

EXHIBITIONS



Yeh Chu-sheng, *Environment Ecology* (2008). PHOTO COURTESY OF LEISURE ART CENTER

Yeh Chu-sheng (葉竹盛) laments the devastation wrought by Typhoon Morakot in **88 River Elegy (88河殤)**. The focal points are a large-scale installation fashioned from driftwood left behind after the typhoon, as well as Yeh's characteristic sea-and-river-themed sketches and two-dimensional mixed-media works. The sketches in this series serve as a record of the artist's creative process, giving viewers a closer view into the full context in which these works have emerged.

■ National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts in Taichung (國立台灣美術館), 2, Wucyuan W Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市五權西路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm. Tel: (04) 2372-3552

■ Until Dec. 27

Chinese artist Cai Guoqiang (蔡國強) has taken over the front lobby of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum for his exhibit **Hanging Out in the Museum (泡美術館)**. The 35 works on display are drawn from international museums and private collections and include three new works created for this show. A series of activities and programs complements the works on display. The exhibition highlights the artist's background and development, his creative process and his objective of making art more accessible to the general public.

■ Taipei Fine Arts Museum (台北市立美術館), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm, closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656. Admission: NTS250

■ Until Feb. 21

Wang Ya-hui (王雅慧) chronicles her real-life experience of living in Taipei in **Rainbow and Bow (彩虹與弓)**. Collage-like fragments of rainbows, buildings and imaginary figures each serve as pieces of a puzzle onto which viewers can impose their own narrative structure.

■ Galerie Grand Siecle (新苑藝術), 17, Alley 51, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段12巷51弄17號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 1pm to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2578-5630

■ Until Dec. 27

Internationally renowned video artist Chen Chieh-jen (陳界仁) returns to Main Trend Gallery with **Empire's Borders I & Military Court and Prison (帝國邊界 I & 軍法局)**, two videos that explore his recent experiences with borders and history. **Empire's Borders I**, the first of two videos, draws on the artist's own difficulties of obtaining a visa to travel to the US. The second video, **Military Court and Prison**, uses the repurposing of a prison as a human right's park as a microcosm for Taiwan's modern history.

■ Main Trend Gallery (大趨勢畫廊), 209-1, Chengde Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市承德路三段209-1號). Open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2587-3412

■ Until Jan. 23

Utmost Esthetics: Styles From Taiwan Artists (台灣藝術家的風格) is a group exhibition of sculpture and painting by five established artists: Chu Wei-bor (朱為白), Lee Tsai-chien (李再鈞), Chen Ching-jung (陳景容), Chen Yin-huei (陳銀輝) and Liu Kuo Sung (劉國松). The show seeks to provide viewers with a glimpse of the artists' works and demonstrate how the country's rich landscape and urban spaces have influenced their creativity.

■ Angel Art Gallery (天使美術館), 41, Xinyi Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市信義路三段41號). Open daily from 10am to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2701-5229

■ Until Nov. 29

You never forget your first Ed Kienholz. Mine was *The Beanery* in Amsterdam, a lifesize tableau of three-dimensional figures hunched over their drinks in the yellow fuge of an American dive, sweaty, listless, plausibly real right down to the beer gut and drool, except that each face was a stopped clock reading 10 past 10: large as life, but vastly more melodramatic.

In the 1960s, when the work was made, you could enter the swing doors of this little hell and pass among the lifelike effigies. People say the detail was stupendous. Even when I saw it, decades later with conservators' cordons now in place, a damp warmth exuded from within and the stench of beer was so powerful it felt as if real drink had been spilled. The opaque glint on the fried eggs indicated how long they had been waiting for trade.

True to life? Indubitably so, but no matter how realistic *The Beanery* seemed, you were clearly not to think it was all about ingenious facsimile. Unlike his fellow American Duane Hanson, Kienholz was by no means a hyper-realist sculptor. And unlike Hanson, he did not express complex feelings about the inner lives of his blue-collar figures.

Each *Beanery* face told you time was slipping away by the glass. The whole scene appeared to be oozing sticky fluids, as if the drinkers were picking themselves. Even if you didn't notice the horrifying Vietnam headlines on the newspaper hoarding outside, it was obvious that shock, horror, disgust, a sense of urgency — perhaps even shame — were the prescribed response. This was the melodrama of a militant moralist.

And so it is at the National Gallery, where Kienholz's immense street scene of 1980s Amsterdam by night has been installed among the old master art, a juxtaposition that could hardly be more advantageous to his enterprise. For even those familiar with his work will surely get a jolt passing from the careful conditions of the main galleries, with their still, silent paintings, to the garish, noisy, crudely, lifesize shocker of a peep-show that is *The Hoerengracht*.

The title is a blunt pun, turning the real Herengracht (gentlemen's canal) into a whores' canal with the addition of a single letter. But the street conjured here is really an entire district compressed into a couple of corners and some alleys. All is highly realistic to the point of actual reality — real dead leaves, silted litter, gum stains on the pavements, real china dogs on window sills and bicycles chained to racks. And in the pitch dark, red lights pullulate around



The Hoerengracht ("Whore's Canal"), an installation by Ed Kienholz and Nancy Reddin Kienholz, is currently being exhibited at the National Gallery in London. The museum, one of the world's great public collections, has put on display a seedy reconstruction of Amsterdam's red light district in a rare foray into contemporary installation art.

PHOTOS: REUTERS

London's National Gallery opens right-light district

The Kienholzes' tableau tries to presents prostitutes as victims, but it comes across as little more than a fairground sideshow

BY LAURA CUMMING
THE OBSERVER, LONDON



The basketball champ takes a shot at art as curator of exhibition on the theme of scale in the contemporary art world

Amy Densford, left, stands next to *Untitled (Big Man)* by Ron Mueck. The sculpture is part of *Size DOES Matter*, a group show curated by NBA star Shaquille O'Neal.

PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Size matters for Shaq

BY LINDSAY POLLOCK
BLOOMBERG

Shaquille O'Neal, the 216cm all-star center with the National Basketball Association's Cleveland Cavaliers, has discovered that art is no slam dunk.

Moonlighting for the first time as a curator, O'Neal is overseeing *Size DOES Matter*, an exhibition on the theme of scale in contemporary art coming in February to New York's nonprofit Flag Art Foundation.

"New York is the art capital, so I'm pleased to be starting at the top," O'Neal, 37, said in an e-mail interview. "It was a little harder than I thought it would be. When you think about what each of the artists put into their work, what they are expressing and want to share with the world, you feel bad about having to narrow it down." He said he chose pieces he "can relate to."

The show is expected to include 39 artists and 52 artworks, five of which are special commissions. Flag was founded by art collector Glenn Fuhrman, co-managing partner of MSD Capital LP, which serves as money manager for Michael S. Dell, chairman and chief executive officer of Dell Inc, the world's third-biggest seller of personal computers.

The exhibition includes artworks belonging to Fuhrman, as well as loans from other private collectors and from museums. Ron Mueck's eerie, life-like sculpture of a hairless giant slumped in a corner, *Untitled (Big Man)*, will be on loan from Washington's Hirshhorn Museum. Other artists include the irreverent sculptor Maurizio Cattelan, large-format photographer Andreas Gursky and Paul Pfeiffer, known for his videos using footage of sporting events.

"We hope to attract a serious art-world audience, plus others who might not have considered art accessible," said Flag's director, Stephanie Roach.

Roach went to Cleveland to see Shaq and the Cavaliers play and met with him after

the game. They reviewed potential artworks.

"Shaq went through images, and anything he had a visceral response to, anything he was really into, he put multiple checks" beside on his list, Roach said. O'Neal will be coming to New York to help install the show, according to Roach.

The writer James Frey, a collector of art by Damien Hirst and others, and a partner in a contemporary New York gallery, is writing an essay for the exhibition catalog.

"This won't be like another nice show at MoMA or the Met," Frey said, referring to New York's Museum of Modern Art. "Getting Shaq, one of the largest people in the world, to curate a show about scale is really fun. He does a lot of things that are unconventional for a guy of his stature."

Shaq has appeared in films and on television shows, has recorded rap CDs and has served as a reserve officer on the Miami Beach police force.

Painter Richard Phillips is among those commissioned to make a special piece for the exhibition. He is working on a 3m-tall portrait of a figure that he describes as "seen from below," said Phillips. "It's an upshot."

Phillips, who stands 196cm, says his art is influenced by his height. "For me as an artist, this show addresses a part of my work I feel really strongly about," he said. The show tackles "scale and its relationship to physical dominance and power. This exhibition will put this on the table."

Flag regularly invites guest curators to organize shows, such as the painter Chuck Close and Sotheby's Chairman Lisa Dennison. O'Neal is the first person not from the art world to be tapped for the job.

And does curating have anything in common with basketball?

"As a curator, I have a responsibility to the artists, who are my 'teammates,'" O'Neal said. "We all have to make each other look good — no different than what I do on the court."