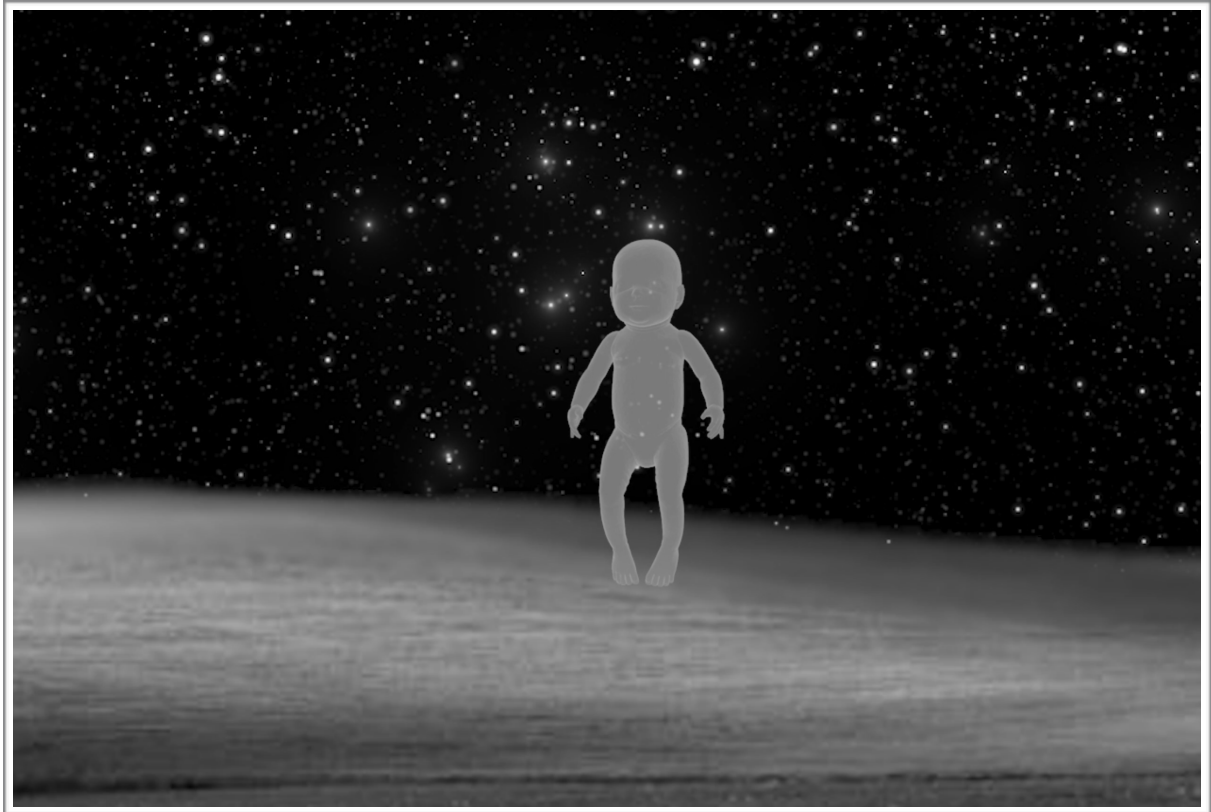


# PROJECT PROPOSAL

—The Third Revision of Text on Practice



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2022/4/23

# IMPROVISATION

## \General Idea\

At the beginning, my interested issue is that the strict manipulation of network in China, like deleted comments deliberately, falsify history, or spread rumours and fake news etc. Further, I summarise two points that I am more interested in and dig deeper :

1/ The invasion of social platforms by political means and the unconscious manipulation;

2/ Online information is more likely to be modified and deleted, especially those historical events and social movements, that are still play an important role in our social development. But when people gradually lose the chance to learn the past, also influenced by the daily fake news, will us fall into nihilism ?

## \Intro to Improvisation\

This is a 5-minute-video called 'Improvisation', and the whole film is in black and white. It's an experimental and collage-based work. Accompanied by a lullaby humming, a person who was about to fall into a dream is attracted by a butterfly, then followed a white human figure enter a door and came to a dystopian world that combined real scenes, 2D animations, and 3D models. Two weak voices intertwined, reading E.T. Eliot's poem 'The Hollow Men' in a form of manifesto, and under a spliced wasteland and starry sky, your vision was

constantly enlarged, blurred, removed, until finally, a new virtual life was born in this wasteland, this is the way the world ends.



## \Research and Process\

According to the first point :The invasion of social platforms by political means and the unconscious manipulation, I found Hito Steyerl 's article "Proxy Politics:Signal and Noise", in which she mentioned “political bot armies on Twitter” which means "behind a normal ID may be a robot who completes the number of posts and comments everyday." So I learned that our visibility in the virtual world is manipulated, and it reminded me of the music box in a crib that plays a lullaby at the time you set, and the baby goes quiet. When people get used to these network manipulation or the brainwashing stuff, they will stay in people’s subconscious and affect people's cognition in the real world. So I added

a lullaby at the beginning of the video. I hope to bring the audience into a half-awake context, simulating the feeling of entering an ambiguous world, that

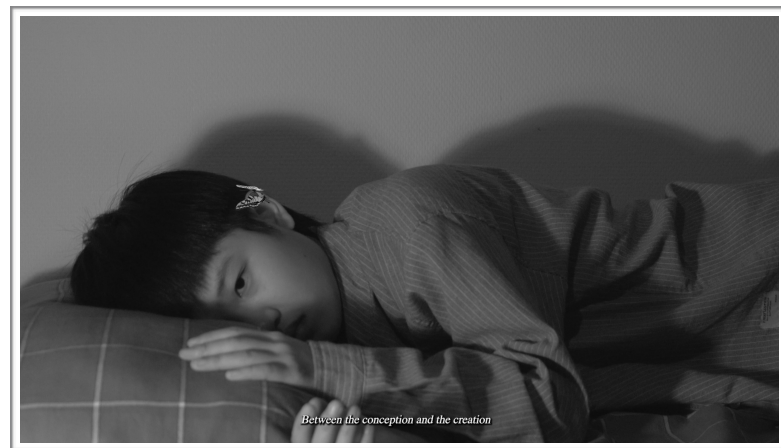
trying to hypnotise people.



Then I thought of an ancient Chinese story - Zhuang Zhou dreaming of a butterfly: Once, Zhuang Zhou dreamed he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering about, happy with himself and doing as he

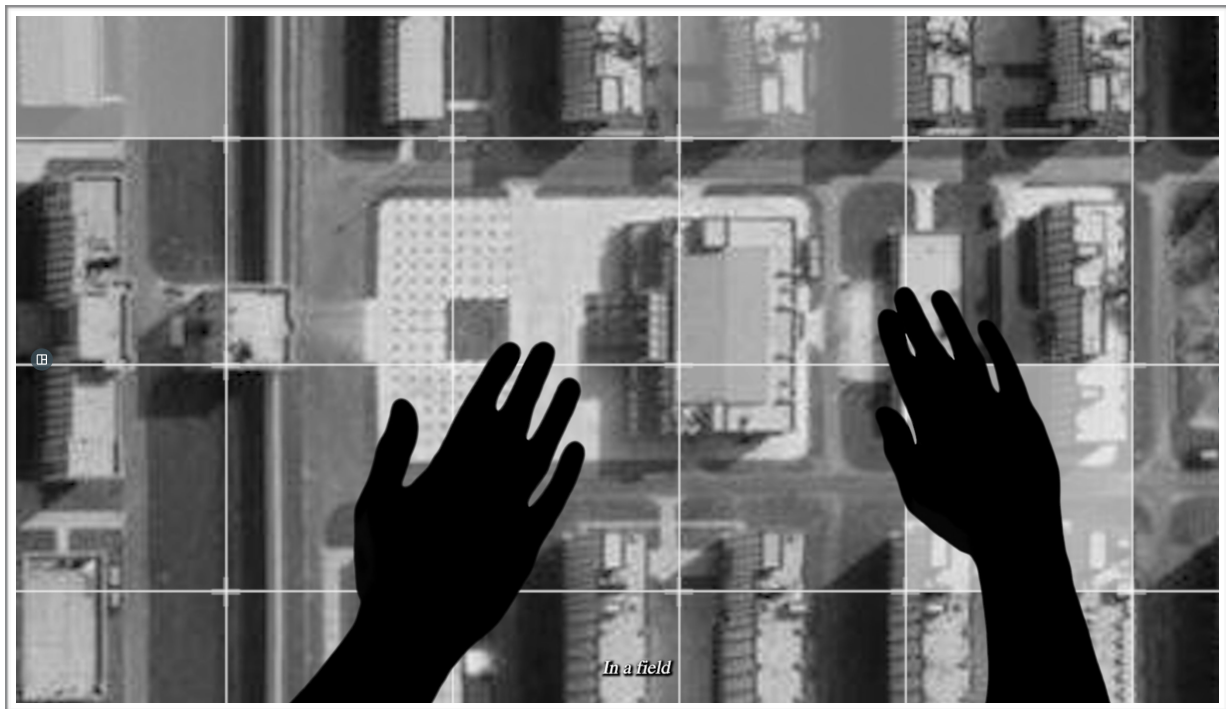
pleased. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming that he was Zhuang Zhou. I want to use this story to imply the uncertainty of people's identities caused by the fact that

people's access to information is being manipulated invisibly, especially that the comments generated automatically by robots instead of humans are gradually occupying the

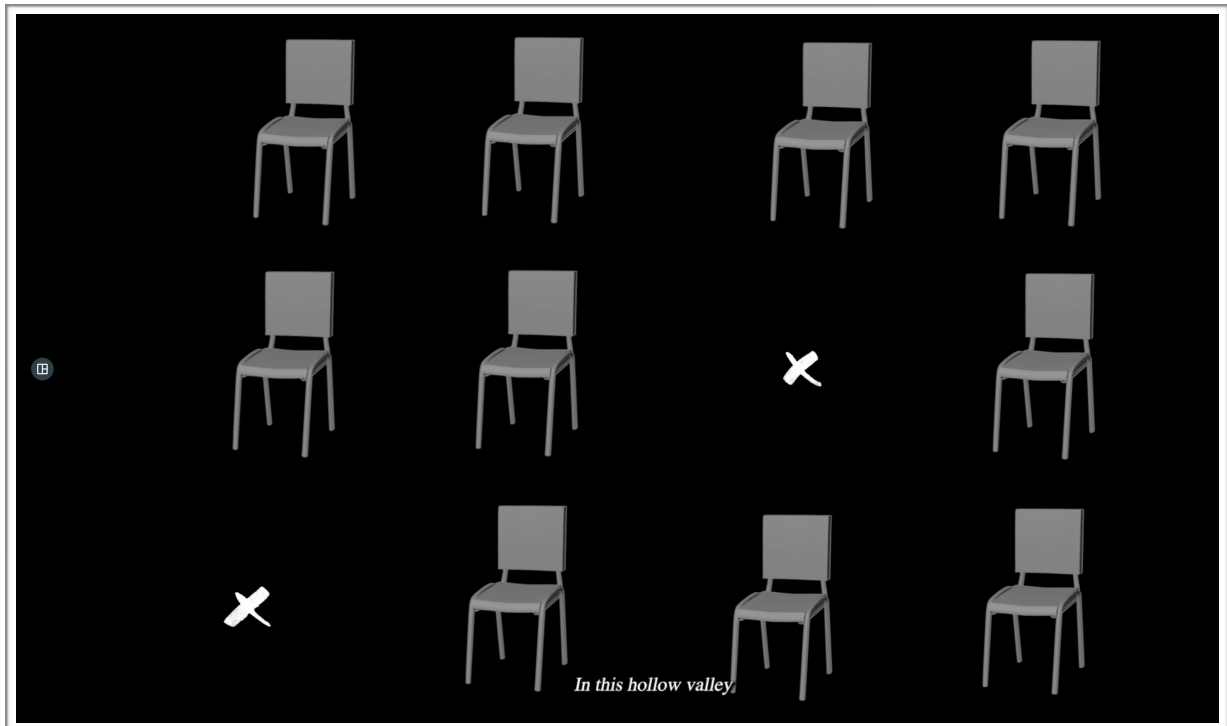


high ground of public opinions. We are deeply involved in the virtual world, but it is impossible to judge the true identity of the 'players' behind the digital accounts , and in this dream-like world, what form should we exist in.

Regarding the second point: Online information is more likely to be modified and deleted, especially those historical events and social movements, that are still play an important role in our social development. I found some areas that we couldn't find on the virtual map, such as the abandoned nuclear city, so I made some black hands and kept smearing on a satellite map. Although the map was constantly zooming in, the vision became more and more more blurry.



I use the disappearance of chairs to express people who are gradually disappearing from the Internet. It can be some historical figures, or ordinary people like us. For those who are still sitting in the chair, vision is removed and we can only continue to participate blindly.



## \Problems and Solutions\

Later when all things was done, in the process of concatenating the collages and moving images I have made, I found that they were too fragmented. So I started looking for a way to edit the materials. I thought of a poem ‘The Hollow Men’ by E. T. Eliot. This poem originally expressed the extremely empty living state when facing the modern civilisation. I feel when the truth or history keeps disappearing in the virtual world, People lose the chance to learn from the history, and the fake news makes us unable to fully understand what’s going on. People can easily fall into historical nihilism and become ‘the hollow men’. So I

tried to connect these video clips through the content of the poem, like when the poem mentioned “let me be no nearer....to the death’s dream kingdom ”, then I add the ‘satellite map’ scene based on the lines trying to generate some connections.



But another problems is that each video footage has a new visual element, and they are relatively fragmented, so I repeated my own image and the butterfly element, hoping to establish a visual clue.

By sharing this video with different people, if I didn't make some explanations, they wouldn't get my points directly, so I realised that the video is loosely structured : the visual elements are some externalised abstract expressions based on my research, themselves had a wide range of orientations. So if I hope the audience could get my points, I need to provide a clear context for these visual pieces. However, I choose to build the context and video structure by a poem which based on a specific historical background, so without a doubt, poem in

this video is also some kind of abstract metaphor that wouldn't help to clarify the whole structure. On the contrary, it made the video more burry.

So I choose to change the poem to another more directional and specific narrative way to continue. Then I took some visual figures in Improvisation as characters and developed a story for them.

## \New Work\

I wrote a script currently, It will be a short animation film, also I think the film will not include any dialogue and be purely visual with some simple motion sounds and background music: A long time ago, people's shadows had their own eyes, the human's eyes see the part that was illuminated by the light, and the shadow's eyes see the secret hidden in the shadow. The story happened in a small town with a silent monster sit on the hill for years. One day, the monster on the hill broke into the town and attacked on some people, breaking the previous harmony, and the people in the town fell into a huge panic. The government quickly worked out a response to soothe the public. They launched a new pill, once people take it, the monster will disappear in front of their eyes. But it seems that only a boy—Ming, noticed the unusualness of the pill, so he decided not to take it and find out the truth about the monster alone...

## \ Process and Problems\

I wrote three versions, and in the three different scripts, I have always kept one constant element in Improvisation—the shadow's eyes. This's the character I have first settled on. It serves as an externalised expression for people to perceive



social problems, that is only the shadow 's eyes could see the monster in my script.

The first version tells the story of a family. The father was arrested for defying official regulations which

based on a real event about a

Chinese journalist. The

mother told what happened

to the father in a fairy tale to

her son. But in this version, I

paid too much attention on

the father's life after he was

arrested, but there were not

many case references for me to adapt, so I can't give a clear ending, also my first point is not well presented, such as the father was just took away from his house, but not disappeared from the sight and memories of the public.



Then in the second version, I shifted the focus to what the father did, and added an element of pill to imply official intervention and manipulation. Since this version retains all the characters of the previous script, the storyline is too complicated, and there are some unexplained issues, like what choice should the mother make, and Ming's attitude towards his father's choice as the narrator...

In the current version, only the characters of the boy and the pill are retained, and a fictional figure "monster" is added, which represents those who was disappeared by official means and the social problems behind them. Ming as a person like us are forced to make a choice between the two points.

## \Future Plan\

In the future, I will spend some time on character design, because I don't want the timespan of this work be so long, so I could only show the character changes and choices through the change of his appearance, for example, I would like the whole animation in black and white, but I will add some different textures or give a single colour to show the changes of different characters.

I think I will need some technical advices, so maybe Barend can help. For instance, how to choose a proper frame rates and how to editing it after finishing all the paintings.