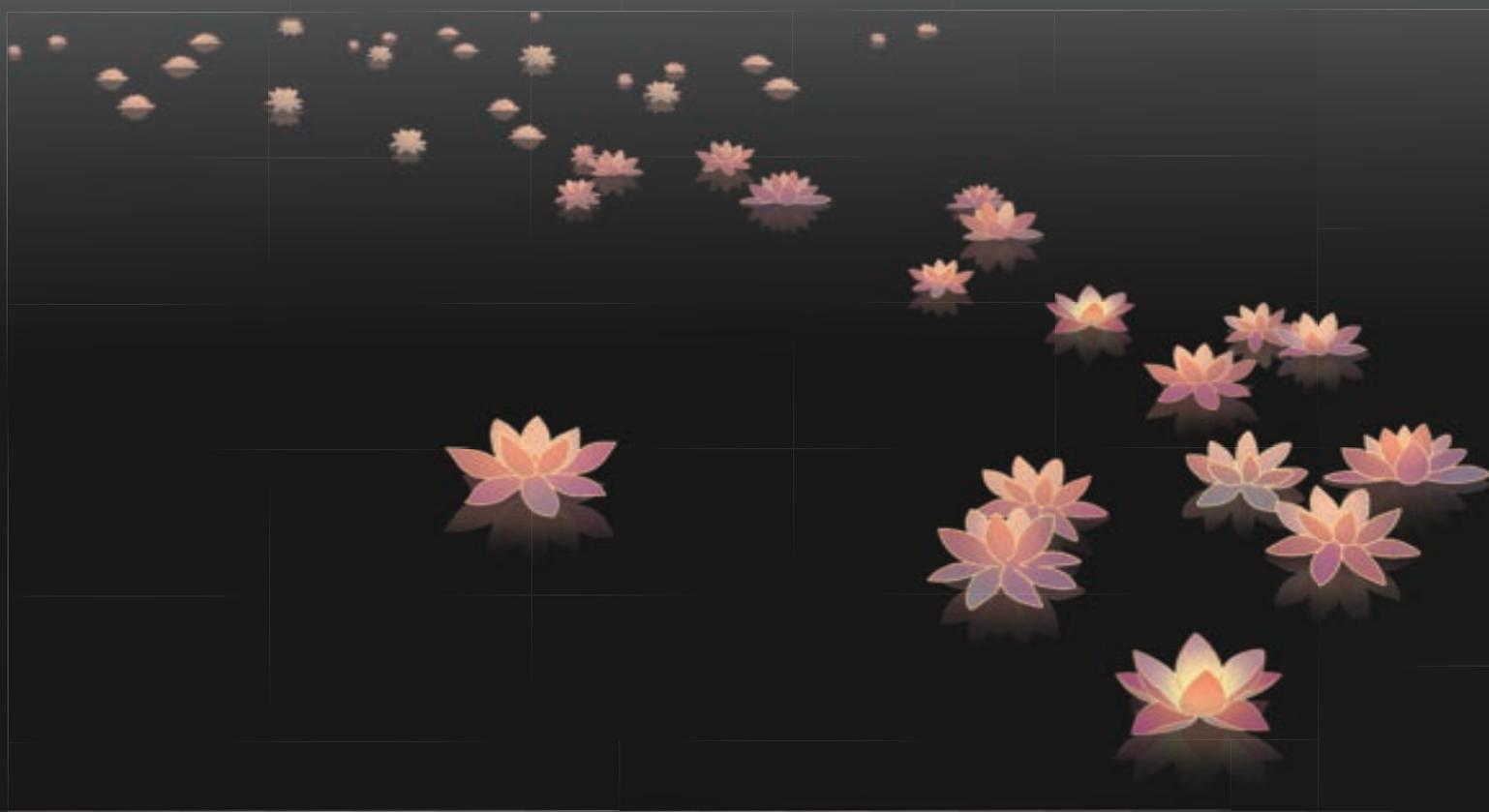


THE MOONLIGHT FLOWS

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Bachelor of Crafts and Design

Academic Year 2023







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CAPSTONE STATEMENT

This project "The moonlight flows" helps me find inner peace after going through the Covid-19 pandemic. As an international student studying abroad, this artwork evokes my nostalgia and gives me courage to carry on with life. This project is intended to help people find inner peace and memorial for the lost ones.

I am an artist currently living and studying in Canada. I was born in China and first came to Canada when I was in grade ten. This journey helps me grow up and becomes more independent. It makes me stronger when I have to resolve every little problem in my life on my own. Although it has been a long time without meeting my families in person, we have felt connected all the time. To me, families are my mental support and friends make up another big part of my life.

During the covid pandemic, people feel more attached to each other in their heart rather than making social connections through group activities physically. It first broke out in China, everyone was panicking when so many people were dying around them, when there was no cure for the virus, when it was all over the media and the doctors were ordered to stand by twenty-four seven. I was worried about my family and especially my father who is a doctor that was ordered to act at once when needed. He was too busy to tell me how bad the situation was, he told me to take care of myself and it was getting better everyday. It struck me hard when I heard that one of his coworkers died because of overworking. I have never experienced death around me, loss of someone I am familiar with and knowing that there is a potential risk of losing my father made me really scared. I tried to calm myself by devoting my time into one thing I am passionate about: Art. When we finally made it through the tough time, I remember the way people used to memorialize the lost ones back in my hometown. They tried to find their inner peace through expressing their feelings for the dead with river lanterns on the Ghost Festival so that they could move on with their life. I wish I could bring back peace to myself and people who have the similar experience with this capstone project.

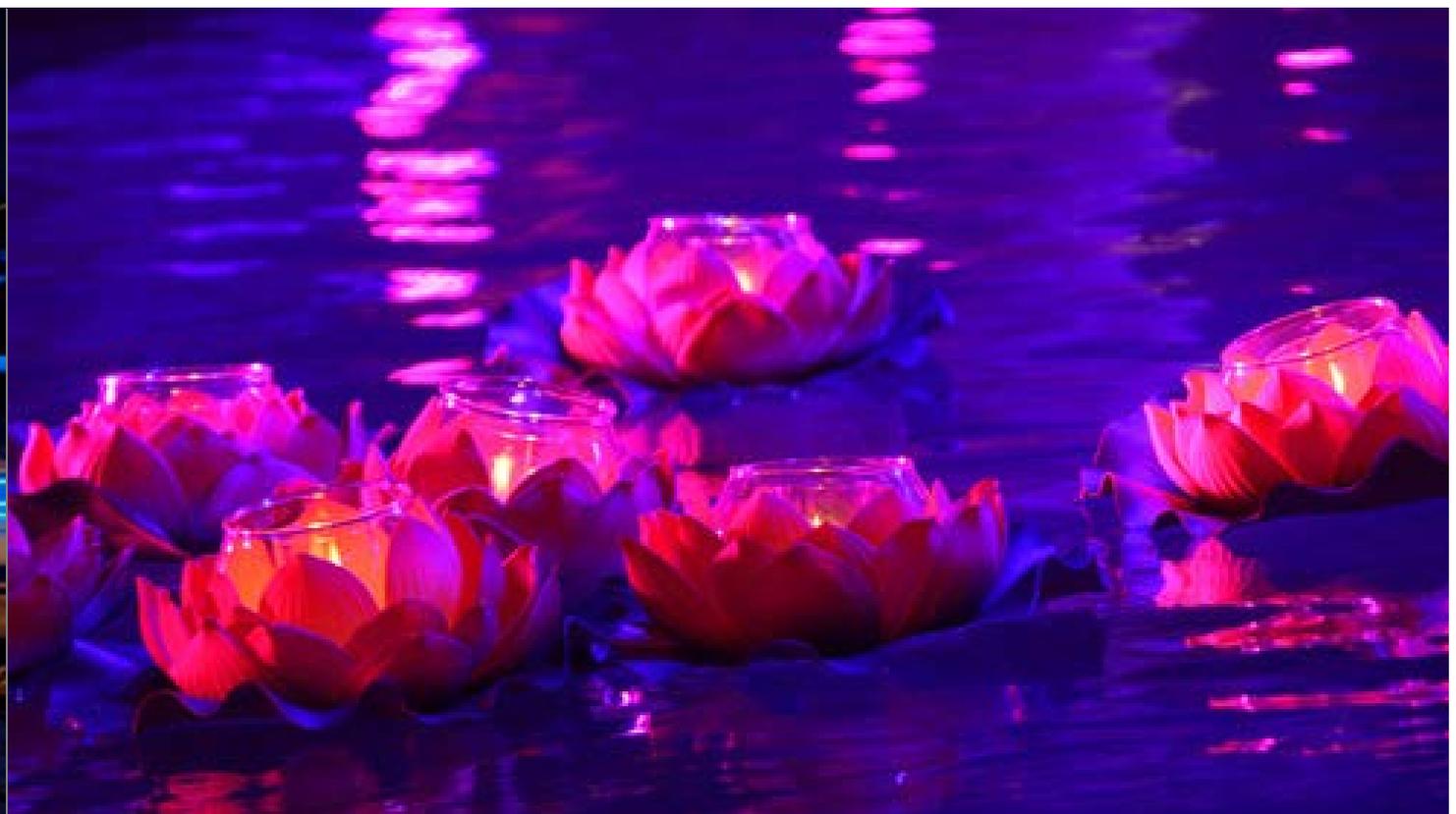


INSPIRATION



The title “月光如水” comes from a Chinese poem called “初秋戏作山居杂兴俳体十二解” by Yang Wanli from Song Dynasty . The meaning of the word is that the moonlight is flowing like water. It was used in the poem to describe that it is the best time of the year on the day of Chinese Ghost Festival when the moonlight is shining on you like water flows through. Every year at this time, autumn just arrives. There is a slight chill, but it is not yet cold. It is just the perfect time to enjoy the moment peacefully, you can meditate in the moon appreciation, you can think about the distance without feeling desolate, you can wander in the mind, and perceive the beauty of the world, you can think about the soul, and talk with the dead As early as the late Tang Dynasty, the poet 11 used this expression to express his longing for his old friends. When he came to Jianglou again, a place where he used to come with his friend, he saw the quiet moonlight and lamented that the scene is still beautiful but the past is in the past.

I got inspiration from my hometown: Nanjing, because I always find peace and joy every time there's something that reminds me of my hometown. I remember the time spent with my family, the places that I used to play when I was a kid. These memories bring me comfort and I know these lives inside of me no matter what challenges I will face in the future. These are my mental support, everything I have been taught so far will give the power to overcome the problems and help me move forward. I think of the time when I was a kid, I would hang my wishes onto the prayer tree. Watch people put down river lanterns and watch them flow away, lights become distant. It was quiet and peaceful, I did not feel sadness from those people. However, I did not understand them. I was just a kid back then. I realize that they needed to do this to move on. Therefore, I tried to design the environment with my hometown as a reference.



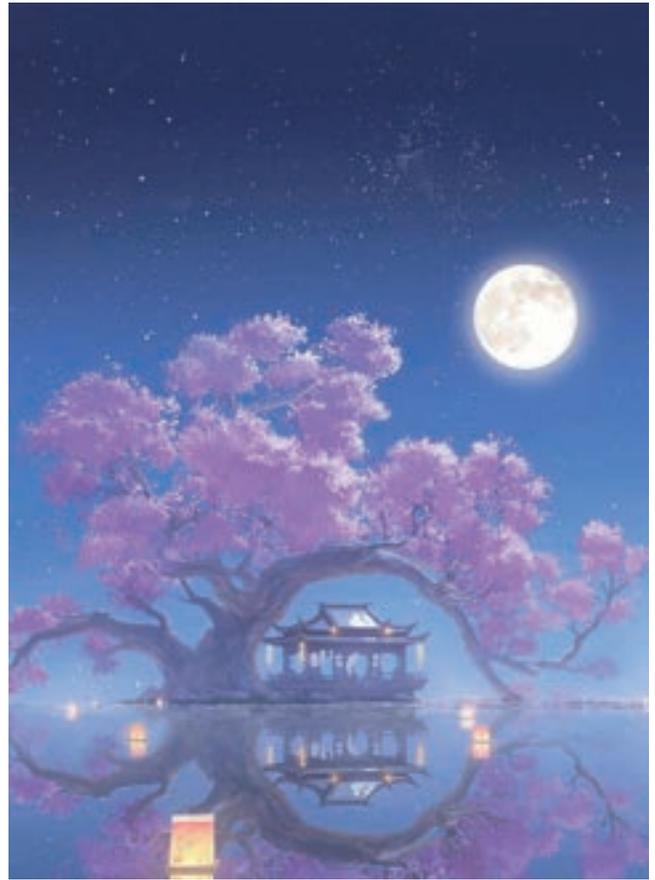


RESEARCH

The craftsmanship of river lanterns is an intangible cultural heritage in China, with a history of more than two thousand years. It is a long-standing folk custom activity where people miss their old friends, pray for peace and entrust their yearning for a better life. Different regions have different production processes, and the styles of river lanterns are also varied, most of which have evolved from lotus shapes to the present. For thousands of years, the Chinese have always regarded the lotus as a symbol of holiness and a messenger of light leading to the other side. It is a traditional custom of the Ghost Festival to release river lanterns. River lanterns can not only entrust people's longing for their ancestors, but also mean that bad luck will flow eastward with the passing water and never return. It has become a beautiful custom for people to express their longing for the dead relatives and wish the living people well.

River lanterns are also called "lotus lanterns". They are generally made of colored tissue paper and foam as the base, and incense lamps or candles are placed on the base. The traditional river lantern is produced by firstly applying rosin evenly on the back of the iron pot, and under the action of high temperature, put papers of different colors to let the rosin penetrate. Then, press the colored paper onto the round wooden stake while it is still hot. Finally, trim the shaped paper into the shape of a "lotus cup". In the past, people used melon rinds, noodle bowls, and paper to make lamps. Nowadays, coloured paper is generally used, shaped with heated rosin, made into bowls, filled with kerosene, and lit with wicks.

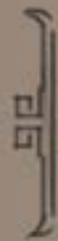
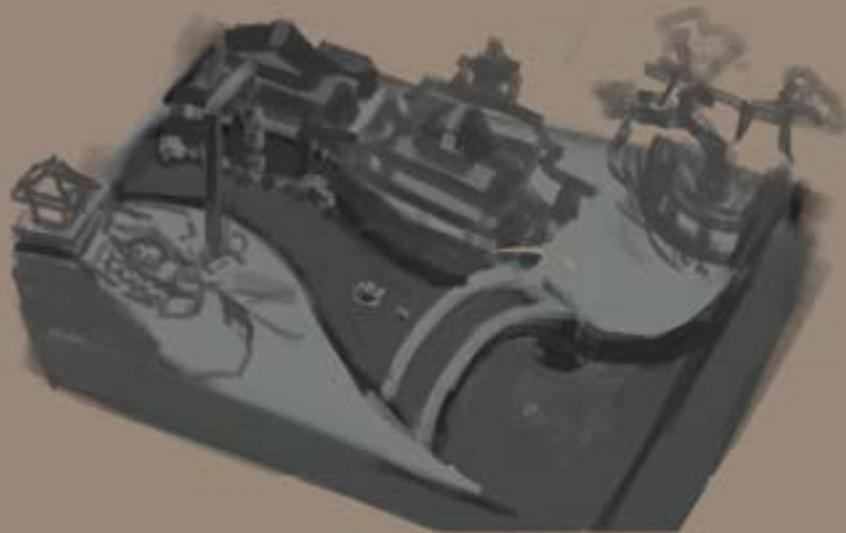




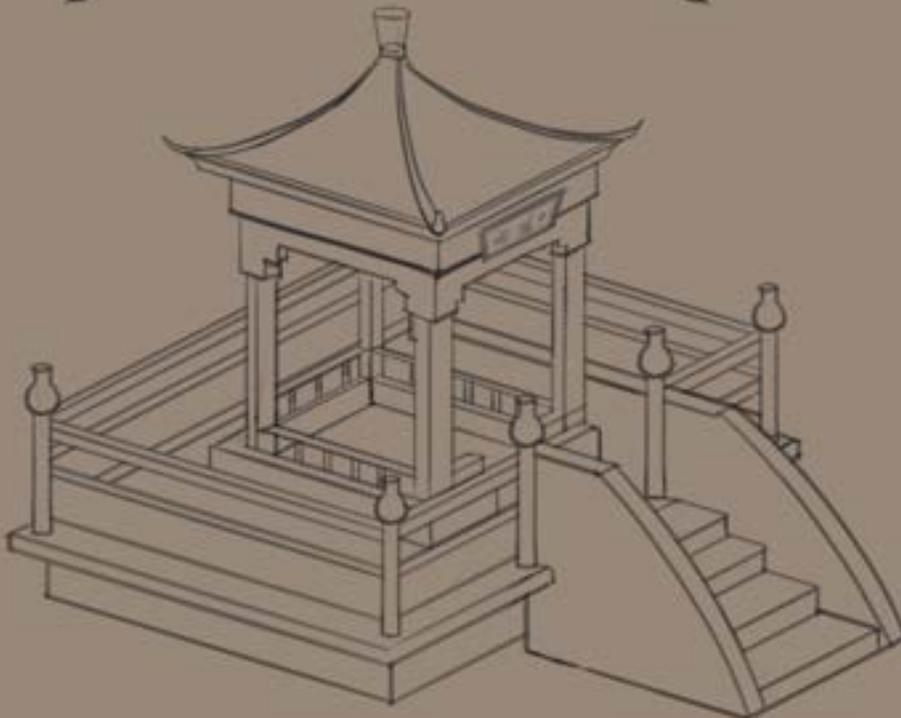
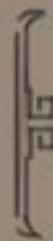
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Idea development

Chinese Ghost Festival - River Laterns



Chinese Pavilion





Prayer Tree

A large tree that people come and pray. They write down their wishes for the new year and hope the wind takes away all the troubles and bring the joy to them. Wishes are hanged on the branches.

River Lantern
Mostly in the shape of water lily. People use these to worship the dead, Especially the people they miss the most, usually are friends or families.



JiuQi (Wine Flag)

A commercial folk custom in China. Ancient hotels hung silk banners or lanterns on the roadside to attract business. As one of the oldest form of advertising, Jiu Qi have a long history in China.



PROCESS WORK

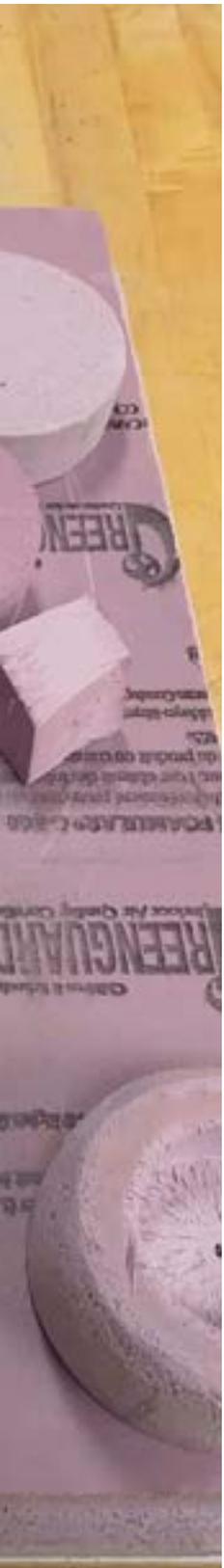




LANDSCAPE

Materials :
Plaster
Foam





STRUCTURES

Material:
WOOD

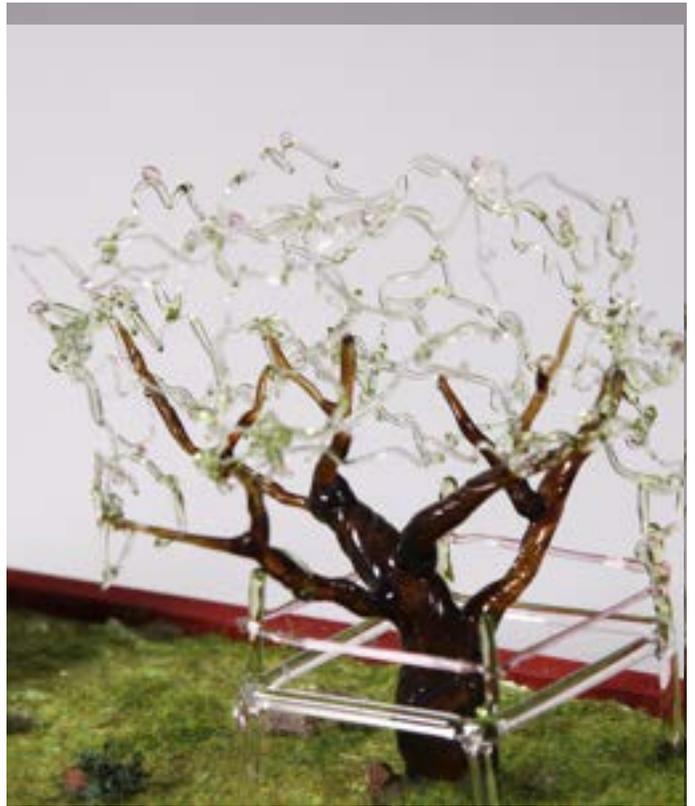




ELEMENTS

Material:
GLASS





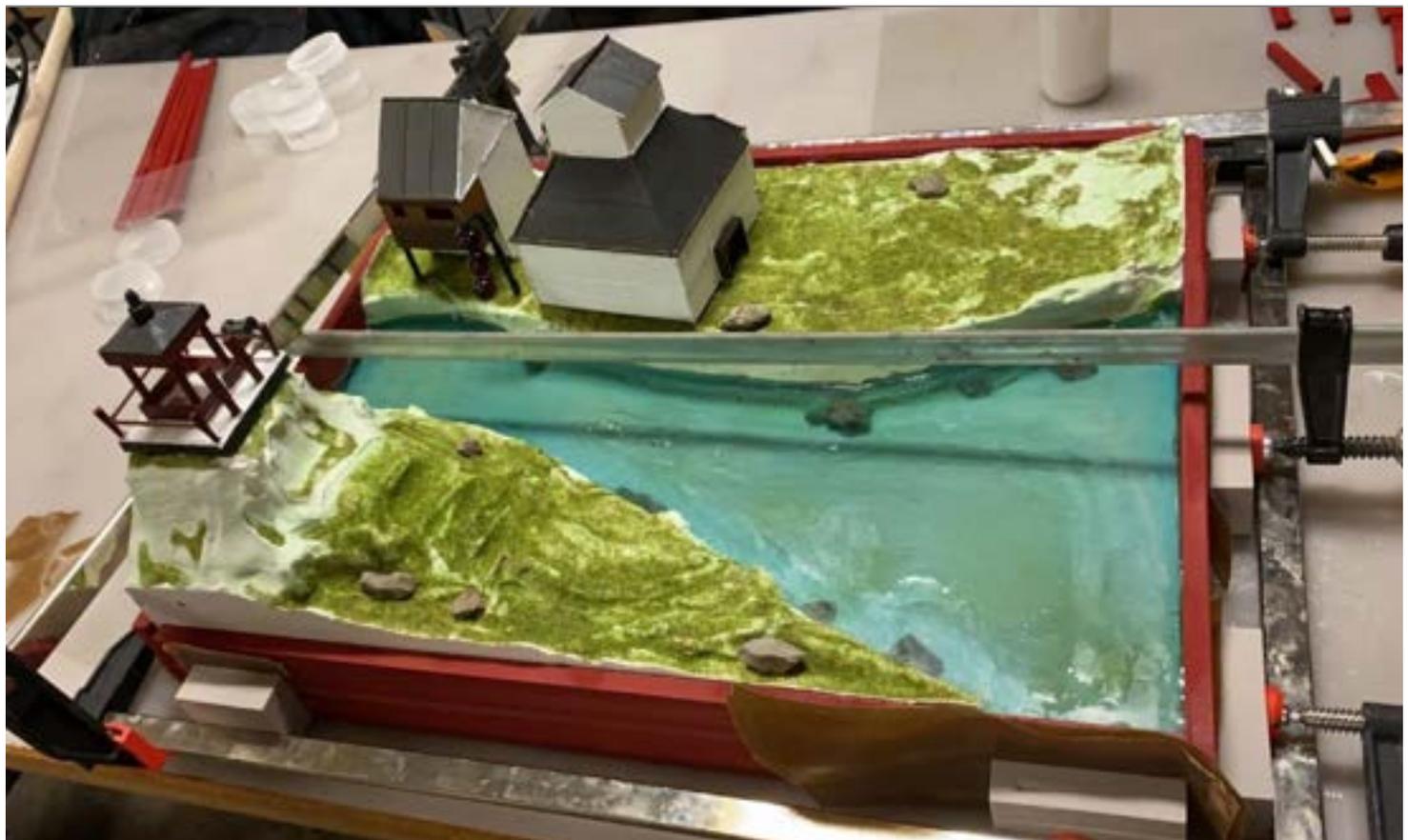


RIVER & FRAME

Materials:

RESIN

WOOD







FUTURE THOUGHTS

It has been a hard time for a lot of people going through the Covid pandemic. I certainly find some comfort for myself through this project. It feels great for me to be connected with others through my artwork. The pandemic is almost over and people are getting back to school and work as normal. I know that there will be a lot more challenges for me to face in the future, but now I believe I have the courage and ability to overcome all the tough times. Although, I will be graduating from Sheridan College and move to the next stage of my life. I would love to keep working on the stuff that

I am passionate about. Hopefully, I can continue to develop myself as a professional artist. I would love to make art as my career. The plan for the next step is to set up a lampworking studio at home so that I can still have the equipment to play around glass. If you ask me what is the greatest achievement during this time, it must be that I am very glad that I am still doing what I love. I have no way to predict what will happen in the future, but if I have to say how long I will stick to art, I hope there is no time limit..





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APPENDIX

Pg. 5 Artwork photo, Designed and Made by Jiawen Gu, Photo by Jiaying Xu

Pg. 6 (Top) 古镇夜色, Photo by 逆光前行

Pg. 6 (Bottom) 秦淮灯会, CCTV news, 2023

Pg. 7 Lotus Lantern, Phoenix TV news, 2013

Pg. 8 River Lanterns, Nipic, 2013

Pg. 9 River Lanterns, Guilin Life News, 2021

Pg. 10 (Top Left) 水乡古镇, Huaban, 2022

Pg. 10 (Top Right) 古风场景, Dui Tang, 2020

Pg. 10 (Bottom Left) Summerhouse, iStock, 2013

Pg. 10 (Bottom Right) River Lanterns, Mafengwo, 2023

Pg. 12 - 13 Concept Sketch, Jiawen Gu

Pg. 14 -15 Process work, Jiawen Gu, Photo by Jiaying Xu

Pg. 16 - 17 Landscape, Jiawen Gu, Photo By Jiaying Xu

Pg. 18 -19 Chinese Pavilion and Houses, Jiawen Gu, Photo by Jiaying Xu

Pg. 20 - 21 Glass elements, Jiawen Gu, Photo by Jiaying Xu

Pg. 22 - 23 River and Frame design, Jiawen Gu, Photo by Jiaying Xu

Pg. 24 - 25 Final Presentation, Jiawen Gu, Photo by Jiaying Xu

Pg. 26 - 27 Flameworking, Photo by Jiawen Gu

