

讓我們， 像空氣一樣的存在

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「一攝無邊：香港劇場影像紀錄數碼資料庫暨教育計劃」（下稱「一攝無邊」）其中一個推廣項目，是邀約兩岸四地資深舞台攝影師擔任講者，分享他們在當地參與舞台攝影的經驗。其中來自台北的許斌老師在網上講座「一攝之間：許斌舞台攝影的黑與白」中有一句說話令我印象深刻。他說導演王墨林覺得他在排練場拍攝時好像空氣——「我就是好像空氣，要讓人不覺得你的存在，但是又有需要。」

這個意象，在我的腦海中久久不散。

計劃名稱中的「一攝」，是我在策劃整個項目的初期，就想到要用的兩個字。「一」體現了時間，而「攝」則有動感；在呼應攝影的同時，影像凝煉一刻亦往往具懾人甚至攝魂的魅力。但真正點睛的，是本會主席張秉權博士建議的「無邊」二字——讓「舞台」攝影跨越空間與空間的邊界，延伸至其他具表演意義的場域、和具歷史意義的時代。當然，計劃本身已然包含了建立網上資料庫，發佈研究和口述史，舉行講座、工作坊和出版等多元的跨域項目，讓更多對香港／舞台／攝影有興趣的業界內外人士，參與發掘、發現和發展與之直接相關，或有機流動的記憶，而對觀眾拓展的無邊想像，也是我們殷切期盼的。

Let Us Exist Like Air

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One of the programmes of “A Snap beyond Borders: An Online Archive and Education Project of Hong Kong Theatre and Performance Photography” (“A Snap beyond Borders”) is a talk series to which we have invited veteran theatre photographers from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau to share their experiences in their local theatre photography scenes. In the online talk “A Snap in Between: The Colours of Black and White in Hsu Ping’s Theatre Photography”, Hsu Ping from Taipei said something that struck a chord with me. As he recalled, theatre director Wang Mo-lin feels that Hsu is like air when he is photographing during rehearsals. “To be like air is exactly what I want to be,” Hsu said. “It is something that you do not normally feel, but it is an essential existence.”

It is an image that lingers in my mind.

As part of the project title, the expression “a snap” came to me during the initial stage of project planning. It captures a sense of time and the feeling of movement. While it describes the photographic act, it also evokes the instant an image crystallises and captivates the mind. Yet it is the phrase “beyond borders”, suggested by Dr Cheung Ping-kuen, Chairman of the IATC(HK), that lights up the concept of the entire project. It takes “theatre” photography beyond spatial borders, and extends it to other performative sites and historically significant eras. The project features a range of diverse initiatives such as an online archive which includes the publication of research findings and oral history materials, talks, a mentorship scheme and a photobook. It invites industry professionals and people who are interested in Hong Kong, theatre or photography to explore, discover and elaborate on recollections that touch on or revolve around these subjects. It is also a prompt for audiences to expand their imaginations, a prospect that we would love to see happening.

Over the summers of 2017 and 2018, I spent about three months travelling across Europe, where I visited various performing arts museums, archives and research institutes. In the Arts and Theatre Institute (ATI) in Prague, I came across something that left a deep impression

我在2017和18年夏天，在歐洲斷續逗留了近三個月，考察了當地多個表演藝術博物館、資料館和研究中心。其中安放在捷克藝術與劇場研究中心檔案室當眼處，一個接近兩米高、一米半寬的照片檔案櫃讓我難忘。它原屬於當地一位劇場攝影師，他為照片建立了井然有序的整存系統，照片背後都有手寫資料。舞台照片對中心而言，是屬於首要數碼化的項目，影像超越了文字，它是世界觀眾管窺捷克劇場歷史的入場券。

櫃內的照片當然已經數碼化，但這檔案櫃是中心的珍寶，也是「一攝無邊」的啟發點。「一攝無邊」得到各位攝影藝術家（阮漢威、張志偉、曾文通、謝明莊、關本良）的信任，及城市當代舞蹈團協助提供陳德昌的照片，並獲香港特別行政區政府「藝能發展資助計劃」的資助順利在2019年中展開，即使在疫情肆虐期間，部份活動的舉行時間稍有變動，但也沒有影響整個項目的行進。為此，我感謝辦公室所有同事無邊的支援，亦多謝曾參與這計劃的所有工作人員。因為你們，讓這個以攝影藝術家的視角和記憶作主體的計劃得以成事，通過他們的眼睛和鏡頭下的美學，見證香港與舞台過去四十年的歷史。

這兩年間難免心緒不寧，城事和人事變得很快，我沒有沉澱的餘裕。我深深感激，是「一攝無邊」讓我找到慰藉。有些記憶不能抹去，歷史的小述說要細水長流。如是，就讓我們像空氣一樣的存在吧！（好像）不在，但的而且確在。

on me. At a prominent spot in the institute, there stood a filing cabinet—approximately two metres tall and one and a half metres wide—filled with photos. It originally belonged to a local theatre photographer, who developed an archiving system for the collection of photos. On the back of each print, there was a handwritten record containing information about the image. For the ATI, the collection of stage photos was a priority item for digitalisation. The images go far beyond texts, and offer an opening into the history of Czech theatre for audiences worldwide.

The collection of stage photos in the ATI has now been digitalised, and the filing cabinet remains a treasure of the institute. It was also the creative impetus for the project “A Snap beyond Borders”. Thanks to the participating photographers (Yuen Hon-wai, Cheung Chi-wai, Tsang Man-tung, Tse Ming-chong and Kwan Pun-leung) who entrusted their work to us, and to the City Contemporary Dance Company who offered the use of selected photos by Ringo Chan, “A Snap beyond Borders” was launched in mid-2019 with the support from the HKSAR Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme. Although some of the activities have been rescheduled during the pandemic, the project has moved forward as planned. I would like to thank my colleagues in the office for their support, and everyone else who has worked on the project for their contributions. It is thanks to your efforts that we are bringing this project, which centres on the photography artists’ perspectives and memories, to fruition. It allows us to witness the past four decades of Hong Kong and its theatre once again through the aesthetic perceptions and lenses of the photographers.

The past two years have been a time of accelerating changes and restlessness in our city, and I have yet to process everything that has transpired. I have found solace in working on “A Snap beyond Borders”, and I am deeply grateful to the project. There are some memories that cannot be erased, and certain accounts of history that need to be preserved. Let us exist like air! An existence that is not always palpable, and yet is real.