

SINA HUANG

團圓

CATALOGUE 2022



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## PART I

# The Unseeing Eyes

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# The Unseeing Eyes

As a third-generation immigrant from Taiwan who grew up in South Africa I have always felt a disconnect from my culture. Growing up in Durban I was always the only Chinese child in my grade and was faced with racial micro-aggressions in my daily life. Racial Micro-aggressions are short and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities that expresses racial slights and insults towards people or groups of colour in a hostile and negative manner, whether it be intentional or not. These perpetrators are often unaware that they are conveying negative slights when interacting with people of colour.

Going out onto the street I was often confronted with words such as “China, China”, “Ching Chong Cha” or “Konnichiwa” and constant stares of curiosity for the other. However, the sense of not belonging was not only limited to South Africa but also in my home country. Instead of feeling a sense of comfort surrounded by people with the same colour skin I was instead confronted with stares, as if I had a huge sign that signalled that I didn’t belong. Oddly enough, as I grew older and the looks subsided, I continued to feel eyes on me even when they weren't there.

In *The Unseeing Eyes*, I created eyes out of clay which will be scattered around the walls of the exhibition space. They are painted white to mimic the colour of the gallery walls and in the effort to blend in with the exhibition space.

I chose to only sculpt the left eye to reference the Summer Hong Kong protest where a participant of the protest was shot in her right eye. Covering only the right eye and leaving the left soon became a symbol of the protest as it became impossible to look away from their eye and talk normally. The eyes are unseeing, as they are not actually looking at anything and although they are sculpted to remain open, they lack pupils. This references the imaginary eyes that I feel on me constantly. The pupilless eyes are designed to make the viewer uneasy, as if hundreds of eyes are staring at them but in reality, the eyes are not capable of “seeing” as they are pupilless and inanimate.







## PART II

\_\_\_\_\_ is a Five Letter  
Word

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# \_\_\_\_\_ is a Five Letter Word

At the height of Covid-19, when Asian hate crimes were at their peak, my father instructed me and the rest of my family to pack an emergency bag. This bag contained essentials that we would need in case we needed to flee if worse comes to worst. During that time, I remember being terrified that something would happen to my family. And it saddened me as the main cause of these hate crimes stemmed largely from the misconceptions that Covid originated in China and the false rumour that it was caused by bat soup. Therefore, my second artwork aims to create an environment in which people who are unfamiliar with Chinese food and culture can learn through interactions with the art as learning is the best way to understanding different cultures and getting rid of prejudices and fear.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a Five Letter Word is heavily influenced and inspired by my father who owned and oversaw multiple Chinese restaurants throughout my childhood. As a child, the only time that my whole family came together was during events or festivals where we would dine together. In spite of the fact that we were constantly stared at, which was odd considering we were Asian people in a Chinese restaurant, it was the only public place that I felt completely safe and where the stares

just completely disappeared from my mind.

Another source of inspiration is my experience working at my family's Chinese supermarket where I worked part-time during my holidays. I have always felt a disconnect from my culture however when I began to cook for myself, learning about the ingredients and sharing food and recipes with people from different cultures who too appreciated Asian food, food became my medium to better understand and accept my culture and in turn myself.

In Chinese culture a huge emphasis is placed on food and the act of dining together becomes essential to create, maintain and deepen relationships. All guests are treated like family and often expensive or rare foods are served to indicate respect and close relationships. The meal only begins once everyone is seated, and all the food is placed on a round lazy susan at the centre of the table and shared amongst the guests.

In \_\_\_\_\_ is a Five Letter Word I invite my viewers, in groups of five, to experience a carefully curated recreation of a Chinese meal. At first

the table as well as the food is covered by a red veil, however as soon as all five participants are seated, the veil will lift upwards to reveal the food. This emphasizes the fact that the meal is not possible without the people. Dining together has always been an activity that brought me, my family, and friends together thus by recreating the round table meal I hope that the viewers can experience and learn more about my culture and foods in a non-confrontational way as well as create and strengthen relationships with other participants.

The most important aspect of \_\_\_\_\_ is a Five Letter Word is for the viewers to learn about my culture and foods and to create or strengthen relationships. Therefore I have created a game where the participants are required to work together. I designed for my viewers to interact with my artwork through a game where the five participants are tasked with solving clues in order to find the QR codes hidden in each dish.

The QR codes encourage the viewers to learn more about the dishes in a hands on manner and ideally strengthen or create new relationships amongst the five people and spark conversations amongst themselves about the food itself or how it differs or is similar to that of their own

culture. Accompanying each QR code are miniature mooncakes with five different letters etched on top. The participants must unscramble the letters, figuring out the title of the artwork and to complete the game. The order in which the viewers are instructed to find the QR codes mirror the sequence that food is usually served in a Chinese restaurant.



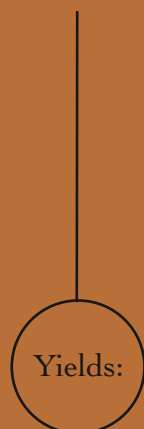


SOUP

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# 酸辣湯

# S O U P & S O U P



Yields:

· 5 Servings

## A. Main ingredients:

- 5 pcs Dried shiitake mushroom
- 5 g Dried wood ear mushroom
- 40 g Carrot
- 50 g Bamboo shoots
- 100 g Soft tofu
- 1 pcs Egg

## B. Soup base:

- 1 L Unsalted chicken or vegetable stock
- 4 tbsp Cornstarch - mix with 4 tbsp water
- 3 tbs Black rice vinegar
- 1 tbs Light soy sauce
- ½ tsp Ground white pepper
- ½ tsp Sesame oil
- Coriander or scallions

Soup is a staple part of a Chinese food and is served along with every meal, at the restaurant and at home. It is typically eaten either at the beginning or end of a meal. In my family, we always had soup served first and it was always my favourite part of the meal. Hot and Sour soup or Suan La Tang has always been a fan favourite in my family and is not often seen in Chinese restaurants here so I had to include it here. The basic hot and sour soup recipe is a thickened broth, seasoned with white pepper and chili, flavored with white or black rice vinegar and soy sauce, and containing egg, fragrant mushroom pieces, carrot, ginger, and bamboo shoots and tofu. My favourite part of Hot and Sour Soup has always been the Shiitake mushroom. Shiitake mushrooms symbolize longevity and seizing opportunities. According to theories of traditional Chinese medicine, the soup not only combines the healing abilities of chicken broth and the circulation-enhancing qualities of black fungus, the vinegar also aids digestion and promotes a healthy appetite. Ground pepper, too, helps boost blood circulation, which is especially helpful in cold weather.

1. Soak dried shiitake mushroom, wood ear mushroom in plenty of warm water to rehydrate the ingredients until they enlarge and become soft. It takes at least 1 hour (soak overnight if you plan ahead).
2. Slice the mushrooms, carrot, bamboo shoots and tofu into thin strips. Lightly beat the egg.
3. In a wok or large pot, bring the stock to a full boil.
4. Add shiitake mushroom, wood ear, carrot, bamboo shoots. Leave to cook for 2 mins or so.
5. Turn down the heat and keep the soup at a gentle simmer. Mix corn starch and water very well then slowly pour the slurry into the soup. Stir with a spoon or ladle.
6. Once the soup becomes thick, gently slide in the tofu. Slowly pour in the egg in a circular motion.
7. When the soup starts bubbling again, turn off the heat. Add black rice vinegar, soy sauce, white pepper and sesame oil.
8. Give everything a gentle stir. Garnish with coriander or scallions. Serve warm.

**Clue: Sometimes it pays to overstuff your dumpling**









# APPETIZER



# 蒸餃

# DUMPLINGS

Yields:

· 12 Dumplings

## A. Wrappers:

- 100 g All purpose flour
- 52 g Water

## B. Filling:

- Your filling of choice

## C. Others:

- Cooking oil
- Dumpling sauce of choice

Chinese dumplings or jiaozi, are stuffed parcels made of unleavened dough and savoury fillings consisting of minced ingredients like meat, egg, tofu, or vegetables. They can be boiled (Shuijiao), pan-fried (Jianjiao) or steamed (Zhengjiao). Eating dumplings are a way to bring good luck, so that everything goes well in the coming new year and that family can be together. Dumplings are a much-loved delicacy and taste best handmade with family and friends.

Tip: Make sure not too overstuff your dumplings with fillings or they will burst open when cooking!

1. In a mixing bowl, add water to flour gradually. Mix with chopsticks or spatula until no more loose flour can be seen. Combine and knead into a dough.
2. Leave to rest (covered) for 10 minutes then knead again until smooth.
3. Cover and rest the dough again for 30-60 minutes until it becomes soft.

Note: If using a stand mixer: Knead on low speed for 8 minutes or so until smooth. Cover and rest for 30-60 minutes.

4. While waiting for the dough to rest, mix the filling of your choice following instructions found in its respective recipe.
5. Divide the dough into three parts. Roll one part into a rope then cut into 10 equal sections (cover the rest to avoid drying out).
6. Press each piece into a small disc with the palm of your hand.
7. Use a rolling pin to flatten it into a thin disc. Dust with flour if it sticks. Repeat to finish the rest of the dough.
8. Place a spoonful of filling on the wrapper. Seal the wrapper using the technique you're most comfortable with.
9. Place a lettuce leaf in the steamer baskets, then place dumplings on top (This is to avoid sticking. You may use parchment paper or coat the steamer with a little oil).
10. Bring the water to a full boil in a pot or wok, then place the baskets in (you can stack up 2-3 baskets and cook all at once). Cover with a lid then steam over medium heat for 10 minutes.
11. Serve the dumplings with your dumpling sauce of choice

**Clue: Find cLues In Places THE Farther InSide Here**







MEAT DISH

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# 枸杞蒸魚

# STEGOJIBERRY FISH

Yields:

5 Servings

## A. Main Ingredients:

500 g Whole fish of choice  
10 g Gogi berries  
3 Stalks green onion  
2 tbsp Sesame oil  
1 tsp Garlic finely minced

## B. Sauce:

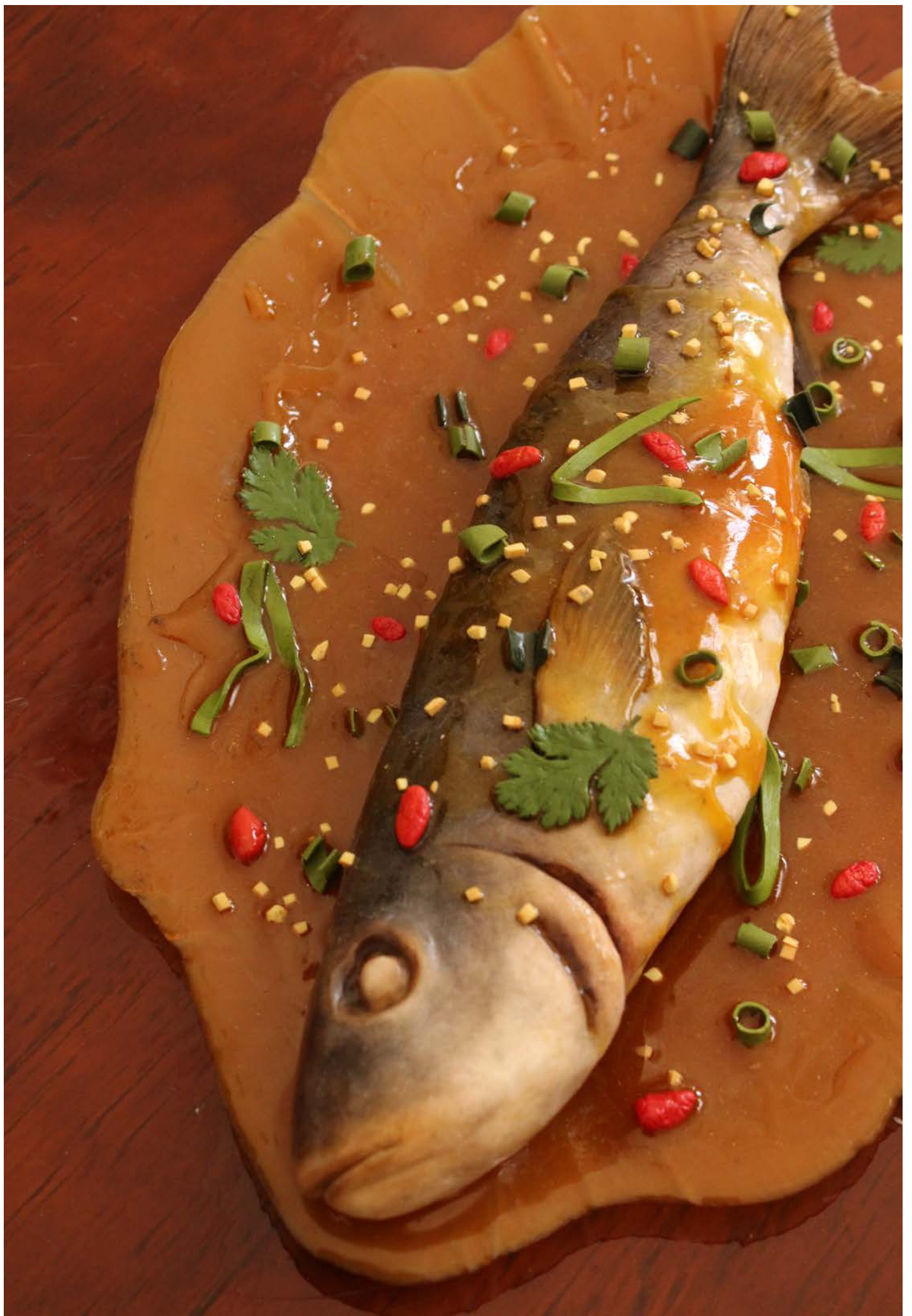
1 tbsp Soy sauce  
¼ tsp Salt  
¼ tsp Sugar

The Chinese word for fish “Yu” sounds similar to the word for abundance or wish and thus symbolize wishes for abundance during the New Year. It is also the symbol of unity, happiness and prosperity and luck. Thus, fish is eaten as a celebratory dish during Chinese New year and is always served whole with the head and tail intact to signify a good beginning and end for the year. Steamed fish was always one of the dishes served at my father’s restaurant and thus it was important that I included it.

Fun fact: In my culture it is considered bad luck and bad table manners to flip over a whole fish. To turn over a fish is similar to turning over a fishing boat which can bring misfortune or disaster to one’s family. Thus, it is better to finish the meat from one side of the fish then carefully remove the backbone to get to the flesh underneath or alternatively remove the bones first.

1. Separate the green part of green onions from the whites. We will use the white part to rest the fish on top. Shred the green part into thin long strips.
2. Soak the dried goji berries in warm water until they soften. Discard the water.
3. Prepare the fish. Simply clean fish by rubbing some salt on the skin and inside. This will help to remove fish odour and retain moisture and freshness of the fish when cooked. Rinse off and pat the fish dry with an absorbent paper towel.
4. Make 3 slits on the flesh where it is the thickest.
5. Steam the fish. Line a plate with 3 stalks of the white part of the green onion. Put the fish on top. This prevents the fish from sticking to the plate and the fish cooks evenly on both sides too. Steam over high heat for 10 minutes. Then turn off the heat and let it sit in the steamer for 2 minutes.
6. Remove the fish and discard any liquid that is collected on the plate. Pour the dressing over the fish. Arrange the green part of the green onion, goji berries, and minced garlic on top.
7. Pour the hot oil on top to let the oil scalds the garlic and green onion strips. The fish is ready to be served.

Clue: .- . - - - - - . / ... . - . / - - - - - .









VEGETABLE DISH

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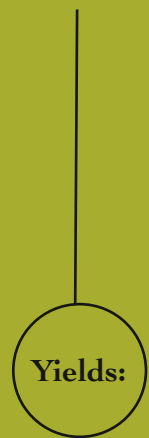
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· 5 Servings

## Ingredients:

- 1 Bunch fresh Jie Lan (Chinese Broccoli), washed thoroughly
- 2 tbsp Oyster Sauce
- 1 tbsp Light Soy Sauce
- ½ tsp Sesame Oil

Jie Lan, Gai Lan or Chinese Broccoli is a leafy green vegetable with thick stems and small florets belonging to the cabbage family and taste similar to broccoli. It is typically stir fried with garlic or quickly blanched and served with oyster sauce. Green vegetables symbolize close family ties. During a Chinese meal, a vegetable dish is always served along with a meat dish and eaten with rice. I chose Jie Lan as one of my dishes as it was always the vegetable dish that was served at my father's restaurant and is a dish that you don't see often elsewhere.

1. Prepare jiè lán. Cut off the larger outer leaves, leaving the thick stem with smaller leaves attached at the top.
2. Use one hand to hold the stem on a cutting board, and use a knife to peel the thick skin from the stem. It is important to use a knife instead of a peeler, because you want to remove the fibrous and chewy part and expose the very tender stem. A peeler won't go deep enough.
3. For the extra thick stems, you can cut a slit in the middle, so the stem will cook as evenly as the leaves.
4. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, set aside to simmer. Cut the jiè lán into 4-6 pieces, and either boil or steam until cooked al dente.
5. Combine the oyster sauce, sesame oil and light soy sauce in a medium bowl.
6. Spoon oyster sauce over the jiè lán before serving.

**Clue: One of these twelve are not like the rest as the clue you seek lies on the underside**







DESSERT



# 月餅 MOONCAKE

Yields:

· 12 mooncakes

## A. Mooncake Dough:

- 150 g Golden syrup
- 1/3 tsp Lye water
- 60 g Vegetable oil
- 250 g Cake flour
- 2 pcs Egg yolk beaten, for egg wash
- 4 tbsp Milk

## B. Filling:

- 12 pcs Salted Egg Yolk
- 380 g Red bean paste

## Equipment:

- Mooncake mould

Mooncakes or yue bing are baked pastries traditionally eaten during the Mid-Autumn Festival, a Chinese holiday celebrating the rice and fruit harvest. These desserts are eaten when the moon is at its fullest and brightest and are often gifted to family, friends, coworkers, or employees as a traditional gesture during family gatherings or public celebration. Mooncakes symbolize unity as in Chinese culture, roundness is associated with completeness or togetherness. The round shape of the mooncake is made to reflect the round shape of the moon seen during the Mid-Autumn Festival but can be square shaped too. The most popular fillings include sweet bean paste, lotus seed paste and jujube paste with salted cured duck eggs yolks.

1. Combine golden syrup and lye water in a large bowl and mix until emulsified.
2. Add oil and mix well.
3. Using a sieve, add all the flour at once to the mixture. Fold until combined and rest for 30 minutes.
4. Divide the dough into 20 equal portions (You can use the kitchen scale to make this easier). Roll each portion into a ball.
5. Cover one ball with plastic wrap or dust with flour and roll it out into a thin circle. Flour might make the texture gritty, so try to use plastic wrap. You can reuse the same one for each dough ball. Preheat the oven to 180 °C.
6. Roll the red bean paste into twelve balls (The paste balls should be smaller than the dough balls). Poke a hole in each one and insert a salted egg yolk (or 2 yolk halves) and seal the red bean paste in the dough disc.
7. Oil and flour your mould. Place the filling-sealed-in-dough ball inside it. Press the handle lightly, then remove the pressed pastry. Place on a lined baking sheet.
8. After moulding all 20 yue bing, mix the milk and egg yolks to make an egg wash. Brush each pastry with this mixture. If desired, brush them again delicately with a dry brush to remove excess and preserve the moulding.
9. Bake for 10-12 minutes. After removing from the oven, let it cool for 5 minutes and then brush again with remaining egg wash. Let cool on a wire rack and then store in an airtight container for 1-2 days before consuming.

**Hint: Check the symbolism behind each dish**







# Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude my supervisor Jane Alexander and my supervising group Zenaéca Singh, Noah Rudolph, Paballo Nkonyane and Sonja Swanepoel for their invaluable feedback, advice and support throughout this year. They are truly the most creative and encouraging people I had the honour to work with and this year would not have been possible without you. I would also like to thank the Michaelis staff and the sculpture department for their help and valuable knowledge throughout these four years.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for their emotional support and for believing in me even when I was struggling the most and for putting up with video and voice calls from me constantly speaking about my artwork. A special mention is due to my friend Charlie Lin for taking time out of his busy schedule to help me with making the mechanical side of my artwork possible. But most of all I would like to thank my father, who although understands nothing about art, has become my unofficial consultant. He is constantly being badgered by my questions yet has the never-ending patience to answer them all. His numerous years and wide knowledge of the restaurant business has been especially helpful and has played an integral part in my artwork and my further understanding of my culture, food and practice.

## About the Artist



Sina Huang is a Taiwanese South African who grew up in Durban, South Africa. Growing up she spent most of her time in her father's Chinese restaurants and thus draws heavy inspiration from the food that she grew up eating there and by her Ama (grandmother) who played a huge part in her understanding of Chinese food and traditions. In her free time she enjoys to read and make miniatures versions of food.