

Resolution on Pizza Boxes

My grandfather Shih Tao-chi was a Buddhist scholar. Every day he would spend many hours painstakingly rendering ancient buddhist texts with a brush and ink. Although I always believed that he was editing these works or hoping to preserve them for future generations, he modestly denied any reason other than to state that his calligraphy helped engage his mind into a meditative state.

Months after spending several hours a day painting hundreds of little boxes in gouache, I realize that these exercises while seemingly monotonous and mundane are actually meditations in certain colors and their relations to other colors surrounding them. By painting these little rectangles on the backs of discarded pizza boxes that once encased plastic shrink wrapped frozen pizza, the elements of consumerism, westernism and environmentalism are also added to the meditative process. As each color tries to find a harmonious place for itself amid an increasingly crowded grid, I too try to search for a harmonious place for myself within humanity and more complicatedly, humanity's harmonious place on this planet and within the cosmos.

Bullet SHIH, February 2008