

EXHIBITIONS



Chou Chu-wang,
Look 3 (2010).

PHOTO COURTESY OF ART TAIPEI

Art Taipei 2010 starts on Aug. 20, and if the number of exhibitors is anything to go by, it is set to be a big event. Now in its 17th year, the art fair is one of Asia's largest and provides a unique platform to view the latest in contemporary art from across the world, with an emphasis on Southeast Asia. This year, 111 exhibitors — 33 more than last year — from Europe, North America and Asia will display paintings, sculptures, video, photography and installations at the Taipei World Trade Center. The fair is complemented by a series of lectures by some of the world's most renowned art experts as well as special exhibitions such as Made in Taiwan, which presents the works of younger artists, and Affordable Art Project, an ideal venue for the first-time art investor. This year also sees the addition of Art Taipei Photo, which focuses on contemporary, conceptual and fashion photography.

■ Taipei World Trade Center (台北世貿中心), Area A and Area D. Opening hours are 11am to 7pm from Aug. 20 to Aug. 23 and 11am to 6pm on Aug. 24. General admission is NT\$200
■ Begins Aug. 20. Comprehensive details of the event in English and Chinese can be found at www.art-taipei.com



Hong Gen-shen, *Standing Straight* (2009).

PHOTO COURTESY OF LA CHAMBRE ART GALLERY

Southern Oscillation (南方震盪) brings together seven contemporary artists from Taiwan and China working in sculpture, oil painting and ink painting, covering different styles such as abstraction, realism and traditional Chinese landscape painting.
■ La Chambre Art Gallery (小室藝廊), 31, Ln 52, Siwei Rd, Taipei City (台北市西維路52巷31號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from noon to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2700-3689
■ Until Sept. 5

A skinny old man riding a dragon named Mercedes Benz serves as the central protagonist in Hua Chien-chiang's (華建強) series of dreamy gouache paintings **Reality in Wonderland (人好仙夢)**. Though you might suspect Hua has been puffing on some top-quality bud, his canvases — rendered in a cartoonish style — of humans floating on clouds through different cities are actually allegories of daily life.
■ Aki Gallery (也趣), 141 Minzu W Rd, Taipei City (台北市民族西路141號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from noon to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2599-1171
■ Until Aug. 29

Japanese artist and illustrator **Yoshitaka Amano** returns to Taiwan with a solo exhibit of 60 drawings and paintings produced between 1985 and 2001.
■ Hong-Gah Museum (鳳甲美術館), 5F, 260, Daye Rd, Taipei City (台北市大業路260號5樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10:30am to 5:30pm. Tel: (02) 2894-2272. Admission: NT\$100
■ Until Sept. 19

Landscape to Mindscape of Floating World: Contemporary Art From Taiwan (浮世山水—台灣藝術心貌) presents works by Lee Ming-tse (李明則), Pan Xin-hua (潘信華), Yao Jui-chung (姚瑞中) and Hua Chien-chiang (華建強). The show examines how Taiwanese artists reflect on their cultural identity by reinterpreting key themes in art history, such as humanity, nature, life and society, and the internal and external conditions that affect the nation's psyche.
■ National Taiwan Museum of the Arts (國立台灣美術館), B1 Gallery, 2, Wucyuan W Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市五權西路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 9am to 5pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 9am to 6pm. Tel: (04) 2372-3552
■ Until Sept. 19

Chinese contemporary oil painter Zhong Jianqiu (鍾劍秋) depicts Taiwan's landscapes and seascapes in **Vitality — Depiction of Taiwan (遇見陽光 離離台灣)**.
■ 5000 Years Fine Art Gallery (五千年藝術空間), 295 Cingnian 1st Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市青年一路295號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10:30am to 9pm. Tel: (07) 334-6848
■ Until Aug. 31

Fun Year Art Gallery (凡亞藝術空間) is currently holding a retrospective exhibit to celebrate the 80th birthday of celebrated painter **Chen Yin-huei (陳銀輝)**. The exhibit surveys Chen's entire career, from representational works based on direct observation to more conceptual works following the modernist experiments of surrealism, expressionism and fauvism.
■ Fun Year Art Gallery (凡亞藝術空間), B1, 16, Ln 301, Henan Rd Sec 2, Taichung City (台中市河南路二段301巷16號B1). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 2pm to 6pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30am to 6pm. Tel: (04) 2703-2424
■ Until Aug. 29



The monster known as growing up

Tseng Yu-chin's latest exhibit continues his exploration of childhood — only this time with a darker and more sardonic quality

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER

Here's a teaser: A stranger sends you an e-mail telling you he wants to take pictures of your children as a part of an art project. When he shows up at your door, he informs you that he wants to photograph your children in their bedrooms, under their beds or in their closets. Would you invite him in?

Tseng Yu-chin (曾御欽) assumed that parents would answer in the affirmative. The 33-year-old artist had just arrived in New York for a six-month residency at Location One, a non-profit gallery and residency space similar to the Taipei Artist Village.

"I was thinking that my project would be finished in a month or two," he said.

Boy, did he get that one wrong. "Some people shot me down when they saw me. Others just slammed the door in my face," he said.

Not really the kind of experiences one writes home about. Yet in an age in which child pornography and abductions are constantly making headlines, it is hardly surprising that New Yorkers were wary of letting Tseng into their homes, even though he invited parents to supervise the photo shoots.

(Interestingly enough, statistics from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services show that cases of missing children have decreased significantly over the past decade.)

These and other misunderstandings have changed Tseng and his art. *Hide and Seek*, a must-see exhibit of six light-box installations currently displayed at the Nou Gallery (新畫廊), continues his exploration of childhood, though with a

more sardonic tone than his earlier work.

Tseng's work has always tiptoed along that thin line separating what is taboo and what is acceptable. His viewers' reactions to his work illustrate just how thin that line can be. Take his 2005 *It's Not So Bad* for example. It shows two young boys dressed only in white shorts frolicking behind a bush. Many interpreted the slide projection as a portrayal of forbidden love.

Or his series of videos *Who is Listening*. One video depicts a young boy clad only in white underpants climbing over, kissing and burrowing his head into the crotch of a woman (presumably his mother), while phrases such as "you smell so good," "you can't kick me or else I'll bleed" and "kiss my boobies" flash across the bottom of the screen. Is the video a playful depiction of family bliss or the early stirrings of an Oedipal complex?

Another video in the same series focuses on the innocent faces of children. Suddenly, a stream of yogurt is shot on to their faces. In separate frames, each child is shown reacting with surprise and often laughter. Is this a celebration of a novel experience or the dark fantasy of some sexual predator? (The videos can be found on YouTube). "When I showed it in college, the professor and my classmates [asked]: Do you love children?" Tseng said. "Of course I said no. I [use] children because they are pure... White is a symbol of that purity. This question has been haunting me for 10 years."

Clearly, the reaction of his peers and

teachers has left a sour taste in Tseng's mouth. And so the color white, Tseng's emblem for youthful purity has, in this particular series, turned to black.

Hide and Seek emerged from more immediate experiences in New York. While riding the subway on his first day there, he accidentally bumped into a man standing beside him. "Fuck," the man bellowed menacingly.

"I just wanted to hide. I didn't want to leave my apartment," Tseng said. Upon further reflection, he realized he could portray his own anguish through the imaginary world of children. Although his contact at Location One strongly advised him against attempting the project, he persevered and eventually found parents willing to go along with it.

The images are arranged in broken triptychs, which are affixed to the front of wooden light boxes stacked on the gallery floor. Though fragmented, the photos are linked by a clear narrative thread: The first frame captures the bedroom, the focal point being a boy tucked away in a closet or a girl hiding under a bed. The second photo is a close-up of the child in his or her hiding place. The third is taken from the child's perspective, effectively turning the children into complicit actors in an unfolding drama that the viewer must interpret.

Rendered in saturated colors and "repainted" in black, the pieces provide a sense of dread, as though the children are hiding from an unseen bogeyman — an echo, perhaps, of the day Tseng escaped from the threatening man on the subway.

As with his previous work, these

EXHIBITION NOTES

WHAT: Hide and Seek

WHERE: Nou Gallery (新畫廊), 232, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段232號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 7pm, closed Mondays. Tel: (02) 2700-0239

WHEN: Until Aug. 29

images are considerably detailed. The messiness of a boy's room or a girl clutching a doll allude to the child's personality and by extension his or her family. All aspects of the visual experience are manipulated, both through the angles of the shots and the arrangements of the lighting, so that everything is left open to interpretation.

During our interview, Tseng was guarded about his work — similar, perhaps, to the way parents have become more protective of their children. The public's reaction to Tseng's innocent portrayal of children shattered the sacred image he held of pre-adolescence.

"I think that when people grow up they become dirty. You can't see purer or simpler things. It is really depressing," he said.

From the top down: Tseng Yu-chin's *Fever Dark pfin* (2008), *Fever Dark rfin* (2008), *Fever Dark tfin* (2008) and *Fever Dark ufin* (2008).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TSENG YU-CHIN AND NOU GALLERY

