

An Artist Statement On *A Moment of Truth*

Lightwave Memory series suggests a pair of contradictory beings in the motion of drawing a line: a line representing motion and an ink blot stillness. And another pair collectively: the collective of the lines representing an undefined time and the collective of individual dots the relativity of present. This series covers mostly my mind and tools present at my hand. What might a drawing become if I extend my observation to other objects out of my reach? What about other people's observation? Would other nature beings, such as rocks, rivers, stars and so on, have their independent mind?

For if there is "such cognition independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the sense",¹ could it mean that such cognition might not depend on the continuity of spacetime in order to recognize itself, is not restricted by sensibilities and intuitions so that it can always convert all objects to intuitions, and might have taken place before the beginning of spacetime?

Time, distance, perspectives and dimension are like frameworks of nature. Instead of seeing nature beings attaching their matter information to these frameworks, might it be also possible to see framework information attaching to nature beings' independent cognition? If the attached framework information could be reduced, might the mind, cognition or intuition of nature beings be revealed?

Referencing other people's photographs as a method of seeing nature from other people's emotion and mind, I choose arbitrarily some parts of their photos to draw. When nature beings appear in their fragmented forms, we might not perceive them in the same way as before. We might not recognize their names, locations and time. A fragmented image might separate our preconception about nature beings from coherence with their matter, which reflects attached framework information. From our side, the unfamiliarity might also reduce our subjective sensibility towards them. The drawing of a fragmented image might become relevant to the projection of an image of a nature being's independent intuition.

Visually fragmented images also help lower barrier to integration between disparate forms in drawing. Assembling images in drawing, I try not to plan and not to imagine what the drawing might look like, so that I will not attach my mind, and the movement of the pen to the frameworks. Once a pen is picked up, there is a continuous flow from my mind to the pen and then onto the paper. This focused, homogenous act of drawing might establish a communication with the intuitions of the nature beings and is reflected pictorially by the amalgamation of different fragments. In light of Kant's observation in "The Transcendental Aesthetic First Section On Space":

All things, as outer intuitions, are next to one another in space.²

The synthesis of fragments might also rely on retaining dissonance among disparate and diverse components of matter before fragmentation. Tensions could bind them as a whole. Giacomo Leopardi wrote:

Nature has many qualities and principles that are at once harmonious and dissonant, rather, that harmonize and that mutually sustain one another by virtue of their contrariety.

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 136.

² *Ibid.*, 177.

And one contrary not only does not destroy the theory of another but in fact proves it (Zibaldone, 2046).³

Yet, harmony would not imply a predetermined destination for this series of drawings. The distinctive nature of the individual parts plays an important role in reflecting the tensions which separate and connect them as a whole. In our world, this amalgamation might not be permanent, or may only last for a short moment. This instability could suggest that it might take place at the boundary of existence and non-existence. Italian theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli speaks of his view on the world:

So, for the moment we have to stay with the Standard Model. It may not be very elegant, but it works remarkably well at describing the world around us. And who knows? Perhaps on closer inspection it is not the model that lacks elegance. Perhaps it is we who have not yet learnt to look at it from just the right point of view; one which would reveal its hidden simplicity. For now, this is what we know of matter:

A handful of types of elementary particles, which vibrate and fluctuate constantly between existence and non-existence and swarm in space even when it seems that there is nothing there, combine together to infinity like the letters of a cosmic alphabet to tell the immense history of galaxies, of the innumerable starts of sunlight, of mountains, woods and fields of grain, of the smiling faces of the young at parties, and of the night sky studded with stars.⁴

This transient state could have encompassed the cycle of the universe in one inclusive glance. Each drawing in this series can be viewed as an independent transient domain, or as the next transient state after its antecedent. Thus there can be an infinite set of different possible drawings in this series.

The 18th century painter Shen Zongqian (沈宗騫) adopts a concept, 'opening-closing' (kaihe 開合)⁵, which relies on a pictorial scheme to reflect the progression of time, and thus the cycle of the universe. The lower part, or the foreground is considered as the 'opening' where landscape objects are placed 'to produce inexhaustible sensations' (*ibid.*). This corresponds to Spring, when ten thousand beings are born and develop. 'Closing' refers to the upper part, which should 'make the painting concrete by forming a whole without excess' (*ibid.*). It is comparable with Winter, 'showing the myriad things in contemplation and repose' (*ibid.*). Through the contemplation on the continuing cycle of the universe, literati painted nature to express their sentiments via brush and ink. There is a contented adaptation of the progression of spacetime. To the contrary, *A Moment of Truth* is not created under a methodical approach to pictorial organisation. Nature beings are not placed to match their attributes and spatial meanings. Contemplation of this clustered whole might perhaps embrace a special moment in the cycle of the universe, and the blackness in the continuity of the spacetime framework.

³ Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, trans. Kathleen Baldwin, Richard Dixon, David Gibbons, Ann Goldstein, Gerard Slowey, Martin Thom, and Pamela Williams (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 896.

⁴ Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, trans. Simon Carnell and Erica Segre (U.K.: Penguin Books, 2016), 35-36.

⁵ Frank Vigneron, *Shen Zongqian, porte-parole de la tradition lettrée au dix-huitième siècle* (Lille: A.N.R.T., 1999), 167. The text is from the chapter 'Capturing the Impetus' (取勢) of the treatise *The Study on Painting by Mustard Seed-Boat* (芥舟學畫編).