

# 臺灣視覺文化研究的發展概況

Contemporary Visual Culture Studies in Taiwan

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## 摘要

視覺文化是近年來相當風行的學術研究方向，從某個角度來看，也可說是一個流行詞彙。廣義的說，視覺文化研究是一門跨越文化研究、藝術史和人類學的文化研究路向，亟力於說明那些仰賴視覺影像表達的文化層面議題，最初的研究焦點比較集中在電影理論、電視研究上，近年來觸角逐漸延伸到電玩遊戲研究、卡通動畫、傳統媒材的繪畫、廣告影像，網際網路的視覺傳達設計等，同時也都能提出相對的文化探討成果。中文學界的圖像研究與視覺文化研究，早已蔚為風潮。本文論述：視覺文化一詞在臺灣經常被用來指涉更廣義的視覺活動與各類文化展演事物，而非關注比較深刻的社會文化課題。然而臺灣學者確實已經逐步掌握視覺文化的社會學面向，其動向值得注意。

關鍵字：視覺文化、影像學、圖像轉向



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## 壹、緒論

近三十年來，歐美藝術學研究圍繞在多元族群特色和多元文化氛圍之中，研究者一方面企圖衝決西方文化的藩籬，藉以顯示出個別研究者的文化觀看差異與豐富程度，另一方面又試圖在這種差異當中建立起新的文化認同。宏觀的說，這是一個受到全球化腳步衝擊的思維方向，而所思維的重點在於建構資訊和媒體閱聽經驗的基本範域—影像與圖像。然而這種多元、多面向、多學科、多視角的後結構主義式研究觀點，畢竟預設了極其困難的跨學科對話與理解，研究者一方面必須對自己和他人所從事的學科具有精確的認識，另一方面還必須從彼此的差異當中求取相互成長的資源，並且以其觀察社會的視覺層面，穿透這些影像的傳達方式與傳達訊息。

在這些研究動向中，視覺文化（Visual culture）是近年來相當風行的學術研究彙稱，從某個角度來看，也可說是一個流行詞彙。廣義的說，視覺文化研究是一門跨越文化研究、藝術史和人類學的文化研究路向，研究者亟力於說明仰賴視覺影像表達的文化層面議題，最初的研究焦點比較集中在電影理論、電視研究上，研究者近年來逐漸將觸角延伸到電玩遊戲研究、卡通動畫、傳統媒材的繪畫、廣告影像，網際網路的視覺傳達設計……，同時也都能提出相對的文化探討成果。

相對來說，「視覺文化」一詞在臺灣學術界和文化界的使用頻率同樣極高，作為研究路向，它重新範塑了以往在各個學科邊陲地帶的研究領域，譬如藝術史與設計史交疊的各種研究課題，媒體研究和社會研究共同跨足的各種議題。作為流行名詞，視覺文化一詞的威力幾乎和「藝術」、「美學」不相上下，常被書寫者拿來取代「圖像」和「視覺藝術」這些傳統詞彙，以示進步。無論從概念使用、研究材料與對象的指定，都還面臨各種蒐集、彙整和討論的需求。因此，視覺文化與視覺文化研究在臺灣所面對的問題，與其說重建，不如說新建。

## 貳、視覺文化研究與傳統藝術史研究的差異

「視覺文化」此一概念充滿歧義與曖昧。先就西方藝術史方法學觀點來看，德國藝術史界在20世紀初就已經投入視覺研究，研究者從李格爾、瓦堡、本雅明到帕諾夫斯基，相繼不絕。但是「視覺文化」概念的萌形，仍有待1970年代西方學界開始討論圖像轉向與文化轉向。若從藝術史研究者的角度來看，視覺文化在藝術史中的接受度還要更晚一些，藝術史學者Svetlana Alpers在1970年代主導「新藝術史研究」時曾經關心此一概念，1983年討論荷蘭繪畫發展時，同時也借用藝術史學者Michael Baxandall 1972年「時代之眼」的概念，開始指稱荷蘭的繪畫是「荷蘭視覺文化」（Dutch visual culture）（Alpers, 1983），其後，「視覺與視覺性」（vision and visibility）的主題研究，逐漸蔚為風潮。從學科研究組織的實際發展來看，視覺文化被認定為和1970年代興起的文化研究（cultural studies）息息相關，在此社會學研究的風潮領導下，各類視覺文化專書選集，乃至於以視覺文化研究為主題的學術性期刊也紛紛成立，英、美各大學更相繼設置視覺文化研究的碩士學位課程。與視覺文化研究平行的德國影像學（Bildwissenschaft）學科建立於1990年代初期，其內容與議題涵蓋量更大。<sup>1</sup>

1. 影像學（Bildwissenschaft）在全球研究的通用英文翻譯方式是最讓他們難以接受的「image science」；某些英美學者則將影像學直接看成「視覺文化」或者「視覺文化研究」的德國式說法（如J. Elkins和N. Mirzoeff）；法國學者將影像學當作「媒體研究」（Médiologie）的一環。中文直譯應為「圖像科學」、「圖像學」、「影像科學」、「影像學」。但是前三者或與其他相關藝術學門名稱衝突，或者涵蓋面太緊，因此我採取和「藝術學」（Kunstwissenschaft）相近的「影像學」翻譯。



圖像學、視覺文化研究和影像學這三個學門，無論在基本概念、應用對象與研究課題上都和視覺、圖像相關，但是它們所關注的面向與研究貢獻仍有差別。從學術性格上來說：圖像學是歷史意識的產物，也是藝術史學方法論的一支，因此最終會導向於對藝術史的說明；視覺文化是社會意識的產物，屬於文化研究的一支，最終引向對社會文化的說明；影像學概念在理解上多元而曖昧，一方面和視覺文化等義，另一個主軸則可歸屬於科學意識或者認知意識的產物，基本上由各種具有差異性的科學研究法所組成，這些研究法相互支援、分合、對話或對抗。從實際發表成果來看，幾乎與藝術學（Kunstwissenschaft）疊合。

這些學門在歐美乃至於本國高教體系中都有不同的定位，圖像學在1960年代之後，已成為藝術史科系的必備課程。然而有些學者認為：圖像科學和視覺文化研究並不是一個固定的學門，也不能被視為單純的學術運動或思潮，而更好被理解為一個集合概念，它們是許多在內容、方法上都大不相同的探索方式的總稱，這些探索的主題當然都集結在視覺、圖像和影像，但是各種方法之間卻只有鬆泛的家族相似性。<sup>2</sup>

### 參、視覺文化研究在臺灣的引進

臺灣引進視覺文化研究的時間約略與中國同步，從學科研究組織的實際發展來看，視覺文化被認定為和1970年代興起的文化研究（cultural studies）息息相關，在此社會學研究的風潮領導下，各類視覺文化專書選集，乃至於以視覺文化研究為主題的學術性期刊也紛紛成立，英、美各大學更相繼設置視覺文化研究的碩士學位課程。由 Stuart Hall 指導編寫的《視覺文化讀本》（*Visual culture: the reader.*）（1999）是Open University 社會科學碩士課程「影像與視覺文化」（The Image and Visual Culture）指定教材。依據視覺的文化、攝影的意義、觀看與主體性三大主題，編選33篇相關論文。此書幾乎成為全球視覺研究的基本文獻，在20年前影響了中國和臺灣學界對視覺文化的基本認識。

從斯圖亞特·霍爾《表徵—文化表象與意指實踐》的譯本問世之後，羅崗，顧錚主編的《視覺文化讀本》和陳永國《視覺文化研究讀本》等教科書和論文選集相繼出版，這不但是閱讀熱潮的延續，也是思考議題的建構發展。「視覺文化」到「視覺文化研究」，書名的考究，看來絕不只是為了出版市場上的區隔，而是更多的顯現出中文世界對西方當代理論理解的發展。但是在中國日常語言或者高教體系的教學課程中，「視覺文化」一詞所指涉的內容泰半偏向Malcolm Barnard所謂的泛稱的視覺文化（Visual culture in a weak sense），主要仍偏重於影像和設計的認識。<sup>3</sup>

2. 影像學（Bildwissenschaft）在全球研究的通用英文翻譯方式是最讓他們難以接受的“image science”：某些英美學者則將影像學直接看成“視覺文化”或者“視覺文化研究”的德國式說法（如J. Elkins和N. Mirzoeff）；法國學者將影像學當作“媒體研究”（Médiologie）的一環。中文直譯應為「圖像科學」、「圖像學」、「影像科學」、「影像學」。但是前三者或與其他相關藝術學門名稱衝突，或者涵蓋面太繁，因此我採取和「藝術學」（Kunstwissenschaft）相近的「影像學」翻譯。

3. 巴納德區分強性視覺文化和弱性視覺文化，強性視覺文化／強義的視覺文化（Visual culture of strong sense）指「視覺文化所要建構和傳達的價值與認同」，特別強調視覺文化的文化研究層面；弱性視覺文化／泛稱的視覺文化（Visual culture of weak sense）則更關心「視覺面向……特別是那些人類將其視為文化與社會生活的一部份來生產與消費的無數的二度空間或三度空間可視事物」，可以視為視覺和影像的同義詞。換言之，學者可能會使用強義的「視覺文化」一辭，藉以保持文化研究的學科色彩，關心視覺文化的研究對象、形成與實踐。但是網路和大眾書寫者會用泛稱式的「視覺文化」一辭來描述所有的視覺形式。見Malcolm Barnard, *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture*. Palgrave: 2001, pp.1-2



臺版的視覺文化教科書通常和設計叢書並置，換言之，視覺文化一詞在臺灣經常被用來指涉更廣義的視覺活動與各類文化展演事物，而非關注比較深刻的社會文化課題。不過多位臺灣學者在論述中確實都能夠精確掌握視覺文化的社會學面向，也值得注意。簡言之，臺灣在視覺文化研究方法論的討論上不及中國廣泛，但是在實際研究的成果上更為精確。

其中值得注意的是鄭斐文在英國Lancaster 大學的博士研究主題，從文化分析的角度探討國族主義與想像共同體的形成，從「創傷歷史記憶與國族認同」角度切入，並以再現國族紀念文化的視覺媒體為主要分析對象。此一研究方向繼承了英國伯明罕文化研究的傳統、性別研究與視覺文化研究，近期從身體的科技研究角度，探討「身體、影像與科學」的關聯性，她對於現代性、身體與視覺化議題的研究，誠可謂英國視覺文化研究知識系統在臺灣的發用。早期視覺文化研究者吸取法蘭克福學派對於文化工業的批判思想，因此多半針對資本主義大眾文化和流行文化提出相應的批評。近期則環繞特定的社會理論主題提出論辯，對他們來說，視覺圖像只是圖像使用者對主體性、差異政治、認同、知識……態度的伸張。鄭斐文的研究在此一方面著力甚深。

另一個大型的研究動向反映在菊池裕子主編的《折射的現代性：殖民臺灣的視覺文化與認同》（*Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan*）中<sup>4</sup>，此書共收錄九篇論文，主要分為三部分，第一部份收錄島津直子、廖新田、渡邊俊夫、顏娟英論述臺灣風景的政治意義的文章，第二部份，小島薰、賴明珠論述女性形象。第三部份，傅朝卿、胡家瑜、菊池裕子談建築與工藝性。菊池裕子從「殖民現代性」框架檢視東亞殖民發展的歷史脈絡，借用「折射的東方主義」，說明日本殖民主義本身折射了歐美的殖民主義，九位作者各自提供關於日治時期臺灣視覺文化的分析，深刻描述了臺灣視覺文化在日本殖民帶來的跨文化的複雜性中浮現的狀況。

## 肆、臺灣的視覺文化研究相關機構

近年來，臺灣高教體系內陸續成立視覺文化研究團隊，臺灣聯合大學系統的視覺文化研究群，包括交通大學電影研究中心、中央大學視覺文化研究中心與陽明大學視覺文化研究團隊。他們認為視覺文化為文化研究範疇裡重要的整合研究領域，從文化與社會的角度詮釋各種視覺的文化文本，包括美術、攝影、電影、電視、廣告、時尚、數位影像、圖像敘事等等。主要研究方向為：

- 一、藝術史與電影研究中的認同議題：以藝術史與電影研究為軸心，探索近代視覺文化中的認同議題，包括國族、性別、階級、性傾向、離散想像等等。
- 二、全球化視野下的歐美與臺灣／華語視覺文化交流

陽明大學視覺文化研究所則於2013年成立，在學術科組上與歐美大學從1990年代陸續成立的視覺文化研究系所接軌，是臺灣第一個「視覺文化研究所」，其學術定位在於連結攝影研究、電影研究、藝術史、視覺社會學，但與技術研究的傳統領域區隔。以近代（十七世紀迄今）為研究時期，探求從臺灣／華語到歐美視覺文化的跨領域整合研究。

4. Kikuchi Yuko (eds.) *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007.

這兩個研究單位的建立，未必能夠讓視覺文化研究和藝術史研究檢別開來，然而卻能清楚化的把媒體和影像作為關切走向。這兩所視覺文化學習機制的建構，若和Margaret Dikovitskaya在2005年發表的《視覺文化》中所描繪的美國大學視覺文化研究科系成立情形比對，也有相近之處，都是以藝術史、文學理論、電影、媒體做為跨學科整併的方向。<sup>5</sup>

## 伍、臺灣的視覺文化研究相關活動

中央研究院歷史語言研究所2010年舉辦的「醫療與視覺文化」國際學術研討會以及2011年國立臺灣大學藝術史研究所舉辦「宮廷與地方—乾隆時期之視覺文化國際研討會」，可謂近幾年來較大型的視覺文化研究會議，然而前者傾向於圖像學研究，後者則更多的顯示文化唯物主義和文化史研究的關懷。

次就視覺文化中文研究著作出版概況來看，中文學界的圖像研究與視覺文化研究，早已蔚為風潮。80年代以來的大陸圖像研究者——無論當初是以藝術史、藝術學或者美學之名發言的學者群，先從全面性的貢布里希著作翻譯開端，漸次發展到李格爾、沃爾夫林、帕諾夫斯基的原典翻譯與研究，幾部法國圖像學專著隨後問世，學界更幾近同步的譯介了布萊森、巴克桑德爾等人的文獻與方法論叢，這替緊接其後的圖像轉向討論和視覺文化研究思潮奠定了相對穩定的基礎。

然而在臺灣的出版動向略有不同。除了一般性的視覺文化導論翻譯出版外，臺灣的視覺文化又做為視覺藝術教育的新時代版姿態出現。2005年，趙惠玲出版《視覺文化與藝術教育》，引進Paul Duncum的視覺文化藝術教育（Visual Culture Art Education, VCAE）觀點。2005年教育部公布「藝術教育政策白皮書」，規劃為期四年（民國95年至98年）之國家藝術教育發展藍圖，藉由五項推動目標、22項發展策略及84項行動方案，其中已有視覺文化藝術教育觀點。2006年由趙惠玲等編輯之《高中藝術領域課程輔助教學參考手冊1—美術》，〈第二篇 當代藝術教育思潮：視覺文化藝術教育〉以20頁篇幅介紹視覺文化藝術教育。Kerry Freedman 2003年的《教導視覺文化：課程、美學及藝術的社會生活》（Teaching Visual Culture: Curriculum, Aesthetics, and the Social Life of Art）一書由陳瓊花等於2017年譯成出版。由此可見臺灣藝術教育界在引進視覺文化的努力，不過，這個面向的努力，基本上仍舊以藝術籠罩視覺文化，將視覺文化作為藝術的新名字，雖然關切多元文化的認識，而整體學科屬性仍然和藝術社會學無所區隔。

另一個值得觀察的特點是：由於臺灣的設計研究和設計史研究已經有三十年以上的持續研究發表和成果，因此其中有一些對圖文設計、視覺傳達設計的研究，已經和視覺文化的議題重合。譬如姚村雄《釀造時代：1895~1970臺灣酒類標貼設計》（2004）、《設計本事—日治時期（1895-1945）台灣美術設計案內》（2005）、《圖解台灣製造：日治時期商品包裝設計》（2013），系統

5. Margaret Dikovitskaya相當清楚的描述了羅徹斯特大學、芝加哥大學、加州大學歐文分校和紐約州立大學石溪分校這四所美國視覺文化研究重鎮的人事異動、課程方向與發展藍圖。據她介紹，美國目前不少以視覺文化研究作為學術號召的大學，當初多半因為藝術史系或者社會學系招生不易，只好和媒體或電影科系整併，轉型成新的學程，以求存活。事實證明，這些科系如今已經成為文化研究的先鋒部隊。Margaret Dikovitskaya, *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005

性研究了日治時期的商標與視覺面貌，但是姚村雄在著作中認定自己進行的工作是藝術社會學研究或者設計文化調查。與此相近，邱武德《金光啓示錄：台灣金光藝術起生》（2010）探討了民間視覺的變遷，但是他將自己的著作定位為臺灣文化美學的探索，而不以視覺文化名之。

## 陸、結論

歐洲學者Lambert Wiesing 和美國學者 W. T. J. Mitchell 曾經針對視覺文化的學科特質，問了幾乎相同的問題<sup>6</sup>：

- 一、視覺文化研究是不是一門全新而獨立的知識學科？可以像人類學或者社會學一般作為大學學術講授的對象？
- 二、視覺文化研究是不是哲學學門或藝術史學門下的一個部份？
- 三、視覺文化研究有沒有可能是新生的媒體研究或者文化學的一支？

若以臺灣的文化研究進程來看，上述問題也頗為適用。有鑒於此，我想提出更直接的問題和表述：視覺文化會不會根本不是一門固定的學科？而是一個集合概念，是各種圖像與文化關係探索方式的總稱。換句話說，無論西方或臺灣，視覺文化研究都是許多在內容和方法上大不相同的研究進路，這些研究進路之間只有非常鬆泛的家族相似性，而沒有其他的學術連結。因此，視覺文化研究最好應該被視為一個複數型態的概念來掌握，基本上存在著各種不同類型的視覺文化認識與視覺文化研究。這種繁花亂錦的學術風景，將來也勢必成為常態。

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6.W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago 2005.以及 Wiesing, Lambert, *Artifizielle Präsenz. Studien zur Philosophie des Bildes*. Suhrkamp, 2005, S.9.



### Abstract

Visual culture has become a popular research subject in recent years. Under certain context, it could also be treated as a popular term. In general, visual culture studies combines cultural studies, art history and anthropology with an effort to elaborate on cultural issues expressed with visual images. Its initial focus was more on film theories and television studies. In recent years, it has extended to video game studies, cartoons and animations, painting of traditional media, images of advertisement, and visual communication design on the internet, providing fruitful cultural achievement. In the Chinese academia, image studies and visual culture studies have become a trend for some time. In Taiwan, the term “visual culture” often refers to the more general visual activities and cultural performances with little focus on profound social and cultural issues. However, Taiwanese scholars have studied visual culture more with a sociological perspective and have developed some potential prospects.

**Keywords:** visual culture, Bildwissenschaft, iconic turn

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## I. Introduction

In the past 30 years, art studies in Europe and North America revolved around diverse ethnicities and multiculturalism. On one hand, researchers have tried to break through the Western cultural barriers and showcase the difference and richness within the cultural perspectives of different researchers. On the other hand, they have tried to build a new cultural identity within the difference. In a greater sense, our zeitgeist has been impacted by globalization with an emphasis on information construction and media reception, which are based on videos and images. This post-structuralist perspective is diverse, transdisciplinary, multi-dimensional and multi-perspectives. This transdisciplinary interaction and understanding is extremely difficult. Researchers need to have accurate understanding of not only their own discipline but also others'. They need to learn from the difference between one another and grow from it. With their observation on the visual aspect of society, they dig into the expressions and messages of these images.

In these studies, visual culture has become a popular research subject in the past few years. Under certain context, it could also be treated as a popular term. In general, the study of visual culture combines cultural studies, art history and anthropology. Researchers make an effort to elaborate cultural issues expressed with visual images. Their initial focus was more on film theories and television studies. In recent years, it has extended to video game studies, cartoons and animations, painting of traditional media, images of advertisement, and visual communication design on the internet, providing fruitful cultural achievement.

Relatively, the term "visual culture" has been used very frequently in the academia and the cultural scene of Taiwan. As a guideline of studies, it has reshaped peripheral studies in several disciplines such as the overlapping fields of art history and design history, or issues which were covered by both media studies and social studies. As a popular term, the term "visual culture" is almost as powerful as "arts" and "aesthetics." Writers often use this term to replace the traditional terms of "images" and "visual arts" for its more advanced concept. Its usage, research materials and subjects are still undergoing collection, sorting and discussion. Therefore, visual culture and the studies of visual culture in Taiwan do not need reconstruction but new construction.

## II. The Difference between the Studies of Visual Culture and of Traditional Art History

"Visual culture" is ambiguous and vague. On review of the methodology in Western art history, artists in the German art scene of the early 20th century such as Alois Riegl, Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin and Erwin Panofsky had already probed into visual studies. Yet, the shaping of "visual culture" began in the 1970s when Western scholars started to discuss the iconic turn and the cultural turn. Researchers of art history found that visual culture was acknowledged later in art history. Art historian Svetlana Alpers led a study of new art history in the 1970s, which covered this concept. In 1983, when discussing the development of Dutch painting, Alpers applied the concept of the period eye devised by Michael Baxandall in 1972. He referred to Dutch painting as Dutch visual culture (Alpers, 1983). Ever since, the subject "vision and visibility" have gained it popularity. As for the development of academic institutes, visual culture is deemed closely related to cultural studies emerging in the 1970s. Following the trend of sociological studies, academic books and anthologies on visual culture appeared one after another as well as academic periodicals of the same theme. Universities in the UK and the US started to provide Master degrees in visual culture studies. Parallel to visual culture studies was the German Bildwissenschaft established in early 1990s, which cover even greater content and issues.<sup>1</sup>

1. The universal English translation of Bildwissenschaft around the world is the least acknowledged "image science." Some British and American scholars such as J. Elkins and N. Mirzoeff see Bildwissenschaft as the German term of "visual culture" or "visual culture studies." French scholars see it as a part of the médiologie. The literal Chinese translation would be 圖像科學, 圖像學, 影像科學 and 影像學. The first three either are preexisting terms of art studies or share meanings too close to other terms, which is why the translation "影像學" which is similar to the Chinese translation of "Kunstwissenschaft" is used here.

The three subjects, iconology, visual culture studies and Bildwissenschaft, all have something to do with vision and images in their basic concepts, applications and researched issues. Yet, their focal points and contributions differ. There is difference in their meanings in academia. Iconology was a product of historical consciousness as well as a method of interpreting the history of art, which inevitably leads to the elaboration of art history. Visual culture was a product of social consciousness. It is a part of cultural studies and inevitably leads to the elaboration of society and culture. The meaning Bildwissenschaft is diverse and ambiguous. On some level, it shares the same meaning of visual culture. It is also a product of scientific and cognitive consciousness. Basically, it is formed with different scientific methods, which support, include, exclude, interact and counteract one another. Its actual achievement almost overlaps Kunstwissenschaft.

All these subjects serve different purposes in Taiwanese high education system. Iconology has become an essential course in departments of art history since the 1960s. Some scholars think that iconology and visual culture studies are not fixed subjects and cannot be treated as pure academic movements or trends of thought. It is better to understand them as ensemble concepts. They are general terms which explore vastly different contents with different approaches. Their themes of course concern vision, images and videos. Yet their approaches only share remote similarities.<sup>2</sup>

### III. The Introduction of Visual Culture Studies to Taiwan

Visual culture studies were introduced to Taiwan and China around the same time. As for the development of academic institutes, visual culture is deemed closely related to cultural studies emerging in the 1970s. Following the trend of sociological studies, academic books and anthologies on visual culture appeared one after another as well as academic periodicals of the same theme. Universities in the UK and the US started to provide Master degrees in visual culture studies. *Visual Culture: the Reader*, edited by Stuart Hall, was a prescribed textbook of “The Image and Visual Culture,” a graduate social science course offered by the Open University. 33 related papers were selected under three major themes, “The Culture of the Visual”, “Regulating Photographic Meaning” and “Looking and Subjectivity.” The book served as an introduction to global visual studies and influenced the basic understanding of Chinese and Taiwanese scholars on visual culture 20 years ago.

The publication of the Chinese translation of *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* by Stuart Hall was followed by that of *Visual Culture: the Reader* (視覺文化讀本), edited by Gang Luo (羅崗) and Zheng Gu (顧錚) and *Visual Culture Studies: A Reader* (視覺文化研究讀本) by Yong-Guo Chen (陳永國). Many textbooks and collections of essays were published afterwards. They were not only the extension of the growing readership of the subject but the development of the thoughts and issues. The titles, *Visual Culture* and *Visual Culture Studies*, served more than the purpose of differentiation in the publishing market. They showed the evolving understanding of a Western contemporary theory in the Chinese context. In China however, the term “visual culture,” when used in a daily scene or in the high education curriculum, mostly refers to visual culture in a weak sense introduced by Malcolm Barnard,

2. In the past 20 years, publications related to visual culture have been of abundance. *Visual Culture* by Margaret Dikovitskaya published in 2005 offers an detailed elaboration of visual culture studies. Through literature review, surveys of experts, oral history and interviews of scholars, *Visual Culture* investigated the history, structure and methodology of visual culture studies from several aspects. Dikovitskaya cross-interviewed several lead scholars of visual culture, such as Douglas Crimp, Michael Ann Holly, Martin Jay, Nicholas Mirzoeff, W.J.T. Mitchell, asking their definitions and opinions of visual culture. She utilized ethnography to capture vividly the cultural turns in contemporary art history and the emerging of visual studies. Dikovitskaya, Margaret, *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn*. MIT Press, 2005, Cambridge.



which focuses on knowledge of images and design.<sup>3</sup>

Taiwanese textbooks of visual culture are often placed next to books of design. In other words, the term “visual culture” often applies to more general visual activities and cultural performance with little focus on profound social and cultural issues. However, it is noteworthy that many Taiwanese scholars still grasped precisely the sociological perspective of visual culture in their discourse. In short, the discussion of the methodology of visual culture in Taiwan may not be as extensive as in China. The actual achievement of research is yet more precise.

Fei-Wen Cheng’s (鄭斐文) PhD research at the University of Lancaster, UK discusses the formation of nationalism and imagined communities through cultural analysis. With focus on trauma, memory and national identity, her research mainly analyzes the visual media which represented national commemorative culture. It followed cultural studies of the University of Birmingham, UK, taking in its traditions, gender studies and visual culture studies. Recently, she has been studying bodies from a technological perspective, discussing the relation among “body, images and science.” Her research on modernity, bodies and visualization can be deemed as the application of British visual culture studies in Taiwan. Earlier researchers of visual culture absorbed the critical thinking against the cultural industry from the Frankfurt School. Most of them made related criticisms against capitalist mass culture and pop culture. The recent argumentation revolves around certain social theories. Visual images are used to express subjectivities, the politics of difference, identities, knowledge and attitude, which is the focus of Cheng’s research.

Another major research is reflected in *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan*,<sup>4</sup> which collects nine essays in three major parts. Part 1 consists of essays on the political meanings of Taiwanese landscape by Naoko Shimazu, Hsin-Tien Liao (廖新田), Toshio Watanabe and Chuan-Ying Yen (顏娟英). Part 2 consists of essays on images about women by Kaoru Kojima and Ming-Chu Lai (賴明珠). Part 3 consists of essays on architecture and craftsmanship by Chao-Ching Fu (傅朝卿), Chia-Yu Hu (胡家瑜) and Yuko Kikuchi. Yuko Kikuchi examines the historical context of colonialism in East Asia with a framework of colonial modernity. She uses retracted orientalism to discuss that Japanese colonialism has retracted European and American colonialism. Nine authors all provide their own analysis of Taiwanese visual culture during Japanese colonization, which vividly depicts Taiwanese visual culture in a transcultural complexity introduced by Japanese colonialism.

#### IV. Institutes of Visual Culture in Taiwan

In recent years, research groups of visual culture were formed in the high education system of Taiwan. The visual culture research cluster of the University System of Taiwan includes the Film Studies Center, National Chiao Tung University, the Visual Culture Research Center, National Central University and the Visual Culture Studies Group, National Yang-Ming University. They consider visual culture an important integrated research field within cultural studies. Visual cultural text is interpreted from cultural and social

3. Barnard distinguishes between visual culture of strong sense and visual culture of weak sense. Visual culture of strong sense refers to “the values and identities constructed and conveyed by visual culture” with special emphasis on the research aspect of it. Visual culture of weak sense focuses more on “the visual aspect...especially the numerous visible items and events which exist in two or three dimensions and are produced and consumed as a part of human culture and life.” It is synonymous to vision and images. In other words, scholars might use the strong sense of visual culture to keep its aspect of cultural studies with focus on its research subjects, formation and practices. Online or public writers would use the general sense of visual culture to refer to all visual forms. Barnard, Malcolm, *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture*. Palgrave, 2001, pp.1-2.

4. *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan*. Edited by Kikuchi Yuko, University of Hawaii Press, 2007, Honolulu.

aspects, including arts, photography, films, television, advertisement, fashion, digital images and graphic narratives. Their main research subjects are as follows.

1. Identities in art history and film studies: With art history and film studies as the core, identities in modern visual culture are explored, including nations, genders, classes, sexual orientations and diasporic imagination.
2. The interaction between Western visual culture from Europe and North America and Chinese visual culture from Taiwan.

The Graduate Institute of Studies in Visual Cultures of National Yang-Ming University was established in 2013. Its curriculum is similar to that of the visual culture studies graduate institutes established ever since the 1990s in European and American universities. It is the first graduate institute of visual culture studies in Taiwan with an academic aim at combining photography studies, film studies, art history and visual sociology. It differentiates itself from the traditional field which focuses skills and techniques. The modern period (from the 17th century) is studied to explore the transdisciplinary research integrating Western visual culture from Europe and North America and Chinese visual culture from Taiwan.

The establishment of the two research institutes may not distinguish distinctively between visual culture studies and art history studies but its focus is clearly shifted to media and images. Compared the establishment of the two visual culture education institutes to that of the visual culture studies graduate institutes in American universities discussed in *Visual Culture* by Margaret Dikovitskaya in 2005, some similarities are shared with the transdisciplinary integration of art history, literary theories, films and media.<sup>5</sup>

## V. Activities Related to Visual Culture Studies in Taiwan

In 2010, the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica held the international conference, “Medicine and Visual Culture.” In 2011, the Graduate Institute of Art History, National Taiwan University held the conference, “Visual Culture in the Era of Emperor Qianlong.” These were the two major conferences on visual culture in recent years. The former paid more attention to iconology, while the latter more to cultural materialism and cultural history.

On review of Chinese publications of visual culture studies, image studies and visual culture studies have become a trend in the Chinese academia. Ever since 1980s, Chinese researchers of iconology, whether in the form of art history, art studies or aesthetics, started from the translation of Gombrich’s works to the translation and research of the works of Riegl, Wölfflin and Panofsky. These were followed by some French publications of iconology. Shortly after, the scholars translated and introduced documents and methods by Bryson and Baxandall, which set a stable foundation for the later discussion of iconic turns and thoughts of visual culture studies.

In Taiwan, the publications evolved a bit differently. Besides the translated publications of general introductions to visual culture, visual culture in Taiwan took an educational form in a new era. In 2005, Hwei-Ling Chao (趙惠玲) published *Visual Culture and Art Education* (視覺文化與藝術教育) and introduced

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5. Margaret Dikovitskaya depicts clearly the faculty development, curricula and prospects of the four major American graduate institutes of the University of Rochester, the University of Chicago, the University of California, Irvine and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. According to her introduction, many universities in the US with an academic specialty in visual culture integrated their art history or sociology departments, which could not attract enough students, to media or film departments to offer new programs in order to survive. It is proven that these programs have become the leading ones in cultural studies. Dikovitskaya, Margaret, *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn*. MIT Press, 2005, Cambridge.



visual culture art education by Paul Duncum. The same year, the Ministry of Education announced “The White Paper of Art Education Policies” (藝術教育政策白皮書) and proposed a four-year plan of national art education (2006-2009) with five goals, 22 strategies and 84 projects, including the education of visual culture. In 2006, *The Teacher's Manual of High School Art Courses 1: Fine Arts* (高中藝術領域課程輔助教學參考手冊1-美術) introduced visual culture education with 20 pages in “Chapter 2 Contemporary Art Education Trends: Visual Culture Education” (第二篇 當代藝術教育思潮：視覺文化藝術教育). *Teaching Visual Culture: Curriculum, Aesthetics, and the Social Life of Art* written by Kerry Freedman in 2003 was translated by Chiung-Hua Chen (陳瓊花) for publication in 2017. It is clear that art educators in Taiwan have been dedicated to introducing visual culture. Yet, their contribution to visual culture is still overshadowed by fine arts with visual culture being treated as the new name of fine arts. It may have dealt with multiculturalism, but its overall academic attributes are no different from art sociology.

It is noteworthy that research of design and design history has been around for more than 30 years with fruitful results. Research on graphic design and visual communication design overlaps the issues covered by visual culture. For example, three books by Tsun-Hsiung Yao (姚村雄), *Brewing Age: The Designs of Taiwanese Alcohol Labels during 1985-1970* (釀造時代：1895~1970台灣酒類標貼設計) (2004), *Design Story: An Introduction to the History of Taiwanese Graphic Design during Japanese Colonial Period (1895-1945)* (設計本事—日治時期(1895-1945)台灣美術設計案內) (2005) and *The Graphic Understanding of Taiwan: The Packaging Design of Popular Taiwanese Commodities during Japanese Colonial Time* (圖解台灣製造：日治時期商品包裝設計) (2013), study systematically the trademark and visual design during Japanese colonial time. Yet, Yao identified his books as art sociological research or design culture studies. It is similar with *An Apocalypse of Golden Rays Art: The Origins and Development of Taiwan's Golden Rays Art* (金光啓示錄：台灣金光藝術起生) by Wu-De Chiu (邱武德) discusses the visual change in folk art. Yet, he identified it as an exploration of Taiwanese cultural aesthetics not a form of visual culture.

## VI. The Plural Forms of Taiwanese Visual Culture Studies

European scholar Lambert Wiesing and American scholar W. T. J. Mitchell have asked almost the same questions regarding the academic quality of visual culture<sup>6</sup>:

1. Is visual culture studies a brand new and independent subject? Can it be taught as a subject in the university like anthropology and sociology?
2. Is visual culture studies a part of the philosophy discipline or the art history discipline?
3. Can visual culture studies be a new form of media studies or a part of cultural studies?

These questions also applied to the development of Taiwanese cultural studies. Thus, a more straightforward question could be raised: Might visual culture not even be a fixed subject? Instead, it is a ensemble concept, a general term for the ways to explore the relation between images and cultures. In other words, whether in the West or Taiwan, visual culture studies covers studies of vastly different contents and methods. These studies only share remote similarities but not other academic relations. That is why it is better to treat visual culture studies as plural forms, which consist of different types of visual culture understandings and studies. These rich and complicated academic trait will definitely be the normality. (Translated by HSU, Shang-Ting)

6. Mitchell, W. T. J. *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. The University of Chicago, 2005, Chicago and London. Wiesing, Lambert: *Artifizielle Präsenz. Studien zur Philosophie des Bildes*. Suhrkamp, 2005, S.9.



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