

Final Project Proposal

Zhang Yan

1. Aims and Objectives

The initial aim of the final project is to develop the visualizing skill, to practice and improve the image-making and story-telling approach, better understand the link between image and content. Learning how to enrich the content of the work through individual research and thinking, in order to make the image deeper.

2. Rationale

Since I moved far away from my homeland, I felt I knew better about who I am and where I come from. So I am more interesting in my culture and custom, and would like to introduce them in creative way. I found food is an appropriate medium to introduce the custom. Chinese people regard food as the sky, so we pay great attention on food for thousands of years. Food represents the culture, so I think it is an interesting viewing point, and would like to know more about the food culture.

3. Project Outline, Methods & Approach

This is a project about Chinese food and its culture. The final form will be a group of short films showing the different food and stories, for example, Yin-yang philosophy on food, and ancient poem about food, etc. I am still reading to find inspiration, so the final thesis will more about the response on my reading, the research on Chinese food history and culture. I want to keep my methodology of the ink project, which is starting from experiment, filming all the tests and hope to get inspiring footage. And then, add digital animation on it. Technically, I want to keep doing mixed-media short films, and try a variety of visual effects.

Work Plan

October	November	December
research; proposal writing	research; experiments	experiments; holiday
January	February	March
experiments; organize results	organize results; editing	editing; add digital effects

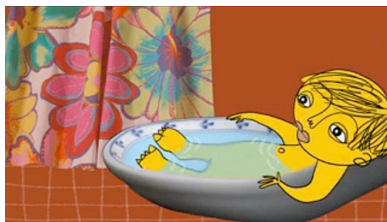
April	May	June
editing; add digital effects	essay writing; video making	design the exhibition setup exhibition space

4. Relationship to Previous Work



Screenshots of "waiting for the bus", "miss", "down the rabbit-hole"

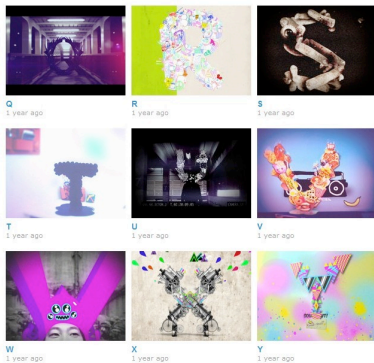
I mainly focused on animation works during last academy year. I practiced different methods to do animation, from frame-by-frame drawing to video live action, from linear storytelling to non-narrative. I learnt most aspects of knowledge and tried to find my favorite style and technique. In addition, I also interested in mixed



Screenshot of "our melting home"

media. The thesis I did for my bachelor degree is also about this topic, and as practice-based research, I did a short animation film named "Our Melting Home", which combined with stop-motion, collage and frame-by-frame drawing. So this time, I want to continue my study of mixed-media technique, on both moving image and graphic works.

5. Expected Outcomes



a-z video series
by Daniele Manoli

The final result will be a short video series, each one showing one story of a food or dish. There will be a concept links the whole group, so they make sense when they are put together, even though they are made in different aesthetic and technique. It is supposed to be screened in the graduation show. The thesis is about Chinese food culture and some stories which I used in videos, and talk about the way how I visualize them

through food. I also want to make it a nice book, not boring papers.

6. Research – Framing the Work

6.1 Theoretical Research on Chinese Food Culture

Chinese culture has grown from the enjoyment of food. It is Confucius, however, who regards good cuisine as an enjoyment in life rather than simply a need. "I have absolutely no objection that the grains are fine and the pork slices tender and delectable." Chinese cuisine is not a general and vague concept. It attaches great importance to the color, smell and taste of the food, its myriad regional styles and flavors and its profound cultural underpinning. China, with its vast territory and a long and unbroken history, has given rise to a diverse spectrum of variety of regional flavors and styles. Moreover, there is an endless list of innumerable specialty snacks and refreshments.

6.2 Visual Research on Mixed-media Animation

Any technique and material can be mixed together to make art works, such as painting, illustration and video. It is limited to use only one technique, so combining different and suitable methods gives more possibilities and creates new interesting imagery. The key is keeping the unity, as the good Mix must be a perfect match.

7. Review of Field of Research and Practices

7.1 Key Artist Jan Švankmajer



Screenshot of "Dimensions of Dialogue"



Screenshot of "Food"

Jan Švankmajer is a Czech filmmaker and artist whose work spans several media. He is a self-labeled surrealist known for his surreal animations and features. Why Švankmajer obsessed with food? In the interview with kamera.co.uk, Švankmajer acknowledges the fixation, claiming that, as a child, he was a "non-eater" and was urged by adults to "fatten up." His stop-motion animation *Food*, was divided into three parts, *Breakfast*, *Lunch* and *Dinner* feature people dying and coming back to life, eating non-food items like utensils and tablecloths, and practicing cannibalism and self-mutilation.

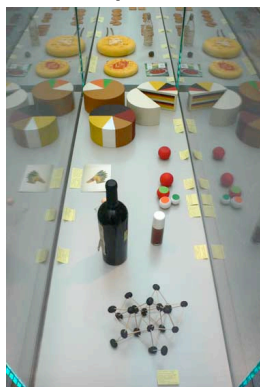
Švankmajer originally conceived the project in the 1970s but feared the tempestuous political climate of the time.

7.2 Key Artist Alexandre Dubosc



Screenshot of "Alimation" and "Food About You" by Alexandre Dubosc, a young French director and photographer, created several clever animations from food for the Annecy Festival. His short film "Alimation" shows a series of ingenious and extremely appetizing animations made with food. He used a old zoetrope technique to create very fresh and lovely result. "Food About You" is another short film of him, a mixture of stop-motion and pixilation, provided an imaginative and funny viewing point on food.

7.3 Key Field Food Design



Food design work
by Marti Guixéis

"A food designer is somebody working with food, with no idea of cooking" is the sentence on the homepage of food-designing.com, written by Marti Guixéis. Perhaps this is the best definition I can find. Marti Guixé is an important innovator in food design. He understood food design as a way to re-evaluate and redesign the structure around food, the industry and the consumer. He said, I am only interested in food, as I consider it is a mass consumption product and I like the fact that it is a product that disappears, by ingestion, and is transformed into energy.



"We Eat Animal in
a Vegetarian Way"
by Dada Wang

Some food design works are conceptual, like the image on the left is a project by my friend Dada, which called We Eat Animal in a Vegetarian Way. Those vegetarian food are made in the form of puzzles, can shape animals. People, who joined in the meal, were so interested and evolved in the game. After eating, they gave good feedback and expressed their views on vegetarian culture.

8. Critical Evaluation

First, I want to make the image beautiful every single second. Because they are shorts and will probably be showed in a gallery space, so it is better to be eye-catching enough to attract audience. Second, they are not only nice moving images, but communicable, clearly visualize and convey the idea behind. Third, the content is interesting for most people, so that audience will still keep thinking after watching videos. About the thesis, it will work as explanation or further reading of the video series, tell more information about culture and custom though food.

9. Initial Bibliography

Zishan Chen, Food and Chinese culture: essays on popular cuisine, Long River Press, 2005

Junru Liu, Chinese Food- Introductions to Chinese Culture, Cambridge University Press, 2011