

# **Experimental Film and Artistic Expansion in Taiwan and Asia-Pacific**

**Dr. Esperanza Collado  
Taiwan Fellowship 2020  
Report 2021**

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Things Said Once / 曾經說過的事, Esperanza Collado  
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# Index

Acknowledgements	1
Precedents	3
Project Objectives	8
Method and Execution	10
Project Outcomes and Results	13
Publications, Presentations and Other Productions	20
Future Plans and Follow-ups	24



## *Acknowledgements*

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Even though the rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic didn't facilitate any international traveling once I settled in Taipei, my project was originally planned to include significant study conducted in South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan. Several activities were programmed in Japan and South Korea and inevitably canceled. I want to sincerely thank Pip Chodorov, Busan Film Festival and Seoul Art Space Geumcheon for inviting me to share and/or develop part of my research in South Korea, as well as Takashi Makino, Julian Ross and Koyo Yamashita for providing relevant documents, contacts and information relating to Japanese expanded cinema.

## *Precedents*

This project was motivated by the discovery of the work of Su Huiyu, a Taiwanese multi-disciplinary artist I discovered in Oberhausen in May 2019. We were both —as well as Slovakian artist Magda Tóthová— invited to present lectures (or ‘performance-lectures’ as it was my case) on consecutive evenings as part of the well-known International Short Film Festival, celebrated annually in the German city. Su delivered an artist talk focusing on his video work, in which he often re-narrate and reproduce old films, ancient publications and counter-cultural events. He talked quite extensively about Taiwan, its recent history, its process of democratisation, its long-standing disputed national identity and the so-called Taiwan Economic Miracle. I thought his work was risky and fascinating and it triggered in me great curiosity in Taiwan. When, one month later, I got an email in my UCLM inbox informing about a call for applications for Taiwan Fellowship, I contacted Oberhausen’s Festival director, Lars Henrik Gass, asking for Su Huiyu’s contact details. I wanted to research expanded cinema in Taiwan but I had no idea if there was an experimental film ‘scene’ to start with in the island. Su is not an expert on this topic, he explained, but he was extremely generous in facilitating plenty of information that was very valuable for the elaboration of my application and for ‘imagining’<sup>1</sup> an expanded cinema in Taiwan at this early stage.

I had conducted myself previous research on the topic of national developments of expanded cinema taking as a framework Spain. On the other hand, Ireland’s avant-garde cinema was also the subject matter of previous investigation I carried out between 2008 and 2013. Both projects presented enormous difficulties at the outset. As far as Spanish historical expanded cinema is concerned, the task of gathering information was specially tedious because the nation experienced the constrictions, prohibitions and cultural limitations of the Francoist dictatorship for great part of the twentieth century, resulting in an unthinkable historical development of a national experimental or subterranean cinema, as opposed to other Western nations. However, this didn’t stop a few artists and filmmakers from conducting some significant experiments that have survived to this day, although sometimes only in the form of written accounts<sup>2</sup>. In Ireland, where I lived for 5

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<sup>1</sup> I intentionally use this word to paraphrase the only reference to historical Taiwanese avant-garde film both Su Huiyu and I found when I was elaborating my application: ‘Imaging the Avant-Garde: Taiwan’s Film Experiments in the 1960s’, a film programme series curated by Wood Lin and the team of the Taiwan Film Institute. The programme notes refer to imagining films now disappeared and to an ‘imagined’ avant-garde hampered by the particular political impediments of the era in which they were produced.

<sup>2</sup> See Esperanza Collado, “Film and Its Resonance in Space: Notes on Expanded Cinema in Spain”. In *Experimental Conversations* Journal Issue 13, Cork Film Centre, Ireland, 2014.



years, I researched avant-garde and experimental film for a specific curatorial project I developed back then called *Márgenes* (2008-2009). When I told my colleagues in Ireland (experimental filmmakers, programmers and critics themselves) I wanted to elaborate a programme of historical Irish avant-garde films, they thought I was crazy. Later though, their help proved crucial to achieve such an unprecedented work, as well as the assistance of the Irish Film Institute. Eventually, the programme I curated<sup>3</sup> expanded into a more comprehensive series for international touring.<sup>4</sup> Referring to a history of experimental cinema, in the programme notes we noted:

Ireland, as a colonised and economically underdeveloped nation for much of the twentieth century, has in the European context an almost exceptionally marginal place in this history. Nevertheless, when we delve deeper into the history of Irish cinema, it is possible to find a thin thread that links what could be seen as a series of attempts to access and contribute to this history.<sup>5</sup>

Taiwan's own political and cultural climate after World War II represented a similar challenge: the censorship, incomprehension, isolation and repression that dominated the country during the KMT's martial law years seemed to have prevented any avant-gardist perspective to develop. However, I was convinced that, bridging the great historical and cultural gap and differences between these regions, there had to be rare, underground and risky exceptions in Taiwan as indeed there had been in Spain and Ireland. The cinema industry was introduced in the island during Japanese rule and, another interesting thread was the effervescent Japanese expanded cinema movement of the 1960s, which has been uncovered relatively recently thanks to the work of academic researcher Go Hirasawa and film curator Julian Ross<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, I had studied before — during

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<sup>3</sup> Titled *More or Less Annihilated by Saccadic Enchainment by the Sea* and funded by Culture Ireland, I presented it in Madrid in 2009, in presence of some of the filmmakers, and in London in 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Commissioned by the Irish Film Institute and Reel Ireland, *Absences and (Im)possibilities: Traces of an Avant-Garde Cinema in Ireland*, is a series of programmes for international touring distributed by London's LUX Moving Image. It is curated by the Experimental Film Club (Aoife Desmond, Alan Lambert, Donal Foreman and myself).

<sup>5</sup> Donal Foreman and the Experimental Film Club, *Absences and (Im)possibilities: Traces of an Avant-Garde Cinema in Ireland*. Experimental Film Club's blog, 2013. [http://experimentalfilmclub.blogspot.com/p/blog-page\\_16.html](http://experimentalfilmclub.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_16.html) Accessed 1 Sept. 2021

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance *Japanese Expanded Cinema and Intermedia: Critical Texts of the 1960s* (ed. Go Hirasawa, Ann Adachi-Tasch, Julian Ross). Collaborative Cataloging Japan, Archive Books, Berlin, 2020 and *Japanese Expanded Cinema Revisited*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo, 2017.

a Fellowship in New York in 2009-2010— the work of pioneer expanded cinema artist Takahiko Imura<sup>7</sup>. The proximity of Taiwan and Japan, not just geographical but also cultural, pointed to a possible development of similar experiments on the island even in the context of the political restrictions experienced at the time. In this sense, it is noteworthy the long-standing presence in Taiwan of intellectuals and literati, sometimes emigrants from the mainland, and their important role as a cultural vanguard and resistance to the different occupations on the island.<sup>8</sup>

Another notable aspect to add to the list of challenges this research project presents is implicit in the subject of study itself. In the past fifteen years, there has been a notable international convergence of film experiences that could be contingently inscribed in the realm of expanded cinema. With this contested term I refer to a diversity of interventions, situations, environments and performances in which the conventional *mise-en-scène* of projection is reorganised and displaced from its conventional placement. The emergence of these practices has given us —artists, researchers, academics, curators— an impulse not just to map the present but to trace works from historical expanded cinema. If experimental film already had a problematic history and struggled throughout the twentieth century to define its own artistic autonomy and medium specificity, debating itself between the black box and the white cube without being fully recognised by none of these more established spaces, expanded cinema, in its evasive, ephemeral and trans-disciplinary form posits some additional difficulties. The lineage of works expanded cinema embraces has often been neglected not only due to the long-standing alienation of film and technology practices from mainstream art; its particularly unfixed form often challenged the old formats of artistic exhibition and economy based on archiving, documentation, marketing and collection. In fact, one of the most fascinating aspects of expanded cinema and the particular regime of the more or less avant-gardist arts emerging those years is the singularity of their inscription in the social construct by

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<sup>7</sup> See, in this regard: Esperanza Collado, 'Takahiko Imura in Interview'. *Experimental Conversations Journal* Issue 5: Winter 2009-2010, Cork Film Centre, Ireland. In 2014, I conducted a talk with Imura focused on his expanded cinema works at the S8 Mostra de Cinema Periférico. This edition of the festival was dedicated to Japanese experimental and expanded cinema.

<sup>8</sup> This presence started during Qing Dynasty, when scholarship and writing was seen as subversive occupations on the mainland and intellectuals were expelled from it and fled to Taiwan where they were welcomed with open arms by Koxinga and the remains of the Ming empire settled on the island around 1660. As Jonathan Manthorpe has put it: "these writers and philosophers also formed the nucleus of a particular scholastic and artistic tradition on Taiwan. The original literati and their descendants came to play a significant role at several points in the island's story. They were central to the ill-fated founding of the Taiwan Republic in 1895, to resistance to Japanese occupation in the first half of the twentieth century, and to Taiwanese opposition to the Kuomintang in the second half of the century." Jonathan Manthorpe, *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan*. St. Martin's Press Griffin, UK, 2009, p. 91.

displacing art from its traditional cozy corner — the art institution. Even though there is a common agreement around the black box / white cube dichotomy regarding expanded cinema's entry into the gallery space, the relationship between ways of production and forms of visibility determined a specific connection between politics and aesthetics that reinforced also the development of projects with a strong local and site-specific nature, often disassociated from art-institutions and highlighting the inadequacy of these as spatial devices that regulated their social insertion. In other words, such historical works and gestures — in their radical and subversive nature — may have existed on extreme underground layers of culture, making it very hard to pin them. And indeed, in Taiwan, as I would later find out to attest this theory, when the first museum of modern art — Taipei Fine Arts Museum — opened in 1986 applying a good deal of censorship due to the martial law that was still imposing on the island, the dissatisfaction among the vanguard Taiwanese art scene gathered artists in groups and collectives that almost secretly run anti-establishment projects and illegal exhibitions often hidden in alternative locations.

Considering the existing literature on Taiwanese cinema I could find before I began this research, one would be hard pressed to find evidence of a Taiwanese experimental cinema, a primordial discipline in intimate association with, and probably indispensable for, the development of the rather trans-disciplinary expanded cinema. An interesting exception is the recent exploration carried out by Taiwan International Documentary Festival with support from the Taiwan Film Institute, resulting in the programme series *Imaging the Avant-Garde: Taiwan's Film Experiments in the 1960s*. Highlighting the difficulties in elaborating a discourse and a film archive based on unseen — and therefore 'imagined' — films, the curators managed to gather together a collection of works that enabled them to claim the existence of a trend of film experimentation in 1960s Taiwan.

However, within the general discourse around filmmaking and film culture, the word 'experimental' is occasionally thrown around (as are 'avant-garde', 'underground', 'expanded', etc.) in a loose and inconsistent way, often completely disconnected from the well-informed uses of the term. The little information I was able to find when I prepared my application on the series of programs curated by Wood Lin and his team included some descriptions of films that seemed to fall into fairly narrative, documentary, or fictional categories. Their programme series was presented, among other venues, in New York's Anthology Film Archives, which somehow was a guarantee about the experimental nature of the works, as this is a long-standing home for avant-garde and experimental cinema. In any case, a question about to what extent this really was an *imagined* avant-

garde prevailed until later, when I was able to inspect the documents and films thoroughly.

The effects of globalisation and the proliferation of international influences has benefited much the visibility, understanding and projection of experimental film and its artistic expansions in contemporary times. In the Asia-Pacific region there are a few contexts where to find exhibition for these practices. One of such contexts is EXiS (Experimental Film and Video Festival in Seoul) and Image Forum in Tokyo. Additionally, there exists also a small collection of rather underground, independent collectives, such as The Other Cinema (Taipei), Space Cell (Seoul) or Plus Screening (Tokyo, 2009-2017). Nonetheless, with the exception of Japan, the presence of Asian experimental cinema in the contemporary international scene still seems to present a significant gap, but this has been improving significantly in recent years. While historical Asian experimental cinema is definitely outside of the ‘official histories’ of experimental and avant-garde film — markedly dictated by the West and most notably by the Anglo-Saxon canon, the filmmakers and artists that make the contemporary ‘scene’ seem to be commonly based in the West or have studied abroad<sup>9</sup>, making difficult the establishment of a solid and network, long-lasting over generations, in the country.

Together with a few other loose clues and conjectures, these were the precedents that served as the basis or rationale from which this project started off in early February 2020. This report presents an overview of my investigation and includes a description of the main objectives set out at the outset of the Fellowship period, a description of the methodological nature of the research —including specific ways it was carried out and issues found along the way—, and an account of the most significant outcomes that came along the process. This section also refers to outcomes in terms of personal development. The last sections of this document are dedicated, on the one hand, to publications and presentations motivated, facilitated and/or impelled by the Fellowship in Taiwan, and lastly, I will commentate on the nature and possibilities observed as future plans to share and make public the results of this ongoing survey.

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<sup>9</sup> Looking at this year's edition of San Francisco Cinematheque Festival of Artists-Made Film & Video Crossroads 2021 (September-October), one can easily observe the presence of East Asian filmmakers is significant, featuring two artists from Taiwan: Cherlyn Hsing-Hsin Liu (劉行欣) and Erica Sheu (徐璐). They both live and work in the US.

## *Project Objectives*

With this research survey I intended to track down and critically analyse historical and contemporary intermedia artworks associated to expanded cinema and paracinema practices created in Taiwan and in its neighbouring countries of the Asia Pacific region, focusing especially —but not exclusively— on works that explore and exploit one of the genetic components of film from its primitive era: live action or performance. The survey I planned at the outset was not meant to focus exclusively in Taiwanese production for two main reasons: the first one refers to the difficulties in devising a history for such works from scratch —with the additional aforementioned issues expanded cinema entails and practically no guarantee of success, as I had no solid references whatsoever. What I intend to approach more specifically when I refer to ‘devising a history’ is to assembling an anthology of works or an approximately continuous and chronological account or record that embraces and interrelates a lineage of works produced from the early age of cinema’s introduction in the island and up until contemporary times. The second reason is the lack of studies published in the English language on experimental and expanded cinema offering a broader vision that encompasses production in the Asia-Pacific region. As mentioned above, the publications focusing on Japanese expanded cinema are extremely recent —one of them was actually published in 2020 when I was researching in Taiwan. For these reasons, the original aim of this project was to elaborate a rather *unfixed* genealogy of experimental film and expanded art practices in Taiwan *and* its neighbouring countries. My first intention, therefore, was to conduct the main investigation in Taiwan, but also include South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan in the equation. This way, I could explore possible links, connections and contrasting elements between the practices of the whole area and formulate a solid argument to sustain a genealogy of expanded cinema in Southeast Asia taking as the main focus Taiwan.

The Asian context of experimental and expanded cinema most talked about in the West is undoubtedly EXIS, the Experimental Film and Video Festival in Seoul. In South Korea, I intended to investigate film performance production between Nam June Paik’s *Zen for Film* and the most recent works of HangJun Lee, as well as of younger generations. Regarding Japan, my intention was to carry out research on shadow play performances and the primitive *benshi* performances, following with the expanded cinema movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Jun'ichi Okuyama, Takahiko Iimura, Masao Adachi, Hiroshi Manabe, etc.) and on to this day, represented by fellow artists such as Takashi Makino. So, taking as a starting point the activity developed in Japan and South

Korea, the idea was to undertake a field study focusing on this geographical area with the ultimate aim of contributing to a comprehension of the flourishing and recent developments of intermedia art practices with a special emphasis on the so-called time-based art, uncovering radical and interesting work that definitely needs more attention in the West.

Nevertheless, the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and the impossibility to travel and conduct research outside of Taiwan, compelled my activity to increasingly limit itself to Taiwanese resources. My study is therefore incomplete in relation to the original plan and with it, I could only tentatively propose to map a field that is moving, elastic and definitely unfinished from where to approach expanded cinema in Taiwan based on scarce written material in the English language and plenty of interviews and conversations with artists, filmmakers, programmers, curators and academics. While my original plan was to gather a small research team in Taipei to lead students to help me investigate this topic, this perspective seemed quite difficult from the start when, upon my arrival, schools were closed temporarily and later imposed restricted access due to pandemic security measures. Gathering a team of students seemed indispensable at the outset for various reasons, one of them being the fact I don't speak Mandarin. But, to my surprise, I rapidly found out that —with very rare exceptions— the professionals I contacted for interviews and documentation spoke English quite fluently, as most of them studied abroad. On the other hand, the students I was exposed to were too young and not as fluent as I would have required. Of course, there were exceptions and Au Sow Yee former student Seah Yizai (逸仔), who spoke English quite well, worked as my assistant for a specific part of my investigation. Regarding written materials, of course the issue of the language barrier is more significant. In any case, the difficulties the pandemic had posed at the start — which was by then and has been again in 2021 masterfully contained in Taiwan— I decided to go ahead with the project in a more autonomous way than I had originally envisioned, specially considering I had planned a stay of just 4-months.

Although not a main objective of the project, I did have expectations to curate a film-programme or a series of screenings and film performances in Spain composed of experimental films and expanded cinema works made by Southeast Asian artists. As research progressed in Taiwan, I eventually decided to dedicate this potential show exclusively to works made by Taiwanese artists and filmmakers. The curator of the cinema program department of a renown venue in Madrid had expressed interest in hosting the event and we carried on correspondence about this plan. It goes without saying, the pandemic has prevented any type of activity in this line. My main objective is

now to compose a genealogy of expanded cinema practices in the Asia-Pacific region in order to contribute to intermedia art studies and fill in the gap, uncovering radical and interesting work that definitely needs more attention in the West. Moreover, I would like to publish my findings in an extended document for which I am now considering a second period of investigation in situ. And, ideally and as a last resort, this publication's presentation could be accompanied with a curated programme of works and a seminar.

### *Method and Execution*

My research process has involved the identification of artworks, artists and opinions, as well as the critical analysis — contrasted with arguments of other experts if there existed— and interpretation of the documents and informations collected not just during my 8-month stay in 2020 but also after. During my stay in 2020 and under the limitations of the pandemic, which were not as severe in Taiwan as in other parts of the world where the virus spread rapidly and people had to confine in their homes, I could not develop the part related to collection of documents and information as I would have expected. For instance, I could not engage in the context of the university until May, and by then my research had changed drastically in methodology. One of the measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 has relied primarily on avoiding social interactions, but being in a safe environment provided me with the unique opportunity to conduct several interviews. The rhythm at which I was interviewing professionals gathered pace as my stay progressed —if at first there were more pandemic restrictions, towards the last months of my Fellowship period, these were more relaxed— I carried out a considerable number of interviews. Some of the first meetings and interviews —as the ones with Wood Lin and with Tony Wu— provided me with plenty of documents and audiovisual material to look at closely, and this revitalised the dynamic of the research process. I could not wait around for the university to relax restriction measures (as I first planned to set up a team of students to help me with my investigation), so I used a methodology based on on-site interviews with artists, curators, programmers and academics. During the first months of the Fellowship, this methodology run parallel to exploration study focused on contemporary film artists from South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan with some of whom I conducted online interviews, meetings or simply written correspondence. One of the first steps I took before arriving in Taipei was to post an email on the international experimental film forum Frameworks informing about my project and upcoming visit to

the Asia-Pacific. This is a highly active forum to which I belong since 2007 and this kind of announcement is quite common and appreciated in order to keep the community alive and expanding. But, I was surprised by the lack of response to my query asking for film artists in Taiwan. It was actually a friend, filmmaker and critic Maximilian Le Cain, whom I collaborated in several projects in the past decade, who put me in contact with Tzuan Wu (who at the time was in France) and with Lichun Tseng (who lives in The Netherlands). Unfortunately, they both were not going to be in Taiwan during my stay, but Tzuan Wu kindly accepted a first online meeting while he was away that opened up the field for me, as Wu is not only a film artist himself but had been involved in the collective The Other Cinema, dedicated to experimental film and expanded cinema, as curator<sup>10</sup>. All in all, the professionals and experts I interviewed, would lead me directly to documents of different kind or to other professionals. Very often, after having revised or studied those documents closely, watched audiovisual materials, or gone through the audio recording of a particular interview to look at specific references, I would meet the same experts again for a second interview. This way I could clarify, expand, ask for more details or just share some conjectures and hypotheses, engaging in a discussion. Most interviews were conducted in English, and if the interviewee didn't speak English fluently someone kindly helped translating. I spent a considerable period researching artists and filmmakers whose work could have led to expanded cinema experiments. I studied their websites, watched their films and videos or any other spatial approaches they may have created, and, additionally, this involved direct communication with them. In this regard, I would like to highlight that, even though my research involved an important amount of audio-visual and textual reading as well as document inspection and contrasting —in fact, very often I found myself using different digital applications in order to facilitate the reading of documents in Mandarin as well— the social element became absolutely indispensable and conformed its main lead. As pointed out in the 'Precedents' section of this report, historical avant-garde in Taiwan run subterraneously due to martial law, making records, descriptions or documentation of such works hard to spot in the usual institutions dedicated to collections and archives. This made critical a more direct contact with practitioners. The drawback is that not everyone responded to my requests, while for others it took a very long time to do it. In fact, I am still in the hopes to receive certain feedback and have no doubts I am still missing significant information that certain academics and curators could provide.

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<sup>10</sup> Tzuan Wu was undertaking an artist residency in Paris before COVID-19 forced him to come back to Taipei, where I could interview him more thoroughly and see his work.



The category of works I look for refers to intermedia and multimedia art combining performance and film, and often falling in the cusp of film-theatre, film-dance, light-shows, film and live music or shadow plays — any production in which a film projection interacts with a live element would fall into the interests of my research, regardless of whether the term expanded cinema has been used (consciously) to describe it or not. Most professionals I contacted or interviewed were fully aware what expanded cinema is, and some practitioners were knowledgeable of the history of experimental film. However, the term expanded cinema itself carries some unclear meaning and often needs clarification. Contemporary artists who have produced (or keep producing to this day) expanded cinema works, such as Au Sow Yee, Tzuan Wu or Erica Sheu share a historical awareness and they feel they contribute (or have contributed) to this history in new and diverse ways. However, when talking about historical expanded cinema in Taiwan, the certainty of its existence shifts dramatically. Given the difficulties to find historical expanded cinema works, by the middle of my research period, I focused more deeply although not exclusively in finding possible vestiges of it. Instead of approaching historical expanded cinema directly, I used the strategy of circumventing it by way of approaching the experimental film community and artists, such as Tehching Hsieh (謝德慶), who had worked intensively with the notion of duration and exhibited film in expanded ways in the 1980s. I tried to approach it also from a theatrical perspective, but I didn't manage to find the right channels to do it during my stay. I found them posteriorly though and, as I will elaborate later on this report, this and other factors indicate my investigation would benefit greatly by undertaking a second on-site survey.

In any case, by May 2020, I had not yet found Taiwanese examples of expanded cinema made during the first wave (1960s, 1970s) except for Huang Hua-Cheng's *Experiment 002* (1967) and, on the other hand, it became more and more evident that I would not be able to run any research visits to South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong as the project had required. Besides, some lectures I was going to deliver in Taipei had been postponed significantly due to COVID-19, and until the last moment, there were hopes that the 2020 edition of Taiwan International Documentary Festival was going to happen in May. I had been informed by the Festival staff this edition was planned to host a considerable amount of experimental film with important international guests coming to Taipei. The perspective of a social gathering with international and local professionals could have benefited very much my project but, unfortunately, the 2020 TIDF edition didn't happen. In any case, all this unstable situation in terms of expectations and

shifting plans made me decide to stay longer in Taiwan so that I could try to gather more documents and information in order to focus the project more directly on Taiwanese production and be able to carry out a more solid study in the hope I could find the mentioned vestiges of an expanded cinema in the island. I had organised for a 4-month stay at the outset, but given these circumstances and how the research was affected, I ended up applying for two extensions in order to complete, particularly, at least some interviews and be able to visit some specific exhibitions. The first extension I requested involved staying in Taiwan until early August (2 more months than expected) and the second one until the end of the year, but unfortunately I could not negotiate my absence at my university back in Spain, which refused online classes despite the alarming growing numbers of Covid cases in the whole country. Therefore I went back to Spain and stop my research in Taiwan on September 18. However, my stay in Taiwan was finally extended by 4 more months than I had originally envisioned.

### *Project Outcomes and Results*

The project actually benefited enormously from this extension for various reasons. One of them was the possibility to visit what I consider to be the most relevant event of my study: the exhibition that Taipei Fine Art Museum dedicated to multi-faceted artist Huang Hua-Cheng (黃華成), an iconic trans-disciplinary pioneer, founder of the *École de Great Taipei* —probably his most radical work— and a core member of the avant-garde journal *Theater Quarterly*. Working in an era of severe restrictions, Huang Hua-Cheng represents the forefront of postwar avant-gardism in Taiwan and, to my knowledge, he is the only artist of the 1960s to have produced expanded cinema work on the island recognised as such. I don't recall the exact way I first stumbled upon the name of Huang Hua-Cheng but talking about him on my first meeting with Programme Director Wood Lin was enlightening. Lin and the staff of TIDF kindly gave me documents related to their curated programme *Imaging the Avant-Garde: Taiwan's Film Experiments in the 1960s* and I could finally watch the films of the programme series, among which there was one work authored by Huang Hua-Cheng. This was revealing. In posterior meetings with Wood Lin, he explained the peculiar circumstances by which the staff at the Taiwan Film Institute found unexpectedly a VHS cassette with a recording of the 1994 presentation of *Experiment 002* and showed me some original publications authored by Huang. I watched the film programme curated by Lin and the staff of TIDF way before the exhibition

opened. There were indeed plenty of films closer to the documentary genre, such as *Morning in Taipei* (1964) by Pai Ching-Jui (白景瑞) or *New Born Baby* (1967) by Chuang Ling (莊靈), but others were unquestionably formal experiments emerged from the research and development of new or alternative technical resources performed with the camera or during the editing process. Examples of this are *The Milky Way* (1968) by Xi Xi (西西) or *Run* (1966) by Han Hsiang-Ning (韓湘寧). On my first interview with Tzuan Wu, he referred to me to curator Chou Yu-Ling (周郁齡), who had completed a Ph.D. on Theater Quarterly. I visited her soon after in Taichung, as she was working at the time at Taiwan Museum of Contemporary Art. She provided relevant information about the magazine and referred me to copies of the original volumes deposited at the National Central Library. Together with the discovery of Huang Hua-Cheng's work, the journal Theater Quarterly (1965-67) was one of the most important outcomes of this project.

It was a group of young aficionados who published this self-financed avant-garde journal. There is consensus as to the indisputable origin of experimental cinema in Taiwan in this journal, which played a fundamental role in presenting the newest developments in Western culture and art, dedicating approximately 90% of its pages to translations of new and challenging work from Europe and North America. The title of the journal refers to the theatre not so much as a form of artistic expression, but as a space —highlighting the emphasis that the magazine placed on the notion of place, space and spatial relations, as well as also the space of the page itself. It was actually Huang Hua-Cheng who designed the typography and inventive text layout of Theater Quarterly, often playing with the orientation and distribution of the characters on the space of the page. The magazine's editors were young artists, filmmakers and writers. They kept meeting to discuss Western philosophy, art criticism, existentialist theatre, and French New Wave cinema. Their intention was to bring this kind of cultural conception to Taiwan. In their political climate, breaking with oppressive society meant getting closer to Western modernity. Key founders studied art, film or theatre in the US. Later, some of them would be jailed for spreading Marxist and Leninist ideology and propaganda. The Theater Quarterly publications included writings on avant-garde art and cinema from the 1920s. The full screenplays for Marguerite Duras's *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* were translated. It discussed American avant-garde and underground films of the 1960s by Jonas Mekas, Andy Warhol, Maya Deren, Gregory Markopoulos, and a good deal of content was dedicated to avant-garde artists such as John Cage, Christian Wolff, Allan Krapow, etc. As Chou Yu-Ling has argued, having very few opportunities to

see experimental cinema, readers often envisioned the works through beautifully translated texts.<sup>11</sup> A similar exposure to experimental film was experienced by the avant-garde artists of the 1960s Japan, as Takahiko Imura has asserted.<sup>12</sup>

The Theater Quarterly's most notable achievements are the two experimental and expanded film sessions that took place at the Tian Educational Center (TEC) and the Armed Forces Cultural Center (now C-Lab) respectively in 1966 and 1967. A total of eleven films were presented in these two sessions. One of the members, Chung Ling, narrates how "you needed to apply for official permission for any cultural activities in public, but we didn't go for it, as even if we applied we wouldn't have been granted permission anyway. Strictly speaking, we were hosting these events illegally, but with the support of the religious organisation we bypassed the rigorous censorship of the government."<sup>13</sup> Theater Quarterly ended in 1967 due to financial problems, although in its short life of 3 years it published 9 issues.

The exhibition at Taipei Fine Arts Museum *An Open Ending: Huang Hua-Cheng* (9 May–8 November 2020) presented mainly documentation of the artist's works, manuscripts, project plans, recreations and replicas of some pieces, and research on historical materials. It was actually ideal for a researcher except that, continuing with the list of difficulties implied in my topic,

art historians have admittedly been hampered by certain subjective limitations and lack of data, and their continual revisiting, reconstruction, and reevaluation of [Huang Hua-Cheng] oeuvre has left it, from an art historical perspective, in a state of perpetual incompleteness that will likely continue into the future<sup>14</sup>.

In fact, apparently only three original artworks by Huang Hua-Cheng have survived to this day. The only film that I could watch authored by him is *Joy of Life* (1967), shown at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. The documentation on VHS of the presentation of *Experiment 002* in 1994 is a very interesting record of Huang Hua-Cheng's great personality and astonishing charisma but unfortunately the poor quality of the recording

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<sup>11</sup> This assertion appeared on the paper presented by curator Chou Yu-Ling (周郁齡) at LUX Artists Moving Image in London, as part of LUX Salon: Kao Chung-Li and Experimental Film in Taiwan, May 2015.

<sup>12</sup> See Esperanza Collado, 'Takahiko Imura in Interview'. Op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from the paper presented by curator Chou Yu-Ling at LUX, London. Op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Chang Shih-Lun (張世倫), "Introduction". *An Open Ending: Huang Hua-Cheng*. Exhibition booklet, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, 2020, p. 2.

format and the special light conditions of the projection of *Experiment 002* don't facilitate an adequate viewing of the actual work. In any case, the rest of his films seem to be lost, although luckily TIDF has listed them to the detail. On the other hand, the exhibition did uncover a considerable amount of documents in the Mandarin language such as manuscripts and other paperwork generated by the artist himself that have not been translated into English yet. I photographically documented the most relevant areas of the show – the ones related to experimental film and expanded cinema – and took notes during my several visits to Taipei Fine Art Museum. Some information and descriptions were shown in English which was very helpful, and I waited for the 3-volume catalogue's publication, which was released eventually some time after I had already left Taiwan. Only a few pieces of writing appear in English, indispensable documents to understand more clearly Huang's oeuvre. Unfortunately the artist's own writings remained untranslated on the catalogue. Given that most of his films are lost and I am still unable to read his own writings, for the time being I have to make do with what there is.

There were other exhibitions coinciding with my stay in Taipei that provided unexpected relevant material for my research. Most notably the exhaustive retrospective of Thai filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul and the exhibition of Taiwanese artist Yao Jui Chung (姚瑞中) hosted by C-Lab. Weerasethakul's was a touring exhibition entitled *The Serenity of Madness* (Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 30 November–15 March 2020) where I discovered the artist's early experimental films as well as other artworks falling into the category of exhibition cinema.<sup>15</sup> To my surprise, Weerasethakul's practice is not limited to filmmaking, but he also explores cinema as an a-disciplinary power that can manifest itself across a diverse range of media. The discovery of this show and the nature of the artworks in it made me hesitate about including Thailand in my project. There had been in the past attention and intention to circulate experimental film in the country – a tendency that seems to have vanished in our time, but in any case this inclusion would be quite tangential at least for the time being.

*Republic of Cynic (R.O.C.)* (1 May–5 July 2020) is the title of Taiwanese artist Yao Jui-Chung's comprehensive solo show at Taiwan Contemporary Culture Lab, located in Taipei's Da'an District. *Republic of Cynic* is a provocative, bold exhibition that stages a fictional country that acts as a parasite of the Republic of China, Taiwan's official name. When entering one of the two historical buildings, one stumbles upon an Embassy of The

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<sup>15</sup> I would define this category not as simple film or video projections onto museum walls, but as real explorations of the film apparatus and its formal possibilities in the particular space of the white cube, where projection is taken as strategy and the spectator is always itinerant and in motion.

Republic of Cynic checkpoint where a uniformed person stamps your passport, issued moments before as part of the exhibition's experience. Significantly, C-Lab is located on the former Air Force Command Headquarters, among other identities the building had before and after<sup>16</sup>, which makes the exhibition a site-specific work. Born after the lifting of martial law, Yao Jui-Chung's solo is a response, humorous and clever, to the United States/China/Taiwan imbroglio emerged from Cold War —whose spectres seem nowadays awakening a new Cold War— and a reflection of the shifting identities and social changes lived by the people of Taiwan. There were a couple of works in this show I will discuss from the viewpoint of expanded cinema strategies on the ongoing paper I am preparing with the results of my research.

Another unexpected outcome this process of investigation revealed is the realisation that, in Taiwan, cinema was always performative. The intermedia approach to cinema that I was looking for seems to have started at the very origins of the medium's introduction in the island. It was during Japanese rule (1895-1945) that cinema was introduced and it came accompanied by the figure of the *benshi*, the Japanese version of the film narrator. Screenings were actually film performances where the performers or *benshi* served to interpret the film for the audience, reading the inter-titles or elaborating the plot. In Taiwan, *benshi* artists became the actual stars of the film. Before the so-called Japanisation and its prohibitions on Taiwanese folklore and language (1937), one of the cultural activities that Taiwanese population enjoyed and identified with was the traditional opera. Gradually, Taiwanese *benshi* masters appeared too, bringing a local flavour to the foreign films that were being screened around the main venues in the country. Together with Taiwanese opera, this was an enormous contribution to the development of a strong national identity as well as a desire for democracy. The phenomenon of the *benshi* — called 辯士 in Taiwan— became the cornerstone of film performances on the island and played down the exclusive prominence of moving images in the cinematic situation. *Benshi* masters were intellectuals, artists that provided their own unique touch to film narration. In fact, according to my findings, audiences would watch the same picture with different *benshi* artists; they were the headliners on promotional bills, with their names printed in larger case than any other film details including title, director and stars. From the point of view of a possible history of expanded cinema in Taiwan, what I find utterly revealing is not just the figure of the *benshi* itself as the incorporation of a live performer that interacts directly with the projection, but also the way opera performances and film

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<sup>16</sup> See more info on the website <https://clab.org.tw/en/about/>. Accessed 4 September 2021.

screenings were intimately intertwined in what has been described as ‘chained dramas’. This revelation connects in yet unexplored ways to the multimedia and intermedia experiments in theatre that were to be carried out by experimental theatre groups in Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, expanded cinema seems to have taken a completely unexpected form in Taiwan.

Not only in terms of the research undertaken but also in terms of my personal development, what has been significant as a consequence of what I have just elaborated, is the necessity to question and overcome certain preconceived ideas, more specifically a long-standing conception based on experimental film assumptions around a kind of rivalry between the theatre and the cinema. Cinema, as well as the much older art form theatre, are disciplines that have been both constrained from an early age to a series of norms and conventions oriented toward the pleasure of entertainment *per se*. But both art forms have a history of radical experimentation that is often forgotten or perhaps neglected, specially by the most restricted academic experimental film perspective. Laying on a territory between film experimentation, theatre and performance art, expanded cinema has undoubtedly seen examples overcoming such distinctions, but more typically artists and filmmakers try to avoid any connections with theatre. The very figure of Huang Hua-Cheng is a clear demonstration of such interdisciplinarity, harmonious coexistence and interaction between the two art forms. In a recent publication entitled *Cinema Expanded: Avant-Garde Film in the Age of Intermedia*, American scholar Jonathan Walley—who is one of the most prominent theorists of the field of expanded cinema—, has similarly observed that

to invoke performance is also to invoke theatre. Though they are not the same, they are undoubtedly connected, and for avant-garde filmmakers and critics the former comes with the unwanted baggage of the latter.<sup>17</sup>

Discussing the undeniable link between expanded cinema and theatre, Walley opportunely brings to the fore Michael Fried’s 1967 controversial essay “Art and Objecthood” where the American critic categorically asserts that “art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre” or that “theatre is the negation of art”<sup>18</sup>. While expanded cinema could be described as an exploration of live action and performance

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<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Walley, *Cinema Expanded: Avant-Garde Film in the Age of Intermedia*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2020, p. 158.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Fried’s essay “Art and Objecthood” was originally published in *Artforum*, vol. 5, n°.10, Summer 1967.

within the *staging* or *mise-en-scène* of the film apparatus, in its combination of disciplines, it poses an indeterminate art form that very often and logically shares elements with the theatre. In Taiwan, this link seems to have been stronger than I expected and it naturally developed completely outside of any conscious label such as 'expanded cinema'. In this regard, I am indebted to George Clark, who revealed to me precious information and ideas relating to a possible history of performative cinema in Taiwan.

Meeting Chun-Hui Tony Wu (吳俊輝) and being able to interview him several times as well as having access to his audio-visual work, his writings (some of them fortunately translated into English) and the vast work he has made as Programme Director of Experimental Media Art Festival in Taiwan, has been vital for the development of this research. Wu's project took off under the name "Image-movement", the first organisation in the country dedicated to the circulation of experimental film established in 2000. Borrowing the name from French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, the intention was to present an idea of image creation as a complex mental process of perception and duration that will eventually take us away from the restrictions of representation, narrativity and drama to lead us to cinema's very raw and pure powers. The short life (due to lack of funding) of this organisation was followed by EX!T (Experimental Media Art Festival in Taiwan) (2010-ongoing), which not only made available several experimental film works from the West; it also gave voice to plenty of Asian works. EX!T is run by Wu, curator and Professor Liu Yung Hao (劉永皓), artist and lecturer Ming-Yu Lee (李明宇). Liu and Lee also run the Taiwan International Cat Film Festival from 2016. Tony Wu is the author of *Stranger than Cinema: A Study of Taiwanese Experimental Film*<sup>19</sup>, a pioneer study of its kind that gathers a collection of writings by scholars and practitioners of the country, and he also curated a special event in 2009 dedicated to expanded cinema called *With(out) Cinema* that was part of the Guling Street Little Theatre Arts Festival.

A remarkable case that I consider fundamental for this project is found in the work of Kao Chung-Li (高重黎), a Taiwanese artist whose work spans across different media such as experimental cinema, drawing, photography and installation. Some of his work is closer to what I would identify as paracinema, that is, a cinema by other means, or ways of expressing cinematic properties outside the conventional film apparatus and

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<sup>19</sup> Chun-Hui Tony Wu, *Stranger than Cinema: A Study of Taiwanese Experimental Film*. Le Ganges Edition, Taiwan, 2013.



mechanisms.<sup>20</sup> In the 1980s Kao Chung-Li won several Golden Harvest Awards (the experimental section of the Taiwan Film Festival) for his 8mm films, which often featured recordings of his family life and sub-cultural activities. Kao also belonged to one of the first anti-establishment artists collectives formed in 1986 when Taiwan was still under martial law, Living Clay (息壤). Responding to the censorship in museums, and formed by Kao, Chen Chieh-Jen (an internationally established film artist), Wang Jun-Jieh and Lin Ju, they staged (illegally) experimental projects, such as performances and exhibitions with a strong conceptual perspective in alternative and unconventional spaces such as abandoned houses or the street.<sup>21</sup> Kao Chung-Li's unique work, or at least much of his work, is said to be strongly influenced by the impact of the European film avant-gardes, which he discovered through Theater Quarterly. Taking 8mm film as his main medium along with various artefacts built by himself, he modifies the film apparatus as a reflection of the way western cinematographic mechanisms have transformed Taiwan's visual culture. Thus, he calls these modified artefacts 'moving photo-mechanical images' and/or 'slide-show cinema'. For the artist, modifying these devices is a critical gesture, since "film history in the West is created by the film camera [which represents] the viewpoint of filmmakers."<sup>22</sup> His work also explores the complicated relationships between history, vision and image and has been one of the most experimental and subversive artists on the contemporary visual arts scene in 1980s Taiwan.

### *Publications, Presentations, Products*

The Fellowship has provided a unique opportunity to explore, produce, experience and share both my work and the work of others in ways I will elaborate in this section. I have divided these into three categories:

- first, scholarly products strictly derived from the research carried out;
- second, lectures and presentations motivated/facilitated by/during the Fellowship;

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<sup>20</sup> See in this regard: Esperanza Collado, *Paracinema. La desmaterialización del cine en las prácticas artísticas*. Trama editorial, Madrid, 2012. There is a chapter translated into English: <http://esperanzacollado.net/WRITING/paracinema.pdf>. Accessed September 12 2021.

<sup>21</sup> "The aim of these exhibitions was to challenge the 'official' version of avant-garde art that promoted largely 'formal, self-contained' modernist abstraction." Kao Chung-Li, *The Man With The Film Projector*. Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Research Forum, 2015. <http://network.cfcca.org.uk/exhibitions/kao-chung-li-the-man-with-the-film-projector/>. Accessed September 18 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

- third, production of new work generated during my stay and influenced by it.

Regarding the first category of work strictly derived and generated from the scholarly research, I would like to highlight the lecture given in Barcelona in December 2020, titled *Beyond the Canon: Experimental Film and Artistic Expansion in Taiwan and Asia-Pacific*. This 2-hour presentation was part of an educational course organised by the Centre of Contemporary Culture in Barcelona titled “Beyond the Canon: Other Histories of Experimental Film”<sup>23</sup>. The course, taught by 7 professionals and led by Gloria Vilches, coordinator and programmer of the Centre’s renown section dedicated to experimental film Xcèntric, had the aim of questioning the criteria under which the ‘official’ history of cinema has been built on, paying special attention to works that have been left out of such history. Opening a critical space to examine the policies and criteria that made the canon of experimental cinema, the course focused on the margins of it, paying special attention to works made by women, produced in Africa or the Asia-Pacific, or anonymously, to name just a few of the focuses it offered. There was an evident interest in the subject of my lecture and a significant audience number, which included online and in-person attendees, and an interesting Q&A. This intervention, elaborated in the Spanish language, is the most complete presentation as a result of the Fellowship that I have shared publicly to this day. In addition, I have been working too on an extended dissertation that is unfinished yet and I intend to publish in the English language. I will get back to this by the end of this document. However, I intend to publish sooner and in Spanish —hopefully before the end of 2021— a shorter version of the results, extending from the paper given at CCCB’s Xcèntric and including some posterior findings.

Second category refers to presentations I did in Taiwan. These presentations allowed me to generate encounters, dialogue and discussion with Taiwanese academics, students and professionals, and created cultural contexts for interchange and knowledge that benefited my research enormously. These presentations include the two scholarly lectures delivered in May at Taipei National University of the Arts, hosted by artist and lecturer Au Sow Yee (區秀詒) and celebrated in the context of [Future Media Project] *Film Implosion: Congruence and Crossroad of Experimental and Documentary Film*<sup>24</sup>, a series of lectures and screenings focusing on dematerialisation and on different approaches to

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<sup>23</sup> More information about the whole course can be found in <http://xcentric.cccb.org/es/programas/fitxa/mas-alla-del-canon-otras-historias-del-cine-experimental/234234>. Accessed September 13 2021.

<sup>24</sup> More information can be found in <http://cat.tnua.edu.tw/caten/?p=6243?rc=17>. Accessed September 13 2021.

none-commercial cinema. In June, I presented an event at Taipei Contemporary Art Centre titled *A Chair Can Sit You in The Void*<sup>25</sup>, composed of works by Spanish artist Bruno Delgado Ramo as well as my own. Running for two days, I presented the most recent super8 films of Delgado Ramo and my own *Things Said Once* (2015-2019). The latter is a piece of writing and a performance built around an understanding of cinema as experience in its spatial, temporal and communitarian or social dimensions. *Things Said Once* was presented as a reading in an elaborated environment that included a series of bodily actions and objects through which the text is revealed. Additionally, I produced a bilingual printed edition of the original text with a Mandarin translation that was given to the audience. Also in June, I gave an introductory lecture on expanded cinema hosted by artist Bamboo Hsu (工作室), as part of her camera-less workshop in C-Lab, and in July, and as part of its open studios day, I gave an artist talk at the Digital Art Centre. All of these talks and lectures, together with the one presented at Taipei Contemporary Art Centre, were tightly linked to my work as both artist and researcher. In August, I was invited by Absolute Space of the Arts in Tainan to participate in their ongoing project “Coming to My Place”<sup>26</sup>, launched in 2017 and intended to gather together international and local artists in order to encourage them to exchange ideas and in-depth understand each other’s working processes, including their chosen media, materials, space layouts and/or how they brainstorm, create and produce. I was invited to share affinities and differences with local artist Hong Jun-Yuan (洪鈞元) and the outcome was presented in the form of a public discussion in the gallery. In September, days before I left the island, Taiwan Film Institute kindly invited me to present *Evenly Balanced, Almost* (2017)<sup>27</sup>, a site-specific work for the dark theatre. This film performance consists of a textual 16mm film that addresses directly and playfully the projected image, the relationship between the film and the audience, and the defining features of the space of projection. The projection was complemented by a number of live actions performed by the audience and the staff of Taiwan Film Institute. We presented two sessions followed by Q&A.

This list of presentations during my Fellowship would not be complete without mentioning the event that took place at Image Forum in Tokyo in October 2020<sup>28</sup>. This

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<sup>25</sup> More information can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/events/taipei-contemporary-art-center-%E5%8F%B0%E5%8C%97%E7%95%B6%E4%BB%A3%E8%97%9D%E8%A1%93%E4%B8%AD%E5%BF%83/a-chair-can-sit-you-in-the-void/292610251915516/>. Accessed September 13 2021.

<sup>26</sup> <https://absoluteartspace.wixsite.com/absolute-art-space/2018>. Accessed September 13 2021.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/events/985882301876178/>. Accessed September 13 2021.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.imageforumfestival.com/2020/en/program-live2>. Accessed September 13 2021.

presentation, which included the super8 films of Bruno Delgado Ramo and my aforementioned film performance *Evenly Balanced, Almost* was possible thanks to artist Takashi Makino, with whom I had been planning both a collaboration work and a presentation of my own work in Japan all along my Fellowship stay. Takashi Makino is a well-known, acclaimed experimental film and expanded cinema artist whose work has been shown internationally. We first met when he came to show work in Spain and I stumbled upon him in several locations where I also showed work. I interviewed him past then in 2014 and that same year we collaborated in what I believe to be an interesting project called *The Box* (2014) that toured Japan along some experimental films curated by Makino. Since my research in Taiwan included at the outset some interviews and scholarly visits in Japan, we made plans to work on a new expanded cinema piece together. In addition, Makino had been invited to undertake an artist residency in Taiwan by May 2020 as well as to work as a juror for TIDF 2020 edition. Unfortunately, all these plans didn't materialised<sup>29</sup> due to the pandemic, but Makino and associate artist Rei Hayama presented my work and supervised the projections at Image Forum. We also managed to collaborate in a digital film conceived and assembled by him, *Untitled (March 2020 - June 2020)* (2020). On his website, the following description appears:

*Untitled* is a collage film that combines the image and sound by Takashi Makino, the music by Lawrence English, and the automatic writing text [and voice recording] by Esperanza Collado, which were produced between March and June 2020 when the first attack of Coronavirus began to hit the world. For the first time in my work, a clear "language" is used. The image projected on the screen, the image imagined inside the viewer, and the memory evoked by words repeat reflections with reality, and connect us organically with the world situation.

*Untitled* would fall into a third category of works that were produced during the Fellowship period or that were caused by it and will have use beyond the Fellowship. Among these is also an extended interview with Takashi Makino conducted by Tzuan Wu and myself in 2021. This interview is now in the process of being translated into Mandarin and will be published soon in the magazine Funscreen (Taiwan Film and Audiovisual Institute).

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<sup>29</sup> Takashi Makino did serve as an 'online juror' for TIDF 2021 edition.

During the fellowship period, I also produced two new small-scale artworks that allowed me to interact in other ways with the city and with the Taiwanese artist community that I came to know through the Fellowship. *12 oficios para Su Majestad el Rey Felipe VI (Made in Taiwan)* (2020) is a series of photo-collages in which I photographed several Taiwanese workers at work to, subsequently use those pictures as the background material for a series of 19 collages. The other work, still untitled and unfinished, takes advantage of Taiwanese advanced technological developments and their influence and application in art. The work is still under construction and will be exhibited in New York in 2023.

### *Future Plans and Follow-ups*

It is always difficult to know when a process of investigation should stop. Probably vital circumstances will often decide for us. But underneath the more 'official', granted research, the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information in order to better understand a phenomenon comes accompanied with decisions that force us to play around the project's pragmatism and its idealisation. When passionate work and enthusiasm take part in this process, then it becomes even more difficult to consider a project completed satisfactorily. The truth is, the project I began in 2020 thanks to Taiwan Fellowship presents sufficient complexity to make me believe I shall (and wish) to dig deeper into it. Luckily, I may have found already the right sites where to do it, so to speak.

The phenomenon that I have been trying to understand through this research process — philosophically speaking, the a-disciplinary powers of a cinema without organs, and in more practical, in-the-field words, the lineage of intermedia works defined as expanded cinema in the West — has taken a complete different and unique form and path in Taiwan. This applies at least to a historical approach. While contemporary expanded cinema is quite easy to track, it took a a long time to understand the development of its historical development, or the most powerful moments and gestures where it manifested itself throughout Taiwan's history, as these differ enormously from the background, contextual framework, reasons, processes or preoccupations that led Western artists to produce this kind of work.

I have been working on an extended dissertation as a result of my project. At the moment I am trying to decide whether if I want to publish what I already have done so far

(the paper is still in progress and important data has been compiled already), or wait for a more satisfying completion. While I make a decision, I plan to publish soon — as mentioned above— a paper in Spanish in a Chilean journal. There's still several gaps to investigate and projects that I want to explore more deeply. The former, most ideal option would result in an extended paper. Even though I have taken advantage of the contact network made during my 8-month stay and have kept a correspondence in order to expand or clarify some specific issues, it is very appealing to me to write a more substantial document but, unquestionably, this would imply another research survey period in Taiwan in order to compile more data, undertake some more visits, conduct in-person interviews and consult documentation. This option would very likely result in a book. Apart from interviewing again some artists and approach a few experts and practitioners I could not reach in 2020, the areas that I would like to cover during this second period of investigation would be mainly:

- Consultation of specific documents related to the introduction of cinema in Taiwan during Japanese rule, the figure of the benshi and the production of 'chained-drama';
- In-depth exploration of Taiwanese opera (history, developments, political context and modernisation);
- Popular culture and Taiwanese temple projection;
- Little theatre intermedia works (1970-1990);
- Formation of independent collectives acting outside the governmental system during martial law years (such as Living Clay), artists, works and principles;
- Artistic relations and contrasts with Japanese expanded cinema and other similar approaches developed on Taiwan's neighbouring countries;
- Continue compiling contemporary works that may have been produced after 2020

An appealing end-product would be to accompany the presentation of the results of my research with a seminar of sorts in which different practitioners, experts and scholars would share a space for dialogue and discussion. This seminar would be structured as a series of talks, lectures, performances and screenings.

