

TALKING TO THE BLUE

蓝色的对话

Baitian Yu
Design for Social Innovation
School of Visual Art

1. Preface

This document is the thesis paper of the graduated final project for the Design for Social Innovation Department in the School of Visual Arts in New York. The images in the paper are either recorded or designed by the author unless otherwise indicated. The information in this paper is sourced from interviews with New York artists, critics, gallery managers, and other experts, except where noted.

I started this project one and a half years ago. During this time, my opinions and acknowledgments changed a lot. As I was documenting every moment of this process, when reading this paper, one will encounter different, if not conflicting, ideas. Although I regret the confusion that may arise from it, I also believe that the paper provides for an excellent record of the process in which a designer co-creates and co-designs with the targeted community.

2. Project Statement

This project aims to help the young artists in Northeast China obtain the necessary information and resources that will enable them to create work and participate in the art world.

This project is a social design project, which means the designer should co-design it with the community that is to benefit from the project. In doing so, this paper will explore different social design approaches and record them.

As this project is also a project that aims to invoke empathy and kindness, at times, the language of the paper will be lyrical.

The key community of this project is a group of young artists in Northeast China, most of whom are currently students. The case study used in this project is the Textile Art Department of the LuXun Academy of Fine Art in Shenyang City, Liaoning Province, China.

It is important to note a difference in understanding and defining "contemporary art" between the target group of the project understands it and how it is viewed in western literature. "Contemporary art" is also differently viewed by the Western and Chinese academies. Luckily, the issue of definition isn't central to this paper. In writing this paper, I will record the concept as it appears in the material used as the basis of my research. At times, the usage and definition of "contemporary art" will not coincide with my ideas or opinions of the concept. Similarly, other terms associated with this discourse will appear in this paper.

Index

1	-----	cover
2	-----	preface&index
3~4	-----	project background
5~6	-----	research process
7~8	-----	design process
9	-----	theory of change
10	-----	logic frame
11	-----	time line
12~22	-----	final intervention
23	-----	critique
24	-----	thanks

1, project background:

1.1 context:

(1) About Northeast China

As early as the Han Dynasty, Northeast China was a part of the farming nation. The area often changed hands between the farming regime in the Central Plains and the nomadic regime in the north. As the Great Wall is the dividing line between the north and south, Northeast China has a very different history from North China. As a result of being at the crossroads of Northeast Asia, along with war and incessant ethnic mix, Northeast China has gradually formed an unusual way of life, which is a mixture of farming and nomadism. It can be said that Northeast China has been a region with diverse nationalities and cultures since ancient times.

During the Qing Dynasty, under the influence of the Chuang Guandong movement, a large number of people from ethnic groups belonging to the Central Plains swarmed in. This has caused a fusion between Shamanism, Lamaism, Islam, Taoism, and Confucianism, which laid the cultural foundation of today's northeast community.

During modern times, the Northeast was occupied by the Japanese colonial government. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced, and a large number of people in villages were forced to work as laborers in Japanese military factories, forming the basis of today's urban pattern in Northeast China.

After 1949, because Northeast China was the earliest liberated area and nearest to the Soviet Union, Northeast China became the model community area to accept the assistance from the Soviet Union. The factories built through the Soviet industry support became the economic foundation of Northeast China.



(1) Economic difficulties in Northeast China: As the industrial, commercial, and cultural center in the early times of China, Northeast China had a strong working-class cultural tradition and an economy based on heavy industry. But since the Chinese economic reform initiated thirty years ago, nearly ninety percent of workers' families have been influenced by the big layoff tide. More than ten million workers in Northeast China have been fired from the national factory that initially promised them insurance, housing, and the future. This terrible event is still influencing the economy, identity, culture, and art in Northeast China. The most obvious implication of this on the art is that Northeast China literally has no gallery system. It is virtually impossible to have galleries when there aren't



people able to invest in art. In my hometown, a city of 3.5 million people, there are only two registered private galleries and less than ten national museums.

(2) The censorship of Contemporary Art

Due For a long time and before the Chinese economic reform, "contemporary art" represented a negative idea of society and humanity in China. Therefore the origin of contemporary art in China is relatively new. Its birth is related to the so-called "90's new thoughts", a movement of young Chinese artists learning and creating contemporary art. Due to the Chinese examination system, which ignores art education, Chinese contemporary art has been absent from the education of the vast majority of the people. This art is popular amongst a small, closed group of people, which we call "professional artists" in China.

Chinese contemporary art is notably absent from the few art galleries in Northeast China. As a result, the creation and development of young artists there are significantly limited. To access contemporary and have a significant interaction with commercial galleries and professional investors, the artists from Northeastern China need to go to the nearest international city, Beijing.

Unlike cities like Xian or Beijing, Northeast China is a nomadic and farming economic belt where urbanization arrived relatively late. The ethnic composition, culture, and art of most villages and towns in Northeast China are diverse. The northeastern cities, such as Shenyang, Changchun, Harbin, Anshan, Dalian, and others, were formed or expanded to their current size after the Qing dynasty. Their cultural and artistic rise, considering the western understanding of "culture" and "art," occurred from the 19th century to the 20th century, during the early stage of the People's Republic of China. This period is known as the period of "the eldest son of the Republic." The modernism style in oil painting, print art, traditional ink art, and sculpture is very popular in art schools and the fine arts colleges in Northeast China. This is because of the Influence from Japan, East Germany, and the Soviet Union on the culture of Northeast China.

1, project background:

1.3. Present situation:

According to the interviews held with experts and officials about the legislation on art censorship, China's culture was significantly shaped by Confucianism, as it has defined China's tradition and cultural patterns. In the Chinese culture, the artwork performs a role in maintaining the social structure, confirming the identity and the relationship of both the giver and recipient. The gift exchange confirms the identity of both sides of the transaction, whereas, before the exchange, the identities of the giver and receiver are still flexible.

It is important to understand the role that the artwork has played in Chinese society for thousands of years: it is more than an object; it is a confirmation of the social structure. This understanding of artworks has created a system that Chinese "artists" have survived on for centuries.

After the Revolution of 1949, and the formation of the PRC, the modernization has broken down the thousands of years old Confucian social structures in the urban areas. For the Chinese society, this meant that many embedded traditions shifted or lost their meaning and relevance. As Confucianism disassembled, a form of "elitism" arose as a social construct, resulting in dramatic consequences on the placement of artists within the new and evolving society. The outcome was the emergence of "elite artists" who represented modernism and compromised with the Confucianism ethic., These two groups of artists are getting close right now.

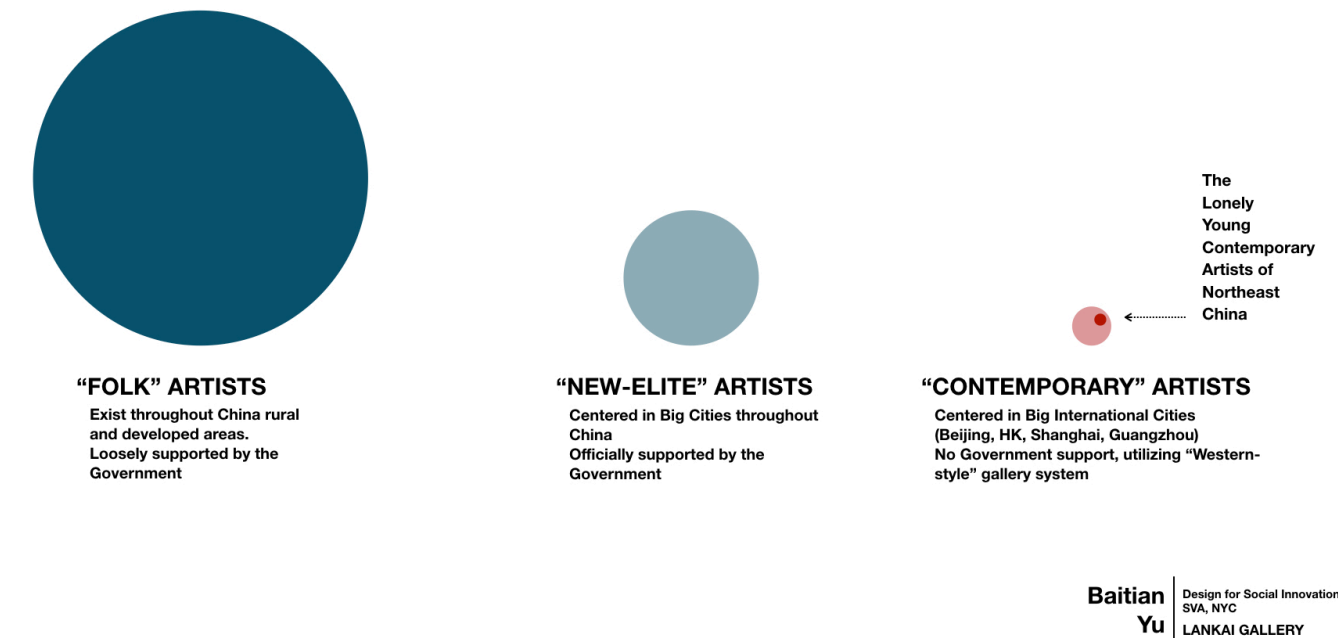
In the imagination of most of the lost generation Chinese public, The major cultural conflict within the Chinese society is still the tension between Confucianism and Modernism To this, the young artists shout, "Y'all are wrong!"

During the fighting between "elite artists" and "folk artists," the government played an important role. When there was nearly no space for modernist art in the developing areas of China, the government strongly supported modernist artists The governmental focus on supporting modernist art means that most of the "elite artists" have a profoundly beneficial bond with the government. Therefore, it's tough for young artists who claim contemporary art credentials and get support from the government. Meanwhile, most of the public still favors "folk art," which means that young artists are unlikely to get substantial investment from the art market.



Besides, it will be meaningless if the artists can't build their artistic idea based on their community. As elaborated in this paper, under the "reinforcing loop," young artists are marginalized in the society of Northeast China. Laying the blame on lack of funding or solving the issue by leaving the region are attitudes that avoid the systematic nature of the problem. We can't claim that the young artists who strive to make contemporary art are simply right. We need to raise awareness of the problem; call for more public attention to the issue; enable communication between different stakeholder groups; create a discourse within which young artists can use their powerful voice.

EXISTING LANDSCAPE OF ARTISTS IN CHINA.



In China, the most artworks been created and sold are "folk art", which means traditional ink arts. They must been created in specific topic and formation. Most of publics accept them and love these kind of art. But to be a folk artist means sacrifice many of your time, can be decades mostly, to become an independent artist. And very hard to express yourself, because every element in that formation have specific meaning which been required by their customer.

And the second group of artists named "elite artists", they born with the influence of western colonizer, represent modern spirit. After 1949, the government started fund them, so that speed up the modernization process of China. Originally, they are the future of young artists they teach. But since the economic reform, the government change their way to support artists. So many funds been kept in the hands of "elite artists" because they already have the information resources and networks. And many of them keep their group closely and chose their followers carefully. And many of them consistently control the power to explain "art" or "contemporary art", so that they can keep their position, but also increasing the marginalization of artists.

Young artists can not get support from publics, very hard to get resources from government, and been marginalize by publics and "elite artists". So nobody care about their expressing, and not been accept as an artists by others. The size of the circle in map represent the resources they can get.

“ The proportion of the outflow population with bachelor degree who intend to stay for a long time is 74.4% , and the proportion of graduate education outflow is even higher 78.9% 。 It can be seen that the low educated people in the outflow population of Northeast China are more likely to continue to "flow". ”

“ In 2000, the net emigration of the population in Northeast China was more than 400000. In 2010, the figure was 2.191 million, five times that of 10 years ago. It can be seen that the scale of population outflow in Northeast China is increasing, and the trend of population outflow is strengthening. ”

2, research process

2.1 research method:

"Talking to the blue" is a design and practice project concerned with public welfare and social values. It takes three issues in Northeast China as social value and young artists in Northeast China as its target group. The project aims to help young artists in Northeast China obtain promotional opportunities and other resources needed for them to create work and engage in the critical dialogue. The project will help these young artists in alleviating the adverse effects of three practical problems: (1) the incomplete gallery system, (2) the low level of art education for the masses, and (3) the absence of foreign exchange.



2.2 methodology:

In the research stage of this project, the following was taken as the primary project research means:

(1) Expert interviews

The main interviewees were experts on how contemporary art developed in China and the difference between art in Northeast China and the other regions of China. These interviews were mainly face-to-face interviews. Before the interviews, there was a certain degree of second-hand data research on the views of the interviewees. That was done to quickly establish the shared context and to keep these meetings between half an hour and three hours long.

(2) User tracking

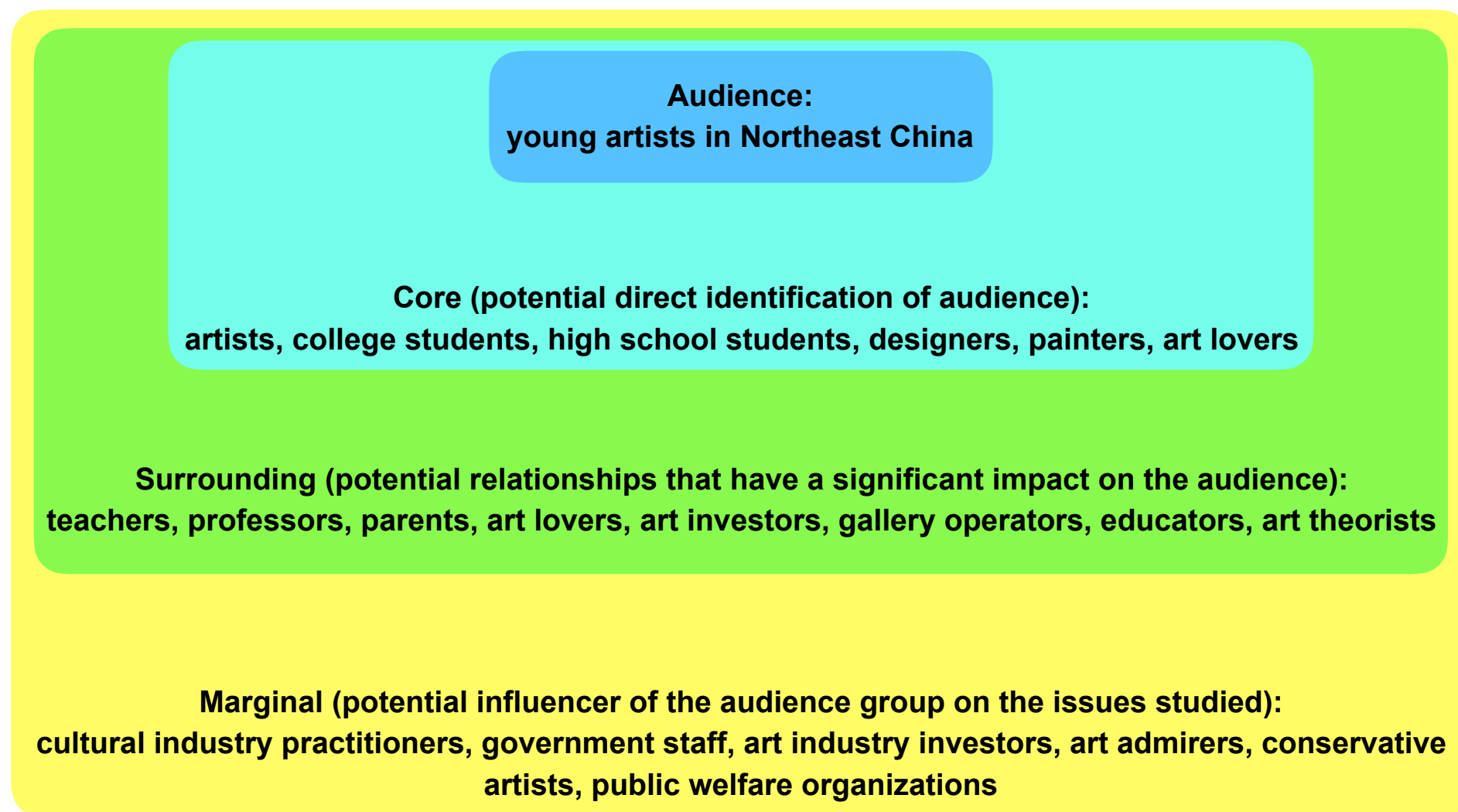
The "user tracking" in this project means stakeholder tracking, how different stakeholders influencing the elements potentially could influence the environment around young artists in Northeast China. Therefore, user tracking was primarily based on the personal relationships I built in the process of interviewing. That is a good way of co-designing. Without the definition of identity, decision making was very flexible. It was tough for the designer to record the process. The method used was recording daily communication as much as possible. At times, it was difficult to track the sources for some opinions. Most of the records are textual.

(3) Focus group

Through my cooperation with the Luxun Academy of Fine Art, I was able to interview different stakeholders. As I said earlier, the group of young artists in Northeast China is relatively closed and small. So it's not very hard to organize young artists and other stakeholders. The main issue dealt with during the focus groups is how to build a platform that amplifies the voices of these young artists when they are communicating with other stakeholders. Unlike in the US, different individuals have a strong tendency to communicate without revealing their identities, in China, it's impossible to let a stranger sit down and talk without identifying him/herself first. For example, in the few focus groups, I tried to organize, the participants refused to say anything before they figured out the identity of the other participants.

What happens in most of the focus groups is that the participant who believes to have a superior command of the language guides the conversation, or nobody will say anything meaningful. So my method is taking the opposite way: I choose a group of people who have stable interpersonal relationships amongst each other and organize the focus group as a "party." In that way, all of the participants were able to ignore the stress of identifying the other participants and their social position. The advantage of this format is undeniable: One doesn't need to do facilitation, and it's much easier to control and understand the conversation. But the disadvantages are also apparent: It's tough to organize a party, and it is nearly impossible to find the sources of the participants' opinions. In the end, the relatively closed and small group of young artists in Northeast China, to whom I talked, provided a lot of help during the process.

2.3 analysis of the combination of stakeholders and user labels:



2.4 preliminary interview:

(1) Research Timeline

From June to July 2019, I conducted 34 interviews with young artists from Northeast China and other stakeholders that influence the environment in which the young artists work. Amongst the experts were 4 specialized in art and art market. I created a map of all the presented problems and opinions. Although they all agreed that the issue for young artists in Northeast China is systematic and social, many of them had different views from each other. For example, some of them believed that the issue stems from the young artists themselves as these young artists are "disturbed by information coming from the outside." In their opinion, that creates inner conflict for the young artists who are not able to reconcile with their real life. Some of the interviewees believe that the root cause is the old artists who absorb most of the public funding; Some of them even believe that these "elite artists" have become a kind of conservative power standing together with Confucianism; At the same time, some of them thought these young artists have already lived a better life than their elders, so, the reason why they are complaining is the result of the currently over liberalized education. Some thought that the real problem of young artists is that they refuse the inheritance of traditional arts, which in the future will cause a severe problem with identity and culture.

From August to October of 2019, I interviewed 15 artists and art critics in New York on the topic. Most of the interviewees live in New York, but many of them come from all over the world. According to artists from other places like Russia, India, and Singapore, the problems of young artists in Northeast China are similar to those of their peers in other parts of the world, except for those in New York. Even in some other states in the US, the conflict in language power between the traditional culture and contemporary art, and art based on internet culture is pronounced. The difference is how the gallery system looks like and how the outside capital influences these conflicts.

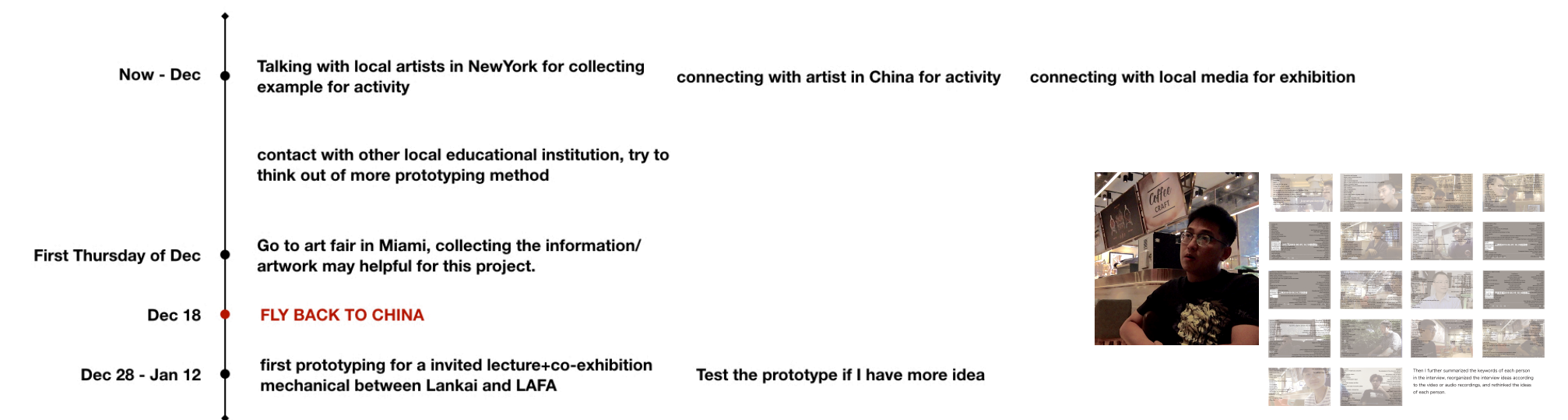
At the end of 2019, I went to the Art Basel in Miami to meet artists and research the differences in the gallery systems in Northeast China and the US. The visit confirmed what the Chinese experts have conjectured: The market system in Northeast China runs very differently from its counterpart in the US.

Most of the artwork priced below 2000 dollars in Northeast China are traditional artworks. To make such work, one needs skills acquired during decades of learning. The artworks from Northeast China mostly have a high price but no local buyers. Most of the artworks sold in Art Basel were around 200 dollars. In that case, we can rarely find artworks focused on ideas sold in Chinese exhibitions. Another difference is that most buyers of contemporary Chinese art buy the artworks anticipating the work being appreciated in the future. In contrast, the buyers of the traditional artwork mostly buy traditional artworks for the purpose of social contact — they buy it as gifts to others, which is a step in the mechanical social relationship of the Confucian ethic.

It's tough to find an investor for artistic ideas in Northeast China. Also, it's a kind of shame in the Chinese culture for an artist to openly seek money. That is due to the elitist tradition, which tells artists that successful, "professional" artists should keep a higher position than the buyer. This ethic keeps the artists independent and has helped the cultural inheritance for the past thousands of years. It is entirely based on the Confucian ideal of "worshiping the elder." But it's hard for traditional artists to convince the young artists to follow their example because young artists can get an equal position with these older artists outside of Confucian social order when they are creating contemporary art. As a result of the tension between young artists and the elders, the young artists are mostly looking for the buyer from abroad.

This makes the art market intently twisted: The artworks are incredibly high priced, and without buyers. The artists will buy their artworks themselves, for the purpose of showing foreigners that their works are faring well in the art market. This has also caused a more profound marginalization of the artists creating contemporary artworks as the public can't understand their artworks and view them as expensive. This attitude makes the artists' group smaller and more closed, as well as the general art market.

It's nearly impossible for young artists to get funding from abroad or the gallery system, except for artists attending the Fine Arts college. Most others will either (1) leave Northeast China and go to international cities like Beijing or Shanghai where it's easier to interact with resources from abroad or (2) stop creating artworks. The latter occurrence is why it is hard to build an open gallery system in Northeast China or organize an art fair like Art Basel which can embrace young artists. The situation is extremely difficult for young artists.



3.1.2 Key Insights

Based on the interviews I conducted and the research I have done, I frame my opinion as follows:

The history of Northeast China and its development has resulted in (1) an incomplete gallery system, (2) limited arts education of the public, and (3) a closed artists group.

As an innovative force in the process of art inheritance and development, young artists in Northeast China are facing the problem of lack of promotional opportunities, resources needed for continuous creation, and feedback from peers and critics.

Young artists in Northeast China lack:

- 1) Financial means to survive as practicing artists; and
- 2) A more extensive artistic network and community in which they would be able to discuss their creative ideas openly.

3, design process

3.1 specific situation and representativeness

To better understand how to help young artists overcome the adverse effects of the incomplete gallery system, the low level of art education of the public, and the absence of foreign exchange, I worked with the Textile Art Department of the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts.

Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts is a representative of the cultural and artistic heritage of Northeast China. It was initially called the Yan'an Academy of Fine Arts. Now, it is located in one of the most famous cities in Northeast China, Shenyang city. East Germany and the Soviet Union profoundly influenced the teaching system of the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts.

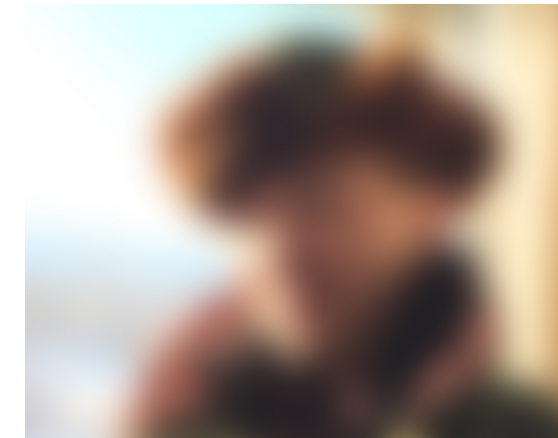
Many excellent talents emerged in the contemporary art movement after the reform and opening up that propelled China's economy in the 1970s. However, with an increasingly global economy, Chinese contemporary art transformed, relying on international resources. Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts gradually lost its original influence in the national art field due to the lack of communication with the outside world and the slow economic development in the northeast. Therefore, in choosing the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts as a case study for my project, I could examine an institution once revered as a place of influence within the Chinese contemporary art scene.

The Department of Textile Art merges art and design. This art major is different from traditional print, oil painting, and other subjects. Among all departments of Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, it shows the most openness to contemporary art.



3.2 user tracking

In this project, I tracked three users. For privacy reasons, not all the records are shown here.



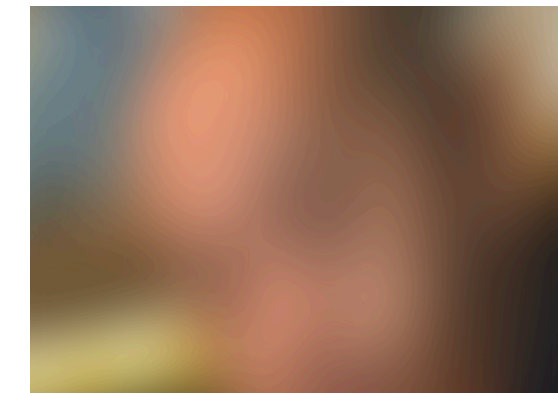
The first subject is a young artist born in the Northeast countryside and studying at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. In interviewing this subject, I found that although young artists in Northeast China are generally trapped by the lack of opportunities for foreign exchange, they have different behaviors and responses to this artistic constraint.

In other words, when an artist is aware of the problems of his environment and is willing to make efforts to overcome them, there is a straightforward solution: the Internet. But that doesn't mean

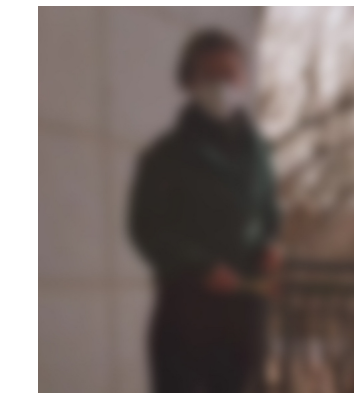
young artists have no problem tracking the information they need. Mostly just because they believe they already get the information as well as other artists all over the world.

It's very easy to ignore the influence of their environment for most of them. "They are very lazy but overconfident" from an interview of a researcher. Generally, they are not able to get enough information to support their work and obtain contracts. Their formation as a relatively closed group, lack of non-profit platform, and the language barrier are also parts of the problem.

To make them realize that they are deeply influenced by their environment is much harder because it is not about one being happy or satisfied with enough the resources they have; it's about how strong is their willingness to open up and get information or support they need.



The second subject is the in-service professor at the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, who has many attainments in the field of traditional art. In interviewing this subject, I found that the subject has much different understanding of the challenges faced by young artists from the one held by the young artists. The old artists who are represented by professors will frame the problem of young artists as a psychological or financial problem. On confirming that there is such a thing as the problem of young artists in Northeast China, both sides agree.



The third subject is an independent artist who was born in Northeast China and now lives in Beijing. In our conversation, I found that the lack of information and resources available to young artists in Northeast China is gradually becoming the main factor limiting the overall art development in that region.

As the young artist said, Chinese artistic ideas are changing fast, day by day. Meanwhile, the Northeast Chinese art area is always silent. There are no art activities or events, which results in fewer and fewer people who are willing to listen to the artistic voices from the northeast. In turn, it decreases the willingness of young artists in Northeast China to express themselves.

3.3 focus group

First focus group:

Objective:

To provide a platform for young artists in Northeast China where they will be able to exchange views on contemporary art with other stakeholders in the art market, which will bring a better understanding of the conditions of contemporary art in Northeast China.

Participants: Gallery operators, art collectors, professors at an academy of fine arts, young artists.

Keywords of the process:

The way to make a living, the way to art, professional art.

What was learned:

Not all young artists in Northeast China have difficulty in obtaining information about international contemporary art. Many young artists believe it's not necessary to be overly informed to create artworks. This belief is held because these young artists rarely communicate or interact with their peers from abroad, and also because some of their professors encourage them not to communicate with others. The latter is said to bring peace to the heart of the artist, enabling the artist to express him/herself better. But if someone intently stops appreciating art for a long time, they will lose their passion gradually and, in the end, give up on being an artist.

The members of the focus group also told me that they feel frustrated when trying to introduce their ideas to someone else because they think people rarely express interest in their artistic ideas. This is due to the prevalence of the stereotype that a good artist must be skillful on something. If not, then the idea of these artists' artworks won't be respected. So it's really hard for young artists to focus on their ideas and keep their artistic passion alive.



Second focus group

Objective:

To understand the circumstances of young artists in Northeast China.

Participants: art critics, older artists, professors at an art college, young artists, writers, etc.

Keywords of the process: realism, separation of the head from the body, the traditional art circle, the college art circle.

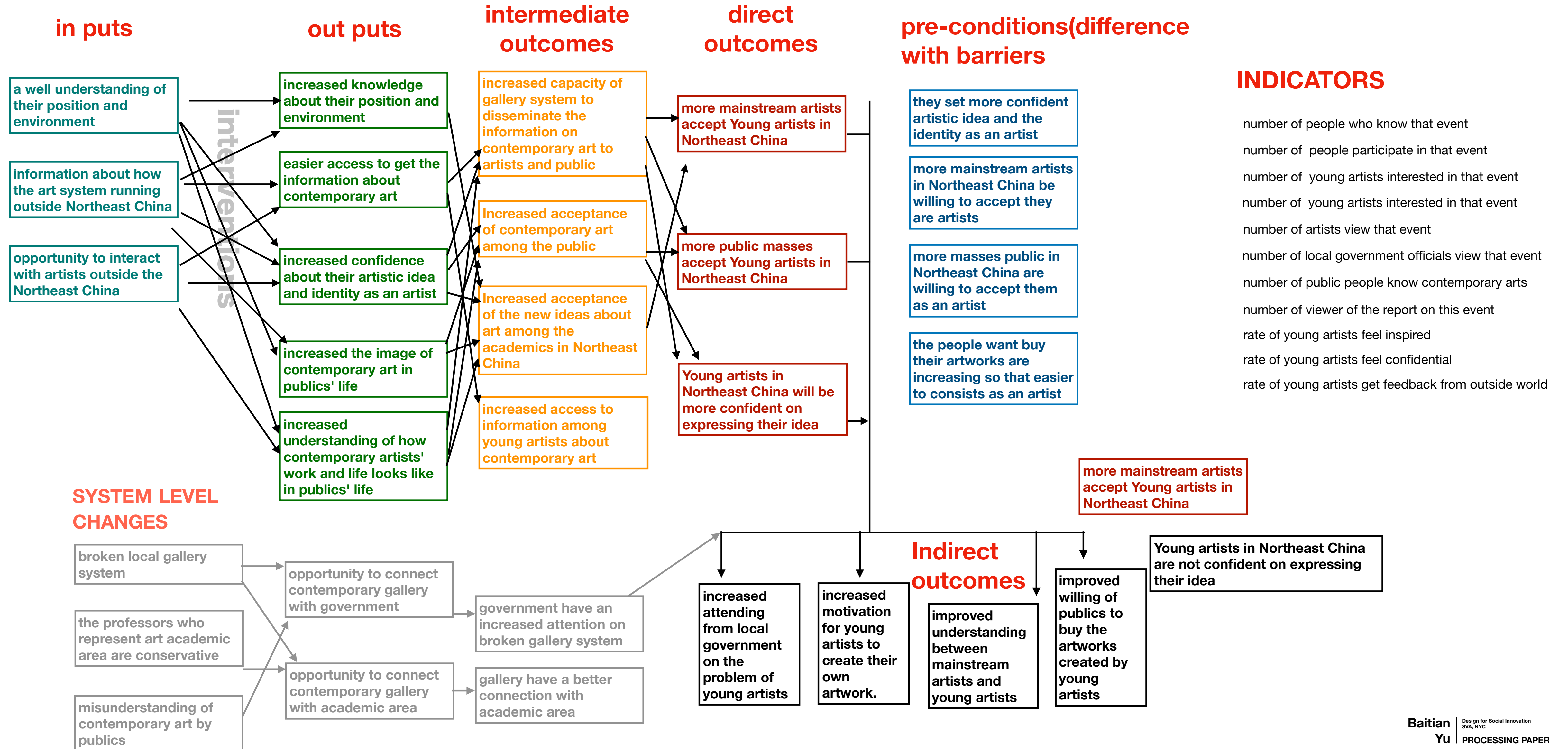
What was learned: At present, the developmental space for contemporary art in China is minimal. Traditional art (representing conventional culture forms), together with academic art (representing contemporary Chinese culture), occupy the majority of seats in the art field. Also, they are controlling the definition and attention of art in people's minds. On the other hand, due to the late urbanization period in Northeast China, the leading art style is print art, which is deeply influenced by the Soviet Union, East Germany, and modern Japan.



THEORY OF CHANGE

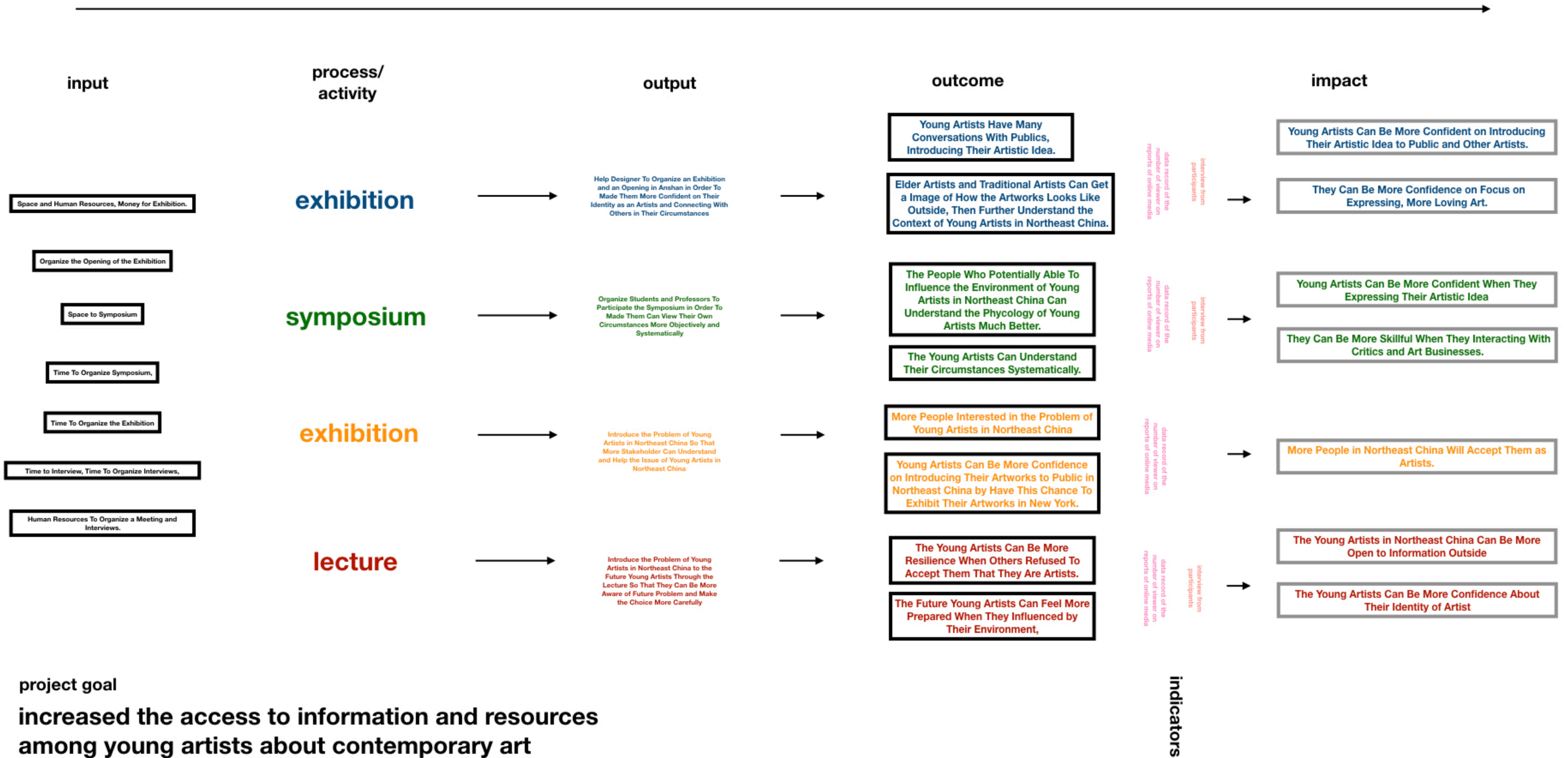
Theory of change is the way how I analyze the situation into a problem and plan the intervention systematically

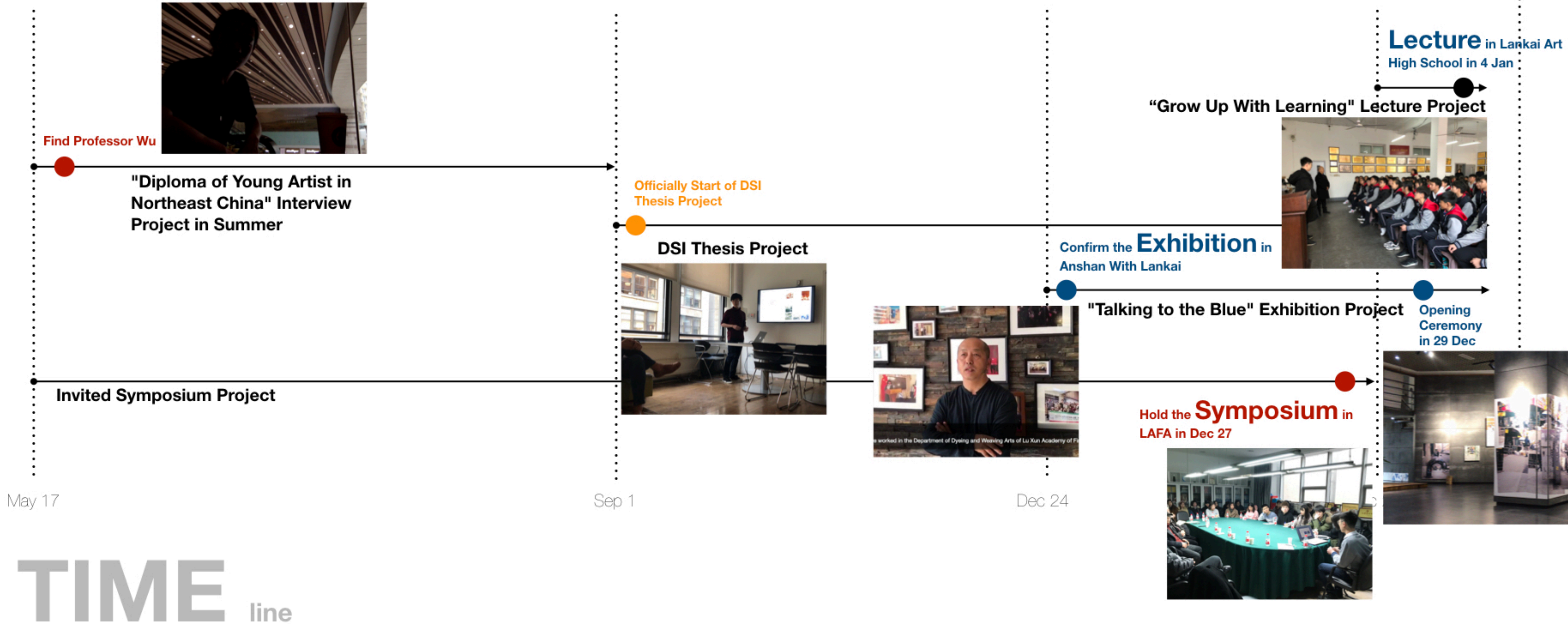
ASSUMPTION: YOUNG ARTISTS IN NORTHEAST CHINA HAVE A STRUGGLE ON CREATING ARTWORKS AND SURVIVE AS AN ARTIST



3.3.2 LOGIC FRAME

logic frame is the way I thinking while design from the problem jump to answer

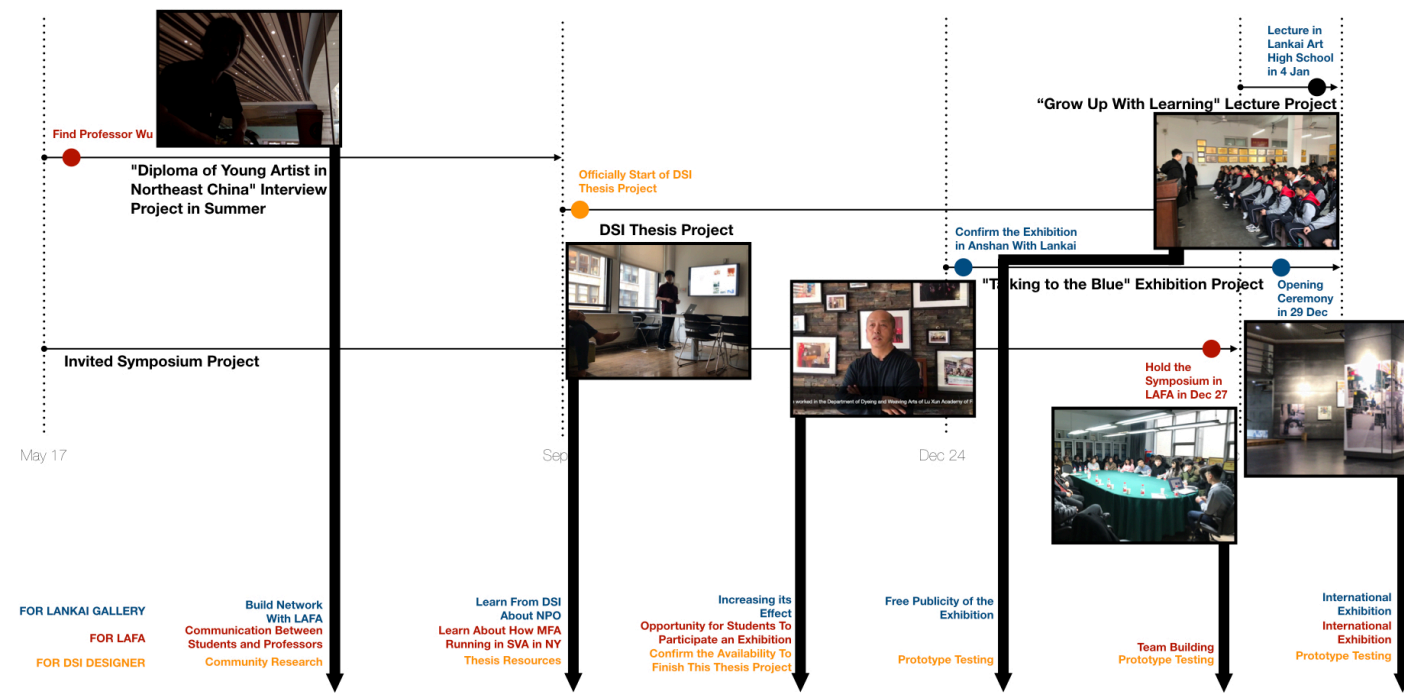




TIME line

PACKING MODEL

For these models can continually running, I write down how different partner cooperating in different time in this event. And a model can help them to planing a similar project.



Lecture Grow Up With Learning



A Good Opportunity To Have a Professor Introduce Their Life in Future

A Platform Provide Information From on Going Young Artists in Northeast China

Spreading the Information of Exhibition

A Special Event to Attracting Students

in the symposiums, young artists will explain their idea of their artworks show in exhibition, so that can help young artists introduce their artistic idea to other stakeholders which hard to do for them in daily life, and exhibition can also attractive young artists' interests in this event.

The lecture is a great opportunity to spreading the exhibition, and the exhibition will also help these high school students open their eyes to contemporary artworks from NYC, and attract them to start thinking about their future in an international level which their teacher in high school can never done.

Symposiums Dialogue With Young Artists of Northeast China



A Platform Help Young Artists To Introduce Their Artworks and Get Feedback Which Hard To Do in Northeast China.

An Opportunity Promise to Young Artists So That They Would Like To Participate the Symposiums

Exhibition Talking to the Blue



3.4, final intervention

3.4.1 "growing up with learning" speech:



Time:

January 4

Venue:

Lankai High School

Process:

In my speech on how to face the examination as a high school student, I started from my personal experience. Then I explained my identity as an artist or designer. From there, I expanded to the problems and difficulties faced by young artists in Northeast China. After speaking about the problems of young artists in Northeast China, I spoke about the artistic and social environment in Northeast China. Later I compared the artistic atmosphere in Northeast China to that of New York. Finally, I described the current situation of international contemporary art, as well as the problems of the Northeast art markets from an international perspective.

Cooperation model:

The goal of thinking: In the unique "art college entrance examination" system derived from China's college entrance examination system, all candidates who want to enter art colleges need to take the unified national exam. As a result, almost all Chinese high school students who want to enter art colleges and universities will gather to study. These students are called "art students".

Lankai Art High School is an educational institution that provides centralized training services. Because almost all young artists in Northeast China have been "art students" before entering art colleges, I think that they would benefit from an introduction to the environment and difficulties faced by young artists in Northeast China. By creating an opportunity for such an introduction, I will enable young artists in Northeast China to have more references when facing doubts and anxieties often created by the conservat social forces. In informing these young artists, I am helping them become more confident and resilient to the pressure.

Process step model:

- Contact Ms. Liang, the principal of Lankai Art High School, to talk about the purpose, significance, and help meant by the project.
- Together with Principal Liang, determine the time, number of participants and duration of the focus group
- Start to organize students and record work after arriving at the site
- Ask Principal Liang to explain the background of the activity
- I divided my experiences ranging from when I was an "art student" to my experiences in New York, into small stories. I connected them to larger themes and issues of my project the difficulties faced by young artists in Northeast China, the current situation in Chinese art circles. I ended my expose with an introduction to the art environment in New York and the view of young artists in Northeast China from an international perspective.
- Summary and random interview

Outcomes:

The future young artists can feel more prepared face the challenges stemming from their environment, and be more resilient when others refuse to accept them as artists.

Impact:

They future young artists can be more open to information coming from outside, and more confident about their identities as artists.

Evaluation method:

After my speech, I collected the feedback from teachers and students on the spot.

What have I learned:

Due to China's college entrance examination system, most of China's 15-18-year-old high school students are experiencing a state of high mental tension. Because China does not attach importance to students' social practice, Chinese high school students rarely have the opportunity to form their views, especially on social problems. This kind of educational system indirectly leads its students' constant dependence on the school and the elders. Because high school students in China tend to continue their studies, directly after high school graduation, in universities, young artists rarely can jump out of their original context and think systematically about the problems they are facing. For that reason, I created this information session, which aims to make them aware of the circumstances and challenges ahead. The students thought that this activity would be most beneficial if organized during the summer vacations, after their college entrance examination

3.4, final intervention

3.4.1 "growing up in learning" speech:



I gave a report on the current situation of New York contemporary art and Chinese contemporary young artists to students in Lankai art high school. They are all students who strive to enter the fine art college, they are the young artists in the future. I think that through the popularization of the basic knowledge of contemporary art in the fundamental aesthetic education stage, they can learn more about their position in the social network they live in and what to do in the future.



3.4, final intervention

3.4.2 Symposium <dialogue with young artists in Northeast China>



Time:

December 27

Venue:

Conference room of Department of Dyeing, Weaving and Clothing Aart, Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts

Process:

At the symposium, I first introduced this activity, then briefly introduced the situation in New York's art industry, and commented on the mainstream style of New York's artworks seen in exhibitions I visited. After that, nine young artists from Northeast China who participated in the blue dialogue introduced themselves and their works. After that, several teachers, curators, and artists who participated in the symposium discussed the works of young artists in Northeast China and raised several questions based on my introductory remarks about art in New York. We discussed these issues, and finally summed up the new ideas generated at the symposium.

Cooperation model:

The environmental problems faced by most young artists in Northeast China are not very difficult to overcome. The biggest challenge is how to make them fully aware of their environment. The current state of young artists in Northeast China can be changed, and one step to that is to introduce the situation in which artists from other places work. All of that is to help them deal with the pressure they face and make them more confident. At the same time, it helps young artists in Northeast China to communicate with other stakeholders, and through that, reshape their challenging environment. By promoting communication, they can approach the difficulties more systematically and rationally.

Process records:

- Determine the theme and time of the symposium with Professor Wu, head of the Department of Dyeing, Weaving and Garment Art, Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts
- Invite young artists, art critics and relevant experts from the Internet
- Date and time with participants
- I will give the opening speech and report on the results of the expert interviews in New York.
- Young artists will present their artistic views.
- Experts and young artists will take turns in giving speeches and expressing their opinions on the problems faced by young artists in Northeast China.
- I will summarize the meeting.

Outcomes:

The people who are potentially able to influence the environment of young artists in Northeast China will better understand the psychology of young artists much. Meanwhile, young artists will recognize their circumstances more systematically.

Impact: Young artists will be more confident when they express their artistic ideas; they will be more skillful when interacting with critics and art businesses.

Evaluation method:

After this symposium, I had dinner with some of the participants. Before and during the meal, we had a discussion and exchanged feedback on this activity.

What I learned:

Although all stakeholders pay attention to the problem, they do not have a clear view of how to solve it. But in the second half of the discussion, both young artists and other stakeholders have focused on whether there should be only one way to understand contemporary art; whether the conflict between traditional art and contemporary art is one between "Oriental" and "western," or between "traditional" and "modern." The consensus reached in the final meeting was that "art should not be related to survival."

3.4, final intervention

3.4.2 Symposium <dialogue with young artists in Northeast China>

In the symposium, we discussed many different components, start from the self introduce of these young artists and their artworks, and end with the several topics coming out from the artworks of these young artists claim by other stakeholders.

The reason I think I can ease the problem of young artists by this symposium:

First, it's a good opportunity for young artists talking with different stake holder. Increasing their understanding to their situation more objectively.

Second, providing their more information about the contemporary art and artists from New York can improve their understanding of artist.

Besides, they can feel more confidence and open to talking about their artworks to mainstream artists.



Topics

"conflict between contemporary art and traditional Chinese art"

"conflict between young artists and Chinese public aesthetics"

"conflict between the survival and creation of young artists"

"art market between Northeast China and New York"

"identity as a Chinese artists"

etc



3.4, final intervention

3.4.3 "talking to the blue" International Contemporary Art Tour: Anshan station



Time:

December 29 to February 1

Venue:

Anshan Lankai Art Museum

Process:

During the exhibition arrangement, I mixed the works of artists from Northeast China with those from New York. I hoped that the contrast could arouse the audience's thinking about the difference between New York and Northeast China's art atmosphere.

At the opening of the exhibition, the person in charge of Lankai Art Museum first explained the background of the show and welcomed the guests. Then I gave a 10-minute speech, in which I detailed the social value of this socially innovative design project. Next, I played a statement from the New York Institute of Visual Arts. After that, seven participating artists delivered a collective speech.

Cooperation model:

Thinking goal: When helping young artists in Northeast China to communicate with the outside world, the most fundamental goal is not the direct communication between the two. Because of the differences in language, time difference, and context, communication with words is often better than contact with works. The primary purpose of the blue dialogue exhibition Anshan Station is to help young artists in Northeast China understand the systematic views of art circles in Northeast China and New York mentioned in the symposium, and help them know this information through a real art exchange. At the same time, through the joint exhibition, they can have a deeper understanding of their position and status in the world.

Process records:

- Work with the Lankai Art Museum to determine the date, scale, and other details.
- Details of the organization and coordination of the Northeast artists participating in the exhibition will be done with Professor Wu, head of the Department of Dyeing,
- Weaving and Garment Art, Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts.
- Explain the background and principles of the event to the artists in New York City and determine the list of participating artists.
- Take the works to China and arrange the exhibition in Lankai Art Museum.
- Work with the director of the Lankai Art Museum and Professor Wu to determine the scale, level, and publicity channels for the opening of the exhibition.
Opening ceremony and speech
- Explain the work to the visitors and record their feedback.
- Take part in promoting the exhibition on TV.
- Prepare a commemorative certificate for the exhibiting artists.
- Take the show down and bring some of the work to New York.

Outcome:

Young artists have many conversations with the public, introducing their artistic idea. Older artists and traditional artists can get an image of how the artworks look outside of China, then further understand the context of young artists in Northeast China.

Impact:

Young artists are more confident in introducing their artistic ideas to the public and other artists. Also, they are more confident and focused on expressing their art.

Evaluation method:

After the exhibition, I held a feedback meeting in the art museum, mainly recording the feedback of the young artists about this activity. I also record the browsing data on the network platform.

What I learned:

Realizing a problem, or facing it confidently, can't be evaluated by a simple "yes or no." It is a question of "to what extent." When artists say "they are aware" of a specific problem, they don't necessarily have the same or similar views on them.

3.4, final intervention

3.4.3 "talking to the blue" International Contemporary Art Tour: Anshan station

In the opening ceremony of this exhibition, 27 local culture leaders and officials of Anshan abused. As the first international contemporary art combine exhibition in Anshan, it has an enormous impact and influence.

Through the combine exhibition, by make a contract with the NYC artists, these young artists can get more resources and information about the artworks of themselves and which from New York.

Besides, by showing their artworks to public, they can become more confidence on sharing their artistic idea with public. So that they can get the information about their artworks and their situation much easier.



14 New York artists participated are diverse in identity, age, and artistic style because it reflects how deeply public people evolve in art area in NYC.

And 9 young artists form China participated are all students in Fine art college, it reflects the marginalization of the artists in Northeast China

I hoping to show the common pursuit of art creators in different contexts.



3.4, final intervention

3.4.4 "talking to the blue" International Contemporary Art Tour: New York station



Time:

February 24 to February 28

Venue:

Starta Arta , New York City

Process:

In the process of setting up the exhibition, I will show my works in the way of "partial reproduction, partial original works." Due to the new epidemic and other reasons, artists from Northeast China can not be present. Therefore, I will show my works in the way of personal introduction and work introduction. At the same time, I invited several New York artists to set up their works on the spot.

In the course of the exhibition, I introduced the background in which young artists in Northeast China work. This introduction takes the history of Northeast China as a clue. It discusses in detail the difficulties in ideology, identity, and foreign exchange faced by the artists and masses in the current transformation period. Also, I interviewed and recorded the artists and commentators present or not present.

Cooperation model :

Thinking goal: During the project, many artists from other places have said that the problems faced by young artists in Northeast China are more like a template, and similar things happen in all traditional cultures that are faced with the impact of contemporary art. While helping young artists in Northeast China get information, I also hope to be able to tell the stories of young artists in Northeast China. I also hope to get more feedback from artists in New York on the shared stories of young artists in Northeast China.

Process Records:

- I brought some of the art that was displayed in China to New York.
- I found Starta Arta space, an arts organization dedicated to helping artists organize exhibitions.
- I confirmed the date, arrangement, scale, and other details with the person in charge.
- I'll print the rest of the artwork as an exhibit.
- Set up in the space of Arta Starta.
- Complete the design of posters, publicity copy, and other publicity material.
- Prepare on-site presentation documents and invite artists, curators, etc.
- Explain the background knowledge of young artists in Northeast China.
- Taking down the exhibition.

Outcomes:

More people are interested in the problems of young artists in Northeast China. As a result of exhibiting their artworks in New York, young artists are more confident when introducing their artworks to the public in Northeast China.

Impact: More people in Northeast China will accept young artists as artists.

Evaluation method:

After the exhibition, record the browsing data on the network platform.

What I learned:

Young artists in Northeast China are not willing to consider themselves as a vulnerable group because their efforts are more important than others' help in China's social culture. They are ashamed to admit that they are a vulnerable group in need of help. Therefore, in their works and exchanges, they did not mention the problems they face. Thus, in the exhibition, my description of the background of the problem of young artists in Northeast China is more resonant than the works of artists.

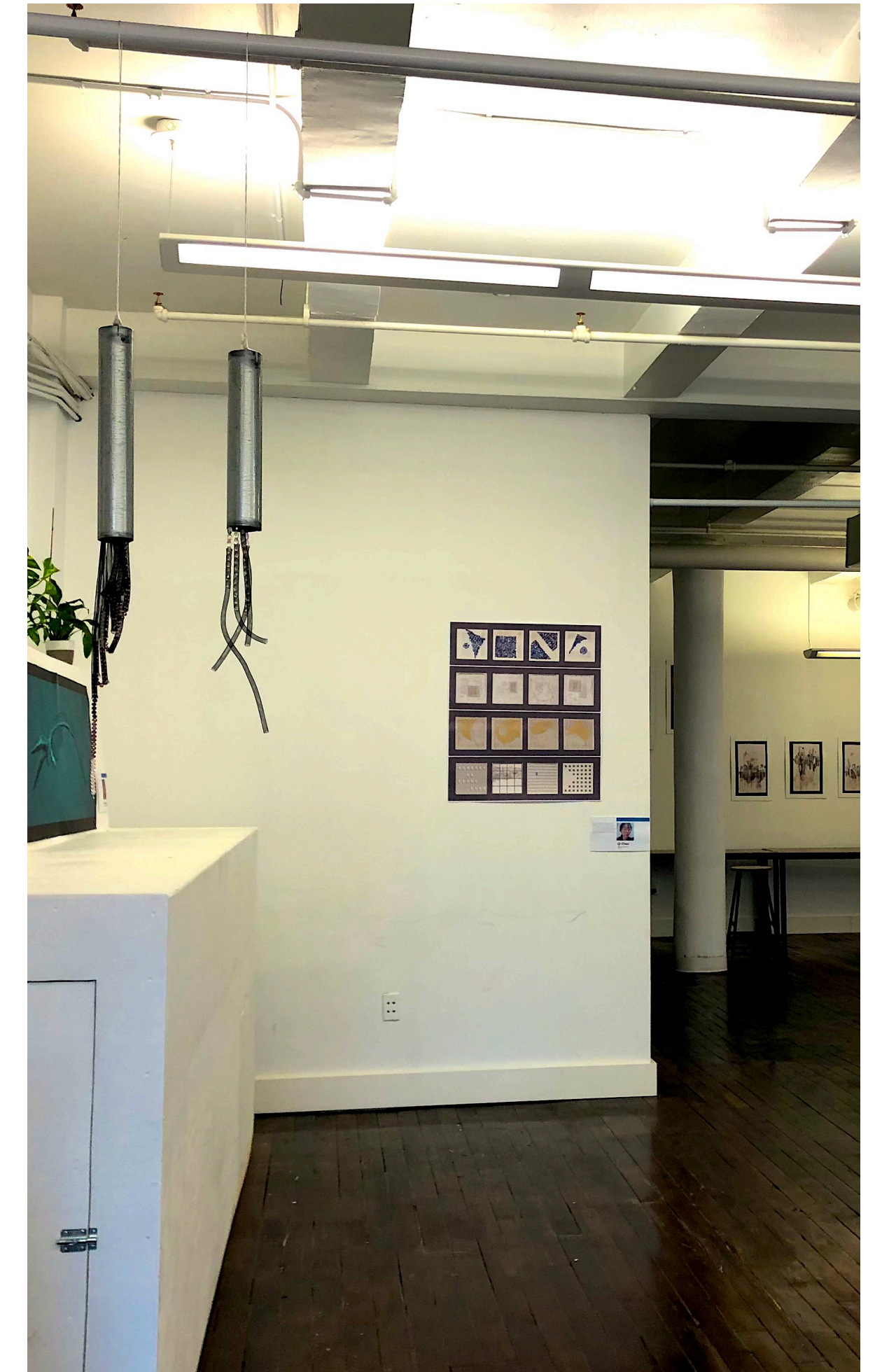
3.4, final intervention

3.4.4 "talking to the blue" International Contemporary Art Tour: New York station

In the New York station of this exhibition, I showed the works of young artists from Northeast China by the way that some in pictures and some in original works.

During this exhibition, I also introduced the background of young artists in Northeast China.

The exhibition at New York station will not only give more feedback to young artists in Northeast China on their works, but also let more people know the problems faced by young artists in Northeast China, as well as the social and cultural environment in Northeast China. It is also expected to bring more international perspectives to young artists in Northeast China.



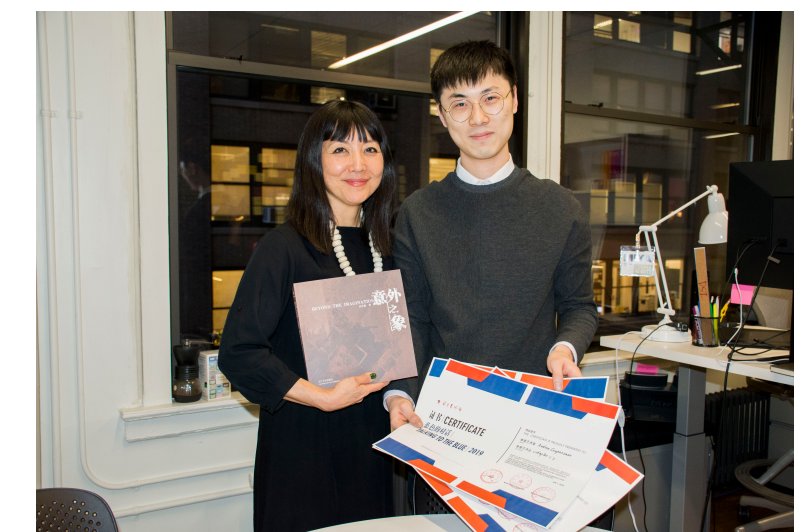
3.4, final intervention

3.4.5, How I bringing these to the world

And for spreading my idea, I go to the local public radio station to introduce the exhibition and the problem of the young artists in northeast china, how this problem looks like and how the situation in the outside world looks like right now. There is also a lot of reports about this local event on newspaper and online media. Something surprised me is that exhibition is the first international combine exhibition of contemporary art in Anshan city in 21st century for most of the Anshan citizens. And what more surprise me is that most of the old artists and local leaders of traditional art participated in the opening ceremony of the exhibition actually have a great interests in these contemporary art works, which shows that how important the communication is in art area.



Besides, every artist participate in this project will get the certificate accept by LAFA and SVA. It's an important provement and the realization of the supported from the world to these lonely young artists.



3.4, final intervention

3.4.7, How to evaluate my prototype & How to measure success or failure

FEED BACK SHARING MEETING

For measure how that prototype work and how to improve it, I hold another two feedback meetings for their feedback, one is for symposium and another for exhibition.

Towards the exhibition, all the young artists have a very positive attitude. Most of them thought it's a good and fair opportunity for the artists who participate in that exhibition. But the professor feel it will make sense only if this event can benefit the LAFA through how deep the SVA can evolve inside.

Towards the symposium, all the stake holders thought it's a good method to communicating. But some young artists complaining about they can never sit with professor equally, so it's doesn't matter whatever sit around or sit across. But many of young artists still refused to say anything to strangers.



RESULT OF VOTING ON
FEEDBACK MEETING

SYMPOSIUM
exactly what I need 9
not the best way 2
give up 5

exhibition
exactly what I need 7
not the best way 1
give up 0

For measuring how these prototype work and how to improve it, I hold another two meetings for their feedback. Towards the exhibition, all the young artists have a very positive attitude. Towards the symposium, all the stake holders thought it's a good method to communicating. I made a Show of hands for their attitude toward these activities.

I really enjoy this event, after I saw all these artworks from New York, I really want to know how New York people think my Artwork.

"It's very interesting that you can share your information by the story"

The idea of communicating aboard is really smart, I will more thankful if you can bring the artworks of our students outside because we can't help them even we know their problem, you can't wash the publics brain so that they can love contemporary art.

"I thought you will share more of your experience on dealing with the examination"



For measuring the lecture, I make a random interview after the lecture to students and teachers. Most of them feel it's helpful and interesting. But some of them will expected to hear more practical lesson like how to deal with the coming examination.

besides, after I finish all these event, I record the number of review of the reports on exhibition. and Interviewed and take the feedback on these artists and artwork from different artists and curator.



4, CRITIQUE

Social innovation design, Narrative pattern and "Maximum slogan"

In this project, I gradually realized that a social problem is not clear. In many cases, contradictions cannot be explained in words, especially when using bilingualism as an international project. Context and position are closely related, and just as this project is held, the public opinion environment of the entire society is constantly changing, which makes narrative more difficult. Sometimes, this contradiction may make the vocabulary somewhere prominent and abrupt, while other vocabulary is confusing in another language. Even aside from the factors of language, the categories of "signifier" and "referential" of a word or concept can confuse different people. The key concepts widely circulated in the art field are likely to have completely different meanings in sociology or daily life. If the standards are not established, the dialogue will be difficult, and the development of the standards will often make the interlocutors feel uneasy, thereby reducing the participants' willingness to dialogue. This balance is common and important for social design.

While I was working on this project, it was precisely the time when a series of events with profound influence, such as the rise of the US right wing, the escalation of Chinese public opinion conflicts, and the COVID 19, occurred. Different supporters of this project also have different cultural and political positions. How to choose and replace the narrative elements in the process of the project is the biggest challenge this project faces.

Taking "Chinese contemporary art" as an example, the "Westernity" of contemporary art should be criticized in the minds of many young Chinese artists, while old Chinese artists often regard contemporary art itself as "Western art" and are used to it. Summarize and oppose "Chinese traditional art" into "Eastern art". New York artists are more inclined to define "art that is currently popular in European and American society" as "contemporary art" and "Chinese traditional art" as one of the diverse cultures. Therefore, when planning the exhibition, I need to use these three narrative methods to tell three stories to different groups. As well as introducing projects.

How should social design identify the cultural background and practical needs of native communities? Actually, I think it is impossible. The cultural background does not have a clear dividing line between "history" and "present". When we intervene in community reform, it will inevitably affect the cultural history of the community, and it will also indirectly affect their self-identification. But this does not mean that we can disrespect cultural history, as the "whiteboard theory" studied by the Pacific Society, ignore history and rebuild the system. The value of social design is precisely to put forward a "maximum slogan". Nothing is more powerful than the narrative pattern with conservative values as the main body calling for the goal of system reform. If you just unite the reformers who originally agreed with you, but at the same time treat more neutrals as "others" and put all those who do not support you on your opposites. In my opinion, this is just a kind of self-satisfaction, is an unprofessional social design.

It's like when I discuss the contemporary art market with traditional artists, I can't emphasize how beneficial this is to young artists. I need to constantly emphasize how this will increase the market acceptance of traditional culture. On the other hand, there is also a need for evidence in the cultural industry to prove the change in the status of traditional cultural elements in the Internet market. One story has completely different conclusions from different perspectives. It is for this reason that it is prudent to deal with different partners. It's not that the closer people are, the smoother the cooperation.

3.6.1 vision for future

The change of my hometown in two hundred years is huge. From the generation of my grandfather, people who can stay until today have experienced countless disasters and have many highlight moments to be proud of. The transformation and low tide we are experiencing today will certainly become an important history in the future. The young artists of Northeast China are not only writing history as Northeasterns and Chinese, but also as an artists looking for new opportunities and thinking together in this new era of globalization. The challenges facing the art field now and in the future.

Art is not just for artists, it belongs to every appreciator and thinker. The problems of the young artists in the Northeast must also be a manifestation of the contradiction between cultural identity and social identity. Especially in a period of drastically changing low tide, the artist's exploration and expression will be more important. This is not just economic or political value, but a humane historical value, which is the responsibility of every Northeast Chinese person. I think as a social designer, the more meaning we discover about problems is to provoke people to think and give the choice to everyone in the community instead of telling people what to do. But at the same time, we must adhere to our own morals and positions, and cooperate with people from different moral and positions to seek common ground while reserving differences.

At the same time I wrote this text (April 2020), the COVID 19 infects millions of people, the global stock market plummeted, the right-wing governments of various countries tried to incite hatred among their civilians, and the media clamored for panic and doubt. The process of globalization stop or even backwards. But I believe that we always stand together, just like the suffering and glory of the Northeast China happened in history, disaster and hope will inevitably accompany. Whether as a social designer or an artist, we all have the responsibility and ability to express our moral and position.

We are all paying efforts for a future we stand together.



5, thanks

Thanks to SVA, 兰开美术馆(Lankai Gallery), 鲁迅美术学院(Luxun Academy of Fine Arts) and Starta Arta, and their employee I saw or not.
Thanks to 吴青林, 于晖, 傅汝新, Oxana, 梁士慧, Miya, the key help on my prototyping, and also thank for the help on prototyping to 程焯,
Markus, 吴熙

Thanks to my advisors, Archie and Kara, your suggestions are professional and impressive.

Thanks to all my DSI cohorts to the listening, understanding and advice on my project, especially thanks to Tara, your help is necessary for me
to finish my slides in "English" English.

Thanks to all of the artists and critics participate in my research and prototype,
韩大为, 宫华绅, 李程, 于雨田, 岳勇旭, 徐旷之, 张冰, 丁永升, 孙朔楠, 史鑫星, 徐铭亮, 赵华卿, 胡月明, 齐晨, 王彧, 梁宝华, 董明
武, 王棕正, 杨家琛, 白坤, 贾继东, Andrea, Hera, 石梦霞, Dulce, Cali, 耿翔, 黄炎周, Koichi, Oxana, Markus, Sadia, Ridhima, 刘劲祎, 宫世
鑫, 覃明月, 王馨阳, 王桐桐, 狄航宇, 魏涛, Gae, and everyone help me during this journey.

Thanks to my family, friends, and all the people I love.