

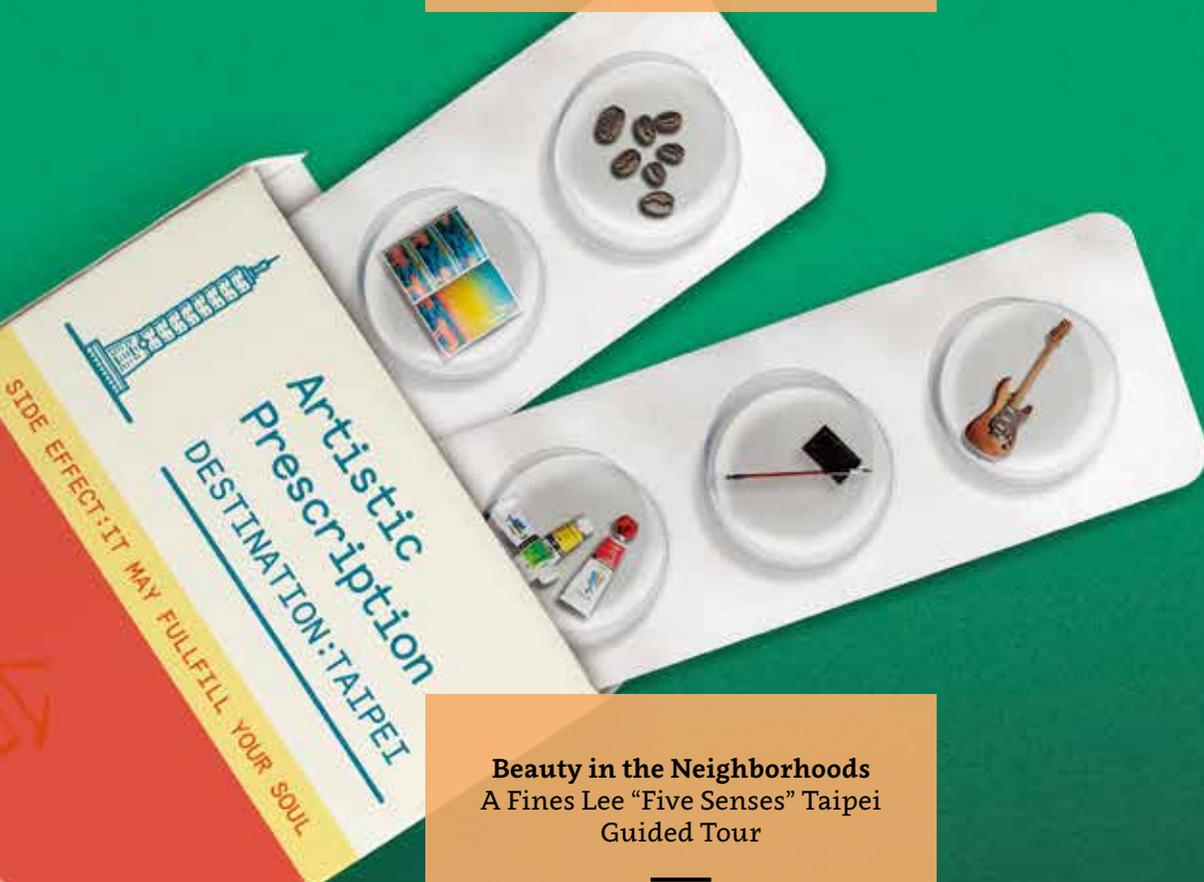
# TAIPEI 台北

STORIES FROM THE CAPITAL

AUTUMN 2019

| VOL.17

## TAIPEI'S ARTFUL AUTUMN



### **Beauty in the Neighborhoods**

A Fines Lee "Five Senses" Taipei  
Guided Tour

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### **Five Places to Feel the Music** in Taipei

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**The Faithful Gourmand**  
Enjoying Taiwanese Brunch at  
Dadaocheng Cisheng Temple

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**Not Another Hipster Café**  
Taipei's Old-School Coffee Shops

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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## Notes from a Taipei Autumn

Taipei's arts scene is getting a lot of attention these days, not only in Asia, but throughout the world. In this autumn issue of *TAIPEI*, we invite the editor of *The Big Issue Taiwan*, a monthly street newspaper covering the arts and a wide variety of other topics, to give us a tour of the Taiwan capital from the standpoint of the five senses — hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste.

Autumn is a time full of artistic events in Taipei. One of those is *Nuit Blanche*, an annual all-night arts festival, and we've got your sneak peek at the festivities before they begin. Another reason to celebrate is the fact that Taipei recently became the cover story of international magazine *Flaneur*, which turns every issue into a deep-dive exploration of a city street. We have a chat with *Flaneur*'s editor about the beauty to be found throughout the streets of Taipei.

Also featured in our autumn issue is an exploration of Taipei's vibrant music scene, exciting live music clubs and underground dives, and interviews with artists whose specialties range from calligraphy to illustration and dance to find out what Taipei looks like through their unique lenses. Then, there is a piece on Taipei's old-school cafés, places that keep to the old ways in terms of decoration, service, style, and atmosphere, that give you a chance to sit, relax, sip on a cup of aromatic coffee, and experience what Taipei was like in decades gone by.

When it comes to culture, we've got two of the biggest festivals of the autumn season covered — Memorial Ceremony for Confucius and the Qingshan King Rituals, bringing you features on ancient temple rituals and more.

Autumn truly is an artful time in the capital, a place where artists young and old find inspiration in the metropolis' ever-changing facade and myriad traditions kept alive for centuries. There's never a bad time to visit Taipei, but when the weather cools and the culture flows, autumn might just be the best season of all to see what the city has to offer.

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# Calendar of Good Times

SEPTEMBER

## Now - 10/27

### 2019 Taipei Jazz Festival

The Taipei Jazz Festival (台北爵士音樂節) takes "Swing" as its theme this year and has invited jazz stars including Jun Kung (蔡碩良), Zhang Wei Zhi (張為智) and the Japanese jazz band the H ZETTRIO to perform. In a continuing tradition, live shows will be presented in outdoor venues like Zhongcheng Park (忠誠公園), Songshan Cultural and Creative Park (松山文創園區) and Daan Park (大安森林公園). Coupled with an open jam, lectures and workshops, fans can experience full-scale jazz energy and swing from the inside out. For more information, please consult the official website: [jazz.festival.taipei/2019](http://jazz.festival.taipei/2019)



## 10/1 - 10/30

### 2019 Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts

Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts (大稻埕國際藝術節) is dedicated to the preservation of culture and arts in Tua-Tiu-Tiann, also known as Dadaocheng. This year the bold concept of "Street Co-exhibition" has been proposed for the first time. Feature performances have been planned to display the present state of Dadaocheng. The major event "Time Machine Theater—1920's Costume Parade" connects with the spirit of the Roaring 20s. "Street Gathering" brings to life local originality and special characteristics. The "Dadaocheng and the World" and "Creative Talk" forum series of the festival will discuss various cultural issues and topics. For more information, please visit the official website: [www.tttifa.com](http://www.tttifa.com)

OCTOBER

## 10/5 - 10/6

### 2019 Nuit Blanche Taipei

Entering its fourth year, Nuit Blanche Taipei selects Neihu (內湖) and Dazhi (大直), two relatively new districts in Taipei, as the stages to present the duality of Taipei. While the main theme is "double-sided ballet," the opening ceremony on October 5 has invited new media artists and Anarchy Dance Theater and HH to attend, rendering Taipei as a nighttime wall-less art museum, stage, and street theater! There will be more than 20 shows and over 18 nocturnal art exhibits. For details, please visit the official website: [nuitblanchetaipei.info](http://nuitblanchetaipei.info)



## 9/21 - 10/6

### Taipei Poetry Festival

With "The Woodpecker on the Wall" as its theme, the Taipei Poetry Festival (台北詩歌節) employs the imagery of a "wall" to convey the notion of a boundary, yet also signifying the inspiring rise of the LGBTQ community in Taiwan. The festival invites Dan Osano, an openly gay Japanese tanka singer, to be the city's poet-in-residence and to talk out about how to express a different voice in a society like a woodpecker chipping away at the wall bit by bit. German poet Wolf Biermann will appear at the festival as well. His poetry and musical voice not only draw on the heartstrings but also exhilarate his audience. For more information, please visit the official website: [poetryfestival.taipei/2019/](http://poetryfestival.taipei/2019/)





## 10/26 Fun Guandu

Based in the Guandu neighborhood, Fun Guandu (關熱關渡節) is organized with an aim of enforcing community consciousness and promoting local culture as well as art education. This year, the true local culture will be on full display. On the day of activity, a parade will be held on Zhixing Road (知行路) in Beitou. In the plaza of Guandu Riverbank Park (關渡水岸公園), there will be a market fair all day long so that visitors can fully enjoy the beauty of Guandu.

## 10/31 - 11/4

### 2019 Taipei Hot Spring Festival

This year, Taipei Hot Spring Festival (台北溫泉季) will be held at MRT Xinbeitou station (新北投捷運站), Qixing Park (七星公園), and Beitou Park (北投公園). On the eve of October 31, a singing contest will kick off the opening ceremony. On the following day, an open-air cinema will be held for the public to enjoy. Major events of the festival, including the clash between the mikoshi, or scared palanquin, and the performance of the Ming Hua Yuan Arts & Cultural Group (明華園) will take place on November 2. Furthermore, a series of activities such as the yukata festival, live music event and a charity market are all awaiting hot spring lovers who will come to experience the exciting Taipei hot spring culture.



## 11/22 - 12/8

### 2019 Shilin Residence Chrysanthemum Show

With "Happiness in Chrysanthemum" as its main theme, the Shilin Residence Chrysanthemum Show (士林官邸菊展) will present a graceful visual and auditory feast with a mixture of Da-Li chrysanthemums (大立菊), designer chrysanthemums, and various other kinds of chrysanthemum flowers. The opening ceremony on November 22 will be led by an acapella musical performance. During the exhibition period, a series of discounts will be offered by shops around the residence in Shilin. In addition, there will be shows featuring classical music and indigenous folk songs, welcoming visitors to enjoy the melodious sounds while flower viewing during Taipei's amazing autumn season.

## 10/26

### 2019 Taiwan LGBT Pride Parade

As Taiwan recently became the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage in 2019, the LGBT parade this year will be an unprecedented celebration. On October 26 the parade will take place with its main theme, "Together, Make Taiwan Better," along with a fair comprised of over a hundred booths in the Taipei City Hall Square, the starting point of the parade. The route will meander through various Taipei attractions, and the parade will end at the rainbow stage on Ketagalan Boulevard (凱達格蘭大道) to celebrate the very first year of same-sex marriage in Taiwan. For more information, please check the official website: [www.taiwanpride.lgbt](http://www.taiwanpride.lgbt)





## Beauty in the Neighborhoods: A Fines Lee “Five Senses” Taipei Guided Tour

WORDS BY

Rick Charette

PHOTOS BY

Yenyi Lin, *Taiwan Scene*, Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government, Taipei Art Book Fair

Let's take a themed grand tour of Taipei using all five senses to the fullest — hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste — with your host for the day, the publisher of the acclaimed magazine *The Big Issue Taiwan* Fines Lee.



Fines Lee (李取中) is a man with a vision. And to make that vision a reality, he's a man on a mission.

His is a name equally respected within the local publishing community, the local community of charitable enterprises, and the local arts and design circle. And as days go by, with ever more members of the Taipei and larger Taiwan community uplifted by his efforts, it is a name that is becoming synonymous with the concept of “good citizen, good neighbor.”

Recently *TAIPEI* magazine sat down for a chat with Lee at the SUN SUN Museum (森3 SUN SUN Museum), located near MRT Nanjing Fuxing Station (捷運南京復興站). Topics covered: His vision. His mission. The community building that is at the core of *The Big Issue Taiwan* (大誌) enterprise. His dream to make “beauty” an intrinsic element in even the most mundane moments of his fellow citizens' lives. His support of other creators — the SUN SUN Museum as an example — to bring the aesthetic life right into neighborhood communities. The Taipei personality and how it has changed over the past decade-plus. And Lee's suggestions for the perfect itinerary for travelers from overseas looking to grasp the true Taipei character.



1 | 2

1. **The editor-in-chief of the *Big Issue Taiwan*, Fines, leads *TAIPEI* readers to explore Taipei using their five senses.** (Photo / Yenyi Lin)
2. **SUN SUN Museum is located in a residential neighborhood, bringing the aesthetic life right into local communities.** (Photo / Yenyi Lin)

## THE BIG VISION

If just a single word could be used to encapsulate Lee's vision, it would be "community." "Big cities are giant, busy living organisms, but life tends to be atomistic," he says, "We tend not to interact with each other — even with the people who live right next door to us. Just like countless atoms astir, bouncing off each other at a feverish pace but with no connections established." He wants to play a role in establishing a sense of community in Taipei and throughout Taiwan, and of caring for the other humans we come across.

Lee grew up in Tainan (台南), a city comparatively quieter than Taipei located in Taiwan's southwest. It had a sense of community he misses. He sees great potential in Taipei, a place where a sense of distinctive character has managed to survive in many neighborhoods through the pressures of modern times. "Compare to other cities in Asia, Taipei sets no boundaries and makes anything possible."

Extending this concept of "community" even further, Lee's desire is to bring the beauties of life back into local communities. As the negative aspects of modern materialistic living have taken hold, the beautiful and the aesthetic have been relegated to places outside our daily existence. You make special trips to the mountains for the beauty of nature, and to big museums or theaters, for example, to see the beauty created by individuals who have chosen to make aesthetics an everyday presence in their lives. But his wish is that we bring the beautiful back into our homes and surrounding neighborhoods — as publicly

performed music, plays, and other art forms were presented right outside our doors in our communities, the experiences shared with the people who live around you. He seeks to help others learn how to make the beautiful an intrinsic element in everything we do — hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste. To see your life as a work of art in itself and, embracing the "community" world view, to care for those around you, especially those who are different from you — to see the beauty in their lives.

## THE MISSION

Lee's primary vehicle for making his vision a reality is *The Big Issue Taiwan*, the local version of the famed British magazine enterprise initiated by Lord John Bird and the husband/wife team of Anita and Gordon Roddick of The Body Shop fame. On the one hand, it introduces Taiwan readers to novel ideas from the outside in lifestyle, art, culture, design, technology, and business, primarily through foreign writers resident in Taiwan.

On the other it delves even deeper into the "local community, good citizen, good neighbor" concept through its primary sales channel — selected homeless and socially disadvantaged individuals who receive training and who retain half of the cut from sales revenues. Most readers come across these sellers outside neighborhood Taipei Metro stations, the name of the magazine prominently displayed on their iconic yellow vests, baseball caps, and grey carry-bags.

## THE GRAND TOUR — THE FINES LEE "TAIPEI TOUR OF THE FIVE SENSES"

TAIPEI magazine asked Fines to switch hats for a spell and serve as a travel guide for expatriates new to Taipei City and international travelers here. His task: to present a "five senses" itinerary, suggesting the best places and experiences to get to know the character of this city. Let the tour begin.



## H E A R I N G

*“First, be sure to experience the music of Leo Wang (LEO王), an eclectic, highly-respected Taipei-based singer/songwriter. Of course, words cannot capture music properly, so consider this a tour assignment. I start with ‘hearing’ because Wang’s career and music encapsulate the Taiwan spirit. Like Taiwan’s people, his music is very iconoclastic. Creative expression elsewhere in the region is more formulaic, but in Taiwan and especially Taipei nobody stands behind you placing limitations, so you can explore your own spirit. Elsewhere there is repetitiveness, ‘false’ creativity, people staying close to trodden paths.”*

Leo Wang has himself professed publicly how much he appreciates the unlimited local artistic creativity, quoted in English as saying, “Being in Taiwan is a very blessed and lucky thing. As an artist I can create whatever I want.” Lee believes the unusual openness local people have both to outside ideas and novelty generated on the island stems in large part from Taiwan’s position as a crossroads of peoples and cultural influences, and its past as a frontier land. Like the American West, the result is fierce individuality of spirit and tolerance of others.

Another prominent “hearing” phenomenon over the past decade-plus, says Lee, is the bringing of live music out from dedicated indoor venues into the community, alfresco, with everyone welcome. He especially recommends the Taipei Jazz Festival (台北爵士音樂節), one of Taiwan’s biggest annual music events. Daan Park (大安森林公園) is the one of the main venues that will be holding live concert from October 25 to 27 this year. Jazz icons, such as Jun Kung (恭碩良) and Zhang Wei Zhi (張為智), and the organizers delight in creating sparks by pairing local with international talents on the same stage.

## S I G H T

*“Taipei is the nationwide leader in an urban regeneration movement that has gained great momentum over the past couple of decades — the saving of heritage buildings, with the government assisting in renovating the buildings and then cultural-creative enterprises operating them, so the sites can be self-sustaining. I recommend a visit to the old Dadaocheng (大稻埕) neighborhood and especially The Great ArtYard (大藝埕) enterprises on Dihua Street (迪化街) that gives you a prime look at this movement.”*

One of the brands, ArtYard 1 (小藝埕), for example, is known for urban regeneration and is located in a restored hundred-year-old building where Taiwan's first pharmacy to import Western medicines was once situated.

Recently, entrepreneurs have been opening up small-scale art and design spaces right at street level, inviting local residents to drop in to see the latest in the confluence of modern art, design, and thought. The aforementioned SUN SUN Museum is a prime example.

SUN SUN Museum has taken two side-by-side street-level residences in a quiet residential neighborhood and made them into a unified open-concept exhibit space. The façade is now floor-to-ceiling glass, inviting in both sunlight and anyone who passes by. Subjects addressed in the exhibits have almost no limitations. The exhibit at the time of writing was an exploration of the beauty of moths, and an upcoming exhibit will be a joint effort with a musician who wants to celebrate the beauty that music brings into our personal lives.

Lee and *The Big Issue Taiwan* also support the Taipei Art Book Fair (草率季), an annual multi-day gathering which will be held from October 18 to 20 this year at Songshan Cultural and Creative Park (松山文創園區). Participants range from indie publishers to zine creators, art galleries, and art groups, with about half the stands set up by overseas enterprises. The fair, says Lee, provides much new art and design food for thought for Taiwan locals.





## S M E L L

*"If you ask me how a visitor can get to know this city through the nose, I think of the traditional neighborhood fresh-food markets. You are immersed in daily food rituals and a sensory experience that have changed little in essence over multiple generations, though the markets now have much higher hygiene standards, brighter lighting, and other pleasantries of course. These are grand bazaars of food ingredients and prepared foods. Each is filled with scores of mom-and-pop stands, many in the same family hands for generations. I myself am a regular at Dongmen Market (東門市場)."*

Back in the Japanese period (1895-1945), to better manage the city's sprawl of street vendors, public markets were set up outside three of the city's gates — the West, South, and East gates. Of these, Dongmen (East Gate) Market has developed a special character as the scent of the city remains old-school. The first aroma that impresses most visitors is usually the fresh smell of the morning-picked vegetables and fruits, while the seafood vendors invites the ocean breeze to every breath you take. Lee makes special visits to soothe his hankering for the handmade cilantro and minced-pork dumplings at the famed Yu Yuan Fang (御園坊) stand. The dumplings are packed frozen in a bag and Lee cannot resist the juicy smell of the gravy when boiling them for quick meal.

1 | 3  
2 |

1. **ArtYard 1 is located in a restored hundred-year-old building where Taiwan's first pharmacy to import Western medicines was once situated.** (Photo / Taiwan Scene)
2. **Taipei Art Book Fair provides much new art and design food for thought for visitors.** (Photo / Taipei Art Book Fair)
3. **Yu Yuan Fang's pork dumplings are made with a special ingredient, cilantro, which elevates the aroma to another level.** (Photo / Taiwan Scene)



## T O U C H

*“I’m an avid jogger, and though Taipei has many attractive park spaces to run, notably Daan Park and the interconnected riverside parks, I recommend something more ‘tactile.’ Put feet to concrete and run the streets to best get to know the city’s neighborhoods.”*

Over the past couple of decades, the city has been systematically widening and clearing sidewalks, creating terrific, quiet early-morning and late-evening “urban pathways” through neighborhoods, says Lee. Joggers and those on long walks can watch locals readying themselves for the new day or resting and packing up their supplies at day’s end.

Lee’s favorite route begins with a loop through tree-thick Daan Park, known as the “lungs of Taipei.” He then proceeds along Xinyi (信義路) or Renai Roads (仁愛路) to 228 Peace Park (二二八和平公園), followed by a swing by the Presidential Office Building (總統府), opened as the seat of Japanese imperial authority in 1919, beautifully lit up at night today.

Fully understanding that not everyone enjoys moving along at more than a walking pace for more than a few minutes at a time, Lee strongly recommends hitting the streets for slow-paced exploration of the city’s many distinctive neighborhoods and their dense alley webs via two other means: bicycle or motorbike. First, the city’s superb YouBike public bike rental system is the perfect facilitator for this mode of touring. As for the second means, Lee usually gets around by motorbike and dives into neighborhoods to see what makes them tick serendipitously. “This city’s youthful folk are rejecting corporate regimentation, and the result is neighborhoods bursting with owner-operated cafés, boutiques and galleries” he says. Hence, Lee highly recommends “touching” the city with a slow pace to admire its energy, as well as the personality of its countless unique and artful shops.

1 | 2

1. **Lee thinks that running through the streets is one of the best ways to get to know the city’s neighborhoods.** (Photo / Taiwan Scene)
2. **Rechao is an essential Taiwanese comfort food and an iconic Taiwan culinary staple.** (Photo / Taiwan Scene)

# T A S T E

*“Rechao (hot stir-fry, 熱炒) restaurants are an iconic Taiwan culinary staple. They are simple-décor neighborhood beerhouses where us Taiwanese love to gather with groups of friends. The cold beer flows and the shared stir-fry dishes begin arriving, clanked on the table by busy staff, and the mood gets ever merrier and ever louder. Taiwanese insist on the freshest ingredients in our foods; considering how fresh the ingredients are and how good the food is, the prices at these joints are incredibly low.”*

Lee's go-to spot is the well-known Lin's Seafood (小林海產), not far from the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館). It specializes in fresh marine catch, but *rechao* joints have mind-bogglingly wide menus. Comfort foods such as stir-fried baby shrimp, oysters with onion, or pork neck, gives locals a chance to sit at a round table together to enjoy some quality friends and family time in the neighborhood.

Aside from *rechao*, Lee says there is nothing he likes better than sitting down at a favorite café to relax, read a bit, and observe the beauty of interaction between people in Taipei. Taipei's non-chain operators seem to strive to make theirs a one-of-a-kind see and taste experience. He especially recommends Trio Café (三重奏) in Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914文化創意產業園區), which is in fact much, much more than a café. Rather, it is a combo café, bar, and restaurant for those of more aesthetic desires.

*“I trust there's more than enough here to keep visitors busy and happy during their Taipei stay,” says Lee, “and I warmly welcome one and all interested in learning about our Taipei community — our little neighborhood in the wide world of neighborhoods.”* T



# An Art Festival Never Sleeps — Nuit Blanche Taipei

WORDS BY

Takayuki Shinoyama

TRANSLATION BY

JR Wu, Joe Henley

PHOTOS BY

Nuit Blanche Taipei 2019

“Nuit Blanche,” or White Night as it means in English, has become a spreading phenomenon around the world recently. Museums, galleries, and art centers that usually open only during the daytime will open their doors at the witching hour to hold special events at night and light up the night together, inviting expats and citizens to join in a sleepless night of unparalleled wonder.

Nuit Blanche, a collection of various artistic events free to the public, has been held in Taipei every year since 2016; on the first Saturday in October varied forms of artistic events will be conducted all night, and the public can freely attend and participate in this festival. Nuit Blanche Taipei aims to eliminate the barrier between entertainment and art by utilizing public space on the street so that people can embrace the art in the most natural and yet ephemeral way possible. Over 200,000 people participated in past events each year, and in 2018, attendance even exceeded 400,000, making it the largest art-related event on the street in Taipei history.

Continuing its popularity, Nuit Blanche Taipei will be kicking off from October 5 in 2019. Here are some highlights of the event.





## || BUILDING UP THE STAGE IN NEWLY-DEVELOPED AREAS

In the past, Nuit Blanche Taipei was usually held in places related to history and culture. However, the stage this year will be set in Dazhi (大直) and Neihu (內湖), newly developed areas in Taipei known for their booming science and technology sector.

While technology and the economy are rising quickly in Dazhi and Neihu, cultural and artistic fields are less developed compared to other areas in Taipei. The common scene in the areas are usually technology companies and lots of white-collar workers, featuring some breakfast shops, cafés, restaurants, and bars that target office workers.

These little shops, will be full of people during the daytime but soon become deserted after the working hours when those salary men and women return home. It is considered as a “third space”, which is different from the basic living area as well as the office areas where people stay for a long time during the day. Instead, the third space serves as a functional but limited social space where people meet with each other solely while working. Nuit Blanche Taipei chose Neihu and Dazhi in the hope that these large spaces could be used effectively, not only during daytime but also at night, and that they could freely develop their own art scene without boundaries. It is also important for the people from Dazhi and Neihu to create their own unique identity and sense of belonging to embody the significant concept of contemporary art that — “Everyone is an artist.”

*“Quasi Land”, one of the works of Nuit Blanche Taipei created by Kou Tak -Leong, use both artificial and natural light as the element to create a field where audience can walk in, stay and enjoy the art.*



## || EXPLORING THE DIVERSITY OF THE CITY

The theme of this year's event is "double-sided ballet", showcasing the diversity of Taipei. The concept is based on the theory of "Body Ballet" and "Place Ballet" advocated by geographer David Seamon.

"Body Ballet" is characterized by the "individual body" moving through the space. The actions we perform routinely are caused by habits, and will create a unique rhythm according to a person's work, pastimes, lifestyle, and religion. For instance, you might get up at a predetermined time, go to work in a certain way, and return home at a certain hour and so on. These actions were named "Body Ballet" because it has a pattern of movement and rhythm just like a ballerina has to follow the choreography.

Meanwhile, "Place Ballet" is a series of body ballet, such as getting up in the morning and going to work repeatedly for a long time in a specific location. It is a specific rhythm which spreads from individual to the community and the whole of society, and a characteristic is born and a sense of belonging cultivated as a life rhythm is created among people when the place ballet is formed.

By incorporating these concepts this year, Nuit Blanche Taipei hopes a new "Body Ballet" will be born in Dazhi and Neihu, and expects that "Place Ballet" will metamorphose into much more than just going to work and returning home. It requires lots of people to participate in the event to reach

this goal, and if all goes according to plan, there will be more and more people, locals and those from abroad alike, who will be introduced to these emerging aspects of a new society in addition to the core of technology and commercial development.



1 | 3  
2 | 4

1. *There is no set format for the activities in Nuit Blanche Taipei. Even everyday items like plastic bottles can be an essential element.*
2. *Japanese artist Michiyoshi Isozaki designed a magnificent plastic dome, allowing people to decorate it and participate in the creation of art.*
- 3,4 *"One Minute Sculpture" uses the most common things in life as props, inviting the audience to be a part of the performance.*

## || ELIMINATING BARRIERS BETWEEN ENTERTAINMENT AND ART

“Nuit Blanche Taipei” has invited Hu Chao Sheng (胡朝聖), an artist with a master’s degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, to be its art director for 2019.

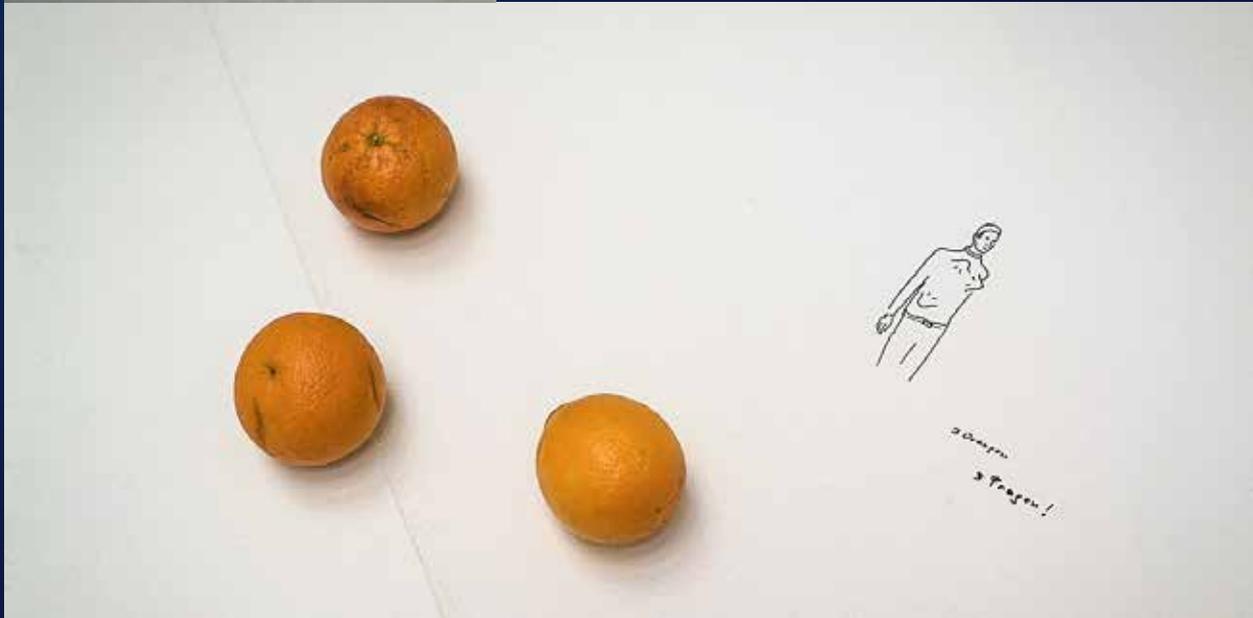
As the event emphasizes the characteristics of participation as always, Director Hu hopes that participants can become citizen curators of art and culture. By creating art pieces/activities to develop a place ballet in Dazhi and Neihu, it will encourage local residents to participate in public events and find the distinguishing features of themselves and their living neighborhoods.

An example of this is a project planned by Japanese artist Michiyoshi Isozaki who designed a plastic dome where participants can go in and decorate it without any prescribed limitations. With the help from the public, a piece of art will be completed in an unconstrained way.



In addition, “One Minute Sculpture”, planned by Austrian artist Erwin Wurm, will take place in the open square at MRT Jiannan Road Station (捷運劍南路站). This is a plan in which wares such as wooden boxes, books, fruits and clothes are prepared on the stage, and audiences can join the performance freely by acting out instructions written on a note. They will have to maintain a posture for one whole minute on the wooden boxes, making everyone who joins the performance a temporary piece of sculpted art. The instructions will be challenging but interesting, such as putting three oranges on one’s head or squeezing two people into one sweater. This “two-way art” will allow people to spontaneously create art that, like the cherry blossoms, will come to life and then promptly fade into memory, until the next instance of creation brings those cherished memories rushing back.

At Nuit Blanche Taipei 2019, a new feature of Dazhi and Neihu is expected to be born as the gap between the participants and art is closed to a new level of proximity. The concept of contemporary art “everyone is an artist” will become reality and a new facet of the daily lives of those in these once very business-like districts. It is a great opportunity for visitors to experience a slightly different atmosphere of Taipei. Be sure to take this chance to feel the capital through this artistic and wondrous night. T





## Street Smarts: Capturing Taipei Street Scenes with Flaneur

WORDS BY Adam Hopkins / PHOTOS BY Flaneur, Taiwan Scene, Tomáš Benedikovič

A single street can tell you a lot about a city, and nobody knows that more than Fabian Saul, editor-in-chief of *Flaneur Magazine*. Founded in Berlin in 2013, *Flaneur* is an independent, artistic publication that focuses on one street per issue, highlighting the street's layers, complexity and fragmentation. In their own words, the magazine is collaborative, impulsive and unconventional. Utilizing artists across a variety of disciplines, *Flaneur* “attempts to use a single microcosm to tell universal stories.” We chatted with Saul following his residency at Taipei’s Treasure Hill Artist Village (寶藏巖國際藝術村) and ahead of the release of the latest issue of *Flaneur*, which will be all about Taipei.

## T What Motivated You to Establish *Flaneur Magazine*?

F *Flaneur* started six years ago as a collaborative project in Berlin. Initially, we depicted one street in Berlin. The street was located in a part of town that wasn't familiar to some of us. It felt like a different city and we were traveling to a new place in order to do the magazine. Then, to others, it was a street synonymous with their childhoods, so walking down it meant tracing all kinds of different memories. We decided to invite other artists from different disciplines to add their perspectives. Since then, we have done issues on streets in Leipzig, Montreal, Rome, Athens, Moscow, Sao Paulo and now Taipei.

## T What's the Concept/Vision of *Flaneur*?

F We are interested in the historical, social and aesthetic layers of the place and like to discover them by actually being there rather than researching from a desk. We spend many months on location and form a network of contributing artists that work on what the street has to offer both individually and collectively. Often, there is a strong connection to local communities and local storytellers.

We are not a travel magazine that takes the reader by the hand and shows them the nicest places or sights. The process of walking the city and discovering its hidden and often invisible layers, could lead to much darker places. The magazine is a platform where the different spatial experiences of participating artists form a multi-perspective view of the street.

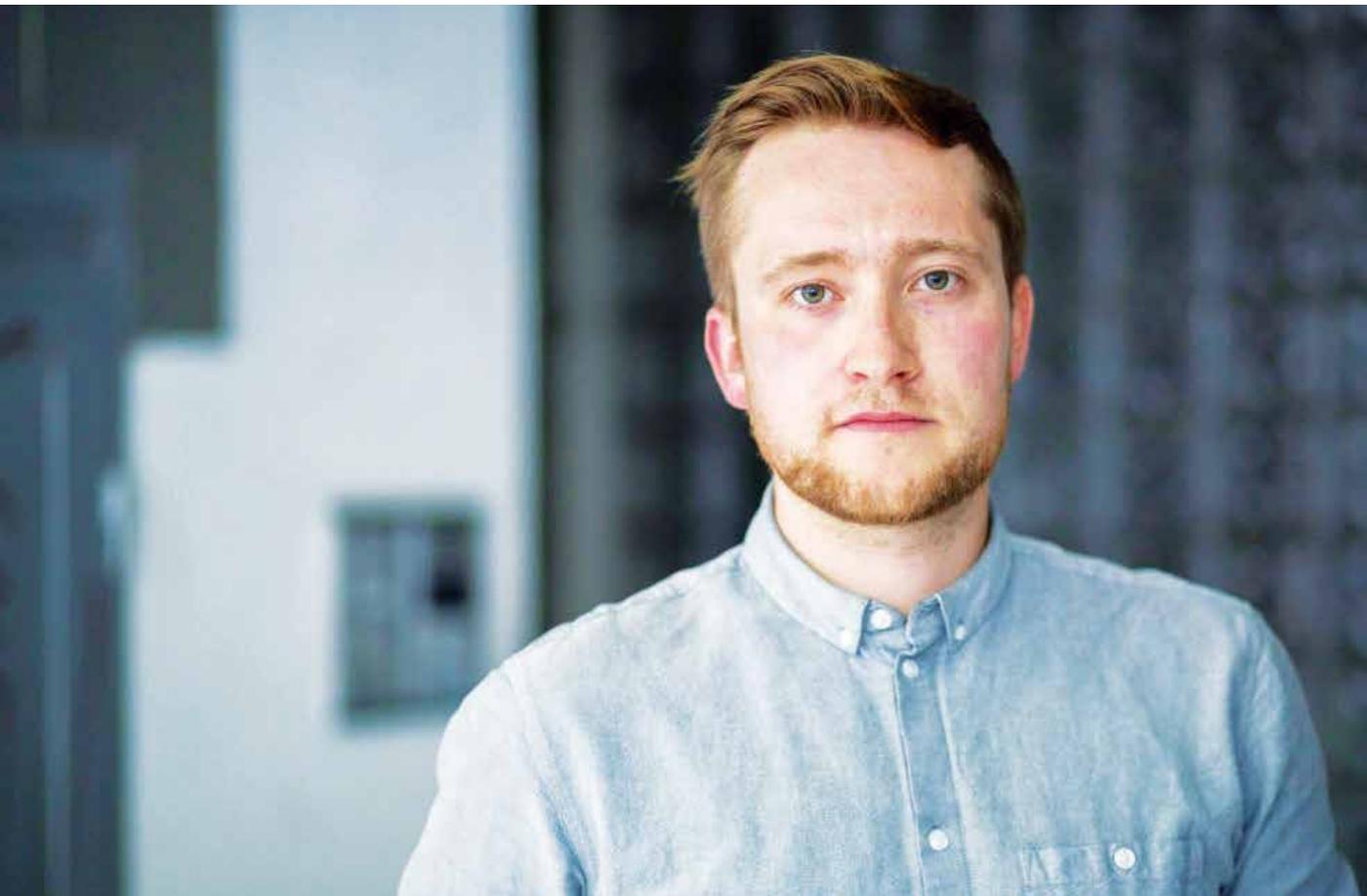
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1. ***Flaneur Magazine covers Taipei for its eighth issue, introducing what Taipei looks like to international readers.***

*(Photo / Flaneur)*

2. ***Fabian Saul, editor-in-chief of Flaneur Magazine.*** *(Photo / Tomáš Benedikovič)*



## ┆ Why Did You Choose to Cover Taipei for Issue 8?

┆ There are always certain places that interest us, and Taipei was one of them. Then there needs to be an initial moment that feels like an invitation — and the opportunity to do a residency at Taipei Artist Village felt like that invitation we were waiting for.

## ┆ How Will You Introduce Taipei to Your Readers?

┆ Many international readers might not have a set idea of what Taipei looks like. In some ways, it is not on the map, so to speak, despite being one of the most progressive places in Asia. With the fantastic Taiwanese contributors in this issue, we hope to shed light on the mesmerizing layers of Taipei City.

## ┆ How Does Taipei's Art Scene Differ from Berlin's and Those of Other Major Cities?

┆ The art scene in Taipei feels very interconnected. After a couple of weeks, we started to form networks across different disciplines, social groups and age groups. That kind of dense, interdisciplinary network is harder to establish in a larger, more fragmented cultural landscape such as Berlin. Taipei, thanks to its inviting vibe, felt very familiar to us very quickly.

## ┆ Could You Share Your Experience as an Artist in Residence in Taipei?

┆ Treasure Hill as a starting point for traversing Taipei was very helpful in establishing initial connections with the city. This place reflects so many layers of Taipei; it sparked much inspiration. Of course, we have to be aware of the role of the artists from Treasure Hill that are helping to save the place — the Artist Village helped protect the area from demolition — but on the other hand, due to gentrification, are making Treasure Hill, as it once was, vanish. On a different level, Treasure Hill is also an important root of water infrastructure in the city and it led us to closely following Taipei's rivers.

## ┆ What Was Your First Impression of the City? Did It Change After Visiting Taipei?

┆ Before coming to Taipei, the most prominent image of the city was Taipei 101, which isn't an accurate reflection of the city's actual urban fabric. After spending time in Taipei and especially in Wanhua, known as the oldest part of the city, I can tell there are many historical layers that can be traced back to the different periods of development. While the grid street plan is left in the north of Wanhua from Japanese city planning, the south remains a more organic development of small alleyways with many temples, which resonate with the diversity of the area.





- 2
- 1 3
1. *Treasure Hill Artist Village has a special cultural landscape within a military dependents' village, attracting many tourists. (Photo / Taiwan Scene)*
  2. *Flaneur chose Wanhua District to conduct the street research because it reflects Taipei's stories from the past and the future. (Photo / Taiwan Scene)*
  3. *Nanjichang Night Market is a local night market located in Wanhua District. (Photo / Taiwan Scene)*



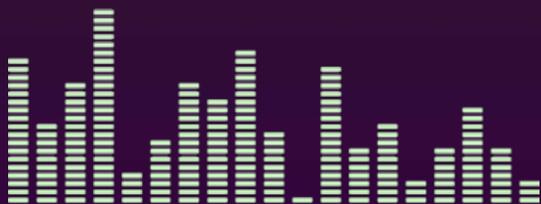
**T** You Chose to Conduct the Street Research in Wanhua District. What Were Your Thoughts About This District?

**F** To me, Wanhua District is a lot like the root of this place's relationship with the water. Xindian river runs by the west of Wanhua and illustrates the city's proximity with the mountains. It flows into Tamsui river before heading to the ocean, which also makes it a key trading route. These days, Wanhua is perceived as the edge of the city. But during our time working on Kangding Road (康定路) and Wanda Road (萬大路), we understood that Wanhua in many ways is the gate to Taipei City. A lot of what this area provided and provides goes unseen, and while the city gentrifies slowly but surely, talking about Wanhua also means talking about the places in Taipei that may soon vanish. It is a conversation that is based on the stories from the past, gets actualized in the present and concerns Taipei's future.

**T** What Are Three Must-See Places in Taipei for First-Time Visitors? And How Would You Recommend People to Discover the Local Art Scene?

**F** I think that as a contrast to the center, it is important to go to the riverbanks at Dajia Riverside Park (大佳河濱公園), especially in the evening. This puts things in perspective. I also believe that the MRT Longshan Temple station (捷運龍山寺站), the smaller local night markets in Bangka, and Nanjichang Night Market (南機場夜市), are important places to understand the cultural and economic geometry of this city.

The strength of Taipei's art scene is not made by one institution but the network of people that make it happen. Make sure to make time to spend some days walking the arcades of Taipei. Despite the weather, Taipei is a very walkable city and an inviting place to be discovered by foot. **T**



## Five Places to Feel the Music in Taipei

WORDS BY

Joe Henley

PHOTOS BY

Riverside Live House & Riverside Music Café, Witch House, The Wall, Revolver, Legacy, Bill Hamway, TS

Music would be nothing without the cities that give birth to it — songs, genres, and entire albums reflect the cities in which they were incubated and within each one is something unique to that place. This is a song from Dylan's New York period. That is an album from when Tom Waits was still slumming around L.A.'s Skid Row. And this — this is a song by The Chairman (董事長樂團), from the days when they were still finding themselves at a dingy little basement club in Shida (師大), Taipei, called Underworld (地下社會).

For decades, cover bands reigned supreme in Taipei's clubs. It wasn't until the mid-to-late 1970s when the Campus Folk Movement (校園民歌), spurred by a deep desire to assert the unique Taiwanese identity, began a shift away from western domination of the nation's stages and dance floors.

Fast forward to the 1990s. Martial law, ended in 1987, is over, and so begins a new and more open era for Taiwanese music and art. SCUM, a Taipei performance space, becomes the first Taipei venue to insist that bands perform at least one original song in their set. Other venues soon follow suit. Punk, post rock, metal, noise — all of it comes rushing in like a flood as artists flourish in a new atmosphere of creative freedom.

Now, some two decades later, that same passion that filled Taipei's first real live houses (the local vernacular for venue) still runs deep, and you can feel it most any night of the week, at everything from intimate, small-scale clubs to large world-class event centers all over town.



## RIVERSIDE LIVE HOUSE (西門河岸留言) & RIVERSIDE MUSIC CAFE (公館河岸留言)

Open since the turn of the millennium in Taipei's Gongguan (公館) neighborhood, not far from the National Taiwan University campus, it was once a place where bands had to audition in person before taking to the intimate stage. New bands would be put through their paces before being deemed stage-worthy or not, and as such the cafe became something of a proving ground for young bands looking to see whether they had what it takes to make the move from the practice space to the live setting. Over the years, it has also become a place for established rock, pop and indie bands to play, though Monday evenings are reserved for an open jam, where anyone can sign up and get up on stage to try out some new material.

In 2008, another offshot Riverside Live House was opened in Ximending (西門町), housed in the brick building known as the Red House (紅樓). Larger than the Gongguan branch can accommodate, this 650-capacity venue is equipped for Taiwan's mainstream rock and indie mainstays, giving them the ability to stage a full production in a more intimate and immediate setting for their fans than they might otherwise put on when they play the nation's arenas and concert halls. Besides, the area around the live house is home to Taipei's lively LGBTQ district, a thriving collection of welcoming chic and friendly outdoor bars. The LGBTQ culture, indie music and a thriving collection of welcoming outdoor bars have together drawn a vibrant cultural scene of Taipei City.

**Riverside gives bands old and new the chance to stage a full production for their fans.**

(Photo / top: TS ; middle & bottom: Riverside Live House & Riverside Music Cafe)



### Riverside Live House

- 📍 177, Xining S. Rd., Wanhua Dist.
- 🕒 Opening Hours may vary depending on the nature of events. Tickets are available on site at 6:00pm on event days.



### Riverside Music Cafe

- 📍 B1, 2, Ln. 244, Sec. 3, Roosevelt Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
- 🕒 Monday to Sunday, 7:00pm – 00:30am



## WITCH HOUSE (女巫店)

Witch House is another Taipei music venue that is as much a part of the foment of Taipei indie as the bands themselves. The aforementioned Underworld, shuttered in 2013, has been called the CBGBs (seminal New York underground music club) of Taipei, but that title could just as easily be applied to Witch House. Open since 1996, Witch House started up after the demise of SCUM in the mid-nineties, first catering mostly to rock and metal bands, later stripping things down and going for a more unplugged/indie/folk audio aesthetic. Many established singers were nurtured here in their early career and thus the small venue is praised as a cradle of Taipei's indie music.

Moreover, Witch House is admired for its support for female performers. The café, together with “fembooks” (女書店) on the second floor, is regarded as Taipei's feminist icon which champions women's liberation, as evidenced throughout the café's interior artwork and decorations featuring women's lingerie and other symbols of unbridled feminine freedom. Furthermore, there weren't many places for female musicians to perform before, and so the venue cultivated a stage and space for women to feel free to express themselves. As such, some of Taiwan's biggest female singer/songwriters such as Cheer Chen (陳綺貞), Sandee Chan (陳珊妮), and Anpu (安溥) all got their start at Witch House before going on to achieve great fame on the broader Taiwan and Asia stage.

There was a scare in 2011 when Witch House almost fell victim to the same urban redevelopment plans that spelled the end of Underworld. Fortunately, it was allowed to remain standing, providing a much-needed dose of progressive thinking and great music for future generations to hear from the independent women.



*Witch House cultivated a stage for women to express themselves. Some of Taiwan's biggest female singer/songwriters all got their start here. (Photo / Witch House)*



### Witch House



7, Ln. 56, Sec. 3, Xincheng S. Rd., Daan Dist.



Sunday to Wednesday, 10:00am - 11:00pm  
Thursday to Saturday, 10:00am - 12:00 midnight



## THE WALL

The Wall came along in 2003, founded in part by two members of Taipei music royalty. Freddy Lim (林昶佐) the front man of metal band ChthoniC (閃靈樂團) and Ji Dong (阿吉) from The Chairman. The Wall was established based on a strong concept of creating a space for all kinds of music and free expression, where bands playing original material could say and do what they want without fear of reprisal.

From the mid-2000s onward, The Wall was the stage young musicians dreamed to play on, especially for Taipei's metal heads who share the same passion as the founders, as The Wall began to draw a bevy of international metal artists like Bay Area Thrashers Exodus or Tampa Florida's legendary death metal band Cannibal Corpse, many of which were playing Taipei for the first time. The 600-plus capacity live music venue was once named one of the top 10 attractions in Taipei by New York Magazine. Music lovers are welcomed to walk down the spiral staircase to the rebellious basement and enjoy the true rock vibe of the city that lives at night.

Since those heady days, The Wall has changed hands a couple of times over but its influence and rock spirit remains strong. Nowadays, rock fans line up at The Wall not only for international music icons but also for local young bands who touched the audiences with true voices while playing on their dream stage. Just like many of their heroes have done before, the music lives as the song kept being sung.



*The Wall welcomed Taipei's rock fans to enjoy the true rock vibe of the city. (Photo / The Wall)*



### The Wall

- 📍 200, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Wenshan Dist.
- 🕒 Wednesday, 8:00pm - 12:00 midnight  
Thursday to Saturday, 7:00pm - 3:00am  
Sunday, 7:00pm - 12:00 midnight



## REVOLVER

If there is a modern-day Ground Zero for Taipei musicians of almost any ilk, it's Revolver. Located near Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂), the two-story establishment (drinks downstairs, music upstairs), set up by a pair of British expats in 2010, serves as a seven-days-a-week live music haven for all kinds of artists from rock to metal to punk to hip hop to electronic to experimental and everything in between. As such, Revolver has become something of an incubator for the New Sound of Taipei, the way Underworld once was, where musicians young and old put their varied styles on display.

The interior of the first floor is eclectic, featuring artwork depicting the likes of everyone from classic rock icons David Bowie and Jimi Hendrix to metal acts Carcass and Napalm Death. Behind the bar is an iconic handwritten note that reads "No Coldplay," a nod to the fact that this is a place fiercely for forward-thinking independent music and vehemently against pop star pablum.

Capacity upstairs is capped at 100 and when the place is packed out there's no greater atmosphere to catch one of Taipei's many great up-and-coming acts. Many of the world's smaller venues are plagued by sound issues, but Revolver has a top-notch PA system, solid back-line equipment, and sound technicians who by virtue of doing this most every night know how to make everything run like a well-oiled machine. Revolver is also one of the few places where Taipei's expat and local music communities truly mingle, bringing people of all nationalities and musical tastes together.



*Revolves serves up live music most every night and is also a bar favored by visitors of all nationalities and musical tastes. (Photo / Revolver)*



### Revolver

- 📍 1-2, Sec. 1, Roosevelt Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
- 🕒 Monday to Thursday, 6:30pm - 3:00am  
Friday & Saturday, 6:30pm - 4:00am  
Sunday, 6:30pm - 1:00am

# 5

## LEGACY

For a long time in Taipei, there was no middle-step from the clubs to the arenas — no mid-size venues or halls where large or large-ish international bands could play, forcing promoters to rent out spaces like veterans halls and even high school gyms whenever bands with a drawing power of at least a thousand but less than that which could fill an arena announced a tour of Asia. Then, in 2009, Legacy opened in Taipei's Huashan 1914 Creative Park. The live music spot was a welcome addition to the fold, setting up shop sandwiched between an exhibition space and an art-house theater.

Over the years Legacy, which can accommodate up to 1,200 fans, has played host to an enviable roster of international indie acts from Neutral Milk Hotel to The Jesus and Mary Chain and even a pair of raucous performances by New York No Wave icons Swans. It's a place, like most spaces in Taipei, that is open to all kinds of music and is one of those venues that has helped Taipei attract an ever growing quantity of high-caliber artists from all over the world with its professionalism and unique setting within the cavernous former warehouse, where the roots of surrounding trees have grown into the roof and walls.

It can be said without hyperbole that there has never been a better time to experience the live music scene in Taipei. Every music community goes through its ups and downs, its periods of falling in and out of love with itself. But in Taiwan's capital city, bands both new and established are being nurtured in an environment where at every level they know they have a place — a home. It's helping the city develop and evolve its own sound, and it's a sound that deserves to be heard. **T**



**A mid-size venues that accommodates 1,200 people, Legacy is a great option for international bands.**  
(Photo / Legacy)

### Legacy

 1, Sec. 1, Bade Rd., Zhongzheng Dist. (M5 in Huashan 1914 Creative Park)

 Opening hours may vary depending on nature of events.

CULTURAL TAIPEI

# A Modern Take on a Confucian Tradition

WORDS BY

Zhang Yinghua

TRANSLATION BY

Joe Henley

PHOTOS BY

Zhao Shouyan



September 28 is the birthday of Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, and appropriately it is also celebrated as Teachers' Day in Taiwan. Confucius's educational philosophies such as "education without class distinction" (有教無類) and "teaching according to one's aptitude" (因材施教) has been highly admired in East Asia for thousands of years, and thus has earned Confucius the honorable title of "Ultimate Sage and First Teacher" (至聖先師). On his birthday, people in Taiwan pay tribute to the great educator to remind us to always uphold and maintain the traditional virtue of respecting our teachers.



*The Memorial Ceremony for Confucius in Taipei Confucius Temple is solemn and majestic.*



## || BREATHING LIFE INTO A THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD CEREMONY

Every year on Teachers' Day, Taipei Confucius Temple (台北市孔廟) organizes a Memorial Ceremony for Confucius (祭孔釋奠典禮). The ceremony dates back to the day Confucius passed away, and Duke Ai of Lu (魯哀公), the ruler of Confucius's homeland, gave the order to pay respect to the philosopher and educator. It was not until the Han dynasty (漢朝) that the ceremony became a nation-wide activity. As for the official ceremonial proceedings and the title "Ultimate Sage and First Teacher," those were established in the Qing dynasty (清朝). Taipei Confucius Temple was established in 1930 with funds from the local gentry and has since held more than 80 ceremonies so far, attracting some 2,000 people every year to observe.

During the ceremony, students perform "the Yi Dance" (佾舞) which is an important part of the shared cultural heritage of Eastern Asia. A complete ceremony has 37 different procedures that can be generally divided into three portions: "Welcoming the Spirit," "Worship," and "Escorting the Spirit." The

ceremony is hosted by "the Consecration Officer" (奉祀官), a role that can only be played by Confucius's grandsons, "the Master of Ceremonies" (引贊), who is responsible for chanting and guiding people to offer their gifts, "the Leader of Musicians" (樂長), who is in charge of singing and conducting the music and dance, "the Musicians" (樂生), who play Confucian Music, "the Yi Dancers" (佾生), who take part in the Yi Dance, and "the Deacons" (禮生), who attend to other relevant ceremonial affairs.

On the day of the ceremony, a raised platform will be built in front of the Dacheng Hall (大成殿), in which the memorial tablet of Confucius is placed. The platform is called *Dan Chi* (丹墀), and is used as the venue for the music and the Yi Dance.

- 1 1. *The annual Memorial Ceremony for Confucius reminds students to respect their teachers and of the importance of education.*
- 2 2. *A total of 189 offerings will be used for the ceremony.*





1. **1. Musicians play ceremonial music.**
2. **2. The procedure of "Burying the Sacrificial Remnants" symbolizes the endless succession of life.**

## || EVOLVING WITH TIME AND REFINING THE PROCEDURES

Growing up in the vicinity of Taipei Confucius Temple and having served as the mentor to Deacons for more than ten years, Chen Yingyi (陳應義) has a prodigious bond to the ceremony and has also witnessed his share of ceremonial changes over the years. He says, one example of this is the custom of "Plucking the Hair of Wisdom" (拔智慧毛), where the hair of wisdom refers to the hair taken from the head of a sacrificial ox. According to folklore, plucking the hair of the ox that has been savored by the Sage of Literature (文聖), another honorific title of Confucius, will increase one's wisdom. In recent years, the Hair of Wisdom has transformed into the Pen of Wisdom. These pens are made in the form of the Hair of Wisdom and carved with a message: "Learn with a constant perseverance and application" (學而時習之), an excerpt taken from *The Analects of Confucius* (論語). At the temple, these pens will be hung from a golden ox for people to "pluck."



During the solemn ceremony, there are some procedures which carry a particularly special meaning. One of them is called "Burying the Sacrificial Remnants" (瘞毛血). This peculiar procedure involves one Deacon holding a plate which has on it the hair and blood of sacrificial livestock, and then burying it in the ground. The connotation of this movement includes the nourishment of the land by animals who were once nourished by the land, the endless succession of life, and purification. However, the use of real animal blood has been replaced by water mixed with red rice yeast due to the growing concern for animal welfare.

Though the long-standing ceremony has experienced several changes over the years, it is not only the ceremony that is worth preserving. We should also cherish its latent meanings, such as the promotion of cultural traditions, etiquette, and, above all, education. Taipei Confucius Temple always welcomes travelers to visit and join the ceremony. Just like Confucius taught us, it is always a pleasure to greet a friend from afar (有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎)! <sup>T</sup>

**Education** without class distinction.

**Teaching** according to one's aptitude.



## The Qingshan King Rituals of Bangka

WORDS BY

Zhang Yinghua

TRANSLATION BY

Joe Henley

PHOTOS BY

The Qingshan Club of Bangka Qingshan Temple, Chiou Shih Chie

Bangka (艋舺) is an old area where Taipei originated and now known for its rich historical and cultural heritage. Not only are there various traditional foods hidden among the neighborhood's labyrinth of alleys and lanes, but a wealth of popular temples sit in this area. Among these temples, Bangka Qingshan Temple (艋舺青山宮) on Guiyang Street (貴陽街) celebrate the birthday of its principal deity, King Lingan (靈安尊王) every year. A series of pilgrimages and religious activities are held from October 20 to 23 of the lunar calendar annually, collectively called "the Qingshan King Rituals" (青山王祭典), more commonly known as "the Grand Worship of Bangka" (艋舺大拜拜). The event attracts hordes of people every year and is one of the three major temple fairs of Taipei City, the other two being the celebration of the birthday of Xiahai City God (霞海城隍) in Dadaocheng (大稻埕) and the procession of Baosheng Emperor (保生大帝).

## A DEITY WHO CROSSED THE STRAIT TO STOP THE PLAGUE IN TAIWAN

Bangka Qingshan Temple was built in 1856. Legend has it that in 1854, a group of migrant fishermen from Huian County (惠安縣), Fujian Province (福建省), officially invited King Lingan to Bangka. When the holy palanquin passed Old Street (today's Xiyuan Road (西園路) section 1), it suddenly became too heavy to lift. After consulting the god's will, the fishermen decided to build a temple on that very spot. This incident coincided with the time when Bangka was wracked by the plague. Miraculously, after the tormented locals paid tribute to King Lingan, they regained their health. Consequently, the deity's believers multiplied and a new temple was erected at the new site at the current location.

The Qingshan Temple we see today was refurbished in 1938 in the style of palatial architecture of the Qing dynasty, which contains two halls, two corridors and a back-hall. The temple is recognized as a Level Three Ancient Monument by the

Taipei City Government. In 2013, a fire destroyed many hundred-year-old deity statues and cultural relics preserved in Qingshan Temple. However, the horrible accident deepened the locals' faith since they believed that it was a mysterious deed done by King Lingan to prevent an even more terrible catastrophe.

To show their gratitude for the deity's kind gesture, residents of Bangka initiated the annual temple fair. The regular event has now become a uniting force in Bangka. In 1953, the Taipei City Government selected the Qingshan King Rituals as an autumn worship event in the then Longshan District, making Qingshan Temple one of two temples authorized to organize a temple fair in Taipei during the period of martial law. In 1975, the Qingshan King Rituals were listed as one of the seven major religious rituals in Taipei City, extending the pilgrimage to the whole range of today's Wanhua District.



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1. **The eight generals of Qingshan Temple consist of "red-faced generals" and "green-generals", and is the only one of its kind left in Taiwan.**

(Photo / Chiou Shin Chie)

2. **The members of the eight generals of Qingshan Temple are all volunteers and serve with their devotion and enthusiasm.**

(Photo / Chiou Shih Chie)



## MIDNIGHT PATROL TO CAST AWAY FILTH IN THE REALMS OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

This year, the Qingshan King Rituals begin from November 16 of the western calendar (October 20 of the lunar calendar), and Qingshan Temple will invite Qingshui Zhshi (清水祖師) in Bangka Qingshui Temple (艋舺清水巖), Guanyin (觀音 / 觀音佛祖) in Longshan Temple (艋舺龍山寺) and Mazu (媽祖 / 天上聖母) in Taipei Tianhou Temple (台北天后宮) to be “guest gods” of Qingshan Temple and attend the whole ritual.

On November 16 and 17, King Ligan will lead his generals and soldiers on a “midnight patrol” (夜巡暗訪) in the southern and northern part of Wanhua District to inspect the realms of the living and the dead, cast away filth and evil, and arrest ruthless gods and marauding ghosts. On November 18, a large-scale midday pilgrimage (正日繞境) accompanied by parade formations from temples in northern Taiwan will take place. Local residents will set up tables and sacrifices along the route. Committee

members of the temple like *luzhu* (censer master, 爐主) and *toujia* (local chiefs, 頭家) will build makeshift temples and stages where cabaret performers can sing and dance. The pilgrimage is always teeming with people who want to receive the god and express their joy for his birthday. The firecrackers set off along the way symbolize good luck. Believers who had made a pledge to King Ligan to return the favor after their wish was fulfilled will come back as *jiangjiao* (guards, 將腳) in red clothes and pants, wearing special straw sandals with facial painting. They will escort the holy palanquin in return for the deity’s kindness and push the atmosphere to a joyous climax.

1 | 2 1, 2 **King Ligan, the principal deity of Qingshan Temple.**  
(Photo / The Qingshan Club of Bangka Qingshan Temple)



## THE EIGHT GENERALS IN RED AND GREEN PERFORM THE GHOST STEPS

The real eye-catcher during the midnight patrol and pilgrimage is “the eight generals of Qingshan Temple” (青山宮八將團). Equipped with intricate face paint designs, costumes, and instruments of torture adhering faithfully to traditional paraphernalia, the eight generals of Qingshan Temple are the most authentic parade formation. The group consists of four “red-faced generals” (紅面) and “four green-faced generals” (綠面), a unique combination, and the only one of its kind left in Taiwan. The eight generals wear helmets and serve as guards clearing the way for the holy palanquin. They will perform ceremonial steps known as “the ghost steps” (鬼步), which are both domineering and impressive to protect King Langan during the royal procession. In the center of the formation, there is one extra figure called the “guiding child” (引路童子). The guiding child is said to be the incarnation of a magical white crane. The guiding child wears a helmet and dons a royal robe. The gourd lantern in his hands helps guide the way for the eight generals. The eight generals of Qingshan Temple only show up for three days every year during the Qingshan King Rituals. They follow King Langan of their own volition and, most important of all, their devotion and enthusiasm to serve.

On the birthday of King Langan, a ceremony held in the temple will be followed a magnificent birthday banquet on Guiyang Street, which will be closed to traffic beforehand. The banquet is just like a traditional Taiwanese catering party that opens to staff and other relevant people such as luzhu and toujia. During the banquet, local residents will toss moon blocks to determine the luzhu and toujia for the following year. Being nominated is regarded as a blessing and means one has been chosen by King Langan.

“There is not much change in the way we hold these rituals. But the makeshift temples built along the route of the pilgrimage are more sophisticated these days. We also see people celebrating the event in different ways such as drum formations, singing, and pole dancing. People even rent fancy sports cars to accompany the pilgrimage parade. It just keeps getting livelier,” says Cheng Yumin (陳玉敏), secretary of Qingshan Temple.

Moreover, during the pilgrimage every year, committee members will make a palanquin and put their kids on it to hand out a kind of Taiwanese begals to other worshipers. In the early days, the palanquin was lifted by men, and now people have switched to using a tricycle palanquin. Around two decades ago, residents living nearby would hold a joint “catering party” on the same day of the birthday banquet, but the scene is now a thing of the past due to evolving customs changes.

***A series of pilgrimages and religious activities are held to celebrate the birthday of King Lingan, which always attracts hordes of people every year.***

*(Photo / The Qingshan Club of Bangka Qingshan Temple)*

### || GREEN PILGRIMAGE

In response to environmental concerns, Qingshan Temple now requests *luzhu* and *toujia* to lower the volume of late night performances and cut down on their use of firecrackers. To restore street view and keep the environment clean, Taipei City Government also arranges garbage trucks to gather firecrackers and trash right after the pilgrimage ended.

The Qingshan King Rituals stick to the most authentic and traditional form of religious ceremony and showcase the devotion of Bangka residents as well as their local culture. The rituals serve as an irreplaceable spiritual mainstay. People participate in the exciting event to seek inner peace, and the process has become an integral element and an intangible cultural asset of Taipei City. T





*Hsu Yung-Chin enters a state of unity with the universe while writing an inscription. (Photo / Lin Weikai)*

## More Than Calligraphy: Hsu Yung-Chin, a Calligrapher Combining Old and New

WORDS BY / TRANSLATION BY / PHOTOS BY  
Xu Kaisen / Joe Henley / Lin Weikai, Hsu Yung-Chin

“The source of calligraphy is openness and limitlessness; it’s a flowing concept. A calligrapher’s inspiration can be anything or any scene in this world such as trees, stones, mountains, plains, the ocean, wind, and rain. The image and the word simply penetrate each other.” As such does calligrapher Hsu Yung-Chin (徐永進) define the art of calligraphy with his own erudite philosophy.



## || ENJOY ART AS IT IS AND LET NATURE RUNS ITS COURSE

Hsu Yung-Chin, now 67 years old, is a contemporary Taiwanese calligraphy artist who started his career, as do most, by learning traditional calligraphy skills. It was not until the late 1990s that he began to gravitate toward modern calligraphy and ink painting. Hsu's first encounter with calligraphy dates back to his days at Hsinchu Teachers College (新竹師專), where he began studying when he was 17 years old. At first, he learned calligraphy through self-study. Then he tried to imitate calligraphy master Liu Gongquan's (柳公權) letters again and again in order to improve his skills. Finally he began to receive instruction by professional calligraphy teachers. In just a year, he had cultivated a keen interest in writing calligraphy, which led to his decision of making it his life-long career.

Hsu recalls a time when a delegation of Japanese calligraphers came to Taiwan for a cultural exchange, and before departing Taiwan, they left a

rather cutting remark, saying that "In a few more years, all Taiwanese will have to come to Japan to learn calligraphy." Their comment raised dissatisfaction in Hsu's heart, and he determined to exhibit his own calligraphy pieces on Japanese soil one day. Consequently, Hsu exerted himself in his practice. When he lacked the money to buy paper and ink, he practiced by writing on bricks during the 10-minute recess between classes. By doing so, Hsu could accumulate around 80 to 90 minutes of extra practice every day.

After five decades of relentless practice, Hsu has come to a somewhat surprising conclusion: Working too hard is a sign of insufficient confidence. He has realized that during the early years of his calligraphy studies, he spent too much time practicing just to compete with other calligraphers, and that, according to his current beliefs, is the wrong approach. Instead, the



1 | 2 1,2 *“A Thousand-Mile Journey Begins with a Single Step” (left) and “The Voyage of Heart” (right) breaks free from the conventions of inscription, elevating calligraphy to a different level with its flowing and agile strokes. (Photo / Hsu Yung-Chin)*

quintessential nature of art is to let it run its course and let loose your inspiration. Only then have you reached that stage wherein you will be able to relish the true beauty of art.

## || THE STORY BEHIND THE MASTERPIECE “TAIWAN”

“Localness” is a great emphasis within Hsu’s calligraphy and paintings, and he tries to infuse his cultural empathy for the local to transform traditional calligraphy into a modern art form. In that vein, Hsu created a calligraphy piece with the word “TAIWAN” in 2001. Hsu bestowed an ingenious meaning upon each letter, and together, the letters became a cultural totem promoting Taiwan’s vibrant tourism. The letter “T” resembles Yehliu’s Queen’s Head (野柳女王頭) on the northern coastline; the letter “A” depicts a Taiwanese showing friendliness

toward a tourist; the “I” shows a tourist looking at the Queen’s Head. Meanwhile, the “W” looks like two people talking happily, a take on the strong sense of hospitality in Taiwanese people. Lastly, the letters “A” and “N” conjure up a heartwarming image of a grandma holding her grandchild.

A stroke in 2004 rendered Hsu’s right-side paralyzed. During that time, though emaciated and nearly unable to speak, Hsu kept writing with his left hand every day. “Before the stroke, my body could automatically adjust itself to reach equilibrium, but after the stroke I had to maintain balance with awareness,” Hsu says. “This is exactly what my recent creations are dealing with. I am trying to strike a balance between the old and the new.”

In 2011, Hsu held a solo exhibition called “Beyond Calligraphy” at the Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei (台北當代藝術館). Pieces exhibited included



calligraphy written with acrylic paints, 3D calligraphy sculptures, digital calligraphy shown on LCD screens that showcases the combination of digital technology and animation, interactive digital calligraphy, as well as “the art of dynamic audiobook” presented in a 180-degree panoramic theatre, a collaboration with U-Theatre (優人神鼓), a Taiwanese performance art troupe.

The exhibition was an avant-garde cross-border performance comprised of whimsical mixed media and forms of expression that brought the art of calligraphy from a mere 2D reading to a 3D experience.

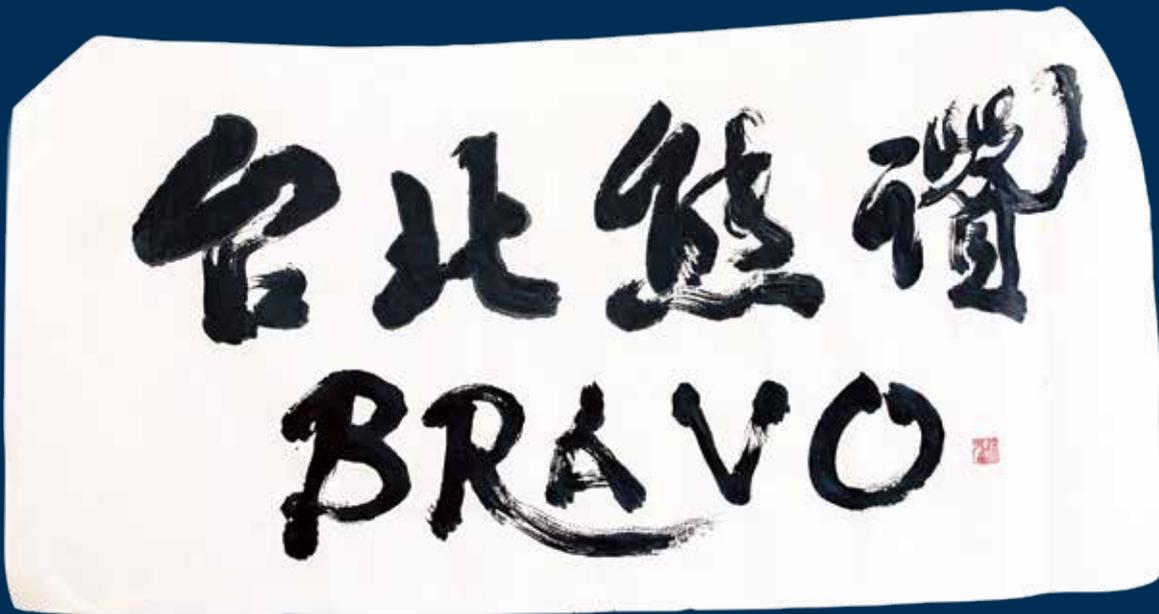
“In the past, we wrote words on paper, but now we can write words on clouds. Words can dance and spin to another height. Self-confinement and monotonousness do nothing but hinder the development of calligraphy,” Hsu says. At the age of 60, demonstrated his fantastic creativity and ability to cross and connect different fields of art, marks a huge transition in his career as a creator.

## || CALLIGRAPHY, MARRIAGE, AND NATURE

Mr. and Mrs. Hsu now live in Taipei’s Shilin District, also the place where their romance first began. Around 30 years ago, Hsu and Zheng Fang-He (鄭芳和) (now Hsu’s wife), were both invited to a traditional Chinese music concert. At the concert, the couple met for the first time, and Hsu was expressing his opinion about the rhythm of calligraphy and music to Zheng with *Ambush from Ten Sides* (十面埋伏), a masterpiece of Chinese Classical music, being intensely played on stage. Hsu’s enthusiasm caught Zheng’s attention; they started dating and walked down the aisle not long afterwards.

At that time, Hsu was teaching at Ming Chuan Business College (銘傳商專) and Mrs. Hsu at Chinese Culture University (中國文化大學). Thus they decided to form their family somewhere between the two, and that place turned out to be Shilin, an area scattered with rice fields and lotus ponds back then. The National Palace Museum and the Taipei Fine Arts Museum have since witnessed their frequent visits.

The couple’s love for nature also makes them regular visitors of Yangmingshan (陽明山), the Waishuang River (外雙溪), and the Shengren



- 1 | 2
1. *This calligraphy/painting creation exhibits the features and characteristics of Taiwan. (Photo / Lin Weikai)*
  2. *Hsu's creation "Taipei BRAVO" showcases his skills as well as the passion he pours into each work. (Photo / Lin Weikai)*

Waterfall (聖人瀑布). There are more than ten parks and bikeways in the neighborhood of Shilin where the couple can enjoy the scenic view of the left bank of the Shuang River (雙溪) on their bicycles whenever they want. The Chiang Kai-shek Shilin Residence (士林官邸) is practically their back yard. They come here to watch chrysanthemums and hike in their spare time, and the banyan trees here are their favorite painting subjects.

## STAUNCH CONCENTRATION CREATES PENETRATING STROKES

We asked Hsu to write "Taipei Bravo", the city mascot's name, to showcase his skills. Despite the fact that he is already a seasoned calligrapher with decades of experience, he still took a professional and strict attitude toward our request. After several practices, Hsu took hold of his calligraphy brush and wrote these letters with firm strength which seemed to penetrate the paper. "I don't even have the time to see clearly how my writing is," Hsu exclaimed after he finished writing. His comment is not hyperbole. When Hsu is holding a brush in his

hands, his focus becomes so concentrated and he lets his feelings take over. When Hsu is performing his art, the word "writing" might not be exactly precise; it is more appropriate to say that "the god of calligraphy" is performing the strokes via Hsu's hands.

"Good craftsmanship depends on the use of the right tools." This Chinese phrase is not quite applicable to Hsu, a person who is not extremely choosy when it comes to brush selection. In his opinion, the point is never the brush, but the person who holds it and the content of their heart. The philosophy corresponds to the poem hung on the wall in his home that says:

*Flowers are to spring as the moon is to autumn,  
A cool breeze is to summer as snow to winter;  
Allow no trivial matters to concern your heart,  
You will have the privilege to savor all the good  
times in this world.*

Calligraphy, according to Hsu Yung-Chin, is like his first crush, and there is nothing that can make him happier than writing calligraphy. Hsu still sticks to his daily routine of meditating, working out, and writing calligraphy. A life that may seem severe from the outside, but is rich and wonderful at its core. **T**

# Pick Up Your Weapon, Even If It's a Pen: A Conversation with Taipei Illustrator A ee mi

WORDS BY *Jenna Lynn Cody*      ILLUSTRATION BY *A ee mi*

PHOTOS BY *Yenting Lin, Taiwan Scene, Should Wang*

Your average visitor to Taipei might not know that the city is home to a nascent yet vibrant illustration and animation scene. Many Taiwanese illustrators pursue independent projects, and their work can be found at an increasing number of independent bookstores and art shops, or online through their own Facebook fan pages. The first Taipei Illustration Fair (台北插畫藝術節) was held in 2018, and art spaces around Taipei such as the Songshan Cultural and Creative Park regularly hold illustration exhibitions.

One of these emerging young artists is A ee mi, who is known for her neon-bright designs that incorporate elements of Taipei city — its colorful signboards, old shopfronts and streetscapes — with strong messages on a variety of social issues.

*TAIPEI* sat down with A ee mi near her home in Wanhua, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Taipei, to talk about her art, the city and the issues she cares about.



## || AN ARTIST FINDING HER VOICE

The first question of course went to the meaning behind her unique name. "It doesn't mean anything!" she says, laughing. "My English name was Aimee. Once I went to Seoul to attend a film festival for my thesis. I found that 'Aimee' was pronounced 'a-ee-mi' in Korean, and I felt that was more interesting."

Born and raised in Taipei, A ee mi has become an emerging voice in Taiwan's illustration scene as well as in comic and animation circles. After finishing her MFA and working briefly in New York, She returned to Taiwan in 2017 and gradually established herself as an illustrator, with the intention to explore herself more and express her views on various issues, such as gender equality, marriage equality and politics.

"A few years ago I didn't care about these things, I was just a normal person living my own life," A ee mi says. "Before I went to the States, there was the Sunflower Movement in Taipei. Hong Kong's Yellow Umbrella movement followed right after ... and these were happening continuously, and we couldn't just turn away and say "Oh, it's not something that's related to me." We have the power and the right to decide our future. It's something very important that we have to be aware of."



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1. **A ee mi is a Taipei illustrator and animator who focuses on Taiwan's cultural and social issues.** (Photo / Yenting Lin)
2. **The use of bold graphics and bright, fluorescent candy colors is one of the hallmarks of A ee mi's work.** (Photo/Yenting Lin)
3. **Trendy Zine is A ee mi's first physical publication, exploring the topic of fast fashion and hopes to attract more people to pay attention to this issue.** (Illustration / A ee mi)



## || PUTTING TAIPEI ONTO HER PALETTE

A ee mi's work incorporates many elements inspired by Taipei's unique aesthetic, a culture and place she feels familiar with, after the self-described "anxiety" of trying to survive in a foreign culture, alongside the financial stress of being a graduate student and then a young illustrator, in the United States. These inspirations for the "look" of her work come from signboards and neon lights, especially in older neighborhoods such as Bangka, also known as Wanhua nowadays. The use of bold graphics and bright, fluorescent candy colors is one of the hallmarks of her work. Street scenes and traditional businesses such as old-school massage parlors and barbershops also influence her designs.

Noticing the environment around her as a factor in her personal style was a realization that came only after leaving Taipei and returning again. "I didn't think that the streets I usually walk down or the views I usually see would be my inspiration," she says. "But after I came back, I started trying a new style and thinking about what I wanted to draw. It just came naturally. A lot of this early work was

simply street views of Ximending and things like the streets in Bangka and old barbershops. These things were kind of old but new to me."

A ee mi also describes the advantages and disadvantages of working as an illustrator in Taipei and the States. "The market in the US is mature but can be quite commercial sometimes," she points out. "Taipei's market might not be as mature, but artists can do whatever they want and they won't be criticized or judged as much; If you want to do something, you can just do it."

Meanwhile, A ee mi does not believe there's a distinct "Taiwanese" or "American" style of illustration. "We're in a kind of information explosion," she adds. "The boundaries have become vague." However, she is quite clear that the surface-level elements of her designs influence deeper notions of what she wants to convey, and vice versa. For her, the aesthetic of Taipei and the issues facing Taipei and Taiwan are intertwined: "The issues I care about are things that happen around me in the city and in this country."



- 1 2 1,2 A ee mi found that the old barbershops in Wanhua are very interesting subjects. (Photo / left: Taiwan Scene ; Illustration / right: A ee mi)
3. A ee mi incorporate elements of Taipei, such as the neon sign on street, into her design. (Photo / Should Wang)
4. The streetscapes and lifestyle around Wanhua are part of the inspirations for A ee mi's creation. (Photo / Yenting Lin)





► Video Interview

## || ILLUSTRATION AND SOCIAL ISSUES RISE IN TAIPEI

A ee mi's first foray into social issues was with *Trendy Zine* (流行刊物). Her partner is a clothing designer with his own brand, so when he held an exhibition, she decided to create a zine exploring the topic of fast fashion.

Asked why she chose fast fashion as a topic, she said she used to buy a lot of fast fashion because she didn't know what was happening behind the scenes with environmental problems and pollution. "But after my partner and I got together," she reflects, "we talked about these issues a lot. Fast fashion companies make a lot of clothes and... most of them don't sell out, so they just dump them in Third World countries. They say 'we're giving them clothes for free', but do they need that many clothes?"

A ee mi only had two weeks to complete *Trendy Zine*, and says that most of her projects happen like that. She does plan, but doesn't like to spend too much time planning. Instead, she prefers to create when the idea strikes her. Another example of this is her comic exploring marriage equality, *Red with Green* (紅配綠). "I actually started it three weeks before publishing it online, so I had to work very quickly," she says.

A ee mi has a strong interest and stake in gender equality, which her works frequently explore. "For me, gender and marriage equality just should be," she says. "I have a lot of gay friends in Taipei, but they deserve love just as we do. In university, my gay friends were having a hard time finding themselves and figuring out how they should be in this society."

She goes on to describe her experience growing up as a female in Taipei. "In junior high school, boys in your class will snap your bra, and they'll guess what color your underwear is," she said. "I was a very quiet girl in my class, so a lot of boys would target me. I didn't know how to fight back. Even now, I feel that's not right. I shouldn't have been treated that way. Nobody should."

A ee mi was driven by these experiences to create *Gender Education* (性別教育), a zine about how common Taiwanese swear words are sexist. "A lot of people said some really bad things that weren't even about my work," she notes. "Sarcastic comments like 'Feminist buffet!' People think political correctness is boring because it's become a widely-discussed topic, but just because it is widely discussed doesn't mean the problem is solved."

As an artist, A ee mi emphasizes that creating art to raise awareness of social issues is the most direct way to express how she feels. "Sometimes I feel kind of small," she says. "I don't have many resources to change something. For me and my friends who are in this field, we would usually feel kind of sad — we want to effect change, but we don't know if we can."

"Maybe some artists realize they can't really change anything, but they still do it, she continued. "That's the point — you don't need to think about whether you can have a greater impact, but you just need to do it, because you never know. Pick up your weapon, even if it's a pen."



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1. **Many of A ee mi's works concentrate on social issues such as gender education, marriage equality and fast fashion.** (Photo / Yenting Lin)
  2. **A ee mi highly recommends wildflowerbookstore, which is known for carrying a variety of independent works, both internationally and from Taiwan.** (Photo / Taiwan Scene)
  3. **Venue is a complex exhibition space, providing Taipei's artists and creators, including A ee mi, a stage to perform or to hold exhibition.** (Photo / Taiwan Scene)

## || THE TAIPEI ILLUSTRATION SCENE

A ee mi believes the Taipei illustration scene has changed a lot since she left in 2014. Since returning, she has been doing more independent, non-mainstream work, and, as a result, most of the people who have helped her are from independent bookstores in Taipei, or places that showcase more work from various art and design subcultures.

She goes on to add that "Those spaces have been popular in the United States for a long time, but were not that popular in Taipei before I left. But since then, a lot of bookstores opened, and they started to select different works from international or Taiwanese artists and were very willing to promote Taiwanese independent illustrators."

Although she's something of a homebody, A ee mi feels that physical "place" in a city is important. While anyone can post work online, she believes that if there's a place like a bookstore that people can go inside and experience, there might be a much greater impact on the individual. She describes such bookstores as places "where people can enter even if they don't know anything, after they come out, they've gotten something from that and maybe fallen in love with some of the work that they found."

In Taipei, A ee mi suggests that people go to the neighborhood around MRT Zhongshan station (捷運中山站). She specifically recommends wildflowerbookstore (荒花書店), PAR STORE, Waiting Room and Venue (濕地).



Wildflowerbookstore is known for carrying a variety of independent works, both internationally and from Taiwan. "No matter what you like, you'll find something." As for PAR, it is a record store that also carries curated zines and books; Waiting Room mainly selects works from Europe or the United States, and focuses on T-shirt brands, and artists from Taipei are also showcased. In addition, A ee mi held an exhibition at Venue last February and recommends that as well. Outside of Zhongshan, she notes Mangasick, a well-known shop in Gongguan area that sells comics originating in Taipei and Japan.

Young illustrators like A ee mi who just started a career in Taipei are ready to bloom and shine. Her rebellious spirit reflects the uninhibited environment and the free stage that Taipei has offered to artists in every field. Art can be a source of entertainment or joy, yet A ee mi uses her creations to raise public awareness regarding social issues with her pen, an artistic trend in Taipei that shows people the true power of art. **T**

TAIPEI LIFE



# Breaking into the Mainstream: Meet the Spanish B-boy Helping to Grow Hip-hop Dance Culture in Taipei

WORDS BY

Adam Hopkins

PHOTOS BY

Debby Wang, *Boyz In The Hood*

It's no secret that many foreigners move to Taiwan's capital every year; each one of them ending up here for their own unique reason. However, despite their differences in background and motivation, they all have one thing in common when they first arrive: they need to find a way to fit in, settle down and make Taipei their home. For 35-year-old Spaniard Krishna Palacio, it was his passion for breakdancing that helped him bridge the cultural gap.



## || BREAKING INTO TAIPEI

You would be forgiven for not knowing much about Taipei's breaking scene, but Krishna assures us it is alive and well, and a subculture that is very much on the rise. Originally from Madrid, he has lived in Taipei coming up on three years. He has been dancing since the age of 16, and his style concentrates mainly on footwork — moves with an emphasis on the movement of the feet.

"I knew only a little bit about the breaking scene in Taipei but it wasn't difficult for me to find out about it because breaking as a scene worldwide is not very big," he tells us. "Breaking has really grown a lot in the last decade. If you're active in the breaking community, you're going to know a lot of people."

As with a lot of things in life, getting your foot in the door in a new breaking scene is all about who you know. For Krishna, that's exactly how he got started here in Taipei: a b-boy friend from the Philippines put him in touch with some Taipei dancers. After settling down in Taipei, he kicked off his dancing life by joining a practice with local dancers, who all welcomed him with open arms and minds, and even invited him to more events.

- 1 | 2,3
1. **Spanish B-boy Krishna has been dancing in Taipei for three years and is intimately familiar with the breaking scene in Taiwan.** (Photo / Debby Wang)
  - 2,3 **Krishna specializes in moves with an emphasis on the movement of the feet.** (Photo / Debby Wang)

## LIVE IN TAIPEI AS A PURE DANCE ADDICT

Krishna practices at least twice a week and competes in regular events and competitions, such as cyphers and jams, held on weekends in Taipei. While he especially enjoys the competitive aspect of breaking, he's really been embracing the collaborative side of the art since coming to Taipei. Taking part in cyphers — informal gatherings where breakers will jam and dance together — allows him to mix with and learn from local dancers, and for him, that's an extremely enjoyable and rewarding part of breaking in this city. "The most interesting thing is sitting with people, talking with people and seeing what they do," he says.

Krishna also finds the distinguishing feature of Taipei's breaking scene is that dancers seem to focus on technical skills a lot. Young dancers enjoy challenging themselves to pull off big and impressive moves, similar to those seen in gymnastics competitions, though keeping up with the power moves isn't a big deal to Krishna. The language barrier, on the other hand, can occasionally prove to be an issue when interacting with local dancers. However, even if he can't communicate so well verbally, Krishna lets his breaking do the talking when his words can't. "It sounds like a cliché, but it's true," he laughs.

## FROM THE UNDERGROUND TO THE MAINSTREAM

"Coming here and spending time with these guys has enriched me as a dancer," Krishna admits. Every scene is different, whether it be Spain, Japan or here in Taiwan, and he has benefited hugely from being exposed to these different breaking environments where dancers and their moves are influenced by a variety of cultures and backgrounds. "Breaking is much more of a mainstream thing in Taipei than it is in Europe, for example," he explains. While still

very much an underground art form, in Taipei breaking is very popular with young people. High schools have dance clubs, where many forms of street dance are widely participated in, whereas back in his native Spain, or London where he also used to live, this isn't the case. It'd be even more underground, so to speak.

"There's a bunch of b-boys in Taipei who live professionally from dancing. They have schools. They can also make a living from dancing," he reveals, somewhat to our surprise. But this just goes to show the popularity of the art in this city. Enough people are invested and engaged in breaking that opening a school to run classes and performances is a viable way to make a living.

Krishna likes to share tips at practices with those who are passionate. These days, he chooses not to make money from dancing out of principle. For him, teaching for free is equally, if not more, rewarding. Instead, he designs boardgames for work. It's a different type of creative expression from breaking, but something he enjoys nonetheless. "At the end of the day, it's still creativity," he smiles. He goes on to tell us that a lot of people in Taipei's breaking scene have jobs that are a world away from dancing and hip-hop culture. One b-boy friend of his, for example, is an engineer. His crew back in Spain had a lawyer and a dentist.

Taipei lends itself well to breaking and street dance, and you can often find people dancing in parks and public squares. "I can dance pretty much everywhere in Taipei," Krishna says, "and that's how easy it is if you want to dance here." In the whole Taipei City, Taipei Cinema Park (臺北市電影主題公園) in the Ximending area is a popular spot for breaking that Krishna frequents. Complete with murals, graffiti and people skateboarding, it's a place that truly captures the feel of breaking in the city. It's both known and unknown, in plain sight yet underground. It's welcoming but with a slight edge to it — sort of like breaking itself.

***"Breaking is much more of a mainstream thing in Taipei than it is in Europe."***



*Krishna thinks break dance is relatively mainstream in Taipei and he can dance freely in the public without worry.  
(Photo / Debby Wang)*



## || LOCAL STYLE, SERIOUS DANCERS

When asked about big names in Taipei's breaking scene, one crew that quickly comes to mind for Krishna is Boyz In The Hood — a local collective of like-minded dancers who organize a lot of jams in Taipei, hold classes and are looking to grow Taipei's breaking scene. He also gave a shout out to a b-boy named Bojin who runs a school and is doing a lot to sell breaking and hip-hop culture to a wider audience across Taiwan, as well as less developed countries such as Nepal. Krishna championed the work of his Taiwanese peers and also the more mainstream nature of the art form here in Taipei which is allowing it to reach a bigger audience.

Despite its larger than usual popularity here in Taipei, breaking events still aren't greatly publicized

and your best bet to find an event to attend is by searching on Facebook. It's one of those things, "If you're in, you know," Krishna enlightens us. However, one big meet to look out for this year is Boyz In The Hood's ten-year anniversary event on October 11-12 at Gongguan Riverside Plaza (公館水岸廣場) in Taipei Water Park (臺北自來水園區), which will include one-on-one battles, crew battles and more. You'll even be able to catch Krishna himself in action.



**Boyz In The Hood**



<https://www.facebook.com/bzhdtw/>



*Local dance group Boyz In The Hood has lots of professional dancers and often holds dance-related events in Taipei. (Photo / Boyz In The Hood)*



► Video Interview

## || A VISION OF THE FUTURE DANCE SCENE IN TAIPEI

Taipei, as a dynamic city, can be young and energetic, but at this point in Krishna's life and career, he is concentrating on longevity. "I've been dancing already for 18 years and I want to be able to dance until I really can't anymore," he says with a grin. So, with longevity in mind, he looks set to be a mainstay of Taipei's growing breaking scene for the next decade and beyond. This is a scene that, thanks to the current popularity of breaking with Taipei's youth, will be healthier than it's ever been ten years down the line.

There's no doubt that breaking is already pretty big in Taiwan for something so underground, and it's only going to get bigger. Given the size of the country and its population in relation to how many people know about and actively take part in breaking, the Taipei scene is fairly substantial. "There are dancers everywhere," Krishna says. "People make a living from this, it's professionally big and people know about it. You mention breaking and people know what it is." One thing that the scene in Taipei has to its advantage compared to the likes of Europe or America is its compact nature. Taipei is so small that dancers can technically attend every jam if they are prepared to put in the effort.

Underground yet mainstream. Small yet big. Breaking in Taipei — and Taiwan as a whole — seems to be going from strength to strength and could one day help put the city on the map as a hub of dance, culture and expression. With breaking being talked about as potential event at the 2024 Paris Olympics, maybe one day we'll see a Taipei dancer stand on the podium with a gold medal around their necks. Perhaps we're getting ahead of ourselves, but watch this space nonetheless. **T**

***"I've been dancing already for 18 years and I want to be able to dance until I really can't anymore."***



# The Faithful Gourmand: Enjoying Taiwanese Brunch at Dadaocheng Cisheng Temple

Foods taste better  
when shared.

WORDS BY / TRANSLATION BY / PHOTOS BY  
Ryan Hong / Joe Henley / Ryan Hong

Faith gathers people together. Just as temples in Taiwan are centers of prayer and divination, they also allow people to gather and chat over a cup of tea. But faith also serves as a beacon. There are different tastes in different parts of Taiwan, and you can always find the most authentic snacks by walking through the grand temple entrances. Following in the footsteps of the faithful, you are sure to find the best local delicacies.

There is perhaps no place like Taiwan, where religion and food are so deeply connected. In Taiwan, there's an old saying: "tsē lāng hó-tsia hih" (濟人好呷物), which means "foods taste better when shared." The temple entrance and square are where large numbers of people come and go, and, understandably, become a place bustling with not only people but also all kinds of delicious street snacks, Oolong tea flavored melon seeds and noodles. If you want to eat authentic, cultural, humanistic, and local delicacies, the temple entrance is the best place to go.

## TAIPEI DELICACIES AT CISHENG TEMPLE

From the south to the north, the temple entrance in every city acts as a kind of food distribution center. The flavors of local gourmets are rooted in the snack stalls in such places as Kaohsiung Guandi Temple (高雄關帝廟), Lugang Mazu Temple (鹿港天后宮), and Hsinchu City God Temple (新竹城隍廟). These places are also where local customs are always on full display. Similarly, Cisheng Temple in Dadaocheng (大稻埕慈聖宮) is where the flavors of Taipei can be found and enjoyed to the fullest. Cisheng Temple is unique in the highly-developed city of Taipei. Its main entrance is not on a main road, but in Lane 49 of Baoan Street (保安街), where lies a large temple yard and several banyan trees. Without over-decorated neon signage nor luxurious, modern facilities, it retains a most traditional yard for people to chat within, as well as a whole row of authentic snack stalls along the fence surrounding the temple entrance.



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1. **Cisheng Temple is favored by the local faithful, making it one of the three biggest temples in Dadaocheng.**
2. **There are so many food options in the Cisheng Temple neighborhood, and all of them are heartily recommended by locals.**
3. **There's a row of street food stalls in front of Cisheng Temple, where the food reminds locals of a bygone era.**

## **SOLD OUT BY THE AFTERNOON: BRUNCH IN DADAOCHENG**

The snacks found at Cisheng Temple are characterized by the limited timeframe in which they are available. If you come early in the morning or late in the afternoon, you might be out of luck. However, if you are there in time for brunch, your timing couldn't be better. The Taiwan-style brunch here is provided in a nearly ritualistic manner: it must be served before the sun reaches its zenith, with one person sitting alone having meat congee (肉粥) or sharing fried rice and *ding bian cuo* (pot sticker soup, 鼎邊趖) with friends. You can have chicken rolls (雞捲) with steamed buns (饅頭) or four-herb soup (四神湯) with fried rice in different combinations for several days without worry of the meal becoming monotonous. What remains unchanged is the sunshine in the morning, the temple square full of human kindness, and the same good taste that has been a mainstay here for three generations and counting.

## **START WITH SOUP: A NOURISHING APPETIZER**

The soup at Cisheng Temple is what this place is best known for. After all, a bowl of hot soup is the best way to awaken one's appetite in the morning. A bowl of Ye Family Meat Congee (葉家肉粥) in the hands of a customer is one of the common morning sights at Cisheng Temple. Rice boiled with broth is not as soft in its consistency as Cantonese congee (廣東粥), but still chewy. The most recommended way is to enjoy it with all kinds of fried food, especially the combination of fried red-yeast pork (紅糟肉) and meat congee. A mouth of fried salty and crispy skin wrapped in half of the fat and lean pork with a mouth of congee is the most authentic flavor of all.

Of course, you should not miss out on the pork rib soup (排骨湯). This clear soup with a layer of light oil is mixed with lard and radish. The stewed pork ribs

are stewed lightly and the meat falls away from the bones with the gentlest bite. With small radishes cut into cubes, the flesh and bones are made fresher and sweeter. The soup is so lip-smacking good that you will want to scoff the entire bowl in two or three mouthfuls.

Speaking of traditional soups, four-herb soup is another authentic Taiwanese food that is a must-try. Drinking four-herb soup in Taipei is absolutely indispensable along with a hot steamed meat bun! This special custom can be seen almost exclusively in Taipei, and at Cisheng Temple as well. The four-herb soup provided at the entrance of Cisheng Temple has a sweet taste of sugarcane, and its pig intestine (豬粉腸) is especially soft and tender. When having the steamed meat buns, pull apart the steamed fluffy wrapper, dip it in the soup and eat it, and then take another bite of the filling with its perfect proportion of fat and lean meat. Your taste buds will be absolutely satisfied!



## || CHANGE OF RICE: HAVE A TASTE HERE

The most delicious Taiwanese rice found among the food stalls at Cisheng Temple is probably that prepared at the famous A-lan's fried rice (阿蘭炒飯). Different from the general fried rice that is fried in a frying pan, the one made by A-lan is made in an iron plate to make the rice more separated and distinct. The rice is evenly coated in a light soy sauce and decorated with scattered bits of fried egg. The dish encompasses an appetizing fragrance that leaves you with endless cravings later on.

Rice can be cooked in countless forms, and *ding bian cuo* is a case in point. *Ding bian cuo* is made by spreading indica rice around the sides of a pan. There are many other ingredients in A-lan's *ding bian cuo*, which includes not only daylily and bamboo shoots, both of which are interesting additions, but also pork liver, shrimp, and lean meat. In addition to this specialty, A-lan also serves up many other rice-based dishes.



## || THE GOLDEN CHICKEN ROLL WITH NO NAME

No matter what kind of food you like, you must try the famous golden chicken rolls when visiting Cisheng Temple. What's interesting about this famous little shop is that it doesn't have a name. The sign only says "chicken roll" in very large characters. As time went by, everyone came to call it "Nameless Chicken Roll." Chicken rolls don't actually have chicken inside, but they're filled with onions and lean meat. The crispy, deep-fried skin is dipped in a savory sweet chilli sauce. Only after swallowing it can you understand why a dish that hasn't had a name for decades sticks in people's minds.

The food in Lane 49 of Baoan Street retains the simplest human kindness in its skilled preparation. The entrance and square of Cisheng Temple is a Taipei institution suspended in time, which has not changed for decades. You can take a leisurely morning stroll, chat with shop owners, order a few favorite dishes, sit on the tables and chairs in the temple square, and quietly eat a bowl of Taiwanese, Taipei-style and Dadaocheng-style brunch. **T**

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1. **Locals will have four-herb soup with a meat bun, which is a unique combination in Taipei.**
2. **Ding bian cuo showcases the diversification of Taiwanese rice culture.**
3. **The shop that sells chicken rolls in Dadaocheng doesn't have a name, yet the dish's crispy texture impresses people again and again.**



## Not Another Hipster Café : Taipei's Old-School Coffee Shops

WORDS BY

*Francesca Chang*

PHOTOS BY

*Samil Kuo, Taiwan Scene, Nathan Dumlao*

The lively city of Taipei has recently experienced a coffee craze led by a young generation that is amped up about high quality beans, trendy atmospheres, and unique café themes that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Taipei has also become a paradise for coffee lovers as just one drink order will usually grant you access to a cozy spot in a café for the entire day. What's more, many of the capital's upscale coffee shops are run by professional baristas who have won international roasting and concoction contests. But although Taipei has garnered international attention as one of the world's top coffee cities because of these "hipster" shops, there remains a coffee culture nostalgic for the days when Taipei's cafés were not prized for their international status, but rather for their steadfast standing as a hallmark of the times.

Here, we explore five coffee shops that have remained standing in Taipei since as early as the end of World War II.



## COFFEE FROM THE CHIANG KAI-SHEK ERA: ASTORIA CAFÉ | 明星咖啡館

The retreat of the Nationalist government (國民政府) from China to Taiwan in 1949 is a widely known story. However, a little known fact is that the Han Chinese people were not the only ones who came to Taiwan during that time. During that same year, six Russian emigres came to Taipei from Shanghai (上海), where they had been in exile after the Russian Revolution. Together with their Taiwanese business partner Archibold Chien (簡錦錐), the entrepreneurs opened a bakery featuring soft Russian candy previously available only to the Russian royal family, and Mazurka walnut cakes which were modified by using local dried longan instead of dried cherries. While these pastries were sold on the first floor, the second floor offered coffee and drinks.

The Russian-style coffee house started to gain popularity among intellectuals in 1959 when poet Chou Meng-tieh (周夢蝶) began selling poetry and

other literary works outside the bakery. Unlike other shop owners on the block, Chien allowed the poet to conduct business right outside the café doors. As a result, many of Taipei's young writers, including those who later became Taiwan's key literary figures, began frequenting Astoria, drawing inspiration in a welcoming environment with no time restrictions as they wrote. Astoria also attracted important political figures including the late President Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), who had studied in the Soviet Union for over a decade, and his Russian wife Faina Chiang Fang-liang (蔣方良).

Despite being closed for an intermittent 15-year period, Astoria is alive and well today, complete with the original European furniture and Russian pastries that once attracted poets, businessmen, and politicians of Taipei. For a special treat, be sure to order the Russian black tea; it features a generous serving of brandy.



*Astoria Café is a Russian-style coffee house known for its European style decoration and Russian pastries.*  
(Photo / Samil Kuo)

📍 5, Sec. 1, Wuchang St., Zhongzheng Dist. ⌚ 10:00am - 9:00pm



*Fong Da's famous ice drip coffee and traditional walnut cookies are their signature products.  
(Photo / Samil Kuo)*

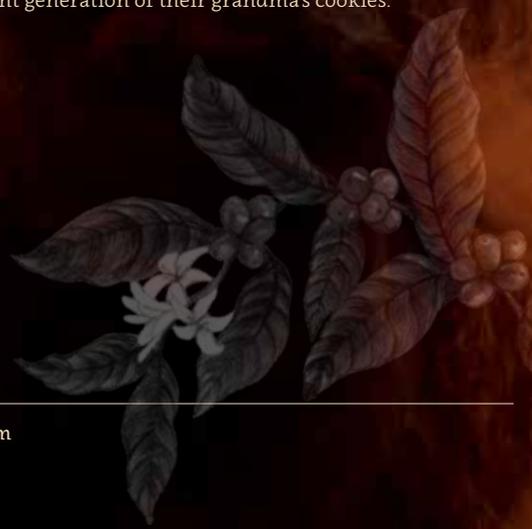


**COFFEE FROM THE 1950S:  
FONG DA COFFEE | 蜂大咖啡**

Located in the hip district of Ximending (西門町), Fong Da Coffee has stood the test of time, being the first café in Taipei to introduce the novel concept of iced coffee in 1956. Since then, this café has kept its cool by continuing to use vintage equipment to grind and brew coffee on its street-facing countertops, a site that attracts passersby and keeps the never-ending queue of customers entertained. In addition to these old machines, Fong Da has also preserved its commitment to high quality coffee, offering 12 different blends.

Additionally, there are two things impossible to miss when passing by Fong Da: a meter-tall iced coffee maker (which only makes four cups every six hours) and large, tempting, glass cookie jars that line an outdoor cookie station corner.

Characterized by a small, narrow walkway and a line out the door, this busy establishment is an exception to most of Taipei's coffee shops that refuse to give customers a time limit. Visitors are granted an hour, tops, and then the next round of customers is ready to take their seats. While you're there, be sure to order their famous iced coffee, and approach the cookie counter directly for their traditional walnut cookies and soft bean paste pastries that remind the current generation of their grandma's cookies.



📍 42, Chengdu Rd., Wanhua Dist. ⌚ 8:00am - 10:00pm



## COFFEE FROM TAIWAN'S ECONOMIC MIRACLE: MI FENG CAFE | 蜜蜂咖啡

Between the 1950s and 1980s, Taiwan experienced a rapid period of industrialization and economic growth known as the Taiwan Miracle. Mi Feng (which translates to “bee”) Cafe, not to be confused with another “Bee Cafe” in Taipei, was a true representation of these times. During the island's economic growth, coffee was seen as a symbol of status. If you could afford to sit at a café and leisurely sip coffee all day, it was a sign that your business was prospering.

Opened in 1978, Mi Feng Cafe catered to this type of clientele. The current owner, Ms. Tsai, still reminisces about the customers' stock market chatter, the smell of cigarette smoke in the air, and the sound of Japanese music playing in the background. Mi Feng Cafe was a Japanese franchise that had 20 shops around Taipei. Today, Ms. Tsai's branch is the only establishment still standing. Her willingness to sit and chat with us while showing us

photos from the café's early days is representative of the café's entire vibe: friendly, homey, and slow-paced. Her café is a piece of Taipei history stuck in time: everything from the furniture to the original sugar containers have remained the same since 1978.

Mi Feng's prized honey coffee is a special blend of beans prepared with the old-school siphon brewing method whereby a vacuum with two glass chambers is used to heat — but never boil — coffee beans. Her shop is also famous for its Taiwanese braised pork knuckle dish and lemon juice mixed with a raw egg. She still serves warm almond tea, a local classic. Be sure to check out this piece of Taipei history soon — Ms. Tsai has plans to sell the shop!



*Mi Feng's honey coffee is a special blend of beans which has conquered the taste buds of many Taipei regulars over the last 40 years. (Photo / Samil Kuo)*

📍 3-2, Qingdao E. Rd., Zhongzheng Dist. ⌚ 7:30am - 8:30pm ; Closed on Sunday



*The Old Tree Coffee, famous for its siphon coffee, has stood on Xinsheng South Road for more than 30 years and is still the first choice for Taipei coffee connoisseurs. (Photo / Samil Kuo)*



## OLD COFFEE TURNED HIP: OLD TREE COFFEE | 老樹咖啡

Old Tree Coffee is a café originally from Southern Taiwan that made its way up to the coffee paradise of Taipei. The inspiration behind the venue's name was originally from a Chinese poem of Ma Zhiyuan (馬致遠), an acclaimed poet of the Yuan dynasty (元朝), that mentions an "old tree." However, when the shop's owner, a passionate coffee aficionado, opened the third branch in Taipei in 1984, he was inspired by the old, towering trees in the Wanhua District where he grew up, and very carefully designed the furniture and decor with the Baroque style that still stands in the Taipei branch, not only to embody his memory but also to create a relaxing atmosphere for the customers.

Established during Taiwan's great economic boom in the eighties, prominent businessmen would not only come here to relax, but also to conduct business deals. One interesting fact about Taipei's long-standing coffee shops is that they previously stayed

open later than imaginable for any Western-style café. That is because before the days of the internet and smartphones, Taipei's nightlife thrived with lively bars, musical venues, and cafés. After partying or drinking in the evening, businessmen would visit cafés like Old Tree to sober up with a cup of coffee and conduct business until the wee hours of the morning. Back then, Old Tree remained open until 2 am. Now, it closes at 11:30 pm.

Now one of the most expensive coffee shops in Taipei, a cup of their highly popular proprietary blend (both dark and medium roasts) will cost you around NT\$300. Another specialty is its Irish coffee, served with just a hint of whisky. Unlike other cafés, very few dining options are available to avoid interfering with the scent and taste of their finely curated beans. If you plan to go, make a reservation first. This place is often fully booked.

📍 60, Sec. 1, Xinsheng S. Rd., Zhongzheng Dist. ⌚ 10:00am - 11:30pm

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**EAST MEETS WEST:  
WANG YI COFFEE | 王義咖啡**

For over 30 years, Wang Yi has held to tradition while adapting to the modern coffee trends of Taipei. This unique venue is famed for serving a very traditional Taiwanese dish alongside its specialty roasts: beef noodles. A Taiwanese staple, beef noodles are a dish made of savory beef broth, stewed or red braised beef, vegetables and perfectly Chinese noodles. The unconventional owners add a little twist to this dish by adding spicy pepper to give the broth an unexpected kick. Although such a hearty meal may not be what Westerners first think of when envisioning a coffee shop, the combination of local food and high quality coffee works well in the foodie city of Taipei that continues to seamlessly blend the old with the new. In fact, Wang Yi's beef noodles sell out practically every day — sometimes even before lunch! Coffee is usually served after customers are finished with their meal. Even if there is a line (which there usually is) customers are allowed to take their time to enjoy their cup of coffee, served with sweet honey cake, upon finishing their meal.

Wang Yi prides itself on catering to a very local Taiwanese market who appreciate the authenticity of its establishment. Although the baristas brew high quality coffee beans from around the world using modern equipment, the shop relies solely on word-of-the-mouth marketing, with an almost non-existent presence on the internet besides a Google map location. The proprietors of this shop prefer to keep it this way, declining almost every interview or press opportunity presented to them. Such a low-key profile proves that quality and familiarity can withstand the test of time in a modern city like Taipei.

Despite Western influence and the success of modern, hipster coffee shops, these five venues above have remained true to their origins, continuing their own coffee traditions and preserving a piece of Taipei's history for the old and the new, one cup at a time. 📍



*Wang Yi Coffee has long been popular among locals by serving beef noodles alongside its after-meal specialty coffee for many years. (Photo / Taiwan Scene)*

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

For traveling between Taipei and Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, whether by inexpensive, high-quality shuttle, safe and fast taxi, high-grade professional airport limo service, or the brand new Taoyuan Airport MRT, you're spoiled for choice in satisfying your particular time and budget.

### TAXI

**Service locations:** West side of the Arrivals Hall of Terminal I and west side of the Arrivals Hall of Terminal II

**One-way fare:** Meter count plus 15%, with freeway tolls extra; average fare to Taipei around NT\$1,100

**Terminal I Arrivals Hall taxi-service counter:** Tel: (03) 398-2832

**Terminal II Arrivals Hall taxi-service counter:** Tel: (03) 398-3599

### PASSENGER SHUTTLE BUS

**Service locations:** Terminal 1 bus pickup point: Bus pickup zone at B1 Arrivals Hall. Terminal 2 bus pickup point: Bus pickup zone at the east arcade of the 1st floor Arrivals Hall.

**Shuttle-service companies:** Kuo-Kuang Motor Transportation, Evergreen Bus, Citi Air Bus

**One-way fare:** NT\$65~145

**Travel time:** 40~60 minutes depending on routes (60~90 minutes for Citi Air Bus, which has more stops)

**Schedule:** Every 15~30 minutes

### TAOYUAN AIRPORT MRT

**Service Locations:** A12 Airport Terminal 1 Station & A13 Airport Terminal 2 Station

**One-way fare:** NT\$150

**Service Time:** First train - to Taipei 05:57 / to Airport 06:00 ; Last train - to Taipei 23:35 / to Airport 23:37

## METRO TAIPEI

**Service Hours:** 6:00am - 12:00 midnight **Customer Service Hotline:** (02) 218-12345

### METRO TICKETS



**ONE-WAY TRIP TICKET**  
NT\$20 - NT\$65



**DAY PASS**  
NT\$150



**24HR PASS**  
NT\$180



**48HR PASS**  
NT\$280



**72HR PASS**  
NT\$380

### IC CARDS

Easy Card (left) and iPASS (right) are available at MRT stations and convenience stores. Just add value before entering the system; the fare for each journey will be deducted appropriately. These cards also have an e-purse function for use at convenience stores and other authorized businesses, and for YouBike rentals.



### TAIPEI FUN PASS

There are three types of Taipei Fun Pass available: the Unlimited version (attraction+transportation), Exploring version (attractions only) and Transportation version (transportation only). You can visit Taipei City, New Taipei City and Keelung City within the validity of the pass.



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4 Day Pass  
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**Transportation**  
1 Day Pass/2 Day Pass/  
3 Day Pass/5 Day Pass/  
Maokong Gondola  
1 Day Pass  
NT\$180/310/440/700/350

### TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

**Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communication:** 0800-011-765

**Information for Foreigner in Taiwan:** 0800-024-111

**Taipei Citizen Hotline:** 1999 (Outside Taipei City, please dial (02) 2720-8889)



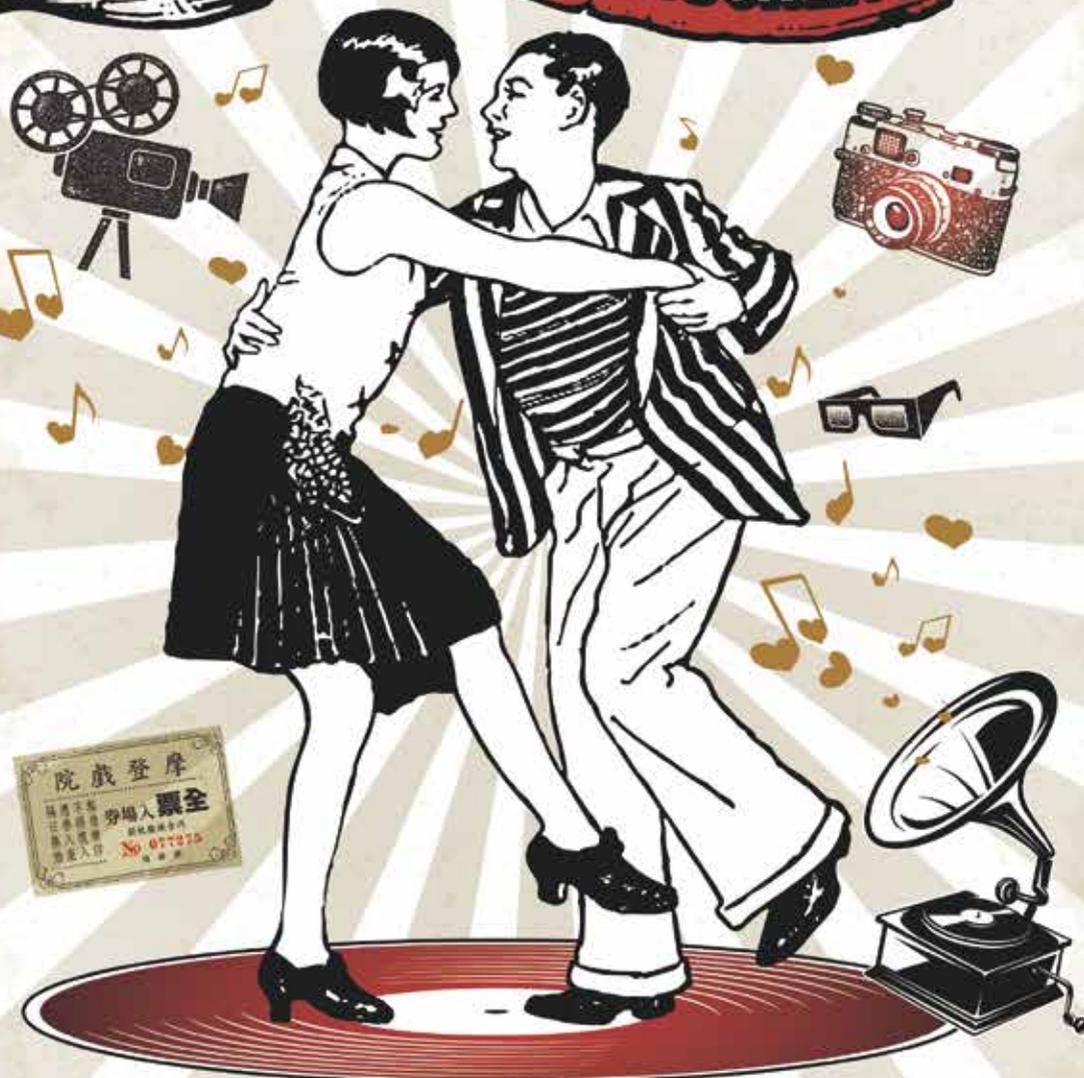
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