



Taiwanese American Arts Council

For immediate release

Peoples' Movements: Sunflower 10th Year Anniversary

人民的運動：太陽花十周年

Opening Reception: March 15, 2024 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Curator, Artist Lectures and Guided Tour: Thursday, March 21, 1-4 p.m.

Seminar: Saturday, March 30, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Exhibition dates: March 15 to April 15, 2024

[Manhattan, New York, March 2024] The Taiwanese American Arts Council (TAAC) presents an exhibition, "People's Movements: Sunflower 10th Year Anniversary," which brings together a selection of nine artists and one collaborative team's works in sculpture, photography, installation, and painting. The exhibition will be on view from March 15, 2024, to April 15, 2024, at the Tenri Cultural Institute in New York City, with an opening reception on March 15, 2024, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

Luchia Meihua Lee, the Executive Director of TAAC and curator of the exhibition, chose to commemorate the Sunflower Movement, which led to the renewal of Taiwanese society, instead of celebrating the 10th anniversary of TAAC. It also intentionally reminded the world of an opportunity for social change. Curator invited artists to respond to and review the peoples' political movements that took place around the world around 2014, mainly led by youth. The five movements chosen are: Taiwan's Sunflower Movement, the Arab Spring, Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, the Chilean Winter, and Ukraine's Euromaidan Movement (or Revolution of Dignity). Artists will respond to one of these movements.

During Taiwan's Sunflower Movement, students and other young people occupied Taiwan's Legislative Yuan to protest in response to the Ma Ying-jeou administration's plans to strengthen trade relations with China, the Sunflower Movement successfully blocked the proposed legislation, leading many of its participants to finally enter formal political life and thereby revitalizing Taiwan's political culture. Artists played a pivotal role in the struggle, not merely as observers but actively on the front lines. The Island Sunrise Team, employing paint brushes, cameras, and video recorders, documented the events. The exhibition will showcase visual and written records from 2014. Notable participants include Tsung-Jung Liu, a frontline Sunflower Movement protester, and photographers Enbion Micah Aan, who captured the New York Sunflower and human rights movement. Hsin-Yi Liu fearlessly took to the streets for social justice, while Hong Kong artist Kacey Wong, now in Taiwan exile, grapples with the lingering shadows of victim pressure. Five others in the exhibition represent diverse movements worldwide, highlighting social human rights.

In the foreword, "*Spring passes and autumn passes, but don't forget the sunflowers*," from the exhibition special issue marking the 10th Anniversary of the Sunflower Movement, Patrick Huang, co-founder of TAAC and founder of Brooklyn Artists Studio (BAS), expresses gratitude. He acknowledges, "Fortunately, the young people of the Sunflower awakened the sleeping god of spring. Their fervor to

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shape destiny and save the country swept across Taiwan. Community sponsors, including Patrick Huang, Thomas Chen, Ming Jiang, Patsy Chen, and Kenneth Howell, provided long-term support for TAAC's arts and cultural endeavors. Enthusiastic backers like Chen Weiting, a key Sunflower Movement leader, and Edward Hsu of AIA Studio, further strengthened this fortunate event.

In the Foreword of the special booklet of this 10th Anniversary of the Sunflower Movement, Patrick Huang, TAAC co-founder and Brooklyn Artists Studio (BAS) founder, expresses gratitude, stating, "Fortunately, the young people of the Sunflower awakened the sleeping god of spring. Their passion to shape destiny and save the country swept across Taiwan." Community sponsors, including Patrick Huang, Thomas Chen, Ming Jiang, Patsy Chen, and Kenneth Howell, provided long-term support for TAAC's arts and cultural endeavors. Enthusiastic backers like Chen Weiting, a key Sunflower Movement leader, and Edward Hsu of AIA Studio, further strengthened this fortunate event.

This exhibition commemorates youth-led movements from a decade ago, emphasizing both their shared and distinct aspects. Curator Luchia Meihua Lee notes the common ground of these movements, highlighting their ongoing significance. People's movements consistently play a vital role across centuries, fostering challenging dialogues within societies, countries, and communities. Through these discussions, they offer insights into how governments can adapt their behavior to better serve society.

More Information Contact:

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Curator: Luchia Meihua Lee

Assistant curator: Tzu-Ying Chan

Seminar organizer and panelists: Weiting Chen

Advisory team: Patrick Huang, Thomas Chen, Ming Chiang, Patsy Chen, Kenneth Howell, Weiting Chen, I-Lun Shih

Participating artists

- ❖ **Taiwan Sunflower Movement**
- Enbion Micah Aan
- Island Sunrise Team

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Tsung Jung Liu

Hsin Yi Liu

Chia H. Kuo

❖ **Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement**

Kacey Wong

❖ **Ukrainian Euromaidan revolution**

Oleksii Koval

Shih-Pao Lin

❖ **Chilean Winter**

María Verónica San Martín

❖ **Arab Spring**

Kevork Mourad

Seminal Panelists

Topic: **Reflecting on the 10th Anniversary of the Sunflower and Umbrella Movements: The Future of Hong Kong and Taiwan**

- Weiting Chen, Sunflower Movement frontline activist
 - June Lin, Sunflower Movement frontline activist
 - I-Lun Shih, Sunflower Movement frontline activist
 - Sunny Cheung, Hong Kong political movements frontline activist
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[some curatorial concept about Hong Kong Umbrella, Arab Spring, Chilean Winter, Ukraine Euromaidan]

The Peoples' Movement exhibition also highlighted Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement which took place in September 2014. This movement made a comeback on the occasion of its fifth anniversary in 2019. The extradition bill imposed then on Hong Kong further weakened its special status, contrary to the agreement negotiated between the UK and China. This exhibition, however, will celebrate the public self-sacrifice exemplified in Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and embodied in every popular movement. Artist Kacey Wong not only participated in the protest through performance actions, but also established a database of the movement on social media.

This exhibition will include some elements of the Arab Spring. The movement began in several Arab countries in the early 2010s with varying degrees of success. The Arab Spring began in Tunisia, and protests occurred across the Arab world. These were youth movements in pursuit of democracy and an economic future, and against dictatorships - which were also consistent with the theme of this exhibition. The artist chosen this time, Kevork Mourad, is an exiled Syrian artist of Armenian descent. His "Four Acts for Syria" video animation work is a sad historical lyric poem that laments the displacement of people. The exhibition also shows his sailing ship called "Sailing to Nowhere", which carries the faces of the victims and the dead.

One of the most high-profile episodes of protest in South America was that which took place in Chile from 2011 to 2013. Known as the "Chilean Winter," these were student-led protests against the then-

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existing for-profit higher education system in Chile. This system dated back to the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, and Chilean artist María Verónica San Martín in her elaborate artist's book depicts the people massacred by the dictator. In both Taiwan and Chile, the transition to democracy was peaceful—and political movements needed to fine-tune democracy.

The youth movement in Ukraine has been called the "**Euromaidan**" revolution or the "Pomvrancheva revolution". Protesters also attempted to occupy the legislative branch; unlike Taiwan's Sunflower Movement, armed police blocked this action and killed, injured, or arrested many protesters. The pro-EU movement aimed to overturn President Viktor Yanukovich's attempts to forge closer ties with Russia - echoing Ma Ying-jeou's advocacy of closer ties with China in Taiwan. In the end, the opposition of Russian-speaking Ukrainians emboldened Russia to seize the Crimean Peninsula. Oleksii Koval, an artist from Ukraine, used his silk-like enamel-like creations created in 2014 to present the maintenance of traditional Ukrainian culture and to comment on the pro-EU revolution in Ukraine. Taiwanese and American artist Shib-pao Lin took humanitarianism in the Ukraine-Russia war as his theme. He personally went to the war zone twice in 2023 and traveled 5,000 kilometers with NGO members in two weeks to continue his One Pray, One Painting project to support Ukraine.

Cultural, social and political change are never directly and completely separable - this is why we choose "The People's Campaign: Sunflower 10th Anniversary" to represent the reason why TAAC is on its 10th anniversary. We also call on the people to stand together to change the destiny of the country, and also thank professional art creators for participating in the Sunflower Movement and the courage of young people around the world to save the country.

More reference available upon request



Taiwanese American Arts Council



Cultural
Affairs



TAAC Co-founders: Lung Fong Chen, Patrick Huang, Thomas Chen, Luchia Meihua Lee
TAAC other Board members: Patsy Chen, Ming Chiang

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