



EXTREME OPERA

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University of Florida
May 2004

Project Option in Lieu of Thesis
Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
degree of Master of Fine Arts



Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude to all my committee members:

To Professor Maria Rogal, without her vision, fresh perspective, and passion I could not have completed this project.

A special thanks to professor Connie Hwang, who always supported me to do my cultural research. "Courage! Courage! Courage!" she always exclaimed, as she shared her professional knowledge with me, and helped me arrive at another level of design.

I would like to express my endless thanks to professor Brian Slawson. Through his wisdom and guidance I learned how to question the concepts of design, and overcome my weaknesses in design. I also learned to design cleanly, intelligently and without excess. "Small and brilliant like a diamond" was his motto. I will never forget his words.

Many thanks to Monica Salazar, Selin Ozguzer, Michael Christopher, Dori Griffin, Ricardo Hernandez, and Aaron Anderson for all their various help in realizing this project. Their assistance was much appreciated.

To my wife Yi-Hsuan – without her constant devotion, encouragement and support, I could not have survived in the program. Finally, my mom and brother provided their love to me. I hope to share this wonderful moment and accomplishment with them.



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ABSTRACT

The emergence of more contemporary media genres, the dated style, and the lack of knowledge of abstract performance have caused Chinese opera to lose most of its audience. "Extreme Opera" is designed to introduce traditional Chinese opera to a modern audience, with the objective of promoting awareness and motivating Taiwanese youth to experience and appreciate this rich and traditional art form. This project-in-lieu-of-thesis is a multimedia exploration consisting of printed matter, motion graphics and spatial interventions in an attempt to recontextualize traditional culture for a modern audience. May the traditional cultures carry forward to the future and lift up to the international stage.



The clay model of traditional opera theater

INTRODUCTION

“Although Chinese opera itself is not particularly ancient, China’s theatre tradition is, with India’s, the oldest and most significant in Asia. Chinese opera represents the climax of the nation’s rich and colorful theatre tradition, and yet it also exemplifies the tensions between the beauties of the traditional arts and the demands of the modern world.”

~ Colin Mackerras ~

The background of Chinese opera

The Chinese opera is a traditional form of stage drama, combining the elements of dance, song, dialogue, sword play, acrobatics, and mime. Gestures, movements and expressions are uniquely presented because each performer has a different method of expression, and these highly individualistic performances can make a deep impression on the audience. Chinese opera communicates the idea of time and space to the audience through the actions of the performers. This is a concept of abstraction called “imagined time and space.” The performers not only imitate daily life but also must change these simple actions to choreographic performances, which emphasize their characters.

In addition, Chinese opera has special costumes, facial make-up, music, and detail to indicate each individual character’s personality. Adding imagined time and space to these characteristics creates strong dramatic results for Chinese opera.



Exorcist presented the early painting face in Han dynasty.



Chinese original masks of Prince Lan Lin of Tang dynasty.



Shadow play related to Chinese opera.

Chinese opera is enjoyed and appreciated by people from various social strata. Most stories of Chinese opera are part of our daily lives: heroes battle overwhelmingly powerful foes, good challenges evil, and lovers seek escape from domineering and disapproving parents. Familiar characteristics of Chinese opera are the painted face and colorful costumes. The colorful and exaggerated symbolism of the painted face expresses each character's role in Chinese opera. The painted face reveals a character's personality, typical behavior patterns, and outstanding physical characteristics. Delicate embroidery of the costumes contributes to a dramatic visual result. Color plays an important part in the symbolism of stage costume. Different colors indicate different levels of rank and status.

The history of Chinese opera

The contemporary Chinese opera has existed for over two hundred years, and has been in development for approximately three thousand years. It was seen as a form that expressed the traditional art of China culture most completely. As mentioned before, the Chinese opera was a highly difficult and abstract art: blending music, dancing, drama and acrobatics. Because of its long historical background, Chinese opera was deeply embedded in the heart of the Chinese people.

The Chinese opera's long period of development can be classified into approximately four periods: god worship, music and dance development, ancient theater, and finally the mature period of Chinese opera.



Many kind of dances in Tang dynasty.

The period of god worship was the first primitive drama period. Praying for god and giving joy to god were integrated into the religious rites in this period. The performance of imitating animals developed into god worship, and it can be said that the first primitive drama was produced. It existed over a long period of time in various performances of the future generations. Until the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C.) and Han Dynasty (206 B.C.), Chinese drama was developing from the primitive stage in religious rites into the entry-level stage of expressing art value and achieving the function of entertainment.

The Tang dynasty was the most representative of the period of music and dance development. Emperor Ming Huang (712-755 A.D.) and Emperor Chuang Tsung (923-925 A.D.) were called “honorary fathers of Chinese opera” because they gave every effort to this art, providing abundant conditions for the existence and developments of the Chinese drama. The music and dance of the Tang Dynasty was very prosperous, and had the detailed construction fundamental to Chinese opera, as well as the special features of its music and dance. However, the performance system was just for carrying on an impromptu type performance at this time, and the music system did not develop to its full potential.

During the Sung Yuan Dynasties. The Sung Dynasty provided a ripe environment for the development of Chinese drama because the palace had perfect recreational organization. In addition, the embryonic form of the Chinese opera began from the Sung Dynasty. At this time, the first

*See page 8: Chronology of Chinese opera



Modern opera in the period of Cultural Revolution.

variety of quality would be the appearance of professional drama actors, and the performance system developed to a more complete and longer performance. The music system already contained a mechanism, but it was not obvious. The Yuan Dynasty began the historical stage allowed the Chinese drama to rapidly develop. The music system, stage principle, and performance system had been established completely and perfectly by this time.

The representatives of the mature period of Chinese opera were the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The Chinese drama of the Ming Dynasty continued into the Sung Dynasty and the Yuan Dynasties, but still continued to develop. The form of scripts and the music system tended towards integration. The quality of stage art rose gradually, expressing mainly the personal style and stage background. The Qing Dynasty was a peak of the Chinese drama, and was also an important period that spread Chinese drama extensively throughout China. Chinese drama in the Qing Dynasty is really exquisite and smooth, and stage acting started to focus on the acrobatic techniques. The stripes and colors on the painted face became more complicated, and the patterns and symbols had special meaning. After the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese drama began to be called the Beijing opera, and this is the Chinese opera that we know and appreciate today.

Contemporary Chinese opera

In the period of the **Cultural Revolution** in China (1966-1976), performance of the Chinese opera was forbidden by the government. At this time, many precious assets were eliminated. It was not until 1978 that the performance of Chinese opera was permitted.



The model of painting face in Taiwan.

On the other hand, the development of Chinese opera in Taiwan has continued to carry forward the tradition of Chinese opera. However, due to other forms of media entertainment (television, film, video games, internet, etc.), and the lack of historical and theatrical knowledge of the young, Chinese opera had lost much of its audience. At this writing, much of the audience is elderly – people who were children when Chinese opera was at its peak.

As a designer and an enthusiast of Chinese opera, I am concerned that the younger generations and even my generation (late 20s / early 30s) have a general apathy towards Chinese opera and its rich traditions and narratives. If Chinese opera does not have the interest of the young audience, the development of Chinese Opera does not have hope to continue and flourish in the future. Ironically, most of the young generation has a higher level of education than those before them, and one would expect that this education would engender a superior background and appreciation of Chinese opera. The question then is not that young Taiwanese dislike Chinese opera itself; but that they do not have the motivation or knowledge to allow them to get in touch with this inheritance. Additionally, the educational system and the society in general do not provide the appropriate leadership, so the young generation does not have the appropriate foundation to understand or appreciate Chinese opera.

Therefore, based on my own enthusiasm for traditional Chinese culture and Chinese opera, I have proposed this project so that I may play a role in inspiring the young generation to appreciate Chinese opera and to continue this rich tradition.



Extreme Opera

“For young Taiwanese with Chinese blood mixed with influences of western popular culture, perhaps combining the western drama form and traditional Chinese opera is one of the ways to solve the crisis of Chinese opera.”

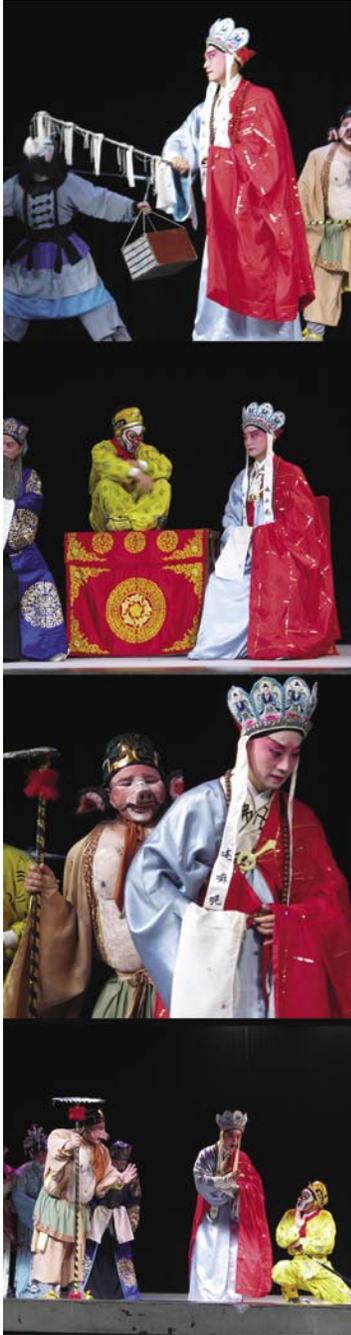
~ Yu-Yin Chang ~

The reason I chose the word “Extreme” to be my theme is that “Extreme” is a popular expression in contemporary American pop culture. Since 1960, Taiwan received assistance from the United States, and western culture was introduced to Taiwan during this period. Western pop culture is attracting a lot of attention in Taiwan through music, movies, and TV shows. The Taiwanese have accepted the Western culture for many years and many Taiwanese often actually look at our own culture with a Western point of view.

To be “Extreme” is to express a feeling of the greatest possible intensity, one that is far beyond the norm in actions, and is used to attract youth to a product or event. So, the Extreme opera intends to use the concept of “Extreme” to attract the young Taiwanese. The focus of this study then is how to attract the young generation of Taiwanese to appreciate and attend the Chinese opera.

The concept of the Extreme opera.

In the process of the design of “Extreme Opera,” I ask myself how can I communicate the traditional Chinese opera so that it is something appealing? This reflexivity then



The story of Monkey King vs. Leopard.

functions as a cultural bridge, to form the connection between modern young Taiwanese and traditional Chinese opera.

The most extreme part of my design is the thinking process – transferring the intangible ideas, such as the identity of Extreme opera design, into a visible design. Therefore, Extreme opera will be a new manner in which to introduce and recontextualize traditional Chinese opera. The new conception combines traditional images of Chinese opera and western pop culture to promote awareness and motivate young Taiwanese to experience and appreciate Chinese opera. At the time of this writing, the project consists of three parts of a system that has room to grow.

Historical time line

Focusing on the history of China and the history of Chinese opera;

Print posters (3)

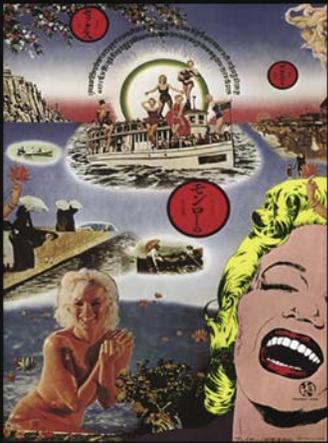
Focusing on different themes to motivate the audience to think about Chinese opera – specifically the past, present, and future;

Motion graphics (2)

Using new media, and specifically the internet to attract young Taiwanese to experience and appreciate contemporary Chinese opera.

Chronology of Chinese opera		
Dynasties	Period	Sources
Republic (1911 – Present)	Mature period of Chinese opera	Chinese opera
Qing (1644 – 1911)		
Ming (1368 – 1643)		
Yuan (1277 – 1367)	Ancient theater	Dramatic dances
Song (960 – 1276)		
Tang (618 – 906)		
Sui (589 – 617)	Music and Dance development	Court Jesters
South & North Dynasties Western & Eastern Jin Three Kingdom (220 – 588)		
Han (206 BC – AD 220)		
Qin (221 – 206 BC)	Shamans	Exorcist
Zhou (1122 – 255 BC)		
Shang (1766 – 1122 BC)		
Xia (2205 – 1767 BC)	Spectacle and Circus	Topical Farce
Neolithic		
Neolithic	God worship	

EXTREME OPERA



Posters was designed by Tadanori Yokoo.



Ya Yin Ensemble

PROJECT INFLUENCES

Tadanori Yokoo

Tadanori Yokoo was born in 1936 in Nishiwaki, Japan. He became a world famous graphic artist in 1960. He was the first graphic artist who transformed the noisy and fleet pop language into business illustration.

Yokoo's design philosophy is that substitutes the order and logic of the Constructivism for endless vitality of dada and glamor of mess media and popular arts. The elements of the photograph are usually collage into design, and transform the traditional pictures into the pop art languages.

“An artist speaks for a generation.” Yokoo expresses an enthusiasm and curiosities of Japanese generation, who grow up under the effects of mass popular culture and electronics media in the United States, such as television, movie, radio and records. Perhaps exceed any visual artist in his generation; Yokoo translates this phenomenon in his design. (Meggs, P., 1998)

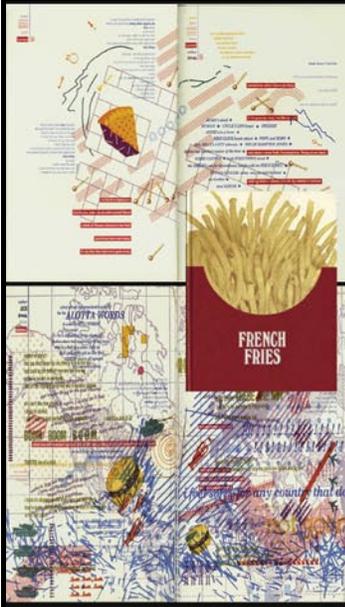
Ya Yin Ensemble

Ya Yin Ensemble was established in March 1979. It is the avant-garde group of the Chinese opera, and is led by Kuo Hsiao- Chuang, a new generation opera actor. Ya Yin has won a lot of praise and affirmation from domestic and international audiences through new stage dialogues writing, the merger of the western theatrical ideas and



Top: Warren Lehrer and his wife Judith.

Bottom: Warren Lehrer's book French Fries.



functions, and experiment new performance techniques. Ya Yin is a successful example to explain how to succeed of attract the young audiences to appreciate the Chinese opera performance.

An impression of new experiment has combined western drama and traditional Chinese opera. Direct Wu Hsing-kuo manufactures a modern opera through high creation and successful adoption the Shakespeare's **Macbeth**. It does not abandon the tradition; the experiment is a process to help the traditional Chinese opera accepting by more modern audiences. (Tzeng, Y., 2003)

Warren Lehrer

Warren Lehrer is a writer, designer, and book artist whose books and theatrical works celebrate the music of thought and speech, the complexity of character, and the relationship between social structures and the individual. (Lehrer, W., 2001)

In spring 2002, Warren Lehrer was invited to lecture in the School of Art and Art History at the University of Florida. During this time he introduced his book *I mean you know*, which studies human dialogue and the poetics of communication. Warren Lehrer used multiple typefaces, font sizes, and different paragraph alignments to develop a visual pictorial narrative. This is a good example of integrating a drama in a graphic book. Audiences can perform his work by reading text and image. During a workshop, I had the opportunity to perform with Lehrer in a group reading and understood how this came to life. Warren Lehrer's book inspires me how to present traditional Chinese opera with a new visual representation.

JUSTIFICATION& DELIMITATIONS

Because the largest audience for Chinese opera is aging and there is little sign of its popularity amongst youth culture, it is in danger of disappearing. As a Chinese designer, I have an interest that is both personal and professional in cultural preservation. Cultural preservation is a very important issue related to this project. The question of how to continue the cultural traditions, of how to inspire new audiences (local and global) is critical and a big responsibility.

Certainly, I do not want to change the traditional Chinese opera because that goes beyond the scope of this project and my expertise as a graphic designer. Instead, I draw from Chinese opera itself, which focuses on essentializing actions to do the same in order to communicate the excitement, richness and depth of Chinese opera.

ASSUMPTIONS

First, I defined the target audience of this project as young Taiwanese, between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five. I believe that if we can attract youth to the Opera and help them understand and appreciate it, and it will continue to grow and not become a lost art form.

Second, "Taiwanese youth are interested in global culture, especially western popular culture. Because communication technologies (and communication) is flourishing in Taiwan, young Taiwanese have many opportunities to be in contact with many foreign cultures. One example is MTV.

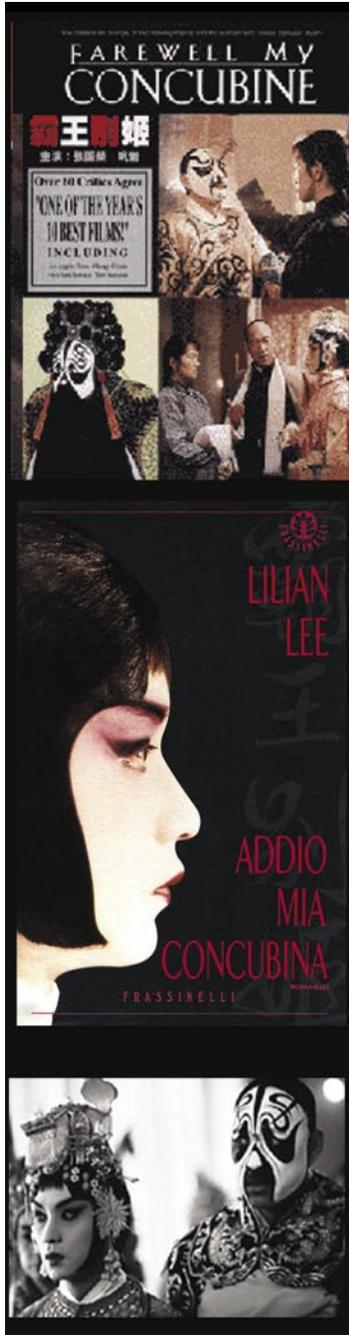
At this time, MTV Mandarin plays 24 hours a day in Taiwan, with distribution to 98 percent of all cable-accessible homes (approximately five million households) in Taiwan.” (MTV Cable Network Information, 2002)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

If I intend to be like a bridge to continue extending my own culture then how can I, as a designer, engage people and move them to attach importance their own traditional culture? My project is an exploration of how contemporary visual communication and its related methodologies can be utilized to create awareness and appreciate of cultural history includes specific Chinese opera for young generation Taiwanese.

Based on this concept, I ask how can one guide the young generation through the history and development of Chinese opera in order to share the historical knowledge of Chinese opera? In what parts of Chinese opera is the young generation most interested? How can a designer motivate young Taiwanese to experience and appreciate Chinese opera? How can one stimulate young Taiwanese thinking and attach importance the meaning and the value of preserving Chinese opera, and go a step further to consider the development and the innovation of Chinese opera in the future?





Posters of the Farewell my Concubine.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

"An artist speaks for a generation"

~ Tadanori Yokoo ~

Based on my research and previous work, my project will focus on "forms of expression." I think forms of expression are one of the aesthetic elements of design. They attract the audiences' attention, and give them the feeling of participating in an experience.

The target audiences of this project are young Taiwanese, between the ages of fourteen to thirty-five. In order to obtain more information from my target audience, I chose to survey a sampling of Taiwanese living in the US. The survey was based on the viewing of one clip of Chinese opera from the movie of **Farewell my Concubine**, and I asked the target audience the following questions:

What is their way of looking at Chinese opera?

What parts of Chinese opera do they find interesting?

How long and where do they spend their leisure time (define the medias)?

After the survey, I understood more about my target audiences' opinions on Chinese opera, and worked on this project with these responses in mind.

In addition, a survey done by 30 Taiwanese from age 14 to 34 found the following information (Chinese opera & Media study for young Taiwanese, October, 2003):



Young Taiwanese in USA

Gurvey

1. Have you watched Chinese opera before? Yes No

2. Following the sequence of the video, please circle the most interesting parts after you watched this video, and why (5 is the most interesting to you, and 0 is least interesting to you)

a. Music: 5 4 3 2 1 0 why _____

b. Movement: 5 4 3 2 1 0 why _____

c. Make up: 5 4 3 2 1 0 why _____

d. Costume: 5 4 3 2 1 0 why _____

e. Props: 5 4 3 2 1 0 why _____

f. Story: 5 4 3 2 1 0 why _____

What kind of story you will expect to see in Chinese opera
 Action Love Drama Other _____

4. How do you spend your leisure time?
 TV & Video Computer game Internet Music
 Sports Cinema & Theater Other _____

5. How much time do you spend on the following media?
 TV & Video: Less 1 hour 2 - 4 hours 5 - 6 hours
 Music: Less 1 hour 2 - 4 hours 5 - 6 hours
 Internet: Less 1 hour 2 - 4 hours 5 - 6 hours
 Book & Magazine: Less 1 hour 2 - 4 hours 5 - 6 hours
 Radio: Less 1 hour 2 - 4 hours 5 - 6 hours

6. Where do you spend your leisure time most?
 Library Museum Bookstore & Cafe shop Gym
 Cinema & Theater Shopping mall Other _____

The survey of Extreme opera

62% of young Taiwanese have watched Chinese opera.
 38% of young Taiwanese never watched Chinese opera before.

I edited the opera sequence in the movie of Farewell my Concubine to show my audiences music, movement, make up (painting face), costume, props (stage prop and actors prop), and the story.

Following the sequence of the video, the audiences choose the most interesting parts after they watched the video.

Paint face	85%
Movement	82%
Costume	77%
Actor's Prop	62%
Music	48%
Stage Prop	34%

This survey also points to the contents of Chinese opera they like to watch.

Action	58%
Love	14%
Drama	14%
Other	14%

As I continued to investigate my audience, I considered how young Taiwanese spend their leisure time

Internet	53%
TV & Video	13%
Computer game	13%
Music	13%

Source: Chinese Opera and Media Study



MTV is the most influential TV show for young people.

The amount of time young Taiwanese spend on media per week:

TV & Video	56 % over 6 hours
Music	77 % over 6 hours
Internet	84 % over 6 hours
Book	76 % over 6 hours
Radio	15 % over 6 hours

Source: Chinese Opera and Media Study

After the survey, the results are following below.

*62% of young Taiwanese have watched Chinese opera.
38% of young Taiwanese never watched Chinese opera before.

*Painting face, movement, costume are the most interesting parts for young Taiwanese.

*Young Taiwanese spend their most leisure time in Internet, music, and TV.

*50% of young Taiwanese spend their leisure time in café shop, 21% at home, 14% in shopping mall, 7% library, and, 7% cinema & theater

Secondly, my objective was to research what is the most effective way to reach my target audiences.

The following research shows that MTV has strong influences in young generation.

“MTV is Music Television. ...MTV reaches 387 million households worldwide, and is the #1 Media Brand in the world. ...MTV gives viewers music that defines a generation. ...MTV also gives young adults everything they are passionate about, from fashion, lifestyle and sports, to attitude, politics and creativity. ...MTV as the most rec-

ognized network. MTV is the best way to connect with 12–34 year olds who are 91 million strong and growing, and represent

33% of the U.S. population. They look to MTV to find out about their world in their language, from their point of view.” (MTV Cable Network Information, 2002)

Since MTV continues to be an effective way to reach the young audience, I asked myself how, if at all, can graphic designer use MTV concepts (including concept, form and culture) to reach young audiences more effectively in Taiwan?

“Since 1995, MTV has heavily saturated the eyes and ears of affluent young adults (25-34) in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. MTV Networks Asia is currently advertising an MTV pager, which ‘connects you to MTV,’ providing music and concert news, promotional updates, and party information. So, the influence of MTV is powerful not only in the United States, but also in Taiwan.” (MTV Cable Network Information, 2002)

Thirdly, I needed to observe what the concept of MTV is, which cause MTV so popular in young generation “Because MTV is such a post-modern art form, its seemingly meaningless fragments are rich with connotations, and viewers are free to play a far more active role.” (Kaplan,A.,1987).

“The terms **post-modern** have been used to describe some of the styles and approaches to making images that have circulated more prominently since the late 1970s.”, “ The major thrust of post-modern graphic design is a spirit of liberation, a freedom to be intuitive and personal, and to

go against the modern-design juggernaut so dominant through much of the twentieth century. Designers felt free to respond positively to vernacular and historic forms, and to incorporate these into their work” (Meggs, P, 1998). Therefore, I conclude the conception of MTV has the following characters:

- * High-speed tempo
- * Diversification
- * Chaos
- * Wild, and Wired
- * Broken rules

Finally comes the choice of media. I think posters and motion graphics are the best way and the most appropriate form to present this work to the audience.

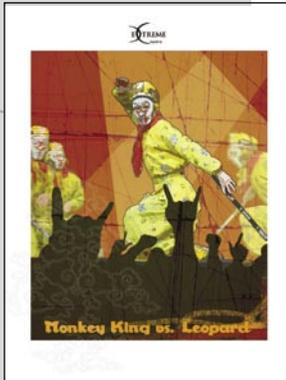
In Taiwan, there are many art or business activities, and when these new activities want to introduce an idea or product to their audiences or customers, they will choose to announce it by the media of posters and motion graphics because of their efficiency in communicating in the public space. We see motion graphics playing on the TV, on the giant television screen billboard on the street, or on the internet, and also see big posters on the outside of the buildings, in showcase, or in display windows. In addition, we can see many images of these posters and motion graphics will be applied to many different kinds of products in order to get in touch with their target audiences. These products include T-shirts, mugs, calendars, postcards, mouse pads, notebooks etc.

From my survey, the results show that where and how the young Taiwanese spend their leisure time – 50% of young Taiwanese spend their leisure time in internet coffee shops,

21% at home, 14% in shopping mall, 7% library, 7% cinema & theater, 84% of young Taiwanese spend their leisure time using the internet over six hours per week, and 56% on TV, so the following are the media that can get in touch with my target audiences efficiently:

television, internet, signs, shopping bag, postcards, teacups, T-shirts, notebooks, bookmarks, calendars....

The work I have designed can move fluidly from one media to another, with minor adjustment. In addition, there is a famous place in Taiwan, called “**Sei-Men Ting**”, where many young Taiwanese congregate, and many companies select this location to announce any new products or produce development. Sei-Men Ting has the giant billboard, and also has the giant television screen wall to notify public. So, Sei-Men Ting is perfect place to apply my posters and motion graphics to communicate with my target audiences.



Postcard designed for MFA thesis exhibition



COMPONENTS

There are four components to this project, which are part of a larger system. They are logo, time line, poster, and motion graphic. Because the survey shows that MTV influence exceeds any cabled TV in the United States, the young generation between age 14 to 18 votes MTV and VH1 to be first popular programs. (Zollo, P., 1998.) The influence of MTV is powerful not only in the United States, but also in Taiwan when MTV Mandarin began broadcasting in 1995 in Taiwan. It attracted young Taiwanese attention immediately. So, design posters and motion graphics to express Chinese opera by using MTV concepts will be a good way to communicate with my target audiences. These four components are described in detail below.

The Extreme Opera identity

In order to express my work systematically and effectively, I chose to design an identity for extreme opera. The Extreme Opera design identity is not only makes language visual and extends it's meaning, but also let every characteristic reflect my design concepts. In the process of designing the extreme opera identity, I broke down the meaning of extreme opera for young Taiwanese into three different points of view. It includes the continuation of culture, the fusion of old and new culture, and the qualities of Chinese culture.

First, for the continuation of culture, I designed the "X" from the word "extreme" to reflect the shape of **DNA**, in



The Extreme Opera identity for MFA exhibition.



Rough ideas about Time line model.

order to remind young Taiwanese that the traditional culture still exists in our blood, and this is what we cannot forget.

Second, for the fusion of old and new culture, I intended the “X” to represent the influence of cultural junction and created the “X” out of two semicircles of different size. The larger semicircle represents the younger Taiwanese culture; the smaller semicircle represents the traditional culture.

Third, in applying the yin yang theory, I also intended the “X” to represent the yin yang theory. World is yin and yang two spirit oppositions and the result for unifies, any thing of the universe includes the both sides that the yin and yang stands opposite each other, as hot and cold, day and night, move and quiet etc. It is just like the situation that old traditional Chinese opera meets new Taiwanese generation, although is an opposition to relate apparently, in fact, it is to unify moderate, complement each other.

Fourth, for the qualities of Chinese culture, I used a glare effect, which starts from the top of the curve and transitions downward as a brush texture, to lead to the word “opera”. It demonstrates primary qualities of Chinese culture such as elegance, balance, longevity and beauty.

Finally, the typefaces, chosen, **Trajan** and **Folio**, demonstrate the contrast between the new and old cultures. While these are a western paradigm, they express the same meaning in contemporary Taiwanese culture.



Time line project

Time line

Purpose

The time line is intended to provide the younger generation with information regarding the origins of Chinese opera and its relationship as a part of the greater history of China.

Description

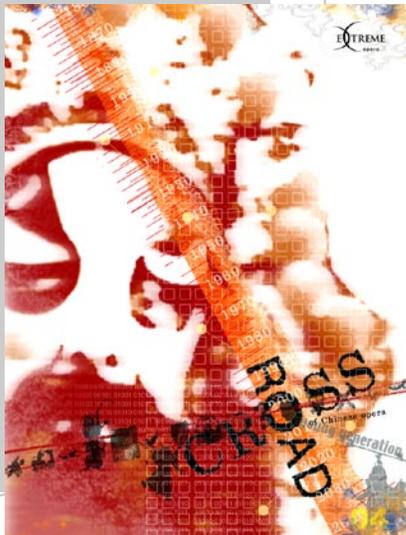
The Time line designed manifests in two long posters (18' H x 1.5' W). One represents the history of China, and the other shows the history of Chinese opera. The periods contrast one another through the use of color, and allow the audiences to understand the relationship between the history of China and the history of Chinese opera.

The posters are divided into ten areas of color and texture to increase visual interest and allow the audience to easily understand the different dynasties. The choice of the colors is representative of the colors used for painting face in Chinese opera. The dots are used as a visual device to connect the 16 major dynasties of China and its 5000 year history. The ten different colors divide the history of Chinese opera into four important periods - the period of god worship, the period of music and dance development, the period of ancient theater, and the mature period of Chinese opera.

For the Chinese history section, I employ dots and arrowheads from top to bottom to express time periods I use the



Color shows different personality in Chinese opera.



Poster 1: Crossroad

gray dots to link the important historical affairs. In addition, I use the images to help the audience understand the information on an initial read. For the history of Chinese opera, 12 different colors of dots express the process of Chinese opera development, and each color represents the contemporaneous evolution.

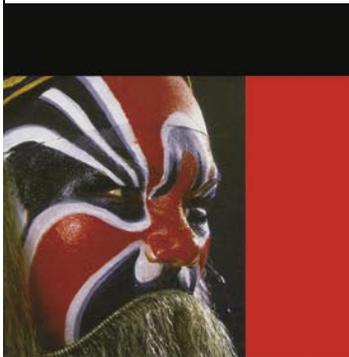
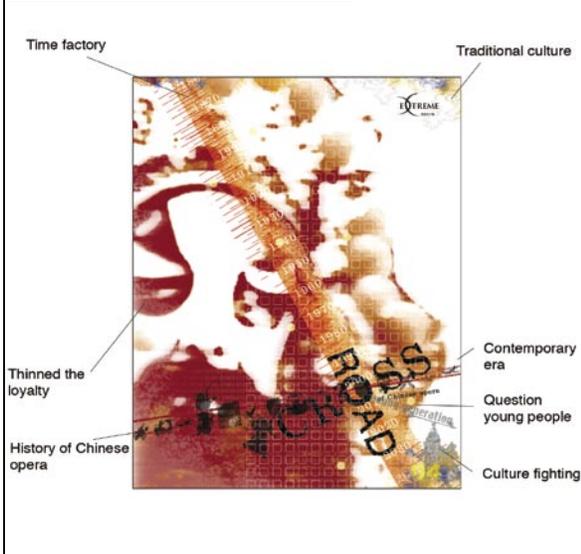
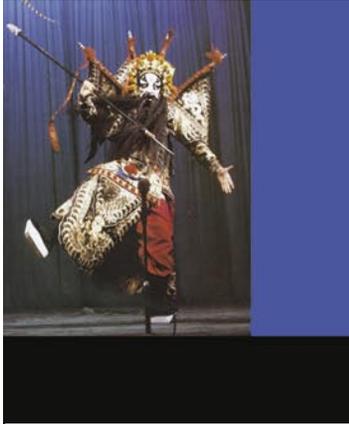
Poster 1: Crossroads

“In Chinese opera, it regards personal modeling art as principle. The personal modeling art means customs and painting face. Especially, painting face let person’s impression deeply, because the color is fresh and gorgeous, the shape is special, and the theatrical mask is filled with the symbolize meaning.”

~ Yu-Yin Chang ~

Purpose

Crossroads asks young Taiwanese to question the value of preserving Chinese opera by utilizing MTV concepts. Chinese opera had its highest peak in the **Qing dynasty**, but nowadays the circumstances are different. Facing globalization and competition from entertainment media, the Chinese Opera audience is in decline. How do I provide a mechanism for the young generation to attach importance to and preserve Chinese Opera? This poster is intended to do just that, by using a painting face from Chinese opera, giving it special meaning. The red color in painting face means “loyalty”, however, it has been gradually thinned to evoke the passage of time and distance, and represents the fading memory that today’s youth have of Chinese opera. Crossroads has two interwoven lines: one is red, another one is orange. The Red line stands in for the horizon, which represents the aspects of the history of Chinese opera, and the black background indicates the



Red represents loyalty.

difficulties of Chinese opera in the contemporary era. The Orange line extends from the top left to the right bottom, which expresses time factors and connotes that Chinese opera is not in vogue as it was 200 years ago. When these two lines intersect together, the word “young generation” appears to focus on Chinese opera – signifying that the young generation is tied to the richness of the past that it is embedded in their present.

The squares with the white lines represent the digital age; the contrast of the clouds, represents traditional culture – these appear in the upper right and bottom right respectively; and two persons, presenting Chinese opera, throw their weapons toward the direction of the words “young generation”. This signifies that it is the challenge of the young generation to continue this tradition, and weave the past, present and future together.

Poster 2: Inheritance

Purpose

The purpose of Inheritance is to utilize MTV concepts to let young Taiwanese know that appreciating Chinese opera can be very fun and “rocking.” It is not like the stereotype of Chinese opera, which can be considered strict and boring slow. In this poster, Monkey King fights on the stage, and audiences demonstrate enjoyment by raising their hands, just like the audiences enjoying rock-and-roll concerts. My intent is through this poster I can bridge the gap between Chinese opera and young Taiwanese, by creating awareness and an appreciation for Chinese opera.



Hand signal in live show



Poster 2: Inheritance

In my survey, the results show that is 38 % of young Taiwanese have never experienced the Chinese opera. Nevertheless, the survey also shows that more than 80 % of young Taiwanese are really interested in and have strong impression of the movements and the actions of Chinese opera, even if they do not have any prior experience with Chinese Opera.

This designer participated in the performance of Chinese opera at *Fu-Shing* theatrical school in Taiwan, and had a chance to interview the chief of the troupe. The chief noted that the main purpose of the *Fu-Shing* theatrical school is to introduce and preserve the traditional Chinese opera. At this time, they have introduced, three languages of subtitles: Chinese Japanese, and English. When the actors speak or sing, the subtitles will appear to the audience in these three different languages, to aid audiences in understanding the plot of their play. However, it is the movement and action of the play that is considered most critical. As that is what audiences respond to the most – the simple plot of Monkey King expresses the power and beauty of Chinese opera.

Description

In this poster, the background story refers to Monkey King's fight with Leopard. The main character, Monkey King stands on the central stage, and is the focal point under the spotlight. Behind the main character stand many small monkeys, which are spared from the Monkey King. Together they all resist the evil Leopard. In the meantime, the audience enjoys the show and thrusts their hands in the air to express excitement and approval, similar to audiences in western pop music.



Costume to show eastern pattern.



Poster 3: Welcome to future

There are two considerations for choosing the background story of Monkey King. One is that the story of Monkey King is familiar and well known in Taiwan. The other is that the plot is very vivid, and regards movements and actions as primary. So, Monkey King will be the key figure used to introduce Extreme Chinese Opera.

Poster 3: Welcome the future

Purpose

Welcome the Future combines Eastern and Western cultural art forms, in order to show the young generation, who are heavily influenced by western culture that there is a 'coolness factor' to Chinese Opera.

Description

The aim of welcome the future's design is to target the young generation by utilizing MTV concepts. The whole poster represents a stage of Chinese opera. The texture of waves and flames comes from the pattern of the costume, so audiences can feel the eastern influence of the piece. The person at the middle stage takes on the likeness of American pop star, Britney Spears, with the traditional Chinese hand signal inviting the young generation to join Chinese opera. I have used photo collage and illustration to synthesize the person. The background story is the legend of white snake, which is a traditional love story with the characters caught in a battle of good and evil, and this includes four lead roles to make a drama in this poster. The designer attempts to invite younger generation to appreciate Chinese opera through the use of a familiar story line and western pop idol.



Motion Graphic 1: Monkey King vs. Leopard

Purpose

Utilizing MTV concepts to express the traditional Chinese opera through motion graphics, in order to attract the young Taiwanese to the Chinese opera. The focus of this piece is on the action and drama of Chinese opera.

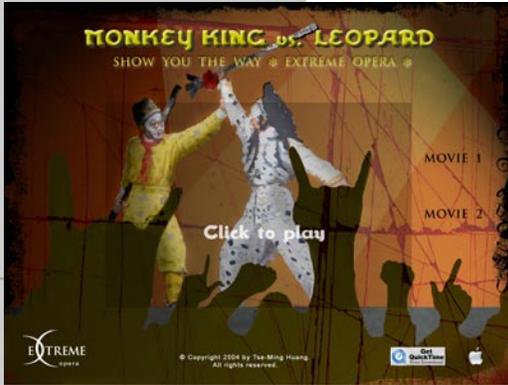
The story of "Journey to the West"

"Journey to the West" is a popular myth in Taiwan, featuring the fight between the righteous and the evil. "The Monkey King vs. The Leopard" is one part of "Journey to the West". **Tong monk's** journey takes him to the western heaven to gain **Holy Scriptures** from **Buddha** and bring them back to China. Monkey King, **Sun Wu-Kong**, **Monster Pig**, and **River Monster** have an order from Buddha. They should protect Tong monk on his journey to western heaven. On the way, they live in Mr. Dang's house, and they find discover Leopard wants to marry with Dang's daughter. Leopard is a monster in the mountain. Monkey King and Monster Pig transform into Dang's daughters. Then, Leopard marries with Monkey King and brings them to his mountain.

Monkey King changes back to his original form and fight with Leopard. He uses his hair to make a lot monkeys who also fight with Leopard. Finally, Monkey King wins the battle, and captures Leopard.

Description

30 second animation complete with the descriptive



Interface design for Extreme opera.

texts to assist audiences in memorizing and understanding the story.

A dangerous mission

An impossible task

The fight for good against evil

The great monkey king

Charge forward into the west.

I use non-stop motion and fresh and clear colors to represent the breathtaking and vivid story, with a close up of the Monkey King in the foreground for the audience to appreciate.

[[click to watch Movie1](#)]

Motion Graphic 2: Extreme opera

Purpose:

Movie 2 expresses the Extreme opera concept, and allows audiences a backstage pass into understanding Chinese opera through costumes, background and painting face.

Description:

There are 30 seconds of recorded video from backstage to offer an insight into Chinese opera. The movie is divided into three parts: past, present, and future.

1. Past – to understand

There are two circles interlaced with each other at the beginning of the movie, and the Chinese dragon appears in the intersection of the two circles. These all indicate Chinese opera's glorious tradition. The indistinct background presents the faded memory most people have of



Chinese opera.

2. Present - the experience

The second part shows the beautiful delicacies of Chinese opera by focusing on the costume pattern and bright embroidery. At this time, two circles interlace each other again from top to bottom representing temporal and cultural fusions, and suggest the need for young Taiwanese to come experience Chinese opera.

3. Future – the imagery

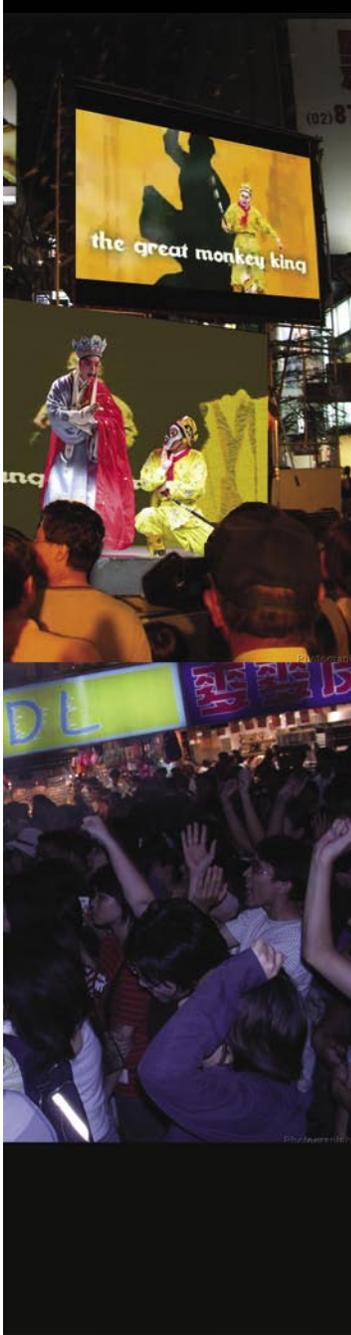
The application of the painting face in the final part of the movie expresses the unique specialty of Chinese opera. It catches the young Taiwanese's attention by playing Chinese opera character's shadow on the costume of Monkey King, and expressing the feeling of speed with quick rhythm. Finally, the Monkey King stares off into a distance to give audiences infinite imaginable space for Chinese opera in the future.

The text is the following below:

Understand,
Experience,
Imagine,
These stories are yours.

{ [click to watch Movie 2](#) }

The concept of extreme opera presents past, present, and future about Chinese opera.



CONCLUSION

From the beginning of the worship of God at ancient times to the fusion of music, dance, drama and melody, Chinese opera experienced many manifestations over several thousand years, to become the Chinese opera of today. So, there is deep meaning based in the development and culture of Chinese opera, which I believe is more important than any other form of entertainment today. However, the young generation has never been taught the value or the purpose of Chinese opera. How one creates interest to persuade the young generation to explore and appreciate Chinese opera is an important cultural topic for discussion.

As a graphic designer, I have been concerned with the preservation of the Chinese cultural arts. How does one pass Chinese culture to the next generation by using new technology and modern media, I think this is the purpose of doing this project. My project is an exploration of how contemporary visual communication and its methodologies, can be utilized to create awareness and appreciate of cultural history includes specific Chinese opera for young generation Taiwanese.

During my exhibition at the University Gallery (University of Florida), I did some short interviews with the audience. Most people believe this is a very successful way to promote the traditional Chinese opera. It not only attracts audiences to close the Chinese opera, but also makes them feel the Chinese opera is interesting.



The time line functions as a useful tool to create an understanding of the history and backgrounds of the Chinese opera because it communicates the long history and affairs of China and is intertwined with the evolution of Chinese opera. The design, including the use of color-coding, is effective in ordering this complex information. The motion graphics are an important consideration. Most people were interested in walking in front of the computer to play the motions graphics. Many visitors to the Gallery asked me questions on the story background, the music of the Chinese opera, the manufacturing process, and even where they can appreciate the Chinese opera.

I hope this project becomes a very popular topic of conversation among young Taiwanese, and encourages my audiences to want to get into the theater to experience and appreciate the Chinese opera. Then the traditional Chinese culture can be preserved for the future generations.





MFA thesis exhibition in University Gallery (Feb., 2004)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this whole process of preserving the traditional Chinese opera, what I am attempting to do is motivate the audience to get into the theater. If this is successful, then it follows that an important concern will be how to keep the audience interested. It goes without saying that the future of the Chinese opera needs the support not only of the educational system and the society but also from all Chinese. May the traditional cultures carry forward to the future and lift up to the international stage.



TERMINOLOGY and NOTES

Cultural Revolution: A comprehensive reform movement in China initiated by Mao Zedong in 1965 to eliminate counterrevolutionary elements in the country's institutions and leadership. It was characterized by political zealotry, purges of intellectuals, and social and economic chaos.

Macbeth: King of Scotland (1040-1057) who ascended the throne after killing his cousin King Duncan in battle. Legends of his rise to power and reign are the basis of Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth.

Farewell my Concubine: Farewell My Concubine is a film published in China 1993 (Directed by Chen Kaige). It is a feast for the eyes and heart. Spanning over 50 years, people follow the lives of two opera stars from their entry as young boys into the Peking Opera School in 1924 to their reunion in 1977.

Post-modern: Of or relating to art, architecture, or literature that reacts against earlier modernist principles, as by reintroducing traditional or classical elements of style or by carrying modernist styles or practices to extremes.

Sei-Men Ting: A popular place in the center of Taipei for young generation to watch live show, movies.

DNA: A nucleic acid that carries the genetic information in the cell and is capable of self-replication and synthesis of RNA. DNA consists of two long chains of nucleotide twisted into a double helix and joined by hydrogen bonds between the complementary bases adenine and thymine or cytosine and guanine. It presents relationship between Chinese and Chinese opera.

Trajan: Trajan font was designed by Carol Twombly. The Trajan font design was inspired by ancient chiseled letter forms. The Trajan font carries a historic feel to it. It also has also become popular due to the elegance and grace of the design.

Folio: Folio font was designed by Konrad F. Bauer and Walter Baum and appeared with the Bauerschen font foundry in 1957. The designers based their ideas on Helvetica but Folio did not turn out to pose the competition they had hoped. The font has the same applications as Helvetica and is an extremely legible font. Folio font is particularly good for text and has an objective, neutral character

Qing dynasty: Also called the Manchu dynasty, was the ruling dynasty of China, officially the Empire of the Great Qing, between 1644 and 1912. It followed the Ming dynasty and preceded the Republic of China.

Holy Scriptures: Sanskrit is one of the oldest known members of the Indo-European language family, and an official language of India. Having first developed around 1500 BC, It has sometimes been described as the Asian equivalent to Latin for its role in the religious and historical literature of India.

Sun Wu-Kong: The Monkey King is perhaps the most famous and beloved fictional character in all of classic Chinese literature. He is the main character of Journey to the West, a story dating back to the Tang dynasty. Through a series of audacious stunts he acquires immortality, shape-changing ability, cloud travel skills, and ownership of a handy as-you-will resizeable cudgel which can be nestled behind the ear for easy carrying or resized to tree-trunk size for pounding the sense out of dragons. Above all he has monkey chutzpah.

Monster Pig: Zhu Bajie is one of the three helpers of Tong monk in the classic Chinese novel Journey to the West. He is a terrible monster, part human and part pig, who often gets himself and his companions into trouble by his laziness, his gluttony, and his propensity for lusting after pretty women.

River Monster: Sha Wujing who have agreed to help Tong monk along the way as an atonement for past sins.

Buddha is a title given to individuals who have realized their complete potential for personal development and conscious evolution. In contemporary usage, it often refers to Siddhartha Gautama, the religious teacher and spiritual founder of Buddhism (considered to be “the Buddha of this age”). In the other usage, it is an appellative and exemplar for an Enlightened human being.



Tong monk: Xuanzang (602 - 644/664) was a famous Chinese Buddhist monk. Xuanzang was born near Luoyang, Henan in 602 as Chen Hui. He came from a scholarly family, and had three elder brothers. He became famous for his seventeen year-long trip to India, during which he studied with many famous Buddhist masters, especially at the famous center of Buddhist learning in Nālandā temple.

Journey to the West: It is a classic of Chinese literature. It was published anonymously in the 1590s, and no direct evidence of its authorship survives, but it is traditionally ascribed to the scholar Wu Cheng'en. The novel tells a fictionalized and mythologized version of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang's pilgrimage to India.



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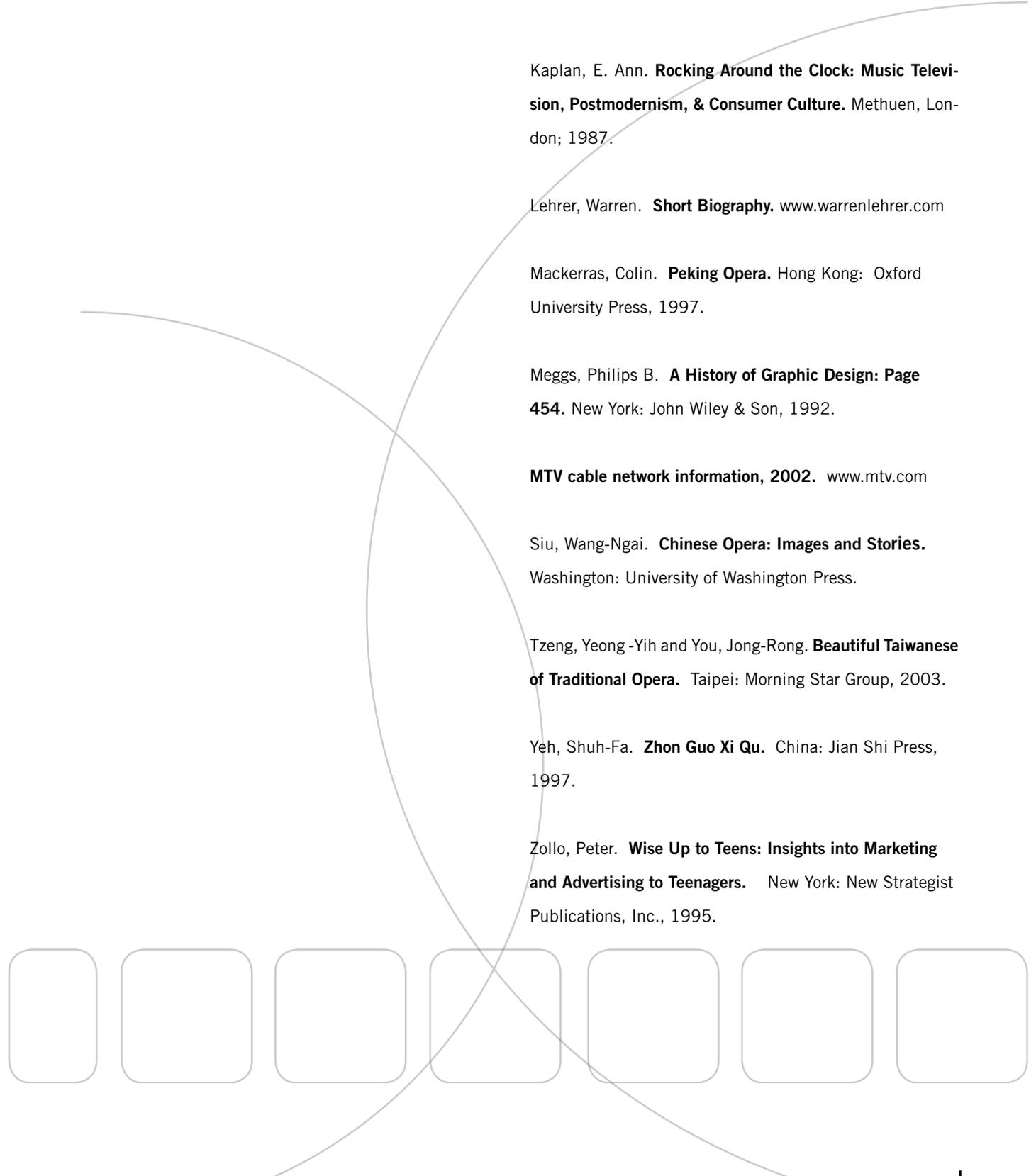
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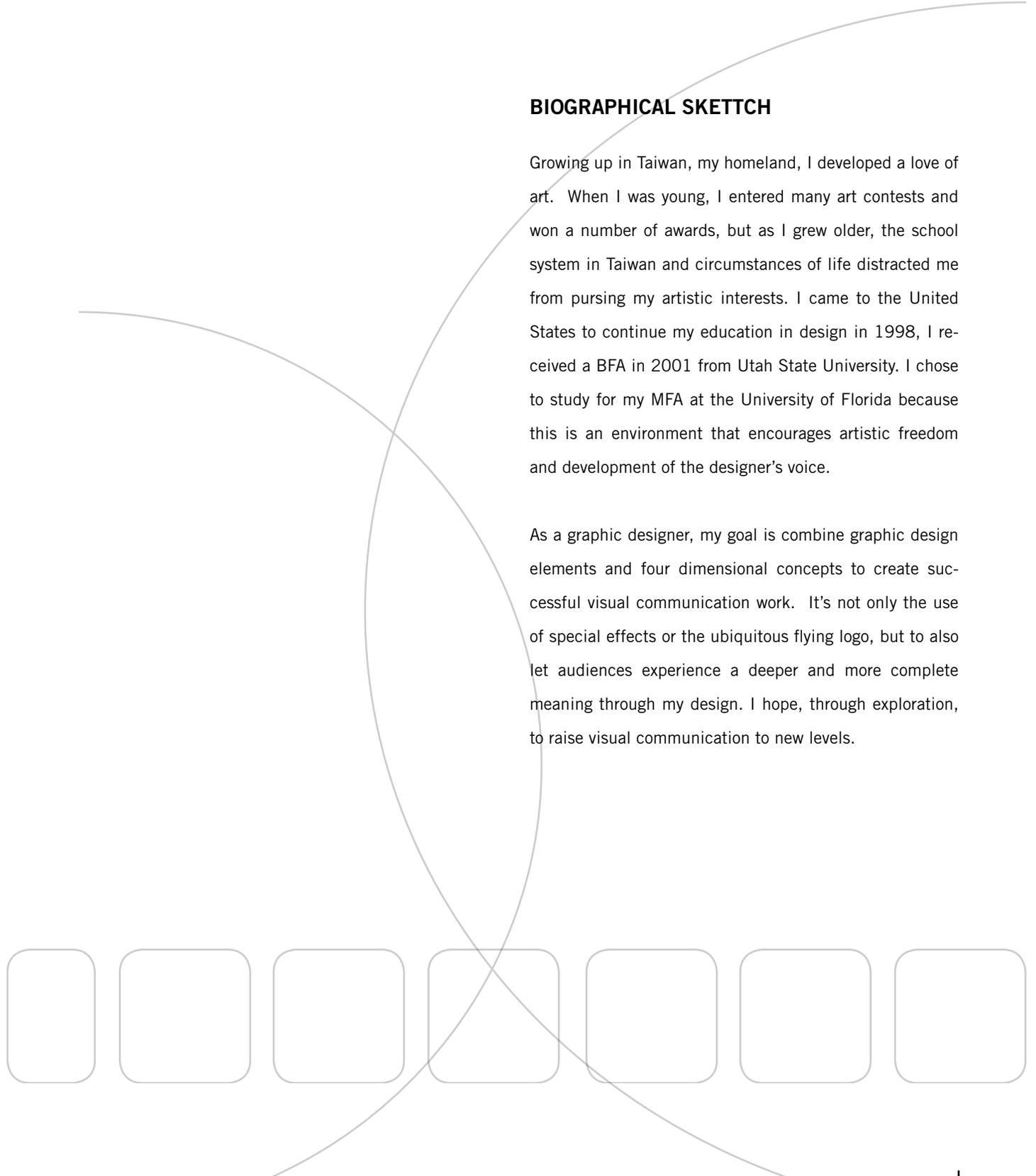
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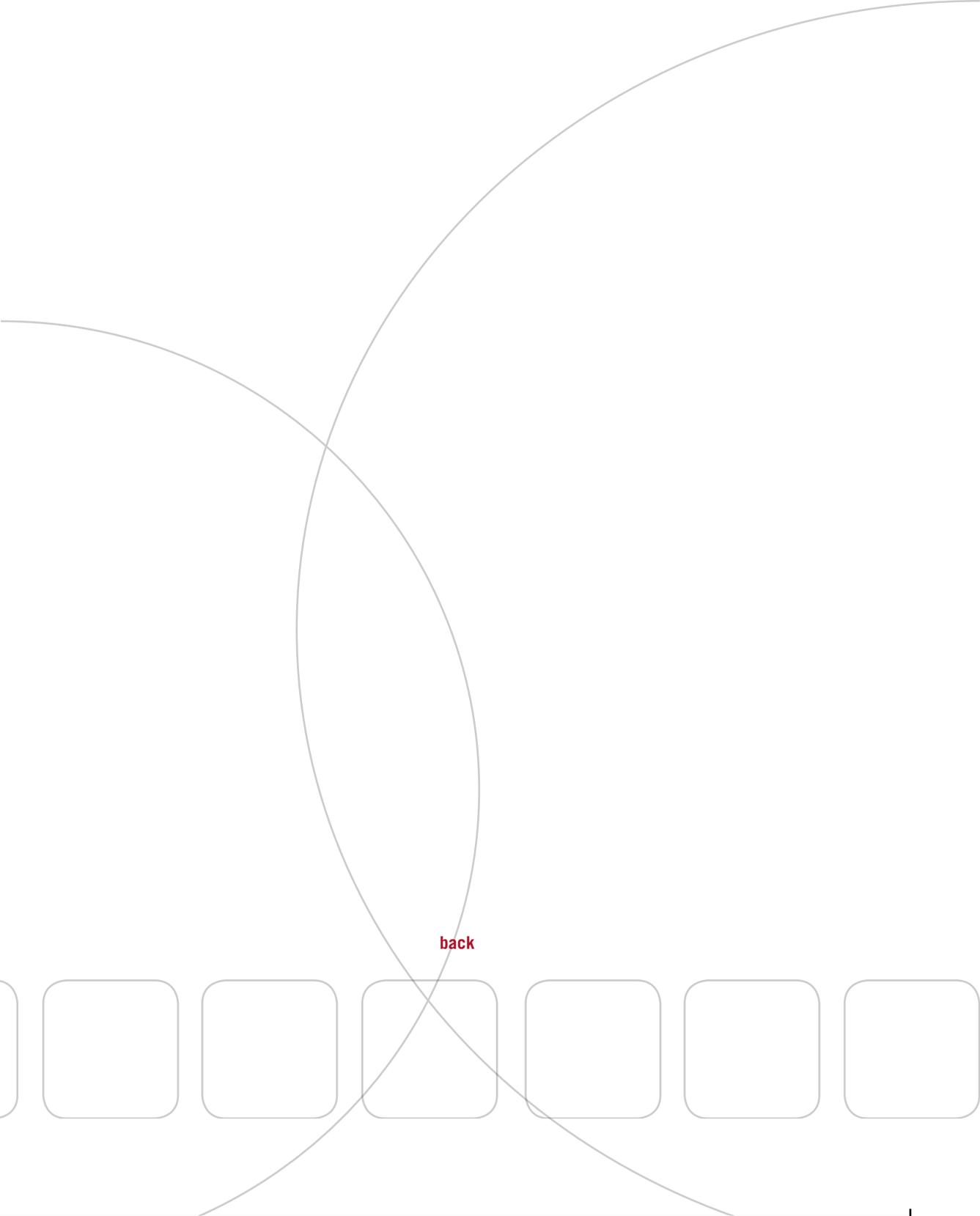
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETTCH

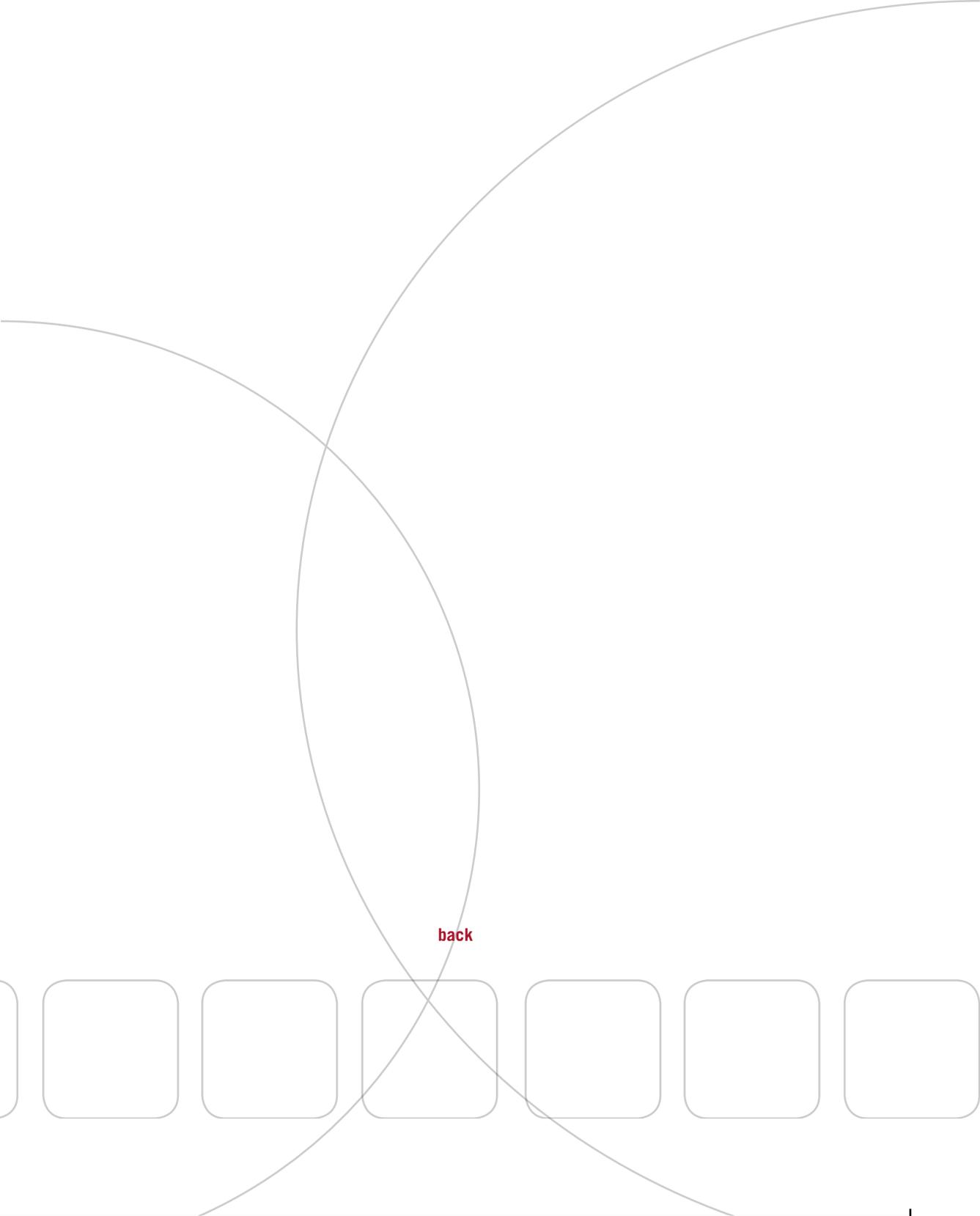
Growing up in Taiwan, my homeland, I developed a love of art. When I was young, I entered many art contests and won a number of awards, but as I grew older, the school system in Taiwan and circumstances of life distracted me from pursuing my artistic interests. I came to the United States to continue my education in design in 1998, I received a BFA in 2001 from Utah State University. I chose to study for my MFA at the University of Florida because this is an environment that encourages artistic freedom and development of the designer's voice.

As a graphic designer, my goal is combine graphic design elements and four dimensional concepts to create successful visual communication work. It's not only the use of special effects or the ubiquitous flying logo, but to also let audiences experience a deeper and more complete meaning through my design. I hope, through exploration, to raise visual communication to new levels.



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EXTREME OPERA



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