Hong Kong does some soul searching

Contemporary art from Hong Kong takes pride of place at the Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art from Oct 14, to coincide with a Hong Kong-themed week of events at the ongoing Expo 2010 Shanghai.

The exhibition "Legacy and Creations – Art vs Art" will show the works of 19 artists, architects, choreographers and musicians. By using different materials and symbols, the artists have transcended traditional boundaries and created new interpretations of contemporary art in Hong Kong.

One of the highlights comes from the hands of Wilson Shieh, an artist who works in Chinese fine line-style figurative painting. Shieh, who deals with themes such as sexuality, role-play, costume play and cultural symbols, delivered one of the most impressive pieces at the "Ink Art vs Ink Art" show, a retrospective exhibition for traditional Chinese art in Hong Kong that was held at the Shanghai Art Museum two months ago.

His video features particles of Chinese characters floating in an empty space, showing how they mutate, reproduce and interact.

"I chose Chow because Hong Kong is most famous for its movies and entertainment industry, and he is the most famous of its actors," he said.

Shieh adopted a new form of media this year, ditching his favorite ink on silk or rice paper to acrylic on canvas. He has enlarged his range of subjects to include popular icons such as late singer Teresa Teng, Hong Kong actress Maggie Cheung, and modern Chinese writer Eileen Chang.

An important theme of contemporary Hong Kong art is the notion of identity, said Hung Keung, who will bring an interactive digital video project to the show. The project focuses on key Taoist principles.

His video features particles of Chinese characters floating in an empty space, showing how they mutate, reproduce and interact with a virtual human body, he said.

If You Go

Oct 15-Nov 12
Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art, 231 Nanjing Road W
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Wilson Shieh takes Hong Kong movie star Chow Yun-fat as the subject in a series of paintings.