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Diverse Visions

An Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Mainland China and Taiwan

Lishan Chang
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Ya-Hui Wang
Jui-Chung Yao
C.J. Yeh

JAN 15 - MAR 9 2007

Walsh Gallery
Seton Hall University
Diverse Visions: An Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Mainland China and Taiwan brings together the work of seven contemporary artists from Mainland China and Taiwan, who are working in a variety of media. All have come to the United States in the hopes of furthering their studies or to work in New York's thriving art environment. Some have settled here permanently while others travel back and forth.

Because of their travels and experiences these artists are faced with the challenge of reconciling their own artistic and cultural traditions with a range of Western influences. The works that have resulted from this cross-pollination are diverse, yet they exemplify their makers' shared goal of seeking a fitting visual mode to convey cultural duality. In the installations, paintings, photographs and videos that are seen in the exhibition, this duality is extensively explored. By blending techniques and subjects of traditional Chinese art with elements of Western contemporary art, the artists represented in Diverse Visions make an effort to bridge the distance that exists between Eastern and Western cultures.
Lishan Chang is from Taiwan and studied at the Taipei National University of the Arts. In 1997 he came to the United States to participate in a year-long artist-in-residency program. Upon its completion Chang spent another year at the New York Institute of Technology; he is currently a participant in the residency program of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council in New York. His work has been exhibited at the Amerasia Bank Gallery, the Crystal Art Gallery, and White Studio, all in New York City.

Beginning in 2004, Chang began to make photographs of the human body wrapped in plastic film. The film helps him to create a womb-like environment in which human forms appear to be suspended, as if weightless.
Yu-Hung Huang is originally from Taiwan and currently resides in the United States, where he traveled in 1997 to get his B.A. at the School of Visual Art. After completing his education with an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Huang moved back to New York City to further his artistic career. His recent exhibitions have included an outdoor show in Union Square, New York City, and an exhibition of his photography at the Amerasia Bank Gallery in New York City. Although Huang is from the East, where the traditional medium is ink on paper, he has adopted Western oil painting techniques. He admires Paul Cézanne, Alberto Giacometti, and Giorgio Morandi, though while he looks at their work for inspiration, he believes art is ultimately a personal discovery.

The Stranger Series developed from Huang’s immersion in a foreign environment. While renting a studio in Chinatown, he observed that, though the streets were crowded with people, they did not interact and their facial expressions were distant and emotionless. Eye contact and conversation were avoided due to the perception of others as strangers. Huang began to see people as figures with no substance and he even felt a stranger to himself. His Stranger Series comprises portraits of people, whose faces are blurred. By obscuring the part of the human body that is most expressive, he prevents the viewer from connecting with the figures in his portraits.
Shih-Pao Lin was born in Taiwan in 1962. He began his career as an artist in 1978 and five years later moved to New York, where, in 1996, he successfully completed his graduate studies at New York University. A prolific and well-publicized artist, Lin has exhibited his work in the Museum of Modern Art, the 2005 Expo Japan, and the Queens Museum of Art, New York.

Lin has used tape to create an arrow installation in this exhibition. To the artist, the arrow, which suggests movement in a specific direction, is a symbol that is meaningful to all mankind. Lin sees the arrow as a metaphor of human life. Because of its inexorable forward movement, he believes the arrow represents life's "motor," human desire.
Ruijun Shen is from Guangzhou, China. She studied under her father, a traditional silk painter, since she was five years old. After completing her Fine Arts degree at the Guangzhou Academy, Shen came to the United States to complete her M.F.A. at Montclair State University in New Jersey. Currently, Shen is completing her second M.F.A. degree at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Shen’s painting style has evolved from her dual training in traditional silk and Western oil painting. Her technique combines the delicate lines of brush and ink painting with the color and texture of oil paints. Shen’s subject matter is inspired by Song Dynasty art, which explores the subjects of birds, trees and flowers. Eastern and Western cultures coexist in her work. Shen’s desire is to capture “the subtleness of Eastern culture and the magnificence of Western culture.”
Ya-Hui Wang lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan. She received a B.A. from National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei (1998) followed by an M.F.A. from the National Taipei University of Arts (2004). In 2002, she received the Taipei Arts Award from the Taipei Fine Arts Museum as well as an award for artistic excellence from the National Cultural and Arts Foundation, Taiwan. In 2006, Wang was the recipient of the Yageo Tech Art Award of the ACC (Asian Cultural Council), awarded yearly for a residency at Location One in New York City.

The work Exchange is a two-screened video projection depicting images of personal belongings and objects that have been dislocated from their domestic place of origin. The drifting quality of these objects signifies Wang's interest in determining where the confines of personal reality begin and end.

*Text references materials from Location One, NYC*
Jui-Chung Yao is an artist, critic, and curator who was born in Taipei, Taiwan and still resides there, even though he makes frequent trips to the United States. While he has a degree in Art Theory from the National Institute of Art in Taiwan, Yao is also a practicing artist, who focuses on photography, installation art, and video. While the themes of his work vary, many of them are inspired by the exceptional history of his native Taiwan and the influence and effects of globalization on his nation and his people.

In his work China Town-Dizzy, Yao examines the changing face of national identity that results from globalization. By way of performing a handstand and simultaneously inverting the image, Yao “holds up” Chinatown and its global identity for all to see. To Yao, “the historical destiny of humanity has a certain incurable absurdity” and this philosophical attitude is reflected in his playful approach to his subject matter.
C.J. Yeh, a native of Taipei, Taiwan came to the United States to pursue his education. Working primarily as a painter, Yeh received his B.F.A. from Pratt University and his M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. Since 1998, Yeh has been exploring the use of new media trying to integrate them with more traditional modes of expression.

Two of Yeh's works that are shown in this exhibition are Liquid Mondrian and my Data=my Mondrian. Each of these works is an attempt to explore the differences between images that exist in the physical world and those in cyberspace. my Data=my Mondrian is an interactive computer program in which the personal data provided by viewers are translated into a Piet Mondrian-like composition. With an interface replicating a sign-up form for a "My Space" page, participants are asked to provide a variety of personal information. Each data input has a specific effect on the final composition, for example, the width and height of the image is based on the viewer's body type, the primary and secondary colors in the composition are based on the viewer's hair and eyes, the number of horizontal and vertical axes is based on the viewer's interests and education. In a sense, my Data=my Mondrian enables the viewers to create their own "digital self-portraits" through data input.
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An Exhibition of Contemporary Art From Mainland China and Taiwan

Co-curated by Matthew Callinan and Katie Landes, M.A. students
in the Museum Professions Program at Seton Hall University

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