

Funny reflections

ART EXHIBITION

Very Fun Park

PICA

Review: Carroll Doyle

VERY FUN PARK is a vibrant collection of works from emerging artists in Taiwan.

The reflections by these young artists on life in a dynamic, cosmopolitan society are full of colour and humour with an element of critical commentary.

The entrance to the gallery space at PICA frames an impressive work. *Savage Paradise* by Yao Jui-chung has a giant golden dinosaur with antennae, facing a wall of 15 separate images which form a photomontage.

Gods, animals and fantasy creatures are superimposed on backgrounds of modern Taiwan to create surrealist landscapes which glow in tones of red-brown and gold.

Ornately framed, they shimmer in the light of the antennae of the dinosaur, its two huge orbs seeking out the landscapes of the imagination. The images conjure a yearning amid this fabulous opulence, a desire for some place else.

In this dramatic and playful work, the themes of wealth and desire, loss and fear, are revealed by Yao, one of the most experienced of the artists in this exhibition — he has represented Taiwan at the Venice Biennale.

Coming upon Chang Wang's *The Life of Anima 1* and *The Life of Anima 11* is rather like encountering an alien just hanging around waiting to be activated. Made up of life-sized fibreglass pieces in the shape of human bodies, the forms fit together in an overlapping sequence creating an enormous spine.

Having established that the beast will not suddenly twist and writhe in the air, the viewer can relax. Like the vertebrae they mimic, the bodies share an interdependence they are unable to escape. Although this is disconcerting initially, there is a humorous edge to these works.

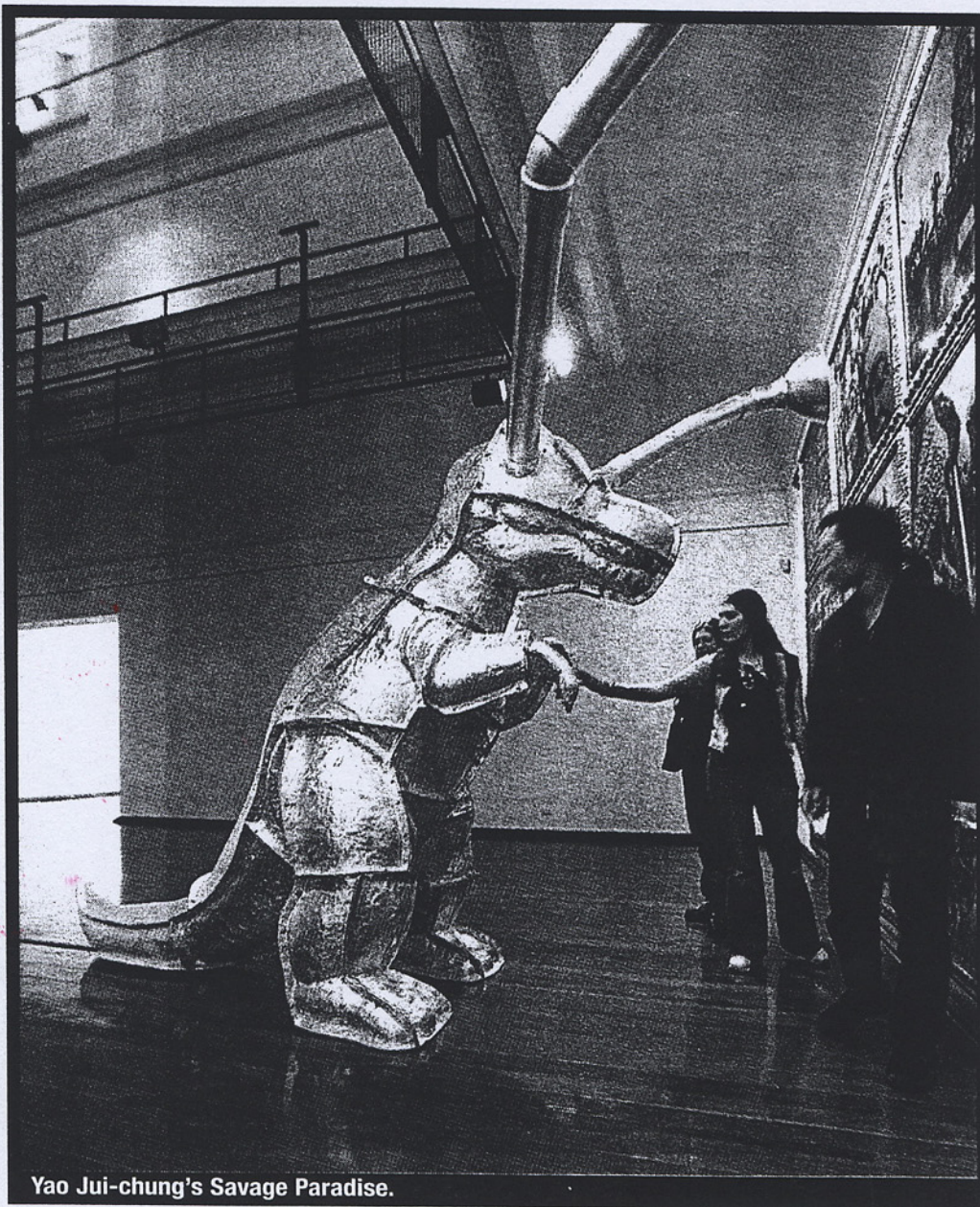
The exhibition connects us with the feel of modern Taipei. Although the artists are not presenting us with political or economic perspectives, we get glimpses of a fast paced, colourful and affluent society which has experienced rapid change.

Cardboard, the ubiquitous emblem of a highly industrialised society, is the chosen medium of Huang Ching-yi. Her work called *Creeping* attaches itself to corners and sills just above head height.

From this featureless material, she has constructed a fascinating organic-like form. Previously flat, the now rounded forms expand and reproduce their shapes but retain the dusky, dry appearance of the original material.

In the disembodied machines of artist Shyu Ruey-shiann, the visual and the auditory elements of modern Taiwan are encountered. As the viewers enter the display space, they activate a sensor. The work called *Writers Vessel* clicks on.

A bicycle wheel sits on a metal sheet. Attached to the wheel are equally distanced



Yao Jui-chung's *Savage Paradise*.

feathers. Switched on, the motor rotates the wheel back and forth, the feathers moving in unison. The reflection off the metal plate makes it resemble a pool of water on which the feathered wheel floats, writing words that cannot be read.

There is a lightness of touch in the magic of hard, cold surfaces becoming something else. Mechanisation is paired with whimsy and humour.

Artist Cola King has recorded the faces of teenage girls who gather at weekends in the centre of Taipei. He enlarges photographic images that cover a wall to form a vibrantly colourful collage of youth culture.

There are girls dressed as Goths and story-book characters, both demure and glamorous; they gaze coyly at the photographer. The images of these girls, followers of

the teenage girl culture of Japan, are caught like exotic butterflies behind glass.

As with all shows of emerging artists, there are differing levels of artistic maturity, though all of them express telling observations on their social environment.

Sponsored by Taiwan's Council for Cultural Affairs, the exhibition is a joint collaboration between Fubon Art Foundation, Hong Kong Arts Centre and the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts.

Fubon Art Foundation is an art sponsorship wing of the Fubon Group, which promotes the arts in Taiwan.

Co-curator Rita Chang and the executive chief of Fubon Art Foundation, Maggie Tsai, accompanied seven of the artists to Perth for the opening of the exhibition, which is on until April 29 at PICA, James Street, Perth.