

*Taiwan Digital Art Pulse Stream Plan:*

*The First Phase*

*Body, Gender, Technology | Digital Art Exhibition*

台灣數位藝術脈流計畫—脈波壹

**身體 · 性別 · 科技**

數位藝術展

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隨著全球化影像技術的廣泛運用，「數位藝術」這個象徵新時代與新世代的創作形式至今仍讓藝術社群處於不知所措的視覺震撼中，特別是在不斷推陳出新的表現和在後面「苦苦追感」的論述與詮釋間的差距不斷拉大之際。僅憑一些基礎的理論（雖然相當有助益）仍然無法掌握數位藝術帶來的衝擊及其介入的諸種議題，如本土化、身體、性別等等。甚至，連最根本的提問如「數位可以是藝術嗎？」，對許多人而言（甚至已建制的藝術中的工作者），都仍然處於渾沌不明的狀態，即便它已安穩地機構化為藝術教育與展覽的體制之內，並且成為主流。這個研究計劃與展覽「台灣數位藝術脈流計畫——脈波壹」以及「身體・性別・科技」數位藝術展，乃試圖在數位藝術的重要面向如理論、發展、展覽與實踐等等試圖加以深化、甚或體系化。本文主要在探索數位藝術的一些基本理念，而計畫展覽及創作將有另文詳述。

### 「有識之士」與「有視之士」：一個觀念史的簡探

圖像研究在西方傳統中早已形成體系相當完備而深厚的知識，構成了如何「圖解」的一套理路，含納了造形意涵、意義層次、文化聯繫等等。「偉大的作品」刺激了圖解的可能，也另一方面讓偉大的作品更形偉大（一套聖化或經典化的過程）。再加上美學上提供審美感知概念，造型心理學界定視覺與心理反映作用等等，這一切似乎註定了圖像的秘密隱藏在圖像自身之內，圖像知識於焉而生，只有天才能創造之，也只有「有識之士」能挖掘之。這種「古典式」的說法，建立在一個假設邏輯之上，例如：材料及其衍生的人為手法固定不變，預設一種平面而靜滯的畫面形態，一種單向的（我寧可稱之為素樸的）、較為被動的投射與接收關係（圖像總是主動向作者訴說），一句話，焦點總是在圖像上。然而，因著視像科技的躍進，以及近十數年來的文化研究與視覺文化討論趨於成熟，已逐漸將此種相較封閉的狀況打開。視覺狀態（觀看的文化與視覺社會行為）的討論加入了圖像探討，甚至有超越後者之勢。換句話說，從「什麼是圖像？

圖像的意義是什麼？」這種單純的提問到更複雜的「什麼/為什麼是觀看？如何是觀看？觀看和圖像的意義是什麼？」這種較當代式的思考，則建立在如下的辯證邏輯上，例如：方法決定結果，因此觀看的方法決定了觀看的結果，這便是圖像的新意義之所在，當然這裡材料的挑戰也是具有方法論意義的。在此，「看法」(point of view) (或「觀點」) 至少有兩層意思：觀看 (view) 和方法、論點 (point — 我稱之為位置、角度、切入點，都和方法、取徑有關)。這種思考導致了：圖像的意義是在觀看關係作用下產生的，當然如此推理下來，不同的關係就有不同的觀看結果以及「圖解」方式，關係的重要性不下於圖像的創造與觀看行動（事實上，社會科學早已把行動視為一高度複雜的社會中人我互動下的結果，包含了相當複雜的符號與語言）。我認為，「圖像」加「觀看」構成了「視相」<sup>1</sup> (vision) — 既非圖亦非看，而是一種整合的、辯證的、有機的綜括活動。當今視覺文化所戮力探討的，是西方現代社會（經由帝國主義、跨國商業、現代化等傳播為一跨文化與全球的主流現象）如何視覺化 (visualization) 我們的世界，讓世界或社會的概念無所遁形 (visualized) (亦即被看見)，藉此掌握現代社會的法則及控制手段。一些現代西方學者所提出的「視覺中心主義」(logocentrism) 見證了這種朝向「檯面化」(不斷曝光證成存在) 的傾向，一個西方社會現代性的基礎，一個隱微而深刻的底層結構。讀者也許以為我是在玩中文的文字遊戲，英文字典中的“theory” 在字源中有觀看 (behold) 與思考的雙重意涵；法文中觀看與知曉有其重疊和連繫的意思 (voir, savoir)，這是法國文化學者 Pierre Pourdieu 所提出的說法。進一步的，觀看關係涉入文化及社會的關係，有著時空因素的影響，符號、性別、階級、族群、權力等等，在在影響圖像的解讀取徑與意義的詮釋。這種觀點形成一套越來越綿密的網絡，如同其他社會網絡或系統，規範著人們觀看的行徑，進行形塑與再形塑的世代交替工程。雖然沒有像文字般有嚴謹的文法規則，但是其高度的開放性讓分析取徑更具挑戰性，英國學者 Stuart Hall 稱之為「再現系統」(system of representation)。而學者們提出的「視覺性」(visuality) 這個概念，更將觀看推進為一種具文化社會意涵的理念，和純粹圖像研究獨立出來。視覺文化分析所提出的概念，也對過去與當下的現象之理解進一步有所裨益，例如「奇觀」(spectacle) 的

<sup>1</sup> 在一般理解中，中文的「相」相較於「像」更為綜合抽象，更接近一種內外整合的解讀，一種質感、氣質或特性，所謂「相由心生」、「面相」、「帝王之相」等，一種和西方傳統的二元論截然不同的思考和觀看方式——一種特殊體系的中華（國）視覺文化，值得持續探索。我深感中文的視覺文化研究社群，需要一個更為一致的、有共識的概念詞彙使用。這個課題雖然只是架構基礎，但關切到理念的推演。



提出，解構了眾多歷史的節點，如帝國博覽會或國際性運動會的表演的意涵（全力展示和秩序化作為，集體亢奮）以及本計劃及展覽焦點：微觀層次的「身體奇觀」與介於宏／微觀間的「性別奇觀」。換言之，觀看不再只是工具的化身，觀看被觀念化為一個有複雜價值的概念甚至體系，至少是個概念性的工具 (conceptual tool)，而非僅是使用工具 (use tool)。這種觀察的好處是，融通了各式的指涉系統 (signifying)，可以做總體的考察和相互比較其差異。Roland Barthes 是此一理論大師，他的符號學 (semantics) 已成為視覺文化的經典理論依據，深入圖像意識型態層次並加入批判意識，前所未有。總的說來，古典主義式的圖像分析是一種「有識之士」的圖解意義活動，針對客體的內容種種加以辨認、分析、解釋與詮釋；當代圖像研究則轉向視覺活動的內涵，企圖發掘觀看關係的內質、結構，可謂「有視之士」的視覺文化活動。這一群西方的「有視之士」，事實上也就是我們所熟知的西方的哲學家及思想家，柏拉圖、笛卡兒、沙特、海德格到晚近的麥克魯漢 (Marshall McLuhan)、宋妲 (Susan Sontag)、巴特、布希亞、傅科、班雅明、詹明信 (Jameson) 等等，若加上圖像學者潘諾夫斯基等人的跨域視野，「有識之士」其實也是「有視之士」，只是時代關照的焦點不同而已（這牽涉到學術或思想典範的移轉）。我們常常忽略了思想家其實也常常是卓越的觀察者。影像的挑戰在於觀看的迷「思」，人們對視覺的運用，其廣度與深度，遠遠超出我們的認知，因此我們需要更多的「有視之士」來解答這些觀看的謎團<sup>2</sup>。

當代的視覺文化之所以勃興，毫無疑問自當拜影像科技或視覺科技高速發達之賜，但現代主義奠基了視覺規訓的作用力並成為「反作用力的前提」，因為透視法可謂科學主義下視覺威權主義的代表。當代影像技術的誕生以及網路科技大行其道，一種先行於思維的行動刺激之下，「視覺違規」(visual transgression) (首先向透視法挑戰) 成為可能，觀看不再由科學式的視覺規訓所指導，透視法的霸權式觀看在此時不再主導全局。因此，我們也可以說，影像科技所帶來的革命性啟發，可說進入了後現代式的視覺文化與觀看操作。如前所述，觀看不再只是過程，觀看是自身的意義，一個具有創新、改革、突破、創造潛力的當代社會行動；是視覺解放，而

2 關於現代主義和後現代主義視覺模式的探討，請參閱筆者相關發表：《從深層到表面：現代主義與後現代主義視覺模式研究》，台大社會學博士論文 (2006)；〈技術化影像的新體驗：對視覺傳統的反思〉，《Boom！快速與凝結新媒體的交互作用—臺澳新媒體藝術展》。台北：台灣藝術大學。頁 38-44 (2007)；〈觀看的層次—視覺文化、視覺社會學與視覺方法批判〉，《藝術學報》4 卷 2 期 (83)：215-236 (2008)。

不是視覺約束；是視覺創造而非視覺反映。如今，全球化衝擊下，人人都是潛在的「有視之士」，很少人置身其外。

### 從造形風格到速度風格

圖像的特性在於將各種視覺呈現化約、綜合為造型的表現。一個畫面或數個畫面，都以同時性的方式表現在一個或數個平面載體上（亦即定格的畫面），因此造形的營造、排置展現了這些視覺語彙的匠心獨運。即便展現空間，一如立體派，也是多元空間的定格造型，而情感（緒）表達、對圖像的離異、音樂性等等非原屬造型的範疇，也都必需轉化成視覺語言。因此，所謂「一部藝術史，是一部觀看的歷史」這種說法，更確切的說應是「一部觀看下的造型史」或「造型創造的觀看史」（社會文化的意義在此存而不論，因為並非所有的人都有相同的感受，非西方民族觀看西方繪畫需經過現代藝術教育的過程）。觀看成就了造型，造型實踐了觀看。這裡意思是：推陳出新的造型應允了（同時也是擴大了或開啟了）我們的觀看世界與思考世界之可能。三度空間的視覺藝術如雕塑或裝置等空間性作品（此時加入各種觀念作為創造素材），人們藉由身體的移動及視覺的游移轉換來接續前述的平面視覺感。將切割的畫面自行接合，用以掌握這種整合造形（以及造型整合）。我們會說：這件雕塑是藝術作品，但記錄它的影像不是；或這件裝置在藝術家特定的空間與材料安排下是藝術作品，但記錄它存在的影像不是，不論如何精緻。在造型的表達下，空間與時間被壓縮在一個相同維度，更遑論空間與時間交織下的「速度」或變異可能。二十世紀初歌頌速度與科技的未來主義者們，還是以造型的考量來解決其革命性的看法，雖然其成果在當時（以及至今）仍讓人耳目一新。我記得台灣早期雕塑家朱銘的「太極系列」，其中最讓人動容的作品之一是在招式和招式間的移動，他成功地凝結了這移動的瞬間（不動的雕塑大部分作品都有躍躍欲動的傾向）。另外。我們相當熟悉的杜象「下樓梯的女人」也是在表現瞬間而整體的移動關係（會運動的雕塑也是）。「以靜制動」大概是這種藝術表現策略，造型風格（不論具象或抽象）成為古典與現代藝術的總體成果（總的方向是朝向自主化，即所謂的抽象），雖然這兩者的表現訴求大異其趣。

當代科技的發展最大的貢獻是速度，讓空間和時間的順序感縮短、反轉、交錯、跳躍，做各種可能的組合，我們一般通稱「蒙太奇」(montage)。動態的影像提醒了我們，任何靜的圖像



或動的影像都是時空下的產物，它們隨時隨地會變化，雖然有時只有些微的差別。「地球村」(已經頗為老舊了，不是嗎?)是這種時空壓縮影響下的最典型的概念，虛擬實境(現在還是殘留些新鮮感)則是最大膽的宣示：人們的時空觀與身體觀將徹底的翻轉。震駭猶如當年的火車影像朝向法國觀眾般的驚嚇及奔跑的馬的錯覺，但人們很快習慣了這種衝擊並納入認知系統中，甚且樂此不疲。我們很驚訝的發現，人們對視覺革命的接納是如此的廣泛、無止境和快速，而世代的世界觀在視覺呈現上反映出極為明顯的差異(或可暫稱為視覺代溝)。從柏拉圖洞穴的隱喻將虛擬影像視為罪惡到供奉虛擬實境，這個一百八十度的差別反映了前述的說法。表現影像的速度、變化和圖像造形截然不同，用後者的判準及思維來看待前者會有相當大的落差，甚至誤讀與誤解。

速度是瞬息萬變的，如何表現(首先是紀錄)?如果能表現，那表現什麼?表現的成果，又如何解讀?我們需要另一種批評的模式嗎?<sup>3</sup> 這些問題導向一種關照的方向：速度風格，而非造型風格。首先，速度風格重視「移動的形貌」。形貌的移動是怎樣的「形貌」?在我看來，原本傳統造形中不被重視的「影跡」成為主角，因為它聯繫了造型並記錄了造型的動態關係，最終「影跡」是造型自身不可或缺的元素，「影跡」就是造型。「影跡」訴說了時間與空間交錯下的形貌，包含種種的情緒表達與感知。移動是它的本性，見證活的、有生命的速度，也就是生命的表現。因為是移動中的形貌，過程是重要的，因此這線性過程中的諸種變化也是重要的。數年前我在英國泰特現代美術館看到一群人圍著一台再也普通不過的電漿電視，影像起先是看似不動的、古典唯美的靜物畫。觀眾的反映起先也和這幅畫一樣沉悶。十數秒之內，觀眾的專注提高了起來，原來靜物畫上的葡萄葉乾枯了許多，鮮豔欲滴的水果表皮起了皺折。不旋十數秒，水果皮逐漸覆滿灰綠霉菌，又不旋踵，整盤水果已成一片死灰的面貌。觀眾間凝重的氣氛清楚地說明了這段短短時間歷程的衝擊。有的帶著沉重或不解的情緒離開，有的繼續留下來再度體驗這種不愉快的、緩慢但可觀察的變化、不著痕跡的腐化。這種視覺經驗是流動的，造型固然重要(畫面誠然經過藝術家的精心排當)，但關鍵在於速度風格所帶來的特殊時空感知。這幅數位化的靜

3 我提倡與主張建立明確的藝評模式，尤其是在台灣。我的觀察是，台灣的藝評，數十年來都有改革的呼聲，但缺乏共識與具體作為，各唱其調。我認為首先建立藝評模式和進一步建立台灣藝評學是必要而可行的作法。參見：廖新田，2009，〈台灣當代藝術評論中的當代思潮介入：朝向一個文化研究的理念探析〉，《文化研究月報》90期。<http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/90/park/park03.htm>。

物畫控制了時間，和我們的時間感有些許落差地並列著，觀者很快察覺並同時體驗生老病死的「時間美感歷程和差異」(即便腐化，畫面也維持一定的古典美感)。可以說，靜物畫是載體，展現了速度的情緒和面貌。我們可以簡單的總結：生命是短暫的、無常的、脆弱的、不堪一擊的，不論多麼榮華富貴，一切都將歸於塵土，這是人生的宿命。但不論多麼生動的感知言辭(或老生常談)，都取代不了這一切速度的風格表現所帶來的震驚或感動。實際的時間轉變成虛擬的時間，虛擬的時間是實際時間的再度異化，欣賞這件數位作品的觀看者正面對自我在時間維度中的自我異化，世界的不斷異化與解構。有時，速度風格的表現讓觀者有「視盲」或外於真實世界的感受。我曾經有過非常挫折的經驗(雖然自詡為視覺分析與評論者)，一部機械人不斷變化型態的電影，我老追不上它們的變化速度，我當時有一種強烈的感受，我正處於速度挑戰下時空的差異(當然我也沒看完那部電影)，我的視覺慣性已不容於新形式的視覺風格。如果仔細體驗，面對影像的流轉，我們個人的微觀世界正劇烈地轉變與面對挑戰。

此外，速度風格強調一種行進中的敘述模式，透過某一種機器時間下的排序來表達、呈現。敘述可說是數位藝術的內容，流動的方式則成為作品的形式。不但如此，由於機器的介入，敘述的型態(構成風格的一部分)不可避免有格式化的傾向(遷就於技術的進化，我們寫文章不是常常受套裝辭彙的影響?至少我覺得它們逐漸左右我的思維行動)，使得速度風格的分析更形複雜，要借用原先圖像分析的模式，在我看來恐怕有些削足適履之困。這和圖像風格大異其趣，形式與內容有其清楚的界線。速度風格下的敘述美學，恐怕是未來探討數位藝術需要多加著力的。觀眾並非要故事的結果，而是影跡的表現過程。如果有一種美專屬於速度，專屬於藝術中的速度風格，這種美絕非造型風格之美。這個觀察可以和本文開始對「古典式」圖像分析的假設邏輯做比較。如果「圖像風格」是材料及其衍生的人為手法固定不變，那麼「速度風格」則沉醉於數位影像材料及其衍生的數位手法；如果「圖像風格」預設一種平面而靜滯的畫面形態，那麼「速度風格」則歌頌動態畫面中的畫面動態；如果「圖像風格」指向一種單向的、較為被動的投射與接收關係，那麼「速度風格」期待雙向的回應或主動參與創造，容許介入、改寫、變造等等；「圖像風格」焦點在造型，「速度風格」焦點在運動痕跡；最後「圖像風格」以靜制動(以及「以靜制靜」)，「速度風格」以動制動(以及「以動制靜」)。這樣的比較也許有二元對立之嫌，我企圖藉此掌握兩者的對照性差異，而事實上兩者確實有相對的風格「嗜好」。



我們不能不承認，美術史觀已為這種典範轉移（或竄升，一種同時並進，不斷增加的狀況）設下了反動的密碼：亦即，「速度風格」的藝術革新使命或隱或顯地以「圖像風格」所界定的美學規範為反作用力之標竿，並以科技為基礎。但我們也驚訝地發現，「速度風格」仍然延續了前者的運作模式，亦即對特定材料及展現方式有著不容置疑的主張（白南準之後，很少有藝術家懷疑這個材料了）。這樣的模式埋下了另一場藝術的革命，等待某種相對的風格「竄位」。更值得注意的是，「速度風格」依賴電子的傳導與數位的技術規畫，作品表現必需要在這些特定的裝備及規格下進行：電腦或電視是框架，電子或數位訊號是其油彩，所有的表現被壓縮（或限縮）到指定的框架上，一但拔除電源，什麼事都不會發生。1975年，有人攻擊美國電視ABC電視網，因為他認為他被植入一個電視接收器，他怎樣都沒辦法把它關掉。我們都是，不是嗎。數位藝數的框架問題，和架上畫的問題如出一轍，都面臨以平面挑戰三度空間的困境，前者以造型解決，後者以影跡的速度詮釋，不過，後者的身形變化比前者更大<sup>4</sup>。

#### 從疏離到親密：第三自然中的身體與性別

起先把虛擬影像當真似乎是不可思議的事，但人們非常嚴肅的看待它，財產交易、衝突甚至導至命案的發生，司法及安全系統早已介入甚深，確保它的安全。在當今，身體和機械的結合已是醫療中極為普遍的現象，而用人工改變原本的身體有相當大的市場價值。和電腦或電視中的影像眉來眼去？已不是新聞。看色情網站獲得快感？雖然有些尷尬但是是全世界普遍的現象與問題。這些都指向人們的身體的真實性不再被視為理所當然。可以什麼都不用做，只要坐在這一台提供慾望的機器前，就可以「秀才不出門，能幹所有天下事」。

慾望和觀看文化有共同的癥候：重視想像和不斷的違規，而兩者的共同空缺是：都被現代主義的理性化作為與思維控制、疏導或佔據了三四百年。大體上，過去的影像科技之發明建立在科學理性與機械文明的目標上。人們的理性終於戰勝了神話、迷信，凡影像紀錄所到之處，無不展現高度的事實與存在，無可辯駁。影像是證明、定格與控制，由科學來作保；影像科技所到之處，光明與文明隨之而來。可以說，現代主義下的影像是禁慾主義的、衛生化下的產物。

<sup>4</sup> 我必需承認我對數位技術的認知非常有限，只能以傳統美學的認知及參觀的經驗去理論化地彌補這種不足及推導結果，這是有相當疑問的，目前只能如此。

曾幾何時，數位影像的量變與質變改寫了各種先前的預設與區隔：私密與公共、主體與客體、過程與意義（或工具與目的）。事到如今，我們必須收起懷舊式的提問：我們的身體、感官還重要嗎？要先問：我們的身體、感官為了什麼而存在。圖像的想像已不足以形容當今人們對虛擬影像的需求與迷戀，那是一種慾望，一種觀看的慾望，一種具有強烈穿透力的慾望，並延身到全身與人生。不管從什麼目的開始，人們已接受了這個外來物，讓它位居身體主體的位置和欲望主體的位置，只要看。數位慾望取代了身體情慾，數碼的格式規格化了我們的想望。這台機器也是「告解」的機器（或神，提供應允；或慾神，提供自我耽溺的滿足），我們向它吐露、記錄我們最私密的部份，它讓我們得以滿足在現實世界中的缺憾。在這台機器前，它應允了我們反思下的種種「疑難雜症」。死亡？那有死亡，死亡已被影像機器 delete 掉。想念某人？重播



影像，栩栩如生如在眼前，不會有失落感；想要愛人？在現實世界達不到的，虛擬影像讓美夢成真；想要製造生命或變造生命？數位影像可以如願。這裡總的走向是：從面對數位機械（和牛頓式的物理機械不同）及其語言的疏離（甚或抗拒）到內化為身體的一部份，肉體與數位機械合一。現實世界和肉身被反轉為虛擬，人們逐漸移民到「第二生命」的真實世界，新認同因而誕生。因此，如果我們的身體存放、活躍之處是第一自然（雖已名存實亡，早被供奉起來），現代主義下的再現體系（即我們的觀念世界）是第二自然，那麼數位化的影像世界是第三自然，一個和機械有新的親密關係的坦然世界。其中，我們的身體可以安然擺放，私密語言可以存放，狂野的想像得以實踐甚至超越狂野的期待。人們的靈魂的浴（寓）所：人們可以卸下衣物的偽裝，裸裡面對，尤其是慾望。它可以說是介於現實與理想的人間烏托邦。

以上的描述扣接到數位藝術中的「身體與性別」，這些個社會定義下、充滿重重問題性的概念，似乎面臨重新由虛擬世界來定義的挑戰。數位規畫下的身體影像，走向中性與性別錯置的探索，但一方面也極大化性別區隔所做不到的區塊。這兩級的對立：打破性別與身體區隔和鞏固性別與身體區隔，形成另一種藝術的張力。因此，數位化的身體與性別的藝術性探討與表達，恐怕可能要重回本文先前的基本命題：速度風格，如何在速度風格的觀點下表現身體與性別，兩個早被現代社會與文化高度定義與規範的概念。



## Intimacy and Alienation: The Looking Relationship and Style Forms within Contemporary Digital Images

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Nowadays, with the widespread use of imaging technology, “digital art,” an art form that has come to define a new era and generation, has overwhelmed the art community with its visual impact and influence. In particular, theories and interpretations of digital art are increasingly “lagging behind” digital art’s execution, which is continuously reinventing itself.

Based on basic theories (which prove useful at times), it is impossible to grasp the impact of digital art and the issues it touches upon, such as localization, body, gender, etc... Moreover, the most fundamental question has yet to be answered, “Can art be digital?” Even though digital art is already institutionalized and, thus making it a norm within art education and exhibition organizations, its status remains unclear for many people (even for those working in the art field). The research plan, “Taiwan Digital Art Pulse Stream Plan - Pulse One,” and the exhibition, “Body, Gender, Technology” aim to foster a deeper understanding and create a framework for digital art’s direction in terms of theory, development, exhibition, and execution. Furthermore, this essay will primarily explore the basic principles of digital art, while others will describe and explain the exhibition and artworks themselves.

### “Insightful” and “Visionary”: A Brief History on Concepts

In the West, the study of images is already a well-established discipline that forms a basic guide for the understanding of form meanings, levels of significance, cultural relevance, etc... “Great works of art” stimulate the need for explanations, which in turn, enhance their significance (a process of sanctification, or becoming a classic). In conjunction with the concept of aesthetic perception and art psychology’s definition of visual and emotional responses, these disciplines all seem to confine an image’s intrinsic value within the image itself. Thus, only geniuses can create masterpieces that can only be uncovered by “insightful people.” These “classically orientated” understandings are established upon a series of hypothetical assumptions, such as unchanged material and manipulation, planar and static form presentation, and formation of a relationship (the image is the narrator) between an unidirectional (which I refer to as “simple”) and relatively passive projection with reception. To summarize, the focus is always on the image. However, with the advances in imaging technologies and cultural research over the past ten years, as well as the maturation of visual culture discussions, this narrow-minded condition is gradually opening up. With the addition of discussions about visual statuses (society’s act of viewing culture and visuals) to the discipline of image understanding, the tides are changing. In other words, from simple questions, such as, “What is an image?” and “What is

the meaning of an image?” to more complex questions like, “What to view and why should I view? How to view? What is the meaning behind the viewing and images?,” contemporary arguments are then applied to the following logic: method decides the results, therefore, the way we view dictates what we see. This is the new meaning behind images. Of course, this logic can also be applied to an artwork’s materials. Furthermore, the word, “point of view” (or “perspective”), contains two parts to its meaning: view and point (referred to as a position, angle, entry point, encompassing method, path). Going along with this rationale, one will come to the following conclusion: An image’s meaning depends on the point of view referenced. One could reason further that different relationships yield different viewing results and “interpretation” methods. The importance of relations is no less than the act of creating and viewing the image (in fact, social sciences have long seen actions as the result of interaction between people in a highly complex society with complex language and symbols). I believe that “images” together with “view”<sup>1</sup> form “vision” - neither view nor image, it is a consolidated, dialectical, and organic fusing of activities. Nowadays, the discussion of visual culture is centered on how Western society (with its imperialistic philosophies, multinational enterprises, media and popular culture) is visualizing worldly or social concepts, and thereby dominating and controlling modern society.

Some modern scholars of the West have even coined the phrase, “logocentrism,” which refers to the perceived tendency of Western thought to locate the center of any text or discourse within logos. It is the foundation, an esoteric and profound underlying structure of modern Western society. Readers might think I am just playing around with words. However, within the English language, the word, “theory,” has its roots from the words, “behold” and “think.” According to French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher, Pierre Pourdieu, the French words “behold” (voir) and “understand” (savoir) are closely related and reinforce each other. This further enhances the notion that points of view are intertwined with society. A person’s interpretation of an image is influenced by factors such as symbols, their era, gender, social classes, race, and authority. These perspectives form an ever tightening network much like any other social network or system. Setting paths to viewing methods, these networks undergo a continuous process of evolution, thus becoming a constantly changing tool within their times. Unlike language, which is governed by grammar rules, these networks are open systems, making the analytical approach much more challenging. British scholar, Stuart Hall, called this a “system of representation.” The scholarly concept of “visuality” even further confirms the social aspect behind the act of viewing, thus standing apart from purely researching images. The concepts proposed in the analysis of visual cultures have granted us a better understanding of both past and present phenomena. For example, the proposition of “spectacle” deconstructed many nodes of history, such as the

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<sup>1</sup> In a general understanding, the Chinese word for “phase” is much more comprehensively abstract than the character for “like.” It is also closer to an internal and external integrated meaning, a type of texture, quality or characteristic, so-called “phase from the heart,” “face,” “emperor’s phase”, etc...a very different perspective from that of traditional Western dualism. --- a type of unique Chinese (country) visual art culture system worthy of continued exploration. I deeply feel that those who study Chinese visual culture need a more consistent consensus on concepts and vocabulary. Even though this topic is only a structure foundation, it concerns the deduction of concepts.



meaning of the Empire Exhibition, international sport events (forceful behaviors of exhibition and acts of creating order; group excitement) as well as this project's focus: Micro-layers of the "spectacles of the body" and "spectacles of gender," which lie between the macro- and microscopic layers. In other words, viewing is no longer a manifestation of a tool, rather it has become conceptualized into a complex concept or system; at least it is a conceptual tool, rather than the use of a tool. The advantages in this kind of observation are that, through various signifying factors, one can conduct a holistic examination and comparison. Roland Barthes is a philosopher from such a school of thought. His study of semantics has become the basis of classical theories pertaining to visual culture. His approach to exploring the ideology of images, and then applying critical thinking is unprecedented. To summarize, classicism's approach to analyzing an image is based on an "insightful person's" interpretation of images. They are based on objective identification, analysis, explanation, and interpretation. On the other hand, the modern study of images focuses more on the meaning behind viewing activities, with the aim of discovering the inner significance and construction of the observer's point of view. This is a "visionary's" approach to studying visual culture. Amongst this group of Western "visionaries" are well-known philosophers and thinkers, such as Plato, Descartes, Sartre, Heidegger, as well as later figures, like Marshall McLuhan, Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, Baudrillard, Foucault, Benjamin, Jameson, and others. If one applies Panofsky's iconography, then "people with insight" are also "visionaries." It is just that the focus is different for each era (this is related to paradigm shifts). We often ignore the fact that philosophers are often excellent observers because the challenge of viewing images lies in "distractions." People's use of vision, in terms of depth and breath, far exceeds our understanding. Therefore, we need more "visionaries" to answer these enigmas of viewing.<sup>2</sup>

The flourishing of modern visual culture is undoubtedly linked to advances in modern visualization and imaging technologies. However, modernism's force for visual training has become the "premise to its anti-force" because perspective can be said to be the representative visual discipline in this science-orientated world. The emergence of modern imaging technologies and the Internet has made "visual transgression" (the first to challenge perspectives) possible. Viewing is no longer led by scientific guidance, since perspective's way of viewing does not dominate anymore. Therefore, we can say that imaging technologies sparked a revolution that led to a post-modernist way of viewing visual culture. As mentioned before, viewing is not only a process, it is the meaning itself. It is a novel, revolutionary, groundbreaking, and creative movement of modern society. It is a visual liberation, not a visual confinement. It is a visual creation, and not a visual reflection. Now, with this global phenomenon taking place, everyone is a "visionary," and nobody is an outsider.

2. On modernist and postmodernist visual modes, see the relevant paper published: From the Deep to the Surface: Modernism and Postmodernist Visual Models, Sociology, PhD thesis of National Taiwan University (2006); "The New Experience of Technological Images: Reflections on Visual Traditions", *Boom! An Interplay of Fast and Frozen Permutation in New Media—Taiwan-Australia New Media Arts Exhibition*. Taipei: Taiwan University of Arts. Pages 38-44 (2007); Viewing Levels - Visual Culture, Visual Sociology and Visual Method of Criticism, *Taiwan Journal of Arts* Volume 4 Issue 2 (83) :215-236 (2008).

## From Form Style to Speed Style

The image's characteristics stem from the amalgamation of various visual presentations to create an expressive form. Both a canvas and digital screen use a synchronous method to present on one or many planar medium(s) (a static plane). Therefore, the creation and arrangement expresses the artist's creativity with a visual vocabulary. Even spatial expressions, such as cubism, are formed by piecing together static planes. And, emotional expressions, non-image expression, musical expression, etc... are all expressions that originally do not belong in this category, must also be transformed into a visual vocabulary. Therefore, the notion that "art history is a visual one" can be more accurately expressed as "a history of forms in a context of viewing" or "a viewing history created by forms" (The significance of social and cultural experiences is set aside, because not all people have the same feelings. People from non-Western cultures need to be introduced to modern art education before viewing Western paintings.) Viewing in itself has become a type of molding, and molding is the practice of viewing. This means that inventing and reinventing new forms allows (at the same time expands or opens up) us to view the world and its thoughts. When observing three-dimensional art, such as sculptures and installations (incorporating many concepts such as creative media), the viewer shifts their perspective to see the art in a planar fashion. By pasting together the segmented images, the viewer can comprehend the entire form (and its aggregate). We would say: This sculpture is art, yet the recording of it is not; or, this installation's premeditated arrangement is art, but the recording of it on tape is not, regardless of how well done. With the expression of forms, space and time are compressed into a signal dimension; therefore it is not necessary to mention "speed" or the variations of the intertwining space-time. During the early twentieth century, futurists, who praised speed and technology, also used forms to tackle their revolutionary thoughts. Although this was many years ago, it remains impressive today. I remember that amongst the "Taichi" series of works created by early Taiwanese sculptor Ju Ming, the ones that embodied motion and postures were the most impressive. He successfully combined the instance of moving (even immobile statues mostly have a sense of movement to them). Also, we are familiar with the work called "Women Descending the Staircase," which expresses the instance of motion (mobile sculptures do the same). "Using inaction to control action" is probably such an artist expression. A form's style (figurative or abstract) is the result of both modern and classical art (the entire trend is moving towards an autonomous state, or what we call abstract), even though the two are vastly different.

The biggest contribution of modern technology is speed. The distance of time and space is shortened, reversed, crossed, and jumped over, creating all kinds of possibilities. We generally call this a "montage." Dynamic images remind us that any static or moving image is just a product of space-time. At any time, they can change, even though at times there are only slight differences. "Global village" (already quite old, is it not?) is the most typical concept influenced by this compression of space-time. Virtual reality (some residues are still fresh) makes the most daring declaration: People's concepts about space-time and their bodies are undergoing a complete reversal. Horror is generated, much like the shock from the moving image of the train heading directly into a French audience and the illusion of racing horses. However, people are quick to adapt to this shock and absorb it into their cognitive system, even coming to enjoy it. Surprisingly, we discover how



broad, endless and quick people are in their acceptance of this visual revolution. And, under this generation's world view, visuals present a reflection on very significant differences (or tentatively called the "visual gap"). From Plato's cave metaphor of making virtual images as sins into a worshipping of virtual realities, this 180 degree difference reflects the above view. The speed, changes, and forms of expressive images are different. There will be a considerable gap when one uses the latter criterion and thought to view the former, even leading to misreadings and misunderstandings.

Since speed is constantly changing, how do we express it (after recording it)? If we can express it, then what do we express? And, for the resulting expression, how does one read it? Do we need another type of critique model?<sup>3</sup> These questions lead to another direction of concern: speed style, not shape style. First, speed style emphasizes "moving shapes." What is the "shape" of a movement? In my opinion, "image traces," usually de-emphasized by traditional shapes, have taken the main role because they link the shapes together, as well as records the relationship of the shape's movements. Finally, "image traces" are an essential element to a shape. An "image trace" is the shape, speaking of the intersection of time and space and including various mood expressions and perceptions. Movement is its basic nature as it witnesses living speed. This is also life's expression. Because this is the shape of movement, the process is important. As a result, this linear process of change is also important. A few years ago in England's Tate Modern museum, I saw a group of people surrounding a no longer common plasma television. At first, the image seemed to be a still and static classical painting, and the viewers surrounding it shared in its withdrawn mood. Within ten seconds, the attention of the viewers suddenly rose. Apparently, many of the grape leaves within the painting had dried up, and the vibrancy of the fruit became wrinkled. After ten seconds more, the fruit skin gradually became covered with grayish, green mold, and then, some time more, the whole plate of fruit had become dust. The somber atmosphere of the viewers clearly illustrated the impact of this short time history. Some left with a heavy or confused mood. Others remained to once again experience this unpleasant and slow, but perceptible course of change and corruption. This type of visual experience is flowing. Even though the style is important (the image has undergone a careful aligning by the artist), but the key is the particular sense of space-time brought on by the style of speed. This static, digital painting controlled time, and has a slightly different sense of time than us. Viewers were quick to realize and experience the "course of beauty and difference over time" with the feeling of getting old and dying of illness (even amongst the corruption, the image still maintains a classical beauty). It can be said that static paintings are carriers that exhibit speed's mood and appearance. We can simply summarize that life is short, uncertain, fragile, and vulnerable. No matter how much riches and wealth one has, everything will eventually turn to dust. This is the fate

3. I promote and advocate for the establishment of a clear model for criticism, especially in Taiwan. My observation is that there have been calls for reform in the field of art criticism for decades, but the lack of consensus and specific actions have stymied progress. I think the first step to establishing art criticism models and Taiwan art critic education must be undertaken with a feasible approach. See: Liao Xintian, 2009, "Taiwan Contemporary Art Review Intervention in Contemporary Thought: Towards a Concept of Cultural Studies>," Cultural Studies Report "for 90. <http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/90/park/park03.htm>.

for all life. But, no matter how vivid the sense of words (or cliché), there is no substitute for the shock or sensation brought by the expression of speed style. Converting real time into virtual time, virtual time is the re-alienation of real time. Viewers who enjoy this digital work face their own self-alienation, as well as the world's continuous alienation and deconstruction within this time dimension.

I have previously experienced moments of great frustration (though I claim it is for visual analysis and discussion). When watching a movie about a robot whose appearance keeps changing, I am always unable to keep up with the speed of the changes. At that time, I had a strong feeling that I was challenging speed under a different space-time (Of course, I did not finish that movie). My established visual habits make it difficult to absorb new forms of visual style. If you experience it closely, while facing the image's flow, our personal microscopic world is dramatically changing and meeting challenges.

We cannot fail to recognize that the perception of art history believes that this paradigm shift (or jump, a type of simultaneous growing condition) has setup a reactionary password: that is, the "speed style" art revolution's new mission, implicitly or explicitly, goes along with "image style's" definition of aesthetic norms as reactionary benchmarks while utilizing technology as the base. However, we also surprisingly discover that "speed style" continues the former mode of operation of using specific materials and exhibition method without any doubt (After Nam Jun Paik, very few artists doubt this material). This model buries another revolution in art, while waiting to usurp another similar style. More noteworthy is that "speed style" relies on electric conductivity and digital technology planning. The presentation of works must proceed with specific equipment and specifications: with a computer or television as the frame, and electronic or digital signals as its oil, all expressions are compressed (or shrunk within restrictions) into the specified frame. Once the power is disconnected, nothing happens. In 1975, one person attacked ABC, an American television studio, because he believed that a television receiver was implanted inside of him. No matter how much he tried, he could not turn it off. Aren't we all the same, right? The problems facing digital art's framework is exactly the same as those for easel paintings. They both deal with the challenging dilemma of projecting three dimensional spaces onto planar surfaces. The former uses forms as the solution, while the latter interprets with traces of speed. However, the latter stature's changes are larger than those of the former ones.<sup>4</sup>



HUANG Po-Chih  
Self-Portrait No.2(RED)  
Digital Moving Images  
2007 7'17"

4. I must admit that my understanding of digital technology is very limited. I can only rely on the cognitive and



### From Isolation to Intimacy: The Third Natural Body and Gender

First, taking virtual images as real seems to be unthinkable, but people actually view it with great seriousness: property transactions, conflicts which even lead to occurrences of murder. Justice and security system have already been involved, ensuring its security and safety. Today, the integration between body and machine is a very common phenomenon in health care. There is a considerable market value for using artificial objects to replace original body parts. What about those flirty images in the computer or television? These are no longer news. Getting pleasure from going onto pornographic websites? Although there is some awkwardness to this, it is a phenomenon and issue that the whole world is dealing with. These are all indications that people take their bodies for granted. One thinks they can do nothing but stare at a computer or machine, “controlling the world with a stroke of the keyboard.”

Desires and the culture of viewing share the same symptoms: they are both centered around imagination and continuous violation. And, the shortcomings to these two aspects are that, for the past three to four hundred years, they have been neglected and taken over by modernism’s rational and controlling thoughts. Rationality has finally prevailed over myths and superstitions. With image recording devices, there are places where all is exposed and nothing can be disputed. Images are evidence, standards, and controls that are assured by science. Any place where imaging technology goes, civilization and enlightenment follow suit. It can be said that imaging in a modern context is a product of asceticism and cleanliness. Digital image’s change in volume and quality has redefined previous defaults and notions, such as public and private, objective and subjective, process and meaning (or tool and goal). Then we have to let go of a nostalgic question: are our body and senses still important? To answer this, we have to first ask ourselves: why do our body and senses exist? The imaginations within images can no longer fully describe people’s need for and obsession with virtual images. It is a desire of viewing, a strong and penetrating desire that extends throughout the body and life. Regardless of initial intent, people have come to accept this externality, letting it manifest people’s bodies and desires just through watching.



LIN Pey Chwen  
The Portrait of Eve Clone  
3D Hologram  
2010 46cm x 58cm x 4cm

participatory experiences of traditional aesthetic studies to theoretically remedy this and come up with results. This raises many questions, but, currently, this is the only way.

Digital desires have taken the place of emotions in the body; our emotions have become digitalized. This machine is a “confession” machine (or God, as a reference; or gods of desire, which indulge people in their obsessions). We spill our secrets to this machine, which records all our intimate and private thoughts. It makes us feel whole by granting us what we cannot have in reality. In front of this machine, we reflect on all of our “obstacles and shortcomings.” Death? What death? Death has already been deleted by imaging machines. You miss someone? Just replay a video clip of that person, and he or she is alive again. There will be no sense of loss or loneliness; you want a lover? What cannot be obtained in the real world, can be

materialized in the virtual one. You want to create life or reinvent it? Digital imaging can help. To summarize this trend: dealing with digital machines (different from those operating in a Newtonian world) and the distancing of language (or resisting), this internal transformation merges body and digital machine into one. The real world and the body are transported to a digital realm, as people start to migrate to the realities of their “second life.” A new understanding is born. Therefore, our actual bodies reside in a real world (even when dead in the real world, it has long been captured in a virtual one); the conceptual framework of modernism (and our conceptual world) is the second reality, and the digital imaging world will form the third reality, a world where we intimately coexist with machines. In there, our bodies can reside with our private conversations, wildest imaginations, and desires. People’s souls can reside in this comforting place: People can take off their clothes and guises, and be naked and true, especially when it comes to their desires. It can be said that this place is an utopia that exists between the real world and an ideal reality.



The scene of exhibition "Taiwan Digital Art Pulse Stream Plan- The First Phase: “Body, Gender, Technology” Digital Art Exhibition ”

When the above mentioned are brought into contact with the “Body and Gender” exhibition, it seems that these problematic socially defined concepts are going to have to face the challenges of being redefined in a virtual world. Digital images of bodies are increasingly uni-sexual in nature, which explore the vanishing of genders; however, on the other hand, it also maximizes what even gender differentiation cannot. This is a stark contrast: To eradicate the barriers of the body and gender, yet to reaffirm the distinction between them has become an driving force for another form of art. Therefore, for art to explore and express the digitalized body and gender, it might have to address the aforementioned issues with the style of speed: How does one express the body and gender, two dogmatic concepts strictly defined throughout history, within the context of speed?



## 台灣數位藝術脈流計畫－脈波壹 「身體・性別・科技」數位藝術展

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## Taiwan Digital Art Pulse Stream Plan: The First Phase 「Body、Gender、Technology」Digital Art Exhibition

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HUANG Po-Chih · HUANG Chien-Hua · HUANG Yi-Ching · CHANG Hwei-Lan · TSENG Yu-  
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