



Mirage: Disused Public Property in Taiwan ***Opens at the Museum of Vancouver May 30, 2024***

Photography as Social Activism and a Critique of Urban Development Policies

For Immediate Release: April 18, 2024 — *Mirage: Disused Public Property in Taiwan* covers 10 years of artist Yao Jui-Chung’s use of photography to expose Taiwan’s “mosquito halls.” Starting in the 1970s, Taiwan invested in convention centres, sports facilities, schools and other public structures, only to abandon them—leaving them to breed mosquitos, waste money and add to urban decay.

Yao Jui-Chung, Taiwan’s leading contemporary artist and photographer, whose work has been shown internationally at the Venice Biennale (1997), the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Queensland Art Gallery, Bibliothèque National de France, the Art Museum of Seoul and many more, is also a professor. In 2010, he gave his students a choice: to follow the conventional lecture and textbook format or to participate in an investigation of abandoned public projects.

They chose to investigate—and in just a few months they identified 147 “mosquito halls” and compiled a 684-page book that prompted Taiwan’s Vice President and Premier to inspect the abandoned spaces, promising to revive or demolish them. Known as the **Lost Society Document (LSD)**, students from the National Taiwan Normal University and the Taipei National University of the Arts joined Yao to survey the country. Between 2010 and 2019, they documented over 800 underutilized public facilities constructed with taxpayer money. Their photographs and research, which shed light on these haunting modern-day ruins throughout, served as a criticism of the government’s failed democracy and economic transition.

“In this age of transparency, covering up only causes more harm. The mission of this project is to examine the condition of public space usage from the perspective of the peoples. The whole world is facing the same problem, but Taiwan is willing to face it, deal with it, and let go, which can set an example for the international community.” —**Yao Jui-Chung, Artist**

「在這個透明化的時代，掩飾只會造成更多傷害。本計劃核心是站在人民立場檢視公共空間狀況，全世界都面臨相同問題，但是台灣願意面對、處理、放下，堪為國際社會表率。」— **藝術家姚瑞中**

Mirage will open at the Museum of Vancouver on May 30, 2024 and will feature 150 black and white photos of Taiwanese “mosquito halls” as well as Sandy Lo’s documentary film, *A Rainbow Over the Ruins* showing behind-the-scenes footage from the LSD project. This is the exhibition’s first-ever showing in North America. Short films created by students in UBC’s Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies program (ACAM) and the

UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (SALA) will provide a local perspective on the themes of placemaking and urban decay in Vancouver.

Mirage will be on display at the Museum of Vancouver starting May 30, 2024 with an opening reception on May 29th.

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Media Contact: *Debby Reis, Marketing & Communications Manager, Museum of Vancouver / dreis@museumofvancouver.ca / 604-730-5309*

Media Tours on May 29, 2024

Members of the media are invited to tour the exhibition. Featured artist Yao Jui-Chung and documentarian Sandy Lo, along with the Museum of Vancouver's Curatorial Lead, Denise Fong, Curator of Urban Cultures, will be on-site and available for interviews **by appointment on Wednesday, May 29, 2024 between 11:00am and 2:00pm** at the Museum of Vancouver, located at 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, BC. Interviews can be held in English, Mandarin or Cantonese.

To book an appointment for a walk through, or for media inquiries and interviews at other times, contact Marketing & Communications Manager, Debby Reis at dreis@museumofvancouver.ca.

About the Museum of Vancouver: The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) connects Vancouverites to each other and connects Vancouver to the world. The Museum's programs, exhibitions and collections bring people together and inspire conversation about the future. The Museum is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring a socially connected, civically engaged city. The Museum of Vancouver and the city of Vancouver is located within the shared, unceded, ancestral territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.