

**Invisible Hands:  
The Ethnic Chinese Influence on the Development of Southeast Asian  
Contemporary Art from 1990 to 2022.**

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## **Biography**

Nien-Ting Chen (1990, Taipei) is an academic, independent curator and visual artist who graduated from Glasgow School of Art, UK, with an MFA, and is currently a PhD candidate at Liverpool School of Art and Design at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), UK. Her research explores embodied overseas ethnic Chinese experiences of self-cultural identity.

There are commonalities in ethnic Chinese lifestyles, yet as disparate nationalities, they have each developed their own unique contemporary cultural identities, bringing about collective memories that are seemingly homogeneous, but also distinct. Nien-Ting's research and artistic practice methodology is explored through contemporary art which draws upon diasporic Chinese history, everyday rituals, exchange, and cultural heritage.

Her artistic practice and exhibitions are primarily based in cities across Asia and Europe, and her art projects also focus on sharing artistic resources with young artists worldwide, as well as implementing various curatorial projects to build networks. Currently her curatorial experience has reached out to various countries to practice the impact of contemporary art in society through transnational contemporary art exchange. Her representative projects include: 2021 'Down the Melting Pot' at the George Town Festival (Malaysia), 2021 'Tai Thai Boba Milktea Wave Wave' at Digital Art Center, Taipei (Taiwan), 2021 'Cyber Labyrinth at Liverpool LightNight' (UK), 2018-19 'The Unsettled Dust' at Asia Short Film Festival, co-curated with Singaporean curator, Jaxton Su (Thailand), among others.

In addition, Nien-Ting Chen has been working with Ukrainian artists before the Russo-Ukrainian War broke out and has continued her collaborations during the conflict. Having visited Kyiv and Dnipro in 2021, she went on to co-curate two exhibitions exploring the war and supporting the people of Ukraine in 2022. The first was a virtual exhibition, 'Unstable

Condition: Greeting From A Stranger’, and the second was physical and in Taipei: ‘News From The Fields’. In December 2022, she also participated in the ArtsLink Assembly 2022 in Poland, a platform that allowed Ukrainian artists, curators, and cultural leaders to share perspectives and ideas for the future of the cultural life of the country.

## **Abstract**

This thesis will evaluate the influence of ethnic Chinese people on contemporary Asian art with particular reference to Southeast Asia from 1990 to present. This research will focus on the evolution of these contemporary art movements by reviewing the causes, the formation and condition of the Asian contemporary art process. This will include analysing the influence of culture, history, politics and Asian regional developments. Additionally, the influence of the ethnic Chinese, which includes China mainlanders, overseas Chinese and diaspora Chinese in Asia on these contemporary art movements will be analysed.

The research will provide and discuss the elements and possibilities for Eastern and Southeast Asian art, particularly in contemporary art. World art history can easily be categorised by geographic district and cultural difference: for example, Western art; the art of Europe; African art; Latin American art. Yet, the Southeast Asian art background integrated ancient Indian culture and ancient Chinese culture and developed their own cultural features. From the Western point of view, the history of Southeast Asian art was based on the study of ethnography and its anthropological exploration and roots and imagination. Modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia was a study of evolution from colonialism to the 1990s. Local artists and art history researchers have begun to transcend this confrontation between the East and the West and to conduct cross-regional dialogue. There is evident a significant difference of view between themselves and western researchers (others).

This research will investigate the ethnic Chinese influence in the Southeast Asian Contemporary Art environment. Southeast Asia is the region with the largest number of overseas Chinese and their population is suggested to be over 40 million, as recorded by the Chinese government. Regarding Southeast Asian Chinese, the most impressive thing about them to the world is their economic strength, as ethnic Chinese in the Southeast are mostly wealthy. Therefore, in the Southeast Contemporary Asian art world, the main promoters, sponsors and collectors are also local Chinese. Those Chinese have private museums, commercial galleries and financial support from the government's art and culture policies. On the other hand, many Southeast Asian artists' background originates from Chinese culture and their art relates to their artistic personal family tree and Chinese background.

As a result of the researcher's unusual position as an Asian scholar, but who has been educated and operated in the West, this research provides unique new insights into the overall development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia through an analysis of the development of East and Southeast Asian countries. In addition, based on the background of the world history and current globalisation situation, this thesis contributes to knowledge by revealing the probable new development methods and the paths for the future of Asian contemporary art. The research will examine the diversity and possibilities for contemporary Chinese art, culture and history.

This thesis explores the deliberately weakened existence of Southeast Asian Chinese artists in Southeast Asian society and the government. Facing the social environment in which contemporary Chinese ethnic people live, ethnic Southeast Asian Chinese artists choose to use art as a symbol and means to record their living experiences and cultural heritage. Through artistic practice and research which is documented in this thesis, I strive to unearth the truth about ethnic Southeast Asian Chinese artists which has been concealed, and to reflect the real social situation.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would not have been able to complete this thesis research without the support and kindness of my supervisors, family, curatorial partners and colleagues at LJMU and beyond. I would especially like to thank the following people:

My Mum and Dad, my boyfriend, my brother and sister-in-law. On 11 October 2022, my first niece was born; her birth gave me the spiritual support to keep completing my thesis. My family is always pleased to hear how my work is going and are supportive of my career path.

Thank you to my supervisors, Dr Emma Roberts & Dr Michael Birchall, and to the Head of Research Degrees, Professor Colin Fallows. Your professional and academic character is the goal I pursue, and I have grown through the four years of interaction with you and learning from you.

Thank you again to my main supervisor, Dr Emma. I always appreciate your support, teaching and trust in my research. Your tutorial and kindness are like the breeze in spring, the sunshine after the rain in my heart.

Finally, thank you for the assistance of everyone I have met in my four years of research life, especially from 2020 to 2022, when everyone was under the challenge and difficult experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Introduction**

This practice-led research aims to investigate the development of ethnic Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia. The research methods cross many disciplinary boundaries, such as national history, history of art, culture and political studies and art practice to complete my holistic doctoral research approach. Alongside this thesis, as my research result, I also present two two curatorial exhibitions and international exchange programmes in Taiwan and Singapore. The key aims of the research are to evaluate the influence of ethnic Chinese on contemporary Asian art, with particular reference to East and Southeast Asia from 1990 to 2022. This research will focus on the evolution of these contemporary art movements, by reviewing the causes, the formation and condition of the Asian contemporary art process. This will include analysing the contemporary Chinese influence on culture, history, politics and Asian regional developments. Additionally, the influence of the ethnic Chinese, which includes China mainlanders, overseas Chinese and diaspora Chinese in Asia on these contemporary art movements, will be analysed.

A large research part of this thesis explores the self-identification of Chinese ethnic and Chinese culture influence in Southeast Asia. This research topic is also my self-exploration and reflection on the research and understanding of self-identity as an ethnic Chinese person in Taiwan. By studying the history of the diasporic Chinese in Southeast Asia, I am actually understanding myself again; researching wide Chinese identity is also re-defining self-identity; it is meaningful for deepening my self-exploration. Life is like a journey on a long road, keeping continuous pursuit of self-positioning, staged exploration of self-worth and identity issues, through which to know the self, the self-consciousness, and to identify the self. As millennial Taiwanese, from the moment we were born, we have to face the complex situation of

cross-strait relations between China (POC) and Taiwan (ROC) and the self-identification of Taiwanese and Chineseness. Over one hundred years, people who have an ethnic Chinese background and live outside China (Mainland) have continually undergone a crisis of self-identity. Southeast Asia has the largest number of diasporic Chinese settlements. Sometimes Southeast Asian people who have a Chinese background recognize that they are Chinese, but sometimes not, and they have gradually adapted to this tricky situation and think it will accompany their whole lives.

My research horizon initially started from my personal observations and speculations about the contemporary Chinese topics and were informed by personal perspectives as a Taiwanese national. Otherwise, for a long time as a curator and artist, my methodology for artistic practice has been explored also through contemporary art which draws upon diasporic and postmodern Chinese history, everyday rituals, exchange, and cultural heritage. However, during my approximately four years of PhD training and thesis research, I established a professional methodology and academic objectivity in this thesis. I am aware that I have a special identity, insofar as I belong to the 'insider' world of Chinese ethnicity, and at the same time I am also the academic researcher of this thesis. How I conducted my research and recorded effectively and neutrally was both a challenge and the value of this thesis. I use some postmodern theories, such as orientalism, oriental orientalism, and autoethnography, to establish and accept my own particular identity as a subject of the research and theoretical study for this thesis. This was conducted with rigorous cultural theory and visual art analysis, methodological applications, and a thorough literature review, and this was combined with my own unique research background and identity, which can be considered itself as a professional academic methodology that underscores the rationality and legitimacy of this thesis. At the same time, such research methods reflected interdisciplinary research and the characteristics of contemporary art, which also made this thesis more unique and worthy of attention.

Particularly, my doctoral study in the UK, and studying and living abroad, has made me once again directly aware of the special contradictions of my national identity and Chinese ethnic identity challenge. This symbolised a shift of cultural contexts, and this new perspective also thereafter enabled a professional academic objectivity to be developed and maintained. During my doctoral research I collected and compared different perspectives from the Western, oriental and Chinese environments, such as historical movements and international issues for ethnic Chinese identity. Moreover, overseas Chinese artists practised contemporary art and how it reflected their Chinese self identity. During my research journey, I find that in each ethnic Chinese generation's memory and self-identity, there is a common but ambiguous thread of the imagination of nostalgia for earlier, simpler times and blood heritage connection for Chinese who are overseas. Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic peoples under different nationalities and generations have different Chinese identities and Chinese cultural environments. The identity of Chinese ethnicity in Southeast Asia is not constant, but changes in any moment; it is like a time river flows to the sea. This thesis indicates the status of development of Chinese ethnic artists and their self-identity in Southeast Asian contemporary art during 1990 to 2022. This is explored in the third chapter of the thesis, by the recording and analysing of my curatorial practice in contemporary art exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore.

In chapter three art practice and exhibition recording could be reviewed that as a researcher and curator of Chinese contemporary art, through this thesis relative art practice, I could directly contact the views of young Chinese ethnic artists and realise the new generation's consciousness of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia and taiwan. However, in this art practice case when curators received the new commissioned artworks submitted by the artist, it greatly exceeded the original prediction of the curators. The Chinese culture and self-identity presented by young ethnic Chinese contemporary artists were completely different from previous ethnic

Chinese artists' development in Asia. In the paragraph, The Curator's Observation and Perspective In the Exhibition, I analysed the Chinese ethnic self-identity development of the new generation of artists is different from that of the ethnic Chinese in the past. They break the shackles of the Chinese principle in the past and present their self-identity and observation in a new form.

The Chinese ethnicity mentioned in this thesis adopts the broadest definition of Chinese (華人), which includes various identities, such as overseas Chinese (transnational immigrants/海外華人), Chinese descendants (華族後代), and Chinese descent (華裔), all of which are collectively referred to as 'ethnic Chinese'. In this thesis ethnic Chinese refers to the general term for people with Chinese ancestry all over the world. At the same time, it can also refer to people of Chinese descent in a specific area, regardless of their current nationality. In this identity definition I follow Guotu Zhuang's Chinese explanation<sup>1</sup> (莊國土 2009). He is a well-known expert on overseas Chinese studies and Southeast Asian studies.

This thesis is structured in three chapters which aim to explore the formation of Chinese ethnic contemporary art in Southeast Asia and to analyse how ethnic Chinese artists and Chinese ethnic Asians have challenged or reiterated these within their artwork and art practices. Before officially starting the main body of research, there are four research objectives and awareness of research questions that have to be identified. Firstly, how to define Asia particularly in Southeast Asia? It can be understood from different perspectives, such as geographical location, the historical development situation, definition of other hegemony, cultural beliefs and practices, and ethnic distribution. Secondly, what and who is ethnic Chinese? Ethnic Chinese constitute the world's largest ethnic group and ethnic Chinese people are mostly concentrated in

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<sup>1</sup> Zhuang Guotu, 'A Brief Discussion on the Ethnic Identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese and Its Development Trend', *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, vol. 151, no. 3, 2002, p. 68.

Mainland China. However Southeast Asia is the region with the largest number of overseas Chinese. The thesis will introduce the history of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia and will analyse the ethnic Chinese influence felt in East and Southeast Asia, especially in terms of the development of contemporary art. Thirdly, the research analysis period is from 1990 to 2022. What significance were the 1990s to East Asian and Southeast Asian countries, especially in the development of contemporary art? In European and North American countries, the history of modern art can usually be called the art of European or Western art. From Gombrich's classic *The Story of Art*<sup>2</sup> and John Fleming and Hugh Honour's *A World History of Art*,<sup>3</sup> these books, and similar, act to describe the history of art throughout European development. Can contemporary art developed in East and Southeast Asian countries be collectively known as Asian contemporary art, which has a distinctive Asian context? In Chapters One and Two, I will identify and define the confines of the research. From an analysis of the development of East and Southeast Asian countries, further discussion will occur on the overall development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. In addition, based on the background of the global history and the current globalisation situation, one will find the possibility of development methods and the paths for Asian contemporary art and the development of Chinese ethnic contemporary art in Southeast Asia.

The first chapter describes the development and background of Southeast Asian contemporary art from 1990 to 2022, and considers the influence of Chinese ethnic artistic people in Southeast Asia. The pace and strategy of contemporary art development in Southeast Asian countries are different. The long-standing turbulent social conditions and complex political history in Southeast Asia have had a profound impact on its artistic development. For the current development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, how to find a balance between the strong

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<sup>2</sup> E H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Honour, Hugh and John Fleming, *A World History of Art*. 7th ed., London, Laurence King Publishing, 2018.

Western historical influence and the local traditions is crucial. Eleven countries in Southeast Asia have their own different languages, cultures and religious backgrounds, which has created the diverse development and characteristics of Southeast Asian art. But at the same time, it also makes it very difficult and complicated to comprehensively organise and analyse the contemporary art system in Southeast Asia.

‘Diversity’ is the cornerstone of the development of Southeast Asian art, which reflects the richness brought about by the geographical and cultural differences in Southeast Asia. In the early 1990s stage of the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, success depended on if the artists were invited to participate in international biennials and gained overseas art funding support. After the 2000s, many Southeast Asian artists and curators had grown rapidly and gained exposure around the world through international exchange projects and biennials, and they also became famous and influential in the Asia art world. At the same time, art collection and art business systems in Asia have become mature. Local museums and art spaces were established in Southeast Asia by private collectors (who were ethnically Chinese). This Chapter briefly summarises the similarities and differences between each of the Southeast Asian countries, and further analyses their characteristics and the relationship between Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic communities and Asia Chinese-dominated countries and societies to influence Southeast Asian countries and their artistic contributions.

Following Chapter 1, the development of the history and contemporary art knowledge for ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asian countries moves to Chapter 1-1. This examines Southeast Asian contemporary art, considers how to incorporate social engagement, and reveals the current social situation. This section was written in the form of keywords, which was inspired by Raymond Williams’ *Keywords: An Analysis of Culture and Society* (1976). By selecting fundamental Asian issues in eight keyword paragraphs for analysis, Chapter 1-1 explores the

ongoing and current social development priorities in Southeast Asia from the first-person perspective of Asia. The research content of keywords includes not only contemporary art research, but also the analysis of culture, society, politics and economic perspectives.

In today's millennium society, the usage habits and application of keywords have been greatly affected by internet technological innovations. Modern people rely on online search engines for anything they do not understand and identify unknown keys. People search the online databases to find a satisfactory understanding. When going back to the more primitive meaning of keywords, that word has its roots originally from keys or passwords. In each vocabulary can be the importance of the keyword itself; it can be used as a projection of ideas, a tool of thought, and a medium of communication in society. It is itself independent and important. The paragraph describing these keywords may not be directly related to contemporary Asian society at first glance, but the words can provide assistance to the public to understand the sudden changes or current obstacles in contemporary Asian society. The keywords also reflect contemporary cultural ideas and the rapid presentation of ideas.

The keyword research broadly explores the current social situation in Southeast Asia and the participation and influence of the ethnic Chinese. The study cases in each keyword used Southeast Asian contemporary artists and their artworks to be examples to echo diversely and extensively the Southeast Asian social development and situation. This chapter provides the keyword fields which reflect in recent decades the difficulties and challenges for developing contemporary Asian keywords as important vocabulary meanings to express various social phenomena and explanations.

Each keyword is divided into three parts. The first one is a background summary, the basic definition of this concept and its influence in Asian society. Secondary, is the detailed

description, describing other related knowledge about this keyword concept. The last part is a contemporary art case study, in order to enhance the concept and extensive discussion of current social phenomena and explain them with indicative or social issues and artistic cases. I provided artistic cases in each keyword to further explain the research issues. Chapter 1-1 presents the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, and is closely related to the development of Southeast Asian society through keyword creative writing and art analysis. Local artists living in Southeast Asia pay attention to local social issues and social development status, and it is inevitable to participate in local society through their artistic practice. The development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia is naturally closely related to the current social development and situation in Southeast Asia. The purpose of this chapter is to classify and present the diverse appearance of the current Southeast Asian social development and to verify it with exemplar contemporary art cases.

The second chapter analyses the expression of 20th to 21st century national identity and nationalism for Asian ethnic Chinese. Here, one deeply explains the condition of five countries which have the most ethnic Chinese cultural influence in Southeast Asia. In addition, the research includes the influence of Chinese daily culture in Southeast Asia and the potentiality of Sinophone articulations in contemporary art analysis. The diasporic Chinese in Southeast Asia are rooted in different educational backgrounds, national situations, and the self-awareness of historical and cultural memories, so even though they are all ethnically Chinese, they show some similarities and differences in behaviour. In addition, every ethnic Chinese individual has a different definition of Chinese, ethnic Chinese, Chineseness, and China. In the second chapter, I will carefully clarify the development and current situation of the Chinese community in Southeast Asia in different periods and generations.

In Chapter 2, five countries with the strongest Chinese influence in Southeast Asian countries are selected for case discussions. Through the current Southeast Asia social development status of Chinese ethnic groups in various countries, one will discover local contemporary art works and artists that echo and reflect the current status of the country for analysis. This will be undertaken by using contemporary Chinese ethnic art works in Southeast Asia to analyse and extend to the current changes in self-identity and cultural identity faced by the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, I appropriated the concept of Sinophone study, and extended it to the concept of social participation in cultural research in contemporary art analysis in my art cases. ‘Sinophone (華語語系)’ is a neologism that fundamentally means Chinese-speaking. Chinese culture develops from different regions and social contexts rooted in the idea that people establish their own local Chinese identity in different nationalities and ideologies. But at the same time being ethnically Chinese still maintains a special relationship with Chineseness and Chinese cultural identity. A new concept dedicated to contemporary Chinese studies was born. The latter part of the second chapter explores proposals on how effectively to incorporate contemporary artworks and developments into Sinophone studies in Southeast Asia for interdisciplinary integration.

The structure of the first two chapters of this thesis is to establish a three-dimensional, even multi-dimensional, general understanding of the contemporary Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic perspective and Southeast Asian Chinese contemporary art based on the analysis and research of multiple documents orientated towards history, society and art culture. The third chapter will execute and record a contemporary young ethnically Chinese artist’s self-identity, and the development of their Chineseness in a practice case study, while taking Taiwan and Singapore exchange projects as research examples. I think that artists and curators can participate in society through artistic practice, and at the same time reflect the current social situation and review historical development through exhibitions and art works. Therefore, the third chapter is

an objective record of the art exchange process and curatorial analysis of the identity of the new generation of ethnic Chinese in Taiwan and Singapore.

In Chapter 3, the art practice case study result and outlook is recorded in words and exhibitions. This artistic information and point of view can serve as useful reference materials for other academic researchers in interdisciplinary cultural studies and contemporary Chinese art development studies. This curatorial art practice definitely verified that the ‘art field’ created through art practice can usefully reflect and respond to the exploration of contemporary public social phenomena and issues. In the art practice presented in the exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore, ‘An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects’, the artist took familiar daily objects as an inspiration, rethought those objects in daily life to reflect on the state of the social meaning, and then explored the relationship between the material and spirit of the ethnic Chinese contemporary situation. Each presenting artwork was a coalescence of the artist’s observations of current societal situations occurring at home or abroad, as well as the artist’s research interests and enquiries over years with their art context. Ten artworks were art commissions which were first exposed in the exhibition. Those artworks discussed the ethnicity and cultural identity of the new generation of ethnic Chinese individuals with the object of art.

In this thesis, I provide diverse social research observations to improve the integrity of the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia and the diaspora of Chinese in Asia. In addition, this thesis compared significant culture and art publications and theories from many international scholars, and summarises the applicable interpretation and analysis of Western immigration theory and contemporary cultural research on the phenomenon of modern Chinese immigration in Southeast Asia. The purpose is to find out the theories of immigration in the East and the West that can be applied to the contemporary phenomenon of Chinese immigration in Southeast Asia. At the same time, it presents the influence of artistic people who are

ethnically Chinese in the development of Southeast Asian contemporary art. The thesis also acts to explore more diverse and cross-field research methods for understanding the modern Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese self-identity trend through artistic observation.

## **Literature Review**

The scope of the literature review used in this thesis includes historical review and examination of social and cultural observation theories. The research encompasses concepts and theories related to contemporary art and Chinese ethnic identity, diaspora and acculturation in Southeast Asia. The thesis cites literature which was provided by academic and authoritative institutions (governments) around the world to conduct research on contemporary ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. The research documents I collated and analysed are Chinese and English monographs, historical reviews, official (government) statistics, international periodicals, high quality papers and other related artistic materials. The content of the literature review includes texts about Western modern ethnic identity and current mainstream cultural theories, as well as Chinese research and seminar resources from China (POC), Hong Kong, Taiwan (ROC), and Southeast Asian countries, which are important in this thesis. Through the collection of multiple materials, I try to find cases that are consistent with the Chinese diaspora and self-identity of the ethnic Chinese in the current development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, I carry out case studies and their analysis during the thesis construction. The literature review of this thesis collects materials from interdisciplinary literature such as history, society, art, cultural discourse and artistic practice to establish new possibilities for contemporary Chinese studies.

## **Overview and the History of Modern Southeast Asia (近代東南亞史)**

I use the documents of cross-nationality and cross-period historians to analyse the history of modern Southeast Asian countries through multiple intersections, and I therefore restore the appearance of objective history as much as possible. The historical analysis involved in this

thesis focuses on the nationalist policies of Southeast Asian countries after Independence and the challenges of overseas Chinese ethnic peoples in Southeast Asia during the period of the 20th century. The literature used includes *Chinese Amongst Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (2008)<sup>4</sup>, (including the Chinese translation edition), and ‘Why China Historians Should Study the Chinese Diaspora, and Vice-Versa’ (2006)<sup>5</sup> as important references for Southeast Asian history. The author, Philip Kuhn (孔飛力, also known as 孔復禮), is one of the most important contemporary experts in Sinology and he is also an expert in the study of Southeast Asian history. His research since the 1970s has focused on the History of Overseas Chinese Immigration. Japanese historical political researcher, Ikuo Iwasaki’s *Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History* (2018, Chinese edition)<sup>6</sup> provided me with the overview and understanding of basic required knowledge on Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian countries. The book focuses on what is Southeast Asia, describes the context of modern history from a unique humanistic perspective, and then summarises the key political and economic periods in the history of Southeast Asia. In American journalist, Michael Vatikiotis’s *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia* (2017),<sup>7</sup> he recorded in the book the author’s on-site personal experience of major historical events during the 40 years of journalist and conflict mediation work in Southeast Asia. In the book, he analyses from the perspectives of economy and culture, colonisation and history with the sharp vision and writing style of a media reporter to describe his observations on contemporary Southeast Asian democracies and monarchies and dictators. This book helped me effectively to find the locals’ observations on the environment of civil society and local people’s social engagement which

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<sup>4</sup> Philip A. Kuhn and Minghuan Li, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*, Taiwan Shang Wu Yin Shu Guan Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Philip A. Kuhn, ‘Why China Historians Should Study the Chinese Diaspora, and Vice-Versa’, *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2006, pp. 163–72, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/203769/pdf>, (accessed Mar 21 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Ikuo. Iwasaki, *Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History*, Taipei, Business Weekly, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Michael. Vatikiotis, *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia*. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2017.

can be echoed in the case analysis of Southeast Asia contemporary art development. Dr Milton Osborne is a writer and consultant on Asian issues from Australia. He has been associated with Southeast Asia for more than 60 years. In 1980 he was a consultant to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees in relation to the Cambodian refugee problem, working along the Thai-Cambodian border. He publishes many books and articles on Asian subjects. In this literature consulted for this thesis, I refer to his books including: *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*<sup>8</sup> (1979), now in its 12th edition, and *The Paramount Power: China and the Countries of Southeast Asia*<sup>9</sup> (2006) published by the Lowy Institute for International Policy. In addition, the Southeast Asian survey data and policies mentioned in this thesis come from the official government announcements of various countries, and this information can be found in official online databases. In particular, Taiwan has a special official research institution for ethnic Chinese ethnic and overseas Chinese: the Overseas Community Affairs Council (中華民國僑務委員會). In the thesis, many research data references such as the Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic population and distribution were obtained from the data of this institution.

## **Overview of Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia and the Case Study of Chinese Ethnic Art (東南亞當代藝術概論與華族藝術案例研究)**

In this thesis, the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the ethnic Chinese psychological identity and its behavioural significance in the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia, and try to find its situation from historical and social research literature and especially through the research of contemporary art development. I collect and compare a large

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<sup>8</sup> Milton E. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Milton E. Osborne and Lowy, *The Paramount Power: China and the Countries of Southeast Asia*, Double Bay, N.S.W., Longueville Media, Published For Lowy Institute For International Policy, 2006.

amount of Asian contemporary art resources and materials, for example theories, reports, critiques and exhibition documents, to accumulate a systematic and complete grasp of the facts of the situation for Southeast Asian contemporary art.

The research into the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia includes examination of artworks, exhibitions, art spaces, art movements and my own art practice to become a rich area of dialogue within this thesis. Contemporary art practice actions can be valuable participations in society. The process and result of art practice can reflect the current social situation, and can review historical development through exhibitions and art works. Archival research and curatorial methods are also employed to provide depth to the analysis of the visual art and cultures of Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia, specifically the (re)construction of Chinese ethnic identity through Chinese ethnic contemporary art practice during 1990 to 2022. Exploratory archival research was conducted from the development of Southeast Asian contemporary art. Art research references were collected from the archives of Tate Modern, London, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, The National Gallery of Singapore, Miami Contemporary Art Museum and The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara (MACAN), Indonesia. In addition to these, I utilised multiple artists' and galleries' official websites. I also used documents on art biennale, such as Documenta, The Venice Biennale, Liverpool Biennial, The Asia Pacific Triennial, Taipei Biennale, Singapore Biennale, Bangkok Art Biennale, The George Town Festival and Jakarta Biennale (JB), for my artist and artistic research database.

The Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) was held at the Queensland Art Gallery, Australia, in 1993. It has become the first dedicated subject in the biannual system to curate the Pacific and Southeast Asian contemporary art. The Queensland Art Gallery has built its collections in tandem with the APT series, becoming an international leader in collecting and

presenting Asian and Pacific contemporary art. APT has a complete online database that records past exhibitions and artist information. I employed their online database to build my contemporary art research greatly. Furthermore, in Southeast Asian art academic research, the APT has promoted the research, documentation, publication, and seminars of Asian and Pacific art, and supported residencies and internships for artists, scholars, and museum professionals in the field.

‘No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia’ (2013) was the first exhibition of a multi-year initiative, conceived by the Guggenheim Museum, New York, which charted contemporary art in the Southeast Asian region. In 2017, the National Art Center, Tokyo, Mori Art Museum, and the Japan Foundation Asia Center hosted ‘Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now,’ the largest exhibition of Southeast Asian contemporary art to be held in Japan. This exhibition successfully caused widespread repercussions in East Asia and was later invited to be exhibited in Taiwan again. This exhibition is the official entry of Southeast Asian contemporary art into the eyes of the general public in East Asia, and has special research value for my thesis.

Asia Art Archive (AAA) is an independent non-profit organisation based in Hong Kong. The mission of AAA enriches people's understanding of the world through the collection, creation, and sharing of knowledge around recent art in Asia. Over recent decades, they have been intensively cooperating with non-profit art institutions in Southeast Asia, and at the same time assisting contemporary art spaces in Southeast Asia with systematic documentation and preservation. Numerous documents for this thesis also benefit from AAA's art documentation preservation. In my opinion, AAA is a non-profit institution that has the most complete collection of Southeast Asian and Chinese contemporary art literature. In the thesis, I indicate the important and representative artists (including ethnic Chinese artists) in Southeast Asia and

study the contents and contributions of their artistic practices. At the same time, I analyse these Chinese ethnic contemporary art practice cases in order to identify contributing factors that influence society and encourage participation of contemporary Southeast Asian society.

Pierre Bourdieu, a contemporary French social thinker, mentioned in his book *The Rules of Art Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field (Les règles de l'art- genèse et structure du champ littéraire)*<sup>10</sup> that he thought that the field of literary production, or the field of art production, is in a world full of paradox. I agree with Bourdieu's view of the sociology of art. My point of view is that contemporary art reflects an artist's life which was intimate to social issues. In addition, American scholar, Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson,<sup>11</sup> pointed out in his book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*<sup>12</sup> (1983), that “the nation is an imagination” and that it provides a process of human development to the modern world. ‘Nation’ does not only rely on objective characteristics and appearances, but the importance of the process of forming ethnic group identity. In my research and analysis of contemporary art, I refer to and review many items of literature in sociological, political and historical documents for artistic analysis.

### **The Diasporic History of the Chinese in Southeast Asia and the Development of the Contemporary Ethnic Chinese (東南亞華人離散史與當代華族發展)**

Wang Gungwu (王賡武; 1930) is a Chinese-Singaporean historian, sinologist, and writer. He is

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<sup>10</sup> Pierre. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, (born August 26, 1936, Kunming, China—died December 12/13, 2015, Batu, Indonesia), Irish political scientist, best known for his influential work on the origins of nationalism.

<sup>12</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 1983.

an historian of China and Southeast Asia. His books, *A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese*<sup>13</sup> (1969) and *China and its Cultures: From the Periphery*<sup>14</sup> (2007), provide knowledge on the Chinese diaspora from the local Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese perspective. He describes that the earliest social research on overseas Chinese began with researchers supported by European colonial governments in the nineteenth century. Inspired by the needs of the colonial government's rule and management, the research during this period was politicised. In the 20th century, Western scholars explored Chinese society in Southeast Asia from the perspective of anthropology and history. After the millennium, scholars from Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar, began to conduct research on issues such as the familiar ethnic Chinese in their society, and their cultural background, and identity. On the other hand, for the academic circles in America, China Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, there have been studies on the political, social, and economic achievements of overseas Chinese all over the world, as well as overseas Chinese issues.

In the book, *Chinese Overseas: Comparative Cultural Issues*<sup>15</sup> (2004), Tan Chee-Beng indicates that the distinction between ethnic identity, cultural identity, and national identity is a priority for Chinese identity research. Therefore, in the works of early overseas Chinese scholars, most of the research on (Chinese) identity focused on sociological identity analysis. On the other hand, most Western scholars focused their 'identity' research on nationality, ethnic group and religion (Baumann, 1999; Joseph, 2004). Stuart Hall said "People in discrete situations are often forced to accept changes, multiple or hyphenated status."<sup>16</sup> American scholar, Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, pointed out in his book *Imagined Communities:*

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<sup>13</sup> Gungwu Wang, *A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese*, Taipei, Buffalo Book Co, 1969.

<sup>14</sup> Gungwu Wang, *China and Its Cultures: From the Periphery*, Taipei, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Chee-Beng Tan, *Chinese Overseas : Comparative Cultural Issues*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong Univ. Press, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Stuart Hall, *Essential Essays, Volume 2: Identity and Diaspora*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478002710>, (accessed 7 Apr 2023).

*Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) that “the nation is an imagination” and it provides a process of human development to the modern world. Nation does not only rely on objective characteristics and appearances, but the importance of the process of forming ethnic group identity. I collected Chinese diasporic perspectives of Eastern and Western scholars integrated with Southeast Asian Chinese diaspora research literature.

The study of the Sinophone is an important research viewpoint and is a foundation in my thesis, which is also linked to my artistic practice. Sinophone articulations (華語語系表述) is a literary and cultural theory emerging in the European and American academic circles recently. The second and third chapters of this thesis strongly connected my artistic practice and analysis with the research method of Sinophone studies, and obtained first-hand analysis in Chinese ethnic contemporary art practice. Shumei Shi is an important representative scholar of Sinophone studies, and her theories opened up the opportunity for me to integrate and analyse the Sinophone and contemporary art research together. In this thesis, Shumei Shi's theories have a great influence on my research, among others. Her books *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*<sup>17</sup> (2007/視覺與認同: 跨太平洋華語語系表述·呈現), and *Against Diaspora: Discourses on Sinophone Studies*<sup>18</sup> (2017/反離散: 華語語系研究論) have been particularly important. These two books are integrated through my research content of Chapter 1-1 and Chapter 2.

Sinophone research began to develop rapidly in the American academic circle after the millennium. This trend of research methods has extended to Asia and has attracted attention in Chinese academic research in Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, etc. *Rethinking Chineseness:*

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<sup>17</sup> Shumei. Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Shumei. Sh, *Against Diaspora: Discourses on Sinophone Studies*, New Taipei, Linking Publishing , 2017.

*Translational Sinophone Identities in the Nanyang Literary World*<sup>19</sup> was written by E.K. Tan 陈荣强, (2013). This was important sinophone research about Chinese-language writers from Borneo, Malaysia, and Singapore and provides a new perspective on the connection of the notion of Chineseness and identity. Brian Bernards's book, *Writing the South Seas: Imagining the Nanyang in Chinese and Southeast Asian Postcolonial Literature*<sup>20</sup> (2015), analysed the situation of Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese, and considered how Southeast Asian Chinese can be described and imagined in Asia.

### **Observation on Contemporary Southeast Asian Society in the 21st Century (21世紀當代東南亞社會觀察)**

The literature research provided an overview of the facts and movements of the development of Southeast Asian countries through sociological, political and historical perspectives to reflect on the Southeast Asian contemporary art environment and situation. In Chapter 1-1, research topics (keywords) were derived from my research on contemporary culture and society in Southeast Asia. Roland Barthes, (1915–1980) in his *The Death of the Author* (1967) and *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*<sup>21</sup> (1977/戀人絮語), broke the classic writing principle. He provided the new horizon of creative and deconstructed writing. Barthes's fragments remain deliberately scattered, and coherence rejected. I used Roland Barthes's scattered perspective in my keywords analysis to point to the development situation of contemporary society in southeast Asia and through contemporary art case studies to certify it.

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<sup>19</sup> E K. Tan, *Rethinking Chineseness: Translational Sinophone Identities in the Nanyang Literary World*, Amherst, New York, Cambria Press, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Brian C. Bernards, *Writing the South Seas: Imagining the Nanyang in Chinese and Southeast Asian Postcolonial Literature*, D.C., University of Washington Press, 21 Dec. 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Roland. Barthes, *Fragments d'Un Discours Amoureux*, Paris, Ed. Du Seuil, 2010.

*Orientalism*<sup>22</sup> (1978), by Edward W. Said, was influential for my work. In the book, he used the background of the identity of an orientalist to challenge the domination of Western colonial power in the oriental world, such as the hegemonic structure of knowledge reproduction, the relationship between Western colonisers and Eastern by colonised role, and the state of the current hegemonic system of unequal development between the East and the West. Said started the discussion of orientalism in this book. After the book was published, he aroused the reflection of Asian local cultural researchers on the imagination of Asia as an object. The study of Orientals' orientalism (東方的東方主義) began to be noticed in Asian academic circles. Furthermore, when I collected Oriental orientalist studies of relevant Southeast Asian and East Asian scholars, I discovered a new Southern perspective. The term 'South' comes from *The Southern Question*<sup>23</sup> (1995), by Marxist scholars, Antonio Gramsci and Pasquale Verdicchio, who formally placed the term 'South' in academic discussion. I use Gramsci and Verdicchio's South in my research to re-interpret the imbalanced development of Southeast Asia in the twentieth century.

For the keyword writing and social research used in Chapter 1-1, I used Raymond Williams's *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976/ 關鍵詞：文化與社會的詞匯) as an important piece of literature and methodology. This book is about the study of keywords that are crucial to understanding the modern world. In Chapter 2, there are two important research themes in current cultural studies: globalisation and identity. David Jonathan Andrew Held explained in using the concept of globalisation, that it is not singular or unidirectional, but that the formation of globalisation comes from multiple factors. The globalisation status and relational networks of Southeast Asia are repeatedly mentioned in my thesis, and are used in the

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<sup>22</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Antonio Gramsci and Verdicchio Pasquale, *The Southern Question*, New York, Ny, Bordighera Press, 2015.

study of art, culture and society. On the other hand, in the study of Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia, I follow Wang Gungwu's (王賡武) and Guotu Zhuang's (庄国土) theories to analyse contemporary Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia. These two representative scholars of contemporary Sinology are trying to establish a research context with Chinese characteristics and local Chinese perspective, rather than transplanting or copying Western research viewpoints one-way.

### **Conception of Contemporary Art Practice (當代藝術實踐概念)**

On the concept of artistic practice, I adopt Pierre Bourdieu's research on the integration of practical theory. In his *The Logic of Practice*<sup>24</sup> (1990) and *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*<sup>25</sup> (1998), he analyses the social field of the meaning and function of practice. In addition, in Pierre Bourdieu's book, *The Rules of Art Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field (Les règles de l'art- genèse et structure du champ littéraire)*,<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu thought that the artist and the art viewer can establish a stake in the state of the seemingly most “irrelevant stake (無關利害)” through artworks. In Bourdieu's sociological analysis, he believes that “art is still subject to the influence of politics and economics in the field of production.” I agree with Bourdieu’s view of the sociology of art. In my contemporary art practice, the curatorial practice reflects the horizon of the artwork and the artist (the curator) which is intimate to social issues, for concluding that contemporary art is also inseparable from the politics and economic conditions in contemporary life. Therefore, my art practice can respond to the discursive research in my dissertation, Following Bourdieu’s point that the artwork is an intentional sign entangled and

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<sup>24</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Nice, *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, Stanford, Calif, Stanford University Press, 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1996.

regulated by something else, and the artwork becomes a symptom of these things. Here I think autoethnography analysis can explain the relationship of artwork (artist) and society.

Autoethnography systematically analyses personal experiences in an effort to understand cultural and social experiences in the case of research. I analyse Southeast Asian artists and their artworks through an autoethnography from Méndez's book, *Autoethnography as a Research Method: Advantages, Limitations and Criticisms*<sup>27</sup> (2013) to analyse the influence and meaning of Chinese people in Southeast Asia.

'curator' is the caretaker of the soul, but also a healer, and this characteristic corresponds to the priesthood meaning of curature. This point of view and explanation was influential for me, and it originates from *Curating Subject: Practising Contemporary Exhibitions* (2013, Chinese Edition, 策展主體: 當代展演實踐)<sup>28</sup> which was written by Hongjohn Lin. My personal art practice in this thesis is present in curating. My curating and exhibition organising knowledge is based on Hans Ulrich Obrist's *A Brief History of Curating*<sup>29</sup> (2008). For the executive reference of the operation of independent curators, I choose Harald Szeemann as an example. He is the representative of the earliest independent curators. I reference a mode of Sophia Krzys Acord's exhibition-making.

The third chapter I will execute and record a contemporary young Chinese ethnic artist's self-identity and the development of their Chineseness in the practice case study while taking Taiwan and Singapore exchange projects as research examples. According to the results obtained in my art practice research, it can be found that this is an ongoing development trend that has not been realised in the current contemporary Chinese cultural research and the study

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<sup>27</sup> Mariza G. Méndez, 'Autoethnography as a Research Method: Advantages, Limitations and Criticisms', *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, 21 Jan. 2014, p. 279, <https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2013.2.a09>.

<sup>28</sup> Hongjohn Lin, *Curating Subject: Practising Contemporary Exhibitions*, Ehgbooks, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist et al., *A Brief History of Curating*, Zurich JrpRingier, 2018.

of Sinophone research in Asia. The result of this art practice case provides new awareness and evidence of the Chinese ethnic identity and sense of belonging of contemporary Chinese ethnic young artists' development in Asia.

## **Methodology**

This thesis and accompanying body of practical work (curatorial exhibition and exchange programme) centre on the exploration and analysis of the ethnic Chinese influence on Southeast Asian contemporary art in modern history, contemporary art development, and cultural and social theory. The research employs a national geographic, historical studies and a thematic keywords analysis approach, implementing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in order reflexively to analyse the development of the art practice discussed in Chapter Three, and to situate this practice within relevant social and the interpretation of art contexts. Chapter Two presents a critical analysis of the contemporary social situation of Chinese ethnic and the crisis of Chinese assimilation in Southeast Asia in the 21st century and considers the artistic approaches and art study cases to discuss, reiterate or reflect on the current irresistible development. The first chapter separates two sections. The first section describes and analyses Southeast Asia's modern history and the development of contemporary art in each country; in addition, the case studies are analysed in terms of the influence of Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia contemporary art. The next section presents the outlook of the Southeast Asian contemporary important social issues and through a thematic keywords analysis approach and also analyses the case studies by the influence of Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia contemporary art. This is done according to Chinese ethnic contemporary art practice cases in order to identify contributing factors to social influence and participation of contemporary Southeast Asian society. The research is divided into three broad methodological areas, which are: historical enquiry and analysis; thematic analysis of cultural and political texts and exploratory art practice and analysis.

This research synthesises art practice, art historical and socio-cultural enquiry. The practice-led methodology follows Hegel's conceptualisation of practice-led research. In Hegel's philosophy

'practice' is a historical process, saying that all things form social functions in the process of 'practice'. The study of social phenomena has a methodology of theoretical analysis and practical research.<sup>30</sup> Another practice method I also adopt is Pierre Bourdieu's research on the integration of practical theory. In his *The Logic of Practice* (1990)<sup>31</sup> and *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (1998)<sup>32</sup> he analyses the social field of practice meaning and function. The definition and purpose of practice is mainly used to understand the basic model (模組) behind the behaviour and attitude of a specific object, and then explain the interaction between social culture and personal experience. This can quickly analyse the temporary state of daily life practice in society. In this practice-led thesis with its methodology of art practice action (curatorial exhibition and art exchange programme), I can participate in society through the process and result of art practice, and can reflect the current social situation and review Chinese ethnic development in Southeast Asia through exhibition practice.

In the practice-led theory knowledge background from an ancient Chinese research context, I follow Du Fu (杜甫)'s interpretation from his practical poetry. In his philosophy of poetry he actively advocated that the social responsibilities and obligations of Chinese scholars should be elevated to a specific practice orientation.<sup>33</sup> Du Fu actively participated in social and national issues through his identity as a poet, and recorded history for future generations in the form of poetry. In addition, I also reference Chinese poet, Li Bai (李白), who is as famous as Du Fu. Li Bai's work, *Travelling is Hard* (行路難), represented the specific practical action of the poet's social practice. In the conception of ancient Chinese poetry (ancient Chinese academic methods)

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<sup>30</sup> Lien-Te Hung, 'Theory and Practice-the Divergent Views among Kant, Hegel and Marx', *Journal of National Development Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Pierre. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, [https://monoskop.org/images/8/88/Bourdieu\\_Pierre\\_The\\_Logic\\_of\\_Practice\\_1990.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/8/88/Bourdieu_Pierre_The_Logic_of_Practice_1990.pdf), (accessed 15 Mar 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Pierre. Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, Stanford University Press, 1998, [https://monoskop.org/images/a/aa/Bourdieu\\_Pierre\\_Practical\\_Reason\\_On\\_the\\_Theory\\_1998.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/a/aa/Bourdieu_Pierre_Practical_Reason_On_the_Theory_1998.pdf), (accessed 15 Mar 2023).

<sup>33</sup> Du Fu, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, trans. Stephen Owen, Boston, Berlin De Gruyter, 2016.

‘theory’ and ‘practice’ can be combined. I collate the ancient Chinese poetry (ancient Chinese academic methods) integrated with Western academic research methods which can be presented in this thesis. The research and practice methods established by the ancient Chinese civilization are different from the Western academic research context and methodology, but through transdisciplinary studying and cross-cultural experimental actions, it can bring more sparks to the contemporary human civilization.

The research fundamental in this thesis comes from my academic education background and experience in Taiwan and the United Kingdom. The exclusive point is I can utilise, but not be limited by, Western ideas of the Southeast region, while also integrating local Asian cultural knowledge, and historical background, especially in the influence of Chinese culture in modern Southeast Asia life. I have strong bilingual reading skills in Chinese and English, which is indispensable for collecting literature and reference resources from a large number of different languages and regions for integration and comparison. In addition, my method of investigation requires comparison and analysis of relevant trans-cultural literatures and academic theories, and moreover in art practice, including curatorial and exchange programmes, can collect and present recent ethnic Chinese young artists’ artworks and their opinions. At the same time, I open up the communication stage of Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic art topics to the public and observe their feedback.

Practice-led research and research-led practice is a distinct methodological approach which foregrounds a “reciprocal relationship between research and creative practice.”<sup>34</sup> This explores art, as a medium of social practice: how to use the method of ‘art practice’ to arouse the

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<sup>34</sup> Ed Brown, ‘Smith, Hazel and Dean, Roger T. - Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts | PDF | Quantitative Research | Qualitative Research’, *Scribd*, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/91269904/Smith-Hazel-and-Dean-Roger-T-Practice-Led-Research-Research-Led-Practice-in-the-Creative-Arts#>, (accessed 13 June 2023).

potential cognition of the individual (people) and at the same time as the name of art to escape the predicament under the current social and cultural structure. Furthermore, when art as one of the methods for social practice is involved, it may not only be interpreted by a single linear context which opens the multidimensional illuminations. Curating is the most important part of my thesis art practice. Exhibition curating, and organising such knowledge, is based on the curator's work content and scope explored in Hans Ulrich Obrist's *A Brief History of Curating* (2008). For the executive reference of the operation of independent curators, I choose Harald Szeemann as an example. He is the representative of the earliest independent curators who left the museum system. In 1969 he resigned as director of the Kunsthalle Bern in Switzerland, declaring himself an 'independent' curator. He defines his identity as an independent curator as an exhibition maker (Ausstellungsmacher).<sup>35</sup> This affects my perception of curating exhibitions in alternative art spaces as an independent curator. In my art practice method, I refer to the mode<sup>36</sup> of Sophia Krzys Acord's artistic meaning through exhibition-making.

An interview is a qualitative research method<sup>37</sup> that is also part of my thesis analysis and art practice. My interview models separate into "public talk interviews and semi-public which belong to an unstructured interview. An unstructured interview is the most flexible type of interview."<sup>38</sup> Interview results and data are used in my culture and art research, sociological analysis, and for the ethnographic research in Chapter Three and the Conclusion. The questions and interactions between interviewee and interviewer are open in my interview design and

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Schjeldahl, 'Harald Szeemann's Revolutionary Curating', *The New Yorker*, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/22/harald-szeemanns-revolutionary-curating>, (accessed 6 Apr 2023).

<sup>36</sup> Sophia Krzys Acord, 'Beyond the Head: The Practical Work of Curating Contemporary Art', *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 33, 2010, pp. 447–467, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11133-010-9164-y>, (accessed 6 Apr 2023).

<sup>37</sup> Fatemeh. Rabiee, 'Focus-Group Interview and Data Analysis', *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, vol. 63, no. 04, Nov. 2004, pp. 657, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fatemeh-Rabiee/publication/7906250\\_Focus\\_Group\\_interview\\_and\\_data\\_analysis/links/0deec52f261efa277c000000/Focus-Group-interview-and-data-analysis.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fatemeh-Rabiee/publication/7906250_Focus_Group_interview_and_data_analysis/links/0deec52f261efa277c000000/Focus-Group-interview-and-data-analysis.pdf), (accessed 19 May 2023).

<sup>38</sup> Arksey Hilary and Peter Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists: An Introductory Resource with Examples*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif., Sage Publications, 1999, p. 96.

organising. This type of interview can proceed more spontaneously, based on the participant's previous answers. This flexibility in my information collecting is very important, because my questions might be relative to the interviewee's personal experience and privacy particularly in art interpretation. However, so much flexibility means that they can be very challenging to conduct properly. I needed to be very careful not to ask leading questions, as biased responses can lead to lower reliability. Before I started my research interviews I gained approval from the University's Research Ethics Committee.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the recording of art practice and the analysis of curatorial execution and its showcase, Chapter 3 also includes participant observation and visual analysis as quantitative methods. The analysis of the exhibition includes the opinions and perspective from the artists, artworks and curators, as well as the reflective exhibition comments of the public. In this methodology no theoretical assumptions were made before the start of the research. Through the execution and observation of the actual case, the results and feedback attitudes were collected and observed, and the research objects were summarised in the process of collecting and analysing data. Finally, the research results were raised to a universal theoretical hypothesis. Using the research method of grounded theory enabled me to obtain the development status and self-identity of the Chinese in the new generation of ethnic Chinese artists in Asia. Through the multi-practice methods utilised in my art practice, and discussed in detail in Chapter three, the thesis records and analyses the practice and embodied experiences of ethnic Chinese contemporary artists in Singapore and Taiwan. Curatorial practice serves multiple purposes in this research: it is a form of creative production in its own right; it is a form of publishing research outcomes; and it is a method of ordering and analysing research data.

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<sup>39</sup> I passed the UREC Ethics application requirement including LJMU research ethics training and I gained the certificate passed in April 2020. And this research and interview was confirmed to be associated with LOW risks from LJMU's Dr Dave Harriss, research Governance Manager & Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee.

The purpose of selecting qualitative methods in this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of the ethnic Chinese psychological identity and its behavioural significance in the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia, and try to find its reasons from historical and social research literature and especially in research of contemporary art development to get proof. The first and second chapters of the thesis focus on qualitative research. Qualitative research-related methodologies include epistemology, discourse analysis, case study, visual analysis, discourse analysis and ethnography. Chapter 1 uses epistemology from history and geopolitical research to extend to Southeast Asian contemporary art development, where inclusiveness and detachment in the context of acknowledgement and further explore the development of ethnic Chinese contemporary art and ethnic Chinese social involvement in Southeast Asia. Art historical research is a key method in this research project, drawing on the Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese artists and ethnic Chinese artistic people in their artistic achievement to produce thematic and typological analyses of Southeast Asian contemporary art.

Thematic ‘keywords analysis’ is utilised in Chapter 1-1 to explore the situation of contemporary social and cultural development in Southeast Asia, in direct response to the deconstruction of these texts in Chinese ethnic artist practice cases. I use the form of keywords to analyse contemporary society of Southeast Asia. Using keywords analysis means one must mention Raymond Williams's publication, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976). He wrote the publication because he did not agree with the style of the great narratives of literary studies in the British 1950s. He used the local mass public life as the research source to find his own position in cultural research. I am a fellow-user of Raymond Williams's *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1974), *Keywords in Taiwan Theory* (2019) and *Keywords in Chinese Culture* (2021) in order to build my writing structure. In my

contemporary art research, I reference *Keywords 100* (2011) which is a famous functional book when learning about art. The French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes (1915–1980) in his *The Death of the Author* (1967) and *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977) broke the classic writing principle. He provided the new horizon of creative and deconstructed writing. “Barthes’s fragments remain deliberately scattered, coherence rejected.”<sup>40</sup> I used Roland Barthes's scattered perspective in keywords analysis to point to the development situation of contemporary society in southeast Asia and through contemporary art case studies to certify it. Chapter 1-1 presents a consciously fluid and discursive mode of analysis, in contrast to the relatively rigid and rooted methodology utilised in chapter 1, in recognition of the different subject area and subject matter on which this chapter centres.

In Chapters 1 and 2, the artist’s case study, and in Chapter 3, my art practice sections can also be understood as a form of autoethnography. Autoethnography is a qualitative approach that systematically analyses personal experiences in an effort to understand cultural experiences. My autoethnography knowledge is as according to Ellis & Bochner’s book *Autoethnography: an Overview. Historical Social Research* (2011).<sup>41</sup> In this thesis, I analyse Southeast Asian artists and their artworks through an autoethnographical approach from Méndez’s book, *Autoethnography as a Research Method: Advantages, Limitations and Criticisms* (2013)<sup>42</sup> to analyse the influence and meaning of ethnic Chinese people’s situation in Southeast Asia. In Chapter 3, I analyse the art practice of ten important Southeast Asian artists who had ethnic Chinese backgrounds. One example is FX Harsono, an Indonesian-Chinese artist who has

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<sup>40</sup> Lucy O’Meara, ‘Encyclopaedic Autobiography in Roland Barthes’s *Roland Barthes*’ (1975) and Amy Krouse Rosenthal’s *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* (2004)’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, vol. 57, no. 2, Apr. 2021, pp. 223–239, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/cqab014>, (accessed 15 Mar 2023).

<sup>41</sup> Carolyn Ellis, et al, ‘Autoethnography: An Overview’, *Historical Social Research*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2011, pp. 273–290.

<sup>42</sup> Mariza G. Méndez, ‘Autoethnography as a Research Method: Advantages, Limitations and Criticisms’, *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, 21 Jan. 2014, p. 279, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260778406\\_Autoethnography\\_as\\_a\\_research\\_method\\_Advantages\\_limitations\\_and\\_criticisms](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260778406_Autoethnography_as_a_research_method_Advantages_limitations_and_criticisms), (accessed 15 Mar 2023).

experienced the Indonesian anti-Chinese history. He chose to use his own artist methods to record and deal with the scars of the Indonesian nation caused by this history. From his public interview at Smith College Museum of Art<sup>43</sup> in Massachusetts, USA, I understood that his art practice adopts an autoethnographic methodology. He visited the villages that were persecuted in those years, interviewed the survivors, and traced the reason why he was forced to cut the roots of his own culture due to the Indonesian anti-Chinese incident.

Another represented research case, Wong Hoy Cheong (黃海昌), is an indispensable representation in the Malaysian contemporary art circle. Wong Hoy Cheong's long-standing artistic practice and research is always interested in migration waves, colonialism and globalisation from ancient times to the present. He is keen to unearth forgotten stories buried in the grand narratives of history and the country. He creates unique works that traverse the blurred terrain between past and present, reality and fiction, language and image. Wong Hoy Cheong said that for Chinese Malaysian artists to be invited to exhibit overseas, they must represent Malaysia and also reflect the coexistence of globalisation and multiculturalism. The works presented by Malaysian artists show diverse identities and political correctness in Malaysia. FX Harsono and Wong Hoy Cheong are the internationally famous Southeast Asian contemporary artists. They had strong Chinese culture and Chinese ethnic historical connections in their art practice, and analysing their artwork backgrounds from autoethnography and ethnography methodologies can respond to the point of view in this thesis.

Discourse analysis (論述分析) in my theory also an important methodology, as well as

Orientalism, which was identified by an internationally renowned literary theorist and critic,

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<sup>43</sup> Smith College Museum of Art, 'Q & A with Artist FX Harsono about His Video NAMA | October 2022', *Www.youtube.com*, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kunT8fe0q-I>, (accessed 15 Mar 2023).

and the founder of post-colonial theory, Edward Said. He started the discussion of Orientalism in his book in 1978 *Orientalism*. At the same time, this theory also arouses the reflection of Asian local cultural researchers on the imagination of Asia as an object. The post-colonial theoretical trend led by Said was brought back to Asia in the 1990s by scholars who came from Asia to study in Europe and the United States in the 1980s, and then spread to the intellectual circles of Asian countries, including politics, society, art, culture and other research fields. The research method of this thesis is to embody the Orientalist viewpoint of self-Orientalism in diversity of artistic perspectives. Sinophone articulations (華語語系表述) is a recent literary and cultural contemporary Chinese theory emerging in Western academic circles. In my research I use 'Cultural China' (文化中國): the argument put forward by Harvard professor, Wei-Ming Tu (杜維明) in the 1980s. He is also a representative of the third generation China's New Confucianism. Shumei Shih (史書美) occupies a very important part in my discourse analysis, among which her book *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific* (2007) inspired my horizon of Chineseness in art in my academic research. She is mainly engaged in Sinophone studies, modern Chinese literature, comparative literature methodology.

Chapter 2 explores the development of Sinophone research in Southeast Asia and those research materials from American, East Asia and Southeast Asia. This exploratory research yielded some new contextual information regarding the production and dissemination of Chinese diaspora and Chinese ethnic cultural studying in the late twentieth century. Visual analysis is not only analysis for art. It is also a critical part of visual literacy, a skill that helps people read and critically interpret images, whether in a museum, on social media, in entertainment, advertising, or the news. My visual analysis and methodological knowledge is

informed by Theo Van Leeuwen & Carey Jewitt's book, *The Handbook of Visual Analysis*<sup>44</sup> and Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln's book, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*.<sup>45</sup> Chapter 6 uses a visual methodology. Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art published his visual analysis lecture<sup>46</sup> describing that visual analysis is a method of understanding artworks that focuses on an artwork's visual elements. It is also a description and explanation of visual structure and meaning for the purpose of the art practice. Visual analysis can also recognize the choices that an artist made in creating the artwork, as well as to better understand how the formal properties of an artwork communicate ideas, content, or meaning. Visual analysis can provide the research method in observation, analysis and interpretation for this thesis.

In this thesis, I used the visual analysis method to discuss more than 30 Southeast Asian and relative Chinese ethnic contemporary artworks. Through those artworks the artists respond to Southeast Asian Chinese identity and the development of Chinese ethnic society. For example, in FX Harsono's representative work, *Bone Cemetery Monument*, the title of the work expressly evokes the appearance of a monument such as a tomb. This work can be initially understood as the death of Chinese culture in Indonesian society, which means that the Indonesian Chinese who have gone through the dark, tragic and unknown history of Indonesian Chinese can only cherish the memory through the way of monuments. Viewers who are familiar with or live in the Chinese cultural circle can clearly recognize through the appearance of the works that it is more like a GuangMing lamp (光明燈) than a tombstone or a monument. FX Harsono is aware of this taboo, and he hides a message in his works. FX Harsono's work traces the historical

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<sup>44</sup> Van Leeuwen, Theo, and Carey Jewitt, 'Approaches to Analysis in Visual Anthropology and Types of Analysis and the Importance of Contextual Information', *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Los Angeles, Sage, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Denzin, Norman K, and Yvonna S Lincoln, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2013, pp. 177–195.

<sup>46</sup> 'Home | Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art', *Museum.cornell.edu*, <https://museum.cornell.edu/>, (accessed 15 Mar 2023).

narratives of events, stories (whether historical, mythological or oral) and cultural relics from places in Indonesia that he believes represent ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Harsono's research unearths a buried history of anti-Chinese violence in the past. There are extremely complex reasons behind every painful history. Harsono, as an artist and through his own artistic research methods, traces the emotional connection from the Chinese origin, and his inner desire to explore identity, which is quite different from academic research, which is quite subjective and quite internal in its processing.

NŪR, were artists Hoy Cheong Wong and Simon Davenport, who created an oversized lantern installation in 2021 for the Creative Folkestone Triennial. In NŪR, the work uses the element of paper cutting as the first visual impression of the work. Paper-cut art is a very important part of Chinese folk life until today. As an artist representing Malaysia, Wong Hoy Cheong must pay respect to the state religion Islam established by the Malaysian government. Therefore, it is very important and necessary for all Malaysian artists to use Malay cultural elements into their works. The work also presents the classic Muslim decorative art: arabesque through paper-cutting. Through the characteristics of the paper-cut art and the continuous and symmetrical composition of the Islamic aesthetics, it can be a combination of the dual characteristics of the East and the West (Arabic) in the national value of Malaysia. NŪR is a work that embodies the characteristics of Malaysian Chinese artists. The artworks and exhibitions explore how narrative constructs identity and ideas, and how composite media transcends single media, but at the same time it is always limited by its essence. FX Harsono's *Bone Cemetery Monument*, HoyCheong Wong and Simon Davenport's NŪR's two artworks as the example through my visual analysis and artistic interpretation tightly clasp the research core of the thesis. Chinese ethnic art practice in Southeast Asia takes the absurd phenomenon of national social politics as the subject of creation. On the one hand, they use a cross-cultural perspective to discuss the differences between Eastern and Western cultures and the

compatibility of Western theoretical practices in the East. At the same time, they delve into the complex history of Southeast Asia politics and Chinese culture to find causality and identity contradictions.

## **Chapter 1. The Development and Background of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art from 1990 to the Present**

- **Modern history and development in Southeast Asian countries.**
- **The general background of Southeast Asian contemporary culture and art.**
- **Who supports Southeast Asian artists becoming the new stars in the contemporary art world now?**
- **Invisible hands: the influence of Chinese-speaking art communities in Asia.**
- **Artistic case-studies research**

### **Modern History and National Overview of Southeast Asian Countries : Southeast Asia**

What is known today as ‘Southeast Asia’ was called ‘Further India’ by some writers in the 1930s,<sup>47</sup> but such a term was very inappropriate for the civilizations and peoples in this region. Before World War II, another common name for Southeast Asia was ‘Asia of the Monsoons’ (亞洲季風區),<sup>48</sup> a term derived from the local monsoon climate pattern. Geographers are particularly accustomed to using this term, but it is not limited to today's Southeast Asia, but also includes Sri Lanka, most of India and southern China, which are considered monsoon climates. However:

Before World War II, neither foreigners nor local residents had the concept of ‘Southeast Asia’ to view the entire region. With the outbreak of World War II, ‘Southeast Asia’ began to become a concept of a region. From the perspective of military strategy at that

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<sup>47</sup> Ito Mitsuomi, and Joseph M. Fernando, ‘Early Uses and Conceptualisation of the Term “Southeast Asia.”’, *SEJARAH: Journal of the Department of History*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2014, pp. 164–166, <https://doi.org/10.22452/sejarah.vol23no2.8>, (accessed 4 Sep 2022).

<sup>48</sup> ‘Buddhism - Southeast Asia.’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism/Southeast-Asia>, (accessed 4 Sep 2022).

time, this region was obviously not India and China, nor part of the Pacific Ocean. After the Western military re-acquainted Brunei, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia with the needs of its strategy, it not only gradually organised Southeast Asia into a geographical unit region, but also called these countries in their modern names which now we familiar country name. It should be noted that the Philippines was left out of Southeast Asia at that time, because until the 1960s, the academic community was still uncertain whether the Philippines was a part of Southeast Asia. In addition, prior to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, East Timor was rarely mentioned in historical studies. However, since the East Timor government decided to join ASEAN, East Timor is also a part of Southeast Asia.<sup>49</sup>

In the past, the concept of Southeast Asia as a geographical and cultural regional unit was not only due to military strategic needs:

As early as the 1920s and 1930s, anthropologists and historians had begun to regard 'Southeast Asia' as a common similarity area. The ceremonies of the dynasties in the Southeast Asian continent are similar, thus indicating that the traditions of the place are of the same origin and inherited from each other, and there are generally similar basic family structures in the region.<sup>50</sup>

From the relationship and regional patterns of the early (before the Great Discovery of Europe) Southeast Asian countries, it can be found that foreign forces have a strong influence on this region. The Southeast Asian region has always been influenced by the development of powerful neighbouring civilizations, such as Chinese and Indian civilizations. However, in the Southeast Asian region, there are also the rise and fall of many ancient kingdoms and dynasties, and at different times, the Asian continent and the Indonesian archipelago also have close exchanges with Southeast Asia due to political and trade relations. After the end of World War II, the study of diplomacy and international situations among countries around the world and academic research in various fields have greatly increased the attention to this region, and regarded Southeast Asia as a potential transnational region and at the same time, doing large-scale business development and strategic cooperation in Southeast Asia. Such a view has

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<sup>49</sup> Milton. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, trans. Yi-Ting. Wang, Taipei, Haoyou Culture Publishing, 2020, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Milton. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, trans. Yi-Ting. Wang, Taipei, Haoyou Culture Publishing, 2020, p. 17-18.

now been emphasised by historians, anthropologists, political scientists and linguists alike, underscoring the broad and latent similarities in Southeast Asia. Although from the perspective of the 21st century, we have long taken transnational regional integration and research for granted, in fact such a concept is a concept of modern Southeast Asia that was gradually recognized and widely used after the Second World War. For the majority of scholars who study Southeast Asia, the most important questions and concern points are: in the history of modern Southeast Asia, how much influence did European invasions have on the development of Southeast Asian countries? The core of this debate is the key factors that shaped Southeast Asia's landscape for today. However:

with the extension of the depth and breadth of research, more and more scholars in different fields realise that the local development of Southeast Asia itself is the most important. In past Southeast Asian studies, it was not the works and research reports written by local people in Southeast Asia, so the research content was always deeply influenced by the subjective consciousness of the West, while ignoring the importance of the Southeast Asian character itself. The general consensus in Southeast Asian studies now is that it is recognized that the European colonial period was indeed important in the history of Southeast Asia, but the old concept of 'Eurocentrism' should not be used to overemphasise the importance of Europe in Southeast Asia. In fact, the impact on European and foreign civilizations in Southeast Asian countries and each place is fundamentally different, and the levels and methods of impact and influence are also very uneven. Otherwise, of course, Southeast Asian countries cannot be recognized as an extension of 'little Indias' or 'little Chinas'.<sup>51</sup>

The influence of countries and cultures is difficult to define easily. Although it cannot be ruled out that the two neighbouring civilizations of India and China and European countries have influenced Southeast Asia in the past and present, the extent of their influence is still controversial, but at the same time, they are always worth studying. Therefore, the general consensus in research on Southeast Asia is that all countries in Southeast Asia are independent cultural units, and the cultural development among countries can also be compared and referred

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<sup>51</sup> Milton. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, trans. Yi-Ting. Wang, Taipei, Haoyou Culture Publishing, 2020, p. 73.

to each other. Southeast Asia has been overemphasised in the past as a region shaped by foreign cultures and values from India and China.

At the same time, local scholars today, while studying the post-independence development of modern Southeast Asian countries, also pay close attention to the local aboriginal culture and traditions. In recent years, studies of Southeast Asian literature and history have also looked at multiple transnational regions from a broader perspective, rather than examining a single country. The ‘Austronesian’ (南島語系) research concept is currently the most widely used research framework in the study of Southeast Asian literature and history:

The Austronesian, or Malayo-Polynesian language family, which comprises between 800 and 1200 languages, is thought to be the most widespread and the second largest language phyla in the world. Some 270 million people are speakers of Austronesian languages (‘The Austronesian Language Phylum’), living in varied countries such as modern Burma, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kiribati, Madagascar, Tonga, the Philippines, the southern coastal areas of Thailand. This basic language is spoken in Cambodia and Vietnam.<sup>52</sup>

As a common language family, Austronesian also exists in many Indonesian and Malay languages. At the same time, there are similar but different dialect Austronesian language systems in different places in Southeast Asia. Although the research of Southeast Asian studies is still young and widely studied, there are still a lot of similarities and differences in the multi-characteristics that deserve our in-depth research. This is like Indonesia's national slogan: ‘Unity Diversity’ (多元而一體).<sup>53</sup> Scholars of Southeast Asia should not be blinded by the above-mentioned commonalities and unity, nor should they obscure differences between

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<sup>52</sup> R. A. Blust and University Pacific, *The Austronesian Languages*, Canberra, Pacific Linguistics, Research School Of Pacific And Asian Studies, 2009, pp. 2-3.

<sup>53</sup> Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which literally means ‘many, yet one’ and means ‘unity in diversity.’ This motto was adopted from a Javanese phrase which literally means ‘they are one, they are many. ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Definition’, *Law Insider*, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/bhinneka-tunggal-ika>, (accessed 19 June 2022).

regions, ethnic groups, and other levels. Southeast Asian studies should study the culture and history of Southeast Asia with a diverse and open attitude.

The long-standing turbulent social conditions and complex political history in Southeast Asia have had a profound impact on its artistic development. For the current development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, how to find a balance between the strong Western historical influence, and the local traditions contained, is crucial. Eleven countries in Southeast Asia have their own different languages, cultures and religious backgrounds, which has created the diverse development and characteristics of Southeast Asian art. But at the same time, it also makes it very difficult and complicated to comprehensively organise and analyse the contemporary art system in Southeast Asia, but it is always worth trying. Dr Eugene Tan, who joined the National Gallery of Singapore as Director in 2013, said:

“For a long time, there has been no authoritative research and analysis institution on Southeast Asian and Singaporean art in the world. However, in recent years, school art education and popular art promotion in Singapore have gradually begun to increase many project studies on Southeast Asia and Singapore's local art history. Therefore, Singapore has always tried to increase the awareness of Southeast Asian residents and the world's public on the current state of art in Southeast Asia.”<sup>54</sup> Dr Eugene Tan has always considered Southeast Asia "one of the most culturally diverse regions in the world"<sup>55</sup>. However, the art of Southeast Asia has been neglected by the West for a long time, even by the peoples of their own regions. Therefore, many important works with high artistic value are often limited to the scope of private collections and have not been exposed to the public for appreciation; and perhaps colonialism is one of the reasons behind this phenomenon.<sup>56</sup>

In recent years, the Singapore government has been planning to build Singapore into an international cultural and art city. At the same time, under the government's plan, Singapore has

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Singapore Biennale: Panorama of Southeast Asian Art \_ArtChina’, *Big5.China.com.cn*, 2013, [http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content\\_6396725.htm](http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content_6396725.htm), (accessed 27 June 2022).

<sup>55</sup> ‘Singapore Biennale: Panorama of Southeast Asian Art \_ArtChina’, *Big5.China.com.cn*, 2013, [http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content\\_6396725.htm](http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content_6396725.htm), (accessed 27 June 2022).

<sup>56</sup> ‘Singapore Biennale: Panorama of Southeast Asian Art \_ArtChina’, *Big5.China.com.cn*, 2013, [http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content\\_6396725.htm](http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content_6396725.htm), (accessed 27 June 2022).

gradually demonstrated its desire to master the art discourse power in Southeast Asia. In 2015, Singapore established the only national art institution in the world dedicated to displaying and researching the history of modern art in Southeast Asia which is the National Gallery Singapore. Singapore is trying to build itself into the centre of this booming global Southeast Asian art trend. Lisa Horikawa, senior curator at the National Gallery Singapore, said: “Our aim is not to provide a comprehensive review of art in each country, but to provide a platform that invites everyone to recognize, understand, and re-imagine Southeast Asian contemporary art.”<sup>57</sup>

In addition to Singapore's active participation in the regional art voice of Southeast Asia, Indonesia has also created a Southeast Asian style for the development of contemporary art around the world in the past decade. On September 22, 2019, Documenta Fifteen’s supervisory team announced that Ruangrupa, an artist group from Indonesia, was to be the artistic director of the 15th Documenta. Ruangrupa runs an art space in the south of Jakarta: “A space that conveyed the ideas of visual art – which are important to analyse, mediate, and furnish – like public art, performance art, and video art.”<sup>58</sup> Singaporean art history researcher, David Teh, believes and stated that “the Indonesian artist group Ruangrupa is the embodiment of an important curatorial spirit in Southeast Asia.”<sup>59</sup> In November 2017, Indonesia’s first world-class contemporary art museum opened in Jakarta, the capital, with the name Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara, or ‘Museum MACAN’ for short. The exhibitions in Museum MACAN mainly showcase the representative contemporary art of Indonesia and also includes Asian contemporary art. The opening of Museum MACAN also symbolises that the contemporary art of Indonesia is officially in line with the contemporary art of the world.

Furthermore, Thai contemporary artists are also well-known internationally, and the

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Singapore Biennale: Panorama of Southeast Asian Art \_Art China’, *Big5.China.com.cn*, 2013, [http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content\\_6396725.htm](http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content_6396725.htm), (accessed 7 July 2022).

<sup>58</sup> ‘About’, *Ruangrupa*, <https://ruangrupa.id/en/about/>, (accessed 27 June 2022).

<sup>59</sup> David Teh, ‘Afterall - Who Cares a Lot? Ruangrupa as Curatorship’, *Afterall*, 2012, <https://www.afterall.org/article/who-cares-a-lot-ruangrupa-as-curatorship>, (accessed 13 June 2023).

development of Thai contemporary art is also very dynamic. However, in terms of the development of Thailand's contemporary art, the government does not have such a strong desire and active action to educate and promote contemporary art. Therefore, many Thai contemporary artists have been recognized by the world through international activities such as overseas biennials, foreign art galleries and foreign collectors. Add that, given this context, it is very surprising that contemporary art is thriving in Thailand. In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics of Southeast Asian contemporary art developed by Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, each country in Southeast Asia has its own characteristics and historical context of contemporary art development, which will be analysed in the following chapters. 'Diversity' is the cornerstone of the development of Southeast Asian art, which reflects the richness brought about by the geographical and cultural differences in Southeast Asia. In the early 1990s stage of the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, success depended on if the artists were invited to participate in international biennials. In recent two decades, Southeast Asian countries have actively held biennial exhibitions and established world-class art museums to create exhibitions of the specific practice of Southeast Asia. These artistic actions and decisions further explore the value of Southeast Asian art and promote international attention to Southeast Asia. Through the art platform of holding biennials and thematic exhibitions, it will continue to open up exchanges and dialogues for Southeast Asian art.

The following sections will briefly introduce the modern history of the region under consideration. The thesis main body will analyse the contemporary art development context in each Southeast Asian country, and much additional information can be found in the accompanying appendices.

## **Indonesia:**

**The modern history of Indonesia is discussed in Appendix 1.**

### **The Outlook for the Indonesian Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

The development of Indonesia's contemporary art industry is relatively mature for Southeast Asian countries, and its local collection strength is quite strong. The commercial market is the yardstick that promotes Indonesian contemporary art. The public art and cultural institutions are still very weak in Indonesia. The promotion of contemporary art in Indonesia mainly relies on the grand feats constructed by artists, curators, collectors, galleries, private art galleries, foundations and even auction companies.<sup>60</sup> The most important movement in the history of contemporary art in Indonesia was the establishment of the Indonesia New Art Movement [Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru / GSRBI] in 1975. This Movement was centred on a group of mainly young artists including FX Harsono and Jim Supangkat who freed themselves from the existing framework of Indonesian modern art, based predominantly on 'Western' context - with the dominance of expressionism, realism, abstract and surrealism.<sup>61</sup>

The development of contemporary art in Indonesia is separated into the three cities of Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Bandung. Each city has different features to highlight. Jakarta is the site of the Jakarta Biennale. Jakarta was the first in Indonesia to have a collection of modern and contemporary Indonesian and an international art museum: the Museum of Modern and

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<sup>60</sup> Yunxi Lin, 'The Diverse Artistic Appearance of Southeast Asia-Indonesia. The Taste of Clove Cigarette', *Artouch*, 2016, <https://artouch.com/views/content-5216.html>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>61</sup> Yoneda Naoki, *Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, exhibition catalogue, Tokyo, Mori Art Museum, The Japan Foundation Asia Center, 2017, p. 312.

Contemporary Art in Nusantara<sup>62</sup> (Museum MACAN).<sup>63</sup> The museum opened in 2017 and was established by Haryanto Adikoesoemo<sup>64</sup> who is a famous international collector. He had been developing his collection for 25 years into one of the most significant collections in Indonesia. Komunitas Salihara<sup>65</sup> is an art and cultural centre founded in 2008, dedicated to the promotion of literature, film, architecture, philosophy and performing arts. The building is constructed with a green building structure, with theatres of various scales, exhibition halls, rehearsal rooms, shops and restaurants. It is a fairly indicative art and cultural community in Jakarta.

Ruangrupa<sup>66</sup> is a contemporary art collective and an alternative art space based in Jakarta. Founded in 2000 by a group of seven artists, Ruangrupa provided a platform in South Jakarta for organising exhibitions, events, and festivals, also conducting publishing services, workshops, and research. Ruangrupa functions as a non-profit organisation that supports contemporary art within the urban and cultural contexts of Indonesia and beyond, often involving artists and practitioners from other disciplines such as the social sciences, politics, and technology. As a collective, they co-directed Documenta Fifteen,<sup>67</sup> 2022, in Kassel, Germany. Ruangrupa is arguably the most influential art collective currently in Jakarta and also in the contemporary art world. In Documenta Fifteen, Ruangrupa invited a lot of Southeast Asian independent art organisations and artist groups to provide their diverse and unique

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<sup>62</sup> The Museum has an active programme of exhibitions and events in a 7,100 square metre facility including onsite education and conservation spaces.

<sup>63</sup> Vivienne. Chow, 'Art in Jakarta Faces a Bright Future', *Sotheby's*, 2019, <https://www.sothebyscn.com.cn/en/articles/art-in-jakarta-faces-a-bright-future>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>64</sup> Born in 1962 in Surabaya, Indonesia, Haryanto Adikoesoemo is the President Director of PT AKR Corporindo Tbk, a publicly listed logistics company in Jakarta, Indonesia.

<sup>65</sup> Komunitas Salihara is the first privately-owned multidisciplinary arts and cultural centre in Indonesia. Their vision is to maintain freedom of thought and expression, respect differences and diversity, and to foster artistic and intellectual resources.

<sup>66</sup> It's an interdisciplinary team that includes architects and social scientists, among others, who believe in the notion of collectivity as a means to break away from the modernist idea of the artist as a centralistic entity.

<sup>67</sup> Ruangrupa has based Documenta Fifteen upon the values and ideas of 'lumbung'. Lumbung, which directly translates as "rice barn", refers to a communal building in rural Indonesia where a community's harvest is gathered, stored and distributed according to jointly determined criteria as a pooled resource for the future. 'About', *Documenta Fifteen* [website], <https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/about/>, (accessed 30 October).

perspectives which are different from Western contexts. In the past, Ruangrupa also invited local art institutions and groups in Jakarta, such as Forum Lenteng, Grafis Huru Hara, Serrum, OK. Video, Jakarta 32°C, to join and establish Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem<sup>68</sup> in 2015. Gudang Sarinah Ekosistem maintains, nurtures and builds a complex space as a community system where artists, communities and various public institutions can integrate and support each other. In the Documenta Fifteen exhibition, Ruangrupa skillfully brought the organic and diverse cooperation model of Southeast Asia into the mechanism of the Western authoritative biennale.

In recent years, the biennale activities in Indonesia have been very active, attracting the attention of art and cultural people from all over the world. Yogyakarta is host to Biennale Jogja.<sup>69</sup> ARTJOG<sup>70</sup> is a contemporary art fair, held annually in Taman Budaya Yogyakarta<sup>71</sup> (Cultural Centre of Yogyakarta). In 2019 ARTJOG rebranded as an art festival from an art fair. Cemeti Institute for Art and Society<sup>72</sup> is Indonesia's oldest platform for contemporary art, founded in Yogyakarta in 1988 by artists, Mella Jaarsma<sup>73</sup> and Nindityo Adipurnomo.<sup>74</sup> Cemeti

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<sup>68</sup> 'Ruangrupa', *Ocac.com.tw*, <https://ocac.com.tw/index.php/zh/art-spaces/item/404-ruangrupa>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>69</sup> Commenced for the first time as an exhibition that represents the dynamic of art practice in Yogyakarta in 1988, Biennale Jogja has now become one of the most robust and consistent visual arts events in Indonesia.

<sup>70</sup> ARTJOG is an art exhibition in Jogjakarta that has been an annual occurrence for 12 years, and even in 2020 when the world faced the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>71</sup> Taman Budaya Yogyakarta is a cultural development centre in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. TBK complex consists of two buildings: namely the Taman Budaya Concert Hall and the Societet Militair Building. The Concert Hall mainly functions as an official room for fine art exhibitions, such as painting, visual art, sculpture, and craft.

<sup>72</sup> Cemeti Art House's main focus is stimulating art practices, art discourse and art management. Contemporary art in Indonesia can be seen as the form, concern, view and reflection of artists to issues developing in society.

<sup>73</sup> Mella Jaarsma (b. 1960) is a Dutch artist who now lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Jaarsma studied visual arts at the Minerva Academy, Groningen (1978 – 1984), after which she left the Netherlands to study at the Art Institute of Jakarta – IKJ (1984), Jakarta, and at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts – ISI (1985 – 1986), Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

'Mella Jaarsma', *Framer Framed* [website], <https://framerframed.nl/en/mensen/mella-jaarsma/>, (accessed 12 May 2021).

<sup>74</sup> Nindityo Adipurnomo (b. 1961, Semarang, Indonesia) lives and works in (2007) Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and works to engage history in ways that examine how culture is created and developed under external influences. 'Nindityo Adipurnomo', *Baik Art* [website], <https://baikart.com/nindityo-adipurnomo>, (accessed 12 May 2021).

offers a platform for artists and cultural practitioners to develop, present and practise their work in close collaboration with curators, researchers, activists, writers and performers, as well as local communities across Yogyakarta. They actively engaged artistic practices in social and political issues, exploring the possibility for a gallery to act as a site for civic action. Generally, for artists based in Yogyakarta, their art practice has a strong Indonesian local character and nostalgic feeling:<sup>75</sup>

The economic performance of Indonesian Chinese in Indonesian society has attracted deep attention in various fields. Diego Fossati, an Indonesian studies scholar, said: “The Chinese are the backbone and soul of Indonesia's national commerce. The influence of Indonesian Chinese in various fields of art and culture also plays a pivotal role.” For Indonesian Chinese, arts and cultural activities are not only the basis for building community context, but also an important medium for developing cultural identity. As Prof. Sumarsam, an Indonesian ethnomusicologist, said: “The development of Javanese art and literature has been spread by Chinese ethnic publishers, and the Chinese Indonesian have spared no effort in supporting and maintaining traditional music and drama.”<sup>76</sup>

This section will discuss the contribution of Indonesian Chinese to the development of local contemporary art and culture in Indonesia. In fact, the Chinese migrated to Indonesia and took root for a long time. The development of contemporary art in Indonesia is supported by the richest Chinese from major wealth groups in Indonesia. They control the economic lifeline of Indonesia. Among them, the most representative Indonesian Chinese collectors and representatives of art museums and art foundations are Budi Tek (余德耀), Deddy Kusuma (林運强), Haryanto Adikoesoemo (翁璋光), Dr Oei Hong Djien (黄鴻仁醫生)。

Dr Oei Hong Djien (黄鴻仁醫生) is the largest collector of Indonesian modern and contemporary art. Dr Oei opened the OHD Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in

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<sup>75</sup> Further information on Indonesia’s contemporary art development can be found in Appendix 2.

<sup>76</sup> As Foreign Land Becomes Home Land: The Chinese Indonesian Culture and Artists That Break through the Ethnic Barriers [online video], Tnnua.edu.tw, 2020, <https://ethnomu.tnnua.edu.tw/p/404-1029-26075.php?Lang=zh-tw>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

Central Java in 1997 (OHD is Dr Oei Hong Djien's initials). The large-scale collection of OHD is of high value to the academic research of Indonesian contemporary art:

Oei once stated that “In Indonesia, the government is not so interested in contemporary art, so the support of contemporary art by private organisations plays a very important role. Indonesia currently does not have a complete infrastructure, galleries or fairs to support the career development of young local artists.”<sup>77</sup> Dr. Oei has supported modern Indonesian artists who have now become well-known ‘masters’ of modern art, such as Affandi<sup>78</sup> (1907–1990) and Widayat<sup>79</sup> (1923–2002), and he will continue to support young Indonesian artists to continue to create.<sup>80</sup>

Deddy Kusuma (林運強) is a major shareholder of a real estate group company in Indonesia. The group has developed many buildings and construction projects in Indonesia, and he is one of the representatives of the Indonesian Chinese business community. Deddy Kusuma is also a very representative collector in Indonesia. He actively helps Indonesian artists to prepare exhibitions, and also promotes Indonesian artists to the international art world:

Deddy used to invite international art museums and curators from all over the world to hold Indonesia-themed exhibitions overseas through his status as a world-class collector, and in 2016, he contributed to Art Stage Jakarta, which was Indonesia's first international art fair event.<sup>81</sup>

“A reporter once asked him ‘The biggest part of your collection is Indonesian, but it also has a lot of international and Chinese artists. Why China?’ His answer was China because my ethnicity is Chinese, and I know Chinese culture. My collection is 60% Indonesian, because I'm

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<sup>77</sup> Mo Xiaomo, and Lin Qi, ‘Interview with Indonesian Collector Huang Hongren: Art Collecting Is Addictive’, <https://www.zgnfys.com/a/nfms-39449.shtml>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>78</sup> Affandi was an Indonesian artist recognised for his bold and unorthodox paintings of Indonesia in the 20th century. ‘Affandi Biography, Artworks & Exhibitions’, *Ocula.com*, 2022, <https://ocula.com/artists/koesoema-affandi/>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>79</sup> Born in 1923, Widayat was among the first batch of students at the Indonesian Academy of Fine Arts (ASRI), Yogyakarta. A pioneer in the art of a uniquely Indonesian decorative art, his work is often described as being enchanting and magical. ‘WIDAYAT’, *www.christies.com*, <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5568081>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>80</sup> ‘Asian collectors keen to showcase their collections’, *Collection.sina.com.cn*, 2011, <http://collection.sina.com.cn/cjrw/20110627/161030242.shtml>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>81</sup> Indonesia Tatler Editor, ‘Collector Conversation: Deddy Kusuma and the Faith for Indonesian Art’, *Indonesia Tatler*, 2016, <http://www.indonesiatatler.com/arts-culture/arts/collector-conversation-deddy-kusuma-and-the-faith-for-indonesian-art>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

living here, I'm Indonesian. 20% is maybe Chinese and the other 20% is from the rest of the world.”<sup>82</sup>

An entrepreneur in Indonesia's livestock industry representative, Budi Tek (余德耀), began collecting in 2004. In 2008 he founded his first institution, Yuz Museum Jakarta, which was among the first private art museums in the Indonesian capital. The name Yuz derives from a nickname of Tek's Chinese name, Yu Deyao (余德耀). In 2012 and 2013, he was selected to be in the 'Power 100' list of *Art Review* magazine (*ArtReview*) for two consecutive years. In 2014, he also opened the 'Yuz Museum' named after him again in Shanghai Xu.<sup>83</sup> Yuz Museum Jakarta, as the first private art museum in Indonesia approved by the Ministry of Culture of the country, received a remarkable amount of local media at the opening of its first exhibition. Many Indonesian celebrities participated in the activities.<sup>84</sup> Budi Tek (余德耀) said in an interview at the museum:

Indonesia is now a democratic country. Although I can still see some of Indonesian people's hatred of Chinese people, but at the level of government policy, we are not Chinese (中國人), but ethnic Chinese (華族/華人), and ethnic Chinese is already the second largest ethnic group in Indonesia. Moreover, we (ethnic Chinese people) are quite well-behaved in every way we work, so when I applied to an art museum for the public, the government was rather puzzled. They thought that I could just be a commercial art gallery. Why should I open an art museum? But after keeping communication, the government sent several groups of people to investigate, and finally thought that the museum was a good thing for everyone. Because my art museum promotes the exchange of Asian cultures, not only Chinese contemporary art, it is not very narrow in the government's view. I will also promote the works of local Indonesian artists.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Indonesia Tatler* Editor, 'Collector Conversation: Deddy Kusuma and the Faith for Indonesian Art', *Indonesia Tatler*, 2016, <http://www.indonesiatatler.com/arts-culture/arts/collector-conversation-deddy-kusuma-and-the-faith-for-indonesian-art>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>83</sup> 'Yuz: Why open a private art museum in China?', *The New York Times*, 2014, <https://cn.nytimes.com/art/20140901/tc01yudeyao/zh-hant/>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>84</sup> A recording of the interview at the opening of Yuz Museum Jakarta is available in Appendix 3.

<sup>85</sup> 'Indonesian Chinese collectors never give up on Chinese', *Www.99ys.com*, [www.99ys.com/home/2009/01/16/09/96233.html](http://www.99ys.com/home/2009/01/16/09/96233.html), (accessed 6 July 2022).

In November 2017, Indonesia's first world-class contemporary art museum opened in the capital Jakarta, The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara, which is referred to as 'Museum MACAN' (the English pronunciation of MACAN is 'mah-chan'). It provides public access to a significant and growing collection of modern and contemporary art from Indonesia and around the world. The Museum MACAN, which has been in preparation for nearly ten years, mainly contains more than 800 private collections collected by businessman and philanthropist Haryanto Adikoesoemo (翁璋光) in the past 25 years. The purpose of the museum is to discover the blind spots of most Indonesians in the field of art, especially outstanding Indonesian artists. Museum MACAN has appointed Thomas J. Berghuis, former senior curator of Chinese art at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, as its first museum director, dedicated to active exchanges between the local Indonesian and international art ecosystems. FX Harsono (胡丰文), a representative Indonesian artist, said: "Museum MACAN has a pivotal position. Most of the contemporary art development in Indonesia is dominated by business, and only national museums like MACAN can promote the development of the local art scene."<sup>86</sup> Haryanto Adikoesoemo (翁璋光), a representative Indonesian Chinese who promotes the development of contemporary art in Indonesia, is not only the initiator of Museum MACAN, but also the chairman of Indonesia AKR Group. The company's businesses include Indonesia's largest chemical and energy storage, land development and luxury housing development. "He strongly supports local Indonesian artists, such as the much-loved Indonesian artists, Affandi, Srihadi Soedarsono, FX Harsono and Entang Wiharso, whose works make up a large part of Haryanto Adikoesoemo's collection."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Adam White, 'Is Jakarta the new art capital of Southeast Asia? The rise of contemporary art in Indonesia', *Discovery*, 2020, <https://discovery.cathaypacific.com/southeast-asias-new-art-capital/?lang=zh-hans>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>87</sup> arielhauer, 'Haryanto Adikoesoemo', *ARTnews.com*, 2017, <https://www.artnews.com/art-collectors/top-200-profiles/haryanto-adikoesoemo/>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

From the above research, it can be clearly found that the Indonesian Chinese community has a huge influence on Indonesian business, and this influence also plays a role in supporting and promoting Indonesian contemporary art. At the same time, we can also feel the strong cohesion of Indonesian Chinese to their own ethnic Chinese identity. China's representative art gallery, Suqiao Li, head of Gallery Beijing Space, has been invited many times to organise Indonesia-China exchange exhibitions. In an interview, he said:

An important reason why Indonesian Chinese prefer contemporary art with Chinese elements more than Chinese in other countries is the large-scale anti-Chinese riots that broke out in Indonesia in May 1998, which led to deep-rooted anti-Chinese sentiments in the hearts of ordinary Indonesian people. This makes it impossible for Chinese Indonesians to have a complete sense of belonging to Indonesia emotionally, which keeps their Indonesia national belonging in a state of contradiction and complexity.<sup>88</sup>

Although the Chinese people in Indonesia account for less than 5% of the total population, they control 70% of Indonesia's economic lifeline. These Indonesian Chinese and the Indonesian Chinese mentioned in this article, such as Budi Tek (Yu Deyao), Deddy Kusuma (Lin Yunqiang), Haryanto Adikoesoemo (Weng Weiguang), and even native Indonesians Chinese, often consider themselves to be Chinese ethnic first and foremost. Culturally, the identity of China has a more similar blood background, so these Indonesian Chinese have always had a strong sense of belonging and identity to Chinese culture.

On the whole, the artistic situation and development of Chinese Indonesians is very bumpy. The main reason is that in the 1960s and 1970s, the Indonesian political authority, Haji Mohammad Suharto (Soeharto), set off a large-scale wave of Chinese exclusion in Indonesia. At that time, Indonesian Chinese were forbidden to use Chinese, not to use Chinese characters, Chinese-language schools and Chinese-language newspapers, prohibiting the celebration of traditional Chinese festivals, and being forced to change to Indonesian surnames and other

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<sup>88</sup> 'Indonesian Chinese collectors never give up on Chinese', *Www.99ys.com*, [www.99ys.com/home/2009/01/16/09/96233.html](http://www.99ys.com/home/2009/01/16/09/96233.html), (accessed 6 July 2022).

anti-Chinese policies... even led to massacres. And this period of history until now is still unclear, and no one can say the exact number of how many Chinese were killed in this history.<sup>89</sup>

Until 1999, when Abdurrahman Wahid, who is of Chinese descent, was elected President of Indonesia, the Chinese language was fully opened. In 2000, he signed Presidential Decree No. 6, which revoked the decree that banned Indonesian Chinese from publicly celebrating Chinese festivals since 1967. Abdurrahman Wahid is respected as the 'Father of Indonesian Chinese' by Indonesian Chinese because of his contribution to the harmony of Indonesia's diverse ethnic groups.<sup>90</sup>

FX Harsono, an Indonesian Chinese artist who has experienced this history, chose to use his own methods to record and deal with the scars of the Indonesian nation caused by this history. He visited the villages that were persecuted in those years, interviewed the survivors, and traced the reason why he was forced to cut the roots of his own culture due to the Indonesian anti-Chinese incident. FX Harsono lived his childhood from one to ten years old in Java, and was exposed to Indonesian traditions and culture through his grandmother. As an Indonesian Chinese, he experienced dual-cultural education and living habits, but all of these faced great challenges in his life when he was in middle school. At that time, violence and discrimination against China (including anti-ethnic Chinese, supported by the national government) broke out in Indonesia. Between 1965 and 1966, due to national politics and Chinese exclusion, FX Harsono always remembers that his father burned any family photos of the activities of the Chinese community. Because these photos were likely to be detrimental to Chinese families, they were maliciously interpreted as evidence of an intention to shake the stability of the country.

Since 1966, the government has explicitly banned the use of Chinese language and words:

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<sup>89</sup> Taomo. Zhou, *Ambivalent Alliance: Chinese Policy Towards Indonesia, 1960-1965*, Washington, D.C., Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2013, p. 208.

<sup>90</sup> *As Foreign Land Becomes Home Land: The Chinese Indonesian Culture and Artists That Break through the Ethnic Barriers* [online video], Tnnua.edu.tw, 2020, <https://ethnomu.tnnua.edu.tw/p/404-1029-26075.php?Lang=zh-tw>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

Chinese media have been forced to close down, the import of Chinese publications has been banned, Chinese schools and social and political organisations have been closed, and any use of Chinese has been strongly curbed. Members of the Indonesian Chinese community were also forced to change their names to more Indonesian-sounding names. The main reason for the exclusion of Chinese during this period was the anti-Communist purge in Indonesia, and many Chinese were members of the Communist Party at that time.<sup>91</sup>

In fact, there are many and complicated reasons for Indonesia's exclusion of Chinese, which can be traced back to the colonial period. The colonial governments of all dynasties have deliberately operated, because creating ethnic conflicts is conducive to governance. This also led to his forced change of the Chinese name at birth to Franciscus Xaverius Harsono (FX Harsono). Despite this, the name change is still not enough to prove the loyalty of Indonesian Chinese to Indonesia. As part of the assimilation policy, "FX Harsono and other Chinese Indonesians must also officially 'become' Indonesian citizens. That meant a litany of red tape, requiring him and every Chinese ethnic to renounce his Chinese citizenship, which they didn't exist and never had."<sup>92</sup> FX Harsono's work traces the historical narratives of events, stories (whether historical, mythological or oral) and cultural relics from places in Indonesia that he believes represent Chinese ethnic in Indonesia. Harsono's research unearths a buried history of anti-Chinese violence in the past. There are extremely complex reasons behind every painful history. Harsono, as an artist and through his own artistic research methods, traces the emotional connection from the Chinese origin, and his inner desire to explore identity, which is quite different from academic research, which is quite subjective and focuses on his internal processing. The next section will examine his work in more detail.

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<sup>91</sup> 'Indonesian Presidential Election: Anti-Chinese and Anti-Chinese Events in History', *BBC News*, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-47946596>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>92</sup> Catt. Lisa, 'Expressions of Chinese Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage in Contemporary Indonesian Art: FX Harsono and Tintin Wulia,' *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2015, pp. 67–81.

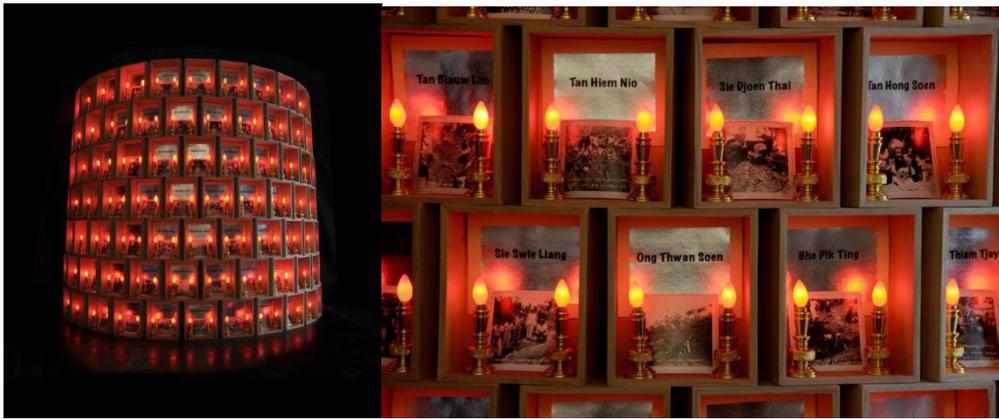


Figure 1. FX Harsono, *Bone Cemetery Monument*, 2022, <https://indoartnow.com/artists/fx-harsono>.



Figure 2. *Guangming Lamp* (光明燈), Three Gorges, New Taipei City, Guangxing Palace, Guan Shengdijun Temple, 2022, <https://www.0226730131.com.tw/services.html>.

FX Harsono's representative work, *Bone Cemetery Monument*, looks like a giant neon sign at first glance. The title of the work expressly evokes the appearance of a monument such as a tomb. Inside the monument are hundreds of photo boxes with red light installations on sacrificial platforms. Each small space is also filled with the ethical and moral dogma of Chinese culture. This work can be initially understood as the death of Chinese culture in Indonesian society, which means that the Indonesian Chinese who have gone through the dark, tragic and unknown history of Indonesian Chinese can only cherish the memory through the way of monuments. But in fact, there may be more profound information hidden in the works. Viewers who are familiar with, or who live in the Chinese cultural circle, can clearly recognize

through the appearance of the works that it is more like a guangming lamp (光明燈) than a tombstone or a monument. Guangming lamps (光明燈) are similar to western culture's votive candles. "Guangming lamps are a kind of Chinese folk belief activities, and also lamps used for blessing in religion. There are often bright lamps in Taoist temples, which have the meaning of blessing. It also symbolises the beacon on the road of life, shining in the direction and never getting lost."<sup>93</sup> There is a famous taboo in Guangming lamps that the living cannot light the lamp for the deceased. Therefore, I think FX Harsono is aware of this taboo, and he hides a message in his works that the Chinese cultural dogma in Indonesia has perished like a monument on the surface. However, the Chinese ethnic in Indonesia have always silently preserved the culture of the descendants of Chinese Indonesian and always believe that these Chinese dogmas will continue to be passed down in the Chinese Indonesian life and culture, and that the young Chinese living in Indonesia will illuminate and bless the Chinese Indonesian culture like Guangming lamps.

## **Malaysia:**

**The modern history of Malaysia is discussed in Appendix 4.**

## **The Outlook for the Malaysian Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Effected Their Influence in the Development of Art:**

The development of contemporary art in Malaysia from 1990 to 2010 was mainly due to the influence of the public art institution and the art market. Moreover, the development trend of visual art in Malaysia is based on the internal operating mechanism and needs of the National

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<sup>93</sup> 'Light up the Lamp', *Moi.gov.tw*, 2014, <https://religion.moi.gov.tw/Knowledge/Content?ci=2&cid=41>, (accessed 7 July 2022).

Art Gallery. The National Art Gallery of Malaysia was established in 1958, and the National Visual Arts Gallery<sup>94</sup> in Kuala Lumpur is one of the oldest museums of art in Malaysia and plays a central role in contemporary art in the country. The National Art Gallery hosts the Young Contemporaries Award (YCA)<sup>95</sup> and exhibition. The YCA has contributed a lot to the promotion of contemporary art in Malaysia. In addition, the National Art Gallery has regularly provided various art events and programmes, such as the annual ‘Malaysia Open Show’ and the ‘Salon Malaysia Art Competition.’<sup>96</sup> In a way, these projects are one of the few domestic platforms that provide local artists with opportunities to publish their works and become famous and receive high prizes. ‘Most of the artists who are active in Malaysia have been baptised (or crowned) by the above-mentioned government art programs and awards. By participating in official exhibitions and awards, Malaysian artists have more expectations for the development of contemporary art in Malaysia.’<sup>97</sup>

Compared with the public art institution's bureaucratic system and single aesthetic standard situation, private art galleries and art spaces are relatively flexible and active in presenting multiple artistic possibilities. After the mid-1990s, the concept of ‘creative’ was promoted in various arts and cultural fields, such as advertising design, new media, fine art, community art, etc., and gradually some unique and cross-domain art groups and art spaces were connected for

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<sup>94</sup> The National Visual Arts Gallery (Malaysia) is a public art gallery in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, that highlights Malaysian art. It held its first exhibition in 1958.

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/museums/national-visual-arts-gallery-malaysia>

<sup>95</sup> The Young Contemporaries Award (YCA) is one of the most prestigious and recognised competitions in Malaysia, and is open to all Malaysians who are 35 and below.

<sup>96</sup> Salon Malaysia is a National Art Competition and Exhibition, jointly sponsored by the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur and the Malayan Tobacco Company, Berhad.

<sup>97</sup> Chang-hwang. Chai, ‘Unspoken Condition: Imagining an Alternative Malaysia Contemporary Art’, *Www.tfam.museum*, 2021, <https://www.tfam.museum/Journal/Detail.aspx?id=33&aID=10&ddlLang=zh-tw>, (accessed 7 July 2022).

various experimental explorations. For example, one of these is Rumah Air Panas (RAP),<sup>98</sup> which was founded originally as an independent non-profit art space and was based in Kuala Lumpur in 1997.<sup>99</sup>

RogueArt was founded in 2008 and is based in Kuala Lumpur as an art specialists team, focusing on the creative, strategic and organisational management of art and cultural projects, exhibitions, collections and publications. In 2019 they finally completed their four-volume series, *Narratives in Malaysian Art*,<sup>100</sup> which they embarked upon 10 years ago. The series of books, which research the Malaysia contemporary art development of the structures and their relation, capture some of the history of Malaysia's art scene over the decades. They also map key areas of art institutions, artist-run initiatives, the art market, art education as well as art writing and publication. Malaysian art groups, spaces and projects had grown into an independent art circle. They propose public art plans and local community development in communities or small villages, based on non-commercial considerations. These members or groups are not only those who have art education from universities or colleges at home or abroad, but there are also many people from different backgrounds. They integrate their work in cross-fields of art, such as independent curation, outdoor lectures, social practice and independent publishing of art and literature. Compared with the resources of official institutions and commercial spaces, the independent circle groups are very tight and have much less exposure. From the perspective of Malaysian contemporary art development, the key players are the system (the government providing and educating), the market (commercial gallery and art industry), and the independent circle which are outside of other two forces.

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<sup>98</sup> Established in 1997, RAP is an independent art space run by art enthusiasts. ASEF Culture360, 'Rumah Air Panas (RAP)', *ASEF Culture360* [website], 2011, <https://culture360.asef.org/resources/rumah-air-panas-rap/>, (accessed 15 June 2022).

<sup>99</sup> There is further information on Malaysian alternative art spaces provided in Appendix 5.

<sup>100</sup> Comprising texts, essays, and interviews on the development of visual art in Malaysia. Published by RogueArt. *Narratives in Malaysian Art*, *Universes.art*, [website], <https://universes.art/en/nafas/articles/2012/narratives-in-malaysian-art>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

These three are in a triangle-like relationship, and they are in a delicate and stable state of mutual checks and balances as well as mutual connections.

After the independence of Malaysia in 1957, the national ethnic policy has always protected (favoured) the Malay indigenous (Bumiputera):

The Malay ethnic group has always identified itself as the absolute majority ethnic group in Malaysia and the indigenous people of Malaysia. They claim that Malaysia is a country of Malays, and they regard the Chinese, the second majority ethnic group in Malaysia, as unpatriotic and disloyal 'Chinese'. Even though the Chinese community has lived in Malaysia for more than half a century, Malaysian Chinese are often derided by the Malays as 'outsiders.'<sup>101</sup>

This has resulted in much unequal treatment of Chinese and other ethnic groups in Malaysian society. Malaysian Chinese in the early 20th century had always had a strong emotional identity with their home country (mother country). After the independence of Malaysia, the Malaysian government demanded that Malaysian Chinese and China draw a line due to international ideological factors. Due to international political confrontation, the Malayan government restricts Chinese from travelling to China, which creates an invisible barrier to ethnic identity for Chinese in Malaysia. Subsequently, the Malaysian government opened the door for overseas Chinese to become Malaysian nationals and the birth of the second generation of Malaysian Chinese. This makes the Chinese in Malaysia gradually realise that they are Malaysian Chinese rather than a single 'Chinese' identity. At the same time, the information exchange between the Chinese community and the government and other ethnic groups has also been strengthened through the promotion of Chinese language newspapers in Malaysia, which has accelerated the Malaysian national identity among the various ethnic groups in

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<sup>101</sup> Ya-Wen. Yu, 'The Formation and Evolution of Malaysian Chinese Identity: An Analysis of Malaysian Chinese Literature', *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2015, p.141, <http://www.tisanet.org/quarterly/11-1-7.pdf>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

modern Malaysia.<sup>102</sup>

Compared with the Indonesian Chinese art circle, the Malaysian Chinese art circle has not shaken the influence of the national art development, but has been integrated with the entire Malaysian art circle in a gentle way:

The development of Malaysian Chinese identity is a relatively flexible and deep spiritual transformation activity, which can be expressed in multiple and open ways through art and literature. In other words, Malaysian Chinese tend to express nostalgia in art, express identity anxiety, or use metaphors to propose Chinese rights to Malaysian society. Therefore, the development of Chinese art and literature in Malaysia has become a mature platform for the local Chinese community to speak out.<sup>103</sup>

By analysing the development of Malaysian Chinese art, we can also understand the historical evolution of the Malaysian Chinese identity and how the Malaysian Chinese society constructed the history of its nation.

### **The Development of Malaysian Chinese Contemporary Art:**

In 1957, the National Taiwan Normal University (台灣國立師範大學) admitted the first batch of Malaysian Chinese students who came to Taiwan to study fine arts, which has influenced the art education in Malaysia to this day. For example, Dr. Choong Kam Kow (鍾金鈞)、Tan Chiang Kiong (陳昌孔)、Tan Puay Jin (陳培仁) and Khor Earn Ghee (許延義) have continued to create painting works and teach at art schools. To this day, Taiwan is also the place where the most Malaysian Chinese go to study fine arts.<sup>104</sup>

The most famous contemporary artist in Malaysia, Wong Hoy Cheong (黃海昌), also has a Chinese background. Wong Hoy Cheong was born in Penang, Malaysia, in 1960. “He is

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<sup>102</sup> However, from the 1950s to the modern society, Malaysian Chinese newspapers still had special issues reporting the concerns of other overseas Chinese societies in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

<sup>103</sup> Ya-Wen. Yu, ‘The Formation and Evolution of Malaysian Chinese Identity: An Analysis of Malaysian Chinese Literature’, *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2015, p.145, <http://www.tisanet.org/quarterly/11-1-7.pdf>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>104</sup> Aiwei. Lin, ‘Southeast Asia's Diverse Artistic Appearance - Malaysia. As Deep as a Rainforest’, *ARTouch.com*, 2016, <https://artouch.com/art-views/content-924.html>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

classified as the first generation of post-independent artists in Malaysia.<sup>105</sup>

Wong Hoy Cheong's works always try to provoke the viewer's sense of safety, reminding us that the boundaries between reality and fiction, past and present are difficult to grasp; he believes people are constantly re-creating their own history. Wong Hoy Cheong (黄海昌) has an outstanding international reputation and is an indispensable representation in the Malaysian contemporary art circle. He is not only an artist but also an educator, curator, critic/writer, etc. Wong Hoy Cheong is the fifth generation of Chinese immigrating to Malaysia and the first generation of artists of the post-independence generation in Malaysia.

The development of his artistic creation is based on ideas and is never limited to a certain form of media. His practice research focuses on knowledge and knowledge in different fields such as literature, cartography, botany, history, anthropology, archaeology, popular culture, and politics. There is no denying that he is undeniably a cross-disciplinary practice artist.



Figure 3. HoyCheong Wong, Simon Davenport and Shahed Saleem, *NŪR*, 2021, accessed 6 July 2022, <https://www.dezeen.com/2021/07/22/assemble-creates-skatable-sculptures-for-folkestone-triennial/>.

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<sup>105</sup> Further artistic information on the artist is available in Appendix 6.

*NŪR*, artists, HoyCheong Wong and Simon Davenport, created an oversized lantern installation together with architect Shahed Saleem that towers over the courtyard of Folkestone's Islamic Cultural Centre in 2021 for the Creative Folkestone Triennial. Illuminated from within, the artwork casts shadows onto the mosque through its acrylic panels, which are rendered in 'Turkish delight' colours and cut with motifs chosen in collaboration with the local community. In 2018, this artistic experiment developed surveys, focus groups, workshops, briefings and feedback sessions were conducted on proposed plans. A children's field trip and print workshop was conducted to design motifs and patterns for the future mosque. Oral histories of the community and site history was collected.<sup>106</sup> For me, the work *NŪR* is a work that embodies the characteristics of Malaysian Chinese artists. For Malaysian Chinese artists to be invited to exhibit overseas, it represents Malaysia and also reflects the coexistence of globalization and multiculturalism. It is very important how the works presented by Malaysian artists show diverse identities and political correctness in Malaysia, and at the same time show the artists' own artistic vision.

In *NŪR*, the work uses the element of paper cutting as the first visual impression of the work. Paper-cut art is a very important part of Chinese folk life until today. Chinese papercutting(中國剪紙) is a folk art that uses scissors or a knife to cut patterns on paper, which is used to decorate life or cooperate with various folk activities. Chinese papercutting was popular in ancient China in the Tang and Song dynasties,<sup>107</sup> and was introduced to Turkey in the 16th century and to West Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>108</sup> In Chinese culture, the art of

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<sup>106</sup> 'Hoy Cheong Wong - Creative Folkestone Triennial', *Www.creativefolkestone.org.uk*, <https://www.creativefolkestone.org.uk/artists/hoycheong-wong-2/>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>107</sup> Rachel. Jiang, 'Chinese Paper Cutting | Jiǎnzhǐ | Facts, History, Categories & Applications', *Medium*, 2019, [https://medium.com/@rachel\\_82473/chinese-paper-cutting-ji%C7%8Enzh%C7%90-facts-history-categories-applications-191b65a97238](https://medium.com/@rachel_82473/chinese-paper-cutting-ji%C7%8Enzh%C7%90-facts-history-categories-applications-191b65a97238), (accessed 5 Sep 2022).

<sup>108</sup> 'The Politics of Paper-Cutting', *Something Curated*, 2022, <https://somethingcurated.com/2022/05/11/the-politics-of-paper-cutting/>, (accessed 5 Sep 2022).

paper-cutting is integrated into the social life of people of all ethnic groups. Paper-cutting contains rich cultural and historical information in Chinese culture, expressing the social cognition, moral concept, practical experience, life ideal of the general public, and also has the function of aesthetic taste. In 2009, the Chinese papercutting (中國剪紙) declared by China was held at The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference on the protection of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and Chinese papercutting was included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. As an artist representing Malaysia, Wong Hoy Cheong must pay respect to the state religion, Islam, established by the Malaysian government. Therefore, it is very important and necessary for all Malaysian artists to use Malay cultural elements into their works. The exhibition location in *NŪR* is the dome of the mosque, and the work presents the classic Muslim decorative art: arabesque through paper-cutting. Through the characteristics of the paper-cut art and the continuous and symmetrical composition of the Islamic aesthetics, it can be a combination of the dual characteristics of the East and the West (Arabic) in the national value of Malaysia. *NŪR*'s works once again echo Wong Hoy Cheong's long-standing artistic practice and research, always interested in migration waves, colonialism and globalisation from ancient times to the present. He is keen to unearth forgotten stories buried in the grand narratives of history and the country. He creates unique works that traverse the blurred terrain between past and present, reality and fiction, language and image. Wong Hoy Cheong said, "In this century, we need to reflect on our own history. We must not stumble because of history, we must continue to move forward!"<sup>109</sup>

On the whole, the social environment and artistic development in Malaysia have always been presented in the ideology of the content of the works based on the identity problem of

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<sup>109</sup> 'Wong Hoy Cheong', *Www.eslitegallery.com*, <https://www.eslitegallery.com/authors/wong-hoycheong-%E9%BB%83%E6%B5%B7%E6%98%8C/#1506494569116-66c51e87-a88e>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

"Malaysia is a country built by Malay culture and Malays as the main body."<sup>110</sup> In addition, Malaysian Chinese artists continue to create art in a way that does not conflict with the Malaysian government and mainstream society. The elements in their works can always see the cultural characteristics of being ethnic Chinese, but such characteristics need to be wrapped in the multiculturalism of the mainstream consciousness in Malaysia. One may discern this, for example, in the work, *Image and Identity V*, of The Festival Series (1977-1998) by Choong KamKow, a representative Malaysian painting artist. He is Malaysian Chinese artist but he painted a rice dumpling (sticky rice tamale), which is a 'ketupat (馬來粽)'<sup>111</sup> instead of Chinese 'Zongzi' (粽子/肉粽), and the title of the work is *Imagination and Identity*, it provides the various interesting identity- 'imagination'. Another artist, Jolly Koh's work, *The Distant Mountains*, uses a composition similar to a horizontal axis on the marginal identity of the diaspora who can only be 'the other' in the immigrant country. Jolly Koh explained the concept of creation: this "Refers to an ancient tradition that goes back to landscape painting (Song Dynasty landscape-style), which presents the nostalgia and remembrance of the cultural motherland 'Tangshan (唐山)'. It is also the artist's reflection on Song Dynasty paintings of mountains in turquoise blue."<sup>112</sup> The distant mountains reflect the imagination of the distant mother culture and the nostalgia of nostalgia in the heart.

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<sup>110</sup> Kuan Yew. Lee, *Towards a Malaysian Malaysia*, Singapore, Ministry of Culture, 1965, p. 17.

<sup>111</sup> Ketupat is commonly made in large batches and eaten during festivals and holidays such as Eid ul-Fitr, the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan. P.M. Willers, 'What Is Ketupat? (with Pictures)', *Delighted Cooking*, 2022, <https://www.delightedcooking.com/what-is-ketupat.htm>, (accessed 8 July 2022).

<sup>112</sup> Tuck Fai Cheng, 'The Subjectivity of Malaysian Art: A Study on "MERDEKA 50: A Celebration of Malaysian Art,"' *The International Journal of Arts Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, p.198, [https://ed.arted.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990\\_arts\\_education61\\_189202.pdf](https://ed.arted.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990_arts_education61_189202.pdf), (accessed 6 July 2022).



Figure 4. Dr. Choong Kam Kow, *Image & Identity IV*, 1996, Acrylic with mixed technique on canvas, 107 x 137 cm, accessed 8 July 2022, <https://choongkamkow.com/the-festival-series.html>.



Figure 5. Jolly Koh, *The Distant Mountains, III*, 2006, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, 61cm x 428cm, accessed 8 July 2022, <https://www.jollykoh.com/works-from-2000>.

*National Language Class: Our Language Proficiency* (2019), by Okui Lala, is a video work by a new generation Chinese artist in Malaysia:

The video unpacks the complexity of intergenerational and multilingual conditions through looking back at the history and development planning in Malaysia over the last six decades. The work simulates a classroom setting of a discussion and sharing of experiences amongst six individuals that have studied in National Type Chinese School in Malaysia.<sup>113</sup>

The work narrates the interviewee's own past experiences: the process of being punished or forced to learn 'National Language' for speaking different languages in class, which is similar to the national language policy situation in other Asian countries such as Taiwan, Singapore,

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<sup>113</sup> *National Language Class: Our Language Proficiency* [online video], Singapore Biennale 2019 commission, 2019, <https://okuilala.com/National-Language-Class-Our-Language-Proficiency-2019>, (accessed 8 July 2022).

Thailand, etc. After the independence of Malaysia, Malay became the ‘national language’ and English was the ‘official language’. However, because of the advantages of English, people's willingness to use their mother tongue at home has gradually decreased, especially the Malaysian Chinese who have lost their ability to communicate in their mother tongue and can only speak English. The phenomenon also happens in Singaporean Chinese:

This phenomenon is mainly caused by the mass ban of native languages in the broadcast media, making the loss of ‘dialects’ even more pronounced. In the film, *National Language Class: Our Language Proficiency*, many people expressed that they lost their self-identity to the mixing of languages, resulting in language confusion in the process of communication.<sup>114</sup>

The deep discussion on the Chinese mother language and self-cultural identity faced by the contemporary Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese and the new generation of diaspora Chinese will be analysed further in Chapter 2.

Overall, the development of contemporary art in Malaysia has always been led by national policies. The Chinese and Indian ethnic groups in Malaysia have no choice to be included in the ‘Malaysian Nation’, but they cannot intervene in the country’s distribution of resources and political power. This is a great sadness for the ethnic Chinese and Indian ethnic groups in Malaysia. The ethnic minorities in Malaysia are directly subject to the unequal treatment of the majority of mainstream ethnic groups in the country under the provisions of the constitution. Under the circumstance of the marginalisation of national power, every Malaysian person has to bear the ideological guidance of ‘New Malaysian’.<sup>115</sup> The nation as a constructed ‘imaginary community’ provides the national identity of Malaysia with a cultural symbol of a clearly highly exclusive ethnic group. How does the Malaysian Chinese community in the frontier

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<sup>114</sup> No Man's Land, ‘Dialogue with Malaysian artist Okui Lala: Artistic Practice of Language and Migration’, *The News Lens*, 2017, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/80307>, (accessed 20 February 2022 ).

<sup>115</sup> Tuck Fai.Cheng, ‘The Subjectivity of Malaysian Art: A Study on “Merdeka 50: A Celebration of Malaysian Art,”’ *The International Journal of Arts Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, pp. 199-200, [https://ed.arted.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990\\_arts\\_education61\\_189202.pdf](https://ed.arted.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990_arts_education61_189202.pdf), (accessed 6 July 2022).

position use the imaginary identity of the cultural mother of ‘Chinese culture’ to reshape its own ethnic historical memory and connection? In Malaysia, there are two sets of different national discourses and huge differences between Malay ethnic groups who emphasise collective Malay values, and the Chinese ethnic group who advocate pluralism, democracy and equality. In such a realistic environment, Malaysian Chinese ethnic artists integrated with the entire Malaysian art circle in a gentle and multicultural way. At the same time those Malaysian Chinese artists tend to express nostalgia in art, express identity anxiety, or use metaphors to propose Chinese culture and ethnic rights to Malaysian society.

### **Philippines:**

**The modern history of the Philippines is discussed in Appendix 7.**

### **The Outlook for the Philippine Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

In the Philippines, Manila has a number of government-organised art facilities that deal with contemporary art, such as the Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Centre,<sup>116</sup> the Cultural Centre of the Philippines [CCP]<sup>117</sup> and Ateneo Art Gallery<sup>118</sup>. In addition, there are also substantial Manila-based contemporary private art galleries and museums such as the Ayala Museum,<sup>119</sup> Silverlens Galleries,<sup>120</sup> Finale Art File<sup>121</sup> and 1335 Mabini,<sup>122</sup> The Jorge B.

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<sup>116</sup> A centre for Philippine art and culture, main thrusts are research, exhibition and education. History and Collection, *Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center* [website], 2008, <https://vargasmuseum.wordpress.com/the-museum/about/>, (accessed 27 March 2021).

<sup>117</sup> The Cultural Center of the Philippines (or CCP) is located in Metro Manila, the Philippines, and was opened in 1969 to promote and preserve Filipino arts and culture. History | Cultural Center of the Philippines, *Culturalcenter.gov.ph* [website], 2019, <https://www.culturalcenter.gov.ph/pages/history>, (accessed 27 March 2021).

<sup>118</sup> Widely recognized today as the first museum of Philippine modern art.

<sup>119</sup> The Ayala Museum is an arts, culture, and history museum located in Makati, Philippines.

Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Centre, which is affiliated with the University of the Philippines, has presented numerous exhibitions by researcher, curator and prolific writer, Patrick D. Flores<sup>123</sup> [1969–]. He is one of the most famous and important Southeast Asian curators in the global contemporary art world.<sup>124</sup>

The development of contemporary art in the Philippines was deeply influenced by commercial galleries, because the local wealthy people in the Philippines are keen on art collection and investment, which resulted in excessive growth and strength in the gallery industry (Nobuo Takamori, 2012).<sup>125</sup> Some successful artists in the market have also established artist-run galleries. Therefore, compared to museum and gallery spaces in the Philippines, independent art spaces or alternative spaces were few. Another situation is that the support of the Philippine government for young artists is almost nothing. One that has had a particularly enduring presence in Manila is Green Papaya Art Projects,<sup>126</sup> founded in 2000 by Norberto Roldan<sup>127</sup> and Donna Miranda<sup>128</sup> (Asia Art Archive, 2021).<sup>129</sup> This is Manila's oldest artist-run space and an

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<sup>120</sup> A leading contemporary art gallery based in Manila, Philippines, with a specialisation in Southeast Asian art. Silverlens Galleries, Facebook [website], <https://www.facebook.com/watch/silverlensgalleries/> (accessed 27 March 2021).

<sup>121</sup> Established in the early '80s, Finale Art File is considered as a premier gallery institution in the Philippines, says, 8 Galleries in Manila to Unleash Your Inner Artist, *About Finale Art File | Finale Art File* [website], <https://finaleartfile.com/about-finale-art-file/>, (accessed 27 April 2021).

<sup>122</sup> 1335MABINI is an international gallery grounded in the contemporary art ecology of Metro Manila.

<sup>123</sup> Professor, Art Studies Department, University of the Philippines Diliman (The Philippines) Born in Manila, the Philippines in 1969. Flores is also curator of the Arts Division, Philippine National Museum. The Japan Foundation - Profile - Patrick D. Flores, *Www.jpf.go.jp* [website], <https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/culture/archive/information/0507/patrick.html>, (accessed 12 April 2021).

<sup>124</sup> Patrick D. Flores's curatorial information in Appendix 8.

<sup>125</sup> Nobuo Takamori, 'New Kinetic Energy in Chaos--An Observation of Philippine Contemporary Art', *Artist Magazine*, vol. 443, 2012, p. 311.

<sup>126</sup> Opened in 2000, Green Papaya is the longest running, artist-led space in Metro Manila.

<sup>127</sup> Norberto Roldan was born in 1953 in Roxas City, Philippines. He is a multimedia artist and curator, and the artistic director of Green Papaya Art Projects. The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation, The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation [website], <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/norberto-roldan>, (accessed 25 July 2021).

<sup>128</sup> Donna Miranda is a choreographer living and working in the Philippines.

DONNA MIRANDA: Bio, DONNA MIRANDA [web blog], <http://donnamiranda.blogspot.com/p/bio.html>, (accessed 25 July 2021).

influential model within the region. Green Papaya had always intended to shut its doors in 2020, having celebrated a 20-year run as a centre supporting and organising actions and propositions that explore tactical approaches to the production, dissemination, research and presentation of contemporary practices in varied artistic and scholarly fields. Suddenly, in May 2020, a fire tore through its archives (which, alongside documentation of exhibitions, included more than 300 artist-donated works on canvas and paper, photographs and objects). What remains will now be held at Asia Art Archive and made available digitally too.<sup>130</sup>

The Chinese community in the Philippines has a long history, with more than 400 years of immigration history since Spanish rule in the 16th century. After the Spanish arrived in the Philippines in 1571, they opened many job opportunities for the Chinese and introduced a large number of Chinese to the Philippines for development. In general, however, the Chinese in the Philippines developed very differently from other Chinese societies in Southeast Asia. The main reason for this is the influence of:

The national independence movement that unfolded across the Philippine Islands at the end of the 19th century. At that time, the Chinese and Filipino mixed race (Chinese Mestizos) turned to call themselves ‘Filipinos’ instead of calling themselves ‘Chinese Filipinos’. They do not have the consciousness of inheritance and development of Chinese culture in their self-identification. In the national independence movement, the Chinese-Filipino mixed ethnic group (Mestizos) recognized the ‘Philippines’ and awakened their patriotism, and then integrated into the Philippine (indigenous) nation-state. As a result, in the early twentieth century, the line between Mestizos and indigenous Filipinos was blurred, which was also the period when the Chinese-Filipino mixed ethnic group (Chinese Mestizos) disappeared from Philippine society.<sup>131</sup> On the other hand, Chinese in the Philippines were not allowed to open their naturalisation and obtained Filipino citizenship until 1975 because of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Philippines.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Asia Art Archive is an independent non-profit organisation. Archive, Asia Art, ‘About Asia Art Archive’, *Aaa.org.hk*, <https://aaa.org.hk/en/about/about-asia-art-archive>, (accessed 12 March 2021).

<sup>130</sup> Please see Appendix 9 for further information about Green Papaya Art Projects.

<sup>131</sup> Edgar. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, Manila, Ateneo De Manila University Press, 2002, p. 134.

<sup>132</sup> ‘How Chinese and Overseas Chinese Connect to the Belt and Road Series: The Philippines’, *Politics.people.com.cn*, 2015, <http://politics.people.com.cn/BIG5/n/2015/0624/c70731-27201635.html>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

The Chinese group who were not officially naturalised in the Philippines until the 1970s and 1980s have always played a pivotal role in the Philippine economy, from the past to the present. However, at the same time they have always guarded the inheritance of Chinese culture. As a result, the national consciousness established by Chinese culture has always kept the Filipino Chinese at a distance from the exchange of local culture in the Philippines. “In the evolution of Chinese society in the Philippines, two very special Chinese ethnic groups with different beliefs and national identity orientations have developed. They developed the face of Chinese Filipino society in very different ways.”<sup>133</sup> The development of contemporary art in the Philippines is also reflected in the complex Chinese composition and diverse ethnic identities in the Philippines. For Filipino artists of mixed Chinese descent, they do not overemphasise their Chinese national identity and cultural characteristics. On the other hand, the Chinese Filipino community affects the Philippine art business market because of its own economic strength. According to Professor Zhuang Guo Tu (Xiamen University), an expert on Overseas Chinese Studies, his research showed that among “the 248 listed companies in the Philippines at the end of 2009, Chinese businessmen accounted for 30%. Otherwise, in the Philippines’ 2013 *Forbes* list of the Philippines’ top ten richest people, more than half of the Chinese Filipino businessmen in the list.”<sup>134</sup> These Chinese-Filipino businessmen have an important influence in the Philippine art business market in terms of art collections and art trading and investment.

This section will introduce two very representative artists in the development of modern and contemporary art in the Philippines, whose own families are also related to Chinese backgrounds. The two artists are Chinese Mestizos, with Chinese blood, but their self-identity belonged to the new Philippines:

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<sup>133</sup> Chi-Feng Chao, *Ethnic, Religious and Identity - the Philippine Chinese Community during Spanish Colonial Era*, Ph.D. diss., Kaohsiung, National Chung Cheng University, 2011, pp. 2-3.

<sup>134</sup> ‘How Chinese and Overseas Chinese Connect to the Belt and Road Series: The Philippines’, *Politics.people.com.cn*, 2015, <http://politics.people.com.cn/BIG5/n/2015/0624/c70731-27201635.html>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

David Medalla (1942 – 2020) was a Filipino international artist and political activist; he was born in Ermita, a cosmopolitan area of central Manila in 1942. His parents were of different ethnic backgrounds: his father Tagalog, his mother a Visayan from the island of Cebu – with admixtures of Chinese, Malay and Spanish blood.<sup>135</sup>

David Medalla is a pioneer of kinetic art, earth art, performance art, participation art and conceptual art. His seminal work in the 1960s, the *Cloud Canyons* bubble machine pieces, were the first auto-creative sculptures, and have been recognised as iconic artworks of the 20th century. David Medalla and Paul Keeler founded the Signals Gallery in London, at the corner of Wigmore Street and Wimpole Street, in 1964. For two years Signals became a showcase of the international avant-garde. Signals was, to quote Medalla, “a spiritual adventure in understanding contemporary culture in the fields where art and science converged in harmony and energised each other. The gallery was on four floors with a large basement, and hosted important exhibitions by many pioneering artists.”<sup>136</sup> Medalla’s works, apart from their overt political engagement, also harnessed aesthetic and poetic strategies for profound self-reflection. Medalla resided in many places, including New York, Marseille, Paris, London, Venice, Berlin and Manila. “Despite his constant travels, he never renounced his Filipino nationality, which often restricted him to tourist visas.”<sup>137</sup>

Carlos Modesto ‘Botong’ Villaluz Francisco (1912 -1969) was a Filipino muralist from Angono, Rizal. “Botong Francisco's father is of mixed Chinese descent, and he lived in Manila with his businessman father as a child. His paintings are an important part of the Philippines

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<sup>135</sup> Charles Darwent, ‘David Medalla Obituary’, *The Guardian*, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/jan/08/david-medalla-obituary>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>136</sup> Adam. Nankervis, ‘A Stitch in Time: David Medalla — Mousse Magazine and Publishing.’, *Www.moussemagazine.it*, 2011, <https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/david-medalla-adam-nankervis-2011/>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>137</sup> Maximiliane. Leuschner, ‘Burlington Contemporary - Reviews.’, *Contemporary.burlington.org.uk*, 2022, <https://contemporary.burlington.org.uk/reviews/reviews/david-medalla-parables-of-friendship>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

country's creative identity.”<sup>138</sup> Botong Francisco's most famous work is the huge *Filipino Struggles Through History*. The size of the work is 2.7 metres high and 79.4 metres wide. Manila Mayor Villegas commissioned the work in 1964. This work is recognized as a national cultural treasure of the Philippines and is now in the National Museum of the Philippines. In this giant mural, Botong Francisco depicts important figures and events in the history of the Philippine country, such as Filipinos and Chinese, Arab trade, and Spanish troops colonising the country, the British occupation of Manila from 1762 to 1764, the Philippine Founding Father José Rizal, and Andrés Bonifacio, the 'Father of the Philippine Revolution' who resisted Spanish colonial rule, etc. However, there is almost no obvious feature of being a mixed-race Chinese in Botong Francisco's works. Nevertheless, there is an important work in the Yuchengco Museum in Makati, Metro Manila, which is the portrait of Alfonso Yuchengco's parents, *Enrique and Maria Yuchengco*, painted by Botong Francisco for Alfonso Yuchengco. From this work, we can discover his understanding and imagination of Chinese culture. The work, *Don Enrique and Dona Maria Yuchengco. The Parents of the Late Amb*, is 579.1 cm high and 241.3 cm wide. It is hung in the Yuchengco Museum, and viewers must look up to see the whole picture. Alfonso Yuchengco (楊應琳) was a Filipino accountant, industrialist, businessman, educator, and diplomat. He headed the Yuchengco Group of Companies, one of the largest family-owned business conglomerates in the Philippines. He also served as chairman of business and educational institutions including the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, one of the country's largest commercial banks. Alfonso Yuchengco (楊應琳) is one of the representatives of well-known Chinese industrialists in the Philippines. The painting combines traditional Filipino and Chinese cultural elements. Alfonso Yuchengco's parents are wearing suits and a cheongsam respectively. The background is bamboo to represent the

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<sup>138</sup> Yanjun. Chen, 'The Philippine Contemporary Pioneer Podong Family Continues the Artistic Blood', *Www.cna.com.tw*, 2019, <https://www.cna.com.tw/culture/article/20191019w001>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

couple's children, as well as the labour scene of Filipinos and Chinese. Above the painting is Guanyin (觀音)<sup>139</sup> standing in the clouds. Guanyin has a pair of angel wings behind it.

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<sup>139</sup> The Chinese figure, Guanyin, is the same as the figure known in India as Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Guanyin in Chinese means 'Perceiver of all Sounds,' which refers to the way in which Guanyin is able to hear all prayers and cries for help. 'Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara: Guanyin (Article)', *Khan Academy*, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-asia/beginners-guide-asian-culture/buddhist-art-culture/a/bodhisattva-avalokitesvara-guanyin>, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).



Figure 6. Botong Francisco, *Filipino Struggles Through History*, 1964, National Museum of the Philippines, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/nationalmuseumofthephilippines/photos/a.195151237175869/183295126062517>.



Figure 7. Botong Francisco, *Don Enrique and Dona Maria*, 1953, Yuchengco Museum, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=521524223323974&set=a.484155090394221>.

## **Thailand:**

**The modern history of Thailand is discussed further in Appendix 10.**

### **The Outlook for Thailand's Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

Thailand is one of the nations of Southeast Asia where contemporary art is thriving, and the environment that sustains it is extensive. However, in terms of the development of Thailand's contemporary art, the government does not have such a strong desire and active action to educate and promote contemporary art. The official definition of 'art' in Thailand is mostly traditional, religious, and Thai-featured techniques, such as temples, palace architecture, mural paintings, and traditional natural material crafts. For the government, it is far more important to emphasise the connection between art and traditional culture and 'Thainess' as a medium and strategy for cohesive national identity which is much more important than contemporary art's innovation and philosophy.<sup>140</sup> In addition, Thailand's official attitude towards art is also shown in its resource allocation, among which there is almost no support and policies for contemporary art, and there is no cultivation or subsidy for artists to engage in contemporary art creation. Therefore, many Thai contemporary artists have been recognized by the world through international activities such as overseas biennials, foreign art galleries and foreign collectors.

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<sup>140</sup> Tong-An Lin, (2019). 'Bangkok Creative City Marketing Pearl New "Thai" Degree', *Taipeiecon*, 2019, [https://www.taipeiecon.taipei/article\\_cont.aspx?MmmID=1203&MSid=1035145332217264333](https://www.taipeiecon.taipei/article_cont.aspx?MmmID=1203&MSid=1035145332217264333), (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

In regard to public art facilities, the National Art Gallery of Thailand,<sup>141</sup> located near the Grand Palace in Bangkok, was established in 1974. Although it is a national art gallery, it collects important Thai art from the 17th century to the present, but the overall facilities in the museum are outdated and also lack effective management and planning. In the field of contemporary art, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)<sup>142</sup> is a contemporary arts centre opened in 2007 and is open to many different types of art exhibitions and performances. The centre includes cafes, commercial art galleries, bookshops, craft shops, and an art library. It is intended as a venue for cultural exchange, giving Bangkok an operational base on the international art scene. The BACC aims to create a meeting place for artists and the public, to provide cultural programmes for the community and create new cultural resources from both the public and the private sectors. Overall, the contemporary art space and art promotion in Thailand are mainly private contemporary art institutions such as Bangkok MoCA<sup>143</sup> and Chiang Mai MAIIAM Museum of Contemporary Art (MAIIAM).<sup>144</sup>

The development context of Thai contemporary art can be simply divided into two cities: Bangkok (a genealogy derived from Silpakorn University) and Chiang Mai (a genealogy developed by Chiang Mai University), which radiate out into an intertwined network.<sup>145</sup> As the capital of Thailand, Bangkok has the country's first art university, which provides professional

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<sup>141</sup> The National Gallery is an art gallery and one of Thailand's national museums. Thailand, Museum, 'The National Gallery, Thailand: Museum Thailand', *Www.museumthailand.com* [website], <https://www.museumthailand.com/en/museum/The-National-Gallery-Hor-Silp-Chao-Fa>, (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

<sup>142</sup> BACC is a centre of cultural diversity for sustainable social development. Bacc-Mission | Bacc.or.th, *En.bacc.or.th* [website], <https://en.bacc.or.th/content/32.html>, (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

<sup>143</sup> MOCA BANGKOK displays works of art inspired by traditional Thai modes of expression alongside art that has been influenced by the introduction of Western artistic styles and techniques. MOCA BANGKOK, *MOCA BANGKOK* [website], 2020, <https://mocabangkok.com/>, (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

<sup>144</sup> MAIIAM is a new private museum of contemporary art in Thailand initiated by Jean Michel Beurdeley and his late wife together with their son. About, *MAIIAM Contemporary Art Museum* [website], <http://www.maiiam.com/about/>, (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

<sup>145</sup> *BIOS Monthly*, 'Shuttle Through the Colorful Thai Art Jungle (1): When Tradition and Modernity Meet in Bangkok', *BIOS Monthly*, 2016, <https://www.biosmonthly.com/article/7861>, (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

art training, as well as collecting international art galleries and many artists to develop their careers. Before the 1990s, art education only existed in Bangkok, and Bangkok monopolised most of the art resources and art career opportunities. The establishment of the Art Institute of Chiang Mai University was led by a group of artists who were dissatisfied with the Thai art circle being controlled by the Bangkok art circle. Chiang Mai's contemporary art has developed through the independent efforts of artists. The most well-known is the art project The Land Foundation,<sup>146</sup> founded in 1998 by core members, Rirkrit Tiravanija<sup>147</sup> [1961 – ] and Kamin Lertchaiprasert<sup>148</sup> [1964 – ]. The aim of this project, which began in a rural area on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, is the formation of a community by artists, shaped through ongoing discussion and implementation. The series of works made here reflect daily life in Thailand and occupy an important place in contemporary art as pioneering works of art in the art project format. Because of the establishment of the School of Art in Chiang Mai University, there is another possibility of systematic transfer of the development of contemporary art in Thailand. Academic institutions such as art schools can have relatively sufficient resources and time to systematically cultivate teachers and students to develop contemporary art. In 2013, the Chiang Mai Creative and Design Centre (TCDC Chiang Mai)<sup>149</sup> was instituted, further establishing Chiang Mai as the second largest art base in Thailand outside of Bangkok.

In addition, with the establishment of the Art College of Chiang Mai University, various types of art galleries and art spaces have also been established in Chiang Mai. Among them, Gallery

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<sup>146</sup> Initiated in 1998, the land was the merging of ideas by different artists to cultivate a place of and for social engagement.

<sup>147</sup> Rirkrit Tiravanija was born in Buenos Aires in 1961 and was raised in Thailand, Ethiopia, and Canada. Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Guggenheim.org* [website], 2020, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/rirkrit-tiravanija>, (accessed 20 July 2021).

<sup>148</sup> Kamin Lertchaiprasert was born in 1964, in Lop Buri, Thailand. The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation, The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation [website], <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/kamin-lertchaiprasert>, (accessed 20 July 2021).

<sup>149</sup> TCDC Chiang Mai is the first fully-functional education centre of TCDC. PCL, Post Publishing, 'TCDC Chiang Mai', *Bangkok Post*, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/lifestyle/entertainment-arts/25948/tcdc-chiang-mai>, (accessed 15 July 2021).

Seescape<sup>150</sup> can be regarded as a senior art space. It has been in business for more than ten years, starting from a small exhibition space and studio, and now has become a composite art space with a small green garden and a coffee shop. The founder, Torlarph Larpharoensook,<sup>151</sup> is a famous Thai artist. He is good at using utensils and installations of different materials to assemble functional works that incorporate nostalgia, emotion, and imagination for the future. This gallery has an exhibition room specifically to show local young artists' works, and the gallery supports more exhibition opportunities for potential artists who do not yet have the reputation and resources.

After 1987, Thai artists began to be invited to be exposed in international contemporary art exhibitions such as Documenta<sup>152</sup> and the Venice Biennale.<sup>153</sup> Although Thai artists have joined these important international art events not long ago, their performance in the international art arena has attracted much attention, such as Montien Boonma,<sup>154</sup> who can be said to be the father of Thai contemporary art. Rirkrit Tiravanija is currently the most internationally renowned Thai artist. His creative concept is known as 'Relational Aesthetics.'<sup>155</sup> The relationship between the audience and the artist is not a single way without interaction. Rirkrit's works often invite visitors to participate and become part of the work together. For the artist, Rirkrit, the work

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<sup>150</sup> An alternative art community established in 2008, provides contemporary arts, based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Gallery Seescape | Artists, Art for Sale, and Contact Info | Artsy, *Www.artsy.net* [website], <https://www.artsy.net/partner/gallery-seescape>, (accessed 10 July 2021).

<sup>151</sup> Born on December 9th, 1977, he was raised in a houseboat in Ayutthaya. He studied art at the college of Fine Arts, Bangkok. CV, *Torlarphern* [website], <https://www.torlarphern.com/about>, (accessed 15 July 2021).

<sup>152</sup> Documenta is a German art festival held every five years in Kassel, Germany. It showcases contemporary art, using a variety of venues throughout the city.

<sup>153</sup> Venice Biennale, Italian Società di Cultura la Biennale di Venezia, is an international art exhibition featuring architecture, visual arts, cinema, dance, music, and theatre that is held in the Castello district of Venice every two years during the summer.

<sup>154</sup> Montien Boonma (1953–2000) was one of Asia's most distinguished contemporary artists. 'Montien Boonma: Temple of the Mind', *Nga.gov.au* [website], <https://nga.gov.au/boonma/>, (accessed 15 July 2021).

<sup>155</sup> 'Relational aesthetics' is a term coined by curator Nicolas Bourriaud, for the exhibition 'Traffic,' held at the CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux in 1996. It refers to installations and interactive events designed to facilitate community among participants (both artists and viewers). 'A Guide to Relational Aesthetics', *Something Curated* [website], 2018, <https://somethingcurated.com/2018/02/14/a-guide-to-relational-aesthetics/>, (accessed 15 July 2021).

objects themselves are no longer the focus of production, and the process that everyone goes through together participating is what he cares about. Apichatpong Weerasethakul<sup>156</sup> [1970–], is an artist and film director whose films are highly acclaimed in the film world, and have become an essential presence in contemporary art exhibitions of recent years. In addition to well-known Thai artists, Thailand also has world-class curators. Apinan Poshyananda<sup>157</sup> [1956–] has had a significant influence on the development of contemporary Thai art. He is a former permanent secretary for the Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Thailand,<sup>158</sup> and is an internationally renowned curator whose exhibition ‘Traditions / Tensions: Contemporary Art in Asia’ held at the Asia Society in New York in 1996 was an ambitious attempt to provide a comprehensive introduction to artists of Asian countries.

Under the influence of the family’s assimilation policy in Thailand in the last century, for the contemporary artists with Chinese backgrounds in Thailand, even their art works have common elements of both Thai and Chinese cultures, because as a Thai artist, they would not deliberately emphasise their ethnic Chinese background. Representative Thai contemporary artist, Kamin Lertchaiprasert, was born in 1964, in LopBuri, Thailand. He was from a Chinese Thai family whose ethnic background connected to his art deeply focused on Chinese philosophy practice. In his representative works, *Drawing to Spirit* (1992), during the two-year

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<sup>156</sup> Apichatpong Weerasethakul, byname Joe, (born July 16, 1970, Bangkok, Thailand), is a Thai film director, writer, and installation artist whose preference for unconventional storytelling usually relegated his work to the art house. Kathleen. Kuiper, ‘Apichatpong Weerasethakul | Thai Film Director’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Apichatpong-Weerasethakul>, (accessed 15 July 2021).

<sup>157</sup> Prof. Dr Apinan Poshyananda (b.1956 Bangkok) received a Master’s Degree in Fine Arts from Edinburgh University and PhD in History of Art from Cornell University, New York. He was Chief Executive and Artistic Director of Bangkok Art Biennale 2018. ‘Apinan Poshyananda. Chief Executive & Artistic Director, Bangkok Art Biennale 2018’, *Universes.art*, <https://universes.art/en/bangkok-art-biennale/2018/apinan-poshyananda>, (accessed 12 July 2021).

<sup>158</sup> The Ministry of Culture is a Thai government body responsible for the oversight of culture, religion, and art in Thailand. ‘History’, *Ministry of Culture*, [https://www2.m-culture.go.th/en/article\\_view.php?nid=101](https://www2.m-culture.go.th/en/article_view.php?nid=101), (accessed 12 July 2021).

period during which the artist made thousands of drawings, he then later burned them all in an exhibition:

Through this, he explores the value of art and art making, and whether it resides in the work itself or the process of making it. The visual expression is for him characterised as a dialogue with vital energies of mental and physical life where spirit cannot be divided from morality. Therefore, he considers art's potential role in a common culture of positive sentiment. Speaking on creativity and his role as an artist in our society.<sup>159</sup>

This work obviously originally gains its concept from joss paper, which also known as incense papers (燒金紙). These are papercrafts or sheets of paper made into burnt offerings common in Chinese ancestral worship. Worship of deities in Chinese folk religion also uses a similar type of joss paper. Joss paper, as well as other papier-mâché items, are also burned or buried in various Asian funerals, to ensure that the spirit of the deceased has sufficient needs in the afterlife. For Lertchaiprasert, art is a ritualistic practice aimed at the achievement of a greater understanding of oneself, nature, and the world as a whole. His concept of art practice is derived from Philosophical Taoism (道家思想) which originates from ancient China.

Torlarp Larjaroensook, born in 1977, was raised in a houseboat in Ayutthaya. He studied art at the college of Fine Arts, Bangkok. Later on, he graduated with a Bachelor degree with a major in painting from Faculty of Fine Arts, Chiang Mai University. As an artist whose works involve multiple media:

Torlarp focuses his interest on creating interaction between art and audience by using ready-made objects in sculpture, installation, and also other artworks in a form of moving architecture. His works act as connectors, linking the audience's feeling to materials found in everyday life. Apart from being an artist. Torlarp is also the founder of the Gallery Seescape (Alternative art space).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> 'Kamin Lertchaiprasert Interview – Why I Burned My Drawings – *Public Delivery.*', *Publicdelivery.org*, 2022, <https://publicdelivery.org/kamin-lertchaiprasert-interview/>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>160</sup> 'CV', *Torlarphern*, <https://www.torlarphern.com/about/>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

As an artist whose works involve multiple media, Torlarp focuses his interest on creating interaction between art and audience by using ready-made objects in sculpture, installation, and also other artworks in a form of moving architecture. His famous works, *Spiritual Spaceship* series, derives “the concept from his childhood memories. He remembers his Chinese grandmother praying to the moon every day. This memory fusion is the basis of his art practice and has particularly fueled the *Spiritual Spaceship* series.”<sup>161</sup> His work is wildly imaginative sci-fi fusions of traditional and antique Thai and Chinese Thai design with contemporary stylistic elements and technologies, and these speak to his upbringing in the quiet and historic former capital and his memory with his Chinese grandmother.



Figure 8. Torlarp Larjaroensook, *Spiritual Spaceship*, 2017, ADM Gallery, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://www.torlarphern.com/spiritual-spaceship>.

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<sup>161</sup> Gracelee. Lawrence, ‘Torlarp “Hern” Larjaroensook and Gallery Seescape’, *International Sculpture Center*, 2020, <https://sculpture.org/blogpost/1810776/348744/Torlarp-Hern-Larjaroensook-and-Gallery-Seescape>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).



Figure 9. Torlarp Larpjaroensook, *Spiritual Spaceship*, 2018, Bangkok Art Biennale, BACC Thailand, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://www.torlarphern.com/copy-of-spiritual-spaceship>.

Compared with other countries in Southeast Asia, Chinese-Thai people have a higher degree of integration into Thai society in terms of ancestry or culture. Due to the general Thaiization of the Chinese ethnic group, most Chinese have lost their ability to speak Chinese in Thailand:

Chinese-Thai people are active in the fields of charity and art in Thailand, and their background is the influence of Chinese-Thai people's economic power. In addition, Chinese-Thai people have also been actively involved in political activities in Thailand, and Chinese-Thai people have long been integrated into Thailand's ruling class. In the early 20th century, the ruling class in Bangkok could hardly find pure-blooded Thais, and most of the prime ministers of Thailand had Chinese ancestors, who were descendants of Chinese Thai of the second or third generation.<sup>162</sup>

In addition, “the current Thai royal family, the Chakri dynasty, also has Chinese descent.”<sup>163</sup>

On the other hand, in terms of the influence of Chinese-Thai people on the Thai economy,<sup>164</sup> according to the list of Thailand's richest people released by *Forbes*, the top four richest people who have been in the top four list for many years are all from Chinese immigrant families.

<sup>162</sup> Xu Mei, ‘Changes in the Political Life of Chinese in Thailand’, *Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 02, 2002, p. 20.

<sup>163</sup> Anthony Reid, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*, Chichester, West Sussex, Wiley Blackwell, 2015, p. 215.

<sup>164</sup> Naazneen Karmali, ‘Forbes Released the 2021 Thailand Rich List | Forbes China’, *Forbeschina.com*, 2021, <https://www.forbeschina.com/billionaires/56210>, (accessed 21 Aug 2022).

These people not only have Thai names but also have Chinese names from their Chinese family heritage.<sup>165</sup> Under these Thai chaebol group companies there are department stores, high-end hotels, art investment consultancies companies and the Art Culture and Charity Foundations, they also provide many opportunities for mutual assistance and exposure for the development of contemporary art in Thailand:

Chinese-Thai people assimilate to a relatively high degree in Thailand, although rich Chinese-Thai celebrities often actively participate in social charity and cultural and art affairs in the name of individuals and associations. But they did not organise social groups and activities of the Chinese ethnic group.<sup>166</sup>

Generally, in the contemporary art world in Thailand, Chinese-Thai people have long been deeply assimilated into the self-identity of Thai people. This makes the Chinese cultural characteristics of ethnic Chinese less obvious, which is also reflected in the performance of contemporary art in Thailand. Although Chinese-Thai artists have not abandoned their Chinese ethnic identity and the cultural characteristics of the motherland, they do not overemphasise or prove the Chinese cultural characteristics. Most Chinese-Thai people have long since assimilated into the values of the mainstream of Thai; they use the Thai language and participate in various social customs of the Thai. However, at the same time, “there are also many Chinese-Thai people who still maintain the cultural heritage of China. For example, they show their second ethnic identity as Chinese by worshipping their ancestors and celebrating Chinese special festivals.”<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> For example, Charoen Pokphand's CEO, Dhanin Chearavanon (谢国民 who controls the largest business conglomerate in Thailand, Chalerm Yoovidhya (许书恩) is Red Bull GmbH's main owner, Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi (蘇旭明), the largest wine merchant in Thailand and the Cheng family (鄭氏家族集團) of Central Group (中央集團), Thailand's largest retail property development and investment company.

<sup>166</sup> Zhuang country, ‘A Brief Discussion on the Ethnic Identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese and Its Development Trend’, *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, vol. 151, no. 3, 2002, p. 66.

<sup>167</sup> Zhuang country, ‘A Brief Discussion on the Ethnic Identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese and Its Development Trend’, *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, vol. 151, no. 3, 2002, pp. 69-70.

## **Singapore:**

**The modern history of Singapore can be found in Appendix 11.**

### **The Outlook for Singapore's Contemporary Art Situation and How Local**

#### **Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

Singapore's economic development has been particularly remarkable amongst Southeast Asian countries, and their government actively promotes their culture and art in education or policies and funding support, which especially includes contemporary art. 1988 was a watershed in Singapore's cultural policy. In that year, the government established the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts (ACCA).<sup>168</sup> The government focused not only on Western science, human resources, and development of financial capital, but also the country's cultural development. The government believes culture and art shape the way of life, habits and psychological state of the local people in Singapore, and also endow the country's particularity. In 1991, the National Arts Council<sup>169</sup> was established. Two years later, the National Heritage Board (NHB)<sup>170</sup> was also established. The goal is to strengthen national identity and develop cultural infrastructure through the conservation and development of culture. In regard to public art facilities, these

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<sup>168</sup> The time-limited special independent council, the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts (ACCA), was set up to review the state of arts and cultural development in Singapore and to propose recommendations to make Singapore a culturally vibrant society. Council (Singapore), National Arts, 'The Report of the Arts and Culture Strategic Review,' *Apo.org.au*, 2012, <https://apo.org.au/node/254931>, (accessed 12 July 2021).

<sup>169</sup> The National Arts Council champions the arts in Singapore. 'NAC - Mission, Vision & Values', *Www.nac.gov.sg* [website], <https://www.nac.gov.sg/aboutus/mission-vision.html>, (accessed 12 July 2021).

<sup>170</sup> The National Heritage Board (NHB) is the custodian of Singapore's heritage. 'National Heritage Board - Pride in Our Past, Legacy for Our Future', *Www.nhb.gov.sg*, <https://www.nhb.gov.sg/>, (accessed 27 December 2021).

include in Singapore the famous Asian Civilizations Museum<sup>171</sup> and Esplanade Theatres on the Bay.<sup>172</sup> Singapore Art Museum (SAM)<sup>173</sup> which opened in 1996 as the first art museum in Singapore, focuses on international contemporary art practises, specialising in Singapore and Southeast Asia. SAM is not only one of the most important art facilities in Singapore, but it also has a dramatic influence in recording of Asian art, and the museum is now a contemporary art museum. The National Gallery Singapore<sup>174</sup> opened in 2015, and collects and exhibits a comprehensive range of works that survey the art of Singapore and other Asia countries from the modern to contemporary art. For the academic education institute, the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore,<sup>175</sup> which was opened in 2013 by Nanyang Technological University,<sup>176</sup> regularly organises feature exhibitions in addition to offering residency and educational programmes.

The Singapore government also hosts the Singapore Biennale<sup>177</sup> and the President's Young Talents (PYT)<sup>178</sup>: two regular events to encourage people to involve contemporary art in

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<sup>171</sup> ACM is Singapore's national museum of Asian antiquities and decorative art. 'About ACM', *Www.nhb.gov.sg* [website], <https://www.nhb.gov.sg/acm/who-we-are>, (accessed 10 July 2021).

<sup>172</sup> Esplanade-Theatres on the Bay is one of the busiest arts centres in the world. *Esplanade.com* [website], 2020, <https://www.esplanade.com/about-us/the-esplanade-story>, (accessed 21 July 2021).

<sup>173</sup> The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) focuses on international contemporary art practices, and specialises in Singapore and Southeast Asia. 'Singapore Art Museum', *Www.roots.gov.sg* [website], <https://www.roots.gov.sg/places/places-landing/Places/museums/singapore-art-museum>, (accessed 21 July 2021).

<sup>174</sup> The National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which oversees the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian modern art. 'About the Gallery,' *National Gallery Singapore* [website], <https://www.nationalgallery.sg/about>, (accessed 15 July 2021).

<sup>175</sup> The National Research Centre of Nanyang Technological University.

<sup>176</sup> Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) is a research-intensive public university. 'About Us | Vision and Mission', *Corporate NTU* [website], <https://www.ntu.edu.sg/about-us>, (accessed 21 July 2021).

<sup>177</sup> The Singapore Biennale is an international contemporary visual arts exhibition. 'Singapore Biennale (Singapore)', *Biennial Foundation* [website], <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/singapore-biennale/>, (accessed 25 July 2021).

<sup>178</sup> The President's Young Talents (PYT) is Singapore's premier and only mentoring, commissioning, and award programme, which recognises promising artists aged 35 and below, whose practices chart new dimensions in Singapore contemporary art. 'President's Young Talents 2018 | Singapore Art Museum', *Www.singaporeartmuseum.sg* [website], <https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/art-events/exhibitions/pyt2018>, (accessed 25 July 2021).

Singapore.<sup>179</sup> In Singapore, the government fully supports the development of contemporary art because they deeply understand that cultural diplomacy can be carried out through the arts of Singapore, so that Singapore has a distinctive feature on the international stage. On the other hand, for Singaporean artists, a strong motivation for creative activities has been found in questioning their national identity in a nation with a relatively short history and in probing individual identity in a society where different ethnicities exist. Through dialogue with Western culture and cultures different to their own, some Singaporean artists utilise the video image to shed light on the harmony and discord existing in their own country. Further discussion on Singapore and Singaporeans' Southeast Asian contemporary art strategies and their development, will be analysed in Chapter 2. In addition, Singaporean younger generation artists also show a strong interest in the medium of film and create works that do not simply involve the projection of video but also take the form of art installations that incorporate various elements.

The ethnic composition of Singapore is dominated by the Chinese: "Three-quarters of the population are Chinese, with the rest mainly composed of native Malays and Indians and new immigrants from Malaysia after the 19th century. The numerical advantage of the Chinese has played a crucial role in Singapore's national planning and policy."<sup>180</sup> This phenomenon is also clearly reflected in the development of contemporary art in Singapore: "When Singapore became independent from Malaysia, international experts predicted the possibility of a third China being born."<sup>181</sup> Although the name of Singapore does not have the meaning of 'China', the majority of the ethnic population is Chinese or the descendants of Chinese hold the real political and economic power in Singapore. Even the majority of Singapore customs and living

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<sup>179</sup> Further information is available in Appendix 12.

<sup>180</sup> Ou Daxu, 'Singaporean Chinese, Are You Chinese or Chinese?', *Cn.NYTimes.com*, 2015, <https://cn.nytimes.com/opinion/20150213/c13aw/zh-hant/>, (accessed 21 Aug 2022).

<sup>181</sup> Tuck Fai Cheng, 'The Subjectivity of Malaysian Art: A Study on "MERDEKA 50: A Celebration of Malaysian Art,"' *The International Journal of Arts Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, p.190, [https://ed.arted.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990\\_arts\\_education61\\_189202.pdf](https://ed.arted.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990_arts_education61_189202.pdf), (accessed 6 July 2022).

habits are quite in accordance with the living model of Chinese traditions. This phenomenon presents the fact that most of the Singapore operations are Chinese-managed, which is undeniable. However:

Lee Kuan Yew (李光耀) was the founding leader of Singapore and one of the founders of the People's Action Party. During his 31-year tenure as Prime Minister of Singapore, he clearly indicated that his goal of leading Singapore was not to build a third China, but to build a multi-ethnic state of “Singapore for Singaporeans.”<sup>182</sup>

The real power in Singapore has always been dominated by the Chinese community:

For them (Singapore), how to maintain the identity of the Chinese ethnic group while forging the national consciousness of Singapore's diverse ethnic groups is more important. Therefore, there is no need for the Chinese in Singapore to strengthen the identity of the Chinese ethnic group, because under the multiculturalism of Singapore, the Chinese culture has always been the most powerful and dominant.<sup>183</sup>

On the other hand, in the contemporary art environment, whether it is government policy or art education and development planning, the Chinese ethnic community in Singapore also have absolute influence and discourse power to represent Singapore's cultural and artistic characteristics. At the same time, the Singapore government has always planned to build Singapore into an international cultural and art city. Under the government's plan, Singapore gradually showed plans to master the status of artistic leadership in Southeast Asia. After the millennium, the Southeast Asian art market continued to attract the attention of European and American art circles. Singapore frequently hosts various international contemporary art events such as Singapore Biennale, Singapore Art Week, Art Stage Singapore, Singapore International Festival of Arts, etc. Through these activities, on the one hand, the famous Southeast Asian artists are invited to participate in the Singapore art events and exhibitions to expand the

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<sup>182</sup> Tuck Fai Cheng, ‘The Subjectivity of Malaysian Art: A Study on “MERDEKA 50: A Celebration of Malaysian Art,”’ *The International Journal of Arts Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, p.190, [https://ed.arte.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990\\_arts\\_education61\\_189202.pdf](https://ed.arte.gov.tw/uploadfile/periodical/1990_arts_education61_189202.pdf), (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>183</sup> ‘[Research on Chinese in Southeast Asia] the Transmutation of Contemporary Chinese Society in Singapore and Its Dynamics and Characteristics—the Perspective of New Political Economy - All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese,’ *Wwww.chinaql.org*, 2022, <http://www.chinaql.org/BIG5/n1/2022/0208/c420265-32347830.html>, (accessed 21 Aug 2022).

influence of Singapore's contemporary art development. On the other hand, those events and exhibitions also actively promoted emerging Southeast Asian artists to the international artistic people and institutions. Tan Boon Hui (陈文辉), a former director of Singapore Art Museum (SAM) and an internationally renowned curator, once said: "The development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia hopes to become the leading art practice in Southeast Asia through the Singapore Biennale which can introduce to the international art people to know... The art platform created by Singapore will continue to provide opportunities for artistic and cultural exchanges and dialogues in Southeast Asia."<sup>184</sup> Otherwise, "the establishment of the National Gallery Singapore is advertised as the only national art institution and museum in the world dedicated to displaying and studying the history of modern art in Southeast Asia."<sup>185</sup>

Singapore's contemporary art development attempts to cover the entire Southeast Asian contemporary art. Dr Eugene Tan, Director of National Gallery Singapore, said: "Singapore's internationally renowned art projects are part of the government's overall national planning. The aim is to make Singapore an important cultural destination in Southeast Asia and even the world."<sup>186</sup> Step by step, Singapore has established itself as the centre of Southeast Asian contemporary art through the national power of the government. The government's plan to allow Singapore to fully grasp the right to speak in Southeast Asia contemporary art world from three different aspects: in public part to provide the art appreciation and exchange opportunities, in academic part to research some art articles and organised seminars, and in commercial part which encourage art marketing and art fair in Southeast East Asia. It cannot be ignored that within the promotion of Southeast Asian contemporary art which is under the Singapore

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<sup>184</sup> Singapore Biennale: Panorama of Southeast Asian Art', *Big5.China.com.cn*, 2013, [http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content\\_6396725.htm](http://big5.china.com.cn/gate/big5/art.china.cn/huihua/2013-10/23/content_6396725.htm), (accessed 7 July 2022).

<sup>185</sup> Doris Chen, 'The Mixed History of Museology – an Observation beyond Singapore Biennale' *No Man's Land*, 2021, <http://www.heath.tw/nml-article/the-mixed-history-of-museology-beyond-singapore-biennale/>, (accessed 20 Feb 2022).

<sup>186</sup> Wang. Xu, 'Singapore Wants to Master the Right to Speak in Southeast Asian Art' *M.21 jingji.com*, 2016, <http://m.21jingji.com/article/20160109/9ff38b4ab079a1ddfd3c4d0b3d7eb4ef.html>, (accessed 7 July 2022).

government's national policies and Singapore citizen's cooperation, whether it is the policy makers, arts implementers and promoters and even Singaporean participators, it is the Chinese ethnic group that makes up the majority of influence in Singapore.

## **Brunei:**

**The modern history of Brunei can be found in Appendix 13.**

### **The Outlook for the Brunei Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

In Brunei, which gained independence from Britain in 1984,<sup>187</sup> it is often the case that artistic students go abroad to study in the UK. After they return to Brunei, they usually stop to focus on their artistic career. However, some of them are doing art teaching by being employed in the public schools and under the government's expectation. Therefore, in Brunei it is difficult to say that a contemporary art environment is sufficiently maintained. In Brunei, there are no art museums that specialise in modern or contemporary art, and the few galleries that are scattered across the city are not actively trading works of art on the market.<sup>188</sup> Fortunately, in recent years the situation has changed and some spaces, such as the creative room and Kaleidoscope Studio,<sup>189</sup> have appeared, organising exhibitions in addition to workshops and talk events.

Although this change is not the regular situation now, it can demonstrate potential and act as

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<sup>187</sup> In 1979, Brunei and the United Kingdom signed an agreement which granted independence to the sultanate in 1984.

<sup>188</sup> Rui Oliveira Lopes, 'Defining Bruneian Cultural Identity through Contemporary Artistic Practice', *Engaging Modern Brunei: Research on Language, Literature, and Culture*, Singapore, Springer, 2021, pp. 199–214.

<sup>189</sup> Founded in 2014, Kaleidoscope Studio began as an artist-run space that put a spotlight on the wide range of talent that Brunei offers. 'Kaleidoscope Studio, Bandar Seri Begawan (2021)', *www.glartent.com* [website], <https://www.glartent.com/BN/Bandar-Seri-Begawan/423384584426923/Kaleidoscope-Studio>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

encouragement for young local artistic people. In fact, the case of young Bruneians studying at art schools in Europe or Australia are common and normal. There is no financial difficulty for them because the government is willing to pay studying abroad costs, however after those studying abroad young artistic people go back to Brunei, the real Brunei art environment is too small and too conservative for them. In Brunei only a few Bruneian artists keep active in Brunei or outside of Brunei after graduating.

Brunei is a mysterious and elusive country. Hassanal Bolkiah, the sultan, rules the country very tightly, so very few research documents seep out. It is difficult to find and record information about Brunei's artistic and cultural events, and one cannot even find any of the world-level art institutions and art museums publicly talking about Brunei's contemporary art. The research materials that can be found under the existing documents show that:

The Brunei media has spontaneously established a very strict sense of self-censorship in the society of Brunei. It is also difficult to establish an independent civil society watchdog, especially when it comes to reports and public discussions related to religion and politics. In addition, because the people of Brunei have long relied on national welfare, the development and transparency of civil society awareness is very weak, and the public has not established an independent civic organisation.<sup>190</sup>

In the research of Chinese Brunei artists, I could not find any contemporary Bruneian artists with a Chinese background; the reason is that Brunei art information and research documents are not transparent enough. With the limited information I have collected so far, I cannot comment on whether the Brunei contemporary art community exists and has a stable functioning organisation or group to develop Brunei contemporary art. In addition, Brunei has a Chinese population of 43,100, accounting for 10.23% of the total population.<sup>191</sup> But in fact not

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<sup>190</sup> Zhenzhao Song and Zhang Wende, *The Rising Southeast Asia: Peeping Into the Landscape and Business of Southeast Asian Countries*, Taipei, Wu Nan Tu Shu Chu Ban Gu Fen You Xian Gong Si, 2019, p. 225.

<sup>191</sup> 'Department of Economic Planning and Statistics - Population,' *Deps.mofe.gov.bn*, <https://deps.mofe.gov.bn/SitePages/Population.aspx>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

everyone has Brunei nationality. “Close to half of the Chinese still remain as temporary residents while less than a quarter were citizens.”<sup>192</sup> The application process for Chinese or foreign ethnic immigrants to join Brunei citizenship is very strict:

The basic condition is to have lived in Brunei for 20 years, and must pass the Malay language test, which is extremely difficult and has a naturalisation limit every year. In the past, there was a limit to approve only 200 people per year, and after 2020, it was to be relaxed to allow 1,000 people to naturalise each year.<sup>193</sup>

Persons who cannot obtain Brunei citizenship (Stateless persons) living in Brunei cannot receive the protection and social benefits from the Brunei government. “Many members of the Chinese community are stateless and continue to be excluded from some aspects of society, including subsidised health care and land ownership.”<sup>194</sup> These people are engaged in agricultural and labour work to make a living. On the other hand, most of the Chinese with Brunei nationality are active in the business industry, just like other ethnic Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries. These overseas Chinese have important influence on the commercial trade in Brunei and abroad.

Brunei has a constitutional monarchy; the hereditary sultan is the supreme ruler of the country and holds both the Prime Minister and Defence Minister positions. The official language of Brunei is Malay, and Islam is the state religion. The concept of establishing a country is based on Malay, Muslim and monarchy. Therefore:

Chinese and other foreign ethnics ultimately have no political status, nor are they allowed to organise political groups and political parties. After 2010, the Chinese ethnic in Brunei experienced an ‘immigrant exodus.’ The reason is that the Chinese are the largest ethnic group in Brunei. On the surface, the government promotes that “the

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<sup>192</sup> ‘Chinese’, *Minority Rights Group*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/chinese/>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>193</sup> ‘Home - Immigration,’ *Www.immigration.gov.bn*, <http://www.immigration.gov.bn/en/Theme/Home.aspx>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>194</sup> ‘Chinese,’ *Minority Rights Group*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/chinese/>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

ethnicity is one family”. In fact, there are quite a few policy restrictions and differential treatment for the Chinese and other ethnic minorities.<sup>195</sup>

For example, since 2014, Brunei has fully implemented ‘Sharia Law’. The Brunei government has nationalised Islamic law, and all Brunei citizens of different faiths must abide by it.<sup>196</sup> After 2015, Brunei’s policy has stipulated that all public and private schools must teach Jawi,<sup>197</sup> regardless of background and ethnicity it is mandatory to learn.<sup>198</sup> In addition, in 2015, Chinese Bruneians were also restricted from holding traditional custom activities. Brunei stipulates that Chinese cultural activities can only be held at specific times and places, and all participating members must be Chinese, and no non-Chinese ethnic person must be present at the scene.<sup>199</sup> Under this series of repressive protectionist policies, Chinese ethnic in Brunei began to choose to leave to immigrate to other countries.

Overall, Brunei has a small population and a small size of land. The national system is a Muslim country with a constitutional monarchy. The national economy has long relied on a single oil reserve trade. The national policy has adopted conservative protectionism in recent years. Combining these reasons, it is difficult to develop contemporary art in Brunei, whether it is for local Bruneians or ethnic Chinese artists, even though the Brunei government is willing to provide full funding for studying abroad in art.

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<sup>195</sup> ‘Chinese and Overseas Chinese Participate in the Belt and Road Research Series: Brunei,’ *World.huanqiu.com*, 2015, <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnJOm2l>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>196</sup> ‘Brunei’s Pernicious New Penal Code,’ *Human Rights Watch*, 22 May 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/22/bruneis-pernicious-new-penal-code>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>197</sup> Jawi is a local indigenous script in Brunei, using the traditional Arabic alphabet to write the Malay script, and it also has the status of the official script in Brunei. Brunei is one of the few countries in the world that still uses the Jawi script.

<sup>198</sup> Sri Kartika A. Rahman, ‘Jawi in Malay Language Education in Brunei Darussalam: A Review of Empirical Research,’ *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 7, no. 5, 2017, p. 162.

<sup>199</sup> ‘Chinese,’ *Minority Rights Group*, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/chinese/>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

## **Cambodia:**

**The modern history of Cambodia can be found in Appendix 14.**

### **The Outlook for the Cambodian Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

A contemporary art practice, like social engagement and personal and social concern, is the reproduction and recording of social reality. Through the artist's re-interpretation, a single individual event is contextualised and conceptualised, which helps audiences or readers to gain a new vision in the chaotic life world and re-define the problem and gain insights. Cambodian local artists know deeply that they can find social problems and then seek problem solving through art practice, and the support of social innovation needs to be added to this part. Phnom Penh (the capital) and Siem Reap (the area where Angkor Wat is located) are important tourist areas in Cambodia, so there are many cultural and creative craft and art studios established.

Among them, the internationally renowned Angkor Art School and its brand 'Artisans Angkor'<sup>200</sup> are the most representative. The 'Phare Performing Social Enterprise'<sup>201</sup> belongs to the art performance team. It established Phare Ponleu Selpak<sup>202</sup> (school) and Phare: The Cambodian Circus (theatre company) for the purpose of helping Cambodians to get rid of poverty through performing arts education. The ability of performers was improved through art education and after graduation they went directly to a professional theatre troupe to perform.

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<sup>200</sup> Artisans Angkor is a Cambodian company that was created at the end of 1990's to help young rural people find work near their home village. 'Artisans Angkor', [Www.artisansdangkor.com](http://www.artisansdangkor.com) [website], <http://www.artisansdangkor.com/beliefs-vision.php>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>201</sup> Phare Performing Social Enterprise (PPSE) is a social business. The organisation is designed and operated as a for-profit company, but is guided by social-benefit principles. 'Phare Performing Social Enterprise,' *Phare Performing Social Enterprise* [website], <https://www.pharepse.org/>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>202</sup> Phare Ponleu Selpak – in Khmer, The Brightness of the Arts – is a Cambodian non-profit arts school. 'The Organisation', *Phare Ponleu Selpak* [website], <https://phareps.org/the-organization/>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

They obtained a stable income at the same time to inherit Cambodian culture and traditional skills. Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are well-known international tourist areas, so it is easier to receive foreign concepts and experiences than in other Cambodian places. The residents of these two cities are more open-minded and willing to accept new things. Therefore, the few artistic activities in Cambodia are almost all held in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Sa Sa Art Projects,<sup>203</sup> is the only art alternative space in Phnom Penh, and was founded in 2007 by Erin Gleeson, a curator and scholar of contemporary art from Cambodia, to support curatorial and educational practices in the visual arts by providing studio space, publications, and travel support for emerging Cambodian artists. Sa Sa Art used for residencies is a community-based environment at The White Building on Sothea's Boulevard.<sup>204</sup> This building was built in 1963, and the apartment building was the first attempt to offer modern urban accommodation to lower and middle-class Cambodians. The building was abandoned following the rise of the Khmer Rouge in the mid-1970s. After the ultra-Communist group's ousting in 1979 from the capital, it became a haven for returning artists, actors and dancers, as well as civil servants working for the Vietnamese-backed government. Over the years, the building also developed a reputation for drugs and prostitution. In 2007, Sa Sa Art moved to a new location because the White Building was slated for demolition to make way for a new condominium project. At the new location, Sa Sa Art Projects places a stronger focus on working with young Cambodian artists. At the same time, they deepened the dialogue with other Asian artists through educational programmes, exhibitions, their own residency

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<sup>203</sup> Sa Sa Art Projects is a Cambodian artist-run space dedicated to experimental and critical contemporary art practices. 'Rei Foundation | Sa Sa Art Projects, Cultivating Cambodia's Arts Community', *Reifoundation.com* [website], <https://reifoundation.com/projects/sa-sa-art-projects-cultivating-cambodia-s-arts-community>, (accessed 26 June 2021).

<sup>204</sup> The White Building project (originally known as the Municipal Apartments), was built in the 1960s as part of the ambitious Bassac riverfront cultural and housing complex that was laid on reclaimed land along the Bassac River.

programme Pisaot, and other collaborative projects. Sa Sa Art Projects is currently programmed by Director Vuth Lyno,<sup>205</sup> Lim Sokchanlina<sup>206</sup> and Khvay Samnang.<sup>207</sup>

The term:

‘Chinese Cambodians’ refers to the Chinese who from the southeastern coastal areas of China immigrated to Cambodia in the late Qing Dynasty and the early years of the Republic of China (Mainland), and also including Cambodians who mixed with Chinese descent. The people of mixed Cambodian and Chinese ancestry are called ‘Khmer kat Chen,’ and ‘Khmer Chen’ means Chinese born in Cambodia.<sup>208</sup> In the late 1960s to early 1970s, the Chinese ethnic were the largest ethnic minority in Cambodia with an estimated 425,000 population. However, by 1984, there were only 61,400 Chinese Cambodians who stayed in Cambodia, mainly due to factors such as war, economics and the reign of terror that caused Chinese Cambodians to emigrate to other countries such as North America or Australia.<sup>209</sup>

After 1999, the Khmer Rouge was completely disintegrated, and the Hun Sen regime also announced their intention to abandon Communism, and promised to return the buildings and properties belonging to Chinese Cambodians during the Khmer Rouge period, so some Chinese ethnic individuals were willing to return to Cambodia. “The total number of Chinese ethnic today is about 900,000, accounting for 6% of the total population of Cambodia. The proportion of Chinese in Cambodia is only lower than that of Singapore and Malaysia in Southeast Asian

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<sup>205</sup> Vuth Lyno is an artist, curator and researcher. A co-founder of the Stiev Selapak art collective, he is also co-founder of SA SA BASSAC gallery and reading room. ‘Artist-In-Residence: Vuth Lyno’, *Para Site* [website], <https://www.para-site.art/residencies/artist-in-residence-vuth-lyno/>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>206</sup> Lim Sokchanlina (b. 1987, Cambodia) uses photography, video, site-specific installation and performance to work across documentary and conceptual practices. ‘CV / Bio: Lim Sokchanlina’, *Www.limsokchanlina.com* [website], <http://www.limsokchanlina.com/bio/>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>207</sup> Khvay Samnang was born in 1982 in Svay Rieng, Cambodia. QAGOMA, ‘KHVAY Samnang’, *Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art* [website], <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/apt8/artists/khvay-samnang>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>208</sup> Lucien Grey, ‘Chinese New Year in Cambodia’, *Phnom Penh Spotlight*, 15 Feb. 2018, <https://phnompenhspotlight.wordpress.com/2018/02/15/chinese-new-year-in-cambodia/>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>209</sup> Guotu Zhuang, ‘Changes in the Social Status of Chinese in Cambodia since World War II,’ *Southeast Asian Affairs*, no. 3, 2004, pp. 3–5, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41345306.pdf>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

countries.”<sup>210</sup> There are very few Chinese exclusion incidents in Cambodian history. It can be said that Cambodia has a very good relationship with China. There are three main reasons: “Cambodia is more hostile to the Vietnamese ethnic group than the Chinese. Second, when the French were under colonial rule, they were unfriendly and even hostile to the Chinese, which made Cambodians and Chinese have a similar feeling of common weal and woe, which continues to this day. The third reason is that Chinese and Cambodians intermarry and change to Cambodian surnames, so they are well integrated into Cambodian society.”<sup>211</sup> The third point is the main reason. In addition, cultural integration also affects each other. Although the Chinese are integrated into Cambodian society, they also retain some Chinese customs and habits, so Chinese culture also affects the living habits of Cambodians.

The Chinese are very active in the Cambodian business community, and their economic strength is strong, but their relationship with the political world is not tense. “Many of the military and political figures in Cambodia have Chinese blood, such as Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and his wife [who] have Chinese family. The Cambodian Chinese newspaper (*JianHua Daily*/ 柬华日报) also reported that half of Cambodian cabinet officials are with Chinese blood.”<sup>212</sup> After the 1990s, Chinese ethnic businessmen in Cambodia planned to cooperate with overseas Chinese businessmen in cross-border trade, so they adopted Chinese culture and religious customs into Cambodian Chinese families, such as setting up altars of Chinese folk beliefs in homes and shops, and handling Chinese cultural festivals:

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<sup>210</sup> Lin Wenbin, ‘Intermarriage of Cambodia and China All the Way to the South, the Culture Blends Together: Cambodia, Which Is the Least Exclusive to China in Southeast Asia, Has Become the Back Garden of Chinese Capital’, *Liberty Times Net*, 2019, <https://talk.ltn.com.tw/article/breakingnews/2872080>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>211</sup> Lin Wenbin, ‘Intermarriage of Cambodia and China All the Way to the South, the Culture Blends Together: Cambodia, Which Is the Least Exclusive to China in Southeast Asia, Has Become the Back Garden of Chinese Capital’, *Liberty Times Net*, 2019, <https://talk.ltn.com.tw/article/breakingnews/2872080>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>212</sup> Lin Wenbin, ‘Intermarriage of Cambodia and China All the Way to the South, the Culture Blends Together: Cambodia, Which Is the Least Exclusive to China in Southeast Asia, Has Become the Back Garden of Chinese Capital’, *Liberty Times Net*, 2019, <https://talk.ltn.com.tw/article/breakingnews/2872080>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

After 2010, a large amount of Chinese capital directly came to Cambodia from China, which completely changed the business environment of Cambodia, especially the real estate market, construction industry and national construction (roads, bridges, water conservancy and power facilities).<sup>213</sup>

In 2014, China's The Belt and Road (B&R) policy officially opened the commercial and political alliance between China and Cambodia.<sup>214</sup> In July 2016, the World Bank announced that Cambodia has been upgraded from a low-income country to a low-middle-income country. Therefore, Cambodian aid from European and American countries and international organisations was reduced in stages.<sup>215</sup> In the same year, China became Cambodia's largest investor and largest economic donor.<sup>216</sup> Cambodia's economic dependence on China continues to deepen.

In the research on the influence of Chinese on Cambodian contemporary art, when I was collecting information on Cambodian Chinese artists, I found an interesting phenomenon. Cambodian contemporary artists did not particularly emphasise their Chinese identity, but some of their works contained very strong Chinese cultural characteristics. I think there are two reasons. One is that Chinese Cambodians have already peacefully assimilated with native Cambodians, so even if Cambodian artists have Chinese relations, they do not need to emphasise the particularity of their Chinese identity. However, it is inevitable that the living habits and customs of Chinese culture have influenced the artists' art practice and their art style in a subtle way. This makes the elements and features of the works used by some Cambodian

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<sup>213</sup> Congyuan Chen, and Rihan Huang, *Guiding the Road, Bridging the World: Overseas Chinese and One Belt One Road Initiative*, Beijing Shi, She Hui Ke Xue Wen Xian Chu Ban She, She Hui Zheng Fa Fen She, 2016, p. 36.

<sup>214</sup> Ma Yifan, 'Chinese Real Estate Companies Dig Gold in Cambodia: Exploring New Investment Hot Spots Chinese Capital Gambles in Phnom Penh', *Finance.sina.cn*, 2019, <https://finance.sina.cn/2019-01-17/detail-ihqfskcn7836037.d.html>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>215</sup> Lin Wenbin, 'The Enigmatic Angkor Smile: Cambodia beyond the Real Estate Boom', *Liberty Times Net*, 2017, <https://talk.ltn.com.tw/article/breakingnews/2290956>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>216</sup> Congyuan Chen, and Rihan Huang, *Guiding the Road, Bridging the World: Overseas Chinese and One Belt One Road Initiative*, Beijing Shi, She Hui Ke Xue Wen Xian Chu Ban She, She Hui Zheng Fa Fen She, 2016, p. 36.

artists contain Chinese cultural characteristics. Another reason is that China's influence on Cambodia has continued to increase after 2010, so it is reasonable for a contemporary artist to discuss issues and cultural characteristics related to China in artists' works to echo the social environment of Cambodia. In the section below, I introduce two of the most internationally famous Cambodian contemporary artists and their works to reflect this phenomenon.



Figure 10. Vuth Lynoand, *House – Spirit*, 2018, Installation view (left) and detail (right), accessed 28 Aug 2022,

<https://art4brunch.com/2019/04/17/while-on-the-subject-of-place-development-loss-and-preservation/>.

Vuth Lyno was born in 1982 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He lives and works in Phnom Penh. His art research is about social transformation and development in Cambodia. In addition to his practice as an artist, he is a curator and artistic director of Sa Sa Art Projects, Phnom Penh's only Cambodian artist-run space:

His work is often par-tic-i--pa--tory and col-lab-o-ra--tive, engaging specific Cambodian com--mu-ni-ties, and concerned with social issues and injustice. Lyno is currently focused on exploring the legacy of the now demolished White Building in Phnom Penh,

which was once home to a diversity of Cambodian artists, performers and craftspeople.<sup>217</sup>

Figure 10 depicts one of Vuth Lyno's famous works, *House – Spirit*, which was collected by Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA). The work described the White Building's spirit house, which is something that the residents believe. The White Building was the first apartment-style public housing built in the 1960s during Cambodia's post-independence period. The building was knocked down in 2017 to make way for new development, as the government decided that the structure was no longer safe.<sup>218</sup> As people moved out, many left their spirit houses there. A spirit house is a shrine to the protective spirit of a place that is found in Southeast Asian countries:

Spirit houses are intended to provide a shelter for spirits. Vuth Lyno had been working in this vibrant community for seven years, and he felt the need to document its collective memory that lasts beyond its physical disappearance. Lyno believes those spirits accumulated a dense history and rich stories of the families and the neighbourhood. He invited the White Building original residents together to reconstruct pieces of history and memory of the White Building community and Phnom Penh city, forming a refuge for their collective spirit.<sup>219</sup>

*House – Spirit* recalls one of the modular columns of apartments and balconies that once comprised the White Building.

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<sup>217</sup> QAGOMA, 'Vuth Lyno', *Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art*, <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/the-9th-asia-pacific-triennial-of-contemporary-art-apt9/artists/vuth-lyno>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>218</sup> Roth Sochieata, 'Edgy Artist Innovates with Installations,' *Www.phnompenhpost.com*, 2021, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/lifestyle-arts-culture/edgy-artist-innovates-installations>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>219</sup> Vuth Lyno, 'House – Spirit', *Vuth Lyno*, <https://vuthlyno.art/artworks/house-spirit>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).



Figure 11. Vuth Lynoand, *House – Spirit*, 2018, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://vuthlyno.art/artworks/house-spirit>.

Before Buddhism was prevalent in Southeast Asia, spirit houses were used all across Southeast Asia to honour the ‘spirit’ of the home. By paying respects and leaving offerings, families believe that the resident spirit will help to bring them good luck and protection. Local Southeast Asians believe that the spirit world is very much connected to our modern-day world. They also revere the ancestors and the spirits of the people who have lived and worked on the land in days gone by. The spirit houses are built to be the resting place of the spirits. In Southeast Asian countries, different countries and nations have different styles of spirit houses, and their styles and construction methods are different. There is also such a culture in Chinese culture and it is called ‘Landlord God’ (地基主/ 地主公). In particular, Vuth Lyno's work, *House – Spirit* uses many Chinese cultural spirit houses to compose the works, and it is obvious from the works that Chinese sacrificial texts can be seen. From the works, it can be clearly seen that both the artist and the residents living in White Building have a large part of the habit of Chinese blood and Chinese cultural customs.

Another artist, Khvay Samnang, was born in 1982 in Svay Rieng, Cambodia. He graduated from the Painting Department at the Royal University of Fine Art in Phnom Penh. Khvay’s

multidisciplinary practice offers new views on historic and current events as well as on traditional cultural rituals using humorous symbolic gestures. “In his work, which includes all media, he focuses on the humanitarian and ecological impacts of colonialism and globalisation.”<sup>220</sup> Khvay Samnang also a founding member of Stiev Selapak, an art collective dedicated to reappraising and remembering Cambodian history and exploring continuities in visual practices disrupted by civil war and the Khmer Rouge regime. In 2010-2011, Stiev Selapak set up two nonprofit art spaces in Phnom Penh, Sa Sa Art Projects in White Building.<sup>221</sup>



Figure 12. Khvay Samnang, *Popil*, 2018, accessed 29 Aug 2022, <https://www.khvaysamnang.com/>.

The video, *Popil* (2018), was commissioned by the contemporary German museum, Haus der Kunst<sup>222</sup> in Munich. *Popil* was inspired by the fact that people in Cambodia as well as in China believe in dragons, featuring two dancers performing a modern version of the classical Khmer

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<sup>220</sup> ‘Biography / CV – Khvay Samnang’, *Www.khvaysamnang.com*, <https://www.khvaysamnang.com/biography-cv/>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>221</sup> Sa Sa Art Projects is a Cambodian artist-run space dedicated to experimental and critical contemporary art practices. ‘Rei Foundation | Sa Sa Art Projects, Cultivating Cambodia’s Arts Community’, *Reifoundation.com* [website], <https://reifoundation.com/projects/sa-sa-art-projects-cultivating-cambodia-s-arts-community>, (accessed 26 June 2021).

<sup>222</sup> The Haus der Kunst is a non-collecting modern and contemporary art museum in Munich, Germany. ‘Mission Statement Haus Der Kunst’, *Haus Der Kunst*, <https://www.hausderkunst.de/en/mission>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

‘Robam kbach boran’ dance which was a prayer in movement for rain and fertility in a sacrifice ceremony. In the video the two dancers enacted a contemporary love story of two dragons, one representing Cambodia, the other representing China. The two dragons are twirling, and enacting circular movements to depict North-Eastern Cambodia to Phnom Penh to South-Eastern Cambodia by mimicking the flows of both the nation’s major rivers, as well as the circulation of capital throughout the nation. Two dancers don masks which the artist has fashioned from woven fishing vines, and “the work would constitute a critical remapping of the complex geographies and cultural rites which are enfolded within the wider rotating movements of Cambodian and Chinese interests and relations.”<sup>223</sup> Samnang said “This work is meant to show the close relationship between China and Cambodia in terms of geography mapping as well as development areas and future development areas.”<sup>224</sup> In the video, the two dragons sometimes fall in love and sometimes quarrel, which also represents the complex interdependent relationship between Cambodia and China at different stages from the past to the present.

In Cambodia, there is only one art institution (and one alternative space), Sa Sa Art Projects, supporting the development of contemporary art throughout Cambodia by themselves. Under Cambodian art circumstance, overseas art resources and art exchange projects can at least flow into Cambodia to establish art connections, which is worth cherishing. Through these overseas resources and assistance, Sa Sa Art Projects has quickly established a local art community in Cambodia and encouraged more young artists to engage in contemporary art work. With their efforts, they have encouraged and cooperated with many local young artists who were born

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<sup>223</sup> ‘Delfina Presents: Khvay Samnang’, *Delfina Foundation*, <https://www.delfinafoundation.com/platform/delfina-presents-khvay-samnang/>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>224</sup> Michelle Vachon, ‘Three Cambodian Artists Use Diverse Artforms and Techniques to Speak of Today’s World’, *Cambodianess*, 2022, <https://cambodianess.com/article/three-cambodian-artists-use-diverse-artforms-and-techniques-to-speak-of-todays-world>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

between 1980 and 1990. These artists are also often invited to participate in exhibitions around the world supported by Sa Sa Art Projects' overseas art plans and recommendations.<sup>225</sup> On the whole, the Cambodian government has not provided policies and resources for the development of art. The resources and financial aid of Cambodian contemporary artists and independent institutions are mainly from overseas art projects, exhibitions, and residencies.

## **Laos:**

**The modern history of Laos can be found in Appendix 15.**

## **The Outlook for the Contemporary Art Situation in Laos and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

The situation of contemporary art in Laos is comparatively little known- even among ASEAN countries. In fact, only the limited information can be found via paper documents and digital media. The official art exhibited in Laos's state-run cultural institutions have to comply with the government requirements. Local artists produced works that met the state's demands; the government's purpose is a glorification of Laotian culture. Therefore, these paintings are produced in oil and occasionally watercolour, extending traditions of French modernism<sup>226</sup> and a gentle mode of socialist realism.<sup>227</sup> This neo-traditional art<sup>228</sup> satisfies authorities but is far

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<sup>225</sup> Michelle Vachon, 'Three Cambodian Artists Use Diverse Artforms and Techniques to Speak of Today's World', *Cambodianess*, 2022, <https://cambodianess.com/article/three-cambodian-artists-use-diverse-artforms-and-techniques-to-speak-of-todays-world>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>226</sup> Modernism is a philosophical movement that arose from transformations in Western society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped modernism were industrialization and the rapid growth of cities.

<sup>227</sup> A form of modern realism imposed in Russia by Stalin following his rise to power after the death of Lenin in 1924, characterised in painting by rigorously optimistic pictures of Soviet life painted in a realist style.

<sup>228</sup> The definition of neo-traditional art involves a reinterpretation of the formal value system that governs art, ones usually denoted by a set of style markers, or by technique or content.

away from the pressing issues of today.<sup>229</sup> Some local contemporary artists produce works that are innovative in their use of different media and critical in their address to the issues facing Lao society. However, they can only ship to overseas foreign biennales and museums to have an opportunity to show.<sup>230</sup> In 2018, three Laotian artists, Souliya Phoumivong (1983–),<sup>231</sup> Bounpaul Phothyzan (1979–)<sup>232</sup> and Tcheu Siong (1947–),<sup>233</sup> were invited to participate in the 9th Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT9)<sup>234</sup> in Brisbane, Australia. This was a rare opportunity for the overseas art world to appreciate the works of contemporary Lao artists. Their participation was widely publicised in international as well as the Lao press, celebrating the recognition of contemporary art from Laos. Notwithstanding, these artists do not frequent domestic art shows supported by the state-affiliated institutions.<sup>235</sup> Because those works express themselves creatively and critically against the government's demands and expectations, they keep it out of domestic public view.

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<sup>229</sup> Anna Koshcheeva, 'A New Art Scene in Laos', *ArtReview*, 2018,

<https://artreview.com/ara-winter-2018-feature-contemporary-art-in-laos/>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>230</sup> Anna Koshcheeva, 'Neo-Traditional Art of Post-Socialist Laos: The Entangled Temporality of the Mother-Land', *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, p. 31.

<sup>231</sup> Animator and new-media artist, Souliya Phoumivong, initially trained as a painter and was a member of the first artist-run space in Laos. 'Souliya Phoumivong', *Www.bkkartbiennale.com* [website], <https://www.bkkartbiennale.com/archive/2020/artist/Souliya-Phoumivong>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>232</sup> Bounpaul Phothyzan's sculpture, installation and land art practice is driven by social and environmental issues relevant to Laos — from deforestation to the devastating legacies of war. QAGOMA, 'Bounpaul Phothyzan', *Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art*, <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/the-9th-asia-pacific-triennial-of-contemporary-art-apt9/artists/bounpaul-phothyzan>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>233</sup> Tcheu Siong is an ethnic Hmong artist whose unique, large-scale textile works capture her own dreams and visions in connection to her Hmong ancestry and spirituality. QAGOMA, 'Tcheu Siong', *Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art*, <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/the-9th-asia-pacific-triennial-of-contemporary-art-apt9/artists/tcheu-siong>, (accessed 6 November 2021).

<sup>234</sup> 'The Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art' (APT) is the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art's flagship contemporary art series. Discover more than 400 artworks by over 80 individuals, collectives and groups that capture the energy of new art being created in Asia, the Pacific and Australia. QAGOMA, 'The 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT9)', *Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art*, <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/the-9th-asia-pacific-triennial-of-contemporary-art-apt9>, (accessed 6 November 2021).

<sup>235</sup> Anna Koshcheeva, 'Neo-Traditional Art of Post-Socialist Laos: The Entangled Temporality of the Mother-Land', *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, pp. 31–71.

The centrality of Laos' contemporary art community lies in the National Institute of Fine Arts (NIFA). In recent years in Laos, contemporary art events have slightly increased compared to before 2000. Local people anticipated the innovation events for the Laotian art community, at the same time through contemporary art providing more opportunities for international exposure and exchange. Local artists initially sold artworks down by the riverfront weekend market, then tried to open commercial gallery spaces in the city centre and more experimental works were shown at the back of the galleries. Those galleries' main customers are foreign tourists. Bounpaul Phothyzan is the most internationally famous contemporary Laos artist and is also a pioneer of land art in Laos. Bounpaul Phothyzan's artistic practice is focused on his engagement with critical social and environmental issues in Laos.<sup>236</sup>

Photyzan's land art work, *Red House* (2015, 2016), shows three red tents built in an immense field and reflects the growing tension between the Lao people and China, particularly the problems caused by increased Chinese investment in land properties. The red fabric symbolises a new form of colonialism and that, at the persistence of communism in Laos, this directly influences the local Laotian but they can not make their own decisions for their country. However, paradoxically, after the Communist state of Laos opened up its capitalist economy this led to the Laotian local farmers being forced to leave their fields. Another work, *Red Carpet* (2015), is a huge installation and art performance that represents an immensely long red fabric unfolded in the field that leads into the city and symbolises the road to the future. This work expresses a “hidden reference to the famous Chinese project, ‘One road, one belt’, and encapsulates in one powerful image all the complex questions raised by the current

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<sup>236</sup> Photyzan formally trained as a painter at the National Institute of Fine Arts in Vientiane, and later, Bounpaul went on to broaden his perspectives and studied Visual Arts in Thailand. He has been invited as an artist by the Singapore Biennale 2013, the Elevations Laos Symposium and Art Prize in Vientiane, Laos.

development of the country.”<sup>237</sup> Phothyzan used his works to show the concern that the current Chinese influence on Laos is becoming out of control and it will be a potential national problem for the Lao people.



Figure 13. Bounpaul Phothyzan, *Red Houses*, 2015, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/bounpaul-phothyzan-elevating-laos/>.



Figure 14. Bounpaul Phothyzan, *Red Carpet*, 2015, accessed 28 Aug 2022, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/bounpaul-phothyzan-elevating-laos/>.

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<sup>237</sup> Caroline Ha Thuc, ‘Bounpaul Phothyzan: Elevating Laos | COBO Social,’ *COBO Social*, 2019, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/bounpaul-phothyzan-elevating-laos/>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

In 2013, Bounpaul Phothyzan opened his own art space, the Eastern Art Gallery and Academy, located in Vientiane and Savannakhet.<sup>238</sup> Bounpaul Phothyzan is undoubtedly the most well-known Lao artist in the overseas art world. The art space he opened has the potential to give other Lao artists exposure and exhibition opportunities at Lao and abroad. At the same time, if overseas art organisations want to exchange art in Laos, at least they can contact the Eastern Art Gallery and Academy for cooperation. For the long-term development of contemporary art in Laos, having an independent art space run by a local artist is a huge breakthrough.

Laos is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia, and 80% of its geographical environment is mountains and plateaus. Laos belongs to the UN list of least developed countries in the world announced by the United Nations.<sup>239</sup> In the research materials I can find on Laos, the information in either English or Chinese is limited to basic geographic knowledge and national historical research. In addition, there is very little related research on Chinese ethnic society in Laos. The limited research documents I have collected shows that today the main population in Lao Chinese society is the second generation of old overseas Chinese immigrants, who are about 40 to 50 years old. Most of these Chinese have integrated into Lao society and more than 90% are engaged in business and small and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>240</sup> After the Lao government implemented reform and opening up in 1990:

It introduced a capital market economy and at the same time outsourced many state-owned enterprises and companies, which have experienced years of operating difficulties and severe losses to Chinese-funded enterprises. This decision has turned most Lao state-owned enterprises into profits. On the one hand, it increases the fiscal

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<sup>238</sup> Chairat Polmuk, 'Bounpaul Phothyzan: Unearthing Lao History through Art', *Kooper | Creator Marketplace*, 2019, <https://kooper.co/bounpaul-phothyzan/>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>239</sup> UNCTAD, 'UN List of Least Developed Countries | UNCTAD', *Unctad.org*, 2020, <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>240</sup> Zhuang Guotu, 'Changing Social Status of Overseas Chinese in Laos Since World War,' *Overseas Chinese History Studies*, no. 2, 2004, p. 32.

revenue of the Lao government, and on the other hand, it attracts more Chinese businessmen to invest in Laos.<sup>241</sup>

The new Chinese immigrants in Laos are also mainly engaged in business, so now the streets of Laos contain Chinese shops and Chinese words everywhere. Chinese Laotians are in the middle class in today's Laotian society. Compared with other countries in Southeast Asia, the ethnic Chinese groups in Laos do not belong to the rich class. This is directly related to the history and development of Laos in modern times.<sup>242</sup>

From the research documents and resources I have collected so far, I have not found any contemporary artists with Chinese backgrounds in Laos. I think the main reason is that the Chinese community in Laos is small, and most Chinese are mainly engaged in business. In addition, the contemporary art community in Laos is also very small, and the Lao government's explicit restrictions on the development of Chinese Laotians' jobs is problematic. Finally, the information in Laos is not transparent and not easy to obtain. I think the above reasons are the reasons why Chinese Laotians will not engage in artistic work in Laos. Overall, Laos's modern art and contemporary art still has an aura of fear which is connected with national history and the experience of living under war. So a lot of art is quite traditional, and art development is stunted due to the political ambience under the governmental indoctrination and control. Laos's contemporary art environment lacks infrastructure and art education. The lack of art market infrastructure, government censorship, prevalence of traditional teaching paradigms in art schools have kept artists in Laos unable to build their contemporary art community. However, local artists still keep their creative spirit and persevere to find any opportunities. Bounpaul Phothyzan believes that it is the freedom to create and the sheer desire to make one's voice

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<sup>241</sup> Yu-Chuan. Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019 ,pp. 29-30.

<sup>242</sup> After 2013, due to the 'One Belt, One Road' transnational cooperation policy, there occurred the new immigration cycle for Chinese in Laos. Further information can be found in Appendix 16.

heard that will ultimately empower emerging contemporary artists. He will see more contemporary art from Laos soon, bridging social, historical and geographical divides that result from decades of isolation.

## **Myanmar:**

**The modern history of Myanmar can be found in Appendix 17.**

### **The Outlook for Myanmar's Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

During different military government periods<sup>243</sup> in Myanmar, all of them were staunchly isolationist, and artists in the country became subject to a censorship board, which consisted of a constantly changing coterie of government officials who possessed a minimal understanding of art. Regarding art education, only traditional techniques were taught in the schools and at university and all the contemporary artists considered themselves self-taught as far as contemporary forms were concerned. In the art market there are only a few local collectors. Local Burmese people do not have much knowledge about contemporary art due to lack of literature and art spaces. In addition, artists in Myanmar cannot receive any support from the government.<sup>244</sup> Despite the government seriously censoring the artists and their works, it was impossible to silence Myanmar's artists entirely. They found ways around the imposed ways such as euphemisms or codes in their artworks and artistic movements to outwit censors.<sup>245</sup> The important Myanmar artist group, Gangaw Village, started in 1979 formed by approximately 20

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<sup>243</sup> The country gained independence from Britain in 1948. It was ruled by the armed forces from 1962 until 2011, when a new government began ushering in a return to civilian rule.

<sup>244</sup> Isabel Ching, 'Art from Myanmar', *Third Text*, vol. 25, no. 4, July 2011, pp. 431–446, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2011.587688>, (accessed 5 Jan 2022).

<sup>245</sup> Yoneda Naoki, *Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, exhibition catalogue, Tokyo, Mori Art Museum, The Japan Foundation Asia Center, 2017, p.1.

students of Rangoon Arts and Sciences University [now University of Yangon]<sup>246</sup> that played a significant role in the development of contemporary art in Myanmar. Inya Gallery of Art, opened in 1989 as the first modern art gallery in the country and grew out of the groundbreaking Gangaw Village Art Group. New Zero Art Space<sup>247</sup> is a nonprofit visual arts organisation, led by the artist Aye Ko,<sup>248</sup> and was established in Yangon in 2008. New Zero Art Space has two locations: one in the city and one in the countryside. In 2012, New Zero hosted the International Multimedia Art Festival<sup>249</sup> which was the first new media public art event in Myanmar. It was a critical opportunity for many young Burmese artistic local people, allowing them to connect face-to-face with the overseas art culture. As an overview, the situation of Burmese artists has still a long way to go and they still rely a lot on the Foreign Foundations and institutions which have opened their doors in Yangon, and on international programmes.<sup>250</sup>

Chinese Burmese, also Sino-Burmese or Tayoke (緬華), are a Burmese citizens of Chinese or partial Chinese ancestry. The population of Chinese in Myanmar is less than that of Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries. According to the Population Bureau of the Ministry of Immigration and Population of Myanmar, the total population of Myanmar as of April 1, 2020

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<sup>246</sup> The University of Yangon, founded in 1920, is the earliest university in Myanmar and has played an important role in the life of the nation through educating future leaders and undertaking ground-breaking research. 'University of Yangon | Official Website', *Wwww.uy.edu.mm* [website], <https://www.uy.edu.mm/>, (accessed 30 April 2021).

<sup>247</sup> The Art Space promotes contemporary art and artists with an intention of promoting new young art spirits of the next generation. 'New Zero Art Space | Transartists', *Wwww.transartists.org* [website], <https://www.transartists.org/en/air/new-zero-art-space>, (accessed 30 April 2021).

<sup>248</sup> A leader in the field of contemporary art in Myanmar, Aye Ko (Myanmar, b. 1963), began his career in the Yangon art scene in 1988 and is known to be among the postmodern art generation in Myanmar. 'Suffering, Aye Ko | Artspace.com', *Artspace* [website], <https://www.artspace.com/aye-ko/suffering>, (accessed 30 April 2021).

<sup>249</sup> The event, organised by New Zero Art Space, will feature more than 80 video, installation and performance artists from around the world, including Myanmar. 'Yangon Festivals Survey Multimedia Art', *The Myanmar Times* [website], 2012, <https://www.mmtimes.com/lifestyle/3053-yangon-festivals-survey-multimedia-art.html>, (accessed 11 July 2021).

<sup>250</sup> 'Myanmar's Alternative Artists Turn to Performance', *The Myanmar Times* [website], 2012, <https://www.mmtimes.com/lifestyle/3571-myanmar-s-alternative-artists-turn-to-performance-to-express-themselves.html>, (accessed 11 July 2021).

is 54.58 million.<sup>251</sup> The Chinese Burmese population announced by the Burmese government is about 1.64 million,<sup>252</sup> although Burmese Chinese people account for about 3% of the total population of Myanmar. However, the actual Chinese ethnic population is much higher because “official statistics did not include mixed Chinese Burmese, some Chinese who have hidden their Chinese identity for escaping discrimination against Burmese, the new population of mainland Chinese who have migrated to Myanmar since the 1990s and there still are a large number of Chinese Burmese in northern Myanmar who are not included in the government population statistics.”<sup>253</sup> Many Chinese-Myanmar people were born and raised in Myanmar and have never left the country, but they are unable to become naturalised in Myanmar and are treated differently by Myanmar society. They have no access to higher education, no political participation, no state welfare and security in Myanmar. According to a survey by scholar Lex Rieffel, more than two million<sup>254</sup> Burmese Chinese have never been officially included in the Chinese-Myanmar population statistics.

Chinese Burmese people and Chinese working in Myanmar generally belong to the middle class in Burmese society, especially in the business field which supports the Myanmar economy. Although Chinese-Burmese have achieved great economic success in Myanmar, they are also actively integrating into the local mainstream culture of Myanmar, but in Burmese society they have long been severely oppressed by the Burmese government. Except for the

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<sup>251</sup> ‘Home’, *dop.gov.mm*, <https://dop.gov.mm/en>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>252</sup> ‘Chinese in Myanmar.’, *Rpl.hds.harvard.edu*, <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/faq/chinese-myanmar>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>253</sup> Liang Dongping, ‘6 million Burmese Chinese Have Been Terrified for 50 Years’, *Www.yzzk.com*, 2017, <https://www.yzzk.com/article/details/%E5%B0%81%E9%9D%A2%E5%B0%88%E9%A1%8C/2017-33/1502353369081/600%E8%90%AC%E7%B7%AC%E7%94%B8%E8%8F%AF%E4%BA%BA%E9%A9%9A%E6%81%9050%E5%B9%B4>, (accessed 20 Dec 2022).

<sup>254</sup> Alexis Rieffel, *Myanmar / Inside Challenges, Outside Interests*, Washington, D. C., Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2010, p. 95–97.

Kokang Chinese (果敢華族),<sup>255</sup> the Chinese Burmese's Chinese ethnic identity in Myanmar is basically not recognized by the Myanmar government. Despite the exclusion of the Chinese, there are people of Chinese descent who have a strong influence on the Burmese political arena, such as Khin Nyunt (欽紐), Ne Win (奈溫/吳尼溫), and San Yu (山友), all of them are important political figures in Myanmar. Although these politicians had Chinese blood, for their own political career, they would not strive for the social right to Chinese Burmese in Myanmar. Surprisingly, the Myanmar government is very friendly to the Chinese government compared to the indifference to the Chinese Burmese in Myanmar. On the other hand, the Chinese government is also friendly and has good relations with the Myanmar government (including the temporary military government after the coup), the “Chinese government provides political and economic assistance to the Myanmar government, and even supports rebel groups in Myanmar by funding them or providing them with arms.”<sup>256</sup> Although Myanmar officials have close ties with the Chinese government<sup>257</sup> and even rely heavily on them, it can be seen from the treatment of the Chinese ethnic group by the Myanmar governments in the past dynasties that the Burmese people always have serious prejudice that the Chinese ethnic Burmese were foreigners and outsiders from China. In this unfriendly Burmese social environment, “the Chinese in Burma are naturally unable to fight for basic Chinese national rights and build a Chinese community.”<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> The word ‘Guokang’ comes from the Shan language. In the Shan language, ‘guo’ means ‘nine’, and ‘kang’ means ‘hukou’. The whole meaning refers to the place where nine families live. In 1659, in order to avoid the pursuit of the Qing army, Zhu Youlang, the emperor of the Southern Ming Dynasty, led thousands of Han servants to flee from mainland China to Kokang. Glocal, ‘The National Identity of Ethnic Minorities in Myanmar: Taking the Kokang as an Example (Part 1)’, *The News Lens*, 2016, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/47715>, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).

<sup>256</sup> ‘[Myanmar Coup] Report: Five Chinese State-Owned Enterprises Provide Arms to Myanmar Military’, *Radio Free Asia*, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/mr-china-02172021073303.html>, (accessed 14 Aug 2022).

<sup>257</sup> Further information can be found in Appendix 18.

<sup>258</sup> Zhuang Guotu, ‘A Brief Discussion on the Ethnic Identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese and Its Development Trend’, *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, vol. 151, no. 3, 2002, p. 69.

It is not that Chinese-Myanmar people do not agree with their Chinese identity, but that they are in the society of Myanmar. It is the greatest protection for Chinese ethnic people not to have a clear identity and position in public. In the art world of Myanmar, too, it is an unpredictable risk to disclose Chinese identity and the works with Chinese characteristics. In particular, Myanmar contemporary art itself is constructed based on Burmese political and social issues. In my research on contemporary artists in Myanmar, I did not find any artists who disclose their Chinese ethnic or cultural background in public. The development of contemporary art in Myanmar is based on self-study by artists, and by skillfully avoiding government censorship through performance art. The content of these works is mostly about social and political issues in Myanmar, because the government of Myanmar does not allow people to openly gather to show their different opinions.

## **Vietnam:**

**The modern history of Vietnam can be found in Appendix 19.**

## **The Outlook for the Vietnamese Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

Vietnam is a socialist country, so the government also uses socialist realism and propaganda as the mainstream in art education and promotion.<sup>259</sup> The ‘Doi Moi’<sup>260</sup> reform and opening up in 1986 transferred the domestic economic system from a planned economy to a market economy.

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<sup>259</sup> Su-Ning. Ker, ‘The Painful Chain: On the Market Process of Modern and Contemporary Art in Vietnam’, *Artouch*, 2020, <https://artouch.com/market/content-13273.html>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>260</sup> The reform policies launched in Vietnam in 1986 known as Doi Moi, translated literally as ‘restoration,’ have brought profound changes to the country — rescuing it from the failures of central planning and self-isolation adopted after unification of the country in 1975. ‘Vietnam; the Rising Star of South-East Asia’, *The diplomaticaffairs.com* [website], 2020, <https://www.thediplomaticaffairs.com/2020/05/21/vietnam-the-rising-star-of-south-east-asia/>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

This huge transformation brought unprecedented economic changes to Vietnamese society and affected domestic opportunities for opening up. At the same time, with the expansion of the economy, the culture and art of capitalist countries were immediately introduced to Vietnam. This also provides an opportunity for the Vietnam art field to accept the new artistic expression and thought of ‘contemporary art’.<sup>261</sup>

As Cristina states:

Throughout the 1990s, along with an influx of foreign art buyers, new art galleries opened in Vietnam. With multicultural exchanges from foreign practitioners coming into Vietnam and some Vietnamese artists given the rare opportunity to visit other countries, came the discovery, even if limited, of new art forms beyond the picture plane and traditional media.<sup>262</sup>

Even after the reform and opening up in Vietnam, before publicly exhibiting works, it was always necessary to accept the review of the content of the works by the relevant cultural information departments to ensure that the works have no inappropriate political views. In 1998, Tran Luong<sup>263</sup> founded Nha San Studio<sup>264</sup> (closed in 2011), together with Nguyen Manh,<sup>265</sup> to provide an experimental space for installation, video, performance and other such media that were new at the time. Gathered in the first generation of Nha San Studio, contemporary Vietnamese artists rebelled against censorship and conservative artistic expression. They chose

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<sup>261</sup> Kenichiro Egami, ‘Hanoi's Acceptance of Contemporary Art and Two Nha San (House of Contemporary Art)’, *SCENE/ASIA*, 2017, <http://scene-asia.com/zt/archives/692>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>262</sup> Cristina Nualart, ‘Queer Art in Vietnam: From Closet to Pride in Two Decades’, *Palgrave Communications*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2016, <https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms20169>, (accessed 6 February 2022).

<sup>263</sup> Tran Luong was born in 1960 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Trần Lương is a visual artist, independent curator and a pioneer in creating space for critical contemporary art in Vietnam. ‘The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation’, *The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation* [website], <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/tran-luong>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>264</sup> Nhà Sàn Studio (NSS) was founded in 1998 by artists Nguyen Manh Duc and Tran Luong. It was the first and is, to date, the longest running non-profit experimental art space in Vietnam. ‘Nha San Collective - Introduce Nha San’, *Nhasan.org* [website], <https://nhasan.org/introduces>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>265</sup> Nguyen Manh Duc graduated from Vietnamese Fine Arts University. He is the co-founder of Nha San studio. ‘Nha San Collective - Nguyen Manh Duc’, *Nhasan.org* [website], <https://nhasan.org/artist/nguyen-manh-duc>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

contemporary art forms from the West, applied it to the practice of the concept of ‘free expression’, and adopted new media such as performance and installation. As artistic means of expression diversified, this led to experiments with performance as a form that is not easily targeted for censorship. In 2013, a younger generation of artists carried on the experimental spirit of Nha San Studio to establish the Nha San Collective, and they continued their activities without a permanent space for exhibition. As a second-generation artist team, the members of the Nha San team also face the government's issue of censorship. They are trying to provide the younger generation of artists with better opportunities for production, display, and education.

Performance art and performances can be said to be very popular in the development of contemporary art in Vietnam, because young Vietnamese artists can not cover the cost of money for art tools and materials. Performance art, in which the artists use their body as an art medium, is simple and economical in terms of cost. It is more flexible in forms of expression, and impromptu performances can also skilfully evade the censorship of galleries and museums. In the face of the government's deep-rooted traditional censorship, the Vietnamese arts and cultural circles, on the one hand, adopt an anonymous approach to form small and close groups to cooperate with each other, and at the same time use the Internet directly to connect the local and the world to carry out mobile and improvised art projects.<sup>266</sup>

In the Indo-China Peninsula's countries, including Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar, for the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam with other Chinese societies such as China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan the relationship is relatively close in terms of politics, economy, society and culture. The borders of China and Vietnam are connected geographically. In the Song Dynasty of ancient China (宋朝, 960–1279), Vietnam was a direct territory of China. Therefore,

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<sup>266</sup> Kenichiro Egami, ‘Hanoi's Acceptance of Contemporary Art and Two Nha San (House of Contemporary Art)’, *Scene/Asia*, 2017, <http://scene-asia.com/zt/archives/692>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

bilateral exchanges have had many intersections in every aspect and field since ancient times. Chinese emigrants in Vietnam are one of the oldest overseas Chinese communities.<sup>267</sup>

In the 1970s, when Sino-Vietnamese relations were tense, the Vietnamese government decided to start rectifying the issues of identity and nationality of the Chinese in Vietnam. Therefore:

In 1976, the Vietnamese government promulgated the ‘Nationality Law’, which clearly required that Chinese in Vietnam must leave the territory of Vietnam if they did not accept Vietnamese nationality. As a result, the Vietnamese government drove more than 200,000 Chinese back to China the following year.<sup>268</sup>

Until 1980, Vietnam's constitution still called China “Vietnam's direct and dangerous enemy.”<sup>269</sup> The relationship between China and Vietnam only gradually became better after Vietnam's ‘renovation’ policy in 1986 to open up the relationship between the two governments. In the same year, the policy of Vietnam officially recognized that Chinese Vietnamese were also Vietnamese citizens, which were positioned as a minority in Vietnam. Chinese Vietnamese finally have fair civil rights in Vietnam; after decades of substandard treatment, Chinese-Vietnamese people have finally legally entered the protection of Vietnam's national identity:

In the 1990s, the Chinese-Vietnamese population increased, and the Chinese who had been forced to leave Vietnam also returned. It can be said that the current Chinese have finally fully integrated into Vietnamese society and become part of the Vietnamese family. The process of localization of Vietnamese Chinese people has also been completed.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> See Appendix 20.

<sup>268</sup> Chen Hong Yu, *On the Citizenship, Social Status, and Human Rights of Overseas Chinese*, Taipei, Hua Qiao Xie Hui Zong Hui, 2014, p. 178.

<sup>269</sup> Chen Hong Yu, *On the Citizenship, Social Status, and Human Rights of Overseas Chinese*, Taipei, Hua Qiao Xie Hui Zong Hui, 2014, p. 179.

<sup>270</sup> Chen Hong Yu, *On the Citizenship, Social Status, and Human Rights of Overseas Chinese*, Taipei, Hua Qiao Xie Hui Zong Hui, 2014, p. 179.

On the other hand, the Vietnamese government has opened up foreign investment in Vietnam, and more and more Chinese businessmen are going to set up factories and trade in Vietnam.

The attitude of Vietnamese society towards Chinese is becoming open and friendly:

The national identity of the ancient Vietnamese was based on the continuous assertion of independence from the foreign regimes of the Chinese dynasties. In the nineteenth century, the Vietnamese intended to establish a national consciousness different from that of the Chinese dynasty which called Dai Viet (大越國), but at the same time Vietnamese made extensive Chinese technologies and concepts for their own use.<sup>271</sup>

Ancient Chinese culture had been deeply influenced towards Vietnam in different perspectives such as the language, customs, and religious beliefs. Chinese characters were introduced to Vietnam at the end of the Western Han Dynasty (西漢, 202 BC – 9 AD), and in the 12th century it became the common language of Vietnam. The emergence of Vietnamese characters in the 13th century was based on the knowledge of Chinese characters, and the Vietnamese characters referenced from Chinese pictographs (象形), compound ideographs (會意) and phono-semantic compounds (形聲) methods to create Vietnamese characters, Chữ Nôm (字喃).<sup>272</sup> The early development of Vietnamese art was also deeply influenced by Chinese painting and aesthetics, and it was not until the 19th century that French colonialism changed this. The development of Vietnamese modern art is greatly influenced by the Western art system in terms of artistic technique and creative form. Most of the modern art works in Vietnam are strongly aligned with the characteristics of Western paintings.

Although Vietnamese modern art is heavily influenced by Western art, the Vietnamese artists still convey the spirit and landscape of Vietnamese and Asian culture in their works. Among the

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<sup>271</sup> Li Li, and Hui Xue, *Introduction to Southeast Asia: Taiwan's Perspective*, Taipei, Wu-Nan Book Inc, 2008, p. 10.

<sup>272</sup> Michele C. Thompson *Scripts, Signs, and Swords: The Viet Peoples and the Origin of Nôm*, Philadelphia, PA, USA, Dept. of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2000, pp. 2–6, [http://www.sino-platonic.org/complete/spp101\\_vietnamese\\_chu\\_nom.pdf](http://www.sino-platonic.org/complete/spp101_vietnamese_chu_nom.pdf), (accessed 5 Sep 2022).

Vietnamese modernist painters are several well-known Chinese painters, such as Nguyen Phan Chanh (阮潘正), Ly Khac Nhu (李克柔), and Chang Christopher (張漢明). Their art style combines Western painting techniques while bringing Vietnamese and Chinese characteristics and ideas into their paintings. The development of Vietnamese contemporary art originated from the young Vietnamese artists in the 1990s. They reflected different opinions from the mainstream of Vietnamese society and government policies through avant-garde and social experimental preference art. Of course, such contemporary art is not recognized by the Vietnamese government. Therefore, the development of Vietnamese contemporary art is participatory social art under the non-academic art education, and the artistic actions of these contemporary artists must also escape the censorship of the Vietnamese government. On the contrary, it is very risky for Chinese-Vietnamese people to engage in contemporary art activities to collide with the Vietnamese government system. From the Chinese-Vietnamese people's perspective, the ethnic identity of the Chinese as the new official Vietnamese identity and gaining acceptance from the Vietnamese government is a difficult process to achieve. For Chinese-Vietnamese people working in contemporary art publicly, with their Chinese background or Chinese identity in evidence, compared with 'local' Vietnamese contemporary artists conducting the same art actions, if they are arrested by the police, the punishment for the two identities is actually completely different. The government's tolerance is not to allow that ethnic Chinese have different opinions. Therefore, it is almost impossible to find contemporary artists who are open about their Chinese ethnic identity in Vietnam. In my collected study resources, I found the only documentation which explains the Chinese-Vietnamese artists' situation in Vietnam. It is about the Vietnamese contemporary artist, Bui Cong Khanh (裴公慶). In an open artist discussion in Taiwan during his residency project, he shared his story of knowing that he is Chinese Vietnamese by accident. For more than two decades before his father accidentally told his family was Chinese, he prided himself on being Vietnamese and

hated the Chinese. From the public interview with artist Bui Cong Khanh, we can clearly know that Vietnamese people are always sensitive to the identity and issues of China and Chinese. Some Chinese-Vietnamese people do not specifically explain and express their Chinese identity to their descendants. They only hope that their descendants will live in Vietnam safely as 'authentic' Vietnamese. For further information please see Appendix 21.

In summary, the Communist Party in Vietnam likes to maintain a monopoly on the visual representation of Vietnamese culture; they do not allow artists out of their control. Therefore, in Vietnam, it is common for contemporary artists to self-censor their artworks in order to survive. In a way it forces artists to push themselves further and requires them to look for other ways to express their artistic languages and viewpoints in different media art platforms. In addition, in the development of Vietnamese contemporary art, due to the complicated history of China and Vietnam in the past and the Vietnamese government's attitude towards the Chinese reasons, almost no Chinese-Vietnamese contemporary artist is willing to disclose their Chinese identity.

### **East Timor:**

**The modern history of East Timor can be found in Appendix 22.**

### **The Outlook for East Timor's Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

Despite East Timor achieving full independence in 2002,<sup>273</sup> the country's economy remains highly controlled by the government, and the development of the domestic infrastructure and of communities has still been limited. The heart of East Timor's art scene is the nonprofit Arte

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<sup>273</sup> The United States recognized Timor-Leste, then known as East Timor, on May 20, 2002, when it achieved formal independence. Before this time, the region had been a Portuguese colony up until 1975 and was under Indonesian sovereignty from 1976 to 1999. 'Timor-Leste - Countries - Office of the Historian', *History.state.gov* [website], <https://history.state.gov/countries/timor-leste>, (accessed 25 May 2021).

Moris,<sup>274</sup> founded in 2003 by Swiss artist couple, Gabriela and Luca Gansser,<sup>275</sup> in the capital of Dili. The founders established the means to showcase the artistic capabilities of the citizens of Timor-Leste. Without such artistic venues, much of the local artistic creations would go unseen, never having been able to portray and record their story. “The youth of Timor-Leste suffer from chronic lack of job opportunities and the poverty rate of the entire population remains high at 42 percent. Timor-Leste still lags behind in basic national software and hardware construction such as education, employment and political participation.”<sup>276</sup> Because of the dissatisfaction with the society and the pressure of survival, the younger generation in East Timor have developed the habit of expressing their dissatisfaction by graffiti on the wall, and then expressing their disappointment with the country and their resistance to political authority. Arte Moris actively provides free art education courses to local young people. Arte Moris is not only engaged in the promotion of art, but also hopes to help the people of East Timor restore the balance of daily life after a long and bloody struggle for East Timor independence. Through the free courses by Arte Moris, they have successfully nurtured many artists, including visual artists, musicians, actors, photographers, filmmakers, and even architects. There are some local art institutions, cultural centres and artists’ associations which offer free art education to Timorese youth, in addition to hosting lectures and staging exhibitions. The Afalyca Community Arts Centre<sup>277</sup> in Baucau operates on a similar model to Arte Moris:

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<sup>274</sup> Arte Moris is a not-for-profit Fine Art School, Cultural Centre and Art Community based in Dili, East Timor. Since 2003 Arte Moris has been using the creative arts as a building block for psychological and social reconstruction of a country devastated by violence. ‘Our Partners’, *ETWA* [website], <https://www.etwa.org.au/about/our-partners/>, (accessed 25 May 2021).

<sup>275</sup> After the country was founded, a project was launched by a Swiss artist called Luca Gansser and his wife, Gabriela Gansser, that resulted in establishing Arte Moris (Living Art) – an art centre that became a haunt for Timor Leste youth. ‘About Us – East Timor Arts Society’, *East Timor Arts Society Art Gallery* [website], <https://easttimorartsociety.com/about-us/>, (accessed 25 May 2021).

<sup>276</sup> The Merit Times, “‘Art of Living’ Nurtures Talents and Helps Share Values – Art Schools Heal Young People in Timor-Leste | Trend Front.”, *The Merit Times*, 2022, <https://www.merit-times.com/NewsPage.aspx?unid=776577>, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).

<sup>277</sup> Since its establishment in 2007, Afalyca has grown into a cooperative and democratic community-focused organisation. Students from Baucau study with visiting teachers and resident artists, and showcase paintings and drawings throughout Timor. ‘Afalyca Art Centre Timor-Leste’, *Box Hill*

Former President of East Timor, revolutionary hero and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jose Ramos-Horta personally believes that the exchange of public art such as murals and graffiti is one of the ways for people to express their opinions and communicate. The government should support and represent East Timor as an inclusive country. After 2006 he actively cooperated with some NGOs, commissioning artists to paint walls all over the country.<sup>278</sup>

He looks forward to when the citizens can peacefully enable and share the individual opinions through murals and graffiti art and establish a unique cultural landscape in East Timor. In fact, such expectations still remain in the mind. The government has always been unfriendly to art. The country did not plan any art and culture policy, and even the government obstructed the operation of NGO art institutions. The artistic and cultural activities and art courses in Timor-Leste are independently organised by the local ordinary people. Those people used to find funding sponsors from overseas art foundations.<sup>279</sup>

Timor-Leste's contemporary artists actively engage in social and political issues in their art practice through murals and street art to encourage more local people to think about national issues. For the youth of Timor-Leste, Arte Moris is not only an art space or an art school, but a platform that can express civic opinions through art. Arte Moris is undoubtedly an important ambassador of art and culture in East Timor, and also builds a bridge for local artists to connect with overseas art organisations. On the other hand, unfortunately, I have not found any contemporary artists with ethnic Chinese background in East Timor. The main reason for this is the sparse Chinese population in East Timor today. However, the Chinese ethnic group has also had a significant influence in East Timor's history.

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*Community Arts Centre* [website], <https://www.bhcac.com.au/about/afalyca-art-centre-partnership/>, (accessed 25 May 2021).

<sup>278</sup> *The Merit Times*, “‘Art of Living’ Nurtures Talents and Helps Share Values Art Schools Heal Young People in Timor-Leste | Trend Front,’ *The Merit Times*, 2022, <https://www.merit-times.com/NewsPage.aspx?unid=776577>, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).

<sup>279</sup> See Appendix 23.

People of Chinese descent who lived in Portuguese Timor and continue to live in present-day Timor-Leste are called 'Cina Timor'. The term 'Cina Timor' does not carry the racist overtones that are associated with the term 'Cina'.<sup>280</sup> Before the Indonesian military occupied East Timor in 1975, many Chinese ethnic lived in Portuguese Timor. Many of these people had Taiwanese (ROC) citizenship. Thus, "the Taiwan (ROC) government established a consulate, primary schools and temples in the capital Dili. They were very important for East Timor's economy."<sup>281</sup> The living situation of Chinese in East Timor was completely changed after the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, nine days after East Timor's independence in 1975:

Many Chinese communities were massacred by Indonesian soldiers. At the same time, the ruling Indonesian authorities cancelled Chinese education for local Chinese. All people in East Timor could only learn Indonesian. In addition, Chinese newspapers and periodicals were also banned. As a result, a large number of Chinese have fled East Timor to Australia, Taiwan and Macau.<sup>282</sup>

Until East Timor officially became independent in 2002, only a small number of Chinese returned to East Timor to settle down, and most Chinese chose not to return to East Timor. Today's Chinese ethnic are only 2% of Timor-Leste's national population.<sup>283</sup> East Timor's Chinese community is the smallest community of ethnic Chinese community in Southeast Asian countries and they mainly stay in the capital Dili. Further information about the ethnic Chinese development in East Timor is available in Appendix 24.

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<sup>280</sup> Douglas Anton Kammen, and Jonathan Chen, *Cina Timor: Baba, Hakka, and Cantonese in the Making of East Timor*, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 2019, p. 165.

<sup>281</sup> Yan Hongwei, 'Post3', *Sites.google.com*, <https://sites.google.com/go.thu.edu.tw/hear/post3>, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).

<sup>282</sup> Jason Fang, 'Australian East Timor Chinese - Witnesses and Participants of East Timor History,' *Www.abc.net.au*, 7 Sept. 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/chinese/2019-09-07/australias-east-timor-chinese-community/11488694>, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).

<sup>283</sup> Institute of International Trade and Economic Cooperation Ministry of Commerce, *Country (Region) Guide for Foreign Investment and Cooperation East Timor 2021*, Institute of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce, 2021, p. 5, <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/dl/gbdqzn/upload/dongdiwen.pdf>, (accessed 5 Sep 2022).

## **Overall: The Regional Development Status of Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia and How Chinese Ethnic People Influenced Art of the Region.**

The pace and strategy of contemporary art development in Southeast Asian countries is different in each case. This section will briefly summarise the similarities and differences between each of the Southeast Asian countries, and further analyse their characteristics and the relationship between Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic communities and Asian Chinese-dominated countries and societies to influence Southeast Asian countries and their artistic contributions. In Southeast Asian countries, except for Singapore, which is dominated by Chinese society, the governments of other Southeast Asian countries were not willing to support the development of contemporary art in their countries. Furthermore, those governments also have not provided a complete national art policy and art assistance to their citizens, and some governments, such as Laos, Myanmar, Brunei, and Vietnam, even still have strict art censorship systems to restrict people's freedom of speech and local artists' public art practice. Artists in Lao and Myanmar have to be subject to a censorship board, which consists of a constantly changing coterie of government officials. However, actually those official censors only have a minimal understanding of art. In the art education of these two countries, only traditional techniques were taught in the schools and at university. All types of art and exhibitions have to be state-run cultural institutions to authority check which is the government requirements. Local artists produced works that met the state's demands; the government's purpose is a glorification of local culture. The two countries' governments did not care about the development of contemporary art so artists considered themselves self-taught as far as contemporary forms were concerned. Despite the government seriously censoring the artists and their works, it was impossible to silence Myanmar and Laos artists entirely. Lao and Myanmar still have a few small art villages and alternative art spaces are running and providing overseas exposure opportunities to local artists.

Brunei is a small but wealthy country ruled by Hassanal Bolkiah, the sultan. Compared with other Southeast Asian countries, Brunei people have more opportunities to receive art education overseas with financial aid from the Brunei government. The Brunei government is willing to pay studying abroad costs, however after those studying abroad young artistic people go back to Brunei, the real Brunei art environment is too small and too conservative for them. Brunei artists can not find local exposure opportunities for their artistic careers. Finally, they gave up being an artist instead of teaching or office jobs. In Brunei, there are no art museums that specialise in modern or contemporary art, and the few galleries that are scattered across the city are not actively trading works of art on the market. Furthermore, rules of the country vary very tightly in Brunei, so it is difficult to find and record information about Brunei's artistic and cultural events, and not even in any of the world-level art institutions and art museums is there any publicly displayed information about Brunei's contemporary art.

The 'DoiMoi' reform and opening up in 1986 led to Vietnam having a huge transformation that brought opportunities for opening up the expansion of the economy in this period. The culture and art of capitalist countries were immediately introduced to Vietnam. This also provides an opportunity for the Vietnam art field to accept the new artistic expression and thought of 'contemporary art'. Throughout the 1990s, along with an influx of foreign art buyers, new art galleries opened in Vietnam. During this period, modern and contemporary art in Vietnam has attracted the attention of domestic and foreign art circles. Numerous transnational art projects and exhibitions have provided a lot of nutrients for the development of contemporary art in Vietnam. Regretfully, even after the reform and opening up in Vietnam, before publicly exhibiting works, it was always necessary to accept the review of the content of the works by the relevant cultural information departments to ensure that the works have no inappropriate political views. Contemporary Vietnamese artists in pursuit of freedom of speech and social

practice rebelled against censorship and conservative artistic expression. Through the contemporary art forms Vietnamese artists chose to move into performance art and social engagement art to circumvent government censorship. As a result, Vietnamese contemporary art is mostly performance and video documentary works that are famous internationally.

Although the majority of governments in Southeast Asia do not provide much support in the development of art, and at the same time, not every country in Southeast Asia has national fine art museums or contemporary art centres that provide artists with exhibition opportunities and public awareness and education of contemporary art, this does not stop the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. After the 1990s, Southeast Asian artists and curators have grown rapidly and gained exposure around the world through international exchange projects and overseas biennials. In particular, Thailand became one of the countries in which contemporary art is the most thriving in Southeast Asia. Thai contemporary art is deeply loved by European and American art circles, and it is the most recognizable and exposed country in Southeast Asia. In this period, Thai artists quickly collected the overseas professional exhibition experience from Documenta and the Venice Biennale. Thai artists have joined the overseas important international art events and their performance in the international art arena has attracted much attention, however, in terms of the development of Thailand's contemporary art, no matter how famous overseas, in Thai domestic contemporary art environments, the Thai government does not have such a strong desire and active action to educate and promote contemporary art. Thailand's official attitude towards art is also shown in its resource allocation, among which there is almost no support and policies for contemporary art, and there is no cultivation or subsidy for artists to engage in contemporary art creation. Therefore, the artistic environment in Thailand cannot support the local Thai artists' careers. Thai contemporary artists have to be recognized from the overseas art world through international activities such as international biennials, foreign art galleries and foreign collectors. The

contemporary art situation in Cambodia and East Timor is highly similar. The two governments not only had no art and culture policy and education plan but also the governments obstructed the operation of art institutions. Furthermore, contemporary art development in both countries are fully dependent on only one local art space in each country.

The heart of East Timor's art scene is the nonprofit Arte Moris. Arte Moris actively provides free art education courses to local young people. The founders established the means to showcase the artistic capabilities of the citizens in Timor-Leste. Sa Sa Art Projects is the only art alternative space in Phnom Penh, the space supports curatorial and educational practices in the visual arts by providing studio, publications, travel and residency support for emerging Cambodian artists. Arte Moris and Sa Sa Art Projects are not only engaged in the promotion of art, but also hopes to help the people of East Timor restore the balance of daily life after a long and bloody struggle for the country's independence and peace. Cambodia and East Timor local artists know deeply that they can find social problems and then seek problem solving through art practice, and the support of social innovation. Cambodia and East Timor have at least the Sa Sa Art Projects and Arte Moris art institutions and spaces, so that overseas art resources and opportunities can be passed to Cambodian and East Timor local artists. It is good to know that, in Southeast Asia, all countries have at least one public art institution and alternative art space that can organise art and cultural activities and collect art communities for local artists. While some art spaces in Southeast Asia still can not individually operate on their own, they rely on the financial assistance from foreign foundations, charities and art councils. However, without such artistic venues, many of the local artistic creations would go unseen, never having been able to portray and record their story.

In terms of the Southeast Asian art market, the modern and contemporary art markets of Indonesia and the Philippines performed the most brilliantly. The development of

contemporary art in the Philippines was deeply influenced by commercial galleries, because the local wealthy people in the Philippines are keen on art collection and investment, which resulted in dramatic growth and strength in the gallery industry. The exposure of Filipino artists on the international stage has increased significantly in the past ten years. Filipino artists are highly active, and their exposure is increased through exhibitions and international exchanges. Therefore, the growth rate of Philippine contemporary art development is the fastest in Southeast Asia. In the Philippines, Manila has a number of government-organised art facilities that deal with contemporary art. However, the support of the Philippine government for young artists is almost nothing. Compared to museum and gallery spaces in the Philippines, independent art spaces or alternative spaces were few and non-commercial arts activities are rare.

After the millennium, the Indonesian contemporary art market was very stable and prosperous, mainly due to the local Chinese businessmen collecting local and overseas artist works. It makes the modern and contemporary art market in Indonesia stable compared to other Southeast Asian art markets. In fact, the development of Indonesian contemporary art in the early period was uneven except for the booming commercial market. The public art and cultural institutions are still very weak in Indonesia. The government is not so interested in contemporary art and Indonesia currently does not have a complete government-made infrastructure, galleries or fairs to support the career development of young local artists. Indonesian contemporary artists, like most Southeast Asian artists, need to rely on their own efforts to establish an overseas social network for exhibition exposure. After 2014, the Biennale in Indonesia developed their own contemporary art context which was different to the Western contemporary art system. Suddenly, it has received high international attention, and many artistic people from all over the world visit Indonesia. Biennale Jogja and Jakarta Biennale became one of the most important biennale in Asia. The rise of contemporary art in Indonesia

and Southeast Asia has brought a new trend and experience to the development of contemporary art worldwide. This new trend of contemporary art in Southeast Asia was seen by global artistic people in Documenta 15, curated by the Indonesian curatorial team, ruangrupa, in 2022.

The development of contemporary art in Singapore and Malaysia is the most complete and stable among Southeast Asian countries, especially in terms of art market mechanism, national art and culture policy and education of art. The development of contemporary art in Malaysia from 1990 to 2010 was mainly due to the influence of the public art institutions and the art market. Moreover, the development trend of visual art in Malaysia is based on the internal operating mechanism and needs of the National Art Gallery. Compared with the resources of official institutions and commercial spaces, the independent circle groups are very tight and have much less exposure. From the perspective of Malaysian contemporary art development, the key players are the system (the government provision and education), the market (commercial gallery and art industry), and the independent circle which are outside of other two forces. These three are in a triangle-like relationship, and they are in a delicate and stable state of mutual checks and balances as well as mutual connections. On the other hand, the situation in Singapore, and almost all the funds for Singapore contemporary art activities, such as national art galleries, international art festivals and biennales, and local community art events, come from the Singapore government's financial support. The purpose of the Singapore government's construction and promotion of contemporary art is to bring a good international cultural impression to Singapore. At the same time, in addition to promoting its own Singapore art, it is also actively packaging the entire Southeast Asian art to the overseas art world. In 2013, 'Art Stage Singapore' specially launched an Indonesian art region, inviting 30 Indonesian contemporary artists to participate. The second Singapore Biennale held in the same year invited more than 80 artists from Southeast Asia to participate. Indeed, "Singapore's promotion

of arts in Southeast Asia is largely attributable to the government's ambition to establish Singapore as an arts hub for the entire Southeast Asian region also showing Singapore art can be the leader of artistic leadership in Southeast Asia."<sup>284</sup>

### **The Influence of the Chinese Ethnic Individual on Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia.**

From the information provided in this chapter, it can be seen that the Southeast Asian Chinese (including those of Chinese ancestry and Chinese living in the Southeast) have a significant and obvious influence in the Southeast Asian region. Here, it is particularly clarified that the ethnic Chinese mentioned in this chapter are analysed in terms of the self-identity of the Chinese nation and cultural ethnic groups in a broad sense. Therefore, regardless of the nationality, blood, and ancestral identity of the research subjects, as long as the subjects self-identify as Chinese, and meet the two conditions of living in Southeast Asia for a long time and engaging in arts and culture related activities and art contributions, they can be included in the study of Chinese identity in this theory. The large-scale influence of the Chinese on Southeast Asia as a whole began with the rise of China after the 1990s and the strong economic influence of Southeast Asian Chinese businessmen in Southeast Asian countries. These two forces have caused the Chinese to have complex political influence in addition to economic influence in Southeast Asia because of their Chinese identity. Some people with Chinese background control Asia's economics and politics; they have an influence that cannot be ignored. The influences in each different perspective include international diplomacy, territorial disputes in Southeast Asia, national construction plans, folk life and consumption habits, and even art and cultural development. My research analyses the influence of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast

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<sup>284</sup> 'Singapore: Advantages and Disadvantages of Being a New Art Centre', *Art.china.cn*, 2011, [http://art.china.cn/huihua/2011-10/07/content\\_4524408.htm](http://art.china.cn/huihua/2011-10/07/content_4524408.htm), (accessed 7 July 2022).

Asia from the background of the history of Southeast Asian countries and the development of national policies. Through the major historical events and national environment to analyse the influence and the extent of the ethnic Chinese on Southeast Asian contemporary art.

In my research on the influence of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, I organised it into three aspects: internal, external, and the intertwining of internal and external. The internal influence is caused by the diaspora of the Chinese society established by the second and third generations of Southeast Asian Chinese in Southeast Asian countries. The Chinese culture in this region has forged deep connections with all parts of Southeast Asia for hundreds of years. The Southeast Asian Chinese descendant groups once became the largest minority in the five Indochina Peninsula countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand) from the 1960s to the 1970s. After the 20th century in modern times, due to factors such as internal and external wars, economic turmoil, and reign of terror on the Indo-China Peninsula, a large number of Chinese people in the Indo-China Peninsula immigrated to other countries or chose to hide their names and assimilate into mainstream ethnic groups. It led to a rapid decline in the Chinese ethnic population and reduced the influence of internal Chinese in the region. The majority of Chinese ethnic groups in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar are engaged in small and medium-sized commercial work, and there are not many Chinese ethnic groups engaged in art jobs.

In Thailand, Chinese-Thai people have a high degree of integration into Thai society in terms of ancestry or culture. Due to the general Thaiization of the Chinese ethnic group, most Chinese have lost their ability to speak Chinese in Thailand. Chinese-Thai people are active in the fields of charity and art in Thailand, and their background is the influence of Chinese-Thai people's economic power. The contemporary art in Thailand, Chinese-Thai people have long been deeply assimilated into the self-identity of Thai people. This makes the Chinese cultural characteristics of ethnic Chinese less obvious, which is also reflected in the performance of

contemporary art in Thailand. Although Chinese-Thai artists have not abandoned their Chinese ethnic identity and the cultural characteristics of the motherland, they do not overemphasise or prove the Chinese cultural characteristics. For Thai-Chinese contemporary artists, Chinese culture and identity are far away from them, which belong to the memories of their parents and grandparents, not their own. However, sometimes they use Chinese cultural elements to miss their family roots.

In Vietnam, because of French colonial reasons, the development of Vietnamese modern art is greatly influenced by the Western art system in terms of artistic technique and creative form. Most of the modern art works in Vietnam are strongly influenced by the characteristics of Western paintings. However, there were a small number of early Vietnamese Chinese artists who used Chinese art and Chinese imagery in their paintings and were recognized by the official art. Art exhibitions in Vietnam must pass strict government censorship mechanisms, however Vietnamese contemporary art development is about participatory social art under the non-academic art education, and the artistic actions of these contemporary artists must also escape the censorship of the Vietnamese government. It is very risky for Chinese-Vietnamese people to engage in contemporary art activities to collide with the Vietnamese government system. The Vietnamese government seriously does not allow the ethnic Chinese (minority) to have different opinions and to challenge the government. Therefore, it is almost impossible to find contemporary artists who are open about their Chinese ethnic identity in Vietnam.

In contrast to the Nanyang Islands countries, including Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore during the period of 1970s to 1980s, the modern countries in Southeast Asia became independent one after another. For the ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, the countries of the Nanyang Islands were relatively stable in terms of national security, politics and economy compared to the countries of the Indo-China Peninsula.

However, most governments of Nanyang Islands countries also choose to implement a strict assimilation policy against the Chinese. They forbade the Chinese to speak Chinese language and take Chinese names, and even forbid Chinese folk customs and celebrations, which caused these descendants of Chinese descent gradually to lose their awareness of the cultural identity of the Chinese. Furthermore, there are also some Chinese in Southeast Asia who choose to intermarry with the locals and naturally to assimilate into the local community. Although these ethnic Chinese have been integrated into the local society, they have always retained some Chinese customs and habits, so Chinese culture has silently influenced the local living habits of Southeast Asian countries in all aspects.

In Indonesia, Indonesian Chinese are proud of their Chinese blood lineage, so they have always had a strong sense of belonging and identity to Chinese culture. In addition, the Indonesian Chinese community has a huge influence on Indonesian business. The development of contemporary art in Indonesia is supported by the richest Chinese circle, and they control the majority of wealth in Indonesia. Those Chinese rich people are not only successful businessmen but also famous world-level collectors. They also organise the private museums, galleries, art foundations. Those Chinese-Indonesian collectors used to invite international art museums and curators from all over the world to hold Indonesia-themed exhibitions overseas through their status as world-class collectors. The Chinese Indonesian circle influence also plays a role in supporting and promoting Indonesian contemporary art. In addition, Indonesian-Chinese artistic people personally prefer contemporary art with Chinese elements more than Chinese in other Asian countries.

The population and proportion of Chinese in Brunei and East Timor are relatively few among Southeast Asian countries. The development of contemporary art in the two countries is still in the unexplored stage. The reason is that the government has a cold attitude towards art and has

not proposed any art and culture policy. In addition, the Brunei government strictly controls people's assembly activities and speech.

In the situation of the Philippines, the national consciousness established by Chinese culture has always kept the Filipino Chinese at a distance from the exchange of local culture in the Philippines. The ethnic Chinese evolution in the Philippines developed into two different Chinese groups according to Chinese Blood and national identity: the Chinese and Filipino mixed race (Mestizos) and Pure-Blood Chinese Groups. They developed the face of Chinese Filipino society in very different ways. In the end of the 19th century, the Chinese and Filipino mixed race (Chinese Mestizos) turned to call themselves 'Filipinos' instead of calling themselves 'Chinese Filipinos.' They integrated into the Philippine (indigenous) nation-state. Until the early twentieth century, the line between Mestizos and indigenous Filipinos was blurred, which was also the period when the Chinese-Filipino mixed ethnic group (Chinese Mestizos) disappeared from Philippine society. The Pure-Blood Chinese communities always keep their motherland's national consciousness established by Chinese culture. They follow the Chinese living routine and in the distance with local Filipino culture. This group until the 1970s and 1980s naturalised into the Philippine nationality. However no matter in the past or the present, they also played a pivotal role in the Philippine economy. Additionally, the development of contemporary art in the Philippines is also reflected in the complex Chinese composition and diverse ethnic identities in the Philippines. For Filipino artists of mixed Chinese descent (Chinese Mestizos), they do not overemphasise their Chinese national identity and cultural characteristics. In my research, no one from the pure-blooded Chinese group is engaged in artist work, however, the pure-blooded Chinese businessmen community have strong economic power in the Philippines and thus strongly influence the Philippine art business market. Besides, these Chinese businessmen collectors prefer to collect the art works with Chinese elements.

In Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese in the early 20th century had always had a strong emotional identity with their Chinese home country (mother country). The reason is the social environment and artistic development in Malaysia have always been presented in the ideology which is based on the identity of 'Malaysia is a country built by Malay culture and Malays as the main body.' Under this social environment, Malaysian Chinese artists tend to express Chinese nostalgia in art, express Chinese identity anxiety, or use metaphors to propose Chinese rights to Malaysian society. In addition, Malaysian-Chinese artists continue to create art in a way that does not conflict with the Malaysian government and mainstream society. The elements in their works can always see the cultural characteristics of being Chinese ethnic, but such characteristics need to be wrapped in the multiculturalism of the mainstream consciousness in Malaysia. Overall, Malaysia's art world has many Chinese-Malaysian artists and the artists record the history and emotional sustenance of Chinese-Malaysians through artistic practice. Malaysia's Chinese contemporary art development has been integrated with the entire Malaysian art circle in a gentle way. Chinese ethnic development in Singapore is very different from other Southeast Asian countries because the national ethnic composition of Singapore is dominated by the Chinese: over three-quarters of the population in Singapore are Chinese. The majority of the ethnic population is Chinese, or the descendants of Chinese, and these hold the real political and economic power in Singapore. Even the majority of Singapore customs and living habits are quite in accordance with the model of living from Chinese traditions. The real power in Singapore has always been dominated by the Chinese community. For them, how to maintain the identity of the ethnic Chinese group, while forging the national consciousness of Singapore's diverse ethnic groups, is more important. Therefore, there is no need for the Chinese in Singapore to strengthen the identity of the Chinese ethnic group, because under the multiculturalism of Singapore, Chinese culture has always been the most powerful and dominant. The numerical advantage of the Chinese has played a crucial role in

Singapore's national planning and policy. This phenomenon is also clearly reflected in the development of contemporary art in Singapore. On the other hand, in the completed contemporary art environment, whether it is government policy or art education and development planning, the Chinese ethnic in Singapore also have absolute influence and discourse power to represent Singapore's cultural and artistic characteristics.

In summary, during 1990-2020, the ethnic Chinese influence on contemporary art in the Indochina Peninsula countries was generally lower than that in the Nanyang Islands countries. The reason for the overall environment was that the political situation, national economy and political stability of the Indochina Peninsula were significantly lower than those of Nanyang Islands countries. In addition, because of this past history and national policy factors, the total number of Chinese population and population ratio in the Indochina Peninsula countries are much lower than in Nanyang Islands countries. Therefore, one can almost find no Chinese ethnic artists in Indochina Peninsula countries.

In analysing the influence of external Chinese in Southeast Asia, we have to mention the rise of China after 1990 and China's 'The Belt and Road Initiative (B&R)' policy after 2010, as well as Taiwan's 'Southern Policy in 1990'<sup>285</sup> and 'New Southern Policy' in 2010.<sup>286</sup> These are major transnational foreign policies carried out by Asian Chinese societies and countries for the purpose of international geopolitics strategy. China (Mainland, POC) and Taiwan (ROC) have

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<sup>285</sup> The political purpose of Taiwan's southward policy is to reduce its dependence on the Chinese market so as not to endanger national security. Hwang Dong-Yang, 'Retrospect and Prospect of the Southward Policy Achievement', *Prospect & Exploration*, vol. 6, no. 12, 2008, p. 43, [https://www.mjib.gov.tw/FileUploads/eBooks/d634d0ef22734ccc8423f8358ffe7cb7/Section\\_file/7be6ade527e8422aa5e13cb5b958324d.pdf](https://www.mjib.gov.tw/FileUploads/eBooks/d634d0ef22734ccc8423f8358ffe7cb7/Section_file/7be6ade527e8422aa5e13cb5b958324d.pdf), (accessed 9 Sep 2022).

<sup>286</sup> In its New Southbound Policy initiative, Taiwan intends to engage in a wide range of negotiations and dialogue with 18 countries. The plan prescribes specific measures for four focal areas: economic and trade collaboration, talent exchange, resource sharing and regional connectivity. Department of Information Services, Executive Yuan, 'New Southbound Policy', *Executive Yuan*, 2019, <https://english.ey.gov.tw/News3/9E5540D592A5FECDD2ec7ef98-ec74-47af-85f2-9624486adf49>, (accessed 9 Sep 2022).

initiated the exchanges and construction of contemporary Chinese countries and societies with Southeast Asian countries with a large amount of funds. These external Chinese forces are impacting on the entire Southeast Asian region, and the countries on the Indochina Peninsula have far-reaching influence. Among them, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar governments used to rely on foreign aid for their national economies, and China's land connected to Indo-China Peninsula countries. Those reasons make the three countries have close links with and dependencies on China in politics and economics. Under the policy of 'The Belt and Road Initiative', a large number of Chinese private and national funds have come from China to Southeast Asia in that the countries that have signed cooperation agreements. This has completely changed the countries' local construction and investment environment in Southeast Asia, especially the real estate market, construction industry and national construction. At the same time, cultural exchanges between civil societies and countries have also increased significantly.

In Cambodian contemporary art development, the external Chinese provide many opportunities for international art exhibition and exchange projects for Cambodian artists. Cambodian contemporary artists did not open their Chinese identity in art, but some of their works contained very strong Chinese cultural characteristics. I think those Cambodian artists who have a Chinese background have already assimilated with native Cambodian society. In addition, China's influence on Cambodia has continued to increase after 2010, so there are many Cambodian artists' works that indicate that China brings a sense of crisis to Cambodia's society. A similar situation also occurs in Laos and Myanmar, because Chinese have a lot of investment and construction in their countries. This makes most of the people in Laos and Myanmar hold a sense of crisis. At the same time, they are afraid that China's power will be too powerful and shake the countries. Some local contemporary artists reflect their concerns to present the disequilibrium relation of the influence of China and Chinese businessmen.

Although officials in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar all have friendly relations with Chinese officials, people generally have mixed feelings of gratitude and fear toward China. The purpose of the Chinese government is to move trillions of dollars of Chinese infrastructure spending into Southeast Asia—knitting Southeast Asia economically and physically with China:

At the same time, the Beijing government continues to search for opportunities to build defence and security ties with Southeast Asian governments. As a consequence, the countries of Southeast Asia have been the focus of Chinese efforts to build economic, diplomatic, and security ties displacing those that already exist with the US influence.<sup>287</sup>

On the whole, the cross-border exchanges led by the political means of external Chinese, such as the Chinese government and Taiwanese government, no matter what their real purpose, undeniably opened the development of Asian cross-border contemporary art indirectly. This has prompted Southeast Asian contemporary art in diversity of perspectives and also provided the Southeast Asian artistic people to participate in a large number of overseas contemporary art activities. However, it is important to know that under these opportunities are China's (Mainland, POC), Hong Kong's, Macau's and Taiwan's (ROC)'s financial sponsorship in order to expand their expansion of diplomacy and business.

The third aspect is the interlaced influence developed under internal and external influence. This is the most complex of all influences. It covers the special Chinese status based on the interweaving of Chinese culture and ethnicity in Southeast Asian internal Chinese and external Chinese societies. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, China began to conduct diplomatic exchanges with Southeast Asian countries in the 1990s. In 2010, it actively carried out a lot of construction and investment in Southeast Asia, which resulted in China's influence on Southeast Asia that cannot be ignored. In fact, before the rise of China:

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<sup>287</sup> Marvin C. Ott, 'Myanmar in China's Embrace - Foreign Policy Research Institute', *Www.fpri.org*, 2020, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/01/myanmar-in-chinas-embrace/>, (accessed 5 Sep 2022).

In the late 1970s, China began to implement the policy of reform and opening up and successfully attracted Southeast Asian Chinese businessmen and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan capital funds to enter the Chinese mainland. This constitutes an important economic capital for mainland China to actually utilise the foreign capital from overseas Chinese.<sup>288</sup>

This early economic investment by the overseas Chinese businessmen (mainly from Southeast Asia, Taiwan and Hong Kong) in China fulfilled an important role in China's economic construction and even the entire Asia-Pacific economy in the future. Southeast Asian Chinese businessmen came from early Chinese immigrants (before World War II) and new immigrants (after World War II). They had a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and national conditions than other countries, also they had more emotional motivations to provide a large amount of investment funds to China in terms of the friendship between the motherland culture and the Chinese ethnic. After the rise of China, the Chinese conversely provided mutual construction and economic cooperation to Southeast Asian countries. During this process, Southeast Asian Chinese enterprises took the lead in carrying out investment plans and also played the role of brokers between Chinese and Southeast Asian governments:

According to the '2009 World Chinese Business Development Report' published by *China News*, Chinese businessmen in Southeast Asian countries have strong economic strength. Among the companies listed on the stock exchanges in Southeast Asia, Chinese business listed companies account for about 70%.<sup>289</sup>

Chinese businessmen in Southeast Asia have established a cooperation model exclusively for Chinese in the business cooperation between Southeast Asia and China. This way of cooperation cannot be replaced by other nations except the Chinese nation.

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<sup>288</sup> 'SWOT Analysis of Southeast Asian Chinese Business Enterprises in China,' *Www.jyjkj.com*, 2012, <http://www.jyjkj.com/viewnews202105050505.asp?id=13936>, (accessed 7 Sep 2022).

<sup>289</sup> '2009 World Chinese Business Development Report (Full Text) - Chinanews.com,' *Www.chinanews.com.cn*, 2010, <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/zgqj/news/2010/05-20/2293574.shtml>, (accessed 7 Sep 2022).

The influence of the Chinese in Southeast Asia has brought great contributions, but at the same time, it has also brought deep and unknowable potential crises to the Southeast Asians. The main body of the research is still focused on the development of contemporary art, so it is not the place here to go into details about the mutually beneficial relationship between Southeast Asian Chinese businessmen and China, and this section did not consider the points of advantage and disadvantage. The Chinese also brought an interlaced influence in the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. In art marketing, Chinese collectors (whether from Southeast Asia or mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan) have great influence in the Southeast Asian art market and the entire world of contemporary art collections. In 2019, the internationally renowned art magazine *ArtNews* announced the list of 2019 Top 200 Global Collectors.<sup>290</sup> There are 34 collectors from Asia: 17% of the proportion of the world. Among them, there are 22 collectors with an ethnic Chinese background. The Chinese collectors have a good artistic social circle around the world. In addition to their influence in the art market, they are often invited to serve as collection consultants and exhibition nominees in the world-level art museums. Among them, some Chinese collectors and their companies have established art galleries, private art museums, art foundations and art scholarships in Southeast Asia. They not only provide opportunities for art development and also support art education in Southeast Asia. These Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese are engaged in the art industry no matter what their final identity, and they undoubtedly provide positive nutrients for the development of Southeast Asian contemporary art.

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<sup>290</sup> Rosalie. Cabison, 'Collecting for the Future', *ARTnews.com*, 2021, <https://www.artnews.com/art-collectors/top-200-collectors/top-200-collectors/>, (accessed 9 Sep 2022).

## **Chapter 1-1. Social and Cultural Context & Historical Background in Contemporary Asian Society**

- **Definition of Asia from diverse perspectives.**
- **The real condition in Southeast Asia through local Asia research.**
- **Analysing the keywords which relate to contemporary artistic cases.**

Further information is also available in Appendix 1.

### **Keyword Fields in Asia (亞洲現場關鍵詞)**

This chapter will provide the keyword fields which reflect in recent decades the difficulties and challenges for developing contemporary Asia. Using the form of Keywords to enable discussion in this chapter, one must also mention Raymond Williams's publication, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (R. Williams, 1976).<sup>291</sup> He wrote the publication because he did not agree with the style of the great narratives of literary studies in the British 1950s. He used the local mass public life as the research source to find his own position on cultural research. For further information on Williams's Keywords, and for additional discussion on this topic, please see Appendix 2. I believe that Williams's Keywords not only lets readers recognise and understand British modern culture and society, but also to participate in contemporary culture and society.

In addition, in today's millennium society, the usage habits and application of keywords have been greatly affected by internet technological innovations. Modern people rely on online

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<sup>291</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, USA, Oxford University Press, 2014.

search engines for anything they do not understand and identify unknown keys. People search the online databases to find a satisfactory understanding. When going back to the more primitive meaning of keywords, that word has its roots originally from keys or passwords. In Williams's approach,<sup>292</sup> he emphasised that vocabulary can be the importance of the keyword itself; it can be used as a projection of ideas, a tool of thought, and a medium of communication in society.<sup>293</sup> It itself is independent and important.

The chapter that discusses these keywords may not be directly related to contemporary Asian society at first glance, but the words can provide assistance to the public to understand the sudden changes or current obstacles in contemporary Asian society. The keywords also reflect contemporary cultural ideas and the rapid presentation of ideas.

In terms of the traditional keywords used, people tend to use them directly and to copy them. This is much like traditional broadcasting, which is a one-to-many model. On the other hand, the new type of keyword communication, like the database which is more special and open, is no longer just one-to-many; it can also be one-to-a few, one-to-one, or even one-to-nothing. It is just like today's social media, when people publish or upload an article, comment or even a picture or code on media platforms via the internet. Maybe no one reads it, some people click in and leave after reading it silently, or the internet instantly becomes popular and becomes a hot topic. At this time, the focus of the keyword is more not regeneration, but the use of the situation and the reaction it encounters in the actual situation. This reaction is dependent on the cognitive ability of the user and the reader's own background. In this way, the characteristics of using keywords in contemporary society are similar to the trend of development of

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<sup>292</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1976.

<sup>293</sup> Shumei. Shi et al., 'Taiwan and Theory: A Forum on the Keywords Taiwan Project and the Local Vocabulary of Theory', in Shumei. Shi et al (eds.), *In Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019, p. 386.

contemporary art.

Returning to the beginning of research, I believe that theoretical thinking and application should start from one's background when living and caring for the self; establishing connections from the place where we come from and stay and communicating in a rapidly changing reality. Now, due to the anguishes of the past, Asia still needs to continue the work of cultural mourning and cultural stitching but through the form of contemporary art practice. To mourn here is not to bury, but to take a serious look at the cultural practices and value systems that have been degraded and cancelled in the modernisation plan, and to conduct a comprehensive reevaluation from the standpoint of local life. Only in this way can it be possible to find a way forward in the torn cultural scars.<sup>294</sup>

Each keyword is divided into three parts; the first one is background summary: the basic definition of this concept and its influence in Asian society. Secondary, is the detailed description: other related knowledge about this concept. The last part is progress: other usages of this concept and extensive discussion of current social phenomena and explaining them with indicative or social issues and artistic cases. This part will provide an artistic case in each keyword.

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<sup>294</sup> Shumei. Shi, *Against Diaspora: Discourses on Sinophone Studies*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2017, p .48.

**Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: *The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia*  
(CDOSEA)**

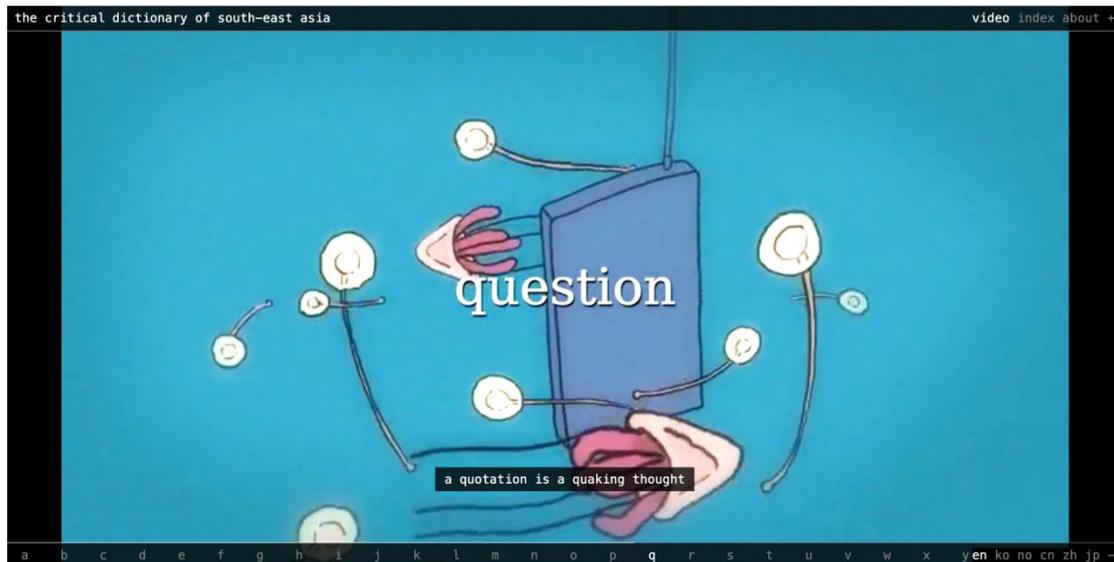


Figure 15. Ho Tzu Nyen, *The Critical Dictionary of South-East Asia* [online video], 2017, Cdosea.org, accessed 28 December 2021, <https://cdosea.org/#video/q>.

*The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia (CDOSEA)* was started from 2012 to the present (2021-) by Singaporean artist, Ho Tzu Nyen. This work revolves around a proposition: What pieces together the concept of Southeast Asia? *CDOSEA* is Ho's long-term project, which focuses on Southeast Asia's colonial histories and national identities. In an attempt to overcome national borders and articulate the possibility of another collective identity for the region, he collects metaphors, sounds, biographies and narratives left out of the official history books. As a result, an extensive archive of thousands of hours of audio-visual material has emerged which Ho presents online as a virtual, critical dictionary. *CDOSEA* proposes 26 terms — one for each letter of the Latin alphabet. Each term is a concept, a motif, or a biography, and together they question, problematise, and address the complexity in defining Southeast Asia.<sup>295</sup> *CDOSEA*

<sup>295</sup> Ho Tzu Nyen, 'Ho Tzu Nyen: *The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia* Volume 10: N for Nameless', *Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art* [website],

was composed of multiple distorted and elusive descriptions of characters, concepts, and types. The works and exhibitions explore how narrative constructs identity and ideas, and how composite media transcends single media, but at the same time it is always limited by its essence. The concept of a critical dictionary is akin to an organism, it is part of an ongoing project that grows, generates and provides critical insight into the pluralistic definitions of the territories under this nomenclature. Born out of recognition for how sweeping the term ‘Southeast Asia’ is, it considers what makes up an area not unified by language, religion or political power. In the critical dictionary selected vocabularies were a part of an endless series of possible Southeast Asia, which collectively form a torn yet interconnected terminological territorial tapestry. Described as “a platform facilitating ongoing research, a matrix for generating future projects and an oracular montage machine,”<sup>296</sup> *CDOSEA* is part of a database of texts, music, online images, that according to an algorithm selects and weaves different sounds and images to form an “Abécédaire”<sup>297</sup> For further information on Ho Tzu Nyen’s work, please see Appendix 3.

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<https://cfcca.org.uk/exhibition/ho-tzu-nyen-the-critical-dictionary-of-southeast-asia-volume-10-n-for-n-ameless/>, (accessed 28 December 2021).

<sup>296</sup> *The Critical Dictionary of South-East Asia*, *Cdosea.org* [website], <https://cdosea.org/#video/q>, (accessed 28 December 2021).

<sup>297</sup> Edouard Malingue Gallery, *Edouardmalingue.com* [website], <https://edouardmalingue.com/>, (accessed 28 December 2021).



Figure 16. Matthew Teo, *Ho Tzu Nyen*, 2021. accessed 28 December, 2021, <https://artreview.com/artist/ho-tzu-nyen/?year=2019>.

## Post-War (後戰爭)

Compared with war, the simplest understanding of post-war should generally be after the war in terms of time. But what kind of war is this war? Does post-war have a clear starting point in time? Examining the term ‘war’ as used today, it roughly starts with 1945 after the end of the ‘World War II’ (or Pacific War/Greater East Asian War).<sup>298</sup> After the Second World War, various regions in Asia began to gradually form a modern state.<sup>299</sup>

The specific time of ‘Post-war’ will be slightly different in terms of the history and political development of Asian countries. For more than a century, people in various regions of Asia have experienced different positions and ideologies to collide with each other and become enemies. It makes the meaning of ‘post-war’ or ‘War After’ become ambiguous. Therefore, in this keyword section, ‘Post-war’ focuses on the end of the East-West Cold War in 1991. The

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<sup>298</sup> Yijun Yang, ‘The History and Contemporary, Continuation and Eternity of “War”——Contemporary Thoughts on Culture and Literature in the Post-War Period’, *The Study of Chinese Language and Literature*, vol. 1, no. 4, 2010, p. 18.

<sup>299</sup> Please refer to Appendix 4.

Soviet Union collapse event influenced the new stable situation for many southeast Asian countries. Southeast Asia was one of the dangerous regions with the longest duration in the post-war world, a battlefield of hot wars, a frontier of the Cold War, and one of the important goals of the US-Soviet global hegemony. The investigation of the various political, social, cultural and literary phenomena discussed here, not only concerned the reality of situations after the war, but also the important thing is that this is the starting point of awareness of the problem. At the same time, the investigation is considering the complex dynamic development generated by the entanglement of various war experiences (or relics) during the war, as well as the historical significance it brings to Asia and the world and its reference to the future.

In the development of the post-war period, the first thing that must be dealt with is the legacy of the war, which is very important for the reconstruction of post-war. ‘Legacy of War and War Heritage’ refers to the results of war and the political, economic, social and cultural activities derived from war. The tangible part can be about post-war territorial borders, sovereignty, compensation, judgement, etc., and the intangible part is about the basics in culture and life, and the various patterns of life and forms of life derived from the war. It is bound by traumatic experience, which can be national identity, ideology, self-national experience, and the discipline of the state and society. Taiwan Academia Sinica Institute of Sociology researcher, Horng-Luen Wang,<sup>300</sup> pointed that the cognitive framework shaped by the war will dominate the future national identity. The current national issues in Asia have led to many contradictions in modern international politics. It is related to a series of wars and war legacy in modern history. For further analysis, please see Appendix 5.

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<sup>300</sup> Wang Horng-Luen is a Taiwan Research Fellow/Professor. Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, [www.ios.sinica.edu.tw](http://www.ios.sinica.edu.tw) [website], <https://www.ios.sinica.edu.tw/fellowE/horngluenwan>, (accessed 4 July 2021).

Different war experiences and legacy are intricate and complex forms entangled and intertwined. It is inevitable that they conflict with each other because of complex identity issues. With the change of regimes and times, the public's experience and memory of wars have shifted and changed over time and regimes. In historical records and reviews of wars, it is not only the memory and narrative of wars that are relative, but also personal experience and family relations. Because of personal different positions, faith, experiences, and the atmosphere of the times, when the person had a different view, or was against the majority of people or people with vested interests, it has to transform into the perspective of narrating or documenting wars in a private or obscure manner. Perhaps the most important thing about the memory and narrative of the war is not how the war is remembered and expressed, but who is remembering it? Who is narrating? In what position and attitude is it remembered and narrated? Or is it necessary to return to the dialectics of human nature to clarify it?

From the post-war period to the present, the nationalism of Asian countries has always had strong negative emotions. Most of these emotions came from the sufferings and traumatic memories of wars and war legacy, which became the source of mutual resentment and formed 'multi-layered resentment'. Multi-layered resentment<sup>301</sup> refers to a state that has both positive and negative evaluations, emotional with love and hate, it cannot be rationally organised. It is just like the state of stacking and squeezing layers of plates in this complicated state, even though the situation in Asia was relatively stable in the late 1990s. However, the nationalist atmosphere of various countries is still on the rise. There are incompatible disputes and wars that define the memory and memory of wars, and citizens' cognition and understanding of wars which are under the control of governments with different ideologies and positions. At the same

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<sup>301</sup> Hong-Luen. Wang, 'From On War to the New History Textbook: Ressentiment and Its Institutional Constitutions in Contemporary Japanese Nationalism', *Taiwanese Journal of Sociology*, vol. 19, 2010, p. 147.

time, under the deliberate operation of the rulers, the people are educated to be hostile to neighbouring countries with different political positions or unclear distribution of national boundaries and interests. Under such a social environment, the emotional entanglement of complex contradictions across ethnic groups and generations has been caused. Therefore, the current post-war research has shifted from post-war history to justice, post-war history writing, and the understanding of wars has turned to in-depth exploration of the possibility of historical dialogue and reconciliation.

**Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: A Cambodian Artist, Svay, Thought From His Art Practice to Examine the Facet of War.**



Figure 17. Svay Sareth, *The Vessantara Jataka*, 2015, accessed 2 Jan 2022, <https://prabook.com/web/svay.sareth/3756397#works>.

Svay Sareth was born in 1972 in Battambang, Cambodia, during a period of political turmoil and violence that would last until he was 18 years old.<sup>302</sup> Svay Sareth draws from personal memories of war and resistance in his practice. At once cathartic and critical, his works respond to present-day concerns in his home country while maintaining the long view of history. In his artwork which describes his life as a refugee as a void nationality... a time and place you imagine escaping from.<sup>303</sup> Drawing and painting became a daily activity for Svay; a process of bearing witness to the psychological and physical violence that was an everyday experience, as well to symbolically escape and dream of change.

Svay Sareth's works in sculpture, installation and durational performance are made using materials and processes intentionally associated with war – metal, uniforms, camouflage, and actions requiring great endurance. While his critical and cathartic practice is rooted in an autobiography of war and resistance, he refuses both historical particularity and voyeurism on violence. Rather, his works traverse both present and historical moments, drawing on processes of survival and adventure, and ideas of power and futility.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> For Sareth's artistic background, please see Appendix 6.

<sup>303</sup> June Yap, 'Interview with SB2013 Artist Svay Sareth', *Tumblr*, 2013, <https://singaporebiennale2013-blog.tumblr.com/post/55220587919/interview-with-sb2013-artist-svay-sareth>, (accessed 12 May 2023).

<sup>304</sup> The artist's artistic development and CV can be found in Appendix 7.



Figure 18. Svay Sareth, *Toy (Churning of the Sea of Milk)*, 2013, National Museum of Singapore, accessed 2 Jan. 2022,

<https://www.facebook.com/National.Museum.of.Singapore/photos/svay-sareths-toy-churning-of-the-sea-of-milk-uses-camouflage-patterned-stuffed-t/595867833807266/>.

## Globalisation and Westernisation: Language and Education (全球化與西化)

Globalisation is a compression of the world driven by information and communication technology and capitalism. It is also a compression, connection and interdependence of time, space and social relations. This compression has led to the phenomenon of politics, economy, culture, etc., gradually showing a trend of transnational homogeneity, and also showing a conscious attitude to regard the world as one. This keyword text first proposes a conceptual analysis of globalisation, and further details the connotations and characteristics of various aspects of globalisation, including economic globalisation, political globalisation, and cultural globalisation, as well as changes in the lifestyle of information and communication technology under the power of globalisation. Finally, it discusses the current plight of globalisation to Asian academic world. Political scholar, Held's,<sup>305</sup>:

View on the source of globalisation points out that it is not single or one-way, but that the shaping of globalisation comes from a variety of factors: 1. The emergence of the global economy; 2. The expansion of cross-border links between economic units and the construction of new forms of collective decision-making; 3. The development of

<sup>305</sup> David Jonathan Andrew Held (born 27 August 1951) was a British political scientist. 'Microsoft Academic', *Academic.microsoft.com*[website], [https://academic.microsoft.com/author/2275744699/publication/search?q=David%20Held&qe=Composite\(AA.AuId%253D2275744699\)&f=&orderBy=0&paperId=1984759356](https://academic.microsoft.com/author/2275744699/publication/search?q=David%20Held&qe=Composite(AA.AuId%253D2275744699)&f=&orderBy=0&paperId=1984759356), (accessed 4 July 2021).

intergovernmental and quasi-transnational institutions; 4. The development of transnational communications; 5. The creation of new regions and military order.<sup>306</sup>

Regarding the occurrence of globalisation and the driving force of globalisation, scholars' divergent views can be attributed to several common main reasons: the global expansion of capitalism with a single economic power, and the technological revolution, especially information and communication technology, transference of the political ideology and challenge of international status. Therefore, some scholars argue that globalisation is the product of the comprehensive dynamics of the times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The revolution of information and communication technology has accelerated the process of globalisation. The basic driving force of today's global social changes is information technology empowered by capital controllers. For further analysis of globalisation in telecommunications systems, please see Appendix 8.

Overall, globalisation is often equated with Americanization and Westernisation, because the United States and other Western countries have the most powerful promotion of globalisation. Westernisation refers to the modern generation's absorption of Western culture. American and European culture, no matter if governments or business companies, are important, in direct opposition to the unimportance of the local mother culture:

Such as American social media, shopping culture and online resources the cornerstones of Asia (even not only in Asia) is becoming Asian people's mother culture. Stuart Hall's penetrating statement that "the global is the self-representation of the dominant particular" aptly captures the extreme unevenness governing the production and circulation of cultures across the globe.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> R.A. Morrow and C.A. Torres, *The State, Globalisation, and Educational Policy*, New York, Routledge, p. 27.

<sup>307</sup> David. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell Press, 1989, p. 256.

Whether it is economic, political or cultural globalisation, it all involves language communication issues. Although there is information and communication technology to deliver information quickly and immediately, and innovations in transportation technology have made the circulation of goods more rapid, no matter what, when facing the understanding, interpretation and even communication of information, it is necessary to use a common language. Nowadays it is still an inevitable problem and challenge in the globalisation world.

In various international communication occasions or communication of information discussion, the most common language indubitably is English, which has become a global language.<sup>308</sup>

In Southeast Asia, there are two countries using English as their legal official language, and these are Singapore and the Philippines. Since Singapore's independence in 1965, the Singaporean government immediately introduced a series of policies related to the founding of the country, one of which was the bilingual policy.<sup>309</sup> The bilingual policy emphasises the promotion of English and mother tongue education in public schools. Singapore used to be a British colony, so English has naturally become the common language of communication among all races in this multi-racial society. Some people may not understand why the Singaporean government after independence chose English as one of its official languages. In fact, the reason is very simple. In a multi-racial society, if the various races are not linguistically connected, how can the government unite the people? Therefore, it is necessary to promote a common language among all ethnic groups in Singapore. Compared with the languages of Chinese dialect, Tamil and Malay, used by the four major ethnic groups in Singapore, English is not racially biased in Singapore, so it is not political, and does not partially strengthen the language privileges of a certain race, so it will not cause disputes between various races. As a

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<sup>308</sup> For further information, please refer to Appendix 9.

<sup>309</sup> Cheryl Sim, 'Bilingual Policy | Infopedia' *Eresources.nlb.gov.sg*, 2016, [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_2016-09-01\\_093402.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2016-09-01_093402.html), (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

consequence, English has become the common official language of Singaporeans because of its neutrality and racial politics.

For further information, please refer to Appendix 10.

In recent years, Asian governments have begun to pay attention to localised education and local mother tongue awareness, while speeding up the formulation of a suitable constitution, seeking positioning and advantages under the international division of labour. The globalisation information network has opened up the international vision of the people of Southeast Asian countries. In the face of the accelerated trend of globalisation, the national identity within each country will be an unknown test.

In Asian countries, under the environment of globalisation and westernisation, the Asian academic and cultural research world continues to introduce new academic theories and cultural content from the West. Western cultural ideological trends are transplanted by young researchers studying abroad or cultural people living abroad to bring a variety of discourses on science and technology, politics, culture, and art to Asia. At the same time, the Western lifestyle, fashion trends and aesthetic awareness has also changed the daily life of the Asian public.

“From a sharper, negative perspective, some people feel that partially transplanting the West or directly imitating the development result of the West, and arbitrarily imitating without effectively integrating or criticising theories or discourses suitable for the mother country's development context, is actually not substantive to their own country's long-term developmental help.”<sup>310</sup> At the same time, ‘such ‘imitation’ makes scholars feel guilty and anxious. The major anxiety and secret worry facing the Asian academic world is that they

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<sup>310</sup> Shumei Shi *et al.*, ‘Molecular Translation’, in Dongsheng Chen (ed.), *In Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019, p. 18-19.

cannot establish an independent and systematic regional discussion in their own academics. The “theoretical anxiety”<sup>311</sup> Often mentioned in seminars in the Asian academic world also comes from this. In the Southeast Asian academic world at the margins of the world's knowledge system, theoretical anxiety is inevitable. Therefore, the awareness of this issue has become an important issue in Asia, requiring theoretical analysis and discourse, and thus becoming a theoretical concept by itself. Imitation under globalisation can assimilate others, or even be assimilated by others. In the academic research and culture in Asia, Asians imitate Western theories and cultures that have become a reality. In the territory of the new colonial distribution of global knowledge, Asian scholars can be said to be introducers, imitators and theoretical practice. The most peculiar thing about this phenomenon is that most of the knowledge produced by imitating the West in Asia seems to exist independently or in parallel with the West. Although the target of the imitation is the West, it seems that there is no direct contact or intersecting with the West.<sup>312</sup> There are different analyses on this topic available in Appendix 11.

### **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Phenomenon of The Explosion of Biennale Explosion In Asia (雙年展在亞洲大爆發的現象)**

Among the global biennale mechanisms, the ‘Venice Biennial’ (La Biennale di Venezia) and ‘Documenta’ (Kassel Documenta) have a special temporal and spatial background and high popularity. Most of the biennales are mainly produced by the local or national governments trying to promote the postmodern art and contemporary art development of the relative country and the exhibition mechanism derived from the self-confessed gap with the international

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<sup>311</sup> Shumei Shi *et al.*, ‘Molecular Translation’, in Dongsheng Chen (ed.), *In Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019, p. 21.

<sup>312</sup> Shumei Shi *et al.*, *Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019, p. 167.

mainstream art development. The São Paulo Art Biennial, held in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1957, was an important milestone in international art exchange for developing countries: in the rich countries of emerging economies, or for both developed and developing countries the second-tier and third-tier cities, through the mode of holding short-term international exhibitions, try to make countries and cities visible in the international art circle and create a right to speak (discourse power). Since the establishment of the ‘São Paulo Biennale’, new model biennials around the world have exploded rapidly.<sup>313</sup>

After the end of the Cold War, the biennale was widely held around the world, which reflected the birth of ‘global art’ and the projection of the cultural competition headed by the state apparatus. Compared with the long-term investment and operation of transnational art and cultural institutions or world-class art museums, the Biennale is actually a game (gambling) where the disadvantaged areas of international art development try to gain popularity and reputation with small to large. In addition, during the Biennale times, the host countries and cities concentrated on a large number of marketing and exposure in a short period of time, and at the same time, they also actively invited important international art people.<sup>314</sup>

By attending forums and opening events, the mainstream art people from Europe and the United States were treated with courtesy and respect. At the same time, the art circles of the host countries (artists, curators, art galleries, galleries, etc.) have established international links with mutual benefit for everyone:

The globalised thinking developed in the 1990s, at the same time, the third world and the independent countries after World War II began to join the dialogue of the global art world one after another. However, the open view of ‘multiculturalism’ in non-Western countries is dominated by the intellectuals of the country who have received Western higher education backgrounds. Therefore, under such circumstances, it has been constantly questioned whether the mainstream views and educational thinking of the West are dominating the distribution of global culture, but otherwise on the stage of world art, Asian perspectives and characteristics are still ‘exotic’ expectations hidden in

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<sup>313</sup> For further information, please refer to Appendix 12.

<sup>314</sup> Nobuo Takamori, ‘After 20 Years, Does Taiwan Still Need a ‘Biennale’ System?’, *ARTouch.com*, 2019, <https://artouch.com/views/content-11786.html>, (accessed 6 February 2022).

Western stereotypes to imagine the artistic attributes and functions of regional cultures.<sup>315</sup>

Southeast Asian contemporary art developing under globalisation is presented in a way that caters to or responds to the mainstream Western world art stage. As a result, the presentation of contemporary art in Southeast Asia is very easy to fall into the most recognizable method, which must connect the locality, historical memory, political and social vision, and other artistic symbols produced under the issue of local consciousness and cultural identity. Such manipulations make it easier to be invited to the globalised international art scene. It is perhaps this mode of reorganisation that is needed in order to underscore the relevance of contemporary Southeast Asian art in a world still enamoured of centres and peripheries. However, Asian biennales began to undergo dramatic changes after the millennium, especially in Southeast Asian countries, such as the Singapore Biennale in 2006, which immediately showed a positive and aggressive attitude in the world and the Asian biennale stage. In addition to the exhibition, a large number of Southeast Asian curators, art critics and scholars were invited to participate in the forum to establish links with the entire Southeast Asian region and the European and American art circles. Local curators in Singapore and curators from various regions in Southeast Asia met face-to-face and held workshop discussions. Singapore took advantage of the situation to gain a radiant position to control the development of art in Southeast Asia. After the 2010s, it established its status as a regional discourse power in Southeast Asia. For further analysis, please see the information in Appendix 13.

### **Hybridization and Ambivalence (混味與雜揉)**

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<sup>315</sup> Liang Li-ling, 'Whose Contemporary Art?--From Exoticism to Local Signs,' *Journal of Taiwan Museum of Art*, vol. 72, 2008, p.20.

Following the social impact of the above-mentioned keywords ‘globalisation’ and ‘westernisation’ on Southeast Asia, the academic research development of Asian countries is facing the phenomenon of ‘theoretical anxiety’. A large part of this phenomenon is mixed with the main factors and states of hybridisation and ambivalence. This section introduces and discusses this keyword. In the new cultural trend of thought and enlightenment from Europe and the United States, through different generations of Asian students and overseas researchers, they import the recent concerns and theories of Europe and the United States, including various research aspects such as current technology, academic research, international policy and trends, modern art development, business trends, etc. to each Asian country.

From a relatively sharp critique, developing regions and countries in Asia still often have production areas (factories) that produce imitations, replicas, and even pirated copies. In a very short period of time, a large number of transplants and misappropriations have been used, and without having experienced the precipitation of time and questioned and criticised the essence of things, it is merely a rude and extensive copying and using the Western technologies and resources. Without experiencing the substantive and rational integration on the ground (the local context) is a very dangerous thing or even a criminal act. In addition, there are also such academic creation and research issues in Asian intellectual circles. Such imitations and reproductions are the foundation of no local development context. This appears to be vague, and it also leads to the inability of the introduced scholars and the executive units to form a collective anxiety state under the specific mastery of knowledge theory. The problem consciousness of ‘theoretical anxiety’ often mentioned by the Asian academic circles mainly comes from this.<sup>316</sup> In fact, behind ‘theoretical anxiety’ stands for the keywords of

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<sup>316</sup> For places like Southeast Asia, which are relatively marginal in the world's knowledge system (Waste knowledge system), theoretical anxiety is unavoidable. Therefore, such a state and phenomenon require extra and especial-theoretical analysis and clarification, and thus may result in a unique theoretical concept of its own.

‘hybridization’ and ‘ambivalence’ (explained in detail in the next section), not only in Southeast Asia, but also in all parts of the world on the edge of the knowledge system.

Ien Ang<sup>317</sup> argued about hybridization: “the importance of hybridity in a world in which we no longer have the secure capacity to draw the line between us and them, the difference and the same, here and there, and indeed, between Asian and Western. In Clifford Geertz’s words, we now live in a globalised world in which there is a gradual spectrum of mixed-up differences.”<sup>318</sup> Hybridity is a necessary concept to hold onto in this condition, because unlike other key concepts in the contemporary politics of difference, “it foregrounds complicated entanglement rather than identity, togetherness-in-difference rather than separateness and virtual apartheid. It is also, as I will argue, a concept that prevents the absorption of all difference into a hegemonic plane of sameness and homogeneity.”<sup>319</sup> As an overview, she proposed the concept of hybridization to fight against all boundaries with culture, but not to erase the existence of boundaries; she advocated the blurring of boundaries and the resulting instability:

The term hybridization has traditionally been used in society evolutionary theory has interpretations of impurity, racial contamination, and genetic variation. In the late twentieth century, however, miscellaneous and miscellaneous were being appropriated to refer to cultural synthesis.<sup>320</sup> For the analysis of different opinions on this issue, please see Appendix 14.

“The term ‘hybridisation’ derived from the epistemology of scientific racism. Nowadays, this term has transformed, from toxic racial discourses, into the cultural creativity of

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<sup>317</sup> Distinguished Professor Ien Ang is a Professor of Cultural Studies and was the founding Director of the Institute for Culture and Society. University of Western Sydney-, ‘Distinguished Professor Ien Ang’, *Www.westernsydney.edu.au*, [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/people/researchers/ien\\_ang](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/people/researchers/ien_ang), (accessed 22 May 2021).

<sup>318</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford Univ. Press, 2007, p. 148.

<sup>319</sup> Ien Ang, ‘Together-In-Difference: Beyond Diaspora, into Hybridity’, *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2003, pp. 141–154.

<sup>320</sup> Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, *Scattered Belongings: Cultural Paradoxes of ‘Race’, Nation and Gender*, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 188.

empowerment.”<sup>321</sup> Despite the fact that the notion of hybridisation is mostly referred to in the realm of postmodern studies, it is definitely not a new phenomenon, nor a post-modern invention. But indeed, trans-cultural movement and the process of culture mixture have accelerated in the recent decades globally. As Ernesto Laclau pointed out, “Identity does not necessarily lose its grip due to hybridization; instead, the existing identity may just be renewed and given new possibilities.”<sup>322</sup> Ang also emphasised that hybridization offers a critical standpoint, which reminds us of the challenges in face of our differences, as well as of the ambiguity, dynamics, and complicity of identification in the phase of late modernity.<sup>323</sup> As a term, ‘ambivalence’ has been chosen as one of the Asian contemporary keywords; as a concept, it is critical as well as reflexive to Western modernity. One study pointed out that, the contemporary Eastern cultures are characteristics of being “receptive to both positivity and negativity,” or at least way more balanced compared to their Western counterparts.<sup>324</sup>

Through westernised education, contemporary Asian civilizations absorb an abundance of Western theories and apply them to local academia and policymaking. We can thus ask: Would the balancing proposed by ambivalence theory contribute to the conclusion of Asian modernity?

“Ambivalence theory can also be used to analyse contemporary Asian societies, to reflect upon the course of development in modern Asia, where the changing of regimes were experienced both within the nations and the region, and finally, to propose a trajectory where homology is

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<sup>321</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media*, Taipei, Socio Publishing, 2012, p.p.31-32.

<sup>322</sup> Stuart Hall *et al*, *The Multicultural Question*, Milton Keynes, UK, Pavis Centre For Social And Cultural Research, The Open University, 2000, p. 236.

<sup>323</sup> The expanded analysis for this topic is in Appendix 15.

<sup>324</sup> Richard P. Bagozzi, and Yi Youjue, ‘Multitrait-Multimethod Matrices in Consumer Research,’ *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 17, no. 4, Mar. 1991, p. 426, <https://doi.org/10.1086/208568>, (accessed 13 August 2022).

replaced by diversity and subject is turned object.”<sup>325</sup> For further analysis, please see Appendix 16. Now, the Asian has to create, or retrieve, the subjectivity after modernization. Empowered by hybridization and ambivalence theories as tools and taking Westernization and globalisation as mediators, we are not only emancipated but also transformed from our past self (noumenon).

### **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Pedagogical Horror Film Which Indicates The History of Geopolitics: *Student Bodies***

Overall, “an even more fundamental reason for the invisibility of contemporary Southeast Asian art is its complexity. Without discounting the complexity of other regions, Southeast Asia is made impossible by the overwhelming diversity it encompasses.”<sup>326</sup> A famous curator, Junichi Shioda, pointed out: the only basis for even thinking about a body of Southeast Asian art, is that firstly we have to admit the extent of its cultural diversity and complexity. This diversity and complexity are not only from Asia's inner local culture and environment reasons but also the external intervention (colonisation and globalisation). It made Southeast Asian countries even fully independent but cannot readily be conformed to the elegance of the nation-state model.

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<sup>325</sup> Shi, Shu-Mei *et al.*, *Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Taiwan, Linking Publishing Press, 2019, p.229.

<sup>326</sup>Joan Kee, ‘Introduction Contemporary Southeast Asian Art’, *Third Text*, vol. 25, no. 4, July 2011, pp. 371–381, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2011.587681>, (accessed 30 December).



Figure 19. Rui An. Ho, *Student Bodies*, 2019, accessed 2 Jan 2022, <https://horuian.com/student-bodies/>.

*Student Bodies* was a video work which was made in 2019 to the present by Singaporean artist, Ho Rui An. The artist described:

The work of pedagogical horror that approaches the fraught history of capitalist modernity and radical culture in East and Southeast Asia through the figure of the student body. Beginning with the students of Satsuma and Choshu from Bakumatsu-era Japan, who were the first students from the country to study in the West, the work considers the student body as both collective and singular, metaphor and flesh, standing in for the body politic of the region across the successive periods of miraculous development, crises, and recoveries through to the present day. The star capitalist pupil of the United States, as Chalmers Johnson said of Japan in the post-war period, becomes in the next moment, the dead student protester on the streets. In the film, such monstrous transformations of the student body through history are given voice by unseen ‘ghosts’ whose utterances are comprehensible only through the subtitles. With each turn of the student body as a carnal signifier, the film attends to the didactic/dialectic rhythms that shape up the student to become both the embodiment of the pedagogical system that produces it and its contradiction.<sup>327</sup>

In *Student Bodies*, the remodelling of students' bodies after receiving imperial and modern education in their time alludes to the potential predicament under the development of Asian

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<sup>327</sup> Rui An Ho, ‘*Student Bodies – Ho Rui An*’, *Horuian.com*, <https://horuian.com/student-bodies/>, (accessed 30 December 2021).

capitalism, transforming ideological progress, retrogression, and resistance into the image of the students come to direct expression, or indirect metaphor. The film combines documentary archives and photographic clips of current affairs, transforming the students' bodies, from the early Western imperial colonisation and Japanese aggression under the education and ideological transformation, which caused concerns about the physical and mental impact of local students. The artist describes the 'horror teaching' in this film as characters from science fiction and horror movies telling a terrifying and contradictory geo-political history. The real image 'ghosts' that have never appeared in the film to describe the reign of terror and the transformation of education that students have experienced with the evolution of the times. The film can only rely on subtitles to understand what those 'ghosts' say. For further information on the artist, please see Appendix 17.



Figure 20. Rui An Ho, *Lecture*, 2019, accessed 2 Jan 2022, <https://horuian.com/tropicopolitan-objects/>.

## Diasporic Chinese

In terms of the history of Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia, the exact historical record began in the ancient Chinese period, the Tang Dynasty (about the 9th century AD), and it has a history of nearly a thousand years. “Compared with other regions of the world, the population number of Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia (approximately 22898 thousand in population) is the largest,<sup>328</sup> which has a great correlation with the geographical environment situation.”<sup>329</sup> During the booming maritime trade in Southeast Asia from the 15th to the 16th centuries, Chinese businessmen had developed seasonal and regular business activities in Southeast Asia. Chinese businessmen had a very important contribution at the time. They used the ships to go back and forth between China and Southeast Asia following the monsoon changes, which promoted the exchange of trade between the East and the West. In addition to commodity trade, some Chinese businessmen also stayed in Southeast Asia and intermarried with local women. In the nineteenth century, a large number of European colonists entered Southeast Asia. Because the colonial government and business firms expanded, they required manual assistance, many Southeast Asian Chinese who have taken root in Southeast Asia and multiplied the next generation had become important middlemen. The early leaders of the Chinese immigrant society in Southeast Asia established their economic foundation in Southeast Asia through trade and tax farming. While overseas Chinese became wealthy, they were also required to give extra back those benefits and wealth to the colonial regimes. Therefore, the Chinese business usually could get the protection and support of the local colonial government, and even had the promotion of social status in return. This was a mutually

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<sup>328</sup> M. Jocelyn Armstrong, R. Warwick Armstrong and Kent Mulliner, *Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*, London, Routledge, 2012 p.2.

<sup>329</sup> Ikuo. Iwasaki, ‘Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History’, Taipei, *Business Weekly*, 2018, p.13.

beneficial model for both parties. Further detailed analysis of this issue is presented in Chapter 2.

In the 19th century, Southeast Asia's political power definitely did not belong to the Chinese Dynasty, and Chinese and was mainly controlled by Western colonial regimes. However, gradually the Chinese controlled the important economic lifeline of Southeast Asia in their own hands and began to participate in management indirectly. “The Chinese living in Southeast Asia were second-class citizens in Southeast Asia, and their status was below the colonists, but at the same time, the Chinese's social status was above the third-class citizens of the local indigenous peoples.”<sup>330</sup> In the Western imperialism in Asia for nearly three centuries of historical development, this special colonial hierarchy specifically gave the Chinese a special chance of success. However, “it also left deep resentment among the local people, which indirectly affected the results of the anti-Chinese movement or violence in Southeast Asia that detonated in the twentieth century.”<sup>331</sup>

The Chinese who moved to Southeast Asia, whether positive or resentful, have played an important role in the history of this region. In the postcolonial nation-states of Southeast Asia, Anti-Chinese sentiment (Chinese Exclusion (排華)/Sinophobia (恐華)) has always been in existence because of political, regional, social structure and long term colonial experience. When the Western colonists evacuated the Asian colonies after World War II, and the scattered Chinese who had settled in Southeast Asia for generations were unable to return to the Chinese motherland where the dynasties have changed for generations, those diasporic Chinese conditions became the Chinese problem which was a special shadow under the emerging

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<sup>330</sup> Ikuo Iwasaki, ‘Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History’, Taipei, *Business Weekly*, 2018, p.16.

<sup>331</sup> Philip Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*, Taipei, The Commercial Press, 2019, p.225.

countries after the Southeast Asian countries became independent from colonial rule. This is the main factor that led to the Chinese exclusion incident in Southeast Asia. The first impression of the Chinese people in Southeast Asia is that the bourgeoisie (businesspeople), outsiders, foreigners and the colonists who are feared by the local people are complicit. Because of those stereotypes, indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia cannot sincerely welcome Chinese people. The main reason for the event from the exclusion of the Chinese upgrade to the violent anti-Chinese incidents is after the Western colonists left Southeast Asia, “the Chinese were cancelled by the tax package privileges provided by the colonial government, so Chinese businessmen tried to enter other economic fields in order to adapt to the new market environment”<sup>332</sup> and then offended local economies that had not had conflict in the past.

Furthermore, after the Xinhai Revolution (1911 Revolution), “the founding of New China (modern China) began a large-scale development of national construction and revolutionary undertakings, and overseas Chinese in East India were high-spirited in front of non-Chinese (for local people in Southeast Asia). This emerging sense of pride has stimulated the resentment of the local people in Southeast Asia.”<sup>333</sup> Because the governments of emerging Southeast Asian countries are composed of the majority of local ethnic groups, the incidents of attacking Chinese in the early days of the establishment of Southeast Asian countries were not valued or even protected by the new local governments. In recent decades, the Chinese diaspora has been an important issue in Southeast Asia- from the anti-Chinese movement and violence in the domestic Southeast Asia that detonated in the beginning of twentieth century to the mainland Chinese's China's rise (rise of China /中國崛起). When the relationship between Southeast

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<sup>332</sup> Charles A. Coppel and Asian Studies Association Of Australia, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 22.

<sup>333</sup> Philip Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*, Taipei, The Commercial Press, 2019, p. 366.

Asian countries and China improved, more diasporic Chinese began to link with China and build their ethnic Chinese identity and Chinese relationship.

As James Clifford has remarked, “diasporic identifications reach beyond ethnic status within the composite, liberal state”<sup>334</sup>. The idea of diaspora is an occasion for positive identification for many, providing a powerful sense of transnational belonging and connection with dispersed others of similar historical origins. The contemporary Chinese diaspora has by virtue of its hinge population of number, global range economic might, evinced an enormous power to operate as a magnet for anyone who can somehow be identified as ‘Chinese’—no matter how remote the ancestral links. This reaching back to one’s ancestral ‘roots’ can be a powerful, almost Utopian, emotional pull.<sup>335</sup> Further analysis of this issue is in Chapter 2: 'Facing the Current Situation and Case- Study Discussions of Chinese Culture and Identity in Southeast Asia'.

From the perspective of the cultural change of ethnic Chinese, the study of Chinese culture cannot unilaterally focus on mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan and other regions, but must return to the special circumstances of different regions. Especially after the Second World War, the political situation and society in Southeast Asia have undergone tremendous changes. The cultural roots of the Chinese in the local society also reflect that the cultural adjustment of ethnic Chinese is not only an extension of the culture of the Chinese motherland but is based on local situation's concerns.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Dovilė Šarkūnaitė, *Identity Formation in Lithuanian Diaspora Press*, MA diss., Vilnius, Vilnius universitetas, 2017, p. 10.

<sup>335</sup> Ien Ang, ‘Together-In-Difference: Beyond Diaspora, into Hybridity’, *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 27, no. 2, June 2003, pp. 141–154, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357820308713372>, (accessed 30 December 2021).

<sup>336</sup> This is also a record of the localization and cultural evolution of traditional Chinese culture by the modern Chinese nation. Therefore, in the post-war study of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, researchers cannot simply indicate the ‘cultural continuation’ of ‘cultural differences’ or the strong affection of Chinese traditions, and the ‘cultural fusion’ of the inevitable localization to diasporic

## Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: FX Harsono Explores His Own Identity Through The Arts.

In Southeast Asia, due to historical factors such as civilization, culture, and religion of the region itself, “The nation-state model is insufficient for dealing with populations more committed to sustaining the idea of a given cultural heritage rather than to any particular government or nation. The Chinese diaspora throughout Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore and other sites, for example, is bound more to the preservation of a certain cultural heritage than to the countries in which it lives.”<sup>337</sup>

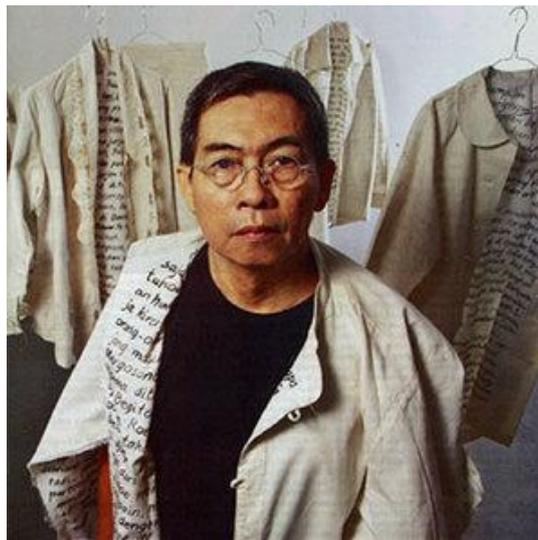


Figure 21. FX Harsono, *FX Harsono*, 2013, accessed Feb 16, 2022, <https://indoartnow.com/artists/fx-harsono>.

FX Harsono, one of Indonesia’s most revered contemporary artists, has been a central figure of the Indonesian art scene for over 40 years. His early artistic practice is based on installation and

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Chinese. Huan Jan. Onn, ‘Who is Chinese-Research Ideas on the Adjustment of Chinese Culture in Southeast Asia’ Lecture, *Research Thoughts on the Adjustment of Chinese Culture in Southeast Asia*, Taipei, Taiwan, Nanxiang Chinese and Cultural Interpretation Project Team, 2019, pp. 153-159.

<sup>337</sup> Joan Kee, ‘Introduction Contemporary Southeast Asian Art,’ *Third Text*, vol. 25, no. 4, July 2011, pp. 371–381, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2011.587681>, (accessed 30 December 2021).

performance and the works were powerfully eloquent acts of protest against an oppressive state apparatus. However, after 1998, Harsono's artistic practice had dramatically changed to introspection about his own family history and the position of minorities in society, especially his own Chinese-Indonesian community:

Harsono explores his own identity through these works and expresses his personal sense of loss of a rich culture that has been subjugated by political forces. Forever an 'other' in the country of his birth, he has created a powerful statement from this position and once again places himself at the forefront of Indonesian contemporary art.<sup>338</sup>

This family experience of Indonesian Chinese persecution has deeply influenced the development of his artistic practice and his personal philosophy to this day. Further artistic information on Harsono is available in Appendix 18.



Figure 22. FX Harsono, *Voice without Voice*, 1993-1994, accessed 7 July 2022, <https://www.designboom.com/art/fx-harsono-testimonies-part-01/>.

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<sup>338</sup> FX Harsono and the Complexity of NAMA, *COBO Social* [website], 30 May 2019, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/fx-harsono-and-the-complexity-of-nama/>, (accessed 28 December 2021).

There is Keyword analysis ‘The Southeast- The Difference from Outside and Inside (南方-內外差異)’ in Appendix 19.

There is Keyword analysis ‘Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Road of Contemporary Art Practice For Southeast Asia's Globalisation Under the Globalisation of the World. (世界全球化下東南亞全球化的當代藝術實踐之路)’ in Appendix 20.

There is Keyword analysis ‘Affirmative Action: The Possibility of Multiple Coexistence (平權運動：多元共存的可能性)’ in Appendix 21.

There is Keyword analysis ‘Imperialist Power (帝國夾擊)’ in Appendix 22.

## **Chapter 2. Expressing 20 to 21 Century National Identity and Nationalism for Asian Ethnic Chinese**

- **The modern history of ethnic Chinese migration.**
- **The ideology competition between communism and capitalism in the Chinese world in the 20th century.**
- **The influence of Chinese daily culture in Southeast Asia.**
- **The potentiality of Sinophone articulations in contemporary art.**

### **Starting from my Chineseness as Self-Identity. (來自於自身華人認同經驗說起)**

The research process of “Ethnic Chinese Identity in Southeast Asia ” is also my self-exploration and reflection on the research and understanding of self-identity as a Chinese person in Taiwan. By reading the history of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, it is actually understanding myself again; studying Chinese identity is also studying self-identity; it is meaningful for deepening my self-exploration. Life is like a journey on a long road. keeping continuous pursuit of self-positioning, staged exploration of self-worth and identity issues, through which to know the self, the self-consciousness, and identify the self. As millennial Taiwanese, from the moment we were born, we have to face the complex situation of cross-strait relations between China (POC) and Taiwan (ROC) and the self-identification of Taiwanese and Chineseness. Over one hundred years, people who have an ethnic Chinese background and live outside China (Mainland) have continually undergone a crisis of self-identity. Sometimes those people recognize that they are Chinese, but sometimes not, and they have gradually adapted to this tricky situation and think it will accompany their whole lives. Nowadays, the young generation does not think about who they are and merely live within an ambiguity. In my personal case,

because the experiences of living overseas in the United Kingdom, it has made me once again directly aware of the special contradictions of my Taiwanese identity and ethnic Chinese identity problems. In this context I have collected and compared different perspectives from the outside environment, such as historical movements and international issues for ethnic Chinese identity. Moreover, overseas Chinese artists practised contemporary art and how it reflected their Chinese self identity. In my research, I find that in each ethnic Chinese generation's memory and self-identity, there is a common thread of the imagination of nostalgia for earlier, simpler times and blood heritage. As Xue states, 'People tend to idealise the concept of pre-modern space in local customs when they are nostalgic'.<sup>339</sup> Nostalgia is known for its indefinableness. *The Future of Nostalgia*, written by Svetlana Boym, attempts to define nostalgia in a poetic way describing it as the sentimental passing, but also a personal dream of love. 'Nostalgic love can only survive in a long-distance relationship. A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images — of home and abroad, of past and present, of dream and everyday life'.<sup>340</sup>

Stuart Hall said: 'People in discrete situations are often forced to accept changes, multiple or hyphenated status.'<sup>341</sup> In the self-identity of overseas Chinese, the terms "Chinese descendants" and "ethnic Chinese" are often used interchangeably. Generally speaking, "ethnic Chinese" refers to people of Chinese descent who have settled in non-Chinese regions (the motherland), regardless of their nationality, degree of enculturation,<sup>342</sup> and social identity.<sup>343</sup> The term

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<sup>339</sup> Xue, Wei, 'How to Understand Nostalgia (2)', *Sanlian Lifeweek*, 2011, [http://www.lifeweek.com.cn/2011/1017/35285\\_2.shtml](http://www.lifeweek.com.cn/2011/1017/35285_2.shtml), (accessed 17 December 2019).

<sup>340</sup> Svetlana. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York, Basic Books Press, 2001, p. 200.

<sup>341</sup> Hall means naturalized citizens and their descendants with immigrant origin, such as Asian-Americans. Hall Stuart and David Morley, *Essential Essays, Volume 2*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2020, p. 227.

<sup>342</sup> The British anthropologist, Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), put forward the famous cultural definition, which refers to the process by which an individual learns a certain life pattern consciously or unconsciously from an early age and becomes a member of his society. Brian Vincent Street, 'Sir Edward Burnett Tylor | British Anthropologist', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-Burnett-Tylor>, (accessed 17 December 2019)

“Chinese ethnic Chinese” more specifically refers to “a group that has cultural elements that can be identified or categorised as Chinese culture, and members of this group socially identify themselves or others as a unique group”. For example, Indonesian Chinese scholar Melani Budianta explained: "For ethnic Chinese who are infiltrated by Chinese culture, I am not considered ethnic Chinese because I can't speak Chinese and I'm not familiar with Chinese culture. For people who have never been infiltrated by Chinese culture, I am ethnic Chinese. There is also the Chinese with mixed ancestry like Budianta, he is an Indonesian Chinese under cultural hybridization. He lives in the middle zone between Chinese and local culture. He can't even trace his historical relationship with pure traditions. His personal nation-identity may be deprived of power by the strict model of cultural pluralism, because people like him cannot find a place for identity in the multicultural structure. They can only reimagine and replace the designated self with nation-identity.<sup>344</sup> American scholar, Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson,<sup>345</sup> pointed out in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) that "the nation is an imagination" and it provides a process of human development to the modern world.

The Nation does not only rely on objective characteristics and appearances, but the importance of the process of forming ethnic group identity. As an art researcher and curator, in my research on contemporary art around the world, I found that the artist's works not only reflect the atmosphere of the times, but also reflect their own life experience and spiritual value to a large extent. Taking Taiwan as an example, under the wave of post-modern art in the 1980s, Taiwanese artists showed their artworks to explore the orthodoxy (the authority of traditional

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<sup>343</sup> Leo. Suryadinata, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Participation in Four ASEAN States', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 15, no. 3, Dec. 1993, pp. 292–308, <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs15-3d>. (accessed 17 Feb 2022).

<sup>344</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media*, Taipei, Socio Publishing, 2012, p. 9.

<sup>345</sup> Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, (born August 26, 1936, Kunming, China—died December 12/13, 2015, Batu, Indonesia), Irish political scientist, best known for his influential work on the origins of nationalism.

Chinese heritage) of Chinese culture and the differences between Chinese democracy and Chinese communism. However, with the development of contemporary art since the 1990s, the Taiwan artists mainly presented the localised political state of Taiwan and works that metaphorize Taiwan's international situation and relations. For the big difference in modern Taiwan art development, there are two main reasons. The first reason is that the 1990s Taiwanese artists were born and raised in Taiwan, and their self-identity tends to be localised in Taiwan. At the same time, modern Taiwanese's perception of China (mainland) has been transformed into an increasingly blurred to "Other Place (他方)." As a fact, for the majority of Taiwanese people, the Chinese mainland regime is an existence that poses a threat to Taiwan's national security. The second reason is that under the atmosphere of the times at that time, Taiwanese were facing Third Taiwan Strait Crisis (臺灣海峽飛彈危機、1996年台海危機)<sup>346</sup>. Taiwanese artists were living under the fear of the despair crisis and through art practice they reflected on their Chinese identity and their sense of self-identity in the social environment at that time. Here I would introduce two very representative Taiwanese contemporary artists and their works to echo this change of Chinese identity.

Mei Dean-e (梅丁衍), was born in Taipei in 1954, graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Chinese Culture University (CCU) in 1977. In the days when Mei Dean-e was growing up,

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<sup>346</sup> The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation (臺灣海峽飛彈危機，第三次臺灣海峽危機、1996年台海危機)

During the ten months following Lee's visit to Cornell, the United States and China reopened their difficult negotiations over U.S. policy toward Taiwan. The negotiations reached a climax in March 1996, when China displayed a dramatic show of force consisting of military exercises and missile tests targeted near Taiwan, and the United States responded with an equally dramatic deployment of two carrier battle groups.

Robert S. Ross, 'The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force', *International Security*, vol. 25, no. 2, Oct. 2000, pp. 87–123, <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228800560462>, (accessed 7 Dec 2022).

Taiwan was still shrouded in a social atmosphere where the White Terror (白色恐怖)<sup>347</sup> had not subsided, and the people always had fear and awe of politics:

For the first generation of contemporary artists in Taiwan who grew up during the martial law period (台灣戒嚴時期)<sup>348</sup>, being under this long period of martial law, not only directly affected the Taiwanese individual's memory of growth, but also shaped the personality of the soul. At the same time, this experience has become the key to the reversal of the Taiwanese artist's artistic thinking.<sup>349</sup>

Such national history has directly influenced the development of contemporary art in Taiwan.

In 1983, Mei Dean-e went to the United States and he was one of the first foreign students from Taiwan to study art in New York.<sup>350</sup> In the 1990s, during the lifting of martial law in Taiwan (解嚴), local artists and artists who studied abroad combined Western thought trends with local social issues, which led to the rapid development of Taiwanese contemporary art:

At this time, it was the golden age of Taiwanese contemporary art. Taiwanese artists began to think about how to face their own mother culture. The wave of localization was coming, which was a counterattack to the cultural hegemony during the martial law period in the past. Mei Dean-e chose the method of reversing the semantics of objects in Dada's artistic spirit. He used ready-made objects or old objects to collage contemporary artists' thoughts on Taiwan's national history and cross-strait relations.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>347</sup>1945, the Republic of China took over Taiwan after Japan's defeat, and in 1947, the February 28th Incident broke out due to the failed administration of Kuomintang (KMT). Government promulgated the Martial Law in 1949.

This four-decade period of repressive rule, 1949-1992, is known as the White Terror Period. 'White Terror Period', *Www.nhrm.gov.tw*, [https://www.nhrm.gov.tw/w/nhrmEN/White\\_Terror\\_Period](https://www.nhrm.gov.tw/w/nhrmEN/White_Terror_Period), (accessed 7 Dec 2022).

<sup>348</sup> Martial law ran from 1949 to 1987, running for 38 years, making it the longest martial law imposed at the time. During this period of martial law, there were no political parties, no human rights, and no free speech. Civilians were tried in military court, people's thinking and reading were controlled, and no freedom of expression.

'Martial Law', *OFTaiwan*, 2017, <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/martial-law/>(accessed 7 Dec 2022).

<sup>349</sup> 'WANTED DEAN-E MEI: A Retrospective', *Www.tfam.museum*, 2017, [https://www.tfam.museum/Exhibition/Exhibition\\_page.aspx?id=505&ddlLang=zh-tw](https://www.tfam.museum/Exhibition/Exhibition_page.aspx?id=505&ddlLang=zh-tw), (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

<sup>350</sup> Please further information Appendix 1.

<sup>351</sup> 'The 40th Wu Sanlien Award Art Award-Mei Dingyan. Interview – Wu Sanlien Award Foundation.', *Wu San-Lien Awards Foundation*, <http://www.wusanlien.org.tw/02awards/02winners/02winners40/d01/>, (accessed 5 Dec 2022).

Mei Dean-e is good at using cross-media to make works, and his works are mixed with the dialectics of history, culture and identity. Through his works, he constantly challenged, questioned, and posed questions to the viewers. Some considered Mei Dean-e to be a political artist, while others called him the father of Taiwan's Dadaism.<sup>352</sup>

Mei Dean-e's works take the absurd phenomenon of Taiwan's social politics as the subject of creation. On the one hand, he uses a cross-cultural perspective to discuss the differences between Eastern and Western cultures and the compatibility of Western theoretical practices in the East. At the same time, 'he delved into the complex history of Taiwan's politics and culture to find causality and identity contradictions. His works deeply explore Taiwan's peculiar situation on cross-strait, internal affairs, foreign affairs, economy and trade, reunification and independence, and globalisation.'<sup>353</sup> In Mei Dean-e's famous *Identity* (哀敦砥悌) series of works, he recreates new Chinese words with homophones and different meanings from the semantics and the ambiguous gap between Chinese and English translation. The work reveals Taiwan's vague identity and historically absurd situation. The work *Give Me Hugs* (給我抱抱) shows Taiwan's repressed position in the international arena after it withdrew from the United Nations in 1971. At the same time, it also reflects the sinister diplomatic situation of Taiwan under the cross-strait political struggle. The "love" or "Hug" support of a diplomatic country towards Taiwan has nothing to do with whether it is sincere or not. It only asks whether the conditions for establishing diplomatic relations are satisfactory or not, and the diplomatic financial aid provided by Taiwan is enough to the diplomatic country. Mei Dean-e's ten years of studying and living in the United States has become the context of his artistic thinking and

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<sup>352</sup> 'The 40th Wu Sanlien Award Art Award-Mei Dingyan. Interview – Wu Sanlien Award Foundation.', *Wu San-Lien Awards Foundation*, <http://www.wusanlien.org.tw/02awards/02winners/02winners40/d01/>, (accessed 5 Dec 2022).

<sup>353</sup> KAOHSIUNG MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, 'Beyond Politics, after Art Mei Dingyan's "Mei-Style Humor."', *Www.kmfa.gov.tw*, 2020, <https://www.kmfa.gov.tw/ArtActivityInfo/ArtActivityInfoArticlesDetail.aspx?Cond=d3a9f1bd-5eed-4c3-8f80-b8dbcfb36ec1>, accessed 5 Dec 2022.

practice. In particular, he looked back at his identity from the outside; he was more aware of the position of himself and also Taiwan was sitting in the world position. In his long-term overseas life, he observed the experiences of Chinese immigrants in the Western world, which made him realise the issue of cultural identity, and began to read and examine the history of modern China and the history of overseas Chinese immigration.

As an international student, curator and artist living in the UK for nearly eight years, I have similar overseas life experiences and perspectives as Mei Dean-e. His artistic practice uncovers the existence of Taiwan that was once deliberately deceived in a way that Taiwanese artists did not have in the past, while my PhD artistic research and practice explores the deliberately weakened existence of Southeast Asian Chinese artists in Southeast Asian society and the government. Facing the social environment in which contemporary Chinese ethnic people live, we choose to use art as a symbol and means to win the world's attention and record our own life experiences. Through artistic practice, we strive to unearth the truth that has been concealed and reflect the real social situation.



Figure 23. Mei Dingyan, *Give Me Hugs*, 2000, Ministry of Culture, accessed 20 Dec, 2022, [https://toolkit.culture.tw/artinfo\\_184\\_285.html](https://toolkit.culture.tw/artinfo_184_285.html).

Yao Jui-Chung (姚瑞中) was born in 1969. He lives and works in Taipei and graduated from The Taipei National University of the Arts. He is one of the most representative artists in Taiwan. Yao specialises in photography, installation and painting. The themes of his works are varied, but most importantly they all examine the absurdity of the human condition. Representative works include *Action Series*. When I analyse his works it can find the clue he explores the question of Taiwan's identity.<sup>354</sup> In the face of the uncertain collective destiny of Taiwan in the future, Taiwanese and the world he feels that people should perform dialectical thinking. 'He interprets art through his own point of view, and his artworks return to "Who am I? Where did I come from and where am I going?" This kind of classical discussion.'<sup>355</sup>



Figure 24. Mei Dingyan, *The World Is For All - China Beyond Chin*, 2001, 100×150cm 10 sheets, Mei Dingyan, accessed 20 Dec, 2022, [https://www.yaojuichung.com/index.php?page=coll4ections\\_artwork&language=EN&id=qQ9aFYpGVtyvfsTCAV1pMUR5VRuAvR0C](https://www.yaojuichung.com/index.php?page=coll4ections_artwork&language=EN&id=qQ9aFYpGVtyvfsTCAV1pMUR5VRuAvR0C).

<sup>354</sup> For this further artistic information please see in Appendix 2.

<sup>355</sup> Chang Li-Hao, 'Entering the Rewritten Genealogy of History: Yao Jui-Chung', *Www.itpark.com.tw*, 2009, [http://www.itpark.com.tw/artist/critical\\_data/32/730/30](http://www.itpark.com.tw/artist/critical_data/32/730/30), (accessed 5 Dec 2022).

*The World is for All* (天下為公行動) is a series artworks that Yao had developed for four years (1997~2000). It originated from Yao's residency programme at the Hyderland Art Center in San Francisco through the Asian Cultural Council (ACC) funding supported in 1997. The work explores a dialectical process between the “blood” and “political correctness” of a Chinese nation. This is a photographic work that captures and records ten<sup>356</sup> more representative Chinatown arches in different countries in the 1990s. In addition to discussing the colonial complex and the local people's stereotypes of Asians, the work finally restores the “loss” of people facing their own situation after leaving their hometowns.<sup>357</sup> Most of the paifang are concentrated in the emerging colonies of North America and Australia, while Europe is much less in comparison. Although there are Chinese people all over the world, Chinese immigrant communities from different provinces, even if they immigrate to the same overseas country, there will be differences because of different dialects, social habits and even the ideology of the motherland. Different Chinese communities have their own life circles, and it is difficult to break into the same community unless there are special cases. In fact, in the same immigrant country, each Chinatown has its own area. As long as the Chinese people speak, other Chinese will immediately know which area one is probably from. Each Chinese region has its own management level, and sometimes even the local government cannot manage it, which is like a state of “Chinese of Chinese (國中國)”. Such a state also started happening in Southeast Asia in the 19th century. It has had long-term effects until now. The paragraph, Facing the Current Situation and Cases Discussion of Chinese Culture and Identity in Southeast Asia will describe and analyse further.

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<sup>356</sup> The ten cities are: Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, Philadelphia, New York, San Francisco, Paris, London, Yokohama, and Brisbane.  
Yao Jui-Chung, ‘The World Is for All - China beyond China.’, *Wwww.yaojuichung.com*, [https://www.yaojuichung.com/index.php?page=collections\\_artwork&language=EN&id=qQ9aFYpGVtyvfsTCAV1pMUR5VRuAvR0C](https://www.yaojuichung.com/index.php?page=collections_artwork&language=EN&id=qQ9aFYpGVtyvfsTCAV1pMUR5VRuAvR0C), (accessed 5 Dec 2022).

<sup>357</sup> Please refer to Appendix 3.

Pierre Bourdieu, a contemporary French social thinker, mentioned in his book *The Rules of Art Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (1996), *Les règles de l'art- genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, that he thought whether the field of literary production or the field of art production is in a world full of paradox. Pierre believes that the artist and the art viewer can establish a stake in the state of the seemingly most “irrelevant stake (無關利害)” through works:

Pierre indicated the artwork as an intentional sign entangled and regulated by something else, and the artwork becomes a symptom of these things.<sup>358</sup> In sociological analysis, Pierre Bourdieu believes that “art is still subject to the influence of politics and economics in the field of production.”<sup>359</sup>

I agree with Pierre's view of the sociology of art. My point of view is that as long as people live together in human society, there must be social interaction; that is, human beings as a social species cannot exist independently without politics. Therefore, as a social species, human beings cannot exist independently of politics. Further more contemporary art reflects artist's life which was intimate to social issues, for concluding it contemporary art is also inseparable from politics. On the other hand, whether it's Yao Jui-Chung or Mei Dean-e's works, their works belong to be political, but in fact they just reflect the real situation of living in Taiwan and also part of their experience of overseas Chinese life. This section took the artistic practice of Taiwanese artists who had similar life experiences to me as an example, and explored how Taiwanese art workers are still exploring national identity and Chinese national characteristics through art under the contemporary conditions of Taiwan. In the next section, I will describe the identity and transformation of Chinese immigrants when they established new local connections and connections after moving to Southeast Asia. I will also question if such a transformation of national identity be seen in the works of Southeast Asian Chinese

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<sup>358</sup> Pierre. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, Taipei, Art & Collection Group, 2016, p .214.

<sup>359</sup> Pierre. Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Taipei, Rye Field Publishing Co, 2009, p. 153.

contemporary artists? What is the contribution of the unique identity of Southeast Asian Chinese to Southeast Asian contemporary art? This is what I want to explore in depth in this chapter.

## **History of Chinese Migration in Southeast Asia in the 20th Century (二十世紀華人東南亞遷移史)**

The early leaders of the Chinese immigrant society in Southeast Asia established their economic foundation in Southeast Asia through trade and tax farming. While overseas Chinese became wealthy, they were also required to give extra back those benefits and wealth to the colonial regimes. Therefore, the Chinese business usually could get the protection and support of the local colonial government, and even had the promotion of social status in return. This was a mutually beneficial model for both parties. Although overseas Chinese businessmen are not themselves the creators of the colonial empire, they have become important assistants or assisted in the colonial empire. Political power in Southeast Asia does not belong to the Chinese, and is mainly controlled by Western colonial regimes. However, gradually the Chinese controlled the important economic lifeline of Southeast Asia in their own hands and began to participate in management indirectly. The Chinese living in Southeast Asia were second-class citizens in Southeast Asia, and their status was below the colonists, but at the same time, the Chinese's social status was above the third-class citizens of the local indigenous peoples.<sup>360</sup> This early social phenomenon of unequal ethnic groups affected the social status and exclusion of Chinese in Southeast Asian countries after national independence. In the Western imperialism in Asia for nearly three centuries of historical development, this special colonial

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<sup>360</sup> Philip Kuhn, 'In the 16th Century, the Chinese Immigrated to Southeast Asia for Economic Reasons. How Did They Deal with the Colonial Mother Country from Europe?', *The News Lens*, 2019, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/116272>, (accessed 3 Jan 2023).

hierarchy specifically gave the Chinese a special chance of success with art. However, ‘it also left deep resentment among the local people, which indirectly affected the results of the anti-Chinese movement or violence in Southeast Asia that detonated in the twentieth century.’<sup>361</sup> The Chinese who moved to Southeast Asia, whether positive or resentful, have played an important role in the history of this region. The economic role functions were the most significant for Chinese in Southeast Asia, and the economic role itself was a role with important political implications after the Second World War and the Communist Party of China established New China in 1948. For most Chinese, it was impossible to return to their hometown of China physically or politically. At this time, ‘the large-scale overseas Chinese immigrant community had become a major political issue in Southeast Asian countries’.<sup>362</sup> There is further analysis for the history of Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia in Appendix 4 .

The overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have never been a homogenous group because they came from mainland China which has a vast territory and includes diverse ethnic Chinese groups. Those Chinese of Southeast Asian minorities that emerged from the different Chinese geographical environment and the imperial colonial era can not just be merely classified as a Southeast Asian Chinese group. Coppel indicated that ‘the overseas Chinese were from a specific context in a specific area in Asia.’<sup>363</sup> For discussions on the diversity of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, refer to Ongkhokham (Ongkhokham 2005): Chinese (Chinese descent) have various regional and class diversity in Southeast Asian societies. These parts (diversity) have also created their self-identification of Chinese descent in different regions, eras, and social status. Although Southeast Asian Chinese have been portrayed as economic animals and

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<sup>361</sup> Philip. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*, Taipei, The Commercial Press, 2019. p.225.

<sup>362</sup> Milton. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, trans. Yi-Ting. Wang, Taipei, Haoyou Culture Publishing, 2020, p. 120.

<sup>363</sup> Charles A. Coppel, *Studying Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia*, Singapore, Singapore Society Of Asian Studies, 2002, p. 108.

wealthy businessmen in the social stereotypes from the past to the present, in fact this 'stereotype is not fully applicable to all Chinese in Southeast Asia'.<sup>364</sup>

However, distribution and contributions of contemporary Chinese artistic workers in the Southeast Asian art world can also reflect the diversity of the Southeast Asian Chinese situation in Southeast Asia. For example, in Thailand's contemporary art world there are some famous artists who are from northern Thailand and have a Chinese background. Their Chinese ancestors are mainly from the ethnic minority Dai people (傣族) or Kuomintang Thailand–Burma orphaned army (泰緬孤軍) in 1950s because of Chinese Communist Revolution (國共內戰). They settled on the northern border of Thailand from Yunnan by foot. The families of these Chinese-Thai artists were not rich or even poor, and their families were mainly engaged in farming and basic retail work. The life of these Chinese who immigrated to Thailand was very difficult. In addition, Thailand implemented the assimilation policy at the same time, so the family chose to simplify the inheritance of the Chinese motherland's culture. Therefore, these Chinese-Thai artists are not familiar with Chinese culture, but sometimes we can still see a small number of unique symbols of Chinese culture in their works.

On the other hand, the Chinese ethnic community in Malaysia is very significant in inheriting Chinese culture. The Chinese-Malaysian art community is mainly concentrated in Kuala Lumpur and Penang. Among them, the Chinese culture in Penang is particularly rich and diverse. Penang is the region with the largest number of Chinese ethnic in Malaysia, and it is also one of the few states governed by Chinese ethnic people.<sup>365</sup> Penang's Chinese mainly came from southern China to Malaysia in the 19th century, and most of them were Hokkien and

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<sup>364</sup> Manhua. Yu, *Multicultural Self: An Autobiography of a Vietnam-born Chinese Canadian, Including a Dialogue with a Cultural Psychologist*, Chung-fang Yang, Taipei, Yuan-Liou Publishing, 2003.

<sup>365</sup> Guo Xi, 'Language Life in the Chinese Community in Penang, Malaysia', *Web.archive.org*, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080310204635/http://www.huayuqiao.org/articles/guoxi/guoxi11.htm#fn2>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

Cantonese.<sup>366</sup> They arrived in Penang through maritime navigation and engaged in maritime commercial trade business. Therefore, Chinese-Malaysians in Penang generally have a good living standard and environment and can continue to inherit Chinese culture and Chinese folk activities. In 2008, George Town in Penang, Malaysia, was listed as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations because of its special harbour history and multicultural characteristics. In George Town, there is a coexistence of Nanyang monuments and modern buildings with century-old Chinese characteristics. At the same time, traditional and emerging cultural and art industries are also flourishing in George Town, which also attracts Chinese background artists from all over Malaysia and the world to engage in artistic work in George Town. Contemporary Chinese art workers and Chinese communities in Southeast Asia are also affected by their own definition of Chinese cultural heritage and their own Chinese identity because their Chinese ancestors came from different Chinese regions and different immigration periods.

There is a further analysis article “The Impact of Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia's Geopolitics in the 20th Century. (東南亞地緣政治中的華人)”, please refer to Appendix 5.

### **Facing the Current Situation and Case- Study Discussions of Chinese Culture and Identity in Southeast Asia. (當前東南亞華人文化與認同的現況與案例討論)**

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<sup>366</sup> ‘New Living Water - Why Penang?’, *Www.fountain.org.tw*, 2020, <https://www.fountain.org.tw/issue/penang>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

**Table 1** Estimated population of Southeast Asia, total and Chinese, 1999

Country/region	Total population* (thousands)	Chinese population (thousands)	Percent of Chinese in Southeast Asia	Percent of country population Chinese <sup>†</sup>
Brunei	321	51	0.2	16.0
Cambodia	10946	109	0.5	1.0
Indonesia	209255	6278	27.4	3.0
Laos	5297	212	0.9	0.4
Malaysia	22180	5515	24.1	24.8
Myanmar	45059	631	2.8	1.4
Philippines	74454	968	4.2	1.3
Singapore	3522	2719	11.9	77.2
Thailand	60856	5234	22.8	8.6
Vietnam	78705	1181	5.2	1.5
Southeast Asia	510595	22898	100.0	4.5

\*All countries except Malaysia from: United Nations (1999). Malaysia from: Malaysia (1998).

<sup>†</sup>Compiled by Leo Suryadinata, National University of Singapore. These percentages were multiplied by the total population estimates to obtain the Chinese population estimates.

Figure 25. Estimated population of Southeast Asia, total and Chinese, 1991. Courtesy of *Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*, accessed 30 August, 2021.

The 1990 Southeast Asian Demographic Data showed that there were more than 22 million Chinese in Southeast Asia, accounting for 4.5 percent of the total Southeast Asian population. However, Guotu Zhuang (莊國土), a well-known scholar of Chinese studies, believed that:

the actual number of Chinese living in Southeast Asia, regardless of their nationality, is much higher than the number of official and academic published data. The main reason for the divergence in the statistical results of the scale of Chinese in Southeast Asia is that after the Second World War, most of the Chinese in Southeast Asia naturalised the local nationality. However, the governments of Southeast Asian countries have long regarded the Chinese as a sensitive social stability issue for historical and political reasons, so they consciously avoided or distorted the real information on the existence of the Chinese. In addition, the statistics of Entry and Exit Dates in Southeast Asian countries are incomplete.<sup>367</sup>

There is a huge gap in the statistics of the ethnic Chinese population in Southeast Asia from governments and institutions around the world<sup>368</sup> so the number and scale of Chinese in

<sup>367</sup> Guotu. Zhuang, 'On the Chinese in Southeast Asia', *Journal of World Peoples Studies*, no. 3, 2002, pp. 44–45, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41345249.pdf>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

<sup>368</sup> Guotu ZHUANG, 'New Estimates of the Number of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia', *Journal of Xiamen University*, no. 3, 2009, pp. 62–69,

Southeast Asia are generally underestimated or greatly underestimated. In addition to the attitudes and policies of the Southeast Asian government towards the Chinese that will affect the self-identity of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, the establishment and definition of the self-identity within the Chinese community internal in Southeast Asia is also important. In the study of the possible development of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia, most Chinese identity researchers currently use the Chinese double-identity theory proposed by R. J. Coughlin (1960) as the fundamental studying base:

The double-identity theory of Chinese in Southeast Asia is based on the phenomenon and characteristics of double-identity reflected by the Chinese in Southeast Asia who identify not only with their Chinese identity, but also with the Southeast Asian country (local nation-state). Coughlin's theory takes a compromise view between being completely assimilated and not being assimilated. In his perspective, after Westernization (modernization) the Southeast Asian Chinese will become an intermediate state of identity (中間型認同狀態).<sup>369</sup>

That is to say, Chinese in Southeast Asia psychologically identify with China as well as the country where they reside. In addition, Coughlin's research point of view also emphasised the distinction between cultural identity and national identity. He believed that the double identity of Southeast Asian Chinese was psychological identification with China, and identification with the place and country where they were living.

Generally, the Chinese in Southeast Asia have always maintained the characteristics and status of the Chinese double-identity until today. However, with the development of different Southeast Asia countries, the Chinese ethnic identities in Southeast Asia have become more diverse and complex. Different situations and cases in Southeast Asia lead to different

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[http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/\\_local/3/B4/87/FC235E9FE008C6F194550B706BE\\_A37C2150\\_4214F.pdf](http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/_local/3/B4/87/FC235E9FE008C6F194550B706BE_A37C2150_4214F.pdf), (accessed 11 May 2023). Please refer to Appendix 6.

<sup>369</sup> Joseph P. L. Jiang, 'The Chinese in Thailand: Past and Present', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1966, pp. 39–40.

identification phenomena. It makes contemporary Chinese study researchers begin to review and update Coughlin's conclusion of the Chinese double-identity:

The current mainstream research reinterprets the double identity meaning and analyses it with current social examples. They divide the Chinese identity of the Chinese ethnic group in Southeast Asia into Chinese cultural identity and Chinese national identity defined by the political image of many ethnic minorities in Southeast Asian countries. Under the current world outlook and development in the country's modernization environment, Southeast Asian Chinese, as one of the diverse ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. They (Chinese ethnic) strive for the same equal rights as the Southeast Asian minorities, and at the same time, as Southeast Asians, they try to build a multi-ethnic society that is diverse and inclusive in Southeast Asia.<sup>370</sup>

The development and meaning of the Chinese double identity has changed with the changes of the times. However, Southeast Asian Chinese have always maintained the identity and inheritance of Chinese mother culture, and at the same time actively participated in local society activities and civic duty in Southeast Asia where the country they naturalised. The following paragraphs will analyse the new Southeast Asia Chinese generation's self-identity and local society status in five Southeast Asian countries in Appendix 7.

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<sup>370</sup> Jen. Hsieh, 'On the Identity Problem of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia: Reconsidering the Concept of R. J. Coughling's Double Identity (in Chinese)', *Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2006, pp. 12–15.

## **The Ambiguity of Chinese Self-Identity in Southeast Asia After the 21st Century.**

### **(21 世紀東南亞華人模糊的身份自我認同)**

In 1985 professor Wang Gungwu (王賡武), a historian born in Malaysia and Singapore and a pioneer in the history of overseas Chinese, said that no one concept is enough to convey the complex situation of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia:

Professor Wang's research pointed out that the concept of Chinese identity before 1985 was only applicable to certain ethnic groups in certain nation-states in Southeast Asia, and only for a certain period of time. After 1985, the Chinese in Southeast Asia had a huge change in their identification with the Chinese in the past.<sup>371</sup>

Whether the early research on Chinese identity can be applied to the current trend of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia is still unknown. Contemporary Sinophone studies try to combine different concepts, hoping to explore the entire issue of overseas Chinese identity through the concept of multiple identities. I used interdisciplinary research ways to cross-research through the history of the Chinese diaspora, the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia, Sinophone studying and cultural studies. Through the diverse Chinese cultural materials, I tried to sort out the reasons and phenomena of the ambiguity of the current self-identity of Chinese in Southeast Asia.

“Identification” in general understanding refers to the psychological process in which an individual identifies a certain person or group emotionally, and thus imitates it in terms of behaviour and value standards, so that himself, herself and other people tend to be consistent. 张淑华 *Social Identity* (1996) by Richard Jenkins indicated that the process of identification is the

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<sup>371</sup> David Yen-ho. Wu, ‘The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities’, *Daedalus*, vol. 120, no. 2, 1991, pp. 159–179, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/20025378#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/20025378#metadata_info_tab_contents), (accessed 20 Dec 2022).

process of seeking to be similar to or different from others. Defining the concept of identity from a psychological perspective:

Identity is an individual's confirmation of self-identity and cognition of the group to belongness, which is a psychological process that integrates the accompanying emotional experience and behavioural patterns. There are three structural classifications of identity: "individual identity (個體身份認同)" is about personal values, ideals, goals, emotions, and a subjective sense of continuity and uniqueness; "Social identity (社會身份認同)" is about the self and one's public image in relation to others; "Collective identity (集體身份認同)" refers to self-concepts related to affiliation with social and demographic groups.<sup>372</sup> People establish self-identity in society through many channels, including gender identity, family identity, social class identity, and religious identity. 'Chinese identity in Southeast Asia is mainly divided into ancestral identity (祖籍認同) and class identity (階級認同). Class identity here refers to the awareness of economic class differences based on financial foundation.<sup>373</sup>

According to the history of Chinese immigration in Southeast Asia discussed in the first and second chapters of this theory, the motivation of all early Chinese people to leave the motherland of China and come to Southeast Asia was because of economic needs. They had a dream of pursuing a less competitive development environment at the same time getting more economic benefits. Early Chinese immigrants expected to improve their social status by going overseas to work. In ancient China, because of uneven regional development, many Chinese people lived in hardship. When social problems such as insufficient living space and development opportunities became more and more serious in China, in the 18th century in order to find survival opportunities, many Chinese labourers in coastal areas of China migrated overseas. After the Opium War (The Anglo-Chinese War /中英戰爭/鴉片戰爭) in the middle of the 19th century, a large number of Chinese emigrated to various parts of the world following the needs of European trade and the industrial revolution, and the largest number of Chinese moved to Southeast Asia. 'The background of Southeast Asia at that time was under

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<sup>372</sup> Zhang Shuhua et al, 'Review on Research of Identity', *Psychological Research*, vol. 1, 2012, pp. 23–27.

<sup>373</sup> Yu-Chuan.Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, p. 99.

the rule of European imperialism; the demand for commercial trade increased and the social division of labour in Southeast Asia at that time was seriously short of manpower,<sup>374</sup> which created opportunities for new Chinese immigrants to survive and develop in Southeast Asia.<sup>375</sup> At the beginning of the establishment of the Chinese society in Southeast Asia, native (hometown) associations were established in different regions and different Chinese dialect groups. It means:

the Chinese at that time had a homogeneous identity with other Chinese who spoke the same dialect, it can be said that the Chinese “language (dialect/方言)” identity preceded the overall Chinese cultural identity for oversea Chinese. During this period, the recognition of family, clan, and ethnic groups in the same hometown represented the affirmation of Chineseness by overseas Chinese. It can be said that the ancestral identity standards of the Chinese community in Southeast Asia also tend to be identified in the historical context.<sup>376</sup>

In the early development of Chinese Southeast Asian art, it can be clearly found such characteristics of the development of fellow Chinese hometown associations. In the early days of Southeast Asian Chinese art, through the Chinese hometown associations and clan associations, those Chinese art works with Chinese local characteristics were established, such as Chinese architecture, temples, Chinese calligraphy, paintings, operas, etc. These cultural arts with Chinese artistic characteristics are not difficult to find in Southeast Asia today, and some of them have become well-known local tourist attractions in Southeast Asia and have been well preserved and integrated into the contemporary multiculturalism of Southeast Asia. For example, China Towns and Chinese villages in all Southeast Asian countries, Malacca and George Town in Malaysia are all world level national attractions.

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<sup>374</sup> Philip A. Kuhn and Minghuan Li, *Chinese among Others: Emigration in Modern Times.*, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009, p. 108.

<sup>375</sup> There is further analysis about Chinese workers and Chinese faction fighting accidents (派系械鬥) in Southeast Asia in Appendix 8 .

<sup>376</sup> Yu-Chuan.Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, p. 99.

The other is class identity (階級認同), which is:

a concept that the Chinese community in Southeast Asia has vaguely developed to the common Chinese goal in economic power. After the 19th century, the development of the Chinese in Southeast Asia was mainly through business. Only through economic power can the Chinese have the right to speak in the local society of Southeast Asia. This concept clearly defined the identity of the Chinese for their class ambition.<sup>377</sup>

In addition, Hung-ting Ku (古鴻廷), a famous Nanyang Chinese historian, tends to argue that the economic identity of the Chinese is stronger than the Chinese nationalist identity (nationality and political identity) of the Chinese:

In fact, the anti-Chinese incidents in modern Southeast Asia in the 1970s were mainly due to ethnic conflicts by the local governments (or government acquiesced) because of Chinese ethnic controlled too strong economic powers in Southeast Asian countries. The governments in Southeast Asia had implemented anti-Chinese violence and anti-Chinese policies against Chinese in Southeast Asia under the pretext of ideological crisis and anti-Chinese communism. But in fact, it was because of fear and resentment that the economic class of the Chinese in the local society is obviously higher than that of other ethnic groups.<sup>378</sup>

The Chinese always classed as outsiders in the history of Southeast Asia, which was easily targeted and rejected by other local ethnic groups. Otherwise, the local ethnic group believe that the Chinese had deprived the internal resources belonging to the local people in Southeast Asia, and it had also caused the problem of uneven distribution of assets in Southeast Asia.

In history, the large-scale conflicts between Chinese in Southeast Asia and local ethnic groups were not caused by differences in religious beliefs, but by differences in economic status and ideology, which led to mutual incompatibility of ethnic groups. The background of art development after the Renaissance cannot be separated from the rise of merchants and

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<sup>377</sup> Yu-Chuan.Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, p. 99.

<sup>378</sup> Guotu Zhuang, 'Clash of Civilizations, or Social Contradictions-a Brief Discussion on the Relationship between Chinese and Local Ethnic Groups in Southeast Asia after World War II', *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, no. 3, 2003, pp. 72–75.

capitalism. Contemporary art developed in the 20th century also developed rapidly in the face of the wave of capitalist globalisation; a majority of economics in Southeast Asia is under the hands of Chinese businessmen and Chinese celebrities. Furthermore, it has been a known fact in the past to present that the rich and powerful people buy and collect a large number of artworks under their distribution of assets. These rich and luxurious Chinese merchants in Southeast Asia also buy a large number of artworks at home and abroad. This also invisibly accelerates the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. In terms of art education in Southeast Asia, the Chinese ethnic are more able to support their offspring to study abroad because of their own economic strength, which makes young Chinese ethnic students have more opportunities to get the current overseas new trends of thought and new technologies. Contemporary art, as the mainstream emerging art style in the current art development, undoubtedly attracts young art students from Asian countries to study in Europe and the United States. A large number of Asian international students and their parents choose to pay expensive tuition fees for studying abroad. The purpose is to introduce advanced Western technology back to their own country and improve and apply it in their own country to obtain exclusive development opportunities. To put it bluntly, studying abroad is also a kind of capital investment. For most Asian families, studying abroad is actually an exclusive choice because it means their family has the advantage of capital.

The term “identity” and the concept of cultural research have not been formally studied by Chinese scholars until the early 1980s when they received Westernised education. According to the direction of Chinese mainstream identity research, ‘Wen, Chung-i (文崇一) claimed that the theories of Westerners may not be applicable to Eastern societies, because nation-states and sovereign states are concepts invented by the West in modern times. Before the formation of

Western concepts of sovereignty and boundaries, Chinese people moved freely across Asia.<sup>379</sup> On the other hand, in the book *Chinese Overseas: Comparative Cultural Issues* (2004), Tan Chee-Beng believes that the distinction between ethnic identity, cultural identity, and national identity is a priority for Chinese identity research. Therefore, in the early overseas Chinese scholars, most of the research on (Chinese) identity focused on sociological identity analysis. Differently, most Western scholars focused their “identity” research on nationality, ethnic group and religion, such as Baumann, (1999), or Joseph, (2004).

In the western national identity research model, the country is often regarded as a cultural community, or culture is expressed in race or religion, as discussed by Smith. However, after World War II, the Chinese in Southeast Asia have undergone tremendous changes in their identity of Chinese ethnicity after experiencing nationality naturalisation, identity concepts, social structure, economic conditions, education methods, political awareness, and distribution flow. This is also the most profound and dramatic change in the history of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. At the same time, in terms of political identity, because the vast majority of Chinese choose (no matter voluntary or forced) to join the nationality of the local countries in Southeast Asia. By the end of the 1970s, the Chinese in Southeast Asia had basically completed the transformation of their identity in Southeast Asian countries. Due to the changes in various external environments and the adjustment of individual self-identity, Chinese identity awareness and Chinese self-changes are now showing great differences in contemporary Southeast Asia.

This phenomenon can also be clearly found in Southeast Asian Chinese contemporary art development. Compared with the early Southeast Asian Chinese artists who directly (explicitly) used Chinese elements and art media for artistic development and Chinese cultural inheritance,

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<sup>379</sup> For the further explanation see Appendix 9.

the current Southeast Asian Chinese artists use Chinese cultural characteristics as the material and elements of their artworks, which is ambiguous, and even deliberately weakens their own Chineseness to highlight the diverse characteristics of their Southeast Asian culture. I think the main reason is that the Southeast Asian countries after independence are more stable politically and economically than in the past. Young generation Chinese artists born in after 1990, they grew up in the contemporary Southeast Asian society and education under natural assimilation. Their social identity is more inclined to nationality identity than Chinese role identity. In addition, the awareness of Chinese in Southeast Asian countries is also different due to different national policies and histories. For example, the Chinese art communities in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have always maintained the unique cultural characteristics and inheritance of the Chinese in the development of art and culture in the local countries, and extended the research materials of contemporary Sinophone Studying for academic research.

On the contrary, although traditional Chinese cultural customs have always been continued in Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia, contemporary Chinese cultural research and inheritance have not undergone new forms of transformation in these countries, and even the characteristics of Chinese culture are gradually weakening in these countries. Therefore, the current contemporary Chinese culture and inheritance in Southeast Asia are very different in Southeast Asian countries and regions, and this phenomenon will continue and develop diverse Southeast Asian Chinese cultural characteristics. At the same time, the identity of contemporary Southeast Asian Chinese is due to the special historical context of Southeast Asian countries and localities. In addition, Southeast Asia and international political and diplomatic factors complicate the relationship between immigrant and emigrate countries.

Under the complicated global relational background, there are many contradictory phenomena

and states in Southeast Asian Chinese ethics on the issue of Chinese identity. However, it is undeniable that after World War II:

nationalism in Southeast Asian countries flourished, and the identity of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, whether active or restricted, has gradually tended to the political identity of the country of residence. Even under such a political trend in Southeast Asia, due to their own economic strength and rich cultural and educational capital advantages in Southeast Asia, the Chinese ethnic are always unique among the mainstream ethnic groups in Southeast Asian countries, regardless of the past or the present.<sup>380</sup>

On the other hand, it makes the Chinese trapped in their own circle and separate them from other local ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. Overall the identity development of contemporary Southeast Asian Chinese with other Southeast Asian nations is approaching the identity of the country of residence. Southeast Asia Chinese immigrants and their descendants have transformed from a single Chinese identity in the past to a pluralistic contemporary identity in Southeast Asian countries. Through the current cultural and artistic research results, it can be clearly found that the overall identity of contemporary Chinese in Southeast Asia tends to be ambiguity. Further, in order to fully clarify the current identity of Chinese in Southeast Asia, internal research must understand the historical background of the origin and immigration of Chinese ethnic groups in Southeast Asian countries and regions. External research also needs to analyse the relationship between the national policies of Southeast Asian countries and the development of overseas international situations. For the discussion of further contemporary art practice and case study analysis, this will be in Chapter 3.

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<sup>380</sup> Yi-Hsuan. Huang, *Teaching Chinese as a Second Language under the Influence of the Ethnic Chinese Identity in Philippines*, MA diss., Kaohsiung, National Kaohsiung Normal University, 2014, p. 44.

**How to Analyse The Development of Chinese Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia From the Perspective of Sinophone Studying. (如何以華語語系研究的觀點分析東南亞華族當代藝術的發展)**

The issue of diaspora derived from migration has attracted much attention in the research of modern world history. Philip D. Curtin was the first to introduce the concept of “diaspora” into historical research. His book, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, closely combined the concept of “diaspora” with “cross-cultural trade”. And this point of view was widely cited in academic circles. I think such a research perspective is suitable for the study of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. According to Curtin’s perspective:

When urban life began to appear in the human world, at the same time trade settlements (貿易聚落) also appeared. Some trade merchants chose to leave their original settlements and go to other towns or cities to develop, and they settled overseas as non-locals. And these merchants settled in foreign place, learning the local language, customs, and local business methods. Since these merchants living in foreign places longer, they become familiar with the trading mode of the new place of residence, so they can provide services to other merchants who are from the same hometown. Those early merchants naturally became “cross-cultural” intermediaries between the newly immigrated merchants and the local aborigines.<sup>381</sup>

Diaspora through overseas trade is common in Southeast Asian countries, in addition to the diaspora Chinese in Southeast Asia, there are also many diaspora Europeans, diaspora Americans and diaspora Indians who have based and lived in Southeast Asia due to colonial history, wars and trade factors. Although the proportion of these diaspora minority ethnic groups is not as large as that of the diaspora Chinese in Southeast Asia, their existence also reflects the local historical stamp and the diversity of contemporary Southeast Asian nations. Diaspora research echoes the development history and migration paths of different diaspora groups around the world through the development history of transnational trade. The current

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<sup>381</sup> Xiu-Hui. Wang, ‘The Development of Overseas Chinese Migration from the Perspective of Modern World History’, *Journal of History and Education*, vol. 17, 2010, p. 137.

wave (trend) of Chinese diaspora research is developing in Southeast Asia in Sinophone studying.

“Sinophone research” is cross-disciplinary which includes contemporary local literature, particularly nativist literature, diaspora writing, historiography, and family sagas. Recently the research materials extend to visual material such as films and contemporary visual art. The professor of the Asia Center at Harvard University, Tu Wei-Ming (杜維明), in his publication, *Cultural China*, writes that ‘Chinese diaspora consists of individuals, such as scholars, teachers, writers, who try to bring their conceptions of China to their own linguistic communities... writing in English has had a greater impact on the intellectual discourse on culture China than those others in Chinese.’<sup>382</sup> Despite the fact that the Chinese diaspora is marginalised in their immigrant country, they still actively engage with different cultures and negotiate for the role of scattered Chinese in navigating China's contemporary global culture as something of significance. However, ‘the diaspora will begin to fade in relevance as Chinese migrants become naturalised and lose their mother tongue. Minoritization is a process, and identity is a temporal category, rather than simply an existential, cultural, political, or geographical issue.’<sup>383</sup> Through the study of Sinophone materials, we can further understand the ethnic identity and cultural identity of the Diaspora Chinese in different stages.

Sinophone research began with the study of modern Sinology and diaspora Chinese culture in the United States. At present, the research methods and discourses of Sinophone are divergent and developed centred on Chinese-American scholars. At the same time, the development and academic application of cross disciplinary and interdisciplinary research in contemporary

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<sup>382</sup> Wei-Ming. Tu, ‘The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today’, *American Academy of Arts & Sciences*, vol.120, no. 2, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>383</sup> Shumei, Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, p.186.

American academic circles is more mature than other countries. I think this is directly related to the fact that the United States receives the largest number of overseas immigrants in the world.<sup>384</sup> In America, language was never an issue for national liberation; the decoupling of language and nation is also an everyday reality for many countries in Europe.<sup>385</sup> Sinophone studying has attracted much attention in the early 21st century, especially in the vibrant academic community in the United States. It is deepening the breadth and scope of the existing discussions on “Chinese-ness” and Chinese identity. Sinophone Studies is a new Chinese research subject, supported by some scholars who are themselves Chinese. Those scholars' assertions do not follow the cultural nostalgia complex of the cultural China (文化中國)<sup>386</sup> and do not imitate the doctrine of transnationalism to abandon the national boundaries, and for locality as the foundation to interpret the framework of immigrant society to establish the premise of local identity. Since the middle of the 20th century, overseas Chinese culture has flourished. Mainland China can no longer cover the complicated phenomenon of social production during this period. Particularly, in these modern times of globalisation and postcolonialism trends, people with a Chinese background must possess a more flexible thinking regarding their self-identity.

As mentioned earlier, Southeast Asia has the largest population of diaspora Chinese in the world, and Southeast Asia has rich and diverse local development characteristics of Chinese culture, which inevitably attracts the attention of Chinese diaspora and cultural researchers at home and abroad. After 2010, this wave of Southeast Asian Sinophone Studies ushered in a peak, and the books on Southeast Asian Sinophone studies were published successively in both

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<sup>384</sup> Nations United, ‘The Number of International Migrants in the World Reached 232 Million’, *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/zh/desa/number-of-international-migrants-rises>, (accessed 27 Jan 2023).

<sup>385</sup> Benedict. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London, Verso Books Press, 1983, p. 47. Shumei. Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2007, p. 187.

<sup>386</sup> Wei-Ming. Tu, *Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center*, Cambridge, Mass, The MIT Press, 1991, pp. 1-32.

Chinese and English. *Rethinking Chineseness: Translational Sinophone Identities in the Nanyang Literary World*<sup>387</sup> was an important example of sinophone research about Chinese-language writers from Borneo, Malaysia, and Singapore and provided the new perspective on the connection of the notion of “Chineseness”, identity, and the evolution of Southeast Asian local cultures. *Sinophone Malaysian Literature: Not Made in China*, by Alison Groppe, (2013) discussed literary expressions on being Chinese forged in Malaysia. *Writing the South Seas: Imagining the Nanyang in Chinese and Southeast Asian Postcolonial Literature*” Brian Bernards, (2015), analysed the situation of Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic community, and how Southeast Asia Chinese has been described and has been imagined in Asia. And *Remapping the Sinophone: The Cultural Production of Chinese-Language Cinema in Singapore and Malaya before and during the Cold War* (Hee Wai-Siam, 2019) explored Chinese-language cinema in Singapore and Malaya. Such studies explained the complexities of Southeast Asia sino-literature and sino-film included the interaction of Sinitic and non-Sinitic languages. Recently those research materials merely have remained in limited academic allowed arrangement. In my theoretical research I would add the contemporary art perspective and methodology to enrich and extend the possibility of Sinophone studying. There is no doubt that sinophone research in the Southeast Asian academic world is becoming popular, particularly in Malaysia, Singapore. In addition, development of Sinophone research in Taiwan academic circles also provides important support. After 2010, a lot of sinophone seminars, issues and publications were held in Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries. For example.....

Please refer to Appendix 10.

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<sup>387</sup>E K.Tan, *Rethinking Chineseness : Translational Sinophone Identities in the Nanyang Literary World*, Amherst, New York, Cambria Press, 2013.

Sinophone Southeast Asia: Sinitic Voices across the Southern Seas (东南亚华语语系：南洋华语之声)<sup>388</sup> collected an overview of the research on Sinophone in Southeast Asia written by different scholars from various countries in Southeast Asia. Through field investigations and archive research in various parts of Southeast Asia, it explores the development of Sinophone and the multilingual culture of the Chinese community in Southeast Asia from different perspectives- especially the Chinese dialect culture in Southeast Asia in various places. This book shows how the dialects in various parts of Southeast Asia are influenced by the local vernacular languages; with the passage of time and changes in geographical location, Chinese language and Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia become localised and formed a unique contemporary local language of the Sinophone. Although, many of Southeast Asia's unique Sinitic languages are now endangered, as fewer and fewer individuals retain fluency in the tongues of their grandparents, particularly amidst the hegemony of national languages, Mandarin, and English. Yet they constitute important linguistic heritage, are closely intertwined with (often equally endangered) localised cultural practices, and crucial to the region's grassroots histories.

Please refer to Appendix 11.

The Sinophone study is to present the diversity of the Chinese language. Sinophone is not only a literary study of a single language and a single region. The Sinophone theory originally proposed by Chinese-American scholars has been transmitted from American academic circles to Asian Chinese academic circles in the past two decades, which has aroused echoes, reflections, or criticisms from many Chinese people to open the new Chinese horizon. Shih,

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<sup>388</sup> This book co-edited by Dr. Caroline Chia, a researcher at the Chinese Department of the National University of Singapore, and Dr. Tom Hoogervorst, a researcher at the Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.

Shu-mei, an important promoter of Sinophone studies, considers Sinophone as a valid concept ‘calls for the rise of a critical position that is likely to yield neither to nationalist nor imperialist repression, allowing a pluralistic moderation (多元調節) and multidirectional (多向)’<sup>389</sup> I also agree with her research point of view, the research entry point of Sinophones takes language as the basic orientation of cultural identity. Southeast Asia has the largest concentration of overseas Chinese, and the study of Chinese in Southeast Asia presents the diversity of different Chinese cultures and the possibility of Chinese.

Sinophone Southeast Asia differs from other parts of the world in its remarkable linguistic diversity. Unlike early Chinese migration to Australia and the Americas, which was dominated by Cantonese communities, Southeast Asia exhibits a complex makeup involving speakers of Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hainanese, Hakka, Henghua (興化), Fuzhouhua (Hokchia/福清/福州話) and many more.<sup>390</sup> In Southeast Asia, apart from Singapore and Malaysia, scholars of Sinophone studies in other countries in Southeast Asia, such as Cambodia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, have also begun to record the local contemporary Chinese cultural characteristics and focus on the issues of minority ethnic culture loss. In addition, Southeast Asia’s Sinophone research multifaceted storehouse of experiences and case studies – centring on transregional circulations, layered histories of mobility, and exceptional plurilingualism – invites a move beyond the common dichotomy of mainland China versus “the diaspora”<sup>391</sup>.

In addition to Chinese literature and Chinese writers, the current Sinophone research materials

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<sup>389</sup> Shih, Shu-mei, “Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production.” Jing Tsu and David Wang(ed.), *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 47.

<sup>390</sup> Caroline Chia, and Tom Hoogervorst, *Sinophone Southeast Asia : Sinitic Voices across the Southern Seas*, Leiden ; Boston, Brill, 2021, <https://brill.com/display/book/9789004473263/BP000013.xml?language=en>, (accessed 27 Jan 2023).

<sup>391</sup> Caroline Chia, and Tom Hoogervorst, *Sinophone Southeast Asia : Sinitic Voices across the Southern Seas*, Leiden ; Boston, Brill, 2021, <https://brill.com/display/book/9789004473263/BP000013.xml?language=en>, (accessed 27 Jan 2023).

have extended to the analysis of Chinese language film works and Chinese ethnic directors. In Shu-mei Shih's book *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*(視覺與認同: 跨太平洋華語語系表述·呈現), there is a large amount of literature review through the analysis and dialectics of the plot of Chinese movies and the visual language of movie screens, which have become effective materials for academic research in Sinophone study. Chinese ethnic directors in Southeast Asia record and explore the history and current situation of Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia through films and art, such as Ming-liang Tsai(蔡明亮), James Lee(李添兴), Ho Yuhang(何宇恒), Midi Zhao(趙德胤), Namewee Wee Meng Chee(黃明志) and filmmaker Lily Yu Monteverde(杨莉华).

In the research and practice of this thesis, I extended the research methods and concepts of Sinophone to the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia for integrated research and reference. This is an experimental research approach and academic practice. Although the Sinophone research has incorporated global Chinese language films into the existing Sinophone research, it is a new proposal and challenge to study the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia into Sinophone.

Hegel (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 1770-1831) wrote about the function and value of art in *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. He described that artworks can not only arouse people's immediate and direct pleasant feelings, but also arouse people's judgement. Because people's rationality can involuntarily think about the content of art and the way in the artworks of art are presented, and consider whether the interpretation of art is appropriate. Therefore, the demand for art philosophy in today's era is much higher than in the past. Art allows people to think intellectually. The purpose is no longer to create art, but to philosophically understand what art

is.<sup>392</sup> I firmly believe that contemporary art not only provides visual appreciation for viewers, but also reflects the diverse outlook and social engagement and demands. Artworks can be analysed and interpreted in multiple ways to find the potential message and value of the society. Art is the medium(media) and carrier for conveying information and consciousness (will/意志), it can also be used to confront or resist the framework that the real society cannot break through. Of course, the inner appeal of an artwork does not have to be rough and rebellious, it can also be gentle, peaceful and positive.

In any case, artworks carry messages consciously and unconsciously through artistic interpretation (cross-media). Artwork provides a special metaphor and has the tension to gather consciousness when people contemplate art. When the message of artwork is interpreted by different viewers, it will meet with the real society and form a collision to stimulate different sparks and possibilities. I think this is a manifestation of a certain value in art, and it deserves to be analysed and corded. My research and theory responds to the characteristics of the Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic as a Southeast Asia special ethnic situation and through analysis of the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia. Facing the vibrant field of Sinophone Studying methodology, which opens the new possibility of cultural productions of Sinophone and Chinese ethnic contemporary art and culture communities.

According to the diversity of Chinese cultural resources such as arts, movies, Sinophone literature and customs in Southeast Asia can be found in the great diversity of contemporary Chinese culture. In particular, the development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia and the artworks from Chinese ethnic artists in Southeast Asia are included as new material research and reference. I believe it can be a fruitful combination unlocks new avenues to

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<sup>392</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Thomas Malcolm Knox, *Aesthetics : Lectures on Fine Art. Vol. I*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 103.

investigate not only textuality, but also the materiality of culture and language resources, including the various ways in which Southeast Asia's Sinitic languages and Southeast Asia Chinese art can be analysed or used in diversity and cross-disciplinary research. It also reflects the different sociolinguistic and visual language understanding and application. Each Southeast Asian country's Chinese ethnic approaches arts and language in conversation with history and identity. This is especially meaningful in minority contexts. I believe through diverse and open research materials in Arts, language, history, autoethnography and identity together let people to stand in different scales of perspective. I hope this new research method can link Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic or even individuals and also provide a different Chinese perspective to global patterns of Chinese migration, Southeast Asian ethnic identity.

### **Chapter 3. Exhibition Recording and Analysis for Curatorial Practice(展覽實踐紀錄與分析)**

#### **Research Purpose and Value of Curatorial Practice(策展實踐的研究目的與價值)**

The structure of the first two chapters of this thesis was to establish a three-dimensional, even multi-dimensional, general understanding of the contemporary Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic perspective and Southeast Asian Chinese contemporary art based on the analysis and research of multiple documents orientated towards history, society and art culture. This third chapter will execute and record a contemporary young ethnic Chinese artist's self-identity and the development of their Chineseness in the practice case study while taking Taiwan and Singapore exchange projects as research examples. I think that artists and curators can participate in society through artistic practice, and at the same time reflect the current social situation and review historical development through exhibitions and art works.

This chapter will consider art, as a medium of social practice, how to use the method of 'art practice' to arouse the potential cognition of the individual (people) and at the same time as the name of art to escape the predicament under the current social and cultural structure. Questions will be asked, for example, whether social participation in the development of contemporary art can provide multiple opportunities to present, respond to, and even solve some of today's social issues and enable problem awareness through the presence of curatorial practice? This is an open question to which no one can certainly reply, and this reflects how art cannot be understood and interpreted in a single way. However, there is no doubt that the case of art practice deserves to be recorded and analysed. The biggest difference between 'practice' and 'theory' in Aristotle's point of view, is that compared with theoretical knowledge, which uses

intuitive reason to deal with eternal existence, when human beings face changeable existence in the world, they will use practical knowledge and wisdom to be practised to get the answers and questions needed.<sup>393</sup> In the study of modern philosophy in the 19th century, Hegel (G.W.F. Hegel, 1770-1831) analysed ‘practice’ as a historical process, saying that all things form social functions in the process of ‘practice’.

On the other hand, the dialectic between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ can also find different proponents of practical theory in ancient Chinese poetry (ancient Chinese academic methods). For example, Du Fu (杜甫), a practical poet, actively advocated that the social responsibilities and obligations of Chinese scholars should be elevated to a specific practical orientation. Many of his poems mainly reflect the social outlook of the country at that time period, and use metaphors to present his opinions. His works had multi-layered meanings. “Du Fu's poems showed his care and practice for ancient Chinese politics and society during his travels around the ancient Chinese world.”<sup>394</sup> Du Fu actively participated in social and national issues through his identity as a poet, and recorded history for future generations in the form of poetry, so he has been called the ‘Poet-Historian (詩史)’ and the ‘Poet-Sage (詩聖).’<sup>395</sup> In addition, the great Chinese poet, Li Bai (李白), who is as famous as Du Fu, revealed his self-expectation for Chinese poets in his poems in his early works. He believed that the character of Chinese poets should be first to study hard, and then to display their abilities through specific practices after possessing a wealth of knowledge. At the same time, poets should participate actively in national and social affairs and assist the monarch in governing the country. In Li Bai's work

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<sup>393</sup> Lei SUN, ‘From Wisdom to Practical Wisdom-on the Transformation of Basis of Aristotle’s Practical Philosophy’, *Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*, vol. 44, no. 5, 2017, pp. 127–140.

<sup>394</sup> Shiu-an-Yu. Chen, ‘The Beauty of Morality between Parents and Children in Du Fu’s Poems’, *Modern Taohuayuan Journal*, no. 2, 2012, pp. 11–15, <https://rcs.tajen.edu.tw/var/file/49/1049/img/873/2.pdfpdf>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

<sup>395</sup> Chinese Foundation For Digitization Technology, ‘Dictionary View [詩聖] - Ministry of Education “Revised Mandarin Dictionary” 2021’, *Dict.revised.moe.edu.tw*, 2021, <https://dict.revised.moe.edu.tw/dictView.jsp?ID=127254&la=0&powerMode=0>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

‘Travelling is Hard (行路難)’, the last two sentences of the poetry are: "Travelling is hard! So many crossroads; which to choose? One day I'll skim the waves, blown by the wind, With sails hoisted high, across the vast ocean (行路難，行路難，多歧路，今安在。长风破浪会有时，直挂云帆济沧海)」。 The ‘Travelling (行路)’”here represented the specific practical action of the poet's social practice. Therefore, whether it is Western or Chinese early academic research, ‘practice’ is an important knowledge base and orientation of implementation. This chapter aims to now consider the issues arising from practical research, to add to the previous theoretical discussions in Chapters 1 and 2.

In the development of global academic research under Westernised education in the 20th century, practical research reached the peak, and it was French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu (Pierre Bourdieu, 1930-2002) who contributed to the integration of practical theory. Bourdieu proposed that in the field of practice of actors, he went deep into the practice with the dual nature of structure and construction formed by the interaction between actors and social structure. “He opposed the theoretical logic that attempted to appear omniscient and explain human practice by deeply analysing the logic of practice (la logique de la pratique).”<sup>396</sup> The above point of view shows that if the theory is applied to the individual cases of any culture and society, there will be differences in practice due to the differences in the formation of habits of individuals or communities from different growth backgrounds. It should be known that, the formula (公式) is only a reduction (化約) rather than an absolute. The definition and purpose of practice is mainly used to understand the basic model (模組) behind the behaviour and attitude of a specific object, and then explain the interaction between social culture and personal experience. It can be the temporal state of everyday practice. This can quickly analyse the temporary state of daily life practice in society. I think it is very valuable to add case analysis of

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<sup>396</sup> Hung-Ju Hsu, ‘P. Bourdieu’s “Practice” and Its Implications for Educational Research’, *Journal of Educational Research and Development*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2006, p. 154.

practical projects to theoretical analysis and research. Furthermore, art as one of the methods for social practice, may not only be interpreted by a single linear context which opens the multidimensional illuminations. However, the individual case analysis of practice cannot fully apply the theoretical results and objective analysis of the complete research topic, and ‘Art practice’ is futile if it is just a word and a fixed explanation to the human world, because until today, it is difficult for art to be classified into its meaning and category.

The value and application of art to human beings is still an unknown exploration. However, the artistic practice under the artistic framework to be discussed in this thesis has the evidence and dialectical value referred to in my research content, and at the same time has the possibility of extending research materials in contemporary cross-field research. I believe curatorial practice in my theory is a necessary research methodology. The case of curatorial practice research in the third chapter includes a complete record of exhibition schedule execution, analysis of exhibited works, public feedback and exhibition social benefits. Through the actual post-exhibition analysis of data to echo the content discussed in the first and second chapters of this thesis, this can effectively echo the content of the lecture review in the research and conduct a multi-analysis of the subject. Therefore, the arrangement of art curatorial practice recording and analysis in the third chapter of the thesis provides vitality and the latest art data for reference to the complete thesis planning.

‘An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects (各奇所物)’ is an exhibition of artistic practice in this thesis; it was an international art exchange programme exhibited by curators Chen Nien Ting and Jaxton Su in Taiwan in 2021 and in Singapore in 2022. This chapter will objectively and comprehensively record the execution process of the exhibition. The content of the record includes the preparation of the curators in 2019, the invitation to participating artists, the search for a suitable exhibition space, the application for sponsorship and funding, the

organisation of the executive team, the exhibition works, exhibition marketing and publicity, and viewing visitors' feedback and the social evaluation of the exhibition. This art (curatorial) practice once again explored and verified the research on the awareness of Chinese ethnic identity and belonging of contemporary Chinese ethnic young artists in Asia. In addition, open questions are considered here. For example, can the 'art field' be created through 'art practice' and reflect and respond to the exploration of contemporary public social phenomena and issues? Can we explore possible solutions from art? The process of the exhibition was reproduced in the form of text (words) records, observing the effectiveness of the curatorial practice of the new generation of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia and the trend of Chinese identity among the younger Chinese ethnic generation. At the same time, it is expected to provide case studies for the direction of art research in the development of Sinophone studying.

### **The Exhibition Internal Practice Framework and Analysis(展覽內部執行架構及分析)**

The content of this chapter is based on the analysis of the internal documents related to the practice case study of my exhibition. I (the curator) objectively record the on-site materials of exhibition planning and execution, the conception of the exhibition, art exchange activities, and artwork description to conduct multiple analyses of the exhibition. The practice exhibition case study 'An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects' is an exchange presentation (result) of the contemporary art exchange programme between Singapore and Taiwan, co-curated by young Chinese ethnic Taiwanese curator, Nien-Ting Chen, and Singaporean curator, Jaxton Su. This was a long-term art exchange programme for the young Chinese ethnic artists in Asia. The curators used 'object' as the key word of this exchange programme. The exhibition presented

perspectives and observations by the current young Chinese ethnic generations in Singapore and Taiwan on their relationship with other Chinese ethnic people.

The exhibition was completed in Taipei in December 2021 and in Singapore in June 2022. The exhibition venues are both in alternative art spaces. I will here provide the complete record of the preparation and execution of the internal process in the early stage of the exchange and the exhibitions, including pre-exhibition working, curatorial and artistic exchange concepts and planning, selection of participating artists, introduction and analysis of artists and exhibited works, curators' observations, and internal execution data, such as exhibition design, sponsorship and funding. The entire exchange programme lasted three and a half years between the stages of preparation, implementation and case closure from 2019 to 2022. The execution work is mainly coordinated by two curators, Nien-Ting Chen and Jaxton Su. These are also artists with rich experience in international exhibitions around the world. They have worked together as dual curators for over six years and have co-executed more than 15 contemporary art exhibitions, mainly in the UK and Asia. Although the curators come from different national backgrounds, they are both artists and curators concerned with the interpretation of Chinese ethnic history in Asia. The motivation for this cooperation comes from the curiosity of the two curators about the self-identity of young Chinese people in Taiwan and Singapore, therefore they decided to cooperate with international exchange programmes and contemporary art exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore.

Similar to many Southeast Asian countries, Singapore and Taiwan are both multicultural entities composed of different ethnic groups, and the biggest ethnic group is Chinese. There are commonalities in both lifestyles, yet as disparate nations, the two have each developed their own unique Chinese ethnic cultural identities for local Chinese ethnic people. The influence of Chinese ethnic communities in Taiwan and Singapore bring about collective memories that are

seemingly homogeneous, but also distinct. This exchange exhibition in Taiwan and Singapore adopts a flexible bilateral curatorial model based on a common research ground. The exhibition hoped to utilise cross-cultural observation, learning and examination of perspectives, in order to bring about fresh entry points into constructing a flourishing and experimental contemporary art domain.

‘An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects’ was an international young ethnic Chinese artists’ exchange project (exhibition) using an assortment of random objects, in an attempt to discuss the imperative of current Chinese ethnic identity issues in Asia. The ubiquity of objects as multi-faceted constituents of culture can be reflected in users' subconsciousness and mental condition. This exchange exhibition invited ten groups of Taiwanese and Singaporean young Chinese ethnic artists to create new works based on chosen objects from their everyday life. Each work was a coalescence of the artist’s observations of current societal situations occurring at home or abroad, as well as the artist's research interests and enquiries over the years. The aim for this exchange exhibition was to utilise cross-cultural observations and examination of perspectives to construct a flourishing and experimental contemporary art and Sinophone research platform between Singapore and Taiwan.

As a new form of contemporary art practice, the curation attracted public attention. “In the past, people visited exhibitions that focused on exhibited works, however nowadays more people also care about the overall concept and presentation of the exhibition.”<sup>397</sup> Furthermore, the preparatory process and research for exhibitions has also developed to a contemporary art

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<sup>397</sup> Sotheby's Institute of Art, ‘Trends in Contemporary Curating’, *Sotheby's Institute of Art*, 2012, <https://www.sothebysinstitute.com/news-and-events/news/trends-in-contemporary-curating>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

professional discipline (curatography/策展學).<sup>398</sup> The preparatory work for this case study exhibition included organising the executive team, inviting suitable artists and contacting the exhibition venue, fund preparation and application for sponsorship, planning the exhibition schedule and timetable and coordinating work assignment. In my personal experience of curating practice, the scope of a curator's exhibition work is often difficult to define clearly, especially when the exhibition's funding is uncertain. The curator needs to prepare the conceptual conception of the exhibition, the space planning of the exhibition space, the production of the exhibition plan and progress, the contact of the artist, the seeking of sponsors and even the marketing and publicity arrangements, etc. All execution phases of the entire exhibition require the constant coordination and confirmation of the curator, whose cumbersome job responsibilities still have no definite boundaries.

There were only two curators in the initial team of this case study exhibition. After they determined the exhibition theme and direction of curatorial research, they began to collate a list of young ethnic Chinese artists in Taiwan and Singapore. In particular, the selection of the list of the potential artists in this time was different from the general practice. The curators developed a bilateral curatorial model with experimental proposals, which meant that the two co-curators shared a common curatorial research context with cross-border foreign (others) perspectives and cross-documentary references for the selection of artists and their artworks. The list of Singaporean artists was provided by the curator, Jaxton. The Taiwanese curator, Nien-Ting, selected Singaporean artists and their artworks for the exhibition. In contrast, curator Nien-Ting provided a list of Taiwanese artists to Singaporean curator, Jaxton, who selected the Taiwanese artists and their artworks. However, the exhibition site planning and installation work of the Singapore and Taiwan exhibitions were led by the local curator and

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<sup>398</sup> Hongjohn Lin, 'What Is Curatography?', *Curatography*, 6 Mar. 2020, <https://curatography.org/what-is-curatography/>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

teams. The cross-observation and discussion of foreign curators brought different entry points to the exhibition, and at the same time kept concentrated on exhibition orientation without the pressure of social relationship. I believe that such experimental curatorial cooperation enriched the research quality of the exhibition and the openness of the overall results, and also injected new vitality into the curatorial approach. After confirming the initial list of invited artists, the curators contacted the artists who were willing to participate in the exhibition, and at the same time also contacted the exhibition venues that were interested in cooperating.

“Generally, an exhibition is composed of three core roles between ‘art space’, ‘curator’ and ‘artist’. The three roles are responsible for the relationship between exhibitions resource providers and content providers.”<sup>399</sup> The exhibition venue was planned for an alternative space. The main reason was the social characteristics of the alternative space. Alternative art spaces generally refer to exhibition spaces other than art museums and commercial galleries. “The emergence of alternative space in history was born in response to the openness of contemporary art development.”<sup>400</sup> While contemporary art media was broken of different materials and principles from contemporary artists, at the same time the contemporary art exhibition venue was also liberated in different showcase places. The alternative space has the characteristics of a composite space, which provides freedom, unofficiality, no commercial interests, and no strict restrictions compared with art museums and commercial galleries. Therefore, the spirit of alternative space is an anti-mainstream, counter-system, non-profit attitude. The development of alternative space in Asia is mainly established by artists themselves, and alternative space can provide opportunities for artists to exhibit, and at the same time establish an artistic social circle (net) through regular exhibition activities. In addition, alternative spaces often cooperate

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<sup>399</sup> Adrian George, *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces*. London, Thames And Hudson, 2017. (Digital version).

<sup>400</sup> Cristelle. Terroni, ‘The Rise and Fall of Alternative Spaces’, *Books & Ideas*, 7 Oct. 2011, <https://booksandideas.net/The-Rise-and-Fall-of-Alternative>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

with overseas alternative spaces, so can also serve as an exchange and information sharing function for the international world art circle.

“The alternative space kindly accepts opportunities for avant-garde and experimental artworks to be exposed to the public, and at the same time allows young artists to seek more diverse creative energy experiences outside the mainstream and centre.”<sup>401</sup> After the 1990s, both Taiwan and Singapore began to have alternative spaces and provided more exhibitions for local young artists and gave chances for artistic people to talk together. In the early era of alternative spaces in Taiwan and Singapore, the government’s art subsidy policy had not yet been established, and there were no art foundations or non-profit organisations to sponsor, so all operations were paid by artist groups themselves. “In the 1990s, in order to seek academic education or artistic exposure opportunities outside the mainstream of art, young artists decided to organise collective art social practice of art groups, including the establishment of alternative spaces.”<sup>402</sup> After the millennium, alternative spaces in Asia are generally recognized by the domestic art circles, and the government recognizes that alternative spaces can provide positive effects and contributions to national art promotion. Therefore, the Singapore and Taiwan governments and national art foundations began to provide local alternative space operation assistance. In the 2010s, ‘the development of alternative spaces in Singapore and Taiwan ushered in an explosive period, and cities in Taiwan and Singapore successively established alternative spaces and sought government subsidies.’<sup>403</sup> Alternative spaces have also begun to enter the daily life of the general public. Young people going to alternative spaces to visit exhibitions and participate in artistic events have become one of the regular leisure activities on

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<sup>401</sup> Tzu-Chin Kao, ‘Mine Deposits Mined and Created on the Way to the Borderlands— Development of Installation Art in Alternative Spaces in the 1990s’, *Art Critique of Taiwan*, vol. 12, 2001, p. 49.

<sup>402</sup> Pei-Yi LU, *Creating Spaces-Post Alternative Spaces in Asia*. Taipei, Garden City Publishing Ltd., 2011, p. 56.

<sup>403</sup> Chien-Hui Kao, *Transpassing : Special Studies on Contemporary Asian Art in 2010s*, Taipei, ARTouch, 2013, p. 190.

weekends. So far, the alternative space has entered the artistic life of the general public and also has become an attraction for overseas art tourists when sightseeing.<sup>404</sup>

When the curator was looking for a suitable venue in Taiwan, she contacted VT-Artsalon,<sup>405</sup> the most well-known alternative space in Taipei, and successfully obtained the right to use the exhibition. On the other hand, finding a suitable exhibition venue in Singapore was not very smooth. The main reason is that in 2020, due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic and the cessation of assistance from the Singapore government for alternative spaces (withdrawal of exhibition building use rights and cancellation of subsidies), many art spaces in Singapore were forced to close in an instant. This undoubtedly dealt a painful blow to Singaporean art workers. However, the history of the emergence of alternative spaces was established as an art space for local artist groups to provide opportunities for exhibitions and gather artistic people, so even recently during the Covid-19 pandemic situation whilst many of Singapore's well-known historic alternative spaces were closing down, still some Singaporean young artists decided to open new alternative art spaces. Among them, Starch Gallery rose rapidly during this period. Finally the curators were honoured to be invited to curate our exhibition here.

Planning a three-year overseas art exchange plan requires not only the preparation of a detailed proposal, but also the hiring of a professional administrative team to implement it. Therefore, the primary goal of the second stage was to find financial subsidies to enable the plan to be real practice. The contemporary art environments in Taiwan and Singapore are partly similar. They are both supported by subsidies led by the national government to support young domestic art workers. In addition, the governments of both sides have actively cultivated domestic young

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<sup>404</sup> Chien-Hui Kao, *Transpassing: Special Studies on Contemporary Asian Art in 2010s*, Taipei, ARTouch, 2013, pp. 156-170.

<sup>405</sup> VT Artsalon, 'VT Artsalon – Contemporary Art Space @Taipei', *vt Artsalon*, <https://vtartsalon.com/en/vt-artsalon-2/>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

curators and artists to engage in transnational exchanges in recent years. The exhibition and exchange programme applied for subsidies from the government agencies of the two countries during 2021-2022 and successfully gained the International Arts Exchange Funding programme (curating) in southeast Asia in 2021. The funding sponsor was Taiwan Ministry of Culture. The amount received was TWD 700000 (about 17,500 pounds). The funding enabled the curator to cover overseas exhibitions and exchanges (including Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore). The second funding was from General Arts funding-Term 2 by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government. The amount received was TWD 100000 (about 2500 pounds). The funding covered the Taipei exhibition expenses. The third funding was from the National Arts Council marketing and audience development grant in Singapore and we received SGD7000 (about 4300 pounds). In 2022, the programme awarded Regular Grants tier 2 (International Culture Exchange) by the Taiwan National Culture and Arts Foundation (NCAF), the amount received was TWD 193000 (about 5300 pounds) and covered the Taiwanese team's travelling costs for the Singapore exhibition. Another source of funding was acquired from International Culture Exchange tier 2 by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government. The amount received was TWD 60000 (about 1600 pounds) for the working costs of the Singapore exhibition installation. With the assistance of government funds, the administrative teams from Taiwan and Singapore were successfully hired, so the pre-exhibition preparation and planning could be achieved.

In addition, due to the successful raising of sufficient funds, finally the curator decided to invite all of ten groups of new generation ethnic Chinese artists from Singapore and Taiwan to commission new works for the exhibitions and provide research and exchange trip costs for artists and the team. The curators provided as much as possible for the intensive exchange events, including online and physical activities and support for artists' research and commission payment for artworks to make sure artists had a comfortable environment in which

to develop their artworks. Through the high quality of presented artworks and exhibitions, exploration was then enabled to explore the views of the current young ethnic Chinese generation in Singapore and Taiwan and the relevance to themselves and other Chinese ethnic communities.

At the beginning of exchange activities for ‘An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists’ Exchange Exhibition’, because of the pandemic period almost all exchange and administration work was completed in the online working mode. During 2021, throughout the international exchange activities from August 11th to December 24th, the curators arranged regular exchanges and symposia for all artists participating. During the exchange period, the artists exchanged inspirations and research directions for new works, and also shared observations on contemporary Chinese culture between the two countries, and the development trend of art in the two countries, etc. The intensive and diverse arrangement of activities allowed the participating artists to have a more specific understanding of the research direction of the exhibition and each other, and at the same time to seek the resonance of contemporary ethnic Chinese culture between the two countries, which served as nourishment for the participating artists to develop their new works. The exchange and exhibition used daily objects as key words to explore the spirit of the times under familiar objects in the daily life of contemporary Chinese culture on both sides, and then explored the relationship between material and spirit under the changing environment of the times. Through the artists’ (re)interpretation, the observation of contemporary multicultural Chinese cultural awareness and Chinese ethnic generational identity changes provided audiences in Taiwan and Singapore with a deeper experience of each other's ethnic Chinese situation and social phenomena.

During the artists' exchange meeting, the curator, Chen Nianting, provided two cases of Chinese culture as reference for participating artists to develop new works if they were interested. The first one was 'hot pot (火鍋)'. Hot pot can be said to be one of the representatives of Chinese food culture. Hot pot perfectly interprets the essence of Chinese reunion around the stove table. At the same time, the process of eating hot pot is also a social activity, such as the order and timing of putting ingredients, seating arrangements, the order of eating by the elders, and the culture of drink pairing. Chinese ethnic individuals in different regions have established a unique Chinese food culture because of different ingredients and tastes. The meaning of hot pot to Chinese culture has surpassed the eating of the food itself. It also symbolises the behavioural interaction of 'family (reunion)' and 'harmony'. The intention of hot pot is to create a lively atmosphere of harmony, unity and cohesion. The usual arrangement for eating hot pot is that everyone sits at a big round table, and the table is filled with different ingredients, Chinese foodstuffs and ingredients are served beside the pot for people to put into the hot stock and share the food together. In addition, dipping sauce is also one of the essence of eating hot pot. In Chinese culture, commensal (共食) also symbolizes that people who eat together are as close as a family, and there is no problem that cannot be resolved while eating hot pot together. Although modern Chinese migration has caused modern Chinese ethnic people to disperse in different places, the habit of eating hot pot has also been passed down by Chinese culture around the world in different ways.

The second inspirational case study for sharing is 'Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers (旺旺仙貝)', which is a popular and cheap biscuit produced in the 20th century. It carries the childhood memories of all Chinese children born in the 80s and 90s. Chinese ethnic children in Southeast Asia know Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers from the extra snacks they ate when they went to their grandparents' house. In their memory, grandparents always proudly said that this is a

‘Chinese snack’ from China, which is their hometown's special production. After these children grow up to be adults, when they see Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers, Chinese nostalgia automatically appeared in their hearts, even when they might not understand and realise what Chinese nostalgia is. Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers reflects an unknown homesickness among young Chinese in Southeast Asia. However, when people carefully understand the commodity history of Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers, they will find that the image of Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers in reality is completely different from the truth that most Chinese (ethnic) people think. Particularly, many Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia think that Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers are Chinese snacks from China, but in fact Want Want Senbei is from Want Want Holdings Limited (Want Want/ 旺旺集團有限公司), which is a food company in Taiwan.<sup>406</sup> Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers from the Want Want company also had a technical cooperation with Japan's Iwatsuka Confectionery Co., Ltd. (岩塚製菓株式会社) since 1983.



<sup>406</sup> Want Want China, ‘Want Want Holdings Limited Official Website’, *Want-Want.com*, 2023, <https://www.want-want.com/tw/about/>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

Figure 26. Want Want China, *Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers*, accessed 12 May 2023, <https://www.want-want.com/tw/about/>.

Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers is a senbei (米菓煎餅) from Japan. Originally, this product was designed as a fake (imitation) Japanese-style snack developed to match the eating habits of Taiwan under Japanese rule in the past. In 1983, Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers was a great success in Taiwan immediately after its initial release. At the same time, the owner of Want Want company planned to expand the sales territory by overseas marketing, especially in the People's Republic of China, which was undergoing reform and opening up. "In 1989, the Want Want company officially entered the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore markets. However, under the historical background of entering the big Chinese market,"<sup>407</sup> the majority of Chinese had 'Anti-Japanese sentiment (仇日情結)'. Therefore, Want Want company proclaimed that their product Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers was the first rice cracker developed in China and achieved success in all of the Chinese market. According to *Forbes*, the World's Billionaires in 2013 announced that Want Want Holdings Limited's annual revenue in China reached US\$1.734 billion.<sup>408</sup> It is hard to imagine that the Want Want Company entered the Chinese mainland market with the snack Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers and gained a Chinese snack tycoon and mega revenue. Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers can succeed in different countries for different reasons. For example, behind the success of mainland China is a chance provided from Chinese economic reform and selling patriotism for the Chinese. For Taiwanese and Southeast Asian Chinese, Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers sells the nostalgia of historical memories through a snack. The nostalgia of some Taiwanese is the childhood memories of the era of Japanese rule. And for the Chinese ethnic

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<sup>407</sup>Want Want China, 'Want Want Holdings Limited Official Website', *Want-Want.com*, 2023, <https://www.want-want.com/tw/about/>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

<sup>408</sup>Want-daily, 'Want Want Has Been Ranked among the Top 50 Listed Companies in Asia-Pacific for 5 Consecutive Years, with Outstanding Revenue and Profits, and Entered the "Forbes" List', *Want Daily*, 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160308002443/http://want-daily.com/portal.php?aid=94009&mod=view> (accessed 27 Jan 2023).

individual in Southeast Asia, eating Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers offers the chance to inherit the sense of belonging of the Chinese ethnic and cultural heritage to their next generation. The curator, Nien-Ting Chen, used two Chinese object cases to re-deconstruct the familiar objects of the ethnic Chinese people and extended the open-ended question of whether similar but different Chinese mother cultural memories among contemporary Chinese ethnic people exist?

After a number of online exchange activities and discussions, artists from Singapore and Taiwan exchanged and shared their unique artistic observations of observing objects. After constant discussions, the two sides continued to correct the cultural differences and faults in each other's information and misunderstanding, and even from this exchange, people can detect the gradual disappearance of the belonging to Chinese culture and the sense of Chinese ethnic identity faced by the contemporary ethnic Chinese young generation in the two countries. The online exchange events between Taiwanese and Singaporean artists and curators was smooth and completed, but it was also found that Chinese Singaporean young people can no longer communicate in Chinese, and Taiwanese young artists cannot interact directly with Singaporeans due to their English communication skills. Therefore, when artists from both sides communicate, it was necessary for the Taiwan and Singapore curators to assist in translation in order to make the exchange progress smooth. This situation was one that the initial team was not aware of in planning activities. However, because of this kind of personal communication experience, one can deeply feel that the Chinese language has almost disappeared among the young generation in Singapore. This difficult situation echoes the problem of the loss of the mother tongue (華語母語) of the Chinese in Singapore, as discussed in the thesis Chapter 2, and it is also reflected in the all of young ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. This may be a concrete message that some Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic individuals are rapidly leaving the stage of the Chinese diaspora. This exchange exhibition

entrusted artists to make new works, hoping effectively to present the unique artistic vision of young Chinese ethnic artists of the two countries and to provide new interpretations of the contemporary Chinese diaspora phenomenon. Furthermore, the exhibition was to explore the current established framework and labels of the Chinese art and culture of each other, and to discover the diversity contained in the Chinese contemporary art and culture.

### **Analysing The Participatory Artworks And The Curator's Perspective(展出作品分析)**

Affected by the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020-2022, many international art exchange programmes were adjusted to online research and digital resources and media collections. It has greatly changed the way for artists to develop their art research and practice. After multiple online exchanges between the Case Practice Exhibition and the Taiwan-Singapore Contemporary Art Exchange Programme, artists from both sides have also exchanged information and identified Chinese issues they are interested in researching. The artist took familiar daily objects as an inspiration, rethought the conventional daily meaning of those objects by reflecting on their social meaning, and then explored the relationship between the material and the spirit of the Chinese ethnic contemporary situation. The exhibition 'An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects' was achieved through the interpretation of the artists' works and the integration of the curators' exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore. After multiple online exchanges between the Case Study Practice Exhibition and the Taiwan-Singapore Contemporary Art Exchange Programme, artists from both sides also exchanged information and identified the Chinese issues they are interested in researching. The artists took familiar daily objects as an inspiration, and rethought the conventional meaning of these objects in order to reflect on their social meaning, and then explored the relationship

between the material and spirit of the Chinese ethnic contemporary situation. The exhibition ‘An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects’ was achieved through the interpretation of the artists’ works and the integration of the curators’ exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore. This exhibition invited ten groups of young artists living in Singapore and Taiwan to create new works based on a selected object from their ordinary life experience. Each participating art work was a coalescence of the artist’s observations of current societal situations occurring at home or abroad, as well as the artist’s research interests and enquiries over years with their art context. Ten participating artworks were the first exposed in the exhibition. Those artworks discussed the ethnicity and cultural identity of the new generation of ethnic Chinese with the object of art. This section will introduce and analyse five selected works that accurately echo the Chinese identity and cultural phenomena of the current ethnic Chinese new generation in Southeast Asia

*How to Chase a Mountain*, produced by Desiree Tham, takes Feng Shui (風水)<sup>409</sup> as the research core of her work. The work is a medium-to-large sized installation and the main materials used are dice, stones and artificial turf.<sup>410</sup> Desiree mentioned in her introduction that:

I’ve always been fascinated by how objects can perform beyond their form and mediate relations in the way we perceive and think about the society. Focusing on deconstructing and altering their functions into everyday situations, I aim to explore the tension that underlies every object and the infinite world inside them. In my work, *How to Chase a Mountain* is an exploration of Feng Shui (風水). In Chinese culture, Feng Shui is widely used to determine in oriental buildings whether or not they offer an auspicious life for residents. The Chinese people generally believe that buildings are structures with spiritual significance, and that buildings with occupants have mutual influence in invisible power. Feng Shui has been widely used in Chinese society until today. Regardless of life or death, the Chinese people are always seeking to find their good

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<sup>409</sup> Fengshui (which literally means ‘wind and water’) dealt with the critical relationship of Man and the environment and was believed to involve the fate of the country. But after the fall of the Han dynasty in 220 A.D., as it gradually became mixed up with fortune-telling, the eight diagrams, the theory of the five elements, and the like, fengshui began to take on a heavy popular colouring, and it eventually came to be used merely as a tool to help individuals to get a promotion or to make it rich. Taiwan Panorama, ‘Fengshui--the Chinese Art of Geomancy’, *Taiwan Panorama*, 1986, <https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/Articles/Details?Guid=131e4351-18d6-4ea9-92bc-30e5b7323630&langId=3&CatId=11>, (accessed 27 Jan 2023).

<sup>410</sup> ‘Desiree Tham | How to Chase a Mountain’, *Www.artsy.net*, 2022, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/desiree-tham-how-to-chase-a-mountain-a3-4-1>, (accessed 12 May 2023).

geomantic location (風水寶地). This sculptural installation art work builds on the historical myths behind the 'Mountain Dragons' (龍脈)<sup>411</sup>,

where the shapes and forms of mountains govern one's wealth and status in life. In her work, Desiree surveys the geographical and urban spaces she lives in, particularly in the context of Singapore where mountains are non-existent. A large part of Singapore's territory is reclaimed from the sea, but can the man-made geographical scenery be included in the study of Feng Shui? This is an open question. Desiree thinks about the connection of overseas Chinese families through the study of Feng Shui in Singapore, especially in the current Singaporean Chinese families who are gradually abandoning the Chinese language and Chinese living customs. This extended thinking is not only the disappearance of Chinese ethnic identity but also the state of generational estrangement in Chinese families in Singapore. *How to Chase a Mountain* seeks to question the role of functionality and rationality by allowing the audience to have the authority to re-imagine the maximum and probable capacities to seek protection and to ponder what Chinese ethnic individual would pursue in return for prosperity and luck. What is the Chinese dream? And how far will we (ethnic Chinese) go to protect ourselves?

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<sup>411</sup> Desiree Tham, 'Desiree Tham Interview', *VT Artsalon*, 7 Dec. 2021, <https://vtartsalon.com/en/desiree-tham/>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).



Figure 27. Desiree Tham, *How to Chase a Mountain?*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

Tang Ya-Wen's artwork, *The Form of Comes and Goes*, is a composite material installation in which the main material used is postcards. The artist uses overseas postcards as an extension of the object theme of this work. *The Form of Comes and Goes* displays a cuboid structure with sea ripples through the stacking of postcards. The artist shaped the sea's visual image through objects (postcards) that once crossed the ocean and created a sense of weight and volume by stacking these postcards. The artist used a boat hook and rope to hang the artwork for exhibition showcase, and there was a boat lamp accompanying. In her imagination of this artwork she tried to build a lighthouse in the vast sea to guide the memories and greetings of wandering on the sea. Lines of informal personal communication (lines of murmurs/ 明信片文字話語中的呢喃) in postcards, reminders and memories written in these postcards that hold a variety of photographed scenic landscapes, cross the humid ocean and slowly embody this ocean of memory.

Ya-Wen's<sup>412</sup> works are mostly presented in composite media, installations, and images. She is good at mixing and assembling machines, mechanical parts, found objects, etc. into carriers of emotional objects. Through mechanical operation and virtual narrative, the fluctuating moments in her personal life experience are connected in series. In Ya-Wen's developing *oeuvre* she uses a lot of images about the ocean. She once said:

In my daily life, I am always immersed in imagining the ocean. Perhaps because of family experience, my father used to be a seafarer, he (father) lived at sea for a long time. However, for me, although I live on land, the sea seems to be not far away from me also. I usually think about the sea surface, the other end of the sea, and the distance between the sea and me.<sup>413</sup>

This work cleverly uses postcards and images of drifting in the sea to reflect that both Taiwan and Singapore are as a ship is drifting in the sea, regardless of their geographical location or national history for the Chinese diaspora.

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<sup>412</sup>Yawen Tang, ' | CV | TANG Ya Wen', *Tangyawen.com*, <https://tangyawen.com/CV>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

<sup>413</sup> Yawen Tang, 'The Form of Comes and Goes', *Tangyawen.com*, 2021, <https://tangyawen.com/The-Form-of-Comes-and-Goes>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).



Figure 28. Tang Ya-Wen, *The Form of Comes and Goes*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

Shao-Ying Huang's work, *Cognitive Component of Happiness*, is a composite installation that uses soft sculpture. The artist sculpts fibre objects.<sup>414</sup> This work discusses the relevance and similarities of contemporary Chinese culture. The artist raised a question of the national essence of the Chinese in the artist exchange forum. What is the happiness that the Chinese ethnic pursue? The work is divided into three installation parts. One is a Chinese sentence 'How are you?' which is made of transparent acrylic. The second part is five cups of drinks in different colours, and the last part is a very high threshold (門閾) installation. The artist's imagination of ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia is very unfamiliar. She starts with a sentence of daily greetings; water is the most basic extension in the diet, which is like the gradual colour of a hand-shaken drink. The artist, Shao-Ying, has never been to Singapore, so she found some Singapore local delicacies on the Internet. Bandung (a rose syrup drink), with

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<sup>414</sup> 'Shao-Ying Huang', *Nunu Fine Art*, <https://www.nunufineart.com/-shaoying-huang>, (accessed 17 May 2023).

its striking colour, seems to be filled with happiness. On the other hand, regarding the city houses, the door threshold has always been the first place of the house entrance so she pays attention to look for a meaning of having one's own house for the young Chinese ethnic generation. The concept of the threshold comes from Feng Shui. It is a symbol of barriers, gatherings, and status. The external design, and the relative living place, is indeed a metaphor of class. This work honestly reflects the strangeness of the Taiwanese to Chinese in Singapore today, but in the strangeness there is the expectation of care and blessing. In addition, the work thinks about the pursuit of happiness by Chinese people, which comes from the desire and difficulty of owning their house. Shao-Ying uses the threshold to echo that even the Chinese ethnic people who live in different places are always deeply influenced by Chinese culture and Chinese social principles, so the aims of pursuing happiness for Chinese ethnic people are very similar. The artist is good at capturing the scenes that express daily experience. These are transformed into objects, to bring out the elements and possibilities of understanding happiness in life. Most of her creations are inspired by her accumulation of personal daily sensibilities and experiences. She imagines that society's existence is generated through other beings or objects that form various metaphors within her, thereby forming a kind of physical possibility.



Figure 29. Huang Shao-Ying, *Cognitive Component of Happiness*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

Ryan Benjamin Lee's work, *Perfect*, is a single-channel video. Ryan is the youngest participating artist in this exhibition, and he was born in 1997. He is a moving image artist based in Singapore whose practice utilises video art, installation, GIF-making, sampling and (re)animation to create a range of media assemblages.<sup>415</sup> Grounded in an interest in material investigation, his artworks explore the relationship between physical and virtual spaces and how the post-internet experiences seamlessly merge the two. As such, his works often have a sculptural or site-specific quality to them. *Perfect* is about a young girl taking charge of her education. The little girl uses voice memos as a way of memorising her science test, often reciting them as short plays like playing a game. The little girl speaks difficult scientific vocabulary in English and Chinese naturally in the video. Through a performance game, science facts become something she can conquer or master. However, even when she pretends to play the role of a teacher, she can not help but burst into laughter; maybe at the absurdity of embodying that kind of authority and power. In the video, stickers that read 'Perfect', 'Good Job' or 'Nice' are used as markers of intellect and success in the classroom. However, in this film, they are transformed into words of affirmation; the girl's sense of self worth does not come from institutional validation, but from her own self-confidence. This video presents the innocent and romantic side of a little Chinese girl in Singapore. In the video, the little girl repeats the difficult scientific vocabulary over and over again. Although the viewers don't know whether she has learned it or she gained an exam high score in the end, but they can see that she is happy in the self-study process. For the artist, he doesn't really care about the current phenomenon and development of the Chinese ethnic community in Singapore. Even though the existing social context and development are problematic for ethnic Chinese in Singapore, he (the artist) prefers to face them in a self-deprecating way. In addition, 'No worry too much

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<sup>415</sup> 'Ryan Benjamin Lee | ARTX30', *Artx30*, <https://www.artx30.com/about/profiles/ryan-benjamin-lee/>, (accessed 17 May 2023).

about everything. Just go with the flow' is becoming the philosophy of the young Chinese generation in Singapore and this artwork exactly 'perfect' presents it.

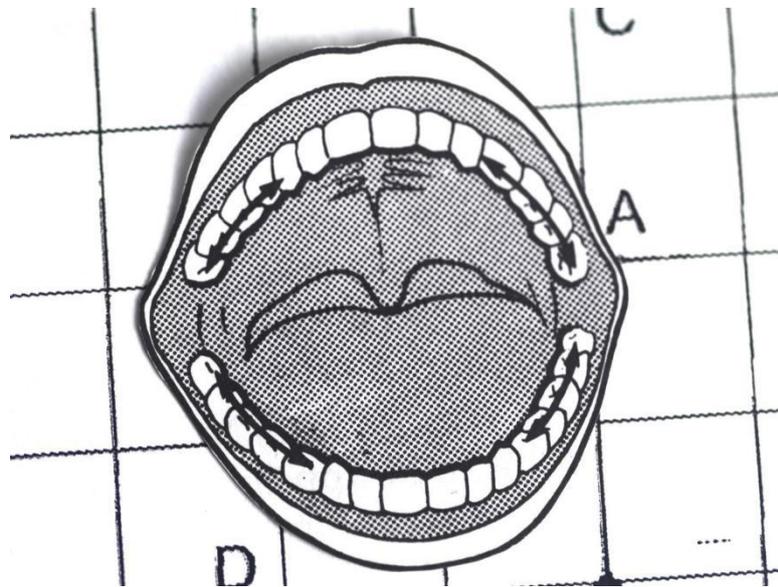


Figure 30. Ryan Benjamin Lee, *Perfect*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

Wilfred Lim<sup>416</sup> is an artist and photographer. He lived and grew up in a small fishing village at the seaside in Pengerang, southern Malaysia, for 18 years before pursuing his education in Singapore. His works feature photographic artwork carefully staged to resemble surreal and whimsical tableaux. In the work *Tiny Bits of Bliss* the artist selected toys as art developed objects. Wilfred believes that everyone carries a child in the heart (mind), a worry-free, inquisitive self buried deep under the sheath of vulnerable adulthood. The artist uses an adult's perspective and professional photography techniques to present the imagination of childhood toys in the eyes of adults and pursue the existence of happiness. The *Tiny Bits of Bliss* photography series uses colourful colours to create a psychedelic visual experience. Colour is like a visual stimulant to help ease negative tensions accumulated from daily encounters. People are usually attracted to colourful objects, and the artist thinks the human physical

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<sup>416</sup> Wilfred Lim, 'About - Wilfred Lim', *Wilfred Lim*, 2020, <https://www.wilfredlim.co/about>, (accessed 17 May 2023).

mechanism subconsciously chases bright colours, perhaps a psychological instinct to make up for emotional void. This is an unconscious attempt at self-healing therapy. The artist took the favourite toys in his childhood memories as the image material of his artwork, but the composition and colour of the photographs show a strong sense of visual contrast. Such conflicts present a dreamy but cruel side, presenting the helplessness of adults in reality. When watching *Tiny Bits of Bliss*, the sense of discordant conflict is transmitted from the moment of visual acceptance to the brain for a second spiritual impact. At first glance, this photographic work is an interpretation of adults' pursuit of childhood memories, but it also reflects the habit of the adult's responsibility and the way of survival. And this mental state also echoes the research question of self-ethnic identity of the ethnic Chinese community in Southeast Asia in this exhibition. The current attitude of the Chinese mother culture in Singapore and Malaysia is just like an image of colourful toys: it only exists in the memory of the adult's heart. However, the reality of adults is that they cannot only have memories and must learn about survival. On the other hand, for the Chinese ethnic people in Southeast Asia, people know that Southeast Asia is their physical home where they are living. The identity of the Chinese is just a memory of the past ancestral identity and history of the Chinese diaspora. Nowadays, the Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia may not completely disappear, but what is certain is that the contemporary Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia is a memory of the past. The curators think that this photographic work interprets the transformation and status of Chinese ethnic individual's mood and social responsibility in different periods of the Chinese diaspora. It is a multifaceted and meaningful visual art work. At first glance, the artwork is an easy-to-read work, but if viewers read and experience it carefully, people might find that the work is full of complexity and contradictions.



Figure 31. Wilfred Lim, *Tiny Bits of Bliss*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

The above-mentioned participating artists discuss the self-identity of contemporary Chinese ethnic groups from different contemporary Chinese issues and objects. The participating artists and their artworks involve Feng Shui customs in Chinese culture, the definition and imagination of happiness in Chinese society, and other contemporary Chinese diverse studies. Through the artists' reinterpretation of daily objects, people can look at these accustomed objects inspired from different perspectives, and get a glimpse of the artists' artistic perspective in the exhibition. The curators hope from the exhibition to utilise cross-cultural observation, learning and examination of perspectives, in order to bring about fresh entry points into constructing a flourishing and experimental contemporary art domain.

### **Exhibition External Information And Public Feedback(展覽外部資訊與大眾反饋)**

The previous paragraphs have recorded and analysed the pre-exhibition organisation and preparation, the concept and planning of curation and the art exchange programme, the selection of participating artists, the introduction and analysis of artworks, the views of curators and other internal executive materials. This section will now analyse external exhibition materials, such as introduction of exhibition venues, exhibition public organisation, exhibition

marketing and promotion activities (guided tours, art talks, opening event) and public feedback.

Regarding the exhibition description, because of the different historical backgrounds of contemporary Chinese art and sinophone research in Taiwan and Singapore, also the global situation of Covid-19 in 2021 and 2022 which was affected by the factors of epidemic prevention policies of both countries, so the exposition and publicity of the exhibition in the two venues were slightly different. The part about the Taiwan exhibition is because Taiwan is a relatively sensitive topic for Chineseness and Chinese identity.<sup>417</sup> Although it is sensitive, Taiwan is a democratic society, so everyone can openly discuss and express different opinions. The curators presented different contemporary ethnic Chinese observations in the Taiwan exhibition with an open attitude, so the Taiwan exhibition featured sharing different contemporary Chinese issues that are of concern to the young generations in Taiwan and Singapore. The exhibition in Taiwan aimed to understand the current issues and self-expression of Chinese-background artists in Taiwan and Singapore through the artworks of young artists. The rise of millennial ethnic youths grew up in a globalised environment. These are a new generation that has not experienced any severe physiological and economic difficulties during their formative years, and are therefore more likely to pursue non-material spiritual needs such as knowledge, autonomy, happiness and equality.<sup>418</sup>

The exhibition brings everyday objects to the fore in an attempt to discuss the imperative of current issues with the peculiarity of daily commodities, The multi-dimensionality of different objects may conjure up narratives such as personal and collective memories, as well as symbolic associations to certain subjects as they spark curiosity and ideas. The participating artists used the reinterpretation of everyday objects that echoes the adaptive relationship

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<sup>417</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1.

<sup>418</sup> Further Taiwan exhibition conception is available in Appendix 2.

between people and societal values. The exhibition offered an expansion of perspectives on pressing societal issues and re-examined the many contradictions and inconsistencies in contemporary life. The young Taiwanese and Singaporean people, while ushering in an era of stability and affluence, through the artists' unique sensibility, cogitation and imagination provided a new perspective to challenge the recent social balance of the world.

The venue of the Taiwan exhibition was VT Artsalon,<sup>419</sup> which is a legendary alternative art space in Taiwan and has an important historical position for the development of Taiwanese contemporary art. Twenty years ago in Taipei, there was a Taiwanese young artist-run group named Very Temple. At its initial stage, the group allied with various parties, holding exhibitions on an irregular basis with no fixed exhibition venue, and achieving their artistic ideals with guerrilla-like practices. In 2006, this guerrilla force with united talents resulted in the establishment of VT Artsalon (hereafter referred to as VT). This space complex was founded by a team of curators and artists.<sup>420</sup> They orientated VT towards transdisciplinary performance, exhibition and exchange, and devoted their energies to promoting arts outside the mainstream. These artists nowadays have become the most famous and important Taiwanese artists and curatorial representation. In 2012, VT moved to a new venue on Xin-Sheng North Road. Since then, it has re-orientated itself towards holding professional exhibitions and developing various interlinking art projects. Besides, VT also brings young curators and art administrators to the world, cultivating their universal vision, the way of getting along with art workers from around the globe, as well as a better international literacy of art. My artistic career development has also benefited from VT's support programmes to train young artists and curators in 2018. VT hopes that more talents will be encouraged, and more Taiwanese art

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<sup>419</sup> VT Artsalon, 'ABOUT', *vt Artsalon*, 2006, <https://vtartsalon.com/about/>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

<sup>420</sup> Including Jui-Chong Yao (姚瑞中), Wen-Chi Chen (陳文祺), Wei-Cheng Tu (涂維政), Chun-Hao Chen (陳浚豪), Sean C. S. Hu (胡朝聖), Dar-Kuen Wu (吳達坤), Hui-Yu Su (蘇匯宇), and Isa Ho (何孟娟).

workers will shine on the global stage. In recent years, VT transformed the horizon from an artists' space into an alternative art space as a collective art or project.



Figure 32. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists' Exchange Exhibition in VT Artsalon, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

The exhibition description text in the Singapore venue is more direct than that of the Taiwan exhibition to explain the question of the Taiwan and Singapore art exchange programme.<sup>421</sup> As lands surrounded by the ocean and inhabited with multiple ethnic groups, Singapore and Taiwan share many commonalities that weave through our culture, geography, history and lifestyle. Similar historical narratives inform Taiwan and Singapore's past as people once welcomed an influx of migration, fell under colonisation or authority of different countries, as well as experiencing rapid industrialisation and economic growth. Although Taiwanese and Singaporeans each have unique identities as disparate territories, the use of Mandarin Chinese as the national language in Taiwan and as a mother tongue for the ethnic Chinese majority in

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<sup>421</sup> Please refer to Appendix 3.

Singapore, has conceivably helped bridge two cultural differences and encouraged the building of collective memories. In celebration of Taiwanese and Singaporean cultural affinities, 'The Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects' aimed to utilise cross-cultural observation and examination of perspectives to construct a flourishing and experimental contemporary art platform.

In 2022, with circumstances such as the global pandemic and international conflicts inevitably affecting human norms and warping the realities, people grew accustomed to the way people perceive certain objects might have shifted as new narratives and interpretations continue to formulate. In our contemporary era of uncertainties, how have different situations affected our way of perceiving and defining objects? What novel perspectives and solutions might objects offer us during turbulent times? How do the younger generation from different cultures perceive certain objects in relation to current societal conditions? What are some of the issues of concern in Singapore and Taiwan amongst young people today? Essential to the transmission of culture, objects have been exchanged and traded between disparate societies since antiquity. On one spectrum, there are objects that are highly regarded and treasured due to their cultural value, and on the other, there are objects that have been deeply entrenched within Taiwanese and Singaporean everyday lives that we often take for granted. Objects are multidimensional entities that may evoke a variety of narratives including historical associations, personal or collective memories, emotional reactions, and metaphorical expositions. Aligned with different personal experience and knowledge, objects are not just bounded by their utilitarian purposes and physical forms, as human innate curiosity has also driven people to observe, examine, admire, collect, create and discuss about them in ways beyond their functionality and appearance. The significance of objects is also externalised in their correlations with culture due to their shared meanings and symbolic compositions that persist through the test of time. The concluding exhibition of the Singapore-Taiwan exchange

project was presented as a curious mishmash of seemingly unrelated objects, with each work chronicling an artist's observation and commentary of current societal situations. The artists made an attempt to discuss the imperative of current issues with the peculiarity of specific commodities and altered realities that have suffused our world at present.

The venue of the Singapore exhibition was Starch Alternative art space. Starch is an artist-run space meant as a site for experimentation, conversations and re-orientations. In December 2020, artist Moses Tan started an independent art space located in an industrial estate at Upper Thompson, and has already had a steady stream of exhibitions, events and workshops. Starch, borne out of an informal chat, seeks to facilitate critical conversations while also orientating around notions of care and support as tangential possibilities. Named 'Starch', it embodies the carbohydrate's energy-giving properties in hopes that it will provide a space for conversations amongst Singaporean artists and create a community within. Starch's owner, Moses, is a Singapore-based artist whose work explores histories that intersect with queer theory and politics while looking at melancholia and shame as points of departure.<sup>422</sup> Working with drawing, video and installation, his interest lies in the use of subtlety and codes in the articulation of narratives. He used to be a tutor in several art colleges in Singapore. During an exhibition art talk, Moses expressed his concerns about how some art spaces are slowly disappearing, or are not doing well in Singapore. He wasted no time making use of the space as an opportunity to create a platform for himself and other artists to explore and experiment to create exhibitions. Through this art practice project, the alternative art spaces in Singapore (Starch) and Taiwan (VT) can get to know each other and establish more cross-border art connections.

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<sup>422</sup> 'Moses Tan', *Www.4a.com.au*, 11 July 2022, <https://4a.com.au/creatives/moses-tan>, (accessed 17 May 2023).



Figure 33. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists Exchange Exhibition in Starch, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

The exhibition visual graphic design is available in Appendix 4.

During the exhibition's public open period in Taiwan and Singapore, there were five artist talks (speeches) and other related publicity activities for public participation, including the exhibition opening, curator and artist exhibition tour and artist talks, and open lectures. These open events introduced the exhibition conception and analysed exhibited works to the audience through physical activities, and the public could also touch more different viewpoints and developmental backgrounds from the curators and artists. Singaporean curators and artists were unable to come to Taiwan due to the epidemic policy during the Taiwan exhibition, but they still actively participated in the promotional activities of the Taiwan exhibition through online media. In addition to discussing the concept of exhibitions and artworks, the public activities also shared the real situation and observations of the current Chinese society in Taiwan and Singapore from young Chinese ethnic artist perspectives to audiences. Curators and artists used artistic social observation and research methods to explore the social messages behind their artworks and exhibitions. In addition, the curators also shared curatorial or artistic development

themes and current social development trends that they have paid attention to in recent years. The curator provided the public with creative content and characteristics of artists from different cultures and generations around the world through transnational exhibitions and artistic activities. Artistic workers respond to the state of recent society through artistic practice (artworks, curations, art social actions) to record social development in a cross-disciplinary manner.



Figure 34. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists' Exchange Exhibition, Taiwan Artist Talk: Everyday Extraordinary Whimsy, accessed 11 May 2023.

The exhibition in Taiwan and Singapore all invited well-known local senior artists, curators and art critics to attend as guests and speaker; they provided cross-generational perspectives and advice to the young curator and artists. During the Taiwan exhibition's open period under the severe global epidemic situation, the curators specially planned 'International Communication Strategy under the Epidemic: Taiwan & Singapore Online Exchange Forum.' The guest speakers of the forum included VT Artsalon director, Wu Dar Kuen (吳達坤), Starch gallery director, Moses Tan, art space managers and the curators who discussed the international communication methods during the epidemic and the impact of the epidemic on recently

international art exchange. In the discussion, Moses also shared the current challenges for the alternative art spaces in Singapore and more about the environment of art development.

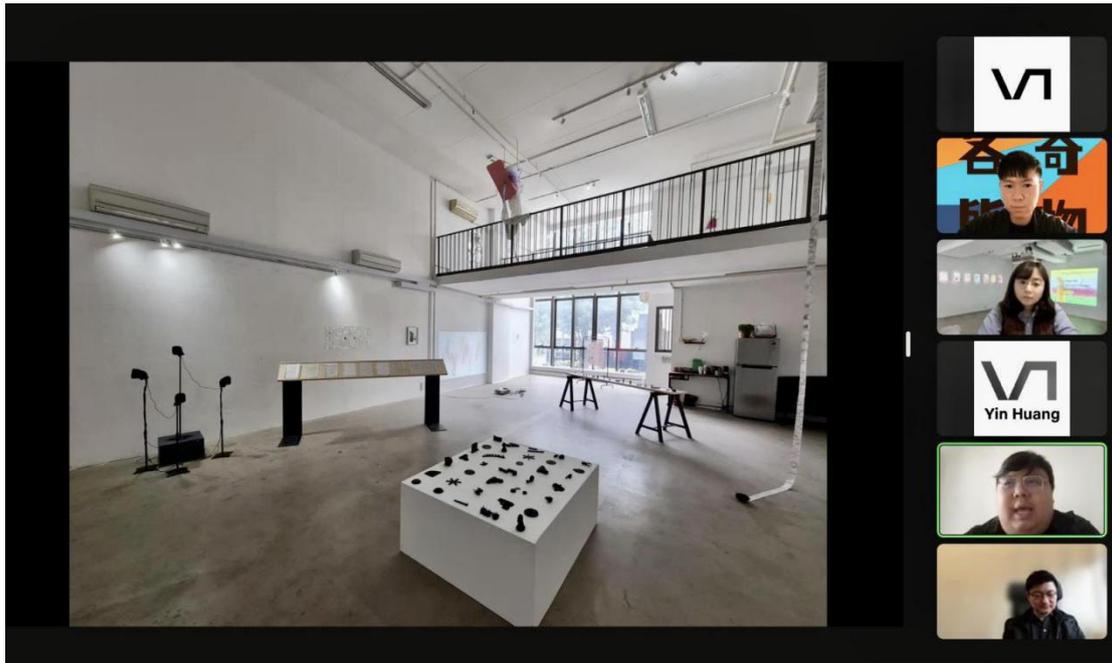


Figure 35. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists' Exchange Exhibition, Singapore Artist Talk: Across Mountains and Seas, accessed 11 May 2023.

The media publicity and exposure of the current exhibition relies on online social platforms. The publicity team mainly used Facebook and Instagram extensively for advertising and marketing promotion. In addition, during the epidemic, the executive team also specially shot exhibition trailers, exhibition online guide, participating artist interviews and curators explaining exhibition videos uploaded to the public platform of YouTube to attract viewers who are interested in art and culture. Those online videos also allowed audiences who could not attend physically to watch the exhibition and read the results of this Taiwanese and Singaporean young Chinese ethnic artist exchange through online participation. During the exhibition period, a total of seven exhibition videos<sup>423</sup> were released. In addition to the promotional effect of the exhibition, these videos are also very good documentation materials for people to know the Taiwanese and Singaporean Chinese ethnic art exchange and exhibition to be recorded and studied in a variety of research ways.

<sup>423</sup> TingFunArt, 'Ting Fun Art - YouTube', *Www.youtube.com*, <https://www.youtube.com/@tingfunart8548>, (accessed 17 May 2023).

In addition to increasing the impact of the post and the exposure of the exhibition through the post advertisement on Facebook, the exhibition also attracted the attention of many people who usually do not follow art and cultural activities. In addition, because this exhibition invited all the young generation artists, all familiar with social online community influence, it also derived the extra benefits of online promotion of the exhibition. The online promotion and social network are important for the young generation artists and curators. On the other hand, the publicity team also invited the co-organizers (sponsors) to assist in publicity on the government network platforms of Singapore and Taiwan. Otherwise, after the exhibition opened for the public, there were some online art magazines and art news in Taiwan and Singapore which also promoted and published crits. According to the final statistics, the number of participants in this exhibition was about 1,800 people. During the epidemic period in 2021, it was beyond the surprise of the curatorial team and the art spaces that still so many people came to see the exhibition. In addition, the number of people following the exhibition online was 3412. Such exhibition attention was successful for alternative art spaces in Taiwan and Singapore both.

### **The Curator's Observation and Perspective In the Exhibition (策展人的觀點與觀察)**

This exhibition and exchange programme's original intention was to explore the influence of young contemporary Chinese ethnic artists born in the 1980s and 1990s in Asia and try to understand young Chinese ethnic thoughts on other overseas Chinese societies and their self-identity as Chinese in their artistic practice. After the 1990s, the trend of contemporary art thought began to develop rapidly in Asia. During this period, “some diaspora Chinese contemporary artists explored their own Chinese identity and the state and transformation of

Chinese cultural heritage through their contemporary art practice.”<sup>424</sup> At the same time, overseas Chinese collectors, overseas art museums and world level biennials exposed and collected a large number of those ethnic Chinese artists’ artworks, and under these art history backgrounds created a special ecology of Chinese contemporary art in outside mainland China. This phenomenon especially happened in Southeast Asia. These Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic artists, artist relative workers, and collectors have gained national and worldwide attention, and at the same time they have an important influence on the development of Southeast Asian contemporary art. This is a special era and there is much contribution of the Chinese ethnic people who live in Southeast Asia to the development of Asian contemporary art in the 1990s and 2000s.

My thesis research collected a large number of documents and references from 1990 to 2010, which can prove the history and phenomenon of contemporary Southeast Asia art. However, I have a question in my mind: is there any difference between the new generation of Chinese ethnic artists who have been separated from old generations and do their self-identity and cultural identity of the Chinese ethnic changed? It started with this question and then extended to how to present and reflect the current young generation's imagination and recognition of the ethnic Chinese identity through exhibitions and youth Chinese art exchanges? Therefore, I decided to plan a transnational art practice as a curator, to observe young Chinese ethnic artists’ thoughts on contemporary Chinese issues through exhibitions and art exchanges, and at the same time observe the reaction of the audience (the public) through exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore. I am curious how young ethnic Chinese artists in Taiwan and Singapore think about the current issue of Chinese identity in the interpretation and feedback of their works? As a

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<sup>424</sup> Chien-Hui Kao, *Transpassing: Special Studies on Contemporary Asian Art in 2010s*, Taipei, ARTouch, 2013, pp. 22-23.

curator, I believe that ‘curating’ is not just a simple display of artworks in an exhibition.<sup>425</sup> The process from the preparation, execution to presentation of the exhibition itself is the ontology of action practice with problem awareness and public participation. This art practice action has social collective characteristics. “Today's art practice belongs to social participation for the public, which provides the characteristics of the artistic social field of public dialogue.”<sup>426</sup>

Contemporary curation reveals the aesthetics and artistic essence of art internally, and at the same time echoes the interactive relationship between social phenomena and social participation externally. Therefore, I think curating practice is a social and cultural action, as well as a process of producing and interpreting social meaning. Artists and curators present and reflect the social context in which they live through their artistic practice. The content of contemporary curation itself has been constantly changing and revised. “Curators analyse the state of knowledge production and the power operation relationship behind the world operation and through artistic means or mechanisms to present their horizon.”<sup>427</sup> This is undoubtedly an action of social participation and practice. In the curatorial practice of ‘An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects’ exhibition, it was inevitable that there would be some unexpected challenges. It can be understood to a curator who has rich curating experience, that this can be overcome through professional experience and curatorial ability. However, what impressed the curator deeply in this exhibition is that all the works on display this time are new commission artworks. The curator invited Taiwanese and Singaporean ethnic Chinese young artists to develop themed art practice based on the research direction of the exhibition and cross-border exchanges in their local Chineseness. The work content of the curator includes

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<sup>425</sup> The meaning of curating in my personal philosophy is available in Appendix 5.

<sup>426</sup> Adrian George, *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces*. London, Thames And Hudson, 2017, p. 25.

<sup>427</sup> Adrian George, *The Curator's Handbook: Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces*. London, Thames And Hudson, 2017.(digital version)

regular communication with the artist and tracking of the development progress of the commissioned work.

In this art exchange and exhibition cooperation, although the artist used the curator and the exhibition concept as the development direction of their artwork, the artist's own art development state and unique creative characteristics are still the critical point for those presented artworks. Therefore, the curator cannot completely and accurately predict the specific state of those new artworks on the exhibition site before the work is finally completed by the artist. From this art cooperation experience, when the curator finally received the new artworks submitted by the artist, it greatly exceeded the original prediction of the curators. As the co-curator of this exhibition, I can honestly say that I was surprised and shocked when I received the new commissioned artworks from the artists at first. The Chinese culture and self-identity presented by young ethnic Chinese contemporary artists were completely different from previous ethnic Chinese artists' development in Asia. On the other hand, the artists' development of these artworks were not directly affected by the current Western ideological education methods. Actually, these artworks are purely loyal to the artists' thought and mind, but the thinking behind and the presentation of the artworks were very different from my expectation as a curator and researcher of contemporary Chinese art development in Southeast Asia. This made me think: why are there big differences in the artworks from young ethnic Chinese artists to me? Why the final presentation of artworks out of my (curator's) expectation?

During the exchange of contemporary Chinese art between Singapore and Taiwan, I preconceived the idea that these young ethnic Chinese artists would follow the thinking and art context of past local Chinese ethnic artists to extend predictable artworks on contemporary Chinese issues. The form of these artworks naturally presented the symbolic signs of the Chinese visualisation of art, but in fact, these participating artists did not choose to follow the

previous developments in art in their new artwork. They consciously abandoned the established Chinese artistic context and forms, and turned to a more open and contemporary art creation method without the Chinese artistic context to present works on contemporary Chinese issues. As a curator, I have studied the Chinese symbols and characters used by the participating artists in their art context and I have checked if these artists followed contemporary Chinese issues in their art practice. I thought the artistic context of the artists in this art practice programme was in line with the research direction of this Chinese ethnic contemporary art exchange in Taiwan and Singapore. At the same time, in the process of artistic exchanges, the artists also provided a lot of meaningful observations and phenomena of Chinese contemporary life. Undoubtedly, these participating artists are the best choices for this practice and exhibition.

I have summed up two kinds of new problem awareness that are worthy of reflection. First, why do the artists choose to present the commissioned artworks with a tendency to ‘de-symbolize Chineseness (去中華性符號化)’ and also hide Chinese cultural symbols in their artworks and difficult to people to touch? What is the motivation for this? Secondly, how does this seemingly paradoxical situation reflect the current transformation of Chinese ethnic thinking and the state of identity among young Chinese ethnic artists in Taiwan and Singapore? These phenomena beyond my expectations have made me constantly reflect on whether my research on the development of Chinese contemporary art is deficient (narrow). I analysed in detail the unexpected phenomenon of artist-submitted artworks, and the messages and viewpoints of Chinese identity in these artworks. I found that these themed works of art about contemporary Chinese identity and cultural identity seem to have no connection and similarity at first glance of artworks. I decided to have a one-on-one communication and interview with the artists, and I asked them to explain their point of view and the artists’ meaning of the commissioned artworks.

Eventually I got several recurring common points from ten artists. Ethnic (Chinese) is innate to human marks; it is just like innate symbols such as skin colour, race, and biological gender. In Singaporean and Taiwanese recent society, the Chinese are the mainstream group, so there is no need to emphasise and separate them in domestic. Ethnic Chinese people in Singapore and Taiwan don't need to emphasise Chinese rights compared to those Chinese as a minority in other countries. In addition, young Chinese ethnic individuals nowadays are unfamiliar with overseas Chinese groups. Although the young Chinese ethnic generation sometimes can hear overseas Chinese communities' information from their grandparents' generation, it is becoming far away from our life. There is no special need to establish other overseas Chinese connections for the next generation. For the Chinese of recent generations, foreign Chinese ethnic individuals are just foreigners and have no special national sentiments: even people who share the same or similar mother culture.

The reason young Chinese ethnic artists practice their art with Chinese characters and elements is because of family connections. Here the art motivation is more closer with generation gap issues and is not a Chinese culture identity. On the other hand, in fact, the cultural identity for Chinese has always existed in the new generation of Chinese ethnic, but they believe that Chinese culture has also been integrated into the current melting pot of globalised culture. Therefore, Chinese culture and living customs are more reflected in the inclusiveness and diversity in a multicultural society and a globalised society. In addition, almost every young Chinese ethnic generation born after the 1990s in their growing environment were not directly persecuted or discriminated against by their national government rules, so they could not deeply understand the immigration history and mental state of the Chinese in the past. In addition, the Chinese parents of the previous generations stopped oral traditions about the family history of the Chinese and the concept of diaspora Chinese. The young Chinese ethnic generation can not know their Chinese ethnic history from public compulsory education and

family education. Perhaps the previous Chinese ethnic generations do not want the next generation to be restricted by Chinese diaspora history. Under such recent background, the Chinese born after the 1990s did not feel that they needed to defend or promote their Chinese identity, even if they recognized their Chinese ethnic identity.

Through this art practice social experience, I could directly contact the views of young Chinese ethnic artists and realised that the new generation of Chinese identity and the development of Chinese art are completely different from the previous generation in Singapore and Taiwan. The younger generation of ethnic Chinese artists do not have an urgent desire for ethnic Chinese identity and a sense of belonging to Chinese mother culture. When I looked at the artworks and the artists' perspectives, suddenly, I found that they were presenting the characteristics of the Chinese identity of the current new generation of ethnic Chinese with a new perspective and concept. In their artworks there is no over emphasis on Chinese marks, Chinese responsibility and Chinese story but to faithfully present the changing phenomenon of the Chinese characteristics that are developing in the new generation. I agree with the original intention and ideas of these young artists. They have the right to create Chinese contemporary art belonging to their generation. It is not necessary for their art to continue the old development of Chinese contemporary art.

The Chinese ethnic self-identity development of the new generation of artists is different from that of the ethnic Chinese in the past. They break the shackles of the Chinese principle in the past and present their self-identity and observation in a new form. As a researcher and curator of Chinese contemporary art, I once again deeply feel the state of mind of the new era and the new generation through the works and artistic interpretations of the artists. The new thinking of Chinese art is changing and will continue to change. Through this exchange of artists' talks and understanding the meaning of commission artworks, I quickly adjusted the description of the

exhibition and the presentation of the exhibits, rearranged the exhibition positioning of the Singapore and Taiwan exhibitions and the audience's suitable perspective for visiting the exhibition. The artistic practice of communicating with the new generation of Chinese art made me realise that in the exhibition there is diverse experience and understanding from artworks, artists, curators and audiences. Different people have different feelings. Even if people follow the artists' description, the curator's explanations and the critics' art review of the artwork and exhibition, it does not mean that everyone will receive the same perception.

Roland Barthes's *The Death of the Author* (French: *La mort de l'auteur*) does not only emphasise the existence or non-existence of the author in the text interpretation, but encourages the readers to actively interpret from 'the removal of the author' when reading the text. When Barthes endowed readers with great reading authority, he also gave himself great authority and freedom to interpret and read the text.<sup>428</sup> I think that Roland Barthes gave up as the author states, but he never gave up on the reader, and he didn't give up on himself as a reader. His over-emphasis on readers, in a large sense, is to provide a guarantee for the freedom of interpretation. As a curator, while interpreting the exhibition and conveying the artistic message, I tend to return the exhibition to the self-interpretation right for the viewers. In contemporary art dialogue situations there is nothing that can be absolutely defined. This situation reflects the recent development of contemporary society, but also cannot be absolutely explained and defined. People are always chasing clues and phenomena for interpretation and examining the complex context involved in the content and development trend of contemporary artworks. To enable the audience to appreciate artworks and exhibitions as much as possible, curators must receive and re-interpret the feelings and experience behind artworks and exhibitions through systematic training. They must also integrate audiences to establish

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<sup>428</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, trans. Stephen Heath, London, Fontana, 1977, pp. 142–148.

multiple connections and information in the exhibition to their own sensory systems and social cognition.

## Summary of Art Practice

In *The Ethnic Chinese Influence on the Development of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art from 1990 to 2022*, the research in this thesis explored the background of contemporary art that entered (introduced) Southeast Asian countries after 1990. After 2000, Asian contemporary art already has attracted the attention of art circles around the world. Among them, the Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia had a substantial influence on the development of Southeast Asian contemporary art, but there was not too much research and studying material to analyse this special phenomenon. Early Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic contemporary artists explored their own Chinese identity and the state of Chinese cultural heritage through artistic practice. At the same time, overseas Chinese collectors, art museums and art galleries established by Chinese ethnic businessmen have exposed and collected a large quantity of ethnic Chinese artists' artworks in Southeast Asia. Under this art history background was a special ecosphere of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia. The third chapter conducted analysis and recording of art practice, in order to further explore the identity and cultural identity of the new generation of Chinese ethnic artists who were different from the previous generation of Chinese ethnic artists. I invited to Taiwan and Singapore (included Malaysian artists) young Chinese ethnic artists to participate in contemporary Chinese art and culture exchange and exhibition. Through their commissioned artworks to open dialogue on contemporary Chinese issues, the exchange results were presented to the public in alternative art spaces in Taipei and Singapore. At the same time, the exhibition also conducted a large-scale integration of first- and secondhand art research documents through exhibition observation and collection of public responses to artworks and exhibitions.

In the process of art practice, I had experienced many known and unknown challenges, especially when the world was caught in the Covid-19 pandemic during 2019-2022. During this

period, governments around the world had adopted strict anti-epidemic policies, so all physical cross-border communication activities had been suspended, which made this art practice mainly work and exchange online. However, on the other hand, it also opens up a new type of art communication and exchange methods, and the international art exchange would not be stopped no matter for any reason. This exhibition and exchange programme had received sufficient funding support which enabled the curator to employ a professional administrative team to assist in the execution of the programme and exhibition.

Funding collection and team organisation are also important work for curators in case study practice. Due to the sufficient subsidies from the governments of Singapore and Taiwan, this art practice was able to commission the artist to produce new artworks. The artist's cooperation mode of commissioning new works can enable artists and curators to focus more on the research direction of the exhibition. This exhibition provided all new artworks, which challenged the communication between the curator and the artists and also needed to regularly track the presented artworks in the procession and also checked shipping state and cost of the artworks. After confirming all of the exhibited artworks, the curator needed to think about the exhibits harmoniously on the exhibition site, and installation work, and submit the final exhibition description text and consider the public understanding of the exhibition. In addition, for exhibition audiences, the viewpoints in this exhibition and artworks may not be understood and recognized by everyone.

The artist used their unique imagination to interpret the artworks. In this exhibition, the audiences can not only experience the artworks through visual appreciation, but also have other understanding of the works and the concept of the exhibition through the explanatory text of the

exhibition booklet, guided tours, artist talks and online exhibition videos.<sup>429</sup> During the exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore, the curatorial team held several forum lectures and artistic events. The curators invited ethnic Chinese young artists and senior artistic Chinese ethnic researchers to participate in discussions on exploring the creative methods of artists under different Chinese cultural backgrounds in Asia and the diverse development of contemporary Chinese society for exhibitions and works. Those artistic activities were open to public participation and interaction. Public talks not only provide audiences closer to the exhibition's artistic views from curators and artists but also provide the opportunities for artists and curators to get the public's feedback and opinions. Although participating artists created new artworks through the reference from the curator and the exhibition concept text, the artworks achieved positive reviews<sup>430</sup> which depend on the artist's own creative state and unique artistic characteristics. Before the artworks were completed the curator could not accurately predict the specific presentation of the exhibition.

In 'An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects' exhibition, the artist took familiar daily objects as an inspiration, rethought those objects in daily life to reflect on the state of the social meaning, and then explored the relationship between the material and spirit of the Chinese ethnic contemporary situation. Each participating art work was a coalescence of the artist's observations of current societal situations occurring at home or abroad, as well as the artist's research interests and enquiries over years with their art context. Ten participating artworks were the first exposed in the exhibition. Those artworks discussed the ethnicity and cultural identity of the new generation of Chinese ethnic individuals with the object of art. The inspiration objects include: a calendar and map; beverages and the door threshold; dice and jade

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<sup>429</sup> Please refer to Appendix 6.

<sup>430</sup> Interview during "An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects Taiwan & Singapore International Artists Exchange Exhibition", *VT Artsalon*, 11 Jan. 2022, <https://vtartsalon.com/%e5%be%ae%e8%a8%aa%e8%ab%87-ft-%e3%80%90%e5%90%84%e5%a5%87%e6%89%80%e7%89%a9%e3%80%91/>, (accessed 19 May 2023).

stones; fluorescent pigment and plastics; pixels and photographs; postcards and letters; soaps and sponges; stickers and test papers. These objects selected by artists seem to be unrelated to each other, but through the artists' imagination and creativity, those artworks presented the artists' views on Chinese issues and identity in contemporary society.

At first glance, the artworks in this exhibition show different ways and forms to previous ethnic Chinese artists who explored Asian Chinese issues and diasporic identities. These young Chinese ethnic artists are using new perspectives and artistic expressions to present the current Chinese diaspora issues and identity of the Chinese ethnic group belonging to the new generation of ethnic Chinese. This absolute new state of development of Chinese ethnic contemporary art is the unique self-assertion and viewpoint of the new generation of Chinese ethnic artists in Asia that the curator did not fully anticipate at the initial stage of the exhibition preparation. This has made the curator deeply aware that the new generation of Chinese ethnic identity and Chinese diaspora art development represented by the views of the participating artists is totally different from the views and art development of the previous generation.

According to the results obtained in this art practice research, it can be found that this is an ongoing development trend that has not been realised in the current contemporary Chinese cultural research and the study of Sinophone research in Asia. I think the Chapter 3 art practice case study result and outlook was recorded in both words and in the exhibition. This artistic information and point of view can serve as useful reference materials for other academic researchers in interdisciplinary cultural studies and contemporary Chinese art development studies. This curatorial art practice definitely verified that the 'art field' created through art practice can usefully reflect and respond to the exploration of contemporary public social phenomena and issues. The result of this art practice case provides new awareness and evidence

of the Chinese ethnic identity and sense of belonging of contemporary ethnic Chinese young artists' development in Asia.

## Conclusion

### Retrospective Consideration of the Research And Findings (研究回顧與成果)

Southeast Asia is the region where the largest number of overseas Chinese live in the world. The Chinese ethnicity in Southeast Asia has developed to this day. No current concept of cultural studies is sufficient to fully explain the complex situation of the Chinese ethnic identity in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the narrative that is closer to the facts is that the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia have multiple Chinese identities. On the other hand, most contemporary immigration theories are developed by Western scholars based on the immigration environment in the West. This is according to the differences in immigration motives caused by the social environment, as well as the differences in the cultural background of the researchers. Therefore, although overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have been a phenomenon that has existed for a long time, the origin of their existence has always been far (different) from the assumptions of Western immigration theories. In addition, most of the early overseas Chinese research was based on the activities of Southeast Asian historians, and most of them tended to study the history of Southeast Asia and its relationship with ancient China from documents and archives.<sup>431</sup>

This thesis attempts objectively to explain and analyse these complex issues and conduct a cross-analysis through research into contemporary art and my personal art practice and present a new research perspective on Chinese ethnicity. In addition, the extra contribution of this thesis is to collect and analyse some contemporary Asian and ethnic Chinese theories and

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<sup>431</sup> Guotu Zhuang, 'Studies on Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia in China: History, Current Status and Prospects ——Interview with Professor Zhuang Guotu', *Southeast Asian and South Asian Studies*, vol. 1, 2012, p. 88, [http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/\\_local/D/01/DD/E71176485C967D70198F7BBA134\\_D63EEEF4\\_29706.pdf](http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/_local/D/01/DD/E71176485C967D70198F7BBA134_D63EEEF4_29706.pdf), (accessed 6 Apr 2023).

documents which have not been translated into English. These are added to the more conventional research into Western theories and documents. My research focuses on the evolution of these contemporary art movements, by reviewing the causes, the formation and condition of the Asian contemporary art process. This includes analysing the contemporary ethnic Chinese influence on culture, history, politics and Asian regional developments. This makes the thesis more multi-layered and objective in the diversity of its horizons.

In the thesis, I collected and juxtaposed different perspectives from the Western, oriental and Chinese backgrounds, such as historical movements and international issues for ethnic Chinese identities. Moreover, examination was made of ethnic Chinese artists, how they practised contemporary art, and how history reflected their Chinese self identity and overseas Chinese communities. During my research journey, I find that in each ethnic Chinese generation's memory and self-identity, there is a common but ambiguous thread of the imagination of nostalgia for earlier, simpler times and blood heritage connection of the overseas Chinese. Southeast Asian Chinese ethnicities under different nationalities and generations have different Chinese identities and Chinese cultural environments. The identity of Chinese ethnicity in Southeast Asia is not constant, but changes at any moment; it is fluid like a river flowing to the sea. This thesis focused on the study of contemporary overseas ethnic Chinese, and during the research for the thesis, I am aware that I have a special identity, insofar as I belong to the 'insider' world of Chinese ethnicity. Therefore, how I conducted my research and recorded effectively and neutrally was both a challenge and the value of this thesis. I use some postmodern theories, such as orientalism, oriental orientalism, and autoethnography to establish and accept my own particular identity as a member of the inner objects of this thesis research and theoretical study. At the same time, in Chapters Two and Three, I used interdisciplinary research methods such as Sinophone articulations, diaspora study and the

characteristics of contemporary art presentations in Southeast Asia, which also made this thesis more unique and worthy of attention.

After the millennium, Southeast Asian contemporary art has risen rapidly and has gradually developed a Southeast Asian contemporary art system model with its own cultural and historical context. This has aroused great attention from the contemporary art circle around the world. For the Western contemporary art world, the current development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia is different from that of the West. International cooperation through biennials, exhibitions and cross-border artistic performances can provide multiple nutrients for the development of contemporary art for each other. However, it is undeniable that the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia has always been deeply influenced by Western postmodern art trends. This is a realistic situation, because the mechanism, rules, education, and promotion of contemporary art were imported from the West, and Western contemporary art has always had a high discourse power in Southeast Asia. A basic characteristic of this environment for the development of art is that the contemporary art works in Southeast Asia have the characteristics of oriental orientalism in the form of exotic operation. Western art circles and business groups have provided a wide range of assistance to the art resources of Southeast Asian countries. The first chapter describes the development and background of Southeast Asian contemporary art from 1990 to 2022, and considers the influence of ethnic Chinese artistic people in Southeast Asia. The pace and strategy of contemporary art development in Southeast Asian countries are different. Eleven countries in Southeast Asia have their own different languages, cultures and religious backgrounds, which has created the diverse development and characteristics of Southeast Asian contemporary art.

In my research on the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, it is not difficult to find that the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia have special influence. However, the

contribution of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia to contemporary art in Southeast Asia is rarely discussed. In this thesis, I analyse deeply the ethnic Chinese artists' artworks and can reflect the current Chinese ethnic self-identity and cultural identity that were changed in different Southeast Asian countries and different generations. As an art researcher and curator, I believe that the artists' works not only reflect the atmosphere of the times, but also reflect their own life experience and spiritual value to a large extent. This has great research value to be explored. The Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese artists are not just unilaterally emphasising their Chinese identity and over praising Chinese culture. Instead, they reflect the diversity of contemporary Southeast Asian culture through their own complex discrete identities, and at the same time participate in social activities through artistic practice as a part of Southeast Asia.

In addition, in Chapter Three, the art practice case review exposed that the Chinese culture and self-identity presented by young ethnic Chinese contemporary artists was completely different from previous ethnic Chinese artists' development in Asia. Through my contemporary art social engagement (art practice) analysis I discovered the phenomenon that the Southeast Asian younger Chinese ethnic people are breaking the shackles of the Chinese principle in the past. Furthermore, I anticipate that this is a signal that the general ethnic Chinese public will begin to present their self-identity and observation in a new form soon. This is a major discovery of this thesis. Therefore, this thesis indicated and reviewed the status of development of Chinese ethnic artists and their self-identity in Southeast Asian contemporary art during 1990 to 2022. Furthermore, through curatorial art practice I acquired first-hand research data for the evidence that the young ethnic Chinese self-identity is changing.

By selecting fundamental Asian issues in eight keyword paragraphs for analysis, Chapter 1-1 explores the ongoing and current social development priorities in Southeast Asia from the first-person perspective of Asia. The research content of keywords includes not only

contemporary art research, but also the analysis of culture, society, politics and economic perspectives. These keywords may not be directly related to contemporary Asian society at first glance, but the words can provide assistance to the public to understand the sudden changes or current obstacles in contemporary Asian society. At the same time, the keyword research broadly explores the current social situation in Southeast Asia and the participation and influence of the ethnic Chinese. The study cases in each keyword used Southeast Asian contemporary artists and their artworks to be examples to echo diversely and extensively the Southeast Asian social development and situation.

‘Diversity’ is the cornerstone of the development of Southeast Asian society and art, which reflects the richness brought about by the geographical and cultural differences in Southeast Asia. In the early 1990s stage of the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, success depended on if the artists were invited to participate in international biennials and gained overseas art funding support. After the 2000s, many Southeast Asian artists and curators had grown rapidly and gained exposure around the world through international exchange projects and biennials and they also became famous and influential in the Asian art world. At the same time, art collection and art business systems in Asia have become mature. Local museums and art spaces were established in Southeast Asia by private collectors (who were of Chinese ethnicity). This thesis briefly summarises the similarities and differences between each of the Southeast Asian countries, and further analyses their characteristics and the relationship between Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic communities and Asian Chinese-dominated countries and societies to influence Southeast Asian countries and their artistic contributions.

Multicultural social concerns have always been historically a powerful driver of creative production in Southeast Asia, and resonate all over the region. Southeast Asian contemporary artists add to the common narrative, a new distinct local motive and a degree of urgency.

In addition, it can be clearly found in the research on national arts policy and development in Southeast Asian countries, that the majority of governments in Southeast Asia do not provide much support in the development of art, except the Singaporean government, and until today not every country in Southeast Asia has national fine art museums or contemporary art centres that provide local artists with exhibition opportunities. On the other hand, public art awareness and art education in some Southeast Asian countries is still in the beginning stage. However this does not stop the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. Local and global artistic people develop Southeast Asian contemporary art in diverse ways and more and more people are starting to know about Southeast Asia contemporary art. These artistic actions and practises further explore the value of Southeast Asian art and promote international attention to Southeast Asia. Through the art platform of holding biennials and thematic exhibitions, it will continue to open up exchanges and dialogues for Southeast Asian art.

The second chapter analyses the expression of 20th to 21st century national identity and nationalism for Asian ethnic Chinese. Here, one deeply explains the condition of five countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam) which have the most Chinese ethnic culture influence in Southeast Asia. Using the statistics that showed which countries in Southeast Asia currently evidence large groups of ethnic Chinese, I explored and discovered the local contemporary art works and artists that echo and reflect the current status of the country for analysis. I used contemporary Chinese ethnic art works in Southeast Asia to analyse and extend to the current changes in self-identity and cultural identity faced by the Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, I appropriated the concept of Sinophone studying, and extended it to the concept of social participation in cultural research in contemporary art analysis in my art case studies.

In the third chapter of the thesis, through the recording of my curatorial practice in contemporary art exhibitions in Taiwan and Singapore, I explored how the exhibitions presented the young ethnic Chinese generation's perspective in their self-identification and cultural identity. At the same time, through the analysis of this art practice (curation and art exchange programme) and comparative and typological analyses of the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, I present a new insight about the development of ethnic Chinese art in the young generation during my art practice. This art practice offers open insights into the diversity of study on contemporary ethnic Chinese. At the same time, through my art practice, I find that the recent trend of young Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese self-identity is that young diasporic Chinese are consciously absent to Chinese ethnic identity. This thesis took a uniquely artistic perspective about the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia to understand the status of developing Chinese ethnic society and its influence in Southeast Asia, and in the twentieth century the consciousness of self-identity in the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia.

The artworks considered in this thesis presented the artists' views on Chinese ethnic issues and identity in contemporary society. At first glance, the artworks in my exhibition ('An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects') show different ways and formats to ethnic Chinese artists who had previously explored Asian Chinese issues and diasporic identities. These young ethnic Chinese artists are using new perspectives and artistic expressions to present the current Chinese diasporic issues and identity of the Chinese ethnic group belonging to the new generation of ethnic Chinese. This absolute new state of development of Chinese ethnic contemporary art is the unique self-assertion and viewpoint of the new generation of Chinese ethnic artists in Asia. This has made me deeply aware that the new generation of Chinese ethnic identity, and the development of Chinese diasporic art represented by the views of the participating artists in the exhibition that accompanies this thesis, is totally different from the

views and art development of the previous generation. This is a significant new discovery for this thesis. According to the results obtained in this research into art practice, it can be found that this is an ongoing development trend that has not been realised previously in the research on current contemporary Chinese culture, and in the study of Sinophone research in Asia.

The results of this thesis in terms of art practice reflect how contemporary art works and exhibitions are defined and viewed in Southeast Asia. The exhibitions revealed the gaps and splits in the cultural identity of Chinese ethnic artists during the process of diaspora. Asian contemporary artists, curators, and art critics are trying to construct a 'grand narrative' that is compatible with the art history of the Southeast Asia region and local art history, and at the same time criticise and question the necessity of this grand narrative. Asian local artistic writers, curators, historians and practitioners need to rethink the contemporary so as to keep sight of its contradictions. Indeed, "The impasse is acutely palpable when refracted through the idea of a Southeast Asian where the vast array of languages, cultures, religions and local histories and the disparate rates of their circulation significantly frustrate any attempts to resolve the impasse."<sup>432</sup>

The aim of this thesis is that the results and analysis of the research and exhibition practice can provide reference for the study of multi-ethnic countries and contemporary ethnic cultures. On the other hand, this thesis also provides a study on the overall development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia, especially through the analyses of the art case studies and the keyword research on ethnic Chinese studies in Southeast Asia. Through the research on the development of local contemporary art in Southeast Asia, it provides an analysis of the influence and contribution of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19

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<sup>432</sup> Joan Kee, 'Introduction to Contemporary Southeast Asian Art', *Third Text*, vol. 25, no. 4, July 2011, pp. 371–381, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2011.587681>, (accessed 30 December 2021).

pandemic in 2019-2021, the thesis leans more on the literature discussion than expected. After the pandemic stabilised in 2022, the art practice part was implemented, and the practice provides cross-field exchanges in contemporary art. These results were presented as the exhibition results in Chapter Three of the thesis.

### **Research Proposals And Recommendations (研究展望與建議)**

Through mastering the current popular concepts and theories related to Southeast Asian society, the information can be further applied to the actual social research of Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic groups. Most of the current cultural and ethnic theories are brewed from the historical context of the Western horizon, so the fundamentals of the research are still based on the use of Western modern and postmodern theories. However, when conducting local research in Southeast Asia I must make some adjustments based on the local real environment and status as much as possible. I hope that this thesis can explore the real contemporary situation of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia through Eastern and Western culture and art literature, and at the same time, strengthen the basic theoretical foundation for the study of contemporary Chinese art and society in Southeast Asia.

I use documents that are from cross-nationality and cross-period historians to analyse the history of modern Southeast Asian countries through multiple intersections, and to restore the objective history as much as possible. In this thesis the main title, 'Invisible Hands', matches and reflects the mid-1990s: when due to Southeast Asian authorities and Southeast Asian social and historical factors, the existence and influence of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia were forced to be invisible. Here I define the first 'Invisible Hands situation'. In addition, through the

result of my thesis art practice, I found that in 2022,<sup>433</sup> the current young Asian ethnic Chinese artists' identification with the ethnic Chinese identity has gradually transformed into a localised identification. In Southeast Asia, the Chinese ethnic identity problems are evaporating (消散) during the assimilation stages of the Chinese diaspora. Therefore, I interpret the recent Southeast Asian Chinese diaspora process in the 'Z generation' as the second 'Invisible Hands situation'. These two Invisible Hands situations show a discrete state transition. The two 'Invisible Hands' scenarios are different, but they are important stages in the assimilation and identification process of the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia. In the research for this thesis, the development of ethnic Chinese contemporary art and ethnic Chinese self-identity in Southeast Asia can be found in this obvious phenomenon.

The socially engaged dimension of curatorial practice appears to be one of the main features of curating in the 21st century. I think that art needs to communicate with people to a considerable extent, and that the exhibition is the result of a dialogue. Curating is not only about exhibitions, but also about inviting people to come together and share their different opinions. Hans Ulrich Obrist mentioned in his book, *Ways of Curating*, that based on past curating experience, curators must try to bridge the gap between institutions, artists, the general public and other diverse communities, and build a bridge of communication for each other.<sup>434</sup> The key to curatorial work is to collaborate and practice by connecting different objects, and to create the possibility to resonate with each other. After directly exchanging and cooperating with young Southeast Asian artists, I realised deeply that Southeast Asian artistic people and the development of contemporary art do not rely on capital (although this is unavoidable), but on the spontaneous organisation and willingness of local people to communicate with equality and

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<sup>433</sup> Please see further explanation in Ch 3.

<sup>434</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist and Asad Raza, *Ways of Curating*, New York, Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 2016, p. 89.

openness which supports the aim of contemporary art in Southeast Asia to become successful and famous.

In my contemporary art practice, the curatorial practice reflects the horizon of the artwork and the artist (the curator) who was intimate to social environments and public issues, and concludes that contemporary art is also inseparable from society, politics and economic conditions in contemporary life. In Chapter 3, can be found the art practice section which responds to this inference in the thesis.

Although the name ‘Southeast Asian Chinese (東南亞華人)’ is a very common way to identify someone with a Chinese background in Southeast Asia, it does not mean that the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asian countries are a consistent community. The diasporic Chinese in Southeast Asia are rooted in different educational backgrounds, national situations, and self-awareness of historical and cultural memories, so even though they are all ethnically Chinese, they show some similarities and differences in behaviour. In addition, every ethnic Chinese individual has a different definition of Chinese, ethnic Chinese, Chineseness, and China. Furthermore, each country or even a different region of the Chinese group presents its own characteristics.

Diasporic Chinese studies in Southeast Asia has been developed for a long time in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. In recent years, Chinese studies in Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Myanmar have gradually attracted attention in their domestic academic world. In addition, research on local Chinese in Brunei, Laos, and East Timor has not yet developed, but still has a potential research value. This thesis marks the beginning of study in this respect.

It has been clearly confirmed in my thesis that the phenomenon and state of the development of ethnic Chinese studies in Southeast Asia is also reflected in the development of contemporary Chinese art in Southeast Asia. In addition, I appropriated the concept of Sinophone studying

which is a neologism in contemporary Chinese diasporic research. I extended conception of Sinophone to the concept of social participation in contemporary art analysis in my art case studies and art practice in this thesis. Chinese culture develops from different regions and social contexts rooted in the idea that people establish their own local Chinese identity in different nationalities and ideologies. A new concept dedicated to contemporary Chinese studies was born through examining the Sinophone in ethnic Chinese contemporary art. I explored the proposal on how effectively to incorporate contemporary artworks and developments into Sinophone studies in Southeast Asia for interdisciplinary integration.

The emphasis of this research is not to blindly praise the ‘Greater Chinese culture’ or the superiority of the ‘Greater Chinese identity’. The cultures of various ethnic groups in Southeast Asia also have their own advantages and uniqueness, which are irreplaceable and which represent the diverse characteristics of Southeast Asia. I think there is no need to regret the issue of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, whether it is assimilation, integration, or integrated development, as long as the process is carried out peacefully and without external interference. In addition, I think that the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia was not always extremely consistent and cohesive, as the famous Australian Sinologist, Charles Patrick Fitzgerald (費子智),<sup>435</sup> believed. C. P. Fitzgerald had predicted that “the Chinese in Southeast Asia will form a ‘Third China’ that maintains Chinese cultural traditions but is politically different from mainland China and Taiwan.”<sup>436</sup> I tend to agree with May Ien Ang's opinion that:

The identity of Chinese ethnic questions imply more than an anti-essentialist critique of identity. They point to the profound variability, uncertainty and ambivalence of Chinese ethnic identity as such, across space and through time, shaped as it is by myriad factors

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<sup>435</sup> He was the first Australian ambassador to the People's Republic of China, and he received a doctorate from the Australian National University in 1983 under the guidance of Wang Gungwu. Rafe de Crespigny, ‘Fitzgerald, Charles Patrick (1902–1992)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fitzgerald-charles-patrick-382>, (accessed 6 Apr 2023).

<sup>436</sup> Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, *The Third China: The Chinese Communities in South-East Asia*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1965.

including changing historical circumstances, geopolitical relationships, and social and political location.<sup>437</sup>

The relationship between ethnic identity cannot be easily captured through seemingly unambiguous concepts such as assimilation, multiculturalism and diaspora. Each of these terms points to particular difficulties, ambivalences and failures of identification and belonging that continue to haunt diasporic people around the world. It is very important that neither the ‘ethnic’ nor the ‘national’ are absolutely fixed or closed in the terms, but are constantly evolving and mutually entangled.

Overall, I think that studying the Chinese diaspora and the development of Chinese culture and art in different eras can provide a clearer understanding of the state of the ethnic identity of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia at different stages. In this thesis, through the collection of multiple materials and art practice, I try to find cases that are consistent with the Chinese diaspora and self-identity of the Chinese ethnic in the current development of Chinese contemporary art in Southeast Asia. The research material Literature Review of this thesis collects from interdisciplinary literature, such as history, society, art, cultural discourse and artistic practice to establish new possibilities for Southeast Asian Chinese contemporary art in sinophone study. The research results are based on cross-disciplinary artistic practice, and explore the ethnic identity and cultural adaptation of contemporary Southeast Asian Chinese in various aspects. In this thesis, I demonstrate the transformation of Chinese self-identity in Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese in the 21st century and also ethnic Chinese artists’ cultural and artistic contributions in the development of contemporary art in Southeast Asia.

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<sup>437</sup> Ien Ang, ‘Beyond Chinese Groupism: Chinese Australians between Assimilation, Multiculturalism and Diaspora’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 37, no. 7, 10 Dec. 2013, pp. 1188–1195, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2014.859287>, (accessed 6 Apr 2023).

The research for and implementation of my thesis took place from 2019 to 2023; this period was characterised by the global pandemic of Covid-19 pneumonia. Therefore, some of the planned research methods in this thesis were transitioned to digital acquisition of data and online communication to enable exchange and contact with Southeast Asian Chinese artists and related art institutions. I plan to visit Southeast Asian countries again in 2024 for a long-term research field trip and for art exchange projects. At the same time, I will take the opportunity to optimise my research analysis and the data for this thesis, and will publish a Chinese and English version of the research as a book within three years.

In conclusion, this thesis has enabled me to encounter hundreds of contemporary artists and their works, to understand the history, culture and geopolitics of tens of countries in the Asian region, as well as to maintain a deep focus on Southeast Asia. The Southeast Asian art background integrated ancient Indian culture and ancient Chinese culture and developed their own cultural features. Modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia was a study of evolution from Western colonialism to the 1990s. Nowadays, local Asian artists and art history researchers researching Southeast Asian Art have begun to transcend this comparison between the perspective of East and the West. The art researchers are further conducting cross-regional dialogue and exchange. I have experienced a rich immersion into this new contemporary art and research trend.

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## **Appendix One:Chapter 1. The Development and Background of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art from 1990 to the Present**

### **Indonesia:**

#### **Appendix 1**

The Republic of Indonesia, commonly known as Indonesia, is composed of 17,506 islands with a land area of 1,877,591<sup>438</sup> square kilometres. With a population of 270 million<sup>439</sup>, Indonesia is the fourth<sup>440</sup> most populous country in the world. The capital of Indonesia is Jakarta. The borders of Indonesia are on the island of New Guinea and Papua New Guinea, on Timor Island and East Timor, and on Borneo with Malaysia. In addition, Singapore, Philippines and Australia face each other across the sea. There are about 300 ethnic groups and 742 languages and dialects in Indonesia. Most Indonesians are descendants of Austronesian people.<sup>441</sup> Indonesia is rich in natural resources, with forest products such as wood, rubber, and raw rattan, as well as mineral resources such as coal and marble. The main export items are oil and natural gas. Indonesia's abundant natural resources provide a stable economy, but the manufacturing industry is still in the developing stage. Indonesia is the country with the largest number of Muslims<sup>442</sup> in the world, but Islam<sup>443</sup> is not the national religion of Indonesia. Indonesians can freely choose their beliefs.

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<sup>438</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) - Indonesia*[website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=ID&start=1961>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>439</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) - Indonesia*[website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2019&locations=ID&start=2018>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>440</sup> The U.S. Census, *Most Populous Countries* [website], <https://www.census.gov/popclock/world>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>441</sup> Also called Malayo-Polynesian. A family of languages spoken in the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Madagascar, and Oceania.

<sup>442</sup> Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe there is one true God Allah (the Arabic word for God).

<sup>443</sup> Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy and forgiveness that should not be associated with acts of violence against the innocent.

In 1619, the Dutch United East Indies Company<sup>444</sup> (VOC) conquered Jakarta (Batavia<sup>445</sup>) and established the VOC headquarters there. After the bankruptcy of VOC in 1799, it was taken over by the Dutch government in 1816.<sup>446</sup> The government began actively to take economic considerations as the guideline to expand in East India. In 1942, the Pacific War<sup>447</sup> broke out and Japan invaded the Dutch East Indies. After Japan ruled in Indonesia, the Japanese tried to weaken the influence of the Dutch colonial period. They began to promote the popularisation of Indonesian, which established the standard for the use of modern Indonesian language.<sup>448</sup> After the Second World War, Japan announced its surrender, and the Indonesian leader, Sukarno,<sup>449</sup> quickly declared Indonesia's independence, but in 1945 the Dutch army returned to Indonesia in accordance with the decision of the Potsdam Conference<sup>450</sup>. At this time, the ideas and actions of the Indonesian independence movement<sup>451</sup> had been widely introduced into Indonesians' minds. For the Netherlands, the war with Indonesia could seriously consume the Dutch economy. Therefore, in 1949 Queen Juliana<sup>452</sup> announced the recognition of Indonesia's independence. Since the founding of the independent country, Indonesian leaders have

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<sup>444</sup> The Dutch East India Company (VOC, Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie), founded in 1602 and liquidated in 1795, was the largest and most impressive of the early modern European trading companies operating in Asia.

<https://indianculture.gov.in/unesco/memory-world/archives-dutch-east-india-company>

<sup>445</sup> During the sixteenth century it became an important trading outpost for the British and for the Dutch, who named it “Batavia” in 1619. The city was renamed “Jakarta” by the Japanese during WWII during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia.

<sup>446</sup> Chengfeng. Shih, ‘Indonesia Under Dutch Colonial Rule’, *Taiwan People News*, 2019, <https://www.peoplenews.tw/news/f6c4824c-46f9-4e41-8290-aa618750c9d9>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>447</sup> Pacific War: a major theatre of World War II that covered a large portion of the Pacific Ocean, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, with significant engagements occurring as far south as northern Australia and as far north as the Aleutian Islands.

<sup>448</sup> Chengfeng. Shih, ‘Indonesia Under Dutch Colonial Rule’, *Taiwan People News*, 2019, <https://www.peoplenews.tw/news/f6c4824c-46f9-4e41-8290-aa618750c9d9>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>449</sup> Sukarno (June 6, 1901–June 21, 1970) was the first leader of independent Indonesia.

<sup>450</sup> A conference held in Potsdam in the summer of 1945 where Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill drew up plans for the administration of Germany and Poland after World War II ended.

<sup>451</sup> It took place between the time of Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945 and the Netherlands' recognition of Indonesia's independence in 1949.

<sup>452</sup> Juliana, in full, Juliana Louise Emma Marie Wilhelmina, (born April 30, 1909, The Hague, Netherlands—died March 20, 2004, Baarn), queen of The Netherlands from 1948 to 1980.

implemented dictatorships<sup>453</sup>, and military leaders have held real power and received continuous economic assistance from the United States on the anti-Communist standpoint. In 1997, Indonesia was hit hard by the Asian financial turmoil, which caused a large-scale dissatisfaction with the policy system and even a large-scale anti-Chinese turmoil. (Fiona, 2014)

<sup>454</sup> The people's dissatisfaction with the current social situation had further accelerated the promotion of democratisation. In 2004, Indonesia held its first direct presidential election.

## **The Outlook for the Indonesian Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

### **Appendix 2**

Bandung was designated by UNESCO as a creative city in the field of design. Bandung is a creative city that is able to create an inspiring city atmosphere and support the improvement of regional economic development through the art and design creative industries. (Probosari & Ardhanariswar, 2017)<sup>455</sup> In 2007, Bandung city government cooperated with the British Council<sup>456</sup>, learning the British creative industry's concept and experience. After that, Bandung slowly established creative parks and industrial clusters to create cultural and creative industries with creative markets, concerts and life festivals, and the creation of graffiti art villages. Bandung Contemporary Art Award (BaCAA) is an art competition conceived by Art-Sociated,<sup>457</sup> founded in 2009. The purpose of BaCAA is to see and provide opportunities

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<sup>453</sup> Dictatorship: the form of government in which one person or a small group possesses absolute power without effective constitutional limitations.

<sup>454</sup> Fiona, 'Am I Chinese? Indonesian Artist FX Harsono's Artistic Interpretation of Violent History', *AOFA.TW*, 2014, <https://aofa.tw/?p=1557>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>455</sup> Prayudi et al., 'Analysis of the Development of Bandung as Creative City', *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, vol. 8, no. 9, p. 1025.

<sup>456</sup> The British Council is the United Kingdom's international cultural relations organisation founded in 1934.

<sup>457</sup> ArtSociates was an art and artist management enterprise established in 2007 by Andonowati as part of Foundation AB.

for Indonesian young visual artists with potential and observed closer the latest development by them. Selasar Sunaryo<sup>458</sup> Art Space (SSAS) is a non-profit space organisation established to support the practice, research and development of contemporary art and culture in Indonesia, and to actively plan public education activities. SSAS was originally established in 1998 by Indonesian artist, Sunaryo. The artists in Bandung as a whole are more westernised and present the style of a metropolis. Most of the local artists come from the Bandung Institute of Technology<sup>459</sup>. They developed their art practice in a community and organic way:

### **Appendix 3**

The Museum not only invited Singapore Art Museum Founding Director Kwok Kian Chow (Guo Jianchao) to curate the museum's first exhibition, but the exhibition opening invited former Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who personally delivered a speech.

Megawati said:

It's a good thing that this museum exists, even though Indonesia has other museums, but they are all on a smaller scale; Yuz Museum Jakarta is the first private art museum recognized by the Indonesian Ministry of Culture for the first time. Its establishment is not only conducive to strengthening the relationship between Indonesia and China, but also brings the same international benefits to other countries. I think the Indonesian people need more art spaces and exhibitions like this.<sup>460</sup>

### **Malaysia:**

### **Appendix 4**

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<sup>458</sup> Arin Dwi Hartanto Sunaryo was born in 1978, in Bandung, Indonesia. He studied fine art at Bandung Institute of Technology, graduating in 2001, and earned an MFA from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, London, in 2005.

The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation, *The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation* [website], [www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/arin-dwi-hartanto-sunaryo](http://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/arin-dwi-hartanto-sunaryo), (accessed 13 Jun 2021).

<sup>459</sup> The Bandung Institution of Technology was established in 1920 and was given its current name in 1959. It was one of Indonesia's first technological universities and has established a strong reputation among both Indonesian and South Asian institutions.

<sup>460</sup> 'Indonesian Chinese collectors never give up on Chinese', *Www.99ys.com*, [www.99ys.com/home/2009/01/16/09/96233.html](http://www.99ys.com/home/2009/01/16/09/96233.html), (accessed 6 July 2022).

The federal constitutional monarchy of Malaysia consists of thirteen states and three federal territories, consisting of East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak) and West Malaysia (Malaysia) separated by the South China Sea. Kuala Lumpur is the national capital and largest city, while Putrajaya is the seat of the federal government. Malaysia has a total area of 328,550 square<sup>461</sup> kilometres with a total population of 31.94 million.<sup>462</sup> Malaysia has a complex multiracial population, predominantly defined by three major ethnic groups: Malay (Bumiputera 61.8% including Malays and indigenous peoples), Chinese (21.4%) and Indian (6.4%) races<sup>463</sup> with diverse cultural backgrounds. (Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2021).<sup>464</sup>

Malaysia's geographical location is close to the equator, and its climate is similar to the Asian tropical rainforest climate. Malaysia is rich in natural resources such as oil, natural gas, rubber, and palm oil, and it is an important pillar of the global economy. However, the most important industry in Malaysia is the manufacturing of electrical and electronic products for the global market and is export-oriented (Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal, 2021).<sup>465</sup>

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society made up of Bumiputera<sup>466</sup> (Malays and other indigenous people), ethnic Chinese, and Indians. However, the constitution stipulates the 'special position' of Bumiputera. The Islamic faith of Malays is the religion of the Federation, Malaysia's official

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<sup>461</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) – Malaysia* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=MY&start=2018>, (accessed 13 Jun 2021).

<sup>462</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total – Malaysia* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2018&locations=MY&start=2018>, (accessed 13 Jun 2021).

<sup>463</sup> MyGOV - The Government of Malaysia's Official Portal, *Demography of Population* [website], <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/portal/content/30114>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>464</sup> Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), *Brief Introduction of Regional Overseas Chinese* [website], <https://overseas.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/SubSites/Pages/Detail.aspx?site=e7062d29-8a82-4ee8-8d15-b38672d05d01&nodeid=745&pid=6754>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>465</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal, *Key Indicator* [website], <https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>466</sup> Literally translated, means 'sons of the soil', and is a term normally used in reference to the Malays, though it incorporates other indigenous communities.

religion, but citizens enjoy the right to freedom of religion under the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

The modern history of Malaysia began when British forces entered the Malay Peninsula in 1785, and Penang was leased from the Sultan of Kedah<sup>467</sup> by the British East India Company.<sup>468</sup> In 1819, the British again obtained the management power of Singapore from Johor,<sup>469</sup> and officially launched colonial and trade competition with the Netherlands. In 1824, Britain and the Netherlands signed the Anglo-Dutch Treaty,<sup>470</sup> which established Britain's hegemonic relationship in Malaya. The Netherlands withdrew from Melaka<sup>471</sup> and gave up all its interests in Malaya. The British colonial government united Penang, Malacca, and Singapore to form a British overseas territory called the Straits Settlements.<sup>472</sup> With the Japanese occupation of Malaya during the Second World War, the different regimes supported by the various ethnic groups in Malaysia led to increasing tensions with each other. However, the public's support for independence gradually increased. After the war, the Malayan Union<sup>473</sup> established in 1946, and consisted of all the British possessions in the Malay Peninsula. The Malayan Union was later replaced with the Federation of Malaya in 1948, which restored the autonomy of the rulers of the Malay states under British protection. On August 31, 1957, with the approval of the British colonial government, the Federation of Malaya declared its independence and

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<sup>467</sup> The Kedah Sultanate is the oldest unbroken independent kingship lines in the 'Malay world' with 1,000 years of history, and arguably one of the oldest in the Islamic world.

<sup>468</sup> An English company formed for the exploitation of trade with East and Southeast Asia and India and incorporated by royal charter on December 31, 1600.

<sup>469</sup> Johor, also spelled Johore, is a state of Malaysia, in the southernmost state of Peninsular (West) Malaysia.

<sup>470</sup> The signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty between Great Britain and the Netherlands in London on 17 March 1824 was primarily a settlement of a long period of territorial and trade disputes between the two countries in Southeast Asia.

<sup>471</sup> Melaka, formerly Malacca, is a town and port, Peninsular (West) Malaysia, on the Strait of Malacca, at the mouth of the sluggish Melaka River.

<sup>472</sup> The Straits Settlements is the former British crown colony on the Strait of Malacca, comprising four trade centres: Penang, Singapore, Malacca, and Labuan, which were established or taken over by the British East India Company.

<sup>473</sup> The Malayan Union was replaced by the Federation of Malaya, which safeguarded the traditional leadership role of the Sultans.

established a new country as a constitutional monarchy in the same year. In 1963, together with North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore, formed an enlarged federation called Malaysia. (The Government of Malaysia's Official Portal, 2016)<sup>474</sup>

## **The Outlook for the Malaysian Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Effected Their Influence in the Development of Art:**

### **Appendix 5**

Currently, Rumah Air Panas (RAP) pursues activities as an artist collective without a fixed venue. In the past they have organised and hosted exhibitions and presentations. Rumah Air Panas currently embraces community and social engagement as important guiding sessions of its activities. RAP has been inactive since 2017. HOM Art Trans<sup>475</sup>, is an art space established in 2007 and led by the artist collective Matahati.<sup>476</sup> The current alternative space in Malaysia faces the challenges of transformation and generational change. Compared with the alternative spaces in Singapore and Taiwan, it is more difficult for the alternative space in Malaysia to operate in the long run without financial assistance from the local government.<sup>477</sup>

### **Appendix 6**

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<sup>474</sup> The Government of Malaysia's Official Portal, *Summary Of Malaysia's History*[website], <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/portal/content/30120>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>475</sup> HOM Art Trans is an independent art space that seeks to assist and support the development of visual art in Malaysia and facilitates networking with the Southeast Asian counterparts. FREEDOM under CONSTRUCTION a Malaysia-Myanmar Art Exchange: Artwork, *HOM Art Trans*, [website], [www.homarttrans.com/2014/03/freedom-under-construction-malaysia.html](http://www.homarttrans.com/2014/03/freedom-under-construction-malaysia.html), (accessed 24 June 2021).

<sup>476</sup> MATAHATI is a collective art group which comprises five Malaysian artists: Ahmad Shukri Mohamed (b. 1969), Ahmad Fuad Osman (b. 1969), Bayu Utomo Radjikin (b. 1969), Hamir Soib @ Mohamed (b 1969) and Masnoor Ramli Mahmud (b. 1968). Matahati, *MATAHATI* [website], <http://matahati-artriangle.blogspot.com/p/matahati-matahati-is-collective-art.html>, (accessed 24 June 2021).

<sup>477</sup> Chang-hwang. Chai, 'Unspoken Condition: Imagining an Alternative Malaysia Contemporary Art', *Www.tfam.museum*, 2021, <https://www.tfam.museum/Journal/Detail.aspx?id=33&aID=10&ddlLang=zh-tw>, (accessed 7 July 2022).

He studied in the United States to obtain a bachelor's degree in English literature from Brandeis University, a master's degree in education from Harvard University, and a master's degree in art from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He returned to Malaysia in the 1980s for Malaysian artistic development. He works in drawing, photography, video, installation, and performance. During the 1990s, he developed an interest in the migration of plants. This inquiry led him to investigate human migration and the related subjects of race, colonisation, and indigeneity.<sup>478</sup> His work deals with concepts and ideas about identity, place, globalisation, and colonialism using a variety of media. In 2004, the National Art Gallery of Malaysia held a major retrospective exhibition for him. In 2004, he was invited to participate in the Liverpool Biennial. In 2003, he exhibited his works Z.O.U. - Zone of Urgency and Utopia Station at the 50th Venice Biennale. Taipei Biennial (2008); Lyon Biennial, France (2009); Negotiating Home, History, and Nation, Singapore Art Museum (2011); and PhotoEspana (2011). Wong lives and works in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>479</sup>

## **Philippines:**

### **Appendix 7**

The Republic of the Philippines is an archipelago country in the maritime region of Southeast Asia. Geographically located in the Western Pacific Ocean, it faces Taiwan across the Luzon Strait to the north, Indonesia across the Celebes Sea to the south, Vietnam across the South China Sea to the west, and the Philippine Sea to the east. The Philippines is located in a tropical country on the Pacific Rim Seismic Belt. It is often hit by earthquakes and typhoons. However,

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<sup>478</sup> 'The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation', *The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation*, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/wong-hoy-cheong>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

<sup>479</sup> '2008 Taipei Biennial', *www.taipeibiennial.org*, <https://www.taipeibiennial.org/2008/TBArtists/ArtistContent.aspx?flag=iWtQXTY5yerWZqo3gg8/BL9NEiKjGqNL&cid=iWtQXTY5yerWZqo3gg8/BBkEMMQR8Hat&Language=iWtQXTY5yerWZqo3gg8/BL9NEiKjGqNL>, (accessed 6 July 2022).

such a climate environment also creates rich natural resources and biodiversity. The Philippine archipelago consists of 7,641 islands<sup>480</sup> with a total area of 298,170<sup>481</sup> square kilometres. It is mainly divided into three island groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The population of the Philippines is approximately 108.1 million.<sup>482</sup> The economy of the Philippines is dominated by agriculture and industry, especially in light processing industries such as food, textiles, electronics, and automotive components. The daily life of Filipinos is influenced by Indian culture, Chinese culture and Islamic culture. The Philippines is a Catholic country, which is because Spain colonised and preached in the Philippines in the 16th century. It affected the political and social structure of the Philippines. The Philippines is a multinational state, with diverse ethnicities and cultures throughout its islands. The two official languages in the Philippines are English and Filipino. Manila is the nation's capital, while the largest city is Quezon City, both lying within the urban area of Metro Manila.<sup>483</sup>

The Philippines was the first country in Southeast Asia to implement democracy and electoral systems.<sup>484</sup> It is also the country that has been colonised by the West for the longest time among Asian countries. In 1521, Magellan<sup>485</sup> led a Spanish expedition to the islands in the Pacific

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<sup>480</sup> GOV. PH, *About the Philippines* [website], <https://www.gov.ph/web/guest/about-the-philippines.html>, (accessed 15 June 2021).

<sup>481</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) - Philippines* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=PH&start=2018>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>482</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total – Philippines* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2018&locations=PH&start=2018>, (accessed 15 June 2021).

<sup>483</sup> 'Establishments Detail - Embassy of the Philippines in Singapore | World Gourmet Summit 2022', *Worldgourmetsummit.com*, <http://worldgourmetsummit.com/wgs2022/main.php/estab/691-Embassy-of-the-Philippines-in-Singapore/>, (accessed 27 June 2022).

<sup>484</sup> Deasy Simandjuntak, 'The State of Democracy in Southeast Asia | Heinrich Böll Foundation | Southeast Asia Regional Office', *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung* [website], 2018, <https://th.boell.org/en/2018/10/19/state-democracy-southeast-asia>, (accessed 15 June 2022).

<sup>485</sup> Ferdinand Magellan, (born 1480, Sabrosa or Porto?, Portugal—died April 27, 1521, Mactan, Philippines), was a Portuguese navigator and explorer who sailed under the flags of both Portugal (1505–13) and Spain (1519–21). Mitchell, Mairin, and Francisco Contente, 'Ferdinand Magellan | Portuguese Explorer', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferdinand-Magellan>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

during the first round-the-world voyage of the Great Geographical Discovery, but Magellan was hacked to death by local natives. In 1542, the Spanish named the islands “Las Islas Filipinas”<sup>486</sup> for Prince Philip (later Philip II<sup>487</sup>), which became the origin of the name “Philippines”. In 1571, the Spanish invaded and occupied Luzon to build the city of Manila. In 1594, it was announced that Manila had become the capital of the Philippine Islands, and the Spanish rule of the Philippines began. On June 12, 1898, the Filipinos declared independence from Spain and established the First Republic of the Philippines. In the same year, the Spanish-American War<sup>488</sup> broke out. As a result, Spain was defeated by the United States on December 10 and signed the “Paris Peace Treaty”<sup>489</sup>. The Philippines became a colony of the United States and an important military base for the United States to supply supplies in the Asia-Pacific. In 1935, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt<sup>490</sup> signed the draft Philippine Constitution to accept the procedures required for the independence of the Philippines, and the National Association of the Philippines was formally established. However, in 1941, Japan attacked the National Association of the Philippines and occupied Manila, promulgating martial law and implementing military management. During the Second World War from 1942 to 1945, Japan occupied the Philippines and established the Second Republic of the Philippines (the puppet regime). After the war, on July 4, 1946, according to the “Tydings-McDuffie

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<sup>486</sup> Spanish explorer, Ruy López de Villalobos, during his expedition in 1542 named the islands of Leyte and Samar Felipinas after the then Prince of Asturias (Spain). General Information, *The Republic of Philippines* [website], <http://www.warsawpe.dfa.gov.ph/the-philippines/the-phl>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>487</sup> Philip II, (born May 21, 1527, Valladolid, Spain—died September 13, 1598, El Escorial), was king of the Spaniards (1556–98) and king of the Portuguese (as Philip I, 1580–98), and a champion of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Philip II | Biography, Accomplishments, & Facts, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Philip-II-king-of-Spain-and-Portugal>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>488</sup> Spanish explorer, Ruy López de Villalobos, during his expedition in 1542 named the islands of Leyte and Samar Felipinas after the then Prince of Asturias (Spain). General Information, *The Republic of Philippines* [website], <http://www.warsawpe.dfa.gov.ph/the-philippines/the-phl>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>489</sup> Treaty of Paris, (1898) was the treaty concluding the Spanish-American War.

<sup>490</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the 32nd president of the United States (1933–1945).

Act”,<sup>491</sup> the Republic of the Philippines (Third Republic) was completely independent, but the United States could still retain military bases in the Philippines. In 1965, Ferdinand Marcos<sup>492</sup> was elected President. In 1972, the President lifted the presidential term limit and declared the beginning of martial law and a dictatorship. In 1981, Marcus ended martial law but still maintained his dictatorship. In 1986, Corazon Aquino<sup>493</sup> (popularly known as Cory Aquino) led the People Power Revolution<sup>494</sup> to overthrow Marcus's dictatorship. Despite having many large-scale demonstrations and protests during that time, however, people's resistance was peaceful. Finally, the government's operation was transferred, and the Philippines restored democratic politics. After Cory Aquino stepped down as president, the Philippines has undergone several national elections, but the past dictatorship has caused corruption in the administrative bureaucracy, whether it is administrative corruption or judicial corruption, which is always a serious problem for the development of the Philippines.

The Chinese community in the Philippines has a long history, with more than 400 years of immigration history since Spanish rule in the 16th century. After the Spanish arrived in the Philippines in 1571, they opened many job opportunities for the Chinese and introduced a large

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<sup>491</sup> The Tydings-McDuffie Act, also called the Philippine Commonwealth and Independence Act, (1934), was the U.S. statute that provided for Philippine independence, to take effect on July 4, 1946, after a 10-year transitional period of Commonwealth government. Tydings-McDuffie Act | United States [1934], *Encyclopedia Britannica* [website], <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tydings-McDuffie-Act>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>492</sup> Ferdinand Edralin Marcos, (born September 11, 1917, Sarrat, Philippines—died September 28, 1989, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.), as head of state from 1966 to 1986, established an authoritarian regime in the Philippines.

The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘ Ferdinand Marcos | Biography & Facts ’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferdinand-E-Marcos>, (accessed 24 Jun 2021).

<sup>493</sup> Corazon Aquino, in full, Maria Corazon Aquino, née Maria Corazon Cojuangco, (born January 25, 1933, Tarlac province, Philippines—died August 1, 2009, Makati), Philippine political leader who served as the first female president (1986–92) of the Philippines.

Corazon Aquino | Biography & Facts | Britannica, *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Corazon-Aquino>, (accessed 21 May 2021).

<sup>494</sup> From February 22 to 25, 1986, hundreds of thousands of Filipinos gathered on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue to protest against President Ferdinand Marcos and his claim that he had won re-election over Corazon Aquino.

Official Gazette, ‘ A History of the Philippine Political Protest | GOVPH ’, *Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, 2016, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/edsa/the-ph-protest/>, (accessed 21 May 2021).

number of Chinese to the Philippines for development. However, the Chinese are not stable settlers in Philippine society; furthermore, they had experienced several anti-Chinese historical events. At the beginning, the Spanish colonial government needed the labour force of Chinese labour and the capital construction of Chinese businessmen, and Manila was the most important development city. Chinese businessmen and Chinese workers provided the Philippines with economic and living needs, but the Spanish colonial government was full of discrimination and anxiety towards the Chinese. This is mainly because of ‘the fear that they worried the Chinese will overthrow the Spanish regime in the Philippines. From the early 17th century to the 1870s, the Spanish colonial government carried out five massacres,<sup>495</sup> killing Chinese people from a few hundred to 245,000’. (Hsia, Chen-Hwa, 2003) The Chinese in this period were at the lowest level of social status in the Philippines, and even Chinese-Philippines discriminated against the Chinese. They did not admit that he or she had a Chinese father. These Chinese and Filipino mixed-race people were educated by Christianity and Spain; they grew up in the Philippines and maintained a hostile attitude towards the Chinese.<sup>496</sup>The Chinese and Filipino mixed-race descendants were called mestizo<sup>497</sup>. These mixed-race communities have been important since the eighteenth century. Even today, the mixed descendants of Chinese and Filipinos have always had a certain influence in Filipino society. After the Spanish-American War, in accordance with the Paris Agreement of December 10, 1898, the Philippines was transferred to American rule. ‘During American rule (1898-1946), the American government advertised the rule of law. The Chinese community was relatively stable in Filipino society, and

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<sup>495</sup> Rachel A.G. Reyes, ‘China-Philippines Relations: A Long and Bloody History of Distrust’, *The Manila Times*, 2018, <https://www.manilatimes.net/2018/11/27/opinion/columnists/china-philippines-relations-a-long-and-bloody-history-of-distrust/474068>, (accessed 29 August 2021).

<sup>496</sup> Richard T. Chu, ‘The “Chinese” and the “Mestizos” of the Philippines: Towards a New Interpretation.’ *Philippine Studies*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2002, pp. 327–370, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42634470>, (accessed 23 Dec 2022).

<sup>497</sup> In the Philippines “mestizo” denotes a person of mixed foreign (e.g., Chinese) and native ancestry.

the Chinese were no longer subject to discrimination and racial restrictions in society'.<sup>498</sup>

However, the period of American possession was the strongest period for Chinese national consciousness. Many Chinese communities in the Philippines were very concerned about China's domestic political situation.

After the Second World War (1946), the international situation and the independence of the Philippines provided the foundation for the integration of the Chinese into the mainstream society of the Philippines. For example, the famous Filipino independence activist, Chinese mestizo Dr. José Rizal<sup>499</sup>, is a recognized pioneer in the history of modern nationalism in Southeast Asia. After the independence of the Philippines, based on the Philippine Nationalism stance, the government announced many Philippineization policies, which severely impacted on the living space of overseas Chinese. At the same time, the overseas Chinese in the Philippines were also assailed by between the political situations in the Philippines, China (People's Republic of China) and Taiwan (Republic of China) of political ideologies. Those situations made the overseas Chinese in the Philippines begin to think about their own position and identity in the Philippines, and the future development plan for staying in the Philippines. From the late 1960s to the mid-1990s, the Philippine government changed its original policy of exclusion and restriction on overseas Chinese and adopted a policy of accommodation and integration. This became the key to the transformation of the overseas Chinese from a Chinese diaspora status to a Chinese-Philippines and Chinese society. By the mid-1990s, the Filipino Chinese had basically completed the process of assimilation and integrated with the mainstream society of the Philippines. 'The Chinese who were born and raised in the

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<sup>498</sup> JENSE. KHIN KHIN MYINT, *The Chinese in the Philippines during the American Regime*. Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin, 1956, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/ba6de92a12b18fb1dc78fe28bf17d025/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbI=18750&diss=y>, (accessed 23 Dec 2022).

<sup>499</sup> José Rizal, in full, José Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda, (born June 19, 1861, Calamba, Philippines—died December 30, 1896, Manila), was a patriot, physician, and man of letters who was an inspiration to the Philippine nationalist movement.

Philippines have crossed ethnic boundaries and identified themselves as Filipinos. They believe that the culture and traditions of the Chinese also belong to the traditions and culture of the modern Filipino country and society'.<sup>500</sup>

## **The Outlook for the Philippine Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

### **Appendix 8**

Patrick D. Flores also proactively invited young domestic curators working outside of institutions and curators from other countries to host exhibitions. Flores is also Artistic Director of Singapore Biennale 2019<sup>501</sup>, Curator of the Vargas Museum in Manila, and Adjunct Curator at the National Art Gallery, Singapore. (Asia Art Archive, 2019)<sup>502</sup> He was one of the curators of Under Construction: New Dimensions in Asian Art (2000),<sup>503</sup> of the Gwangju Biennale (Position Papers) in 2008,<sup>504</sup> and was the curator of the Philippine Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015.<sup>505</sup> Flores's research and curatorial conception has described the biennial as an opportunity to extend the process of reimagining Southeast Asia independently of its construction by colonial powers.

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<sup>500</sup> Shaocong, Zeng, 'Changes in Chinese Identity in the Philippines: Transition from Immigrant Society to Sedentary Society', *Center for Chinese Studies*, 2001.

<sup>501</sup> Titled 'Every Step in the Right Direction', the Singapore Biennale 2019 focused on the imperative of making choices and taking the steps to consider current conditions and the human endeavour for change and betterment.

<sup>502</sup> ASIA ART ARCHIVE, *Power 100-Most Influential People in 2019 in the Contemporary Artworld* [website], <https://artreview.com/artist/patrick-d-flores/?year=2019>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>503</sup> This was a collaborative project in which nine young curators in their twenties and thirties from seven Asian countries (China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand) conducted local art surveys, debated their findings, and created exhibitions.

<sup>504</sup> The programme was divided into three main strands: "On the Road," a collection of travelling exhibitions that were produced elsewhere in 2006/2007; "Position Papers" involved curators in dialogue; and "Insertions" featured works and events specially commissioned for Gwangju.

<sup>505</sup> Fifty-one years after its first (and last) appearance and almost 30 years since the end of Martial Law, the Philippine Pavilion is back in Venice in 2015 with curator Patrick Flores's "Tie A String Around The World".

## Appendix 9

The artistic director of Green Papaya Art Projects, Norberto ‘Peewee’ Roldan, is a multimedia artist and curator. He initiated the country’s longest-running biennale, VIVA EXCON,<sup>506</sup> in the Visayas<sup>507</sup> region. The biennale was intended to provide “a mechanics for the discussion and assessment of parallel artistic development in the islands, give an opportunity for analyses of academic theories and other relevant issues and serve as the context for a better understanding of various aspects of contemporary art practises.” (Biennial Foundation, 2014)<sup>508</sup> It did this through celebrating Visayan art by bridging the islands of the Visayas so as to provide a venue to facilitate dialogues, interaction, networking and cultural exchanges. Co-founder of Green Papaya Art Projects, Merv Espina,<sup>509</sup> is an artist and curator. He’s also one of the organisers of WSK Festival of the Recently Possible<sup>510</sup> (founded in 2008), an experimental music and media art festival. In 2014, he started the Kalampag Tracking Agency<sup>511</sup> with artist Shireen Seno<sup>512</sup>, which is an initiative that explores the screening programme as a participatory archive of Philippine experiments with the moving image. He was part of the curatorial team of

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<sup>506</sup> VIVA ExCon is a Visayas-wide biennale which started in Bacolod City in 1990 whose hosting has since then toured the Visayan Islands every two years. About Us, *VIVA ExCon Organization* [website], <https://vivaexcon.org/about-us/>, (accessed 12 March 2021).

<sup>507</sup> The term "Visayan" refers to people who inhabit the islands surrounding the Visayan Sea, mainly the Samarans, Panayans, and Cebuans.

<sup>508</sup> Biennial Foundation, *VIVA EXCON* [website], <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/viva-excon-philippines/>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>509</sup> Merv Espina is an artist and researcher based in Metro Manila. Archive, Asia Art, ‘Merv Espina | Barons, Backlash, and Biennials’, *Aaa.org.hk* [website], <https://aaa.org.hk/en/programmes/programmes/merv-espina-barons-backlash-and-biennials>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>510</sup> WSK — a disemvoweled form of “wasak” which means “shattered” or “destroyed” in Filipino — is the first and only annual international festival dedicated to contemporary electronic, digital, and experimental art.

<sup>511</sup> The Kalampag Tracking Agency, is a curatorial and organisational collaboration between Shireen Seno and Merv Espina that brings together film and video from the Philippines spanning the past 30 years.

The Kalampag Tracking Agency: Experimental Films & Videos from the Philippines (1985 - 2015), GASWORK [website], <https://www.gasworks.org.uk/residencies/the-kalampag-tracking-agency-2016-02-23/>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

<sup>512</sup> Shireen SENO (1983, Japan) was born in Tokyo to a Filipino family. She is an artist and filmmaker. Shireen Seno | IFFR, *Iffr.com* [website], <https://iffir.com/en/persons/shireen-seno>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

‘SUNSHOWER: Contemporary art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now’<sup>513</sup> (2017) at the Mori Art Museum<sup>514</sup> and National Art Centre Tokyo<sup>515</sup>- the largest survey of Southeast Asian artists to be exhibited in Japan.

## Thailand:

### Appendix 10

The Kingdom of Thailand (formerly known as Siam Sayam) is a constitutional monarchy in Southeast Asia. The country has a land area of 510,890 square kilometres<sup>516</sup> and a population of 69 million.<sup>517</sup> Thailand is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and the southern extremity of Myanmar. The capital and largest city is Bangkok. Thailand’s main industries are electronics and motors, automobile manufacturing and service industries. Thailand is a world-renowned tourist destination in Asia, and the main reason for tourists to go to Thailand is beach entertainment. Thailand is a Buddhist country, and Buddhists account for more than 92.6%<sup>518</sup> of the country’s population. However, the Thai

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<sup>513</sup> ‘SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now’ exhibition at Mori Art Museum in 2017, the largest-ever in scale, sought to explore the many practices of contemporary art in Southeast Asia since the 1980s from 9 different perspectives. SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now Exhibition | Projects, *Japan Foundation Asia Center* [website], <https://jfac.jp/en/culture/projects/sunshower/>, (accessed 10 Jun 2021).

<sup>514</sup> Mori Art Museum is a contemporary art museum in Tokyo, Japan. Mori Art Museum, *Www.mori.art.museum* [website], <https://www.mori.art.museum/en/>, (accessed 10 Jun 2021).

<sup>515</sup> The National Art Center, Tokyo, is the national government’s fifth art institution to be organized under the umbrella of the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art. ‘About the National Art Center, Tokyo | the NATIONAL ART CENTER, TOKYO’, *Www.nact.jp*, <https://www.nact.jp/english/outline.html>, (accessed 10 Jun 2021).

<sup>516</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) – Thailand* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=TH&start=2018>, (accessed 10 June 2021).

<sup>517</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total – Thailand* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2018&locations=TH&start=2018>, (accessed 10 June 2021).

<sup>518</sup> Pew Research Center, *pew-global-religious-futures-project* [website], [http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/thailand/religious\\_demography#/?affiliations\\_religion\\_id=0&affiliations\\_year=2020](http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/thailand/religious_demography#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2020), (accessed 11 Jun 2021).

constitution does not stipulate the state religion; it guarantees citizens to choose their beliefs freely. However, the constitution stipulates that the Thai King must be a Buddhist.

Thailand is the only country in modern Southeast Asia that has not been colonised by European and American countries in history. The analysis of the general historical discourse is that Thailand was between British and French forces in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, it served as a buffer between the two forces and the Thai royal regime cleverly used their aristocratic status to actively modernise the country, thus avoiding the colonial crisis of European and American powers, and able to survive as an independent country. After the end of World War II, with the advent of the Cold War era, the Thai military used anti-Communism as a reason to control political and military power and jointly govern Thailand with the Thai royal family. But with the influence of market liberalisation in the 1970s, Thai people's demands gradually turned into political democratisation, which indirectly contributed to the two democratic movements in Thailand in 1973<sup>519</sup> and 1976.<sup>520</sup>

Although it has experienced many democratisation struggles and campaigns, Thailand has not successfully transformed to democratisation. The gap between the rich and the poor in Thailand is serious, and changes in political and military power often trigger coups.<sup>521</sup> The long-term interdependent relationship between the Thai royal family and the military has contributed to the legitimacy of military power entering Thailand to manage civil society.

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<sup>519</sup> 1973 Thai popular uprising. Years of protests by students demanding democracy culminated in clashes with police on Oct 14, 1973 around Democracy Monument.

<sup>520</sup> 6 October 1976 massacre. State forces massacred scores of student activists on the lawn of Bangkok's Thammasat University.

<sup>521</sup> BIOS Monthly, 'Shuttle Through the Colorful Thai Art Jungle (1): When Tradition and Modernity Meet in Bangkok', *BIOS Monthly*, 2016, <https://www.biosmonthly.com/article/7861>, (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

In 2006, the division of society became fierce again. The political conflict between anti-Thaksin and pro-Thaksin quickly evolved into a battle between the yellow shirts (anti-Thaksin)<sup>522</sup> and the red shirts (pro-Thaksin).<sup>523</sup> As a result, conservatives declared martial law through the Constitutional Court in 2014, and the Thai military government once again became a provisional government to rule. The development of Thai democracy has entered a critical period of transition. Thai people had a consensus that no matter which political groups they support, most people appeared to oppose dictatorship and maintain general elections. Until today Thailand is a “democracy with the king as head of state,”<sup>524</sup> with the king possessing tremendous political influence.

## **Singapore:**

### **Appendix 11**

The Republic of Singapore is a city-state island country and city country located in Southeast Asia. Singapore has an area of 709 square kilometres<sup>525</sup> and a population of 5.7 million.<sup>526</sup> The country is located at the southernmost tip of the Malay Peninsula and the southernmost exit of the Strait of Malacca. It is separated from Indonesia by the Singapore Strait to the south, and Malaysia is separated from the Strait of Johor to the north. Singapore has a good national credit, complete government supervision mechanism and legal system which has helped it to develop

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<sup>522</sup> A loose grouping of royalists, ultra-nationalists and the urban middle class also known as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), the yellow-shirts utterly opposed Mr Thaksin.

<sup>523</sup> The red-shirts are formally known as the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD). As supporters of deposed former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted by a military coup in September 2006.

<sup>524</sup> Kasian. Tejapira, 'The Irony of Democratization and the Decline of Royal Hegemony in Thailand', *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2016, pp.219-237, [https://doi.org/10.20495/seas.5.2\\_219](https://doi.org/10.20495/seas.5.2_219), (accessed 25 Jun 2021).

<sup>525</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) - Singapore* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=SG&start=1961>, (accessed 9 Jun 2021).

<sup>526</sup> Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS), *Population and Population Structure* [website], <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/search-by-theme/population/population-and-population-structure/latest-data>, (accessed 9 Jun 2021).

into a world-class international financial centre. At the same time, Singapore's electronics, chemical, oil refining, rubber and other industries are also quite developed.

In 1819, the island of Singapore was part of Johor Sultanate.<sup>527</sup> Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles,<sup>528</sup> who worked for the British East India Company, took advantage of the Johor Empire's succession crisis to sign a treaty with the Sultanate of Johor,<sup>529</sup> which allowed the United Kingdom to establish a trading post and colony in Singapore.

Due to its special geographical location, Singapore had always been the most important strategic stronghold of the British Empire in Southeast Asia before World War II. From 1942 to 1945, Singapore was occupied by Japan for three and a half years before returning to British administration. In 1959, Singapore established an autonomous state and Singapore joined with Malaya, North Borneo, and Sarawak to form the new Federation of Malaysia under the terms of the Malaysia Agreement in 1963. After the merger, the Federal Government of Malaysia and the Government of the Singapore Autonomous State had serious disagreements on various policies such as race and economy. The Singapore state's first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew (LKY).<sup>530</sup> called the Malays 'Malaysian Malaysia'<sup>531</sup> and opposed the Malaysian central

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<sup>527</sup> In 1528, Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah, a descendant of the Malacca Sultanate, founded Johor and set up his royal residence in Johor Lama. His dynasty ruled Johor until the demise of Sultan Mahmud in 1699. 'History of the Johor Sultanate', *Laman Web Rasmi Kemahkotaan DYMM Sultan Ibrahim*, <https://kemahkotaan.johor.gov.my/pengenalan/sejarah-kesultanan-johor/?lang=en>, (accessed 12 July 2021).

<sup>528</sup> Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, (born July 6, 1781, at sea, off Port Morant, Jam.—died July 5, 1826, London, Eng.), was a British East Indian administrator and founder of the port city of Singapore (1819), who was largely responsible for the creation of Britain's Far Eastern empire. 'Sir Stamford Raffles | British Colonial Agent', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stamford-Raffles>, (accessed 12 July 2021).

<sup>529</sup> Sultan Hussein Mohamed Shah (b. 17761—d. 5 September 1835, Malacca), was the eldest son of and heir-apparent to Sultan Mahmud, the last ruler of the fading Johore empire that stretched from Riau. 'Sultan Hussein Shah | Infopedia', *Eresources.nlb.gov.sg*, [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_3\\_2004-12-14.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_3_2004-12-14.html), (accessed 20 May 2021).

<sup>530</sup> Lee Kuan Yew, (born September 16, 1923, Singapore—died March 23, 2015, Singapore), politician and lawyer who was Prime Minister of Singapore from 1959 to 1990.

<sup>531</sup> Lee, Kuan Yew, *Towards a Malaysian Malaysia*, Singapore, Ministry of Culture, 1965, p. 17.

government's concept of 'Ketuanan Melayu'.<sup>532</sup> After that, the concept of 'Ketuanan Melayu' in Malaysia gradually spread. In 1964, serious ethnic conflicts broke out between Singaporean Chinese and Malays. In 1965, the Malaysian Parliament agreed to separate Singapore from the Commonwealth. The next day Singapore became independent and the Republic of Singapore was formally established. After independence, Singapore relied on the operation of international trade and human capital to pull itself from poverty and quickly transformed into rich and also being one of the 'four Asian tigers'.<sup>533</sup> At the same time, with its-self geographical advantages, Singapore has become one of Asia's important financial, service and shipping centres. Singapore has four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil, with the lingua franca between Singaporeans of different races being English. In fact, the main language is Singapore English which is better known as 'Singlish'.

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<sup>532</sup> Wilson T. V. Tay, 'Dimensions of Ketuanan Melayu in the Malaysian Constitutional Framework', in Andrew Harding and Dian A. H. Shah (eds.), *In Law and Society in Malaysia: Pluralism, Religion and Ethnicity*, London, Routledge, 2017, p. 44.

<sup>533</sup> The 'Four Asian Tigers' are the high-growth economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan.

## **The Outlook for Singapore's Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

### **Appendix 12**

The Singapore Biennale is a large-scale biennial contemporary art exhibition, and the first was organised in September 2006. The biennale serves as the country's major platform for international dialogue in contemporary art. It seeks to present and reflect the vigour of artistic practices in Singapore and Southeast Asia within a global context, fostering collaboration and engagement between artists, arts organisations, and the international arts community including public engagement and education programmes that include artist and curator talks and tours, school visits and workshops, and community days. The PYT award is presented to a young Singapore visual artist and is organised by SAM. PYT is Singapore's premier and only mentoring, commissioning, and award programme which is presented every two years. PYT recognises promising artists aged 35 and below, whose practises chart new dimensions in Singapore contemporary art.

### **Brunei:**

### **Appendix 13**

Brunei Darussalam, also known as Brunei, is the only country in Southeast Asia that practises absolute monarchy.<sup>534</sup> Brunei is located in a Southeast Asian country on the northern coast of Borneo,<sup>535</sup> on the southern coast of the South China Sea. The entire country covers an area of

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<sup>534</sup> An absolute monarchy is a form of government in which a single person (usually a king or queen) holds absolute, autocratic power.

<sup>535</sup> Covering an area of roughly 287,000 square miles, Borneo is the third-largest island in the world.

5,270 square kilometres<sup>536</sup> and is divided and surrounded by the Malaysian state of Sarawak. The total population of Brunei is about 430,000, of which about two-thirds are Malays, and indigenous people account for 6%.<sup>537</sup> The most populous ethnic minority is Chinese, accounting for about 10%<sup>538</sup> of the total population.

The Sultan of Brunei<sup>539</sup> is the leader of the country and the government and the commander of the army. The Sultan<sup>540</sup> has the status of head of state and serves as the Prime Minister of Brunei. Brunei's ruling national policy is the Malay Islamic monarchy,<sup>541</sup> which includes Malay language, Malay culture and customs as the main body. Brunei's culture mainly derived from the Old Malay World, which encompassed the Malay Archipelago and from this stemmed what is known as the Malay Civilisation. Islam is the official religion of Brunei Darussalam.

Brunei officially separated from Britain on January 1, 1984, in a peaceful and independent way. Brunei does not have an elected legislature, and the legislators of the Legislative Council are directly appointed by the Sultan.

Brunei discovered oil in 1929, and it was exploited in large quantities in the 1960s and 1970s. This made Brunei's economy in good condition. The domestic production and export of oil and

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<sup>536</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) - Brunei* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=BN&start=1961>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>537</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), *East Asia and Pacific* [website], <https://www.mofa.gov.tw/CountryInfo.aspx?CASN=5&n=5&sms=33&s=74>, (accessed 23 Jun 2021).

<sup>538</sup> Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, *By Race* [website], <http://www.deps.gov.bn/SitePages/Population.aspx>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>539</sup> Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, (born July 15, 1946, Brunei Town [now Bandar Seri Begawan], Brunei), 29th Sultan of Brunei.

<sup>540</sup> The use of "sultan" is restricted to Muslim countries, where the title carries religious significance contrasting the more secular king, which is used in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

<sup>541</sup> Since 1984, the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam has chartered its post-independence course through its proclaimed ideological compass of MIB (Melayu, Islam, Beraja). Ann. Black, 'Ideology and Law: The Impact of the MIB Ideology on Law and Dispute Resolution in the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam', *Asian Journal of Comparative Law*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2008, p. 15.

natural gas were the main pillar industries of the economy, accounting for about 52.3% of the GDP.<sup>542</sup> The overall standard of living of the people and the extent and scope of social welfare are very good. The country is famous for citizens who do not need to pay taxes, have free education, and the country allocates public housing for residents.<sup>543</sup>

## **Cambodia:**

### **Appendix 14**

The Kingdom of Cambodia (Cambodia), formerly known as Khmer, has a population of 16.48 million<sup>544</sup> and a land area of 176,520 square kilometres.<sup>545</sup> Cambodia is located in the Indo-China Peninsula, bordering Laos to the north, Thailand to the northwest, Vietnam to the southeast, and the sea to the southwest. The south faces Malaysia across the Gulf of Siam. The Indochina Peninsula is usually referred to as ‘French Indochina’,<sup>546</sup> which was once a French colony. The areas that were colonised by France in the past include Vietnam, Cambodia (Khmer), and Laos. Cambodia’s largest industry is the textile industry and tourism, and agriculture is still the main source of income for many rural Cambodians.

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<sup>542</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economy, *Brunei’s economy grows by 2.4pc in Q1 2020* [website], <https://www.mofe.gov.bn/Lists/News/NewDispForm.aspx?ID=150>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>543</sup> The United Nations, *Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations* [website], <https://www.un.int/brunei/brunei/country-facts4>, (accessed 23 Jun 2021).

<sup>544</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total – Cambodia* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2018&locations=KH&start=2018>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>545</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) – Cambodia* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=KH&start=2018>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>546</sup> French Indochina was the collective name for the French colonial regions of Southeast Asia from colonization in 1887.

The Khmer<sup>547</sup> established the Angkor dynasty<sup>548</sup> in the 12th century. By 1863, the then Angkor King Norodom<sup>549</sup> had been invaded by Thailand and Vietnam for many years, so he decided to negotiate and sign an agreement with France. Then it was occupied by Japan in World War II. After World War II, it continued to be colonised by France, and Cambodia officially became independent on November 9, 1953. After independence, facing the world's Cold War period, the forces of China, the United States and other countries entered Cambodia. On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge<sup>550</sup> captured Phnom Penh and overthrew the Khmer Republic. Subsequently, the Khmer Rouge established a democratic Cambodian government to establish authority through mass murder and reign of terror. A total of two million people were massacred from 1975 to 1979- about a quarter of the population of Cambodia- most of whom were intellectuals such as students, lawyers, professors, and doctors. This has caused the poor in Cambodia to be weak and the economic development has been seriously poor so far. From 1979 to 1980, Khmer Rouge was slowly weakened due to the intervention of international forces, but Cambodia really began to recover from its barren and ruined conditions, until the establishment of the “United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia”<sup>551</sup> in 1992. The United Nations has sent tens of thousands of staff to Cambodia.

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<sup>547</sup> The Khmer empire was a powerful state in South East Asia, formed by people of the same name, lasting from 802 CE to 1431 CE. Rodrigo. Plubins, ‘Khmer Empire’, *World History Encyclopedia* [website], 2013, [https://www.worldhistory.org/Khmer\\_Empire/](https://www.worldhistory.org/Khmer_Empire/), (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>548</sup> Angkor Wat is an enormous Buddhist temple complex located in northern Cambodia.

<sup>549</sup> Norodom, (born 1834, Cambodia—died April 24, 1904, Phnom Penh), king of Cambodia (1860–1904) who, under duress, placed his country under the control of the French in 1863.

‘Norodom | King of Cambodia’, *Encyclopedia Britannica* [website], <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Norodom>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>550</sup> The Khmer Rouge, (French: “Red Khmer”) also called Khmers Rouges, was a radical Communist movement that ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 after winning power through a guerrilla war. The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘Khmer Rouge | Facts, Leadership, Genocide, & Death Toll’, *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Khmer-Rouge>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>551</sup> The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cambodia in 1992–93 formed following the 1991 Paris Peace Accords.

After 1999, Khmer Rouge lost most of its army and the occupied area was completely disintegrated. Subsequently, a ‘special court’ jointly formed by the United Nations and the Cambodian government pursued the leaders of Khmer Rouge. In 2014, two Khmer Rouge leaders, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, were jailed for life by a United Nations-backed court which found them guilty of crimes against humanity for their roles in the Khmer Rouge's genocidal campaign.<sup>552</sup> The United Nations brought Cambodia an electoral system and completed its first general election in 1993 under international supervision. Although Cambodia has regular elections, it has won the political struggle. Prime Minister Hun Sen is a strongman who has been in power for 30 years and continues to expand his power.

Before the 2017 Congressional elections, Hun Sen<sup>553</sup> asked the Supreme Court to forcibly dissolve the only opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party, and all 118 senior members of the party were banned for five years. This election lacked competition, but the election system has become a source of formal maintenance of the legitimacy of Cambodia's regime. It has also allowed Cambodia to develop in the direction of electoral authoritarianism (McCargo 2005; Un 2012). According to International Aid and Democratic Development in Cambodia, Cambodian-American political scholar, Sophal Ear,<sup>554</sup> has pointed out that although Cambodia has received huge international aid in the past three decades, this did not bring about corresponding social development, and even contributed to the growth of corruption and corruption (Ear 2007).

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<sup>552</sup> ‘Khmer Rouge Leaders Found Guilty of Cambodia Genocide’, *BBC News* [website], 16 Nov 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-46217896>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>553</sup> Hun Sen, (born April 4, 1951, Kâmpóng Cham province, Cambodia), is a Cambodian politician, who was Prime Minister of Cambodia from 1985.

<sup>554</sup> Sophal Ear's research and teaching focuses on global political economy, security, and development, including how to rebuild countries after wars. He specialises in Southeast Asia and is a leading authority on Cambodia. Council Members, *Crescenta Valley Town Council* | *Sophal Ear* [website], <https://thecvcouncil.com/council-members/sophal-ear/>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

## Laos:

### Appendix 15

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, commonly known as Lao, is a socialist country located in the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia, with a land area of 230,800 square kilometres.<sup>555</sup>

Laos is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia. It borders Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, Thailand and Myanmar to the west, and the People's Republic of China to the north. The economy of Laos is dominated by agriculture. The capital and largest city is Vientiane. The people speak the Lao language, and the population is 7.16 million.<sup>556</sup>

Laos became a French colony in 1893. In 1947, France passed a new constitution, defining Laos as a constitutional monarchy “autonomous country” under the French Union. In 1954, Laos gained formal independence through the Geneva Conference<sup>557</sup> and established a constitutional monarchy, but it soon fell into a long civil war. In 1975, the Communist organisation, Pat Lao,<sup>558</sup> overthrew the monarchy, and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic was established and continues to this day. Laos is a socialist republic with

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<sup>555</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) - Lao PDR* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=LA&start=2018>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>556</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total - Lao PDR* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2018&locations=LA&start=2018>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>557</sup> In April 1954, diplomats from several nations, including the United States, the Soviet Union, China, France and Great Britain, attended a conference in the Swiss city of Geneva. This led to the creation of the Geneva Accords, which outlined a roadmap for peace and reunification in Vietnam. The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘Geneva Accords | History of Indochina’, *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Geneva-Accords>, (accessed 17 Jun 2021).

<sup>558</sup> Pathet Lao, was a left-oriented nationalist group in Laos that took control of the country in 1975. Founded in 1950, the Pathet Lao (Lao Country) movement joined with the Viet Minh, the Communist-orientated Vietnamese nationalist organisation, in armed resistance to French rule in Indochina.

The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘Pathet Lao | Nationalist Organization, Laos’, *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2009, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pathet-Lao>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

Marxism-Leninism<sup>559</sup> as its official ideology. The only political party is the Lao People's Revolutionary Party.<sup>560</sup>

### **The Outlook for the Contemporary Art Situation in Laos and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

#### **Appendix 16**

At the same time, 'the Lao government has formulated a series of unequal regulations for ethnic Chinese, for example, Chinese Laotians are not allowed to be civil servants, not to buy and sell real estate, and not to join the army.'<sup>561</sup> Therefore, there are not many choices for Chinese ethnic individuals to work in Laos, so doing business is a safe and stable job in Laos. 'After 2013, a large number of Chinese entered Laos from northern Laos to do business, which started another new immigration cycle for Chinese, making the number of Chinese immigrants residing in Laos to an unprecedented scale.'<sup>562</sup> The main factor causing this phenomenon is that in 2013, the Chinese government proposed the "One Belt, One Road" transnational cooperation policy, expecting to establish a China-led regional economic network and its cooperation system to the world. And the geographical location of Laos is very important to the development of "Belt and Road" construction. On the other hand, the Lao government expects that through China's transportation infrastructure construction in Laos, it will bring them opportunities to trade with neighbouring countries, and thus get rid of the plight of domestic poverty. With the cooperation between the two governments, 'Chinese private and government

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<sup>559</sup> Marxism-Leninism was the official ideology of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and by extension of the international Communist movement during the twentieth century.

<sup>560</sup> The Lao People's Revolutionary Party, is the founding and governing political party of the modern-day Laotian state.

<sup>561</sup> Yu-Chuan. Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, p. 30.

<sup>562</sup> Yu-Chuan. Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, p. 3.

funds entered Laos after 2014, and a large number of Chinese moved to Laos. Some Chinese chose to immigrate to Laos because of the convenience of the business work, and that became a new generation of Chinese immigrants in Laos.<sup>563</sup>

## Myanmar:

### Appendix 17

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, commonly known as Myanmar, is a unitary republic located in the western part of the Indochina Peninsula. The geographical position of Myanmar borders the People's Republic of China to the northeast, Thailand and Laos to the southeast, the Andaman Sea to the south, and the Bay of Bengal to the southwest. The country's land area is 652,790 square kilometres,<sup>564</sup> of which forest coverage exceeds 50%. With a population of about 54.04 million<sup>565</sup> and the capital of Naypyidaw, Myanmar is rich in natural mineral resources, oil and natural gas, and its economy depends on agricultural exports.

The British East India Company seized control of the administration of Myanmar after three Anglo-Burmese Wars<sup>566</sup> in the 19th century, and the country became a British colony. In 1942,

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<sup>563</sup> Fang Yun, 'Overseas Chinese in Laos and the Construction of the "Belt and Road Initiative."', *Overseas Chinese Journal of Bagui*, no. 2, 2018, pp. 58–59, <http://www.cqvip.com/QK/82303X/20182/675795554.html>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

<sup>564</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) – Myanmar* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=MM&start=1961>, (accessed 16 Jun 2021).

<sup>565</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total – Myanmar* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2019&locations=MM&start=2018>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>566</sup> Anglo-Burmese Wars, (1824–26, 1852, 1885), were three conflicts that collectively forced Burma (now Myanmar) into a vulnerable position from which it had to concede British hegemony in the region of the Bay of Bengal. 'Anglo-Burmese Wars | British-Myanmar History | Britannica', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Burmese-Wars>, (accessed 30 June 2021).

the Japanese army assisted the Burmese Independence Army (BIA),<sup>567</sup> established by Aung San<sup>568</sup> and Ne Win, on the grounds of supporting the Burmese patriotic independence movement to lead the Japanese occupation of Burma. The following year, Japan announced the establishment of the Burmese State for Burma. After the unconditional surrender of the Empire of Japan in World War II, the British Empire returned to Burma and implemented military rule. In 1948, Myanmar formally broke away from British colonial rule for more than 60 years and officially announced the establishment of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.<sup>569</sup> After independence, due to the resistance of the Burmese Communist Party and other political factions, there were continuous domestic disputes and large-scale civil wars occurred one after another. Until 1962, the military commander General Ne Win<sup>570</sup> launched a coup and established a military-ruled government, declaring Myanmar a socialist country.

In 1988, Aung San Suu Kyi,<sup>571</sup> the leader of the National League for Democracy, promoted the democratisation of Myanmar and was under house arrest by the military. In 1991, Aung San won the Nobel Peace Prize, but she was released by the military government in 2010 and ended

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<sup>567</sup> Formed in December 1941, the BIA fought alongside the Japanese at the start of the Burma campaign but was more important as a political symbol of Burmese independence which the Japanese claimed to support. 'Burma and World War II', *Culturalsurvival.org* [website], 2018, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/burma-and-world-war-ii>, (accessed 30 June 2021).

<sup>568</sup> Aung San, (born Feb. 13, 1915, Natmauk, Burma [now Myanmar]—died July 19, 1947, Rangoon [now Yangon]), Burmese nationalist leader and assassinated hero who was instrumental in securing Burma's independence from Great Britain.

'Aung San | Myanmar Nationalist | Britannica', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aung-San>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>569</sup> Mingli. Hsiao and Hongyuan. Chu, (2020, June) 'Japan's Invasion of Burma (1940–42) and the Role of Taiwan', *Asia-Pacific Research Forum*, no. 67, 2020, p. 1.

<sup>570</sup> U Ne Win, original name Shu Maung, (born May 24, 1911, Paungdale, Burma [Myanmar]- died December 5, 2002, Yangon, Myanmar), Burmese general who was the leader of Burma (now Myanmar) from 1962 to 1988. 'U Ne Win | Myanmar General and Dictator', *Encyclopedia Britannica* [website], <https://www.britannica.com/biography/U-Ne-Win>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>571</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi, also called Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, (born June 19, 1945, Rangoon, Burma [now Yangon, Myanmar]), is a politician and opposition leader of Myanmar, daughter of Aung San (a martyred national hero of independent Burma) and Khin Kyi (a prominent Burmese diplomat), and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1991. Kenneth. Pletcher, 'Aung San Suu Kyi | Biography & Facts', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aung-San-Suu-Kyi>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

her life under house arrest. In 2015, Myanmar held its first general election in 25 years. The National League for Democracy (NLD)<sup>572</sup> led by Aung San Suu Kyi took power and ended the 54-year rule of the military government. On February 1, 2021, the Myanmar National Defence Forces launched a military coup, and political leaders such as Aung San Suu Kyi were detained by the Myanmar military.<sup>573</sup>

## **The Outlook for Myanmar’s Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

### **Appendix 18**

According to data from 2019, China is the largest trading partner of Myanmar. China occupies the largest share in both imports and exports of Myanmar.<sup>574</sup> In addition to China's cooperation with Myanmar in the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (B&R), in 2018 the two countries also ‘signed the China Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), a connectivity scheme tying Myanmar's economy to China's, which was developed with Beijing by the deposed elected government.’<sup>575</sup>

### **Vietnam:**

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<sup>572</sup> The National League for Democracy was born out of the political tumult of 1988, when a massive pro-democracy uprising rocked the nation and toppled the government of Gen.

‘National League for Democracy | Political Party, Myanmar’, *Encyclopedia Britannica*[website], <https://www.britannica.com/topic/National-League-for-Democracy>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>573</sup> Alice. Cuddy, ‘Myanmar Coup: What Is Happening and Why?’, *BBC News* [website], 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>, (accessed 16 Jun 2021).

<sup>574</sup> Sumanth. Samsani, ‘Understanding the Relations between Myanmar and China’, *ORF*, 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/understanding-the-relations-between-myanmar-and-china/>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>575</sup> Jason Tower, and Priscilla A. Clapp, ‘Myanmar: China, the Coup and the Future’, *United States Institute of Peace*, 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/06/myanmar-china-coup-and-future>, (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

## Appendix 19

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, commonly known as Vietnam, is a socialist country located at the eastern end of the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. It borders China to the north and Cambodia and Laos to the west. Vietnam has a population of 96.46 million and a land area of 310,070 square kilometres.<sup>576</sup> The capital of Vietnam is Hanoi, and the largest city is Ho Chi Minh City. Vietnam's geographical location and natural conditions are very conducive to agricultural activities. It is rich in rice, tropical crops and aquatic products. It is a major agricultural export country in Southeast Asia and the world's largest cashew nut processing and export country,<sup>577</sup> accounting for about 80% of the world's cashew nut exports. Electronic products have become Vietnam's largest export product since 2012.<sup>578</sup> In addition, textile and garment manufacturing are one of Vietnam's main industries.<sup>579</sup> The ruling party, the Communist Party of Vietnam, is currently the only legal political party in Vietnam.<sup>580</sup>

The Vietnam War broke out immediately after the independence of Vietnam. The South Vietnam (Republic of Vietnam)<sup>581</sup> camp opposed the capitalist United States and its allies against the North Vietnam camp. The Communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the South Vietnam National Liberation Front (also known as the Communist Party of Vietnam)

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<sup>576</sup> World Bank Group, *Land area (sq. km) – Vietnam* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?end=2018&locations=VN&start=2018>, (accessed 16 Jun 2021).

<sup>577</sup> News VietNamNet, *Vietnam Remains World's No 1 Exporter of Cashews* [website], <https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/business/187522/vietnam-remains-world-s-no-1-exporter-of-cashews.html>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>578</sup> 'Vietnam Product Exports 2012 | WITS Data', *Worldbank.org* [website], 2012, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/VNM/Year/2012/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/WLD/Product/all-groups>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>579</sup> 'Vietnam Product Exports 2012 | WITS Data', *Worldbank.org* [website], 2012, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/VNM/Year/2012/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/WLD/Product/all-groups>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>580</sup> 'Vietnamese Communist Party | Political Party, Vietnam', *Encyclopedia Britannica* [website], <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vietnamese-Communist-Party>, (accessed 17 June 2021).

<sup>581</sup> South Vietnam, officially the Republic of Vietnam, was a country that existed from 1955 to 1975, the period when the southern portion of Vietnam was a member of the Western Bloc during part of the Cold War.

aided by the Soviet Union<sup>582</sup> were supported by the Communist country. South Vietnam (the Republic of Vietnam) had been supported by the United States and its allies, whose ideology was capitalism and the North Vietnamese People's Army of Vietnam and the South Vietnam-based Viet Cong<sup>583</sup> had supported the Soviet Union and its Communist countries. On April 30, 1975, North Vietnam captured Saigon, which was the capital of South Vietnam, and completed the unification of Vietnam.<sup>584</sup> In 1986, the Vietnamese leadership decided to implement reform and opening up, from a single planned economy to a market economy. After the end of the Cold War, Vietnam's rapid economic development gradually got rid of diplomatic difficulties. After opening up, Vietnamese society began to stabilize in all aspects, but it still faces many social problems in terms of the gap between the rich and the poor and medical and health care.

## **The Outlook for the Vietnamese Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

### **Appendix 20**

So far, according to the number of overseas Chinese reported in a 2013 document from the Overseas Chinese Affairs Statistics of the Republic of China (Taiwan), there are more than 990,000 Chinese ethnic in Vietnam.<sup>585</sup> In modern history, China and Vietnam had several key

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<sup>582</sup> The Soviet Union, in full, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.), Russian Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik or Sovetsky Soyuz, was a former northern Eurasian empire (1917/22–1991) stretching from the Baltic and Black seas to the Pacific Ocean and, in its final years, consisting of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (S.S.R.'s).

<sup>583</sup> The Viet Cong (VC), in full Viet Nam Cong San, English Vietnamese Communists, was the guerrilla force that, with the support of the North Vietnamese Army, fought against South Vietnam (late 1950s–1975) and the United States (early 1960s–1973).

<sup>584</sup> Goscha, Christopher, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam*, New Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2018, p. 320.

<sup>585</sup> Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), *2013 Statistical Yearbook of the Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan)*, Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China(Taiwan), 2013, p. 8, [www.ocac.gov.tw/ocac/File/Attach/313/File\\_23038.pdf](http://www.ocac.gov.tw/ocac/File/Attach/313/File_23038.pdf), (accessed 5 Sep 2022).

wars, which affected the delicate political relationship between China, Vietnam and Taiwan, and also affected the important historical background of the migration and distribution of Chinese ethnic in Vietnam in modern times. China and Vietnam are the few countries in the world governed by the Communist Party. From an ideological point of view, the relationship between the two countries should be friendly. However, the two countries actually fought several military conflicts during the Cold War, including the well-known Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979. After the millennium, the two countries often had conflicts over the sovereignty and development disputes of the South China Sea (Paracel Islands and Nansha Islands). From ancient times to the present, the attitude of the Vietnamese towards the Chinese still has been in a complex relationship, sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile. Conversely, Taiwan and Vietnam have had friendly relations in recent years. ‘In 1994, the Taiwan government proposed the “Southward Policy (南向政策),”<sup>586</sup> which made the originally cold relationship between Taiwan and Vietnam warm again, and the two sides established frequent economic and trade exchanges.’<sup>587</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> The foreign and economic policies initiated by the government of the Republic of China in the 1990s promoted the transfer of overseas investment by Taiwanese businessmen to Southeast Asia, and intended to use economic power to expand some political influence, while reducing the intensity of Taiwan's investment in mainland China.

Kwei-Bo. Huang, and Rong-Hui. Chou, ‘The Retrospect and Influence of Taiwan’s “Southward Policy”’, *Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau*, vol. 14, no. 8, 2014, pp. 61–69.

<sup>587</sup> Wu Jing, *The Emigration History of Vietnamese Chinese and Their Use of Language – a Preliminary Study of Hakka in Ho Chi-Minh City*, MA diss., Taoyuan, National Central University, 2010, p. 1.

## Appendix 21

The original translated document is below:

(Interview record)

Interview Title: Welcoming to My House- Artist International Talking (來溫家：藝術家工作室國際對話系列)

Moderator: Hsu, Yuan-Ta(許遠達)

Talking Artists: Fang Wei-Wen(方偉文) x Bui Cong Khanh (斐公慶)

Time: 2019.04.28 15:00 - 17:00

Venue: Absolute Space for the Arts

Bui Cong Khanh said: Until I returned to my hometown of Hoi An (Hội An/Faifo) at the age of 20, when I saw a statue of Guan Gong at home, I asked my father, are we Chinese? ... I didn't know until that day that my grandfather was Hokkien Chinese. I was a little surprised at the time because I didn't like Chinese, and I've been asking myself what to do ever since. I also asked my father why he didn't tell me earlier that we are Chinese. My father said that in our (Vietnamese) society, Chinese is a very sensitive issue.... When I was young, I thought my family were pure Vietnamese. So later I was very hesitant, and I didn't like things related to Chinese very much. Suddenly, I know that I have Chinese blood, it is very painful and difficult for me to accept. I thought about how to redefine myself and how others see me. Although this is painful, it is still a good way to face it (Chinese identity) and make artworks in such a sensitive atmosphere and situation... In my hometown, Hoi An, there was originally a food dish that belonged to the Chinese cuisine, but it was changed to another name. If someone asks the locals, is this dish from China? They will simply say no. (Because) It is very sensitive, (in Vietnam) even the food rejects its own (Chinese) origin. ...

## East Timor:

### Appendix 22

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (East Timor) is the youngest country in Asia. It was established as an independent state only in 2002, with a total population of about 1.29 million<sup>588</sup> Its main territory is in the eastern half of Timor Island. Timor Island is located in the southeast of Java Island, Indonesia, divided into West Timor (belonging to Indonesia) and East Timor. East Timor faces Australia across the Timor Sea to the south. The country's land area is 14,870 square miles.<sup>589</sup> East Timor and its territorial waters are rich in natural resources (oil, natural gas) and metal minerals (gold, chromium, tin, copper, etc.).<sup>590</sup> The official languages are Tetum and Portuguese, and English and Indonesian are available for communication.<sup>591</sup>

East Timor's road to independence was very bumpy. It was ruled by Portugal, Japan, and Indonesia successively, and there were many armed conflicts against colonization, the most tragic of which occurred during the Indonesian occupation period. In 1999, then Australian Prime Minister John Howard,<sup>592</sup> announced that Australia supported the East Timorese national

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<sup>588</sup> World Bank Group, *Population, total - Timor-Leste* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2019&locations=TL&start=2018>, (accessed 16 June 2021).

<sup>589</sup> Government of Timor-Leste, *About*. [website], <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=547&lang=pt>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>590</sup> 'Timor-Leste', *Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative* [website], <https://eiti.org/timorleste>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>591</sup> Kerry. Taylor-Leech, 'The Language Situation in Timor-Leste', *Current Issues in Language Planning*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2009, pp. 1–68.

<sup>592</sup> John Howard, in full John Winston Howard, (born J Between 1975 and 1999, some 200,000 Timorese were killed by Indonesian occupation forces who used starvation and sexual violence alongside chemical weapons and napalm. 'Timor-Leste (East Timor) – CJA', *Center for Justice & Accountability: CJA* [website], <https://cja.org/where-we-work/archives/timor-leste-east-timor/>, uly 26, 1939, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia), was an Australian politician who was Prime Minister of Australia (1996–2007) and leader of the Liberal Party (1985–89, 1995–2007). 'John Howard | Biography and Facts', *Encyclopedia Britannica* [website], <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Winston-Howard>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

self-determination referendum, and US President Clinton<sup>593</sup> also actively participated in the East Timor issue, prompting the Indonesian government to agree to the referendum result. People living in East Timor finally chose to leave Indonesia and become an independent country with a 78.5% vote.<sup>594</sup> After the 1999 referendum on independence, the riots of pro-Indonesian militias and armed groups at once plunged the country into a state of disorder, and the United Nations needed to come forward to maintain the political and economic stability of East Timor. From 1999 to 2002, the UN Security Council<sup>595</sup> passed Resolution 1246,<sup>596</sup> authorising the establishment of UNAMET<sup>597</sup> and UNTAET<sup>598</sup> peacekeeping operations and plans. In addition to ensuring and supervising the smooth progress of the 1999 referendum and election, it also acted as a temporary government during the transitional period. It has power to fully assist East Timor in establishing a modern government system and counselling administrative personnel

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<sup>593</sup> Bill Clinton, byname of William Jefferson Clinton, original name William Jefferson Blythe III, (born August 19, 1946, Hope, Arkansas, U.S.), was 42nd President of the United States (1993–2001), who oversaw the country's longest peacetime economic expansion. The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 'Bill Clinton | Biography, Presidency, Accomplishments, & Facts', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bill-Clinton>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>594</sup> Alison Rourke, 'East Timor: Indonesia's Invasion and the Long Road to Independence' *The Guardian* [website], *The Guardian*, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/30/east-timor-indonesias-invasion-and-the-long-road-to-independence>, (accessed 23 June 2021).

<sup>595</sup> The United Nations Charter established six main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. It gives primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council, which may meet whenever peace is threatened.

<sup>596</sup> Resolution 1246 (1999) / adopted by the Security Council at its 4013th meeting, on 11 June 1999. This resolution established the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET).

<sup>597</sup> The UN established the United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to organise and conduct the popular consultation in order to ascertain whether the people of East Timor accepted or rejected a constitutional framework proposed by Indonesia.

<sup>598</sup> On 26 October 1999 the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1272.

## **The Outlook for East Timor’s Contemporary Art Situation and How Local Chinese Exerted Their Influence in Art Development:**

### **Appendix 23**

Animatism<sup>599</sup> is the famous cross discipline art group in East Timor for over ten years. The group members from East Timor, Australia and Indonesia. They realised through literature, street art, experimental theatre, projection works, large-scale installations, live tattoo and comic book etc. diverse art forms to create local conversations. They organised many projects to advocate for creative ways to bring Australians and East Timorese together in partnership, deepening cross-cultural understanding across the Asia-Pacific region,<sup>600</sup> developing new creative works for Australian and East Timorese audiences and broadening artistic networks between the two countries. It is a project that builds knowledge in the region about life through art. In 2014, the first public art festival in East Timor was showcased, Arte Publiku,<sup>601</sup> which aimed to provide transformative power of art in peace-building and democratic discourse.

### **Appendix 24**

After East Timor declared its independence in 2002, it immediately announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with China (POC). The relations between the two countries are very close to this day:

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<sup>599</sup> Animatism supports cultural exchange, festivals and showcases opportunities for collaborations between Australian and East Timorese artists, led by East Timor’s free art school, Arte Moris, and Melbourne-based artists and creative producers. ‘Animatism’, *Animatism*, <http://www.animatismart.com/>, (accessed 4 May 2021).

<sup>600</sup> As defined by the scope of the ECO ASIA Project, the Asia-Pacific region is of vast proportions, stretching northward to Mongolia, southward to New Zealand, eastward to the island states of Oceania, and westward to Pakistan.

<sup>601</sup> This organisation brought artists from across Timor together with International artists from across South East Asia, Europe, and the Pacific, to share their practice and engage in collaborations. ‘Arte Publiku!’ *Arte Publiku!*, [https://artepublikufestival.wordpress.com/?fbclid=IwAR1gYJ6EXPu5RBV7tgr\\_RU26rPoqcfIahsfbJUv2b1CN7ZoOnZYcjt38GSQ/](https://artepublikufestival.wordpress.com/?fbclid=IwAR1gYJ6EXPu5RBV7tgr_RU26rPoqcfIahsfbJUv2b1CN7ZoOnZYcjt38GSQ/), (accessed 4 May 2021).

The Embassy of China became one of the most active diplomatic representations in the country. In the post-2008 years, East Timor attracted many Chinese, both from China, and overseas, who established many small enterprises. Chinese businessmen have been particularly helpful in developing this new country. Those Chinese residing in East Timor who work as computer, factory and supermarket entrepreneurs, and as cell phone sellers and repairers.<sup>602</sup>

In 2010, Timor-Leste joined China's "One Belt, One Road" plan. For the Chinese government, Timor-Leste's geographical location stands between Asia and the Pacific. For the reason of the geo-political position, East Timor attracts the interest of the Chinese government.

## **Appendix Two: Chapter 1-1. Social and Cultural Context & Historical**

### **Background in Contemporary Asian Society**

#### **Appendix 1**

The rapid recovery of Asia from the 1990s to the present has become the focus of the new world stage. In East Asia, the development of Japan, South Korea, China (the first-tier cities),<sup>603</sup> and Taiwan has almost reached the level of the Western world in each aspect such as economy, education, and technology. However, in fact, Southeast Asia has also grown at an alarming speed while silently compared to the publicity gained from the success in East Asia. It is worth noting that the development path of Southeast Asia is more complicated than in East Asia.

In Southeast Asia the population is more than 655 million.<sup>604</sup> It is the third most populous geographical region in Asia after South Asia and East Asia. Southeast Asia is also one of the

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<sup>602</sup> Jean A. Berlie, 'Chinese in East Timor: Identity, Society and Economy', *HumaNetten*, no. 35, 2016, p. 39, (accessed 28 Aug 2022).

<sup>603</sup> The Chinese city tier system is a hierarchical classification of Chinese cities. There are no such official lists in China, as the Chinese government does not publish or recognize an official definition, or a list of cities included in the tier system. Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen are generally recognized China's first-tier cities. These four cities are also the top four cities in China's total economic output. The tier system typically includes cities in mainland China only.

<sup>604</sup> Total Population of the ASEAN Countries 2008-2018 | Statista, *Statista*[website], 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/796222/total-population-of-the-asean-countries/>, (accessed 1 February 2021).

most diverse countries on planet earth. The region is culturally and ethnically diverse, with hundreds of languages spoken by different ethnic groups. There are 266 million Muslims-- almost as many Muslims as the Arab world. They also have 146 million Christians, 149 million Buddhists<sup>605</sup> which included Mahayana Buddhists and Hinayana Buddhists, and millions of Taoists and Confucianists and Hindus and even Communists. Once known as “the Balkans of Asia,” South Asia used to be experiencing a clash of civilizations and wars.<sup>606</sup> Instead, nowadays Southeast Asia is one of the most peaceful and prosperous corners of planet earth within the second most successful regional multilateral organisation ASEAN.

## **Keyword Fields in Asia (亞洲現場關鍵詞)**

### **Appendix 2**

Williams’s basic background was at the end of World War II. Facing the state of British society at that time, he tried to discuss the historical changes in the meaning of these new and old words in the form of keywords and clarified the cultural politics behind these changes. He examined the historical context of the literal vocabulary changes in the social movement: how they are formed, changed, are redefined again and are influenced. These Keywords not only let readers recognise and understand British culture and society, but also participate in contemporary culture and society. Resources such as *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1974) by Raymond Williams, and *Keywords 200* (2003)<sup>607</sup> by Ping-hui Liao, and *Keywords 100* (當代藝術關鍵詞 100 (2011))<sup>608</sup>, *Keywords in Taiwan Theory* (2019)<sup>609</sup> and *Keywords in Chinese*

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<sup>605</sup> Pew Research Center, *Pew-Templeton: Global Religious Futures Project* [website], <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/regions/asia-pacific>, (accessed 1 February 2021).

<sup>606</sup> Sydney Business Insights, *The Asian Century with Kishore Mahbubani* [website], <https://sbi.sydney.edu.au/the-asian-century-with-kishore-mahbubani/>, (accessed 3 February 2021).

<sup>607</sup> Binghui. Liao, *Keywords 200: Keywords in Literary & Critical Studies*, Taipei, Rye Field Publishing Press, 2003.

<sup>608</sup> Takemi. Kuresawa, *Gendai bijutsu no keyword 100*, Taipei, Rye Field Publishing Press, 2011.

<sup>609</sup> Shumei. Shi et al., *Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019.

*Culture* (2021)<sup>610</sup>, reference keywords as important vocabulary meanings to express various social phenomena and explanations. Williams's keywords focus on using the concrete situation, therefore some keywords in his publication are not frequently used in daily life, but these keywords were considered not to be a formal professional academic system- in terms of the development of special and specific fields. However, at the same time, it can even be said to be a vocabulary with the possibility of cross-field cooperation. It can be viewed as a more creative and contemporary way to access the subject.

### **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia (CDOSEA)**

#### **Appendix 3**

Ho Tzu Nyen was born in Singapore in 1976. He works primarily in film, video, and performance, and has recently developed environmental multimedia installations.

The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation.<sup>611</sup> Ho Tzu Nyen uses historical texts and artefacts to create unique films, video pieces, installations and theatre works that have been shown worldwide from the world level's museums and Biennales. His most famous creative style and characteristic is the use of a large number of different video clips and collages to reveal to people the little-known history of Southeast Asia, while also pointing out the unknowns that we have not perceived. The context of Ho's work refers to a series of literary, art history and music documents, in which a sense of ambiguity, drama, and anxiety is expanded and strengthened. Ho cleverly uses a large number of visual images and a vast knowledge base to stimulate the audience's physical and spiritual feelings to mobilise the viewer's multiple perceptions, and to

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<sup>610</sup> Wai-ye. Li and Yuri. Pines, *Keywords in Chinese Culture*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press, 2021.

<sup>611</sup> The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation, *The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation*[website],<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/ho-tzu-nyen>, (accessed 28 December 2021).

encourage the audience to reflect on our knowledge through the work and explore for more unknowable fields. Ho's works have been featured in the Guggenheim Museum ('No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia', New York, 2013), Guggenheim Museum Bilbao ('The Cloud of Unknowing', Bilbao, 2015), Mori Art Museum ('MAM Project #16', Tokyo, 2012), the 54th Venice Biennale ('The Cloud of Unknowing', Singapore Pavilion, Venice, 2011), Ming Contemporary Art Museum (McaM) ('One or Several Works', Shanghai, 2019) and Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA) ('Ho Tzu Nyen: The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia Volume 10: N for Nameless', Manchester, 2020).<sup>612</sup> The research of main cores in Ho's art practice has always centred on several aspects: the study of Southeast Asian regional politics and folk history, mythology, and culture; film language, structure and symbols; the connection of social reality with the human inner fantasy; the experiment of visual images with social and spiritual metaphors. Ho used over many centuries historical retrospectives to piece together broken vocabulary and message combinations, through the history, vision and music of art to recognise the world again and unfold to what is the current state of Southeast Asia and the outside box of the world's understanding.

## **Post-War (後戰爭)**

### **Appendix 4**

The modernization of Asia began when Europeans entered Southeast Asia in the 16th century. The Portuguese and Spanish came first and after were the Dutch. In the 19th century, the British and French already controlled most of Southeast Asia. At that time, in Southeast Asia only Thailand maintained its formal independence. The European colonial powers ruled Southeast Asia for a long period of time until after World War II. Fubu.

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<sup>612</sup> 'Edouard Malingue Gallery', *Edouardmalingue.com*[website], 2014, [https://edouardmalingue.com/artists\\_ch/%E4%BD%95%E5%AD%90%E5%BD%A5/](https://edouardmalingue.com/artists_ch/%E4%BD%95%E5%AD%90%E5%BD%A5/), (accessed 21 November 2021).



## Appendix 5

Wang used theories from German-born American political theorist Hannah Arendt,<sup>613</sup> and French philosopher Michel Foucault,<sup>614</sup> to show that the intricate relationship between war and society is far beyond the general public's understanding. Foucault reversed Carl Philipp's proposition 'politics is the continuation of war (Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik unter Einbeziehung anderer Mittel)'<sup>615</sup> and indicated the proposition "society is the continuation of war" and made the argument. From this research context, Wang integrated with two sides and further distinguishes and provided to the two concepts of "war itself" and "war legacies."<sup>616</sup> He further developed the concept of "Frames of War" by thinking about the foundation of the relationship between war and society, combining the theoretical concepts of Judith Butler<sup>617</sup> and Erving Goffman<sup>618</sup> and analysing how war and war legacy rebuild people's perception of the world view.

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<sup>613</sup> Hannah Arendt (born 14 October 1906) was a German-born American political theorist. 'Hannah Arendt | American Political Scientist', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hannah-Arendt>, (accessed 4 July 2021).

<sup>614</sup> Paul-Michel Doria Foucault (15 October 1926) was a French philosopher, historian of ideas, writer, political activist, and literary critic. James. Faubion, 'Michel Foucault | French Philosopher and Historian', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michel-Foucault>, (accessed 4 July 2021).

<sup>615</sup> Carl von Clausewitz says, "War is the continuation of politics by other means." He emphasised the importance of social politics and social operations and national policies contained in the complex nature of war. Jordan. Lindell, 'Clausewitz: War, Peace and Politics', *E-International Relations*, 2009, <https://www.e-ir.info/2009/11/26/clausewitz-war-peace-and-politics/>, (accessed 4 July 2021).

<sup>616</sup> Horng-Luen. Wang, 'The Framework of War in East Asia and the Issue of Nationality: An Investigation of Japan, China, and Taiwan', In Horng-Luen. Wang (ed.), *War and Society: Theory, History and Subjective Experience*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2014, p. 157.

<sup>617</sup> Judith Pamela Butler (born February 2 The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 'Erving Goffman | Canadian-American Sociologist', *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1956) is an American philosopher and gender theorist. Brian. Duignan, 'Judith Butler | American Philosopher', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Judith-Butler>, (accessed 4 July 2021).

<sup>618</sup> Erving Goffman (born 11 June 1922) was a Canadian-born sociologist, social psychologist and writer. [website], 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Erving-Goffman>, (accessed 4 July 2021).

## **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: A Cambodian Artist, Svay, Thought From His Art Practice to Examine the Facet of War.**

### **Appendix 6**

Svay began making art as a young teenager in the Site 2 refugee camp, near the Thai-Cambodian border. After studying art at historic Site 2 refugee camp in the late 1980. In 1994, Svay became a co-founder of Phare Ponlue Selepak, a non-governmental organisation and art school in Battambang that continues to thrive today. In 2002, he continued his studies in France, earning the Diplôme National Supérieur d'Études des Arts Plastiques / MFA in 2009, after which he returned to Siem Reap to live and work.

## Appendix 7

Recently, Svay confronts the idea that “the present is also a dangerous time” through the appropriation and dramatisation of public monuments that hint at contentious political histories. He had showed his works (Select group exhibitions) at John Young Museum of Art in Hawaii, Manoa in 2016 (Fragments & Empire: Cambodian Art from the Angkor Period) at 10 Chancery Lane Gallery in Hong Kong in 2016 (Shapeshifting: Contemporary Art From Southeast Asia); at Singapore Art Museum in 2015 (After Utopia); at National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia in 2015 (Gods, Heroes and Clowns: Performance and Narrative in South and Southeast Asian Art); at Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2014 (Secret Archipelago); the 4th Singapore Biennale: If The World Changed and 21st Biennale of Sydney, Mini Essay: Art and Globalisation; at Gwangju Museum of Art in Gwangju, South Korea in 2014 (The Mirror and Monitor of Democracy in Asia) etc. Sareth’s solo exhibitions include ‘The Breath of Change’ (2019) at Richard Koh Fine Art in Singapore. ‘I, Svay Sareth, am Eating Rubber Sandals (2015) and ‘Traffic Circle’ (2012) at SA SA BASSAC in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

## Globalization and Westernization: Language and Education (全球化與西化)

## Appendix 8

‘Manuel Castells<sup>619</sup> indicated that because of the rapid development of the telecommunications system and the leadership of the information technology revolution, the world market has

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<sup>619</sup> Manuel Castells Oliván (born 9 February 1942) is a Spanish sociologist especially associated with research on the information society, communication and globalisation. Microsoft Academic, *Academic.microsoft.com* [website], [https://academic.microsoft.com/author/2288240046/publication/search?q=Manuel%20Castells&qe=Composite\(AA.AuId%253D2288240046\)&f=&orderBy=0&paperId=1514186485](https://academic.microsoft.com/author/2288240046/publication/search?q=Manuel%20Castells&qe=Composite(AA.AuId%253D2288240046)&f=&orderBy=0&paperId=1514186485), (accessed 12 May 2021).

expanded rapidly.<sup>620</sup> Apart from proposing various factors that lead to globalisation, Allan Luke<sup>621</sup> and Carmen Luke<sup>622</sup> further pointed out the countries that have contributed to the driving force and development of globalisation. Among them, the United States takes its economic power, English language, intelligent industry, science and technology, military power, and huge public media and publishing business can be said to be the complete leader. In addition, other first world countries are also closely following the United States.

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<sup>620</sup> Manuel. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Vol. I*, Massachusetts, Wiley-Blackwell Press, 1996 , p. 379.

<sup>621</sup> Allan Luke (born 1950) is an educator, researcher, and theorist studying literacy, multiliteracies, applied linguistics, and educational sociology and policy. Technology (QUT), ‘Queensland University of “Allan Luke”’, *QUT* [website], <https://www.qut.edu.au/about/our-people/academic-profiles/a2.luke>, (accessed 12 May 2021).

<sup>622</sup> Carmen Luke, is the author of books such as *Globalisation and Women in Academia*. ‘Carmen Luke Books - Biography and List of Works - Author of *Globalisation and Women in Academia*’, *Www.biblio.com* [website], <https://www.biblio.com/carmen-luke/author/677066>, (accessed 12 May 2021).

## Appendix 9

In David Crystal's book, *English as a Global Language*,<sup>623</sup> the writer analysed the historical background of English as a global language. He explained that English is a symbol of super military power, political power, intellectual power, communication power, and economic power in today's society. English is becoming a new world language. He even used Umberto Eco's<sup>624</sup> opinions that the primacy of English today is due to a series of historical circumstances. It began with the commercial and colonial expansion of the British Empire in the seventeenth century, then in after World War II because the United States controlled the world economic and technological hegemony, It determined the dominant position of English in the world.

## Appendix 10

The Philippines was colonised by the United States from 1898 to 1946, opening up the English-speaking environment in the Philippines. After the founding of the country, the Philippine government was still open and accepting foreign English languages. The reason is the Philippines is a country composed of more than 7,600 islands, with as many as 187 confirmed dialects. Therefore, the government chooses English as the second official language to facilitate communication and invest a lot of resources to promote the benefits of English circulation. English proficiency has brought many competitive advantages to the Philippines in the era of globalisation. The industries that benefited include tourism, retirement and nursing care, economic and trade investment, English education, and labour exportation. Because of the convenience brought by English, the Philippines has attracted many international tourists, which increased from 3.52 million in 2010 to 7.13 million in 2018, and it has shown a positive

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<sup>623</sup> David. Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 72.

<sup>624</sup> Umberto Eco (born 5 January 1932) was an Italian medievalist, philosopher, semiotician, cultural critic, political and social commentator, and novelist. 'Umberto Eco | Biography, Books, & Facts | Britannica', *Encyclopædia Britannica* [website], 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Umberto-Eco>, (accessed 26 Jun 2021).

growth almost every year,<sup>625</sup> the magazine, *International Living*, listed the Philippines as a suitable place for retirement on the grounds of low living expenses and the ability of the people to speak English.<sup>626</sup> In terms of labour export, the ability of foreign workers to communicate with colleagues and supervisors is extremely important, and it is also an important measure of whether they can meet the requirements of the industry and employers. English proficiency has made Filipinos popular in overseas technical, professional and labour industries.<sup>627</sup> As a result, the Philippines' business outsourcing and customer service industries are booming, earning a large amount of foreign exchange income for the country and the people. These advantages are partially attributed to the Philippines' strong English-speaking population.

The emergence of globalisation not only marked the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, but also caused an increase in the number and functions of international organisations, which directly challenged the functions and operations of countries themselves. In Southeast Asia, this occurred due to the sovereignty and territorial disputes between countries, the opposition between domestic ruling and opposition parties, and even the separation of warlords and political and business corruption, as well as the different views of different ethnic groups on identity, cultural identity, and political identity. Therefore, national identity crises often occur in Southeast Asian countries.

## Appendix 11

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<sup>625</sup> Christia Marie Ramos, 'Philippines breaks tourism record in 2018', *INQUIRER.NET*, 2019, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1077216/philippines-breaks-tourism-record-in-2018>, (accessed 22 December 2020).

<sup>626</sup> Kathleen. Peddicord, 'How to Retire in the Philippines: The Philippines offers an exotic retirement lifestyle at an exceptionally low price', *U.S. News & World Report*, 2020, <https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/baby-boomers/articles/how-to-retire-in-the-philippines>, (accessed 22 December 2020).

<sup>627</sup> Andy. Charters, 'Why the Philippines Is One of the Top English-Proficient Countries', *Cloudemployee.co.uk* [web blog], 2021, <https://cloudemployee.co.uk/blog/it-outsourcing/why-philippines-for-business>, (accessed 22 October 2020).

‘The new face of the world under globalisation is multiculturalism which is effective as a public policy. Furthermore, in an increasingly globalised late-modern world, people are increasingly challenged by the increase and prevalence of cultural identity, kinship separation, and transnational connections in the process of immigration.’<sup>628</sup> Here, American anthropologist, Renato Rosaldo,<sup>629</sup> pointed out that in today's postcolonial world, the notion of authentic culture as a world of natural inner coherence no longer seems tenable. At the same time, this fact is also reflected and increasingly clear in the increasing interdependence of globalisation; neither "we" nor "they" can be fully framed and homogeneous as they have been in the past. All of us now live in an interdependent world that is borrowed and marked across penetrable national and cultural boundaries.<sup>630</sup>

## **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Phenomenon of The Explosion of Biennale Explosion In Asia (雙年展在亞洲大爆發的現象)**

### **Appendix 12**

In contrast to this, the holding of biennales in several important cities that are leaders in contemporary art, such as New York, London and Paris, became not that important for biannual art circle, because these art cities have world-class art museums and well-known multinational galleries with worldwide organisations to hold exhibitions on a regular basis. It has an obvious influence in attracting artistic and cultural people from all over the world to participate in the events.

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<sup>628</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media*, Taipei, Socio Publishing, 2012, p. 28.

<sup>629</sup> Renato Rosaldo is an American award-winning poet and anthropologist. ‘Renato Rosaldo’, *Smith College*, <https://www.smith.edu/academics/poetry-center/renato-rosaldo>, (accessed 6 Feb 2022).

<sup>630</sup> Rosaldo, Renato, and Jonathan Xavier Inda, *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*, Malden, Blackwell, 2008, p. 217.

## Appendix 13

On the other hand, Jogja Biennale's operating funds are far less than the Singapore Biennale, but the 'Equator Project' that has been implemented since 2011 has received a huge response from world art. The Equator Series project which largely focuses on practices to investigate how contemporary art and culture are intertwined with the local art in the region. In many texts, local art is often referred to as indigenous art. They rebuild and re-define 'indigenous' or 'non-indigenous' and encourage that these terms be re-examined and redefined because they are closely related to the power relation, which has been socio-historically shifting in a long period of time. The Biennale Jogja largely focuses on how local art can always be so dynamic and open that it can last and adapt to new situations or coexist with and embrace the incoming new cultures. In addition, in 2019, Documenta 15 announced that Ruangrupa, an Indonesian art group, will be the Artistic (curatorial) Director of the 15th Documenta (2022).<sup>631</sup> Ruangrupa is a non-profit organisation established in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2000. The art social practice project is based on the concept of expanding the artistic possibilities of pan-culture in the city through exhibitions, art festivals, art laboratories, workshops, research and literature publications as ways to expand artistic social participation. The purpose of the organisation is to create a global-oriented, interdisciplinary art and cultural platform for mutual cooperation. It was the first time an Asian interdisciplinary art group was invited to be a curator in Documenta (Kassel Documenta). It remains to be seen whether this special cooperation with the authoritative western biennale organisation can bring new influence and awareness to the globalisation of contemporary art in Southeast Asia?

## Hybridization and Ambivalence (混味與雜揉)

## Appendix 14

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<sup>631</sup> 'Documenta Fifteen', *Documenta Fifteen*, <https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/>, (accessed 6 Feb 2022).

Leading scholar of Critical Race Theory, Professor, Goldberg,<sup>632</sup> proposed that “miscellaneous is the appearance of survival and renewal in a multicultural context.”<sup>633</sup> The concept of miscellaneous is related to a view of cultural integration, which ‘emphasises complex states of cultural entanglement rather than cultural differences partially reinforced by multiculturalism.’<sup>634</sup>

## Appendix 15

Based on this critical standpoint, we can thus reiterate ‘diversity over homology, inclusivity over xenophobia, performance over privilege, conversation over disciplined political structure.’<sup>635</sup> In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term “ambivalence” denotes “the fact of having or showing both positive and negative feelings about somebody or something,”<sup>636</sup> while in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* it further elaborates: “simultaneous and contradictory attitudes or feelings (such as attraction and repulsion) toward an object, person, or action,” and as such, “continual fluctuation (as between one thing and its opposite).”<sup>637</sup> This implies one’s attitudes, toward a person, an action, or an object, are in an ambiguous, entangled state, for example, love and hate, half-in and half-out. Ambivalence is widely translated as paradoxicality or ambiguity in Chinese. However, the word derived from ‘ambi’ (pair) and ‘valence’ (value), which operate on the plane of the emotional, not the cognitive, and thus

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<sup>632</sup> David Theo Goldberg is the Director of the University of California Humanities Research Institute within the University of California system-wide research facility for the human sciences and theoretical research in the arts. ‘David Theo Goldberg | UW-Madison Centre for the Humanities’, *Humanities.wisc.edu* [website],

<https://humanities.wisc.edu/events/entry/david-theo-goldberg>, (accessed 21 November 2021).

<sup>633</sup> David Theo Goldberg. ‘Racist Exclusions’, *Philosophical Forum*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1994, p. 10.

<sup>634</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media*, Taipei, Socio Publishing, 2012, pp.28-30.

<sup>635</sup> Papastergiadis, Nikos, ‘Hybridity and Ambivalence’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2005, p. 57.

<sup>636</sup> ‘Ambivalence Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.’, *Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com*, 2022, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/ambivalence>, (accessed 4 Sep 2022).

<sup>637</sup> ‘Definition of AMBIVALENCE’, *Merriam-Webster.com*, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambivalence>, (accessed 4 Sep 2022).

should not be misunderstood with the paradox or ambiguity within the knowledge system. The “co-existence of positivity and negativity” adopted by Qi-Zheng Ye (葉啟政)<sup>638</sup> would be a more appropriate translation.

## **Appendix 16**

Post-colonial scholar Homi Bhabha<sup>639</sup> pointed out that under colonialism (as the peak of Western modernism), the colonised mimicked their colonisers as the latter modernised the colonial subject according to their needs, and this was an example of ambivalence. Perhaps the more hybrid in Asia they become, the more space they would gain, possibly beyond the Western modernity and postmodern theories, on our ways to Southeast Asian epistemology.

## **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Pedagogical Horror Film Which Indicates The History of Geopolitics : *Student Bodies***

## **Appendix 17**

Ho Rui An is an artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance and theory. Working primarily across the media of lecture, essay and film, he probes into the ways by which images are produced, circulate and disappear within contexts of globalism and governance. Ho's artistic research discusses the geopolitics of East and Southeast Asia, especially in relation to the modernity of capitalism. Several of his early works mainly discussed what is meant by the ‘miracle’ period of Asia. After World War II, Asia became a

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<sup>638</sup> Qi-Zheng Ye is a professor at the Department of Sociology at National Taiwan University, is a scholar and a social reformer, (accessed 6 Feb 2022).

‘The 15th Wu Sanlian Award for Sociology - Ye Qizheng. Introduction’, *Wusanlien.org*, <http://www.wusanlien.org.tw/02awards/02winners/02winners15/e01>, (accessed 6 Feb 2022).

<sup>639</sup> Homi K. Bhabha (b. 1949) is a literary and cultural critic, influential theorist of postcolonial culture, and engaged advocate for the humanities. ‘Homi K. Bhabha’, *Obo*, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0057.xml/>, (accessed 6 Feb 2022).

mythical phenomenon praised by the rapid economic and technological development, but the vigorous development was quickly stopped in the 1997 financial crisis.

At the Jakarta Biennale 2017, Ho Rui An presented *Solar: A Meltdown*, a lecture-performance.

He used film analysis to discuss issues of colonisation, globalisation and environmental problem awareness. From a strange image at the Tropenmuseum, Ho Rui An has launched a series of investigations to get to the suppressed or supposedly unspectacular stories of the colonial empire and, more crucially, the merciless sun behind it, beating down on the imperial back. The lecture totals a hour and during the performance time he shared a variety of observations on life, the visual composition language of the film and other materials for the well-paced discussions. Through layer-by-layer deductions, he has (works) zoomed in from various very small details and phenomena of life to larger discussions of political and racial exchanges, such as using light, sweat and a man's pectoral muscles to discuss the exoticism of bodies and emotions. He (the artist) turned the colonial theme into another fantasy story within his own logic. Through his superb acting skills and on-site objects, as well as humorous content, he seriously reflects on the current situation caused by the past history of the whole of Asia. From this artistic research case, possibly, we can expect that in the near future contemporary Southeast Asian art yields the artistic degree to which contemporary art can be defined by its turn towards the local and away from the national and international.

## **Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: FX Harsono Explores His Own Identity Through The Arts.**

### **Appendix 18**

Harsono was born in 1949, just as the independence of the Indonesian nation was being established. He grew up in a Catholic household, he was the son of ethnic Chinese parents who spoke fluent Bahasa and Dutch and only a little Mandarin. He remembers his family kept many Chinese customs:

such as Chinese New Year and visiting the graves of his ancestors. He also attended a Chinese school for several years of his early education. Such a culture and education background with lingual ties and integrated, mestizo lifestyle is characteristic of Peranakan Chinese. Southeast Asia Chinese people with mixed ancestry, it is now used to signify members of the Chinese Indonesian community who were born in the archipelago and have a long familial lineage in Indonesia, speak fluent Bahasa or a local Indonesian dialect, and have largely adopted local cultures.<sup>640</sup>

Between 1965 and 1966, as the government transitioned from the rule of socialist Independence leader Sukarno to the military-backed, authoritarian regime of Suharto, violent communist purges saw many ethnic Chinese killed, captured, or arrested based on their alleged political affiliations with China (mainland).<sup>641</sup>

During this time, Harsono recalls his father burning family photographs that depicted any activities related to the Chinese community. These photographs could be used against the family as supposed evidence of intent to destabilise the nation:

Beginning in 1966, the use of Chinese characters was forbidden, Chinese media was shut down, the importing of Chinese language publications was prohibited, Chinese schools and sociopolitical organisations were closed, and any use of the Chinese language was

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<sup>640</sup> Lisa Catt, 'Expressions of Chinese Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage in Contemporary Indonesian Art: FX Harsono and Tintin Wulia', *Yishu : Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2015, pp.67-81.

<sup>641</sup> Jemma Purdey, 'Anti-Violence and Transitions in Indonesia: June 1998–October 1999', Lindsey. Timothy(eds), *In Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*. Singapore, Institute Of Southeast Asian Studies; Clayton, 2005, p.15.

strongly discouraged. Members of the Chinese Indonesian community were also pressured to change their names to ones that sounded more Indonesian.<sup>642</sup>

This situation also influenced to Oh Hong Boen (胡丰文), who changed his name to FX Harsono. FX comes from Francisco Xavier, the name of the saint his mother chose when he was baptised—even identifiers of Dutch colonisation were given precedence over those of Chineseness in postcolonial Indonesia.<sup>643</sup> This family experience of Indonesian Chinese persecution has deeply influenced the development of his artistic creation to this day. His work has been shown in over 100 exhibitions around the world, including the seminal ‘Traditions/Tensions: Contemporary Art in Asia’ at the Asia Society in New York (1996), and the first Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane, Australia (1993). The Singapore Art Museum mounted a major career retrospective, ‘FX Harsono: Testimonies’, in 2010. He presented his first solo exhibition in the United States, ‘Writing in the Rain’, at Tyler Rollins Fine Art in 2012. Most recently, he presented a solo exhibition, ‘NAMA’, at Tyler Rollins Fine Art in 2019. Recent biennials include Indonesia’s Jogja Biennale (2013) and the Sydney Biennale (2016). Harsono’s art work has touched on concerns that resonate globally, foregrounding fundamental issues that are central to the formation of group and personal identities in our rapidly changing world.

## **The Southeast- The Difference from Outside and Inside (南方-内外差异)**

### **Appendix 19**

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<sup>642</sup> Leo. Suryadinata, *Chinese Indonesians: State Policy, Monoculture, and Multiculture*, Singapore, Eastern Universities Press, 2004, p.3.

<sup>643</sup> Lisa Catt, ‘Expressions of Chinese Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage in Contemporary Indonesian Art: FX Harsono and Tintin Wulia.’ *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2015, [http://yishu-online.com/wp-content/uploads/mm-products\\_issues/uploads/yishu\\_67\\_web.pdf](http://yishu-online.com/wp-content/uploads/mm-products_issues/uploads/yishu_67_web.pdf), (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

The words ‘Southeast Asia’ come from the definition of the relative geographical position. As the name suggests, this position is in the southeast of Asia; and ‘East’ and ‘South’ have other symbolic meanings in different civilizations and cultures in addition to the basic geographical relative designation. In the Chinese language, the orientation east, west, south and north are not only common orientation words, but their implied meanings are also different. In the use of ancient Chinese poetry, the north-south direction and the east-west direction are used in different situations.

North and South represent remoteness and isolation. It is like ‘Tang Dumu’s poem “Han River”:<sup>644</sup> “The people who visit from the north and the south are getting old, and the sunset will watch the people who are visiting by boat” (唐杜牧《漢江》：「南去北來人自老，夕陽長送釣船歸」); Tang Dynasty Liu Zongyuan’s “feudalism”: To capture the central area and to revive the good virtues, the hero from the southern to the northern for the expedition. (唐代柳宗元《封建論》：「挾中興復古之德，雄南征北伐之威」) But East and West usually have the meaning of being adjacent to the surrounding, therefore, the cognition differences between the East and the South have a long history. Since ancient times, the north has been considered a dark place, because China is located in the northern latitude, and most of the sunlight comes from the south. During the year, the north receives far less sunlight than the south, so it is considered a ghostly place(幽冥之地). Li- Yun. Festival, *Book of Rites*<sup>645</sup> “The ancient dead went to the north, the living went to the southern countryside”.(《禮記·禮運》：「故死者北首，生者南鄉」) It means that the ancients believed that the dead all went to the north, and the

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<sup>644</sup> Du Mu (803 - 852), a native of Wannian, Jingzhao (present Xi'an of Shaanxi Province), was a renowned poet in the Tang Dynasty. Feng Hui, ‘Du Mu’, *En.chinaculture.org*, [http://en.chinaculture.org/focus/focus/2010expo\\_en/2010-04/21/content\\_377367.htm](http://en.chinaculture.org/focus/focus/2010expo_en/2010-04/21/content_377367.htm), (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

<sup>645</sup> Li ji (The *Book of Rites*) is one of the Five Classics of the Confucian canon, which had significant influence on Chinese history and culture. ‘Annotated Edition of *The Book of Rites*’, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, <https://www.loc.gov/item/202166635>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

living were to face the south. The south is in charge of life, and the north is in charge of the dead king. The distance between the two is naturally extremely far.<sup>646</sup>

‘The location of Southeast Asia was first recorded by Western civilization in 1839 by American pastor Malcolm Howard in his book “Travels in South-Eastern Asia”. But the definition of Southeast Asia at that time included only the continental part, excluding the marine part.’<sup>647</sup> During World War II, the Allies established the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) in 1943. The term “Southeast Asia” is therefore widely used. By the late 1970s the term “Southeast Asia” had become standard usage by countries and international organisations and the scope of countries and territories it included. ‘In Southeast Asia under Western centrism, in the dual semantics of both East and South, “East (Oriental)” is assumed and constructed as a heterogeneous, divisive and “authorised” which includes “Far Eastern thought”; “South” it is a symbol of tropical, colourful and primitive meaning.’<sup>648</sup>

These symbols became geopolitical metaphors used as a pretext for colonisation by Western powers. Under this structure, “south” is usually given negative meanings relative to the north, such as other, frontier, weak, invisible, deprived, colonised, sacrificed, etc. But at the same time, the metaphor of the “south” is sometimes seen as a place of escape from governance, a place of vitality, a place of possible redemption, and the possibility of an alternative utopian imagination. That is, the “South” has the potential to reverse the established reality.<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> Mychistory, *An ancient small theatre that knows history: to understand ancient miscellaneous studies and historical gossip, it turns out that it was like the ancients*, Taipei, My House Publishing, 2017, p. 5.

<sup>647</sup> Joshua. Eliot et al., *Indonesia, Malaysia & Singapore Handbook*. 1996, Bath, Trade & Travel, Lincolnwood, Illinois, 1995.

<sup>648</sup> Woo. Park Seung and King. Victor T, *The Historical Construction of Southeast Asian Studies Korea and Beyond*, Singapore Iseas–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 2013.

<sup>649</sup> Lu. Pei-Yi, ‘Making South: The “South” as a Method in Taiwan Contemporary Curating’, *Journal of Taipei Fine Arts Museum*, no. 41, 2021, p. 70.

From the literal meaning of ‘South’ to its extended meaning, another term, ‘Global South’ (全球南方), provides richer concepts and theories:

according to Literary and Critical Theory - Oxford Bibliographies, the term “Global South” points to three definitions: first, in relation to the “Non-Aligned Movement”, referring to economically developing countries and post-war referred to as Third World countries, which in practice both sides (those countries) use the Southern Alliance Strategy(南方結盟策略). The second is the spillover effect of capitalism on deterritorialization(去疆域地理的資本主義外溢效應), such as the location of the “South” within the geographic distribution “North”, or the “North” within the geographic “South”. A third definition refers to the imaginary resistance of transnational political subjects, under which the “global South” can be seen as a direct response to the transition from colonial to post-colonial. This can also be indicative of the people and places affected by the globalisation of contemporary capital.<sup>650</sup>

The western sociologists and anthropologists use the terms ‘advanced’ and ‘primitive’ to describe global and local differences, referring to “primitive” to the past and the colonised world. The colonial expansion of Europe thus provides a historical context for the ‘Global South’, shifting from a previous focus on regional developments or cultural differences to an emphasis on geopolitical power relations. The Marxist scholar, Antonio Gramsci's book, *The Southern Question* (1995), formally placed the term ‘South’ in academic discussions. The book mainly focuses on ‘the colonisation of southern Italy by capital from the north, making the ‘South’ shift from the confrontation between the ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ concerned by colonial issues to the ‘centre’ and ‘frontier’ issues of world economic development’.<sup>651</sup> The ‘southern question’ is mentioned not only when analysing at the political and economic level, but also when studying the historical role of religion and intellectuals in the South roles over a long period of time. At the same time, the content of the discussion was elevated to the level of national culture.

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<sup>650</sup> Anne Garland. Mahler, ‘Global South.’ *Oxford Bibliographies Online Datasets*, 25 Oct. 2017, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0055.xml>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>651</sup> Lu. Pei-Yi, ‘Making South: The “South” as a Method in Taiwan Contemporary Curating’, *Journal of Taipei Fine Arts Museum*, no. 41, 2021, p. 70.

In the 1950s to 1960s, Argentine economist Raul Prebisch believed that underdeveloped and poor countries were affected by the reform of the world trade system. This view turned the ‘South’ from an economic perspective to an international political term. The ‘Global South’ is here referred to as having a conflict of interest with those industrial powers.<sup>652</sup> On the other hand, the concept of the ‘Global South’ in the field of cultural studies and literature almost refers to analytical research from a postcolonial perspective of Marxist economics. However, from an intersectoral perspective, traces of colonialism are seen in northern societies, not just in the South. In addition, the contemporary ‘global South’ also refers to the transnational social movements of the 1990s that were used to counter neoliberal capital flows, a global perspective drawn from the history of the Third World, especially the Non-Aligned Movement.

From the simple analysis above, we can know the transformation of the concept of the ‘Global South’ itself: from cultural differences, economic development, to the geopolitics of international relations. The ‘South-North’ discourse shifts from the binary opposition of ‘advanced’ and ‘primitive’, ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, ‘centre’ and ‘frontier’ to multiple meanings and issues. At the same time, ‘south’ can also be referred to as a behavioural attitude.

### **The Self-Southern Identity in Southeast Asia (亞洲東南方的自我南方認同)**

Southeast Asians began to take concrete actions towards their own regional integration and awareness in the 1960s, when various Southeast Asian countries became independent and domestic political and economic stability was relatively stable. The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), a regional organisation in Southeast Asia, is an important promoter of establishing regional identity and harmony in Southeast Asia. ASEAN was founded in 1967.

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<sup>652</sup> Roberto Dainotto and Raewyn Connell, ‘South by Chance: Southern Questions on the Global South’, *The Global South*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2017, pp. 12–13, <https://doi.org/10.2979/globalsouth.11.2.03>, (accessed 17 Feb 2023).

After 40 years of integrated operation, ASEAN has not only developed into an important regional organisation in Asia, but also has been recognized and recognized internationally. The establishment of ASEAN can resolve differences among member countries, thereby promoting the effective operation of the organisation. This operation is called 'The ASEAN Way', which emphasises the principles of 'informal', 'tolerance', 'consensus', 'negotiation' and 'non-intervention in internal affairs' among Southeast Asian countries. However, the ASEAN model has been in operation so far because the ASEAN has always adhered to the principle of "non-intervention in internal affairs", which has hindered ASEAN in demonstrating its organisational principles. When faced with regional problems or crises, 'The ASEAN Way' obviously tends to be rigid and unable to respond immediately, which leads to questioning the authority and value of ASEAN.

However, at the same time, as the international situation is changing rapidly, the so-called 'The ASEAN Way' has become the best shield for member states to isolate foreign political and diplomatic interference. 'In the past, when scholars from Southeast Asian countries proposed the concept of ASEAN, they adopted neo-functionalist approaches to ASEAN. Scholars in Southeast Asia believe that the principles and norms generally accepted in security cooperation based from the rising economic interdependence of Southeast Asian countries driven by the capital market is based on the rise of a cognition-based community, so it is recommended that Southeast Asian countries work together to establish a favourable common environment. The functional cooperation of ASEAN belongs to Constructivism, which is to explain how to cooperate from the perspective of collective identity. 'ASEAN expects that the interaction between states in international relations will form an identity about a common regional identity, and this identity will also change the country's definition of its interests.'<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> Kuo. Chun-Lin, 'Regional Integration of Southeast Asia-ASEAN Way's Practice and Review', *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2008, pp. 99-126.

The challenge facing ASEAN as an organisation has always been how to balance the sovereign rights of member states and maintain its own credibility. ASEAN's goal is to be an advanced international organisation dedicated to peace, economic growth, and strengthening equality within the region.<sup>654</sup>

For Southeast Asian people, when the mainstream consciousness in Europe and America is no longer regarded as the only goal of progress for themselves, the choice of their own Southeast Asian paths to implement locally will be the necessary key in the process of self-understanding in Southeast Asia to recognize its own current situation. At the same time, Southeast Asia must affirm and admit its failure and unbearableness in the past centuries, and how its history has influenced the current situation:

Southeast Asian countries resist the distinction between “south” and “north” by “recognizing the local reality”. Furthermore, Southeast Asia is also fully aware that the “south” is not an exotic place that can only be the “north”, and that the “south” is not a cultural specimen collected by the “north”. The “South” is not a utopia in which the “North” absorbs vitality.<sup>655</sup>

To establish the local-centred thinking of Southeast Asia will be the place where the ‘south’ sees itself as being; to build their (Southeast Asian) own cultural context and live the life in their want on their own land with itself as the subject. Recognizing the relationship between land, nature, environment and locality in Southeast Asia. Taking the local as the main body to think about the differences between the North and the South is not just the division of transnational regions, it can also be placed in a relative regional position within the country for differentiated classification and development plans.

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<sup>654</sup> Lu. Pei-Yi, ‘Making South: The “South” as a Method in Taiwan Contemporary Curating’, *Journal of Taipei Fine Arts Museum*, no. 41, 2021, p. 93.

<sup>655</sup> Chao. En-Chieh (ed.), *Studying the South. the South, Studying*, Taipei, Rive Gauche Publishing House, 2020, p. 65.

**Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: The Road of Contemporary Art Practice  
For Southeast Asia's Globalisation Under the Globalisation of the World. (世界全  
球化下東南亞全球化的當代藝術實踐之路)**

**Appendix 20**

The word 'Asia' originated from the development of the industrial revolution after the European Enlightenment and the rise of colonial empires. 'Asia' has become the object of the expansion of European empires. An internationally renowned literary theorist and critic, the founder of post-colonial theory, Edward Said, started the discussion of Orientalism in his book in 1978 *Orientalism*. At the same time, it also arouses the reflection of Asian local cultural researchers on the imagination of Asia as an object. The post-colonial theoretical trend led by Said was brought back to Asia in the 1990s by scholars who came from Asia to study in Europe and the United States in the 1980s, and then spread to the intellectual circles of Asian countries, including politics, society, art, culture and other research fields.

Asian societies in the 1990s revolved around the post-colonial context of de-imperialization and the establishment of sovereign subjects, especially under the influence of the heightened local consciousness among Southeast Asian countries, and were promoted by the local academic and political circles. On the other hand, the Asian art circle is also influenced by the trend of Orientalism and explores the establishment and practice of 'artistic subjectivity' in Asian contemporary art. In addition, in David Held's conceptual theory of globalisation in 1999, he defined globalisation as a multi-series process of intercontinental or transregional behaviours, interactions, and power operations, including changes in spatial organisation of various social relations and dispositions. The thinking of Asian subjectivity under the operation of globalisation has produced multiple connections under the thinking of postcolonial and

decolonization. At the same time, the globalisation thinking led by Europe and the United States has also begun to enter the world-wide art field for practice. However:

the open view of “multiculturalism” packaged under globalisation, after being critically analysed by intellectuals in non-Western countries, has always been questioned as being unable to get rid of the power distribution in which the mainstream view of the West dominates the global empire of culture. In addition, in the Western art circles, attempts have been made to weaken the expectation of “exoticism” hidden behind the Western subject to imagine the artistic attributes and functions of Asian regional culture.<sup>656</sup>

Under such a power operation mechanism and the operation behind it, Asian contemporary art has been operating in a way that responds to the globalised world art stage, and at the same time, it must be presented and developed in the most recognizable way to join the Western mainstream's contemporary art development.

Since the early 1980s, when the idea of a distinct contemporary Asian art started to gain momentum, most of the important exhibitions, symposia, books, lectures, and other events specifically focused on contemporary Southeast Asian art have taken place in or have been otherwise funded by the Western developed countries. By the 1990s, several wealthy Asian countries and regions of Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia joined Asian and Southeast Asian regional art practices. After 2000, the Singapore government has devoted much attention towards establishing Singapore as a, if not the, centre for contemporary Southeast Asian art. Despite the government's predilection for imposing constraints on freedoms of expression, its attempts to reify Singapore as an artistic regional centre have been partly successful due to its affluence, the widespread use of English, the lingua franca of the contemporary global art world, and to the introduction of laws and policies designed to encourage investors and collectors. Additionally, the state has poured considerable monies into the construction of an artistic infrastructure as evidenced by the Singapore Art Museum, which

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<sup>656</sup> Liang. Li-ling, ‘Whose Contemporary Art?--From Exoticism to Local Signs’, *Journal of Taiwan Museum of Art*, vol. 72, 2008, p. 20.

also doubles as a significant centre through which contemporary Southeast Asian art becomes historicised, and the establishment of the Singapore Biennale in 2006. In addition, Southeast Asian neighbours, Australia, where multiculturalist imperatives helped facilitate the inclusion of art from around the putative Asia-Pacific region. Held at the government-funded Queensland Art Museum since 1993, the Asia-Pacific Triennial has been an important venue for many contemporary artists from Southeast Asia. For further the Road of Contemporary Art Practice.

On September 22, 2019, the Documenta Fifteen supervisory team announced that Ruangrupa, an artist group from Indonesia,<sup>657</sup> would be the artistic director of the 15th Documenta. As a concrete practice, self-image and appearance, 'lumbung' was the starting point of Documenta Fifteen: principles of collectivity, resource building and equitable distribution are pivotal to the curatorial work. Ruangrupa based Documenta Fifteen upon the values and ideas of lumbung, which directly translates as 'rice barn', and refers to a communal building in rural Indonesia where a community's harvest is gathered, stored and distributed according to jointly determined criterion as a pooled resource for the future:

Ruangrupa is a collective founded in 2000 and based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As a non-profit organisation, Ruangrupa promotes artistic ideas within urban and cultural contexts through the involvement of artists and other disciplines such as the social sciences, politics, technology, or the media so as to open up critical reflections and perspectives on contemporary urban problems in Indonesia. Ruangrupa runs an art space in the south of Jakarta. The collective has participated in numerous collaborative projects and exhibitions, including the Gwangju Biennial (2002 and 2018), Istanbul Biennial (2005), Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Brisbane, 2012), Singapore Biennial (2011), São Paulo Biennial (2014), Aichi Triennial (Nagoya, 2016) and Cosmopolis at the Centre Pompidou (Paris, 2017).<sup>658</sup>

Singaporean art history researcher, David Teh, believes that:

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<sup>657</sup> 'Artist Collective Ruangrupa Selected as Artistic Directors of Documenta 15 - Biennial Foundation', *Biennial Foundation*, 2019, <https://biennialfoundation.org/2019/02/artist-collective-ruangrupa-selected-as-artistic-directors-of-documenta-15-%E2%80%A8/>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>658</sup> 'About', *Documenta Fifteen*, <https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/about/>, (accessed 6 February 2022).

the Indonesian artist group Ruangrupa is the embodiment of an important curatorial spirit in Southeast Asia. Ruangrupa is not only a paragon of artist-curator unity, but also “a time-based, immediate, and loosely structured event; with purpose, but with more joy than competition”, and in a way that Places are closely connected.<sup>659</sup>

In the era of global capitalism, Ruangrupa's vitality, spirit and practice bring artistic inspiration, which is also the main reason why Ruangrupa was invited as the curatorial team of the 15th Documenta Exhibition. Filipino scholar, Patrick D. Flores, indicated that the 'artist-curator' is an integral part of contemporary art practice in Southeast Asia.<sup>660</sup> He believes that the curator is a roaming agent, giving coherence in the complex chaos, allowing multiple fragments to come together (like the geographical environment and historical evolution of Southeast Asia), it transcends its own internal and external differences, and affirms the collective cooperation.



Gudskul & Jin Panji, *Ruangrupa*, Ajeng Nurul Aini, Farid Rakun, Iswanto Hartono, Mirwan Andan, Indra Ameng, Ade Darmawan, Daniella Fitria Praptono, Julia Sarisetiati, Reza Afisina, 2019, accessed 18 June, 2022, <https://documenta-fifteen.de/en/about/>.

<sup>659</sup> Ute Meta Bauer, *SOUTHEASTASIA SPACES OF THE CURATORIAL*, Taichung, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, 2021, p.p. 130-140.

<sup>660</sup> Patrick D. Flores, *Past Peripheral: Curation in Southeast Asia*, Singapore, National University Of Singapore Museum, 2008.

## Affirmative Action: The Possibility of Multiple Coexistence (平權運動：多元共存的可能性)

### Appendix 21

The first step in eliminating prejudice is to create opportunities to get to know each other (消除偏見的第一步，就是彼此認識) The term ‘Affirmative Right (Equal Rights)’ has a broad connotation and covers a wide range of target groups. It includes long-neglected races, ethnic groups, young and old groups, people with disabilities, and even people with different sexual orientations, genders, gender identities, socioeconomic status, geographical areas, Citizenship or Religion (Americans for the Arts, 2016). The concept of affirmative action is to support and prevent differential discrimination and take positive actions for the acceptance of ethnic minorities, disadvantaged ethnic groups, and social minorities. This can be understood as a form of reverse (against) discrimination, providing ethnic minorities, disadvantaged groups and minority groups with opportunities to correct their names and coexist with social diversity with relatively open standards. The term ‘affirmative right’ comes from the ‘affirmative action’, a social movement that emerged in the 1960s in America along with a series of civil rights movements such as the African American Civil Rights Movement, the Feminist Movement, and the Sexual Revolution. Initiated in 1965 by US President, Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ), of the Democratic party government, it advocates taking care of disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities and women in college admissions, government bidding, etc. The United States in the 1960s was a specific period of “Affirmative action in the United States”<sup>661</sup> to protect some minority citizens. The LBJ government<sup>662</sup> actively advocated for the internal

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<sup>661</sup> The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘Affirmative Action | Definition, History, & Debate.’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/affirmative-action>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>662</sup> The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, ‘Lyndon B. Johnson | Biography & Facts.’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lyndon-B-Johnson>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

society of the United States to protect minority groups and ethnic groups from being discriminated against and unfairly treated in education and work. This policy was enacted to address a long history of discrimination faced by minorities and women, but at the same time it has created many policies that have a relatively unfair advantage over whites and men, although such laws are built based on unfair relative fairness. But it has always been a dispute with fair concept and definition until present. It is undeniable that the LBJ government not only directly changes the legal norms of today's American society, but also makes formal compensation for the harm done to the disadvantaged groups in the American society in the past, and for the unequal mistakes of the past. The purpose of the policy was to provide more educational and job opportunities for American minorities who have been discriminated against throughout the United States and have suffered from relatively unfavourable economic conditions and social discrimination. This movement of affirmative action launched in the United States has drawn attention from all over the world. Affirmative action, although an intervention based on the principle of inequality, requires that disadvantaged groups be given priority.

Cultural equality means:

Culture is the basic right of the people. Regardless of race or identity, every culture has the right to develop, preserve, display, and inherit arts and expressions. At the same time, the country should respect the cultural subjectivity of each ethnic group. And actively protect the people's right to use and participate in culture, and at the same time pursue effective and equal opportunities in resource allocation.<sup>663</sup>

The cultural equity used here is based on the definition proposed by American non-profit organisation Americans for the art and Alan Lomax, founder of The Association for Cultural Equity (ACE):

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<sup>663</sup> 'Ministry of Culture-Equal Cultural Rights.', *Moc.gov.tw*, 2017, [https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/content\\_374.html](https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/content_374.html), (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

The non-profit organisation Americans for the art interprets the term cultural equality as follows: Cultural equality ensures that all target groups can reflect their values, policies and cultural participation, and be represented in the development of arts policy. The people who need to be protected and have a correct name include long-neglected races, ethnicities, the elderly, young, women and children, persons with disabilities, and persons with different sexual orientations, genders, gender identities, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship, or religion, etc. The “Appeal for Cultural Equity” proposed by Alan Lomax (1972), was published by UNESCO, which asserted: “Every culture has the right to preserve, display and develop its art and expression.”<sup>664</sup>

At the same time, Alan Lomax also pointed out: “The only way to avoid the degradation of human culture is to be committed to promoting cultural equality. If each ethnic group has the time and space

On the other hand, Scholars, Liu and Jerry C. Y., mentioned in the book, *The Mapping Culture Right in Taiwan* (2015), that ‘cultural rights’ have often been neglected internationally in the past few decades. Scholars, Liu and Jerry C. Y., mentioned in the book, *The Mapping Culture Right in Taiwan* (2015), that ‘cultural rights’ have often been neglected internationally in the past few decades. One of the reasons is that the members of the United Nations organisation are all governments, and the member states are actually not willing to touch the minority issues that are diverse and different from each other. Because once the cultural rights of ethnic minorities are elevated, the existing advantages of the ‘nation’ state, the sovereignty and territorial boundaries will be threatened:

Social groups marginalised by modernity in the past have recently begun to critique modern knowledge and the contemporary (current) problems that modernity generates. Contemporary affirmative action advocates put forward the concept of “Knowledge from Below”, which means that any knowledge that can provide resources and improve people’s daily life has intellectual value.<sup>665</sup>

And today’s scientific method seems to fail to ensure that knowledge is generated independent of the interests of mainstream economic, political, and social values. Portuguese theorist

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<sup>664</sup> Alan. Lomax, ‘Appeal for Cultural Equity.’, *Journal of Communication*, vol. 27, no. 2, June 1977, pp. 125–138, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1977.tb01838.x>, (accessed 13 Aug 2022).

<sup>665</sup> Sandra.Harding, ‘Knowledge from Below’, In *Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019. p. 132.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos issues charges of ‘knowledge stifling’ against modern science (2007, 2014):

The research methods of various sciences consistently ignore the knowledge-generating process of the majority ethnics of the world; they favour only the expensive, simplified procedures reserved for a few wealthy elites in the West and their allies across the globe. The development of modern Western scientific knowledge is only for finding usable answers in the epistemological research of Western civilization, and today these funders are mainly capitalist enterprises, powerful countries and their military. If most of the world's research questions are set to serve these few forces, this will inevitably lead to global inequality or destruction of environmental resources, triggering a global crisis of life survival.<sup>666</sup>

The post-millennial people of Southeast Asian countries actively promote various affirmative movements, such as racial, religious, political and gender equality. Internal cross-organization ASEAN and external multinational organisations such as the United Nations and World Vision also actively participate in promotion activities. The issue of homosexuality is still highly controversial in Southeast Asia, and the situation in Asian countries varies due to different environments. In Southeast Asian countries, there are still many countries that treat homosexuality as illegal. For example, Singapore makes same-sex sexual behaviour illegal, and offenders can face up to two years in prison; like Singapore, Myanmar also follows the British colonial-era laws (which have long been abolished in Britain), and homosexuality can be fined or sentenced to prison; in Malaysia, due to the influence of Islamic teachings, both secular and religious laws outlaw same-sex sexual activity. In the conservative Southeast Asian region, most people think that Vietnam and Thailand are relatively open places, where multiple orientations and third-sex performances can be seen in the city centre and tourist attractions. In this seemingly pluralistic and free situation, the government takes tourism as its main industry based on the needs of national economic development. Under the ‘demand’ of early foreign tourists, the local industry has become a double-edged sword. Therefore, for the needs of

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<sup>666</sup> Sandra.Harding, ‘Knowledge from Below’, In *Keywords of Taiwan Theory*, Taipei, Linking Publishing Press, 2019. p. 136.

different genders, multiple sexual orientations and gender identities have become an 'acceptable existence' for the majority of people in their society. However, in fact this is not a real open-mindedness, but many people and the government only think that 'these people can exist and can make money for the country'. In the past, Vietnam's official media have repeatedly discussed many unfriendly arguments against homosexuality, including accusing homosexuality as a 'social evil' and linking it with bad social behaviours such as prostitution and prostitution, gambling, and drug use; there are also media reports that 'homosexuality is a disease'. In recent years, Vietnam has made much progress on this issue. For example, Vietnam officially abolished the 'ban' on same-sex marriage on New Year's Day in 2015. Actions led by the Vietnamese government have taken the lead in the development of gender and marriage equality in Southeast Asian countries, but in fact, this does not mean that the Vietnamese government 'recognizes' same-sex marriage, it is just 'removing the penalty'. Homosexuals still cannot get a marriage certificate, nor do they have any relevant provisions on the rights and obligations of both parties after marriage. But it is undeniable that this has led other Southeast Asian countries in the protection of gay rights. In fact, the Vietnamese authorities did not shy away from saying that they 'lifted the ban' on same-sex marriage, created a more homosexual-friendly environment, and 'attracted gays from all over the world to Vietnam travelling. The Vietnamese community is very happy to see the progress and changes in Vietnam's same-sex issues, although it is still an economic consideration in the tourism industry, it is not under the right of equality. Southeast Asian society has not yet achieved gender equality, and has truly achieved affirmative justice under the protection of laws and policies. In addition, among Asian countries, Taiwan's same-sex marriage law took effect in 2019, becoming the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage.

**Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: Truong Tan, the First Vietnamese Local Artist to Address Perceptions of Homosexuality. (首位處理越南跨性、同性議題的藝術家 Truong Tan)**



Truong Tan, *What Do We Want*, 1993, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/31267>.

In the 1990s, the political and economic policies of Southeast Asian countries began to relax, which affected the free development of the people and social atmosphere, and the concept of contemporary art began to appear in the art circle. At the same time, the art market in Vietnam began to develop, and new types of art galleries began to appear. In addition, foreign art collectors also began to pay attention to Vietnam, a mysterious and unfamiliar country, and its artworks; although the Vietnamese government's art censorship has not completely disappeared, Vietnamese artists still have a relatively free environment than before. One of the most representative artists, Truong Tan,<sup>667</sup> has homosexual content in his works. Truong Tan is the

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<sup>667</sup> Truong has had solo exhibitions at Gallery Ecole, Hanoi (1994), Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany (1996), Gallery Les Singuliers, Paris (1997, 1999, and 2000), Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1998 and 1999), Gallery 4A, Sydney (1998), Asian Fine Art Gallery, Berlin (1999), Nhasan Studio, Hanoi (2002), Ryllega Gallery, Hanoi (2004 and 2005), and Thavibu Gallery, Bangkok (2010). Notable group exhibitions include Singapore Biennial (2008); Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, Japan (2009); Connect:

first openly gay visual artist in Vietnam. He was born in 1963 in Hanoi, Vietnam. He graduated from the University of Fine Art Hanoi in 1989 and used to be a lecturer at the latter from 1989 to 1997 before becoming a full-time artist following the advent of the Doi Moi (renovation) policy in 1986, which liberalised Vietnam's market policies. In this period, Truong abandoned the country's then-current academicism in favour of a practice that focused on the complexities of human psychology and social circumstances. Truong challenges social convention and investigates human identity and freedom of expression via painting, drawing, performance, installation, sculpture:

Truong addresses the long-established prejudices that influence Vietnam's highly traditional society, examining national identity and its intersection with gender stereotypes. Centered on his own identity, the artist's work explores perceptions of homosexuality in a conservative milieu. This autobiographical emphasis is clear in *Being Human* (1996), a series of erotic ink drawings of the male figure. The series' visually reductive interpretation of the male form in the series accentuates the phallus and presents relationships considered unconventional in Vietnam's contradictory environment of economic liberalisation and social rigidity.<sup>668</sup>

In Vietnam, homosexuality was not removed from the official list of mental illnesses until 2001; even though the government decriminalized same-sex marriage in 2013, homosexuality is still not accepted by most Vietnamese. LGBTQ groups have continued to promote and organize affirmative action in Vietnam in recent years and held their first annual gay march in 2012, same-sex marriage is not contemplated by law, but the ban on celebrating same-sex wedding ceremonies has been lifted. And from 2017 the civil code will permit the gender reassignment of transgender people.<sup>669</sup>

As Ofield states, "By 1995, the international media was already describing Tan as 'Vietnam's only openly gay painter.'"<sup>670</sup>

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Kunstszenen Vietnam, ifa Gallery Berlin (2010) and ifa Gallery Stuttgart (2011); *Negotiating Home, History and Nation: Two Decades of Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia, 1991–2010*, Singapore Art Museum (2011).

<sup>668</sup> 'What Do We Want', *The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation*, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/31267>, (accessed 7 Feb 2022).

<sup>669</sup> Anh Vu - Khanh An, 'Vietnam Recognizes Transgender Rights in Breakthrough Vote', *Thanh Nien Daily*, 2015, <http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/vietnam-recognizes-transgender-rights-in-breakthrough-vote-54121.html>, (accessed 7 Feb 2022).

<sup>670</sup> Simon Ofield, 'Cruising the Archive', *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2005, pp. 351–364, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412905058353>, (accessed 16 Feb 2022).

Truong Tan, a contemporary artist developed in Vietnam, has the courage to speak out for himself and minorities in the Vietnamese social environment. He refused to admit and accept the denial and attack of the old-fashioned ideas of Vietnamese society and the government. Art critic Bui Nhu Huong calls him a pioneer of Vietnamese contemporary art.<sup>671</sup>



Truong Tan, *Red and Yellow*, 1994, accessed 2 Jan 2022, <https://aaa.org.hk/tc/collections/search/archive/salon-natasha-archive-red-and-yellow/object/a-work-by-truong-tan>.

## Imperialist Power (帝國夾擊)

### Appendix 22

Stuart Hall's penetrating statement that "the global is the self-representation of the dominant particular" aptly captures the extreme unevenness governing the production and circulation of cultures across the globe.<sup>672</sup> After the 21st century, for the two hegemonic empires of countries China and the United States, Asian developing countries function as a dice to be thrown at will at each twist and turn in the relationship between the superpowers. The American imperialist strategy in Asia is advertised as an inclusive approach that encourages participation from

<sup>671</sup> Bui Nhu.Huong, *Update: Kunstszene Vietnam*. Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany, ifa-Galerie, 2010, pp. 76–85.

<sup>672</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell Press, 1989, p. 200.

smaller nations, and makes people believe they can acquire huge benefits directly. In fact, in the long run, the United States always gets the biggest gains. For example, in Taiwan's case, in 1950 the United States planned to dump domestic overproduced wheat and corn, via the sale of 'American Aid' to Taiwan.<sup>673</sup> It influenced the Taiwanese rice habits towards noodles and bread as food staples. It made Taiwanese rice lose value on the market and finally farmers shut down and stopped work. Taiwan has depended on imported wheat ever since. Moreover, in the aftermath of World War II, Taiwan entered a period of undetermined national status, and the American government directly and indirectly gave much aid and support, the most influential of which was 'Soft Power of America', which was based on the triumvirate of political ideas, educational knowledge, and a sometimes-omnipresent popular culture.<sup>674</sup> No matter what is the economy, daily culture, education and even military, the American government indirectly controls most Asian developing countries. Until now, the influence of the American Empire in Asia is unparalleled to this day for every Asian life.

On the other hand, since the Chinese commenced the policy of Reform and Opening Up, China has entered a new transforming period of economy and society. China rapidly transformed from the world factory into the world market. It has become the irony of global capitalism that a rising third world nation has become a powerful empire. China already has global economic and political power. In 2013, the Chinese international development strategy, Belt and Road (B&R),<sup>675</sup> shows such abilities. China is the only one who can challenge the hegemony of the

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<sup>673</sup>An Act to maintain the security and promote the foreign policy and provide for the general welfare of the United States by furnishing assistance to friendly nations in the interest of international peace and security. 'Summary of H.R. 5113 (82nd): An Act to Maintain the Security and Promote the Foreign Policy and Provide ...', *GovTrack.us* [website],

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/82/hr5113/summary>, (accessed 4 May 2021).

<sup>674</sup> Shumei. Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2007, p. 169.

<sup>675</sup> The *Belt and Road Initiative* is a development strategy that focuses on connectivity and cooperation between Eurasian countries. The strategy underlines China's push to take a larger role in global affairs with a China-centred trading network. OECD, *China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Global Trade, Investment and Finance Landscape* [website], 018,

United States. The United States is still the world's most powerful state when power is measured in terms of economic and military assets. In the future, the United States will remain the most powerful military nation on earth for some time to come. However, America's economic and military edge relative to the world's other great powers, will inevitably diminish over the next several decades. The country best positioned to challenge America's preeminence, first in East Asia, and then perhaps later globally, is China.<sup>676</sup> Overall, Asian countries are increasingly aware that China has indeed become an 'intimate enemy' about which Asian countries feel many ambivalent feelings. Intimacy is a given due to economic necessities, business opportunities, and cultural similarities... but this intimacy is conditioned by the Chinese government's constant threat of military and nation boundaries invasion of Asia.<sup>677</sup>

### **The Close Internal Enemy Under Imperial Rule. (帝國統治下造就內部的親密的敵人們)**

After the military coup in Myanmar in 2017, the geopolitical layout of the Asia-Pacific region has become more complicated. This section discusses how China and the United States carried out imperial expansion and mediation in Myanmar based on the military coup in Myanmar in 2017:

China and the United States, as the top two major military powers in the Asia-Pacific region, are also the world's first and second largest economies. The complex relationship in the face of the Burmese coup also reflects the imperial wrestling between China and the United States in the world.<sup>678</sup>

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<https://www.oecd.org/finance/Chinas-Belt-and-Road-Initiative-in-the-global-trade-investment-and-finance-landscape.pdf>, (accessed 4 March 2021).

<sup>676</sup> Robert Jeffrey, Art, 'The United States and the Rise of China: Implications for the Long Haul', *The Academy of Political Science*, vol. 125, no. 3, 2010, p. 359.

<sup>677</sup> Shumei. Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2007, p. 136.

<sup>678</sup> Radio France Internationale, 'Chen Pokong: The Sudden Coup in Myanmar Affects the Game between the Two Major Powers of the United States and China', Radio France Internationale [website], 2021,

After the independence of Myanmar in 1948, the country has been in constant wars because of the core issues of race and identity. In recent years, Burmese citizens have been mobilised in different social groups, political parties, business circles, militia groups, and armed organisations around the issue of ethnic identity. In fact, the problems of xenophobia and racial discrimination in Myanmar today are inseparable from the British colonial rule at the time. They are the seeds of inter-ethnic hatred in Myanmar planted by the British colonial government's ethnic and economic policies in Myanmar.<sup>679</sup> The British colonised Myanmar from 1824 to 1948 after the two Anglo-Burmese wars. In the early period of the rule, the Burmese colonial territory was divided into the Indian colony:

During the British colonial rule, millions of people moved from India and border areas to Myanmar. At the same time, in terms of management policies, they were given differential treatment according to race, religion and economy. The British colonial government itself divided Myanmar into a zone of “ethnic instability”.<sup>680</sup>

In 2017, the Rohingya genocide incident occurred in Myanmar. The Muslim minority ‘Rohingya race’ in Rakhine State in western Myanmar was suddenly and bloodily suppressed by the Myanmar army. The Myanmar government released a statement explaining the terrorist attack as ‘a reasonable repression of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) riot by the Myanmar government.’<sup>681</sup>

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<https://www.rfi.fr/tw/%E5%B0%88%E6%AC%84%E6%AA%A2%E7%B4%A2/%E5%85%AC%E6%B0%91%E8%AB%96%E5%A3%87/20210210-%E9%99%B3%E7%A0%B4%E7%A9%BA-%E7%B7%AC%E7%94%B8%E6%94%BF%E5%B1%80%E7%89%BD%E5%8B%95%E4%B8%AD%E7%BE%8E%E5%85%A9%E5%80%8B%E5%A4%A7%E5%9C%8B%E7%9A%84%E5%8D%9A%E5%BC%88>,(accessed 14 June 2022).

<sup>679</sup> Shao Yu. Jheng, ‘The Prevalence of Xenophobia in Myanmar Begins with the Fear Brought by the ‘Chettien Bank’ During the British Colonial Period’, *The News Lens*, 27 July 2021, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/153860>, (accessed 16 Feb 2022).

<sup>680</sup> Myint-U Thant and Huang. Zhongxian, (2021) *The Hidden History of Burma: Race, Capitalism, and the Crisis of Democracy in the 21st Century*, Taipei, Taiwan, Make Beiluo Wen Hua.

<sup>681</sup> Albert, Eleanor, and Lindsay Maizland, ‘What Forces Are Fueling Myanmar’s Rohingya Crisis?’, *Council on Foreign Relations* [website], 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis>, (accessed 15 June 2022).

The people of Myanmar were once again facing a crisis of ethnic cleansing: the scale and ferocity of the Myanmar government's response shocked the world. International organisations and countries headed by the West, such as the United Nations, the European Union and the United States, have raised strong condemnations and protests. As for United Nations resolutions and international forces, they only have political implications and are not practically binding. At most, Western countries such as the EU and the United States can only impose economic sanctions on the Myanmar government to oppose the violent massacre. In fact, the sanctions have little effect on the Myanmar government and the military. Instead, they worsen the economic plight of Myanmar's people's livelihood.<sup>682</sup>

It is not only fundamentally difficult to contain the forces of warlords and militias in Myanmar, but the Myanmar government also cannot solve the problems of Myanmar's political development. At the level of regional organisations in Southeast Asia, the statements of ASEAN members cannot achieve synergistic results. This is because the attitudes of ASEAN countries themselves are different, and most Southeast Asian countries have expressed their unwillingness to interfere in other countries' internal affairs.

On the other hand, the relationship between China (People's Republic of China, [POC]) and Myanmar is significant. This is because Myanmar was the first Asian country to recognize the People's Republic of China, and also an important portal from mainland China to the Indian Ocean. Therefore, in the past decades, Myanmar and mainland China have maintained close interaction and friendship. Even as the international relations between Western powers and Myanmar began to cool down after the 2017 massacre, relations between China and Myanmar have become increasingly friendly. The Chinese government has always advocated that the

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<sup>682</sup> Taipei Forum, 'A Golden Country Suffering from Internal and External Aggression: An Analysis of Myanmar's Political Dilemma', *Www.taipeiforum.org.tw*, 2021, [https://www.taipeiforum.org.tw/article\\_d.php?lang=tw&tb=4&id=6040](https://www.taipeiforum.org.tw/article_d.php?lang=tw&tb=4&id=6040), (accessed 16 Feb 2022).

principle of consistent respect, and calls on all forces to respect Myanmar's sovereignty and give Myanmar time to allow domestic political forces to create a proper internal and external solution environment.<sup>683</sup> At the beginning of 2019, China's One Belt One Road policy planned to build a railway linking Yangon and Mandalay to Shanghai and Beijing in Myanmar.<sup>684</sup> Chinese companies see Myanmar as an easy-to-enter market and make quick profits (both legal and illegal trading of goods and labour). At the same time, India has also sought to strengthen its influence, pledging to link its northeastern states with Myanmar through its 'Act East' policy.<sup>685</sup>

Myanmar has been ruled by the military for a long time. After 2010, it gradually implemented democratisation due to years of diplomatic friendship from the United States. However, the situation was changed due to the Myanmar coup and massacre in 2017 which also represented that the democratisation promoted by the United States in Myanmar was a failure. On the other hand:

China's attitude towards the Burmese coup has always tended to be acquiescence, instigation and even agitation. On January 12, 2021, the China government sent Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi to visit Myanmar and met with the prime minister of a military-led caretaker government, Min Aung Hlaing (the leader of the massacre incident). Chinese officials appreciate the Burmese army's contribution to Myanmar through national rejuvenation, and at the same time uphold the traditional friendship between China and Myanmar.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>683</sup> 'Wang Yi Holds Talks with Myanmar's Foreign Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin', *Www.fmprc.gov.cn*, 2022, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/202204/t20220402\\_10663718.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202204/t20220402_10663718.html), (accessed 18 June 2022).

<sup>684</sup> Dipanjan Roy. Chaudhury, 'China-Myanmar Railway Line May Pose Challenge for India', *The Economic Times*, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/china-myanmar-railway-line-may-pose-challenge-for-india/articleshow/72971617.cms>, (accessed 28 June 2022).

<sup>685</sup> Taneja, Nisha, et al, 'India's Act East Policy: Facilitating India-Myanmar Border Trade', 2019, [https://icrier.org/pdf/India\\_Myanmar\\_Border\\_Trade.pdf](https://icrier.org/pdf/India_Myanmar_Border_Trade.pdf), (accessed 15 June 2022).

<sup>686</sup> people.com, 'Wang Yi Meets with Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-In-Chief of the Myanmar National Defense Forces', *Cpc.people.com.cn* [website], 2021, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/n1/2021/0112/c64094-31997540.html>, (accessed 15 June 2022).

In general:

the international situation of the Myanmar coup is favourable for China and not favourable for the United States. Because the military coup in Myanmar represents a setback for the democratic world and a success for authoritarianism. How will Myanmar's political situation develop in the future? It will always affect the game between the two major powers, China and the United States. If Myanmar's new military government succeeds, it will be a victory for the Chinese forces; if the military government suffers setbacks and Vietnam's democracy resumes, it will represent a victory for the United States and the Western democratic world.<sup>687</sup>

Therefore, the impact of events in Burma is not only a test for the people of Burma, but also a major test for international relations and the imperial rivalry between China and the United States.

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<sup>687</sup> Radio France Internationale, 'Chen Pokong: The Sudden Coup in Myanmar Affects the Game between the Two Major Powers of the United States and China', Radio France Internationale [website], 2021, [\(https://www.rfi.fr/tw/%E5%B0%88%E6%AC%84%E6%AA%A2%E7%B4%A2/%E5%85%AC%E6%B0%91%E8%AB%96%E5%A3%87/20210210-%E9%99%B3%E7%A0%B4%E7%A9%BA-%E7%B7%AC%E7%94%B8%E6%94%BF%E5%B1%80%E7%89%BD%E5%8B%95%E4%B8%AD%E7%BE%8E%E5%85%A9%E5%80%8B%E5%A4%A7%E5%9C%8B%E7%9A%84%E5%8D%9A%E5%BC%88\)](https://www.rfi.fr/tw/%E5%B0%88%E6%AC%84%E6%AA%A2%E7%B4%A2/%E5%85%AC%E6%B0%91%E8%AB%96%E5%A3%87/20210210-%E9%99%B3%E7%A0%B4%E7%A9%BA-%E7%B7%AC%E7%94%B8%E6%94%BF%E5%B1%80%E7%89%BD%E5%8B%95%E4%B8%AD%E7%BE%8E%E5%85%A9%E5%80%8B%E5%A4%A7%E5%9C%8B%E7%9A%84%E5%8D%9A%E5%BC%88),(accessed 14 June 2022).

**Relative Contemporary Artistic Case: Exiled Burmese Royal Artist,  
Sawangwongse Yawnghwe**



Sawangwongse Yawnghwe, *Sawangwongse Yawnghwe*, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://www.tkgplus.com/en/artists/31-sawangwongse-yawnghwe/biography/>.

Artist, Yawnghwe, was born in the Shan State of Burma in 1971. Sawangwongse Yawnghwe is the son of an aristocrat turned revolutionary from the Shan ethnic group of Burma's northeast. His grandfather, Sao Shwe Thaik, was the first President of the Union of Burma (1948–1962) after the country gained independence from Britain in 1948. Shwe Thaik died in prison following the 1962 military coup by General Ne Win. Since then, Yawnghwe's family was driven into exile. They stayed in Thailand, then escaped to Canada, where Yawnghwe grew up and received education. He now lives and works in the Netherlands.<sup>688</sup> Yawnghwe's painting and installation practice engages politics with reference to his family history as well as current

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<sup>688</sup> 'Sawangwongse Yawnghwe - Biography', *TKG+*, <https://www.tkgplus.com/en/artists/31-sawangwongse-yawnghwe/biography/>, (accessed 2 Jan 2022).

and historical events in his country. Family photographs also provide the basis for a pictorial language through which he explores events in the country, suggesting that existing and available archives cannot reveal a nation's entire truth. In addition, Yawngwe's work of maps charts the conflicts between drugs such as heroin and amphetamines, revolutionary armies, minority ethnicities, mining and gas pipelines, the armament of generals, as well as state genocide against its minorities. He intends to bring discernible order to a complex political situation.<sup>689</sup>

In his art practice, he has addressed a family history of armed/political resistance with new narrative interpretations. He is a world renowned international artist.<sup>690</sup> Yawngwe's art practice engages with Burma's political events and the conditions of being an outsider. His paintings and installations explore suppressed histories and unrecorded memories, seeking to map the complex power structures behind this region's conflicts. His painting not only indexes the protest events of the present Burma domestic war condition, but reflects the ethnic society of oppression, and the role fear plays in world power and trade. In 2019 he had an interview in a Singaporean art magazine; he stated:

Home is not the place I left it. Home is a capitalist invention. Home is overrun by foreigners taking selfies with war criminals. Home is where my people are systematically exploited out of their land and natural resources. Home is a war-torn place.

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<sup>689</sup> Sawangwongse Yawngwe, *Jane Lombard Gallery*,

<https://www.janelombardgallery.com/sawangwongse-yawngwe>, (accessed 2 Jan 2022).

<sup>690</sup> He exhibited in the Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh, 2020), the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Australia, 2018), the 12th Gwangju Biennale Exhibition (Korea, 2018), Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh, 2018), Qalandiya International — Jerusalem Show VIII (Jerusalem, 2016), Steirischer Herbst (Austria, 2016), and Dak'Art 2016/The 12th Biennale of Contemporary African Art (Senegal, 2016). He has also exhibited in numerous museums, including: the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art – Seoul (Korea, 2020), Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (Poland, 2018), Van Abbemuseum (Netherlands, 2018), MAIIAM Contemporary Art Museum (Thailand, 2018), Irish Museum of Modern Art (Ireland, 2016), and Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (Netherlands, 2015). Art-agenda, 'Sawangwongse Yawngwe: Burmese History X - Announcements - Art-Agenda', [www.art-agenda.com](http://www.art-agenda.com) [website], 2020, <https://www.art-agenda.com/announcements/348577/sawangwongse-yawngweburmese-history-x> (accessed 15 June 2022).

Home is a place where you can survive a war only to be killed by the lack of healthcare. Home is where the military killed my uncle, took our land, and built condominiums on it. Home is the genocide of 1 million Rohingya. Home is carpetbagging, drug trafficking, where murders are committed by people in high places. Home is where a hipster can drink her mango juice and Instagram her Yangon balcony while saying, “I am happy to be home.” Home is where the doves go to die.<sup>691</sup>

In Yawngwhe's art practice he attempts to elucidate the trauma in Myanmar's current political history, contrasting the relationship between museum mechanisms and art history, and through the experience of modern Myanmar's ethnic and religious imperialism, to question the right of discourse dominated by the national regime. He uses art to document the continuing military suppression of the democracy movement in the 21st Century in Burma.



Sawangwongse Yawngwhe, *People's Desire*, 2018, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/asia-pacific-triennial-2018-a-review/>.

<sup>691</sup> Ian, Tee, 'Interview with Sawangwongse Yawngwhe', *Art & Market*, <https://www.artandmarket.net/dialogues/2019/5/31/conversation-with-sawangwongse-yawngwhe>, (accessed 2 Jan 2022).

## **Appendix Three:Chapter 2. Expressing 20 to 21 Century National Identity and Nationalism for Asian Ethnic Chinese**

### **Starting from my Chineseness as Self-Identity. (來自於自身華人認同經驗說起)**

#### **Appendix 1**

During his (Mei Dean-e) studies at the Pratt Institute, he devoted himself to the study of Dada art. In his personal identity background, Mei Dean-e belongs to the second generation of provincial mainlanders (二代外省人) in Taiwan, so the question of identity has always surrounded him. Moreover, his life experience of overseas Chinese during his stay in the United States further prompted him to directly think about issues such as identity and national imagination through his art practice. Mei Dean-e returned to Taiwan to teach in 1993 after experiencing the enlightenment of art education in Taiwan and the overseas life and identity self-exploration of international students studying in New York. Through art education, he passed on the thoughts of cultural identity and identity to young Taiwanese students.

#### **Appendix 2**

He believes that the current Taiwanese nation has disappeared because of its international subjectivity, which leads to the lack of self-confidence among Taiwanese islanders, so Taiwanese will work hard to find identity. 'He is also an Associate Professor at the National Taiwan Normal University Department of Fine Arts. Additionally, he is also the author and has published more than 50 Taiwanese art books. Yao is a well-known artist who plays with art and politics. His works are classified by art critics as a creative style with "strong sarcasm and criticism of political issues", and although he always considers himself "political indifference". The image of political figures is often appropriated in his works. However: Yao Jui-Chung

emphasised that what he wanted to explore was not politics, but the aesthetics of a particular situation in the world that exists in Taiwan. Through his art he opens a question for Taiwan's unique and special situation in the world to people to think about it.

### **Appendix 3**

During Yao's residency period he kept thinking about how to apply the local environmental characteristics to his context of art practice. He was walking in front of the paifang / painting in San Francisco Chinatown and saw the four big Chinese characters "The World is for All (天下為公)" written by Sun Yat-sen. Suddenly, he decided to make works to explore the issues of Chinese colonisation and immigration. Before the on-site shooting, Yao investigated all the cities in the world to see if there is a Chinatown, and to confirm whether there is a paifang? After detailed investigation and research, it was found that there are about twenty cities with paifang in Chinatown.

### **History of Chinese Migration in Southeast Asia in the 20th Century (二十世紀華人東南亞遷移史)**

### **Appendix 4**

In terms of the history of Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia, the exact historical record began in the Tang Dynasty (about the 9th century AD), and it has a history of nearly a thousand years. Compared with other regions of the world, 'the population number of Chinese immigrants in the Southeast Asia (approximate 22898 thousand in population) is the largest,'<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>692</sup> M. Jocelyn Armstrong, R. Warwick Armstrong and Kent Mulliner, *Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*, London, Routledge, 2012 p.2.

‘which has a great correlation with the geographical environment situation’.<sup>693</sup> During the booming maritime trade in Southeast Asia from the 15th to the 16th centuries, Chinese businessmen had developed seasonal and regular business activities in Southeast Asia. Chinese businessmen had a very important contribution at the time. They used the ships to go back and forth between China and Southeast Asia following the monsoon changes, which promoted the exchange of trade between the East and the West. In addition to commodity trade, some Chinese businessmen also stayed in Southeast Asia and intermarried with local women. In the nineteenth century, a large number of European colonists entered Southeast Asia. Because the colonial government and business firms expanded,<sup>694</sup> they required manual assistance; many Southeast Asian Chinese who have taken root in Southeast Asia and multiplied the next generation had become important middlemen. American scholar, Edna Bonacich,<sup>695</sup> referred to these “middlemen” as “middleman minorities”; it means that they are ethnic minorities or new immigrant groups, but they are not of low-end status (labour). Instead, they acted as intermediaries to enter the cross-border trade and commercial transportation market; they have multiple roles such as agents, labour intermediaries, rent collectors, money lenders and brokers. Namely they are also intermediaries for producers, consumers, employers, employees, landlords and tenants. ‘In this period the Chinese middlemen were of similar business character to European Jews, East African Indians, South Asian Pasi, Turkish Armenians, and South American Lebanese.’<sup>696</sup> Whether they are newcomers or local Chinese businessmen working in Southeast Asia (a foreign land), they would not compete with local rulers for political power and interests; on the other hand, they would be willing to surrender to the local rulers in exchange for trust and thereby be able to obtain commercial benefits. The commercial projects

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<sup>693</sup> Ikuo. Iwasaki, ‘Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History’, Taipei, *Business Weekly*, 2018, p.13.

<sup>694</sup>Western powers plundered European natural resources and dumped European industrial products.

<sup>695</sup> Edna Bonacich is one of the leading scholars on race and class in the United States. Her work focuses on social inequality, labour, immigration, sweatshops, and global production.

<sup>696</sup> Ikuo. Iwasaki, *Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History*, Taipei, *Business Weekly*, 2018, p.17.

that Chinese businessmen engaged in for the colonial regimes in Southeast Asia were trade and tax farming.<sup>697</sup>

## **The Impact of Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia's Geopolitics in the 20th Century.**

(東南亞地緣政治中的華人)

### **Appendix 5**

At the beginning of the Cold War (1947), the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union was tense. No matter what ideology (democracy or Communism) the overseas Chinese supported during this period, their destiny was greatly changed and affected. Firstly, the opposition between the Kuomintang or the Communist Party during the Chinese Civil War affected the Chinese in Myanmar, and the mountainous areas in northeastern Myanmar became a hot zone occupied by the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang. In 1961, the Burmese government supported CCP troops to enter and defeated the Kuomintang troops in northern Myanmar. The defeated Kuomintang army had to retreat to Thailand, and the remaining remnants eventually settled on the Thai-Myanmar border. This battle deepened the split of the Chinese in Burma into a posture of support for the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of the Republic of China (ROC) or the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-led government of the People's Republic of China.<sup>698</sup>

At that time, Southeast Asia in the Third World was in the early days of successive independence among countries, and some pro-Communist Chinese were hit and affected the entire Southeast Asian Chinese society. For example, in Malaysia, some Chinese (including

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<sup>697</sup> Representation the colonial regimes collecting taxes from local commerce and service industries

<sup>698</sup> Victor S. Kaufman, 'Trouble in the Golden Triangle: The United States, Taiwan and the 93rd Nationalist Division', *The China Quarterly*, vol. 166, June 2001, pp. 440 - 456, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443901000213>, (accessed 5 Jan 2022).

Malaya Chinese) supported China's resistance to Japan during the Japanese occupation of Malaysia. They even joined the Malayan Communist Party and organised the people against the Japanese army.<sup>699</sup> After the Japanese surrender, Malaysia was re-administered by British forces. 'The British government stepped up its crackdown on the people of Malaysian Communist activities, which led to the Communist Party of Malaysia launching an armed revolution in 1948. The result of the revolution was a failure, which caused many Chinese who had supported the Communist Party to be expelled from Malaysia'.<sup>700</sup> Chinese in Indonesia also had similar incidents. After Indonesia's independence and founding under the leadership of Soekarno, Indonesia's diplomacy gradually moved closer to the Communist camp. The ruling party in Indonesia at the time gained the support of the Chinese government and developed rapidly and received strong support from the Indonesian people. However, in September 1965, right-wing soldiers in Indonesia launched a coup d'etat and planned to overthrow the Soekarno regime (Left-wing politics), which triggered a large-scale riot in Indonesia. 'At that time, because many Indonesian Chinese once supported the Communist Party, it finally led to a large-scale anti-Chinese movement in Indonesia'.<sup>701</sup>

In 1949, when the Chinese Civil War ended and the Kuomintang was defeated, the Chinese Kuomintang government moved to Taiwan and continued to implement the overseas Chinese policy of the former Republic of China in Taiwan:

Beginning in the 1950s, the Kuomintang government in Taiwan encouraged many Southeast Asian Chinese to invest in Taiwan, and at the same time opened up Taiwan's universities to accept Southeast Asian Chinese students. This policy has continued to this

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<sup>699</sup> 'Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army | Malaysian History', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Malayan-Peoples-Anti-Japanese-Army>, (accessed 5 Jan 2022).

<sup>700</sup> Joan S. H. Wang, 'Observing the Development of Overseas Chinese Migration from the Perspective of World History', *History and Education*, vol. 17, 2010, p. 137.

<sup>701</sup> Justus M. van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its History, Program and Tactics*. Vancouver, B.C., Publications Centre, University Of British Columbia, 1965, pp.141-143.

day. Under the overseas Chinese policy, many ethnic Chinese students from Southeast Asian countries (especially Malaysia) came to study in Taiwan,<sup>702</sup>

and these international Chinese students after graduating became an important agent and consultation resources for Taiwanese businessmen to invest in Southeast Asia in the 1990s. The continuous maintenance of the overseas Chinese policy in Taiwan is also related to the treatment of Chinese in Southeast Asian countries. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, young countries in Southeast Asia were experiencing the rise of nationalism. Many local rulers in Southeast Asian countries rejected Chinese as their hostile others (outsiders), and an anti-Chinese wave was rising during this period.

Before 1998, the Taiwanese government only allowed ethnic Chinese students to choose to enrol as the “overseas Chinese” identity. Even now (2020), the special regulations for overseas Chinese students are still the ‘Measures for Regulations Regarding Study and Counseling Assistance for Overseas Chinese Students in Taiwan’<sup>703</sup> (僑生回國就學及輔導辦法) Measures for Overseas Chinese Students Returning to Study and Counseling in China (Taiwan, ROC)“ (Regulations Regarding Study and Counseling Assistance for Overseas Chinese Students in Taiwan<sup>704</sup>). In fact, this is in serious conflict with the status and concept of most foreign Chinese students who do not have the nationality of the Republic of China. Chinese students studying in Taiwan think that they are studying abroad, not "returning to the China motherland.” This is because the government of the Republic of China has always regarded itself as the “orthodox China motherland” of overseas Chinese in the past. Before

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<sup>702</sup> Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan), *The New Southbound Talent Development Program* [website], [https://www.edunbsp.moe.gov.tw/index\\_en.html](https://www.edunbsp.moe.gov.tw/index_en.html), (accessed 28 August 2021).

<sup>703</sup> Laws & Regulations Database of The Republic of China, *Article Content* [website], <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=H0100001>, (accessed 26 August 2021).

<sup>704</sup> Laws & Regulations Database of The Republic of China, *Article Content* [website], <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=H0100001>, (accessed 26 August 2021).

2000 AD, the Nationality Act<sup>705</sup> of the Republic of China (Taiwan) adopted "bloodism." As long as the ancestors came from China, overseas Chinese would always be "Chinese" or so-called "overseas Chinese."<sup>706</sup> This lasted until 1987 after Taiwan's martial law was lifted, and Taiwan's social consciousness developed towards democratization and localization. In 1998, after the national consciousness and brainwashing education of the Chinese Kuomintang gradually liberated in Taiwan, the Taiwan government allowed overseas Chinese (ethnic Chinese) students to choose to enrol as foreign students; on the other side, China (POC/ Mainland China) established the Nationality Law in 1980 that does not recognize dual nationality Chinese status. Therefore, the POC government had officially defined "Overseas Chinese/ Chinese abroad" which only refers to Chinese citizens (citizens of the nationality of the People's Republic of China) who live overseas and have Chinese nationality. 'Chinese' and 'ethnic Chinese' refers to Chinese who do not have Chinese nationality.

Southeast Asian countries adopted political and educational austerity policies against Chinese in the 1950s and 1960s. However, this also led to unexpected and good gains for the Chinese in Southeast Asia's economic development. For example, a large number of overseas Chinese students from Southeast Asia studied abroad, and after graduation, they established transnational business partnerships with the overseas countries. In Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese businessmen cooperated with indigenous governments to establish political and business networks, such as Malaysia's Ali (Malay political elite), Malaysia's Baba and Indonesia's Cukong.<sup>707</sup> After entering the 1990s, due to the increasingly active economic globalisation and China's reform and opening up, Southeast Asian countries began to embrace

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<sup>705</sup> Laws & Regulations Database of The Republic of China, *Article Content* [website], <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=D0030001>, (accessed 26 August 2021).

<sup>706</sup> JinXuan. Du, 'A group that was "mandatory adopted" by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission of the Republic of China: Malaysian Alumni Association in Taiwan', *StoryStudio*, 2018, <https://storystudio.tw/article/gushi/malaysian-student-association-in-tw/>, (accessed 26 August 2021).

<sup>707</sup> Cukong is a Chinese (Hokkien) term meaning "master," but in Indonesia it is used to denote a skillful Chinese businessman who closely co-operate as a middleman with those in power, especially the military.

China. Therefore, Southeast Asian countries opened, their domestic Chinese cultural and educational policies were also loosened, and the overseas Chinese cultural activities were revived in Southeast Asian countries. 'When the relationship between Southeast Asian countries and China improved, more overseas Chinese began to link with China and build their relationship to culture, business, family tree and investment'.<sup>708</sup>

After the opening of China, China gradually normalised its economic, trade and diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian countries. A large number of mainland Chinese go overseas to seek more opportunities for economic development, while Southeast Asia is based on geographical convenience and emerging market potential. In addition, there are Chinese ethnic groups in Southeast Asia who are similar in language and culture, which attracts some new Chinese immigrants to develop there. On the other hand, the motivation and purpose of the past Southeast Asian Chinese immigrants and the modern Southeast Asian Chinese immigrants are vastly different. Wang Gungwu was born in Surabaya, Indonesia, grew up in British Malaya, and became a historian and a professor at many universities. He is a pioneer and important promoter of Chinese studies in Southeast Asia. In his years of research and analysis:

he summed up the trend of Chinese immigration to Southeast Asia in the past 200 years, and found that there have always been four forms of immigration in the history of Chinese immigration, namely, the form of Chinese businessmen (華商形態), the form of Chinese workers (華工形態), the form of overseas Chinese (華僑形態), and the form of Chinese descent (華裔形態). In 2000, the new immigrants from mainland China to Southeast Asia mainly included two types of business immigration and workers (skilled workers) immigration.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> Khay Thiong. Lim, 'Chinese in Southeast Asia', *In Introduction of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian History*, Taipei, *Business Weekly*, 2018, p.11.

<sup>709</sup> Liu Hong, 'Professor Wang Gungwu and Overseas Chinese Studies: A Preliminary Observation on Methodology', *Overseas Chinese History Studies*, no. 1, 2003, p. 66, [http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/\\_local/C/06/9F/85834910018CE6F218F05A19043\\_BF55D6FE\\_3C9E2.pdf](http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/_local/C/06/9F/85834910018CE6F218F05A19043_BF55D6FE_3C9E2.pdf), (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

In the past, Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asia were about survival factors such as avoiding war or the difficulties of living in China. In modern times, the main purpose of Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia is business considerations. Due to the promotion of the major national policies of the “Belt and Road”, China has exported a large number of new Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asian countries, including businessmen, technicians, workers and even employees of Chinese state-owned enterprises. These people follow China's policy plan to expand the Southeast Asian and Chinese markets. Driven by the internal promotion of the Chinese government, many mainland Chinese have migrated to Southeast Asian countries, which has resulted in a new wave of Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia after the millennium. This is not just a phenomenon that the Chinese government allows but also the China government promotes. In the past, the Chinese government banned overseas Chinese, but now China is planning to export labour and carry out major transnational constructions to Southeast Asian countries. This wave of Chinese new immigrants includes highly educated entrepreneurs and high-tech engineers, and many new immigrants were originally moved to Southeast Asia with the “Belt and Road” initiative. They originally belonged to the temporary migrant workforce, but some of them decided to stay in Southeast Asia for long-term:

China's “One Belt, One Road” policy initiative is in line with the development expectations of some countries in the Southeast Asian region. This phenomenon of Chinese immigration is popular in some Southeast Asian countries such as Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The fact that China provides a large amount of capital and highly technical Chinese new immigrants, increases the labour income and capital accumulation of these countries, and makes a significant contribution to the taxation of the local government.<sup>710</sup> As of today, public opinion and government evaluations of these new Chinese immigrants in the immigrant countries are mostly positive. Furthermore, the local media in these countries also maintain an optimistic and welcoming attitude towards the influx of new Chinese immigrants. However, there are still many local ordinary people and scholars who worry that the long-term development of such a phenomenon will oppress the livelihood of the local people and the independent functioning of the country.<sup>711</sup>

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<sup>710</sup> Yu-Chuan. Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, pp. 120–121.

<sup>711</sup> Leo Suryadinata, ‘2021/74 “a Rising China Affects Ethnic Identities in Southeast Asia” by Leo Suryadinata’, *ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute*, 2021,

In Chapter 1, it is mentioned that contemporary artists from Myanmar and Cambodia are keenly aware of such worries, and they call on more local people to face this phenomenon through the exhibition of their art works.

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<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2021-74-a-rising-china-affects-ethnic-identities-in-southeast-asia-by-leo-suryadinata/>, (accessed 23 Dec 2022).

**Facing the Current Situation and Case- Study Discussions of Chinese Culture and Identity in Southeast Asia. (當前東南亞華人文化與認同的現況與案例討論)**

**Appendix 6**

Guotu ZHUANG, 'New Estimates of the Number of Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia', *Journal of Xiamen University*, no. 3, 2009, pp. 62–69,

[http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/\\_\\_local/3/B4/87/FC235E9FE008C6F194550B706BE\\_A37C2150\\_4214F.pdf](http://www.ims.sdu.edu.cn/__local/3/B4/87/FC235E9FE008C6F194550B706BE_A37C2150_4214F.pdf).

# 东南亚华侨华人数量的新估算\*

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**摘要:**近20年来,对东南亚华侨华人数量的估算相距甚大,导致对世界华侨华人数量估算的分歧。根据历史统计数据,参照人口自然增长率和机械增长率的因素,并充分考虑新移民对东南亚华侨华人数量的影响,可以估算,东南亚华人华侨总数约3348.6万,约占东南亚总人口的6%,约占全球4543万华侨华人的73.5%。其中,20世纪80年代以后进入东南亚的中国移民及其眷属至少在250万以上。

**关键词:**东南亚;华侨华人数量;新移民

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对世界华侨华人的数量,历来没有相对一致的估算。近年来,无论官方或民间,无论在外国或中国,对华侨华人数量估计相差更大,从3000万到8700万都有。<sup>①</sup>

大体而言,东南亚以外的华侨华人集中在发达国家。由于发达国家有当地国官方人口普查数据和出入境数据可以利用,也有对非法移民数量的估计数据,因此,对发达国家的华侨华人数据估算大体相差不大。对世界华侨华人数量的估算,关键在于把握占世界华侨华人总数70%—80%的东南亚华侨华人的数量。由于东南亚传统华社绝大部分是二三代乃至十几代的华人,并经历多种劫难和变迁,因此,各国官方和学术界对东南亚华侨华人总数的估算差距甚远。此外,近20年来,又有大批中国新移民进入东南亚。他们大多为超期滞留者或非正式移民入境者,且能通过各种方式取得当地定居身份,其数量更从无统计。本文试图重新估算东南亚传统华社的规模和近20年进入东南亚的华人新移民数量,作为估算世界华侨华人口数量的基础。

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① 2007年国家汉办主任许琳介绍,海外有5000万以上的华侨华人和超过100万的留学生。《人民日报》(海外版)2007年12月10日;《中国经济周刊》2005年第24期称,华侨华人多达8700多万人;英国《卫报》刊登伦敦经济学院学者马丁·雅克的文章估计,华人总数大约为4000万;中国社会科学院发布的《2007年全球政治与安全报告》提及,目前中国大陆海外移民人数已经达到3500万人。《2007年:全球政治与安全报告》,社会科学文献出版社2007年版)

## 一、研究对象的界定

鉴于各国官方和学术界关于东南亚华侨华人数量估计的巨大差异,而这些差异很大程度上又是来自对如何认定“华侨”、“华人”和“移民”的分歧。因此,本文界定相关概念如下:

### 1. 华侨(Overseas Chinese)

根据《中华人民共和国归侨侨眷权益保护法》(1990年)第3条规定:华侨指定居在国外的中国公民。何为中国公民?《中华人民共和国国籍法》(1980年)第3条和第4条规定:父母双方或一方为中国公民,本人出生在中国或外国者具有中国国籍,但本人出生时即具有外国国籍者不具有中国国籍。<sup>①</sup>因此,国外任何持中国护照者,只要具有定居性质,即是华侨。其子女如没有外国国籍,也是华侨。但何为定居,中国官方没有作出明确的时间和身份界定。在实践上,很多前往海外求学、投资或务工者,从一开始就具有定居性质。因此,我们拟引入“国际移民”的概念。联合国人口司(United Nations Population Division)和世界移民组织(International Organization for Migration)对“国际移民”的定义为:跨越国界的常久性人口空间移动。在统计移民数量时,以非出生于居住国为标准。何为“常久性”,则各国标准不一,从1-12个月均有,但以半年至一年为多。参照以上定义和标准,本文的“中国新移民”,指20世纪70年代以来从中国大陆、台湾和港澳地区移居国外并长住一年以上者。但不包括政府所派遣的外事人员。在实际估算中,那些非定居性质的留学生或劳务人员的总量,对本文估算的华侨华人总量影响极小,不会超过1%。

### 2. 华人(ethnic Chinese, Chinese Diaspora)

“华人”泛指海外中国移民及其后裔。各国(包括中国)官方和学界对“华人”的认知并非完全一致,但基本上按政治(法律)和文化族群类型划分,而两者又有密切联系。就总体而言,判断是否属于华人,主要根据其与血统相联系的文化特征。因此,我倾向于将“华人”定义为:一定程度上保持中华文化(或华人文化)和中国人血缘的非中国公民。<sup>①</sup>关于华侨华人数量估算的巨大差异,关键在于对何为“华人”标准的歧异。尤其是把混血华人都归入土著或大部分归入土著,抑或把仍有华人血统者都估算为或大部分估算为华人,都会导致数据的悬殊。本文所指华人,不包括虽有华人血统,但文化上已经几乎完全融入东南亚当地土著的华人后裔。

综上所述,本文所指的华侨华人,指定居在国外一年以上的中国公民和一定程度上保持中华文化(或华人文化)、中国人血缘的非中国公民(华人)。

## 二、东南亚华侨华人数量估算的基本原则和方法

诸种因素导致对东南亚华侨华人规模估计的差异。首先,二战以后,绝大部分东南亚华人相继加入当地国籍,其身份认同呈多元化状态。很多华人或自愿或被迫同化于当地社会,隐瞒华人特征,导致“华人”身份认定的不确定性,在社会人口统计中多被归入土著民族。此状况以印尼、泰国为最,次为缅甸、越南。其次,华侨华人问题一向被东南亚各国政府视为敏感问题,其真实存在状况的信息通常被回避或扭曲。即使在新加坡政府发布的族群结构统计数据中,也未公布非永驻新加坡的外国人来源地的统计数据。除新加坡和马来西亚外,其他地区几乎没有关于族群结构的可靠统计资料可利用。第三,东南亚各国的出入境统计数据大多不全,尤其没有关于入境签证类型及其

<sup>①</sup> 关于“华侨”、“华人”和“华裔”概念的详细讨论,参见庄国土:《论东南亚华族》,《世界民族》2002年第3期。

是否按期出境的记录。中国与东南亚有漫长的边境,难以有效监管,很多地方边民可自由出入。此外,在缅甸、柬埔寨、老挝乃至菲律宾和泰国,很多中国新移民可通过各种方式改变居留身份而不进入官方的归化统计记录。以上种种情况导致对近 20 年进入东南亚的中国新移民规模难以把握。

本文将当前东南亚华侨华人分为两部分估算:一是传统华社,二是近 20 多年进入东南亚的中国新移民。本文对东南亚传统华社规模的把握,主要是通过考察历史人口数据变动及可能的人口自然增长率,参考其他相关因素进行推估。大体而言,作为估算基础的历史人口统计数据,多是殖民政府或当地土著政府基于出入境数据的估算,普遍存在低估或大幅度低估实际华侨华人规模的现象,但华侨华人的人口增长率可能稍低于当地土著。因此,笔者偏向谨慎评估,假设两者至少可相互抵消,再将得出的数据与各家估算和从东南亚侨社获得的信息相互印证,其结论应该相当接近真实状况或偏于低估。对中国新移民的估算则通过搜集和综合各种零散的信息,力图描述东南亚的中国新移民的整体状况和推断出大体数据(详见表 1)。

表 1 东南亚华侨华人分布及在当地人口中所占比例 (单位:万人)

国别	年份	人数	在当地人口中所占比例	新移民人数*
印尼	2007	1000	4.1%	10
泰国	2007	700	11%	35-40
马来西亚	2006	645	23.7%	10-15
新加坡	2007	360	77%	35
缅甸	2007	250	4.5%	100-110
菲律宾	2006	150	1.6%	20
越南	2007	140	1.67%	10-15
柬埔寨	2007	70	5%	20-25
老挝	2007	28	4.8%	13
文莱	2007	5.6	15%	*
总计	2007	3348.6	5.96%	253-283

\* 新移民指 20 世纪 70 年代以后进入东南亚的华侨华人,包括来自中国大陆、港台和其他国家的华人华侨。

### 三、东南亚华侨华人数量估算和分布

#### 1. 印尼和泰国

印尼和泰国是东南亚华侨华人数量最多的国家。中国移民在印尼和泰国定居已经数十代,很多中国移民后裔不同程度同化于当地社会。

由于印尼缺乏对华人人口的全面普查,且印尼华人后代有相当大部分同化于当地土著,很多底层华人及其子女仍无国籍,尚有一部分华人自认为是印尼土著或以印尼土著身份对外交往,故关于印尼华侨华人人口数量估计差距很大,有 700 万、1000 万、1600 万甚至 2000 多万等相差甚远的估计。但如以人口的自然增长率和机械增长率推估,再与较有权威性的印尼官员或专家的估算印证,仍能大体得出印尼华侨华人的基本规模。

2007 年,印尼华人问题研究专家廖建裕(Leo Suryadinata) 引用 Astrong 所编的统计资料,2000 年印度尼西亚华人人口为 402 万,占全国总人口约 2%。<sup>[2]</sup>这和通常认为印尼华侨华人占印尼人口 3% - 5% 的比例偏差较大,不足采信。暨南大学黄昆章教授认为,20 世纪 80 年代初,印尼华人有 600 万左右;到 1995 年,全印尼人口有 1.9 亿,其中华裔有 720 万以上,加上华侨和无国籍华人,华

侨华人口总数为770万,<sup>[3]</sup>约占印尼总人口的4%。本人基本认可这一估计。1999年11月,印尼驻新加坡大使鲁弗班查依旦中将认为,印尼华人有1100万人。<sup>[4]</sup>鲁旦中将与收藏完整华人资料的印尼国家情报局有密切联系,因此,这个数字应有一定依据。据印尼泗水《千岛日报》社长张明开先生说法,印尼官方认为华人数量是1000万,但当地华人的估计是约有1600万人。<sup>[5]</sup>印尼《国际日报》主编李卓辉提出,根据印尼移民厅1954年的估计,印尼华人约300万人,占印尼人口3%。这个数据仍属低估,因为印尼移民厅对华人身份的认定,只包括那些华人认同意识强烈的人,较少包括那些双重认同或华人意识较弱的人。李氏又估计,至2003年,华人约1100万人,占总人口的3%或3.5%。<sup>[6]</sup>2005年,印尼中华总商会副秘书长陈立志认为,据官方不完全统计,华人口总数约在1760万人左右,大多数从商。<sup>[7]</sup>但他并没有进一步说明何种官方统计及其依据,因此,仍不足采信。

关于印尼华人数量估计偏差如此之大,源于殖民时期对华人身份的认定。1910年初,荷兰政府颁布《荷属东印度籍民条例》,以出生地主义为原则,鼓励华人,尤其是土生华人加入荷籍。在人口统计中,很多土生华人计入印尼土著籍。1930年,荷印发布关于人口统计数据,华侨人数123万人,占印尼总人口的2.19%。<sup>[8]</sup>虽然这个统计严重低估华侨人口的实际数量,但却成为此后各种数据的推算基础。1972年台湾《华侨经济年鉴》根据雅加达中华商会推算的数字,载华侨人口为450万人,占印尼总人口的3.68%。其中,取得印尼国籍者250万。<sup>[9]</sup>

我们拟以1972年雅加达中华商会的华侨人口占印尼总人口的3.68%为基数,根据自然增长率和机械增长率(进入印尼的中国移民)以及适当增加无国籍华人和华人身份不甚明显的部分,推估印尼华侨华人总数。如华人自然增长率稍低于印尼总人口自然增长率,但加上无国籍华人和部分华人身份认同不甚明显者,则2007年印尼华人约960万。苏哈托统治后期,来自福建的中国移民在其富裕的印尼亲友的帮助下,开始成批进入印度尼西亚。<sup>[10]</sup>根据福建省调查资料,1996年以前往印尼的新移民及其子女约30900人。到2005年,在印尼的福州籍新移民增至51311人。<sup>[11]</sup>加上来自中国大陆其他地区的移民、劳务输出人员和常驻印尼商务与技术人员,以及印尼数以万计的台商及其眷属,可推估印尼华侨华人约1000万。这个数据作为下限应当是适度的,与鲁弗班查依旦中将、李卓辉和黄昆章教授的估计也相去不远。

和印度尼西亚一样,泰国华人华侨数量大且特别难估算。19世纪以来,泰国华人口数量一直没有可靠的统计数据。中国移民普遍与泰人通婚,其后代融入泰国社会程度甚深,很多仍有华人意识的中国移民后代取泰国名字,行为方式与泰人无甚区别,通常被官方视为泰人。在泰国官方的人口资料中,向来只有中国人出入境的数据和人口普查时的中国籍侨民人数统计。因此,无论是19世纪西方商务官和清朝官员的估计,或20世纪日本学者的研究,其数据相距甚远。

据暹罗政府的出入境统计,1900年的暹罗华侨约60.8万人,占全国人口732万中的8.3%。美国史金纳教授根据对泰国内地所做的详细调查,估算1954-1955年泰国华人总数为231.5万,约占泰国总人口的10%。<sup>[12]</sup>但农工商部侍郎杨士琦在1908年奉旨考察旅暹民情形,他称“暹罗全国户口不满千万,而华侨有三百万人,人数之众过于爪哇”。<sup>[13]</sup>两者数据相差如此悬殊,可能是杨士琦将暹化或半暹化的华人全部计入。根据泰国(暹罗)出入境人口统计,仅1900-1949年,中国人就净移入泰国近100万。1949年后,中国向泰国的移民潮流基本停止,但一部分国民党部队和“难民”陆续逃离中国进入缅甸,以后辗转潜入泰国北部。如不考虑同化因素而仅以自然增长率计算,1955年泰华数量应在300万至400万间,与1956年台湾华侨志编撰委员会估计的369万人相当,<sup>[14]</sup>约占泰国总人口的15%。在20世纪80年代以前,尚无大规模中国新移民进入泰国。我倾向仍按史金纳的泰华占总人口比例10%估算泰华人口。考虑到近年来泰国人口自然增长基本停顿,故设定泰华的人口增长率应相当于总人口增长率,不影响按泰华人口占总人口的10%的估算。2007年泰国人口为65068149人。<sup>[15]</sup>因此,我估计传统泰华社会约为650万,加上近20年涌入泰国的40至

50 万中国新移民,估计 2007 年的泰国华人华侨应在 700 万左右。由于华泰混血儿数量很大,如他们大批认同华人身份,则这个数据可能大大低估。

## 2. 新加坡、马来西亚和文莱

马来西亚、新加坡和文莱建国后,先后都有华族的人口统计。因此,对新马和文莱的华族人口数量通常没有较大异议。

新加坡发布人口统计资料,一向包括各族裔国民人数和定居的外国人人数,但没有发布定居新加坡的外国人族裔比例。因此,新加坡华人华侨人数的总和,应当是新加坡华族人数和定居的外国人中的华人,以及中国劳务人员和非法长期滞留者人数之总和。

截至 2007 年 6 月,新加坡人口总数 468.06 万。其中,近 370 万的公民和永久居民,其余约 100 万为暂住的外国居民。公民和永久居民人口比上年度增加 1.8%,而暂住居民则增加了 14.9%。<sup>[16]</sup>根据新加坡统计年鉴提供的数据,2006 年华族占新加坡公民和永久居民比例为 75.2%。如 2007 年的种族与上年比例大体相当,华人的比例与公民和永久居民种族比例相当,加上没有进入统计的少量非法滞留者,则新加坡的华侨华人总数约在 353.5 万人。<sup>[17]</sup>

据马来西亚统计局数据,2006 年,马来西亚人口约 2664 万人。其中,2120 万人住在西马,544 万人居住在东马。如按 2004 年华族占总人口 23.7% 的比例,2006 年华人共 631.37 万。<sup>[18]</sup>如加上尚未加入马来西亚国籍的中国新移民(如婚姻移民、退休移民等)和合法与非法中国劳工,2006 年马来西亚华人华侨总数约在 645 万。

2006 年,文莱华人华侨约 5.6 万人,约占总人口的 15%。<sup>[19]</sup>由于文莱严厉管制出入境,中国对文莱的劳务人员出口仅数百人,非法移民也几乎没有居留空间,故文莱华侨华人变动主要是人口自然增长率所致。

## 3. 缅甸、菲律宾和越南

对缅甸华人华侨数量的估计分歧最大,有 300 万(2000)、200 多万(2008)、250 万(2003)、100 万(2001)、90 万至 135 万(1996)、46.6 万(1990)、32.48 万(2007)等,其数据相差近 10 倍,是对东南亚各国华侨华人数量估计中悬殊最大者。笔者以为,对缅甸华侨华人数量的估计,应重视对传统华人社会自然增长率和机械增长率的估算,更要关注近 20 年中国新移民对缅甸华侨华人总量的影响,后者可能是决定性的。

根据缅甸人口和侨民统计局统计,1988 年,缅甸华侨华人约有 80 多万,其中华侨只有 73 272 人。<sup>[20]</sup>缅甸华人研究专家 Mya Tan 估计,缅甸华人的数量约占人口的 2% - 3%,当在 90 万至 135 万间。<sup>[21]</sup>台湾的《华侨经济年鉴》估计,2000 年,缅甸华侨华人达 300 万,<sup>[22]</sup>与其两年前的不到百万的数据相差太远,且没有解释为何两年内暴涨 2 倍的原因,因此不予采信。2008 年缅甸风灾过后,缅甸归侨联谊会会长栗秀玉称,目前缅甸华人华侨有二百多万人。<sup>[23]</sup>

以上学者对缅甸华侨华人数量的估计,依据的是传统华人社会的增长率,除缅甸归侨联谊会会长栗秀玉外,均未注意到新移民的因素。东南亚华人史研究专家布赛尔(V. Purcell)据缅甸殖民政府人口调查推估,1961 年缅甸华人数量为 35 万,约占总人口的 1.6%。缅甸华人无国籍或以土著名字者多,因此,此数量当然是大为低估,即使是缅甸政府官员,也不认可这个数据。早在 1953 年,缅甸内政部部长在答复国会议员时称:全缅甸华侨大概有 35 万人,<sup>[24]</sup>华侨华人的实际数量应远多于此。根据民国政府驻仰光总领事馆的查报,1947 年,缅甸华侨总数为 36 万,<sup>[25]</sup>占当地总人口的 2.3%。我倾向于以民国驻仰光总领事馆 1947 年查报的数据 36 万、占缅甸人口 2.3% 为基础,再考虑 1973 年以后缅华非正常减少的因素及 1950 年国民党军溃退缅甸和文革期间云南知青大批前往缅甸的非正常增长因素,取传统缅华社会约占缅甸总人口 2.2% 的估计,则 2006 年应为 110 万。

改革开放以后,前往缅甸的云南商贩开始络绎于途。20 世纪 90 年代以来,中缅经贸关系飞速

发展, 双方贸易额、中国对缅甸的援助、官方和私人投资、承包工程额等急速增长, 激发大批中国移民前往缅甸。据估计, 在近 10 年间, 有多达 100 万中国新移民前往缅甸。<sup>[26]</sup> 加上 20 世纪 80 年代以来新移民的自然增长率, 则新移民及其后裔当在 130 万人以上。此外, 缅甸北部有原为汉人的果敢族近 10 万人, 云南的部分跨界民族居住于缅北, 他们向来不被统计为华侨华人。如加上他们, 当前缅甸的华侨华人应在 250 万以上。这一估计与缅甸归侨联谊会会长粟秀玉所说的 200 多万相当, 也符合 2005 年中国驻缅甸使馆的估计。<sup>①</sup>

20 世纪 80 年代以来, 菲律宾没有公布过菲律宾华侨华人的统计数据。但对 20 世纪 90 年代中期菲华人数, 各菲华研究专家估计的数据相差不大, 误差不超过 20%。1973 年, 著名学者、台籍日本教授戴国辉根据菲律宾中华总商会的资料, 认为菲律宾华侨华裔人口达 60 万, 半数居住在马尼拉地区。1990 年, 著名菲律宾华人研究专家、加拿大教授魏安国(Edgar Wickberg) 估计, 20 世纪 80 年代末菲华数量约在 60 万至 100 万之间, 认为数据的不确定性在于缺乏官方对华裔菲律宾公民的人口统计。<sup>[27]</sup> 20 世纪 90 年代中期, 菲华研究专家和菲律宾华社著名活动家洪玉华女士(Teresita Ang See) 估计, 菲律宾华人约在 80 万至 85 万人之间, 约为菲律宾 6800 万总人口的 1.2%。<sup>[28]</sup> 同期, 魏安国教授认为, 菲华总数大概在 80 万至 120 万之间。包括新移民, 最普通的估计是 100 万人, 约为菲律宾总人口的 1.4%。<sup>[29]</sup> 如洪玉华的估算不包括新移民, 则两人的估计大体相当。

我基本同意魏安国的估算, 即 20 世纪 90 年代中期, 菲律宾华人华侨约 100 万, 为总人口的 1.4%。以此数据为基础, 加上自然增长率和 20 世纪 90 年代初以来的新移民及其自然增长率, 应是菲律宾华人华侨的总数量。菲律宾的中国新移民准确数量无从得知, 只能大体推估。2006 年 4 月笔者访问菲律宾时, 特别向各侨团领袖征求对新移民数量的估计, 但差异甚大, 从 15 万至 50 多万的回答都有。但通常都认可至少有 20 万以上, 绝大部分已经有正式居住身份。如菲华人口自然增长率与菲律宾总人口相当, 加上 90 年代初迄今至少 15 万的新移民及其自然增长率, 则 2007 年菲律宾华人华侨总数约 150 万。

虽然当前越南华人华侨的总数一直没有权威的统计数据公布, 但各学者对越南华人的估计基本一致, 即约占越南总人口的 1.4% - 1.53%。1989 年, 越南人口普查时统计, 全国人口总数为 6441.2 万人, 其中华人总数为 961 702 人, 约占越南总人口 1.5%。<sup>[30]</sup> 廖建裕教授关于 1990 年越南华人数量的估算采用这个数据。<sup>[31]</sup> 1996 年, 越南国家社科中心(National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities of Vietnam) Tran Khanh 博士认为, 越南华族约 105 万, 占越南 7500 万总人口的 1.4%。<sup>[32]</sup> 据台湾“侨委会”统计, 2002 年越南华人共有 122.65 万人, 约占越南总人口的 1.53%。<sup>[33]</sup> 我倾向于越南华人占总人口的 1.5% 左右的估计, 到 2006 年, 华人数量约为 130 万人。加上中国在越商务人员、常驻边贸商贩和台商及其眷属约 20 万人, 越南华侨华人总数约在 150 万。但各家推估的基础是 1989 年越南政府发布的人口普查数据。当时中越关系尚未正常化, “华人”身份仍是敏感, 应当有不少华裔不敢认同华人身份。故如在此基础上高估越南华人口 10% - 20%, 本人也认可。

#### 4. 柬埔寨和老挝

对当前柬埔寨华侨华人数量的推估差异可达数倍。其误差多在是否包括和如何估计近 10 多年来大规模涌入柬埔寨的中国新移民。本人基于对柬埔寨的中国新移民研究的基础, 推估 2007 年柬埔寨华侨华人总数约为 70 万。

1968 年, 柬埔寨华人约 42.5 万人, 占柬埔寨总人口 6.5%。<sup>[34]</sup> 在红色高棉和越南入侵柬埔寨时期, 柬埔寨华人大批殉难和外逃。<sup>②</sup> 1987 年, 柬埔寨政府调整对华侨华人政策, 金边当局通过各种

① 2005 年, 笔者助手在仰光时, 曾电访中国驻缅甸大使馆一秘。

② 1995 年笔者访问金边调查资料。

渠道争取逃离柬埔寨的华人回柬定居, 华侨华人数量回升。1999年, 柬埔寨华侨华人约40万。<sup>[35]</sup> 柬埔寨华人研究最著名的专家、新西兰根德堡大学社会学系教授云达忠(W. E. Willmott)估计, 20世纪90年代中期以前, 柬埔寨华人大约有35万人, 包括来自中国大陆、香港和台湾的新移民,<sup>[36]</sup> 约占柬埔寨总人口4.3%。近10年来, 由于中国和柬埔寨经贸关系飞速发展, 中国对柬埔寨的大规模投资、经济援助、承包工程, 使涌入柬埔寨的中国各类管理、工程技术人员数量乃至劳工迅速增长。据著名移民观察家David Fullbrook估计, 近年来涌入柬埔寨的中国移民在5万至30万人之间, 散布在柬埔寨各地。<sup>[37]</sup> 因此, 如估计20世纪90年代中期以后还有10万新移民涌入柬埔寨, 加上约占柬埔寨人口4.3%的原有华侨华人, 则柬埔寨华侨华人总数应在70万, 与柬埔寨联合资源投资集团董事长、柬埔寨中国商会副会长张云峰的估计相当。<sup>[38]</sup>

由于近20年来中国进入老挝的新移民数量较大且难以准确估算, 对老挝华侨华人总数的估计差异较大, 从1万余人(1997年)到21.2万(2000年)都有。本人基于对老挝的中国新移民研究的基础, 推估2007年老挝华侨华人总数约为28万, 约占老挝600万总人口的4.8%。

## 结 论

迄2007年, 东南亚华人华侨总数约3348.6万。其中20世纪80年代以后进入东南亚的中国移民及其眷属至少在250万以上。东南亚华侨华人约占东南亚总人口的6%, 约占全球华侨华人的73.5%。印尼、泰国和马来西亚三国是东南亚、也是世界华侨华人数量最多的国家, 其华侨华人数量共达2345万人, 超过世界华侨华人总数的一半。要强调的是, 基于各方面因素考量, 本文对华侨华人数量的估算可能偏低, 因此, 如有人提出更高的估计并言之成理, 我们也倾向于接受。

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## A New Estimation of the Ethnic Chinese Population in Southeast Asia

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**Abstract:** In the last twenty years the different estimations of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia have resulted in the wide divergence in the numbers of the ethnic Chinese in the world. This paper tried to estimate the ethnic Chinese population in Southeast Asia by re-examining the historical population data and referring to the natural increase of population and net migration. The new estimation of the ethnic Chinese population in Southeast Asia is 33.486 millions, accounting for 6% of population in Southeast Asia and 73.5% of the ethnic Chinese in the world.

**Key words:** Southeast Asia, the number of the ethnic Chinese, new Chinese migrants

## Appendix 7

### Malaysia:

After the Malay Peninsula became a British colony, the British colonial government encouraged a large number of Chinese and Indians to settle and work because of a lack of labour. A large number of Chinese indentured labour,<sup>712</sup> from the coastal areas of China came to the Malay Peninsula either legally or illegally. These Chinese who immigrated to the Malay Peninsula in the late Qing Dynasty were called “Sinkeh”. Although all Chinese worked and lived in the Malay Peninsula, Sinkeh was different from the Baba Nyonya<sup>713</sup> and Malayan who were originally influenced by Malay culture. ‘The Baba Chinese in Malacca are the descendants of early Chinese immigrants, living in a special cross-cultural identity of half Chinese and half Malay. They think that they never belong to either side, but they do think that they are permanent residents of Malaysia’.<sup>714</sup> Sinkeh living in the Malay Peninsula has affected the Chinese who have settled in the Malay Peninsula in the past or the Chinese who have been married to the Malays. This have given these overseas Chinese immigrants and their Chinese descendants to have the opportunity to come into contact with Chinese customs and culture again. They then gradually formed “Resinification” (再華化), also known as “De-melayuization” (去馬來化) phenomenon. Sinkeh changed the way of life of the original Malay Chinese society. The Chinese society in modern Malaysia is a fusion of the old and new customs of the Chinese in Malaysia.

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<sup>712</sup> The Treaty of Peking (November 14, 1860) confirmed and extended the territorial gains Russia had wrested from China in the Treaty of Aigun (1858).

<sup>713</sup> Baba and Nyonya or Chinese Peranakan are the people of mixed births during the 15th–19th centuries as a result of interbreeding between the immigrating Chinese people and the local people in Southeast Asian countries.

<sup>714</sup> Milton. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, trans. Yi-Ting. Wang, Taipei, Haoyou Culture Publishing, 2020, p. 117.



The picture shows the mixed Chinese and Malay Baba Nyonya. Courtesy of Public Domain, accessed 25 August 2021, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/24988>.

The division of ethnic groups in Malaysia was mainly due to the separate management policy used during the colonial rule of the British Empire. In the colonial era, the entire social system was controlled and coordinated by the British, so each ethnic group only cared about the relationship with the British. In the economic field at that time, the Chinese mainly traded in small and medium-level capital transactions, and they concentrated in emerging cities and towns. Most Malays maintained the traditional rural economic business model. The Chinese and Malays did not have serious commercial conflicts of interest, and they had different political trends and social goals in the future. On the other hand, the social characteristics of the early Chinese took the feudal clan (surname clan, 姓氏宗族) extended to to business Chamber of commerces and guilds. These organisations had a specialised division of labour with Chinese characteristics. With the division of labour between the development of the Chinese community and social development, the Chinese society was described by the British colonial official J.D.Vaughan in the 1850s (J.D.Vaughan, 1971-1854). He indicated the Chinese community as being quite complex and diverse in terms of lifestyle, industry classification or

occupational level. He said ‘The Chinese are everything, they are actors, acrobats, artists, musicians, chemists, druggists, shop assistants, cashiers, engineers, architects, surveyors, missionaries, priests, physicians, teachers, lodging house keeper, butchers, general merchants... and thieves.’<sup>715</sup> However, under this diverse Chinese occupation choice, the Chinese are mainly engaged in secondary and tertiary industries. Furthermore, ‘Under the British colonial policy, different ethnic groups developed their own language and cultural systems, economic production models, lifestyles, and educational systems. They each had a complete social system, and each ethnic group did not need to contact other ethnic groups’.<sup>716</sup> British historian, Victor Purcell,<sup>717</sup> a former colonial official in Malaya, pointed out that the context of Malaya’s past situation has developed into a Plural society. In a multi-ethnic society, different ethnic groups only have contact in the market, there is no interracial marriage, and they pursue completely different lifestyles and principles.

In the 1930s, most Chinese on the Malay Peninsula were mainly born in China or were of the second generation, whose parents were born in China. The political identity of most Chinese communities is not in British Malaya, but in China. The Chinese community did not care about the politics of British Malaya, but for the Chinese situation which was divided into different camps because of the confrontation between the Chinese Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. In October 1949, the People's Republic of China was formally established. The Malay Peninsula, which experienced anti-Communism, generally still had concerns about the Communist Party; while the Republic of China (KMT) had retreated to Taiwan, and its consulates in Malaya were closed. When Malaysia became independent in 1957, the Malaysian

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<sup>715</sup> Li-chen. Kao, *The Formation and Development of Local Chinese Immigrant Society in Penang, Malaysia*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2010, p. 149. <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/982a6g>, (accessed 20 Dec 2022).

<sup>716</sup> Bee Piang. Tan, ‘Malaysian Chinese and Malays: Towards Policies on the Formation of Ethnic Boundaries’, *Journal of Malaysian Chinese Studies*, vol. 10, p. 1-17.

<sup>717</sup> Victor William Williams Saunders Purcell CMG (26 January 1896 – 2 January 1965) was a British colonial public servant, historian, poet, and Sinologist in Malaya (now Malaysia).

government required the Malay Chinese and China (People's Republic of China) to define their identity of nationality due to political factors. At that time, the Malayan Chinese were caught in the issue of nationality: whether they wanted to maintain Chinese nationality or choose Malayan nationality:

Before the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Malaya in the 1970s, the Chinese government did not establish a consulate in Malaya. This caused the Chinese in Malaya to lose important channels of contact with mainland China. As a result, the old historical relationship and connection between the Malaya Chinese community and China directly disappeared.<sup>718</sup>

Although the Chinese in Malaysia had lost contact with the Chinese motherland, the Malaysian Chinese still maintain a good heritage of Chinese culture, whether it is folk beliefs, cultural education, and dialect usage. The Chinese architecture and art in Penang and Malacca originated from the Chinese businessmen who came to trade between the two places in the 18th century. Since both places were colonies for commercial purposes, a large number of Chinese businessmen gathered here and built a large number of Chinese-style buildings. Chinese architecture in Malaysia is divided into two categories, Chinese traditional architecture and Baba Nyonya architecture. Chinese-style traditional buildings are mainly used in Chinese temples. Temples are the most important central point to unite the Chinese community, and host Chinese folk activities and ancestral home (籍貫) organisations. On the other side, Baba Nyonya buildings are mostly used for residential buildings. Each house lives in a family with the same surname, and there is a large indoor courtyard for children to play and females to cook. Its architectural appearance is characterised by the use of a large number of colourful tiles. The Chinese art of this period had not yet been influenced by Westernization, and the artistic expression was still dominated by traditional Chinese art. The Chinese art was mainly reflected in the architectural decoration of temples, such as Buddha statue, wood and stone sculpture,

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<sup>718</sup> Eric. Wong, 'Whose Malaysia? The Uninterrupted Ethnic Conflict in Malaysia Seen from the History of Chinese Immigration', *The News Lens*, 2015, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/24989>, (accessed 26 August 2021).

porcelain, calligraphy, ink painting and door god portrait (門神畫像). These Malaysian Chinese-style buildings and Chinese-style artworks can be seen everywhere in Malaysia until today. Among them, the Melaka and Penang areas have formed an internationally renowned art tourism area for tourists from all over the world to visit.

Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia are the three countries with the largest number of overseas Chinese in the world, with a total of 21.94 million<sup>719</sup>: more than half of the total number of overseas Chinese in the world. Malaysia had an ethnic Chinese population of 6.71 million in 2020, accounting for 22.6% of the country's total population.<sup>720</sup> The majority of Chinese-Malaysians live in cities in a concentrated manner, and they are good at doing business and have an economically advantageous position in Malaysia. Furthermore, Chinese-Malaysians have a strong sense of ethnic identity, and the Chinese communities have always fought for equal rights with the Malay government in safeguarding the rights of Chinese culture and Chinese education in Malaysia. Excluding the three places across the Taiwan Strait<sup>721</sup> (cross-strait), Malaysia is the only country with a complete Chinese education system in elementary, middle, high school and college. However, due to historical and ethnic factors, the Malaysian government still adopts a policy of restricting Chinese education. Chinese education has always been a sensitive issue in Malaysia. Under the restrictions of the Malaysian government, there are no universities that teach mainly in Chinese. Therefore, many Chinese Malaysians choose to study at universities in Taiwan. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China (Taiwan), Malaysia had 13,964 Chinese Malays receiving higher education in Taiwan in 2020<sup>722</sup> which is the country with the largest number of international students in Taiwan. Although the Malays have an absolute dominant position in Malaysia politically, and the Malay-led government has long implemented a Malay-first policy, the Malay government has not implemented a policy of violent exclusion of ethnic Chinese.

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<sup>719</sup> Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), *Population of the top 20 overseas Chinese ranked countries* [website], [https://www.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/File/Attach/10/File\\_54.pdf](https://www.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/File/Attach/10/File_54.pdf), (accessed 25 August 2021).

<sup>720</sup> Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), *Brief Introduction of Regional Overseas Chinese* [website], <https://overseas.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/SubSites/Pages/Detail.aspx?site=e7062d29-8a82-4ee8-8d15-b38672d05d01&nodeid=745&pid=6754>, (accessed 25 August 2021).

<sup>721</sup> China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau (media term used esp. since 1997).

<sup>722</sup> Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan), *The New Southbound Talent Development Program* [website], [https://www.edunsbp.moe.gov.tw/overview\\_students1004.html](https://www.edunsbp.moe.gov.tw/overview_students1004.html), (accessed 25 August 2021).

Therefore, until today, Chinese-Malaysians have a diverse self-identification in the national identity of Malaysia. This is also reflected in the characteristics of contemporary Malaysian art development. For example, George Town Arts Festival is the largest cross-disciplinary arts festival in Malaysia, and is also known as “the most influential arts festival in Southeast Asia”.<sup>723</sup> The George Town Festival is held to celebrate and preserve the local arts, culture and heritage. Artistic performance, including dance, music and theatre, as well as photography and heritage exhibitions, have been included in the festival. The George Town Festival is the month-long art festival that is typically headlined by international acts, at the beginning of the festival the majority of the acts are of local origin. In recent years the art festival has become a conduit where Malaysia and international cultural arts are promoted. For instance, the 2014 edition featured several acts by Singaporean artists highlighting the shared culture between the two fellow Straits Settlements cities. After 2018, The George Town Festival launched a long-term art exchange programme called ‘ISLE to ISLE’ with Taiwan. Through artistic exchange between Taiwan and Malaysia, it stimulates the attention and discussion of Taiwanese culture and diverse contemporary Chinese culture among Malaysians. From the executive organisation of the George Town Arts Festival every year to the programme arrangement and the international exchange programme, it can be easily found that under diversity of contemporary Malaysia culture, Chinese culture has had a great influence on the development of contemporary art and culture in Malaysia. There is no doubt that Chinese-Malaysians still keep their Chinese cultural identity. Even though Malaysian Chinese political identity changed to Malaysia nationalities, they still attach importance to Chinese education and culture customs. Malaysia is the country in Southeast Asia that retains the most complete Chinese traditional culture.

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<sup>723</sup> Ministry of Culture Taiwan (R.O.C.), “‘Isle Isle: Taiwan Design Week’ Landing Venue of George Town Art Festival, Malaysia’, *Moc.gov.tw*, 2008, [https://www.moc.gov.tw/information\\_250\\_146701.html](https://www.moc.gov.tw/information_250_146701.html), (accessed 24 Dec 2021).

Chinese-Malaysians have long promoted Chinese education and communicated in Chinese. The research and inheritance of Chinese literature in Malaysian Chinese communities is not inferior even in a country and society dominated by Chinese. 'Chinese-Malaysians not only have the highest Chinese language level in Southeast Asia, but also they still retain relatively complete Chinese traditional customs. Without major political changes, the awareness of Chinese ethnic groups in Malaysia will be stable for a long time, and may be further strengthened by the development of overseas Chinese interaction.'<sup>724</sup>

### **Thailand:**

The history of Chinese migration in Thailand has a long history. Many Chinese migrated to Thailand during the Sukhothai dynasty, whose history developed more than 700 years ago. Because of 'the early immigration history, many descendants of Chinese had gradually integrated into Thai society in different eras. At the beginning of the 15th century, Chinese people in the southeast coastal areas of China gradually began to immigrate to Siam (Thailand) on a large scale.'<sup>725</sup> It was difficult to know an exact number for how many Chinese have migrated to Thailand from the past to the present. In recent years, there have been many relevant studies on Chinese in Thailand, but it is difficult to count the number of Chinese in Thailand today (including Thais of Chinese descent). This is mainly because of 'the intermarriage between Chinese and Thai, the identification of the Thai nationality law, and many Chinese have been assimilated in Thai society. Therefore, the statistics of the population

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<sup>724</sup> Zhuang country, 'A Brief Discussion on the Ethnic Identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese and Its Development Trend.', *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, vol. 151, no. 3, 2002, p. 68.

<sup>725</sup> Ya-liang. Chang, 'Exploring Chaozhou Opera Influence on the Boundary of Ethnic Group in Thailand', *Journal of Performing and Visual Arts Studies*, vol. 4, 2012, pp.59-75.

based on Chinese ancestry are very unclear.<sup>726</sup> Regarding the statistical number of Chinese in Thailand, it is mainly because after 1954, due to the amendment of the Thai Nationality Law, all Chinese born in Thailand must be naturalized in Thailand and be Thai on official records. Therefore, from 1954 to 1989, the number of overseas Chinese in Thailand's official statistics began to plummet. According to the deduction of these data and the Thai government's amendments to the nationality law, the population of overseas Chinese in Thailand approximate only a dozen or two hundred thousand; however, the number of Thais with Chinese descent has already exceeded millions of people. It is very difficult to find out the correct number of Thai Chinese. Although it is not easy to judge the identity of Chinese in terms of descent and nationality, Chinese culture has been combined with local Thai customs which can clearly be found in Thai folk life, festivals and daily routine. In addition, Thais with Chinese descent also have a certain proportion and influence in Thai society and professions. In the Thai art world, there are many people with Chinese backgrounds, whether they are artists, art educators, collectors, art gallerists, and curators. The Chinese immigrated to Thailand for different reasons in each period, and Chinese-Thai artists in different periods also presented different backgrounds of Chinese cultural perspectives and elements in their works. In Thai contemporary art, there are many second and third generations of Indian Thai and Palestinian Thai artists whose works focus on immigration issues. However, I could not find Chinese-Thai artists who make artworks that directly discuss Chinese immigration history or Chinese identity. Within the next paragraphs I will provide the details and reasons for this situation.

Before the Second World War, Thai society was mainly based on agricultural development. In the era of King Rama V, the feudal system (Feudalism) was adopted. At that time, Siam

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<sup>726</sup> Ming-Hung Tasi, 'Research on Thai-Chinese Ethnic Identity in Cross-Cultural Perspective', *Overseas Chinese Journal of Bagui*, no. 1, 2013, pp. 24–27, <http://www.cqvip.com/QK/82303X/20131/46234816.html>, (accessed 23 Dec 2022).

implemented a sakdina hierarchy system,<sup>727</sup> which required ‘Thai ordinary citizens to follow the landlord. Under the sakdina system, most of the Siamese population were unable to pursue personal freedom; the local people were bound by land and labour.’<sup>728</sup> On the contrary, the Chinese at that time did not have such restrictions. ‘The Chinese did not belong to any feudal founders under the feudal lord system of Thailand. They enjoyed complete personal freedom as foreign immigrants.’<sup>729</sup> Therefore, under the privileges granted by the Thai royal family, the Chinese established a great economic foundation in Thailand. ‘In the early days, Thailand’s policy of assimilation to the Chinese was friendly. The Chinese had outstanding performance in agriculture and commercial trade, and some Chinese even became agents of the royal family’s trade.’<sup>730</sup> Not only cooperating with the royal family, the Chinese were also engaged in official business, selling or transporting goods, and even controlled Thailand’s foreign trade. After World War II, Thai Chinese gradually assimilated into Thai society.

I think there is a key reason for the high acceptance of Chinese immigrants and Chinese culture in ancient Thai society. The reason for the influence also includes the customs, values, architecture, wearing clothes, aesthetics, and art on both sides of ancient China and ancient Thailand. As a result, the cultural differences and living habits experienced by Chinese immigrants to Thailand were less than other countries’ immigrants. The reason is that the societies and regimes of ancient China and Thailand believed highly in Buddhism. The two countries have mutual respect and comity politically because of their religious relations:

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<sup>727</sup> Sadki Na grades, (1454), rules of land tenure established in Thailand by King Trailok of Ayutthaya (1448–88) to regulate the amount of land a man could own.

<sup>728</sup> Leng-Hoon. Goh, *Research on the Economic and Trade Development of Anluo Chinese from the 14th to the 19th Century*, MA diss., Tainan, National Cheng Kung University, 2002, pp. 1–146, <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/w55w2n>, (accessed 23 Apr 2023).

<sup>729</sup> Weiguang. Gao, ‘Thai-Chinese Literature and Thai-Chinese Identity,’ *Journal of Fujian Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, vol. 11, 2011.

<sup>730</sup> Jie. Li, ‘Differences in Political and Economic Status of Chinese in Southeast Asia and Their Reasons: A Comparative Analysis of Thailand and Indonesia’, *Bagui Overseas Chinese Journal*, vol. 81, no. 01, 2008, pp. 62–65.

During the Qing Dynasty in China, the Qing Emperor had friendly diplomatic relations with the Siam Dynasty. The Siam Dynasty in Thailand often paid tribute to the Qing Dynasty in China and the Chinese court also doubled their gifts to Thailand. The Zhongyuan Dynasty (中原王朝),<sup>731</sup> which ruled China for over thousands of years in the past, allowed Thai envoys to bring Thai goods to China for sale. At the same time, Thai people also bought a lot of Chinese products and got exclusive duty-free treatment.<sup>732</sup>

The artistic development of the early two countries originated from the architecture and paintings in the temples because of the Buddhism religion. In addition, 'Chinese literature has also directly influenced the development of Thai literature, and the character stories in Romance of the Three Kingdoms (三國演義) were circulated among Thai folk and transformed into local Thai folk tales.'<sup>733</sup> The long-term friendly diplomacy has made there not much cultural and life differences between Thais and Chinese in the past.

After the 1970s, due to the Thai government reducing economic restrictions to Chinese businesses, it led to the rapid rise of new Chinese enterprise groups. These companies not only expanded their business scope and scale, but also entered the circulation and financial industries, becoming a powerful pillar of Thailand's national economy. In the *Forbes* 2015 ranking of the richest in Thailand, six of the top ten were Thai Chinese.<sup>734</sup> Thai Chinese actively

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<sup>731</sup> There are two academic definitions of "Central Plains Dynasty": one is a dynastic state centered on the Han people of the Central Plains civilization [1], that is, a dynasty ruled by the Han nationality, such as Zhou, Qin, Han, Tang, Song, and Ming; the other is based on the Central Plains Han The land is the core expansion, and the rulers are not limited to the dynastic countries of the Han people, such as Jin, Yuan, and Qing. Historically, the definition of dynasties in the Central Plains has undergone a transformation from a "dynastic state" to a "modern state." Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier China: A History of Peripheral and Ethnic Relations in the Twentieth Century*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2016, p. 19.

<sup>732</sup>He Fangchuan, *A History of Cultural Exchange between China and Foreign Countries*, Beijing, International Cultural Publishing Company, 2008, p. 367-369.

<sup>733</sup> SUNGSIA SAELEE, *A Study Of 《Romance of the Three Kingdoms》 Translation and Widely Spread in Thailand*, MA diss., Taoyuan, Yuan Ze University, 2016, p. 89, <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/tn5c2g>, (accessed 23 Dec 2022).

<sup>734</sup>Maxmilian. Wechsler, 'Thailand's Six Pack- The Powerful Thai-Chinese Families Who Dominate The Country's Business Scene', *The BigChilli*, 2 Nov. 2021, <https://www.thebigchilli.com/feature-stories/thailands-six-pack-the-powerful-thai-chinese-families-who-dominate-the-countrys-business-scene>, (accessed 2 Jan 2022).

participate in Thai political activities. Many political elites or previous prime ministers in Thailand have Chinese ancestry. They are active in the political arena. For example:

During the Prime Minister of Chatchai Chunhawan<sup>735</sup> period, more than half of the 44 cabinet members were of Chinese descent, including Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan himself and many ministers were also Thai Chinese. In addition, the former Prime Ministers, Chuan Likphai<sup>736</sup> and Thaksin Chinnawat,<sup>737</sup> were also Chinese. And Thailand's first female Prime Minister, Yingluck Chinnawat,<sup>738</sup> is also the fourth generation of Thai Chinese. Having Chinese ancestry is not a hindrance in Thai politics, and even self-identification as Chinese will be more supported by overseas Chinese. Therefore, there have always been ethnic Chinese politicians in Thai politics. (Pan, ShaoHong, 2003)<sup>739</sup>

Early Chinese immigrants integrated into mainstream Thai society, and the art industry was no exception. However, compared to Chinese-Thai politicians who open their Chinese background in the Thai political community, the Chinese-Thai artists I know do not publicly emphasise their Chinese identity. Although Chinese identity did not affect those artistic careers negatively, also Chinese identity in the Thai art world did not bring additional advantages.

In the past of Thailand, 'Chinese Thai' refers to the Chinese who lived, resided, and settled in Thailand in the early days. At that time, 'Thai Chinese did not have nationality, citizenship, human rights issues in Thailand.'<sup>740</sup> Therefore, in the Thai Chinese circle at that time, the issue of "Chinese identity" did not clearly exist. After the Second World War, the Southeast Asian countries were pursuing independent nationhood and national consciousness prevailed. In

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<sup>735</sup> As Prime Minister (1988-1990) General Chatichai Choonhavan (born 1922) tried to lead Thailand in its internal economic expansion and in its enhanced political and economic roles in Southeast Asia.

<sup>736</sup> Chuan Leekpai, (born July 28, 1938), Thai lawyer and politician who served as Prime Minister of Thailand (1992–95, 1997–2001).

<sup>737</sup> A telecommunications billionaire, Mr Thaksin, was the first Prime Minister in Thailand's history to lead an elected government through a full term in office.

<sup>738</sup> Yingluck Shinawatra, (born June 21, 1967), Thai businesswoman and politician who was Prime Minister of Thailand from 2011 to 2014. She was the younger sister of former Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, and the first woman in the country to hold that office.

<sup>739</sup> Shaohong. Pan, 'Continuation and Improvement: The Evolution of Chinese Social Status in Thailand - after World War II to the 1990s', *Xiamen University Nanyang Research Institute*, vol. 2, 2003.

<sup>740</sup> Chen Hong Yu, *On the Citizenship, Social Status, and Human Rights of Overseas Chinese*, Taipei, Hua Qiao Xie Hui Zong Hui, 2014, pp. 133–146.

contrast, Thailand was never colonized, so did not have serious national and ethnic problems. Compared with Indonesia and Malaysia, Thailand has a less discriminatory and angry attitude towards outsiders. This historical background reflected in the Chinese ethnic artists the strategy of their art practice and development in Southeast Asian contemporary art, compared with Chinese Indonesian and Chinese Malaysian ethnic artists who used Chinese cultural elements in their works to fight for their local Chinese issues and the rights and interests of the local Chinese citizens. On the other hand, Chinese Thai artists merely use Chinese cultural elements to cherish their Chinese family and family history. However, ‘when the new regime of China (People's Republic of China) was established, even though the Chinese in Thailand were only a little affected by the political changes in China (the motherland) at that time, the Thai government was still worried that Communism would infiltrate Thailand through the Thai Chinese’.<sup>741</sup> After 1932, the Thai government changed the purpose of its original assimilation policy, trying to remove all the Chineseness related to the Thai Chinese. The strong implementation of the anti-Chinese policy is due to the influence of “only Thai doctrine” (Pan-Thaiism<sup>742</sup>). In 1940, the Thai military government strongly implemented De-Sinicization: they announced the language policies to prevent Thai Chinese use and the learning of Chinese. “De-Sinicization” in Thailand was to completely exclude any consciousness related to Chineseness from Thai society. From the identification development of Chinese in Thailand in different periods, it could be seen that their identification judgments would be changed due to the Thai social situation, and choosing the ethnic consciousness in that most beneficial and convenient for themselves. From the responses of the Chinese Thai and overseas Chinese in Thailand to ‘the government policies in different periods, this clearly shows the split identity tendency of the marginal people of the Thai Chinese in Thailand. Thai Chinese are emotionally

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<sup>741</sup> Yu-Chien. Chuang, *Chinese Identities De-sensitized: A Study of "Non-Identity" in Thai Politics and Foreign Policy*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan University, 2018, p. 26-28.

<sup>742</sup> Pan-Thaiism is an ideology that flourished in Thailand in the 1930s and 1940s. It was a kind of irredentism and its aim was the political unification of all the Thai people in Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Cambodia and Laos into a greater Thai state. (Anjalee Cohen, *Youth Culture and Identity in Northern Thailand: Fitting In and Sticking Out*, Routledge, London, 2020.)

identified with Chinese culture and ancestry, but rationally they chose to identify with Thai nationality'.<sup>743</sup> This is another reason why it is not easy to find Chinese Thai artists and their Chinese background artworks in the research of Thai contemporary art. But Thai artists with Chinese backgrounds in Thailand still exist and the number has a certain amount. For Thai Chinese artists, despite 'the loss of the mother tongue and culture of Chinese ancestors, but through the ethnic memories left by the Chinese ancestors or the countryman, the common memory of the ethnic group still exists in the consciousness of the descendants of the ethnic Chinese in Thailand.'<sup>744</sup> The detailed analysis of the works of Chinese-Thai artists had been analysed in Chapter 1, 'Thailand', so I will not repeat them here.

On the whole, the pressure of assimilation for Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese in Thailand was much milder than in other Southeast Asian countries. 'The majority of ethnic Chinese groups in Southeast Asian countries experienced the process of acculturation<sup>745</sup> (涵化) rather than assimilation (同化). However, Thailand was not in the acculturation condition and it was a special case.'<sup>746</sup> The Thai government used economic, cultural and political policies to restrict and regulate the overseas Chinese to achieve the effect of assimilation. In addition, the Thai government considered the naturalization and citizenship of overseas Chinese earlier than in other Southeast Asian countries. This affected the transformation of overseas Chinese in political identity earlier than in other Southeast Asian countries, and this process was relatively smooth and thorough. Regardless of the influence of Thailand's assimilation policy, the

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<sup>743</sup> Chieh. Liu, *Comparing Thai Chinese Ethnic Identities: A Case Study of Chaozhou and Hakka in Thailand*, MA diss., Taoyuan, National Central University, 2018, p.11

<sup>744</sup> Chieh. Liu, *Comparing Thai Chinese Ethnic Identities: A Case Study of Chaozhou and Hakka in Thailand*, MA diss., Taoyuan, National Central University, 2018, p.11.

<sup>745</sup> Acculturation refers to the continuous and direct contact between two or more cultures. During the cultures exchange some aspects of the cultures will likely be taken and blended within the original culture of the individuals. (Jary and Jary, 1991:3)

<sup>746</sup> Jen. Hsieh, 'On the Identity Problem of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia: Reconsidering the Concept of R. J. Coughling's Double Identity (in Chinese)', *Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2006, p.8.

descendants of Thai Chinese have indeed integrated into Thai society, and even the mother tongue (Chinese dialect) has disappeared. However, part of Chinese cultural traditions are still preserved in folk life and integrated with local Thai customs. The historical progression of Chinese immigration is also reflected in the development of contemporary art in Thailand. In the Thai art world, whether it is artists, artistic administrators, art educators, collectors, gallerists, and curators, there are many Thai people with Chinese blood, and they chose not to show their Chinese identity in public because Chinese identity has already been integrated into the entire Thai society in the process of assimilation, and the Chinese cultural identity has long been included in the Thai multiculturalism.

### **Singapore:**

Singapore has become an independent country after experiencing rapid development from an uninhabited island in the past. This is a very special case. Nowhere else in Southeast Asia is an emerging country formed through a combination of successful business development and Chinese immigrants. Singapore is a nation dominated by Chinese descendants. 'The history of Chinese immigration can be traced back to the period of Ming treasure voyages in the 15th century. Before the British arrived in Singapore in the 19th century, the Chinese had a long history of development in Singapore'.<sup>747</sup> These Chinese include Chinese business travellers and land reclaimers. After the opening of the port by Stamford Raffles in the 19th century, maritime trade activities required a large amount of labour, and a large number of Malayan Peranakan and European merchants came to the country. Because of Western countries' demand for colonization, the development, and trade in Southeast Asia greatly increased, and a large number of Chinese immigrants were introduced from China to Southeast Asia as labourers.

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<sup>747</sup> Gungwu. Wang, *China and Overseas Chinese*, New Taipei, The Commercial Press, 1994, p. 300.

Therefore, through Chinese indentured labour (also often called coolie), the sales contract began to appear.

In this period, 'Chinese Indentured Labour became one of the main sources of labour in Southeast Asia. By the middle of the 20th century, the Chinese ethnic group in Singapore was relatively concentrated, and it already accounted for 77% of Singapore's population at that time'.<sup>748</sup> The ethnic Chinese sector in Singapore is an absolute majority in the proportion of the population, and the Chinese are the mainstay of the Singaporean society. However, after Singapore's independence, the government adopted a Southeast Asian identity policy, which weakened the Chinese national consciousness.<sup>749</sup> At that time, in order to merge with Malaysia, Singapore established Malay as the national language and established a multilingual policy based on Malay. Even after Singapore's formal independence from Malaysia in 1965, the national language of Singapore remained Malay, but it was not compulsory to learn the national language. In fact:

Malay is not widely used in Singapore, and Malay is not a common language among all ethnic groups in Singapore. Therefore, the Singapore government considers the importance of popularization of English to Singapore's economic development and political stability, so it raises the status of English for daily and official using.<sup>750</sup>

English in Singapore is not only the language of administration, business, teaching, and the social language of the upper class, the public is also increasingly using English for communication for survival and work development:

The current use of English in Singapore is no longer a colonial language, but one of the official languages used by the people and the government. The term "plural society"

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<sup>748</sup> Li. Luo, 'Nation-Building and Chinese Ethnic Identity in Southeast Asia after the World War II', *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 4, 2010, p. 75.

<sup>749</sup> Tsutomu Kikuchi, '[Research Reports] the Strategic Significance of A', *Www.jiia.or.jp*, 2022, <https://www.jiia.or.jp/en/column/2022/03/indo-pacific-fy2021-01.html>, (accessed 19 June 2022).

<sup>750</sup> Yun Tsui. Yeh, *The Change of Singapore Chinese Settlements: A Discourse on Nationalism*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2010, p. 60.

refers to a society that can be classified into multiple identifiable ethnic groups, which have different and non-complementary value systems, norms, institutional roles and languages. (Chiew 1983:29) Singapore's history was formed through immigrants from all over the world, which is obviously a pluralistic society.

Singapore's population grew from 1.8 million in 1965 to the present (2021) about 5.7 million,<sup>751</sup> but the race (ethnic) ratio of this period has never changed. The four major ethnic groups of Singapore CMIO (the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others) are formed by Chinese, Malays, Indians, and other races. The CMIO model is the dominant organising framework of race in Singapore. This is a fixed golden ratio, of about 76% (Chinese), 15% (Malay), 7% (Indian), 1% (others).<sup>752</sup> Race informs government policies on a variety of issues such as political participation, public housing and education. However, the state's management of race, as well as the relevance of the CMIO model, has been a point of contention amongst some in recent years. Because CMIO is deliberately maintained by the Singapore government, this kind of stable ratio is a very important indicator for the government. Maintaining this stable state means maintaining the peace of Singapore's race because the population distribution of Singapore has always been dominated by Chinese, although the Singaporean government and people have the consensus of multi-ethnic co-prosperity for Singapore. However, it is undeniable that Singaporean society is still operating with a Chinese-dominated social model.

This phenomenon can also be echoed in the development of contemporary art in Singapore. Most of the art workers in Singapore are also mostly Chinese. These Chinese art workers belong to the majority of the mainstream ethnic groups in Singapore, so it is natural for the overall development of Singaporean contemporary art to have the characteristics of Singaporean Chinese culture. The Chinese characteristics reflected in the works of Chinese

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<sup>751</sup> Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS), Population and Population Structure [website], <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/search-by-theme/population/population-and-population-structure/latest-data>, (accessed 28 August 2021).

<sup>752</sup> Statista, Resident population in Singapore as of June 2020, by ethnic group [website], <https://www.statista.com/statistics/622748/singapore-resident-population-by-ethnic-group/>, (accessed 28 August 2021).

ethnic artists in Singapore are not driven by the demands of Chinese rights. On the contrary, they do not want to overemphasise the specificity of the Chinese community in the country, which is not necessary in Singapore. Chinese cultural characteristics are naturally revealed in the works of most Chinese artists in Singapore. Otherwise, Indian-Singaporean artists, as a minority in Singapore, actively strive for the unity of the Indian art community. For example, galleries, artist studios, and public art exhibitions in the Little India district of Singapore provide additional benefits and more exposure opportunities for Indian Singaporean artists.

The family languages of Singaporean Chinese have all gone through a huge transformation process. Firstly, the switch from Chinese dialect to Mandarin, and then the switch from Mandarin to English. Next, in the 1990s, the Singaporean government designated Chinese as the "mother tongue" of the Singaporean Chinese, and the government consciously promoted Chinese as a mother tongue to achieve the function of inheriting Chinese culture. On the other hand, the government has gradually emphasised Chinese and promoted the "Speak Chinese Movement (Mandarin),"<sup>753</sup> which has led to once again the Chinese dialects continue to be lost in the Singapore Chinese community:

Most Singaporeans of the older generation speak Chinese dialects, while the younger generation does not speak the dialects anymore. This situation leads to the obstacles for communication and exchange in different inter-generations. This caused some Singapore Chinese to realize the importance of dialect inheritance, and began to protect and promote local Chinese dialects.<sup>754</sup>

Since the government promoted the "Speak Chinese Movement", Chinese has gradually become popular and used in the Chinese community in Singapore. In addition, after the reform and opening up of China (China mainland/ POC) in 1979, the official and non-governmental

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<sup>753</sup> The Speak Mandarin Campaign was launched by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew on 7 September 1979 with the aim of simplifying the language environment and improving communication among Chinese Singaporeans.

<sup>754</sup> Yu-Hsien. Yeh, *A Comparative Study of Language Policies in Education with Reference to Malaysia and Singapore*, MA diss., Nantou, National Chi Nan University, 2000, p. 70.

contacts and exchanges between China and Singapore increased. Singapore's official Chinese language learning, teaching materials and Chinese pronunciation all follow China's official Chinese. 'The Singapore government requires Singaporeans to change to use the simplified Chinese characters and Hanyu Pinyin (汉语拼音) that the Chinese government dares to measure instead of traditional Chinese'.<sup>755</sup> Although ethnic Chinese in Singapore mainly speak English, this does not mean that they do not identify with the ethnic Chinese and use Chinese language. In addition, the contemporary Singaporean Chinese's identification with Chinese is an instrumental view, for example, the rise of China affects the motivation of learning Chinese. It is not uncommon in Singapore that the Singapore government leads the rapid transformation(policies) of the Singaporean people. Chinese background Singaporean artists also present the loss of Chinese-Singaporean culture, mother language and heritage awareness through their artistic practice, for example Lee Wen's series Journey of a Yellow Man<sup>757</sup>(1992–2012) and Amanda Heng's 'Twenty Years Later'.<sup>758</sup>

## **Indonesia:**

With a population of approximately 240 million and more than 300 ethnic groups in the country, Indonesia is undoubtedly one of the countries with the most diverse ethnic groups and cultures in the world. Among them, Javanese (41.7%) and Sundanese (15.41%) are the two largest ethnic groups in Indonesia.<sup>759</sup> (Suryadinata et al. 2003) In contrast, Indonesian Chinese only

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<sup>755</sup> Chieh-En. Tang, *A Study on Language Use and Ethnic Identity among Singaporean Chinese*, MA diss., Hsinchu, National Tsing Hua University, 2018, p. 180.

<sup>757</sup> Alice Ming Wai Jim, 'Afterall - Lee Wen: Performing Yellow', *Afterall*, 2018, <https://www.afterall.org/article/lee>, (accessed 12 May 2023).

<sup>758</sup> 'Amanda Heng - Art World Database', *Art World Database*, 21 Feb. 2022, <https://artworlddatabase.com/portfolio/amanda-heng/>, (accessed 12 May 2023).

<sup>759</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, 'Assimilation, Multiculturalism, Hybridity: The Dilemmas of the Ethnic Chinese in Post-Suharto Indonesia 1', *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 7, no. 2, June 2006, pp. 149–166.

make up two or three percent<sup>760</sup> of the total population; they are just one of many ethnic minority groups in Indonesia. 'In the nation-states in the post-colonial era in Southeast Asia, Indonesia's implementation of anti-Chineseism was the most serious. This made the ethnic identity of Indonesian Chinese have more serious identity problems than other Southeast Asian Chinese'.<sup>761</sup> 'Indonesia's politics, religion, ethnic structure, and the long-term colonial history have made the "Chinese problem" a special shadow of the ubiquity of the country.'<sup>762</sup>

Professor Leo Suryadinata,<sup>763</sup> an expert in the field of Chinese studies and sinologists in Indonesia and Singapore, put forward a pessimistic view on the "Chinese Indonesian issue" in the post-authoritarian era in the *Straits Times* in 1998 that the anti-Chinese riots.<sup>764</sup> Indonesian society is actually a long-standing Chinese problem that will not stop. From the majority of indigenous Indonesians' point of view, as long as the Chinese are not fully absorbed by the indigenous society for a day, the "Chinese problem" will continue to exist. 'The reason why Indonesian aborigines hated Chinese immigrants came from the business connection between the Chinese immigration and the colonial government. During the Dutch colonial era, Indonesian natives had strong dissatisfaction with the Chinese as tax collectors and opium monopoly agents of the colonial government'.<sup>765</sup> After the Second World War, the indigenous

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<sup>760</sup> World Population Review, *Indonesia Demographics* [website],

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/indonesia-population>, (accessed 29 August 2021).

<sup>761</sup> Yu-Jung Huang, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in Indonesia under the Rule of Suharto*, MA diss., Tamsui, Tamkang University, 2009, p. 176, <https://hdl.handle.net/11296/eqt4tu>, (accessed 29 August 2021).

<sup>762</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media*, Taipei, Socio Publishing, 2012, p. 180-183.

<sup>763</sup> Leo Suryadinata, Ph.D., is Adjunct Professor of Asian Studies Programme at RSIS. He is currently Director of the Chinese Heritage Centre (Singapore) and President, International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO). Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 'Adjunct Faculty', *Web.archive.org* [website], 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20111001144235/http://www.rsis.edu.sg/grad/adjunct-faculty.htm>, (accessed 2 Jan 2022).

<sup>764</sup> Yong-Jie, Zhou, 'Will the "anti-Chinese ghost" of the Chinese in Indonesia retreat to the background of history over time?', *The News Lens*, 2016, <https://www.thenewslens.com/article/56932>, (accessed 29 August 2021).

<sup>765</sup> Milton. Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, trans. Yi-Ting. Wang, Taipei, Haoyou Culture Publishing, 2020, p. 119.

Indonesians who had just obtained the opportunity of independence knew that the economic resources originally controlled by the Netherlands would be taken over by the Chinese. Suddenly, they felt angry at the injustice of the situation. This caused their anger and resentment towards Chinese immigrants to erupt instantly. The social and economic exclusivity of the Chinese was intolerable to Indonesians.

Overall, there is indeed jealousy and resentment towards wealthy Chinese businessmen in Indonesian society. Although 'the proportion of Chinese doing business is especially high, not all Chinese doing business are rich. On the other hand, even if the local Indonesian tycoons received similar commercial benefits and offers, they did not receive similar criticisms as the ethnic Chinese groups'.<sup>766</sup>

Indonesian Chinese said that even if Indonesian Chinese have already immigrated to Indonesia living and working for hundreds of years, young Indonesian Chinese offspring cannot speak Chinese and have no knowledge of any Chinese customs. Under the definition of Indonesianess of the New Order, they are still regarded as a non-native "Other".<sup>767</sup>

In 1966, the Indonesian government promulgated the New Order policy, which led to the assimilation of all Chinese in Indonesia. The Indonesian government requires the Chinese to be forced to adopt Indonesian names instead of traditional Chinese names. Compared with the Chinese in Thailand who changed their Thai surnames randomly under the Thai assimilation policy, some Chinese in Indonesia chose to systematically change their names to protect their Chinese family culture heritage. "Indonesian Chinese had chosen Indonesian pinyin similar to the original Chinese surname, such as 'the surname of Liem or Lim (Lin/林) was changed to "Salim or Limanto, the surname of Oei (Huang/黃) was changed to Wijaya or Widjaya, the

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<sup>766</sup> Philip. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*, Taipei, The Commercial Press, 2019, p. 310.

<sup>767</sup> Chang-Yau. Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media*, Taipei, Socio Publishing, 2012, p. 16.

surname of Tan ( Chen/陳) was changed to Tanoto.<sup>768</sup> Until 1999, when Abdurrahman Wahid, who had a Chinese background, became the President of Indonesia, he issued a number of decrees to completely revoke a series of Chinese exclusion policies that strictly prohibited Indonesian Chinese in 1966, such as prohibiting the use of Chinese and not allowing Chinese festivals to be publicised. Because of his contribution to the harmony of the Chinese ethnic group, Wahid is respected by Chinese Indonesians as the “Father of the Chinese”.<sup>769</sup> Although the Chinese-Indonesians in the 21st century have lived relatively harmoniously in Indonesia, the issue of national assimilation in Indonesia has not always had a complete consensus in national policy and public life.

In the Indonesian contemporary art world, some Chinese-Indonesian artists present the Chinese family history and injustice of Chinese Indonesians through their arts installations, research projects, performance art, music, dance, literature, etc. It was very difficult for these artists to develop art in Indonesia in the early days, because their artistic practices were against the mainstream public opinion and national consciousness in Indonesia at that time. They develop their art careers through overseas art foundation funding and outside Indonesia exhibitions. In particular, Chinese artists and art spaces in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and some overseas Chinese communities actively invited these Chinese-Indonesian artists to collaborate or hold exhibitions together. In the 20th century, life for the Chinese living in Indonesia was very difficult, but these Chinese Indonesians actively educate their descendants how to face it with soft power, such as the language of art. Even in the difficult times of survival, Chinese Indonesians have always worked hard to protect their mother culture, and their efforts have allowed Chinese culture to continue to be passed down in Indonesia in a variety of ways.

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<sup>768</sup> Rikey. Tenn, ‘Historical Oblivion and Digital Memorial: Interview with FX Harsono’, *No Man's Land*, 21 March 2017, <https://www.heath.tw/nml-article/historical-oblivion-and-digital-memorial-interview-with-fx-harsono/>, (accessed 5 Jan 2022).

<sup>769</sup> Tsai Tsung-te, ‘As Foreign Land Becomes Home Land : The Chinese Indonesian Culture and Artists That Break through the Ethnic Barriers’, *Tainan National University of the Arts Graduate Institute of Ethnomusicology*, 2020, p. 5.

## **Vietnam:**

Southeast Asia was the region with the largest number of overseas Chinese in the world in the early days (from the 18th century). Of the three Indochina countries (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) located in the Indochina Peninsula, Vietnam has the largest overseas Chinese population.<sup>770</sup> Chinese immigrants have brought different contributions to Vietnam at different times and periods. There are three important influences. Firstly, the contribution of the Chinese in Vietnam had been shown to have greatly promoted the development of the local early economy. Second, the contribution of the Chinese was also manifested in promoting the development of industry, agriculture and commercial trade in Vietnam in various periods. Third, the traditional Chinese culture, mainly Confucianism, spread by the Chinese had had a profound impact on the social concept of Vietnam. This also has a profound impact on the opportunities for in-depth cooperation and exchanges between the Chinese country and society in Vietnam today.

Historically, Vietnam's political, economic, social, and cultural relations with China and Taiwan were relatively close. In the modern history of China and Vietnam, several wars had led to the delicate relationship between China, Vietnam, and Taiwan (ROC). This was also an important historical background that affected the migration and distribution of Chinese in Vietnam. Since ancient times, Vietnam had been close to China in terms of politics, economy, society, and culture. Vietnam was also a member of the Chinese character culture circle (漢字文化圈)<sup>771</sup> in the past. Therefore, it had been deeply influenced by ancient China from the

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<sup>770</sup> Overseas Community Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan), *Population of the Top 20 Overseas Chinese Ranked Countries* [website], [https://www.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/File/Attach/10/File\\_54.pdf](https://www.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/File/Attach/10/File_54.pdf), (accessed 25 August 2021).

<sup>771</sup> Chinese characters originated in China and contain a deep culture and civilization of China. As Chinese characters were spread from China to neighbourhood of China, such as Japan, South Korea and Vietnam, Chinese Character circle has formed.

language, customs, and religious beliefs. Vietnam was a vassal territory of China in history and became a French colony after the Sino-French Treaty of Tientsi<sup>772</sup> was signed after the Sino-French War in 1885. From a geographical situation, northern Vietnam is connected to southern China. Therefore, the people of China and Vietnam have frequent interactions, especially those living in the border areas of China and Vietnam. Until after the Sino-French War, according to the Tianjin Treaty,<sup>773</sup> the area south of Beilun River (Ka Long River) was placed under the jurisdiction of Vietnam, and the Chinese who originally lived there were also classified as Vietnamese nationals:

In the civil war between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China in 1949, the National Government forces (Kuomintang party) were defeated. In order to escape the war and the persecution of the Communist Party, some Chinese people in China fled to Vietnam. This had once again changed the distribution of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.<sup>774</sup>

From 1954 to 1986, due to the economic and political problems of the Chinese, the Vietnamese government adopted many active assimilations and anti-Chinese policies towards Vietnamese Chinese. Vietnamese people with full or partial Han Chinese ancestry background were called Hoa people:

Under the assimilation policy, the government forced Chinese to acquire Vietnamese nationality and restricted the Chinese to establish Chinese schools in Vietnam. The South Vietnamese government amended the Nationality Law in 1956, in which the government stipulated that "children born in Vietnam no matter whose parents are Chinese, they are all Vietnamese." On the other hand, when Chinese students were in school, the school was not allowed to speak Chinese and strongly promulgated Chinese as a foreign

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Jian-Ming. Huang, 'A Study on Evolution of Writing System Policy in Chinese Character Circle Countries', *The Journal of Chinese Public Administration*, vol. 24, 2019, pp.7-22.

<sup>772</sup> Signed on June 9, 1885. The unequal treaty restated in greater detail of that implicitly forced China to abandon its claims to suzerainty over Vietnam, and the treaty formalized France's diplomatic victory in the Sino-French War.

<sup>773</sup> Signed in June 1858, this provided residence in Beijing for foreign envoys, the opening of several new ports to Western trade and residence, the right of foreign travel in the interior of China, and freedom of movement for Christian missionaries.

<sup>774</sup> Jing. Wu, *The Emigration History of Vietnamese Chinese and Their Use of Language — A Preliminary Study of Hakka in Ho Chi-Minh City*, MA diss., Taoyuan, National Central University, 2010, p.23.

language. The ethnic Chinese at that time disliked and felt angry for the Vietnamese government's Vietnamization policy, and they thought it was a measure to discriminate against ethnic Chinese.<sup>775</sup>

The reform policies launched in Vietnam in 1986, the fierce anti-Chinese policies in the past have slowed down and changed. Nowadays, many overseas Chinese, Taiwanese businessmen, and Vietnamese overseas Chinese have returned or come to Vietnam to engage in business and trade investment. The anti-Chinese movement initiated in Vietnam in recent years is usually because many Vietnamese Chinese or overseas Chinese are doing business and investing in Vietnam, and they have a great influence on local economic activities. Therefore:

Chinese (including overseas Chinese and Chinese descent) treat local Vietnamese with a superior mentality, and they actively maintain their ethnic Chinese identity. This has caused the local Vietnamese to feel that the economy is being exploited and feel unbalanced. In addition, the Chinese community is highly recognizable in Vietnam, so it is easy to become the target of retaliation.<sup>776</sup>

This phenomenon also leads to Chinese ethnic artists concealing or deliberately weakening their Chinese identity and Chinese features in the Vietnamese art environment. The ethnic Chinese in Vietnam are officially divided into the Hoa, Ngái (Hakka) and Sán Diu tribes. Vietnamese Chinese used to come from many different Chinese provinces. According to statistics, Guangdong Chinese accounted for about 80%, and Fujian, Guangxi, and Yunnan Chinese accounted for about 20%.<sup>777</sup> According to the announcement of the National Institute of Statistics of Vietnam in 1957, there were more than 1.5 million ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, which included registered and unregistered, and half of the Chinese were concentrated in Ho Chi Minh City. In 1977, the number of overseas Chinese already exceeded 3 million.<sup>778</sup> 'In the

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<sup>775</sup> Overseas Chinese Chronicles Editorial Committee, *Overseas Chinese in Vietnam*, Taipei, Overseas Chinese Chronicles Editorial Committee, 1958, p. 214.

<sup>776</sup> Wi-vun Taiffao. Chiung, 'Identity and Indigeniz: Minh Huong People versus Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam', *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2013, p. 87.

<sup>777</sup> Xing.Yan and Zhuo-mei. Zhang, 'Vietnamese Citizens of Chinese Origin: History and Contributions', *Journal of Wenshan Teachers' College*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2012, p. 43.

<sup>778</sup> Wang-Yao. Wu, 'The Voice of Overseas Chinese in the Entrapped Communist Area', In 'Trivia on the Fall of Vietnam', *China Daily News*, Tainan, 1979, p. 202.

1970s, during the Sino-Vietnamese War the Vietnamese government confiscated all Chinese enterprises and their properties.<sup>779</sup> This resulted in a large number of Chinese being forced to leave Vietnam. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>780</sup> It is estimated that between 1 million and 2 million Chinese escaped from Vietnam between the 1970s and 1990s, of which about 200,000 to 400,000 were killed by pirates or died at sea. In 2013, the Republic of China (Taiwan) conducted a large-scale report on overseas Chinese affairs statistics (海外華人人數統計),<sup>781</sup> and the Chinese ethnic population in Vietnam was only over 990,000. This is about 0.96% of the total population of Vietnam.

The Chinese in Vietnam have made great contributions and influence to Vietnam in the past and in modern times. However, due to several wars after the 1970s, a large number of Chinese left Vietnam. Some Chinese who chose to stay in Vietnam suffered from a high-pressure Chinese exclusion policy. In order to protect their descendants, they chose to conceal their family's Chinese history. Local Chinese Vietnamese ancestors gave up their Chinese identity and merely let their descendants be ordinary Vietnamese. The Vietnamese government is dissatisfied with the development of Vietnamese contemporary art and has implemented a strict art censorship system, while Chinese-Vietnamese people have experienced severe Chinese exclusion policies in Vietnam's modern history, resulting in no Chinese contemporary art community established in Vietnam. Only a few ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese artists work in Vietnam, however they are reluctant to admit their Chinese background- even for themselves and do not know they have Chinese family history. In today's Vietnam, people can still see the

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<sup>779</sup> Zhuang country, 'A Brief Discussion on the Ethnic Identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese and Its Development Trend.', *JOURNAL of XIAMEN UNIVERSITY (Arts & Social Sciences)*, vol. 151, no. 3, 2002, p. 69.

<sup>780</sup> '40 Years of the Vietnam War in China: Stories of Overseas Chinese from Foreign Countries to Other Lands', *BBC News*, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/world-47061859>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

<sup>781</sup> Overseas Community Affairs Council, 'Airiti Library', *Www.airitilibrary.com*, 2013, <https://www.airitilibrary.com/Publication/alPublicationJournal?PublicationID=a0000109&IssueYear=2013>, (accessed 6 Dec 2022).

characteristics of Chinese culture in Vietnamese life, but these are the shadows of the Chinese in the past, and it does not belong to the contemporary Chinese Vietnamese. '(N)ow the Chinese-Vietnamese people have fully integrated into Vietnamese society and they become a part of the big Vietnamese family.'<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> Chen Hong Yu, *On the Citizenship, Social Status, and Human Rights of Overseas Chinese*, Taipei, Independent Writers Press, 2014, p. 195.

## The Ambiguity of Chinese Self-Identity in Southeast Asia After the 21st Century.

(21 世紀東南亞華人模糊的身份自我認同)

### Appendix 8

Many Chinese workers did not consider doing business jobs at the beginning in Southeast Asia. However, ‘when they arrived in Southeast Asia, many Chinese businessmen from the same hometown helped with their work and settled down their lives, naturally they were also actively involved in their business.’<sup>783</sup> Early overseas Chinese only had the concept of a local hometown in their minds but not the concept of China's country. Their identity belonged to the hometown where they came from, because at that time Chinese did not have a conception of a country. “Country” the ideal came from the westerner:

Chinese culture was dominated by families and clans (氏族), and the living circles of ancient Chinese individuals were not large. In the past, the Chinese tended to live in their hometown for a lifetime and would not leave their hometown rashly. The main reason for this was that the Chinese tradition was an agricultural society. At the same time, Confucianism influenced the Chinese people's thinking with emphasis on family and hometown.<sup>784</sup>

Chinese from the same hometown established their hometown Chinese communities and groups even though they left their hometown for new places. Different Chinese native groups have their own chambers of commerce, beliefs, dialects, living habits, entertainment methods, etc., which had a great impact on the early Chinese emigrated establishment and establishment of identity of Chinese. With the long-term development of Chinese hometown communities in Southeast Asia, different Chinese hometown communities established their own sense of ancestral Chinese identity. In addition, when Chinese hometown communities faced conflicts

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<sup>783</sup> Philip A. Kuhn and Minghuan Li, *Chinese among Others: Emigration in Modern Times.*, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009, p. 221.

<sup>784</sup> Yi-Hsuan. Huang, *Teaching Chinese as a Second Language under the Influence of the Ethnic Chinese Identity in Philippines*, MA diss., Kaohsiung, National Kaohsiung Normal University, 2014, p. 24.

of interest within the Chinese, they aroused local Chinese faction fighting accidents (派系械鬥).

## **Appendix 9**

Even if they moved or emigrated to a different place, their hometown (country) identity might still stay in ancient Chinese empires. Also because the Chinese ethnic group has a long history of immigration, after World War II, modernised countries and sovereignty were established around the world. The “imagined community (想像的共同體)” of the “Chinese nation” collided or merged with the concept of “sovereign country”.<sup>785</sup>

## **How to Analyse The Development of Chinese Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia From the Perspective of Sinophone Studying. (如何以華語語系研究的觀點分析東南亞華族當代藝術的發展)**

## **Appendix 10**

There are some reasons and the sinophone development background made it develop quickly. The reason why Sinophone studies are popular in Malaysian Chinese academic research comes from the fact that Chinese-Malaysia has retained the Chinese-language education system until today. Although Chinese schools are not part of the Malaysian national education system, private Chinese schools have excellent education quality and the characteristics of teaching in Chinese. So even though Chinese schools are outside the system, Chinese-Malays and a few other Malaysians willing to choose their children to study in Chinese schools. Malaysian Chinese schools are coherent from kindergarten to high school, but they cannot be opened at the

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<sup>785</sup>Yu-Chuan.Huang, *The Evolving Roles of the Chinese in Laos*, MA diss., Taipei, National Taiwan Normal University, 2019, pp. 21-23.

university stage due to the restrictions of Malaysia's education policy. This has caused many Chinese Malays students to choose to study in mainland China or Taiwan after graduating from high school. This educational situation invisibly deepens the new connections and exchanges between young Chinese Malaysians and Chinese in other regions. Another reason is that even today, Chinese ethnic living in Malaysia mainly use Chinese dialects to communicate and write Chinese in their daily life and business. The Chinese ethnic in Malaysia cannot live without the Chinese language. At the same time, Chinese Malaysian's Chinese language ability is also the best among Southeast Asian countries. Malaysian Chinese literature and Chinese cultural studies have been well preserved and recorded from the past to the present. These large amounts of Chinese research resources and materials have provided good nutrients for the development of sinophone research in Malaysia.

So far, the results of sinophone research in Malaysia are also the highest among Southeast Asian countries. Compared with the Chinese language ability of Chinese Malaysians, although Singapore has the highest proportion of Chinese in Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese-language ability of Singaporeans continues to decline. Because Singapore's national policies and propaganda after the founding of the country have focused on the country's economic survival as the highest priority, English as the advantage and convenience of communicating with the world has become the main language used by the Singapore government. In addition, it is undeniable that Singaporeans used to have British language hegemony and influence during the colonial era in Singapore, which made Singaporeans have a sublime yearning for speaking English under 141 years of colonial rule. Although Singapore's national education implements bilingual education, but all subjects are taught in English, only the mother tongue class(母語課) learn and use in mother language. Factly, for most of the young generation in Singapore, their real mother tongue is English(or Singlish), and the language learned in the “mother tongue” class is a “foreign language”. However, the national

language of Singapore is Malay, but not every Singaporean can speak Malay. In fact, Singaporeans consciously use English as the language of daily communication and develop into the Singlish language.

Singlish is an informal, colloquial form of English that is used in Singapore. Linguists define it as Singapore Colloquial English. For Singapore, the current bilingual education has no way to ensure that Singaporeans are proficient in English and the "mother tongue" two languages. Under the government's language policy and bilingual education, now Chinese families in Singapore mainly speak English, while the number of Chinese speaking Chinese dialects is gradually decreasing. The new generation of Chinese students learn Mandarin Chinese in their mother tongue classes at school. However, in fact, Chinese grandparents in Singapore may not be able to use Mandarin because they only can use Chinese dialects such as Cantonese, Hokkien or Hakka, so the old and new generations of Singaporean Chinese have difficulty communicating in their Chinese mother tongue.

The "Speak Chinese Movement" was launched in Singapore's education reform in 1979. In some places in Singapore, it is easy to see the propaganda copy of the Chinese Language Movement. The main goal of the Singapore government is to make the Chinese "seem" to retain their mother tongue. 'The titles of these poster propaganda included Speak more "Mandarin and less dialects(多講華語、少說方言)", "Chinese speak Chinese is reasonable and Mandarin's in, dialects out(華人講華語，合情又合理)", "Speak Mandarin first, everyone is happy! Start with Mandarin, not dialect(先開口講華語，皆大歡喜)" etc.'<sup>786</sup> The loss of Chinese language proficiency among Singaporean Chinese has been actively concerned by Singaporean scholars and the government in the past two decades. The Chinese literature and

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<sup>786</sup> Xiumin.Cai, 'How to Create a Country That Does Not Speak "Mandarin"? Language Education and Ethnic Identity in Singapore', *Opinion.cw.com.tw*, 2016, <https://opinion.cw.com.tw/blog/profile/52/article/3856>, (accessed 27 Jan 2023).

academic circles in Singapore are actively participating in the research and promotion of the Sinophone study in Singapore. However, their research found that the phenomenon of the disappearance of the skill of Chinese language is not only happening in Singapore, but the complete Chinese ethnic in Southeast Asia are facing the crisis of losing their Chinese mother language.

### **Appendix 11**

On the other hand, the reason why Sinophone research is popular in Taiwan, is because that the Taiwanese live with such political ambiguities everyday due to the national history and political situation with China(mainland) , at the same time, because these ambiguities help ensure the nation's current survival and security. Taiwan's Sinophone culture is the bearer of this ambiguity, and Taiwan is the arena upon which such ambiguity is played out. Taiwanese scholars look forward to finding out the possibility of self-worth and self-identity of Chinese and Taiwanese from diverse Chinese and Taiwanese through Sinophone research. it is the chance to 'break with such an ambiguous situation.'<sup>787</sup> However, it should be noted that in Taiwan academic world not only focuses on Sinophone studying but also in Austronesian languages research(Taiwanese aboriginal language). This also reflects once again the diverse local characteristics of Taiwan itself. In Taiwan, Sinophone research brings about the new opportunity of thinking with regards to national identity. At the very least, the research of Sinophone issues opens up the opportunity for a national conversation to take place about "Chinese-ness", and its place within Taiwanese thinking.

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<sup>787</sup> Shumei, Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press , p.139.

## **Appendix Four:Chapter 3. Exhibition Recording and Analysis for Curating Practice**

### **Exhibition External Information And Public Feedback**

#### **Appendix 1**

Globalisation, which introduces the circulation of capital, culture, goods, ideas and technology, has significantly impacted every sphere of the contemporary world. As it brings about rapid development and increasing mobility of people, while ushering in an era of stability and affluence, there are also new challenges that may arise. Sociologist Ronald Inglehart proposed that when people live in a prolonged prosperous situation with their material and security needs fulfilled, cultural value and mentality in the entire society will gradually shift. Inglehart believed that a generation growing up in a materially affluent environment will be more inclined towards post-materialism, which is characterised by the prioritisation of personal ideals and self-expression that may reflect the current social and environmental conditions, as individuals place the subjects that are relatively deficient in precedence.

This is reflective of the world at present, as it embraces the rise of millennial youths - a new generation that has not experienced any severe physiological and economic difficulties during their formative years, and are therefore more likely to pursue non-material spiritual needs such as knowledge, autonomy, happiness and equality. As the first digital natives, this generation is exposed to a technological world where flow of information, cultures, possessions, services and people could occur freely and widely across real and virtual boundaries, resulting in a more informed and cosmopolitan worldview. This contributed to their collective sensibility towards social justice, political liberalness and environmental concerns. For these millennials who have

grown up in a relatively unruffled society that is constantly thriving, they are more likely to seek deeper spiritual gratification as they reflect upon the inherent social structure.

In light of this current social development trend, An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects will attempt to establish the possibilities of intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogues by inviting ten Singaporean and Taiwanese millennial artists to present works that touch on various social commentaries and observations on issues that matter to them, as culminated from the artists' unique sensibility, cogitation and imagination. The exhibition will bring everyday objects to the fore in an attempt to discuss the imperative of current issues with the peculiarity of daily commodities, thereby presenting an interesting juxtaposition that demands attention in a post-material world. The multi-dimensionality of different objects may conjure up narratives such as personal and collective memories, as well as symbolic associations to certain subjects as they spark curiosity and ideas.

Through the reinterpretation of everyday objects that echoes the adaptive relationship between people and societal values, the exhibition will offer an expansion of perspectives in pressing societal issues and re-examine the many contradictions and inconsistencies in contemporary life as the artists utilise the mundane objects within their personal encounters and experiments to highlight certain habitual tendencies of modernity, as well as the absurdity and impermanence behind these realities.

## **Appendix 2**

Sociologist Ronald Inglehart proposed that when people live in a prolonged prosperous situation with their material and security needs fulfilled, cultural value and mentality in the entire society will gradually shift.<sup>788</sup> Inglehart believed that a generation growing up in a

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<sup>788</sup> Ronald. Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 215.

materially affluent environment will be more inclined towards post-materialism, which is characterised by the prioritisation of personal ideals and self-expression that may reflect the current social and environmental conditions. Therefore, millennials care more about spiritual practice and self-advocacy than previous generations. At the same time, for the new generation as the first digital natives, they are exposed to a technological world where flow of information, cultures, possessions, services and people could occur freely and widely across real and virtual boundaries, resulting in a more informed and cosmopolitan worldview. This contributed to their collective sensibility towards social justice, political liberality and environmental concerns.

### **Appendix 3**

Objects are multidimensional entities that may evoke a variety of narratives including historical associations, personal or collective memories, emotional reactions, and metaphorical expositions. Aligned with our experience and knowledge, objects are not just bounded by their utility purposes and physical forms, as our innate curiosity has also driven us to observe, examine, admire, collect, create and discuss about them in ways beyond their functionality and appearance. The significance of objects is also externalised in their correlations with culture due to their shared meanings and symbolic compositions that persist through the test of time. Essential to the transmission of culture, objects have been exchanged and traded between disparate societies since antiquity. On one spectrum, there are objects that are highly regarded and treasured due to their cultural value, and on the other, there are objects that have been deeply entrenched within our everyday lives that we often take for granted.

With current circumstances such as the global pandemic and international conflicts inevitably affecting our norms and warping the realities we have grown accustomed to, the way we perceive certain objects might have shifted as new narratives and interpretations continue to

formulate. Commodification of different forms brought about by capitalism and the blurring of boundaries between the real and the virtual as advocated by rapid digitisation, have also affected what we consider as an object. As we live in a technological world where flow of information, cultures, possessions, services and people could occur freely and widely across real and virtual boundaries, how objects are discerned around us seems to be in constant flux. In light of the ubiquity of objects as multi-faceted constituents of culture, independent curators Nien-Ting Chen (Taiwan) and Jaxton Su (Singapore) have initiated an exchange project between Taiwanese artists and Singaporean artists that bring an assortment of random objects to the fore, in an attempt to discuss the imperative of current issues with the peculiarity of specific commodities.

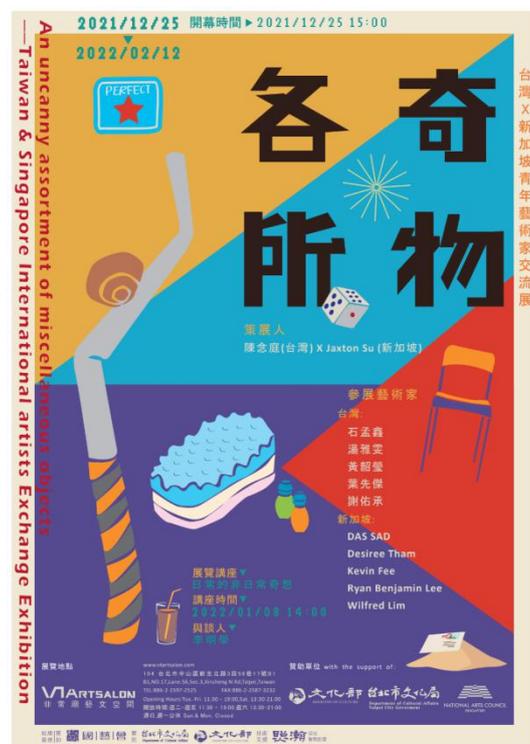
As lands surrounded by the ocean and inhabited with multiple ethnic groups, Singapore and Taiwan share many commonalities that weave through our culture, geography, history and lifestyle. Similar historical narratives inform our past as we once welcomed an influx of migration, fell under colonisation or authority of different countries, as well as experienced rapid industrialisation and economic growth. Although we each have our unique identities as disparate territories, the use of Mandarin Chinese as the national language in Taiwan and as a mother tongue for the ethnic Chinese majority in Singapore, has conceivably helped bridge our cultural differences and encouraged the building of collective memories. In celebration of our cultural affinities, The uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects aims to utilise cross-cultural observation and examination of perspectives to construct a flourishing and experimental contemporary art platform. Culminating as two distinct exhibitions in Singapore and Taiwan, ten groups of young artists were invited to create new works based on chosen objects from their everyday life.

In our contemporary era of uncertainties, how have different situations affected our way of perceiving and defining objects? What novel perspectives and solutions might objects offer us during turbulent times? How do our younger generation from different cultures perceive certain objects in relation to current societal conditions? What are some of the issues of concern in Singapore and Taiwan amongst young people today? A calendar and map; beverages and door threshold; dancing pole and telegraph poles; dice and jade stones; fluorescent pigment and plastics; pixels and photographs; postcards and letters; snails and flags; soaps and sponges; stickers and test papers — what narratives can we uncover from these diverse and extraneous entities? Examining the aforementioned enquiries, the concluding exhibition of the Singapore-Taiwan exchange project is presented as a curious mishmash of seemingly unrelated objects, with each work chronicling an artist's observation and commentary of current societal situations and altered realities that have suffused our world at present.

#### **Appendix 4**

The exhibition visual identity was designed in accordance with the characteristics of the exhibition conception and transnational exchange results. Based on comprehensive consideration of the echo between the artworks and the public's visual aesthetics, the exhibition visual designer finally decided to choose bright and colourful colours as the positioning of the exhibition visual image for the public promotion, using yellow, blue, red and other single bright colours to symbolise the young Chinese artists' characteristics of diversity and open contemporary Chinese culture development in Taiwan and Singapore. The exhibition visual design is represented in the form of 2D hand painting with the objects selected by each participating artist and used in the promotion of the exhibition poster. The invitation letters for the exhibitions were designed in a vertical format for the Taiwan venue and a horizontal format for the Singapore venue because of the consideration of the different reading habits of the two countries. On the poster, besides the 2D hand painted objects, there were also bold colour block

collages covering the poster screen. The colours used in the posters were designed with reference to the complementary colour method (互補配色法) and adjusted individually according to the differences in the cultural chromatics of the two countries. For the visual colour in the Taiwan venue, the designer picked high-saturation and high-contrast bright colours for visual matching. In the Singapore venues, the visual designer based the design on the Split-Complementary Colours method (補色分割配色法) and add warm and highly saturated colours for visual matching in order to Singaporean audience's visual habits.



*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition Taiwan version poster, accessed 27 Jan 2023.



*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition, Singapore version poster, accessed 27 Jan 2023.

## The Curator's Observation and Perspective In the Exhibition

### Appendix 5

Curator, Dr. Hongjohn Lin (林宏璋), reviewed the origin of curating etymology and the definition of curating early concepts in the book *Curating Subject: Practising Contemporary Exhibitions* (2013, 策展主體: 當代展演實踐), “Curature” originally means person who cares for the soul, representing the clergy who ensure that religious ceremonies are carried out. At the same time, the meaning of the Latin evolution of the word curator is related, such as caregiver (照料者) and guardian (守護者); curator is the caretaker of the soul, but also a healer, and this characteristic corresponds to the priesthood meaning of curature.<sup>789</sup> With the development of contemporary art, the importance and function of curators in art have been greatly enhanced. Through the selection of artworks and exhibition concepts developed by curators, the curator provides the public with multiple interpretations and understandings of the viewing world.

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<sup>789</sup> Hongjohn Lin, *Curating Subject: Practising Contemporary Exhibitions*, Taipei, EHGBooks, 2013, p. 5.

## Summary of Art Practice

### Appendix 6

*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition Taiwan version exhibition brochure

**2021/12/25**  
開幕活動▼  
2021/12/25 15:00  
展覽講座▼  
日常的非日常奇想  
講座時間▼  
2022/01/08 14:00  
與談人▼  
李明學、黃麗人、參展藝術家

**2022/02/12**  
PERFECT

# 各奇所物

策展人  
陳念庭(台灣) X Jaxton Su (新加坡)

台灣 X 新加坡青年藝術家交流展

An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects  
— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition

參展藝術家  
台灣:  
石孟森  
湯雅雯  
黃韶瑩  
葉先傑  
謝佑承  
新加坡:  
DAS SAD  
Desiree Tham  
Kevin Fee  
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駐: No.17, Lane 35, Sec. 3, Xinyuan St., Taipei, Taiwan 開放時間週二-週五11:30-19:00, 週六13:30-21:00  
TEL: 886-2-2591-2323 FAX: 886-2-2591-8232 週日週一休息 Sun & Mon. Closed

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管理 助 助 Department of Cultural Affairs member of CCA/TVA 支持 支持 贊助於美



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台灣 X 新加坡青年藝術家交流展

# 各奇所物

## Description

### 各奇所物 — 台灣 X 新加坡青年藝術家交流展

An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects  
— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition

策展人：陳念庭（台灣）、Jaxton Su（新加坡）

當今世界正處於過往未有之全球化的進程，21世紀各地文化與科技技術不斷相互學習與創新，人類社會迎來繁榮的陽明與富裕，與此同時，也面臨更多未知的挑戰。社會學家 Ronald Inglehart 提出，當人民生長在繁榮的境況且物質需求獲得滿足時，整個社會中的文化價值觀與心態將會再逐漸改變。Inglehart 認為在物質豐裕環境中成長的一代會更傾向後物質價值觀，其特色為個人價值觀的優先排序將反映當下社會環境狀況，個人會將相對缺乏的事物放在價值觀排序裡的優先位置。

當前各國正迎來千禧世代的崛起，新世代的他們在成長過程中並非經歷極端險峻的生理和物質困難，因此，此代人的特質是比過往的世代更加追求與嚮往知識、審美、幸福、平等而非物質的精神需求。人類社會發展至今處於相對過往富足穩定的時代，在這背景下成長的新世代更加義無反顧地追求更加高層的精神滿足，進而反思固有的社會結構。德國社會學哲學家 Friedrich Engels 描繪了這樣的社會運作變化互動：「一個偉大的基本思想，即認為世界不是現成事物的集合體，而是過程的集合體。每個看似穩定不變的事物與狀態，都是我們腦中的思想映象的概念，它無處不在地經歷生成和滅亡的變化之中。」面對未來的社會發展趨勢，「各奇所物——台灣X新加坡青年藝術家交流展」邀請十組新加坡與台灣新生代藝術家以自身特有的敏感性、思考力與想像力，創造出特定場域進行創作，藉此反映千禧世代青年視角下的社會觀察，重新審視當代生活諸多的矛盾與不協調，發展跨世代對話的可能性。

本展覽透過藝術家對當代日常物件的再詮釋，呼應人與社會價值之間的適應關係，進而重新定義或質疑現今所處的生活型態與體制，創作者以不斷重複的親身實驗來突顯某些舊有習以為常的社會價值與現實環境背後的荒謬與無常。

Globalisation, which introduces the circulation of capital, culture, goods, ideas and technology, has significantly impacted every sphere of the contemporary world. As it brings about rapid development and increasing mobility of people, while ushering in an era of stability and affluence, there are also new challenges that may arise. Sociologist Ronald Inglehart proposed that when people live in a prolonged prosperous situation with their material and security needs fulfilled, cultural value and mentality in the entire society will gradually shift. Inglehart believed that a generation growing up in a materially affluent environment will be more inclined towards post-materialism, which is characterised by the prioritisation of personal ideals and self-expression that may reflect the current social and environmental conditions, as individuals place the subjects that are relatively deficient in precedence.

This is reflective of the world at present, as it embraces the rise of millennial youths - a new generation that has not experienced any severe physiological and economic difficulties during their formative years, and are therefore more likely to pursue non-material spiritual needs such as knowledge, autonomy, happiness and equality. As the first digital natives, this generation is exposed to a technological world where flow of information, cultures, possessions, services and people could occur freely and widely across real and virtual boundaries, resulting in a more informed and cosmopolitan worldview. This contributed to their collective sensibility towards social justice, political liberalness and environmental concerns. For these millennials who have grown up in a relatively untroubled society that is constantly thriving, they are more likely to seek deeper spiritual gratification as they reflect upon the inherent social structure.

In light of this current social development trend, An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects will attempt to establish the possibilities of intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogues by inviting ten Singaporean and Taiwanese millennial artists to present works that touch on various social commentaries and observations on issues that matter to them, as culminated from the artists' unique sensibility, cogitation and imagination. The exhibition will bring everyday objects to the fore in an attempt to discuss the imperative of current issues with the peculiarity of daily commodities, thereby presenting an interesting juxtaposition that demands attention in a post-material world. The multi-dimensionality of different objects may conjure up narratives such as personal and collective memories, as well as symbolic associations to certain subjects as they spark curiosity and ideas. Through the reinterpretation of everyday objects that echoes the adaptive relationship between people and societal values, the exhibition will offer an expansion of perspectives in pressing societal issues and re-examine the many contradictions and inconsistencies in contemporary life as the artists utilise the mundane objects within their personal encounters and experiments to highlight certain habitual tendencies of modernity, as well as the absurdity and impermanence behind these realities.

## Curators

02



TAIWAN 台灣

陳念庭  
Nien-Ting Chen

<https://www.nientingchen.com/>



SINGAPORE 新加坡

蘇敬翔  
Jaxton Su

<http://www.jaxtonsu.net/>



陳念庭，1990年生於台灣台北，是位獨立策展人與視覺藝術家，畢業於英國格拉斯哥藝術學院，獲得藝術創作碩士(MFA)，目前為英國利物浦藝術與設計學院(LSA, LJMU)博士候選人。主要的藝術實踐與發表於亞洲及英國各城市，發展項目聚焦於世界藝術青年的藝術資源連結與共享、青年藝文工作者在國際發展的策略與實踐。同時，也持續發展各項具連結性之藝術計畫與策展。交流觸角遍及英國、韓國、新加坡、馬來西亞、泰國等地。藉由跨國當代藝術交流，進而推廣台灣藝術與文化並增加台灣在國際藝文上的曝光度。

Nien-Ting Chen (b. 1990) is an independent curator and visual artist. She holds a Master of Fine Art from the Glasgow School of Art, United Kingdom and is currently pursuing her PhD in Art at the Liverpool School of Art and Design (LSA, LJMU). She works across cities in both Asia and the United Kingdom, with her research, practice and projects focusing on developing strategies to bring young artists onto the world stage through the exchange, sharing and combination of resources.

At the same time, she continues to actualise various interconnected art projects and curatorial works in places such as United Kingdom, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, etc., where she hopes to promote and enhance the exposure of Taiwanese arts and cultural scene within the global landscape of contemporary art. Her PhD research delves into the objective analysis and evaluation of how the Chinese has impacted the advancement of Asian contemporary art, particularly in the broad Eastern Asia since the 1990s. By reviewing the retrospective frameworks of Asian contemporary art's development, she aims to outline the evolution of the contemporary art movement in the last three decades, while drawing links between the cultural, historical, political and geographical development of various regions in Asia.

蘇敬翔 Jaxton Su(生於1988年，新加坡)是一位獨立視覺藝術家與策展人，目前也是新加坡南洋理工大學的一名講師。他畢業於英國格拉斯哥藝術學院，獲得藝術碩士學位，並獲得新加坡南洋理工大學視覺傳媒美術學士學位。他的研究興趣包括地質、心理學及其與社會和日常問題的關係。抱著對當代藝術的熱忱，他積極參與策展、社區交流、雙邊和教育項目。他的一些曾在國際舞台展現過的項目包括跨區域的「不滅塵埃」-亞洲當代青年影像影展，展於台灣的「吡叻群幹-岡山國際當代藝術倉庫交流展」、「台北好日曬日曬」-中山區鄰里內的藝術巧遇計畫，新加坡的「運動中的色彩」-跨媒體視覺藝術和舞蹈項目，以及愛丁堡國際科學節的「我們的納米世界」研討會等。

Jaxton Su (b. 1988, Singapore) is an independent visual artist and curator. He is also an adjunct lecturer at Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Holding a Master of Fine Art from The Glasgow School of Art, UK and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from NTU, Singapore, Jaxton seeks to coalesce the diverse interrelated experience from his artistic, pedagogical, community-based and curatorial practices, and apply them within meaningful projects that will encourage reflection and discourse.

As an independent curator, he is interested in bridging the gaps between current social issues through contemporary art and advocating artists as citizens of agency. By challenging traditional formats of presenting art, he is keen on bringing contemporary art to the masses while encouraging appreciation. He was selected as a curator at Alt Space Loop, Seoul for their annual curators open call in 2020. Some of his notable endeavours that he has presented internationally include curatorial projects 'The Unsettled Dust' - a touring Asian Short Film Festival, 'Dare you do this? FFFF IT!' - a Taiwan Gangshan Dist Contemporary Art Warehouse International Exchange Program and 'Power Play' - a biennial contemporary art festival in Singapore.

## DAS SAD

SINGAPORE 新加坡

DAS SAD工作室位於新加坡，是一個由Woong Soak Teng、Ng Ai Qing Adar和Lim Wei Jing Dave組成的跨領域藝術三人組，主要在圖像創作，旨在利用藝術創作的過程作為灌輸實踐的載體。

Based in Singapore, DAS SAD Studio is a multidisciplinary arts trio comprising of Woong Soak Teng, Ng Ai Qing Adar and Lim Wei Jing Dave. Primarily image-makers, we aim to utilise the process of art making as the vehicle for inculcating praxis.



### 展覽 Exhibition

2021 September 2021 About Routes, Not Roots- Art Agenda SEA, Singapore



## flâneur 漫遊者

03

影片、數位印刷 / digital video, c-prints / 5'40" / 329mm x 483mm / 2021

《漫遊者》是一個表演錄像藝術作品，它考慮了在日益數碼化的時代我們環境的過去、現在和未來狀態。利用機器學習科技，新加坡的檔案照片在不斷升級和縮小的過程中被破壞侵蝕。這意味著都市的不斷重新構建和重建。這部作品中的檔案照片引用了Lim Kwong Ling等多位現代攝影師的作品，模糊了時間和空間，為穿入和穿出血框的漫遊者創造了一個數位遊樂場。她有時是社會的觀察者，有時是媒體世界的表演者。行走和漂流，她透過採用衍生的想法思考自己在瞬息萬變的城市中的位置，這是一場由景觀意識所引導的無計劃旅程。

flâneur is a performative video artwork that considers the past, present and future states of our environment in an increasingly digitalised era. Utilising machine-learning technology, archival photographs of Singapore are visually eroded through a recurring process of upscaling and downscaling, synonymous with the constant re-framing and re-construction of the city. The archival photographs in this work, referencing modern photographers such as Lim Kwong Ling, obscure time and space to create a digital playground for the flâneur, who weaves in and out of frame. She is sometimes an observer of society and other times, a performer for the media-infused world. Walking and drifting, she ponders about her place in the rapidly changing city by adopting ideas of *dérive*, an unplanned journey subconsciously directed by the landscape.



## Desiree Tham

SINGAPORE 新加坡

Desiree Tham 專注於物件如何突破自身形式、調節人類感知與思考社會的關係。他解構並改變物件在日常生活中的功能性，探索每一個物體和它們內部的無限世界的張力。將物體帶入行動之中，呈現出一個將可能性和日常性融合在一起的空間，以一種超越性的新方式去看待簡單物件和日常事務。

"I've always been fascinated of how objects can perform beyond its form and mediate relations in the way we perceive and think about the society. Focusing on deconstructing and altering their functions into everyday situations, I aim to explore the tension that underlies every object and the infinite world inside them. I use objects and bring them into action, a space where possibility and everydayness converge to activate a transcendent new way of looking at simple objects and everyday routine."



### 學歷 Exhibitions

2016- Present BA(HON) FINE ARTS LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS  
2014-2015 DIPLOMA IN ART EDUCATION NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
2010-2013 DIPLOMA IN ART TEACHING NANYANG ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

### 展覽 Exhibitions

2021 FIGMENT, Group, Shophouse  
2021 aedge, Group, SOTA  
2021 Artist-in-School programme, Host-Fairfield Methodist School Secondary  
2020 aedge, Group, SOTA  
2019 ASIA ART IN THE MIRROR, Supernormal  
2019 CHAN DAVIS ART PRIZE, solo, Chan + Hori Contemporary  
2019 THE ONLY PARADISE IS PARADISE LOST, Stamford Art Centre  
2019 ARTXTHCH FOR GOOD 2.0 (MESHMINDS), Art Science Museum / Roger&Sons  
2018 LIGHTS MARINA BAY, Marina Bay Sands  
2018 LOADING PLESAS WAIT..., Alliance Francaise

## "How to chase a Mountain?" 如何追逐一座山?

木製結構、骰子、草皮、玉石、LED燈、塑膠貼紙、手把、輪子 / Wood structure, Dice, Grass Patches, Jade stones, Led light, Vinyl stickers, Handles and Wheels / 160cm x 120cm x 25cm / 2021

"如何追逐一座山"是對於風水的探索與實踐，為了尋找一個良好的空間或位置，保佑我們在山上的建造與生活。該雕塑裝置的靈感來源於對吉祥山的探索，在"龍脈"背後的神話中，山脈的形狀和形式會影響一個人的財富和生活地位。調查我們居住的地理和都市空間，特別是在沒有山脈的新加坡。試圖質疑其功能性和合理性，讓觀眾重新想像它所帶來的能力，並思考一個人將追求什麼來換取繁榮和運氣。

什麼是中國夢？

我們將在多大程度上保護自己？

"How to chase a mountain" is an exploration of Feng Shui practices to search for a good space or location that corroborates as protection to build homes and living in the mountains. Inspired by this search for an auspicious mountain, the sculptural installation builds on the historical myths behind the "Mountain Dragons", where the shapes and forms of mountains govern one's wealth and status in life. Surveying the geographical and urban spaces we live in, particularly in the context of Singapore where mountains are non-existent, the installation seeks to question the role of functionality and rationality by allowing the audience to have the authority to re-imagine the maximum and probable capacities to seek protection and to ponder what one would pursue in return for prosperity and luck.

What is the Chinese dream?

And how far will we go to protect ourselves?



## 謝佑承 Hsieh Yu-Cheng

TAIWAN 台灣

1992年生於台灣宜蘭，現居與工作於台北。由光所構成影像與空間中的邏輯關係，揭示著機器影像與觀看視角的邏輯順序；實體與虛擬、數位與類比、錯置與對位、在場與缺席，是其創作以現場製作、影像、物質材料等不同形式與媒材，發展以光為存在附體的系列作品。近期創作多以螢光透視彩色、科技物件等常規方法，實驗影像概念的嚴基礎條件，於此試圖回溯視覺發生的初始與現實輕軌的可能。

Born in Yilan, Taiwan, in 1992, Hsieh Yu-Cheng lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan. His works puts emphasis on the dialectical relationship in image and space laid out by light, revealing the logical sequences in machine's image and viewer's perspective. Substantial vs. virtual, digital vs. analogue, misplacement vs. counterpoint, and presence vs. absence are works series Hsieh develops with light as the existential dialectic, comprising on-site production, image, materials, and other forms and mediums. His recent works are pieces using fluorescent paints to simulate colors and technological objects to experiment on the most fundamental criteria for the notion of image, with which the artist endeavors to retrace the onset of visual as well as the possibility of shattering the reality.



### 學歷 Exhibitions

MFA 國立臺北藝術大學新媒體藝術研究所

### 個展 Solo Exhibitions

2020 SIGN, 索卡藝術, 台南  
2019 高壓電, 蕭聲文化園區, 台南  
2018 亮處, 福利社, 台北

### 聯展 Group Exhibitions

2021 是什麼使今天的影像如此不同, 如此有魅力  
2021 臺灣國際光影藝術節, 國立台灣美術館, 台中  
2020 剛醒著你 刺繡, 山屋口, 台北  
2020 借光, 寶藝術, 台中  
2020 不在此見, 關渡美術館, 台北  
2020 相依的總和—寶麗麗光節, 寶麗麗國際藝術村  
2020 空幻場, 空樓創新基地, 台北  
2020 給火星人類學家, 新北市藝文中心, 新北  
2020 不言之境, 昇土藝廊, 台北

### 獎勵 Awards

2019 第六屆天美藝術基金會台灣當代藝術家海外參訪計畫  
2018 集思廣義—當代藝術賞, 首獎  
2018 台南新藝獎

## Mark

螢光粉、螢光漆、現成物、螢光燈 / Fluorescent powder, Fluorescent pigment, Ready-made objects, Fluorescent lamps / 裝置尺寸依場地而定 / 2021

我的創作關注日常中不可視的存在與連結，透過螢光媒材在紫外光中的雙重性（黑暗中獨自發光），嘗試開拓實存與虛觀的經驗邊界。在東亞的日常文化中，快速射出製成塑膠用品，亮麗且低廉的價格遍及於市場與生活裡，我藉由螢光材料重製它們，以另一種實存呼應其隱微的位置與身份。

My work focuses on the invisible existence and connection in daily life. Through the duality of fluorescent media in ultraviolet light (glowing alone in the dark), I tried to explore the dialectic between real existence and virtual experience. Common in East Asia's daily culture, plastic products are mass produced and come in attractively low prices throughout the market. I reproduced them with fluorescent materials, echoing their subtle position and identity with another kind of existence.



## 黃韶瑩 Huang Shao-Ying

TAIWAN 台灣

黃韶瑩(b.1989)目前生活與創作在台南。以物件、雕塑、立體、空間裝置、綜合媒材為主，創作大多來自於個人日常感知經驗的累積，我想像社會的生命狀態與存在，可能像是一種透過他者或某種物件，在我內心產生的隱喻，讓彼此試圖展現某種身體的可能。

Huang Shao-Ying (b.1989) currently lives and works in Tainan. She works with objects, sculptures, three-dimensional and spatial installations, as well as mixed media. Most of her creations are inspired by her accumulation of personal daily sensibilities and experiences. She imagines society's state of life and existence is generated through other beings or objects that form various metaphors within her, thereby forming a kind of physical possibility.



### 學歷 Exhibitions

2012 國立彰化師範大學 美術系  
2016 國立台北藝術大學美術系碩士班

### 個展 Solo Exhibitions

2019 《Something Random in Between》個展，1/2 Room, 彰化，台灣  
2017 《世界是這樣的 你是你我是我》個展，黑白切，高雄，台灣  
2016 《他者在我心中的波瀾-黃韶瑩 創作展》，DOU MAISON，台南新藝博，台灣

### 聯展 Group Exhibitions

2021 《聲音談:在地音景採集計畫》，鳳甲美術館，台北，台灣  
2020 《不延綿的景與微光 第四章：房門裡的海市蜃樓》，寬藝術，台中，台灣  
2020 《台北好日麗日麗》，台北視覺藝術協會，台北，台灣  
2020 《Immediacy of Image》，Idealoka Gallery，印尼  
2020 《跑進藝術節》，1/2 room，彰化，台灣  
2019 《How to be soft and flexible》，TRENDS，台北，台灣  
2019 《堆棧裡幹-岡山國際當代藝術會場交流展》，日盛七號倉庫，高雄，台灣  
2019 《10 x 10 藝術 x 學校的大地實驗室》麻豆大地藝術季，嘉義 麻豆，台灣  
2018 《透明象限-2018藝術採集計畫INTO-2018 TAV ART PROJECT》，百里廳，台北，台灣  
2018 《8th International Sculpture Festa》，Seoul Art Center，首爾，韓國  
2017 《無用台北物件》，台北國際藝術村駐村聯展，百里廳，台北，台灣

### 幸福的認知成分

#### Cognitive Component of Happiness

布料、木板、壓克力顏料、綜合媒材、鐵架 / Fabric, Wood, Acrylic, Mixed media, Iron frame / 裝置尺寸依場地而定 / 2021



以日常問候的一句話作為開頭，而飲食的部分水則是最基本的延伸，就像是一杯手搖飲的漸層色，對於一個從來沒有去過新加坡的我來說，突然在網路上推薦的旅遊美食、玫瑰露的確是一個充滿幸福的色系。

關於城市，門檻一直都是我在尋找租屋處的第一個會注意的地方，門檻的概念來自於風水，有阻擋、聚集、身份的象徵，若離開這些之外，門框只是一個區分內在與外在的設計，而相對性的地方，的確是一個階級的隱喻...

擷取日常經驗的場景轉化為物件，並站在北回線線上面向著赤道的方向，尋找生活中認知幸福的成分與可能性。

Starting with a sentence of daily greetings; water is the most basic extension in the diet, which is like the gradual color of a hand-shaken drink. For a person who has never been to Singapore, I was recommended some local delicacies on the Internet. Bandung (a rose syrup drink), with its striking colour, seems to be filled with happiness.

Regarding the city, the door threshold has always been the first place I will pay attention to when I am looking for a rental apartment. The concept of the threshold comes from Feng Shui. It is a symbol of barriers, gatherings, and status. The external design, and the relative living place, is indeed a metaphor of class...

The scenes that capture daily experience are transformed into objects, to bring out the elements and possibilities of understanding happiness in life.

## Kevin Fee

SINGAPORE 新加坡

Kevin Fee (1990) 新加坡視覺藝術家，作品以攝影和動態影像為主。他的作品經常結合各種領域及技法，讓無機的物體帶來親密感。這樣的特性也展現在他執行的時尚與商業設計等跨領域作品中呈現。

A Singaporean visual artist (b.1990) who works mainly with photography and moving images, often exploring multi-disciplinary approaches and bringing intimacy to the inanimate. This is also translated into my commercial practices as a photographer and videographer in the product and fashion fields.



### 個展 Solo Exhibitions

2018 "Songs of a Beached Whale" The Arts House at The Old Parliament, Singapore

### 展覽 Exhibitions

2020 Maybe we read too much into things  
2020 OHI Open House - HOME: WFH WTH WTF  
2018 Nomad: Outside In, The Arts House  
2018 The Life of Things, Esplanade, Theatres on the Bay  
2017 北京國際攝影周展覽  
2017 NOMAD Residency: 7th Dali International Photography Festival 2017  
2017 Incidents in the Sensible World (Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Photography 2016 Winners Showcase)  
2017 Good OH! Holland Village Art Walk by OHI Open House  
2016 Each and Every Exhibition at DECK  
2016 School of Art, Design & Media Graduation Showcase 2016  
2016 Steidl Book Award Nominee Showcase by THEBOOKSHOW  
2015 WORKBOOK Showcase by THEBOOKSHOW  
2015 Pingyao International Photography Festival 2015  
2015 Noise Singapore 2015 Festival Exhibition

### 獲獎 Awards

2016 Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography

## Giving the snail some advice 給蝸牛的一些建議

真心的建議、攝影 / Honest advice, Photography

/ 420mm x 594mm

/ 2021

「你想想看如果我們在蝸牛身上掛上旗幟嗎？他們就不再被踩到了。」

這段話是有人在路上要求我，將一隻蝸牛從繁忙的人行道上搬移後與我分享的。這幾天我一直在思考這個對我非常有幫助的建議，並藉由作品創作在蝸牛上——因為我現在認為這是一個值得被記憶的事件。

有些陷阱可能需要花更長的時間才能弄清楚。這不要責怪自己——因為他們知道你不懂。不要在未知的另一部分，因為這陣子你將會體驗到。

偽裝/掩飾是刻意的塑造。而其餘的往往也是誤解。

我們製造出一些差異，也發現出一些差異。當你遇到麻煩時，一定要舉手，或許有些人能發現並為你伸出援手。

"Can you imagine if we put flags on snails? They won't get stepped on anymore."

That was shared with me after I relocated a snail away from the busy pedestrian pathway, upon her request. For days I thought about advice that would be so valuable to myself, and adapted it for the snail - which I now consider a memorable.

Some traps might take you longer to figure out. Don't blame yourself - they know what you don't.

Don't pay too much attention to what's on the other side. You can, also, experience that side later.

Disguises are by design. The rest are, often, misunderstandings.

Some differences we make, some differences we make out.

Always raise a hand you're in trouble - for those who see it, may lend theirs.



# Ryan Benjamin Lee

SINGAPORE 新加坡

Ryan Benjamin Lee (1997, 新加坡) 現居新加坡，從事動態影像的藝術家，他的作品多以影像、裝置、GIF製作、採樣再製的方式創造一系列的動畫影像。藝術作品擅長探索物理和虛擬空間之間的關係，以及如何以後繪路體驗將兩者相互融合。因此，他的作品往往具有龐雜或特定領域的質感。

Ryan Benjamin Lee (b.1997, based in Singapore) is a moving image artist based in Singapore whose practice utilises video art, installation, GIF-making, sampling and (re)animation to create a range of media assemblages.



### 學歷 Education

Experimental Animation BFA at California Institute of the Arts

### 獎助 Awards

2018 NAC Scholarship

## Perfect 完美

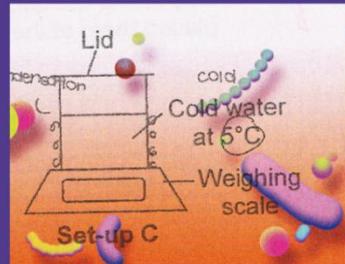
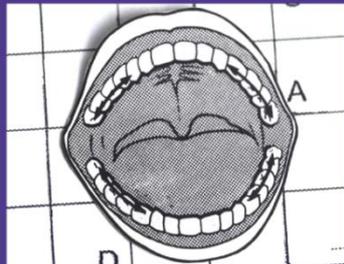
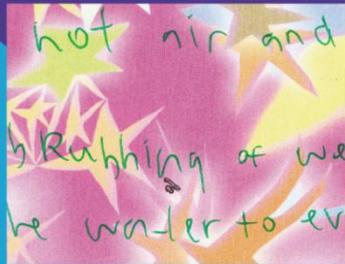
帶有貼紙和噴墨打印的動畫 / Animation with stickers and inkjet print on school test papers / 4'45" / 2021

《完美》(2021) 講述的是一個小女孩如何掌控自己的教育。我的妹妹使用語音備忘錄來記住她的科學考試，並經常將它們當作短劇來背誦。透過表演，科學事實成為她可以征服或掌握的東西。然而，即使是在假裝擔任老師的角色時，她也會忍不住大笑起來；也許是因為表演體現了那種權威和權力的荒謬。

寫著“完美”、“幹得好”或“不錯”的貼紙在課堂上被當作聰明和成功的標誌。然而，在這部影片中，它們被轉化為肯定的話語，我妹妹的自我價值感不是來自制度上的認可，而是來源於她自己的自信。

Perfect (2021) is about a young girl taking charge of her education. My sister uses voice memos as a way of memorising her science test, often reciting them as short plays. Through performance, science facts become something she can conquer or master. However, even when she pretends to play the role of a teacher, she can not help but burst into laughter, maybe at the absurdity of embodying that kind of authority and power.

Stickers that read "Perfect", "Good Job" or "Nice" are used as markers of intellect and success in the classroom. However, in this film, they are transformed into words of affirmation, where my sister's sense of self worth does not come from institutional validation, but from her own self-confidence.



# Wilfred Lim

SINGAPORE 新加坡

林威義 (1988) 畢業於新加坡南洋理工大學藝術設計與媒體學院。出生於暹羅 (Pengerang) 位於馬來亞亞半島南部的漁村，十八歲時前往新加坡就學。林威義的創作擅長透過超現實構圖，隱喻對時事與人生的反思，實現天馬行空的想像。

Wilfred Lim (b.1988) graduated from Nanyang Technological University's School of Art, Design and Media. He lived and grew up in a small fishing village at the seaside in Pengerang, southern Malaysia for 18 years before pursuing his education in Singapore. Drawing reference from classical paintings, his photographic images are often carefully staged to resemble surreal and whimsical tableaux.



### 個展 Solo Exhibitions

2018 "Songs of a Beached Whale" The Arts House at The Old Parliament, Singapore

### 聯展 Group Exhibitions

- 2021 "Painting with Light - Palettes of Singapore", ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands
- 2020 "Margins: drawing pictures of home", ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
- 2017 "Motor Valley, A Tale, An Italian Project" The Arts House at The Old Parliament, Singapore
- 2016 "Scout: Emerging Art Practices" Gillman Barracks, Singapore
- 2015 "To Seem and to Be" Museo de Santo Domingo del Cerro, La Antigua Guatemala
- 2015 "Suwon International Photo Festival" Suwon, Korea
- 2015 "I See You See Me" Parked @ Gallery Threshold, India
- 2015 "Terra Incognita: Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Photography 2014 Winners Showcase"
- 2015 "Young Art Taipei" Sheraton Grande Taipei, Taiwan
- 2015 "Photo Speaks 2015: The 7th International Festival for Photography & Video" Alliance Francaise de Busan

### 獎助 Awards

- 2017 "Nikon Photo Contest 2016-2017" Next Generation Award: Photo Story (2nd Place)
- 2015 "NTU x National Geographic Light & Live Photography Competition" Single Image Category Winner
- 2014 "The Undergraduate Awards" Visual Arts Category - International Winner
- 2014 "ICON de Martell Cordon Bleu 2014" - Nominee
- 2014 "Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography 2014" Winner
- 2013 "Noise Singapore Award 2013" Photography Award Winner

## 一丁點的幸福

### Tiny Bits of Bliss

攝影 / Photography / 175mmx245mm / 2021

每個人心中都有一個小孩，一個被埋藏在脆弱成年人外衣下無憂無慮，對世界充滿好奇的自我。顏色像是一種興奮劑，我享受色彩所帶來的視覺衝擊，從中釋放生活中累積的負面情緒。我被繽紛斑斕的事物深深吸引，或許是為了彌補心靈空虛的直覺性表現，一種不自覺的自我療癒過程。

這是我的對抗負能量的自我保護機制。

We all carry a child in us, a worry-free, inquisitive self buried deep under the sheath of vulnerable adulthood. Colour is a visual stimulant to help ease negative tensions accumulated from daily encounters. My attraction to colourful objects is perhaps a psychological instinct to make up for emotional void, an unconscious attempt of self-healing therapy. This is my anti-unhappiness defence system.



## 湯雅雯 Tang Ya-Wen

TAIWAN 台灣

1993年出生於桃園，現居住與工作於台北，2020年畢業於國立臺北藝術大學美術學系碩士班創作組，作品多為複合媒材、裝置以及影像，藝術家擅長將機器、機械零件、拾得物等，加以揉合、組裝成感性物件之載體。透過機械的運作、虛構的故事串聯起生命經驗中的波動時刻。

Tang Ya-Wen, born in Taoyuan in 1993, currently lives and works in Taipei. She graduated with a Master of Fine Art from the National Taipei University of the Arts in 2020, and works mostly with mixed media, installations and moving images. The artist enjoys experimenting with machines, mechanical parts, found items, etc., to combine and assemble them into objects that carry a kind of sensibility. By weaving the operation of machines with fictitious narratives, she would like to draw links to the fluctuating moments in life experiences.



### 學歷 Exhibitions

2020 國立臺北藝術大學美術學系 創作組 碩士

2016 國立臺北藝術大學美術學系 學士

### 個展 Solo Exhibitions

2019 假如在那艘船上，福利社，台北，台灣

### 聯展 Group Exhibitions

2020 落山風藝術季，屏東，台灣

2018 綠鏡：趨近那些尚未看見的場景，金馬賓館

2018 ART ASIA 2018，KINTEX，高陽，韓國

2018 擲擲欲示，黨光二村，桃園，台灣

2018 不會飛的鴉，關渡美術館，台北，台灣

2018 游擊隊，非常廟藝文空間，台北，台灣

2017 空氣煞車，駁二藝術特區，高雄，台灣

### 獎助 Awards

2018 美術創作卓越獎

2017 世安美學獎，造形藝術類



### 往返的形狀 The Form of Comes and Goes

明信片、沙漏、彈珠、玻璃浮球、珠貝標本、木製印章 / Postcards, Hourglasses, Marbles, Glass floats, Bead specimens, Wooden seal / 裝置尺寸依場地而定 / 2021

在日常生活中，我總沈浸在想像海洋，也許因為家庭經驗的關係，海似乎一直離我不遠，想著海面、想著海的另一端、想著海與我的距離，我透過這些曾經跨越海洋的物件形塑了這盞海，用紙品堆疊出的份量感，還有那些沒入紙的物件，一一行行絮語、叮嚀、或寫著回憶的明信片；一張張風景名勝的定格攝影，穿越潮濕的海洋，慢慢具體化了這片海。

In my daily life, I am always immersed in imagining the ocean. Perhaps because of family experience, the sea seems to be not far away from me. I think about the sea surface, the other end of the sea, and the distance between the sea and me. I shaped the sea through objects that once crossed the ocean and created a sense of weight and volume by stacking these paper products, together with objects that are submerged in the paper. Lines of murmurs, reminders and memories written in these postcards that hold a variety of photographed scenic landscapes, cross the humid ocean and slowly embody this piece of ocean.

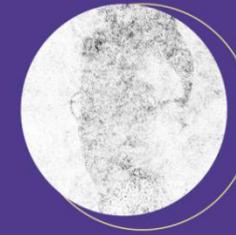
## 葉先傑 Ye Sian-Jie

TAIWAN 台灣

1987年出生，現居及工作於台灣。

當代藝術的美麗深刻處在於，其始終機敏地警醒眾人——關於平庸的危險。我創作之題材往往來自於生命中細小的裂隙，在此處我們尋找一種當場的張力，並以微妙的方式言說著更真實的差異與情感，以藉此邊界關於人類處境最嚴肅的面對。

Ye Sian-Jie (b. 1987) currently lives and works in Taiwan. He thinks that the beauty and profoundness of contemporary art lies in the fact that it always astutely warns everyone about the danger of mediocrity. The themes of his creations often come from small rifts in life, where he looks for a kind of tension during that particular moment, and narrates the differences and emotions in subtle and more realistic ways, so as to critically explore the human situation.



### 學歷 Exhibitions

2018 國立臺南藝術大學 造形藝術研究所

2014 國立臺南藝術大學 材質創作與設計學系

### 個展 Solo Exhibitions

2017 觀看的裂隙-個展 台中

2017 風暴之間-個展 高雄

2012 再也不孤單-個展 台中

### 工作經歷 Work Experience

2018 展覽協理-學學 白色空間

2018-2019 兼任講師-實踐大學媒體傳達設計學系

2021- 藝術總監-Og Graphic

### 獎助 Awards

2017 臺北美術獎-第一階段入選

2015 桃源創作獎-入選

2009 國立臺南藝術大學公共藝術競賽-第二名

### 2021年11月 Nov. 2021

錄像 / video / 10'00" / 2021

自我 (Subject) 總是寄宿在其對象 (Object) 裡，在此世界中所有對象的交匯，都深刻地同步在自我之形象中，將人困著於世界中。2021年11月，每日，我將自己帶到下雨的地方放置。這場放置被安設在觀者的面前，作者的形象、不正確的時空、空洞的日記，潛伏著消解與積極的張力，這些充滿了刻意安排的痕跡，靜候著真實想像力的釋放。

The subject(自我) always clings to the object(對象). The intersection of all objects in the world are synchronized ironically with themselves(subject) and humans are ossified in the world. In November 2021, on each day, I take myself to a place where it rains. This placement is reenacted in front of the viewer. The creator's image, incorrect time and space, and empty diary are latent with negative and positive tension, which are full of traces of deliberate arrangement, waiting for the release of heterogeneous imagination.



*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition Singapore version exhibition brochure

2022/06/04 ▶ 2022/06/26

**An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects**

- Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition

Curators  
Nien-Ting Chen(Taiwan) X Jaxton Su (Singapore)

Opening Reception  
2022/06/04 15:00  
Artist Talk  
Across Mountains and Seas  
2022/06/05 15:00-16:30

Artists  
DAS SAD  
Desiree Tham  
Kevin Fee  
Meng-Hsin Shih  
Ryan Benjamin Lee  
Shao-Ying Huang  
Sian-Jie Ye  
Wilfred Lim  
Ya-wen Tang  
Yu-Cheng Hsieh

Executive Team  
TING FUN ART  
Hsin-Fang Lee  
Jui-Hua Wang

Venue :  
Starch, 81 Tagore Lane, Tag A building, #02-11, Singapore 787502  
1-8pm daily, closed on Mondays

Organizer:  
VARTSALOM  
中 南 藝 文 空 間

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## An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects

—Taiwan & Singapore

International artists Exchange Exhibition

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### Description

#### An uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects

—Taiwan & Singapore

International artists Exchange Exhibition

#### Curators

Nien-Ting Chen(Taiwan) X Jaxton Su (Singapore)

Objects are multidimensional entities that may evoke a variety of narratives including historical associations, personal or collective memories, emotional reactions, and metaphorical expositions. Aligned with our experience and knowledge, objects are not just bounded by their utility purposes and physical forms, as our innate curiosity has also driven us to observe, examine, admire, collect, create and discuss about them in ways beyond their functionality and appearance. The significance of objects is also externalised in their correlations with culture due to their shared meanings and symbolic compositions that persist through the test of time. Essential to the transmission of culture, objects have been exchanged and traded between disparate societies since antiquity. On one spectrum, there are objects that are highly regarded and treasured due to their cultural value, and on the other, there are objects that have been deeply entrenched within our everyday lives that we often take for granted.

With current circumstances such as the global pandemic and international conflicts inevitably affecting our norms and warping the realities we have grown accustomed to, the way we perceive certain objects might have shifted as new narratives and interpretations continue to formulate. Commodification of different forms brought about by capitalism and the blurring of boundaries between the real and the virtual as advocated by rapid digitisation, have also affected what we consider as an object. As we live in a technological world where flow of information, cultures, possessions, services and people could occur freely and widely across real and virtual boundaries, how objects are discerned around us seems to be in constant flux. In light of the ubiquity of objects as multi-faceted constituents of culture, independent curators Nien-Ting Chen (Taiwan) and Jaxton Su (Singapore) have initiated an exchange project between Taiwanese artists and Singaporean artists that bring an assortment of random objects to the fore, in an attempt to discuss the imperative of current issues with the peculiarity of specific commodities.

As lands surrounded by the ocean and inhabited with multiple ethnic groups, Singapore and Taiwan share many commonalities that weave through our culture, geography, history and lifestyle. Similar historical narratives inform our past as we once welcomed an influx of migration, fell under colonisation or authority of different countries, as well as experienced rapid industrialisation and economic growth. Although we each have our unique identities as disparate territories, the use of Mandarin Chinese as the national language in Taiwan and as a mother tongue for the ethnic Chinese majority in Singapore, has conceivably helped bridge our cultural differences and encouraged the building of collective memories. In celebration of our cultural affinities, The uncanny assortment of miscellaneous objects aims to utilise cross-cultural observation and examination of perspectives to construct a flourishing and experimental contemporary art platform. Culminating as two distinct exhibitions in Singapore and Taiwan, ten groups of young artists were invited to create new works based on chosen objects from their everyday life.

In our contemporary era of uncertainties, how have different situations affected our way of perceiving and defining objects? What novel perspectives and solutions might objects offer us during turbulent times? How do our younger generation from different cultures perceive certain objects in relation to current societal conditions? What are some of the issues of concern in Singapore and Taiwan amongst young people today? A calendar and map; beverages and door threshold; dancing pole and telegraph poles; dice and jade stones; fluorescent pigment and plastics; pixels and photographs; post-cards and letters; snails and flags; soaps and sponges; stickers and test papers — what narratives can we uncover from these diverse and extraneous entities? Examining the aforementioned enquiries, the concluding exhibition of the Singapore-Taiwan exchange project is presented as a curious mishmash of seemingly unrelated objects, with each work chronicling an artist's observation and commentary of current societal situations and altered realities that have suffused our world at present.

## Curators

02



TAIWAN

**Nien-Ting Chen**

<https://www.nientingchen.com/>



Nien-Ting Chen (1990, Taipei) is an independent curator and visual artist who graduated from Glasgow School of Art, UK, with an MFA, and is currently a PhD candidate at Liverpool School of Art and Design at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), UK. Her artistic practice and exhibitions are primarily based in cities across Asia and Europe, and her projects focus on sharing artistic resources with young artists worldwide, as well as implementing various curatorial projects to build networks. Currently her curatorial experience has reached out to various countries to practise the impact of contemporary art in society through transnational contemporary art exchange. Her representative projects include: 2021 *Down the Melting Pot at the George Town Festival* (Malaysia), 2021 *Tai Thai Boba Milktea Wave Wave* at Digital Art Center, Taipei (Taiwan), 2021 *Cyber Labyrinth* at Liverpool LightNight (UK), 2018-19 *The Unsettled Dust* at Asia Short Film Festival, co-curated with Singaporean curator Jaxton Su (Thailand), among others.



SINGAPORE

**Jaxton Su**

<http://www.jaxtonsu.net/>



Jaxton Su (b. 1988, Singapore) is an independent artist and curator. He is also an adjunct lecturer at Nanyang Technological University. Holding a Master of Fine Art from The Glasgow School of Art, UK, Jaxton seeks to coalesce the diverse interrelated experience from his artistic, pedagogical, community-based and curatorial practices, and apply them within meaningful projects that will encourage reflection and discourse. As a curator, he is interested in challenging traditional formats of presenting art and encouraging appreciation towards experimental contemporary art. He was awarded the StudyUK Alumni Award in Culture and Creativity in 2022 and selected as an international curator at Alt Space Loop, Seoul in 2020. Some of his notable endeavours that he has presented internationally include 'The Unsettled Dust' – a touring Asian Short Film Festival, 'Dare you do this? FFFF it!' – a Taiwan Gangshan Dist Contemporary Art Warehouse International Exchange Program and 'Power Play' – a contemporary art festival in Singapore.



## DAS SAD

SINGAPORE

Based in Singapore, DAS SAD Studio is a multidisciplinary arts trio comprising of Woong Soak Teng, Ng Ai Qing Adar and Lim Wei Jing Dave. Primarily image-makers, we aim to utilise the process of art making as the vehicle for inculcating praxis.



## flâneur

digital video / 5'40" / 2021

*flâneur* is a performative video artwork that considers the past, present and future states of our environment in an increasingly digitised era. Utilising machine-learning technology and through the manipulation of pixels, archival photographs of Singapore are visually eroded by a recurring process of upscaling and downscaling, synonymous with the constant re-framing and re-construction of the city. The archival photographs in this work, referencing modern photographers such as Lim Kwong Ling, obscure time and space to create a digital playground for the flâneur, who weaves in and out of frame. She is sometimes an observer of society and other times, a performer for the media-infused world. Walking and drifting, she ponders about her place in the rapidly changing city by adopting ideas of *dérive*, an unplanned journey subconsciously directed by the landscape.

03

### Exhibitions

2021 September 2021 About Routes, Not Roots- Art Agenda SEA, Singapore



## Desiree Tham

SINGAPORE

"I've always been fascinated of how objects can perform beyond its form and mediate relations in the way we perceive and think about the society. Focusing on deconstructing and altering their functions into everyday situations, I aim to explore the tension that underlies every object and the infinite world inside them. I use objects and bring them into action, a space where possibility and everydayness converge to activate a transcendent new way of looking at simple objects and everyday routine."



### Education

2016- Present BA(HON) FINE ARTS LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS  
2014-2015 DIPLOMA IN ART EDUCATION NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
2010-2013 DIPLOMA IN ART TEACHING NANYANG ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

### Exhibitions

2021 FIGMENT, Group, Shophouse  
2021 aedge, Group, SOTA  
2021 Artist-in-School programme, Host-Fairfield Methodist School Secondary  
2020 aedge, Group, SOTA  
2019 ASIA ART IN THE MIRROR, Supernormal  
2019 CHAN DAVIS ART PRIZE, solo, Chan + Hori Contemporary  
2019 THE ONLY PARADISE IS PARADISE LOST, Stamford Art Centre  
2019 ARTX HIGH FOR GOOD 2.0 (MESHMINDS), Art Science Museum / Roger&Sons  
2018 LIGHTS MARINA BAY, Marina Bay Sands  
2018 LOADING PLEASES WAIT..., Alliance Francaise



## "How to chase a Mountain?"

04

Wood structure, Dice, Grass Patches, Jade stones, Led light, Vinyl stickers, Handles and Wheels  
/ 160 x 120 x 25cm x 2 / 2021

"How to chase a mountain" is an exploration of Feng Shui practices to search for a good space or location that corroborates as protection to build homes and living in the mountains. Inspired by this search for an auspicious mountain, the sculptural installation builds on the historical myths behind the "Mountain Dragons", where the shapes and forms of mountains govern one's wealth and status in life. Surveying the geographical and urban spaces we live in, particularly in the context of Singapore where mountains are non-existent, the installation seeks to question the role of functionality and rationality by allowing the audience to have the authority to re-imagine the maximum and probable capacities to seek protection and to ponder what one would pursue in return for prosperity and luck.

What is the Chinese dream?

And how far will we go to protect ourselves?



## Kevin Fee

SINGAPORE

A Singaporean visual artist (b.1990) who works mainly with photography and moving images, often exploring multi-disciplinary approaches and bringing intimacy to the inanimate. This is also translated into my commercial practices as a photographer and videographer in the product and fashion fields.



### Solo Exhibitions

2018 "Songs of a Beached Whale" The Arts House at The Old Parliament, Singapore

### Exhibitions

2020 Maybe we read too much into things  
2020 OH! Open House - HOME: WFH WTH WTF  
2018 Nomad: Outside In, The Arts House  
2018 The Life of Things, Esplanade, Theatres on the Bay  
2017 北京國際攝影周展覽  
2017 NOMAD Residency: 7th Dali International Photography Festival 2017  
2017 Incidents in the Sensible World (Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Photography 2016 Winners Showcase)  
2017 Good OH! Holland Village Art Walk by OH! Open House  
2016 Each and Every Exhibition at DECK  
2016 School of Art, Design & Media Graduation Showcase 2016  
2016 Steidl Book Award Nominee Showcase by THEBOOKSHOW  
2015 WORKBOOK Showcase by THEBOOKSHOW  
2015 Pingyao International Photography Festival 2015  
2015 Noise Singapore 2015 Festival Exhibition

### Awards

2016 Kwek Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography

## Giving the snail some advice

Honest advice, Photography, Video  
/ Variable / 2021-2022

"Can you imagine if we put flags on snails? They won't get stepped on anymore."

That was shared with me after I relocated a snail away from the busy pedestrian pathway, upon her request. For days I thought about advice that would be so valuable to myself, and adapted it for the snail - which I now consider a memorabilia.

Some traps might take you longer to figure out. Don't blame yourself - they know what you don't.

Don't pay too much attention to what's on the other side. You can, also, experience that side later.

Disguises are by design. The rest are, often, misunderstandings.

Some differences we make, some differences we make out.

Always raise a hand you're in trouble - for those who see it, may lend theirs.



## Meng-Hsin Shih

TAIWAN

Shih Meng-Hsin (born 1995, Taichung ) currently lives and works in Tainan, Taiwan. He works with sculpture, found objects and space-related installations as his art form. His recent creations explore the functionality of ready-made objects from daily life, assembling and transforming them in response to unutilised spaces around us, forming a dialogue between objects and space.



### Education

2018-2022 (M.F.A.) Graduate Institute of Plastic Art, Tainan National University of the Arts, Tainan

2014-2018 (B.F.A.) in sculpture, National Taiwan University of Arts, Taipei

### Solo Exhibitions

2020 《19:00》 Michael Ku Gallery · Taipei

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2021 《Broken Landscapes: Have Our Cities Failed?》 JUT Art Museum ,Taipei

2020 《Fugang railway art festival》 Fugang Railway Station, Taoyuan

2020 《Have a relationship》 WALEY ART · Taipei

2020 《Z-MEI not at home》 Limei's home, Tainan

2020 《Kaohsiung Award》 Kaohsiung Museum of Art, Kaohsiung

2019 《Free Art Fire》 Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, Taipei

2019 《Taiwan Emerging Art Awards》 Taichung City Seaport Art Center ,Taichung



## Dancing Pole

video / 1'08" / 2021

"Dancing pole" places an inflatable air dancer commonly seen at major events on a country road amongst a whole row of telegraph poles. The inflatable air dancer (dancing pole) has no utility function, unlike telegraph poles that steadfastly support wires and transmit electricity. In contrast with a row of straight and static telegraph poles, its comical facade is even more emphasised, making it the centre of attraction. This echoes the peculiar position of artists in society, who may not provide realistic contributions, but compared with ordinary people, their unorthodox presence provides a different way of viewing the world.



06

## Ryan Benjamin Lee

SINGAPORE

Ryan Benjamin Lee (b.1997, based in Singapore) is a moving image artist based in Singapore whose practice utilises video art, installation, GIF-making, sampling and (re)animation to create a range of media assemblages.



### Education

Experimental Animation BFA at California Institute of the Arts

### Awards

2018 NAC Scholarship

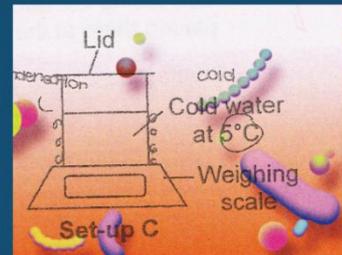
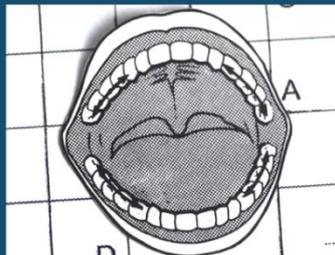
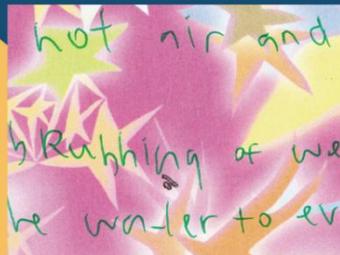
## Perfect

Animation with stickers and inkjet print on school test papers / 4'45" / 2021

*Perfect* (2021) is about a young girl taking charge of her education. My sister uses voice memos as a way of memorising her science test, often reciting them as short plays. Through performance, science facts become something she can conquer or master. However, even when she pretends to play the role of a teacher, she cannot help but burst into laughter; maybe at the absurdity of embodying that kind of authority and power.

Stickers that read "Perfect", "Good Job" or "Nice" are used as markers of intellect and success in the classroom. However, in this film, they are transformed into words of affirmation, where my sister's sense of self worth does not come from institutional validation, but from her own self-confidence.

07



## Shao-Ying Huang

TAIWAN

Huang Shao-Ying (b.1989) currently lives and works in Tainan. She works with objects, sculptures, three-dimensional and spatial installations, as well as mixed media. Most of her creations are inspired by her accumulation of personal daily sensibilities and experiences. She imagines society's state of life and existence is generated through other beings or objects that form various metaphors within her, thereby forming a kind of physical possibility.



### Cognitive Component of Happiness

Fabric, wood, Acrylic, mixed media / variable dimensions / 2021



### Education

2016 (MFA) Taipei National University of the Arts Department of Fine Arts  
2012 (BFA) Changhua National University of Education

### Solo Exhibitions

2019 《Something Random in Between》 1/2 room, Changhua, Taiwan  
2018 《daily object scene my poetry》, Tu Mli, Taipei, Taiwan  
2017 《That is how the world works You are you I am me》, blackblank215, Kaohsiung, Taiwan  
2016 《It like a waves in my heart》, DOU MAISON, Tainan, Taiwan

### Group Exhibitions

2021 《SET BAD》, Zit-Dim Art Space, Tainan, Taiwan  
2021 《Sound Talks: Local Soundscape Collecting Project》, Honggah Museum, Taipei, Taiwan  
2020 《Uninterrupted Views and Shimmers》, Kuan art space, Taichung, Taiwan  
2020 《Taipei City sun slit public art project》, AVAT, Taipei, Taiwan  
2020 《Immediacy of Image》, Idealoka Gallery, Indonesia  
2020 《Tsau Thuann Art Festival》, 1/2 room, Changhua, Taiwan  
2019 《How to be soft and flexible》, TRENDS, Taipei, Taiwan  
2019 《Dare you do this? FFFF it!》, Sun-wood Warehouse, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan  
2019 《10 x 10 Art x Madou Sugar Industry Terminal, Chiayi City, Taiwan

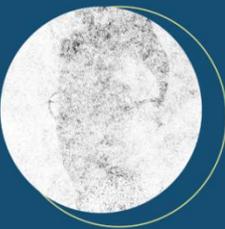
In response to current situations, the artist attempts to transform some of the scenes captured from her daily experience into objects in order to bring out the elements and possibilities of understanding happiness in life within the context of both Singapore and Taiwan. Starting with a greeting sentence, which we converse with on a regular basis, she questions the purpose behind this greeting and its significance in current times. This is extended by a series of soft sculptures, which explores the notion of beverage and its relation to culture and emotion, as she experimented with the mixing of colours to get from a semblance of Taiwanese Milk Tea to Bandung (a popular drink from Singapore), which bears a striking colour seemingly filled with happiness. The third object in her series comes in the form of an awkwardly tall door threshold, an item that always catches her attention when she looks for a rental apartment. Arising from the concept of Feng Shui, a door threshold holds the symbol of protection, gathering and status. Putting these auspicious beliefs aside, the door threshold merely serves as a divider between the exterior and the interior. The artist is interested in its metaphorical symbolism as a divide between different classes, especially in the context of today's sky-high property prices.

08

## Sian-Jie Ye

TAIWAN

Ye Sian-Jie (b. 1987) currently lives and works in Taiwan. He thinks that the beauty and profoundness of contemporary art lies in the fact that it always astutely warns everyone about the danger of mediocrity. The themes of his creations often come from small rifts in life, where he looks for a kind of tension during that particular moment, and narrates the differences and emotions in subtle and more realistic ways, so as to critically explore the human situation.



### Education

2018 M.F.A., Graduate Institute of Plastic Arts in Tainan National University of Arts  
2014 M.F.A., Department of Material Arts and Design in Tainan National University of Arts

### Solo Exhibitions

2017 Crack of Sights - Z space, Taichung, Taiwan  
2017 Storm Room - Black and white, Kaohsiung, Taiwan  
2012 Not Alone - Black and white, Taichung, Taiwan

### Work Experience

2018 Exhibition Director - Xue Xue White Gallery  
2018-2019 Adjunct Lecturer - Shih Chien University Department of Communications Design  
2021 Art Director - Og Graphic

### Awards

2017 Taipei Art Awards - First Stage selection  
2015 Taoyuan Contemporary Art Award - Selected  
2009 Public Art Creation Competition of TNNUA - Special Prize

### Nov. 2021

video / 10'00" / 2021

In November 2021, the artist placed himself at a rainy location on a daily basis and this placement is reenacted in front of the viewer as a video. Alongside it is a corresponding calendar-map that traces his deliberate movements through time. Challenging our common perception of object as something to be controlled and manipulated by the subject, the artist sees the relation between subject and object under a different light — as a process of immersing into one another, thereby blurring the boundaries between subject and object. With the artist's image placed within an incorrect time and space in the exhibition, the artist hopes to present a tension that straddles between positive and negative, to be embodied by the imagination of the viewer.



09

## Wilfred Lim

SINGAPORE

Wilfred Lim (b.1988) graduated from Nanyang Technological University's School of Art, Design and Media. He lived and grew up in a small fishing village at the seaside in Pengerang, southern Malaysia for 18 years before pursuing his education in Singapore. Drawing reference from classical paintings, his photographic images are often carefully staged to resemble surreal and whimsical tableaux.



### Tiny Bits of Bliss

Photography / 175mmx245mm / 2021

We all carry a child in us, a worry-free, inquisitive self buried deep under the sheath of vulnerable adulthood. Colour is a visual stimulant to help ease negative tensions accumulated from daily encounters. My attraction to colourful objects is perhaps a psychological instinct to make up for emotional void, an unconscious attempt of self-healing therapy.

This is my anti-unhappiness defence system.



### Solo Exhibitions

2018 "Songs of a Beached Whale" The Arts House at The Old Parliament, Singapore

### Group Exhibitions

- 2021 "Painting with Light - Palettes of Singapore", ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands
- 2020 "Margins: drawing pictures of home", ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
- 2017 "Motor Valley, A Tale, An Italian Project" The Arts House at The Old Parliament, Singapore
- 2016 "Scout: Emerging Art Practices" Gillman Barracks, Singapore
- 2015 "To Seem and to Be" Museo de Santo Domingo del Cerro, La Antigua Guatemala
- 2015 "Suwon International Photo Festival" Suwon, Korea
- 2015 "I See You See Me" Parked @ Gallery Threshold, India
- 2015 "Terra Incognita: Kwok Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Photography 2014 Winners Showcase"
- 2015 "Young Art Taipei" Sheraton Grande Taipei, Taiwan
- 2015 "Photo Speaks 2015: The 7th International Festival for Photography & Video" Alliance Francaise de Busan

### Awards

- 2017 "Nikon Photo Contest 2016-2017" Next Generation Award: Photo Story (2nd Place)
- 2015 "NTU x National Geographic Light & Live Photography Competition" Single Image Category Winner
- 2014 "The Undergraduate Awards" Visual Arts Category - International Winner
- 2014 "ICON de Martell Cordon Bleu 2014" - Nominee
- 2014 "Kwok Leng Joo Prize of Excellence in Still Photography 2014" Winner
- 2013 "Noise Singapore Award 2013" Photography Award Winner



## Ya-Wen Tang

TAIWAN

Tang Ya-Wen, born in Taoyuan in 1993, currently lives and works in Taipei. She graduated with a Master of Fine Art from the National Taipei University of the Arts in 2020, and works mostly with mixed media, installations and moving images. The artist enjoys experimenting with machines, mechanical parts, found items, etc., to combine and assemble them into objects that carry a kind of sensibility. By weaving the operation of machines with fictitious narratives, she would like to draw links to the fluctuating moments in life experiences.



### Education

- 2020 M.F.A., Department of Fine Arts, TNUA, Taiwan
- 2016 B.F.A., Department of Fine Arts, TNUA, Taiwan

### Solo Exhibitions

2019 If...on that Ship, FreeS Art Space, Taipei, Taiwan

### Group Exhibitions

- 2022 Over the Rainbow, YIRI ARTS, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2020 Pingtung Luo Shan Feng Arts Festival, Pingtung, Taiwan
- 2018 Prism: Approach Unseen Scenarios, ALIEN ART, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
- 2018 ART ASIA 2018, KINTEX, Goyang, Korea
- 2018 Removal Notice, Hsian-Guang Second Village, Taoyuan, Taiwan
- 2018 Pigs Don't Fly, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2018 Guerrillas, VT ARTSALON, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2017 Aerobraking, The Pier-2 Art Centre, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

### Awards

- 2018 Outstanding Art Prize of Fine Arts
- 2017 S-An Art Award, Plastic Arts, Selected



### The Form of Comes and Goes

Mixed media / variable dimensions / 2021

The work draws inspiration from the artist's imagination of travelling across the ocean towards Singapore in a time when she is unable to. Due to her father's previous occupation as a sailor, the artist is able to gather impressions of Singapore through his narration, which mostly describes the seascape environment. She envisions the sea surface, the other end of the sea, and the distance between the sea and her. Utilising objects that once crossed the ocean, she formed the shape of the sea, creating a sense of weight and volume by stacking written postcards together with token objects that are submerged within. Lines of murmurs, reminders and memories written in the postcards that hold a variety of photographed scenic landscapes come together and slowly embody this piece of humid ocean.

## Yu-Cheng Hsieh

TAIWAN

Born in Yilan, Taiwan, in 1992, Hsieh Yu-Cheng lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan. His works puts emphasis on the dialectical relationship in image and space laid out by light, revealing the logical sequences in machine's image and viewer's perspective. Substantial vs. virtual, digital vs. analogue, misplacement vs. counterpoint, and presence vs. absence are works series Hsieh develops with light as the existential dialectic, comprising on-site production, image, materials, and other forms and mediums. His recent works are pieces using fluorescent paints to simulate colors and technological objects to experiment on the most fundamental criteria for the notion of image, with which the artist endeavors to retrace the onset of visual as well as the possibility of shattering the reality.

### Education

MFA, Department of New Media Art, TNUA, Taiwan

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2021 Natural sequence, YIRI ARTS, Taipei
- 2020 SIGN, Soka Art Tainan, Tainan
- 2019 HIGH VOLTAGE, Soulangh Cultural Park, Tainan
- 2018 Shadow Side, FreeS ART, Taipei

### Group Exhibitions

- 2022 Multiple Copies—Readable Multiplex Landscape, Tainan Arts Museum, Tainan
- 2021 2021 Taipei Art Awards, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei
- 2021 The Light We Seek, Gallery x Chiao, Taipei
- 2021 HualienQA—Hualien Performing Public Space Festival, Hualien

### Grants and Honors

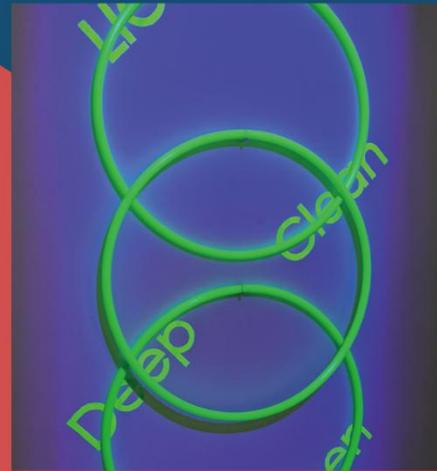
- 2021 2021 Taipei Art Awards, Selected
- 2021 National Culture and Arts Foundation—Visual art projects
- 2021 Visual art exhibition subsidy—Department of Cultural Affairs Taipei City Government
- 2019 The 6th Tianmei Art Foundation Taiwan Contemporary Artists Overseas Visit Program



## Mark

Fluorescent powder, Fluorescent pigment, Ready-made objects, Fluorescent lamps  
/ variable dimensions / 2021

The work focuses on the invisible existence and connection in daily life. Through the interplay of fluorescent medium and ultraviolet light, the artist explores the dialectic relationship in image and space laid out by light, questioning the viewer's perspective and bringing out the dualities of substantial vs. virtual and presence vs. absence. Using plastic — a common product in East Asia's daily culture that is mass produced and comes in attractively low prices throughout the market, the artist reproduced them with fluorescent paints to simulate colours, echoing their subtle position and identity with another kind of existence.



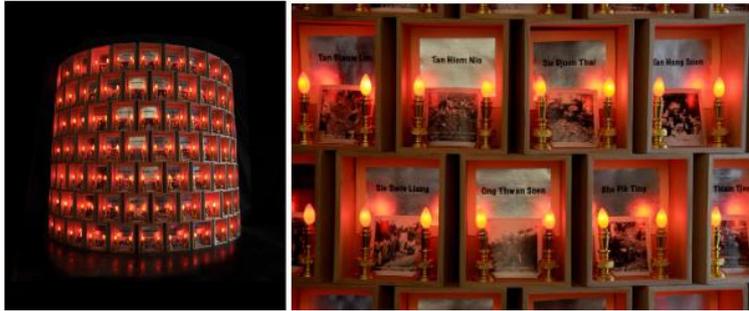
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- Figure 1. FX Harsono, *Bone Cemetery Monument*, 2022, <https://indoartnow.com/artists/fx-harsono>.
- Figure 2. *Guangming Lamp* (光明燈), Three Gorges, New Taipei City, Guangxing Palace, Guan Shengdijun Temple, 2022, <https://www.0226730131.com.tw/services.html>.
- Figure 3. HoyCheong Wong, Simon Davenport and Shahed Saleem, *NŪR*, 2021, accessed 6 July, 2022, <https://www.dezeen.com/2021/07/22/assemble-creates-skatable-sculptures-for-folkestone-triennial/>.
- Figure 4. Dr. Choong Kam Kow, *Image & Identity IV*, 1996, Acrylic with mixed technique on canvas, 107 x 137 cm, accessed 8 July, 2022, <https://choongkamkow.com/the-festival-series.html>.
- Figure 5. Jolly Koh, *The Distant Mountains, III*, 2006, Oil & Acrylic on Canvas, 61cm x 428cm, accessed 8 July, 2022, <https://www.jollykoh.com/works-from-2000>.
- Figure 6. Botong Francisco, *Filipino Struggles Through History*, 1964, National Museum of the Philippines, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/nationalmuseumofthephilippines/photos/a.195151237175869/1832951260062517>.
- Figure 7. Botong Francisco, *Don Enrique and Dona Maria*, 1953 Yuchengco Museum, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=521524223323974 &set=a.484155090394221>.
- Figure 8. Torlarp Larpjaroensook, *Spiritual Spaceship*, 2017, ADM Gallery, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://www.torlarphern.com/spiritual-spaceship>.
- Figure 9. Torlarp Larpjaroensook, *Spiritual Spaceship*, 2018, Bangkok Art Biennale, BACC Thailand, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://www.torlarphern.com/copy-of-spiritual-spaceship>.
- Figure 10. Vuth Lyoand, *House – Spirit*, 2018, Installation view (left) and detail (right), accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://art4brunch.com/2019/04/17/while-on-the-subject-of-place-development-loss-and-preservation/>.
- Figure 11. Vuth Lyoand, *House – Spirit*, 2018, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://vuthlyno.art/artworks/house-spirit>.
- Figure 12. Khvay Samnang, *Popil*, 2018, accessed 29 Aug, 2022, <https://www.khvaysamnang.com/>.
- Figure 13. Bounpaul Phothyzan, *Red Houses*, 2015, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/bounpaul-phothyzan-elevating-laos/>.
- Figure 14. Bounpaul Phothyzan, *Red Carpet*, 2015, accessed 28 Aug, 2022, <https://www.cobosocial.com/dossiers/bounpaul-phothyzan-elevating-laos/>.

- Figure 15. Ho Tzu Nyen, *The Critical Dictionary of South-East Asia* [online video], 2017, Cdosea.org, accessed 28 December, 2021, <https://cdosea.org/#video/q>.
- Figure 16. Matthew Teo, *Ho Tzu Nyen*, 2021. accessed 28 December, 2021, <https://artreview.com/artist/ho-tzu-nyen/?year=2019>.
- Figure 17. Svay Sareth, *The Vessantara Jataka*, 2015, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://prabook.com/web/svay.sareth/3756397#works>.
- Figure 18. Svay Sareth, *Toy (Churning of the Sea of Milk)*, 2013, National Museum of Singapore, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/National.Museum.of.Singapore/photos/svay-sareths-toy-churning-of-the-sea-of-milk-uses-camouflage-patterned-stuffed-t/595867833807266/>.
- Figure 19. Rui An. Ho, *Student Bodies*, 2019, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://horuian.com/student-bodies/>.
- Figure 20. Rui An. Ho, *Lecture*, 2019, accessed 2 Jan, 2022, <https://horuian.com/tropicopolitan-objects/>.
- Figure 21. FX Harsono, *FX Harsono*, 2013, accessed Feb 16, 2022, <https://indoartnow.com/artists/fx-harsono>.
- Figure 22. FX Harsono, *Voice without Voice*, 1993-1994, accessed 7 July, 2022, <https://www.designboom.com/art/fx-harsono-testimonies-part-01/>.
- Figure 23. Mei Dingyan, *Give Me Hugs*, 2000, Ministry of Culture, accessed 20 Dec, 2022, [https://toolkit.culture.tw/artinfo\\_184\\_285.html](https://toolkit.culture.tw/artinfo_184_285.html).
- Figure 24. Mei Dingyan, *The World Is For All - China Beyond Chin*, 2001, 100×150cm 10 sheets, Mei Dingyan, accessed 20 Dec, 2022, [https://www.yaojuichung.com/index.php?page=collections\\_artwork&language=EN&id=qQ9aFYpGVtyvfsTCAV1pMUR5VRuAvR0C](https://www.yaojuichung.com/index.php?page=collections_artwork&language=EN&id=qQ9aFYpGVtyvfsTCAV1pMUR5VRuAvR0C).
- Figure 25. Estimated population of Southeast Asia, total and Chinese, 1991. Courtesy of *Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*, accessed 30 August, 2021.
- Figure 26. Want Want China, *Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers*, accessed 12 May 2023, <https://www.want-want.com/tw/about/>.
- Figure 27. Desiree Tham, *How to Chase a Mountain?*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.
- Figure 28. Tang Ya-Wen, *The Form of Comes and Goes*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.
- Figure 29. Huang Shao-Ying, *Cognitive Component of Happiness*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.

- Figure 30. Ryan Benjamin Lee, *Perfect*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.
- Figure 31. Wilfred Lim, *Tiny Bits of Bliss*, 2021, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.
- Figure 32. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists' Exchange Exhibition in VT Artsalon, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.
- Figure 33. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists Exchange Exhibition in Starch, accessed 27 Jan, 2023.
- Figure 34. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition, Taiwan Artist Talk:Everyday Extraordinary Whimsy, accessed 11 May 2023.
- Figure 35. *An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition, Singapore Artist Talk:Across Mountains and Seas, accessed 11 May 2023.

## Illustration Plates



**Figure 1.**  
FX Harsono  
*Bone Cemetery Monument*  
2022



**Figure 2.**  
*Guangming Lamp (光明燈)*,  
Three Gorges  
New Taipei City, Guangxing Palace, Guan  
Shengdijun Temple,  
2022



**Figure 3.**  
HoyCheong Wong, Simon Davenport  
and Shahed Saleem  
*NÜR*  
2021



**Figure 4.**  
Dr. Choong Kam Kow  
*Image & Identity IV*  
1996  
Acrylic with mixed technique on canvas  
107 x 137 cm



**Figure 5.**  
Jolly Koh  
*The Distant Mountains, III*  
2006  
Oil & Acrylic on Canvas  
61cm x 428cm



**Figure 6.**  
Botong Francisco  
*Filipino Struggles Through History*  
1964  
National Museum of the Philippines



**Figure 7.**  
Botong Francisco  
*Don Enrique and Dona Maria*  
1953  
Yuchengco Museum



**Figure 8.**  
Torlarp Larpjaroensook  
*Spiritual Spaceship*  
2017  
ADM Gallery



**Figure 9.**  
 Torlarp Larpjaroensook  
*Spiritual Spaceship*  
 2018  
 Bangkok Art Biennale, BACC Thailand



**Figure 10.**  
 Vuth Linoand  
*House - Spirit*  
 2018  
 Installation view (left) and detail (right)



**Figure 11.**  
 Vuth Linoand  
*House - Spirit*  
 2018



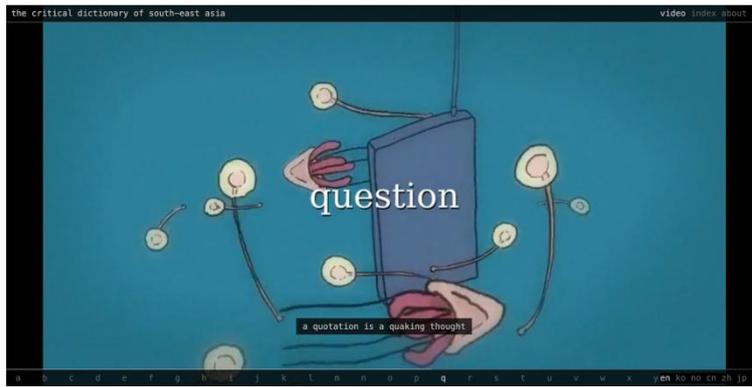
**Figure 12.**  
Khvay Samnang  
*Popil*  
2018



**Figure 13.**  
Bounpaul Phothyzan,  
*Red Houses*  
2015



**Figure 14.**  
Bounpaul Phothyzan  
*Red Carpet*  
2015



**Figure 15.**  
 Ho Tzu Nyen,  
*The Critical Dictionary of South-East Asia*  
 2017



**Figure 16.**  
 Matthew Teo  
*Ho Tzu Nyen*  
 2021



**Figure 17.**  
 Svay Sareth  
*The Vessantara Jataka*  
 2015



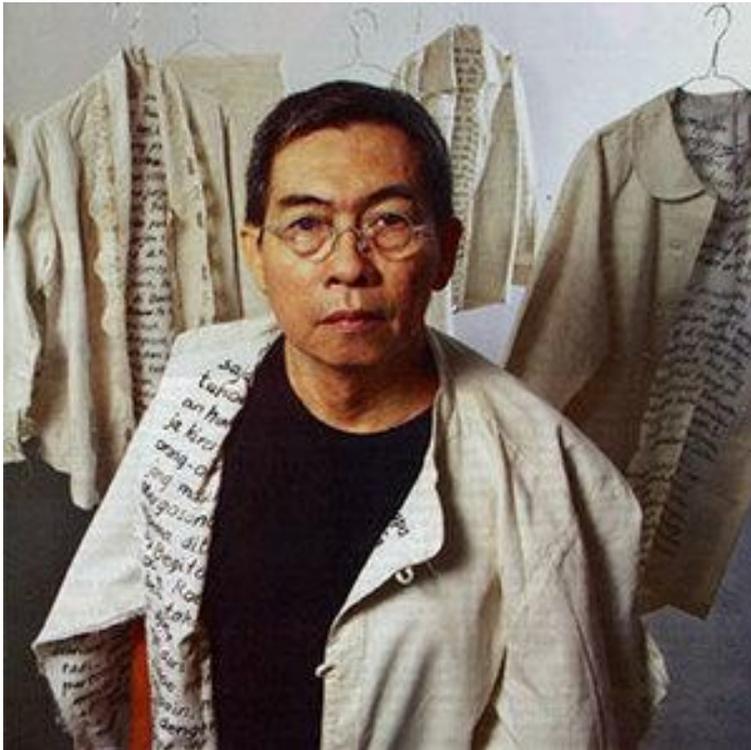
**Figure 18.**  
Svay Sareth  
*Toy (Churning of the Sea of Milk)*  
2013  
National Museum of Singapore



**Figure 19.**  
Rui An. Ho  
*Student Bodies*  
2019



**Figure 20.**  
Rui An. Ho  
*Lecture*  
2019



**Figure 21.**  
FX Harsono  
*FX Harsono*  
2013



**Figure 22.**  
FX Harsono  
*Voice without Voice*  
1993-1994



**Figure 23.**  
Mei Dingyan  
*Give Me Hugs*  
2000



**Figure 24.**  
Mei Dingyan  
*The World Is For All - China Beyond China*  
2001  
100×150cm 10 sheets

*M. Jocelyn Armstrong and R. Warwick Armstrong*

**Table 1** Estimated population of Southeast Asia, total and Chinese, 1999

Country/region	Total population* (thousands)	Chinese population (thousands)	Percent of Chinese in Southeast Asia	Percent of country population Chinese <sup>†</sup>
Brunei	321	51	0.2	16.0
Cambodia	10946	109	0.5	1.0
Indonesia	209255	6278	27.4	3.0
Laos	5297	212	0.9	0.4
Malaysia	22180	5515	24.1	24.8
Myanmar	45059	631	2.8	1.4
Philippines	74454	968	4.2	1.3
Singapore	3522	2719	11.9	77.2
Thailand	60856	5234	22.8	8.6
Vietnam	78705	1181	5.2	1.5
Southeast Asia	510595	22898	100.0	4.5

\*All countries except Malaysia from: United Nations (1999). Malaysia from: Malaysia (1998).

<sup>†</sup>Compiled by Leo Suryadinata, National University of Singapore. These percentages were multiplied by the total population estimates to obtain the Chinese population estimates.

**Figure 25.**  
Estimated population of Southeast Asia, total and Chinese  
1991  
*Courtesy of Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*



**Figure 26.**  
Want Want China  
*Want Want Senbei Rice Crackers*



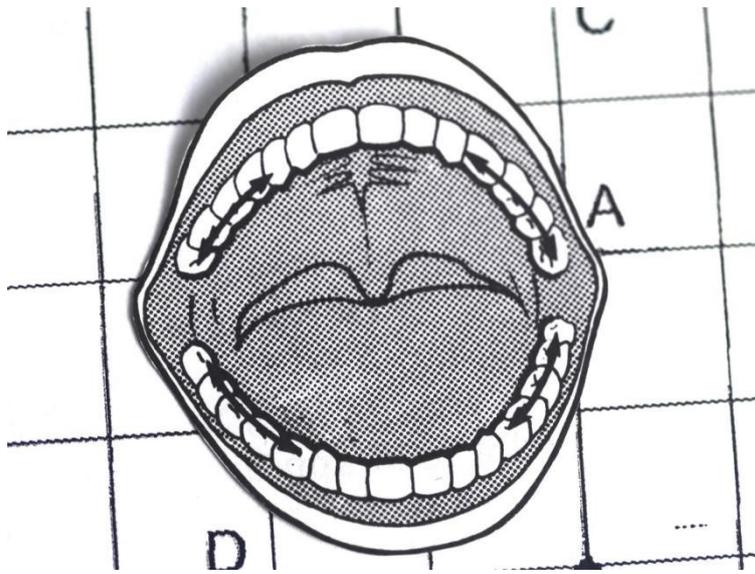
**Figure 27.**  
Desiree Tham  
*How to Chase a Mountain?*



**Figure 28.**  
Tang Ya-Wen  
*The Form of Comes and Goes*



**Figure 29.**  
Huang Shao-Ying  
*Cognitive Component of Happiness*



**Figure 30.**  
Ryan Benjamin Lee  
*Perfect*



**Figure 31.**  
Wilfred Lim  
*Tiny Bits of Bliss*



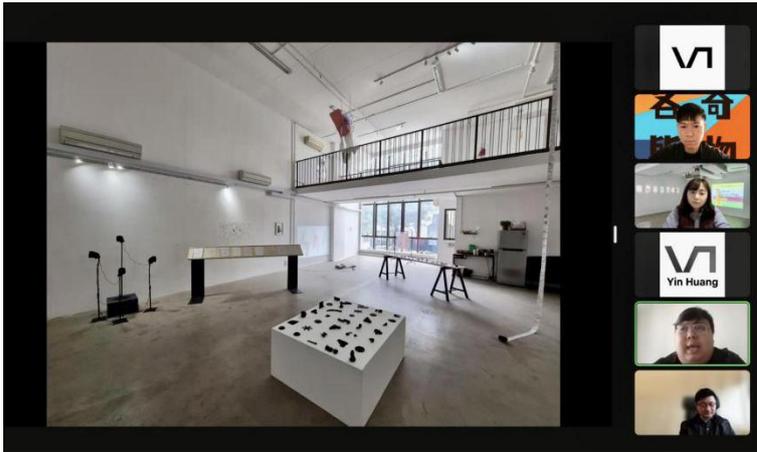
**Figure 32.**  
*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists' Exchange Exhibition in VT Artsalon



**Figure 33.**  
*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International Artists Exchange Exhibition in Starch



**Figure 34.**  
*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition, Taiwan Artist Talk: Everyday Extraordinary Whimsy



**Figure 35.**  
*An Uncanny Assortment of Miscellaneous Objects*— Taiwan & Singapore International artists Exchange Exhibition, Singapore Artist Talk: Across Mountains and Seas