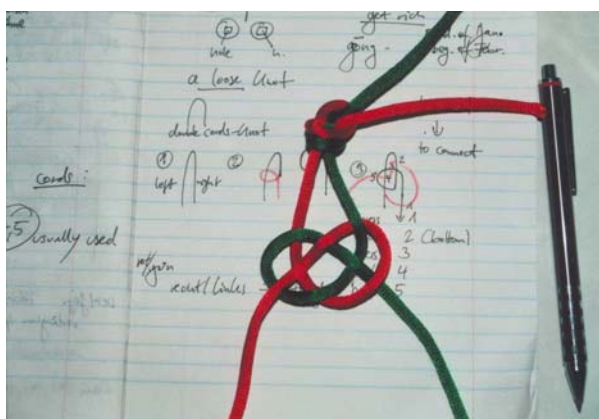


to be made in Taiwan

I remember when I was preparing my “(k)not-working” in Taiwan a text by sinologist Cornelia Menzel¹ about the origin of the structure and dynamic of Chinese characters mentioning also knots as a system of mnemonic devices for transmission comparing them to the Peruvian Quipus. Also Lydia Chen² – the person who originally invited me to come to Taipei, working at the Palace Museum in Taipei, talked about language of knots as a preform of Chinese characters. In order to study the ancient Art of Chinese Knotting it was important for me to read in the "Senfkorngarten" - the manual about Chinese Painting from the 17th century³ - about the secrets of how to paint the bamboo knot; esp. the simultaneousness in the Chinese Character of

"knot" and "moral" led me to a kind of inversion of Fluxus, an internet-EXPOSé, titled "and the knots of the story"⁴: Was perhaps Fluxus something like a neverending story with many knots⁵, with which in the meantime a whole country (Luxembourg) pays, today inverts this quotation; whereas Ernst the elder still described the myth of the Gordion knot⁶, Huang Yong Ping wanted to defeat the West with the East and vice versa⁷; today Alexander's great son is sitting at the round table in the mustardseed garden, complaining now and then and buries himself in the art of war⁸, unless his cell phone rings...so the (fairy tale) character of the bamboo knot is discussed as a sign of the festivities and thriftiness, so to speak the moral (of the story): jié.



My first Chinese Double Coin Knot on 18th of December 1998

...and after having learnt and practised the knots for one year at the Chinese Knotting Promotion Center, Taipei I have got the impression that we are developing from jade-made (hsie) into digital and neurological bodkins; if the web doesn't have a weaver, the wish will neither know any father nor a "Godfather of Chinese Art in the 21st century"⁹.

To adjust and to move the knot is much harder than to do the knot, that's just to be right or not, 0 and 1, that's not longer enough...these are our old computers from last century...

E.g. the double coin knot is a knotted representation of an often-employed decorative motif, composed of two antique Chinese coins overlapping each other. Merchants used to take the symbol for prosperity, hanging it over the entrances of their shops hoping to attract wealth. Used elsewhere, the double coin motif connotes not only prosperity, but longevity as well.

When learning the ancient Art of Chinese Knotting I felt those 3D-knots might be "patterns of communicative actions" thinking of Jürgen Habermas, Daoism and ourselves in the age of our biogenetic reproduction¹⁰; if each of us is already a group, what about a new self-portrait ?

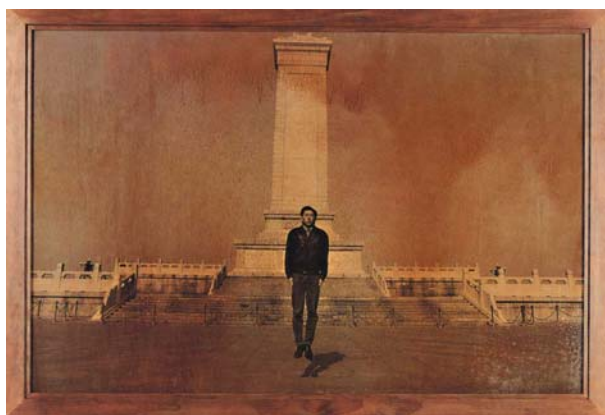


"we are (k)not working" at the Central Library, Taipei, 1999, 1st of June

One of these “knots of the story” happened on 29th of June/2nd of July 1999 at 3 p.m./10.30 a.m.: a group of 8 Eastern and Western actors met in front of the entrance of the National Museum of History Taipei first jumping and squatting, then stretching their arms and hands up/down trying to touch the sky/earth according to the weaving pattern of the Pan Chang knot - which is one of the eight Buddhist treasures – in order to **"recover and de-freeze"** the history of museum (after Jui-Chung Yao¹¹).



Defrost the History of Museum !



pick/press/pick/pick - press/press/press/pick

The index of the human cords for the performance consisted of the Taiwanese architect Ti-Nan Chi, the director of the German Cultural Center Taipei Sabine Hagemann-Ünlüsoy, the Taiwanese art critic & curator Manray Hsu, the director of the National Museum of History Taipei Kuang-Nan Huang, the German painter/ American painter Stephanie Jünemann/ Susan Kendzulak, the German (k)not-worker Ralf Schmitt, the knotting-teacher at the Chinese Knotting Promotion Center Taipei Amy Wang and the Taiwanese artist Jui-Chung Yao; the actions were "frozen" into a photo-shot taken by the Taiwanese photographer Ben Yu.

Yao Jui-Chung, Recover Mainland China-Action, photograph at the People's Heroes Monument, Tiananmen Square, Beijing 1997



當態兔變成形式，或當熊度變成形式，n(e)onobject, Taiwan 1999



Fritsch's „Sweating Bodhisattvas“ by telepathy

Since 1999, when rabbitudes became form¹² at Hsinchu Municipal Glass Art Museum¹³ visavis the zoo, **concepts have become more and more animal**; the Chinese equivalent of "rabbitudes" is "bearitudes." Perhaps, the so called cultural difference between East and West is simply the distinction between a bear and a rabbit. This could explain how Katharina Fritsch's Madonnas¹⁴ morphed into „Sweating Bodhisattvas“ in front of the Eight-Immortals Cave at 八仙洞 Pa-hsien Tung in Taitung County: *just by telepathy.*

I continue "(k)notworking" by having started in getting inside the "Quipu"-issue; Quipus, used by the Incas during the 16th century, were sophisticated devices for recording and transmitting codified information. They are part of the global history of data handling and computation. Following Marcia Ascher, a Quipu is an assemblage of colored knotted cords. The colors of the cords, the way the cords are connected together, the relative placement of the cords, the spaces between the cords, the knots of the individual cords, the relative placement of the knots and the spin of the cord are all part of the logical-numerical recording. The quipumaker was a person of privilege as he processed and made available privileged and valued information¹⁵. He was deeply involved in what we call the "politics of data".

When I came back to Berlin in 2000 fortunately I met a Bolivian scientist, Carmen Beatriz Loza, working at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin who is an expert in "Quipus" and the history on the genesis of the famous Quipu-collection (402 units) deposited in the Museum of Völkerkunde Berlin. Currently she is working on a book about the social history of the diaries of German archaeologist (Mad) Max Uhle (1856–944)¹⁶ concerning his stay and travel in Bolivia/Peru.

Following Carmen Loza written descriptions of the Quipus existed prior to any graphic represent-

ation; there was widespread interest in creating quipus based on literary descriptions and other sources and can be seen as a result of a social process. The diffusionists' research concentrated in origin and material maintaining the thesis of an analogy with Asian cultures, using the quipu trying to justify the argument that Peruvian inhabitants were of Asian (or Atlantean) descent. This search led to a comparison of the chimpu, a Peruvian calculator to the Asian abacus.¹⁷

In this collection Carmen Loza also found so called "Quipolas", a term applied in London during the 19th century, which were made by the Europeans. As a kind of paradox the museum in Berlin was comprised of quipolas before quipus, being classified and kept as if they were of Peruvian origin. An interesting point is that it was only then that the genuine quipus from Peru began to arrive in Europe, long after the Spanish colonization of the Andes.

Early this year I went to NYC to search some knotted objects at the Ratti-Center at the Metropolitan Museum with the help of Emilia Cortez and the Quipu-collection at the American Museum of Natural History with the help of Vuka Roussakis.

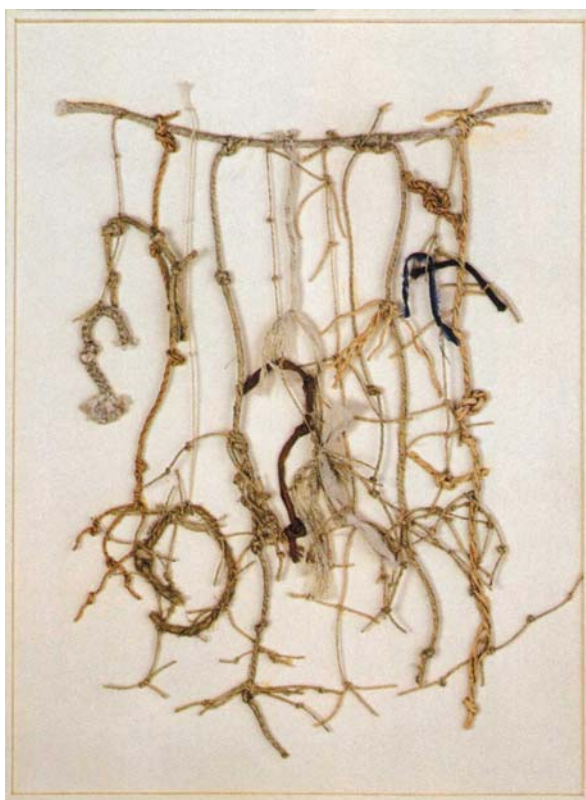
Often being asked for my "thesis" and *knot having one*, I decided to use its form:

Digital Transcription of the 3 Quipus of a Shepherd (from Challa, Titicaca-Island)

In 1938 Mark Rothko painted “Entrance to Subway” (86,5 x 117,5 cm, Collection of Kate Rothko Prizel).¹⁸ In 1975 Alice Aycock realized a “project for a Simple Network for Under-ground Wells and Tunnels” within the exhibition “Projects in Nature”, Merriewood West, Far Hills, New Jersey.¹⁹ In September 1993 the first subway-station “Lord Jim” made out of concrete was opened in Kthma Canné, Hrousa on the Cycladian island Syros in Greece as part of the Martin Kippenberger project “**Metro-Net**. Subway around the world” with more (planned) stations in Münster, Kassel, Dawson City West, New York, Leipzig, Vienna, Tokyo, Nice, Athens, Egypt, Hollywood, Los Angeles, Helsinki, Paris, Geneva, Rome.²⁰



This subway entrance floats in a lake at Kassel as planned for documenta X.

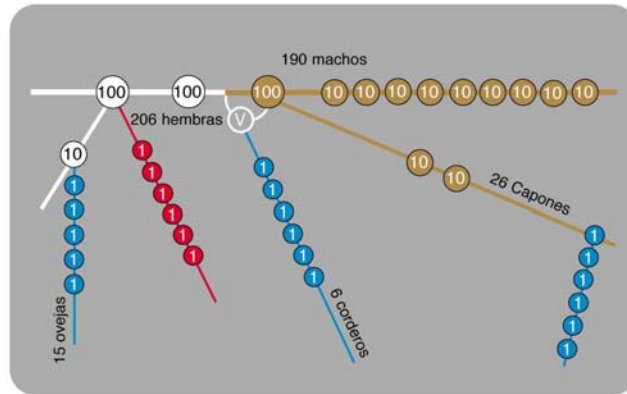


My favourite poem, 1962 by Jiří Kolář

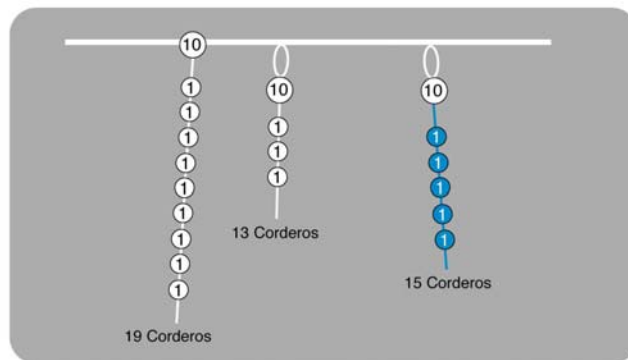
During 1962-63 the Czech artist Jiří Kolář made his first “poems of knots” based on his study of the genesis of writing and language of knots.²¹

In 2001 a digital transcription of a hand drawing from 1894 by the German archaeologist Max Uhle showing 3 quipus from Challa, Titicaca-Island, made by the Indians in 1893, was produced as a remittance work for the Bolivian scientist Carmen Beatriz Loza with the help of the designer Matthias Schellenberger; it has proved, that this possibly is up to now the oldest known example of a *floating* metro [cp. Buenos Aires “Subte”]²² -map; (1) shows the status quo of the net in those days, (2) and (3) the planned links under construction. The single lines are named and counted after animals and brought into order after their sex.

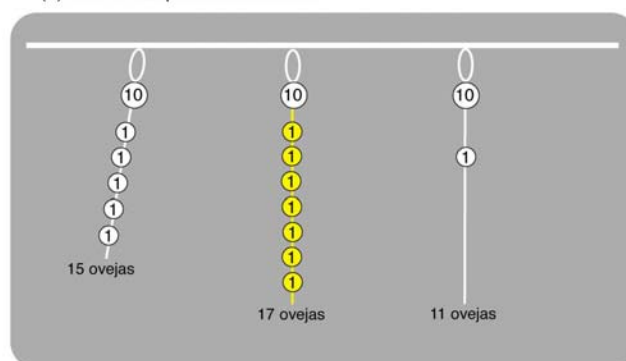
(1) Quipu:
Subte-interface



(2) Quipu:
Subte-links
under construction



(3) Quipu:
Planned Subte-links



Akakor diver Lorenzo Epis in the lake

A few years ago the French oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau made an expedition to the lake and found giant frogs. In the Year of the Dragon the Atahuallpa 2000 expedition organized by the Italian association Akakor Geographical Exploring under the leadership of the scientist Lorenzo Epis has discovered pre-Incan ruins of a 200-metre-long, 50-metre-wide holy temple, a terrace for crops, a road and an 800-metre-long wall on the floor of Lake Titicaca. Dating back 1.000 to 1.500 years ago, the ruins have been attributed to the indigenous Tiwanaku or Tiahuanaco people.²³

Nobody, however, can explain or prove if the lake level was different in the past except the frogs. But unfortunately we cannot understand them: some speak “Aymara”, some “Quechua”. So these three quipus probably record the interface of the first **international floating “Subte”** in World History between the boundaries of present Bolivia and Peru just 30 years after the nation-and site-specific metros of the European powers were opened such as London’s “Tube” in 1863.²⁴

“The Last Stop West”²⁵ is drifting East !



taken from “Franz.Ost: Politics of Dada and Data”, 2001 B.erin/C.halla

¹ Menzel, Cornelia, Die Struktur und Dynamik des chinesischen Schriftzeichensystems. Magisterarbeit Trier. 1995, pp. 28-97

² Chen, Lydia, Chinese Knotting, ECHO Publishing Taipei 1996, pp. 25-29

³ cp. Sheng, Zhu/Zhi, Wang u.a.: Der Senfkorngarten. Lehrbuch der chinesischen Malerei.- Hrsg. von Hans Daucher.- Ravensburg 1987.- Bd.2, S.81-93.

⁴ <http://www.foerderkoje.de/taiwan/pages/tobemade.html>

⁵ cp. Block, René/Knapstein, Gabriele: Eine lange Geschichte mit vielen Knoten - Fluxus in Deutschland 1962-1994.

⁶ Jünger, Ernst: Der Gordische Knoten.-Frankfurt a. M. 1954.- p. 13: "Der gordische Knoten hat, wie alle großen Bilder, sein Stets-Gegenwärtiges. Als Symbol der Erdmacht und ihrer Fesseln wird er bei jeder Begegnung zwischen Europa und Asien vorgewiesen und muss immer wieder zertrennt werden. Das bedeutet eine Begegnung mit frühen Verhängnissen."

⁷ cp. Dawei, Fei: Asien und Europa.- In: Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Hrsg.): Die anderen Modernen.- Berlin 1997.

⁸ cp. Sunzi: Die Kunst des Krieges.- Hrsg. von James Clavell.- Muenchen 1998.

⁹ cp. Zhou Tiehai

¹⁰ cp. Walter Benjamin

¹¹ http://aggv.bc.ca/taiwan/yao_jui-chung.htm

¹² cp. Szeemann, Harald, Live in your head - When attitudes become form, Works-Concepts-Processes-Situations-Information – Kunsthalle Bern 22.3. – 27.4.1969

¹³ <http://www.taipetimes.com/news/1999/12/12/story/0000014660>

¹⁴ http://www.walkerart.org/resources/res_pc_fritsch.html

¹⁵ cp. Ascher, Marcia, The Logical-Numerical System of Inca Quipus. In: Annals of the History of Computing, Vol. 5, Nr. 3, July 1983, pp. 268-278

¹⁶ <http://www.utexas.edu/courses/wilson/ant304/biography/arybios98/morrisbio.html>

¹⁷ cp. Loza, Carmen Beatriz. - Quipus and quipolas at the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin : genesis of a reference collection (1872-1999) / Carmen Beatriz Loza. - In: Baessler-Archiv. - Berlin. - 1999, N.F., Bd. 47, H. 1, p. 39-75

¹⁸ cp. Weiss, Jeffrey “Underworld” pp. 37-44 in “Mark Rothko, ‘A consummated experience between picture and onlooker’ ”, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel 2001

¹⁹ cp. Kunstforum International, Bd. 34, 4/79, pp. 42 f.

²⁰ <http://www.centreimage.ch/metronet/metronet.htm>

²¹ cp. Kolář, Jiří, in “Vielleicht etwas, vielleicht nichts”, p. 18, Kestner Gesellschaft e. V., Hannover 1969

²² <http://www.metrovias.com.ar/>

²³ <http://cnnenespanol.com/2000/enfoques/08/24/titicaca/>

²⁴ <http://www.geocities.com/themole7/tubeanimals.html>

²⁵ cp. Kippenberger, Martin, MAK Center for Arts and Architecture, Schindler House, L.A., 10 July – 11 October 1998

This is not part of the contribution, just information:

1. There are also Chinese characters used in the word-document.

2. Please check publication rights in case of images 5, 8, 9 and 13:

Image 5 is taken from: Recover Mainland China: Prophecy & Action, a solo exhibition by Yao Jui-Chung, published by the Dimension Endowment of Art, July 1997, Taipei, Taiwan

Image 8 is taken from Martin Kippenberger: The Last Stop West, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Schindler House, L.A., Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1998

Image 9 is taken from Jiri Kolar, Internationales Kulturzentrum Egon Schiele, Krumau, 1997 Nadace Egona Schieleho, Cesky Krumlov

Image 13 is taken from BBC 23.8.2000: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/newsroom/240800temple.shtml>