

An Unknown Road

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People's different interests in various things determine their different research and exploring directions. For me, specifically, automobiles are my passion and I am obsessed with them for two reasons. I am enthusiastic about the metal lines that are full of sense of design, appreciative of the ingenious combination of the complex structures and curious about the proper application of high-end technology on the automobiles. The three aspects of automobiles I am interested in all perfectly contribute to the visually aesthetic driving machines. In real, speed is always attractive to everyone. Whether we have heard our heartbeat when taking rides at Six Flags Magic Mountain, or we have disdained the speed limit when driving in our cities, or we all have dreamed we could fly in the sky one day, speed has always been a limit that the whole human race has been trying to raise. However, even God has given us limitless abilities of imagination and creation; he still has to keep the world balanced by significantly restraining our physical abilities. Fortunately, our wisdom allows us to build up machines to make up what we are physically capable of in order to both eliminate unnecessary hard labor work and improve efficiency. Therefore, as being one of such machines, automobiles came into our daily lives. On the other hand, the development and reformation of the automobile culture originated from the reformation of people's ideology. The culture not only reflects the developing relationships among human beings, but also represents the whole human civilization. Different groups of people or people from different places hold different perspectives towards the value, application and appearances of automobiles. All the differences make me curious since automobiles are the center of my creation projects. Therefore, I am more than willing to explore and make my projects perfect.

I have been trying to stay on and enrich the creative thoughts I have had for the past two years as a graduate student. Most of my supporting materials come from my own memories and experiences. The most significant ones are the two terrifying car accidents that I have witnessed with my own eyes. I even tried to offer as much help as possible for the injured people in one of the accidents. In addition, the experience of staying with my mother before and after her encephalic dngioma surgery also makes me reconsider the meaning of life. All the experiences make me further realize the sharpness of cars, the weakness of life and the interactions of emotion. Furthermore, glass as a fragile, sharp and transparent material has been a valuable part of my creation since my undergraduate years. The sculptural language it contains has contributed a lot to my creation. I truly hope I can combine my knowledge of the materials with my creative thoughts perfectly so that audiences can accept it and

agree with me on my creative thoughts. Meanwhile, I do not believe we have to give up aesthetics for production that conveys authors' thoughts in a negative way. I pursue an ideal state when I can provide some space of memory and feelings that last with some simple expressions.



MAOA gene, 2012



Dromotopia (collaboration with Tivon Rice), 2013



Need for..., 2013

My graduation project is consisted of two parts. The first part contains two watercolor paintings. One of the paintings puts the audience in the driver's seat after an accident when the airbag has blown out. The other one allows audience to fully view a carriage that has been exploded and burned. I expect audiences to feel comparison between the tragedy that has happened to the people inside and the normal scene on the outside with such perspective of the painting. Several typical traffic violations seem to appear in a humorous way. On the surface, the violations are part of the automobile culture and people would just laugh at such violations since all the pictures are funny. However, when we put more thoughts into them, many fatal accidents also originated from such violations. In addition, I have also been considering several problems: how do we treat and define such violations? How do we define safety? How differently the definition of safety can mean to various people?



Mutants on the road (1), 2014



Mutants on the road (2), 2014

The other part of my graduation project that is currently being exhibited at Henry Art Gallery is also consisted of two parts. First of all, I try to make the audience feel they are driving on a freeway during a rainy night by putting them in such perspective. Then, I put four typically injured human body parts from car accidents into exhibition boxes. Therefore, in a narrative way, I can show the causality between the scenes when people are driving to an unknown destination and the eventuality or the necessity of an accident it might lead to. Ideally, audiences will finally realize the unpredictable possibilities that might cause an accident. After all, the second scene is just a negative suppose I make of the first scene, but it does not have to happen. However, audiences can still consider the possibility that the first scene can somehow cause the second one.

Many people might fall in love with cars. Indeed, driving is always an interesting experience for me. The raise of speed and the change of road conditions both increase my curiosity about driving

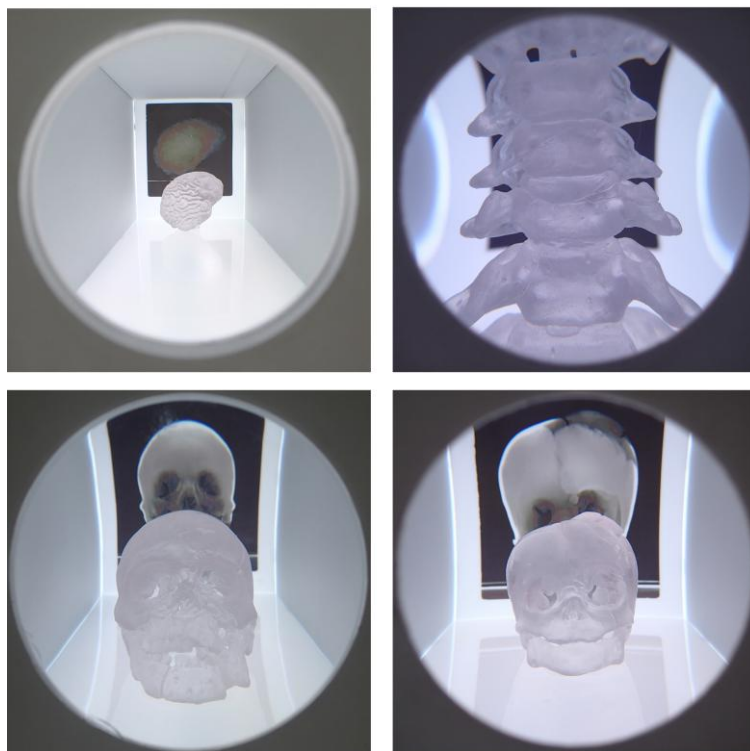
even though I might drive on the same road every day. However, the two accidents I experience during high school and college make me reconsider my favorite industrial product. The moment the accidents happened, automobiles suddenly became extremely sharp and dangerous. We all lost control on them, but became vulnerable in front of them. In my perspective, as technology develops on a daily base, our ability of producing automobiles also gets more and more perfect. Therefore, modern car accidents do not mostly originate from cars that are not fully functional, but from people's negligence. Hence, cars are just cold industrial production. They are the extension of our thoughts about being physically faster. Such extension should have been completely beneficial to everyone. However, the change of our emotions alters it. If our emotions make us violate any of the traffic laws, it might eventually change ourselves or others directly or indirectly.

The experience of me driving on Seattle highway in a rainy night was quite memorable, which inspired me of Scene I. Heavy rain and splashed water by other vehicles made the windshield very obscure, even though the wiper swung as fast as possible. However high-speeding cars on the highway kept their momentum at 60 mph without even a moment of hesitation. I was having an unusual driving experience and I paid extra attention on the road. Excitement and fear weaves around both of my hands, which were holding the steering wheel tightly. After that night, I kept thinking about that moment of tension and in Scene I I constructed a black box to recreate my memory. The sight of the viewer was limited to the driver's perspective; through the narrow vision of the front windshield glass, the viewer can see a winding road leading to the dark. Although the headlights and reflecting double yellow lines indicate the direction of the road, there are still many unknowns in the dark. People like to use the old saying, that "it was the light that waits at the end of darkness", to describe the causal. However as a matter of fact, I want to talk about the opposite: a dark unknown path does not always lead to the destination of light. My creation of Scene II is to hang four rectangular white glass light boxes each containing a cast-glass damaged human organs or tissues, in order to create a scene effect like an operation room or examination room. The interior spaces are brightly lit, viewed through an optical element, magnifying the surface details of the organs. I picked four accident cases out of my massive researches and used my imagination to recreate the injuries resulting from those accidents. I purposely limited the audience's vision range to actively investigate what I am presenting and to establish some kind of relationship with the night scene, with their own experience of driving and with the possible consequences. The magnifiers, as the necessary tool of the brain operation physicians, play a very

important role in doctor's observation diagnosis and treatment. So the reason I choose the magnifier is to let the viewer adjust the distance between his eyes and the window, the window and glass pieces, so that he need to look for the best viewing angle and clarity, as if the third party is connected to the lost life in the accident, near or far, fake or real. Perhaps we could possibly cure the victim, saving him from the death evil; perhaps it was too late to do anything, to make any changes. No matter how the audience define themselves when viewing, I hope through the layers of glass – where hidden the damaged body parts and x-ray photos – people would be touched and reconsider the fragility of human beings.



An unknown road, 2014



An unknown road (details), 2014

Image 1+2. MAOA gene, 67*75*47”
Plaster, 2012

Image 3. Dromotopia (collaboration with Tivon Rice), 48*8*12”
Cast glass, video projection and sound, 2013

Image 4. Need for..., 33*43*47”
Blown glass, mirror and mixed media, 2013

Image 5. Mutants on the road, 62*40”
Watercolor, 2014

Image 6. Mutants on the road, 62*40”
Watercolor, 2014

Image 7+8+9. An unknown road, Size variable
Glass, 2014