



藍天之下 BETWEEN EARTH AND THE SKY

Artists

Baboo

FAMEME

Su-Yuan Wu, Slow Geng (Motif Design)

Chen-Wei Lee

James Ming-Hseuh Lee

Ching-Yueh Roan

Hui-Chih Hsu

Chia-Ying Chang

Chih-Chung Chang

Liang-Hsuan Chen, Musquiqui Chihying

Clockwork Noses

Resident Island Dance Theatre

Co-curator

Jo Hsiao, Yi-Wei Keng

我們時代的
精神狀況

THE SPIRITUAL STATE
OF OUR TIMES

08/01/2020 — 10/18/2020

GALLERIES 1A, 1B

Contents

Director's Foreword

- 03 **About the Exhibition**
Ping Lin, Taipei Fine Arts Museum Director

Essays

- 04 **Between Earth and the Sky:
The Spiritual State of Our Times**
Jo Hsiao / Co-curator
- 17 **How to Pierce a Hole in the Azure Sky**
Yi-Wei Keng / Co-curator

ARTISTS & WORKS

- 21 **FAMEME**
- 25 **Ching-Yueh Roan**
- 28 **Hui-Chih Hsu**
- 31 **Chia-Ying Chang**
- 34 **Liang-Hsuan Chen, Musquiqui Chihying**
- 37 **Chen-Wei Lee**
- 40 **James Ming-Hseuh Lee**
- 43 **Baboo**
- 46 **Clockwork Noses**
- 49 **Resident Island Dance Theatre**
- 52 **Chih-Chung Chang**
- 55 **Su-Yuan Wu, Slow Geng (Motif Design)**

About This Exhibition

Ping Lin

Director, Taipei Fine Arts Museum

In *Relational Aesthetics*, Nicolas Bourriaud offered a critique of the exhibitions of the 1990s, writing: “It behooves us to understand the changes nowadays occurring in the social arena, and grasp what has already changed and what is still changing. How are we to understand the types of artistic behaviour shown in exhibitions held in the 1990s, and the lines of thinking behind them, if we do not start out from the same situation as the artists?” In this context, artists view the exhibition site as a miniature social arena. They concern themselves with the condition of humanity and the environment in the modern world, or reflect on the true state of life, or express intense interest in social or public issues. Bourriaud alludes to a form of art that produces a specific social arena, or creates a social circumstance. Ultimately, how can such art promote the modern project of liberation?

This was exactly the original intention of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum when I took office in 2015, to promote “live exhibitions”: Contemporary art aims to establish a new order in the context of art, and at the same time it constantly

strives to shatter that order and explore the possibilities of piecing art back together in new ways. Live exhibitions are built on this core, standing on the foundation of live works. They break the linear time structure of static works, and they midwife close relationships among people. As Bourriaud put it, “Art is the place that produces a specific sociability.” Here, an open, flexible milieu emerges. Here, people can discuss what they see as it takes place. This freedom may be where meaning resides.

From “Alice’s Rabbit Hole” (2015) and “Arena” (2017) to “Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times” (2020), this is a series of exhibitions with no specifications as to how the artworks must take shape. It is the appearance of contemporary art as it moves toward the realization of freedom. A diverse world of art is the true practice of art. It is the path to a future in which new culture and new politics continue to develop. At this time the world is shrouded in the shadow of the novel coronavirus. With art centered on this theme, in the form of a live exhibition, will we be able to see art engage in a conversation with the world?

Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times

Jo Hsiao / Co-curator



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Introduction — Live Exhibition

In the contemporary experience, when the participant (visitor) is both the subject of the work and its material, live exhibitions are not so much a new taste in art as they are a wide variety of things that have not been precisely described yet. This includes a form of free association, an exploration of contemporary art's unique quality of variation. The key to concretely realizing a live exhibition as a form of artwork is

to pry open the variability of contemporary art, to continue to collide with a formal exhibition system, to examine it, flip it over, and try to provoke the many possibilities of art. As Robert Rauschenberg once put it: "Break the boundaries. If it doesn't exist, invent it."¹

The process of such a work may not have an end point with a specific duration, nor does it necessarily lie within the structure of a continuous cycle; rather, it breaks the linear time structure of static works. And those works that are time-based performances—be they the present-moment reactions, feedback and interpretations of performers, participants (who might be visitors) or spectators—are founded on a real sense of presence and direct acts of viewing. Such immersive artistic experiences present the possibility of generating perception and experience, either personal or collective, opening up broad and flexible spaces. Starting from that moment, visitors exhibit their free will, seeing and thinking about what is happening before their eyes. Indeed, such freedom is the entire source of meaning.

¹ In his landmark mixed media series, Robert Rauschenberg (1954–1964) used collage techniques to juxtapose the materials of artmaking with everyday objects. As he put it, "I consider the text of a newspaper, the detail of a photograph, the stitch in a baseball, and the filament in a light bulb as fundamental to the painting as brush stroke or enamel drip of paint." This series of "assemblages" was a new form of art mixing painting, collage and sculpture, and expanding the complexity of artistic expression through a variety of materials and media.

On this foundation, “Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times” is not performance art or body art harking back to the 1960s or 1970s. At that time the ambition of artists was not to create a participatory platform with a “public nature” or “collective nature.” Most of them used their own bodies to resist the mainstream values of society and government. This exhibition aims to create a participatory public sphere to project contemporary social conditions and even boldly analyze and presuppose the network of relationships between individuals, communities, the environment and the world.

Through the structure and basic principles of a “live exhibition,” this exhibition seeks to portray the spiritual state of our times — from people, environment, and ecosystems, to various symptoms of illness — and thus serve as a microcosm of the world we live in today. Twelve artists or art collectives forge connections between the immediate moment and the “spectacle” of daily life. The exhibition spans art, literature and science to construct a vision of reality, regarding life and thought, environmental sustainability, the “real world” we imagine, and the universal meaning of technological civilization.

In this “live” exhibition, the artists have constructed an “interface of liveness,” asking questions either related or

unrelated to their own lives, moving from one moment to the next, formed of things that lie exclusively in the realm of possibility or things that are purely realistic, whose focal points are arranged yet also form according to accidental/non-accidental, meaningful/counter-meaningful events. In this context, “liveness” and “interactivity” serve as fundamental elements of the works that strengthen and extend their visual features, using the city or world as we see it to offer a certain vantage point or to express a certain stance, explicitly or implicitly.

The exhibition’s approach has been to plan each work on the foundation of “dialogue.” The artists and curators cross-examine one another, for the purpose of sparking debate. As much as possible, there is no fixed framework or pre-established goal. Each work expresses an assembly of many meanings. Here, dialogue, collaboration and process take place. The final results are, on the one hand, “exhibited works,” but on the other hand, they begin to carry out the mission of cross-referencing: The works serve as messages of the medium, directly interacting with visitors. And through visitors, who form a second level of the medium, a transformative channel in message transmission is formed, allowing viewers and participants to fully throw themselves into the process of perception, and moving the medium (the work) to a new vantage point. The whole process is

like challenging the works to battle. And in everything that takes shape within it, in all the forms expressed, and in the reversibility ultimately produced by these forms, their “active nature” is readily apparent.

Here, the live exhibition has a sense of presence, exchange, performance, or directness. It all takes root in the coexistence of the performers and the viewers. At a certain level, this dovetails with Heidegger’s analysis of existence in a shared world. People encounter one another in the same network, and this constitutes a relationship between one’s own existence and the world of the other, a relationship of being–there or there–being, and this is an all–encompassing relationship.² For “Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times,” the performative nature we wished to explore was relatively inconsequential; the thread joining each project was the common core of live work. Whatever specific thing the artists created mostly had to do with the viewpoint and method formed collectively by the work and the participating visitors.

An Imagined Community of World Views Generated by the Exhibition

While Marshall McLuhan predicted the advent of a “global village” brought together by the interface of new media,

Arjun Appadurai questions this proposition, citing media theorist Joshua Meyrowitz’s observation that the communities created by new media have “no sense of place.” Appadurai also references rhizome theory: “The world we live in now seems rhizomic...even schizophrenic, calling for theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other.”³ Appadurai examines how an imaginary world landscape has been constructed through human migration and electronic media in the era of globalization. The current global flow of people and things and the global configuration of the technological landscape have forged a global culture of the hyperreal. As an example Appadurai cites high–grade coconut oil, which results from a montage of different countries of origin and import, from production, manufacturing and packaging to consumption, thus accelerating cultural cross–germination.

As people live together in a world of bubbles, the emergence of such communities lends context to all the rootlessness, alienation, and distance, creating many imaginary landscapes

2 Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), *Being and Time*, sections 25 to 32.

3 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: Public Worlds, 1996) p. 29

within the powerful narrative of the global village. Inside the global village of bubbles, the rapid progress of information technology is no longer limited by national boundaries, but reflects the basic structure of the imagined world. The problem that remains is that we are all living in this “constructed” hybrid world. Here, the function of electronic media, to produce and disseminate information, provides a common foundation for our conscious thoughts to continuously flow and disintegrate, interdependent inside our bubbles.

According to Byung-Chul Han, a German philosopher and cultural theorist of Korean descent, the phenomena of widespread hybridization, large-scale population migration, overconsumption, excessive communication, excess information and overproduction fully explain an excess of expansiveness. Therefore, information no longer conveys information, production no longer produces output, and communication is no longer communicative. He compares it to a massive expansion of the body system leading to a blockage of the circulatory system and the accumulation of fat.⁴ Put simply, excessive expansion is leading the global village step by step toward annihilation.

The Bubbles of the Digital Network Age

For Yu Cheng-ta, a work of art represents a proposition about society in the current moment. Planted in the soil of the electronic environment, he used the digital identity “FAMEME” to create a physical store selling the euphoria-inducing pill “MST,” which claims to have both health-care and disease-prevention effects. Imitating the marketing and advertising methods of TV shopping channels, his videos, featuring the artist himself as well as users sharing their thoughts after they eat durian, screened continuously at the exhibition. In addition, a game app simplifies people’s psyches down to the level of “data.” The artist’s purpose is to make viewers aware of the various effects that new media imposes on them in all aspects of life. In this work, new media serves as a medium to craft a fictitious product of the future, resoundingly revealing how the message of the medium can bring about psychological changes in both individuals and society. The artist uses the influence of technology to change people’s sensorial and perceptual patterns, wielding the magic or potential power of the medium to the fullest extent.

On this basis, *Durian Pharmaceutical* demonstrates that

4 Byung-chul Han, *Topology of Violence*, tr. Amanda DeMarco (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2018).

the power of electronic media over us, individually and collectively, lies in how it becomes a hidden force that shapes society. This force seems invincible. Indeed, people are unable to resist it and can only choose to march in synch with its beat. Marshall McLuhan noted that when we embrace new media and new technologies to amplify and extend ourselves, we introduce changes in the scale, the speed and the paradigms of things in the human world. In today's society, life is no longer the same as before, and faced with this new state of affairs, we become reckless and desperate.⁵

McLuhan attributed the dramatic changes in the human world to the loss of a cultural foundation and the flood of information, which forces us into a numb state in this new electronic world.⁶ Roan Ching-yueh's *Wavering on a Mountain Path—A Rescue Plan for My Novel* is based on words and exposes the inner quandaries within the mental state of contemporary humanity. Written words are both weighty and light, intellectual and emotional. Whether they stimulate our emotions or our thoughts, they reward human beings at a level beyond the visual. Words are irreplaceable in the process of civilization. But in an era when high-speed computer processors are replacing printing, the rapid transmission of information has decisively cut contemporary humanity off from the written word and turned us into a sacrifice in the visual and auditory worlds.

Words that Heal is a writing action performance exploring the origins and orientations of “words” and “the heart.” Words are expressive and referential. Words undergo a process in which they grow in meaning. The written word endows culture with a gestalt rich in meaning. Today's explosively growing data and information technology have been positively affirmed as the model for our interaction with the world, and words seem redundant. Hsu Hui-chih reminds us that text can lead people to contemplate deeply and seek a better world. Perhaps this is a futile undertaking, but it also attests to the assertion of Byung-Chul Han: “From lack of repose our civilization is turning into a new barbarism.”⁷

At the end of the last century, Jean Baudrillard declared that we are destined to live in a hyperreal world. In front of our faces is a microsatellite mechanistic operating device, propelled into our real-world life orbits like a living being. As

5 *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* was the first book by Marshall McLuhan, published in 1964. He believed that media influenced society not through its content but through the special characteristics of media themselves. The book is seen as a seminal work of media theory, and the author has been hailed as a prophet of the 20th century.

6 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1964) p. 7

7 Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society*, tr. Eric Butler (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015) p. 15

long as there is a screen and a network, a single click allows us to initiate production, consumption, connection, contact, feedback and communication. Our time, our bodies, even our pleasures have been miniaturized.⁸ In Aldous Huxley's science fiction novel *Brave New World*, everyone is happy as long as they ingest the "soma" of technology. The novelist conceived the shape of the world to be based on the development of science and technology, predicting that as modern technology is put in place, all the civilized values of the past would be lightly discarded. What a price we must pay!⁹

Collective Hypnosis

In his book *The Burnout Society*, Byung-Chul Han argues that in modern life, human society is increasingly moving toward specialized technical skills and multitasking. Amidst such a purely hectic rush, we can only reproduce and accelerate what is already available without creating anything new.¹⁰ Ultimately, people are increasingly concerned about survival, turning human society into a barren wasteland. Within this structure, Chang Chia-ying created a new world — the sect of "HAHA." Building a temple with paintings and images, she allows all of us who are hyperactive to enhance our capacity for deep concentration, to become cognizant of this over-visualized space and thus internalize the consciousness of becoming "I."

The Gesture II adopts the vigorous hand gestures, painted amulets and other exorcism rituals in 1990s zombie movies from Hong Kong and Taiwan, proposing solutions to the current coronavirus epidemic. This kind of film/content employs a typical black-comedy narrative, and the ending is never a surprise: the Taoist master succeeds in the arduous task of driving the zombies away. Here, zombie movies serve as a vehicle through which the artists Chen Liang-hsuan + Musquiqui Chihying share their own perspectives on contemporary society and human nature. Focusing on mysterious folk beliefs such as the rituals of painting amulets to exorcise evil or the "Nine Protective Gestures," this video installation expresses humanity's courageous fight against the virus. And through ritualistic and symbolic performances, symbols (gestures) and spaces are filled with the implication and atmosphere of tension, projecting a system of repulsion and a sense of uniqueness amidst boisterous activities of contemporary life such as expansion, liberation, counter-

8 Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," published in: Hal Foster ed., *The Anti-aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983) p. 129

9 The dystopian novel *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) described the world in 2540, a totalitarian world dominated not by feelings, intellect or morals, but by technology combined with political control.

10 Op. cit., Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society*, p. 12–15

intervention, and the dissolution of borders and rituals.

In *14 Kinds of Exercise with Endurance*, Chen–Wei Lee uses his own body to convey the physical experience of different extreme states. This bodily act of metaphorical interpretation, with its repeated enactments of several continuous motions and its sense of time alluded to through repeated use of the human body and circulation, contrasts with the emphasis on efficiency and mechanization found in industrial society, serving as an interesting reference and dialogue. This work essentially considers the body as the place where art occurs, echoing the minimal aesthetic expressions of conceptual art and performance art of the last century. Meanwhile, by using bodies to establish the right to speak, it forces us to ponder the inextricable connection between the ruminative consciousness of people’s bodies and the way they exist in the world. Therefore, the world nature that our bodies possess is a social world.

Post—Beach of Spices is a display case containing an artificial beach made of salt, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon and strewn with bottled drinking water from many different countries and a big beach ball, creating a virtual holiday scene. James Ming–Hsueh Lee’s “spice beach” evokes the ghosts of colonial history, when the Western world fought a contest over spices in the 15th and 16th centuries. The

spice–centered trade wars and political strife of the past foreshadowed the wars of today triggered by oil, finance and epidemics. Moreover, the floor–to–ceiling glass covering the beach scene is a reference to all the “transparent” social conditions of today. Every event and every person has become transparent. At the same time, it also implies that the opposite of order, democracy and freedom is disorder, centralization and surveillance. This installation stands as a kind of metaphor for the end of the world. Just like a display case in an advertisement, the future and the past seem to be a *déjà vu* of the present. In the context of globalization, “civilization” is extraordinarily ironic.

Altogether Now

Corona Villa references the space design concept of an “Anti–Epidemic Hotel,” a composite resort combining the images of an inn, a cruise ship, a shelter, a sanctuary, and a nursing home. The work’s micro–social venue is closely related to the current world under the shadow of the pandemic. Visitors must book their check–in time online. The structure of their participation is fixed. Each of the five rooms can only be occupied by one person at a time, and they are not allowed to leave throughout the two–and–a–half–hour experience. The artist Baboo has constructed a real scenario of society in the art museum. In each room, the participants, who have no

idea what their roles are, either follow or refuse to follow the instructions they hear on headphones. For a short period, actors interact online with participants in real time.

Here, all the images captured by a live cam in the room are broadcast, and other visitors become unwitting voyeurs. This work functions on two levels: the passive consciousness of the participants and the active consciousness of the viewer. On either level, be it participation, emphasizing automation, or viewing, emphasizing autonomy, the fear of invisible manipulation may lurk beneath the surface. Thus, we can say, multiple mutually contradictory images have been inserted within the two parties' actions, both voluntary and involuntary, leading us to rethink the new relationships and the new order of coexistence among people and between people and the world. In the future, will humans completely achieve progress? Or what kind of world would it have turned out to be? The collective activity of humankind is a form of revelation.

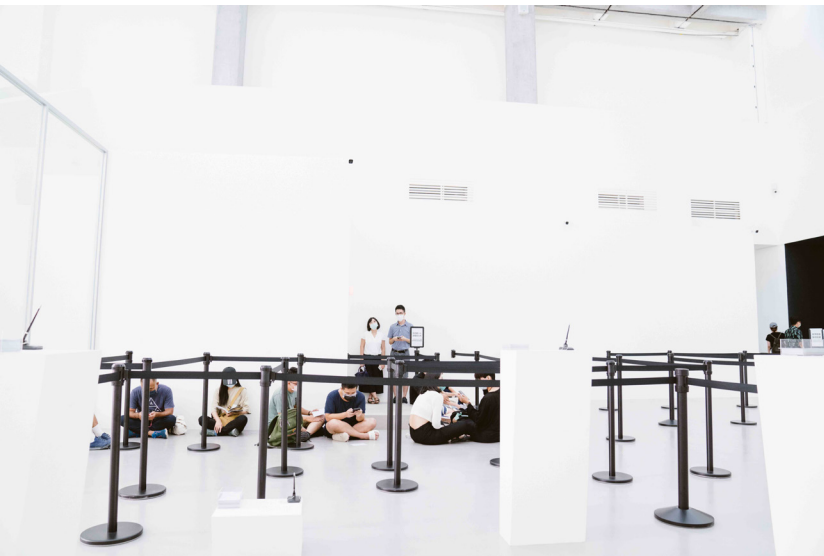
In the 18th century, the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham proposed the design of the panopticon, an all-seeing, circular prison.¹¹ And in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault discusses the formation process of prison systems since the 18th century. The book talks about the principle underlying Bentham's panopticon architecture: the surveillant is in the central observation tower, where

they can see everything in each cell all around, but can never be seen themselves. The prisoner is conscious of being isolated and monitored. The panopticon allows power to function automatically. It is a highly economical form of power, designed as a universally widespread technique of coercion.¹² In today's epidemic-ravaged world, isolation and surveillance have become the common mode of discipline the world employs to fight the novel coronavirus. With the help of digital technology, a new form of panopticon has been born. We are currently experiencing a digital form of surveillance more detailed, more abstract, and more hidden than the panopticon. Beneath the superficial imagery, a viral plague has engendered an extraordinary and ubiquitous new form of discipline.

In the work *howwwwwwww* 🙋🏻, queuing up is an essential act. Visitors must have self-awareness and self-control. They cannot be impatient. They move forward step by step, maintaining a safe distance between each other. The space itself can only accommodate one person at a time. In this

11 Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) proposed his circular prison design in 1785. The building would be shaped as a rotunda, with a guard tower at its center. The tower would have 360-degree windows, allowing the guard to view prisoners in their cells in all directions.

12 Michel Foucault (1926–1984), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr. Alan Sheridan (Pantheon, 1978)



Photograph: Dabei Chin

space, participants must perform missions as a form of personal assessment, or stay in the same room with the examiner connected online. They follow instructions, fill out questionnaires, and repeatedly confirm various details of their lives to complete their personal assessment forms.

“Stand in line,” “Wait” and “Be alone” — these are the three messages that form *howwwwwww* 🙌. Visitors take action on their own: the difference between becoming a frontline participant and a back-row viewer is the act of participation

itself — this serves as the work’s medium and also its primary contents. Row after row of barriers form a path, and participants must enter the venue in order and keep a safe distance from one another. They enter a small room, but can only enter one person at a time, and before they enter, they must wait. In the small room, the members of Clockwork Noses occasionally appear on a video screen to interact with participants in an improvised manner. We can see that these are critical allusions to the current social reality of social distancing, self-censorship, and isolation. The entire design — whether the participants fill in the personal assessment form and questionnaire according to instructions, or anything they do — follows no set routine, and may in fact end with an invalid conclusion. The work is carried forward through a series of impromptu, unconnected events. The complete futility of this improvisational work serves to highlight the state of humanity in the current world of Covid-19, maintaining a critical attitude toward the system of censorship that permeates every aspect of our lives.

Resident Island Dance Theatre employs the human body as an information medium, in a dance performance about the most basic interpersonal acts of communication, connection and trust. Inside the museum, which serves as mechanism, the dancers project “flesh/body” as matter in motion, which becomes a living art during the exhibition. *Being There* is an

occasional event that elicits interaction with the audience. Or it is a dance, animatedly expressing the endless joy and pain of personal desire. Lying concealed beneath the bodies of the artists is their psychological tenor in the environment, which serves to awaken self-consciousness. This self-consciousness can be regarded as a different kind of perception of various elements within the environment in the present moment, transformed after the audience takes them in, belonging to both individuals and the group. More important is the aspiration of the choreographers and dancers to arouse viewers' desire to take action in the real world.

Illustrated Album of Sea Ornaments is a book from the Kangxi reign of the Qing dynasty that depicts a melange of marine life forms. Similarly, *Crossing the Sea* by the artist Chang Chih-chung intentionally projects a view of history mixing fiction and reality, using history to look at the marine ecosystem we see today. In the process, viewers must track the various illustrations, texts and other incomplete information left by the artist, and piece them together to find the clues of ocean pollution caused by anti-fouling paint used on the hulls of big ships. This work is designed as a puzzle game attempting to provoke a direct reaction from visitors for the purpose of making them realize that the mission of society is "to regain the truth." Nonetheless, driven by the motive to reveal the truth of marine ecology,

the work is charged with political criticism, conveying that in a society awash in information, the ocean is being ignored. From radio, print media, television and other conventional media to the new media of the internet, which is no longer anchored to any one time or place, information is a self-extension of our society, transmitting what we believe and understand. And this specifically explains why, living amidst a glut of information media, people's minds are dominated by "content," which profoundly affects their behavior patterns. Indeed, the state of the entire marine environment confirms this interpretation.

The Terminus

Michel Foucault believed that in contrast to the imperfection of the real world, the world in the mirror is a utopia, and the mirror through which we approach that utopia is a utopia as well.¹³ *Heterotopia Garden* is a deliberately crafted artificial space, a more perfect, seemingly real "heterotopia." Throughout this mirrorlike world can be found the traces of human activity, subtly expressing people's relationships with other people and the world, and an understanding of people

¹³ Heterotopia is a theory of social space proposed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. A heterotopia is a space that really exists, which functions as a prism, refracting the things that people place inside it, and serves as an anchor for mutual reference with the real world.

living in their world. That is to say, it is a world in which people have a place. Such a world describes the universe and everything in it, and humans are only one element of this complex. What this work invites us to experience is both the everyday world and a work of art. The two landscape architects Wu Shu-yuan and Ning Keng have strongly suggested that art must be integrated with life. And this dual experience forces visitors to look, pause, and personally experience a work in order to perceive the subtle things of the real world. Here, the emphasis is on “perception” rather than mere bodily participation. Much like the 18th-century British landscape paintings extolling the past, a “landscape as lovely as a painting” leads us to encounter the aesthetic experience of nature, in which many different things arise side by side.¹⁴ Perhaps it also symbolizes the road to the mythical Peach Blossom Paradise.

Conclusion — “Does God Exist?”

Ultimately, we may revisit the question, “Does God Exist?” Stanley Kubrick, the director of “2001: A Space Odyssey,” once said in an interview, “The concept of God is at the center of the film...What we are really dealing with here is the scientific definition of God.” Science and technology have come to exercise an unbreakable dominance over humanity.

Just as Kubrick’s science fiction film intimated, science reflects humanity’s concept of God. The spiritual state of our times is centered on the civil society brought about by technology. Humans have taken the place of God and become omnipotent creators.

In 2020, the novel coronavirus has become the enemy of the whole world. Here, we address a question regarding the virus: Who made it? This “who” can be interpreted as its source or the environment from which emerged. But we also address a second question: What should humanity do to save ourselves when ordinary lives are threatened by disease? We have seen countries around the world striving to developing vaccines. At the same time, the spread of the virus has been curbed by blocking national borders. The interaction among ethnic groups throughout the world today that has been accelerated by globalization is suddenly no longer the norm. This portends the disintegration of the myth of globalization! This issue shows us that reality as a whole is embedded in the concrete world we live in. A critical change has transpired in a wide range of scenarios, be they “local” or “global”: It implies that human beings are conscious of the changes in the world’s

14 For a time in the 18th century, natural landscape paintings were extremely popular in Britain. This trend derived from the renaissance landscape art of the previous century and centered on the expression of classical humanism present in natural scenery, reflecting a strongly utopian sentiment.

landscape, and we must face the causes of this cruel reality. More specifically, we urgently need to find new ways to respond to the real life world.

With the railroads and steamboats of the 19th century, travel was the exclusive privilege of a handful of people, and the length of voyages limited the transport of goods. But since the end of the 20th century, humankind has had astonishing accomplishments in industry and capitalism. Motor-driven shipment and transportation have brought about a network of cross-border movement and global connections. The travel and transportation possible today perfectly explain why “them” and “us” from different cultures, speaking different languages, meet together in the same place, why the Japanese low-cost clothing brand Uniqlo has numerous brick-and-mortar retail stores in cities throughout Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania.

In the 21st century, the internet has enabled multinational e-commerce companies such as Amazon and Alibaba to build common experiences in which “them” and “us” compete yet also enjoy wonderful alliances. To state it another way, “globalization” is a symbiotic structure between different countries and different forms of negotiation, creating the myth of “coexisting side by side.” Ultimately, the milieu of economic globalization has been revealed to be political

in nature at a deep level. For example, “consensus” and “legitimacy” regarding global climate change and epidemics are frequently negotiated through global conferences, but such consensus is reached only through confidential talks among powerful states.

We must note that the veil has been instantly lifted on the political tug-of-war that lies hidden behind the basic deployment of economic globalization. Humankind is playing a dangerous game in the global arena. A pandemic has not only paralyzed global supply and demand, and traffic and transportation have collapsed overnight. The world seems to have pressed the stop button! Now that the connections of the globalized economy can be anticipated to have lost a secure channel of transmission and even bacteria and viruses invisible to the naked eye occupy the spaces of human activity, sending civilization into a state of imbalance, human beings are being forced to ponder the rationality of creating a modern civilization based on rational scientific, technological and political behavior.

Our age is certainly an age of extremes. We live in a beautiful world, but on the other end of it there exist natural disaster, plague, human displacement (refugees), totalitarian government, terrorism and war, plunging us into an unknown horror we cannot imagine. Humankind has collectively

constructed the global village. In their imaginations is it more real or unreal? Is the question of whether God exists just a metaphor or an inquiry into the inability of human beings to face the new state of affairs they themselves have engendered?

Under the azure sky, nature, the universe and the stars reveal many meanings. Although we see the omnipresence and omnipotence of the world of the mind, at this moment, the foundation stone laid by the structure of human technology seems on the verge of shaking and crumbling. Humans and other species have been pummeled by the effects of unprecedented heat waves, droughts, floods, infectious diseases, and climate change. The outbreak of Covid-19 is like a developing agent, revealing the threat that globalization is posing to the earth's environment. Now that human beings have found ourselves driven to dire straits by the novel coronavirus, we must re-examine the conditions for our continued existence in this world. This paradoxical situation reveals the outlines of a living environment waiting to be evaluated. It represents the parameters of the negotiations we must make with the new situation we have created.

Astrologers say that Saturn will retrograde in Capricorn in 2020, and this conjunction will symbolize destruction, rebirth, desire, death, extremes, and the unconsciousness of the

malefic planet Pluto. Walter Benjamin once said, "I came into the world under the sign of Saturn — the star of the slowest revolution, the planet of detours and delays."

When Susan Sontag wrote *Under the Sign of Saturn*, she described Walter Benjamin as melancholy and indifferent yet focused. "One characteristic of the Saturnine character is slowness ... [T]his is an apt temperament for artists and martyrs, those who court 'the purity and beauty of a failure,' as Benjamin says of Kafka ... [T]his is an apt temperament for intellectuals."

The aesthetic intent of the exhibition is to invite artists to gather beneath the canopies of Saturn and Pluto and at this moment when the world is changing, full of annihilation and rebirth, to activate the human consciousness through inimitable artistic experiences, leading to a reflection on art and on our times. Put precisely, it is art that allows us to see things never seen before, and to evaluate the deeply rooted self-reflective perspective of contemporary intellectuals toward the world.

How to Pierce a Hole in the Azure Sky

Yi-Wei Keng / Co-curator



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

The exhibition must become an event. This was the goal of “Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Time.” And this is the special quality that a live exhibition should possess. If we look at the curatorial contents—in the process of recruiting the artists, we asked them how they would respond to the impact of Covid-19 on the world—the theme itself was an event. The contemporary French philosopher Alain Badiou, renowned for his event theory,

considers art to be a creative event, which can pierce a hole in knowledge and make us see realities we had not seen before.

An acquaintance of mine who graduated from Taipei National University of the Arts shared on Facebook his thoughts after viewing the exhibition. He excitedly wrote: “I’ve been to Taipei Fine Arts Museum many times, and I’ve seen all kinds of exhibitions, both large and small. Unfortunately, I always come away without any feeling, like I’ve been staring at a high wall. It makes me feel like I’m not an artist, and I’m unable to comprehend either the discourse or the beauty. I’ve always thought, these discourses are of course really wonderful, but why am I always like a blind man groping to perceive a red dragon? Why do artworks have to be supplemented by theory and images for us to get their meaning? Why does art always make the public prejudiced against it? Is there anyone who can implant their creative ideas directly in the viewer’s mind without having to be transcoded? There is. Check in to *Corona Villa*, at ‘Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times.’”

This exhibition was initially conceived as being founded on live work. But because its formalized features would be insufficient to guarantee that an event would occur, the mechanism of curation itself would have to generate the

conditions to facilitate events and allow accidents to happen outside the orbit of expectations. The co-curatorship I shared with Jo Hsiao, as viewed from a strict perspective, was presented in the curatorial statement: “The curators cross-examine each other, for the purpose of sparking debate. As much as possible, there is no fixed framework or pre-established goal. Each work expresses an assembly of many meanings. Here, dialogue, collaboration and process take place.” A lighter viewpoint appeared in the article “Curation for Two,” which I wrote for the August edition of *Artco Monthly & Investment* magazine: “The process of curating an exhibition

is a contest between the curator and the artists. But it is not a war. It’s an artistic ballgame. The playful process of creation is more important than who wins and who loses. The decisive moment caused by accident is more incredible than being right or wrong. Many of the works in ‘Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times’ have mechanisms of audience participation and dynamic spaces in which the performance develops in the current moment. If it goes off well, this exhibition should form a different kind of metaphor, helping visitors see a world state they have never seen before.”



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

When the works by these 12 artists and art collectives were executed at TFAM, the process included negotiation and the consideration of practical technique. But after James Ming-Hsueh Lee’s *Post—Beach of Spices* led to the imposition of a restriction that no one was allowed to go back along the same path (for fear that pepper would be spread all over the floor), the possibility of a narrative interpretation emerged throughout the whole exhibition space—that is, why did the ending fall on the head of nature (Wu Shu-yuan and Ning Keng’s *Heterotopia Garden*)?

This is what one reporter asked me: “Why did you want the ending to take place in nature?” At the moment I was asked this, I realized that the meaning of this exhibition was still

growing. Because of the title “Between Earth and the Sky,” the aspect of nature was being reinforced. I also became aware that viruses are a part of nature, or perhaps, like a garden landscape, they are a form of manmade nature.

Along with the question of how nature is artificially processed, another issue was echoed in this exhibition: how capitalism incorporates nature into the human world. For example, Chang Chih-chung’s *Crossing the Sea* was a pseudo-archive of historical archaeology that led visitors to consider how the marine ecosystem is being polluted by the anti-fouling paint of the shipbuilding industry, excavating a story that has never been told but ought to be known. Such a manmade boundary-crossing in which nature is processed (perhaps Covid-19 is as well?) can also be seen in FAMEME’s *Durian Pharmaceutical*—a physical store selling “MST” pills that have therapeutic effect, extracted from durian through genetic engineering. Through FAMEME’s visually hyperbolic marketing rhetoric, this method of exploiting nature and commodifying it with technology clearly made visitors sense the sarcastic effect the artist sought to convey.

At the opening press conference, I stated my hope that each visitor would construct their own discourse and interpretation of the exhibition. This was not a lie. A live exhibition must not only be achieved through the participation of visitors (as

when Clockwork Noses expressed the meaning of their work “ howwwwwwwww 🙋 ” through the queue formed by visitors), but it must also cede to visitors the ultimate right of interpretation. Indeed, if it had not, this exhibition would not have closed the final circle of dialogue (between curator and curator, between curators and artists, and between artworks and audience), and the exhibition would not have counted as being “live.”

“Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times” was like an illustrated book—even if its many pages proceeded in a fixed sequence, each page had a life of its own. Each had its own story. Right at the exhibition entrance, Chia-Ying Chang’s *HA.HA* had this effect. This was the only space that did not ask for visitors’ interaction or participation, yet it had an interesting aura of strangeness. The existence of this work destroyed the possibility of completely explaining this exhibition as performance art or live art. This was not a research-oriented exhibition. The curators did not seek the authority to project knowledge, to categorize or systemize things in order to create a world that could be captured in words. Under the azure sky, many things can only be experienced with the body.

Wittgenstein said, “What can be shown cannot be said.” When visitors saw this exhibition, they had an experience in

this space. Even their sense of smell was stimulated (James Ming-Hsueh Lee's *Post—Beach of Spices*). In Chen-Wei Lee's *14 Kinds of Exercise with Endurance*, there was no language at all. Inside a closed white box, visitors had to rely on their endurance to observe and gain understanding, in an exercise having to do with the body. Baboo's *Corona Villa*, which relied on the traces of the artist's bodily movements in the moment; Hui-Chih Hsu's *Words that Heal*; Ching-Yueh Roan's *Wavering on a Mountain Path – A Rescue Plan for My Novel*, with nude bodies and live recitations in collaboration with visitors; and Chen Liang-Hsuan and Musquiqui Chihying's *The Gesture II*, which even reconsidered everyday bodies through the lens of the fictional bodies in zombie movies, all involved the “eventness” of bodily participation.

Body is a key word. In an exhibition where live art serves as a parameter, it is a very relevant choice. It's only that in “Between Earth and the Sky,” the bodies under consideration were not limited to those of the artists, as in performance art, but encompassed the bodies of the audience, and even the entire society (whose bodies have been impacted by the virus). This is why the visual design of the exhibition is a dancer whose body has been transected by the exhibition title.

Visitors had to go to Taipei Fine Arts Museum during the last week in August for the chance to see *Being There* by Resident Island Dance Theatre. Every day for six days in a row, they presented a new work on a different theme, and the inspiration for each performance was related to another work in the exhibition. For me, this was an act of incorporating the curatorial concept into the realm of dance, placing different performances within a certain framework. Ultimately, the juxtaposition of these works produced greater meaning.

The body must be present. The live part of life must be extended. Those who can connect yesterday and today are the visitors with their own ideas. They know: I am here. I am the source of all events. I can pierce a hole in the azure sky.

FAMEME

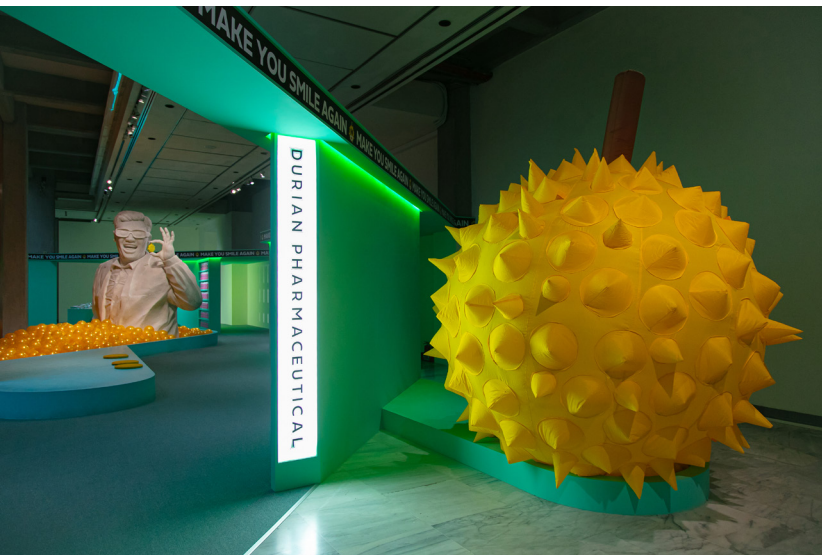
DURIAN Pharmaceutical

Installation, performance

Mixed media, interactive installation

Dimensions variable

2020



Photograph: Troy Lee

FAMEME is an artist/fictional web celebrity. He has inherited the brand Durian King, which his father founded in 1936. Through his love of fashion and music, he began to reinvent the brand, selling durians, the “king of fruit,” all over the world. 2019 marked his first arrival in the United States, where he posted an ad on the Edition Hotel’s giant digital billboard in New York’s Times Square. In the city’s SoHo district he established the world’s first “Museum of Durian,” a popular check-in spot for online influencers. In 2020 FAMEME invaded Korea, collaborating with the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (GmoMa) to introduce the Durian Exercise Room, beloved by children and parents alike.

In 2020 FAMEME crossed over to the biotech industry to establish Durian Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. Dedicated to extracting the durian nutrient Misohtornii, they have applied for a patent and by 2023 plan to introduce MST, a customized, contemporary elixir of life. At the same time, they have set up a concept store displaying MST at Taipei Fine Arts Museum. This pill fortifies an individual’s health, prevents viral infections, and serves as a catalyst to activate the amygdala, strengthening limbic system responses and stimulating dopamine in the brain, so that the user feels a surge of emotion as if falling in love. It intensifies the heat energy produced by exercise, elevating the effects of endorphins. It also stimulates the production of serotonin, which brings a sense of control through positive energy, unblocking channels of thought that lead to feelings of happiness. MST is a panacea for the body, mind and spirit. Just like FAMEME, it will “Make You Smile Again”!



Photograph: Troy Lee



Photograph: Troy Lee



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: MW Studio



Photograph: MW Studio



Photograph: Shao-Gang Wang

Producer: Cheng-Ta Yu
 Space design: Troy Lee
 Visual design: Jay Guan-Jie Peng
 Interactive design: Hsien-Yu Cheng
 Still photography: Hedy Chang, MW Studio
 3D scanning: Solid Memory Studio
 3D modeling: Ming-Chien Luo
 Wall Text: James Blaxland

Film Production

Producer: Wade Ding
 Director of photography: Liam Morgan
 Production assistant: Meng-Yan Tsai
 Focus Puller: Max JIN
 Camera Assistant: Ching-Tsung CHIEN
 Gaffer: Wei HU
 Best boy: Wei LO, Ming-Wei HSU
 Make-up& hair stylist: Edna HUNG

Film Post-Production

Editors: Cheng-Ta Yu, Liam Morgan
 3D Animation: Computerface
 Sound Designer: Andy Chiu
 Digital Colorist: CY CHIU
 Studio: Buzzing Studio

Performance Production

Script: Huang-Yang Chen, Cheng-Ta Yu
 Performance assistant: Pei-Hsuan Peng
 Actors: Nan-Hsuan Lee, Yi-An Pao, Bo-Hsiang Chiu, Chih-Yuan Li,
 Shin-Yi Chao, Hsiao-Hsuan Wu, Chih-Wei Tseng



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Ching-Yueh Roan

Wavering on a Mountain Path— A Rescue Plan for My Novel

Mixed media installation, film, text, performance

Dimensions variable

2020

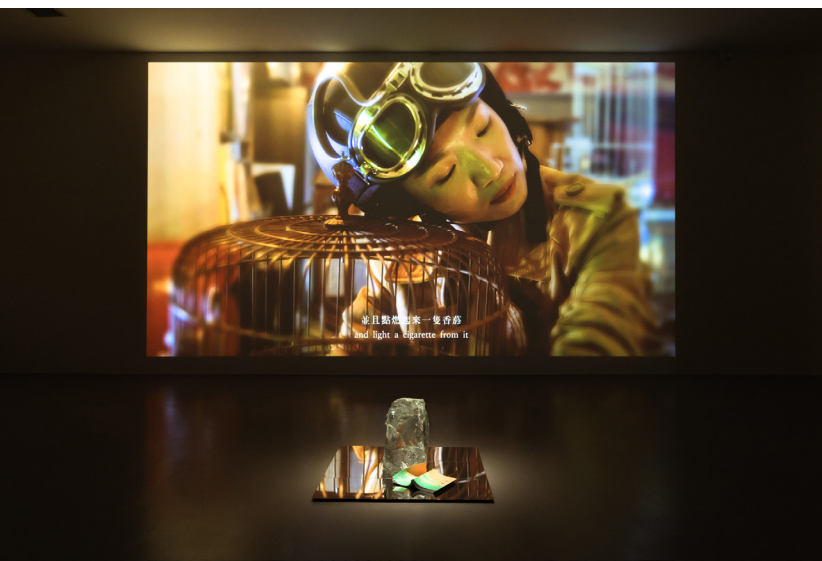
Wavering on a Mountain Path—A Rescue Plan for My Novel uses fiction, video and installation to reveal the internal problems of the contemporary mental state. Written words are both weighty and light, intellectual and emotional. Whether they stimulate our emotions or our thoughts, they reward human beings at a level beyond the visual. But when we ingest the stimulant of technology, we are boundlessly immersed in the world of images, and the written word gradually comes to feel heavy and cumbersome. Because they are present in daily life, they hold a peculiar abstraction and distance. Through the creation of fictional stories, Ching-Yueh Roan has constructed a pure world with words.



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

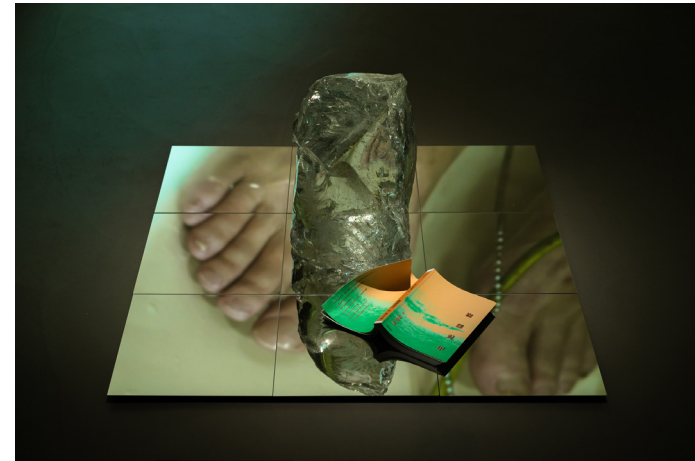


Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian





Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Text: Ching-Yueh Roan
 Filming: Chien-Hua Liao
 Execution: Chang-Chih Huang
 Performer: Ching-Yueh Roan

Hui-Chih Hsu

Words that Heal

Installation, performance

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

2020



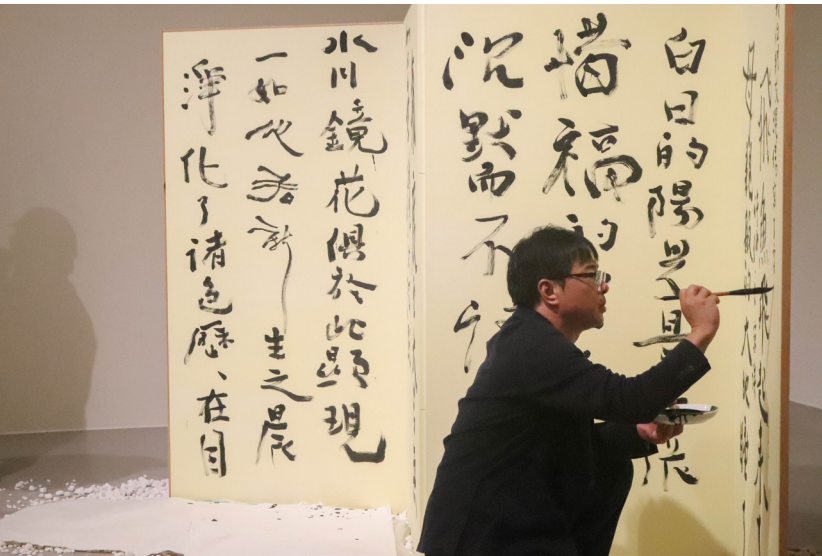
Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Hui-Chih Hsu's *Words that Heal* is a writing action performance exploring the origins and orientations of "words" and "the heart." Words are expressive and referential. Words undergo a process in which they grow in meaning. They also go through birth, death, evolution, and new life. Words form phrases. They name all the things in the universe, distinguish them, express feelings and afford understanding. Phrases gradually lengthen into sentences. The more words there are, the more fully they express emotions. But we often write words so much that we forget their "true meaning."

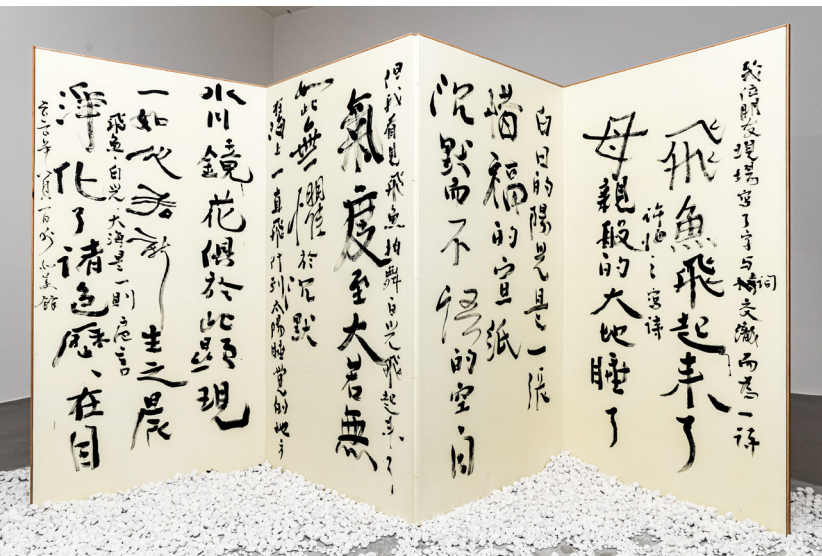
This work features two sets of screens based on the concept of "a wall of poems." One set shows a semi-abstract poem handwritten in ink deconstructing the Chinese word for compassion, as "This heart is not a heart" and "The name of compassion." For the other set of screens, on the opening day of the exhibition, the audience will be asked to provide a large number of words. Based on these words, the artist will write a four-screen poem, serving as the "letters of the heart" by which to derive the heart's power to comfort.

Hsu will also be joined by two other artists, Chang Wei-Yuan and Ku Yao-Hua. The three will take turns making art in an album, live in the venue — constantly referencing the idea that through heart-to-heart understanding and communication, people can "resist" the control of disease without having to maintain "social distancing"!

Photograph: Chih-kai Yang



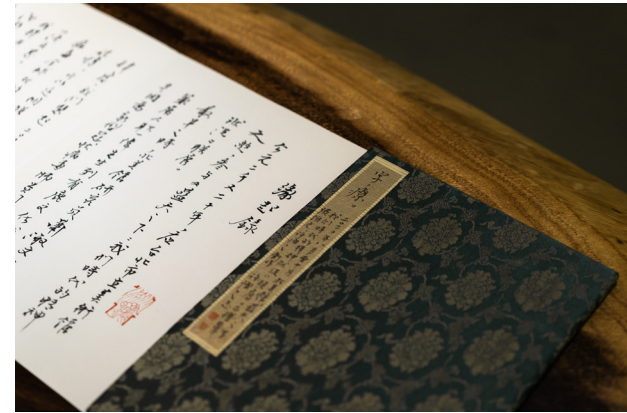
Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Chien-chou Chen



Photograph: Chien-chou Chen



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Chih-kai Yang

Space design: Yin-Chiao Liao

Folding screen production: Tin-Wai Wu, Chi-Hsuan Shen,
Ching Yu Shan Fang

Folding book production: Hsiu-Hsiang Lee

Performers: Hui-Chih Hsu, Yao-Hua Gu, Wei-Yuan Chang

Chia-Ying Chang

HA.HA.

Installation

Mixed media, acrylic on canvas, sculpture

Dimensions variable

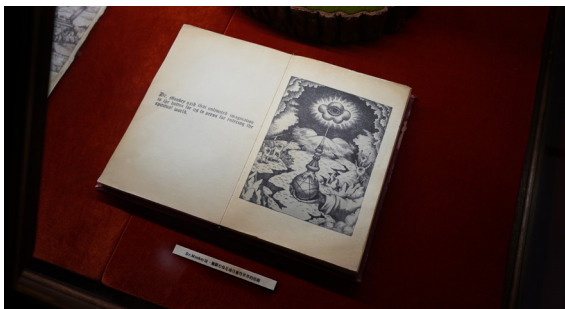
2020



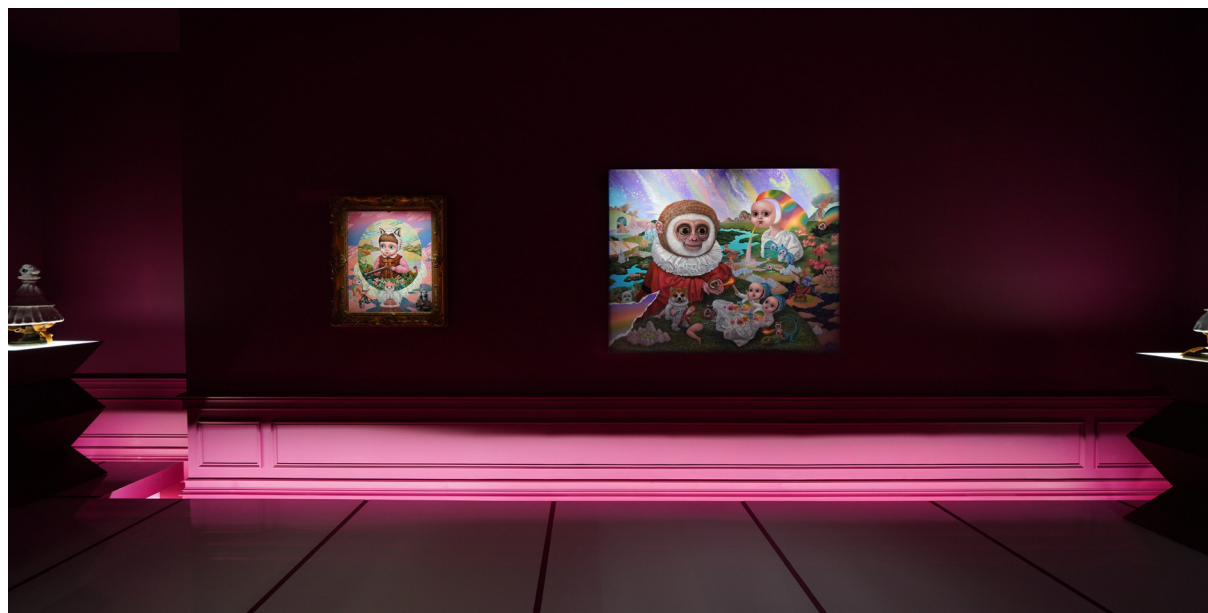
Photograph: Nai-Fang Cheng

Value systems, philosophies, power structures, and moments of cultural evolution often occur in times of turbulence and disintegration. When order collapses, it will always be replaced by another way to achieve balance, and it often seems to be the fate of the human cycle that those who dominate resources, hold power, and rule by force will rise. We long for redemption, and redemption is like an antidote to the soul, but it is also an anesthetic, and an aphrodisiac for the powerful. Currently, more than 3,000 religious groups can be found in the world, each one claiming their faith is the only truth, yet they are full of ludicrous, bizarre theologies and power ploys. No matter how absurd they are, for their believers, each one holds the redemptive truth, and such absurdity pervades our yearning for redemption.

The artistic oeuvre of Chia-Ying Chang has always been replete with such absurd beliefs and mysticism, fables with no beginning or end, an admixture of classics and mutations, populated by weird, self-contradictory species that are half-human and half-beast, seemingly beautiful but with a sugar-coating under which cruelty lurks. Hers is a collage world that constantly disintegrates and reorganizes, in which all the stories expand infinitely like ripples in a pond, but eventually attain another kind of equilibrium, like an endlessly circulating Mobius strip.



Photograph: Nai-Fang Cheng



Liang-Hsuan Chen & Musquiqui Chihying

Jiangshi Film Study: The Gesture

GIFs, handwriting machines, talisman paper, 2-channel HD video,
live performance, mixed media

Dimensions variable

2020

Jiangshi Film Study: The Gesture considers the nature of pop culture, taking as its starting point the zombie movies of Hong Kong and Taiwan that reached a zenith of popularity in the 1990s. Cooperating with a professional Taoist priest, it examines specific symbols in Hong Kong and Taiwan zombie movies, such as gestures and talismans, and explores how they metaphorized and reflected the anxieties of the masses, transformed fear into comedy, and became popular images, before being internalized and absorbed back into the public consciousness.

At a time when Covid-19 runs rampant, besides wearing face masks, what we do with our hands is a crucial part of disease prevention. To better protect ourselves from infection, we must frequently wash our hands and disinfect them with rubbing alcohol. These new daily hand gestures are not only official directives, but have also become a movement of the people. Hand gestures have demarcated a new boundary line, illustrating the divide between “inner/safe” and “external/dangerous.” But hand gestures serving as barriers are not something that protects us in this era alone — they have long constituted a form of human culture.

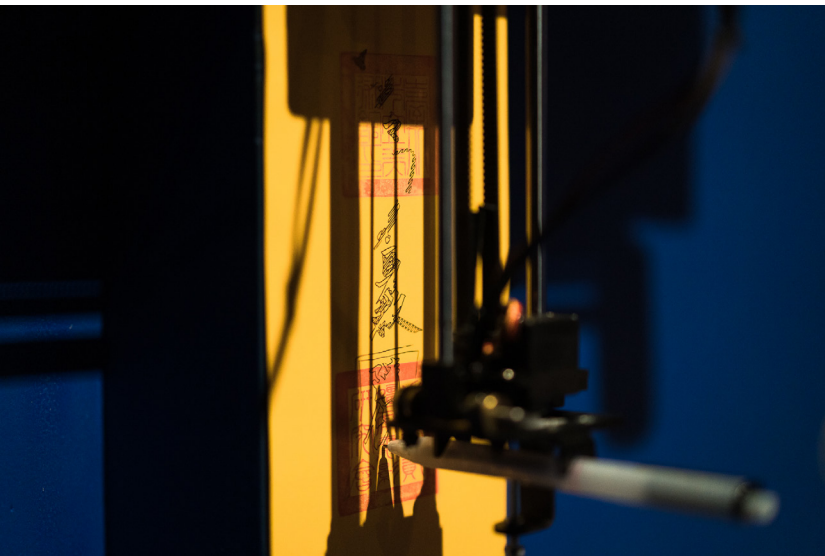


Photograph: Anpis Wang

Unlike the zombie movies of the West, which portray direct bodily resistance, the East Asian version conveys a different way of confronting anxiety and danger, expressing a special sense of distancing through protective hand gestures and ritualistic implements. To this day, even though humankind collectively faces one crisis after another, symbolic hand gestures still effectively respond to contemporary anxieties about reality. *Jiangshi Film Study: The Gesture* will include four parts: “*Gestures*” is a series of GIFs presenting a collection of hand gestures to prevent infection made in today’s public spaces. In “*Talismans*” we invited a Taoist priest to create protective talismans, then installed three automatic talisman-drawing machines in the exhibition space. We have also asked Master Sanlong — a Taoist priest who was inspired to choose his path in life by watching Hong Kong and Taiwanese zombie films — to create a new set of Taoist rituals in response to the current epidemic.



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Anpis Wang



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Chen-Wei Lee

14 Kinds of Exercise with Endurance

4-channel dance video installation

Full HD, coloured, sound, looped

Dimensions variable

2020



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

To experience physical endurance and resist drag on propulsive force, dancers explore different movements with different limbs in different scenarios. As the movements build up over time, the process of change in shape due to pressure and energy consumption creates an instantaneous exit from the equilibrium between motion and stillness.

When an artist experiments with bodily endurance, they feel the same bottomless demand we feel ourselves. Such a state is the cadence and pace at which the body moves in the direction of modern culture. Mechanization and quantification have become the basic elements of material production in society. As both producers and consumers, we proceed within a non-linear temporal consciousness, striving physically and mentally to pursue time while also being pursued by time. Existing in the midst of this predicament, we must interpret the intermeshing state of chasing and being chased.

In the process of this work, the artist observes the closely connected partnership between the body and the will, which perpetually adjusts and extends life. Within these constraints, it extracts all kinds of freedoms. Conversely, it also bears the weight of life, fragile yet tenacious, solid as a rock yet ready to crumble.

Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Still image



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Still image



Still image



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Concept, choreography: Chen-Wei Lee
 Performer: Chen-Wei Lee
 Images, editing: Maël G. Lagadec
 Sound Design: Jeanne Debarsy
 Art consultant: Ding-Yeh Wang

James Ming-Hsueh Lee

Post—Beach of Spices

Installation

Pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, beach ball, beach chairs, beach umbrella, artificial coconut trees, fengshui balls, mineral water, curtains, wallpaper, mirrors

Dimensions variable

2020



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

The appetite for Middle Eastern spices that Europeans developed in the 15th century drove geographical discovery, which grew trade routes. In the background behind this seemingly beautiful obsession lies geographical ignorance, intertwined with the myth of Columbus, spun from the imagination. The trade wars and political strife brought about by spices echoed the conflicts over salt that preceded them, and foreshadowed the wars of today triggered by oil, finance and epidemics. The political intrigues of royalty and merchants evolved into today's structure of collusion among politicians and capitalists. What has never changed, however, is how trade brings with it the spread of disease.

In this work such spices as salt, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon have been placed in a display case, creating the feel of an artificial beach. Strewn with bottled drinking water from many different countries and a big beach ball, it forms a virtual holiday scene. Through the decoherence of corporeality and visuals that spark the imagination, it awakens historical and bodily sensations, attempting to consider the imagined interweavings of historical images and the progression of time within global trade, and ruminating on the paradoxes of desire. The entire display window of *Post—Beach of Spices* stands as a certain metaphor for the end of the world. Just like a display case in an advertisement, the future and the past seem to be a *déjà vu* of the present.

Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



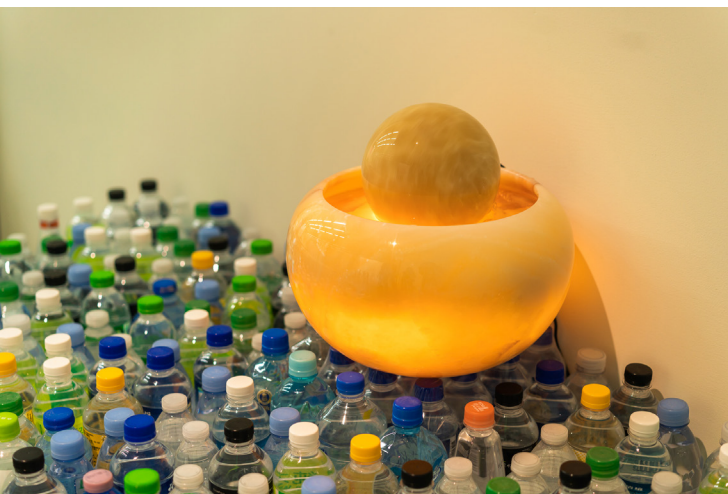
Photograph: James Ming-Hsueh Lee



Photograph: Yueh-hao Kuo



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

Baboo *Corona Villa*

Installation, live streaming, interactive performance, mixed media

Dimensions variable

2020



Photograph: Howard Yu

This is an imagining of and a proposal for a future isolation facility. When epidemics become the norm, the country's borders are strictly controlled, and staying in hotels to prevent epidemics becomes a means of self-isolation and protection, as well as a means of temporary relief and escape from the daily grind.

This work is an “Anti-Epidemic Hotel” placed in the art museum, a composite resort combining the images of an inn, a cruise ship, a shelter, a sanctuary, and a nursing home. In this resort, multiple contradictory images — freedom and confinement, holidaymaking and centralized control, trajectories of motion and surveillance mechanisms — intervene in visitors' actions, both autonomous and non-autonomous, leading us to ponder new relationships and a new order in which people coexist with others, objects and the world.

In every room there is a live-stream of an artist, offering services to the guest room via remote video. Services vary according to the artist's specialization — “Virtual Lover,” “Singalong,” “Collective Sketching,” “Contact Treatment,” and “Valet Shopping.” Through the material sensations of hearing, touch, smell and even taste, the isolated guests and the artists located in outdoor spaces link spaces and themes to create “on-site” and “off-site” sensorial experiences, while also resonating with the behaviors of art therapy.

Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Kris Kang



Photograph: Manbo Key



Photograph: Kris Kang



Photograph: Kris Kang

Concept & Direction: Baboo

Space designer: Hui-Ming Chang

Video designer: Ruey-Horng Sun

Interactive design: Wei-Yao Hung

Script Writer: Chin-Yan Hu

Sound designer: Blaire Ko

Typography: Aaron Nieh

Site execution: Yen-Cheng Liu

Online artists: Betty Apple, Su-Lien Lin, Pin-Wen Su, Chien-Hao Chang,

Pei-Yu Hung, Tung-Yi Hsiao, Yun-Pei Hsiung, Chih-Wei Tseng

Voice actors: Fa, Shih-Chun Wang, Hung-Yuan Wang, Ming-Che Li,

Ting-Fang Liu, Yi-Lin Yang

Video engineer: Yen-Hsun Huang

Video content compositor : Yong-Hsin Huang, Ho-Ying Yang

Video programmer: Tung-Han Tsai

Video operator: Dong-Han Tsai, Chang-En Ting, Yi-Chen Lin

Director Assistant: Chang-En Ting

Executive producer: Hsia-Hsien Chao, Kiang-Yun Wang

Performance execution: Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group

Special Thanks: Äi Äi ILLUM LAB



Corona Villa video archive

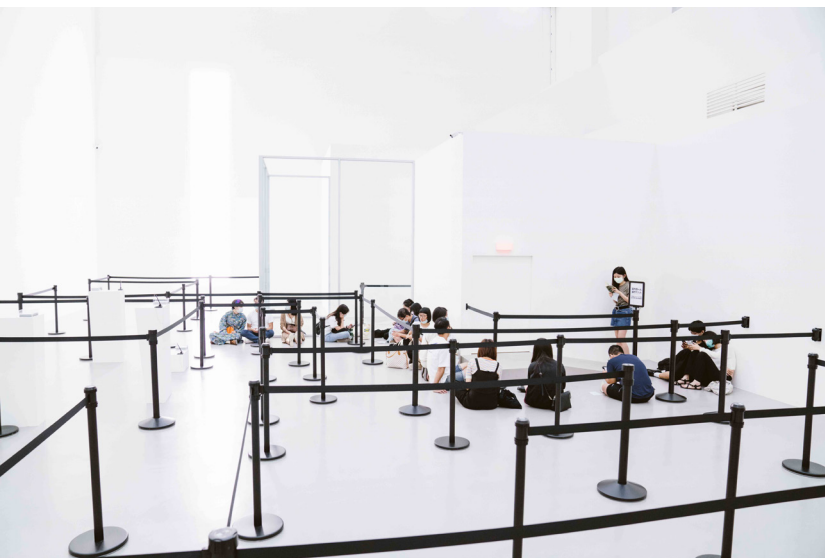
Clockwork Noses

howwwwwwwww 🙋

Video, live streaming, installation, mixed media

Dimensions variable

2020

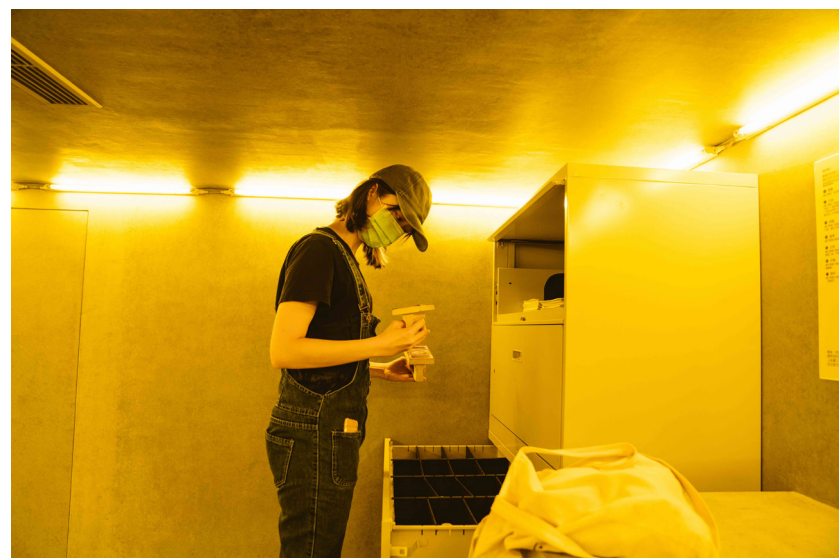
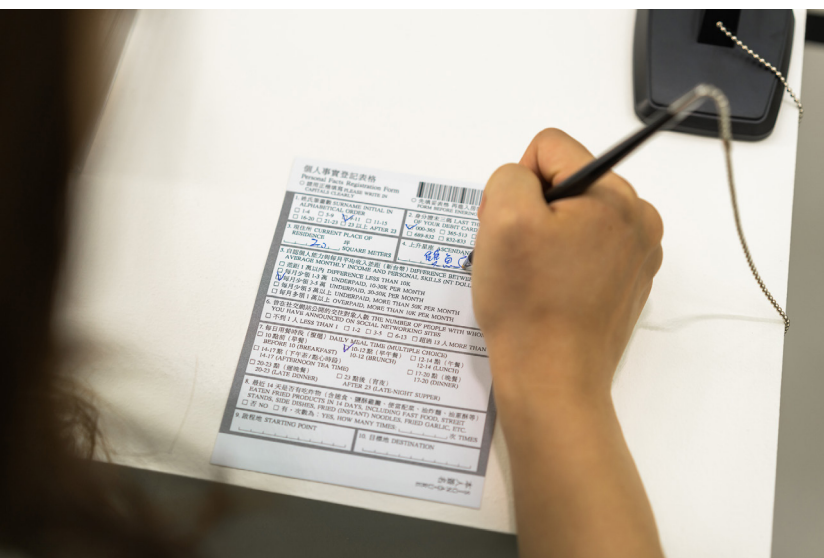
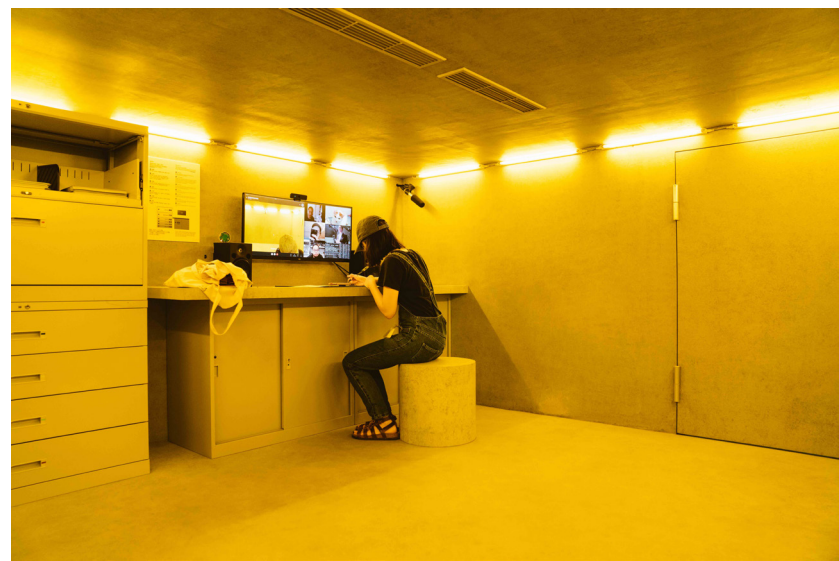


Photograph: Dabei Chin

In this journey through an epidemic, we have discovered that all of this has no end. Like being in a parade formation with countless ranks, one can only move forward along with the pace of the crowd, trapped within in it step by step. If queuing originated as a means to receive service — to pass through customs and immigration, be seated in a restaurant, purchase one's shopping — it is now more like an act of expending energy, or balancing terror: what must be done is better than doing nothing at all. None of this can truly lead to an “end.” If no goal can really be achieved, one can't necessarily gain the anticipated results.

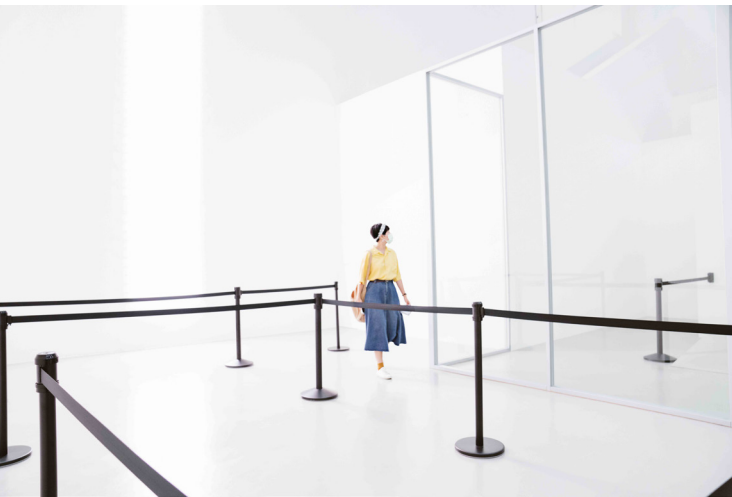
The act of queuing is the first scene one encounters in this work. The route leads to an inspection area that can only accommodate one person. In this space, participants must undertake a mission as a personal evaluation, or gather online with a small group of people, repeatedly confirming various details about life in order to complete an evaluation form. Participants become both performers and viewers, while also being viewed. Here, they complete self-expression and impression management, negotiating and navigating surveys to move on to the next “where.”

In this dynamic paradox balancing the concrete and the abstract, “how” becomes an invalid action. Nevertheless, before any goal is “valid,” are all “attempts” already activated in a future that has not yet been reached?





Photograph: Dabei Chin



Photograph: Dabei Chin

Concept, production, execution, design, technique, performance:
Guan-lin Chen, Mao-kang Chen, Tora Hsu, Chang-chih Huang,
Iggy Hung, Yin-chiao Liao, Yi-ling Tsai

Resident Island Dance Theatre

Being There

Live Performance
2020



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian

The explosion of the novel coronavirus has cast a pall of fear over the whole world. Creating distance between people and straining human relationships, the global pandemic has produced unprecedented challenges and negative impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder, mental derangement and anger under such oppressive conditions. How can we use dance to join people together in the most basic state of communication, connection and trust?

The dance animation *Body Talk* reminds us: “When we see others dance, our hearts dance with them.” Dance is not as straight and to the point as language. What dance gives us is a feeling, an understanding, an imagining. Once the viewer accepts it, it becomes an alternative form of perception transformed from elements in the immediate environment. It belongs to the individual (internally), and it belongs to the collective (the group that is gathered in the space). This work adopts the hyperlink as a metaphor. The signals that the audience gives (movements) are a hyperlink switch, and the dancers are a vehicle for receiving these signals, acting out details and interactive possibilities provided by the choreographer based on differences in the performance space from one day to the next.

On each of the six performance days, the choreographer will create connections through dance in different places in the exhibition, joining together the visitors, the exhibited works and the spaces. This is a dialogue between dance and the works, between the visitors and the dancers. And visitors will become the content of the work.

Photograph: Sam Chen



Photograph: Sam Chen



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Sam Chen



Photograph: Sam Chen



Photograph: Sam Chen

Concept & Direction: Chung-An Chang

DJ: Hung-Chih Chen

Collaborators: Shih-Yun Fang, Chung-Ying Weng, I-Hua Yeh

Project Manager: Sasa Hsiao

Administration: Pik-Ning Chen

Photograph: Sam Chen

Film Documentation: Ding-Tai Lin

Chih–Chung Chang

The Mistake on the Sea

Mixed Media installation

Drawings, images, sound, printed materials

Dimensions variable

2020



Photograph: Chih–Chung Chang

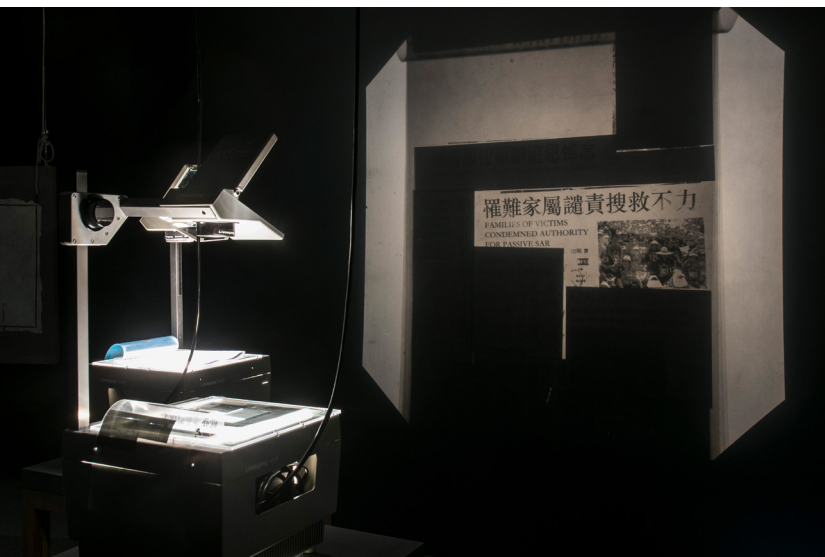
“A lengthy epic painting titled *Crossing the Sea* was recently brought to public attention, describing in great detail a historically unprecedented battle between humans from the land and underwater creatures, a confrontation between ships and the oceanic realms. Yet the core narrative of this conflict on the high seas remains unclear, because the text is damaged and fragmentary...”

In this fictitious, ambiguous alternate history, the blank spaces in the story’s denouement serve as an invitation to the visitor. By exploring, excavating and piecing together the various clues and fragments of information in the space, viewers can gradually build a conjecture about the content of the fragments, and then find a solution that is persuasive to themselves, realizing that the anti-fouling paint encasing the exterior of the ships seems to be the central key. However, before they take action, visitors must determine the values with which they identify. This choice will lead down very different paths of thought, which may lead to different or even conflicting positions. At this time, communication and dialogue become the only means to gain insight into the overarching situation.

This work attempts to reflect upon the hidden marine pollution that has been widespread in the shipbuilding industry from the mid-20th century to the present. Today, in an era of seemingly open information and internet communication, the situation has long been hidden and ignored. It also points to the reality that within the “defilement—anti-defilement” logic of the chemicals industry, humanity and nature cannot easily avoid tension and a zero-sum relationship.

Special Thanks:

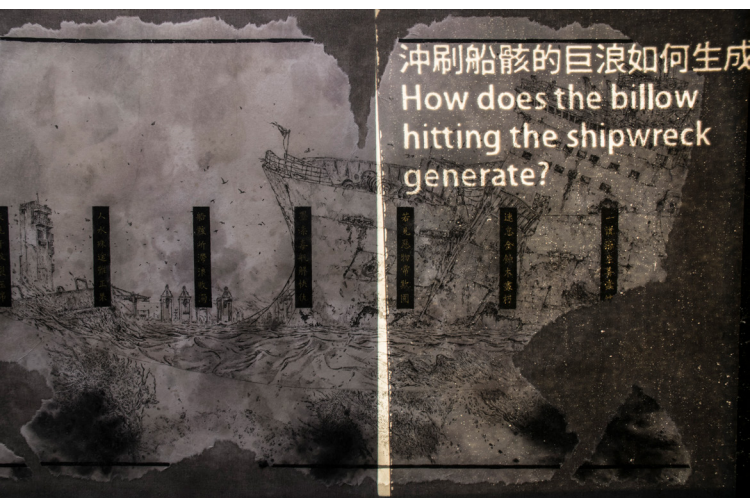
IONTU Prof. Yiing–Jang Yang, IONTU Prof. Hui–Ting Lin, and LAMY Taiwan



Photograph: Chih-Chung Chang



Photograph: Chih-Chung Chang



Photograph: Chih-Chung Chang

Motif Planning & Design Consultants

Shu Yuan Wu, Slow Geng

Heterotopia Garden

Installation

Plants

Dimensions variable

2020



Photograph: Slow Geng

A garden is a simulacrum of the world. What place other than a garden can one see birth and death, evanescence and immortality? It is a form of living art that evolves along with time. Here, one can see hope, beauty, power and fragility. Plants grow in perpetuity. The cycle of life and death revolves endlessly.

Michel Foucault believed that in contrast to the imperfection of the real world, the world in the mirror is a utopia, and the mirror through which we approach that utopia is a utopia as well. Beginning in a “garden,” plants may transform in pursuit of different strategies or exist on the land without changing, but human beings evolve over the course of time, as one age follows another. They may disappear due to diseases and wars. But nature never changes. *Heterotopia Garden* is a deliberately crafted artificial space (outdoor venue/living space/passage/flow/semi-flow/rest stop), a more perfect, seemingly real “heterotopia.” Throughout this mirrorlike world can be found the traces of human activity, subtly expressing people’s relationships with other people and the world, and an understanding of people living in their world.



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Zih-Sin Jian



Photograph: Slow Geng



Photograph: Slow Geng



Photograph: Slow Geng



Photograph: Slow Geng

The digital format of the catalogue is for the exhibition titled
 “Between Earth and the Sky: The Spiritual State of Our Times”
 which was on view from August 1 2020 to October 18 2020 at
 Taipei Fine Arts Museum Galleries 1A, 1B.

Director	Ping Lin
Cocurator	Jo Hsiao, Yi-wei Keng
Production	Jo Hsiao, I-ying Chiang
Exhibition Construction	Bo-hsin Chien
Marketing and Public Relations	Tze-chin Kao, Yen-ju Chou
Exhibition Maintenance	Jui-yu Cheng
AV Technicians	Yi-hsuan Kuo, Yung-en Huang, Huei-ming Chang
Lighting	Yi-ting Lee
Editor	Mao-kang Chen
English Translator	Brent Heinrich
Graphic Designer	Ming-wei Liuu (printed material), Placebo Studio (digital format)

First Edition: DEC. 2020

Title: Between Earth and the Sky ISBN: 978-986-546-415-8 (PDF)

Publisher: Taipei Fine Arts Museum

181 Zhongshan N. Road Sec. 3, Taipei 10461, Taiwan R.O.C.

Tel: 886-2-2595-7656 Fax: 886-2-2594-4104 www.tfam.museum

© 2020, Taipei Fine Arts Museum

The content of this file, including but not limited to its content, text, images, and future use or derivative works in various forms, is the exclusive property of the following individuals or organizations. Without express authorization or consent, it is prohibited to modify, quote, embed or reproduce, either in whole or in part, on the grounds of reasonable use.

Copyright of the artworks belongs to the artists.

Copyright of the articles belongs to the authors.

Copyright of the images belongs to the artists and photographers.