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The New Ethical Relations of Eco-Art within the Social Movements – Examples of *Plant-Matter NeoEden* Art Project (2008-2010) of the *Sa'owac* Village of *Amis* Tribe at Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

The *Plant-Matter NeoEden* has been worked on from an eco-art and cultural movement by Su-Chen Hsu and Chien-Ming Lu from 2006 to 2010. The project is beginning with the “Plants in adverse environments – Taiwan Series”, and also includes its sub-projects are their participation in the indigenous movement, such as “Internal Migrants”: Riverbank Vegetable Garden Plants in *Daluan* Village, “Tribe Was Born”: *Sa'owac niyaro* Was Born in a Vegetable Patch, and “Cultural Reconstruction: Material Cultural World of the Riverside Amis”.

The *Sao'wac* village is located the Dahan riverbank on the edge of metropolitan area in north Taiwan. In 2008, Hsu and Lu initiated an investigation on the agricultural environment for *Sao'wac*. In 2009, the village had faced compulsory evacuation by state apparatus. And they and residents went through a period of self-reconstruction. Now Hsu and Lu are working at the cross-cultural exchange that goes beyond the ethnic and social class restrictions. Artists/activists have employed a contemporary art style is no limitation on “media”, and they have expanded this channel of communication with the outside world in the form of: (1) mass media, (2) the power of writing, (3) social movements, and (4) artistic manifestations.

The village reconstruction and artistic creation both beyond the state apparatus, but they held 8 exhibitions in official gallery/museum in Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Melbourne and Beijing. Furthermore, the project has also got *The 8th Annual Taishin Arts Awards Winner for Visual Arts*. The creator has consolidated situated-knowledge and artistic method into social practice, their strategy is created a fresh

counter-attacking route for the indigenous movement and a new cooperation between the indigenous and the Han people in Taiwan. Last but not least, the project has re-opened a new ethical relationship between the country, the consortium, as well as the society in general.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Su-Chen Hsu is Visual Artist, Independent Curator, Honorary Chairperson of Taiwan Women's Art Association, and Independent Investigator of Sustainable Built Environment Research Center at the Chung Yuan Christian University.

Hsu has played active roles in several interdisciplinary and international collaborative art projects. Include the Taiwan-UK Artists Fellowships Programme in Digital Arts 2004; Women's Worlds 2005: 9th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women in Korea; Scotland's International Festival of Live Arts 2006; "Plant-Matter NeoEden Melbourne 2008" project at the Royal Botanic Garden Melbourne.

Now she is focusing on art projects are how to research on plants in adverse environments has uncovered evidence of plant migrations in Taiwan's island geography, and also provides issues connected with the historical/cultural evolution of aboriginal, colonial, immigrant groups. Another focal point is the feminization of Asian immigration in the wake of the rapid economic development that began in the 1970's.

Chien-Ming Lu is Ph.D. candidate of Institute of Design of Chung Yuan Christian University, and Visual Artist on the Eco-Art focusing on the community. He has tried to make sure that all knowledge development, professional technology, and social activities take place on the basis of three considerations, namely "community, village, and local subjective thinking," "taking the locale and community as the units of the overall representation of culture," and "integration of interdisciplinary manpower and knowledge." Lu currently use "social realization" as his primary method, and hope to establish and accumulate the "theory and practice" of future societal adaptation via collective learning in the form of social movements.