

IM Exhibition Proposal
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I find that young people are often ashamed to reveal the complex emotions that exist between their parents and themselves. The intimate parent-child relationship is like a sensitive and fragile snail, parts of its body instinctively retracting into its shell at the touch, always thinking that there is safety in its hard, protective wall and opaque black cave, when in fact, the shell crumbles like sugar in one's fingers.

At the age of twenty-three, I began to rekindle my relationship with my father with that hope of better understanding the dynamics of our relationship. He does not open up much of himself to me because the traditional Chinese notion of a "strict father" has influenced him for so long. When we talk, mostly it means that he lectures and I listen, or sometimes I disagree and he devalues my opinions. To him, I am not old enough to be trusted or taken seriously regardless of what subjects we are talking about, which frustrates me more and more as I try to get closer to him. The parent-child relationship is the most basic and important kind of interpersonal relations in family life, because only a good one can produce a fully harmonious familial relationship. One generation's economy, politics, and culture can determine its needs and notions of family relationships, so when parent's and children's presentation of shifting opinions are not understood and accepted, even if different, the communication decreases and conflicts intensify.

I see my art practice as a tool to communicate with my father about my perception and beliefs. As a Chinese person growing up in a Western culture, I realize that mutual understanding between us has been lost for a prolonged period because my father holds traditional Chinese beliefs of what a father should look like, and my opinions are influenced more by the idea that every man is a unique and free-thinking individual. So when we do exchange opinions, we are not trying to understand the intent behind each statement, with a focus on comprehending each other, but merely to acquire the other's agreement and acknowledgement. There is a hidden battle occurring that neither of us realized was happening until after we both had been trapped into this behavioral pattern. This inept communication has become a normality, and this work, *Let's Race* (working title), is offering me a chance to present to him how I perceive our current relationship in a visible and tangible way. For this project, I invited my dad to join me a one-kilometer race competition on January 18, 2020. We were running along a lakeside where the miles were marked on the ground. The only rule in this competition was whoever reached the one kilometer mark first would be the winner. The participant was able to quit if he/she felt physically unable to finish, and the other participant would become the winner automatically.

To record this performance, each of us held a selfie-stick with a GoPro camera attached to capture the changes in our facial expressions, physical conditions, and positions during the racing competition. Along with the self-documentation, I also invited my friends to participate as a photography crew to videotape the whole performance, which created and enhanced a sense of

formality and seriousness for my dad so as to trigger his competitiveness. The performance offered me a simple solution to represent the complexity of our relationship's dynamics.

Although we participated in this competition together, our participation was recorded separately and individually, which reflected the loss of our current understanding of each other. Even when we are talking, we are not communicating but only throwing out our own ideas. Therefore, even though I won, I could not feel the thrill of winning, but rather the loneliness of being the only participant in the game because he gave up running when he was approaching the end. Through this performance and video projection work, I am aiming to show my dad that the tension between us is what keeps us alive and real, but that winning should not be the only thing we pursue in our relationship.

The exhibition will take place in the Hallway Gallery at C108. My final work will consist of two video channels, one of which is the footage from my dad's race and the other is the footage from my race. The two channels will be projected separately on each wall on the side of the hallway, so videos of our performance during the race will be facing each other in the hallway. The idea of competition is embedded in the change of frame size. At the beginning, the scale of the two videos is equally sized, but it will change based on our position in the race; if I am ahead, the scale of my projection will be bigger in relation to my dad's and vice versa. If we are running side by side, the scale of our projections will become identical again. The size of the projections is reciprocal, which also indicates our positions in real life semiotically. At the end of the game, one person's video reaches the maximum of the project area and the other's gets smaller and smaller until it disappears from the frame.

The sound of the video will only be played when the viewer is close to the projection. There are two ultrasonic distance sensors linked to the Arduino that checks for an object's distance to the screen. When the viewer is within a certain distance, the sound from the speakers will change to the sound coming from the video. When there is no one within the sensor's range, there will only be white noise playing from the surrounding speakers. The viewing experience will increasingly intensify as the audience approaches the middle of the two projections and is gradually reduced when they move away from the projections.

Just like the shift in projection size, the tension between my dad and me ebbs and flows, sometimes letting go, sometimes holding back. I used to think my father behaved like a typical gamer in our relationship, given that he considers lecturing me as the only reason for talking to me, and he tends to rewrite the rules of the game when his turn is about to end. However, as I began to understand him and his idea of competition, I started to see that my father and I both behave like gamers in our own territory called home, both trying to win. Only in our case, the prize remains unknown. We are like boats sailing side by side, sometimes we are so close that we can even grasp our hands and look at each other, but most of the time, we just cope with our own waves and squalls. And during the time that we pass by each other, we can only wave, keeping our feelings inside our evasive hearts.

