Crafting Desire

Queering the Artefact

CONTENT

The Normal World

To my younger self, Judy, in love.

Her World Without Her

Twenty-five years ago, Judy was born in Taipei, Taiwan. As the first child of her parents, she entered the world with all kinds of wishes from the family. Little did Judy know that the world she was about to live in, had already determined her role in it, as well as her name, identity, and future. She was raised commonly, just like other kids at that time. The only special was Judy's mom. She is a Hakka, a minority ethnic in Taiwan. Hakka people are known for being extremely frugal, hard-working, and self-disciplined. Judy's mom is no exception. She taught Judy to behave well all the time, tightening herself not to disappoint or disobey other people.

Judy learnt to be a good girl by being obedient and careful in childhood. Whenever she made mistakes or said something against her mom, she got punished corporally. Her social reality was then built up entirely based on surrendering. "Girls must behave like girls," Judy heard this at home, at school, in the tale books she read. She was willing to do anything to make her mom happy; however, she gradually felt uncomfortable with what she had been asked to do. As simple as wearing a dress or putting on hairpins. Judy wanted to wear cargo shorts and cool sneakers, but she never dared to tell her mom. "Those are for boys," she convinced herself to give up the idea.

The struggle between Judy and her world

became more and more aggressive as time went by. She felt drowned. When her parents sent her to a private junior high school, the situation got worse. Judy had a hard time in school. She was bullied and isolated because she acted 'weird', which means good at sport and didn't talk about boys like other teenage girls. Her classmates hated her; her teachers wanted to correct her. Judy met the darkest point in her life. When Judy looked into the mirror, she didn't see herself. Instead, she saw everyone surrounding her shaking their head, including her mom.

Still, Judy didn't give up trying to align with other people in the world. She was eager to grab a rope to save herself from drowning. Luckily, the magic happened. In 2005, the film 'Brokeback Mountain' directed by Ang Lee, won three awards at Oscar Academy Awards, including the Best Director. The winning news was widespread in Taiwan, and that was when Judy learnt the word 'homosexual' for the first time. Judy has been obsessed with gay and lesbian movies ever since. She watched Saving Face (2004), The World Unseen (2007), Sea Purple (2008), Prayers for Bobby (2009), and so on. Judy didn't know if she is homosexual or not at the moment, but she was happy to see someone that behaved the way she wanted to. Someone like her who didn't appear in real life.
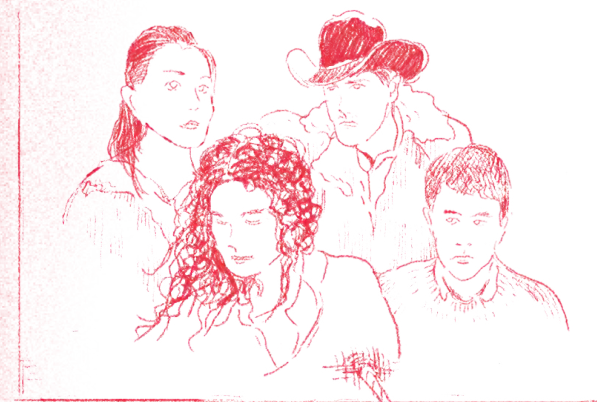
Judy hid her joy and pleasure about the LGBT movies secretly. Since this was the only way, she felt connected, free, and alive. She didn't want it to be ruined. Judy understood that she was doomed to deal with reality harshly. But, she found an alternative way to socialise, to ascertain the world through films. She named the world she could not fit into 'the normal world' and the film collectives 'the secret world of joy.'

Apparently, 'the normal world' was a world that didn't need her.

Undesirable Desire

It took Judy more than a decade to fully accept that she is only attracted to females. However, she still pretended to be interested in males whenever the others brought up the topic. Because Judy knew 'the normal world' had no room for homosexuality and her realness. Even in the perfect life her mom had portrayed: marrying a decent man, having a son to continue the bloodline of her last name, were undesirable to Judy, but she remained silent. Because on the other hand, Judy was an undesirable daughter since no parents wanted their kids to be homosexual.

Judy decided to keep the secret with her

into the grave. Unfortunately, you can't use paper to wrap up fire[1]. Judy's parents found out about her sexuality. A family war was inflamed. Actually, not so much a war as a struggle session[2]. Every single part of Judy was a target of humiliation. Judy never stands out for herself, and this time was no exception. She didn't dare to infuriate anyone ever again. So, Judy ended up saying that it was all her fault and lying that she would try harder to be with males. Judy had no choice but to lie to avoid seeing a psychiatrist for treatment her mom demanded to. No one knew that Judy could no longer face herself. She was not only dishonest to everyone but even herself. She

had drowned again, knowing that she had to carry this guilt forever.

In Taiwanese Han-Chinese culture, inheriting from Confucianism, obeying parents and elder relatives unconditionally is the priority of a younger generation. In Judy's family, they took this relationship seriously, leaving no possibility for negotiation. Tolerating is considered a virtue and mandatory. Judy must follow the path her parents want her to. She still communicated with her 'secret world of joy,' even so, the unfair fight between Judy and 'the normal world' didn't give her a rest. Judy is not a liar, but she became a con artist to survive. Judy didn't

have ownership of her life at this time. She was just a projection, a container of other people's wishful thinking.

1
紙包不住火。Mandarin Chinese idiom, meaning the truth cannot be concealed; it will be revealed in the end.

2
批 鬥。A form of public humiliation and torture used during the Cultural Revolution（文化大革命）in China. In general, the victim of a struggle session was forced to admit various crimes, being abused verbally and physically until they confessed.
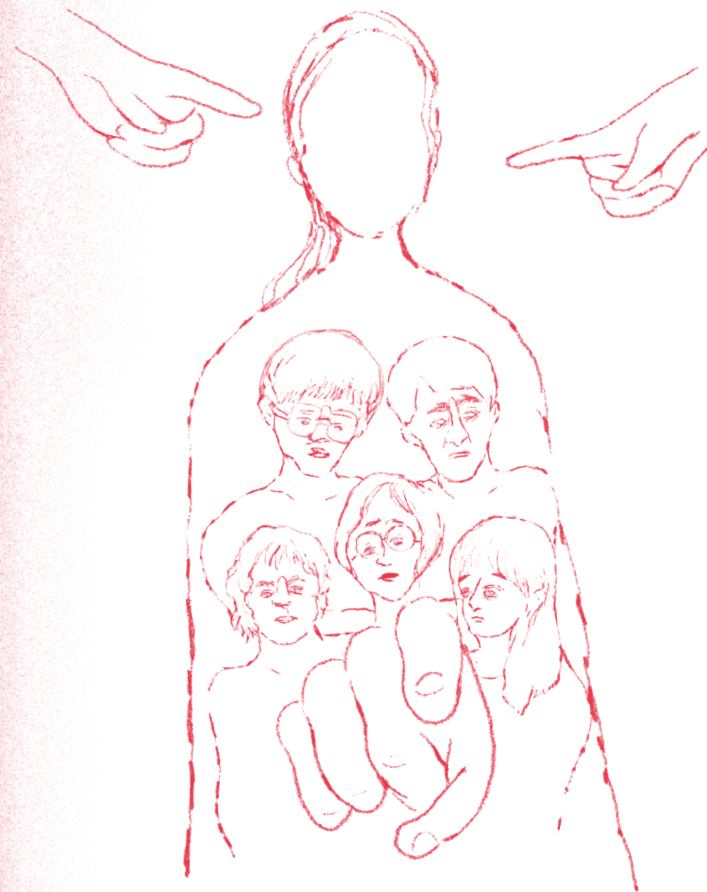
The Patriarchal Box

'Freak,' Judy heard this word a lot. It was particularly hurtful when she heard it from people close to her. 'The normal world' required Judy to fit in the box of gender roles. Instead of being energetic and athletic, Judy was asked to be quiet and meek. Attitude, expression, stereotype, normativity, box over box over box over box. Judy strived as much as possible to fit in the boxes. However, no matter how hard she tried, she was still unlike other girls. People saw a freak pretending to be normal rather than a regular person crushing herself. Judy could feel the unfriendly gazes from others even though she was just a walking dead. She was spiritless but yet emotional. Judy was crying inside without others' notice.

How can Judy feel alive if 'the normal world' had only one absolute standard? Sexism, homophobia, and things outside the patriarchal box were mysterious but aberrant. People were unable to perceive nor envision outside the box. Judy was no exception. She lived in the cage while her genuineness was outside; therefore, she was blind to herself.
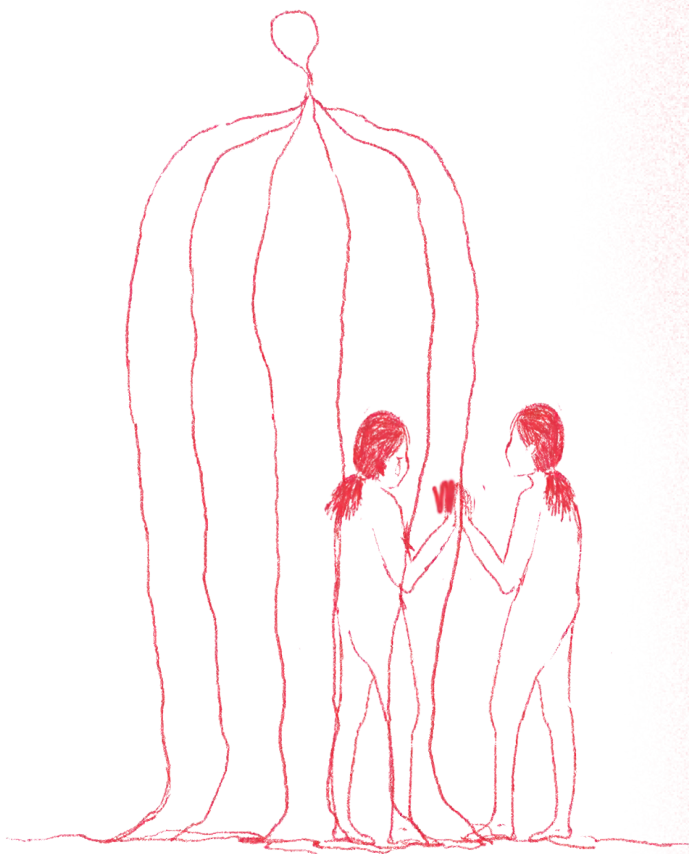
The box blocked the fluidity between norm and queerness. Slang and attacks came in to stay while the tears and heartache from inside had no way out. Judy's box was overloaded, but the outside force was too powerful to escape. Over time, Judy just surrendered and let herself drown. But it was not completely hopeless. Judy acknowledged that as early as 2001, a place called The Netherlands had legalised same-sex marriage. This was huge to Judy. She started to imagine a wonderful world full of diversity. People can love who they love, to be who they want to be. Judy sees The Netherlands as a place with opportunities; maybe she will find acceptance, freedom,

and herself that she could not find here, there.

In the end, Judy's dream came true. She was successfully accepted into a Dutch academy in 2020. Judy, now Rising, is moving on to the next chapter of her life, 'the real world of joy'.

The Material World

Material world, all things matter.

Artefacts are Containers

The material world offers a vital framework for the formation of collective memory (Jones, 2007)[1]. In this regard, artefacts can be seen as the containers of concepts, especially in light of the fact what we think reflects the objects we make, choose, and use – in other words, our mind is inseparable from objects. Furthermore, there are two ways of containing: one is through the design of artefacts, the other is through their name.

Design can be seen as both the process and the result of this intentional making. For example, artefacts enable to cultivation of a physical group attitude depending on the usage intent. Take clothes, for instance.

Cargo pants were initially designed as military workwear, and thus is a reflection of radical, utilitarian, and practical needs underlying its conception. Even though it later became a consumer item and was utilised in scenarios apart from those it was originally intended for, the idea and notion of 'carrying tools with the wearer' have been adopted alongside the uptick in use of this garment. Moreover, as a result, the represented military theme was still visible and linked to the cargo pants without further explanation.

Name is another means for artefacts to carry messages immaterially, as the names we give to objects demonstrates our

relationship with them. In this case, how language is constructed is highly influential in naming something; I want to elaborate on this by taking the word-building system in Traditional Chinese as an example. As the only logogram still being used, Traditional Chinese characters contain inherent meaning in their written nature. This means the original concepts of the word is preserved even as it develops: 'The image and structure of hieroglyphs reflect the ancients' understanding of the laws of the world' (Du, 2016)[2]. The characters are the symbolised version of the material culture in Traditional Chinese (Fig.1).

角 ㄐㄧㄠˇ

這是一個象形字，像一隻割下來的獸角，角上還有天然的紋理。《易經》：「羝角觸藩，羸(ㄌㄟˊ，困住)其角。」。「角」又是古代的酒器名和樂器名。

Fig.1 ' 角 ' is a hieroglyph. The cut-off animal horns with natural texture. ' 角 ' is the name of the ancient wine vessel.

Further, we must acknowledge that the theory above is not universal. For example, the differences in naming patterns across languages, at least within the domain of artefacts, is not characterised by a single type of relation (Malt & Sloman & Gennari, 2002)[3]. However, it is sufficient to conclude that the entanglement between artefacts and cognition is intertwined through design and names alone.

1
Jones, A. (2007). *Memory and material culture. Cambridge University* Press.

2
「象形字的形象與結構體現著古人對世界規律的理解。」
杜婷 (2016) *漢字的形象化精神與內涵*（碩士論文・大連工業大學）Du, T. (2016). *The Spiritual Visualization and Connotation of Chinese Characters. (Master's thesis, Dalian Polytechnic University)*.

3
Malt, B. C., Sloman, S. A., Gennari, S., Shi, M., & Wang, Y. (1999). Knowing versus naming: Similarity and the linguistic categorization of artifacts. *Journal of Memory and Language, 40*(2), 230-262.

Artefacts Pass Down Ideology

Since artefacts are not absolute nor are they neutral, but rather contain particular intentions, especially given the physical objects we encounter in our daily life play a role in shaping our minds and our relations to them. Thus, the material world affects how we see the world, ourselves, and others. The inferential concept of physical objects assisting human cognition to map out conceptual ideas was previous researched in various strands, including linguistics, psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, anthropology, etc. From these past undertakings, two influential theories have been gleaned—George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's 'Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)' and Vittorio Gallese's

'Embodied Simulation Theory (EST)'—which have embraced the thesis of 'embodiment' (Coëgnarts, 2017)[4].

In the diagram (Fig.2) depicted by Coëgnarts which has combined the perspectives of CMT and EST into a unified model, physical objects are taken as the medium and the provider in the system connecting the physical and mental worlds. "Cognition is not simply a computational process, but a biological phenomenon with a firm grounding in bodily, social and cultural experience" (Coëgnarts, 2017). The embodied experience with objects, such as definitions, relationships, gestures, interactions, habits, rituals, etc.,

are generated in reaction to humanity's encounters with these artefacts, with our responses being the way through which we construct our understanding of the world. Material culture is subsequently formed when such reactions pervade.
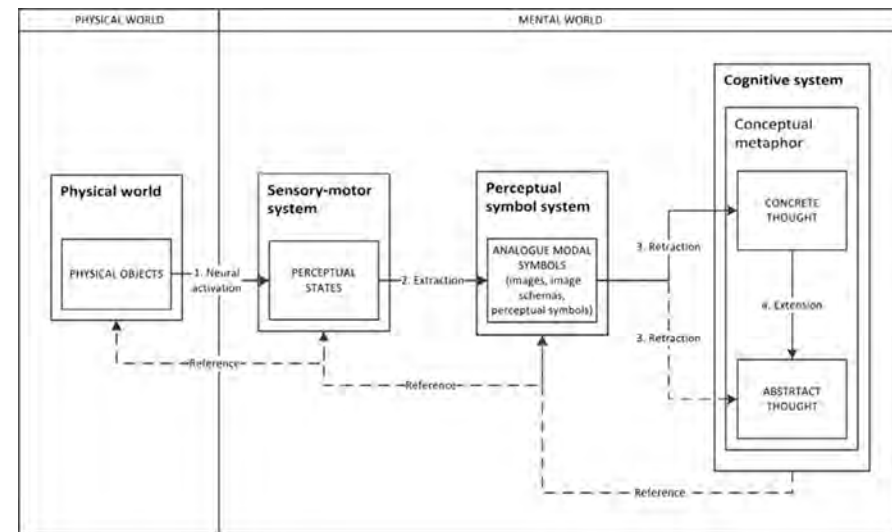

Fig.2 'Embodied cognitive science' (Coëgnarts, 2017)

4
Coëgnarts, M. (2017). Cinema and the embodied mind: metaphor and simulation in understanding meaning in films. *Palgrave Communications*, 3(1), 1-15.

"The term 'material culture' emphasises how apparently inanimate things within the environment act on people, and are acted upon by people, for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human activity" (Woodward, 2007)[5]. In the Han-Chinese cultural context, the social functions focus on '規矩' (rules, regulations). "The '規矩' cogitation has been rooted for a long time. The concept gradually extended from the standardised specifications of making and measuring artefacts to the guidelines and laws [of] life" (Feng, 2011)[6]. Thus, the intentions of the artefacts were more about rule, order (Luo, 1997)[7], and domination (Liu, 1990)[8]. We are just blank canvases when we are born, but as time goes by, our embodied experiences with artefacts imprint on us these passed-down thoughts in our heads. Through material, we absorb our thoughts.

Language also participates in the cognitive process. Again, take Traditional Chinese for example; the names of artefacts provide a direct reference point, in addition to also including the ancient worldview through Chinese characters. Thus, language enhances the influence of this system (Fig.2, with research also supporting this sub-conclusion in other linguistic contexts. For example, languages that utilize gender grammatically have the power to bias

people's memory and descriptions of objects alongside affecting people's ratings (Phillips & Boroditsky, 2003)[9]. Meanwhile, languages that utilize honorific speech, such as Japanese and Korean, display rigorous respect toward things relating to their belief system.

5
Woodward, I. (2007). *Understanding material culture. Sage.*

6
「『 規矩』之觀念根深柢固已久，它從製作、測量器物的標準規範，逐漸衍伸至生活上之行事準則與法度。」馮金山 *(2011)《說文解字》中呈現之「規矩」文化現象研究* （碩士論文， 國立屏東教育大學）Feng, J.S. (2011). *The Culture of Propriety Found in the Shuowen Jiezi.* (Master's thesis, National Pingtung University of Education).

7
羅彩雲 (1997) *台灣傳統紅眠床之研究－以中部地區爲例*（碩士論文，國立雲林科技大學） Luo, T.Y. (1997). *A Study of the Traditional "Red Sleep Bed" in Taiwan - with Mainly in the Areas of Central Taiwan.* (Master's thesis, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology)

8
劉君燦 (2016)。 *談科技思想史*。明文書局。
Liu, J.Y. (2016). *Talk About The History of Scientific and Technological Thought.* Ming-Wun Book.

9
Phillips, W., & Boroditsky, L. (2003). Can quirks of grammar affect the way you think? Grammatical gender and object concepts. In *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society* (Vol. 25, No. 25).

Case Study:
The Red Sleep Bed (紅眠床)

As a Han（漢）/Hakka（客家）Taiwanese, I had experienced the material world by adopting the habits and rituals surrounding our cultural artefacts. Specifically, in Taiwanese tradition, family values are always the most important, with the strong connection and united spirit of family being a lifelong duty. In my family, we possess artefacts like the ' 尫架桌 (ang-kè-toh)[10]' and ' 神主牌仔 (sîn-tsú-pâi-á)[11]' (Fig.3) to ensure that our ancestors and deities remain with us. These objects represent more than just the family members we will forever memorialise: they are also the guardians who ' 保庇 ' (protect and bless) you, and the surveillance who watches over you. Like we say in Taiwanese, " 人咧做 天咧看 (the ruler in the sky is watching what you are doing)," you just have to be careful of your actions.

10
尫架桌 (ang-kè-toh)
The table we put religious props on and worship around. As you can see in Fig.3, the one in my home is multireligious. The figure in the drawing is ' 觀世音菩薩 (Guanyin)', a Buddhist bodhisattva. But the rest, including the rituals, follow Taoism traditions.

11
神主牌仔 (sîn-tsú-pâi-á)
A placard that used to designate the seat of a deity or past ancestor. The one at my home has ' 堂上賴姓歷代祖考妣之神位 (The god seat for generations of ancestors in Lai's family)' written in the middle.

Fig.3 尪架桌 (ang-kè-toh) and 神主牌仔 (sîn-tsú-pâi-á) at my home in Taiwan

Family is the cornerstone of our society. The form, rules, and core of our family values are based on Confucianism (儒 教). In Confucianism, "the family as one body in harmony" is the highest ideal, and the way we maintain that harmony is "being kind as a father, following filial piety as a son (父慈 子孝)," "being friendly as an elder brother, being respectful as a younger brother (兄 友弟恭)," and "being genial as a husband, being meek as a wife (夫 和 妻 柔)." Thus, following the principle of husband and wife fundamentally ensures harmony for the family (Hsieh, 2012)[12]. As a result, a good marriage is essential to an individual.

The artefact that has been intertwined with marriage is the 'Red Sleep Bed (紅 眠 床),' a traditional form of dowry in Taiwanese culture. Inherited from South-Eastern China, the Red Sleep Bed had remained in the possession of families for generation after generation from the Qing Dynasty until the 1970s (Yeh, 2012)[13]. Moreover, the Red Sleep Bed lied at the very centre of everyday life and witnessed some of the most important events in one's life, such as getting married and having children. As well, there has been a vast array of specific procedures and rules dictating how this bed should be made, meaning the Red Sleep Bed is tantamount to religious furniture (Yeh, 2012). It is a great example of how an artefact, as a container, embodies and

enacts Taiwanese traditions. In addition, the Red Sleep Bed also reflects the language we use and the gestures we make under the influence of material culture. As such, each part of the Red Sleep Bed is meaningful on both the practical and metaphorical levels. Therefore, allow me to unpack the stories of the Red Sleep Bed piece by piece for you in the following paragraphs.

12
「家庭成員一體和諧是儒家最高理想 ...『家和之道』在於父慈子孝、兄友弟恭、夫和妻柔。而『家和之道』又造端於『夫婦之道』。」謝居憲 (2012) 儒家［家庭一體］ 之建構初探。當代儒學研究 (12)，179-213 。
Hsieh, J.H. (2012). A Preliminary Investigation of the Construction on The Confucianist "The family as One Body". *Journal for Contemporary Studies of Confucianism*, (12), 179-213.

13
葉前錦 (2012)，臺灣傳統紅眠床的裝飾風格與象徵意義初探－以國立臺灣歷史博物館館藏爲例，*歷史臺灣：國立臺灣歷史博物館館刊*，5-49。
Yeh, C.J. (2012), The Decorative Style and Symbolic Significance of the Traditional 'Red Sleep Bed' in Taiwan - A Study of the Furniture Collection in the National Museum of Taiwan History, *History of Taiwan: Journal of the National Museum of Taiwan History*, 5-49.

Fig.4 'Red Sleep Bed' collections at the National Museum of Taiwan History

The Whole Body

Design in Shape

According to the field notes taken by Tsae-Yun Luo in her thesis "A Study of the Traditional 'Red Sleep Bed' in Taiwan - Mainly in the Areas of Central Taiwan (1990)," the width of the Red Sleep Bed was always found to be 6 Tshio*(≒ 180cm), while the depth was typically found to be between 8 to 16 Kiàn* (≒ 109 to 218cm), with 8 Kiàn (≒ 109cm) and 10 Kiàn (≒ 136cm) being the most common. Lastly, the height of the bed was typically 5 to 6 Tshio (≒ 150 to 180cm).

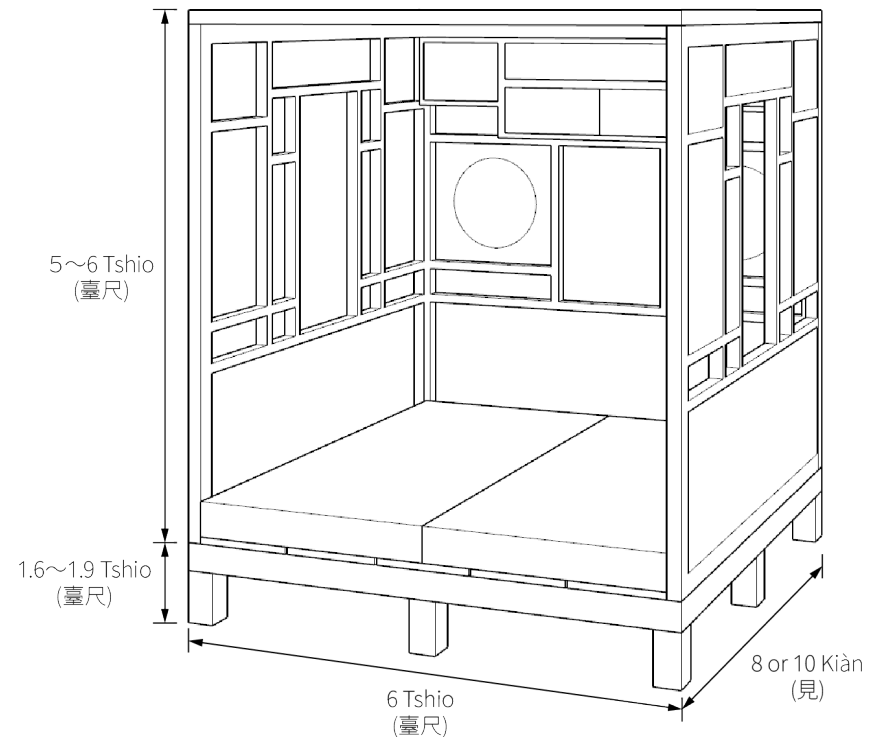*Fig.5 Height measurements of the Red Sleep Bed*

5〜6 Tshio (臺尺)

1.6〜1.9 Tshio (臺尺)

6 Tshio (臺尺)

8 or 10 Kiàn (見)

Compared to the modern double-size bed (Fig.6), the Red Sleep Bed seems relatively small for two people to sleep in. According to Luo's research, several reasons for this could be elucidated by interviewing the traditional owners and users of such beds:

1) People in the past were shorter.

2) In a Taiwanese proverb, we say "雙腿一伸 (two legs stretched)" to refer to a dead person. People believed that living humans sleep on their side with their bodies curved (Fig.7).

3) In the past it was said that they intended to "眠床做的小，老婆才不會跟人跑 (make the bed small to keep the wife from running to another person)." This speculation is the most convincing because males sleep at the outer side of the Red Sleep Bed, and it has only one exit (Fig.8). This means women could not leave the bed without their partner noticing.

Fig.6 Comparison between the Red Sleep Bed and a modern double-sized bed

dead people | alive human sleeping

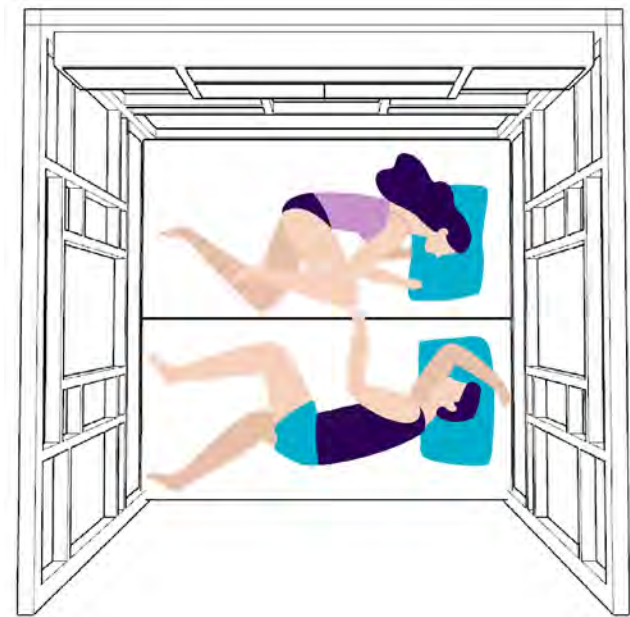Fig.7 Interpretation of the laying down position in the Taiwanese proverb

Fig.8 Sleeping position in the Red Sleep Bed

Elaborating on the third reason, we also have phases in our language supporting this positioning, such as "男 主 外 女 主 內 (men master things outside, women master things inside)." "Outside" in this case means bringing home the bread; "inside" means taking care of the family members and housework. On the one hand, this positioning clearly demonstrates the division of work in the family in accordance with traditional customs; on the other hand, the patriarchal ideology from past society is carved into the very shape of the Red Sleep Bed, determining how we sleep together while fortifying folk sayings.

Design in Languages

The Red Sleep Bed was where the marriage ritual ended, and was where the residents would later start and end each day of their lives. As such, the bed is a demarcation – as we say in Taiwanese "床頭拍床尾和 (fight at the head side of the bed, reconcile at the foot side of the bed)," meaning the couple's situation wherein they were fighting would end overnight. Furthermore, design in language assists design in shape, providing a clear view of people's thoughts on relationships traditionally. You will discover more about this tendency in the rest of this chapter.

The name " 紅　眠　床 (âng-bîn-tshng)" in Taiwanese is also intriguing, with the word " 紅 (âng)" being pronounced similarly to the word " 安 (an)." Therefore, "Red Sleep Bed" also sounds like "Safe Sleep Bed," which provides the impression of reliability, while the well-built wooden structure further reinforces this impression. In addition, the frame of the Red Sleep Bed partially refers back to the word " 安 " (Fig.9). " 安 " has the same Chinese radical[14] as home (家) (Fig.10) - ' 宀 ', house in the font form. Therefore, we know that the Red Sleep Bed somehow means 'home' in context.

安ㄢ/ an

在一間靜靜的屋子裡，有一個女子手置胸前，安詳地坐著(古人習慣席地跪坐)。本意是「安定」、「舒適」、「安全」。

Fig.9 ' 安 ' means stable, comfortable, and safe. A woman kneels down with her hand in front of her chest in a quiet house.

安家

Fig.10 Chinese characters for 'safe' and 'home'

14
' 部首 ', or Chinese radical in translation, is the graphical indexing component in every Chinese character. The component is used to categorise and sort the characters in the dictionary. Each character has one only radical. Characters with the same radical are usually somewhat relevant, be it morphologically, conceptually, contextually, geographically, etc.

Top Canopy (頂棚)

" 龜甲頂 (tortoiseshell top)" (Fig.11) and " 蜘蛛頂 (spider top)" (Fig.12) were the two most common types for the top canopy. Specifically, the 龜甲頂 (tortoiseshell top) has a central decoration and an array of patterns around it, while the 蜘蛛頂 (spider top) has staggered geometrical patterns. Typical decorations for these are usually positive symbols in Chinese culture. For example:

1) Bat." 蝙蝠 (biǎn-fú)" in Chinese, its pronunciation is the same as the word for luck, happiness, and blessing – 福 (fú).

2) Crane (bird) (Fig.13). According to myth, the crane represents longevity; the Chinese pronunciation of crane, " 鶴 (hè)," is the same as the word "good" in Taiwanese, " 好 (hó)."
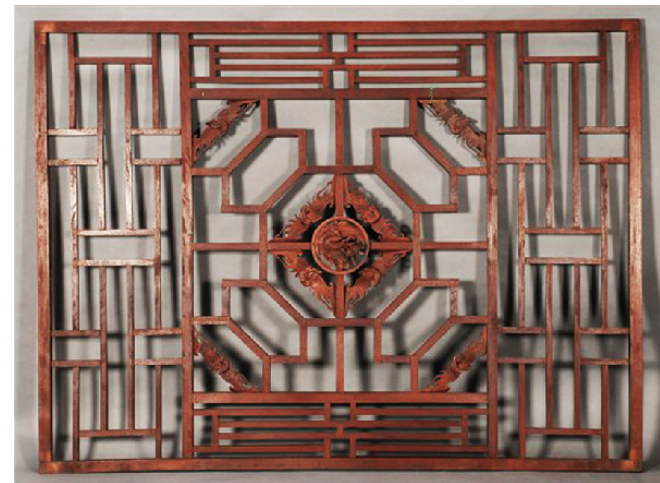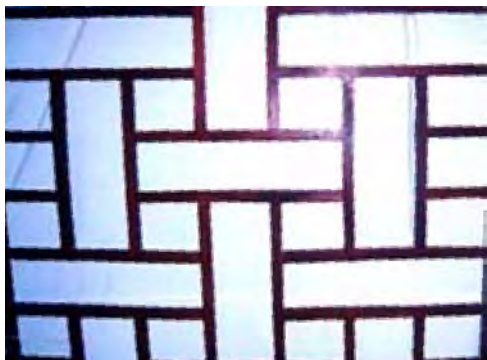

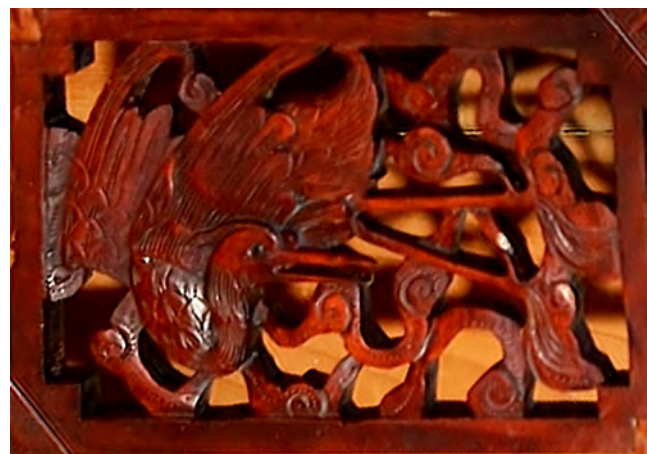*Fig.11 龜甲頂 (tortoiseshell top)*

Fig.12 蜘蛛頂 (spider top)

Fig.13 Crane in the decoration of the top canopy

The mixed use of language is highly common in Taiwan, especially when it comes to Taiwanese and Chinese. The influence of this multilingualism is what has imbued the symbols with further interpretations as well as any associated playfulness in craft making. For example, five cranes, " 五 隻 鶴 (wǔ-jhih-hè)" in Chinese, sounds similar to " 有 夠 好 (ū-kàu-hó)," which means "very good" in Taiwanese. So, when you see five cranes, it has multiple meanings, more than just longevity. In my opinion, the flexible, hybrid expressions that can only happen in the Taiwanese context are precious. Somehow, the bond between myself and the artefact is stronger than the geographical connection because we share the same culture's multilingualism and complexity.

Wind Dividers (遮風)

The structure of the Red Sleep Bed was named after its function or affordance (Luo, 1997). You can link the component's appearance with the intent of its design by its name; the 'Wind Divider' needs to serve the function of being windproof, thus it was made with closed planks for the bottom part which people sleep next to (Fig.14).

Fig.14 Wind Divider of the Red Sleep Bed. Collections of theNational Museum of Taiwan History.

As a wedding gift from the family, the wooden pieces (牙板) and drawings inlaid in the bed frame were the visualisations of wishes and expectations for the couple. The decorative theme typically dealt with traditional idioms, tales, and symbols, especially those related to children. Unlike the top canopy which had metaphorical patterns, the images on the wooden pieces are more realistic and direct. Here are some examples:

1) Idiom – " 望 子 成 龍 (watching as the son becomes a dragon)" (Fig.15), meaning witnessing the son mature and become successful.

Fig.15 望子成龍 *(watching as the son becomes a dragon)*

The dragon (龍) and other mythical beasts play a crucial role in Han-Chinese superstition, with all of them representing some kind of accomplishment. For example,

the dragon means success (specifically for men), Pixiu (貔　貅) (Fig. 16) means rich, etc. Therefore, the transformation from a human into a mythical animal may sound literally impossible, however achieving the goal they are intended to represent is very much possible. We use the name of the mythical beasts as idioms to implicate their representation, with the mythical beasts also protecting what they mean: the dragon protects the throne, Pixiu saves money, etc., so we utilise them as images or statues in our environment to help us deal with our everyday lives. Further, it is quite unique that all our gods can be visualised and materialised, so the material world becomes the vivid spiritual world when mythical images and statues are crafted into artefacts and surround us.
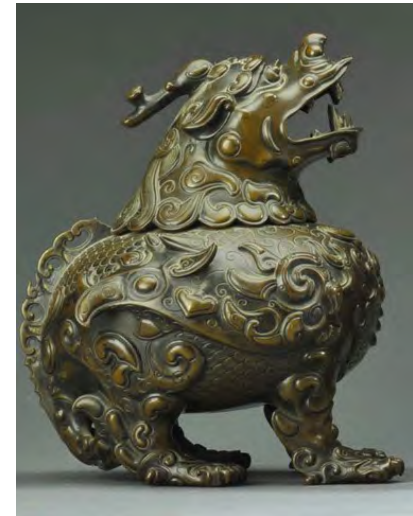

Fig.16 Pixiu (貔貅)

2) Tales – the story from the classic text "二 十 四 孝 (The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars)." This text was highly influential and used to teach Confucian moral values in Taiwan.

Fig.17 鹿乳奉親 *(consecrating deer milk for the parents)*

This piece is the story of "鹿 乳 奉 親 (consecrating deer milk for the parents)" (Fig.17). The story is about a son, Tán (郯 子), who wore a deerskin and camouflaged himself among the deer in order to obtain some milk to aid his parents' eye afflictions. One day, a hunter was fooled by Tán's deer disguise; yet, just when the hunter was about to shoot, Tán hastily exposed himself and told the hunter his reason for doing this. Because the hunter was so moved by his filial piety, he gave Tán the deer milk he had and safeguarded his exit from the mountain.

The story sounds nothing more than a heart-warming tale about a caring son.

However, the real message of this story is that "filial piety is the way to success." How so? Because it turns out that Tán was actually a real person in history, having been the monarch of one of the Ancient Chinese states (諸 侯 國) during the Spring and Autumn Period (春 秋 戰 國 時 期 , approximately 771 to 476 BCE). By word of mouth, he was known for his dedication to filial piety, wisdom, and the just rule of the state. People were ultimately convinced that these were the reasons why he could sit on the throne successfully.

In Taiwan, tales were a typical way of teaching kids about almost everything. As you might notice, the expressions of the Chinese and Taiwanese languages are pretty subtle and metaphorical as we cultivate our context using a variety of idioms, proverbs, phrases, and sayings that have realistic and/ or fictional stories behind them. This way of sharing our thoughts also is expressed through the crafting of artefacts like the Red Sleep Bed. Because I learned these stories during my childhood, I can sense a more profound meaning when I hear or see something. Moreover, it is the default that things have deeper meanings than first appears, so once you know the story, the implication is etched into your mind.

3) Symbols – sunflower, pomegranate (Fig.18). These two kinds of plants symbolise "多子 (having many sons)," because both sunflowers and pomegranates have a lot of seeds – "多籽 (duo-zǐh)," which is pronounced the same as "多子 (duo-zǐh)" in Chinese.

Fig.18 Sunflower and pomegranate wood carving decoration

In Taiwanese tradition, when it comes to auspiciousness for a newly-married couple, we commonly wish them " 早 生 貴 子 (to have a son soon)," or " 多 子 多 孫 (having many sons and many grandsons)." From a historical viewpoint, a son was considered more important to the family than a daughter, especially when it came to getting married. The man " 娶 妻 進 門 (takes a wife back home)" whereas a woman "嫁去夫家 (is married 'out to' the husband's house)." We say " 嫁出去的女兒是潑出去的水 (daughter who marries 'out' is the water that is splashed outside)." In Taiwan, we define the father's family as being "in" and the mother's family as "out." In other words, people who share the same family name with you are "in".

Before explaining the patriarchal influence in Taiwanese family culture, this is essential to know.

Since men were the people who brought wives in and passed down their surname, they were allowed to inherit the family business and properties. In comparison, women who would become outsiders after marriage were relatively ignored. As such, raising a daughter is like preparing for her for her future husband's family, not for the "in" family. This mindset impacts parents' and elder relatives' expectations of each gender – more wishes for boys, more regulations for girls. There was less imagination of a bright future for girls; or at

least, that is what happened in my family.

However, I want to clarify that generalising all families is impossible – the new generation might not even take this tradition as seriously as before because gender equality is the majority's consensus and is now in law. But, the gender difference does exist, embedded in language and custom. We say having a son is "弄璋之喜 (the joy of playing a jade instrument)," while having a daughter is "弄瓦之喜 (the joy of playing spindle)" (Fig.19). The gift for celebrating the new-born baby's one-month-birthday - sticky rice, chicken leg, and red egg for boys, and cake for girls.

Fig.19 璋 (a kind of jade instrument used in ancient palace rituals) & 瓦 (a textile spindle)

Back Wind Divider (後遮風)

Like the Wind Dividers on the sides, the Back Wind Divider was initially built with planks pressed against each other. However, during the time Taiwan was a colony of Japan (1895-1945), the Japanese authorities strongly pushed a policy of Westernization. As a result, the Red Sleep Bed was gradually influenced by Japanese craft techniques and western decorative styles (Yeh, 2012). One of the remarkable design transformations appeared through the the Back Wind Divider, especially its cabinet design and decorative style.
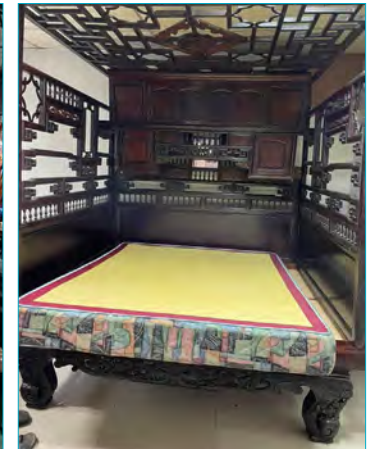

Fig.20 Red Sleep Bed from different periods

Cabinet Design

The cabinet design is the intervention of Japanese craft philosophy, which pursues a balance between aesthetic and functionality. Japanese wood joint techniques were learned and applied by Taiwanese craft masters (Luo, 1997 & Yeh, 2012), and as time went by, one could discern the development in the proportions of such cabinets' backsides in different periods (Fig.20).

Decoration Style

During the Japanese colonial period, the social structure in Taiwan underwent significant upheaval; as industrialisation and westernisation led to urbanisation, the social strata changed. For example, merchants who had previously been considered the lowest social class now became necessary,[15] while a new social class, the middle class, popped up. This new class wanted to imitate western lifestyles while emphasising their status and superiority, including exaggerative decorative art. Thus, the Baroque art style became very popular (Yeh, 2012). Conjointly, typical materials such as stained glass used in Baroque wall adornments replaced traditional Chinese drawings and bronze mirrors. (Yeh, 2012)

Ultimately, the read wind divider demonstrates the modification of styles due to the nation's

status. Thus, it is fascinating how artefacts can document immaterial history through materials – when the mind changes, the artefact also changes.

15
In ancient times, the class order was: 士 (scholars), 農 (farmers), 工 (artisans), and 商 (merchants).

Base Plank (底座)
& Feet of the Bed (床腳)

The Chinese character for bed – ' 床 ' or ' 牀 ' – initially illustrates the item" ' 爿 ' is the structure while ' 木 ' is wood. In combination, ' 牀 ' describes the bed's structure and the material used for it in ancient times (Fig. 21). Specifically, antique beds from South-Eastern China, where the Red Sleep Bed originated, had four legs. After this bed came to Taiwan and its unique geographical environment, the Red Sleep Bed was built with more legs. Thus, having eight legs is the result of the resettlement from China to Taiwan.

本字作「爿」。甲骨文造字時往往把原型豎起來寫。

Fig.21 ' 床 ', originally written as ' 爿 '. The oracle bone script (甲骨文) commonly rotates the object in question's shape to make it into a character.

On the edge of the bed's base were wood carvings, again emphasising the idea of having many sons via the patterns etched there, in addition to carvings on the two front legs. As well, because the word "bottom" in Chinese (" 底 ") also means "until the end," decorations like ' 龍鳳呈祥 (dragon and phoenix living in harmony)' (Fig.22) representing the mythical symbols of men and women can be found on the legs. These are aimed at evoking the ideal of the husband and wife living in harmony until the end; in other words, forever. Thus, this permanently echoes the traditional view of marriage and family.

Fig.22 龍鳳呈祥 (Dragan and phoenix living in harmony)

The Desirable World

Reflection:
The World Unseen

Reflecting on Judy's story, things and their meanings were settled when Judy entered the world, including the gender-based division inherent to Traditional Chinese knowledge. Moreover, the patriarchy was embodied in the form of artefacts which passed down the rule to Judy, thus she could not find tangible things that met her preferences while simultaneously fitting her gender role. Therefore, Judy could not sense her desire or position in the world. While the norm, in reality, was undesirable to Judy and she did compromise to survive, she still nevertheless created a "secret world of joy" through fantasy on which to base her identity. When she had the opportunity to go to a country which seemed to be friendly to homosexuals, Judy finally had the chance to experience this fantasy in real life.

Judy's family is her origin; her understanding of the world relies on the material world she encountered in her life. This is another way of saying that people learn from the artefacts present in their daily environments. For the Taiwanese, furniture that has religious or ritual meaning, such as 尪架桌 (ang-kè-toh) and the Red Sleep Bed, teach lessons about family connections and marriage. However, not every lesson taught is up-to-date, since the old-fashioned ideologies that helped construct society in the past may now be seen as problematic. As we discovered with the Red Sleep Bed,

its set-up and decorations were meant to portray an ideal marriage based on the traditional conceptions of gender roles, with folk sayings having developed around this concept as well.

But what is now considered an ideal marriage? Most importantly, what does it mean to the individuals? Judy obviously cannot fit into the world of when the Red Sleep Bed had been contextualised because of her sexuality, nor could Judy make it in the world of her past, too. What will the world be for Judy, now Rising, to fit in then? This desire had been crafted into artefacts, albeit not for Judy. Can Rising craft her desire into artefacts with which to build a material world in which she can fit in? By crafting her desires, can she elicit the unseen world that is visible to her?
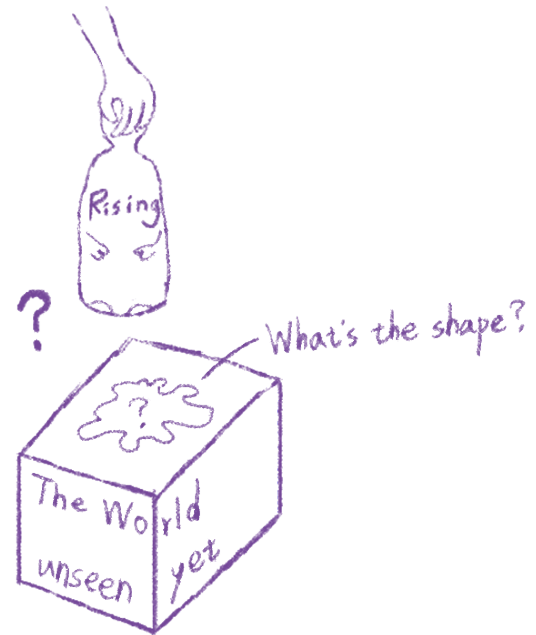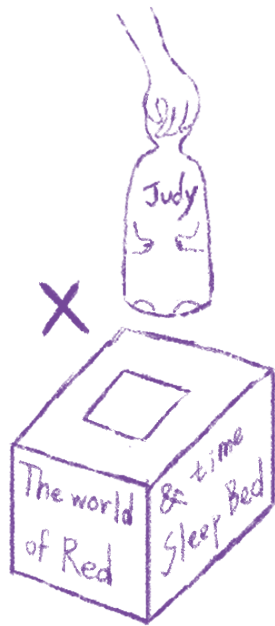
Rising now lives in The Netherlands, her (sometimes they/their) "real world of joy." The people she meets – her schoolmates, friends, and colleagues – treat her with respect and listen to her. She does not need to compromise or lie about her sexuality to them; it just seems like people accept her here. Now, when Rising looks into the mirror, she sees herself; whether it be in cargo shorts or with her curly dark hair down, she adopts whichever look she so desires. And, because Rising can recognise herself, she is able to realise her admiration, attraction, affection, and desire, too.

With this newfound awareness of herself, when Rising now looks back on her history,

she can recognise the problematic artefacts. Rising understands that the objects themselves are not why the patriarchy exists, but they are its heritage-they are what are transmitting messages of that specific mind set. But, Rising is no longer afraid anymore. She is not confused by the world surrounding her, but instead has become more curious, beginning to question her past, the norms defined by others, and what that means for her. Through her questioning, Rising starts to hear her own voice narrating the story of her past. The voice that has never been heard before.

I am Rising. I knew what happened to me was amiss. However, 時過境遷 (the time had

passed, the environment had changed), so I cannot alter the past. My identity and the right to decide for my own life are still aspects absent from my past. Then, we must ask, what is left? The objects, the artefacts, the memories. Luckily, those things can all be changed. As a designer, I learn and practice how to make things, and through making, I get to decide what something is and to therefore shape it. This time is an exception: I am going to shape the material world and pass down a new perception – a desirable world with acceptance, diversity, and love.

Crafting Desire

Crafting is "the activity or hobby of making decorative articles by hand: crafting has emerged as a fashionable form of self-expression" ('Crafting,' n.d., para. 1)[1]. To craft is to create things independently, no matter what tools have been used, be they based on hand or machine. The most important thing is that the end results directly stem from your own ideas. To me, crafting is an empowered and impactful process that enriches your self-awareness, with the result not being in response to other people's commands, but rather the creators' entire decision. It is an individualised, decolonised, democratic undertaking because no one can replicate what you have done. I strongly

feel like this is the way to materialise and enliven my unseen truthfulness.

Desire is the "strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen; strong sexual feeling or appetite" ('Desire,' n.d., para. 1).[2] The desire evoked in the following focuses on sexuality, specifically the capacity for sexual feelings including sexual orientation. Even though desires are complex because they are unique for every individual, they can be discussed in a defined range. For my approach to this research, I want to highlight the non-binary gender and homosexuality that I identified with, while the notion of

"crafting desire" stemmed from my journey of having grown up without being accepted due to my sexuality. I feel like I have rarely had the chance to decide who I am, who I want to be, but instead had been forced to fulfil other people's desires. Thus, "crafting desire" is my wish to make something joyful for self-expression.

How can desire be presented? How can it be experienced? What are its contents? I hope that by crafting desire we can also explore the diversity of gender and sexuality. What if the craft-making is centred on non-binary gender and/or non-heterosexuality? What methods can be applied for expression

materially? Combined with the spirit of questioning the status quo in the gender world, I will determine if the process of "queering" is a possible avenue to be explored.

1
Crafting. (n.d.). In Oxford Dictionary of English. Retrieved December 28, 2021, online

2
Desire. (n.d.). In Oxford Dictionary of English. Retrieved December 28, 2021, online

Queering the Artefact

Coming from the phrase "queer reading," the term "queering" is used to challenge heteronormativity by analysing the parts of a text that use heterosexuality or binary identities (Siobhan, 2007[3] & Eve, 2013[4]). Having been primarily applied in literature, queering can be seen as both a method and an action. As a method from my knowledge, queering obliges us to read with queer eyes, not presupposing the context as being gender binary or heteronormativity. The aims are finding another way to situate the narratives and understanding the literature from other angles. Since we are so used to the so-called norm, we might miss the alternative interpretations in creative works. As an action, queering includes incorporating sexual minorities' perspectives into analysis, thus presenting renewed explanations in the review.

"Queering" is synonymous with the concept of "bringing the unseen world alive" I proposed in the previous paragraphs. "Queering" breaks the imaginative limit affected by gender binary or heteronormativity. I found this approach highly useful for renewing the material culture, too. Instead of authorising one specific mind as the norm, "queering" shares thoughts, while at the same time embracing what already exists and not erasing it. To me, 'queering' is encouraged, enlightened, and hopeful. Furthermore, we have learned in

chapter two that artefacts can document the immaterial history through materials since when the mind changes, the artefact also changes. What if we apply "queering" to an artefact? In what ways are we queering that artefact? How will the process change the associated mind set, and how will the results vary in the material world?

Before further discussion, I want to clarify what an "artefact" is. An artefact is "an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest" ('artefact,' n.d., para. 1)[5]. In brief, artefacts are matters that are made by humans with intention. For instance, a bed is an artefact, wood is not; a needle is an artefact, metal is not. Thus, "queering the

artefact" means articulating the mind behind those objects made by humans, imbuing them with creative possibilities from queer perspectives. Furthermore, there is also the objective of creating a renewed culture and to influence the material world. How? I organised a queering guide that includes thirteen methods of queering in the next chapter.

3
Somerville, S. B. (2014). Queer. *In Keywords for American cultural studies* (pp. 203-207). New York University Press.

4
Sedgwick, E. K. (1993). Queer and now. In *Tendencies* (pp. 1-20). Duke University Press.

5
Artefact. (n.d.). In Oxford Dictionary of English. Retrieved December 28, 2021, online

The Queering Guide

Introduction

This guide provides a map and toolbox for queering, from direct, simple, straightforward, and reflective methods, to those creative, speculative, fictional, imaginative, and optimistic. Each method has its own descriptions and a reference, with the references not having been limited to design alone. Specifically, cinema, art, commerce, and literature are also included when they perfectly represent the featured methods. As well, suggestions are provided regarding what should be thought about when applying the means to queer the artefacts.

This guide encourages people to face and accept the existence of an imperfect world while at the same time acknowledging that the feelings caused by this imperfect world are true and do in fact matter. Through queering, we imbue objects with new meanings and definitions from our perspectives, ideally creating "life preservers" to aid others "drowning" due to the lack of diversity in the existing world. Furthermore, the creations and ideas associated with these new artefacts will be passed down and generate new material cultures.

Before applying these methods, please keep in mind the importance of " 不 忘 本 (not forgetting the origin)." We cannot erase the past, and we should not because we do

not want to forget who we are. The past is the backpack, full of materials, we carry and which makes us us. Humans are more than just themselves; we all belong somewhere. We need that connection with others even if we have different kinds of minds. Thus, the "queering" methods I have collected in this guide are not aiming to cover up what already exists, but rather to give it a chance to represent what already exists in a new way. In other words, giving it a new coat of paint to make it more colourful, rather than a single-coloured cover-up filler. The purpose thus is to alter the artefact without breaking it, and to elicit the values of its origin.

Identifying

Brief

See things through a queer lens. This method keeps us apprised of our surroundings by focusing on this topic and emphasising the differences.
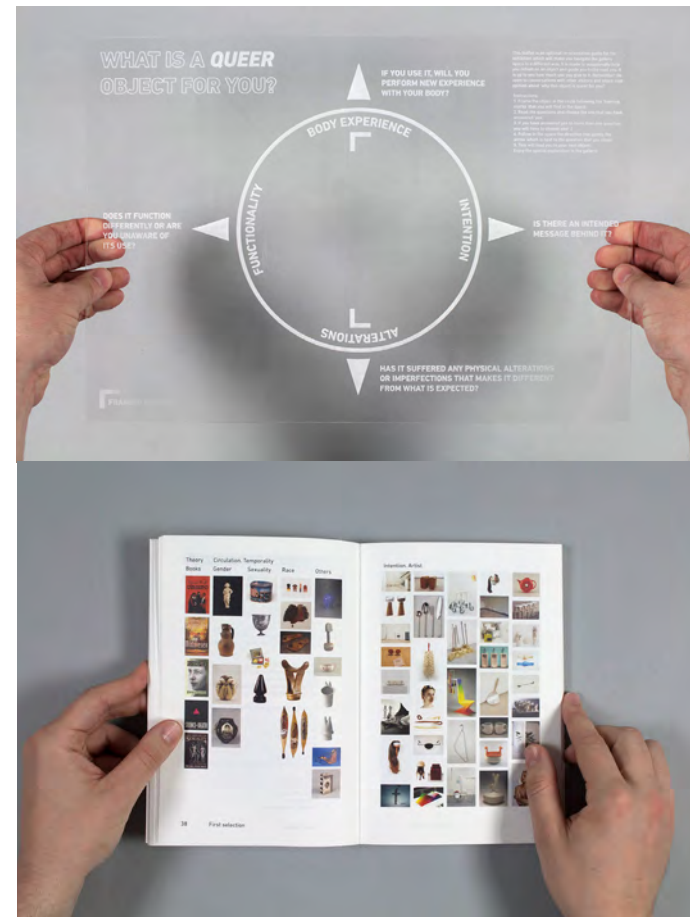
Benefit & Risk:

This is a simple and straightforward method of perceiving and reflecting. However, the result might be less impactful given the reflection is intangible.

Reference

Queer Objects (2016), United Kingdom, John Philip Sage

This project identifies the objects that fall outside heteronormative standards by providing a guide. This project also presents the synchronically visible relations between objects in the format of a fictional exhibition exploring different levels of view.

Archiving

Brief

Make a collection of items with queer stories. By telling the stories, this method recontextualises the objects collectively.

Benefit & Risk:

The applications of this method are unlimited and shareable, including documenting while processing. However, if it is not grounded in a solid platform, the results might be too broad to focus on.

Reference

Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future (2016), Singapore, Loo Zihan

This project archives 81 objects that vary from items of personal significance to memorabilia from events and organisations. Each collection is associated with the contributor's journey of queer identification. Ultimately, this project assembles objects that will represent a hypothetical Singaporean queer archive.

Naming

Brief

Renaming things from a queer point of view, this method articulates new characteristics and impressions on matters.

Benefit & Risk:

This method is intuitive, so the result can be compelling because of its personality. However, it might become offensive or unpreferred labelling if this method had not been conducted with enough awareness and sensitivity.

Reference

The First Gay Kit (2018), Croatia

This project names ordinary objects from a closeted gay perspective. Containing 19 products, this kit brings the emotional tolls of denying identity to light by using sarcasm and humour, thereby aiming to give others a sense of hope by creating the feelings of community and belonging.

Multiplying

Brief

By creating a new scenario through duplicating or multiplying common elements, this method stages ordinary scenes slightly differently to stimulate our preconceptions of unusual relationships.

Benefit & Risk:

This method is attractive because it is full of love. However, it might raise questions about the results' influence and actual function in public discourse.

Reference

His, His & Hers (2018), The Netherlands
Timothy Liu & Dasha Tsapenko & Chris Cooper

This project multiplies daily supplies and furniture into sets of three for polyamorous purposes, thereby challenging the stale ideology in society that rationalises the most typical kind of romantic relationships. This project used several products practically to demonstrate a queer love life of a romantic triad.

Reversing

Brief

To inverse (or reverse) the elements, colour, size, material, or even one's whole world view. This method alters your perspective in order to experience the status quo from another angle.
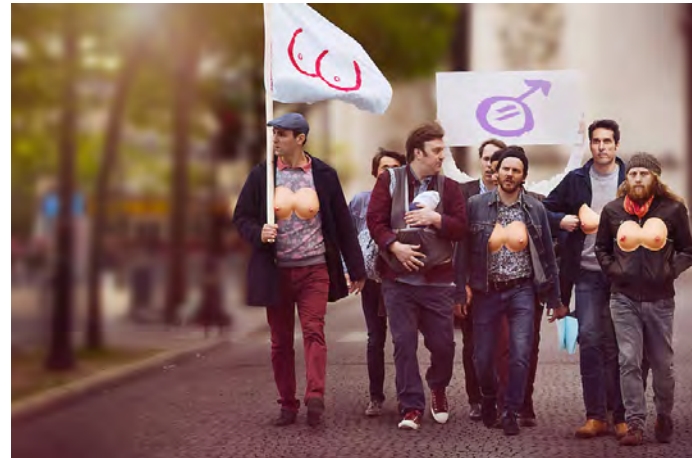
Benefit & Risk:

This method is effective because it challenges the basic setting. However, it might become aggressive and fall into another gender dualism if the new context is predicated on only one side of the story.

Reference

I Am Not an Easy Man (2018), France, directed by Éléonore Pourriat
This movie inverts gender status, being about a romantic relationship between a woman and a man in a world like ours, except for the gender roles. This movie makes you rethink and reconsider the differential treatment between men and women in the society that we are used to in our world.

Mixing

Brief

To mesh or blend contrasting or contradictory elements to break down barriers. This method adds challenging views on gender dualism and questions the necessity of distinctions.
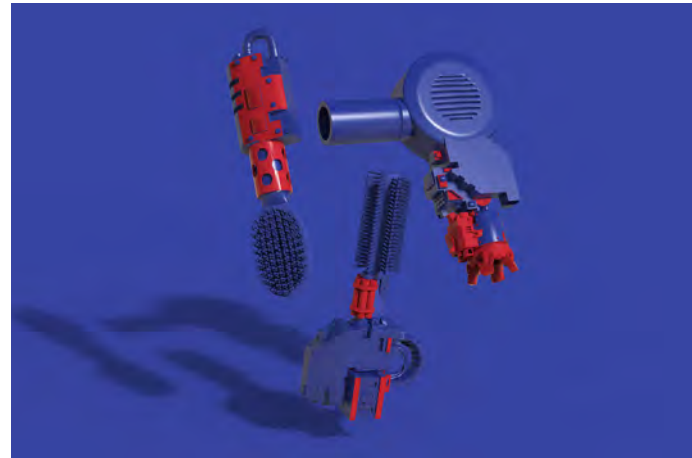
Benefit & Risk:

This method is playful and creative, the results of which can be highly intriguing because they reflect on gender stereotypes while also giving them unique features. However, the result can also be messy or unrecognisable if the elements are over-meshed.

Reference

Playing Against Patriarchy (2020), The Netherlands, Lucie Ponard

This project mixes gendered shapes and materialities in children toys to blur barriers. Barbie accessories are mixed with Transformers; action figures of soldiers are mixed with household items. This project considers the function of toys, making the merging between them look natural and realistic with a touch of playfulness.

Rephrasing

Brief

a+b=c→d+e=c. Replacing or changing the elements while retaining the same framework, this method allows us to decide who will form the focal point (or centre) of stories.

Benefit & Risk:

This method builds on the existing framework, so the results will be convincing. However, the results might not be understandable or might be misunderstood due to cultural differences.

Reference

This Is What Iconic Movies Would Look Like With LGBT People (2016)
Tania Safi & Anna Mendoza (from BuzzFeed)

This campaign reimagines mainstream movies by changing the leading characters, intending to kick off one's imagination regarding the question of "what if a film had queer stars with the same storyline?" It seeks to convince us that queer stories deserve equal space as heteroromantic ones in the media.

Collaging

Brief

a+b=c → a*b=f. Deconstruct the original objects and put them back together in another form. This method shares personal thoughts about objects and reconstructs the context.

Benefit & Risk:

This method allows the creator to express themselves with absolute freedom; however, it requires skilled experience to make the results aesthetically pleasing.

Reference

Unfamiliar Passions (2021), The Netherlands, Leo Maher

This project collages historical heritages that have homosexual aspects in time and western civilisation. This series of pieces share the designer's investigation and thoughts about homosexuality, aiming to provide a medium for queer legends within material culture.

Patching

Brief

a+b=c×a+b+g=h
To dress up and decorate the original, with attached accessories. This method displays both the origin of an object and new designs without downgrading it.

Benefit & Risk:

This method aims to "evolve" items without changing their origin and form. However, if it is over-patched, the result might seem as if it is a patch-work cover-up and thus immediately loses the quality imbued by this method.

Reference

Traitor's Patriotism (2018), South Korea, Choi Haneyl
These sculptures patch diverse and colourful materials on byung-poong, the traditional Korean folding screen. By using byung-poong as a locus, this work bridges global queer identity with Korean national pride.
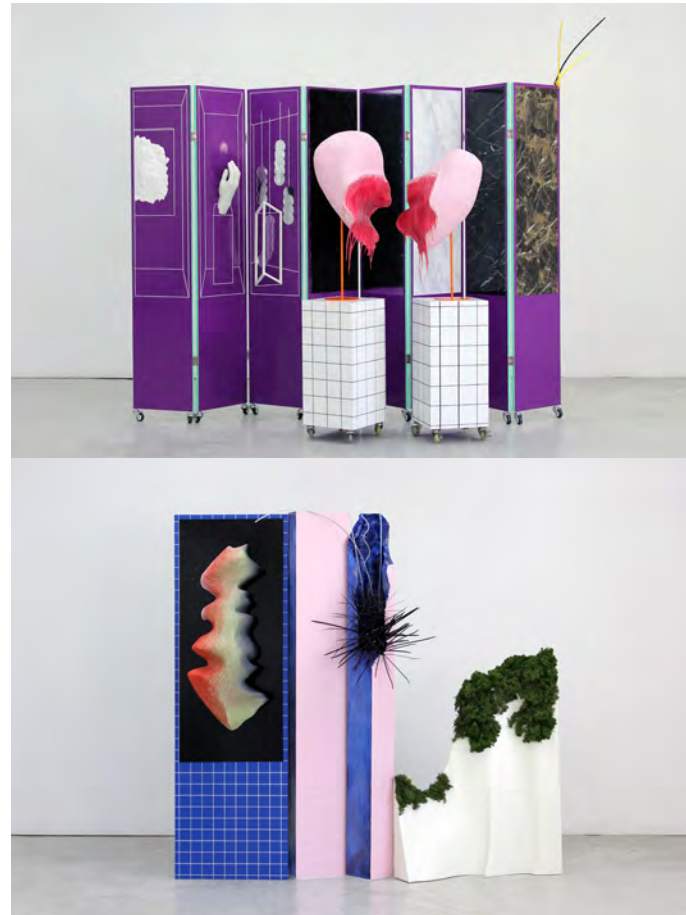
Illusion

Brief

Creating magical designs that provide intriguing illusions of all kinds, such as visual, optical, auditory, tactile, and temporal illusions. This method plays on and fools our conceptions of reality and notions of our body, compelling people to reconsider what they experience.

Benefit & Risk:

This method creates meaningful and subtle results which are multi-layered. However, this method requires scientific knowledge about illusion and adeptness at tools to make the designs work.

Reference

A Mind Sang (2020), Vier Nev

This animation creates optical illusions in order to depict two images simultaneously, thus toying with transition and perspective. Therefore, this film contains more than one story merged together, leading the audience to see through different themes in one frame.

Confluence

Brief

Drafting stories between reality and fiction by gluing different timelines, this method entreats us to analyse the context and receive inspiration from the imaginary intersection.

Benefit & Risk:

This method creates an alternative reality that gives us the hope to believe that the story may happen. However, it is impossible to rationalise each and every part of the imagination realistically, sometimes necessitating compromise.

Reference

Lesbian Romance Mythology Series (2015-2019), Natasja Hellenthal

This series of books imagines the confluence of historical/traditions myths and the presentation/depiction of lesbians. The stories are predicated on rigorous cultural research to provide realistic and well-shaped characters. with the tales having been renewed by retelling and reshaping.

LESBIAN ROMANCE MYTHOLOGY SERIES
BOOK 1 ~ 3
NATASJA HELLENTHAL

Near-Future

Brief

ollowing the developmental trend present in other disciplines and visualising the possibility within scenes, this method speculates as to what ideal queer life can be by depicting the near-future.

Benefit & Risk:

This method tells a story about the preferred future. The visualisation of the result can enhance the rationality of the ideal concept. However, even though it is called the near-future, such speculation might not become real in the end.

Reference

(Im)possible Baby (2015), United States America, Ai Hasegawa

This project depicts a near-future scenario based on recent developments in genetics and stem cell research. Analysing the DNA of a lesbian couple, this project manages to portray their own genetically-related children and their family life.

Utopia

Brief

Dream about a queer world to an extremely-optimistic level. This method lets go of reality and the status quo, fantasising a whole new worldview.

Benefit & Risk:

This method is emotionally-empowered because a fantasy need not follow the real world. However, this dream might also cause a sense of loss when coming back to reality.

Reference

The Fathers Project (2020), Leo Herrera

This web series dreams of a world without AIDS. In this utopia, gays live without fear, discrimination, and grief. What would they have accomplished if they had never been wiped out? What would the world look like with them in it? This work brings the LGBTQ+ community emotionally together.

Epilogue

'So poor,' 'Do your parents know you are gay?' I heard this all the time back in Taiwan. People told me that I was abnormal, and that was it. I am gay, and that was all of me to others. As a homosexual, I had to fight for myself or shut up while straight people were accepted naturally. Every time I was attacked because of my homosexuality, my only hope was that someone could tell me, 'I am sorry what happened to you.' Unfuturnatly, no one did that. But now, I find my way of healing, just like I discovered 'the secret world of joy' when I was young. The difference is that this time, it is no longer a secret. I couldn't share my thoughts with others before, now I can. What happened to me can stay in the past.

From my own experience, I realise you can only sense desire when you are able to see yourself. Therefore, we need spectrum in the world for everyone to see themselves. Because a single-standard world is for single type of people, one kind of desire. And the rest are exclusive. On the contrary, a world with spectrum, open to everyone, will have the spectrum of desire. Thus, by queering the artefacts, I want to make people be aware of the norm we take for granted. Perhaps, crafting desire in artefacts can help other people like me who were suffering to heal. Hopefully, the creations of my fellows and me will stay in the material culture and influence the value system. So the specials in the next generation won't have to experience what I experienced because the reality has spectrum already.

This proposal is a gentle revolution for creating a new world full of amazement, wonders, and inclusivity. This book, I hope, is a call to action.

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