

## EXHIBITIONS

Shen Chao-liang, *Stage 1* (2008). PHOTO COURTESY OF ARI GALLERY

Celebrated for his 2005 photo series of whale sharks being slaughtered at a fishing port in Yilan County, Shen Chao-liang (沈昭良) takes his camera on to dry land with **Stage: Illusion Reality** (幻影現實), a series of photos of makeshift stages and the temple environments where they are placed. The images, snapped at rural and urban areas throughout central and southern Taiwan, are bereft of people and props, suggesting that the traditional forms of entertainment common to temple festivals are increasingly becoming a thing of the past.

■ Aki Gallery (也藝), 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

■ Opening reception on Saturday at 3pm. Until Oct. 2

Zhan Wang, *Artificial Rock No. 148* (2007). PHOTO COURTESY OF ESILITE GALLERY

Photography, installation, drawing and documentary videos are brought together in **Reflection** (反射), a solo exhibition on prolific and respected Chinese artist Zhan Wang (展望), which runs the gamut of the 48-year-old artist's career. Zhan, however, is mostly famous for his stainless steel sculptures that replicate rock formations, a number of which will be on display. The exhibition is complemented by a public exhibition of *Artificial Rock No. 59* (假山石#59), a towering work that is on display at Taipei 101, and *Artificial Rock No. 125* (假山石#125) outside the Xinyi Eselite Store (誠品信義店) in Taipei.

■ Eselite Gallery (誠品畫廊), 5F, 11 Songgao Rd, Taipei City (台北市松高路11號5F). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 8789-3388 X1588

■ Opening reception on Saturday at 3pm. Until Oct. 3

Bamboo Curtain Studio, a multi-functional art and performance space, is celebrating its 15th anniversary with a retrospective exhibition on the works of 15 artists who have lived or worked at the venue since its inception. The exhibit's title is **Aesthetics at the Edge: An Alternative Way for Creativity**. The artists include Tsong Pu (莊普), the "godfather of Taiwanese installation art," muralist Michael Lin (林明宏) and Kuo Wei-kuo (郭維國), creator of psychologically rich and haunting surrealist oil paintings. The selected artists were also chosen to illustrate the evolution of Taiwan's art scene over the past 15 years.

■ Bamboo Curtain Studio (竹簾工作室), 39, Ln 88, Zhongheng E Rd Sec 2, Tamsui Township, Taipei County (台北縣淡水鎮中正東路二段88巷39號). Tel: (02) 8809-3809

■ Opening reception on Sunday at 7pm. Until Oct. 10

**Hold Down: Interdisciplinary Interactive Performance** (Hold Down 互動跨領域演出)

brings together artists from Taiwan, Thailand, France and Spain in an interdisciplinary work of conceptual performance art. The exhibit/performance integrates interactive performance, installation art and digital music "to explore a more liberal artistic language." The performances last 60 minutes.

■ Barry Room, Taipei Artist Village (台北國際藝術村百里廳), 7 Beiping E Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號). For more details call Ms Chen at (02) 3393-7377x407

■ Friday at 7:30pm and Saturday and Sunday at 2:30pm. Tickets are NTS 150 and are available at the door

**Kaikai Kiki Gallery's Contemporary Art in West** (西方藝術的世界)

brings together 14 contemporary artists from Europe, Japan and North America working in sculpture and painting. The paintings and sculptures on display hail from the collection of Takashi Murakami and the gallery.

■ Kaiiki Kiki Gallery, 2, Chongqing 5 Rd, Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市重慶南路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 10pm. Tel: (02) 2382-0328

■ Until Oct. 3

**Never Give Up — The New World**

a manga-inspired serial created by the duo in 2009 that centers around two fictional characters: Mimi and Lucy. Digital photography, sculpture and single/multi-channel video are brought together to create fantasy worlds that are meant to serve as projections of real-life situations.

■ VT Art Salon (非常藝術空間), 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 Sept. 18

**The Mirror of Time** (時代的鏡子)

offers a brief taste of the work of four figurative painters from China, born after 1975: Wei Jia (韋嘉), Song Kun (宋琨), Chen Ke (陳可) and Jai Aili (賈麗力). The artists place their subjects in seascapes and landscapes, imbuing the canvases with a dreamy visual language that evokes a sense of otherness.

■ Michael Ku Gallery (谷公館), 4F-2, 21, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段21號4樓之2). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 8pm. Tel: (02) 2577-5601

■ Until Oct. 10



▲ Head of the Chateau de Versailles Jean-Jacques Aillagon, left, presents the Hall of Mirrors to Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, center, at Versailles.  
 ▲ Chaos, Takashi Murakami (1998). PHOTOS: AFP



## French turn their noses up at Takashi Murakami

Traditionalists and conservatives criticize the Versailles show of the Japanese artist's work as dishonoring French history

BY PASCALE MOLLARD-CHENEBOIT  
 AFP, VERSAILLES, FRANCE

A show of outlandish sculptures by a cult Japanese artist in the historic Chateau of Versailles near Paris has enraged traditionalists who say it dishonors France's past.

From Sept. 14 to Dec. 12, visitors to Versailles will see eye-grabbing multicolored statues in silver, fiberglass and metal by Takashi Murakami alongside the chateau's ornate murals and chandeliers.

"The Chateau de Versailles is one of the greatest symbols of Western history," Murakami said in a statement on the museum's Web site.

"The Versailles of my imagination ... has become a kind of completely separate and unreal world," he added. "That is what I have tried to depict in this exhibition."

Versailles enthusiasts however branded it an outrage to their beloved museum in the posh Paris suburb.

"Murakami and company have no business in the Chateau of Versailles!" reads a message on the Web site Versailles Mon Amour, dedicated to a petition that it says has gained

more than 3,500 signatures.

"The chateau is not a billboard but one of the symbols of our history and our culture," it says.

French King Louis XVI was driven from the chateau by revolutionaries in 1789 and guillotined four years later. His ancestor Louis XIV had set up court there in the 17th century, living in his royal apartments — site of the new exhibition.

The museum's director, former culture minister Jean-Jacques Aillagon said the protests "come from far-right fundamentalist circles and from very conservative circles."

Such groups see Versailles as "a reliquary of nostalgia of [pre-revolution] Ancien Regime France, of a France that is turned in on itself and hostile to modernity," Aillagon added. Murakami has a global cult following, but his brash, colorful style and sometimes gleefully obscene subject matter are not to everyone's taste.

The 47-year-old artist's work evokes the look of manga comic books, perhaps most famously in the 1997 statue *Hiropon*, which depicts a large-chested girl skipping over a

"rope" of spurting breast milk.

In another sculpture, *My Lonesome Cowboy*, a naked young man finds a novel use for his own semen.

These two works are not part of the Versailles exhibition, but Anne Brassie, a local literary critic who launched the petition, cited them as showing that Murakami was not worthy to have his work displayed in Versailles.

"The young man with an erect penis whose sperm forms a lasso, the little woman with big breasts whose milk forms a skipping rope — these have no place in the royal apartments," she said.

Another patriotic cultural group, Versailles Defence Coordination, also launched a petition which it said has gained more than 4,000 signatures. Its leader Arnaud Upinsky said the exhibition was "illegal."

Aillagon said the works in the show "were chosen carefully so they could be seen by everyone."

They include *Oval Buddha Silver*, a meditating silver figure with a huge globular head, and the multicolored psychedelic

sculpture *Flower Matango*.

The Murakami show is one in a series of contemporary art installations in the chateau, launched by Aillagon. The first such show in 2008, with bright and bizarre sculptures by the US artist Jeff Koons, also angered traditionalists.

Prince Charles-Emmanuel de Bourbon-Parma, an heir of Louis XIV, tried to get it banned, saying it dishonored his family's past, but the courts dismissed his bid.

Visitors flocked to the Koons show and to the second in the series last year, with works by French pop artist Xavier Veilhan including futuristic purple horses, a naked woman, and a colossal 4m-long Yuri Gagarin.

Aillagon said the series "aims to give visitors to historic monuments the chance to discover art that is less familiar to them, and to those who want to see Takashi Murakami or Jeff Koons to come to the chateau where they wouldn't normally come."

The organizers of the site said a "playful" demonstration was planned in front of the chateau on the day of the exhibition's opening.

## Capturing the moment in the nick of time

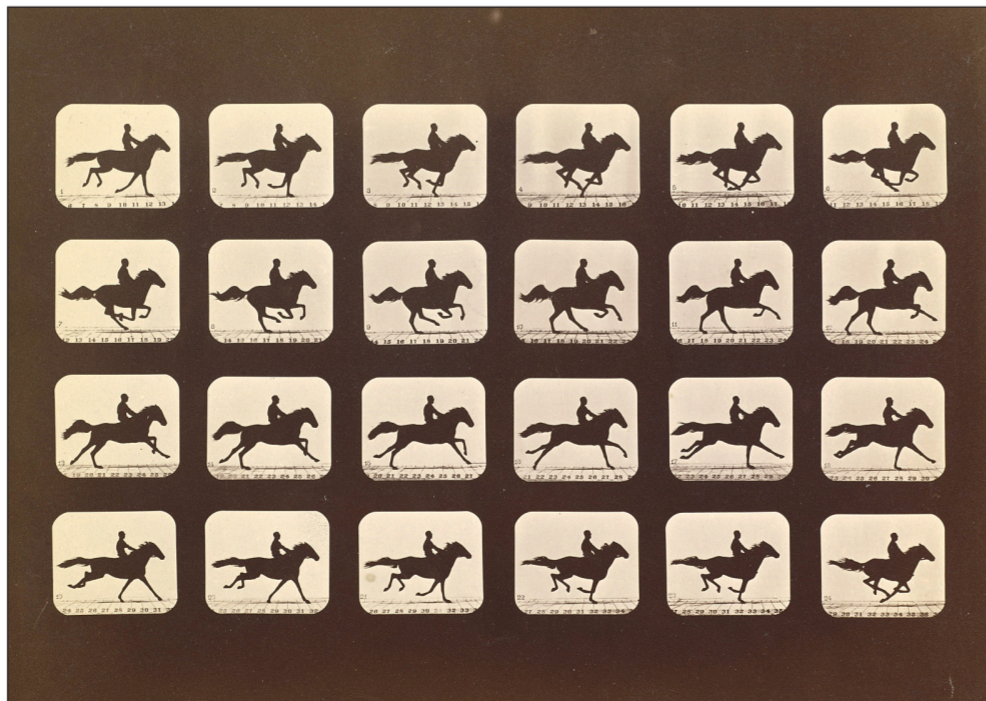
David Hockney once complained that photography was a paltry art because its angle on the world is restricted to what the camera sees at the moment of exposure: Unlike painting, a photograph can make no space for time. Tate Britain's massive and magnificent forthcoming exhibition of Eadweard Muybridge's work proves Hockney wrong. Combining artistic vision with scientific analysis, Muybridge showed how an image that paralyzes motion can catch the fluency of phenomena. He was one of the great photographic thinkers, whose mind reached ahead from still photography towards the inevitable invention of the cinema, which he anticipated by constructing a gadget called a zoopraxiscope that could animate sequences of images to display mules kicking or nymphs dancing.

Despite his scientific skills, he enjoyed the esoteric mystery of his new medium. Photography writes with light, and in homage to the Greek sun god Muybridge called himself Helios; the emblem on the business card attached wings to his camera and made it radiate beams. But the would-be deity was also a shrewd faker, a sly self-inventor — he was born, a little too drably for his own taste, as Edward Mugeridge in Kingston upon Thames, near London — and a busy self-promoter. In between photographic expeditions in the Californian wilderness, Panama and Guatemala, lecture tours of Europe, and experimental sessions to study the movement of trotting ponies, galloping horses and skittish deer, he even managed to commit a murder.

Muybridge's great achievement was conceptual: He made time visible in space. His studies of locomotion atomize duration into instants. He demonstrates, for instance, what water looks like, second by second, as it is hurled from a bucket by a bizarrely naked female model. With a battery of cameras tripped by electrical switches he captures minute metamorphoses too quick for the blinking human eye. What we see as a sloppy, slurping mess is a rainbow of gravity-defying droplets,

*Eadweard Muybridge was an innovator of photography who, almost magically, made time visible in space*

BY PETER CONRAD  
 THE GUARDIAN, LONDON



An albumen silver print by Eadweard Muybridge titled *Horses Running*. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

then a looped ribbon that twists around itself, next a leaping fish or a slippery mermaid. It seems to have trapped a spirit, compelling wet ectoplasm to solidify in the air — and of course, like many of his Victorian contemporaries, he could do that as well: When photographing the house of a Californian patron, he included the double-exposed ghost of the owner, patrolling the premises to keep an eye on his late wife.

Time is a stream, flowing around us and through us, incising lines on faces as it abrades rocks. Almost magically, Muybridge devised

ways of enabling us to see that stealthy entropy at work in nature. Time is written into the sedimentary layers of the cliffs he photographed, or computed in the rings of the inconceivably ancient and enormous Californian sequoias. The grandiose vistas he photographed in Yosemite are not only sublime evidence of God's grandeur or America's glory, like the same scenes when looked at through the cameras of Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams. Muybridge emphasizes the destructive and creative power of water, which over millennia carves tracks through

mountains. A lake can pretend to be a placid camera, duplicating and inverting the mountains of Yosemite, but in other moods water is aggressive, able to sculpt stone. Muybridge's long exposures make waterfalls or surging creeks look like sharpened wedges or blunt-ended mallets, weapons that enforce geological flux.

He followed the advance of the railways that abbreviated time and conquered space as they unified the US, but he knew that these technological changes had been anticipated, with epochal gradualness, by nature. A glacier in Yosemite is as implacably regular as the steel tracks being laid by the Union Pacific engineers.

Muybridge's work can be, as it is here, spectacularly terrifying. On other occasions — as when he gets a woman costumed as a Greek nymph to walk endlessly up and down stairs holding a teacup so that he can study the locomotive processes involved — he is either whimsical or frankly weird. His odd self-portraits suggest something of his strangeness. In one he pretends to be harmlessly dozing in an art gallery; in another he appears, abstractly reshaped into a black lump, in a reflecting globe set up in an amusement park. He performed for his own locomotion studies, dressed only in underpants despite his sagacious white beard: Imagine Moses exercising at the gym.

Most unsettling of all is a portrait by a colleague in which Muybridge hunches, scowling with paranoia, at the base of a patriarchal sequoia, apparently ready to wriggle into a cavity between its roots. Here the man who wielded the axe resembles a potential axe murderer, and in 1874 he did indeed gun down his wife's lover. Placed on trial for murder, he first pleaded insanity, then allowed his lawyer to admit his guilt while entreating the jury "to send him forth free to resume that profession, which is now his only love." Art, luckily, mattered more than the piddling strictures of the law, and Muybridge was acquitted. Everyone who goes to the Tate exhibition will be grateful for the miscarriage of justice.