

## I Go Traveling

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“I Go Traveling (I)- Journey to Beijing (1999) was in fact a fabricated journey the artist did not make in person. Televisions are placed a short distance apart facing each other so that participants invited to walk between them are unable to see clearly what images are being shown on the screens. Despite the fact that the two televisions do in fact showing the same scenes, looking left and right stood between them the second difference and limited field of vision makes that impossible to confirm. “Journey to Beijing” did not involve traveling, rather “being deliberately absent” as a way of viewing the intolerable panic of “nostalgia” and “seeing reality in ways that differ from memory or the way one was taught.”

“I Go Traveling(II)- Je fais un voyage” (1999-2000) invited people in a semi-open space to phone the unknown artist who happens to have left her phone number. The artist carries a video phone with her as she travels around Taiwan, taking and making calls from Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung and Taitung. At the predetermined mid point of the journey, she stops and listens to calls that come in from the second video phone video link in Taipei. This type of communication is extremely subtle because both video phones have been placed in semi-open public spaces – a book shop and a cosmetics store. The artist who leaves her telephone number has no way of knowing who will call or when. She stands by the phone telling strangers who call names of places visited on the journey. The place names recited in the phone call are written on a postcard participants can obtain and on which they are asked to make their own mark. Once the call has been completed and a mark made, participants are encouraged to send the postcard to whoever they want. The traveling artist is often forced to stop the journey and wait in another semi-public space for the calls, but tells people: “I am going traveling, please call such and such a number to contact me.”

In “I Go Traveling ( III)- IT Vacation” (2000), the artist deliberately arranges a journey that resembles the different levels/stages of a video game, around the New Year period. This encourages participants to try their luck and thereby draws them into the piece. As part of the process of this “journey” the make-believe guide deceives people by including souvenirs collected from the earlier “I am Going Traveling II: video tape, landscape photographs, phone call bills, a travel journal and map cut into non-continuous segments and given new numbers, instructions, colors, shapes, raffle prizes and with travel destination awards : free toilet access, NT\$100 cup of coffee etc. Despite the familiarity of the display space, visitors occasionally find themselves on the journey but inundated with

lots of information and meanings that are yet to be constructed, forcing them to deny their own bafflement and struggle to make sense of things, so as to find what is truly fascinating about the journey.

“I Go Traveling (VI)- Traveler. Bali” (2001) appears in a 40-minute “theater-like” format. The artist takes on the role of editor, director and performer. The Taitung Theater cooperates in the presentation of the work, which was performed on the banks of Pipa Lake in Taitung. Tang Huang-chen also put on a brief performance at an art work class in Bali. This requested that participating artists from different countries take part in a recorded Q&A session, part of which was then used in the final piece. The question asked is: “If you loved someone what would you say to let the other person know?” Because each of the interviewees responded in their mother tongue, Tang did not necessarily know what they said, though artists from the same country who did understand smiled meaningfully. The “Schizophrenia” of this dialogue is the focus of “I am Going Traveling IV.”

Without a stage or sound effects, performers have to rely on constant movement back and forth to create the feel of a theater; fighting with the sound of crashing waves, whilst conducting this strange performance, creating what is in essence a rupture wherein there is no relationship between words and actions; one after another individuals recite lines from the same script, once sentence after another, sometimes reversing the order, or repeating others people’s lines whilst simultaneously imitating actions from daily life; going to the toilet, washing, putting on make up...