

Talk Show

A discussion of the development of video art in Taiwan from the personal perspectives of Wang Jun-jieh 王俊傑 (artist), Yuan Goang-ming 袁廣鳴 (artist) and Professor Su Shou-cheng 蘇守政 (Professor at the National Institute of the Arts in Taiwan and Director of the Technological Art Centre at NIA), in conversation with Shen Yi-ning 沈怡寧.

Question: *How does one enter the world of video art? Would you describe the exhibitions or individual artists that influenced you at this time?*

Wang Jun-jieh: My interest in images was initiated during my senior high school days. I spent many hours watching films, particularly European ones of the 1960s. This influenced me and created a strong desire to evolve into work in this area. I produced my first video in 1984. After having been awarded the "Promising Newcomer Award" by Hsiung Hsih Art Magazine, one of the judges, Mr Chiang Hsun, invited me to teach at the Yunmen Dance Troupe's summer school. There, I introduced the dancers to a new facet of fine art, and thus began my experimental film work. I combined my previous film techniques into the media of video. Since I already had an interest in drama, this also allowed me the opportunity to combine performing and mixed media arts.

During this period, video art was not being discussed in schools, and my main reservoirs of information came from three sources. First of all, art magazines such as Hsiung-Hsih Art Magazine played an important role. Su Shou-cheng and Lu Ching-fu introduced artists such as Nan Jun Paik who were active and influential in the 1960s. However, these introductions were very general, and video art was only considered another medium for expressing creativity in the avant-garde field.

Secondly, German and American Cultural Centres introduced video art from their own collections, and through their academic exchange activities, video art was promoted.

Finally, Fine Art Museums were only slightly influential, as they tended to be somewhat conservative in their attitude and approach, and rarely promoted new media. The first exhibition that included video was the German Video Art Exhibition, held in the 1980s. A few of the installations

displayed constituted the first official introduction of video art to Taiwan.

Before going overseas in 1989, my video equipment was the ordinary domestic type. When I returned from abroad, I rented a studio and some professional equipment. In both the media and in schools, there was still very little information about video art, and of course we had no Internet at that time. I was attracted by the special effects element of video, to such an extent that I occasionally sidelined the work's content. I felt special effects separated video art from other art media.

Yuan Goang-ming: 1987 was my second year in the art department of university. I was experiencing an enormous creative block and found myself unable to use traditional art media to express my ideas. Fortunately, at that time, I visited the German Video Exhibition at the Fine Art Museum. My art perspective was instantly changed. I was eager to experiment with this new and exciting media. My frustrations with regard to the lack of information about video art were similar to those of Jun-jieh.

Su Shou-cheng: When I went to Japan in 1982, I realised video art already had a history of over ten years there. Japan had been experimenting with computer/video art during the 1960s and 1970s, and with the backing from their Cultural Ministry, Tsukuba University's experimental art school had begun to experiment with new media art. Both the university's photographic and editing equipment was of a highly technical specification. Professor Yamaguchi Katsuhiko brought together a group of talented individuals working within the video, computer, laser imaging/lighting and artificial intelligent art. This group was the foundation of the ART UNIX GROUP, which concentrated on promoting undergraduate video art.

The first artists to use video technology in Japan came from the generation involved in experimental film in the

