

# Ah xian – college essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Contents

- Post Modern

Ah Xian's ' Bust 66' in the series ' China China' is made from porcelain and overtop of closed mouth and eyes are the traditional Chinese landscape paintings of misty mountains, waterfalls and wooden bridges. Ah Xian's semi abstracted qualities of his work make the face look recessive and his use of shadows create a contemporary feel to the artwork. This artwork evidently reflects his Chinese culture and heritage through the painted surface designs, yet combines the Western portraiture tradition dating back to the ancient Roman times. Through this contrast, Xian attempts to create a metaphorical reconciliation between the two cultures This landscape painted with incomprehensible detail and precision, mainly monochromatic, yet with vibrant hints of colour in the almond trees or windows.

## **Subjective**

As stated above, the closed eyes and shut mouths of Xian's porcelain busts are a statement about the restriction of individuality and freedom of speech within China, yet Ah Xian's remains elusive as to the meaning of his artwork. His limited use of colour displays his conscious adjustment to switch to this thinking and effectively reflects this conceptual attitude, largely directing his art creation. He suggests that through landscape painting on a human being, we are a part of nature; however technology that we continue to develop never affirms this connection as it is so often against nature. Through his artwork, he displays that we exist because landscape exists and vice versa, as " we humans grew out of each other". Cultural

Until the events of Tiananmen Square, the Chinese people accepted authority and displayed willingness to conform, however through the Cultural Revolution during the 1960s to 1970s there were many changes in the way people created and viewed art. Chinese art developed from the Pre-Modern art where there was no protest art, traditional conventions and practices were prevalent, and there weren't many risk takers, to Modern Art.

During this period, due to the resident censorship in China, many artists moved to neighbouring Asian countries where they were free to express themselves through art, and where they were not imprisoned for creating anything which was not specifically in favour of Mao's communist government. There was a distinct change in the practices of art as well as its uses during this period, as Mao's regime and the communist revolution stated that the only accepted form of art was propaganda for the government, all other art was forbidden. Ah Xian portrays his figures with closed eyes and closed lips, symbolic of this lack of democratic freedom within his home country.

### **Post Modern**

Ah Xian explores the Chinese identity by artistically displaying the human being's connection with nature as well as confronting the stylistic differences between traditional and contemporary art. Ah Xian makes the designs on the busts largely resemble tattoos, making a statement about the indelibility of an individual's cultural background and heritage. His focus on the merging of Western and Chinese art forms in sculpture is a postmodern approach to his art to convey his contextual concerns.