Remembering Taiwan’s Martial Law Conference

27–30 JULY 2021
About

The martial law period (1947–87) lies at the heart of narratives shaping Taiwanese identities, criss-crossing the foundations of contemporary society. Experiences of this period are relived through expressions of individual and collective memories, through arts and literature, language and politics, and everyday minutiae. These stories emerge from historical prohibition, creating powerful connections with Taiwan's living history and layering upon the present a multi-layered narrative of heroes, villains, and victims.

How are such deeply ingrained, personal and political experiences told? *Remembering Taiwan's Martial Law Conference* 懷起戒嚴 examines the diversity of voices across lands and spaces, platforms and mediums, lines, and cleavages that form the foundation of the story of modern Taiwan.

This is a virtual conference with two in-person components:

• Film Screening: *Detention* 返校

• Keynote lecture: Memory and Resistance: The Martial Law Period and Taiwan's Future in the Era of Xi Jinping by Dr Mark Harrison

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*Remembering Taiwan's Martial Law Conference* 懷起戒嚴 is an initiative under the ANU Taiwan Studies Program 2018-21, a collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan).

Cover Image: The artwork features a wedding invitation with anti-communist slogan from the National Museum of Taiwan History Collection.
Program

Tuesday
27 July 2021

6–7pm  Keynote Address
Li Ang 李昂
Taiwanese feminist writer

‘Writing About Sex and Politics: From Authoritarian to Democracy’

8–10pm  Film Screening
Director John Hsu

Detention (2019)

This film screening is in person only. It is free and open to the public.

Wednesday
28 July 2021

10–11:30am  Panel One — Juancun (Military Dependents’ Village)
Dr Shuge Wei
The Australian National University

Chair

Aidan Lee
University of California, Berkeley

‘View from the Bamboo Fence: Remembering Kuomintang Statecraft Through Taiwan’s Juancun’

Professor Sheng-mei Ma
Michigan State University

‘Get Out of the Village: Watching The Prisoner with Chinese Subtitles in Juancun’

Dr Phyllis Yu-ting Huang
Monash University

‘Turning a Nostalgic Story Into a Traumatic Tale: Narratives of Juancun Mainlanders in the TV Drama A Touch of Green’

1–2:30pm  Panel Two — Visual Culture
Dr Olivier Krischer
The Australian National University

Chair

Dr Anne Ma Kuo-An
NYU Shanghai

‘Documenting Nativism: “Realist Photography” in Taiwan and the Nativist Movement’

Dr Chou Yu-ling
Independent researcher and curator

‘Curating as Method: Reconfiguring the Legacy of Theatre Quarterly’

Associate Professor Li-Hua Chiang
Taiwan University of Arts

‘Introducing Early Development of Reporting Photography in Taiwan’

Dr Shuxia Chen
The Australian National University

‘Picturing a Psychic World of 1980s Taiwan’

3–4:30pm  Panel Three — Literary Studies (1)
Professor Ari Larissa Heinrich
The Australian National University

Chair

Dr Craig A. Smith
The University of Melbourne

‘Inclusivity and Trauma: The White Terror in Fiction’

Dr Josh Stenberg
The University of Sydney

‘The End of Exile?: Pai Hsien-yung and the End of the “Wandering Chinese”’

Sophia Huei-Ling Chen
The University of Sydney

‘Native-soil without Soil: Envisioning a New National Canon on Mars in “How to Live Like Wang Zhenhe”’
### Wednesday 28 July 2021

#### 5–6:30pm  
**Panel Four — History**

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<tr>
<td>Emeritus Professor Richard Rigby</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>The Australian National University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emeritus Professor Yew-Chaye Loo AM</td>
<td>’Four Years in Tainan Under Kuomintang’s Martial Law’</td>
<td>Griffith University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Tets Kimura</td>
<td>’The Rise and Fall of the Qipao in Taiwan’s Martial Law Period’</td>
<td>Flinders University</td>
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#### 7:30–8:30pm  
**Keynote Address**

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<tr>
<td>Chia-wen Calvin Yao</td>
<td>’1970s-80s Taiwan: What Led to the End of Martial Law?’</td>
<td>Senior Advisor to President Tsai Ing-wen</td>
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### Thursday 29 July 2021

#### 9:30–10:30am
**Panel Five — Science and Medicine**

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<tr>
<td>Dr Benjamin Penny</td>
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<td>Hsinyi Hsieh</td>
<td>’White Coats Under the White Terror: Political Prisoners, Medicine, and Healthcare in Cold War Taiwan, 1950s-1970s’</td>
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<td>’Rescuing the Nation with Science: Science Monthly and Science Student Activism in Taiwan and the United States’</td>
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**Keynote Address**

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<td>’Rethinking Modernist and Realist Photography in 1970s Taiwan’</td>
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<td>Adjunct Assistant Professor Chien-jung Hsu</td>
<td>’Authoritarianism, Opposition Movement and the Construction of National Identity in Taiwan’s Media, 1945-1987’</td>
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<td>Professor Hsiu-Chuang Deppman</td>
<td>’A City of Misfits in Edward Yang’s Terrorizers’</td>
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#### 11am–12pm
**Panel Six — Two Figures**

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Friday 30 July 2021

8–9:30am  
Panel Eight — Detention

Dr Craig A. Smith  
The University of Melbourne  
Chair

Dr Chia-rong Wu  
University of Canterbury  
‘Remembering the White Terror: Ghostly Encounters and Memories in Detention’

Chee-Hann Wu  
University of California, Irvine  
‘Memories Detained: Avatar, Puppet and Alterity’

Visiting Assistant Professor Chia-Lan Sharon Wang  
Oberlin College and Conservatory  
‘Trauma and Melodrama: Popular Cinematic Representation of the Martial Law Period in Detention and Your Name Engraved Herein’

10–11:30am  
Panel Nine — Literary Studies (2)

Dr Phyllis Yu-ting Huang  
Monash University  
Chair

Linshan Jiang  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
‘Queering the Intergenerational Remembrance of the Martial Law Period’

Professor Jih-Fei Cheng  
Scripps College  
‘Queer Across the Straits: Contesting “Martial” Heroism, Ethnonationalism, and Gender in Flying Swallows Awaken the Dragon (飛燕驚龍)’

Professor Ying-ying Chien and Di-kai Chao  
National Taiwan Normal University  
‘Taiwanese Women Writers’ Metaphors of Gender and Nation in Grotesque Narratives of the Martial Law Era’

1–2pm  
Keynote Address

Dr Mark Harrison  
University of Tasmania  
‘Memory and Resistance: The Martial Law Period and Taiwan’s Future in the Era of Xi Jinping’

Registration essential  
This lecture is in-person and online, and is open to the public. Light refreshment is provided 12:30pm.

Abstracts

Aidan Lee  
University of California, Berkeley

View from the Bamboo Fence: Remembering Kuomintang Statecraft Through Taiwan’s Juancun

The Kuomintang (KMT) state, and the mainland migrant population that fled to Taiwan after 1949, occupy an ambiguous position in the historiography on modern Taiwan. Was the KMT government merely an external colonial regime comparable to Imperial Japan? Or was it, as the KMT itself had long maintained, the legitimate authority of Taiwan and China, and the true successor of the 1911 revolution? This paper approaches this debate through Taiwan’s juancun, or military dependent villages, which were set up for newly arrived members of the KMT military after 1949. By analyzing the space and history of juancun through two case studies (Sisi Nancun in Taipei, and Minde Xincun in Kaohsiung), I outline the complex power relations that existed among the KMT state, the mainland migrant population, and bendiren communities (Taiwanese of Chinese descent who migrated prior to 1949). I examine how the KMT state constructed, administered, and policed spaces dedicated to military dependents and civil officials, in stark contrast to state policy toward the broader Taiwan population. A second part of this project engages with the juancun preservation movement in Taiwan, which arose in response to the demolition, renovation, and relocation of juancun communities over the last forty years.

Get Out of the Village: Watching The Prisoner with Chinese Subtitles in Juancun

Once upon a time, it took a while—ten years, give or take—for Anglo-American waves of the chaotic sixties to reach the island nation of Taiwan. Such waves took the form of popular culture, among which this essay focuses on The Prisoner (1967–1968). My speculation of the ten-year gap stems from the fact that the “underprivileged” juancun (military dependents’ village) I grew up in was not graced by television sets until the late 1960s. Given the austerity of juancun, a constellation of provisional, ramshackle housing projects for the Nationalist Armed Forces personnel and their families fleeing communist China in 1949, and given that the subject of English was not introduced into the curriculum until middle school, I believe I watched reruns of The Prisoner in the 1970s largely with the aid of Chinese subtitles. Why was that teenage boy in a military dependents’ village fascinated by the surreal, fairy-tale “Village,” a prison camp from which Patrick McGoohan’s “Number Six” attempts to get out, always in vain? What did that adolescent get out of it, his eyes toggling between the screen and the subtitles on the bottom?
Turning a Nostalgic Story into a Traumatic Tale: Narratives of Juancun Mainlanders in the TV Drama A Touch of Green

Military dependents’ villages, also known as juancun, are unique cultural landscapes in Taiwan. These compounds were established during the 1950s in order to house the defeated Kuomintang (KMT) soldiers and their families. There have been numerous literary and cinematic representations of juancun since the 1980s, but television (TV) dramas on the related topic did not appear until the 2000s. This paper delves into the highly acclaimed 2015-2016 TV drama A Touch of Green (yi ba qing), directed by Tsao Jui-yuan, which is an adaptation of the mainlander writer Pai Hsien-yung’s canonical literary work of the same name in 1971. This paper examines how Tsao turns Pai Hsien-yung’s China-centric and nostalgic literary work into a TV drama that is aligned with contemporary Taiwanese values. It considers how it provides a new historical interpretation of mainlanders in a bid to seek ethnic reconciliation between Taiwanese and mainlanders. Drawing upon Alison Landsburg’s idea of ‘historically conscious drama,’ this paper argues that by shaping the mainlander characters not as heroic figures but as victims of the Chinese Civil War and the KMT’s White Terror, A Touch of Green elicits Taiwanese audiences’ emotional and intellectual engagement with this group.

Curating as Method: Reconfiguring the Legacy of Theatre Quarterly

This paper looks at the exhibition Wild Rhizome: 2018 Taiwan Biennial, which explored the avant-garde magazine Theatre Quarterly (1965-1966) and the interpersonal communities formed through its publication. Theatre Quarterly focused on the translation of films and theatrical works, introducing to its readers the French New Wave, Italian Neorealism, cinematic realism, and New York underground films. It was a self-initiated community formed by like-minded people, and translation was used as a way to transplant concepts during the suppression of the martial law era. Considering art communities as important historical agents, the exhibition examined the thoughts, discourses, and ethos of communities associated with Theatre Quarterly, as well as their extended impact on the 1970s cultural scene. Regarding exhibitions as a compelling medium for the development of art discourse, I argue that visual demonstration generates visual arguments that cannot be replaced by textual discourse. As such, the paper examines exhibitions as sites of innovative art historical scholarship, seeing display as a crucial factor that challenges the authority of chronology in history.
Introducing Early Development of Reporting Photography in Taiwan

This paper explores the establishment of reportage photography in Taiwan by attempting to clarify the terminology and context of its development in the 1970-80s. Wang Hsin, a pioneer of the genre in Taiwan, believes that reportage photography should be informative, international and humanitarian. In addition, a reportage photographer should act with conscience and justice, with love and compassion for people. These are the criteria that initially differentiated reportage photography from realist or documentary photography. The media push and the political environment after the lifting of martial law gave photographers the courage to touch upon politically sensitive topics and socially critical issues, and to seek the root of local cultures. Ren Jian magazine, founded and operated in the spirit of humanitarianism, combined photography, illustration and literature in its reporting, identifying, documenting, witnessing and commenting. The magazine faithfully revealed social injustice by caring for the disadvantaged and emphasizing equality among ethnic groups. In sum, while reportage photography in Taiwan started slightly later than in the West, it has created works through long-term observation on a variety of people, things, and objects in the day-to-day life of Taiwan. In addition to local coverage with vernacular photography, reportage photography in Taiwan has emphasized special folk activities or life in remote villages, as well as ephemeral events. All these inspire resonance in the society and establish an image culture about the land and the people of Taiwan.

Picturing a Psychic World of 1980s Taiwan

The 1970s and 1980s in Taiwan saw peak industrial growth, amid a shift toward a nativist turn in local histories and cultures. Debates regarding Taiwanese identity at the time might also be reflected the increased interest in mental health and psychiatry among educated public. The issue of mental health had attracted public attention following reports on the conditions and practices at Long Fa Tang, a Buddhist temple for people living with mental illness. While institutions such as Long Fa Tang were at the centre of public debates, the periodical Teacher Chang, the first Taiwanese popular psychology magazine was established in 1982, to raise public knowledge on mental health through long-term investigation, including the novel use of regular photo essays. This paper examines the photographic series Long Fa Tang by Hou Cong-Hui, who was once a patient there; and Lien Hui-Ling’s photojournalistic work and dark room manipulated images for Teacher Chang magazine, sharing preliminary research on photography’s role in revealing the psychic world of both these photographers and Taiwan towards the end of the martial law period.

Inclusivity and Trauma: The White Terror in Fiction

2021 is the 74th anniversary of the 228 Incident, a violent event that ushered in Taiwan’s Martial Law period. Despite the passage of so many decades, the violence of 1947 remains an influential social and political issue in Taiwan today, where traumatic memory of the incident has firmly connected it to Taiwanese identities.

Beginning with the democracy movement in the 1980s, but continuing and accelerating in recent years, the 228 Incident has become a symbol reminding people of the need for peace and reconciliation. Fiction related to 228 and the White Terror has stayed in step with Taiwan’s democratization movement and societal change, employing traumatic experience to question contemporary Taiwan’s inclusivity. As the experience of 228 and the White Terror became traumatic symbols of the nation, the narrative that recounts this experience has been repeatedly rewritten to better reflect a changing Taiwan.

Through texts from the 1980s to the early 2000s, this paper will chart key moments in this body of fiction, examining writers such as Chen Yingzhen, Dongfang Bai, Zheng Qingwen, Li Ang, and Walis Norgan to show how what can be called 228 Fiction has dealt, sometimes problematically, with different ethnic, gender, indigenous, and queer identities to produce a narrative of an ever-expanding and inclusive Taiwanese society.

The End of Exile?: Pai Hsien-yung and the End of the “Wandering Chinese”

In 1976, Pai Hsien-yung’s essay “The Wandering Chinese” appeared in The Iowa Review. It examined the oeuvre of his fellow exiles in the United States, Yu Li-hua and Nieh Hua-ling. The limits of writing on the Republic of China on Taiwan, he concluded, though less onerous than those of the PRC, nevertheless prevented free expression and forced literary expression abroad. Scholarship has tended to regard Pai stories such as “Death in Chicago” and “Li T‘ung” as fictional lamentations of the same exile. It has similarly read Pai’s Taipei People stories as the pathos of ROC elites exiles in Taiwan.

It has now been forty-five years since Pai wrote “The Wandering Chinese” and over thirty years since Pai first visited Mainland China. He has in recent decades split his time between the PRC, Taiwan and the United States, devoting much of his time to the promotion of kunqu and especially The Peony Pavilion, which in Taipei People acted as a powerful metaphor for displaced highbrow Jiangnan culture. This presentation considers whether the end of martial law and détente in the cultural arena put a term to wandering, and how the generation of exilic writing might fit into Sinophone literary history.
Native-soil without Soil: Envisioning a New National Canon on Mars in “How to Live Like Wang Zhenhe”

In this article, I examine Huang Chongkai’s speculative short story, “How to Live Like Wang Zhenhe” 《如何像王禎和一樣地活著》 from his 2017 short-story collection, The Content of the Times 《文藝春秋》. As a pastiche of Wang Zhenhe’s Caricature of Beauty (1982) and Rose Rose I Love You (1984), this short story transposes the Cold War memory within Wang’s two stories onto Mars of the year 2140. Deliberately abusing the conventionally serious and critical narrative about the Cold War memory — including the native-soil literary debate, the putative Americanization of Taiwan, and the emergent discourse of local consciousness — Huang speculates on the afterlife of Taiwan literature in a futuristic setting where Taiwan becomes unreturnable. By juxtaposing 1980s’ martial-law Taiwan with a high-tech and resource-savvy Mars, the story models Taiwan as a postcolonial polity, which enables the Mars-born narrator to develop his local consciousness and anticolonial spirit. Crucial to this modelling is the national-building agenda in the literary-critical discourse during the 1980s. The story evokes and posits this agenda as the origin of a national literature — amusingly for Mars, instead of Taiwan. The values and creeds from this discourse are approached sardonically in Huang’s pastiche, which, as I will argue, ultimately relativizes the divide between benshengren and waishengren, the local and foreign, and asks what it means by “native soil.”

Four years in Tainan under Kuomintang’s Martial Law

With US Navy’s logistic support, the 12000-strong KMT 72nd Army landed at Port Jilong (Keelung) on 17 October 1945. Providing the backup for General Chen Yi in accepting Japan’s official surrender, this marked the beginning of KMT’s authoritarian rule in Taiwan.

The brutal 228 Massacre under Chen’s command started on 28 February 1947. By mid-March, the suppression of the anti-KMT riots was complete with the death of countless civilians.

To further stabilise the situation in Taiwan, the 2nd Governor, General Chen Cheng, formally declared martial law on 20 May 1949. The ensuing 38 years of martial-law administration ended on 14 July 1987 when Chiang Ching-kuo returned the island to civilian rule.

By various accounts, the martial law was declared to help eradicate the subversive activities instigated by the CPC through its agents and sympathisers on the island. The law nonetheless had prolonged the “white terror” that caused undue injustice to the wider population.

This paper summarises the author’s experiences as an Overseas Chinese student from September 1962 to July 1966 at the then Provincial Cheng Kung University in the rebellious city of Tainan. It provides some insights into the precarious atmosphere then existed across the island.


If we consider the wipeout of the wartime generation of Japanese educated Taiwanese elites during the 1947 February 28th Incident as the Chinese Nationalist (KMT) regime’s initiation of nation-building in post-War Taiwan, the new Taiwan Provincial Governor Chen Cheng’s declaration of Martial Law on Taiwan on 20th May 1949 and the subsequent three decades was regarded as continuation of the consolidation of the legitimacy of the ROC’s rule in Taiwan since its retreat to the island upon the total defeat in the Chinese Civil War in 1949. However, before American intervention in the cross-Strait warfare upon the eruption of the Korean War in 1950, Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT regime had no one to rely on, except Japanese.

This paper aims to look at the role that the ‘White Group’, Chiang’s secret military advisory group consisting of more than 80 former Imperial Japanese military officers who spent 20 years in Taiwan by helping retrain and reconstruct the ROC Armed Forces, drafting military plans for reconquering Mainland China and ‘re-introducing’ wartime mobilisation system including conscription and mobilisation guidelines with the goal of defending Taiwan and retaking the mainland,
played in the ROC’s nation-building in Taiwan under the early years of Martial Law. The introduction of the ‘Anti-Communist and Anti-Russian Mobilisation Campaign Guideline’ (反共抗俄總動員運動綱領) in 1952, with assistance of the ‘White Group’, had henceforth brought irreversible impact to post-War Taiwanese politics, economy, society and culture under Martial Law. This essay investigates not only the impact of Japanese imperial military ideas on the development of post-1949 ROC military culture and ethos, but whether the ‘re-introduction’ of the wartime mobilisation system in Taiwan should be considered as the ‘protection’ for people in Taiwan from the invasion of the PRC or the ‘accomplice’ of Chiang’s authoritarian rule on this ‘accidental’ island-nation.

Dr Tets Kimura
Flinders University

The Rise and Fall of the Qipao in Taiwan’s Martial Law Period

When Taiwan became free from Japanese colonisers following the end of WWII, women’s fashion was increasingly sought and expected to reflect and help (re)build a national “Chinese” culture. This paper will examine a key fashion practice, the iconic style of the qipao, and consider how such dress came into being, how it was circulated, and what it meant to both the nation and to the women who adopted these styles. Focus is given to the role of the First Lady Soong Mei-ling, and lived experiences of tailors of the qipao as well as women who were made to wear the uncomfortable dress, displaying the Chinese identity for the sake of social and governmental expectations. This paper argues that this top-down fashion movement could/did not last as women over the course of the Martial Law decades gained control to enact a strategic bodily practice over which they had agency. As a result, the qipao was largely discarded from fashion by empowered Taiwanese women and replaced with Western clothing.

Hsiyi Hsieh
University of California, San Francisco

White Coats under the White Terror: Political Prisoners, Medicine, and Healthcare in Cold War Taiwan, 1950s-1970s

From the 1950s to the 1970s, hundreds of Taiwanese medical practitioners became political prisoners for their opposition to the authoritarian rule by Chinese Nationalist government that was established on October 25, 1945. This article investigates how the relationship between medicine and politics in Taiwan from 1950s to 1970s, had been shaped by martial law, Cold War politics, and Japanese colonial heritage. Influenced by the popular thought of socialism and the growing opportunity of political participation in the late Japanese colonial period, those condemned or imprisoned physicians during the 1950s were disappointed with the incompetence of authoritarian regime in governing epidemic outbreaks, class and ethnic conflicts, and postwar reconstruction. From the labor camp on Green Island (1951-1965) to the prison site in Taipei City (1965-1987), imprisoned physicians provided health care, surgery, and self-care education, running medical offices within political prisons. Compared with those physicians during the 1950s, the imprisoned doctors in the 1970s shifted to advocating for a Taiwanese identity, challenging the authoritarian regime for the real democracy and Taiwanese independence. After finishing their sentences, most of the imprisoned physicians returned to their careers in medicine, but under surveillance until 1987, which was the end of the martial law in Taiwan.

Justin Wu
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Rescuing the Nation with Science: Science Monthly and Science Student Activism in Taiwan and the United States

In the 1960s, a group of science students, primarily from National Taiwan University, saw the need for society to change. Knowing that the ruling KMT regime would not tolerate any dissenting voices, these students chose to engage in a “safe” kind of activism: promoting science education. While pursuing their graduate degrees in science subjects in the United States, they founded the influential magazine Science Monthly, first published in 1970, that became a popular reading among the secondary and college student population in Taiwan. This paper assesses the founding of Science Monthly. It demonstrates how the social and geopolitical context of the 1960s shaped these science students, analyzing their experiences growing up in the Martial law era and how they came to see promoting science education as a way to serve the nation. Science Monthly provided a platform for the science students to draw on their expertise to contribute to society. By keeping this activity “non-political,” these students believed that their effort could help strengthen the ROC in Taiwan.
Visiting Professor
Camilo Pérez-Bustillo
National Taiwan University

Memory, Truth and Narratives of Colonial Liberation:
Su Beng in Comparative Perspective

The Taiwanese pro-independence revolutionary and writer known as Su Beng, who died at age 100 in September 2019, has become an iconic figure. He was one of the most well-known victims of persecution during the Martial Law era, which led to his exile in Japan until 1993. Many know him best as the author of the very influential book *Taiwan’s 400 Year History*, which he wrote while in exile and was long banned.

This paper will explore the continuing impact of Su Beng’s life and work, from a comparative and intercultural perspective focused on his role as a decolonial activist scholar. Su Beng sought to fuse a Marxist-inspired anti-capitalist approach with detailed historical critique of the impact on Taiwan of Japanese and Chinese colonialism and neo-colonialism. Key questions include: 1) the continuing significance of his work in today’s Taiwan amid its still incomplete process of self-determination and transitional justice, and 2) the relationship between his experiences and approach, and that of arguably analogous scholar activists from the same generation in contexts such as Puerto Rico and leading cases of transitional justice elsewhere in Latin America and globally. Su Beng has been widely compared to both the renowned Latin American revolutionary, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and to Miguel de Cervantes’ literary hero, Don Quixote. What are the implications of such comparisons from a contemporary, comparative perspective?

Associate Professor
Wendy Cheng
Scripps College

The Body of Chen Wen-chen: A State Killing and the Triumph of U.S. Liberalism

This paper focuses on the case of Chen Wen-chen, its effects and repercussions, and the politics of grief and mourning. Chen was a U.S. resident and professor at Carnegie Mellon University who was killed in government custody during a return visit to Taiwan in 1981. His death received national media attention and sparked two U.S. congressional hearings on the topic of extralegal surveillance and persecution of Taiwanese in the United States. While contributing to international pressure to lift martial law and democratize Taiwan, the hearings ultimately solidified a liberal, individualist human rights discourse that positioned the United States as a benevolently concerned but fundamentally separate entity. In doing so, they erased the constitutive historical relationship between the ROC state and the U.S. state, and perpetuated a fictional moral geography that persists today.

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Authoritarianism, Opposition Movement and the Construction of National Identity in Taiwan’s Media, 1945-1987

As an authoritarian regime from Mainland China without broad support or legitimacy in Taiwan, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT; Kuomintang) government applied numerous measures to secure its power before democratization. Just as the Japanese conducted its Japanization policy during 1895-1945, the KMT attempted to Sinicize Taiwanese by means of inculcating Chinese nationalism. In addition, in order to protect its power, the KMT proclaimed itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese nation as opposed to Communist China during the period 1945-1988. The KMT regime thus portrayed both the Taiwan Independence Movement and the democratic opposition as a threat to the Chinese nation on Taiwan. The KMT controlled almost all mass media in Taiwan before democratization. The media formed part of the ideological state apparatus of the KMT regime, playing a vital role in propagandizing its version of Chinese ideology and attacking the Chinese Communists, the Taiwan Independence Movement, and the democratic opposition. Nevertheless, some burgeoning voices of Taiwan identity emerged in the opposition magazines from the mid-1970s. This paper first explores the KMT regime and Chinese ideology. It then examines the attempt by the KMT regime to develop Chinese...
nationalism through the mass media in Taiwan. Finally, it explains how opposition magazines resisted this effort to inculcate a Chinese identity.

A City of Misfits in Edward Yang’s Terrorizers

Premiered near the tail end of Taiwan’s Martial Law, Edward Yang’s 1986 film Terrorizers turns a civil society inside out by exposing the psychoses of people living in a repressive State. A master storyteller, Yang constructs multiple narrative strands that intersect through fateful coincidences. A restless photographer, a delinquent prank caller, a discontented writer, and a Janus-faced doctor all become unwittingly involved in the lives of others by trying to scale the walls closing in on them. Yang shows the barriers of human communication through divided, enclosed spaces. His objective camera presents apartments, office buildings, and hotel rooms not as places that house dreams of love and longing, but as prison cells that brew self-destructive instincts. 

Terrorizers offers a microcosmic view of Taipei’s citizens trying to break free from such normative expectations as male military draft, female homemaking, and filial piety. In this paper I argue that Yang stylizes the narrative tensions between long take and montage to explore the unsettling relations between social mobility and stasis. As individuals try to exit the space in which life seems to be put on hold, some walk the city to document the pulse of the people while others are paralyzed by fear.

Remembering the White Terror: Ghostly Encounters and Memories in Detention

This article treats the Detention franchise as a cultural phenomenon from three interrelated angles. First, this article examines the historical significance and political reconstruction of the White Terror in response to the development and adaptation of Detention. Historically bound, Detention blends foreign and local horror, fostering the gamers’ and viewers’ imagination of darkness embedded in the realm of the unknown and the dead. Second, this article brings into focus the mix of historical pain and horror genre with respect to the ghostly youth and monstrous past in Detention. The digital and cinematic remakes of the White Terror mediate the unaccountable trauma via the techno-enhanced immersive horror across screens. This unique strategy speaks to the gamers and spectators alike, especially the young generation, with profundity in the new age of entertainment. Third, this article identifies Detention as a political allegory in relation to the socio-cultural anxieties shared by the majority of the Taiwanese subjects in the contemporary era. In a political light, it not only echoes the ongoing campaign of transitional justice as promoted by the ruling Democratic Progressive Party on the island, but also points to the universal pursuit of freedom and democracy against any totalitarian regime in the twenty-first century.

Memories Detained: Avatar, Puppet and Alterity

Set in 1960s Taiwan under martial law, the 2D horror game Detention begins with two students, Wei and Ray, finding themselves trapped in the school, haunted by malicious monsters. While hiding from the monsters, mysteries are slowly unveiled that leads to the revelation of the darkest past. Detention incorporates elements of Taiwanese culture and mythology, including the extensive use of budaixi (glove puppetry), one of the most popular performances and entertainments in Taiwan, as a symbol of the silenced people and victims of the White Terror. This paper discusses the use of avatars and budaixi puppets in the game: players appear in the world of Detention as the game avatars of Wei and Ray, and the victims as puppets. Both avatars of game characters and puppets are the alterity that engages us with the exploration and revelation of the past. I think of the intermediality of avatars and puppets, and the way that game avatars remediate puppets as different media are continually citing, commenting on, reproducing and replacing each other. The interactions between human players, game avatars and puppets, as well as the notion of “human manipulation” offer a different way for us to respond to or interact with the historical moments. Detention creates a new form to revisit, address and discuss what we understand as the past.
This research further explores how Detention reenacts history and trauma. While players are trying to solve the mysteries through avatars, they are experiencing, witnessing and reenacting the past. In addition, by using the puppets to represent the victims, the game avoids triggering fear while demonstrating the horrifying events since avatars and puppets are alterities, alien to oneself. It is through the recognition of the gap between the real and the virtual that provides the players space and a sufficient distance to learn, relearn and unlearn this past. Detention allows a revisiting and retelling of stories previously untold or censored that goes beyond the mere representation of trauma.

Trauma and Melodrama: Popular Cinematic Representation of the Martial Law Period in Detention and Your Name Engraved Herein

This paper investigates two contemporary Taiwanese teen movies, Detention (2019) and Your Name Engraved Herein (2020), and analyzes the way elements of melodrama are deployed to portray sentiments of terror, despair, rebellion, love, and nostalgia, which often constitute the cultural and political discourses of Taiwan’s martial law period. I particularly study how, considering Ann Kaplan’s discussion of the way cultural trauma is remembered, articulated, reconciled, and forgotten in the genre of melodrama, a genre that focuses on the private space of family, the two films use fantasy, romance, and confession to suture the paralysis, repetition, and fragmentation of trauma. As the particular genre from Euro-America is typically associated with the middle-class and aims to contain un-representable historical, colonial, and racial traumas, I argue that the films’ representation of censorship, discrimination, violence, and disciplines of the martial law period through conflicts with parental figures and surveilling high school authority translates Taiwan’s historical and national trauma into the linearity of a rite of passage, in which nostalgia for one’s turbulent and disaffected youth and the cathartic, liberating experience of narrativizing one’s troubled adolescence exhibit an intention to aestheticize and decontextualize the impacts of historical trauma.

Queering the Intergenerational Remembrance of the Martial Law Period

The Martial Law period (1947-1987) in Taiwan is full of complexities and nuances with resistance and obedience. There are perpetrators, fighters, victims, accomplices, and bystanders. Borrowing Michael Rothberg’s conception, everyone can be regarded as an “implicated subject” in terms of lived experience and embodied memories. In this paper, I would like to focus on three unconventional figures, namely, Mulberry as a “madwoman” and “promiscuous” woman in Hualing Nieh Engle’s Mulberry and Peach (Sangqing yu taohong, 1976), Zhao Nandong as the offspring of the resisters of the White Terror in Chen Yingzhen’s Zhao Nandong (1987), and He Yinyin as the 1.5 generation of the White Terror and lesbian feminist in Zhang Yixuan’s I Leave You (Yongbie shu, 2015). Through reading these three figures, I argue that there is a gendered and queer dimension towards the seemingly heteronormative narrative of the Martial Law period with men put into prison and women suffering at home. I also look at the intergenerational dimension of the Martial Law Period, both in terms of different generations of writers in Taiwan and the divergent impacts on the characters that these writers are depicting. As Nieh and Chen are two prestigious writers in the literary history of Taiwan, Zhang also carries out intertextual conversations with the previous generations of writers.

Queer Across the Straits: Contesting “Martial” Heroism, Ethnonationalism, and Gender in Flying Swallows

Awaken the Dragon (飛燕驚龍)

This paper engages the 1985 television series, Flying Swallows Awaken the Dragon (飛燕驚龍), as a cultural site contesting Nationalist Party hegemony during martial law-era Taiwan. The series aired on the China Television Company Limited network, established in 1969 by the Nationalist Party. Swallows and Dragon is a story about the battle between the 9 martial arts sects over the Guiyuan Collection of Secrets. It is based upon the acclaimed 1958 wuxia novel by author and former Nationalist government propagandist, Wolong Sheng. Both the novel and TV series can be considered forms of soft power to promote the power of the Nationalist Party. They can also be read as the struggles for Nationalist Party legitimacy, Han Chinese ethnonationalism, and “martial” heroism. By analyzing the transgressions of Mandarin, ethnonationalism, gender norms, and heterosexual romance in the tv series, this paper explores how viewers are summoned to imagine queer socialities that exceed Nationalist and Han-centric settler colonial identification. Instead, viewers are open to perceive a post-martial law Taiwan identity rooted in Third World internationalism.
Taiwanese Women Writers’ Metaphors of Gender and Nation in Grotesque Narratives of the Martial Law Era

Novels written by Taiwanese women writers, such as Nieh Hualing in the 1970s and Li Ang in the 1980s, provide a perspective to reflect on the transformation of Taiwanese literature. Nieh and Li’s texts engage with gender politics and national allegory, reflecting the critical influence of the modernist literary movement and the nativist resistance of the Martial Law era. This paper aims to investigate the grotesque narratives of such texts, focusing on metaphors of gender and nationality during the Martial Law era in Taiwan.

On the one hand, Nieh’s fiction (e.g. Mulberry and Peach) was written during the martial law period. She incorporates modernism and nativism to interpret the heroine’s split subject in diaspora, as well as the ambiguous political state of Taiwan with a gender focus, highlighting the post-modernism concern. On the other hand, Li’s fiction (e.g. Invisible Ghosts) was mostly written after the Martial Law period. Li transcends the both modernism and nativism: her grotesque narrative has a post-colonial concern, highlighting the multi-colonized situation of Taiwan. Nieh and Li’s gender and national concern are different from those of their male contemporaries and tend to emphasize the women’s subtle subjectivity under the control of patriarchal system.

Biographies

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Shuxia Chen is an art historian and curator of Asian art. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary Chinese photography and artistic collaboration. Shuxia’s research has been published in books, peer-reviewed journals, exhibition catalogues and art magazines. Shuxia is working on two book projects: A Home for Photography Learning: the Friday Salon, 1977-1980 (Shanghai, 2021), and Chinese Toggles: Culture in Miniature (Sydney, 2023). She is currently a curator at the University of Sydney Chau Chak Wing Museum, as well as a sessional lecturer at UNSW Art and Design and the National Art School.

Sophia Huei-ling Chen 陳慧玲 is a PhD student in Chinese Studies at University of Sydney. Her thesis explores the practice of genre subversion in modern Taiwanese literature, with broader interests in transnational mobility and queerness.

Jih-Fei Cheng 鄭志飛 is Assistant Professor of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Scripps College. He has been involved in HIV/AIDS social services, media production and curation, and queer and trans of color grassroots and non-profit organizations in San Diego, Los Angeles, and New York City. Cheng is co-editor of the book volume AIDS and the Distribution of Crises (Duke University Press 2020). His first book-in-progress, Materialist Virology, historicizes HIV/AIDS within the colonial context of virology and racial capitalism. A second project, tentatively titled Unbecoming Chinese, studies how the fields of virology and genetics have structured whiteness and Chineseness in cultural and historical memory.

Isabelle Cheng is Senior Lecturer in East Asian and International Development Studies at the University of Portsmouth. Using gender as an approach, her research interest is in marriage and labour migration in East Asia with reference to nation-building, sovereignty, and citizenship. Her recent interest is the use of women’s voice for psychological warfare and deploying them as the state’s messenger on the radio and behind loudspeakers. She is currently serving as the Secretary-General of the European Association of Taiwan Studies.

Li-Hua Chiang is an associate professor at National Taiwan University of Arts. She received her Ph.D. in the Institute of Plastic Arts, National University of Paris I, France. Dr. Chiang served as the curator of Reading the History of Taiwanese Painting organized by the Taiwanese Cultural Center in France (2010), and the curator of Return to Simplicity: Chiu Shi-Lin’s World Photography at Yi-lan Art Museum (2018). Her publications include Living in France-Memory Puzzle graphic photography collection (2014), Image of Duration: A Study on the Image of Interpretation of Time (2016), and An Introduction to the History of Modern Photographic Art in Taiwan: 1850s-2018 (2019). Her research interest focuses on the fields of visual culture, image theory, photographic art, and photography history.

Ying-Ying Chien is a professor at the National Taiwan Normal University, specialising in comparative culture, gender studies, and Sinophone film and literature. She graduated from National Taiwan University with a BA degree in Foreign Language and Literature, an MA in English from Rutgers University and a PhD in comparative literature from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Chien has taught at National Taiwan University, Penn State University and served as Chair at Fu Jen University.

Hsiu-Chuang Deppman is professor of Chinese and cinema studies at Oberlin College. Her research interests include comparative literature, the history of cinema, film adaptations, documentaries, and modern Chinese fiction. Author of two monographs — Adapted for the Screen: the Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Fiction and Film and Close-ups and Long Shots in Modern Chinese Cinemas, she is also a contributor to many academic books and journals.

Chou Yu-Ling is a writer, researcher and curator based in Taiwan. She graduated from Birkbeck College (The London Consortium), University of London, with a PhD in Humanities and Cultural Studies. In 2015, Chou joined the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art as a curator, where she curated Hardcore Rally with Hantoo Art Group (2017) and Wild Rhizome: 2018 Taiwan Biennial (with Gong Jow-Jiun). She is also the researcher and exhibition coordinator for Hold the Mirror up to his Gaze: the Early History of Photography in Taiwan (1869-1949), the first exhibition of the National Center of Photography and Images, which opened in April 2021.

Mark Harrison is Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Tasmania. He is a Founding Fellow of the Australian Centre on China in the World at the Australian National University. His academic work examines contemporary culture and politics in the Chinese-speaking world, using a distinctive theoretically-informed style and with a particular interest in Taiwan. He works widely across cultural studies, politics and policy, and international relations.

Ari Larissa Heinrich is a professor of Chinese literature and media at the Australian National University. They are the author of Chinese Surplus: Biopolitical Aesthetics and the Medically Commodified Body (2018) and other books, and the translator of Chi Tá-wei’s novel The Membranes (2021) and Qiu Miaojin’s novel Last Words from Montmartre (2014).

Hsin-Yi “Shinyi” Hsieh is a PhD candidate of History of Health Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco. She received her Master degree from National Taiwan University in Sociology in 2014. Her dissertation examines the Cold War transformation of Taiwan into a socio-medical experimental site within the international health. She is especially interested in the conception of Cold War — marked by US aid, Japanese colonial heritage, and Chinese Nationalist authoritarianism — influence the knowledge production of international health on Taiwan.
Chien-Jung Hsu 許建榮 is the Director of Cybersecurity Technology Institute, Institute for Information Industry and Adjunct Assistant Professor at National Dong Hwa University. He received his Ph.D. from Monash University in 2012. Dr HSU has published numerous works on Taiwan’s politics, media and the Internet over the past decade, including, The Construction of National Identity in Taiwan's Media, 1896-2012 (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2014), “China's Influence on Taiwan's Media,” Asian Survey 54:3 (2014), “Cyberspace and the Rise of Taiwanese Identity,” Changing Taiwanese Identities (Routledge 2017) and “China's influence on Taiwan's media and implication on Taiwanese politics,” Beyond Europe: Politics and Change in Global and Regional Affairs (Berlin: Logos Verlag Berlin 2018).

Phyllis Yu-ting Huang 黃鈺婷 received her PhD in Chinese Studies from Monash University, where she works as an adjunct researcher. Her first monograph, Literary Representations of “Mainlanders” in Taiwan: Becoming Sinophone, was published by Routledge in late 2020. Her articles can be found in International Journal of Taiwan Studies, Archiv Orientální, and Journal of Taiwan Literary Studies.

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Tets Kimura is Research Associate in Creative Arts at Flinders University, South Australia, working on the space of East Asian cultural history. Together with Dr Shih-Ying Lin (Tainan University of Technology), he has written “Creation of Contemporary Taiwanese Fashion” (Fashion Practice, 2017). His first book, Exporting Japanese Aesthetics (2020, Sussex Academic Press), brings historical and contemporary case studies addressing international impacts of Japanese culture. He has received an Asia Study Grant (2021) from the National Library of Australia.

Mei-fen Kuo 郭美芬 is a Lecturer in Contemporary Chinese Culture and History at Macquarie University where she teaches and researches in the area of modern Chinese history with a focus on diaspora identity and transnational mobility. She is the author of Making Chinese Australia: Urban Elites, Newspapers & Chinese-Australian Identity During Federation (Monash University Publishing) and Unlocking the History of the Australasian Kuo Min Tang 1911-2013 (Australian Scholarly Publishing).

Olivier Krischer is an art historian and curator interested in the aesthetic navigation of social, political and environmental transformation in East Asia. In 2021, he is Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University and an Honorary Associate at the University of Sydney. He has previously been Acting Director of the University of Sydney China Studies Centre, and a Visiting Fellow at Academia Sinica, Taiwan. His publications include Shades of Green: Notes on China's Eco-civilisation (2020, edited with Luigi Tomba) and Zhang Peili: from Painting to Video (ANU Press, 2019); while his curatorial projects are Wayfaring: Photography in 1970s-80s Taiwan (2021, curated with Shuxia Chen) and Wei Leng Tay: Abridge with Shuxia Chen) and Zhang Peili: from Painting to Video (ANU Press, 2019); while his curatorial projects are Wayfaring: Photography in 1970s-80s Taiwan (2021, curated with Shuxia Chen) and Wei Leng Tay: Abridge with Shuxia Chen).

Aidan Lee 李安森 is a doctoral student in the History department at the University of California, Berkeley. He has previously been an acting editor of the University of Sydney China Studies Centre, and a visiting fellow at Academia Sinica, Taiwan. His publications include Shades of Green: Notes on China's Eco-civilisation (2020, edited with Luigi Tomba) and Zhang Peili: from Painting to Video (ANU Press, 2019); while his curatorial projects are Wayfaring: Photography in 1970s-80s Taiwan (2021, curated with Shuxia Chen) and Wei Leng Tay: Abridge with Shuxia Chen.

Ko-Hang Liao 廖克杭 is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (FAMES) at the University of Cambridge. His research traces the genealogy and impact of the White Group (白團), Chiang Kai-shek’s Japanese military advisory group consisting of defeated Imperial Japanese military officers, on the ROC in Taiwan and argues for its centrality to the Nationalist nation-building and developmental state forged after 1949. It helps better understand the post-war history of Japan’s former empire after the imperial dissolution by examining the influence of Japanese imperial continuity or legacy in Taiwan and redefines the meaning of ‘defeat’. 
Yew-Chaye Loo

Yew-Chaye Loo, born and educated in Malaya, is a long-time China observer. He obtained his BEng at Taiwan’s Cheng Kung University, MEng at AIT, Bangkok, and PhD at Scotland’s Dundee University. He joined Wollongong University, NSW in 1974 and in 1995 became a foundation professor at Queensland’s Griffith University where he last served as the Sciences Group’s Internationalisation Director. He attained the Emeritus status in 2016. Loo was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in June 2013.

Anne Ma Kuo-An

Anne Ma Kuo-An considers herself a cultural historian with a particular interest in the visual aspects of modern history, and believes that history should “look different” in the age of digital media. In her dissertation, she looked at how the concepts for local and local society were shaped and transformed by emerging visual media, especially photography, in Taiwan during the colonial period. As an enthusiastic explorer in interdisciplinary studies, she is currently initiating a new research project to look at the history of science, visuality and folklore studies in 1950s East Asia. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at NYU Shanghai.

Sheng-mei Ma 馬聖美

Sheng-mei Ma is Professor of English at Michigan State University in Michigan, USA, specializing in Asian Diaspora and East-West comparative studies. He is the author of over a dozen books, including On East-West (2022); Off-White (2019); Sinophone-Anglophone Cultural Duet (2017); The Last Isle (2015); Alien English (2014); Asian Diaspora and East-West Modernity (2012); Diaspora Literature and Visual Culture (2011); East-West Montage (2007); The Deathly Embrace (2000); Immigrant Subjectivities in Asian American and Asian Diaspora Literatures (1998); and the critical memoir Immigrant Horse’s Mouth: Journey to the West by Bearing East (2022). Co-editor of four books, including Transnational Narratives in Engishes of Exile (2018), he also published a collection of poetry in Chinese.

Benjamin Penny

Benjamin Penny is Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Centre on China in the World and Head of the ANU Taiwan Studies Program. His work mainly focusses on Chinese religions, but he is also interested in the Chinese Treaty Ports in the mid-nineteenth century and the development of Sinology. His two current projects are a study of a Taiwanese new religion, Weixin shengjiao 唯心聖教, and a book based on the teenage diaries of Chaloner Alabaster, an English Student Interpreter in Hong Kong in 1855-56.

Camilo Pérez-Bustillo is Visiting Professor of Human Rights and Social Justice at College of Law and Psychology Department, and Visiting Scholar, Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, at National Taiwan University (NTU), and affiliated researcher with: the Global Research Programme on Inequality (GRIP, University of Bergen, Norway), Instituto para la Geografía de la Paz in Ciudad Juárez (Mexico), and University of Dayton Law School. Lead author of Human Rights, Hegemony, and Utopia in Latin America: Poverty, Forced Migration and Resistance in Mexico and Colombia (Brill 2017).

Richard Rigby is Emeritus Professor in the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific. After completing his PhD under Professor Wang Gungwu at the ANU, Richard Rigby joined the Australian foreign service. He was a diplomat for some 26 years, with postings in Beijing, Tokyo, London, Shanghai (Consul-General), and Israel (Ambassador). From 2001-2008, he served as Assistant Director-General in the Office of National Assessments, responsible for North and South Asia. He was Founding Director of the China Institute (2008-2018) and Associate Director of the Australian Centre on China in the World (2011-2017) at the ANU.

Craig A. Smith 史峻 is Lecturer of Translation Studies at the University of Melbourne’s Asia Institute. He is the author of Chinese Asianism: 1894—1945 (Harvard University Asia Center, 2021) and co-editor of Translating the Occupation: The Japanese Invasion of China, 1931—45 (UBC Press, 2021). He graduated from Taiwan’s National Chung Cheng University with an MA in Taiwan Literature in 2010 and acquired a PhD in East Asian History from the University of British Columbia in 2014.

Josh Stenberg

Josh Stenberg is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney, specialising in transnational aspects of Chinese-language theatre and literature. He is the author of Minority Stages: Chinese Asianism: 1894—1945 (Harvard University Asia Center, 2021) and co-editor of Translating the Occupation: The Japanese Invasion of China, 1931—45 (UBC Press, 2021). He graduated from Taiwan’s National Chung Cheng University with an MA in Taiwan Literature in 2010 and acquired a PhD in East Asian History from the University of British Columbia in 2014.

Chialan Sharon Wang 王嘉蘭 is visiting assistant professor of Chinese at Oberlin College. Her fields of research include postcolonial studies and Sinophone film and literature. Her current projects include Sinophone native-soil literature and affective representation of history in Sinophone cinema.
From the early 1980s, with the Meilidao or Kaohsiung Incident fresh in the memory, my writing has focused on sex and politics. Fear of being shot or jailed meant that I had to hide any political comment behind symbols and metaphors, as in The Lost Garden where the theme of Taiwanese national identity is cloaked under a love story. This ended up, however, as an enjoyable game and resulted in a novel I was pleased with as a novel, not just as propaganda.

Martial law was lifted in 1987 but we had to wait until the mid-90s to gain a real kind of liberty, so scarce in the hundred years of the Republic of China. Only then could I write critically: The Beigang Incense Burner of Lust, for example, deals with levels of political reality and human nature beyond day-to-day incidents; about women, power, and sex; about the politics of sex.

If I were asked whether I was more at risk writing about politics or sex, I would say politics. But then, sex is never really separate from politics. Writing about both together meant I was in double trouble.

Looking forward, the freedom I have now doesn’t necessarily guarantee good work — but at least there is no one else to blame.

Li Ang 李昂 was born in Lu-Kang, Taiwan, 1952. After graduating from Chinese Culture University, Taiwan with a degree in philosophy, she get a master degree in Theatre at the University of Oregon. Beginning her writing career at the age of 16, she has published numerous novels and collections of short stories centering on Taiwan’s patriarchal hegemony, women’s power, female subjectivity and politics. Translated into different languages and published worldwide, she was awarded the “Chevalier de l’Ordre Arts et des Lettres” by the French Minister of Culture and Communication in recognition of her outstanding contribution to world literature in 2004. Her latest Japanese translation novel is 我们的谎言 (Chinese 聽從我) published in 2021. Her latest novel 《密室 | 殺人》(Murder in secret chamber) was published in September 2020.

Shuge Wei 李昂 is lecturer of Chinese history and Australian Research Council Discovery Early Research Fellow in the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University. Her research focuses on Sino-Japanese War, history of China’s international propaganda, grassroots movements in China and Taiwan. She is the author of News under Fire: China’s Propaganda War against Japan in the English-Language Press, 1928-1941, and co-editor of The Living Politics of Self-Help Movements in East Asia.

Chee-Hann Wu 吳稚涵 is a Ph.D. candidate in Drama at the University of California, Irvine. She holds an MA in Drama from the University of Alberta, Canada. Her research focuses on puppetry and its ability to reenact/retell memories, experiences and trauma that have been suppressed. Chee-Hann’s dissertation research uses puppetry as a lens to look at Taiwan’s cultural and sociopolitical environment, colonial past, as well as its path to democracy. She is also drawn to the intersections between art-making and scholarship, and performance and activism.

Justin Wu is a PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA). His research interests include nationalism and identity formation, social movements, and pan-Asianism in 20th century East Asia. His dissertation explores anti-Japan sentiment and the dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea since the 1970s.

Chia-rong Wu 吳家榮 is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Global, Cultural and Language Studies at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. He specializes in Sinophone studies with a focus on Taiwan literature and film. His research interests include ghost-island literature, strange fiction, Aboriginal literature, and ecocriticism. Dr Wu is the author of Supernatural Sinophone Taiwan and Beyond (Cambria Press, 2016) and Remapping the Contested Sinosphere: The Cross-cultural Landscape and Ethnoscape of Taiwan (Cambria Press, 2020).
1970s–80s Taiwan: What Led to the End of Martial Law?

This lecture offers insights into the domestic factors and international politics that ended the martial law period in Taiwan.

Chia-wen Calvin Yao 姚嘉文 is Senior Adviser to President Tsai Ing-wen and an Associate Professor of law at National Tsing-Hua University. Yao studied law at National Taiwan University and passed the bar exam in 1966. On his return from University of California at Berkeley as a visiting scholar, Yao co-founded the “Legal Advice Center for Citizens” (平民法律服務中心) in 1972. In 1979, he was arrested and served seven years in prison for his involvement in the Kaohsiung Incident, a crackdown on pro-democracy movements in Kaohsiung. Yao has served as the Chairperson of the Democratic Progressive Party (1987-88), a member of the Legislative Assembly (1993-96), and President of the Examination Yuan (2002-08).

Rethinking Modernist and Realist Photography in 1970s Taiwan

This talk attempts to re-examine modernist as well as realist photography in Taiwan in the 1970s, two major photographic practices during the later period of Taiwan's martial law era. Contextualising these two approaches of photographic practice within this specific political milieu, I argue that both practices are outcomes of the repressive political atmosphere, and that their concepts substantially differ from those originated in the West.

For the style of photographic modernism, leading figures such as Chang Chao-Tang and Hsieh Chun-Te began to create such photographic images in the 1960s, and some kind of ‘modernist’ touch continued to be their artistic signature from then on. But, expressions of absurdity, uneasiness or desolation in their works could be understood, I propose, as a means of resistance against or escape from the suffocating political reality of the time. This is to say, their images were not so much representations or contemplations of a highly industrialised/urbanised society, as we may see in the works of many Western modernist photographers during the early to mid-20th century.

In terms of the realist photography of this decade in Taiwan, such an approach was encouraged partly by the Native Literature Movement (鄉土文學運動) and Campaign for Cultural Formation (文化造型運動) in the second half of the 1970s, in which aesthetic paradigms started to shift from the Western or universal to the local. More importantly, when the legitimacy of the governing KMT regime appeared unstable due to its diplomatic defeats at that time, a collective need for knowing reality or truth among society surged. I suggest, however, Taiwanese realist photography can still be differentiated from such practices in the West under the core notion of positivism.

Kuo Li-Hsin 郭力昕 is a critic of photography and documentary film in Taiwan. He received his PhD in the Department of Media and Communications at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and is currently Professor and Dean at the College of Communication, National Chengchi University, Taiwan. His publications in Chinese include: Writing Photography (1998), More Writings on Photography (2013), Interrogating Reality: Politics and De-politicisation of Documentary Film (2014), and Manufacturing Meaning: Discourse, Power and Cultural Politics in Realist Photography (2018).
In the last decade, the long legacy of Taiwan's period of authoritarian rule (1949-1987) has moved to the centre of Taiwan's political and cultural imaginary. A history of political violence that had remained occluded in the 1990s and 2000s after the end of martial law by Taiwan's narrativisation of democratisation has traversed the politico-juridical and socio-cultural to animate a wide range of forms of cultural expression, politics and policy.

Also in the last decade, the People's Republic of China has turned towards a retrograde reassertion of totalising CCP party-state power under party chairman Xi Jinping. Invoking its characteristic model of machinic instrumental power over all expressions of subjectivity and corporeality in the name of a perfectible system, the PRC party-state has set about systematically controlling resistance and opposition, from Xinjiang to Hong Kong, and liberals and commerce. Taiwan is central to the party-state's vision for China's future.

This keynote address explores the way the Xi era is reactivating the salience of the martial law period in Taiwan. From being an open-ended exploration of democratic potential and socio-political justice, the threat from the PRC is remaking the memory and history of martial law as an unmediated potentiality. The address suggests that the memory of martial law in Taiwan is being mobilised as political force oriented outward to Taiwan's international and transnational relationships in culture, social life and politics, and ultimately as a source for national resistance to Taiwan's erasure as a place unto itself by the PRC party-state.

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