

Tzu-Chieh Huang

Exploratory Practice

## Unearth project

The project's name is 'Unearth', it was based on my childhood memory. The story is about when I was 8 or 9 years old, probably in second-grader. One day, my classmate told me: 'In the backyard of the school, there's a rabbit statue. If you look into its eyes, you'll see a different world.' And it just so glad that I didn't have to go to the after-school programs that day. In the meantime, I just told by my grandma that she would come pick me up later. I wanted to confirm if my classmates were lying to me. Therefore, I went to find the statue and saw in its eyes. Suddenly, a strange world appeared in front of me. The whole story only accompanies with narration and was told in Hakka. And the target audiences will be festival. This animation is about one minute long, worked individually, and the creating software was Procreate, Photoshop, After Effects, Dragonframe, and DaVinci Resolve.

In the beginning, I was struggling with 'what is Me'. So I started to analyse myself by using mind maps. Then I divided myself into four parts, which was hobbies, personal information, religion, and what I believe. During the process, the mind map reminded me of my childhood memory. Actually, in the original story, the only thing I could see in the rabbit's eyes was darkness. However, I believed it just because it was the wrong timing. So I decided to make a sequel of this memory, I added my imagination about what I was seeing at that time. As my hometown Pingtung is near to Dawu mountain, I used mountain as an element in this animation. Besides, considered the background of this story, I decided to use Hakka as narration. Hakka is disappearing in Taiwan, it is a symbol of my family, also my home town. Therefore, I

asked my grandma to sing a nursery rhyme that she first taught me by using Hakka and added it into this animation. The translation of this song was: 'Uncle and aunt didn't prepare chicken and goose to thank god. So they prepared a duck but it was too small, just as a bat. They also prepared pork, however, the pork was like a starfruit because it was small too. Therefore, they told god, "whether you want to eat them or not. If you don't want to eat them, we cannot do anything." They remembered they have alcohol and helix lucorum, but when they wanted to grab alcohol, they just found they didn't bring it. So they ask if it okay they went back to bring it back.'

This mystical lyrics brings me into a surreal world, and which is what I am chasing for. Because surrealism is made by human, but it is full of imagination. So I created a bat with duck's wing, and the duck with bat's wing. Also two pigs with starfruit bodies. These creatures were inspired by the lyrics.

In the prior period, I tried to use pencil to create the scene of the black sun rising. I was wondering pencil can build up an ethereal atmosphere, because in Wabi-Sabi, mostly they used light colour as the key vision.



Richard Long (1988) Whirlwind Spiral.



Test by using pencil

However, pencil's texture was too light to catch by using a camera. Therefore, I replaced pencil to charcoal. In the result, charcoal could show smudge effect, and it was matched to the halo of the sun. For colouring, I tried watercolour first, but I found the paper was uneven. At that time, I referred this problem and discussed with the tutor, and she suggested me to use gouache to avoid using too much water on the paper. Comparing watercolour and gouache, gouache has better colour rendering and create thicker texture. The reason of making texture is to create a unique tempo, in order to add vitality into this animation.



Watercolour



Gouache

I used Procreate to build up the line, and coloured it frames by frames because use Procreate would be easier to trace the path of the movement and correcting . For charcoal's part, I drew the patterns on the paper and using Photoshop to do image matting. After that, they were imported into After Effects and completed the part of the rigging and transform them from 2D to 3D.

In character design, the original idea was about puppet animation. So I made two puppets by using clay and silicone. However I only used clay in this film because the rough surface of clay bring out more used mark. In this film, the rabbit statue's setting was as old as my elementary school, which existed for more than 80 years.

Because of clay was hard to change the movement, alternatively, I used Photoshop to separate its body and used After Effects to do the post production. The story was surrounded by surrealism. Therefore, I chose mixed media to complete this animation. To use different material to construct a bizarre atmosphere. Also in the festival, the rabbit statue will be present, so the audiences can directly see the actual props after watching the film and having connection with this project.



Clay



Silicone

From positive aspect, it would be an experiment of testing different material, and enriched the knowledge of making animation. Also, discover variety possibility of way to convey ideas by using the screen.

However, it would take a long time to test. In this project, research part was taken too many times and changed frequently. So the time of testing was compressed. This result led to an overwhelming situation. Due to this reason, I will do the research earlier and have more time on testing.

In conclusion, in this project, it was a good thing learning to apply different material into the animation. Also, for software, the ability of using After Effects and

Photoshop was improved. Besides, because of the film will be sent to the festivals, during summer vacation I will refine the details of this animation as the problem I mentioned above.

Compared to collaborative and individual work experience, last time I was working with Sam and made a stop motion film for the NHS prostate cancer project. At that time, it was easier to work with puppet animation because we were in charge of different position. Sam is more suitable for making the puppet, alternatively, I am good at manipulating the puppets. Back to this project, if it is a team work, I will mix with puppet animation and apply this on the startfruit pigs scene. There is a melting part of the scene, it can be created by using silicone. To make the audiences feel the contrast between the real world and fantasy. It is aimed to search every possibility to create a surreal world. Surrealism is dream like, anything can be happened, just like the animation. And it is the reason that I am attracted by surreal world.

**Reference:**

- Richard Long (1988) Whirlwind Spiral. Available at: <http://www.richardlong.org/Sculptures/2011sculpupgrades/wlwind.html> (Accessed: 31/05/2023).