

# The Making of *Annunciation*

Frank Yung-Fong Tang

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[Gabriel] said to her [Mary], "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

(Luke 1:28/NASB)

## Introduction

In this paper, we describe the creation process of *Annunciation* (Fig. 1), a Surrealism work, and its iconography.

## Summary of Medium in Final Product

- Micron Pen and Color Ink Pen: Hammer Body and Floor
- Pencil: Wings
- Brusho: Claws and Legs
- Acrylic Paint: Background
- Collage: Halo, light beams, text, handbag, sceptre, finger ring, and earthly treasures on the ground.

## Surrealism Strategy: Metamorphosis & Dislocation



Fig. 1 The final view of the completed *Annunciation*.

# Creating Process

## Stage 1: Brainstorming and Idea Forming

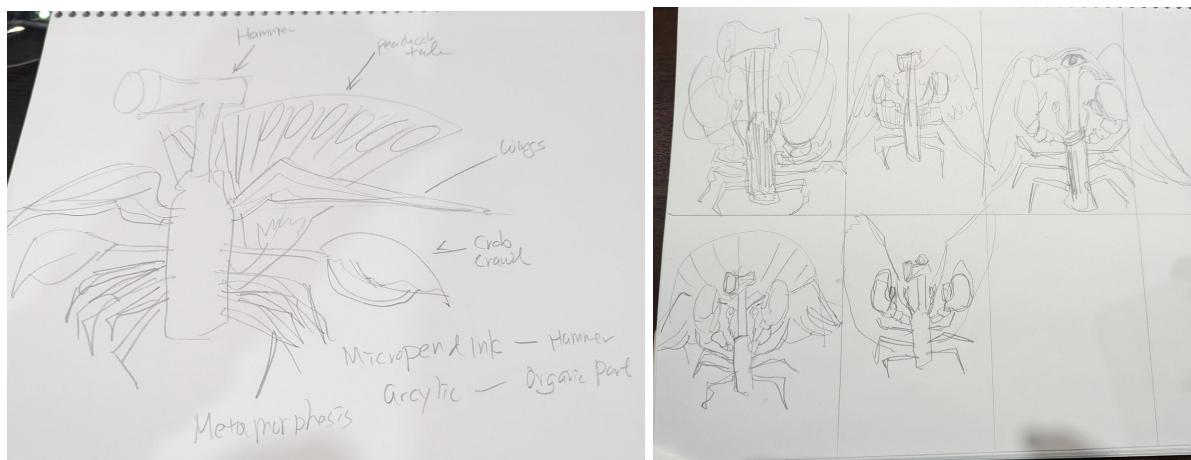
The work started from a thumbnail brainstorming process. I created four different ideas and shared them with the teacher and a small group of classmates to seek feedback. At this stage, the idea is to depict a Surrealism work by using Metamorphosis Strategy. The idea is simply a “Hammer with White Wings, Peacock Tail and Lobster Claws and Legs” (Fig 2). The original medium plan is

- Hammer : Micron pen & Ink
- White Wings: Paper cutout collage
- Peacock Tail: Acrylic
- Lobster Claws and Legs: Watercolor or Acrylic (undecided)
- Background: Watercolor + Collage

The key takeaway from the teacher's feedback are:

- Add eyes or other facial features to the figure.
- Let the figure hold something in their claws.
- Utilize background.

I then quickly decided to focus on this particular idea and ignore the other three ideas for this project.



**Left:** Fig. 2 Original brainstorming thumbnail. **Right:** Fig. 3 Refined design thumbnails.

## Stage 2: Refine Thumbnail & Sketch on Bristol

I started to sketch and refine the composition in several thumbnail attempts, showing above (Fig 3). I tapped one inch on each edge of a 14x17 Bristol to form a 12x15 drawing area. I sketched the rough shape of the hammer, claws, and wings of the figure with a 2H pencil.

## Stage 3: Render the Lobster Claws/Legs by Brusho

I rendered the Lobster claws and legs by using Brusho by first drawing the shape with water by brush, then carefully sprinkling “Rose Red” and “Terracotta” color Brusho crystals on the wet spots (Fig. 4). After that, I let it dry overnight and dusted the remaining Brusho crystals outside my house.

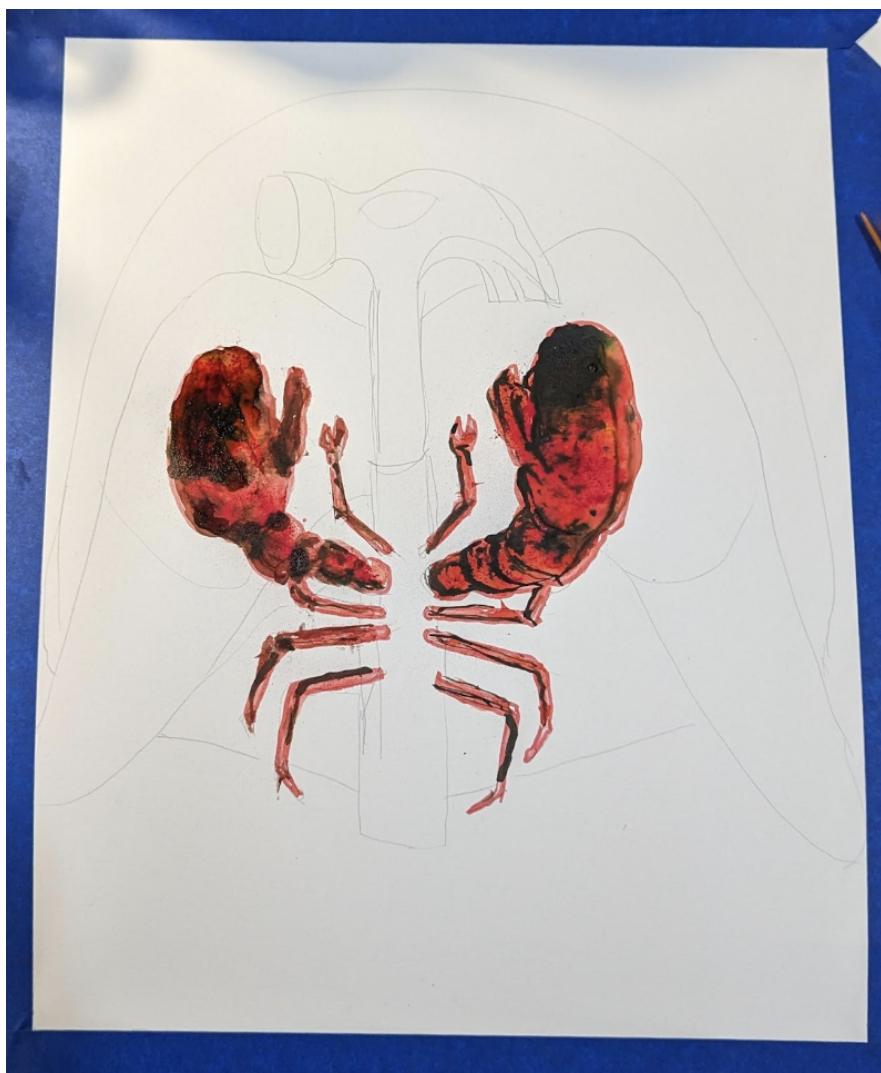
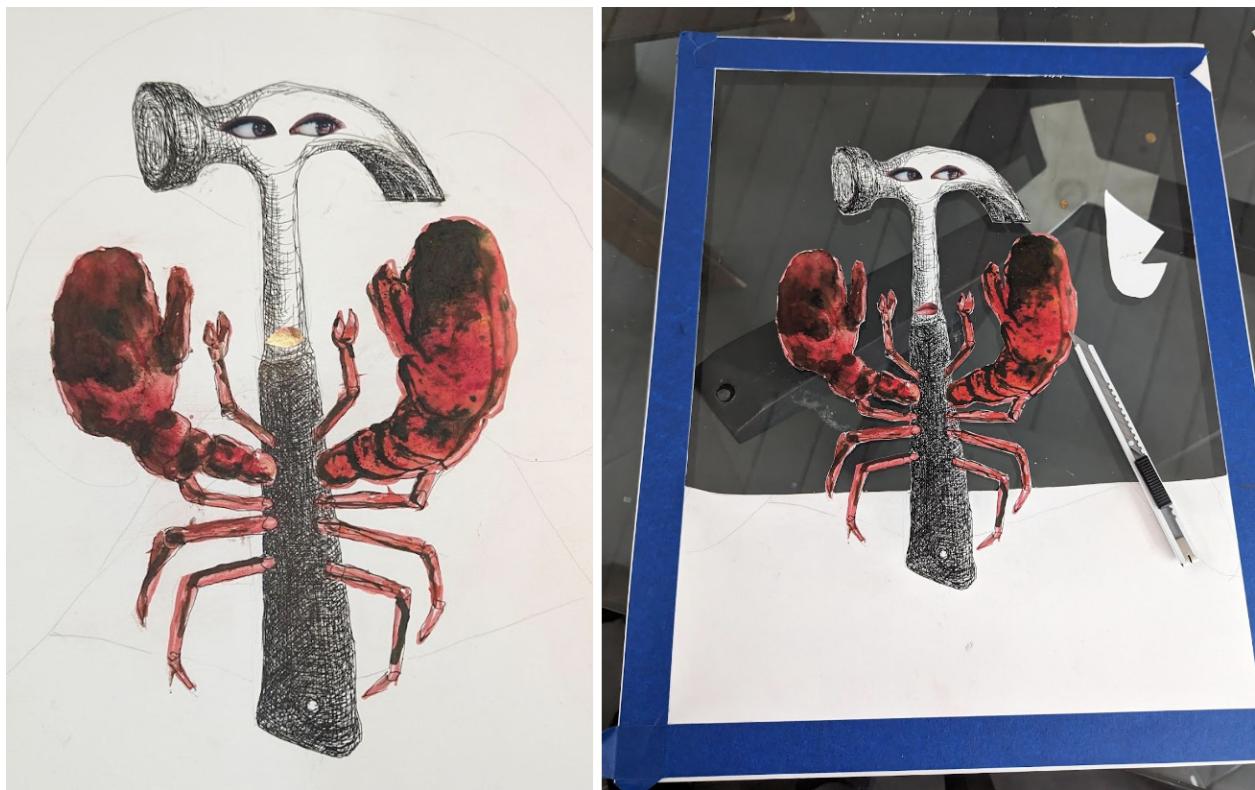


Fig. 4 Lobster claws and legs rendered by “Rose Red” and “Terracotta” Brusho crystals

## Stage 4: Draw Hammer with Micron Pen

I illustrated the hammer by using a micron pen. I pushed the values in some areas with a gray water based ink pen I got from Daiso. Then, I cutted out two eyes and a lip from a magazine and used them for collage (Fig. 5). After gluing the eyes to the hammer, I drew some eyelashes with a micron pen. I think it could be easier to render the background in a separate piece of paper. Therefore, I carved out the background part from the bristol with a utility knife (Fig. 6)

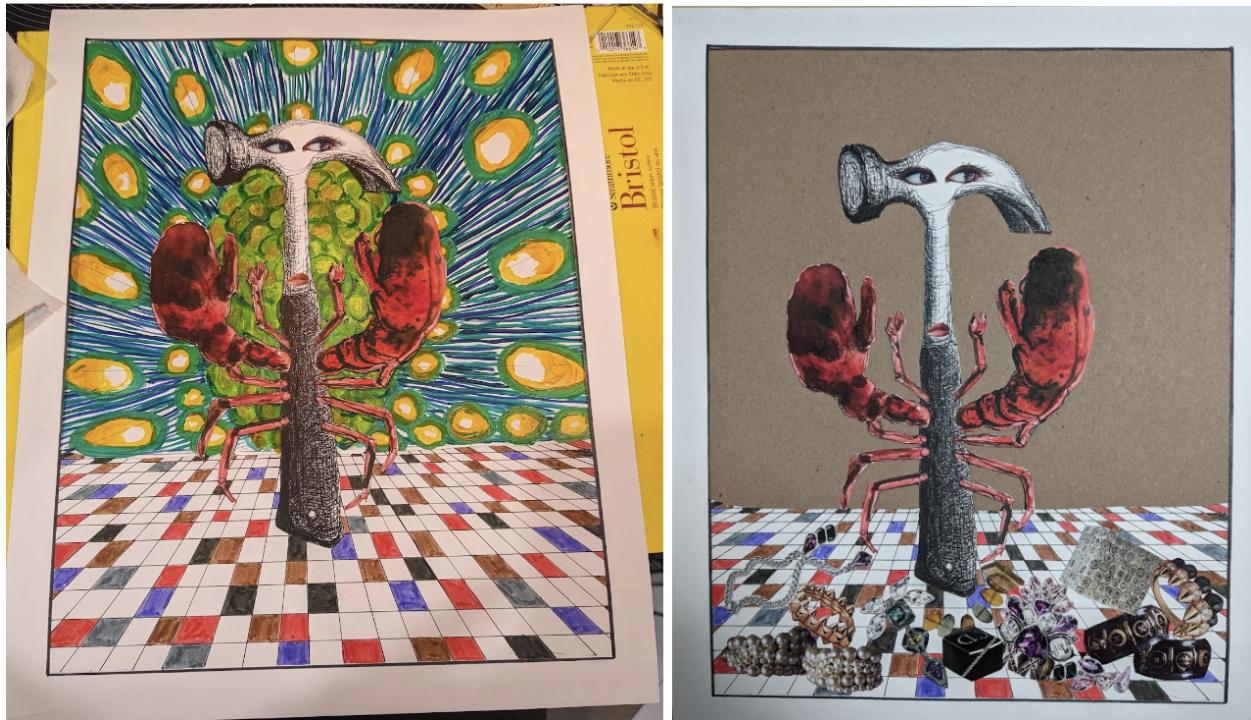


**Left:** Fig. 5 Hammer by micron pen before applying water based ink, collaged with eyes and lips from magazine cut out. **Right:** Fig. 6 Carved out the background part by a utility knife.

## Stage 5: Peacock Tail by Acrylic Paint that I Abandoned

Following the original design, I started to paint a Peacock Tail by blue and green Acrylic paint on a separate piece of bristol (Fig. 7). I soon realized if I portrait the figure in a similar ratio as the body and tail of a peacock, the tail should be illustrated much bigger than my drawing area and I will not be able to show the whole tail in the view. So I cropped it and just showed a portion of the tail instead. Then after I did a rough rendering, I realized the background would look way too colorful. I decided to abandon this attempt and seek a better design. I still like the

idea of “lines radiating out from the figure” pattern. But I believe the color scheme needs some rework.



**Left:** Fig. 7 The abandoned and unfinished acrylic peacock tail in the background and the finished one point perspective grid floor by micron pen and water based ink pen.

**Right:** Fig. 8 The “earthly treasure” collage, made by magazine cut outs, on the ground.

## Stage 6: One Point Linear Perspective Floor Grids for Space

In the lower part of the foreground bristol, I used a black micron pen to draw grids of cells in one point linear perspective to create the sense of space. I then colored some cells with black, gray, red and purple water based ink pens I got from Daiso (Fig. 7). I felt the floor was a little bit too colorful and thought about how to tune that down. I found several interesting objects from a magazine and used them as collage on the ground for “earthly treasures” (Fig. 8).

## Stage 7: Sketching the Wings by Pencil

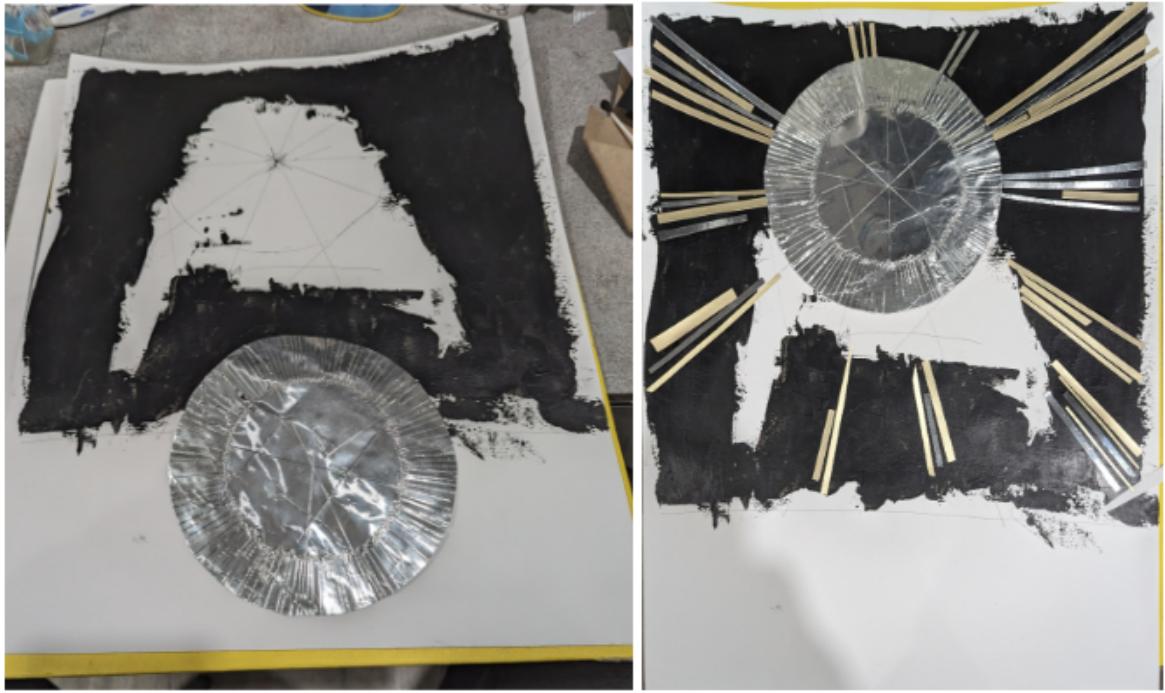
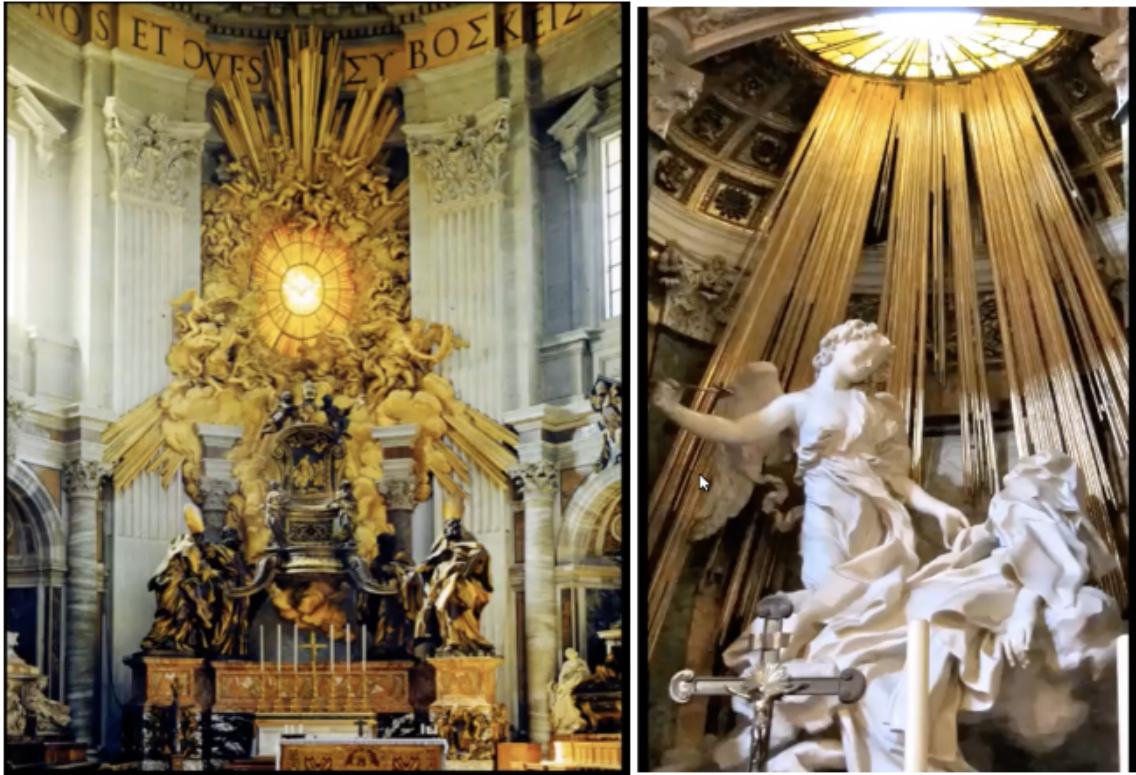
In a separate piece of paper, I sketched a pair of wings by pencil, then cut them out and glued them to the back of the hammer as collage. The fuzzy feeling of pencil drawing fits the fuzzy texture of the wings very well.



**Left:** Fig. 9 Pencil sketch of the wings before cutting out from paper. **Right:** Fig. 10 Glue the wings to the back of the hammer body.

#### Stage 8: Black Acrylic Paint and Gold/Silver Paper Strips for Background

After I decided to totally abandon the idea of a peacock tail, I decided to frame this work with a Christmas theme- *Annunciation*. Inspired by the presentation form in *Cathedra Petri* in Saint Peter's (Fig 11) and *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (Fig 12) by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, I decided to create a silver and gold halo, radiating out silver and gold light beams in a black background. I painted the background area black with Acrylic paint (Fig. 13). I cut out gold and silver paper strips from a See's candy box and a Christmas gift box and tape them in groups to form the light beams similar to Bernini's work. The halo is composed of a bigger silver circle of aluminum foil and a smaller golden circle (Fig. 14). I use a red marker to write the uppercase Greek letters on a golden paper and then glue it on the halo (Fig. 1).



**Upper Left:** Fig. 11 *Cathedra Petri* in *Saint Peter's*, Gian Lorenzo Bernini **Upper Left:** Fig. 12 *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*, Gian Lorenzo Bernini **Lower Left:** Fig. 13 Black Acrylic paint for background and aluminum foil circle for a silver the outer ring of the halo **Lower Left:** Fig. 14 Golden and silver paper strips form the light beams, radiating out from the center of the halo.

## Stage 9: Collage and Message

I cutted down English letters from magazines to form what Gabriel speaks to Mary in Luke 1:28b “Greetings favored one the Lord is with you”. I also cutted out a handbag, a finger ring, and created a spector for decoration (Fig. 1).

## Stage 10: Final Assembly and Touch Up

After I was pleased by the final work, I glued the foreground bristol to the background bristal together, the carved out portion of the foreground bristol revealed the halo, the light beams and the annunciation message nicely. I used a gray water based ink pen to draw some casted shadows on the ground to create a more realistic atmosphere. I also dotted the remote edge of the floor with a micron pen to push the value more to create aerial perspective. When we view the work from different angles, the shining halo and silver light beams will reflect the room light differently, creating a spectacular effect (Fig. 15-17). I am very pleased with my final work.



Fig. 15-17 The golden and silver halo and light beams in the work show different reflection when viewing this work from different angles

## Iconographic

The angel Gabriel in this work is depicted as a figure with a claw hammer as body, lobster claws and legs, and bird wings. Gabriel is a given name derived from the Hebrew name Gabrī'ēl (גָּבְרִיאֵל) meaning "God is my strength", or "God is a strong man" ("Liturgy Alive"). Therefore, a claw hammer as a body fit the name very well since the hammer is strong and has strength. The figure has eight lobster legs and two lobster claws, representing their multitasking ability and strength. Their wings symbolize they are above human society. Gabriel holds an orange handbag and a scepter on the right claw. The handbag "represents creativity, adventurousness, and optimism. In color psychology, orange is often associated with energy, balance, and warmth. It can evoke feelings of joy, sunshine, and tropical sunsets, making it the perfect summer color" (Ticuleanu). Sceptre is an "ornamented rod or staff borne by rulers on ceremonial occasions as an emblem of authority and sovereignty" therefore it represents that Gabriel is speaking while representing the sovereignty of God ("Sceptre"). Gabriel is hovering above the world, which is rendered with earthly treasure on top of grids of colorful cells drawn in one point linear perspective. This represents Gabriel on top of the earthly world. The background is black to contrast the gold/silver halo that beams out lights. Name of Gabriel, written in red uppercase Greek letters, could be seen on the top of the inner ring of their halo. The words "Greetings" "favored one" and "The Lord is with you" are in the background showing what Gabriel said to Mary at that moment, according to Luke 1:28 NASB.

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