

Publishing as Possibility for Artistic Practice

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From the outset of 2020, many art and cultural events have been seeking alternative ways of operation due to the pandemic. For instance, the Tokyo Art Book Fair (TABF) has been named as the Virtual Art Book Fair (VABF), taking an interactive website as its site. The original venue, the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, hosted the fair in an online virtual space, which also combined a variety of images to offer access to the virtual exhibition, including the booths inside the museum, the outdoor performance, the design of the booth, and the photos of books and other publications of the booths.

Such a case reflects a significant medium shift of global art and cultural events in 2020. Since 2006, the New York Art Book Fair (NABF), organized by the New York-based non-profit publisher Printed Matter, has set the trend for other cities around the world (such as Tokyo, Bangkok, London, Shanghai, and Singapore) to organize art book fairs under the name of each "city," continuing NABF's curatorial model and structure. When the name "Tokyo" was replaced by the concept "Virtual" at the VABF in 2020, it implied that the "virtual" scene diminished the divide between cities, highlighting the contradictions of glocalization in contemporary society and blurring the boundaries between online and offline activities. On the other hand, physical "paper" hard copies are crucial elements of publications in

various forms in art book fairs, including artist's books, photobooks, hand-made books, and zines. Hence, when books were presented through online interfaces in a virtual book fair, the physical quality was transformed into pixels on the screen. The presentation further responded to new media intervention on the books regarding flipping and covering and the multiple and blurred definitions of images, pictures, and post-photography.

With the inquiry "Publishing as Possibility for Artistic Practice," this issue aims to bring together perspectives of diverse researchers to deliberate the contemporary book culture phenomenon. In the Featured Articles, independent Chinese curator He Yi-ning reviews the development and changes in photobooks publishing in China from 2010 to the present and analyzes the types of photo archives in contemporary Chinese photobooks in her article "Photo Archives as Photobook Works: The Echoes of 'Old Photos' in Chinese Contemporary Photobook publishing". She further takes Kurt Tong's photobook *Yanjie: Combing for Ice and Jade* and Shi Zhen's *Tragédie, Coïncidence et La Double Vie de L.L.D.M (Tragedy, Coincidence and Double Life of L.L.D.M)* as case studies. In "The Mixed Names: The Birth of the Photo-Essay in South Korea in the 1960s," South Korean photography researcher Nayun Jang examines Joo Myung-Duck's *The Mixed Names* series concerning the development of photography in the 1960s after the Korean war. Jang explores how *The Mixed Names* took the form of photo-essay and revealed the situation overlooked in the official narratives with the juxtaposition of photographs and texts. Taiwanese researcher Pei-chun Viola Hsieh takes the 2013 photobook *Cauchy Horizons* as a case study in "The Future was Exhausted: On the Cinematic Banality of Sci-fi in Martine Stig's *Cauchy Horizons*". Hsieh investigates the intersections of layout, printing, photography, and film in sci-fi photobooks and explores how the sci-fi genre can reflect on the current situations. Furthermore, Jian Miaoju's "Wake up! Taiwan

Punk Fanzine and the Cultural Politics of Zines” attempts to connect the historical contexts of the international punk zine and zine culture movement. Jian illustrates the rebellious nature of zine culture and emphasizes the criticality of zine culture by looking at the development of punk zine around 2000 in Taiwan and how the trend has expanded in the indie music scene.

As to Research Articles, in “Library and Soapbox: A cross-domain reading into *Cross-Domain Reading & Writing: A Biblio-ecology in Art*,” Shen Yu-Chang starts from the 2018 exhibition *Cross-Domain Reading & Writing: A Biblio-ecology in Art* in Taipei Fine Arts Museum to analyze the contemporary significance of “publishing as an artistic practice”. He employs the works of eleven participating artists and the curatorial methodology of the two curators to scrutinize the inquiry the role of exhibition publications that “feature exhibitions but do not serve as exhibition catalogues”. In “Publishing as Artistic Practices as a Form of Creativity and Distinction: An Investigation on the Narrative Disarray Inside and Outside of the Fields of “Xiao Zhi” and “Artists’ Books” Throughout the Past Decade in Taiwan” Hong Tze-Ning focuses on “artist’s books” and “xiao zhi” (zine) practices in the past decade in Taiwan, using the concept of cultural fields as the approach to distinguish the two practices. Lai Wen-shu adopts her course on “artist’s books” at the Institute of Applied Arts, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University to explore the concept of artist’s books in the context of teaching, practices, and artmaking in “The Teaching and Art Praxis of Artist’s Books at NYCU”.

In general, this issue focuses on the cultural phenomenon surrounding “books” in the art scene. Through a collection of in-depth commentaries and essays, we aim to propose possibilities for media thinking in the post-digital culture and establish new modes of perception in diverse situations that continue to be defined.¹

¹ The chief editor has interviewed practitioners who have been involved in book-related events in recent years, including bookmaking, exhibition, editing, curating, publishing, teaching, and research, in an attempt to present the “book culture” scene in Taipei around 2020. The full text is available for download as an e-book, a reference for further research. See *Book Phenomenon*, <https://www.tw-chuyinhua.com/book-phenomenon>.