

Written Component:

Video Essay

This journey started with me staring at the broken railing fence and taking a picture. There are certain moments when I stare at an everyday object and feel confused. What is it? What does this object mean to my understanding and my behavior?

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When looking at the photo later, I thought about *One and Three Chairs* by Joseph Kosuth, in that work, the object is an object, the photo is a replica, and the text of definition is ... suggesting a wider set of relations.

1

I wrote down my observations and understandings that float around the fence on this yellow sheet, from definitions to imaginations. I constantly reflected on Calvino's *Invisible Cities* while writing, as it constructed a visual space through composed verbal materials. My writing is composed of fragmented thoughts and experiences from a personal perspective, trying to capture 'the fence' as a piece of reality that I engage with.

Now, switching to the role of a graphic designer, I have to decide how to organize the texts. The decision depends on my understanding of the text; in this case, it is to put my inconsequential thoughts out for others to read. As you're viewing it now, I've used a traditional liner binding with a plain layout on eye-catching yellow paper, with the intention of fighting against over-generalized definitions.

The problem is, in this form, it looks like an independent and static narrative, isolating from those moments when my thoughts is shaped and revealed.

2

The website you're viewing now is a digital 'container' that I've created to hold my ongoing writing experiment centered around the theme of 'fences', involving the experiences of encountering various fence-like structure in the everyday.

The idea of a 'container' comes from 'The carrier bag theory' by Ursula K. Le Guin, in which she proposes to view the narratives as containers which hold, gather and care. Le Guin states the purpose of 'the carrier bag' as 'neither resolution nor stasis but continuing process.' To me, the theory portrays a

dynamic space held by relations, with elements continuously stored, used and shared. On this website, texts are linked behind draggable visuals that represent both physical and metaphorical 'fences' scattered in a fictional space.

From the publication to the layers on this website, I've been constantly searching for ways of organizing my texts.

3

I looked at the figurative system of the d'Alembert and Diderot's encyclopedia for quite a long time. It is a diagram, an encyclopedic representation of organizing knowledge, with its deceptive appearance and branches, creating an illusion of comprehensiveness. Now, let's put it on the left.

The world explained by Erick Beltran is the reference that helps me to articulate my writings on 'fences', as he states, a 'personal theory' is consist of 'hunches, makeshift ideas, crude understandings...the limited knowledge and experience we have at hand' and is 'a constant dynamic process of making meaning', revealing how individuals participate in cultural production.

So here, I have a 18th-century rigorously-structured knowledge diagram and a bunch of fragmented texts of personal theory on 'fence'. They're both knowledge, but there're obviously contrasts between the two, one is from the past, a dense structure, a retrieval system, with texts placed under branches that may confuse today's people; the other is a neglected branch floating everywhere, changing our behaviors, yet disregarded as true knowledge and not structured in any knowledge branch.

I start to iteratively compare this knowledge diagram with a collection of personal theory on 'fence' and visualize them, from contents to forms. The purpose of this comparison is neither to produce certain knowledge nor to learn about the right knowledge, but to compare differences between the nature of encyclopedic knowledge and the nature of personal knowledge. Which knowledge is considered important and correct? Who gets to decide, and based on what? Should the production of knowledge necessarily serve a certain kind of purpose or demand?

Within the juxtaposition of the diagram and personal theory, I dragged connecting lines between the two and compiled this publication. During the process of layout, I sensed the relations between text and diagrams that open a parallel space for me to analyze the way of how knowledge is organized.