For my project, *Title Has Been Censored*, I used movable walls to make a big room. On the walls inside the room I wrote all of the “sensitive” Chinese words and the American censored words that I found online. Those words that could not appear on the websites or television were crossed out. In that room, a film was projected. I wore a “Mao Ze-dong” mask and a fellow student wore a “George Washington” mask and we sat together. We read those same words one-by-one. If those words did not appear on websites or television, they appeared as “beep” sounds. (Fig. 13)

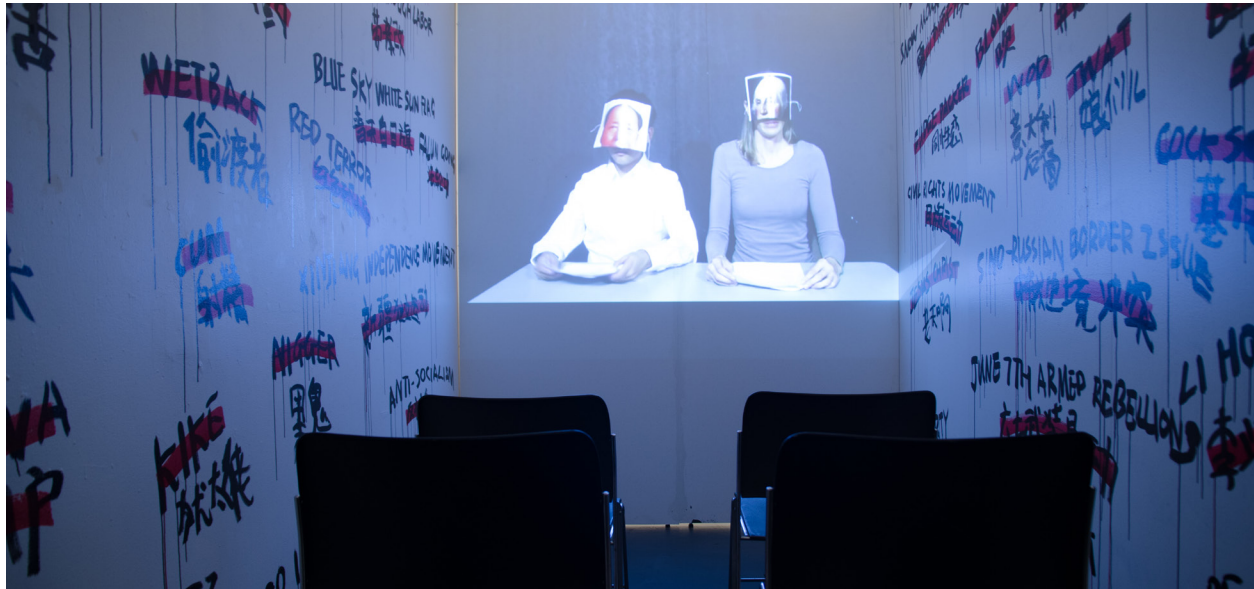


Fig.13 Mou Zhu, *Title Has Been Censored*, 2012, mixed media, installation view.

IDEAS FOR THE EXHIBITION: *Guī*

Recalling Childhood

One day, when I saw Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter, a post struck me: “Nowadays, many artists think they are getting with it. In fact, we really need to continually look back, return to where we started and find what we really want to do.” Jeff Koons made *Balloon Dog* because he was inspired by his childhood, and Ai Weiwei’s artworks are so rebellious because his father was denounced as a rightist (that is, antisocialist with bourgeois tendencies) and his family was exiled to the Xinjiang Region in northwest China when he was a child. (Ai) Childhood is the subject of many of the artists I respect. I look to my childhood to inform my work.

As I began to recall my childhood. Two things immediately appeared in my mind: Small animals at Chengdu’s Flower and Bird Market and my teacher Jialin Xu.

Grandpa’s Letter: Reminds Me Return to China

My grandfather liked flowers and birds, and he often took me to the flower and bird market. Because of my grandfather’s hobby, I liked flowers and small animals. I have a habit that I must first log into QQ, a Chinese instant message program, every time I turn on my computer. I recently realized that I have used “turtle” as my user name for more

than 10 years. My love of turtles is long and deep. I remembered that I had the experience of feeding turtles when I was a child, but I was too young to remember the details of the stories. I called my grandfather and asked him about the turtle story. My grandfather said he could not remember all of the details, but he remembered the story of our little lost turtle who had come back to our house. He told me that he would ask my grandmother and try his best to remember, and send me a letter to tell the story. Finally, my grandfather asked about my plans after graduation. I told him I might stay in the United States because I think that the United States is more suitable for me to create art. He was surprised and seemed to respect my choice, but I knew he wished that I would return to China.

Sometime after the conversation with my grandfather, his letter arrived in Philadelphia. (Fig. 14) He mentioned how we kept and fed the turtle and how it got lost and returned to our house. The turtle was sick and dead because I often grabbed him without washing my hands. In the letter he wrote, "All animals can think and have humanity. They know where food is and friends are, and they know to return home." To me, it was very clear that he was reminding me to return home.

For most international students or workers, the decision to go back to their respective countries or not is a real dilemma. My grandmother and grandfather raised me and I have an obligation to support them. My parents grow older and I have an obligation to give them grandchildren. But most of my work will be censored in China if I return. My college professor advised me not to return to China after graduation, because he thought that the Chinese art environment was poor. So far, I still have not made a decision.

“The Person Who Influenced Me Most” Written in 1999

Because my parents were busy at work and my grandmother was the principal of the Chengdu No.7 Kindergarten, growing up I lived with my grandmother and grandfather from kindergarten to high school. My grandmother found I liked drawing and she took me to learn children’s painting at the Sichuan Youth Palace, where I met the most significant teacher of my childhood Jialin Xu. As I wrote in my essay, “He not only taught me how to draw, but also taught me how to be a good person.” (Fig. 15)

February 17, 2013, I received a call from Fei Xu, the daughter of Jialin Xu, my first art teacher. She told me that Jialin Xu had passed away. I was speechless for a few seconds, and I suddenly remembered the last sentence in grandpa’s letter: “Just as he returned to

our home, he returned to the world where he came from." Xu's death was the same as the death of the little turtle. He just returned to where he came from. (Hu) I have been focused on the theme of the circle of life.

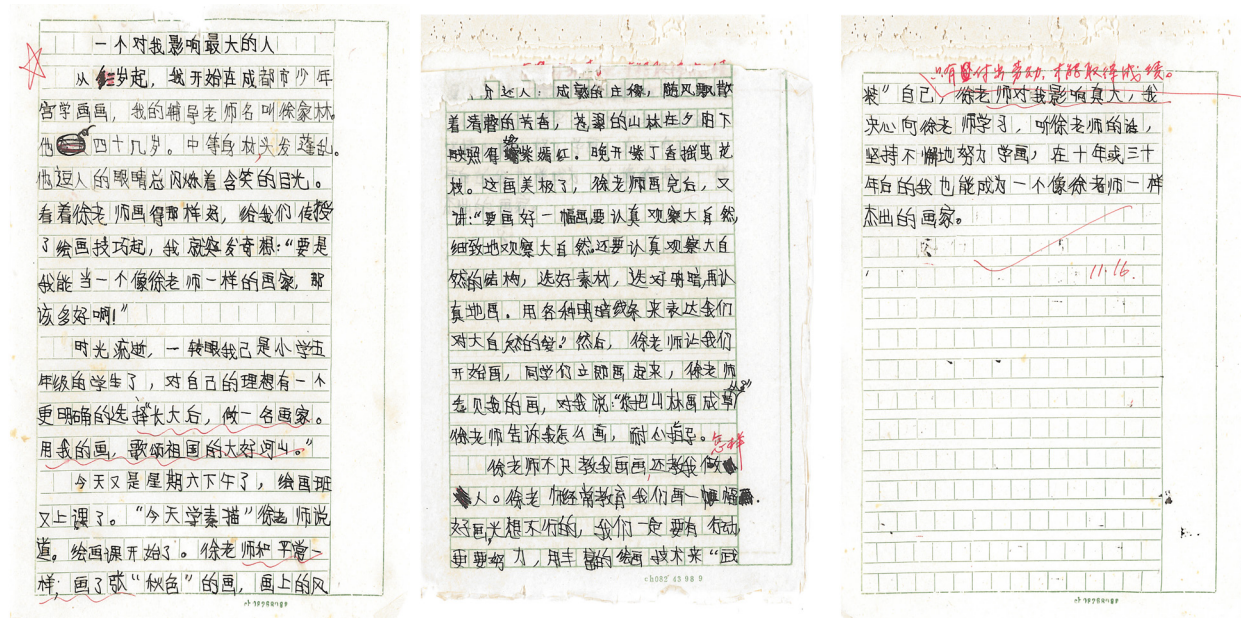


Fig.15 Mou Zhu, *The Person Who Influenced Me Most*, 1999, ink on paper.

Idea of Turtle Shells Installation

The idea of my thesis exhibition, *Guī*, was inspired by my grandfather's stories of my small turtle's returning home. The idea of playing with words was inspired by Ai Weiwei and Marcel Duchamp. In Ai Weiwei's new piece *He Xie*, he created 3200 simulated porcelain crabs and randomly placed them on the floor. *He Xie* literally means "river

crab,” but it is also a homophone for the word meaning “harmonious,” which is used in the Chinese Communist Party slogan “the realization of a harmonious society.” On the Internet, it has become a term referring to online censorship and the removal of anti-establishment views and information. He metaphorically suggests the restriction of individual expression and free speech in Chinese society, while playing and still plays with the Chinese language. I saw Marcel Duchamp’s *Fresh Widow* at MoMA. It is a small replica of a traditional French window. The glass panes are covered with black leather that Duchamp insisted, “should be shined every day like shoes.” With the inscription along the base, Duchamp turned an inanimate French window into an anthropomorphic “Fresh Widow,” which was, he felt, “an obvious enough pun.”(MoMA)

I began to seriously consider how to make “Guī.” I wanted to use materials and techniques that I learned in my studies at the University of the Arts. I had already tried pen drawing, printmaking, videos, among other media. I felt that my two-dimensional works were not able to fully express my ideas. I decided to use sculpture technology and make an installation this time. I wanted to give myself the opportunities to explore new materials and sculpture.

My thesis exhibition consists of six groups of turtle shells of different materials, placed in a spiral circle, representing the ideas of circle of life. Transparent glass turtles sym-

bolize the baby who was just born, spotless and fragile. Semitransparent wax turtles symbolize children who gradually grow, entering a strange world and changing. White plaster turtles symbolize adults, healthy and gradually becoming strong in the society. Gray fiber reinforced plastic (fiber glass) turtles symbolize middle-aged people, strong but beginning to grow old. Black paper turtles symbolize elders, weak and at the end of life.

There are sixty-four pieces in total, eight glass and a variety with other materials. I also included sixty-four real turtle shells, symbolizing the end of life. This figure, eight and sixty-four, is derived from the sixty-four hexagrams of I Ching.

CONCLUSION

The exhibition of *Guī* came from the different meanings of *Guī*. *Guī* became an autobiography, drawing on different things related to my childhood, my studies in China and the United States, and my recent life. The turtle shell, as an Oracle bone, was the earliest book and I Ching tells the future, came from the Oracle bone. Eight and Sixty-four, the numbers of turtle shells, are based on I Ching, which represents the idea of the circle of human life. The I Ching I created in *Guī* might tell me my future and whether I should go back to China or not.

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- Fig.1 Oracle bone, Tencent, Web. June, 2009
- Fig.2 Mou Zhu, *Guī*, 2013, mixed media, installation view.
- Fig.3 Mou Zhu, *Colorful Tree*, 1997, marker on paper.
- Fig.4 Mou Zhu, *For Elise*, 2009, screen printing, 39cm x 54cm.
- Fig.5 Xu Bing, *A Book From the Sky*, 1988, mixed media, installation view. Courtesy of the University Art Museum, State University of New York at Albany.
- Fig.6 Mou Zhu, *New Edition Chinese Book*, 2010, mixed media.
- Fig.7 Mou Zhu, *New Edition Chinese Book*, 2010, mixed media, installation view.
- Fig.8 Mou Zhu, *Wow*, 2011, ink on French paper, 5inch x 5inch.
- Fig.9 Ai Weiwei, *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010, mixed media, installation view. Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern.
- Fig.10 Mou Zhu, *Stupig*, 2011, crayon on foam-core, 40inch x 60inch.
- Fig.11 Mou Zhu, *Shitizen*, 2011, micron pen on foam-core, 40inch x 60inch.
- Fig.12 Mou Zhu, *Smilence*, 2011, mixed media, 40inch x 60inch.
- Fig.13 Mou Zhu, *Title Has Been Censored*, 2012, mixed media, installation view.
- Fig.14 Minyou Hu, *Grandfather's Letter* in Mou Zhu's *Guī*, 2013, ink on paper.
- Fig.15 Mou Zhu, *The Person Who Influenced Me Most*, 1999, ink on paper.