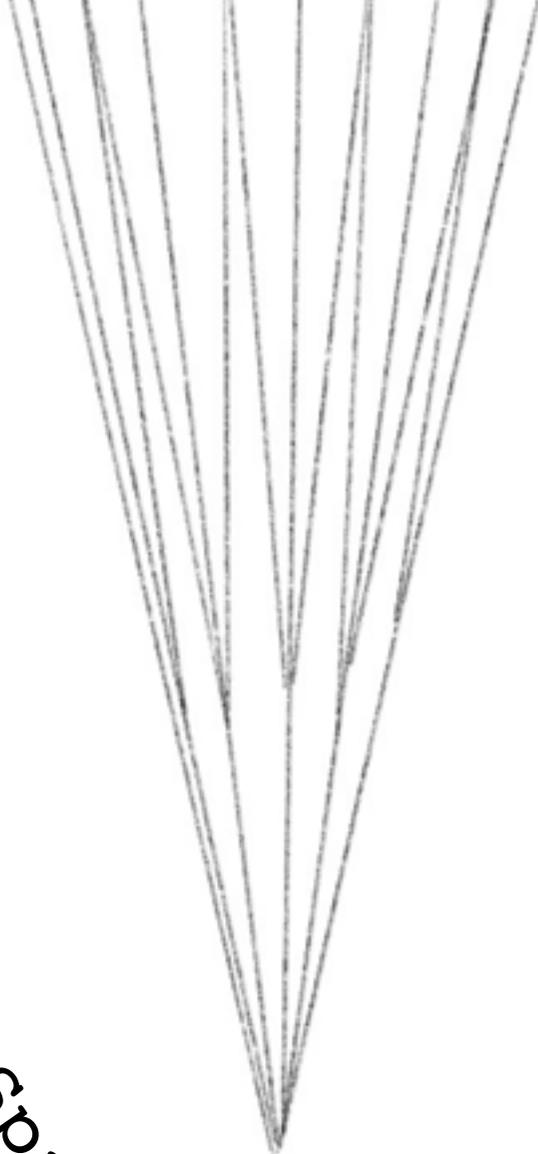


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A Space For

Reconciliation



A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Fine Art in Jewelry & Metalsmithing at the
Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

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Abstract

The environment where I grew up retains some characteristics from The Chinese Cultural Revolution, and still influences my thinking and behavior close to the mainstream and following the rules unconsciously. Contemporary jewelry has affected me to be more critical in a positive way. I want to share this transformative experience with people who have never had contact with contemporary art, which is an alien concept for most Chinese people.

I use jewelry as the medium to express my ideas. But the typical response to my work is "I appreciate your concepts, but I can't accept your pieces." So, how can I find a jewelry form that is both conceptual and acceptable? I will explore this in my thesis.

Introduction

Starting from a simple concern with the monotony of mass-produced jewelry and the exclusivity of contemporary jewelry, I explore the fine line in between, to create work that is both conceptual and accessible.

As if polarized by a difference in values, I see opposing expectations of what connotes a meaningful piece of jewelry among wearers in China from the elder generation to the millennials. For example, I've noticed that my elders, in particular my grandparents, appreciate precious materials with a long history such as gold, silver, jade, and pearl. For people of working age, diamond jewelry is the most popular choice. For youths, exaggerated mass-produced accessories are popular. However, contemporary jewelry barely shows up in daily life. If jewelry, as a means of self-display, represents the values and cultural identity of the wearer, how does this difference arise and can it be modulated through a hybrid form of communication? Through my practice, I build an aesthetic bridge to span generations.

Commercial jewelry factories are a microcosmic version of a well-ordered society. They produce individuals who are accustomed to rules and resistant to change because workers in factories used to following rules and trust the rules. Contemporary jewelry objects are akin to the young rebels of society, rejecting “the normal” to demonstrate individuality. They convey the profound thoughts of artists and provide new perspectives on traditional jewelry forms, which usually requires a background of knowledge in the field to understand it. If a person cannot appreciate the value of the concept, they will view the high price out of line with otherwise nonprecious material. Additionally, the forms of contemporary jewelry are usually exaggerated, making them less-widely accepted and less worn in daily life. There also exists a group of people, in the gap, for whom rebellion is repressed only in public. They appreciate the difference but wish to avoid catching the attention of the majority, broadcasting only in subtle ways. Through my work, I seek to aid in the expression of inclusive attitudes and create a wider—welcoming—space in the gap between.

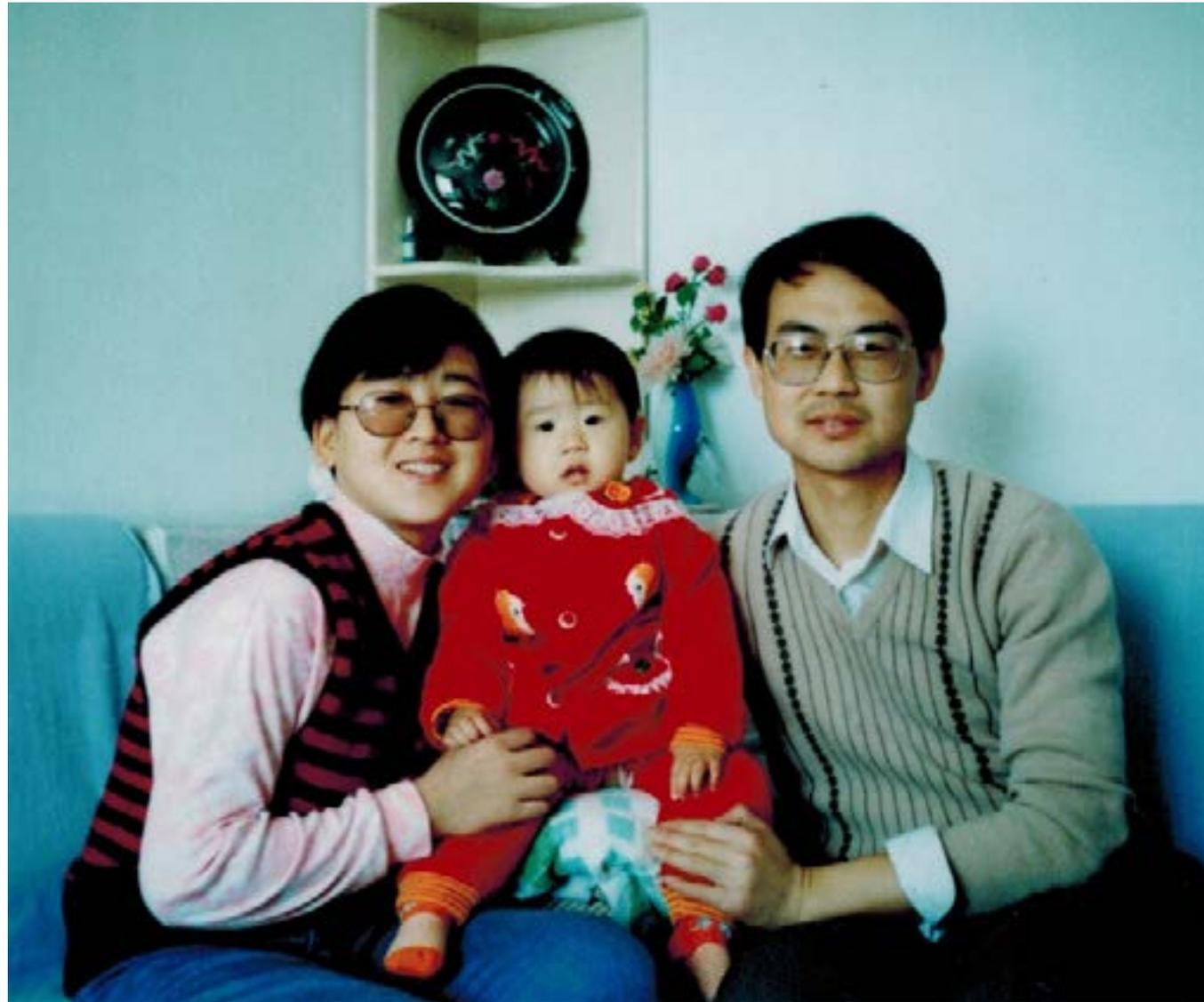
Life Background

I was raised in an environment typical for the molding of the working-class family. In my case, a new developing northern city in China, near Beijing, called Shijiazhuang. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Shijiazhuang was only a small village, but it happened to be the intersection of two important railways, which drove regional development. After the founding of PRC in 1949, the government designated a group of state-owned corporations to relocate and develop the city. Therefore, political decision-making had a great influence in this area. Life was influenced by regulations for work that extended to housing and social behaviors.

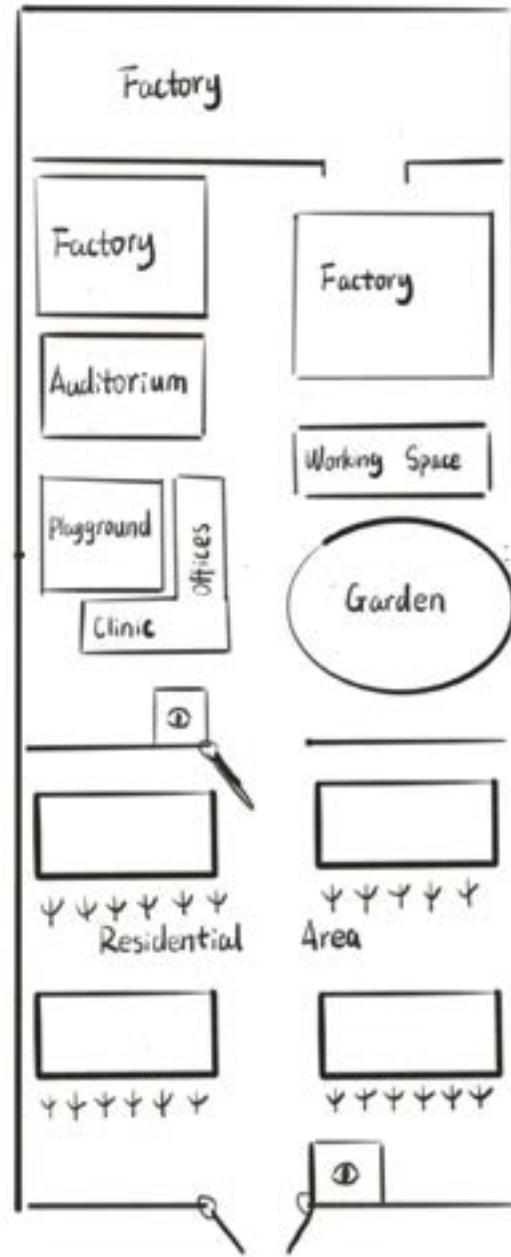
My grandparents' generation lived through the Cultural Revolution [1966-1976] where jobs were assigned by the government and followed directions of the party in everyday life. My parents' generation had more freedom but most people still chose to rely on the government to assign jobs and houses for them. As the third generation of state functionaries, we were assigned to attend the school nearest to the work unit of our parents. After school hours were also spent together with those children whose parents shared the workplace and who also lived within the adjoining housing compound. The internet was not yet widespread, so information was limited from TV shows and broadcasts. People living around the same area shared the same information. Within this tightly enclosed system, we operated with great familiarity.

In the view of my grandparents, a “good” child should be amenable to rules and do what other good kids do. The most common word I heard during my childhood was tinghua, which meant to follow their words. I could live well as long as I remained obedient to my elders and authority figures. Everyday life was repetitious. In the morning, we ate breakfast together. Then my parents went to work and I went to school two bus stops away. After morning class, I went back home to eat lunch with my grandparents and slept for a while. Afternoon classes finished at 5:30 pm, then one more hour of supplementary class for math, Chinese, or English. After dinner, I finished my homework and went to sleep before midnight. During weekends, I studied drawing and English, sometimes writing and dancing, in cram school. Not because we liked these classes, but every student needed to do that.





However, for us, the charm of rules was to break them, but also to avoid notice by parents. In my place of living, the working area and living area were divided by walls and had a gatekeeper beside the iron gating to prevent children getting into the working space during work time. Our recreation after school was to find ways to get through the door without getting caught by the janitor. Our enjoyment came not from getting into that door, but in doing something we were not allowed to do. We did it not for blatant rebellion, only to amuse ourselves and to get peer recognition. It was a secret pleasure that only existed under limitations.

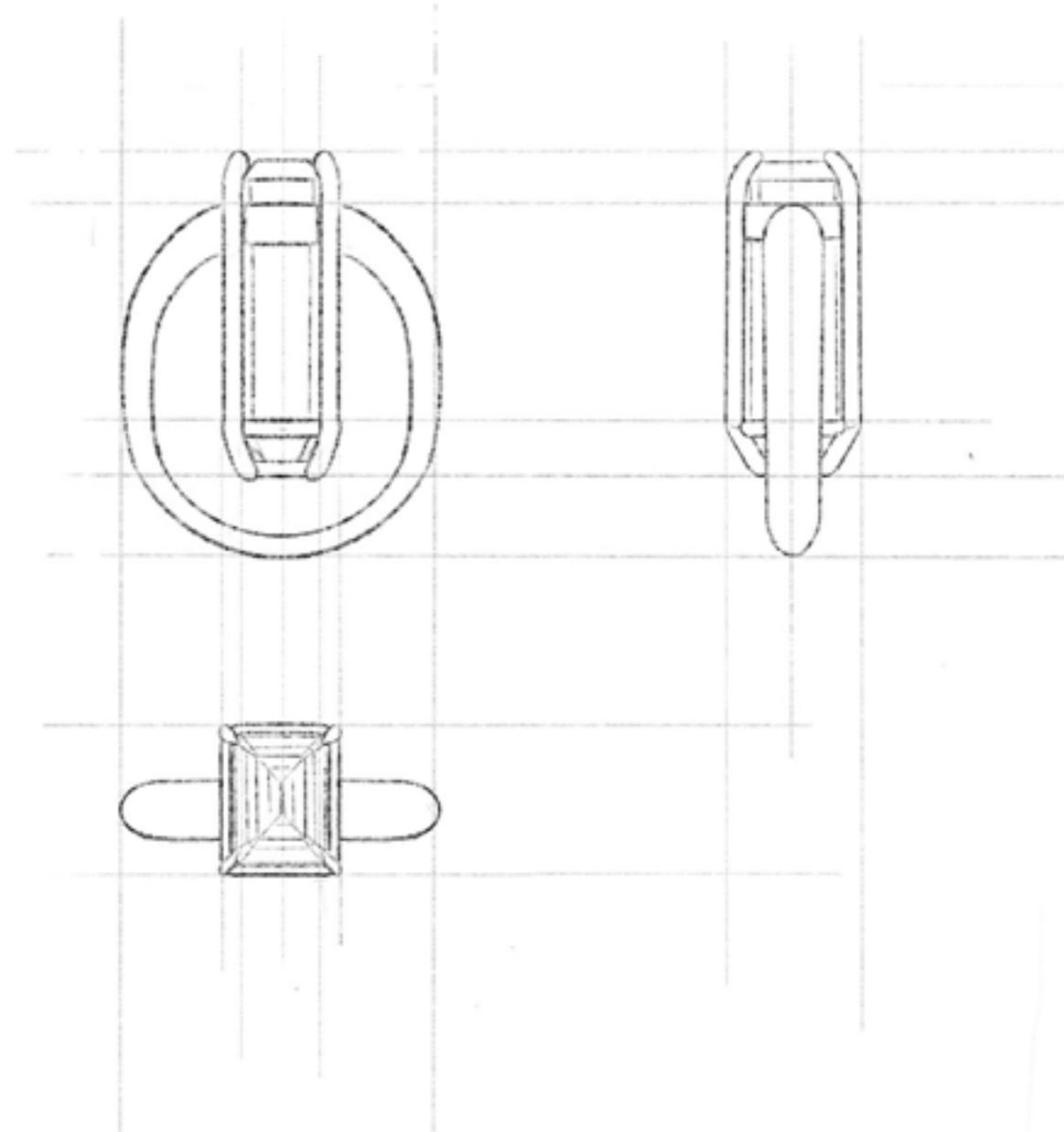


Initial Contact With Contemporary Art

Once a young adult, I moved away from my family to study in a more diversified city, Beijing, which granted more diverse options. I went to the China University of Geosciences to learn jewelry design, which naturally attracted by captivating gemstones. We learned knowledge about the mass production line and how based on their rules to design jewelry fit for factory production. We learned how to identify real and fake gems as well as the cutting proportions to best reflect light. Our designs surrounded limited combinations between gemstones and precious metal. The content of the jewelry design course is about how to make design modifications, rather than create new original designs. If there was a ring in the market with a round main stone in the center and a circle of square stones surrounded, we could draw a square main stone in the center and a circle of round stones as a new design. Or transform a flower-shape into pave with gemstones on paper. I did not enjoy these experiences because I thought computers were better suited for this kind of work. I was eager to find my value as an original-designer.

Even though I found the process of designing modified jewelry forms on paper boring, it fit my conventional understanding of what jewelry should be. I understood design as visual, only aesthetic work until I was introduced to contemporary jewelry by a special professor named Hui Guo. Instead of teaching the original Design Methodology class, he introduced contemporary art to us. The first artist he introduced was Marcel Duchamp [P.1]. Duchamp used a found object to break the normal definition of art. I admired his courage to question both normalcy and authority. His work came down on me like a hammer, cracking my consciousness open. I began to question what rules meant to me. The world needs rules to maintain its order, but when I am accustomed to obedience, I am no longer alert to the rules I follow. Are they necessarily unchangeable? Before I came in contact with contemporary art, I was a rule follower. I viewed normal as normalcy, with no doubts for the rules around me. Viewing my life before this new perspective, it was like living in "The Truman Show". Familiarity was the mantle that created a settled perception for me. In this comfort zone, I lost the alertness of questioning the normalcy of events and was used to following rules that were widely accepted.

However, contemporary jewelry holds a different system from the factory production system that we immersed in. Therefore, all of my classmates struggled with why Ted Noten's work [P.2] is different from ordinary jewelry. It is easy to get confused about what contemporary jewelers were doing without a background of knowledge in contemporary art.



Sketch of *One Perspective Image*



[P.1] Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917



[P.2] Ted Noten, *Ageeth's Dowry Bag*, 1999

Experience with Jewelry Factories

I have visited a jewelry factory that represented the most extreme system of production. It had many rooms arranged in a line with huge glass windows, allowing one to see workers in each focused on different techniques. For example, the polishing room was filled with dozens of people, doing nothing except polishing; and carving room was just for carving. I was enthralled by the factory. An abstract system turned into a real process. Rooms were not arranged by jewelry-making order. A piece of jewelry processed and transformed in a specific order through movement among these rooms. It was as if an invisible hand guided and manipulated the work. Workers and designers trusted and relied on the rules behind them, or we could say, they were controlled by rules.

Factories have an effective system to make the same style of jewelry. They choose a design from the jewelry designer and build a model on a computer for 3D printing. A prototype is then cast to create a model allowing for a press rubber mold. When the rubber mold is done, it would be sent to the workers who focus on wax injection, making it possible to get thousands of the same wax model by injecting wax into the rubber mold. Then these wax models will be transferred to the casting area and arranged on a wax stick as a tree shape to be cast together. Workers cut these pieces of jewelry from the tree and give them to the next polishing process. If the design has stones on it, there are some masters who especially work with stone settings.

Rules create efficiency but are hard to change. Mass-produced jewelry shared similar characteristics under the same rules system.

One Perspective Rings

The main idea One Perspective Rings is that when viewers look at these rings from a specific perspective, they would see the classical figure of an engagement-ring usually shown on advertisements. However, along with the transformation of perspective, the perception of the work would be totally different. When I provide a picture taken in a specific perspective as a popular ring, most people see the complete form in their mind based on experiences, since engagement rings have a formed and common definition known through images and advertising slogans.

This trust placed in the ideal perspective happens not just in jewelry, but is a thinking pattern of most individuals, especially in the Chinese context. There are lots of stereotypical images common to our minds. Building a standard recognition that ignores individual deviations is what I see in the world around me. Value is placed on the average and in the mainstream, planting subconscious thoughts for individuals to follow along.

"In general, mimesis is a process of social formation or social healing: it helps people to develop bonding and submit to the dominant ideology."¹

"It could be seen as an immaculately monotonous world, one full of repetition and imitation. There were clearly people who were out of line with the mainstream, but the price was often too high, and the pressure too intense, for anyone to flaunt difference. Indeed, many displayed very little resistance against the call for uniformity."²

Lasting Effect of The Cultural Revolution

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a sociopolitical movement led by Mao Zedong in China from 1966 to 1976. At this time, people viewed Maoism as the dominant ideology and acted in similarity, according to the code. A highly unified society was built up. The Cultural Revolution is a special period. Even though it has ended many years ago, and I did not experience in my lifetime, I see its influence extending into the present.

Under the mind control of the government, some raised their rebellious spirit, but most of the people kept obedience as their life mode. Many artists created artwork criticizing the Cultural Revolution, such as Ai Weiwei and Zhang Xiaogang. These artists as an oppressed minority became victims of the era. However, for the great majority of the proletariat, the government empowered and supported them. For this group of individuals, they positively received Mao's idea and inherited their thinking habit to educate their offspring.

Slogans are a distinctive form ubiquitous in China. They exist in propaganda, like "Service for the People;" "Listen to the Party, and follow the Party." Many area governments use slogans to forward their policies, like "If you want to get rich, build roads first." Schools use slogans like "Study hard and make progress every day." (Which directly translated as "Good good study, day day up.") These slogans usually have rhymes and catchy tones which easily take root in citizens' minds to make an unobtrusive influence. These several words define a complicated event.

Another phenomenon in the Culture Revolution is the trust of a "model" or mofan, which represents perfection. The government encouraged individuals to view models as their examples to mimic. The person chosen as a mofan was not allowed to have stains in their behaviors and morality of a special standard. For example, proletarians were considered as the highest and purest class at that time, but intellectuals and capitalist classes were evil which should be reformed. Therefore, mofans should own the consciousness to sacrifice themselves for the public at any time, and resist material temptation. Paragons were usually chosen from laborers, and their working figures were printed on posters for massive propaganda. One-dimensional thinking patterns were formed for most people.



中国人民解放军是毛泽东思想大学校

The influence of this period is continued. For example, my grandparents blindly trust advertisements. They believe public media like posters, which would never cheat them. Schools also create a uniformity environment to manage students before college education. Students just need to follow and trust their teachers and rules in school. This administration mode is efficient, but the negative influence is that students might be weak in critical thinking.



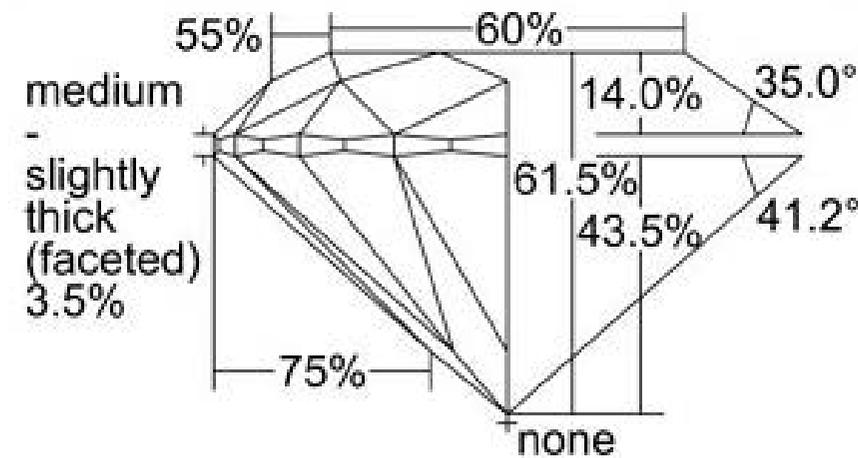
Slogans in Hengshui No.1 High School
Picture from internet

Material and Style Choice

Precious materials and popular jewelry design styles are important resources in my work. Precious materials are bridges for me to connect with customer-based jewelry which is widely accepted.

Faceted gemstones are the most common style used in commercial jewelry design and the figure of diamond is the representative perception of gemstones. Based on the refraction index of diamonds, which is 2.417, diamonds are usually cut in a special proportion to reflect as much light as possible. The classic shape—brilliant round cut, for example-- the ideal table percentage is from 54% to 57% and the ideal depth percentage is 56%-62%. But for gems with different reflective indexes, the cutting proportion should be changed. There is no reason to cut them into this diamond shape. The sparkle of a cut diamond becomes the biggest aim for jewelry. Many materials are used to simulate diamonds. The most basic one is rhinestones, which are made from glass or plastic with a golden foil reflective coating on the back. Cubic zirconia, moissanite, and white sapphires are also common material to substitute for diamonds. The industry continues to pursue materials that are infinitely similar to diamonds. Diamonds become the ideal leader of the jewelry in our minds. The importance of gemstone in fine jewelry is obvious. When we observe those delicate jewelry pieces, all of the metal patterns are support the main gem.

When we see the jewelry development in China, even though there is little tradition about diamonds in Chinese history, this country still became the second-largest market for diamonds in the world in just twenty years. I think this phenomenon has a great relationship to residual thought patterns from the Cultural Revolution. Most people believe that the success of diamonds is from the advertising of the De Beers company. The slogan “Diamond is forever” translated successfully in Chinese and became rooted in people’s minds. Gradually, diamonds became the model for jewelry which represents love, wealth, maintenance of value, loyalty, and beauty. Even if some people couldn’t pay for diamonds, they would rather choose a similar material as diamonds’ replacements. With diamonds as the model of jewelry, diamond sense, which is sparkling, has gradually become the representation of jewelry for the public.



Standard diamond cutting proportion
Picture from GIA certificate

The style I chose to copy and remake are some of the most classical and highest-selling engagement rings with stone settings. The popular style I chose is based on the survey of one of the biggest factories that involves making to selling in Beijing. In that factory, there is a special room for showing wax molds of active demand jewelry pieces. Customers just need to write down the number of the design they want, then the same wax mold could directly be used for casting. In wax mold shelves, the most popular designs are common styles with various choices of the bezel size. A larger number of wax molds of a specific design means it has a wider audience. These rings are popular because it would never be wrong to wear them on almost all of the social occasions. The budget is flexible for buyers according to the size and the quality of stones. Excess parts are removed to meet more consumer's demands.

Jewelry factories have a stable system for mass production. Therefore, massively produced jewelry usually has a narrow traditional style. For example, when I made factory cooperated jewelry, I need to provide three-view drawings for factories. And for some popular jewelry style, sometimes we just need to provide one perspective drawing, and the worker in a factory would know how to do it based on mutual trust in the rules of mass-produced jewelry design.



Workers working in a jewelry factory
Picture from internet



Wax molds ready for casting
Picture from internet

In my making process, I found a traditional jeweler in China to help me cut stone from rough crystal. We had a difficult process of communication at the beginning as we were standing in different positions and holding diverse expectations for jewelry. I prized how to distinguish my work from classical stone shapes to better express my concepts, but he considered more about the function of stones. He had difficulty understanding why I wanted him to cut these forms. He questioned the stone shape that I designed since, the cutting proportions could not reflect the light perfectly and would be hard to wear. Technical obstacles frequently came up in the progression of making my designs practical and real. Throughout the process, I pushed him to do things and make in a way he never had before.

Finally, he said to me: “the stone that I cut for you is really interesting, but unfortunately, it’s hard to wear.” He accepted my concepts but couldn’t appreciate my jewelry forms. To find a wearable format is the goal in the next step.

Conversation With The Stone Cutter:

SC—Stone Cutter

SC: The stone you designed is very special. The girdle of the gem is so thick. I have never made such a thick girdle. I will see if I could make the pavilion in echelon form. I would try about it, but because the girdle is thicker than normal design, the craft would be different. Which pavilion cut of the gem do you prefer? The echelon form or the form you designed?

X: Well, just echelon form.

SC: There are lots of gem cutting forms in this web set. You could choose forms from here, and we could do most of them. You might have some inspiration from those shapes. But what you asked me to do is not suitable for the current technique.

X: How about this?

SC: No. Because it has a sunk area.

X: How about this one?

SC: It works. But the crown is too high, which influences the light reflection. Thus, creates a gray, non-reflective area.

X: Which area?

SC: From the edge of the table to the margin. I mean all area except table of the gem.

X: Ok.

SC: All brilliant round cutting facets are from the most optimal optical design.

X: How about this one?
Would it be dark in the center?

SC: Generally, crown height accounts for about 15% of the diameter. I have the light simulation in my CAD. I'll show you. For good designs, light will be totally reflected. If the pavilion is too high, light would escape. Through my experiment with the material, this cut will elongate the pavilion which will create a sharper culet that is easily broken.

X: It's fine. I don't mind.

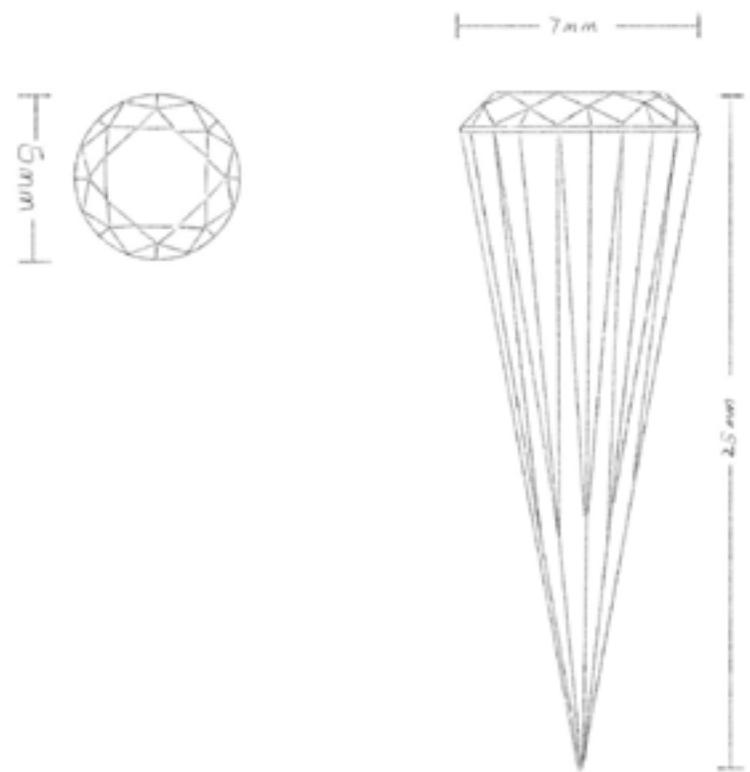
SC: Ok. I'll try. This kind of stone with long pavilion and long gird is a kind of torture. What we lapidaries care about is to display the gem's luminosity at its fullest through our hands.

SC: I have done the crown part, but the pavilion can't be reached. When grinding the pavilion part, I need to glue the crown on a stick. However, the crown is too small but the pavilion is big, which lead gem wax easily broken. The diameter should go up to 2mm, or remind 2mm's girdle.

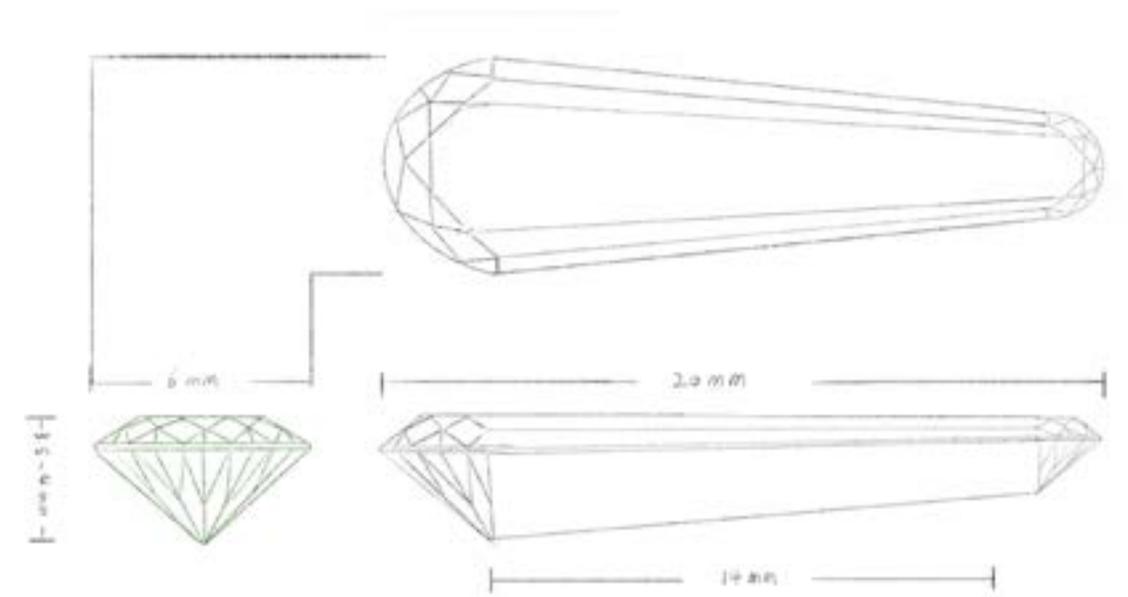
X: Ok, I prefer the thicker girdle.

SC: Ok.

SC: The gem you want me to cut with long pavilion I have already done, which is really interesting. I will send you a video tomorrow.



The main stone's sketch of
One Perspective Image—Elongate 2



The main stone's sketch of
One Perspective Image—Elongate 1









TOP VIEW *One Perspective Image—Separate*, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal, Ring, 2019



SIDE VIEW *One Perspective Image—Separate*, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal, Ring, 2019





SIDE VIEW *One Perspective Image—Split, Sterling Silver, CZ, Ring, 2019*



TOP VIEW *One Perspective Image—Split, Sterling Silver, CZ, Ring, 2019*

Reconciliation & Juxtaposition

Living in society, especially in China, we have to reconcile identity into the group under collectivism. Sacrificing individuality for the uniformity sounds like a sad story, but I do not think personality is lost in this condition, especially for the younger generation. Instead, they express themselves implicitly. What interests me is how individuals develop compromising approaches in positioning themselves into a collective condition. Creativity is generated when people try to find a balance between breaking limitations and integrating themselves into the community.

The education method in most Chinese schools is exam-oriented. Standards exist everywhere especially in the period from elementary school to high school. There are not only standard answers for tests but also standards exist for students. Lots of rules serve that standardized and unified environment. Here are some rules I translated from the student handbook of my high school:

- Using mobile phones on the campus, including in the dormitory is forbidden
- Wearing slippers on campus is not allowed
- Smoking and drinking on campus is forbidden
- Students have to wear uniforms in the teaching area
- Wearing accessories is not allowed, including rings, earrings, brooches, necklaces, pendants or bracelets
- Hair dye and perm is not allowed
- Fringe haircut of female students cannot pass over the eyebrows
- Female students with long hair should tie their hair up
- The hair length of male students should not be longer than a finger thickness
- Zipper of the uniform should be higher than the second button of inside clothes
- Loving affair is not allowed
- Cheating in the test is forbidden
- Leaving school without permission is not allowed
- Contradicting teachers is not allowed
- Running, playing and shouting in the classroom or hallway is not allowed
- Going to the toilet without permission during the class is not allowed
- Talking during class time is not allowed
- Talking, having lights on, not being in bed after the sleeping horn is not allowed
- Going to toilet within 30 mins after sleeping horn is not allowed.
- Staying at dormitory after leaving horn is not allowed
- Leaving personal stuff on beds and public area is not allowed
- Returning to dormitory during class breaks is not allowed
- ...

In some grand school events, like sports meetings or radio gymnastic competitions, each class usually shows up in cube-shaped teams. For orderliness, students too tall or too short are mostly excluded from the team. Schools are trying to blur personal identities, because the main idea of communism is to eliminate the gap, and they believe students would free themselves from comparing their dress, and pay more attention to studying.

Under this manipulation, self-expression may have smaller voices but still exists, which turns into an obscure way. For example, some teenagers dye their inner hair in different colors. In school, they will not catch the teachers' attention. But after school, they could tie up the upper hair to show the difference. And some students give some small visual improvement of uniforms for a better outline.

Jewelry As The Medium

Jewelry is the form that I use to express ideas because I have been working with jewelry for six years and familiar with its language. The reason that jewelry always attracts me is jewelry is a portable art form compared to sculpture or painting. Differing from garments, it has a dispensable function, which makes it stronger to transmit personal values.

There exist two large field of jewelry, which is commercial jewelry and contemporary jewelry. These two formats are abstractly representing two different culture identities for me. Commercial jewelry is more like a person positioning oneself as a member of society; relatively, contemporary jewelry represents personal expressions. I have worked in both fields. Commercial is mainly focused on visual attraction and production costs, so the formats are confined. Contemporary jewelers like to break traditional stereotypes of jewelry and use more liberal ways to express their personal ideas, but the audience for contemporary jewelry art is limited. These two systems are constructed by contrary rules. If a person has accepted a particular rule system, they are easily blocked from seeing the other side.

Both of these formats are not in total the form I want. I aim to make jewelry for most people living in conformity to tell them you are unique. Even if you are not striking in a group; even if you share some common characteristics with other individuals, you are special. Therefore, I am trying to find a way which could balance uniformity and personality. The method I use is to permeate rules of the mass production jewelry field and contemporary jewelry field into each other.

An artist who holds a similar idea is named Gijs Bakker, the co-founder of Chi ha Paura, which is a gallery in Italy showing works of conceptual design jewelry. He claims that a good piece of jewelry is not only decorative accessories,³ and aims to bridge the gap between the world of design and the world of contemporary art.⁴ From his observation, design jewelry and contemporary jewelry are two strictly separated areas. His ultimate goal is jewelry designers would always originate from a concept and take it as the starting point to make design and result in products.⁵

Some people need to narrow the gap between the mainstream to make them seem more approachable, by wearing similar clothes and jewelry. To serve integrative roles, they present similar characteristics, which give users a sense of belonging.⁶ For people who appreciate differences, but also want to be included by the group, there is little choice for them in jewelry.

Body of Work

My work *Reconciliation & Juxtaposition* provides a modest choice for people who struggle with showing personalities in a unified group. Stark differences can make us feel nervous, but small changes which happen in a comforting way can gradually help us to build the courage to demonstrate difference.

This series of work is separated into two parts: *Reconciliation* shows various possibilities that extend from mass produced rings. Ring bands and faceted stones in this group of works are ready-made products with “jewelry” hallmarks, representing the general impression of most people that are similar in a community. I then create and intervention with the form by carving and bonding rock crystal onto the mass-produced stones. This emulates the components growing together, exemplifying personal characteristics under a unified collective. Mass-produced parts provide efficiency and familiarity with recognizable forms. Both characteristics together result in reaching a wide audience. I plan to find factories to assist me in the making process in the future, to make this set of work produced and accessible for the public.

In the work *Juxtaposition*, I carve the main stone from a whole piece of rock crystal. The central part is the form of a cabochon. Each ring is attached to different growing shapes from the central stone in various boldness, from small and unnoticed attachments to bigger and more striking attachments. I want to provide different choices for my audiences to choose by themselves about how much distinctiveness they feel comfortable to show to the public.

After making this ring piece, I asked the stonecutter that I worked with before about his response. He said: “It looks very nice” “Make my eyes brightened” and “Of course I could accept it”. In the past, I was afraid to talk about my work with my family members. Even when I tried my best to explain what I was doing, there still existed a gap between our conversation. This time they could easily accept my work. When I showed this piece to my grandmother, she said: “I am pleased and not flattering you, kid, you did a good job!”



Juxtaposition 1, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal Ring, 2020





Juxtaposition 3, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal Ring, 2020



Juxtaposition 4, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal Ring, 2020





Reconciliation 1, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal, Topaz, CZ, Ring, 2020



Reconciliation 2, Sterling Silver, Rock Crystal, Topaz, CZ, Ring, 2020

Conclusion

I grew up in the Chinese environment where personal actions are mostly influenced by the group, then later studied in America which encourages personal expression. I was perplexed about my identity during the cultural transformation. Contemporary jewelry helped me to find my personal identity, which has had a great influence on my life.

I used to put myself in a non-important position because a unified group doesn't need too much personal voice. Rules provide the most energy in a collective system. It seems like an unseen power exists in China, pushing people to reach the group admitted standards. There would be verbal attacks and social isolation if a person deviated from the mainstream. Mostly, opposing ideas from the mainstream would be considered as wrong, instead of as a new contribution. I am a replaceable element in this situation because the rules are the most important part of this system instead of individuals.

Jewelry is one of many reflections of culture. I learned traditional jewelry design language and use them to express contemporary jewelry ideas. In this process, my position has gradually shifted from replaceable to irreplaceable, because commercial jewelry is based on customer preferences while contemporary jewelry values more about private opinions. I am constantly discovering myself through making contemporary jewelry, also getting power from jewelry to express concepts.

In the work One Perspective Image, I express the phenomena of subconscious trust in normative standards and ideal images under the influence of The Chinese Cultural Revolution. Concurrently, I convey my concepts to the public in an acceptable jewelry format.

I appreciate the core idea about contemporary jewelry, which provides a way for me to express, and encourages me to understand my peculiarity. The form of contemporary jewelry, though, is too aggressive and not well suitable goals. When I depart from the traditional art area and try to get into the contemporary art field, it is as if a glass wall exists between me and the contemporary jewelry. I could see it, could mimic it, but I couldn't get into it. Then I started trying to find a way in between to help me get over that barrier.

So, I turned back to my life background. I found that even though critical ideas are showing up much more than fifty years ago in China, most of them are just surrounding on the edges. How to make my ideas really get into the public instead of being screened when I lack the power to have a big influence? There is an art of the "mean," which means compromise. Compromise doesn't mean "disappear." As the old saying goes in China: "Over rigid is easy to break." I want my ideas to permeate to my audiences in a persisted process. The work Reconciliation and Juxtaposition the first step that I attempted to answer the above question. The strategy of injecting conceptual content into conventional formats allows jewelry to act a medium to engage the masses, and in doing so, wcause a change in how the public perceives rules and standards.

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to my RISD Professors:

Timothy Veske-McMahon, Lauren Fensterstock, Barbara Seidenath,
Seth Papac, Tracy Steepy, Lori Talcott, Noam Elyashiv,
Anne West& Peter Carney

Special thanks to:

Brian Bergeron, Johan Van Aswegen,
Yuxin Long, Hannah Oatman, Steven Kaplan-Pistiner, Meiqi Luo,
Zhiqing Guo, Cathryn Jasterbzski, Jiayi Lao, Valerie James,
Diya Wang, Haotian Yang, Yue Jiang, Danni Xu, Qin Xu, Talya Kantro,
Zhe Zhang.

Thanks dearest Mom& Dad; my Grandparents

Thank you for your persistent support and encouragement!

