Protest Art and Urban Renewal in Taiwan: Convivial Combats from 2010-2013

A dissertation presented to
the faculty of
the College of Fine Arts of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Lising L. Wei

December 2014

© 2014 Lising Lily Wei. All Rights Reserved.
This dissertation titled
Protest Art and Urban Renewal in Taiwan: Convivial Combats from 2010-2013

by
LISING L. WEI

has been approved for
Interdisciplinary Arts
and the College of Fine Arts by

Charles S. Buchanan
Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Arts

Margaret Kennedy-Dygas
Dean, College of Fine Arts
ABSTRACT

WEI, LISING L., Ph.D., December 2014, Interdisciplinary Arts

Protest Art and Urban Renewal in Taiwan: Convivial Combats from 2010-2013

Director of Dissertation: Charles S. Buchanan

This dissertation examines the relationship between art and urban renewal through case studies in Taipei, Taiwan, from 2010-2014. The common use of art by artists, activists, and residents to critique neoliberal urban policies demonstrates that art can help scrutinize social systems and prompt critical reflection. The main objectives of these protest artworks are improved housing rights, equitable urban planning, and increased civic participation in policy making. The various art forms employed include sculpture, writings, graffiti, film, photography, music, dance, and performance art. The interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of many artworks is notable, and leads to a broader definition of Participatory Art as an art form that not only relies on but also can be initiated by members of the public. The case studies also illustrate that conviviality and criticality can co-exist in Participatory Art.

Taiwan's art and activism for housing rights were characterized by the vigorous and persistent involvement of university students and the cooperation between citizens from dissimilar socioeconomic backgrounds. The language and imagery incorporated in the artworks produced a theatricality that was simultaneously amiable, jovial, resistant, and combative. The convivial and militant tones concurrent in these works encapsulate Taiwan's housing rights movement. These characteristics also reflect cultural elements unique to Taiwan, which were influenced by the country's colonial history. A broader and
richer interpretation of Participatory Art emerges from its diverse adaptations in the featured art examples, which illustrate multiple approaches to facilitating socially-minded artistic practices through public participation. Furthermore, this research affirms Participatory Art's ability to agitate problematic dynamics in the (re)construction of cities in the globalized present.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for my committee chair, Dr. Charles Buchanan, whose patient guidance and meticulous reviews enabled the completion of this dissertation. His dedication to research and teaching and his pursuit for excellence in scholarship will remain my inspiration. I am also grateful for my committee members, who always provided timely advice. Dr. Peterson deepened my interest in global performance. Dr. Frohne introduced me to post-colonial theory. Dr. Klein recommended the most fun academic sources.

To my parents, role models of passionate and hardworking educators, thank you for encouraging me to pursue what I love. My brothers Tim, Mu, and Sean, are always close to my heart. They offer unconditional support, wise counsel, and comic relief. I also thank Jen Bai Lin, Mrs. Sergeant, Claudia, and Mary Griffith for their love and insight.

My mentors, Mei Ron Lee, Derek Sprawson, and Kai Huang Chen, guided my path. My friends and fellow interdisciplinarians, Laura, Dan, Adel, Hsin-ning, Max, Nate, Anton, Yining, Monica, Rachel, Emily, and Sung-Chul, broadened my knowledge and offered transportation, accommodation, and good company. I shall miss experiencing art and life, as well as sharing meals with you. A big “thank you” to my friend, Jay, for listening to me mumble, laugh, and cry, and to Misha for his moral support.

This dissertation would not have matured without the friendship and the enthusiastic, professional writing help of Elliott Casal and Pat Alan. Funding from the Ohio University's Student Enhancement Award supported two research trips to Taipei and Los Angeles. I consider it an honor to work with the artists and activists who
inspired, and are the subject of this project. I also thank the excellent and forever helpful librarians in Alden and Nate Berger of Create_Space. I wish to thank my family at Athens Bible Church, Shi Pai Baptist Church, and North Gate Presbyterian Church for their faithful words of encouragement and prayers.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my beloved grandparents, Wu Jan and Wei Yun Kuei. Their devotion and legacy enrich and give meaning to life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participatory Art: A Genealogy</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan's Colonial History and Desire for Equitable Governance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neoliberal City</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Art Responds to Neoliberal City</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Outline</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1: 小 ACT: Operation Anti-2010 Taipei International Flora Exposition and Homelessness</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>小 ACT</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We are Family&quot;</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Operation Little Barbarossa</em></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Guided Tours</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We Need an Army&quot;</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taipei Beautiful…If Only for a Few Months</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Fragrant Flower or Iron Tribulus?&quot;</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists Respond</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone Flash Mob Action</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear the Old and Ugly for the New and the Beautiful</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction to Revolt</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube as Protest Platform</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miga: Entitlement Versus Exclusion</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness in Taiwan</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The S.R.B. Project</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2: Communities as Bases for Protest and Participatory Art</strong></td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shaoxin Community</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Together Shaoxin</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Voice of Shaoxin</em></td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medical Care for the Homeless, WochenKlausur, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We are the People, Sam Durant, 1993, for Project Row Houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Community members gathered in Project Row Houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Taipei International Flora Exposition, main entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Home, Not for Sale or for Razing” poster at Wenlinyinuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Artist Kao Jun-honn and music professor, Lin Huijun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Front cover of act 01 and graphic design for the cover of act 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>“Taiwan Political-Entrepreneurial Familial Marriage Schematic Diagram”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The original BMW318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The frame and “engine” of 小ACT’s handmade car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>小ACT car's body, made of high-density styrofoam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>小ACT's BMW318 final product on the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The “Act Joyfully Celebrating the Flora Exposition” sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A scooter approaches 小ACT’s BMW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Participants stand in a circle reading act 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Seated on the floor, participants study act 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The “Dream Gallery,” ceiling installation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The “Dream Gallery,” mechanical flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Street view next to the Yuanshan MRT Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The old Yuanshan railway station</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 21: The new transit center near Yuanshan ..........................................................79
Figure 22: The Flora Exposition mascots, in PVC Inflatable and hard plastic..............79
Figure 23: An image of Yuanshan captured by C. Collingwood in 1886.......................80
Figure 24: Another photograph of Yuanshan by C. Collingwood...............................81
Figure 25: One of the temporary “fake parks.” ...............................................................82
Figure 26: “Taipei Beautify: 18-Month Fake Parks” mock calendar .........................83
Figure 27: A temporary green space in Taipei...............................................................84
Figure 28: A Japanese-style building on Qingtian St. in Da'an District, Taipei.......86
Figure 29 Another Japanese-style building on Qingtian St., Taipei...............................86
Figure 30: “Greenified” fence in Taipei. ........................................................................92
Figure 31: *The Burning Map* ...................................................................................94
Figure 32: Artists collectively discussed the Flora Exposition.................................99
Figure 33: The Flora Expo mascot engages in several disruptive acts .................107
Figure 34: A remote control airplane drops worms to disturb the Flora Exposition ...108
Figure 35: Miga members perform a parody of the Flora Exposition Dance........111
Figure 36: The last move of the parodied dance......................................................111
Figure 37: A photograph of the *Kandelia obovata* plant .........................................116
Figure 38: Sectioned park benches to prevent homeless people.............................118
Figure 39: Dividing metal bars used to discourage the homeless from staying ..........118
Figure 40: “The New Feudal Period” .........................................................................120
Figure 41: The Social Record Box..............................................................................121
Figure 42: Medici shared beer and snack with a homeless man............................124
Figure 43: Medici kept the homeless man company ....................................................124
Figure 44: Ai Nu Yi explored Kaohsung with a camera hidden under a squirrel. ......125
Figure 45: The Shaoxin Community.............................................................................136
Figure 46: Students created installations to Shaoxin's live and space. .........................139
Figure 47: Participants explained their works to visitors and residents.........................139
Figure 48: Paper models depicting the Shaoxin Community .......................................141
Figure 49: A 3D rendition of the Shaoxin Community ................................................142
Figure 50: Shaoxin depicted in Taiwan Beer cardboard boxes ....................................142
Figure 51: Invitation to the From Eviction to Construction event................................145
Figure 52: Alliance students in front of the 1:1 House ................................................145
Figure 53: A mosaic depicting the protection of the Shaoxin Community....................147
Figure 54: A Cooking at the Front Line member at Front Eviction to Construction...148
Figure 55: The Shaoxin-NTU Students Alliance in the 2013: Fall Battle Protest ....149
Figure 56: Professors Lin and Gong interviewed Shoaxin residents ..........................150
Figure 57: The Voice of Shaoxin concert.................................................................151
Figure 58: Interviews clips of residents broadcasted on their own TV monitor...........151
Figure 59: A family watched its own interview clip at home.....................................152
Figure 60: Two protest banners displayed at the Shaoxin Community .......................154
Figure 61: Lin Huijun performed the violin near a Taipei metro station......................156
Figure 62: Lin performed Schindler's List outside Taipei's Court ...............................157
Figure 63: Lin and students performed at the 929: Homeland – Battlefield event ......158
Figure 64: Aerial view of the Shaoxin Community..................................................162
Figure 65: A resident passed by the exhibited drawings on her tricycle ........................................164
Figure 66: Visitors experienced a guided tour of the drawings .........................................................................165
Figure 67: Detail of one of the exhibited drawings ...............................................................................................165
Figure 68: A resident read the information display at the exhibition .................................................................166
Figure 69: The “Guard Shaoxin with Love” flea market .........................................................................................169
Figure 70: A lady prepared the glutinous rice filling ...............................................................................................171
Figure 71: The invitation to the rice dumpling making event ..................................................................................171
Figure 72: The finished rice dumplings ....................................................................................................................172
Figure 73: Aerial view of the Huaguang Community ..............................................................................................174
Figure 74: An educational illustration about the Huaguang Community ..............................................................176
Figure 75: Photographs in the Huaguang Community Photography Exhibition ............................................................178
Figure 76: Graffiti by Candy Bird in Huaguang .........................................................................................................179
Figure 77: Wadan Wumas' *Urban Savage* and Wang Mo-lin's *Struggle* .................................................................180
Figure 78: The audiences view *Struggle* ................................................................................................................181
Figure 79: Scene from “Huaguang: Short Videos of the Disappearing Community” ................................................185
Figure 80: A night-time performance of The *Lang Project* ..................................................................................187
Figure 81: Scene of a solo figure dancing, The *Land Project* ....................................................................................187
Figure 82: *The Land Project*, a group dance .........................................................................................................188
Figure 83: *The Land Project*'s choreography featured extended limbs ...............................................................188
Figure 84: Protest banners hung on the Wang's residence, Wenlinyuan ..............................................................196
Figure 85: Detail of the *One Hundred People Paint* banner ..................................................................................197
Figure 86: Pong Long San working at Wenlinyuan post demolition .................................................................199
Figure 87: Huang Huiyu ...............................................................201
Figure 88: Chen Hungyin...............................................................202
Figure 89: More than 300 protestors camped in front of Wenlinyuan ..........206
Figure 90: Police sent to remove the protestors at Wenlinyuan ....................207
Figure 91: A press conference outside the temporary hut at Wenlinyuan ...........209
Figure 92: A bulldozer clearing rubbles at Wenlinyuan ................................210
Figure 93: A student guard the temporary hut, now painted with graffiti ..........211
Figure 94: Graffiti created in support for the demolished Wenlinyuan ..............212
Figure 95: Graffiti condemned Leyang and JUT construction companies ........213
Figure 96: Architecture students envisioned rebuilding of Wenlinyuan ..........214
Figure 97: San ho yuan, traditional residential architecture in rural Taiwan ......219
Figure 98: The exhibition invitation for 2012, Chungjong Doomsday ...............231
Figure 99: Two of the photographs from Chungjong Doomsday ......................231
Figure 100: The front cover of the magazine, Urban Calamity .......................234
Figure 101: Invitation to “Your Home is a Battleground: Party @ the Wangs” ....249
Figure 102: Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground), Barbara Kruger, 1989 ....250
Figure 103: The Cooking at the Front Line kitchen .....................................252
Figure 104: The hand-built kiln of Cooking at the Front Line .........................253
Figure 105: A student baker presenting the finished product .........................254
Figure 106: Front Line members cooking on a sustainable farm ......................254
Figure 107: An illustrated recipe from the Front Line Blog ..............................255
Figure 108: More aggressive and assertive poses in the kitchen .......................257
Figure 109: Outfits inspired by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.......................257
Figure 110: A drawing as Cooking at the Front Line's Facebook cover photo ..........260
Figure 111: Another cover photo for Cooking at the Front Line ..........................261
Figure 112: An Art Brut-style drawing by Cooking at the Front Line ....................263
Figure 113: The front cover of the notebook designed by Cooking at the Front Line 265
Figure 114: A poem in the notebook ......................................................................265
Figure 115: “No land, no property” and illustration .................................................267
Figure 116: An illustration to visualize the poems in the Frontline notebook ..........267
Figure 117: Illustration 2 to visualize the poems in the Frontline notebook ............268
INTRODUCTION

The big social groups act with and/or against each other. From their interactions, strategies, successes, and defeats grow the qualities and “properties” of urban space.

—Henri Lefèbvre

The realm of the political may be the most appropriate place for the arts, after all.

—Nato Thompson

This dissertation examines art and urban development through recent case studies in Taiwan. The relationship between art and urban development is complicated. On the one hand, city governments and urban developers employ art as a tool to improve their image and neutralize dire problems such as homelessness and socioeconomic inequality. On the other hand, artist-activists strive to dismantle this situation through their art. Such art resists profit-oriented development by calling attention to housing rights for the disadvantaged and by demanding more inclusive and sustainable urban planning. Among the various methods utilized by the artists in the case studies, Participatory Art was a popular approach.¹ This study will investigate the sub-genre of Participatory Art that addresses urban policy and housing rights in Taiwan, and can serve as a lens into other participatory works of this sub-genre globally.

Participatory Art is an approach to making art that emphasizes the audience's direct involvement in the creative process. The audience's active participation is achieved by their corporeal presence, contribution of materials that inform the work, as well as creative, intellectual, and physical involvement. Characterized by its public nature,

collective discussion, collaboration, and social engagement, Participatory Art provides an inclusive environment that encourages participants to examine serious social matters from creative angles. The emphasis on social relevance and dialogue makes Participatory Art a compelling means of communication in the context of urban development, as it gives representation to those who are marginalized by markers of neoliberal development: high-value properties, luxury housing, and cultural institutions. Through Participatory Art, artists and residents work together to expose social inequality in urban renewal and rally for an equal right to housing and public space. In this manner, underprivileged residents actively and creatively contest uneven urban development.

This project investigates specific urban development incidents in Taiwan that prompted the artists and the general public to collaborate. By exploring case studies in Taipei from 2010 to the present, it addresses these works' goals and ramifications, and whether Participatory Art can effect social change. The case studies reveal Participatory Art's varying degrees of efficacy. They do so by raising awareness of urban redevelopment's unjust side, changing people's views on urban regeneration, and eventually altering government policy. Other crucial aspects of Participatory Art, such as collaborative working dynamics, the formation of new identities, and socio-political actions, are also considered. Featured works include *Operation Little Barbarossa; So, My Unruly Alarm Clock Disturbed Your Whispers – Flower Expo Flash Mob Action; Social Record Box Project; “The Voice of Shaoxin”, Shaoxin Program, Huaguang Community Carnival*, and *Cooking At The Front Line*.\(^2\) These participatory works are primarily

concerned with equal housing rights and citizen participation in the urban planning process. Through the visual arts, music, film, performance, cooking, and conversations, these works articulate the artists' and communities' attitudes toward issues such as gentrification, housing rights, homelessness, and motives for urban planning and development.

This analysis considers how Participatory Art brings a critical lens to issues surrounding urban development and housing rights. It points out that regionally and globally, artists and activists are employing Participatory Art to counteract inequitable urban renewal. A clear contrast exists between the art projects used to aid urban development and those that demand housing rights and equality. The Taiwanese cases will serve as a window to the larger field of global activities and ramifications of contemporary Participatory Art. Utilizing archival research, site visits, and interviews with artists and participants, this study examines how Participatory Art has become a common artistic practice in Taiwan to critically engage with exclusive urban development practices.

**Participatory Art: A Geneology**

Artists, historians, and curators have used various terms to describe this art form that centers on public participation, sociality, and the civic, including Suzanne Lacy's *new genre public art*, Nicolas Bourriaud's *relational aesthetics*, Lars Bang Larsen's *social aesthetics*, and *social practice* on the US West Coast. The Critical Art Ensemble's activist approach, *tactical media* and Grant Kester's *dialogical art* also pertain to Participatory Art.
Art. Although the earliest use of the term “Participatory” in the operative definition dates to 2006, Participatory Art is an outgrowth of the 1970s redefinition of public art. Mary Jane Jacob identifies participatory as one of three types of art approaches that aim to produce social change. Patricia C. Philipps focuses on artist's intention to engage with multiple audiences, and proposes the formulation of a new set of criteria to assess artworks of a participatory nature. Additionally, Suzi Gablik's listener-centered paradigm and Leonie Sandercock's articulation on “the voices of difference from the borderlands” serve to interpret Participatory Art.

Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art, edited by Suzanne Lacy (1995), is the earliest comprehensive record of public art's departure from site-specific sculptures to topic-specific, socially-oriented, and interactive public works. In a later work, One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity (2002), Miwon Kwon also remarks on the transfer of site-specificity from a physical emphasis to a discursive one in recent public art. In Mapping the Terrain, artists and art historians investigate art of a participatory nature and contextualize contemporary case studies within the history of socially-engaged collaborative art. “New Genre Public Art” was an umbrella term for

---


Public Art that diverges from the traditional definition of sculpture installed in public places, and civic participation is one of the characteristics of this new art form.

Mary Jane Jacob points to different ways artists have produced art that addresses social issues, from the expression of identity, to creating art as social critique, and to the production of art as a medium for change. According to Jacob, participatory is one of three types of art produced as an instrument for change. She maintains that the aim of the participatory type is to create a long-term impact on the involved individuals' lives, to “be of productive service” to society, and to “contribute to remedying social problems.” At the same time, Lacy connects the activist nature of participatory public art projects to the time of their emergence in the 1960s to 1980s – they were concurrent with social and political sentiments such as feminism, anti-war movements, anti-censorship, and the AIDS movement. Jacob and Lacy illustrate a tradition of Participatory Art that was socially discerning and intent on transforming society. Through *Mapping the Terrain*, contemporary case studies are linked to a preceding body of art that critically responds to social dilemmas through public inclusion.

Another central element to Participatory Art is the artists' intention to engage with multiple audiences. Patricia C. Phillips suggests that many artists believe that their responsibility is to assist in constructing a public through art – to encourage a participatory audience through action and idea. Therefore, the formation of audience becomes both objective and method. According to Phillips, this new way of working

\[\text{Mary Jane Jacob, “An Unfashionable Audience,” in } Mapping the Terrain, 53-54. \text{ The other two types are emblematic, and supportive, Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Lacy, “Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys,” in } Mapping the Terrain, 19-48.\]

\[\text{Patricia C. Phillips, “Public Constructions,” in } Mapping the Terrain, 67.\]
requires a different set of criteria in judgment. Rather than focusing on formal qualities of the aesthetic object, citizens and viewers are invited to discover the relation between art production and democratic participation. However, Philips does not elaborate on the relationship between art production and democratic participation, a topic requiring deeper exploration.

In another essay, “Out of Order: The Public Art Machine”, Phillips underlines the importance of theorizing about public art in relation not only to its physical site but also to the abstract, symbolic space it creates. Noting the contemporary preoccupation with public art's pragmatic aspect, Phillips urges artists and historians to consider its philosophical dimension. She recommends a vigorous exploration of questions such as: can public art illuminate cultural ideas that other forms frequently cannot, and what is it that public art can uniquely do? Phillips maintains that notions of public art should not be solely associated to designated public spaces, because the art derives its “publicness” not from its location but from the nature of its engagement with a conglomeration of personal interests, collective values, social issues, political events, and “wider cultural patterns that mark out our civic life.” Public art should not derive its meaning through its placement in a forum but should instead create the forum for dialogue.9

The recent Taiwanese case studies illustrate that the centrality of their public nature lies in the platforms they create for discussing urban development and housing rights. Although each case is uniquely rooted in its physical locality and history, the abstract, discursive spaces they create are transnational. While urban development problems take on varying forms in different cities and nations, the issue of housing rights

---

is universal. The desire to encourage dialogue is constant despite the artists' different approaches to addressing this issue.

The Taiwanese participatory works also echo Phillips's notion of publicness – one that recognizes the complex relationship between the public and the private, which are interrelated and cannot be separated by a distinct boundary. The case studies reiterate this view by addressing urban planning and housing rights, a topic at the intersection of the public and private domains, affecting residents as a group and individually. Furthermore, these works satisfy Phillips' expectation that public art should inspire people to expand discourse into both the public and private domains that it enters.

The book, *Participation*, is a more recent extension to *Mapping the Terrain*'s exploration of Participatory Art. The section on artists' writings presents philosophies of Participatory Art and demonstrates the varied intentions and methods for audience-centered, participatory art practice. For instance, Tiravanija is concerned with “the core ideas of conceptual art”, as he questions “the idealism behind the relevance of authorship and authenticity”. Tiravanija aims to resist artifice and “the ontological structure of art making” through his work. Thomas Hirshhorn, on the other hand, asserts the importance of art's autonomy in works made collectively. He insists that his art reach out to the audience with friendship, but without compromise in its visual aesthetic, meaning, or content.  

Although the artists in the Taiwanese case studies differ in their concepts of

---

contemporary art and participation, they are commonly motivated by a need to respond to the rapidly changing physical and socio-political landscapes of Taipei.

The rise of art works that require active audience participation in the past two decades has prompted various discussions among art historians and critics. Currently, there are several theoretical approaches to Participatory Art. While Grant Kester and Nicolas Bourriaud champion social interaction rather than the art object itself, Claire Bishop and Hal Foster assert the importance of the artist's intention, the artistic elements, and the work's ability to criticize current social conditions. Additionally, Suzi Gablik's listener-centered paradigm, Suzanne Lacy's understanding of Participatory Art as metaphor, and Leonie Sandercock's attention to “difference” and new ways of knowing are important perspectives for understanding Participatory Art.11

In Conversation Pieces, Kester showcases several examples of dialogical art that make conversations among participants the focus of the work. Kester argues that art critics and historians can interpret these interactions and conversations themselves as the work's aesthetic element. Similarly, Nicolas Bourriaud places great emphasis on dialogue in art production, maintaining that the purpose of art is to connect people, to “produce empathy and sharing” and to “generate bonds.” Bourriaud's “relationist” theory of art maintains that the interaction, or “inter-subjectivity”, becomes the “quintessence of

Although Kester's and Bourriaud's observation on the conversational, intersubjective elements of Participatory Art is significant, other criteria, such as context (conceptual, social, and geographical), varying channels and degrees of public participation, artistic form, content, and craftsmanship, should be included to form the basis for critique.

Taking a very different standpoint from Kester and Bourriaud, Claire Bishop argues that art works that seek to create friendly collaborations with public audiences risk the danger of losing the critical function so essential to avant-garde art. Bishop refers to Kwon's work in order to contextualize her position. Kwon observes the departure of the public from “heavy metal art”, noting that artists are shifting from the traditional view of public art as located in a public place towards the view that public art includes the public. However, Bishop complains that artists take the intersubjective space created through participatory projects as the focus and as the medium of their artistic investigation, and they do so by concentrating on the relational rather than the aesthetic. For Bishop, it is essential to consider, examine, and compare such works as art. She prefers examples such as Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* (2002), Artur Zmijewski's *The Singing Lesson II* (2003), and Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (2001), which though less aesthetically pleasing and harder to engage, challenge their audiences to think critically about issues such as identity politics, physical disabilities, and conflicts of interest.¹³

---

Bishop and the art historian Hal Foster both emphasize the importance of social reflexivity and artistic vigorousness for Participatory Art. Foster worries that the open-ended tendency in relational aesthetics may make art become formless and lose its ability to intervene in the social sphere. He asserts that art should still be able to take a stand, and to do so “in a concrete register that brings together the aesthetic, the cognitive and the critical.” Similarly, Bishop recognizes Participatory Art's potential to “lend support to” a larger project of equality; however, she maintains the necessity to “sustain a tension between artistic and social critiques”. Art, in Bishop's view, should not bear the sole responsibility for devising and implementing a political project, because it is “a form of experimental activity overlapping with the world”.  

According to Bishop and Foster, it is insufficient to simply consider a gathering of people and their collaboration as a good in itself; collaboration must make artistic contribution as well as social inquiry.  

In the essay, “Living Takes Many Forms,” Shannon Jackson reiterates Bishop and Foster's emphasis that Participatory Art is not the “emptied, convivial party of the relational” or the “romantically unmediated notion of ‘life’ with a generalized spontaneity”, yet she affirms Participatory Art's ability to function both socially and aesthetically. She affirms that Participatory Art can simultaneously be rigorous, formal, and conceptual when it “addresses, mimics, subverts, and redefines public processes”.

Lacy, considering the evaluative criteria for Participatory Art, contends that apart from the artist, audience, and intention of the work, the work functions above all as art, which she defines as a representational model operating as a symbol. She maintains that

---

15 Shannon Jackson, “Living Takes Many Forms,” in Living as Form, 93.
“perceived notions of change based on political and sociological models and those [notions] extrapolated from personal experiential reports are necessary, but insufficient” in evaluating Participatory Art. She argues that Participatory Art must be recognized as a metaphor that attempts to function simultaneously within both social and aesthetic traditions.\textsuperscript{16}

The Taiwanese case studies demonstrate that Participatory Art can produce significant social and artistic commentary while embracing the interpersonal and collective aspects. At the same time, their more nuanced and complex approaches require a broader interpretive framework. The Taiwanese examples often combine concrete art objects with performances and social activities. Artistic craftsmanship and the artists' interest in discursive, interactive collaboration are both evident, and the intention of individual works can be multi-dimensional, varied, and distinct. For instance, good will, the desire for collective action, social transformation, and an increased understanding of specific communities, as well as a critical antagonism that scrutinizes governmental policy and educates the public, all characterize \textit{Operation Little Barbarossa, The Voice of Shaoxin, Together Shaoxin: Shaoxin Community Space and History Workshop, the Huaguang Community Carnival, and Cooking at the Frontline}. These events rely on active audience participation to create aesthetically sound pieces that form powerful critiques of past and present urban development schemes.

This study aims to consider Participatory Art from multiple vantage points in order to allow for a more fluid interpretation. A listener-centered paradigm, proposed by

Suzi Gablik, can be one analytical approach. Gablik suggests that public works can build communities in this manner. For Gablik, listener-centered (instead of vision-oriented) works cannot be fully achieved through the mode of self-expression but through dialogue as open conversation, in which one listens to and includes other voices. Through this approach, previously excluded groups are given an opportunity to share their experiences, which are then incorporated into the artwork. This model is useful for understanding the case studies discussed here because the voices of the participants are given an important role in the works' creation. The listener-centered paradigm allows the analysis to go beyond emphasizing Participatory Art as relational events and critical art (although both are significant); it interprets Participatory Art as an instrument through which artists help ordinary citizens tell their stories.

It is important to note that the element of storytelling in the case studies is two-fold. When the participants tell their own stories through the works, they are also relating the histories of their cities. These narratives preserve past and present images of the redeveloped areas, preventing their memories from complete erasure by new buildings and activities. When analyzing these works, it is crucial to “listen” for the histories and stories revealed through the artistic actions.

Participatory Art is salient due to its cross-disciplinary and socially-oriented nature. Shannon Jackson maintains that Participatory Art opens up different social zones for critical reflection. In Jackson's view, the participatory approach's cross-disciplinary nature challenges people to consider what forms of life they sustain – “be they aesthetic,
social, economic, or governmental”. In this manner, Participatory Art increases and complicates public awareness of the systems and processes that shape social life. It invites people to reflect upon various cultural possibilities.

The artists and participants in the case studies recognize that social life is not coincidental but actively produced. They are aware of and highly sensitive to dysfunctional urban planning, and they recognize the potential to change society through art and collectivism. The case studies demonstrate artists' and participants' efforts to correct current discriminatory urban planning policies. Most importantly, these activists ameliorate urban systems' oppression by defending the rights of marginal citizens to live in the city.

Regarding the relationship between Participatory Art and Urban Planning, Leonie Sandercock articulates the featured artists' aspirations for future urban planning. According to Sandercock, critics like Gloria Anzaldúa, Cornel Wear, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Himani Bannerji are seeking a new urban planning process by listening to the displaced, the transplanted, and the marginalized –“the voices of difference from the borderlands.” These critics are concerned with identity and difference, more inclusive ways of thinking about justice, resistance and consciousness, and new spaces of opposition. They also emphasize storytelling and the inclusion of multiple voices in urban planning. Proposing new ways of being, knowing, and acting for city planners, these writers contend that difference must be incorporated into the quest for social justice in the city.

---

19 Leonie Sandercock, “The Death of Radical Planning: Radical Praxis for a Postmodern Age,” in Cities for Citizen, 423-439. The concept of “the voices of difference from the borderlands” is discussed on page 436.
Concerning the role of city planners, Sandercock explains how they can respond to the challenges of variance and build difference into their practice. She lists several principles for planning for a heterogeneous public, including empowerment of excluded social groups, representation for minority groups in decision-making, and participation without assimilation. Besides state-directed planning, Sandercock encourages urban planning by mobilized communities as well as collaborative planning between the two. These guidelines imply that difference is not only to be tolerated but also “valorized”. Though the multicultural city is the main context for Sanderlock's article, the notion of incorporating difference into urban planning is applicable to cities marked by divergent agendas of various sociopolitical groups. Despite the fact that the artists and participants in the case studies are still advocating for Sandercock's principles in urban planning, these dynamics already inform the art projects. The artists and participants' attempt to incorporate difference, give voice to the disenfranchised, and communicate with opposing parties are evident.

Furthermore, several participatory projects in this study suggest an expansion of the definition of Participatory Art. The Taiwanese cases indicate that there is no single identifiable parameter for this artistic approach, but rather, its markers are highlighted through a variation of art forms. The various collaborations between artists, students, and resident activists in Taiwan's housing rights movement reveal different aspects of Participatory Art, including organizing, activism, protest, research, education, lending

---

20 Ibid, 437.
voice to the marginalized, and artistic creation by both professional artists and members of the public.

At the same time, the Taiwanese examples demonstrate that the employment of Participatory Art is not merely the domain of professionally trained artists. Traditionally, Participatory Art is defined as a work initiated and facilitated by artists, and completed with the help of public participation. However, the *Together Shaoxin: Shaoxin Community Space and History Workshop* and the *From Eviction to Construction* exhibition were both organized by non-art major students, and *Cooking at the Frontline* was established by a group of students of various fields with the help of one art student. Nevertheless, all three produced quality art that informed the public and encouraged critical examination of urban renewal and housing rights. Therefore, Participatory Art might be redefined as an artistic approach that can be employed by professional artists as well as by other citizens to bring attention to social issues.

**Taiwan's Colonial History and Desire for Equitable Governance**

The political nature of the Taipei case studies illustrate how Participatory Art can be a means for social activism, a way for artists to rally for housing rights and increased civic participation in urban policy. The Taipei case studies are uniquely characterized by two concurrent tones. They were at once peaceful, playful, and hopeful, yet also militant and antagonistic. In either instance, a spirit of civic participation and self-determination prevailed. In order to understand the origin of this spirit of autonomy and the art works' concomitant peaceful and militant nature, one has to delve into Taiwan's history. An understanding of the island's colonial history reveals that active demands for autonomy
and for equity are not contemporary phenomena but evolved during the country's history. While resistance movements against various occupiers throughout Taiwan's history from 1624 to 1945 serve as an important background, the more recent events that occurred after the Chinese KMT takeover explain why Participatory Art is a relatively new phenomenon, compared to its Western counterparts.21

In the late sixteenth century, Taiwan, an island in the Southeast Pacific and populated by eleven or more Malayo-Polynesian dialect-speaking aboriginal tribes, became targeted by colonizers. In a period spanning 321 years, from 1624 until 1945, Taiwan was controlled by five different foreign forces: the Dutch (southern Taiwan, 1624 to 1662), the Spanish (northeast Taiwan, 1627 to 1642), the Zheng Family from China's Ming Dynasty (1662-1683), the Chinese Qing Dynasty (1683-1895), and the Japanese administration (1895-1945). The inhabitants of Taiwan challenged all of the above colonizing efforts with uprisings and attempts of self-government.22

The Taiwanese people's desire for self-governance was demonstrated by their fierce and repeated revolts against the successive colonial powers. Both the aborigines and later settlers from coastal China initiated rebellions. The Taiwanese aborigines

21 The KMT, or Guomindang (the Chinese Nationalist Party) was established by Sun Yat-sen, a proponent of democratic government in China. The KMT established a government after overthrowing the Ching Dynasty, but engaged in a civil war with the Chinese Communists, and was eventually defeated in 1949. Refer to Zhao Suisheng, editor, *Across the Taiwan Strait: Mainland China, Taiwan and the 1995-1996 Crisis*, (Routledge, New York, 1999), 233-239.

battled the Dutch colonists, the Ching authorities, and the Japanese regime to resist land encroachment, sinicization efforts, and oppressive domination, respectively. The Han Chinese, who migrated from the southern region of Fujian from the 1600s-1800s and identified with the way of life in Taiwan, also rebelled numerous times during Ching and Japanese rule.23

Most of Taiwan's socio-political divisions and conflicts are intertwined with the island's more recent colonial history, which commenced with the arrival of the Guomindang (KMT, or the Chinese Nationalist Party) in 1945. To this day, the sequence of events under KMT rule of Taiwan continue to influence the Taiwanese citizens' psyche and outlooks, as well as the nation's political, economic, and cultural development. In the November 1943 Cairo Conference, the Allies agreed that Taiwan would come under Guomindang control upon Japan's surrender in the Asia-Pacific War. Although most Taiwanese people had supported the Japanese war effort, they generally accepted the change of administration, and welcomed the KMT's in September 1945. However, contrary to the expectation of the war-weary Taiwanese that their fellow Han Chinese would bring the normality of peacetime and improved economic conditions, disaster ensued. Instead of the order, welfare, and sympathetic attitude that Taiwan had hoped for and needed, the KMT generated chaos, corruption, violence, and suspicion. Frustration grew as people realized that the new government “had neither the will nor the program to address Taiwan's serious social problems.” The limited self-rule allowed by the Japanese

23 Campaigns that aimed to quell the uprisings accounted for one third of the Ching soldiers killed on Taiwan during 1884-91. The Ching court was forced to relinquish Taiwan to Japan after losing the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War. See Davidson, 20-21, 33-34, 42-44, 52.
from 1920s onwards was also now completely eliminated. Furthermore, the KMT brought with them a version of “Chinese high culture” that was elitist. These attitudes were revealed in the newly arrived mainlanders' deep antagonism toward the Taiwanese, whom they believed to have been “contaminated by Japanese colonization and separation from the motherland.”

The KMT's Chinese-centered interests became more evident through its propaganda in Taiwan to “defeat the Communists and revive the nation,” dashing dreams of democracy and stability for the Taiwanese people. The slogan indicated that KMT's temporary stay on the island was merely a “regrettable necessity”, and that the party intended to return to and reclaim the mainland as soon as it was able, leaving Taiwan “in its traditional position at the periphery of China.” Soon, articulate Taiwanese began to protest their “circumscribed role” as it became apparent that elected representatives had

---

24 Within weeks of the Chinese takeover, the most generally held opinion was that KMT rule imposed all the harshness of the Japanese administration but lacked any of its efficiency, predictability, and order. The 28,000 officials who arrived on Taiwan prior to the KMT's full retreat to the island, a result of its defeat by the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese Civil War, also displaced many Taiwanese in government service. Zhao, *Across the Taiwan Strait*, 239. Instead of rebuilding the war-torn infrastructure, installing jobs, improving public health, reviving agriculture and the economy, the KMT chief administrator of Taiwan, Chen Yi, and his cohort engaged in personal aggrandizement and corruption. Chen, representing the state, also took control of all major enterprises, confiscating formerly Japanese private and government property. Chen granted monopolies to favored officials and created trade bureaus to manage mainland and international trade. The Japanese government had granted Taiwanese participation in lower-level government councils after its occupation stabilized. Zhou, 67; Qi Jialin, *Taiwan Shi [The History of Taiwan]*, Vol. 1 (Taipei: Zili Evening News, 1985), 154-162; Huang Dashou, *Taiwan Shi Gang [An Outline History of Taiwan]* (Taipai, Sanmin Book Company, 1982), 225-29; Davidson, 52.

25 Zhao Suisheng, *Across the Taiwan Strait*, 239. More than 200,000 Taiwanese served in the Japanese Imperial Navy or the Imperial Army, and at least 30,000 Taiwanese died in that effort. Davidson, 75 -76.

26 The KMT (the Chinese Nationalist Party, with democratic ideals) is distinct from the socialist Chinese Communists. Despite collaboration between the two parties in the early stage of the revolution against the Ching Dynasty (China's the last imperial dynasty), Chiang Kai-shek purged the Communists from the KMT upon succeeding the KMT founder, Sun Yat-sen, resulting in the Chinese Civil War. Zhao, *Across the Taiwan Strait*, 239.
no true decision-making power in the councils and assemblies formed in 1946. These protests increasingly turned into a demand for self-government for the people.\textsuperscript{27}

However, any dissent was soon drastically suppressed in the February 28 Incident and the subsequent period of White Terror. By 1947, Taiwan was plagued by economic devastation, uncertainty, and lawlessness. The Taiwanese people's rage finally erupted on the evening of February 27, 1947, when a middle-aged woman selling black market cigarettes was arrested and roughly treated by the KMT police. In response, the crowd who gathered around the incident taunted and attacked the police. The police retaliated by shooting into the crowd, killing several and wounding others. Soon street demonstrations broke out in Taipei and spread across Taiwan. On March 6\textsuperscript{th}, a February 28\textsuperscript{th} Incident Settlement Committee issued a document of twenty-three demands that, if satisfied, would result in a degree of self-governance that would make the island essentially independent of KMT control. This optimism and drive for democracy were diminished when two days later, KMT troop reinforcements landed in Taiwan and launched a rampage of indiscriminate shooting.\textsuperscript{28}

Despite KMT's authoritarian reign, the resolve for democratic governance persisted in Taiwan. After declaring martial law on March 13, 1947, the KMT party began a series of operations to quell political opposition. The first was the \textit{qing xiang} movement, which eliminated “traitors” by clearing villages of those not only suspected of having instigated trouble but also those who were merely perceived as potential threats to

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, 77.
\textsuperscript{28} In 1947 Taiwan, hoarding and black markets became commonplace, and thugs identified with the KMT government stole from people without restraint. The 228 Incident occurred outside the old Taipei railroad station. Zhao, 79-80.
KMT rule. In February 1948, a new round of arrests took place to prevent public recognition or demonstrations at the anniversary of “a painfully remembered event.” In 1949, the KMT’s virulent campaign of “White Terror” caused an even more comprehensive silencing of potential critics. Out of fear of retribution, voices of political dissent were subdued and did not reemerge until the 1960s. However, these proponents of democracy and independence were strongly suppressed by imprisonment during the 1960s to late 1970s. Nevertheless, danwai activists persevered and announced the formation of the new Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, or Mingjindang) in 1986. A month later, the KMT government indicated its intention to lift martial law in summer 1987.29

Taiwan's move toward democracy on the national level was directed by president Lee Teng-hui. After succeeding Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai-shek's son, Lee actualized his goals of “liberalization, democratization, and internationalization” through a series of political reforms.30 The momentous Wild Lily Student Movement further positioned Lee to steer Taiwan toward democratic governance. In March 1990, students from the National Taiwan University and other universities gathered in Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Square (later renamed Liberty Square) to demand an end to

29 Estimates of the exterminated in the qing xiang movement went as high as 100,000. The White Terror, or the suppression of political dissidents following the 228 Incident, during the period of martial law, lasted from 19 May 1949 to 15 July 1987. Within this period, 40,000 Taiwanese were imprisoned, of which about 3,000–4,000 were executed, for their real or perceived opposition to the KMT. Most of the imprisoned were Taiwan's intellectual and social elite, as the regime feared they might resist KMT rule or sympathize with communism. Huang, Tai-lin, "White Terror exhibit unveils part of the truth". Taipei Times, (20 May 2005). Danwai means “outside the party”. In this context, it means outside the KMT Party. See Davidson, 81.

government dominance by mainland power figures, a reexamination of the constitution, and a timetable for the transition to a fully democratic state. Lee responded with reforms, including the introduction of directly elected mayoral positions to the cities of Taipei and Gaoxiong in 1994, and later the popular vote presidential election in 2000. Chen Shuibian, the presidential candidate from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party and former mayor of Taipei, won the election in March 2000. Chen's victory signaled that the Taiwanese people embraced the idea of an independent Taiwan, and would not be intimidated by the Chinese Communist regime's opposition to an independence candidate.\footnote{Chen was reelected in the 2004 presidential election.}

During the eight years of the Chen administration, Taiwan enjoyed relative peace and stability; however, protests concerning freedom and democracy soon reemerged after Ma Ying-jeou, a pro-China KMT member, became president in May 2008. One major protest was the Wild Strawberry Student Movement (WSSM) that began on November 6, 2008. The WSSM responded to police suppression of the Taiwanese identity during a visit by the China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits chairman, Chen Yunlin. The banning of the display of Taiwan's national flag and the playing of Taiwanese songs prompted a group of four hundred students to begin a sit-in in front of the Executive Yuan and at Liberty Square. Rallies, marches and meetings ensued until June 2009.\footnote{Students from six other cities joined the protest in “satellite sites”. Among }

\footnote{Davidson, 105 -125. Lee was the first Taiwanese president within the context of KMT rule.}\footnote{Other demands by the WSSM protesters included a public apology by President Ma and Premier Liu Chao-shiuan for police misconduct, and the resignations of the Director-Generals of the National Police Agency and the National Security Bureau. See "Wild Strawberries: Taiwanese Student Movement Stirs Anew", \textit{Huffington Post} (December 8, 2008) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marc-cooper/wild-strawberries-taiwane_b_149231.html 2014; Wang, Flora (December 12, 2008). "Wild Strawberries forced to vacate Liberty Square," \textit{Taipei Times}; "Opening Ceremony of WildBerry House (野莓之家)," Official
other requests, the protesters collectively demanded an immediate review and amendment of the Assembly and Parade Law to ensure the right of peaceful assembly and expression.33

In addition to the WSSM, recent years have seen protests by Taiwan's citizens concerning labor rights, anti-nuclear weapons, and press freedom. It is within this period of increasing outspokenness that the housing rights movement is situated. One observes that recent forms of protest have transitioned from armed "rebellions" in Taiwan's early colonial history to the more recent peaceful marches and sit-ins, and that the objectives have shifted from demands for self-rule to issues of human rights, environmentalism, and quality of life. Regarding the specific issue of housing rights, the people in recent years have been fighting for the right to choose where they reside and to protect their homes from real estate speculation. The featured case studies highlight the use of art by different groups to support or protest exclusive real estate development.

Among the various art forms employed to challenge inequitable urban renewal, Participatory Art is particularly significant within the context of Taiwan's colonial history. Contrary to the elitist nature inherent in KMT culture and policy, Participatory Art in Taiwan embodies the ideals of inclusion, and focuses on lending voice and support to underprivileged groups. Several factors may contribute to the relative recent emergence of Participatory Art in Taiwan. Participatory Art gathers people and expresses interest in their stories and opinions. However, freedom of speech was denied during the

---

33 The officials asked to resign were Wang Cho-chiun (王卓鈞) and Tsai Chao-ming (蔡朝明), respectively. Chang, Rich, Flora Wang and Ko Shu-ling, "DPP Proposes Parade Law Amendment," *Taipei Times*, (November 11, 2008).
martial law period, and public assembly is still restricted by the Parade and Assembly Law today. Despite the lifting of martial law, remnants from the White Terror remain. Citizens were fearful to question government authorities or openly disclose their viewpoints. At the same time, Taiwan was isolated from the US and Europe until the KMT permitted the first group of students to study abroad in the mid-1970s. Although Taiwanese students might have encountered Participatory Art in Great Britain, Europe, and the United States, where this artistic approach became common in the 1960s, socio-political factors discouraged its application in Taiwan until the 2000s. The earliest known example of Participatory Art is Wu Ma-li's *Queen's New Clothes* (2004), which focused on women's personal stories through small group conversations, the sharing of personal archives, costume-making, and public parades. While Wu's project still drew inspiration from a Western tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes," the more recent Participatory Art that addresses housing rights reflects Taiwan's history and tradition, such as Taiwanese idioms, rice dumpling-making, and agricultural achievements.

Neoliberal urban policy, as discussed in the next section, became the main point of critique for artists, activists, and academics in Taiwan's housing rights movement. This movement, along with the various protests mentioned above, commonly focused on law amendment. For example, the WSSM initiated the revision of the Assembly and Parade Law, and housing rights activists, including Pong Long San (featured in Chapter 3), called for the abolition of the Urban Renewal Regulations.³⁴

Neoliberal City

In the global democratic world, cities are managed like businesses with neoliberal policies. Neoliberalism is a type of free-market economic theory that combines a commitment to market expansion and the "logics of competitiveness" with a deep "antipathy toward all Keynesian and/or collectivist strategies." According to Peck and Tickell, this theory has become "the dominant ideological rationalization for globalization and contemporary state 'reform'." Pierre Bordieu elaborates that neoliberalism erodes state organizations that "potentially safeguard the interests of the dominated and the culturally and economically disposed" while simultaneously building up "agents of finance, budget, militarism, and the rule of law." Furthermore, Kingfisher and Maskovsky maintain that articulations of neoliberalism can vary as it intersects with other political-cultural formations and governing projects. Similarly, Wilson suggests that neoliberal urban governance is historically and geographically specific – it is a set of fluid and evolving formations that adjust to evolving politics, cultures, understanding, and actions.


37 Pierre Bourdieu, Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market II, (New York, New Press, 2003), 34-5. Trouillot also asserts that neoliberalism is more than simply about "the market," but about "market extremism." It bears the notion that the market "is not only the best, but the only reliable social regulator," an idea that can be used as "an argument against liberal democracy." Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "A Fragmented Globality," Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 53-54.
38 In Catherine Kingfisher and Jeff Maskovsky, "The Limits of Neoliberalism," Critique of Anthropology, 28, 2 (2008): 115, the authors suggest that one should treat neoliberalism "as a process rather than a fait
In order to reinvent a city's image to increase its global visibility and economic potential, governments have implemented (re)development plans to since the 1970s, resulting in spatial segregation between the affluent and the underprivileged. Urban blight and various forms of urban distress led cities to "clean up" and redevelop "derelict areas in the central city in the name of revitalization, regeneration, and gentrification."  

Gentrification is the renovation of older, deteriorated neighborhoods typically rich with architecturally significant housing stock. When derelict houses are transformed, the renovated neighborhoods become potentially high-priced residential areas. As a result, gentrification displaces the poor, because it "reduces affordable housing throughout the city."  

The replacement of old industrial complexes with high-end retail stores, office buildings, fine dining restaurants, galleries, and museums also help "upgrade" certain city districts. Subsequently, the "upgraded" areas are occupied exclusively by the affluent.

In their effort to revive the dwindling urban economy, cities employ music, dance, theater, literature, the visual arts, crafts, video art, performance art, computer and multimedia, because they "generate employment, tax revenues and multiplier effects." Other "cultural product sectors", such as high fashion, furniture, news media, jewelry, advertising and architecture can also be utilized to reinvigorate urban economy. Similarly, Zukin observes "a form of culturally based urban renewal" and develops the notion of "symbolic economy," in which symbols of high culture are used to promote economic activity, create a class of elite patrons, and elevate the city's international accomplishi"; David Wilson, "Contingent Urban Neoliberalism," Urban Geography, 25, 8 (2004): 779-780.  

John Rennie Short and Yeong-Hyun Kim, Globalization and the City, (Longman, 1999), 89.  


image. Zukin asserts: "the aestheticization and culturalization of the city can be connected to the manipulation of city images and city marketing." In the context of symbolic economy, art, a signifier of "high class", originality, creativity, and activity, becomes a product that promotes the city—it appeals to tourists, investors, and high-income residents.

Neoliberal economic polarization is reflected in the visual image of the city. Visual polarization can be observed in the spaces that the affluent and the professional working-class occupy. A stark contrast exists between the desolate neighborhoods inhabited by the disenfranchised urban poor and the luxury pockets of the city belonging to the socioeconomic elite. With an aspiration to improve the city's global image, urban (re)development tends to emphasize the "bright and beautiful" parts of the city and mask the dark and desolate areas. Certain "revitalization" plans even seek to eradicate the "ugly" images of "unsightly areas" by eliminating the visibility of the poor. Most often, languages of exclusion and criminalization are employed to justify this action.

For example, Miles indicates that development "produces sharply delineated (geographic and conceptual) zones of 'success' [and] counter-spaces of 'failure'." Furthermore, "monolithic corporate culture," which increasingly represents 'the city', is dissociated from "the diversity of street cultures." Miles states that this condition leads to "a process of abjection," characterized by the identification of homelessness with pollution and crime. Homelessness, Miles further explains, is made to seem either

---

voluntary or a misfortune that cannot be helped. Therefore, urban development creates an "adversarial social model" of "good" affluence versus "defiling" deprivation.\textsuperscript{43}

Miles's theory echoes Deutsche's claim that urban development "violently fractures the social pictures...[and] conceals domination...." Deutsche uses New York's Battery Park City, an area built in the 1980s, as an example to demonstrate this phenomenon. She argues that the gentrification of the homeless people's neighborhoods and the associated repressive, divisive policies justify themselves through art, as beauty. In Deutsche's view, however, it is possible for artists to subvert this process. She asserts that public space is not a "preconstituted entity created for users – it arises only from a "practice (or counterpractice) of use" by groups excluded from dominated space.\textsuperscript{44}

At the same time, even artists themselves have become the means to property redevelopment. For example, Zukin maintains that the presence of artists in cities such as New York and Los Angeles documents a claim to these cities' status in the global hierarchy. Artists, likely considered valuable investments by developers, are favored recruits for urban revitalization because they are associated with the concepts of culture, style, creativity, and forward-thinkingness, qualities that create a sense of class and vibrancy for the city. Ironically, as illustrated by Rosler's project and the book, If You Lived Here, few artists can afford to remain in the redeveloped areas that they have helped create and enhance. Although gentrification displaces existing communities, it is

\textsuperscript{43} Malcolm Miles, Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures. (Routledge, 1997), 105.
\textsuperscript{44} Rolasyn Deutche, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," October Vol. 47, (MIT: 1988), 45; Deutche writes: "As a practice within the built environment, public art participates in the production of meanings, uses, and forms for the city. In this capacity, it can help secure consent to redevelopment and to the restructuring that make up the historical form of late capitalist urbanization. But like other institutions...it can also question and resist those operations, revealing the supposed contradictions of the urban process. " Ibid, 10.
nevertheless viewed favorably by the local media and the middle-class. A major reason for this positive attitude toward gentrification is the desire to improve the city's global image.45

Gentrification appropriates both traditional and popular art forms as a central strategy – architecture, public sculpture, concert and theater halls represent "high culture" and class, whereas art fairs and festivals create a sense of amicability and conviviality. Participatory Art, perceived as a more inclusive, interactive, and approachable art form, is not exempt from this interpolation.46 However, the case studies here indicate that artists and participants are keenly aware of gentrification's negative effects – spatial division and the lack of housing for the less privileged. The Taiwanese artworks are examples of Participatory Art that challenge the use of art to support social and spatial exclusion.

Although visual representations, such as architecture, often define a city, the city also comprises the organic expression of the people who inhabit it. The professional and working class residents are crucial contributors to a city's economy and liveliness, and access to a dwelling is fundamental to their livelihood. The reconfiguration of living spaces often disintegrates existing communities. Demolition not only destroys physical structures but also disrupts people's psychological connection to their homes. In certain incidences, individuals who are displaced lack the means to relocate and become homeless.

46 Nato Thompson suggests that socially engaged art is “not just the purview of the artist,” but can in fact “be deployed by capitalists for the production of their own version of meaning and advertising.” Nato Thompson, "Living as Form," in Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art From 1991-2011 (New York/Cambridge, Mass.: Creative Time/MIT, 2012), 31.
The prevalence of the sub-genre of Participatory Art that addresses housing rights reflects the globalizing trend of neoliberal urban (re)development.\(^{47}\) By focusing on the issue of housing and urban development, the featured Participatory Art cases disclose the social hierarchies, material inequalities, and conflicts that are inherent in a city's building and rebuilding. Furthermore, they reveal the conflict of interests between diverse groups of people with divergent interests. The clashes of interests take form in the demand for urban space and housing, where the affluent attempt to expand their holdings with little regard for the interests of other groups. For example, urban regeneration programs tend to exclude underprivileged residents from the decision-making process, forcing them to relocate. The Taiwanese case studies respond to this uneven social treatment through activism. They illustrate the union of artists and citizens to contest inequality and support shared beliefs.

**Participatory Art Responds to Neoliberal City**

In Taiwan, as will be discussed here, artists, students, and activists have been employing Participatory Art, among other art forms, to critically examine neoliberal urban development. Using diverse creative methods, ranging from humorous, convivial, satirical, to militant and forceful, artists and activists have garnered attention and created alternative forums to monitor urban development. Through interdisciplinary, trans-social strata collaborations, the artists, students, and residents have called upon governments and city planners to center urban development on citizens' common welfare and living quality.

\(^{47}\) Broadly defined, the process of globalization is the spreading of similar economic, cultural and political activities across the globe. Refer to Short and Kim, *Globalization and the City*, 3.
In recent years, there has been a surge around the globe of demonstrations and uprisings in which residents protest economic inequality and political injustice in their home cities, nation states, and across borders. For examples, fierce and at times violent protests occurred in Korea's Longshan Event, Hong Kong's Tsaiyuan Village (菜園村), and China's Chong Qing City regarding forced demolition. These struggles signal a defect in the methods of governance both locally and globally, and demand a reconsideration and reconstitution of local and global governance, one that safeguards each citizen's basic human rights. Participation Art helps facilitate this reexamination by envisioning, demanding, and enacting change to existing politico-economic establishments.

The Taiwanese participatory case studies portray an emerging grassroots, international, and trans-disciplinary coalition of artists and activists who aim to counter neoliberal encroachment on citizens' rights to live in the city. In contrast to the discord, discrimination, conflict, and detachment that mark neoliberal development, the case studies are premised on communication, collaboration, tolerance, and equality. The Participatory Art examples in Taiwan are to be contextualized within a global network of similar practices, including Medical Care for the Homeless and Project Row Houses in Austria and the United States, respectively.

Medical Care for the Homeless and Project Row Houses, two significant artist-initiated, participatory projects focusing on home and community development, occurred simultaneously in 1993. Through arts initiatives, both works created an immediate and

---

48 In the age of globalization the local is almost always influenced by the global.
long-term impact on their communities. In *Medical Care for the Homeless* (fig. 1), the Austria-based collective, WochenKlausur, organized a free mobile clinic in the Karlsplatz, Vienna. The location was critical, because the collective was invited to present work in the contemporary art space, Vienna Succession, but WochenKlausur chose to install their work in Karlsplatz, a plaza nearby, where many homeless people aggregate. The artists set up a clinic operating from a van that was equipped to provide basic medical treatment. Though initially intended to run for eleven weeks, “the van still travels daily to public spaces throughout Vienna to provide medical care to over six-hundred people per month.”

---

*Figure 1. WochenKlausur, Medical Care for the Homeless, 1993. The clinic's van travels to public spaces in Vienna to provide health care for the homeless.*

While the eight artists from WochenKlausur were raising funds for their free medical clinic in Vienna, the artist Rick Lowe was purchasing houses on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. *Project Row Houses* is located in Houston, Texas's Northern Third

---

49 Thompson, ed., *Living as Form*, 249-250.
Ward, a low-income, predominantly African-American neighborhood. As the community was on the brink of being demolished by the City of Houston, Lowe purchased several row houses. The artist rallied hundreds of volunteers to help clean, rebuild, and renovate the houses (figs. 2-3). Lowe and the growing group of activists transformed the community into a place for cultural participation and artist residencies. Functioning as a non-profit organization, Project Row Houses provides childcare and subsidized housing for single mothers. Project Row Houses in Houston and Medical Care for the Homeless in Vienna, along with Operation Little Barbarossa, Program @Shaoxin, and Cooking at the Frontline (among others) in Taipei, demonstrate that Participatory Art has become a global phenomenon in response to neoliberal globalization.

Figure 2. In 2003, Artist Sam Durant contributed We are the People to Project Row Houses. Source: Thompson, Living as Form.

50 The project was inspired Lowe's conversation with a student, who questioned the efficacy of art for social change and challenged Lowe to find a creative solution to the problems surrounding the student's home community. Lowe was also motivated by a desire to make a “profound, long-term commitment to a specific neighborhood”. Thompson, Living as Form, 26-27; 256.
Participatory Art is useful for interpreting the urban environment. It points to the fact that physical urban spaces are produced by a set of abstract social forces and relations. Existing examples demonstrate that artists are using this approach to express their discontent with exclusive urban development. Unlike the numerous art programs employed in marketing the city under neoliberal ideologies, artists in the case studies use Participatory Art to benefit residents who are disadvantaged by gentrification. This dissertation contributes to the existing record of Participatory Art by providing updated examples from the twenty-first century in Taiwan, a country where Participatory Art and urban planning have not been examined comprehensively. Focusing on Participatory Art's relationship to urban (re)development, this research affirms Participatory Art's ability to agitate problematic dynamics in the (re)construction of cities in the globalized present.

**Chapter Outline**

From 2010 to the present, Taiwan's national administration and city governments implemented numerous large-scale, "urban renewal" projects that raised strong criticism from its citizens. Although protests erupted in Tainan, Maoli, the majority and the most
severe took place in Taipei, where citizens complained that the city's numerous “urban renewal” plans disregarded the city's cultural heritage, natural environment, and its underprivileged populations. The three chapters of this dissertation explore the major urban renewal cases and associated Participatory Art.

Chapter One examines a series of art projects that responded to controversies surrounding the 2010 Taipei International Flora Exposition, a garden festival and “horticultural exposition” that ran from November 2010 to April 2011 (fig. 4). The preparations for this international event included multiple demolitions in Taipei, which instigated strong opposition. The strongest critique dispelled the rhetoric that the Exposition would elevate Taipei "to the global stage," and instead maintained that the "redevelopments" were in fact real estate speculation in disguise. Joining many citizens in voicing their complaints were the artists Kao Jun-honn and the 小 ACT art collective, which devised a man-powered BMW car to distribute their anti-Flora Exposition literature on the street. This work, along with a cell phone flash mob performance and the Social Record Box Project, where members wandered and observed the night streets in various cities, were part of the many other artistic actions and scholarly discussions included in 小 ACT's three-part publication.
Chapter One relies upon Lee Zong-Rong's groundbreaking research, which reveals the close-knit, mutually beneficial relationship between Taiwan's political and economic powers. This relationship resulted from the implementation of neoliberal policies, which privatized the economic sector and enabled families to establish themselves as financially powerful. These families then intermarried with the political elite to form an extensive upper class, which attempted to monopolize all sectors of the country's economy in order to further certain wealthy families' interests.

Chapter Two focuses on various works of Participatory Art created in central Taipei's two communities: Shaoxin and Huaguang. From 2007 to 2011, residents of both communities faced pressure to evacuate and self-demolish their homes, or pay steep "compensation" to the administration when they received government lawsuit notices. These surprise "evacuate, demolish, and pay" notices, which were implemented under a state-owned revitalization plan, greatly disturbed residents and other citizens because of
the lack of transparency in government decision-making and the administration's refusal for open communication. The lack of a resettlement plan also meant that the disenfranchised residents would become homeless once they were evicted. Subsequently, through art and protest, residents formed self-help associations and worked with outside support to rally for a fair housing policy and civic representation.

The collaborations resulted in video installations and music performances by professional artists like Kao Jun-honn and Lin Hui-chun, as well as sculpture and architecture installations by non-art students. Shaoxin and Huaguang also inspired graffiti, performance art, photography, dance, and short films. The Participatory Art in Shaoxin and Huaguang shared the political overtones and conviviality of 小 ACT's works in Chapter One; however, unlike 小 ACT's more guerrilla, hit-and-run style, most works in Shaoxin and Huaguang had a stable, community base and involved more sustained interactions with residents.

Chapter Three investigates what many describe as Taiwan's most controversial urban renewal case, Wenlinyuan (fig. 5), which occurred in 2012-2014. The forced demolition incident is presented from the perspectives of three core staff members of Taiwan Alliance for Victim of Urban Renewal (TAVUR): Pong Long San, Chen Hunying, and Huang Huiyu. Pong, Chen, and Huang collaborated with TAVUR members to support residents who faced eviction. Materials from interviews provide insights into these three core members' journey of housing rights activism both individually and as a team. The gathering of residents and supporters of all backgrounds culminated in the resistance to the forcible eviction of Wenlinyuan's residents. Even after their eviction,
TAVUR persisted with their resistance by building a temporary hut and stationing staff at the demolished site. Eventually, *Cooking at the Frontline*, a student-initiated kitchen adjacent to the temporary hut, was built to sustain supporters and those struggling with forced demolitions in other communities. *Cooking at the Frontline* added a more vibrant and convivial atmosphere of daily conflict and struggle at Wenlinyuan.

*Figure 5.* Members of the Taiwan Victims of Urban Renewal Alliance protesting against forced demolitions of legal buildings held a press conference at the legislature in Taipei, March 15, 2012. Source: Chang Chia-ming, *Taipei Times*. http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/photo/2012/03/16/2008070120
CHAPTER 1: 小 ACT: OPERATION ANTI-2010 TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL FLORA EXPOSITION AND HOMELESSNESS

In 2010, controversies surrounding the Taipei International Flora Exposition prompted the art collective, 小 ACT, to respond with a series of participatory, performance art actions. The 2010 Taipei International Flora Exposition, which ran from November 6, 2010 until April 25, 2011, was an international horticulture exposition meant to showcase the diverse and unique flora of Taiwan and to promote international trade. However, the event was publically criticized for being environmentally harmful, financially wasteful, and dismissive of important historic heritage. Furthermore, some academics and activists perceived the Exposition as a front for the city administration and developers to promote real estate speculation.51

Expressing the same concerns, 小 ACT denounced the city government's capitalist-driven cultural policy through its Participatory Art projects, Operation Little Barbarossa and My Unruly Alarm Clock. These two works were approachable due to their participatory nature, and thought-provoking because of their political overtones. In its act publications, 小 ACT also recorded anti-Flora Exposition writings and creative projects by members of the public. Examples include Miga's Flora Expo. Dance parody and YouTube music videos. As an extension to their investigation on neoliberal urban development and real estate speculation, 小 ACT examined the issue of homelessness

through the *S.R.B. Project*. In this overnight experiential work, group members explored and recorded Taipei after dark. Although the *S.R.B Project* does not fully resemble Participatory Art, its interactive process is significant. Moreover, its approach makes reference to the practices of *flâneur* and *dérive*, both of which emphasize understanding and participating in the city through walking.

**小 ACT**

“小” means small 小 ACT. It was the name of a team of graduate art students and volunteers from the Tainan National University of the Arts, National Taiwan University, and Tamkang University. 小 ACT demonstrated a nation-wide collaboration among students, unified by their critical stance toward the 2010 Taipei Flora Exposition. The fact that its members came from different universities in northern and southern Taiwan demonstrates that even though the Flora Exposition took place in Taipei, discontent extended beyond the capital. This art collective's objective was to examine governmental urban renewal practices. The artist, Kao Jun-honn (fig. 6), whose recent artworks explore urban policy and the politics of space, was invited to head the 小 ACT team. Kao is a Tainan National University of the Arts PhD student of Professor Gong Jow-jiun, one of the chief editors of *ACT: Art Criticism Taiwan*.

In Kao's 2008 work, *Urban Secret Formula* (my translation from 城市秘方), Kao used performance and visual documentation to reflect on isolation and entropy in the city. He collected water from the polluted Tamsui River in Taipei, stored the water in jars, and placed them on a street vendor's cart on the roadside. It was as if he were selling them as
healing potions, which were in reality bogus.  

Kao and I met in June 2012 at the Taipei Artist Village in central Taipei for an interview, during which Kao presented *act*, a three-volume special commentary on urban renewal. The title, *act*, is related to *ACT – Art Criticism Taiwan*, a contemporary arts magazine published by the Tainan National University of the Arts.

*Figure 6*. Artist Kao Jun-honn, left, in a housing rights and land justice forum held in Huaguan Community. Music professor, Lin Huijun, right, addresses the audience.

Although 小ACT's name makes a direct reference to the *ACT* magazine, the phrase also can be interpreted as “act a little,” or “small act”. These meanings coincide with the *act* booklets' content, use, and visual characteristics. Cut and bound into 5/7.5

---

52 See Jian Tzu-chieh's “From Rarefraction to Care: The Social Turn in Jun-honn Kao's Recent Art Projects,” in *ACT* 48, 60-66. Kao's Anti-Department of Cultural Affairs series represent his “land politics” body of work. Included in the series is a satirical Flora Exposition Shelter model. For more information, refer to Kao's Blog, http://bcc-gov.blogspot.com/2010/02/ii.html.

53 *act* is also funded and published by Tainan National University of the Arts.
inch pamphlets with covers in green, yellow, and pink (fig. 7), the *act* mini-magazines were eye-catching and user-friendly. They were convenient for distribution and easy to transport. These publications explained why the Flora Exposition was culturally, financially and environmentally deleterious to Taiwan, and through texts, drawings and photographs, 小 *ACT* called the public into small collective, participatory actions with potentially significant ramifications.\(^{54}\)

![Figure 7](image.png)

*Figure 7. Left: cover of *act 01*. Right: graphic design for the cover of *act 02*.  

“We are Family”  
Taiwan’s current political, economic, and cultural debates surrounding urban renewal can be understood within the context of neoliberalist policies. In order to provide

\(^{54}\) Compared to the regular *ACT* magazines, the *act* publications are smaller in size and shorter in length.
scholarly support for the argument that the Flora Exposition was highly interest-driven, ACT interviewed Lee Zong-Rong, an assistant research fellow at the Institute of Sociology at Academia Sinica. Lee had conducted a two-year investigation into Taiwan's politico-entrepreneurial intermarriages using investigative journalist and biographer Chen Jou-chin's 1999 research as a basis. His findings revealed that Taiwan's upper class is in fact “one big family”, one that ignores individual families' conflicting business and political interests. Lee published the “Taiwan Political-Entrepreneurial Familial Marriage Schematic Diagram” to illustrate the conglomeration of Taiwan's politico-economic elites (fig. 8) – an interwoven network that monopolizes power, wealth, and the country's resources.

Figure 8. The “Taiwan Political-Entrepreneurial Familial Marriage Schematic Diagram” created by Lee. Source: Academia Sinica Weekly 1261; act 03, 8-9.

---

In his interview with 小 ACT, Lee explained how Taiwan's elite society emerged. He remarked that prior to the 1990s, Taiwan's economic development was supported by small and medium enterprises (SMEs); however, after the 1990's, Taiwan experienced political emancipation and economic liberalization. As a result, formerly public sectors, such as telecommunications, oil, finance institutions, and financial-holding companies, were privatized. Corporations that controlled these private sectors proceeded to establish close working relationships with powerful politico-economic entities. Consequently, financial enterprises began to influence government decisions through these established connections. Private businesses proposed self-benefiting regulations to the government; they also consulted government officials when making business decisions. In turn, the US-trained, neoliberal government officials encouraged the simultaneous liberalization of Taiwan's economy and politics. Family-owned companies such as Taiwan High Speed Rail, Far East Tone, and Taiwan Mobile received privileges, thriving and expanding on exclusive opportunities. Lee notes that 80% of major corporations in Taiwan are now controlled by Taiwan’s network of elite families, and these corporations continue to expand unchecked due to these “abnormal” political-financial relations.

According to statistics from the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, the annual income of Taiwan's 20% richest families is 8.22 times higher than that of the island's lowest-income families—Taiwan's socioeconomic disparities have become more prominent than ever, following the economic recession of 2009. Lee warns

57 政治解放, 放鬆管制 Act 03, 8.
58 The Chinese names for these three families are: 高鐵, 遠傳, and 台灣大哥大 respectively.
59 Act 03, 8.
that “unless the government introduces relevant taxes on wealth, as well as social welfare measures”, the rich will continue to become richer and the poor poorer, thus making worse the “one Taiwan, two societies.”

Regarding government regulation on property value inflation margin, Lee maintains that government regulation is essential because of the fundamental concept that land is public property. In other words, “all citizens have the right to dwell [on it].” He reports that the market is usually regulated by the government in Northern and Central European countries, and unlimited increase in housing prices rarely exists in these nations. In contrast, “there seems to be no limit in real-estate market inflation in Taiwan”. Lee maintains that in Taiwan, financial corporations trade and speculate land to make exorbitant profits. Moreover, the government, believing that economic growth improves life quality, encourages and assists in property speculation. As a result, the unregulated major enterprises are allowed to expand ad infinitum. “The Grand Families of Taiwan” makes a valid claim in stating that: “There's nothing wrong with members of these extended families supporting each other” and strategizing to advance family interests. However, the authors accurately conclude that it is necessary to consider “how these family conglomerates can be prevented from standing on the opposite side of the greater public good as they thrive and prosper in pursuit of lasting business success”.

---


61 Act 03, 9.
Operation Little Barbarossa

As an anti-Flora Exposition statement and 小 ACT's first major collaborative artwork, Operation Little Barbarossa exuded humorous, satirical, adventurous, as well as militant tones. This “operation” aimed to communicate Flora Exposition's defective aspects to the general population. Its title comes from Operation Barbarossa, Germany's invasion plan against Russia during World War Two. Operation Barbarossa itself was named after Frederick Barbarossa, a medieval Holy Roman Emperor. Barbarossa means “red beard” in Italian. The name came from the northern Italian cities Frederick Barbarossa attempted to rule. It was a mark of both fear and respect. 小 ACT mockingly appropriated this German imperial title to highlight its own anti-capitalist actions. In Kao Jun-honn's blog, the artist describes this piece as an “urban spatial guerilla operation”. Operation Little Barbarossa's main objective was to distribute act publications, and inform the public about the problem of cultural manipulation in Taiwan. Kao writes about using guerilla tactics to infiltrate areas surrounding the Flora Exposition. He explains that 小 ACT distributes the act booklets in an unusual, “completely self-deprecating manner” in order to protest against the Flora Exposition. Although Kao does not clarify what he means by self-deprecating in his writings, two possible interpretations can be deduced from the Chinese phrase 蹂踏, translated

62 Operation Little Barbarossa's Chinese title is 小巴巴羅薩行動. For Frederick Barbarossa, see Alexander Canduci, Triumph and Tragedy: The Rise and Fall of Rome's Immortal Emperors, Millers Point, Pier 9, 2010, 263.
63 The Chinese phrases Kao used for “urban spatial guerilla operation” and “completely self-deprecating manner” are 城市空間的游擊行動 and 完全踐踏自己的方式. See Kao’s blog, http://bcc-gov.blogspot.com/2011/10/blog-post.html and Kao, act 02, 1; Video clips of the operation are available on Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1kgYtxGofI and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeVPBPtoTak
here into the English adjective, self-deprecating. 踩踏 is a verb in Chinese. It means *to trample, to degrade, or to insult*. The character 踩 denotes *to execute and to carry out*, and the symbol 踏 signifies *to tread and to step on*. Therefore, 踩踏, in the context of *Operation Little Barbarossa*, can refer to “pedaling a man-powered car”. On a broader level, 踩踏 indicates “realizing ideas through practice”. The project's laborious process and its self-deprecating nature empowered the protest, giving meaning and force to the movement.

For *Operation Little Barbarossa*, 小ACT artists went to great lengths to fashion a 100% man-powered car, a BMW318. The delivery car was strictly modeled with a 1:1 ratio after an original BMW318 (fig. 9). 小ACT chose this particular car to play a joke on the real estate development corporations, which favored the BMW318 for company transportation. Kao also noted that the choice of the BMW318 was intentionally satirical because it is the car model preferred by gangster members in Taiwan.

*Figure 9.* The original BMW318.
At the same time, ACT’s dedication to the *Operation Little Barbarossa* is evident in the time and effort they devoted to handcrafting their vehicle. To fashion the car, the artists bought a small model of the BMW318. They measured the model with a precision ruler, and created a blueprint on the computer. To build the model car’s structure, the artists purchased a four-person tandem bicycle originally discarded among the grasses at Bali’s left bank. The tandem bicycle became the car’s central structure. ACT members made a frame for the car by soldering two-inch angle iron to the tandem bicycle (fig. 10). High-density styrofoam was then added to the frame to make the body (fig. 11).

Figure 10. The car's frame and “engine” made of angle iron (a length of iron with an L-shaped cross section for structural support) and a tandem bicycle. Source: *act 02*, 1.

---

64 Bali used to be a major port by Taipei’s Tamsui River. It is now a tourist destination. Bicycling and tandem bicycling are popular activities in Bali. Bicycle rental shops provide regular and tandem bicycles for tourists.
The artists carved, sculpted, and sanded the styrofoam into shape, a challenging and time-consuming process. They then painted the shell black, and applied varnish to make it waterproof. Members also designed paper tires and wheels, signal lights, license plates, and the BMW logo to make the vehicle more realistic (fig. 12). The artists had wanted to add glass windows and turn signals but were not able to complete the tasks before the planned journey.65

On a morning in November 2010, 小 ACT set out in their new BMW318 to disseminate their publication and infiltrate the Flora Exposition. Two art students, Lai Jun-Hong and Lin Jao-Yu, pedaled the car from Kuandu, a northern rural district of Taipei, to Yuanshan Station, located in Taipei City proper.66 En route, they traveled along

---

65 Interview with the artist.
66 Lai, 賴俊宏, was a student at the Graduate Institute of Trans-disciplinary Arts, Taipei National University of the Arts; Lin, 林昭宇, was a sculpture student at National Taiwan University of the Arts.
the agricultural roads of Kuandu Plain, “refueled” at the Formosa gas station on Chengde Road, and changed a flat tire at the Giant bicycle shop on Zhongshan North Road, before arriving at the Flora Exposition. All the intersections were guarded by police officers, and when the 小 ACT riders unintentionally merged into the fast lane at the intersection of Zhongshan North Road and Minzhu Road, the police came to question them. The team explained that they were there to celebrate the Flora Exposition, and the police allowed them to continue their journey.

Figure 12. 小 ACT's BMW318 final product on the road. Source: Kao Jun-honn.

Kao recounted that the city government stationed numerous police officers around the Flora Exposition venue, most likely due to fear that people would attempt to protest and disturb the event. In response, the participating artists installed a sign on the top of
their car that read, “Joyfully Celebrating the Flora Exposition”, to help them gain access to the Yuanshan Station Plaza (fig. 13). Once the team entered Yuanshan Station, members started to hand out act pamphlets randomly by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. After a while, the police began to sense that something was not quite right, and sent some staff to follow 小 ACT's BMW318. 小 ACT reciprocated by giving some act booklets to the police who followed them.  

**Figure 13.** A sign that reads: “act Joyfully Celebrating the Flora Exposition” sits on top of 小 ACT's BMW318. Source: Kao Jun-honn.

*Operation Little Barbarossa* attracted much attention on the road. Not only did passersby flock to the car, but also the media captured this peculiar sight on camera. Footage of *Operation Little Barbarossa* was featured on Taiwan's NextTV Channel's Nighttime news program. One of the car's “drivers,” Lai Jun-Hong informed the TV  

---

67 The “Joyfully Celebrating the Flora Exposition” sign was in Chinese, 歡慶花博.
journalist that this action intended to point out many problems with Taiwan current cultural policies. Kao stated in *act 02*'s preface that *Operation Little Barbarossa* was the artists' first effort to increase public awareness of the government's culturally manipulative policies. Through this performance art action, Kao communicated to the government that 小 ACT represented a group of concerned citizens critical toward cultural manipulation. In *act*, he argues that Taipei's urban renewal policy highlights the consequence of “a country lacking in a mechanism for citizen participation: everything is dominated by political force.” Kao indicated that *Operation Little Barbarossa* aimed to counter Taiwan's politics, which was, in his view, purely driven by a “political-economic integrated capitalist logic.” Furthermore, the project protested against the monopoly in Taiwan's cultural policy.

According to Kao, *Operation Little Barbarossa* was very successful. On the road, the artists did not have to make much effort to attract people because they ran or rode toward the BMW318 out of curiosity (fig. 14). The “drivers” would distribute the *act* booklets from within the car. Kao estimated that the team gave out 2,000 copies of their publication. The news television also continuously broadcasted about *Operation Little Barbarossa*. The team was able to spread its message as journalists interviewed them that day. The *Operation Little Barbarossa* video documentary shows the drivers distributing pink *act 01* magazine to pedestrians, gas station workers, and people at bus stops. The

---

68 The video footage was later included in a ten-group exhibition, titled Bio Image, in Tainan, Taiwan. Chen Kai Huang, a conceptual artist and professor at National Taipei University of the Arts, curated the show.

69 Kao, *act 02*, 32.
documentary photographs that Kao provided depict people reading the *act* pamphlets intently at the Yuan-Shan MRT station plaza (fig. 15-16).

*Figure 14. A scooter approaches 小 ACT's BMW to obtain the *act* magazine. Source: Kao Jun-honn.*

Kao reflected that when he and teammates rode the MBW318 to Yuanshan, residents and shop owners in the area reacted differently from Flora Exposition visitors. 小 ACT learned from conversations that the residents and shop owners were fundamentally opposed to the Flora Exposition, despite new business opportunities and free Flora Exposition tickets issued by the Taipei City government. These citizens boycotted the event mainly because the city administration demolished the old Yuanshan Railway Station's historic buildings and trees nearby. The residents and shop owners' 70

---

70 See pages 56-57.
positions demonstrated that some citizens were able to prioritize public cultural and environmental justice over private gain.

Figure 15. The organizers and participants read the *act* pamphlets intently at the Yuan-Shan Metro Station plaza. Source: Kao Jun-honn.

Figure 16. Seated, students read the booklets published and distributed by 小 ACT, *act 1* and 2. Source: Kao Jun-honn.
According to Kao, the 小 ACT team remained at Yuanshan Station Plaza for a long time that day, discussing the Flora Exposition with visitors, passersby, as well as residents who lived directly across from the Yuanshan MRT station. Kao related that those residents living adjacent to the Yuanshan MRT station were very much against the Flora Exposition, and were initially suspicious toward 小 ACT. They asked the artists which department they were from, whether an organization secretly funded their publication, or whether they were from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). It will be recalled that the Democratic Progressive Party was established in 1986, inspired by the Taiwanese people's struggle and sacrifice for self-government. The DPP governed Taiwan from 2000-2008 during Mr. Chen Shui-bian’s presidency. Chen was succeeded by Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomintang, who was elected president in 2008, and again in 2012. The DPP remains the main opposition political party to the KMT, or Chinese Nationalist Party. The artists answered no to all of the above questions. This particular incident exposed two realities. First, the fact that residents questioned 小 ACT's affiliation demonstrates the citizens' lack of trust in information released by the government and its efforts to promote the Flora Exposition and to “revitalize” the city. The situation also revealed that the general public was not familiar with street Performance Art.

小 ACT embarked on another special mission in the same afternoon as Operation Little Barbarossa. Dubbing themselves the “Deadly Scooter Group”, members reached

---


72 奪命機車小組
numerous stores on scooters to disseminate *act*. The movement spread over the entire island of Taiwan. Three subgroups formed in northern, central, and southern Taiwan, according to the cities that members resided in. Each person took a few hundred copies to give away in various towns. Kao covered the spots in Taipei, and left the booklets wherever he thought people would most likely take them.\(^{73}\)

When asked if he encountered any resistance when giving out the pamphlets, Kao recounted that 70-80% of the places agreed to it. However, one bookstore expressed that they did not accept publications with a viewpoint. Kao interpreted the statement to possibly mean that the bookstore rejected publications with a political viewpoint. Kao stated that 小 ACT's statement was exactly to articulate a political stance. On that day, the Deadly Scooter Group placed pamphlets in at least twenty locations in Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsung.

On one level, *Operation Little Barbarossa* was an anti-Flora Exposition gesture. On a deeper level, 小 ACT intended *Operation Little Barbarossa* to inform the public and the government about the problem of “cultural manipulation”.\(^{74}\) *Operation Little Barbarossa* aimed to send different messages to the two groups. To the public, "Operation Little Barbarossa" was an educational vehicle to make people aware of the fact that culture can be manipulated for unjust political economic gain. To the Taipei City Government, "Operation Little Barbarossa" was a warning against the national and city

---

\(^{73}\) Kao left the most number of copies in various Eslite bookstores (a chain) and Nanhai Gallery (南海藝), an exhibition space in central Taipei.

\(^{74}\) 文化操控的問題. *Kao, act 02*, 1.
administrations, reminding officials that their cultural manipulation and selfishness would not go unchecked.

**Alternative Guided Tours**

Originally, 小ACT had advertised two free Flora Exposition guided tours on the “100% handmade luxury BMW recreational vehicle”. As opposed to regular guided tours that promote and praise a tourist destination, the 小ACT BMW tours were meant to educate and help participants confront reality. The first tour was to reminisce about the structures destroyed in the process of Flora Exposition's preparation. The second tour was to “appreciate” the fake parks created to “beautify Taipei”. Ironically named “Flying Butterflies: Erasing Memories [of places] Surrounding the Flora Exposition” and “Happy Farms: Taipei Beautiful Fake Parks”, the two tours would run for ten days each, from November 20 to December 10, 2012. However, these free tours did not take place as initially planned because the BMW318 had to be dismantled prematurely. At the end of *Operation Little Barbarossa*, the artists parked the BMW318 in an alley nearby Yuanshuan. After a while, they suddenly heard the news television reporting about a hearse illegally occupying an alleyway. The artists realized that the “hearse” was referring to their BMW318. Due to the lack of a parking space, team members scrapped the car that night.

Although the alternative tours never occurred, their conception indicates 小ACT's desire to provide citizens with a more realistic understanding of the effects of the Flora Exposition. Moreover, the first tour's title, “Flying Butterflies: Erasing Memories [of places] Surrounding the Flora Exposition” expresses 小ACT's concern for environmental
and cultural preservation; it implies that removal of trees for Exposition-related construction causes ecological damage, and that demolishing historic buildings prevents people from learning about the country's past. The second tour's title is a clear criticism of the Taipei Beautiful Policy, a zoning bonus program that encourages landowners to transform small fields into temporary green spaces. These areas are deemed “fake parks” by critics because in eighteen months, they will become building sites for high-rise structures.

“We Need an Army”

During a conversation with the Kao, the artist reflected on the formation of 小ACT's and its production of texts and images. Kao recalled that even before the Flora Exposition, he and a group of artists started to feel that “urban planning” was turning the city of Taipei into “an outrageous place.”75 The artists wanted to do something to express their frustration. With 小ACT, Kao wanted to create something disruptive through interventionist strategies. However, the immediate results of these interruptive actions were not as highly effective as Kao had envisioned, since they were temporary and reached only a limited public. Consequently, 小ACT sought to create a long-term impact through documentation and publication. To respond to the urgency of the Flora Exposition issue, three act booklets were published at the rate of one per month. Regarding act's content, Kao stated that urban redevelopment and the Flora Exposition were the two focuses and that they were interconnected. The three-part act series expounds on the major points of 小ACT's critique of the 2012 Taipei Flora Exposition,

75 Interview with Kao, June 23, 2012.
including its shallow rationale, wasteful spending of public funds, lack of environmental sustainability, and mistreatment of architectural heritage. The team also condemns the Taipei City government's Flora Exposition building regulations, which encourages real-estate speculation and gentrification. The publication uses humor, satire, and serious critique to expose the negative side of urban development and the 2012 Taipei Flora Exposition.

In the first issue, act 01, 小 ACT establishes a militant and collective tone with the title, We Need an Army. In the preface, “Compass in A Sea of Flowers”, chief editor and founding member of 小 ACT, Kao Jun-honn, proclaims that act is a “book of anger” – “plebeians' anger,” combined and articulated through text. Kao explicates that this literature is produced because Taiwan needs a “cultural army” to respond to its government's unrelenting cultural policies. He maintains that the Flora Exposition has again caused people to lose their sense of direction in a sea of flowers. For instance, building the exposition venues obliterates citizens' memories of these spaces and disrupts their existing pace of life. Kao offers an extensive definition of being lost. It means losing the sense of direction and the ability to determine space and time. For Kao, however, getting lost in the context of the Flora Exposition implies more serious consequences for Taiwan’s inhabitants. It signifies losing a grasp of historical memory and a sense of control over everyday living spaces.

76 憤怒之冊, act 01, 1; 庶民之怒, act 01, 1.
77 An inclusive tone is found in the original Chinese text, which uses “our” instead of “citizens’” and “their”. My translation from act 01: We Need An Army, page 1.
Even though the government claimed and the media suggested that the Flora Exposition was the first internationally credited global exhibition, the event lacked a consensus between the government and Taipei's citizens from the very beginning. The Taipei City government allocated significant funds to continuously plant flowers, telling citizens that flowers can make the world see Taiwan again. Kao stated that the ideology of stepping into the global arena through a sea of flowers was superfluous and superficial. He indicated that Taiwan is already positioned on the global map. Moreover, the Flora Exposition was superficial because it only attempted to attract the world's attention by giving Taipei a facelift. In the interview, Kao stated that rather than using flowers to create fleeting beauty to Taiwan's capital, people need to establish an enduring, pragmatic worldview. He explained that a practical perspective compelled people to study and deepen their own culture using existing, limited assets and resources. Kao argued that only in this way can dialogue with the world have real substance. Such a dialogue provides an external reference for self-introspection.

The Flora Exposition did not create a channel conducive to increasing the world's understanding of Taiwan. Rather than showcasing Taipei and Taiwan's unique cultures and aesthetics, the Taipei City government created generic, temporary, and unsustainable winter gardens in an attempt to attract the world's attention. For Kao, such behavior displays Taiwan's complete lack of self-confidence. Kao's critique can be expanded to explain the government's responsibility in creating Taipei City's world image. The Taipei City government's lack of appreciation for Taiwan's vibrant and diverse cultures contributed to the non-distinctive representation of Taipei. The city administrators, as act
pointed out, failed to seize an opportunity for cultural self-examination and presentation. The failure to consider, understand, and incorporate Taiwan's essential cultural aspects resulted in a meaningless international event far removed from its cultural context.

Furthermore, the Taipei Flora Exposition used visual extravagance and beauty to provide momentary entertainment (figs. 17-18), but it did not encourage understanding or reflection. The theme of flowers was irrelevant to and disassociated from most citizens' everyday life. Instead of being offered an opportunity to reconsider their own history and the land they live on, domestic visitors took a day trip to Taipei, appreciated the flowers, and returned to their everyday lives. International visitors arrived in Taipei to see a contrived, fanciful utopia that did not represent Taiwan's reality: an island of breathtaking natural scenery and diverse cultural groups. As a result, people benefited little from the Flora Exposition, and the Taipei City government missed an important opportunity to introduce Taiwan to the world in a meaningful way.
In contrast to the Flora Exposition, Kao’s philosophy of exploring and knowing one’s own culture as a premise for meaningful international exchange is sensible and
grounded. He calls for representations of Taiwan that are more closely connected to its own history and unique cultural characteristics. According to Kao, 小 ACT's performances and publications are based on a cultural expression through extensive, critical self-reflection. This type of practice is more significant than the 2012 Taipei Flora Exposition's conventional and fragmented portrayal of Taipei and Taiwan.

If Taipei and Taiwan's general public was lost in the government’s endeavors to “bring the country onto the global stage”, then 小 ACT aspired to be a compass that oriented the readers by providing historical and contemporary facts on Taipei City. The collective investigated the inner-workings of Taipei City’s land, property, and building policies through archival research, site visits, and interviews. In addition to speaking to residents affected by urban renewal around Taipei, 小 ACT also invited architecture and urban planning scholars to write for their publication. In the act 01’s introduction, Kao emphasized that act publications are practical manuals for direct actions. Kao hoped that these booklets would make people aware of the danger of shallow cultural policies. He argued that cultural policies focused on appearances are not only mundane but also potentially harmful.

A major portion of act 01 is dedicated to examining the effect of the Flora Exposition on the surrounding landscape. In order to understand the changes in landscape throughout history in Yuanshan, the area hosting the main Flora Exposition venue, 小 ACT surveyed the streets near Yuanshan MRT Station (fig. 19). It discovered that the Yuanshan Station and the surrounding buildings, built in 1900, are historically significant

---

78 Kao, preface, act 01, 1.
because they record Taiwan's colonial history. These structures marked Taiwan's transition from an agricultural-industrial country to one centered on high technology. According to 小 ACT, the former Taiwan railroad dormitory was originally the residence of Japan's eighth governor in Taiwan. Built in a standard Japanese design –four rooms and a courtyard –the building became abandoned when the old Tamsui rail line stopped its operation in 1988. In 1997, the Tamsui Line became Taiwan's first traditional railway to transition into a high-speed track. 小 ACT's fieldwork indicated that through demolition, the government's Flora Exposition building plans disregarded historically significant structures that symbolized Taiwan's political and economic development.79

Figure 19. Street view next to the Yuanshan MRT Station, during the Flora Exposition. Source: https://picasaweb.google.com/nkshmay98/100032815#5590266717618926050

79 Kao, act 01, 12.
This negligence of national history is further demonstrated by an *act* article, which features the hundred-year-old Yuanshan Train Station and railway staff dormitories that previously existed on Lane 9, Jiuquan Street in Datong District (fig. 20). The article reports that the Taipei City government dismantled these buildings under the reasoning that they looked too unsightly, thus creating a sense of visual chaos. However, this redevelopment plan was heavily criticized because the narrow Jiuquan Street was clearly inappropriate to function as a traffic hub. The city government also contradicted itself when it attempted to fell trees around the railway staff dormitories while delivering the Flora Exposition message of greening the environment. As a result, an anti-demolition association was established to protest specifically Jiuquan Street's demolition plan. After a reevaluation by the Department of Cultural Affairs, the four hundred-year old trees and the stationmaster's residence were allowed to remain. However, most of the trees and buildings on Jiuquan Street were demolished. Lane 9, Jiuquan Street later became a large field of concrete and a street nearby was “transformed” into a transit center (fig. 21). Kao remarked that some “idiotic looking” statues of the Flower Exposition mascots are now installed on that site (fig. 22).

---

80 大同區九泉街
82 Interview with the Kao.
Figure 20. The old Yuanshan Train Station. Source: Xuite Diary, Ian's Raiway Dream Walk. http://blog.xuite.net/yihan.wu/Ian/23456677

Figure 21. The newly built transit center near the Yuanshan MRT Station. Source: Gray Hair Baby (Blog). http://xiang-shou.blogspot.com/2011/03/b-226-37.html
Kao's choice of words in describing the Flora Exposition mascots reveals his frustration stemming from the impracticality of Yuanshan's renewal plan and these visual symbols' disconnection from Taiwan's culture. The cartoon-like characters made no reference to Taiwanese aesthetics, history, or flora, and could have been designed and installed in any country. Their presence was misleading because it helped label the Flora Exposition as a fantastical event with children as its main audience. Unlike the city government that obliterated Yuanshan's historical architecture and replaced it with indistinctive pop icons, 小ACT researched historical images to help readers rediscover Yuanshan's past. In 1886, an Englishman, C. Collingwood traveled through the area of Yuanshan Station by boat and recorded photos printed below (figs 23-24). The pictorial representations provide a great contrast to Yuanshan's post-redevelopment landscape. While 小ACT attempted to retrieve the memory of Yuanshan's past, the Taipei City
government hurriedly changed its appearance into one that is ubiquitous and devoid of cultural significance.


*Figures 24.* Yuanshan photographed by C. Collingwood in 1886. Source: *act 01*, 16.
Taipei Beautiful…If Only for a Few Months

Since the Flora Exposition seemed to have had no significant immediate or long-term benefit for the interests of Taiwan's general public, critics suggested that the Taipei City government and developers designed this occasion to encourage uneven urban revitalization and real estate speculation. 小 ACT elaborates on this critique in act 01, stating that the Flora Exposition was a good excuse for city officials and developers to demolish unsightly homes, integrate land, and build new residential and commercial complexes. The Taipei Beautiful policy and the consequent “fake parks” were two major components in Taipei's building policy that came under close scrutiny.

A 小 ACT article titled “There are Plants in the Parks, There are No Houses for Citizens” explains how the Taipei Beautiful policy produces temporary “fake parks” that benefit not the environment but developers (fig. 25). This report indicates that more than seventy empty lots became “fake parks” under the Taipei Beautiful Series Two policy. The reason these parks were called “fake” was that in eighteen months the “useless” small lawns, devoid of any greening effect, would be converted into floor area bonus, allowing land owners and developers to build structures that are one and a half times the original legal height limit.83

83 The original Chinese title for “There are Parks with Plants, but Citizens Have No House to Live” is 公園有草木，市民沒房子. Yang Kai-wen. Act 02, 4-5.
A picture of a mock calendar, reprinted from the Facebook group “Take a Good Look at Taipei, Eighteen-Month Fake Parks”, points out the Taipei Beautiful Series Two policy's faulty efforts (fig. 26). The calendar accuses the government of selling state-owned lands' usage rights cheaply to financial groups, which “steal” potential public spaces for future generations. These temporary, green patches (fig. 27) are in effect preparatory lands for luxury residences. The text also predicts that development corporations will unreasonably inflate land value. Combined with the government's excessive zoning bonus, future overpriced, towering buildings would not only block out sunshine but also violate people's “right to survive.”

---

84 This group staged its own protests. See https://www.facebook.com/fake.park
85 生存權. Yang, act 02, 4.
Figure 26. A fake calendar created by the “Taipei Beautify: 18-Month Fake Parks” group. https://www.facebook.com/fake.park

小 ACT presented its own suspicion toward the Taipei Beautiful policy in a section titled “Taipei Beautiful Point-to-Point Investigation.” The collective maintained that the Taipei City government disregarded the basic principles of green landscape planning, such as bio-diversity and foundation water retention index. Rather than upholding the notion of sustainability in its efforts to create extensive green landscapes, the administration used “green aesthetics” as a catchphrase to produce numerous untended green lawns that destroy Taipei's urban texture.
Suspecting the Taipei Beautiful policy to be a governmental practice to benefit financial corporations, ACT sent two volunteers to investigate the incentives and commercial interests behind this policy. The volunteers surveyed ten areas that had been transformed into green spaces under the Taipei Beautiful policy. Their findings revealed that these lots, by now all owned by various firms, provided minimal public benefits, such as pedestrian passing for open space. At the same time, they had maximum potential for constructing buildings ranging from sixteen to forty-six levels. During our interview, Kao noted the peculiar involvement of financial corporations in the “fake park”. He observed that in addition to private citizens, a considerable number of financial

86 *Act 02*, 6-8.
corporations participated and benefited from the Taipei Beautiful policy. They did so by seizing the opportunity to negotiate with landowners and to purchase private lands, knowing that the land could make money.

Another disconcerting result of the Taipei Beautiful policy was the demolition of existing historic structures. The zoning bonus ordinance, a regulation that grants additional floor area building allowance, allowed this. Kao found it “despicable” that among these demolished houses were Japanese-style structures, “which were quite lovely” (fig. 28). He explained that these structures were unprotected because they lacked official historic status. A set of rules and regulations dictate that if buildings do not possess historic status, they can be torn down at any moment. Many Japanese-style houses in Taipei do not have the protection and recognition of historic treasure, when owners do not apply for the historic status label (fig. 29). As a result, under the implementation of the Taipei Beautiful policy, several elegant Japanese-style buildings were destroyed without restrictions. Japanese colonialism is an integral part of Taiwan's history, and the physical disappearance of these Japanese structures eradicates the visual symbols that remind Taiwan's people of their national history.

---

87 Interview with the artist.
Figure 28. A Japanese-style building on Qingtian St. in Da’an District, Taipei City. Source: http://pic.pimg.tw/yuminghui/4ad5d57393e96.jpg

Figure 29. Another Japanese-style structure on Qingtian St. in Da’an District, Taipei City. Source: http://piggy-mylifemystyle.blogspot.com/2010/12/blog-post_19.html
“Fragrant Flowers or Iron Tribulus?”

The Taipei Flora Exposition did not enrich cultural awareness. On the contrary, it was superficial, extravagant, financially unsustainable, and environmentally destructive. To support this idea, ACT reprinted a Taiwan Architect Magazine article, “Fragrant Flowers or Lethal Weapon Iron Tribulus? The Sustainable Actions and Strategies Activated by the Unjustified”. This critique by the architecture professor and member of OURs, Huang Jui-mao argued against the Flora Exposition from various perspectives.

Huang's essay responds to the Taipei Mayor Hao Lung-pin's rhetoric on the Flora Exposition as related to land regulations. In a newspaper article, “Presenting a Fresh Bouquet to Citizens”, Mayor Hao stated that the city government made a “breakthrough” by passing a bold reform in building laws. He noted that zoning credits and zoning bonuses enabled the city government to “demolish, clean, green, and aestheticize eighty-three derelict houses in the short period of one year”. Hao reasoned that because seventy percent of the “transformed” areas are “public land”, Taipei citizens will reap future benefits from this zoning bonus policy. Hao praised the Taipei City government

---

88 This article in act 02, 10-21 is reprinted from Taiwan Architect Magazine (建築師雜誌), October 2010; OURs stands for The Organization of Urban R-s, a professional organization established in 1989 that focuses on urban reforms. It emerged out of the Homeless Solidarity Alliance (無住屋者團結組織) that organized earlier in the same year. According to introduction to the organization, “R-s” may stand for Re-design, Re-Plan, Re-build, Review, and Revolution. For more information on urban reform and the homeless rights movement in Taiwan, see OURs, http://www.ours.org.tw/about; Tsuei Ma-Ma Foundation For Housing And Community Services, http://www.tmm.org.tw/English/about_EN.htm and Formosa, Tsuei Mama and Urban Reform Organization, “Grade Report for Ten Years of the Snails' Journey: An Interview with Homeless Solidarity Alliance Chairman Li Hisng-long,” reprinted from Pots Weekly (破週報) 65, 1999 6/25 - 7/1. http://bbs.nsysu.edu.tw/txtVersion/treasure/tmm/M.855789194.D/M.872869045.A/M.930843686.A.html All links accessed July 17, 2013.

for obtaining an area of green spaces equivalent to the entire Da'an Park (approximately 64 acres) for its Taipei's residents.\(^{90}\)

Although Hao portrayed his administration's new “transformative” policies and efforts positively, his rationale was problematic because the converted green areas were impractical for leisure enjoyment and environmental sustainability. The greenified spaces “equaling to an entire Da'an Park” were in fact miniscule patches of grass scattered across Taipei. Citizens had little use for these obscure places, which lack any recreational facilities or community interaction. More importantly, unlike Da'an Park, these so-called “parks” are transient; in a few months they will turn into construction sites for high-rise buildings.

Secondly, Huang suggested that the Flora Exposition was created as a pretense for real estate speculation. He based his theory on the timely introduction of new zoning laws and Mayor Hao's public statement, both of which occurred simultaneously with the Flora Exposition preparation. Huang also reiterated that the Flora Exposition was exclusively beneficial for government officials and developers but financially nonviable for Taiwan. From a marketing perspective, Huang pointed out that the “International” Flora Exposition, contrary to its title, targeted domestic consumers rather than international visitors. For instance, according to media reports, the nationwide advertising fees were three times that of the international advertisement budget. Though the Taipei City government claimed that the exposition could attract eight million visitors, it only aimed to attract four hundred thousand foreign visitors. Therefore, rather than generating

\(^{90}\) Totaling eighteen hectares, approximately 44.479 acres.
international revenue that could be channeled towards public welfare programs, the Taipei City government procured from its own citizens.®

Huang observed the major motivation for the city government's behavior during the pre-Exposition preparation. He suggested that the government cleaned up the city's “underdeveloped” areas and “created stratified landscapes in order to enlarge the real estate market”. Huang criticized the Taipei City government's developmentalism-driven urban development policies, suggesting that the Flora Exposition could have been a critical, positive occasion for Taipei's urban transformation. He argued that the city administration could have used this large-scale event as an opportunity to advance urban infrastructural adjustment by reaching a common ground on Taipei's urban development. Unfortunately, communication and dialogue with the general public were “non-existent”; instead, contestation for urban spaces began in full-force. Furthermore, the city's motivation to create a “bourgeoisified urban landscape” became apparent when the officials employed the police to disperse homeless persons.®

Thus, the Taipei City's urban policy recalls the uneven urban development as discussed by Deutsche, Zukins, and Miles, who mainly referred to American examples. Taipei's case demonstrates that the exclusion of the professional-working class and the further alienation of underprivileged citizens were similarly occurring in Asia.® In Taipei, it is clear that the city government and associated real estate developers utilized

---

® Kao, act 02, 13.
® Huang, act 02, 13-16.
® In the past ten years, particularly during the last five, aggressive government endorsed urban (re)development schemes have been rampant in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and Korea. The number of ineffective “revitalizations” that disregard the environment and local residents exceed positive instances. According to Kao Jun-honn's research, the homelessness issue is also critical in Japan.
the 2010 Taipei “International” Flora Exposition as a gateway to boost the local housing market. The simultaneous “urban development” was ineffective, detrimental, and exclusive because it overlooked public participation in urban policy-making and solely benefited the politico-economic elite.²⁴ It is evident that the Flora Exposition was used as a cover for “urban cleanup”.

Though economic incentives are the apparent cause for the rapid and rampant destruction of Taipei's unique architecture, Taiwan's colonial history might be the primary reason for a widespread disregard for these valuable cultural assets. Ironically, although most of Taiwan's people initially celebrated Japan's departure and welcomed the Chinese Nationalists (KMT), they soon realized that the KMT was a militant party that intended to use Taiwan as a temporary base to retake China. The KMT's political ambitions, its sense of cultural superiority, and lack of genuine interest in Taiwan's welfare precipitated the island-wide pillage and rape as well as the subsequent 2-28 incident and White Terror.

Like Japan, the KMT coveted Taiwan's rich natural resources and labor and treated the non-Mandarin speaking population –the Taiwanese-speaking, Haka-speaking, and aboriginal groups –as inferior. Discrimination and segregation were common in professional and everyday settings. Taiwan's people, who imagined a return to the “warm embrace of motherland”, were greatly disappointed because they not only remained “second-class citizens” but were traumatized into another silent oppression under a new military dictatorship. Historic factors may explain the government's aggressive

²⁴ Huang refers to primary information release by a real estate professional, providing evidence of a near sixty-three percent increase in housing market's unit price (from five hundred thousand NT to eight hundred thousand NT per square meter). Kao, *act 02*, 14.
development schemes and its thoughtless demolition of older buildings island-wide. The KMT's antagonism against the Japanese colonizers and their derision of non-Mandarin speaking groups contributed to Taiwan's current cultural identity confusion, fragmentation, and political indifference. Despite the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, numerous fine Fujian and Japanese style residences continued to be demolished in the urbanization process of the 1900s.  

Huang's and ACT's distress over the current destruction of Taipei's urban environment was shared by various grassroots organizations across the country. Contrary to its professed mission to “beautify and greenify the city”, the Flora Exposition was ecologically detrimental. For example, the greenery planted on the fencings of construction zones (fig. 30) was ineffective in trapping carbon emissions because its “soil coverage” was less than the necessary 0.3 meters. Additionally, the “greenified” construction fencings were entirely made of steel, which meant that they actually increased, rather than reduced, carbon emission in the city. Additional public protests arose when the city government removed a significant number of trees in order to construct various pavilions, including the removal of 1,000 or more mature trees in central Taipei. As the spokesperson for the Tree Protection Alliance, Huang maintained that the government's choice of the display areas demonstrates a lack of vision and concern for the city's sustainable development. At the same time, community members

---

95 The 228 incident and the subsequent White Terror during Taiwan's martial law period made the questioning of governmental policies taboo. For a detailed account of Taiwan’s history in cultural heritage preservation, see Lin Hui-Chun’s “A General Introduction to Taiwan Cultural Heritage”, Encyclopedia of Taiwan, Taiwan Ministry of Culture. http://taiwanpedia.culture.tw/web/content?ID=723#. Accessed July 13, 2013.

96 Huang, act 02, 15.
found several other aspects of the Exposition's building plan absurd: “remove trees to plant rice”, “build a water-consuming tea farm and stepped rice fields”, and “a bike bath without entrance and exit points”. These types of construction countered environmental sustainability.  

Figure 30. “Greenified” fence in Taipei. Source: http://tw.mag.cnyes.com/Content/20100624/5a7a167797374f2e9f9f48ee64abd7ab_1.shtml

At the same time, Huang indicated that Taipei's limited green space restricted its ability to cope with dramatic climate changes. He explained that parks are essential for water drainage and flood management, and concluded that the government's decision to build the Exposition venues in designated green spaces revealed its negligent attitude toward prioritizing urban parks. Huang mentioned that in the 1930s, the colonial Japanese

97 including Xin Sheng Park (新生公園), a park by Keelung River (基隆河旁之一公園), and the portion of Taipei Artistic Park’s with the highest tree density. Huang, act 02, 20.
government envisioned seventeen parks for Taipei’s urban life. However, Taipei's post World War II urban development under the Chinese Nationalists focused on building structures and ignored Japan's blueprint for green spaces. In Huang's view, this tendency to “disregard urban planning” and the necessity of greeneries puts Taipei at risk for urban heat island and urban flooding. Therefore, as Huang discussed, incorporating parks into urban design is important because they facilitate recreation, beautify the urban environment, and safeguard the city during climate crises.

In order to halt the current ecologically harmful development and to rally for increased public participation in policy decision-making, the 2010 Taipei Flora Exposition Fan Group initiated the “Ecology City, Give Back the Parks” citizens' movement. It demanded that the city administration convert several current public spaces into urban parks according to the original Japanese design. At the same time, the Fan Group created the Urban Taipei Burning Map as a long-term effort to supervise the government's urban policies. The map (fig. 31) indicates “danger zones” where green spaces should be located. This informative visualization educated Taipei's residents on their environment by tracking green spaces’ growth and decrease. It was instrumental in raising public awareness and preventing the city from becoming a “concrete forest”. The map also indicates the degree to which green spaces are lacking in Taipei City. Out

---

99 生態城市，還我公園運動
100 “Concrete forest” refers to an environment populated by concrete high-rise buildings. See http://burningmap.blogspot.com/
of the twenty-five locations that need green space, eighteen are concentrated in or near central Taipei.

![Figure 31. A map indicating areas in Taipei that need more green space. Source: Citizens Demanding Green Space Action Plan@Burning Map. http://burningmap.blogspot.com/](image)

Additionally, Huang provided other reasons for his negative evaluation of the Exposition's effectiveness: its obscure mission, lack of educational purpose, and detachment from residents' everyday life. Referring to the objectives of AIPH (International Association of Horticultural Producers), Huang suggested that instead of showcasing flowers and plants, media reports and the Taipei Flora Exposition official website emphasized recreational activities, architecture, and nearby facilities.\[^{101}\]

\[^{101}\text{The most relevant is AIPH's objective number two: “every country should organize an Expo to show its professional Horticulture sector. Every country should organize was Refer to the AIPH website:}\]
A visual analysis of the 2010 International Flora Exposition official website provides strong support for Huang's statements. Prominently located at the top of the main page are five topics: Overview, Pavilions, Event, Albums, and Venues – none of which incorporates information on flora. The hyperlink to “Horticulture” is demurely placed on the left panel, after “Ticket”, “Transportation”, and “News.” Upon entering the “Horticulture” page, one discovers a list of flowers that are featured in the exposition. However, flower images are merely three quarters of an inch in size, disproportionate in scale, poor in color definition, and clearly reformatted from low pixel, one by one inch photographs. The only information beneath the flower pictures are their English and scientific names. There is no indication of their country of origin or any special section focused on Taiwan's native plants. In comparison, larger, higher-resolution photographs of the various “pavilions” dominate the website; extensive details on the architectural designs and celebratory events are readily available. A view of the Flora Exposition’s official website indicates that this event’s real focus lay outside of environmental sustainability or horticultural education.

It is apparent that the city government desired to showcase Taipei and attract tourism; however, the venues and pavilions presented a miscellany of information that contained minimal historic or cultural significance. The lack of focus, depth, and breath in the exposition's overall concept was represented by the incongruent naming of the pavilions, such as: Pavilion of Future, Pavilion of Dreams, Pavilion of Angel Life, and


103 Consists of a brief introductory greeting by Mayor Hao and explanation of the event's logo.
Pavilion of Aroma Flowers (a souvenir shop). In this regard, the city government failed to enrich and educate visitors on two levels: first, the exposition overlooked what should have been its main theme – flora and environmental awareness; secondly, as an international occasion, Taipei lacked a coherent narrative to enhance foreigners' socio-historical understanding of Taiwan. The absence of a cohesive message indicated the purely economic incentive of the Flora Exposition.

Moreover, the Flora Exposition, though located in the heart of Taipei City adjacent to citizens' everyday activities, was far removed from their daily life. The most telling aspect was the non-existent community participation in the Exposition's planning process and implementation. According to Huang, Taipei City missed a golden opportunity to involve its residents strategically and actively. He elaborates that the eleven hundred million NT “City Garden” project, outsourced to a company that planted potted flowers in the streets and alleys, would be more viable if managed by local communities. He observed that the potted plants and “green walls” installed by the commissioned company withered due to neglect, and suggested that neighborhoods could help create sustainable communities by planting flowers in the soil and tending to them long term.\(^\text{104}\)

Apart from its detachment to citizens' everyday life, Huang criticizes the Flora Exposition's financial aspect, arguing that its budget: twelve billion, three hundred million NT in total, could have been allocated to serve numerous other more socially

\(^{104}\) Kao, *Act 02*, 15.
Calling the Taipei City government's tax expenditure into question, Huang investigates the idea: “What can twelve billion, three-hundred million New Taiwan dollars do?” In a symposium with the same title, participants responded to Mayor Hao's claim that the main purpose of the 2010 Taipei Flora Exposition was to place Taipei on the world map. They proposed numerous alternatives that could have achieved this aim. For example, twelve billion, three hundred million NT could have been utilized to double the number of rental housing in Taipei. The funds could also support the entire 16,000 “vulnerable, middle to low income households” for 17.8 years. Another attendee suggested that the budget could have provided one year's free lunch to 1.5 to 1.8 million school children. Compared to the superficial, commercial Flora Exposition that taxed both citizens and the environment, these recommendations were socially meaningful and ameliorative.

Although the 2010 International Taipei Flora Exposition was a missed opportunity for public education, urban transformation, industries upgrade, and citizenship participation, Huang took pride in his grassroots efforts to improve urban design and life quality. He to this day is encouraged by the collaborations among concerned citizen groups that seek a participatory and sustainable transformation for Taipei despite the government's unresponsiveness and inefficacy. He remarks that shared common values and a “participatory governmental practice” within the Tree Protection Alliance transcended Taipei's exclusionary urban governance. The organization of the

106 act 02, 12-13 records the symposium discussions; The cost of free lunch varies according to cities.  
107 參與式的治理模式, Huang, act 02, 21.
2010 Taipei Flora Exposition Fan Group and the *Taipei Burning Map* are indications that the city government's inadequacies prompted concerned citizens to take direct action.

**Artists Respond**

Taipei's unbalanced, exclusive, and environmentally destructive urban development from 2009 to 2014 incited numerous protests and debates. Among concerned citizens were artists and scholars, including Kao and Huang, who explored the question: how can artists, as citizens, respond to the absurd and unjust Flora Exposition? On January 29, 2010, Kao gathered a group of about eight artists at Zhuwei for a discussion on the “Anti-Flora Exposition as a Possibility for an Art Movement” (fig. 32). Their dialogues focused on what artists could do regarding problems associated with the Flora Exposition. An architecture professor, Huang Jui-mao, stated that the Flora Exposition would only benefit Taipei's citizens if it guided them to consider how to create a sustainable living environment. Huang commented that although the Flora Exposition could have led to a citizens' movement, the administration was merely using this grand festival as a smokescreen to develop the city. The government's efforts, Huang maintained, went against reducing carbon dioxide pollution. For instance, rather than encouraging individual households to build their own flower walls and maintain them economically with recycled rain water, the city government spent sixty million NT to build a flower wall. Eventually, the flowers on the wall either withered or were stolen.

---

108 竹圍, located in northern Taipei.
109 20,675,400 US Dollars.
Huang also remarked that the Taipei Beautiful policy was absurd, as it permits and encourages private landowners to turn undeveloped land into future building sites.\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{figure}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Artists gathered for a collective discussion about the Flora Exposition in Zhuwei. Photo: \textit{act 02}, 18.}
\end{figure}

The art critic Chen Tai-song stated that the Flora Exposition was essentially a way for the government to legitimize its capitalist mode of operation. He indicated that the Flora Exposition reflected Taiwan's cultural policy problem. The venue's location next to the Taipei Museum of Fine Arts highlighted the great discrepancy in governmental resource distribution. For Chen, the fact that the Taipei city government spent significant

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{act 01}, 18-19; \textit{act 01}, 18-19; Huang also authored “Fragrant Flowers or Lethal Weapon Iron Tribulus? The Sustainable Actions and Strategies Activated by the Unjustified Floral Expo and the Possible Development of the Former Site of the 202 Ammunition Factory,” \textit{Taiwan Architect Magazine} No. 430, October 2010, 98-105.
sums of money on the Flora Exposition, but not equally on the cultural sphere, proved that the government lacked a cultural perspective.\textsuperscript{111}

The artist Hsu Chien-Yu disapproved of art as a tool in political movements, as people generally experience it. Instead art should enter the public arena to engage people directly and in new ways. For instance, Hsu explained that establishing a pirate broadcasting station, or intercepting an existing station might allow people to experience art as something other than a prop. Hsu's critique of art as a prop could refer to the Flora mascot sculptures, painted surfaces, and other “arts” the Taipei City government used as a means to aestheticize and promote the Flora Exposition (fig 17-18; 22). At the same time, the proposal of a pirate broadcasting station or intercepting another channel is unusual but not unprecedented. Tactical Media is a term coined in 1996 to characterize a form of media activism that favors temporary, hit-and-run interventions. Often a combination of art and activism, these types of activities tend to be aggressive and counter-establishment, resembling guerilla tactics. An example is the Critical Art Ensemble's *Radio Bikes* (2000), which created bikes designed for “nomadic broadcast”. The art collective described the broadcasts as “détournements of fascist news items.”\textsuperscript{112}

Hsu's suggestion of using an underground channel to contravene the Flora Exposition echoes *act 01's* militaristic title, “we need an army,” and emphasizes collective action through alternative media.

\textsuperscript{111} *Act 01*, 19.

It is a common sentiment among Taiwan's artists that the name of art is misused to mask politico-economic interests. For instance in a postscript, Kao laments the fact that “anything controversial about the Exposition is labeled 'art','” and interprets this phenomenon as symptomatic of a national political system that lacks a participatory model, in which “everything is dominated by politicians”. He questions whether a mature political system is possible where the people can decide what they themselves want for their city. At the same time, Kao is hopeful that 小 ACT can counteract the current situation by raising citizens' awareness. He proposes diverse methods of protest and envisions for Taiwan a “cultural autonomy” created through a more nuanced and inclusive process. Moreover, Kao hopes that environmental, cultural and political issues can become a part of the general public's “language base.”

**Cell Phone Flash Mob Action**

One of the public protest actions 小 ACT devised was a flash mob action, titled *My Unruly Alarm Clock Disturbed Your Whispers*. On the end cover of *act 02*, 小 ACT invited readers to join them in this “Flora Expo Flash Mob Action.” The event took place on December 18, 2010 at the Yuanshan MRT station, Exit 1. The plan of action directed participants to preset their cell phone alarms to 1:05pm, and to turn their speaker volume to the maximum. Participants were asked to wander around the venue beforehand. More than forty people participated in the *Flora Expo Flash Mob Action*. Two-thirds were acquaintances of 小 ACT, and the rest unfamiliar faces. Apart from advertising the event beforehand, 小 ACT arrived early at Yuanshan Station to hand out *act 2*. They explained

---

113 Kao, *act 02*, 32.
the performance to passersby, and invited them to take part. Even the police received the literature and were invited to participate.

The flash mob performance lasted for only three minutes, with each minute marking a phase. In the first phase, “Amazing Field [with] Floral Sounds,” all the actors waited for their cell phone alarms to sound simultaneously at 1:05pm. The participants continued to wander as if nothing special had happened. In the second minute, for the “Still as a Flower” stage, everyone froze in still motion while the alarms kept sounding. For the final step, “Dead Flowers No Regrets,” people sat down for a minute and dispersed. These actions were carried out in silence, and the three minutes were measured by each actor's body clock. Kao explained that using the cell phone as a prop for the flash mob action was more discrete, and it would prevent shyer participants from backing out.114

After the flash mob action ended, the artists wanted further to express their views; thus they started to read writings from act 2 aloud. This attracted attention from the nearby police, who approached to photograph and collect the “evidence” — the act 2 booklets. However, there was no further confrontation. Although it was difficult to observe the audience's reaction as the artists performed, Kao judged that visitors were slightly taken by surprise. Kao recalled two types of public responses. Some, particular younger ones, were willing to listen when the artists shared their viewpoints. Others, who

---

114 小 ACT had printed ten thousand copies of act 02 and distributed them at the same locations as act 01. The original Chinese titles for the flashmob action’s three phases were: 妙田花音, 不動如花, and 花屍不悔, Kao, back cover of act 2.
had made the trip to visit the Flora Exposition, ignored the message that the Flora Exposition was negative.

Although flash mobs and Participatory Art both share a reliance on participants to complete the work, they differ in process. Participatory Art often involves research and conversations to examine the issue at hand, and thus encourages sustained interaction and mutual learning between the artists and participants. In contrast, flash mobs are characterized by their brevity. While participants form a temporary bond through their actions, they communicate little before the performance and remain strangers after their dispersal. Nevertheless, a flash mob, defined by its intentional irreverence, was appropriate for ACT's purpose of opposing the Flora Exposition. John H. Muse fittingly describes flash mobs as “revolts against predictability, diversions from a sterile status quo…animated by an implicit agenda to reclaim public space from state and corporate control.”

This description applies to My Unruly Alarm Clock Disturbed Your Whispers, which was successful in arousing passersby's curiosity. However, the flash performance would have been even more effective if it had been digitally recorded, for it could have been disseminated online to encourage further discussion on the Exposition.

**Clear the Old and Ugly for the New and Beautiful**

In the article, “When It's Not Just Animals That are Evicted!,” ACT dismantles the city government's assertion that Taipei is a “Friendly City” by using the Flora Exposition to illustrate the hypocrisy in its contrived image. The authors reflected that

---

116 The article's original Chinese title is 當驅離的對象不只是畜生！. Act 03, 10.
despite the media's portrayal of the event as a symbol of “progress” and “beauty,” many ugly and backward practices occurred during the its preparation period. An obvious example was the effort to eliminate stray dogs and the homeless. In its attempt to “transform” Taipei into a modern, advanced, and prosperous city, the government launched an aggressive campaign against these people and animals, labeling them as “urban garbage” to be cleared from a neat and beautiful city. In 小 ACT's view, this “urban cleansing” “conveniently occurred” prior to the Flora Exposition, when the city officials conveyed to citizens that all the new building and development, and the clearing of “ugly sights” were intended to create a beautiful environment for the “international event.”

Moreover, 小 ACT maintained that the government's efforts to raze old homes and evict “dirty, old” stray dogs, wanderers, and the “despicable poor” was indicative of the politicians' and capitalists' attempt to seize the people's properties more effectively. The collective describes the eviction of the underprivileged to expedite urban revitalization as the politico-financial elite “dividing the spoils.” In 小 ACT's opinion, Mayor Hao cleverly packaged “urban revitalization” as a symbol of a new, beautiful, modern, and hopeful life –in the same way the Flora Exposition was depicted. He “introduced this lie to the people first, and proceeded to label it as the people's wish.”

The truth is that Taiwan's ruling imperialist-capitalist coalition has been eliminating the disenfranchised from its vision of a global, elitist urban society.

---

117 Act 03, 10-11; Examples of other large-scale urban regeneration schemes occurring prior to major international events include the Barcelona 2004 International Forum, the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, and the London 2012 Summer Olympics, among others.
118 Act 03, 11.
Furthermore, 小 ACT claimed that contrary to the purported, popular belief that current “urban revitalization” schemes are strategic solutions to Taiwan’s economic hardships, they are, in effect, “capitalists' solutions to remedying stagnant capital circulation.” To support its viewpoint, 小 ACT pointed to Taiwan's unreasonable real estate inflation, a condition felt and observed by many citizens. It is now common knowledge that Taipei's housing stock has spiked in price and remains incredulously high, resulting in wealth accumulating toward the top and the poor living in stark quarters with extremely limited resources. However, the various “revitalization” plans threaten the already marginalized population because they are evicted by force and no longer able to afford living in the city.

In “When It's Not Just Animals”, 小 ACT responded to this phenomenon with irony: “Fortunately, the middleclass has already obtained a secure living environment because the government has cleared away all the unsightly wanderers and misbehaving people” from the urban face; “When all the 'dirty wanderers' disappear from the parks and all the stray dogs are exterminated, Taipei's middleclass will [finally] feel safe.” 小 ACT also posed a fundamental question significant for all urban dwellers: What is our imagination of the city?

By discussing the extermination of stray animals in conjunction with the eviction of the homeless, 小 ACT emphasized that the urban poor are despised and criminalized as if they were on the same level as animals; however, this situation cannot be blamed

\[119\] Ibid.  
\[120\] Ibid.
solely on the ruling elite – Taipei’s citizens are also responsible for indirectly assisting it. They do so by remaining ignorant and turning a blind eye. Nonetheless, individuals and groups, like Kao, Lee, Huang, 小 ACT and the Tree Alliance, understand that it is oppressive and unjust to create an image of an opulent, global city at the expense of the underprivileged. The intellectual criticism, grass-root initiatives and creative protests express genuine concern for urban justice; they display solidarity and bring hope to the marginalized.

**Instruction to Revolt**

Apart from Participatory practices like *Operation Little Barbarossa* and *So Then, My Unruly Alarm Clock Disturbed Your Whisper*, 小 ACT also depicted potential anti-Exposition strategies on paper to disrupt the Flora Exposition. In the “Flora Action Sketch” section, 小 ACT drew satirical pictures of the Flora Exposition mascot behaving inappropriately, as it finds several ways to ruin the “beautiful” Flora Exposition. In *act 01*, the reader sees the mascot urinate on flowers, perform an electric guitar to collect money, consume alcohol in public, and smash flowerpots (fig. 33). In another drawing, the group suggested the use of a remote control airplane to drop and spread worms onto the Flora Exposition flowers beds (fig. 34). Although these scenarios did not occur in the actual Flora Exposition, their imagined, subversive illustrations allowed 小 ACT to express its aversion to the event. At the same time, these drawings of comic characters in defiant acts characterize 小 ACT’s approach to its protest art actions as one that combines a sense of fun and conviviality with an attitude of aggressive subversion. In this

---

121 “Flora Action Sketch” (花博行動草圖) was featured in *act 01*, p. 22-23 and *act 02*, p.22.
manner, the “Flora Action Sketch” resonated with *Operation Little Barbarossa* and the *My Unruly Alarm Clock* flash mob event.

*Figure 33.* The Flora Expo mascot engages in disruptive acts. Source: *act 01*, 22-23.
The Flora Exposition was criticized not only by academics but also by the broader community. The Internet was perhaps the most powerful medium to disseminate citizens' anti-Flora Exposition criticisms. Dissatisfied public members satirized the Flora Exposition on Youtube. For instance, a video by Ji Che Guan (Scooter Light) strongly disapproved of the Taipei City government's wasteful spending. In it he parodies a song by the famous Taiwanese singer, Wu-Bai. He replaced the original title, *You Are My Flower*, with *The Unbelievably Costly Flora Exposition*. The new lyrics attributed the suspiciously high quoted price for flowers in the Flora Exposition to corruption. In the

---

**Ji Che Guan's Chinese name is 機車光. For his parody video see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j09yxGaGLmg Accessed November 11, 2012; Wu-Bai (五佰) literally means “five hundred” (dollars) in Chinese.**
song, Ji Che Guan contends that judicial figures protect the offender, the Taipei City mayor Hau Lung-bin; thus, the corruption goes unchecked.

Apart from individuals’ complaints, the Taipei City government's corrupt flower purchasing practice also received mainstream media coverage. A report indicated that the Flora Exposition's budget inflated flower prices eight to nine times. Another satirical YouTube video by Liao Hsiao Mao included screenshots of a news report by the Cti television broadcast on August 28, 2010. The screen shots compared the market prices with the amount of money spent by city officials, confirming that corruption did occur. For example, the city administration's reported purchase cost of various flowers was eight to thirty times the market price, and building materials were five to ten times more expensive. The Taiwanese lyrics of this parody video were pointedly critical, They cursed Mayor Hao for thinking that the mistake of overspending would go unnoticed by citizens. The singer also stated that while the mayor made easy money illegally, citizens suffered from the misfortune of having elected a “bandit” who cheats taxpayer's money. Lastly, the song reprimanded and warned Hao that he and his party (the KMT) will be shamefully ousted in the next Taipei mayoral election. For the various reasons discussed above, groups and individuals, such as Ji-Che Guan, Liao Hsiao Mao, 小 ACT, and Miga (discussed below) vented their frustration toward the Taipei City government's absurd policies into a creative force. As analyzed in the next section, the employment of Taiwanese tunes, lyrics, and idioms to criticize the city government’s proceedings reveal a particular cultural and political identification of the protesting parties. These dissatisfied

123 Liao’s Chinese alias is 廖小貓. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r-b2I0jznQ&feature=related Accessed November 11, 2012; Cti is 中天新聞.
citizens most likely identified with a Taiwanese consciousness, which recognizes Taiwan as one’s homeland and distinguished itself from China.

**Entitlement Versus Exclusion**

In the months leading up to the Flora Exposition, many citizens were frustrated with government's inability to perceive and meet the needs of ordinary citizens, typified by policies such as *Taipei Beautiful*, the zoning bonus regulations, and forced eviction and demolitions. A common sentiment was that administrative officials lived an elevated, segregated lifestyle, removed from the masses' daily reality. Government decisions revealed the distance between two kinds of lives in Taipei: those of the politico-economic elite and those of the professional and working classes.

Sharing similar discontent, Miga, a group of architecture students from Tainan National University of the Arts, satirized the government creatively through puns and dance moves. Together, they parodied the choreography of the official Flora Exposition Dance, and composed their own version of the dance. Miga members performed their routine in a sugarcane field (fig. 35), an event captured and featured in *act 01* as a step-by-step visual aid for public education (fig. 36). The parody dance selected five "moves." It is important to note that the Chinese character for moves, 招, is associated with martial arts moves; thus, the dance symbolized an offensive move against the government as well as a defensive action based on their ideals. These five moves were entitled with common Taiwanese sayings that mocked the Flora Exposition's administrators.

---

124 Kao, *act 01*, 24-27.
Figure 35. Miga members in a parody of the Flora Exposition Dance. Source: *act 1*.

Figure 36. The last step/move of the parodied dance. Source: *act 1*. 
The first move's title was: “The person is doing, God is watching.” This phrase is a warning to politicians that contrary to their beliefs, their wrongdoings will not go unnoticed; God knows, and will punish accordingly. Agricultural understanding is required to comprehend the second move's title, “Like the mustard plant in June, pretending to care.” Apparently, mustard plants' stalks are hollow in June, and therefore lack a “core”, the same word as “heart” in Mandarin. The Flora Exposition administrators here are likened to mustard plants, as they only pretend to care for citizens and the environment, and in fact their true motivation lies in economic gain. The third move's title, “Consuming rice without knowing its price,” is an expression used to describe a person who is detached from social reality. It implies that the city officials are so affluent that they have no knowledge of everyday hardship. The fourth title, “Planted a gourd, out came a luffa”, alludes to someone who says one thing but does another. The final move's title, “Choosing the larger half of the watermelon,” connotes acting to maximize one's own profit.125

These titles borrow directly from Taiwanese idioms that have been passed down through generations. This reference to oral tradition is significant because it suggests a particular cultural identity and likely political alliance. One will recall that early Chinese settlers to Taiwan spoke Min Nan, now known as Taiwanese in Taiwan. This dialect is not mutually intelligible with Mandarin, which was spoken by later Chinese migrants who came with the KMT. Historically, speaking Taiwanese was forbidden under

Japanese and early KMT rule. Therefore, speaking, performing, and publishing in Taiwanese can be interpreted as a subversive stance even in present-day Taiwan, where Mandarin still dominates the administrative and academic realms. Furthermore, the use of Taiwanese vernacular reveals a strong identity with the Min Nan culture that took root on the island. These ironic Taiwanese wisdom sayings function as an inside joke or satire by excluding the Mandarin-speaking population that represent the KMT government. Miga's choice of dance move titles attests to the differences between the two conflicting cultures in Taiwan.

Furthermore, Miga's parody dance emphasized Taiwan's history through both its content and setting. Four out of the five dance move titles incorporated agricultural associations. These sayings were created, used, and passed down by farmers who work the land. These references recognize Taiwan's agricultural tradition by demonstrating that farmers' livelihood was integrated into their way of life. Knowledge of various crops both sustained people and inspired adages. The fact that Miga's *Flora Exposition Dance* was staged in a sugarcane field is also important because it makes a direct reference to Taiwan's colonial past. During the Japanese rule Taiwan's sugarcane industry was modernized and became the island's leading export to the protected Japanese market.126

Compared to the Flora Exposition's high-tech displays, cartoon-like mascots, grandiose floral arrangements, and popular performances that gave no focus to Taiwan's

126 The Sugar Railway lines were initially constructed by Meji Sugar Co., Ltd. during Japanese rule in the early twentieth century. The railways continued to operate until the 1990s under the management of the Taiwan Sugar Corporation. Typically, the majority of the Sugar Railway lines centered on the numerous sugar mills in southern and central Taiwan, and radiated outwards through sugarcane fields and small towns. Most of the lines also reached stations shared with the main railway lines, which allowed passengers to transfer to long distance trains.” Olds, Kelly. "The Economic History of Taiwan," EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. March 16, 2008, http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/olds.taiwan.economic.history
culture, the unique linguistic insights, historical significance, and agricultural expertise showcased by Miga's parody would have been a superior display to international visitors. Unlike the Exposition's demolition work that eradicated structures symbolic of Taiwan's colonial past, Miga's performance helps people remember an important historic period that contributed to the island's multicultural present.

**Homelessness in Taiwan**

Among the various aspects of urban policy that 小 ACT focused their creative practice on was the issue of homelessness. Homelessness is closely associated with gentrification, which currently occurs in multiple sites in Taipei, including districts both near the city center as well as on the city's periphery. A combination of real-estate speculation, a dire national economy, and the lack of a resettlement plan have kept underprivileged citizens from finding affordable, alternative shelter once they are evicted. As a result, many have been put at risk of becoming homeless. The following section presents 小 ACT's report on Working Poor Unite, an organization that aims to alleviate homelessness.

In Taiwan, homeless persons are called 無殼蝸牛 – snails without shells, or 遊民 – wanderers/ drifters. Homelessness, a prevalent contemporary phenomenon in major world cities, is an under-reported topic by the mainstream media. This social dilemma is intentionally downplayed due in part to the desire to present a more positive portrayal of cities. As part of their investigation into Taiwan's urban conditions, 小 ACT focused on the issue of homelessness. “In the City, Out of a House: Interview with Working Poor Unite's Document Life Photography Class,” an article published in *act 03*, summarizes an
interview with Kuo Yin-jing, an executive committee member of Working Poor Unite. This organization was founded in 2010 in response to the widening gap between the rich and poor in Taiwan. The founders believed that an unjust social structure caused a “survival crisis” for the lowest classes, where the well-being of the masses was sacrificed in order to increase the power and wealth for a select few. Thus, the mission of Working Poor Unite was to reverse this tendency.\textsuperscript{127}

小 ACT's interview with Kuo took place near the 漂泊攝影 (Drifting Photography) exhibition at the Taipei City Hospital, Jongxin District (台北聯合醫院中興院區) in February, 2011. The exhibition included photographs taken by homeless people and the exhibition organizers. Kuo recounted that one homeless person used the plant *kandelia obovata* as a metaphor for wanderers (fig. 37). *Kandelia obovata* is a kind of mangrove found in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southern China. Its seedlings drift with the tide and take root wherever mud is available. This person explained that homeless people are like *kandelia obovata* because they need to constantly adapt to new environments. He added: “We must make every effort to adapt to this society; we will be abandoned [by society] if we cannot adjust; we can die of hunger, illness, or hyperthermia at any moment”.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{127} The article's original Chinese title is 都市裡頭，住宅之外：訪當代漂泊「記錄人生攝影班, act 03, 1-5. The Working Poor Unite's Chinese name, 當代漂泊, is a compound phrase that means "contemporary (當代) drifting (漂泊)"); See Working Poor Unite. http://homelessoftaiwan.pixnet.net/blog/category/436116 Accessed April 12, 2013.

During the interview, Kuo challenged the stereotypical representations of the homeless. She stated that the general public always assumes that homeless people are lazy, idle, and even disruptive to the social order, but in fact, 90% of them held jobs before they became homeless. Moreover, 70% of the homeless population in 2011 were working poor, and nearly 70% lived in extreme poverty, earning no more than one-hundred US dollars monthly and only able to afford one meal per day.\footnote{Kuo, act 03, 3.}

Kuo complained that the government lacks empathy for the wanderers' plight. She argued that the state's apathy toward this marginalized population can be observed in two
dimensions: the government's unfriendly attitude and its insufficient welfare system. Kuo elaborated that district administrators, police officers, and the Taipei City government's Department of Environmental Protection would evict the wanderers in order to “purify” public spaces. In recent years, local authorities would spray water onto benches and add extra armrests to them in order to prevent the homeless from loitering (figs. 38-39).130 Regarding the attitude and treatment toward the homeless, Kuo maintained that government officials' lack of understanding in wanderers' living circumstances contributes to faulty welfare policies. For instance, the regulation that homeless shelters can only admit those who have employment is premised on the assumption that the homeless are lackadaisical. City officials believe that this inadequacy must be addressed to help the homeless “re-enter” society.131

130 Ibid, 4.
131 The homeless are physically present in society, though they are often intentionally ignored and rendered invisible.
Figure 38. Benches in parks are sectioned to discourage homeless people from sleeping on them. Source: *act 03*, 5.

Figure 39. Dividing metal bars are installed in order to prevent homeless people from resting on the concrete benches. Source: *act 03*, 5.
According to Kuo, another disadvantage faced by the homeless is the great physical distance between the homeless shelters and their work place. The time and energy spent traveling between the two locations leaves them unable to endure heavy labor. Moreover, their few possessions, such as clothing and blankets, are often confiscated. These factors are detrimental to the homeless people's physical and psychological well-being.

In January 2011, the Working Poor Unite organized a press conference to demand that the government stop its inhuman treatment of the wanderers. The press conference also called for basic hygiene facilities, affordable housing, and amenities that truly meet the needs of the homeless. At the same time, The Working Poor Unite curated “In the City, Out of a House”, a photography exhibition that featuring works by members of the group. The photographs included one taken by Kuo, titled “The New Feudal Period Brought about by the 圈城 (literally “circling the city”) Movement” (fig. 40). The caption captures the effect of urban development's on the poor, as it refers to developers creating citadels in the city and displacing the poor to the periphery. The photo illustrates this phenomenon by depicting an elderly male who stands with his hands folded and his back to the camera. He stands alone in the center of the picture plane by a busy road, and is framed by buildings, cars, promotional banners, and most noticeably, a large billboard advertising a new luxury apartment complex. The photo's composition and its content create a contrast between the elderly man and his surroundings. This feeble-looking man is physically isolated from the material wealth of the city, which is represented by the

---

132 圈城運動帶來的新封建時代, act 03, 2.
cars and the luxury apartments advertisement. The image of a man in a suit on the billboard reiterates the separation between those who can and cannot afford to reside in redeveloped areas.

Figure 40. Kuo's photograph, “The New Feudal Period.” Source: act 03, 2.

The S.R.B Project

In another experimental piece, entitled Social Record Box (S.R.B) Project, 小ACT continued its examination of urban development and homelessness. On the night of March 11, 2011, participating members carried uniquely modified painter's boxes – called “Social Record Boxes” – and wandered city streets until dawn (fig. 41). Similar to Operation Barbarossa, Social Record Box focused on the idea of self-deprecation. It aimed to suggest “the possibility that a certain type of self-deprecation carries a productive potential”. 小ACT explained in its project statement: “a box is a man-made object, and yet it is also a space for thought transformation.” According to 小ACT, the
S.R.B. Project was inspired by the question of how different types of relationships between the human self and society change. The collective emphasized the necessity to “understand those unnamed spaces and circumstances that shape us”.

Consequently, ACT members underwent a sleepless night to investigate these “urban dynamics”. ACT explored the northern and southern regions of Taiwan, including cities like Taipei, Hisnju, and Kaohsung. This act of separating received particular emphasis in the S.R.B. Project statement. By separating to explore different cities, the group was able to encounter varied urban socio-spatial dynamics, and the act of dispersing enabled members to bring together a sample collection of interactions with the
city. Their “social records” thus provided readers a sense of “unity in diversity”.

Although these records are differentiated by specific localities and the artist-wanderers' approaches, they are connected by the artists' desire to understand urban environments, their attachment to people and places, and their sense of weariness toward current social and developmental conditions.

Throughout the night, 小 ACT members communicated with each other by wireless networks and social media. They also documented their observations with artifacts, photographs (fig. 42-44), and written words. The section below presents five different narratives of this sleepless, self-reflexive night of wandering.

Mu-Dan's Night Wander

Tonight, Mu-dan roams around the Taipei Main Station. People are asked to leave the station in preparation for the station workers start for closing after 12:30 am, following the last train's departure. As a result, Mu-dan is forced to meander outdoors. The Station's South Exit is already filled with homeless people. They sleep neatly in a row, perhaps to shield each other from the northeast wind. Numerous of these people appear seemly, and many of their baggage neat and tidy. Among the displaced were several middle-aged women…Mu-dan carried his camera, but he has no desire to photograph the crowd in this moment because they are not prey for images. Besides, just like them, Mu-Dan will sleep here tonight. If this is the case, what’s there to photograph?

Mu-dan recalls some places where he has slept through the night: Yilan's Dali Train Station, the seashore of Tung’ao, Pingtung Donggang, and that night when Mu-dan had just arrived in Frankfurt and could not find lodging…but none of them seems the same as tonight's drifting in the familiar Taipei. [Mu-dan] walks into Nanyang Street, where he studied more than ten years ago on this rare occasion. The entire street is brightly lit and devoid of people as if it were a backdrop with intricate lighting. Its daily activities cause [this scene] to become detached, morphing into a highly unfamiliar realm.

This sense of unfamiliarity exhilarates Mu-dan; sleeping outside the Train Station in drizzling rain; the vagabond sleeping in the next space is a white man dressed in black. There isn't much to say, actually, only the feeling that Mu-dan should wander more like this; in fact, there isn't much to tell, only the realization that the city, appearing bright and clean at night, is but a crime scene left behind by the flurried evacuation of modernity.
Medici

Citizens' good friend, Medici, is here. He is not here on assignment today, but to make friends. He becomes acquainted with a wise man. As with all hero stories, there is always an elderly man wandering the streets, who points the protagonist toward the right way. The wise man mentions his past as a sushi chef, and Medici too talks of his own dreams. They enjoy beer and barbeque together, and in the end, the wise man says to Medici, who is striding toward the heroic path: “If you force matters, you will attempt to demand countless things by force.”

Wanà, Hsian-Liu, Do-Lan

Housing prices are increasing; working hours are extending; salaries are decreasing. We have jobs, but cannot [afford to] buy a house. The end of a day's work is the beginning of wandering. The drifting editorial board can only wander the city streets, and look for places with wireless network and electric outlets. In the bleak and dreary night, unending manuscripts; the unexpected icy wind accompanies the sound of cars zooming by, our hearts just got colder.

p.s. My lips are chapped.

Sha Fong-Jing

If I am to wander, then I want to re-experience familiar places; to see the house where I used to live. With an empty box in hand, I start at Taipei's East District (Dong-Chu; 東區), but I want to escape soon after I start. Someone looks at my box and asks, “When are you going to set up the vendor's stall?” I continue westward, passing by the empty house that awaits reconstruction (改建), and the quilt-like parking lot beneath the bridge. Only after exchanging a glance with a street friend do I realize the necessity of [finding] a spot where I can avoid the scrutiny of others. As a result, I feel exhausted and wish for a place to rest my feet. When I begin to build my 'nest' in a Taipei Beautiful park, an elderly woman – an earlier riser – proclaims: “There is no old house here, this place is a ruin.” My abode sinks into gold sludge at that moment. Finally, I welcome the sunrise on the bridge of “the most beautiful city on the riverside.”

---

133 The passerby mistakes Sha Fong-Jing’s box for a vendor’s box because it is common for
Figure 42. Medici shared beer and snack with a homeless man. Source: *act 03*, 28.

Figure 43. Medici’s kept the homeless man company. Source: *act 03*, 28.
“Look, What is that Squirrel Looking at?” By Ai Nu Yi

I named this operation, “Look, What is that Squirrel Looking at?” in order to examine the everyday feeling of self-alienation/fragmentation, I installed a soft toy squirrel to disguise the portable recording machine I received incidentally – one entitled “Social Record Box”. Throughout the night, I roam around semi-familiar paths and places, and document through the squirrel's eyes the operations of these urban spaces I encounter. Roaming is not wandering; the latter is easily romanticized, but are we not to evade this kind of temptation, and require the self to re-explore its relationship with the streets, the city, and this land? Therefore, I give myself the role of a landscape collector; a daily-life-fragments scavenger; a janitor in a city's corner. Through the process of scavenging, I catalyze the fermentation of certain indescribable and slightly melancholic sense of the mundane.

Figure 4. Ai Nu Yi explored Kaohsung with a camera hidden under a squirrel. Source: act 03, 31.

The above vignettes illustrate varied approaches to the same goal of investigating urban socio-spatial dynamics. For example, Mu-dan (an alias of Kao) maintains a sense of objectivity by referring to himself in the third person, reiterating the S.R.B Project's intention to observe the self in relation to its environment. Kao's choice of Taipei Main
Station is also significant because he was able to discover and reveal a sight that contrasted sharply with the Station's public image. This bustling traffic hub in the city center that hustles passengers during the day becomes a quiet gathering place for the homeless at night. Kao's account indicated that he not only observed these homeless sleepers but also spent a night as one of them. Lying by the South Exit under the elements (as no one is permitted to remain inside Station after the Station closes), Kao empathizes with the displaced and recalled his previous experiences of sleeping outside without proper accommodation. He decides that in comparison, the experience of drifting in Taipei is distinct because of a sense of unfamiliarity in a familiar city. In the end, Kao concludes with an insight in a detached yet condemning tone. He describes the city at night as a “crime scene”, likely because its “bright and clean” façade does not conceal the gloom sight of the homeless who have been abandoned by economic development.

Sha Fong Jing's record is similar to that of Kao’s because it also bemoans and satirizes the negative aspects of progress (“modernity”) and urban development (“golden sludge”). Sha expresses unease in Taipei's prosperous Eastern District and journeys westward, where he comes across an empty house awaiting reconstruction and a homeless person (“street friend”). Although concise, Sha's description points to major problems with urban development: historically significant old houses no longer exist and the creation of uninhabited ruins. He also ironically characterizes the demolished land he stood on as “gold sludge” to deride real estate speculation. Lastly, Sha arrives at a luxury apartment complex, which he describes as the “emperor’s throne” as to underline its exclusiveness.
Through a more interactive approach, Medici's story humanizes the homeless by illustrating a more up-close encounter with a vagabond. The sustained conversations and the sharing of food between Medici and the former-sushi-chef provide a softer and warmer tone to the “social record collection”. One should note the curious visual juxtaposition between the alias Medici and the plaster mask, both of which originated in the European tradition, with the beer and barbeque, a very Taiwanese late night snack combination. In the meantime, Ai Nu Yi's focus on the definition and nuanced significance of his wandering demonstrates an introspective reflexivity. His incorporation of a squirrel soft toy adds a touch of fun and lightheartedness to an otherwise serious, self-assigned duty of collecting Kaohsung City's “everyday fragments”, which Ai perceives as somewhat indescribable and melancholic.

Lastly, the group adventure of female artist-wanderers, Wanà, Hsian-Liu, and Do-Lan, highlight the young professional’s plight that is currently critical in Taiwan as well as in many other countries. Wan'a, Hsian-Liu, and Do-Lan's reflections represent the journey and circumstance of Taiwan's many young adults: They have worked hard in an extremely competitive academic environment all their life, sitting in countless tests and exams to further their education. The tremendous time, money, and effort these young citizens and their parents have invested are meant to secure a prosperous future; however, the present reality is bleak – young students and graduates reap only joblessness, or low-income jobs at best. As a result, most of Taiwan's young adults struggle to become financially independent, and are incapable of purchasing a home of their own. Having no place to call “home” or “office” in the city that they “live” and “work” in is not only
ironic but an alienating dilemma. In brief, the “social records” above highlight various aspects of urban dynamics between the self and the social and/or physical, environment.

Although 小 ACT members initiated the S.R.B. Project with a sense of earnest inquiry, it is important to remember that their account of wandering the city streets for one night is only a glimpse into homelessness rather than a comprehensive representation. The depth of collective's critical gesture could have been enriched by a longer experiment. At the same time, despite the creativity of the project, 小 ACT's self-imposed temporary hardship is insignificant compared to the daily experience of the homeless. Some may also regard the S.R.B. Project narratives to be more personal, poetic, romanticized, and idealistic, and conclude that it is less effective than the more visible, openly critical Operation Little Barbarossa. However, it important to recognize two art historical traditions that may have inspired the S.R.B. Project's method.

First, 小 ACT members' drifting through the city recalls the figure of the flâneur. According to Baudelaire, the flâneur is a “gentlemen stroller of city streets” who plays a key role in understanding, participating in, and portraying the city. The flâneur has the double role of “observer-participant”, one who interacts with his surroundings with a critical eye while remaining detached. This theory is consistent with 小 ACT's philosophy for the S.R.B. Project. Secondly, 小 ACT's reflexivity derived from wandering the city is reminiscent of dérive, an unplanned tour through an urban landscape guided entirely by the feelings invoked in the individual by their environment. This concept, which originated in the 1940s with the artistic and political collective,

---

Letterist International, continued to be key for the succeeding Situationist International. The situationist Guy Debord maintained that *dérive* is a necessary tool to counter the increasing predictability and monotony of everyday life that people wade through in advanced capitalism.\(^{135}\) This critical attitude toward capitalism and the desire for fresh encounters with the urban terrain are evident in the *S.R.B. Project*. Although this work is not Participatory Art in the traditional sense, where public members directly contribute to the completion of the art, conversation and interaction with other citizens were nevertheless central to three of the five explorations. Furthermore, the *S.R.B. Project* evokes *flâneur* and *dérive*, two approaches in art history that emphasize walking through the city as a way for artists to engage with the urban landscape, explore new experiences, and actively participate as citizens.

**Conclusion**

小 ACT's research, inspired by the 2010 Taipei International Flora Exposition, presented a wide range of activities critical toward related issues such as real-estate speculation, gentrification, and cultural manipulation. These critical commentaries represent the public's reaction to the government's urban policy in Taiwan. Through research, writing, performance art, dance, music, photography, mapping, social media and activism, scholars and artists like 小 ACT, Miga, Working Poor Unite, and The Tree Alliance emphasize the importance of environmental, cultural preservation and participatory, holistic urban planning.

Concerning characteristics, two parallel tones permeate the art featured in this chapter. On the one hand, \textbackslash little ACT creates an oppositional, battle-like quality in their works by employing military terms like “army” and “infiltrate” to describe their activities. The act of mapping that Tree Alliance uses to indicate “danger zones” lacking green spaces can also be recognized as a military strategy. One the other hand, humor, irony, and even a sense of mischievousness are abundant in \textit{Operation Little Barbarossa}, \textit{My Unruly Alarm Clock} flashmob action, and Miga's mock Flora Exposition Dance. These works transform the acts of protest into jovial, satirical activities that negate official rules and poke fun at them. Compared to the more assertive, playful, and participatory \textit{Operation Little Barbarossa} and \textit{My Unruly Alarm Clock}, \textbackslash little ACT's \textit{Social Record Box Project} and Working Poor Unite's photography exhibition are more discrete, subjective explorations with sentimental undertones. Nevertheless, they function as vignettes that provide interpretive recordings of cities after dark and glimpses into the homeless condition.

It is also important to recognize the central role of text, online network, and the media in the art works' realization, documentation, and interpretation. First, the three-volume \textit{act} booklets serve as permanent records to the temporary performances. They contextualize the \textbackslash little ACT's works, spread these experiences, and disseminate their political implications. The booklets, along with online social media, were also crucial platforms to call for potential participants in the \textit{My Unruly Alarm Clock} flashmob action. Lastly, reports by commercial television network effectively helped publicize \textit{Operation Little Barbarossa}, drawing more awareness to this unusual event.
The 2010 Taipei Flora Exposition is reminiscent of the use of art to neutralize uneven urban development, as expounded by Deutsche, Zukins, Miles, Short, and Kim. The many components of the Flora Exposition, the architectural venues, the floral displays in specially constructed gardens, the high-tech sculptural installations, and the music and dance entertainment, all were cultural products that aimed to boost Taipei's economy. Moreover, these elements of "symbolic economy" only diverted people's attention from the Flora Exposition's real incentive: real estate speculation. In response, Operation Little Barbarossa and My Unruly Alarm Clock are examples of the "counterpractice" that Deutsche refers to because they intend to subvert the City Government's dominant practice within the city through artistic intervention. 小 ACT's works are tactful, as they do not seek to obliterate mainstream, official Flora Exposition activities but utilize the festivities as cover for their actions. Operation Little Barbarossa even appropriated the slogan, "Celebrate Flora Exposition" to gain clearance on the street and into the main Exposition venue.

Similarly, Operation Little Barbarossa and My Unruly Alarm Clock were the kind of Participatory Art that challenges people to reconsider their aesthetic, social, economic, and governmental aspects of live, as discussed by Shannon Jackson. They sought to increase and complicate public awareness of the inner workings of the Flora Exposition and uneven urban development. Kao Jun-honn also directly challenged the "cultural manipulation" he saw in the Taipei City government's use of a horticultural exhibition as an opportunity for profiting the real estate market. In contrast to the rigid, superficial and
generalized portrayal of Taiwan by the Flora Exposition, Kao urged citizens to reflect upon a more well-rounded, more accurate cultural representation of Taiwan.

In addition to visual and performance art, one can also recognize the listener-centered approach, as proposed by Suzi Gablik, in ACT's activities. Gablik suggests a listener-centered model that replies on dialogue as open conversation and includes other voices. While the “Anti-Flora Exposition as a Possibility for Art Movement” was a discussion among like-minded intellectuals, the interviews ACT members conducted gave citizens who are otherwise excluded from the mainstream media an opportunity to share their experiences and opinions about the Flora Exposition.

Regarding the demographic of the public response, with the exception of Yuanshan residents' responses to ACT’s interviews and Working Poor Unite's photographs, most of the criticism recorded in this chapter come from artistic and scholarly circles. Although ACT, Miga, The Tree Alliance and Working Poor Unite all sought to reach a wider public through approachable literary publications, illustrations, mapping, performative actions and other art forms, most of the discussions regarding current uneven, unsustainable urban development circulate among learned circles. However, in the next two chapters one will observe more critical response and efforts initiated by residents themselves, including organized, student and artist-assisted collaborative movements that counter Taipei City Government's gentrification enforcement.
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITIES AS BASES FOR PROTEST AND PARTICIPATORY ART

This chapter examines Participatory Art inspired by the stories of Shaoxin and Huaguang, two communities gravely affected by the Taiwan government's "National Land Revitalization Policy," which threatened residents with eviction and lawsuits. The residents in Shaoxin and Huaguang were low-income individuals and families that were at risk of becoming homeless after eviction. The demand for large financial compensation by the National Taiwan University and the Taipei City government also caused the residents psychological trauma. The participatory events include The Voice of Shaoxin, Together Shaoxin: Shoaxion Community Space and History Workshop, the Huaguang Community Photography Exhibition, Huaguang Community Carnival, and the film competition titled, The Power of Dialogue and Moving Image on Huaguang Community's Experience. The plight of these communities resulted in the formation of self-help associations and attention from sympathetic public members. Consequently, through collaboration between residents, artists, and activists, the Participatory Art mentioned above was created in order to garner public support and guard housing rights. These works broaden the definition of Participatory Art by illustrating that this artistic approach can be initiated by not just artists but also any public member, in which case the results still maintain a high level of craftsmanship and criticality.

Like most examples of Participatory Art, the art works produced in Shaoxin and Huaguang were site-specific and employed a wide range of approaches and media, including photography, graffiti, music, film, sculpture, performance art, and dance, all of
which were instrumental in bringing awareness to their plight. At the same time, the focus of these works remained on the residents, showcasing their lives, communities, and circumstances. The fact that the art was about the people and not about the glorification of the artists demonstrates the spirit of Participatory Art: the artists' humility. Artists engaging in the participatory method often desire to know about and learn from the people with whom they collaborate. They tend to view their skills and creativity as tools or channels that can lead to discussions on certain social concerns. This tendency was apparent in the Participatory Art produced in Shaoxin and Huaguang, which appeared to be more exploratory than definitive.

The creative activities in Shaoxin and Huaguang most prominently echo Leonie Sandercock's discussion of the relationship between Participatory Art and urban planning. Sandercock suggests that Participatory Art can help articulate new visions of an urban planning process that centers on listening to the displaced, the transplanted, and the marginalized. This approach focuses on issues of identity and difference, more inclusive ways of thinking about justice, resistance and consciousness, and new spaces of opposition. It also emphasizes the incorporation of story-telling, multiple voices, and new ways of knowing and acting in the quest for social justice in the city.\(^{136}\) The artists' and participants' works in Shaoxin and Huaguang dovetailed with this concept, since their involvement was motivated by their drive for urban justice. Furthermore, story-telling, conversations, Participatory Art, workshops and meetings that inform the public of the communities' history became new ways of understanding and communicating the current, realistic needs of Shaoxin and Huaguang's needs. Rather than abiding by a

\(^{136}\) Sandercock, “The Death of Radical Planning: Radical Praxis for a Postmodern Age,” 436.
singular, dominant urban policy from the Taipei City Government, the artists and participants provided the disenfranchised residents more opportunities to present their case and make their demands. As a result, the interactions between artists, participants, and those residents under the threat of displacement transformed the neighborhoods from spaces of oppression to spaces of sharing history, spaces of creativity, and spaces of opposition.

The Shaoxin Community

The history of the Shaoxin Community dates to Taiwan's Japanese colonial period. When the Japanese government built dormitories for Japanese medical officials who taught in the nearby Taihoku Teikoku Daigaku's medical college, Taiwanese people who worked for the Japanese residents began moving into this area. After the Chinese Nationalist (KMT) government took control of Taiwan in 1949, it stationed its Combined Service Forces in a neighboring area that is now the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. Consequently, military servicemen, staff, and their families were placed in the present-day Shaoxin Community. The new residents assembled basic structures on the mere twenty square-meters allocated to each family. Therefore, a number of residents lived in this area for fifty to sixty years, while others moved in later through legal acquisition of properties. None of them knew that the land they lived on in fact belonged to the National Taiwan University.\(^{137}\)

In August 2010, the 136 families that resided in the Shaoxin Community (fig. 45) received civil court notices that represented the National Taiwan University (NTU), ordering residents to “demolish the house, return the land, and compensate for damages” within just sixty days. The notices maintained that residents would be responsible for several million New Taiwanese dollars in compensation for “improper gains” if their conditions were not met. These announcements caused a great panic among Shaoxin's residents, who suddenly faced losing their homes. The Shaoxin Self Help Association was subsequently established, after which local residents became more acquainted with each other and continued to promote their causes by helping one another.

Figure 45. The Shaoxin Community. Source: The Shaoxin Community and NTU Students Alliance.

Together Shaoxin

In August 2013, when the Shaoxin Community NTU Students Alliance organized a two-week *Together Shaoxin: Shaoxin Community Space and History Workshop*, which featured a guided tour, a seminar on space, a seminar on history, and a session of storytelling by residents. The remaining time was designated for interviews with residents and documentation of the community spaces. At the end of the workshop, participants presented the results of their learning in an exhibition on August 17, 2013. Many of them translated details of the community's life and spatial observations into drawings, writings, models, and installations. Shaoxin residents also participated in the event by demonstrating traditional crafts and writing texts to explain the art displayed. At the end of the workshop, participants celebrated the result of their learning with the residents by organizing an art exhibition and an interactive tour.\(^{139}\)

The mixed-media approach evident in the *Together Shaoxin* artworks demonstrated the workshop participants' artistic ability, competence, and thoughtfulness. Drawings, photographs, watercolor, collage, diagrams, texts, architectural floor plans, and found objects were used in various combinations to tell a story. Three major themes emerged from these works: the physical characteristics of Shaoxin, portraits of the residents and their daily life, and reflections by both residents and participants on the community. Often, the artwork conveyed multiple themes. For example, in one, architectural drawings of a residential unit were clipped onto brown linen strings, which were attached to an old, brown suitcase. Photographs were individually pasted onto brown construction paper pieces and given descriptions, forming stacks that were then...

\(^{139}\) The workshop's original name in Chinese is 夥紹興—紹興社區空間文史工作營.
placed in repurposed wooden containers. The wooden containers were nestled in the lower half of the suitcase, which was lined with brown newsprint paper printed with black and white images (fig.46). A wheel chair, representing the elderly residents of Shaoxin, was utilized as a display platform for diagrams, texts, and photographs (fig. 47).

These mixed-media installations thoughtfully incorporated symbols of both Shaoxin's space and culture. While the green and white rectangular house number plates (placed at the upper left corner of the suitcase) and the floor plans functioned as visual representations of the actual architecture, the photographs and texts showcased the people living in these spaces. The method of displaying drawings by attaching them with clippings onto strings was creative and significant, as it made a visual reference to the common way people dry their laundry in Taiwan. It spoke to the community's everyday life. Moreover, the depth of the conceptual process behind the making of this work was revealed through its symbolism. The dominant brown tone exuded a sense of nostalgia. This feeling of looking back was reiterated by the suitcase, which literally encapsulated the architecture, its residents, and the depiction of their lives. The idea of travel and being mobile associated with suitcases also hinted at the impermanence of Shaoxin's homes and the uncertain future of their residents.
**Figure 46.** Students created installation and models that captured Shaoxin's live and space. Source: Program @ Shaoxin.

**Figure 47.** Workshop participants explained their works to visitors and Shaoxin residents. Source: Program @ Shaoxin.
Several works also successfully used paper as the primary material to construct complex and intricate models of different areas of the Shaoxin Community. Participants purposefully combined drawings, watercolor, and photo collage to create scenes of everyday life. Smooth paper was used to build walls and the ground, while corrugated cardboard was utilized to imitate corrugated iron sheet rooftops (figs. 48-49). The corrugated cardboard was appropriate not only because it was an accurate visual representation, but also because it conveyed the general lack of economic wealth in Shaoxin. Corrugated iron sheets are an economic material commonly employed for low-budget structures in Taiwan. Furthermore, participants applied color strategically to differentiate different types of buildings. For example, residential units and most walls were kept in monotone grey, whereas warm and vibrant colors of red, brown, and orange decorated special structures like the temple and theater stage.

At the exhibition, one could also see several cardboard boxes stacked up in a corner of one of the alleys inside Shaoxin Community (fig. 50). These cardboard boxes were instantly recognizable to any Taiwanese because they were the packaging boxes for Taiwan Beer, Taiwan's most popular and affordable local alcoholic beverage. While some boxes still contained emptied Taiwan Beer bottles, others were transformed to resemble little rooms, stages, or TV sets that displayed various residents' lives. Visitors could flip open a “door” cut out from one side of each box and read about a particular space and the people inhabiting it. In contrast to the definitively Taiwan label on the beer packaging boxes, the stories celebrated the diverse cultures represented in Shaoxin. For instance, one of the boxes depicted the story of an immigrant worker from Indonesia. This
immigrant's experience of working in a foreign land with a language barrier was also
documented as part of the exhibition. The incorporation of the story of a foreign worker
demonstrated the participants' and Taiwanese residents' validation of this immigrant as a
fellow community member. This inclusive gesture illustrates precisely Sandercock's
contention of “giving voice to the marginalized.”

*Figure 48.* Participants used paper to create Three-Dimensional models of the Shaoxin Community. Source: Program @Shaoxin.
Figure 49. In this model, smooth paper depicted the ground and walls, and corrugated cardboard was used as tin roofs. Source: Program @Shaoxin.

Figure 50. Taiwan Beer cardboard boxes contained images and stories of the diverse culture of Shaoxin. Source: Program@Shaoxin.
The art works created by participants of the *Together Shaoxin* workshop displayed an aesthetic that was rooted in Shaoxin's everyday life. They incorporated the green and white house number plate, the corrugated rooftops, a traditional theater stage for puppet shows, and Taiwan Beer bottles and boxes that are all typical of Taiwan's culture. The artworks were at once vibrant and nostalgic. The community celebration united the residents by creating an inclusive atmosphere for descendants of Chinese Nationalist veterans, Taiwanese-speaking people, and Southeast Asian immigrants alike. At the same time, the photo documentation indicated that participating students worked together to create these artworks, reiterating a crucial aspect of Participatory Art: collaboration.

By the end of the *Together Shaoxin: Shaoxin Community Space and History Workshop*, more students had learned about Shaoxin's circumstance and joined the Alliance's efforts. As a result, the Shaoxin Program became an official student organization. Subsequently, the Alliance students continued to publicize their cause both on campus and in the streets. They saw the beginning of a new school year as an opportunity to garner more support, and set up a booth at the NTU Student Organization Fair on September 7, 2013, to recruit new students. Ten days later, a reception welcomed new members. The first Alliance sponsored lecture on “informal settlements” took place on the NTU campus September 26, 2013.

In addition to the Shaoxin Community, the Alliance students extended their attention to other communities suffering land and social injustice. For example, they joined other NTU student organizations to support the “Shut Down but Not Shut Up:
Reaching out to express solidarity in struggles among marginalized professional-working class had become common among various housing rights, land rights, and labor rights organizations in Taiwan from 2010 to 2014.

On November 15, Program@Shaoxin organized the *From Eviction to Construction: One to One Unit, Walking into the Life of Residents* exhibition outside NTU's main entrance. In addition to music performances by various student bands and soloists, the event featured a “1:1 house” that symbolized residents' homes. This simple structure was symbolic and significant as it was inspired by the actual homes of the Shaoxin residents, many of whom were confined to cramped spaces. Comparing the event invitation and the actual 1:1 house, one could observe the transformation of Shaoxin from 3D to 2D to 3D. On the invitation, one could see renderings of original Shaoxin homes on the lower half and a vision of the 1:1 unit on the upper right. The photo of the 1:1 home, built collaboratively by participating students, was a realization of the structure envisioned on paper. The organizers encouraged visitors to walk into “the life of residents” by literally walking into the 1:1 unit and experiencing what is was like to live in such a small space (figs. 51-52).

---

140 “Shut Down but Not Shut Up” was the final part of a series of protests sparked by workers who became unemployed because of the shutting down of several factories in Taiwan.
Figure 51. The invitation to the *From Eviction to Construction* event.

Figure 52. The Alliance students in front of the 1:1 house installation, which was a part of the *From Eviction to Construction: One to One Unit* exhibition. Source: Program @Shoaxin.
At the same time, attendees were invited to collaborate on a mosaic that depicted two characters standing on top of a house holding a red heart, and a larger figure, represented by two arms, keeping the home from being demolished (fig. 53). The overlaying of the bulldozer's “mechanical arms” and the human forearms was clever, as it was a play on Taiwanese colloquialism. In Taiwan, bulldozers are nicknamed *guai sho* (怪手), meaning *monster's hand*. Therefore, the mosaic design depicted two sets of hands, touching each other and surrounding a home from which love grew. The mechanical, “monster's hands” aimed to destroy, while the human hands strove to protect the home by fighting its destruction. The mosaic collage differed from the two-dimensional 1:1 house model not only in its two-dimensional nature but also in the type of audience it engaged. Although both were instances of collaborative Participatory Art, the 1:1 house was created by a small group of students with some sense of architectural construction. In contrast, the less technical mosaic collage allowed a broader demographic to enjoy and participate. Apart from music and art, the student organizers also provided desserts to make visitors feel at home. *Cooking at the Front Line*, a kitchen established by young housing rights activists, participated by serving homemade sweet potato soup. The server wore a hand-crafted, bright pink “fish helmet” to attract attention (fig. 54). This use of unusual accessories, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, was a popular strategy of the *Cooking at the Front Line*. 
Figure 53. A collaborative mosaic piece symbolizing people protecting the Shaoxin Community from two "monster's hands", a colloquial term in Taiwan that refers to bulldozers.
Two days after the *From Eviction to Construction* event, the Alliance participated in the nation-wide “2013 Autumn Battle” protest, in which numerous groups demonstrated their disapproval of various current issues such as land equality, housing rights, labor laws, and unemployment (fig. 55). The Shaoxin Community Self Help Association and the NTU Students began with the specific concern, housing rights, in a particular place. Eventually, their persistence in championing for housing equality led them to broaden their activism to other social issues by supporting other marginalized groups in Taiwan.
Several other important art events took place in Shaoxin. Although they do not necessarily qualify as Participatory Art, it is important to include them in order to enrich the understanding of using art as protest in Taiwan's housing rights movement. Yearning to partake in the conversations and self-help activities, a group of artists that included Kao, music professor Lin Hui-chun, music students from the Tainan National University of the Arts, and transdisciplinary art students from the Taipei National University of the Arts began interviewing residents of Shaoxin in June 2011 (fig. 56). During this interview process, several members of the Shaoxin Self Help Association helped organize The Voice of Shaoxin “dissonance concert.” On August 20, 2011, a small orchestra formed by Professor Lin and his students performed music for visitors (fig. 57). Simultaneously,
video recordings of the interviews conducted with residents were broadcast on the
interviewees' own television sets in their respective homes (figs. 58-59). The concert
audience was invited to visit residents' homes and view these video clips. For Kao, it was
important that these video clips be displayed in the residents' homes, where they were
originally recorded, as a kind of “protest film”.

Figure 56. Professors Lin Hui-chun and Gong Jow-jiun interviewed an elderly Shaoxin
resident. Photo: Kao Jun-honn.
Figure 57. The Voice of Shaoxin “dissonance concert”. Source: Kao Jun-honn.

Figure 58. Movies of interviews with residents played back on their own TV monitor. Source: Kao Jun-honn.
The *Voice of Shaoxin* was significant both for those who lived outside and within the Shaoxin Community. First of all, visitors unfamiliar to the area were able to learn of Shaoxin's story through music and video installations. The music performance helped people focus emotionally and prepared them to listen to the stories told through the video recordings. By entering into residents' homes to view the “protest films,” the audience was encouraged to interact with these spaces' occupants as well as with the films. Thus, they were able to gain a deeper appreciation of Shaoxin not only through the artistic representation of film, but also by interacting with these film's subjects directly. In addition to being educational for “outsiders”, the music and art also served the members of the Shaoxin Community. The music performed was intended as much for the residents as for visitors. It brought the message that unlike the mistreatment by the government,
they were valued by fellow citizens and deserved recognition. Moreover, those residents who had their stories recorded and telecasted in their own homes likely felt a sense of gratification, as the short films became an outlet for their plight. Their experience of hosting an interested film audience and relating their stories to others was empowering.

For the artist Kao and Professor Lin, their work in Shaoxin was a demonstration of their respect for its residents and their belief that these people and their housing rights were important. In their effort to garner support for Shaoxin, both Lin and Kao sought to keep the focus of their work on the residents and issues at hand, rather than on the artists. For example, Kao explained that he avoided the traditional method of Performance Art, which uses the body as medium, and instead chose the medium of film because interactions with people in the community allowed for a mutual exchange of knowledge.  

According to Kao, residents could not accept that their homes had become labeled as “illegal,” since each retained a legal housing purchase contract and a household registry, and paid for water, electricity, and taxes. This dilemma compelled residents to protest and repeatedly to point out how governmental policies were inappropriate and conflicting. Fig. 60 displays two protest banners. The first reads, “Historical glitches are hard to resolve; the judicial system is employed to demolish and displace,” and the second makes a play on different Chinese characters that sound the same; what was meant to be “NTU institution of learning” became “NTU learning corrupted”. These disadvantaged residents’ frustration was understandable because they had no laws to

---

141 Kao, *ACT No. 48*, 32-33.
support their objectives. Kao stated that the outcry was sparked by the government's and NTU's negligent treatment of residents. He suggested that the city government had let land profits overrule Shaoxin's “legally undetermined” status, and used the judicial system to expel occupants with no consideration for relocation as settlement, thus forcing residents into collective protest. Kao maintained that in contrast to NTU's apathy toward the Shaoxin residents, its “complete lack of communication,” and its “games of bureaucratic, legal jargon,” the Shaoxin Community responded with grace and clear direction. For example, residents asserted that they “did not look for sympathy but only understanding from the general public.”

Figure 60. Two protest banners in Shaoxin. One (left) complains of the government's use of the judicial system to demolish homes. Another (right) suggests an economic incentive for NTU's seizure of the land. Source: Kao Jun-honn.

143 Kao, *ACT* No. 48, 32.
Kao observed that these residents' difficult situation and their understanding that they were “in the same boat” prompted them to move forward as a collective, “symbiotic organism under crisis,” which provided opportunities for rebuilding self-confidence. By “rebuilding self-confidence,” Kao likely referred to residents' regaining of self and mutual respect through discussions of proactive ways to publicize and petition their circumstances (fig. 60). Moreover, their common goal was to defend their homes through joint efforts that endowed citizens with a sense of purpose and empowerment.144

Apart from collaborative concerts, Professor Lin, Chair of the Music Department at the Tainan National University of the Arts, also performed solo on the streets in order to petition for Shaoxin residents. His weekly attendance in the Shaoxin Self Help Association meetings enabled him to gain a thorough understanding of residents' difficulties. On the evening of February 21, 2012, Lin appeared outside the Zhongxiao Fuxing Metro Station in central Taipei, where he set up a poster display and performed the violin for pedestrians (fig. 61). Lin hand-wrote the names of Shaoxin residents who were indicted by NTU, which filled an entire poster panel. For Lin, these names, which belonged to residents from age 1 to those who had passed on, made up the “Lee Si-Chen's List.” The list was attributed to Lee Si-Chen, the president of NTU, because Lee approved and authorized the lawsuit actions against the Shaoxin residents. Lin explained that over 500 names on the indictment notice looked visually similar to Schindler's List; however, unlike Schindler's List that aimed to save lives, “Lee Si-Chen's List” intended to make residents homeless. Therefore, he played the Schindler's List's melody on the violin adjacent to his posters to satirize the government. Although his song was often drowned

144 Ibid.
out by the sound of traffic and people hurried past the campaign literature, Lin remained optimistic. He asserted, “I was mentally prepared that the result might not be ideal, [though] I believe that more people will come to learn about Shaoxin if I come to the same spot and play at the same designated time”.  

Figure 61. Lin performed outside a Metro Station in central Taipei. Source: Citizen Journalism, http://www.peopo.org

It was reported that this was not the first time Lin used the violin to support the Shaoxin Community. When residents attended court hearings in January 2012, he also played outside the court but was interrupted by the police (fig. 62). Nor was this the last time Lin attempted to garner attention for housing rights through music. When the Wang's Family at Wenlinyuan (portrayed in Chapter 3) encountered unreasonable threat of demolition, he too accompanied the group of family and students who petitioned outside

Mayor Hao's residence on March 21, 2012. After Wenlinyuan was forcefully demolished on March 28, 2012, Lin and his students formed a quartet and performed Taiwanese compositions in a gathering at the demolition site, titled 929, Homeland – Battlefield on September 29, 2012 (fig. 63).  

Figure 62. Lin performed Schindler's List outside Taipei's Court with his posters before the police (back) stopped him. Photo: http://www.peopo.org

---

Through an email exchange, Professor Lin discussed his pro-housing rights efforts in detail. He summarized his encounter with urban renewal issues as incidental. It began when the artist Kao Jun-honn brought him to Yungchuen, an area fraught with urban renewal controversies. Cryptically, Lin stated that he made a decision in Yungchuen, and as he continued to walk, he made a second decision. “Then the third, the forth, and so on...It was simply like picking up a line on the road and following it. In the end, [I] walked into a terrifying web.” The “walk” in Lin's description refers to his journey into housing rights activism. Following the logic that a line is formed by connecting dots, then the “line” Lin “picked up” would be a sequence formed by the individual controversies in various Taipei communities. In summary, Lin is expressing his surprise at the numerous urban renewal problems he learned about after that first visit to
Yungchuen. Consequently, his repeated decisions to become involved and remain supportive of housing rights led him to an entangled web of controversies.\footnote{147}

Regarding the use of the arts and the body for social activism, Lin stated, “When a giant monster attacks, you throw wooden sticks [at it] if you have wooden sticks in hand, and you throw stones if you have stones in hand. I happen to have a violin in hand.” At the same time, Lin noted that he did not know what can result from fighting demolitions with his violin because his training is in classical music, a genre that according to Lin, “cannot directly connect with social issues and phenomena.” Although Lin did not anticipate any results, in my interview he observed two functions of his music. First, it had a “symbolizing effect” at the beginning of the housing rights movement, which was highly reliant upon the mass media. His performances were able to attract media and public attention. Secondly, it had a comforting effect on residents and supporters. He related that many people who experienced his and his students' performances expressed that though the music did not excite any fighting spirit, it was able to comfort their nervous and tiresome hearts. As a result, these people gained more courage to continue their protest. Lin also reflected on his personal experience and insights, revealing that he was at odds with classical music because the “classical music circle” mostly relies on the national government and capitalists financially. Playing the violin in the context of protests provided Lin new hope.\footnote{148}

Concerning the relationship between art practitioners and society, Lin described contemporary art workers as “pets kept by the system.” However, he maintained that

---

\footnote{147}{All quotes by Lin are taken from the Email exchange with author. August 6, 2012.}
\footnote{148}{Email exchange with Lin.}
“this is not any particular sin because after all, those who want to resist the system are a minority.” Lin also elaborated on his view of the arts and how to integrate them into society. First, he clarified that the term “arts” encompasses many disciplines that differ greatly. Broadly speaking however, Lin views art as “highly destructive.” He asserted that art practitioners should “persevere and continue to destroy until true matters emerge.”

Apart from this, Lin saw nothing special in artists or in their social concerns. He suggested that if artists' attention toward social issues cannot persist, it is often worse than being indifferent. Lin used a film production as an example to illustrate his point, “let's say you successfully directed a film titled 'Foreign Laborers Treated as Non Humans'. For you, it is done once the film wraps. The audiences are truly moved and shed much tears at the screening; however, it is over once they exit the movie theater. However, for those 'foreign laborers who are treated like non humans,' nothing is over. This is the illusion of art.” Lin proposed that if artists are willing, they can approach social issues by seeing their own art production as secondary, and by limiting the use of vocabularies exclusive to their professional field. He emphasized that “others” are what is important.

Lin reiterated that each person has his or her own “weapon” (for attacking housing inequality). His weapon happened to be the violin, which was all he knew at the moment. However, Lin indicated that he was still searching for more powerful weapons. He also felt that the value of current forms of “art” is overrated, a phenomenon that is not only counterproductive for the housing rights movement but also for art itself. Lin stated that inflating art's value would thwart its power to thrive. Lastly, when asked how artists

---

149 Email exchange with Lin.
can equip themselves for long term involvement in demanding social welfare, Lin responded, “observe as you go, but you need to give your all.” He also warned that politicians and capitalists are merciless, and therefore one should harbor no illusions about them. In Lin's view, artists first need to have determination; they should not sell their works or their integrity. Then they should learn everything from the basics, hard study, and labor.  

Lin's perspective on art as a “highly destructive weapon” connotes war and attacks. His concept that artists need to persist and “continue to destroy until true matters emerge” portrays art practitioners as aggressive, destructive soldiers fighting in order to reveal social truths. Lin also emphasized the importance of guarding one's integrity and total dedication when participating in social movements. The militaristic tone of his discussion echoes ACT's vision of an army of artists that can disrupt and counteract oppressive governmental policies.

The plight of the Shaoxin Community (fig. 64) attracted support not only from art practitioners, who were based in more geographically distant areas, but also from National Taiwan University faculty and students working, studying, and living nearby. Shaoxin residents' protests appealed to many NTU students who felt that their university's behavior toward Shaoxin entirely contradicted the virtues the university advocated. Subsequently, eight NTU student organizations connected with the Shaoxin Self Help Association and established the Shaoxin Community NTU Students Alliance in order to defend residents' housing rights. The Alliance started a petition online that made two

\[150\] Ibid.
demands from the University. First, that NTU promptly withdraws its current lawsuits and guarantees no future lawsuits against Shaoxin residents. Secondly, that NTU immediately begin dialogues with Shaoxin residents as equal parties who, under the premise of protecting current residents' housing rights, jointly devise a win-win resident placement proposal.\(^\text{151}\)

\[\text{Fig 64. Aerial view of the Shaoxin Community: small units were tightly confined together. Source: The Shaoxin Community and NTU Students Alliance.}\]

The petition statement also emphasized that civil court indictments had especially caused panic and physical and mental pressure for elderly residents. At the same time, the Alliance condemned NTU's “violent treatment” of all Shaoxin residents, maintaining that filing lawsuits against them was highly inappropriate and inconsiderate of Shaoxin's

\(^{151}\) The NTU student organizations involved included 台大學生會、台大意識報社、台大醫學系系學會文刊部、台大濁水溪社、台大大學新聞社、台大社會學研究所學生會、台大建築與城鄉研究所學生會、台大女五宿生治會; the two demands are listed on the petition website's main page, \(\text{http://campaign.tw-npo.org/sign.php?id=201111322341800}\) Accessed January 10, 2014.
historical background. The statement indicated that Shaoxin is an epitome of Taiwan's post World War Two history, during which military, government officials, and academics moved from China to Taiwan. This community also represented the large numbers of “urban migrants” who moved to Taipei from rural areas during the 1960s. The Alliance maintained that in order to respect this history, national institutions have always provided compensation or subsidized housing for residents of old “illegal buildings.” Therefore, NTU's request of residents to demolish their homes, return the land, and compensate was unprecedented and should be reconsidered.\textsuperscript{152}

In summer 2012, the Shaoxin Community NTU Students Alliance held an exhibition that displayed drawings of Shaoxin by a Japanese exchange student, 田口友子 (Taguchi Tomoko or Taguchi Yuko). In an interview, Taguchi expressed that although being unfamiliar with laws of Taiwan, she still hopes to use her art as an alternative channel to help the residents of Shaoxin. She wants to showcase this community's beautiful and intriguing elements to the public at large.\textsuperscript{153} Students from Taiwan also sketched from their surroundings at the show opening. Apart from friends and supporters, all the residents were invited. The event offered a guided tour about the artworks, which included several stylized pencil drawings of different views of Shaoxin and a few colored renderings of common objects such as a lizard and a rice dumpling (figs. 65- 67). Most of the works on display were black and white line drawings that trace the outlines of objects and buildings with no shading. The artist also left blank certain areas of the picture plane

\textsuperscript{152} The insufficient and ambiguous land right system in Taiwan cause many properties to be labeled 'illegal'.

\textsuperscript{153} See “Don't Raze Shaoxin, Japanese Student Supports through Drawing Exhibition,” the PTS Evening News report on August 19, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZbcv7a1sw8
that are close to the border. These techniques provide a sense of calmness that permeates the black and white drawings, and a reprieve from the detailed and busy composition. The drawings, which resemble architectural sketches and preparatory works for animated movies, reveal Taguchi's observant eye and her ability to portray mundane objects that make Shaoxin lovely. Scooters, bicycles, overgrown potted plants, a chair, and a heap of stuff covered by a plastic fabric, combined with lanterns, screen doors, and metal sheet roofs, provide a window into the appearance of typical older communities in Taipei. At the same times, the watercolor drawings of a rice dumpling and a lizard add life and vibrancy to the exhibition, and offer glimpses of residents' everyday life.

Figure 65. A resident passed by the exhibited drawings on her tricycle. Source: Program @ Shaoxin.
Figure 66. Visitors listen to the artist, Taiguchi, explain her works on display. Source: Program @ Shaoxin.

Figure 67. A detail of one of the drawings displayed. Source: Program @ Shaoxin.

At the exhibition, educational information on the history, development, and current circumstances of the community was also displayed on the brick and cement walls that separate gardens from alleys (fig. 68). The dissemination of information in this
community setting, as opposed to a university setting was significant on two levels. First, the art brought the audience to the original site that it portrays, so that visitors can interact with the Shaoxin's physical environment and the people who inhabit the space. Secondly, the decision to organize the exhibition away from National Taiwan University's campus could be interpreted as a form of protest. This protest stemmed from the students' complaint that NTU's action of suing residents and demanding their removal contradicted the university's educational principles, including its four core ideals: “virtue, studiousness, nationalism, compassion.”

Fig. 68. A resident read the information display about her community's history at the exhibition. Source: Program @ Shaoxin.

Through their protest, the Alliance students communicated that NTU contradicted its recently proposed “NTU Students' Ten Basic Qualities.” For example, the University advocated the “fulfillment of civil duty” while it ignored history by threatening and
forcing the Shaoxin residents to demolish their homes and return their land. Students also indicated that although NTU promoted “independent thinking and innovation,” it misinterpreted “law-based administration” as “law-based exclusion” and overlooked the law's support for subsidized relocation of illegal structure occupants. Furthermore, while NTU encouraged “concern for humanity,” it refused to communicate with residents or consider their “creative, mutually beneficial proposal.” Lastly, students complained that NTU claimed “moral reflexivity and practice” while simultaneously expediting lawsuits against residents, causing them to “live in anxiety and fear night and day.” As a result, the students asserted that the University's contradictory words and actions could not serve as a model for NTU students to be responsible for society's survival and sustainability.154

Alternatively, the Shaoxin Community NTU Students Alliance believed that there were multiple visions for and uses of national lands, which all needed to be researched and discussed in line with social welfare and justice. In the Alliance's view, NTU was not a property developer and thus should not erase Shaoxin's “social, historical veins bulldozer style” by focusing only on national land's ownership and property rights. Rather, the Alliance urged NTU to realize its social significance through its management and use of national land on behalf of all citizens. This petition procured signatures from a total of 1299 individuals and 15 organizations, including at least 48 professors from various departments and universities.155

In addition to petitioning through writing, Alliance students used social media to educate the general public and garner support. They designed the Shaoxin Program @

155 Ibid.
Shaoxin Community in order to offer real life courses on the effects of urban renewal, which were not part of any mainstream university course offerings. Several slide shows were made available on the Program's Facebook page to teach people about Shaoxin's history, its current dilemma, and issues of land ownership. Photos showcasing the Community and its residents were also posted on the website to help visualize this information. The Shaoxin Program @ Shaoxin Community Facebook page became an effective tool of sharing about and documenting social activities organized at Shaoxin.

In the Spring of 2013, students found another creative way to bring attention and support to Shaoxin. On April 13, social work students from Fu Jen Catholic University and NTU set up a flea market that aimed to “guard Shaoxin with love” (fig. 69). The flea market communicated a message of preservation and upcycling. Similar to the fact that items that were no longer suitable for some could still be useful to others, the Shaoxin Community, which seemed outdated and unprofitable to the city government's urban planning, still possessed valuable cultural and historical elements.
The Shaoxin Program @ Shaoxin Community continued to address the intellectual and physical needs of residents and supporters by initiating gatherings for residents, film screenings, and public lectures. For example, in March 2014, three lectures on illegal buildings occurred, and an anti-eviction movement and documentary film about issues surrounding a piece of land owned by the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology was screened. In May 2014, the Program gathered residents and supporters to make traditional rice dumplings to and celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival. The purpose of the rice dumpling event was twofold. It aimed to provide the younger generation an opportunity to appreciate the importance of traditional food and
culture, and to allow residents to revisit the homey atmosphere associated with this activity.\footnote{Program @ Shaoxin Facebook page mobile uploads.
https://www.facebook.com/ShaoxingCommunity?fref=photo}

The rice dumpling activity added another dimension to Taiwanese Participatory Art because it was a special craft that required learning. It also illustrated that food too can be used as a medium to create art, in this case little sculptures, that are at once practical and aesthetically pleasing (figs. 70-72). Furthermore, it demonstrated how the artists and activists incorporated traditional elements that were unique to Taiwan into a Western art approach, thus adding a deeper layer of meaning and sense of familiarity to Participatory Art for the Taiwanese participants. While Participatory Art became common in Great Britain, Europe, and the United States in the 1960s, the employment of this art approach is relatively new in Taiwan. The earliest known example is Wu Ma-li’s *Queen's New Clothes* (2004), which focused on women telling their personal stories through costume-making and parading. However, Wu's project still drew inspiration from a Western tale, “The Emperor's New Clothes.” In contrast, the more recent Participatory Art that addresses housing rights embraces Taiwan's history and tradition, such as rice dumpling-making and how historical development affected has resulted in a change of residential demographics.
Figure 70. A lady prepared the glutinous rice filling. Once wrapped, the dumplings would be secured by the white strings and hung on the bamboo pole. Source: Program @Shaoxin.

Figure 71. The invitation to the rice dumpling-making event. Source: Program @Shaoxin.
Figures 72. The finished products were triangular sculptures made of glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo leaves. Source: Program @Shaoxin.

The Huaguang Community: “Refugess on the Golden Block”

The Shaoxin Community was only one of the many areas in Taiwan where residents were battling urban renewal and demolition. The Huaguang Community is another famous case in Taipei. Like the Shaoxin Community, the Huaguang Community's history dates back to the Japanese colonial period (fig. 73). It was the location of the Taipei Prison, one of three major prisons on the island during Japanese rule. Dormitories for single police officers were erected adjacent to the Taipei Prison. After the Chinese Nationalist Party arrived in Taiwan in 1949, it took over the Prison's administrative duty and renamed it Taiwan Taipei Prison. Many government employees in the judicial system
were assigned residences either in the existing Japanese dormitories or in the newly built “Judicial Village.” Commanding officers also permitted those who were not assigned housing to construct their own shelter on the empty land nearby. According to the Huaguang Self Help Association website, two factors contributed to this type of “passive, laissez-faire” housing policy. First, there was an overwhelming number of Chinese Nationalist military families, approximately one million people; second, the Nationalist Party viewed Taiwan as a temporary base before repossessing China. However, the Chinese Nationalists never retook or returned to China. With urban development, high numbers of rural migrants entered Taipei, and due to the rising land and property prices that resulted from economic growth, many underprivileged migrants settled in less desirable areas such as Yongkang, Shaoxin, and Huaguang during the 1970s. Currently, these public servants’ families and urban migrants constitute the Huaguang Community.¹⁵⁷

In 2007, under the “Four Golden Blocks Plan” of the Executive Yuan, the executive branch of the Taiwanese government, Huaguang was designated as the building site for the new “Taipei Wall Street.” Later in 2013, it was re-designated as the future site of the special financial district, “Taipei Roppongi.” Subsequently, intending to sell state-owned land to corporations through BOT, or Build-Operate-Transfer contracts, the Taipei City administration proceeded to clear the people and objects in Huaguang.

Footnote: The Executive Yuan is the Executive Branch of the Taiwan government: “Taipei Wall Street” was part of the 四大金磚計畫, literally translated as “four big golden bricks plan;” Taipei Roppongi: 台北六本木. Roppongi, literally “six trees,” is a district of Minato, Tokyo, known for its nightlife and aggregation of foreigners. Many foreign embassies are also located in Roppongi. *Tokyo Weekender - Weekender Archives – “Roppongi - A history of Our Favorite Watering hole” via http://www.archive.org/*
Families living in units labeled “illegal” by officials, were sued and required to self-demolish their homes. BOT is an arrangement in which the private sector builds an infrastructure project, operates it, and eventually transfers ownership of the project to the government. In Huaguang's case, the government intended to sell fifty years of superficies, or surface rights, to private companies. Many residents were forced to pay compensation ranging from 40-70 million NT. The lawsuits created an outcry from residents, who had acquired their homes through either inheritance or legal purchase. The monetary compensation order by the court, an astronomical amount to the residents, and the deadline to demolish their own homes added unbearable pressure on the residents.

Consequently, the Huaguang residents formed a Self-Help Association in order to have a collective and unified voice to express their situation. Calling themselves “refugees on the golden block,” the association also created a Facebook page to explain their case in detail with texts, photographs, and illustrations (fig. 74). Cartoon-like drawings depicted the historical architecture, a little tree, and residents being threatened by the City government. Satirical dialogues and simple slogans were incorporated into these drawings, providing a concise, easily-digestible summary of the more detailed, accompanying narratives.

---

159 Investopedia USA.

Concerning housing rights, the Huaguang Self Help Association made four demands on the government. First, the government must stop evictions and devise a proper plan to resettle residents. Second, the government must withdraw requests for “unlawful profiting” compensation. Third, development of state own land must be transparent and public oriented. Fourth, related laws must be amended to ensure the protection of housing rights. Despite the protests and demands, the government demolished two family units on March 27, 2013 and almost an entire row of houses on Jinghua Street on April 24, 2013. These forced demolitions caused more controversies and doubts regarding Huaguang and urban policy in general.\(^\text{161}\)

\(^\text{161}\)【他們在抗爭什麼？】訴求篇; “What Are They Protesting About”: Demands, http://goo.gl/5wYAQ; [官民糾纏十二年 北市華光社區今天開拆]; “After Twelve-Year Dispute between Government Officials and Citizens, Demolition Starts Today in Taipei’s Huaguang Community” (author's translation),
Although the government ultimately ignored the Huaguang residents' petitions and supporters' protests, the Participatory Art created as part of an effort to preserve the Community deserves analysis. The first artistic event took place in Huaguang from April 12 to June 12, 2011, when the Community and the non-profit Cultural Studies Association co-organized the Huaguang Community Photography Exhibition. This juried exhibition received approximately 150 works from 57 submissions, among which shortlisted and award-winning pieces were showcased at the Huaguang Community Carnival on June 12, 2011 (fig 75). The exhibited photographs portrayed various facets of life in Huaguang. Several photos conveyed the idea of innocence in a leisurely and peaceful environment by depicting children walking hand in hand in the alley, a small boy riding his bicycle, and an elderly woman smiling at the camera, with elderly men playing and watching a Chinese chess game. Other photographs expressed loneliness, isolation and desolation: an elderly man with a somber expression sitting alone with a cat in his lap; an elderly individual's back juxtaposed against a partially demolished wall; and an aerial view of humble housing that looked compact, minute, and feeble. Two colored photographs overtly communicated anger and frustration toward government policy. One captured an old man hanging a protest banner with a large, single Chinese character, “Cheat.” Another displayed a horizontal banner hung across several units' façade, proclaiming residents' demand: “Huaguang Community, Settle the Residents on Site.”

http://www.coolloud.org.tw/node/72897

162 The Huaguang Community Photography Exhibition and the Carnival were titled 華光社區影像展 and 華光社區嘉年華 respectively.
On the day of the Carnival, visitors viewed the award-winning photographs hung by Huaguang residents themselves. They were also able to appreciate graffiti drawings by Candy Bird and acts by performance artists, as they walked through the Community (fig. 76). Candy Bird's graffiti, which covered an entire side of a house, was satirical yet carried a hopeful message. On the right portion of the drawing, the artist depicted blindfolded, or blind government officials who seemed lost and clueless. To the left of the drawing, one saw an enormous, gluttonous, fattened, and sweaty person sucking a pacifier and holding a “bulldozer's arm.” This creature, representing greedy developers, sits on a seesaw while paper bills fly out of its pocket. On the other end of the seesaw is a daisy flower being watered by a little girl. A child's chalk drawing of clouds, the sun, flowers, and the word “home” sits in the background between the girl and the giant “baby.” While the giant developer's “bulldozer hand” invades the “home drawing” with insatiable greed, the girl waters and nurtures the flower. The drawing is an image of hope, because the small, fragile flower outweighs the developer.
Two avant-garde performance art pieces, *Urban Savage* and *Struggle* were also included in the Carnival (Fig. 77-78). In *Urban Savage*, actor Wadan Wuma wore little clothing and interacted with the environment, including a concrete wall with marks that symbolized tree branches. Considering the title and the imagery of Wadan Wuma's performance, the artist made reference to a simpler life that included a closer connection to nature, as compared to the “concrete forest” found in urban Taipei. At the same time, Wadan Wuma's identity as a Taiwanese aborigine provided an additional layer of meaning to *Urban Savage*. Although Taiwanese aborigines were often derided as “savages” by the Japanese colonizers and Chinese settlers, Wadan Wuma's performance asks the question, “Who is the savage? Is it the native person who respects and preserves nature or is it those who destroy it indiscriminately in order to build skyscrapers?” The fact that the tree...
branches were drawn onto a concrete wall also suggests the scarceness of natural plants, as they are represented merely with a few brushstrokes rather than the real object.

Figure 77. Left: Wadan Wuma's *Urban Savage* performance; Right: Wang Mo-lin's performance piece, *Struggle*.

For *Struggle*, the actor and theater critic, Wang Mo-lin, covered the shrubs in an empty yard with colorful fabric. Lying on a long piece of the same fabric, Wang, naked and partially covered with the fabric, seemed to struggle to get up as he held onto an imaginary rope. Although there is no statement from Wang regarding the meaning of his performance, one may interpret it as a metaphor for the economic underprivileged having difficulty overcoming demolition and displacement. The floral pattern on the plastic fabric is significant, as it points to the absurdity of covering the natural with the fabricated greenery. Wang's struggle might also represent the effect of insufficient urban planning on all citizens, who are buried and surrounded by environment man-made structures that have disconnected them from nature.
Critiques on Huaguang

Although the reasons for the residents' protest included lack of preservation of history, culture, and nature, housing rights were the central issue. People focusing on Huaguang's historical significance argued that demolishing residential units would damage the adjacent walls of the former Taipei Prison, the first “western style” correctional facility built in Taiwan. While the north wall gained historic site status in 1989, the south wall and adjoining structures were still undergoing administrative procedure to obtain the status, and were thus not protected. Taipei Prison is symbolic because it is associated with major events and people that mark Taiwan's Japanese colonial period, World War II, and the 228 Event and White Terror under Guomindang rule. Cultural preservationists indicated that demolishing residential homes and causing damage to the historical Taipei Prison complex were an “extremely crude treatment” of both the history of human settlement and the history of architecture. They asserted that
the plan to raze Huaguang demonstrated the government's negligent attitude toward history and culture.  

At the same time, environmentalists maintained that old trees were important to the community because they provided not only shade for residents but also living habitats to other species, such as birds, butterflies and bats. Conservationists complained that the recent demolition work uprooted and “boorishly transplanted” many old and valuable trees at Huaguang. They further complained that this damage was dismissed by demolition workers as being the result of high winds or what is “normal in operations involving large-scale machinery.”

Meanwhile, the strongest criticism against Huaguang's demolition centered on the government's urban development policy, oversight in public welfare, and exclusion of civic participation. First, residents and supporters asserted that Taiwan's housing policy became increasingly commodified, which led to inflation of housing prices and housing problems for various social strata. They stated that many other countries regulate the housing market and offer affordable housing to citizens as a response to urban related speculation. However, Taiwan's government acted in a contrary manner, by becoming “the greatest muscleman” for land commodification. Furthermore, clearing Huaguang of people through lawsuits not only overlooked history and the deficiency of overpriced housing market, but also marginalized current residents.

---

164【他們在抗爭什麼】简介篇: “What are They Protesting About?: Introduction,” http://goo.gl/5wYAQ  
165There were approximately forty species of old trees in Huaguang, many of which were already mature with crown canopy in photographs taken in 1945 by the US Air Force.【他們在抗爭甚麼？】文史保存與護樹篇: “What are they Protesting About?: Cultural Preservation and Tree Protection,” http://goo.gl/5wYAQ
Secondly, housing rights activists claimed that Taiwan's urban policy focuses on economic profit rather than solution to public demand for livelihood. For example, in 2011, the National Property Administration commissioned the Tourism Bureau to recruit corporations to build two high-end business class hotels. Making reference to the significant transaction sums of National Property Administration's three other property rights deals in 2012, analysts argued that in order to gain profit from the purchase, businessmen who won the bids would need to “revitalize” these state-owned lands into luxury housing or high-end boutique stores. Consequently, it would not be regular citizens but only a selected number of rich individuals who could enjoy these facilities. Residents and activists criticized that this type of policy lacks sustainability and a vision of the city as a public place. It also disregards and destroys community histories, networks, and housing rights.  

Moreover, residents and activists were unhappy with the fact that citizens were excluded from the urban development process and vision. They indicated that Huaguang's redevelopment plan did not allow the city's main users, the citizens, to participate in the decision-making process. At the same time, state-owned land revitalization policy was transforming the Taipei City Center into an expensive, exclusive place where the general population could only “look through veils and glass but not share in.” Housing rights supporters also used Huaguang's case to illustrate their viewpoint that the government was not intent on improving housing policy or on offering suitable housing for its

---

All three deals were over 150 million NT, with the last deal reaching 800 million NT. 【他們在抗爭什麼？】國土活化篇: “What Are They Protesting About?”; Government-Owned Land Revitalization, http://goo.gl/5wYAQ
citizens. They argued that the “short term public housing” offered by the government in response to residents' protests was harmful rather than beneficial. For example, the rent was too high and the location was not ideal. Additionally, the rental term was only for three years, which was too short and guaranteed no housing security to the residents. Activists suspected that the distribution of short-term public housing application forms, the application deadline, and the accompanied implication of delay on demolition were all designed to pressure residents to leave Huaguang. Lastly, people interpreted the existence of short-term public housing as evidence of the government's lack of a long-term settlement plan. They believed that it was merely a temporary way out that cannot effectively solve the housing policy problems that had long troubled Taiwan.167

Regarding effective solutions, housing rights activists recommended that the government should consider social housing with affordable rental rates and long-term contacts as an option. They also suggested that the government prohibit residents from turning rental properties into immovable property investments in order to avoid housing commodification and speculation. Additionally, they argued that the design for social housing should suit the specific needs of various types of residents in order to accommodate a broader public.168

In 2011, the Huaguang Community made a call for video documentaries addressing the theme, “The Power of Dialogue and Moving Image on Huaguang Community's Experience.” As a result, four short videos by university and community college students were later featured under the title, Huaguang: Short Videos of the

167 Ibid.
168【他們在抗爭什麼？】居住篇; “What Are They Protesting About?”: Housing, http://goo.gl/5wYAQ
Disappearing Community in the Iron Horse Film Festival (fig. 79). One scene from the film documentary captured what people feared they would lose with the demolition of Huaguang. This still-image depicts four boys sitting in chairs, enjoying each other's company in the middle of the road. A garbage-collecting vehicle, sheltered by a large umbrella, is parked a few feet way. Two women are walking in the opposite direction. The boys are flanked and sheltered by trees that have become one with the simple houses. Two boys wave at the camera, seemingly inviting the audience to partake in the simple yet convivial life of the Huaguang Community.

Figure 79. A scene from “Huaguang: Short Videos of the Disappearing Community.”

169 The theme in original Chinese: 華光社區的經驗對話和影像力量; The film festival's Chinese title: 鐵馬影展 Iron Horse Film Festival http://ironhorse2013.blogspot.com/
The Land Project

The many urban renewal controversies in Taipei also inspired a dancer, Hsiao Tse Han, to create the Land Project, using dance to explore the relationship between the body and the land. Hsiao's experience of teaching dance to children in the remote Taidong County and her encounter with the Meiliwan land controversy caused her to question the definition of land. She wondered, “Is the place of human habitation land? Is a hotel land? Can a place without traditional culture still be considered land? Hsiao recruited dancers interested in “providing strength to the world through their bodies” and encouraged them to create dialogues with the land. The group debuted their first performance in Huaguang (figs. 80-83) from November 16 to 17, 2013. Prior to the performance, Hsiao's team conducted field research, during which members conversed with residents and explored the site. Hsiao emphasized that learning the stories of the residents enabled her and group members to truly understand and empathize with the feeling of having to leave one's home. Although the final performances consisted only of professional dancers, the Land Project nevertheless relied on a crucial method of Participatory Art: conversing with people who were central to the issue in focus.

170 Hsiao's Chinese name: 蕭紫菡; Meiliwan Event, 美麗灣事件, was a land controversy in East Coast Taiwan that involved the lack of environmental evaluation prior to the granting of a building permit for a holiday resort. Quote taken from [華光廢墟上起舞 舞者自發「土地計畫」關懷土地議題]; “Dancing on the Ruins of Huaguang: Dancer Initiate 'Land Project' to Address Land Issues” (author's translation), Taiwan Environmental Information Center, http://e-info.org.tw/node/94764
Figure 80. A night-time performance of *The Land Project*. The dancer Hsiao Tse Han approaches another dancer in the role of a resident reacting to the aftermath of her home's demolition. Source: Hsiao Tse Han Dance Theater Facebook Page.

Figure 81. Scene of a solo figure dancing. The backdrop, a plastic sheet with a blue-and-white stripe pattern, is commonly seen in Taiwan. Source: *Taiwan Environmental Information Center*: http://e-info.org.tw/node/94764
The *Land Project* differed from typical dance performances due to its setting. Rather than moving across a smooth surface in a traditional space, dancers performed in the midst of rubble, using demolished buildings as their backdrop. This made the dancers' movements more challenging, as they would need to shift their bodies in a different
manner that could accommodate the rugged terrain of the ruins. They might need to move more slowly and land their feet with less force. These limitations and challenges reminded the dancers as well as the audience of the difficulties faced by the residents of Huaguang. In the documentary photographs, the dancers similarly extend their limbs by squatting in a wide step and stretching their arms upward. In these poses that express struggle and with their heads looking up toward the sky, the dancers could be drawing attention to, questioning, or lamenting the destruction of homes in this community. The Land Project is a work in situ that forces its performers to be aware of their surroundings. It is also unique for its use of current events as inspiration.

**Conclusion**

The stories of Shaoxin and Huaguan residents inspired solo and collaborative works that focused on the residents themselves and housing rights. Although the art works discussed above are not Participatory Art in the traditional sense because the general public did not directly collaborate with artists in creating them, community members still played an integral part. For example, Kao Jun-honn and Lin Hui-chun's video project in Xiaoxin relied on residents' willingness to share their stories and open their homes to the public. Not only did they become the sole subject of the film clips, their everyday living space temporarily became an exhibition space. The presence of residents during the video screenings in their own homes likely created a more effective and emotional experience for viewers. In Lin's solo violin street performances, residents' names were the focal point of the narrative. The listed names of those sued by the government on Lin's poster created a powerful visualization of the persecution.
In the more convivial, NTU student-initiated Shaoxin Program @ Shaoxin Community, students were able to enter the community and interact with residents in a more substantial manner. After the program's participants learned about residents' lives in Shaoxin and explored its physical environment, residents were able to see their stories and living spaces translated into drawings, architectural models, and installations of memorabilia right within their own community. Furthermore, students from the Shaoxin Community NTU Students Alliance brought their experience of the Shaoxin community to the university campus through *From Eviction to Construction: One to One Unit*. They combined literature, music, architectural installation, and collaborative mosaic making to educate the public about Shaoxin and housing rights. The *Shaoxin Program @ Shaoxin Community* and *From Eviction to Construction* are closest to Participatory Art among all the works done in Shaoxin and Huaguang, due to their approaches. Throughout the two-week Shaoxin Program @ Shaoxin Community, participants had sustained interactions and conversations with residents on a daily basis, as they explored this area's culture, history, and physical space. The participants' research resulted in various types of art works created by the participants themselves. At the same time, “From Eviction to Construction” included the collaborative architecture constructed by non-art students from NTU and the mosaic piece that invited all visitors to participate in.

In Huaguang's case, numerous artists, whether professional or amateur, helped garner support for residents by creating works about or performing in Huaguang. Photographs and videos submitted by the general public captured the simple, compact environment of the community, the heartwarming scenes of children playing and the
elderly gathering, as well as somber views of buildings decorated with protest banners, earmarked for demolition. Candy Bird's satirical, and cartoon-like graffiti work was the most permanent form of art within Huaguang. Its vibrant colors and childlike style contrasted with the serious subject, which addressed the bleak future of the community. The actors interacted with the environment of Huaguang through performance art and dance, which were unique for both artists and residents.

Participatory Art's exploratory nature and the artists' humility were evident in the photographs and short films about Huaguang, which did not aim to represent the community in its totality, but rather allowed the public to appreciate vignettes of community life. They were not a branding of Huaguang but an invitation to people to understand and support the community. The same attitude existed in the performance art and dance pieces, where the artists intended to interact with the communities' history and environment through their field research and performances. They aimed to draw attention not to themselves but to the issue of housing rights through their creativity.

It is important to note that the Participatory Art processes in Huaguang and Shaoxin are equally, if not more, important than the artistic results. The video installations, community tours, photographs, dance performance clips, and short videos introduced the audience to these two neighborhoods by capturing a sliver of the community's life. However, it is the artists and participants who likely gained more insight and understanding through more sustained interactions with the communities, including interviews, visits, and the two-week Together Shaoxin workshop. Although non-resident participants, artists, students and supporters cannot relate completely to the
pressure that the residents face, they are able to empathize, express support, and rally for housing rights through conversation, companionship, educational outreach, and art. The Participatory Art created in Shaoxin and Huaguang differs from those produced by 小 ACT due to the different degrees and manner of public interaction. 小 ACT critiqued uneven urban development and a specific event through one-time performances like Operational Little Barbarossa and My Unrly Alarm Clock, where interaction with participants occurred at the very end of the planning and completion. In comparison, Kao's video installations and Lin's concert at Shaoxin, the Together Shaoxin: Shaoxin Community Space and History Workshop, Hsiao's dance performances in Huaguang, all required significant contact and conversations with residents. In Kao and Lin's work, residents' stories became the inspiration for, as well as the actual content of, the final product. The Together Shaoxin Workshop was also successful because participants interacted with the community for two weeks on a daily basis, from morning to evening. In the end, the residents became the subjects as well as the viewers of the art. Lastly, although Hsiao's dances did not feature any participants, the choreography resulted in a deep understanding of the neighborhood's landscape and stories obtained through site visits and extensive interviews with residents. In the next chapter, one sees this more sustained interaction with residents taken to another level, where artists, students and activists work and live alongside residents in a year-long struggle to defend housing rights.
CHAPTER 3: A NATION-WIDE CITIZEN COALITION FOR HOUSING RIGHTS

Chapter 3 investigates the most controversial demolition case in Taipei in 2010, Wenlinyuan, by analyzing the associated Participatory Art activities: Hundred People Paint to Save the Wangs, a collaborative poster making event; and Cooking at the Front Line, a student activist-run kitchen that incorporated creative elements into various aspects of cooking. While the Hundred People Paint to Save the Wangs was a short, one-time Participatory Art activity that made the Wenlinyuan protest instantly visible, Cooking at the Front Line was a long-term project of sustained housing rights activism. The latter suggests an expansion of the definition of Participatory Art due to its use of unconventional processes and materials for collaborative practices. For example, kiln construction with bricks, product design, and baking artisan bread challenged the traditional understanding of visual arts production. Furthermore, the costumes adopted by Cooking at the Front Line members during their public appearances can be viewed as a type of performance. Cooking at the Front Line is Participatory Art because it was a collective endeavor that resulted in not only functional but also artistic products.

Shannon Jackson, Suzi Gablik, and Leoni Sandercock’s theories are relevant to Hundred People Paint to Save the Wangs and Cooking at the Front Line because these two works focus on story-telling and social inquiry. In these participatory projects, artists and participants applied Gablik’s listener-centered paradigm by listening to residents relate their experiences of urban renewal. In turn, the final results told the story of these residents collectively. This lending voice to and valuing the input of distressed residents, as well as providing alternative account to the dominant view on urban renewal, answer
Sandercock's call to include voices of difference in public policy. Furthermore, the artists’ and activists’ efforts to challenge urban redevelopment regulations through Participatory Art concurs with Jackson's discussion on art's potential to complicate social systems.

In addition to the Participatory Art at Wenlinyuan, this chapter introduces Pong Long San, Huang Huiyu, and Chen Hongyin, three central figures of the Taiwan Alliance for Victims of Urban Renewal, an organization that supported residents facing eviction, including the Wang Family of Wenlinyuan. With different roles as resident, art student, and student of urban planning, respectively, Pong, Huang, and Chen became critically aware of Taiwan's urban socio-spatial inequality through different avenues but during the same period of time. They converged in a forceful, unified, and momentous movement to contest urban inequality. Using a listener-centered paradigm to give voice to marginalized residents, the Taiwan Alliance for Victims of Urban Renewal's practices corresponded to Gablik and Sandercock's theories, in that, eventually TAVUR became a national, trans-social strata support network.

A portion of this chapter is devoted to Huang Huiyu's experience with urban renewal as a resident artist in a development corporation-affiliated artist residency program, Chunjong Urban Core Art District. This program exemplified the phenomenon of art being employed by urban developers to neutralize divisive redevelopment policies, as mentioned by Deutsche, Miles, Zukins, Short and Kim. Huang, aiming to challenge this situation in Taipei, applied Suzi Gablik's listener-centered approach to her research, as she interviewed residents in Chunjong. By organizing two symposia that involved
both the art community and residents and asking the question, “What does urban renewal mean?” Huang raised public awareness and complicated the dominant urban redevelopment system, as affirmed by Shannon Jackson. Huang's final display, though a traditional group art exhibition, presented findings from her interviews and symposia, two methods widely employed in the Participatory Art approach.

**One Hundred People Paint**

Beginning on December 25, 2011, passengers of the Taipei Metro could see a bright, multicolored banner affixed onto a building as they passed the Shilin Metro Station in northern Taipei. The building was called Wenlinyuan, and belonged to a family resisting forced demolition, the Wangs. The colorful banner featured 100 small figures holding hands and a large, red and black slogan, “Home, Not for Sale and Not for Demolition.” This collage on fabric was the result of a Participatory Art event titled *One Hundred People Paint to Protect the Wangs*. On the evening of December 24, 2011, the general public was invited to Wenlinyuan to paint and write messages on figures made out of fabric. The painted figures were then attached to a larger piece of fabric to create a large banner that hung on the Wangs residence. A roll of figures also appeared to be directly painted onto the banner (fig. 84).
On the banner, each figure was connected by a hand to show solidarity and protection. The participants gave these figures various facial expressions, including smiles to encourage the Wangs and to express cheerfulness and mutual support. Other figures' faces appeared to be hurt, frightened, and frustrated. Different signs and phrases were also inscribed on the figures, such as a dollar sign, a sign that encircled and crossed out the word “demolition;” the words, “home,” “stay,” and the phrases, “not for sale,” and “you also became the victim.” The banner was both a statement and an invitation to its viewers. It conveyed the Wangs' and their supporters' determination to protect Wenlinyuan from demolition, and urged the audience to learn more about the controversy by visiting TAVUR's Facebook page, as indicated by words written in blue on the top right of the banner (fig. 85).
Additionally, a large, colorful bunch of helium-filled balloons floated above Wenlinyuan. The celebratory tone of the balloons visually contrasted with the dim sight of the partially destroyed building, with its walls torn down, rooms emptied, and rebar exposed. The cheerful, hopeful connotation of the balloons also differed from the serious, contentious mood of the words written in red and black and displayed next to the main banner. The Chinese characters read, “Bully urban renewal [policy] forcible demolition regulations;” “Razing civilian homes [as] gifts to developers, all citizens put the Taipei City Government on public trial;” and “Mayor Hao, please seriously consider three-win [and] 100% safety for residents.” These messages and the *One Hundred People Paint* banner were an important gesture, because they marked the first time people of various social backgrounds came together to defend not only a family's home but also all citizen's
housing rights. The protest against an inequitable government urban renewal program was now a collective issue, where the people demanded a policy that benefited not only the city government and developers but also residents. The fact that this was a shared concern was revealed in the protest messages and visually reiterated by the hundred figures connected by their hands.

The One Hundred People Paint to Protect the Wangs participatory event was organized by the Taiwan Alliance for Victims of Urban Renewal (TAVUR), a group that played a central role in supporting the Wenlinyuan housing rights struggle. A simple quote from the website of another community undergoing urban renewal, the Sanying Tribe Self-Help Alliance, encapsulates TAVUR's ideals: “Land is not a commodity.”

Pong Long San, Huang Huiyu, and Chen Hungyin held key responsibilities in TAVUR and at Wenlinyuan. Their working dynamics, TAVUR's mission, and their perspectives on Participatory Art and housing rights activism will be discussed in conjunction with the development of the Wenlinyuan case.

TAVUR and Its Core Staff

Pong Long San, a motorbike mechanic and shop owner, became a victim of inequitable urban renewal laws when he was pressured and sued by Sen Yeh Construction Co., LTD, after refusing to join the urban revival program in his community, Yungchun. His determination to protect his family's ancestral property, the learning of other citizen's stories of oppression, and a strong sense of unequal treatment

---

1 In addition to the land disputes listed by TAVUR, there have been more controversies since 2010, such as the Miali Dapu urban renewal case. The author interviewed Pong, Huang, and Chen in July, August, and September 2012, respectively; quote taken from Sanying Tribe Self Help Alliance Blog main page. Accessed November 2, 2013. http://sanyingtribe.blogspot.com/
motivated Pong to organize The Taiwan Alliance for Victims of Urban Renewal (TAVUR) in 2010 (fig. 86).^{172}

![Figure 86. Pong (right), working at Wenlinyuan post demolition. His T-shirt reads, “Home, not for sale, not for demolition.” Source: Kuo Sh.](image)

Huang Huiyu was a graduate student in the Department of Trans-Disciplinary Arts, Taipei National University of the Arts (fig. 87). She began to question the relationship between the arts, urban renewal, and community residents when she and a

---

^{172} Yunchun is a district in East Taipei, whereas Wenlinyuan is situated in northern Taipei. The urban renewal controversies in these two communities and other locations in Taipei demonstrate the extent and comprehensiveness of the City government’s urban renewal program.
group of artists received space to work and exhibit in emptied buildings awaiting reconstruction in Chungjong, Chungzheng District. This area was renamed the Urban Core Arts District by the JUT Development Group. During her artist residency, Huang observed little connection between the art creations in Urban Core and its surroundings. As she questioned, she became frustrated by the fact that information on the fate and future of this community remained unobtainable. As a result, Huang decided to create a site-specific piece that included conversing with local residents and researching on urban renewal in Taiwan. Her quest led her to a conference and a reading group on urban renewal at National Taiwan University, where she met Chen Hungyin, a graduate of Urban Studies (fig. 88).173

Having studied urban planning, Chen Hungyin became highly aware of urban renewal controversies in Hong Kong and South Korea while she was working in Korea. Upon her return to Taiwan in September 2010, Chen was shocked by the prevalence of urban renewal programs in Taiwan. After meeting Huang Huiyu, Chen, Huang, and several other concerned art and urban studies students visited Pong Long San in Yungchun in order to learn more about urban renewal at the community level. Eventually, Huang, Chen, other victims of urban renewal, and seven other students joined The Taiwan Alliance for Victims of Urban Renewal (TAVUR) in 2010.174

---

173 The Chinese names for Chungjong, Chungzheng District, Urban Core Arts District, and JUT Development Group are 城中區, 城中藝術街區, and 中泰建設, respectively.

174 Chen Hungyin earned a Bachelor degree in Urban Planning from National Chung Kong University and a graduate degree from National Taiwan University's National Institute of Building and Planning. While in Korea, Chen worked in a Non-Government Organization and focused on immigrant workers' rights.
Figure 87. Huang speaking outside a court hearing for the Wenlinyuan Case. Source: The Taiwan Association for Human Rights.
As an organization, TAVUR rallied for equal housing rights and supported victims of urban renewal through a variety of approaches, including sit-in demonstrations, discussion forums, press conferences, and community activism. Its members included both residents, who were directly discriminated against by urban renewal policies, and those who “suffer indirectly” under the harsh environment of “high housing prices and no dwellings.”

In its mission statement, TAVUR recognized that Taiwan's current urban renewal policies were the primary cause of law violations and social disruption, and they forced an increasing number of people to relocate. The organization also asserted that its goal was “to urge our society and government to acknowledge and reaffirm human-centered urban renewal in ideology and policy; and to redirect the commerce-centered tendency in
At the same time, TAVUR articulated its aspiration for “urban renewals that respect every individual's housing rights and dignity, and for environmental friendly and sustainable urban revitalization.”

Following the mission statement were “Seven Major Demands” that were directed at the government and real estate developers. They read:

- Housing rights belongs to all residents participating in urban renewal regardless of their property rights status.
- [We] repudiate excessive distribution of floor zoning bonus, which should be premised on the promotion of public welfare.
- Urban renewal must implement democratic participation, information transparency, and integration from top to bottom.
- The revitalization of old communities should be prioritized over areas with high housing value.
- Urban renewal should be more than reconstruction – it needs to encompass more vision and imagination, such as renovation and preservation in respect to environmental and architectural factors.
- Urban renewal must honor the locality's existing ways of living rather than blindly constructing modern apartments.
- The government should construct public welfare-centered social housing extensively – units that are not for sale but for rent only.

The clear and thorough articulation of these demands demonstrated the TAVUR members' first hand experience as well as a professional understanding of urban renewal. It is evident that the statements were the result of personal insights and collective vision. They combined ideological statements with pragmatic recommendations. Contrary to the current government-endorsed urban gentrification efforts, these demands exemplified a sense of equality and justice, a respect for history, culture, and the built environment, and the desire for common welfare.

---

175 Ibid.
The prevalence of Taipei's urban renewal controversies was demonstrated by the thirty-two disputed cases in nine of the twelve districts in Taipei City and two New Taipei City districts from 2009 to 2012, as recorded by the TAVUR website. TAVUR supported marginalized residents through direct actions, including those listed in “What We Are Doing” on TAVUR's website:

1. Provide consultation for difficult and complicated urban renewal cases and queries.
2. Create a communication platform for various communities undergoing urban renewal.
3. Organize inter-community collaborative actions to advance institutional reform initiatives.
4. Initiate a “bottom-up” urban renewal law reform.
5. Promote housing rights and environment-centered urban renewal public-education through publications, lectures and dialogues.

Victims of urban renewal were able to obtain timely assistance and connect with victims from other communities. The cross-community initiatives to demand housing justice and supervise government policies were significant because they enacted change. Residents not only were able to share their stories with each other and with TAVUR members – which in itself was a healing process – but also were empowered by the support from other students and professionals. This immediate support enabled victims to remain in their prolonged struggle for housing rights. Furthermore, TAVUR's focus on providing disenfranchised residents the space and media coverage to address their concerns was consistent with Suzi Gablik's and Leoni Sandercock's writings. The listener-centered approach championed by Gablik and the inclusion of marginalized voices encouraged by Sandercock were realized as residents were enabled to tell their stories and request a welfare-centered government housing policy.
The Wenlinyuan Controversy

Regarding the highly controversial urban renewal case, Wenlinyuan, Pong related that he became acquainted with the Wangs in 2009. Having heard of their struggles, Pong and other members visited the family to express concern and show solidarity. Despite the One Hundred People Paint banner and the several protests and press conferences that supporters helped organized, Wenlinyuan was eventually forcibly demolished in the early morning of March 28, 2012. On the evening of March 27, more than 300 students and supporters gathered in front of Wenlinyuan to protect it from anticipated forced demolition. Many of them lay on sleeping bags laid out on the ground, ready to resist eviction. Others held discussions under a tent decorated with colorful figures and the phrases “Urban Renewal; Forced Demolition; Unconstitutional” hung on strings. According to Pong, around one thousand police were sent to evict the Wangs and all those present (figs. 89-90).
Figure 89. More than 300 students and supporters camped in front of Wenlinyuan to protect it from anticipated forced demolition on the night of March 27 to the early mornings of March 28, 201. Source: TAVUR.
Pong and many TAVUR members were present during the 328 Wenlinyuan Eviction Incident. Huang estimated approximately 300-500 supporters guarded Wenlinyuan, among them professors from various departments, colleges and universities, other victims of urban renewal, students, and many citizens of different professional and social backgrounds. Pong related his personal experience in the interview, mentioning the presence of Professor Lin Hui-chun and Professor Gong Jiu-chun. He also remembered that some of the students chained themselves to the furniture and the front gate. In response, the police cut the chains with saws. Many students were taken to a bus and transported to several parks in the city. Pong was able to “rescue” some of the students from the bus; however, he felt sorry for the students who were taken away by the police because those students “had nothing on them – no ID, money, or cell phone – because
everything was destroyed or confiscated during the police raid.” The evicted students had to borrow cell phones from strangers on the street in order to contact Pong and Alliance members, and to regroup.

On April, 26, 2012, almost one month after Wenlinyuan's forced demolition, TAVUR members helped the Wangs assemble a prefabricated hut in order to guard their property and prevent any new construction (fig. 91). The tent and the hut became a base for discussions on urban renewal issues. On the façade colorful posters were hung, which were painted bright yellow and green to make the place visually appealing. Students also set up a tent, a table and chairs in front of the hut to distribute literature and welcome visitors. The tent and the hut became a symbol of resistance against forced demolition and a base for discussions on urban renewal issues. The application of Sandercock's, Gablik's, and Jackson's theories was evident in this step to rebuild a home for the Wangs. The temporary hut encouraged the exchange of information among victims of urban renewal through conversations. Listening to and understanding these resident's dilemma was one of the primary tasks of the TAVUR staff stationed on site. At the same time, Jackson's idea of art as an agent for social transformation was reiterated through TAVUR's use of posters and architecture to increase public awareness of the Wenlinyuan controversy and to intervene in the urban renewal process.

However, violent eviction was not the end of the Alliance members' troubles, for they continued to receive pressure and threats from developers. The developer, Leyoung Construction Limited, employed gangsters to taunt, tease, and harass the Wangs and Alliance staff. A bulldozer parked in the demolished area constantly attempted to destroy
the hut and remove the remaining rubble (fig 92). Violent clashes occurred when TAVUR members tried to stop construction workers from building illegally. Consequently, student supporters arranged watches to guard the hut and to video-record construction workers' movements as evidence (fig. 93).

As a result of their resistance efforts, Pong, along with a few students and residents, suffered lawsuits. Pong fought twenty lawsuits and Huiyu two. The struggle became more difficult when the summer heat arrived in May. Despite the physical and psychological endurance test, members persisted in defending the Wangs.

Figure 91. A press conference held outside the temporary hut the students helped build. Source: TAVUR
In addition to Participatory Art, graffiti art was a major medium employed by housing rights-conscious citizens. *Figure 93* features Candy Bird's satirical illustrations painted on the temporary hut built after Wenlinyuan's demolition. In the same cartoon-like style as the graffiti piece that Candy Bird created in the Huaguang Community, this illustration depicts several figures with enlarged heads and facial expressions; they appear incompetent and unintelligent. Two of the figures' heads have been opened and appear hollow, while arms extended from the roof hold book bags and white shirts and ties. A book bag is placed in one figure's head, while a pipe prepares to fill the empty head of another figure. These figures dominate the picture frame, compared to the “child's drawing” of a sun, a house that contains a heart shape, and two stick figures, one male and one female, holding hands. The typical professional attire of white shirts and
ties and the school bags seem to represent professionalism and knowledge. The fact that they are detached from the large figures suggests their lack of these two qualities. The picture also implies that current urban renewal devised by inept government officials and greedy developers overshadows the peace and security of citizens.

Figure 93. A student supporter recording construction workers' activities as part of his watch; Satirical illustrations were painted on the temporary hut. Source: Storm Media Group.

In response to the 823 Wenlinyuan Eviction/Demolition Incident, a student also painted a graffiti mural to express his support. The left side of the mural renders a greedy, evil-looking person with sharp teeth pointing toward the words, “Taipei City, Easy to
Demolish.” On the right of the image is a yellow bulldozer also with sharp teeth (fig. 94). TAVUR posted this photo on its Facebook account with the caption, “The Taipei City government unconstitutionally implemented urban renewal by force: Democracy is dead; the shame of human rights.” Another photograph captured stenciled graffiti on a side of the Wangs' ancestral home, Wenlinyuan. This image was composed of motifs of a bulldozer in black and white, each containing the Chinese name of JUT Land Development Group or Leyang Construction Ltd. (fig.95). Positioned in the same direction, this “army” of bulldozers that bear the names of the two largest developers involved in urban renewal seems ready to destroy many residential homes. The three graffiti pieces portray an urban renewal program characterized by greed and aggressiveness.

*Figure 94.* After the 823 Wenlinyuan Eviction/Demolition Incident, a student (pictured) painted this graffiti to express support. Source: TAVUR.
Along with individual displays, a group of architecture students from Chun Yuan Christian University brought their designs to Wenlinyuan. They displayed blueprints, color renderings, and 3D models of what they envisioned the rebuilt Wenlinyuan and the nearby community could be (fig. 96). Through their works, these architecture students emphasized the importance of resident-centered urban planning and housing design. The floor plans, color renditions, and 3D models also reverberated with the message painted in red on the metal sheet above, “Give back my home”. The architecture students' designs provided a concrete path to the Wang family's request of the Taipei City government to rebuild their house. The examples of Participatory Art, graffiti, and architecture blueprints and models, often utilized in combination with slogans, demonstrate the
prevalence and importance of the visual arts in the students' efforts to support Wenlinyuan and housing rights in Taiwan.

Figure 96. Architecture students from Chun Yuan Christian University displayed their visions of Wenlinyuan rebuilt at the demolished site. Source: Epoch Times.

Issues in Taiwan's Urban Renewal

In his interview, Pong outlined and criticized Taiwan's Urban Renewal Regulations and this implementation. He explained that urban renewal in Taiwan is a joint effort between the government and developers. The renewal is initiated through two distinct manners: the first is that the government decides to implement a renewal plan and outsources the project to a developer. In the second, the developer drafts a blueprint and applies for government authorization. Regardless of how the renewal plan is initiated, in
Taiwan, it is the developers who procure agreement forms directly from residents. The process is further complicated by the convoluted land ownership practices in Taiwan.

During our conversation, Pong also illustrated how the government grants real-estate investors ample room for city development by explaining the urban renewal process in simple terms: First, the developer circles the area it wishes to “re-develop” on a map. Second, the developer is able to outline a construction zone after obtaining agreement from only 10% of the residents living in the encircled area. Subsequently, the developer relies on the influence of the precinct magistrate and local, prominent persons to persuade the rest of the community and to obtain signatures on the “Urban Revitalization Agreement.” After three quarters of the residents’ signatures are obtained, the government authorizes the developer to reconstruct the area.\textsuperscript{176}

At the same time, Pong exposed Taiwan's exclusive, dubious, and even deceptive urban renewal process. He commented on the conflict of interest existent in government procedure for urban reconstruction. First of all, many residents did truly understand what the “Urban Revitalization Agreement” entailed before they were “schemed” into signing. Although many residents realized their mistake afterwards, any attempt to withdraw the agreement was futile. Secondly, Pong revealed that although prior to granting permission to develop lands, the government invites “associated parties” to form an evaluation committee to “professionally assess” the case; however, the fact that many committee members are also the bidding developers makes the proceedings suspect. Though these developers are occasionally requested to avoid conflicts of interest by not attending the

\textsuperscript{176} Interview with Pong, July 19, 2012.
meetings, Pong doubted whether this would be enough to check and balance the “phenomenon of the referees doubling as players.”

This uncertainty about the integrity of Taiwan's urban planning process was valid considering the close-knit, interwoven politico-economic establishment that sociologist Lee Zong-Rong's research has unraveled. Moreover, current oppressive and unequal treatment of residents, such as government-endorsed, anti-protest police intervention during developers' demolitions and the use of laws to force relocation, affirms Lee's conclusion that the government and developers collaborate to protect and further each other’s interests. It is also evident that Taiwan's urban renewal programs provide more benefits to developers than to common residents.

For Pong, the core of the problem in urban renewal includes the commodification of land and housing and neglect of the social welfare. Pong, in his interview by 小 ACT, remarked that the rights of residents, tenants, and property owners are not protected by current urban revitalization plans. He described the inequality between developers and landowners as “the strong devouring the weak.” Pong indicated that capitalists are powerful enough to “influence, control, and manipulate the country's development. They can arrest people and raze buildings.” Furthermore, the Wenlinyuan incident confirmed Pong's view that urban renewal is in fact political-economic powers “dividing the spoils.” Pong also criticized the rhetoric of urban renewal because he believed that, contrary to advocates' declarations, urban renewal was not genuinely concerned with public welfare.

---

177 Ibid.
178 For details of Lee's research, refer to Chapter I, 55-58.
He maintained that local residents are left out of the decision-making process, and the zoning bonus policy makes housing unaffordable to “everyone.”

Pong also remarked that “the value of money” has changed the relationship between people. He mentioned that during the renewal process, many neighbors and family members quarreled and turned against each other due to financial disagreements. Pong had also seen many middle and low-income people lose their homes because of urban renewal. Furthermore, Pong explained why Taipei is particularly susceptible to real estate speculation and renewal schemes. He stated that Taipei's population is mainly comprised of immigrants from other cities, who are less attached to the land and less concerned with the concept of “home.” Pong lamented the current shift in values and supported a return to the “values in the very beginning.” In Pong's opinion, family, living, and community are more significant than profit, as he emphasized that housing should accommodate people's needs according to their own vision, and not be constructed for monetary gain. He proposed an emphasis on public facilities in urban planning, and the provision of affordable housing by the government to middle and low-income citizens. Pong maintained that the biased Urban Renewal Regulation should be abolished in order to uphold housing and land justice.

In addition to support for victims of urban renewal and to protest the “evil” Urban Renewal Regulations, Pong discussed his idealistic vision for Taiwan's urban planning and housing policies. He argued that citizens deserve a good living environment, and his image of a good living environment is a “return to what was before” – people coming to a place and building houses according to their own needs. Pong illustrated the traditional

179 Act 02, 9.
Taiwanese way of living with the iconic *san ho yuan* 三合院 (fig. 97). This historical residential complex is characterized by a central building with two wings attached perpendicularly on either side. All the sides of this structure enclose a courtyard that in agricultural society is typically used as a threshing floor. For Pong, this kind of architecture typifies the custom where extended families live together and help one another, thus providing a strong sense of community. Pong commented that, in contrast, modern mid-rise and high-rise apartments compartmentalize living space and result in isolation between people.

The *san ho yuan* style home is significant culturally, socially, and aesthetically. It is culturally important because it records Taiwan's immigration history during China's Ming Dynasty. This Min Nan style architecture, typical in China's Fujian Province, was imported by Jeng Chengong and became popular in agricultural Taiwanese society. *San ho yuan* also possesses socio-historical significance as customs required specific assignment of living quarters and bedrooms according to the hierarchy of positions held by family members. This type of architecture is typically inhabited by multi-generations and extended families to reinforce a strong sense of familial ties and to provide practical mutual assistance. Aesthetically, the one-story, three-wing design allowed the building to spread out horizontally and to stay connected to the land. It blends in with its natural surroundings, and unlike high-rise buildings, does not obstruct the views or sunlight.
Regarding the government's role in urban development, Pong considered it crucial and necessary. He believed that the administration should assume the role in planning and regulating at the onset of urban (re)development programs. From a resident's perspective, Pong raised several essential factors for government consideration in regards to urban revitalization. For instance, one important aspect is “living functions” – a common term in Chinese that refers to the organic and inorganic infrastructures and amenities that determine the capacity of a redeveloped area to support the higher population density resulted from the doubling in floor area ratio. At the same time, Pong emphasized the necessity for the design and implementation of a more sensible floor-area-ratio-bonus system. Other central concerns included: which areas actually need reconstruction, the
appearances of different districts, and whether tenants' rights are protected. Pong maintained that neglecting these issues negates social equality because when the reconstructed dwellings become unsuitable for the original occupants, they are unable to acquire properties and remain in the same area even with financial compensation.

In his remarks on urban planning, Pong raised two critical issues: evaluating the necessity to rebuild and determining an individual district's visual image. In urban planning, it is crucial to study individual districts' functional and historical significance, the uniqueness of each community, as well as how they configure into the city as a whole. Assessing the necessity for reconstruction is also important because it carefully evaluates an area's socioeconomic, architectural, and environmental factors. Unless buildings are unsafe or inadequate, there is no legitimate reason to demolish and reconstruct them, especially people's homes. Therefore, urban renewal needs to consider more advantageous alternatives such as renovating and repurposing idled buildings. These approaches conserve financial resources and limit environmental harm. More importantly, avoiding unnecessary demolitions protects citizens' housing rights, as it prevents evictions and displacement.

Interviews with Pong Long San, Huang Huiyu, and Chen Hunyin demonstrated these three core members' unified perspective on Taiwan's urban renewal policies. They argued that housing is a citizen's fundamental right and should thus be defended. Although Huang and Chen, the two core student members, shared a common vision in the Alliance's purpose, they provided insights into different aspects of urban renewal according to their professional training. For example, Chen's strength lay in her
understanding of urban planning procedures and regulations. Her encounter with Korea's Longsang Incident also prepared her to respond more efficiently to urban renewal conflicts in Taiwan. Furthermore, her knowledge and overseas experiences enabled her to analyze Taiwan's urban renewal within an international context.\textsuperscript{180}

Chen began observing the issue of urban renewal between 2008 and 2009 by paying attention to news from South Korea and Hong Kong. At the time, she became aware of numerous problems of urban renewal in these two countries, including major controversies and often-violent protests incited by reconstruction work. According to Chen, residents object to urban renewal for different reasons. Some of them organize protests in order to protect their personal interests. Other residents resist because the urban renewal plans directly affect their rights to work, study, and survive. The second group seems to be affected most severely by urban renewal because this disadvantaged population is vulnerable to repeated evictions.\textsuperscript{181}

Chen used Korea as an example to explain why residents who are evicted once are likely to be targeted again. She indicated that statistic records reveal that a person is evicted, on average, three more times after the first eviction. The reason is that the underprivileged person uses less money to purchase or rent a place in a more derelict area that is even more susceptible to evictions. Therefore, when the city government beautifies selected areas in the city, “it converts residents who can afford to live in the area into

\textsuperscript{180} The Longsang Incident took place in Seoul, South Korea, on January 20, 2009. Protests against government-sanctioned demolitions in Longsang turned violent and deadly when residents threw petrol bombs at the police. The resultant fire and explosion killed 6 and injured 23. 25 people were arrested. “Seoul Residents Protest Forced Relocation, Petrol Bombs Thrown at Police,” http://www.coolloud.org.tw/node/34551 Accessed August 8, 2014.

\textsuperscript{181} Interview with Chen, September 8, 2012.
those who are no longer financially capable of sustaining their residence.” Consequently, these residents are forced to choose older, cheaper districts, which would be the next to undergo urban renewal. “Under these circumstances, there is a high possibility of repeating this kind of historical fate,” Chen remarked. She recalled the Alliance encountering similar cases in Taiwan, such as the ones in Sanchong District.  

Comparing East Asia to Europe and the United States, Chen's initial inquiry addressed why property values continue to spike due to speculation in contemporary East Asia, when Europe and the US no longer develop according to the skyscraper apartment building model? In considering this inquiry, it is important to know that the skyscraper apartment model is one of the most efficient ways to speculate property. She concluded that there was “a lot of hot money flowing into East Asian cities that enables speculation.” At the same time, real estate developers in East Asia were promoting the so-called REITs (Real Estate Investment Trust) in order to obtain profit. Chen commented that REITs' main purpose was to transform real estate into movable property that can be circulated. REIT, which originated in the United States, is the securitization of real estate – it is a security that sells like a stock on the major exchanges and invests in real estate directly, either through properties or mortgages.  

Chen recounted how she became aware of problems associated with real-estate speculation in Taiwan during her anti-speculation, pro-housing rights journey. Upon her return from Korea, friends informed her about the forty or so community members forming a communal association against urban renewal. Chen highlighted the uniqueness

---

182 三重 is the Chinese name for Sanchong District; quotes taken from interview with Chen.
of this association by indicating that this type of single community-based movement is rare, despite the popularity of community movements in Taiwan in the 1990s. At the same time, Chen and her friends were impressed by the association's cross-community exchange—a rare phenomenon—and consequently joined the association to help. Afterward, the student members helped organize a few protests and exhibitions, which were “the first attempt to bring in voices other than [one that is pro-] urban renewal.” Chen observed, “everyday, everyone follows these myths [about the benefits of urban renewal], and we only simply produced a certain voice of difference.”

Furthermore, Chen described her first impression of the dynamics among the association's members and how they evolved through student members' involvement. “In the beginning, people relied on middle-aged male colleagues out of admiration.” For example, Chen explained, “if there are elderly people, women, and children in a group, people will most likely choose someone who is middle aged and male, someone who can speak more clearly in Mandarin, to represent the group in press conferences.” After joining the association, the student members established a more balanced representation than the middle-aged, male dominant one. They did so by encouraging middle-aged and elderly women to speak up. The students believed that it was beneficial for people to express their own voices themselves, and therefore they invited resident members to tell their own stories. The students helped the residents by listening to their stories a few times before determining what details should be included or omitted in a succinct speech. The residents were able to speak on their own at press conferences after the students

\[184\] Interview with Chen.
helped them practice their speech a few times. The students contacted reporters, wrote press releases, and organized press conferences, and all members attended them together.  

The addition of student members also resulted in a change of purpose and perspective for this community association. Chen expressed that before the students joined the group, the majority of its members held a landowner-centered perspective. She explained, in Taiwan's system, tenants have no voice because only land or property owners hold ownership rights. Therefore, only property owners are in a position to be selective and negotiate conditions with developers. Chen believed, however, that TAVUR needed non-resident parties to engage in dialogue with its members. The unbalanced rights between property owners and tenants and the problematic aspects of the zoning bonus policy needed to be addressed.

Upon joining the self-help association, Chen, Huang, and their student friends indicated that they would “interact with stakeholders from the position of non-stakeholders.” Due to their varied interests and perspectives, the process of developing mutual understanding between the student and resident members was lengthy. Urban renewal is a complex, tenuous process even without the involvement of non-stakeholders. For example, the renewal program in Pong's community took as long as ten years. Chen suggested that, contrary to the claim that urban renewal aimed to improve residents' living conditions, “in reality, its purpose is to make the poor leave in order to

---

185 Chen explained that everyone has a language (Taiwanese or Mandarin) they are familiar with, but those fluent in Taiwanese worry about communicating with officials because conversing with officials requires the ability to express ideas very clearly in Mandarin.
conveniently obtain the land.” Chen considered it important to examine why urban
task of obtaining the land evolved into these circumstances in the first place. She highlighted two major
factors that make Taiwan's urban renewal controversial and dubious: institutional policy
and disparate perspectives. Chen concurred with Pong that government profit-based
urban renewal policy overlook important factors, such as developers' manipulation of
residents, individual household's demands, the necessity of urban renewal, the type of
environment the renewal aimed to create, and the option of renovation instead of
rebuilding.

**Urban Renewal in Taiwan**

During the interview, Chen provided a brief history of urban renewal to reiterate
her criticism of its implementation in Taiwan. She reported that urban renewal in the
United States, which occurred in the 1940s and 50s, was initially referred to as the
“bulldozer type” of urban renewal – complete rebuilding and reconstruction of an area.
After a while, experts started to evaluate this kind of urban renewal, which resulted in the
emergence of terms like “urban revival” and “urban development,” although “they still
meant pretty much the same thing.” In response, some scholars reflected that the scope
and breadth of urban renewal “should not be partial to reconstructing buildings but
should instead consider the various aspects of society.” Chen stated that this theory,
which originated from Japan and England, recognizes issues, such as the provision of
public welfare designs and employment opportunities, as part of urban renewal. Major
corporations who follow this type of urban renewal differ from the others in their
emphasis on social orientation and their attempt to solve past social problems. This new “urban regeneration” approach “seems to be more comprehensive,” Chen concluded.\textsuperscript{186}

By contrast, Taiwan's “urban regeneration” was heavily criticized because developers were implementing the US 1940s version of urban renewal. Chen maintained that Taiwan's “urban regeneration” differed too much in level and depth from the English and Japanese models. In Chen's opinion, citing the extremely advanced methods of inter-company co-management to call the policy in Taiwan “urban regeneration” was inappropriate and deceptive.\textsuperscript{187}

Furthermore, Chen used Urban Core as an example of the developer employing the arts as a primary force to promote "urban regeneration." She explained that the developer's approach is to take possession of a few small units and then to release them to university architecture departments or arts and cultural teams. This “single point management” method focuses on revitalizing small, selected areas in the district, and promotes urban renewal through “arts and cultural management. Chen viewed this approach as problematic because it is unrelated to critical matters, such as residents' housing rights, which have become "indiscernible under the packaging of art."\textsuperscript{188}

\textbf{Urban Core and Chungjong Doomsday}

Chen's co-worker at the Alliance, Huang Huiyu, was also critical and skeptical of Urban Core from an art scholar's perspective. Huang noted that Urban Core, itself a base for urban renewal, was the first and the most controversial case in 2009. The primary point of contention, according to the Alliance staff's understanding, was a series of

\textsuperscript{186} Interview with Chen.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
zoning bonus policies titled “Taipei Beautiful,” which allowed for the use of various “tricks and loopholes” to obtain floor zoning bonuses. Huang indicated that “Taipei Beautiful” was highly controversial because it broke almost all district classification barriers, regardless of “industrial” or “residential” land labels.189

By using a residential district as an example, she explained, “a building that is originally three or four stories tall can become part of an outlined area on the map, and through zoning bonus policies, developers can obtain a construction permit for a twenty-story building.” Huang viewed this as a “very scary matter” not only because it required no environmental evaluation, but also because it neglected traffic-carrying capacity and nearby communities’ “sunlight rights.” She asserted that urban renewal and urban planning should be a broader issue that involves a set of guiding principles. However, she maintained that this is not the case in Taiwan and that “the zoning bonus policies are the main reason for urban planning’s nonexistence.”190

It was clear to Huang that the Chungjong District was designated for gentrification, and the renewal management approach was to make empty spaces available for art studios and galleries for two-and-a-half years prior to reconstruction. One of the art groups active in Urban Core was TCAC, Taipei Contemporary Art Center, an association of Taiwan's most famous artists and art critics. TCAC’s ambition was to become the center of exchange for the entire contemporary art world. The group

189 Interview with Huang, July 25, 2012.
190 “Sunshine right” is the right for a residential area to receive a certain amount of sunshine daily, which is affected by the height and proximity of other structures nearby.
requested a space from JUT Land Development Group, and organized events and parties frequently in that space.191

Although Huang entered Urban Core as an artist, participated in a few exhibitions, and even traveled abroad with TCAC to Japan to exhibit, she was most concerned with how the art space was confronting its political issues. She raised a number of questions – do zoning bonus policies apply to areas labeled as art spaces? How many people were living in Chungjong District? What was the percentage of residents who agreed to the renewal scheme? How many people were unwilling to leave, and why? – all went unanswered. Huang recalled, “It was impossible to find an answer in Urban Core because everyone told me, ‘I don’t know.’” With a desire to address the real problem of the Urban Core Art District, Huang became frustrated because no one was willing or able to talk about it; and even the other artists told her, “I don't know, this is JUT's problem, it has nothing to do with me.”

Despite Huang's belief that zoning bonus policies do apply to areas labeled as art spaces, she found it difficult to confirm the answer because the construction company would certainly deny it. The artists in residence, restricted by their contracts, would not make too many inquiries because of their contracts with the developer. One of the contracts plainly stated: “I [the developer] lend you this space for two and a half years, but this contract bears no relation to future urban renewal plans.” Huang found dangerous the contracts' limitation on artists' ability to question. Furthermore, she challenged the phrase “bears no relation” on the contracts and considered it “very curious.”

191 The JUT Land Development Group was the real estate development corporation overseeing Chungjong District's renewal.
indicated that although the JUT Foundation renamed Chungjong as the Urban Core Art District for two-and-a-half-years and labeled it “urban revitalization,” it was apparent that Urban Core was one of the various artistic interventions as part of a larger urban renewal plan.  

Although Huang already considered Urban Core problematic, she gained a concrete understanding of urban renewal after attending a symposium at the National Taiwan University in September 2010. Huang met her future collaborators, including Pong and Chen during the event, and learned that urban renewal was not only “unjust” due to zoning bonus policies and its lack of environmental planning, but also grievous because of the associated housing rights and human rights violations.

Unsatisfied with unanswered questions about Urban Core, Huang did her own research in Chungjong. Over a two-month period, she conducted fieldwork and organized two forums. For the first forum, she invited art organizations to discuss what urban renewal is, and the second gathered residents from Chungjong and other communities who were experiencing urban renewal in order to examine the same topic. Huang's research in Urban Core and her realizations about urban renewal had a profound influence on her artistic practice. She organized a group exhibition titled, “2012 Chungjong Doomsday.”

The invitation to the show combined two buildings: one the actual exhibition space and the other with Candy Bird's drawings on its wall (fig. 98). Except for the light, pastel yellow and blue on the drawings, most of the image was in black and white or

---

192 Interview with Huang.
sepia. The tilted angles of the two buildings and the lack of color communicated a sparse emptiness. The stark tone was enhanced by a large white banner that hung horizontally across the picture plane, declaring, “2012, Chungjong Doomsday.” Inside the exhibition space were black and white photographs of the Urban Core area.

Two documentary photographs capture two residents, one inside and the other in front of their homes (fig. 99). Although these two people's shelters were still intact, their startled expression and the bleakness of the background suggested fear and uncertainty caused by the impending demolition. The fact that both are elderly people also makes them appear more vulnerable. Both photographs are characterized by a great contrast of light and shadow that creates a dramatic tone to the narrative. The photograph on the left is particularly haunting because of the camera's angle and the dominant black shade. The lens frames the subject from a higher angle and makes the room look compressed. The woman's pained expression is intensified by the lighting, which cuts her face into two halves, one brightly lit and the other disappearing into the darkened background.

The photograph to the right is divided vertically by a shaded balcony on the right and the white background on the left. A man stands in front of the balcony and looks directly into the camera. Whether this man is telling his story to the photographer or simply posing with his house, the image captures a moment of peace before drastic spatial changes. The flattened foreground, resulted from the man's white shirt, the dominant shadow on the balcony, and little gradation, adds to the sense of connection between the resident and his home. In contrast with this closeness and attachment to one's dwelling, the empty buildings in the background suggest inevitable demolition.
Huang described the concept, content, and reception of this exhibition. First, she considered the show “a work in situ,” although “2012 Chungjong Doomsday” was an art curatorial project because it featured three other artists and included a publication editorial team. Secondly, Huang maintained that, conceptually, the work was site specific, because it intended to bring attention to the existing problems particular to that
place. She stated, “for me, it was more like an action although it was a two-month stationary exhibition.”

Huang's intention for the two forums of “Chungjong Doomsday” as well as its final exhibition was to “let people face the problem by bringing information into Urban Core.” The exhibition was visually and intellectually hard to ignore because Huang hung a large banner with the words, “2012, Doomsday of Urban Core” at the entrance. The displays inside explored many problems of urban renewal by incorporating discourses about other communities' problems and about urban renewal itself. The general public and the developer responded to “2012, Chungjong Doomsday” with unease and action, respectively. Huang recalled, “this place was like a thorn in everyone's eyes because it was hard to avoid seeing the site, and because it made people aware of the fact that central Taipei was undergoing urban renewal. [People would] wonder whether these problems are present in that place, or what the problems were...the whole atmosphere made people feel as if they were “sitting on a blanket of needles.”

Concerning the accompanying publication to Chungjong Doomsday (fig. 100), Chen, who was part of the editorial team, provided more details on its content and use. She indicated that the Taiwan Alliance for the Victims of Urban Renewal needed a literary publication in order to explain some matters clearly; therefore, the organization utilized funding allocated for publications from Huang's Chungjong Doomsday project. The editorial team produced a small magazine, and, in the process, conducted one

---

193 Interview with Huang.
194 如坐針氈, a Chinese phrase that conveys the idea of extremely uncomfortable, painful, and unsettling.
hundred in-person interviews and distributed additional questionnaire surveys to learn about “the average person's” general perception and opinion of urban renewal.

In response to the general public's desire to understand urban renewal from related professionals' viewpoints, the magazine presents perspectives from people occupying different roles in urban renewal, such as real estate agents, immovable property agents, architects, and urban planners. The magazine also includes another section that was more practical and useful for communities. It explores the question, “after having discussed so many problems of urban renewal, what is good urban renewal after all?” One other section quickly informs readers of the necessary process one needs to undergo in every urban renewal case. It lists the ten major aspects people should pay special attention to. Chen also described two unique characteristics of the magazine, its inclination to “collect the few voices of conscience” and the longer histories of Pong Long San and Sanchung composed from two interviews.
Lastly, Chen explained that the title of the publication, 都市災生, is a play on the phrase 都市再生 ("urban renewal"). 都市災生, meaning "urban calamity," differs from 都市再生 only in one character. These characters have similar pronunciation but differ only in tonal quality. The magazine's name is also meaningful because it was intended to reference Urban Core, which was a site of urban renewal.¹⁹⁵ The front cover of the *Urban Calamity* magazine encapsulated the editorial team's interpretation of Taipei's urban renewal and of what "doomsday" entails. The monotone illustration, with slight hints of

---

¹⁹⁵ 都市 (dūshì) means "city" in Chinese. In this context, it is used as the adjective, "urban"; 災 (zāi) is the symbol for "calamity", "disaster", and "misfortune"; "生" (shēng) is the character for "birth"; it also signifies "to give rise to."
blue, depicts a hell-like environment. Four lanky citizens in the foreground are evaporating into ghostly beings as they are driven out of their city, which is now solely comprised of luxury high-rise buildings confined in a birdcage. The monster emits a repelling, blood-like substance toward the citizens, and a white ghost floats in the background. Another overbearing figure hovers and takes hold of the encaged city by wrapping his frog-like arm around it. His oversized face appears distorted and overcome with greed. Under the title, "Urban Calamity," the editors ask the reader, "Erase the past, what will the future be?" The message and the drawing warn of the disastrous effects of exclusive urban planning and unnecessary demolitions.

Chen reported that publication became the TAVUR's primary source of income. Whenever the Alliance organized events or when people came for consultation, the magazines would be for sale for charity. The highest numbers were sold during the Chungjong Doomsday exhibition, and Alliance members distributed copies to various bookstores for consignment afterwards.

It is important to note the interdisciplinary collaboration in student-initiated housing rights activism. Though Huang Huiyu's Chungjong Doomsday exhibition featured works by a group of trained artists, its accompanying publication, Urban Calamity, was edited by a team of students in other academic fields. The project's process also resembled the common Participatory Art methods, including field research, interviews, and symposia. The field research enabled Huang and her colleagues to understand how urban renewal was implemented in Chungjong, and to determine resident's relationship to the renewal program. The interviews and the symposia coincide
with Gablik's listener-centered approach and Sandercock's emphasis on including of the voices of disadvantaged groups in urban planning. The Chungjong Doomsday project gave residents opportunities to relate their experience with urban renewal and urged urban planning professionals and community members to critically examine government policy. Furthermore, the art exhibition and the *Urban Calamity* publication presented concrete statistics and crucial information on urban renewal in a professional, artistic manner.

In response to "2012 Chungjong Doomsday," the JUT Land Development Group released a statement claiming that Huang was slandering the company. In its public announcement, JUT emphasized that exhibitions at Urban Core should be unrelated to urban renewal. The corporation also indicated that hindrances are inevitable when executing an urban renewal plan, and "hindrance," Huang explained, referred to those families resisting eviction. The statement defended certain unjust actions by justifying them as "necessary vices." Moreover, JUT felt that the artists had nothing to do with urban renewal because they were contracted parties and not local residents. After this incident, Huang resolved to target JUT with her art and writing.196

Huang was critical toward JUT and Urban Core Art District for several reasons. First, she considered Urban Core an unsuccessful example of revitalizing an area through art residency, "because the art was detached from its locality." Secondly, Huang indicated that Urban Core was limited in raising the market value of Central Taipei because the program "did not establish a living network there." She explained, "although there were

---

196 必要之惡 was the original Chinese phrase for “necessary vices.”
more than ten art spaces, you would frequently still find the area empty." At the same time, despite the building of some new structures, "no new shops entered the area, so the place lacked the signs of revitalization." Huang asserted that JUT was intentionally creating an empty place through its continuous effort to convince residents to agree with urban renewal and to leave Chungjong. She complained that the process of producing this abandoned space "was very violent because it created a sense of panic for the remaining residents." Huang regretted the fact that art was employed to make the urban renewal process less obvious, as the stationing of art spaces cleverly covered up the reality that JUT was making Chungjong District increasingly uninhabitable.197

During the interview, Huang criticized the use of art to neutralize urban renewal. She perceived Chungjong as a white cube, "a capitalized space in its idle, pre-structuring period" awaiting “intense spatial transition." To Huang, this thought-provoking matter influenced her to believe that the dialogues and exhibitions at Urban Core should include the area's industry structure and way of life, dimensions that are relevant to this specific site. However, the art that was being produced in Urban Core disappointed Huang, because it "failed to discuss the issue of people." A survey of the types of art exhibited at Urban Core confirmed Huang's observation. "Illegal Architecture" by Wang Shu and Hsieh Ying-Jun was a generalized reflection on building policy in Taiwan. The two artists installed covered corridors and sitting areas with wooden and metal beams and plastic sheets. Other artists painted cartoon-like murals or op-art zebra patterns. The UrbanCore Café and Bookshelf displayed fantastical figurines, surrealist paintings, and modernist sculptures that were all unrelated to the residents of Chungjong. Huang

197 Interview with Huang.
commented on the insufficiency of Urban Core's art and related it to urban renewal: "We made a lot of works that viewed our society from a panoramic perspective, but there are no people in them. This is similar to the problem in the urban renewal— the concern is not people but profit."198

For Huang, the greatest problem for art made in Urban Core was its inability to confront the circumstances it was directly situated in. In her opinion, though the art produced at Urban Core dealt with a political problem, the locus of the problem was elsewhere. Huang provided two exhibitions to illustrate this common phenomenon. The first was Hsieh Ying-Chun's work. As an architect, Hsieh's exhibition was about the aesthetics of illegal buildings in Taiwan. It commented on how people use those spaces to create a way of living comfortably. However, Hsieh focused on the analysis of these illegal building's architectural structure, form, and living style rather than highlighting the major issues associated with illegal structures – housing and survival. In Huang's opinion, one should consider the reasons for these structures' existence in the first place. She states that the lack of living space is the primary cause.199

Another example Huang provided was artist Yao Jui-chung's project. Yao surveyed unused spaces on the entire island by photographing many sites in Taiwan. At the end of his fieldwork, Yao returned to Urban Core, published a book, and organized an exhibition. In Huang's opinion, although Yao's work intended to critique certain matters, that particular kind of critique "is invalid because it is more like a tool for art production." Huang elaborated, "under capitalism, there is a limit for all [forms of]

198 The "white cube" is a common term in fine arts used to refer to the pristine art studio, gallery, and museums spaces.
199 Hsieh Ying-Chun's Chinese name is 謝英俊.
critique, and the reason Yao's critique is invalid is that he would not overstep that line. Within this boundary, he has made his work appear fashionable." Other criticisms included the unapproachability and aestheticization that characterize Yao's work. Huang attributed Yao's exhibition's unapproachability to artistic manipulation. She mentioned that, for example, the subtitles were all in English, which alienated viewers who only understood Mandarin. Furthermore, Huang maintained that Yao aestheticized the topic of unoccupied spaces by presenting them as a large landscape. She suggested that this aestheticization in Yao's work contributed to the problem that "what is left of the political issue initially addressed by these artists is no longer political."200

Moreover, Huang discussed how the works she experienced at Urban Core changed her perception of contemporary art. She reflected, "The production of art can take you to exhibit overseas, but the art produced does not deal with urgent issues that concern people." Huang also mentioned one phenomenon in contemporary art that she was initially comfortable with but which became increasingly unacceptable. In her opinion, when political issues are examined through contemporary art, the power of critique is usually lost. She explained that although she is part of an art institute, she had become "gradually disconnected from this system of art curation and art production."

Huang noted that after Urban Core ended in March 2012, the JUT Foundation won high commendation from the art circle. She reported that art professionals responded positively to Urban Core because the Art District was "a mutually beneficial deal" between the developer and the artists as "the artists received [free] space, while the

---

200 The Chinese phrase Huang used for “unoccupied spaces” was 閒置空間, which could also be translated as “idle spaces”.
developer built the image of a luxury housing brand." When asked about the local residents' reaction toward Urban Core, Huang referred to her research to illustrate residents' disconnectedness from the program. In her interviews with local residents, Huang found that very few people knew about urban revival. The percentage of people who agreed with urban renewal was under 60%, although the official cut-off mark was 75% in order for urban renewal to proceed. Furthermore, Huang stated that "as a matter of fact, the residents were clueless when the art teams entered and became stationed" in Chungjong. Therefore, Huang viewed JUT's urban renewal proposal as merely "a scam, an advertising gambit," because it was against the law to proceed with renewal when only 60% of residents had agreed to it.

Following the "2012 Chungjong Doomsday" exhibition, a series of development and turn of events occurred. Huang recalled, "since the exhibition, a few people started to attack the JUT Land Development Group, mainly those from the Institute of Transdisciplinary Arts and others I knew from first year of graduate school." This small group of art students continually wanted to connect JUT to urban renewal because they believed that JUT and the Leyoung Land Development Group represented all large developing companies enforcing urban renewal. Despite Huang and her friends' antagonism toward the JUT Land Development Group, the company received more and more urban renewal cases from the government as it had established a reputation as the luxury housing brand name. However, the forced demolition and eviction incident at Wenlinyuan had some impact on the art world's perception of JUT. Huang revealed that after Wenlinyuan was demolished by force on March 28, 2012, many art groups who had
signed contracts with JUT dissolved their contracts with the company. Yao Jui-chong, a major figure in the TCAC, self-initiated the contract termination. Huang believes that the TCAC's disbandment was also influenced by the Wenlinyuan incident.  

**Art and Activism: Insights and Challenges**

Huang also reflected on her role as an artist and as a member of an activist collective, discussing what she learned from her participation in Urban Core and Wenlinyuan. Since her involvement in the Alliance, Huang had been thinking about what else she could do as an activist, curator, and artist, and about what other roles she could assume. Her recent observations on art and urban renewal had also caused her to contemplate, "What is the value in me returning to the [art] institution?" She expressed that she was still searching for the answer. Regarding collaborative art, Huang indicated that none of the star artists active on the art scene were part of a collective – they were all solo artists. She stated this situation reflected a major lack of organized effort in social activism. Huang asserted, "If you want to reverse or change certain important matters, to upturn some social structures, then organizing is absolutely necessary." She maintained that the non-existence of art collectives limited Taiwan's contemporary art world in participating in social transformation. Huang also explained that artists working as individuals were less effective because "the things that one person can manage are limited, and the people one comes into contact with are fewer."  

---

201 Leyoung Land Development Group, 樂揚建設, was the company responsible for the Wenlinyuan incident.  
202 Interview with Huang.
Huang made this statement from personal experience, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and interpersonal skills. She observed, "I've discovered through these series of events that one person has little ability to handle something without backup support or a partner." Huang reflected that even with the necessary connections, it is hard to operate as an organization. For her, the challenge was not to sustain a collective but to change something collectively. She also discussed the priorities in TAVUR's decision-making: "When [we] intend to reshape something, the first aspect of consideration would not be artistic style or form but rather how to achieve the goal effectively." Huang observed that despite the fact that these considerations were not necessarily art-related, art practitioners tended to demonstrate more flexibility and quick thinking in the process.

Furthermore, Huang examined the skills that she acquired in the art institution in relation to her working experience in the Alliance, and remarked on how her public participation changed her perspective. She commented: "When I enter into the real world, when everyone is having discussions around a specific matter, people will not see your background and identity. The opinions will differ. As a result, what you've learned before could be overruled." Huang used the March 28 Wenlinyuan eviction to illustrate this point. She recalled that Alliance members, knowing that they would eventually be evicted, had a weeklong discussion about how they would be removed. In the end, they decided on a traditional and conservative approach, one that differed greatly from what Huang had imagined.203

203 Wenlinyuan's eviction took place from the night of March 27 until the early morning hours of March 28, 2013.
Huang remembered, "We proposed many plans, it was extremely interesting."

The group drew numerous diagrams of how they might be carried away and how they would resist. Around the 25th of March, the Alliance members knew that something was definitely going to happen soon, and, as a result, a performance/hunger strike was proposed. According to the proposal, the group would seal up the innermost room at the Wangs' residence, leaving only a hole for breathing and for food delivery. Professor Lin Hui-chun would go on a hunger strike inside the sealed room while playing the violin, and the group would transmit the [video-recording] footage outside. Huang recollected, "We proposed several ways to be evicted, but eventually we employed the most peaceful and the least creative way." Regarding the reasons for their final decision on the least creative approach, Huang suggested that several fundamental questions should be explored: "What standpoint are you taking when contemplating the matter of being removed? Does it need to be aestheticized? Does it need this kind of stylistic packaging? Is [the eviction and demolition] in itself a living form of violence. If we need to aestheticize it, then why so? What are our considerations when we are thinking about aestheticizing it?"

Huang revealed that the Wangs' feelings played a major part in the final decision on how to be evicted. The Wang family expressed to the Alliance staff and supporters that to them, sealing up a room or making alterations to the building would equal destroying their home. More importantly, it would be as if they had destroyed it by their own hands. Therefore, the Wangs felt that they “absolutely could not” accept the idea.
Huang believed that in the end, the group chose the fiercest approach, to sit in silence, though it might have seemed like a very conservative way to protest. She described the many photographs taken that night and recalled the situation, “although it seemed like students were [just] sitting in, it was radical because we all knew exactly when the demolition would begin and when we would be removed. Everyone was trying their best to live a normal life.” No one packed. All the valuables were in the house.

Huang elaborated on the thought process and consequence of this decision, stating: "Our conviction then was that we must try to live and get on until the end. So everything was as it was in the house, and because so, we paid a high price for it.” For example, almost all the belongings and fixtures were destroyed. Laptop computers were thrown into paper boxes and, as a result, were broken. To illustrate that everything was in its original state, Huang indicated that when the bed was damaged, the covers were not made, the sheets were not changed, and all the clothes were in the closet. More importantly, Huang reflected, "it was a way [of protest] unimaginable by ordinary people, but to me, it was more radical than any of the ways we had thought of because you were leaving yourself in a completely defenseless, weaponless state."

It took a tremendous amount of strength for the students, staff, supporters, and especially the Wangs to remain passive and to resist the urge to defend themselves. This radical way of protest became even more significant when Huang revealed that it was what the Wangs wanted the most. This revelation, along with the processes behind the eventual protest, demonstrated the TAVUR members' respect for the people they support. Furthermore, it echoed Huang's reflection, "What you initially imagined came to be
overruled, but at the same time, you learned more about what kind of approach was more effective." Huang also learned that "everyone had to yield a little," because it was impossible for all members to reach a complete agreement during decision-making.204

At the same time, Chen related how the student staff's professors and family members' attitude made activism challenging. She used art students Huang Huiyu and Jeng An-chi as examples to illustrate the students' difficulties, which she also experienced. She asserted that being art student-activists was an extremely hard path to take, and that Huiyu and An-chi's roles were rare even in artist villages. Chen explained that generally teachers and the elder members of their families were not optimistic about their activism, and that it was difficult for people to understand why they would become this deeply involved. For example, Huang and Jeng's art professors likely perceived that their students were spending too much time on matters unrelated to art production. Chen stated that another form of doubt manifested in the professors' viewpoint that it was much better to create daring and impressive types of art. In their opinion, such works could produce greater impact and would be superior to what they understood as the student activists' approach: being broad and irrelevant, staying with only one grass-roots organization, and spending time on petty and trivial matters.205

Although Huang, Chen, and the other students' dedicated involvement with housing rights activism was questioned by their professors and families, TAVUR's student members persisted in their work because of their strong belief in housing equality. Using participating art students and professors as an example, Chen described

204 Interview with Huang
205 The three original Chinese phrases of these opinions were: 漫天無際, 蹲點, and 雞毛蒜皮的小事.
TAVUR's collaborative work dynamic as one characterized by an equal status among "workers." She considered these artists different from the others because they did not see themselves as maestros. She explained, "You can say that everyone is a worker, then, the artist is one type of worker." Chen also used herself as an example: "Although I do not study art curation professionally, I also helped set up the [Chungjong] exhibition." Chen did not dominate the task of writing the press release simply because she was more experienced, either. Rather, everyone took turns writing. Mentioning the organic nature of her collaboration with Huang, Chen concluded that the roles of the TAVUR members were fluid, as the staff did not label themselves but did whatever needed to be done.

During interviews, Huang and Chen both explored what they believed to be the most challenging aspects of TAVUR. Chen likened the TAVUR staff to a firefighting team, adding: "We are actually all volunteers, and so everyone is taking care of the Alliance's matters on top of school and work." Although there were many urgent cases and locations needing immediate attention, workers were few. Chen maintained that the low number of workers limited their ability to address political details. Consequently, TAVUR aimed to create a more complete system in order to organize its effort and manage it long-term.

Chen conveyed that the 328 Wenlinyuan Eviction Incident completely disrupted the rhythm TAVUR had hoped to establish. Chen recalled that in the beginning, the work pace and atmosphere were "pretty slack", but after 328, the Alliance entered into a more intense working mode. TAVUR, under an unstable state of organization, suddenly faced people who wanted to join its effort. However, the group lacked full-timers and a system
to receive, organize, and retain the new human resource. She attributed the inability to fully grasp and utilize incoming support to TAVUR's lack of foundation and the fact that it had to respond to many major incidents swiftly. Additionally, Chen revealed that TAVUR was discriminated against in government grant applications due to the sensitive nature of the organization's name. TAVUR would be turned down whenever it applied for funding. However, these kinds of experiences, albeit unsuccessful, were helpful in improving future management because the TAVUR core staff was continuously in a process of critical reflection.

In Huang's experience, the clash of interests and principles was the greatest challenge in the two years since TAVUR's founding. She asserted that apart from the very few residents like Pong, most people perceived TAVUR as some sort of urban regeneration consumers' foundation, through which they hoped to attain better benefits. Huang pointed out that all TAVUR staff members needed to learn the entire set of urban renewal's rules and regulations in order to be knowledgeable as an organization. She stated, however, that they did not learn the information in order to facilitate a smoother urban regeneration procedure; instead, they learned it to oppose this system. As a result, there was often a clash between principles, between the TAVUR staff's principles and people's expectations.

Other challenges Huang mentioned included misinformation, discouragement by the government, and retribution from the developer. She revealed that the government-run Radio Taiwan International held a non-supportive position toward the Alliance, and it announced a false statement that Mr. Wang wanted five hundred million NT as
compensation. Huang related that one day staff members were interviewed by Radio Taiwan International, and just as the interview ended, trouble occurred at the construction site, and the police were called. All parties, the TAVUR staff, and the construction workers, were taken to the police station. According to Huang, however, it was obvious that the police were biased against the Alliance members. She revealed that the developer had called the police, and the government allowed it. The difficulties that the TAVUR members faced were summarized by Huang's words toward the end of the interview, “Conflict occurs every day. I am staying at the temporary hut unless I have some other assignments I absolutely have to complete. Every day it is conflict and more conflict.”

Despite some setbacks, TAVUR persisted in its support of the Wangs at Wenlinyuan. For example, members organized a summer day of fun on July 14, 2012 to boost morale, to garner attention, and to declare, “We are still here.” They named the event, “Your Home is a Battleground: Housing Rights Long-term Battle Party @the Wangs.” The event invitation demonstrated the students' knowledge in art history because its aesthetic and slogan were clearly inspired by Barbara Kruger's 1989 avant-garde work, *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)* (figs. 101-102). For example, the invitation appropriated Kruger's trademark white texts on red background, as well as the text layout. However, instead of a black and white close up of a female's face, TAVUR's invitation featured a landscape view of TAVUR members by the temporary hut. Bright colors from members' T-shirt, a kiddie pool, and a water gun decorated the invitation. On the upper-right hand side of the invitation are green leaves, which symbolize hope and rebirth, and a drawing of a home. The leisurely state of the people in the picture contrasts
markedly with the language of war on the invitation. This once again illustrated the co-
existing tones of Taiwan's housing rights movement: the light-hearted, optimistic note
and the vigorous, assertive spirit.

*Figure 101. Invitation to the "Your Home is a Battleground: Housing Rights Long-term Battle Party @ the Wangs'." Source: TAVUR*
The program for this party included Participatory Art and other activities. Attendees were invited to help build a defense wall out of the rubble, paint the outer walls of the temporary hut, enjoy dinner prepared by a cooking team, and view a documentary on Tsaiyuan Village in Hong Kong, a community that faced forced demolition. T-shirts printed by TAVUR with the message, "Home, Not for Sale and Not for Demolition", and the Urban Calamity magazine were also on sale to raise funds. The party was intended to remind people that the infringement of housing rights, manifested in the forced demolition of Wenlinyuan, could not be forgotten. Moreover, TAVUR members hoped the Battle Party @ the Wangs' would facilitate the amendment of urban renewal regulations and the return to housing rights-centered urban planning and development.
Cooking at the Front Line

Eight months after the eviction incident and the intensive guarding of the Wangs' property, Huang and TAVUR student members aimed to set a different tone for Wenlinyuan. Acknowledging existing sentiments of struggle and conflict, the students hoped to create an atmosphere that was warmer, more convivial and inviting to the community. The result was the addition of a kitchen adjacent to the temporary hut constructed by the TAVUR members following the forced demolition (fig. 103). The student staff of TAVUR decided to build a kiln, a complicated process that would allow all supporters to collaborate and become acquainted with one another. Subsequently, the kitchen, named Cooking at the Front Line, began to produce savory dishes and breads in assorted shapes and flavors. Artistic intention was evident in all aspects of Cooking at the Front Line. For example, bulldozer-shaped latches were designed and fitted onto the kiln's door, and an intricate “OVEN” trademark was placed in the center of the brick arch that framed the kiln opening (fig. 104). Also, each type of bread was carved with "signature patterns" that expressed the members' creativity. The breads were shared among visitors and delivered to other communities that were struggling with eviction (fig. 105). Members also traveled to various locations around Taiwan to cook for housing rights-conscious groups (fig. 106). The group's Blog even featured fully-illustrated recipes used in the Frontline kitchen (Fig. 107). The making and sharing of food from the Cooking at the Front Line kitchen added a softer side to the hard struggles against eviction.

---

206 One would recall Cooking at the Front Line's support for the Shaoxin presence in the 1:1, as discussed in Chapter 2.
Figure 103. Students wearing various disguise posing in the tiny kitchen. Source: Cooking at the Front Line
Figure 104. Students built a kiln, complete with an artistic sign and specially designed latches, for TAVUR's new kitchen, *Cooking At the Front Line*. Source: *Cooking at the Front Line*. 
Figure 105. A student baker presents the finished product. Source: *Cooking at the Front Line*.

Figure 106. *Cooking at the Front Line* members wearing masks and cooking on a sustainable farm for workshop participants. Source: *Cooking at the Front Line*. 
Besides the handcrafted artisan breads, the most singular aspect of *Cooking at the Front Line* was the outfit worn by its members (figs. 103, 105-106, 108-109). While the clothing was typical of those worn by the Taiwanese youth, a few accessories stood out, including hats, masks, gloves, and scarves. Cute, comical adornments were often combined with edgier embellishments. For example, a female student always wore a cartoon-like mask and mitten or gloves. The mask resembled a teddy bear's face that was at once funny and angry-looking due to its eyes and eyebrows outlined in black (Figs. 103, 105). The mitten and gloves might have been worn for practicality, but they also added a sense of strength and theatricality. Another female student sported a light blue headpiece in the appearance of a soft toy dog. This gentle-looking mascot was paired with scarves that covered part of this student's face (fig. 103). In Figure 106, a female student modeled a bright yellow mask that appeared like *Pikachu's* face. *Pikachu* is a
yellow pocket monster from *Pokémon*, a Japanese media franchise that includes video games, anime, and film. The *Pikachu*, the cartoon bear, and the cartoon dog symbols represent the adoration of cuteness in Japanese popular culture, which, as demonstrated by *Cooking at the Front Line*, influenced Taiwan's youth even at the university level.

Meanwhile, the male student members mainly wore masks and scarves that concealed their faces and necks, which made them appear rebellious and somewhat threatening (figs. 103, 106, 108-109). According to the *Cooking at the Front Line* Blog, this fashion choice was inspired by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, the *nom de guerre* used by the main ideologist, spokesperson and de facto leader of the Mexican Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Visually, the students achieved a unique blend of cuteness and subversion by combining references to popular culture and history of revolution in their outfits. These adorable and intimidating ensembles added theatricality while the members cooked or posed for pictures.
Figure 108. The Front Line members in assertive poses inside their kitchen. Photo: Cooking at the Front Line.

Figure 109. More aggressive poses with outfits inspired by the Mexican Zapatista leader, Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. Photo: Cooking at the Front Line.
When photographed, the students also incorporated various kitchen tools and food items as props to help conceal their identity. *Figure 108* features a special bread peel that resembled a human face. Cutouts were made onto the metal plate to create a menacing expression, formed by its furrowed brows, narrow eyes, flaring nostrils, and a wide open mouth with only a few teeth remaining. In addition to retrieving bread from the brick kiln, the bread peel can function as an offensive or defensive weapon. *Figure 103* illustrates how the students combined everyday objects with their on guard gestures to convey a determination and tenacity to fight. Here, five students occupy the narrow kitchen space in various positions, each holding a common kitchen tool as they stare directly into the camera lens. Two male students in hats and masks sit on the kitchen walls with a bread peel and blender in hand. They flank the seated female student in the bear mask, who covers a piece of rounded bread with her gloved hands. The manner in which she holds the bread could gesture protection. Another female student stands behind, gripping a cleaver and a chopping board that could be used as an attacking knife and a shield. Further back, another student leans across the top of the kiln, which seems to claim ownership. While the height of her position is impressive, her raised leg, her faux mustache, and what appears to be a pink snake, produce a comical and absurd effect. Overall, this group photograph communicates that the chef team is serious about occupying and defending Wenlinyuan and its makeshift kitchen.

The same spirit is evident in figs 108-109. In *Figure 108*, the two students in the front place tomatoes and cleaning brushes over their eyes as disguise. The student at the back covers his face with the specially designed bread peel. Protruding horizontally from
the kitchen wall, he resembles a ninja. Figure 109 depicts the Front Line members posing in front of the graffiti wall of the temporary hut. The dramatic setting and the students' poses make them appear as if they are ready for battle. Visible in the foreground are bulldozer treads and rubble. Three students stand atop or behind the sandbag wall, which is surrounded by yellow tape that signals “no crossing.” The student to the left, also wearing a mask, holds out a bunch of green onions as to challenge any intruders. The middle one stands defiantly with hands at his waist. The one on the right squats as he displays a large pot and a colander. Their stances declare to the viewer that Cooking at the Front Line is not threatened by attack, but is prepared to keep defending citizens' housing rights.

Compared to the assertive tone of the Cooking at the Front Line photographs, the drawings produced by the group have a softer and friendlier quality. Their style tends to be child-like and fantastical, reminding one of Art Brut. In all three examples included here, the picture plane is saturated and has little negative space (figs. 110-112). The repetition of patterns, particular obvious in figs. 110 and 111, prompts the viewer's eye to move continuously across the canvas due to the lack of a focal point. The sense of busyness created by the multiplication of shapes is most strongly felt in fig. 110. This black-and-white drawing depicts a forest filled with leaves and flowers. Among the overgrown foliage, one discovers a snake, four birds, and a Pikachu. The presence of Pikachu indicates the drawing's imaginary nature. In the background are four buildings and a goat. The elongated oval, the hexagonal, the triangular, and the rectangular shapes are repeated to form the white bird's feathers, the leaves, the ground, and the buildings.
The prominent black-and-white contrast creates a flattened effect that makes image resemble a relief print. One may interpret this picture as an idyllic rendition of the artist's vision of the ideal living environment. It is one that emphasizes nature and harmonious co-existence among creatures. At the same time, the man-made buildings do not dominate but rather blend in with their surroundings. They are simple, yet aesthetically pleasing.

*Figure 110. A drawing featured as Cooking at the Front Line's Facebook cover photo.*
Figure 111. Another cover photo of the *Cooking at the Front Line* website.

*Figure 111* continues the theme of plants and birds in a pastel-colored drawing. The color palette consists of muted greens, reds, and browns with sprinkles of yellow, blue, and purple that help create a sense of serenity and approachability. The composition exudes stability, with the picture plane filled with mostly horizontal and diagonal lines and shapes. The fanciful elements in this image include the blue-colored leaves, the house sitting atop a bird in flight, the geometric flower carried by the large bird in the center, the flying fish toward the top, and the winged, two-legged reptile at the bottom. In addition to the kitchen's title, "Cooking at the Front Line," the artist wrote "Tramping and Practice" in both Chinese and English to represent the group's objectives. The Chinese characters help visualize the terms, "tramping" and "practice," through imagery. 跋涉, the phrase for "tramping," contains two characters that mean “to climb [mountains]” and “to wade [through water]” respectively. Meanwhile, 實踐, the term for "practice," includes...
two symbols that convey "reality" and "to tread or trample." Therefore, members of *Cooking at the Front Line* strove to act on their beliefs and to put them into practice with considerable effort.

The main concepts, the central figures, and the major activities of *Cooking at the Front Line* are summarized in *Figure 112*. This drawing records the yellow and green hut at Wenlinyuan and the red brick kiln named, Front Line Oven No. 14, after the original house number of the Wang residence. Three core members of TAVUR and of *Front Line* look out from the right window, and numerous smaller heads of other supporters fill the left one. A *Front Line* chef is about to step into the hut to deliver some freshly baked bread. Apart from the bread peel leaning against a partially demolished brick wall and animated with a red, angry face (the color possibly also resulting from the heat of the red fire), the general sentiment if peaceful. Every person in the drawing with visible facial expression is smiling, and one even whistles while holding a mug. Potted plants decorate the front of the hut, and a green couch and a glass coffee table welcome visitors. At the same time, a rooster stands guard on the roof. Although the atmosphere is harmonious, a block of bricks torn from the outer wall reminds viewers of the traumatic demolition that took place before. The background is painted in various shades of blue and green, and it features Mr. and Mrs. Wang, the couple in need of support. Also written on the background are an invitation and a statement: "Let me bake a bread named Tomorrow for you;" "Urban Renewal Should be something about Sharing." The accompanying texts to the picture explain what the group perceives urban renewal should be: "Urban renewal is sharing about the issues of elderly care, childcare, convenient transportation, limited
zoning, libraries, cemeteries, prisons, nursing homes, knowledge, culture, the rays of sunrise, birdsongs, night breeze, and starlit sky." These words combine a serious, critical attitude toward urban renewal and the public welfare with a poetic optimism. The message echoes the intention of Huang Huiyu and fellow Front Line members to create a warmer ambiance for Wenlinyuan through the establishment of the kitchen, even as they continue to strive for housing rights.207

![Figure 112. An Art-Brut-style drawing on the Front Line website.](image)

One should note the parallel styles that characterize Cooking at the Front Line's image. On the one hand, the drawings featured on its Blog and the members' costumes

---

207 Fig. 111 and the accompanying texts were posted to Cooking at the Front Line's Facebook page on January 4, 2013.
project an *Art Brut*, cartoon-like sense of fantasy and amiability. On the other, the *Front Line* members exude a militant quality by posing with masks, scarves, and cooking utensil props in combative gestures. The two contrasting styles of sweet versus aggressive echo the two concurrent tones of Taiwan's housing rights movement: one that is peaceful, hopeful, convivial, and satirical, and the other combative and antagonistic.

In addition to baking and cooking, students also utilized their artistic talents to design notebooks for fundraising (Fig. 113 -117). The light brown color of the notebooks' covers reminds one of earth, the land, which was a central concern for *Cooking at the Front Line*. The notebooks also include illustrations, poems, and phrases that comment on land and housing issues. There is a clever juxtaposition of sound-alike Taiwanese and Mandarin phrases captioning the small illustrations that, while obvious to those fluent in both Taiwanese and Mandarin, is lost on the non-Taiwanese speaking Chinese KMT settlers and the average Occidental reader. For example, the first half of the titles, "No house, no place," and "No rice field, no property" are in Taiwanese, whereas the second half is in Mandarin. The two small drawings, one of rice plants and the other of a damaged building baring its concrete and rebar, match the two phrases and symbolize two distinct periods of Taiwan's history: the pre-industrial, agricultural period and the wave of demolition during present-day urban redevelopment (figs. 113, 114).
Figure 113. A member holding the front cover of the notebook designed by *Cooking at the Front Line*. The phrase, "No house, no place" with the drawing of a damaged building.

Figure 114. The caption, "No land, no property" and the illustration of a rice plant.
Two poems composed by the students for the notebooks further illustrate *Cooking at the Frontline*’s critique of Taiwan's contemporary values, land policy, and lifestyle. The first poem, titled "Yesterday" (fig. 115), reads: "As it has always been, every year is harvest year: cedar, rice, sugar cane, high mountain tea; exchanging containers full of goods for tomorrow's prosperity. Yesterday, I heard we broke the foreign exchange reserves record again. I simply heard through word of mouth." The second poem, titled "Today," reads: "As it has always been, we always relinquish mountains, forests, rivers, and streams to corporations; rich farming land exchanged for concrete buildings. Parents sent to nursing homes, children entrusted to kindergartens, youthful years mortgaged to banks. We concede all limited resources until we lose our foothold." These poems contrast a past of sustainable and profitable living by working the land with the present society, where family life is fragmented, and natural assets are exploited to cause financial hardship for many. Two detailed, black and white drawings in the notebook visualize the "Yesterday" and "Today" poems. They depict four mountains, with three representing "Yesterday" and one representing "Today." *Figure 116* and the right half of *Figure 117* portray agricultural products, rice, cedar, and tea being grown and transported by plane, train, and trucks for export. Atop the mountain at the right side of *Figure 117*, one can also see the *san ho yuan*, the typical residential architecture in agricultural Taiwanese society, as well as the common beetle nut trees that surround the living complex. In contrast, the left side of *Figure 117* displays a mountain overtaken by high-rise buildings, with a New Year's Eve firework display from the Taipei 101, a landmark skyscraper, crowning the mountaintop. Trees exist only sparsely along the main road.
The visualization of the poems through these drawings deepens the understanding of the texts.

*Figure 115.* "Yesterday," a poem in the notebook.

*Figure 116.* The illustration that visualized the poem, "Yesterday."
According to a Cooking at the Front Line member, the idea of building a kiln came from the first day after Wenlinyuan's eviction, when people had to work together to build a fire in order to cook as they built the temporary hut. The kiln construction was intended to be a team-building, collaborative experience during which participants would familiarize themselves with each other. Moreover, the dishes produced by the Front Line kitchen also relied on collaboration. The kitchen, along with group members' artistic drawings, outfits, and carefully crafted dishes, became a venue for creativity, productivity, sustenance, and discussions on housing rights.

Furthermore, Cooking at the Front Line extended TAVUR's practice of Gablik's listener-centered paradigm and Sandercock's emphasis on the inclusion of voices of
difference. When the kitchen was established in order to provide long-term support for residents struggling with eviction, it was also intended as a gathering place for people to relate their urban renewal stories while enjoying food together. Creating an alternative platform for these marginalized voices was fitting and necessary, particularly after residents made repeated yet unsuccessful demands for housing rights on the city government. The ultimate goal of *Cooking at the Front Line* also echoed Jackson's view of art's potential to complicate social systems, as these student activist chefs aim not merely to listen to and provide meals for the victims of urban renewal, but also to stop impending demolitions through protest, petition, fundraising, and informing other citizens.

Whether through playful charm or combative stance, *Cooking at the Front Line* was a unique approach to protest, as it transformed a space of hard struggle, trauma, and antagonism to a softer place of creativity, nurturing and fellowship through food. For members of *Cooking at the Front Line*, their artistic practice – posters, kiln construction, packaging designs, new recipes, or handmade utensils – became a way of sharing and critical reflection. More importantly, it spurred participants to reconsider the meaning of art in everyday life. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, *Cooking at the Front Line* merged art and social activism with everyday acts of cooking and eating in a space of protest that rallied for urban equality.

**Conclusion**

The quest for urban equality and housing rights in Taipei took many forms, including Participatory Art events, interviews, symposia, group art exhibitions, banners,
publications, press conferences, sit-in demonstrations, and the construction of a kitchen. The artworks featured in this chapter demonstrate that Participatory Art transcends any particular set of defining parameter. Rather, this interdisciplinary art approach can concurrently embody a multiplicity of concepts, qualities, methods, and ideals. For example, *Cooking at the Frontline* and Chungjong Doomsday meet the seemingly opposing criteria proposed by Bourriaud and Kester on one side, and Bishop and Foster on the other. On the one hand, the relational aspect was clear and crucial in both Chungjong Doomsday and *Cooking at the Front Line*; on the other hand, the photography in Chungjong and the kiln, notebooks, and cuisine produced in the *Front Line* kitchen were professional with attention to details and high standards of artistic craftsmanship.

Although *One Thousand People Paint to Protect the Wang's* and *Cooking at the Front Line* stand out as two primary Participatory Art projects at Wenlinyuan, it is important to note that they were part of a larger housing rights movement that also utilized other types of art. In this movement, artists like Kao and Huang used Participatory Art to assist in spreading a clear political message of urban equality. In addition to these artists' efforts, the establishment of the Taiwan Alliance for Victims' Urban Renewal was also significant and momentous because it was the first cross-community grassroots organization formed by residents themselves. In this organization, Suzi Gablik's listener-centered approach and Leonie Sandercock's difference-based urban planning approach were both put into practice. First, the interaction between residents was based on telling their stories to each other. Secondly, when students joined the Alliance, their work also focused on listening to residents' stories and helping them
articulate the narratives in a concise manner. This process, which emphasizes listening to the marginalized, is reiterated by Sandercock, who argues that it can lead to more inclusive ways of thinking about justice, resistance and consciousness, and new spaces of opposition.

TAVUR, Wenlinyuan, and *Cooking at the Front Line* became exactly these new spaces of opposition where people of different backgrounds explored the concept of justice and ways of resistance together. The most distinct characteristic of this housing rights movement in Taiwan is its extensive scale and breadth. The meeting and collaboration between Pong, Chen, and Huang exemplifies the convergence of members from disparate disciplines in a unified vision. Through this coming together and mutual learning, most citizens realize that regardless of social status, they are equally affected by faulty urban renewal policy. It is also this phenomenon that encourages Chen and Huang to persist in the housing rights movement despite doubts from family and professors. Taiwan's housing rights movement has grown from isolated communities or families facing eviction to an island-wide coalition.

Pong, Chen, and Huang's determination and the overall sentiment of Taiwan's housing rights movement can be understood by analyzing *Cooking at the Frontline*. By building a kitchen, feeding supporters, and sharing food with other communities, *Cooking at the Front Line* stabilized the tumultuous struggle for housing rights with the ability to sustain participants physically. By incorporating the everyday acts of cooking and eating, *Cooking at the Front Line* was responding to a city government that was attempting to
take residents’ homes by force. “We are here to stay;” this statement best represents the
spirit of the nationwide, trans-social strata housing rights movement in Taiwan.
CONCLUSION

Participatory Art has been a major component of Taiwan's housing rights movement from 2010 to the present. The case studies in this dissertation have incorporated a variety of art forms to spread the same political message, demanding more transparency, equality, and citizen participation in urban planning. 小 ACT utilized sculpture, performance art, and literature; supporters of Huaguang and Shaoxing employed photography, mixed-media works, mosaic, and architectural installation; and TAVUR appropriated collage, construction, and cooking, to resist eviction and forced demolition. Possessing both artistic craftsmanship and critical reflexivity, and realized through varied degrees and methods of public participation, the Taiwanese case studies illustrate that Participatory Art cannot be limited to a singular definition or framework. Instead, its core concepts are applied and manifest through various combinations of art, social critique, and political activism.

Furthermore, the listener-centered approach and the inclusion of voices of the marginalized, as advocated by Suzi Gablik and Leonie Sandercock, were the main channels for artists, residents, and supporters to understand and navigate Taiwan's urban development. For example, 小 ACT interviewed Yuan Shan residents in order to understand how they were affected by Flora Exposition-related constructions. Kao Jun-honn's video installations at Shaoxin began with house visits and listening to residents relate their situations to Kao and Lin Hui-jun. In turn, these normally excluded voices of the underprivileged became the focal point of the artwork. At the same time, students participating in the Shaoxin Pogram@Shaoxin workshop learned about the history,
culture, and current circumstance of the community by listening to residents' stories. The
dancer Hsiao Tse Han's “Land Project” at Huaguang was inspired by interviews and
interactions with its residents. Also, TAVUR's approach centered on students listening to
the stories of victims of urban renewal and helping them articulate it to the media. It was
the understanding through listening that enabled artists and students to create works that
reflected the reality of urban renewal, challenged existing systems, and also spoke to
audiences' hearts.

At the same time, the featured Participatory Art cases affirm Shannon Jackson's
suggestion that this artistic approach has the potential to complicate people's
understanding of existing systems, be they political, social, economic, or aesthetic, and to
guide them to reconsider their lives. In addition to being rigorous and conceptual,
works by \ACT, Kao, Lin, Huang, the students at Shaoxin, and *Cooking at the Front
Line* addressed the specific issues of urban development and housing rights through
Participatory Art. They subverted the current sociopolitical elite's approach to urban
renewal by including voices of the professional working-class. Moreover, they redefined
Taiwan's urban planning process into one that included voices calling for more
transparency and civic participation.

By incorporating different perspectives from the professional-working class,
considering the meanings of equality, and exploring ways of resistance against uneven
urban development, the Participatory Art works created new spaces of opposition in the
city of Taipei. As demonstrated by the case studies, Participatory Art was coupled with

---

public statements and demonstrations to transform the very spaces of exclusion and oppression into places for protest and petition. These spaces of contestation included both public and private spaces, such as the streets, university campus, home, and kitchen. The acts of creative resistance challenged the public not only to examine Taiwan's existing urban development policy, but also to contemplate the fact that any space can potentially be a venue for voicing citizens' demands.

Moreover, the varied dynamics of the case studies call for a broadening of Participatory Art's definition from one that is artist-initiated to one that can be launched by any member of the public. Regarding the case studies' organization and implementation, some were designed by professional artists, some were collaborations between artists and other public members, and others were commenced and executed by people with no formal art training. However, all were artistically vigorous and powerful as social critique.

While Participatory Art's definition makes no mention of the duration of collaboration between artists and the public, the progressive increase of interaction in the case studies should be noted. From 小ACT, to Huaguang and Shaoxing, to TAVUR and Wenlinyuan, it is clear that the relationship between artists, students and residents became more and more sustained. The time artists and the public spent together progressed from a few hours, a few weeks, to an entire year, all on a daily basis. Participatory Art's role and effectiveness in these different durations of interaction is a potential area for further research.
The Participatory Art cases introduced in this dissertation are unified by their political nature and their main purpose: protest. Objections against uneven, exclusionary urban policy, such as real estate speculation and violation of housing rights, inspired the use of art to oppose the 2010 Taipei International Flora Exposition and the various demolition plans in Taipei. These protest actions were particularly significant within the context of Taiwan's history because they signaled the drastic changes that occurred after Taiwan transitioned from a pro-democracy government to a pro-China administration. During the presidency of Chen Shiubian from the DPP, freedom of speech was encouraged, and public protests tolerated. Simultaneously, outbursts of civil discontent mostly dissipated during Taiwan's democratic period from 1996 to 2008. However, after Ma Ying-jeou became president in 2008, people started to demonstrate again against many political and social issues, such as nuclear power and the infringement of freedom of speech, labor rights, land rights, and housing rights. The most recent large-scale protest was the Sunflower Student Movement, during which students occupied the parliament to decry the KMT's passing of a service trade agreement with China without due process.

The many protests in recent years indicate that Taiwan's citizens are no longer merely content with freedom of expression but desire financial security, social equality and a high level of democracy. Although protesters today need not fear for their lives (yet), unlike those ruled by authoritarian governments in the country's past, they can still suffer repercussions from law enforcement. While the people today no longer employ firearms in uprisings, artists and citizens of other professions have chosen art as their
weapon. Participatory Art, such as skits, staged performances, collages, posters, and sculpture installations, have particularly been widely incorporated in Taiwan's recent protests. This increased utilization of Participatory Art as protest, be it about democracy, housing rights, or other issues, is another potential direction for future research. One may also examine whether the tones of satirical, convivial, and militant discourse are unique to Taiwan's protest art, or whether it bears similarities to the protest art created in other nations.

There are three more research areas that this dissertation has initiated. First, Participatory Art and urban renewal can be examined regionally in Asia. During individual research and conversations with artists and activists like Kao Jun-honn, Huang Huiyu, Pong Long-San, and Chen Hungyin, it was clear that urban renewal and protests against forcible demolitions were widespread not only within the island of Taiwan but also in other Asian states like Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and China. Examples include Korea's Longshan Event, Hong Kong's Tsaiyuan Village (菜園村), and China's Chongqing City. Moreover, residents and activists from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan visited each other and exchanged support. An investigation into Asia's urban renewal by comparing and contrasting different country's policies, case studies, and their use of Participatory Art would shed light on how artists and activists are using Participatory Art and other cultural productions, such as film graphic design, to gain support for urban equality and housing rights on a regional scale.

Secondly, the regional perspective can be extended to a global outlook. The author's previous research examined Participatory Art and housing rights in Dublin,
Ireland and Los Angeles. For example, the activist art collective Ultra-Red held conversations with residents in Los Angeles' Pico Aliso and Aliso Village, and created several community performances in order to support subsidized public housing. Later, the group conducted similar research in Ballymun, Dublin by facilitating meetings between Aliso and Ballymun residents and organizing radio talks and public performances. The Irish artist Seamus Nolan also produced work that commented on Ballymun's regeneration. In *Hotel Ballymun*, Nolan transformed one of the abandoned Ballymun tenement towers into a temporary hotel that opened to the public for business. The project employed furniture designers and local residents to create one-of-a-kind furniture pieces by upcycling found objects in the empty building. Residents also served as volunteer tour guides for visitors to Hotel Ballymun. These events, along with the examples discussed below, demonstrate that urban renewal has become a global phenomenon, and, in response, artists are utilizing Participatory Art to engage with issues of public welfare and housing policy.

These international Participatory examples, like the case studies from Taiwan, aimed to help marginalized citizens reclaim urban space. They all addressed the effects of urban renewal on residents' lives and underlined the importance of a transparent urban planning process that involves citizens' input. A study of the relationship between Participatory Art and urban renewal from a global perspective would enable the understanding of similarities and variances in different national urban policies as well as in artists' critical approaches. Lastly, many of the events described in this dissertation
continue with new developments. Residents and activists are still fighting, and artists are still paying attention.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Association Internationale des Producteurs de l'Horticulture. (AIPH).
http://www.aiph.org/site/index_en.cfm?act=teksten.tonen&parent=4681&varpag=
4254 Accessed June 25, 2013

Atkins, Robert, Rudolf Frieling, Boris Groys, and Lev Manovich. The Art of


Bourriaud, Nicolas. Relational Aesthetics. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza


Canduci, Alexander. Triumph and Tragedy: The Rise and Fall of Rome's Immortal
Emperors. Millers Point, Pier 9, 2010.

Taipei Times, (November 11, 2008).

Cooking at the Front Line. Facebook page and Blog.
https://www.facebook.com/cookingatthefrontline; http://cooking-at-the-front-
line.blogspot.com/

2014.


Davidson, Gary Marvin. A Short History of Taiwan: The Case for Independence.


Huang, Tai-lin, "White Terror exhibit unveils part of the truth." *Taipei Times*, (20 May 2005).


Huaguang Self Help Association, "Our Hope." https://sites.google.com/a/huaguang.co.cc/tw/home


OURS, http://www.ours.org.tw/about


Program @ Shaoxin Facebook page.
https://www.facebook.com/ShaoxingCommunity?fref=photo


"Taiwan's Intercorporate Familial Network." (台灣企業間的親屬網路) *Academia Sinica Weekly* 1261.


Tsuei Ma-Ma Foundation For Housing And Community Services, http://www.tmm.org.tw/English/about_EN.htm

*Urban Calamity*. Taiwan Alliance for Victims of Urban Renewal.


