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**How's the research on the "colonial and cross-cultural context" possible?**

The 1980s was a particular period in the history of modern Taiwan, a decade marked by unprecedented collision, vigor, and diversity. It witnessed the emergence of modern and contemporary art, little theater, new-wave cinema, contemporary thoughts, pop music, and a democratic society. Be they revolutionary, leaping, transformative, upgrading, or pioneering, these trends were collectively "in motion" that signaled the so-called "golden age." Nonetheless, how do we recognize and comprehend this decade and its social concomitants of special significance to Taiwan? How did art and culture respond to the general situation during that period with many people's support and engagement? These questions have not yet been adequately investigated, hence the original conception of this research project. Understanding the developmental context of modern

and contemporary art in Taiwan is as much fundamental and urgent for analyzing, interpreting, and constructing the features and gestalts of cultural production mechanisms and Taiwanese epistemology, as it is for the ensuing establishment of the Aisthesis with Taiwanese characteristics and the unfolding of cultural dialogues. We've long been examining the development of modern and contemporary art in Taiwan by reference to Western or occidental art history and art criticism, from which we obtain not so much a relatively objective understanding as a unidirectional flow of comparisons and monologues. On top of that, the related dialogues and discussions tend to lose focus due to the divergence and fragmentation of individual referential objects in the literature, along with the inaccuracy of translation or the different versions of interpretation.

Despite the unique empirical material, written texts, and documents on the multiple, continuous colonial rule and the cross-cultural context in Taiwan, there has been an actual paucity of scholarly efforts to collate, describe, analyze, and question these data in the studies of Taiwanese modern and contemporary art. Therefore, our research project is aimed particularly at remedying this deficiency. In the times when Taiwan was a colony, the cultural and technological "differences" in terms of territory gradually intermingled to produce temporal discrepancies. Such temporal discrepancies have manifested themselves in the contention between "deferred modernity" and "alternative modernity" throughout the historical development of Taiwan. It can be considered not only as an indispensable dimension of "coloniality" (i.e., cross-cultural and politicized "Episteme" and "historicity") in Taiwan's art history, but also as the sentimental qualities and historical manifestations that pressingly need to be clarified in terms of aesthetic inquiry. From oral account, writing and collection to interpretation and archiving, the process of imbrication is covered with the so-called "double contingency," viz., the state of interdependence and entanglement between the self and the other. Accordingly, accurate

empirical data have become the very foundation for us to penetrate "coloniality" insofar as to build up archives.

### **How does archives approach an "epoch"?**

Given the sheer complexity of Taiwan's historical context, the construction and description of "archives" are far from objective, but tend to be selective and distorted as a result of ideological divide. The struggle for discursive power reduces archives to unilateral interpretation based on linear thinking, and the craze for archives eventually exists only in dusty folders on shelves. This is precisely the fate of archives under the "double contingency" of coloniality, and, with a knock-on effect, this is the ultimate destiny of Taiwan memory as well. Archives not only bear testimony to history, but also guide us to trace relatively macroscopic zeitgeist. By dint of comparisons and multi-directional cross-questioning, we deconstruct the ideologized logic of classification and explore the relevance in the oceans of imbricated data. Without exception, each idea, event or action in history invoked a metaphor for the technological operation of its time, whilst the corresponding imagination space and atmosphere intertwined therein to form the very epistemological system we attempt to grasp.

An "epoch" is such a textured, highly expressive manifestation of history. It is meanwhile a temporal ecology, since it comprises the traces of heterogeneous lives and actions as well as the influences of events and landscape changes. An epoch per se is actually a superluminal organic entity. It allows the course of time which is nothing if not intricate and portmanteau to be penetrated by languages, texts, images, sounds, and even spaces and actions. Accordingly, an epoch is tantamount to an assemblage of methods that renders time perceptible, intelligible, describable, and performable, whilst the "presentation of an epoch" is nothing short of the formation of a specific methodology. In this sense, how is an epoch, over its previous countless "present," related to the

superluminal describability of the future? Each of these innumerable “present” resembles a fingerprint on the surface of time. Humbled by the endless river of time, these fingerprints are little more than fragments, yet they echo one another and thereby weave resonating threads into the “time” which touches upon the past and contains the future. The Taiwan archive is relational by nature. Only through relational actions and practice can different colonized bodies and memories spark the will which is so great that it triggers a qualitative change in the colonial relations. This research project ergo starts from understanding the multitudinous “present” and focuses on Taiwan’s qualities within the cross-cultural context, so as to advance the documentation and writing of observation and research.

#### **How do messages lead to “relational democracy”?**

An “epoch” is intrinsically ecological. It encompasses a myriad of heterogeneous components, hence “transdisciplinary.” The 1980s as a transdisciplinary epoch implies that the democratization of Taiwan around the lifting of martial law was not the shaping of a true democracy, but rather a “relational democracy” generated by rapid exchanges and connections at the social and cultural levels; that is, to experience, move toward, or search for a state of “democracy” through the practice and creation of relations. However, since the 1990s, and even in the so-called postmodern world, the “monadological” cognition driven by modernized “specialties” has not just prompted most studies to focus on specific fields, but also confined them to delimiting these fields. Thus, these studies were plunged into the inability to accommodate social changes and tackle real-world issues.

In Taiwan, apart from the analyses and interpretations of all stripes made by previous studies that revolved around the two themes of political democratization and market vitalization, the 1980s, as a *sui generis* epoch that followed the crisis of subjectivity in the 1970s and heralded

the contending thoughts in the early 1990s, had fully embodied Taiwan’s ontological state of agitating for interdisciplinary exchange, absorbing heterogeneous factors, and undergoing technological transformation over the course of modernization. Therefore, with the circulation of messages, this research project seeks to explore and depict such an ecological transdisciplinary state, and expects to gain a better understanding of the convergence or intersection of the flows of people, messages and capital through closed-door forums, interviews and fieldwork analyses, in order to comprehend that the agency of people (individuals) and their relational communities was exactly the “kinetic energy” and “distinctive feature” of this epoch. According to the testimonies and recollections of many participants in that period, the political liberalization and rapid economic growth in the early 1980s indeed aroused people’s zeal for change and innovation. This passion, which had long been suppressed by martial law, was quickly addressed by the environment under the pressure of liberalization and the appeal for justice. The frequent exchange among *culturati*, the explosion of knowledge and information, the plurality of political agendas, the media self-awareness, and the mushroomed citizen movements always evoke a 1980s nostalgia, and many people even consider that such a special space-time has been nowhere on the horizon.

In the 1980s, the interpersonal organic connections, the impulse to experiment with new methods, the voices of socio-political issues, and the rapid flourishing of pop culture not only rendered visual arts in Taiwan eager to give different things a try, be they inside or outside the system, but also galvanized people to explore the qualitative extension of the spaces and venues for artworks, the linguistic properties of new media, and the physical behavior-based inquiry into public spaces. In the 1980s, the little theater movement and experimental theater in Taiwan introduced the theatrical body training method from the United States and put it into practice in a down-to-earth manner. It featured the

extensive development and creation of links between the quotidian body and the physical method, which can be deemed the real-life experiences described and accumulated in the novels of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the physical training-based representation and expression of the repressed restless body of the 1980s. However, Hong Kong commercial cinema outperformed Taiwanese cinema at the box office in the late 1970s. In this situation, the Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC) had to handle the challenge of liberalization confronting the one-party system. Besides, the resource shift from television to new media afforded nascent film directors opportunities for experimentation. Furthermore, inheriting the previous literary achievements and the images in documentary photography of the 1980s, Taiwanese film directors cultivated a new taste of images (realism) and acquired a new understanding about actors (little theater actors and amateurs). Cinema ergo became an important medium for exchange between the intelligentsia and culturati in that period. With the diversification of media, the popularization of home video cameras, and the influx of foreign cinematic resources via various channels (especially television, film festivals, and pirated videos), image experimentation served as a means for creation and idea exchange among students and young creators, which made the Golden Harvest Awards a vital platform for presentation at that time. The significant influence of commercial culture on the production, reproduction and exchange of messages during the middle class formation found vivid expression in the aforementioned phenomena and events. These were also the manifestations and variations of relational democracy when a consumer society came of age.

### **The Dawn of a Transdisciplinary Taiwan: From Experimentation and Nativism to Subjectivity**

In early 1981, Jan Hung-tze published “Of Two Literary Minds: Critiques on Two Recipient Works of the United Daily News Literary Prize,” a review article that borrowed the term “frontier literature.” It not only

made the smoldering embers of the late-1970s’ nativist literature debate aflame, but also provoked contending views about the particularity of Taiwanese literature — the “third-world literature” led by Chen Ying-zhen and the “Taiwan nativist literature” epitomized by Yeh Shih-tao. Since the 1970s, the literary supplements of *China Times* and *United Daily News* had incubated a new generation of social elites with the postwar baby boom, and evolved into the platforms where overseas advanced thoughts and budding writers converged. Chen Ying-zhen launched the *Ren Jian Magazine* in 1985, and Jin Heng-wei founded the *Con-Temporary Monthly* in 1986. A riotous profusion of thoughts, translated works, and publications significantly contributed to the production of knowledge and discourse. The discursive seriousness of different disciplines also formed the common language among many people in discussing various issues. It can be said that literature, theater, and cinema became the platforms for the frequent, intensive exchange among the intelligentsia and culturati in the 1980s. Thanks to the existence of these platforms, people had ample opportunities for transdisciplinary exchange and cooperation. However, these platforms in Taiwan had their respective specific histories in the 1970s and the 1990s. They primarily received fragments of foreign messages and experimented with imagination so as to gain experience, and meanwhile found the return to nativist culture a matter of urgency when deciphering foreign contexts, or became aware of the importance of grasping their own developmental contexts. “Nativism” ergo served as a “chora” that refers to the place where the self exists, only to differentiate due to the “double contingency,” and the debate over Taiwan nativist literature ensued in the late 1970s. These disciplines embarked on the quest for individuality in the 1980s, and converged on the issue of Taiwan’s subjectivity in the early 1990s, which led to a debate over modernity.

Thus, before we started this research project, we can see in the preliminary survey that “experimentation,” “nativism” and “subjectivity” were all

presented as “transdisciplinary” movements driven by international colonial dominance. To put it another way, the “transdisciplinary” in Taiwan may not just be a topic in a specific epoch, but also a characteristic linked to Taiwan’s very nature, and therefore it was initiated by the agency of people and interpersonal connections. What were the issues that couldn’t be coped with in their own disciplines as we question the epoch or the existing institutions, systems and values? The answer or the crux often lies outside of the frameworks of established disciplines. Such an approach entailed active exchange and interaction with different disciplines like theater, cinema, literature, architecture and art, insofar as to connect themselves in a spirit of spontaneous experimentation. Seemingly random, the approach that bypasses rigid institutional frameworks with external linkage was nothing if not critical and proactive. It reflected the dissatisfaction with the frameworks or internal institutions of different disciplines or the issues that couldn’t be tackled through available perceptions. Practitioners from different disciplines then gradually entered partnerships, hence transdisciplinary communities with shared values and attitudes beyond existing frameworks. Loose-knit and unorganized notwithstanding, these communities could still mobilize cooperative resistance as their collective response to and interaction with the general matrix and institutions. Various modes and actions of resistance emerged in the process of intra-community interaction as well. Radiating a transdisciplinary “aura,” the 1980s was an epoch that mirrored the “genuine meaning” of Taiwan.

### **Cultural Modeling: The Practice of Self-enlightenment**

In the 1980s, the term “transdisciplinary” remained absent in Taiwanese culture and art, but the rudimentary thoughts and incubation, whether in terms of cultural leap, connection or debate, had embodied the ideal, radicalism and purity of the intelligentsia throughout the decade, which was a unique period of its kind in the modern cultural history of Taiwan.

In 1976, *Lion Art Monthly* (Hsiung Shih Art Monthly) published Wang Chun-yi’s article “A Discussion on the Cultural Modeling Effort,” which questioned Taiwan’s long-term unreserved acceptance of occidental arts education and aesthetic viewpoint, and criticized Taiwan’s utter ignorance of building a new culture for the nation. Wang’s article also advocated that artists should consider themselves as “cultural stylists” who turn passivity into spontaneity. They should draw on the rediscovery and understanding of traditions and nativist culture to disturb history and transform it into an active, subjective pursuit of future cultural forms. These reflections had great reverberations. Chiang Hsun’s article in the magazine *Cactus* promoted the practice of cultural modeling to a movement. The “cultural modeling movement” regarded artistic practitioners’ concern for the society as a concrete change which broadened the originally narrow definition and scope of fine arts. From March 1978 onwards, Chiang was the managing editor of the innovated edition of *Lion Art Monthly*. He espoused “literary, national and realistic” thinking, expanded the content to photography, theater, dance, architecture, music and literature, reoriented the magazine from “artistic” to “cultural,” and declared that “we should go out in the streets because literature and art are unlikely to survive otherwise.” These were the precursors to trail-blazing transdisciplinary practice and subjective identity cogitation.

The “avant-garde” or “avant-gardeness” of Taiwan was by no means the “renunciation” of the past in the direction of linear time. Practitioners from different fields and backgrounds gathered together. They shared local and external knowledge and messages with one another, and launched transdisciplinary events, activities, exhibitions, and so forth. By doing so, they managed to transcend the confines of established values and protect their own “avant-gardeness” over and over again in the environments that tended to be inimical or uncertain. Therein, they developed new approaches and practices bound to challenge the existing



value system and therefore difficult to be incorporated and categorized. This situation made the existing value system on tenterhooks to an unbearable degree. In this way, these new approaches and practices offensively and aggressively responded to the thorny issues and arcane values in their respective disciplines. Their rebellious, adventurous spirit of experimentation produced a paradoxical subversiveness, making it possible for transdisciplinary *modus operandi* to be “avant-garde.” The “avant-garde” here was more a spirit of subversive experimentation inspired by the process of transdisciplinary exchange. As a result, the “avant-garde” is definitely an initial state of motion. It is always ongoing, marching toward the future with a posture of dramatic challenge in a forward-looking fashion. If the “transdisciplinary” is to cross and break away from the boundary of fixed *modus operandi*, the “avant-garde” triggered by the “transdisciplinary” is the present-based verification which provocatively opens up many possibilities for the future.

The inauguration of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) in 1983 ushered in the “era of art museum” in Taiwan. Bearing a loosely defined banner of “modernity and contemporaneity” though, the TFAM undeniably offered new possibilities of diversified concepts of visual arts for the conservative artistic environment of Taiwan at that time. The massive influx of contemporary art concepts into Taiwan’s official institutions radically changed the system’s nature, which was echoed by the development of alternative avant-garde in civil society that surged like a gathering storm. All sorts of “outlet” for confrontation or breakthrough became the driving force behind the overall cultural environment of that time. Whether the desire for advanced knowledge or the liberation from rigid, conservative agendas, from experimental theater, physical behavior and new-wave cinema to the founding of anti-academic painting groups, they were widely interlinked into an attacking “plane,” and the crude techniques or aesthetics were precisely the re-exploration that violently collided with

the avant-garde cross-sections of history. In 1986, the joint exhibition “Xirang” was held at an empty apartment in the Eastern District of Taipei. It represented a breakpoint of a certain historical response. In the chaotic situation on the eve of the lifting of martial law, the exhibition’s strong connotation of political rebellion and the participants’ multi-disciplinary identities created an unprecedented scene of artistic production on the one hand, and made a conscious attempt at liberation that went against the trend on the other, followed by the higher purity of the avant-garde spirit of this epoch.

The “avant-garde” per se is undergoing a continued evolution. During this experimental process in pursuit of greater autonomy and freedom, we sever all ties with the past and move toward an undefined objective. However, the “avant-garde,” manifested as a proactive spirit vis-à-vis this kind of expectation or movement toward the future, is not merely a provocation in the critical thinking of anti-system, anti-tradition, anti-mainstream, anti-authority and anti-commercialism. Its kernel desire is actually to fulfill the “self-enlightenment” characterized by a questioning, challenging posture and inexhaustible proactive practice. It also sets great store by active knowledge development and value creation. The “self-enlightenment” has to be experimental, dancing to its tune, and thirsty for knowledge, rather than relying on and believing in authority and rigid matrix, insofar as to construct new perspectives and relations. As Taiwan is enmeshed in the historical imbroglio of the especially complex, multiple “double contingency,” our “enlightenment” lies not so much in the cave of soul or the pineal gland as in the formation of “culture.” The “social scene” is the battlefield of our self-enlightenment. Therefore, we may argue that Taiwan has been applying the reflexive technique of “self-enlightenment” at the ethical and political levels as a transdisciplinary avant-garde happening.

# *The Infinite Delay of Time/Reality: Observations on Ideological Trends and Publications*

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Chang Wen-hsuan

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Hsiao A-chin, "The Cultural Politics of Exile: Taiwan's Return to a Generation, Literature, and History of Reality in the 1970." *Three Generations of Taiwanese: A Century in Pursuit of Reality and Ideals* (New Taipei City: Walkers Cultural Enterprise, 2017), pp 402-439.

The 1980s may have been a decade of accelerated growth for Taiwan in terms of economic development, social activism, and artistic production, however, this golden age did not appear out of the blue, but was a legacy of the preceding era. Hsiao A-chin considers the 1970s to be an Axial Period in postwar Taiwanese history. Borrowing from Karl Theodor Jaspers' concept, he describes it as a pivotal era when "ideas, habits and environments hitherto unconsciously accepted, were investigated, interrogated, and clarified."<sup>1</sup> The crucial element among the plethora of political, economic, and cultural influences that made the 1970s a turning point is a series of diplomatic setbacks: the Defend the Diaoyu Islands (Baodiao) movement began in 1971; in October of that year, the People's Republic of China (PRC) replaced the Kuomintang (KMT) regime and received representation as China in the United Nations ; in 1972, diplomatic relations between Republic of China (ROC) and Japan were severed; in 1978, the United States broke off diplomatic ties with the ROC and established ties with the PRC the following year. The loss of

legitimacy as “the sole and legitimate government representing China” on the international stage meant that the KMT was no longer able to easily maintain the vacuum created by martial law. The “postwar generation” of intellectuals, influenced by the modernist ideologies provided by publications including *Free China Journal*, *Literature Magazine*, *Modern Literature Magazine*, *The Intellectual*, etc., began to shift their perspectives toward their own social realities, to “investigate, interrogate, and clarify” the KMT’s narrative framework with “exile” as a main theme. The movement to return to reality created far-reaching effects on many levels. Politically, leading to calls for social reform; culturally, leading to a renewed understanding, discussion, and creation of the past (with a specific focus on the Japanese colonial era) and present.

### **From Contemporaneity to Reality**

The diplomatic quagmire that shifted post-war intellectuals away from modernist thought toward social realities in Taiwan can be seen in two major events that occurred in the 1970s. If the Taiwan nativist literature movement initiated by Wang Tuoh , Chen Ying-zhen, Wei Tian-chong , Chu Hsi-ning , Yin Cheng-hsiung, Peng Ge and Yu Kwang-chung, et. al., in 1977 as a “re-understanding” of local realities led to a final confrontation between multiple narratives; and the Formosa incident of 1979 forced intellectuals and activists in the political and cultural arenas to more accurately point to a definition of that “reality.” Though the nativist literature movement has been regarded in the discourse of Taiwanese independence as having laid the foundations for Taiwanese consciousness, Hsiau A-Chin’s analysis specific to Taiwanese (ethnic) literature emphasizes that the nativist spirit of the 1970s was a resistance to the over-Westernization of the previous generation which was provoked by the diplomatic setbacks to a return to reality, but was not a spirit of Taiwanese nationalism. The reason more politicized definitions developed from the sentiments, determination, and action of the 1970s was due to the

### **2**

Hsiau A-chin, “The Development of Taiwan Cultural Nativism since the 1980s: An Analysis of Taiwanese (Nativist) Literature,” *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology Issue 3* (July 1999), pp 1-51.

### **3**

Chu Wan-wen, “Democratization and Economic Development-The Unsuccessful Transformation of Taiwan’s Developmental State,” *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies Issue 84* (September 2011), pp 243-288.

Formosa incident which intensified the political opposition movements and politicization of literature.<sup>2</sup>

Wu Nai-teh argued that even though substantively, the Formosa incident may be regarded as a failed movement under the forceful purging by the KMT, but the emotional effects and mobilization of the entire event created ripples in the transition to the 1980s that gathered momentum, making waves in a number of arenas. The emotional mobilization of the Formosa incident is closely related to the development of the media. From the distribution of the *Formosa Magazine* and the establishment of its service centers, the live broadcasts on Radio Taiwan International of the mass arrest at the scene of conflict at the Formosa Incident in Kaohsiung, the publication of the argument and closing statements of the defendants in the media such as *China Times*, and *Independent Evening News*, to the images from the Lin family murder in 1980. The mission and emotions that could not be accomplished in one event were deposited through publications and audiovisual media and withdrawn in various arenas.

Hence, the thirst for knowledge and hunger for creative output by Taiwanese intellectuals and creators in the 1980s can be understood thus: in the context of a thriving economy and media, the political emotional mobilization, the inheritance and transplantation of knowledge, the narrative issues of identity were all forcefully propelled forward. To date, the 1980s were most commendable for the outstanding economic achievements. Despite the overall economic policy gradually developed toward “internationalization” and “liberalization” in response to the growing trade surplus, transformations in economic affairs have basically been a passive, responsive process.<sup>3</sup> For those in power at the time, “openness” is not a result of free choice, but an inevitable outcome of multiple evaluations. This was true for the economy, and more so in

politics and culture. Technological advancement and the application of various media – publication, broadcast, and even portable digital cameras, further intensified the pressure-cooker of Taiwanese society.

In the shift from modernity to reality, the development of reportage literature and reportage photography became an unmistakable phenomenon when observing the confluence of politics, the economy, culture, and technology in the 1980s. Among these, *Ren Jian (Human World) Magazine* founded by Chen Ying-zhen from 1985 to 1989 is an exemplar. In his remarks for the inaugural issue, Chen Ying-zhen explained the influential publication project thus: “*Ren Jian* is a magazine that undertakes reporting, discovery, documenting, witnessing, and analysis through images and text.”<sup>4</sup> The subjects of its “reporting, discovery, documenting, witnessing, and analysis” can be broadly divided into two categories: concern for marginalized communities, and reporting on social issues that differs from that of mainstream media.<sup>5</sup> Compared to the trend of exploring reality propelled by the *Ren Jian supplement of the China Times* in the 1970s, with Kao Xin-jiang as editor-in-chief, the narrative practice of *Ren Jian* magazine that featured text in tandem with images in its pages using copperplate printing, photo-spreads, and image editing. These not only nurtured photographers who continue to remain important to this day, but also enabled “reportage” to serve beyond a reporting of events and provide opportunities for subsequent events.<sup>6</sup>

### The Formal and Informal Circulation of Ideas

A demand for reading materials increased along with an increase in national income enabling increased book sales, and the implementation of the 9-year compulsory education leading to an increase in the reading population. The injection of consumer spending into the publication industry and the gradual foray into the information age saw a shift toward a lower threshold and increased the efficiency in developing various

#### 4

Chen Ying-zhen, “On the Inaugural Issue,” *Ren Jian Issue 1* (November 1985), pp 2.

#### 5

Jewel Tsai, Chu En-ling, Chang Chuan-Fen, “The Light Shines on in *Ren Jian*,” *China Times, Section 31* (May 14, 1993).

#### 6

Space constraints do not allow for an in-depth discussion of the contradictions between Chen Ying-zhen’s applications of emotional imagery in “objective reporting” for *Ren Jian* magazine; or of the relationship between Chen Ying-zhen’s third-world theories, Chinese consciousness, and running a magazine. Chang Yao-Jen further critiques and reflects on theories beyond the humanitarianism of *Ren Jian* magazine in his book *The Practice of Taiwan Reportage: from Literary Supplement of China Times to Ren Jian Magazine* (Taipei: Wunan, 2020).

modes of operation and division of labor processes. In addition to the burgeoning of new non-literary genres that diversified publishing, the popularity of book series, new bookstore formats, and new marketing techniques (bestseller lists, book launches, annual literary anthologies), etc., all contributed to the 1980s as a Warring States period for Taiwan’s publishing industry.

The boom in the publishing industry is evident in the increasing quantities of translated works published. In the 1980s, foundations in translated content, translation teams, circulation methods, and legal specifications established in previous eras saw significant changes. Though the selection of translated works in the humanities and social sciences remained tethered to prevailing concepts in European and American academic arenas, the growing numbers of intellectuals returning from studies overseas meant that translations no longer focused solely on general theories or textbooks for teaching needs but also introduced new theoretical trends. In addition, cultural and literary magazines also became an important platform for exposure to new concepts from abroad. The above causes gradually closed the temporal gap between the original works and their translations. The advocacy, promotion, and localization of conceptual trends were not only inextricably connected to young academics in educational institutions, but also influenced the composition of translators in the 1980s. From the 1950s to the late 1960s, the majority of works translated locally were by academics teaching at the university level, most of whom came to Taiwan from China. But by the 1980s, many works were translated by a new generation of academics or masters and doctoral candidates working through the formation of academic collectives or reading groups; for instance, Ma Kang-chuang and Tsai Yao-ming at the National Taiwan University had organized the Jen Yi academic society in 1979. Although the project was subsequently terminated, several invited translations were later published as planned. These included *Selected*

*Readings on Structural Functionalism in Modern Sociology* (1981) translated by Richard Hwang Ruey-Chyi; *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (1985), translated by Ma Kang-chuang; *Husserl's Phenomenology* (1986), translated by Liao Jen-I; etc. Furthermore, in preparation for translating series of masterworks of sociology, publishers often invited academics to serve as editors or editors-in-chief. Academic networks among scholars and institutions can also be gleaned from the lists of translation personnel.<sup>7</sup>

Parallel to the publication of translated works in the 1980s was the piracy of existing works in translation or the informal circulation of works. The background for the occurrence of piracy can be observed from two aspects. Firstly, prior to the revision of the copyright law in 1992, foreign works and Chinese translations not registered in Taiwan were not protected by copyright laws; as such, these cannot be described as “illegal” acts of piracy. Secondly, although the “security and anti-espionage” policies in the 1980s were relatively relaxed compared to the 1950s and 60s, publications continued to be circulated according to the rules of the previous generation. The Ministry of the Interior permitted “omitting or modifying the author’s name” with works by Chinese authors from the 1930s, creating a situation of “legalized piracy”<sup>8</sup>. Meanwhile, works and translations by the “communist bandits and chiefs” were blanketly prohibited.<sup>9</sup> As the names of translators from China could not be published, many books were published without attribution, using false names for translators, or as pseudo-translations attributed to “Editorial Department” or “Translation Bureau.”<sup>10</sup> The direct impact of international relations and cross-straits politics on academia and publication is evident in the thriving market of pirated books of the 1980s.

### **Publishing as Political Activism**

In addition to the legal norms at the time, the main cause for the proliferation of pseudotranslations, “half-price books,” and the minitrucks

**7**  
Wang Chih-hung, Symptoms and Pathology of Academic Translation: Translation of Sociology in Taiwan, 1950s-2000s (Taipei: National Taiwan Normal University Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Master's Thesis, 2002).

**8**  
Joyo Chiu, “Taiwan’s Literary Publishing from the Perspective of Copyright Disputes,” *Newsletter of the National Library Taiwan Branch, Vol. 2, Issue 4* (1996), pp 38-50.

**9**  
According to Article II of the “Regulations Regarding the Control of Publishing in Taiwan Under Martial Law,” amended by the Executive Yuan, “Works, translations, and counterfeit publications by communist leaders or cadres are prohibited.”

**10**  
Sharon Tzu-Yun Lai, “On the Fake Translations of World Literature in Taiwan,” *Journal of Library and Information Science Vol. 38 Issue 2* (2012), pp 4-23.

**11**  
The “half-price books” here is not a typical sales tactic but refers to the low price of pirated books far below the price of the original works when piracy was rampant in Taiwan. Book vendors in mini-pick-up trucks would be present in areas around universities frequented by students. See Chen Ming-Pan, “40 Decades of Taiwanese Publishing in Brief (Final Instalment),” *Wen Hsun Issue 33* (1987), pp 243-250.

**12**  
“The Development of Taiwan Cultural Nativism since the 1980s: An Analysis of Taiwanese (Nativist) Literature,” *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology Issue 3* (July 1999), pp 1-51.

selling pirated books that made rounds at university gates<sup>11</sup> was that this booming market for books occurred under the backdrop of martial law period in Taiwan. Legislation such as the Declaration of Law in Taiwan, the Publications Law, Regulations for Publishing under the Martial Law Enactment in Taiwan, and the National Mobilization Act had forcibly inserted unavoidable variables between supply and demand. The debate between unification and independence was not along lines of leftist or rightwing politics, nor was it divided along disciplinary lines. In a situation where the “wielding of the gun” controls the “wielding of the pen,” even those who declare themselves to be apolitical could not extract themselves from politics.

The Formosa incident was more than a political event. It influenced a number of literary creators. Wang Tuoh and Yang Ching-chu were imprisoned for their participation in political opposition movement. Authors who had no direct involvement in the incident, such as first-, second-, and third-generation of postwar Taiwanese novelists, including Chung Chao-cheng, Lee Chiao, Sung Tse-lai, et al., have expressed the profound personal impact of the Formosa incident. Not only did the political opposition movement become increasingly radicalized from the nativist literature debate, to the Formosa incident, to the Taiwanese consciousness debate, but literature also became increasingly politicized.<sup>12</sup> On the one hand, literary magazines such as *Li Poetry* magazine and *Taiwan Literature* became noticeably intimate with those outside the ruling part; and on the other hand, intellectuals became concerned with local realities and began to unearth Taiwan’s past and its memories. Works by Kuo Sung-fen, Huang Fan, and Chen Ying-zhen, et. al, can be regarded as attempts to recalibrate historical time. Compared to literature, the political response in Taiwanese visual arts and performance art arenas in the 1980s were largely aimed at life under Martial Law or as a means of participating in social movements.

The efficacy of social movements has always been inextricably linked to an appropriate utilization of broadcast media. With bans on the formation of political parties and the publication of newspapers during the Martial Law period, magazines became an effective communications channel between political activists and members of the public. First, by using non-party sanctioned magazines to disseminate ideas and consolidate a base; then, to change the distribute power within the system through participating in elections. The Taiwanese political movements in the 1980s were intimately related to non-party political magazines though the relationship between the two have not drawn sufficient attention in past research.<sup>13</sup> At a time when new newspapers are prohibited from publication, magazines are able to seize the moment immediately following an incident to communicate with the public, and expose the illusions of the party-state media.

The desire for “immediacy” and “documenting the present reality” was not only manifested in social science and literary publications, but also evident in the participation of documentary photography, reportage, and fringe theater in social movements. For intellectuals and creators of the 1980s, the confluence of conditions including diplomatic setbacks, economic growth, and aging strongmen pried open a gap with a clear objective: to confront a newly rediscovered locality and to contemplate and experiment with ways of amending real time, while also reconciling existing but unacknowledged historical time. How can disparate “realities” be understood across different historical periods? As we revisit the 1980s from the perspective of the present, the foremost challenge is perhaps precisely to avoid regarding individual achievements and ideas as era-defining, but instead to cautiously examine the type of “reality” that was observed through various disciplines four decades ago.

**13**

Lin, Ching-fen, “An Investigation into the Prohibition of Taiwan’s Non-Party Political Magazines of the Early 1980s,” *Bulletin of Academia Historica Issue 5* (March 2005), pp 253-326.

# *Reflexivity and Innovation: Observations in Visual Art*

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Chen Chia-nuan

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The island-wide Formosa Incident at the end of 1979 and the military trial at the end of the following year may have caused apprehension, but it was a key event that moved Taiwanese society from inhibition to openness. The open trial that received coverage and attention from domestic and international media drew long-repressed public opinions in Taiwan to the fore as Taiwanese history entered into the 1980s, a period marked by drastic systemic transformations. From non-party movements, to social movements that took to the streets, to the lifting of martial law, the democratic progress during that decade positioned Taiwanese society in a paradoxical state that was simultaneously full of hope and justice, passion and anxiety.

On the economic front, influenced by the oil crisis and inflation of the early 1980s, the government turned to developing information and electronic industries with low energy intensity and high added-value; the demand for highly skilled human resources propelled developments in Taiwan’s higher education. Economic grown and liberalizing policies enticed students studying overseas to return for employment. The opening of monetary

and financial policies, increase in per capita income, and stimulated consumer market of the late 1980s also faced a variety of substantive issues in social rights and benefits, such as environmental consciousness, consumer rights, affordable housing, farmers' welfare subsidies. Economic development catalyzed the development of modernized tools of mass communication, shaping a mass culture markedly different from prior eras. The establishment of the Council for Cultural Affairs by the government at the end of 1981 represented the beginning of a push to separate cultural policies from the education domain subsequent to including cultural construction into the overall national development plan.<sup>1</sup>

### Challenges and Reflexivity in Laying the Groundwork for the 1980s

The nativist literature movement that began in the early 1970s ignited an attentiveness to the local culture with “an embrace for the homeland, and a concern for reality” which expanded into the fine arts domain. In 1976, Wang Chun-yi penned the article “A Discussion on the Cultural Modeling Effort” in *Lion Art Monthly* (Hsiung Shih Art Monthly) magazine, and Chiang Hsun expanded cultural modeling efforts into a cultural modeling movement in *Cactus Magazine*,<sup>2</sup> exemplified when Chiang Hsun instituted a major revamp when became editor-in-chief of *Lion Art* with the “Innovation Issue” of March 1978, which advertised “culture,” “ethnicity,” and “reality” as its three main axis.<sup>3</sup> The revamped *Lion Art Monthly* deliberately preserved the two large Chinese characters 雄獅 (lion) on the magazine's cover and replacing the characters for art (美術) with a line that included “art, photography, architecture, drama, dance, music, literature” in a smaller font. The structure of the content also expanded on these disciplines, transcending the limitations and comparably more technical boundaries of pure art to elaborate on cultural and artistic forms with different developmental contexts, each with the potential to reflect reality.<sup>4</sup> The monthly magazine transformed from an arts publication into an interdisciplinary cultural periodical grounded in realism.

**1**  
Chen Yen-ing, *The Transitional Eighties - Taiwan's Art Breaks New Ground* (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2003), p 6.

**2**  
Chiang Hsun, “Anticipating a Comprehensive Cultural Modeling Movement,” *Cactus Magazine Issue 5* (July 1977), pp 59-60.

**3**  
Chiang Hsun, “Literary, Cultural, Realistic: A Foreword for the Relaunch Issue,” *Lion Art Monthly Issue 85* (1979), p 4-5.

**4**  
Chang Shih-Lun, *A Search for Reality: A Study of Taiwan's Photographic History* (Taipei: VOP Books, 2021), p 363.

**5**  
For Lee Shien-wen's oral narrative regarding this period, see: Chen Man-hua, ed., *Lion's Roar: An Oral History of Lion Art Monthly* (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2011), p 38-39.

**6**  
Lin Hsin-yueh, *Four Decades of Art in Taiwan* (Taipei: Independent Evening Post Cultural Publishing Department, 1987), p 239.

**7**  
Ibid 1.

Although Chiang Hsun's tenure as editor-in-chief lasted under a year, the serialized publication of a novel by Chen Ying-zhen who had been recently released, as well as other sensitive topics, piqued the concern of the Garrison Command, and Chiang Hsun ultimately resigned due to political pressure,<sup>5</sup> highlighting the political atmosphere in society under martial law, as well as the interference and suppression of the arts community. However, the nativist movement prevailed in the atmosphere of that era. In addition to the seeking and reflecting on their roots of the '70s, the new generation making their foray into the '80s had gradually cultivated a artistic subjective consciousness in the process of actively challenging, reflecting, and adjusting.<sup>6</sup> They reflected the issues of the era through new concepts and methods in avant-garde works of art.

Under the backdrop of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural policy changes, standards of education and living improved, corresponding to an increase in individual consciousness and social rights. Often described as “the whirlwind” and “collective voicing” of the '80s, the emerging social phenomena of collective construct and acts of resistance included political conflict, the emerging of a middleclass and of urban spaces, discoveries in daily living, trends in mass culture, as well as sexual desire and betrayal all impacted the development of Taiwanese art.<sup>7</sup>

### An Overview of the 1980s Arts Environment

In the above described temporal context, art historian Chen Yen-ing summarized that Taiwanese art in the 1980s was heir to the interdisciplinary spirit and collective modes of the avant-garde movement of the 1960s. A number of artists who began to return from studies abroad in Europe, the United States, and Japan such as Richard Lin, Tsong Pu, Jun T. Lai, and Chen Shu Ming, et al.; as well as those who had worked steadily in Taiwan over the years such as Lee Chun-shan, Su Hsin-tien, and Ni Tsai-chin often organized seminars or conferences, or met at gatherings such

as the Witch Cloud Villa or Foolish Birds Villa at the Chinese Cultural University Department of Fine Arts to discuss and exchange ideas, stimulating ideas and advancing the progression of new art.<sup>8</sup>

In a collaboration between Lion Art New Artist Award and Spring Gallery in 1980, works by the top five award winners were organized as a joint exhibition that became a fountainhead for large-scale exhibitions by emerging artists, and catalyzed the organization of arts collectives on university campuses. Academia served as a basis for arts organizations during this period, which fell under the auspices of art-adjacent departments at the four major universities: National Taiwan Normal University, National Arts Academy, Chinese Cultural University, and Fu-Hsin Trade and Arts School. In the attempt to balance exhibition costs with the dearth of exhibition opportunities, organizing art collectives and alliances became a pragmatic strategy for young artists in order to highlight their ideas, to transcend the limitations of institutionalized education, and to confront the challenges of survival in an arts career. Some examples include the alliance between a students' art collective with the "Hwa-Wai Association" of their predecessors to create the New Painting and Art Association (1984) ; or the 101 New Schema Works by Three Artists in 1985 that was actively promoted by Su Hsin-tien, and the 101 New Schema Works by Three Artists by the 101 Modern Art Collective (1982) comprising a new generation at Chinese Cultural University held at Nan Gallery; as well as the *Intense Re-Creation* series of joint exhibitions organized by the Foolish Bird Art Collective (1982). Although ultimately, the New Painting and Art Association was disbanded to form the Taipei Art Group which integrated several student-oriented art collectives at the Chinese Cultural University; and the Interact Art Group led by Su Hsin-tien of National Taiwan Normal University -- each embarking on their own developmental path, these art collectives all aimed to consolidate a collective consciousness to propose new, endemic directions for art that respond to real societal issues.

<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid 1.

<sup>9</sup>  
Hsiao Chong-ray, *Post-War Taiwanese Art History* (Taipei: Artist Publishing, 2013), p 144.

In the competitive marketplace of the commercial mechanism, works by established artists or with local themes and realism were favored the majority of commercial galleries for their market competitiveness. Among them were a number of galleries who idealistically provided opportunities for presenting new art, such as the aforementioned Nan Gallery who introduced works by a new generation at Chinese Cultural University as well as hosting the launch ceremony for Lee Ming-sheng's *Baggage 119*; or Spring Gallery, which held the *Alien - Play of Space* exhibition, etc. These became important milestones in the developmental path of modern art in Taiwan.

Initially, support for presentations of new art was limited to a small group of private galleries. They were seen in systemic exhibition spaces at the county and city level only after cultural construction was incorporated into national policies. The official opening of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in 1983 ushered a new era for museums, and represented a crucial turning point when Taiwanese society gradually pivoted from efforts to "a quest for Chinese orthodoxy" to "expressions of contemporary thought."<sup>9</sup> The museum's intention to play a leading role in contemporary art is evident in its 1985 "Color and Form: Avant-Garde/Installation/Space" exhibition and the 1987 "Experimental Art: Action and Space," and its continued introduction of international modern and contemporary art exhibitions. In addition, judging from the works entered into various competition exhibitions such as the Contemporary Art Trends in the R.O.C., the Contemporary Sculpture from Taiwan, and the Contemporary Abstract Ink Art Exhibition by previous award-winners, it can be seen that the competition mechanism indirectly shaped the development of 1980s art genres such as abstract ink wash, abstract/minimalism, new media, and figurative neo-expressionism.

In order to gain opportunities for exhibition, as well as less restrictive exhibition spaces outside of the museum and gallery mechanism, a



number of short-lived albeit distinctive exhibition spaces emerged in the 1980s that enabled the expression of avant-garde works. An example is the 1986 exhibition *Xirang* (Living Clay) that utilized an apartment in Taipei's East District as a pop-up exhibition space. Studios and commercial spaces were also purposed as exhibition arenas, for instance the 1988 *Xirang 2* was presented in the Image Concept Studio; or Wu Mali's 1985 solo exhibition *Time Space* was held at the Shenyu Gallery in the Shenyu Tea House; Chen Chia-Jen allocated a section in his own painting studio as Chia Jen Gallery which held Lin Ju's *The experiment of pure painting by Lin Ju, solitary confinement for 90 days* in 1985. In 1986, Jun T. Lai created the Studio of Contemporary Art (SOCA) as an exhibition and teaching space; this was followed by the establishment of art spaces such as Space II and IT Park. Exhibition modes infused with a sense of autonomy and experimentation gave rise to an ecology of alternative spaces in the 1990s.

### A New Force in 1980s Art Genres

In *The Transitional Eighties - Taiwan's Art Breaks New Ground*, Chen Yen-ing analyzed the two main creative paths of Taiwan in the 1980s. The many artists and scholars returning from abroad at the time brought contemporary European and American artistic theoretical trends that gradually amalgamated with local consciousness and styles to form two stylistically disparate creative paths. The first of which absorbed and digested the abstract aesthetic styles and thoughts of the Western avant-garde to reveal introspective or self-specific monologues that were less constrained by the fetters of authoritarian thought. Most of the artists subscribing to this conceptual trend were artists who studied in Europe or the United States in the '70s and '80s. The second path include artists whose work reflect traces of social change under the impact of external forces. Many of the artists of this group had remained in Taiwan in their creative development.

#### 10

Chen Yen-ing, *The Transitional Eighties - Taiwan's Art Breaks New Ground* (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2003), p 8.

#### 11

As Cheng Tsun-shing noted in "A Panorama of Contemporary Art: the 7th Documenta Exhibition from the Avant Garde to the Transavantgarde," published in six consecutive issues of *Lion Art Monthly* in 1983.

To some degree, the geometric abstract and minimalist creative styles of the 1980s drew from the abstract avant-garde movement of the 1960s, the international spirit of the Hwa-Wai Association, and the minimalist paintings developed by Richard Lin in the '60s and '70s. This wave of experiments erupted in the 1984 exhibition *Alien - Play of Space* with Richard Lin, Tsong Pu, Jun T. Lai, Hu Kun-jung, Chen Hsing-wan and Chang Yung-tsun, and in the *Transcendent - Play of Space* exhibition the following year. Artists utilized the intrinsic characteristics of materials including pliable tubing, wire, wood planks in dialogue with the space, and in interaction with the audience, which spurred a spate of fervent national discussions on new materials and spatial installations. However, such experimental developments do not emphasize the narrative or explanatory nature of the subject matter, nor do they incorporate political and humanitarian contexts, unlike Western abstract paintings and multimedia works.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned creative trajectories, Chen Yen-ing also summarized another major category in the context of the drastic transformations in Taiwan's political and economic environment:

On the one hand, figurative artists since the 1970s have inherited the artistic concern for the motherland, and strived to depict personal emotional states and life's realities; on the other hand, these artists were inspired by the plethora of Neo-expressionism and Transavantgarde concepts on the international stage introduced in arts magazines<sup>11</sup> forming another force with an emphasis on "the return of art into life." Artists clearly use explicitly use imagery as a counterattack on abstractionism and through an interpretation of corporeal action and history, and mythological images, attempt to respond and appeal directly to urban imagery, gender issues, sociopolitical conditions, and human interactions with the environment.

For instance, driven by the Transavantgarde emphasis on a historical re-reading of regional history, the interpretation of history, mythology, and traditional imagery became a source of inspiration for artistic creations. Using the functions of “allusion” and “metaphor” and a temporospatial juxtaposition of the historical and the contemporary, a slightly comedic and satirical scene is produced. Specifically, the process through which the Transavantgarde entered Taiwan was a reshaping through rereading and re-comprehension, hence many artists engaged in social issues merely reference Western avant-garde or modern forms as tools; the spirit of their creative content continues to reveal Taiwan’s endemic character. Notable among these is the work by Lu Tien-yen, Yang Mao-lin, Wu Tien-chang of 101 Contemporary Art Group in the early 1980s that created prehistoric ancient Chinese images from *Classic of Mountains and Seas* and the Dunhuang frescoes to reflect the epochal nature of reconstruction of history and of critiques of existing historical values in Taiwan of the 1980s.

### **New Artistic Voices in Political and Cultural Critique**

Martial Law and the lifting of Martial Law are not solely political events but are a coming of age for young artists growing up in the 1980s. Artist using their body as a pure tool of rebellion and resistance is intimately connected to the social atmosphere and corporeal experience of oppression and restraint under martial law. For example, Lee Ming-Sheng’s 1983 series of actions that provoke social order as an examination of the inertia and rationality of daily life. His ritual-esque works on the streets often draw the attention of the police, such as *Non-Line* in 1986, originally planned for February 28, where a string would be pulled beginning from his studio and ending at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, but the action was aborted when the police were alerted to the sensitive timing of the work. Chen Chieh-jen’s 1983 series, *Dysfunction No.3* featuring five young men with black cloth covering their heads, and their feet wrapped in gauze. They advance in a row in Taipei’s Ximending, and then writhe on the ground

### **12**

Ericamigo Wu, “Unshackled: The Birth of the First and Second Generations of Taiwanese Contemporary Art,” *Fountain Magazine* relaunch issue (September 2017), p 55.

in poses of pain and struggle in a display of the concept of oppression and breaking free. The group were also interrogated by police during the performance period. That same year Kao Chung-li created *Grooming*, which combined authoritarian surveillance cameras, kinescopes, and various photographic lenses in an attempt to dialogue with image theory.

From another perspective, the power of broadcast and dissemination of television media became a tool and object of criticism for artists in the ‘80s. In 1982, Chen Chieh-jen created an untitled video work (later given the title *Flash*) after seeing CCTV footage from the Lee Shih-ke bank heist broadcast on the three national TV stations daily, and was intrigued by Lee Shih-ke’s attempt to conceal his face when he committed an act in breach of the law. Affixing crumpled newspapers throughout the exhibition space, Wu Mali’s 1985 solo exhibition *Time Space* was the first work in Taiwan to use discarded materials, and was read as “a reflection of the cacophony on the streets before martial law was lifted” and “trampling on newspapers is a critique of Taiwanese media,” etc.<sup>12</sup>

The lifting of Martial Law in 1987 heralded an opportunity for increased engagement in direct political criticism through artistic practice. Everyday photographs, archival historical footage, and sanguinary images of executions were edited and combined and set to a soundtrack of anti-war songs in Yuan Goang-ming’s *Out Of Position* (1987) as a critique of human violence and massacres resulting from an imbalance in technology and communication. Adept at editing archival footage, Wang Jun-jieh’s creative format was closely related to television media. His installation works, such as *Image, Repeat, Image* (1986), *The TV Channel Broadcasting Porn Everyday* (1988), as well as *The Depth of the Epidermis* (1988) and *Face/TV* (1989), continued to be concerned with issues of consumerism and eroticism, media and politics, as well as state violence and historical truth. His 1989 collaboration with Shu Lea Cheang in the work entitled *How History Was*

*Wounded* not only criticized the exploitation and exaggeration of social conflicts on television media, but also further exposed the ways in which the news media intentionally creates kitschy tragic effects as well as the state mechanism of the media. Wu Mali uses images of the Green Team in her installation work *The Vase of Democracy* to explore the Taiwanese government's tacit tolerance of street protests as a strategy in trade negotiations with the United States. In 1989, creators from the worlds of theater and fine arts joined forces with activists to hold the *520 Artistic Practice Joint Exhibition* with the May 20 Peasant Movement as the creative theme. In 1990, Wu Tien-chang's exhibition *Portraits of the Emperors* was presented to the public at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum without political suppression, and the *Taiwan Archives* art collective presented a highly satirical first exhibition entitled "Congratulations on the Inauguration of the Eighth President Chiang" in which Wu Mali's work *Love to Climax* consisted of a gradually rotting flag cake; and Lee Ming-Sheng's work *Our Constitution Finally Can Be Used* featured the constitution printed on toilet paper, etc., both used direct and explicit symbolism to as political and cultural criticism enabling Taiwanese art in the 1980s to clearly reflect the context of social and cultural change in Taiwan after the lifting of martial law.

The 1980s saw a gradual blurring of the classifications of single media and pure art categories of the past; while political, economic, and broadcast media influences, material changes in the living environment also allowed creators to attempt and seek out media and vocabularies that adequately respond to their immediate environment. Old frameworks were gradually being broken in the upheaval and turbulent era that preceded and followed the lifting of Martial law, and a new generation of artists were vigorously seeking for an entry point from the periphery to the center. The active experimentation and exploration of what is "new" also made everything possible, showcasing a spirit of experimentation that was interdisciplinary and diverse in creative format, theme, and content.

# *The Wild Body: An Observation on Theaters*

Huang Yi-hsuan

1

From 1984 onward, the National Festival of Culture and Arts was no longer organized by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Education but by the Council for Cultural Affairs. From February to July each year, performances of music, dance, theater, and local traditional operas were delivered in social education centers and cultural centers throughout Taiwan. See *Taiwanpedia*, <https://nrch.culture.tw/twpedia.aspx?id=21211>.

In the clamorous 1980s, the turbulent environment of Taiwan prompted the youth to make action-based responses to the breakthroughs in ideology and practice from autocracy, tradition and modernity toward pluralism, innovation and postmodernity. The social climate in that decade had been changing with the surging undercurrents of the Tangwai movement, underground media (e.g., the *Formosa Magazine*, radio station and street photography) and foreign thoughts apart from the overnight transition from the martial law period to the post-martial law era. The 1970s saw the rise of the nativist culture movement in Taiwan, under which many constructions and policies reflected the national agenda for localization. The official ambition to shape and promote the arts and literary scene found vivid expression in the establishment of the Council for Cultural Affairs (1981), the extensive mobilization of the National Festival of Culture and Arts,<sup>1</sup> and the inauguration of the National Theater and Concert Hall (1987).

In terms of theater, practitioners had not only adopted creative approaches distinct from that of the official "anti-communist and anti-Russian aggression dramas," but also improved stage play and traditional opera since the 1960s and 1970s. In 1979, Yao Yi-wei took over as the chairman of the Chinese Committee of Stage Play Appreciation and Performance, leading the promotion of the "Experimental Theater Festival"

for five consecutive years (1980-1984). The festival aimed to enable the new generation of creators to experiment with theatrical creativity as much as they like, exclude the audience-oriented commercial consideration, and shake off the shackles of rigid realism.<sup>2</sup> Surely, the “Experimental Theater Festival” can be compared to a catalyst that made theater a popular attraction for the multitude<sup>3</sup> and an experimental platform for art enthusiasts in the 1980s. Nevertheless, we have to start our discussion from the gathering of people and the channels for the circulation of information on arts and literature if we’re going to delve deeper into the sensation of theater that flourished on a large scale then.

### The Seed of Enlightenment in the Fertile Soil

An overview of the vicissitudes of Taiwanese performing arts practitioners in the 1980s reveals that the convergence of various thoughts here was by no means the result of any causal chain along a single narrative axis. The sources of these thoughts can be traced back to the magazines launched in the 1960s, namely *Xiandai Wenxue* (lit. modern literature), *Europe*, and *Theater*.<sup>4</sup> The United States Information Service on Nanhai Road, the Cardinal Tien Cultural Center and the Huadeng Arts Center (the film appreciation society and arts organization founded with Catholic resources), the Film Library established on Qingdao East Road in 1978, the Qingkang Theater, the Test Screening Room founded by Wang Mo-lin and Cho Ming against the film censorship,<sup>5</sup> as well as the pirate screening spaces (e.g., the Flea Hideout, the Film Pavilion, and the Solar System) collectively introduced a massive amount of information on occidental theater, the French New Wave Cinema, and foreign arts and literature into Taiwan, which nourished the young interested in culture, art and society at that time. The influence of the absorbed foreign information on cinematography subsequently spilled over into the creative concepts of the little theater movement, the Taiwanese New Wave Cinema, and experimental film. The gatherings at arts and literary venues opened up opportunities for

#### 2

Chen Ling-ling, “We Used to Walk Together! The Experimental Theater Festival,” *Wenhsun Monthly*, no. 31 (1987).

#### 3

Chen Ling-ling, “The Dream Knight of Fulfillment—On the Theatrical Character of a Grand Master,” *Unitas*, no. 152 (1997): 56-60.

#### 4

Ma Sen, “The Little Theater Movement in Taiwan since the 1980s,” in the *Proceedings of the Symposium on Taiwanese Modern Theater: Taiwan Little Theater 1986-1995* (Taipei: Council for Cultural Affairs, 1996), pp. 19-34.

#### 5

Guo Liang-ting and Zhou Ling-zhi (discussants), “A Man with a History: The Theater Practice of Cho Ming,” *Art Critique of Taiwan*, no. 76 (2018): 10-21.

the exchange among talents of all stripes, hence a riotous profusion of organizations. For example, the Cardinal Tien Experimental Theater Troupe founded in 1976 under the support of priest André Lefebvre at the Cardinal Tien Cultural Center was exactly the predecessor of the Lanlin Theater Troupe, a troupe must be reckoned with when it comes to the little theater movement. In addition, the guidance of theater precursors like Yao Yi-wei, Zhang Xiao-feng and Nie Guang-yan, the experimental training conducted by Li Ang and Wu Jing-jyi at the Lanlin Theater Troupe, the performances delivered in Taiwan by foreign groups like the Shiro Tora Troupe and the Zuni Icosahedron, as well as the foreign theatrical theories and acting techniques (e.g., La Mama, Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner, Martha Graham, and People’s Theater) introduced by homecoming students from abroad all enlightened performing arts with a large amount of information on arts and literature as the very foundation. Around the lifting of martial law, the sheer lack of any nativist theory and body in Taiwan propelled the rapid acceptance and development of diverse perspectives and experiments. Performance training ergo became the youth’s approach to “self-enlightenment” in the 1980s.

### The Wild Theatrical Movement

Experimental theater troupes had mushroomed during the five-year “Experimental Theater Festival,” such as Lanlin, Perimeter, Little Dock, Grand View, Huagang, Work, and Earthly Realm. They not only spurred the development of performing arts, but also started a craze for theatrical creation. Besides, the trend for producing and watching dramas emerged from the success of *Tale of the White Serpent* (1975) by the Cloud Gate Dance Theater, *He Zhu’s New Match* (1980) by the Lanlin Theater Troupe, and *The Night We Became Hsiang Sheng Comedians* (1985) by the Performance Workshop. Echoing the gradually liberalized society with youthful fearlessness, the experimental theater troupes founded in the mid- and late 1980s (e.g., Rive Gauche, Notes, Ruin Circle, U-Theater, Environmental Theater

425, Zero Field 121.25, and Critical Point) surpassed all others of their kind before and since. They channeled their political energy accumulated in the body into wild theatrical actions that broke away from the previous little theater movement. The creators' anxiety manifested itself in the wanting in subjectivity. They were eager to seek their own identities and evolve their personal styles, while being constrained by the relatively systematic foreign theoretical frameworks and acting techniques mentioned above. Treating the "body" as the actor, this type of training method shattered the outdated ideology and initiated the search for an approach capable of responding to individuals' genuine impulse, which was exemplified by Liu Jing-min's U-Theater<sup>6</sup> (*Tracing Project* [1988, 1993]), Zhou Yi-chang's Zero Field 121.25 (the learning of the "Cow Plow Array" and the "Drum Flower Array"), as well as the anti-system sentiment and gender awareness in Tian Chi-yuan's oeuvre.

Social and political movements had been legitimized and flourishing soon after the lifting of martial law. Different political stances notwithstanding, art had also appeared as an action that articulates collective desires on the sites of stormy social movements. People gathered together without distinction, resulting in the collective creation that features talents from various fields and shapes a sui generis scene of transdisciplinary actions, such as *Exorcizing the Evil Spirit on Orchid Island* (1988) in the Tao anti-nuclear waste movement, the action play (1989) in the mass demonstration for forest conservation, *Wu Er Ling* (1989) in the May 20 Peasant Movement, and the action play (1989) of 10,000 people staying overnight on Zhongxiao East Road in the Shell-less Snails Movement. Meanwhile, individual artists or art groups spontaneously responded to the political appeals with their respective works, such as Lee Ming-sheng, Chen Chieh-jen, *Interchange* (1986) by Luo He Zhan Yi, *October* (1987) delivered collaboratively by three theater troupes (incl. Rive Gauche, Ruin Circle, and Notes), as well as *The Song of a Covered Wagon* (1989) directed by Wang Mo-lin. In their attempt to resist and subvert the existing system, they applied many creative

## 6

The artist used the name "Liu Jing-min" in the 1980s, and she has changed her name to "Liu Ruo-yu."

## 7

Ma Sen, *Chinese Modern Theater under Occidental Thoughts* (Taipei: Bookman Books, 1994).

## 8

Chen Ko-lun, *Politics of the End of Martial Law Period and Cold War Aesthetics: Retreating the Discourses and the Practices of Taiwan's Little Theatre Movement (1986-1996)*, doctoral dissertation, the Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies, National Chiao Tung University, 2018.

## 9

This book is Chung Ming-der's doctoral dissertation based on his personal experience during 1986 and 1989 and finished at the Graduate Institute of Performance Studies, New York University in 1992.

methods bound up with the local context, such as non-fiction drama, environmental theater, and action play, exhibiting a transdisciplinary confluence of performance art and installation art.

### The Endeavor of Definition in a Hybridized Environment

The clash between the constantly renewing social landscape and the remnants of the disciplinary system aroused the desire among theater scholars at that time for "defining" both their own history and the turbulent epoch. In the little theater movement, for example, people's eagerness to position themselves and fill the vacancy of the body by interpreting history found expression in the different approaches adopted by Ma Sen, Chung Ming-der and Wang Mo-lin to their dialectical relationships and the history of this movement. Their historical arguments in the name of "definition" therein also presented a transposing observation on their own politico-cultural positioning. Ma Sen constructed his argument of the "second tide from the West" that revolves around the history of Chinese drama.<sup>7</sup> He defined the "first tide from the West" as the May Fourth Movement in China in imitation of occidental realistic drama, and the "second tide from the West" as Taiwan's development under Western modernist thoughts in the 1960s and 1970s and the influence of postmodernism from occidental contemporary theater in the 1980s. He treats "westernization" as a catalyst for the advancement of non-Western regions, a process equivalent to modernization.<sup>8</sup> In 1999, Chung Ming-der published *The Little Theater Movement of Taiwan (1980-89): In Search of Alternative Aesthetics and Politics*,<sup>9</sup> a book following the framework of the "tides from the West" while seeking to tackle nativist issues of Taiwan. Treating the "theory of revolution" aimed at a nativist aesthetic institution as the entry point, this book divides the creative methods in the little theater movement into the "experimental theater" (1980-1985) and the "avant-garde theater" (after 1985). Chung also envisaged a collage of "postmodern theater" in Taiwan by grafting the repression and

contradiction between westernization and localization in the theatrical creation of the late 1980s with the context of occidental postmodernism's loss of its core and rebelliousness. Unlike Chung's approach, Wang Mo-lin focused on the nativist context of Taiwan. He argued that the *dispositif* of knowledge and power in postwar Taiwan is ineludible for the so-called political ideas and aesthetic experiments if one is going to analyze the little theater movement arising around the lifting of martial law.<sup>10</sup> The little theater movement in Wang's belief began as the subversive street performance against the institutional culture. The stellar examples include *Dysfunction No.3* (1983) by Chen Chieh-jen, *Interchange* (1986) by Luo He Zhan Yi, and *Bombing the Womb I—After Genesis* (1986) by Nai Jing Yishi, followed by Wang's formulation of the "body theory under martial law." In the 1990s, Wang noticed the inclusion of the little theater movement's effort into the private sector economy under the capitalist system in Taiwan, and therefore he claimed that "little theaters are dead."

Seemingly in the imbrolios of political system transformation and social climate change, the 1980s instead became a gigantic laboratory for the experiments of performing arts. In that decade, the dust of radical reform had not yet settled, the disciplines had not yet been excessively demarcated, the educational system had not yet been specified, and the official institutions had not yet met the needs from arts and literature. All this prompted people to "wildly" engage in physical practices, showing their great hunger for reform and liberation, their resistance against martial law, and their cogitation upon the Cold War. It was them who pioneered transdisciplinary practices. The diversified achievements of the 1980s were concrete manifestations of the prime time of zeal and practice. We may also wonder that whether the hybridized environment and the transdisciplinary creation of the 1980s, as two sides of the same coin, also remind us about how to reflect on the creative environment under the social system nowadays.

<sup>10</sup>

See note viii, p. 96.

# *The Need for Realistic Portrayal and the Desire for Spectacles: An Observation on Moving Images*

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Chang Wei-lun

After years of highly authoritarian rule, Taiwan in the 1980s saw a gradual relaxation of its stringent social control as the global politico-economic structure underwent significant changes, which eventually ushered in the lifting of martial law in 1987. Following the endeavor to construct a nativist context in the 1970s, Taiwanese people in the post-martial law era relied more on local energy to gaze into themselves in search of their innermost core when experiencing the collective anxiety for national identity or the re-establishment of individual subjectivity. This tendency then implicitly became a mainstream consensus among the intelligentsia and the practitioners of arts and culture. Besides, democratization stimulated as much competition in the media industry as it did in the free market. The production of moving images in that period not only reflected Taiwanese society's collective need for realistic portrayal, but also gratified

the consumer market's desire for spectacles. Apart from the emergence of new genres on the basis of traditional film and television, the Golden Harvest Awards and associated film festivals also galvanized different types of image creation. In Taiwan, as technologies, platforms and media advanced rapidly with the democratic transition, moving images had managed to press forward under the pincer movement of two main forces: contemplative introspection and innovation-induced commercial opportunities.

### Television and Democratization

In the 1980s, the democratization of Taiwan generated a boom in commercial media. By dint of the greater television penetration and diversified program genres, along with the introduction of Hong Kong dramas like *Chu Liuxiang* filmed in a cinematic style which garnered unprecedentedly high ratings, television gradually replaced film as the primary medium for the public to access audio-visual content. At that time, the three state-run TV stations enjoyed virtual monopoly, whereas cable TV and public TV were in their infancy. The media ecology adapted quickly to the market demand. The audio-visual industries were ergo lavishly funded, which gave moving images increasing mainstream media exposure. Television had played a crucial role in the democratization and social transformation of Taiwan over those years. It complemented not only the resource pooling for image creation but also the social communication for meaning production. The innovations and changes of image content on television found expression in TV documentaries, anthology series, and some TV commercials at that time. Take TV commercials for example. In the early 1980s, the government of Taiwan began to promote foreign direct investment, followed by the entry of international brands and transnational advertising agencies into the local market. The advertising industry exerted a gravitational attraction toward elites from all walks of life due to the growing demand for advertising, and

<sup>1</sup>  
Hsiu-Hui Sun and I-Fen Chen,  
"Exploring the Research Paths of  
Taiwan's Television Commercial  
History: From Semiotics,  
Narratology to Cultural Studies,"  
*Chinese Journal of Communication  
Research*, no. 22 (Dec. 2012): 47-48.

the results became apparent in the flourishing scene of TV commercial creativity and visual language.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the commercials made by the Ideology Advertising Agency and director Chen Hung-yi for Stimorol (a brand of chewing gum) and the Sunrise Department Store are nothing if not inimitable in aesthetic style. Meanwhile, TV documentaries gradually moved away from national image promotion and instead set greater store by reflecting social realities. For example, *The Portrait of Hundred Occupations* (1986-1991) by Wang Shau-di documents not only traditional-industry workers but also new-industry practitioners of the 1980s such as models, club DJs, comic artists, and wedding photographers. In addition, "TV film" emerged as a new genre, which was also known as the cradle of directors of "Taiwanese New Wave Cinema." For instance, *Eleven Women* (1981), produced by Sylvia Chang, marks the TV feature film debut of several directors like Edward Yang and Ko I-cheng. *All the Corners of the World* (1989) and *The Sky for Ordinary Citizens* (1990-1991) by Tsai Ming-liang are stellar examples of this new genre as well. Witnessing the innovations in program planning and filming technique, we can conjure up the pioneering spirit of creators and intellectuals who actively strived toward experimental resources and venues for pluralistic image creation within the media and market environments on the tide of change.

### Technology, Platform, and Exchange

The 1980s was a chaotic decade in which occidental knowledge of image (e.g., video art, experimental film, documentary, and animation) had not yet come academically into the horizons of Taiwanese creators. Wielding their cameras, a group of local creators initiated moving images experiments amidst the phenomena of information dissemination, platform construction and technical equipment circulation sparked by democratization. New technologies like "videotape image reproduction" and "portable electronic camera" were introduced into Taiwan in the 1980s, and the lowered technical threshold led to the emergence of

private and personal video recordings.<sup>2</sup> In his essay “So Says the Plebeian Film,” experimental film director Lu Xin-cang advocates a robust film culture with the example of the low production costs of the entries for the Golden Harvest Awards. He argues that, in addition to commercial films, fulfilling pluralistic, diverse demands from image production is the key to striking a genuine balance for film culture.<sup>3</sup> At the Experimental Film Exhibition Symposium in 1977, the participants referred to the Hong Kong Experimental Film Festival and encouraged creators to produce works in their personal styles. The symposium concluded with the establishment of a “film library” to promote experimental film festivals, and the call for entry to the 1st Golden Harvest Awards for Outstanding Short Films was issued in the following year (1978). In 1987, the *Ren Jian Magazine*, the *Apollo Magazine*, the *Con-Temporary Monthly*, and the *UNITAS Magazine* jointly organized the seminar titled “Alternative Cinema Panorama.” It mirrored the endeavors of film critics and practitioners of arts and culture at that time to create an “alternative” film genre besides the commercial one, and to promote independent productions like non-commercial features, documentaries, experimental films, and animations.<sup>4</sup> In that period, the establishment of related awards, film festivals and institutional platforms either directly or indirectly supported creators to produce richly diverse “experimental films” at a relatively lower cost without apprehensions over the restrictions from the commercial market and censorship. For instance, the establishment of the Golden Harvest Awards (1978), the Golden Horse Film Festival (1980) and the China Times Express Film Awards (1988), along with the diversified platforms like the American Cultural Center, art museums, galleries and alternative spaces,<sup>5</sup> all proposed the possibilities of building the channels and institutions for viewing “alternative images” outside of the commercial system.<sup>6</sup> Huang Ming-chuan, a trail-blazing independent film director, and the Green Team, a self-media pioneer in documenting the democratic reform and social movements at that time, further employed their mastery of technology to create sui generis works

**2**

Feii Lu, “An Introduction to the Internet Database of the Taiwanese Newsreel and Documentary and a Filmographic Research,” *Journal of Audio-visual Media and Technologies*, no. 16 (Mar. 2001): 10.

**3**

Xin-Cang Lu, “So Says the Plebeian Film,” *Four Hundred Blows*, no. 16 (1985): 78-79.

**4**

Lung-Jen Chi, “Farewell ‘New Wave,’ Looking forward to the Advent of an ‘Alternative’ Cinema,” in *The Demise of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema* (Taipei: Tonsan, 1991), p. 7.

**5**

For example, “Kao Chong-li Photographic Exhibition” (1983) at the American Cultural Center, “French Video Art Joint Exhibition” (1984) at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, “Video Installation Performing Arts” (1986) at the Spring Fine Arts Gallery, “Advanced Technology Art Exhibition” (1988) and “Japan High Technology Art Exhibition” (1988) at the Taiwan Museum of Art (now National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts), the “Living Clay” exhibition series organized by Kao Chong-li, Chen Chieh-jen and Wang Jun-jieh from 1986 onwards, as well as the participation of Lu Ming-te and Yuan Goang-ming in the ITPARK Gallery & Photo Studio founded in September 1988. See Sing Song-Yong, “Restructuring the History: Had the Era of Video Art Never Been Inaugurated in Taiwan,” in

that resist and transcend the barriers of official and mainstream media.

From the 1960s onward, the main access to avant-garde images from overseas include governmental institutions (e.g., the United States Information Service, the Goethe-Institut Taipei, and the Foreign Language Film Panorama of the Golden Horse Film Festival), the “film libraries” constructed through public-private partnership, and NGOs (e.g., the Cardinal Tien Cultural Center, and the Huadeng Arts Center). At the time of ideological liberation, the public curiosity and thirst for images opened up new market opportunities. Misappropriation was not illegal then owing to the absence of the concept of intellectual property rights. There were stores (e.g., the Hardy Begonia known as the Specialty Store of Alternative Films and the Storehouse of Academic Films) that provide film copies, and MTVs (e.g., the Film Pavilion, the Solar System, and the Eight and a Half Non-viewpoint Theater) that collect and screen European art films. In such a socio-cultural milieu, films became a common theme on which image aficionados from different backgrounds could exchange their ideas. Different types of small-scale screening or gathering spaces began to emerge, such as the Taiwan Test Screening Room set up by Huang Cheng-huang (a founding member of the Lanlin Theatre Troupe), the Flea Hideout co-founded by Sisy Chen and Han Liang-lu, and favorite hangouts of the intelligentsia and culturati like the Wistaria Tea House and the Cornfield Coffee run by Jan Hung-tze, musician Lee Shou-chuan and their friends. The Image Concept Studio established by Lu Xin-cang and Huang Ming-chuan engaged more broadly in the exchange and production of experimental film, indie film, and video art.<sup>7</sup> The NTU Audio-visual Research Club is inherently a transdisciplinary club. Apart from making image the vehicle for cross-disciplinary exchange, these phenomena also reflected the particular dynamics of the times and meanwhile profoundly influenced the cultural and intellectual relations between home and abroad.

*Rewind\_: Video Art in Taiwan*, 1983-1999 (Taipei: Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei National University of the Arts, 2015), p. 12, and Sing Song-Yong, “Delayed Plasticity: A Preliminary Investigation of the Political Criticism of Sinophone Single-Channel Video Art in the 1980s,” *Journal of Taipei Fine Arts Museum*, no. 34 (2017): 65-90.

**6**

*The Death of New Cinema: from “Save Everything for Tomorrow” to “A City of Sadness,”* edited by Mi Zou and Liang Xin-hua (Taipei: Tonsan, 1991), p. 7.

**7**

“Living Clay,” an artist group co-founded by Chen Chieh-jen, Kao Chong-li, Lin Ju and Wang Jun-jieh in 1986, had also staged a joint exhibition at the Image Concept Studio.



### Taiwanese New Wave Cinema and Liberalization

Now, let's contemplate Taiwanese New Wave Cinema, a landmark event in the history of Taiwanese film, within the portmanteau, turbulent social context and market setting of the 1980s. We can feel the mixed, collaged climate of an era through the transdisciplinary nature of cinematography as well as through works and industrial activities. We can also see that the intelligentsia and creators around the lifting of martial law demonstrated great resilience to political control and strived to transcend the existing confines like investors and box office when confronted with the pincer movement of political stranglehold and free market-encouraged competition. Ming Ji was appointed the general manager of the Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC) in 1978, and thenceforth he worked with many young scriptwriters and Taiwanese New Wave directors such as Hsiao Yeh, Wu Nien-jen, Hou Hsiao-hsien, and Edward Yang. They collectively formed a Taiwanese style of art film that focuses on social phenomena and draws inspiration from nativist experiences. People generally trace the history of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema back to the 1980s. At the beginning, the CMPC released the omnibus film *In Our Time* (1982) directed by Tao Te-chen, Edward Yang, Ko I-chen, and Chang Yi who were still obscure and unknown at that time. With "Taiwan's very first art film" as the slogan on the poster, *In Our Time* is considered the inception of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema. The next year, the CMPC released another omnibus film *The Sandwich Man* (1983) directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien, Zeng Zhuang-xiang and Wan Jen. Its script was based on three stories in Huang Chun-ming's novel, namely *His Son's Big Doll*, *Vicki's Hat*, and *The Taste of Apple*. Directed by Chen Kun-hou, the film *Growing Up* (1983) was based on Taiwanese writer Chu Tien-wen's novel. The market potential of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema was evidenced by the box office success of this film.<sup>8</sup>

Taiwanese New Wave Cinema spoke to the public in the spirit of realistic creation, so that it could respond to Taiwanese society's internal needs in

#### 8

Feii Lu, *Taiwanese Cinema: Politics, Economy and Aesthetics (1949-1994)* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou, 1998), pp. 271-273.

#### 9

The literary works adapted for Taiwanese New Wave Cinema include Huang Chun-ming's *His Son's Big Doll*, *Vicki's Hat*, *The Taste of Apple* (respectively directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien, Zeng Zhuang-xiang, and Wan Jen, 1983) and *A Flower in the Raining Night* (directed by Wang Tong, 1983), Kenneth Hsien-yung Pai's *Jade Love* (directed by Zhang Yi, 1984), Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife* (the first prize of 1983 United Daily News Novella Awards, directed by Zeng Zhuang-xiang, 1984) and *Dark Night* (directed by Dan Han-zhang, 1986), Liao Hui-ying's *Rapeseed* (the first prize of 1982 China Times Short Novel Awards; script written by Liao Hui-ying and Hou Hsiao-hsien, directed by Wan Jen, 1984), Xiao Sa's *My Son Hansheng* (directed by Zhang Yi, 1985) and *Kuei-Mei, a Woman* (script written by Xiao Sa and Zhang Yi, 1985). Chu T ien-wen and Hou Hsiao-hsien co-wrote the scripts of *A City of Sadness*, *The Time to Live and the Time to Die*, and *Growing Up*.

#### 10

Jan Hung-tze, video interview, *Hou Hsiao-Hsien: The Antecedents of a Film Director*, produced jointly by Taiwan and Hong Kong.

the 1980s for the reflection on nativist experiences and the construction of Taiwan's subjective identity. The collective momentum towards "together" and "searching" thus built up, which manifested itself in the integration between the film industry and other fields. For example, screenwriters co-wrote scripts with directors and original authors. They successfully adapted the works by Taiwanese nativist and modernist writers, and ergo embedded literature in Taiwanese New Wave Cinema.<sup>9</sup> Hou Hsiao-hsien once stated: "The reason why I adapted *His Son's Big Doll* because it is a story written by Huang Chun-ming, whose novels, along with those by other nativist writers, have profound influence on all of us (i.e., Taiwanese New Wave directors). Their novels were what we read during our school days. The world in which Huang's novel was set is exactly the world in which we came of age, a world all too familiar to all of us. More importantly, it's a world that has not yet been presented and expressed by film. Once we've found an opportunity to display this world on the silver screen, we couldn't wait to do it."<sup>10</sup>

Those who have been involved in a variety of fields, such as Sylvia Chang and Jan Hung-tze, had also actively assisted Taiwanese New Wave directors in formulating more diversified media strategies. For instance, *Eleven Women* (1981), produced by Sylvia Chang and released by the Taiwan Television Enterprise, Ltd., is the TV feature film debut of several directors like Edward Yang and Ko I-cheng. Its script was based on the short novels by Taiwanese female writers and filmed entirely with location shooting. In 1982, Chang became the director of the Cinema City Co. Ltd., Taiwan branch. She developed the conception of "independent operation" and pursued a commercial approach different from that of the parent company in Hong Kong. To be more specific, she focused on producing "Taiwanese nativist art films," therefore giving birth to *That Day, on the Beach* (1983) and *A Kid with a Sword* (1983) respectively directed by Edward Yang and Ko I-cheng. In an interview, Chang revealed that the reason she

took over as the director of the Cinema City Co. Ltd., Taiwan branch was to “give this company a different look in Taiwan, so that a balance could be attained between commerce and art.”<sup>11</sup> Jan Hung-tze, who returned to Taiwan from the United States in the early 1980s, used to work for the literary supplement of *United Daily News* and *China Times*. Before the emergence of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema, Jan had published his analyses of Taiwan’s film and TV industries on Commercial Times, seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the structure of Taiwan’s film industry. He proposed the business strategy of “Hou Hsiao-hsien economics”<sup>12</sup> and discussed the economic potential of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema. Chiu Fu-sheng, the founder of the Era Communications Co., Ltd., was convinced by Jan’s concept and ergo invested in Hou Hsiao-hsien’s *A City of Sadness* (1989), a winning entry of the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and a film topped \$10 million at the domestic box office.

Taiwanese New Wave Cinema per se seemed to be a record of the breakthroughs of image creation despite the existing limitations in the 1980s. Underpinned by the favorable climate of public opinion, the “apple-peeling incident” in 1983 pushed the tug-of-war between freedom of creation and political interference one step further towards democracy. In addition to eliminating political interference, Taiwanese New Wave directors tried to make cinema no longer a mere appendage of drama or entertainment, but an art form rich in audio-visual appeal.<sup>13</sup> However, Taiwan’s economy began to take off in the 1980s. The Taiwanese were really rolling in money, and they seemingly had no time to ruminate upon these cultural gems that came from profound cogitation. People preferred consumptive, entertaining image commodities. The commercial consideration that prioritizes market value eventually overwhelmed the energy that Taiwanese New Wave Cinema devoted to nativist image experimentation. In 1986, the Government Information Office removed the restrictions on the quotas for foreign film copy, hence a massive influx

**11**

Edwin W. Chen and Tien-An Yang, “The Spark of Ideals in Market Reality: The Cinema City Company Limited in Taiwan 1982-1984,” *Film Appreciation Journal*, issue 172-173 (2017): 23-33.

**12**

Hung-Tze Jan, “Hou Hsiao-hsien Economics,” *Business Weekly*, no. 68, 1989.

**13**

Feii Lu, *Taiwanese Cinema: Politics, Economy and Aesthetics (1949-1994)* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou, 1998), p. 275.

**14**

Huang Jian-yeh, *The Pursuit of Humanistic Films* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou, 1990), p. 41.

**15**

Published on the *Apollo Magazine* and the *China Times Literary Supplement* in 1987, the “Taiwanese Cinema Manifesto” was drafted by 50 Taiwanese New Wave practitioners and culturati. It seriously questioned the cinematic policy, mass media, and film critic system at that time, and appealed for the survival of an “alternative cinema.”

of foreign films. Meanwhile, Taiwan’s film industry was in a slump. Film companies pulled out of the Taiwan market, whilst production companies and cinemas successively closed down. Taiwanese New Wave directors were also compelled to find an acceptable balance between reality and ideal as well as between art and box office. Political, economic, and cultural hindrance and pressure notwithstanding, Taiwanese New Wave Cinema had finally been recognized by a succession of major international film awards, which provided the experimental style of Taiwanese cinema with international visibility. Unfortunately, while the elite culture had been elevated to such an international level, the entire film industry and the audience of popular films were apparently at odds with this development.<sup>14</sup> The “Taiwanese Cinema Manifesto” in 1987 declared that Taiwanese New Wave Cinema can’t survive with the ostracism by commerce, policy and critique.<sup>15</sup> The next year, the military propaganda film *Save Everything for Tomorrow* (1988) provoked negative criticism for being politically correct. Although *A City of Sadness* (1989) was an overnight international sensation that broke political taboos and took the box office by storm, Taiwanese New Wave Cinema was gradually re-orientated from a collective trend toward individual stylistic evolution after 1990.

As we attempt to grasp the cross-disciplinary phenomena in Taiwan’s moving images production in the 1980s via the motif of “New Wave Cinema,” we can see that it not only created innumerable intersections among politics, economy, media market, art, humanities and different specializations, but also connected talents of all stripes amidst social collective needs that appear as an eclectic mix of conflict and sympathy (e.g., mass/elite, social realism/spectacle-based consumption, and art/commerce). It explored the frontier of freedom within the limits of reality, shuttling in a cross-disciplinary fashion among the parallel universes that are not yet clearly demarcated by specializations. Such a portmanteau collage was precisely a realistic portrayal of the 1980s in general.

# *Rewriting Taiwan: Observations of Taiwanese Literature in the 1980s*

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Shiu Shiou-hau

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Literary writings of the 1980s was heir to the 1970s legacy of ideological forms in cultural trends which enabled the tradition of realism to brim over “nativism” and opened up a diverse writing concerned for Taiwan’s diversified society. Moreover, the vigorous non-party movements, political conflicts coming to the fore, and a loosening freedom of speech also enabled authors of the era to continue to explore taboo spaces of themes, forms, and aesthetics. Upon entry into the consumer society, the inundation of Western theories and the prevalence of emerging media technology prompted new generation authors to attempt new aesthetic forms and vocabularies as they began to experiment with post-internationalization and urbanization writings. However, literary writing in the 1980s did not develop in a linear fashion. The complex and parallel writing concerns and the clashes between aesthetic forms that makes it difficult to examine and describe the ‘80s through a single historical view. Nevertheless, there remains a common pivotal core to the complex literary writings of the 1980s which is “Wherefore Taiwanese literature?”

From the nativist literature debate, to political writings, and even to the rise of post-modernism in Taiwan, all can be regarded as literary writers attempting to approach the subject of “Taiwan” by experimenting through various lexicons. Taiwan’s decline on the international stage, and the absence of an official view of cultural history compelled literary writers to respond to “wherefore Taiwanese literature?” through political ideologies, observations of social realities, and foreign theoretical vocabularies. Hence, any examination of the literary writings of the 1980s cannot be approached from a linear concept of development with constraints on the complex experimentations of the entire era, but instead, regard the 1980s as a process where literary writers repeatedly rewrote Taiwan. The experimental intention of the consciousness and aesthetics of the ‘80s can only be told through observations undertaken through this perspective of “re-writing,” rather than through a sort of declaration after the fact. This essay begins from the nativist literature dialectic, by regarding it as a key to unlocking the desire for a Taiwanese discourse by authors in the 1980s; and responds to the urgency of rewriting Taiwan in the 1980s through observations of various aspects including political writings, diverse social experiences, and the infusion of foreign ideas. Most importantly, even though this series of narratives must be writing according to chronological constraints, the various writing experiments and perspectives of the ‘80s still occurred in a sort of layered, interwoven and parallel manner.

### **The Aftermath of the Nativist Literature Dialectic**

The eruption of the 1970s nativist literature dialectic was integral to the rise of the “Taiwan consciousness” and “Taiwanese discourse” in the 1980s. Successive political conflicts occurred in Taiwan in the latter half of the 1970s, from the Chungli Incident, to the Qiaotou Incident and the Formosa Incident. On the one hand, these conflicts rattled the existing political power structures, and on the other hand, they enabled the public to improve their ability to reflect upon and observe internal

political structures. At the same time, the severing of diplomatic ties between Taiwan and the United States also produced a crack in the existing national discourse on the status of “Taiwan” and “Republic of China” that was open to comprehensive attacks. The cultural ideological trends constructed in the 1950s and ‘60s was not only unable to confront the string of dramatic political changes, but also further exacerbated the identity setbacks and internal contradictions for the Taiwanese people.

The inaugural issue of *China Tide* magazine in 1977 ignited a furor in discussions of “nativist” thought. With Taiwan at the core of his writing, Yeh Shih-tao published his essay “An Introduction to the History of Taiwanese Nativist Literature” in *China Tide* magazine which established nativist literature as a shared experience of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, and attempted to reflect the writing consciousness in the lives of the Taiwanese people. This was followed by Chen Ying-zhen’s “The Blind Spot of Nativist Literature” that attempted to define Taiwan’s cultural context within the narrative of “history of Chinese literature in Taiwan.” Thus, a series of attacks in the 1970s nativist literature dialectic was rendered.

The subsequent eruption of the nativist literature dialectic could be regarded as a comprehensive review during the late ‘70s, of the cultural ideologies constructed in the ‘50s and ‘60s. It can also be considered as a composition of ethnicity, or even an examination, proposal, and defense of the concept of “Taiwan”. Although the term “nativist literature” had previously appeared in literary history, the term “nativist” in discussions of the 1970s became a projection of the Taiwanese consciousness on realism. In other words, though there are internal debates over routes and positionality in the dialectic of nativist literature, the dialectic does not depart from the urgent anticipation of “social intervention” or even “social construction.” Unlike the modernist literature that continued

to develop in the 1970s with an emphasis on inward excavation and a sense of intimacy, the literary concepts that derived from the dialectic emphasized the practice of reflecting reality as well as a deep concern for the underprivileged underclass. This also directly determined the inevitable diverse development and social concerns in 1980s literature and art, as well as the burgeoning Taiwanese consciousness.

### **Is It Literature? Or is It Politics?**

Prior to the 1980s, theoretical trends experienced an upheaval as a result of anxieties over the rise of the Baodiao movement (literally Defend the Diaoyu Islands movement), completion of the Ten Major Construction Projects, and international tensions such as the severance of U.S.-Taiwan diplomatic ties. Writers who experienced the 1970s not only faced an official literary and artistic aesthetics that was unable to satisfy conditions in reality, but also issues of the environment and pollution brought about by the burgeoning economy, as well as the changes in the labor structure resulting from industrial transformations such as processing and export zones. These unprecedented scenarios compelled writers to confront a different society of economic growth, a global flow of transnational capital, and the uncertainties of existing cultural theories and self-identification. However, the uncertain and turbulent forces were yet unable to become a condition for differentiation in the 1970s. The point of fragmentation that forced the Taiwanese public into the 80s can be attributed to the Formosa Incident that erupted in Kaohsiung in 1979, as well as the international attention during the first public trials of the Formosa Military Trial that began in Spring of 1980. An era of conflicts, contradictions, ambiguities, and provocations officially began in the 1980s with the various media reports, and Shih Ming-te's uncanny smile in the courtroom.

In the aftermath of the nativist literature movement, the definitive nativist literature authors Wang Tuoh and Yang Ching-chu became non-party

**1**  
Jan Hung-tze, "Of Two Literary Minds: Critiques on Two Recipient Works of the United Daily News Literary Prize," *Taiwan Review of Books*, Issue 93 (1981), pp 23-32.

candidates in the 1978 Elections of Additional Central Legislators. That particular election was suspended due to the severance of Taiwan-U.S. diplomatic ties. Subsequently, the two joined the staff of *Formosa Magazine*. After the eruption of the Formosa Incident, they were arrested following the magazine's liquidation. This act impacted and accelerated the development of a shift toward a Taiwan consciousness in nativist literature. It can even be said that not only were the 1980s accompanied by a political oppositional movement gradually coming into the fore, but the Formosa Incident also catalyzed the politicization of literature and the manifestation of a Taiwanese consciousness.

Impacted by the 1980s political landscape, local literary and art journals including *Li Poetry Magazine* and *Taiwan Art and Literature* magazine began to touch upon various sensitive topics while further intensifying and politicizing discussions on "wherefore Taiwanese literature" subsequent to the nativist literature dialectic. Contributing writers including Peng Rui-jin and Chen Fang-ming not only continued in the literary thesis of a "Taiwanese consciousness" constructed by Yeh Shih-tao, but took it a step further to posit a radical argument of a "de-Sinicized" Taiwanese literature. In the January 1981 article "Of Two Literary Minds: Critiques on Two Recipient Works of the United Daily News Literary Prize" by then-director of the *China Times Literary Supplement*, Jan Hung-tze, he wrote: "Three centuries from now, if someone is tasked with describing the past three decades in a hundred words or less for their conclusion on Chinese literary history, how would they describe it and which names would they mention?"<sup>1</sup> Following Jan Hung-tze's proposition of a "frontier literature," writers across the board rushed to propose their own arguments in support or to refute. Among them, Peng Rui-jin emphasized the urgency of establishing a Taiwanese literature grounded in the local rather than localizing Taiwanese literature. The key is in structuring a "Taiwanese consciousness" that resists foreign oppression which can serve as a

cornerstone of Taiwanese literature.<sup>2</sup> Lee Chiao stressed that Taiwanese literature out to be characterized by a focus on reflecting reality, with a concern for presenting an image of a diverse society in order to help those with an “exile mentality” to restore a life that faces reality. On the other hand, Chen Ying-zhen proposed a common “third world” experience that attempts to juxtapose the third-world experience and the cultural conditions of China and Taiwan to posit a cultural spirit of “realism” that “implicates life” as the foundation for a literary tradition.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Chen Fang-ming’s 1984 essay “Current Issues in Nativizing Taiwanese Literature” refuted Chen Ying-zhen’s third-world theory, arguing that the concept reflects an unrealistic “Chinese consciousness” and that the oppressive nature of Chinese nationalism established a foundation for the Kuomintang dictatorship and provincialism. He argued that with the thriving development of the oppositional movement, Taiwanese literary authors must necessarily pursue their “localization and “autonomy.”<sup>4</sup> This series of discussions regarding “Discussions on Taiwanese Literary Rectification” marked the official emergence of the term “Taiwanese literature,” and discussions of Taiwanese literature had moved beyond the nativist literature polemic that was mired in the framework of “unification/independence” or “Taiwanese/mainlander” in binary opposition. The key to discussions of Taiwanese literature had been elevated to social realities in Taiwan and methods of practice in the interpretation of historical perspectives.

“Taiwanese literature” was not the only term one that surfaced in the early 1980s; literary writings in the name of politics also began to emerge. *Taiwan Literature* and *Sunshine Poetry Journal* successively coined the term “political poetry,” each producing a compendium of political poetry. In his essay “My Views on ‘Political Poetry’ Seminar” published in Issue 13 of *Sunshine Poetry Journal*, Yeh Shih-tao proposed four objectives of political writing, to be “historically conscious,” “fair,” “realistic,” and “lucid

**2**  
Peng Rui-jin, “Nativizing as a Priority in Taiwanese Literature,” *Literary Taiwan*, Vol. 2, (Kaohsiung: Chun-Hui Publish, 1982), pp 1-3.

**3**  
“Chen Ying-zhen Discusses Scar Literature,” *Mountain Road* (Taipei: Vista Publishing, 1984), pp 326-327.

**4**  
Song Dong-yang (Chen Fang-ming), “Current Issues in Nativizing Taiwanese Literature,” *Taiwan Literature* Issue 86 (1984), pp 10-40.

**5**  
“My Views on ‘Political Poetry’ Seminar,” *Sunshine Poetry Journal*, Issue 13, (June 1984), pp 22-38.

and accessible.”<sup>5</sup> Li Chin-an also differentiated between “social poetry” and “political poetry,” emphasizing the subjective critical views and accusations. This demonstrated ways in which literature in the 1980s was not only heir to the desire for social intervention by the nativist literature polemic, but also further amalgamated the oppositional spirit of non-party movement. When the last group of Taiwanese political prisoners were released in 1982, the historical memories of the White Terror further supplemented the writers’ Taiwanese historical consciousness in their social critiques. For instance, in Chen Ying-zhen’s 1983 novel, *Mountain Road*, political prisoners of the White Terror in the 1950s serve as the main subjects in the reconstruction of missing historical memories from the perspective of political victims. Although Shih Ming-cheng’s *Thirst* (1980), and *One Who Drinks Urine* (1982) does not reflect the living conditions of the people through the traditions or realism, his depictions of the depravity and distortion of human nature under dire conditions nevertheless reconstructs a historical consciousness through a certain state of extremity. Even though literary writers of that time were not necessarily vested in the political system, the political subject matter and construction of the victims’ memories enabled the literary writing to become essentially a type of political critique and a mode of resistance against the authoritarian system.

### Writing the Diversity of Voices in Society

A segment of the literary writers of the 1980s had a profound sense of mission and historical consciousness who courageously exposed political conditions under Taiwan’s authoritarian regime as paths for political writing opened with the easing of freedoms of speech. At the same time, other writers chose a stance of “super-political disruption” by furtively working in the daily lives of the public. These writers often more closely approach the daily life experiences of people in the 1980s that is disparate from methods of writing that possess a historical consciousness

or emphasize ideological forms. These literary writers who immerse themselves in observing quotidian predicaments or life struggles, utilize methods that are intimate to the consumer society and the proletarian public to attack the cultural structures of the consumer society and daily life from a gentle yet incisive manner on common writing platforms such as literary supplements. The supplemental journal trend that began in the '70s and the successively held newspaper literature awards since the mid '70s have also consolidated literary resources that shaped the creative atmosphere for emerging authors, as well as laying the foundation for the diversification and innovations of authors in the '80s with the launch of literary writings that were comparatively more energetic than traditional literary journals or government publications. In the era where literary supplements became the literary community, literary creativity and critique could be directly displayed before the public. The consumer nature of the supplement publications enabled authors to more closely approach the public in the writing styles, and to be more diverse in their choice of subject matter. Among these, the most significant development in the 1980s was the rise of "women's writing."

Liao Hui-ying's *Somewhere My Love* (*Bu Gui Lu*) and Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife* successively received the United Daily News Novella Prize in 1983. Though this does not suggest that literary writings prior to the '80s did not touch upon women's issues. Long before the '80s, there were authors concerned with the oppression of women's bodies and desires, but these writings were regarded as transgressions and subjected to official sanctions in the name of morality. In the modernist writing trends of the 1970s, observations and writings regarding women mainly focused on explorations of their internal psychological states and personal spiritual consciousness. Women's consciousness in the 1980s were influenced by the introduction of foreign feminist ideas into Taiwan and the burgeoning non-party movement. On the other hand, women's social status was

substantially different from the past due to changes in labor structure due to industrial reform and the gradual entry of the socioeconomic structure into consumer society. Hence, it could be said that "womanhood" explored throughout the '70s mainly focused on the conceptual level of individual consciousness and psychology; the majority did not touch on descriptions of the feminine body. Entering into the '80s, these "feminine" roles gradually reclaimed the "corporeality" that had been lost, and recovered the "female collective" within the context of Taiwan's socioeconomic structures, progressing from a conceptualized "feminine consciousness" to a materialized "feminism." Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife* provided a catharsis for the atmosphere of female oppression by clearly writing a female corporeal consciousness. From *Ah Fei to Somewhere My Love*, Liao Hui-ying compelled readers to witness through words the upheaval of women's lives and experiences in a transforming society in the aftermath of Taiwan's economic miracle. The two authors did not take a tense or heavy approach in their writing that treated women's issues as a political attitude, but instead took a detached cynical stance through writing tailored to the living language and daily experiences in response to the semi-open social atmosphere and historical moment in the '80s, as the cultural repression as Martial Law neared an end.

Pai Hsien-yung's *Crystal Boys* also surfaced in the '80s. This novel that was serialized from the '70s through the '80s was officially published as a single edition book in 1983. The homosexual themes addressed in *Crystal Boys* had been mentioned in previous works, and alluded to in Pai Hsien-yung's earlier writings. The temporal significance of *Crystal Boys* is not in its depiction of homosexuality, but in the interaction of homosexuality in the overall social environment and context, specifically the internal conflicts between homosexuality and the traditional heterosexual family. Furthermore, it is precisely the social conflicts that enable the homosexual protagonist in *Crystal Boys* to construct his own gay subject consciousness.

Prior to *Crystal Boys*, *Letters to Chuang Chia-tsun from Shiy De-jinn*, containing 72 letters written by artist Shiy De-jinn to artist Chuang Chia-tsun between 1963 to 1966, was published in 1982. When *Letters to Chuang Chia-tsun from Shiy De-jinn* was publicized in newspapers, the media went as far as to reveal in headlines that these were “Love letters from *Shiy De-jinn*,” etc. Though not explicitly stated, the media at the time conceivably hyped up Shiy De-jinn’s homosexuality in various tacit ways. Although the letters were written in the 1960s, the book was written from the perspective of Shiy De-jinn looking back from his experience abroad on his gender experience in Taiwan, which unexpectedly corresponded to the gay literature published in the 1980s, such as Lucy Chen’s *Paper Marriage* by Lucy Chen (a.k.a. Chen Ruoxi) and Ma Sen’s *Wandering in the Night*. Both approach the “foreign” non-heterosexual male from the perspective of an Eastern female. Though these two did not attempt to carve a position for homosexuals within Taiwanese societal structures, they still presented nonmainstream gender issues such as AIDS and bisexuality to readers in a universal and amazing way.

In addition to gender issues, indigenous issues were also addressed by authors in the tumultuous ‘80s. Hu Tai-li published the short story *The Death of Wu Feng* in *Taiwan Literature* magazine in 1980. *The Death of Wu Feng* was pivotal not only for revealing the lack of factual basis behind the legend of Wu Feng of the Han Dynasty who “sacrificed himself to stop the aboriginal practice of headhunting,” but also for exposing the emasculation of the indigenous subjectivity under Han centrism. This means that literary writing with indigenous people as the subject is necessarily more convoluted and complex than the various identities and oppositional movements described above. In addition to the influence of Han centrism, translating and writing the oral tradition and artistic imagination of the indigenous people through the Chinese language is another reason the indigenous literature cannot be accurately anchored.

Following *The Death of Wu Feng*, along with the establishment of the Association for the Advancement of Taiwanese Indigenous Rights, various indigenous identities, rights, and consciousness also began to unfurl along with democratization in the 1980s. A number of indigenous intellectuals also expressed through writing the sense of powerlessness over the loss of traditions and raised the urgent need to preserve indigenous culture. Tulbus Tamapima’s 1983 novel *The Last Hunter* attempted to express through Chinese language the shock of witnessing the vanishing of his tribe. While the indigenous identity movements, Orchid Island anti-nuclear waste movement, the Tang Ying-sheng murder case, and the anti-child prostitution demonstrations that followed also enabled indigenous authors to reflect the disregard and discrimination for indigenous rights in the Han centric social structures through depictions of the suffering of the indigenous people. An example is the poetry anthology *Beautiful Ears of Rice* (1989) published by Paiwan author Monaneng which makes direct reference to the commodification of indigenous people in consumer society and describes the indifference and exclusion of indigenous people by Han society. The oppression of indigenous people by Taiwan’s Han society is mentioned in chapters of *Discussions on Taiwan’s Contemporary Indigenous Literature* which was serialized in *The Commons Daily* in July 1989, producing the first batch of outstanding writers nurtured by indigenous society. This suggests that the formation of indigenous literature is not a process of actively seeking an ethnic subjectivity; instead, the distressing experience of being objectified was an important cornerstone of shaping indigenous literature.

### **The City and Postmodernism**

On the one hand, Taiwanese literature developed toward diversification and focused on the observation and writing of local Taiwanese society. On the other hand, knowledge influenced by the urbanization and internationalization as a result of the economic miracle also gradually



began to ferment within writings of the 80s. At the same time that *Apollo* magazine was revived in 1986, *Contemporary Monthly* magazine published its inaugural issue and with the “Special Issue on Michel Foucault”. That same year, Lo Ching published his essays “The Relevance of Post Modernism to the New Poetry of the 1970s,” and “Poetry and Post-Industrial Society: The Emergence of the Post-Modern Condition.” Thus, the terms “postmodern” and “postindustrial” officially entered the vocabulary. However, this is not to say that that concepts of postmodernity and deconstructionism only appeared in the mid-‘80s, nor does it indicate that 1986 marks a dividing point between Taiwan’s modernist literature and postmodernist literary trends. In actuality, games, anti-form, and deconstructionist characteristics can be seen in Lo Ching’s poetry anthology *Ways to Eat a Watermelon* (1972); and in Hsia Yu’s poems “Connect the Dots” (1979), “Speaking Lessons” (1979), “Criminal C” (1982), and “Society Pages” (1979) which were published as supplements. The language to categorize Yu Kwang-chung’s essay “The Beginning of New Modernist Poetry” published in *Youth Literary Monthly* in 1972 did not exist, and the term “new modern poetry” was used to describe Lo Ching’s poetry which was markedly different from the writing style of modern poetry at the time.

As such, writings in the mid-‘80s should not be regarded a linchpin to the discovery of postmodernism. The eruption of foreign theoretical trends or postmodernist trends in the mid-‘80s should be seen as a series of experiments by Taiwanese intellectuals who interpreted foreign theoretical trends introduced to Taiwan in order to retrace local works to conform with foreign historical perspectives, or to adapt foreign theories to the Taiwanese environment. The postmodernism fervor and the thirst for contemporary “foreign” critical theory reached fever pitch by 1987 when Fredric Jameson’s arrival in Taiwan by invitation became a major event in academia and among contemporary literature and arts

circles. Simultaneous to the promulgation of the lifting of Martial Law, *Contemporary Monthly* magazine and *Apollo* magazine successively published Fredric Jameson’s lectures at Peking University and special issues on postmodernist ideologies in translation. The promulgation of the lifting of martial law in 1987 also contributed to the consideration of postmodern theory and contemporary leftist ideologies as contemporary “foreign” cultural theoretical trends. In the years that followed, this wave in the name of “postmodernism” led to the publication of a number of well-received specialized books with a certain public and consumer impact; for instance, Lo Ching’s *What is Postmodernism*, Chung Ming-der’s *In the Cacophony of Postmodernism* (1989), and Meng Fan’s *The Complications of Post-Modernism* (1989), etc.

The enthusiasm over foreign theories added to the existing provincial divides and sense of separation from historical contexts among the authors in the ‘80s. As Lin Yao-de indicated in *After 1949*, in addition to facing the legacies of historical traumas, authors born after 1949 were further galvanized by the effects of drastic urbanization and the consumption of emerging media. Through their novels authors such as Huang Fan, Wang Yu-Hua, and Chang Ta-Chuen wrote about new perceptions brought about by the city and the consumer space. The term “urban literature” proposed by Lin Yao-de seeks an aesthetic experience critical position apart from traditional rural realism though the method of “the city as text.” On the one hand, the emergence of urban literature signifies the emergence of a new generation of authors in the 1980s, and on the other hand, indicates the intense desire for experimentation prevalent among the new generation of authors who intend to break with the past and with realism through new constructions of language and forms. In other words, “urban literature” is not a blanket rejection of “realism,” but an interrogation of the “literary legitimacy” established by previous generations as well as an experimental expansion of the “internal

realities” revealed by emerging media. Hence, rather than suggesting that urban literature developed as a mode of resistance against realism, it could be said that urban literature attempts to develop an aesthetic different from traditional literature, and constructs a legitimacy of writing based on ideology, region, ethnicity, and justice.

Subsequent to the nativist literature dialectic, the consciousness of writing “Taiwanese literature” is no longer limited to the reunification/independence complex and an ideological struggle; however, the ‘80s indeed inherited the tradition of realism that is the legacy of the nativist literature polemic; but had transcended the rural narrative to depict drastic changes in Taiwanese society while experiencing multiple pressures such as international isolation, economic miracles, and political openness through intimate observations and experiences of Taiwanese society. As mentioned in the introduction, literary writing in the ‘80s took multiple and complex guises, but each was rooted in the rewriting and experimentation of “wherefore Taiwanese literature” by literary authors. Political writing attempted to intuitively construct an ideology and literary history perspective that could satisfy the existing Taiwanese condition. Diversified literary writings attempt to respond to the ethical contradictions and life conditions of gender, race and class in a transforming Taiwanese society. Meanwhile, having been baptized by internationalization, a new generation of authors attempted to transplant foreign theories into the Taiwanese context and to experiment with new vocabularies in response to a Taiwanese condition that was making strides into a consumer society. Through different forms of depiction of the Taiwanese condition, the rewriting of Taiwanese literature is not necessarily for the purpose of producing a paramount historical narrative or aesthetic form. In contrast, the most breathtaking aspect of 80s literary writing is precisely the attempts at rewriting and the intricate experimentations on the proposition of “Taiwan.”

# *Uncontrolled Internal Acceleration in the Cultural Movement of the 1980s: Uncharted Territory for Transdisciplinary Practitioners*

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Wang Jun-jieh & Huang Chien-hung

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## **Transdisciplinary Practitioners in the 1980s**

The particular matrix of the history, practice and performance of Taiwan’s modern and contemporary art in the 1980s was characterized by the decisive influence of politics on art and culture, the shaping of networks by resource flow, the individuals’ persistence in creation, the significance of historical change, the agency of interpersonal collaborations in an unsystematized state, and the paracolonial ethics derived from the symbiosis with the postcolonial world. Based on its basic keyword study and its problématique framework of transdisciplinary networks, this research project seeks to collect, examine, compare and reorganize related data. By doing so, we aim to achieve a threefold objective: (1) to

alternatively outline the situations of different disciplines in the 1980s by reference to interpersonal collaborations and innovative experiments; (2) to reconnect us with the “transdisciplinary practitioners” behind the socio-cultural driving force in that period; and (3) to rediscover the events beyond the established history and archives from the very authenticity of the epoch and society. Then, we can begin to use the “Taiwan phenomenon” as a discursive framework to address the general phenomena of art and culture. From this sociological cognition of art, we can probe deeper into the “transdisciplinary practitioners” as the attribute of Taiwanese people (raised in this land) in an anthropological fashion, and finally harness the rudimentary findings at each of these stages to comprehend and simulate how Taiwan evolved into a vitalistic cultural ecology.

As early as our initial survey of the related material for this research project, we found that the 1980s — an epoch witnessing Taiwan’s democratization and reopening to the globalized world — was of extraordinary historical significance for our collation and understanding of the “transdisciplinary” experience owing to the emergence of Taiwan’s “episteme” at that time. What was exactly the “episteme” of the 1980s, or, what kind of “institution” did it build? The “relaxation” in the 1980s was in fact a state of “coexistence” continuously “inflating” with the information explosion. However, for the observable world, politics in particular, such a state was a cul-de-sac, a situation in which further progress is impossible. During that period, some figures (incl. Jan Hung-tze) had perceived the growing sense of frustration and the surge of social emotions. In other words, the inflation and relaxation did not allow for pure and substantial expansion, but a large number of more diversified and thriving experiments. These raging torrents were channeled into the sheer energy that generated a continually metamorphosing “suspension.” In their recollections, many interviewees and interlocutors (incl. Jan Hung-tze, Wang

Mo-lin, Chen Fang-ming, Jin Shi-jie, Jin Heng-wei, Huang Jian-Yeh, Liu Ruo-yu, and Wu Mali) used the following terms to portray the silhouette of the 1980s, such as “non-replicable,” “unlikely to happen again,” “fracture,” “bygone,” “without ensuing impact,” “the most wonderful,” or “unfinished.” As they applied these terms with excitement, nostalgia or sentimentality, we can confirm that the 1980s, which followed the 1970s and heralded the 1990s, was an uncontrolled yet nearly imploded suspension. It’s like herding cats to verify whether the “Taiwanese Cinema Manifesto,” postmodernity, or even the lifting of martial law was a remarkable turn or turning point. Nonetheless, people who flourished in that decade indeed experienced the state of “in motion” as “transdisciplinary practitioners,” despite the difficulty in depicting the very scene.

The “transdisciplinary practitioners” in the 1980s refer to those who were stimulated by the environment to adopt spontaneous “transdisciplinary” practices. We focus our attention to the literature, events, and phenomena appearing around the 1980s, with the aim of formulating the epistemology and methodology compatible with Taiwan’s developmental context, so as to give Taiwan’s cultural aesthetics a texture of history. In this way, we can see that the “transdisciplinary” in Taiwan then was not a result of the demands from different disciplines, but rather the ad hoc collaborations due to the systemic deficiencies of each discipline. Besides, the nativist discourse (cultural and political subjects) and the universal “occidental” one (in which non-occidental information was mostly translated into English) were constantly generating diverse artistic and culturally significant experiments in their dialectical relations of correspondence, fusion, and confrontation. Moreover, in an economic setting rich in imagination for new life, new society, new knowledge and new subjects, namely that of the 1980s, a vibrant middle-class culture must be cultivated in order to effectively promote the flow and integration of artistic and cultural resources. The interplay among people has been a major driving force

for innovation and change in Taiwan, hence the need for a “relational life technique,” or, in other words, the “technique of hybridization” in artistic and cultural practices. Unlike the modernist pursuit of purity or rootedness in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s was a decade of experiencing as well as creating relations and hybrids under strong internal impetus. It implies that relationality and hybridity became the defining characteristics of Taiwan during the complex politico-economic development of this country.

### **The Torrents of Internal Acceleration in the 1980s**

Treating the published chronologies in different disciplines as the point of departure, this research project integrates those in visual arts (incl. video), cinematography (incl. experimental image), theater (incl. performance art), thoughts and publishing, as well as literary publications and studies. First of all, we extensively review the literature (mainly newspapers, magazines, professional journals, and books), from which we select the keywords concerning the events we labelled in these chronologies, and ergo we obtain an overall picture and the keyword distribution of the transdisciplinary scene. This research project on the 1980s would be problematic if it relies solely on academic papers and monographs, because many of the subsequent papers (in academic journals and MOST projects) have been confined to specific topics in each single discipline. Many social connections and relational productions that fostered collaborations and dynamics at that time have been omitted in the process of highlighting or deepening theoretical issues, hence a general lack of precise links to the phenomena in the real world. On the contrary, under the political censorship and during the formation of the middle class in the 1960s and 1970s after the post-war baby boom, newspaper supplements became the main intellectual network and the realm for discursive experiments, whilst magazines not only responded to but also represented the real situation with in-depth discussions and dialogues in a more adaptable way. Secondly, we explore the relations among the events,

places, works, and figures amidst these keywords. That is, we use events and works as a guide to incrementally outline the intricate social network. The emergence of “transdisciplinary practitioners” coincided with that of “cooperators” and “interlocutors.” The collated keyword clusters are the incarnations of the “relationships” forged by these transdisciplinary practitioners and cooperators, and these relationships appeared as a visible manifestation of the dynamics in that period. Therefore, the various clusters of keywords are tantamount to the social mechanism established unconsciously through experiments, and even equivalent in function to a topographic map of the 1980s that affords us a glimpse of the “transdisciplinary” Taiwan in the “pre-globalization” period. Thirdly, the intensive keywords at the intersections of different keyword clusters can be assumed to be the important nodes on this topographic map of a “transdisciplinary” Taiwan. These nodes support or even inspire us to break away from the earlier territorial distinctions and the historical writings on actions justified by success. Working in tandem with the concept of “field,” these nodes also allow us to understand the 1980s from an alternative perspective in terms of the spatial relations between the places and moments of happenings in this epoch. For instance, a specific field emerged from the connections among the Lanlin Theater Troupe, the Taiwanese New Wave Cinema, the Department of Theater Arts, Taipei National University of the Arts, and television, whilst local surveys, novels, thoughts, debates, and films constituted another. Even the linkage among magazines, non-fiction novel, documentary photography, and films can be deemed a field. The reason why these territories can penetrate one another and form a field was because of the dynamics created by the rapid flow and bindings of people. It was the “transdisciplinary” taking place in a state of “pre-globalization” and territorial “unsystematization.”

Thus, referring to all the elements of this epoch and involving such a large number of figures, events, works and places (institutions), these

keywords constitute not so much the focus or subject of this research project as the nodes for grasping the myriad of connections in the 1980s. To put it another way, these keywords lay out the “time-scape” of the 1980s, and their interconnections (relations) represent the vagaries of its dynamics. In this sense, the realm or space unfolded by these keywords is commensurate with a topological map which spatializes the 1980s. We select more than 1,200 keywords from all these disciplines through a preliminary yet comprehensive search, and go on to filter them into around 800 keywords by the overlap rate under a transdisciplinary consideration. Then we delve deeper into the “relational networks” as iconic as crucial at the time. There are roughly 5 major modules and more than 20 integrated clusters, making a total of 706 keywords. After removing the overlapped ones, 603 keywords are involved eventually, among which over 200 are closely interrelated so that they serve as the agents that profoundly influence our endeavor to represent the milieu of the 1980s. In short, by virtue of the analysis and examination of the chronologies and keywords, this research project managed to identify 248 key elements (i.e., transdisciplinary practitioners, fields, and events) that shaped the 1980s.

The search, indication, and illustration of these key elements will fundamentally alter people’s general perception of the art and literature of the 1980s; or, in other words, they will reorganize and help confirm the topographical relations among different periods, such as the connections among Yu Da-gang, Xi Song and Lin Huai-min, among Wang Chun-yi, Huang Yong-song, Xi Song and Chiang Hsun, among Jan Hung-tze, Ya Xian and the post-nativist literature debate, between Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang later, among Sylvia Chang, Edward Yang, Ko I-cheng, Lo Ta-yu and the New Wave Cinema, as well as those among Christopher Doyle, Jin Shi-jie, the Lanlin Theater Troupe and the New Wave Cinema. How should we define the linkage among Li Ang, Wu Jing-jyi, Shih Ming-teh, the New Wave Cinema, novels and social movements? How did

documentary photographers (e.g., Chang Chao-tang, Wang Xin, Hsieh Chun-te, and Liu Zhen-xiang) begin to connect social movements with art and culture after the nativist documentation of the 1970s? Meanwhile, such a research project will bring the previous writing style of Homeric heroism back to “field phenomena.” For example, how did the connections among cinematography, theater, folklore and politics suggested by Zhou Yi-chang reorient themselves simultaneously toward the Cloud Gate Dance Theater or Liu Ruo-yu’s folk body exploration which owed its inspiration to J. Grotowski, and toward the linkage between little theater and social movements as well as the alliance formation among theater troupes during social movements, just like the “520 Artistic Practice Joint Exhibition,” *Exorcizing the Evil Spirit on Orchid Island*, and experimental political alliances (e.g., *October*)? How did Shao Yi-de create a network of connections by participating in the avant-garde movement spearheaded by Chen Chieh-jen, devoting himself to the criticism of European New Trend Cinema and Taiwanese New Wave Cinema (especially the *Film Appreciation Journal*), and joining the Rock Records’ pop music projects? Perhaps we should also earnestly address Wang Mo-lin who treated martial law and leftism as his discursive perspective to make connections among literature, visual arts, performance art and little theater on the one hand, and actively introduced *butoh*, the Shiro Tora Troupe, and Japanese little theater movement on the other, which gave birth to his “theory of the body.” Through the two joint exhibitions of “Xirang” held in the 1980s, the participating artists (e.g., Chen Chieh-jen, Kao Chung-li, and Lin Ju) brought fine arts, theater, experimental film, anime and manga, photojournalism, and criticism (e.g., newspaper supplements, the *Long Take*, and the *Film Appreciation Journal*) together, and even ran a tavern that became a favorite hangout of art practitioners. In addition, how did actors like Sylvia Chang, Yang Li-yin, Yang Hui-shan, Lu Xiao-fen and Jiang Xia echo the new “female subject” vividly portrayed by Lee Yuan-zhen, Han Liang-lu and Huang Yu-shan in the events related to the *Awakening Magazine*? Furthermore, while the *Ren*

*Jian Magazine* had tackled a variety of issues concerning politics and civil society, it still failed to propose appropriate discursive strategies on the Taiwanese New Wave Cinema, pop music, and the topic of new women. This research project gives prominence to the intimate relations between “transdisciplinary practitioners” and “transdisciplinary fields” in the 1980s (e.g., the experimental fields opened up by Jan Hung-tze, Sylvia Chang, Wu Jing-ji, Zhou Yu, Lin Ju, the “Green Team,” Huang Jian-Yeh, Lee Shou-chuan and Chen Chieh-jen), from which a diversity of “transdisciplinary events” were orchestrated that affected or touched upon more “transdisciplinary practitioners” and “transdisciplinary fields,” hence the “uncontrolled internal acceleration” in the cultural movement of this epoch.

#### **The Unknown as a Method: The Cultural Movement of the 1980s**

This research project cannot cover all the issues arising from the assorted relations it has rediscovered. However, clarifying these relational chains and the field phenomena traced via these chains enables us to contemplate the spiritedly discussed “transdisciplinary inception” of Taiwan in the 1980s, or to conceptualize a “cultural movement of the 1980s” that we have never fully comprehended. The figures, events, places, institutions, media, works and actions, as well as the general economic milieu, political status quo, ideology and international relations in the 1980s all came somehow under mutual influence. “Messages” were acting as the medium for the convergence, circulation (channeling) and transformation of new social energy. Although the instrumental environment was still dominated by telecommunications and not yet digitalized, it was sufficient for the 1970s and 1980s to see the shift of relational cognition toward an information society (from newspapers and magazines to television, film and videotape) thanks to the gradual liberalization of politics, the vitality of economic production, and the sociability of the emerging middle class. In that period, the massive messages linked with individuals’ agency were transformed into different relational networks

(e.g., the bank robbery committed by Lee Shih-ke, the Tenth Credit Union Incident, and the case of Tang Ying-shen). How did these networks arouse social concern and condense into the episteme? Or, how was the knowledge networks built up by newspaper supplements being politicized into portmanteau magazines that facilitated the societal transition into an organism capable of receiving and responding to an immense number of recurring messages? The peculiarity of the 1980s lies not simply in the economic boom, the lifting of martial law, or the crusading zeal, but also in the flow of people, messages (incl. images, narratives and news) and capital which was able to accept and even create more contingent relations or events over the accumulation of cultural surveys and the change of politico-economic status quo. The contingencies that mostly transpired in an unknown state could organically recur in all sorts of networks and ad hoc teams, forming a sui generis open automaton bursting from the emotional will under multiple and successive colonization.

This scheduled milestone in this research project bears more than a passing resemblance to a preliminary topographic mapping of emotional will, which exemplarily marks a greater number of nodes that can be traced by reference to their social relations and historical relevance. This research project also seeks to highlight how the 1980s demonstrated its significance and irreplaceability to the overall development and quality convergence of Taiwan. Such irreplaceability that reconciled “pre-globalization” and “pre-information society,” along with the diversified collaborations, experiments, fusions, fractures and individuals’ impassioned (restless) agency derived from it, had already laid a solid foundation for the social movements as early as the 1970s through the politico-cultural submergence, the heated discussions on national fate, system and culture, as well as the documentation and manifestation of local customs by the mass media. Carried along on the rising tide of the high-tech industry and financial integration, the stock market index

soared to a new all-time high at 12,682 points in 1990, which ushered in a frantic period of global economic bubble. The “uncontrolled internal acceleration” led to “splendid, dazzling” fractures in the late 1990s, and the intricate details therein can be more adequately revealed only by the interviewees and interlocutors at the interviews and close-door forums under this research project. Their statements informed us that the experience of the 1970s is a force to be reckoned with, and that the uniqueness of the 1980s can be better understood only through the vicissitudes of the 1990s.

When the established values can no longer stimulate deeper thinking, we must actively shift around different disciplines to build communities with common values, create interfaces among individuals, blur the boundaries of existing patterns, and innovate transdisciplinary *modus operandi*. Such an attitude is a constant gesture of defiance against stereotypes and an opportunity for innovative avant-gardeness. The more drastic and turbulent the state of a period is, the greater degree of repression, subordination, darkness and indignation it mingles, and the more “unknown” is the result it delivers. Even though Francis Fukuyama argued in his essay “The End of History?” (1989) that humanity has attempted to control and reproduce its evolution, the 1990s seemed inevitably to exhibit a total control and pursuit of the “known” in the universal phenomena like globalized hermeneutics, postmodern nihilism, declining criticism, and excessive reproduction, as well as in Taiwan’s search for its identity in the international society, the construction of Taiwanese subjectivity, and the myth of systematization. Thus, the rareness and preciousness of “unknown territories” in the 1980s appear more evident, allowing us to ponder over how the preservation and curiosity about the “unknown” exerted decisive influence on the emergence of “transdisciplinary practitioners.” The avant-garde spirit definitely exists in any space-time with the “unknown-oriented” will. In Taiwan, which had not yet been fully systematized in the 1980s,

such an avant-garde approach not only accentuated the importance of self-enlightenment, but also facilitated the self-enlightenment technique of this specific epoch. To sum up, without synchronously questioning and contemplating the domestic “tradition” vis-à-vis the foreign “domination,” and without the “internal acceleration” prompted by the assembled self-enlightenment technique, it would be difficult for us to imagine the so-called “avant-garde” that once occurred in Taiwan.

Appendix

1980s Timeline

	Domestic political and economic incidents and social movements	Ideological Trends and Publications	Art events and works
1976		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication of first issue of ChinaTide Magazine.</li> <li><i>China Times</i> · <i>Ren Jian Literary Supplement</i> publishes a series of reports on JU Ming.</li> <li><i>China Times</i> · <i>Ren Jian Literary Supplement</i> publishes a series of reports on HUNG Tung.</li> <li>Publication of article "A Discussion on the Cultural Modeling Effort" by WANG Chun-yi in <i>Lion Art Monthly</i>(Hsiung Shih Art Monthly) .</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of the Tien Experimental Theater (predecessor of the Lanlin Theater Troupe).</li> <li>LI Shuang-tze induced debate and discussion concerning modern Chinese folk songs when he appealed to people "to sing our own songs" during the Tamkang Incident.</li> </ul>
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the Zhongli Incident, people take to the streets for the first time to protest against election fraud, setting the stage for further street demonstrations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication of first issue of <i>Cactus Magazine</i>, publication stops after 12 issues.</li> <li>Restart of publication of <i>Modern Literature Magazine</i>; PAI Hsien-yung publishes <i>Crystal Boys</i> in this magazine as a serial.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WANG Tuo, YIN Cheng-hsiung, CHU Hsi-ning and colleagues issued a call for nativist literature in <i>Cactus Magazine</i>, initiating public debate concerning nativist literature.</li> <li>YANG Tzu-chun and Ara Kimbo performed and recorded LI Shuang-tze's posthumous work "Formosa" at his funeral.</li> <li>Ya Hsien was made editor-in-chief of the <i>United Daily News Supplement</i>.</li> </ul>
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CHANG Ching-kuo takes office as the 6th president of the Republic of China.</li> <li>The United States announces the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Lion Art Monthly</i> changes name of the "Young Painter Competition" to the "Lion Art New Artist Award."</li> <li>Publication of first issue of Chinese-language version of <i>Echo</i> magazine.</li> <li>1st "Golden Harvest Awards for Outstanding Short Films".</li> <li>Establishment of New Aspect Cultural and Educational Foundation.</li> <li>Establishment of the "Golden Harvest Awards".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KAO Hsin-chiang serves as editor-in-chief of the <i>China Times</i>, <i>Ren Jian Literary Supplement</i> for a second time.</li> <li>WU Jing-yi joins the Tien Experimental Theater.</li> <li>Establishment of the Film Library of the Motion Picture Development Foundation.</li> <li>CHIANG Hsun becomes editor-in-chief of <i>Lion Art Monthly</i>, and increases content concerning literature, music, photography, dance, and drama.</li> <li>Establishment of the Spring Fine Arts Gallery.</li> <li>The "Grass Field Charity Concert" organized by YANG Tzu-chun is Taiwan's first large outdoor concert during the postwar period.</li> <li>Cloud Gate Dance Theater performs <i>Legacy</i>.</li> </ul>
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The United States broke off diplomatic ties with the ROC; the PRC issues the <i>Message to Compatriots in Taiwan</i>.</li> <li>Citizens are permitted to engage in overseas tourism.</li> <li>US President Carter signs the <i>Taiwan Relations Act</i>.</li> <li>CHANG Ching-kuo issues the "Three No's Policy" with the PRC —no contact, no negotiation, no compromise.</li> <li>Formosa Incident occurs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening of the "Film Library".</li> <li><i>After China Tide Magazine</i> is shut down, some of its members found <i>Formosa Magazine</i>.</li> <li>Publication of first issue of <i>The Eighties Weekly</i>.</li> <li>Publication of first issue of <i>Formosa Magazine</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YAO Yi-wei takes charge of the "Chinese Drama Appreciation Committee", and jointly promotes Experimental Theater Festival with secretary-general CHAO Chi-pin.</li> <li>"YANG Tzu-chun's album" is released, but the songs "Formosa" and "Young China" fail to pass government review.</li> </ul>
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Termination of the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty.</li> <li>LIN Family Massacre</li> <li>Completion and inauguration of the Hsinchu Science Park.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of the "Golden Horse International Film Festival".</li> <li>Japan's NHK produces the TV series <i>Silk Road</i>(in collaboration with China's CCTV), which is later shown in Taiwan.</li> <li>The New Aspect Art Center holds the 1st "New Aspect International Arts Festival"</li> <li>Establishment of the Huadeng Arts Center.</li> <li>Establishment of the Lanlin Theater Troupe (originally the Tien Experimental Theater) .</li> </ul>
1980			
1981			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robbery of the Guting Branch of the Land Bank of Taiwan by LEE Shih-Ke. WANG Ying-Hsien commits suicide on May 7 after being falsely accused of the crime.</li> </ul>
1982			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DENG Xiaoping proposes the "One Country, Two Systems" framework.</li> </ul>
1983			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of Awakening Magazine Publishing, and the launching of <i>Awakening</i> magazine.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the 1st "Experimental Theater Festival," the Lanlin Theater Troupe performs <i>Burden</i> and <i>He Zhu's New Match</i>.</li> <li>Establishment of the Cloud Gate Experimental Theater.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JAN Hung-tze publishes "Of Two Literary Minds," which inspires novelist Tung Nien to coin the phrase "Frontier Literature."</li> <li>Numerous localist authors attack the concept of "frontier literature" in <i>Taiwan Literature's</i> "Ten Days Discussion of Literature," initiating discussion of Taiwan Complex and China Complex.</li> <li><i>United Daily News</i> sponsors San Mou a half-year visit to Latin America. She then writes <i>Wan Shui Qian Shan Zou Bian</i> upon return to Taiwan and conducts a series of talks around the island.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening of the Wisteria Tea House.</li> <li>CTV broadcasts its self-produced TV documentary series <i>The Journey of Images</i>.</li> <li>A symposium on <i>He Zhu's New Match</i> is carried in the <i>United Daily News Supplement</i> over a three-day period.</li> <li>TTV broadcasts the TV drama <i>11 Women</i>, which had been adapted from a novel of the same name.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of the "101 Modern Art Collective" and the "Foolish Bird Art Collective"</li> <li>Release of <i>In Our Time</i>.</li> <li>Hong Kong's "Zuni Icosahedron" is invited by the Asian People's Theatre Festival to perform in Taiwan.</li> <li>Lo Ta-you releases the <i>Chih Hu Che Yeh</i> album, and becomes Taiwan's first singer to hold his own individual concert.</li> <li>CTV broadcasts <i>Chu Liuxiang</i>, and the resulting popularity of Hong Kong TV dramas boosts sales of videotapes and pirated versions.</li> <li>Establishment of National Taiwan College of Arts (predecessor of Taipei National University of the Arts).</li> <li>Lanlin Theater Troupe performs <i>Dai-Mien</i>.</li> <li>"TU Shih-san's Exploratory Show of Postal Conceptual Art" is presented by mail.</li> <li>New Aspect releases the self-produced major production <i>Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream</i>, which had been adapted from the novel of the same name by PAI Hsien-yung.</li> <li>Zuni Icosahedron performs <i>Dragon Dance</i> in Taiwan.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of the "Taipei Progressionists' Modern Art Group."</li> <li>The rock record company "Mumianhua" is sold to LEE Shou-chuan, and its name is changed to "Hsiao Hsi Records"; one-half of the store is used by "Rye Field Café."</li> <li>PAI Hsien-yung's <i>Crystal Boys</i> is published as an individual volume.</li> <li>Lanlin Theater Troupe introduces the "Actors' Experimental Studio."</li> <li>Release of <i>Growing Up, The Sandwich Man, That Day, on the Beach</i>.</li> <li>LEE Ming-sheng presents the performance art <i>Purification of the Spirit</i>, in which he walked around the island of Taiwan over the course of 40 days.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launching the first issue of Fa (<i>Film Appreciation Journal</i>).</li> <li>CHEN Tsun-shing publishes "Documenta: Avant-garde and Trans-avantgarde" in <i>Lion Art Monthly</i>.</li> <li>Eileen CHANG re-translates <i>The Sing-song Girls of Shanghai</i>, which is published as two volumes, <i>Flowers Bloom</i> and <i>Flowers Fade</i>.</li> <li>LI Ang's <i>The Butcher's Wife: Stories from Lucheng</i> wins the first prize in the United Daily News Novella Awards.</li> </ul>



1983			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journalist YANG Shih-chi publishes "The Sandwich Man was Almost Banned" in the <i>United Daily News</i>, which reported that the Central Motion Picture edited out the eating apple scene before submitting the movie for review, and induces discussion on the the scene's deletion.</li> <li>• The 4th New Aspect International Arts Festival. The festival includes a Marcel Marceau mime performance.</li> <li>• Cloud Gate Dance Theater performs <i>The Dream of the Red Chamber</i>.</li> <li>• CHEN Chieh-jen performs <i>Dysfunction No. 3</i> on the street in Taipei's Ximending District.</li> <li>• Opening of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum.</li> </ul>
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHIANG Ching-kuo serves the 7th president of the ROC; LEE Teng-Hui serves the vice-president.</li> <li>• Haishan Mine Disaster.</li> <li>• <i>Labor Standards Act</i> formally takes effect.</li> <li>• Chiang Nan Murder Case.</li> <li>• National Police Administration, Ministry of the Interior conducts "Operation Cleansweep," jailing members of major crime syndicates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SONG Tung-yang's (CHEN Fang-ming's) article "Localization of Taiwanese Literature at the Current Stage" published in <i>Taiwan Literature</i> sparks debate concerning ideologies of Taiwanese literature.</li> <li>• LUNG Ying-tai begins publishing "The Wild Fire" in the <i>China Times · Ren Jian Literary Supplement</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEE Ming-sheng gives an extemporaneous performance of <i>Baggage 119</i> at the Nan Gallery.</li> <li>• Establishment of the New Aspect Art Center.</li> <li>• The Taipei Fine Arts Museum holds the "1984 Contemporary Trends in Chinese Art," at which TSONG Pu's <i>A Trembling Line</i> and CHEN Hsing-wan's <i>Work 8411</i> won the first place, and Jun T. LAI's <i>Psalm</i> won the Award of Honor.</li> <li>• Invited by the Cloud Gate Dance Theater, Hong Kong's "Zuni Icosahedron" visits Taiwan and performs <i>The Second Year of One Hundred Years of Solitude - From a Past Event to Prophecy and Portraits of Women</i>.</li> <li>• Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents the "French Video Joint Exhibition."</li> <li>• Spring Fine Arts Gallery presents "The Play of Space—Spatial Subjects and Color Variations."</li> <li>• Establishment of the "New Painting and Art Association."</li> <li>• CHEN Chieh-Jen presents "Public Statement 25" at the AIT American Cultural Center. After it was requested that the exhibition be removed not long after its start, the exhibition was moved to the Shen-yu Gallery.</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Performance Workshop."</li> <li>• Opening of the "New Aspect Art Center's New Aspect Theater."</li> <li>• Founding of the "Holo Taiwanese Opera Troupe."</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Crown Art Center Theater."</li> </ul>
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenth Credit Cooperative incident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LI Ang publishes <i>Dark Night</i>.</li> <li>• Publication of first issue of <i>Ren Jian (Human World) Magazine</i>.</li> <li>• LUNG Ying-tai publishes <i>The Wild Fire</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the "Taipei Art Group."</li> <li>• The Performance Workshop gives the first performance of its inaugural work <i>The Night We Became Hsiang-Sheng Comedians</i>.</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Theater Note."</li> <li>• LIN Ju's <i>The experiment of pure painting by Lin Ju, solitary confinement for 90 days</i> is presented at Chia Jen Gallery.</li> <li>• Opening of "Never Ending Memory Café."</li> <li>• Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents LEE Tsai-Chien's work <i>Finite to Infinite</i>, which leads to the controversial "Red Stars Incident."</li> <li>• Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents "German Art 1945-1985."</li> </ul>

1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TANG Ying-shen Case.</li> <li>• Lukang Residents' Anti-DuPont Movement.</li> <li>• 519 Green Action to demand the lifting of Martial Law.</li> <li>• The Democratic Progressive Party is established in Taipei.</li> <li>• HSU Hsin-Liang attempts to return to Taiwan from the US, sparking the "Taoyuan Airport Incident."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of first issue of <i>Con-temporary Monthly</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Apollo Magazine</i> resumes publication.</li> <li>• Publication of first issue of <i>Nanfeng Magazine</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When LEE Ming-sheng's performance art <i>Non-Line</i> was to be presented on February 28, the police blocked him from making the performance.</li> <li>• Establishment of Contemporary Legend Theater.</li> <li>• Establishment of Ruin Circle Theater.</li> <li>• The Broadcasting Development Foundation (predecessor of the Public Television Service) and Minxin Studio, led by the director WANG Shau-di, jointly produce the TV documentary series <i>The Portrait of Hundred Occupations</i>.</li> <li>• The Performance Workshop presents the <i>Secret Love for the Peach Blossom Spring</i>.</li> <li>• Byakko-Sha gives performances in Taiwan.</li> <li>• "Xirang 1" is presented in the Jindi Building in Taipei.</li> <li>• Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents the "1986 Contemporary Trends in Chinese Art."</li> <li>• Jun T. LAI's <i>Psalm</i> wins the Excellence Award at the "1986 Chinese Modern Painting New Prospects art show," and <i>Neither Going Nor Coming</i> wins first place at the "Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition."</li> <li>• Release of <i>Dust in the Wind</i>.</li> <li>• When "Luo He Zhan Yi Theater" performs <i>Interchange</i> in an underground corridor at the Taipei Main Station, the police beat the troupe members with batons and interrupt the performance.</li> <li>• Luo He Zhan Yi Theater disbands not long after performing <i>Rumors</i>—Time at the National Taiwan Arts Education Center.</li> <li>• Jun T. LAI, TSONG Pu, and colleagues establish the "SOCA (Studio of Contemporary Art)."</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Green Team."</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Ping-Fong Acting Troupe."</li> <li>• The Green Team films the <i>Taoyuan Airport Incident</i>.</li> <li>• HUANG Cheng-huang, CHOU Yih-chang, Edmond WONG, Mingder CHUNG, MA Tin-ni, CHANG Chao-tang, and colleagues jointly establish the "Contemporary Taipei Theater Lab."</li> <li>• The "'Nai Jing Yishi'" gives first performance of <i>Bombing the Womb I— After Genesis</i>."</li> <li>• The "'Contemporary Legend Theater'" performs <i>The Kingdom of Desire</i>."</li> <li>• The Cloud Gate Dance Theater performs <i>My Nostalgia, My Songs</i>."</li> <li>• Release of <i>Terrorizers</i>."</li> </ul>
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 30 civil groups and NGOs hold demonstrations and sit-in protests to call for the rescue of child prostitutes.</li> <li>• The government announces the lifting of Martial Law of Taiwan and Penghu area; National Security Act takes effect.</li> <li>• The government announces the abolishment of the <i>Rules Governing the Control over the Newspapers, Magazines and Books during the Martial Law period</i>.</li> <li>• Taiwan residents are allowed to visit Mainland China for the purpose of visiting their relatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of first issue of <i>Long Take Magazine</i>.</li> <li>• Inauguration of the National Theater &amp; Concert Hall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the "'Huadeng Arts Center'" in Tainan's Sacred Heart Church.</li> <li>• "1987 Taiwanese Cinema Manifesto" is published in <i>Apollo Magazine</i> and the <i>China Times · Ren Jian Literary Supplement</i>.</li> <li>• Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents the "Technology, Art, Living: Exhibition of German Video Art."</li> <li>• HOU Chun-ming's graduation art show <i>Side Show</i> provokes heated controversy with its erotic cultural symbols and gender topics.</li> </ul>

<p>1987</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents the "Experiment Art-Action and Space" exhibition.</li> <li>• The Rive Gauche Theater Troupe performs <i>A Solitary Sun</i>, which is adapted from a short story by CHEN Ying-zhen, at the New Aspect Theater.</li> <li>• The Ruin Circle Theater performs <i>Fluid Graphic Construction</i> at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum.</li> <li>• <i>My Nostalgia, My Songs (pirated version)</i> is performed at the New Aspect Art Center (supervised by WANG Mo-lin, produced by WANG Jun-jieh, CHEN Chieh-jen, HU Min-shan and others).</li> <li>• Fredric Jameson and Ihab Hassan visit Taiwan, inducing trends and discussions on postmodernism.</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Performing Arts Alliance" Preparatory Association.</li> <li>• <i>October</i> is jointly performed by Theater Note, Ruin Circle Theater, and Rive-Gauche Theater at the UFO House in Sanzhi.</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Zero Field 121.25 Experimental Theater."</li> </ul>
<p>1988</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibition on new newspapers revoked; applications for new newspaper registration and the enlargement of existing newspapers accepted.</li> <li>• "Huaxi Street Demonstration" is held to save child prostitutes."</li> <li>• Death of CHIANG Ching-kuo; LEE Teng-hui assumes presidency.</li> <li>• Sentencing of TSAI You-chuan and HSU Tsao-the Taiwan independence case.</li> <li>• May 20 Peasant Movement</li> <li>• "Indigenous Land"" Movement.</li> <li>• Chiayi Wu Feng statue desecration incident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the "Taiwan Museum of Art" (predecessor of the "National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts)."</li> <li>• Chen Tsun-shing publishes the "Ventriloquist's National Anthem"" in the <i>Independence Morning Post</i> in response to the incident surrounding the new film "Save Everything for Tomorrow."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the ""Film Cooperative," which was founded by Edward YANG, CHEN Kuo-fu, WU Nien-jen and CHU Tien-wen, and had JAN Hung-tze as its general manager.</li> <li>• Tai Gu Tales Dance Theater is founded by LIN Hsiu-wei in Taipei.</li> <li>• WANG Mo-lin, CHOU Yi-chang, LI Huan-hsiung, WANG Jun-jieh and members of the Lanyu Youth Association, including KUO Chien-ping, organize the anti-nuclear waste "action theater" <i>Exorcizing the Evil Spirit on Orchid Island</i>.</li> <li>• The Green Team films <i>Orchid Island's Opposition To Nuclear Waste</i>.</li> <li>• The first to the third part of <i>LEE Ming-sheng=Art</i> are performed on the streets in Taipei's Eastern District and at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum.</li> <li>• Establishment of the "U Theater," which performs its inaugural work, <i>Basement Note Faust</i>.</li> <li>• The Taiwan Museum of Art presents the "Advanced Technology Art Exhibition."</li> <li>• Zuni Icosahedron and the Ping-Fong Acting Troupe perform <i>October/The Decameron 88</i>.</li> <li>• Establishment of the ""IT PARK."</li> <li>• "Shidai Yinghua Theater" changes its name to "Critical Point Theater Phenomenon"; TIAN Chi-yuan and Chi Chia-wei cooperate in production of the groups inaugural work <i>Love Homosexuals in Chinese</i>.</li> <li>• CHEN Chieh-jen, KAO Chung-li, LIN Ju, and WANG Jun-jieh present "Xirang 2" at the Image Concept Studio.</li> <li>• HOU Hsiao-hsien, LI Yuan, and WU Nien-jen film the military education propaganda film <i>Save Everything for Tomorrow</i> for the Ministry of National Defense.</li> <li>• The Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon performs <i>Socialism in the Capitalized Nude</i>.</li> </ul>

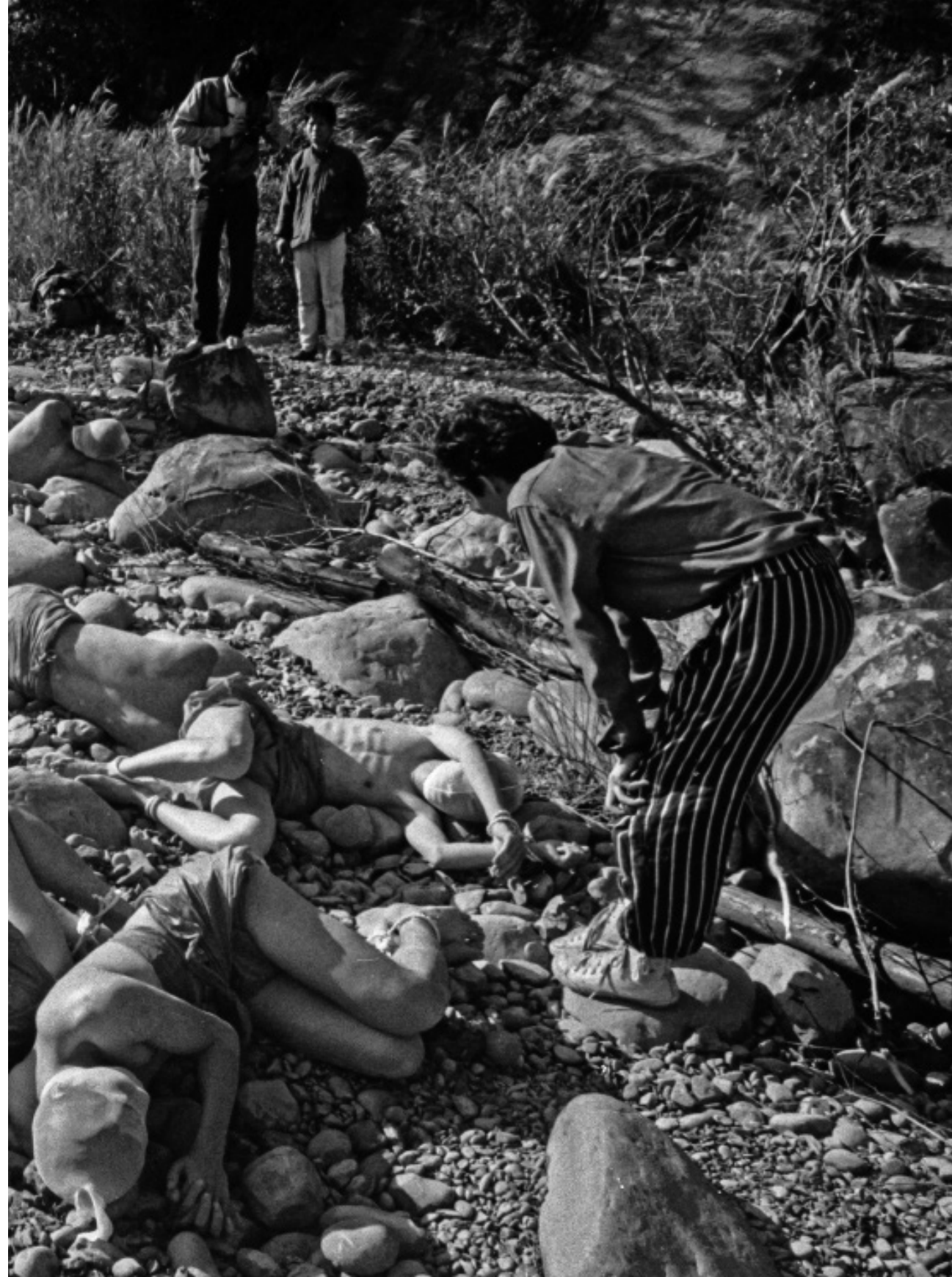
<p>1989</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-immolation of CHENG Nan-jung.</li> <li>• Self-immolation of Chan I-hua</li> <li>• Tiananmen Square Protests in Mainland China.</li> <li>• Establishment of the "Homeless Solidarity Alliance" and launching the "Shell-less Snails Movement."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the Dimension Endowment of Art.</li> <li>• Publication of first issue of <i>Imagekeeper Monthly</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Critical Point Theater Phenomenon performs <i>Mangpattan and Wei Jingsheng</i>.</li> <li>• The art community introduces the "520 Artistic Practice Joint Exhibition," the "Post-520 Social Practice Discussion Conference," and the "520 Artistic Practice Joint Exhibition Assessment Meeting," which sought to break with old institutions and seek new spaces.</li> <li>• Zero Field 121.25 Experimental Theater and Ruin Circle Theater jointly perform <i>Wu Er Ling</i> at the Cardinal Tien Cultural Center.</li> <li>• "520 Artistic Practice Joint Exhibition" is held at the former Beitou Railway Station.</li> <li>• "Zero Field 121.25 Experimental Theater" presents the <i>Mengmu 3000</i> puppet theater in support of the "425 Environmental Theater Workshop."</li> <li>• U Theater begins research on Taiwan's traditional arts and crafts and folk rituals, and conducts the "The Project of Tracing Back" to trace the body culture.</li> <li>• The Taipei Fine Arts Museum presents the "Bauhaus 1919-1933."</li> <li>• In response to the "Shell-less Snails Movement" on housing justice, nearly 50,000 people participate in an overnight demonstration on Zhongxiao East Road in Taipei, and theatrical groups including "Anti-U0", the "425 Environmental Theater Workshop", "Zero Field 121.25 Experimental Theater" give street performances.</li> <li>• Establishment of ""No. 2 Apartment."</li> <li>• WANG Jun-jieh and CHEANG Shu-lea's <i>How History Was Wounded</i> is released by New York's Paper Tiger TV and Taiwan's Green Team.</li> <li>• Critical Point Theater Phenomenon performs <i>Ke Kung Sung Te: 300 Years of Taiwan History</i> at Taipei's Shezi Dao.</li> <li>• <i>A City of Sadness</i> wins the "Golden Lion Award" at the 46th Venice Film Festival.</li> <li>• TSAI Ming-liang releases the TV drama <i>Corners of the World</i> at the "CTS Drama Festival."</li> <li>• CHOU Yi-chang joins forces with the "Zero Field 121.25 Experimental Theater" and members of other theatrical groups to establish the "YEH Chu-lan Theater Work Team" to support the election of YEH Chu-lan and New Nation Alliance candidates.</li> <li>• U Theater performs <i>The Death of Zhong Kui, which is part of the theater's "Project of Tracing Back."</i></li> <li>• The Green Team releases <i>Green TV's Inaugural Film</i>.</li> </ul>
<p>1990</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild Lily Movement.</li> <li>• LEE Teng-hui elected the 8th president of the ROC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of the <i>War Machine book series</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Green Team disbands. "</li> <li>• Lanlin Theater Troupe ceases activities."</li> <li>• U Theater tours <i>The Road Show of Story of Rainbow River</i> in temple courtyards and streets throughout Taiwan."</li> </ul>

1991

- LEE Teng-hui announces the revocation of the *Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion*.
- Establishment of the "100 Action Alliance"; demands abolishment of Article 100 of the *Criminal Code of the Republic of China*.
- Establishment of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits.
- Resignation of all members of the Indefinite Extended-term Congress.

- San Mou commits suicide.
- Establishment of the "Chinese Taipei Film Archives."
- Publication of first issue of *Isle Margin*.

- Establishment of the "Body Phase Studio."
- Lanlin Theater Troupe disbands.
- The "Taiwan Documenta" presents the "Supernatural and Superstition" exhibition.
- The Taipei Fine Arts Museum opens the "B04 Avant-garde and Experimental" display space, in which the inaugural exhibition of No. 2 Apartment, "Apartment—1991," was presented. The works are accidentally destroyed in a fire occurring during the exhibition period.
- NI Tsai-chin publishes articles including "Western Art Made in Taiwan: A Critique of Taiwan's Contemporary Art," "Taiwan's Avant-garde Art Seeks its Roots," and "Taiwan Consciousness in Taiwan's Art" in *Lion Art Monthly*.



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## 1980s: The Dawn of a Transdisciplinary Taiwan

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Published by

Taipei National University of the Arts, January 2023

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Taipei National University of the Arts

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1, Hsueh-Yuan Road, Peitou District,  
Taipei, 11201, Taiwan  
<https://w3.tnua.edu.tw/>

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The Chinese edition of this book is  
published by Horizon Publishing

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Supervised by Ministry of Culture

The research project is sponsored by "Reconstructing  
Taiwanese Art History" of Ministry of Culture.

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