

WEBVTT

00:00:12.830 --> 00:00:16.260

>> We started with Minneapolis with

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the Pillsbury House Theater which was two blocks from the Floyd memorial.

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Then we talked to a few puppeteer friends in Delhi and

00:00:29.150 --> 00:00:32.390

how they responded to the migrant crisis that was brought on by

00:00:32.390 --> 00:00:36.400

India's very severe lockdowns at the start of the pandemic.

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We talked to people in Chile,

00:00:39.005 --> 00:00:44.630

in Santiago and their struggle for constitutional reform and now what that

00:00:44.630 --> 00:00:47.660

means now that they have this right which is fairly

00:00:47.660 --> 00:00:51.210

fraught of rewriting their constitution.

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Then at the beginning of this year,

00:00:53.150 --> 00:00:57.845

we spoke to Joy Mboya from Nairobi and looking at the art scene in

00:00:57.845 --> 00:01:02.840

East Africa and how decolonization practices have happened there.

00:01:02.840 --> 00:01:08.990

We're extremely excited to have Wen Yau today with us.

00:01:08.990 --> 00:01:12.860

Nick will be formally introducing you to her,

00:01:12.860 --> 00:01:16.765

but I wanted to introduce you to my wonderful colleague, Nick Bartlett.

00:01:16.765 --> 00:01:22.895

He's an anthropologist of China with training in medical anthropology and psychoanalysis.

00:01:22.895 --> 00:01:26.480

His research interests include addiction and recovery, labor,

00:01:26.480 --> 00:01:31.295

embodiment, historicity, civil society, and psychoanalytic practices.

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His first book, *Recovering Histories: Life and Labor After*

00:01:34.980 --> 00:01:39.280

Heroin in Reform-Era China was published in 2020.

00:01:39.280 --> 00:01:42.230

His next project, and I would love to hear about this

00:01:42.230 --> 00:01:45.095

more at some point, amongst other things,

00:01:45.095 --> 00:01:48.150

is a collaborative book exploring the affect

00:01:48.150 --> 00:01:52.020

of intensities of life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

00:01:52.020 --> 00:01:57.370

Thank you, Nick, and please join me in [NOISE] welcoming Nick and Wen Yau.

00:01:58.580 --> 00:02:01.640

>> Thank you so much for putting this on and I'm really

00:02:01.640 --> 00:02:04.835

excited to be here today with Wen Yau.

00:02:04.835 --> 00:02:08.930

Let me provide a brief introduction and then she's going to give

00:02:08.930 --> 00:02:11.720

a presentation for 40 minutes or so and then hopefully

00:02:11.720 --> 00:02:15.255

we'll have time for a collective conversation at the end.

00:02:15.255 --> 00:02:17.610

As a cross-media artist,

00:02:17.610 --> 00:02:19.550
researcher, curator, and writer,

00:02:19.550 --> 00:02:21.590
Wen Yau has focused on performance,

00:02:21.590 --> 00:02:24.770
live art, and social practices for the last few years.

00:02:24.770 --> 00:02:28.160
Her work often grappled with cultural difference and intimacy in

00:02:28.160 --> 00:02:31.835
public space and has been presented internationally.

00:02:31.835 --> 00:02:36.035
She's worked as a researcher at Asia Art Archive,

00:02:36.035 --> 00:02:39.350
and she obtained a PhD at the Academy of Visual Arts,

00:02:39.350 --> 00:02:42.560
Hong Kong Baptist University with their thesis titled

00:02:42.560 --> 00:02:44.600
Performing Identities: Performative

00:02:44.600 --> 00:02:48.130
Practices in Post Handover Hong Kong Art and Activism.

00:02:48.130 --> 00:02:50.540
In 2015 through 2016, she served as

00:02:50.540 --> 00:02:53.660
a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Performance Studies Department at

00:02:53.660 --> 00:02:56.285
the Northwestern University and she contributes

00:02:56.285 --> 00:02:59.905
frequently to various periodicals in Hong Kong and Asia.

00:02:59.905 --> 00:03:03.190
Please join me in welcoming Wen Yau.

00:03:04.700 --> 00:03:08.160
>> Thank you, Nick, for your introduction,

00:03:08.160 --> 00:03:18.000
and thank you Shayoni for your invitation to these very meaningful

pandemic panels.

00:03:18.350 --> 00:03:22.080

As introduced by Nick,

00:03:22.080 --> 00:03:24.345

I am an artist/researcher,

00:03:24.345 --> 00:03:27.630

that's what I always call myself,

00:03:27.630 --> 00:03:32.130

and I'm specializing in performative and social practices.

00:03:34.070 --> 00:03:41.870

I found it a very meaningful occasion for me to speak to you now because it's

00:03:41.870 --> 00:03:46.640

a very difficult time here in my city because of

00:03:46.640 --> 00:03:52.520

the pandemic and also because of the sociopolitical situation.

00:03:52.520 --> 00:03:58.355

Today, I will focus on a few socially engaged projects that I have been

00:03:58.355 --> 00:04:04.830

involved in, in a subtle manner or maybe secretive manner.

00:04:06.290 --> 00:04:12.720

The title of my talk is Hong Kong and Persistent Resistance.

00:04:16.520 --> 00:04:19.370

Just to set the stage,

00:04:19.370 --> 00:04:21.815

maybe I give you some background about

00:04:21.815 --> 00:04:26.210

what's happening in Hong Kong in the past two years.

00:04:26.210 --> 00:04:30.770

In 2019, in the name of

00:04:30.770 --> 00:04:37.880

extraditing a Hong Kong resident to Taiwan where he murdered his girlfriend,

00:04:37.880 --> 00:04:40.445

also a Hong Konger,

00:04:40.445 --> 00:04:48.050

the government proposed an amendment bill that allows extradition to China.

00:04:48.050 --> 00:04:52.825

It means like including Taiwan under the One China Policy.

00:04:52.825 --> 00:05:00.140

The burning concerns over losing our judicial autonomy in Hong Kong and

00:05:00.140 --> 00:05:08.705

the government's unresponsiveness turned into continuous protests that last for months.

00:05:08.705 --> 00:05:12.870

Actually, this is April 2019.

00:05:13.210 --> 00:05:16.865

Every month we have a peaceful rally.

00:05:16.865 --> 00:05:23.250

You see that I was in the middle of the protest.

00:05:23.320 --> 00:05:26.040

But that might turn somewhere,

00:05:26.040 --> 00:05:31.755

things escalate and violence escalate

00:05:31.755 --> 00:05:39.090

after rounds of pepper spray,

00:05:39.090 --> 00:05:43.950

tear gas, or even water cannon deployed by

00:05:43.950 --> 00:05:50.655

the police and deployed indiscriminately.

00:05:50.655 --> 00:05:56.695

Then in November, the campus of the university has been raided by the police.

00:05:56.695 --> 00:06:00.665

This is the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

00:06:00.665 --> 00:06:11.715

The campus has been under siege for 13 days and more than 1,300 people were arrested.

00:06:11.715 --> 00:06:16.245

Meanwhile, in the same month,

00:06:16.245 --> 00:06:20.670

there was a district council election.

00:06:20.670 --> 00:06:26.220

Actually, the majority of seats has

00:06:26.220 --> 00:06:34.620

been got by the whole Democratic candidates.

00:06:34.620 --> 00:06:38.730

Actually, the district council election is like

00:06:38.730 --> 00:06:46.690

a benchmark to show people's voice against the government.

00:06:47.090 --> 00:06:53.680

Quite a lot of my artist friends ran for the election.

00:06:53.870 --> 00:06:58.170

Among those who won the election, actually Clara Cheung.

00:06:58.170 --> 00:07:05.010

You see the lady in white on the left, she is my friend.

00:07:05.010 --> 00:07:09.900

She is also an artist and curator.

00:07:11.360 --> 00:07:13.949

In her election campaign,

00:07:13.949 --> 00:07:20.580

she agreed to use this concept like a community curator.

00:07:20.580 --> 00:07:26.490

I've been helping her out since her election campaign.

00:07:26.490 --> 00:07:30.430

She took to office in 2020,

00:07:30.860 --> 00:07:37.345

last year, and I've been helping her in her district work as well.

00:07:37.345 --> 00:07:46.185

Her idea basically is to, I would say actually,

00:07:46.185 --> 00:07:51.080
she tried to make good use of

00:07:51.080 --> 00:07:59.030
public resources and people's expertise in the neighborhood using a
bottom-up approach.

00:07:59.030 --> 00:08:02.515
This is what she calls a community curator.

00:08:02.515 --> 00:08:08.040
I've been shadowing her work

00:08:08.040 --> 00:08:14.470
indeed as part of my ethnographic research in the past one year.

00:08:14.470 --> 00:08:16.380
I contribute ideas,

00:08:16.380 --> 00:08:17.490
I discuss with her,

00:08:17.490 --> 00:08:23.685
sometimes I help her distributing some propensity things,

00:08:23.685 --> 00:08:27.820
do design, whatever she needs, I'll be there.

00:08:27.820 --> 00:08:35.070
At the same time, you know that year 2020 was a very difficult one.

00:08:35.070 --> 00:08:40.005
We have the pandemic and the protest was still going on.

00:08:40.005 --> 00:08:45.000
This is actually the health workers in public hospital.

00:08:45.000 --> 00:08:50.675
They have a strike to demand the government to close the China border

00:08:50.675 --> 00:08:57.820
so as to stop the spread of the virus to Hong Kong.

00:08:59.390 --> 00:09:02.550
Also in February, this is

00:09:02.550 --> 00:09:10.200
the very last public assembly with the so-called approval.

00:09:10.200 --> 00:09:14.205

That means no objection matter from the police.

00:09:14.205 --> 00:09:20.595

This is the last assembly being approved by the police.

00:09:20.595 --> 00:09:23.525

After that, all the assemblies or

00:09:23.525 --> 00:09:29.445

all public gatherings are illegal according to the government.

00:09:29.445 --> 00:09:31.545

Just like this day,

00:09:31.545 --> 00:09:36.960

we also have all these social distancing measures.

00:09:37.120 --> 00:09:41.985

Indeed, I would say in the name of public health,

00:09:41.985 --> 00:09:46.460

the government implemented all the social distancing policies to stop

00:09:46.460 --> 00:09:55.464

public gatherings instead of really doing containment or public health control.

00:09:55.464 --> 00:10:00.135

Because it doesn't make sense why they asked people to stay,

00:10:00.135 --> 00:10:06.140

like you can't stay more than four people together or two people together.

00:10:06.140 --> 00:10:11.430

There is no such scientific data for the support anyway.

00:10:13.380 --> 00:10:17.890

Let's get back to Clara Cheung's district work.

00:10:17.890 --> 00:10:23.530

After she took office or actually when she started her election campaigns,

00:10:23.530 --> 00:10:27.025

she rented this very small space in the alley

00:10:27.025 --> 00:10:32.305

off the main road in her district, Happy Valley.

00:10:32.305 --> 00:10:37.825

She has this very nice space for people to hang around,

00:10:37.825 --> 00:10:39.475

like a chill area.

00:10:39.475 --> 00:10:44.815

She call it the community sitting room or living room.

00:10:44.815 --> 00:10:48.859

Actually, this is in March and April.

00:10:50.370 --> 00:10:54.520

In her district counselor office,

00:10:54.520 --> 00:11:03.100

she distributed canvas and some acrylic color sets to the local residents.

00:11:03.100 --> 00:11:08.320

Then people collected and returned a painting to her office.

00:11:08.320 --> 00:11:14.590

You see that in this small space there was a very nice small exhibition displaying

00:11:14.590 --> 00:11:22.910

all these paintings created by the laborers in her district.

00:11:23.820 --> 00:11:27.805

Later on actually, this is during the summer

00:11:27.805 --> 00:11:31.750

when the pandemic was getting a little bit better,

00:11:31.750 --> 00:11:42.670

so this artist Man Chan is a photographer and he stayed irregularly in a space.

00:11:42.670 --> 00:11:50.395

You see that actually he's taking picture of the pets of the local residents.

00:11:50.395 --> 00:11:53.005

Happy Valley, this area is

00:11:53.005 --> 00:11:57.640

a very special place because actually there are lot of dog keepers.

00:11:57.640 --> 00:12:03.985

From time to time people hang out with their dogs and to chat with each other.

00:12:03.985 --> 00:12:06.400

Then our space became a very,

00:12:06.400 --> 00:12:10.660

very good place for them to hang around and talk to each other.

00:12:10.660 --> 00:12:16.795

This man invited all these residents to share the stories of their pets.

00:12:16.795 --> 00:12:20.800

Then she took a portrait of the dogs,

00:12:20.800 --> 00:12:22.375

mainly actually their dogs.

00:12:22.375 --> 00:12:27.410

But some even took their birds or fish here.

00:12:27.540 --> 00:12:34.855

Actually, the portrait started with the passing of his own dog.

00:12:34.855 --> 00:12:38.125

Then that's why he started this project and he was also doing

00:12:38.125 --> 00:12:42.385

a residency at the V54 space,

00:12:42.385 --> 00:12:47.725

which is located in Heritage Building in the district.

00:12:47.725 --> 00:12:53.065

You see that there was another exhibition in this small space.

00:12:53.065 --> 00:13:00.770

At the same time he was also having the exhibition in the V54 building.

00:13:01.170 --> 00:13:04.450

I was seeing that actually

00:13:04.450 --> 00:13:08.335

all this activity becomes, I will say,

00:13:08.335 --> 00:13:11.995

a meeting point for the community,

00:13:11.995 --> 00:13:16.390

especially you can see the picture here about the art space,

00:13:16.390 --> 00:13:19.015

really, really small space.

00:13:19.015 --> 00:13:23.830

Then actually they got funding from the Arts Development Council

00:13:23.830 --> 00:13:30.205

to run this project called Happy Valley or Hong Kong Communities Connected.

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This is the first in a series.

00:13:32.200 --> 00:13:39.530

We have Wong Wing Tong who did a lot of community work in the past few years.

00:13:39.900 --> 00:13:45.430

He actually, at that time or because of the pandemic,

00:13:45.430 --> 00:13:48.835

we cannot recycle old clothes

00:13:48.835 --> 00:13:54.355

because they cannot be transported to other countries now.

00:13:54.355 --> 00:13:59.065

The people living in Happy Valley are very well off.

00:13:59.065 --> 00:14:02.410

From time to time they have a lot of things to give away.

00:14:02.410 --> 00:14:06.160

They have a lot of old clothes that have nowhere to go.

00:14:06.160 --> 00:14:13.104

So Wong Wing Tong has actually taught people how to desert

00:14:13.104 --> 00:14:20.230

the clothes and see they are doing the knitting here in another picture.

00:14:20.230 --> 00:14:25.120

Actually, there's a space in this alley and do

00:14:25.120 --> 00:14:31.525

all this knitting and make some mat like the one you see in the poster.

00:14:31.525 --> 00:14:39.420

The circle thing is like a tool he used to help people to do the knitting.

00:14:39.420 --> 00:14:41.790

And also Clara,

00:14:41.790 --> 00:14:48.720

I have added this video and put it up on her Facebook, you know, things like that.

00:14:48.720 --> 00:14:51.180

Actually, there are some other artists

00:14:51.180 --> 00:14:57.210

[NAME] and also [NAME] for this month.

00:14:57.210 --> 00:15:03.270

Every month actually there's an artist to conduct community projects or

00:15:03.270 --> 00:15:06.450

public activities in the community during

00:15:06.450 --> 00:15:10.310

their one month residency in this small art space.

00:15:10.310 --> 00:15:13.030

Actually, they don't have a regular time,

00:15:13.030 --> 00:15:19.720

but they would just come at least once a week to conduct their project.

00:15:19.720 --> 00:15:22.285

For the local residents,

00:15:22.285 --> 00:15:26.620

they welcomed this a lot because for them it's great fun.

00:15:26.620 --> 00:15:32.965

Also, as I say, they are very well off and also well educated.

00:15:32.965 --> 00:15:36.430

They welcomed these activities and find it, oh yeah,

00:15:36.430 --> 00:15:40.525

that's great. At least during the lockdown,

00:15:40.525 --> 00:15:44.980

they have something to do or they can really do something in

00:15:44.980 --> 00:15:51.670

the community and meet people through this art space and through Clara.

00:15:51.670 --> 00:15:54.430

I just want to make a quick reference here about

00:15:54.430 --> 00:15:58.855

the changing role of Hong Kong's civil society,

00:15:58.855 --> 00:16:05.409

that actually as observed by Elaine Chan and Joseph Chan in their research,

00:16:05.409 --> 00:16:11.590

they say that Hong Kong civil society changed from being

00:16:11.590 --> 00:16:18.130

a passive defender to a more active protector,

00:16:18.130 --> 00:16:22.855

especially during the Umbrella Movement in 2014.

00:16:22.855 --> 00:16:29.575

But little later on, because of all this disagreement among the protesters,

00:16:29.575 --> 00:16:33.775

and there was a loss of mutual trust,

00:16:33.775 --> 00:16:37.960

I will maybe add a remark here that after 2019,

00:16:37.960 --> 00:16:41.245

I feel we gained our mutual trust.

00:16:41.245 --> 00:16:47.470

But actually this has the shifting role of civil society.

00:16:47.470 --> 00:16:51.340

I find it very inspiring indeed.

00:16:51.340 --> 00:16:57.010

Also, quite a lot of artists are aware of this shift and seize the chance to

00:16:57.010 --> 00:17:02.380

draw resources from district council to their socially engaged projects.

00:17:02.380 --> 00:17:07.780

So Clara Cheung has got elected as a counselor,

00:17:07.780 --> 00:17:11.425

managed to transform

00:17:11.425 --> 00:17:17.845

or grant the resources and make her art project,

00:17:17.845 --> 00:17:21.740

or socially engaged art project.

00:17:25.410 --> 00:17:31.225

Then I'm going to show you a few projects that have been

00:17:31.225 --> 00:17:38.020

organized by a few groups that I set up with my friends in the past few years.

00:17:38.020 --> 00:17:43.990

Indeed, I consciously set up these few groups of friends

00:17:43.990 --> 00:17:50.710

and each group has a given mission and branding so-called for funding purposes.

00:17:50.710 --> 00:17:54.430

I did it consciously, indeed,

00:17:54.430 --> 00:18:00.970

because I researched a lot on social practices and activism.

00:18:00.970 --> 00:18:05.620

I know that actually my work is politically quite sensitive and

00:18:05.620 --> 00:18:10.495

to avoid all this censorship and a possible censorship,

00:18:10.495 --> 00:18:13.090

to say, that actually I set up

00:18:13.090 --> 00:18:17.320

these groups with friends so whenever we apply for funding,

00:18:17.320 --> 00:18:18.520

we use the good names,

00:18:18.520 --> 00:18:20.815
but not my personal name.

00:18:20.815 --> 00:18:28.450
This helps me conceal my identity somehow as I

00:18:28.450 --> 00:18:36.770
also struggle a lot myself with the identity of the artist in social practices.

00:18:37.230 --> 00:18:44.500
Actually these few projects run by the groups that I set up with my friends.

00:18:44.500 --> 00:18:48.940
These projects indeed were curated not by me,

00:18:48.940 --> 00:18:51.670
but by my good partner,

00:18:51.670 --> 00:18:55.720
and also maybe we invite some independent curator or sometimes

00:18:55.720 --> 00:18:59.695
when independent curators came to us, we would say, "Oh yeah,

00:18:59.695 --> 00:19:04.405
maybe you can join us,

00:19:04.405 --> 00:19:08.920
use our group names to get the funding or things like that."

00:19:08.920 --> 00:19:11.140
There are three projects here.

00:19:11.140 --> 00:19:14.410
One is the Lion Rock and Mart,

00:19:14.410 --> 00:19:18.565
and the second one is this knitting one.

00:19:18.565 --> 00:19:22.420
Actually, is called Knitting and Up Cycle.

00:19:22.420 --> 00:19:24.415
The third one is really intricate,

00:19:24.415 --> 00:19:27.110

it's called Fun Fun Union.

00:19:31.890 --> 00:19:38.185

For Lion Rock and Mart, actually the original plan was to have a concert,

00:19:38.185 --> 00:19:44.965

one-day festival with concert,

00:19:44.965 --> 00:19:47.770

Indie band music,

00:19:47.770 --> 00:19:52.930

and then at the same time there will be a bazar.

00:19:52.930 --> 00:19:57.040

That is a very popular form in Hong Kong in the past,

00:19:57.040 --> 00:19:58.705

I will say past decade,

00:19:58.705 --> 00:20:01.660

that people would just sell

00:20:01.660 --> 00:20:08.140

their handmade things at a reasonable price.

00:20:08.140 --> 00:20:15.640

But then this is a district council funded projects so we cannot really sell things.

00:20:15.640 --> 00:20:19.840

The idea was actually people can exchange their things.

00:20:19.840 --> 00:20:21.940

For example, I'm good at making dress,

00:20:21.940 --> 00:20:25.390

so I will exchange.

00:20:25.390 --> 00:20:28.720

You can take my dress, well,

00:20:28.720 --> 00:20:33.220

actually you can maybe exchange it with something that you're good at making,

00:20:33.220 --> 00:20:35.995

say make a cake, something like that.

00:20:35.995 --> 00:20:38.215

That's the original idea,

00:20:38.215 --> 00:20:40.510

but because of the pandemic,

00:20:40.510 --> 00:20:48.225

we have to postpone the activity from December to January this year.

00:20:48.225 --> 00:20:50.925

Actually we have to put everything online,

00:20:50.925 --> 00:20:53.100

it's really really challenging,

00:20:53.100 --> 00:20:59.310

how can you do that bazar in a free market online?

00:20:59.310 --> 00:21:01.050

When my partner make it,

00:21:01.050 --> 00:21:04.370

I actually put it on Instagram,

00:21:04.370 --> 00:21:12.270

and she pre-taped a lot of groups that are joining this

00:21:12.270 --> 00:21:21.250

bazar and then at the same time there was the live band show,

00:21:21.250 --> 00:21:23.770

but actually there is no audience,

00:21:23.770 --> 00:21:28.870

so they did perform in front of the camera and then people can watch it on Facebook.

00:21:28.870 --> 00:21:31.915

For the bazar you'll see actually on

00:21:31.915 --> 00:21:35.260

the right-hand side you will see like this guy is doing calligraphy.

00:21:35.260 --> 00:21:38.860

There are also dressmakers and some high-school students,

00:21:38.860 --> 00:21:41.140

for example, that actually they have

00:21:41.140 --> 00:21:45.235

the video doing demonstration of their work, things like that.

00:21:45.235 --> 00:21:49.945

For the music show, there are a few bands, Indie bands.

00:21:49.945 --> 00:21:52.150

Even like the one on the right,

00:21:52.150 --> 00:21:57.175

you'll see the two guys actually they're the district counselors of that district.

00:21:57.175 --> 00:22:02.125

One thing actually, the Lion Rock is really a symbol of Hong Kong.

00:22:02.125 --> 00:22:04.240

If you have been to Hong Kong,

00:22:04.240 --> 00:22:07.135

probably you know this is something that we will

00:22:07.135 --> 00:22:10.750

have something called like Lion Rock spirit or things like that.

00:22:10.750 --> 00:22:15.370

We see this as a very important landmark that

00:22:15.370 --> 00:22:22.360

actually we use this to symbolize the spirit of Hong Kong people,

00:22:22.360 --> 00:22:26.035

the spirits of resistance, now things like that.

00:22:26.035 --> 00:22:31.075

Actually Venji, Venji my good partner actually organized this,

00:22:31.075 --> 00:22:37.600

and she make reference to Fuji Rock festival that happens in Japan every year.

00:22:37.600 --> 00:22:41.560

Of course, this is a very small scale one.

00:22:41.560 --> 00:22:47.200

Anyway, this is the second project I want to show

00:22:47.200 --> 00:22:53.815

you by another group that I formed,

00:22:53.815 --> 00:22:56.990

it's called Knit and Up Cycle.

00:22:56.990 --> 00:23:01.440

From the poster probably you don't know what it is,

00:23:01.440 --> 00:23:04.620

but actually they promoted it a lot on Facebook,

00:23:04.620 --> 00:23:10.405

and we collaborate with another group who is very good,

00:23:10.405 --> 00:23:17.540

who is based in a district called To Kwa Wan as part of the Kowloon city district.

00:23:17.540 --> 00:23:24.415

Then actually the young artist [inaudible] Mandy,

00:23:24.415 --> 00:23:30.810

actually Mandy just graduated from Baptist University last year.

00:23:30.810 --> 00:23:33.390

She invite people,

00:23:33.390 --> 00:23:37.530

she'll often call and ask people to bring their old clothes,

00:23:37.530 --> 00:23:39.575

and not really clothes,

00:23:39.575 --> 00:23:43.974

but actually knitwear to the studio.

00:23:43.974 --> 00:23:46.600

Then they will share with us

00:23:46.600 --> 00:23:50.095

the story and some share very, very personal stories,

00:23:50.095 --> 00:23:55.720

for example, ex girlfriend who sent this knitwear to me,

00:23:55.720 --> 00:23:57.670

but now I don't want this anymore.

00:23:57.670 --> 00:23:59.945

Something like that.

00:23:59.945 --> 00:24:03.210

They bring the story with this

00:24:03.210 --> 00:24:08.430

knitwear item that they don't want to keep anymore.

00:24:08.430 --> 00:24:15.145

So they desert it and then learn to knit something again.

00:24:15.145 --> 00:24:21.290

So actually they would need something like a scarf or hand warmer, things like that.

00:24:21.390 --> 00:24:27.100

They hope that this can transform,

00:24:27.100 --> 00:24:31.720

that this comes from something that you don't want anymore and transform it

00:24:31.720 --> 00:24:38.065

into something and send it, to say, the homeless.

00:24:38.065 --> 00:24:41.500

So that's the plan.

00:24:41.500 --> 00:24:51.130

Indeed this project was inspired by a Wu Yang shop in the district.

00:24:51.130 --> 00:24:53.080

This is a very famous one.

00:24:53.080 --> 00:24:55.645

They've been around for decades,

00:24:55.645 --> 00:25:02.410

but they closed down a few years ago because the owner has been too old to run the shop.

00:25:02.410 --> 00:25:06.565

But this shop has been kind of like a collective memory of

00:25:06.565 --> 00:25:11.350

the labor field and they have been around for many,

00:25:11.350 --> 00:25:16.900

many years and a lot of people of the older generation,

00:25:16.900 --> 00:25:20.950

this older generation may be people around 50, 60s,

00:25:20.950 --> 00:25:29.245

they would tell the stories about this shop.

00:25:29.245 --> 00:25:31.975

So actually the project is like this.

00:25:31.975 --> 00:25:35.320

They also do research about this shop

00:25:35.320 --> 00:25:39.790

and at the same time the artists would do a project like this.

00:25:39.790 --> 00:25:43.630

So you see the lady here,

00:25:43.630 --> 00:25:49.280

she is called KY and it's a [FOREIGN], this project,

00:25:50.130 --> 00:25:52.345

The other one, actually,

00:25:52.345 --> 00:25:53.740

Fun Fun Union,

00:25:53.740 --> 00:25:57.530

from the name you can tell what it is.

00:25:57.980 --> 00:26:04.595

It is a project by Luke Ching Chin Wai.

00:26:04.595 --> 00:26:12.595

He has been doing a lot of socially engaged projects in the past decade.

00:26:12.595 --> 00:26:19.855

In recent years, he focuses on public space and

00:26:19.855 --> 00:26:28.480

also labor and also waste and environmental issues.

00:26:28.480 --> 00:26:33.865

He started a research on market

00:26:33.865 --> 00:26:41.000

and the use of public space and also waste and recycling earlier this year.

00:26:41.850 --> 00:26:47.410

He started his project in [location] and other area where he live,

00:26:47.410 --> 00:26:50.740

but this one is also in To Kwa Wan.

00:26:50.740 --> 00:26:58.010

Actually he did a smaller version of his original project.

00:26:58.260 --> 00:27:02.200

He conducted workshops with

00:27:02.200 --> 00:27:08.225

the participants and then he showed his research on the map,

00:27:08.225 --> 00:27:15.550

he pinned down the shops that has been occupying space in the street.

00:27:15.550 --> 00:27:19.870

You see the picture on the right-hand side.

00:27:19.870 --> 00:27:26.800

Then even some local residents and some district counselors joined the workshop.

00:27:26.800 --> 00:27:31.600

He did a few visits and walked around in the market

00:27:31.600 --> 00:27:36.685

and really did a survey of all the space and all these things.

00:27:36.685 --> 00:27:39.520

We also discussed or brainstormed about

00:27:39.520 --> 00:27:44.900

the possibilities of recycling all this plastic waste.

00:27:45.840 --> 00:27:50.425

They use a lot of foam, polyfoam,

00:27:50.425 --> 00:27:54.160

boxes and things like that actually,

00:27:54.160 --> 00:27:58.430

on the bottom you see how they use this for food.

00:27:59.160 --> 00:28:03.010

We have been discussing a lot of possibilities.

00:28:03.010 --> 00:28:10.285

For example, using this very thin separator that has been made by polyfoam,

00:28:10.285 --> 00:28:13.340

and it's hard to recycle them.

00:28:15.540 --> 00:28:20.275

Maybe we can send it to school for the kids to do this and that.

00:28:20.275 --> 00:28:24.565

We designed again together into more shops. Things like that.

00:28:24.565 --> 00:28:29.890

You can see that actually the name Fun Fun Union is kind of

00:28:29.890 --> 00:28:35.190

like "what?" it is nothing related to the project itself.

00:28:35.190 --> 00:28:40.245

But I have to say this is the tactic we have to use because

00:28:40.245 --> 00:28:45.770

if we try to do something that is obviously too political,

00:28:45.770 --> 00:28:47.905

we'll be in trouble.

00:28:47.905 --> 00:28:51.190

Not only being arrested or things like that,

00:28:51.190 --> 00:28:54.655

but actually the district council indeed is

00:28:54.655 --> 00:29:00.355

operated by the Home Affairs Department in Hong Kong.

00:29:00.355 --> 00:29:02.289

All these government officials,

00:29:02.289 --> 00:29:09.715

they will use all administrative means to make trouble with you.

00:29:09.715 --> 00:29:13.510

Even actually we finished this project in January.

00:29:13.510 --> 00:29:17.065

Even till now we still haven't got our money back.

00:29:17.065 --> 00:29:21.760

Actually, they will use any excuse to try to stop you or try

00:29:21.760 --> 00:29:28.135

to make you delayed in getting a payment.

00:29:28.135 --> 00:29:30.280

They will even, for example,

00:29:30.280 --> 00:29:34.015

I heard some other groups that want to publish a book

00:29:34.015 --> 00:29:39.310

about stories that they have collected from local residents.

00:29:39.310 --> 00:29:41.350

The officer will say,

00:29:41.350 --> 00:29:43.645

hang on, we have to proofread the book.

00:29:43.645 --> 00:29:49.405

Then they really checkup every single word in the book and then say,

00:29:49.405 --> 00:29:51.385

you cannot publish this.

00:29:51.385 --> 00:29:54.205

There is a lot of censorship going on.

00:29:54.205 --> 00:30:02.890

That's why at the beginning we have to make a name like Fun Fun Union,

00:30:02.890 --> 00:30:10.015

that is easier to get funding because they can't tell what it is.

00:30:10.015 --> 00:30:15.205

They can't tell your political stance and things like that.

00:30:15.205 --> 00:30:24.295

At the same time when you organize activities like this people may think,

00:30:24.295 --> 00:30:26.200

oh yeah, this is not political,

00:30:26.200 --> 00:30:27.760

we can come and join.

00:30:27.760 --> 00:30:29.590

People will come and join,

00:30:29.590 --> 00:30:32.200

and of course, Luke,

00:30:32.200 --> 00:30:39.810

people know him quite well because he publishes a lot of his work on the newspaper regularly.

00:30:39.810 --> 00:30:46.420

That's why he got a lot of fans to join, young artists like Mandy.

00:30:47.780 --> 00:30:50.835

Some young people,

00:30:50.835 --> 00:30:55.210

will see "Oh there's a nice poster" and then they will come and join.

00:30:55.220 --> 00:31:00.550

I just want to make another reference to some research

00:31:00.550 --> 00:31:05.470

or an article that I came across recently about the civil society activism and

00:31:05.470 --> 00:31:10.610

authoritarian rule in Romania and Chile.

00:31:11.570 --> 00:31:15.000

Let me read out this part in yellow.

00:31:15.000 --> 00:31:20.775

"It can also criticize and act as the voice of those without a voice.

00:31:20.775 --> 00:31:24.185

Art criticize the regime,

00:31:24.185 --> 00:31:28.255

whether directly or in an allusive manner.

00:31:28.255 --> 00:31:32.185

The use of allusions and symbols for instance

00:31:32.185 --> 00:31:36.550

help create a sense of community with the public,

00:31:36.550 --> 00:31:39.800

sharing a coded language."

00:31:40.530 --> 00:31:44.545

I was not involved in making the design of

00:31:44.545 --> 00:31:48.445

the poster and the title of this project indeed.

00:31:48.445 --> 00:31:55.510

But I think my partner was actually very clever to play around with

00:31:55.510 --> 00:32:04.450

all these things in an allusive manner and make all this coded language.

00:32:04.450 --> 00:32:09.745

He actually did the later part, "'Art instead of politics'

00:32:09.745 --> 00:32:14.965

is then a characteristic common to authoritarian regimes:

00:32:14.965 --> 00:32:20.740

art assumes the function of the political and acts as a 'substitute for

00:32:20.740 --> 00:32:27.010

politics' or as a 'substitutive public opinion.'

00:32:27.010 --> 00:32:34.570

It can also function as a distraction and escape from the repressive environment."

00:32:34.570 --> 00:32:41.920

This is what we have to do now and I find art or even performative practices

00:32:41.920 --> 00:32:52.610

a very good tool to use as a so-called substitutive public opinion.

00:32:53.410 --> 00:32:59.900

Just for your reference we just have the National Security Law passed

00:32:59.900 --> 00:33:05.930

in Hong Kong last year in late June.

00:33:05.930 --> 00:33:14.060

Earlier this month I just Googled it and I was surprised you see the 100 arrests.

00:33:14.060 --> 00:33:16.325

I thought they were even more.

00:33:16.325 --> 00:33:20.525

One hundred people have been arrested so far.

00:33:20.525 --> 00:33:25.175

Recently, it seems like the fire is coming.

00:33:25.175 --> 00:33:28.610

It means actually the fire is on [LAUGHTER] in

00:33:28.610 --> 00:33:32.930

the culture and art scene in Hong Kong because the lawmakers

00:33:32.930 --> 00:33:41.090

is criticizing M+ Museum that collects [FOREIGN] things like that.

00:33:41.090 --> 00:33:50.555

Quite a lot of my friends are alert and we don't know what we can do.

00:33:50.555 --> 00:33:53.885

We don't know in the sense of we don't know where

00:33:53.885 --> 00:33:58.070

the so-called red line is because actually,

00:33:58.070 --> 00:34:03.620

the National Security Law covers so extensively

00:34:03.620 --> 00:34:11.210

everything and whatever they say you are violating the National Security Law,

00:34:11.210 --> 00:34:12.440

you're against this law,

00:34:12.440 --> 00:34:16.220

you'll be arrested and you cannot be bailed out easily.

00:34:16.220 --> 00:34:20.870

This is really something that troubles us a lot,

00:34:20.870 --> 00:34:26.240

especially that we are doing art and creative practice.

00:34:26.240 --> 00:34:29.420

Art can be interpreted in different ways so

00:34:29.420 --> 00:34:33.770

we have to be very careful when we do our work,

00:34:33.770 --> 00:34:36.845

and we don't want to be in trouble.

00:34:36.845 --> 00:34:39.470

For your reference, actually,

00:34:39.470 --> 00:34:45.920

this is actually what happened today on the Handover Day in Hong Kong.

00:34:45.920 --> 00:34:49.340

It was the 1st of July.

00:34:49.340 --> 00:34:54.215

It was one or two days after the passing of the National Security Law.

00:34:54.215 --> 00:34:56.780

This guy on the motorbike,

00:34:56.780 --> 00:34:58.685

a kid with this logo,

00:34:58.685 --> 00:35:02.195

"Liberate Hong Kong revolution of our time."

00:35:02.195 --> 00:35:06.470

This is a slogan that we used a lot in 2019.

00:35:06.470 --> 00:35:13.580

Indeed actually the government said

00:35:13.580 --> 00:35:21.230

that this slogan can

00:35:21.230 --> 00:35:28.805

be against the National Security Law because it promotes independence.

00:35:28.805 --> 00:35:34.040

You don't have to understand the logic that's what they say anyway.

00:35:34.040 --> 00:35:38.570

This slogan that we chanted a lot in

00:35:38.570 --> 00:35:45.035

2019, we reviewed that, okay, maybe we should not use this slogan.

00:35:45.035 --> 00:35:47.959

So, on the Handover Day during the protests,

00:35:47.959 --> 00:35:52.940

somebody made a big banner like this in Cantonese.

00:35:52.940 --> 00:35:57.050

Actually, it's written language of Cantonese.

00:35:57.050 --> 00:36:03.095

It literally means we fucking love Hong Kong.

00:36:03.095 --> 00:36:13.800

This banner become a very strong motif and this picture actually got viral on Twitter.

00:36:14.140 --> 00:36:22.400

Then interestingly, you see that actually in the next few days or few weeks,

00:36:22.400 --> 00:36:27.815

we see what some artists make a poster like this,

00:36:27.815 --> 00:36:31.590

is the same thing "we fuckingly love Hong Kong".

00:36:31.960 --> 00:36:42.260

We have more vision and the umbrella and also you see how all these things

00:36:42.260 --> 00:36:47.390

people just borrow some symbols

00:36:47.390 --> 00:36:54.030

from our protest or even those become very abstract.

00:36:55.540 --> 00:37:05.670

I find it very interesting to see how once the logo is said to be illegal,

00:37:06.700 --> 00:37:12.950

people manage to transform it into another coded language.

00:37:12.950 --> 00:37:16.460

We know that we cannot say that slogan anymore.

00:37:16.460 --> 00:37:18.725

But then now whenever we see this,

00:37:18.725 --> 00:37:28.490

"we fuckingly love Hong Kong," we know that it means what cannot be said.

00:37:28.490 --> 00:37:35.580

This is what I mean. This is the coded language that we develop.

00:37:36.760 --> 00:37:45.800

Talking about the police and surveillance going on.

00:37:45.800 --> 00:37:51.950

This was what happened last year on the eve of June 4th,

00:37:51.950 --> 00:37:58.710

the Tiananmen Square massacre anniversary.

00:38:00.670 --> 00:38:06.030

This group of artists organized this for

00:38:06.030 --> 00:38:09.590

maybe around 10 years doing

00:38:09.590 --> 00:38:14.960

this actually on the eve of June 4th because every year on June 4th,

00:38:14.960 --> 00:38:20.960

there is a very big candlelight assembly in Victoria Park in Causeway Bay and

00:38:20.960 --> 00:38:23.120

this one actually is very close to

00:38:23.120 --> 00:38:27.065

the Victoria Park but actually also in the same district.

00:38:27.065 --> 00:38:32.645

But then they decided to do it in a more quiet manner.

00:38:32.645 --> 00:38:38.670

They did it on the eve of June 4th that is June 3rd.

00:38:39.010 --> 00:38:48.350

They staged performances in the street and this actually every

00:38:48.350 --> 00:38:57.920

evening this row becomes a walk, they call it walking song or something like that.

00:38:57.920 --> 00:39:00.755

There will be no car or actually I don't know.

00:39:00.755 --> 00:39:05.840

This car was here before six,

00:39:05.840 --> 00:39:07.670

so that's why actually it got trapped.

00:39:07.670 --> 00:39:11.390

You see the guy in white here,

00:39:11.390 --> 00:39:13.145

actually, he's [inaudible].

00:39:13.145 --> 00:39:19.790

He is one of the very senior performance artists in Hong Kong.

00:39:19.790 --> 00:39:24.455

I think you can recall who he is mimicking

00:39:24.455 --> 00:39:30.030

indeed here and a very strong performance indeed.

00:39:31.840 --> 00:39:35.060

I think he didn't realize the car was coming.

00:39:35.060 --> 00:39:39.305

He was just walking around with two bags in his hand.

00:39:39.305 --> 00:39:41.810

But then actually when the car came,

00:39:41.810 --> 00:39:44.940

wow, become so powerful.

00:39:45.760 --> 00:39:50.075

Then there are some other artists you see that some of them use

00:39:50.075 --> 00:39:56.165

really obvious symbols like the national flag

00:39:56.165 --> 00:40:02.525

or even another artist have the Tiananmen Square picture on his T-shirt.

00:40:02.525 --> 00:40:08.584

Surprisingly, there was no police coming and checking.

00:40:08.584 --> 00:40:10.415

I wonder what happened.

00:40:10.415 --> 00:40:13.670

Actually, this is a month before

00:40:13.670 --> 00:40:19.980

or two or three weeks before the National Security Law was passed.

00:40:23.500 --> 00:40:27.545

Then this was last weekend.

00:40:27.545 --> 00:40:33.890

This was Day Of Public Action for Freedom and Democracy was

00:40:33.890 --> 00:40:40.490

open call by a Thai artist called Chumpon and actually,

00:40:40.490 --> 00:40:47.090
he said every year during

00:40:47.090 --> 00:40:54.690
the spring and the fall on this day we will do things in public space.

00:40:55.180 --> 00:41:01.325
This group of artists also organized this event.

00:41:01.325 --> 00:41:04.235
They didn't really tell people where they are but

00:41:04.235 --> 00:41:07.340
then among the group members actually, we know.

00:41:07.340 --> 00:41:09.335
I know that they're there.

00:41:09.335 --> 00:41:11.420
I went and joined them.

00:41:11.420 --> 00:41:13.520
I didn't perform but actually,

00:41:13.520 --> 00:41:16.610
you see Clara was also there.

00:41:16.610 --> 00:41:18.785
I worry a lot,

00:41:18.785 --> 00:41:21.110
"Oh shit will the police come?"

00:41:21.110 --> 00:41:25.385
But then surprisingly, again, no policemen came.

00:41:25.385 --> 00:41:28.700
I didn't mean that we are waiting for the police, but actually,

00:41:28.700 --> 00:41:34.520
it seems I was thinking is it too minor for them?

00:41:34.520 --> 00:41:38.675
Actually, all this performance are not big enough.

00:41:38.675 --> 00:41:44.030
It's a joke we make afterward but I think maybe

00:41:44.030 --> 00:41:51.575

actually the elusive tactic that we're using is maybe very effective.

00:41:51.575 --> 00:41:56.540

This is actually the last slide that I want to show you because actually,

00:41:56.540 --> 00:41:59.090

I'm talking about civil society.

00:41:59.090 --> 00:42:02.510

And interestingly since 2019,

00:42:02.510 --> 00:42:05.630

we have a lot of concern groups like this.

00:42:05.630 --> 00:42:08.960

If you can reach Chinese you know this is

00:42:08.960 --> 00:42:13.115

coriander love for Hong Kong concern group.

00:42:13.115 --> 00:42:17.300

The other is [FOREIGN] a very popular

00:42:17.300 --> 00:42:21.530

dimsum in Hong Kong that you can grab in a lot of shops.

00:42:21.530 --> 00:42:27.875

What [FOREIGN] concern group and they call themselves labor union.

00:42:27.875 --> 00:42:32.330

The last one is mixed vegetables concern group.

00:42:32.330 --> 00:42:40.429

Some of them are private group or public groups or even a Facebook page.

00:42:40.429 --> 00:42:46.295

There you see that the mixed vegetables most concern group.

00:42:46.295 --> 00:42:49.205

They really discuss about mixed vegetables,

00:42:49.205 --> 00:42:51.980

how much I love mixed vegetables,

00:42:51.980 --> 00:42:54.739

where can you find mixed vegetables?

00:42:54.739 --> 00:42:58.730

What dishes can you make with mixed vegetables?

00:42:58.730 --> 00:43:01.550

It sounds so silly and then there's

00:43:01.550 --> 00:43:05.855

some other groups that "We are anti-mixed vegetables.

00:43:05.855 --> 00:43:06.980

We should not eat this.

00:43:06.980 --> 00:43:08.390

This is rubbish."

00:43:08.390 --> 00:43:13.310

They have a group here and there's another group about

00:43:13.310 --> 00:43:20.465

[FOREIGN] is a dumpling from Taiwan and become very popular in Hong Kong.

00:43:20.465 --> 00:43:23.990

Then there's a rice noodle concern groups.

00:43:23.990 --> 00:43:29.685

People really discuss about food seriously in all these groups.

00:43:29.685 --> 00:43:33.795

I've been thinking, come on,

00:43:33.795 --> 00:43:40.570

all these elusive tactics that maybe

00:43:40.570 --> 00:43:46.715

they're using this elusive tactic to reform.

00:43:46.715 --> 00:43:48.980

I would say maybe to,

00:43:48.980 --> 00:43:58.940

reform, like a reformation of civil society because of the regime.

00:43:58.940 --> 00:44:03.200

Now actually it's like the civil society has been

00:44:03.200 --> 00:44:08.075

broken down by the threat of National Security Law.

00:44:08.075 --> 00:44:09.665

But at the same time,

00:44:09.665 --> 00:44:13.895

actually, people are playing around with this.

00:44:13.895 --> 00:44:20.330

I think actually this is maybe my next research project to observe how

00:44:20.330 --> 00:44:25.025

all these food interest groups works and

00:44:25.025 --> 00:44:31.250

how it can become the reformation of civil society in Hong Kong.

00:44:31.250 --> 00:44:38.030

Maybe I stop here for my presentation and feel free to ask me

00:44:38.030 --> 00:44:45.750

questions if you have and I'm happy to talk to you guys. Thank you.

00:44:47.890 --> 00:44:52.685

>> Thank you so much, Wen Yua, that was such a rich presentation.

00:44:52.685 --> 00:44:56.705

Really fascinating. Why don't we do it this way?

00:44:56.705 --> 00:44:58.625

If people would like to ask a question,

00:44:58.625 --> 00:45:03.485

you can either put it in the chat or you can just raise your hand and ask it directly.

00:45:03.485 --> 00:45:09.290

If it's okay, if I can ask the first question before we open up to others.

00:45:09.290 --> 00:45:18.720

I was really struck in thinking about this reformation of civil society in these moments.

00:45:21.040 --> 00:45:24.155

So much is language in different places,

00:45:24.155 --> 00:45:26.660

people are being displaced and coming together anyway,

00:45:26.660 --> 00:45:31.100

but I guess the role of the district and the community curator and

00:45:31.100 --> 00:45:38.000

how different spaces are becoming safe and public but also not public?

00:45:38.000 --> 00:45:43.130

I was wondering about in your work

00:45:43.130 --> 00:45:45.200

through the district where it sounds like

00:45:45.200 --> 00:45:49.430

civil society actors are also part of the state,

00:45:49.430 --> 00:45:53.870

and able to use money in different ways and also able to maybe

00:45:53.870 --> 00:45:58.760

have different ways of making spaces for certain gatherings.

00:45:58.760 --> 00:46:00.500

How does in Hong Kong,

00:46:00.500 --> 00:46:07.470

how does this district, the [FOREIGN], function in relationship to what's possible where?

00:46:08.260 --> 00:46:11.525

>> Thank you, Nick for your question.

00:46:11.525 --> 00:46:17.360

Let me explain a bit more in detail about all these district council thing.

00:46:17.360 --> 00:46:21.785

This is quite a colonial idea.

00:46:21.785 --> 00:46:24.860

At the time, actually they have all these district councils.

00:46:24.860 --> 00:46:28.325

We have 18 district councils.

00:46:28.325 --> 00:46:33.480

They divide Hong Kong into these 18 districts,

00:46:33.760 --> 00:46:39.650

I would say, mainly for the purpose of administration and management.

00:46:39.650 --> 00:46:44.585

They set up all these councils for the purpose of administration,

00:46:44.585 --> 00:46:46.985

at the same time actually consultation.

00:46:46.985 --> 00:46:48.800

During the colonial time,

00:46:48.800 --> 00:46:51.440

actually they have to pretend that they're listening.

00:46:51.440 --> 00:46:57.065

I have to say they pretend because they do have

00:46:57.065 --> 00:47:03.500

all these people sitting in the council and they say that they represent the community,

00:47:03.500 --> 00:47:06.785

and then they will voice out a bit this and that,

00:47:06.785 --> 00:47:11.765

and then the government will be very happy and pretend that they listened,

00:47:11.765 --> 00:47:15.080

and then they can make some policies.

00:47:15.080 --> 00:47:22.040

We have also the Legislative Council that is more about making law.

00:47:22.040 --> 00:47:28.865

But this district council is more for consultation in the past.

00:47:28.865 --> 00:47:33.590

Now actually after the handover,

00:47:33.590 --> 00:47:36.935

the government still inherited

00:47:36.935 --> 00:47:40.430

all this colonial practice and try to

00:47:40.430 --> 00:47:44.450

pretend again that they are listening, so they keep it.

00:47:44.450 --> 00:47:48.170

But in the past two decades mostly,

00:47:48.170 --> 00:47:55.235

the district council has dominated by the pro-establishment camp.

00:47:55.235 --> 00:48:02.180

Some councils have majority of pro-democratic camp,

00:48:02.180 --> 00:48:05.430
but mostly they got seats because

00:48:05.770 --> 00:48:12.545
this is very tricky that they have all this district council and all these members,

00:48:12.545 --> 00:48:17.120
that they got their resources and they use these resources to,

00:48:17.120 --> 00:48:20.750
we call it [FOREIGN] in Cantonese.

00:48:20.750 --> 00:48:23.525
That means that we give advantages to people,

00:48:23.525 --> 00:48:28.535
to local residents so people will like you a lot.

00:48:28.535 --> 00:48:33.080
Even for all these new counselors that took office,

00:48:33.080 --> 00:48:34.970
people still go and ask,

00:48:34.970 --> 00:48:37.430
"Do you have a new calendar for this year?"

00:48:37.430 --> 00:48:39.020
Do you have this and that?"

00:48:39.020 --> 00:48:45.290
They ask for some benefits that they used to have.

00:48:45.290 --> 00:48:49.295
The district council work also this way,

00:48:49.295 --> 00:48:54.695
I won't say as a corruption but like how they buy people,

00:48:54.695 --> 00:48:57.600
to let people agree with them.

00:48:57.760 --> 00:49:04.385
People don't really care about politics especially in the past.

00:49:04.385 --> 00:49:06.500
As long as okay,

00:49:06.500 --> 00:49:08.600

you give me something that I like,

00:49:08.600 --> 00:49:11.840

that's good, so I'll vote for you. That's it.

00:49:11.840 --> 00:49:13.550

You give me rice, yes,

00:49:13.550 --> 00:49:15.530

I can vote for you.

00:49:15.530 --> 00:49:17.585

Or you give me a calendar every year,

00:49:17.585 --> 00:49:19.655

I like you, so I vote for you.

00:49:19.655 --> 00:49:21.455

This is how things work.

00:49:21.455 --> 00:49:27.930

But then I think things change a lot especially after the Umbrella Movement.

00:49:27.930 --> 00:49:32.390

More and more young people,

00:49:33.520 --> 00:49:38.795

they really register as a voter so they really want to make a change,

00:49:38.795 --> 00:49:44.600

so 2019 was really a big change,

00:49:44.600 --> 00:49:49.640

you see and that's why the Chinese government is really,

00:49:49.640 --> 00:49:51.095

I will say, scared.

00:49:51.095 --> 00:49:57.290

There was supposed to be an election last year,

00:49:57.290 --> 00:49:59.075

so they postponed it.

00:49:59.075 --> 00:50:07.680

I'm not sure what will happen for the election this year.

00:50:07.720 --> 00:50:12.605

Because, well, the Standing Committee of the PRC,

00:50:12.605 --> 00:50:18.905

they just totally changed the election.

00:50:18.905 --> 00:50:25.715

Well, we don't care anymore because it's not a real election anymore.

00:50:25.715 --> 00:50:28.760

We don't know what will happen in the future.

00:50:28.760 --> 00:50:34.145

There's a saying, rumors or prediction that we do think

00:50:34.145 --> 00:50:38.869

their current district council or the district counselors

00:50:38.869 --> 00:50:44.160

can stay in the office later this year.

00:50:44.740 --> 00:50:48.690

They will find a way to kick you out.

00:50:48.730 --> 00:50:53.190

I discuss a lot with Clara about this too.

00:50:55.780 --> 00:50:59.270

I'm not sure if I answered your question

00:50:59.270 --> 00:51:02.750

about district and how it works with the community, but

00:51:02.750 --> 00:51:06.030

we don't know what will happen.

00:51:06.640 --> 00:51:11.900

>> Thanks.

00:51:11.900 --> 00:51:18.420

Does anybody else want to jump in with a question? Debra?

00:51:19.270 --> 00:51:23.480

>> Hi. Thank you so much, Wen Yau.

00:51:23.480 --> 00:51:34.205

It was very touching to see how you're continuing to resist the power of China.

00:51:34.205 --> 00:51:39.065

Thank you for all that you and other artists are doing.

00:51:39.065 --> 00:51:44.840

I wanted to know if there's anything that people who are outside of

00:51:44.840 --> 00:51:51.000

Hong Kong can do to help you in your project, in your movement?

00:51:52.180 --> 00:51:54.320

>> Thank you, Debbie.

00:51:54.320 --> 00:51:59.135

It's a difficult question to answer because the same thing

00:51:59.135 --> 00:52:05.940

happened for me when I see what's going on in Burma recently.

00:52:05.980 --> 00:52:10.385

I cry a lot as well when I watch the news.

00:52:10.385 --> 00:52:13.110

I've got friends in Burma.

00:52:14.170 --> 00:52:17.555

And I ask them, what can I help?

00:52:17.555 --> 00:52:19.220

And I ask myself,

00:52:19.220 --> 00:52:20.675

what can I help?

00:52:20.675 --> 00:52:26.915

Indeed, I know I

00:52:26.915 --> 00:52:31.370

make a post on Facebook to show my support,

00:52:31.370 --> 00:52:33.425

they feel happy,

00:52:33.425 --> 00:52:37.475

and they feel happy because people care about them.

00:52:37.475 --> 00:52:38.750

>> Really.

00:52:38.750 --> 00:52:41.270

>> They don't feel alone.

00:52:41.270 --> 00:52:44.090

I think this is really important.

00:52:44.090 --> 00:52:46.565

I've discovered solidarity.

00:52:46.565 --> 00:52:54.600

Maybe we have to talk to them from time to time because they have the Internet cut off.

00:52:54.790 --> 00:52:56.840

So when I chat with them,

00:52:56.840 --> 00:52:59.855

I can chat very briefly with them.

00:52:59.855 --> 00:53:04.640

But then I really feel that they need that support.

00:53:04.640 --> 00:53:09.590

I've been thinking maybe this is the same for us in Hong Kong

00:53:09.590 --> 00:53:14.465

too because after National Security Law,

00:53:14.465 --> 00:53:17.360

we cannot do a lot of things to invite

00:53:17.360 --> 00:53:23.400

the international society to do things to our country.

00:53:23.950 --> 00:53:29.810

I think at least actually show your support to people in

00:53:29.810 --> 00:53:35.600

need and also spread the words.

00:53:35.600 --> 00:53:38.360

Or even say,

00:53:38.360 --> 00:53:42.290

if you don't want to buy things made in China, do it.

00:53:42.290 --> 00:53:45.395

Do whatever you can do.

00:53:45.395 --> 00:53:53.555

Even what happened recently about the cotton making in Xinjiang.

00:53:53.555 --> 00:53:58.080

I think everybody around the world can do something.

00:54:00.100 --> 00:54:02.900

We used to say that, yeah,

00:54:02.900 --> 00:54:04.850

sign the petition or things like that,

00:54:04.850 --> 00:54:06.935

like all this armchair activism.

00:54:06.935 --> 00:54:11.510

But actually no, we can do something that can really make a change.

00:54:11.510 --> 00:54:15.410

Like a lot of drops,

00:54:15.410 --> 00:54:19.220

small drops that enter the ocean, something like that.

00:54:19.220 --> 00:54:21.455

It seems like a cliché, but it's true,

00:54:21.455 --> 00:54:25.565

that's my belief. Thank you, Debbie.

00:54:25.565 --> 00:54:28.820

>> Be in touch with me. Let me now if anything

00:54:28.820 --> 00:54:32.585

else comes up and you need some support from Los Angeles.

00:54:32.585 --> 00:54:35.670

>> Thank you. I'm touched.

00:54:36.580 --> 00:54:39.845

>> I think, Nora has a hand raised.

00:54:39.845 --> 00:54:42.350

>> Hi Wen Yau and hi Debra.

00:54:42.350 --> 00:54:48.440

[LAUGHTER] Thank you I just needed to say hi to you and just in light of

00:54:48.440 --> 00:54:52.250

that last comment to know that I think of you all the

00:54:52.250 --> 00:54:56.810

time and our friends in Burma as well.

00:54:56.810 --> 00:55:01.190

I was really interested in this food interest group because I don't

00:55:01.190 --> 00:55:05.300

think I had heard about that before and I might have missed it.

00:55:05.300 --> 00:55:07.475

If you said it, I'm sorry.

00:55:07.475 --> 00:55:17.280

I mean are they real or is it some metaphor for coded language or both?

00:55:17.910 --> 00:55:21.985

>> Thank you Nora. No, they are serious.

00:55:21.985 --> 00:55:23.500

They are serious about food.

00:55:23.500 --> 00:55:25.360

They're serious about coriander.

00:55:25.360 --> 00:55:29.940

They're very serious about which rice noodle is good or bad.

00:55:29.940 --> 00:55:32.105

They even discuss about, oh,

00:55:32.105 --> 00:55:38.880

this shop is doing the best [inaudible] in Hong Kong.

00:55:38.980 --> 00:55:41.915

I don't know why they have all this passion.

00:55:41.915 --> 00:55:45.950

Well, maybe because I'm a vegetarian so maybe I can only

00:55:45.950 --> 00:55:51.140

join the mixed vegetables and coriander group.

00:55:51.140 --> 00:55:55.670

But then people really discuss really seriously about food,

00:55:55.670 --> 00:55:58.910

so there's not a coded language somehow.

00:55:58.910 --> 00:56:03.845

That means that actually they're not making a metaphor for politics at all.

00:56:03.845 --> 00:56:06.530

But then the way they talk about shops.

00:56:06.530 --> 00:56:07.970

Actually, in Hong Kong,

00:56:07.970 --> 00:56:14.765

we will divide the shop into yellow shop and blue shop.

00:56:14.765 --> 00:56:19.175

Yellow one, that means poor democratic and the blue ones are poor establishments,

00:56:19.175 --> 00:56:21.380

so we use this color of coke.

00:56:21.380 --> 00:56:24.890

We divide it by this.

00:56:24.890 --> 00:56:28.775

We have this yellow economic circle.

00:56:28.775 --> 00:56:30.440

We have things like that so we

00:56:30.440 --> 00:56:37.530

will have to promote the yellow shops as part of our movement.

00:56:38.290 --> 00:56:45.860

Even all these groups they will say,

00:56:45.860 --> 00:56:47.300

"Oh, that shop is blue,

00:56:47.300 --> 00:56:50.390

so the quality of the food is bad."

00:56:50.390 --> 00:56:56.700

That's it. Actually they will not further discuss about very serious politics.

00:56:57.430 --> 00:57:05.785

That's why I'm very curious how they feel connected when they discuss about food

00:57:05.785 --> 00:57:10.610

seriously, and that's why I say this is a reformation

00:57:10.610 --> 00:57:15.485

of civil society that actually people are not doing politics at all,

00:57:15.485 --> 00:57:22.550

but then they found a way to have escaped from the politics around us.

00:57:22.550 --> 00:57:26.030

>> Okay. Now I understand because that refers also back

00:57:26.030 --> 00:57:29.855

to the beginning of your talk.

00:57:29.855 --> 00:57:32.795

Now it makes sense. Thank you so much.

00:57:32.795 --> 00:57:35.490

>> Thank you, Nora.

00:57:37.090 --> 00:57:39.530

>> We're just about that time,

00:57:39.530 --> 00:57:42.660

but maybe we've got time for one more question?

00:57:43.600 --> 00:57:48.710

>> Well, Nick if I may then. Wen Yau, thank you.

00:57:48.710 --> 00:57:52.790

This was so rich and I'm trying to connect

00:57:52.790 --> 00:57:57.680

two things and partly what's been going on through the series.

00:57:57.680 --> 00:57:58.880

One is, as you're saying,

00:57:58.880 --> 00:58:07.790

this role of either transnational solidarity or showing up.

00:58:07.790 --> 00:58:12.110

But you're also saying how it's fascinating how

00:58:12.110 --> 00:58:14.930

the resistance movement in Hong Kong is using and

00:58:14.930 --> 00:58:18.725

developing this very savvy coded language.

00:58:18.725 --> 00:58:25.410

I love the idea of the Fun Fun Union [LAUGHTER] and like it could be anything.

00:58:26.050 --> 00:58:30.740

But I think the question is,

00:58:30.740 --> 00:58:34.235

how do we read these tactics from the outside?

00:58:34.235 --> 00:58:39.980

Like it's deliberately coded and it needs to be to survive,

00:58:39.980 --> 00:58:47.490

to grow community, to find Hong Kongians to engage.

00:58:48.490 --> 00:58:51.950

Do you have thoughts on how do people read these codes or

00:58:51.950 --> 00:58:55.295

understand these codes from the outside?

00:58:55.295 --> 00:58:58.850

It's wonderful that you can share them with us now but I'm

00:58:58.850 --> 00:59:03.150

thinking just in the social media landscape.

00:59:04.600 --> 00:59:06.800

>> Thank you Shayoni.

00:59:06.800 --> 00:59:10.040

Actually I was struck a lot whether to talk about this.

00:59:10.040 --> 00:59:15.050

[LAUGHTER] It is taught indeed because actually this is like a secret language.

00:59:15.050 --> 00:59:23.620

But if I expose the secret actually and maybe we have to develop something else.

00:59:23.620 --> 00:59:25.065

But then I think why not?

00:59:25.065 --> 00:59:28.160

You see actually the slogan that I mentioned,

00:59:28.160 --> 00:59:30.545

we can't use that slogan anymore,

00:59:30.545 --> 00:59:34.160

but then immediately we transform it into something else.

00:59:34.160 --> 00:59:36.005
"we fuckingly love Hong Kong."

00:59:36.005 --> 00:59:39.365
Whenever we say that actually we know what it means.

00:59:39.365 --> 00:59:42.300
What is at our heart.

00:59:42.910 --> 00:59:45.110
I think yeah, why not?

00:59:45.110 --> 00:59:50.985
Also actually, this is a small talk so I think it's okay to talk about this.

00:59:50.985 --> 00:59:52.930
Too minor, not big enough.

00:59:52.930 --> 00:59:56.785
That's why there is no policeman checking the performance art event.

00:59:56.785 --> 00:59:59.425
I don't mean this is not important,

00:59:59.425 --> 01:00:04.225
but actually I think I'm fine.

01:00:04.225 --> 01:00:10.950
Maybe people keep an eye on me but actually I think that this should be fine.

01:00:14.860 --> 01:00:19.055
Also I'm going to publish an article about

01:00:19.055 --> 01:00:23.270
an art group that I follow in the past few years and

01:00:23.270 --> 01:00:32.340
I discuss a lot how they struggle with the district council officer,

01:00:32.620 --> 01:00:37.820
what they call secretarial office of

01:00:37.820 --> 01:00:42.875
the district office and how they got the funding in an elusive manner.

01:00:42.875 --> 01:00:45.440
Things like that I discuss about in details

01:00:45.440 --> 01:00:48.440
and I discuss a lot with the group members

01:00:48.440 --> 01:00:54.350
as well to see whether I should publish it because once I tell the
whole world,

01:00:54.350 --> 01:01:01.130
saying, they do

01:01:01.130 --> 01:01:07.715
all this elusive tactics, maybe they can't do this anymore.

01:01:07.715 --> 01:01:11.555
But then a member from the group said,

01:01:11.555 --> 01:01:13.640
"Well, don't worry about that.

01:01:13.640 --> 01:01:15.680
Actually we will be in trouble anyway.

01:01:15.680 --> 01:01:18.815
[LAUGHTER] Why not?"

01:01:18.815 --> 01:01:20.420
and I say, "Oh, yeah true."

01:01:20.420 --> 01:01:22.130
[LAUGHTER] I say,

01:01:22.130 --> 01:01:23.705
"Oh yes true.

01:01:23.705 --> 01:01:26.375
We will be in trouble sooner or later.

01:01:26.375 --> 01:01:35.045
So why not?"

01:01:35.045 --> 01:01:38.075
That's why I really want to

01:01:38.075 --> 01:01:42.365
maybe further research on more of these food interest groups.

01:01:42.365 --> 01:01:44.880
Indeed there is another group.

01:01:45.640 --> 01:01:48.725

I think they started

01:01:48.725 --> 01:01:54.800

the page last year after the pandemic because we have to cook a lot at home,

01:01:54.800 --> 01:01:58.710

so people share about how bad their cooking are.

01:02:00.070 --> 01:02:03.455

This is also another very interesting page.

01:02:03.455 --> 01:02:08.360

The person who made this page

01:02:08.360 --> 01:02:17.210

I think she has some mission like a social cause at heart.

01:02:17.210 --> 01:02:25.470

So I think let her do this further and maybe I can do some more observation.

01:02:27.310 --> 01:02:31.820

I won't say I don't care or things like that,

01:02:31.820 --> 01:02:36.140

but we will be in trouble sooner or later. Go ahead.

01:02:36.140 --> 01:02:39.980

[LAUGHTER] I think if we keep on

01:02:39.980 --> 01:02:45.120

worrying about this and that actually we can't work things out.

01:02:52.600 --> 01:02:56.810

>> On that note, thank you

01:02:56.810 --> 01:03:01.530

Wen Yau so much for coming today and sharing your inspiring work with us.

01:03:02.200 --> 01:03:07.805

Shayoni, maybe I can turn it over to you since this is the last event of the semester,

01:03:07.805 --> 01:03:10.205

maybe you can close it.

01:03:10.205 --> 01:03:11.750

>> Yes. Really,

01:03:11.750 --> 01:03:14.615

thank you Nick and thank you Wen Yau for joining us.

01:03:14.615 --> 01:03:19.370

We have had an incredibly rich year of discussions in pandemic panels.

01:03:19.370 --> 01:03:22.505

We've been from Minneapolis to India,

01:03:22.505 --> 01:03:26.715

to Chile to Nairobi.

01:03:26.715 --> 01:03:30.145

We will have all of these conversations up

01:03:30.145 --> 01:03:33.160

online so please do check us out for the ones you missed.

01:03:33.160 --> 01:03:38.635

It is barnard.edu/global/pandemicpanels.

01:03:38.635 --> 01:03:43.130

We really hope to create this archive of resistance strategies and

01:03:43.130 --> 01:03:47.915

I really think that Wen Yau's note is the one to end on.

01:03:47.915 --> 01:03:51.620

We're not big, we're small

01:03:51.620 --> 01:03:55.490

and it is these drops in the ocean that hopefully somewhere we will

01:03:55.490 --> 01:03:58.400

be able to share and pass on

01:03:58.400 --> 01:04:03.230

this rich knowledge of resistance strategies from around the globe.

01:04:03.230 --> 01:04:09.750

Thank you all very much for joining us and you'll find us online or email us.