Totem Chronicle – Exploring Contemporary Paiwan Art

An exegesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Fine Art (DFA) – Professional Doctorate

Chen Hui-Lien, Denise

School of Art
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University
December 2012
DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic awards, the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Chen Hui Lien

December 2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project is dedicated to my grandmother Vuvu Alayup, my grandaunt Vuvu Ruvaruva and my beloved mother Gai Tagaraus. My deepest gratitude also goes to Associate Professor Kevin White, Associate Professor Terry Batt, Dr. Werner Burger, Ms. Sherry Gao and my husband Jude.
ABSTRACT

Totems, from the past to the present, from primitive tribes to advanced societies, have appeared in different forms and manifestations as symbols of spirituality and culture. All races and countries have their totems, such as the national flag, the national emblem, and many other forms that are closely connected with the totems of the past. From the historical course of totems’ development, we can also see how aesthetic thinking has evolved in different cultures.

Among the indigenous tribes of Taiwan, Paiwan had been a tribal community with a strict social structure and a class system consisting of nobles, warriors and hunters. These characteristics were reflected in their sculpture, carving, embroidery, pottery, glass beading, weaving and architecture. The symbols and decorations found in traditional clothing represented the status and achievement of the wearer. For example, only a noble could use the hundred pace viper symbol. Warriors could use the animal symbol and the hunter a man with a spear.

During the past one hundred years of a jostling and tumultuous course of history, the Paiwan people have experienced tremendous changes in their society due to external factors beyond their control. One obvious example that reflects this change is the omnipresence of the totems that are used for non-status purposes and also turned into exotic souvenirs in tourist spots. For indigenous people that have no written language, totems were like pages of history and carriages of culture. Their purpose had been more than ‘decorative’. Now, in facing the reality of the crumbling of traditional communities and culture, profound changes have to be made. Indigenous people have to undergo extensive cultural self-examination of the past and present to find the direction to a revitalized future. Using the totem as a vehicle, this project aims to create a new series of two-dimensional and three-dimensional work in a range of non-traditional media. The major focus of the project is to create a contemporary platform for the exploration of new strategies for the re-invigoration of traditional Paiwan arts and crafts.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration 1

Acknowledgments 2

Abstract 3

Table of Contents 4

List of Figures 6

Introduction 8

**Chapter 1: Descendants of the Snake**

– The Origin of the Paiwan Tribe Totem 11

1-1: The Paiwan Tribe - Historical, Geographical Distribution and Anthropological Background 12
   a. Historical Background
   b. History of the Paiwan
   c. The Paiwan Sub-tribes: Raval and Butsul
   d. Geographic Distribution
   e. Cultural Characteristics
      1. Hierarchial social Structure
      2. Equal Primogeniture
      3. Spirit and Ancestral Worship
      4. Body Adornment
      5. Ancestral Origin
      6. The Tribe of Art and Craft
      7. Cultural Integration

1-2: The Spiritual View of Heaven, Earth and Man 24

1-3: Myth of the Totem, Illustration and Analysis 27

1-4: The Representation of Totem in Traditional Material Culture 40
Chapter 2
“Break Away” Anthropology – Use of Totem in Contemporary Paiwan Indigenous Art & Craft

2-1: “Museum – Gallery” – Vehicles for Indigenous Art?
2-2: Background and Period of the Bloom of the Indigenous Creative Industry
   b: Indigenous Art on the 'Fringe' - The Mainstream Perspective

Chapter 3
Liberation and Remolding –
The search for Modernity in Paiwan Totem Art

3-1: Simply traditional 'decoration'? – Aesthetics of the Paiwan Totem
   a: ‘Primitive’ Art and the Element of Authenticity
   b: Inheriting 'Tradition' and Creating under 'Modernity'
      1. The History and Concept of Tradition
      2. Modern Creativity

3-2: What are the ‘Coordinates’ of Totem Art
   a: Besieged by Colonization, Localization and Westernization
      – Examining and Analyzing the Works of Two Artists
      1. Experience of Self-awareness-Reflection and Exploration:
         Rahci Talif (Taiwan)
      2. Subversive-Fiona Foley (Australia)
   b. The 'Fan Li' (Barrier) of Culture-Restrictive Tradition and Deflective Modernity

Chapter 4
Totem Manifestation

4-1: Totem Chronicle-Spiritual Substance, Material and Way of Expression
4-2: Conclusion

Bibliographies

Appendix 1: Appropriate Durable Record
Appendix 2: Curriculum Vitae
Appendix 3: CD
**List of Figures**

Fig. 1. Geographic distribution of indigenous tribes in Taiwan, Council of Indigenous Peoples, Executive Yuan.

Fig. 2. The Hundred Pacer Snake (Paiwan), glass – beads embroidery.

Fig. 3. The Head (Paiwan), wood carving.

Fig. 4. Human Figure (Paiwan), wood carving.

Fig. 5. The Sun (Paiwan), wood carving.

Fig. 6. Pottery Vase (Paiwan)

Fig. 7. Rhombus (Paiwan), embroidery.

Fig. 8. Butterfly, glass - beads embroidery.

Fig. 9. Boar, wood carving.

Fig. 10. The Savages of Formosa, from ‘Postcards of Formosa – The images of Native Taiwan.’

Fig. 11. ‘Flying Fish’, 2009.

Fig. 12. ‘The Pride of Ami’, 1993.

Fig. 13. ‘Fali-yos-Typhoon Action Project’, 2007.

Fig. 14. ‘Fali-yos-Typhoon Action Project’, 2007.

Fig. 15. ‘Land deal’ 1995, flour, mixed media, found objects, text diameter 442.20 h cm

Fig. 16. ‘Black Opium’, 777 cast aluminum poppies, 2006.

Fig. 17. ‘HHH#1 2004’, Ultrachrome print on paper; edition 6/5, 75X101cm, photography: Dennis Cowley.

Fig. 18. Bluewater Trail Public Art, 2008 (Mackay Regional Council Public Art Collection, Artspace Mackay) – ‘Crows’ 2009, laser cut stainless steel
– ‘Yuwi’ 2009, fabricated aluminum, wet spray finish
– ‘Fishbones’, 2009, cast aluminum and mosaics
– ‘Shields’, 2009, water jet cut stone inlaid into paved surface
– ‘Sugar Cages’, 2009, box-formed sheet stainless steel with acid-etched lettering
– ‘Mangrove Cap’, 2009, weathered corten - steel, solar powered LED lights

Fig. 19. Checkpoint at mountain barrier.

Fig. 20. ‘Sinofication’, Installation, incense, wire, thread, 2011.

Fig. 21. ‘Grandmother’s Tatoo’, Prints, 135cm x 65cm, 2009.

Fig. 22. ‘Follow the line’, paper & pin, 225cm x 160cm, 2010.

Fig. 23. ‘Follow the line’, paper & pin, 210cm x 160cm, 2010.

Fig. 24. ‘Name Rectification’, paint & pencil, 225cm x 105cm, 2012.
Introduction

Before I began this research into Paiwan traditional culture, my main focus was on Western art theory and an understanding of its differences with modern Oriental art. But more often, I have absorbed myself in finding my own creative direction and pursuit as an artist. The resulting work can be quite intuitive and not always profound. But I felt a sense of urgency when I saw the fading tattoo on my grandmother’s hands during a visit to my Paiwan home village in the year 2005. A desire to rediscover my traditional roots underpins this investigation of indigenous totem culture along with the primary aim of finding new creative strategies for reinvigorating traditional Paiwan forms of art creation.

My initial research in Paiwan traditional culture began by visiting indigenous artists and cultural creative industry studios. I have discovered that there is currently little distinction between artistic pursuit and the need to produce for the market. This has resulted in many difficulties that tribal communities have to face. Traditional Paiwan culture has come to face a fault line because of the onslaught of colonial, foreign, and Chinese influences throughout history. The situation has been exacerbated by the political and social changes happening in modern times. For indigenous artists, there is no cultural solid ground to cultivate.
The progress of cultural heritage depends largely on reflecting on the past to enable the breaking of new ground in the future. Unfortunately, the trend of present day indigenous art is focused more on the venting of personal feelings, and lacks exploration and discovery in perception, substance and form. For a minority culture to revive itself, the obstacles are all the more daunting. Under the shadow of mainstream art, it is important for indigenous artists on the fringe to find ways to reflect their own cultural vitality and creativity.

Paiwan in eastern Taiwan is an indigenous tribe possessing no written form of language. Paiwan believe in animism. The sky, earth, humans and nature are worshipped and deified through various totems. These are not just icons, but a vehicle carrying meaning, representing rule and order and reflecting the social structure, spiritual and material aspects of the culture.

The impact of globalization has caused the meaning of tribal totem to be separated from its original symbolic value. The use of conventional materials, displayed and copied in various settings, has disassociated the totem as a spiritual focus. This has made it a mere add-on, turning it from a revered symbol to a cheap commercial product.
The main focus of this research project is to draw on the iconic meaning of the totem as a vehicle for my own artistic exploration. The situation facing indigenous art in a rapidly changing environment will be discussed. The search of any possible break will be along historical and cultural veins as presented in Chapter 1. Through the use of non-traditional materials and processes, combined with multi-faceted, experimental and pure art approaches, I aim to produce a metamorphosis or reinterpretation of the totem.
Chapter 1
Descendants of the Snake – The Origin of the Paiwan Tribe Totem

Sigmund Freud in his book *Totem und Tabu* asked ‘What is a totem? ’ It can be an animal that is harmless or dangerous, domesticated or wild. In some cases, a plant or a natural occurrence like raining can be connected to a tribe or clan in strange and important ways. Foremost of these is that the totem is generally the representation of ancestors of the clan who convey commands and assistance from the supernatural world to their people and protect them from intruders. In North American Indian language, a totem signifies the supernatural sacred power that is drawn from nature and carries many taboos, myths and legends. With personification and idolization of interaction with this power, totem becomes its physical representation. The totem has not only become the symbol of a clan from a religious perspective, but has also developed artistically through time. Evidence of the relationship can be found in the rich material culture that exists, such as the Chinese dragon.

The indigenous people of Taiwan practised animism and believed that all things natural were equated with spirits that existed within them. These were reflected in many myths and legends about the mountain god, river

---

god and sun god. The Paiwan tribe’s ancient belief was that humans were born from the clay pot and the snake and also that the sun gave birth to an egg. Out of awe and respect, totems that reflected such beliefs were created.

This chapter will discuss the spirit of the totem practice of the Paiwan from a geographic, historical, and humanistic context, with myths and legends as a backdrop and seek to explain how totems were used and interpreted in the tribe's social and class structure.

1.1

The Paiwan Tribe – Historical, Geographical Distribution and Anthropological Background

a. Historical Background

Taiwan indigenous people are descendants of the tribes who had inhabited the island before the arrival of the Han. Presently, there is no concrete proof that the ancestors of these people were native to the island. Different tribes have their own legends about how their ancestors came to live on the island. Research carried out by anthropologists generally indicates that the tribes came to Taiwan in different waves between 6,500

---

2 The Han were Chinese immigrants from coastal provinces of Guang Dong and Fukien.
to 5,000 years ago. But this assertion is still not conclusive among academics.

The many indigenous tribes in Taiwan came to the island at different times and among the second wave were the Paiwan. From observing excavated artifacts with Paiwan cultural traits, archaeologists have determined that it was around 2,500 years ago that the tribe first settled on the island. There is strong linguistic evidence that the language spoken by the tribe is linked to the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian Linguistic Family, the language spoken by many people living on islands covering South East Asia and Micronesia. There also exist similarities in their living customs, such as the chewing of betel nuts, planting taro as staple food, house building, totem carving, social structure, ancestral worship and tattooing.

From an historical perspective, Taiwan initially came under foreign rule from the 17th century. The Spanish occupied part of Taiwan from 1626–1642, and the Dutch from 1622–1661. Subsequently, Taiwan was returned to Han rule during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) Dynasties. In 1895, the Qing Empire ceded the island to Japan under the
Treaty of Shimonoseki. After Japan was defeated in the Second World War in 1945, the present Nationalist Government took over the island.

Based on archaeological, linguistic and other evidence, the history and traditional culture of the indigenous people have seen tumultuous and vigorous changes as a result of the many external influences and intrusions during these periods of foreign rule. These included European merchants seeking trade opportunities and missionaries finding new converts. The following fifty years (1895 – 1945) of Japanese colonial rule subjected the indigenous people to brutal exploitation and abrupt cultural changes, particularly in spiritual beliefs. Finally, they have had to face the transition to a capitalist society with a totally different survival code.

From the 17th century to the 19th century, the indigenous people of Taiwan were influenced, in varying degrees, by the contact, including marriage, between themselves and the Han population. But the disintegration of indigenous tradition and culture occurred only in the last 100 years with the start of Japanese colonial rule that lasted for 50 years.

---

3 Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed in 1895, after the Qing Empire was defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War, after which Taiwan was ceded to Japan.
The policy of Japanization\textsuperscript{4} was carried out among the indigenous people with the start of the ‘Policy of Ruling the Barbarians’\textsuperscript{5}. This included such drastic measures as the adoption of Japanese names, restriction of hunting grounds, eradication of old customs and the displacement of whole villages with forced relocation. Ironically, research into indigenous people only commenced with the occupation. Japanese anthropologist Ino Kanori first classified the indigenous people under four main groups, eight tribes and eleven sub-tribes with geographical distribution details and descriptions of their cultural characteristics. His classification, with some changes, has been adopted to this day. Government policy formulation was also based on the works of other scholars. These include Torii Ryuzo, Mori Ushinosuke, Shikano Nacho, Utsurizawa Nenojou, Miyamoto Nobuto, and Mabuchi Touichi. The research conducted by these scholars constituted the first broad, systematic and detailed record of the culture of the indigenous people as well as accounts of their history.

After Taiwan reverted to Chinese rule under the Nationalist government,

\textsuperscript{4}Japanization was the process in which Japanese culture dominated cultures of minorities and colonies during the imperial period from 1868 to 1945. In Taiwan, this was achieved through three stages among the indigenous people.

\textsuperscript{5}Policy of Ruling the Barbarians’ was implemented during the Japanese colonial rule to control the indigenous people.
many of the policies related to the indigenous people of the colonial time were followed, but with a Chinese emphasis and less high-handedness. What has changed has been the adaptation of Chinese names and learning of the Chinese language. Thus, in the course of a century, traditional indigenous cultures had been uprooted twice and suffered greatly.

Apart from the influences of politics and trade, religion had also travelled across oceans at a later date and played a major role in transforming the lives of indigenous people. In 1859, the San Domingo Mission set up the first mission in Taiwan. The British Presbyterians arrived later in 1865 and began frontier missionary work in Southern Taiwan. Dr. Mackay of the Canadian Presbyterians followed in 1872 and made close contact with indigenous tribes in the northern part of the island.

During the period of Japanese colonial rule, missionaries were not allowed to enter indigenous land. This policy was changed when the Nationalist Government took over in 1945. With the Catholic Church and Protestants actively spreading Christianity, 87% of the indigenous population had been converted during 1954–1966 (Research Commission of Taiwan Province). Sociologists explained that this was the result of
external social changes. In facing brutal suppression of their traditional culture and high-handed measures to enforce changes, indigenous people were not able to practice their rituals, beliefs and core values. The resulting spiritual void allowed the entry of religious groups to spread Christian beliefs effortlessly after the ban was lifted. With the added material lure such as the handing out of flour by the missionaries during a time of hardship, Christian faith has since become an integral part of indigenous culture. Currently, according to government statistics (Department of Civil Affairs, Taiwan Provincial Government), 67% of the indigenous population still believes in God. After experiencing these waves of outside influence and violent change over the last few hundred years, the result has been a profound change and loss of indigenous culture.

b. History of the Paiwan

The name of Paiwan was derived from the myth that their ancestors originated from Payuan of the Kavulungan Mountain⁶ and then spread to other places. The Japanese scholar Ino Kanori first used the term Su-Paiwan to refer to those who lived in the southern part of the Central Taiwan Mountains and along the southeastern coast. Later on, in his

⁶ Kavulungan Mountain is on the southernmost part of the Taiwan Central Range and the tallest one in Southern Taiwan. It is also the scared mountain to the Paiwan, Rukai and Puyuma tribes where the ancestral spirits reside and the origination of many myths and legends.
report written in French, Torii Ryuzo changed Su-Paiwan to Paiwan, which has been used to this day.

Paiwan as a tribe was suggested by the Japanese scholar Mori Ushinosuke in 1912 of which the Rukai and Puyuma tribes were included. This was because both tribes lived in close proximity with the Paiwan and at that time, intermarriage and cross-cultural influences were common. The suggestion clearly disregarded the differences in languages, social structure and culture among the three tribes in the early studies of Japanese scholars. After decades of research and debate on the topic, Taiwanese anthropologist Lin Yi Di, based on geo-cultural consideration, put the Paiwan and Rukai among the southern tribe group, and Puyuma among the eastern group. When based on language and culture, the three tribes were considered independent from each other.

c. The Paiwan Sub-tribes: Raval and Butsul

The Ravel Sub-tribe in the north was closely linked and influenced by the Rukai in culture and customs. Intermarriages have been common and occasionally it would be difficult to distinguish people from the two tribes because of their close resemblance in clothing and headgear.

The Butsul Sub-tribe, larger in number, was divided into the northern
group of Paumaumaq, the southern groups of Chaoboobo and Parilario, and the eastern group of Paqaroqaro. The southern groups were more localized because of their closer contact with the Min Nan and Hakka people. This was reflected in their clothing. We can also see that the Ami and Puyuma tribes of the area had influenced the ceremonial rites, clothing and material culture of the eastern Paiwan group of Paqaroqaro. This was particularly true in clothing and customs that seem to be a mixing of elements coming from all three tribes. Fundamentally, the northern Paiwan tribes had a longer history of interaction with other tribes. As people of each sub-tribe migrated, villages were formed under a chief that allowed greater amalgamation with other cultures over the course of time.

d. Geographic Distribution
Paiwan is one of the 14 indigenous tribes of Taiwan (Fig. 1). There are nine administrative districts in the mountain areas and three on the plains. With a population of 90,000 (according to a 2011 census), it is the third largest tribe in Taiwan, after Amis and Atayal. Originating from the Kavulungan Mountain, the tribe spread to live in areas from altitudes of 1,500 ft down to lower hills over the course of several migrations. They

---

7 Min Nan and Hakka were two Han groups who immigrated to Taiwan from the Chinese coastal provinces of Fuk Kian and Guan Dong.
are also found in the south of the Central Mountain Range and the south of the eastern coastal mountains. In 1930, after the Wushe Incident\(^8\), the Japanese colonial government moved all indigenous communities who were living deep in the mountains to lower ground. The Paiwan was one of the three tribes most affected by this action. Further relocation after 1945 by the Nationalist government resulted in mainly Paiwan communities being moved further down. After the 1988 Typhoon\(^9\), more villages were dislocated and dislodged from their old tribal grounds.

---

\(^8\) In 1930, the Sediq tribe in Central Taiwan revolted against the Japanese authorities due to long-term oppression. The incident started in the village of Wushe and was suppressed with strong military action with subsequent introduction of harsh measures to control the tribespeople.

\(^9\) The 88 Typhoon was referred to locally in Taiwan as Typhoon Morakot, which hit the Island on 8\(^{th}\) August 2009. Due to the extreme downpour of rain, large-scale mudslides and flooding caused many deaths and displacement of entire villages in the mountainous regions, where many indigenous people lived.
Geographically, the Paiwan are found in the southern part of Taiwan and can be divided into the South Paiwan, East Paiwan, Central Paiwan, and North Paiwan. They have been living adjacent to other indigenous tribes like the Bunun, Rukai, Puyuma, Amei and also the Han on the plains. Although linguistically the Paiwan speak the same language, such frequent contact with other tribes in different geographic surroundings resulted in a variance in culture and customs among different groups.
e. **Cultural Characteristics**

1. **Hierarchical Social Structure:**

   The social structure of the Paiwan was basically hierarchical. The village was lead by the village head or *kamazangilan*; under the village head were the noble class, *mamazangilan*; the braves, *pualu* and the commoners, *adidan*. The status of the noble class was dependent on their lineage with the village head. The name of a Paiwan also reflected the class of a person. There were ways to go up the social ladder by being distinguished in hunting and sculpting skills, being bestowed a higher-class name by the village head, or through marriage. The village head also owned the land, river and hunting grounds in the old days, which could be expanded through marriage. The status of the village chief was exemplified through their right to decorate their house with woodcarving; adorning their clothes with specified totems and their body with tattoos. With the changes over time and the advent of the modern capitalist economy, the hierarchical structure is now practically non-existent. However, the buying of a noble name still occurs.

2. **Equal Primogeniture:**

   The Paiwan tribe practice Equal Primogeniture in regard to the inheritance of family fortune and status. The eldest child, regardless of gender, would decide on the distribution of family wealth. This also
means matrilocal marriage will take place when a female village chief wants to find a husband.

3. Spirit and Ancestral Worship:
This took the form of a pair of one male and one female carved statues erected inside the house or under the eaves. Either stone or wood was used and the statues were placed in an upright position with hands raised to the chest.

4. Body Adornment;
Clothing was the medium the Paiwan used to demonstrate their love of totem. The use of colour with elaborate embroidery work and the mix and match of headgear, ear ornament, and necklace were combined to achieve aesthetic beauty and self-aggrandisement. Such practice is still popular nowadays.

5. Ancestral Origin:
The Paiwan had different myths and legends to elevate the status of the tribe and individual. In honour of the ancestral spirits, rituals were performed. First, there was the receiving of spirits, then the entertaining of spirits and finally the ushering out of spirits. Besides consolidating the class system and the society, the rituals were also reflections of their view
on the world, religion and social structure.

6. The Tribe of Art and Craft:
The hierarchical system had been the main reason for the Paiwan to produce more art and craft than other tribes. The status of the noble class was accentuated by the exclusive possession of carvings, embroidery and other artifacts. This creative tradition, even after the crumbling of the system, is still maintained to the present day.

7. Cultural Integration:
Because of their geographic distribution and contact with other neighbouring indigenous tribes, the Paiwan have been able to absorb external cultural elements during different stages in their history. This is one reason that Paiwan culture still survives.

1.2
The Spiritual View of Heaven, Earth and Man
There were many myths, particularly about the origin of the tribe, circulating within the Paiwan. As the tribespeople settled across different parts of Taiwan, different versions of the myths arose, such as Paiwan people were hatched from the egg born by the sun, or came from bamboo, stone, snake and other natural beings. It was accepted that all beings
could be god and that the Paiwan were not created by one god.

The Paiwan believed that gods, ghosts and humans co-exist in the same world but not in the same space. The supernatural beings were divided into gods, spirits, ghosts and ancestral spirits, forming the primitive worshipping view of the tribe.

The Paiwan practiced animism, which believes that spirits exist in all natural objects and phenomenon. All gods and ghosts were called *tsumas*. The soul in a human was divided into the good, right soul in the body and the wicked, left soul roaming outside the body. When the right soul of a person failed to do good, danger would follow, and the bad soul would cause sickness and bad behaviour. Paiwan people had a very clear idea of what one will become after their life on earth. All would become a god *tsumas*. Only those who had died a natural death with a good soul would be called ancestral spirit *vulva*, while others became bad spirit *galay*.

During a person’s dream, the right soul would wander out and play around. If one was caught by the ghost *tsumas* in a dream and got sick, a sharma would be invited to perform a healing ritual called *parisi*. The
sharma would negotiate with the *tsumas* what to offer to bring the sick back to health. Minor sickness would only need a couple of betel nuts or a piece of pork for the ritual. Traditionally, the Paiwan believed that taboo and restrictions were cast upon the tribespeople according to age, sex and class. Any serious infringement could jeopardize the very existence of the whole tribe.

The parallel co-existence of the natural and the supernatural world in the minds of the Paiwan formed the rules that were strictly obeyed. Any suffering or misfortune in life, be it physical or mental, were accorded to the supernatural force. The result was strict observation of rules and taboo. There was also incessant appeasement through the sharma with rituals and offerings.

In the Paiwan mind, all things had their creator with gods overseeing rivers and mountains and the home its protective god. But the closest tie with the other world had been through ancestral worship. The noble class erected wooden or stone totem to represent ancestral spirits and ordinary people used woven patterns and embroidery to adorn their clothes for the purpose.
Myths of the Totem, Illustration and Analysis

Among the indigenous tribes of Taiwan, the Paiwan totem art form had obtained prominence and was widely used in the material culture of the tribes-people. The rich totem tradition was closely related to the hierarchical, social structure of the tribe. As the noble class once had special privileges in the decoration of their houses and the adornment of their dresses, totem was a symbol of power. As they also did not need to work by accepting tributes from the lower classes, it was natural for them to pursue a more refined lifestyle.

In the early days, the Paiwan totems were used more as symbols of worship and charm with less consideration on aesthetic appeal. These can be found in the carved wood and stone statues of ancestral spirits, the decoration of eaves, daily utensils, pottery vases, clothing and body tattoo. Each category would have its group of commonly used totems.

Motifs

Human Figure – Head, upper body, whole body
Fauna – Hundred-pacer snake, boar, deer, muntjac, bird, dragon, phoenix
Insect – Butterfly, spider
Nature – Sun, rainbow
Flora – Leaf, flower
Ware – Pottery vase, connected cup
Celebration – Ancestral worship, swing, hunting
Geometrical – Rectangle, square, cross, rhombus, triangle, hexagon, arc, circular dot, oblique
Others – Nipple shape

Following are the most representative of the Paiwan totems:

1. Hundred-Pacer Snake

![Image of Hundred-Pacer Snake]
Fig. 2, Hundred-pacer Snake, glass bead embroidery.

Legends – The hundred-pacer snake (Fig. 2) was believed to be the ancestor of the Paiwan and the most common totem. It was also used exclusively by the noble class. There were many legends about the snake. One tells of two eggs that were laid by the sun, one red and one white, both of which were guarded by a hundred-pacer snake. Two snakes, one male and one female were hatched and these were the ancestors of the Paiwan noble class. As to the ancestors of the ordinary class, they were born by a green snake. Another legend concerned the invasion of a Paiwan village by foreign intruders when the tribes-people were out. The invaders were found dead from snake poison when the tribes-people returned. The tribe believed this was due to the protection of the hundred-pacer snake. Since then, the snake has been honoured as the protector of the tribe. During a marriage ceremony, guests would participate in a traditional dance. It would start with a small circle of people, gradually joined by others, forming a snake like coil.

A book published in Japan in 1915 Report on Investigations into the Customs of Aboriginal Peoples\textsuperscript{10} mentioned that the Hundred-Pacer

\textsuperscript{10} Originally titled Report on Barbarian’s Customs and published in Japanese, the book was about the culture and customs of indigenous tribes in Taiwan in early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. The Five Volume Eight Book Chinese edition, named Report on Investigations into the Customs of Aboriginal Peoples, was published in 2004 by the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica.
Snake was the ancestor of the Paiwan tribe elders and the noble class. This meant the worship of the snake was in essence the worship of ancestral spirits. The primitive practice might also stem from the fear of the dangerous venomous reptile and the belief that such a powerful creature could protect the tribe from outside intrusion. The feared snake, as suggested in the first legend, placed the noble class in a superior and dignified position that strengthened their ruling power.

The hundred-pacer snake is one of the five venomous snakes native to Taiwan and found mainly in the eastern, central and southern mountainous forests. It has a triangular shaped head, dark brown triangular patterns on its two sides, a grayish brown rhombus pattern on the back and a black dotted white bottom. It is believed that a victim, once bitten by the snake, will die after walking for a distance of one hundred paces. The snake symbol occupied a very important place in Paiwan belief. The physical shape of the body, curved or coiled, can still be found in variant forms. The rhombus pattern on the snake's back is another popular symbol that is used. These are combined with differences in quantity, colour, position and other symbols to achieve a luxuriant and varying effect. The image above is a typical adornment on a dress in the form of a snake with rhombus pattern. Brightly coloured yellow, green
and orange glass beads are embroidered on black cloth achieving a striking and contrasting effect.

The hundred-pacer snake had been the protective god of the tribe, representing independence, calm, non-aggressiveness but swiftness in retaliation. The Paiwan word for hundred-pacer snake also means respected elders. So the symbol of the snake had been revered and worshiped as the same as the ancestral totem, appearing in clothing, wood and stone carvings and daily utensils. With the decline of the noble class, all members of the tribe are now able to use the snake totem without restriction.

2. The Head
The Head Symbol (Fig. 3), was used exclusively by the village head to represent ancestors. The highest class would wear a headgear or headband embroidered with the head symbol, decorating it with boar teeth, deer horn, leopard’s teeth or eagle feathers. In early times, when head hunting was practised on the enemy or other tribes, the skull would be displayed on a designated head shelf after an elaborate ritual. So, the symbol might also represent a show of bravery.

---

11 According to Digital Archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, the oldest record of the head hunting practice is from The Batavia City Diaries (February 1624). The practice was banned during the Japanese colonial rule 1895–1945.
Fig. 3, The Head Symbol, woodcarving.
3. Human Figure

Fig. 4, Human Figure, woodcarving.
Just like the head symbol, the Human Figure (Fig. 4) also represented ancestors and connects with ancestral worship. Used exclusively by nobles, it was first found in wood sculpture and later in clothing. From the column carved with ancestral figures inside the house, the carvings on eaves outside and the statues erected during the quinquennium ancestral worship ceremony, the human figure totem had been a symbol that legitimized and consolidated the status of the noble class.

Paiwan ancestral statues are usually standing, symmetrical, with hands raised to the chest and the contour of the faces carved out. Decorative symbols include the hundred-pacer snake and geometrical patterns were also added. There are still other forms of these primitive male and female human figures of ancestors and tribe heroes that can be found in clothing and in wooden and stone carvings. The number of figures can be more than one; in rows or connected; showing the face or the side; either standing or kneeling; during the beheading of an enemy or the hunting of an animal.

4. **The Sun**

Legend

In ancient times, in a small white house up the *Kavulungan* Mountain, the
sun god laid two eggs in a vase. A man and a woman were hatched and they got married. Their children, with the guide of a spirit dog, journeyed outside the *Kavulungan* Mountain area, built their home and established the Paiwan Tribe. This was one variation of the sun laid egg legends that explained the origin of humans. The Paiwan once buried their dead in the house. However, the Japanese Government, because of health concerns, banned the practice. Traditionally, the corpse would be placed with the body facing east where the sun rises. This was due to the belief that the soul would return and be reincarnated after a trip to the sun, the origin of human kind. The neighbouring Rukai tribe held a similar belief and also saw themselves as the son of the sun. Just like the Paiwan, the Sun Symbol (Fig. 5) could only used by their noble class. This may result from cross- influence, as the two tribes had lived close to each other.

The Sun was represented in radial form with layers of cloud at the outer edge denoting the parade of the noble class. A symbol that derived from the sun was the rainbow.
5. **Pottery Vase**

Only members of the noble class were able to own such vases (Fig. 6) that were used as a container for valuable possessions and passed on as an heirloom of the family. Usually decorated with snake, dot and circular symbols, the vase itself became a symbol that appeared on dresses.

Fig. 5, The Sun, woodcarving.
6. Rhombus

The Rhombus Symbol (Fig. 7) had been commonly used. Taken from the pattern on a hundred-pacer snake, the form would usually be continuous, multi-coloured, overlapping and circumvent the object to be decorated.

Fig. 7, Rhombus Symbol, embroidery
7. **Butterfly**

The Butterfly (Fig. 8) symbolizes beauty, agility and energy and is used with no class restriction but only by the fastest running messengers or sportsmen of the Northern Paiwan people.

![Fig. 8, Butterfly, glass bead embroidery](image)

8. **Fauna**

As a hunting tribe, it was natural that boar (Fig. 9), deer and dragon were found represented on daily utensils, carving and clothing. The dragon motif would have been borrowed from the Han.
1.4

The Representation of Totem in Traditional Indigenous Material Culture

The restricted use of certain motifs like the hundred-pacer snake and human head by the nobles served the purpose of accentuating their name and position in the tribe. This meant the symbols, besides their decorative and aesthetic values, also represented power.

Totem is an important element in the study of many tribal cultures and art. It is an artistic interpretation of a tribe, concerning the way of life and the meaning of their customs that have passed down from their ancestors. The use of totem can be found in common daily utensils as well as in decorative objects. It is also a way of expression in nature worship.
Chen Chi-lu in his book *Woodcarving of the Paiwan Group of Taiwan (1961)* listed the categories of symbols found in objects according to the usage. These included carving in the house, furniture, household utensils, worshipping tools and abstract expression. The book also included totem illustrations of the body, head, snake, deer and the combination with geometric and blended patterns to form many other abstract and varied patterns.

The Paiwan had used totems in several major areas. First was the discontinued practice of body tattoo, worn exclusively by the noble class. Men would have their more sophisticated tattoo appear on the front or back of the body and for the women, on the back of the hand. The choice of motifs and symbols would put emphasis on the ruling class such as repetitive abstract designs of mountain and river. The second area was on pottery vases, once an important matrimonial gift. Patterns could range from being crude to intricate because of the plasticity of clay and the designs were more varied, sophisticated and three-dimensional. Another important use was in wood and stone carving found in house decorations, daily utensils and in the form of ancestral statues. The hardness of wood and stone allows the totem to be more narrative or ceremonial in content. Lastly, single design class-conscious totems such as the hundred-pacer
snake and the head symbol could be found in embroidery work. The repetitive use of the symbols, enhanced by the mix of coloured threads or glass beads, created a vivid, embossed and elegant effect.

The breakdown of the Paiwan social structure, which began during Japanese colonial rule, meant the original purposes attached to the above uses were mostly lost. Vases are made and statues are carved purely as commercial products or decorative items. This also applies to embroidered totems using brightly coloured threads and beads that adorn clothing.

It has been suggested by anthropologists that any new possibilities in the study of material culture rest not on the method, but on the understanding of ‘the nature of culture’ Chen Chi Lu (1988). The symbols used by the Paiwan were closely related to their hierarchical social structure. These were the materials that enabled them to construct a way in which to connect their own common world-view with an order. As mentioned above, each symbol had its meaning that incorporated old customs and beliefs of a once self contained society, with both pragmatic and symbolic functions. The continuance of this traditional material culture will depend
very much on how it can be applied in daily usage with cultural meaning, and go beyond the realm of compilation and observation of the ‘material’.
Chapter 2

‘Break Away’ Anthropology – Use of Totem in Contemporary Paiwan Indigenous Art & Craft

The cultural history of Taiwanese indigenous people has been written by outsiders, commencing with the Japanese scholars in the late nineteenth century and continuing with the anthropological field studies that were conducted following Taiwan’s reversion to Chinese rule. In order to obtain objective and accurate dates, anthropologists have always maintained a distance by ‘way of seeing’ an ‘exotic culture’ when carrying out their research. However, greater emphasis has been directed on the 'material' aspect of the culture, with scant consideration on the future of the tribes-people at critical times of change. The advent of the authority of anthropologists as interpreters of indigenous culture began in England and America during the 1930's and matured in the 1950's, Hu Kong Ming (1998). The traditional purpose of anthropology is the 'understanding of humans'. On the other hand, it is the 'saving of tradition'. But traditionally the discipline neglected to face the many problems and conflicts that exist in modern society. The restriction imposed by the theories of functionalism has limited scholarly research

---

12 Anthropologists call those cultures that are unlike theirs and not in the mainstream as ‘other culture’ or ‘different culture.’ Here ‘exotic culture’ is used to show the corresponding cultural view of British anthropologists.

13 Functionalism is associated with British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and Structural Functionalism with Radcliffe Brown. Their views belong to the
to the understanding of tribal communities in ‘isolation’. Its failure in apprehending what indigenous cultures have to undergo in a modern world and their relationship with changing governing authorities has resulted in a lack of reflection from a 'subject' or 'object' perspective.

The indigenous art and culture of Taiwan have been mostly lost because of the changing situation of the world. All these facts are sadly irreversible for those in the minority. Cultural specimens obtained by anthropologists and museums, regardless of the channel of acquisition, would be ‘lifeless’ once removed from their context. In the tribes, many of the younger generation have lost the ability to speak their native tongue. Artefacts have become the only objective and tangible thread through which to ‘connect’ to the past. Many of these threads are now scattered and found in museums and galleries. Consequently, there is diminished opportunity for tribespeople to view and appreciate these exquisite artifacts made by their ancestors.

'Break Away' means to step out from the confinement of anthropological research and to understand the problems facing indigenous culture and art
in a modern day context. The Paiwan, which are renowned for their totem art, have to consider 'staying on the fringe' or 'entering the mainstream', and to discuss' leaving' the specimens in the confined space of a museum or 'bringing' the specimens out through transition and conversion.

2-1

‘Museum – Gallery’ – Vehicles for Indigenous Art?

It is a sign of our times that every piece of pottery or dress or jewelry, every tool for living has to start with a blueprint. Primitive people begin making things with their fingers, with material in their hands. Their work expresses the pleasure of making. What we enjoy, probably, is the intense and often grotesque expression of energy, of life. These sentences reach into the present, and perhaps even beyond it. The fundamental sense of identity, the plastic - colorful ornamental pleasure shown by 'primitives' for their weapons and their objects of sacred or daily uses are surely often more beautiful than the saccharinely tasteful decorations on the objects displayed in the show cases of our salons and in the museums of arts and crafts. – E. H. Gombrich (2002:224)

A museum is an establishment set up to keep, exhibit and research cultural objects. An older impression of a museum is that it houses only 'dying' artefacts. But developments in present day museums have made

---

14 Part of a statement from the German painter Emil Nolde.
all of these notions appear outdated. The relationship, the research and
the exhibition direction built between the museums which house the
collected 'objects' have to go beyond their value (aesthetic and skill), or
the similarity or variance between objects. What have become more
important are the social fabric and historic meaning that inform the
object, which also includes people to people; people to object and people
to environment relationships.

In many European cities during the Renaissance, there was increased
academic interest in obscure things such as specimens from nature and
handmade wares that were found locally or from abroad. The
accumulated items became collections that were called ‘wunderkamern’,
‘cabinets de curiosite’ or ‘cabinet of curiosities’. These were the
forerunners of present day museums. From the 16th to 18th century, the
main fields of collection were art, archeology, history and natural
sciences. Museums of ethnology, anthropology, science and technology
appeared only in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Early twentieth century artists were inspired very much by tribal
sculpture, resulting in the changing course of art development at that
time. Tribal art has since been widely recognized and appreciated but organized exhibitions by mainstream art museums only commenced in the early 1920’s. This began with African sculpture and then American indigenous art. The collection of Taiwanese indigenous art has a shorter history of one hundred years or more, beginning from the period of Japanese colonial rule from 1895 to 1945. Then followed the period when Taiwan reverted to Chinese rule under the Nationalist Government to the 1970’s. The last forty years have seen the establishment of more indigenous museum spaces. Most early research works and collected items of Japanese anthropologists are now in Japan. The remainder, are housed in the Taiwan Provincial Museum, an important establishment set up in 1908 for the preservation of indigenous cultural relics. It is now called National Taiwan Museum. In 1928, the National Taiwan University set-up The Museum of Anthropology and in 1956, the Institute of Ethnology was established at the Academia Sinica. Their collections have focused on different periods of indigenous lives and cultures using the semi-open principle in ethnology collection management. In recent years, these institutions have opened their doors to the public, which means indigenous people now have the chance to see exquisite objects made by their ancestors. Since 1908, three more important museums with partial or full indigenous cultural content were open to the public. First, was the National Museum of Natural Science in 1986, followed by the
National Museum of Prehistory and in 1994, the first privately funded Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines. Instead of serving mainly academics, the contemporary management styles of these new museums have allowed greater interaction with the general public, organizations and communities. In spite of the changes seen in 21st Century Taiwan museums, the questions that have been raised through the awakened indigenous identity and increased demands of cultural autonomy are still unanswered.

In Taiwan, the material culture of indigenous people has been mostly lost or transformed over the course of one hundred years. The specimens in a museum have become the 'evidence' of the upkeep of traditional culture. Indigenous artist Rahic Talifo pointed out that ‘anthropologists answer the question on the future of indigenous art, not indigenous people.’ Sun Ta Chuan (Paellabang Danapan), Chairman of the Council of Indigenous People, also suggested that the direction of anthropological research and concern have affected the general attitude regarding indigenous people. 'The protective attitude of anthropologist has created a misconception in people's minds. Many, particularly government officials, either see indigenous people issues from a museum perspective – specimen collection, or from a tourism or living specimen perspective. … They
have ignored what the tribes-people are facing – a lingering fate of eventual obscurity.' Sun Ta Chuan (1991: 119)

The role of anthropologists is to interpret different aspects of indigenous culture. Naturally, they have close contacts with indigenous people and a working relationship with museums. Their related views will definitely affect the content and display formats of the latter, particularly in activities that are related to artefacts. The result may have a profound effect on how indigenous people regard their traditional material culture. Museum’s of anthropology are usually detached from the 'humans' who were the makers of their collection. There is no direct contact between them. What present indigenous communities face is beyond the interest of museums. In recent years, tribal architecture and totem had appeared in different venues, of which Paiwan totem is the iconic symbol of indigenous art. But such occasions are rare. Since 1990, more cultural villages and parks have opened. Established mainly by local governments and run by businesses, these cultural establishments are aimed at the tourist market. Tribes-people are hired to sing and dance, or to sell souvenirs and traditional artefacts. In comparison with tribal shows staged for tourists in the past decades, the present day cultural villages have larger venues and offer more sophisticated performances. But in
essence, nothing has changed. There is still no in-depth revelation and presentation of traditional culture.

After all these years, the preconceived notion about indigenous culture still remains in the minds of many who run research institutes, museums, cultural organizations, and even indigenous departments, resulting in an unbreakable 'object' oriented stereotype. With a cultural village that is more 'human' oriented, there should be more inclusion and examination of the educational and economic issues that affect how indigenous people connect with the modern world. So far, these are all lacking in these villages and parks. In the 21st Century, indigenous art has developed, at a slow pace, both locally and internationally. But truly conscious efforts that stem from the tribespeople are still lacking.

After the Second World War, native American and Australian indigenous people brought out issues concerning their autonomy and one of their demands was the returning of their tribal artefacts from museums. In the 1970s, the Zuni Native American tribe legally removed their tribal statues and altars from North American and European museums. This action denounced the usual practice of collecting for the sake of academic
research, public education, authenticity of exhibits and permanent
possession for future generations. The many present demands and
aspirations of indigenous people in Taiwan, like autonomy, cultural
enlightenment, possession and interpretation rights, are following the
effects of what other indigenous people have done in America,
Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Will these efforts eventually form a
consolidated movement? In the last twenty years, there has been a
growing voice in Taiwan calling on anthropologists, researchers,
academics and museums to change their 'dead' and 'past' hardened
thinking. Allowing the general population to be involved and to
understand more of the collections in universities and museums through
events can be an effective step. This will allow common people, but in
particular those from the indigenous tribes, to connect the historic vein
with the present, and to open up future possibilities for indigenous art and
culture. The private ‘Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines’ has co-
operated with individual tribes to organize exhibitions, a pioneering effort
that has avoided the stereotyped bureaucratic involvement. In a
multifaceted modern world, indigenous art and culture have to find their
own channels and spaces that go beyond established confinements,
particularly museums, and to open up their new possibilities.
2.2
The Background and Period of the Bloom of Indigenous Creative Industry

From 1990, indigenous art and artefacts started to flourish and for the first time, entered mainstream cultural discussions in a positive and dignified manner. This was due to the individual efforts and support of the government policy in promoting indigenous art industry. Even if future policy may suffer discontinuance or relevance, the direction in the formation of cultural policies has been established. Government policy during 1951 – 1988 emphasized the production of artefacts in support of the tourist trade. After 1990, ‘continuation of the cultural’ became the buzzword and was promoted widely in communities. Competitions in creative design were organized with winning works exhibited. The development of indigenous art and artefact enterprise under the above government policy has been divided into three stages:

1. From 1951 to 1988, the main objectives were to boost employment and promote tourism by opening training centres to train indigenous people in farming and handicraft skills.
2. From 1991 to 2003, the emphasis was on the building up of the cultural industry. The Council of Indigenous Peoples\textsuperscript{15} and Council of Cultural Affairs\textsuperscript{16} were established to provide support in creative enterprises based on traditional arts and crafts with the ultimate aims of cultural continuance, livelihood improvement and social status advancement.

3. From 2002 to the present, under the direction of the Council of Cultural Affairs, the attention has turned to creativity, design and branding of products that can compete in the international market. The Council of Indigenous Peoples has also organized a series of design competitions and exhibitions.

Before the 1990's, exhibitions of indigenous artefacts organized by the government and the private sector contained mainly ‘old collections’ provided by museums with few acquisitions of contemporary work. Starting from the mid 1990's, there has been a strong inclination to enter the mainstream art market by producing creative works with commercial

\textsuperscript{15}The Council of Indigenous Peoples was established in 1996 to provide a central point of government supervision for indigenous affairs, as well as a central interface for the Taiwan's indigenous community to interact with the government.

\textsuperscript{16}CCA was established in 1981 as the nation's highest institution for the planning and oversight of the country's cultural establishments. The primary aim of CCA is to upgrade cultural soft power.
appeal but also with roots in tradition. The Paiwan in Southern Taiwan are prominent leaders and their creative shows captured the attention of media with much fanfare, bringing indigenous art and artifacts to the attention of the world. Under such favourable conditions and policy, many seminars were held and studios, cultural centres and cultural foundations sprung up in numbers. This solid indigenous endeavour in meeting and reviving local entrepreneurship in meeting the policy and development of cultural tourism and trade under the indigenous banner gained momentum.

Under an optimistic sentiment and supporting policy, there has been a mushrooming of workshops, studios, cultural centres and foundations during this period. This tide of producing indigenous art and artefact is the response on the individual level to the call of the building and marketing of cultural enterprise and tourism based on local characteristics. Economic development under the banner of cultural continuation can be a promising direction to follow. With a bustling economy in Taiwan, opportunity has arisen for those who have worked in the cities to leave hardship and discrimination behind. They can pursue a respectable career in continuing what their ancestors were good in doing, i.e., traditional artefacts. Tribal villages, in a changing society, have
gradually lost their role as the bearer and centre of cultural tradition. Government policy can be instrumental in the tradition's preservation and continuation. The idea of cultural enterprise with commercial and economic considerations is not new. But the reality of competing in a commodity market with quality in mind, the balance between artefact and art and the co-existence of tradition and creation are questions that need to be addressed.

After the end of Japanese colonial rule, with Taiwan taken back by the Nationalist Government, martial law was introduced and lifted in the year 1989. This sudden state of freedom opened an opportunity for indigenous people to break away from isolation and seek recognition, autonomy and self-assertion. A long awaited chance for 'culture rebuilding' had arrived. But this was also a period of political stranglehold between the two political parties, the Kuomintang and Democratic Progress Party, with indigenous people elevated to a new level of importance.

However, hiding behind this optimistic atmosphere are more unknown factors and uneasiness. The segregation policy brought upon the indigenous people during the traumatic colonial days had placed them in
a low position on the social ladder and low in self-regard. These concerns, coupled with economic incapability, have made a 'creative cultural industry' a distant goal. The situation is further aggravated with inadequate thinking on indigenous art. With the bare existence of a traditional environment, the introspective ability to examine traditional culture is lost. Those in the art profession also lack a broader cultural vision and necessary contemporary art education. With this backdrop, indigenous art has been marketed by the government with glamour at cultural and tourism festivals. For indigenous artists, with insufficient knowledge and limited understanding, the direction of the ‘cultural creative industry’ has been influenced by the government’s focus on the economic level and on the ‘industry’, and not on the ‘culture’ and ‘creativity’.


Picasso and Vlaminck found African masks at the flea market and recognized that they were Art. From then on, it was a slow steep climb for recognition, but due to the vision and taste of important collectors and the heroic efforts of enlightened curators, these extra-ordinary pieces now have a secure and enduring place among the arts we rightly celebrate. – Shelly Errington (1998:49)
Pintung County in southern Taiwan is where many Paiwan live. Every year, the local indigenous affairs office would organize a sculpture contest to promote the carving tradition. When looking at the works from the past eleven years, we have seen better technical ability, younger participants and broader motifs. For the purpose of fairness, participants have been divided into two categories. One is for students/open (amateur) and the other for professionals. Juries generally judge from the 'art' or academic point of view. But many participants have learned their craft from teachers as apprentices. Their understanding of the difference between art and artefact is often minimal and vague.

Indigenous art as ‘art’ has been determined mainly by the ‘other’ academics, collectors and artists. Howard Murphy (2007:15) in his book *Becoming Art* says:

‘Primitive art was not fine and in some respects it was being edged out of the category of art at all. To an extent, objects of primitive art were being defined as art only in the context of Western societies. Their potential as art was recognized by European artists who saw that they had something in common with their own practice, but it was doubted whether the people who produced them were motivated by the same sensibilities.

The study of non-Western, in particular indigenous art in context became the
province of anthropologists who were for the most part outside the domain of value creation in fine art. I suspect Mariett Westerman (2005: xi) is largely correct when she writes ‘“Art” in anthropology is often taken in the original Western sense of the Latin term ars, making by prized skill’. This may explain why anthropologists have not taken up the cudgels in the arena of fine art to the extent they did in the case of religion. Anthropologists may themselves have been victims of the hegemony of the fine art category, which in many ways divorced art from function and context and for a while located the aesthetic response in ‘disinterested contemplation’.

To indigenous artists, the factual, microscopic and conceptual criteria derived by ‘other’ experts may place them in an unfair light. From the Western aesthetic point of view, indigenous art has always been placed outside the realm of mainstream art. The difference in semantic thinking also made any comparison impossible. Material culture in the old tribal society was used for pragmatic purposes and its religious view regarded nature as its core value and there is no concept or word for art or artist in their language. The Paiwan word pulima or with many hands, means a person has skills. The other Paiwan word ventsik17, is a noun meaning word, symbol, tattoo and totem. The use of these two words illustrates the physical aspect of their art, and not an abstraction. This explains why the Paiwan find it difficult to separate 'art' and 'commodity' or to comprehend

17 In the Paiwan language, ventsik means symbol and ventsikan means all symbols that appear in embroidery, carving, tattoo and writing. Academics suggested that in a society that does not have a written language, ventsik can be regarded as a kind of symbolic language.
the antagonistic issue with the Han.

Over the last twenty years, there have been many rising talents in the indigenous art field, which is an indication that development in different areas does exist. But whatever they are called, there is no strong attachment to the name and what it represents. There has been a lack of comprehension of the work produced by an artist, an art worker, a craftsman, and a traditional or common artisan. Many are not able to distinguish the difference between art or craft, or a traditional or modern piece of work. In fact, all these issues are rather distant and difficult to explain to the mainstream society or the indigenous artists themselves. In the 1990's, it was hard for young tribes-people to find jobs in the cities. Once a sideline profession for the few, the thriving of indigenous art during this time has provided the opportunity for them to return to their home villages to learn craft in order to make a living. Personal interest and cultural heritage have not been a priority in their minds. The distinction between art and artefact and their values is not important for them. Even many fine art artists, who are constantly facing the perplexing identity of 'indigenous art', cannot understand the distinction.
In 1993, the 'International Year of the World's Indigenous People' had prompted a search for a new identity among those in the cultural circle and indigenous people in Taiwan. Exhibitions and promotional activities were organized to promote indigenous literature and indigenous art. The term 'indigenous artist' was coined by the media at this time. In 1996, the Council of Indigenous Peoples was established to address the grievances of the aboriginal people. One significant change was the use of the terms 'indigenous' or 'the original inhabitants' to describe them. To interpret and position 'indigenous art' in the modern context is a challenging task. This has not been made easier because archaeology, tourism, history, art and artefact seem to intersect with no clear direction. A promising sign is that many contemporary indigenous artists have created works that have slowly moved away from the confines of traditional materials and rules. They have even questioned the essence and perplexity of what the term ‘indigenous’ means and represents.

Aboriginal art curator Djon Mundine pointed out that in Australia, the process of differentiating ‘aboriginality’ and ‘authenticity’ in aboriginal art has undergone a process of over twenty years. He also defined 'contemporary aboriginal art' as a piece of work of which its content and form is related to aborigines, connected to their culture and recognized by
their community. If many of the primitive tribal artworks, creation and aspects of art were not the results of aesthetic pursuit, representation or expressions of the makers, then the many selected views and values bestowed upon aboriginal art, are as Andre Malraux has pointed out, that many of the objects considered as art underwent a 'metamorphosis' to become art. So, in regard to the discussion on Indigenous Art in Taiwan, it still requires the test of time and scrutiny to accumulate style and meaning. In a multi-cultural and complex international society, it is essential to discuss, analyze, and critique the many issues from different angles with openness and far sightedness. To achieve true significance from such efforts, it has to be realised from the core cultural perspective of the tribe and based on the course of historical interaction with outsiders.

Shelly Errington, in her book *The death of authentic primitive art and other tales of progress*, suggested that ‘revolutions, displacements, and other disruptive events liberate objects from the contexts that produced them.’ (1998: 98) It is doubtful whether the material culture of the indigenous people in Taiwan has been liberated from being the intense research subject of anthropologists, archeologists and ethnologists. Many of their research acquisitions are now kept in specimen rooms in national
or private museums. Some artefacts would fall into the hands of art dealers or collectors. With availability becoming increasingly scarce, demand has pushed up prices. Once made within a traditional context, the creator of an artefact was not required to sign their work. In recent years, those who label themselves as ‘indigenous artists’, because of their increasing fame, have done so to prevent plagiarism and to protect their copyrights. Such action does not represent the true artistic value of a work, but is used as a way to determine its market price and to make it more valuable. The Paiwan totem art had been the cultural heritage of its people. Its physical and abstract symbols and designs are unavoidably used and copied and the signing of a work is just to increase the commercial value. Trying to prevent such use commercially would be a futile effort. One positive step is to broaden the creative vision based on the totem heritage.

The thinking behind traditional Indigenous art has developed from ‘object’ to ‘cultural industry’ and then to ‘creative industry’. The most important consideration is the use of art and craft to solve the economic problems of indigenous people, with a cultural face. Industries are established under such policy, with little artistic and cultural content. Quality is traded for quantity. Creativity is traded for imitation. What has
been lost is the ability to elevate creativity and maintain independent
cultural thinking. Time-honoured skills; form, and the rich aesthetic and
cultural meaning would require the rediscovery of traditional culture and
discovery of creativity to achieve attractive commodity design and artistic
realization. As history does not stay at one point, the existence of totem
as an important cultural element in the fabric of the traditional way of
living has faced many challenges in a highly demanding and ever
changing capitalist society. From specimen to art, from transformation to
mismatching, from high esteem to commonality, the road from producing
artefact to artwork has never been voluntary to the tribes-people. It is a
turning point for traditional culture to progress along a path of 'substance'.

b
Indigenous Art on the ‘Fringe’ – The Mainstream Perspective
Over a long period of time the majority of a society adopt and practice
mainstream values. Such values dictate many people's views and
preferences on people, issues and material possessions that ultimately
affect their judgment. An intense, suppressing force would be formed
behind such views that bars and pushes non-mainstream values to the
fringe. This may have crushed a lot of potential in the creative endeavour
of the indigenous people. As mainstream values may be attuned to the
change in the bigger environment because of racial, cultural, political, religious and aesthetic influences, the mass would affect the speed of change and obsoleteness of such values. But the mainstream still needs to co-exist with the non-mainstream, and the mass in number does not represent the prevalence of any value to be absolute and correct. In spite of the smallness in number and size, the minority can still become a deciding factor in forming a singular value that constitutes uniqueness in acumen and ingenuity. This, of course, would depend on how an individual or a minority would position and develop their cultural value when facing a dominating one. The gap between the Han and indigenous people has been the result of the accumulation of historical agitation and racial discrimination over the years. Indigenous tribes always represent marginalized culture, sitting on the lower rung of the social ladder, or the labour class. Their culture and art are colonized, industrialized for tourism, and seen as an 'exotic', which means there has always been an inadequacy for mainstream values to look at minorities in a positive light.

For a long period of time, the Indigenous People in Taiwan have been regarded as the 'exotic/other' objective body and not as equal. The difference in culture has not given them an exotic attraction. Instead, antagonistic and pre-conceived notions were cast upon them. In facing
the sense of superiority exerted by different colonial or external authorities, a sense of inferiority had permeated the indigenous people, creating an insurmountable gap. Eventually, this prevented any self-understanding or respect of their own culture. Indigenous art has turned into a symbol of difference only and been wholly ignored. Their cultures were turned into abstractions, theories, and identified as 'object' rather than as a body of 'people'. So, what we then see is that Paiwan art is woodcarving, and that drinking is their culture. Such stereotypical views from the mainstream would inevitably determine the good and bad of a fringe art culture. However, with the influx of Western multi-cultural values, plus the awareness of indigenous people themselves, mainstream values are challenged and traditional ones are realigned and reinforced.

'The Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art in the Netherlands was established in 2002. It is the only contemporary aboriginal art museum in Europe. Its purpose is not only to exhibit aboriginal art, but also to provide a venue so that 'visitors can learn about the similarities and differences between Aboriginal and Western visual arts and form their own point of view regarding Aboriginal art. There are differences that occur between nations, races and individuals. Such differences can produce negative and strange connotations that give rise to judgmental, restricted, standardized conclusions, with the result of debasing those who are different. But differences can also allow one culture, one
individual, or one piece of work to break out of the crowd and be regarded highly with respect. To examine closely the values in the variations would seem to be a more sensible approach. The indication of a nation's cultural richness would depend on its demonstration of variedness, amalgamation of different races and fair treatment and respect of those on the fringe. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe was started in 1947. The main reason behind its inception was the inability for eight theatre groups, who turned up uninvited, to perform at the Edinburgh International Festival, an initiative created to celebrate and enrich European cultural life in the wake of the Second World War. Not being part of the official programme, they staged their shows anyway. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe has become the largest arts festival in the world. It has provided the existence of a free platform for unhindered cultural performances that are full of an unbinding, non-racial and non-judgmental human spirit.

Multi-culturalism and plurality in values are the impetus in a country's advancement. It is natural that there is the existence of fringe cultures. The line drawn between mainstream and fringe culture can be indistinct and can go in opposite directions. Their roles and positions may be changed and counteracted constantly. The indigenous cultures on the
fringe have to avoid being engulfed or assimilated by the mainstream or pushed further to the edge. It is not for the minority to decide whether there is a need or the possibility to enter the mainstream. This will be decided by their ongoing relationship with the surrounding state as a whole, although such discussion is not pressing at the moment.

Contemporary/mainstream thinking is fluid in nature and does not stay at one point. It has undergone flourishing and declining days, which is applicable to some of those at the fringe. As the understanding of indigenous culture and art has passed through the mainstream knowledge system, which instills long established and hardened views, indigenous people have found it hard to initiate any meaningful discussion on their own. On the other hand, if there is no true recognition of one's cultural identity and core values, no serious efforts to think and learn in an open manner, those who pursue the path of creating indigenous art would always remain in a closed, limited and narrow psyche based on racial self-aggrandizement. This would make deeper exploration and discussion on the related issues problematic.
Chapter 3
Liberation and Remolding
– The Search for Modernity in Paiwan Totem Art

The death of authentic primitive arts and crafts has a venerable history. Authentic primitive art is not being produced any more, the story goes, because the cultures that produced it are "dead."

'To say arts and crafts have "died out" makes it seem that social change toward modernity (such as a society’s adoption of a cash economy or a world religion, or its participation in the nation-state and indirectly in the global economic system) is a natural process, analogous to biological processes of birth, growth, and death. The implicit notion behind metaphors like this one is that world history is going somewhere—toward modernity— and that cultures and societies that do not step onto the road leading toward modernity will be left behind and disappear. In this narrative, marginal, small-scale societies in out-of-the-way places must not stand in the way of progress and should gladly adopt the benefits of modernization—else be left behind in their materially deprived state.’ Shelly Errington(1998: 118-136)

In the discourse on the modern fast paced economy and multi-directional development, tribal totem has been produced and sold in different forms and in different occasions and places. But what does totem mean to most people and what is its cultural value? How do indigenous people see their own culture? During the 1990’s, there had been much discourse by indigenous people in Taiwan about their art. Yet academic institutions
and cultural organizations did not pay much attention or take any related action about the issue. Indigenous artists involved also found it difficult to explain their predicament in a traditional and modern binary situation.

Used in everyday life and also during ceremonies within the context of the tribal culture of the Paiwan, traditional totem symbols have been collected, exhibited and marketed. Tribal artists seeking creativity from tradition and who brand their works as indigenous art also try to enter the mainstream but have encountered obstacles and missed chances. This chapter aims to trace back the origin of the tradition; to explore and comprehend whether such tradition has to be at the opposite end of modernity, and to find out the possible problems preventing such distinct tribal totem from being transformed and remolded. To further expound on the subject, works of selected artists will be examined from both an aesthetic and contemporary perspective.

3-1
Simply Traditional 'Decoration'? – Aesthetic of the Paiwan Totem
The actual beginning of the Paiwan Totem may not be determined but it was not created originally for decorative purposes. It can be perceived as a pictorial form of words used to represent the social order, hierarchy and to meet the needs of primitive worship in a tightly knit and stratified society. For example, figures were carved from wood as a symbol of
respect to ancestral spirits, the hundred-pacer snake as a protective god and which was also worshipped as the originator of the tribe. All of these creations were starting points to satisfy practical needs with scant consideration of aesthetics.

The use of totem, besides that of a symbol of class, had been extended to ceremonial occasions, particularly during weddings. When dancing the traditional group snake coil dance, participants would eye and size up each other. For the unmarried, this was also a good chance to find a prospective partner. To appear outstanding and attractive, the practice of wearing a dress adorned with totem gradually materialized. Then the house was decorated by placing a carved statue inside and carved wooden eaves appeared on the outside. Totem symbols also appeared broadly in household utensils, weapons, smoke pipes, carrying sacks and on skin tattoo. Now with the changing of time, totems once designated for use solely by the Paiwan noble class, such as the snake and human figure, can now be used by all of the tribe for decorative purposes during formal occasions. This still causes some murmuring of dissent among the elders.

In the past thirty years or so, the rapid change in living conditions, irreparable collapse of the Paiwan social system and encroachment of
foreign cultures have mostly eradicated the meaning of what totem once represented. Nowadays, totem can be seen occasionally when traditional rituals are performed and its use for 'decorative' purposes is more prevalent. Because of the altered political landscape, one party rule in Taiwan came to an end in 2000 and now the two opposing parties regularly campaign bitterly for people’s votes. Once a sidelined minority, the Paiwan has inevitably been swept into this election tide and totem has become a publicity tool. To gain the support of the tribes-people, candidates always promise to reinforce and spread traditional Paiwan culture. To convince the tribes-people of their sincerity, they usually wear Paiwan costumes decorated with totem symbols in colourful red, yellow, black and green during election campaign gatherings. After the election, there would be measures to be taken as a means of fulfilling election promises. One is the support of 'cultural industry' in the 1990's. Traditional culture becomes the main element to attract tourists. Merchandise over decorated with totem symbols can be found in tribal villages, hotels, and airport shops. During Japanese colonial rule, postcards were produced (Fig. 10) of barbarous, uncivilized aborigines to attract tourists who were looking to see an 'exotic culture'. In the 1970's, one can find a human size board with Paiwan costume painted on it. The parts of the eye, nose and mouth were hollowed out and tourists would simply stand at the back and turn themselves into a 'pseudo barbarian.'
Such developments in cultural tourism would satisfy the general public seeking an exotic experience and also meet the government’s vision of a modern economy, but inadvertently debase the charm of the totem.

**Image removed due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 10. The savages of Formosa. *Postcards of Formosa The Images of Native Taiwan. 2003.*

In *The Grammar of Ornament (1856)*, Owen Jones recommended that English artisans follow the example of 'primitive' ornament in order to restore the vitality and invention lost to over sophisticated design:

The ornament of savage tribe, being the result of a natural instinct, is necessarily true to its purpose; whilst in much of the ornament of civilized nations, the first impulse which generated received forms being enfeebled by
constant repetition, the ornament is oftentimes misapplied … all beauty is destroyed … by superadded ornament to ill-contrived form. If we would return to a more healthy condition, we must even be as little children or as savages; we must get rid of the acquired and artificial, and return to and develop natural instincts. (Grammar, 16)

What we can understand from Owen Jones is that totem in tribal culture is to interpret nature and follow natural instincts. It is a physical impulse with little conscious thought and reflection. This may provide the reason for how indigenous tribes form their unique culture. The form of the totem or symbol is not important. It is the spirit behind it and the attitude towards life and the surroundings that matter. The preservation of indigenous culture in Taiwan has been the effort of anthropologists. Their areas of study and research concentrate more on the functional aspects and artistic merits of the material culture with less attention paid on its original and inherent strength. There are differences between eastern and western art but the co-existence of such differences also allow connection in aesthetic values. When we are talking about primitive art, an understanding of the unique social and historical background may be necessary for a fuller appreciation of the innate 'beauty'. Inborn in humans, the pursuit of 'beauty' can be affected by culture and experience. In a tribal culture that does not have written language, symbols are visible decoders of meaning. This was the factor enabling the determination of
friend or foe when the defensive mechanism rested on a village, rather than the whole tribe. As every Paiwan totem had its origin and meaning, what appeared in men's body tattoo and women's hand tattoo could signify unmistakable information about the person's deeds, family, class and traditional territorial dominion\textsuperscript{18}. It is fascinating to be able to read all of these in the totem along with the sedimentary and historical changes embedded in it.

For thousands of years, philosophers and estheticians have studied the artistic essence of totem art and provided inclusive findings. The appreciation of totem can be based on its concept, its physical property and the feeling it evokes. But the heart and soul of the totem can be its representation. This representation transformed itself further into the creation of more objects, forms and artistic variations. To be more precise, the beauty of the totem is in its sacred form that primitive people created to represent the core value of life. It transcended the art of rhythm, symmetry, colour and size and can provide the foundation for rebuilding and transformation during the 'modernization' process.

\textsuperscript{18} ‘Traditional territorial dominion’ is the territory where indigenous people live or hunt. The Paiwan noble class used hand tattoo to indicate the land possessed by family.
a. Primitive Art and the Element of Authenticity

When discussing 'primitive' art, we have to first examine the related contradictions and controversies. Esthetician G. Blocker in his book *Aesthetics of Primitive Arts, 1991* asked: Is 'primitive' primitive? And: Is primitive art 'art'? In Blocker's opinion, primitive art includes most art forms from remote cultures and tribal societies. Renowned Taiwan anthropologist Chen Chi-Lu also says: Primitive art usually means art created by humans a long time ago. But the art of the African Negro, Oceanic natives, North American Indians, and many tribes in Asia can also be regarded as primitive. Therefore, it is not easy to make a precise definition. European peasant art and Chinese folk art also include primitive elements. So, to use the word primitive can be discretionary in some cases. Generally, primitive arts include traditions that are outside the Western and Eastern civilizations of Greece, Rome, China, India and Arabia.

The word primitive can have meanings which include: earliest, uncivilized, barbarous, simple, native, unpretentious, strange, exotic, weird, savage, all of which can be subjective, positive or negative misconceptions. From an evolutionary point of view, all modern societies must have their origins. So, primitive societies represented the early
living stages and fashions that cannot stay 'primitive' at one point forever.
The opening of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing of Primitive Art at New York's Metropolitan Museum in 1982 was a turning point, where objects in their primitive state were accepted by the mainstream.

In the early twentieth century, the major trend of modern art was the rejection of traditional narrative, restraint and forms by artists associated with Cubism and Fauvism. Many artists, including Picasso, Matisse, and Apollinaire, 'discovered' the masks and carvings of Africa and Oceania. Their works were greatly inspired by the beauty found in these primitive works of art and had a strong impact on the development of western art. This also caused increased research in primitive art and market demand. But what elements did the artists obtain from the works outside their civilized domain? Seen from the Western aesthetic point of view, how 'authentic' are these elements? But we can see that these elements had been the source of inspiration and transformation in their creative works. The strong colour shown in the works of Fauve artist Matisse and the multiple perspectives of Cubist artist Picasso convey a true sense and vitality of life. The creator of the term 'Art Brut', Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985) found that children can paint what they see but with unconventional elements. Unrestricted by art styles and conventional
rules with a direct and unpretentious approach, the result was a new creation full of indescribable strength and meaning. To search for a ‘break through’ and to shake off traditional restraints are common in art creation. Primitive art, as an 'exotic' culture that exists beyond the culture of our own with different values, thinking and meanings, can provide a different kind of impact and experience in the transformation of art creation.

The evolution in form of Paiwan wood carving art, according to Chen Chi-Lu (1961:191-192), had been slow and still retained its primitive appearance in the 1950’s. As Taiwan is an island, its geographical buffer may be one reason that slowed external influences. When we are examining 'supernatural' ideas that were the combination of 'symbolic–traditional–natural' elements, their application in wood and stone carving, embroidery and pottery was not painterly, primitive art. Instead, realistic human and animal forms were used and structured in repeated single or double rows with little variation. Strong, contrasting colours like black and white, red and black, red and green, plus orange were also used abundantly. To meet the social and spiritual needs of a hierarchical society, such free use of form, media and material in the creative process became the impetus behind the development of the Paiwan totem.
b. **Inheriting 'Tradition' and Creating under 'Modernity'**

In the 21st Century, indigenous communities in Taiwan have undergone a process of modernization and tribal tourism has been promoted for economic development. We can see the development of tourist spots and an upgrading of roads and public facilities. But the most obvious are the tribal totems erected along the road entering the village. From northern Taiwan to important tourist destinations in the south, the omnipresence of totem is the sign of cultural communication. For the tribes-people, economic gain is now realized under capitalism. The whole cultural context has been bypassed with the modern day tribe selling decorative totem for better quality living.

For the Paiwan, or maybe the indigenous people in Taiwan as a whole, it is not easy to discuss art in terms of 'tradition' and 'modernity', where a clear fault line existed from a historical perspective. During the period from 1895 to 1990, which included fifty years of Japanese colonial rule, only traditional art forms were encompassed in the art history of Taiwan. Indigenous art had never been mentioned and no traces of its development can be found. Take tribal sculptures as an example, where all creations were made to satisfy the needs of the art market and antique merchants. Mostly, these were imitations or representations of traditional
tribal life. The mainstream art community only paid attention when indigenous art of a more contemporary nature appeared at the end of 1990 to early 2000. But since the new generation of indigenous artists have never lived the traditional way of life, they started a creative path with only vague comprehension of their past and were unclear what to expect in an unfamiliar 'modernity' world. The pressure of making a living has also made the journey all the more harder and disheartening. Creativity can then be eroded through the continuous repetition and copying of old works. This would only make the path of creation narrower or lead it towards a dead end. 'Tradition' does not mean stopping or going back to the past. It should be a process of constant regeneration with the result and content being appreciated by the members of the society.

1. The History and Concept of Tradition

In discourses about 'tradition', indigenous traditional artifacts are mostly attributed as handicraft under folk art, and not under fine art. The conservation of indigenous traditional culture generally involves the collection efforts of museums and academics as well as it being turned into 'pseudo indigenous culture' imitations sold in tourist markets. Hsieh Shih-Chung (2004:133-152) in his discourse about the active or passive arrival of indigenous artefact culture in the world (that is to go beyond the boundary of the tribal community) has examined the stage of
development in six areas. These include tourism; collectors; leisure; national culture; academic papers; functional museums and self initiated efforts of indigenous people. In the tourism market, shopkeepers mentioned the word ‘tradition’ that includes those from indigenous people outside of Taiwan. This may be a ploy to increase the appeal of their merchandise, as some are imported and not locally produced. On the other hand, the potential for generating cultural invigoration may result. This means that tribes-people can be inspired by such foreign imports and infuse such inspirations into their work. Such invigoration has already cut into a cultural tradition that is not linear or gradual, forming a 'hybrid' among the tribes in Taiwan. With 'Creative Industry' projects of indigenous art overflowing, Paiwan totem art has its broad influences but inadvertently cannot avoid being influenced by other indigenous cultures.

The wide use of Paiwan totem, particularly in woodcarving, has affected other indigenous tribes and created a 'pan Paiwan' phenomenon. The main reason behind this has been the way government cultural departments promoted indigenous culture by treating all the tribes as a whole and disregarding the fact that some tribes do not have a wood carving tradition. As to the courses conducted to promote the craft, teachers have come mainly from the Paiwan tribe. Their style of graphical form and the
Paiwan's traditional material culture has been preserved passively as anthropological specimens and adopted for commercial purposes with the production of mainly run-of-the-mill, unimaginative merchandise. 'Tradition', much battered and weakened during the last hundred years, is now undergoing a process of awakening over the past two decades. When tribal memory and experience were marginalized and perceived as
inferior, 'to re-establish tradition' comprehensively, becomes a fundamental task. 'To find the roots' is the starting point to conceive and to learn how to produce value and meaning in the belief of the spirit of Paiwan traditional culture.

2. Modern Creativity

With varying content, the term "modern" again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of Antiquity, in order to review itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new… the term "modern" appeared and reappeared exactly during those periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients—whenever, moreover, Antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitation. Jurgen Habermas

Modernity is a historical cultural progress from the post-medieval period of feudalism to a modern capitalist, industrialized, secularized and rationalized society. The process has undergone different phases of development affecting political, social, cultural, philosophical, religious and artistic changes until the 20th Century. Built on understanding and

---

19From the talk by Jurden Harbermas on September, 1980 when he was awarded The Theordor W. Adorno Price by the city of Frankfort. It was subsequently delivered as a James Lecture of the New York Institute for the Humanities at New York University in March, 1981 and published under th title "Modernity Versus Postmodernity" in New German Critique 22 (Winter, 1981).
respect, what we see was the realization of a new social order with new values. The pursuit of artistic expression had been more about satisfying spiritual and aesthetic needs of the mind, and less about the needs of the body. For indigenous people in Taiwan, it was like taking a triple jump from soft muddy ground to an unknown world of modernity. In the late 90's, the terms 'modern' or 'contemporary' indigenous art started to appear. The flourishing tribal art scene was overwhelmingly considered as the revival of traditional culture with bold, superficial and limited representations of its different aspects. Discussions about adhering to tradition, breaking new ground and the transition from the old generation to the contemporary era have fallen mostly on superficial and simplistic grounds. An example is the imprinting of symbols on daily utensils as a standard of 'modern-ness'. There are simply no reflective processes or critical thinking to be found in the many attempts to modernize. Here, the word modernity does not only imply the process of time, but is also about the concept of cultural value. Modern Western art includes many different art groups, which have often been in uncompromising or even antagonistic terms with each other. But these groups were experimental in their exploration of the essence of art, which had formed historical art movements and trends. What indigenous artists are facing is the inability to break away from the confines of 'tradition = totem culture' thinking. Their lack of self-identity, relative knowledge, independent thought,
aesthetic sense, broader perspective and world view, also stand as an obstacle in the transition from tradition to modernity.

Hsu Koun-Min also discovered that although Taiwan's 'Contemporary Indigenous Art' has shown multi-faceted aspects, it is still within the frame of 'primitive image'. She hopes that those indigenous artists who appeared after 1990 can open their minds and hearts to absorb, learn and understand more outside knowledge, technique and mediums of expression. Besides connecting with one's traditional culture during the creative process, it is also important to build an inter-subjective relation of shared cognition and consensus with mainstream culture. At the Third Indigenous Art Creative Symposium, Taitung, December, 2002, Jiang Guan Ming said that many indigenous artists are still in a stage of trying to answer 'What is my cultural tradition?' and 'How can I find the traditional root of my inspiration?' when they are carving, weaving or embroidering. Then they are also facing what Wallis Wu described as a sci-fi future because of many technological possibilities. At the 'CO2' Exhibition in Taipei, 2002, nearly half of the artworks were created with the use of computers. Under such extremes, when the Ami Tribe began to make sculpture, the Paiwan asked 'Strange, when did you have wood carving?' When the artist Dabiwulan Gule from the Paiwan tribe created
‘Flying Fish’ (Fig. 11), the Yami tribe of Orchid Island accused him of stealing their totem. With such prevailing narrow-mindedness among the indigenous people, the road to modernity would be a long and winding one.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 11. ‘Flying Fish’, 2009

The fundamental question of how to 'create' within the context of 'tradition' is in the minds of many contemporary artists. In 1999, when the Council of Indigenous Peoples was planning for the exhibition 'Transitions – Contemporary Canadian Indian and Inuit Art' at the Taipei Fine Art Museum, they intended to include works of Taiwan indigenous
people. However, TFAM was unable to provide a valid list because they do not have any experts on the subject among their staff. This compelled the local contemporary arts community to think about the 'contemporary indigenous art' issue, which had never received their serious attention. Even indigenous artists had never discussed the modern aspects of their work. It was only during The Third Indigenous People Creative Arts Seminar, Taitung, December 2002 organized by the Bunun Culture and Education Foundation, that the question of 'tradition vs modernity', was hotly debated.

Many of the present generation of indigenous artists have received training and education in art and craft with an understanding of aesthetics. But their aspiration in their creative profession is restricted by their limited life experience in a vastly changed society. Instead of looking for inspiration from the heritage of a single tribe, one possibility is to connect with other tribes and create new thinking and inspiration based on the changes everyone is experiencing. When examining creativity, we would like to see how the present norm is broken or exceeded. But the interpretation of traditional culture is always the starting point to establish substance and application in the creative process. From a modern art perspective, there are issues that need to be untangled when discussing
contemporary indigenous art. These include the complex relationship between 'identity/acceptance', 'tradition/modernity' and the argument of how practicality and aesthetics exist within handicraft/art. The discourse on contemporary indigenous art creation requires the inclusion of many complex elements and different cultural strata in the reality of modern Taiwan society. It has to begin by conversing with history and connecting with tradition. It is my opinion that by examining and building on the past, new thinking will thrive.

3-2

What are the 'coordinates' of totem art? The first is the reconnection of cultural images and sensory experiences like ritual, celebrations, and food to ascertain the memory of ancestors. This has to be followed by the re-contextualization of past experiences and traditional skills. For example, the ancestral pole is used as a physical representation of class, community and ritual process. The third coordinate is the transcendence and bridging of divergent values that exist between the traditional and the modern society. This would translate into the disposal of binary thinking like east/west, indigenous/Han, or the formation of human and nature based cultural values. Finally, the possession of a 21st century perspective on which communal, tribal, and global thinking are built upon.
During the early development of the human race, ancient and primitive religion existed in many different civilizations and races. The core of these primitive religions was the totem. As one of the basic forces of culture, it had strongly affected early tribal lives and progress. The cultural concept of totem had driven the imaginations and creativity of the tribes-people which gave rise to rich and fascinating creations in names, signs, sacred objects, sacred places, taboos, rites, myths and art. During the long existence of totem in history, there were many variations because of the changes in society and living conditions. Some have faced decay and disintegration, some have undergone social and religious adaptation and some have become unrecognizable after being transformed and infused into the ever-progressing modern stream. The totem of Paiwan, like many indigenous tribes in the world, is undergoing a stage of drastic transformation. It is generally affected by politics, available social resources, economic activities, change of religious belief, tribal social structure and interaction with foreign cultures.

The identity awareness of Australian aborigines began in 1980 and the position, interpretation and discourse of indigenous art came to fruition in 1990. What has affected art development included (1) political, historical
and community awareness; (2) contemporary art creation in parallel with theory (3) expression of true indigenous character, existence and value. These are positive experiences that can be borrowed in the course of developing 21\textsuperscript{st} century totem art in Taiwan. Next, is the formation of a broader, sustaining and multi-dimensional view through extensive discussion and discourse that crosses different art sectors and mediums.

a. \textbf{Besieged by Colonization, Localization and Westernization}  
\textit{-- Examining and Analyzing the Works of Two Artists}

1. \textbf{Experience of Self-awareness}  
\textit{-- Reflection and Exploration: Rahci Talif (Taiwan)}

Rahci Talif, born in 1962, is an Ami indigenous sculptor from Hua Lian County. He had worked in the city for many years and never disclosed his indigenous identity. He returned to Hua Lian County in 1991 after working as an interior designer in Taipei. The timing of his homecoming and change of artistic pursuit occurred during a period of contention about the issue of 'localization' and 'self-determination' of art in Taiwan. Recognizing his own identity crisis and with indigenous art riding high on the wave of the indigenous political movement at that time, Rahci Talif decided to return to his roots to search for a new direction.
Rahci Talif uses mainly dead wood and driftwood in his creative works. During his early days back in the tribal village, he explored abandoned villages, and contemplated amidst deserted houses, the question of changes within the tribe and the past and future of the tribes-people. His first individual exhibition in 1993, 'The Pride of the Ami' (Fig. 12) created much attention and discussion. The themes of his early work were mostly related to the history and myths of the Ami Tribe. The many wooden sculptures included designated characters such as father (man), mother (women), brave, and children. Objects such as the pole and pillar (representing male and father), earth and pottery vase (representing female), feather and copper bell (representing children and braves) were used as abstract statements of intrinsic spiritual and cultural values. The combination of line; concave; convex; hollowed; quasi and mosaic structure techniques gave support and balance to the work and also created organic shapes with an elegant flow of lines. For over a decade, with unremitting self-examination, he has not only been advancing his creative practice, but has also been trying to establish new creative methods and ideas on indigenous art.

---

20 The abstract work of Rahci Talif was once rejected entry to a competition in 1996 because ‘it lacks indigenous form’.
The recent installation work of Rachi Talif, displaying a mastery of technique, concept and form, was the outcome of his years of self-examination and internalization. The planning of his work 'Fali-Yos – Typhoon Action Project (Action Project for Typhoon)' (Fig. 13, 14) began in 2007. He traveled and captured images along the route of the typhoon that originated mostly from the northern Pacific Ocean and the Polynesian migration route that started from southern China, to Taiwan, Philippines, Indonesia, Micronesia, then Polynesia. These formed one of the creative elements. The material used was driftwood and ‘flip-flops’ (thongs). Rachi Talif discovered that there is one common practice among Austronesians in spite of the differences in language and culture –
the wearing of flip-flops due to similar climatic conditions. Therefore, he collected 3,000 unmatched pairs of flip-flops to use in the installation. He said 'Because flip-flop is lightweight and cheap, it is easily neglected and abandoned. Still bearing the imprint of the user's foot and roads traveled, it drifted with the ocean waves and then met at some point. Isn't this true for man?' This is the story of the migration of the Polynesian. It is through the materials used that the representation of the relationship between the ever-changing nature and the Austronesian people is expressed. Driftwood is full of life and memory. Flip-flops denote separation and wandering. These, in combination with the dueling force of the typhoon symbolize destruction and rebirth.
From being ashamed of admitting his identity as an indigenous person to becoming an indigenous artist who finally faced his tribe and his life, it was a long and challenging process for Rachi Talif. In the beginning he asked 'Who am I?', because of the cultural disparity that caused the shame of his identity. Then he asked 'What is art?' As an Ami, came the question ‘Where do I stand?’ Following on from his self-examination and soul searching he posed the question: Why do the creative works of indigenous people have to be known symbols (totem) and forms (wood carving)? *Living Water Magazine, Issue 26, 2009: 41–43.* He demonstrates his creative ambition through the use of driftwood, which gradually moves beyond geographical limitation and stereotyped indigenous art style in his creative thinking. When most people still perceive indigenous art as tribal totem and the narrative of traditional
myths, Rachi Talif worked hard to break away from such a confining view and started a new kind of indigenous abstract art that occupies a space between tribal and modern, multifaceted culture.

Rachi Talif was not the first indigenous artist who recognised the need to go back to one's village to cultivate art within the context of tribal culture. But his development in art creation has posed many questions that deserve strong consideration. During the creative process, he was always thinking about and examining the position and relation between self and others, which was based on his and other indigenous artists' traumatic experience with the question of self-identity. There is a paradox in his reluctance to be recognized as an indigenous artist but it is precisely this reason that his work has gained recognition and exposure. The loss of self-identity is the result of the domination of the strong mainstream culture that has caused the misinterpretation of the history of a weaker culture. The mixing of self and others (in written narrative and attitude about life) reflects the most realistic part of indigenous culture with its spirit facing the danger of being assimilated and eventually eradicated.

When entering the context of and recording the history of his culture, Rachi Talif earlier criticized Western religion, which changed his tribe’s traditional culture; the Chinese (Han), who discriminated against
indigenous tribes and the narrow-mindedness of his own people, who engage in copying. This is why he consciously avoided use of the physical representation of totem and used abstraction instead to create tribal, narrative artworks. Some of the forms bordered on modern sculptural style and because of his indigenous background, caused a lot of attention. Undoubtedly, years of experience in the design profession provided him with training in the aesthetic and finishing requirements, resulting in his controlling of proportion, line and content being better than that of most indigenous artists.

Rachi Talif has not been using the Ami totem in his work in traditional culture because he considers tribal art as duplications of form that lack any reflection of the culture's substance. This, to a certain extent, also demonstrates the impact on the 'pan tribal group'. Paiwan woodcarving is done by the Ami and is infused with South Pacific and African style forms, which show the lost and wrongly placed standing of indigenous art. In any discussion about the totem symbol, the positioning of indigenous art depends not on the use of totem or not, but rather it is the way it is discussed and the way it is presented that matter. Multiplicity in culture crosses tribal boundaries through exchanges and interaction in time and space. No single art medium can interpret the many aspects
inherent in a culture, because between an individual and the tribe, there exist different memories and living experiences. This can provide a variety of possibilities and development to help break away from the frame of mind of traditional visual elements and find the most appropriate dialogue with modernity.

2. **Subversive – Fiona Foley (Australia)**

Fiona Foley is an indigenous artist from Australia. She is categorized as a City-based Aboriginal Artist (or Urban Aboriginal Artist). She was born in Maryborough, Queensland 1964 and studied art and education in Sydney, Australia and at St. Martins School of Arts in London. She also studied with traditional indigenous artists in the communities of Arnhem Land, Ramingining and Maningrida in Australia. She collaborated with nine others to form Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative in 1987 to overcome difficulties in being taken seriously by commercial galleries and public institutions.

Fiona Foley has worked in a range of different media including painting, printmaking, installation, sculpture, video, public art and the use of a variety of materials. The motifs in her work instigated a range of
dialogues and exchanges about indigenous identity on a local, national and international level. Fiona Foley was not the only Australian indigenous artist to use art as a political tool. She collected historical material in an anthropological manner and examined the fatal impact of the colonial era and encouraged the viewer to re-examine historical stereotypes. Topics such as frontier violence, race relations, sexuality, and the history of opium in Queensland were scrutinized and depicted. This ‘dig the dirt’, confrontational manner of artistic expression has resulted in her being labeled a political artist by many observers. Fiona Foley objected to such labeling and once said 'No one teaches the methodology toward becoming a political artist, even at art school. However, as my career developed it was a label that others used increasingly to describe the art that I make. Personally, I prefer the term subversive.' She also emphasized her role as an educator. Through her artworks, she invited the public to understand and to face the facts of the past to the present. The searching and the combing of history that are beyond historical and research books in libraries and bookshops have been a daunting task for her mind and body. The most notable example is 'John Batman's purchase of 600,000 acres of land upon which the city of Melbourne was established'. (Fig 15)
Fig. 15. ‘Land deal’ 1995, flour, mixed media, found objects, text diameter 442.0 cm. The text reads: Land deal: After a full explanation of what my object was, I purchased two large tracts of land from them – About 600,000 acres, more or less – and delivered over to them the blankets, knives, looking-glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, flour, etc., as a payment for the land and also agree to give them a tribute, or rent, yearly. John Batman

In this installation, Fiona Foley presents the objects related to the purchase of the land as identically as possible on the wall, such as a box of beads, nine axes, seven knives, seven pairs of scissors and seven mirrors. These exhibits of the historical event reminds the public of the history of aboriginal dispossession, the loss of land and the absence of indigenous voices in the official record. The use of flour to create a swirling circular design on the floor resembles the sand painting of traditional aboriginal ceremonies. One characteristic of her works is the use of symbolic totem and symbols to bring out hidden and complicated
messages. In 'Black Opium', 777 cast aluminum poppies (Fig. 16) were laid out in the form of the number 8, a metaphor for infinity representing a symbol without beginning and end.

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.

Fig. 16. ‘Black Opium’, 777 cast aluminum poppies, 2006.

‘HHH #1, 2004’ (Fig. 17) is a photographic work using colorful and confronting visual elements with a group of individuals wearing ethnic costumes and masks that bear KKK (Ku Klux Klan), representing racial hatred against the black people and HHH (Hedonistic Honky Haters) representing the opposite (‘honky’ being a slang term for ‘white’).
Fiona Foley did not grow up in a traditional way however, she still possesses a sense of her peoples' history and enjoyed reading and discovering history’s varied viewpoints. Her identification with this sense of history is reflected throughout her creative works and she has expressed her intention in seeking the restoration of the aboriginal people to history. Her works also critique prevailing cultural assumptions about identity and belonging. Creative works that carry a political message can provoke sharp argument and provocation. When beginning a dialogue with the government, this path of reconciliation can only be achieved with an open embrace of history.
Fiona Foley in an interview by Catriona Moore published in Artspace, (1992: 205-212) said 'We can't keep placing Aboriginal art within romantic notions of the primitive, traditional or urban. These categories are no longer true or valid definition.' She possesses great creative energy and as one who stands in the forefront of controversy and who vocally argues against authority, persistence in her belief comes from her commitment to her people. Such belief becomes more rooted when she is away from her own culture and in foreign places where her indigenous identity becomes prominent. Through her experience, absorption and comparison of other cultures, she is able to think deeply and examine profoundly her own roots from her own world. By combining her ethnic experience with urban culture and through being equipped with western art training, Fiona Foley produces outstanding work of originality and continuity.

The artworks of Fiona Foley encourage one to contemplate how to face and contend with historical issues from a positive standpoint. Artists frequently use their artwork to convey a message about issues of serious concern. Public artwork (Fig. 18) is an important means of expression through which she arouses broad public and government awareness and attention. Whilst her work engages with sensitive political issues, she is
able to disentangle it from direct interpretation of the totem. Through connecting with contemporary art, a direct dialogue with the public is being established through the conveyed message.

Fig. 18. Bluewater Trail Public Art, 2008 (Mackay Regional Council Public Art Collection, Artspace Mackay

Left to right, top to bottom
– ‘Crows 2009’, laser cut stainless steel
– ‘Yuwi 2009’, fabricated aluminium, wet spray finish
– ‘Fishbones, 2009’, cast aluminum and mosaics
– ‘Shields, 2009’, water jet cut stone inlaid into paved surface
– ‘Sugar Cages’, 2009, box-formed sheet stainless steel with acid-etched lettering
– ‘Mangrove Cap’, 2009 weathered corten – steel, solar powered LED lights
The *fan li* (barrier) of culture  
– Restrictive Tradition and Deflective Modernity

…Ideas of "culture":

1. Real cultures are plural, not single.

2. Real cultures contain argument, resistance, and contestation of norms.

3. In real cultures, what most people think is likely to be different from what the most famous artists and intellectuals think.

4. Real cultures have varied domains of thought and activity.

5. Real cultures have a present as well as a past.

Martha C. Nussbaum (2000:127-128)

---

Fig. 19. Checkpoint at mountain barrier.

The term *fan li* means a barrier to keep aborigines away. During the Qing Dynasty, *ai* or checkpoints at mountain barriers (Fig. 19) were set up to
separate the Han Chinese and the aborigines all over Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty in 1722. Official boundary stones were erected during the Kangxi period to keep Han people separated from aboriginal occupied areas. In order to tap into the natural resources of Taiwan, such as timber and minerals, the Japanese colonial government implemented a policy to control the aborigine population living in the mountains. One active measure was the setting up of manned barriers where mines and electric fences were employed to entrap them. There were quite a number of incidents where aborigines were electrocuted. After Taiwan reverted to Chinese rule and with the implementation of martial law, many mountainous regions were reserved for the indigenous people who were able to use and trade the land amongst themselves but not to outsiders. Since the land belonged to the government, they were not able to use it as collateral. This policy intended to protect the tribes from exploitation, but it also deprived them of a means to obtain capital for investment. As most indigenous people engage in farming, it is difficult to make a living in a capitalist society and many tried to find employment in the cities. With limited education, men in the 1990’s and even to the present day can only work in factories, construction sites or as labourers. For women, they can only find low level jobs and some may fall into the trap of prostitution. All of these concerns are in the collective memories of many indigenous people alongside the social branding of aborigines as representing shamefulness,
laziness and drunkenness. Men are often considered to be only good for manual work and women to sell their bodies. What these issues have brought are a sense of disgrace, marginalization and self-debasement. Many indigenous people do not even wish to admit their identity in the cities. The 1962 born Ami Artist Rachi Talif recalled his days in Taipei as "When I went for job interviews or was at work, the overall discriminating attitude towards indigenous people at that time compelled me to behave like a Han. I would hide my tribal identity and educational credentials. I told people that my father was from China and my mother was a Hakka (an immigrant to Taiwan from Guang Dong), or even claiming I was from Hong Kong. If they eventually found out the truth, there was no option for me but to quit the job. When my parents wished to come from Hua Lian County to visit me, or my indigenous friends at work came looking for me, I tried to hide from them, fearing that my identity would be exposed. After going back to Hua Lian, I was accused by my tribespeople for my behaviour in the city. Feeling that they were not sympathetic to my feelings, I always got myself drunk after returning to the village." Rachi Talif has strived hard to climb the social ladder and enter mainstream society but this came with a price, which is the guilt of betraying himself, his family and his friends.
In the long historical passage of Taiwan, there has been a lot written about indigenous people, who were also objects of colonization. The absence of a written language has caused them to be the 'people without a voice'. During the antagonistic period between the Han Chinese and the fan (aborigine)\textsuperscript{21}, the former would regard themselves as educated and reasonable because they possessed a written language, whereas the latter would be regarded as uncivilized and barbarous fan. As written language is a major vehicle of culture, naturally in Taiwan, culture and education are filled with Han Chinese viewpoints and beliefs. When indigenous people use Han Chinese language to interpret their own culture, and see the world from a Han Chinese perspective, the result is Sinicization.

Indigenous people have been treated equally and protected legally, but they still cannot acquire a subjective social status. This form of equality cannot hide the subjective difference, especially the differences in cultural perception. So, would it be possible that with empathy and increased cultural comprehension that such difference can be minimized?

Dutch scholar and culturist, Geert Hofstede, in his book *Culture's Consequence – International Difference in Work-Related Values*, suggests the 'Cultural Onion' perspective. The outermost layer is about

\textsuperscript{21} Fan is a term used to called the indigenous people meaning they are barbarous savages.
Symbols, such as language, food, architecture, monuments, fashion, art. The second layer is about Heroes, which represents the quality of each culture and race, and strengthens its value. The third layer is Rituals, which are activities performed collectively that lack a specific goal but are seen as socially important within the culture. How people treat each other and nature are unique in each culture, for example, the bowing ritual of the Japanese. The innermost core of the onion is Values. This is what we believe in the abstract thoughts of truth, goodness and beauty. These are the deepest, innermost level of culture, invisible and unconscious to human perception, such as our sense of time and space, our focus on family and relationships, our view of status and hierarchy. At the core of Hofstede's model of culture are values, values that form the most hidden layer of culture. Values as such represent the ideas that people have about how things "ought to be".

As each individual has different views about man and world issues, it is natural that people from different races and cultures possess varied ways of perceiving. There is no good or bad culture, but only differences in language, knowledge, belief, life and material values, morals, ways of thinking and customs etc. that make each culture unique. It is this uniqueness that has formed both wide-ranging understandings and
misunderstandings. But cultural differences do not necessarily result in cultural confrontation. To avoid falling into a culturally confined trap, a smooth co-existence between different cultures can be reached with increased recognition and inclusion. For a culture to progress, more interaction and understanding with other nations and races are necessary. But the prerequisite is inter-subjective acknowledgement of each other based on respect and equality.

During the course of Sinicization and colonization, the visible erected 'ai' (barriers) against the indigenous people were dismantled, but with the invisible barrier still pinned to the heart and hard to remove, the pain lingers.
Chapter 4  
**Totem Manifestation – Personal Studio Research**

From the field trips I undertook, to the reading of historical documents and related literature, I encountered moments of angerliness, but often, what embraced me was an obscure sense of sadness. Greater clarity came through the process of using various media to shape and interpret totem. It cuts deep into the core of my feeling and exposes the true picture of indigenous history, vividly. In my creative thinking, the role and value of the totem not only acts as a form of beauty, but also as a medium to transcend the past and the present. It is a vehicle that can carry different aspects, profoundly and astutely, of the desolate situation indigenous people are facing.

4.1  
**Totem Chronicle – Spiritual Substance, Material and Way of Expression**

In contemporary Taiwanese indigenous art creation, the Paiwan totem is the vehicle used to present vividly, in vibrant colours, the myths, stories, and narratives of the tribal past. However, what it lacks, are works viewed from a historical perspective. 'Totem Chronicle', using totem as the vehicle, aims to present the experiences of the Paiwan and the indigenous people of Taiwan, and the issues they have been facing during times of change. The focus of my work is twofold; one is concerned with
the discourse of history and the other about the personal and collective feelings that exist in the tribe.

**Spiritual Substance**

**Discourse of History**

Through the passage of history, we can see how Taiwanese indigenous art has been fading down a path of desolation. One profound effect is that indigenous culture has been greatly influenced by the Chinese 'Han'. Then there was fifty years of Japanese rule when indigenous people were managed as 'savages'. Christianity has played another important role in the speeding up of the process. All of these influences are laid out, within the historical context, in the creative texture of my work.

The work 'Sinofication' (Fig. 20) aims to show the way in which indigenous culture has been deeply affected by Chinese 'Han' culture. Tribal tradition and thinking plus other areas like language, dress and customs have also been unavoidably affected. The 'Han' practice of burning incense to appease gods and ghosts is an important practice with spiritual (smoke) and physical (prolonged) significance. I have aimed to express these concerns through the construction of Paiwan totem shaped incense, suspended by wire and accentuated with the usual vibrant
colours such as red, yellow, green and black for visual effect. The
burning of the totem incense represents the ceremonious and symbolic
crumbling of traditional Paiwan culture. When handling historical
contentious issues, I do not want to use a confrontational approach as a
means of postulation. Rather, the work aims to draw attention and to
reach for a considered response based on different viewpoints.
Experiences of Personal and Collective Feelings –

An individual or a community's experiences always involve a discourse with memories. In the case of my own experience, memories that cast a deeper imprint in my mind came from those around and close to me. The work ‘Grandmother’s Tattoo’ (Fig. 21) is from a picture I took of the
tattoo on my grandmother's hand. Her face still projected pain even when she was telling me how she described her tattoo experience during an interview by a team working on feminine issues. The impression was deeply engraved in my memory and now I have been able to erase the tattoo on her hand with the use of a computer.

Fig. 21, ‘Grandmother’s Tattoo’, 2009, Print 135 cm x 105cm

When applying Paiwan totem in dresses made at home, the shape of the totem is first drawn on paper, cut out and then traced on the dress cloth. Patterns are then embroidered within the traced area using beads or threads. Another technique is called 'layered cloth embroidery' with the shape traced on a piece of cloth and sewn to the dress cloth. The cutouts are kept in the family and the shapes may vary when used by others. This shows one changing face of tradition through time. Because of the stiffness of wedding invitation card, I have seen tribal women using it as
cutout material. In ‘Follow the Line’ (Fig 22, 23), I have included such cutouts within the spread out shape of a female Paiwan dress.
Among many tribespeople, the collective dispirited experience of those leaving the tribal village to find a living in the cities has created known problems. In the work 'Name Rectification' (Fig. 24), I have listed all the names that have been cast upon Taiwan's indigenous people. 'Name Calling' has always been used to impose distress on members of a weaker culture in a profound but insidious way. The words are the real totem in the work, illustrating the fact that indigenous people have always been written on by others, and do not possess the political strength to have their name rectified. These discriminating and insulting terms are always in the memories of those who had sought a living outside of their tribe. Modern indigenous literature and Paiwan handicraft have become my source of inspiration. With a strong desire to dig beyond the superficial surface of the totem, I have tried to come into contact with possibilities through different media and techniques to examine closely related issues.
Fig. 24, ‘Name Rectification’, 2012, paint and pencil, 225cm x 105cm – Savage; Takasago (Japanese derived from old name of Kaohsiung, a southern city in Taiwan); uncivilized people; mountain people; mountain tribe; mountain compatriot; indigenous people; Paiwan tribe.
Material and Way of Expression

Traditional materials used by the Paiwan tribe in their artefacts are mainly wood, stone, glass beads and leather. These stereotypical approaches in the choice of materials used in indigenous art creation poses a possible restriction. Nature has been a prime source of inspiration and material for indigenous art. The material used and the theme expressed, create a tightly bonded co-existence which means the authenticity of an indigenous artwork will be questioned if the traditional materials do not exist. But I have chosen not to specifically prescribe traditional materials in my work, as my aim is to break away from the stereotype mentioned above and choose what materials are appropriate to the theme in a contemporary context. I also believe that with contemporary development in material and creative approach, exciting new interpretations and directions based on traditional materials are possible. I have been cautious when applying colour in the artistic representation to avoid pre-conceived notions and impressions about indigenous art. Instead, the focus is more on the display of the inner substance of the theme. This is especially true in regard to the use of colour and symmetrical colour patches, which are visually distracting. I have used a wide range of media, depending on the content of the work. These include sculpture, print, photography, drawing, specially hand-made incense, pins and mixed media. The reason that pins are used as the
material for art expression in works such as 'Follow the Line' (Fig. 23), is partly due to my use of sewing needles in earlier works. However, the main consideration behind my current use of shirt pins is that they are close in colour, touch and form to the glass beads which are the main decorating material in the traditional clothing of the Paiwan Tribe. It also meets the layered, protruding and three-dimensional effect I envisioned in the artwork. I intentionally aim to maintain the co-existence of pure art and tribal craft in the work to create a playful distance but avoiding it being over polished and refined, as this would produce a mechanical detachment. The work aims to represent how the pull and push between modernity and tradition still exists in indigenous art. To me, the modernization of indigenous art in Taiwan is to extend indigenous related subject matter beyond traditional issues. At the same time, this is to step out from traditional thought and ways of expression and to establish a communicative platform with other art forms.

4-2: CONCLUSION

My work on this exegesis commenced at a time when most of the traditional social setting of Taiwan’s indigenous people, or remnants of it, were virtually non-existent. The raw data and archival information on Taiwan’s indigenous people has been accessed from mainly archeological
and anthropological sources. As most of these materials were written by anthropologists, my lack of training in this discipline might be considered a handicap but, on the other hand, it has allowed me to see the whole picture from an indigenous people's as well as an artist's perspective. I also found out during the course of research and discovery, that to work on the discourse from the viewpoint of Paiwan only was not enough. Its past, present and future are all tied to the indigenous people in Taiwan as a whole. This is particularly true in regard to the development of contemporary indigenous art as the conflict, contentious and distressful situation faced by many Taiwan indigenous artists has been unavoidable. As a result of my research on the subject of Paiwan Totem and creative development, my conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. The Demise of the Traditional Paiwan Social Structure and the Empty Form of the Totem: Due to historical reasons, such as the degradation in the political and economic environment plus rapid changes in the society, there has been a loss of confidence among many indigenous people. The call of cultural creativity is more often words rather than substance and only exposes the shortcoming of government cultural policy. Totem, as a prominent cultural symbol, should be representing the core value of the indigenous cultural history of each
tribe, and not a smorgasbord of various traditional tribal totem strands
that neglects each other's uniqueness. The 'pan Paiwan' artistic influence
among other tribes is a reality. Fortunately, there are conscious efforts to
revive tribal tradition and many schools in the mountain regions are
teaching traditional culture, art, crafts and language as core subjects.

2. Protecting indigenous culture does not mean preventing its
modernization: When modernity follows tradition and the two
complement each other in a continuous manner, it is cultural creativity
that can produce positive transformation. This creativity can take the
form of the interpretation of tradition or culture. The meaning embedded
in tradition can be our habits, cultural and social norms. Finding a new
direction to avoid the fading of tradition through the impact of the
modern world would require much creativity. The negative side of
colonial and western influences has adversely affected the originality of
indigenous art. But on the positive side, the impact of Western culture on
indigenous artists would mean their artistic view would be broadened
with the absorption of the essence of contemporary Western art.

have a detached and indistinct feeling towards the tribe they belong to, and also to the village they live in, there has never been a sense of consolidation among the various tribes. This means, that as minorities within the society, the possibility of them exerting their collective strength never happened. One example is the traditional Maleveq\textsuperscript{22} Quinquennial Ceremony, which, until this day, has failed to become a vehicle to bring all the villages together. This disconcerted effort in cultural development has created much imbalance with some villages outpacing others.

4. Religion and Animism (The Church and The Totem) - To spread the word of the bible, it is necessary for religious groups to adapt to the local culture of the people they are preaching to, as long as this poses no conflict with the bible. When the central and local governments were focusing on the worldly matters of cultural tourism and economic development among indigenous societies, religious groups had already

\textsuperscript{22}The Maleveq Quinquennial Ceremony is the most important and impressive celebration of the Paiwan. The tribes-people believe that their ancestors would come from the resting place of their spirits, the Kavulungan Mountain, to visit all the tribal villages that took five years to complete. Therefore, the Quinquennial Ceremony was closely related to the migration activity of the Paiwan and essential to maintain tribal solidarity. It was first recorded about four hundred years ago during the Dutch presence in Taiwan and banned during the Japanese colonial period and the early period when the island reverted to Chinese rule. The ceremony is now held only in two villages with the shaman and the knowledge of the ceremonial rites gradually lost into oblivion.
broken through the cultural barrier and established their spiritual influence. The success of these foreign religious groups has resulted in an overwhelming number of indigenous people who have changed their beliefs. The ensuing deep-seated control by the church has changed tribal villages socially and culturally ever since.

Indigenous art is born out of the tribal people's daily lives and is closely related to what they do and need. With the increase in indigenous self-awareness, the restrictions to art creation have lifted and there are efforts by indigenous artists to carry on and develop their tribal culture. In my studio practice, history is the main axis, from which a series of artwork with historical, personal and collective memories themes have derived. The themes are not confined to traditional content, but are related to the issues indigenous people are facing. As a Western trained creative artist with indigenous background, I am able to instill new ideas and use non-traditional media in indigenous art. The broadening of the themes and media also allow me to experiment with different materials that bring new possibilities in art creation. But the re-invigoration of Paiwan arts and crafts would depend on the creation of a platform for indigenous artists to communicate with mainstream art that also allows them to
interact with each other, to learn new skills and knowledge, to appreciate foreign art cultures, to introduce new ideas and to instigate discussion.

I can still remember my feelings when I saw for the first time the exquisite traditional artefacts of my ancestors at the National Taiwan University Museum of Anthropology. Those handcrafted art pieces that reflected the totem spirit of the old society were truly impressive. These impressive creations of the past can be revived and continued. My work ‘Totem Chronicle’, the result after much research, engagement, and creative thinking on the subject, clearly shows it is possible in a multi-faceted world where tradition and modernity co-exist. Through learning, understanding and embracing the better side of other cultures plus self-examination and perseverance, we can restore the luster of the Paiwan cultural gem.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

1. Arthur Cheng

2. Benjamin Genocchio

3. Chantal Zheng

4. Chen Chi-Lu

5. Chen Chi-Lu
1996. *Woodcarving of the Paiwan – Group of Taiwan.* Taipei: Southern Materials Center, Inc..

6. Chris Spring

7. David Blundell(ed.)

8. Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University
1998. *Studies on Ino's Collection at Department of Anthropology of National Taiwan University.* ed. Chia-Yu Hu, Yi-Lan Tsui. Taipei: National Taiwan University Press.

9. E. H. Gombrich
10. Fu Yang – Chih

11. Fre R. Myers

12. George Taylor

13. Hervé Perdrölle

14. Hong Mi-Jen

15. Hossein Amirsadeghi, Salwa Mikdadi, Nada Shabout (ed.)

16. Howard Morphy

17. Howard Morphy

18. Howard Morphy & Morgan Perkins (ed.)

19. Lei Shih
20. Maison des Cultures du Monde

21. Martha C. Nussbaum

22. Michael C. Howard

23. Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney & The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane

24. Mutsu Hsu

25. National Centre for Traditional Arts

26. National Gallery of Australia

27. National Museum of History

29. National Museum of History

30. National Museum of Prehistory

31. National Taiwan University

32. National Taiwan Museum

33. Okwui Enwezor, Chika Okeke - Agulu

34. Peter Stepan


36. Robert Goldwater

37. Sally Price

38. Sheng Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines

39. Shelly Errington
1998. *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*. 
pp. 49-160. USA: University of California Press, Ltd.

40. Shih Tsui - Feng
2000. *Primitive religions and creation myths of Taiwan aborigines.*

41. Shih Tsui - Feng

42. Shih Tsui - Feng

43. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines

44. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines

45. Sigmund Freud

46. Serenella Ciclitira (ed.)

47. Thames & Hudson

48. The Museum of Modern Art

49. E.H. Gombrich
50. Ta:in Taeboeh Sawan Kas'ames

51. Trongman Co.Ltd.

52. Wally Caruana

53. 王雅倫 Wang Ya-Lun

54. 王嵩山 Wang Sung-Shan

55. 王煒昶 Wang Wei-Chang

56. 巴蘇亞.博伊哲努(浦忠成) Pasuya Poiconu (Pu Chong-Cheng)

57. 巴蘇亞.博伊哲努(浦忠成) Pasuya Poiconu (Pu Chong-Cheng)

58. 布農文教基金會 Bunun Cultural and Educational Foundation

59. 行政院文化建設委員會 Council of Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan.
Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan.


64. 李莎莉 Li Sha-Li 1999. 台灣原住民傳統服飾. 台北: 漢光文化事業. Traditional Clothing of Taiwan’s Indigenous People. Taipei: Han Kwang Cultural Enterprise.


68. 林道生 Lin Tao-Sheng

69. 洪英聖 Hung Ying-Sheng

70. 南天書局 SMC Publising Inc.

71. 南天書局 SMC Publishing Inc

72. 徐秀菊 (編) Hsu Hsiu-Chu (Ed.)

73. 胡台麗 Hu Tai-Li

74. 高業榮 Kao Nieh-Jung

75. 施翠峰 Shih Tsui-Feng

76. 黃應貴 Huang, Ying-Gui

77. 許功明 Hu Kong-Ming
78. 許功明 Hu Kong-Ming

79. 孫大川 Hsun Ta-Chuan

80. 張良澤 （監修） Chang Liang-Tse (Imaging Supervision), 戴嘉玲 （編譯） Tai Chia-Ling (Editing and Translation)

81. 鈴木質 Tadasu Suzuki

82. 童春發 Tong Chun-Fa

83. 楊孟哲 Yang Meng-Che

84. 楊南郡 (譯註) Yang Na-Chun (Translation and Annotation)
Institute of Ethnology Taihoku Imperial University

85. 楊俊峰 Yang Chun-Feng

86. 達西烏拉彎. 畢馬 (田哲益) Dashiwula-Bima (Tien Che-Yi)
2002. 台灣的原住民 - 排灣族. 台北: 壽原出版社. Taiwan’s Indigenous


93. 蕭瑞瑋 Hsiao Jui Chiung 2005. 圖說台灣美術史: 泛海讚歌 (荷西. 明清篇). 台北: 藝術家出版社. An Illustrated History of Taiwan Art – Ode to the Crossing of the Taiwan Strait (Dutch, Spanish, Ming and Qing Periods!). Taipei: Artist Publishing Co.

Articles & Periodicals

95. Artlink Indigenous

96. Artlink Indigenous

97. Artlink Indigenous

98. Chiang Kuei- Chen

99. Fu Yang-Chih

100. Huang Wen-Shan

101. Jennifer Alexander

102. Jen Shien- Min

103. Jen Shien- Min

104. Rashidah A. Salam
*The Sense of Order of Orang Ulu Decorative Arts: Motifs, Designs and*

105. Tim G. Babcock

106. Wan, Yuh-yao

107. Wei Hwei-Lin

108. 山海文化Taiwan Indigenous Voice Bimonthly

109. 山海文化Taiwan Indigenous Voice Bimonthly

Websites

110. Academia Sinica Digital Resources,
http://ndaip.sinica.edu.tw/en_index.jsp


113. Denis Dutton, Pacific Arts- Anthropology, Art, and Aesthetics, Denis Dutton on Jeremy Coote, Anthony Shelton, and Ethnograhic Aesthetics,
http://denisdutton.com/coote_shelton.htm

114. Digital Museum of Taiwan Indigenous Peoples,
http://www.dmtip.gov.tw

115. Digital Taiwan - Culture & Nature (Taiwan e-Learning and Digital Archives Program), http://digitalarchives.tw

116. Elizabeth Burns Coleman, Historical ironies: the Australian Aboriginal art revolution,

117. Fiona Foley (Part 2),
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LW5FfraqP-g&feature=relmfu

118. Janet Thomas, The exploration of Identity in contemporary Aboriginal Art, June 27, 2015,
http://janethomas.wordpress.com/category/aboriginal/


120. Museum of contemporary Aboriginal art (AMU),
http://www.aamu.nl/collection


126. Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines,
http://www.museum.org.tw


129. Taiwan Memory, http://memory.ncl.edu.tw/.webloc


APPENDIX 1: APPROPRIATE DURABLE RECORD

‘Vuvu’s Tatoo #1’, cutting on metal and plastic, 70 cm x 45 cm, 2012

‘Vuvu’s Tatoo #2’, cutting on metal and plastic, 70 cm x 45 cm, 2012
‘Dream 1’, pins on fabric, 80 cm x 70 cm, 2010
'Dream 2', pin on fabric, 80 cm x 70 cm, 2010
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic, glass bead
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic, glass bead
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic, glass bead
‘Dress I’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress I’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic

‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic, metal

‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic
‘Dress 1’ (close-up), ceramic, thread
‘Follow the Line’ (close-up), paper, pin, 2010
‘Sinofication’ (side view), incense, mirror, wire, thread, 2011
‘Sinofication’ (top view), incense, mirror, wire, thread, 2011
'Death of the Hundred Pacer Snake', head ornament, glass bottle, iron bar, light bulb, 2011
'Cultural Specimen', clay, wood, slate, paper, thread, needle, fibre, glass bead, acrylic, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, clay, drawing, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, ceramic, drawing, 2012

‘Cultural Specimen’, ceramic, drawing, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, slate, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, wood, drawing, 2012

‘Cultural Specimen’, wood, thread, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, glass bead, drawing, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, fibre, 2012

‘Cultural Specimen’, fibre, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’, paper, needle, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’ (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’ (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’ (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
'Cultural Specimen' (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’ (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
'Cultural Specimen’ (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
‘Cultural Specimen’ (close-up), paper, needle, 2012
‘Ventsikan’ (Totem), pencil, paper, drawing, 22 x 15 x 17cm, 2012
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH

[Images of totem sketches with annotations: Blue, Yellow, Red, White, Black]
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
TOTEM SKETCH
Appendix 2

CHEN HUI LIEN, DENISE

陳惠蓮

CONTACT:
Address: 6, Fung Yip St, 4E, Gee Wing Chung Industrial Building, Chaiwan, Hong Kong
TEL: 29876559/94697151
E-MAIL:   denise@dolarsaver.com.hk
          Denise1234@gmail.com

EDUCATION:
2007- Doctor of Fine Art (DFA), Australia RMIT University
2005    Master of Fine Arts Student, Australia RMIT University
2001    Bachelor of Fine Arts With Distinction (Ceramics), Australia RMIT University
1987    Sochow University (English Literature) Taiwan
1986    Foo-Ying College (Nursing & Midwifery) Taiwan

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:
2010 ‘Dual Plasticity’- (JCCAC, Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre)
2008 ‘Wall Piece’- Art at Home Theme Exhibition III, (JL Workshop)
2007 ‘Complex Number’ (Too Art)
2006 ‘Cracker’ (Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre)
2005 ‘Brink’ (Chai-Wan)
2004    In Progress (Hong Kong Arts Centre)
2004    Happy Works (Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre)
2003    Ikebana Flower Arrangement (Hong Kong Arts Centre)
2003    ‘Traces’ (Shanghai Street Art space)
2001  Teapot Gala (Cobo Ceramics Studio)

1991  JL Workshop Group Exhibition (Hong Kong Arts Centre)

COLLECTIONS:
Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Private Collectors (Hong Kong & Overseas)

TEACHING EXPERIENCES:
1998-2000  Cobo Ceramics Workshop
2002-2006  Instructor of Art Specialist Course (Ceramics), VAC (Visual Arts Centre)
2003  Demonstration Artists, Hong Kong Museum of Art
2004  Dot. Line. Surface – Pottery Creative Workshop, Hong Kong Museum of Art
2005 – 2006 Visual Art Teacher (Ceramics), CCC Kung Lee College
2007  Lecturer of Hong Kong Art School Diploma of Fine Arts in Ceramic
2009-2010 Lecturer of Hong Kong Art School/ RMIT University (BA (FA) Ceramic)
2012  Lecturer of Visual Arts Skills Enhancement Scheme (VASE) – Ceramics Workshop, HKIE (Hong Kong Institute of Education)
2013 Lecturer of Hong Kong Art School/ RMIT University (BA (FA) Ceramic)

CURRENT POSITION:
Freelance Artist
Lecturer