NSK 國家在台北的「Real Wince」

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國家的虛構

IRWIN 經由申請面談和發給護照的方式介入台灣，「台灣」這個在世界上尚未能夠以「國家」之名或具體形式現身的「國家」，無疑地，讓 NSK 這個計劃存在著一個特殊的思考空間；一方面台灣可能跟 NSK 一樣屬於「時間國度」，一種處於流變中的「準國家」（vice-state），另一方面「NSK」護照所提供的物件與身份，具體再現了台灣人的某種欲望，意即「第三身份」。

讓我們先看到第一個面向，NSK 在論者的閱讀中是一種藝術實踐，其中實踐的意義不只對藝術為真，同時這「藝術真實」的虛構（fictive）也碰觸到現實的界限，在這個界限上我們看到「國家」的其他可能與不可能，讓個體得以在既存國家體制外思考自己與國家的關係。NSK 作為時間國度的特質，也就表現在這潛在（virtual）的實踐與現實的界限（frontier）揉合在一起的不穩定性，潛在指的就是程序進行中發生於內在的動態思考，而界限則是這象徵性物件在功能上的曖昧性，所以，這流變的國度一方面以藝術行動作為社群連結基礎而不斷變動並分化其意義，並非以明確的領土（territory）界限來凝結其象徵。台灣雖然並非不是突然出現在世界歷史上的「地方」（*topos*），但在長期而複雜的殖民關係與後殖民關係下，即使擁有明確的領土與獨立的政體，在中國歷史脈絡與國際認可中，它的流變既離不開不可能的「獨立宣稱」，而國家的正名也不斷地困擾著台灣的政經發展方向，同樣地，對於台灣人而言，台灣作為國家的「感知」只能流放於時間的流變之中，無法在具體的地理空間中以「國家」再現。所以，當 IRWIN 進行該計劃時，其實是兩個時間國度的遭遇，但他們一個以虛構逼近國家認知的真實界限，提供的是「時間中的聚合和連結」，而另一個卻只能將所有的現實一次次地投入虛構的黑洞裡，NSK 不斷地改變其狀態，而台灣則不斷地被迫宣稱「維持現狀」。

另一方面，台灣人的身份認同問題一直交纏在「台灣」和「中國」之間，但這兩極化的操作從解嚴後開始，在超過二十年的藍綠鬥爭中，並沒有發生比較積極的對話，討論台灣定位的切實問題，反而看到政黨政治在某種極度焦慮的氛圍中，盡其可能地將社會資源吸納到選舉的運作上。也因此，伴隨著認同的不確定與社會的長時間分裂，「第三地」一直是台灣人擺脫焦慮的一種期待。在蔣介石撤退來台前，台灣人想往的「彼處」，主要是代表進步的日本或是代表祖國的中國，但兩造之間並未造成嚴重的社會分裂，也沒有所謂「第三地」的需求。但蔣介石來到台灣後，台灣卻變成了中華民國與人民共和國的「第三地」；這「第三地」在二十世紀五○年代的出現，是因為有兩個政體都宣稱中國是他們的土地，一是實體的中國，共產黨無疑地獲得了地理與象徵的同一性，但另一個則是觀念

與宣稱上的中國，換言之，象徵與地理之間的斷裂，為了彌補這斷裂，國民黨讓台灣成為物理與地理實體上的臨時性基地，純粹功能性或說象徵性的「第三地」。自此，這個純粹功能性與被強加沒有對應實體之象徵的台灣，以及生活在這土地上的人，就必須在對於政體的認同上「跨越」或「模糊」這矛盾。這形成了台灣人非常特殊的政治意識，一方面因為國家定位未明而不斷的政治鬥爭，讓台灣人總是活在唯名論的焦慮之中，但另一方面，台灣人也因為長期的曖昧經驗，因此「國家」的觀念相對淡薄，甚至為了逃離唯名論下的兩個國家之名，而總是基於「幸福」的理由移民第三地（通常在意識上不會把這第三地當作國家予以認同）。也因為這樣，NSK 的計劃在台灣會碰觸到極為怪異的關係，首先 NSK 護照本身對照的就是「國家認同」的問題，但台灣卻不是國家，或說潛在地是一種雙重國家，所以，NSK 護照並不會立即出現「批判」意涵，反倒貼近疊合到台灣的真實狀態。再則，NSK 護照挑起的是一種台灣人對於第三地的欲望以及該欲望的「憶現」（reminiscence），所以，雖然是一項藝術行動，但其中引起台灣 NSK 公民反應的，既不是藝術行動在虛擬與真實之間的政治性，意即特別對當代藝術進行思考，也不是以全球為尺度對國際政治關係進行關切，而大多純然地反應在一種所謂的「有趣」、「也很好」這一類的「逃逸」姿態。最後，基於現實的想望，回到確實的 IRWIN 的計劃上，鮮少有台灣人「當真」，進而嘗試進入虛構的實踐與認知，這種實證主義的態度主要建立在台灣人向來對於「安全性」的焦慮，並著眼在獲得效益的功能性取向上，所以很難從這一藝術行動出發，去挑戰現實的界限。當然，這也明確地反應出台灣政治一方面開放各種訊息、接受前衛的創新，但另一方面又維護著政治的威權性格。

易名術（The Operation of De-nomination）

我們經由 IRWIN 在台北的實踐，能夠比較清楚地看到這一藝術行動在台灣所呈現的另一種面貌，同時，也圍繞著這物件（護照）以及讓該物件合法化的程序（面談）上，看到台灣人民的存在狀態與政治認知，如何在與藝術行動的交會和對質上看到許多複雜的關係；但同時間，長期身陷於「維持現狀」下唯名論的不可能與政治的不可能的台灣，或許可以從 IRWIN（I'll win?）的 NSK 護照（物件）開啟另一個思考的可能，這個思考的可能就是以「雙關語」和「易名」的藝術性手法，一方面更深入對於這計劃的思考，另一方面重新看待台灣的可能性與多樣性。接續著上述分析，我們也面對著另一個藝術問題，也就是以虛構、擬真、挪用來逼視現實的界限和缺口，然而，這其中究竟是以甚麼樣的機制來發生作用、產生動態？

然而，在當代藝術中談論「易名術」就一定讓人想到杜象，因為杜象很早就經由這技術而一次次地出現關乎藝術的域外思考，而且 IRWIN 在成立之初即參照了杜象的「易名術」。杜象用蘿絲．塞拉維（Rrose Sélavy）作為其扮裝女性的名字，因為同音而轉向「情慾，即生命」的語意，讓象徵化的生命和物理性的性

別外貌之間出現了矛盾；但 IRWIN 挪用並植入的是這一個已經被「藝術」脈絡確認過的名字，就後來發展出的縮寫「R. IRWIN S.」(Rrose Irwin Sélavy) 來看的話，延續杜象的手法，就成了「Real Wince」，也就是因痛苦或尷尬而齜牙咧嘴（自嘲），和「情慾，即生命」似乎形成了另一次的反諷 (irony)，只是這反諷是共黨政權解體後新的政治「表情」；自從他們在紅場鋪設的黑十字，便一貫地以諧擬與自嘲的政治性發動各種行動。然而，這個對於杜象的參照，在藝術與政治的關係上卻和杜象有著極大的差異。杜象的「易名術」主要在文字發音的音義會導引出外於書寫字義的意涵，但該音義並不與字義形成對比或對立，而是構連出一種詩性縫隙，這縫隙便如同他在《大玻璃》中企圖以透明度造成的延遲，更近於《給予：1 瀑布、2 照明的煤油》中企圖通過門上孔洞製造第四空間；換言之，看到文字而進行的發音對他來說就是一種反諷的操作，發音將我們帶離字義並與字義之間建構出另一種關係，杜象式的「反諷」既近似於齊克果式反諷，卻又以詩性關係脫離並取代之間的邏輯關係，而不同於齊克果式的反諷；所以，我們可以說其政治性集中在觀念間的鬆脫與辯證，而不是歷史脈絡與社會脈絡中的政治問題，「物件」在作品中的生產性正因為它的無固定意義甚至無意義，而在兩種意義間製造出用想像轉折意義的「差距」(écart)，所以杜象式物件的必要性不在其視覺表現，而是將我們從觀念轉折中獲得自由必要的準確媒介。假如像阿多諾所言，藝術作品總是在完成的狀態下取消著過程，而轉化為另一物，一種以己的挪移 (déplacement en soi)，首先，在杜象的作為中都存在著「唯名論」的痕跡，但這「命名」(nommer) 並不像是時間性的斷裂，而是意識的移轉 (shift)，認知的懸置與模稜兩可，是時間性的流變。再則，在模稜兩可的兩層之間存在著一種陌生的轉喻關係，該轉喻關係自身就會生產出想像的空間，讓兩端所指稱的都變成為部分物件 (objet a)。

　　至於 IRWIN，同樣有著杜象式反諷的痕跡，但他們憑藉的卻不是字義與音義在觀念上的差距，而是象徵性視覺元素在觀念上的轉折；這個徵候是有趣而深刻的，一方面在冷戰時期共黨體制的意識型態操作下，所有的口號都與感官的形塑有關，另一方面，我們可以說幾乎所有視覺元素都被語言化，於是，象徵性視覺元素的意義轉折所造成的效果就包含著語言意義的轉折；再說，也因為視覺表現和語言都被高度予以政治化，意義轉折隨之成為工具性辯證法，意即為政治正確性服務的再生產，所以，IRWIN 相對於杜象，一方面因為政治經驗，更多地使用著象徵化的視覺元素作為意義的元素，另一方面，則同時為了迴避觀念的意識型態化，而藉此擴張物件製造差距的可能性，以確實的歷史經驗為參照來聚焦這些藝術行動的想像提示；而最後必須談到的是，IRWIN 行動和作品中的視覺元素，是以其象徵性型態與對這型態之擬造間的差距來造成意義的轉折，「型態」在他們的計劃中進入「時延」(duration) 的流變，於是，特定歷史象徵在這時延中出現了鬆脫轉義，如此地完成 IRWIN 政治藝術的獨特反諷。對杜象而言，「物」尚有其存於材料、存於日常中的本然特質，藉由創作可以對應到人的情慾和衝動，但對於 IRWIN 而言，「物」的本然特質已經被政治全面特性化，必須藉

由創作行動在這全面體制化的世界裡，利用反諷在歷史痕跡與意義建構間找到自由。前者的烏托邦在於隱世，而後者的烏托邦在於能夠更自由地與歷史對質。

　　反觀台灣，似乎還未能在我們的歷史發展中出現「Real Wince」的表情，因為當藝術面對政治時，或是藝術面對自身內部的否定性與衝突時，身陷於支持和反對的二元辯證中，無法藉由藝術的創造力擺脫意義的框限，無法轉出另一種產生反諷的意義與「差距」。我們似乎因為失落而沉重，儘管沉重有可能提供悲劇性的動力，但同時也有可能讓我們失去「信任」的力量而倦怠，在一昧的沉重和倦怠當中，抹除著我們的表情。然而，從杜象和 IRWIN 兩種出自反諷的不同政治性，我們試想是否可能經由藝術觀念與藝術實踐而開啟出另一種可能？從 2008 年到 2011 年的台灣當代藝術發展中，先後分別出現了動漫、微型感性、政治藝術、頓挫、科技藝術、生活美學等幾個重要議題，主要推動與消費的兩條軸線就是年輕藝術家與科技奇觀；動漫涉及的是對消費的提升或轉化，微型感性則是處理細微的日常存在感，科技藝術與生活美學相當程度是為了因應文化創意產業而獲得長足發展與重新闡釋。動漫藝術的邏輯仍然延續著商品的感性模式，強調愉悅和快感，科技藝術與生活美學則大多媚俗地回歸觀眾得以立即享受的感性，雖然微型感性企圖穿越所有生活可能的感知，跨越內在與社會的二分法、進行感性的差異化，但這樣的可能性卻仍在被接受之時迅速形式化，與消費體系結合；儘管其中與 IRWIN 最接近的方向是政治藝術，但在台灣由政治藝術與頓挫所構成的雙重辯證中，分別被功利地要求解決現實問題的效力，以及將政治問題的「迴避」和「缺席」視為一種台灣社會現實的產物、一種徵候。總合來看，反諷的不可能－－無論是杜象式或是 IRWIN 式的反諷－－主要因為差異化在市場的盲目收編下不再可能發生。於是，台灣在這期間的易名術大多集中在消費客體的形塑，儘管微型感性與頓挫在其操作中都有易名術的機制，但卻無法明確地拉出「微笑」。

第三地（The Third Place）

　　無法裂嘴嗤笑的原因，在於現實被緊緊地框在兩塊土地、兩個不同的歷史詮釋之間，並因為重商社會的實證論傾向，而更緊縮虛構與虛擬在物理空間中的實驗性。所以，IRWIN 的 NSK 計劃以受邀國際藝術團體的「身份」，而得以避開台灣社會普遍對於現實效力的檢驗，被暗示為一種國際藝術的前衛範例；也因為這個空隙，「第三地」的想像得以出現在這些參與了申請計劃的台灣人。這是一個在台灣自身當代藝術發展中一直無法被轉折出的方向，意味的就是一種壓抑，這普遍期望的壓抑必須經由外來的「特殊狀況」才有可能獲得解放，有趣的是對第三地欲望的解放條件就是台灣特有的壓抑形式，這種迴路在台灣形成了極為綿密的動態結構。然而，這個「第三地」的想像究竟為何？與其他地區的人面對 NSK 護照的差異又可以生產出何種意義？從 IRWIN 的 NSK 護照在薩拉耶佛的反應來看，這「時間國度」的護照因為被使用而得以穿越國界的事實，一方面充

份顯示國家僅專注在於檢查護照的「偽造」，但無法立即判斷一種「非典」國家的護照合法性，另一方面，NSK 護照在這些人身上成為一種藝術實踐對現實的滲透；然而，在倫敦主要針對在英國的非洲族裔進行申請的訪談，呈現出的狀況又完全不同，大多數抱持著來確認 NSK 護照是否真是可供使用的護照，處在一種現實考量，卻又對於毫無依據的想像抱持強烈期待的矛盾狀態裡；但在柏林的狀況，可能因為參與者大多為藝術工作者，所以賦予這行動非常明確的位置，這位置是雙重的，一邊是明確地界定 NSK 護照是一種藝術計劃，另一邊則是肯定它作為一種足以令人反思的虛構。當然上述描述並不足以被當作對紀錄影像的細緻分析，但這些特徵主要是從這些行為記錄中獲取，並得以提供我們思考台灣狀態的參照。如果我們參照 Badiou 的說法將「地方」（ topos）回溯為「主體間性」（inter-subjectivity）來看待，那麼，NSK 護照在訪談的過程中就映射出了不同的「世界」：在柏林的事例中，呈現出來的是極為精確的感性分享下所表現出來對藝術的積極性，這種明確性通常出自藝術思考得以影響社會事務的社會文化條件，表現為「超有機」（super-organic）世界；倫敦的事例中則是對某種現實烏托邦的期待，並反映著對另一個安居之處的需要與獲取現實保證的強烈意志，則反映出一種「無家」（un-homely）世界；至於薩拉耶佛的事例，在理性上清楚地將其界定為無合法性的護照，但因為特殊的歷史情勢，而促使他們在嘗試的實踐中改變了這護照的可能性，是一種充滿偶發事件與決斷的「混沌」（chaotic）世界。

　　雖然台灣的申辦受訪者也知道這是一個雙年展的藝術項目，但由於台灣少有藝術思考影響社會事務的經驗，所以，受訪者很少會從這個計劃出發，單純地將這護照視為一種可能性的選擇；基本上大多台灣人還是無法肯認這虛構的現實可能性，儘管柏林受訪者也確認那是一種非現實，但卻可以直接地將其當作一種可能的理想或潛在的思維。但在無明確基礎（undetermined fundament）的限定下，既非單一組織系統的有機體，也無法構成連結個體化組織的超有機，台灣人卻可能提出更為基進而根本的問題，例如世界公民和世界一家、國家形式的必要性、非單一國家認同、否定政治的意義等等，雖然這些問題都可以在二十世紀後半與二十一世紀找到許多理論參照，但這些問題在陳述行為中卻不是根植於歷史事實的理念辯證，而是烏托邦幻見（utopian phantasm）與恐懼症（phobia）所引發的各種「徵候」。對國家與政治的質疑主要來自於，一方面給出指令的體制一直無法確認其國家身份，另一方面為了這般解離的社會能夠聚合，往往憑藉著對媒體的操作並將人民參與政治的可能性進行限縮，人民權力難以與政府對話時，國家對人民只會單向地進行制約式管理，就是上述身份未明與隔離人民權力的雙重狀態使得人民對於「治理」抱持不信任、不接觸、不參與；但這種反動的政治冷感並無法保障個體的獨立，相對地，經由媒體對人民的智能設定所傳遞的大量粗糙訊息，恐怕會讓人民在消費刺激下變得更無知。

　　政黨利用國家定位與身分認同的模糊，對社會資源進行沒有節制的剝削，造成人民普遍不信任政治以及「自我愚民」的封閉態度。事實上，這就是一種並非經由常態性施壓與建立共識而完成的「馴化」，由於在台灣的解嚴歷程裡，「理性

化」與「法治化」是非常珍貴的經驗，如何反抗這種經由法治建立的宰制對台灣人來說是極為困難的。然而，就社會權利與政治權力而言，台灣的民主是一種有序的混沌狀態，人民必須接受政效不彰的治理，然而社會的混亂來自於政治操作的統治倫理的無法改變，所以，跟前南斯拉夫瓦解後的混沌世界並不一樣，換言之，保障統治階級利益的法治社會並不存在空隙，在加上是島國，可能以 NSK 護照滲透或闖關是台灣人很難想像的。NSK 護照給出的第一個面向是現實上的「無效」、「無利害」和「無意識型態」，所以，台灣人可以卸下過往面對政治的壓力和逃避，而能輕鬆地重新面對另一種思考政治的方式，即使是在現實上不可能的狀況下，但能夠用更具創造力、愉悅的方式面對政治思考，我認為就是一種突破了。

這裡面確實已經讓某種「杜象效應」（Duchamp effect）或「R. Irwin S 效應」（R. Irwin S effect）發酵了，也為台灣人開啟一個願意談論並思考政治的時刻與空間，這便是 NSK 護照在台北展開的另一個面向。台灣在其政治的現代化進程上，一直以歐美「先進」國家做為典範指標，但 NSK 護照對於安穩地置身於國際社會的先進國家來說，除了作為一種批判性觀念的推演和思考之外，其實很難在經驗上出現尖銳的對質；因為「自由穿越」的權利大小必須視護照發照國在國際社會的權力來決定，所以，「護照」決定著個體在國際社會中的自由，但同時間也意味著由它來標定國界、區別人在國際空間裡的自由。所以，在台灣確實也因為國家定位的雙重性而存在著「無家」世界的層次，一種對於「第三地」的強烈渴望，但又因為理性的馴化，這樣的慾望與現實認知之間的拉扯，而將自身的無家世界移轉為面對藝術思考上的開放性與愉悅上：如微型國家、集體虛擬、自我認定、相遇（rencontre）、遊戲、複數認同。

NSK 作為一個類國家的縮寫，同時語帶雙關地隱藏著「新斯洛凡尼亞藝術」，這個被 IRWIN 宣稱為時間國度的地方（topos），首先是一種取消國界的國家形式；再則，就是以藝術之名及其雙關語來擬造國家的想像；但最後，筆者自己期待的就是這想像並非是一種與現實保持二分（antinomian）關係的範疇，而是要介入現實的想像，讓想像造成現實自身出現「雙關語」，是一種確切的觀念和語言的行動。新自由主義的民主意識型態形構了一個全面相對主義的世界，越來越多的社會區塊都以現實的權力鬥爭作為最後的決斷，而個體與個體之間的關係被越來越多的各種消費商品所填充，溝通語言也被制約在幾個被壟斷的作業平台上，除了能夠轉化為商品的「想像」可以倖免於難之外，「想像」被大大地限縮，而無法在連結現實時轉化為「潛在」（virtual）之力。杜象的語意在於將物件的語言挪移為藝術的語意，而 IRWIN 則是將視覺與物件的語意挪移為政治性的語意，逃離視網膜、進入第四空間並非後來大量生產的「語言化」的藝術商品，而是要創造觀念的空間、創造少數而陌生的語言。儘管台灣人能夠在藝術遊戲中表現開放與多樣性，但我們對解放的期許往往是他治的，例如，近來因為全球化的進階發展，許多地區與國家紛紛取消原本對台灣的限制，這或許會讓台灣人進入到另一個階段的國際社會，但必要注意的是這種相對自由的許可，或許將取消

杜象與 IRWIN 打開的想像空隙與潛在運動。

NSK in Taipei: Real Wince

Huang Chien-Hung

Imaginary Country

The Slovenian art group IRWIN, part of the larger art collective and virtual state called NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst), rode into Taiwan on its reputation for taking applications, conducting interviews and issuing passports. Comparing this to the fact that Taiwan cannot be called a concrete national entity, or at least cannot be represented as such in the world, and we see that NSK existed for a while in a unique conceptual space, suggesting parallels between the two that are worth exploring. It could be said that Taiwan is similarly a quasi-state in flux, or a "state in time" as NSK fashions itself, and furthermore the identity, if not the actual document, conferred by an NSK passport embodies a common Taiwanese desire to adopt a third identity beyond "Chinese" or "Taiwanese."

Although NSK is generally interpreted as an art practice, its significance extends beyond art and imaginative construction, approaching real nationhood. NSK's frontier with reality reveals alternative notions of nation—both possible and impossible—and suggest relationships between the individual and state that are beyond existing systems. As a state in time, NSK manifests instability by juxtaposing an art practice, which operates via virtuality and deploys dynamic imaginative states, with an operation that verges on reality, namely the issuing of an NSK passport, which is a symbolic document with ambiguous function. NSK uses art strategies to create a nation that can change its own significance, has a fluid community base, and eschews symbolizing any specific territorial borders. Comparatively, Taiwan has not been conjured out of the imagination; it has, following its long and complex colonial and post-colonial relationships, a definite territory and a genuine and independent government. Also unlike NSK, Taiwan possesses a very real history of political and economic development, and this has been continually hindered by a lack of international recognition and the impossibility of declaring independence within the historical context of China. Nonetheless, we can still draw parallels, as the Taiwanese people are haunted by the perception that their country is merely floating somewhere in time, and cannot be represented as a country existing in a real place. It is for these reasons that IRWIN's deployment of its art practice in Taiwan constituted a meeting of two states in time: NSK, which approaches the limit of national recognition

through artistic imagination and provides an opportunity for its citizens to occasionally come together; and Taiwan, which has had no choice but to toss the reality of its existence into an imaginary black hole. While NSK is continually in flux, Taiwan is forever forced to maintain the status quo.

Since martial law ended in 1987, identity in Taiwan has been an *either/or* concept, with China and Taiwan representing the two poles. Struggles between Taiwan's Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) over the last twenty years have never been productive, nor have they resulted in a feasible position for Taiwan as a political entity. Rather, each party has exploited Taiwan's extremely tense political atmosphere to create support for their election campaigns. Due to feelings of indeterminate identity and long-term polarization, the expectation of a third place, perhaps symbolizing a refuge or escape, arose in Taiwanese society to shake off anxiety. Prior to Chiang Kai-shek's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, alternatives places in the Taiwanese popular imagination were Japan, representing progress, and China, representing an ancestral home. Having these alternatives, however, did not divide society, nor did the need for a third place as a destination for refuge arise. Furthermore, Taiwan itself became a third place after Chiang Kai-shek's arrival, as it was then squeezed between two political entities, namely the communist party's People's Republic of China and the KMT's Republic of China. It was in the 1950s that Taiwan was relegated to third place status as both political entities claimed all of China as their territory: the first, the PRC, certainly achieved symbolic and geographic unity; but the ROC was just a China based on ideas and claims. In other words, the KMT made Taiwan their temporary physical base for operations merely to suture the tear in what is normally the seamless integration of the symbolic and geographic. Taiwan under these conditions, as a purely practical choice and alternative, or third, place, has been forced to embrace its symbolic representation from a geographic distance, and for many years now, people who make their lives in Taiwan have felt compelled to either gloss over or obfuscate this contradiction of not having a governmental identity. Unresolved position and continual political struggle have not only formed the unique political consciousness of Taiwanese people, but also made life one of anxiety over a name. This long-term ambiguity has also resulted in a weakened concept of nation, even to the extent that people are willing to abandon both political entities (PRC and ROC) to find refuge from anxiety in various third place—even though these places rarely confer a sense of national identity. For these reasons, when NSK came to Taiwan, an extremely unique relationship between the two became evident. First of all, the NSK passport raised national identity issues because Taiwan is not a country proper (perhaps it is a double country). The NSK

passport did not immediately appear to be a critique, but rather seemed to overlap with Taiwan's situation, thus provoking desire for a third place or reminiscence of that desire in the people of Taiwan. As an art action, NSK did arouse public response in Taiwan, but it was not regarded as politics floating between the real and imaginary, and therefore we could say it was not regarded as contemporary art as such, nor as a global measurement of Taiwan's international political relations. Most people simply offered evasive assessments of the NSK project, such as "interesting" or "very good." Finally, on account of their real concerns and pragmatism based in anxiety over safety and beneficial results, Taiwanese people for the most part did not want to play NSK's passport game, and so it was very hard for the NSK passport project to challenge the frontiers of Taiwanese reality. Of course this situation reflects a temperament that wishes to uphold political authority along with an open political atmosphere and acceptance of avant-garde art.

An Operation of (De)nomination

Taking a closer look at IRWIN's art practice in Taipei, specifically the process of issuing an NSK passport after an interview, we get a clearer picture of the circumstances of life in Taiwan, the political awareness of the Taiwanese people, and complex interactions between art and life. Following such a long period of passively accepting the political status quo and the impossibility of having a name, the arrival of IRWIN (I'll win?) and the NSK passport may have suggested new ways of thinking. This might have been done by wordplay or (de)nomination, and would take IRWIN's art to another level while encouraging another look at the diversity and possibilities of Taiwan. Continuing with this analysis, however, we come to another question: When used to look more closely at gaps in reality and its frontier, what kind of mechanisms are imagination, simulation and appropriation for producing social action and trends?

Discussing name changing in contemporary art circles will no doubt call to mind Marcel Duchamp, as long ago he used the idea to push past the boundaries of art. When establishing their group, IRWIN made reference to Duchamp's self-adopted feminine pseudonym Rrose Sélavy. Rrose Sélavy both suggests that love is a symbol for life—since it sounds like *eros, c'est la vie*—and is also a figuration for the physical appearance of gender, and thus a *mise en abime* appears between the two. IRWIN's appropriation or grafting of Duchamp's pseudonym took the form of Rrose Irwin Sélavy and was later shortened to R IRWIN S, which is pronounced as *real wince*. Real wince, with its self-mocking pain and discomfort, stands in ironical contrast to eros, c'est la vie, and following the fall of the communist party, irony

became a new and political means of expression in IRWIN's home of Slovenia. Since completing their 1992 performance/painting *Black Square on Red Square Guerrilla Action*, IRWIN has continually staged various art actions based on political parody. This connection between art and politics, however, is extremely different from a reference to Duchamp, as his pseudonym relied upon being spoken to extend its meaning beyond the written word. This difference, however, did not form a contrasting or oppositional relationship with the written name, but rather constructed a poetic fissure. This fissure is similar to attempts in his other works, such as the deferral created by transparency in *The Large Glass*, or even his attempt to construct a fourth dimension with *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas . . .*
According to Duchamp, effecting the pronunciation of written words is an ironic manipulation as it leads us away from their meaning, thus constructing a different relationship between pronunciation and meaning. Duchamp used an irony similar to Søren Kierkegaard's, but Duchamp replaced logic with poetry. So we could say that Duchamp's ideological focus was on a conceptual dialectic rather than political issues embedded in social or historical contexts. Duchamp's work produces its significance through an imaginative transition over a gap between two unstable meanings, or even between meaning and no meaning. In this way, the importance of the Duchampian does not lie in visual expression, but rather as a precision medium liberating us from transitions. As Theodor Adorno put it, when the work of art is finished the process is always erased and the transformation of one thing into another, or *deplacement en soi*, is complete. In Duchamp's case however, the traces of nominalism in his work do not constitute a clean break between the process of creation and finished artwork, but rather a shift in consciousness, suspension of cognition and ambiguity, and temporal fluidity. Furthermore, there exists a strange metonymic relationship in the ambiguity which produces imaginative space, so that what is referred to by the two poles becomes unattainable desire (objet a).

In IRWIN's case there are also traces of this Duchampian irony, but they don't rely on conceptual gaps between words and their meanings, but rather on conceptual transitions in symbolic visual elements. The signs they deploy are interesting if not profound: communist slogans used for ideological manipulation during the Cold War were associated with sensory forms, thus rendering almost all visual elements in a spoken language. Therefore, there was a change in the meaning of language among the effects produced by inflecting the meaning of symbolic visual elements, and also because visual expression and language had been highly politicized, shifts in meaning became instrumental in dialectics, and meaning was reproduced in the service of the political correctness of the time. So in contrast to Duchamp, IRWIN tends to use

symbolic visual elements to serve as meaning elements due to their political experience in the Cold War Balkans. To avoid having their concepts linked to ideologies, IRWIN also expands the possible gaps produced by their objects, using references to actual historical experience as a means of focusing image cues in their art actions. Finally, IRWIN uses visual elements to construct meaning transformations in the gap between symbolic morphology and what this morphology produces. Morphology in IRWIN 's projects has various durations, and therefore designated historical symbols manifest loose meaning transfers for these durations and complete the unique irony in IRWIN's political art. For Duchamp, things still had their material existence, which was stored in the essential nature of the everyday and could be made to correspond with our desires and impulses through art. For IRWIN the essential nature of a thing has always been tied to its political specificity, and this nature is released through art by deploying irony on historic constructs existing in a systematized world. Duchamp's utopia lay in a hidden world, while IRWIN's lay in the ability to more freely confront history.

It seems Taiwan has yet to express the emotion *real wince,* which may be because the contemporary art world becomes mired in a dialog that can only express support or opposition when addressing politics or its own inner conflicts and negativity. The power of creativity cannot dismantle this framework, nor can it generate a different significance for the production of irony or a gap. It seems we Taiwanese are too serious due to certain losses, and even if these losses provide material for affecting tragedy, they also have weakened our faith, worn away our desire to express our feelings, and left us weary and apathetic. Nonetheless, after encountering Duchamp and IRWIN and their irony driven politics, we may wonder if it is possible for Taiwan to find a way out through art. From 2008 to 2010 a variety of interesting themes, formats and materials appeared one after another in the Taiwanese art world, including animation, micro-sensible art, political art, frustration art, new media art and lifestyle aesthetics. These have all been produced and consumed by the younger generation of artists and backed by eye-catching new technologies. Animation has promoted the consumption of art and even transformed the manner in which art is consumed. Micro-sensible art magnifies subtle perceptions of ordinary events. New media art and lifestyle aesthetics, reinterpreted by cultural creative industries, have grown by leaps and bounds. Animation art still maintains its commercial appeal by emphasizing cheerful entertainment. Like kitsch, new media art and lifestyle aesthetics mostly pander to popular taste and are easy to enjoy. Although micro-sensible art attempts to encompass every possible perception in both internal and social realms, as well as create gaps in these various perceptions, perceptions are

customized rapidly and combine with commercial systems. Among these new developments, the dialectic formed by political art and frustration art is closest in spirit to IRWIN's practice, but the former is required by Taiwanese utilitarianism to solve actual problems, and the latter regards the evasion of political problems as a symptom of Taiwanese society. The impossibility of irony in Taiwan, regardless if it is the type deployed by Duchamp or IRWIN, is due mainly to the impossibility of gaps arising in an art marketplace that blindly assimilates difference, and in 2008 to 2010 period of Taiwanese art development, (de)nomination was only deployed to package artwork. Although artists making micro-sensible and frustration art played word games, their works certainly didn't produce the same kind of smile.

The Third Place

This different smile is the product of being hemmed in by China and Taiwan, specifically their divergent interpretations of history, as well as by the constraints that a consumer society's positivist tendencies place on imaginative projects encroaching on reality. Under the cover of its status as an invited, avant-garde, international art group, IRWIN avoided Taiwanese society's expectation that it might actually be here to solve political problems with its NSK passport. This avant-garde status actually allowed locals applying for NSK passports to safely fantasize about a third place, thus making IRWIN's visit an inevitable turning point in the development of contemporary Taiwanese art. I am suggesting that the commonly repressed desire for a third place among Taiwanese was released by IRWIN, but putting it out into the open this way required intervention from abroad. It is interesting to note that this unique situation of repression in Taiwan was a necessary precondition for IRWIN's release of third-place desire, forming a circuit with an extremely dense dynamic structure. We might ask, however, what were the characteristics of this third place imagery? Compared to other regions, what special significance was generated by the Taiwanese reaction to the NSK passport program?

People from the city of Sarajevo reported being able to use the NSK passport to cross national borders, which meant the border agents only focus on forgeries or were unable to identify illegal passports from atypical countries. Carried by these Sarajevo residents, the NSK passport became an art practice that permeated reality. At NSK passport interviews in London, which were primarily conducted with African visitors, most interviewees wanted to know if NSK could actually provide a usable passport. So in London there was air of reality about the project that was based on nothing, and applicants seemed to hold out hopes in this conflicted state of mind. In Berlin, perhaps

since most of the participants were artists, the position of the NSK project was extremely clear: it was an art project intended to make people think. Of course the descriptions I have provided cannot be considered careful analyses of NSK project documentary videos, but these features are present in the videos and provide some interesting contrasts to how the project was perceived in Taiwan. Referring to Alain Badiou's view of inter-subjectivity with topos, we see that the NSK passport interview process casts light on different worlds. In Berlin, for example, we see participants' enthusiasm for art and an extremely precise shared perception. This kind of perception generally arises from the ability of art concepts to permeate sociocultural conditions, and is a manifestation of a super-organic world. London participants expressed an intense desire for assurances that the passport was genuine and were anticipating some kind of real utopia, which reflected their need for a place to settle down and was a manifestation of their un-homely world. Sarajevo participants, knowing the NSK passport was not valid, under unique historical circumstances, were impelled to alter the possibilities of this document by trying to actually use it, thus manifesting a chaotic world with a decision full of contingencies.

Taiwanese participants applying for an NSK passport knew that it was part of a biennial art exhibition, but few thought it was a viable choice for an artwork, as they had little experience with art concepts permeating sociocultural conditions. Basically, most Taiwanese people still cannot recognize the possibility of fabricated reality. Although participants in Berlin acknowledged that the passport was not real, they directly considered it to be a possible ideal or virtual concept. In contrast, Taiwanese people, because of limitations caused by an undetermined foundation—Taiwan is neither an independent organic entity, nor part of a unified, super-organic conception—were inclined to raise more radically fundamental questions when confronted with NSK's program. Questions raised were related to world citizenship, one-world concepts, the necessity of the state, multiple national identities and the possible negation of the significance of politics. While many references to these questions can be found in late twentieth and twenty-first century theory, they are not embedded in the historical fact of Taiwan's conceptual dialectic, but rather are signs of utopian fantasies or phobias. Questions related to the concept of state or politics mostly come from the fact that entities issuing directives never acknowledge Taiwan's national identity, and also that media manipulation and minimizing possible participation in politics is often required to bind dissociated Taiwanese society together. When it is difficult for a people to enter into dialog with their government, power is unidirectional and the country only supervises citizens. When the status of a nation is unclear and there is distance between the government and its people, citizens

cannot contact or trust those who govern. Nonetheless, frigid reactions to politics cannot ensure independence, and torrents of information transmitted by the media based on their supposition of the people's level of intelligence may conspire with consumer culture to make people even more ignorant.

Political parties manipulate the opacity of national and personal identities to make unethical use of society's resources, such that citizens no longer trust politics and have adopted self-obscurantist, closed-minded attitudes. This is actually a domesticating strategy that circumvents the necessity of consensus building or typical persuasion. In the process of dismantling marital law mechanisms in Taiwan, establishing rationality and rule of law were both extremely valuable undertakings, and strategizing ways to overcome domination was very difficult for the Taiwanese people. In terms of individual rights and political authority, however, Taiwanese democracy is a kind of orderly chaos, where the people must accept a government which lacks apparent efficiency, and disorder which arises from the intractability of political manipulation. In this way Taiwan's transition differs from the chaos that overtook the region that was Yugoslavia after it dissolved. That is to say, Taiwanese society, which is governed by law that safeguards the interests of the ruling class, does not afford room for so much flexibility; and this, along with the fact that Taiwan is an island nation, contributed to the difficulty people had imagining actually using the NSK passport to cross Taiwan's borders. Because null and void, dispensable or a-political were the impressions given by the NSK passport, Taiwanese people felt interacting with this artwork was an opportunity to release political pressure or address politics in a more lighthearted fashion. Since the situation proposed by NSK's passport was wholly impossible, people felt free to think about politics in ways that were more creative and carefree, and I think this was not only the main significance of the NSK passport in Taiwan, but also a breakthrough for Taiwanese society.

To some extent, this breakthrough has made it possible for people in Taiwan to discuss current political issues, which is yet another new significance for the NSK passport. While Taiwan has consistently modeled its modernization on developed nations in North America and Europe, it differs from them with respect to the stability of its identity in international society. Introduced into regions where secure identity is the norm, the NSK passport is more likely to encourage critical thinking rather than induce experiences of acute confrontation. A passport determines an individual's freedom to move through international society, and passports issued by more powerful countries accord more freedom in passing over borders. Due to Taiwan's dual identity, which is really no national identity in global circles, an intense desire

for a third place has arisen among its people. This desire, however, stands in direct opposition to what people have been trained to believe is reasonable under the given circumstances, so people turn to art for escape and amusement, or even to collective fictions, casual encounters, self affirmation, games, multiple identities or the idea of a micro state.

"NSK" looks as if it could be the name of a nation, yet bearing double meaning, is also an acronym for *Neue Slowenische Kunst* (new Slovenian art). IRWIN invokes the topos "state in time" in defining NSK, creating a nation that has done away with national borders, as well as an image of a nation constructed both in the name of art, and with the name *art*. Finally, I hope this image will not remain separate from, but rather will intervene on reality, such that the image manifests a double meaning in reality, becoming a precise concept and language operation. Neoliberal ideology has constructed a world of complete relativism in which the result of struggles between regional communities are the last word, relationships between individuals are increasingly negotiated through consumer products, and interaction among individuals is restricted and monopolized. In a world like this, imagination only survives when it is commodified, and even then is severely restricted because it cannot become latent power when manifested in reality. Duchamp's semantic system relied on appropriating the language of objects to speak about art, and IRWIN appropriates the language of objects and visual language to create political language. Neither are retinal art, but rather jump into the fourth dimension, and so produce conceptual space and rarefied languages instead of a large quantity of easily digested commodity. Although people in Taiwan can be open-minded and present a wide range of responses to art games, we still allow our liberation to be governed by others. For example, many regions and countries lifted restrictions on Taiwanese travelers after advances due to globalization. This may signal a new phase for Taiwan in the international community, but this relative freedom to travel may cancel out the imagination that IRWIN and Duchamp have inspired in Taiwan.