



Off the beaten track

A new exhibit inside a model home takes art outside of the gallery — but to what purpose?

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER

Curator Sean Hu (胡朝聖) believes that art should be everywhere. A rice field, plaza and park are among the spaces where he's mounted exhibits in the past. With Urban Crack (城市隙縫), Hu continues this tradition of taking art outside gallery and museum by presenting the work of 10 artists working in digital photography, video and installation in what he dubs a "mobile gallery."

Urban Crack's venue is a formerly dilapidated building near Shuanglian MRT Station (雙連捷運站) that was renovated as a model home — one of those ostentatious structures that are erected for a few months to attract buyers of luxury apartments. It seems like an ideal space because it stands at the interstice between a city's past and future and sets the stage to ask questions about how these buildings fit into and alter the urban landscape. But Hu goes in a different direction

and examines the city from a more general perspective.

"Whenever I go to cities in different countries, I have this sense of déjà vu because under globalization they all look the same. But I'm also looking for the differences. And I'm looking for the differences in some crack — in a corner or a back street," he said.

The theme of difference, however, is somewhat undermined by the fact that these short-lived edifices could easily be judged as emblems of the very buildings that efface a city's individuality. Additionally, many see these structures as symbols of the profligacy of Taipei's consumer culture — topics that the exhibit addresses only indirectly. Julie Chou's (周麗芝) conceptual digital prints of high rises, for example, are statements about hubris and man's desire to build castles in the sky. *Inside Scenery* (屋內風景) by Chen I-chun (陳依純) examines our increasingly homogenized world



Top: Chen Wan-jen, *The Unconscious Voyage* (2008).
Above: Sheu Jer-yu, *Stall* (2002).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOT ARTS

by depicting an empty and sterile convenience store.

Wu Dar-kuen's (吳達坤) digital prints of street performers in Tokyo put a human face on the urban landscape, suggesting that people are what make a city unique. Isa Ho's (何孟娟) images of Paris and Taipei pick up on this theme by placing subjects in front of buildings that are in the process of renovation; when combined these are emblems of spiritual and urban renewal.

At one point, I found myself admiring a large-scale image of a tree-lined street — that is, until a gallery employee came over and pointed out that it wasn't part of the exhibit. Nor were the other photographs showing past buildings that JUT Living Development (忠泰生活開發股份有限公司) — the owner of the property as well as Mot Arts, the gallery holding the exhibit — had renovated or constructed.

A further look around revealed other bizarre similarities: In terms of media — installation, video, digital images — the area reserved for selling apartments mirrors that for selling art. Or is it the other way around? There is no clear boundary separating the two.

And this is what makes the exhibit somewhat problematic. Although the

art offers interesting insights into the city, it seems thematically disengaged from the space it is located in — a space that is unlikely to fulfill its stated purpose of enticing the public at large into its confines for a viewing, unless, of course, they have NT\$800,000 per pin (1 pin = 3.3m²) to spend on real estate.

Although JUT Living Development, along with related ventures such as JUT Foundation for Arts and Architecture (忠泰建築文化藝術基金會), which donated space to the recently opened Taiwan Photography Museum (台灣攝影博物館), deserves credit for supporting the arts, it is hard to escape the thought that Urban Crack is part of a cross-merchandizing gimmick meant to entice potential property owners into buying art.

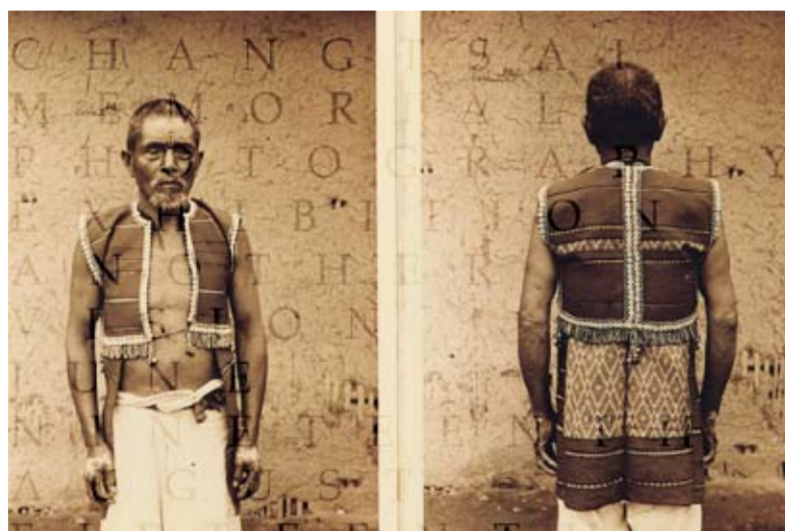
EXHIBITION NOTES

WHAT: Urban Crack (城市隙縫)
WHERE: Mobile Gallery, 5 Jinxi St, Taipei City (台北市錦西街5號)
WHEN: Until Aug. 15
ADMISSION: Free

What you see is what you get

Another Vision presents a brief glimpse of the work of Chang Tsai, a pioneer in the art of realist photography in Taiwan

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER



Although Another Vision has several flaws, it provides an interesting snapshot of one of Taiwan's pioneering photographers.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TAIWAN PHOTO MUSEUM

The introductory blurb for Taiwan Photo Museum's (台灣攝影博物館) exhibit on Chang Tsai (張才) says that the development of photography in Taiwan can be traced through the works of this iconic photographer.

Though the show aims to "offer a different perspective on the methods used by a previous generation of photographers," the exhibit of photographs on view here is long on content and short on context.

Divided into three sections — portraits of Aborigines, images of bar hostesses, and Tsai's rarely seen series on egrets — the 3-inch by 4-inch black-and-white images, many of which are in various states of deterioration, are set in frames that contain between three to 12 photos each.

But nowhere is the reason why Chang should be remembered today explained.

Chang, along with Deng Nan-guang (鄧南光) and Lee Ming-tiao (李鳴堯) — the trio was known as the Three Musketeers (俠門三劍客) — pioneered realist photography in Taiwan after World War II.

Another Vision (另一個角度), located on the museum's first floor, focuses on Chang's early career, which began in the mid 1930s, and briefly surveys his style of portraiture, which caught on in the 1950s.

Born in 1916 to a family of intellectuals in Taipei's Dadaocheng (大稻埕) area, Chang spent his youth touring and

performing with his elder brother, who founded the Drama Research Society (演劇研究會). That experience furnished the young Chang with firsthand knowledge of the lives of ordinary members of the public, who would later become the primary subjects in his photography.

Previous Chang exhibits emphasized his expeditions with anthropologists to remote Aboriginal villages in the 1940s and 1950s to document, for example, the Atayal (泰雅) or Tao (達悟, also known as the Yami 雅美) tribes, because his images portray indigenous rituals and traditions with sensitivity.

The photos on display here are mostly portraits. One shows an Aboriginal man in tribal dress, his strong and proud face half in shadow. Another shows a man smoking a pipe, his furled brow accentuating his intelligent eyes.

Another Vision includes examples of Chang's portraits of young women. Known today as *waipai* (外拍, or outside photography), this style of photography probably found its origins in early 20th-century Japan, where photography clubs would organize outings to snap pictures of beautiful young women at picturesque locations.

The females seen in Chang's photographs were typically bar hostesses hired for the day. Sunning themselves in bathing suits or

posing in front of a seascape, these women wore fashion trends popular at that time.

Whereas the first two sections are limited to portraits, the third, Chang's series on egrets, shows these majestic creatures in flight or perched on a thin branch, and charts their life cycle.

The Taiwan Photography Museum was instituted to raise the profile and prestige of photography as an art form worthy of aesthetic appreciation.

It is disappointing that the museum doesn't provide captions indicating when or where the photos were taken, or, for a show that purports to provide insight into the early history of Taiwanese photography through Chang's work, include information on the relevance of his oeuvre to the development of the art form.

EXHIBITION NOTES

WHAT: Another Vision (另一個角度)
WHERE: Preparatory Office of the Taiwan Photo Museum (台灣攝影博物館預備館), 17, Ln 91, Zhonghua Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市中華路一段91巷17號). Open daily from 11am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2388-9693
WHEN: Until Aug. 15
ADMISSION: Free

EXHIBITIONS

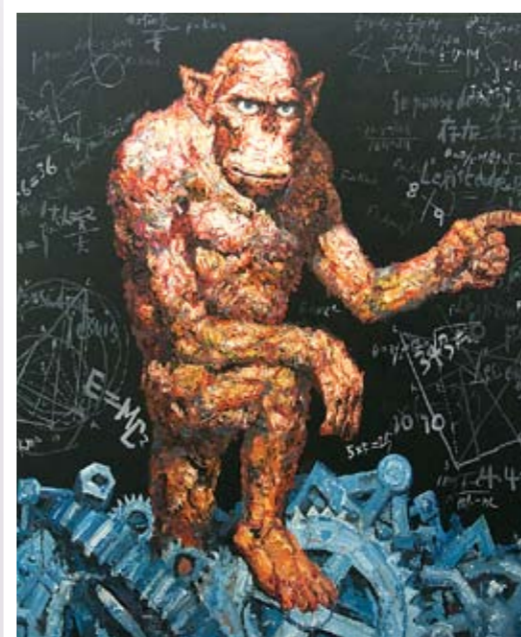


An undated and untitled work by Hung Tung.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GALLERY 100

There has been a recent surge of interest in the life and work of self-taught artist Hung Tung (洪通). Following on the heels of a May retrospective mounted by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Taoyuan County Government (桃園縣政府文化局) comes *Celestial Travel — A Transcendental Encounter of Hung Tung and Ye Yi-li* (神·遊) at Gallery 100. The show brings together Hung Tung's mystical folk art paintings with work by emerging artist Ye Yi-li (葉怡利) as a kind of a tribute to the former and a spotlight on his influence on the latter.

■ Gallery 100 (百藝畫廊), 6, Ln 30, Changan E Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市長安東路一段30巷6號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2536-2120
■ Opening reception on Saturday at 3pm. Until Aug. 29



Hua Qing, *Walking in Shambles* (2010). PHOTO COURTESY OF ASIA ART CENTER

Steeped in Western thought, the paintings of Chinese artist Hua Qing (華慶) juxtapose apes with scientific and mathematical symbols in his solo show *I Think, Therefore I Am* (我思故我在). Inspired by Descartes' famous Latin dictum, *cogito ergo sum*, Hua investigates through impasto works the relationship between human beings and other species while re-examining the

meaning of human civilization. Other works depict iconic monuments such as Stonehenge, placing these subjects in front of motifs culled from philosophy, literature, mathematics and art.

■ Asia Art Center (亞洲藝術中心) 177, Jianguo S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市建國南路二段177號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2754-1366
■ Opening reception on Saturday at 3pm. Until Aug. 15

Considered by many as a pioneer of modern art in China (along with Lin Fengmian (林風眠)), **Wu Dayu** (吳大羽) influenced renowned artists such as Zao Wou-ki (趙無極) and Chu De-chun (朱德群) at his art school in Hangzhou, which is now the China Academy of Fine Arts. The paintings in this show reveal Wu's passion for strong coloring reminiscent of Fauvism and the wild yet controlled brush strokes of expressionism.

■ Lin & Lin Gallery (大未來林舍畫廊), 13, Ln 252, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段252巷13號). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 10am to 7pm, Saturdays and Sundays from 11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2721-8488
■ Until Aug. 10

Time Machine and Anywhere Door (時光機與任意門) brings together artists who in various ways transform reality through meditative, surreal and occasionally absurdist installations. The inter-generational group of five artists from the UK and Taiwan use moving images to transport viewers to another place or time — real or imagined, past or future — while intentionally creating bridges between cultural motifs, histories and fictions.

■ IT Park Gallery (伊通公園), 2F, 41 Yitong St, Taipei City (台北市伊通街41號2樓). Open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 1pm to 10pm. Tel: (02) 2507-7243
■ Until Aug. 14

A Journey Through the Vineyards of Bordeaux (波爾多尋訪) is a solo exhibit of 10 impressionist-inspired landscape paintings by respected artist Yu So-ying (王守英).

■ Cathay United Art Center (國泰世華藝術中心), 7F, 236 Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路236號7樓). Open Mondays to Saturdays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2717-0988
■ Until Aug. 7

Photographer **Chou Yu-cheng** (周育正) shifts gears with a solo exhibit of large-scale paintings that depict interior spaces using a warped sense of perspective.

■ La Chambre Art Gallery (小室藝廊), 31, Ln 52, Siwei Rd, Taipei City (台北市四維路52巷31號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from noon to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2700-3689
■ Until Aug. 7

Women and Girl (女子少女) is a group show by eight female artists that combines painting, photography, video and installation to examine women's roles in contemporary society and how they have changed over the past few decades.

■ VT Art Salon (非常廊藝文空間), B1, 47 Yitong St, Zhongshan Dist, Taipei City (台北市中山區伊通街47號地下一樓). Open Tuesdays to Thursdays from 2pm to 11pm and Fridays and Saturdays from 2pm to 1am. Tel: (02) 2516-1060
■ Until Aug. 14