

Legend·Journey To The West

Once upon a time, there is a mountain.

On the top of the mountain, there is a piece of magical rock.

After a long long time,

a monkey bursts out from it.....

This old legend sets in China in the Tan Dynasty around a Buddhist monk Tripitaka who rides on a white horse and leads three of his distinct looking disciples on a journey westward to India to obtain Buddhist religious texts called sutras. This story is widely known in China and has become notable throughout the world.

I am always fascinated by the world of magic that only comes to life from description of my parents, and I have once even believed that the imagined legend exists as a part of the history. In my childhood, Monkey King - Sun Wukong was undoubtedly my biggest hero. He carries the Golden-Banded Staff that can size itself according to his will. Among all Tripitaka's disciple, he is the most powerful who has Fiery Golden Eyes that can look through all the disguise of ghost and monsters, the ability to master 72 methods of transformation and ride with somersault that travels thousands miles. The commanding Monkey King, who can defeat all the approaching demons, has become the most favored mythical character in China. His importance even surpassed Tripitaka, who is a real life character from the 7th century, and also becomes my first source of interest to the mythical tale.

I was raised by my parents. When they were busy, I would stay quietly at our place that was no more than 24 square meters. For someone imaginative, it was spacious enough. I would take out my sketch book and draw down people who I have "encountered" and events that had taken place. Certainly, Monkey King was the one who I have illustrated the most. At times, I felt as if he was right outside my window hiding behind the cloud despite how little sky I could see from my small window. Until Transformers and Saint Seiya come to my life, my perception for hero has then finally changed. "Transformer, transform! Let's go!" I would yell on the top of my lung the way Optimus Prime would. "Pegasus Fan-ta-sy!" I swing my fist and shout out my fatal move. Later on, countless American and Japanese cartoons and video games rush over my life. Slowly but surely, the Monkey King on top of the cloud seems to be overshadowed by robotic characters, magnificent helmet, and high-tech product.....

Those business strategies have easily conquered the Chinese consumers with varieties of tastes in extended fields. A massive chemical reaction has taken place in China. All of a sudden, cities are flattened, and the mountains and the water are shoveled. A thick layer of concrete is applied onto the surface of China. Grown-ups call it a revolution, and the teachers in school predict that as we move into the 21st century, we would become wealthier and have no more concern about not having enough food and clothing. Then, as I picture the wonderful future, I fall in love with coke and instant noodle at the same time. That monkey in the cloud is almost out of sight.....

In an afternoon after many years, I woke up on a conveyer belt of the production line. Suddenly I feel that I am living in a surreal diagram, but what has covered up the reality? Is it the multi-disciplinary development of culture or the varieties of choices in consumerism? In front of mass production and reproduction, reality has fallen surrealistically. It is difficult for me to sort out the distribution of the sense and the sensibility in my body, and for the reason, I cannot coordinate the next bodily reaction. Therefore, I become indecisive and uncertain, and these uncertainty turns into doubts. Later, I become accustomed to and fond of doubts. It is a starting point of a brand new journey that leads to a place where no one has ever been before.

I start my journey with cheerfulness. Along the way, I record the sight and the observation. I search for the real possibility and the methods of self-recording, but I am not trying to prove anything. People from different background would apply their own experiences to determine the appearance and content of everything. Some may find a long history in an ordinary container; others may find the big picture of future from the trivial events in life; I, on the other hand, hope to make a tiny mirror, a mirror so small that it almost loses its practical value. Yet from it, you can see yourself and others, and of course, if you adjust its angel, you may see a wider range of the world, and that view of the world can only be seen by you.

I do not like to categorize myself because I do not like the feeling of focusing on one aspect only. And, luckily, I have been categorized differently by different people. Up till now, in many people's opinion, I am just someone who makes cartoon-character figures and video games. Before, I would try to explain my intention, but once I do, I feel like a religious preacher. I believe that everyone should have the right to enjoy his own experience, intelligence, and the joys of reading. What can be directly transferred by words is limited to its literal meaning. Language and words is the miracle product of human wisdom, but to me, it is overly processed information. Someone inarticulate like me often feel caught and restricted between words. It exhausts me because there is too much emotion that cannot be precisely organized and delivered through language. And that is the reason why I rely on images rather than words or language; since an emotion is not delivered through words and language, it may cause misreading. However, the misreading may make the piece more interesting. Maybe the outcome of the piece is always

uncontrollable, but the process of making the work is still pleasant.

My studio is very plain, but it is definitely a real studio. It is a storage room near the Art Institute renovated from the waste yard. I think it matches me perfectly; it does not exist for attention. Commodity recycling is a place where abandoned items find their glory again, and you might as well pick up only the ones you need. I like recycled goods not only because their prices are good. If you have enough expertise, then you may find something that worth more than a brand new one. What is more important is the adventure it has recorded. As I think about it, I realize that many artists like to ponder around the past and the present through the history of human civilization. With pieces of information and inspiration they pick up from different era, they are reminiscent, reflective, and hopeful for tomorrow. I think the true value of art should come with the insight from discovery and the considering mind set, and thus, I always go into work feeling relaxed. Of course, I meant mentally.

My studio is built alongside the mountain giving it a Chongqing flair. On the platform by the door is a thick and stubborn White Fig Tree. As one stands underneath the tree, one can see the train station and cargo port on the bottom of the hill and the Nang Mountain across from the Yangtze River. For decoration, I imagine the train, fishing boats, and airplanes occasionally come into my view. It appears quite agreeable especially when it is seen under the soft sunlight or light drizzle. The studio is located 5 meters from the main high way of the town and in the middle of a “S” shape road. Because of its special location, many “Optimums Prime” pass by everyday and sometimes some armored vehicles too. They give my relaxing life a hint of being around the battlefield. Perhaps it is good luck. After I have rented the studio, bamboo, what I have always adored, is planted along the street. And, maybe the community representatives notice my lack of exercise and decide to install work out equipment on the side of the road. Anyhow, I decide to jug home.