

Rules are made to be broken

Whose Exhibit Is This? lifts the veil on how art shows are produced

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER

An illustration, left, and photo, below, of Koki Tanaka's installation *Relocate the Public Library in Taipei by Borrowing One Love Storybook at a Time. Leave the Book in the Taipei Fine Arts Museum.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TFAM



It's the artistic equivalent of letting the inmates run the asylum. Taipei Fine Arts Museum's (TFAM) *Whose Exhibition Is This?* (這是誰的展覽?) brings together 15 artists from across the world who employ photography, video, installation and sculpture to examine how displays of art are produced.

From the museum's perspective, exhibiting artists are often distracted and egotistical and treat its employees little better than servants, while on the other side, artists regularly feel frustrated by the rules and regulations that exhibiting institutions implement. But who creates an exhibition? The artist, curator or museum officials?

Judging by the works on display, it seems that the contributors are uninterested in internal museum politics or examining their own behavior. Instead, their works subvert the many prohibitions that TFAM — and by extension all museums — impose on visitors. It's as though they were told the director had left the building and they could break all the rules.

Taiwanese curator Manray Hsu (徐文瑞) calls on visitors to snap pictures inside the museum, which if caught would normally result in a scolding by security guards. Museumgoers then send their photos to Hsu, who presents them in his installation *The Museum in My Camera* (偷拍美術館). Submission details in English and Chinese can be found at: tfam-whoseexhibition.blogspot.com.

ONE STORY AT A TIME

Playing on the idea that TFAM is a repository for art, Japanese artist Koki Tanaka is attempting to relocate a public library to the museum.

His verbosely named work, *Relocate the Public Library in Taipei by Borrowing One Love Storybook at a Time. Leave the Book in the Taipei Fine Arts Museum*, consists of a space complete with bookshelves, sofas and tables.

Visitors are encouraged to borrow "love stories" from public libraries and leave them in the space for others to peruse.

In addition to subverting museum etiquette, Tanaka and Hsu illustrate

that TFAM is an evolving entity at which visitors can also become creators.

A rack of postcards makes up India-based Raqs Media Collective's *Please Do Not Touch the Work of Art*. The group endeavors to break down the barrier between audience and art by urging visitors to take away a postcard.

To create *The NCU Project* (中央大學計畫), Yeh Wei-li (葉偉立) collaborated with 20 National Central University students who designed their own spaces that the artist then photographed. The work looks at the medium of photography by directing attention to private spaces displayed within the public space of a museum.

Particularly insightful is *25sec-Taipei*, a video installation by Berlin-based artists Angelika Middendorf and Andreas Schimanski. The artists recorded the opinions of 41 denizens of Taipei's artistic community, which they edited down to 25-second snippets. The videos provide a brief though penetrating look into the preoccupations and personalities of the people behind the art.



EXHIBITION NOTES:

WHAT: *Whose Exhibition Is This?* (這是誰的展覽?)

WHERE: Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Tel: (02) 2595-7656

WHEN: Until Nov. 22. Open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm, closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays

DETAILS: With the exception of the ongoing Pixar exhibit, admission to the museum is free

Titian, rivals battle for market share in Louvre show



From left to right: Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* and *The Three Ages of Man and Lucretia* by Veronese.

PHOTOS: BLOOMBERG

Did Antonio Salieri really kill his rival Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as rumor has it? Nothing is less certain. There is no denying, though, that jealousy among artists can both drive creativity and lead to dirty tricks.

Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese — Rivalries in Venice, an exhibition at the Louvre, looks at the Venetian school of painting in the second half of the 16th century from the perspective of fierce competition for market share.

Titian (ca. 1488-1576) was the most senior among the three. His teacher, Giovanni Bellini, had transformed Venice from an artistic backwater to a beacon of the avant-garde. His use of oil instead of tempera and of color as an element of composition became a trademark of the Venetian school.

Not everybody was happy with the new style. Michelangelo, after having seen Titian's *Danae*, told Vasari, the art critic, that he admired the handling of color, yet added: "What a pity that Venetian painters don't learn how to draw properly."

Europe's ruling class didn't share Michelangelo's misgivings. The emperor, the pope, kings, cardinals



The Venetian school of art was as cutthroat as it was innovative

BY JORG VON UTHMANN
BLOOMBERG

and lesser dignitaries lined up to be immortalized by Titian. Emperor Charles V appointed him court painter and knighted him.

Titian's European fame didn't prevent him from keeping a watchful eye on potential rivals at home. Jacopo Robusti (1518-94), nicknamed Tintoretto after his father's profession of dyer (tintore), lasted only a few days in his studio before the older master kicked him out.

When Tintoretto started to make inroads into the Venetian market, Titian's friend, the pamphleteer Pietro Aretino, attacked his work as shallow

mass production.

Tintoretto was no wallflower either. To secure commissions, he routinely undercut his colleagues.

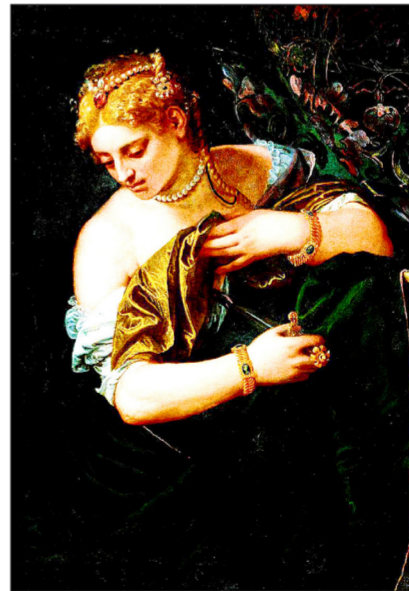
In 1564, when the Scuola di San Rocco launched a competition for an important cycle of paintings, he arrived — while his rivals submitted their sketches — with a finished canvas for the ceiling, modestly offering it as a present to the religious community. Naturally, he won the contract that occupied him, off and on, for more than 20 years.

Tintoretto seems to have been a genuinely pious man in a not-so-pious

city unlike Paolo Caliari (1528-88), nicknamed Veronese after Verona, his place of birth.

Veronese is best known for his sumptuous banquet scenes. In 1573, he got into trouble with the Inquisition: The religious authorities felt that his *Last Supper* looked more like a swanky reception than a biblical event and forced him to rename the painting. Under the title *Feast in the House of Levi* it's one of the gems of Venice's Gallerie dell'Accademia.

Tintoretto's cycle from the Scuola di San Rocco didn't make it to the Paris show, and instead of the *Feast in the*



House of Levi you can see another of Veronese's banquets — *The Pilgrims of Emmaus* from the Louvre's own holdings.

Titian's *Danae*, on the other hand, appears twice. There's the earlier version, lambasted by Michelangelo, and a later one from the Prado in which Cupid has been replaced by an old woman.

Sensibly, the organizers have grouped the 86 canvases thematically so that the visitor can compare the three masters and their different ways of handling portraits, nudes, mythological and biblical subjects. To round off the presentation, the Louvre has added some minor painters, such as Jacopo Bassano, Palma Giovane and Andrea Schiavone, who worked in Venice during the same period.

You'll look in vain, though, for the first of Veronese's banquets, the giant *Marriage at Cana*. It hasn't budged from its wall in the Salle des Etats, facing the museum's leading lady — Mona Lisa.

EXHIBITIONS



Lee Chang Jin will discuss her art project, *Comfort Women Wanted*, at Taipei Artist Village on Sunday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAIPEI ARTIST VILLAGE

HIGHLIGHT

Korean-born, New York City-based artist Lee Chang Jin will this weekend give a presentation about her current art project, **Comfort Women Wanted**, at Taipei Artist Village, where she is completing a residency. The title refers to advertisements that appeared in Asian newspapers during the 1930s that were used to entice women into serving as prostitutes for the Japanese army. When the ads failed to attract enough women from Korea, Taiwan, China and Malaysia, among other countries, the Japanese military employed more dubious means to round up "comfort" women for their soldiers. The project's audio and mixed media installation includes original interviews with extant comfort women and a Japanese soldier as well as prints that resemble the original advertisements.

■ Taipei Artist Village (台北國際藝術村), 7 Beiping E Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號)

■ Sunday from 3pm to 5pm.

Admission is free

Taiwanese artist and 2009 Venice Biennale participant Yang Mao-lin (楊茂林) examines how global culture supplants local traditions in **Temple of Sublime Beauty — Made in Taiwan** (聖潔之廟—台灣製造). In his sculpture, Yang mixes the iconography of Taiwanese religious artifacts, such as Buddhist statues and Taoist alters, and characters from popular culture, including King Kong and Wonder Woman. The message: celebrities are the new idols worshipped by the masses.

■ Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (MOCA, Taipei), 39 Chang'an W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2552-3721

■ Until Jan. 30

Calligrapher and ink painter Kwong Yue-pin (孔依平) spends his time traversing Taiwan's mountains and rivers. **Transforming the Heart in Ink: An Exhibition of the Calligraphy and Painting of Kwong Yue-Pin** (戲墨蛭懷—孔依平書畫展) displays 50 of Kwong's works inspired by his travels.

■ National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), 49 Nanhai Rd, Taipei City (台北市南海路49號). Open daily from 10am to 6pm. Closed on Mondays. Tel: (02) 2361-0270

■ Until Saturday

Taiwanese painter Lin Hong-yi's (林弘毅) solo exhibition features landscape, nude, portrait and still life paintings. The artist follows the realist tradition in depicting everyday subjects.

■ Taipei Cultural Center (台北市社教館) 81, 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號B1). Open daily from 9am to 5pm. Closed on Mondays. Tel: (02) 2577-5931

■ Until Oct. 1

Chinese sculptor and 2006 Zhengzhou International Sculpture Biennale gold-prize winner Ren Zhe (任哲) presents **The Flourishing Age** (盛世繁榮), a solo exhibit of bronze sculptures that depict warriors in heroic poses on horseback.

■ Ping Art Space (平藝術空間), 179, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段179號). Open Monday to Saturday from 1pm to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2738-3317

■ From Saturday until Oct. 12

Chinese artist and photographer Li Xiaoke (李小小) takes a nostalgic look at China in his solo exhibition of ink paintings **Souful Homeland of Ink-Wash** (水墨家園). Li's landscapes portray scenes of misty mountains and urban vistas of Asian architecture.

■ Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館), 505, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段505號)

■ Until Sunday