

# Portfolio



2022 FINE ART WANXI KAN



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# Welcome to my lonely world

I'm Wanxi Kan. They always call me Kankan. I'm 23 years old, but I've never smoked, drunk, fell in love or played online games. Even I don't like using the Internet and computers. I like to enjoy my own world. These characteristics seem out of tune with my peers.

I did well in Science in high school. I originally planned to study science or engineering in college. When I was 17, I bought a book in a bookstore, Van Gogh rediscovered by Chiang Hsun. This book has changed my life. This is also the only book I brought to Britain from China.

I love Van Gogh's works. What moves me more is that he spent his life alone. He never thought he would become famous. He didn't think he was a genius. He was even afraid to call himself an artist. He wandered between many cities and towns, looking for his own scenery and people willing to talk to him. When he thought Gauguin was his true friend and he could entrust everything to him, Gauguin left. A doctor seemed to care about him and appreciate him, but after Van Gogh's death, all the doctor did was find his brother and take more Van Gogh paintings. His brother Theo's support for him is not unlimited. The pressure from his family makes Theo unable to fully support his brother, and there are fewer and fewer letters between them. No matter where he lives, he will be treated as a madman and a monster. He was extremely lonely, which drove him crazy. He had auditory hallucinations. Because he couldn't stand it, he cut off his ears to seek a moment of peace. In the mental hospital, his mental problems became more and more serious. But even so, you can hardly see the gloomy paintings from Van Gogh, and you can't find any traces of his mental pain and torture in those bright and moving paintings. Because when he created, this loneliness and pain turned into an assistant who released the brilliance and brilliance of his heart. The more life wants to kill him, the more he wants to kill him in his works.

The loneliness he experienced was far more terrible than death. He didn't know that after his death, his works would be sold at sky high prices. He didn't know that his name was deeply branded on the stone tablet of art history and became the well-known Van Gogh. He was unfortunate because his life was lonely and painful. He was also lucky that loneliness helped him achieve him and his works.

When I was 17, I came up with the idea of learning art. Perhaps this is the best way for me to explore the root of loneliness.

Chiang Hsun once said: "in fact, the essence of aesthetics may be loneliness." Artists are like this. They live in solitude different from ordinary people; The creation of art is even more so. The sudden burst of inspiration is the countless days and nights of meditation and loneliness spent in solitude. The process of artistic creation condones the breeding of loneliness, which also helps artists grow and explode. This relationship between loneliness and artists has existed for a long time. As long as the art is not dead and the spirit remains, the story of loneliness and artists will continue to be written.







# INTRODUCTION

Many countries and regions in the world are troubled by the spread of novel coronavirus. For this reason, more and more people choose to socialize online, and face-to-face communication is less and less. For artists, such an environment is not conducive to their artistic creation.

Some people say that the myth of lonely genius has long been broken, and contemporary artists are often not lonely geniuses in the dark. Artists are not isolated from the world. What they experience is a globalized world, an era of electronic information, and they are in a social group composed of curators, exhibition institutions, auction houses, collectors, media and other different elements.

Nowadays, attracting people's attention has been a necessary means of rapid success in the Internet age. In well-known art fairs and unknown art studios, there are always places that people can't understand among all kinds of contemporary art works. Some are forms and some are contents. Many contemporary arts strive to be special and stand out. These arts always make the audience look at them one after another. Moreover, these works of art are like fresh life to loudly announce their existence in this world. The artistic talent of artists makes them better at discovering the world covered by repeated life and boredom and displaying it in a brilliant way.

As this exaggerated form of expression has gradually become the mainstream, people have a feeling that art can only be left by sensationalism, while those relatively silent and lonely works of art gradually fade out of people's vision.

However, as artists, do we really no longer need to be lonely?



# BRAINSTORMING ABOUT LONELINESS

Loneliness is a common human emotion. Human beings often treat it as a negative existence, fear it, or even hate it. It seems that for humans who live in groups of animals, loneliness is the enemy.

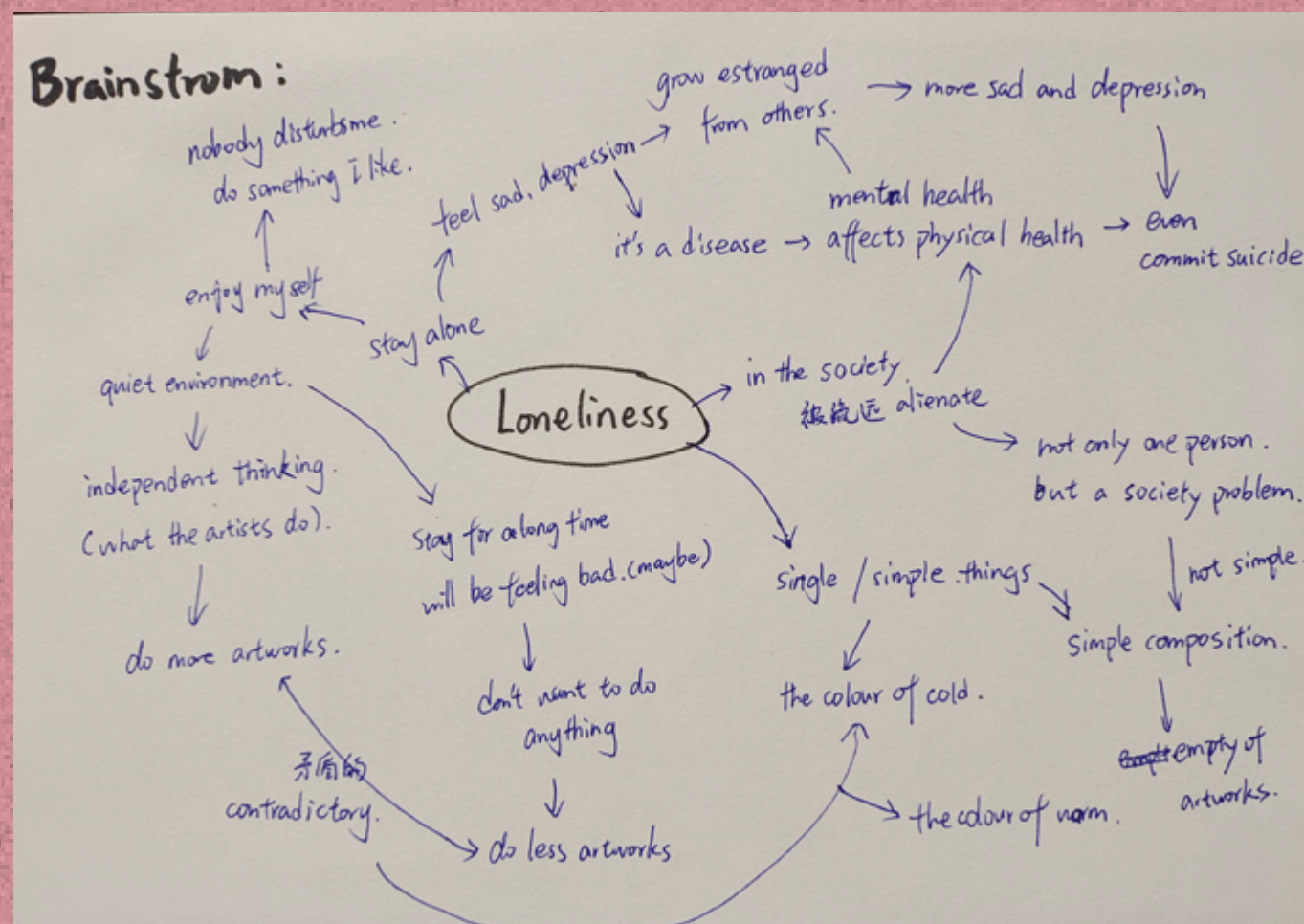
Why do artists always accompany loneliness. In fact, it has a great connection with the profession of artist itself. What artists have to do is to explore, think and create. In most cases, artists do not want to be disturbed in the process of creation, so they often need to lose substantive contact with social groups, and they need to be as quiet as possible. When the artist is disconnected from the outside world, the artist will be forced to feel lonely. This loneliness is not the independent behavior of the artist, but the "punishment" that must be accepted after leaving the social group. In other words, the artist's job is to explore and find new things different from the past. During this period, they need to find a new way in the ocean of their own thinking, and even create new art forms. This process itself is lonely and long. It is not difficult for artists not to feel lonely.

In addition, the society will always feel exclusion and incomprehension to artists' new ideas and creations, which also makes artists have to enter their own world rather than share with the outside world. This is probably the reason why artists are lonely. The way artists live and work leads to artists' inevitable loneliness.

However, it is this loneliness that gives artists enough space to think, imagine, arrange and connect, because they are no longer moved by the outside world, but only in their own world. These are all because of loneliness. Artists really isolate themselves so that they can have space to create. During this period, artists may need to endure unimaginable loneliness and fully integrate their sustenance and emotion into artistic creation. That's why we can see so many amazing works of art today. Behind that painting and music, there is infinite loneliness. This is the quality that artists need, or an artist's attitude towards life, or an essential practice on the way of artists' creation.

Not only artists, but all people will think more about themselves and the world when they are lonely, and the thinking of artists should be more profound and thorough. This kind of thinking is essential for artists, because the concept of creation originates from it. At that time, artists will think about themselves, dissect themselves and examine their inner world. This is an opportunity for artists to reflect on themselves. Loneliness is not just a feeling of depression, lovelorn, bereavement and helplessness.

Loneliness, more often, especially for artists, is a state. In this state, loneliness no longer seems to be torture, but more like an artist's helper in thinking and creation. It is very important for us to learn to enjoy loneliness.





# MY ARTICLE

Author: Wanxi Kan. Date: 12/04/2022 in the UK.

The most unbearable thing for people is probably loneliness. If there is only one person left in the world, he or she must not die because his or her physical needs and desires cannot be met, but because he or she can't stand the endless silence and loneliness.

I have tried to get used to and enjoy loneliness. However, everything in this world must skillfully find a balance point before it can be regarded as "good" in a broad sense. No one can live by others, and no one can live alone. Even if we deliberately want to get out of this messy world, we can't avoid the trouble and pain of cutting and cleaning up. People who can find this balance, if not born with this ability, have tried both extremes.

But if there is any benefit of loneliness, I think only loneliness can achieve art.

This may be absolute, but it doesn't mean that a person refuses to intersect with the world all his life and stays alone. Art and wisdom are interlinked. Although it is not so straightforward as the so-called "Mathematics" to explore the wisdom of the operation principle of the world, it is a kind of philosophy. Any art that has achievements and can stand the scrutiny of time cannot be separated from people's inward exploration. After seeing the intersection of people's spiritual thoughts and how human sophistication flows like the so-called "Ether", the artist asked himself questions.

What is the so-called "person". This question is very complicated, but I think there must be a fixed answer. Throughout history, it is just a spiral process. Even if the passage of time will improve the realm, the essential things will never change, and history will always repeat itself at another level. Therefore, there should be a definite answer to the seemingly unsolvable question of what "human" is.

The work of art is to embody this answer. In the end, what is good and beautiful, what is ugly and evil, what is true and what is false, what is our innate God's blessing, what is our unshakable inferiority deeply rooted in our hearts, what are we looking forward to, and what are we afraid of in the final analysis. These questions cannot be answered by numbers and formulas. There is no doubt that only art can show them in an intuitive form and cause people to exchange ideas.

To explore the answers to these questions, you probably need to be lonely. Only solitude can bring the answer of such inward and deep exploration. This is probably the reason why so many artists gradually get lost in the process of self questioning and finally choose to achieve eternal loneliness in an extreme way. This kind of balance is really hard to find. It is difficult to summarize what loneliness can bring and what it will take away.

The pursuit of art is a consumption of life. Sometimes people take the struggle and pain of approaching the answer in solitude as a kind of mediocrity and laugh at it. People always talk about Van Gogh's self portrait of cutting his ears and his story with prostitutes. But the pain from loneliness is real.

Is it loneliness that makes the world unworthy of nostalgia, or is the cruelty of the answer boring? When we look at art, we look at the souls of people who have devoted their lives to it. We are close to their passion for exploration and creation. Art deserves artists to place themselves in maddening loneliness at all costs. Art is more worthy of people who have never explored the same to stop and appreciate this loneliness.

Photos: My performance art works < MY FEELING >







# PERFORMANCE ART

Performance art is my favorite form of artistic expression. Because it often jumps out of the traditional artistic perspective of the public. I also love drama performance very much. Performance art can give full play to my advantages of being good at performance. And I enjoy interacting with visitors. This process often enables visitors to better understand my works.

I did research on the performance art works of the performance artist Tenching Hsien. His performance art works do not have eye-catching bloody scenes, nor are they sensationally funny. His performance art works are a kind of rational thinking about life. His visual expression of art is more direct and thorough than words and painting. For example, his work cage piece is that he once locked himself in a self-made wooden cage. During this period, he did not read books and newspapers, did not use any communication equipment, did not talk to anyone, and was deprived of his right to contact the world outside the cage. He has done five "one-year behaviors", he explained the social issues of "loneliness and isolation, time, space, relationship and art".

These works of art make us have to think, can we survive? What is the value of our existence? What is the bottom line of survival? Is physical isolation equivalent to spiritual loneliness?

**The videos in my instagram ID: kankanmiss**



# <THE IMPRISONMENT OF THE IRON LION>

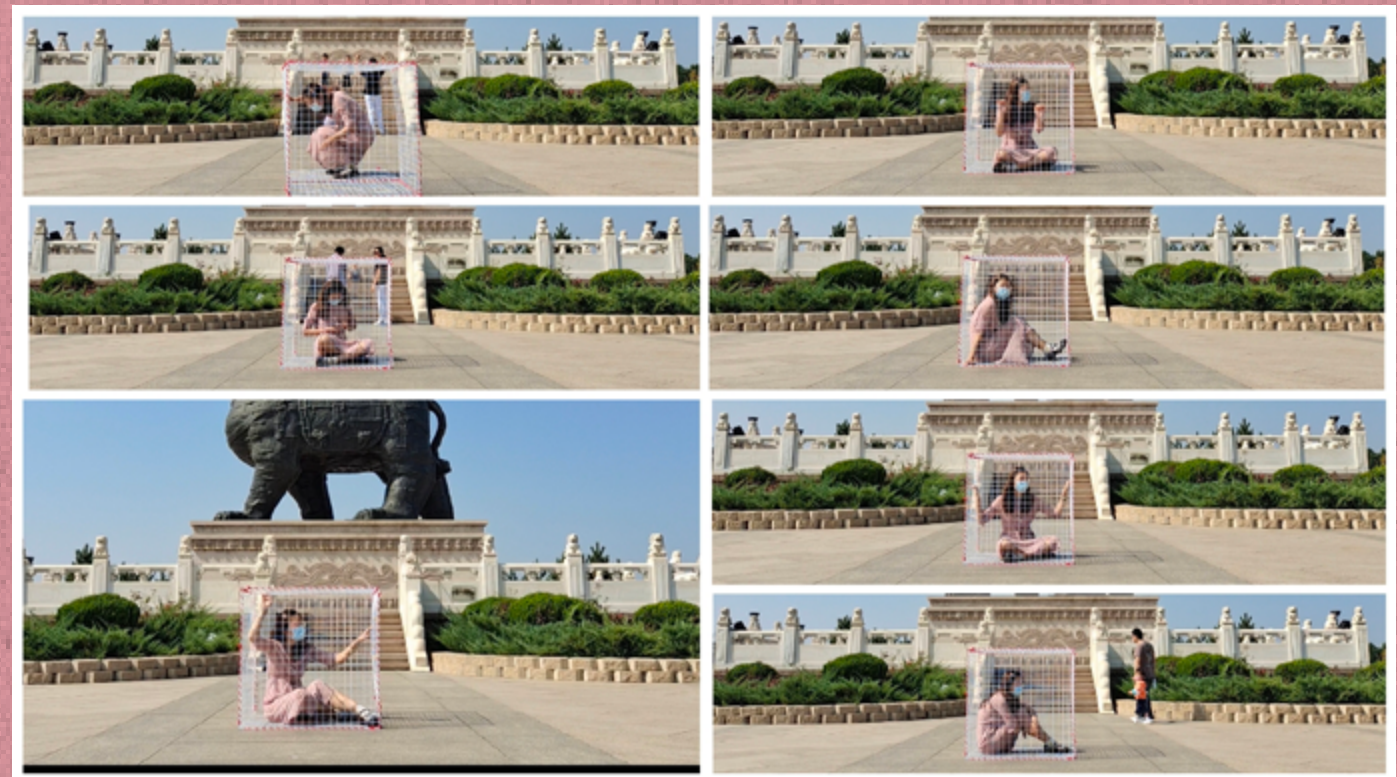
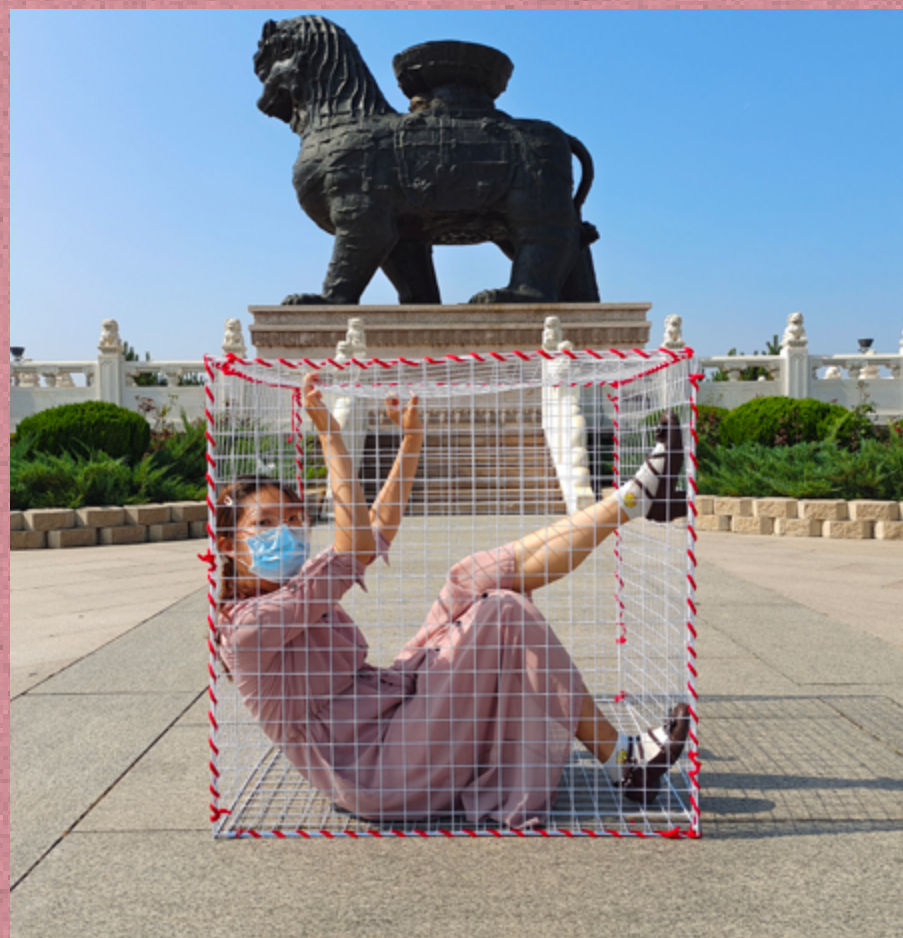
This is my first performance art work of this project. I made an iron cage with white wire mesh and red wool (I use white wire mesh because white represents pure and empty soul. Red wool to connect them, like my veins to sustain my soul). I drove to some cities with the materials to make the cage, and I chose the landmarks of those cities. These places have been visited by people every day for almost hundreds of years. These buildings welcome many people to view them every day, or they are just passing by.

I made the iron cage next to those places, and then I pulled the cage into those places. I sat in the cage, taking in the eyes of the people around me and wondering what was going on in the minds of these people in a hurry. I am like these buildings that have stood beside me for so many years.



Time: 60 minutes (These are pictures of performance art)

Location: Cangzhou, China.





# <THE IMPRISONMENT OF A CITY>

This performance art is the second work of the theme Loneliness. In this work, I express my different understanding of loneliness from another angle. I did it at the Hanging Garden in Cangzhou, China.

This garden is on top of the tallest hotel in the city, if I stand in this garden I can overlook the whole city. The reason I chose this garden to be large is because of the location. What I want to express is the loneliness of everyone in contemporary society, especially in big cities in China, where there is less and less face-to-face communication and interaction between people.

The highest point of the city overlooks everyone in the city, as if I can overlook the loneliness of everyone in the city. I posted information about this performance art piece online ahead of time.



Time: 60 minutes (These are pictures of performance art)

Location: Cangzhou, China.





# PROCESS OF THE WORK



This work will be displayed by video on the degree show. Audio and video I will use different devices to play in order to make the effect better. I have accumulated experience in the first two performance art works, so I completed a work related to my degree show. Because my degree show is also completed in such a regular space, and their venues are similar. There is no contradiction between displaying these two works in one space at the same time.

This is my third performance art work, which is also in the subject of loneliness. This work is performed in the recording studio of UCA. This work is related to the works I showed at degree show. My performance art studio and my degree show art works are completed in a regular cube space. Such a regular space is more like a space where we are alone.

There is another reason why I choose to be in this space. The recording effect of the studio is very good. The recording of the sound generated during my time alone (about 1 hour) will be continuously played in the space of degree show.

It's more like a natural performance. It's easy for a person to get out of control when he is alone without any entertainment.





## < LONELY SPACE >

Time: 60 minutes (These are pictures of performance art)

Location: recording studio of UCA

I cry alone, laugh alone, and stay alone in a space isolated from the outside world. This space is like my own world. No one understands my world, and I don't need them to fully understand it. I have been lonely since I was born, I endure loneliness, I enjoy loneliness.







# PROCESS

No one is free from troubles, and nothing is free from difficulties. I have encountered many setbacks in the process of completing my works. I also found that many of my ideas and plans will have many problems in practice, and even I can't realize these ideas. How to face these problems determines whether we can successfully complete a work.

I mentioned in the first of the portfolio that I used to study science. Art, although some people say it very easily, in fact, art is quite difficult. It is not simpler than science at all. Science is rigorous, but art is also rigorous.

Art requires ability and technology. This ability is not only the ability of painting and production, but also needs a person's literature, history, philosophy and other aspects.

Therefore, in terms of the artistic creation process, the more research, development and innovation, the more difficult it will be. This process is also lonely. I need to face many difficulties and challenges alone.





# ORIGINAL IDEA

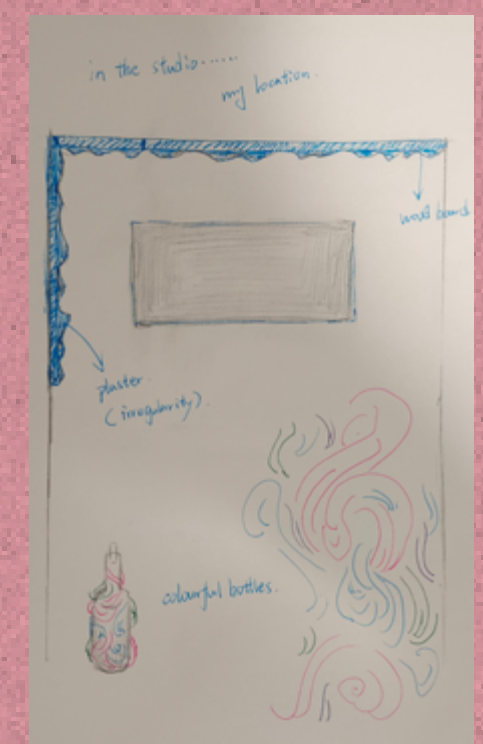
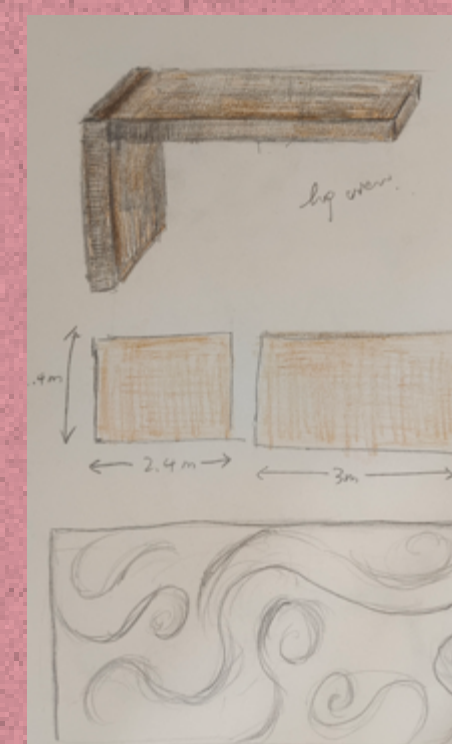
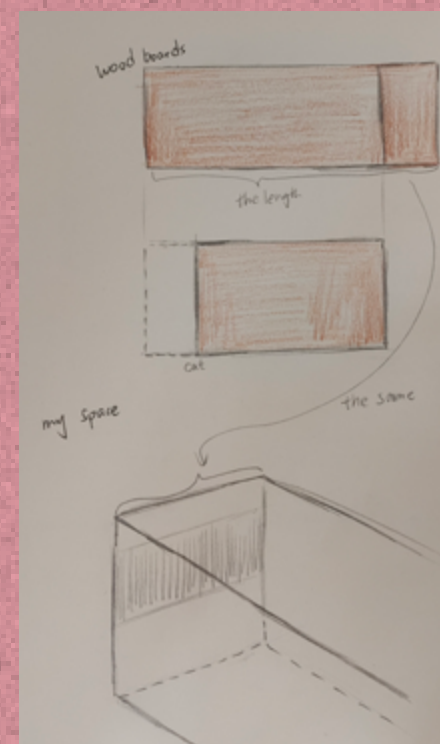


I originally used colored cream glue brought from China to spread and paint on the bottle to make the bottle look cakey. I want to make them look delicious, but have a disgusting feel to them. In the end they turned out great, they were very nicely shaped and also looked a little ugly. The presence of these two opposite adjectives on my work at the same time makes me very happy. I found my art work to be liked by most of the tutors and classmates in discussions with the rest of my group.

Because I've been to a lot of galleries and exhibitions, there are a lot of works that are spectacular, and the artists can let the visitors be inside the works. When I was in China, I wished I could do a very large installation art. I had the idea to enlarge this particular shape. I asked to my tutor if I could make this shape on the big wall instead of just on some little wine bottles. He is very supportive and wants me to realize my ideas.

Using walls to make art is difficult to move, so I decided to use wood boards or cloth. The folds of the cloth would make these shapes odd, and I think wood boards are better.

I originally planned to use cream glue to make this art piece. But the amount of cream glue I brought from China was very small and it was difficult to achieve the effect I wanted. Because I used to stack acrylic paints to create 3D effects, but it is very expensive to make large artworks with this paint. I tell a classmate and he told me that I could use studio mud or plaster. The colour of the mud is brown, the colour of the plaster is white, and the white is more like a cream color. I consulted my tutor and he thought it could be practiced..





# PROCESS OF THE WOOD BOARDS

So I tried this plan before the Christmas break in 2021. After I learned how to use the plaster, I hand painted them on the wall and drew similar shapes to the cream glue on the bottles. They turned out well in the end, and the classmates in the classroom at the time thought my work was beautiful. However, their shape is not the same as the shape on my bottle, and my tutor suggested that I mimic the shape of the pattern on the original bottles. When I tried to make a nozzle in the same shape as cream glue,

I found it difficult for the plaster to produce the same shape. The shape on the bottles is more delicate, but the shape on the wall is rougher. But I feel like the cream glue on the wall is more like a random spread of cream, and the bottles are too delicate to make people feel ugly enough. My decision is to continue to complete my work as the shape now.

But when I came back from vacation, they shattered and fell off. My mind collapsed in an instant, and I didn't react for a few seconds. I can't stand this result.







I worked very hard, I went to school almost every day for two months to make this work.

During this period, after I communicated with my tutor, he told me that the reason why they would break is because the plaster is easy to separate from the board after drying. He suggested that I add glue when making the plaster. After I added the PVC glue, I found that they lasted longer on the boards, but the plaster still shattered in the end. Later I added more PVC glue, but they still crumbled.

I was very sad during that time, I think I spent so much time and effort, but I failed so many times and my artwork didn't make any progress.



Also I bought acrylic paint to paint the white plaster in different colors. During this period, the two teachers offered different views on my work. One of them suggested that I add paint to the process of making the plaster and then paint. Another suggested that I paint with a white plaster and wait for the plaster to dry before applying a different paint on the surface. I hesitated. After thinking about it, I decided to try both.

After the experiment, I found that the plaster after adding the pigment first is colored from the inside to the outside. This effect is more natural.





I've found the plaster that fall on the ground stick on the boards is better. I came up with a new idea, I hope to pick up the rubbish on the ground and stick it on the boards. For example, the glue I have used includes glue gun, white latex, and residual cream glue. The cracks between the pieces of the plaster make the whole artwork looks fuller.

But I didn't expect that I would still fail many times. I tried a lot of glues to get rid of them, but they all fell off and shattered in the end. This plunged me into new despair.

I feel very depressed and depressed because it's so hard for all my thoughts to come true. I think I'm someone who can't do anything well, I don't even think I'm fit to study the art I've always loved.

After many attempts and failures, I found a glue that was more useful than other types of glue. It makes me happy. But it has one disadvantage. It takes 24-48 hours to dry. So I need to take the board off the wall and lay it flat on the table and the ground to avoid the plaster falling and breaking again before it is dry.







I cleaned up my desk and took the wooden boards off the wall. One was put on the table and the other on the ground.

In order to make them stronger, I sawed the wood strip into a shape suitable for the edge of the board. This process is very troublesome. I'm afraid that the wooden strip will fall off, so I use a lot of nails to strengthen the wooden strip. Then I used glue to stick the pieces of plaster of various colors to the board. I put the plaster together to make it look good.



After I paste plaster, I continue to use paint and acrylic paint to paint and repair imperfect places.

And I made a wooden table myself, which is also a part of the work. It is placed in the lonely corner of this lonely space, which is used to increase the integrity and beauty of the whole space. In addition, I plan to place this speaker under the table so that the sound can be played from the inner corner of the space, which can make the whole space full of sound.





# PROCESS OF THE GELATIN

I hope to provide different effects for the light and shadow of this lonely space. I used edible gelatin, soap liquid and gouache pigment to make beautiful translucent sheets with different colors. There are more than ten pieces in total.

But when I came to my degree show space and used a very bright light, I found that these sheets I made could not achieve the effect I wanted. Finally, I had to give them up. I chose to crumple the colourful laser paper and stick it on the light. I found that the effect would be much better.





# PROCESS OF THE WINE BOTTLES

At first, I used cream glue to draw beautiful and disgusting patterns on wine bottles. Then I tried to make them with wax and plaster. I decided to use plaster, on the one hand, because plaster and wood are made of one material, which is unified. On the other hand, many of my classmates and I think that the effect of plaster is more like large pieces of cream. They look more suitable for this work than cream glue. Finally, I used acrylic paint to draw the color of macarone on the plaster bottles. The style they present is the same as that on the board.

I chose bottles of different shapes to make. And the pattern on each bottle is different. This metaphor shows that each of us is a lonely individual. No two people are the same, just like no two leaves with the same grain. We have our own world and our own loneliness.







# DEGREE SHOW

I wanted to create a space that was completely different from the traditional loneliness. In this space, visitors can feel a lonely world that is different from other works of art: the lonely world is no longer a cold color and single composition.

This lonely space I created has very brightly and soft colour. Strong contrast can bring us different feelings. We were in this space, as if we were in a dream world, as if we were in a childhood world, as if we were in a big cream cake. This space seems to be filled with happiness and sweetness.

But if we stay in this space for a long time, we have a different feeling. This space can make us feel depressed, broken and lonely. As if we are always in this world of wine and sugar, in fact, everyone is an individual, and everyone is also lonely. Social life can only temporarily alleviate our loneliness.

The essence of human beings is loneliness, because no one can really understand ourselves. Even we can't understand ourselves, too.





Where to play the audio: the Bluetooth player is stuck under the table I made (because there is no long enough wire, the plug-in player cannot be used).

Where to play the video: on the wall without wooden boards in the space.



# LONELINESS IS A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST



# DETAILS OF THE WOOD BOARDS





# DETAILS OF THE WINE BOTTLES





# KANKAN

in the lonely space







Size: A square room of about 8m<sup>2</sup>.

Time: 2022.

Medium: Plaster, wood, acrylic pigment, white cotton thread, gelatin (changed to pink laser paper), wine bottles, etc.

#### Introduction:

Visitors in this space can truly feel a lonely world different from other works of art: the lonely world is no longer monochromatic and empty, but colourful and chaotic. The two wooden boards on the walls were painted with plaster like cream and it looked colourful and beautiful, but it was an uncomfortable shape. I like to eat cake when I am lonely, it will make me happy and temporarily numb my feeling of loneliness. I never drink, and there will be a lot of brightly colored and oddly shaped wine bottles on the floor of the "corner" because many people choose to drink when they are alone. There are also some people drinking with others, they seem to be very lively atmosphere, in fact, everyone has their own loneliness in their heart. Some of these bottles are still hanging in the air. They are both beautiful, but ugly, which is similar to the feeling of loneliness. There will be some desserts made by myself on the table in the corner of the work, which will interact with the audience. There is no added sugar in these desserts, which will give visitors a different experience. I also put a sound in the work, and the sound plays the audio related to my work. The audience can experience my art works from various angles, such as vision, hearing, touch and taste.