MARCH 2003 | SPRING ISSUE

Yishu
典藏國際版

Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art

INSIDE

US$10.00 NT$350.00

YISHU: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art

Volume 2, Number 1, March 2003

PUBLISHER	Art & Collection Group Ltd.
DESIGN AND PRODUCTION	Leap Creative Group
CREATIVE DIRECTOR	Raymond Mah
ART DIRECTOR	Gavin Chow
DESIGNER	Jeremy Lee
PRINTING	Chong-yuan Image Ltd., Taipei

ISSN 1683-3082

Yishu is published quarterly in Taipei, Taiwan, and edited in Vancouver, Canada. From 2003, the publishing date of *Yishu* will be March, June, September, and December.

Editorial inquiries and manuscripts may be sent to the Editorial Office:

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1008-808 Nelson Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2H2 Canada
Phone: (1) 604-488-2563, Fax: (1) 604-591-6392
Email: info@yishujournal.com

Subscription inquiries may be sent to:

Journals Department
University of Hawai'i Press
2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, HI 96822, USA
Phone: 1-808-956-8833; Fax: 1-808-988-6052
Email: subscription@yishujournal.com

The University of Hawai'i Press accepts payment by Visa or Mastercard, cheque or money order (in U.S. dollars).

Advertising inquiries may be sent to either Vancouver address or Taiwan:

Art & Collection Ltd.
6F, No. 85, Section 1, Chunshan North Road, Taipei, Taiwan.
Phone: (886) 2-2560-2220, Fax: (886) 2-2542-0631
Email: coart@ms37.hinet.net

www.yishujournal.com

Subscription rates: one year: US $48; NT $1500;
two years: US $90; NT $2800, international airmail.

We thank Mr. Milton Wong, Mrs. Elaine Bao, Paystone Technologies Corp. for their generous support.

Cover: Chen Chieh-Jen, *Lost Voice II*, 1997, b & w photograph, 208 x 260 cm (detail). Courtesy of the artist

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PREFACE

The French writer and New York University professor Anne-Marie Thiesse has written, "The history of nations clearly shows that the formation of a collective identity is a militant undertaking involving a political project." Since the flight of the Nationalist Chinese government to the island of Formosa, the Republic of China has existed as a vestige of greater Chinese history. Inhabiting the margins is not necessarily a bad thing. It can spur self-development as a means of self-preservation. Both Hong Kong and Taiwan bear this out. Where it becomes more uncertain is in the area of asserting one's own and group cultural identity. With Hong Kong, its cultural identity preceded its emergence as an economic tiger. While that city's colonial history lends credence to the Baudrillardian idea that an identity is also a terminal of multiple networks, Hong Kong has long been and remains essentially a centre of Cantonese cultural voice in the context of China, one that has shaped and been shaped by the whole of China.

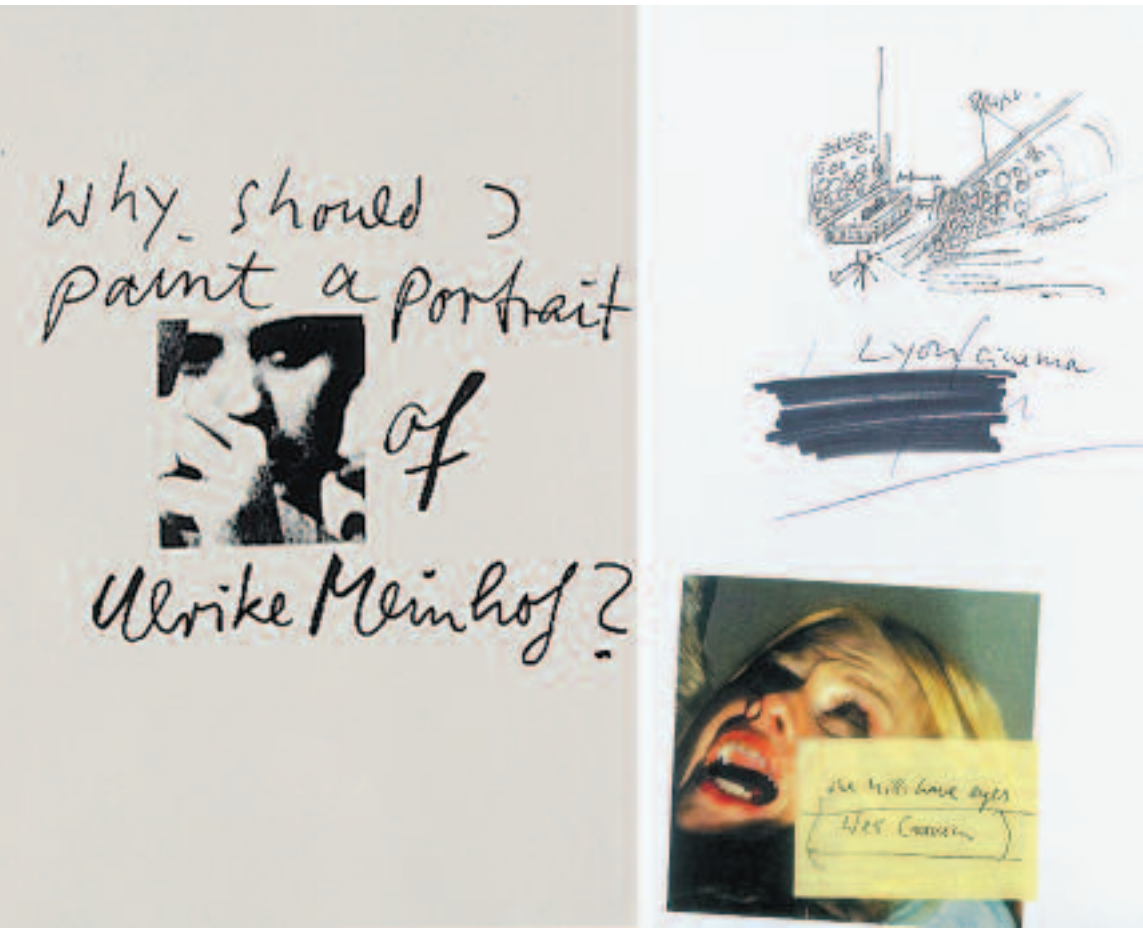
Taiwan has also undergone tremendous changes that have led to the emergence, or at least to the examination, of the question of a Taiwanese identity. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Taiwan, through its title as the Republic of China, has engaged in the ambiguous process of building a nation without the possibility of state building in a complete sense. Beyond the question of politics, there is the added problem in terms of the search for distinctive Taiwanese symbols. The question of Taiwanese identity is in effect censured by the political status of Taiwan itself, a status that is politically ambivalent in terms of its own completeness or incompleteness as a nation. It may be that the identity politics of Taiwan is not sufficiently substantiated by the vicissitudes of its own cultural history.

For many Taiwanese mass media entertainers, China's emergence as a world economic power has meant opportunities for financial gain. Taiwanese singers are popular in China. Contemporary China could not be what it is without in part the investment of Taiwanese capital. There is a large Taiwanese population settled in Shanghai. All of these developments, while influencing the cultural landscape of China, also dissipate the question of a Taiwanese national identity. Still, it cannot be denied that since the division of China between the People's Republic and the Republic of China, Taiwan's cultural landscape has undergone a series of dramatic changes that have affected the sense of selfhood of the whole of Taiwanese society. For the serious artist, unlike the mass media entertainer, the abiding problem is how to express in artistic terms the matter of a Taiwanese identity with which one dares not to associate or mention. Taiwan apart from China is not real and yet Taiwan itself is real. Under such a paradoxical situation, in what ways do or can Taiwanese artists represent themselves through art? The question can be taken further—in what ways is it even possible to be a Taiwanese artist given the precarity of the Taiwanese environment. With this issue of *Yishu*, devoted as it is to an examination of contemporary art in Taiwan, the reader will see the many responses of Taiwanese artists to some of these questions. It is our hope that *Yishu* will provide the reader with a better understanding of the difficulties and aspirations that make the art scene of Taiwan such a fecund place for advanced contemporary art.

Ken Lum

FROM SHADOW MAGIC TO THE SPECTACLE

CHIA CHI JASON WANG / TRANSLATED BY CHRISTINE CHAN



Johannes Kahrs, *Untitled (Duel in the Sun)*, 1996-2002, mixed media and collage on paper

I. PARRHASIUS' CURTAIN

According to legend, Parrhasius, a painter in the classical period of Greece, and another outstanding artist, Zeuxis, were engaged in a painting competition. Zeuxis' still life of grapes was so realistic it attracted birds to come and peck at them. Confident of winning, Zeuxis was eager to see what Parrhasius had painted that could surpass his own work. But when he asked Parrhasius to lift the curtain in front of his painting, he lost. He had no idea that Parrhasius would fool him with a painted curtain.

Both Zeuxis and Parrhasius used the technique of *trompe-l'oeil* to emphasize their exceptional skills in naturalistic representation, and both achieved their purpose. But while Zeuxis was able to deceive birds, the painting of Parrhasius fooled him. In this competition, Parrhasius defeated Zeuxis with his exceptional mastery of illusion.

Like a magician's handkerchief, Parrhasius' curtain fooled spectators into thinking that the painting lay behind it. But there was nothing behind. The curtain was the painting. Because of its texture and folds and the subtle contrast between light and shadow, spectators mistook it for the real thing. Parrhasius' curtain was seen as a curtain covering a painting. In terms of twentieth-century technology, the curtain may be associated with the screen of film and television, with the difference that the screen is a carrier on which images are projected.

II. SHADOWS IN THE CAVE

Parrhasius used his skills in naturalistic painting to imitate and represent reality in order to trick the eye and create visual illusions. To Plato, such illusionistic paintings "are but images, not reality."[1] Since painters were far removed from reality and the truth and were third-hand "imitators," they were excluded from his ideal Republic.

Not only painters, but tragedians also could not enter Plato's Republic for the same reason: the latter's writing and acting were merely imitations of life. According to Plato, "imitative art…is far removed from the truth," and "it touches only a small part of each thing, and that an image."[2]

In terms of the gap between images and reality or truth, Plato illustrated it with the example of two prisoners chained in a dark cave. Since they were unable to see the truth under the sun, they mistook the shadows cast by the torch behind them as reality and the truth. Since shadows and reflections are merely images, they serve only to foster people's illusions. To Plato, what artists and tragedians portrayed and represented were merely shadows and reflections. That is why he had a very low opinion of them.

III. TRAGEDY

By contrast, Aristotle had a much more positive view of poetry and drama also based on the imitation of nature and life. To Aristotle, poetry was more philosophical than history, "for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular."[3] Thus, he considered poetry a higher form. Poets were not merely imitators, but could be called "makers." Aristotle also pointed out that tragedy was more condensed in form and expression than poetry and served higher functions. Therefore, it was even higher than poetry.[4] "Tragedy…is the imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude."[5] The rhythm of its language is regulated with artistic means. By arousing emotions of pity and fear, it produces effects of catharsis in the audience.[6] In other words, tragedy has the effect of purifying the mind. It makes people realize the imperfection and limitations of life and enables them to face the world with greater wisdom and maturity.

In defining tragedy, Aristotle named six essential elements, one of which was "spectacle." However, he seemed to be less interested in this component and did not go into detail. While pointing out that tragedies must arouse emotions of fear and pity in order to manipulate the audience's feelings, Aristotle remarked tersely that these emotions might be aroused by "spectacular means." But they might also result from the inner structure of the piece, a better way to indicate the superior mastery of the poetic language.[7]

To Aristotle, while the spectacle had the effect of arousing emotions, it was the least artistic and the least connected with the art of poetry. Moreover, the production of spectacular effects depended more on the stage machinist than on the poet.[8]

IV. PERSPECTIVE AND REPRESENTATION

During the Renaissance, classical naturalistic representation was further enhanced by mathematical calculation with the help of mechanical devices. Linear perspective not only became the standard for the representation of space in painting, it also formed the main visual basis for the representation of the visible world in the theatre.

The Renaissance also had a different perception of shadow, considered as illusionary and negatively conceived by Plato. In the late fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci analyzed shadow as "the absence of light and…its opponent. Light is always accompanied by shadow."[9] With such optical analysis,

the use of shadow became a fundamental and positive element in artistic production and a means of manipulating vision.

By representing the space in the visible world, linear perspective and light and shadow were used to dictate and guide spectators' points of view. Whether in painting or the theatre, spectators were manipulated. The pictorial images and stage sets now corresponded more to the mechanism of vision. As a result, the reproduced images became visually more convincing. In other words, viewers could more easily project themselves into the painting or the play.

V. THE THEATRE AS A BLACK BOX

The introduction of the proscenium stage after the sixteenth century conveyed an even stronger sense that the stage was the projection of life or the world.[10] When the audience enter the theatre, they are entering a box-like enclosed building. Since the huge frame-like proscenium in front of them is initially covered by a curtain, they cannot see what is behind it. The theatre is designed like a "black box" in order to more tightly control the spectators' perceptions and to achieve magical audio-visual effects. If we think of the proscenium as the frame of a mirror, when the curtain is up, what the audience see on the stage will be like the reflections in a mirror. The stage world will then be the reflections of life. Following this metaphor, the plot of the play may be the reflection of the audience's life. If we think of the proscenium as the frame of a painting, then it will be as though the audience was seeing the performance through a window. They may be looking at the drama from outside the window, or peeping at the world outside from the interior.

With the proscenium stage and the black-box theatre, it is easier to employ machine-operated stage scenery and special effects. The whole theatre may be seen as a huge machine, with mechanisms for special effects hidden from the sight of the audience. Now, the emotions of pity and fear can be aroused by spectacular means through the design of machine-operated stage scenery, without relying on dramatic dialogue and plot. As the audio-visual technology of the stage magician becomes more and more advanced, the stage spectacle also becomes more dazzling. This results in the blurring of the boundary between the real and make-believe. Subject to manipulation by the advanced technology of spectacular effects, the audience is more ready to accept the make-believe as real.

VI. SHADOW/LIKENESS

Whether in terms of painting or the theatre, the Chinese had no particular liking for the use of shadows. The traditional Chinese cultural elite may be more sympathetic to Plato's idea that images are but illusion and not reality. The Chinese term for "image," *ying xiang*, is a compound word made up of the characters for "shadow" and "likeness," implying something that is illusive and unreal.

Due to cultural differences, Chinese people steeped in tradition can hardly appreciate the representational philosophy that "in life and in art the distribution of light and shade helps us to perceive the shape of things."[11] Between the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Italian Jesuits brought religious images that were painted using classical representational techniques of realism. Such paintings were often seen as a kind of spectacle.

During the seventeenth century (the late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty), some Chinese art historians who had seen paintings of the Madonna and the Child described them as "like

reflections in a mirror" and pointed out that even professional Chinese painters thought they were works of wonder. Such descriptions as "like reflections in a mirror" may sound like praise for European classical painting. But in the context of Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, if the figures and objects in a painting are like images in a mirror, they are nothing but illusions. To Chinese viewers at that time, they might seem illusory because they appeared too real to eyes schooled in Chinese painting.[12]

Generally speaking, Chinese painting theorists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote about Western paintings that had entered China from the point of view of "likeness." They emphasized the clarity of shadows in the paintings and the astonishing likeness, which "makes one want to approach them." What these scholars and painting theorists advocated was the aesthetics of the literati which had reigned for hundreds of years. Such aesthetics stressed "spiritual untrammeledness" instead of "formal likeness," which suggested an inferior choice in terms of taste.[13] As the initiator of literati painting of the twelfth century Su Shi said, "If anyone discusses painting in terms of formal likeness, his understanding is nearly that of a child." In other words, it would be shallow and naïve to lay stress on "formal likeness."

VII. ELIMINATING THE SHADOWS

During the eighteenth century, the Qing Emperor Qianlong was most appreciative of the aesthetics of Western classical realistic painting. However, even he could not understand why the Italian Jesuit painter Giuseppe Castiglione, resident at the Qing court, had to paint shadows. Although he had already tried to make the shadows as faint as possible, Emperor Qianlong decreed that "Castiglione should eliminate the highlights in the painting in question."[14] Highlights are set off by shadows. Eliminating the highlights would mean eliminating the shadows. Emperor Qianlong would not allow shadows on the portraits. To the majority of Chinese, shadows imply gloom and death. Shadows are part of *yin*, the antithesis of *yang*. They suggest darkness and bad omens, and are indissolubly linked with death. Shadows are thus interpreted in terms of a cosmological view. In traditional Chinese painting and drama, shadows are avoided. Even though shadows exist as a fact, they cannot be used as a means of evoking atmosphere and creating spectacular effects in painting and on the stage.

VIII. THE CHINESE STAGE

Traditional Chinese opera used to be performed in broad daylight. Certain conventions are still in use today. Now, even if it is a night performance, the stage and seating areas will be lit up. No special lighting is used to create light and dark effects to sway the audience's emotions. The stage, whether permanent or temporary, is extremely simple. It is usually a raised square platform with a canopy on top set up in the open air. As such, it forms a miniature world with sky and earth and four corners. While there are curtains separating the front and the back of the stage, they are but a makeshift division. Curious spectators, especially children, can easily go backstage and peep at the make-up area of the actors. Sometimes, the opera stage can be as simple as a square mat temporarily spread out on the ground. There is no deliberate separation of reality and the play, implying that the play is everywhere.

Traditional Chinese opera does not use machine-controlled stage sets. Nor does it have an enclosed theatre like a black box, which relies on machinery to produce effects that manipulate the audience's senses. The set mostly consists of a simple background curtain and minimal symbolic tables and chairs. During the change of scenes, the sceneshifters simply step on the stage

to move the tables and chairs without a curtainfall. This seems a commentary on the stage philosophy that "life is like the stage/the stage is like life." Such a manner of performance allows the audience to immerse themselves in the drama and interpret what they see as real, while simultaneously distancing themselves from the drama to concentrate on the singing and acting of the performers as well as the quality of the performance as connoisseurs.

Chinese opera represents life mainly through the libretto and the postures of the actors, while the minimal set design does not have any representational function. Such kind of representation may be described as semi-abstract or, to use a Chinese turn of phrase, "hovering between likeness and unlikeness." As such, it is like traditional Chinese painting, which does not seek likeness, but tries to evoke a poetic space for the imagination.[15]

IX. PHOTOGRAPHY: A MEANS OF APPROPRIATING THE SOUL

The age-old Chinese artistic tradition could not hold out against the spectacular images of photography and film, which came to China at the turn of the twentieth century. At the time, some Chinese scholars and artists were of the view that Chinese art had come to a dead end and had to borrow from the Western classical and realistic traditions to avoid decline. Influenced by these ideas, many Chinese students went to Europe to study art during the first half of the past century. Under the colonial rule of Japan, Taiwan also modeled itself on the European artistic tradition following the westernization of Japan.

When photography and film came from Europe to China at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the new technology excited the public. To a China carved up into colonies by Europe, the United States and Japan after the Boxer Rebellion, the camera brought from Europe was a kind of spectacle. Even more spectacular was the belief that photography was a means of appropriating the soul. The Chinese had become the objects of photography, which clearly their position to the colonizers.

Photography subverted traditional Chinese aesthetics and turned the Chinese into objects of the gaze. It ran counter to the tradition of Chinese art in which the spectators participated in artistic creation and performance as connoisseurs. In photography, the spectators are powerless because while they are gazed at and the camera is capturing their images, they cannot participate. They can only know how they are gazed at after the photographs are taken and developed.

The Chinese terms for "photography" and "film," *sheying* and *dianying*, both denote a technology for recording "shadows/likeness." When motion pictures were first introduced to China at the end of the nineteenth century, they were known as "Western shadow plays" or "electric light shadow plays." Since there were no real actors present as the movies played and one could only see "shadows" projected on a white screen in darkness, the name "shadow play" was widely adopted.

"Shadow play" became a new, exotic spectacle in China, especially because it showed the Western world and the Western way of life. Due to its moving images, the Chinese could more easily believe that it was a truthful representation of reality. More important, through movies, they learned about the world outside China, especially the Western world.

X. FROM FILM TO TELEVISION

During the twentieth century, movies became a popular form of drama in Europe and America. With architecture based on the traditional box-like theatre and the proscenium stage, movie theatres became the new and fashionable theatrical venues. As audio-visual technology advanced quickly, people could see increasingly realistic images on screen. Thanks to the wonders of technology, the opaque white screen suddenly turned into a window, through which one could see another reality at once real and fantastic. Through the spectacular images of films, film directors and editors were able to manipulate the emotions of the audience.

In the late 1920s, the United States entered a new phase of audio-visual experience with the advent of television. The introduction of television technology further confirmed the belief that images could be manipulated, with the controller and transmitter of images at one end, and the receiver of images at the other end. We began to witness two models of television broadcasting and spectacle: the concentrated form of spectacle and the diffused form of spectacle. The "concentrated spectacle" was best exemplified in Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia and Maoist China, where images were centrally managed and monopolized. The United States is the most typical and important example for the "diffused spectacle," in which images are transmitted according to the consumption logic of the capitalist commodity economy.[16]

Moving from the traditional box-like theatre to the box-like big screen movie theatre and to the television box at home, images became more and more controlled. The transmitters of images are no longer individuals or creative film directors and editors. Instead, they are capital-intensive big companies or even enterprises. Even the production of films has become a corporate industry. As a mass medium with collective management, television has become a new kind of spectacle. With the establishment of television broadcasting networks, the spectacle controls the viewing. From being active participants in the theatre in the early days, the spectators have now become powerless receivers. They can only choose whether to switch on or switch off the television. There is no longer such a thing as connoisseurship. It is no longer possible to change the shows on television with good or bad reviews. Ratings remain the only means to influence the spectacle of television. In an age dominated by the media, this is getting more and more difficult.

XI. THE SPECTACLE

The interminable flow of television images and information numbs people's senses and clouds their judgment. Television has become a brainwashing machine. The endless news reports make people lose their sense of history. History has become empty and has come to an end. As Guy Debord points out, "Men resemble their times more than their fathers." He also pessimistically tells us that "when the spectacle stops talking about something for three days, it is as if it did not exist."[17]

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the television spectacle, the movie industry and the Internet have formed an even closer alliance. Under globalization, the media stimulate consumption and manipulate viewing through the meticulous planning of images and sounds. With the omnipresence of the sounds and images of the media, is it still possible to avoid or even transcend the spectacle?

XII. REVISITING THE *GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD*

As people sit by the television everyday, talk on their mobile phones incessantly and go on-line whenever they have a chance, I wonder how many people we can attract to the Taipei Biennial with the theme *Great Theatre of the World*. We first planned the *Great Theatre of the World*, was it not our deliberate intention to make "de-spectacularization" a fundamental stance of ours? While we think of the museum as a theatre and the display of the artists' works as the plot of a play, we have no wish to create a sumptuous and deafening event. In fact, we deliberately try to avoid turning the Biennial into just another spectacle of the international arts scene.

The *Great Theatre of the World* does not intend to create a spectacle to draw the crowds. Instead, it intends to re-examine the relationship between life and the stage. Over the ages, the theatre has been an important medium for people to reflect upon their own states of being. Its function does not lie in dazzling or baffling people. Nor does it lie in clouding their perception of the real and make-believe, reality and virtual reality, and the real and illusion. By using the metaphor of the "great theatre of the world," we hope to stimulate visitors to follow the ideas and clues of the artists to find the key to the real world around us that has been turned into a spectacle.

The *Great Theatre of the World* seeks to provide a sober, reflective framework of seeing. It hopes that visitors can transcend the spectacle in today's society and re-examine life and the world with lucidity and broad mindedness.

NOTES

[1] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (London and Sydney: Pan Books, 1981), 277.

[2] Ibid., 276.

[3] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S.H. Butcher (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), 68.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. 61

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 62, 64.

[8] Ibid., 78.

[9] Michael Baxandall, *Shadows and Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 152.

[10] The inspiration for this discussion of the proscenium stage came from a conversation with the drama scholar Dr. Katherine Hui-ling Chou who provided illustrations and reference materials.

[11] Ernst H. Gombrich, *Gombrich on the Renaissance: The Heritage of Appelles* (London: Phaidon, 1976), 3.

[12] Chia Chi Jason Wang, "Cong guankan yu xushu de kunjing tanqi—Guanyu xieshi zhuyi de lianxiang" (The dilemma of viewing and description—some thoughts on realism), *Artist*, no. 231 (August 1994): 231-33.

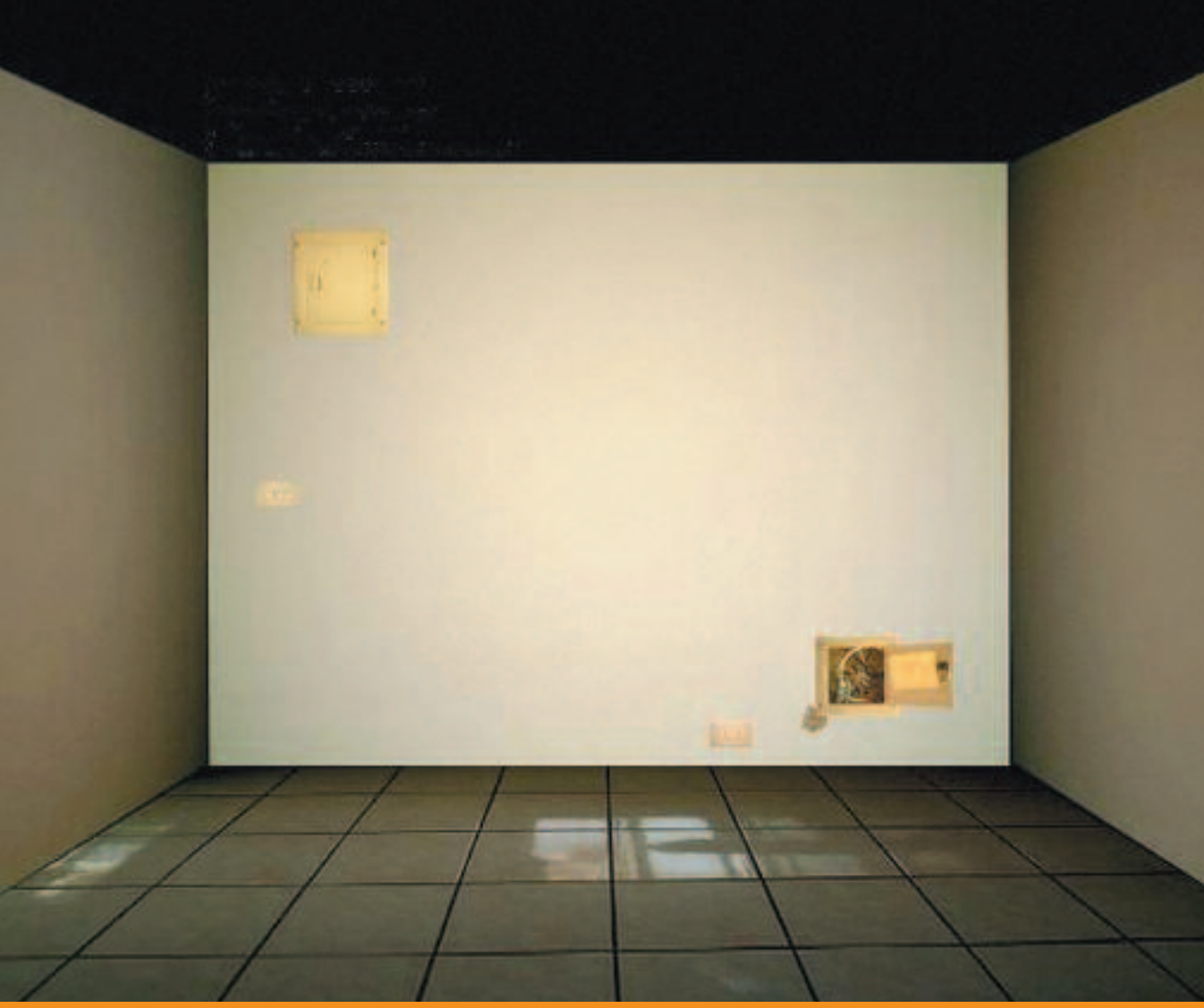
[13] Ibid.; see also Chia Chi Jason Wang, "Giuseppe Castiglione and the Early Qing Court Painting," (M.A. Thesis, Art Institute of the Chinese Culture University, 1986).

[14] "Chronicle of the Life of the Qing Court Painter Giuseppe Castiglione," *Publication of the National Palace Museum*, no. 40 (February 1988): 53.

[15] For this discussion of Chinese opera and the Chinese stage, I am indebted, again, to the drama scholar Dr. Katherine Hui-ling Chou.

[16] Jonathan Crary, "Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory," *October: The Second Decade, 1986-1996*, Rosalind Krauss, et al., eds. (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: MIT Press, 1997): 415-25; Guy Debord, *The Society of Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 41-43.

[17] Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Malcolm Imrie (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 20.



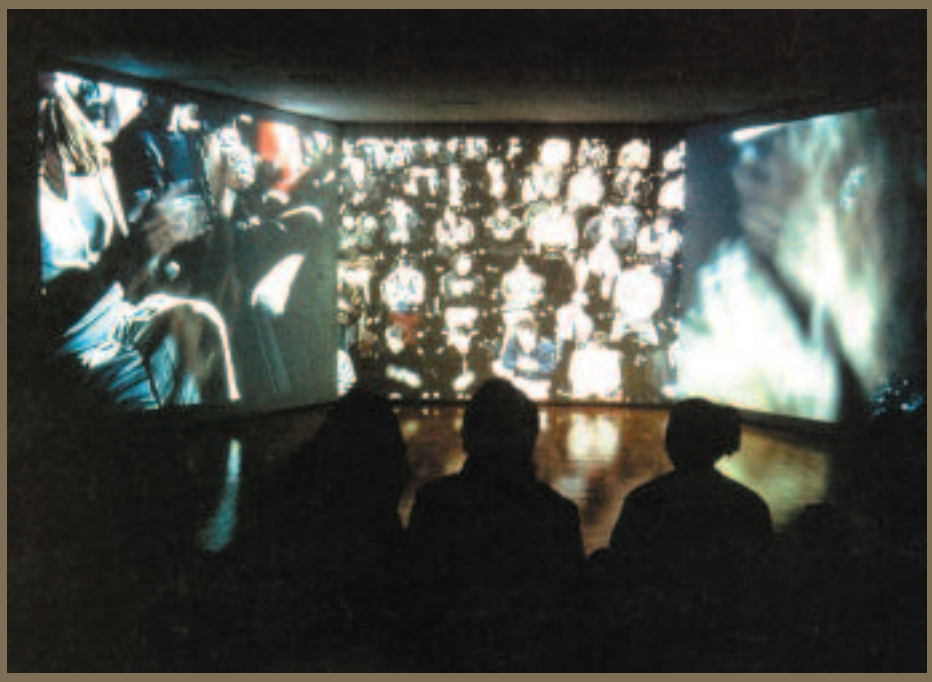
2002 TAIPEI BIENNIAL

Ya-hui Wang, *The Crack*, 2002, video installation, 300 x 400 cm

Asier Mendizabal, *Cinema*, 1998, plastic, wood, mineral water

Chen Chieh-Jen, *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph*, 2002 (on location)

Edwin Zwakman, *Facade I*, 1999, c-print, 185 x 265 cm



Muntadas, *On Translation: El Aplauso*, 1998, video installation

Lee Tzu-hsun, *Maze Theatre*, 2002, mixed media, 500 x 400 x 400 cm

Wang Gongxin, *The Red Gate*, 2002, video installation, 350 x 800 x 800 cm

Xavier Veihan, *Le Film du Japon*, 2002, video

Kyoichi Tsuzuki, *Satellite of Love*, 2002, computer projection image / photograph

Inaki Garmendia Bartolome, *Repeater R.R.V.*, 2002, video installation

Installation view of Chung-Li Kao's *AH-Q*, 2002, 8 mm film, projector and cassette (right);
and *Anti-mei-ology 003*, 2001, 8 mm film, projector and cassette (left)

Miriam Backström, *Scenografier / Set Constructions*, 1995-2000, cibachrome on alumimum, 50 x 64 cm

Thomas Demand, *Poll*, 2001, c-print, 180 x 260 cm

ART AS THEATRE: STAGING THE TAIWANESE BIENNIAL

CRAIG QUINTERO

Figure 1. Rita McBride, *Arena*, Twaron wood, 1997, 400 x 2000 x 300 cm (module: 4 x 4 m)

A large poster declaring "The Curtain is Open" greets visitors to Taiwan's *Great Theatre of the World* biennial at the Taipei Museum of Art featuring thirty-one artists from all over the world. This poster is the first of many signifiers emphasizing the theatrical metaphor uniting the international exhibition. Given the curators' rhetorical emphasis on theatre and the theatrical, this article focuses on the performative elements of the exhibit, examining how the biennial mirrors, reinforces, and, at times, contradicts current trends in performance theory and practice.

SPECTATORS, SPECTACLES, AND CONVENTIONAL MODERNITY

Upon entering the Taipei Museum of Art, patrons are immediately confronted by the towering, golden bleacher seats of Rita McBride's *Arena* (fig. 1). By strategically placing the sculptural seats so they face the entranceway and inviting people to sit on the sculpture, the doorway is transformed into a stage and incoming patrons unwittingly become the actors, creating an ever-evolving performance of entrances and exits. The entering patrons are simultaneously spectators and spectacles, viewing McBride's work as people gathered on the seats view them. By breaking down the "fourth wall" separating viewers from the art, *Arena* subverts the traditional power dynamic of museum displays, animating the artwork and bestowing it with the unsettling interactive ability to return the spectator's gaze.[1]

As the first and most prominent piece in the exhibit, this intelligent and playful display heightens expectations that this biennial intends to utilize performance to challenge and reconfigure the presentational aesthetics of traditional museum culture, and in so doing, encourage spectators to rethink the ocular-centric dominance of the "visual" in contemporary society. But, with a few noteworthy exceptions, the other pieces in the biennial tend to replicate traditional presentational modes of using barriers and lighting to enforce a strict separation of the viewers from the art.

The biennial is decidedly modern in its predilection for video and kinetic art, which constitute almost half of the selected works, but this modernity is undercut by the preponderance of their conventional, one-dimensional "wall-art" mode of display. The biennial's artistic interpretation of "great theatre" foregoes the gritty, sensory overload of performance art, which immerses spectators in the spectacle, in favor of traditional, proscenium arch stage drama presentations, which maintain a safe, sanitized distance between the audience and the art.

Displays of snapshots of television dramas by Ursula Rogg, documentary-style photographs of the film-making process by Hou Tsung-hui (fig 2), and the video of performance games by Xavier Veilhan typify this omission of theatrical dynamism, the works functioning as distant, historical testaments of completed actions rather than including viewers in present tense activities. In noteworthy contrast, Wang Gongxin's *The Red Gate* succeeds in immersing spectators in his work, surrounding them with video projections of the fronts of four traditional Chinese homes. The viewers stand in the center of Wang Gongxin's courtyard, enclosed by the home's doors that creak open and reveal the unfolding sights and sounds of contemporary Beijing hidden behind them. *The Red Gate* bridges the gap between art and performance through its smart utilization of video, creating an inclusive theatrical environment.

Figure 2. Hou Tsung-hui, *Filmmakers*, 1986, silver gelatin prints, 25.5 x 30 cm

PERFORMANCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Since the 1920s, social scientists have broadened the critical scope of theatre studies by exploring the role of performance in everyday life. In his seminal 1927 book *The Theatre in Life*, Russian scholar Nikolas Evreinoff asserts, "We are constantly playing a part when we are in society." In 1956, social scientist Georgres Gurvitch furthers this assertion by highlighting the "theatrical and performance elements in all social ceremonies, even in 'a simple reception or a gathering of friends.'"[2] "Cultural drama," "role playing," and "theatricality" have become important theoretical frameworks for investigating diverse ritual and cultural manifestations of social performance. This theatrical revolution coincides with the artistic blurring of art and life found in Marcel Duchamp's ready-made urinal, Andy Warhol's Pop Art soup cans, and Jeff Koons' post-modern vacuum cleaner.

Kyoichi Tsuzuki's *Satellite of Love* (2002) continues this trend of highlighting the theatrical and artistic in everyday life in his photographic depiction of the dramatic sets and props of Japanese love hotels, complete with water slides, S&M equipment, aquariums, and rotating beds. His matter-of-fact, journalistic display of the wide variety of love hotel settings (including their rental price) stresses that the hotels are already works of art and do not need to undergo further artistic revision. And by omitting people from the photographs, Tsuzuki's hotel rooms become empty stages, encouraging the viewer's interactive projection of their own libidinous performances. Likewise, Shao Yinong's and Mu Chen's unnerving photographic collection of empty mainland Chinese assembly halls provides viewers with a resonant space to insert their own narratives (fig. 3).

Figure 3. Shao Yinong and Mu Chen, *The Assembly Hall*, 2002, photograph, 72 x 100 cm

Rita McBride's *Stage Right* conceptually underscores this idea of performance in everyday life by forcing spectators to walk across the large yellow "stage" she has installed across a hallway. The subtle, un-theatrical quality of her installation (no theatre lights, curtain, set pieces, etc.) initially seems to undermine the efficacy of her work, because the bland, monochromatic stage blends almost too thoroughly into the environment. But this visual unobtrusiveness enables the piece to function as guerilla theatre, subversively framing the act of spectators walking across the stage as a performance, highlighting the theatricality of their everyday actions.

ART OVERPOPULATION

Part of the biennial's mission is to introduce Taiwanese artists to their international peers and promote artistic experimentation, growth, and dialogue in Taiwan. Given this objective, the desire to overfill the Taipei Fine Arts Museum space with as many artists as possible is understandable, but the unintended side effect of this numerical enthusiasm is over-crowded artwork, muddying the artistic integrity of individual creations. For example, the sound of breaking glass in Song Dong's video *Broken Mirror* disrupts the meditative, ritual quality of Chen Chieh-Jen's video *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph* and provides Glen Rubsamen's paintings with an unintended (and unrelated) soundtrack. From a theatrical perspective, it would be unthinkable to stage two productions in a space in which the performances would visually or audibly overlap. But in a museum, whereas it would be inconceivable to have two artworks visually overlap (i.e., by placing one painting in front of the other), the aural integrity of artworks do not receive equal respect and consideration.

Nevertheless, these aural overlaps provide some interesting intersections between separate artworks. For example, the sound of applause in Muntadas' video *On Translation: El Aplauso* provides a compelling score for Shao Yinong's and Mu Chen's photographs of Chinese assembly halls, but the imposition of this soundscape on Shao's and Mu Chen's silent works might significantly alter their intended message and artistic vision. This over-emphasis on the visual, at the expense of the aural, underscores museum culture's continuing preoccupation with the ocular.

ACTOR-LESS THEATRE

The glaring omission of live performance in the *Great Theatre of the World* biennial seems almost too obvious to mention. After walking through a two-story exhibition featuring numerous videos

and photographs of performances, spectators are left to wonder why curators are displaying so many various forms of theatre recordings rather than presenting them with the immediacy of live, flesh-and-blood performers. What is more theatrical than theatre?

Multi-media and interdisciplinary performance are two of the most important contemporary trends in Taiwan's avant-garde Little Theatre movement, recently opening a flourishing creative dialogue between visual and performing artists. Hsu Hui-yu, A-xin, and Zhang Wang are just a few of the emerging artists who are integrating theatre, installation, and video art. Given the exhibition's theatrical theme, the biennial would have been a powerful platform to acknowledge and promote this nascent trend in Taiwanese arts and showcase both international and domestic performance troupes.

LIVING ART

Theatre maintains its spontaneity and creative energy because every time an actor re-stages a production there will be distinct variations. The thrill of watching live theatre is the thrill that it is occurring in the present tense, in real time, and that there is the dramatic potential that something can go wrong at any moment. In comparison, most traditional visual art emphasizes its own un-alterability and permanence. Given this fundamental temporal difference, the biennial's exhibition of "great theatre" presents a dilemma: can static artwork maintain its theatrical suspense? Since the display of the artwork lacks a live, human component, is it still possible to perceive the work as a performance?

Given the theatrical framework of this exhibition, unintended meta-theatrical events take on a heightened significance. A custodian standing on a ladder changing a light bulb in front of Oladélé Ajiboyé Bamgboyé's video projection suddenly became part of Bamgboyé's creation. An electrical problem with Lee Tzu-hsun's *Maze Theater* (2002) that shuts down his frenetic sculptural world of mechanical people, spinning colors, and lights becomes a dramatic event (just like a power outage during a live performance would be). These alterations are obviously the unplanned byproducts of technical difficulties, but these unintended moments breath new life into the otherwise cold, mechanical creations. The *Great Theatre of the World* biennial omits live performers from its exhibition, but these technical ruptures introduce the need for human intervention. And against the sterile, impersonal backdrop of Bamgboyé's scrambled live-on-demand video, the simple act of changing a light bulb becomes a powerful performance and statement of the human condition.

NOTES

[1] The "fourth wall" is the theatrical term for the imaginary wall separating the stage from the audience.

[2] See Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 34-55.

2002 TAIPEI BIENNIAL: GREAT THEATRE OF THE WORLD

YU YEON KIM

Three major exhibitions of contemporary art opened consecutively in China and Taiwan in November 2002. The fourth Shanghai Biennale, the first Guangzhou Triennial, and the 2002 Taipei Biennial all had one thing in common: they focused on particular themes. The problem with themed exhibitions—as opposed to more general concepts or philosophies—is that the curators are obliged to work and select work within defined boundaries that place artificial constraints on the artists. The exhibitions are often judged by how well they illustrate the theme and they invariably fail to fulfill its ambitions. Rather than revealing the expansive phenomena of contemporary art and dialogue, they strain diverse and oblique meaning into a trough from which the slough can be scooped into marketable molds.

The first Guangzhou Triennial was curated by Wu Hung under the auspices of museum director Wang Huangsheng. The Shanghai Biennale was curated by a team of Chinese and international curators including Xu Jiang as Director, Wu Jiang, and Li Xu along with Alanna Heiss as the Curator General, Yuko Hasagawa, and Klaus Biesenbach. What was missing from both exhibitions was an adequate recognition of the most radical and provocative forms of contemporary Chinese art—that have been heavily censored in the past. Instead, these exhibitions opted for safe routes: the Shanghai Biennale with its focus on architecture and urbanization and the Guangzhou Triennial entitled *Reinterpretation: A Decade of Experimental Chinese Art (1990-2002)*. However, with its program of one hundred and thirty artists, the exhibition in Guangzhou did include a few performances by some of the most important artists, including Gu Wenda, Xu Bing, to emerge during the early 1990s. Significantly, an installation by Huang Yongping, humorously titled *Bat Project II*, was withdrawn before the opening.[1]

Entitled *Urban Creation*, the Shanghai Biennale did little to address the political or social dilemmas in contemporary China. It ignored many of the radical performance artists currently engaged with the struggle for freedom of bodily and verbal expression in China. Moreover, it failed to engage in the extraordinary contrast between the impoverished areas outside of Shanghai and the development of a rising entrepreneur class within the city's boundaries. Although the exhibition was eclectic and diverse, it did not reveal or display the controversial and banned works of contemporary Chinese artists who are currently challenging social mores and finding themselves in direct confrontation with the authorities. In addition, much of the architectural work was rather unsurprising and included an array of forms reminiscent of the 1960s together with rehashed 1990s corporate architecture. In effect, the Shanghai Biennale, with its focus on architecture and urbanization, presented a toned down version of contemporary art and left provocation to alternative spaces.

With its grand title *Great Theatre of the World*, the Taipei Biennial declared for itself an ambitious arena. Perhaps the most poetic and open-ended of the expositions, it nevertheless had some glaring exclusions for an exhibition that announced in its title a certain global representation. While there was no lack of excellent work, artists from South America, South Asia, and the Pacific were noticeably absent among the thirty-one artists chosen by curators Bartomeu Marí and Chia Chi Jason Wang.

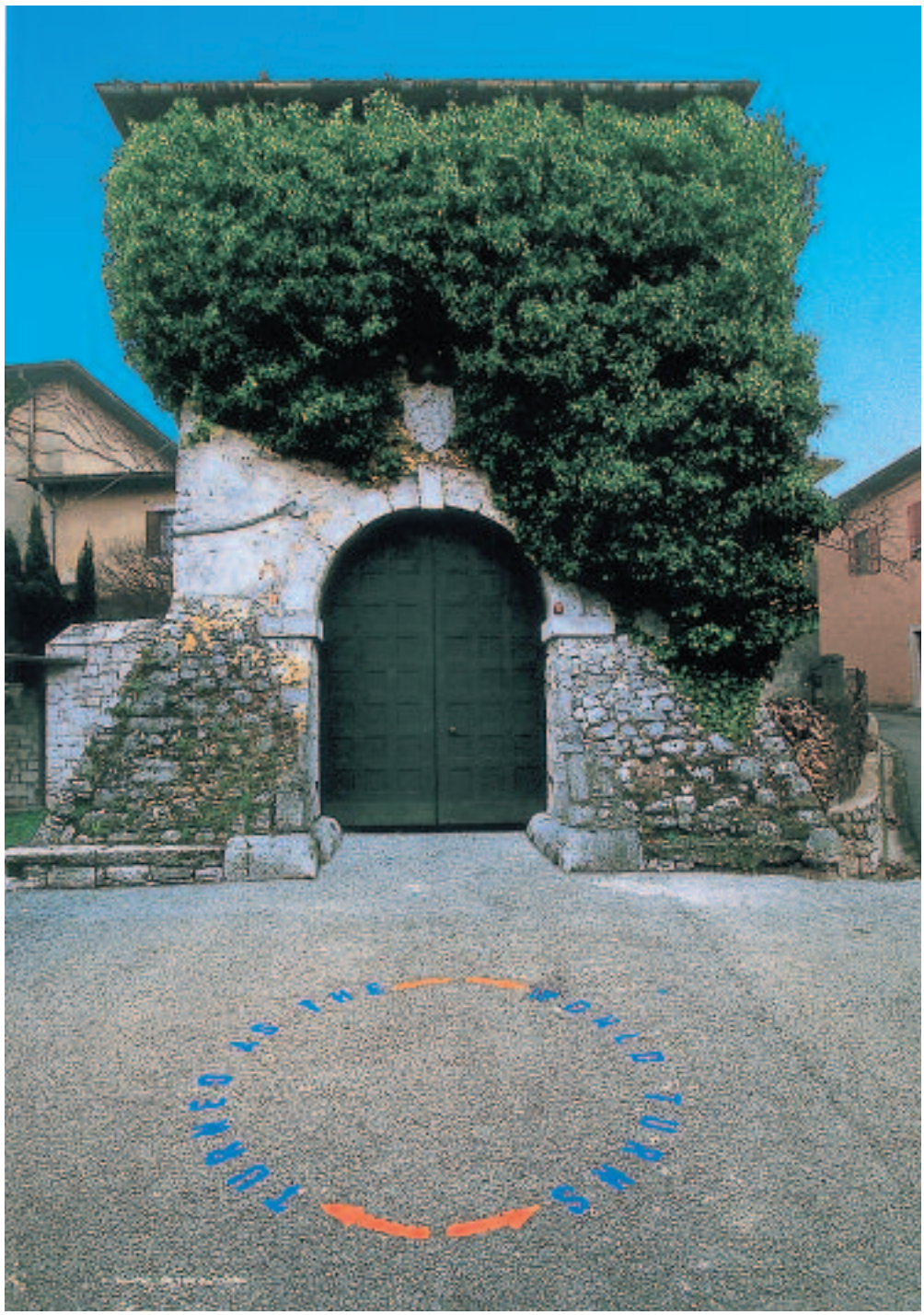


Figure 1. Lawrence Weiner, *Turned as the World Turns*, 2001, photograph

In a compelling essay reminiscent of the philosophical writings of Gaston Bachelard, Bartomeu Marí writes:

> The "global" is obstructing us from considering the "international." And in this respect, it is as though, instead of being people emerging form different places to cross paths at a given point in time, we are instead more like atoms in a physical system, behaving according to laws which we long to discover.[2]

The problem with this statement is that it obscures the underlying issues. We glean that Marí laments the substitution of high-speed, incidental, temporary and, perhaps, meaningless contact for real cultural dialogue. But our current dilemma is precisely this relationship of the global to the local and how they inform and have informed each other. For example, it would be simplistic

Figure 2. Joan Jonas, *Lines in the Sand*, 2002, installation

to view the works of Asian artists only in comparison to "Western Art." Even though the connection obviously exists, the confluence is surely multi-directional. At the same time, we cannot deny the specificity of Asian cultures and the primary environmental and social concerns through which they have developed. In his catalogue essay for the Taipei Biennial, curator Chia Chi Jason Wang discusses the contradictory ways Western and Chinese cultures valued pictorial illusion in the seventeenth century and writes:

> [I]n the context of Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, if the figures and objects in a painting are like images in a mirror, they are nothing but illusion, not reality. To Chinese viewers at that time, they might seem illusory because they appeared too real to eyes schooled in Chinese painting.[3]

We may safely assume that the systems of cultural influences and information that have built contemporary Asian and Western cultures are not drawn from one source. Rather, they are from all the dialogues created by the transit of merchants, scholars, and travelers over centuries—exchanges which are now extraordinarily accelerated. This interaction of the local and the global and how they inform each other is complex. Whether we are actually seeing the erosion of local identities in favor of a more general global identity or whether the concerns of the local will always override the global—so that even though the outward aspects of artistic language may have shared similarities internationally—they are belied by an underlying intention relevant to local problems. While there is so much euphoria about the globalization of culture and economies and its promise of a unified world, we must consider that what is also being promoted is a "world view" or "Internationalism" sponsored by Euro-American capital and hi-tech industries that increasingly resembles that of Modernist Internationalism which borrowed so heavily from other (often colonized) cultures without any genuine attempt to understand them. The tragedy of September 11 has reminded us all too poignantly just how disparate our "world-views" are.

The proscenium to the *Great Theatre of the World* is formed by Lawrence Weiner's work *Turned as the World Turns* (2001) which can be read from both sides of the windows of the museum, suggesting a coy translation of polarities (fig. 1). Rita McBride's playful yellow grandstand made out of synthetic resin creates the auditorium. As with much of her work, one has a "can't quite place it" familiarity with the forms she uses. Did it originate as a type of plastic packing material used in the 1970s or was it assembly-kit furniture? Nevertheless, both works (used as they are in a forced

context as an introduction to a theme) seem oddly hollow. Perhaps there is a risk when curators apply this kind of theme packaging that the "spoken tales" become muted. One had a sense that the play had ended before it had begun without any engagement of the audience. The one work that resonated in this context was Yuan Goang-Ming's eerie *City Disqualified: Ximen District* (2001), a haunting portrait of human passage and erasure in the urban environment. The work was the result of a process of photography in which the people and traffic had been filtered out of a busy city thoroughfare.

Of course, there are works that were able to stand on their own despite their context. Joan Jonas' *Lines in the Sand* is an integrated flux of mediums including video, drawing, panting, sculpture, and performance (fig. 2). The work comprises simultaneous ongoing processes and narratives developed from a concept inspired by Hilda Doolittle's book *Helen of Troy*. Translating the conflicts of the Trojan War into a contemporary domestic setting, the artist engages her audience on a level of multiple perceptions as she relates her narrative through various mediums—projecting at once a sense of alienation and of intense physical presence.

Video cubicles tend to occupy a sizeable section of most international expositions and they are no less evident in the Taipei Biennale where they coincide neatly with the concept of theatre as a "black box." Antonio Muntadas' *On Translation: El Aplauso* (1998) is an exemplary illustration of the pervasive theme of a "play within a play." On the main projection wall is a video covering the range of contemporary experience of violence ranging from war to natural disaster mingled with entertainment and advertising blips. The projections on the flanking walls show the clapping hands of an audience. The real audience is implicated as detached consumerist voyeurs, uncritically viewing the spectacle of life in its real and synthesized forms.

Runa Islam shifts the stage to the back of the eye in her work *Rapid Eye Movement*, a film shot at twenty-four-frames-per-second, which apparently approximates to the speed at which the eye captures information (fig. 3). Her actors occupy an indeterminate liminal zone between reality and dream, each immersed in their own conscious/subconscious plots while sharing the same journey. Oladélé Ajiboyé Bamgboyé's *Stage is Body* (2000), a video built with clips from frame-distorted television porn channels and digital images in which figures and gender are morphed and blended. The work explores the equivalence of sexual acts in the context of aids and the voyeuristic nature of technological access to the intimacy of the naked human form engaged in sexual encounter.

It would appear that the majority of artists who reflected upon social and urban change in their work were from East Asia. Besides Yuan Goang Ming's *City Disqualified: Ximen District*, at least six other Asian artists made works that expressed the transformation and upheaval of their societies. Taiwan artist Chen Chieh-Jen presented his brilliant new film *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph* (2002), a reconstruction and translation of a historical photograph of a public execution by dismemberment taken in China by the French military in the early 1900s. Within the visual "stage" of this horrible act, Chen connects the rejected, unemployed, and disabled (who are actually employed as actors in the film) through occupational hazards with abandoned industrial and historical buildings that have fallen into disuse. The act of dismemberment becomes a metaphor for the experience of China and Taiwan, the turmoil and reinvention of their cultures, and societies and the plight of ordinary people.

Shao Yinong and Mu Chen's *The Assembly Hall* (2002) consists of a series of photographs depicting the interior of halls—some in disrepair and some still used but with changed functions—that were used for community meetings during the Cultural Revolution. Their visual essay is imbued with a strange nostalgia yet also indicates how certain systems eventually outlive their usefulness and, like the structures used to convey their principles, are abandoned and left to crumble. Kyoichi Tsuzuki's *Satellite of Love* (2002) also takes up a kind of visual documentation in the form of photographs of the interiors of Japan's surreal "love hotels" that are soon (due to new Japanese laws) at risk of becoming a thing of the past. Created as an escape and antithesis to the constraints of close apartment life, these fantasy environments give expression to the fetishistic extremes of human desire.

Figure 3. Runa Islam, *Rapid Eye Movement*, 2002, super 16 mm film with sound

Both from mainland China, Wang Gongxin and Song Dong deal with social change and the hidden realities that lie beyond the façade. Wang Gongxin, an artist at the forefront of New Media in China (he founded the "Loft New Media Art Center" in Beijing), presented a video installation entitled *The Red Gate*. The installation used all four walls of the video cubicle and each wall showed a traditional courtyard gate that then opened to reveal another social reality: street life or people seated at a table.

It is the relationship between proscenium and stage, enclosure, and enactment that Song Dong also takes up in the video works he presented at the Taipei Biennale that include *Broken Mirror* (1999), *Crumpling Shanghai* (2000), and *Burning Mirror* (2001). These videos are surprisingly low-tech and the dramatic and concise use of simple materials amplifies the artist's concept. Each work employ mirrors made of light Mylar or glass that are set on fire, shattered, or crumpled. In this process, reflections of city life are disassembled while other scenes are revealed behind the mirrors.

The Taipei Biennale came closest to realizing the ambition of its title in those sections where artists were concerned with expressing the tensions of their locality in a way that reflected a relationship to a wider world. Of course, the Internet and air travel has pushed the exchange of cultural values and information at the end of the last century into hyper-drive, to the extent that we can never be sure what originated where or what is authentically our own culture. But this is not really a new process. It is now just intensified. It is the nature of artists to delight in new ideas, materials, and technology—to see their possibilities and to repurpose them, making them relevant to both personal and universal concerns. Artists are that fractal edge of human consciousness, the "Grand Theatre of the World" in which the flux of ideas become new realizations.

NOTES

[1] *Bat Project II* references the American spy plane incident in 2001. The Guangdong Art Museum removed the *Bat Project II*—a large-scale replica of the U.S. Navy EP-3E spy plane that landed on Hainan island in 2001—due to pressure from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Huang's first attempt in replicating the EP-3E through the *Bat Project I* was pulled from a Shenzhen exhibition three weeks before the opening in December 2001. See *CND: Global Weekly Summary* (22 November, 2002).

[2] Bartomeu Mari, "Sculpture in Tongues" in the catalogue essay for the 2002 Taipei Biennial *Great Theatre of the World* (Taipei: Taipei Art Museum, 2002).

[3] Chia Chi Jason Wang, "From Shadow Magic to the Spectacle," in the catalogue essay for the 2002 Taipei Biennial *Great Theatre of the World* (Taipei: Taipei Art Museum, 2002).

THE DISCURSIVE FORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART CURATION IN THE LATE 1990S WITH A DISCUSSION OF THE CONTINUAL EVOLUTION OF THE SUBJECT POSITION OF TAIWAN ART

PO-SHIN LIN / TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL FEI

I

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the subject position of Taiwan art has continually evolved in the context of the international contemporary art exhibitions held in Taiwan since the 1996 Taipei Biennial. The exhibitions included in this discussion are *River: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei* (1997) curated by J. J. Shih, *Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself* (1997) by Yuan-Chien Chang and *Site of Desire* (1997), a Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) Biennial, by Fumio Nanjo.

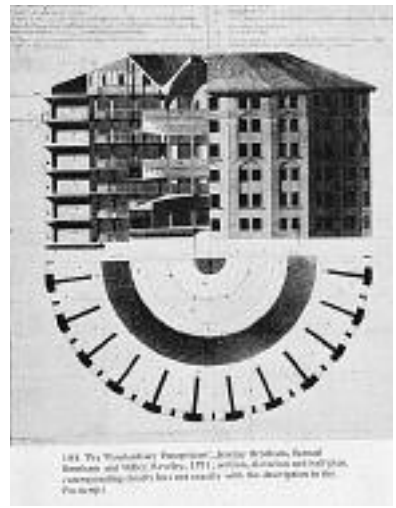


Figure 1. An annular prison structure developed by Jeremy Bentham (Penitentiary Panopticon, 1791)

Organizing exhibitions used to be the job of museum professionals. Prior to the 1990s, there were a few instances of Taiwan art critics participating in exhibit curation. In the early 1990s, art critics became more actively involved in organizing Taiwan contemporary art shows. Here are a few examples: *Time Duration* (curated by Hai-Ming Huang, Dimension Art Center, 1991), *Access to the Summit* (by Hsing-Yueh Lin, G Zen 50 Art Gallery, 1991), *New Art, New Tribes: Taiwan Art in the Nineties* (by Yung-Chih Lu, Hanart (Taipei) Gallery, 1993), and *Installations in the Apollo Building* (by J. J. Shih, Apollo Building, 1993).

Most of these exhibitions were curated by art critics at the request of private art galleries, with the aim of improving the galleries' professionalism through the help of the critics' discursive capabilities.[1] Independent curators[2] who have put together contemporary art shows have begun to attract extensive attention and interest from both public and private institutes since 1996. Government-run art museums even held large seminars and invited curators from across Taiwan and around the world to address topics in this professional area.[3] Curation has since evolved into an independent field of knowledge and expertise. Hence, the international contemporary art exhibitions organized by Taiwan curators since 1996 have been chosen as the research area for this thesis.

If we accept Michel Foucault's view of discourse and power, we should be keenly interested in, and alert to, the profession of independent curator, which has emerged in Taiwan since the late 1990s. In Foucault's genealogy, the panoptic central observation tower conceived by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) had petered out around the nineteenth century (fig. 1). It was replaced by a carefully and totally controlled society based on moral discipline, with decentralized power. By inviting six curators to organize the 1996 Biennial for the TFAM, the government-run art museum gave up the interpretation power it had retained for many years and distributed it to the curators in a network of power. Taiwan Art was then no longer the predominant subject advocated by art museums. Rather, it was reduced to an object of information, hidden in a moral education

apparatus called an international exhibition. Curators produced and copied their versions of Taiwan art with an anonymous operating strategy. We, therefore, have to raise the question: What kind of subject position has been created in the discursive formation process while curating these exhibitions—is it "Asian-Pacific" or "Asian" or "Chinese"? What kind of evolutional changes has Taiwan art experienced under the multiple pressures from different international blocks?

Figure 2. The example of the separate system (Strangeways Prison, Manchester)

In the following paragraphs, we will make a genealogical review of the curatorial discourses within the scope of our study. We will try to reveal the derivative and connective power relations between the spatialization of curatorial discourse and curatorial discourse per se, as well as the process of discursive formation in which Taiwan Art is produced and reproduced. First, we will analyze the origin of, and the backdrop for, Taiwan curators organizing international contemporary art exhibitions in Taiwan since 1996, with a preliminary discussion of the spatialization of curatorial discourse. Second, by focusing on two international modern art exhibitions held in Taiwan in 1997, we will examine and compare the international diagrams depicted in curatorial statements for those shows, and how the subject position of Taiwan Art was addressed. Finally, we will explore how the identities of artists from different nations were interconnected by curators using the concept of a geographic sphere. Also, we will discuss how Taiwan artists were positioned in such social sites, and what impact a curatorial model might have on art creation.

II

I am willing to shoulder the original sin of Taiwan society and culture,
By resigning my post as the Director of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum,
To end this counter-strike launched by evil forces in the art circle,
And the vicious farce therein derived.

Chen-Yu Chang

The above four-line statement was announced on May 7, 1996 at a press conference held in a meeting room inside Taipei City Hall. The person making the statement was Chen-Yu Chang, director of the TFAM at the time.[4] Within the month prior to this announcement, Chang's performance in his official capacity had incited extensive discussions, arguments and criticism both inside and outside the museum, resulting in a number of social events lashing out at the TFAM system. These included the Decoloring Group's signature campaign, the political skit and declaration about Saving the TFAM, the artists' boycott of exhibitions, and the conflicts between the city government and legislature. For the TFAM, the events not only indicated the failure of its collection and exhibition systems, but also symbolized a serious challenge to the authority of government sponsored art institutions.

What did the "original sin of Taiwan society and culture" refer to? What did the "counter-strike launched by evil forces in the art circle" mean? While conjuring up solemn and tragic pictures in the imagination, Chang's few words instantly added a hue of grand epic nostalgia to social events that were meant to be rough and stormy. If we agree that the publication of this statement ended

the ordeal suffered by the Taiwan art community, may we further observe how Taiwan art has since seen the development of new opportunities?[5]

Prior to the 1990s, government-run art museums had devoted their efforts to studying and promoting Taiwan art primarily on two fronts. First of all, with the advent of the localization movement in the Taiwan art circle,[6] government museums offered in succession a few grand exhibitions to sort through the art history of Taiwan. Such exhibitions, including the *Exhibit of 300 Years of Taiwan Art Works* by the Taiwan Museum of Art (co-curated with the *Hsiung-Shih Art Monthly*) in 1990, the *Retrospective Exhibition of Western Art in Early Taiwan* by the TFAM in 1990, and *Taiwan Art (1945-1993)* by the TFAM in 1993, laid the foundation for art museums to be an authoritative voice in Taiwan art studies. As suggested by the exhibition titles, however, museums had not yet reached a consensus on how to define Taiwan art and how to divide Taiwan art history into distinct periods. Consequently, this had caused troubles in screening and selecting artists and their works for exhibition.[7]

Secondly, government museums had played another important role in steering the development of Taiwan art by hosting art competitions. Take the TFAM as an example; it organized a series of exhibits every two years beginning in the 1980s, including *Contemporary Trends in Chinese Art* and *Contemporary Art Trends in the Republic of China*. Although in 1992 the exhibition titles were changed from Contemporary Trends to Biennial, and from the Republic of China to Taipei, the competitive nature remained unchanged. The purpose of art museums organizing such competitions was to "carry forward the creative and experimental spirit" and to "strive to be the symbol of new art in Taiwan."[8] It was paradoxical, however, that the screening mechanism employed by these exhibitions had always been an issue under the spotlight. The TFAM often asserted that the screening system for a current exhibit had made "adjustments" and "breakthroughs" compared to previous ones, in terms of appointing panel members, deciding panel composition (foreign vs. local members), arranging screening phases, categorizing art forms, and even in determining the qualifications for entries. Despite periodic achievements, they still could not avoid being besieged by critics with questions and comments.[9]

In such a context, the ideas of the "original sin of the culture" and the "counter-strike by evil forces" might fail to provide an explanation of why Chang had to resign, but these ideas still possess some specific historical connotations. These have to do with the ways in which art museums have identified Taiwan art. Whether it involves endowing Taiwan art with an academic standing through art history exhibits, or sorting out the current trends in Taiwan art through art competitions, it is impossible not to be involved in "dividing practices" while exercising such powers. In other words, when a group of exhibitors are accepted in the screening process and given the opportunity to showcase their talents, others who fail to meet the standards will inevitably be rejected. This is the eliminating function of competition. Additionally, the distinction between those "accepted" and "rejected" may result in protests and challenges to the authority by those rejected. Throughout world, and Chinese, art history, there is no shortage of examples illustrating this.

Although "original sin" and "counter-strike" sound a little burdensome, we still need to take the four lines seriously. These words represent the unique "literature of martyrdom" that prevailed in the Taiwan art community in the 1990s. While this kind of literature implies a form of confrontation, it transforms the final eloquence of a martyr into a ritual performance of making a declaration in the presence of an audience.[10] The press conference held by Chang happened to be his personal exemplification of this literature of martyrdom. As an art museum director, it was

an opportunity for him to declare his authority. His declaration was a pronouncement of museum policy, with an intended effect of causing his audience to feel awe and conviction toward art museums. As an artist who just quit his executive role, however, all he wanted at the moment was to seize the opportunity to declare his innocence, and protest against the unfair treatment cast on him by the state and society. The difference between these desires symbolized the end of a way of exerting power.

The 1996 Taipei Biennial opened in June, right after Chang's resignation in May. By adopting the form of a curated exhibition with a theme "The Quest for Identity," the tradition of competitive exhibitions was discontinued. The exhibition was divided into three parts. In the Genealogy and Archives area, curators attempted to shake off the ideological confusion of national and ethnic groups by tracing the origin of Taiwan art history to cultural relics of the archeological period. The purpose was to establish a historical perspective for art. Four curators—Hong-Ming Tsai, Jiun-Shyan Lee, Tung-shan Hsieh, Kuang Lu—were invited to organize the Contemporary Issues section, with the expectation that the exhibited works would reflect a multifacetedness and build an ideal Taiwan art identity in their minds. Furthermore, the curators also included the public's voice in the Experiencing Taipei section. When viewed as a curatorial conception, the 1996 Biennial was made as inclusive as possible. The criticism from art critics, however, focused on the mechanism and method used in curating the exhibit.[11] Chien-Hui Kao questioned the relations between the discursive mechanism and power as against the "power of art interpretation."[12] Using the concept of a "war machine," Hai-Ming Huang further deciphered the power game of art museum curation.[13]

According to Hai-Ming Huang, curatorial discourses "stood as the real core and revealed new issues" of the exhibition.[14] After analyzing statements made by the curators, Huang stated that the "generation of meaning was no longer dominated by artists, nor by some kind of scholars. Artworks became potential battlefields and war machines, and so did art museums…[T]he method of exhibiting and related issues made the hidden relations between art and knowledge/power more apparent."[15] In other words, the power to exhibit was not owned by the art museum, its director or any other individual. Rather, there were a complete set of relations for executing and exercising the disposed power. Huang's observations approximate the theory of Foucault regarding knowledge and power, and his illustration of a war machine is also similar to the conception of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.[16] We may illustrate this curatorial apparatus further along his line of thinking.[17]

Basically, the 1996 Taipei Biennial can be explained by Foucault's theory of Panopticism, which is based on a prison cell structure developed by the British philosopher Bentham in 1791. According to the theory, prisoners should be kept in small cells in an annular building. A tall, central observation tower stands at the center of the annular structure (fig. 3). Each cell has two windows, one on the inside and the other on the outside. The outside opening allows light to come into the cell, while the inside opening enables the warder to watch every prisoner from the tower by the effect of backlighting. An inmate locked in such a cell will be thoroughly observed, but he or she has no way to see the observer. In contrast, the observer in the tower can see everything without ever being seen. Huang's argument that "a 'center' appears to exist but actually does not"[18] implies this visibility reversion. Since traditional monarchical power is visible, with its dazzling lights shining all the time and all over the place, the masses stand in invisible shadows. Now, power itself seeks invisibility and the objects of power, on which power operates, are made most visible.[19]

From this perspective, the "subjectivity of Taiwan art" symbolized the demise of the traditional subjects of power. Government-run art museums surrendered their long-held power of interpretation, and distributed it into the hands of individual curators in a network of power. Then, "Taiwan Art" stopped being the supreme subject upheld by art museums, but became an object of information concealed in a curatorial apparatus. Armed with the power to translate an individual into a subject, curators were able to operate the "government of individualization."[20] Under such a theme, the 1996 Taipei Biennial was organized into three sections. Among which, the section entitled "Contemporary Issues" was further divided into four sub-sections, each of which was again divided into four to six programs.[21] The curatorial apparatus distinguished and identified the visibility of exhibitors and their artwork in a measured and hierarchical manner. It blended discourse and creation into one image, ultimately constructing a discursive space with isolated sections.

Just like the prison apparatus, a curatorial apparatus opens up regimes of light where far and near, dark and bright, and visible and invisible are assigned. This technology of arranging light, space and discourse has incubated the birth of school and factory apparatus. Deleuze once picked up Foucault's concept of a diagram[22] to explain the social field map illustrated by the apparatus. In his view, a diagram is a map representing the intensity and density of power relations. "It makes history by unmaking preceding realities and significations, constituting hundreds of points of emergence or creativity, unexpected conjunctions or improbable continuums. It doubles history with a sense of continual evolution."

Since the 1996 Taipei Biennial, the monarchical diagram of competitive exhibitions has been dismantled and replaced with a new diagram of discipline. All power relations in the diagram remain in an unstable and multiple scattering status, "but at each moment move 'from one point to another' in a field of force, marking inflections, resistances, twists and turns, when one changes direction, or retraces one's steps."[23] Between those points, the curatorial apparatus depicts, using the strategy of anonymous operation, numerous diagrams overlapping and expanding into each other, while generating and copying the imaginativeness of Taiwan art. Not only do these diagrams have disciplinary functions, the endless process of their manufacture also mirrors the history of Taiwan art's continual evolution in its different geographical and spatial significances.

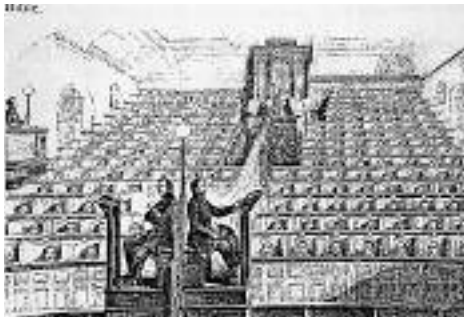


Figure 3. Activity areas are separated and controlled by individual observers. This picture shows the special arrangement according to the function of religious rites.

III

In the mid-1990s, the TFAM initiated a number of exhibitions to promote international art exchange. Among these, Art Taiwan and Identities: Art from Australia, held in 1995, were success stories for "internationalization." It was the first time that Taiwan's artwork toured four major Australian cities with equal terms and conditions, and under the name of Taiwan. Australia, at the same time, shipped some of its artwork to Taiwan for exhibition.[24] With the success of city-to-city diplomacy targeted at the Asia-Pacific region, the 1996 Asia-Pacific Triennial organized by Australia was highly anticipated.

Although invited, the name "Taiwan" was regretfully replaced with "Taipei" in the Triennial directory. Works by Mingtse Lee from Kao Hsiong and others were featured in the exhibition.

In the critics' review, the Triennial was described as "voiceless art from Taiwan" and as "an unfocused gathering." "Do Taiwan artists really care about being voiceless? Do we really care about our position in the Asia-Pacific region?"[25] "Is this a helpless end under political interference? Or, are there no competent curators in Taiwan? This serves as an alert for us to take part in international activities."[26]

These reflections carried certain messages. First of all, Taiwan could not give up its crucial right to speak out, as the importance of the Asia-Pacific region was further emphasized. Secondly, Taiwan began to re-think its position in international exhibitions, moving from a linear back-and-forth operation between nations to a strategic alliance between regions. Finally, the demand to have international events organized by Taiwan curators started to pick up. The hope was to frame Taiwan's own operational strategy and diagram in handling international exhibits through "active curation" rather than "passive involvement."

Figure 4. In the activity areas of the annular prison, although the prisoners work together, they have to stick to the principle of physical separation. The picture shows prisoners wearing masks while joining activities.

Since then, Taiwan art's internationalization program has entered a new phase. The advantages of setting up an international art exchange site locally include the fact that local curators can play a leading role in deciding the theme and content of an exhibit, as well as who gets invited. Local critics can monitor the artistic standard of an exhibition in a timely fashion, to enhance the initiative of Taiwan artists and win more international recognition. Therefore, the year 1996 can be viewed as a critical dividing point in the internationalization of Taiwan art. International contemporary art exhibits put together by Taiwan curators have started to gain attention ever since.

In all these exhibitions, what are the standpoints of Taiwan art? What is the position of Taiwan art? Which international art region does Taiwan want to be a part of? These are the questions worth asking.

To further the internationalization strategy along the line of the Asia-Pacific region, Taiwan curated two important international contemporary art exhibitions in 1997. J. J. Shih organized one with the title *River: New Asian Art - A Dialogue* in Taipei; and another was organized by Yuan-Chien Chang, *Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself.*

Two key curatorial focuses of the *River* exhibition were "New Asian Art" and "Dialogue in Taipei." Born out of a *Taipei County Art Exhibition*, the exhibit followed the curatorial principle that had been in place since 1994. It also attempted to explore the humanistic significance of the Tamshui River, and discuss the "New Asian Art" from the Tamshui area by artists from Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines and Vietnam. Unlike previous Taipei County art events, the curator tried to look at the Tamshui River as one of the "discourse sites," rather than the "discourse topic" per se.[27] All the pieces, except three outdoor works, were displayed concurrently at four locations: the Taipei County Cultural Center, Dimension Endowment of Art, the IT Park Gallery and the Bamboo Curtain Studio. In the curatorial statement, this arrangement was described as "a dialogue at four alluvial mouths of one river system." As he sketched this "highly friendly/low cost exhibit environment," the curator's concerns were the low visibility of the artworks being

isplayed in the Tamshui area and a number of consequential esthetical and technical problems.[28] In other words, the arrangement was designed to cope with such technical issues as security, and to meet utility requirements.

In addition to technical and utility considerations, the efficiency and function of the curatorial apparatus were also key to the planning. First and foremost, artworks were spread in multiple locations around Taipei City and County, in the "hope that the works of the hosts and guests would be compared alternately to generate a brainstorm involving both local and visiting artists."[29] The curator organized exhibited works to be shown in scattered locations, including sites belonging to different kinds of organizations, such as government offices, private institutions and marginal organizations. This arrangement demonstrated the detailed thinking involved in planning the entire exhibit. The curator's capability and efficiency were also established by the ceremonies and by the networking events held during the exhibition, which allowed institutional representatives to meet and communicate.[30] Meanwhile, many highly functional supporting activities were scheduled to take place among the exhibited works in the various exhibit locations. Artists talked about their creative endeavors at seminars. Local and visiting critics and curators shared their curating experience in workshops. Volunteers received training and visitors enjoyed guided tours. Through all these activities, exhibition participants learned from what they observed, made friends with other participants, and shared their experience, as well as identifying their position in the event as a whole and making a connection with the exhibition theme.

From Bentham's ideal perspective, this exhibit appears to have provided a preliminary framework for a separate system.[31] Bentham's design plan involved setting up several isolated activity areas with multiple functions between prison buildings. The *River* exhibition strove to establish communication and dialogues, without participants being totally isolated. However, the separate model and event sites arranged out of technical, functional and utilitarian considerations still gave the curatorial apparatus the functions of cognition and education. In addition, the formation of meaning was also a function that was accentuated by the curator: "It has been our expectation to extract and develop more concepts of contemporary thinking, being joined by other Asian artists in discussing artistic creation with reference to the topic of the *River*." "These exhibits let the living water of art flowing from our own and other Asian lands wash towards the Taipei basin, leaving a deposit of organic soil to grow the landscape of contemporary Asian cultures and nourish the local artistic fields."[32] Through this dialogue in Taipei, Taiwan and even Asian contemporary art have been given a new look, and the curatorial apparatus has been given the functions of forming meanings and generating ideas.

The decision process for selecting artwork for the *River* show involved both international invitations and domestic collection. Among the invited international artists, Japan's Ichi Ikeda and his *Arching Ark* were at the top of the list. Ikeda installed concurrently, both in Taiwan and Japan, two "sailing" vessels to carry water containers, symbolizing the future interflow of culture. As depicted by the artist, "there are many islands, big and small, lined up in an arcing pattern between Taipei and Kaseda, as if the two cities are connected in a arc.[33] The curator decodes Ikeda's creation as follows:

> It was a boat-like installation made of bamboo and wood. At the opening ceremony, it was a stage for the artist to perform a water-friendly ritual. In the following days, it was moved to an outdoor square to be worshipped as a religious instrument on a primitive altar. In a ritual process of symbolizing global cultural integration with the idea of "water returning to the ocean," it played a critical role as "Spirit Carrier."[34]

In the events designed to shape a new Asia, the audience could view the boat-like installation, worshipped as a religious object, after taking part in the opening ceremony of *Taipei Bow*. The curator believed that "they are simultaneously participating in a conceptual event that marks the Great Harmony of the cultures of the world."[35] There were also other pieces in the exhibition that emphasized audience involvement or a ceremonial process.[36] As coordinated by the curatorial apparatus, the audiences and artists interwove a world of shared experience through conversation, observation, and the sharing of feelings, memories and imagination. This so-called "New Asia," however, involved only Taiwan's neighboring countries, indicating that the contemporary art of nations other than those of East Asia remained unfamiliar and distant to Taiwan. With Japan at the top and Vietnam at the bottom, the "New Asia" resembled a pilgrimage route for colonies to deliver tribute to their suzerain. This has left a unique area for contemplation about the "New Asian Art."

Soon after the *River* show, another important Taipei international contemporary art exhibition was under way. Sponsored by the city government of Hsin Chuang, the exhibition Lord of the Rim invited seven female artists from the United States, Japan, Korea and Taiwan to explore issues involving identification and social status, such as gender and class. Metaphorically, the Rim implied the marginal position of those females who were part of the working class and lived on the rim of the Taipei and Pacific Basins. *In Herself/For Herself* was a theme conceived by the curator in the hope of "generating discourse about decentralization" with the participation of female workers from Hsin Chuang.[37] Based on such a good concept, this exhibit was successful in facilitating dialogue between local and foreign artworks.

In contrast with the *River* exhibition, which made grand statements about the ideals of reshaping New Asian arts, the *Lord of the Rim* exhibition was started to elaborate, with a fine feminine touch, the curator's personal experience. Chang first talked about the five years she spent in New York and Tokyo before moving back to Taiwan. She then narrowed the focus and spoke about the geographic relationship of Hsin Chuang, where the exhibition was held, to Taipei. "Twenty minutes from Taipei by car, Hsin Chuang is a very unique town."[38] She went on to cite the analytical comparison presented in the Studies of the Immigrant Population in Taipei County by Hsin-Huang Hsiao, trying to highlight the differences between the city and county of Taipei. Starting from the first two paragraphs, the curator plotted out her discursive strategy of core versus rim, as she moved around a geographic space. Her curatorial discourse shifted continuously from the Pacific Basin to the Taipei Basin's Hsin Chuang.

In the curator's eyes, a slew of randomly disposed "materials, machines and half-finished products," as well as "forms of manual labor" and "residential and factory spaces" constituted the primary cultural characteristics of Hsin Chuang's landscape.[39] At the intersection of these three characteristics sat the textile and garment industries of Hsin Chuang. The curatorial statement then presented the leading characters of the exhibition. "The majority of human resources in the textile and garment industries is composed of women, whose pursuit of self-consciousness and self-identity coincides, though through different approaches, with the self-perfection of a marginal community. Seven female artists have been invited for that reason."[40] This show, however, cannot be entirely simplified to a debate over gender politics. It also touched on "issues not unfamiliar to contemporary art, such as the elite versus the masses, craft versus pure art, individual creation versus mass production, and esthetic space versus social space."[41] With a writing tactic of constantly searching for differences and staying closely interconnected, the curator gradually clarified her explicit position regarding *In Herself/For Herself* in the curatorial statement.

Figure 5. Japanese artist Shimada Yoshiko invited local women to join her in sewing *1000 Red Knots* at the exhibition *Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself* (1997)

If the drawing of the New Asian art diagram in the *River* show drew on the educational function of the school apparatus, the planning of the *Lord of the Rim* definitely re-drew the disciplinary diagram of the factory apparatus. Along the theme of *In Herself/For Herself*, four female artists from Taiwan started the creation of their exhibited works by interviewing the women of Hsin Chuang. They "asked them about the relationship between cloth and the body, between humans and the body, and between labor and management, as well as asking about the power structure of gender in their industry."[42] The artists then extracted material from their interviews to create works echoing the exhibition theme. The curatorial apparatus relied on frequent interviews and interactions in an attempt to call out the collective suffering of women and develop sister-like friendships between female artists. Among others, Mali Wu took action to weave a *Story of the Women of Hsin Chuang* with local female workers; Shimada Yoshiko invited local females to sew *1000 Red Knots* jointly; and Lichuan Huang encouraged collective participation in her workshop, called "Yarns of Remembrance" (fig. 5). All these works can be seen as partial reproductions of the disciplinary diagram of the factory apparatus. What made the difference though, is that, after first reproducing it, *Lord of the Rim* challenged and criticized the power implication of this diagram. This is the success of the curatorial apparatus' presenting the exhibition.

On the other hand, the curatorial apparatus also functioned quite effectively in the sense of production. The power and reality of feminist art have been constantly confirmed by the shared installation terms among participants, the joint efforts of females in the hand-made process, and the many blessings to celebrate in female life. In *From Sexual Politics to Lord of the Rim* (1998), Ying-ying Chien mentioned the unique rituals and events that were carefully organized by the curator. "They let the works of non-local artists take root and become localized, while providing treatment and blessings for the injured soul, body and land."[43] Japan's Yoshiko and South Korea's Ahn Pil-Yun both completed their works at the exhibiting site through personal participation and live performances. As for Judy Chicago from the United States, a special arrangement was made for her by the exhibition.

If the River show had the potential risk of admiring art "suzerainty," *Lord of the Rim* expressed this admiration without any disguise. The beginning of the curatorial statement, published in *Artist Magazine*, stated:

> As Lords of the Rim, seven female artists from the Pacific Rim will join in this dialogue with Hsin Chuang. The six Asian artists in the group salute Judy Chicago, and hope the presentation will inspire people to care for their cities.[44]

The feminist ideas and practices of Chicago, who long ago established her position in modern art history, are undoubtedly representative of pioneering work in the field. In her curatorial statement, Chang talked about Chicago, saying "her participation in this exhibition can be seen as a declaration of intent, as well as providing our theme with some historical context."[45] To have "Judy gather with Asian artists to exhibit in Hsin Chuang makes a fairy tale in exhibition culture come true."[46] The "historic context" traced the exhibit's headwaters to, and made a connection with, the first generation of feminist art. The "declaration of intent" linked the exhibition to the American feminist art movement, stating a clear position for the exhibit in terms of its ideas and practices. Chicago responded to the "fairytale" by sending some of her older works to the exhibition. She did not join the collective creation process in Hsin Chuang, but held a simultaneous solo exhibit in Taipei. The curatorial apparatus originally planned to showcase only Chicago's older pieces, without her participating in the collective events, with an intention of bringing "historic context" and a "declaration of intent" into play. This plan, however, aroused criticism for "not considering the uniqueness of the exhibiting site by showing only older works."[47]

Chicago's art mostly featured "white, middle-class, educated women."[48] Even without taking this into account, the intense contrast between the exhibiting sites of the simultaneous exhibitions, a commercial gallery in Taipei vis-à-vis the City Cultural Center of Hsin Chuang, broke the multi-layered arrangement diligently put into place by the curatorial apparatus. All the strategies defined in the curatorial statement to differentiate between social classes, and between urban and rural and high and low art, collapsed. We may glance through the show to discover the evolution of the *Rim* diagram, which turned and reversed along its way from the other end of the Pacific Rim and eventually returned to its origin.

In both the *River* and *Lord of the Rim* exhibitions, the curatorial apparatus tried to create an atmosphere for international art dialogue by identifying a theme of shared vision and partnering with artists from areas of geopolitical significance. However, the diagrams prepared by either the New Asia or Pacific Rim apparatus preset a ritual subject. All participants, including artists, audience members, staff and curators, were invited to a sacred ritual site. As in a space of liminality, as defined by Carol Duncan,[49] the curatorial apparatus triggered a moment when morality and rationality were disconnected. The participant shook off the burden of secularity and the real world, and collectively fulfilled the meaning intended and recalled by the exhibitions through various spiritual rituals and imaginary actions. The role or function played by the audience was to take part in a flow of symbols and meanings. Yet Taiwan art, while standing in this flow, still had its own blind spots.

IV

Subsequent to these two exhibitions, another curated show that attempted to build up international exhibition systems in Taiwan was the 1998 Taipei Biennial. According to Man-Li Lin, director of the TFAM, this was the first international biennial organized in Taiwan by an international curator (Fumio Nanjo) with a clearly defined theme and a purposely-emphasized Asian perspective.[50] The following is an analysis from those three perspectives.

The show had *Site of Desire* as its theme, and before its conclusion the curator discussed, but with little detail, the show's concept. In an essay of merely five hundred words, Nanjo briefly described his curatorial motive for using "desire" (fig. 6) as the keyword for the exhibition.[51] As he elaborated neither on the connectivity between the theme and the exhibited works, nor on the

interconnectivity of the artwork itself, the exhibit was repeatedly questioned by Taiwan critics during its showing.[52] It was three months after the exhibition had ended before Nanjo finally extended his essay into a curatorial statement published in a special publication for the biennial. In this statement, Nanjo first listed a number of factors that might stir human desires and then pointed to the phenomenon and possibility of targeting Asian cities as sites of desire. As for the meaning of his statement's title "Palimpsestus Urbanus" (Palimpsest urbanism), he provided the following explanation:

> During the European medieval period, parchment was a rare expensive commodity. A palimpsest refers to a parchment that has been used, scraped, and re-used. With time, there were instances where the previous texts became faintly visible through the surface layer of writing. Here "urbanus" is the Latin term for "urban." This term also carries the meaning of "urbane," a term used in modern English to refer to a person who is refined, educated, polished, or one who is multitalented and knowledgeable, or-at time-one who is shameless, audacious. While unquestionably the active development of Asian cities has been brought about on the one hand by modern western technology, democratic philosophies and economic systems, on the other hand, lower layers of distinctive traditional cultures and traditions still remain. In the midst of contemporary cultural symbols, these traditions are either clearly revealed, metaphorically manifested, or suppressed. Thus, metaphorically, these city phenomena are like giant palimpsests.[53]

This explanation perhaps could help us understand how the contextual interrelationship between Asia and other issues was addressed and connected in the curatorial discourse. As a medium of meaning, palimpsests assumed the same importance as the scope of Asia defined by the curator. "The Asian city is both a labyrinth of desire and a many layered palimpsest."[54] Obviously, the word "urbanus" referred to a kind of new urbanism that was perceived by Nanjo as an issue in tackling the cultural and political topics of globalization. The connotation of many terms mentioned in the statement, all related to urbanism but not interrelated, implied an open style of writing. Throughout his statement, the curator apparently attempted to develop a multi-layered and multidimensional discussion space around the exhibition theme, rather than interpret the show from a single perspective view. On this palimpsest, then, what diagram would the curatorial apparatus draw?

Another focal point emphasized by the TFAM for the biennial was its appeal to an Asian perspective, an approach different from those adopted in biennials held in other countries. What was an Asian perspective? "The Biennale was organized with a regional focus and artists were specifically chosen from the areas of Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan, which make up the heart of Northeast Asia. Despite the vast geographical area and seemingly disparate cultures of this region, shared historical experiences create common identities worth exploring. More importantly these areas also share a similar fate as they face the onslaught of Western capitalism and culture in the process of modernization," explained Man-Li Lin.[55]

The reason, as explained, that the TFAM picked four Northeast Asian nations for the biennial was their shared cultural heritage and similar experiences in facing the impact of Western modernization. Was this common experience only shared by people from these Northeast Asian areas? Was it not shared, for instance, by people from Singapore? Or, was it appropriate to put Japan, an economy equivalent to the U.S. or Europe, on the same footing with the three other developing nations, in terms of modernization experience? In a dual mode of tradition versus modernization, a tendency of over-simplification was perhaps quite evident. Nanjo echoed the TFAM's policy in the short essay published before the exhibition. "Tradition is being reexamined and reborn as well as being creatively transmitted. Western modernity is learned from, studied, copied, and denied."[56] This idea was elaborated in his post-exhibition curatorial statement:

Figure 6. Liu Shih-Fen, *The Multiple Sophism of Skin and Membranes*, 1998. From the 1998 Taipei Biennale *Site of Desire*. Courtesy of the Taipei Art Museum

> Originally, Modernism advocated formalism and the universal and was indifferent to such cultural questions as context, difference, locality and tradition. For this, Modernism has been justifiably criticized, however, the question remains: how does the vernacular art which needs to be interpreted according to an individual cultural context become a language universally accepted amongst other cultures? Given the diversity of arts which are born in a multiplicity of contexts, including those of the West, in the future will we gain an understanding of those various arts only through translation, in the same manner as we read a translated book?[57]

The curator appeared to share the same Asian perspective as the TFAM in questioning and criticizing Western modernism and its advocated universality. However, when speaking of Asian modernization, Nanjo believed that "the regions of Asia have not experienced a unified form of Modernization. Modernization has progressed in different ways, depending on the cultural and social conditions present in each country."[58] In other words, modernization could not rationalize the great similarity of the regions. He explained why artists from China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan are linked together. "It is because they share two common experiences, one being Confucianism and another being Chinese characters, which are or were used by all of them."[59] In Nanjo's mind, it was Confucianism and Chinese characters that connected the Northeast Asian nations. What kind of role did modernization play in this artistic system centered on Chinese culture?

Basically, the Asian diagram depicted by Nanjo continues the tradition of modern Japanese thought since Okakura Kakuzo (1862-1963) advocated the concept of "Asia as One" in the *Ideas of the East* (1903).[60] This concept has been a unique complex of the twentieth-century Japanese people in their constant change of thought between "leaving Asia" and "leading Asia." To leave or to lead? These thoughts, however, were the ideological products of modern Japan in response to Western invasion. Naturally, the resulting "Asia Complex," which differs fundamentally from other nations' views of Asia, should not be separated from the discussion of Japan's modernization.

Japan has, in fact, taken a route that is different from other Asian countries' in its modernization drive. Looking back at the developments of modern history, it is clear that Japan tried to transcend China in completing its modernization project. During the process, Japan's intention was to replace China and become a modern power contending with the West. Consequently, regional order in Asia was held in the hands of China, Japan and the Western powers. A recent study of the East Asian tributary system by Hamashita Taketmomo offers an appropriate perspective for looking at the circumstances. As a scholar specializing in the modern economic history of China, Taketmomo suggests that no nation-state has ever existed in East Asia. The historical experiences of the region were composed of transnational trade networking based on tributary routes. In an international order with China at its center, Chinese was not an exclusive concept for China. Both Korea and Vietnam once believed that they were inheritors of the Chinese heritage. Japan's modernization can be viewed as a process in which Japan tried to break down the relationship of "paying tribute and receiving a grant," in order to lead the conceptual Chinese region. Such concepts as "leaving Asia for Europe" and a "Greater East Asia Prosperity Sphere" were established in reaction to the system of China versus Barbarians. The purpose was not to destroy the system, but to totally replace China and take over its center position.[61]

From this perspective, we can see that Japan has actually carried out its modernization program within a highly unstable international order. In its drive for modernization, "Asia as One" has never been a fixed concept. Rather, it has constantly adapted its role and scope to the changing international order. For instance, the concept was used as the foundation for expansion theories, such as the Greater East Asia Prosperity Sphere. Japan has, therefore, experienced a unique process of modernization.

In his curatorial statement, Nanjo criticized the Western modernity and modernism. On the other hand, he based the interconnection of four Asian nations on Chinese culture, without addressing the theme of utmost important—*Site of Desire*—in a specific and in-depth manner. As a result, the curatorial concept was left in a dim and somewhat dangerous position. It is understandable that the TFAM did what it could to integrate the region with a strategy of finding common ground in difference and transforming the Taipei Biennial into an international event.[62] What is regrettable, though, was that the curator failed to support his statement with more detailed and convincing arguments, disregarding the fundamental differences in the geographic region of East Asia.[63]

In addition to the clearly defined theme and purposely-emphasized Asian perspective, the TFAM highlighted the third focal point of the Biennial, i.e. it was the first international exhibition organized by an international curator in Taiwan. Inviting curators from abroad to organize exhibitions definitely marks a significant change as we look at the evolution of the Taipei exhibition mechanism. The TFAM has improved its method of gaining curatorial experience, knowledge and expertise, moving from "learning by doing" to "learning by interacting." Apart from being involved in research programs by international curators and in the production plans of international artists, the TFAM curatorial apparatus has actively gathered state-of-the-art information from overseas to enhance its processing techniques. Man-Li Lin also accentuated the positive implications of working with international curators:

> While it is not unusual for overseas art museums and institutions to work with curators from different nations, it is still a breakthrough for the TFAM to join hands with international curators. To achieve a more competitive future for Taiwan in the international art arena, we need to have extensive international connections, work more closely with international curators and prepare more actively with our own curators. All these efforts, which supplement each other, should be carried out simultaneously and with urgency. The cooperation we have experienced between the TFAM and

> international curators provides not only an excellent opportunity for the museum staff to observe and learn, but a multi-layered discussion space, as presented through exhibition, for Taiwan society as a whole.[64]

Most local critics approved of the international perspective of the Biennial in terms of who were invited to exhibit and how exhibiting space was arranged and planned.[65] Their attention, however, focused on how curators were picked by the TFAM, how exhibits were handled by international curators and how experienced they were, as well as on how much "expertise" could be transferred to Taiwan.[66] Obviously, the core value of the changes in exhibition mechanism, which were fundamental to this Biennial, should be whether the curatorial apparatus had acquired better capability in exhibition development and product innovation after importing internationally recognized expertise.

It is likely that little will be found in the TFAM's documentation if we try to look into the technical aspects of curating the Biennial. Only a short description was offered in the curatorial statement regarding the selection of the theme. Nanjo briefly revealed the process of choosing artists in a media interview.

The first step was to conduct a field survey, followed by visits to artists. When the theme was decided, I immediately asked the artists to put forward their creative ideas for the show. I spent a full day in Taipei meeting publicly with those artists who were not yet chosen for the exhibition, making sure that no one who deserved a spot would be left out. Thirty-six artists showed up in Taipei with their portfolios for an interview. In total, I studied the works of about fifty artists. Similar procedures were followed in other locations. Most importantly, the proposals submitted by artists had to properly match the requirements of the theme.[67]

This selection process was different from those adopted by the curators of the 1996 Taipei Biennial, and the *River* and *Lord of the Rim* exhibitions. Based on his own knowledge and experience, Nanjo first sent invitations to those artists whose works he believed were appropriate for the show. Unlike the previous three exhibitions, the 1998 Biennial altered the traditional way of calling for artists to submit their portfolios through advertising in magazines. On January 14, 1998, the curatorial apparatus announced an "Open Interview" on page 18 of the *United Daily News*. "Any artists interested in sharing their creative thinking face-to-face with Fumio Nanjo, please prepare a portfolio with slides and documentation of five to ten works created in the last ten years." Each candidate was to be given an opportunity to meet with Nanjo personally at the TFAM after an appointment was made with the museum. It is understandable that a visiting curator had to rely on an "open interview" to deal with the disadvantage of not being fully engaged with local artists, so that nothing worthy was left out. What deserves further exploration is the role played by the curatorial apparatus during the entire interview process.

If we compare the different ways of calling for artists used by the two biennials, we will find that the interview announcement was actually a strategy of condescension to mobilize artists for collective participation.[68] With the enthusiastic slogan: "Let's work together to create art for Taiwan," the 1996 Biennial called on artists to send their portfolios to the organizing committee and join the team of Taiwan art creators.[69] In the 1998 interview announcement, however, artists seeking a spot in the exhibition first read such statements as, the "TFAM has invited internationally acclaimed Japanese curator Fumio Nanjo to take charge of selecting and curating" and "Although he has been in contact with a number of Taiwan artists, Mr. Nanjo is anxious to find more works

by Taiwan artists." A difference of position in social space was suggested in these sentences. The announcement then invited those artists to share their creative thinking face-to-face with Nanjo. The sharing of ideas with an "internationally acclaimed" curator, a decision maker with a higher position in social space, translated a fierce competition and selection process into a peaceful, humble and charitable event. When the social distance between him and those artists was removed symbolically, the curator was able to reap the accumulated benefits resulting from this proximity in conducting his interviews.

During the interviews, the curator reemployed the skills perfected by his predecessors hundreds of years ago. Imagine the procedures a collection custodian (called a "curator" then) had to go through in the old days as he sat in a dim corner of a museum warehouse to scrupulously review and read through documents. At his disposal were the materials in the warehouse, some of which could be included in the existing collection system. In rare cases, some artifacts might not be readily added to an existing category.

It has been a responsibility of, and a challenge to, curators to name, categorize and organize rare artifacts, enabling them to be placed in the proper collections. Well-informed curators with acute perception, plus a comprehensive, categorized system built up over years, have played their roles in establishing new knowledge and managing new orders. While the existing categorized system helps people understand certain objects, would it also prevent people from discovering other new objects? How could a curator decide which work should be included and which should be left out for the time being? Does this process of examination conceal some kind of operation by museums to shape the truth?[70]

The up-to-date techniques imported by the curatorial apparatus went completely beyond the imagination of an old-fashioned collection custodian painstakingly rummaging through collectables. During face-to-face sessions to share creative ideas, the curatorial apparatus preset a topic about which artists could express their desires. The interviewees believed that they might be able to secure an opportunity to exhibit their works by going through this confession process. As the criteria stated that "proposals submitted by artists had to properly match the requirements of the theme," artists whose works were objects of knowledge had to make themselves known to others or even remold themselves to fit the theme. This process also conceals some kind of governing technique designed to guide the behavior of artists.[71] The application of this governing technique was not limited to the *Open Interviews*. We may get a glimpse of how it worked in an account by one of the exhibiting artists: "I have no clue why he picked me. I haven't even made one single piece of exhibition or installation art before." Shih-Fen Liu said that she was unclear about her own characteristics, strengths, or where she was heading. Suddenly, here was an opportunity for her to deal with a space. What Nanjo told her then unlocked a crucial door for her to think about creation and presentation. That was something that had never crept into her mind—the preciseness of chosen material. She recalled Nanjo's words that her works had made him extremely nervous, so that he almost had a breakdown. Shih-Fen Liu was asked to make an exhibition proposal related to the theme of desire. Out of their discussion came the most critical material chosen by Liu for her next few successful pieces. That material was bone.[72]

What forces drive an artist to move from a two-dimensional form of art to the unfamiliar territory of an installation? What we have found tells us that the training function of a curatorial apparatus can rework the way an artist is educated. A gifted individual might bypass each checkpoint set up by art schools and follow a less impeded avenue paved by the curatorial apparatus. By going

through an interview, a less experienced artist might be granted an invitation right away. A curator could take from the session any creative elements he or she needs for the exhibition. An exhibition site turns into a lab of artistic creation and learning. With the curator's assistance, artists are directed and forged to create for the exhibition. As a result, their works tend to be intimately tied to the exhibition theme and even become a key component for people to use in identifying their style in the future.

Moreover, artists are considered resources. No longer will a curatorial apparatus passively accept what artists have to offer. It will, instead, actively request that artists produce what is appropriate to the theme. What needs to be taken into account is the utility of an artist. Based on his or her confession, the curator sorts out the useful information needed to judge if he or she can contribute to the exhibition. Any other volubly uttered life, working and emotional experiences only make sense when deemed helpful to the show. In this sense, governing also means determining and constraining one's range of behavior. As the curatorial apparatus spatializes its subjects, artists are archived, labeled, categorized and even directed in their creation in a categorized system designed by curators. An artist becomes a trained and self-tamed docile body.

Thus, body, power and desire comprise a bio-political relationship of curation. "The body is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs."[73] By defining the theme, the curatorial apparatus exerts its desire to temper, train and condition the body. Most works included in the Biennial were installation art, the same as Shih-fen Liu's. Nanjo approximated that there were more than ten pieces that were completed as "site-specific." He believed that site-specific works fit into an exhibiting space extremely well, and could even accent the architectural features of a museum building. Art critic Hai-Ming Huang spoke highly of Nanjo's detailed "spatial thinking" in organizing and planning the exhibition space.[74] Yet, some critics still had questions about the exhibited works. For example, Jui-Jen Shih thought many works ended up with a comedic spirit, although most of them employed the techniques of criticizing and satirizing. Yung-Chih Lu pointed out, in a pink colored site of desire, that most works on display showed a sweet and supple attitude of submission toward material desires, and a pleasant sense of security under cultural authority.[75] Chien-Hui Kao even targeted and criticized the TFAM for attaching too much importance to Nanjo's curatorial experience while downplaying his curatorial ideas, leaving the site of desire as a "trap" in which Taiwan artists spun around such social issues as sex, death, violence and a doomsday desire.[76] In this respect, it seems that the Northeast Asian diagram of international curation has tamed Taiwan into an obedient but productive position.

V

In the same year that the 1998 Taipei Biennial was held, another exhibition entitled Inside Out: New Chinese Art, curated by the Chinese scholar Gao Minglu, took place in the United States. This was the latest achievement of Taiwan art in a different curatorial context. The exhibit, comprised of works by artists from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, only presented the art history of Mainland China, without mentioning that of Hong Kong or Taiwan.[77] In Gao's opinion, the word *huaren* used in the exhibition title was a political compromise. He did not like the connotations of "low-class" and "marginal" that were suggested by the word.[78] In this sense, the subject position of "Taiwan Chinese" in the exhibition was the same as that of "Singapore-Malaysian Chinese" or "European Chinese." *Huaren* here simply refers to the different dialect groups of immi-

grant Chinese settled in different regions. These Chinese share a common past with China. Some might have specific languages, but they do not have their own history and identity. In Taiwan, as the localized movement in the Taiwan art community faded away in the early 1990s, the Chinese art discourse emerged with ethnic identity as a strategy. Its development can be traced by looking at the shift in painting's market focus in Taiwan, the growth and decline of art magazines, and the fever for China's avant-garde art. Further studies on the subject will require more extensive work. Given the limited space of this thesis, the subject will have to wait for the future to be addressed in-depth.

Based on previous analysis, exploring, analyzing and comparing regional art, whether it be Asian, Asian-Pacific or Northeast Asian art, appears to be the area that Taiwan has the most pressing current need to delve into while organizing international contemporary art exhibitions. Traditionally, Taiwan has favored European and North American artists in apprehending and understanding world contemporary art. It has ignored and disregarded the achievements of its neighbors, causing the prevailing potential problem of making inane discourses regarding regional art exhibitions. How can this narrow-minded view of international art communications be expanded? How can the differences between economically advanced and artistically advanced cultures be discerned? Or, how can a field be opened, between international and local studies, for comparative studies of regional contemporary art? The author ardently expects answers to these questions.

Although the analysis made in this thesis has involved curators, artists and artworks, it is not the purpose of this thesis to make aesthetic value judgments or conduct empirical research on them. Additionally, the discussion about the subject position of Taiwan art does not imply that curatorial apparatuses will necessarily induce defects or blind spots. As compared with the traditional way of organizing exhibitions, curatorial apparatuses still offer advantages in utility, functionality and flexibility. The concept of the curatorial apparatus is brought up within a more precise frame of analysis, in an attempt to replace the mindset of determining the success of an exhibition by examining one single curator, and the psychological tendency of counting too much on curators. It is also anticipated that the current static method of visual art criticism, emphasizing post-exhibit effect, will be expanded to a dynamic strategic analysis to include pre-exhibit operations. Similar to the case study approach frequently used in teaching business management, this dynamic method is for curators to observe, make reference to and learn. Within a curatorial apparatus, sponsors, artists, staff, audience members and curators are all participants in an exhibition. Each individual participant has a little power. In the center of power stands the curator responsible for coming up with a curatorial concept. We can view, through the curatorial discourse, how the exhibiting space, works and bodies are deployed, and the visibility of artistic creation.

It seems, therefore, that using the curatorial apparatus as a frame of analysis goes more in line with how power is exerted in exhibit curation. Nonetheless, this frame still has many problems: Does the curatorial apparatus aim at creating visibility for artistic creation or for exhibition publicity? How could it become the major approach for organizing Taiwan contemporary art exhibitions in such a short period of time? How does it relate to the concurrent popularity of installation art? Is it possible that there are still some other ways of curating? All these issues require further study.

NOTES

This thesis was presented at the 24th National Comparative Literature Symposium, Taiwan and published in the *Chung-Wai Literature*. Moreover, part of it was written as a critical essay and published in the "Arts Section" of the *China Times*.

[1] Meanwhile, a limited number of exhibitions were curated for art museums with specific focuses of study. For instance, *Dis/Continuity: Religion, Shamanism, Nature* curated by Hai-Ming Huang as a critic for the TFAM in 1992. The first example of a government institute inviting curators to run exhibitions and keeping the mechanism running for years was the Art Exhibition of Taipei County, which, beginning in 1994, was held for four consecutive shows. As the County Art Exhibitions from 1994 through 1996 were not listed as international contemporary art exhibits, they are therefore not included in our discussion.

[2] The term "curator" originally referred to a museum collection administrator or Catholic Church custodian, whose major responsibility was to collect, categorize and study artifact holdings. Now the term is also translated as "exhibition organizer" in Taiwan. Based on the evolution of his role, organizing an exhibition is just one of the many jobs a curator performs, and it is quite a new one. When used in this thesis, the term specifically refers to "independent curators" who are not associated with any museum and who are responsible for organizing modern art exhibitions. Although its meaning is different in the context of museum studies, we will not hesitate to use the term as it is commonly used in today's Taiwan art community. See Velson C. Horie, "What is a curator?" *The International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 5, no. 3 (September 1986): 267-72; Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship*. Leicester: University Press, 1990), 53-107.

[3] Those conferences and seminars include "Exhibit Curation – A Seminar on Museum Practices" sponsored by the National Museum of History in 1997, as well as the "Conference of World Chinese Art Curators" and "Developing A New Network of Asian Art: An International Conference of Contemporary Asian Art Curatorship" sponsored by the Taiwan Museum of Art in 1998 and 1999 respectively.

[4] For this verbal statement, see an editorial published in the June 1996 issue of the *Hsiung-Shih Art Monthly* and stories published on May 8, 1996 in the *China Times*, *Liberty Times,* and *Min Sheng Daily*. No written statement of resignation was released by Chang.

[5] A few critics held a symposium "When Will the Sky Be Blue and Clear?" to discuss the event. By reviewing the local artistic environment and exploring the possibilities for a sound and healthy system, participants believed that the event also provided an opportunity to develop a new mechanism. See the stories published on May 1, 1996 in the *United Daily News*, *China Times*, and *Min Sheng Daily*.

[6] A debate on Taiwan art localization issues, carried on in the *Hsiung-Shih Art Monthly* since April 1991, was initiated by Tsai-Chin Ni with an essay entitled "Western Art, Made in Taiwan: A Criticism of Taiwan Modern Art." The debate ended in February 1993 when Hsing-Yueh Lin published *Art Localization: Explanations and Statements*. See Yu-Ching Yeh, *The Taiwan Identity in Taiwan Art* (Taipei: Hsiung Shih Art Books Co. Ltd., 1994).

[7] Besides being responsive to critics' discussions, art museums' active involvement in building Taiwan art history had an indirect effect on the emerging Taiwan art auction market. In December 1990, for the first time in the history of Taiwan, a public art auction run by an auction firm took place, as the Chuan-Chia Art Company launched its auction of Taiwan art collections. Christie's Hong Kong Ltd. opened its Taipei office the following year and held its first auction in 1993. During that period, there appeared to be a correlation between the items auctioned by auctioneers and those displayed by art museums to sort out the art history of Taiwan. This is another topic worthy of further discussion.

[8] Sponsors of this exhibition included America's Asian Cultural Council, Japan's Interchange Association and Shiseido Co., Ltd., and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Moreover, among the speakers invited to seminars organized by the curatorial apparatus, were Vishakha N. Desai (Deputy Director, Asian Cultural Council), Oscar H. K. Ho (Director, Hong Kong Arts Center), Takashi Serizawa (Director, P3 Art and Environment), Danny Yung (Director, Arts Center, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), and Hsing-Yueh Lin (Instructor, National Art Institute).

[9] Hai-Ming Huang, "Thoughts on the First Biennial," *Hsiung-Shih Art Monthly* 257 (January1992): 90-93.

[10] The most famous statement in this literature of martyrdom was a paid announcement published in *Artist Magazine* by eight members of "Beyond the Canvas" for eight consecutive issues from October 1993 through May 1994. As indicated in its title: "Impugning the TFAM's Taiwan Art (1945-1993) Exhibition as Being Abusive, Arbitrary, Abrupt, Unfair and a Distortion of History," the announcement expressed its authors' sarcasm and criticism through text and pictures. All eight people who authored the announcement put their signatures on it.

[11] See Hsien-Ming Lu, "The Biennial and the High Morale," *Artist Magazine* 256 (September 1996): 347-350; Ying-Wei Chen "Examining the Social Aspects of Taiwan's Cultural Emotions and Realistic Strategy: A Perspective on the 1996 Biennial Perspective," *Artist Magazine* 256 (September 1996): 350-354.

[12] Chien-Hui Kao, "Fist and Pillow: A Special Art Zone – A Response to the Nature of the 1998 Taipei Biennial," *Artist Magazine* 257 (October 1996): 418-421.

[13] Hai-Ming Huang, "The Taiwan Identity Biennial: Is It Just a Thoughtless Ritual?" *Artist Magazine* 259 (October 1996): 416.

[14] Ibid., 411.

[15] Ibid., 416-417.

[16] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1987), 351-423.

[17] The word "apparatus" is translated from the French word *dispositif* used by Foucault. *Dispositif* originally meant equipment, scheme, or device. As there is no exact equivalent in English, the translator of Foucault's works translated it as "apparatus". Foucault defines dispositif as follows: "As long as people can successfully isolate the strategy holding together the relations between knowledge and power, they will have dispositif." See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow eds., *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 121. See also Gilles Deleuze's discussion for the meaning and usage of the term by Foucault. Translated and edited by Sean Hand (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988), 159-68.

[18] Hai-Ming Huang, "The Taiwan Identity Biennial: Is It Just a Thoughtless Ritual?" *Artist Magazine* 259 (October 1996): 408.

[19] Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow eds., *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 191.

[20] Ibid., 211-212.

[21] "Contemporary Issues" was comprised of four sub-sections. Among which, "Identity and Memories" was divided into Historical Statues, Living Memories, Cultural Identities, and From Ancestry to World Identities; "Visual Dialogue" into Color and Texture, Form and Diagram, Spatial Structure, Time and History, Geographic Location and Ethnic Groups, and Information and Media; "Sexuality and Power" into Feminism, Sexuality, Gender Identity, and Body Sovereignty. See Yu-Lin Li., *The 1996 Biennial: The Quest for Identity* (A Special Publication) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1996).

[22] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 207.

[23] Ibid., 73.

[24] Nicholas Jose and Wen-I Yang eds., *Art Taiwan: The Contemporary Art of Taiwan* (Sydney: Gordon and Breach, 1995).

[25] Pey-Chwen Lin, "Voiceless Taiwan Art, Voiceless Taiwan Female Art," *Artist Magazine* 258 (November 1996): 315.

[26] Yuan-Chien Chang, "An Unfocused Gathering: The Second Contemporary Art Triennial in the Asian-Pacific Region," *Artist Magazine* 258 (November 1996): 320.

[27] J.J. Shih, "*River* Exhibition: A Dialogue at Four Alluvial Mouths of One River System," *Artist Magazine* 269 (October 1997): 366.

[28] Ibid., 366-367.

[29] Ibid., 367.

[30] In addition to *Voyeurism* displayed in the Hsin Chuang Cultural Center, Ahn Pil-Yun also performed action art at the exhibiting site.

[31] Heather Tomlinson, "Design and Reform: the 'Separate System' in the Nineteen-century English Prison," *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*, ed. Anthony D. King (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980): 94-119.

[32] J.J. Shih, "*River*: New Asian Art: A Dialogue in Taipei," *River: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei, 1997 Taipei County Art Exhibition* (Taipei County: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1997): 6.

[33] Ichi Ikeda, "Arching Ark – A Voyage to Taipei," *River: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei, 1997 Taipei County Art Exhibition* (Taipei County: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1997): 122.

[34] J.J. Shih, "*River*: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei," in *River: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei, 1997 Taipei County Art Exhibition* (Taipei County: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1997): 12.

[35] Ibid., 8.

[36] According to the curatorial statement, seven out of sixteen exhibited works were installation art. One example was Ti-Nan Chi's Information River: "The interaction of the sensor mechanism and the blue florescent light also allows the artist to present two different atmospheric experiences for day/night, with different meanings." See J.J. Shih, "*River*: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei," *River: New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei, 1997 Taipei County Art Exhibition* (Taipei County: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1997): 13. *Floating Island* by Shih-Yung Ku was another example: "This work is similarly a space installation in which the participation of the audience is an important element in the development of meaning."

[37] J.J. Shih, "Diagnosing Desires in Art Fields," *Artist Magazine* 279 (August 1998): 339.

[38] Yuan-Chien Chang, "*Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself*," *Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself* (A Special Publication) (Taipei County: Hsin Chuang City, 1998): 6.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 7.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ying-ying Chien, "From Sexual Politics to Lord of the Rim," *United Literature Monthly* 162 (April 1998): 132.

[44] When the curatorial statement was published by *Artist Magazine* in January 1998, this opening paragraph was in bold print to enhance visibility. But in an exhibition album published in February 1998, the paragraph was replaced by a dialogue with a female worker from Hsin Chuang.

[45] Yuan-Chien Chang, "*Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself*," *Lord of the Rim: In Herself/For Herself* (A Special Publication) (Taipei County: Hsin Chuang City, 1998), 8.

[46] Ying-ying Chien, "From Sexual Politics to Lord of the Rim," *United Literature Monthly* 162 (April 1998): 341.

[47] Yung-Chih Lu, "Installation Art: Of Whom and For Whom?" *Artist Magazine* 273 (February 1998): 362.

[48] This was a comment made by Ying-ying Chien on *The Dinner Party*. Her original remarks read: "If we re-examine and reconsider *The Dinner Party* from an Asian/Asian American woman's perspective, the obvious disappointment is not its overemphasis on female symbols (i.e. sex organs and anything related to female functions such as dinnerware and crafts like embroidering, china-painting), but its complete ignorance of Asian women, goddesses and other minority females, who are excluded from the creation process and the final products. As a Jewish American, Judy's art apparently features white, middle-class, educated women" See Ying-ying Chien, "Sexual Politics Reemerges: Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* and Feminist Art," *United Literature Monthly* 148 (February 1997): 58.

[49] Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995), 11-20.

[50] Man Li-Lin, "Director's Note," *1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire* (A Special Publication) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, November 1998): 11.

[51] Fumio Nanjo, "A Century of Desire – Chief Curator of the 1998 Taipei Biennial: In his Own Words," *Artist Magazine* 277 (June 1998): 374.

[52] See J.J. Shih, "Diagnosing Desires in Art Fields," *Artist Magazine* 279 (August 1998): 340; Hai-Ming Huang, "The 1998 Taipei Biennial: Spatial Thinking for the *Site of Desire*," *Modern Art* 79 (August 1998): 3.

[53] Fumio Nanjo, "Palimpsestus Urbanus," *1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire* (A Special Publication) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, November 1998): 21.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Man Li-Lin, "Director's Note," *1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire* (A Special Publication) (Taiepi: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, November 1998): 11.

[56] Fumio Nanjo, "Palimpsestus Urbanus," *1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire* (A Special Publication) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, November 1998): 17.

[57] Ibid., 20.

[58] Ibid., 21.

[59] Li Liu, "An *Artist Magazine* Interview with Fumio Nanjo: Experiencing the Taipei Biennial," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 309.

[60] See Kakasu Okakura, *The Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1903); Chien-Hui Kao, "Love in a Fallen City – Regional Desire and Curatorial Consciousness under the Asian Heat of the Late 1990s," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 344-351. Critic Chien-Hui Kao's comments implied this distinction and contradiction: "Let us take a realistic view of Taiwan culture from the basic perspective of choosing a curator. It is quite common for museums or institutes in other countries to work with curators from different nations. But if we invite someone from the former colonial power and invading nation to direct an exhibition with a theme about 'Asian cities searching for a post-colonial identity,' we have to admit Taiwan's indifference to national consciousness and self-determination."

[61] Hamashita Taketmomo, *International Opportunities for Modern China: A Tributary System of Trading and A Modern Asian Trading Sphere*, trans. Yin-Gui Zhu and Fei Ouyang (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1999), 46.

[62] See the TFAM announcement published in *Artist Magazine* 251 (April 1996).

[63] Liu said that she was referring to site-specific installations, when stating that she had not "even made one single piece of exhibition or installation art." Prior to the 1998 Taipei Biennial, she had never published a work in the form of a site-specific installation. Most of her works took the forms of two-dimensional painting (e.g. *119 Ways to Read Heart Sounds* [1996]), and three-dimensional mixed media (e.g. *Fable of the Narcissistic Woman, Series: Garden of Eden* [1997] and *Banquet of Daddy* [1998]).

[64] Man-Li Lin, "Director's Note," *1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire* (A Special Publication) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, November 1998): 10.

[65] J.J. Shih, "Diagnosing Desires in Art Fields," *Artist Magazine* 279 (August 1998): 339; Yung-Chih Lu, "The Birth and Death of Desire: A Perspective on the 1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 331; Hai-Ming Huang, "The 1998 Taipei Biennial: Spatial Thinking for the Site of Desire," *Modern Art* 79 (August 1998): 16.

[66] Bing-His Shih, "A New Look for Art in an Affluent and Indulgent Society – Impressions from the 1998 Taipei Biennial," *Modern Art* 79 (August 1998): 25; Chien-Hui Kao, "Love in a Fallen City – Regional Desire and Curatorial Consciousness under the Asian Heat of the Late 1990s," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 344-351; Hai-Ming Huang, "The 1998 Taipei Biennial: Spatial Thinking for the Site of Desire," *Modern Art* 79 (August 1998): 3-16; Yung-Jen Liu, "Desire Without Love, Site of Anxiety: Nanjo's Taipei Biennial," *Artist Magazine* 279 (August 1998): 344-348.

[67] Li Liu, "An *Artist Magazine* Interview with Fumio Nanjo: Experiencing the Taipei Biennial," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 310.

[68] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (1989): 14-25.

[69] I discovered a very innovative curatorial model when observing a private institute's process of selecting curators. A curator based his curatorial concept on the life experience he shared with participating artists. His curatorial statement was written as a long verse. No fixed roles were assigned between the curator and the artists, who constantly alternated their roles as the curatorial apparatus moved ahead.

[70] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museum and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[71] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1980).

[72] Wei-Ching Li, "My Works, My Soliloquies - Shih-Fen Liu," *Artist Magazine* 295 (December 1999): 464.

[73] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 25.

[74] Hai-ming Huang, "The 1998 Taipei Biennial: Spatial Thinking for the *Site of Desire*," *Modern Art* 79 (August 1998): 16.

[75] Yung-Chih Lu, "The Birth and Death of Desire: A Perspective on the 1998 Taipei Biennial – Site of Desire," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 327-331.

[76] Chien-Hui Kao, "Love in a Fallen City – Regional Desire and Curatorial Consciousness under the Asian Heat of the Late 1990s," *Artist Magazine* 278 (July 1998): 345.

[77] Gao Minglu, "Toward a Transnational Modernity: An Overview of Inside Out: New Chinese Art," *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[78] Ibid., 391.

THE SHAPING OF THE CONTEMPORARY TAIWANESE ART WORLD: A REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY TAIWANESE ART EVENTS FROM THE 1980S TO THE PRESENT

HAI-MING HUANG / TRANSLATED BY CHRISTINE CHAN

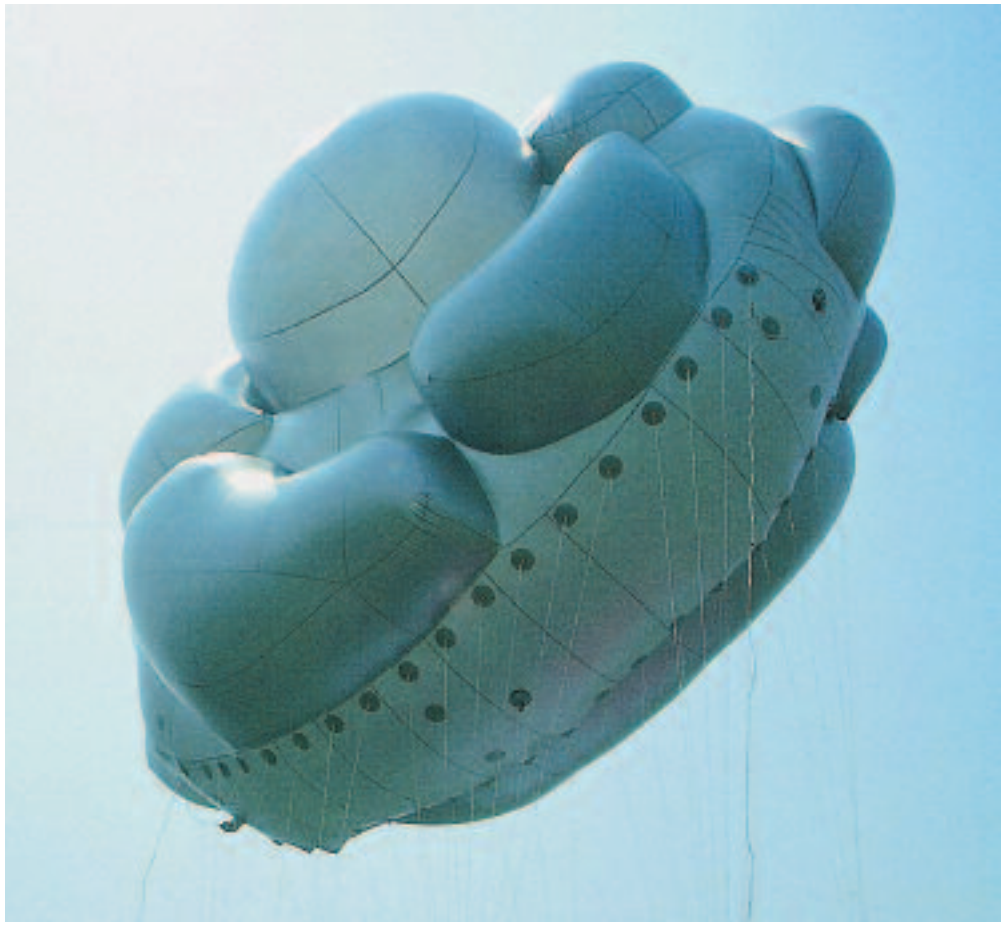


Figure 1. Tsai Shu-Hui, *Auspicious Clouds Brought Good Luck, Seventh Art Exhibition of Taipei County*, 1995. Courtesy of the Taipei County Cultural Center

PROLOGUE

While the situation of contemporary Taiwanese art is rapidly changing, one can still discern a pattern. It is gradually becoming a large organic body—albeit one whose organs and nervous system are not yet well developed. The "art world" in the title of this paper refers to this huge but still loose organic body. Perhaps we can treat the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as two separate periods with the lifting of martial law in 1987 marking a watershed. But it was only after some institutionalized spaces began to confirm the new artistic transformations that we witnessed a massive response from the artists. The 1990s can be divided into an early and a late period. The development began in the late 1990s is still continuing and shows no sign of abatement. If the main driving force came from the new found freedom after the lifting of martial law, the impetus for the later development probably came from extensive contact with the outside world and the opening of alternative artistic spaces. During the last two years, other factors came into consideration. Faced with globalization pressures, especially from mainland China, the government tried to use the creative and cultural industry to enhance our competitive advantage which has lead to a change in artistic focus.

Figure 2.Installation view of the 1996 Taipei Biennale *The Quest for Identity*. Courtesy of *Art & Collection*

As I wrote this paper, I felt excited yet also felt under some pressure. This is a rapidly changing phenomenon—one that has been hardly studied and researched. My role is more of an early participant and agitator in the movement rather than a scholar researching on contemporary art. In this article, I will try to apprehend the past two fast-changing decades and analyze some key events from a distance to see what factors contributed to them and what factors were responsible for bringing about the changes. Since this article uses a chronological approach, the cited events run the risk of reduction. Nevertheless, I think it is useful to draw out some of the main issues that have marked recent art in Taiwan.

SOME MARKERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY TAIWANESE ART: 1980S

The early 1980s brought a number of exhibitions of Chinese and Western artists to Taiwan. They were often abstract, and they tended to be in the modernist tradition. The success of modern painters returning to Taiwan encouraged the emergence of a new generation of artists. A multitude of new talents in contemporary Taiwanese art already appeared on the scene in the early 1980s. The most influential artist was probably Lin Shou-yu, who brought with him the concept of pure abstraction to Taiwan when he returned in 1982. Abstract art with minimalist trends began to influence the new generation. Shown at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (which opened later), it soon became the avant-garde painting style of record in the art academies. The early 1980s also saw the establishment of many new fine arts departments and art graduate schools.

In 1981, the two leading art magazines, *Artist Magazine* and *Hsiung Shih Art Monthly*, published two different art dictionaries. Through these magazines, information about art from Mainland China and overseas became available. Examples include Chen Chuan-xing's long article on Documenta VII and Chen Ying-de's article "The New Free Figurative Painting in the 1980s." Such news about the outside world brought the possibility of change to the conservative Taiwanese art world. Chen Ying-de's reports about Mainland Chinese art brought the first comprehensive introduction of Mainland Chinese art to Taiwan. The humanistic themed and technically outstanding Mainland Chinese works offered another way of looking at society.

However, the more important event was probably the opening of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. Since its opening, its every move has been followed closely by the media. The series of international exchange exhibitions held soon after its opening encouraged further the modernist trend of Taiwanese art. The style of the prize-winning works at the exhibitions organized by the museum under modernist banners also had a decisive impact on the development of Taiwanese art.

The introduction of major modern art exhibitions organized by neighbouring Asian countries brought home to us the backwardness of Taiwan in this respect. For instance, through the *Sino-Japanese Ceramics Exchange Exhibition* in 1981, Taiwanese ceramic artists realized the need to raise the standards of modern ceramics in Taiwan. The *Korean Modern Art Exhibition* in 1984 again made Taiwan artists feel inferior. After 1984—apart from exhibitions—overseas art news came to Taiwan more rapidly and various modern art groups were set up in Taiwan. In terms of the content of art magazines, reports on Western modern art gradually predominated. Most of the contributing writers were painters who went to study abroad during the 1970s. These painters became the main force in propelling the development of Taiwanese modern art after the mid-1980s.

AFTER THE END OF MARTIAL LAW

Figure 3. Yao Jui-Chung, *Territory Take Over* and Wang Jun-Jieh, *Neon Urlaub-Agency Version*, at the Taiwan Pavilion *Taiwan Taiwan: Facing Faces* (1997) Venice Biennale. Courtesy of Yao Jui-Chung

On July 2, 1987, the Executive Yuan passed a motion to declare the end of martial law in Taiwan. This came into force on July 15. This was a momentous year in Taiwanese history, marking the end of the ban on political parties, the end of press censorship, martial law, etc. With fighting within the Legislative Yuan, speculations in the property market, and the granting of permission to visit relatives in Mainland China, 1987 was a turning point. But Taiwanese artists were slow to react to the turbulences in Taiwan's society. Even so, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum presented one large exhibition after another, including *COBRA*, *The Architecture of Charles Moore*, *Modern Art in South California*, *Modern Sculpture of the ROC*, and *Performance and Space*. As Taiwanese avant-garde art surged forward under the sponsorship of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, the new generation tried to enter the museum with exaggerated large-format paintings and installation art. While the Taipei Fine Arts Museum adopted an international approach, private galleries were exhibiting art from Mainland Chinese art even before permission was possible to visit relatives there. The leading Taiwanese artist Yang Mao-lin had challenged the state's authority earlier in his work. After the end of martial law, he immediately painted a series of works depicting DPP heroes fighting the KMT.

Figure 4. Ku Shih-Yung, *Floating Island,* 1997 *River New Asian Art - A Dialogue in Taipei*, Courtesy of Taipei County Cultural Center

In 1988, reports on Mainland Chinese artists—especially the "star" artists—predominated. Developing their artistic vocabulary by exploring life, history and culture, they inspired Taiwanese artists to a certain extent. The Mainland Chinese "fever" coincided with an emphasis on nativism. There was also a proliferation of writing on postmodernism. The book *The Postmodern Art Phenomenon* by Taiwanese critic Victoria Lu brought much inspiration to local artists.

The most important exhibition in 1989 was the show of the Taipei Painting Group at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. It featured large paintings that critiqued the ruling political party. This exhibition revealed how quickly the official museum was to accept alternative voices after the end of martial law.

Other spaces for alternative voices included the small theatres in Taiwan which often criticized contemporary politics on the streets and on campuses, advocating for causes such as preserving Taiwan's forests, democracy on the campuses and enhancing of the rights of indigenous peoples.

THE EARLY 1990S

In 1990, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum showed *Retrospective on Early Western Art in Taiwan* while the Taiwan Museum of Art exhibited *Three Hundred Years of Taiwanese Art* (sponsored by *Hsiung Shih Art Monthly*). These two exhibitions reflect Taiwanese artists' demand for an indigenously determined art history.

In the private sector, the contemporary art circle began to show a "marginal combat" work. For instance, "alternative spaces" like Apt. 2 and IT Park were opened. Adopting an anti-establishment stance, artists shared the minimum management cost or jointly managed these spaces, opening up further opportunities for experimental exhibitions. Compared to the previous year, there was greater artist intervention in the social and political system. During the students' movement in March, students of the National Taiwan Academy of Arts and the Fine Arts Department of the Culture University made a Wild Lily sculpture and put it on display in a square. In May, the Taiwan Archive held the exhibition *Taiwan Archive: An Art Exhibition Celebrating the Inauguration of the Eighth President Lee*, which sharply criticized the contemporary political culture.

Figure 5. Installation view of the 1998 Taipei Biennale *Site of Desire*. Courtesy of *Art & Collection*

In 1991, a debate began to ensue in *Hsiung Shih Art Monthly* over the question of a "Taiwan identity," a debate that lasted more than two years. It began with artists in southern Taiwan and focussed on the question of "nativization" and the internationalization of Taiwanese art. In the early 1990s—while contemporary art in Taipei assumed a strong internationalized character—an "anti-Taipei" stance developed in the south. In particular, the art circles in Kaohsiung and Taipei became opposing camps. Apart from Taipei, autonomous "alternative spaces" were set up in different cities. At the same time, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum also provided space for experimental and avant-garde exhibitions.

In 1992, Taiwanese artists participated in the K18 exhibition in Kassel, Germany. Wu Mali wrote a detailed and on-the-spot report on Documenta XIII for *The Artist Magazine*. His report helped to broaden the international perspectives of Taiwanese artists.

In 1993, Taiwanese artist Lee Ming-sheng was invited to participate in the Aperto exhibition at the Venice Biennale. Since it was the first time a Taiwanese artist particiapted in this international exhibition, *The Artist Magazine* covered the event in detail for two months. This year, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum held the large exhibition *Taiwan Art: 1945-1993*, using the form of an exhibition to compile and display a history of Taiwanese art. At the same time, the museum promoted an international contemporary art exchange by organizing an exhibition exchange with Australia. This exhibition stimulated a discussion over the question of cultural identity in the Taiwanese art circle. Apart from this exhibition—which had the intention of presenting the identity of Taiwanese art—private exhibitions such as *New Art, New Tribes: Taiwan Art in the Nineties* and the *Art Exhibition Toward Apex* also had similar intentions and were more able to capture the new face of Taiwan.

The highest authority governing Taiwan's art and culture—the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA)—used to organize international exhibitions on its own. One example is *The International Biennial Print and Drawing Exhibition*. This exhibition aimed to enhance the international status of Taiwan and promote contemporary art. In 1994, the CCA departed from this approach and delegated its powers to the cities and counties to develop their own cultural festivals. Noting the importance of using art to beautify the environment, it proposed the idea of "public art," which had a profound influence on the "nativization" of contemporary art. The *Environmental Art* exhibition of the Taipei County Cultural Centre of that year had something to do with this new cultural policy. Participants were invited to create art on the Tamshui River and on the riverbanks.

One notable event was the students' strike at the Fine Arts Department of the Culture University to protest against the department head's ideology and verbal violence. Later, the students set up a "Small Grass Art Academy" with a strong staff, a free academic style, and a flexible curriculum. But the academy closed with the end of the strike.

In 1995, Taiwan took part in the Venice Biennale. For the first time, a Taiwan Pavilion was included. Since then, it has become one of the key recurring events for Taiwanese art .

In the mid-1990s, there was another development in contemporary art in Taiwan: it moved from the space of the museum into the real environment. The Taipei County Government under the DPP was the first to promote this. Following the *Environmental Art* exhibition in 1994, it organized the environmental art exhibition *Resurgence on the Tamshui River* and the *Seventh Art Exhibition of Taipei County* in 1995 (fig. 1). The latter was influential for the later entry of contemporary art into urban or rural space. The symposium "Cultural Enterprise" organized by the CCA proposed integrating the concepts of "integrated community development" and "enterprise culture." The "nationwide cultural festivals" of the various counties and cities focused on themes such as enterprise culture, art streets, human environment and history.

Figure 8. Taira Ichikawa, *Conditional Paradise, A Sparkling City: 2000 Taipei County Art and Technology Exhibition*. Courtesy of *Art & Collection*

Figure 7. Installation view of the 2000 Taipei Biennale *The Sky is the Limit.* Courtesy of *Art & Collection*

In 1996, the CCA carried out "integrated community development," which had a decisive influence on the later development of contemporary Taiwanese art. As mentioned earlier, after the end of martial law, Taiwan devoted itself to compiling its history and establishing its cultural identity. There were exhibitions in 1990 and 1993, which focused on the cultural autonomy of Taiwan. In 1995, the DPP took over the Taipei City Government. In 1996, the first local biennial demonstrated an emphasis on Taiwan's cultural identity—as expressed in its title *The Quest for Identity*. This exhibition consciously included artists from the south as well as indigenous artists (fig. 2). In the documentation, the history of Taiwanese art was extended to the "prehistoric period" rather than covering the last three hundred years. 1996 can be seen as a watershed year in that it marked the end of the debate between nativization and internationalization, with art reflecting contemporary conditions in Taiwan becoming the mainstream.

The new political party seized power in both Taipei City and Taipei County. Meanwhile, the Taipei Painting Group—which was the most extreme in advocating "nativization"—considered its historical mission over. The scholar and critic of Taiwan art, Hsieh Tung-shan, wrote *Between Colonization and Independence: Taiwan Art at the End of the Century*. The chapters "Changes in the Methodology of Taiwan Art Criticism" and "The Modernization of Taiwan Art Discourse" suggest that Taiwan art criticism was also undergoing modernization.

THE LATE 1990S

1997 was another momentous year. In 1995 and 1996, contemporary Taiwanese art had grown and expanded rapidly in all directions. For instance, Taiwan continued to participate in the Venice Biennale. Apart from the official version *Taiwan Taiwan: Facing Faces*, there was also an unofficial version *Segmentation/Multiplication* (fig. 3). Many artists went to visit the exhibition and there was also extensive media coverage. The Venice Biennale seemed to have become an important spring-board or a small base for Taiwan's entry into the international art world.

1997 also saw large international exhibitions held locally. The Taiwanese critic and curator J.J. Shih curated the large-scale exhibition *River: New Asian Art—A Dialogue in Taipei*, which took place in interior exhibition venues—including private alternative spaces, foundations and cultural centers, as well as the space along the banks of the Tamshui River. Participants included artists from Taiwan,

Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines (fig. 4). In Hualien, the International Stone Sculpture Art Season invited twelve local and overseas artists to create works in the open air. This was a program of the cultural festival involving the local enterprises. Apart from the characteristics of enterprise culture and international exchange, it also marked the trend of moving the exhibition venue outdoors. Another large contemporary art exhibition *Installation Art in Taiwan* also invited ten Taiwanese artists to create installations in the outdoor public space in Chiayi that would open up a dialogue between local society and history.

In another key, artists discovered that the old distillery of the Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Board left vacant in downtown Taipei was very suitable for the presentation of contemporary art. They launched signature campaigns, held press conferences and processions in order to lobby the government to turn the space into an arts venue. This movement later gave rise to the CCA's cultural policy after 2001 on the "re-deployment of vacant spaces." The Whashang Arts District established the first example of the re-use of old industrial space. This also had something to do with the cultural policies of "integrated community development" and "cultural enterprise." The idea of the arts community creating its own arts district has matured since the various campaigns in Taiwan in the 1990s.

In 1998, contemporary Taiwanese art showed an ambition to accelerate the expansion of its sphere of influence on the international stage and in the rapidly developing and modernizing cities and countryside of Taiwan. With the implementation of the regulations on the installation of public art published by the CCA, all new public projects and public buildings must now assess and install works of art according to the regulations. The CCA established a Public Art Consultative Committee, while the Central and local governments set up "Public Art Assessment Committees" made up of artistic, urban design and legal experts.

Figure 8. Taipei Museum of Contemporary Arts officially opened in May 2001. Photo: Chen Chih-Liang

1998 was also the year that the Taipei Fine Arts Museum organized the first international Biennial. Entitled *Site of Desire*, this exhibition featured thirty-six artists from Taiwan, Mainland China, Japan, and South Korea (fig. 5). Curated by Nanjo Fumio, it presented contemporary art in North East Asia under the theme of desire. At the First Conference of Worldwide Chinese Curators, jointly organized by the Taiwan Museum of Art and *China Times*, participants included Mainland Chinese, overseas Chinese, and Taiwanese curators.

In 1999, the "Conference of Asian Curators" invited international curators in the Asia Pacific area and European and American professionals to discuss the channels of introducing contemporary Asian art into the international arena. After the promulgation of the regulations on the installation of public art by the CCA, large international outdoor sculpture exhibitions were held by the Kaoshiung Museum of Fine Arts, the Provincial Museum of Fine Art, and the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. In fact, *Site of Desire* also brought the spatial characteristics of cities, urban spaces, and streets into the design of the inside and outside of the exhibition venue. From the outside, one could see that the entire museum had become an integrated commercial district.

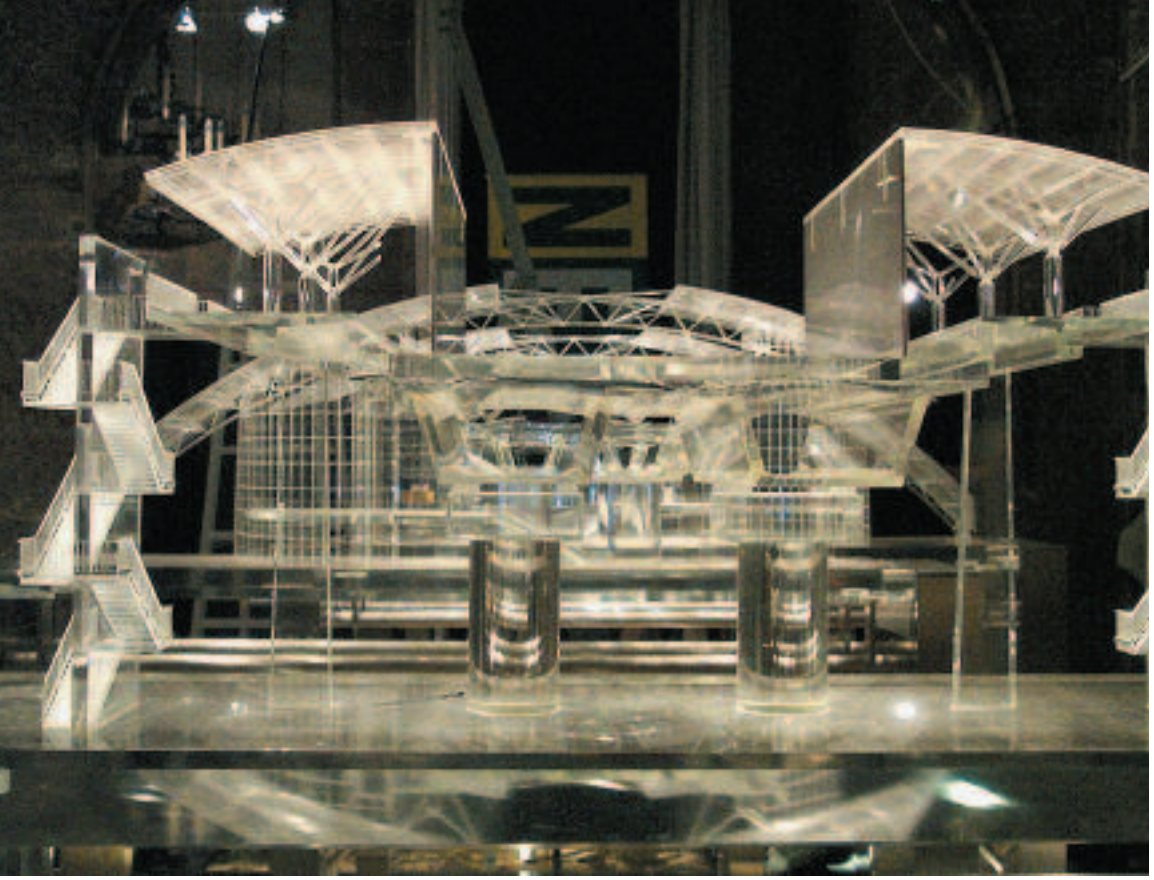


Figure 9. Wei-Wen Fang, *Murmuring, Very Fun Park*, Fubon Art Foundation, 2001

Feminist art was given concrete expression this year. The Taipei Fine Arts Museum organized the exhibition *Mind and Spirit: Women's Art in Taiwan* in an attempt to compile a history of Taiwan's feminist art. The monograph *The Artistic and Cultural Expressions of Taiwanese Women* was published by Fembooks. With the article "The Beginning and Development of Chinese Feminist Art," art critic Victoria Lu laid an important foundation for the inclusion of Chinese women artists in "official history."

With the launch of the MRT service in the Greater Taipei area in 1999, public art started to enter the different MRT stations. Public art works were also installed along roads—such as the boulevard of the Dunhua South Road. Architecture suddenly became the focus of attention in the city this year. As the big cities in Taiwan developed to a certain stage, one began to pay attention to quality and the planning of the overall city image. The city suddenly became the greatest piece of "artwork." The British architect Richard Rogers came to Taiwan and gave two talks in Taipei and Kaohsiung at the "cross-century symposium on the outline of a new image and vision for a maritime capital" in Kaohsiung. In the same year, some twenty architects from Britain, Japan, Australia, and Mexico came to Taiwan to participate in the Taipei Urban Design Forum and held the Urban Design Camp. In addition, the Far Eastern Memorial Foundation presented the First Far Eastern Architectural Design Award.

AFTER 2000

After bidding for more than two years, Taiwan was finally invited to participate in the Venice International Architecture Biennale in 2000. This time, the organizer was no longer the Taipei Fine Arts Museum but rather the Taiwan Museum of Art. Meanwhile, architecture and the plastic arts were situated closer and closer together—one of the reasons being the mediation of these two terms through public art. Another reason is the policy of the "re-use of large vacant spaces" as arts venues. Thus, not only is there a greater exchange between art and architecture now in Taiwan but the plastic arts and performing arts are also drawing closer. Interdisciplinary exchange has become increasingly common.

The CCA, the Acer Digital Art Center, and China Times jointly organized the *First Art Future 2000* art competition. It included one hundred and sixteen works from fourteen countries in Europe, the United States, and Asia. The Taipei County Government also organized the exhibition *A Sparkling City: 2000 Taipei County Art and Technology* (fig. 6). Held at the Panchiao Railway Station, the exhibition presented a "virtual communications city" of the digital age at the newly completed communication hub. Exhibitions such as this one show that "digital art"—with its combination of sound, image, performance, and text—has gradually become the mainstream

A Sparkling City illustrates the new indivisible relationship between contemporary architecture and technological images. Under these circumstances, purely individual creation has become more and more impossible. Following the East-Asia Biennial in 1998, the 2000 Taipei Biennial, *The Sky is the Limit*, was a genuine international biennial. Co-curated by French curator Jérôme Sans and Taiwanese curator Manray Hsu, it featured thirty-one artists from nineteen countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa (fig. 7). This exhibition placed the works in the context of a multi-national or globalized superstore or amusement park thus eliminating the strict boundary between art and the world of consumption. The question of "nativization" was completed erased.

In November, the opening of the *Shanghai Art Expo* and the Shanghai Biennial posed a challenge to contemporary Taiwanese art. The changes at *Art & Collection* at this time are notable. The original *Art & Collection* observed Taiwanese art from a commercial or collector point of view and gave a great deal of professional advice in terms of investment. However, the magazine did not give much coverage to contemporary art or contribute significantly to its development. After Katy Hsiu-chih Chien became publisher, *Art & Collection* was split into two specialist magazines: *Art Today* and *Ancient Art*. These two versions reported on major art events and covered art news from an international angle. If the original *Art & Collection* demonstrated sensitivity in terms of art investment, the new editions follow closely the tangible phenomena and potential trends in art and contributed to the development of Taiwanese art.

Figure 10. *The Good Place*, 2001 Taichung Cityscape Arts Festival Program Calendar. Photo: Chang Chao-Lin

In 2001, Taiwan participated again in the Venice Biennale. However, the Biennale was no longer the focus of attention as there were too many notable events in the same year. In May, the Taipei Museum of Contemporary Arts opened, with Leon Paroissien (one-time director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney) as director (fig. 8). The exhibitions *The Gravity of the Immaterial* and *Labyrinth of Pleasure* more or less established the approach of the new museum. It takes a fun and youthful approach having to do with technology, image, design, and industries.

Converted from a historic building, the Museum of Contemporary Arts is another venue for the dialogue between architecture, the applied arts, and fine art. Design and architecture exhibitions gradually become focuses not only at the Museum of Contemporary Arts, but also at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. For instance, *Moins and Plus: Collection Design du Fonds National d'Art Contemporain* was held in 2001.

There were also a few major contemporary art exhibitions this year that emphasized close interaction with the city. In *Very Fun Park* (fig. 9), the organizer placed contemporary art works in certain shops in the Eastern District of Taipei—such as theme restaurants, beauty salons, gyms, boutiques, furniture design centers, pop music rehearsal rooms, etc. In *The Good Place: 2001 Taichung Cityscape Arts Festival*, art works were installed in computer stores, herbal shops, bakeries, noodle shops, vacant shop premises and deserted commercial buildings in the old commercial district of Taichung (fig. 10). Most interesting of all, some outdoor performances turned the crossroads into a provisional theatre, with truck drivers and pedestrians as provisional actors. The Arts Festival had plenty of interdisciplinary and interactive elements. Apart from exhibitions and performances by plastic arts groups, the festival also included a small film festival as well as a series of activities on discovering the city and reviewing the city's history initiated by the architectural circle.

Sponsored by the Kaohsiung City Government and organized by the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, the Kaohsiung International Container Arts Festival invited local and overseas artists to create art to be exhibited in the container terminal and old containers. The location and design of the exhibition venue contributed to an impressive future image of the international port of Kaohsiung. As public art work groups that came under overall planning, the *Urban Light Corridor* and the *Light Sculpture* in the park—completed before and after the festival—became part of the future urban landscape. Here, installation artists worked with landscape architects and city planners to create an image of the city.

The artistic spaces established through the "re-use of vacant spaces" in the late 1990s are important to note. While enabling the concentration of contemporary art, they also allow different crossover talents to meet and carry out exchange. We can have an idea by looking at the statistics of the programs at the Whashang Arts District in one year. In 2001, film theatres accounted for 4% of its activities, rehearsals accounted for 4%, theatre for 13%, dance for 6%, fashion shows for 3%, solo exhibitions for 10%, and group exhibitions for 15%. The groups that participated in the group exhibitions included students of fine arts, architecture and conservation, visual communication, and industrial design. Graduation exhibitions accounted for 3% of the activities. Students of art education, drama, architecture, and spatial design organized these exhibitions. Other activities making up 18% of the programs included theatre performances, theatre rehearsals (frequently with audience participation), dance rehearsals, dance performances, film shows, music shows, rock & roll concerts, body language workshops, youth creativity camps, press conferences on arts activities, gatherings of arts groups and community and social concern activities. To a certain extent, such venues are potential art factories and have become regular bases for art carnivals. They brought the different arts closer together as well as to the community.

In February 2002, the Pier-2 Art District Kaohsiung—an equivalent of the Huashan Arts District—opened. The art district of over two thousand pings forms part of a larger tourism development area comprising the Port Authority's shoreline development project, the seafood street on Chichin Island, and the Love River project. Last year, the CCA awarded NT$26 million (the maximum amount for CCA grants) to support the project and will continue providing NT$15 million in funding every year. In order to become self-funding, the management group has been awarded a contract to operate coffee shops and arts shops to stimulate spending. In addition to exhibitions and performances, the Pier-2 Art District also has an Art Village. Apart from a group exhibition by its artists-in-residence, the Pier-2 Arts Festival at the end of the year featured outdoor performances including ballet, piano concerts, concerts, flamenco dance plus installation art, a brass band and some performances by Taiwan's small theatre, as well as an art market (flea market).

Figure 11. Installation view of the Taipei Biennale *Great Theatre of the World.* Photo: Chen Ya-Wen

At the end of the year, the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts held the exhibition *Art of Kaohsiung 2002: Nomadic-Developing-Expanding*. Kaohsiung had always been a strong promoter of "nativism." But this exhibition unexpectedly reaches beyond nativism and transcends the old boundaries of art.

In Taipei, there were a number of exhibitions related to architecture and technology. From June to September, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum and the Far Eastern Memorial Foundation presented *Innovation: The Exhibition of Far Eastern Architectural Design Award*, which showed the awarded works at the Domestic Outstanding Architectural Design Award, the September 21st Earthquake Campus Reconstruction Special Award, and the International Digital Architectural Design Award.

From July to October, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum also presented the exhibition Le Corbusier. It was the first time the museum showed the works of a modernist architect. At the same time, the Taipei Museum of Contemporary Arts held the exhibition *Architecture for the New Millennium* as well as *Myxomycity* in its forecourt. This was followed by the exhibition *TECH/NO/ZONE*, in which eight artists from seven countries presented a multi-media technological world.

Under the curatorship of the Taiwan Museum of Art, the architect Kris Yao participated in the 8th Venice Architecture Biennial with his design *High Speed Rail, Taiwan: Hsinchu Railway Station.* Under the title *2050 Vision Taiwan: Next Exit*, Yao used the three themes station architecture, platform and theatre to illustrate the new trends in Taiwanese architecture. It seems that Taiwan is beginning to reflect on its living environment in different ways and the gap between art and life is getting smaller and smaller.

The International Taipei Biennial *Great Theatre of the World* opened in November and emphasized its intention of "de-spectacularization" (fig. 11). This is obviously a reflection on contemporary art events, which are increasingly carnival-like. Compared with the two previous biennials, this one seemed slightly shrunken and a bit conservative—hardly a reflection of the contemporary state of Taiwanese art (fig. 12). At the same time, the *CO2: Taiwan Avant-Garde Documenta*—organized by the private sector—invited young local artists or groups to present a picture of contemporary Taiwanese art. It affords an opportunity for a survey of Taiwanese art and for artists to stimulate one another. Although the working conditions could not compare with the Biennial, young artists or art students participated enthusiastically and their works were quite diverse, showing the unique

Figure 12. Installation view of *C02 Taiwan Avant-Garde Documenta*. Photo: Chen Chih-Liang

aesthetics of the young generation. The most important contribution may be the website of the exhibition http://agora.tad.org.tw/, which enables these artists to continue to add and create works on-line.

EPILOGUE

In an age of intense competition under globalization, contemporary art in Taiwan has been given too many responsibilities and functions and its development has been compressed into too short a time. In any case, from creating for themselves to participating in the development plans of their country, contemporary artists have had to increasingly rely on all kinds of mechanisms for their operation. Of course, administrative mechanisms develop much faster than the system of artistic knowledge. The network spreads like subterraneous stems. When the vertical links grow closer to the horizontal links, it is also easier for communication and change, whether the links are between artists and the official institutions, or between different artists. Contemporary Taiwanese art is full of vitality and creativity. But can the potential be used to create a huge structure? This question is not so easy to answer.

At present, many elements are put together to form a certain pattern and create a new mood. But it is not very stable. If the situation changes, the cultural policy would also be adjusted, which would lead to in a change in the resources. In Taiwan, art has never played such an important role as now. But if art is used to meet urgent needs or is given too many external functions, it will be hard for it to develop depth. It is very important to obtain stability and to secure more resources for free creation. It is equally important for art scholars to build up a network of thoughts and ideas. But probably most important of all, the government department responsible for culture must set the right priorities and achieve the proper balance between the intensive cultivation of innovative art and the supporting of cultural events and enterprises. On this point, it has always displayed an ambivalent attitude and a certain degree of shortsightedness. The giant apparatus of contemporary Taiwanese art has been put up with after tremendous efforts. The present state of contemporary art in Taiwan is both exciting and worrisome. There is a great deal of energy and enthusiasm among young artists. But if the various important channels are not linked up soon, the energy will be rapidly expended through disconnected activities. This feeling is especially pronounced among more senior artists.

INVISIBLE CITY

AMY CHENG HUEI-HUA

The beginning of the third millennium has ushered in an age of anxiety. Globalization offers the promise of a new capitalist, media and cultural era. But as the progress of civilization is reduced to multi-national economic expansion, increasingly intense competition and technological advance, people are schooled to place their faith in a super utopia: "the future." Nevertheless, throughout the modern period, since the Age of Enlightenment, and through Darwinism to today's technological age, there has also been a move away from optimism, suggesting a hidden fear: fear that the dark ages are coming again.

History leaves its mark on everyone's mind. But as the British scholar George Steiner said, history is not a continuous narrative, but consists of broken fragments and incomplete images. Moreover, everyone has a different picture of "history." There are two archetypes in this collective yet individual picture: the "golden age" and the "dark age." Due to uncertainty about the future, people always think of their own age as being full of destructive qualities. As a result, they develop nostalgic feelings for the past. We are encompassed by history as if by a net with the magical power not only to explain the past but also to predict the future.

Everywhere, there is anxiety about the end of the world. The introduction of *Age of Anxiety* by Sarah Dunant and Roy Porter describes such a scene: "The world was full of omens of its own destruction. New plagues swept across the globe: people died in agony, some shriveled to skeletons, some pouring blood and fluids from every orifice… And in a city in the west a woman who had lain as if dead for many months was found to be with child." Similar images can be found in many films and sci-fi novels. In his series of staged photographs, *The Twelve Karmas Under the City*, Chen Chieh-Jen confronts viewers with shocking scenes (fig. 1). The figures in the photographs have metal pieces, computer wiring and cameras inserted into their bodies. These symbols of technological progress do not constitute an optimistic image. Instead, signs of plagues and corpses everywhere convey the message of "blight" and "death." Chen Chieh-Jen's anxiety about the "future" is typical of our postmodern age, the age of globalization, in which the progress of civilization is stumbling and people are suffering from a range of mental breakdowns. Such anxiety is not unfounded. People are afraid about history repeating itself and the inevitability of a coming dark age. Derived from a fatalistic reading of history, these photographs seem to predict a future without hope.

In his book *Ground Zero*, the French thinker Paul Virilio criticizes the present age of hypervelocity and mass media, referring to the paradox of our simultaneous fear of and desire for technology. As he explains, with the aid of technology, adults can "do what they had been forbidden to do as children." Virilio calls this the "prohibition to prohibit." If, in the process of technological development, the destruction of the world is prohibited, global politics and technological competition are continually challenging this taboo. In view of the gradual physical and mental breakdown of individuality and the homogenization of people's "spiritual selves" by the economy and technology of this century, how do we transcend this fear and paint a more promising picture for mankind? The answer is to create a "collective illusion of the future." Virilio says that "for scientific totalitarianism the future is propaganda because propaganda is propaganda fide—the propagation of the faith—and progress is merely a mystical displacement—the frantic deployment of a force of physical repulsion and expulsion of man out of that divine Creation…" Now, we are being told to live in

"the future." In order to make this mission impossible possible, we must transcend "the present." The only way to is to "accelerate." That is why Virilio says, "To progress would be to accelerate!" The ultimate goal is to entirely erase the present, because the "present" world is so imperfect and fragmented.

In *City Disqualified*, Yuan Goang-Ming took more than one hundred photos of a bustling district in Taipei at different times and then altered them with computer manipulation. The "traces" of different moments of time were compressed onto the same flat surface. Time seems to stand still or has been removed altogether. He painstakingly erased the people and cars in the pictures one by one, finally coming up with the image of a deserted phantom city. Whether by day or by night, the "phantom city" looks perfect and functions normally (all the shops are open). But in fact, it is constituted by fragments of discontinuous images, from which the people and cars have been deleted. The digital media used by Yuan Goang-Ming have the power to create a "collective illusion," which is also the mission of technology. But due to his intervention, the human presence has been erased, like the disappearance of the "aura" from a living space.

Like an axis, history links past, present and future. As one lives in the present moment, one is haunted by memories of the past and cherishes hopes for the future. Locating a specific time and space, Chen Chieh-Jen and Yuan Goang-Ming have chosen contemporary Taipei (one of the Third World cities most eagerly seeking modernization and globalization) in an attempt to capture a certain truth of this age—the hidden side of the middle-class utopia produced by the trends of globalization. Chen Chieh-Jen presents an image of "heterogeneity" rejected in a homogenized version of the "future." Gazing at the marginality and "difference" in his images, the viewer is made to feel cruel and uncomfortable, because such sights are normally eliminated and forgotten in the logic and process of progress. Yuan Goang-Ming, for his part, succeeds in creating a perfect urban landscape, which seems to celebrate a pure technological utopia unfettered by human interference.

Through their works, Chen Chieh-Jen and Yuan Goang-Ming express their feelings about living in the present moment. Both are critical of the paradoxical concept of "the future." Using their own vocabularies, they depict an "invisible city," a city unseen. Chen Chieh-Jen's world reeks of the breath of "exile" and "madness" left by capitalist globalization and technology. As for the "corridors" in his images (the subterranean pedestrian passageways of Taipei), he describes them as a repressed "middle state" where there is no way out. They are a "dark zone" outside the rational, regulated world. Adopting another approach, Yuan Goang-Ming uses a time-less and people-less place to evoke an atmosphere of collective disappearance after "difference" has been eliminated. Only phantoms remain, giving the city a strange magnetism. Since different moments of time are compressed on a flat surface, the flow of time is interrupted, resulting in an alienated, cold scene. As he scans the two-dimensional work and projects it as a slow-moving image to mourn the passing of time, there is an unbridgeable distance between this image and the viewer. As he says, technology does not bring people and the world closer, but only increases the distance between them.

History seems to be moving forward on a predictable track, one that oscillates between nostalgia for a golden age and fear of the dark age to come. Chen Chieh-Jen uses the "twelve karmas," the Buddhist explanation of an individual's progress through life, as an interpretive tool. From this theory of the causes of history, he derives a grim image of the present and a pessimistic model of the future. Taken simply, the karmic view is that history not only repeats itself, but its course is inevitable. The current trajectory of contemporary history has far-reaching implications for our lives as individuals. The unique "aura" of human beings living in this world is in danger. If we are

Figure 1. Chen Chieh-Jen, *Rebirth I*, 2000, c-print, 120 x 150 cm

powerless to counter this inexorable fate, our very "existence" will be threatened. The emptied scene in Yuan Goang-Ming's work is a figure of this inevitability. Naming his work after the title of the Japanese novelist Ozamu Dazai's work *Disqualified from Humanity*, he is suggesting that the hypervelocity of the technological age will ultimately take away people's dignity and "disqualify" them from living.

While the idea of history repeating itself and the conviction of its inevitable course seem a pessimistic view, it is not necessarily so. The paradox of karma is that it includes freedom. By understanding and confronting our fate, we are given the opportunity to change it. By making the invisible visible we can break the "illusion of the future." In Chen Chieh-Jen's and Yuan Goang-Ming's works, this is already poetically suggested.

NOTES

[1] Sarah Dunant and Roy Porter, *Age of Anxiety* (New York: Virago Press, 1996), ix.

[2] Paul Virilio, *Ground Zero* (London: Verso, 2002), 2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 15.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Originating in Buddhism, the "twelve karmas" are a detailed set of theories about reincarnation, the ongoing cycle of life and death. The twelve parts of the twelve karmas analyze the cause and effect between past, present and future.

PAINTING IN TAIWAN AFTER 1945: A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

JOHN CLARK

Art is neither a direct reflection of political and economic forces nor is the particular history of painting a representation of the structures found across all the histories of a society. But politics and the economy set the conditions in which art advances and regresses. Its forms of expression are limited by political values, are driven by social tensions sometimes incorporated in the very personalities of given artists, and are selected against scales of values which though ultimately cultural, have an organization which in part is governed by the economics of production and distribution. I intend here to examine this political and economic background to art as a preliminary to an examination of the history of modern painting in Taiwan after 1945.[1]

I. POLITICS AND ART

Two concerns have dominated the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan since its retrocession from Japan in 1945. One is the maintenance of its own power by any effective means over the island territory against a range of real and self-created external and internal enemies. The other is the preservation of control over that territory and the use of its resources as a means to regaining the control it had lost over the whole territory of China. This is with the reservation that after the rise to effective leadership in 1974 of Jiang Jieshi's (Chiang Kai-shek) son, Jiang Jingguo, the latter concern would never seem to have been an actual policy goal as much as it remained the government's publicly avowed intention in the future.

One uses the word "government" here with reluctance. Although legitimate power has devolved through an almost completely spurious and gerrymandered national parliament (the Legislative Yuan plus National Assembly) to an elected government of the Nationalist Party (Guomindang), there remain in force constitutional provisions from before the removal to Taiwan in 1949, which guarantee that only the Nationalist Party will remain there. However, since 1974 there have been increasing trends to invite outstanding Taiwanese to join the mainlander-dominated government as ministers and senior officials. There has also been an increase in the Taiwanese and Taiwan-born mainlander membership of the Nationalist Party such that this is now greater than those members who came from the mainland. Further electoral adjustments have increased the number of seats for Taiwan Province in the Legislative Yuan and the Province has itself had internal self-government since 1951 via a Provincial Assembly.

It being illegal with two minor exceptions to form opposition: parties among those independents who stand on a non-Nationalist Party platform and, until the late 1980s and after the period covered by this text, Taiwan was an authoritarian, one-party state in all but name. The ruling party was split into various factions based on regional origin or into cliques based on educational affiliation or business pedigree. But the party came from the mainland as one of control and rule, organized on the Leninist principle of democratic centralism from above and not as an interest- or ideology-based competitor for power with other parties. The party has had its own security organs—one of which was active in terror on the mainland and is now legalized as the Bureau of Investigation of the Ministry of Justice. There were also state organs of police control (such as the Military Police in Taiwan) having continuously been under martial law between 1949 and 1986. This resulted in a security apparatus parallel to party control organs or civil police at most levels of society. All of these control functions were concentrated in the hands of the former president,

Jiang Jieshi, and a close-knit clique of mainlander families and their advisers. Since 1974, however, and the overall diplomatic isolation of Taiwan in the 1970s, this apparatus would seem to have operated with greater sophistication than hitherto.

From 1949 until the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, the external enemy of Taiwan was the communist government of the People's Republic of China. While the P.R.C. government threatened to invade and tried to subvert the R.O.C. between 1949 and 1951, these efforts were ruthlessly crushed. Later efforts to de-stabilize the R.O.C. government by aerial bombardment of offshore islands in 1958 were unsuccessful. There were severe military tensions at the early stages of the Vietnam War, particularly when it seemed Taiwan might be more actively involved.[2] This external threat and the corresponding threat of R.O.C. "aggression" against the P.R.C. were mollified by the inter-position of the United States' Seventh Fleet Taiwan patrol from 1950 to 1970.[3] Between 1970 and 1976, there was little prospect of military action by the P.R.C. The post-oil shock government policy of concentration in Taiwan of advanced technology manufacturing by transnational corporations has meant Taiwan's stability could be quite simply threatened by a limited submarine blockade. Yet, with the Hong Kong agreements with Britain from 1984 to 1985 (which were clearly framed by the P.R.C. so as to envision a similar arrangement for Taiwan), such a possibility receded to a strategic option of a very different future.[4]

The internal enemies of the government were and are chiefly of its own making. Undoubtedly, retrocession in 1945 was welcomed in Taiwan. But the subsequent treatment of its population—including the systematic massacre of its Japanese-educated elite in 1947 and the repression of its survivors until the mid-1950s—has meant that an ineluctable antipathy by many Taiwanese exists for the Nationalist Party and the R.O.C.. There has been Taiwanese protest including successive attempts at armed revolt, the establishment of numerous homeland or independence parties abroad, election of non-Nationalist Party candidates at provincial level, riot against authoritarian police behaviour or corruption, and attempts to circumvent restriction of the vernacular language in favour of Mandarin.[6]

To compensate for effective disenfranchisement of the right to change the government or change the constitution of the state, the government has juggled with a complex economic distribution, principally by switching the wealth of the Taiwanese landlord class (who were its political enemies) into industrial capital and government bonds, and allowing peasants to buy small land-holdings at "reasonable" rates of interest. Land reform, however, was directed at agricultural land, so non-agricultural and urban land was excluded. When the price of urban land rose with economic growth and with urbanization in the 1960s, the owners of the urban land—mostly Taiwanese and not Mainlanders—became a further element in the wealthy Taiwanese landlord class, which had hitherto to been rich largely because of its ownership of agricultural land.

A second group of opponents (if only sometimes enemies) of the government was created by the transfer to Taiwan of large numbers of mainland families after 1949. This meant the government could count on a large number of people with a vested and one might almost say ethnic interest in its survival. It also meant that those regional factions or educational cliques not favoured by the Jiang family were to constitute a potential intra-party opposition which—given the authoritarian structures and values of the government—were likely to challenge its legitimacy. There were unsuccessful moves within the Nationalist Party to organize an opposition party between 1959 and 1960. These were crushed.

More significantly, because the mainlanders brought heterogenous political and cultural ideals—such as liberal democracy and ideas of de-traditionalizing intellectual life after the May 5th Movement model—their diversity was a continuous threat to the government's ideological legitimacy. Organs of debate and intellectual controversy arose only to be continually suppressed: Ziyou Zhongguo (Free China) in 1960 for having a purported ex-communist on the staff; Wenxing (Apollo) in 1965 for the vituperative nature of its attacks on traditional intellectuals; Taiwan Zhenglun (Taiwan Debate) in 1976 for too vigorous advocacy of intellectual reform; and similarly Zhe Yidai (This Generation) and Xiachao (Summer Tide) in 1978. A whole string of protesting figures have seen themselves as the conscience of their generation and found themselves driven from teaching or imprisoned for "crimes of thought": Lei Zhen in 1960, Bo Yang in 1969, Li Ao in 1971, and Chen Yingzhen in 1978. To these must be added the arrest of students returning from abroad for suspected involvement in the Taiwan Independence Movement. Those individuals hindered in their job prospects for impolitic ideas, not to mention the traditionally sanctioned forms of moral protest like embittered but voluntary internal self-exile.

Thus, since 1945, Taiwan has been a society in continuous crisis due partly to the external environment of the state and partly to the product of its own structure of power and rule. The government sought its way out of crisis by police policy, electoral tinkering, and the economic expansion, which will be the subject of the next section. I will now look at the direct and less direct consequences of this politics on the production of art in Taiwan.

If the government conceives as its main task to remain in power, it will probably see itself as the sole fount of legitimate values. It is right because it is sovereign. This directly concerns art because it uses visual systems whose social acceptance constitutes their legitimacy. With modern art, in particular, the legitimacy of visual systems is often relativized or radically questioned. In Taiwan, it was the continuous task of the Wuyue and Dongfang painters, in particular, to expand what was thought legitimate in painting or to get a public for work so that it was not thought illegitimate (often through the defence of modern poets who themselves faced similar struggles). Thus, even if painting did overtly deal with political themes, the organization of its groups and the stylistic tendencies it deployed were in the domain of questioning the legitimate and therefore indirectly posing the problem of authoritarian ideology.

Practically speaking, *Dongfang* could not constitute itself as a formal painting society with the same status as the Taiyang Painting Society, restarted by Japanese-trained painters in 1949. They were refused permission from the Taipei Police to form such a society and continued as an exhibition group, which, under R.O.C. law, is not a social organization of a legally registered kind.[6] The attempt to form a Modern Chinese Art Centre in 1961 was thwarted after two of its progenitors were threatened with arrest by the Garrison Command. At an exhibition intended to celebrate the founding of the centre, the artist Qin Song had a work seized and probably destroyed because it seemed to deploy abstract forms resembling the characters for Jiang Jieshi's name in a satirical manner.[7] From 1960 to 1962, "modern" art was under attack by misguided liberals like Xu Fuguan for "clearing the path for the Communist world"[8] and by more dangerous but even more confused writers on literature and art in a Guomindang magazine.[9] These individuals claimed that those who painted abstract art were in danger of becoming communist since Pablo Picasso painted abstract art and he was a communist. It is one of the less perfidious ironies of modern Chinese history that shortly afterwards, some artists on the mainland were accused of taking the capitalist road because they painted in less-than-realist styles thought typical of capitalist art. After 1962, the pressure on and around younger artists seemed to ease off, although "abstract art" remained

something of a taboo officially and was not even included in the final year teaching at the Shifan Daxue (Normal University) Art Department in 1984.

Let me now move to a second leg of legitimacy that was given peculiar importance because of the government's preservation of Taiwan as a base to re-take the mainland. The government claimed the authority of values thought to be "Chinese" and not "Communist." This meant that if a painting style was not "Communist," it might claim to expand the range of values thought to be "Chinese." If it was not "Chinese" it might be in danger of being judged "Communist." Part of the explanation for the way "abstract" painting acquired a quasi-legitimacy and then was tacitly ignored by the government was the way it was taken up in the mid-1960s by American-based art historians such as Chu-Tsing Li and because it was extensively patronized by members of the Taipei American community.[10] Although the government was authoritarian, it also claimed to be a bastion of freedom and so could not easily be seen to suppress artistic or literary expression. It was not reluctant, however, to crush the organ of intellectual controversy and the modernizing young *Wenxing* (Apollo) in which many polemical articles by some of the "modern" artists and their friends had appeared.

Political legitimacy as an indirect question or art style also had a negative consequence for painting. To begin with, there is no Taiwanese history painting to speak of (that is public) save some oblique references to 1947 in one or two paintings by Li Meishu and Li Shiqiao. Reference to historical themes from even the distant past of Taiwan could be taken as indirect support for independence movements. From 1947 through to the mid-1950s, the Japanese-trained generation of oil and gouache painters was excluded from prominence.[11] They had very little influence on the rising generation of young artists in the 1950s who were mostly of mainland origin—although Liao Jichun did have some role in teaching Liu Guosong and others at Shifan Daxue. The events of 1947, when Cheng Chenbo and many of their relatives were shot, cannot have been conductive to producing history painting although many of the Japanese-trained painters were equipped to do so. In a country where there are enterprise trade unions but striking is illegal, it is hardly surprising that painters did not risk giving even the slightest whiff of "proletarian painting" even in realistic treatment of scenes of everyday life and work.

Among the modernists, it cannot be ignored that none of the Wuyue or Dongfang artists obtained steady jobs as teachers in the government-funded art school or in the art department at Shifan Daxue. Likewise, the consequences of authoritarian politics were that no serious work was done in the more acerbic areas of Surrealism and Dada—work that would have challenged the notion of social legitimacy itself.[12]

The need not to be a "Communist" also shut painting and prints off from a broad range of artistic experiments in Chinese Realism. This form of realism was brought to fruition in the 1930s by artists such as Xu Beihong who had chosen to remain on the mainland in 1949 or artists who were already of left wing persuasion. But the left-wing artists had in their way appealed to a rejuvenated vein of Chinese humanism, both in Shanghai with Lu Xun and in the Communist-based areas. After 1949, Taiwanese artists were shut off from this past too, in spite of the fact that some of the left-wing woodblock artists were actually in Taiwan after 1945.[13]

"China" was a much graver problem. The claim of the government to represent China meant that non-mainland values in artistic practice (as interpreted by the legitimate) were regarded as alien or at best inferior. This attitude amounted to contempt for quite distinguished innovations in

traditional painting, which had come via the Japanese and been applied with skill and success to Taiwanese subjects. If Taiwan was to be the site where a new "China" was to be brought to fruit, even the "modern" brought in from the "West" could only be a necessary technical ore to be re-smelted in the crucible of cultural purity.

In traditional Chinese painting—by the 1930s on the mainland and from the early 1950s in Taiwan—*guohua* landscape models were those provided by the new group of the mainland teachers who worked in a literati manner after physical landscapes not even found in Taiwan. More trivially, some teachers, like Li Meishu, developed a politically-induced phobia for certain colours and told their students to avoid the excessive use of the colour red for fear of being through "red" as late as 1970.[14] "China" has left many Taiwanese artists with the need to consider themselves as "Chinese" first in their work before dealing with the problem of painting. This left them devoid or cut off from many of the intellectual and artistic references which would enable them to decide just what that "Chinese" was after 1949.

Moving now to direct government interest in and control of art, one can say that painting itself—or the question of whether or not to help a modern art develop—has never been a concern of the government. True, modern art had some isolated supporters in the elite like the head of the cultural exchange office Zhang Longyan, whose intervention probably secured Li Xiqi's (of Dongfang) early release from army service in 1965 to prepare to enter the Tokyo Print Biennale.[15] Some Legislative Yuan members like Zhang Daofan were known to support modern art. One modern artist, Han Xiangning, had a father-in-law in the Legislative Yuan. However, none had the political connections and patronage of *guohua* painters (like the former Manchu prince Pu Xingyu who taught at Shifan Daxue) or the reputation for which the government would bend over backwards to have them live in Taiwan (like Zhang Daqian).

This lack of government interest or support is indirectly clear from the way entries were organized at the São Paolo Biennale where the Republic of China exhibited from 1957 to 1973. These entries never obtained the organizational direction they should have had if the government had wanted to display and foster modern artists. Rigorous standards of quality were not applied to the works selected and administrative inflexibility was shown in the selection of a large number of works by different artists. Taiwan never confirmed its younger artists internationally by careful selection and exposure of just a few each year as the Japanese very carefully and assiduously did.[16] One can only infer they did not do so because the art world and its political and bureaucratic supporters were insufficiently strong and determined to use São Paolo as a way of confirming the importance of artists at home. Of course, the situation changed in the 1970s with the advent of stable commercial galleries, which sold mostly to Taiwanese patrons. But contrary to what may have appeared abroad, the government never supported modern art. Even in 1984, its Committee of Cultural Construction confessed that it could not fund bursaries for distinguished younger artists for fear of art world rivalry from below and political pressure from above.[17] And as mentioned above, the government's security organs very nearly suppressed it from 1960 to 1961.

The reader will have noticed how closely the periodization of certain developments in painting finds its turning points around political events with only distant relation to them. Modern art became secure after the decline in the fears of invasion during the early 1960s. One major organ of its debates was suppressed at exactly the time that its members were coming to international prominence and then (almost en bloc) going away to study and live abroad. The art world of magazines and commercial galleries achieved self-sustaining growth at the moment Taiwan's

external links were curtailed. Taiwanese were increasingly to participate in government and the pressure for intellectual liberalization was cut off by more discriminate repression than hitherto.

After 1975, many but not all of the government's internally created enemies were mollified. From 1978 to 1980, many of the contributions of Japanese-trained artists were to be adequately recognized in print for the first time. It is extraordinary that—apart from survey articles by friends or former pupils—these artists did not publish systematic recollections. Some were active in teaching and then shut themselves away in Taiyang, the non-governmental painting association active under the Japanese from 1934 to 1944 which restarted exhibitions in 1949.[18] Perhaps an added consequence of their reticence and the isolation of Taiwan in the 1970s was that only then did the "homeland" writers and artists controversy develop. Since much of their work is a realistic expression of subjects drawn from daily life in Taiwan and therefore a logical continuation of trends visible in the 1930s, the reason for this nearly forty year caesura can only be found in political taboo.[19]

The last political consequence for art was that polemical members of Wuyue, like Liu Guosong and Zhuang Zhe, could not help associating themselves with a vigorous movement for intellectual renewal through to the early 1960s. This change was to come by a more whole-hearted questioning of the essential "Chinese" values by exposure to a wide range of modern Western knowledge ranging from physics to psychoanalysis that were introduced by *Wenxing*. Significantly, these intellectuals were of a younger generation than those liberals who had come over in 1949. They were either of the May 4th Movement or its students.[20] Aside from the "homeland" writers, there is no noticeable involvement of artists in similar movements from 1971 to 1975. Many of Wuyue and Dongfang artists had gone abroad and may not have effectively communicated the spirit of intellectual modernity to younger artists. They were not properly part of the educational system. Some, like Liu Guosong, were sidetracked by a concern with "Chinese Modern Painting"—which itself deflected serious younger artists from proper understanding of modernism. But, in general, the reason was the influential artists were not in Taiwan—or not there permanently enough—to set up that personal communication between teacher and student which is still so important in Chinese society.

II. POLITICS AND ART: A CODA

I know of no explicit discussions of the relation between art and the official political ideology by the government in Taiwan. There is a 1967 article by Yu Qingyun on "The Three Principles of the People and Artistic Creation."[21] These Principles were originally enunciated by the father of the Guomindang Sun Yatsen (Sun Zhongshan, or Sun Wen) in 1924. Significantly, his pro-Soviet and anti-imperialist colouring was not always given prominence in Taiwan.

Yu begins with an independent statement of ideology:

> What we must recognize today is that the essence of our anti-communist war is that it is a cultural war. Therefore, we must first have a deep and penetrating perception of the spirit of Chinese culture. It is the "spiritual expression in pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty," which "our Chinese culture" represents.[22]

The full flavour of Yu's argument—and one supposes of much legitimate art ideology in Taiwan—comes from his use of some quotations from Sun Yatsen:

> The people's livelihood is the centre of politics, that is the centre of the economy, and the centre of the various actions of history. These would seem to be the same as the centre of gravity in space (Lecture I, On the Ideology of People's Livelihood).
>
> What do the promising development of society, the improvement of economic organisation, and progress in morality have at their centre of gravity? It is the people's livelihood. This is the driving force of all social activity (Lecture II, On the Ideology of People's Livelihood).

From these words by the father of the nation we have the following two important views:

1. Human politics, economy, and the various actions of history are all a kind of culture. The people's livelihood is of course the centre of "culture."

2. The development of social civilization, the improvement of economic organization and progress is morality and all a kind of historical development. The people's livelihood is naturally the centre of gravity and driving force of "culture" and given art is part of culture. The people's livelihood is, of course, the centre of art and its centre and driving force.[23]

I hope the reader can understand that I have introduced this material without preamble so the full tedium and banality of its rhetoric should have appropriate emphasis. What was an interesting if simplistic political speech by Sun Yatsen has been reduplicated by its critic who has simply sought to show that a few terms can be substituted in the formulae so as to extend legitimacy to his coverage of a new area. Nowhere do we learn what exactly connects livelihood, economy, history, culture, and art. We do not know why the people's livelihood is at the centre of art, only that it is, and therefore that it should be. The tortuous ideological appeal to an accepted legitimacy is made even clearer in the following:

> Speaking frankly, if we wish to establish China's burgeoning art, to depart from the philosophical and academic system of the Three Principles of the People, which has grandly brought together both ancient and modern, both Chinese and foreign thought, would be to depart from a nationalism that represents the Chinese "people's spirit" which otherwise there would be no way of establishing. Therefore, art is the product of the total gain from the people's wisdom sentiments, and will.[24]

The interesting quality of this polemical style is how substitutable it is, where all the terms have merely metonymic qualities for the conferral of legitimacy, and ultimately, but clearly unconsciously, for acceptance of the legitimacy of the power bearer, the state or party:

> An art which has undergone the guidance of correct thought will represent the demands of history, the thoughts and feelings of the masses, and even more the new consciousness of struggle. It would, however, not be like that of the past, which was dependent and in dire straits, being unable to stir itself, filthy all over without a breath of life.[25]

We now know that "correct thought" is the Three Principles of the People which gives prominence to the nationalistically designated aspirations of a race and must therefore accept the legitimizing agent of that race (here unspecified). The key term is "correct" (*zhengque*) and there are many similarities with such uses of the adjective in the P.R.C. Can we identify here a similar heritage of adherence to standards of moral propriety which dignify and legitimise these fitted to rule? The possibility of this cultural universal within the Chinese cosmos is tempting to contemplate and I am sure a Marxist East European use of "correct" would be differently nuanced towards a scientistic notion of accuracy in reading the evolutionary trend of history.

III. THE ECONOMY AND ART

One assumption of European students of modern art after Charles Baudelaire and the modernism which follows around the turn of the nineteenth century, would be that these movements can only flourish in the modern urban environment which is based on industrial society. According to different ideological pursuits this assumption can be more narrowly stated in a hypothesis where modern art and then modernism arise because of different experiences of the modern city as a way of life.[26] Or it can arise when artists are no longer in the service of a landed aristocracy but are patronised by a wealthy industrial entrepreneur or *rentier* capitalist class. According to another close hypothesis, "modernism" is an extension of "modern" where there is a further shift of patronage towards art works as commodities sold by merchants (dealers).

The aesthetic crisis associated with this shift was given particular intensity by a change in the role of art works into fetishistic accumulations of social value, since the shift was contemporary with expanded use of mechanical means of visual reproduction which denuded the use-value of painting. Sometimes sub-hypotheses are added such that non-figurative or "modernist abstract" painting arises only if the economic base is far enough developed and object relations so alienated that art represents these from within the alienated state, that it no longer makes alienation its *subject*, but takes it for *medium*. The correlate of such a hypothesis is that if "modernist abstract" painting arises before the economic base is so developed, it will remain the artificial toy of a capitalist economic elite which is tied to "international cosmopolitan" tendencies. This is by virtue of its role as a local owning class and, simultaneously, as the regional service managers for international capital.

These matters are complex and do not admit of simplistic asservations from whatever ideological position, although even a cursory view of the Taiwanese evidence from 1955 to 1970 suggests the sub-hypothesis above is a strong one. They are also *external* arguments about the conditions in which art of one kind or another arises, and not *internal* arguments about how art is actually caused. But if evidence for these hypotheses cannot be asserted directly from economic data, it can be approached indirectly by examining changes in economic structure, the pattern of government expenditure, income distribution and patterns of personal consumption, urbanisation and the growth of the mass media.

Taiwan has one of the most widely studied economies in the world, and so students of non-economic aspects of its society can see more or less which economic changes likely to have had consequences for their study took place, and when. Changes in the economic structure broadly began with a reconstruction stage, which followed from retrocession in 1945 until around 1951—although for the first part of this period the island was used as a colony and there was a drain of resources to the mainland. When the new government was secure in Taipei, it replaced this expropriation with infrastructure investment, its own technicians, and some improvements in education having made good the loss of skilled personnel withdrawn by Japan.

Secondly, from 1950 to 1959 the first major shifts towards an industrial economy took place with an increase in the industrial share of NET Domestic Product of 6.8%.[27] Although this period saw the introduction of land reform policies and a shift to industry, the primary industry employed population dropping 5.9% during 1952 and 1960,[28] there was only a 3 to 4% drop in Gross Fixed Capital Formation between agriculture and industry,[29] and a 3.6 point shift in per capita income.[30]

Thirdly, from 1959 to 1965 there was a major shift towards an urban, industrial society with a further 3.7% drop in the primary industry employed population share,[31] and a 5.5% drop in the agricultural share of Net Domestic Product.[32] Not only was foreign investment encouraged in export processing zones, but also because farmers' payments had been completed under land reform, consumption demand increased. That is, with a steady increase of per capita income of around 2,000 NT$ (New Taiwan Dollars) on 1955, there was an increase in PCI of around 3,000 NT$ from 1960 to 1965, much of which was available for consumption.[33]

Taiwan having reached a balance of trade surplus in 1965 and growth being stabilized, formal American aid was ended although "concessional loans" and private investment continued. From 1965 to 1970, there was a quantum leap in both the distribution of employed population in secondary industry and shift in fixed capital formation and industrial origin of Net Domestic Product between agriculture and industry.[34]

A Population (Millions)

1952	8.12
1955	9.08
1960	10.80
1965	12.60
1970	14.70
1975	16.20
1980	17.80
1984	19.00

B Employment by Sector %

	MILLIONS	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY
1952	8.12	56.1	16.9	27.0
1955	9.08	53.6	18.0	28.4
1960	10.8	50.2	20.5	29.3
1965	12.6	46.5	22.3	31.2
1970	14.7	36.7	28.0	35.3
1975	16.2	30.4	34.9	34.7
1980	17.8	19.5	42.4	38.1
1984	19.0	17.6	42.3	40.1

C Per Capita Income at Market Prices

	MILLIONS	AFTER 1960, 40 NT$ =12US.	PCI INDEX 1981=100
1952	8.12	1,913	2.2
1955	9.08	2,989	3.4
1960	10.8	5,209	5,8
1965	12.6	8,110	8.5
1970	14.7	14,417	16.2
1975	16.2	33,753	37.9
1980	17.8	77,040	86.4
1984	19.0	111,526*	125.1*

D Education of Population (at and over age of six %)

	HIGHER	SECONDARY	PRIMARY	OTHER	ILLITERATE
1952	1.4	8.8	43.5	4.2	42.1
1955	1.7	9.6	46.9	3.9	37.9
1960	1.9	12.4	54.1	4.5	27.1
1965	2.3	15.2	55.4	4.0	23.1
1970	3.7	26.5	51.8	3.3	14.7
1975	5.0	30.4	48.9	2.8	12.9
1980	7.1	36.9	43.3	2.4	10.3
1984	8.7	40.9	39.4	2.2	8.8

E Government Consumption %

	GEN ADMIN. DEFENSE, POLICE, SECURITY	EDUCATION, CULTURE	SCIENCE RECONSTRUCTION, COMMUNICATIONS
1955	63.6 (89.0)*	13.6	8.5
1960	60.5 (82.8)*	13.5	11.4
1965	53.8	12.5	8.1
1970	48.7	16.3	11.4
1975	39.2	16.4	17.1
1980	39.1	16.7	16.7
1984	34.1	19.0	17.0

*Figures for Defense share of Central Government spending only. Other figures include Taiwan Province (other % abbreviated).

F Gross Fixed Capital Formation %

	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	SERVICES
1951-1955	24.9	23.6	51.5
1956-1960	19.7	16.1	54.3
1961-1965	18.0	17.4	54.5
1966-1970	12.0	34.7	53.2
1971-1973	8.3	34.9	56.7

G Industrial Origin of Net Domestic Product %

	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATIONS	COMMERCE	OTHER
1952	35.7	17.9	3.8	18.7	23.9
1955	32.5	20.9	4.0	16.8	25.8
1960	32.5	24.7	4.1	14.4	24.3
1965	27.0	28.2	4.8	14.9	25.1
1970	19.1	32.5	5.7	14.6	27.8
1973	15.5	37.9	5.4	15.0	26.2

H Family Consumption in Taiwan %

	FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO	RENT, FUEL & POWER	EDUCATION & RECREATION
1964	59.7	17.2	1.20
1966	56.2	18.75	1.62
1968	51.75	19.01	1.65
1970	52.46	18.19	2.66
1972	47.81	20.78	7.06
1974	49.4	20.71	6.06
1976	46.38	21.45	6.38
1978	42.93	22.65	7.80
1980	40.35	23.65	8.18
1982	38.71	24.30	8.65
1983	38.94	24.13	8.67

I Income Distribution of Taiwan Area by Income Share of Families % in Quintiles

	RICHEST 20%	2ND RICHEST 20%	3RD RICHEST 20%	4TH RICHEST 20%	POOREST 20%
1953	61.4	18.2	9.1	8.3	3.0
1959-60	51.0	19.7	13.9	9.7	5.7
1966	41.5	22.0	16.2	12.4	7.2
1970	38.9	22.5	17.1	13.3	8.4
1976	37.3	22.7	17.5	13.7	8.9
1980	36.8	22.8	17.7	13.9	8.8

J Comparison of Consumer Durables Among Sectors 1980 (per 1,000 Households)

	MOST URBAN	2ND URBAN	3RD URBAN	4TH URBAN	AVERAGE FOR THE ECONOMY
Washing Machines	808	723	703	537	650
Telephones	792	639	544	359	516
Pianos	87	69	35	30	46
Newspapers	857	618	660	445	589
Magazines	156	108	104	75	100

K The Teaching of Fine Arts in Taiwan from 1950-1985

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1950				19 (a)						
1951										
1952				6			Averages for 1952-1961			
1953	288	2,87	72	32						
1954	331	2,77	83	19			11	1,97		
1955	362	2,64	91	18						
1956	406	2,23	102	29						
1957	479	2,12	120	28						
1958	556	2,17	139	49 (b)						
1959	972	3,48	243	54 (c)						
1960	981	3,23	245	64 (d)						
1961	996	2,34	249	40						
1962	1023	2,66	256	37			38	2,07	14,9	19.1
1963	1169	2,64	292	41			56	2,63	19,1	19,2
1964	1654	3,20	414	34		34	52	2,07	12,6	19,4
1965	2372	3,71	593	46		40	54	2,31	9,1	14,6
1966	2649	3,10	662	34		37	48	2,19	7,2	10,3
1967	3474	3.05	869	34	41	82	37	1,50	4,2	8,7
1968	3681	2,66	921	36 (e)	49	100	81	2,99	8,8	9,5
1969	4863	3,01	1171	38	37	101	138	4,01	11,8	8,5
1970	5072	2,75	1268	36	16	98	50	2,43	3,9	4,5
1971	5461	2,68	1365	38	33	102	74	2,89	5,4	5,0
1972	7553	3,39	1888	35	54	93	79	3,68	4,2	3,9
1973	8260	3,29	2065	44 (f)	52	92	60	3,05	2,9	3,5
1974	6967	2,57	1742	42	61	96	37	1,62	2,1	3,4
1975	7497	2,66	1874	86	61	98	79	3,43	4,2	3,3
1976	10222	3,53	2556	90 (g)	56	102	89	2,44	3,4	5,0
1977	9030	3,02	2258	97	69	111	112	2,91	5,0	5,1
1978	9421	3,05	2355	94	58	90	169	3,55	7,2	6,2
1979	9599	3,03	2400	95	65	95	150	2,59	6,2	7,5
1980	9625	2,95	2406	96	60	93	156	2,63	6,5	7,2
1981	10627	3,10	2657	98	62	102	166	3,10	6,2	6,3
1982	9407	2,62	2352	102	80	78	103	1,74	4,4	6,6
1983	8985	2,39	2246	135 (h)	41 (i)	102	104	1,82	4,6	5,6
1984	7785 (j)	1,97	1946	101 (i)	34 (m)	90 (n)	89	1,64	4,6	5,2
1985	8008 (k)	1,94	2002	89						

Description of the Columns:
1. Number of students receiving an artistic education at tertiary level, counting from the preceding year.
2. Figures from column 1 as a percentage of total tertiary students.
3. Numbers divided by 4 (years of study) to give an approximate number of fine arts graduate per annum.
4. Graduates of the Fine Arts Department of the Taiwan Normal University (including foreigners).
5. Graduate of China Culture University, Taipei (including foreigners and some postgraduates).
6. Graduates of the National Arts College, Banqiao.
7. Number of students going abroad for art study.
8. Figures from column 7 as a percentage of all students studying abroad.
9. Figures from column 7 as a percentage of all fine arts graduates per annum.
10. Total students going abroad expressed as a percentage of all tertiary graduates per annum.

These trends continued with some slight magnification during investment in steel and shipbuilding industries between 1970 and 1975, despite the shocks of loss of U.N. representation and post-1973 oil price rise with a world depression. Between 1978 and 1980 and into the 1980 to 1984 period, the industrial sector was being further diversified towards high technological and capital intensive industries. Even though other social indicators showed levels of achievement only surpassed by Japan in the region and PCI showed massive increases, into the 1980s Taiwan was a relatively cheap labour economy.[35] A comparison of wage levels for 1977 by Sanwa Bank of Japan gives Japan = 100, Hong Kong = 40, Taiwan = 25, South Korea = 20.[36] Even then, the growth rate was phenomenal.

Within a period of two decades, industry's share of net national product increased by eighteen percentage points. By comparison, industry's share in Britain rose only eleven percentage points over a period of forty years during 1801 to 1841. In the early phase of Japan's development during 1878 to 1882 and 1923 to 1927, industry's share increased sharply by twenty-two percentage points, but it took Japan forty-five years to bring about such a drastic structural change.[37]

If we take 1840 to 1845 and 1912 to 1926 as the eras roughly by which the modern metropolis was established in Europe and Japan with an industrial economy, this same "stage" was reached in Taiwan around 1970 and the subsequent structural change had taken about thirty years. Now there can be no *internal aetiology* for the concurrence of a stable, modern art in Taiwan around 1975 with these figures. But it would be interesting to know if there is some economic minimum condition for one indicated by them. In which case, the Taiwan data indicates a Primary to Secondary Industry employment ration of 30.4/34/9, an agriculture to industry share of net Domestic Product of 15.5/37.9 and a PCI of around 8,000 US$.

The consequences of economic change for art and particularly modern painting in Taiwan are not always what one might expect. Wuyue and Dongfang emerged in 1956 and 1957 when agriculture was relatively much more important in the economy than industry. Of course, in terms of a Eurocentric diffusion of styles, they worked in a "modernist" manner or one derivative of it. But in the Taiwanese context their works were "modern" in the limited sense of challenging an establishment and looking towards a re-evaluation of works from China's own painting history. It therefore preceded the establishment of the economic base necessary according to the hypotheses mentioned earlier. But the economic base was there from the late 1960s and was securely established in 1971 to 1974. This anticipation of the economic base by modern art was also found in Japan from 1912 to1926.

It was significant that what was "modern" for Taiwan was "modernist" for the outside world in 1956 to 1965. This was also the era of economic and military dependence on the United States, whose policies in general were to promote the very abstract expressionism which was adopted as significant, certainly by the Wuyue members. There is no evidence the United States attempted to specifically influence Taiwanese art in this direction, but it did confirm Liu Guosong and Zhuang Zhe in their efforts by Rockefeller fellowships in 1965 and 1966 respectively. All Taiwanese artists interviewed by me between 1982 and 1984 confirmed that, in addition, it was almost entirely the patronage of American officers and officials resident in Taiwan, which brought sales with almost no Chinese purchases. Even as late as 1984, Zhuang Zhe's paintings would not sell easily in Taipei, and were sold for much less than prices then asked for the ageing Japanese-trained artists. The following period after 1970 saw a secure economic base for modern art. Then, Taiwan was no longer dependent on a single power but on a world economic system in which its highly trained but cheap and strike-free labour formed the lowest link in the production chain of transnational corporations. What was "modern" to the inside but derivatively "modernist" to the outside was so not because a reactionary elite dependent on a foreign power was patronizing their local variation of a cosmopolitan style. It was a revolt against the traditional styles favoured by that elite in an ideological contest over the legitimacy. Their "modernity"/"modernist" could not be a representation of fetishized values because the economic relations for them under the hypotheses mentioned did not yet exist.

Let me now turn to government consumption. The government of the R.O.C. on Taiwan has always given greatest priority to military and security spending, but the weight this occupies in total spending has declined by around 30% between 1955 and 1984.[38] These figures refer to shares of all government expenditure, and thus include the Taiwan Provincial Government. In the years for which figures are available for the share of military spending in central government spending, this share was 20% or so higher.[39] The proportion spent on education rose 5.4% between 1955 and 1984[40] and there was a large jump in household expenditure on education and recreation between 1968 and 1972.[41] This would appear to have been used to finance an increase in those at secondary

schools by about 32% between 1952 and 1984, and in higher education in the same period by 7.3%. In other words, although the share of education in government consumption has not increased particularly, the increase in the volume of the budget overall has meant an extraordinary leap in the secondary and higher educational level of the society, above all between 1965 and 1975. In 1971, with slightly different figures for higher education in the population as a whole, the figures were 1.5% for Taiwan and 0.9% for the United Kingdom. I will handle fine art education specifically in the appendix but if an educated population is one requirement for a stable modern art world and of its distribution through the population beyond a minority of intellectuals, this condition was reached in Taiwan between 1970 and 1975.

In household expenditure, the major structural shift was that frequently observed with economic development away from high consumption shares for food towards expenditure on education and recreation. Indeed, one may suppose that the move in this direction would have been even greater if there had not been the twin pressures of increased rents through urbanization and increased fuel prices via the oil shock in the early 1970s. (There are slightly different ways of breaking down consumption expenditures giving different figures if private consumption is opposed to government consumption).

Who was able to make these increased expenditures, who has benefited by industrialization, and who had the increased surplus available to make increased expenditures on education and recreation? Income distribution has been widely studied in Taiwan and some of its indices are debatable. Major shifts in income distribution took place with industrialisation, and not after it. The declining *share* of income by the richest 20% families by 4.2% between 1966 and 1980 actually represents a massive increase in their disposable wealth because of the leap in PCI, from 8.5% of the 1981 level in 1965 to 86.4% in 1980, a more than ten-fold increase. I have not been able to discover consumption figures by income quintile groups. But given a fixed marginal propensity for the richest quintile to buy art which is not a function of actual income volume, much more art was likely to be purchased by them after 1965 and especially after 1970 than hitherto. The quintile of second richest families should not be ignored either. For their marginal propensity to buy art may be similar to the richest group. Indeed, since this group may include doctors, architects, and professional middle classes—those who are known from conversation with dealers to buy art in Taiwan—then they actually increase their share of income as the PCI multiplied. Such a PCI growth, coupled with increase in the distributional share for this group, may also be an economic condition of a modern art world's stability.

The urban population of Taiwan increased from 48% of the total in 1952, in twelve centres of more than fifty thousand, to 70% in 1980 in seventy-three such centres. By the 1980s, this urbanization could support a metropolitan area with upwards of six commercial galleries, and four other major cities with about two commercial galleries each, as well as a number of state and province-funded cultural centres. Of the items of consumer durables spread between different levels of urban centre, I suppose it is the piano, which will be a household's most significant index of cultural activity.[42] If investment in this cultural object requires some consideration by all but the very rich, it also requires considerable commitment of time if it is to be actively used. Here the ration of most urban to fourth urban is 87.30, whereas that for washing machines is 808:537. Of course there can be no clear assertion, but one naturally suspects this quite severe difference in the distribution of particular cultural goods shows just how narrowly concentrated higher cultural activities whose objects do not have direct material benefit are in Taiwan.

In communications media, newspaper circulation has increased massively after 1970, and most newspapers carry regular articles about art, so theoretically there has been an increased diffusion of such information. However, it has often been pointed out to me by Taiwanese artists that newspapers in the 1950s and early 1960s, despite their lower circulation, were far more significant media because of lack of competition from television. Indeed, most newspapers at that time published a supplementary page on art and culture every week whose significance must have been all the more greater, given the constrained information available at the time. Moreover, I can attest the level of articles was often more serious and written by an active participant in the literary or art worlds. In the 1970s, where the volume of information appearing in the press was greater, the reports would often be factual ones by journalists without critical engagement and the article would be on the pages devoted to television programmes and gossip about film stars. Some figures do exist for book publishing including fine arts but these are vitiated for my purposes by government censorship and paper quotas.

IV. CONCLUSION

I do not wish here to reiterate any of the points previously arrived at but to suggest that the consequences of politics and the economy for art in Taiwan indicate certain problems not envisaged in a direct transfer of models of the growth of modernism from Europe and America.

I think we have to distinguish between two kinds of elite actor in the process of modernization which overlap in the artist. One is the intellectual as a moral representative whose very existence can put the legitimacy of an authoritarian regime in question. The other is the intellectual as a trained skill-bearer who represents the new and up-to-date and who, because of his technical skill, feels most qualified to introduce knowledge (or art styles) into his own culture and then assimilate them. Both of these moves challenge an authoritarian government's legitimacy unless it can find ways of sanctioning the introduction and screening the assimilation.

In addition, European and American art history often sees "modernity" as a precursor of "modernism" in a formal series. The Taiwan experience suggests what is mere second-hand "modernism" outside can be first-hand "modernity" inside to a minority avant-garde challenging more than just the artistic establishment's legitimacy. But in the sense that they use this "modernity" to challenge and re-shape a tradition—even to deny it—they use "modernity" to explore a cultural space and relativize viewpoints within it in a way not unlike "modernism" itself. It is only later, with economic growth, that "modernity" becomes available as a resource of mass culture and then what would formally be called "modernism" in a European or American series can be engaged. "Modernism" is thus a formal method and not only an artistic process.

NOTES

This text was originally published as a chapter in French translation as John Clark, "La Peinture Moderne à Taiwan," trans. Pierre-Étienne Will and Anne Cheng. *Études Chinoises* 3, no.1, (Paris: Printemps, 1988): 29-63. The original text concerned itself with the situation in Taiwan prior to 1986.

[1] In order to give an idea at this stage of the subsequent changes in painting with which I will be dealing, I have included some initial periodizations of heuristic value:

1945-1947

Recovery of activity by Japanese-trained Taiwanese artists.

1947-1953

Taiwanese artists are isolated by aftermath of 1947 massacres and by influx of mainlander artists.

1950-1955

Some "modern" trends based on Fauvism and Surrealism are introduced by a very small minority of mainlander artists.

1955-1965

Birth and development of Wuyue (Fifth Moon) and Dongfang (Eastern) painting associations. As a confused variety of "modernist" styles (syncretic with a notion of "Chineseness"), their works are mostly sold to foreign clients.

1966-1971

Wuyue and Dongfang artists increasingly go abroad, some not to return. These artists fail to find secure teaching jobs in Taiwan. In 1965, *Wenxing* (Apollo), which published their debates, is effectively shut down. In 1966, the publisher of the same name is insolvent.

1971-1975

The internal art world stabilizes with regular publication of good art magazines and secure commercial galleries. This is simultaneous with the cutting off of Taiwanese art from the São Paolo Biennale and other external contacts.

1975-1982

After a hiatus, a further generation of competent modern oil painters begins to secure itself through prizes and one-person shows. Some reaction against the Wuyue and Dongfang legacy and the commercial prominence of its artists by more serious explorations of analytical Cubism and Surrealism (via largely literary debates about a "homeland" art) by those who pursue a Taiwanese realism.

1982-1984

A diverse third generation of recently graduated students tries to commercialize their work too quickly. Some mature young artists and established older artists begin to return from abroad.

[2] According to Taiwanese friends who did military service in the mid-1960s.

[3] "Aggression" is my term. Both sides would regard such "attacks" as legitimate attempts to recapture of their own territory.

[4] E. A. Winckler, "National, Regional, and Local Politics," in Ahern and Gates eds., *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981). The author discusses the different analogies under which Taiwan's political situation can be seen: frontier Fujian, wartime Sichuan, early twentieth century Shanghai, divided Korea or Germany, a parish in economic demand like South Africa.

[5] Guoyu in Taiwan is exactly the same language as putonghua on the mainland. The main difference being the latter's use of a highly simplified script.

[6] From an interview with Liu Guosong on 14 February, 1984 and Yang Yingfeng from 2 May, 1984.

[7] Interview with Yang Yingfeng from May 2, 1984. See also Yang Wei. Wei xiandai hua yaochide (Waving the flag for modern painting) (Dalin Wenku, 1973).

[8] See Chapter Eleven in Liu Guosong's book, *Zhongguo xiandai huihua de lu* (The Road of Chinese Modern Painting). (Taipei. Wenxing, 1965).

[9] See *Geming Wenyi* (Revolutionary Literature and Art), Taipei, August 1961.

[10] For further discussion about art in the 1960s, see John Clark, "Liu Guosong's The Road of Modern Chinese Painting," *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* 27/28 (1995-96): 33-56.

[11] See John Clark, "Taiwanese Painting and Europe," in Yu-ming Shaw ed., *China and Europe* (Taipei: Institute of International Affairs, 1986): 43-60

[12] See the article on Xie Deqing in *Meishu Zazhi* 7, 1973.

[13] Xie Lifa, "Zhongguo Zuoyi Meishu zai Taiwan 1945-49" (Chinese Left-wing Art in Taiwan 1945-9), *Taiwan Wenhua* 11, 1985.

[14] Interview with Cheng Yanping 6 April, 1984.

[15] Interview with Li Xiqi of 8 November, 1983.

[16] The younger artists were quite well aware of this inadequacy, but were ignored.

[17] From interviews with officials from the committee in 1984.

[18] It would appear from other sources, however, to have re-constituted as a painting society in 1954.

[19] See the collection "Xiangtu Lun" (The Homeland Controversy) published by *Xiachao* magazine in 1978, the year it was suppressed.

[20] For a bittersweet view of the older liberals see Bai Xianyong's short story "Dongye" (Winter Night), *Xiandai Wenxue*, no. 41 (October 1970).

[21] See Yu Qingyun, "Sanminzhuyi yu Yishuchuangzuo," *Meishu Xuebao* (1967).

[22] Ibid., 3.

[23] Ibid., 6.

[24] Ibid., 14.

[25] Ibid., 17.

[26] See M. Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (London: Verso, 1983).

[27] Wu Yuanli and Yeh Kungjia, eds., *Growth Distribution and Social Change: Essays on the Economy of the Republic of China* (Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 1978), 24-25.

[28] *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1985* (Taipei, Council for Economic Planning and Development, Republic of China, 1987).

[29] Samuel Ho, *Economic Development of Taiwan 1860-1970* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 234.

[30] *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1985* (Taipei, Council for Economic Planning and Development, Republic of China, 1987).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Wu Yuanli and Yeh Kungjia, eds., *Growth Distribution and Social Change: Essays on the Economy of the Republic of China* (Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 1978), 24-25.

[33] *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1985* (Taipei, Council for Economic Planning and Development, Republic of China, 1987).

[34] See Samuel Ho, *Economic Development of Taiwan 1860-1970* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 234; Wu Yuanli and Yeh Kungjia, eds., *Growth Distribution and Social Change: Essays on the Economy of the Republic of China* (Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 1978), 24-25.

[35] *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1985* (Taipei, Council for Economic Planning and Development, Republic of China, 1987).

[36] R.N. Clough, *Island China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 84.

[37] Wu Yuanli and Yeh Kungjia, eds., *Growth Distribution and Social Change: Essays on the Economy of the Republic of China* (Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 1978), 25. The authors quote Simon Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 88-91.

[38] *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1985* (Taipei, Council for Economic Planning and Development, Republic of China, 1987) and M. Mancall, *Formosa Today* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 78.

[39] M. Mancall, *Formosa Today* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 78.

[40] *Taiwan Statistical Data Book 1985* (Taipei, Council for Economic Planning and Development, Republic of China, 1987).

[41] Ibid.

[42] Shirley Kuo, *The Taiwan Economy in Transition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 96.

ON LINGCHI:
ECHOES OF A HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH

INTERVIEW BY AMY CHENG / TRANSLATED BY CHRISTINE CHAN

2002 Taipei Biennial installation view of Chen Chieh-Jen's *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph*, b & w film, 300 x 400 x 3 screens

Born in Taoyuan, Taiwan in 1960, Chen Chieh-Jen is one of Taiwan's leading contemporary artists. From the 1980s to the early 1990s, before and after the lifting of martial law in Taiwan, he was active in performance art. Starting in 1996, he created the series *Revolt in the Soul & Body* (1900-1999) using the computer to alter historical photographs of criminal executions. In 2000, he began his own photographic series *The Twelve Karmas Under the City* to explore the "virtual future." His reflections on historical images and the relationship between image and power through intense and frightening images drew people's attention. He has taken part in international exhibitions such as the 1998 Taipei Biennial, the Sao Paulo Biennial, the Taiwan pavilion at the 1999 Venice Biennale, the 2000 Biennale de Lyon Contemporary Art, and the Kwangju Biennale. In 2001, he held his solo exhibition at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris. He won the Special Award of the Kwangju Biennale in 2000. At the Taipei Biennial, which opened in November 2002, his new black-and-white film *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph* was shown on three screens at a slow and lyrical speed. In the film, he links history and contemporary Taiwan society. When it was shown at FIAC in Paris, Le Monde stated : "Elle est atroce, mais c'est une des oeuvres les plus fortes qu'il nous ait été donné de voir ces derniéres années.[1]

IT ALL STARTED WITH A HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH

In the nineteenth century, with the development of colonialism, Westerners shattered the self-sufficient Eastern world with a new technology: photography. The East was seen and understood in a certain way and from a certain perspective. As a result, the subject became an object that was being seen and interpreted. Chen Chieh-Jen describes it as a kind of "soul-stealing." In the process of being seen and photographed, one loses one's subject consciousness and becomes the silent "other." An image is thus "a kind of 'death' frozen on the photographic paper."[2] The photograph used by Chen Chieh-Jen showing a *lingchi* scene was taken by a French soldier in 1905 and made famous by Georges Bataille. It not only shows the East seen through the eyes of colonialists—through a "technological medium resembling a kind of 'soul-stealing' instrument"[3]—but also a long process of dying. An analogy can be drawn between the photographed person having his or her soul stolen and the criminal's trance-like state (as a result of the application of opium to delay death and pain). As a piece of historical evidence, the photograph reveals the power relations between spectator and spectacle. The photographed person had his or her soul

2002 Taipei Biennial installation view of Chen Chieh-Jen's *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph*, b & w film, 300 x 400 x 3 screens

taken away, just as the criminal was being subject to physical dismemberment. After the moment had been captured on camera, it became a sealed memory and a potential source of energy. In the West, due in part to Georges Bataille's interpretation, this photograph has become a key image of the aesthetics of horror dealing with religion, lust, torture, and ecstasy. But prior to 1998, it was a little known image in China. In 1996, Chen Chieh-Jen developed a series of photographs with computerized montage based on this lingchi photograph, posing "questions about an array of issues: image/power, body/execution, politics/violence, reason/madness…self/others."[4]

This time, Chen Chieh-Jen has reworked this theme again in the film *Lingchi*, which elaborates on the theme of delayed pain and trance in order to explore contemporary living in Taiwan. More precisely, instead of revisiting the historical scene, the film deals with the present, which is the culmination of history. Through the method of "extension" (the slow motion of the film and the inter-cutting of scenes of different time and space), he magnifies the trance and prolongs the present. Only by staring at the open wounds can we step into the vestiges of history and experience the pain numbed by the film's slow motion. The film is full of references and symbols relating to contemporary reality, showing a cycle of past and present. Chen Chieh-Jen has used the idea of the nie ching (hell mirror) in Chinese culture as a metaphor and symbol in his discussion of image and power. In the images of hell used in funerals and funeral services in Taiwan, there are descriptions of *nie ching*. It is said that dead people who have fallen into hell have to face its judgment. This mirror will reflect images of their deeds and desires during their lifetime as evidence for judgment of their sins.

Cheng: Before discussing the film *Lingchi*, maybe we should start with your previous series *Revolt in the Soul and Body* of altered historical photos of criminal executions. While working on this series, you used the idea of nie ching to discuss image and power. How do you see nie ching and power?

Chen: It is a paradoxical mirror. On the one hand, it seems to objectively record the past life of the dead. On the other hand, it seems to be eternally watching. In folklore, it can also reveal the various desires in the subconscious of the dead. I am very curious about this mirror of judgment in hell. In the image of hell, it is never really depicted or represented. What I am curious about is how does it mirror people's desires? Or how do people affirm their own memories through the images? Who controls the images and how are they recorded? This reminds me of the beginning of martial law during the Cold War. It was only many years later that I understood what I saw on

television as a child. Whether they were cartoons, historical or war movies, films about the invasion of extraterrestrials, or love stories, their purpose was to rationalize the Cold War and educate by brainwashing with entertainment. Images were transmitted for a reason. The same goes for today. *Nie ching* also exists in this world. This was one of the reasons why I wanted to alter historical images.

Cheng: In the *Revolt in the Soul and Body* series, you put yourself into the images and assume the multiple identities of the victim, the executioner, and the onlooker. How did you choose the historical photographs to be altered and why the multiple identities?

Chen: I tried to choose the photographs of executions with unknown history as much as possible. The executed is someone who could not escape from being photographed. He could not speak and could not even escape in death. I am not interested in national history. I am interested in the "trance-like" character of historical images because of the uncertainty of the event and the silence of the person photographed. While looking at the images, we become lost in the maze of images and participants in the maze of images. According to the Daoists, a person has ten different selves. From my experiences growing up during the Cold War and the martial law period, I feel we are in a trance with multiple identities, and while in a trance, we look at ourselves and find that we are in fact the ones being photographed.

WINDOW/WOUND: THE BEGINNING OF THE GAZE

The process of going from "looking" to "gazing" proposed in the series *Revolt in the Soul and Body* as derived from the metaphor of *nie ching* is still the basis for an understanding of the film *Lingchi*. The film opens with the image of a ruin. In the scene of destruction, we see "windows." This foreshadows what Chen Chieh-Jen wants us to reflect on regarding the process of *lingchi*. The most stunning image in the film is the two wounds left on the chest of the tortured after being dismembered. It is the beginning and focus of the gaze. It is also the beginning of the colonialists' look at the exotic East, a metaphor for colonization. This metaphor runs through the whole film, from the window to the wounds and from the wounds to the hole of the camera lens. The process is being continuously recorded and observed. As the film unfolds, time also moves forward. The late Qing onlookers become a group of modern women workers. Their silent and concentrated gaze suggests a kind of historical parallel. The most speaking passage in the film is when two modern women gradually appear through two wound-like windows. They slowly open up the clothes of a young man between them, who also has two wounds inflicted by *lingchi*.

When the camera enters the body of the tortured, the historical "ruins" also appear. Whether it is the site of Unit 731 in Harbin, the Luchou Village on Green Island, or the heavily polluted RCA electronics factory in Taoyuan, they are all seen in relation to the symbol of the ruins of the Summer Palace in Beijing. The Summer Palace, destroyed by the eight-power allied forces, stands for all those ruins of modern factories that were the sites of political and economic domination. These sites tell the same story and suffer the same damage. Chen Chieh-Jen sees and shows the present in the light of history. All the ruins he saw in the process of filming sing the elegy of the weak. In this film, history is cyclical and keeps repeating itself. Chen Chieh-Jen says he is concerned about the women workers' loss of orientation after being eliminated in the process of globalization. Contemporary history is characterized by this trance-like disorientation.

Cheng: If the aesthetics of the black-and-white photographic series *Revolt in the Soul and Body* is based on the reworking of historical photographs, what do you think of the film medium and the relationship between the inside and outside of the body?

Chen: The Daoists have an "Internal Medicine Diagram," that uses landscapes and seasonal division points to illustrate the balance between the internal organs of the body and external nature. But what is the inside of our body like today? In my view, the mutilated body of the tortured in the historical *lingchi* photo is also like a ruin and is the centre of dizziness. That is why I let the camera enter the inside of the body. There, we see the historical ruins and the modern ruins of the factories outside the body. To me, they form a kind of continuity. Most of the actors in the film are unemployed workers. A few of them are students. For most of them, this was the first time they had acted in a film. Their bodies hardly move in the film. I am interested in the bodies that cannot move. Taiwan does not really have a film industry. Everything is fragmented. I wanted to construct a fragmented narrative so that the audience would ask who these people were because of the fragmented narrative. I hope the questions will begin where the film ends because to me, fragmentation is both the form and the content.

Cheng: How about the slow rhythm from beginning to end?

Chen: The punishment of *lingchi* is a slow and endless process. At the same time, I want the audience to gaze at every face in the film. The actors are not only reconstructing a historical execution, but also expressing their present plight. That is why I let the actor playing the tortured keep his modern haircut. I do not think we can really "represent history." What I wanted to do was trace the origin of our "trance" and the beginning of fragmentation from our present feeling, in order to think about how we entered an endless cycle from there.

PAIN AND TRANCE

The person being tortured represents the subject of the history of the weak. But as part of historical development, are we conscious of the pain ourselves? This is probably one of the reasons why Chen Chieh-Jen wanted to explore and present the state of "trance." In the film, the tortured is given opium to prolong the trance and delay the pain. The moment between life and death is extended to the present. The face of the tortured going from trance to ecstasy remains etched on our memory. If the historical truth is all too obvious under Chen Chieh-Jen's gaze, is it also the most accurate reflection of our situation?

Taiwan is undergoing a modernization and globalization process. The coming of the world of consumption and technology may have brought some optimism about the future. But that may be because we are in such a trance that we are unable to feel the pain of the present moment. Chen Chieh-Jen aptly described the state of "trance" or even "ecstasy" we are in: "In my view, Taiwan is perfectly happy to play the role of an end-receiver in the world of consumption created by multi-national enterprises and the media. It is happy to be dominated."[5] In fact, it is even difficult to differentiate between our pain and our happiness. The post-colonial period is an extension of the colonial period. Third World countries continue to be dominated by the cultural, capitalist, technological, and globalized ideology of the colonialists. Although the post-colonial period also signifies a turning point, nurturing the growth of ideological opposition in Third World Countries, such opposition cannot stop the continuation of manipulation. If history repeats itself again in the future, can we escape from this destiny?

Cheng: If the trance has become internalized, can we break away from this "trance?"

Chen: The trance has not merely been internalized. We are in a collective trance. We cannot be anywhere else. We are not even in the "East." We are merely inside the consumer society created by

multi-national capital. There is no escape. But this does not give cause for pessimism. Due to the Cold War, Taiwan became a downstream processing site for multi-national capital. While making this film, I went to the processing sites and saw factories, which had closed and fallen into disuse, as well as a growing number of unemployed workers. We once got rich by serving multi-national capital. Now, we have been dumped after the globalization of multi-national capital. The bubble has burst. This is a very important lesson for us. Taiwan once helped to rationalize the Cold War. We served the interest of multi-national enterprises and Western hegemony and discriminated against the poor, non-western countries. We called these the values of "progress" and believed in them. We let ourselves be completely alienated.

The trance to a state of ecstasy of the *lingchi* victim is to be differentiated from the trance caused by alienation. The trance of the tortured was caused by passive taking of opium. But the ecstatic smile was active. There is potential energy in the trance to state of ecstasy experienced by the tortured. In making the film, I wanted to re-examine and explore this energetic state. The faint smile of the *lingchi* victim in the historical picture was an active smile while being given opium, while being dismembered, and while being photographed. It was not just ecstasy, but also a small active smile full of defiance. It is a hundred-year smile captured on the photograph. To me, this smile suggests a mad, active cultural strategy to escape from the value system of the consumer society. With a mad smile, one renames oneself.

NAMING THE FUTURE

For Chen Chieh-Jen, history is cyclical and not linear. He uses the Buddhist concept of reincarnation to explain this cyclical view of history. In his eyes, time has to do with causality. As such, there is no real past, present, or future. What the historical photograph shows is a moment. If we can use it as a starting point, we can transcend the chronology of time, the power relations, and the position of viewing. We may be able to understand the present and the future. As a portrayal of the present, *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph* opens up a gap in the "present" for energy to flow through and open up possibilities for the future. As a result, it is no longer impossible to re-define the future actively.

2002 Taipei Biennial installation view of Chen Chieh-Jen's *Lingchi: Echoes of a Historical Photograph*, b & w film, 300 x 400 x 3 screens

NOTES

[1] Harry Bellet, "Le Chinois bousculent l'àrt contemporain à la FIAC," *Le Monde* (27 October 2002).

[2] From Chen Chieh-Jen's statement in 1997.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Chia Chi Jason Wang, "From Shadow Magic to the Spectacle," in the catalogue essay for the 2002 Taipei Biennial *Great Theatre of the World* (Taipei: Taipei Art Museum, 2002): 88-87.

[5] From an interview with the artist in April 2002.

PATTERNS OF THOUGHT: THE INSTALLATIONS OF MICHAEL LIN

BRONWYN MAHONEY

Performance during opening of *APT 2002. Gallery 5 wall, QAG 09.12.02 - 01.27.03 2002.* Photo: Mio Iwakiri

Every painting and every poem has its edges; the question is where they are placed?[1]

Michael Lin's works are carefully placed; his warm-hued paintings overlay and define spaces, saturate them, but become so one with each, that they are accepted in the same way it is hard to remember how something was before it changed. While they meld, their scale and intensity almost dare people to overlook them, or at times, walk over them. Lin described his work in the 2001 Istanbul Biennial as "there not to be there."[2]

Widely known for his expansive installations of predominantly floral patterns, it would be easy to classify Lin as simply a decorative painter. But this would be a misreading, missing the vernacular of Lin's work, which encompasses many vocabularies.

Describing himself as a conceptual artist,[3] Lin synthesizes ideas from sagacious sources. He observes and absorbs a variety of information, an osmotic approach, possibly informed by the migrations of his childhood, from the countryside of central Taiwan, to school in Los Angeles. His approach to art is very much influenced by American art history, from the artists he invokes in conversation, to the pop sensibility that he notes of his work.

Returning to Taiwan in 1995, Lin found a culture that was both familiar and distant, a country dealing with a history of colonial rule, martial law and moves toward democracy. The traditional cotton textiles he recalled from the countryside of his childhood, were now

decorating his Taipei apartment. He began painting the patterns from these fabrics as intimately-scaled still lives.

His first solo show, complementary, in 1998, sought to draw two elements of his history together, and he has continued to develop the ideas initially raised in this exhibition, of creating fluid spaces from the fluid sources, which blend masculine and feminine, in their scale and origin, with the fluidity of the lines of the patterns, and the patterns people create in using the areas he makes.

Bar Merlo, QAG 09.12.02 - 01.27.03 2002.
Photo: Mio Iwakiri

Lin's shifting of the physical plane of painting relates art historically, to the creation of spaces from the early twentieth century. His spatial engagements are informed by investigations and experiments in space, including sculpture, like that of Donald Judd and Richard Serra, which have been described this as invading the space of the viewer.[4]

Lin does not so much invade space, but chooses venues, locales, often outside "official" spaces to create his own world, with considerations of the history and uses of the place, for a designated period of time. Most spaces we use as a public, including museums, are particularly unsexy. Liminal spaces, those ones in between, are often notoriously so—those stairwells, cafe walls, passageways, entranceways and open floors. It is these areas Lin sensualizes.

This is the role of the patterns—not only do they deliver sensuality to our eyes, but the domestic history of their origins invests them with warmth. Patterns create boundaries, visual and emotional, providing comfort in their repetition. The sensual envelops us, but still leaves us space to move. We retain our own skin, it is not constricted, rather we become more aware of it, aware of its shapes and what it feels, by the presence of another element—sensory, sensational, carnal, sensuous, the sensorial movement of bodies.

Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Sept. 9, 2000 - Jan. 7, 2001. Courtesy of the artist

Atrium Stadhuis Den Haag 12 juli t/m 8 september 2002. Courtesy of the artist

Patterns also set edges, in their repetition, parenthesis—from the Latin, to insert, to place or to amplify. The relation of Lin's work as amplifying space is enunciated by the titles he chooses: Gallery 5 wall, *QAG 09.12.02 – 01.27.03 2002; Bar Merlo, QAG 09.12.02 – 01.27.03 2002; Taipei Fine Arts Museum: Sept. 9, 2000 – Jan. 7, 2001; Atrium Stadhuis Den Haag 12 juli t/m 8 september 2002; Palais de Tokyo, 21-01-2002/21-12-2002.*

Hermann Minkowski, during a lecture in Cologne in 1908, stated "nobody has ever noticed a place except at a time, or a time except at a place." He concluded by saying "space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality." This geometric relationship, establishing a 4-dimensional space, is how physicists often describe events, places, actions and moments in history, in terms of their location in the fabric of space-time.[5] But we still only see in three dimensions, but an event takes place in four.

Within these parenthetical edges, in the four dimensions, events take place. These events—whether organized by the artist or institution, like the parties in the Palais de Tokyo, or the everyday traversing of the work by workers on their way to offices in the Hague City Hall—give the work depth. In this there are resonances of the theatrical, but like the domestic notions associated with the installations, the relation returns to the physical work, for like theatre and home, all are intervals, interludes from the "normal." Painting is only a tool, a trope in the projects' situation as a forum: "the work does not raise any concrete possibilities directly but opens up a space which allows for possibilities to be proposed."

Palais de Tokyo, 21-01-2002/21-12-2002.
Photo: Ai Iwakiri

Other authors have noted the physical shifting of the verticality of the viewer, the transgressing of the "understood" behavior that Lin's work encourages—lying on cushions, sitting, walking or painting.[7] We have been trained to behave in certain ways when looking at art, we are conditioned to believe that we stand in a certain way, and wait for the wonder. The unsexy museum is the instigator of this:

> In the Louvre the seignorial Valéry feels himself constrained from the first by the authoritarian gesture that takes away his cane and by the "No Smoking" sign. Cold confusion, he says reign among the sculptures, a tumult of frozen creatures each of which demands the non-existence of the others, disorder strangely organized. Standing among the pictures offered for contemplation, Valéry mockingly observes that one is seized by a sacred awe.[8]

Perhaps the Valéry Adorno describes would have found himself more comfortable encountering Michael Lin's work, lying on the scatter cushions and thinking. But the Proust of Adorno's "Les Problème des musées," who found that, unlike Valéry, works go beyond aesthetic, becoming part of the viewers' consciousness—may have also found art that provided the memory that for him inscribed work with value.

Platform, Istanbul Biennial 22 September - 17 November 2001. Courtesy of the artist

Adorno sees the positions of his protagonists as correct, along the continuum that is the truth, though there is much space in between the two: "each takes the part of one moment in the truth which lies in the unfolding of contradiction…the two most knowledgable men to have written about art in recent times, have their limits, without which, in fact, their knowledge would not have been possible."[9]

These limits are necessary so we can gain perspective. The grounds that Lin produces, bounded by time and space, and his desire to create places encouraging social exchange, provide an interstitial freedom that bridges the history of their intellectual component with the humanity of the events they host and are part of, and the memories they become.

NOTES

[1] Eric Lindner, "Whoever has an eye for the extraordinary among the commonplace can imagine what we are actually familiar with, yet do not always know," *Michael Lin: Atrium Stadhuis Den Haag 2002 12 July – 8 September 2002* (The Hague: Stroom hcbk, 2002).

[2] Quoted in my catalogue entry in "Egofugal," *Istanbul Biennial*, 2001,128-129.

[3] "The Other Side: An Interview of Michael Lin by Jérôme Sans," *Michael Lin Palais de Tokyo, 21-01-2002/21-12-2002* (Palais de Tokyo, 2002).

[4] Nicholas Serota, *Experience or Interpretation: The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 33.

[5] Sten Odenwald, *Ask the Astronomer*, http://itss.raytheon.com/cafe/qadir/q411.html.

[6] Email from the artist to the author, 10 December, 2002.

[7] Vivian Rehberg, "The Language of Flowers," *Michael Lin Palais de Tokyo* (Palais de Tokyo, 2002).

[8] Theodor Adorno, "'Le problème des musées,' Valéry Proust, Museum," trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, *Prisms* (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981): 173-85.

[9] Ibid.,183.

INTERVIEW WITH YUAN GOANG-MING

AMY CHENG HUEI-HUA / TRANSLATED BY CHRISTINE CHAN

A pioneer in video installation art in Taiwan, Yuan Goang-Ming (b. 1965) started working with video in 1986. In 1997, he received a master's degree in media art from the Academy of Design Karlsruhe. Using symbolic metaphor combined with technological media, his work eloquently expresses the state of contemporary existence and profoundly explores the human mind and consciousness. In 1992, his work *Fish on Dish* was shown to great acclaim in Taiwanese art circles, while *The Reason for Insomnia* (1998) captured the attention of the international audience. These two works are still being exhibited around the world. His other memorable works include *Scream, Therefore I Am* (1995), *The Reason for Running* (1998) and the interactive installation *Fly* (1999).

In 2000, Yuan Goang-Ming was awarded the Jury Prize of the First Art Future 2000 by the Acer Digital Art Center. In the same year, he held a solo exhibition at the MoMA Contemporary in Fukuoka, Japan. In 2001, he took part in the exhibition Translated Acts curated by the Korean curator Yu Yeon Kim and held in Berlin and New York, as well as in *010101*: *Art in Technological Times* held at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 2002, he participated in the 2002 Taipei Biennial.

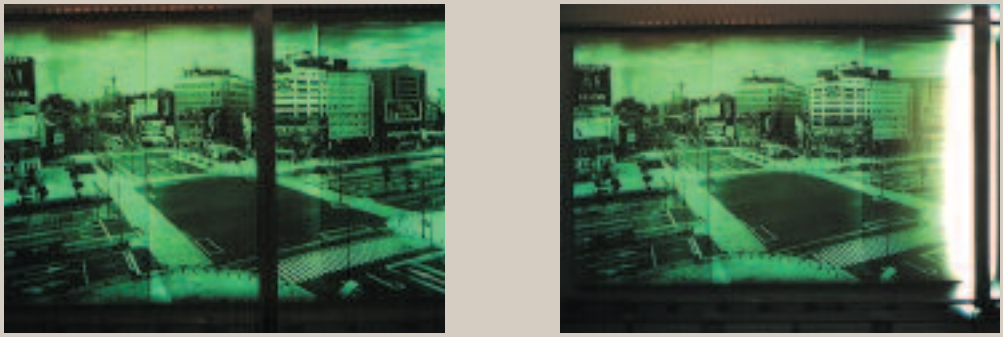
Yuan Goang-Ming, *City Disqualified*, 2002, digital projection (left); *Human Disqualified*, 2001, multimedia installation (right)

The new work *City Disqualified* (2002) represents a new departure in Yuan Guang-Ming's art. Instead of using the form of video installation, he combines two-dimensional photography with computer manipulation. After taking over one hundred photographs of the streets of Taipei, he superimposes them on one another in the computer, compressing the "different moments of time" in "the same space" on a flat image. He then alters the image by erasing the people and cars painstakingly, as if making a sculpture, finally arriving at the image of a fascinating, hyper-real deserted city. In the following interview, he talks at length about the concept and content of his new work.

Cheng: In the past, you had always created video installations. But in your new works in 2001 and 2002, *Human Disqualified* and *City Disqualified*, you have returned to photography and a purely two-dimensional form. What was the reason for this change?

Yuan: I started working with video in 1986 and have been doing so for sixteen years. I am a bit tired of using the same medium all the time. Of course, during this period I have also experimented with different media and created multi-media works. But I seem to feel a kind of limitation. Actually, I like doing two-dimensional works as well. Only I never found a justification for doing so. The "digital" issue is now becoming more and more pressing and interesting. There is, for instance, the question of "reproduction." So, I felt that maybe I could try something in this direction. Actually, it is not a very difficult technology. But while everyone has access to this tool, each uses the technology differently to express different things. I felt I had a different interpretation of it. That's why I created the *Disqualified* series. While working on this series, I also did video works. But I felt that there was something wrong. On the one hand, I became dissatisfied with the expressive mode and picture quality of video. To me, the quality of projection was not fine enough. On the other hand, I wanted to express something new. But the medium I used had a lot of limitations. Later, I knew I had to change my medium and my tool.

Cheng: In *City Disqualified,* viewers will be taken by surprise by the image that seems real and unreal at the same time. Only later will they find out that it is done with computer manipulation. You have erased the cars and people. What made you do this and what were you trying to say?



Yuan Goang-Ming, *Human Disqualified*, 2001, multimedia installation (left and right)

Yuan: It seems to be a question of inspiration. It's hard to explain. Just like if you ask me why choose the Ximen District. It's a kind of feeling. The place was once full of life but went into decline. After redevelopment in the 1980s, it became a bustling place again. It seems to be a microcosm of time. But one thing is certain: the deserted city is not "virtual" but rather something like a video painting. Or you can say it is a kind of "representation." I took a lot of pictures and stored them in the computer. Then I superimposed them on one another to see the kind of space I wanted or to remove elements I did not want. When I opened and closed the superimposed images, the image began to move. Interestingly, I found that the process was just like doing video. It is the "simultaneous representation of different moments of time." It is very similar to the principle of animation. Only I did not allow the image to move. Instead, all the frames were superimposed and I erased certain elements just like doing editing. Finally, I arrived at a "representation" in which time is juxtaposed. That's why I do not think my work is "virtual." It still represents an actual scene. Only I have "deleted" what I did not want.

Cheng: You said using computer manipulation to alter photographs is "very similar" to doing video works to a certain extent. What are the similarities and differences between the two?

Yuan: I found that they are similar in nature. If it's just painting on a flat surface with digital media, I would not be so interested. I gave up painting for video art because I felt that it was hard to express "time" in painting, while the nature of video is very much linked with "time." Now I've turned to digital media because, like I said, the element of "time" is still present. It's one of the things that attracted me. The difference is that in my past video works, the "trace" of time is visible, while it has been erased in my new work. Even so, it is still present. The "deleting" is also a kind of "representation" of the "trace."

Cheng: Since you chose the "city" as your subject matter, does it have anything to do with the experience of city living, such as reflections on the age of consumption and technology? What do you think of "technology?"

Yuan: I guess there are some reflections on the age of consumption and technology. For instance, I wouldn't go and take pictures of the countryside. I'm a bit pessimistic about technology and even tired of it. It sounds a bit paradoxical [laughs] because that's what I do. It's probably a love-hate relationship. Actually, technology doesn't make my life simpler. Rather, it makes it more complicated. Everyone says cyberspace shortens the distance between people. To me, it's just the opposite. It actually increases the distance. But that's the price you pay for "speed." Cyberspace is, in fact, very inhuman. The advertisement of the French Concorde says: "The supersonic jet has erased the entire Atlantic Ocean!" Apparently, space is erased as a result of high speed. It's the same with cyberspace. It eliminates the distance between here and there. But I feel it is inhuman.

Cheng: Your work does have this "love-hate" quality. Its "emptiness" stands opposite to a vague technological feeling.

Yuan: Each age has its own medium. Whether you like it or not, new media stimulates new thoughts and new thoughts produce new forms and contents. One should rather say that I still regard new technology and new media with a certain "skepticism." When Nam June Paik first used the medium of video, he was critical about it. But the second or third generation of video artists already identified with the medium and what they wanted to express was something different. The digital age began in Taiwan around the 1990s. To us, it was still relatively new and there seemed to be some doubt whether we could control it. But for the younger generation, they obviously don't have this problem. In my opinion, my new work *City Disqualified* can challenge viewer's perception. It is like a trap. It's broad daylight but you can't see any people or cars. However, if you look carefully, you will find all the shops are open. Maybe it will produce some new visual and perceptual experiences for viewers.

Cheng: We associate the use of technological media with "speed." But in fact you worked very slowly (erasing the people and cars), like doing traditional painting or sculpture. What do you think of this?

Yuan: It's really rather "painstaking," like doing traditional art. Although I can't find any reason to pick up the painting brush again, I still remember the joy when I used to paint. Every brushstroke is a record of the present. But with digital media, due to the ability of rapid mass reproduction, the unique "aura" of art works in the past seems to be lost. That's why when I'm creating, I want to

see if I can find a small gap to make another kind of "aura" reappear through long hours of labour. Technological media and traditional painting are very different in nature. While painting has an aura, it is still a kind of imitation. But the invention of photography changes everything. One of its ability is to demonstrate, as Roland Barthes said: "ça a été." Its ability of "representing" things affects our way of seeing. That's why the images produced by technological media are fundamentally different from the images of painting. My new work "represents" numerous instances of "ça a été" compressed on a flat surface.

Cheng: Like you said, your work compresses numerous instances of "ça a été" on a flat surface. But its effect is to create a grand "illusion." Was that what you intended?

Yuan: I did not think of so many things before I made it. But the moment it was finished, it was quite interesting to discover it.

Cheng: Why did you do a digital scanning projection of *City Disqualified* later, turning a static work into mobile images?

Yuan: At the time, I decided not to make video again. What other possibilities do images have? As I mentioned before, while altering the photographs, I would pull and move layers of images. When I was moving the images, the motion attracted and inspired me. I thought I could also try some other way. So, I tried to convey the movement with software. More and more young artists are now trying to create mobile images between two-dimensional and three-dimensional with software. Let's just call it "computing video" for the time being. It's a rather new form. Video art has now hit a bottleneck. What I call "computing video" may be a new way out in terms of media. The mobile images are created by continuously playing frame after frame of static images. They are the result of the persistence of vision. This scanning projection work also consists of individual frames. I obtained the frames of images with software and then linked them together for playback. The movement we see is in fact generated from a large two-dimensional photograph. There seems to be a kind of dialectic between immobility and mobility.

Cheng: Can the constitution of "movement" be extended to suggest the constitution of "time?"

Yuan: I very much agree with a saying of Saint Augustine in the fourth century: "Time is the mobile image of immobile eternity." In still photography, "time" is very much hidden. Actually, my work is made up of numerous fragments of time. But they are being compressed on a flat surface instead of being expressed in movement. While the projection seems like a video work, it is derived from a two-dimensional medium in which time is latent. Its statement of the concept of "time" is not quite the same as that of past video works.

Cheng: Most of your past works refer to people's "innermost being" and state of "existence." Are there any such references in this work?

Yuan: Not too many. I don't like to be "didactic" in my works. Otherwise, they will be too descriptive or explanatory and will limit viewers' imagination. Indeed, my past works have more to do with people's life experiences and I used symbols such as the fish, boat, or bird. But in my new work, I wanted some breakthrough and change. The idea of the "city" came instinctively to my mind. Actually, the "city" is still closely related to people. Although you can't see anybody in the photograph, it still has something to do with people.

INTERVIEW WITH HUNG TUNG-LU

AMY CHENG HUEI-HUA / TRANSLATED BY CHRISTINE CHAN

Hung Tung-Lu, *Hsiao-Hung*, 2002, multi-media installation

Hung Tung-Lu (b. 1968) is a Taiwanese artist of the e-generation who rose to fame in his early twenties in the mid-1990s. Later, his works using photography and lenticulars in light boxes began to attract attention in various art circles. In 1999, he was one of three artists who represented Taiwan in the 48th Venice Bienniale, Taiwan Pavilion. He also participated in the 2000 Taipei Biennial and the third Tuscia Electa in Italy. In 2001, he took part in ARCO in Madrid, Spain and the Pusan Biennale 2002. He is one of the few Taiwanese artists of his generation who have achieved international status.

All along, Hung Tung-Lu has used characters from American and Japanese cartoons, comics and electronic games as cultural symbols of his generation in an attempt to show the "hyperreal" nature of consumer icons in pop culture, as well as the e-generation's "identification" with icons. He photographed the familiar characters of *Street Fighter*: *Chun-Li*, *Pretty Soldier* and *Barbie* before traditional religious icons and historical architecture to contrast the signs and images belonging to different time and spaces. In 2000, Hung began employing lenticulars, creating three-dimensional effects on two-dimensional works to convey the unique aura of the consumer age.

In 2002, Hung presented his new work *Hsiao-Hung* in his *Nirvana* solo exhibition, in which he experimented with media he had not used before: sound and interactive installation. In the following interview, Hung talks about this change and the content and ideas he tries to convey in his new work.

Cheng: In your latest exhibition Nirvana in 2002, you began using sound and interactive installations and images. Compared with the two-dimensional works featuring comics characters, such as *Pretty Soldier*, *Street Fighter*: *Chun-Li* and *Asura*, it is a major breakthrough. What made you turn towards multi-media installation and what is its significance for you?

Hung: In 2001, I received an ACC grant and stayed in New York as a resident artist of the International Studio and Curatorial Program for eight months. At that time, I still created mainly two-dimensional works. But after returning to Taiwan, I felt a kind of block and started thinking about the possibility of change. First, I decided not to use ready-made comics characters again, such as *Chun-Li* or *Pretty Soldier*. These virtual characters from electronic games and comics made me think more deeply about things in the "virtual" world. At present, the Internet is so widespread that we are living in a virtual world to a certain extent. I got the idea of creating a virtual world and a virtual character in my work. That's how *Hsiao-Hung*, the character in *Nirvana*, was born. In her world, she plays by her own rules and has her own sensory experience. During the production process, I met some VJs and composers of electronic music in Taiwan, such as Monbaza and Lin Qiang, which expanded the possibilities of my work. By collaborating with them, I expanded the two-dimensional work to a combination of image and sound. At that time, we set up a group

called Art Project. After meeting people from different fields, I realized that art-making now should not be limited to the artist realizing his own concept. Instead, one should step out of one's circle and enlist the support of people from different fields to achieve the greatest effect. This is probably also a trend. In my latest work, I provided the artistic concept as a kind of artistic director. After discussion, the details were carried out by professionals.

Cheng: The protagonist *Hsiao-Hung* is like a biological person. She is not lifelike but has a very minimal appearance. Where did you get the inspiration for the image and why is she so minimal?

Hung: It is a representation of the feeling of cyberspace and the technological age. I wanted to express an absolute technological feel in a minimal way. At first, the model I made was very lifelike. But then I thought that since computer language was used, there was no need for human intervention and no need for her to be "lifelike." Let her be the creature of a cold world, asexual and without a definite identity. If I wanted her to be lifelike, I might as well use a real person. This is probably a counter idea to "virtual" and "lifelike." While the image of *Hsiao-Hung* is "anti-lifelike," it was still carefully worked out and has some affinities with the characters in my past works. For instance, the prototype of *Hsiao-Hung* is the character Na Zha in Chinese mythology. But I deliberately gave her an asexual body. Her boots and legs are like those of the pretty girls in Japanese comics, while her hair tied in two buns is like *Chun-Li*. She's a mixture of different cultures.

Cheng: Many viewers feel that the sound and visual effects of your new work *Nirvana* seem to be conveying the experience of taking psychedelic drugs. What do you think of this?

Hung: This is an age of drugs. The drug problem is much more rampant than we can imagine. It infiltrates every class and corner in society. Drugs did inspire me as an approach to the work. But it is also about my observations of and feelings about the technological age and virtual reality. Or, rather, it expresses my feelings about every aspect of life. Of course, viewers have the right to interpret it according to their own feelings. It does not matter if they think it's a demonstration of the virtual world, an expression of a biological and technological feeling, or is directly linked to drug experiences. After all, it's an instinctive feeling.

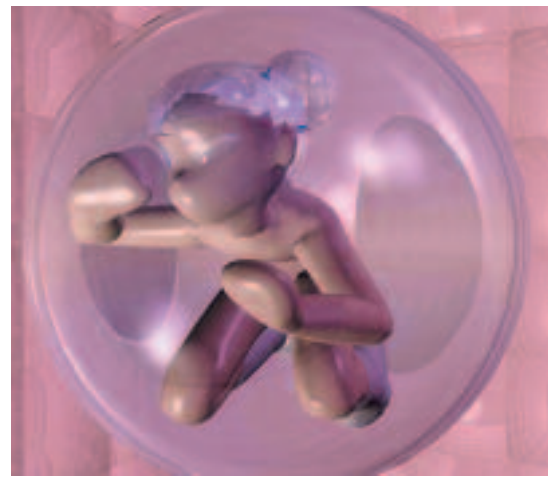
Hung Tung-Lu, *Hsiao-Hung*, 2002, multi-media installation

Cheng: When you used cartoon and comics characters as models in the past, you already expressed your thoughts on the world of "hyperreal" consumer signs. Now, you have created a virtual character *Hsiao-Hung* yourself, who keeps running and floating in endless abstract space. What further point are you trying to make?

Hung: Cyberspace! The space of the Internet. I always wondered how large megas and one gigas are. They are abstract terms. How many ones and zeroes do they have? One cannot measure it in real terms. *Hsiao-Hung* keeps floating and running in an abstract space, which seems endless and infinitely repetitive. It's just like our endless searching on the Internet. You never know where the end is. You feel dizzy but it's absolutely real. Another thing I want to express is a "state." That is, the psychedelic and mental state mentioned before. It changes your senses, as if you have arrived in

another space that is not graspable when you are in a sober state of mind. However, this is by no means a new issue. Each age has its own drugs. For instance, the development of rock & roll had a lot to do with drugs. But in the digital age, how far can our senses be developed? I am more interested in this question.

Cheng: So you place your emphasis on sensory perception, though the work has something to do with the coldness and unknown quality of digital technology?



Hung Tung-Lu, *Hsiao-Hung*, 2002, multi-media installation

Hung: Yes, I don't want people to think that digital space is cold. Although *Hsiao-Hung's* space and her running movements are minimal, I use pink as the overall colour in order to convey the feeling of warmth. It's the feeling of living in a technological and chemical age. I also find that the younger the viewers, the more they can accept abstraction, minimalism, and a high degree of repetition. Maybe it really has to do with a generation difference. Young people are more able to adapt to and are more at ease with virtual space and cyberspace than the older generations.

Cheng: Some people don't like the coldness of technology but you feel more affinity than aversion to digital space?

Hung: It's a world that cannot be wholly grasped. It is impossible to imagine that abstract space in real life. But the fact that is it has already changed the world. For the next generation, it will be an inescapable part of life. It will also be a source of inspiration for the art of the next generation, just like I used to create with dolls as models, because it was a part of my life. That's why I am not averse to digital technology. To a certain extent, it reduces the distance between people. But it seems that I can't identify with it as unhesitatingly as the younger generation. At least, I can't play electronic games as fast as they do.

Cheng: Regarding the interactive installation of *Nirvana*, your design allows viewers to lie down in a capsule-like cabin with images and music. Do you intend viewers to further undergo some special sensory experience?

Hung: Actually what I'm asking is that in this age, whether your senses are receiving something, or whether you are being led by your senses. In terms of the drug experience, are you using drugs or are you consumed by drugs? In a specific context, you are wholly surrounded and dominated by a sensory perception. Some viewers can be totally absorbed in it, but some viewers can't.

Cheng: What do you plan to do next?

Hung: I'm interested in sound. Maybe I'll try something in this direction but it'll still be combined with images. *Hsiao-Hung* will also be further developed but I don't have any definite plans yet. I'll experiment with different things, including animation, film, and sound. I hope I'll become increasingly free in my art.

CHOPSTICKS: SONG DONG AND YIN XIUZHEN AT CHAMBERS FINE ART

JONATHAN GOODMAN

Figure 1. Installation view of *Chopsticks: Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen.* Chambers Fine Art, New York, NY November 7 – 30, 2002
Courtesy of Chambers Fine Art

The object of *Chopsticks*, the exhibition put together by Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen, the married couple from Beijing, was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of their first joint appearance as artists. Both artists graduated from the Department of Fine Arts at Capital Normal University in Beijing in 1989, but the occurrences in Tiananmen Square in early June of that year shook them deeply, resulting in a period of close introspection, during which they maintained a five-year-long hiatus from exhibitions, either installations or performances. Primarily personal in their expression, Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen nevertheless look at large social issues: Song Dong has created a moving family memorial in his two video installations entitled *Touching My Father* and *Father and Son in the Ancestral Temple* (both works are from 1998), while Yin Xiuzhen has produced *Ruined City* (1996) and *Transformation* (1997), works which examine the great changes in Beijing wrought by the many construction projects there. For the recent show at Chambers Fine Art in New York, the couple put together a ritual space in which their lives and art were carefully interwoven in a series of works that were either collaborated on or indicated their relationship in some way.

The night of the opening resulted in considerable crowds, as well as ageneral sense of good cheer; the idea behind Chopsticks—namely, the kind of pleasure associated with a couple's anniversary—took over the evening.Visitors made their way from exhibit to exhibit; the first work the audience came upon as they entered the gallery were a pair of large (more than fifteen feet long) chopsticks, one made by Song Dong and the other made by Yin Xiuzhen (fig. 1). The couple had agreed that each should make the work not knowing how the other would proceed. Built into the rules was the symbolic relationship of the chopsticks to the husband and wife's bond: a commentary on the show talked about how it is necessary to use two chopsticks to bring food to one's mouth; possessing only a single chopstick is useless. In the same way, then, the couple's audience reasons, a person needs a partner to move forward in life. Despite, or perhaps because, each artist worked on his or her chopstick in secret, gender differences became quickly apparent. Song Dong's chopstick is phallically rigid, being constructed of metal, while Yin Xiuzhen's chopstick consists of vaginally soft materials, being a suit of clothing that closed up by a zipper, which, when unzipped, reveals household objects such as a scissors or even a condom.

It is easy to see how the two works of art contrast as expressions of two different genders. It also makes sense to regard the pairing of the chopsticks as suggestive of a complete relationship. The concept of nurturing—chopsticks are needed utensils as they are the vehicle by which one is fed—is also part of the piece. In the case of Song Dong's work, another reference is made. The metal piece also points to the rod used by the Monkey King in the famous sixteenth-century novel Journey to the West. In the story, the Monkey King, who is an escort of the Chinese monk Tang Seng, on his way to India to seek Buddhist sutras, symbolizes a rebellious spirit, one that often saves Tang Seng from fearful predicaments. He wins for himself an iron rod that is capable of calming the sea, as well as being able to shrink or expand at the notice of its owner. The rod, which aids the Monkey King during his many adventures on his way to Western Heaven (where the sutras are stored), also becomes, as the gallery notes point out, a symbol of authority in Chinese religion. Given the background of this reference, Song Dong's metal chopstick takes on all sorts of magical purposes, magnifying its role even as it maintains a relationship with the vaginal chopstick of Yin Xiuzhen.

Figure 2. Installation view of *Life* (2002) *Chopsticks: Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen.* Chambers Fine Art, New York, NY November 7 – 30, 2002
Courtesy of Chambers Fine Art

Life (2002) presents a C-print on synthetic cloth, which delivers a 360-degree panoramic view from the heights of Jing Shan, a mountain overlooking the Forbidden City, set in the historical district of Beijing (fig. 2). It functions as a background to the couple's lives, which have taken place almost entirely in Beijing. Taken in winter, the view is mostly of the sky and the couple, dressed in black; the buildings sighted in the image belong to sites further down from the location of the camera. Yin Xiuzhen, seven months pregnant, offers the viewer the promise of spring in the form of an unborn child (it is possible to notice her swollen belly). As such, the work is a celebration of the couple's relationship, which has clearly (that is to say, visually) resulted in the creation of new life. *Life* consists of sixteen pictures, taken over a period of two hours. Even though it looks as if the image is unitary, the imagery in fact shows change over time. Changes in the couple's poses parallel the kind of change that is occurring in the surroundings they photograph. The image, printed on cloth that was stretched on the walls of the first room in the gallery, becomes a literal, as well as metaphorical, background for the couple's art endeavors.

Figure 3. Installation view of *Desirable Prize: Ping-Pong* (2002). *Chopsticks: Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen* Chambers Fine Art, New York, NY November 7 – 30, 2002 Courtesy of Chambers Fine Art

In a catalog essay for *Chopsticks*, Wu Hung points out that the couple proceeds by producing a "vernacular," which, according to the artist, "does not derive from the conventions of international conceptual art."[1] Neither does it "belong to the refined, elite cultural sphere, but mixes the literary quotations, idioms, and traditional phrases of the common city dweller." Wu stresses that their vernacular belongs to "the typical language of a Beijing story dweller, and the traditional way of making smart conversation by 'street intellectuals' in this ancient city [Beijing]." Finally, the artist's vernacular "rejects generalization. It is a kind of 'insider' language. No matter whether they are traditional, modern, or postmodern, vernacular artists must identify themselves as cultural insiders. Wu sees the idiom of these artists as necessarily "provincial"—that is, their imagery must be based on the specifically local, and only after the local has been expressed can a larger tie to a global language be made. Rather than express themselves within the prearranged, often aristocratic idiom of the global avant-garde, Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen have remained loyal to the specifics of their non-privileged lives in Beijing, preferring what they know in detail to a vaguer, if more universally expressed and agreed upon, art vocabulary. In a sense, then, they are also being true to the implications of their class. Not having attended Beijing's elite Central Academy of Fine Arts, they turn to their actual experience as artists from a comparatively humble background. In part, it is this homemade quality that makes the couple's art distinctive, even as they participate in formal strategies—installation, performance art, etc.—that do in fact speak to a larger audience.

United Hands (2002) consists of two columns, covered in cotton cloth, that rise out of flowerpots. At the top of each column a hand reaches out, each hand holding a chopstick. Together, the chopsticks hold a small video monitor, which displays a tape of a journey the couple took from their home in central Beijing to the suburbs. The imagery records, in a personal way, the kinds of effects construction has had on the city, transforming it from an ancient place to an exceedingly new one. The two hands of the piece obviously refer to the collaborative nature of the installation, which seems as much an expression of love as it is an art strategy.

In *Self-Shot* (2002) the artists, recognizing that their experience has been similar in a parallel manner but which has not actually met in a single expression of art, decided to follow each other with an hour-long video recording each other's movements within their home. Their versions of each other spontaneously taping the procedure of their taking photographs of themselves are claustrophobic but also funny; each artist follows the other with ruthless precision.

On some level, the couple is attempting to record for posterity their presence in the particular space of their apartment, which will soon be torn down to make room for the site of the 2008 Olympic Games. A series of small stools, reminiscent of the stools given children in China, occupied the space in which the video was to shown. Here as elsewhere, the reference to childhood and personal expression is indirect.

In another installation, viewers had the chance to play ping-pong, thus participating in Yin Xiuzhen's installation *Desirable Prize: Ping-Pong (2002)* (fig. 3). Playing with white and orange ping-pong balls (the latter brand named "Red Double Happiness"—another humorous symbol of the couple's happy relationship), the audience competed for a prize: a medal made of a button sewn onto a long, green strap with a *Chopsticks* label. By seeking the prize and playing with the specially named balls, the two people engaging in ping pong are essentially staging a facsimile example of the collaborative process by which the two artists created the exhibition; there is a sense of humor in the substitution, which is gently meant to evoke some of the shared experience of Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen. In the same room were, on the wall, examples of edible bonsai—cookies and other sweets—that visitors could eat at will. And on the floor were a couple of large bronze pots, which held fruit punch and water. The room itself felt festive and oddly interactive; one quite literally ate one's surroundings. And the activities described reinforced the viewer's sense that he or she was meant to mimic the couple's lives in some way. Hence the need for symbolic activities, in which a sense of closeness and bonding would be repeated in a simulation of Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen's relationship.

It is interesting to speculate on the connection between the private and public in the art of Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen. The couple decides to celebrate their lives together in a public fashion, yet they also encourage visitors making their way to the gallery to meditate on the essentially private experience of their bonding—this happens despite the "openness of the collaboration. The meaningfulness of the shared activities in the gallery is ritual in nature, and the notion of ritual action may be best understood as private behavior performed publicly for the sake of society. There is an intensely self-aware element to the pair's art, which zeros in on the essential similarity of their esthetic, most effectively seen in the work in which they videotape each other in the act of videotaping each other. The self-reflexivity of the couple's actions and works prolongs our relation to their art; as a result, we start to stand in as substitutes for the artists themselves. Participating in the good will of the opening, which was so much like a party after a wedding, the audience not so consciously evaluated themselves as behaving in a manner similar to the actions of the artists themselves. In other words, the participatory aspect of *Chopsticks* asks that we do as the artist have done, that is, we reenact the activities that the artists agreed upon as part of their celebration. By behaving so, we come closer to the couple's intentions; indeed, it seems that we share their sense of joy. For all the specific rootedness of the art and behaviors, Song Dong and Yin Xiuzhen see art as catching anyone and everyone in their grasp. They have made the process enjoyable, even humorous, by which we, as fellow participants, are rendered hopefully as happy as the artists themselves.

VESTIGES OF TIME/ ELEMENTAL SPRING: ZHANG JIAN-JUN AND BARBARA EDELSTEIN IN GUANGDONG

AIDA-YUEN WONG

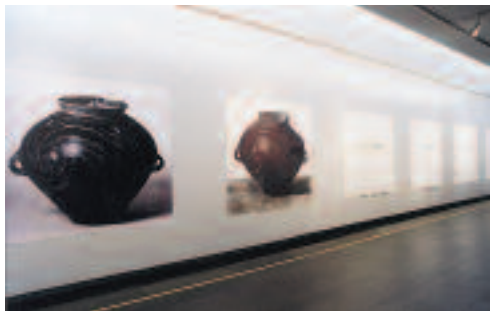


Figure 1. Zhang Jian-Jun, *China Chapter: #05, 3000 BC – 2002 AD – 2102 AD*, photograph, oil paint, graphite on rice paper, time, 180 x 190 cm. each (6 panels). Courtesy of the artist

Photographs of architecture and neolithic pottery line the walls of a dimly lit gallery. In predominantly black-and-white and sepia, the images look austere at first glance. Closer inspection, however, reveals hand-painted passages that have altered the shape of the motifs in a surreal, almost playful, manner. In the middle of the room stands a group of fancy Chinese rockery strapped by meandering copper tubings. Black ink drips from the tubings, suffusing the space with musical sounds as it trickles down the rocks' crevices and perforations. These creations could be seen in a joint exhibition of Zhang Jian-Jun and Barbara Edelstein at the Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou), August 2002. Two New-York-based artists who are married to each other, Zhang and Edelstein see their visions as complementary but essentially separate: "Jian-Jun is a philosopher," remarks Edelstein, "whereas I deal with the emotions and structures of the physical world."

Zhang Jian-Jun, born and trained in Shanghai, uses photographs of buildings and ceramics to capture the Daoist concept of change. In *China Chapter #05* (2002), he begins with a 75 x 71 inch photograph of an enlarged pot printed with a special ink that diminishes in intensity in short order when exposed to light, eventually becoming completely invisible. The artist documents the disappearance step-by-step by taking a photograph of the image at regular intervals (every two to three months), then all the photographs are mounted sequentially in a row. More and more white spaces visibly encroach upon the form as it "ages," until the end, where there is little left. Before the fading process begins, Zhang has also changed the shape of the initial photograph by painting on it: a gently flaring opening becomes an angled block, a round rim turns into a sagging mouth (fig. 1). These painted aspects remain on the paper as the photograph gradually loses its image. In the end, the artist's traces become the only reference to what was once there, the only testament to the lived reality that inspired the vision.

This group of images, part of Zhang's Guangzhou exhibition *Vestiges of Time*, is a culmination of years of thinking. "Before I started this project," he says, "I had wrestled for a long time with the problem of how change could be meaningfully situated in human culture. In 1996 I returned to China after five years of living in the U.S. and noticed many new things. Since then, I have repeatedly asked myself how I might represent these changes. One night, I couldn't sleep—tossing and turning for many hours—then suddenly, the idea of using images that fade came to me." Fading, like human history, is a gradual process. His serialized photographs communicate the inevitability of this process. The end is not nothingness, however. The last images in *China Chapter #05* are several white sheets marked with dates of the near and remote future, extending even beyond the artist's lifetime ("February 2003," "August 2003"…"Final image 2103"). Zhang hopes that another artist looking at his traces down the road might be inspired to paint over or add to them. He denies this is about asserting his own legacy. According to him, the sense of passing on, of re-enactment, is integral to the creative act: "Either implicitly or explicit, all artists work in reaction to the past. There is no such thing as the 'original' image." At the same time, Zhang does not believe in controlling destiny. He cannot dictate how light changes each image through time or how exactly a future artist might transform his vision. Detaching oneself from the final becoming is what the Daoists call *wuwei* (no-action).

"Time is another layer of space," says Zhang. The unfolding of time is necessarily accompanied by changing conceptions of space. Trying to bring out their entwined relationship is his primary goal in this exhibition. Trained primarily as a painter, Zhang regards lines as the primary vehicle for articulating space, and sees each culture or period as having its own signature treatment of lines: "In ancient China, like the archaic pots, lines often assume the postures of gentle whorls and softened edges. Lines in the Bauhaus tradition of the early twentieth century, in contrast, are rectilinear and crisp. Today, lines move in unexpected, organic ways. Gehry's Guggenheim Museum is a good example." Gehryan forms are clearly discernible in the architecture series *Vestiges of a Process: Guangdong Project* (2002). The roofs of the photographed landmarks (all of the monuments were chosen by local residents of Guangzhou) are intruded upon or even usurped by undulating humps and abrupt truncations (fig. 2). Zhang explains: "In evoking Gehry, I don't mean to just follow what is fashionable. Rather, I want to record time. When people in the future see the oddly shaped roofs in my faded prints, they probably recognize them as products of our era. They will likely see them as 'old.'" "Old," here, does not equal atrophy. Rather, it is an endurance of an impression that prompts reflection. That was the reason why he asked the people of Guangzhou to select the monuments featured in his pictures, rather than choosing them himself. Whether the final product delights or troubles, it is an artifact that reminds the audience of their past and connects them with their present. The series is meant to trigger a mneumonic response that the artist has no control over. Again, this is essentially a Daoist attitude.

Besides meditations on time and space, Zhang's doctored photographs are also self-referential. They contain layers of personal history. When he first moved to New York from Shanghai in 1989, he made his living restoring antique ceramics. He learned to repair chips and fabricate parts that would fit seamlessly with the damaged vessels. Afterwards, this experience led to the use of Chinese antique vases

("containers of history") in his own art. At first, he would encase them partially in clay or add improbable appendages to create what he called "postmodern sculptures." Then he abandoned these methods in favor of photography: "When I ran out of antiques and couldn't afford to buy more, I decided to use two-dimensional images. Photography is a subject I've been teaching at NYU for the past several years. It is part of me." Despite a consistent striving for philosophical detachment, Zhang remains deeply sentimental.

Barbara Edelstein's exhibition *Elemental Spring* consists of sculptures that evoke nature, using water, metal, and rocks. To some extent, this project is also built upon personal experience. Having grown up in California, she has always felt a special affinity with gardens and greenery. Beauty, to her, is inextricable from these environments. When she moved to New York in 1986, the gray urban landscape made her uneasy. "I miss trees; that is why our loft on the Bowery is a jungle of potted plants," she explains. Almost all her projects produced in the last fifteen years or so employ vegetal motifs. She would make meticulous sketches of leaves and tree barks, sometimes in mural size, and also recreate them in three-dimensions. She sees herself primarily as a sculptor. When asked what being a sculptor means to her, Edelstein replies: "Jewish philosophy teaches that it is one's duty to help the world, and my way of helping the world is to introduce beauty and awareness to the physical environment. I think this is also very much what being a sculptor is about. "

A woman with a gentle smile and long, curly auburn hair like a Pre-Raphaelite heroine, Edelstein has created some surprisingly physical works: giant sheets of corrugated steel bent into wave-like screens; copper tubings welded together to mimic life-size trees, huge boulders weighing several hundred pounds wrapped in copper pipes. It is tempting to interpret these works as deliberate subversions of femininity: "Some people who have seen my work but not met me automatically assume that I must be a macho guy." But this would be too facile: "Just because I like working with industrial materials doesn't make me tough," she maintains matter-of-factly. Edelstein sees industrial materials primarily as a means to bridge the gap between nature and the urban environment in which most of us live today. She also defies the materiality of the metals by making them appear curvaceous and flexible—something she associates not only with nature, but with her earlier training as a dancer as well. Like dancing, the act of creating a sculpture promotes corporeal awareness; it makes the body understand structure and movement.

Movement is a central ingredient in *Elemental Spring*, her exhibition in Guangzhou. One of the works is an outdoor piece, now a permanent installation at the Guangdong Museum of Art. It consists of three sixteen to eighteen foot irregularly coiled columns made of copper tubings installed outside the VIP entrance of the museum (fig. 3). Water shoots exuberantly from the hollow centre of each column, bursting into a crown of showering streams. The inspiration came from the palm trees planted all over the museum's ground: the copper columns and the water represent tree trunks and foliage. This piece also functions like a fountain. As soon as the water splashes into a stone pool, it is collected and channelled up through the metal columns to start the cycle again. It is a mesmerizing work that engages the visual and auditory senses. It is also a declarative work that celebrates the site.

Physical setting is a primary consideration for Edelstein. Her outdoor pieces always try to complement the site by taking elements from it. "Unlike Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in which the artist lets his ego override nature, cutting through the landscape and reconstructing it, my work emphasizes what

Figure 2. Zhang Jian-Jun, *Vestiges of a Process: Guangzhou Project*, 2002 AD – 2022 AD, photograph, oil paint, graphite on rice paper, time, 60 x 90 cm. each (7 panels). In the permanent collection of the Guangdong Museum of Art

Figure 3. Barbara Edelstein, *Elemental Spring: Guangzhou,* 2002, copper, water, 18 x 16 x 14 ft. In the permanent collection of the Guangdong Museum of Art

is already there. I am not interested in making nature into my image. I guess you can call me an eco-feminist." Respectful of nature, Edelstein nevertheless does not aim to reproduce nature literally. This is evident in the tree/fountain. At first, the four workmen who helped install the piece tried to give the coiled columns a smooth evenness like the actual trees in the vicinity. This did not satisfy the artist, however. She insisted on varying the diameter of the coils so that the trunks would appear to shrink and swell. This adjustment creates a rawness that heightens the illusion of naturalism. "I think of my work as an enhancement to nature, a way to connect people with nature and to make them see nature," Edelstein declares.

The rest of the pieces from *Elemental Spring* are indoors, placed in the centre of the gallery where Zhang's photographs are hung. They consist of "ink rocks" (perforated black scholar rocks) of various sizes mounted like fountains. For centuries, elite gardens in China have used fancy rockery to evoke monumental landscapes. The rockery, often placed in close proximity with an artificial pond or waterfall, imparts a mood of refinement and quiet meditation to the environment. The most common variety have multiple holes and jagged edges resulted from centuries of water erosion. Edelstein transforms these natural sculptures into fountains by channeling black ink from copper tubings to the rocks' surface (black ink is chosen as a symbol of Chinese culture). The liquid flows slowly and gently. Its fluidity is echoed and accentuated by the shapes of the copper tubings, which hug the rocks in soft arabesques like roots and vines. The balance of hard and soft, solid and liquid, is an age-old Chinese idea. However, because of the intervention of metallic materials, these sculptures appear modern and paradoxical.

Vestiges of Time and *Elemental Spring* are best viewed as a dialogue between two intimately connected artists rather than a collaboration. Both projects emphasize the concept of change, but one relates to time/space and the other to the dynamics of physical movement and natural order. Immediately following the opening of this exhibition at the Guangdong Art Museum, Zhang and Edelstein opened a similar show at the Shenzhen Art Institute. In recent times, both artists have been actively exhibiting in China. The works of this talented pair are collected in institutions including the Shanghai Art Museum, the Hangzhou Municipal Administration, and the two museums in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Zhang is also a major figure in the Shanghai art scene. His works are included in the latest Shanghai Biennale.

GUO BROTHERS AT MICHAEL GOEDHUIS

JONATHAN GOODMAN

Figure 1. Guo Jin, *Children at Play No. 2*, 2002, oil on canvas, 145 x 115 cm. Courtesy of Goedhuis Contemporary

The paintings of Guo Jin and Guo Wei almost always concern children, usually at play. Guo Jin, the younger brother who teaches at the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts in Chongqing, has been known since the mid-1990s as a painter of seemingly innocent youths, usually playing in pairs, while Guo Wei, older by four years and an independent artist with a studio in Chengdu, has concentrated on more outwardly disturbing portraits, primarily of his daughter. In the case of both artists, there is a sense of the vulnerable (in the case of Guo Jin) or even the embittered (in the case of Guo Wei) idealism, expressed as realist portraits indicative of more or less permanent changes in contemporary Chinese society. Interestingly and perhaps inevitably, given the affectionate attention children receive in Chinese culture, the two artists have chosen to address the uncertainties of rapid social change in their portraits of children, who quite are capable of communicating, even when evincing a superficial guilelessness, not only the innocence of youth but also, in symbolic terms, the sense of loss and the aggressive materialism that seem to have taken over Mainland China, perhaps the result of the country's foray into global capitalism.

Guo Jin remains a sweeter artist than his brother in temperament, but he too has been producing signs of trouble in his contemporary portraits of children. In a recent catalogue, he very resolutely addressed the problem of idealism in a series of artist's notes: "In circumstances within which pragmatism is growing by the day, idealism is becoming a hopeless illusion....Idealism becomes its own myth. Let us try our best to retrieve the beauty of an idealism we were unaware of while we had it at the time."[1] Why would there be a crisis in confidence at this moment in time, not only for Guo Jin but also, perhaps, for Chinese art in general? China is now poised to become a major economic player in the world; this is the result of its embrace of capital in the form of foreign investments. The idealist perspective is not one easily, if at all, assimilated by the way people in China currently make money; hence the feeling that the changes in China are, for all the apparent comfort that has been created, troubling to its intelligentsia. If it is true, as Guo Jin suggests, that the pursuit of painting carries with it some sense of moral probity, then the loss of that feeling would go far to undermine the morality of the Chinese artist, for whom didacticism, in the sense of ethical teaching, has traditionally been part of his responsibility.

How might this sense of loss, bordering on dread in some Chinese artists, be rendered in the portrayal of children? The emotional life of children is seemingly transparent; feelings openly pass across their features, in a way that inspires our trust—we say we can read the mood of a child; we are confident that it is easier to do so than to read the emotional life of an adult. It is also true that the innocence of children has been overstated by sentimentalists, that they are indeed capable of selfishness and even cruelty. Guo Jin and Guo Wei are concerned to render their visions and versions of childhood in a way that their audience will read as primarily symbolic; their instinctive comprehension of the world of the child is deepened and, in many cases, made more threatening by the way in which the children's activities and poses appear to be more than the casual, unself-conscious posing of youth. It becomes impossible, then, to treat the subject matter as it is, as encompassing a more difficult content; we are intended to invest it with outwardly spiraling meaning that comments on change in public processes even as we note the simple, pleasurable aspect of the brothers' art.

It is interesting to note that both artists are considered part of a progressive movement in art in southwest China, despite the fact that they are figurative painters. Here, in America, there has been a resurgence, in a small way, of figurative art meant to be, if not avant-garde, at the very least hip.[2] But the contemporaneity is achieved via irony and satire; the American artists are making savage commentary about what can only be called a loss of innocence, a failed idealism, in American culture. The Guo brothers, by comparison, do not go that route; the implications of their art do not proceed by

Figure 2. Guo Jin, *Children at Play No. 6*, 2002, oil on canvas, 145 x 115 cm. Courtesy of Goedhuis Contemporary

Figure 3. Guo Jin, *Little Chair No. 2, 2002*, oil on canvas, 145 x 115 cm. Courtesy of Goedhuis Contemporary

way of extreme caricature. In the work of Guo Jin, especially, the first response of the viewer is that of pleasure taken in seeing the joy of children absorbed in their play. Yet, the longer gaze discerns troubling details—the surface of the children's skin and clothing is rough and pitted (in Guo Jin's most recent work, the artist has rouged lips and cheeks and given the top of the children's heads unusual forms, intensifying the feeling of eccentricity), and somehow the interaction between the figures reads as strangely ominous, filled with troubling portents. In *Children of Play No. 2* (2002), a boy sucks his thumb, sitting at an angle against a wall, while a ball is caught high in mid-bounce (fig. 1). It is a seemingly artless picture, but one that calls up, from under the surface, something terribly wrong, and while it is a mistake to interpret the painting too symbolically, it does seem here as though nothing is as it seems.

In Children of Play No. 6 (2002), one boy, on the right, bends over a ball bouncing in mid-air, while to the left a boy stands scrunched up, his face mirthless and his left hand gripping the arm of the other child (fig. 2). The gestures of the two small boys look at once innocent and immanently menacing; this double meaning appears again and again in Guo Jin's art. It may be most fair to say that the art of Guo Jin turns on the duplicate consequences of children being rendered by an adult's eye, which may well see a dark side in the seemingly sunny aspect of their activities. *Little Chair No. 5* (2002), in which a boy hugs another boy from behind while sitting on a long, low bench, ostensibly concerns an expression of affection; however, the scene betrays a sense of caricature: the boy doing the hugging has a sickly sweet smile that is also a bad-tempered grimace, while the child being hugged shows off a half-smile filled with a wistful yearning that is adult as well as world weary (fig. 3). The effectiveness of Guo Jin's paintings stem from the fact that they are, at the same time, celebrations of innocence and canny treatments of the human condition; in this way a larger sense of humanity encloses the direct constructions of his art.

In the work of Guo Wei, the sense of unease is utterly direct. His portraits of his young daughter have an honesty and directness that make them utterly contemporary. Here the representation of childhood breaks free of idealization or excessive feeling, depicting a world of random occurrence and familiarity with violence. Childhood is done away with, in exchange for a charged, even brutal contemplation of human nature. So provocative a view of children underscores Guo Wei's essentially symbolic treatment of his subject; the glare his daughter and her playmates often direct toward the viewer possesses the fierce truth of someone whose realism is expressed not in the pastel light of sentiment but rather as a clear-eyed interpretation of what we, as children as well as adults, are in fact capable of. There is a tension in Guo Wei's monochromatic paintings—consisting of blacks and grays relieved by white—that makes the perception of childhood as idyllic seem coy, disingenuous. In one remarkable painting, *Untitled No. 15* (2001), Guo Wei's daughter nearly defiantly returns the gaze of the viewer, undermining the frilly example of her white dress and mary jane shoes (fig. 4). Her head is larger in proportion to her body and feels entirely adult, as if she were a mature person imprisoned within a young body.

It is precisely this sense of disconnect—physically as well as emotionally—that makes Guo Wei's paintings so effecting. There are other figures in *Untitled No. 15*: a boy in a black bathing suit looks down at a cat lifting its left tail, much as dog does when urinating. Guo Wei includes in most of his paintings arbitrary squiggles and small insects such as mosquitoes and flies, which further alienate the viewer from the picture; they appear here on all three figures, while the ground appears to be littered with cigarette buts. It is an oddly disaffecting scenario, in which inappropriateness—a girl with an adult-size head, a cat lifting its leg like a dog—distances the viewer. In *Untitled No. 16* (2001), Guo Wei's daughter again confronts the viewer, this time gnawing away on the tail of a limp stuffed toy, a tiger, which she lets fall in front of her white shift (fig. 5). Next to her stands a rather fleshy figure, a boy wearing swimming goggles in socks and a pair of shorts. He holds a toy rifle, his face in profile as he studies the weapon. In this work the violence is more outspoken; the poses of both children seem intentionally

Figure 4. Guo Wei, *Untitled No. 15, 2001*, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 180 cm. Courtesy of Goedhuis Contemporary

artificial, consciously seeking the audience's surprise, even shock, at so unadulterated a presentation of willfulness. Although Guo Wei paints marvelously, there is little beauty in the scene, only the wearied, wearying recognition of the disgruntled aggression the children seem to be expressing.

Guo Wei's directness—for example, his painting of his daughter naked in *Untitled No. 12* (2001)—moves beyond esthetic honesty or even provocation to a coolly handled presentation of the figure, in which the idealism that Guo Jin speaks of seems to have completely disappeared (fig. 6). Again a young girl stares back at us, with complete aplomb despite the fact that she is wearing no clothes. Her mouth open, her hands placed on her hips, even though naked she gives away nothing, in fact demanding a matter-of-fact attitude, much like her own, on the part of the viewer. Long, squiggles of white lines, drawn on and next to her body frame her body but also detract the audience from her pose. It is possible to see the lines as a visual affectation, but it is perhaps more accurate to view them a kind of a tic, a studied imperfection meant to draw attention to the artificial construct of the painting. It is Guo Wei's way of showing the limited, even the anti-idealist, nature of his project. His version of the real is close, I think, to what many in contemporary life accept as a given, namely, the failure of art to communicate the ideal. Whose fault is that?, it may be asked? Is the artist culpable in his offhand treatment of family? Are we, the audience, to blame for the jaded atmosphere in which anything smacking of altruism or paradigms of virtue seems, inevitably, beside the point? It is hard to tell how, or why, things have gone wrong, but they have in fact done so. Guo Jin's comments indicate his awareness of the problem; and Guo Wei's honesty does not solve the difficulties facing us so much as state them clearly. Indeed, his gift as an artist is to do exactly that.

Figure 5. Guo Wei, *Untitled No. 16*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 180 cm. Courtesy of Goedhuis Contemporary

Guo Wei and Guo Jin cannot but help be part of a larger sphere, a reality that affects them as powerfully as the instincts of their own imaginations. In their paintings one senses an abnegation, in which idealism is cast off for a tougher attitude. Guo Jin seems a more balanced artist, someone who can call up positive emotions, including tenderness, even as he injects a note of alarm in his carefully arranged, mostly pastel versions of Edenic pleasure. His work contrasts sharply with that of his brother, who is more

Figure 6. Guo Wei, *Untitled No. 12, 2001*, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 180 cm. Courtesy of Goedhuis Contemporary

melodramatically dark in his point of view. Yet Guo Jin cannot prepare for us a shining interpretation of his creativity, despite his recognition of social change; he cannot, any more than anyone else in our current circumstances, put out a pure outlook. Guo Wei, who sees in his daughter a forthright, emotionally powerful recognition of alienation and distance, is even more an agnostic in matters of optimism and belief. The reality of his paintings is a battered one, for all its energy and defiance. Art has the capability of highlighting ways of being, making us see an object or context in an entirely new way. In the case of Guo Wei, we learn from his militant realism, which misses nothing in the would-be innocence of children. Whether this hard-bitten view is accurate is almost beside the point; it matters that this is the reality the painter feels he faces, here and now. The recognition of that sort of existence is central to the work of Guo Jin and Guo Wei, who paint a new point of contact in both an aesthetic and social sense. They are perhaps ahead of their time; it may be a while before we see things as clearly as they have painted them.

NOTES

[1] *Gin Jin: 1998-1999* (London: Chinese Contemporary, 1999), 8.

[2] I am thinking of the work of John Currin and Lisa Yuscavage.

A BAT'S LIFE, OR BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU: A CASE STUDY

MARTINA KÖPPEL-YANG

Figure 1. Huang Yongping, *Bat Project*, 2001, iron, paint, view of the production site. Project for the Fourth Shenzhen Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition. Photo: Courtesy Huang Yongping

HABITAT

Over the last two years, a new development can be observed in the international art world involving Chinese artists, namely the appearance of official exhibitions that feature Chinese and Western contemporary art on an equal footing one to the other or that are co-organized by an official institution from a Western country and by the Chinese government. One of the first and most important of these shows was the Shanghai Biennale 2000. Other noteworthy exhibitions include *Living in Time* held in the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin (2001), the *Franco-Chinese Fourth Shenzhen Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition* (2001), and the Biennial of São Paolo (2002). I do not want to go into more detail here, examining the reasons for the emergence of this development, nor do I want to trace back the way to its origin. However, I wish to question one significant aspect of these official exhibitions—the function attributed to art. Contemporary art here is adopting the performance of diplomatic language. It now takes on the role that sports had for a long time, for example table tennis in the late 1960s, with its political functioning within so-called "ping-pong" diplomacy. The use of contemporary art as a kind of diplomatic language is a common practice in the West. In the case of the People's Republic of China, it signals the affirmation by officialdom of canonical values that are generally associated with contemporary Western art, such as democracy, the freedom of expression, and the assertion of human rights. Once these values are presented as those cherished by the Chinese government, communication on an equal footing is guaranteed. The uncomfortable and steady Western demand to improve human rights protection at once is argumentatively weakened.

To mention art as a vehicle of political programs, or its exploitation as a means of propaganda in the historically developed terms of the People's Republic, is a commonplace. In China, art has long been considered an instrument of education and a practice involved in transformation of the

self—as in the case of the literati—or of society, as was demonstrated during the Cultural Revolution. Now, at a time when China is implementing the third step of its strategic plan in the course of the ongoing socialist modernization drive, art again is involved in the process of social and economic transformation. Participation in the World Trade Organization requires of China an "investment in a new kind of dialogue with the international community: the opening process has changed from a single-sided self-opening to a two-way opening, as was announced by Shi Guangsheng, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation. According to Shi, "China is now able to take an active part in the setting of international economic and trade rules instead of having to accept these rules in a passive manner." Shi states further that China's relations with other nations are now adjusted through both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, while in the past it could only rely on bilateral mechanisms for addressing disputes. The new situation has reverberations in terms of cultural policy, including contemporary visual art. China's active participation in the 2003 Venice Biennales and the eclipsing of Taiwan at the Biennale of São Paolo last year bear evidence of China's intentions to consolidate into irrefutability the new terms of diplomatic relations.

Figure 2. *Bat Project* installed in the Huanlegu Amusement Park in Shenzhen. Photo: Courtesy Huang Yongping

Next to the strategic use of contemporary art, there is a genuine trend towards greater tolerance in the official Chinese art world. The developments of the last two years will make it difficult to maintain the habitual division between official and non- or semi-official art. A modern and contemporary Chinese art now is officially considered as belonging to the "Three Represents," and thus regarded as enhancing the fundamental interest of the majority of the Chinese people. It not only has become very fashionable but also is deemed a social and political imperative. The boom in art biennales and triennales in the PR China—besides Shanghai (1996, 1998, 2000, 2002), Chengdu (2001), Guangzhou (2002), and the Shenzhen International Ink Biennial (1998, 2000, 2002) there will be the Xi'an, the Beijing and the Qingdao Biennial in 2003.

For Chinese contemporary artists this situation is double edged. On the one hand, the long-awaited acceptance—on the national and international level—has become reality. On the other hand, on the way of being integrated in the mainstream and official culture, the question of maintaining a criticality remains essential for contemporary art. Yet, recently another factor does have an enormous influence on international relations. Since September 11, 2001, another kind of rapprochement policy is being performed worldwide. The campaign against terrorism forces countries all over the world into one ideological line. Choosing positions that seem not to be in accordance with this line cause diplomatic problems. Next to the alertness concerning terrorist activities, vigilance concerning the maintenance of good diplomatic relations with the main force in this fight, the United States, is considered the needs of the moment. The crusade against terrorism generates a need for international consent. This takes the form of a political correctness that can be readily twisted and misused as a pretext for vigorous actions against people of nonconformist convictions or different faiths.

Again, we find reverberations in the domain of contemporary art. The recent censorship of Huang Yongping's *Bat Project* (fourth Shenzhen Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition, December 2001) and *Bat Project II* (the first Guangzhou Triennial, November 2002) is a striking example of the direct influence of the international climate, China's new diplomacy, and the discreet intervention of politics in the field of the arts.

CONCEPTION

Huang Yongping's *Bat Project* and *Bat Project II* are replicas of the American EP-3 spy plane—called "bat" in the vernacular—that had collided with a Chinese fight jet over the South China Sea on April 1, 2001 (fig.1). Since making an emergency landing on Hainan Island the American aircraft and its crew had been detained by the Chinese and only after long discussions returned to the United States. The Chinese had requested that the EP-3 should be disassembled and crated. The dismantled plane was later shipped to the U.S. on a cargo plane leased by the U.S. government. The affair was a source of humiliation for the United States.

What had caught Huang Yongping's interest in the incident was the dismembering of such a sophisticated high-tech object, symbol of the political and economical power of the United States, as well as the deliberate humiliation of the U.S. by the Chinese. Huang is well known for his use of conceptual de-construction and irony in his work, here discovered a parallel to his own artistic methods, "What caught my attention was this way of dealing with objects—I found it almost artistic." China's attitude and handling of the affair then could be read as the intentional creation of a kind of objectifying distance. For Huang, this distance sheds light on the question of globalization, "the spreading of the American way of life throughout the world." And as typical of his artistic oeuvre, too, he questions the validity of such a cultural model.

The most emblematic work, expressing the doubt in any kind of cultural model, is his *History of Chinese Painting and Concise History of Modern Painting Washed in a Washing Machine for Two Minutes* (1987). The result was a mass of dirty looking pulp that wittily commented on the

Figure 3. Huang Yongping, *Bat Project II*, 2002, iron and colour, view of the installation site on the square in front of the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, November 2002. Photo: Yang Jiechang

situation of the Chinese avant-garde art scene of the 1980s as well as expressed Huang's anti-cultural model language. In the aforementioned work, anti-culture is defined as derived from the clash of Eastern with Western cultural values. Anti-culture here is not to be understood as the destruction of culture but as the construction of another kind of culture. What kind of culture then could generate the de-construction of the American aircraft? Huang Yongping thus simply made a reproduction of the EP-3 spy plane cut into several pieces. *Bat Project* and *Bat Project II* therefore are replicas of the disassembled aircraft.

A BAT'S LIFE

After September 11, 2001, however, Huang's approach to the EP-3 political incident could no longer be regarded as a simple artistic reflection upon globalization. Both, his *Bat Project*, created for the *Franco-Chinese Fourth Shenzhen Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition* (November 2001) and his *Bat Project II* realized for the first Guangzhou Triennial (December 2002), were censored. Both works were near completion, the second one even installed on site, when the production had been suspended and the work banned from exhibition. What happened?

December 12, 2001 marked the opening day of the F*ourth International Shenzhen Sculpture Exhibition* in He Xiangning Museum, located in the so-called Overseas Chinese Town of Shenzhen. The officially sanctioned exhibition was jointly organized by the Chinese government, and by the French Association for Artistic Action (AFAA), affiliated with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While the Chinese had financed the production of the works, the French side had covered other production costs of the show. The exhibition concept, as elaborated by the French and Chinese curators, meant a group show of ten Chinese and five French artists. Huang Yongping, being a French citizen, had been chosen as one of the five participating French artists in April 2001. Together with the other participating artists, he visited the exhibition site in June. Both sides agreed to Huang Yongping's *Bat Project*, which he had submitted in July. The production of the work started in mid-October; the production costs—RMB 330 000 (about US $50.000)—were covered by the Chinese side. Huang himself assisted the production in Shenzhen from early November on. Up until then, there had been no objections whatsoever to Huang's *Bat Project*. However, on November 15, the French Consul in Guangzhou conveyed to the responsible personnel in the He Xiangning Museum that the French Embassy in Beijing could not approve the work. The Consul proposed that the Museum find some technical pretext to stop Huang's production. According to Huang, the He Xiangning Museum was stupefied by the French decision, even more as the Chinese side already had spent a lot of money to realize the project.

The aircraft was completed on schedule, but the installation on site, originally planned for November 21, did not take place. The French curator clarified to Huang Yongping the reasons for the French Embassy's attitude. According to her, the American Embassy had put pressure on them and they obviously fretted over possible damage to Sino-U.S. and French-U.S. relations, especially in the wake of September 11. Once Huang Yongping's work featured in this officially organized exhibition, it had become an official diplomatic statement, and thus intolerable within the new political context. Nevertheless the French curator added that this attitude could not represent the opinion of the French Ministry of Culture. In late November, a meeting took place between the museum director, the artist, the exhibition commissioners, the French Consulate's cultural attaché and an artistic attaché from the French Embassy in an attempt to resolve the problem of what to do with Huang Yongping and his work. Two options emerged, either Huang's work would be removed or the exhibition would be cancelled, when the French side finally proposed a compromise. This compromise, the so-called "4+1+10 formula", included an offer of a separate exhibition with

Figure 4. A representative from the American Consulate in Guangzhou takes pictures at the installation site, after Huang's work had been covered (back) on November 13, 2002. Photo: Ai Weiwei. Courtesy Huang Yongping

separate exhibition catalogue to Huang Yongping, in order to save the exhibition for the remaining four French and the ten Chinese artists. Huang agreed under the premise that his show be staged simultaneously to the group exhibition. Consequently his name disappeared from public notices and invitations, and his contribution to the exhibition catalogue removed. Meanwhile, the French Embassy contacted the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the co-organizers had submitted the "4+1+10 formula" to the Chinese Ministry of Culture. The written approval sent by the Chinese Ministry of Culture to the He Xiangning Museum, however, only mentioned fourteen participating artists without citing the "4+1+10 formula." The French side did not intervene. Huang and his work thus simply disappeared from scene. In his memorandum Huang laconically writes: "From then on, the production and the process of implementing Huang Yongping's work stopped. The nearly finished aircraft thus was put aside." What Huang Yongping could not know, was that the Chinese, who had financed *Bat Project*, had thought of a way to make it accessible to the public: in May 2002, the unfinished aircraft was installed in the Huanlegu Amusement Park in Shenzhen. Huang Yongping was presented with *a fait accompli* (fig. 2).

Huang's *Bat Project II* had a similar fate (fig. 3). The artist was invited to participate in the First Guangzhou Triennial held in the Guangdong Museum of Art to show his *Bat Project*. However, as this work had already been installed in the Huanlegu Amusement Park, the Museum and Huang finally opted for the realization of a new but related project, *Bat Project II*. While *Bat Project* consists of an EP-3E's middle and tail section, *Bat Project II* should represent those parts of the EP-3, which had not been reproduced yet: the cockpit, the body and the left wing. Thus the work in Shenzhen and the new one in Guangzhou would have a correspondence in time and space. In September the Museum's curatorial committee agreed to Huang's proposal, despite the French Consulate in Guangzhou having contacted the Museum several times, to express its concern about Huang Yongping's participation. The production of the work started in late September and the installation on the square in front of the Guangdong Museum of Art began at the end of October. One week later, the Cultural Attaché of the French consulate in Guangzhou informed the Museum that the French Consul would not attend the exhibition opening, as he feared to have his picture taken in front of Huang Yongping's work, following in the logic of what transpired one year previous. Apparently the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been informed of the affair, soon after a representative of the Guangdong Provincial Foreign Affairs Department investigated the

Figure 5. The dismantling of *Bat Project II* starts on November 14, 2002. Photo: Yang Jiechang

"aircraft affair." He showed photos of the installation site taken by the American Consulate (fig. 4). The American and French Embassies exerted pressure on the Chinese Foreign Affairs Department. Subsequently the wording and the drawings related to the EP-3 spy plane were deleted from Huang Yongping's contribution to the exhibition catalogue. Upon the insistence of the French Consulate, the consulate's name was crossed out from the list of acknowledgements. Finally on November 12, the Guangdong Museum of Art received an official notice requesting the immediate suspension of the production of *Bat Project II*. The work was banned from the exhibition. The Guangdong Museum of Art planned to cover Huang's work; however the authorities demanded that it should be dismantled before the exhibition opening (figs. 5, 6). The museum officials did not want to simply accept this decision. They considered *Bat Project* an outstanding work playing a major role within the exhibition concept, as evidenced by the prominent place they had chosen for its installation—the square in front of the museum's main entrance. Further they had used nearly 400.000 RMB, a tenth of the exhibition budget, on Huang's work. However, in spite of Wang Huangsheng, the Director of the Guangdong Museum of Art's, efforts, the decision could not be revoked. As the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had not given its agreement, the Chinese Ministry of Culture did not dare to make a dissimilar decision. The process of dismantling was closely followed by the Chinese authorities as well as by the American consulate. In the evening of November 16 the work had totally been dismantled and then transported, just in time to disappear before the opening on November 18 (fig. 7). For the second time, Huang Yongping powerlessly had to see his work disappear without a trace.

A BAT'S-EYE VIEW

Neither were there traces left behind by the intervention of the French and American embassies and that of the Chinese authorities. Except for the exhibition approval, no written material had been handed down in both cases. The American and French Embassy, and the French Consulate tried to reject all responsibility for the censorship of Huang Yongping's work. The proposal of the simultaneous exhibition in the case of *Bat Project* had been a diplomatic attempt to smooth out the situation. According to the French side, it had been put forth to circumvent Chinese censorship. Yet, the proposal turned out to be an empty promise. According to French diplomats, the final decision on the matter was made by the Chinese authorities. They asserted that "France had a better reputation for supporting human rights," and thus any accusation concerning their role in the *Bat Project*"affair was absurd.

In the case of *Bat Project II*, both American and French Consulates deny their implication in the affair. Actually the first Guangzhou Triennial was a purely Chinese cultural event, the interventions thus seemed out of place. The Chinese authorities (mainly through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) only intervened after they had been alerted by the French and American Embassies, following the reasoning that the politically correct course included the maintenance of untroubled diplomatic relations with the United States and the protection of the new political consensus over any defence of the freedom of expression.

Naturally the incidents had provoked strong reactions from the participating artists. In December 2001, the artists participating in the *Fourth Shenzhen Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition* signed a petition written by Daniel Buren, in which they called the withdrawal of the work an "unacceptable attack on the freedom of expression, regardless [of] who bears the responsibility for its removal." A first version of this petition, in which they openly blamed the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had been turned down. The artists who participated in the first Guangzhou Triennial this year also wrote a protest letter (fig. 8). They also called the censorship "an infringement of the right of expression." They further considered it an infringement of the climate necessary for the development of contemporary art—in China and internationally—a damage of the image of contemporary China and of the democratic Western countries.

The French and the American Embassies and Consulates not only acted consistently with political correctness, but also according to their image of China, as is demonstrated by their reactions to the media. However, *Bat's Life* shows, that this image of China has to be revised. Certainly it was the Chinese authorities that in the end censored Huang Yongping's works. Yet, they did not do so strictly out of ideological reasons but out of diplomatic considerations to their Western colleagues. Directly after the EP-3 incident, Sino-American relations were tense. Nationalist and anti-American diatribes had been published in the Chinese media, including on the internet. However, the official

Figure 7. The disassembled aircraft on the square in front of the Guangdong Museum of Art. Photo: Yang Jiechang

Figure 7. The empty square in front of the Guangdong Museum of Art on November 17. All traces left by *Bat Project II* will disappear until the next day, November 18, the day of the exhibition opening. Photo: Yang Jiechang

attitude suddenly changed, as China needed the U.S. to support her participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO). After the APEC Forum in Shanghai in October 2001 the EP-3 incident was no longer mentioned. The construction of good Sino-American relations was now the primary concern. Obviously, China's policy and diplomacy is guided by a utilitarian attitude. China has to meet with WTO standards on many levels besides economic ones. The implementation of the "Three Represents" is meant to assure the creation of an advanced and developed society in China. The place of contemporary art within this set of efforts is akin to that of diplomatic language, signaling the development of a democratic and liberal Chinese society. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs naturally could not allow a single work of art to jeopardize Sino-American relations or China's entry in the WTO, which took place on December 11, 2001.

Nevertheless, I do not think, that the Chinese authorities would have censored Huang Yongping's works, if their Western colleagues had not alerted them. China is a huge country and is in many respects disorganized, but, and what is more important, the Chinese authorities no longer consider contemporary art—and in particular installation and performance art or new media—a threat, as they still did back in the early 1990s. Such art forms made their debut in China after June 4, 1989. The admittance of Hooligan literature, and of Cynical Realism and Political Pop as an outlet for the prevailing pessimistic mood and a superficial criticism of the government and the Communist Party, as well as the propagation of a Chinese market for contemporary art, can be considered first attempts in this direction. While installation and performance art can still pose as problems to the official side, they were generally deemed to be more tolerable and controllable than at any previous time. The Chinese government has learned how to use contemporary art for political aims. Its uses are not so different from the manner in which socialist realism was used to further political aims, only the message has changed. In autumn 2003, in the frame of the official Franco-Chinese programme France in China and China in France (2003-2004) contemporary Chinese art will be presented in the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. The new general secretary of the Communist Party Hu Jintao plans to participate in the exhibition opening. Art is just a tool and as such not important.

The consequences for the artists are double-edged, and to choose a position on either side of these edges becomes a vital question. What can the censorship of Huang Yongping's *Bat Project* and *Bat Project II* then mean to them? The *Bat Project* incidents can provide an opportunity to

reflect back on the critical potential vital to contemporary art. At the very least, it can offer a chance to redefine ones position relative to the question of art and politics. Thanks to Huang Yongping's *Bat Project* and *Bat Project II*, one can have a look from a removed distance, perhaps from the perspective afforded by a bat's-eye, of the underlying political and ideological landscape. One sees that the habitual division between official and non-official contemporary Chinese art becomes obsolete as well as that division between a communist and totalitarian China and a democratic West.

Bat Project and *Bat Project II* have been censored and banned from exhibition; the meaning of the works, however, became more important and influential, through their prohibition. At last, what Huang Yongping wanted the spectator to look at from an objective distance is not so distant any more. It is already influencing our contemporary life. Huang's significant work shows once more—the fundamental importance of art.

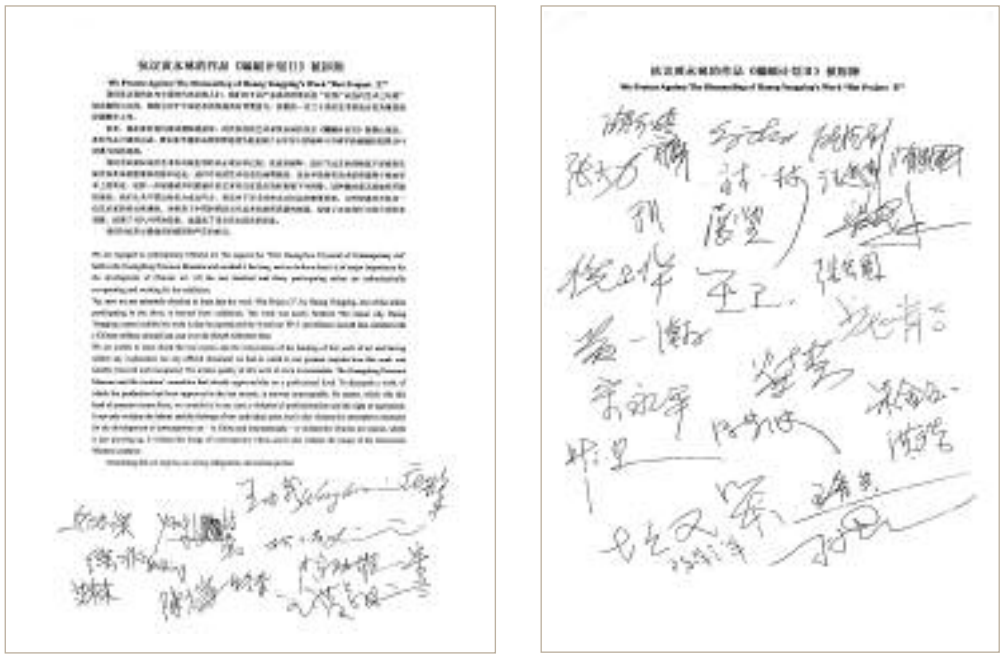


Figure 8. Protest letter written by artists participating in the First Guangzhou Triennial: Wei Guangqing, Zhang Jian-jun, Gu Wenda, Fang Lijun, Yang Shaobin, Wu Shanzhuan, Hai Bo, Xu Tan and others

CHINESE NAME INDEX*

A-xin	邱信豪
Bo Yang	柏楊
Chang Chen-Yu	張振宇
Chang Yuan-Chien	張元茜
Chen Chengbo	陳澄波
Chen Chieh-Jen	陳界仁
Chen Chuan-xing	陳傳興
Chen Ying-de	陳英德
Chen Ying-Wei	陳英偉
Chen Yingzhen	陳映真
Cheng Huei-Hua Amy	鄭慧華
Chien Ying-ying	簡瑛瑛
Christine Chan	陳靜文
Gao Minglu	高名潞
Gu Wenda	谷文達
Guo Jin	郭晉
Guo Wei	郭偉
Han Xiangning	韓湘寧
Hou Tsung-hui	侯聰慧
Hsiao Hsin-Huang	蕭新煌
Hsieh Tung-shan	謝東山
Hsu Hui-yu	蘇匯宇
Hsu Manray	徐文瑞
Huang Li-chuan	黃麗絹
Huang Hai-Ming	黃海鳴
Huang Kuang-Nan	黃光男
Huang Tzai-lang	黃才郎
Huang Yongping	黃永砯
Hung Tung-Lu	洪東祿
Kao Chien-Hui	高千惠
Katy Hsiu-chih Chien	簡秀芝
Kris Yao	姚仁喜
Lee Jiun-Shyan	李俊賢
Lee Ming-sheng	李銘盛
Lee Mingtse	李明則
Lee Tzu-hsun	李子勛
Lei Zhen	雷震
Li Ao	李敖
Li Chu-Tsing	李鑄晉
Li Meishu	李梅樹
Li Shiqiao	李石樵
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Li Xiqi	李錫奇
Li Xu	李旭
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Lu Kuang	路況
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Shih Jui-Jen (J. J.)	石瑞仁
Song Dong	宋冬
Tsai Hong-Ming	蔡宏明
Wang Chia Chi Jason	王嘉驥
Wang Gongxin	王功新
Wang Huangsheng	王潢生
Wong Aida-Yuen	阮圓
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Wu Mali	吳瑪俐
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Zhang Daqian	張大千
Zhang Jian-jun	張健君
Zhang Longyan	張隆延
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*The English spelling in this index is according to the text in which the names appears.

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Yuan Goang-Ming

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ArtChina

5/2002

© Art China Editorial Board
Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Publishing House
81 Qinzhou Nan Road Shanghai 200235 P.R China
Tel:8621-64825514 64519020 Fax:8621-64519015
E-mail:shcpph@online.sh.cn

Subscription Rates (postage included)
(per issue) US $10
(per year,6 issues) US $48

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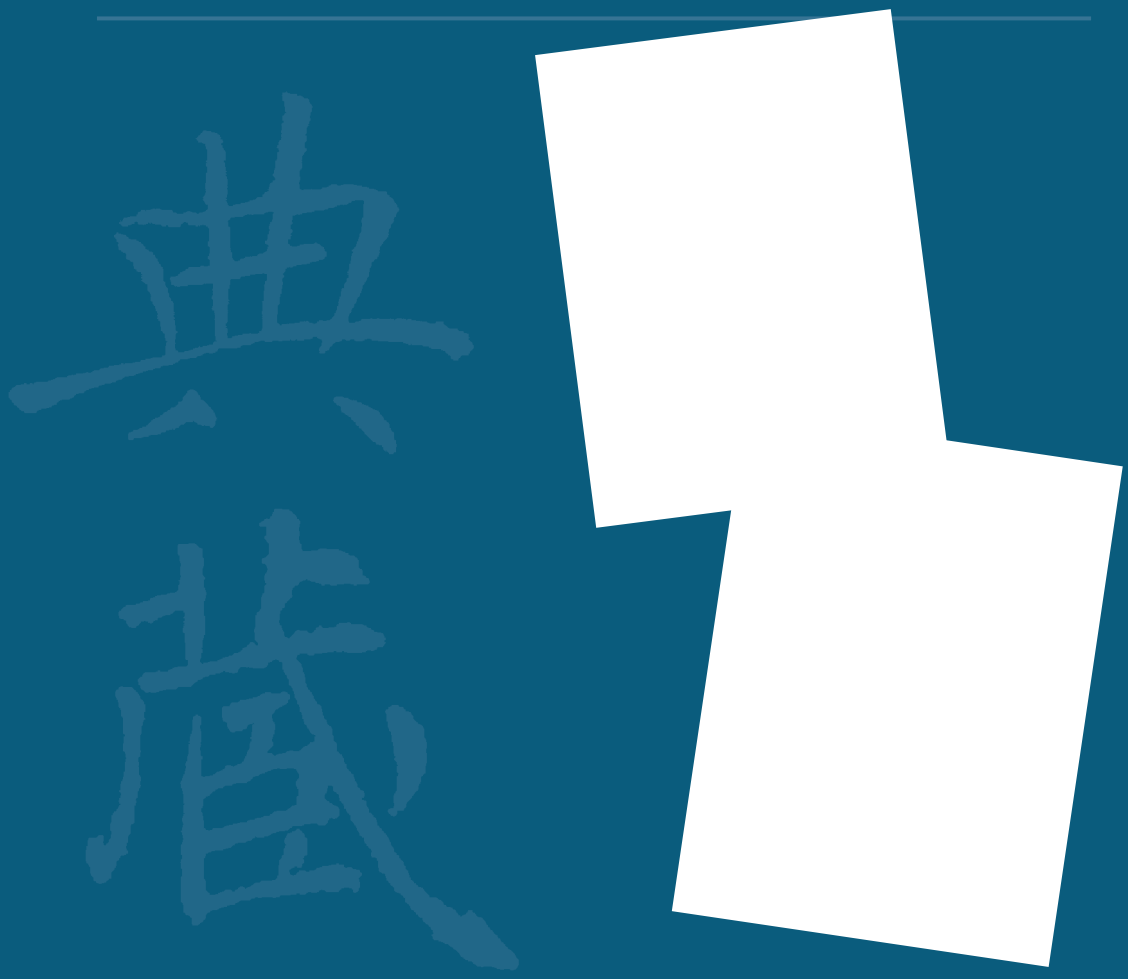

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: (PER MAGAZINE)

1 year (12 issues): US $110 (Asia);
$120 (outside Asia)

2 year (24 issues): US $214 (Asia);
$234 (outside Asia)

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