

At a safe distance, I adore the beauty of trees. However, if I get too closed, something unexpected or unpleasant might happen. When I stand beneath the tree crown, a spider might fall on my nose. If I hug or lean on the tree trunk, I risk being scratched by the splinters. I desire closeness but am often crippled by my fear of being hurt. During this process of appreciating the trees, they are objects and I am the subject.

In Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, he addresses how we lose our subjectivity when other people project their gazes on us, which reverberates in my mind whenever I see a tree. Under the exposure, trees are viewed and judged by me, hence they lose their subjectivity, like what I do when other people look at me. When other people project their gazes on me, I become the object, like a tree, of their assessment and judgment. Under this helpless situation, my body expand. My branches start morphing into arms and hands in a gesture of either desperation or defense. I cannot tell. Because like I cannot tell if I want to get close to a tree when I am a subject, I cannot tell if people's gazes are benign or malignant. This inner ambiguity, which I cannot voice, is all poured into my paintings.

In my current art practice, I channel personal emotions into the visual presentation of narrative landscapes. I collect inspiration from either the internet or my photographs. Back to the studio, facing a blank canvas, I bring in my cathartic emotions and symbolism to endow the scenery landscapes with my personal narrative. By reimagining the scene, I strive to express my feelings and impressions at the moment when I witness the original scene. If I feel peaceful, I will fuse bright or pale colors into a mute atmosphere. If I want the colors to embody my temper or anger, saturated maroon will disclose potential violence. After using emotions as the foundation of scenery paintings, symbolistic elements advance the narration.

In terms of symbolism, strings of infant heads repeated in each painting connect the proposition and story of my practice. When I create these heads, Heidegger's theory of anxiety resonates with me.

In his book *Being and Time*, he talks about how we could face the world when we are thrown into the world. He thinks that at the beginning, we were lost in the world that we could not contribute to. All we could do is to follow the instruction from the other selves. That's why we feel anxious. I think when I was born, as well as thrown into the world, anxiety came with me at the same time. I live with it every moment, including the second when I am touched by the scene.

But in the process of reimagining and reconstructing a world in my paintings, I make a world that I won't feel lost in, since this world is constructed by me, not by others. In this world, I am the one taking control the world. I could ignite the tree or I could do whatever I want. I personify my anxiety into heads and place them in my paintings, because heads are the birthplace of the anxiety. By putting my anxiety in the world where I create, I will not feel lost, so that I could find myself back and heal my anxiety.