



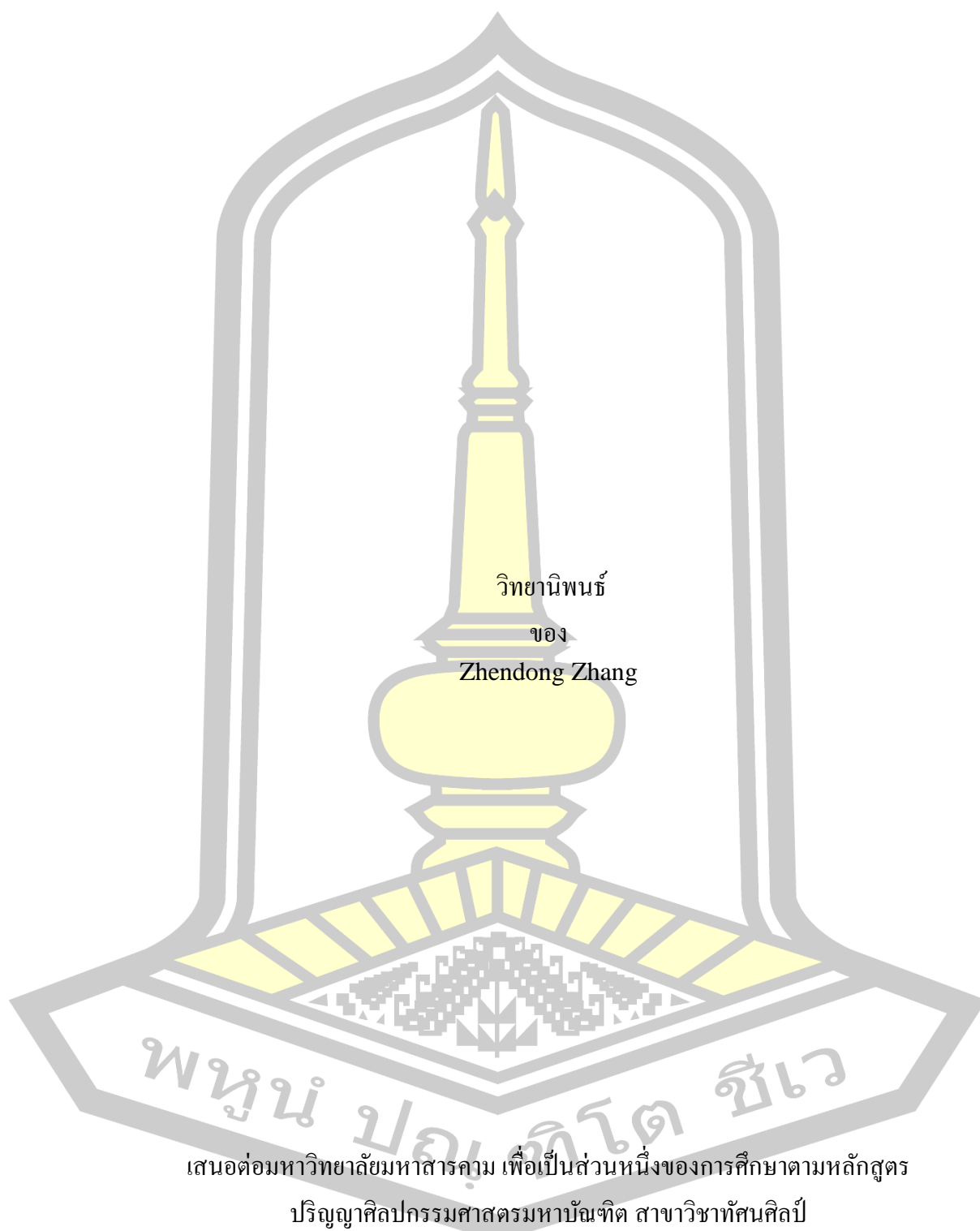
Symbol of Urban Life

Zhendong Zhang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts  
August 2023

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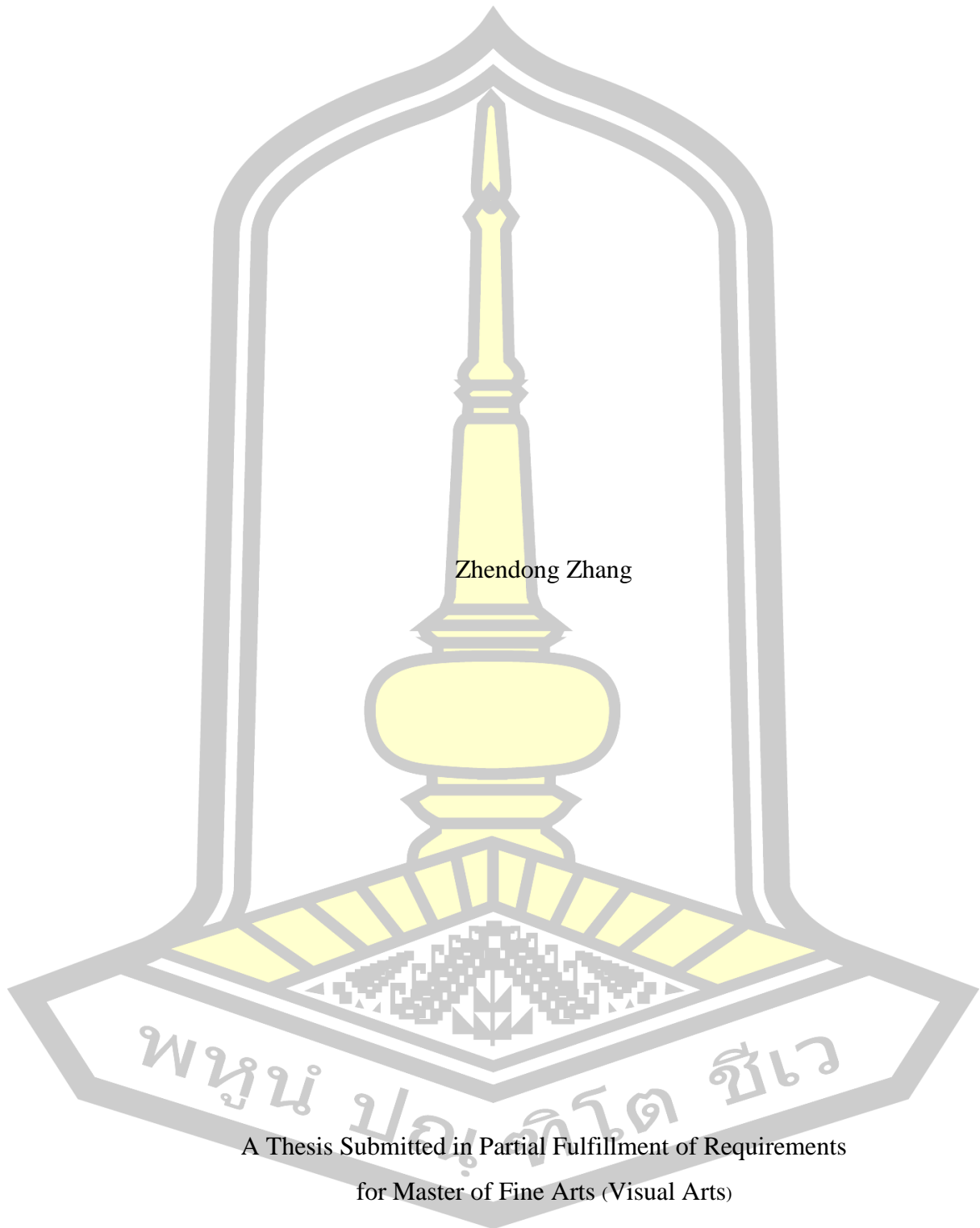
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ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม

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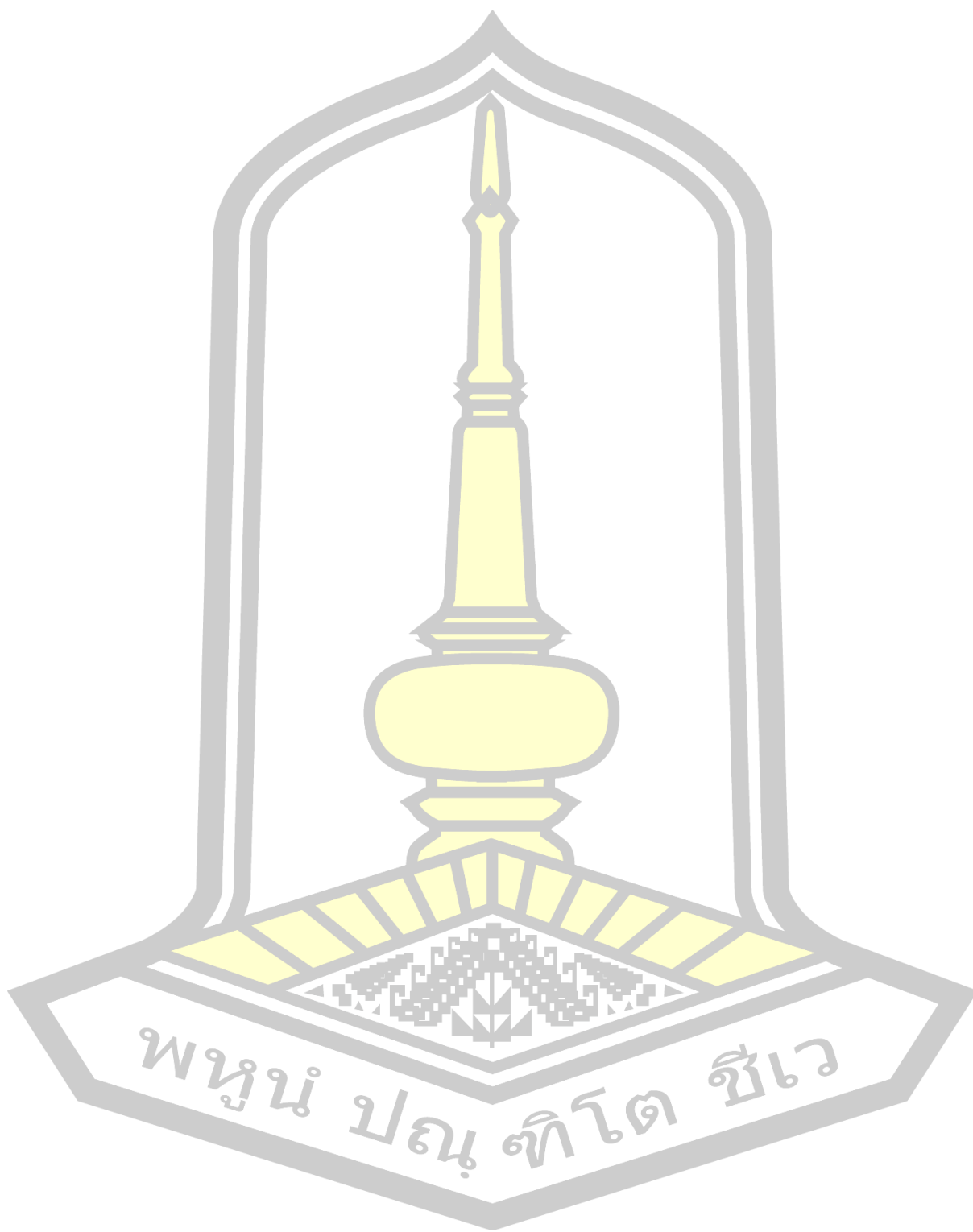
The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Mr. Zhendong Zhang , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts Visual Arts at Maharakham University

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พหุณฺ์ ปณฺุ ทิตฺ สวี

**TITLE** Symbol of Urban Life

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### **ABSTRACT**

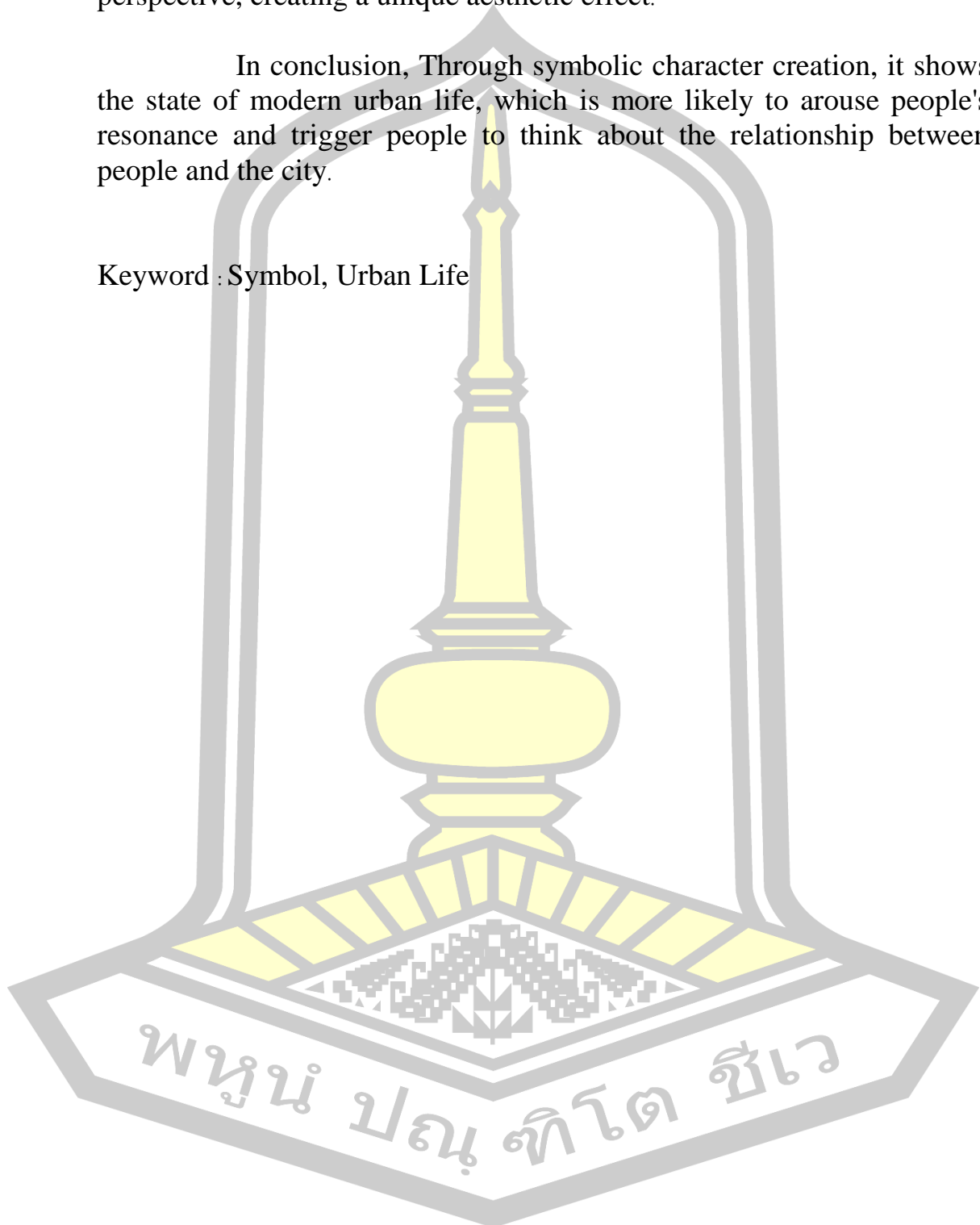
The visual arts creation thesis entitled Symbol of Urban Life, was inspired by After young people come to the city, they go through the process of working, falling in love, and building new families in pursuit of a better life. This study aimed to Study the lifestyle of young people in the city, and combining the character design with architectural features. and to create the visual arts which was sculpture that expressed via form The Symbol of Urban Life. The scope of conceptual creation of the study was Extract typical actions and forms, and express them through forms with architectural order and aesthetic beauty. The forms of the creation work included Construct figurative sculptures through layering and overlaying forms. and the techniques were Computer Technology and Laser Cutting. This creative work was conducted by the data collected from the conditions of the environment, the data from related documents, and the data about the creation of influential visual arts. The researcher analyzed the data to find the clarity of the theme, symbolic form, and creation techniques.

The results of the study and creation revealed that Creating with male and female figures as symbols of the new urban family, just as the West uses the images of Adam and Eve as a symbol of human birth and beginning. Through the stacking of sliced layers, like building a house, the complete bodies gradually take shape, symbolizing young people achieving their ideal lives through continuous effort and accumulation. The sculpture's elusive visual effects, as well as the rotating and overlapping states of the characters, express the confusion and

disorientation of contemporary young people in the city from another perspective, creating a unique aesthetic effect.

In conclusion, Through symbolic character creation, it shows the state of modern urban life, which is more likely to arouse people's resonance and trigger people to think about the relationship between people and the city.

Keyword : Symbol, Urban Life



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

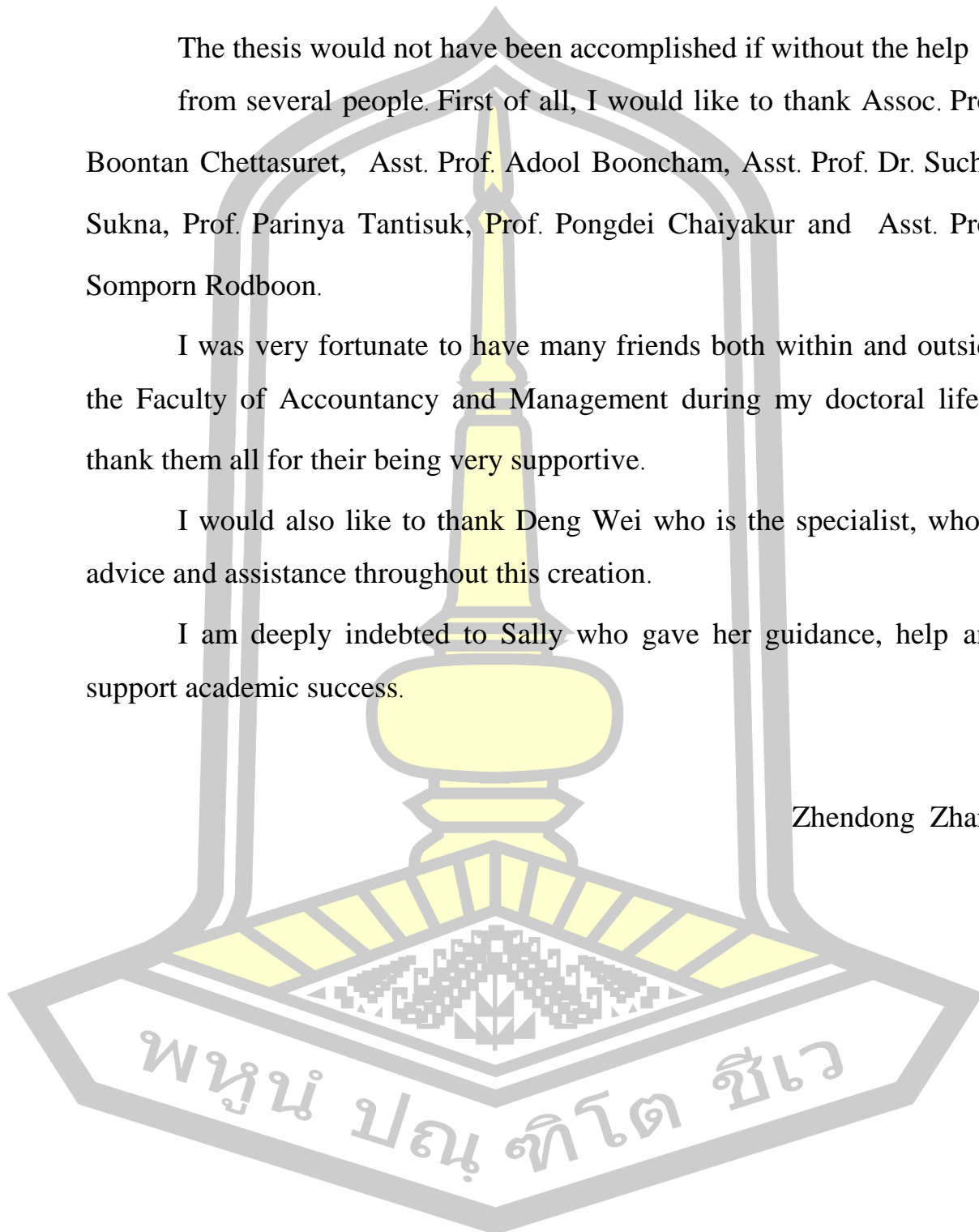
The thesis would not have been accomplished if without the help from several people. First of all, I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Boontan Chettasuret, Asst. Prof. Adool Booncham, Asst. Prof. Dr. Suchat Sukna, Prof. Parinya Tantisuk, Prof. Pongdei Chaiyakur and Asst. Prof. Somporn Rodboon.

I was very fortunate to have many friends both within and outside the Faculty of Accountancy and Management during my doctoral life. I thank them all for their being very supportive.

I would also like to thank Deng Wei who is the specialist, whose advice and assistance throughout this creation.

I am deeply indebted to Sally who gave her guidance, help and support academic success.

Zhendong Zhang

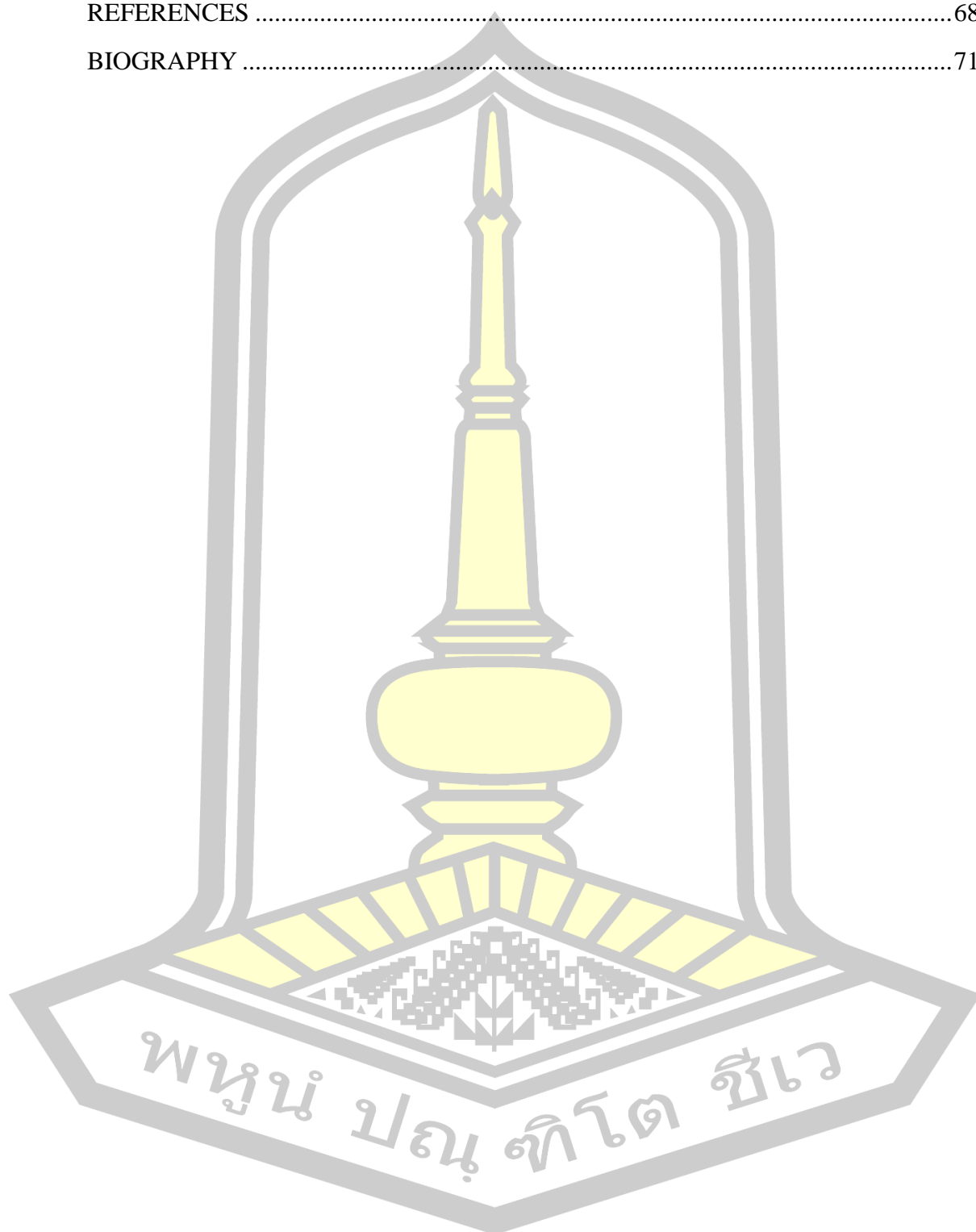




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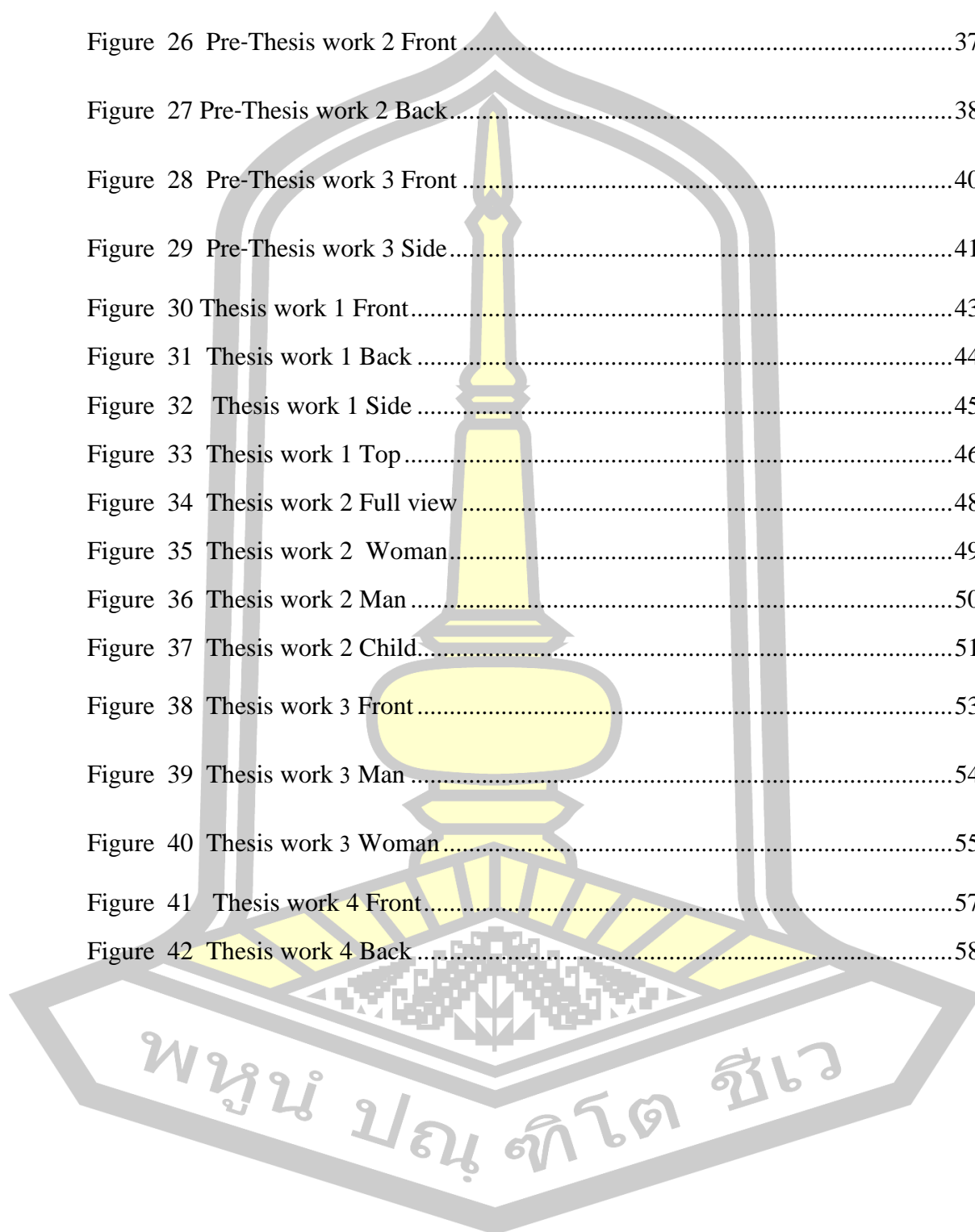
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Since the reform and opening-up policy, with the improvement of the economic level, China has accelerated the process of urbanization. This is mainly reflected in three aspects. The first aspect is the increase in the number and area of cities. Especially with the construction of urban-rural integration, the scope of cities has gradually extended to towns. Data shows that from 1981 to 2019, the number of cities with a population of one million in China increased from 18 to 93, and the total number of cities has reached 672. From 1981 to 2017, the built-up area of cities in the country has increased from 7,438 square kilometers to 56,225 square kilometers, an increase of 6.6 times.

The second aspect is the increase in urban population. China is a country with a large population. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the total population of China has increased from 600 million to 1.4 billion. According to the data of seven census after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the proportion of urban population has increased from 10.6% at the beginning of the People's Republic of China to 64.7% by 2021. It can be seen that the distribution of China's population shows an obvious trend of migration from rural to urban. And the population migration group is mainly young people, most of the old people stay in the countryside to continue living.

The third aspect is the increase of urban high-rise buildings and the progress of building technology. As the urban population increases, young people need to buy houses in cities if they want to establish families there. The demand for housing has promoted the development of real estate economy. High-rise housing can maximize the utilization of land area and reduce construction costs, so a large number of high-

rise housing has been built. Thanks to advanced construction techniques, the use of steel structures as the skeleton made it possible to build a large number of tall buildings in a short period of time, which are now seen everywhere in modern cities. Countless new families were built in these clusters of tall buildings.

### 1. Inspiration

From birth to education and work, the author went through a typical process of entering the city from the countryside. The author was taught by parents from a young age to leave the countryside and pursue a better life in the city. Growing up, the author has been working hard to enter the city and hoping for a better living environment and material conditions. The author also knows the hardships of this process. After coming to the city, facing more opportunities and challenges, it is necessary to work harder. Everything needs to start from scratch and requires gradual accumulation. It is like building a building, it needs to be built floor by floor.

Based on such experiences, the author expresses the life status of young people in the city who have had similar experiences through their works. The author combines the characteristics of urban architecture with the human body to express how young people, like building a building, strive to establish their own families and happy lives. High-rise buildings have a layered visual feature, with a certain sense of order and beauty. By using architectural features to represent the human form, the author expresses the influence of the city on people, and through the movement of the body and the separation and integration of the form, shows the relationship between people in the city.

### 2. Significance of the Study

In the process of rapid urban development, the new generation of young people in the process of work, love and marriage. It praises their spirit of being not afraid of hard work and striving for happiness, arouses people's attention to the current life, the living state and inner world of the new generation of young people, and reflects on the relationship between cities and people, as well as the relationship between people and the environment.

The structure features of modern architecture are extracted and the layered structure is used to represent the sculpture, which represents the young people who gradually establish a stable family by their own efforts and accumulation bit by bit.

Through rotation and crossover, the movement changes between the sculpture individuals are realized, showing a unique light and shadow and visual effect, making the work change between the entity and the illusion, and integrate with the surrounding environment. It expresses the relationship between urban family members, people and the city.

### **Purpose of Creation**

1. To study the current state of urban life, and extract typical shapes and movements by analyzing the living conditions of young people in the city in the new era. Study the style and characteristics of urban architecture, combine character modeling with architectural features, and create sculptures that incorporate architectural styles on the basis of realistic shapes.

2. To create the visual arts which was sculpture that expressed via form The Symbol of Urban Life. Through the art form of figurative sculpture, using materials such as steel plates, wooden boards, and metal components, the complete figure is composed by layering the contours and edges of each part.

### **Scope of Creation**

1. Content

To analyze the state of urban life, through some typical symbolic modeling, role performance. The young generation of urban people can best represent the current status of the city. They excavate creative materials from their work, marriage, family and other aspects to show their happiness, happiness, pressure and

pain in life. This is like a mirror, we can also see ourselves through the expression of their living status.

## 2. Form

Influenced by the aesthetic feeling of architectural order, the figure is decomposed and refined, and the figure contour is divided into evenly spaced slices, which are stacked and combined with the same spacing to form a complete three-dimensional figure shape. The shape of the work extracts the outline from the figurative form and displays it in the form of sculpture, showing an illusory and abstract visual effect.

## 3. Techniques

Using the form of 3D modeling, a complete feature model was constructed. By precise slicing and calculation, the graphics were decomposed into multiple contour curves. Steel plates, wood, and ABS sheets were cut using a laser cutting machine, and materials such as metal bars and screws were used. Through assembly and welding techniques, such as those used in high-rise building construction and layered stacking, a complete image was formed.

## Conceptual of Frame Work

The symbol of city life is the induction of the living state of contemporary young people in the city. The problems that young people have to face in the city are not single. The crowded crowd and traffic in the city, the narrow living space, the fast pace of life and work, and the sense of distance between people all bring people anxiety and pressure. Urban families also face a variety of problems, such as insufficient income, high education expenditure and tedious housework. In the face of these pressures, people will be powerless, so most young people will be busy and anxious life, or even because of high concentration and ignore the existence of self.

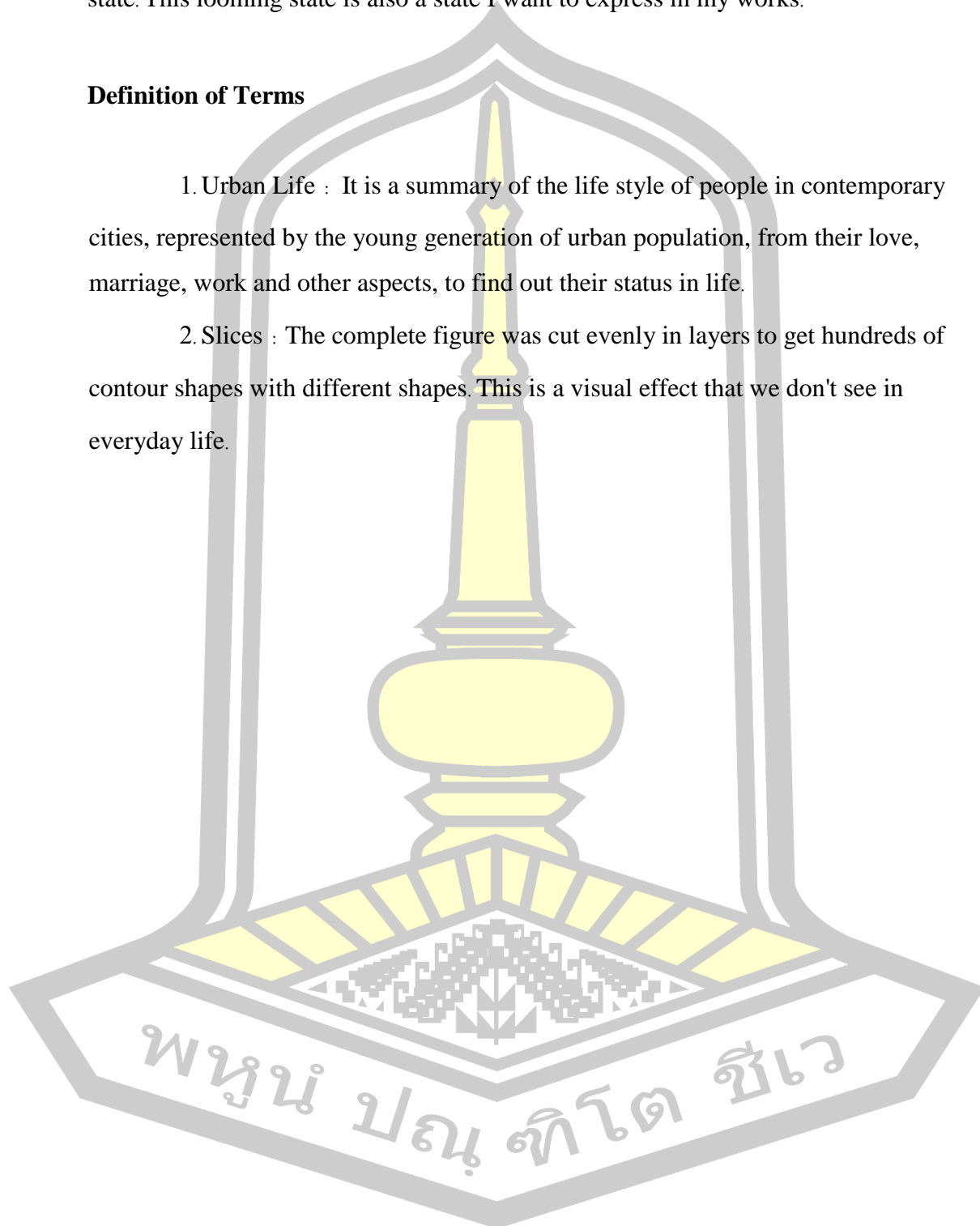


Therefore, people in the city, under the influence of stress, present a lost and weak state. This looming state is also a state I want to express in my works.

### Definition of Terms

1. Urban Life : It is a summary of the life style of people in contemporary cities, represented by the young generation of urban population, from their love, marriage, work and other aspects, to find out their status in life.

2. Slices : The complete figure was cut evenly in layers to get hundreds of contour shapes with different shapes. This is a visual effect that we don't see in everyday life.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the purpose of the creation, this thesis study focuses on Symbol of Urban Life. To support the study purpose, the framework of process is selected accordingly. This chapter reviews related literature, covering the following topics:

1. Field Data
2. Documentary Data
3. Theory
4. Influences from Visual Arts

#### **Field Data**

In order to obtain the latest data, the author has done a lot of field visits and surveys in the cities where he lives and works. Baoshan is a small city in China, which means it has great potential for development. In 2011, Baoshan City began to plan the new urban area. After nearly ten years of construction, the new city has begun to take shape. According to the government's plan, the new urban area will expand Baoshan's urban population from 300,000 to 1.2m. In addition to a small number of foreigners to attract investment, most of the new population belongs to the migrant population and the population transferred from the rural areas around the city. It can be seen that in order to provide housing for this new urban population, a large number of residential buildings have been constructed in the new urban areas, most of which are medium and high rise residential buildings ranging from 12 to 30 stories. There are many mountainous areas in Yunnan, and the traffic remains the same. People living in the mountains are more eager to get out of the mountain villages and come to the city. The construction of Baoshan New City has brought great attraction to them. And this kind of migration is happening in many rural areas.



Figure 1 Baoshan New City under construction  
Photo by Zhang Zhendong, At Baoshan City, Date May 10, 2019



Figure 2 High-rise residential building  
Photo by Zhang Zhendong, At Baoshan City, Date May 10, 2022

Nowadays, more and more young people choose to settle down in cities, where they can enjoy better medical care, education, transportation, and other conditions than in rural areas. Whether relying on their own income or with the help of their parents, they will buy a new house in the city as their new home. Due to economic constraints, most ordinary families choose to purchase more affordable high-rise apartments. The hard demands of work and marriage for housing have further stimulated the real estate market, leading to high housing prices, which also increase the economic pressure on young people in the city. In order to make a living, they rush around in the city and need to work hard every day, independently facing various problems in life. At home, they are great fathers, loving mothers, considerate husbands, and virtuous wives. On the streets of the city, behind every rushing pedestrian, there is a beautiful wish, a happy and warm home.



Figure 3 A busy and crowded crowd

Photo by Zhang Zhendong, At Baoshan City, Date May 10, 2018



## Documentary Data

In order to better support my thesis, I have consulted a large number of literature materials on the major issues of China's urban construction and development, urban residential buildings, and urban newborn families. Through the study of literature data, I have more determined my theme and direction. It also provides inspiration for my work.

Since the reform and opening up, the change of urban residential space in China has been the most prominent. Since 1978, with the continuous increase of urban population, the per capita housing floor area has increased dramatically. Residential space is not only a natural space in the geographical sense, but also a social space structured by specific members and their social behaviors.

In recent years, with the rapid development of the real estate market, especially with the rise of housing prices, residential differences and their expression in urban spatial form are becoming more and more obvious. The overall form of urban living space began to show a certain level, and even the characteristics of stratification began to appear. Excessive marketization leads to soaring housing prices, while vulnerable groups are not effectively protected, resulting in many economic and social problems. (Fang, C. C.2014).

The rise of high-rise residential buildings in mainland China originated from Hong Kong. Due to its special geographical conditions and the need of economic development, Hong Kong has to adopt the building form of intensive high-rise housing in order to meet the housing demand of high-density people. However, the high density of high-rise towers does not enhance the interaction between residents and the street and create an active urban atmosphere. The high density of high-rise buildings is not the goal of modernization and internationalization. Replacing the original low floors with high-rise towers is the result of putting the cart before the horse and mistaking the dross for the good. This way of life hinders the effective interaction between urban residents and leads to the indifference of urban society,

which leads to a series of social problems and the lack of humanistic care. (Wang, H. Ruan, X 2022).

High-rise urban buildings reflect the expression of the complex social and cultural background and technical background in the architectural field. The office and residence of high-rise buildings is the development trend of urban architecture in China in recent decades, and this trend has made people far away from the ancient history of living on the ground, turning to the artificial environment, relying on the latest scientific and technological life. This has also completely changed the way that the modern urban residents are different from the rural areas.

In the design of high-rise buildings, we follow certain laws and aesthetic feeling, and combine aesthetic laws with structural technology, and use order and rationality. The aesthetics of high-rise residences is often reflected in the grasp of rhythm and rhythm. Some structural designers learn from the stress structure of high-rise buildings from the plant growth structure and mineral structure of the natural world, so as to obtain novel and organic shapes. The facade design aesthetics of the high-rise residence is based on the precise grasp of each component, and it is moderately embellished in the repeated unified rhythm of each floor, which belongs to the order beauty in the architectural aesthetics. Architects can combine different materials, volumes and colors to handle the facade lines brought by the structure. The use of moderate materials can bring clear beauty to the building. (Zheng, X. F 2014).

With the development of economy, the proportion of young people working and living in the city increases, thus new families are emerging in the city constantly. In particular, people who come to live in cities from rural areas will choose to buy houses and start families in cities. Both parents live in the countryside, far from the city. New families are often in a relatively isolated position in the city. Families tend to be miniaturized, the proportion of nuclear families is increasing, and the individualism and independence of small families are constantly enhanced..

On the one hand, this phenomenon causes the new families in the city to face certain survival pressure, and the lack of certain interaction and communication between urban families. On the other hand, it also causes a large number of elderly people left behind in the countryside, who do not live together with their children in the city, and will face a crisis emotionally and in life. (Ma, C.H 2011).

## Theory

Interactivity and participation are the characteristics of public sculpture art, and the public awareness in public sculpture can resonate with the public. Public consciousness is affected by historical and social factors, and has the characteristics of the times and groups.

The elements of art that are used by artists working in various media. The elements of art are components or parts of a work of art that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art. The arrangement of elements in a work of art. All works of art have an order determined by the artist.

Composition creates a hierarchy within the work, which tells the viewer the relative importance of the imagery and elements included.

Organic shapes and forms are typically irregular or asymmetrical. Organic shapes are often found in nature, but man-made shapes can also imitate organic forms.

A line is an identifiable path created by a point moving in space. It is one-dimensional and can vary in width, direction, and length. Lines often define the edges of a form. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, straight or curved, thick or thin. They lead your eye around the composition and can communicate information through their character and direction. Horizontal lines suggest a feeling of rest or repose because objects parallel to the earth are at rest. Horizontal and vertical lines used in combination communicate stability and solidity. Vertical lines often communicate a sense of height because they are perpendicular to the earth. The curve

of a line can convey energy. Soft, shallow curves recall the curves of the human body and often have a pleasing, sensual quality and a softening effect on the composition.

Shape and form define objects in space. Shapes have two dimensions—height and width—and are usually defined by lines. Forms exist in three dimensions, with height, width, and depth. Three-dimensional form is the basis of sculpture. Real space is three-dimensional. Space in a work of art refers to a feeling of depth or three dimensions. It can also refer to the artist's use of the area within the picture plane. The area around the primary objects in a work of art is known as negative space, while the space occupied by the primary objects is known as positive space. Positive and negative space. The relationship of positive to negative space can greatly affect the impact of a work of art. (getty, 2023 : online).

### **Influence from Visual Arts**

1. Henry Moore's "Family Group" series of works is to show the affection between family members as the theme. The work shows a happy moment of a family. The mother and father hold their children together. The parents' love for their children can be felt from the movements of the characters, which reminds people of the happiness and warmth of the family. Henry Moore used round and smooth abstract shapes to represent the figures. The shapes were thick and full of tension, and smooth shapes undulated to outline smooth lines, which integrated with nature. This abstract art style would surpass reality and bring purer visual and emotional experience.(Zhang, L 2017).

Henry Moore's Family Portrait fully shows his concern for maternal love and happiness of human relations, and shows his ideal of social life and family life as a humanitarian. In my creation, I draw lessons from the works of Henry Moore. Through the shaping of family characters, I express the living state of new families in modern cities and express the yearning for a better life.





Figure 4 Artist : Henry Moore OM

Title : Family Group

Size : 154 x 118 centimeter

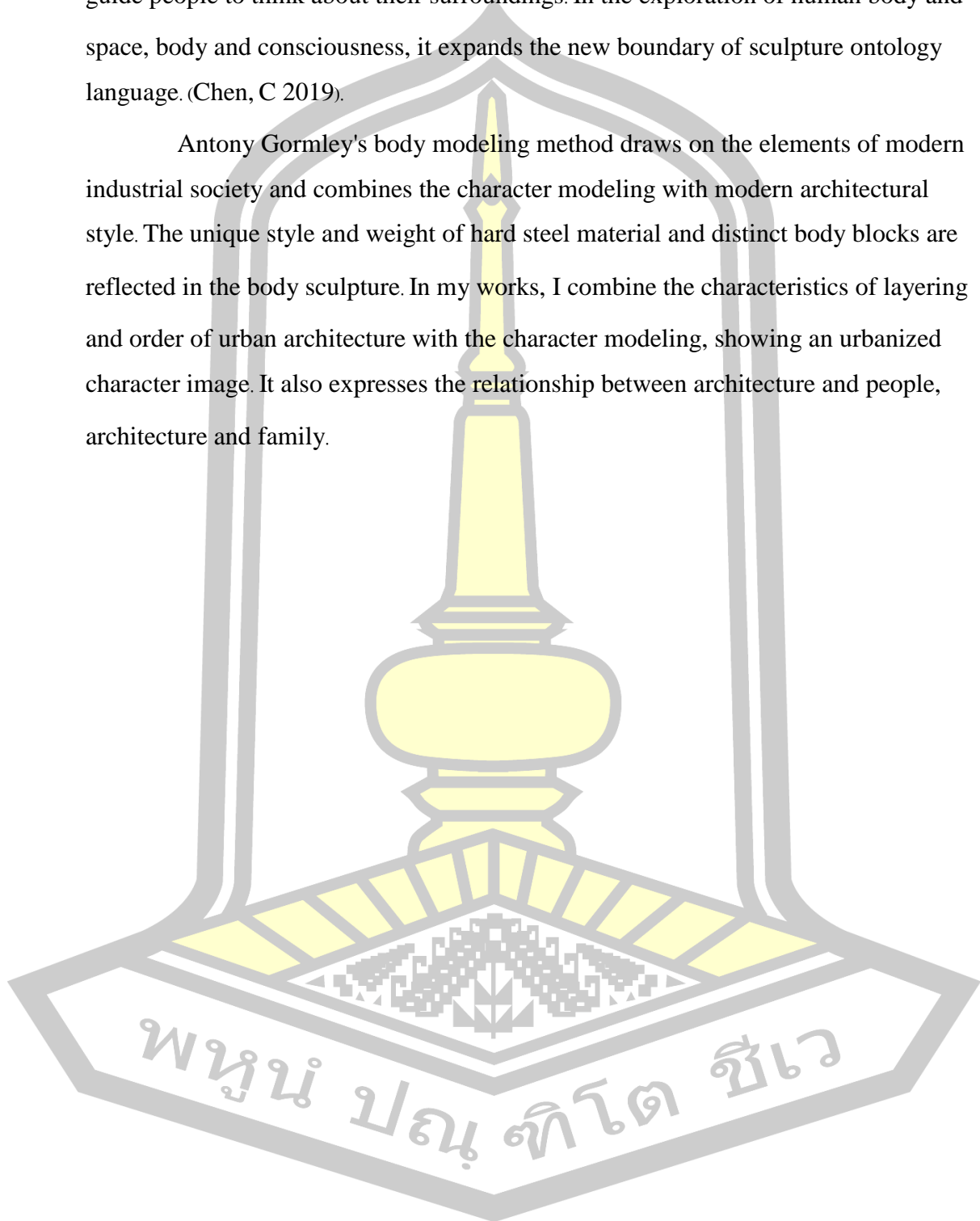
Technique : Bronze Sculpture

(From : Tate Britain, 2022)

2. Antony Gormley is a British contemporary artist with a worldwide reputation. Since the 1970s, Gormley has created a large number of sculptures, installations and public works of art with the human body as the motif, and has had an important impact. Gormley to his "body" as an independent existence of space and environment interact with each other, he broke through the traditional sculpture sculpture language programming, the use of a face, geometry, line of metal and other

elements to rebuild the human body, and place it in nature and public space, so as to guide people to think about their surroundings. In the exploration of human body and space, body and consciousness, it expands the new boundary of sculpture ontology language. (Chen, C 2019).

Antony Gormley's body modeling method draws on the elements of modern industrial society and combines the character modeling with modern architectural style. The unique style and weight of hard steel material and distinct body blocks are reflected in the body sculpture. In my works, I combine the characteristics of layering and order of urban architecture with the character modeling, showing an urbanized character image. It also expresses the relationship between architecture and people, architecture and family.



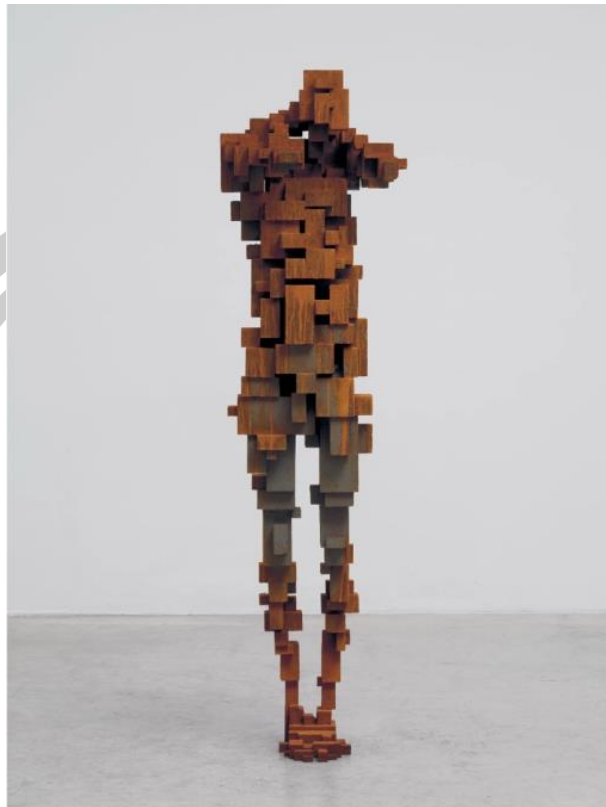


Figure 5 Artist : Antony Gormley

Title : Shrive II

Size : 186 x 49 x 53 centimeter

Technique : Cast iron sculpture

(From : Photograph by Stephen White, London, 2008)

3. Julian Voss-Andreae, a sculpture artist with a PhD in physics. Devoted to the creative research of quantum mechanics and artistic life. In his "Quantum Man" series, which is cut from parallel sheets, the sculptures look solid from the side.

However, they break into waves as people walk through the pieces. When light shoots out from between the thin sheets of metal, eventually the statue will disappear, seeming to disintegrate completely into thin air. (Julian Voss-Andreae | Vanishing sculptures, 2020: Online)

Voss-Andreae's sculptures cleverly use the principles of physics. The change of light makes the sculpture move. He used the knowledge of quantum mechanics to explain the relationship between people and the environment, so that people can see the real and unreal world. In my creation, I will learn from his artistic style and technical techniques, and use slices to form characters to show a sense of modern industrial order, and achieve special visual effects through the change of light and shadow. In the modern city, those universal, but easy to be ignored by us.



Figure 6 Artist : Andreae-Julian Voss

Title : Field

Size : 400 x 2100 x 200 centimeter

Technique : Stainless steel and granite sculptures

(From : Minneapolis, MN, 2014)

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS OF CREATION**

This chapter gives an outline of the study design and procedure. The procedure of the study concluded from chapter two and other frameworks which involve with Symbol of Urban Life. This creation will be presented according to the following topics:

1. Collection and Analysis Data
2. Process of Creation

#### **Collection and Analysis Data**

##### **1. Data Collection**

In the process of data collection, a series of materials and data were collected and studied according to my research theme: Symbol of Urban Life, mainly through literature review, field investigation, observation and inquiry. First of all, I consulted a large number of literature materials and made statistics on the development and change of China's city size and urban population. I went to some cities in China to investigate the urban architecture and living environment in China. Some citizens were interviewed randomly in the city to understand their living conditions and family conditions.

Through the research and analysis of all the collected data, I will further clarify my research direction and form my own views, which will provide guidance for my thesis and artistic creation.

##### **2. Data Analysis**

###### **2.1 Analysis of theme**

The symbol of city life is to show the living state of people in the modern city through the shaping of people. This state is affected by the external

environment and internal operation mechanism of the city. On the one hand, the city has better living conditions and job opportunities, which attracts young people eager to move to the city and choose to establish a family in the city. On the other hand, the large-scale development of cities has resulted in crowded living environment, tight pace of life and high living costs, and young urban families often face more pressure. Living in the city, they are busy, switching between different roles at home and work every day. Living in the city, they are happy, because their dreams are coming true step by step.

## 2.2 Analysis of form symbols

The work shapes the image of young people in the city and portrays the states of different roles from the perspectives of family and career, including the shaping of individual images and the interaction between characters. The sculpted figures draw inspiration from the characteristics of high-rise buildings in the city, presenting figures with stacked features and formed by overlapping slices. This is an image that has been assimilated by the city. The form has a strong sense of order and, as the perspective changes, the sculpture will exhibit rich changes in light and shadow.

Black is used to express the work, which is considered as the color of shadow. The state expressed by the work is what most people have experienced or are experiencing. It symbolizes that the works let people find their own shadow, no matter the appearance or inner emotion, can have a certain resonance with the viewer.

## 2.3 Analysis of techniques

In the production process, computer 3D technology is fully utilized. Through accurate calculation and stratification of the figure modeling, the figure slice graphic data is obtained. The material is cut with laser cutting equipment, and the error is controlled within 0.1mm. The main materials of the human body are wood board and ABS board, which has the characteristics of corrosion resistance, high temperature resistance, not easy to deformation, and light weight, easy to transport.

The finished product is made using steel tubes and screws to fix the slices of the figure layer by layer, just as one would build a building, under precise control. This equal spacing of slices can form a unique visual effect, through the change of perspective, the shape of the sculpture also changes between virtual and real.

### Process of Creation

#### 1. Sketches/ Model

The creation process starts from drawing sketches. Drawing ideas in my mind through sketches can help me think more clearly and improve my concept. This is a repeated process, through comparative analysis, step by step to determine their own plan.

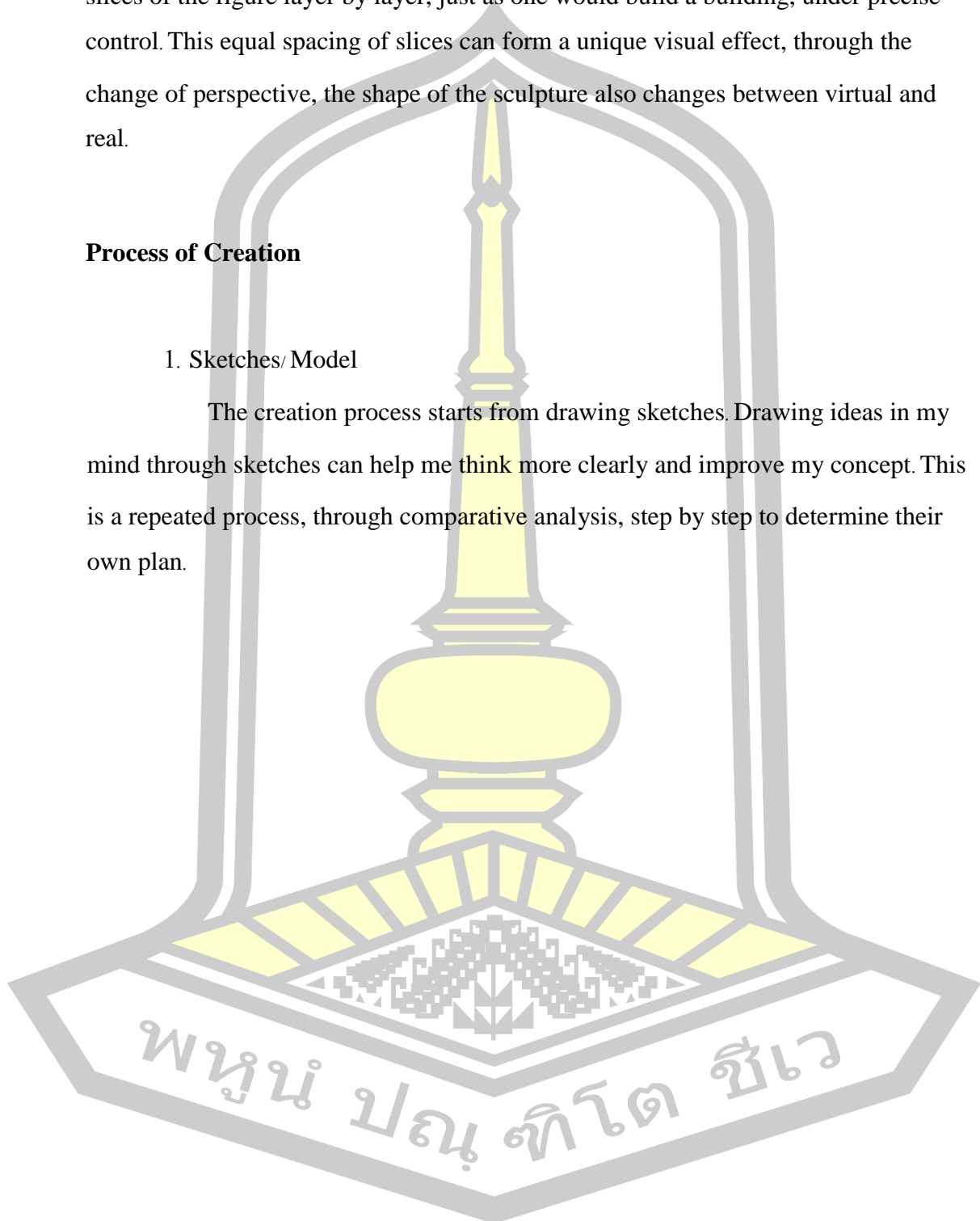






Figure 7 Sketch

In order to see the effect of the work more directly, I will use the computer to make the diorama and render it, so that the effect closer to the real object can be obtained.



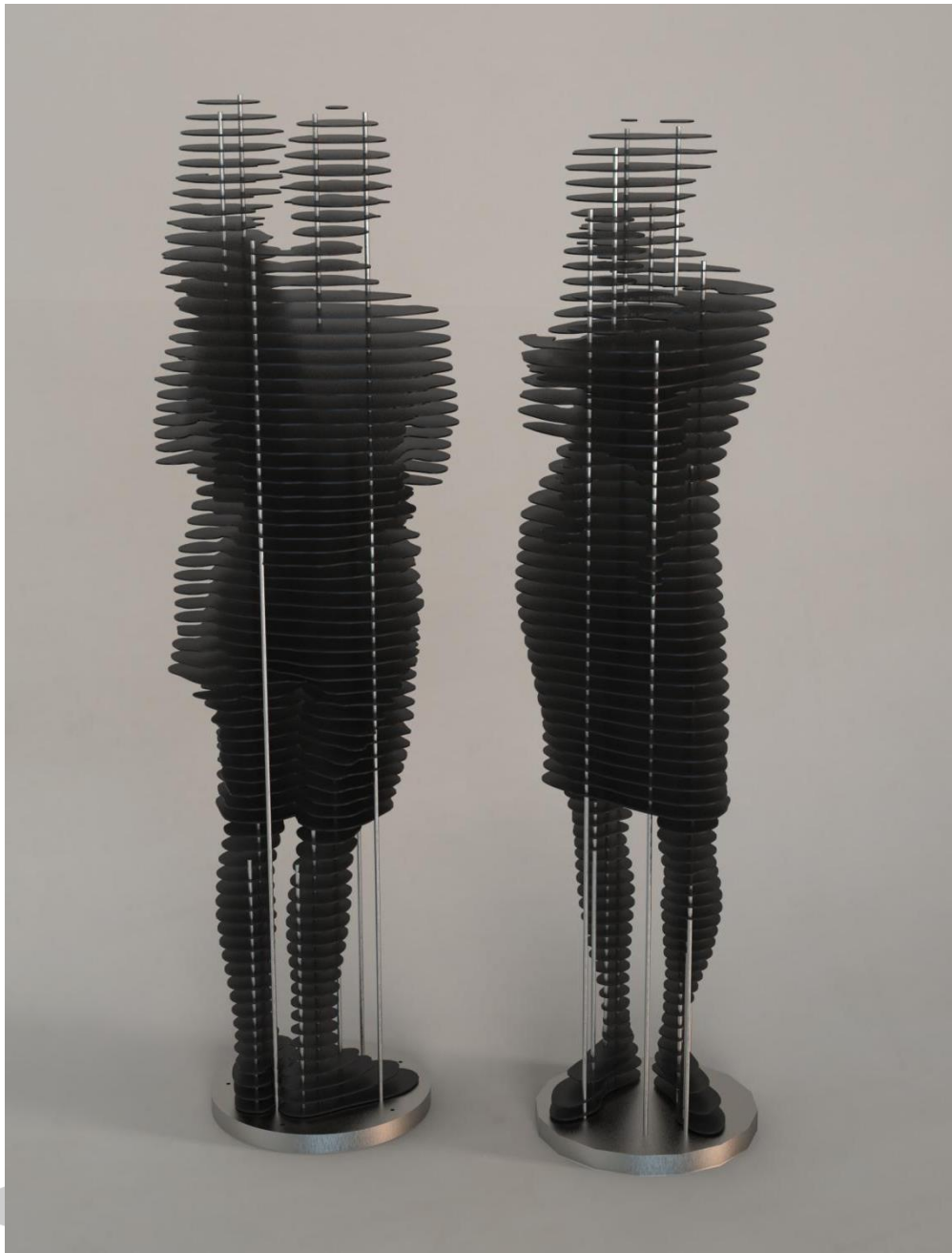


Figure 8 Model

## 2. Material and Equipment

In the previous works, I tried different materials and used steel plates and wood boards for production. Steel plates are too hard to process, and the final product

is too heavy to be transported. The wood board is light in weight and is a more suitable material, but the wood board should not be displayed for a long time, especially outdoors, as it will cause deformation of the board. Eventually I found a more suitable material, ABS sheet. This material is corrosion-resistant, high-temperature-resistant, impact-resistant, and has a low density, only twice the weight of wooden boards, which is completely suitable for the production of works.

In addition to the choice of plates, I also used metal materials such as stainless steel pipes and screws in my works. The 8mm stainless steel pipe becomes the skeleton supporting the work, and the 10mm stainless steel pipe is cut into a length of 22mm to fix the distance between the ABS boards. The base of the work is made of stainless steel plate with mirror effect.



Figure 9 Wooden board



Figure 10 Stainless steel sheet

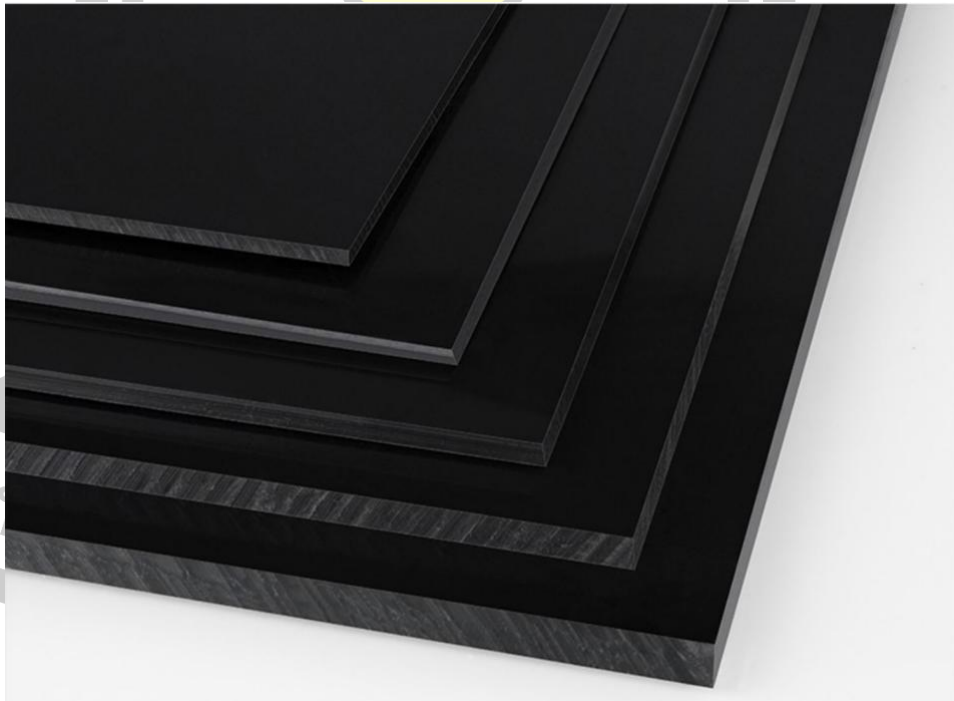


Figure 11 ABS sheet



Figure 12 Stainless steel pipe 1



Figure 13 Stainless steel pipe 2



### 3. Step of Creation

During the process of creating the work, I utilized computer-aided pre-production work. I used digital sculpting software such as Zbrush and Rhino to sculpt the basic models. Then, I sliced the models into layers with a thickness of 3 millimeters and a spacing of 22 millimeters.

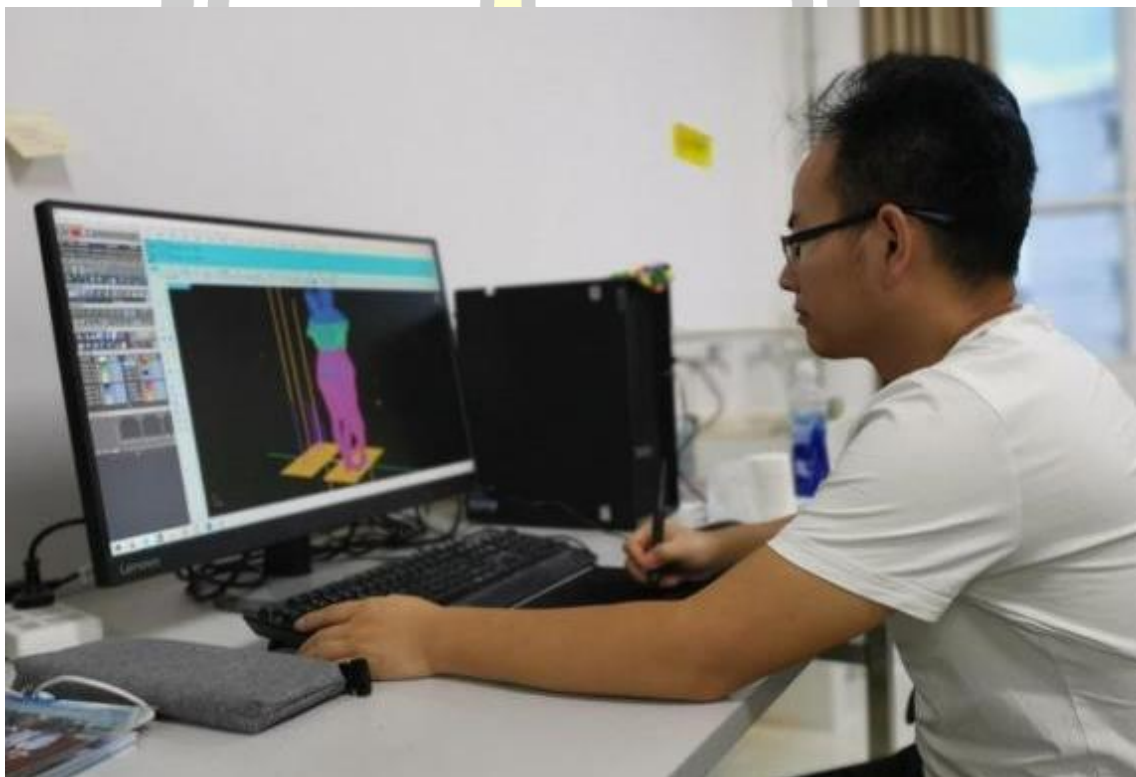


Figure 14 Work in digital sculpting

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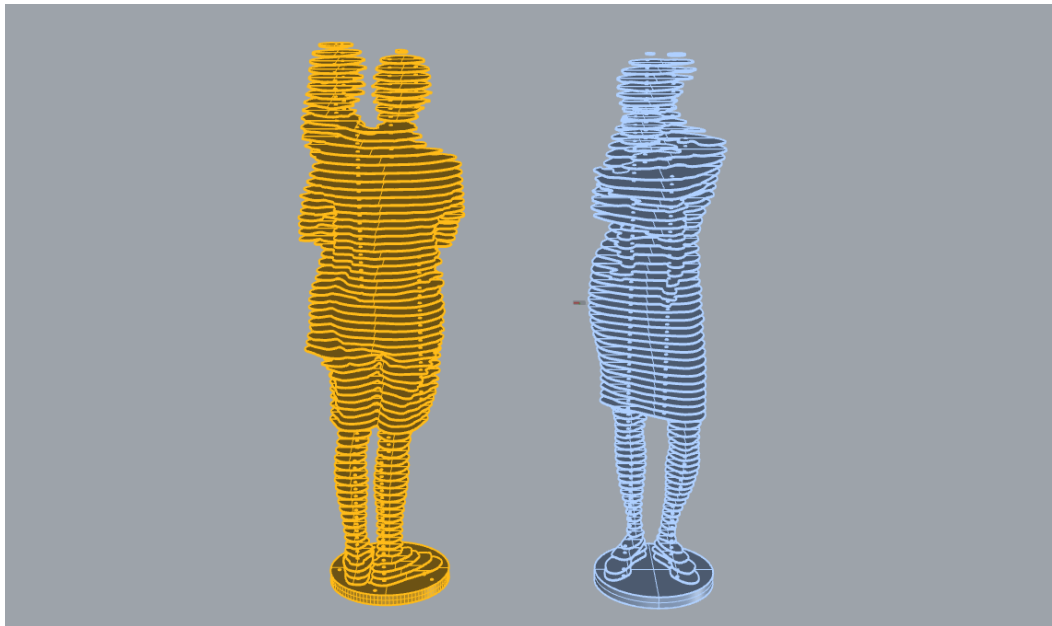


Figure 15 Work in Model layering

By unfolding and laying out each sliced piece, and then extracting the outline curves, we obtained the drawings needed for processing the sheet material.

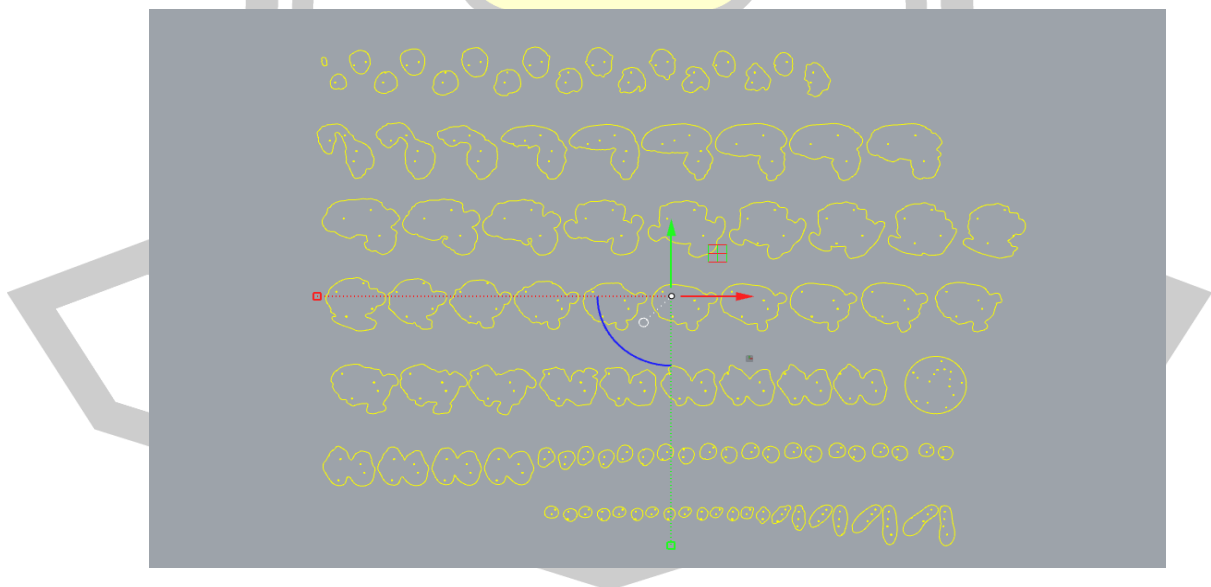


Figure 16 Work in Profile curve

The metal and wood boards were processed using high-power laser cutting machines, which have the characteristics of high precision and fast speed. The ABS sheet was processed using a CNC machining center. The processing accuracy of both methods was controlled within 0.1 millimeters.

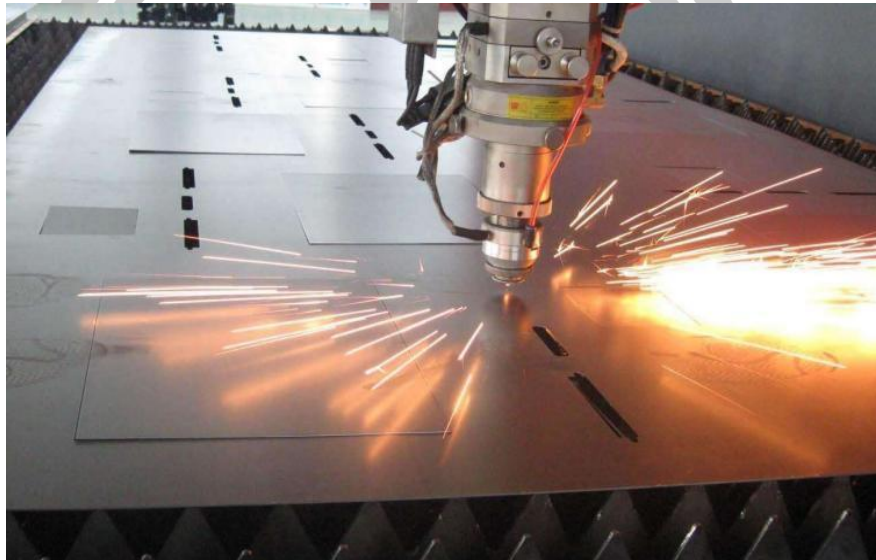


Figure 17 Work in Laser cutting

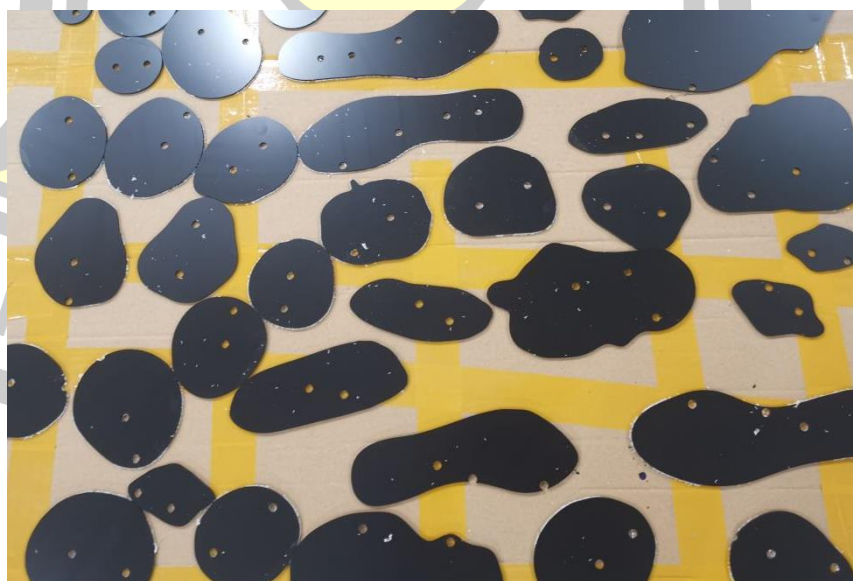


Figure 18 Work in Layered arrangement

The base of the work is assembled using wood boards and mirror stainless steel sheets. To ensure the firmness of the base, I used a large number of screws to fix it. The steel pipes that support the sculpture theme are fixed with long screws to support the main body of the sculpture.

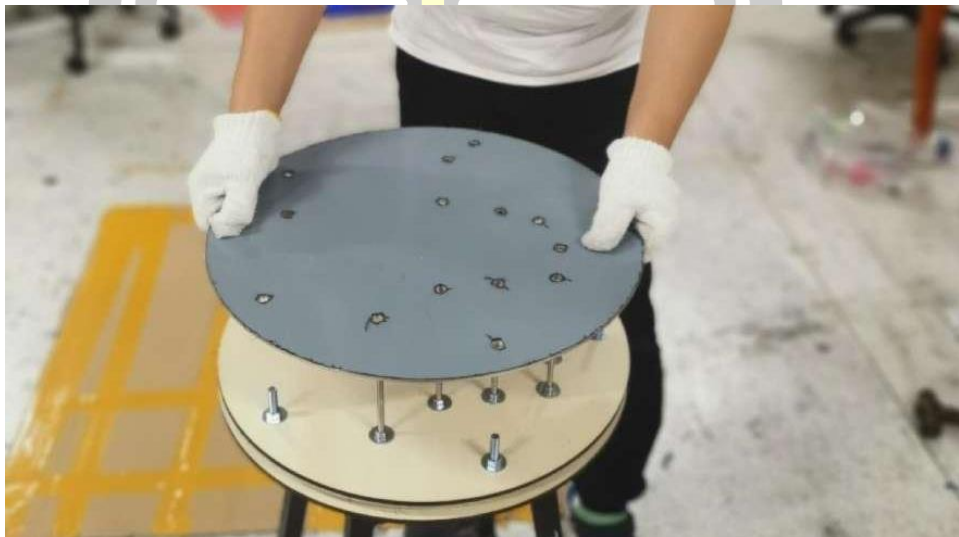


Figure 19 Work in Prepare the base 1





Figure 20 Work in Prepare the base 1

During the installation process of the sculpture, in order to ensure that each layer remained level, I used a spirit level to measure. For the final product, I mounted it on an electric turntable to achieve the rotation and interlocking of the sculpture.



Figure 21 Work in Assembly 1



Figure 22 Work in Assembly 2



Figure 23 Finished work

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This chapter intends to Symbol of Urban Life. The focus of this chapter is to illustrate to the results. Thus, the results are shown into the following topics:

1. Pre-Thesis Creative Work
2. Thesis Creative Work

#### **Pre-Thesis Creative Work**

1. Pre-Thesis work 1

1.1 Idea/Concept: When I was researching newborn families in cities, I first thought of Adam and Eve. In the Bible, the story of Adam and Eve is considered to be the beginning of the origin of mankind and the beginning of the establishment of the first human family. No matter what kind of study Families, all can be connected to the original family. So, in the first work, I modeled this classic moment in the Bible, the moment when Adam and Eve came out of the Garden of Eden. It also heralds the beginning of a new family. This is exactly what young people hope to happen when they come to the city, to find their other half and build a new family. The figure is a nude image, which also indicates the initial state of young people in the city, a state of nothing, but also a state full of hope.

1.2 Form: For the modeling of the characters, I adopted the style of western classical sculpture and created two characters with beautiful shapes and elegant movements. The man and woman held hands and looked at each other, as if they were talking about a bright future. Men stride forward with both feet, while women are slightly shy. This shows that men tend to take the initiative in emotional



aspects, and in terms of life and family, men bear greater responsibilities. In modern cities, this phenomenon is also obvious.

1.3 Results: In the first set of works, I expressed the concept of young people building new families in the city through the images of Adam and Eve. From the final effect of the work, the expected result was basically achieved. However, there are still some shortcomings. The overall composition of the characters is too scattered, and the work lacks a visual center. There are also some shortcomings in the production method. Due to the use of wooden materials for the sculpture base, the final work is not firm enough and needs to be improved in subsequent works.

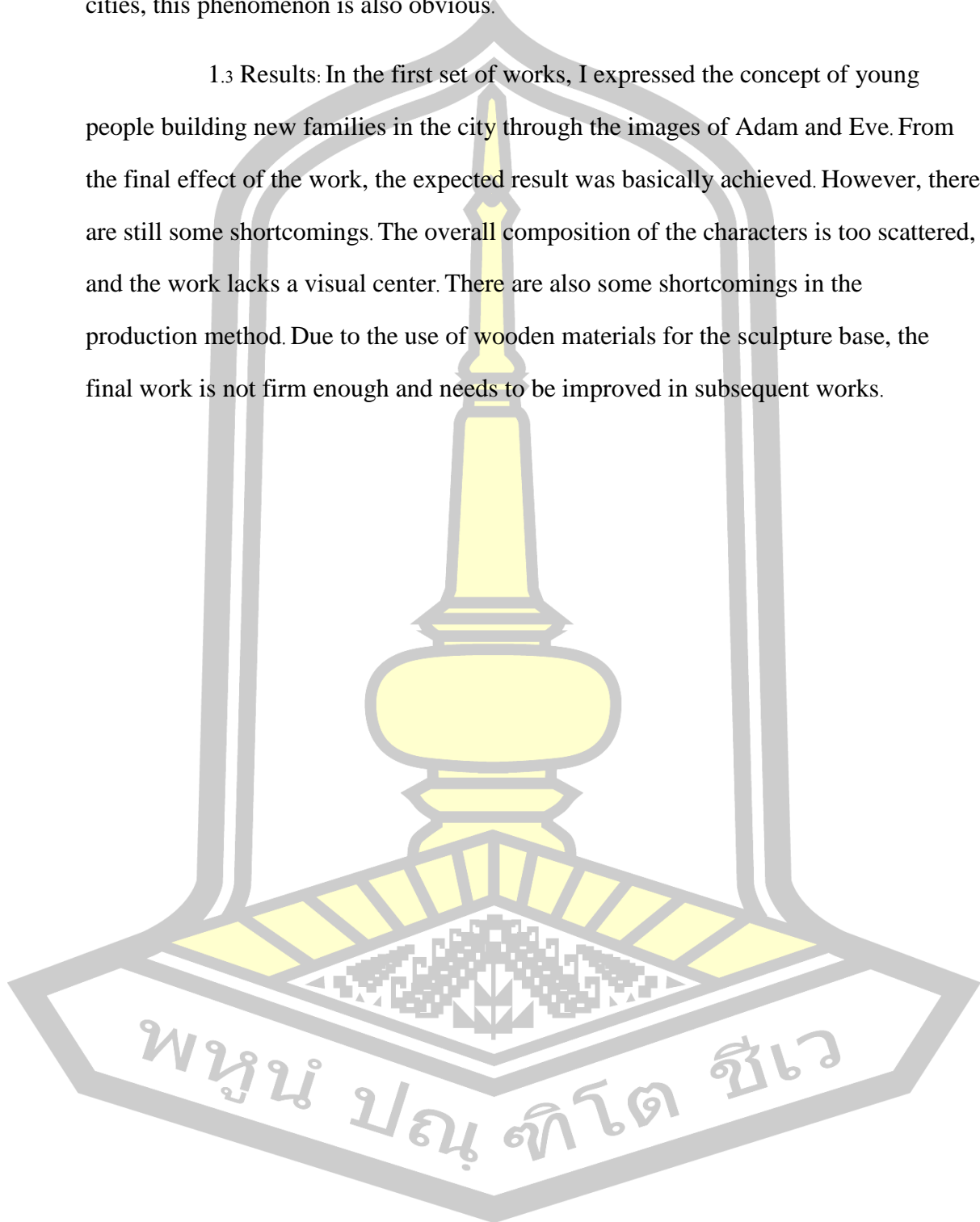




Figure 24 Pre-Thesis work 1 Front

Title : Symbol of Urban Life 1

Size : 60 x 80 x 162 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 25 Pre-Thesis work 1 View from below

Title : Symbol of Urban Life 1

Size : 60 x 80 x 162 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



## 2. Pre-Thesis work 2

2.1 Idea/ Concept: Children are essential members of a family and a bond that connects all members of the family. The arrival of a child is also a sign of further development for a new family. This set of works is a further development based on the previous set of works. It depicts a happy moment in a family, where the child is riding on the father's neck, and the wife is holding the child with one hand, showing their love for the child.

2.2 Form: For this series of works, I still used nude figures to highlight the beauty of the figure's lines. I added a rectangular metal base and fixed the support pipe of the figure on the metal base with stainless steel pipes and screws, making the figure more stable.

2.3 Results: In the second series of works, I expressed a state of modern urban families by depicting moments of happiness in the family, as well as the positive and optimistic attitude towards life of young urban people. Due to the addition of characters and a more complex design, more steel pipes were used to support the work.

2.4 Progress: The sketches of the second set of works went through repeated modifications. Initially, I drew a doll running independently. However, my mentor suggested that I should not deviate from the original theme, which revolves around urban families, and use male and female figures to express it. In the second sketch, I depicted a scene of a young couple with their child, but the characters were clothed. My mentor suggested that I still use nudity for expression, as it represents the original shape of human beings. After several modifications, the current plan was finally confirmed.

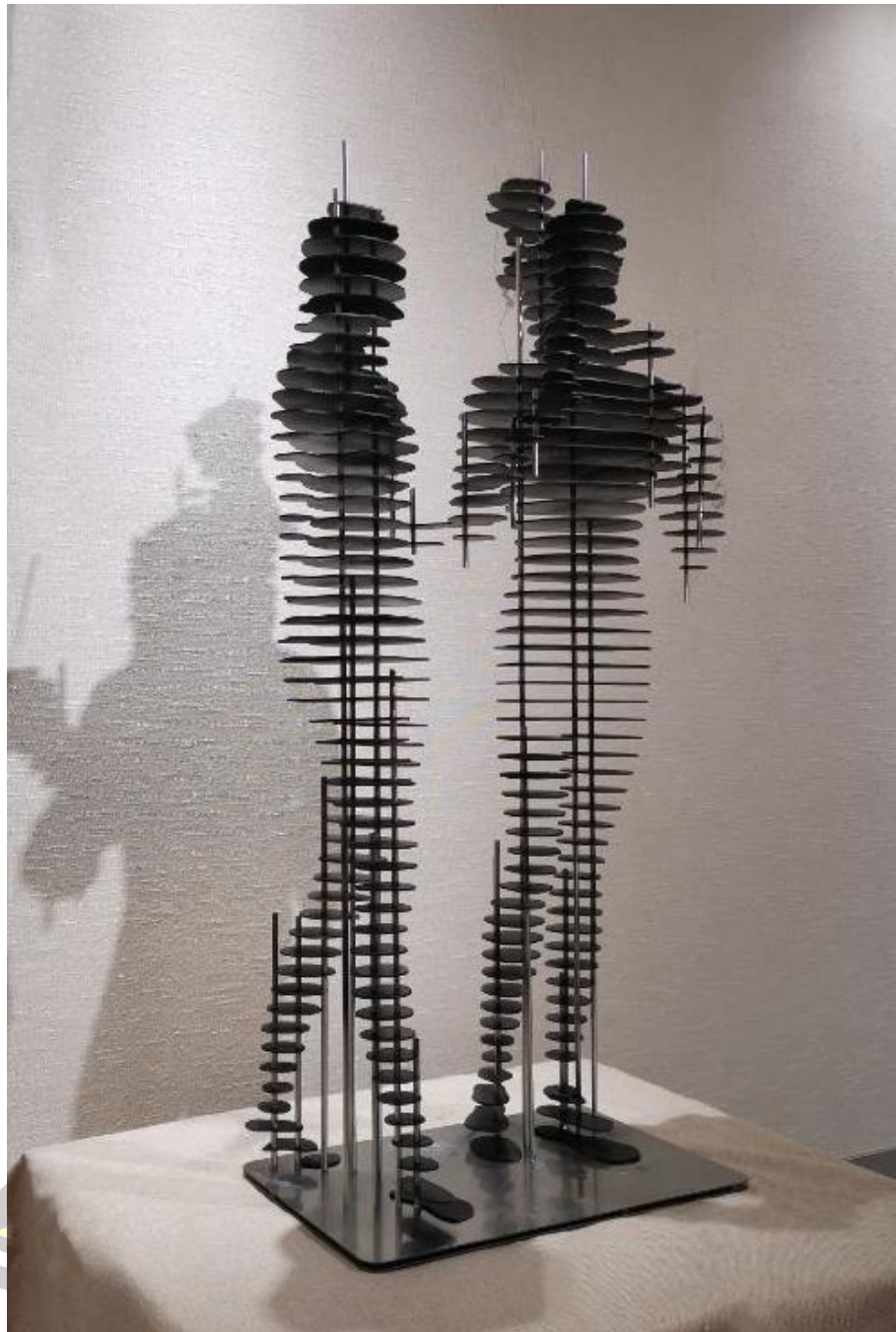


Figure 26 Pre-Thesis work 2 Front

Title : Symbol of Urban Life 2

Size : 70 x 80 x 165 centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

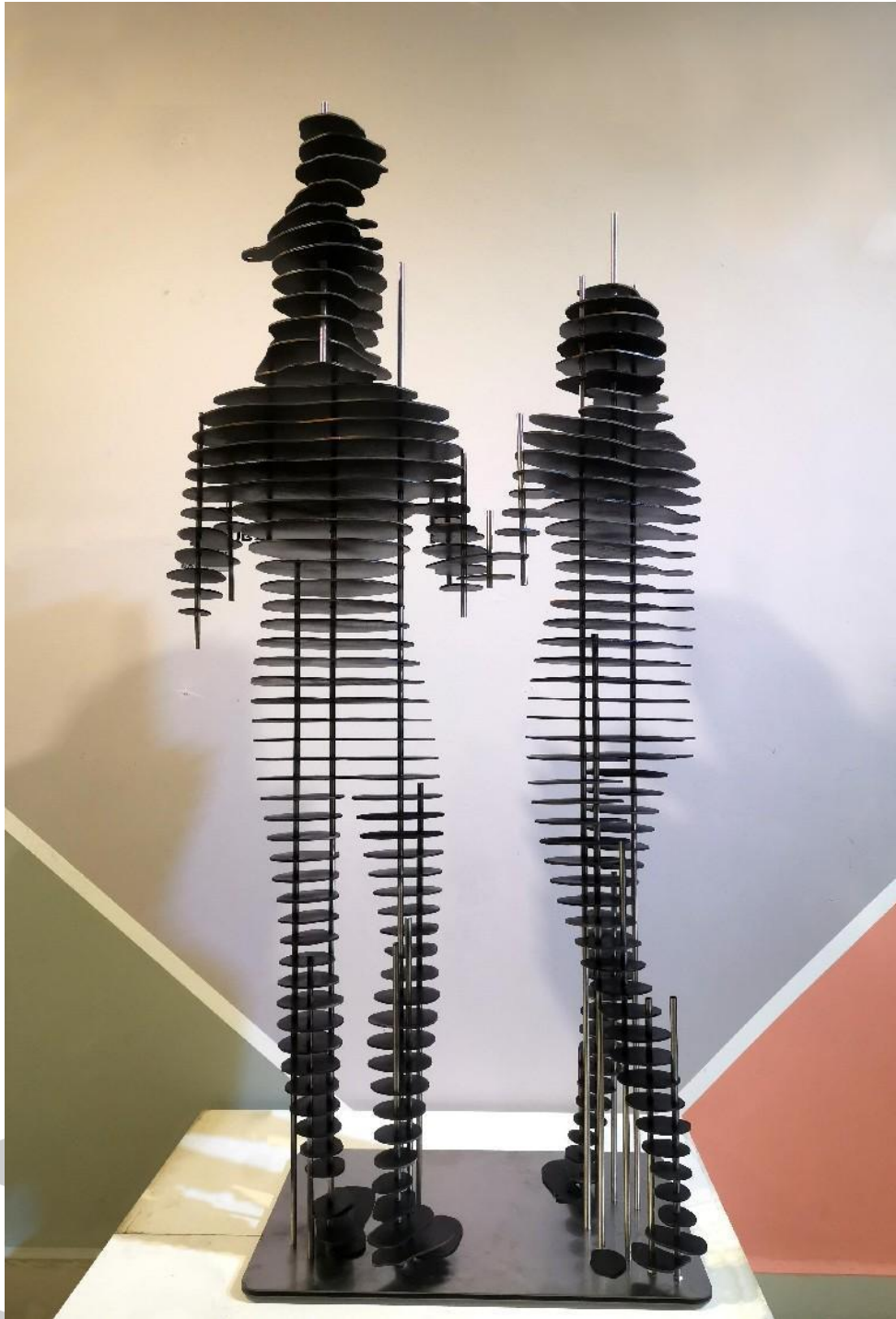


Figure 27 Pre-Thesis work 2 Back

Title : Symbol of Urban Life 2

Size : 70 x 80 x 165 centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

### 3. Pre-Thesis work 3

3.1 Idea/ Concept: These works analyze the state of urban youth from another perspective. The fast-paced urban lifestyle often brings stress and anxiety, making people more vulnerable. The soul needs comfort. I created an image of two characters embracing each other, where the embrace represents the need for comfort and also the release of stress.

3.2 Form: In this series of works, I merged the figures' forms together for the first time. Through the movement of the limbs, I conveyed an emotion of mutual comfort and support between two people. I increased the height and precision of the slices in the work, making it look more detailed.

3.3 Results: The two merged entities reduce the distance and space between the characters, causing the visual center of gravity to shift from two to one, making the work look more unified.

3.4 Progress: In the third set of works, people become fragile under pressure and need comfort and embrace. The mentor suggested designing around stress and burden in subsequent works to portray the difficulties of establishing and maintaining a family for modern urban male lovers. Additionally, the mentor recommended selecting spacious settings for shooting and using spotlights for lighting. Following the mentor's advice, I rented an art exhibition hall and re-shot the previous three sets of works.

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Figure 28 Pre-Thesis work 3 Front

Title : Symbol of Urban Life 3

Size : 60 x 80 x 165 centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 29 Pre-Thesis work 3 Side

Title : Symbol of Urban Life 3

Size : 60 x 80 x 165 centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

## Thesis Creative Work

### 1. Thesis work 1

1.1 Idea/ Concept: The concept that the artist is trying to convey through this collection of works is that happiness and stress coexist in modern urban families. On the one hand, parents face the stress of raising and educating their children. On the other hand, children serve as a bond between spouses and are also an important factor in family happiness.

1.2 Form: In this work, I depicted a scene of a family of three, with the child riding on the father's back while he bent over to lift the child up. The mother was standing by, holding onto the child with one hand. This scene represents the solidarity and collaboration among family members in jointly taking on the pressures of daily life.

1.3 Results: This set of works is the first set after the topic was opened, and before the formal production, there were some changes in my grasp of the style and content of the works. I drew an abstract figure without arms, which proved to be unreasonable. My mentor corrected my idea in a timely manner and guided me to improve and complete the current plan.

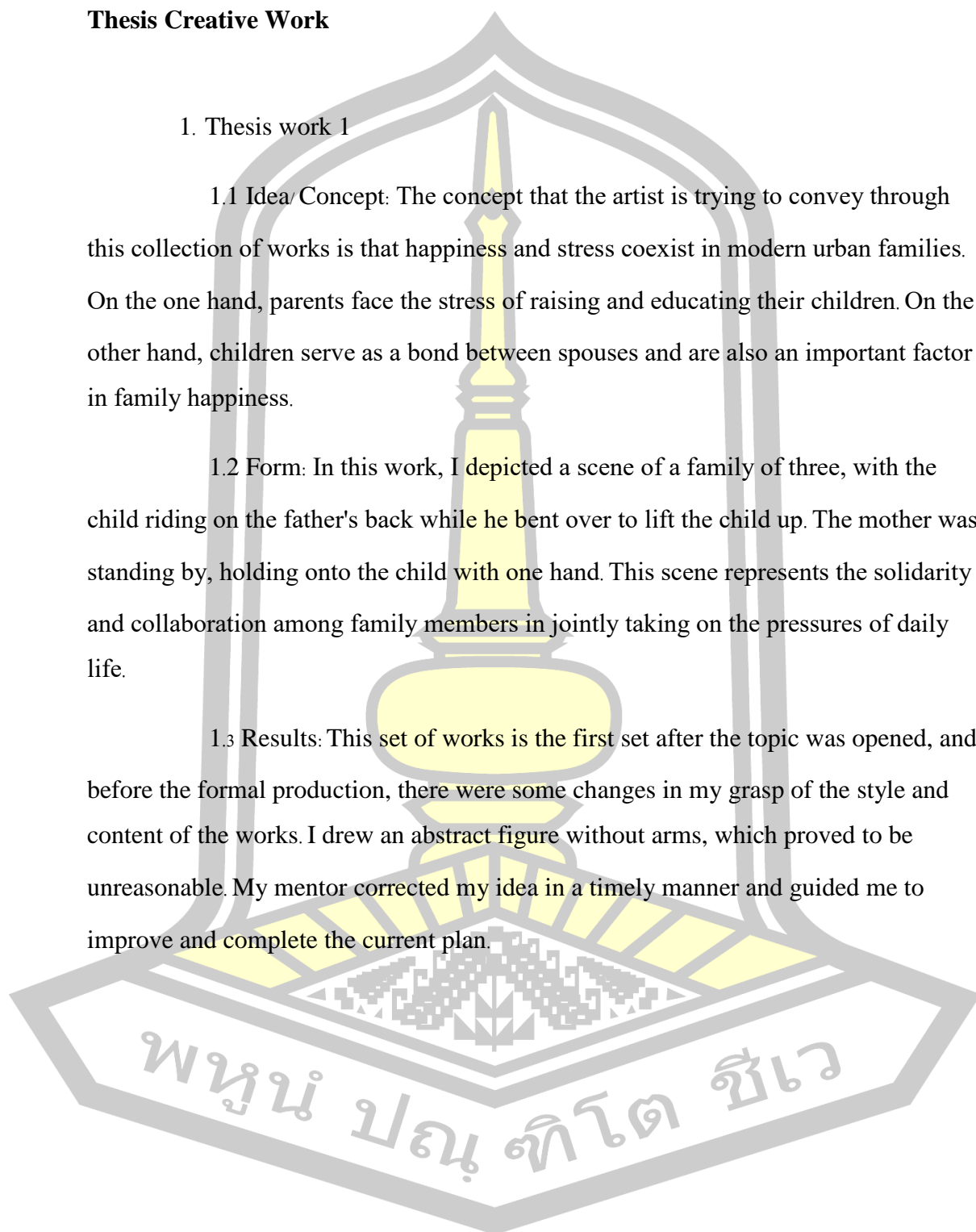






Figure 30 Thesis work 1 Front

Title : new urban family

Size : 60 x 50x 175 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 31 Thesis work 1 Back

Title : new urban family

Size : 60 x 50x 175 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 32 Thesis work I Side

Title : new urban family

Size : 60 x 50x 175 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

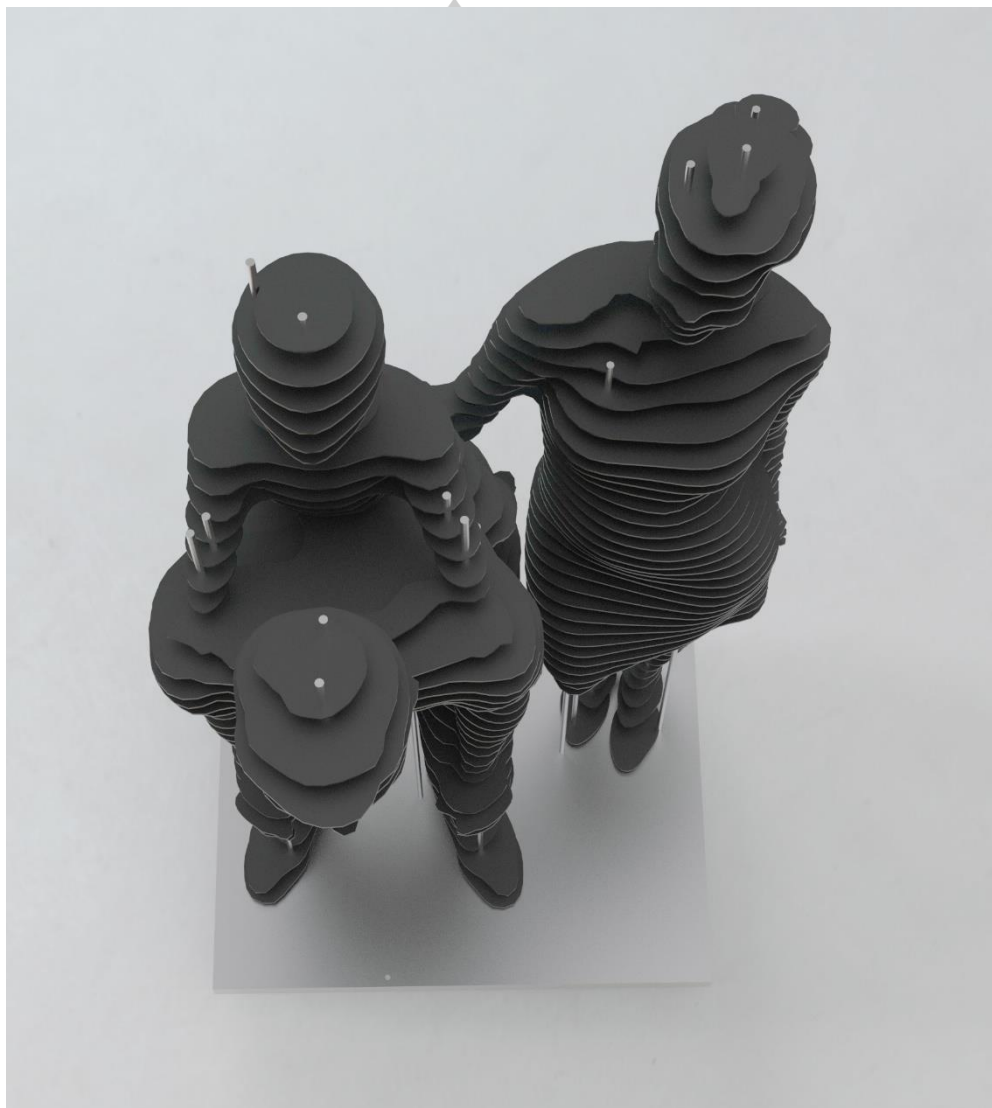
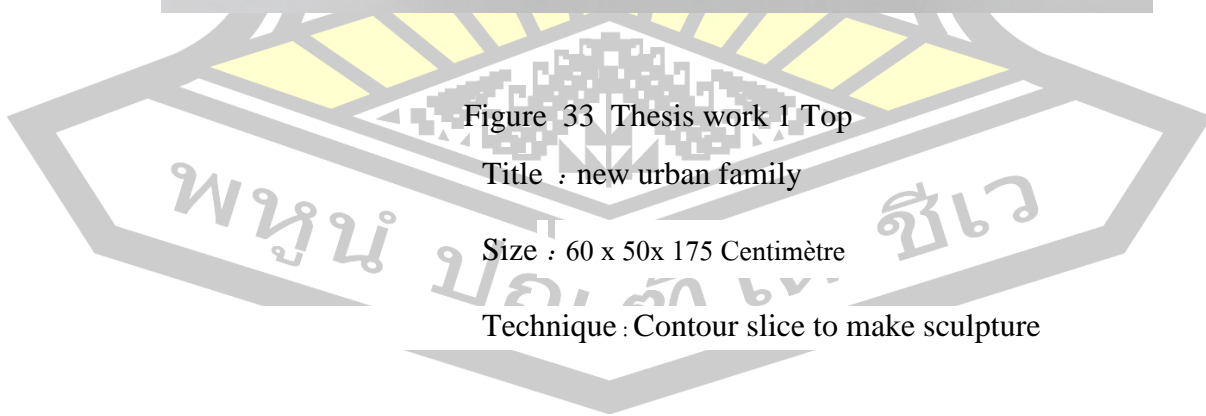


Figure 33 Thesis work 1 Top

Title : new urban family

Size : 60 x 50x 175 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



## 2. Thesis work 2

2.1 Idea/ Concept: In the second group of works, I deconstructed the images of family members to express the role that each family member has to play when facing urban society. Because regardless of whether you are a father, mother, or child in the family, if you want to live better in the city, you also need to fulfill responsibilities and obligations outside the family, mainly in the areas of work and study. This is also another symbol of family members living in the city.

2.2 Form: I improved the materials and production techniques for this group of works. For the first time, I used a circular base, which made it possible for the works to rotate. I used a manual turntable to achieve the rotation of the works, allowing viewers to turn the sculptures. In order to make the spacing of the slices more accurate and consistent, I added another specification of steel pipe to limit the spacing of the slices, and the effect was quite ideal.

2.3 Results: In this series of works, I portrayed family members as individual entities for the first time. This allowed me to freely adjust each person's position. When taking photographs, I tried to have people walk behind the artwork, so that when the figures coincided with the sculptures, their forms merged together to create a unique and interesting visual effect.

2.4 Progress: After I changed the base to a circular shape, my mentor suggested utilizing the feature of the work's rotation to achieve true cross and overlap of characters through the gaps created by slicing. As long as the height difference between the two character slices is controlled, this effect can be achieved. The difficulty lies in how to modify the base and use electricity to make it rotate automatically. This is also a technical problem that needs to be solved for the next work.



Figure 34 Thesis work 2 Full view

Title : roles outside the family

Size : 150 x 200 x 185 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

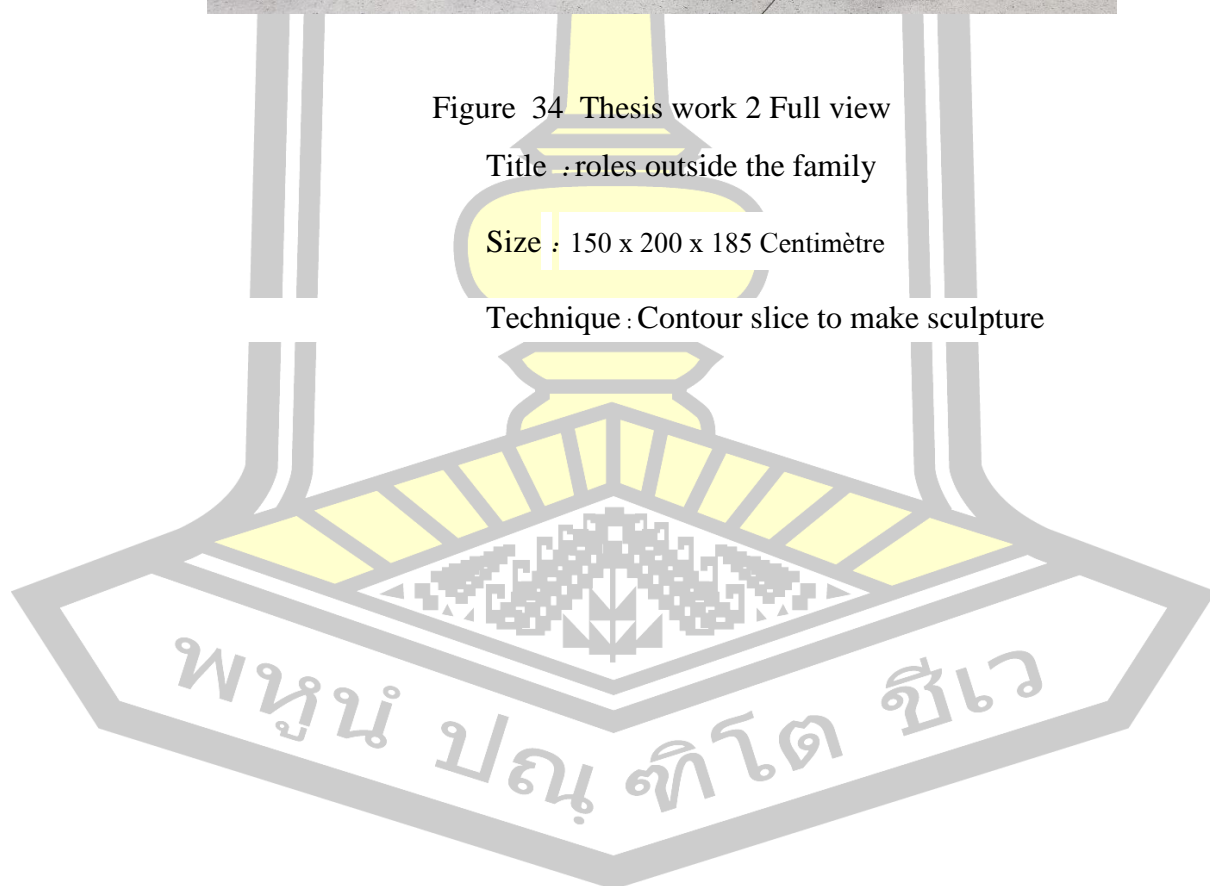






Figure 35 Thesis work 2 Woman

Title : roles outside the family

Size : 150 x 200 x 185 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 36 Thesis work 2 Man

Title : roles outside the family

Size : 150 x 200 x 185 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 37 Thesis work 2 Child

Title : roles outside the family

Size : 150 x 200 x 185 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

### 3. Thesis work 3

3.1 Idea/ Concept: In my third piece, I created an interactive piece featuring two characters that could interact with each other through rotation, representing the physical connection and separation between individuals. This also symbolizes the changing relationships between people in urban life. Similarly, in a family, members are not always together as they are often busy with their own work, resulting in moments of gathering and separation in daily life. This is another typical characteristic and symbol of modern urban families.

3.2 Form: To achieve the rotation of the work and the intersection and fusion of the characters' forms, I calculated the spacing and overlapping area between the characters in advance when sculpting the shapes. This allowed for a common intersection between the forms of the characters during rotation, thereby achieving the desired effect.

3.3 Results: The sculpture transforms from static to dynamic, and when the character rotates, the sliced lines produce richer and more fluid changes. This transformation of converging and dispersing forms also reflects the subject and concept.

3.4 Progress: By adding an electric base, we were able to achieve the effect suggested by the mentor. For the next work, the mentor recommends using the same form of mutual rotation and intersection, with the concept of pressure and burden, to depict the busy and interdependent scenes of couples in new urban families taking care of their children. In the next set of works, I will try this suggestion.



Figure 38 Thesis work 3 Front

Title : Symbol of gathering and parting

Size : 60 x 40 x 180 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



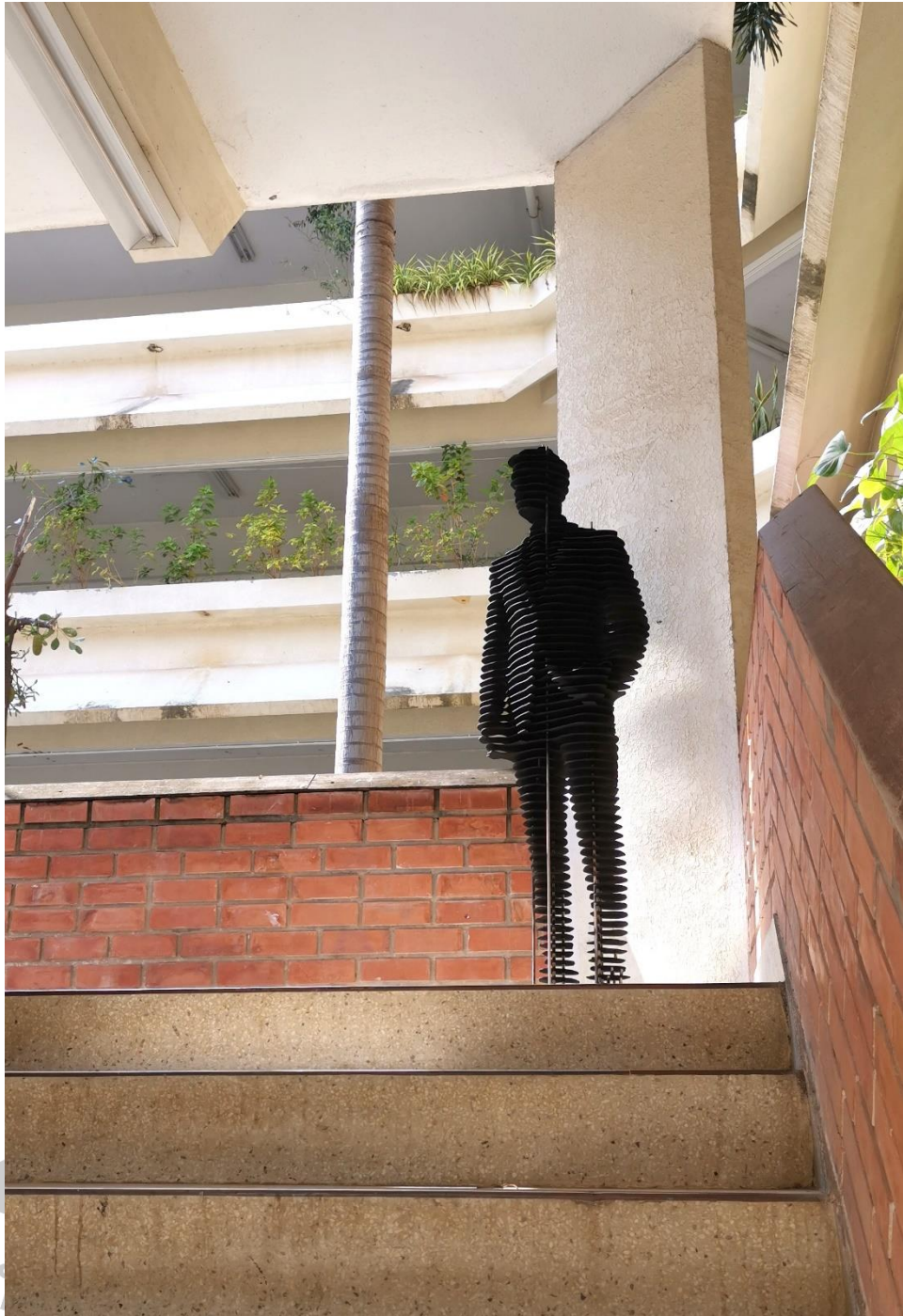


Figure 39 Thesis work 3 Man

Title : Symbol of gathering and parting

Size : 60 x 40 x 180 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture





Figure 40. Thesis work 3 Woman

Title : Symbol of gathering and parting

Size : 60 x 40 x 180 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

#### 4. Thesis work 4

4.1 Idea/ Concept: For the fourth set of works, I portrayed another state of contemporary urban young families. China has fully opened the policy of allowing couples to have a second child. Many young families have chosen to have two children, which has brought them even greater pressure. Young couples must work harder in the city, shuttling back and forth between their family, children, and work. In the works, the couple each hold a child in their arms and interweave, merge, and separate in their respective rotations. This is a typical symbol of contemporary young urban families.

4.2 Form: In terms of materials, I chose to use ABS sheets because they are heavier than wood and therefore I used thicker steel plates as a base. During the production process, I calculated the actions and dimensions of the characters to ensure that they wouldn't conflict with each other when the sculpture rotates. The shoulders of the characters are tilted outwards, so when rotating, the characters will interlace at the shoulder and arm positions.

4.3 Results: ABS sheets have a higher reflectivity than black wood, so after the work is completed, there is a significant difference in visual effect. When viewed from a distance, the sculpture becomes more blurred due to reflecting more of the surrounding environment, and the changes in light and shadow become more varied.

4.4 Progress: In the third group of works, I portrayed the state of young people in the city through their professional image outside of the family. In the fourth group of works, I depicted their roles within the family. During the sketching process, I tried to add miniature props such as cars and buildings to convey the pressures on people. After receiving guidance from my mentor, I ultimately chose to portray the characters holding their children, which unified the style and content of the work and better expressed the theme of my creation.



Figure 41 Thesis work 4 Front

Title : family burden

Size : 40 x 60 x 180 Centimètre



Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture



Figure 42 Thesis work 4 Back

Title : family burden

Size : 40 x 60 x 180 Centimètre

Technique : Contour slice to make sculpture

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter examines the extent to which the study problems have been resolution by the work, study and how the findings add to the existent literature. Conclusion about the creation purposes and the creation resolution are drawn based on the results findings. It will be presented according to the following topics:

1. Purpose of Creation
2. Conclusion
3. Discussion
4. Recommendation

#### **Purpose of Creation**

1. To study the current state of urban life, the living conditions of young people in the new era in the city. The style and characteristics of urban architecture are studied, and the character modeling is combined with architectural characteristics.
2. To create the visual arts which was sculpture that expressed via form The Symbol of Urban Life. Through the art form of figurative public sculpture, using materials such as steel plates, wooden boards, and metal components, the complete figure is composed by layering the contours and edges of each part.

## Conclusion

This visual arts creation thesis Symbol of Urban Life will be presented the conclusion according to the following topics:

### 1. Results of Data Analysis

In China, the change in urban residential space has been the most noticeable since the reform and opening up. the capita housing floor area has grown significantly as a result of the steady growth in urban population. Residential space is a social space that is shaped by specific residents and their social behaviours in addition to being a natural space in the geographical. Due to financial limitations, the majority of typical families opt to buy more affordable high-rise apartments. The real estate market has been further stimulated by the difficult housing requirements of work and marriage, which has raised housing prices and put more financial strain on young people in the city. They hustle around the city, work incredibly hard every day, and deal with a variety of problems on their own to make a living. They are excellent parents, devoted wives, thoughtful husbands, and kind mothers at home. Behind each rushing pedestrian on the city's streets is a lovely wish for a joyful and welcoming home.

Living in a rapidly evolving society in China, urban development is needed to support the population. As a result, lifestyles have to be adjusted in order to live in a modern society. Young people pay more attention to living in the city. Therefore, looking for a living space is important.

In order to accommodate the housing needs of a high population density, Hong Kong must adopt the building form of intensive high-rise housing. High-rise tower density, however, does not improve neighbourhood interaction with the street or foster a vibrant urban environment. This way of life prevents effective interaction between city dwellers and fosters urban society's indifference, which results in a number of social issues and a dearth of humanistic care. (Wang,H.Ruan,X



2022). the issue that residential differences and their expression in urban spatial form are becoming more and more obvious in recent years due to the real estate market's rapid development, particularly with the rise in housing prices. Even the characteristics of stratification started to become apparent in the overall form of urban living space. (Fang,C.C. 2014)

In the past few decades, China has experienced rapid development in both the number and scale of cities, and there has been significant improvement in the construction of urban infrastructure and living conditions. This consistent with the content of Urban high-rise constructions are an expression of architecture's complex social, cultural, and technical background. In recent years, high-rise structures used as both homes and offices have grown in popularity in China's cities. When designing high-rise structures, we adhere to a set of laws and aesthetic principles, combine these with structural technology, and employ logic and order. The ability to grasp rhythm and rhythm frequently reflects the aesthetics of high-rise residences. In order to create new and organic shapes.(Zheng,X.F. 2014)

To accommodate the urban population's housing needs, a large number of high-rise residential buildings have been constructed, ultimately shaping the urban landscape that we see today. However, this has also led to a massive migration of people from rural areas to cities, resulting in a shortage of urban housing and the subsequent rise of the real estate industry. A sizable number of elderly people who are not living with their children in the city. Due to this phenomenon, new urban families experience some pressure to survive as well as a lack of interaction and communication with other urban families. However, it also results in a significant number of elderly people being abandoned in the country who do not live with their children in the city and who will experience an emotional and life crisis. (Ma,C.H 2011)

Interaction and participation are the characteristics of public sculpture art, allowing the audience to feel their own existence through the interaction and dialogue with the sculpture works. Public sculpture can reflect this kind of public

consciousness through the expression of the theme, so as to achieve resonance with the audience

The arrangement of elements in a work of art. All works of art have an order determined by the artist. Composition creates hierarchy in a composition, which tells the viewer the relative importance of the included images and elements. In the work, through the extraction of the shape of the task section, the artistic elements include the straight lines of the horizontal angle and the curves of the task outline. The arrangement of curves has a unique rhythm and visual effect. The curve of a line can convey energy. The curve of a line can transfer energy. Soft, shallow curves are reminiscent of the curves of the human body and often have a pleasing.

Shape and form define objects in space. Shapes have two dimensions—height and width—and are usually defined by lines. Forms exist in three dimensions, with height, width, and depth. Form has depth as well as width and height. Three-dimensional form is the basis of sculpture, to use Organic shapes a human to create a composition. Real space is three-dimensional. Space in artwork refers to the sense of depth or three-dimensionality. It can also refer to an artist's use of an area within the picture plane. The area around the main object in a work of art is called negative space, while the space occupied by the main object is called positive space. The shape of sculpture is composed of positive space and negative space. The existence of negative space makes the sculpture more expressive. He relationship of positive to negative space can greatly affect the impact of a work of art. This consistent with the content of (getty, 2023 : online).

## 2. Results of Creation

In this creative process, a total of 4 sets of works were completed, comprising 10 character images. I attempted to find some images and states that could represent all young people in the city. I first classified the characters from two different angles, family and work, and looked for classic images that represent urban families, such as scenes of fathers, mothers, and children together. Then I extracted

their professions and roles outside the family, such as company employees, housewives, students, and other different images. We can differentiate the characters' roles through their clothing and props, such as skirts, suits, backpacks, and other elements.

In terms of artistic form, I employ a combination of realistic style and abstract expression. The overall proportions and form of the figures are entirely realistic, but I do not use them directly. Instead, I extract sliced contours of the figures. These contours have a strong sense of order and lines. When they are combined together, the visual effect is stunning.

Thesis work 1 The concept that the artist is trying to convey through this collection of works is that happiness and stress coexist in modern urban families. On the one hand, parents face the stress of raising and educating their children. On the other hand, children serve as a bond between spouses and are also an important factor in family happiness. Form: In this work, I depicted a scene of a family of three, with the child riding on the father's back while he bent over to lift the child up. The mother was standing by, holding onto the child with one hand. This scene represents the solidarity and collaboration among family members in jointly taking on the pressures of daily life.

unreasonable. My mentor corrected my idea in a timely manner and guided me to improve and complete the current plan.

Thesis work 2 In the second group of works, I deconstructed the images of family members to express the role that each family member has to play when facing urban society. Because regardless of whether you are a father, mother, or child in the family, if you want to live better in the city, you also need to fulfill responsibilities and obligations outside the family, mainly in the areas of work and study. This is also another symbol of family members living in the city. I improved the materials and production techniques for this group of works. For the first time, I used a circular base, which made it possible for the works to rotate. I used a manual turntable to achieve the rotation of the works, allowing viewers to turn the sculptures.

Results: This allowed me to freely adjust each person's position. When taking photographs, I tried to have people walk behind the artwork, so that when the figures coincided with the sculptures, their forms merged together to create a unique and interesting visual effect.

Thesis work 3, I created an interactive piece featuring two characters that could interact with each other through rotation, representing the physical connection and separation between individuals. This also symbolizes the changing relationships between people in urban life. Similarly, in a family, members are not always together as they are often busy with their own work, resulting in moments of gathering and separation in daily life. This is another typical characteristic and symbol of modern urban families. To achieve the rotation of the work and the intersection and fusion of the characters' forms, I calculated the spacing and overlapping area between the characters in advance when sculpting the shapes. This allowed for a common intersection between the forms of the characters during rotation, thereby achieving the desired effect. The sculpture transforms from static to dynamic, and when the character rotates, the sliced lines produce richer and more fluid changes. This transformation of converging and dispersing forms also reflects the subject and concept.

Thesis work 4, I portrayed another state of contemporary urban young families. China has fully opened the policy of allowing couples to have a second child. Many young families have chosen to have two children, which has brought them even greater pressure. Young couples must work harder in the city, shuttling back and forth between their family, children, and work. In the works, the couple each hold a child in their arms and interweave, merge, and separate in their respective rotations. This is a typical symbol of contemporary young urban families. In terms of materials, I chose to use ABS sheets because they are heavier than wood and therefore I used thicker steel plates as a base. During the production process, I calculated the actions and dimensions of the characters to ensure that they wouldn't conflict with each other when the sculpture rotates. The shoulders of the characters are tilted outwards, so

when rotating, the characters will interlace at the shoulder and arm positions. ABS sheets have a higher reflectivity than black wood, so after the work is completed, there is a significant difference in visual effect. When viewed from a distance, the sculpture becomes more blurred due to reflecting more of the surrounding environment, and the changes in light and shadow become more varied.

## Discussion

The result of creation was discovered which indicated

### 1. Results of Data Analysis

The development of cities is a symbol of human civilization progress. As we move from primitive agricultural civilizations to modern societies, cities are changing people's lifestyles and habits. However, this seems to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, more advanced hardware facilities such as housing and transportation provide us with tremendous convenience, making life and work more efficient. On the other hand, the endless desire for material possessions and the fast-paced lifestyle bring immense pressure to people, which manifests itself in physical and mental stress. This creates a busy and anxious state for people, gradually causing them to lose themselves. The growth and development of cities, which have an impact on people of all ages, in cities, middle school students face the pressure of study, old people face the pressure of body and health, young people face the biggest pressure, they need to raise children, support the elderly, and work hard to maintain a happy family.

We investigated the issues young people faced when adjusting to city life and employment, studied the living conditions of young people in cities in the new era, and synthesised their shared traits from a collective perspective. We achieved the expression of external image and internal spirit through symbolic character shaping and communicated the author's humanistic concern for modern urban populations. In order to create sculpture works that reflect the theme in form and

content and can interact with their surroundings and the people who inhabit them, When people see the work, they stop, they stare at it, they think about it, and when their consciousness makes a connection with the work, they realize that what the work represents is who they are.

## 2. Results of Creation

The human figure has always been the most common element in sculpture, and in contemporary sculpture, the human body serves as a medium to convey the artist's ideas. In my work, I try to make people see not only the human figure itself, but also the city and environment around it through the artwork. The black subject and layered structure create rich changes in light and shadow, and the form transitions and switches between reality and illusion. It is not only a combination of architecture and characters, but also a shadow, a shadow that exists on ourselves, and it is also a state, a state of losing oneself and appearing and disappearing. To express this state in the form of art, it is necessary to show the emptiness existing in the entity. Therefore, I used solid plates in my work to express this visual effect through overlapping gaps.

## 3. The new finding the new knowledge

The theme of the sculpture is quite innovative, as it portrays the image of young people's urban lifestyle and their family establishment, combining the eastern and western understanding of family images.

The structure symbolizing urban buildings is integrated into the sculpture form, allowing the observation of the relationship between human figures and architectural structures in the artwork. This effect enables people to connect the city and its inhabitants, contemplating the relationship between the city and people.

The artwork itself has a unique visual effect, with the rotation and intersection of the figures producing a constantly changing light and shadow effect. This change is infinite, allowing the artwork to shift between reality and illusion, symbolizing the unpredictable changes of the city and its people today.

## 4. The effects or reaction on social or technical field



Through creative practice, a feasible solution has been achieved for integrating computer technology into the artistic creation process. It has also provided a new approach to the techniques of contemporary sculpture.

Interaction and participation are the characteristics of public sculpture art, The interactive object of public sculpture is all citizens, realizing the dialogue between artists and urban society, and influencing the public psychology of a city.

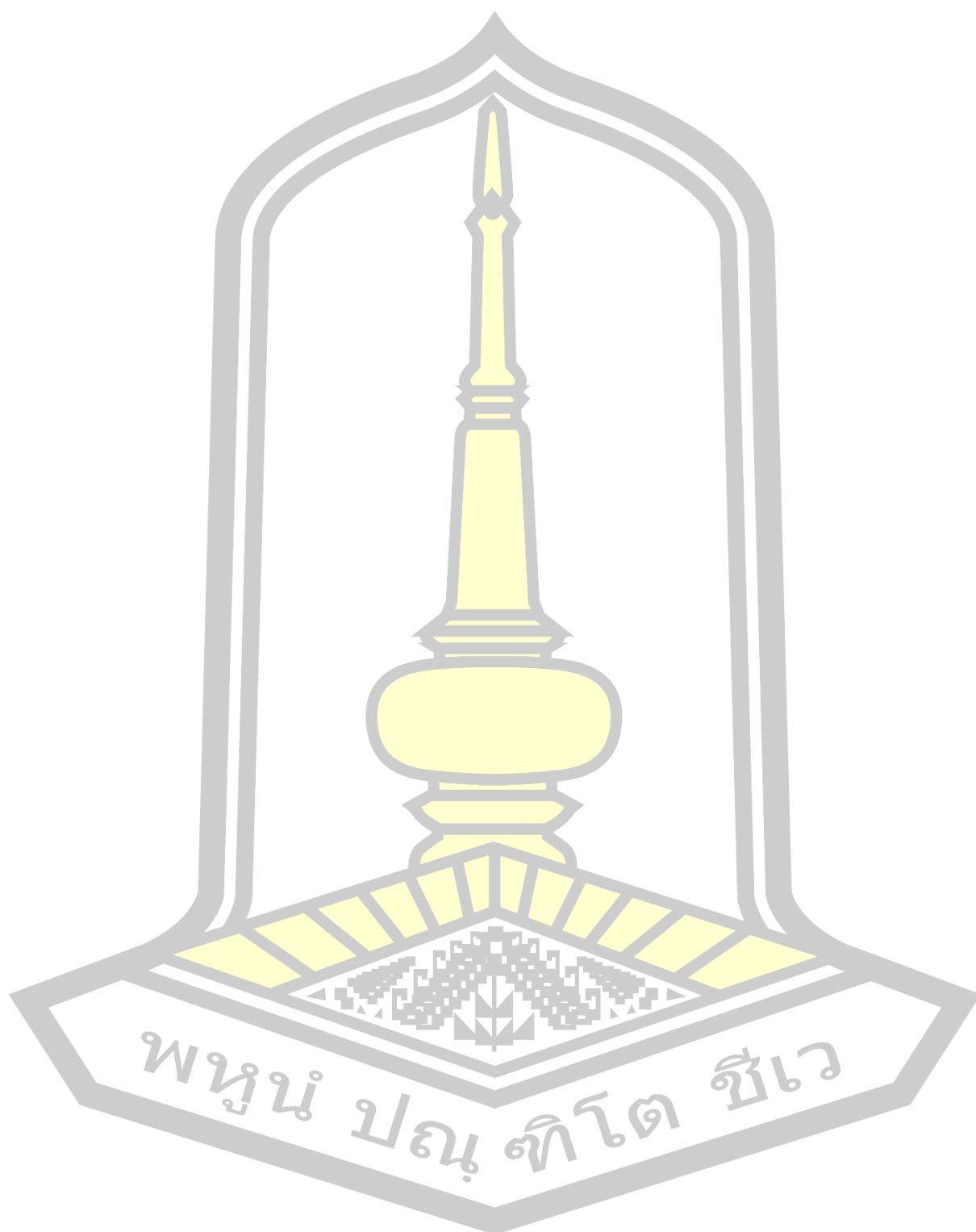
### **Recommendation**

Urban issues are a complex problem that is not specific to any particular group of people. In addition to contemporary young people, the elderly and children are also objects of concern. The problem of children's growth in the city can be addressed from the perspective of neglected child education in families. The issue of the living conditions of the elderly in the fast-paced urban environment can be studied from the perspective of the elderly.

The city is like a besieged city, with those outside wanting to enter, and those inside wanting to escape. Many people still struggle with this contradictory mindset and find it difficult to make a decision, making it a topic worthy of further research.

Crowded living environments and high population densities are common in urban areas. Modern city dwellers often find themselves living within narrow and confined spaces. In artistic creations, the visual sensations of narrowness and crowding can be expressed through the use of sculpture and installation forms.

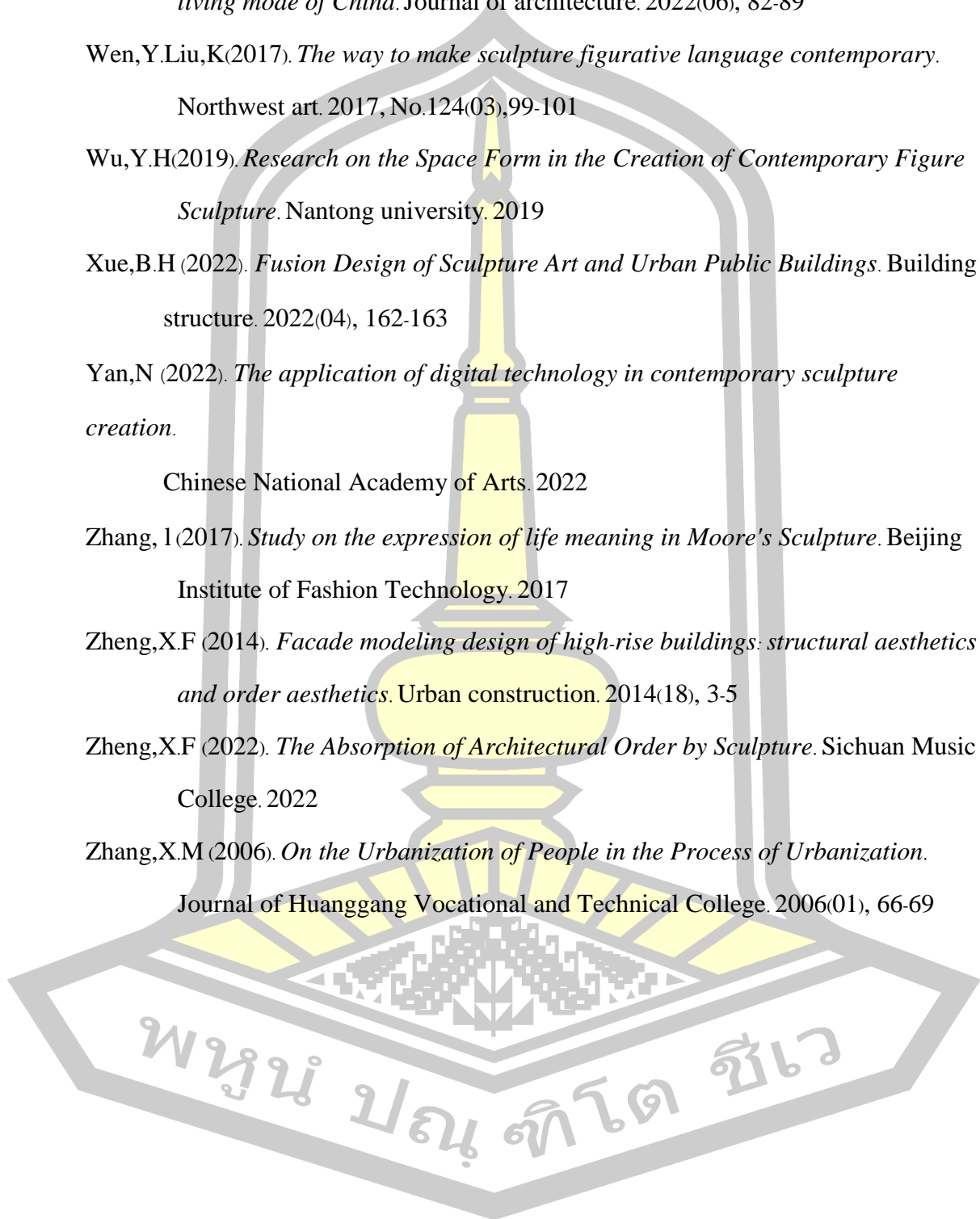
Regarding the form of sliced composite sculpture, I believe that further exploration and experimentation can be conducted. For example, each slice can be individually rotated to achieve continuous changes in form, resulting in a visual effect of undulating waves.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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