

# TUNG LIN TSAI

by Kai Newquist



Spring 2022

## What does your thesis work investigate?

My work investigates my self-identity as a Taiwanese citizen, a citizen of a non-sovereign state.

## How has your thesis project evolved since its inception?

At the very beginning of my project, I had numerous images and prints that I couldn't present within a cohesive framework. From that, I adopted a non-conventional way of printing these images. Through halftone printing and screen printing, I imitated the look of newspaper alike photographs representing my sense of displacement as a Taiwanese citizen; a colorless and politically complex world set upon my identity.

## In your practice, is there a question you are trying to answer?

Rather than answering a question, I am asking a question: whether my existence is a mistake when Taiwan is denied by the world superpowers.

## How do you approach atmosphere and color?

Most of my photographs and prints are in black and white as if when facing international relations and geopolitics, we're all colorless.



(T) 國家會感謝你的 / The Country will be Grateful to You, 2020, Screen Print (Digital layout)  
(B) Passport, 2022, Laser Print

## What or who are your major influences?

Before going to college, I knew nothing about photography, and I rarely took photographs. The reason I began photography was that I couldn't register for any film course in my first year of college. However, after reading the critical writings by Takuma Nakahira, and his story as a photographer, I couldn't stop thinking about photography. From his early expressive works to his botanical dictionary, Nakahira asked the most fundamental question: "If photography is no more than a medium, why do we as photographers rather choose photography, not other media?" Nakahira's question interrogates photographers in essence as if an existential philosopher challenging our existence; none of us is even coming close to the answer. Nakahira has influenced me in thinking about photography throughout my photography journey. I've felt the need to respond to his discourse on photography.

## What is in the future for you?

As an international student, I'd like to work in the U.S. for a year in order to expand my experience. As much as I want to continue my journey as a photographer, I'd also like to apply to graduate school. Based on my experiences in the U.S., I want to, hopefully, take all this with me back to my homeland, Taiwan.



殘膠 / Stickerman, 2020, Screen Print



BR-17, 2020, Medium Format film digital scanned



鐘 / Clock, 2021, 35mm film digital scanned



歐 / Seagull, 2021, 35mm film digital scanned

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Tung is a Taiwanese photographer currently based in the United States. He explores his identity as a citizen of a non-sovereign state through his practice and tends to understand the world with cameras and photographs.