



以時間軸上的不和諧為主的策展

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Curating Dissonances in Time

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當我收到一份策展邀請，要為在國立臺灣美術館舉辦的亞洲藝術雙年展策劃一項錄像藝術的計畫時，感覺上，這項要繼續維持住亞洲凝聚力的主張，艱難而霸氣，因為全球近用 (global access) 的概念幾乎正在崩壞，至少在實質面上，而民族國家在多數情況下已轉向孤立主義與保護主義，這或許多半是出於必要性，但也是隨著政治邊界封鎖，導致全球多處興起極端民族主義、邊緣化、仇外情節而出現的演變。再者，此屆亞雙展的概念主軸在談的是亞洲的未來，但是若要深度思索這個概念，在我收到策展邀請的當下，似乎不是個恰當的時機點。那時全球各地還在從第一波新冠疫情造成的影響中找出新的常態，而我生活工作的（印度）德里還無法從被摧殘得東倒西歪的生活中站穩腳步時，第二波疫情卻已迎面襲來。旅行的可能性則根本為零。另一方面，我們所處的藝術界也在試著理解過去所認識的世界正在經歷的轉變，釐清以往視為理所當然的方法論及形式，究竟隱含著什麼意義。於是我當機立斷將這項邀請當作一個全新的挑戰，望能藉此為我們正在面對的全新未來，重新定義藝術領域的運作方法，即便我的參與只是佔其中的一小部分。由於無法到外地進行研究調查，我馬上意識到和散佈亞洲各地的其他策展團隊成員的合作重點，將會是以各自關注的範疇進行對話，共同發展出一個敘事，除了足以描繪出以亞洲為主的藝術創作樣貌之外，也會針對這個語境框架做進一步討論。這意味著要廢除「策展人是全球走透透的博學之士，其所提出的敘事會被認為具有重要權威性」的人設，因為這樣或許是比較可以發展下去的工作方式。我的觀點會從德里向外擴散，藉著這個機會去處理從生活在這個亞洲城市的直接性和親密性衍生出的大小事，並且與臺灣的語境脈絡建立起對話關係。既然我們的城市正處於重建和重新想像的過程，不趁機好好思考可能的未來，更待何時？

一場介於不同語境與脈絡的對話，這是我為理解本屆亞雙展所提出的切入方式，來取代一份具策展意識的表述或論點。對話也是一種辯證法，當不同想法激盪碰撞，便會產生新的意義。在此前提下，策展工作就涉及回溯對於受全球疫情重壓而內爆崩潰的亞洲城市居民來說，特別具有急迫性的作為和作品：疫情讓體制的裂縫擴大加劇，而且疫情的因與果，只能被放在運行時間過長的生態、政治、社會累積過程的交匯處，才能被理解。本次研究也涉及和亞洲各地都市環境中的同儕之間的交流，這要歸功於非正式的經濟友誼，還有我們各自把關注範疇的研究分享出來，才得以順利完成。這個過程包括：

— 從我們極為熟知的超地方 (hyperlocal) 談起，並且和其他這類超地方脈絡做比較，避開國家的框架。此乃因為，某個背景框架下的鄉村和距離它最近的都會之間的共通點，可能還少於它和另一個背景框架下的鄉村之間的共通點，這種狀況放諸全世界城市皆然，而所有這些全球城市和其誘人的資本主義，以及與其競爭的公共建設，經常以同樣的方式讓人感到詭異的熟悉。

— 把對國際展覽的研究，當作整段職業生涯中要建立的資源交流，而非短暫造訪藝術家工作室收集而來的印象。

定名為「未至之城 Phantasmopolis」的本屆亞雙展，立論在對亞洲大都會的未來進行探究與討論，此靈感來自知名臺灣建築師王大閏唯一文學作品《幻城》(Phantasmagoria)，在這部場景設在在外太空的科幻小說中，空間與時間的感覺是滯鈍的，而且因為小說的主人公陷在沒有盡頭的困乏中，讓那種滯鈍感更加無限延伸。《幻城》中的人物離開了地球上的帝國，一個靠藥物控制的烏托邦，他們從身處的未來時間點縱觀歷史——包括主人公對於過往數個世紀的前世記憶——來思索文明建設累積出的後果。

我主張藉由回溯過去來尋找可能的未來，並在和策展團隊成員討論後，更加確立了這個思考方向，手法上則是透過針對我們在都市脈絡的內與外已經集體地、用文明手法展現的，進行仔細的評估與判斷。都市的概念本身就包括了在其想像中所排除的，以及城市的原欲 (libido) 邏輯所不包含的——也就是它的失察與失敗。當我在為 2021 亞雙展做研究的期間，曾收到一則 WhatsApp 的訊息，只是就訊息內容來看，應該不是要發給我的。對方是個我不認識的人，他的大頭貼是一對年輕男孩和女孩的對鏡自拍，兩人都目露凶光瞪著自己，全身穿搭都是些美國品牌資本主義的識別符號。他們面對的鏡子裡反映出他們身後的景象，我像在打探內情一樣，看到好像是在某個擁擠公寓裡的一個房間的內部，裡面一個架子的側邊上，清楚描繪著帶著都會風格的塗鴉，還有一座供奉幾座尊神像的小神壇、一座小冰箱、一個衣櫃、一個開放式的碗盤瀝水架。這並不是對都市性 (urbanity) 的承諾，而是它的具現。光是在那個房間裡，就存在著多重時間性，承載著好幾個世代的美感和對空間性、傳統、現代性、未來期許的多重想像，經年累月留下的痕跡。

許多亞洲城市熠熠發光的表象，有時是用來掩飾其不太可靠的公共建設。它們是未完工的現代性，在進步發展和工業化的承諾可以徹底履行之前，這類理想抱負會帶來的各種後果，如氣候危機、經濟不平等加劇、社會政治的不滿等，早就已經越演越烈。這些未竟的現代性同樣含括了多重時間性的痕跡，持續在超越被線性的、工業的時間性，和看待歷史記載的後果會用到的理性主義、物質性手法所構築出的預設。殖民和新殖民的文明建設已經將現代性神話以及在無限進步語法中對無限發展的承諾，深深地扎入許多脈絡與框架裡，未考量其向外太空無止盡發射的指示性向量的正在減速。它的語彙又無法順應原住民智慧、與非人類實體的相互連結性、歷史的非理性敘事、以及時間的週期性構成，這些對意義製造在知覺和具體的形態上，都產生了影響，而這也是錄像計畫關注的議題。它們或者半途而廢，重新塑造自己，以符合那些要取代它們的威脅的理解，或者用持續堅持己見的反常痕跡存在著。這也往往導出在科學幻想、資本流動、展覽史中那些主流的、可見的、西方的亞洲想像，其可能的表現方式有：透過由位於此區的資訊科技產業勞工提出的技術例外論 (technological exceptionalism) 的關聯性（尤其是在 1990 年代和 2000 年代初期），以及對 1964 年東京奧運神奇的子彈列車的記憶，倏然地衝進未來的空間；或是把亞洲描繪成存在過去的空間，帶著懷舊之情想像原住民傳統在沒有干擾的情況下穿越時間持續存在，忘記了不管傳統是在哪種情況倖存下來，都是因為它們可以被晚期的資本主義邏輯及其運作機制所吸收。在這樣的敘事裡，現代性本身這個概念只會是西方想像的結果。那麼，歷史上被當作那個西方想像的「對立物」的各種脈絡，是依據什麼權利對此提出主張，而這些脈絡又是如何定義由我們現處狀態所決定的未來？

科學幻想向來是在勾勒出其可察覺的當下的各種焦慮、恐懼、慾望。在生態危機成為一個迫切的現實問題之前，那時資本主義的不平等現象硬是被強壓下來不給曝光，而發展進步彷彿有無限可能時，流行文化裡那些完全仰賴技術進步、時間旅行、星際航行的未來主義想像，是相對容易做到的。依照我們前進的方式，未來將會是時間軸上一段確定的時期，在那裡不會有太多空間容得下彌補性敘事的投射。但是那不代表要把希望暫停，向反烏托邦屈服。當下的現狀未必不是在過去就已經被預料到的。那麼隱伏的未來、以前沒有被允許完全展現或被理解為一種被體制利益矇蔽的後果的警訊和可能性，又該如何看待呢？未來存在於我們的過去，並且會在當下繼續存在。在不向懷舊情愫的泛黃色調光芒妥協的情況下，而且在面對過去傳統時依然保持批判性態度的同時——這些傳統不僅接納了晚期資本

主義的邏輯，也在極端民族主義表述及其自身非包容性主張中重生——是否有可能從被亞洲的未來已經掌握住的事物，來對過去和現在做出超前的推測？懷舊情愫已形同一種武器，可以用它來想像一個清教徒式的過去，但那或許是在極右派別認知裡從未存在的過去，另一方面則需要將懷舊情愫視為一種與現實之間毫無關連的替代性時空維度（僅僅是一種加速主義的症狀），它可能是一個生成的場所，用來投射我們的焦慮、恐懼、慾望，來找出從未留存至今的潛在性。本次的錄像藝術計畫深掘存在當前世界的多重不和諧的時間性。在王大閔的《幻城》裡，烏托邦是出現在一段藝術被攻擊、燒毀的反烏托邦時期之後。

為本屆亞雙展規劃錄像計畫的策展邀請的附帶責任，是要構思出除了在美術館的實體場館之外的另一個線上場域，讓亞雙展在臺灣尚未開放國際旅遊的時候，可以藉由這個平台將其曝光度和近用度向世界各處鋪展。全球的藝術環境已轉渡到數位介面。自從新冠疫情爆發後，我最早接觸到的數位藝術展是由藝術博覽會主辦的，在規劃上多半因襲藝術市場的邏輯。其他的計畫也都不外乎是在數位工具的扁平表面上，虛構出一個乾淨、沉浸式的白盒子，但尺度和比例都不對等。另外還有南亞各地由藝術家和藝術工作者自發性組成的團體，在展出和創作的機會變得零星稀疏之際，他們開始利用社群媒體平台和其他大型科技系統設施來展示作品，即便作品的政治訴求往往和平台潛藏的政治立場相違逆。網路世界有它自己既定的視覺文化和參與型態，是一個有其專屬的思潮、政治、空間性、社會性的「偶得空間」(found space) (譯註：意指原本並非專為藝術建構的既有空間)。我們要如何從道德層面有意義的和這類空間的文化產生關係？我們要如何對抗由上下不停滾動頁面構成的被動式接受、瀏覽網路視覺資訊的慣常做法，離開拒絕承認它所佔據的空間的數位白盒子這個假想之物？身為策展人，我們的思維要如何超越從過去沿用至今並且鮮少對其提出質疑的展示的框架和模式？

於是我重新審視了 pad.ma，這是一個由 CAMP 和 0x2620 創建，自 2008 年營運至今的動態影像線上檔案庫。他們定義自己是一個影片資料帶的非國家檔案庫，內容皆來自此區的文化工作者，以個人之名或為某種政治目的匯整出的素材，藉此揭露在影片素材中可以見到，但又是影片製作、剪輯、觀眾群的習俗向來傾向壓抑或丟棄的一整套影像、意圖、效果。想像 YouTube 在亞洲掀起像現在這種程度的大流行，網路連線速度極差的許多年之前，他們在可行的範圍內接觸錄像這個領域，作為這個時代的檔案庫，而且對網路這個民主空間起了深化作用，遠離流行、主流的互動式系統結構存在的我們的個人時間、數位空間和關注的拓殖化。pad.ma 向來秉持的信念是，他們在營運的這個未來導向檔案庫，不僅處理殘餘 (Remnant)，也處理儲備 (Reserve)，而且是遠遠早於我決定為這個策展計畫回頭去從昔日未來找出「儲備」之前。pad.ma 用作品《phantas.ma/polis》當作一個錄像藝術計畫的場域，並由 pad.ma 的理念策略及技術作為支援。pad.ma 是一個開放給公眾使用的檔案庫，即便在本屆亞雙展展畢後，大眾還是可以進入瀏覽或提供素材，讓在動態產業的從業人員可以在這個網站觀賞自己的作品，並好好利用這個網站所提供的可能性。此外，每件作品也都由策展人與受邀的藝評做出審慎的評論。經過一段時間，聚集在網站上的各種素材，在亞雙展期間將會對影片的策展性與批判性評論逐步發展開來，以建立整個錄像計畫的參展作品之間的關聯和對話。

我尚未針對參展作品進一步著墨，因為這些作品在這個平台上已被一再地闡釋，或在與彼此的交流中，或從各種角度審視。參展作品的選擇肯定了與我同為策展團隊一員的唐娜維·恰卜瑞蒂 (Thanavi

Chotpradit) 提出的想法，集思廣益後彙整出的策展結構所展現的是一次「散步在『未至之城』間」的歷程。亞洲的地理定義向來都是外界、表面的，而其今日的樣貌，並不一定是因為它多種多樣的地理環境與文化友好和睦地團結在一起，主導了其集體命運的定義。此區的組成分子也向來受益於全球貿易流動和外交利益的襲產。這使它成為一個特別的結構型態，從這裡去顛覆民族與地區框架的定局，同時處理核子武器重用主義、殖民化、經濟賦權、原住性、邊緣化歷史、生態易受破壞的急迫性、新殖民主義和帝國主義、異見、人道危機、都會建設、以及自從王大閔以來的太空旅行成就等各種相互依存的歷史與發展。對於來自廣闊大陸不同角落的時間性的情感回應，從敘利亞及尼泊爾，乃至越南及香港，還有那些從來自離散異鄉的藝術家所定義的當下，超越鞏固它的框架，挖掘出構成當代的時空不和諧，在時間軸上前前後後地漂移。



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Curating Dissonances in Time

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When I received the invitation to curate the video art program for the Asian Art Biennial at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, it felt like a difficult but bold proposition of retaining a sense of solidarity across the continent when the notion of global access, at least physically, collapsed almost simultaneously and nation states in most cases became isolationist and protectionist, perhaps more so out of necessity, but also along with the rise of extreme nationalisms, marginalization and xenophobia in many parts of the world while political borderlines were sealed shut. It also seemed to be an unlikely moment to contemplate Asian futures, which provided the conceptual framework for this edition of the Biennial. We were still recovering globally from the effects of the first phase of the pandemic and Delhi, the city that I live and work in, was anticipating a second wave, when it was still reeling from the first one. Travel was still a far off possibility. But as an art community, we were also in the process of understanding what the transformation of the world as we knew it would imply for methodologies and formats of working that we had always taken for granted. I immediately responded to the invitation as a new challenge to engage even if in a small part towards redefining the workings of the arts context for this new future we were confronting. Without a research trip, I immediately understood that the collaboration with the rest of the curators who were part of our team, all working from different parts of the continent, meant dialogues between the various contexts that we were working within, together developing a narrative that was representative not just of artistic practices based in Asia, but also spoke of and to the context. It meant dismantling assumptions of the figure of the curator as a globe-trotting polymath, whose narratives may be held to critical authority, for what could arguably be a more sustainable way of working. My vantage point would be Delhi, and this was an opportunity to address the concerns that emerge from the immediacy and intimacy of living in this Asian city and build a conversation with the Taiwanese context. While we are in the process of rebuilding and reimagining as a society, what better time could we hope for to contemplate possible futures?

Rather than a curatorial statement or a framework, I approached the Asian Art Biennial as a curatorial dialogue between contexts. For a dialogue is also a dialectic, that may generate a new meaning through the encounters of different ideas. With this premise, the curatorial exercise involved remembering practices and artworks that felt especially urgent in the context of urbanites in Asia that imploded under the weight of the pandemic; when cracks in the system amplified and the effects of the pandemic could only be understood at the confluence of cumulative ecological, political and social processes that have been in motion for too long. The research also involved exchanges with peers in urban contexts across Asia, made possible by an informal economy of friendship, and sharing research on our contexts. This process involved:

- Speaking from the hyperlocal that we know intimately and sharing notes with other such hyperlocal contexts, circumventing national frameworks. For the rural may have more in common with another rural context than its closest metropolis as do the urban cities around world, all of which often feel eerily familiar in the same way with their seductive capitalism, and infrastructure that vies with itself.
- Research towards international exhibitions as an exchange of resources built over perhaps the entirety of a professional life, rather than impressions collected over brief interludes at artists' studios.

The premise for the biennial, titled "Phantasmapolis"—a contemplation on the future of the Asian metropolis—drew inspiration from renowned Taiwanese architect Wang Da Hong's only work of literature, Phantasmagoria, a science fiction novel set in outer space where spatio-temporal senses are static, and all that persisted for

its protagonists was endless ennui. From their future location in time where the kingdom they left behind on earth is in a state of drug induced utopia, the characters of Phantasmagoria peer through history—including the protagonist's memory of a previous incarnation several centuries prior—to contemplate the cumulative consequences of the civilizational project. Discussions with colleagues reconfirmed my proposition of looking back to find possible futures, by taking stock of what we had collectively, civilizationally manifested both within and outside urban contexts. The notion of the urban already includes what it excludes in its imagination, and what the libidinal logic of cities does not encompass—its oversight and also its failure. I received a message on WhatsApp around the time I was researching towards Asian Art Biennial 2021, of which I did not seem to be the intended recipient. The profile picture of this person I do not know, was a mirror-selfie of a young boy and girl staring at themselves defiantly, wearing all the appropriate insignia of American brand capitalism on their clothes. Behind them in the reflection of the mirror, I was privy to the interior space of what seemed like one room in a cramped apartment, with urbanesque graffiti etched into the side of a shelf and a small shrine with idols of gods, a small refrigerator, a cupboard for clothes and an open dish rack. It was not the promise of urbanity, it was its manifestation. In that room alone resided multiple temporalities that carried the cumulative traces of multiple generations' aesthetics, and multiple imaginations of spatiality, tradition, modernity and aspirations for a future.

The gleaming facades of several Asian cities are sometimes a cover for its more precarious infrastructure. They are incomplete modernities, where before the promise of development and industrialization could be fully delivered, the consequences of such aspirations including the climate crisis, heightened economic inequalities, as well as social and political discontent were already intensely pronounced. These incomplete modernities also encompass traces of multiple temporalities that continue to exceed the premise framed by linear, industrial temporalities and rationalist, material approaches to the consequences of recorded history. The colonial and neo-colonial civilizational project has already deeply entrenched in many contexts the myth of modernity and the promise of infinite development in the grammar of infinite progress that does not take without taking into account the deceleration of its indicative vector that shoots endlessly into space. And its vocabulary cannot accommodate indigenous wisdom, interconnectedness with other-than-human entities, non-rational narratives of history, and cyclical formations of time that already informed sensorial, embodied forms of meaning making in such contexts, which the video art program is concerned with. They either fell to the wayside, recast themselves to the comprehension of what threatened to displace them, or endured in anomalous traces that continue to assert themselves. This has also often led to dominant, visible, Western imaginations of Asia, in science fictions, flows of capital, and exhibition histories, as either hurtled into the space of the future, through associations of technological exceptionalism brought forth by IT labour located in this part of the world, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s and the memory of the miraculous bullet trains from 1964 Tokyo Olympics or Asia as residing in the space of the past, nostalgically imagining native traditions persisting through time without interference, forgetting that wherever tradition survived it was only because they were able to be absorbed into the logic of late capitalism and its mechanisms. In such narratives, the idea of modernity itself could only be the result of a Western imagination. How do contexts that have historically been regarded 'other' to that imagination claim it and define futures that are informed by where we are at present?

Science Fiction has always been defined by the anxieties, fears and desires of its palpable present. Before the ecological crisis became a pressing reality, when the inequities of Capitalism were forcibly rendered invisible, and progress was potentially infinite, it was easier to imagine futurisms that relied entirely on technological advancement or time travel or interplanetary travel in popular culture. The way we are proceeding, the future is a defined period in time where there isn't much room to project redeeming narratives. But that need not necessarily imply suspension of hope and giving into dystopia. The present perhaps was not inevitable. What about the

latent futures, warnings and possibilities that were never fully allowed to manifest or be comprehended as a consequence of being silenced by systemic interests? Futures residing in our past, and continue to endure in our present?. Without giving in to the sepia-tinted glow of nostalgia, and while still remaining critical of the traditions of the past—that have not just embraced the logic of late capitalism, but have been rebirthed in hypernationalist rhetoric, and its own non-inclusive propositions—is it possible to speculate ahead in time from the reserves held by Asian futures, of the past and present? While nostalgia has been weaponized to imagine a puritan past that probably never existed by far right fractions, it also felt important to consider nostalgia as an alternative spatio-temporal dimension that has no ties to reality—merely a symptom of accelerationism—that could be a generative location to project our anxieties, fears and desires, to find potentialities that never endured. The video art program is an exploration of the multiple dissonant temporalities that have endured into the present. In Wang Da Hong's Phantasmagoria, utopia followed a period of dystopia where art was attacked and burned.

The invitation to curate the Video Art Program for AAB also came with the responsibility to imagine an online location for its exhibition besides its physical presence at the museum as one part of the biennial that can travel and be accessed globally in a moment when Taiwan was not open to international visitors at all. The arts context globally had already transitioned to the digital. The earliest digital exhibitions of art that I encountered after the onset of the pandemic were imagined by art fairs and in keeping with the market logic. There were other attempts, that also very often involved the fiction of a clean immersive whitecube on the flat surface of a digital device, out of scale, out of proportion. Then there were self-organized collectives of artists and artworkers across South Asia who took to social media platforms and other big tech infrastructures to exhibit their work when opportunities to exhibit and make work were few, even when the politics of the work often were contradictory to the politics implicit to the platform. The internet has its own established visual culture and forms of engagement. The internet is a found space with its own ethos, politics, spatiality and sociality. How do we ethically and meaningfully engage with the culture of this space? How do we counter the normative practice of passive consumption of visual material on the internet facilitated by the infinite scroll, and leave the fiction of the digital white cube that is in denial of the space that it is occupying? As curators, how do we think beyond frameworks and models of presentation that we have inherited and rarely tend to question?

I revisited pad.ma, an online archive of moving images by CAMP and 0x2620 since 2008. They define themselves as a non-state archive of video material, personally and politically gathered by cultural workers in the region as a way of opening up a set of images, intentions and effects present in video footage, resources that conventions of video-making, editing and spectatorship have tended to suppress or leave behind. Imagined years before YouTube would become the phenomenon that it is now in Asia and internet speeds were abysmal, they made possible engaged encounters with video as an archive of our times, and a deepening of the democratic space that the internet is, far away from the colonization of our personal time, digital space and attention that popular, mainstream interactive infrastructures exist as. Pad.ma has always held that their future oriented Archive deals not only with the Remnant but also with the Reserve, long before I decided to look back to identify reserves from futures past for this curatorial project. Pad.ma conceptualized phantas.ma/polis as a location for the video art program, supported by the politics and technologies of pad.ma. Pad.ma is a public access archive that anyone can browse or contribute to beyond the duration of the biennial, allowing practitioners who work with moving images to locate their work here for viewing and engage with the possibilities presented by it. Each work is annotated with care and attention by the curators and invited critics. Over time, during the duration of the exhibition, the assemblies will grow from the curatorial and critical commentaries of the films to establish relational affinities and dialogues between the works exhibited across the selection.

I have not yet discussed in detail about the artworks that are part of the exhibition because the works are all read and re-read, in conversation with each other from multiple perspectives on this platform. The selection confirms my colleague, Thanavi Chotpradit's proposition that the collective curatorial framework presents an experience of Strolling Through The Cities of Unarrival. The geographic definition of Asia has always been external, and its present-day configuration did not always involve an amicable coming together of its diverse geographies and cultures to take the lead in defining its collective destiny. Constellations within it have also been the beneficiary of the legacy of global trade flows and diplomatic interests. This makes it a special configuration from which to subvert the finality of national and regional frameworks while addressing interrelated histories of nuclearism, colonization, economic empowerment, indigeneity, marginalized histories, eco-sensitive criticality, neo-colonialism and imperialism, dissent, humanitarian crises, metropolitan infrastructure, and the legacy of space travel since Wang Da Hong. Affective responses to the temporality from different corners of the expansive continent from Syria and Nepal to Vietnam and Hong Kong, and also those by artists from the diaspora that define the present transcend the frameworks that underpin it to unearth the spatial and temporal dissonances that inform the contemporary, drifting backwards and forwards in time.



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