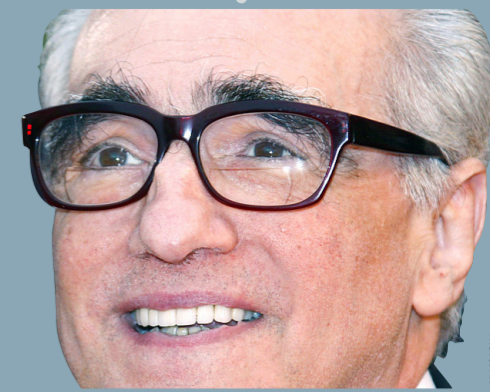


Celebrity Interview



Red

CONTINUED FROM P14

After Scorsese found him, Powell was taken to the US by Francis Ford Coppola and feted by his new Hollywood fans. They saw him as a kindred spirit: a fiercely independent filmmaker who had fought for, and justified, the need for complete creative freedom. Coppola installed him as senior director-in-residence at his Zoetrope studios; he took teaching posts; retrospectives were held of his work; and the great and good of Hollywood queued up to meet him. Scorsese even had a cossack shirt made in the same style as that of Anton Walbrook's character in *The Red Shoes*, which he wore to the opening of Powell and Pressburger's 1980 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. To that event, Scorsese brought along his editor on *Raging Bull*, Thelma Schoonmaker. "Marty told me I had to go and see *Colonel Blimp* on the big screen," Schoonmaker later tells me. She introduced herself to Powell, they hit it off, and four years later they married. Schoonmaker, who still edits all Scorsese's films, experienced first-hand both Scorsese's worship of Powell and his subsequent friendship with him. "One of the first things Marty said to me was, 'I've just discovered a new Powell and Pressburger masterpiece!' We were working at night on *Raging Bull* and he said, 'You have to come into the living room and look at this right now.' He had a videocassette of *I Know Where I'm Going*. For him to have taken an hour and a half out of our editing time is typical of the way he proselytizes. Anyone he meets, or the actors he works with, he immediately starts bombarding with Powell and Pressburger movies."

Powell's influence is all over Scorsese's work. His trademark use of the color red is a direct homage to Powell, for example — though Powell told him he overused the color in *Mean Streets*. And Powell was practically a consultant on *Raging Bull*, giving Scorsese script advice and even guiding him towards releasing the film in black and white. (Again, Powell observed that Robert de Niro's boxing gloves were too red.) Meanwhile, Powell's *Tales of Hoffman* informed the movements of *Raging Bull*'s fight scenes. "Marty was always asking Michael, 'How did you do that shot?' or 'Where did you get that idea?'" Schoonmaker says. "They shared a tremendous passion for the history of film — but he didn't always go along with Marty's taste in modern filmmakers. For example, Michael didn't quite get Sam Fuller. Marty showed him *Forty Guns*, or started to show it to him, and Michael walked out halfway through. Marty was heartbroken."

The restoration of *The Red Shoes* came about when Schoonmaker tried to buy Scorsese a print of *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* for his 60th birthday. She was alarmed to discover the printing negative was worn out, and that there wasn't enough money to restore it. Much of the Powell and Pressburger legacy was, and still is, in a similar condition. So she and Scorsese set about raising the cash to fund the restoration. "It's been over two years now of checking test prints and determining how the picture should be restored," says Scorsese. "In restoration circles, very often three-strip Technicolor film can only reach a certain technical level. The colors start to become yellow and you get fringing — where the strips don't quite line up. But the techniques we used here are top of the line. So it looks better than new. It's exactly like what the filmmakers wanted at the time, but they couldn't achieve it back then."

Other Powell/Pressburger movies are now in line for restoration, but Scorsese and Schoonmaker's rehabilitation mission does not stop there. For some years, between movie projects (they are currently completing Scorsese's latest, *Shutter Island*, with Leonardo DiCaprio), they have been working on a documentary about British cinema, in the vein of Scorsese's 1999 personal appreciation of Italian cinema, *My Voyage in Italy*. Powell and Pressburger will be in there of course; but also Hitchcock, Korda, Anthony Asquith and possibly others we've forgotten about ourselves. British cinema is sorely misunderstood, Scorsese feels, and it needs this documentary even more than Italian cinema did.

Perhaps that's something for next year's Cannes? "Well, I'm still working on my speech," says Scorsese. "I never know what to say. I'm trying to hone it down to my key emotional connection to the film. My favorite scene is the one near the beginning at the cocktail party. Where Lermontov [Anton Walbrook] asks Vicky [Maira Shearer], 'Why do you want to dance?' and she replies, 'Why do you want to live?' Despite all the other beautiful sequences in the film, that's the one that stays in my mind."



After a year's break from making art and two years since her last exhibition in Taipei, Hou I-ting (侯怡亭) returns with what one might assume would be an effort to prove she's still capable of producing the kind of art that saw her short-listed for, and then barred from participating in the Taipei Arts Awards.

Instead, her new work in Image/Playing: Hou I-ting Solo Exhibition (影像嬉劇 — 侯怡亭個展) — at VT Art Salon (VT, 非常廟藝文空間) through June 6 — continues a series of which two works were shown at Taipei's Aki Gallery in 2007.

After four months' respite, digital prints once again dominate the walls of VT. Several find the artist looking into mirrors placed in front of construction sites. The backgrounds are plain enlarged photos, but the images in the mirrors show varying degrees of computer tinkering. While Hou says she's interested in the juxtaposition of the two images, the contrast is either overly simple or subtle to the point of being impenetrable.

In 2005, Hou caused a stir after being selected as a Taipei Arts Awards finalist. She created a series in which she painted herself white and projected images of cartoon characters and celebrities like Lin Chi-lin (林志玲) and Jolin Tsai (蔡依林) onto her body. The resultant distortions require an effort to distinguish between the projected image and the artist. While viewers adjust their focus between the two, Hou's critique of the "ideal" female body has time to sink in.

After installing her work at Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) for the awards exhibition, Hou was told that to avoid legal problems she would need to obtain permission to use Lin and Tsai's images. She refused and had to remove her works before the show opened, losing any chance of receiving one of the country's most prestigious arts awards.

Why TFAM was worried about a lawsuit is something of a mystery. The museum's media department did not respond to e-mail or phone

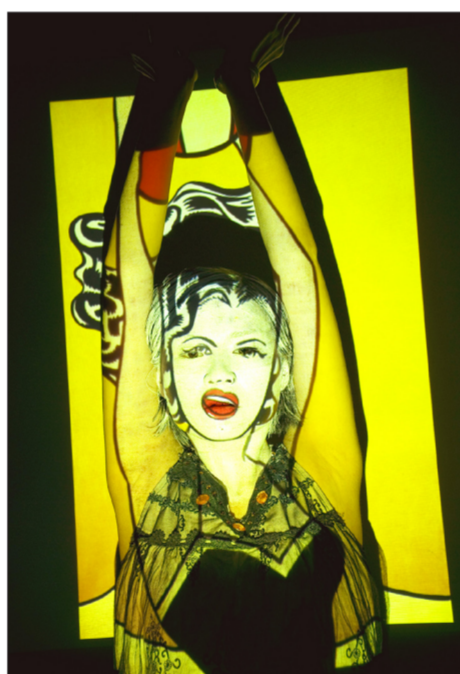
Mirror image

Taiwanese artists are struggling to keep print shops in business with their copious use of large digital prints. Hou I-ting's current exhibition shows her exploration of the medium

BY BLAKE CARTER
STAFF REPORTER

Above: *Agency of Reality: Temple*, 2008.
Below right: *Usurper Star No. 3*, 2007.
Below: Hou I-ting appears a little pale before shooting works in which she projected images of iconic female images onto her body.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HOU I-TING



EXHIBITION NOTES:

WHAT: Image/Playing: Hou I-ting Solo Exhibition (影像嬉劇 — 侯怡亭個展)

WHERE: VT Art Salon (非常廟藝文空間), B1, 47 Yitong St, Zhongshan District, Taipei City (台北市中山區伊通街, 47號地下一樓)

WHEN: Through June 6. Tuesday to Thursday 2pm to 11pm, Friday and Saturday from 2pm to 1am

ADMISSION: Free

requests for comment.

Copyright infringement issues often come up with contemporary art, but the onus usually lies with the artist, not the exhibitor. Last year TFAM had no problem exhibiting dozens of works by painter J.C. Kuo (郭振昌) that incorporated copyrighted images taken from textbooks and stickers of Disney characters like Mickey Mouse.

A source close to the Taipei Arts Awards selection process confirmed that Hou was rejected because of legal worries and said the validity of the decision "was a good question."

Although Hou says the incident didn't bother her, she showed similar works two years later in an exhibition at the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts called *Super Dirty Yoga* — an obvious reference to TFAM's 2006 Taipei Biennial title: *Dirty Yoga*. Unsurprisingly, there were no legal problems.

After the show at Kuandu, Hou reshaped the projector idea again, using well-known Andy Warhol images of Marilyn Monroe and Liz Taylor. By the time she exhibited the work in 2007, she was getting tired of the approach. Hence the current, digitally manipulated pieces, which she says allow her "more freedom."

But more telling, perhaps, is something she said when talking about another artist's recent exhibition. "I like the old works better," she said. "But an artist can't make every show great."

New York brings home the Bacon

Francis Bacon's view of human nature often used violent imagery and is cited as a major influence in modern art

BY NICK OLIVARI
STAFF REUTERS, NEW YORK



A Francis Bacon retrospective starting at the New York Metropolitan Museum today is not for the faint-hearted.

The self-taught British painter (1909-1992), who denied the existence of God, portrays the brutality of humanity in subjects from popes to a paralytic child walking on all fours. His images illustrate that without God, humans are subject to the same urges of violence, lust and fear as any other animal.

"His wider appeal is a morbid fascination with the expression of violence in human nature," said Gary Tinterow, principal curator of Francis Bacon: A Centenary Retrospective, which is the first major New York exhibition in 20 years devoted to the artist and includes works from throughout his career.

Bacon, an existentialist, saw man as

an "accident of evolution," said Tinterow, adding that contemporary artists consistently vote Bacon as one of the great influences of the current era.

Though he drifted aimlessly early in his career, Bacon found his voice as World War II ended and rose to prominence over the next 45 years.

With a predilection for shocking imagery, Bacon's art was dominated by emotionally charged depictions of the human body.

He painted heads with snarling mouths, images of men as pathetic and alone, and a human figure portrayed as bestial, conjuring up the demons he may have lived with.

Suffering from an abusive father, he later relived that pattern with some of his homosexual lovers.

"His early sexual experiences came

by older men who were cruel to him," Tinterow said. "His familiarity with cruelty is strongly expressed."

The exhibit also includes archival materials found in Bacon's studio and only available after the death of a man who hated to paint with anyone present, including the subject. These objects include the pages he tore from books and magazines, photographs and sketches, all of which were source materials for finished paintings on view.

The exhibit, which runs until Aug. 16, was formed in partnership with London's Tate Britain and Madrid's Museo del Prado, and previously appeared in both of those venues.

Visitors to Francis Bacon: A Centenary Retrospective view paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on Monday.

PHOTOS: AP

