

Digital Drawing Room: MFA Fine Arts featuring Zihan Jia

by Yang Li



Zihan Jia

Starting May 10, you can view work by students in the MFA graduating class on the website 2021.CCAMFA.art and in the [Class of 2021 Showcase](#).

Works in this series were written by students in Glen Helfand and Maria Porges' respective graduate writing seminars this past fall and spring.

If the Qing Dynasty had not been replaced by the Chinese Republic, Zihan Jia would be one of the princesses. One of her identities—royal blood from the previous dynasty—has led her to use ancient Chinese art techniques in a contemporary way. In Jia's art practice, she includes materials from her daily life, such as the boxes she has received in the mail from China, a used Chinese wedding dress, or candles from her husband's wedding proposal.

Jia's experience of identity change—from a daughter to a wife, from a data scientist to an artist—have led her to question how many identities a woman can experience in a lifetime. As she researched traditional

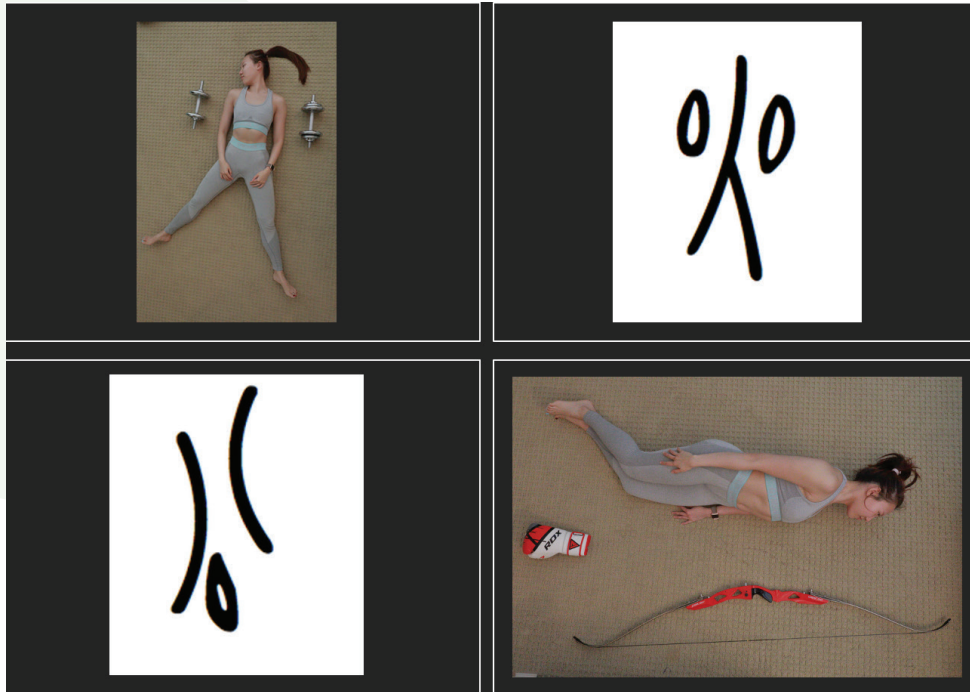


Housework, Ongoing. Performance.



Escape, 2019. Copper, wedding dress.

Chinese women, she kept asking this question as she considered what she wanted to represent their suffering in different periods. One of her artworks, *The Bed*, incorporates an ancient Chinese language called Nvshu — the only script worldwide designed and used exclusively by women to communicate with each other, having been denied the ability to read and write. In another work, she incorporated the leftover candles that her husband had used when he proposed. She cast the shape of her own foot in the candle wax and squeezed the result into the distorted form created by foot binding, which women suffered for centuries in China to modify their feet into a specific shape and size.



Nvshu, 2020. Photographs.