

## EXHIBITIONS

Vincent Van Gogh, *Self Portrait*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

The much anticipated **Van Gogh: The Flaming Soul** opened last week to long lines at the National Museum of History. Dubbed the most expensively insured exhibit ever in Taiwan (NT\$30 billion) and the first exhibit of the Dutch artist's work in the Mandarin-speaking world, it displays 77 sketches and 21 oil paintings that span the artist's short 10-year career.

The more famous works include **Self Portrait, Cypress Against a Starry Sky** and **Vase With Flower and Thistles**, the latter painted a month before the post-impressionist master took his life.

■ 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 Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2361-0270.  
■ Until March 28  
■ Admission is NT\$300

Ju Ming (朱銘) captures the simplicity of life in his latest series of sculptures **Living World Series, Stone (人間系列)**. In this series, Ju Ming dispenses with the vibrant colors that have become an important metaphor in his work for the multiplicity and joy of life in favor of black and white, and the brown of the exposed stone. The sculptures of parents and children, or people in contemplative poses take advantage of the natural curves of the stone and recall Ju Ming's earlier works of calm meditation.

■ Kalos Gallery (真善美藝術畫廊), 41, Zhicheng Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市至誠路二段41號). Open Mondays to Saturdays from 10am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2836-3452  
■ Until Jan. 8

Fish, tigers and dogs are among the totemic animals sculptor Hong Yi (洪易) fashions from steel and paint in a multitude of vibrant colors in **Deity, Tiger, Dog (神、虎、狗)**. The solo exhibit also features some of Hong Yi's acrylic paintings with the same animals roaming through unadorned mountain landscapes or framed inside geometrical shapes.

■ Impressions Art Gallery (印象畫廊), 40, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段40號). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 10:30am to 7pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2705-9966  
■ Until Jan. 4

**Sky (我的天)** is a solo exhibit of black-and-white photographs by Chen Ko-hua (陳克華). Chen's work examines the relationship between the minuteness of the land and the vastness of the sky.

■ Butchart Contemporary Art Space, 155, Linong St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市立農街二段155號). Open daily from 11am to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2820-9920  
■ Until Jan. 12

Lin Po-yu (林博裕) creates semi-human, semi-beast ceramic sculptures in **Ghosts Wandering at Night (百鬼夜行)**. The solo show is Lin's attempt to sift through his complex feelings about the natural world. The creatures, bereft of clothing, are placed in a natural environment that resembles a surrealist Garden of Eden.

■ Yingge Ceramics Museum (鶯歌陶瓷博物館), 200 Wenhua Rd, Yingge Township, Taipei County (台北縣鶯歌鎮文化路200號). Open daily from 9:30am to 5pm, closes at 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Tel: (02) 8677-2727  
■ Until Feb. 7

Although never a clearly defined movement in the West, monochrome art received considerable attention in South Korea through a generation of contemporary artists, some of whom are shown in the touring exhibit **The Color of Nature: Monochrome Art in Korea**. The four artists

— Lim Tschang Yeul, Lee Seung Jio, Lee Kang So and Park Seo Bo — infuse their paintings with Asian philosophical ideas for works that celebrate color, surface and texture.  
■ Soka Art Center (索卡藝術中心), 2F, 57, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段57號2樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2570-0390  
■ Until Jan. 31

Su Meng-hung, *No Poem Before It*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HONG GAH MUSEUM

## The old wish, the young dream

The group exhibition **Non-Everyday: Hidden Force Fields**, currently on display at Hong Gah Museum (鳳甲美術館), may at first glance seem a bit carelessly thrown together: The opening scene of Hou Hsiao-hsien's (侯孝賢) *Cafe Lumiere* is played in loop near the entrance, next to which stands an installation piece composed of animal specimens and elementary school desks and chairs by contemporary artist Su Meng-hung's (蘇孟鴻).

But a closer reading of the gallery literature shows that this is not the case. Curator Wang Pin-hua (王品華) has selected works by three artists born before 1960 and four artists in their 30s in an ambitious attempt to examine how Asian artists deal with history and social issues in an increasingly globalized world, and how different generations approach these issues in different ways.

"Global exchanges have increased significantly since 2000. In the contemporary art scene, the influence of this can be seen in the emergence of international art shows such as biennials, where artists are prompted to find what's unique in their own cultures when engaging in a dialogue with others. And history is always the main thing that's unique about each locale," said Wang Pin-hua.

In Wang Pin-hua's curatorial context, Hou's *Cafe Lumiere*, which will be shown in its entirety at the museum on Sunday, can be seen an insightful look at the complicated relationship between Taiwan and Japan filmed in a realist style with a stationary camera, long takes and natural performances.

Chen Chieh-jen's (陳界仁) 2006 film *The Route* (路徑圖), commissioned by the Liverpool Biennial, was inspired by the *Neptune Jade* incident in 1997, when picket lines were set up at ports in Canada, Japan and the US to protest against the cargo ship *Neptune Jade* in solidarity with more than 500

Chen Chieh-jen, *The Route*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HONG GAH MUSEUM

*Non-Everyday: Hidden Force Fields is an ambitious attempt to examine how Asian artists from two different generations deal with history and social issues*

BY HO YI  
STAFF REPORTER

Wang Ya-hui, *Moon Rabbit*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HONG GAH MUSEUM

### EXHIBITION NOTES:

**WHAT:** Non-Everyday: Hidden Force Fields (非日常：隱力場)

**WHERE:** Hong Gah Museum (鳳甲美術館), 11F, 166 Daye Rd, Taipei City (台北市大業路166號11樓)

**WHEN:** Through Jan. 10. The museum is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10:30am to 5:30pm. Tel: (02) 2894-2272

**ON THE NET:** www.hong-gah.org.tw

longshoremen in Liverpool who had recently been fired. The ship and its cargo were eventually auctioned off at Kaohsiung harbor, where local dockworkers were unaware of the strikes. In *The Route* Chen creates an alternative reality, one in which Kaohsiung longshoremen participated in the 1997 strike.

Wong Hoy Cheong's *Oh Sulukule, Darting Sulukule*, made for the 2007 Istanbul Biennial, was a joint project between the Malaysia-born, US-educated artist and the residents of Sulukule, a settlement for Roma people in Turkey. Interviews with cheerful children who talk about their lives and homes give clues to the past and present state of one of Europe's most oppressed minority groups.

The three artists listed above, who were all born before the 1960s, tend tackle historical and social issues head on and in a critical manner. The four 30-something artists, on the other hand, turn to personal, everyday-life experiences to make lighthearted, playful and sometimes dream-like works.

Wang Ya-hui's (王雅慧) *Moon Rabbit* is a video that shows what appears to be a nighttime scene of a forest teeming with nocturnal insects. Two white balloons painted with images of an owl and a rabbit float between the trees. Then the camera pans to reveal that what previously looked like a lush forest is in fact a tiny field next to a busy highway. Shot in Linkou (林口), Taipei County, the work is an imaginative contemplation on the rapid urbanization seen in many towns and villages in Taiwan.

More desolate in tone, Hou I-ting's (侯怡亭) digitally manipulated video work *Agency of Reality-Desert* shows the artist standing on a dry riverbed in front of a mirror. In the background stands the Siluo Bridge (西螺大橋), a thoroughfare for north-south traffic in Yunlin County. The image in the mirror is a digital tableau comprised of a mosque, the tower of Babel, a stone dragon from a Taoist temple and the artist's reflection. The juxtaposition of the natural and the man-made creates a surrealistic landscape in which the human/artist appears as nothing more than a medium for channeling hybrid icons and images.

Su Meng-hung found inspiration for his installation piece *No Poem Before It* in childhood memories of cleaning up a science classroom filled with animal specimens. The eerie image of dead animals in an old classroom built during the Japanese colonial posits Taiwanese history as something distant and unfamiliar.

The contribution of Yuki Okumura, the only Japanese artist in the group, is more lighthearted. His *A Day in the Life of Spitting, the Way I Kill 'Em* video series shows the artist collecting his saliva in a plastic bottle at various art festivals around the world and then cooking the spit when he arrives at his next destination. The artist's mouth is, to use Wang Pin-hua's words, a portal that connects the inner and outer worlds as his body wanders across the globe.

Hou I-ting, *Agency of Reality-Desert*.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF HONG GAH MUSEUM

