
The History of Video Art in Taiwan (1983-1999) from the Perspective of Auteur Theory

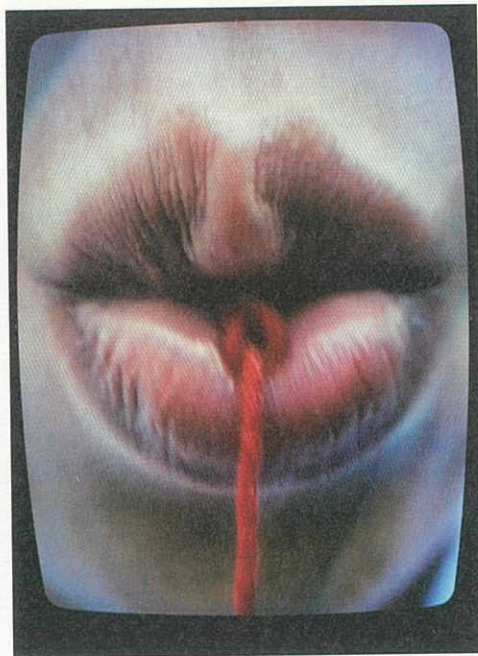
Editor: Wang Po-Wei

The history of video art in Taiwan has obscure origins, and its development cannot be chronicled on the assumption of linear progression. To faithfully outline the genealogy of video art in Taiwan and to give a full picture of its development, we must consider the intersection among different dimensions such as the career trajectory of individual artists and the generation gap.

Video art in Taiwan originated from the efforts of several artists who tried to integrate images into their installations or performances. However, these pioneering artists were not consciously aware of the fact that they were creating video artworks. The video artworks by the first generation of Taiwanese video artists such as Hung Su-Chen, Kao Chung-Li, Lu Ming-Te, Kuo I-Fen, and Chen Chieh-Jen were almost completed in such unawareness. Some other video artists of the first generation such as Wu Mali created several image artworks that did not convey profound "image-based" implications but simply took the form of "recordings."

Born in 1949, Hung Su-Chen earned her master's degree in filmmaking from San Francisco Art Institute in 1985. Living and working in the United States, Hung has been occasionally invited to stage exhibits in Taiwan as one of the pioneers in video image installation. Many contemporaneous artists were truly inspired by her approach of manipulating video images. In terms of the trajectory of her works, *East/West* (1984) symbolized the artist's struggle in reconciling two different cultures after she moved to the United States. This video featured the left and right parts of the artist's lips respectively speaking in Chinese and English on the content of her citizenship interview. *Sweet Red-I* (1986/87) was

a work combining performance art with video. On a more specific basis, the viewers entered a dark room and saw a beam of light illuminating not only the red string hung on the entrance but also the middle part of the artist's body at the other end of the room. Then the artist reached for the entrance as soon as she swallowed up a red string. She left red footprints that gradually faded away and disappeared on the white paper paved along her path towards the entrance because she had soaked her feet in red water with a red string tying on the thumb of her right foot. After she left the room, the television installed in the corner where the artist originally sat began to screen the scene featuring the artist's red



洪素珍 | 《蜜紅-1》 | 單頻道錄像 | 1986

Hung Su-Chen, *Sweet Red-I*, single channel video, 1986

lips slowly swallowing a red string. The artist created *On the Way Home* (1994) through the medium of a television screen, presenting what she saw in the train carriage and the scenery projected on the windows of the train on her way home. *The Kiss* (1996) was a powerful incarnation of the artist's reflections on interpersonal relationships in the telecommunication age. The images were faintly visible from the narrow opening between two televisions: a mouth passionately kisses another mouth on the screen of a television. Inspired by Brancusi's *The Kiss*, this work invoked the metaphor of two kissing mouths with a screen in between to satirize the fact that modern people know and interact with one another through the telecommunication rather than face-to-face contact.

The artist Kao Chung-Li lays greater stress on the question as to how technical conditions dictate the way of image production than Hung did, while the latter tends to prefer massive use of video images. Born in 1958, Kao graduated from National Academy of Arts (now National Taiwan University of Arts) in 1979.

Grooming was an image installation presented in Kao's first solo exhibition of photography in 1983. It consisted of a monitor and a variety of video cameras. Surveillance equipment was a novelty to the public at that time. Previously, the intercom with a built-in video camera was only available in premium apartments. It allows the hosts to confirm the identity of their visitors through the screen, which makes itself a monitor with the most straightforward function.

The materials used and the technique adopted by the artist in his first solo exhibition were so numerous and jumbled that included black-and-white photos, Polaroid, printed color photos, X-ray pictures, copies, mirrors, concrete acrylic images that imitate the endless mirror reflections, death masks, prostheses, burn marks, and photographic equipment. However, the artist neither planned to present the complexity of mirror image theory, nor related this

work to video art or new media. With monitor as the core element, the work *Grooming* primarily focused on images and imagery apparatus. The advancement in audio-visual technology today makes it hard to reproduce this work. On the one hand, it is hard to find the materials used in the original work nowadays. On the other hand, the artist believes that a mirror with an electrical plug is vapid to the viewers today. As a result, the replica is created as a new work by reference to the basic equipment and philosophy of the original with some adjustments.

Born in 1960, Chen Chieh-Jen graduated from the Arts and Craft Division, Fu-Hsin Trade and Arts School. He received the National Award for Arts in 2009. As a pioneering Taiwanese video artist, Chen has inspired many people's imagination about the potential of images in social practices. However, he himself became disoriented amidst images and social practices throughout the 1990s, namely the early post-martial law era.

In 1984, Chen's solo exhibition "Goodbye 25" originally scheduled to be held at the American Cultural Center was cancelled because all the works prepared for the exhibition failed to pass the government censorship. The exhibition was instead held at Shen-Yu Gallery later. One of the exhibited works is the famous single-channel video featuring a man who was made to wear a black hood and executed by shooting. This lost work left no draft, and Chen did not find the remaining footages until 2015. With regard to the work retitled as *Flash*, Chen recalled his original conception as follows: "as one of the performers who wore hoods in *Malfunction No. 3*, I felt disappointed after watching the documentary because I found the form of documentary failing to record my innermost feelings. In addition, the first bank robbery in Taiwan happened in 1982. During that time, the three oligopolistic television stations repeatedly screened the vague image of Lee Shih-Ke carrying a gun and crossing the bank counter filmed by the surveillance

camera in the bank. I was deep in contemplation of the scene that Lee crossed the bank counter because his action symbolized the transgression of the law. In addition, the gun he took from the policeman he killed also reminded me of the chronophotographic gun that appeared shortly in the history of film. The intangible innermost feelings, the robber who wore camouflage, the vague image filmed by the surveillance camera in the bank, the associations for gun, and the flickering scan lines on television collectively inspired me to film *Flash* in the form similar to the images captured by a surveillance camera.”

Different from Hung, Kao and Chen, Lu Ming-Te and Kuo I-Fen received rigorous academic training in media art when they studied abroad in Japan. As far as the two artists are concerned, videos carry not simply images but also profound implications of media.

Born in 1950, Lu Ming-Te received his master's degree from the School of Art and Design, University of Tsukuba, Japan. He teaches as a professor in the Graduate Institute of Interdisciplinary Art, National Kaohsiung Normal University.

Lu studied in Japan between 1980 and 1985 when the discussion on state-of-the-art technologies prevailed. In this context, he embarked on developing the system for his mixed media creation and the underlying philosophy for his subsequent creative practice. He further argued that “media is everything” in his master thesis. “Media, behavior, environment, and installation” served as the mainstream spirit, slogan and feature of artistic creation in that period. The use of installation technique resulted in media diversification, environmental concern, and codification with regard to the development of artworks. The preference over the technique of installation and the emphasis on theory substantially influenced the presentation of artworks that treat image as the medium. The viewers’

response to the technique of interactive installation was far stronger than that to the content of image and visual aesthetics. Installation as an incarnation and a concept of image obviously dictated the presentation of artworks in that period, which was clearly reflected in *The Silent Body* (1987), a work that Lu created in collaboration with Kuo I-Fen to be presented at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, and a work that aimed to explore the possibilities of image presentation as well as the pluralistic codification of image after the diversification of media.

Family I (1988) was a mixed-media artwork that consisted of twigs, a small television, plaster and bandages. Through the philosophical speculation over natural and artificial shapes in this work, Lu attempted to stimulate reflections on environmental protection and ecological restoration. *Southern Taiwan* (1989) was an environmental image installation (and the basis of another work *Ikaho*) which installed diverse media on the walls of the exhibition space. This on-site dynamic image installation indicated that images are undergoing digitalized and Internet-based development.

Born in 1951, Kuo I-Fen earned her master's degree from the University of Tsukuba, Japan in 1986. She serves as the head of the Department of Visual Communication Design, Shu-Te University.

After graduated from National Taiwan Normal University, the artist was enrolled in the University of Tsukuba, Japan in 1982 as a graduate student of Professor Yamaguchi Katsuhiko. The 1985 International Science and Technology Exposition held in Tsukuba attracted public interest in new technological media and transdisciplinary art. Professor Yamaguchi suggested Kuo to treat video installation as the subject of her study on the occasion of the entrance examination administered by the University of Tsukuba in October 1983. Having worked as a graduate student in Yamaguchi's laboratory a year before the entrance examination, Kuo

completed three video installations, namely *In the Corner*, *The Last Party*, and *The Quite Sound* at an unhurried pace. She presented her new video installation *The Wall-1* in September 1984, and published a seminal article on the development of video art in Taiwan titled "The World of Video Art: The Expansion of Visual Environment" in *Lion Art* in October of the same year.

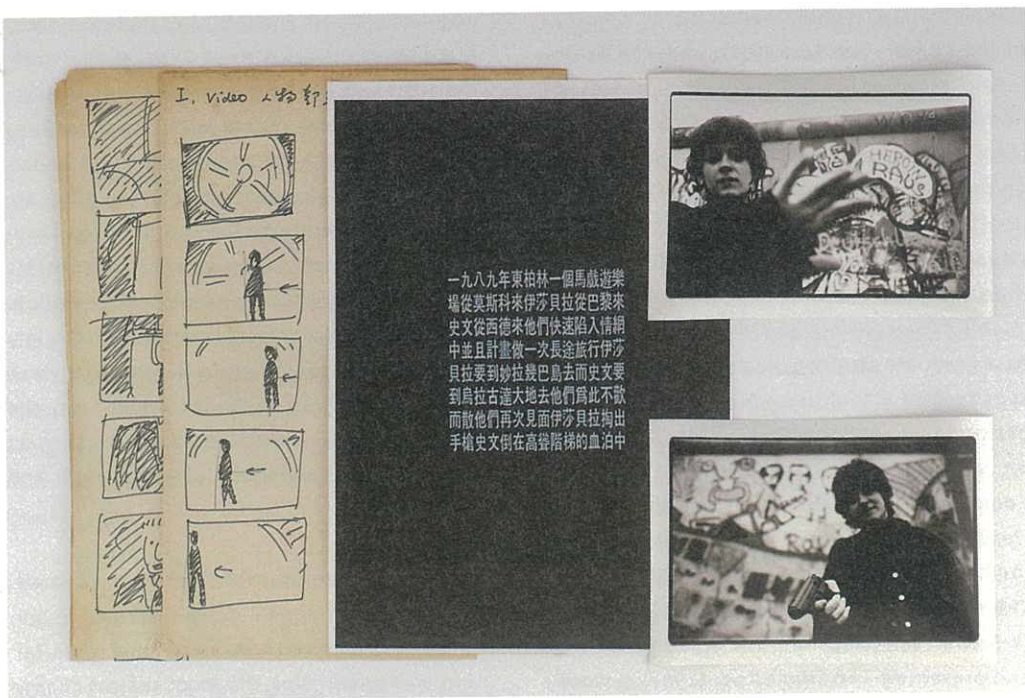
As a graduate student, Kuo blended the perspectives of visual art, social documentary, performance, and installation into her study on video art. She presented *Burying the Sound* in 1985 and *Dream in the Dream, Meditation on the Existence-I* in 1986 as the work for her graduate project titled "A Study on Video Installation Creation." She came back to Taiwan after finishing her study in Japan, and presented *The Silent Body* (1987), a work created in collaboration with Lu Ming-Te, in the exhibition "Experimental Arts – Action Space" hosted by Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

Despite Wu Mali's early adoption of image in her artworks, Wu has never treated video as the primary medium for her artistic creation. Born in 1957, the artist graduated from Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany. She is an associate professor and the director of Graduate Institute of Interdisciplinary Art, National Kaohsiung Normal University. After profound reflections on the social role of artists, she puts her understanding of art into practice with socially engaged artworks.

Democratic Vase (1991) was one of the pieces in her *Camouflage* series which satirized the political and social situations with ready-mades or by adopting, parodying and translating existing forms. *Democratic Vase* was created at the time when Taiwan-U.S. trade negotiations became a big bone of contention that sparked massive protests against the unfair treatment that the U.S. meted out to Taiwan. These protests were substantially different from those suppressed by the police. The Taiwanese government used these protests as leverage in its

negotiations with the U.S., and therefore tacitly approved their existence. Through this work, the artist sought to express that street protests are nothing more than flowers in vases. They seem to manifest the democratic value underlined by the Taiwanese society, yet they are virtually impotent against U.S. power in promoting free trade. Therefore, street protests may serve only as a specimen of decoration. In sum, the artist not only soothed her anxiety over images with Pop Art in the way of reverse takeover, but also criticized televisions, the then mainstream mass media, by working on the realistic assumptions of photograph and television.

The second generation of Taiwanese video artists was born around 1965 and studied in universities around 1988-89, at the time when Taiwan was undergoing the most radical change in its political structure. The political and social atmosphere prevailed in this period substantially influenced the way of thinking and even presentation of Taiwanese video artists of this generation. In terms of the use of media, the lifting of the ban on newspaper publications and political parties unleashed the wrath of civilian power that had been suppressed for a long time. A riotous profusion of television programs were screened with the wave of liberalization. The line of demarcation between public/private spheres shifted with the way of viewing inflicted by television as the mainstream mass medium. The public's horizons gradually stretched to the relationship between Taiwan and the international society. Wang Jun-Jieh, Yuan Goang-Ming, Chen Cheng-Tsai, and Lin Chun-Chi embarked on their careers as artists against this background. They had studied abroad as post-graduates and have taught in Taiwan since the end of the 20th century. The artists of this generation are sensitive to the vicissitudes of the mass media society and lay particular stress on the forms of visual aesthetics. They take the formal development and the transdisciplinary quality of visual presentation to heart.



一九八九年東柏林一個馬戲遊樂場從莫斯科來伊莎貝拉從巴黎來史文從西德來他們快速陷入情網中並且計畫做一次長途旅行伊莎貝拉要到拉曼巴島去而史文要到烏拉古達大地去他們為此不歡而散他們再次見面伊莎貝拉掏出手槍史文倒在高登階梯的血泊中

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Wang Jun-jieh precociously contributed to the early development of video art in Taiwan. We may even regard him as a first-generation video artist in terms of the timing of his creations. Born in 1963, the artist earned the degree of *Meisterschule* from Hochschule der Künste Berlin, Germany. He teaches as an associate professor in the Department of New Media Art, Taipei National University of the Arts, and serves as the director of the Center for Art and Technology in the same university.

Wang's video artworks created between 1984 and 1999 unquestionably echoed the course of world history in a delicate manner. As the winner of the Hsiung-Shih New Artists Award (1984), he filmed his maiden video artwork *The Variable Form* at the summer school organized by Cloud Gate Dance Theater. Treating Jackson Pollock, Yves Klein, Marcel Duchamp, and Lucio Fontana as the point of departure, this work not only blended performance art and improvisation with art history concepts, but also dealt with the intervention of newly emerged electronic media in contemporary art. After the lifting of martial law in the nascent democratized

Taiwan, he, without any source of reference, created five video artworks addressing a riotous profusion of issues ranging from the satire on sex and social taboos (*The Depth of the Epidermis* [1988]) to the criticism against mass media and political hegemony (*Image, Repeat, Image* [1986]; *The TV Channel Broadcasting Porn Everyday* [1988]; *FACE / TV* [1989]; *How Was History Wounded* [1989]). He was enrolled in Hochschule der Künste Berlin in 1989, a year when the Berlin Wall was pulled down and the Communism in Central and Eastern European states fell. He was astonished by these dramatic events. Several issues concerning politics, ideologies, aesthetics as well as the forms, market and power of art had been preying on his mind for so long that he lost the ability to create and even questioned the value of the existence of art. His passively reactionary state of mind in this period was clearly reflected in the works simulating low-quality B-movies or TV programs, such as *Killer Girl*, *Odyssee III* (1990), *Love, Die, Daredevil*, *Odyssee IV* (1991), *The Dragon, Phoenix, Wealth and Auspice Appetize Plate* (1992), and *Special Tiger's Testicle Soup* (1992). Subsequently, before he com-

pleted his studies in Germany, he criticized the consumerist society by transforming the absurdities of globalization and the political power embedded in it into large-scale virtual commodity installations such as *Little Mutton Dumplings for the Thirteenth Day* (1994), *Neon Urlaub* (1997), and *HB-1750* (1998).

Born in 1965, Yuan Goang-Ming earned his master's degree from the Department of Media Art, Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, Germany in 1997. He is an associate professor and the head of the Department of New Media Art, Taipei National University of the Arts.

The artist is highly adept at combining symbolic metaphors with technological media. His works not only vividly illustrate contemporary human conditions, but also poetically express human perception and consciousness. His early experiments on images were inspired by experimental film and hand-held video camera. In this period, he not only engaged in developing new forms of image narratives, but also focused on the shift of meaning caused by the deliberate dislocation between image and installation in his video artworks. His experiments continued until the mid-1990s. The series of *About Millet's The Angelus* (1985-86), *Out of Position* (1987), *On the Way Home* (1989), *Fan* (1992), *Kid · Rail* (1994), and *Pass* (1996) were all created within this context. Yuan delved into image and interactive technology when he was pursuing his master's degree in Germany. His video artwork *Fish on Dish* (1992) was highly praised by the art community in Taiwan upon its screening. His interactive installation *The Reason for Insomnia* (1998) further gave him international visibility. He returned to Taiwan after finishing his study in Germany, and found that the key to capture the nature of image lies not so much in technological advancement as in contemplating the true meaning of image, which prompted him to extensively explore potential forms for presenting images.

Born in 1964, Lin Chun-Chi earned his master's degree from the Department of Media Art, Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, Germany. He teaches as a senior lecturer in the Department of New Media Art, Taipei National University of the Arts.

The first peak of his creativity fell from the feeling of loneliness aroused by his studying in Germany and the anxiety caused by his introspective exploration. The works created between 1996 and the time before he re-settled in Taiwan not only dealt with identity and subjective consciousness but also concerned the process of self-awareness. In terms of the presentation form of art, he believes that we must take aesthetics into account when developing technologies if we really want to reform the society fundamentally. This belief was reflected directly in *I Wanna Talk to You* (1995), *Das Glas II* (1997), *Ich suche mich, bis ich es nicht mehr ertragen kann* (1997), and *The Missing Link* (1997). In sum, the artist tends to use different media in creating new self-images, and simultaneously subverts these external images with critical performances.



林俊吉 | 《我找尋我自己，直到我無法忍受為止》 | 行為表演、單頻錄像 | 表演時間約3小時 | 1997

Lin Chun-Chi | *Ich suche mich, bis ich es nicht mehr ertragen kann* | Performance, single channel video | about 3 hours | 1997

Born in 1966, Chen Cheng-Tsai earned his master's degree from the Department of Media Art, Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, Germany. He teaches as a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Fine Arts, National Taiwan University of Arts.

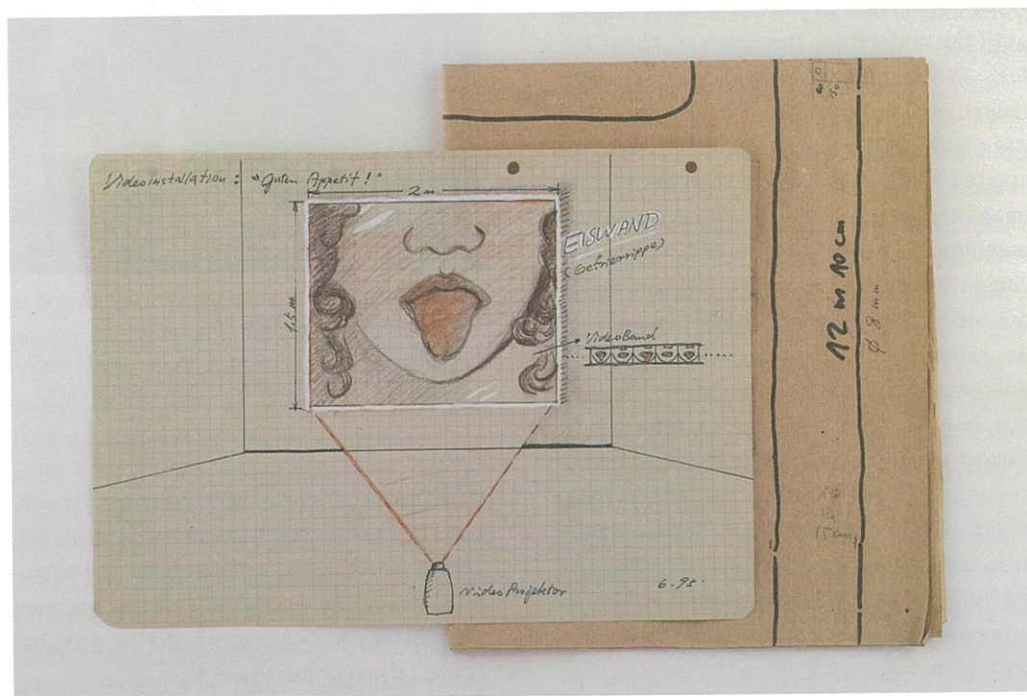
The artist has undergone several phases in his career as an artist since the late 1980s. The first phase (1985-90) featured expressive paintings, the arcane oriental vocabulary, and Surrealism. The second phase (1993-96) explored the time and space in temporal art. The third phase (1996-98) focused on new media, poetry, moving image and space, as well as virtuality and reality. The fourth phase (1998 to the present) featured body, image, society and history. The integration of video, photography, and mixed media is Chen's major presentation form, in which he explores the image planes and installation spaces shaped by different imagery tools. As far as the artist is concerned, the sequence of history of images, paintings, TV screens, computer screens, and video projection represents the evolution from closed media to open ones and the transition from linear to nonlinear exploration. The first three phases happened to chart the path towards video art that many artists of this generation have trodden.

The third generation of Taiwanese video artists emerged around the late 20th century. Most of them had undergone years of academic training in video art that is more "orthodox" than those

received by the first two generations. They are far more skilled than their predecessors in terms of media manipulation and concept formulation. What is worth noticing is that the connotation of and the media employed in "video art" have expanded and diversified since the artists of this generation began to flourish. In this period, cinema largely replaced television. The former has become not only the intended target of video artists' reflections but also the counterpoint of video art in Taiwan. In the meantime, digital media have gradually become vital tools for Taiwanese video artists of this generation. Some video artists who belong to the first two generations have also adopted digital tools as the media for their artworks, which also characterized this new era. When utilizing digital tools, however, most of these artists focused not so much on the level of reflections as on the level of techniques.

Tsui Kuang-Yu was born in 1974, and received his BFA from Taipei National University of the Arts.

The artist has been trying to deal with the adaptive relationship between the social system and humanity from a biological perspective. He also seeks to question and redefine the existing norms



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Love, 1996.
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and institutions with actions. Displaying deviant behavior and experiments, the artist has developed a set of methods for adapting to the environment and redefining the real world. He treats this kind of behavior as a medium to measure the level of tolerance of the environment, thereby highlighting the absurdities behind the social values and realities to which we have been accustomed with repetitive behavior performed by himself. *Spring Action I* (1995) was a work in his series about springs. The artist put several wooden boards equipped with springs along the flooded corridor and ran back and forth on these boards until he fell into the water, thereby visualizing the physical limits on mutual adaptation and dislocation adjustment between the artist and the wooden boards. In *An Imitation: Mimicry* (1996), the artist tried his best to imitate the plants he saw. He regarded the behavior as a shortcut and a training to being invisible. This concept was further refined as the theme of his later work *The Shortcut to the Systematic Life: Superficial Life* (2002-05). In *The Welcome Rain Falling from the Sky* (1997), the artist set out a simple rule of game for the player, a game in which the player had to dodge the objects such as potted plants, televisions and motorcycles falling from above. This game could be regarded as an exemplary measurement of the process of a successful adaptation to dangerous circumstances.

Born in 1972, Lee Kuang-Wei is a director who earned his BFA from Taipei National University of the Arts and MFA from Kyushu Institute of Design, Japan.

His work *Symbiosis* is a video installation created in 1993 and reproduced in 2015. The replica is an identical copy of the original in terms of appearance and structure. However, the former is produced with a totally different technology from that of the latter. In other words, digital technology used for creating the replica replaces the original analogue video without undermining its idea and spirit. When the artist was conceiving *Symbiosis* in 1993, he found that the expression of human beings was going to be very similar to that of a television

because the latter influenced and changed the former in an unobtrusive and imperceptible manner. The status of image in terms of “representation” and “recording” resembles a shadow behind “the recorded” casted by the light. By way of comparison, the memory capability of “the recorded” (be it a human being or an event) seem to be inferior to the recording capability of images in terms of time and space. As a result, the fate of interdependence and entanglement befalls on memories and images, for we rely heavily on the latter to conjure or even reshape the former.

Born in 1969, Peng Hung-Chih earned his BFA from National Taiwan Normal University and MFA from San Francisco Art Institute. The use of “substitutes” was the characteristic signature of his early works because he was haunted by the identity issue throughout that period. He regarded “substitutes” as the most appropriate medium for asserting identities. As a result, the artist’s early works were characterized by the perspective shift between the viewers and the substitutes.

One-Eye-Ball and *Siao-Pai* were two sub-projects of his *Eyeball Displacement Project* launched in 1999. The widespread use of surveillance video cameras at that time attracted his attention because they can be used in the spaces where human body cannot reach. Such a quality formed a solid visual foundation for non-anthropocentric ethics. *One-Eye-Ball* was a wearable sculpture that incorporates the viewers as part of it. The sculpture was not completed until the viewers had experienced it. A display screen was installed in the helmet with a camera at the end of the trunk, making itself an experimental machine designed to falsify anthropocentric ethics. *Siao-Pai* was a video sculpture developed from a documentary film. The artist installed a surveillance video camera on the stray dog Siao-Pai saved by his aunt. The camera recorded what the dog saw in its living surroundings and in the exhibition venue. Then the documentary was screened in a loop on the television installed in a stainless cage. The images swayed with the dog’s move-

ment, from which we witnessed the mutual affections between the pet and its owner as well as the adventure in the urban jungle different from the quotidian existence of human beings.

Born in 1972, Lee Ji-Hong earned his BFA from Taipei National University of the Arts and MFA from Long Island University, New York.

The artist develops his creative concepts by reference to his real-life experiences, and tries to detect differences in the repetition of simple or meaningless actions that people routinely take in their quotidian existence. For example, he used to walk around the square of Regent Taipei for twenty-four hours, rake the falling leaves on a wide refuge island in Taipei for a month, and wipe the windows of IT Park and Hong-Gah Museum for a month. Photography and video installation are the primary media for his works. As far as the artist is concerned, *Taipei Station* is a wormhole between two different worlds, a transfer hub between home and the external environment. In this transitional space, he encountered no acquaintances but new faces. Hence, *Taipei Station* was a work through which the artist attempted to record the first encounters there within a day in 1995, in which the artist invited a total of eighty-one strangers and took a picture with each of them, thereby stopping the efflux of time at the moment when the camera shutter clicked.

Born in 1971, Lin Chi-Wei undertook graduate studies at National Institute of the Arts, with a concentration in traditional arts. He earned a Diploma from Le Fresnoy, France. The artist is interested in French literature, traditional art and audio-visual art. He used to participate in the noise group "Zero and Sound Liberation Organization." He has released electronic music albums, presented video artworks, and delivered multimedia performances. His works in recent years are mainly related to his earlier field research on folk beliefs. Many of his sound works are totally based on his interaction with the audience on site.

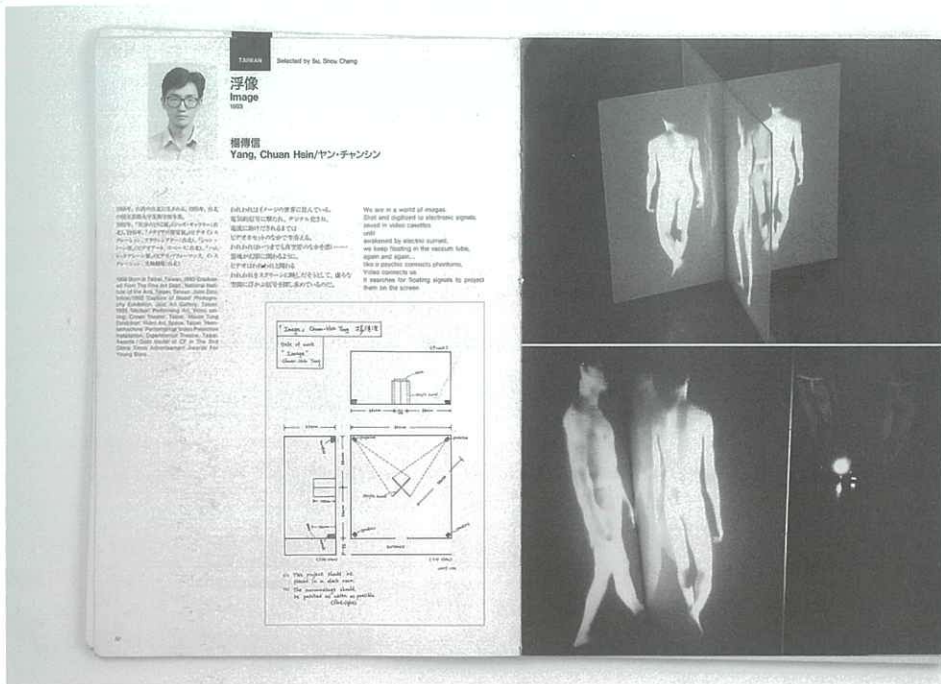
In collaboration with Wu Chung-Wei, Ma Huei-Chong, Liu Po-Li, and Dino, Lin created *Video Brut* (1997) shot at a factory in Guishan, Taoyuan City. *Video Brut* was not a documentary about the factory but was closely associated with his friends who retreated to Guishan after Taipei Broken Life Festival. In this video, Ma Huei-Chong makes fire and walks barefoot in the wilderness. He also builds a stove with mud. The shooting scene is located in the mountain near the factory. The electronic noise is created by Dino and post-produced by Liu Po-Li. The subjects of this video include the bricks in the factory, the hole on a television, fire making with stones, and a goldfish jumping out of the flames.

Born in 1968, Yang Chuan-Hsin graduated from the Department of Fine Arts, National Institute of the Arts (now Taipei National University of the Arts).

The artist's work *Image* (1993) screened in this exhibition encourages our reflections on the relationship between the image of human beings and the technologies developed in different ages. As far as the artist is concerned, modern people have transcended the confines of time and space with advanced electronic imagery technology, thereby stretching their horizons to the extreme and creating their own understanding of self-image. The communications among people has been relying on the transmission of massive electronic images in a greater and greater manner. People's images, facial expressions and voices are transformed into digital signals and transmitted through the optical fibers to the machines that decode the signals to reproduce the images and voices. In this context, everyone becomes a psychic who can identify, visualize, and talk with the phantoms wandering in the electronic space via computer screens. This is the age of the image in which everyone's body and thoughts are digitalized in the blink of an eye into a momentary phantom sealed up together with other images in the magnetic tape, waiting to be waked up by the next electric current and walking in be-

「第五屆福井錄像藝術雙年展」畫冊
楊傳信 | 《浮像》 | 1993 (李
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Yang Chuan Hsin's *Image* in
the The 5th Fukui Video Art
Biennial, 1993. (Catalogue
provided by Kee Kuang-Wei)



tween the electron tube.

Born in 1959, Huang Wen-Hao graduated from the Department of Plant Biology, Chinese Culture University. He is the co-founder of IT Park and the CEO of Digital Art Center, Taipei. His early works took the form of installation and emphasized the experiment on creative media, which earned him the fame as a pioneer of bio-art in Taiwan.

Mind's Eye was one of the works in his solo exhibition “(What I Think) – (What I Do) = Me” held at IT Park in 1996. After this solo exhibition, the artist spent years contemplating and did not engage in artistic practice until he established the Etat Media Lab with Ku Shih-Yung, Alf Chang and Wang Fu-Jui in 2000. *Mind's Eye* reflected the artist's state of mind at that time when he felt frustrated with the exploration of art and excited about the coming of the information age. He could sooth his anxiety over the vicissitudes of life only through introspective reflections, which served as the context in which the work was gestated. Inspired by *Ghost in the Shell* directed by Mamoru Oshii, the artist has fertile imagination about the confines of body and the desire for free soul. A hundred glasses

filled with water reflected the images that were projected from the leather puppet's heart to its eyes, which seemed to be a hundred escape routes as far as the artist was concerned.

At the turn of the century and before new technologies ushered us in the era of digital networks, video art in Taiwan evolved from the initial stage affected by installation and performance art to the late 1990s when artists began to reflect on the rigid confines that television and cinema imposed on people's quotidian existence. In view of the fact that the “traditions” and “histories” of video art in Taiwan did not evolve into robust regime and cognitive framework before the emergence of the third generation of Taiwanese video artists, what we can do is to establish the early genealogy of video art in Taiwan by reference to several correlated yet not causal factors such as artists' re-orientation in their creative media and career paths (particularly their educational and vocational adjustment) as well as the changes in political and social conditions, mainstream mass media, and consumption patterns.