

Fifth Dimensional Perspectives of Cinematic Arts

Digital Cinema Practice and Aesthetics of Vincent Van Gogh

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Abstract—To pursue genuine oriental aesthetics on digital filmmaking, my film celebrating the 125th anniversary of great Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh is scripted and produced. It was through a letter written by Vincent Van Gogh to his friend “Vincent” in Hangzhou, China on the evening Dec 23rd, 1888 - “My dear Vincent! I am creating a joy. What I hear, see, taste, smell, and touch is all illusion. This illusion is manifested onto the reality I believe. The mind is life. I declare that life is the continuity of this illusion. That is the law of university.” Through the time eclipse, the Chinese artist “Vincent” is able to realize the action today, 2015. In contemporary Asia, the style of western movies is dominant and affects life of habitats. Asian excitingly consumed images, political concerns and social ethics from the motion pictures produced by westerners. It is not surprising that life imitates art of films. There are human condition and life quality in which deserved to the individuals of Asian region. The time now is we are living in the abundance of visual materials. This abundance of material leads us to complacency of imitation and reiteration rather than creation and invention. Not only poetry requires great efforts to comprehend and to interpret but also a work of visual art finds itself hard to define. However, traditional representational arts had successfully reinvented the life of phenomena through the complex application of codes and conventions of pictorial graphic language.

Oriental culture has its own renaissance, shining moments and values. It is time to reinvent and restore its humor, and re-discover its joy. This research intends to create the application of authentic Asian perspectives and compositions to filmmaking. Traditional Oriental Master paintings such as Jeong-seon(Korean, 鄭敞, 1676–1759)/ ‘Clearing After Rain in Mt. In-wang’, Guo Xi (Chinese: 郭熙, c. 1020 - c. 1090)/ ‘Early-Spring’ show unique convention for representing distance and forms of two dimensions in accordance with its philosophy. There are qualitative differences between representational media and recording media. The continuous development of technology allows these differences to overcome. The recording arts such as camera and sound recorder provides more direct path between subject and observer. The application of the spirit of oriental paintings to digital filmmaking opens to a new level of discourse of cinema.

Keywords—Digital Cinema; Genuine Oriental Aesthetics; Digital Image Processing; 5 Dimensional Perspectives

I. INTRODUCTION

A film “Vincent” applies a painting ‘Workers of all land unite’ by Hwang Ouchul, to codify certain aspects of painting into a moving image: film. It is possible, through digital experiments, to extract specific elements of what lines and colors elicit emotional and cognitive reactions to the viewer. Based on these extractions and analysis, a framework could be created so called “literal translation of painting”. Even though some interpretations of an artwork might be lost at the literal translation, yet extracted words can be stringed and re-constructed together in order to build episodes and stories in painting. As a result of these digital analyses processing, codified graphic elements brings clues to the script writing of rich and nebulous responses.



Fig. 1. Posters for the film Film VINCENT

The original scenario and visualization of “Vincent” reflects these aspects onto the film. Story structure, representational visual codes like color, form and line, Mise-en-Scène, production design, and camera movements are carefully managed to create the balance between recording media and the insights of painting master. This dissertation focuses on outcome that is moving image applying visual codes of paintings into fiction feature film that could be watched by the greater audiences. It is my belief that the pursuit of new visual grammar and vocabulary in cinematic arts would expand our aesthetic appreciation and ability with

the methodology “literal translation of painting”. Our communication devices and method would be much enriched, and with it our ability for thought, which is fundamentally abstract to begin with. Such an emphasis on abstract imagery as language would lead to advancement in that form. Crossover collaborations between films and paintings demand abundance efforts, experimentation, synthetic knowledge, intuitive thinking and technological endeavor. It is challenging and meritorious research that excavates iconography, and pictorial grammars are shared and transformed across mediums. Through this scrutinized research, the author establishes methodology to create unique film style of the East which departs from classical style. This research concludes the accomplishments and emphasizes the importance of creating meaning of the films to deepen the oriental aesthetics beyond the methodological boundaries.

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II. PHILOSOPHY

A Dutch painter Vincent William Van Gogh cut his ear off on December 23, 1888. According to the article of local newspaper report on 30 December 1888, he delivered his mutilated ear to a girl called Rachel, and handed her ... his ear with these words: 'Keep this object like a treasure.'

With the allowance of the variable understandings of this event, short film “Vincent” has to convey the profound interpretation of artist himself. An alienated outsider Vincent was literally suicided by cruel society. The film “Vincent” is based on the most famous incidents in Van Gogh’s life : his attempt to cut off his ear in 1888. Audiences will dive into the hearts of the artist, the pain, difficulty, and internal fights.

The film structure of “VINCENT” shows the Innovative approaches that fictional parallel universe can co-exists in the East and West, one in France and the other in China through the time difference.

III. 5 DIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Perspective and Color in Film investigates the possibility that can inter-generate views and perspectives of painters and directors. The author considers painting with great interest and takes a powerful metamorphosis to influence directly in between art forms and the language of Film. In new experimental film “Vincent”, the author makes original use of color, composition, rhythm, and fractured temporal structures. The visual information of the abstract painting can be extracted and visualized through different categories.

Hue, Saturation and Brightness were extracted by the image processing. Certain sets of information are classified and selected for the further interpretation and literal

translation. Scenes are thoroughly designed to fulfill the essence of oriental spirits through setting, colors, composition, and perspectives. To determine the look of film and to develop a color palette, the author creates inevitable interrelations with expressionism and poetic realism mingled at the same time and sequence. The story structure of film conveys not only essential questions of the endless circulation of time but also the hope for the infinite destiny of human existence. It demonstrates the innovative combination between representational media and recording media and is expected to have various applications beyond digital cinematic methodology.

After the revolt against perspective by the Cubists, artists have been particularly interested in the fourth dimension. Cubists rejected three-dimensional perspective and tried to view several angles of point-of-view. As the result of their endeavors, their paintings show multiple perspectives: being from the fourth dimension. Because of this new discovery of perspective, paintings were depicted much the way children draw people. The lines of perspective vanishing into the horizon had disappeared in their paintings. Three-dimensional objects have duration over time, forming a fourth dimensional, or enduring shape. Therefore time engages in 4-dimensional perspective. ‘Transferred received 5th dimensional logic’ being used by NASA is the perspective medium outside of the present time interval. Through image processing and analysis of a painting, ‘literal translation of painting’ provides multi-input clues that can be cross-related between films and paintings. This method able to see higher dimensions and takes a dimensional shortcut through a fifth dimension to travel through time.

IV. RE-STRUCTURING TWO-DIMENSIONAL SPACE

From the extracted statistics of digital image processing, it is possible to use of subcategory and field of elements. Through the de-composition of a painting, color, visual space and time, objects, words, and meaning can be translated into verbal narrative. Extracted images are purposefully crafted to have specific properties that make them useful for story telling. A clustered color field serves to create mindscape of filmmaker/writer as something one remembers or imagines. The subject of an image needs to be either in reality or in an abstract concept.

TABLE I. LITERAL TRANSLATION OF IMAGE

Digital Cinematic Language	Painting Language
Space(open-closed)	Overall Fore/middle/background
Characters	Subject
Emotion	Dominant colors
Continuous action/Relations of episodes	Compositional appreciation
Time flow	Harmony

V. SCRIPT

- Title: Vincent
- Ext flower shop sunny day.
- Shop owner displays flowers to sell. Flower Thief steals a bundle of sunflowers. Shop owner noticed she is a thief. Flower Thief runs away then he desperately chases after her. They run, run, and run.
- Ext sun flower field sunny day.
- Flower Thief is stealing sunflowers. When owner (Drinker1) appears, she runs away. She accidentally kicks Vincent's easel and canvas. They fall apart by the disturbance with strong wind.
- Vincent: What a chance.
- The sound of gunfire is heard. Camera sees the Vincent's point of view - a gun sitting next to the oil paint and brushes, now over the ground.
- December 23, 2014. Hangzhou, China
- Int tavern night.
- Flower Thief arranges flowers on the table. She warms up wine pots. She puts ginger and egg yolks into the pot. In that instance, camera sees scar of cut on her wrist.
- Flower Thief is serving wine and flirting with drinkers. All of them look greedy, and it is very quiet.
- When Vincent comes in, all the drinkers find him the object to laugh at. Vincent enters the bar with his daily painting tools, easel, and canvas. Sun flowers arranged on the table.
- Vincent is thirsty. Vincent counts notes and coins on the table. He arranges into three groups. He sketches sunflowers.
- Drinker: Vincent, Hello ugly painter, you are late tonight. Where is this money from? Have you sold your painting today?
- Vincent ignores him and continues his sketches.
- Drinker1: Nope, Taking money from his brother's pocket! I saw the postman today. (Inspecting flowers) By the way, these flowers look like mine.
- Drinker2: Postman? OH, I see. You sent begging letters to your younger brother? You must be good at those writings.
- Drinker: Vincent? What a strange name for Chinese. You made up your own name after your parents. No respect for family tree.

- Drinker1: Old master I said one has to live in mountain at least three years before he paint mountains. How long have you been here?
- Drinker2: Oh, I heard your friend's painting sells. He sold his painting then he himself went to fancy place for pleasure. Didn't he invite you to come along?
- Drinker1 (touching flowers): I have an idea for you Vincent. If you kill yourself one day, your painting will sell well in the market. ha-ha. I am sure these are from my field.



Fig. 2. VINCENT continues his sketches. Vincent explains how he understands things in his painting. (Still from VINCENT 2015)



Fig. 3. Vincent looks into the mirror watching and listening of his mind trembling. (Still from VINCENT 2015)

- Vincent: Don't try to ruin my day. My mind is full of joy.
- Vincent strongly protests it.
- Vincent: Attention please. It's not a begging letters. I am not a beggar. It's a fair trade...exchange with paintings. Artist has a pride even in poverty.²
- Flower thief (approaches to vincent): Hello my dear. How was the West Lake today? Sun must be hot, your neck turned red and cooked. Well-done. (Looking at three groups of money) Three bottles for today?
- Vincent puts back in his pocket one group of money.

¹ He is mentioning Chinese painter Shi Tao 石涛; 1642–1707).

² It's from novel Kong Zhi Yi: 《孔乙己》 - Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936)

- Flower thief: Ok, Two then. (Looking at his sketches) This sketch lacks something. It lacks... spirit of flowers. You know? The scent makes me dizzy. The scent, the ghost, and the spirit.
- Flower Thief takes money then leaves for drinks.
- Drinker: You are old fashioned, man. Look at this. It is 21 century. You are 20-century artist. That's why you cannot sell your painting. Your brother sends money.
- Vincent: (To the other drinkers) Hey, you guys. Once I had a job offer, good money in it. you know, When I was in town, they asked me to reproduce for commercial decorations. Copying old landscapes. but I turned it down. I can't have me paint commercials. Don't you know why? Art and myself cannot be a tool for surviving. Artist...art, its for sharing.
- Drinker: You don't want to work, like us! You have very good life.
- Vincent: I am working everyday. You are the farmer. I am the artist. You have land. I have canvas. You cultivate your land. I cultivate my canvas. I am working hard like you.
- Drinker2: He is working for us and he turned down job offer! (laughter) You are jobless bagger! Loser!
- Vincent: I washed my wading throat with a glass of wine. Lightness. We have had plenty of poverty and conflict in it. Poisonous passion and desire spread in my head dizzily. I am intoxicated with thoughts. No one stumbles at minor pleasure.
- Hypnosis consumes countless implicit time in the shedding blood. If I can be free from all this, my soul, and I can't do better. Dreamy pale face lies across the street. Full of betrayals consists in a relationship. Heartbroken lives. Wait, wait, more time than you have to. Sometimes I have to deny the legitimacy of those cheerful toasts. I am wandering the alleyways in dark night searching for the lights, which can direct to the traffic of loneliness.
- I am a dog not barking. Oh, here you are, coming sun. Come to me without hesitation. Burn me inside peach black and absent-minded midnight. Passing by sleeping naked shoulders of lovers come to me. My heavy shadow hides beneath my toes at noon. Have you read the sound and music in the ecstasy? Only thing I remember is you also do not want to be seen as well. A baby in hunger sucks breast of poor mother. Souls with countless worries exile herself in a strange place where monopoly governs.
- The more desire of it the deeper roots dash into the other side of the sun. I stand in a deserted field to find the heart of the earth, like an eagle's eyeballs chase weak heartbeats of animals. A long red body of magma lying on the ground in the cold air to cool the body. Smell of decay meets the hum of the soul in the forest. Nestled deep in the body of pine tree nematodes kill the host slowly, which was the pride of yesterday.
- There is no trace of my existence to praise and admire. I have an idea and guts to be a fool to go. My works are created by the will of the soul flour to the dough. Then the false pretense of a world without truth hangs under the eaves of life. Eros and Psyche, combine with endless inspiration I will never climb. I want to have a free spirit you envy. My concentration is awful to know as if life-threatening. When I was young and hot I didn't know how to appreciate them with my eyes. To hear that you lost faith in the citadel of the paintings makes me depressed. Aestheticism and curiosity in a laboratory simultaneously happen to face each other in a sweat.
- We must be talking about the weight of loneliness. My honest life proves poverty. Likewise the growth of bamboo shoots after the rain, resignation and sadness lead me oath crumpled and not to base life do so. Single meal mixed with sigh every night. Just as poverty and disorder is accompanied, civilization and barbarism are friendly partners of the equivalent of a companion. I am asking you to be freed on the day of my funeral.
- All the drinkers clap and loud laughter. Tracing their laughter, three kids from neighbor sneak in and surround Vincent's table. Flower Thief approaches with a bottle and dish of nuts. Three kids look at his dish of nuts.
- Vincent: Why one bottle only?
- Flower thief (pointing boss): Boss said you need to settle from the last bill.
- Boss changes 150 to 90 next to Vincent's name on chalkboard on the wall behind the counter.
- Vincent: Oh, I see. I owed something.
- Kid: Can you share some nuts with us, as well?
- Vincent allows kids eat nuts.
- Flower thief: This sketch lacks the smell of God.(looking at his sketches) What did you paint today? Can I see it?
- Vincent shows his painting. It's still wet. Flower Thief cleans colors on her hands. She keeps looking at painting as for eternal time. She looks at Vincent.
- Vincent: This zinc white does not dry at all. I find painting hard work because of mosquito.
- Cutaway, Vincent stretches his leg, hand, eyes and catches the mosquito.
- Kids hands are busy with nuts.

- Flower thief come closer to Vincent in the intimate manner.
- Vincent: Look at this drama here. I went on painting at the risk and peril of seeing the whole show on the ground at any moment-it's a white effect with a good deal of yellow in it, and blue and lilac, the sky white and blue.
- Vincent looks like he is looking at the scene.
- Vincent: However, you must feel as I do. Sunday, when I saw a red sunset, all red like red wine.
- Flower Thief pours red wine. It dances in his glass. His talk continues.
- VINCENT: In the distance it turned to yellow, and then a green sky with the sun, the earth after the rain violet, sparkling yellow here and there where it caught the reflection of setting sun. I am a poor fighter and poor, poor sufferer. I am a too tiny creature to embrace all the spirit of nature.
- She touches his ears.
- Flower thief: Vincent, your ear looks so cute.
- Kids laughter. More drinkers come in to bar, She leaves and greets them.
- Flower thief (to the new comers): Look who's here! Come on in.
- New drinker: hello flower thief, I missed your flower. One bottle of 10 years old warm Yellow wine for us.
- Drinker1: These are mine. (Touching flowers)
- After eating nuts, kids still fix their eyes to nuts. Vincent covers dish with his hands.
- Vincent: Not much left, Not, no. There aren't many left, not many at all.
- Kids laughter.
- Vincent (to the boy): Come and drop by my yellow house in two hours. I want to you to do something for me.
- 4. INT VINCENT'S HOME NIGHT
- Vincent looks into mirror for long time. With biting two brushes in his mouth, he starts cutting his ear with knife. His friend comes back home from his party. Vincent goes upstairs.
- Vincent: Can you help me to finish this job?
- Friend: What the hell!!!
- Vincent: Please help me out!
- Friend: Are you trying to kill me?
- Vincent: No, no, no, I am preparing my gift.
- Friend: You are crazy man. Get off!!!
- His friend shocked and cursed him. He runs down stairs and escapes from the house. Vincent comes down and finishes his job. He cleans his ear and wraps his bleeding head with cloth. He carefully gift-wraps his ear with newspaper.
- 5. INT. DOOR. NIGHT
- Vincent hands in cash and package to boy.
- Vincent: Deliver this to my fair lady.
- Boy: What happen to you?
- Vincent: Nothing.
- Boy: What is it? By the way, who is your FAIR LADY though?
- Vincent: She works at bar. You know her?
- Boy: Which one?
- Vincent: Flower Thief
- Boy: Oh, OK,,,but she is everyone's Fair Lady...
- Vincent: What did you say? Give it back to me, Go away little boy.
- The Boy keeps money then runs away.
- 6. EXT STREET NIGHT
- Vincent keeps on walking on the street with the gift.
- 7. INT TAVERN NIGHT
- Vincent's ear is breeding; He urgently approach flower thief.
- Vincent: This is my gift for you.
- Ear is unwrapped on the table. Frozen Flower Thief and speechless drinkers looking at ear. Drinkers' frightening expression like Goya's painting.
- The end.

VI. VISUAL DEVELOPMENT

The idea of the film "Vincent" is devoted to not only a painter Van Gogh but also all the artists who are seeking for the truth of life. Uniqueness and authenticity of film can be achieved through the eyes of fresh approaches of image. Vincent has almost three minute long monologue in script. To deal with this scene director introduces a new innovative method so called 'foreign materials' into the main sequence. In order to develop new territory of filmmaking technique, the conventional storytelling structure has to be broken. As the results of it, audience can alienated from the pre-conception of artist's famous incident 'ear-cutting'.

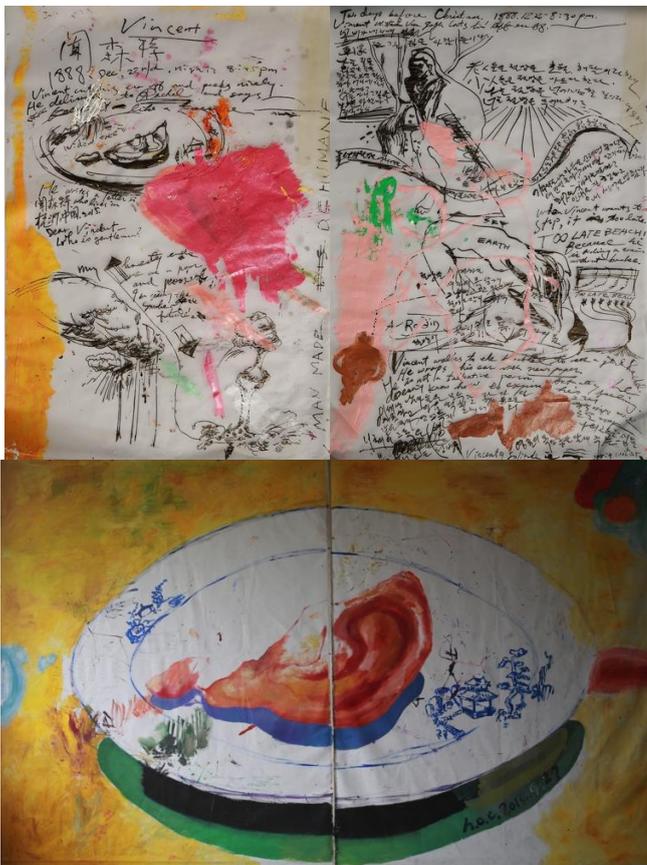


Fig. 4. Script Drawings and Paintings for Vincent



Fig. 6. VFX Application for Vincent

VII. CONCLUSION

An evoking film “Vincent” depicts a new understanding of Van Gogh’s attempt to cut his ear off in 1888. He is one of the greatest and most recognizable painters in history. Even though he himself suffered from multiple mental disorders, film ‘Vincent’ keeps envisioning him as a warm-hearted sensitive human being. It is concentrated on the feeling that hurt him by the incident. Meanwhile the film “Vincent” is appreciated for its cinematic methodological languages and imagination. The film structure of “Vincent” showing that the fictional parallel universe which can co-exists in the East and West, one in France and the other in China through the time difference is innovative time and space design in cinema. Throughout the film, the director raises questions such as how he seeks to bridge between the world of The East and West, and what in the end invents in the process of multiple and cross-cultural application.

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Fig. 5. Drawing Development and VFX Application for Vincent