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Ivan Liu: The Artistic Entrepreneur

By Feliciano Hsu Date : 10 / 11 / 2017

ivan liu the great coupling digital art legacy lab international

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Although for art is still presented mostly through paintings, artists throughout history have been early adaptors and innovators. Over the course of the twentieth century in particular, new materials and media were incorporated into the artistic canon.

This trend continues unabated, with a new breed of creators working at the intersection of science, art, and entrepreneurship.

One of this new breed is Ivan Liu, who seeks to infuse our lives with digital works of art that combine the aesthetic with the scientific.

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With a background in art and science, and having the eye of a businessman, Ivan embodies this new ideal type: the artistic entrepreneur. Here, he shares his experience as one of the main players behind **Legacy Lab International** and talks about how he bridges different fields as well as what he has in store in the future.

Ivan Liu and his Legacy Lab International

Ivan's main focus is actually science. While receiving tertiary education at Imperial College London and gaining a PhD in physics from the Max-Planck Institute in Germany, he also held research positions at CNRS France. Now, he serves as the Artistic Director at Legacy Lab International, a position he has held since the Lab's inception in 2013.

Legacy Lab International's self-proclaimed core mission is to push Innovation.

By gathering talent from a wide variety of fields, the Lab seeks to create a legacy of innovation through new creations of art.

But why did Ivan not pursue the classical academic career that most physicists and scientists aspire to?

"I have been consistently passionate about art since a young age, and was particularly influenced by my mother, who is extremely fond of painting," he explains.

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Upon his return to Taiwan in 2009, Ivan worked in the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) for three years. Driven by his persistent interest in art, however, he sought a means of combining it with science and technology. Thus, Legacy Lab International was born.

In stark contrast to more traditional ideas about art, Ivan's artistic vision not only stresses an appreciation of beauty in nature, but also emphasizes the important insights that modern technology holds for the art world, including for exhibitions.

In 2014, Ivan and his team completed the first big project that incorporated their aesthetic ideas. The large-scale dynamic lighting project was titled "Penrose's Dream" and was commissioned by the renowned Le Meridien Taipei, which also exhibited the piece in its lobby.

Connecting artists with global resources

Asked whether he considers himself an artist or an entrepreneur, Ivan replies, "I think I am an artistic entrepreneur."

Ivan explains that as artistic director of Legacy Lab International, he basically has to run the studio like a startup. In order to secure funding for his team, he has been on plenty of "speed

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dates,” so to speak, with venture capitalists, who all need to be convinced not only of the artistic merits, but the economic feasibility, of the respective projects.

In 2015, Ivan formed a new media performance group called “Encountart,” implying “encounter art.” The troupe’s first production was “The Great Coupling,” for which Ivan served as director, scriptwriter, and interactive designer.

A collaboration between dancers, musicians, visual designers, and sound engineers, the piece was nominated for the 2015 Digital Art Performance Award, and won the Ministry of Culture’s “Star Of Creative Industry” award.

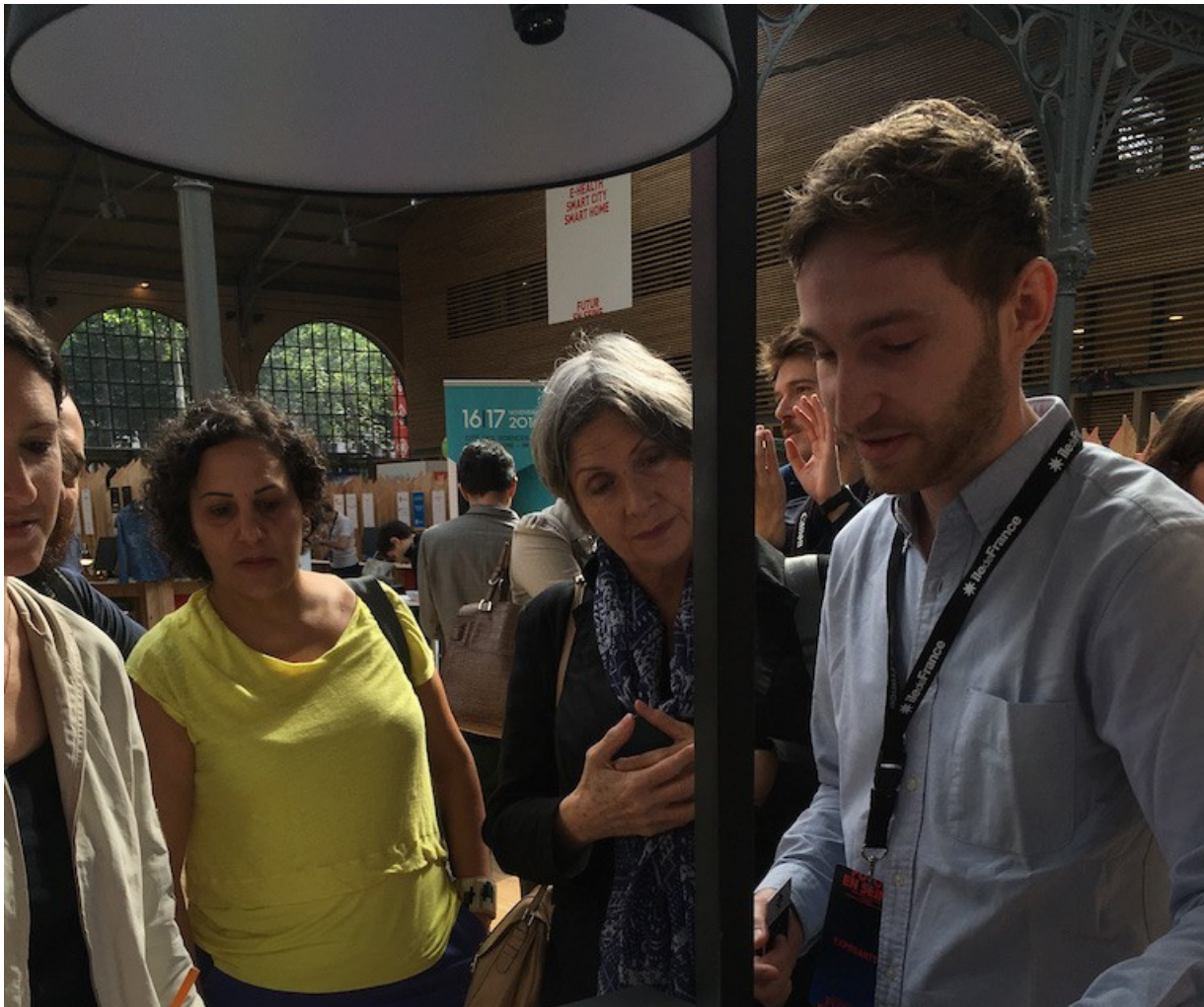
Following his success with Encountart, Ivan continued his search for investors, both public and private. One that he found was the Ministry of Culture, which granted funds to support Legacy Lab’s effort to exhibit its creations.

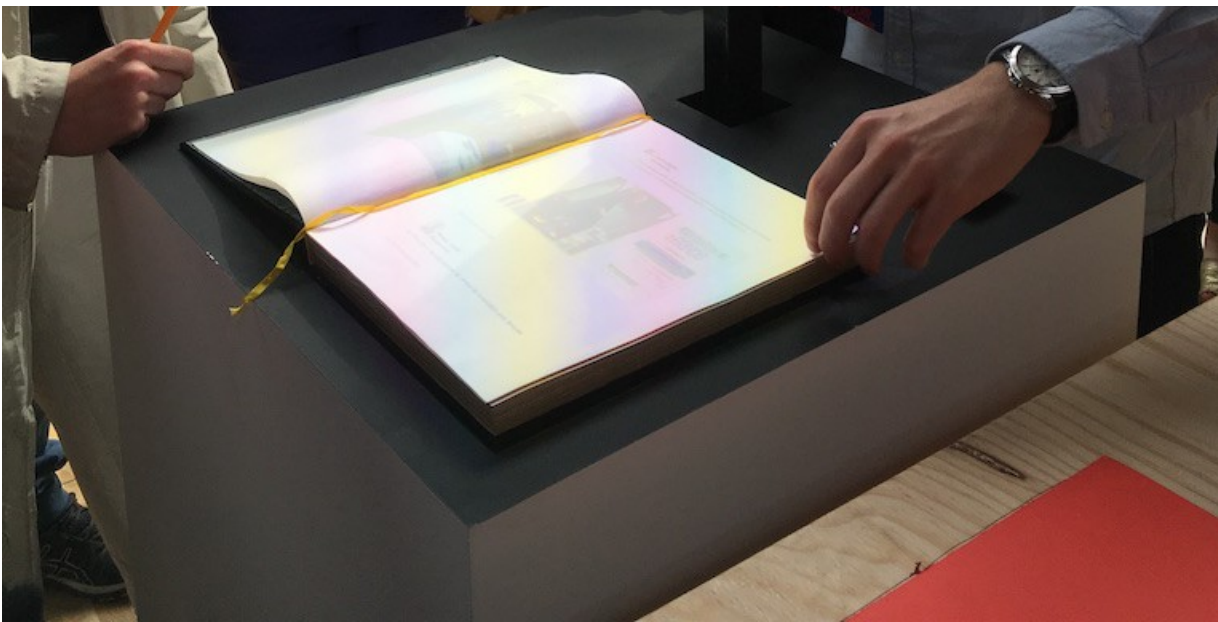
Compared to traditional art, the digital art that is so central to Legacy Lab International requires much more funding to sustain spending on equipment. Therefore, Ivan and his team are actively trying to connect with other artists, investors, and organizations to create interest and support for their projects.


Ivan explains that usually artists are rather reluctant to talk about money, which is often seen as a necessary evil that at worst interferes with their creative process.

In this regard, Legacy Lab International serves as a buffer between artist and investor. The Lab also takes on commercial projects with well-known companies such as the aforementioned Le Meridian Taipei.

“Ultimately, we want our digital art to be seen by the public so that more people can understand its beauty. Art must be pervasive and universally accessible, rather than being limited to a specific group,” Ivan explains.





 Caption:Maison des Cultures de Monde.

Photograph:Ivan Liu

In 2016, Ivan was invited by the Ministry of Culture and the French Office in Taipei to apply for **Maison des Cultures de Monde**, which can be translated as “World Culture Institute.” This program was founded in 1982 to promote cultural exchanges between France and other countries.



 Caption:Ivan joined in Maison des Cultures de Monde.

Photograph:Ivan Liu

After being admitted into Maison des Cultures de Monde, Ivan exchanged with other recipients his views on culture, technology, and how to make art more influential the world over.

Besides France, Ivan also went to Belgium, London, and other European cities to seek cooperation in the name of Legacy Lab International.

The Next Masterpiece: The Great Coupling



📷 Caption:Poster of The Great Coupling

Photograph:Ivan Liu

The Great Coupling In 2017, "The Great Coupling" won sponsorship from both the Ministry of Culture and the Taipei City Cultural Affairs Bureau for a brand-new

performance on November 10-12 at the HuanShan Creative Park.

This time, the performance will be enhanced by using cutting-edge technology from Kinect to connect music, dancing, lighting, and visual art within immersive 3D lighting, allowing “The Great Coupling” to break away from traditional theater performance.

At heart a story about the historical trajectory from the Industrial Revolution to the digital era, “The Great Coupling” also probes the changing connections between individuals. Will humanity benefit from digital advances as a whole, or do only a few stands to gain?

For more information about “The Great Coupling” is [here](#).

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Feliciano gained her MSc of Media Power and Public Affairs from Royal Holloway, University of London.

After graduating from London, she started her career of being journalist at Business Next Media and Meet Startup @TW Website, and specializes in interviewing about innovation and technology.

Within her career, she has interviewed various experts in their field, including **Fleur Pellerin**, former French Minister of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and **Sir Christopher Pissarides**, Nobel Prize Laureate in Economic in 2010.

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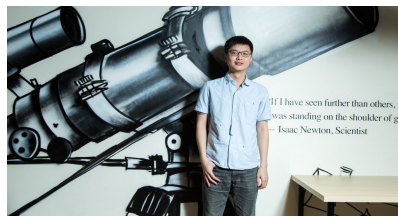
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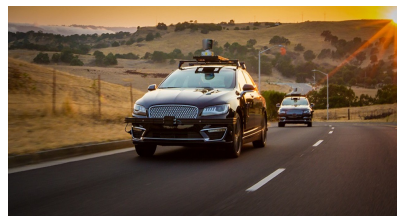
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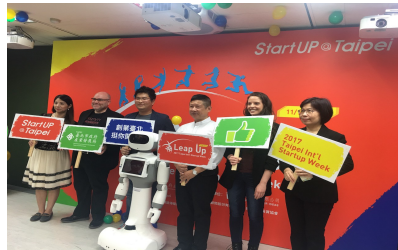
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