

*We Do Care*, a mixed-media collage.

*11 Steps Towards Happiness* is made of 11 mixed-media collage sections.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PROJECT FULFILL ART SPACE



*Another Beautiful Day*, an animation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PROJECT FULFILL ART SPACE



EXHIBITION NOTES :

**WHAT:** Happy Bubble Life — Tu Pei-shih Solo Exhibition (快樂泡沫生活 — 杜佩詩個展)  
**WHERE:** Project Fulfill Art Space (就在藝術中心), 2, Alley 45, Ln 147, Xinyi Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市信義路三段147巷45弄2號).  
**WHEN:** Until June 21. Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 2pm to 9pm, closes at 7pm on Sundays  
**ON THE NET:** www.pfarts.com

*Uneasy Journey*, an animation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PROJECT FULFILL ART SPACE



*Who Cares About the Real*, an animation.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PROJECT FULFILL ART SPACE

# A dreamy attack on capitalism

Young artist Tu Pei-shih explores the relationship between fantasy and real-life in her critique of global capitalism

BY HO YI  
STAFF REPORTER

Tu Pei-shih's (杜佩詩) four-minute-plus animation *Another Beautiful Day* begins with a few happy villagers living in a lush forest where apples and strawberries grow and doves and colorful balloons glide across the sky. Suddenly everything is ablaze. Fighter planes and gigantic flies turn this never-never land into a hell over which the flags of the world's hegemonic powers flutter.

Such are the contrasts expressed in the 28-year-old artist's solo exhibition, *Happy Bubble Life* (快樂泡沫生活), currently on display at Project Fulfill Art Space (就在藝術中心), an intimate gallery that opened last August and focuses on contemporary young artists in Taiwan.

Tu's mixed-media and animation works have a deceptive fairy-tale look. Her palettes are dominated with saccharine pinks, bright yellows, blues and greens. Her cartoonish characters and infantile images of flowers, fruits and trees look like they were cut out of illustrated children's books. The sounds of insects and birds chirping in the background soothe visitors.

The artist's visual vocabulary is the basis of a fantasy life that is perpetually imagined and manufactured in a capitalistic society. Under its veneer of perfectness, ugliness and absurdity intrude on this manufactured world.

*Who Cares About the Real*, a four-and-half-minute long animation, takes as its muse a caricature published by *The Guardian* in which the G8 leaders are seen discussing world hunger and international food

shortages while enjoying a lavish dinner banquet.

The four-minute long *Uneasy Journey* begins with a utopian setting that is blessed with singing orioles, flowers and white clouds, but which quickly deteriorates into a gloomy rubbish dump. The work is based on a news report on how a poor Chinese town in Guangdong Province became the world's biggest dumping ground for electronic waste produced by developed countries.

Though seemingly preoccupied with the injustices and suffering caused by global capitalism, Tu said her work's main motif is the tension between what is real and what is imagined.

"The primary concern in my art is about society's fantasy life nourished by capitalism," Tu said.

This theme is reflected on the types of media and materials Tu culls to make her art and the way she works with them. The artist uses decorative patterns, garish materials and pleasant imagery to deliberately pander to popular tastes. Tu deems animation's innocent and fairy-tale-like qualities applicable to the making of fantasy, or in her own words, to create a "misconceived naivete."

For an artist who is conscious of the correspondence between form and content, it seems only natural that Tu makes her art works by hand, image by image, or frame by frame, as if they belong to a handicraft tradition.

"Audiences and critics are smart. What will they think if you claim to criticize capitalist society but spend big bucks making your art?" Tu said.



[ ENVIRONMENT ]

## Endangered turtles find sanctuary on Indonesian islands

Indonesia, home to important sea turtle migration routes at the crossroads of the Pacific and Indian oceans, is improving its conservation report card



BY PRESI MANDARI  
AFP, RUNDUMA, INDONESIA

For centuries, turtle eggs have been as good as currency on this tiny Indonesian island — they helped put children through school and kept the village kitty in petty cash.

But four years ago the people of Runduma, population 500, decided to change their way of life and start protecting the endangered animals, which return year after year to lay their eggs on the surrounding islands.

Now environmentalists say turtle numbers are increasing in the seas off southeast Sulawesi, and the turtle hunters have become their guardians in the battle to save the marine reptiles from extinction.

"We used to have a long and unique tradition of organizing the egg collection among the people here," Runduma village chief La Brani said.

"Families took turns every night to collect eggs and 30 out of around 100 eggs from each nest were set aside for the village's petty cash."

Most of the eggs were taken from nearby Anano, an uninhabited tropical paradise that lies in ancient turtle nesting grounds between the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Money from the sale of the community eggs financed public spending on things like a new water filtration system, and helped poorer families cover expenses such as school fees for their children.

"It was terribly difficult at the beginning to convince people not to collect eggs as it was a living for them," the village chief said.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

But the loss of this traditional source of income has not worried residents like Hatipa, 42, who would receive about US\$0.09 per egg — enough to put her two children through school.

"I stopped collecting eggs in 2005 because I was afraid that if it continued, future generations would never know what a turtle looked like," she said.

"Since then I've been struggling to protect the turtles. If people are gathering for a chat I tell them how we have to live side by side with the turtles."

Under a 2005 agreement with the local administration and environmental groups, the islanders



Above: Children release turtles into the sea off Runduma island, Wakatobi, Indonesia, last month. Left: A man holds up a sea turtle in Runduma island, Wakatobi, Indonesia, last month. PHOTOS: AP

pledged to stop their trade in eggs and turtle meat and instead protect the endangered creatures.

In exchange the government has topped up the remote community's public coffers, sent teachers and organized visits from celebrities including pop singers and beauty queens.

"Nobody came here before but now we have celebrity visits. Turtles have given us their blessings," Hatipa said.

To supplement the poor fishing village's income, donors can "adopt" a

baby turtle or nest for up to US\$96. Purwanto, the coordinator of a turtle conservation program run jointly by the Nature Conservancy and WWF, said the adoptions helped educate local people about their marine environment as well as raise money.

"We occasionally keep one to five baby turtles from a nest ... and allow visitors to release them into the sea as a symbolic act to save the endangered species. We hope to raise awareness this way," he said.

A short boat ride away on Anano, the evidence of rising turtle numbers is clear. Hour-glass shaped nests full of egg shells are scattered along the pristine beach, each one marking a new generation of turtles safely dispatched into the sea.

"During the peak season from September to December, up to seven turtles will lay their eggs here every night," Purwanto said.

Some 243 turtles laid an estimated 3,000 eggs on the island last year, compared to just 20 in 2006 and 77 in 2007, he said.

Endangered green and hawksbill turtles are the most common visitors. The WWF estimates that 203,000 breeding green turtle females exist in the wild, and only 8,000 of the more critically endangered hawksbills.

FROM POACHING TO ECOTOURISM

All seven marine turtle species are experiencing severe threats to their survival, especially from pollution and the destruction of habitats such as coral reefs, beds of seagrass, nesting beaches and mangrove forests.

Those hatchlings that survive the exhausting dash from their nests to the sea face the ever-increasing risk of drowning in fishing gear or waste such as plastic bags as they make their epic migrations to feeding grounds.

Anano is a success story but

elsewhere in the vast Indonesian archipelago turtles are being killed and exploited with impunity, conservationists said.

Laws setting out fines of up to US\$10,000 and jail terms of five years for anyone caught stealing eggs or poaching live turtles are rarely enforced.

"Egg collection occurs in many parts of Indonesia, especially on Sumatra island where turtle eggs are still commercialized," said WWF's national coordinator of marine species conservation Creusa Hitipeuw.

"Bali has been a main destination market of turtle meat which is illegally smuggled from the nearby islands of West Nusa Tenggara such as Lombok and Sumbawa."

Located around 1,500km northeast of Jakarta, Anano and Runduma are among a cluster of islands in Wakatobi district on the southern tip of Sulawesi island.

They were declared a national park in 1996 and are among 11 zones the local government has set aside for marine and reef conservation.

"For the last three years we included environmental subjects in the school curriculum for elementary and junior high school," said Wakatobi district chief Hugu, a former environmental activist.

"Wakatobi's biggest development income will focus on ecotourism, which will maintain, among other things, the sustainability of sea turtle conservation."