

At intersections is the emptiness

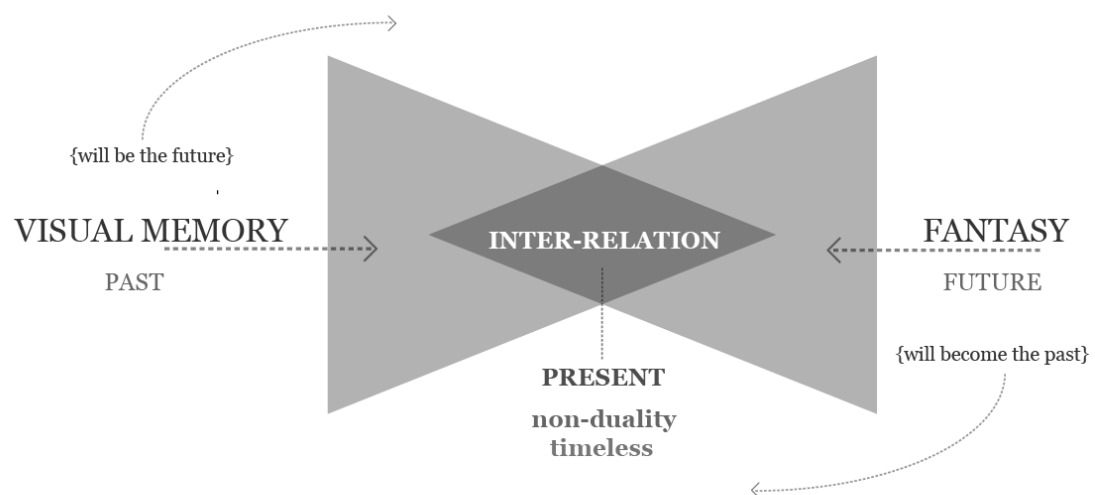
“Visual memory and Fantasy
Past and Future
Nothingness and Fullness

At their intersections is the emptiness.”

In Buddhism, everything we do in actions as well as experience of thoughts are formed through the “Five Aggregates”; Form, Feeling, Perception, Mental formation, and Consciousness. The five factors are set as a never-ending process of clinging, which form the basis of attachment of a person to become “My Self”. There is no experience existing apart from the five aggregates. To experience the world, we always distinguish the experience into pairs of opposites, extreme quality or dualistic extremes, for example, present/absent, success/failure, happiness/suffering, or life and death. And we tend to appreciate one side and to refuse the other side of it. This way, we live with conditional matters of dualities. On the other hand, it is said that all matters and phenomena, both in physical and metaphysical matters, are interconnected with their cause and effect. Seeing that every matter is interconnected in occurring and fading away is non-dualism, and is unconditional.

*Listen, Shariputa, form is emptiness; emptiness is form,
form does not differ from emptiness; emptiness does not differ from form.
The same is true with feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness.
(Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra)*

To me, the idea of Emptiness has a paradoxical meaning between nothing and full of things. It is very simple; there is a glass without water and a glass full of water. But Buddhism explains that emptiness is neither nothing nor full of things, but “inter-relation”. The Emptiness is being empty of independent matters, but possibility full of inter-beings. I have tried to bind together the concept of duality, for this specific instance, visual memory and fantasy, to the sense of time. As the illustration shows below, the present time is where we recall the memories back from the *past*. The present time is also influenced by fantasy pictures, which is laid in the *future* and is variable. A *Fantasy* picture is as our ambition or will.



The present is at the point where memories and wills overlap. It is where the mind pictures, in the past and from the future, influence each other for a decision made at the present time. The overlap space between dualities is the space of no time; no past, no future, but at the present. It is where the whole possibilities happen, and is empty.

In Buddhism, being at the present with mindfulness is a precious moment. A decision made at every present time is free and full of possibilities. Being mindful is also to be aware of how one matter relates to another and to others, how the matters combine to make the wholeness. This is the idea of “inter-beings”. To be mindful, in this instance, is being aware in every moment of how things are interrelated.

Exploring the context of emptiness in painting

The idea of emptiness can be expanded to explore many possibilities in painting. In the first series the concept of emptiness, as illustrated above, is projected in the painting process. This concept of how the mind works in relation to time is applied into the painting process. During the process I worked back and forth between visual perception and fantasy, like between past and future, weaving an opened meaning picture of the wholeness. The picture of the wholeness is full of possibilities, a visual form of “inter-beings”.

In parallel to the duality of mind, I explore how dualities can be spoken through languages in painting, for instance, through object and abstraction, drawing and painting, and materiality of paint and immateriality. To leave the canvas itself as a part of the picture and to play with thickness of colour substance is a way of projecting two extreme poles. I have found that, working back and forth between looking and fantasizing allowed me to flow with spontaneous decisions and freshness while painting. At the beginning, I had neither a plan nor sketches nor a complete picture in my mind. There was no preparations or pre- sketched composition. I only had to trust the process and be truthful to my natural flows with perception and fantasy. Sketching became happening all along the process. Sketching, drawing, and painting take place interactively in the same present time to compose possibility-full pictures. During the process, I see the canvas itself as the state of *Nothingness*, and the materiality of colours as *Fullness*. Between looking and fantasizing all possible languages slowly interrelate at the intersection.

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