



**51. International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia**  
*THE EXPERIENCE OF ART; ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER*

## **TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF TAIWAN**

### ***THE SPECTRE OF FREEDOM*** ***IL FANTASMA DELLA LIBERTÀ***

June 12 - November 6, 2005  
Opening hours 10.00 am - 6.00 pm, closed on Mondays

Palazzo delle Prigioni, next to Palazzo Ducale  
(S. Zaccaria boat station, line n. 1-51-82)  
Castello 4209 - 30122 Venice

Commissioner: Tsai-lang HUANG  
Vice-commissioner: Paolo De Grandis  
Curator: Chia Chi Jason WANG  
Chief Curator TFAM: Fang-wei CHANG  
Artists: Chung-li KAO, I-chen KUO, Hsin-i Eva LIN, Kuang-yu TSUI  
Organising Institution: Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan  
Co-ordinator: Arte Communications

The Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan is pleased to present the Exhibition, *The Spectre of Freedom*, curated by Chia Chi Jason WANG, at Palazzo delle Prigioni, Venice on 12 June - 6 November 2005.

*The Spectre of Freedom* sets out from the perspective of Taiwan's current state of affairs. While reflecting the observations of a group of Taiwanese artists regarding the contemporary environment of their homeland, it also addresses the state of the world today, especially the prospect of globalization and the common condition of humanity, presenting universal reflections with a distinctly Taiwanese perspective.

The inspiration for the curatorial theme of *The Spectre of Freedom* derives partly from the 1974 film of the same name by Luis Buñuel (1900-83), the Spanish founder of surrealist cinema. The concept of freedom as a spectre is adapted to this exhibition to reveal the contemporary human condition in an era of globalization.

Human history has now moved into the dawn of the third millennium, and the role of freedom as a treasured idea and a core value of civilization is now threatened on a global scale.

Numerous crises endanger the global community, including human disasters, terrorist threats, and the unjust war waged by the hegemonic US and its alliance against Iraq. Also witnessed and experienced have been natural catastrophes brought on by global warming, the SARS epidemic that threatened to cripple the world economy, and the devastating earthquakes that have relentlessly pounded Asia.

Capitalism is the pavement of the new global economy that we all drive on, but it seems that the ride is even bumpier than before, with an economic crisis in one area often setting off a vicious chain reaction around the world.



Globalization, apart from being a force in the expansion of capitalism and the formation of a post-industrial consumer society, has also acted to spur the growth of international media conglomerates. Today's media society seems to announce that the "society of the spectacle," as originally envisioned by Guy Debord, is already upon us. Citizens living in "the spectacle" seem to have endless freedom to choose, yet a bombardment of images created by the post-modern consumer society have permeated their thinking, subtly influencing and manipulating their preferences, choices and judgments.

*The Spectre of Freedom* is not only an attempt to translate Buñuel's Surrealist vision of freedom into the context of today's world, but it also represents a questioning of the spectacle being created by the media of our times. The word "spectre" carries a sentiment of death, but it also denotes a haunting quality, like a shadow that is always attached to human subjectivity. Deep inside the human psyche, the pursuit of freedom has constantly appeared as both a "conscious" goal as well as an eternal "unconscious" desire that constantly lingers in our subconscious.

Four Taiwanese contemporary artists have been invited to take part in this exhibition -Chung-li KAO (b. 1958), Kuang-yu TSUI (b. 1974), Hsin-i Eva LIN (b. 1974) and I-chen KUO (b. 1979). All these artists received their artistic training on Taiwanese soil. Moreover, Kuang-yu Tsui, Hsin-i Eva Lin and I-chen Kuo belong to the new generation of artists that came of age after Taiwan's long period of martial law. Not only does the humanist concern revealed in these artists' works begin with Taiwanese society's history and current state of affairs, but also each one presents a unique social perspective and aesthetic examination of today's Taiwanese city within the system of globalization, and even the prospects for a future virtual world.

Chung-li KAO exhibits a body of works mainly comprised of 8mm film projector-based installations. Their principal form is hand-painted animation merged with historical images. Within the context of *The Spectre of Freedom*, Chung-li Kao's works are a response and a dialectical perspective arising from his own distinctive style of creation. Recurrent brawling, confrontation and wrestling are Chung-li Kao's frequent themes. Through this metaphor, he indicates the many paradoxical, divisive relationships of human beings fluctuating between life and death, ignorance and enlightenment, desire and reason, hegemony and war.

Kuang-yu TSUI shows a body of works based on single-channel videos. Most of his works are self-taped performances, taking metropolis as his major arena, occasionally touching on the subject of consumer society and how to simplify human existence in consumer society as, in his words, "superficial life." If a human dominated by "superficial life" can be understood to be a "one-dimensional man" who has internalized "hyperreality" and lost nearly all his freedom, then for this kind of human being, freedom has become a spectre.

Hsin-i Eva LIN launches an interactive net-based installation, titled "De-strike." Through simulation of a strike, the attempt to mobilize others to join her project, and the exploration of the very idea of an "artist on strike," Hsin-i Eva Lin critically examines the role of the artist vis-à-vis the international contemporary art system in the age of globalization. Through the combination of computers, networks and a conceptual installation of the exhibition space, the work actively advances the idea of an "artist's strike," transforming the exhibition space into a venue that strives to convince the visitor to join the ranks of strikers.

Enhancing the metaphoric image of *The Spectre of Freedom*, the fourth artist I-chen KUO presents a video installation titled "Invade the Prigioni," by projecting a huge moving image of an airplane onto to the vault of the Palazzo delle Prigioni. The motivation for *The Spectre of Freedom* to incorporate this work was principally the effect of an airplane's shadow created by this image installation and the roar of take-off and landing that accompanies it. This enormous sound occurring in synch with a shadow alludes to calamity, as if an apparition.

Thus, it strengthens the thematic concept of *The Spectre of Freedom*. The shadow of an airplane haunts the entire exhibition space like a spectre, conjuring a sense of threat and apprehension. For the visitors in Venice, this city on water, it promises to be a special experience, even eliciting impressions of danger in their memories.

The exhibition is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, R.O.C.; the Ministry of Education, R.O.C.; the Council for Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan, R.O.C.; the Taipei City Government; the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government, and sponsored by BENQ.

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM OF TAIWAN  
 181, Chung-shan N. Road, Sec 3  
 Taipei, Taiwan - ROC  
 info@tfam.gov.tw  
 press contact: [hhj@tfam.gov.tw](mailto:hhj@tfam.gov.tw) (Ms. Ruth HU)  
[www.tfam.gov.tw](http://www.tfam.gov.tw)

ARTE COMMUNICATIONS  
 Via P. Orseolo, 16 - 30126 - Venice - Lido  
 Tel. +39 041 526.4546  
 Fax +39 041 276.9056  
 e-mail: [biennale@artecommunications.com](mailto:biennale@artecommunications.com)  
<http://www.artecommunications.com/>

