

West Wind blowing to the East: The “Re-Orientalization” Course in Postwar Taiwanese Art

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Abstract

What does the concept of “re-Orientalization” or “re-Sinicization” mean? The prefix “re” itself embeds a controvert logic: this prefix is not about the motivation to return to the origins, not about revisiting the old ways of doing things, not about reliving the glorious past, nor is it about recovering what was lost. Instead, there is a unique logic in this prefix that suggests particular cultural meanings deduced by time and history: the process of re-Orientalization of Taiwanese art during the postwar era was in fact propelled by the impact of modernization and the effects of observation by others. Postwar Taiwan, when Kuomintang’s (China's National People's Party, KMT) authoritarian rule took over the island, was a colony that was ruled by Japan for half a century. The policy to “re-Sinicization” the people in Taiwan were to rectify the “enslavement mindset” that the Japanese had previously shaped. Under this context, the Taiwanese people were considered as “the cultural others,” who needed to be re-educated, which is the core concept of “re-Sinicization.” For postwar Taiwan, the word “Orientalization” did not bear any negative connotation in the post-colonial treatise. It was the overwhelming tides of modernization that stimulated a reaction force for the Taiwanese to reflect and reinvent the traditions of Chinese painting. Meanwhile, it was the traditional Chinese culture in Taiwan that gave the imported western culture an innovative and vigorous outlook. Orientalism in Taiwan undoubtedly is a “re-Orientalization” cultural movement which includes multiple imports: dualist, ethnic differences, fusion and conflicts, centralism, self-Orientalization, and so on. Re-Orientalization does not commensurate with re-Sinicization; rather, it is the cultural development progress of localization – an adaptive survival strategy for the arts in confronting modernization, a Made-in-Taiwan byproduct.

1. Preface

Let's think about this for a second: a Taiwanese whose bloodline identifies to be more than 50% Han Chinese (aside from the indigenous people), living in a Taiwanese society that is established upon the foundations of the Chinese culture – how does this implausible, puzzling title come about? What does “re-Orientalization” or “re-Sinicization” mean? The first eye-catcher is the prefix – “re,” which holds multiple meanings. This prefix suggests a second time action while references the original state; it even implies that the original state has disappeared due to certain reasons. Meanwhile, the word also urges the return to the original state because of chance or motives; on a deeper level, it even embodies a subject thought process containing “reflexivity.” We might wonder whether if this “reversion movement” would succeed? If so, should we return to the original state, or brave a new path – directing a new direction by means of this reversal, just as the Renaissance Movement did in the past?

On the other hand, the actual situation is that it is impossible for culture to revert to that unique reality. The origin of culture is actually a huge myth, mainly originated from Eurocentrism and Social Darwinism, which assumed that the origin of culture decides the hierarchy of civilization. At the same time, both sides possess a pure sense of superiority, and convert their theory into the mainstream culture, universal values, common knowledge or ideologies to conceal their ambition. Slogans like “forgetting one's origins” and “we are all one big family” are used in order to forcefully justify the master-slave relationship or origin-derivative relationship, or vie over which came first in order to claim cultural hegemony. Recent post-colonization research indicates that centralism or origin is a manipulative discourse often used for political purposes. Historian Eric Hobsbawm also opined that the concept of tradition was contrived by humans rather than naturally developed. The message was loud and clear when he stated: “tradition was actually invented.”

Culture is not mathematics, nor is it determined by genetics. We cannot calculate its components and structures to simulate the original states of culture. Because culture is gradually accumulated through time and space, we can't just simply choose to return to the beginning like watching a movie. Through historical processes and socio-economical shifts, culture will keep rolling forward, layer-by-layer, an ever-advancing development that cannot be reversed.

Continuing the previous line of thought, “re” has a negative connotation: “re” is **not** to intend to go back to the original starting point, it is **not** to retrace its original route, it is **not** to revive its former glory, it is **not** to recover something that was lost, and it

is **not** to emphasize nor cherish something. The inherent logic in “re” is not easy to comprehend, because it refers to specific cultural meanings deduced from historical time and space.

Furthermore, “Orientalization” and “Sinicization” cannot be taken for granted in the context of Taiwanese society. As mentioned above, in the eyes of Western society, it goes without saying that being a part of “the East,” or the “Celestial Kingdom,” not to say that the Taiwanese also shares the DNA of the Chinese cultural, why do we need to emphasize “self-orientalization”? As the Buddhist proverb states: “Since all is void, where can the dust alight?” Why add complications where there were none before? If it already exists, why emphasize “re?”

The phasing journey into re-Orientalization of postwar Taiwanese art did not spring up from nowhere; it actually emerged from the impact of modernization, and the effect of being observed by others in an international sphere. Here, I would like to share some local examples with everyone in order to shed better light on the “re-Orientalization” of postwar Taiwanese art. It is not simply about going back to the origin or in search for the home of Chinese culture, but to reflect on the problems of cultural identity at the onset of cultural exchange, meanwhile, attempting to find a balancing point through the process of uncertainty. Chinese speakers refer culture as the place for “the settlement of life” (originated from *Liu’s Commentaries of History and Mencius*), which expresses a similar sentiment to Homi K. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*. Although he focuses on the idea of “cultural in-between” and hybridity, it is the flowing power of culture that is so powerful that it dissolves boundaries. From unrest to conflict, to adaptation, and to a new state of equilibrium; as each stage completes, the attention not only focuses on the **past**, but more importantly employs the perspectives of the **present** to prepare for the **future**, which is an example of the cultural survival principle. Therefore, various concepts such as modernity, the others, gazing, cultural identity and community of thinking, cultural subjectivity are actively interacting with each other in the process of development. These examples and meanings are solidly and truly “MIT”- “Made in Taiwan.”

I would like to state that this lecture is not an interpretation or introduction of Western post-colonialist theory. Theories, of course, can prompt overturns in thinking and lead to positive changes in action. But post-colonialism scholars have also reminded us that, if we want to establish cultural subjectivity, not only do we have to avoid foreign big discourses that will undermine ourselves, we also need to actively re-establish subjective knowledge through local literature. I call this “detail politics” – using specific content to break through the tendency of general theories, and focus on specific plots to further adjust or differentiate possible theories. That

being said, we were profoundly inspired by the effect of the internal perspective which was suggested in anthropologist Clifford James Geertz's "Local Knowledge." He used the native's point of view to revise and reinterpret the abstraction of theories or outsider's viewpoint. Of course, we cannot simply use the terms "foreign/native," "we group/they group" to differentiate. My main purpose is to tell the "story of Orientalism" in Taiwan. Some of you may recall the "Orientalism" of Edward W. Said to speculate this paper, but because these developments took place in the context of Taiwanese history, perhaps you will need an entirely new attitude to fully grasp the concept.

2. Modernization, Sinicization, and Modern Sinicization

On February 29th 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the proposal of Taiwanese-American Congresswoman, Grace Meng. The phrase "Asian Americans" was used to replace the word "Oriental" which was deemed discriminatory and derogatory. In her speech, Meng called on the U.S. government to stop using this obsolete and offensive term. Not too long after that, former President Obama signed the proposal in May. The term "Oriental" has a negative connotation in the U.S., and a deep historical significance, especially after the publication of Edward W Said's controversial book *Orientalism* in 1978, which claims that our imagination of the East was created by Western hegemony. The "East," according to Said, was not China, but mainly Arabic culture and the Islamic world, yet Asian scholars from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China have successfully extended this concept as to how the West criticize and analyze the Chinese culture. According to my initial investigation, Taiwan's "critique of Orientalism" began with literary criticism in 1995, and in 1999, the Chinese translation of *Orientalism* was published and circulated widely in the academic circle. The criticism in the fine arts field started around the same time. The concepts of the other, cultural hegemony, Euro-American centrism, subordinate classes, and Orientalism, one by one encountered the critical power of post-colonialism. This began the Taiwanese post-colonialist academic movement in the 1990s, which critically reviewed the previous half century of Japanese colonial history in Taiwan (1895-1945). My own doctorate thesis and research was completed under this theoretical influence, and it is still of great interest after 20 years. The most suitable perspective to reflect upon Taiwan under Japanese colonialism is through Western colonial historical references. After World War II, the government of the Republic of China (R.O.C.) retreated to Taiwan. Though the ruling was smooth, it was quite authoritarian and oppressive. For this reason, many scholars still adopt the concept of "the other" to criticize the rule of the Kuomintang (Chinese National

People's Party, KMT). This deviates far from the Orientalism argument, and has a tenuous relationship with the “East.” It is considered a creative application, and not an actual example of the theory.

I would like to point out that using Said’s critique on Orientalism to interpret the “re-Orientalization” of postwar Taiwan does not quite have the affinity in theory. Because Taiwan had been a Japanese colony for half a century when the KMT took over, the main goal of the “re-Sinicization” policy was to dispel the “enslavement” that was forced upon the Taiwanese by Japan. At the time, it was called the “psychological reconstruction,” and was a reaction against the “cultural other,” which was to enable the Taiwanese people to internalize the Japanese culture. In this context, the Taiwanese themselves were the “cultural others” that needed to be re-educated: they needed to relearn Mandarin, rediscover their Chinese cultural identity, and become a “real: Han Chinese again.” This was the core of the “re-Sinicization” movement. In the 1960s, Taiwanese art history have encountered a period of the “orthodox Chinese painting controversy,” this was when the Japanese paintings created by Taiwanese artists were criticized as “pseudo-traditional” and “fake Chinese paintings,” whose paintings were not allowed to be displayed in the “Chinese paintings” (國畫) section at the official Provincial exhibition to represent the legitimate Chinese culture. This was due to the double meaning of the Chinese term “Chinese paintings”: it can mean the national painting or Chinese painting. This short period of discourse struggle forced Taiwanese artists to defend the legitimacy of their works, which have already exceeded the scope of visual arts and entered the realm of conceptual struggle in cultural politics. For these focused and straightforward Taiwanese artists, this was an unprecedented setback and presented a huge challenge. The matter was eventually settled in 1983, when the category of “Chinese paintings” was removed, and established new categories which were differentiated by material, such as ink and *nihonga* paintings. Apparently, this incident, once again, demonstrated that cultural categorizations, segmentations, and boundaries are critical concepts, and cultural exclusion and inclusion also function in the world of art.

The plight of the Taiwanese, just as Homi K. Bhabha describes the universal dilemma of the colonized people, is: “Almost the same, but not quite.” During the Sino-Japanese War, Taiwanese novelist Wu Zuo-liu (吳濁流) described the Taiwanese as the sad “Orphans of Asia”; they were not accepted by the Japanese, and were shunned by the Chinese, therefore, they were missing a sense of belonging. The Taiwanese national identity crisis began in 1895, when the island was ceded to Japan with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, and up till today, it is still an ongoing

issue for over a century. This sense of loss can even be dated as far back as 1622, when the Spanish and the Dutch came to Taiwan to establish colonies; and in 1662, during the late years of Ming Dynasty, when Koxinga (鄭成功) established his empire in Tainan; then to 1683, the Qing Court ruled Taiwan for more than two hundred years. Taiwanese society has always been faced with the challenge and adaptation of national and cultural identities. For this, we must acknowledge that the domestic disputes on the Taiwanese national identity, the exclusion of international status and the emergence of subjective awareness are all the causes and results of the identity crises.

Aside from the “re-Sinicization” movement, in postwar Taiwan, the term “Oriental” did not have the aforementioned post-colonialist negative connotations. From 1951 to 1965, due to the breakout of the Korean War, the U.S. provided a 100 million USD loan each year to assist Taiwan, intending to bring Taiwan into the democratic alliance to prevent red communism from bleeding into the Pacific Ocean. The relationship between Taiwan and the U.S. became close, and Taiwan faced the impacts and challenges of cultural modernization and Westernization. At the time, the “cultural other” was the American culture, while the influence of Japanese culture gradually decreases. Modern art, such as Abstract painting and Pop art were introduced from the West, yet compared to Japan’s indirect introduction of French Impressionism to Taiwan during the colonial period, this was more direct, more innovative, and more accepted by the younger generations. Postwar Taiwan was clearly facing an intense art modernization movement. Looking back now, the success of this cultural movement was evident, especially seeing as China was about to meet its ten-year Cultural Revolution which aims to destroy the Chinese culture starting from 1966 (also known as the Anti-Confucius, Pro-Chin campaign), while Taiwan promoted the Chinese cultural renaissance movement that protected the lifelines of the Chinese culture. At that time, Taiwan was under an authoritarian ruling, and the unfortunate occurrence of the 228 Incident led to the era of White Terror, where civilians were stripped of freedom of speech and thought for twenty years. However, the Taiwanese attitude of preserving the Chinese culture while accepting the modernization of the Western world was equally vigorous. With the seesawing back and forth between Westernization and Sinicization, the “Chinese modern painting” movement achieved great success. Modern painting groups such as the May and East, as well as individuals such as Liu Kuo-song (劉國松) and Li Shi-chi (李錫奇) were all creators of this “Chinese modern painting” movement. They were all “Made in Taiwan” (MIT) heroes.

It is worth noting that the Chinese painting traditions in Taiwan have had the

opportunity to react to the pressures of modernization through reflection and innovation. At the same time, it was the traditional Chinese culture in Taiwan that allowed the foreign Western culture to have this new and exciting new look. In other words, it is a perfect example of two styles complementing each other. The comments of Palma Bucarelli, the former Director of Rome's National Gallery of Modern Art, considerably reflected the intrinsic qualities of Chinese modernization in Taiwan at the time, namely, the possible expressions of modernity within tradition.

When Chinese art entered the international world of modern painting, Chinese modern painters still retained some traditional characteristics. The particular use of color, symbolic forms or the unrestrained application of calligraphy all stem from the exceptional traditions of Chinese painting. Artists today, generally speaking, lean towards the development of abstract paintings, and remain uninterested in realistic paintings. Eastern painters, especially Chinese painters, extracts the essences from tradition to create abstract paintings, which were actually very similar to our current artistic trends, as well as the taste of the modern Western World.

(United Daily News, 1965/2/13)

The merging of the East and West was received positively and plausibly.

3. The context of “Oriental/Eastern(OE) Art” in Taiwan

Today, after localization, criticism of post-colonialism have become a widespread discussion, therefore to talk about “Orientalism” in Taiwan can be a bit awkward, because it is difficult not to equate Orientalism with Chinese nationalism. However, by reviewing the cultural changes of postwar Taiwan, de-Japanization, re-Sinicization, and modernization have become an indisputable historical fact. In 1987, when martial law was lifted and Taiwan entered a state of democracy, localization and Taiwanization became the mainstream. Not to mention the localization of the Taiwanese society doesn't mean getting rid of Chinese culture, rather, under the competition between the cross-strait cultures, as well as the influences of the democratic system and a multicultural modern environment, the Taiwanese culture have developed a unique manifestation of the Chinese culture – or you can say a better Chinese culture, such as new Confucianism, Chinese modern painting, etc., which can be referred to of what post-colonialism academics call “hybridity.” According to my observation, the concept of “the Oriental” in postwar Taiwan is a “preconceived practice,” and not advanced by theories. In other words, we can find many applications of the term “Oriental” in a linguistic context, but we cannot find a clear definition. The assumptions behind the term, and even the ideological scrutiny, are really quite intriguing.

“OE art” encompasses an astoundingly wide range of genres, ranging from ink painting, calligraphy, movies, clothing, woodcut printing, *Ukiyo-e*, Chinese musical instruments, Beijing operas, movies, tourism, architecture to crafts (ceramics, bamboo) and more. China, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia all belong to the Eastern region, and are basically considered as the Northeastern Asian region. The styles from these regions are symbolic, romantic, linear, decorative, simplistic, primitive, poetic, which are contrary to rationality and science, you can even say it is somewhat mystic. Ethnic groups also differentiate the fundamental differences between Eastern and Western culture. Regardless of how diverse may the content be described, the “assumed Western other,” all exists simultaneously. But what exactly is the “West?” There seems to be no obvious target or boundary, therefore, leaves the question open. Furthermore, the relative relationship of looking each other is clear. The implication of the main subjects and “cultural other” presupposes a complicated relationship of anticipation and self-performance.

Part of my theoretical background is rooted in sociology, therefore, I interpret this manifestation from this aspect. In terms of the relationship between the self and others, sociology gives us a double and dynamic relationship of identity anticipation - we are told or given a specific identity, we imagine how others will look at us, and define our social actions based on the scenarios, values, goals, and interpretations. This relationship becomes a situation of dramaturgy. American sociologist Erving Goffman, in his classic 1959 publication *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, analyzed the seemingly obvious interactions that were actually subtle and complicated, which, despite micro-layers, involves the understanding, interpretation, and employment of symbols that are extremely abstract and conceptual subjects. British scholar Nick Stanley called this as “Being Ourselves for You.” The goal to show cultural identity is not necessarily for ourselves; sometimes it originates from pressure that leads to identity performances, this is especially true in Taiwan, due to its strong awareness of its identity crisis. Of course, we can also question how real the performance actually is, but it does not matter, as by juggling with deceit we have ended in a solid truth; this is what is called the “sociological reality.”

In examining the description of “OE art,” we can get a sense of outline from the scenarios mentioned below; the underlying presuppositions and stereotypes are very worth pondering. Through this field research style classification, we can try to figure out the meanings of these “contexts.” The following are the depictions I have extracted from hundreds of pieces of cultural and art reportage. The numbers at the end of each depiction indicates the year that it was published. The contexts are as followed:

- (1) Binary differences – Binary differences emphasize clear cultural boundaries between “us” and “them,” with cultural counterpoints described very clearly. Other than the aesthetic perception of distance, it also sometime includes exoticism and stereotypes - a deeply rooted perception that is not easily detected by us.
- OE art** is taken for granted by Easterners, but in the West it has extraordinary value. (1953)
 - Westerners evaluate **OE art** as always retaining their Oriental colors and sentiments. (1953)
 - Keeping the Chinese style and the spirit of **OE** intact. These are the domestic films that foreigners want to see. (1958)
 - He thinks Western art has reached its limits, while the value of **OE art** still has a lot of potentials. Therefore, he hopes that our country can be an active participant in Shiraz Art Festival from now on, to introduce the achievements of Chinese art to the world. (1969)
 - Contemporary artist Liu Kuo-song's (劉國松) deepest impression after studying abroad in the U.S., is Americans' overwhelming enthusiasm toward the East - especially Chinese painting. They are fascinated by the mechanical little triangles, squares, and lines that can be seen everywhere, which establish a close bond with the people. They accept **OE art** due to the implicit and refined beauty. (1970)
 - Since Impressionism, Western paintings have gradually tended to focus on two dimensional displays. These two dimensional displays can be found in **OE paintings** as well. The influences of Eastern concepts are reflected in Western paintings, this two dimensional problem is indeed very intriguing. (1971)
 - According to the spatial concepts of **OE painting** traditions, space considered to connect to the universe, which is infinite. This is the completely opposite to the Western method to create perspective. (1972)
- (2) Mediums - Specific forms of practice and materials that symbolize Oriental culture, but sometimes we forcefully categorize the common practice as Oriental culture, such as woodcut printing, bamboo art, ceramics, and flower arranging. But we all know that the whole world has these arts

that are close to our daily lives, and they are not limited to the East. Some products that do not have an obvious Oriental feature, yet oddly they became the endorser of the Eastern culture, just like specimens etc., the definitions are very loose.

-Today, woodcut printing need to eliminate the strong realistic components of Western art, and increase the symbolism of **OE art**. (1953)/ Taiwanese artist, who participated in the “*3rd Annual International Printmaking Expo*,” has received wide acclaim. He was praised for “Representing the characteristics of Chinese ethnicity, with rich taste of **OE art**.” (1962)/ Print artist Chen Hong-jen (陳洪甄) used simple but lively lines with innovative and vigorous carving skills to exhibit his **OE art** style. (1968)/ Because our printmaking is unique, it is deemed to represent **OE art**; this can increase foreigners and overseas Chinese’s knowledge of the Chinese culture. (1969)

-“Ukiyo-e” played an important part in the history of **OE art**. (1954)

-Exquisite craft works such as woodcut prints, bullhorn products, coral aragonites, moon-shaped accessories, ceramics, embroidery, hand-stitching work, palace lanterns, caps, silver, bronze and bamboo utensils, butterfly specimens, hairnets, Chinese musical instruments, toys, ramie, and grass-woven carpets, fully expresses **OE art**. (1957)/ Chinese craft works are produced delicately, all the exhibits can represent **OE art** and culture. It is an honor to provide all Asian national representatives with this opportunity to appreciate Chinese artworks. (1958)/ Due to our experience with wooden material processing, we know that foreigners all see bamboo products as representative of **OE art**. (1971)

-Flower arranging is a type of **OE art** with rich traditions, whose origin is actually rooted in China. This not only allows people to feel beauty in their daily lives, but also shows the philosophy of “tranquility” that the Chinese intellectuals pursue and long for. (1964)

-Using the Presidential office as a hallmark for establishing a city of culture, to take up the responsibility to propel the cultural renaissance. We have created a Chinese Cultural Education Museum that displays features of **OE art**; its palace-like exterior makes it the most attractive building that fully shows the unique characteristics of **OE art**. (1967)

-Half of the oil paintings are done on Chinese Xuan paper, which exhibits the elegance of **OE art**. (1968)

-We think batik is a cultural inheritance of the **OE**, and believe it will become a great material for use in modern paintings. (1971)

(3) Ethnic disparity - Cultural background and ethnicity determine the basic aspects of Oriental art. So as long as they are Chinese or a region that belongs to China, does it represent Eastern culture? Ethnic or geographic determinism easily covers up the problems.

-Nang Ing-ding (藍蔭鼎) was invited to America by the U.S. Department of State to give an exclusive interview. She will be holding a painting exhibition and give a talk on the progress of free China and the characteristics and values of **OE art**. (1954)

-Based on our ethnicity and territory, the five non-Han nationalities are also a part of our nation. This music genre still contains the uniqueness of **OE art**. (1954)

-What are your thoughts on **OE art** and its development with some modern Oriental painters, such as Tsugouharu Foujita (藤田嗣治) and Zhao Wu-ji (趙無極)? (1957)

(4) Fusion and clash – Clash – even conflicts between Eastern and Western cultures are inevitable, as expounded in Samuel Huntington’s published theory of *The Clash of Civilizations* in 1993. In order to pursue harmony, fusion is an ideal path, because it displays the Oriental style of Orient as well as modern and Oriental modernity. This is the mainstream thinking of Orientalism, which its purpose is to develop a new and balanced cultural exemplar. It is not a revision or restoration, nor is it an assimilation by Western culture. “Introducing Western culture to strengthen Chinese culture,” “Chinese-Western fusion” and “Westernized Chinese culture” are all fusion strategies. Of course, these examples are rare, and cannot be used as references, artists must attempt to try, experiment, and find the formats of fusion innovatively. As a result, they are not only the most creative and surprising, but also the most controversial.

-Using entirely **OE art** techniques to paint Western new school paintings; the aesthetic effects are really remarkable. (1954)

- We use the simple lines of **OE art** together with the complicated colors of Western art to create paintings based on the strengths of both cultures. (1954)
 - Does **OE art** influence Western art? Chinese and Japanese paintings and calligraphy imbue new values in Western art symbols and indefinite spaces. (1958)
 - Chinese calligraphy and Chinese paintings are integrated to create ink abstract paintings that are rich with **OE artistry and imagery**. (1964)
 - The May Painting Exhibition manifests a thorough understanding of what characterizes **OE art**. It integrates the free expression of Western paintings, and establishes modern paintings that are purely Orient.
 - In the past, the ceramic artworks designed by our factories are all very Chinese. If more Western art characteristics can be infused into the design, they can definitely attract customers that go beyond loving **OE art**. (1972)
- (5) Aesthetics - What are the aesthetic meanings of the Oriental style? A written description can best summarize its forms and allow people to understand it straightaway: non-geometric spatial expression, poeticism, raw, simplicity, composure, brushstrokes, artistic conception, symbolism, Oriental modernity, freedom, nature, and mystique, etc. Inevitably, these descriptions may come from stereotypical judgment or arbitrary regulations. A simple question can break through the logic deficiency of style differentiation: Does this mean that the West does not have poeticism or mystery in their culture or artistic practice?
- Using the essential techniques of **OE art** to reinforce the meaning and life of the “beauty” of these works. (1954)
 - Its operating location covers from close to far, from big to small, Western painting techniques are used in various places, but the characteristics of **OE art** – the calm, soothing warmth of interest radiates in the universe of paper and ink. (1954)
 - As **OE art** fuses with the West, we can see the extreme simplicity and originality in the picture. (1956)
 - OE art** possesses an extreme simplicity and integrity that have not existed in Europe before. (1957)

- It is overflowing with the flavor and brushstrokes that are unique to **OE art**, especially in the trees and mountain rocks in the paintings. (1958)
 - Zao Wou-ki (趙無極) fully integrates the spirit, charm, the delicacy and mystery, as well as symbolic expressions of **OE art** with his oil painting productions, which are rich with poeticism. (1958)
 - The misty rain and the distant mountains employ extremely freehand brushstrokes to set the artistic mood of the whole painting. It has a style and temperament unique to **OE art**, and is steeped with the essence of Chinese painting. (1958)
 - The characteristics of Kurosawa Akira's (黒澤明) works, together with the spirit of **OE art**, have produced a deep artistic conception in his works. All these are worth noting. (1959)
 - The influence of Oriental fine art has become an important phenomenon. This unique expression captures the depth of **OE art**, and its abstract content of metaphysical poetry. (1969)
 - This example of Shang Dynasty oracle script that uses large and small seal script to display the abstract beauty of Chinese characters. By integrating the modern Western aesthetic that forms ideas of metaphysics, it hints at the diversity of printmaking, and exhibits a type of **OE** philosophical spirit.
 - It is influenced by Op art, but it feels **OE**, which is filled with **OE** leisure and mysterious fantasies that shines rays of wisdom. (1972)
- (6) Form elements – combin through Oriental form elements, such as blank spaces, decorations, lines, and circles to emphasize the specific visual reproduction system and structure of Oriental art.
- The surrounding is all blank, with suitable space to inscribe, sign and stamp, rubbing; this needs to show the sturdy foundation of Chinese calligraphy and painting; this is the real “**OE art**.” (1954)
 - It contains the decorative color elements of **OE art**. (1956)
 - We did not overlook the most important characteristic of **OE art**: The beauty of lines and expression of artistic conception! (1956)
 - The appearance of the circle as a symbol in paintings is considered the phantom of the moon due to the location of the Easterners and their

unique qualities. (1971)

(7) Centralism- “Eurocentrism” exhibits a Social Darwinism-inspired theory of cultural supremacy. It emphasizes the differences between central and marginal, placing much importance on cultural origins, and can be seen as cultural hegemony. In another aspect, “Oriental centralism” also reflected the forceful invasion of Western culture. Chinese culture in Taiwan chose to “resist” – taking an old cultural form and convert into the origins of modern abstraction in an attempt to recover the power of the cultural discourse. While this theory is not supported by empirical evidence, and it only presents the collective anxiety felt in cultural subjective identity crises, it is nevertheless effective, which provides a sense of “consolation.”

-From the Renaissance to the late 19th Century, Western paintings have been stimulated by **OE** narrow naturalism. (1957)

-The forms of **OE art** are elegant and relaxed. Domestic films should not borrow inspirations from foreign movies; instead, they should find material within their own rich ethnic culture. (1959)

-China is the real benchmark against which all Asian cultures are measured, and it is the cultural origin of **OE art**. / Chinese art is the mainstream of **OE art**, and paintings are the most prominent part of Chinese art. (1960)

-Not only do the origins of abstract painting originates from the ideas of **OE art**. Today, Oriental painters still holds an influential position in the field of Western abstract painting. (1965)

(8) Self-Orientalization- People with Chinese cultural background can easily identify with the Chinese culture, yet oddly they emphasize their own culture as the Oriental culture. This stems from comparisons of cultural viewpoints and structures: Western culture vs. Oriental culture. This naming process partially comes from one’s self-determination of cultural identity. However, we must admit that it is external pressure that forces us to respond this way. Of course it can also be the result of cultural competition, which is considered a part of the cultural identity issue as in Benedict Anderson’s “Imagined Communities.”

-The painting also exhibits the sense of abstractness intrinsic to **OE art**. Taiwanese people are aware that abstract art already exists in China.

We do not have to keep emphasizing the glory of Western modern paintings that were acquired from the East; we should cherish and develop the simplicity and abstractness of the sublime artistic conception and design in China instead. (1959)

-The movements of the lines undulate with the rhythmic aesthetic of Chinese calligraphy, the styles possess a strong sense of form. Every Chinese relates to the spirit of **OE art** in their blood. (1971)

-Regarding the exporting of Chinese cultural art: The cultural art of China has a history dating back thousands of years, which has many traditional characteristics. The promotion of this project consists of: 1) The introduction and replication of ancient art, 2) Architecture and art cooperation and application, emphasizing of traditional Chinese characteristics, 3) Chinese- style interior design and furnishings, with an **OE** overtone, 4) Chinese gardenscapes art. (1972)

-I have retraced my steps and roots to the **OE**, to that humble and elegant folk art. The simple and powerful lines of ancient Chinese paintings and sculptures have converged to form that implicit, elegant, and poetic **OE**. (1973)

(9) Western Other – Compared to the “self-Orientalization” that emphasizes their own community, the re-Orientalization discourse in Taiwan has discussed the roles of the “Western cultural other,” that either exist explicitly or implicitly, embedding various degrees of imagination. They are the aforementioned “imagined others,” or “hypothetical cultural others.”

-In developing the tourism business, there needs to be things that are rich in **OE art** to attract the attention of foreigners. (1960)

-Former U.S. Secretary of State Mrs. Rusk is extremely passionate towards **OE art**. She often spoke highly of the broad scope of Chinese historical artifacts. / Brundage loved **OE art**, he was an expert in Chinese bronze. (1964)

-President of U.S. General Chamber of Commerce Jones praised the National Palace Museum for preserving valuable artifacts of **OE art** civilization, and is the greatest treasure of the Eastern culture. (1969)

(10) Chinese art – Calligraphy, ink, and printing are fine examples of

re-Orientalization, but we must remember, after half a century of Japanese colonization, Chinese culture in Taiwan has declined. Postwar period, the elimination of Japanization, re-Sinicization, and the Cultural Revolution against the Communist Party has re-crowned Chinese art as the mainstream. Facing the highly complicated strategies and manifestations of Western modernization, we cannot just simply see this as returning to the mother culture or an ethnic group regression.

-Inspired by our calligraphy, there are still a lot of writers who were greatly touched by **OE art** spiritually, structurally, and technically. (1957)

-Artist Chien, Ji-er (錢濟鄂) exhibited his poetry, calligraphy, Chinese painting, and prints at Wellington University. Representing Oriental art, Chien, Ji-er was the only Eastern artist this year. (1973) Professor Fang, Wen (方聞) has lived in the U.S. for many years. He studies **Oriental art**, especially Taiwanese painting, and has many publications. (1974) The paintings of Mr. Da-chien (大千) are noted for their transcendental artistic reference, which convey the essence of modern **OE art**. The Japanese audience should not miss out on this opportunity to see his work.

Art educator Herbert Read, whose books were well known among the Taiwanese people, once had this to say regarding Oriental art: “We should not focus on reproduction as the ultimate goal, so no matter if it is Chinese art or Persian art, as long as it is considered Oriental art, the materials should not be used in realistic paintings but applied in feelings,” “Absolute balance is often seen in Oriental art, subject-matters like two animals facing each other.” Generalizing certain culture or artistic style is an academic task. Inevitably, we will ignore the differences, and emphasize similarities, this is generally the perspective from “the outside to the inside.” When we inspect the generalized East in the context of Taiwanese “OE art,” the viewpoints that come from the true cultural context, going from “the inside to the outside” allows the Orientalism in Taiwan to present a more exquisite meaning, which is different from Said’s version of Orientalism.

4. Reconstructing the “Eastern order” of Modern art: Liao Shiu-ping, Lee Shi-chi, and Zhou Ying

So far, I have attempted to elaborate on the re-Orientalization process of postwar Taiwan. Other than the handover of political power from Japanese colonial rule to

the self-proclaimed political correctness of the Republic of China - and restoration of ethnic identity from “becoming Japanese” to “becoming Chinese” again, the biggest motive for change was the impact of Western modernization. The emergence of Oriental art was due to the stimulation and reflection of American abstract art and pop art, and of course the alternate generations of artists brought about the changes too. While modern practice by young Taiwanese artists were attacked by traditionalists as examples of Communist ideology, however, at that time their works were judged as “innovative” when they represented Republic of China at the annual exhibition in Sao Paulo. This represents the fully acceptance of Oriental art, which employs elements of Chinese art into modern painting. Eventually, it became the cultural mainstream during the postwar period. From the numerous postwar Taiwanese modern Chinese painting movements, I have only chosen three examples of modern printmaking to elaborate on: Liao Shiu-ping (廖修平) (1936-), Lee Shi-chi (李錫奇) (1938-) and Zhou Ying (周瑛) (1922-2011). Coincidentally, I have written biographies for these three artists, therefore, I have a profound knowledge of them. As block printing is also a representative of Oriental art, this can be used as case studies of “re-Orientalization” in Taiwan. The three artists all experienced different artistic trajectories, which reflects the diverse facets of such cultural trajectory.



Fig. 1. Liao Shiu-ping, *Life (B)*, 2005, silk net version, 63 x 46 cm

Liao Shiu-ping was born in Taipei, he developed an interest in painting at a young age. Liao enrolled at the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), Department of Fine Arts, and was taught by Li Shi-jiao (李石樵), who was one of the first-generation modern painters in Taiwan; he inherited the Japanese impressionist oil painting

tradition. After he graduated, he enrolled at the Tokyo University of Education, and then went to France to study oil paintings with Roger Chastel, and simultaneously became a part of No. 17 Printmaking Workshop owned by the famous artist Stanley William Hayter. Liao began to think about the new forms of art creation that corresponded with his cultural origins, and finally found ways to unleash his potential in printmaking. After graduation, Liao worked at the Pratt Graphics Center in the U.S., where he developed and matured a native symbolic style in his practice. He was then invited to lecture at NTNU, University of Tsukuba in Japan and various universities in China, and now has students and followers scattered all over the world. He actively promoted printmaking exhibitions and education, and was known as the “Father of Taiwanese Modern Printmaking.” According to past interviews, Liao Shiu-ping had struggled mightily with cultural disparity. When he realized the situation being an Easterner, he was determined to create his own artistic language which refused to follow the footsteps of the West. As he was immersed in foreign cultures, Liao proposed a serious question regarding the idea of cultural difference, which incubated his interest in finding cultural subjectivity. Surprisingly, what he finally chose to continuously develop in his practice was his earliest and most familiar memory: the impression of Taiwanese temples. The symbols of folk art and traditional totems not only effectively alleviated Liao’s homesickness and his obstacles in practice, but also provided him with a silver lining in his artmaking process. Liao Shiu-ping’s epiphany indicated his reflection and restructure towards the artistic subjectivity that is carried out under the feelings of cultural uncertainty. He adjusted his relationship with Western art, and more importantly, he re-examined his relationship with his mother Taiwanese culture as the base for rewriting and reproducing cultural relationships. At this time, the positioning of art is not just the establishment of personal style, but a clear relationship between the artists and their cultures, which is also the self-positioning within the Western art mainstream.

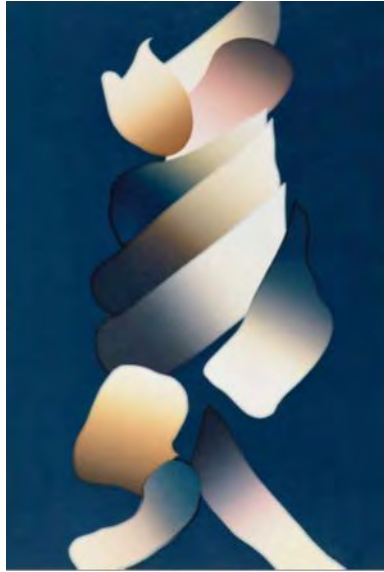


Fig. 2. Lee Shi-chi, *Diary 1*, 1976, silkscreen print, 89 x 60 cm

When Lee Shi-chi attended Taipei Teacher's College to study fine art in 1955, he learned woodcut printing from Zhou Ying, and quickly showed great potential. In his early works he depicted life in his hometown, Kinmen (金門), expressing the sentiments of a homesick student studying away from home in his work. In 1959, Lee Shi-chi, Yang Ying-feng (楊英風), and Qing Song (秦松) established the "Modern Printmaking Association," and simultaneously studied modern abstract art with the "Taiwanese modern painting instructor," Li Zhong-shen (李仲生). In 1963, he joined the "Oriental Painting Group." He worked hard in exploring techniques and his personal style, absorbing the abstract paintings and pop art from the modern West. He also incorporated local themes and traditional cultural elements into his work, and gradually established his own visual vocabulary. In 1973, he was inspired by Huaisu's (懷素) Chinese cursive calligraphy, he created linear colored block prints which integrated the concepts of modern art into calligraphy elements, particularly with the variations of colors and spaces, that create the visual effects of rotary motions, displaying a distinct Oriental modern style. In 1990, he started developing lacquer painting, using strong and saturated colors such as red, black, and gold, and seal stamp imagery, to form a textured style of interesting geometrical displacement, which reinterpreted the structure of modern Chinese art. Taking tradition and native elements as the foundation of his inspiration, he transformed forms, colors, and themes into modern composition. This was a new artistic vocabulary that could create a dialogue and resonate with the global modern arts; this gave great vitality to the birth and development of Taiwanese modern art.



Fig. 3. Zhou Ying, *In Praise of a Rock*, 1984, comprehensive block print

Zhou Ying hails from Changding, Fujian Province. He studied fine art in Fujian Yong'an Teacher's School and Fujian Normal College, where he learned realistic oil painting and woodcut printing from Hsieh Tou-ba (謝投八) and Wu Chi-yao (吳啟瑤), respectively, and in 1949, he became a teacher at the fine art department of Taipei Teacher's College. After the war, the leftwing woodcut movement was trending in Taiwan, but Zhou Ying specialized in woodcut prints of natural scenery, vividly portraying the rustic life of Taiwan's farming villages. How did Zhou Ying, who had learned realistic fine art and learned woodcut from the West, turn from traditional to modern? Stimulations from the artistic environment were a major factor. In 1950, young students were keen to study contemporary art, which resulting in the founding of the Oriental Painting Group and May Painting Group. These two painting societies became the most prominent representatives of Taiwanese art. In another aspect, the ideas of modern art were introduced to the Taiwanese society due to receiving American support during the Chinese civil war. Abstract Art and Pop Art were gradually accepted, especially among the younger generation. The rise of the OE abstract art and local pop art explains the adaptation process of Taiwan's modern art. Zhou Ying turned his attention to modernism, and spent the following decade under the radar. After this first-generation veteran printmaking artist received the Council of Chief of Cultural Affairs Award at the 3rd International Biennial Print Exhibit: 1987 ROC, he said: "I started out with woodcut printing, then I experiment with different materials and its effects. As for the awarded work, *In Praise of a Rock 3*, was an attempt to express the abstraction of painting concepts through employing the spirit of Chinese traditional humanities. I used a few simple and changing forms and overlapped them to unfold the relationship that responds to each other, and it brought out the momentum and tension of the whole piece. I think the work, *In*

Praise of a Rock, has conveyed the idea of how slow and steady wins the race through its forms, providing a vigorous and spirited psychological effect.”

The three Taiwanese printmakers did not acknowledge the so-called Oriental identity through traditional printmaking methods, but rather, “OE” returned into their practice under the impact and stimulation of the West, this includes complicated interactions, such as resistance and negotiation, neither was considered a simple confrontation.

5. Conclusion

The pursuit of art styles is a serious subject for every professional artist; the significance can be from an individual level or to a more complicated cultural, social or historical extent. At the same time, people from different cultural backgrounds result in the difference of life trajectories. Artists from the Western mainstream culture often can handle the personal and cultural issues simultaneously, in other words, they can pursue personal style through their subject matters and forms on one hand, while naturally reflect or exhibit their cultural backgrounds. As for artists from non-Western culture, recent research indicates (especially in post-colonial critique and culture research) that they will encounter the impact of cultural differences, as these artists are now described as “the cultural others,” and will continue to struggle in the search for subjectivity.

According to the current theoretical development, the idea of “Oriental” is actually a vague, moreover, problematic concept. It does not have a clear cultural distinction, which can refer to the Islamic culture of the Middle East, the Buddhist culture of India, or the Chinese culture. From the perspective of Orientalism critique, “we Orientals” actually refer to the opposite of Oriental, which is “those Occidentals.” This is a tendency to rigidify the relationship between the West and the non-West by establishing ideologies and stereotyping. The analysis on Said’s Orientalism discourse is explained considerably clear, but this does not mean we have to completely avoid using the term “Oriental.” Some traditional Orientalist scholars still believe that the word “Oriental” signifies the curiosity and admiration of the West toward exotic (and unique) cultures, which is doesn’t imply a strong sense of judgment or confrontation.

My colleague, Dr. Liu Jun-yu (劉俊裕), in his new publication, *ReOrientalization: Cultural Policies and Cultural Governance*, defined “re-Orientalization” as: “A multi-faceted and dynamic concept, a subjective concept that renews continuously. This includes the reflection, return, restructuring, rebirth, reinterpretation and rearrangement of Oriental ideas through the values and counter-values of Eastern and Western traditions, as well as mutual understanding, mutual reference, dialectics

and dialogues between modernity, cultural globalization and localization. Furthermore, it also seeks to reconnect and transform modern Oriental concepts, and the ReOrientation of the Oriental cultural policies and governance. The meaning of re-Orientalization adapts to a reflexive thinking model within the East Asian cultural governance system, and gradually establishes a set of cultural vocabulary and value interpretations that differs from the West. This is an attempt to let the post cultural value discourses produce localization, in order to find the actual differences, and make practical work more feasible.” This shift in ideas is just like what Taiwanese scholar Chen Guang-hsin (陳光興) observed, as the Third World converts resistance theory to diversion theory and then to localized theory. From my observation, the self-Orientalization discourse of postwar Taiwanese art may not have quite the depth of criticism and reflection that the two scholars have claimed, but to an attempt to find a practical way out of the Western impact. Taiwan’s Orientalism rather is the “re-Easternization/Orientalization” cultural movement; therefore, the implication is different than the former. Context examination and case studies of the “re-Orientalization/Easternization” of postwar Taiwan’s modern art can shed light on the complicated topics mentioned above. Re-Orientalization/Easternization is not re-Sinicization, but the cultural development of localization – the perfect artistic survival strategy that adapts to local conditions when confronting modernization, which is a product made in Taiwan (MIT).

The Western wind is blowing to the East. The wind is very orderless, downdrafts, updrafts, acceptance and resistance. This is the re-Orientalization/Easternization trend in postwar Taiwan, it is neither the East nor the West. You could say it is a “modernization project for Taiwanese art,” and that would summarize the movement in a nutshell.

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