

MIAO XIAOCHUN ARTIST STATEMENT

Restart, 2008-2010

3D animation, 14 min 22 sec

Miao Xiaochun (16 March, 2010)

On the title page of his Missa Solemnis, Beethoven added to the tempo directions "From the heart-may it reach the heart." I hope so for my work.

I

The development of perspective and shading in the Renaissance period is critical to the development of European paintings. Perspective and shading offer unprecedented visual experiences to people at that time. In the following hundreds of years, almost all European artists use perspective and shading to paint. When photography was invented, it became easy to achieve the vividness that perspective and shading can accomplish, and this is why photography had a huge impact on paintings. However, this vividness is based on an objective world. If there is no object world, there is no photography; and this restrains people's imaginations. The development of computer virtual technology allowed us to create a virtual world with software. By using software, we can achieve the same degree of vividness as perspective and shading. This is a magical world where you can accomplish almost all the things that you can think of. Here, our imagination is boundless.

When we look back at paintings of the Renaissance period, whether artists excelled the utilization of perspective and shading is no longer the only criterion to judge their techniques. It is reported that once an artist painted a piece of realistic cloth on a canvas and people actually wanted to lift it to look at the painting underneath and realized that the cloth itself is the painting. Nowadays, only a few people remember this painting and the painter. Similarly, photographs can show everything in perfect detail; this is impressive but it might not be able to touch us deeply.

I don't know what kind of innovative image technology will appear in the future to make today's state-of-the-art film technology pale and obsolete. Is what we are doing today wasted efforts? What are the most important elements of art? How many factors does

art have? How can I do it well?

I want to restart!

II

Just like the sun that rises every morning, I wish to do things that I have done well and not so well over and over again; I wish to start my life and my art from the beginning. I don't understand the meaning of life when I only live in this world for once, and I cannot achieve perfection when I only create art for once. Life is transient, and I feel tired physically and mentally; half of my lifetime is gone and I don't even understand anything. We are revitalized only after a night of good sleep. If death is like sleeping, and we could regain our lives someday, will we understand more and perform better?
I really want to start from the beginning!

III

This series of artworks are still from the art history:

The Triumph of Death by Pieter Bruegel. I imagine the scene in Bruegel's painting to be a scene for movie shooting, and "I" am the director, the cameraman and the log keeper. This death scene is being shot and appreciated again. This way, death is not only seen as conquering life; when death is presented in literature and artworks once and again, its power has been strengthened once and more. We not only experience real visible death - this does not happen every day; we can also experience death of previous generations, death of faraway countries. Virtual death - this can be presented to our eyes every day through movies or televisions.

The School of Athens and Parnassus by Raphael. I imagine the school of Athens to be full of tree leaves, from bright yellow to dark green to dried yellow, then to withering; and the sculptures are breaking and falling apart. Certain thoughts and certain religions once occupied people's hearts, but this will not be forever. Once people give up these thoughts and religions, everything collapses and falls apart.

The Seven Deadly Sins by Pieter Bruegel. When I first saw these seven unforgivable sins, I thought I have all seven of them and I am too sinful that I should probably go to hell. It is too easy to have these sins: take gluttony as an example, it is very difficult to

control the appropriate amount to eat. Take pride as another example, an artist like me who always seeks fame and wealth obviously has this sin, and it is almost impossible not to have it.

The Fall of the Rebel Angels by Pieter Bruegel. So we all have the feeling of floating and drifting unsteadily, even for angels, let alone the ordinary me.

Burial at Ornans by Gustave Courbet and *The Raft of the Medusa* by Theodore Gericault. North Pole: a world of ice and snow. There are two pieces of floating ice like the twin towers; two penguins break the floating ices; an airplane flew by with a cameraman and sound engineer in it to record this scene. A group of people rise and fall in the sea. There is another group of people on the iceberg and the composition is like Gustave Courbet's *Burial at Ornans* where penguins pass through these people. Floating ices; floating iceberg; and the floating Raft of the Medusa.

The Story of Nastagio degli Onesti (second episode) and *The Punishment of Korah* by Sandro Botticelli. Here, the story and the punishment are not important anymore, they are not even in my image because they have changed completely.

I can start over again!

IV

New media is different from traditional media, but it does not mean there is no relation between new media and traditional media. Since *Microcosm*, I started to purposely "push" new media back into traditional media. That's why I tried ink (Chinese painting), drawing and embroidery. In my new works, I tried oil paintings, copperplate and wood engraving. I will gradually experiment with other traditional media as well. Of course, all these experiments are based on the characteristics of new media.

I must start over again!