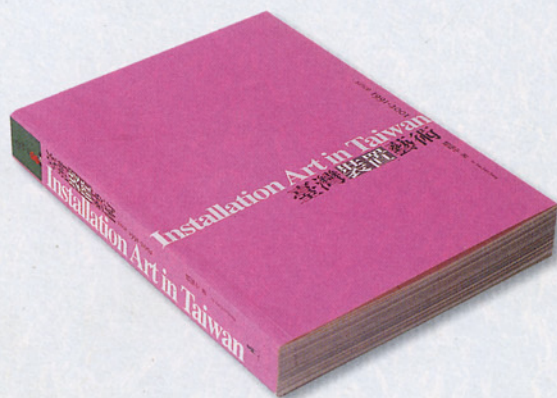


# 《台灣裝置藝術》

## Book Review: *Installation Art in Taiwan*

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新書上榜 New on the Bookshelf



書名：台灣裝置藝術  
作者：姚瑞中  
出版者：木馬文化事業有限公司  
出版日期：二〇〇二年十月  
定價：一二〇〇元  
特價：六五〇元

Book: *Installation Art in Taiwan*  
Author: Yao Jui-chung  
Published by: Ecus Publishing House  
Publication Date: October 2002  
Recommended price: NT\$1200  
Discount Price: NT\$650

一九九〇年代是台灣政治、社會、經濟等各個面向皆蓬勃躍進的時期，如此氛圍下，台灣當代藝術家搭上了全球化的浪潮，以西方概念為骨，本土體驗為肉，在裝置藝術類型上大鳴大放。然而，隨著作品目不暇給、花樣百出而來的，卻是「拿來主義」（直接套用西方藝壇概念）、「看不懂」、「人人皆可為之」等各種批評之聲接踵而至。

身為裝置藝術家的一員，姚瑞中在歷經十年的拳腳伸展後，忙不迭地放下藝術家身段，自己跳下來寫史，「因為等不及別人寫了」。

十年就急著做史，與其說為自己與戰鬥同伴留下紀錄，其實更多成分是身處時代變革的前中年期藝術家，著急地為自己當年的年少輕狂辯解，也企圖為未知的下一步尋得「位置」。

對許多讀者而言，看到《台灣裝置藝術》這樣的書名，油然而生的困惑可能是：台灣談了、做了十幾年的「裝置藝術」，對一般大眾來說，仍是無法一窺的堂奧。

對於一般人「看不懂」的觀感，自然是作者姚瑞中首要關懷的面向。書中他開宗明義指出：「裝置是泛指一種手法而非風格，主要是針對一個實存空間或概念空間所進行的藝術行為與手段。它不是一個派別而是一個觀念。」為了更清楚說明「何謂台灣裝置藝術」，姚瑞中一下筆四十六萬字，意猶未盡。

當然，身為藝術家，姚瑞中寫作的懷抱也絕不僅是「教育」的功能，他說：「走訪過世界許多國家，看了不少令我印象深刻的作品，也曾在書店內被豐富的藝術作品所震撼，當下頗

有感慨，這些豐富的西方文化資產，不是努力就可以趕上的，然而自問：是否就此認命？」

一九六九年出生的姚瑞中，有著該年紀台灣「學運世代」共有的社會責任感，身為裝置藝術家、策展人、藝評人，他身上背負這片土地所賦予的十字架：「放眼本土，胸懷國際」，落實到現實中，就是以堅強的意志力，在一年半的時間內寫出四十六萬字的《台灣裝置藝術》一書。蒐羅三百多張圖片，紀錄一九九一至二〇〇一年的十一年間，台灣本土藝術家發表過的三百多件作品。

身為一九九〇年代裝置藝術的戰將，自己跳下來寫史，難免讓人第一個就要質疑他的客觀性。藝評人王家驥就認為，《台灣裝置藝術》一書，主要是站在藝術家創作的立場，發揮同情與同理心，因此解讀作品時，極力揣摩每一位藝術創作者的創作初衷，故而全書稍有議論，卻沒有強烈、鮮明的批評。

對於上述說法，姚瑞中不諱言，他是自覺性地放棄評論型態。他所關懷的乃在於：多媒材、多主題的龐大裝置藝術品，往往難以收藏，不是展後即拆，就是四落散佚，輝煌的裝置年代，將只是未曾留下任何實質作品的記憶，所以他捨去更能在藝術界建立藝術評論聲名的「斷代史」、「作者論」寫法，而以「作品論」出發，將十一年間，裝置藝術最昂揚時期的眾多龐雜作品逐一分類。還原時代的意義與真相、找出自己的位置，才是他寫書的真正立意。

《台灣裝置藝術》全書分成五大部分，共細分成十三章。

〈群魔亂舞〉包含政治批判、宗教觀察、享樂主義與俗艷風；〈物質狂



**The 1990s were a decade of great political, social, and economic change in Taiwan. Against this backdrop contemporary Taiwanese artists were active participants in the global fashion for installation art, integrating an essentially Western conceptual skeleton with an indigenous or local skin. However, as the volume of work and plurality of styles expanded, criticism became increasingly vociferous. Artists were accused of "mechanically using concepts from Western art," and suggestions were made that such pieces were "incomprehensible" or "could have been produced by anyone."**

**As an installation artist himself with a decade of experience, Yao Jui-chung has now chosen to devote his considerable talent towards the writing of a work of art history, because, in his own words: "I couldn't wait for someone else to do it."**

**After a decade of being part of the making of art history it could be argued that Yao's sense of urgency is motivated by a desire to leave a detailed record of the exploits of both himself and his artistic comrades-in-arms. On the other hand, it is perhaps more likely that as an artist in his prime working at a time of great change he is eager to defend the frivolousness of his own youth, and in so doing "position" his next step into an unknown future.**

For many readers the title chosen for this book, *Installation Art in Taiwan*, may well be something of a puzzle: After all, despite discussing and producing "installation art" in Taiwan for a decade, most people find the profundities it seeks to express difficult to understand.

The impression that people are still unable to grasp the meaning of installation art is naturally one of the first addressed by the author. At the very beginning Yao seeks to make clear the purpose and meaning of such art with the following definition: "In general terms installation art refers to an expressive method not a style. In the main it focuses on artistic behavior or approaches undertaken in a physical or conceptual space. It is not a school of art but an idea or concept." To this end *Installation Art in Taiwan* (460,000 Chinese characters

in length) is a concerted attempt by Yao to flesh out further his treatise on "the nature of installation art."

Unsurprisingly, given Yao's work as an artist, the book does not seek merely to "educate" readers. The artist himself comments: "I have visited many countries around the world and seen a lot of works that have made a strong impression on me. I was once really shocked at seeing so many rich and varied works of art in a bookstore. At which point I realized that such a rich Western cultural heritage cannot be matched by effort alone and I began to ask myself if I was doomed to failure?"

Born in 1969, Yao Jui-chung possesses a sense of social responsibility common amongst those who participated in the "student movement" of his youth. At the same time, as an installation artist, curator and art critic, he carries with him the cultural burden of what it means to be Taiwanese, seeking in real life to "embrace internationalism from a local perspective." On this basis Yao had the strength of will to complete *Installation Art in Taiwan* in just 18 months, a book that comes with more than 300 photographs, recording over 300 works produced by Taiwanese artists in the period 1990–2001.

As an active participant in the development of installation art in the 1990s, we are forced to question Yao's objectivity in writing about the history of a period with which he is so intimately connected. Art critic Wang Chia-chi points out that *Installation Art in Taiwan* is basically written from the creative perspective of the artist, expressing both sympathy and empathy for the subject matter covered. As such, when Yao explains works, he strives to fathom the original creative intent of each artist. In consequence, the book has some commentary but is bereft of any clear, forceful critiques.

Yao Jui-chung candidly admits that he deliberately chose not to adopt a critical approach. He points out that his main interest is in multimedia and the multiple motifs of large works of installation art, ones that more often than not cannot be collected and are generally dismantled or broken up after an exhibition. In other words, works that though they were created in what was a golden era for installation art have left behind

no trace of their existence. With this in mind Yao has forgone any attempt to divide the development of installation art into specifically defined periods or to offer critiques of individual artists one at a time, thereby establishing a reputation for himself in the field of art criticism. He has chosen instead to concentrate on the works in question, categorizing an array of numerous and varied pieces from a highly creative period. It can therefore be said that Yao's decision to write this book was a sincere attempt to detail the meaning and truth of an era and in so doing find the position of each artist in the greater scheme of things.

*Installation Art in Taiwan* is divided into five sections and 13 chapters: "Dance Macabre" contains political criticism, religious observation, hedonism and indulgence; "Carnival of Materials" depicts diverse materials and the use of a reconstructed or virtual arena as elements of installation art; "The Realm of Illusion" discusses photographic, television, projection, optical energy, and animation techniques and how they can be used as part of installation art; "Blurring Boundaries" features "interactive" works that attempts to reduce the distance between audience and art through affinity and interaction; "The Awakening of Body and Self" covers works of "performance art."

Yao develops a dialogue with these works on the basis of artistic empathy. Through the expression of his ideas and interviews with the artists concerned, the pieces discussed gradually become clearer. In this way, readers, who have not seen these works of installation art with their own eyes, build up in their minds a work of art in its own right through extensive dialogue and photographs. As such, even though for the sake of impartiality Yao Jui-chung excludes his own works from discussion, allowing only a handful of photographs as illustrations, his good nature means he is unable to detach himself from the sense of comradeship he shares with his fellow artists and a common dislike for the same perceived enemy. Throughout *Installation Art in Taiwan*, Yao is ever mindful of his purpose, namely to address what he regards as unfair criticism of installation art for "mechanically using concepts from Western art," or suggestions that it is "incomprehensible" or



歡〉羅列裝置藝術中的多元媒材與模擬、虛擬式場景的應用；〈幻影天堂〉討論攝影、電視機、投影機、光能、動影等技術，如何被使用到裝置藝術中；〈迷離異境〉為「互動式」作品，意圖透過親和力的互動方式，拉近藝術與大眾的距離；〈肉身覺醒〉則為「行為藝術」型態的作品。

對於這些裝置藝術品，姚瑞中以藝術家的同理心，採取對話的方式呈現，讓自己的觀點和受訪藝術家一來一往解讀，作品遂逐漸清晰。未曾見過該件裝置藝術作品的讀者，透過完整的對話、片面的照片，在心理面構築的又是另一番作品。所以，即使姚瑞中為求公正，將自己的作品排除在外，僅以數張圖片展現，但太多的善意，還是讓他跳不出與藝術家們同一陣線的同仇敵愾。從引言到結語，他念茲在茲的，仍是外界「拿來主義」、「看不懂」、「技巧與形式的界定過於寬鬆，沒有統一標準，彷彿人人皆可為之」等各種對裝置藝術不盡公允的批評。

他說，台灣在特殊歷史時空背景下

，先天就有融合中西文化的體質，如何善用這樣的優勢，是台灣能否創造新文化的關鍵。但若一味地自限，落入「材質決定主義」，讓形式凌駕過實質，或是過分強調區域色彩，變成「排他的本土主義」，兩者都會走入死胡同。

百年來困擾台灣藝術家的「西學中用」問題，時至今日仍是青年創作者揮之不去的幽靈。然而四十六萬言的《台灣裝置藝術》並沒有讓幽靈領迷了路。在龐雜作品的整理中，他仍看出了時代在藝術家身上所流動的血液。如第一部份的〈群魔亂舞〉，政治批判、歷史反諷的作品形式與深度成為不可磨滅的特色。「以不被體制認可的裝置藝術形式，同時對傳統藝術觀及變動社會中的光怪陸離進行顛覆。」比之鄰近社會條件類似的韓國、日本裝置藝術家單有歷史批評，主體性的討論不足，台灣藝術家顯得前進許多。

另外，台灣特有強韌、俗麗的生命力，在裝置藝術中體現了本土、草根的審美觀，相較於傳統藝術形式，更

能與生活結合，藝術企圖愈加明顯，實驗性也更強。

姚瑞中的貢獻不只是書寫，在重要裝置藝術品散失難尋的情況下，姚瑞中平日的攝影作品、史料收藏，都在這本書中派上用場。圖片細膩的編排方式，反而自成一項平面藝術品，無怪乎藝評人陸蓉之形容：這是姚瑞中的一次精采的「紙上策展」。

姚瑞中收集的台灣裝置藝術史料，如DM、照片、文件等，已高達兩萬餘件，幾乎成為一個重要裝置藝術資料庫。然而，他累積多時，嘔心瀝血完成的《台灣裝置藝術》一書卻並未得到書中所介紹藝術家的認同。藝術家朋友們，不是因沒被提到而不平，就是對涉及自己的內容有意見而生氣。姚瑞中對這樣始料未及的結果頗為無奈。這本書出版的「外一章」：藝術家孩子氣的性情，也頗令人莞爾。

對大多數藝術家來說，跳下來寫書似乎是「不酷」的行為。但姚瑞中寫了一本很「酷」的書。《台灣裝置藝術》無論在藝術性與歷史意義上，都將在台灣藝術史中占有重要地位。□

裝置藝術在媒材的使用上靈活而多元，台灣藝術家在這個領域成果豐碩。

范姜明道就曾以小麥草創作過數件作品。

（卜華志攝）

Installation art is both flexible and diverse in the materials it uses and is a milieu in which Taiwanese artists have achieved much. Artist Fan-Chiang Ming-tao has created a number of works using wheat grass. (photo by Pu Hua-chih)



that "because the distinction between technique and form is so loose there is no unified standard and therefore such works could have been produced by anyone."

Yao observes that given its special historical background Taiwan has shown an innate ability to integrate elements of Eastern and Western cultures and believes that how this quality is utilized will determine whether Taiwan is able to create a new culture. However, if people blindly restrict themselves or fall into the trap of "material determinism" wherein form transcends essence, or excessively highlight regionalism, either one can just as easily lead towards the dead end of "exclusive localism."

For the last century Taiwanese artists have been plagued by the problem of "Eastern learning and Western application" and even today it remains a specter that a younger generation of artists still cannot avoid. However, in *Installation*





顧世勇的《振翼一晝夜》與《御水之翼》兩件作品，使用了金球、螺旋槳、照片等媒材，在同一空間展出，又彷彿是一件作品。（薛繼光攝）  
Ku Shih-yung's two works "Fluttering—Night and Day" and "Flying Wind and Water" make use of golden balls, propellers and photographs all displayed in the same space, as though they are part of the same work. (photo by Hsueh Chi-kuang)

*Art in Taiwan*, the author has not allowed this thorny issue to lead him astray in his discourse. In organizing his thoughts on numerous and complex works, he still observes how the times in which an artist lives impact his or her work. For example, the form and depth of political critique and historical irony are irreducible characteristics in "Dance Macabre." "Using a non-mainstream form of installation art subverts traditional ideas about art and the bizarre and motley developments of a society in flux." Yao feels that Taiwanese artists often seem much more advanced than installation artists in neighboring countries with similar societies such as South Korea or Japan, for whom historical criticism appears sufficient in and of itself.

In addition, Taiwan's resilience and eye-catching vitality have allowed the incorporation of indigenous and grassroots aesthetics into installation

art, which relative to traditional art forms bring it closer to real life, highlighting artistic intent and the strength of experimentalism.

Through *Installation Art in Taiwan*, Yao Jui-chung's contribution to this debate goes beyond the writing of critiques or opinions. With many important works of installation art lost or forgotten, his photographic works and collection of historical materials are used to great effect. The meticulous arrangement of pictures turns them into graphic works of art in their own right. Little wonder then that renowned art critic Victoria Lu has described the book as an outstanding "curated exhibition on paper."

Yao has already collected over 20,000 pieces of historical information on installation art in Taiwan, including leaflets, photographs and documents, making *Installation Art in Taiwan* an important reference source on the subject.

However, despite the time and effort the author has devoted to the completion of this project, the book has not been well received by all of the artists introduced in its pages. Some artists have been unhappy at not being mentioned whilst others were annoyed at what was written about their work. Yao Jui-chung has been somewhat exasperated at this unexpected development. One cannot help but smile at how this unanticipated response to the book illustrates how temperamental artists can be.

It appears that for many artists writing is something too un-cool for their esoteric tastes, but the truth is that Yao Jui-chung has written a very "cool" book. Whether in terms of its artistic nature or historical importance, *Installation Art in Taiwan* will inevitably come to be seen as an important contribution to the subject of art history in Taiwan. □

(Eric Lin/tr. by Andrew Wilson)