

Negotiating Difference –
Contemporary China Art in The Global Context
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Interstice in between Internationalization and Globalization: Critical
Research-Method and Discussion of Taiwanese Contemporary Art

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Abstract

In the same moment that a new computer technology drove the waves of digitalization from the 90's, the issue of globalization, especially the tendency of cultural globalization is also spreading like a raging fire. Before this, in the western world, it was the age of postcolonialism, which concerned itself with the issue of internationalization vs. localization. Later a new term globalization took the place of internationalization, but still developing and continuously discussed is the issue of localization. Therefore the concept of localization that seeking its own character or style has developed to a new modish term "globality" or "globalisation," under the question, "Is it global, transnational, or just regional?"

The key concept of this new vocabulary is the "formation of subjectivity of localization." During the past 20 years Taiwan has been transforming from an old system to a new system. Being influenced by the discourse of postcolonial theory, seeking internationalization, following the footsteps of globalization and the crisis of rapid irrelevance caused by the world financial tsunami, these changes all become the essential prerequisites for the field of art history research to examine. This article is an examination of the historical critiques of the art ecosystem in Taiwan. At first I will point out that the research on Taiwanese art history is relatively young, compare it to the research on pre-modern traditional Chinese art where there are many scholars and some art history department or institutes that have been dedicated for more than 30 years. Nevertheless to say the research on Taiwanese contemporary art is more complicated, has greater variety and interest. Instead this academic work of researching contemporary Taiwanese art is usually done by the Artists themselves, whose duty is to create art works not to research. This special phenomenon has not only created an

non-objective atmosphere but also formed an unprofessional institute, it is instead a product compromise. Therefore it is necessary to criticize the process of doing Taiwanese contemporary research and making contemporary art works. The discussion will involve the authoritative didactic method of art academies, art history courses or philosophical courses, and the contracture of education systems.

Furthermore, in facing the politically and economically powerful China, Taiwanese contemporary art can only establish its own style by making a self-examination to have the distinguishing characteristic(s) of transnation or transculture. Although China and Taiwan are both based on traditional “Chinese” culture during the process of modernization they headed in different directions and now have the difference of thinking with “traditional character” and “simplified character”. Besides the difference between the cultural structure that is expressed linguistically. In Taiwan after the end of martial law and in China after the reform and opening policy contemporary art was influenced a great deal by western artistic concepts and techniques. Therefore these works that are a hybrid with western and Chinese content and styles should be examined under the western art historical context. Whether it belongs to a category of the extension of modernism or extremely progressive postmodernism I will examine them based on the specific political, social, and historical facts of Taiwan herself as the reflection of “subjectivity of local art”.