Beyond Islands: Contemporary Art of Taiwan and East Asia

11-12 June 2014

Lecture Theatre 1, Minto House, 20 Chambers Street, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH1 1JZ, Scotland (Map) (Download Programme)

History of Art at the University of Edinburgh hosts an Spotlight Taiwan Art Forum on contemporary East Asian Art, focusing on artists who received aboriginal Taiwanese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Western art inspirations and developed their own art into an unique visual presentation with a great diversity in East Asia now. Through the study of contemporary artists and policies in collecting and exhibiting Asian art in British national institutions and centres in the US, this event poses ‘Beyond Island’ as main theme and addresses four important strands in the making of and exhibiting contemporary art: “Artistic Practise,” "Writing ‘Histories’ of Contemporary Art,” "Local Colour and Global Vision: Exhibitions outside Asia,” and “Policy Development and Art Commissions: Challenges and Prospects.” The forum will focus on the challenges of staging East Asian art across lines of cultural difference, institutional affiliation and the boundaries between art and design. The programme aims to put the contemporary art in Taiwan and East Asia in a global context by investigating its artists, networks and policy development. It will be opened to public by reservation.

This event is kindly supported by Spotlight Taiwan: Contemporary Taiwanese Art, Culture and Cinema in Scotland, The Ministry of Culture (R.O.C., Taiwan), and History of Art, Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh.

Spotlight Taiwan Lecture: Artistic Practise

11 June 2014, 15:00 - 17:30

Introduction by Roderick Whitfield (University of London)

15:10-16:10 Pao-Shia Hsueh (Tainan National University of the Arts; Artist)
“Hybrid Reality of Abstract Painting: My Artist Journey”

16:10-17:30 Chieh-Jen Chen (Artist)
“Post-Photographic Art and History Writing” (Lecture and Screening)

*Art Forum speakers and chairs are invited to dinner at The Cellar Door at 18:30, hosted by The Taipei Representative Office in Edinburgh
Contemporary Art of Taiwan and East Asia

12 June 2014, 9:00 – 17:30

09:00 Registration

Panel 1 ‘Writing Histories’ of Contemporary Art
Chaired by Roderick Whitfield (University of London)
09:30-10:10 Aida Yuen Wong (Brandeis University)
“After Liu Guosong: Contemporary Shuimo in Taiwan and Hong Kong”
10:10-10:50 Shih-Ming Pai (National Taiwan Normal University)
“Remembering, Being Remembered and Re-Rememberization: The Historical Materiality and Image Narrative of Post-War Photography in Taiwan”
11:10-11:50 Chia-Ling Yang (University of Edinburgh)
“Will Things Ever Get Better?-Ecology and Self-Displacement in Contemporary Art of Taiwan and China”
11:50-12:30 Su-Hsing Lin (Tainan National University of the Arts)
“The Art of Picture Book in Taiwan and Its Network of Signification”

Panel 2 Local Colour and Global Vision: Exhibitions outside Asia
Chaired by Frances Fowle (Scottish National Gallery)
13:30-14:10 Young-Sook Pak (University of London)
“Tradition and Innovation: Three Masters of Korean Contemporary Art”
14:10-15:00 An-Yi Pan (Cornell University)
“Exhibiting Culture as a Soft Power Strategy – the Role of Taipei Cultural Center, NY”
15:00-15:40 Wenny Teo (The Courtauld Institute of Art)
"Of Islands and Prisons: Not Taiwan, Not China at the 2013 Venice Biennale"

Panel 3 Policy Development and Art Commissions: Challenges and Prospects
Chaired by Andrew Patrizio (University of Edinburgh)
16:10-16:50 Sook-Kyung Lee (Tate Research Centre: Asia-Pacific)
“Beyond a Dichotomy: Tate and the Art of Asia Pacific”

16:50-17:30 Simon Groom (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art)

“Keeping it Real”

17:30-18:00 Discussion and Reception

*Art Forum speakers and chairs are invited to dinner at The Vittoria at 18:30, hosted by the Spotlight Taiwan, University of Edinburgh.

Abstracts and Biography of Speakers

**After Liu Guosong: Contemporary Shuimo in Taiwan and Hong Kong**

Aida Yuen Wong

Faculty of Fine Arts, Brandeis University, U.S.A.

Taiwan and Hong Kong are the “other Chinas” that usually receive separate treatment not just from the Mainland but also from each other. This paper considers a potentially common thread that ties the modern/contemporary art of these two places through reference to Liu Guosong (b. 1932). For two decades between 1971 and 1992, this “Taiwanese” innovator of water-ink (shuimo) painting actually taught and practiced in Hong Kong, influencing a whole generation. His deconstructed brush strokes via abstraction and surface manipulation are well documented. Focusing on water-ink experiments in Taiwan and Hong Kong that build upon as well as diverge from Liu’s approach, this paper considers more recent re-conceptualizations of a traditional medium and the problématique of Pan-Chinese aesthetics.

**Brief Biography:** Aida Yuen Wong (Ph.D, Columbia University) is Associate Professor of Art History and Chair of East Asian Studies at Brandeis University, U.S.A. She is a scholar of modern Asian art history, Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies in 2002-2003 and 2012-2013, Field Editor of Chinese Books for CAA.Reviews, and Associate Editor of the art journal Modern Art Asia. Among her many publications are Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China (University of Hawai'i Press,
2006) and the edited volume Visualizing Beauty: Gender and Ideology in Modern East Asia (Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

Remembering, Being Remembered and Re-Memberization: 
The Historical Materiality and Image Narrative of Post-War Photography in Taiwan

Shih-Ming Pai
Department of Fine Arts, National Taiwan Normal University

Photography utilizes a type of image text and historical materials more so than any other medium of visual culture, because the visual way in which it records reality makes it easier to stimulate the historical imagination and cultural identity of the viewer. Moreover, in post-modernist society time, space, concepts, identity and method of viewing are repeatedly deconstructed and reconstructed. As such, images transcend the material existence that originally served as an historical object and through the act of conveyance, the diversity of display media and the critical transformation of ideas become an “arena” reflecting the ideology and identity of the artist. It is the material transcendence of photography or images that constantly increases the distance between the viewer and historical “reality” and the visual history formed by contemporary photography and images is no longer a matter of one single act, record or report, it has rather become the presentation of an historical process defined by constant reformulation, transcending and multiple interpretations within such dichotomies as “otherness/elimination of otherness,” “fixation/non fixation,” “memory/becoming memory.”

The conceptual and technical development of photography in modern Taiwanese history can be traced back to the colonial rule of western powers and Japan and has been an integral part of modern art history and visual culture for more than a century. In those 100 years, whether anthropological photography, realistic photography, photo-reportage, commercial photography, salon photography, pictorialism, rural photography, eco photography and even the popular digital photography of today, the visual history created by Taiwanese photography reflects the process of visual reconstruction based on the change from the colonial to post colonial era. Photography that should reflect the historical materialism of Taiwan, especially in the post war period and the beginning of the totalitarian rule of the KMT, came under the absolute control of unprecedented political
forces and was therefore reduced to the role of “other” having lost the power to observe, criticize, interpret and create thought provoking images and stripped of its visual identity.

Beginning in the 1980s realistic photography began to ask “What is Taiwan?” and Engaged in a visual exploration that was long-term, involved multiple points of view and akin to field research in nature. On the one hand this involved recording the omnipresent otherness of “colonial ruins,” on the other it used the visual process of rural and local people to reconstruct images and historical memory based on the elimination of otherness. This became the earliest experience in the search for a Taiwanese identity in the post-war period. After the end of Martial Law and especially since the beginning the New Millennium rapid democratization, the removal of totalitarian control of society and changes in the way people reflected on Taiwanese values had a huge impact on Taiwanese photography. As a result Taiwanese photography entered an era in which it became far more critical on political, societal, communal, cultural and gender issues. At this point, photography became much more than a tool of consumption and was transformed into a vehicle for the showcasing of new ideas on the reformulation of history, opposition to otherness and the establishment of cultural subjectivity and identity in the post war period.

**Brief Biography:**
Andrew Shih-Ming Pai received a Ph.D from the Kyoto University, is an Associate Professor of Asian art history at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). Began with arts from the Silk Road in Tang dynasty, his research focuses on cultural interactions between the West and the East and expands to art of modern China, Japan and Taiwan. Pai is currently a member of peer-review committee of Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, National Science Council and Department of Cultural Affairs of Taipei City Government. He serves as a scholarly consultant at Academia Sinica Digital Center, Advisory Committee of NTNU, and Cultural Affairs Bureau of Tainan City Government and Kinmen County in Taiwan. In past years, he has accomplished successfully in various academic works and developed a broad spectrum of knowledge in East Asian art and culture. His publication on modern and contemporary art includes articles “Post-War Avant-Garde? -Li Chung-Sheng’s Modern Painting and His Approaches to Post-War Taiwanese Art” (2014), “‘Sketch from Life’ and the Formation of Modern Landscape: An Analysis of Chen Cheng-Po’s Early Watercolours (1913-1924) and Their Significance in Modern Paintings” (2013), “A Review on Study of Modern Art in Taiwan in the Past 20 and 30 Years” (2012), “‘Returning to the Classics, Trusting the Ancient:’ Luo

Will Things Ever Get Better?-Ecology and self-Displacement in Contemporary Art of Taiwan and China

Chia-Ling Yang
Department of History of Art, University of Edinburgh

With growing concern on environmental issues in Asian art, this paper puts forth the essential concept of ecology of place and how it retains a central role in artistic representation across contemporary China and Taiwan. This topic will engage humanistic geography’s wide-ranging applicability and the interconnectedness of people with their landscape reimagined or missing. It will also address to the challenges for the artists living in urban milieu seeking for returning to Nature and the past, and how their works reflect such self-displacement in built-environment.

The Art of Picture Book in Taiwan and Its Network of Signification

Su-Hsing Lin
Department of Art History, Tainan National University of the Arts

The art of picture book was already introduced into Taiwan in early 20th century, and the new form of visual text in Taiwan had a close relationship with the intellectual trends in modern Japan, Europe, and America. The period after 1945 marked an enormous transformation in the arts in Taiwan, the change was not an intrinsic one, but was rather the result of political transition. Although Japanese ended their rule in Taiwan, the artistic influence still existed in the 1950s. In the 1960s, the art world in Taiwan was strongly influenced by the artistic trend in the United States. Since the Cold War period, both the government and private publishing houses devoted to introducing the picture books of America and Europe to Taiwanese readers. Why and how the picture books of Europe or Japan were introduced into in Taiwan, and how did the readers in Taiwan begin “to know and even to interact with the world” via the images on picture books? What were the government and publishing houses’ publishing policies? And what kind of artistic influence could be found on the art scene in Taiwan in late 20th-century? These will be the feature questions exploring in this paper. Besides the influence of Japanese and America, native trends also began to grow in Taiwan since the 1990s. In this paper, I will also use the examples of picture books to discuss why and how the graphic art became important art scene in Taiwan. Not only did picture books reflect a significant page of the cultural interactions, but the visual texts also played a major role in disseminating and changing the visual literacy.

Brief Biography: Su-Hsing Lin received her PhD at Ohio University, and is an assistant professor in history of art at Tainan National University of the Arts. Among her recent publications are the book Feng Zikai’s Art and the Kaiming Book Company: Art for the People in Early Twentieth Century China (豐子愷與開明書店—中國20世紀初的大眾藝術, Si’an, 2008) and articles “Paintings on the Preservation of Life and Modernization of Buddhist art in Early Twentieth-century China,” in The Artistic Traditions of Non-European Cultures Vol. 2. (Warsaw/Torun, 2013) and “Archaeology, National Identity, and Book Design in Republican China,” in Poland-China: Art and Cultural Heritage (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2011), “Chahua and Tonghua: the Illustrated Books and ‘Zeitgeist’ in the Republican China,” in Sztuka Chin (Art of China, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo
Tradition and Innovation: Three Masters of Korean Contemporary Art

Young-Sook Pak
University of London, SOAS

No artists would claim that their art is solely the product of their own invention without any reference to and inspiration from tradition, memory and personal experience. The underlying accumulation of these is the source of artistic innovation. The richer cultural tradition artists possess, the clearer will their artistic sensibility be manifested. Technical advancements in an artist’s lifetime can provide the impetus to mobilize such means to create a new art form as Paik Namjun’s (1932-2006) work with television has demonstrated. In this paper I shall look into the works by Korean artists Kim Hwan-gi (1913-1974), Suh Do-ho (born 1962) and Chon Kwang-yong (born 1944) under this aspect. Through their training and experience outside their native country yet imbued with their understanding of traditional Korean culture, these artists have created aesthetically refined works of art in contemporary Asian art.

Brief Biography: Youngsook Pak received her PhD. in East Asian Art History from the University of Heidelberg, is a distinguished scholar in Korean art and culture. She established and taught Korean art history at SOAS, University of London. After her retirement, she was invited to Yale University as Korea Foundation Distinguished Visiting Professor. She is working on various research projects including Esoteric Buddhism and Buddhist Art in East Asia (Yale conference volume), on Koryō Paintings, the Silk Road and ancient Korea, and contemporary Korean art. She is frequently invited to give lectures at Yale University, Harvard University, Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts, National Taiwan University, and national institutions in Korea. As an eminent scholar with numerous publications, her most recent articles includes "Koryo (918-1392) and Liao (907-1125)"

**Exhibiting Culture as a Soft Power Strategy – the Role of Taipei Cultural Center, NY**

An-Yi Pan
Department of History of Art, Cornell University

This presentation explores Taipei Cultural Center’s role in promoting culture from Taiwan. Prior to the early 2000s, the Center operated mainly from the rented space at the Rockefeller Center in midtown Manhattan, New York City. The end of their lease then gave rise to the opportunity of a new strategy to “exhibit” culture. Under this new strategy, the Center has become proactive in introducing art and literature from Taiwan to various university and local communities, penetrating deeper into the fabric of American society. I argue that this change of direction signifies a new period of diplomacy in utilizing “soft power” to promote Taiwan and instilling a cultural identity in the minds of wider audience in the United States.

This presentation will demonstrate, with quantitative and qualitative data, how over the past decade the Center has served as a bridge between art groups from Taiwanese and American communities. As a non-profit organization, the Center has successfully helped groups from Taiwan reach American audiences that were previously more diffuse and elusive. The presentation examines the variety of art activities the Center has organized to demonstrate how Taiwan’s “soft power” strategy in exhibiting culture has been a means of affirming a cultural identity.

**Brief Biography:** An-Yi Pan, Ph.D. (1997) in Art History, University of Kansas, is Associate Professor of Chinese Art History at Cornell University. He researches Buddhist Art with special interest in the relation between Chinese intellectual participation in Buddhism and Buddhist painting, Buddhist architecture in relation to precepts, monastic hieratical structure, liturgical as well as spiritual spaces, and trans-continental blossoming of Buddhist teachings and art. He also devotes research to Modern Chinese art and
Contemporary Taiwanese art, investigating the impact of colonialism and current geo-political influence on Chinese and Taiwanese art from the late 19th century to now. He is the co-organizer of the International Symposium on Taiwanese Art in Commemoration of Yin-tang Tsai’s 100th Year Anniversary (Taipei, November 2009) and “Aesthetics and Theories in Chinese Ink Painting” International Conference at the Asia Society (New York City, 2008). Among his many publications are Nature Imagined and Observed - 500 Years of Chinese Painting (Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, 2010), Painting Faith: Li Gonglin (1049-1106) and Northern Song Buddhist Culture (Leiden: Brill, 2007), the edited volume Contemporary Taiwanese Art in the Era of Contention (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2004), and articles “History Remaking and Cultural Identity: Subjectivity Transformation in Taiwan’s Visual Culture,” in The Asian Society of Art in Taipei (Taiwan, 2009) and “Painting History and Chinese Modernization at the Turn of the Twentieth Century” in Turmoil, Representation, and Trend: Modern Chinese Painting, 1796-1949 (Kaohsiung, 2007).

Of Islands and Prisons: Not Taiwan, Not China at the 2013 Venice Biennale

Wenny Teo
Modern and Contemporary Asian Art
The Courtauld Institute of Art

This paper takes the provocative negation of national identity encapsulated by the exhibition 'This is not a Taiwan Pavilion' - held in the Palazzo delle Prigioni (the 'Prisons' Palace') - at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013 as a point of departure. It attempts to articulate the conceptual poetics and problematics of islands and/as prisons by examining the geopolitics of the Venice Biennale through post-structuralist critical frameworks. By drawing a critical comparison between the works of art displayed in the not-Taiwan pavilion and those not displayed in the official Chinese pavilion -- specifically the Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei's installations that dramatised his 81-day detention -- it explores the historically fraught relationship between the ROC and PRC through the lens of contemporary artistic practice, focusing on questions of sovereignty, cultural hegemony and artistic agency.

Beyond a Dichotomy: Tate and the Art of Asia Pacific

Sook-Kyung Lee
Tate Research Centre: Asia-Pacific

Tate’s commitment to exploring and representing a wider development of modern and contemporary art has been growing rapidly in the past decade. The art of formerly marginalised regions such as Latin America, Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe has been actively featured in Tate’s programme and acquisitions in recent years, and the art of Asia Pacific has been a particular focus for Tate’s activities.

Following a number of group exhibitions showcasing the art of the Asia-Pacific region in the past few decades, high-profile solo exhibitions of Ai Weiwei, Yayoi Kusama, Nam June Paik and Daido Moriyama have been held at Tate sites in recent years. Along with a growing...
interest from the public, it also reflects the development of Tate’s curatorial expertise in the 20th century and contemporary art of the region.

In terms of its collection, Tate is developing its holdings of art from Asia in tandem with its strategic expansion of collecting activities in other parts of the world. Tate acquires works of art that speak of local experiences while also engaging with themes of international relevance. In the past few years, for instance, Tate has focused on the rethinking of modernisms beyond the canonical interpretation of modernism, discovering and re-evaluating diverse formations and trajectories of modernisms that in turn enrich and complicate the accepted Euro-American understanding of this particular artistic legacy.

The establishment of Tate Research Centre: Asia-Pacific in October 2012 reflects Tate’s commitment to deepening the knowledge of the collection it is building and to supporting Tate curators in presenting global modern and contemporary art to our audiences. Being an active agent within the growing field of global contemporary art, Tate aspires to create an environment that could realise a more just visibility of the former peripheries of modern art without recourse to the pervading model of dichotomy between the regional and the international.

**Brief Biography:** Sook-Kyung Lee (PhD. in Art History, University of Essex), is curator, lecturer and writer, and is currently Research Curator, Tate Research Centre: Asia-Pacific and Curator, Asia Pacific Acquisitions Committee at Tate. She was previously Exhibitions & Displays Curator at Tate Liverpool, and curated a number of exhibitions including *Nam June Paik, Doug Aitken: The Source and Thresholds* (as part of Liverpool Biennial 2012). Born in South Korea, Lee was Curator at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, Lecturer at Hong-ik University in Seoul and Guest Lecturer of the Sotheby’s Institute of Art, London. She has written for several exhibition catalogues as well as for a variety of international art publications.

**Keeping it Real**

Simon Groom  
Director, The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
My talk will focus on a few examples of working with artists from East Asia at the Tate and
NGS, looking in particular at the 2007 exhibition at Tate Liverpool, “The Real Thing:
Contemporary Art from China”. It will look at the conceptual framing of the exhibition, the
criteria we adopted for inclusion in the Tate show, the differences in working and
expectations between East and West, how this is reflected in the cultural infrastructure, the
question of reception of the work by artists producing in a different cultural context, and how
this influences the collecting of Asian art by Western institutions. I will also look at a specific
commission at NGS by a Japanese artist in 2010, Junya Ishigami.

**Brief Biography:** Simon Groom is Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.
He joined the National Galleries of Scotland in 2007 from Tate Liverpool where he was Head
of Exhibitions for four years. Prior to that Simon worked in Cambridge as Exhibition’s
Organiser at Kettle’s Yard. Simon has worked as a lecturer in English Literature in Italy and
Japan and his academic qualifications include a PhD in Art History and an MA in Art History
(Modern) from the Courtauld Institute and an MA in English Literature from the University of
Edinburgh. Simon has curated numerous exhibitions both in the UK and abroad, contributed
to exhibition catalogues and is a regular lecturer on various aspects of modern and
contemporary art. He has a particular interest in art from Asia. Recent exhibitions curated by
Simon include, *Niki de Saint Phalle, The Real Thing: Contemporary Art from China, Richard
Wentworth, A Secret History of Clay: from Gauguin to Gormley,* and *Mono-ha: School of
Things.*