

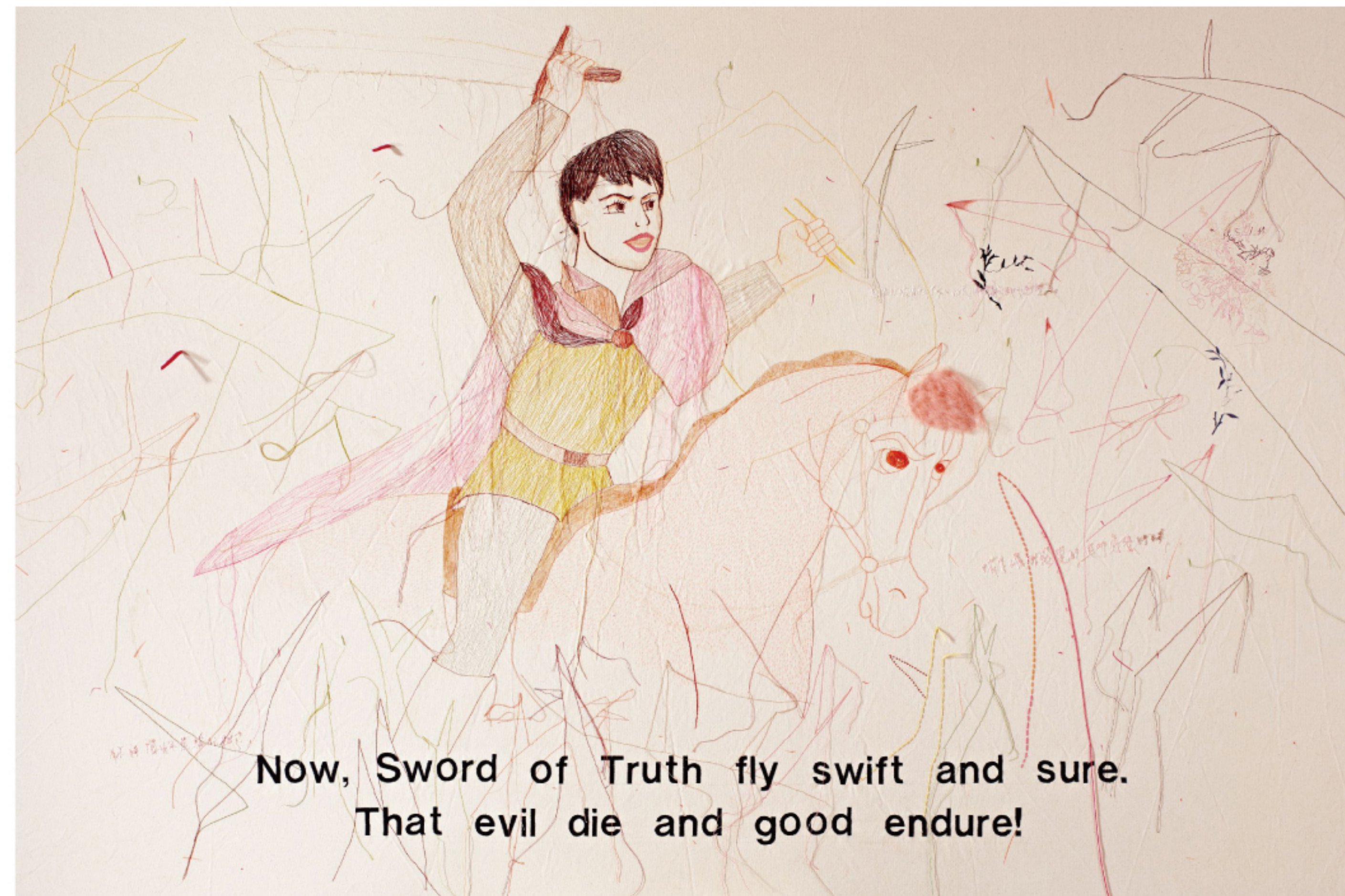
Deep Breathing After a Scab Has Formed on the Wound – Sentiments Arise from Reading CHANG En-Tzu's Works in 2018

By Jean Liao

Although the artist does not utter a word, her work honestly speaks her inner states: disquiet, fear, dread, inexplicable and unreal fluster ... By holding a needle and thread, she instinctively thinks she can sew up or smooth away the wound, or no longer let something she cherishes continually rove... disappear...

Clench the Fist, Swallow the Pain

In fact, it is hard to ignore the existence of violence and only see the power of beauty while looking at the works by CHANG En-Tzu.



你還記得嗎-4 彩色繡線、布料 Do You Still Recall-4 Embroidery on Textile 140x210 cm 2018



隱藏的力量-1 壓克力顏料、彩色繡線、畫布 The Hidden Power-1 Acrylic, Eembroidery on Canvas 60x43 cm 2013

Let us start with two works:

First work: A person has to die one day, please don't be too heartbroken!

(extracted from the letters that the prisoners of the White Terror wrote to their families)

The Last Words-1 is a work that CHANG created in 2016. She embroidered these sorrowful words at the center of the work by hand, which looks like a framed will.

Second work: Now, Sword of Truth fly swift and sure. That evil die and good endure!

(a famous quote from a classic fairy tale: Sleeping Beauty)

Do You Still Recall-4 is a work that CHANG created in 2018. She used the sewing machine to embroider this most classical and aphoristic sentence from Sleeping Beauty; also, the price carrying the sword pops up in her work.

CHANG got married in 2016. Marital happiness and support make her body quiet down with a disturbed heart slowly being freed from worry. The visual appearance of her work has changed from powerless sorrow to the stability which can be felt, even though we can still sense the fears and sentiments which cannot be hidden and indistinctly appear in her work.

In the middle of the interview, she quietly wiped her tears and creased the wet facial tissue into pieces by hand. However, it might not be the time yet to speak out when asking her if there was something which had happened in her life and made her so nervous and uneasy. She said nothing, but clenched her fists instead. Perhaps her creative power comes from her insistence

on not uttering or being unable to utter a word. In the course of her creation, it is a good thing to have the pain as “exercising one’ s mind with suffering” is usually a blessing bestowed by Heaven, and not saying anything about the pain in mind is a trial. My heart aches with pity for her as there seems to be so many unspeakable pains hidden in her petite body.

Needle, Thread and Cloth, Recall in Her Heart of Hearts

Because the teacher encouraged her to invent diverse creations, CHANG tried to use other materials to create her works in the sophomore year. Even so, she still feels a sense of belonging in the practice of sewing or embroidery. She says that needlework gives her a lot of comfort both mentally and physically. She finds the marks left after the healing of the wounds she had when stitching and even smells the blood oozing from the wounds when taking out stitches. Her faint body remains the same between the penetrations of needles and thread, and meantime mending gets started.

As a result, CHANG begins devoting herself to making art on the cloths. She found chammy, textured cloth or cotton cloth in the fabric market. She even uses needles and thread to depict her inner world stitch by stitch after dyeing the cloth, and furthermore she infuses the social issues that she cares about into her work so that it has a more in-depth and much broader creative connotation.

From What Do You See At Very Moment! (2006), How Brave! (2007), Surprised Explosion! (2008), What Is “they live happily ever after” ? (2009) which is extended from How Brave!, Perfect Imperfection (2013), Back Down To Earth And Other Works (2014), Little Girl and The Last Words (2016), The Wall (2017) to Do You Still Recall and Survivor (2018), it is actually heartrending when looking at these series of works. Through her body, the artist attempts to feel the world and goes further to explore the social issues that she is concerned about, the pursuit and reprobation of love, the occurrences of juvenile delinquency and domestic violence as well as the subsequent family events and social phenomena ... we cannot ignore all these in all aspects because the obscure society news have told the public that the related issues continue to happen. The artists can voice their concerns merely through their works as what they can do is limited. Even though their voices are not that powerful, they cannot help but speak out.

The wound can stand the test of time as it will become encrusted with a scab. The voice of complaint can eventually return to the warm home and be rest. After getting married in 2016, CHANG’ s husband has provided adequate warmth to her so that she begins to relieve anxiety and disquiet. Once support takes place, happiness will come along. Now, CHANG looks stronger and more resolute than she was.

Can Anyone Acquire Happiness Similar to That Bestowed Upon Snow White?

In 2010, CHANG won the special award of Journey in My Mind: Open Call for Emerging Artists hosted by the Cultural Space of Louis Vuitton Taipei for her serial works of How Brave! Fumio Nanjo, a renowned curator and the director of Mori Art Museum (Tokyo, Japan), was



不完美的完美-4 彩色繡線·毛線·壓克力顏料·畫布 Perfect Imperfection-4 Embroidery, Wool and Acrylic on Canvas 155x128 cm 2014



藝術家工作室 Artist Studio

one of the jurors and quite liked her works. Accordingly, she was invited to participate in All You Need Is LOVE: From Chagall to Kusama and Hatsune Miku, a group exhibition for the 10th anniversary of the Mori Art Museum.

The first time I saw CHANG' s work was in this group exhibition curated by Mami Kataoka and held at the Mori Art Museum in 2013. The exhibition covered a long span of time from the past, the present to the future and a large age gap between the exhibiting artists, including Marc Chagall, Yayoi Kusama and Hatsune Miku. Every artist was/is a great personage in the art fields and showed their respective interpretations of love. Although CHANG was young, her work was not inferior to those by the masters in any respect. She took another side of Snow White to discuss the possibility of love: could Snow White and the prince really live happily ever after?

In regard to love, CHANG puts forward a word-brave; be brave, then be able to face any possibilities and changes of love. Love cannot last forever, this is the truth; however, love can be sublimated into family relationship, or it can possibly be betrayed. The concept of love told in Snow White is like living in a dream, would she really live happily ever after?

CHANG was still very young when she created the works of the relevant series. The scene depicting Snow White with tears falling down abundantly should probably be the reflection of her personal experience; nevertheless, the tears made of long and black thread seem so sad and astonishing. The image of the men with big noses surrounding Snow White

symbolizes external pressure from the society. The artist tried to ask: as a woman, how brave she needs to be to face the external challenges! The lines knitted through needlework are very simple but full of tension; the texture outlined by the lines gives off an unyielding spirit in the softness.

The Simpler, the Richer

In 2018, CHANG presents her two newest series-Survivor and Do You Still Recall. Either in the manifestation of her needlework or in the connotation of her work, it can be seen there are considerable changes and transformations which are so refreshing.

Survivor still represents the memories of her childhood. The inspiration for her composition comes from the old photos of herself with her two sisters. Despite that, she shows us something novel in the selection of cloths, needlework and manifestation. The artist designedly turns the sewn works over so that the viewers can see the knots originally on the backs. The red threads tied with knots on some parts of the bodies appear protuberant, which creates scar-like marks. The little girls covered with wounds all over are playing hand in hand, while holding together makes them smile and feel supported in an uncomfortable life. The image of mother has been transformed into needlework which nestles tightly to her children. The meaning of “thread in the hand of a compassionate mother” is contradictorily but logically embodied in her work.

For the serial works of Survivor, we can see that the artist takes her idiosyncrasy up a notch, and even more accurate and prudent in the presentation of ideas.

Do You Still Recall is more stunning as the storytelling has been reduced to a minimum; the scenes are getting simpler, the memories seem to gradually dim, the childhood playmates—dolls, baby bears, horses ...—fade into memory little by little. In the end, only the knots are left behind after the colored cotton thread has penetrated through the cloths. Are those knots the scabs of memory? The ends of thread tied with knots form the dots on the cloths, and the lines between the dots form the paths which extend in all directions. But expectedly, there is less narration and the (empty) space becomes larger as this idiosyncrasy creates a minimalist style.

As a matter of fact, CHANG is getting more mature now. Time gives her the opportunity to heal, marriage provides her with the source of happiness, and artistic creation fulfills her expectation and fanciful idea of life. She did courageously face the life arranged by Heaven and respond to the fate of the future with her own efforts. Through her work, we see the growth of an artist, a little girl with a nightmare in her heart of hearts has become a real artist.

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