

## 關於國際交流的省思、重置與再出發

### 一通電話開始，從疫情中生長出共想共作的國際交流方法

一切都從 2020 疫情爆發的年中開始，一天突然接到 Norman<sup>1</sup>的電話，詢問有沒有興趣把今年二月在日本 TPAM，台灣與加拿大交流現場<sup>2</sup>的能量，透過線上交流的方式延續看看，當時心中抱持著，有交流的機會就應該盡量參與，尤其在臺灣的地理環境與地緣政治的狀態下，我們更需要主動去參與並認識各地區的文化脈絡，於是我們兩邊各自開始從當時參與 TPAM 的藝術家詢問，一起開始進行線上交流的意願，感謝武康、品文、彥斌很快地就答應，在完全不確定可以變成什麼或做成什麼？（畢竟臺灣當時相當幸運，在平行宇宙中的我們工作上異常於世界地忙碌），就這樣開始展開了平均每一個月一次的線上對話，並且持續了三年，連我自己都非常驚訝，每一次會議完，大家都認真地把手機行事曆拿出來，確認下一次會面的時間，而這樣長時間的誠意與意願，並不是在所有疫情中發生的線上交流都有的。

在大約線上對話進行了近一年，世界各地漸進摸索與病毒共存的可能，我們雙方越來越熟悉彼此的狀態下，開始了這個交流可以如何往前再邁進一點的討論，雙方也各自尋找兩地不同的資源，共同嘗試著讓這個計畫緩步前行，回頭想想，這個計畫確實是從疫情中生長出來的，也在因疫情擾動的大環境中，它有了多一些呼吸及有機的發展空間，而這也是我自身作為獨立製作人，首次不以製作與演出為主要目標，與臺灣及加拿大的藝術家，以幾乎平行的角色參與計畫的經驗，從計畫進行的可能結構、行程安排到預算彙整，與加方皆是以協作的方式持續工作，於我而言透過共想協作的實踐，能夠觀察了解兩地間不同的文化與思維邏輯、整體生態及補助環境的方向、以及藝術家各自如何對應並長出自己的方式，讓我能夠跳脫過往不斷循環的製作演出思維模式，重新思考在已有的交流經驗上，不同發展模式與工作關係的可能。

### 兩週的密集參訪，站在對方的肩膀上看世界

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Armour, 加拿大溫哥華 Push Festival 創始人，逝於 2023 年 11 月。

<sup>2</sup> 2020 年由國藝會的 ARTWAVE – 台灣國際藝術網絡平台，邀請台灣藝術家及日本藝術家梅田宏明策劃，參與日本橫濱 TPAM(現已更名為 YPAM)之演出及交流相關活動。

2022 下半年，隨著國境逐步開放，實體造訪彼此的想法逐步浮現，呼應著整個計畫的共想(享)協作精神，我們一步一步討論著，如果對方到了自己的所在地，我們各自希望帶對方去哪一個對自己最重要的地方？對方應該要體驗 / 認識那些人事物？雙方需要什麼樣的資源共同完成？這個計畫的後續成果與經驗如何具公共性地分享出來？爾後我們提出了以兩週的參訪為目標，各自為對方規劃行程，透過彼此集體的視野，進入彼此所在的實體環境，由於 Michael 新接下了每年 8 月進行的 SummerWorks 藝術節藝術總監，也剛好兩方時間可行，(實際上七個人要湊出共同兩週的時間是有一定難度的)，很快地決定 8 月由臺灣前往多倫多參訪，加方則於 10 月底 11 月初(跳島舞蹈節)的兩週訪台，而當收到 Andrea, Heidi, Michael 共同規劃的行程時，我非常地驚為天人，首先是他們作為藝術家的行政能力，包括參訪各單位、專業人士與節目觀賞的聯繫與整合，Heidi 製作的精美 excel 表格，以及極度充實的行程安排，而每個參訪行程，他們也盡量或分工陪同並參與現場對話，以我自己過去參與國際展會及出差行程安排的經驗，要在兩週內參訪超過 20 個單位與其核心人員，且每個皆進行至少一小時的深度對話，如果不是透過他們在地深厚的連結與引介，是不可能做到的，而除了行程之外，他們也細心照顧著我們的住宿與交通安排，由於疫情後的通膨導致多倫多住宿費用大漲，Andrea 透過自己的人脈安排我們住宿其友人獨棟住家，我們幸運地體驗了當地美好的住家環境，而在不認識我們的前提下，這些加拿大朋友大方地提供住所，也讓我們再次感受到這個計畫中所培養出來的信任與美好。

由於加方安排的行程非常充實，到了臺灣行程的安排時，武康、品文、彥斌與我邊笑說不能輸，邊進行分工，十四天內走訪了五個城市(臺中、臺東、高雄、嘉義、臺北)，從場館單位、藝術家與策展人、舞蹈教育機構，到臺東原民相關團隊與部落，充分運用臺灣島內快速移動的特性，也包含到島內演出活動遍地開花的體驗，由於時間與行程的安排，還是有許多遺珠之憾，只能留作他們下次再來臺灣的期待。而我自己臺灣的行程收穫也非常大，如果不是這個計畫，往年都在製作與演出的忙碌當中，少有機會到臺灣不同地方做再次的認識，即使是已經認識的人，當再一次聽到他們自己訴說歷史及當下的時候，都有新的與更深的體會與理解。

## 多倫多印象與計畫小結

加拿大多倫多，整體最深刻的印象是多元(diversity)，這裏的多元已經深植在生活裡，從街上不同種族的人們、食物、性別、聊天話題、到每一個區域都相對多數保留的個人雜貨店、較少的連鎖店（除了需執照的酒類店家），因為已經完全融入在這個城市裡，不特別留意的話，甚至一開始會覺得這個大城市閒適得有點無聊，然而細細觀察，這個城市中融合了各種文化與立場，同時有著樂於分享與討論的好奇，社群型的文化活動很多，例如在公園中移動式的舞蹈演出(dusk dances)、於社區內各家陽台上進行的委託創作演出(Porch View Dances)、或是從演出者到觀眾皆為 LGBTQ 群體的 *Love In*，每個地區及社群的集結與互相支持相當顯著，也反映在我們所參與的 SummerWorks 藝術節演出節目上。SummerWorks 令我印象最深刻是其共融 (inclusive) 的部分，80% 的演出都有配合手語現場翻譯，其中還有一個戲劇演出 *Lady M* (改編自馬克白夫人)，主要女演員是由聽障的演員擔任，演出中將大部分的台詞精簡為，具有節奏與線條性的手語表現，即使不懂手語的觀眾如我，仍覺得是一場肢體細節精緻、意涵容易理解的戲劇演出，而現場亦有高比例的聽障觀眾，在演後座談與場外的回應皆相當熱絡，而藝術節的開閉幕與重點活動，現場亦皆配有至少 2 位手語人員進行逐步翻譯。

這次雙向的參訪行程與經驗可能被複製嗎？我們都大致認同，我們非常榮幸能有這個獨特的經驗，如果未來加入的人員不同，經驗也會有所改變，因而後續如何把這次的經驗紀錄下來，也將是這個計畫的意義。而在本次計畫中我自己的觀察，後續也將以「創意駐地 (Creative Residency)」、「工作空間(Working spaces)」、「藝術家與製作人的關係 (Artists & Producers)」等主題進行紀錄分享。

## **International Exchange: Rethink, Reset and Restart**

### **From a phone call to an international exchange initiative sprouted amid the pandemic.**

Back in mid-2020 when the pandemic hit the world, a phone call from Norman checking in to see if I was interested in continuing the exchanges between Taiwan and Canada in TPAM this February through online communication. I said yes right away. As Taiwanese, it's been my belief that we should participate as much as possible whenever there is an opportunity for exchange, especially given the geographical and geopolitical situation in Taiwan. Later, both of us started asking the artists who participated in TPAM at that time if they were willing to engage in online exchanges. Big thanks to the immediate yes from WuKang, Pinwen, and Fangas, without knowing what it could turn into or what it could achieve (after all, Taiwan was quite lucky at that time, and our work was unusually busy compared to the rest of the world). Just like that, we began to have online conversations roughly once a month, which continued for three years. I myself was actually surprised that, after each meeting, everyone was keen for the next one and would take out their phone calendars and confirm the time of the next meeting. This level of sincerity and willingness over such a long period of time, is not something that happens in all online exchanges during epidemics.

After nearly a year of online conversations, as the world gradually explored the possibility of coexisting with the virus, and as we became more and more familiar with each other, we began discussing how this exchange could move forward a bit more. Each side also sought out different resources and jointly tried to move this project forward step by step. Looking back now, this project was indeed developed from the pandemic setting, allowing it with more flexibility and organic process. This was also my first experience as an independent producer not primarily focused on production and performance, participating in the project alongside artists from Taiwan and Canada in almost parallel roles. From discussing the possible structure and schedule of the project, to budget consolidation, both sides continued to work collaboratively. For me, through the practice of shared thinking and collaboration, I was able to observe and understand the different cultures and contexts between the two, and how each artist responded and developed in their own way. I was able to look up from the continuous cycle of production and performance, to rethink the possibilities of different development models and working relationships based on existing exchange experiences.

### **Two Weeks of Creative Residency: Seeing the World from Each Other's Perspective**

In the latter half of 2022, as borders gradually reopened, the idea of physical visits began to emerge. We deliberated on where we each wished to take the other in our respective locations. What were the most crucial places for each of us to experience or acquaint ourselves with? What resources were needed to achieve our mutual goals? How could the subsequent outcomes and experiences of this project be shared

publicly? Thus, we proposed a goal of two weeks for reciprocal visits, with each side planning the itinerary for the other. Through the collective perspectives of one another, we immersed ourselves in each other's physical places and spaces.

As Michael's new and exciting role as the Artistic Director of the SummerWorks which held annually in August, and the alignment of both parties' schedules (though coordinating schedules for seven individuals over two weeks was no small feat), it was swiftly decided that the Taiwanese contingent would visit Toronto in August, while the Canadian team would visit Taiwan at the end of October and early November (coinciding with the We Islands Dance Festival). When I received the meticulously planned itinerary devised by Andrea, Heidi, and Michael, I was truly amazed. They demonstrate such great administrative capacity as artists. They listed and made contact with a great number of institutions, professionals, while integrating performances and events happening around the same time in the schedule. Heidi's beautifully crafted Excel spreadsheets and the meticulously detailed itinerary were commendable. Moreover, they endeavored to accompany and participate in on-site discussions at each visit. Drawing from my past experiences in international meetings and visiting trips, I knew that visiting over 20 institutions and engaging in in-depth discussions with key people within two weeks would have been impossible without their networks and endorsements. Aside from the itinerary, they also took great care of our accommodations and transportation arrangements. Due to post-pandemic inflation, accommodation costs in Toronto had skyrocketed. Andrea arranged for us to stay at her friends' houses, and Heidi was also having us all in her house for the last two days, allowing us to experience the local housing and hospitality. We appreciate it so much that people generously offered their home for us to stay without even knowing us in the first place. And this is reaffirming the trust and goodwill cultivated through this project.

Given the great and incomparable Canadian itinerary, when it came to planning the Taiwan itinerary, Wu Kang, Pinwen, Fangas, and I were going to give our best - Five cities within fourteen days(crazy!) - Taichung, Taitung, Kaohsiung, Chiayi, and Taipei. With venues, artists and curators, dance education institutions, indigenous groups and tribes, workshops and performances all included in the schedule, we fully utilize Taiwan's rapid mobility. Of course, we still have so much to show the Canadians that we just couldn't fit everything in the schedule therefore we will have the next visit. Personally, my own journey in Taiwan was immensely rewarding. Without this project, I would have been engulfed in the busyness of production and performance as in previous years, with few opportunities to revisit different parts of Taiwan. Even for those I already knew, hearing them recount their history and current experiences provided me new and deeper insights and understanding.

### **Toronto Impressions, and thoughts on the project**

My impression of Toronto is its diversity deeply rooted in daily life. The folks, the food, gender identity, conversation topics, and small grocery stores in most neighborhoods with relatively low number of chain stores (except for licensed liquor stores). It's so seamlessly integrated into the city that, if one is not paying attention, you might initially find this big city somewhat uneventful. However, upon closer observation, you'll notice the city's fusion of cultures and perspectives, coupled with a genuine curiosity and willingness to share and discuss. There's a focus on community-based activities, such as site-specific dance performances in parks (Dusk Dances), performances in front of people's houses (Porch View Dances), and the performances like *Love In*, where performers and audience members alike are in the LGBTQ community. The sense of community and mutual support in each neighborhood and community is impressive, and it was reflected in the performances we attended at the SummerWorks Festival.

What struck me most about SummerWorks was its inclusivity. Eighty percent of the performances had live sign language interpretation, and there was even a play called *Lady M* (an adaptation of *Macbeth*) where the leading actress was Deaf. Most of the lines were transcended into rhythmic and choreographic-like sign language expressions, making it visually intricate and understandable even for audience members like myself. There was also a high proportion of Deaf audience members, and the post-show discussions and responses outside the venue were lively. The festival's opening and closing ceremonies, as well as key events, also had at least two sign language interpreters providing simultaneous translation.

After this exceptional experience of reciprocal visits, we asked ourselves can and will this experience be replicated? We all agree that with different people and contexts involved in the future, the experience will inevitably be different. Therefore, documenting and sharing this experience will be meaningful for the project moving forward.

I'd like to share my observations in three topics: "Creative Residency," "Working Spaces," and "Relationships between Artists and Producers."