



365 Artists project by Frank Juarez Gallery (Sheboygan) and Greymatter Gallery (Milwaukee)

1. Briefly describe the work you do.

Through research and investigation of the documents of visual art, literature, politics and history, my work attempts to examine the unreliable relationship between cultural archive, myth and the contemporary human status. I employ various mediums to create multi-narrative spectacle, whilst layering painting, photography, sculptural objects and text amongst video installation through a manipulated and performance-like process. By constructing all-encompassing environments where fiction and reality interweave, I expose dramatic and often humorous as well as absurd aspects of the concept of society. I'm especially interested in how to set up a connection between the trace of modern life and the memory of human heritage through interdisciplinary combinations of media.



Stills from The Trinity part 1, performance, single-channel video, 3'50", 2013

2. Tell us a little about your background and how that influences you as an artist.

I was born and raised in China, and moved to the U.S. in 2012, working on my MFA in painting at Boston University. I feel the biggest advantage of living in China is that I habituate myself to doubt about everything. Having the attitude of doubting has been benefitting me a lot as being an artist. When you are making things balanced between questioning yourself

and being narcissism, you are actually making art. Before I became an artist, I'd earned my bachelor degree in Biology in 2007. Working for another two years in science after graduated, I realized that art could be the best way to utilize all my knowledge and abilities. The experience in science gave me methodologies of focusing on research and an attempt to see things through.



The Trinity part 2, hair and fur on canvas, 53 x 42 inches, 2013

3. The concept of the "artist studio" has a broad range of meanings, especially in contemporary practice. The idea of the artist toiling away alone in a room may not necessarily reflect what many artists do from day to day anymore. Describe your studio practice and how it differs from (or is the same as) traditional notions of "being in the studio."

I always believe studio functions as a secure space for the artists to concentrate on their work. In this sense, anywhere could be my studio as long as it makes me feel safe and comfortable. Due to the nature of my art practice, I often need to stay out of my studio, engaging myself in different environments and conditions, talking and interviewing people, as well as shooting and recording video footages and sound records via a performance-like process. This kind of social intervention is parts of my work. With all the materials I've collected outside, I come back to my studio or find a comfortable place to accomplish the final work.

4. What unique roles do you see yourself as the artist playing that you may not have envisioned yourself in when you first started making art?

I've never envisioned before that one day I could be an artist. After all the effort I've been making, I eventually became an artist. One of the purposes of being an artist is to make yourself become someone you've never envisioned before. The meaning of the role as being an artist has been changing all the time. With the accumulation of experience and ambition, artists need to continuously breakthrough their comfort zones and limits in order to touch the boundary of personal artistic practice.



Vanitas - Two Trapped Bears, two-channel HD video (L:b/w, R:color, sound), 8'30", 2014

5. When do you find is the best time of day to make art? Do you have time set aside every day, every week or do you just work whenever you can?

Poster of Vanitas, Woman, byline of Joseph, 2014, photograph, 23.4 x 16.5 inches

I love working at night, which is the best time for me to collect all my energy and concentrate on my creation. I am normally very productive at night. I often work several days in a row without any distraction.

6. How has your work changed in the last five years? How is it the same?

The changes have happened to me dramatically. I started my artistic path as a painter five years ago, making big expressionism and abstract paintings. At that time, canvas was the surface where I could experiment my complex thoughts with simple tools, as well as an exit to let myself off. When I paint, all the fascinating and ambiguous moments and narrative make me drown in deeply. Later on, I adjusted myself slightly to focus on the exploration of the process of painting. In those paintings, viewers can get a clue from the final image that I present, and trace the previous process which is always narrative. Following with this methodology, I made several projects consisting of two elements: performance and painting. Recently my projects are all performance and archive based through interdisciplinary combinations of medias, where I'm investigating a process balanced between performance

art and documentary genre. My work eventually investigate the methodology in art creating and also reveal how present ideology derives from its cultural memory.



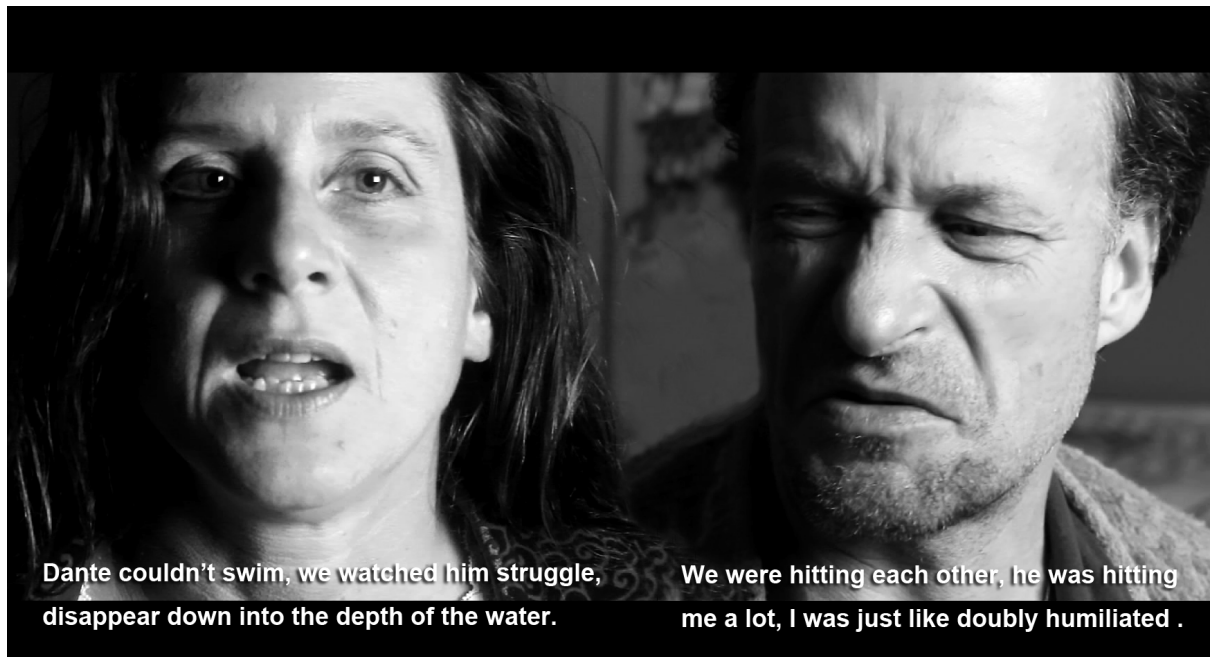
Vanitas – Real and Natural, single-channel HD video (b/w, sound), 8'30", 2014

7. Are there people such as family, friends, writers, philosophers or even pop icons that have had an impact on the work you do?

I like Zach Galifianakis. I learned from his talk show which consists of a series of typical interview questions, building up a structure that cope with shifting events by sticking to a fundamental principle. I like Guy Debord. I attempted to utilize his concept of "Spectacle" in a positive way to construct a system that everything functional in its own space. I like Bertolt Brecht. His "Alienation Effect" helps me preserving and establishing a distance that estranges and separates the audience from the actual artwork. This provides audiences a strong consciousness of that they are watching an illusion.

8. If you had an occupation outside of being an artist, what would that be and why?

I wish to be a comedian if I have the gift. I would like to make some art just like *Between Two Ferns*. When I'm doing art, I always feel it's tough to be seriously humorous. Wonderful humor is something I always want to chase in my work.



Vanitas – Real and Natural, single-channel HD video (b/w, sound), 8'30", 2014

9. Please list 5 top tags for your blog post such as location, medium, etc.

Archive, fiction, narrative, video, New York