



The Art of Taiwan in Psychosis

Japanese Ghost in the Future Pavilion

The central government of Taiwan arranged the Taiwan Design Expo 2005 in the Southern city of Kaoshioung in October 2005. My duty was to deal with the future and set up a so called Future Pavilion. In stead of futuristic kitchen interiors and color trends I ended up in the shadows of a Japanese Army laundry building, which I occupied together with the invited artists and architects. After examining and studying the Taiwanese art and architecture scene for a year I had come to a conclusion, that the island state is in psychosis and that its art is more or less therapy or just simply lies. The Future Pavilion became after a psychoanalysis a dark colored collection of Western and Chinese medicine in the form of architecture and other disciplines of art

The laundry building had stood abandoned the most of the time after the Japanese Army withdraw from Taiwan in the end of the Second World War. The Taiwanese army had used the building for a while but the abandoned it due to strong rumors of Ghosts. The Ghosts are very true in Taiwan and the Japanese Ghost must be one of the most traumatic ones

The building itself was beautiful – hand made of bricks and then plastered. The four 35 meters long wings meet each other in the center of the cross shaped plan in which also stands a tower in the focus of which is a deep well for fresh water. The whole building is realized for the scale of a man plus horse. One has been able to ride along the central corridors of the wings. Also the windows are on the height of a horse rider.

The building was cleaned of all sorts of military trash and the original door openings were again blown open in the central corridors of the wings. Planks were removed from the windows and additional entries were constructed into the middle section of each wing in order to create a circular walking path for the visitors to move from one wing to another. The cleaned up ruin was then given for the invited participants to work within the general themes of the wings. The pavilion was looking at the future and the present situation of Taiwan from four different viewpoints: Urban Acupuncture, Urban Nomad, Organic Layer and Ocean.

Urban Nomad

There is a strong contradiction in the Taiwanese cities between the official and the human layer of the cities. The official city is a polluting machinery of dead temporary buildings and super heavy American-Japanese traffic arrangements. Here and there rises sky scraper or public buildings that try to deal with the Taiwanese cultural traumatism generated by lack of identity by means of copying important buildings abroad or by inviting famous Western architect to borrow their name. Taiwan is in fact part of China, but also some sort of a bastard made with the Americans. The father complex of this corrupted child in between two homes is heavy and as a neighborhood bully he tries to dominate the close quarters with money and ignorance. This can be seen in the ecologically destructive urbanism, the industrial abuse of cheap labor and how the Taiwanese heavy industry is moving to pollute in the surrounding poorer countries.

The official city of the maps is nothing but a attaching platform for the diverse, small scale and hectic private enterprising. These vendors and food makers are nomads. The trolleys and food stands move on wheels, all imaginable merchandise in suitcases and bags and the whole system is constructed around hidden orders and agreements. The official police is looking at the other way. A street that can be daytime a boring sewage of endless cars and scooters may when the sun falls down become a vivid night market. The nomads roll together, the cars can no longer move and people find to the place. When you ask the people they only talk about this human city. The official city means nothing.

The Urban Nomad –wing of the Future Pavilion wanted to lift this city of people into the status of the official city and to present it as a possible structure towards the future. Masters course students from the Taiwan's leading architecture school the Tamkang University had build up personal movable shelters of recycled materials to meet the urban conditions. "The Urban Nomad is an insect, who day by day goes through the metamorphosis from a larva to a butterfly. For the nomad a shelter is not a simple function, as a city flat, but for example movement can be both protection and basic condition of his business, a survival strategy. The nomad reacts for



his surroundings physically and so being is very much part of it – and so he takes care of his surroundings. Without these nomads the Taiwanese cities would drown in their own filth. “ Wei-Chen XXX, one of the students.

Photographer Yeh Wei-Li's five photo series "Emperor Go Moves to City" confused the people. The painting of Emperor Go is a standard issue in every Taiwanese garrison and this historical character is also canonized to be a God. The Emperor wanted to win back his lost empire as the Kuomintang party officially wanted to win back the Mainland China after being kicked out to the island of Taiwan by the communist army in the end of the 40's. The photographer had found the portrait of Emperor Go amongst the garbage in the Future pavilion before its cleaning and then moved the painting into his city flat in the capital city Taipei and had documented the whole process. Witnessing the great Emperor and God Go in his status of trash and then bunking in the suburbs of Taipei did not charm everybody.

My own work for the Urban Nomad was video and photo documentation of the architectonic installation Land(e) scape (Finland, 1999) where we raised three abandoned barn houses on 10 meters high wooden legs to start walking after their farmers towards the cities of the south and in the end burned the whole installation together with a contemporary dancer and choreographer Reijo Kela.

Estonian architect and painter August Kunnapu painted a five meters high wall painting "Lemurian" to the front façade of the wing in which an extra terrestrial looking bold head is saluting the visitors with a frog hand. To the other end of the axis he had painted a big baby cat and a gymnast for 1930's. Families took photos of themselves with the cat, the gymnast was maybe a bit odd and the Lemurian was obviously a bit scary.

Andrei Tarkovski's movie "Stalker" was also shown as well as a rehabilitation plan that I realized for an illegal settlement "Treasure Hill" in Taipei 2003. Treasure Hill is a quiet community of old Kuomintang –veterans and their families continuing an old Chinese village style living in an enclave in the middle of the city. The people were officially to be moved away but later on were allowed to stay and continue their lives as an urban laboratory for a sustainable way of living in Taipei.

Into the middle of the wing we constructed "The Chamber of the Post Urbanist" – steel furniture for post urban meditation. Heavy metal objects as sofa, table, bed, water reservoir, fire place and toilet. The walls were wall papered by Nikita Wu's free newspaper for the Future Pavilion, the "Pe Po". Close by was photos of Casagrande & Rintala's work "Obihiro Walking Street" where the children of urban planners of a Japanese were asked to instruct their mothers and fathers to construct a good house out of cardboard and then paint it. In the end the children got into the houses and walked inside them to the city stopping every now and then to have a rest and to form a spontaneous, instant village.

Urban Acupuncture

The traditional Chinese medicine is based on observing, cultivating and reacting on the human body's inner energy flows (Chi). The Chinese believe in the possibilities of this energy to be in connection with a greater cosmic energy. In the Urban Acupuncture –wing human build environment is treated as the human body by means of acupuncture.

Chi Ti-Nan, a Taiwanese architect and urban planner, is practicing the acupuncture in the light of his personal working method Micro-Urbanism, which is looking at the vulnerable and insignificant side of contemporary cities around the world. He believes that these forgotten and often abandoned areas of everyday life under urban design and capital driven development are, in fact, holding the genuine quality of each city.

For the pavilion Chi did five plans for the host city Kaoshioung but his part of the exhibition was considered politically so challenging that the organizer Taiwan Design Center tried to ban parts of his graphics in several occasions. Political corruption amongst the Taiwanese architects is the most stopping factor for a healthy development of national architectural identity and also Chi took it for granted that his graphics had to go. This did not happen and his frightening texts such as: "Take the whale back to the sea" remained.

Estonian Vilen Kunnapu, an old school constructivist and leading Estonian architect all the way from the 70's has during the last couple of years concentrated on energy central architecture inspired by the Tibetan Mandalas, Palladio and Luis Khan. To the surroundings of the Future Pavilion Mr. Kunnapu constructed two three meters



high red Stupa –buildings out of plywood. “These structures are important for the environment. The exhibition building itself is already very healthy.” According to Kunnapu the Stupas were both 1:1 scale energy center structures in the exhibition as well as models for bigger Mandala –temples to be realized in the Kaoshioung harbor and outside the city hall. Some visitors stopped in front of the Stupas to pray. Inside the pavilion architect Kunnapu exhibited his design line including the Buddhist Center of Tallin, Mandala –temple for Tallin Prison and 9 Mandala Temples for river Thames in London.

Both Chi and Kunnapu are processing a ritual through their architecture. If architecture in general is a theology, both Chi and Kunnapu are mystics. Both men could have been operating a thousand years ago. I also exhibited my study of urban acupuncture together with Alaskan industrial artist Martin Ross and Tamkang University students realized a year ago as part of the Taipei on the Move –project. In our work “Trojan Rocking Horse” we constructed 8 adult size steel made movable rocking horses and placed them to strategic points around Taipei city and started to move towards the center and eventually to surround the city hall. During the march the horses acted as mail boxes for the citizens to write comments, memories and suggestions to Mayor Ma Ying-Jeou as bases for urban planning following Fritz Lang’s maxim from the movie “Metropolis”: “The mediator between the head and the hands must be the heart.”

Organic Layer

Generally speaking the contemporary Taiwanese theatre is quite therapy polluted acting of acting - on the contrary to the Taiwanese puppet theatre and Chinese opera which have strong roots in the Mainland and Chinese culture. From the illusions of pornography and other light weight scream-cry is exfiltrating also honest performers. Kao Jyn-Hong has walked around Taiwan with vegetation in his back bag. Kao goes to the forest, digs a tree, places it into his aquarium like back bag and starts walking and running.

The silent, archaic stalker, is not necessarily the most commercially successful Taiwanese artist nor celebrated in the flashy local design magazines but still again a clear choice for the Organic Layer –wing together with the Japanese pioneer of sustainable architecture professor Yoshio Kato. On the other end of the wing were Kao’s back bags growing trees and on the other end Kato’s models of micro climate architecture in Taiwan and Japan. In his video Kao is running on a highway with a tree in his back or silently looking dressed as a monk with the tree in his robe, Kato is explaining scientifically the climate conditions as the basis of architecture.

Yoshio Kato’s houses are almost laboratories, where the prevailing weather conditions are examined to the very details and no artificial air conditioning or other energy consumption is allowed. Professor Kato is a walking laboratory himself, pockets and car full of sensors ready to document the weather conditions when ever, where ever.

My own place in the Organic Layer –wing was in between Kato sensei’s wind catchers and Kao’s forest bags exhibiting an urban plan for Kaoshioung changing all the flat roof space into biomass production with needed additional constructions. I also planted 9 tin made copies of a hand of a Taiwanese farmer on top soil in one of the water pools of the wing.

Together with multimedia artist Nikita Wu we produced an experimental documentary film Zero City for the exhibition following the developing of a future housing area in the North of Taipei. When Hong Kong was about to go to the Chinese authority in 1997 the town of Danshui estimated some 300.000 immigrants to move to Danshui escaping the communist rule. They developed this area with urban infrastructure including roads, traffic lights and road signs such as “School”, “Hospital”, “Be Aware of Children” and so on for the people to move in with a slogan: “Hey guys, immigrate to Danshui!” The Hong Kong people never came and the area has stood empty ever since. Step by step the nature has overtaken the sites of the planned houses and the roads are used mainly by ants. The traffic lights are still working.

Ocean

The economical and political situation in Taiwan is in the point where there is enough money to start cleaning the environment of pollution but not yet political will for it. The heavy industry has already moved mostly to China, Vietnam and the Philippines and silently in the cities have start talking about cleaning the rivers, the polluted land and the heavily polluted ocean shore line.



The Ocean –wing exhibited works to encourage the Taiwanese visitors to start thinking seriously about the possibilities of ecological rehabilitation focused on the waters. Half of the wing was given to the Denmark based task force CREW*31 and its work “Post Industrial Fleet”. CREW*31 is specialized in converting big scale industrial ships and barges into new urban functions such as the Bioship as an in vessel treatment factory to separate, recycle and compost waste produced its host city. The Community ship gives free space for hobbies or community activities trying to activate the waterline as the new democratic surface of the cities. These ships are out of their industrial duty, the engines are removed and the ship more or less locked into a fixed position as part of the city.

The work was originally created for Denmark and then exhibited in the Venice Biennale 2004 but quite easily converted to meet the conditions in Taiwan as well. Both Denmark and Taiwan have one of the biggest commercial fleets of the world but the harbor industry is concentrating into a few huge scale harbors leaving the smaller harbor cities and towns without boats fading them away from their naval narrative. On the other hand the cities have now the possibility to move to the harbors and CREW*31 is giving them tools to activate the new urban space in a more humanistic and ecologically aware way as an example for a possible direction of new urban development.

Close to the thinking of CREW*31 is Casagrande & Rintala’s “60 Minute Man” for Venice Biennale 2000 in which we planted a small oak forest into an abandoned industrial barge on top of 60 minutes worth of human waste produced by the city of Venice. For the small village of Rosendahl in Norway we constructed a floating sauna as the center point of the village spreading around the final bay of the Hardanger fjord. The sauna has transparent walls and open floor to the ocean. One can jump from the heat straight to the sea.

Japanese contemporary / experimental theatre director Daizo stirred the scene in Taiwan in March by his version of Faust - the Taiwan Faust hitting down to the Taiwan-Japanese traumas as well as trying to re-educate the Taiwanese actors and other theatre professionals. One of the main characters of the hectic play is a universal women goddess sailing around with her little boat. The Venus like character is both Holy Mary as well as the Taiwanese national saint Matsu. In the Ocean –wing one could see the partly eye and partly vagina shaped vessel of the goddess and a photo documentation of the actress transforming into the role of Matsu / Holy Mary as well as smoking cigarettes on the breaks. Also Sergei Eisenstein’s movie “Battleship Potemkin” was part of the display.

Fourth class students of the Tamkang University had constructed for themselves personal boats out of recycled material and then sailed with them in the Love river of Kaoshiung. The photos show the students throwing up in the middle of their colorful boats after drinking the polluted river water.

Generator

Japanese installation artist Sakura Iso washed the dirty laundry of the Japanese Ghost in the dark middle tower. The work called “Generator” was a complex mix of electronic sensors, microphones and oscillators mounted to the tower itself, into the deep well and the to the overtaking vegetation. Small loud speakers were then hidden into the structures, roots and leaves to create a gentle soundscape to work together with the ever altering natural light conditions of the tower and the shadows cast by the surrounding trees. Even the loud Taiwanese entered the space in silence and Miss Iso was believed to be able to communicate with the Ghost.

Essential part of the exhibition was the free newspaper edited by Miss Nikita Wu. She used the media of a newspaper instead of a catalogue to put together the thinking of the participating exhibitors in a direct way avoiding the common clichés of an exhibition catalogue. Most likely after the closure of the Taiwan Design Expo the Future Pavilion will be demolished to give way to maybe a Karaoke hotel. It seems thought that the exhibition and the newspaper have had enough time to raise conversation in Taiwan about the future and especially the role of an artist and architect as the ones to look towards the horizon. Of course some of the visitors were disappointed finding themselves in a dark ruin instead of being surrounded by future electronics. Most of the visitors though walked slowly in the wings with a silent smile on their lips. The leading Sufi researcher of Finland professor Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila could have commented: “One has to take the liberty to take one self one thousand years back to realize, that the real things are the same.”



PARTICIPANTS AND WORKS

Each of the four wings carried one theme to look for future: Urban Nomad, Ocean, Urban Acupuncture and Organic Layer. The central tower was received for a Japanese installation artist Sakura Iso. In the wings the participants were free to use the smaller rooms and the central corridor. The graphic prints were laminated on acrylic and placed into the window openings.

URBAN NOMAD

August Künnapu, painter – architect, Estonia

“Lemurian”, 2005

3 x 5 meters wall painting, acrylic on plaster. Painted on the main entrance of the Future Pavilion greeting the visitors.

Chang Shao-Hsien, Chou Yun-Jain, Liang Temg, Lin Chun-Yu, Weng Wei-Chen

Tamkang University Department of Architecture, Masters Course 1, Taiwan

“Urban Nomad”, 2005.

1:1 scale models and photo documentation of personal one man urban nomad constructions and documentation of the structures in urban situations in the Kaoshioung City and County.

Casagrande & Rintala, architects, Finland.

“Land(e)scape”, 1999

Photos and video. Documentation of an architectonic installation with three abandoned barn houses mounted on 10 meters high legs for walking position and later on burned during a performance.

C-Laboratory, architects, Finland – Taiwan

“Chamber of a Post Urbanist 104”, 2005

Steel furniture for Post Urban Rehabilitation. Cave man style realizations of a sofa, table, bed, fire place, water reservoir and toilet / composting unit. Wallpapers of the C-LAB newspaper “Pe Po”.

Hsu Chun Cheng, architecture student, Shy Chien Univeristy, Taiwan

“Urban Camper”, 2005

Posters and model. Movable dignity unit for post urban man including: Herhof portable biological mechanical anaerobic composting unit, gas conditioning unit and bio-gas based electricity converter, bird garden and collecting unit of birds digested sludge, rain water collecting and bio-filtering unit, 1100 cc bio gas powered engine, earth worm farm, lockable parking stand / gate.

Casagrande & Rintala, architects, Finland

“Obihiro Walking Street”, 2002

Photo documentation of children architecture workshop in Obihiro, Hokkaido, Japan.

Andrei Tarkovsky, director, Russia

“Stalker”, 1978.

Movie

C-Laboratory, architects, Finland – Taiwan

“Organic Layer_Taipei”, 2003.

Photo documentation of an ecological rebuilding process of Treasure Hill –settlement in Taipei, Taiwan,

Yeh Wei-Li, photographer, Taiwan

“Emperor Go in the City”

Photos on light boxes. Narrative story of moving a painting form the Future Pavilion to Taipei. 2005

ORGANIC LAYER

Kao Jyn-hong, performance artist, Taiwan



“Re-Circulation of a Plant”, 2005

Installation, photo and video. Documentation of walking around Taiwan with vegetation in a glass aquarium back-pack. Vegetable gardens in human clothing. Aquarium back pack with vegetation.

C-Laboratory, architects, Finland – Taiwan

“Touch down”, 2005

Installation. Nine tin made 1 : 1 scale casts of a hand of a Taiwanese farmer mounted on top soil.

Yoshio Kato, architect, Japan

“Micro Climate Architecture”, 2005

Installation, models, photos and graphics of micro-climate based ecological architecture solutions in Japan and Taiwan.

Nikita Wu – Marco Casagrande, Taiwan – Finland

“Zero City”, 2005

Experimental Documentary Film, 11 min. Documentation of a future 300.000 residents housing area in Danshui, Taiwan in a non build condition overtaken by nature but with ready made urban infrastructure waiting for the houses.

C-Laboratory

“Kaoshioung Roof Paddies”, 2005

Graphics of and urban plan for Kaoshioung City changing the roof scape into vegetable fields.

OCEAN

August Künnapu, painter – architect, Estonia

“Cat and Gymnast”, 2005

7 x 5 meters wall painting, acrylic on plaster.

Casagrande & Rintala, architects, Finland

“60 Minute Man”, 2000

Photos and video. Documentation of the architectonic installation realized for Venice Biennale 2000. 24 oaks planted in an abandoned industrial barge on top of 60 minutes worth of human waste produced by the city of Venice.

Tong Shang-Ren, Wu Zi-Jian, Xie An-Bang, Xie Wan-Rong, Xu wen-jing, Zhang Wen-Rui

Tamkang University Department of Architecture, 4th Year Design Studio, Taiwan

“Personal Vessel”, 2005

1 : 1 scale models and photo documentation. One man hand made boats and documentation of test sailing on Love River in Kaoshioung.

Casagrande & Rintala, architects, Finland

“Floating Sauna”, 2002

Photo documentation. A floating sauna designed for Rosendahl Village in Norway as the center piece of the community.

CREW*31, architects – artists – landscape architects, Denmark - Finland

“Post Industrial Fleet”, 2005

Graphics and steel made models. Urban planning rehabilitation strategy of industrial ships out of duty converted into fixed position urban use. Including Bio Ship and Community Ship. Realized urban plans for harbor cities in Denmark and Taiwan.

Marco Casagrande, architect, Finland

“Eternity Vessel”, 2005

Installation. An eye -shaped plywood boat originally designed for Daizo theatre piece “Taiwan Faust” converted and mounted vertically hanging in the air.



Sergei Eisenstein, director, Russia
"Battleship Potemkin", 1924
Movie.

Daizo, director, Japan / **Nikita Wu**, actress, Taiwan / **Marco Casagrande**, architect, Finland
"Taiwan Faust", 2005
Photo documentation of transformation of an actress into role.

URBAN ACUPUNCTURE

Chi Ti-Nan, architect, Taiwan
"Micro Urbanism", 2005
Printed Chinese Characters, flyers, graffiti and wall paintings. Micro Urbanism strategies for Kaoshioung City. Political agitation.

Marco Casagrande, architect, Finland & **Martin Ross**, industrial artist, Alaska
Together with Tamkang University Department of Architecture Post Graduate Students: **Fu-Wei Wu**, **Chia-Huei Lin**, **You-Chen Luo**, **Hung-Ming Chen**, **Chun-Hung Lin**, **Jen-Hao Cheng**, **Shin-Chih Hsiao**, **Ci-Ai Hsiao**
"Trojan Rocking Horse_Taipei", 2004
Steel made rocking horses and video. Documentation of attacking the Taipei City with a small army of 8 steel made Trojan Rocking Horses. The 8 horses displayed on outside perimeter.

Vilen Künnapu, architect, Estonia
"Energy Center Architecture", 2005
Installation, graphics and photos. Two human size plywood Stupas mounted on grass outside the pavilion. Documentation of an energy center architectural line.

CENTER

Sakura Iso, installation artist, Japan
"Generator", 2005
Installation. Recording and transmitting devices placed on the central axis of the building.

CATALOGUE

Nikita Wu, editor, Taiwan
"Pe Po", 2005
Free newspaper. 24 pages full color tabloid in Chinese. 5000 copies. Review of the Future Pavilion and additional invited artists and writers.

Artist : Wei-Li Yeh

Project Title : Emperor Go in the City, 2005

Project Description :

Marco Casagrande, a Finnish architect currently serving as a visiting professor in Taiwan, presented to me an essay entitled "At Home in the City" written by an English architect, Angela Nkya. I subsequently read the text on the responsibility of urban architectural design and the crisis of homelessness on a flight from Taipei to Japan. Marco then explained that he wanted me to present a series of photographs that had a dialogue with this



text in the Urban Nomad wing of a project he is organizing and constructing for the 2005 Kaoshiung International Design Expo located on the defunct Wae Wu Ying Military Base in Kaoshiung City.

Upon my return, we flew to Kaoshiung. By the time I entered the Laundry Building on the Wae Wu Ying Military Base, this building has been abandoned and boarded up for a number of years. Probably due to its irregularity in shape and lack of large open spaces, the Laundry Building was not chosen for reuse for the previous arts and cultural events hosted by the Kaoshiung City government. A cross-shaped building surrounded by overgrown bush and trees, this building is a bazaar spectacle. At the center of this cross resides a well, which channels water into four sixty meters halls for the task of doing laundry for the entire military base. After wandering through various dark hallways, we encountered Go Jian. Hung above a door leading to the center of a hallway, roughly three meters high slightly slanted downwards in a traditional hanging style, it is strange to think of Go Jian suspended in the dark for many years. Aside from minor debris such as wood and occasional tables and trash, this painting is the only object that is left in the entire building structure after the renovation and preparation for the exposition.

After mulling over these parameters set forth before me for a week, I decided to transport the painting of Go Jian to Taipei, the city of my current residence. The displacement of this painting into another city as well as the transfer of this work from a public sphere of the military laundry facility into a domestic private setting mirror the predicament of the Urban Nomads put forth by Casagrande. The nomad takes his experiences with him and is imprinted by them, and makes do and anew with what is available at hand in another setting. Emperor Go in the City reconfigures the finding of a lost Chinese tale with a western sociological and architectural manifesto. The different contexts and locations that the Urban Nomad encounters and the legacy of this folklore in contemporary times in its continual mutation poses a hypothetical future for both the Urban Nomad and Emperor Go, when soon after this design exposition ends, the entire conglomerate of buildings on Wae Wu Ying will be torn down and the cycle of reconstruction begins again.

[Wae Wu Ying Military Base will be the future site of Kaoshiung City Opera House, construction is set to begin in the spring of 2006.]