

## EXHIBITIONS



**Tsong Pu, *Flowers Within Concrete* (2010).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF IT PARK

**Every Chalice is a Dwelling Place (每一個花藝都是棲息之所)** is part group exhibition, part promotional event for the 13th Taipei Culture Award and part opportunity for each of the 10 participating Taiwanese artists to interpret the title's theme of finding a "spiritual space that transcends religion and culture." Architect Chi Ti-nan (季鐵男) replicated IT Park's second and fourth floor gallery space on Taipei City Hall's first floor courtyard to showcase the painting, videos and installation by artists including Michael Lin (林明弘), Yao Jui-chung (姚瑞中) and Tsong Pu (莊普).

■ Taipei City Hall (台北市政府), 1 Shifu Rd, Taipei City (台北市市府路1號). For more information call IT Park: (02) 2507 7243

■ Until April 28



**Lin Yi-shu, *Dizzy Theater* (2009).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AKI GALLERY COURTESY OF IT PARK

**YES — Young Emerging Stars**, a group exhibit, presents the work of emerging contemporary Taiwanese artists working in painting, ceramics, photography and installation. Some of the more recognizable names include Lin Yi-shu (林羿束), Tsai Zung-lung (蔡宗隆) and Chen Wei-tu (陳威圖).

■ Aki Gallery (也趣), 141 Minzu W Rd, Taipei City (台北市民族西路141號). Tel: (02) 2599-1171. Open Tuesdays to Sundays from noon to 6:30pm

■ Until May 2

Taiwanese multimedia artist Jenny Chen (陳張莉) continues her transformation of Chinese landscape painting into sculpture and video in **Time Flow (時間流)**. In this exhibit, the artist creates a space for dialogue among graphic art, steel sculpture and installation that guides the viewer to reflect on the natural environment.

■ Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts (關渡美術館), Taipei National University of the Arts (台北藝術大學), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Taipei City (台北市學園路1號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Tel: (02) 2896-1000 X2432

■ Until May 16

**2010 Grand Exhibition of Taipei County Artists** marks the 11th year since the founding of this rotating exhibit of artists from throughout Taiwan and throws up the theme of place in relation to artistic creation. The group show includes 10 categories: ink and water drawings, calligraphy, seal cutting, block print, ceramics, oil painting, water color painting, photography, sculpture and composite material.

■ 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 Sunday

**The Sound of Silence (大音希聲)** is a retrospective exhibit of cast iron and copperplate sculpture by Taiwanese artist Lin Liang-tsai (林良材). Lin's choice of materials is important because "cast iron is like people; it changes over time." His sculptures of the human form examine the internal and external aspects of existence.

■ 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. Admission: NT\$30

■ Until May 9



▶ Twenty-six-year-old Chen Wei-tu (陳威圖) studies at Tainan National University of the Arts. He projects an image onto a canvas, purposely out of focus, and uses an airbrush to create a haunting effect that one gallerygoer said made him dizzy. The same person asked Chen a question about the work, right, based on *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, that was on all of our minds: "Doesn't that horse's neck look like a big penis?" Chen wasn't surprised. "I hear that a lot," he said. "Pure coincidence."



**Chen Wei-tu, *Napoleon* (2010).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AKI GALLERY

▶ Soft-spoken Tsai Yi-ting (蔡依庭) graduated from Central St Martin's College of Art and Design in London in 2006. She says her pastel and acrylic paintings mostly depict her and her husband "just doing normal things around the house." When the 29-year-old said the painting, right, was of her husband, it seemed only natural to ask "Is your husband really so ugly?" "He's standing right behind you," Tsai said. So how does the husband feel about the unflattering images? "I'm used to it," he said.



**Tsai Yi-ting, *My Groom* (2009).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AKI GALLERY

▶ Wang Tzu-ting (王姿婷) finished her undergraduate studies at National Taipei University of the Arts last year and is trying to get into a master's program in England. The 23-year-old says she likes "to use pencil because it's an extension of how I draw in my notebook. That way I can feel at ease and be relaxed, like when I'm doing sketches. All the traces are left on the image, clear or wiped, and I want to show the process." Although she says she doesn't usually work from photographs, this one's based on a magazine picture of "some drunk guy laying in the street."



**Wang tzu-tin, *Safest Posture* (2009).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AKI GALLERY

**Left: Lee Cheng-dao, *Poker Girl* (2010). Below: Lee Cheng-dao, *Red Queen* (2010).**

PHOTO COURTESY OF AKI GALLERY

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# The bare facts

*Ahead of a group exhibition that includes his work, painter Lee Cheng-dao told the 'Taipei Times' about the pros and cons of painting 'fatties' and how he convinces people to take off their clothes*

BY **BLAKE CARTER**  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

**Lee** Cheng-dao (李承道) paints in his underwear.

Not "in" as in "inside" his underwear, but while wearing only underwear.

In his underwear, Lee paints pictures of people wearing only underwear. More specifically, he spends most of his days in a Shilin District studio, half-naked, painting from photographs of friends and acquaintances who are also half-naked.

Taipei's Aki Gallery (也趣畫廊) hosts Lee and 10 other young artists at YES: Young Emerging Stars, an exhibition that opened Saturday with a live jazz band and a mini-fridge of Miller High Life. Only one of the featured artists is over 30.

Lee, who had a solo exhibition at Aki last July, fit right in. The 27-year-old received a master's from National Taiwan Normal University in February and plans to start his military service this summer.

Although his father is a well-known

painter (Lee Chien-yi, 李健儀), Lee describes himself as not showing an aptitude for art while young. He still managed to test into National Taiwan University of Arts, where he tried "a little of everything" before settling on oil painting after his junior year.

Many of Lee's paintings combined a fresh interest in art history and the popularity of *taike* (台客, a style that celebrates things stereotypically Taiwanese) at the time.

"I wanted to paint [Taiwan's] subculture," he said in his studio earlier this month. "Betel nut beauties, *taike*, rockers, gays."

He posed his subjects like figures in classical court paintings, took photographs, and painted them without flourish. Later he began grouping his subjects, creating elaborate scenes based on compositions he appropriated from old masters like Caravaggio.

"I just invite a bunch of friends over to hang out and then take some pictures. If I want them to change something or do something different, I just ask."

Like stripping?

"Men are mostly OK with it," Lee said, "but women can be difficult. They wonder if you're trying to trick them.

"Why do you want me to take off my clothes? What are you trying to get me to do?"

Young artists learn quickly to surmount such obstacles.

"I invite them to see my paintings so they can tell I'm a serious artist ... 'That's pretty good,' they say. I know some of them already ... They think it might be fun, so they agree to take their clothes off."

Eventually though, Lee ran into a problem, which brought him to his latest series.

"I painted so many people that just looked normal, nothing special. Because they didn't have anything particular about them, I had to put them in groups, add things, put in a lot of different objects."

Pointing to a newer painting of a man rippled with folds of fat, he says: "But look at this. There's much more drama."

Lee's three paintings at Aki all depict what he calls "fatties" (胖子). He still tosses in the occasional gimmick — a

man in fishnet stockings and heels is posed like the model in British painter Lucian Freud's *Naked Man, Back View* and has a fast-food box on his head — but the fleshier body type allows Lee to concentrate more on the figure.

And "fatties" are no less willing than others to take off their clothes, Lee says.

"Maybe they're not used to someone telling them they have an interesting body, so when they hear it, they're happy."

Heavier models have their problems, though, as Lee notes when talking about a math teacher who used to weigh 150kg.

"He's on a diet," Lee says. "He's lost about 50kg."

Lee learned at an early age that posing naked was nothing to be ashamed about.

"When my dad was painting, he'd sometimes ask me to strip and pose with nude models he was working with. I was shy at the time, but you get over it."

As for himself painting in his skivvies, Lee has a practical explanation.

"I want to be relaxed when I paint ... And my mom kept scolding me for getting paint on my clothes," he says.

