

**PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE**

PORTFOLIO

2021

————— ZHEN FENG ANG —————

2023

Lightness, 2022

Hand carved paper cut-outs sew into shirt
with threads.

85x52 cm

Buddhists have the custom of burning paper items for god and ancestors. It could be clothings, miniature house models etc. Among these items, paper clothes are one of the most common ones. These paper items are often very delicate, even though it's created for the purpose of burning.





A snapshot from the documentation of burying the shirt.

Video documentation on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/827056056?share=copy>



'Snakes and Ladders' ,2023

Paper cutouts on wooden arch structure, acrylic water feature dripping onto clay, burned hand-made wooden hanger.

400 x 250 x 80cm, 50 x 180cm, 38 x 17cm



'Snakes and Ladders' installation view.



'Snakes and Ladders' installation view, the burned hanger.



'Snakes and Ladders' installation view, the 'Ladders'.



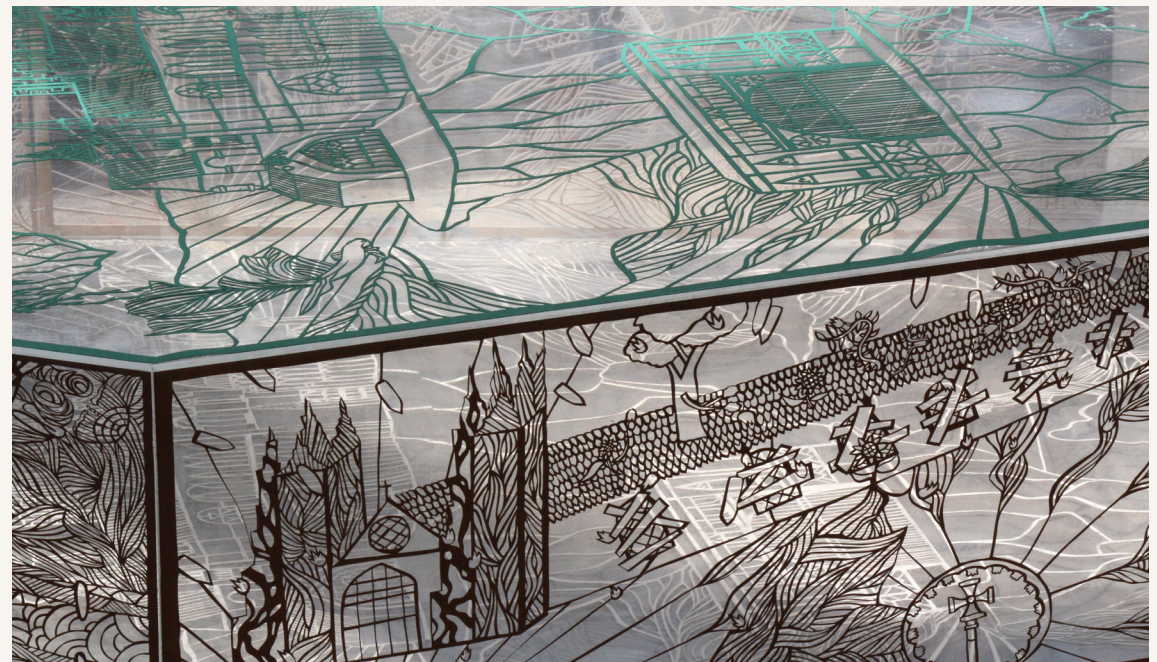
'Snakes and Ladders' installation view, the water feature.

ASHES, 2022

Group exhibition at Canterbury Cathedral, .

Hand carved paper cut-outs on clear acrylic coffin.
180x80 cm

This work is a symbol of death and birth, destruction, and reconstruction. Death of all things is inevitable, and so is birth. The saints buried at Canterbury Cathedral represent death and decay, but their spirit lives on and will inspire new believers. Although the cathedral was engulfed by fire twice, it was reborn from the ashes without exception, like the phoenix.



Installation view and details.



Honey Dipped, 2023

Paper cut-out stuck onto canvas and “dipped”
into resin.

30x40 cm

Exploring the relationship between art and food
and the value of art.

Old Snake, 2023

A combination between silk embroidery and paper cutouts.

30x55 cm



Installation view and details.



Ceramic Puzzle, 2023
Sculpture made in clay and kinsugi
37x59 cm

buddies

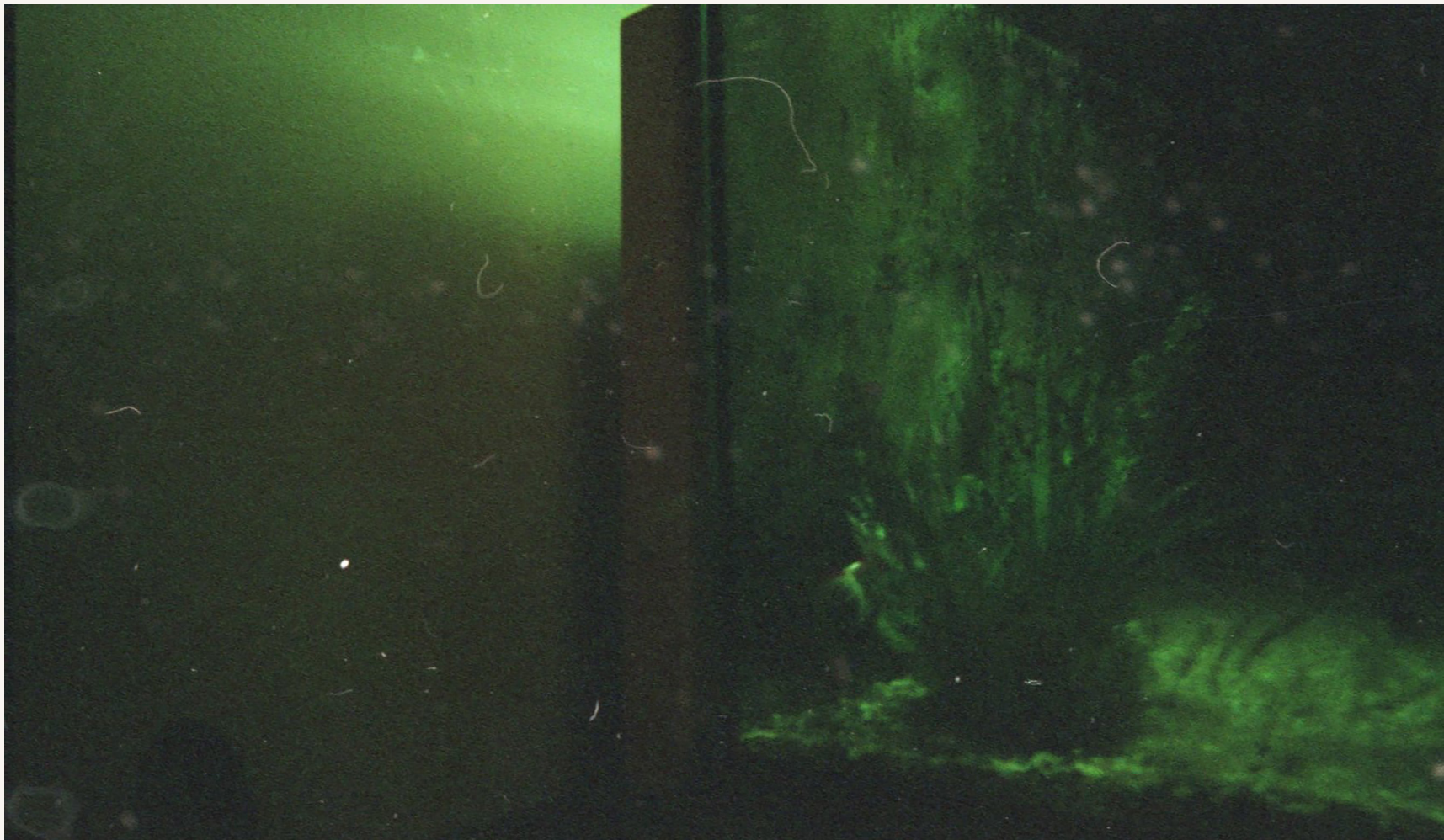
2022, CRATE Studio and Project Space I Margate, CT9 1EE, Group Exhibition.

Puppets made of cotton and fabric cut out from charity shop old cloths.

'Buddies' are large toy figures made by developing and enlarging children's drawings. The dolls remind adults that a child's imagination should not be belittled or ignored. In Malaysia, self-expression is not commonly celebrated, and so the work aims to embrace the importance of a child's unique perspective.



Photo documentation of 'Under 12' group exhibition.



Beauty, 2023, 1 of the 24 film collection.



Beauty, 2023

35mm film collection

Film photography taken by children from age 1-3, who are only told to take a picture that they define as 'beauty' or 'favorite'.

24 images taken by 18 different children.

Artist Statement

Zhen Feng Ang

My practice considers the notion of 'effort' through labour-intensive processes. Such processes often take the form of paper carving or embroidery, where the process fragments are re-engaged in some manner into the final work. The return of matter to an emptiness in my work is an exploration of lightness in response to the strongly engaged effort. For example, burning the work is both a celebration and a sacrifice.

Engaging carefully with one's effort is vital to surviving or even existing, whereby our emotional and psychological attachment to this "effort" could be a complicated compound of time and energy. The ability to readily break this solid bond before one is ready would be an interesting exploration of an indiscernible openness, which allows conflicting factors to exist simultaneously.

"The experience of beauty itself is an entity that isn't me." – Timothy Morton.

Experiencing ambiguity is similar to experiencing beauty; as Morton states, loving an artwork is some strange kind of mind-melding as the viewer is experiencing an unknown and greatly unbidden effect on them. Accepting this ambiguity and allowing it to affect you is a step closer to an indiscernible openness.

The 'Snakes and Ladders' installation is a mapping of the world and moves in all directions around the 'Arch' to the entire building and spaces. The 'Arch', however, is not a central point but rather a node within the intricate web of dissonant connections between bodies, as envisioned by Bennett. It serves more as a passage than a mere entrance or exit that sits in an openness that does not begin or end. The light colour on both wood and paper forms a lightness as well as the exposed bone structure of the arch. Paper sculptures feature depictions and conflicts of hell in Eastern and Western, which tend to be more in line with people's everyday discomforts than portraying the traditional impression of hell after death.

Besides, the water drip feature represents the Buddhist concept of the "sphere of neither Thought Nor Non-Thought," (非想非非想天) which exists in a misty blurriness condition that cannot be fully articulated. The four plates reflect the four levels of the immaterial realm; the clay in the middle decomposes slowly as the water drips on it and turns clear water into a blurry grey state that resembles a misty openness.

The burning shirt is practicing lightness as burning is the quietest fierceness among all methods for matters to return to emptiness. This fierce silence and lightness to intensely engaged effort reach a strong resonance which creates a very contradictory harmony that is not entirely discernible, like a persistent mist or even fog, there is nowhere to turn, and the harder you try, the more confusing it is.

Meanwhile, the 'Ladders' symbolises a desire and a tendency towards equilibrium, even if it is only a temporary and fragile balance. Correspondingly, every matter under the ladders who are not you are the 'snake'.