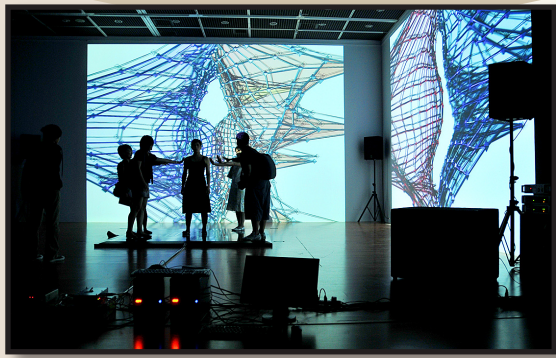


[ ART JOURNAL ]



The viewer becomes a performer in Sonia Cillari's *Se Mi Sei Vicino* (If You Are Close to Me).  
PHOTO COURTESY OF MOCA

# REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOME ART

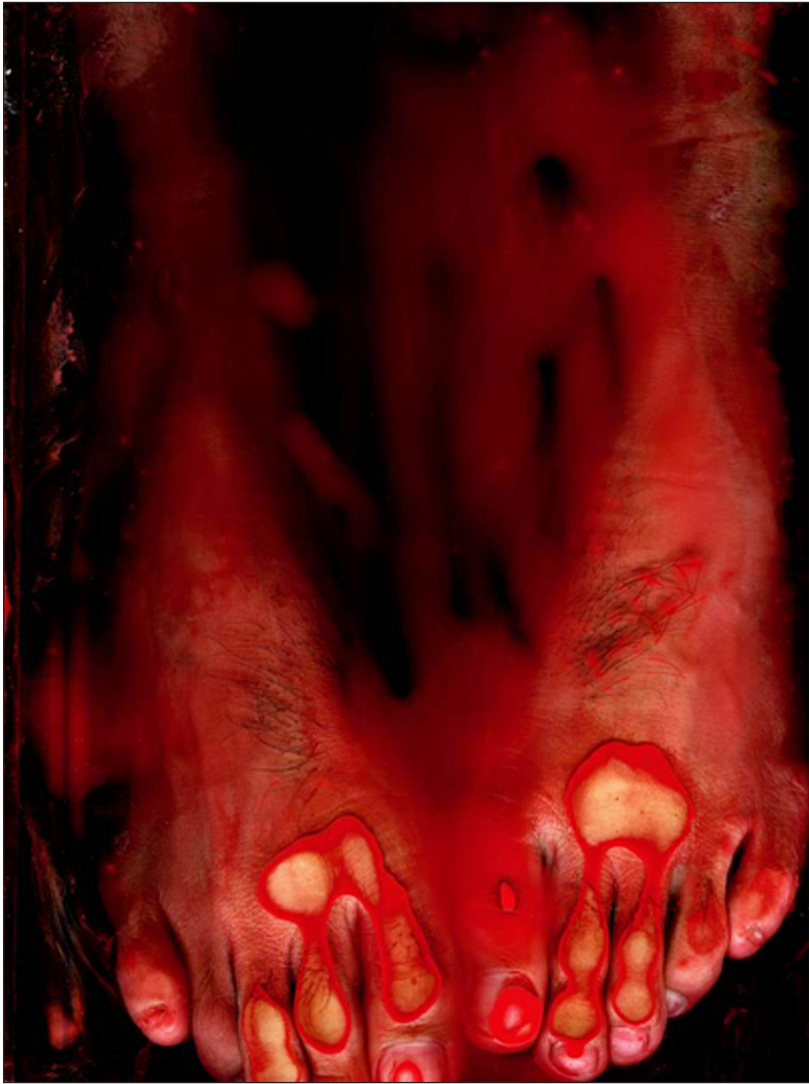
Watching visitors play with the installations and videos at the Museum of Contemporary Art's Digital Art Festival can be as interesting as viewing the art itself

BY NOAH BUCHAN  
STAFF REPORTER

A child zips into Room 103 of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA, 台北當代藝術館), completely oblivious of the sign reading “high voltage,” and lunges at Scottie Huang Chih-chih's (黃致傑) *Motivational Sense Organism* (動覺生物), an installation that uses lights and plastic flowers fused to small latticed booms with faux fern leaves, which elevate when a museumgoer approaches. After a scolding from a museum employee, the boy slowly reaches his hand out towards one of the fronds in an attempt to manipulate the sensors inside. The leaf moves but the boy loses interest and darts out, causing the frond to slump. The process is repeated as other children, parents in tow, enter the gallery.

Huang's piece is part of the 3rd Digital Art Festival Taipei 2008, a collection of more than 40 interactive installations, Internet artworks, computer animations and digital games that runs until Nov. 9. The festival's title, - *Trans* -, which is short for “transcending space and time,” seems somewhat misleading, because many of the works on display focus on the interaction between people and art. In this exhibit, humans take the place of interfaces such as keyboards that are used to manipulate machines and input data. In other words, the nifty gizmos-cum-art seek to make the viewer an active participant, rather than a passive viewer.

Some of the interactive installations use the bodies of museumgoers to create light, movement or sound, or a combination of all three. South Korean artist Mok



In *Self-Portrait No. 2 (Red)*, Huang Po-chih uses a scanner to create gruesome images of the human body.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF MOCA

Jin-yo's sound-and-light installation, *SoniColumn*, can be played by touch. Like pressing the keys of a piano, passing one's hand over one of the piece's hundreds of LED light nodes causes a sound to be emitted.

Sixteen tubes hang from the gallery's ceiling for *Southern Wave 2: Concealment Space*, a joint creation by Tainan University of the Arts Music Department and Logico-Studio (朗機工). Inside the tubes are spinning columns, each of which contains nodes of light bulbs. Speaking or singing into a microphone activates a sensor, creating a symphony of light. On a visit last Sunday, one woman broke into song, as if she were in a KTV, drawing cheers from a crowd of spectators.

Although many of the computer programs in the festival seem

more like resume fodder for young engineers and artists (*Single Cylinder*, for example, looks like your average motorcycle racing video game, though it uses brands of scooters found in Taiwan), some come with a message, such as *Regenerator*, a video game that draws children's attention to problems of environmental destruction, war and disease.

Many of the videos and animations require more of an attention span to digest. Chu Shu-shyan's (朱書賢) four-minute animated video *Dark Seed. Sprouting* (黑色種子・抽芽) is a masterpiece of understatement, with a young man and a vagabond sitting on a bench, each smoking a cigarette. The minimalist narrative structure evokes Samuel Beckett's later works and, somewhat paradoxically, its digital



Above: Chu Shu-shuan's four-minute video *Black Seed. Sprouting* is a masterpiece of understatement that uses images reminiscent of *Grand Theft Auto*.

Left: Like many of the installations at the Digital Art Festival, visitors will probably be more inclined to play with *SoniColumn* than to contemplate it.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOCA

## EXHIBITION NOTES:

**WHAT:** The 3rd Digital Art Festival Taipei 2008, - Trans -  
**WHERE:** Museum of Contemporary Art (台北當代藝術館), 39 Chang'an W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Call (02) 2552-3721 for more information  
**WHEN:** Until Nov. 9. The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 6pm  
**ADMISSION:** NT\$50  
**ON THE NET:** www.mocataipei.org.tw

images are reminiscent of *Grand Theft Auto*. I watched the short three times; each viewing revealed discovered something completely different, like a text that can be read and reread for different layers of meaning. Chu's piece is located in a room with five other digitally generated shorts, which range from four to eight minutes in length and are all worthy of viewing. The museum has provided benches from which to watch the shorts.

Walking into MOCA this past Sunday afternoon, I was shocked to encounter something I'd never seen

before at the museum: a long line. It was comprised overwhelmingly of families and young couples, who waited as long as half an hour to enter the museum so they could ponder, examine, watch and fiddle with the installations, videos and other art on display. Though some might find a deeper meaning underlying these ultra-modern gadgets, it seems that, above all, they are meant to be played with, rather than admired or contemplated. Traditionalists may scoff at the concept, but the kids seem to love it.

# Pitchin' Wu

Wu Tung-lung's paintings reward the patient observer

BY BLAKE CARTER  
STAFF REPORTER

Wu Tung-lung (吳東龍) would rather hear about his works than talk about them. Even quoting other people, he doesn't say much.

“Some people think my paintings describe a feeling, like a feeling they had a long time ago ... Other people see animals,” he says, slowly sipping from a straw at a coffee franchise in Taipei.

Just back from a six-month residency at Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris, the somewhat reticent 32-year-old painter will be showing 14 of his most recent works at VT Art Salon (非常廟藝文空間) beginning on Saturday.

Wu hopes the show will attract attention to paintings that exude “tradition” and “elegance.”

It probably will. Big-seller Impressions Gallery (印象畫廊) has been exhibiting Wu's work recently and his older brother, Wu Dar-kuen (吳達坤), is one of eight established Taiwanese artists who opened VT, the bar-cum-gallery that will host his largest solo exhibition to date.

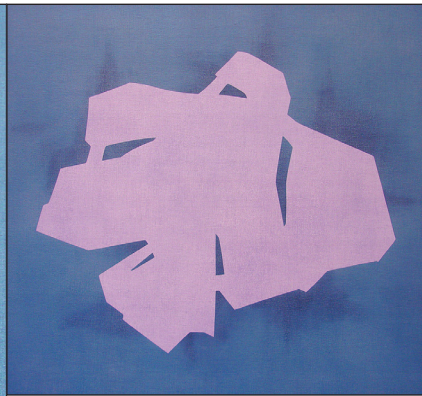
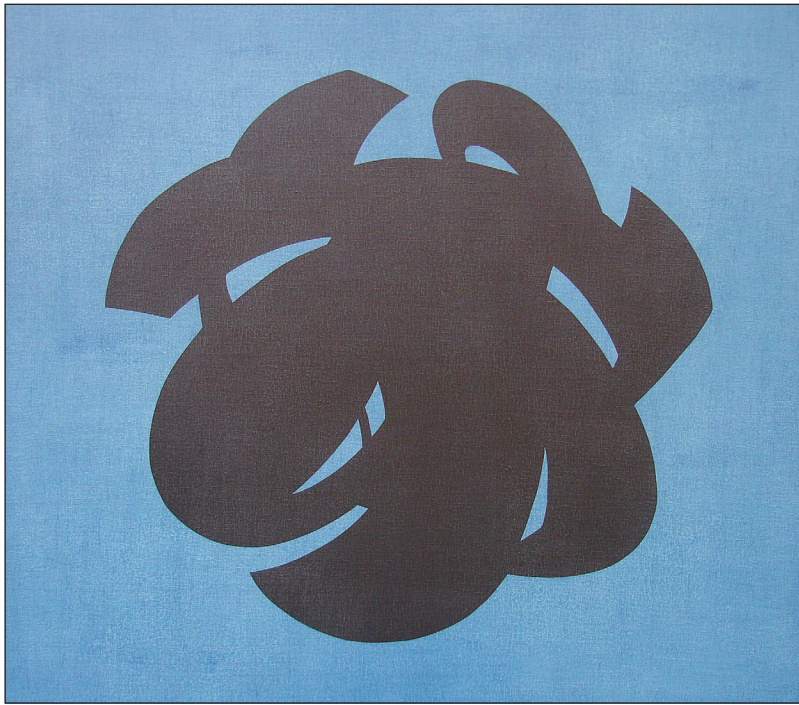
Though born and raised in Taipei, Wu developed his current style

while a graduate student at Tainan National University of the Arts (國立台南藝術大學) six years ago. After years of obediently learning the realism advanced by his junior high, high school and undergraduate instructors, the secluded campus and relaxed atmosphere in Tainan allowed him more time to think for himself, and he gladly abandoned the formalist style he'd developed up to then.

“I thought about which parts I didn't need, and if I didn't need something, I deleted it. What was left was what I really, really needed. And it's this.”

Life in Tainan didn't “delete” Wu's metropolitan flavor. Muted regal colors and simple, enigmatic patterns meet in works that seem carefully designed to hang well in an affluent Taipei East District living room. The pieces are unobtrusive and unapologetically decorative. They almost seem therapeutic.

To his credit, Wu doesn't shy away from listing artists he admires: Mark Rothko, Frank Stella, Cy Twombly. All three now elderly or dead Americans, their works



are famous for requiring time to appreciate. Museums have been criticized for showing Rothkos without a bench on which to rest and appreciate their from.

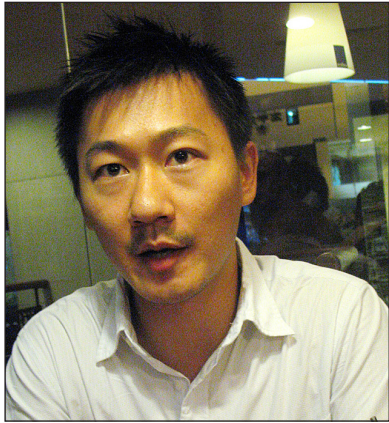
Wu's paintings ask for a similar contemplation, as does the artist himself. He speaks with a grandfatherly patience when discussing his paintings.

“I like to spend time with my works, not [only] to make them, but in the studio or gallery,” he says, composing himself between sentences. “I try to pretend I'm not a painter ... I try to feel them.”

For people who can't afford to own one of Wu's paintings, his show at VT might be their best option. Comfortable seats and drinks are available at the adjoining bar, and aside from weekends there usually aren't crowds to keep you from dragging a chair into the gallery to sit and ponder what's beneath the surface of these seemingly simplistic paintings.

There may be more there than one might think.

“I'm a very emotional person,” Wu says.



Above: Wu Tung-lung. Top: Wu's *Symbol* — 48 (2008), left, and *Symbol* — 46 (2008).  
PHOTO: BLAKE CARTER, TAIPEI TIMES  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF WU TUNG-LUNG



## Celebrity Interview

### Diva

CONTINUED FROM P14

One area where she agrees with Cruise is in her dislike of psychiatric drugs. I ask Lewis about her comment that she would happily see such drugs banned, and she says that she wants people “to look around our world, at whose pockets are getting fat off people being diagnosed with all these disorders, and why are there tonnes of them now? ... I'm all for natural solutions. I'm for Eastern philosophies. Yoga is a good one.”

What about someone with schizophrenia, I venture, surely they need psychiatric drugs? She jumps in before I can finish. “Even for that ... what I'm saying is so, like, for a schizophrenic, or somebody who's deeply disturbed, I still am for alternate solutions. That's where you're getting into things like safe environments. There's, like, animal therapy — there's this whole theory of taking care of animals. Have you ever heard of it? I know this is going to sound so silly on this tape recorder. I don't know all about it, but I've seen it with a mentally handicapped girl — because I had to play a mentally handicapped girl — and, you know, somebody's having a tantrum and they're out of their mind, and you're basically distracting them from their pain.” She pauses. “I'm not going to fucking say it, because it'll be like, ‘Yeah — [get better] through pets!’” I am relieved that she realizes how weak this sounds.

When it comes to politics, Lewis describes herself as “the biggest cynic of all time.” I ask what she thinks about McCain's vice-presidential pick, Sarah Palin, and she puts on a low voice, aping the Republican thought process: “We've got to do something. Let's get a girl! On the one hand,” she continues, “you think, ‘Yay, the times they are a-changing, she's female.’ But, oh no, she's not pro-choice and she loves guns. What? Here's what I'm saying. I am independent, to the truest, true, last little cell. I don't trust politics.”

Lewis says that she has “a natural, innate rebellion, a defiance that my parents allowed in me, and I only have it more so in my 30s.” She calls herself a “man-loving feminist” and says that she wishes more women would concentrate on what they have to offer aside from their looks. “I want girls to start thinking about what they have to say, what do they have to contribute to their families, to other people, to society? ... It's fine if you want to be desirable to your man, that's sweet. But when people are carving their skin and putting plastic, or whatever, synthetic balls in their chest, to be more desirable, against this fucking facade of ‘Oh no, it's for me. It makes me feel good.’ Well, really?”

She says that her favorite female artists are Beth Ditto, Joan As Policewoman, PJ Harvey, and she has just recently finished acting in Drew Barrymore's directorial debut, *Whip It!*, in which she plays a roller-darby champion. (Roller derby is a US punk spectator sport, which involves women on rollerskates racing around a track). Lewis spent 12 hours a day on skates during the shoot, and plays a legendary competitor called Iron Maven, who bullies the main character, played by Ellen Page. She seems to have loved the whole experience, and says that Barrymore “really impressed me. She's so visual and intelligent.”

A few years back, Lewis did an interview with the writer Chuck Palahniuk, in which she shared a range of questions that she'd devised to sound out a man she liked. I ask if I can put some to her, and she agrees. So, does she like asparagus? “Yes.” Would she say she's won more fights than she's lost? “I haven't gotten into that many fights, so I would say it's even.” Did you date an older man, and what did he teach you? “I was going to answer something, but I'm not going to have that answer in print,” she says. I laugh and she adds, “No! It wasn't sexual. Wait, an older man,” she goes quiet. “Cause when I was a teenager I dated someone in their 20s, but looking back I don't consider that older. He taught me honesty. Being honest in a relationship. And being really loving.” She seems slightly sad. She is almost certainly referring to Brad Pitt, whom she dated in her late teens.

Finally, I wonder whether she plans to fulfill that third ambition, and take up performance art. She laughs. “Well, when I say performance art, that's such a scary phrase. What does that mean anyway? I saw some really bad performance art at a museum once where it was like someone brushing their teeth for 30 minutes ... What I mean is a sense of dance, and physical interpretation. Like physicalizing my sound and my drama. I do this on stage anyway,” she pauses. “I cavort.” That she does. Perhaps Juliette Lewis has fulfilled all those childhood ambitions already.