

The Arts is Introduced to the Community as a Scooter Shop is Naturally Transformed into a Music Band

Journalist Winnie Wang, Taipei, 2018-11-30

What is your impression of a scooter shop? Have you ever thought of watching a band performance in a scooter shop? Conceived and produced by Prototype Paradise, *Scooter Wonderland: Big Band* premiered at Chen-xiang Scooter Shop on November 26. The musicians participating in the event engaged sounds ordinarily found in a scooter shop in their performance, taking arts from a fixed performing space to the regular neighborhood life with the intention to break people's inherent imagination of the arts and the scooter shops.

Sounds that are found in a scooter shop, such as the clanking machines, the boisterous neighborhood, the conversation between customers, the vroom of a scooter, and the sound of a TV show, were integrated with a jazz drum and woodwind instruments. Common tools like wrenches, hammers, and oil cans were also deployed as musical instruments. Together with the voice of a pre-recorded hilarious Google Translate which sounded similar to the government's computer system examining scooter's pipes, Prototype Paradise incorporated all the elements and created a brand new format of band performance. The production also included an improv physical theater to interact with the owner and nearby residents to create a unique experience with the daily life of a scooter shop. This would allow them to pay more attention to the scooter shop that they rarely spent time in, thereby got introduced to the arts.



As they waited for the scooter to get repaired, the residents watched the collaborative performance between musical instruments and sounds of repairing. Along with changing their impression of the space, the performance also displayed an amusingly contrasting image of the shop owner. (Photo: Winnie Wang)

The curator and conceptualizer of Scooter Wonderland Yoyo Kung said, “If you observe closely while waiting for your scooter to get repaired, you’d find that the symphony of various sounds in the environment can be quite artistic.” While contemplating on how to marry arts with the community, Prototype Paradise recognized that the scooter is more than a familiar daily street scenery for Taiwanese; it is also their collective memory. Additionally, the scooter shop is a space that draws people from all walks of life and breaks ethnic boundaries. The scooter shop is, therefore, the ideal venue for this event.

Scooter Wonderland is a part of the new “Arts in the Community” project initiated by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. Yoyo Kung, the creator/producer of Prototype Paradise said that in the past, the projects had invited borough wardens and performing groups to organize performances in the community’s space, but the Museum decided to change the format this year and let arts migrate from the stage to the street corners, in hope to further connect residents of the community with arts. She said, “Stage performance in a community center is great, of course, but it requires the resident to get involved actively, which in itself is another barrier.” The remodeled “Arts in the Community” project picked a non-conventional performing space in the community that would allow residents who don’t usually visit the Museum to get acquainted with the arts in the most unexpected way.



Apart from the creative presentation of sounds, the team also made use of the mechanical parts in the shop to perform physical theater, such as using the rear mirror as an antler to interact with the owner.

(Photo: Winnie Wang)

Through promoting the new “Arts in the Community” project, Prototype Paradise and Taipei Fine Arts Museum aim to encourage people to discover things they’ve never thought of in their lives, thereby undoing their existing impressions of everyday lives. Mr. Chen-neng Lin, the owner of Chen-xiang Scooter Shop that participated in the collaboration, said he used to think band performance was boisterous and had no intention to experience it. But on this day, as he worked on repairing a scooter, he realized it’s an enjoyment to do his work with music playing in the background.

* The original article in Chinese: <https://reurl.cc/14OYZX>

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