

Mirror Mirror on the Wall: Transplanted Student Identity in the Virtual Classroom

Curatorial Proposal



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18/04/2021

Contents

1. Curatorial Statement.....	3
2. Selected Artworks.....	4
2.1 Hong Wei, Fragmented Time.....	4
2.2 Tang Nannan, Dreaming Slope.....	5
2.3 Hsiao Sheng-chien, Return.....	5
2.4 Philippe Parreno, Marquee.....	7
2.5 Shinseungback Kimyonghun, Nonfacial Mirror.....	8
2.6 Cheuk Wing-nam, No Sense of Touch.....	9
2.7 Daniel Arsham, Excavated Walls.....	10
3. Transplanted Student Identity.....	12
3.1 Duality of Identity.....	12
3.2 Virtual Classroom and Digital Culture.....	14
3.3 Five Dimensions.....	15
3.3.1 “I”: Fragmentation and Fragmented Self.....	15
3.3.2 “Me”: Social Media and Self-presentation.....	17
3.3.3 “School”: Disruption and In-between.....	18
3.3.4 “Teacher”: Participatory Culture and Empowered Subjectivity.....	21
3.3.5 “Classmate”: Digital Divide and Anxiety.....	22
3.4 Metaphorical Mirror.....	23
3.4.1 Lacun’s Mirror.....	24
3.4.2 Representations of Mirror.....	25
4. Overall Spatial Design.....	26
4.1 Interaction between the Audience and Space.....	26
4.2 Five Interdependent Turnings.....	28
4.2.1 Juxtapositions.....	29
4.2.2 Merging.....	32
4.3 Interactive Screen Wall.....	33
4.4 Voyeuristic Live Camera.....	34
5. Related Programs.....	35
5.1 Documentary Screenings.....	35
5.1.1 Screenagers, 2016.....	35
5.1.2 Secondary School, 2003.....	35
5.2 Student Rooftop Roast.....	35
5.3 Round-table Discussion on Clubhouse.....	36
References.....	37

1. Curatorial Statement

Mind games about virtuality seem to get upgraded and penetrate more domains during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students who sat in classrooms with concrete walls every day are looking instead at themselves mirrored on electronic screens and are trying to identify themselves as students in virtual classrooms. Five members of this curatorial team who also have been drawn into such transplantation with constant uncertainty about our identities try to bring up this issue and share our thoughts and feelings.

To probe into such student identity transplanted from physical space to the virtual one, we have compared some researches on student identity in respective contexts of physical and virtual learning environments, drawn upon literature on philosophical and psychological concepts of the “self”, and reflected on our experiences and feelings concerning transplanted student identity. In this way, we articulated this identity from five perspectives: "I", "Me", "School", "Teacher", and "Classmates" and related to respectively five cultural phenomena in the digital context (fragmentation, self-presentation on social media, disruption, participatory culture, and digital divide).

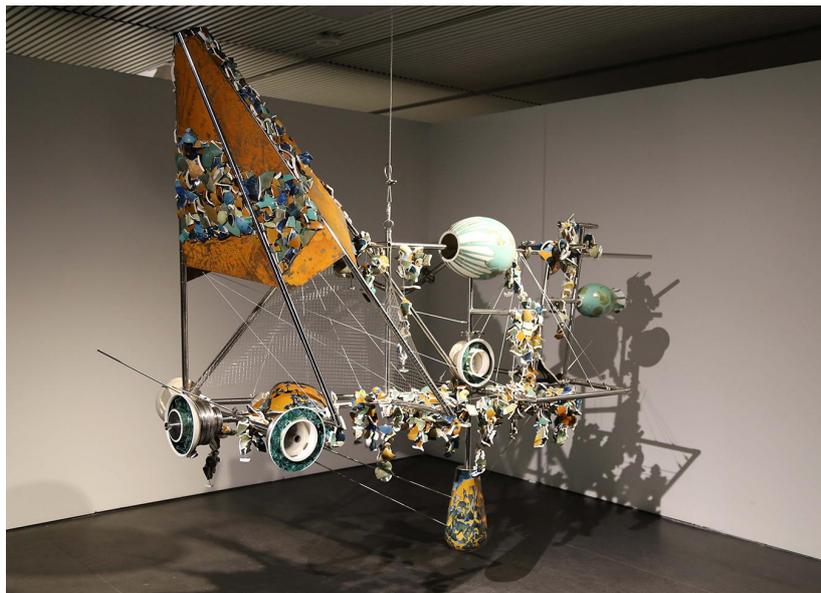
Concrete installations and virtual videos are chosen to be juxtaposed and thus altogether to construct five interdependent spaces responding to the five dimensions above. It is this complicated mix of the self and the others, the technology and the culture, virtuality and physicality, and the past and the present that make student identity such a fascinating subject in our digital

society.

2. Selected Artworks

2.1 Hong Wei, *Fragmented Time*

Hong Wei's dynamic installation, *Fragmented Time*, gives a fragmented form to 'history'. Ceramic, stainless steel, and rusted iron, these material materials were created in different civilizations and thus carry different memories of "time". These memories exist outside of the human will and constitute an independent meaning of the materials themselves. The time fragments metaphorically represented by the porcelain, the architecture of the stainless steel frame to reconstruct the fragments, and the dynamic installation form of the work combine to create a syncretic experience of the subject and historical time for the viewer.

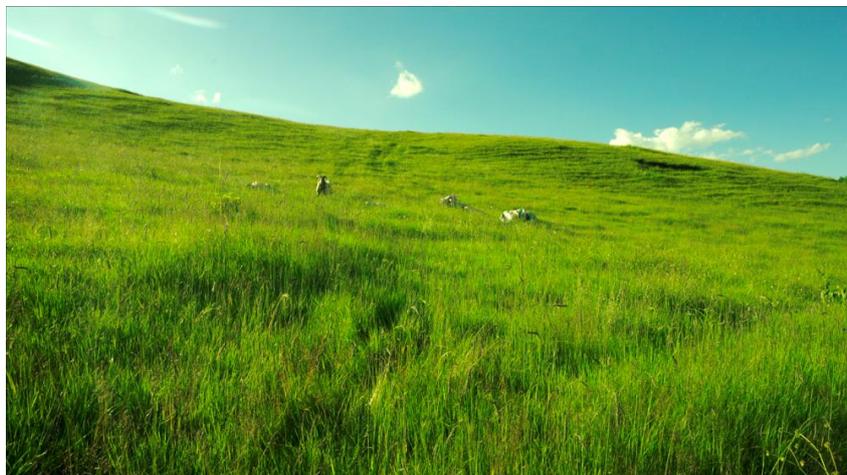


Hong Wei, *Fragmented Time*, 2015, Dynamic Installation. Image © courtesy

of the artist.

2.2 Tang Nannan, *Dreaming Slope*

Dreaming Slope consists of three videos documenting from different angles several people including the artists wrapped in plastic-woven bags rolling down an unknown meadow of Tibet with a sheep. Every person insulated in this industrial material clearly knows that there exist other people but is unable to actually see and touch them in which case they have to sensitively detect others' movement to avoid bumping into each other and get hurt. Meanwhile, it is impossible for them to see the beautifully dream-like outside and they only can “dream” about it.



Tang Nannan, *Dreaming Slope*, 2019, Color Video. Image © courtesy of the
artist.

2.3 Hsiao Sheng–chien, *Return*

Wooden stakes, wires, and wooden boxes were used by Hsiao to build a

prosperous banyan tree. In each small wooden box that hangs from branches, a power device was put in to simulate the call of the bird. The artist remembers walking down the road as a child after school and seeing noisily chirping sparrows perched in trees and on telephone wires; before long, this utterly natural scene was no more. The development of modern industrial civilization has forever changed the environment and the way in which human beings live. In many places, the sounds of frogs, birds, and crickets have been replaced by the rumble of cars and trucks. I seek to recreate the familiar sounds of his childhood memories, using the very same industrial technology that powers these machines.

In the center of the installation, a section of tree trunk slowly revolves like a turntable, artificially lit with the shadows of wires creating the impression of leaves and branches at dusk. Meanwhile, an electronic device plays bird calls—with the sound alternating between sources to mirror the auditory effect of a flock of birds moving from tree to tree. Machinery which might usually be seen as enacting modern 'progress' is altered, humanized, to carry a sense of hand-made warmth. The slowed pace of Hsiao's slowly rotating trunk points to the mechanics of old musical boxes, fairground rides even, and objects from earlier times that conjure distant memories.



Hsiao Sheng-chien, *Return*, 2018, Kinetic Installation. Image © courtesy of the artist.

2.4 Philippe Parreno, *Marquee*

Marquee 2018 is one of a number of *Marquee* works which Philippe Parreno has been creating since 2006. From the artist's ongoing series of *Marquees*, the work consists of a marquee installed above golden motorized shutters which open and close according to a program conceived by the artist. This choreography is in tune with *Marquee*'s light animation. For the artist, a *Marquee* is an intervention in the display space that suggests the presence of cinema, questions the boundaries between reality and fiction, and explores the nebulous realm in which the real and the imagined blur and combine.

This artwork is able to 'see' its surroundings and its own reflection in the mirror, just like the central watchtower in Bentham's Panopticon, and those shutters make such surveillance more covert and easier to be neglected.

These glowing pieces span the realms of sculpture, architecture, and art, acting as ambiguous gateways between the inside and the outside world, between the gazing and the gazed world. It invites us to radically re-evaluate the nature of reality, memory, the passage of time, and the gaze.



Philippe Parreno, Marquee, 2018, Lighting Installation. Image © courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper.

2.5 Shinseungback Kimyonghun, *Nonfacial Mirror*

Shinseungback Kimyonghun is a Seoul-based artistic duo consisting of computer engineer Shin Seung Back and artist Kim Yong Hun. Their collaborative practice explores technology and humanity. The mirror of the artistic duo Shinseungback Kimyonghun is equipped with a facial recognition

system allowing it to detect if a face presents itself to him, the mirror questions our relationship to our image and our narcissistic need in the face of artificial intelligence technologies capable of using this same image.



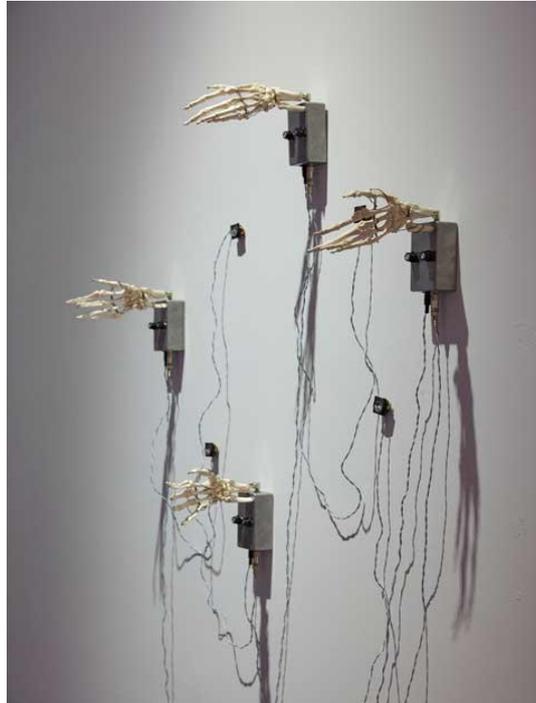
Shinseungback Kimyonghun, Nonfacial Mirror, 2013, Mirror Installation.

Image © courtesy of the artistic duo.

2.6 Cheuk Wing-nam, *No Sense of Touch*

This artwork illustrates a feeling of "can't be too close, but somewhat eager for closeness and contact". Cheuk Wing-nam 's work *No sense of Touch* combines a wrist skeleton and a Tremen (an electronic music device that can produce a scream by shortening or extending the distance between the antenna and the hand through interaction in the air). Audiences would like

to shake hands with the skeleton, but whenever they approach, the work will make ear-piercing high frequencies.



Cheuk Wing-nam, *No Sense of Touch*, 2016, Electronic Music Installation.

Image © courtesy of the artist.

2.7 Daniel Arsham, *Excavated Walls*

Artist Daniel Arsham carves out large holes into faux-concrete walls and edges into the interaction between mankind and architecture and draws particular attention to man's capacity for creating, destroying, and repurposing manmade and natural materials both historically and contemporaneously. Visitors can experience the artworks through the 300-foot long wall installation to engage with their surroundings in a new

context and reflect on “mankind’s place in history” with the repetitions of carvings to create a human-like silhouette.

Arsham has made this installation specifically for different museums (SCAD Museum of Art in Savannah and HOW Museum in Shanghai) and this time he presents this site-specific work at Para Site in Hong Kong to further explore the interaction between man and the surrounding environment.



Daniel Arsham, Excavated Walls, 2018, Installation. Image © courtesy of the artist.

3. Transplanted Student Identity

3.1 Duality of Identity

Examining the historical development, there are three modes to approach the notion of identity (Tao, 2014). Identity has been long centered at the “self” which is essentially tied to the mind, a kind of thinking substance, for many rationalist philosophers during the Enlightenment such as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant. Construction of the “self” In the field of psychology was differentiated by James as the “I” and “Me”. The former one is the self as a subject of experience (self as subject) which can be manifested in the actions that individuals engage in. Thus this exhibition sheds light on the action, multitasking in the virtual classroom is highlighted and relates it to fragmentation in the digital context. Meanwhile, “Me” is integrated responses to the attitudes and evaluations of others, the self as an object of experience, which leads this exhibition to focus on self-branding as responsive behavior of the student to others.

Then, the socially-centered view of social identity gained its popularity as it was influenced by European sociology and social psychology since the 18th century. This new view was to divide the self from society and to emphasize the role of society, the “Other”. According to Althusser, social identity is inherent. In traditional societies where ties of consanguinity were of great importance, people can not choose whether they are a boy or a girl, a

nobleman or a slave, whether they have the right to be the firstborn. Lacun also coined the theory of mirror stage to theory emphasize that after the mirror stage, the child is forced to identify with the cultural symbolic order of the transcendental authority of the cultural symbolic order, the father or the male symbols. When it comes to student identity, this dual construction is also crucial as Wikipedia defines that “a student is primarily a person enrolled in a school or other educational institution who attends classes in a course to attain the appropriate level of mastery of a subject under the guidance of an instructor and who devotes time outside class to do whatever activities the instructor assigns that are necessary either for class preparation or to submit evidence of progress towards that mastery.” From this definition, this exhibition view the important “other” of student identity in the official educational system are the school, teachers, and classmates. Therefore, “self” and “other” emerge as the duality of the construction of identity in this exhibition.

Avoid being an essentialist theory of otherness, post-modernists view identity as a constant process of change rather than being static. Postmodern identity is characterized by a kind of decentering encompassing contradictory identities. In terms of postmodern student identity, students in the virtual classroom not only obtain identities from the current online environment and relationships but also through the social context of the past and personal experiences and expectations as offline students.

Examining these three perspectives of identity, this exhibition tries to explore both “self” (“I” and “Me”) and the “other” (school, teacher, classmates) of student identity through a postmodernist lens. Therefore, changes in these five aspects brought about by the intervention of virtual classrooms are highlighted.

3.2 Virtual Classroom and Digital Culture

A virtual classroom is an important product in a digital society. It is a digital learning environment that allows teachers and students to connect online in real-time. Virtual classrooms utilize video conferencing, online whiteboards and screen sharing to allow educators to hold live lectures, virtual office hours, and discussions with students in an interactive setting. Virtual classrooms are meant to replicate the experience of physical classrooms, with the added benefits of file sharing, instant feedback and interaction and are ideal in distance learning situations.

Since it is given birth in the digital context, it inevitably intervenes and even disrupts certain aspects of traditional schooling through some characteristics of digital culture. This exhibition focus on these five: fragmentation, self-branding on social media, disruption, participatory culture, and the digital divide.

3.3 Five Dimensions

The interplay between the five dimensions of student identity and the five characteristics of digital culture constitutes a common thread that runs through this exhibition. Relating fragmentation, self-branding on social media, disruption, participatory culture, and digital divide to the roles of “I”, “Me”, school, teacher, and classmates in student identity respectively, this exhibition asks questions about changed student identity in the online classroom and tries to construct a space for discussion rather than offering concrete answers. In this space, five questions leading audiences to exploration will emerge as follows.

3.3.1 “I”: Fragmentation and Fragmented Self

In contrast to the previous era when international students had to complete their lectures in the classroom, international students in the online classroom era are no longer bound by the space of the classroom and can listen to lectures in their favorite places, such as dormitories and cafes, which are more relaxing. Students can also choose to take online classes during their commute. As a direct result of the expansion of venues, international students are able to have the power to multitask: they can listen to lectures while eating and having fun in the dormitory; they can chat with their peers while listening to lectures in the café. Even if you are not interested in the content of the teacher's lecture at all, you can choose to "hang up" on the

online class and turn to your own business. This kind of multitasking is actually the pursuit and practice of international students' fragmentation of class time and space. In the "fragmentation" stage of the online class era, international students are more concerned about their individual needs and feelings, and the value of individuality, which was previously ignored or even damaged, has been highlighted and paid attention to as never before. In order to achieve effective communication and experience, the group of international students who used to attend classes together began to separate, and each student began to pay attention to the segmented and individualized community characteristics, as well as their own personality and needs.

It is undeniable that such a fragmented class style is, to a certain extent, a response to the impatient mindset of the contemporary youth, and to a certain extent, it has impacted on the traditional patterned and dogmatic class mode, but the same fragmented class experience also causes the overall thinking of international students to be "fragmented" in class, which makes them lack of understanding of the structure and logic of class content.

In such a context, students are no longer seeking to have a better learning experience in the classroom as before, but to see if they can juggle academics and other things in multitasking. The desire to get twice as much done with half the effort and the ability to make good use of fragmented time has become the object of students' craze nowadays.

3.3.2 “Me”: Social Media and Self-presentation

Social media is increasingly used by individuals to promote themselves and gain a digital reputation. On social platforms, users exert all the personalized settings to engage in individual expression and online interaction leading to that the “Me” of self-identity “is now affected, to a greater degree, through the popularity or feedback on certain aspects of the user’s life that they are willing to share” (Ganda, 2014).

Virtual classroom adopts some settings the same as those on social media offering students an opportunity of being different from other people, sharing life with others, which were not normally done in a physical classroom. Take Zoom for an example. Students can set up and change profile picture using their favorite photos, edit their names, choose a virtual background, and apply some advanced features or a filter to your video display that allows you to smooths out the skin tone on your face, minimizes the appearance of imperfections, and presents a more polished looking appearance. When students present unique experiences and personalities that they want others to see through these personalized settings, It is the unique combination of skills, this telling of the story is in interaction with others’ feedback, implicit or explicit, received by students leading to certain responses contradicting “Me”.

Notably, the live camera setting also affects students’ responses to a kind of alienated gazes of others through the lens and thus mediates student

self-identity. There is robust evidence on how eye contact improves connection—faster responses, more memorization of faces, and increased likeability and attractiveness. These tools that make interactions organically rewarding are compromised over video (Bohannon, Herbert, Pelz, Rantanen, 2013). During conferences with 3 or more people, it can be impossible to distinguish mutual gaze between any 2 people. In this sense, the camera is the spotlight and spotlight effect which leads the student in the virtual classroom to tend to believe they are being noticed more than they really are. Thus, they are more likely to do self-performance orientated by the virtual others before the camera.

3.3.3 “School”: Disruption and In-between

With the emergence of online teaching mode and virtual classroom, schools' power of discipline and surveillance is weakened and end to some extent. Disruption was caused to traditional schools and student's identities. At the same time, only courses enable schools to extend the power of knowledge impartment. Therefore, students become “in-between” the learner and the student.

(1) Discipline and Surveillance on Behavior and Language

Under the traditional teaching mode, students should obey disciplines and norms, for example, students should not leave the campus at will during school hours, and should not whisper to each other during exams. In online

classes, students are no longer under the supervision and surveillance of schools, thus traditional disciplines were dispelled. Moreover, schools cease to be the only ones with a major power in the education system during online courses. The power of surveillance was decentralized to the parents and the electronic surveillance system, like an intelligent monitoring system. Also, parents are responsible for supervising whether their children listen to lectures carefully at home; the intelligent monitoring system plays an anti-cheating effect during exams, to supervise whether students turn on other computer programs during examinations. Besides, during online teaching, students are no longer required to wear school uniforms, instead, they could wear more personalized and differentiated clothes, which causes disruption to traditional school discipline and student's identity.

(2) Differentiated Teaching Mode

Studies in The Role of School in Adolescents' Identity Development show that "At school, messages may unintentionally be communicated to adolescents concerning whom they should or can be through differentiation and selection, teaching strategies and teacher expectations." In traditional teaching mode, schools implement graded education mode which consists of selected and differentiated teaching strategies, based on students' learning abilities, and teachers have different expectations of students. Differentiation and selections from school may unintentionally and subtly leave a profound influence on students' self-cognition, self-judgments and future goals. While

in online teaching, for the convenience and efficiency, the teaching mode and the level of difficulty of homework are the same for all students, which causes disruption to the educational functions of school on students' identity development.

Meanwhile, the power of the knowledge impartment of school is extended due to online courses and collaboration with parents, which also indicates that its power of surveillance on students' absorption of knowledge and academic performance is finding another way to rebuild itself. Schools apply technology to develop new evaluation and monitor systems to score each student's performance and align with parents to further guarantee the impartment off school, which reconstructs the surveillance once cut off by the physical distance. This supervisory system of the knowledge impartment re-formed by schools, parents, and the electronic system obscures the traditional students' identity and a new student identity comes into being—the middleman between the learner and the student.

Students are expected to become learners with initiative in learning on one hand but on the other, they still get directed and monitored. From Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, a learner is "a person who is finding out about a subject or how to do something." When the learner and the student are compared in The Glossary of Education Reform, "learners can learn without teachers, but students are only students when they have teachers." Therefore, the learner and the student are inevitably intertwined concerning student

identity in the virtual classroom.

A LEARNER...	A STUDENT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learns anytime, anywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learns in a classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• directs & supports their own learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is directed by the teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• works at their own pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• works within a defined time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is motivated by the mastery of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is motivated by grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develops own learning goals and monitors own progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• follows goals that are set & monitored by the teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• achieves by active collaboration and feedback with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• achieves by listening and following instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• designs learning experiences based on passions & interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• experiences teacher-designed activities and projects

Picture 1: Difference between learner and student

3.3.4 “Teacher”: Participatory Culture and Empowered Subjectivity

In today's online course order, students' autonomy is improved. Instead of passively receiving knowledge, they can better participate in the contribution of the course through chatboxes and discussion boards. More students can speak at the same time, sharing links and pictures becomes very convenient, and the online course platform realizes the partial empowerment of students. This new classroom order can be understood as a participatory culture brought by the digital context, that is, students actively participate in classroom teaching through digital media means in order to achieve diversity and creative expression and interaction mode. The

boundaries between traditional knowledge "producers"(teachers) and "consumers"(students) become blurry.

It doesn't mean teachers are losing control of the course and give in to such a "participatory culture". In many aspects, teachers are still dominant, such as hosts, the right to share screen, the setting to turn off all audience's microphones, the hierarchy still exists in some ways.

3.3.5 "Classmate": Digital Divide and Anxiety

In the period of online classes, although students all have access to technology, it does not mean that they have equal access to knowledge and opportunities but, on the contrary, the divide will increase. According to some research, the different socioeconomic status of families also affects students' habits in using computers and the Internet, resulting in differences in learning outcomes. Online courses require students to be self-responsible, self-motivated, and able to communicate with teachers and other students through the Internet with the support of communication technology. The ability to perform well in this context is affected by both personal qualities and cultural background (Isman, Gazi, Aksal, 2010). According to research by the School of Education of the University of Hong Kong, in the era of online classes, students from families with higher socioeconomic status can actively and effectively use electronic equipment and information, which are called "productive users". But most students from ordinary families still spend most

of their time in social life and entertainment when facing electronic devices, which are called "struggling users". Such differences in use can lead to the ones in the knowledge that can affect social mobility. Similar arguments have been made in the US. Robert Putnam, a public policy scholar at Harvard University in the United States, has argued that the use of information technology can affect social mobility.

In comparison with the productive users, those who are struggling to control the digital resources will be absolutely at disadvantage. In online classes, the gap between among classmates will be increased. In this way, there will be some anxiety between the classmates in competition for educational resources. Meanwhile, students' contact with the outside world and educational resources is more dependent on technology and media. These inequalities between classmates and the digital divide are inherent and difficult to be controlled. So the students would have a sense of powerlessness in information and education, also feel hopeless in contacting and competing with their classmates. Indeed, the unreality of online teaching and the digital divide have caused students to have unprecedented anxiety about education.

3.4 Metaphorical Mirror

This exhibition will refer to the mirror as an important concept of the exhibition because the mirror can be a medium to understand the world.

When a subject is looking for a corresponding relationship in the interaction with the mirror, they can establish the self-image. At the same time, a mirror image also helps the subject to identify the "other" that is different from the self. Therefore, the mirror has the function of establishing the self-boundary, we face the mirror again and again, but also in the face of such a proposition—"who I am".

3.4.1 Lacan's Mirror

According to Lacan's mirror theory, those infants cannot understand the existence of themselves at the beginning, that is to say, at the initial stage, infants cannot identify the image in the mirror as themselves or others, and their cognition of themselves is in a blank state. "Mirror" is a bridge between him and the outside world. Through different mirror images, he can know himself from different aspects, thus completing his own self-cognition. The mirroring stage refers to that infants from 6 to 18 months develop the initial fuzzy self-awareness, gradually recognize their own image in the mirror, and then identify their real body with themselves in the mirror, so as to complete the process of self-identity and overall identity (Taihei Fukuhara, 2002). Lacan believes that human consciousness has already been influenced by other people's words before it comes into being, that is, "the unconscious is other people's words".

The construction of the self is a process of continuous self-identification

from the mirror image, but the process of self-awakening can only be realized with the help of "the other". The "mirror" in the mirror theory refers to the eyes of others. When a child looks in the mirror, the image in the mirror is not only his own mirror image but also another self belonging to the other. The "I" in this mirror image, as the other of the subject, is the origin of all the "others" in later life (Zhou Ziqiang, 2008). As a kind of medium, "mirror" is in the mirror stage, through which we can get our own understanding. The child imagines the other as himself, and this misidentification continues for the rest of his life.

3.4.2 Representations of Mirror

The concept of the mirror in a lot of film and television works also have more rich, such as TV series Black Mirror is about the transformation of science and technology brought to human daily life. The title symbolizes those displays easily seen in our daily life, such as mobile phones, computers, televisions, etc.. However, this black mirror is not as "perceptible" as a flat piece of glass which reflects light, which means that when people look at it they no longer see themselves reflected in it but something that is often anonymous and passive. Thus in this exhibition, electronic displays, camera lens, and screens, all are mirrors in digital context constructing student identity in the virtual classroom.

Look into the mirror, human's gaze contains a lot of mixed emotional states. In the movie The Joker the mirror witnesses the struggle, inferiority

complex, narcissism and so on in the mirror; in the well-known fairy tale Snow White, the Evil Queen repeated the question "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" and the Magic Mirror see the endless voracity and viciousness. Therefore, this exhibition uses "mirror mirror on the wall" as its title and keep asking five questions about student identity transplanted in the virtual classroom.

4. Overall Spatial Design

4.1 Interaction between the Audience and Space

Daniel Arsham's Excavate Walls occupies the whole space which is constituted by a range of excavated walls with irregular breaks. It is at the turnings of each wall that all the artworks are exhibited revealing five layers of student identity this exhibition wants to explore. Before entering small spaces behind walls, the five questions about student identity in the virtual classroom will be printed on corresponding beams which visitors can carry the question to go on probing each aspect of student identity.

These walls are in a crossed and staggered form in which audiences must wander forward without knowing where the end is, which creates an encounter and audiences can bump into arts and engage more interactivity with space and with the artworks. Meanwhile, these walls are not isolated from each other but can be seen from all these breaks that initially are irregularly shaped and it is only when one reaches the end that one realizes

that the final one has a human form, which induces people to explore various layers of identity.

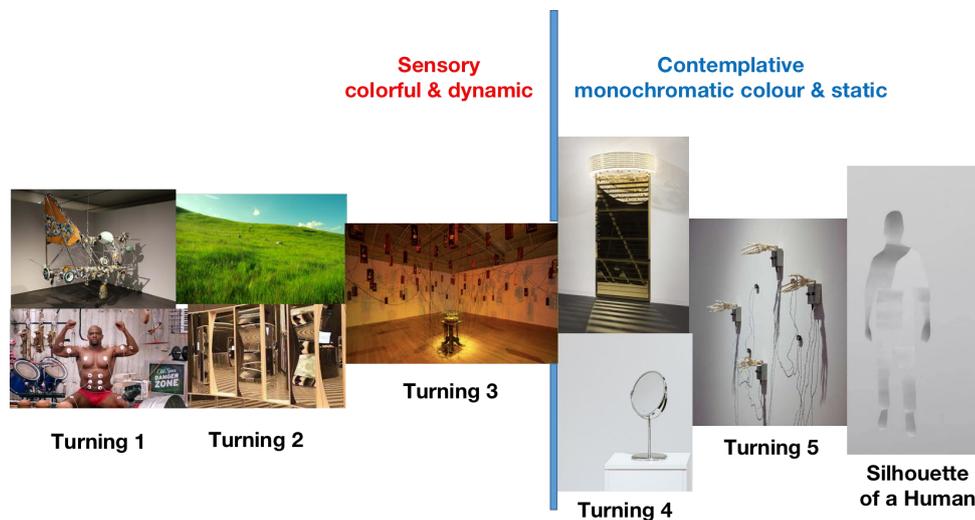
This purely white and peaceful space allows audiences for further contemplation. People who walk among the walls weave in opposite directions and they become a part of the spectacle for viewers outside this piece (see Picture 2). The work itself is made up of a series of static parts but then forms a dynamic change with human involvement. Such acts of watching/being watched and static-dynamic relation represent the postmodern nature of identity.



Picture 2: People weaving in opposite directions

The sequence of these five tiny spaces inscribed within Arsham's work tends to guide viewers from sensual stimuli to contemplation, which also echoes the feature of the exhibition hall at Para Site (see Picture 3). As the first dimension of student identity presented to the audience, the juxtaposition of Muscle Music and Fragmented Time stir up spectators' minds and drag them into a kind of intensively multi-sensory experience leading to exhaustion. Then,

Dreaming Slope calms these startled viewers with a serene depiction of grassland scenery while they can also hear birds sound of the art installation from the next space. Following the twittering which recalls every morning on the way to school, Return exhibits an eccentric scene where lots of creepy human-made kinetic boxes are imitating natural sounds altogether. After these three sensory artworks, another three white and minimalist artworks cool down the viewing experience but continue to call for spectators' own subjectivity to question, to think, and to contemplate. Finally, after going through all these five aspects of student identity, they find a silhouette of a human as the last part of the artwork Excavated Walls. The whole visit is a process of peeling off the constituting layers of student identity.



Picture 3: Sequence of artworks

4.2 Five Interdependent Turnings

Each turning of Excavate Walls constitutes an interdependent space for a question printed on the wall about transplanted student identity in a digital

context: what “I”, “Me”, “School”, “Teacher,” “Classmate”. The juxtaposition between video image and installation is applied at the first two spaces to accentuate not only sensory experience but also the tension between virtuality and physicality while the next one tries to confuse these two notions by presenting a kinetic installation that is producing artificial birdsong. What follows is another juxtaposition but this time it is between two concrete installations. One is still questioning the nature of reality and the gaze in the secret surveillance that monitors everything while the other has a camera and a digital system as inherent parts of the artwork directly to capture human faces and encode them, not needing the slightest effort. In the last space, there only exists one artwork alone simplifying and merging everything, filled with clarity, neatness, efficiency but also barren and doldrums.

4.2.1 Juxtapositions

(1) What is “I”: Fragmented Time and Old Spice “Muscle Music” Video



Fragmented Time + Old Spice “Muscle Music” Video

The first artwork the audience see is Hong Wei's dynamic installation *Fragmented Time*. A description of the exhibit stands next to the installation

for visitors to read. This installation is undoubtedly beautiful, showing us the charm of "fragmented" space and "fragmented" time. A new experience is engendered from the patchwork of these pieces, which indicates how students seemly are able to rid themselves of traditional constraints and enjoy fragmented time and space during online courses. They can be absent-minded, free to play on their phones while pretending to listen and wear a pajama. They can be in a bathroom, at a cafe, or on a bus and do not have to always stick to classrooms. This experience is undoubtedly new and enticing, signaling that fragmentation is gaining traction with the student community in the context of online classes.

The floor is covered with small pieces of paper named "pre1.0," "midterm," "final," "internship materials," "forms," etc. with Word, Excel, PPT icons. Small pieces of paper from apps such as Weibo, Zoom, Youtube, and TikTok are also sprinkled around this exhibit for visitors to pick up at will. This "physical" fragmentation allows the audience to understand the fragmentation of time and space in online classes. The audience can bring pieces of paper to the next area where a projector and a pair of tables and chairs are set up in the middle. There are a laptop, iPad, cell phone, and a bubble noodle model on the table. After the audience sits down, these electronic products will present an interface of virtual class on Zoom, video website, and Weibo respectively; simulating the current situation of multitasking during the online class for students.

Before viewers can figure all these out, all the display devices suddenly start to play the Muscle Music video. This is an ad made by a creative agency Wieden+ Kennedy Portland for Old Spice, an American brand of male grooming products. This features former NFL player and actor Terry Crews shirtless in a strange cabinet of curiosity-type of music room using his muscles to play various musical instruments. This video "physically" demonstrates "multitasking" images in a very exaggerated and spectacle way. The provocative words at the end of the film exemplify the craze of multitasking among students in online classes. But at the same time, the film is also alienating. The shaking of the muscles also makes people feel uncomfortable. This visual stimulation, rather than a statement, is in contrast to the artwork *Fragmented Time*. The result of students' fragmented selves is likely to be anxiety and loss of selves. The exaggerated performance of music muscle allows the audience to understand the polarized form of multitasking and anomalies in the context of fragmentation and stimulate self-reflection.

(2) What is "Me": *Dreaming Slope* and *Distorting Mirrors*



Dreaming Slope + *Distorting Mirrors*

Along with *Dreaming Slope*, there will be an installation consisting of four distorting mirrors and a photograph called *bliss* in this space to explore the

“Me” of self-identity. These mirrors have their names printed on their frames: Network Profile Picture, Filter, Screen Name, and Live Camera, and there is a sentence saying “Welcome to brand yourself.” The photo of a green hill and blue sky with clouds serving as the backdrop is the well-known default computer wallpaper of the Windows XP system, accompanying a tag saying “Recommended virtual background on Zoom.”

4.2.2 Merging

(1) What is “School”: Return

Return uses man-made devices to imitate natural creation and to recall distant memories while virtual classrooms also try to simulate everything in the real classrooms but all these seem to lead to a kind of quirkiness. Hidden as students are in those little dark wooden boxes, they are intrinsically linked to the others who affect their identities, such as teachers, parents, and schools.

(2) What is “Teacher”: Marquee and Nonfacial Mirror



Dreaming Slope + Nonfacial Mirror

Marquee is an exhibit of glass shutters which can relate to the gaze of

teachers. In the traditional class, the relatively high platform allows teachers to have a full view of students' state, so they can monitor all corners of the classroom with a slight glance offering them a natural advantage but those shutters let this easily be forgotten or even be justified.

Beside Marquee is an interactive installation Nonfacial Mirror. This mirror exhibit is a mirror that can automatically recognize a face. When it recognizes a face, it will avoid it. If the audience wants to see the mirror directly, they should cover their own face to hide their original facial features. The “mirror” that was once used to monitor now becomes the antithesis since in virtual classrooms a teacher monitors students only counting on a camera lens with a fixed angle, which can be taken advantage of by students to pretend concentration.

(3) What is “Classmate”: No Sense of Touch

This artwork skillfully transforms interpersonal connection and alienation into a specific and unique sensory experience. The sharp tweet of the device echoes the desire of the students on the electronic platform to contact others, but they are subject to various restrictions and obstacles. The unequal connection leads to the despair and coldness of the underprivileged groups, which are like forgotten bones. When they approach, the sharp voice interprets the new anxiety of the online education era.

4.3 Interactive Screen Wall

Behind the human-shape silhouette in Excavated Walls, a wall filled with

screens will be placed at the end of the exhibition. It will project the audience's answers to the five questions about student identity, feelings about the online-class experience, and comments about this exhibition.



Picture 4: Rendering of the screen wall

4.4 Voyeuristic Live Camera

In order to build up a mix-mode exhibition, a live camera will be placed in the front of all breaks of Excavated Walls, steaming the paths of audiences on Zoom who weave in these layers of walls. This synchronized zoom process also interprets the characteristics of zoom and helps viewers understand this Internet platform more deeply and emphasizes the online platform of the lesson age and intertwining relationships among multiple layers of identities. Furthermore, one of the virtual backgrounds on Zoom will be chosen for this video. Online viewers can only see people's moving trajectories but they are unable to see the exhibition filling with a sense of unknown.

5. Related Programs

5.1 Documentary Screenings

5.1.1 Screenagers, 2016

Screenagers is a documentary created and directed by Delaney Ruston, a physician and film director, to describe growing up in a tech-saturated world where it is her opinion that balance needs to be drawn between screen time and screen-free time. In the documentary, filmmaker Delaney Ruston must decide if she should give an iPhone to her teenage daughter.

5.1.2 Secondary School, 2003

This is a documentary film on education in Hong Kong, directed by Hong Zhang. It depicts two English-medium secondary schools in Hong Kong (St. Jerome's Girls' Secondary School and Ying Wa College), including classes, morning meetings, teacher meetings, extra-curricular activities and parent workshops. The content focuses on issues such as teaching, discipline, students' values, the language of instruction and education reform. The film is shot in a direct cinematic style.

5.2 Student Rooftop Roast

This activity encourages students who are studying through the virtual classroom to go up to the stage set at school rooftops to shout out and

release concerns and feelings that teenagers would normally have when using the virtual classroom, which aims to create a humanistic playground for students' relaxation. The program also has the participation of parents, teachers, and advisors who are educational experts, which builds up a platform to allow different parties to interact, to understand each other, and thus to solve some problems brought by the digital classroom.

This idea comes from a popular Japanese TV show, Rooftop Confession Conference, which features middle school students standing on the rooftop of the school building and professing their romantic affection towards their schoolmates in public. This show also went viral in China and had a Chinese version called Teenager Said.



Picture 5: Screenshot from TV show Rooftop Confession Conference

5.3 Round-table Discussion on Clubhouse

A 24h discussion will be hosted on Clubhouse welcoming all people to talk about their online learning or online-teaching experience and how they think about it. Some scholars and experts doing research on this field will be

invited to randomly drop in the chat room and share their ideas.

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