

Co-living in This World (English)

Chapter I:

Taiwan is no stranger to 'outsiders'. From its colonization by the Dutch and then the Spanish, to the Han-Chinese immigrants during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Japanese immigrants during the era of Japanese occupation, and the two million military dependents brought by the retreat of the Government of the Republic of China to Taiwan. Her story has been written by a large amount of tolerance and coexistence.

Now alongside capitalism and globalization, this island has inevitably welcomed the modern 'outsider', or the migrant worker so to speak.

The word 'history' always gives us the illusion that time and space are far away, but quick glances around our city testify against this, take the ASEAN Square in Taichung, the Zhongping Commercial District in Taoyuan, or even 'little Indonesia' close by Taipei Main Station. The lives of migrant workers have thoroughly shaped the appearance of Taiwan. Even so, they, who speak unfamiliar languages and live their life in different ways to ours have always existed in Taiwan as 'others'.

-How do you think the locals think of you?

-How do you want the locals to think of you?

Participants within this artwork are brought to an entirely different state by these two questions. The two seemingly similar questions actually have different tenses. The former has already happened, the latter is in the unknown future; the former expresses the facts, and the latter draws the ideals.

In the exhibition room, the viewer is greeted by multiple life-size portraits, of six individuals with distinct personalities. They have their own dreams, worries, hobbies, feelings of inferiority, pride, confusion, and perseverance. Everything that makes us characteristically human.

The audience are unaware that the six participants consist of two types of people: Taiwanese who have worked abroad and foreigners who come to work in Taiwan. In this situation 'outsiders' and 'locals' mirror each other.

Perhaps simply by facing towards this empty chair, one day I will become you and you will become I.

Miss. Bench
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