

Laiwan on Jin-me Yoon

Laiwan 03:20

“When you decide to speak nearby, rather than speak about, the first thing you need to do is to acknowledge the gap between you and those who populate your project. In other words, to leave the space of representation open, so that although you're very close to your subject, you're also committed to not speaking on their behalf, in their place, or on top of them.”

Laiwan 3:48

So said, American Vietnamese philosopher, filmmaker, Trinh T. Minh-ha in *Women, Native, Other*, she says, "Never does one open the discussion by coming right to the heart of the matter. For the heart of the matter, is always somewhere else than where it is supposed to be. To allow it to emerge, people approach it indirectly by postponing until it matures, by letting it come when it is ready to come." She later adds, "let the world come to us through an outside in movement."

Laiwan 4:27

In 2009, curator and writer Joni Lowe wrote in an article on the evolving work of Jin-mi Yoon. She says, “Yoon describes her artistic strategy as semiotic collisions, a way of extracting something from one place, and putting it in another context to spur a proliferation of meanings that disrupt the semiotic stasis of popular culture.” She further says, “Yoon clashed her body with landscapes of Banff, a symbolic Canadian location that carries colonial history and racist legacies. The resulting collision denaturalizes constructs raising questions about belonging, identity, memory and place. The viewer may enjoy the deadpan humor, while simultaneously wrestling with aesthetic discomfort.” So what follows is a “semiotic collision,” composed of a score in three parts, playing with poetics, musical sensing, without linearity or logic, deconstruction through random patterning and without attempt to make meaning.

Laiwan 5:52

I acknowledge with thanks that I am based on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. I am with humble gratitude and respect for the

Indigenous stewardship of this land for over millennia. A land that has provided me refuge here, since I immigrated with my parents and Granny in 1977, to leave the war in apartheid Rhodesia. My work is committed to decolonization and the return of resources and land to indigenous stewards.

Russell Wallace 06:28

Good morning agent listener. The card you hold in your hand shows the artist Jin-me Yoon, in 1991, pictured against the backdrop of Lake Louise named Ho-run-num-nay (Lake of the Little Fishes) by the Nakota First Nations people.

Ho-run-num-nay belongs among our high-ranking intelligence officers and whom we have discovered is under threat. Your mission, agent listener, should you decide to accept it, is to help return Ho-run-num-nay to its healthy condition as pictured here 30 years ago.

As always, should you or any of your colleagues continue as normal as you have, Planet Earth will disavow any of you due to your inactions. Remember, the code to gain access and understanding is the word *turquoise*. This tape will self-destruct in five seconds.

Laiwan 07:39

Score part one. Face to face. Taking a stand. Sara Ahmed in her book, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, noted: "the encounter as a face to face can only be thought of as a discrete event when the temporal and spatial function of this approach is negated."

An emphasis on encounters involves a radical rethinking of what it might mean to face up to others. The face-to-face encounter is mediated precisely by that which allows the face to appear in the present.

Laiwan 8:36

Face us directly and as neutrally as you can. Listen for the sound of exceptional neutrality. It is a meditative sound. Face us with the familiarity of this place, this person, this cardigan, this card. Face us full forward body, hands to the side, hands with slight closure, not a fist, not open handed, but measured, ready.

What you desire becomes no longer individual. As we see the global state we are in today.

Now, how do we encounter this image? This card? How familiar or strange does this feel, this encounter?

Laiwan 9:53

Look with a light touch upon this image. With this card in hand, hold the card lightly. How are you standing? Notice if your stance is with fluidity, with strength of spine. Take a stand. Stand here, stand with. Be planted firmly on the ground like a mountain. That is Tai Chi. Take a stance, learn the stance. The first step, the first stance, preparing a motion, a movement of collective being, of collective rising.

Laiwan 10:49

Thirty years later, here we are, a pandemic and as well, anti-Asian racists rose by 700%. How this changes, how we look at you, how the Asian body is seen. How we are understood and made to understand. To stand and to take a stance. To practice to be space. To be with attention. With eyes as if a slow cat, a slow cat-like blink. Slowly blink back. Give recognition, acknowledge, reciprocate.

Laiwan 11:49

By listening to this encounter, we meet by listening. Hear the card, hear an image of Jin-me, hear a voice that is me. We increasingly feel the familiar expanding vocabulary of familiarity. Notice the clothes you are wearing. Perhaps you too are wearing a soft, warm cardigan. And in this card, we noticed the musicality of the colour and designs on Jin-me's cardigan.

Laiwan 12:36

What do you hear as you play with such designs? Are these sounds familiar? Or are they strange? Notice the colour and designs on your own cardigan. These too have a musicality. How would you play it? How does the sound play inside your head? Or the sounds inside your mouth? Do you hear the resonance? Do you feel the vibration? Perhaps you have a light hum, a hum between your lips, and hum from your tongue. A tune you may improvise in this moment warmed by the room you are in. Reminded of the world by this card you hold.

Laiwan 13:31

Score Part Two. Turquoise with ice.

The tone of the section comes from an article on Lake Louise. The lakes contain glacial flour. A sediment from rocks that slowly makes its way into the water through erosion, but as the glaciers melt at faster rates than ever before, less of the meltwater contains the rock flour which intercepts sunlight and gives the lakes their milky turquoise luster. Causing also deteriorating water quality and harming unique species that live in the lakes. Your code word here for the score is turquoise. Where around the world glaciers are melting faster.

Laiwan 14:34

Identify where in this image there is turquoise. What kind of sounds do you hear with each of their placements? Each of the details. Some have clouds nearby. Some have ice nearby. There is mountain and ice. Imagine a familiar exterior hearth. I use the word hearth as a metaphor for an exteriorized heart. A home that is outside even when it is cold or icy or rocky or wild. Pick your favorite exterior hearth. A place you visit often, a place you're not a stranger and not a tourist in, but one way you're welcomed as a member of a family. One where you do not feel cold, even when it is icy, or rocky, or wild. One where you feel generous and want to take care and reciprocate. One where you would not dare to hoard or own. See now in this card that you hold in your hands in your facing us. You see how her white sock softly blends into snow? She stands lightly on a flat rock on feet comfortably with brown shoes modestly.

Laiwan 16:10

What is the feeling of the melody here? Knowing how the turquoise is formed, knowing the turquoise will fade. Do you hear the changing dynamics as you look down at your shoes, how light and comfortable they feel. This will also tell us of the rhythm of your stance. As you stand here before water and water that becomes ice. Do you hear the sounds of the ice, the shifts and creeks, the stretching and the crackling, the popping and the pinging, the singing under our breath? Then listen through muscle and sinew through to your hand that relaxes and the lips light and jaw relaxed. With the small hum the melody of ice.

Laiwan 17:18

Score part three, the souvenir becomes body.

Let's begin before we go to the score, to look at the etymology of the word souvenir.

1775. A remembrance or memory from French souvenir. From Old French noun. Use of souvenir: to remember, come to mind.

Laiwan 18:01

From Latin, subvenire come to mind. From sub, up from below, plus venire, to come. From a suffixed form of gwa, to go to come. Meaning a, token of remembrance, momento, first recorded, 1782.

Laiwan 18:33

Sou equals sub, under, beneath, behind, from under, resulting from, further division. From Latin preposition sub, under, below, beneath, at the foot of, also, close to, up to, towards, of time, within, during, and figuratively, subject to, in the power of, and a little somewhat.

Laiwan 19:23

Venire: He goes, goes, come, to be born, to go walk step, to come, come, approach. Susan Stewart, American poet and author of *On Longing*, noted in 1993: "The souvenir generates a narrative which reaches only behind, spiraling in a continually inward movement, rather than outward toward the future. We will instead hear, move beyond past and future, to face what we are experiencing today in this moment, where the card you hold, cannot be a souvenir, nor a souvenir of a souvenir, but by listening closely, we work attentively with it to become a point of departure.

Laiwan 20:32

Score part three, the souvenir becomes body. We each in turn returned to 2021 from 1991. Listen to these mountains. Listen to this lake. Witness what is being transformed. Remembering how now we in a pandemic, of who can travel freely, of who is trapped at home, of battles on the street, of those not safe on the streets. Time and space propel us to this, where waterflow can with a life giving generosity to then a sudden over abundance that becomes dangerous. Learn a relationship with this flowing phenomenon. Learn her moods, stand up for her. Return to today, continents of melting ice, of changing landscape, 1991, through: wapiti elk, osprey, bighorn sheep, pika, pygmy shrews, moose, mule deer, white tailed deer, bison, wolverine, pine martens, wolves, coyotes, cougar, lynx, black bears, ducks, geese,

owls, eagles, hawks, crows, weasels, martens, minx, rabbits, beavers, porcupines, little brown bats, squirrels, grizzly bear, hoary marmot, Banff spring snails, gray jays, rufous hummingbirds, white tailed ptarmigans, dippers, mosquitoes, skunks, snakes, buffalo, flies, wasps, bees, pike, walleye, white fish, rainbow and speckled trout, sturgeon, turtle, frogs.

Laiwan 23:11

We follow the mountain stance you stand anticipating the next movement where we move towards "waving hands like clouds." Wave hands, like clouds, yún shǒu. Move hands like clouds, yún shǒu. Moving hands like clouds, Metzger and Zhou. Waving hands like clouds drifting by, Chong. These are yang style tai chi.

Clouds, a fusion of water and air, of sky and earth, a balance of yin and yang. Clouds sounds the same as yún. "Luck, fortune, fate." There are shadows of cloud, there is blue of sky, there is turquoise.

Laiwan 24:12

How can we build a commons here, where each are no longer alone? Not alone in this pandemic, not alone at home and not alone as a traveler. No longer alone and thinking through what each are seeing, nor what each are hearing, and in what we may understand what we are witnessing, here as you hold this card.