

5-14-2016

20,082,026

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Recommended Citation

Li, Ruoxi, "20,082,026" (2016). *CGU MFA Theses*. Paper 122.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_mfatheses/122

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Title: 20,082,026

Description: The whole idea of my work came from me questioning about the relationship between industrialization and human beings. Our generation look and think conforming to a public standard. When being asked question our answer is not based on our preferences, but whether it matches what we've been taught.

Keywords: industry, generation, social conformity

Artist Statement

Ruoxi Li

I see myself as an observer. Observation is an everyday habit. I do it constantly. I observe ordinary objects and actions. Finding and noticing details amazes me. As an observer, I'm embracing the world and tasting its variety. While I enjoy all the surprises from the outside world I realize everything is so different and yet you are just one of the pieces in this world. And that makes me wonder: where am I? who am I? I try to find who I am from all kinds of information. I'm trying to find something that can related to myself so that I may can define myself and get closer to the answer.

As an artist, I try to present the ordinary objects I have seen in a new light. This opens the door of chance. I think chance represents the unique and the unrepeatabe. That opens the possibility to second chances. Things can be reborn. They can not be classified. Everyone is a new born and everyone is part of the sustained.

When I'm making the embroidery work, I make a big frame and stretched canvas over it. I embroider many dots with ribbon on that canvas. This embodies these two qualities of time and presents both simultaneously. The ordered ribbon dots are in the time of the sustained. The remainders of the ribbon on the back of the canvas becomes the new born.

As I working these works, suffering and happiness co-exist. The suffering part is repeating the same action. It's really boring. It is mindless physical activity. But it sometimes leads to the mechanical process frees my brain and gives me plenty of space to walk around all my memories and ideas during the repetitive embroidering. I leave a piece of myself in each dot. When I look through dot to dot and watch the whole picture, I'm overwhelmed. I see myself recording everything I care about and every sight in my mind. Also I see it as a society, each dot represents a person. They all mainly look the same but they are hiding who they really are in the back. This painting is a representation of social conformity.

Subsequently, I found a way to amplify the action of printmaking. I use a big plastic sheet as the "printing plate" while another small plastic sheet serves as "paper". All the small sheets are the same size in order to keep the set unified. The plastic "paper" itself is part of the whole image. I see these processes as a sort of therapy. It's like a mirror or a telescope that shows and enlarges what you want to see. And each print is an amplified version of the dots.

I define New born as some sort of action that is accidental, unpredictable and singular. It represents a quality of time which is more spontaneous and favorable to accident. By contrast, the sustained is deliberate, traditional and repeatable. Methodical and traditional art can be seen as forms of the sustained. The time it represents is the opposite of the new born. If the new born is what happens now, then sustained is what happened in the past and then keeps happening. The new born breaks from that. From this perspective, I keep

wiping away the regimented lifestyle of my past and trying to live life in the present. I think the sustained in the basis of daily life. And the new born can be seen as whatever interrupts this in our daily life. Therefore, the moment when the new born becomes the sustained is the moment a different new born must be found. That will occurred a series of comparison that helped perceiving the weight of these two sides of yourself. I feel I'm experiencing a circulation of re-setting and rebuilding myself during this moment. For me, this process is a treatment for knowing myself better and finding what I really am.

My work is surrounded by these two types of times. One of the reasons why these two times keep jumping out of my head and infecting me is because of my cultural context. What happened in my generation in China is that Chinese children were ordered to “sacrifice for others” for the greater good. The one child policy was adopted in order to deal with the population problem. At the same time, the “one child” policy made each child the center of the whole family. That makes us the New Born and one of the sustained members who have to make a sacrifice in order to keep this species sustained at the same time. Actually I think

we all have met this you are so unique just like everybody else situation. Mine is just more obvious. I'm bringing these two times into my work, not only because it has already grow into a mark inside of me, but also because facing them together can help myself clear who I am.

I believe everyone have two sides. My work presents different views and invites viewers to question which side is more important for them. I feel like I'm leading viewers to be

observers. I want people to see through themselves just like they can see through the dots and lines to face every piece of themselves. The goal is to search every inch of yourself.

Decomposing and enlarging yourself lets people see themselves more fully. In my work I try to push people to think more about their lives and the relation of time to their identities.

Sometimes the things that you think are important for you may not be that important.

Maybe that more important part of you is hiding behind the less important you.

