Contemporary Jewelry and Nature

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an investigation of how a jewelry artist understands the life/death cycle of nature and natural processes, the relationship between the human (body), nature, materials, and jewelry, by communicating in the form of jewelry.

I will discuss the relationship between human, nature and jewelry from many aspects. The movement of objects, life and death, how jewelry shows the position and state of human in nature and the relationship with nature, as well as the significance to the contemporary society. My main method is jewelry. My jewelry is emotional and expresses the series of collision and balance when humankind meets nature, and the acceptance of life and death.

Key words: life/death cycle, permanence, materiality, jewelry, nature, transmigration, movement, transformation, water, soil
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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the relationship between nature, the human body and jewelry from the form of jewelry. In particular, it will focus on the circulation and constant movement and transformation of matter in nature, the life/death cycle of nature and natural processes, and how humans participate in it, perceiving the life of materials (by anthropomorphizing nature). For thousands of years, human beings viewed themselves as part of nature; that human beings lived not alongside, but existed within the natural world and participated directly, not only with other people but with animals, plants and natural forms including mountains, rivers, winds and weather patterns. So called primitive people truly inhabited the earth and shared an active relationship and feeling that the world was alive, and animate.

The reason why I am interested in nature is because of the impact of living in different environments and cultures. Growing up in a second-tier city in China, and then studying in Beijing, I believe that my living environment is surrounded by the rapid development of industry and commerce. Even if I come to China's natural scenic spots, they are full of traces of tourism and people. So much of my sensory experience comes through a large screen plasma TV, the computer monitor or from gazing into the micro-screen of a multi-functional cell phone. I began to reflect on this lifestyle that is isolated from nature, animals and plants, original materials, trying to understand nature in another way. Alchemy, Shamanism, mysticism and so on inspired me greatly. Alchemists understood the wonders and mysteries of nature in a profound and meaningful way, that is, the materials we work with are animate and alive, have their own moods and temperament, and are given life by the expectation placed on them by the maker.

The first chapter starts from the moment I began to notice and observed the motion of materials. It also discusses the movement of materials in nature from the perspective of Alchemy and the movement and circulation of “Qi” in the human body from the perspective of Chinese Taoism. Then I discussed the relationship between humankind and nature.

The second chapter discusses the relationship between human's control over nature and dependence on nature from the perspective of garden, and discusses the movement of material from the perspective of the seasons changing and the growth and decay of plants in the garden.

The third chapter discusses the relationship between human and jewelry. At the end of the third chapter, the relationship between people, jewelry and nature will be discussed through the wearing of garden series.

My key question is: How can jewelry express the circulation and constant movement and transformation of matter in nature, and how does the human body participate in it?
Eternal Movement

I always can find much fantasy in nature. One sunny afternoon, I saw the trees thinking in the wind; the sunlight dancing before my eyes; When I saw a mountain, I saw the other side of the mountain staring at me. I felt that the material in my hand was alive, and the process I was doing was alive and emotional.

I felt as if I could be one with nature. As if stone and metal and so on were alive. Whenever I quiet the persistent chatter of words within my head, I find this silent or wordless dance always already going on this improvised duet between my animal body and the fluid, breathing landscape that it inhabits. And then I discovered the inherent beauty of materials. In my opinion, different materials, crafts, processes and actions carry different emotions. Materials are alive. The movements of pouring, casting, carving and sculpting have different emotions. The carving is slow and meticulous, recording the fingerprints, dynamics, emotions and stories of the maker. Casting is rapid, a reproduction of an object in nature. A casting silver block, a beaten copper plate, powder floating in the air, they embody physical exertion and dirty hands; they are the evidence of actions ----- composing, building, constructing, stacking, bending and connecting.

From fracture to healing, from violence to recovery, from attack to survival, these traces are deep in the object. Behind the action, I seem to see a passionate and rich creativity and expressiveness. A piece of linen cloth is much warmer than a piece of yellow color. Materials has the characteristics of soft and hard, light and heavy, coarse and fine, strong and weak, dry and wet, cold and warm, sparse and dense, tough and brittle, transparent and opaque, shapeable or not shapeable, elastic or non-elastic, rough or delicate. They express these vital and vivacious feelings: new or old, comfortable or disgusting, light or heavy, fresh or old, hard or soft.

I began to believe that the power of objects can directly communicate both emotionally and spiritually.

When I was immersed in the fantasy, the subjects of alchemy and animism opened a very different way of thinking to me, an unusually meaningful view of the world.

Neither in China nor in the West can scholars approach with certitude the origins of alchemy, but the evidences in China appear to be slightly older. “Alchemy is now increasingly recognized as a fundamental part of the heritage of chemistry, of continuing human attempts to explore, control, and make use of the natural world. Alchemists developed practical knowledge about matter as well as sophisticated theories about its hidden nature and transformations.”1 In the worldview of alchemists, everything in nature is alive, growing and developing. It links the essence of one's individual spirit with the material of nature and the universe, Alchemists pursue the transcendence of life and death, and projecting life and emotion on materials such as metals. Taoism believes that people can get eternal life, because things are constantly changing and moving, can achieve

1 Lawrence M. Principe, The Secrets of Alchemy, 2018, P97
immortality in the transformation. Life is always the product of the decomposition of another life. The new life relies on the dead life to give away, and then on the decay of the dead body to provide the cycle of nutrients needed by the new life that follows.

The ancient inscriptions of “one is all” alchemy led me to the ancient Greek philosophy of the single raw materials behind everything. This principle underpins the alchemy process: one thing transforms into another because, at the deepest level, they are the same thing. So even though there is the death of the old and the birth of the new, in a sense they are always the same. “One thing is all things, and everything is one thing.” “All living things can achieve eternal life in mutual motion and transformation.” People are constantly involved in the material cycle. Then man can be one with nature. Such ideas in alchemy are similar to those in Chinese Taoism.

Our lives are not our own. From the womb to the grave, we are connected to others. Everything on earth is always changing because the earth is alive and has a soul. We are part of this soul. Everything (minerals, plants, animals, everything) has a purpose, so each individual is not independent, and this means communication and connection, and everything has a spirit.

Alchemy was also developed independently in China by Taoist monks. The monks pursued both the outer elixir and the inner elixir. The former being minerals, plants etc. which could prolong life, and the latter being the use of exercise techniques, such as Qigong, to manipulate the chi or life force of the body.

Unlike alchemy in the west, Daoism, which holds that one can achieve immortality through practice, focuses more on physical and internal practice. The western is an outer alchemy, with the Chinese being the inner. “Taoism believes that people can get eternal life, because things are constantly changing and moving, can achieve immortality in the transformation.” The Taoist concept of “qi” is particularly important in practice.

Ruuut Peters is a pioneering Dutch conceptual jewellery artist. In the year 2013, He discussed about the concept of Qi in his work. "Qi", which comes from Chinese Taoism, is not a tangible "material", is the "spirit" of thinking, rational "law". "Qi (or chi) primarily means air, gas or breath but is often translated as a metaphysical concept of "vital energy", referring to a supposed energy circulating through the body; “a more general definition is universal energy, including heat, light, and electromagnetic energy"; and definitions often involve breath, air, gas, or the relationship between matter, energy, and spirit. The word is to describe systems to cultivate and balance life energy.

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2 Lawrence Principe, The Secrets of Alchemy, 2018, P157
4 Lawrence Principe, The Secrets of Alchemy, 2018 P 180
5 Lao Tzu. Tao Te Ching. China Publishing House P241
7 Yang, Jwing-Ming. Chi Kung: health & martial arts. 1987
Ruudt Peters has studied Chinese alchemy through his work Qi. He discusses the basic use of qi in alchemy. The five elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth) and the four elements (water, air, fire and earth) were extracted from nature by the ancients. The Five Elements Theory, and the Four Elements are both discussing the causes and dynamics of material change. But the ancient Chinese gave Qi a special status over the five elements. “Qi is the energy of life. It is Chinese alchemistic knowledge. I traveled through China for three months in order to be in touch with the Chinese alchemy of Qi. During my stay, I found out that there is a big difference between the East and the West in their approach to life. The Chinese are more holistic in their view of life/health and the mind/body relationships. Chinese alchemy is a mixture of Taoism, herbal medicine, acupuncture, and tai chi. It is based on real life”

Ruudt Peters approached “Qi” from a western perspective, to me, “Qi” symbolizes the movement inside the body. In this project, I explored the movement of substances in nature, and the movement within the body inspired me to explore the connection between nature and human body. “Our bodies and our minds are in motion every minute of a day. Even when we rest, we are restless. On the other hand, is it us who is always in action or are we still and is it just the outer world moving?”

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8 Ruudt Peters, Qi, 2013
9 Karla Olsakova, In Motion, 2016
In my practical work, I explored the feelings and temperatures brought by different materials and processes, including different metals, wax, structure building, welding and so on. For me, the process of craftsmanship is alive, recording the life and death of materials, movement and transformation. I recorded the moment when resin solidified from liquid to solid in the sunlight for tens of seconds or even a few seconds, and captured the motion state of the instant. I did water casting experiments by pouring molten metal into cold water where it immediately solidifies into a random shape, save the moment of metal movement. I use these experiments to represent the movement, circulation, and change of substances in nature.

In these experiments, I recorded my experience of materials. I feel them with my hands, sometimes I feel they are alive, sometimes I feel they are silent. In my opinion, just as people and ideas have their own destiny, materials also have their own specific destiny. They are rapidly evolving independently from human will, and they also have their own wonderful life journey.

I learned about an artist Andreas Eriksson. Andreas Eriksson was born in 1975 in Björsätter, Sweden. He lives and works in Medelplana on the south bank of Lake Vänern, Sweden. Eriksson’s artistic practice is highly expansive, encompassing a wide range of media including painting, photography, sculpture, tapestry and installation. He’s works often appear quiet and understated yet belie a poetic quality which has a lasting effect on the viewer.
Image 4 Yingyun Jiang Water Casting Experiments 2020

Image 5 Andreas Eriksson Content is a Glimpse #33, 2014
Among his works, a series of bird sculptures inspired me a lot. His studio had a very large glass window, so clean and transparent that birds could not see the glass and thought there was nothing there and flew over and killed themselves on the window. Over time some birds died by the window. He recorded the moment when the bird died, the moment when life came to an abrupt end. He cast these dead birds and turned them into sculptures, preserving the last-minute movements and shapes when life suddenly ended. The shape of each bird is different and record is impressive and overwhelming. Andreas’s work records the death of life, while mine records the movement of life. His work presents an impressive stillness of death. Each unique bird stands there quietly, as if the record of death becomes a memory, a memory that proves that they once soared and then fell. I could hear the trills of life.

I explore the movement and change of materials and do material experiments, such as experiments with various resins. Resin is colorless and transparent, similar to water, which has an important role in nature. At the same time, I record the direction and state of material movement in the experiment. The water drops drop by drop and slowly forms an icicle, which is a very slow process. Water casting is an instantaneous process. The process of throwing the resin into the air and being affected by gravity.

This is a choker (Image 7). This choker records the resin dripping in the sun and solidifying instantly under the sunlight. Under the influence of gravity, each drop of resin on the choker has a different direction of movement. Material movement has different forms, and they reach eternity in transformation and movement. I explore these conflicts and contrasts in my experiments: the cycle of life and death, movement and stillness, death and rebirth. The shape of the circle is as clear and transparent as water. Water plays an important role
in the material cycle of nature. Evaporation, precipitation, infiltration, surface flow and subsurface flow, etc., move from one place to another, forming mountains, rivers and oceans. Water has the meaning of nurturing and protecting in Lao Tzu's theory, and it is a powerful natural force: there is nothing weaker than water in the world, but water can attack strong things. Little drops of rain, after years of impact, can drip through the hard stone; An overwhelming tide, a flood, can devour farms and houses, demolish all solid buildings, and nothing strong can withstand them. In Laozi's theory, it is an important natural law to overcome the hardness with softness, which contains the philosophy that the hard things have lost their vitality, and the soft things always represent the new things and are full of vitality.

In this project, I feel the movement of everything in the world like waves. In the lives of human and materials, time is an ephemeral point, and the entity is in the flow.
The Garden

In today's society, we rarely come into contact with raw materials in our lives. What we see and touch are the results of many processes. Warren Seelig talked in his lecture that "communication increasingly occurs digitally, rather than face to face and in the flesh. Our bodies are hermetically sealed by, glass encased, triple glazed, climate controlled and halogen lit apartments, houses, offices and automobiles. So many of the objects we live with are synthesized, reconstituted with their surfaces neoprene coated, plasticized, veneered and laminated creating materials which are so homogenized that they are ultimately un-recognizable."10

I was inspired by that. When I walk in to the supermarket, boxes of frozen meat slices in there concealed the sense of horror when a cow or sheep was killed. The frozen meat is as tough as a stone, like an inorganic, as if its predecessor had not been a living thing. All the materials around us have undergone a thorough industrialization and marketization process.

Matthew Crawford, both a philosopher and a motorcycle mechanic, is emphatic about the tremendous satisfaction which can come through engagement with the physical world and discusses the way in which knowledge may come to us through touch. It seems that Crawford s big worry is about the onset of electronic sweat shops and concern for how computers are transforming the office of the future into the factory of the past.... “that is, the modern workplace (cubicle) is so often a place which deadens our senses and saps our vitality in the new service economy.”11

The expansion of the city gradually makes the forest disappear, people can only look for lost memories in the garden.

The fact that humans have created gardens may seem odd. It shows that there are certain elements in human nature who desire to have a resting place in nature. There is a natural and organic connection between the garden and people's shared life. Since ancient times, gardens have often appeared as places for making friends, talking, and telling stories. Whenever we are far away from the green environment, most people will feel depressed, and attribute it to mental or psychological disorders. One day accidentally in a garden, woodland, or country, often find that the sense of depression miraculously disappears . It seems that the garden also responds to a certain desire of people. This is what people call the "biophilia". humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. The term biophilia was used by German-born American psychoanalyst Erich Fromm in The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness (1973), which described biophilia as “the passionate love of life and of all that is alive.” 12

The garden brings us close to nature, but at the same time marks the distance between the two. A certain element of human nature that is related to nature, but cannot be

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12 Erich Fromm. The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. 1973
incorporated into the natural order. Both flowers and gardens embody order, but they are different types of order: the order of flowers is a natural order, dominating the flower itself, while the garden represents an artificial order, and human is the ruler, the conqueror, and the reformer.

The human in charge of the garden, but the flower is the symbol of beauty, one that evokes nostalgia and longing. It is a beauty that exists independent of man's will, and cannot be created, but can only be cultivated in the garden. This reflects a certain tension—the relationship between nature and man.

I make spiders, moths and little girls. The little girl's head is a moth. I will use these elements and characters to make a necklace. When the necklace is worn on a person's body, it will look like a person wearing a garden. The spider I made, and the moth with the little girl is a corner of this garden. I wanted to create a fantasy garden full of woodland creatures and fascinating female characters dancing in the shimmering leaves of the dark forest. The garden has butterflies, birds and constellations hovering over the snowcapped peaks. Patterns of life from heaven and earth are everywhere, and these patterns are closely related to the body. Dancing with snakes and sleeping with wolves is an extension of some kind of desire, the desire to connect the world and the spirit, personal and collective.

I think most of the images are symbolic and meaningful. For example, when people see the shape of the leaves, they may think of green, plants, or health. I want to combine the images in a scrambled way. In the Greek culture, the image of centaur often appears in the
war. I think the combination of man and horse is endowed with a new meaning, which is a manifestation of man's integration with plants and animals in nature and have no identity. I hope to create a space where people can feel the power of nature. It's like walking into a garden or a wonderland, full of amazing animals, full of imagination and fantasy. This is my making process: The first step is to make a wax mold. The wax mold is then coated with a liquid that causes the chemical reaction. Then the wax mold is put into the chemical tank. Then a chemical reaction takes place in the pool and the copper slowly grows on the surface. I find the process of growth very interesting. The next step is to get the spider out of the pool. Air gun is used to heat the wax in the spider's body to melt it and then remove the wax.

I made two birds. These are also a corner of the garden. Various forms. It's about the same color, light and dark. One was a very complete, empty shell, like a corpse, with a sound and a metallic feel when struck. It has a metallic appearance and a light and fragile feeling. One is broken, the color of the autumn leaves. Wings are branches, leaves and flowers. The broken appearance has the feeling of an animal molting. The chain will be shaped like a coffin. It reminds people of a sleeping or dead bird. I hope to express death, life, seasons, reincarnation, growth, litter. I sculpted, colored, slowly chemically reacted and grew the metal in the pool, welded, polished, oxidized the metal. Metal in the process of continuous transformation and
change, it becomes alive, it becomes a living, have vitality, it is shaped, flowing between different forms. The powder that falls on the ground, the debris that sticks to the hand of the maker, the surface that has been oxidized by the air, the surface texture that appears in the process of growth, all suggest constant movement.

I want to express the relationship between humankind and nature by making the garden and have a relationship with the human body through wearing.

At the same time, the garden is a land of life. In the ancient Chinese legend about the goddess Nv Wa, the body of a human comes from the land, because Nv Wa create humankind by moulding yellow mud. And the land is the gateway between life and death. The seeds that emerge from the land finally come back to the land and move through the door. Human shared an active relationship with garden and feeling that the world was alive, and animate. And gardens depend on time, flowers bloom and fall, and can only be realized by the passing of time. Like a story, every garden has a plot unfolding in turn.
Nature, Human and Jewelry

This chapter mainly discusses the relationship between jewelry and body, the position of jewelry in society and nature, and how to show the relationship among them in practice. "Instrumental in constructing identity, jewelry arouses an array of emotional responses in those who make, wear, possess, desire, and gaze upon it. It thus stands at the center of a whole range of social interactions, in which it too is a player."\(^{13}\)

Life takes the body as the carrier, and the body is the exterior of life. Different appearances and clothes distinguish each individual. Jewelry, as a wearable decoration, is a way for the wearer to show their personality, and is an extension of emotion outside the body. "Defining a piece of jewellery as a discrete object differentiates it from tattoos and other body decorations, which are often prompted by the same motives as jewellery, but which are not transferable and have no exchange value."\(^{14}\) Jewelry and sculpture both are wearable miniature sculptures. Anything related to life forms can contribute to some "sculpture" behaviors of life forms to the body.

Wearing jewelry on the human body is one of the ways to establish a connection between the jewelry and the human body. Jewelry is an intimate art form that always exists in conversation with the body. Just like lines, shapes, colors, air and space, the body is also a material. The body acts as an integral part of the design. Jewelry can amplify even the subtlest of physical activities. When people dance, the bells on the ankles respond to the rhythm of the dance. When people talked, the earrings on both sides of their cheeks trembled slightly. A massive, waist-cinching belt exaggerates the torso. Long earrings focus the viewer’s attention on the wearer’s slender neck.

Jewelry worn on different parts of the body has different ways of interacting with the body. The ring is a kind of jewelry worn on the finger. It needs to fit the shape of the finger and directly contact the skin. This restricts the size and shape of the ring to a certain extent, also makes it closely related to fingers, forming more interaction possibilities with the wearer.

Beth Carver Wees mentioned in Jewelry: The Body Transformed: "Maya of the Classic period (250-900) considered earring to be small-scale portals into the human body that transformed the sounds heard by wearers into sacred and perfumed phenomena. Rings and earrings have more private attributes than brooches, establishing more intimate relationship with the wearer.

My work "Conversation" (Image 12) is a piece of jewelry perched on the shoulders. It is fixed to the clothes by the needle at the bottom. It sits on the shoulder, near the ear, and is so close to the body that it seems to communicate with the wearer in a low voice. In this work, nature is a kind of movement freeze frame, a kind of unfettered communication. The wearer cannot see the jewelry, but feels it at all times through a slight weight on the

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\(^{13}\) Melanie Holcomb, Kim Benzel. Jewelry: The Body Transformed. P9

shoulder or a casual touch from the ear. This is the source of joy, as if an innocent parrot casually fell on the shoulder of surprise.

In contrast, a brooch is a kind of jewelry worn on the chest, which is fixed on the clothing on the chest through a needle, thereby establishing a connection with the wearer. They are not restricted by the wearer’s body shape and have more freedom of expression. Brooches face inward to the wearer, and outward to communicate and express themselves to the outside world.

My piece “Sigh” (Image 13) is a birdish body brooch. I tried to create the image of a man walking in the forest spotting a dead bird, then with a sigh he picked up the body and placed it on his chest. This position is so close to the heart, for the wearer that it is accepted and cherished, and for the dead bird, its back leans against the wearer's heartbeat and sigh. The fear of death has always been a mental shackle. This brooch expresses an acceptance of death and a tribute to life. Express loss, acceptance and reconciliation. In nature, beauty is easy to elapse and move. After it exists, beauty will perish and then be reborn. Therefore, we exclaim: is time a friend or an enemy? When the cherry blossoms fall, we feel the beauty, we admire; At the same time we also experience the passing and death, so the sadness also arises spontaneously, this is a kind of beauty experience connected with life.

The meaning of this piece of jewelry is similar to that of mourning jewelry. Mourning jewelry is worn in memory of someone who has died. These forms of jewelry were used ceremonially to mourn and honor the dead, usually in the form of cufflinks, lockets and pocket watch fobs. Jewelry representing death has existed throughout human history, but was particularly popular during the Victorian era. The jewelry is philosophical in nature and
aims to remind the wearer that each of them must eventually die.

For many cultures, art offers a way to explore a relationship with death and deal more openly with grief. "In the latter part of the 18th century the Romantic movement took hold; death was seen as a reintegration with the natural world (dust to dust). This softened view of death laid fertile ground for the beautiful imagery often seen on mourning jewelry, including the weeping willows, angels, forget-me-not flowers and the birds in flight."\(^{15}\)

My work "Puppet" (Image 14) is an object, which is connected with fingers through silver wires and rings to control movement. It is a desire to bring an inanimate object to life, making a puppet and manipulating it as if it's a reflection of nature. When dancing with the fingers, the dead spider seems to come back to life, creating illusion. Nature in this work is a call to life and a hint of reality. In the puppet, the boundary between death and life seems to be blurred. Life and death, spirit, imagination, feeling and breath are constantly changing and moving.

As one of the oldest art forms in existence, puppets were first used as performing arts tools

\(^{15}\) Stacey Fay. What is Mourning Jewelry - From the Georgian Era to Modern Mourning. 2019
in the Han Dynasty of China and have been practiced worldwide. It's like a window through which you can see the world through the eyes of the operator. "This exploration will be one of art's precious functions. And the art of puppetry, by giving life to inert forms, draws us directly into the mystery of life and creation."16

My piece "Crawl" (Image 15) is a brooch that protrudes from the chest. The movement in this work is very strong, as if it wants to penetrate into the human body, as if it is struggling to break free from the body, as if it is climbing on the body. Nature in this work is a balance of confrontation with human.

My work "Fly" (Image 16) is a necklace. A thin copper wire connects two birds, making this piece lighter and easier to wear than the rest. The bird swayed around the wearer as he walked. The bird is seen here as a point of motion, and the line is drawn in a graceful arc in the air, and the curve suggests the feeling of motion.

These pieces constitute the garden, and each piece is a dialogue between man and nature with different moods and scenes. It expresses the different states when people get along

with nature: the acceptance of death, the cognition of the natural cycle of life and death, the joy of vitality, the conflict and confrontation, the blurring of the boundary between life and death, etc.

Jewelry is located in the place where people and nature meet. "It stands between the body (the self) and the world, representing a sort of link between the inner and the outer."\textsuperscript{17} In the Chinese context, Buddhism is closely related to nature. Tibet has a tradition of sky

burial. After death, the body will be eaten by vultures. In this process, people come out of society, go back to nature and get eaten, and the body begins to participate in the material cycle of nature. It represents people returning to nature and thus losing their former identity, to participate in a natural cycle of transformation. The remaining bones were used to make bone jewelry. Tantric Dalai Lama will wear a full set of such human bone jewelry. Jewelry made from human bones symbolizes the size of the body as well as the size of the universe. Jewelry at this time symbolizes the transcendence of life and death, connecting the essence of one’s personal spirit with the material of nature and the universe. This represents the immortality and reincarnation of the soul. Death is just the separation of immortal soul and old body, and the different transformation of different space. Such jewelry contains the profound connotation of the ancient national social culture and reflects the world view of the unity of man and nature. And behind its simple form, there is the ecological wisdom of conservation of matter.

“Presenting the elements of the body as elements in jewellery date to the ancient. In medieval times, their connection to god and status is the most important function. Showing a skeleton enforces reverence with a holy figure or for the fact that with death comes final judgement.”

Four or five thousand years ago, people have already chosen jewelry to express their longing for eternity. Jewelry has always existed in people’s awe, curiosity, yearning and reflecting about nature.

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18 Hayden Peters. Bones and Rings. 2019
CONCLUSION

In this project, I researched about the relationship between jewelry, nature and the human body. In the beginning, my focus was only on my feeling upon nature, the feeling of wind, the sound of flowers, the gaze of trees, etc. Later, my subject gradually went deeper. I began to pay attention to the spirit of objects, the life and death of objects, the stories of objects, and the movement and transformation of water, mountains, rivers, and stones, etc. I looked for their wonderful life journeys, and recording their history and fate. I did experiments on resin motion and water casting. Alchemy has inspired me a lot. Western alchemy focuses on the unifying raw materials and animism behind everything, while Chinese alchemy focuses on the Qi in the body, which symbolizes the movement in the human body. This movement inspired me to explore the connection between nature and humankind.

Later, I put the subject in a social context and tried to ask what it meant for contemporary society. I set out my thoughts in the garden chapter, reflecting on the effect of factory cubicles on us and the counterbalance between the human and garden. The chapter of Nature, Human and Jewelry is an extension of the chapter of The Garden, and the pieces of jewelry I made constitute the garden. My main method is jewelry, they are located in the place where humankind and nature meet. Each work has its own language and story, expressing different states of being with nature: the acceptance of death, the recognition of the natural cycle of life and death, the joy of vitality, balance and confrontation, the blurring boundary between life and death, etc. Back to my key question, that how can jewelry express the circulation and constant movement and transformation of matter in nature, and how does the human body participate in it? I discuss the constant movement from the two aspects: material movement and the natural cycle of life and death. My work has always been between different practices. By making jewelry, getting along with my works, talking to them, and wearing them, I explore the role and participation of the human in the process.
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Image 12 Yingyun Jiang Conversation 2021

Image 13 Yingyun Jiang Sigh 2020

Image 14 Yingyun Jiang Puppet 2021

Image 15 Yingyun Jiang Crawl 2020

Image 16 Yingyun Jiang Fly 2021

Image 17 bone jewelry Unknown

Image 18 bone jewelry Unknown
Appendix

My artistic method is practical and theoretical research. Exhibitions are part of the practice, and attending the spring exhibition is a rare opportunity to introduce my research to the audience, while at the same time allowing me to learn from both the audience and the exhibition. I used different ways to arrange the exhibition, putting the work on the wall, and suspending them in the air. In my opinion, there is no fixed way, each way can convey different language and emotion. For the suspended works, movement is important. The floating in space, the dialogue between arc and point, the sense of balance, can be regarded as a song or a poem. They have a sense of rhythm. The spider on the wall represents a confrontation. The other two birds were quiet, dead, and asleep.

I got amazing thought-provoking questions from the audience, which inspired me a lot in my practice. “What's the reason for choosing spiders, horses and birds? How do you feel about people wearing your jewelry? Why does your bird have a hole in its heart? What is the role and function of gardens and horticulture in your project?” etc. It's interesting to think about what others have seen in my work, compared to what I want to present to the world, what I want to provoke reflection in the audience. I feel full of power when I'm able to create something by myself, see the learning process, and share them with my audience.

From my personal view, there are several points that I can explore more deeply. The concept “Qi”: the internal movement of the body. That's a good question to ask. I didn't develop a lot of internal movement in the project. Because my project mainly focuses on the movement of nature and material, that is, outside the body. But exploring movement inside and outside the body can also reflect the relationship between man and nature. I think this is a good place to start and branch out. Our bodies and minds are in motion all the time. Even when we are sleeping, our mind is restless, and we have dreams.

In terms of practice, I need to find out the right materials and the right way to express myself. I need to think about the details, such as the way of painting and the way of oxidation. In the way of exhibition, suspension is a good way of expression, but wood is more suitable for texts than paper in my project.

I inspired a lot from the conversation with my partner, Kristina Kirkkopelto. Her project has a lot in common with mine, we both focus on the relationship between life and death. We both advocate death as a natural phenomenon and try to evoke acceptance of death in the audience. In my practice, the role of jewelry is critical, I want my jewelry to convey emotions, to evoke people's awareness and reflection on death by wearing them. Kristina offers a new perspective and her approach to practice is sculpture. Her sculpture is a huge bouquet of withered flowers that is beautiful and conveys a serious mood. She created a monumental encounter where the onlooker would face the work with their whole body.

In the long run, my goal is to establish cooperation with Departures in the future. In Japan, there is a position called Departures. They repair the face and body of the dead people,
and do make up for the dead. By doing so, they give dignity and peace to the dead. It's an acceptance of death. This is the position of my work. The profession of death and hospice care is growing rapidly in Japan. That may be a result of Japan's aging population. The country is experiencing a "super-aging" society both in rural and urban areas, an increasing number of people are reaching the end of their lives. I want my jewelry to be associated with such processes.

In the short term, I will interview Chinese and Japanese Departures. There are also positions for Departures in China. Starting from understanding the culture of Departures in China, I will interview the work content and working environment of Departures, understand their clients, and understand the psychological experience of Departures. Interview format: Starting with online interviews, and then progress to on-the-spot interviews. And then I will try to interview Departures in Japan. I also want to interview people of different nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures about their views on death.

I have interviewed a Chinese girl studying at Konstfack from the Inredningsarkitektur och Möbeldesign department. Her name is Yuqing Tang. Her parents were both religious, but she was not influenced by them and she is a staunch materialist.

*Interview with Yuqing Tang, student from Konstfack, based in Stockholm, May 18th 2021*

**Yingyun Jiang:** “Have you experienced the death of someone close to you? What is the tradition of funerals and honoring relatives in your hometown? What do you think of death? What do you think of mourning jewelry?”

**Yuqing Tang:** “My maternal grandfather and my paternal grandfather passed away when I was very young, and I have no memory of them, so their passing was not a heavy blow to me, but a very distant event. My maternal grandfather believed in Christianity, and the Christianity in our hometown was localized in China. We don't need to cry at funerals, because dying means going to heaven, which is a good thing. We have to be happy for him. My paternal grandfather's funeral was complicated. My paternal grandpa and his relatives on his side believe in Buddhism. We have to cry at the funeral. There are many rituals, too. We need to invite the Master to go up into the mountain to practice magic.

Even though my parents, my paternal grandfather and my maternal grandfather were religious, they didn't impose their world view on me. I have the freedom to explore the world, to choose what to believe and what to accept.

My view of the world is very materialistic, I am a materialist. I think we are all a collection of nature materials, and we need to return ourselves to nature.

I personally think materialism can be romantic, I don't know if you've ever heard of the death of a star. It's a very romantic natural phenomenon. All stars eventually run out of their hydrogen gas fuel and die. As the hydrogen runs out, a star with a similar mass to our sun will expand and become a red giant. While most stars quietly fade away, the super giants destroy themselves in a huge explosion, called a
supernova. The death of massive stars can trigger the birth of other stars. This kind of phenomenon has a great impact on my world view.

Mourning jewelry is very beautiful to me. But I'm not going to wear them. As a materialist, I have a very free and easy attitude towards death. I will not mourn too much, nor miss too much the dead relatives. In my personal view, death is a natural phenomenon.”

Such interesting views from the interviewers are very exciting. I think the interviews in the future will be of great help to my work, and I have the confidence and interest to continue.