

When Teachings Become Form: Concepts-Actions-Conversations-Works

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當教學成為形式：觀念－行動－對話－作品

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摘要

教學能否成為一種創作的形式？

2014年起，研究者與學生透過跨領域課程，與臺北榮譽國民之家中的韓戰反共義士，開展迄今為期三年的藝術教育與社會實踐。三年課程累積了不同向度的知識生產，而2016年結合「美術館教育專題」課程的《義家藝館》教學暨創作計畫，則是回應法國哲學家Félix Guattari 的提問：教室有沒有可能成為一件藝術作品？

藉由生態博物館與教育性策展的雙重路徑，研究者所策劃的《義家藝館》，希望能讓充滿歷史情調與動人故事的義士之家，在國際博物館日成為面向公眾的生活博物館；同時，藉由教學、創作與研究的長期進駐，讓臺北榮家轉化為藝術發生的第一現場。是而，看似展覽策畫的《義家藝館》，實則為教學實務與藝術實踐兩者兼具，相互交融與涵養的歷程，並體現授課教師作為一藝術家教師，提證其教學可視為某種形式的「過程藝術」之案例。

本文題名受1969年展覽《當態度成為形式（作品－觀念－過程－情境－資訊）》啟發，在思索當教學成為形式時，研究者試圖提出觀念、行動、對話與作品等，作為界定其教學之所以為創作形式的四項關鍵要素。這四項要素並非依序或漸次出現，而是在其教學暨創作歷程中反覆出現並相互融滲，於是以「連字號」連結此四項要素，強調「共時存在」的特質。

關鍵字：藝術家-教師, 過程為本的藝術, 教學即藝術

Abstract

Can teachings become a form of art?

The exhibition project, *When Home Becomes a Museum*, is driven to respond to the question posed by Félix Guattari (1995), namely, "how do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?" This exhibition has become a place where teaching practices intertwine with artistic practices. It is also a living example of how an instructor as artist-teacher demonstrates her teaching as a form of process-based art.

The instructor designates four elements – concepts, actions, conversations and works – as critical parts in her teaching and art-making. Rather than taking place in sequence, these elements constantly appear, disappear, and reappear throughout the art-based learning process. Hyphens are accordingly used to denote the nature of these elements in this exhibition project.

As the title of this text is inspired by the form of the 1969 landmark exhibition, *When Attitudes Becomes Form (Works-Concepts-Processes-Situations-Information)*, it seeks to exemplify strategies and mediums facilitating these evolving elements in this particular teaching and artistic practice.

Keywords: artist-teacher, process-based art, teaching as an art

Introduction

In 1954, nearly 15,000 POWs from China during the Korean War made a life-changing decision – to come to Taiwan. Upon arrival, they had anti-communist tattoos marked on their bodies to pledge loyalty to the Chiang Kai-shek administration and were then given a collective identity as “Anti-Communist Martyrs”. Their defection of communism for freedom was once distinctly written in Taiwan history. Yet, with the passage of time, their stories were rarely told and almost forgotten.



Figure 1 An anonymous oil painting at the in-house museum representing the scene inside the room, in which the Anti-Communist Martyrs

(defectors) critically decided to resist brain washing of communism and got freedom to come to Taiwan finally.



Figure 2 The statue of the Anti-Communist Martyr (a.k.a. The statue of the Liberal Man)

Can an exhibition project in which teaching and art-making are equally important help to unfold these stories before all these Anti-Communist Martyrs are gone? If the answer is positive, what elements are we looking for in this teaching and art-making process? As an artist-teacher, the instructor argues that concepts, actions, conversations and works drawn out from discussion-based teaching practice and process-based art practice are the pivotal

elements in this teaching and art-making process. These elements constantly appear, disappear, and reappear in the evolving process of her teaching and art-making, depicting how her teaching practice embodied through an exhibition project is possibly considered as a form of artistic practice.

Concepts

The exhibition project, *When Home Becomes a Museum*, aims to turn the Taipei Veterans Home (TVH), where living, solitary and homeless Anti-Communist Martyrs are currently settled, into a living museum and to bring participatory art experiences to these Anti-Communist Martyrs. By doing so, the instructor believes that forgotten histories and stories can be shared and learned in an artistic manner, and be passed down from generation to generation. In addition, the project itself is not only a teaching practice to the instructor, but also an artistic practice, which resonates with the question posed by Félix Guattari: How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?

Actions

An action, according to Max Weber, is social if the acting individual takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course (Jary & Jary, 2000). As *When Home Becomes a Museum* is a site-specific exhibition project, any action-taking cannot avoid considering social others in its development.

This semester-long exhibition project has been performed in the course of "Special Topics on Art Museums and Learning Theories" at the graduate level in Spring 2016. Students are requested to co-curate the exhibition with the instructor. The project's mission is twofold – to interpret historical objects from Anti-Communist Martyrs, and to share their personal stories through works of participatory art. Under this premise, the curatorial team composed of the instructor and 13 students takes museological and ethnographical approach to conduct field research on historical objects displayed in the nearly neglected in-house museum at the TVH with the Anti-Communist Martyrs. Meanwhile, a derelict self-cooking place is renovated into a studio for participatory art practice. Re-named as *Art Cooks*, the studio has become a

space of embodying and empowering the original spirit of place – make-it-yourself. And since participatory art is another story-telling form of this exhibition project, the curatorial team invites 10 Anti-Communist Martyrs at the TVH to take part in the process of art-making that is based on their life experiences and personal stories.



Figure 3 Students conduct interviews with the Anti-Communist Martyrs at the TVH.



Figure 4 Students accompany the Anti-Communist Martyrs to walk around the display at the in-house museum at the TVH.



Figure 5 A derelict self-cooking place is renovated into a studio for participatory art practice.



Figure 6 Re-named as Art Cooks, the studio has become a space of embodying and empowering the original spirit of place – make-it-yourself.

Conversations

Conversations play the role as a catalyst in this exhibition project. Through conversing with the Anti-Communist Martyrs, the curatorial team collects memories and stories of objects and produce art out of conversations. In facilitating conversations and mutual understandings between those Anti-Communist Martyrs and the curatorial team, artist journals are intensively used

in this learning and curatorial process. The students employ artist journals to document their learning and curatorial development, such as field research notes, post-interview reflections and intangible social interactions related to this exhibition project. The artist journals also allow students to visualize any emergence of creative ideas and the evolvement of concrete concepts occurred during conversations. Further, they function as personal spaces of exploring feelings and experiences, as well as documentations of potential artistic practice. As Pablo Helguera puts in his *Education for Socially Engaged Art* (2011) that if an artist's intention is to truly understand verbal exchange with others, s/he must gain a nuanced understanding of the relationship between art and speech and reflect on the way in which one affects the other. The use of artist journals supports the above claim. This empowers students to visually detect subtle sequence changes in mutual relationships.



Figure 7 In a conversation, an Anti-Communist Martyr shares the picture story of his personal anti-communist tattoos taken by a photojournalist with the students.

關於「自由」的盛大紀念：「123自由日」在今天似乎已經過去，但/你怎麼看待當年反共義士的「抗爭」？是/你或「他」-他/你曾怎麼做？

對於一二三自由日，除了在一些行事歷上瞥見，實在沒有太多印象，更不用說有什麼感觸。直到第一次到訪蔡志忠，當他先許帶著大家前往嘉應的無敵十的同志們自由鐘，才首次覺得這個日子不凡。

在第一次的採訪，我發信給同會伯伯在嘉應進行，我們沒有太多意思在自由日，但在會伯伯講解「義士加抗爭精神自由」一圖時，有更深刻的。會伯伯說：

「因為想回大陸、想回香港，所以必須先回台灣。」

這句話聽起來人真誠...原來伯伯並不是單單追求自由，而是希望有一天可以回老家...

2012.12.21 自由日

1987年剛回大陸探親，我總是怕伯伯說許久的時刻了...也！

今天若說反共義士，我擔心也會有了更有機會回家鄉而做的「回台學」的這群，到了大陸又會再次成為共產黨作品，畢竟已被共產黨騙去許多年，寧願相信一次也很難。

伯伯知道說來台灣生活困難，伯伯對大陸的這是在什麼期許，對台灣的感覺又是什麼？

回國還不穩定，為什麼要回台灣住呢？

感覺這些伯伯一生在大半的時間是孤獨的，在單位的孤獨，在親友疏離的孤獨，到台灣孤獨，等閒的孤獨時，見已轉彎所出的光景應該也孤獨的。尤其伯伯，他吃飯也沒一起吃，自己房間裏吃食物，也不知道他怎麼想這孤獨的，也許這樣也覺得舒服。

在室內，有沒有哪些物件吸引你的目光？是什麼原因呢？「七」的很多又是什麼了得它的樣子記錄下來，並試著整理它與你/你的關係。

二〇一六.三.八

今日去訪三大張家的歷史室，櫃檯中展示了與抗爭義士相關的物件及照片。所有物件中，「義士的徽章」是讓吸引足許久的陳列品。這些物件在不懂我們現在所認知的「徽章」，比較多是像「名牌」，註記著姓名、姓名字，沒黃的紙上印製或書寫了簡單的文字，但亦寫了各種故事。

我自己只喜歡蒐集名牌或徽章，國小時是寫字體的塑膠名牌，國中時是時髦的在銀的現代感名牌，高中是精緻的壓克力牌等。每一個名牌或徽章都像一種 Logo，記著寫著呼聲的某些故事。

很有趣的是這些名牌或徽章幾乎每個人都長得差不多，可能不是上述的名字與編號有所不同。對個人而言，這些可能都是記憶的符號與標誌，但的更覺得它們是一首哲理的短詩，簡短扼要，卻能勾起各種記憶與許多字眼的感觸故事。

許多徽章都是以藍色為主，因為國民黨的關係，不知道伯伯對這顏色有什麼感觸？自由？沉重？...

似乎有人說在藍色，但顏色，和不法

「回台灣，因為是身外物與精神上的，有的程度上是字面是時間中重疊的痕跡。」

寫字牌 (中央的藍色)

Figure 8 In a student's artist journal, she makes literal and visual responses to conversations occurring in the field research (upper left and right figures). She also sketches some objects which impressed her in her first visit to the in-house museum where a de-contextualized display is presented (lower left and right figures).

In addition, to assess and to evaluate the progress of exhibition development, selected pages from artist journals are circulated among the curatorial team. Viewing at each other's journal, students are able to share, discuss, and give feedback. This allows each team member to better understand challenges and difficulties that may lie ahead in conducting the following field research and in curating the exhibition.

Works

The highlight of the When Home Becomes a Museum is the opening followed by a half-day guiding tour led by the curatorial team. Due to the policy of access control at the TVH, the event taking place in the weekend of International Museum Day is by invitation only. An audience of nearly 50 people participated this event. The curatorial team divided the audience into three groups, and took the groups traveling through the following three individual areas, Area A, B and C, of the exhibition project.

Area A is located within the outdoor freedom park, in which the timeworn statue of the Anti-Communist Martyr and Liberty Bell are displayed and re-interpreted in a contemporary manner. This area motivates the audience to reconsider the international relations among Taiwan, Northeast Asia and the international society over half a century ago. It is also an overture of the Anti-Communist Martyrs stories which will be told in the next area.



Figure 9 In the Freedom Park (Area A), a curatorial team member shares the stories behind the statue of the Anti-Communist Martyr.

Area B is located within the in-house museum, where the curatorial team produces a historical narrative of the Korean War based on selected objects and the field research. This area continues the storyline beginning in the preceding area. Through selected objects such as blood stained flag and images of body tattoos on Anti-Communist Martyrs, the curatorial team unfolds the past of the Anti-Communist Martyrs, narrating the reasons why they would make such a life-changing decision to come to Taiwan.



Figure 10 Inside the in-house museum (Area B), a curatorial team member raises questions about the painting in which a historical scenario of the prisons of war is re-presented.

Area C, the Art Cooks studio, in which documents and progressing works of two participatory art projects are displayed to tell the present stories of the Anti-Communist Martyrs at the TVH. In this area, objects, images, acrylic paintings and even a reproduced scene of an artist studio are metaphors of mutual relationships between the curatorial team and Anti-Communist Martyrs developed in this project. In so doing, the audience could reflect on what else we can do with these living histories.



Figure 11 At the Art Cooks Studio (Area C), an Anti-Communist Martyr who is the co-author of one participatory art project is about to give a tour of his photographic works.



Figure 12 In the other participatory art project taking place at the Art Cooks Studio, the artist re-presents the working studio of her project, Conversing Relations.



Figure 13 Note-taking (left) and how verbal conversation is converted into visual work (left) in project Conversing Relations.

Afterthoughts...

In these three areas, works of various art forms such as narratives of objects, documents and images of field research, and acrylic paintings of participatory art practice embody the making of social relations in this exhibition project. Through these material works produced in the development process, the audience is able to decipher how two generations exchange their life experiences, personal stories, and hence generate collective narratives of objects and works of art.

Each material work is not only an artwork itself, but also a fragment that forms a larger process-based artistic practice – When Home Becomes a Museum, whose primary concern is not the product, but the process in which actual doing and how actions can be considered as an work of art. In this regard, the intangible but actual actions such as the converting of space and the guiding tour, or conversations, or improvisations are artworks without materialized form. They take place in the teaching and art-making process and may produce some by-products such as documents, images and video clips. Yet,

these by-products are not the principal interest of process-based art. What really matters is the process itself.

Conclusion

To conclude, the exhibition project, When Home Becomes a Museum, is to suggest a possibility of considering teaching as a form of art. This text has no intention to devalue teaching; instead, by means of integrating elements from teaching and art-making, it aims to extend the imagination of teaching, and to embrace the dynamics often times occur in the process of art-making.

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