

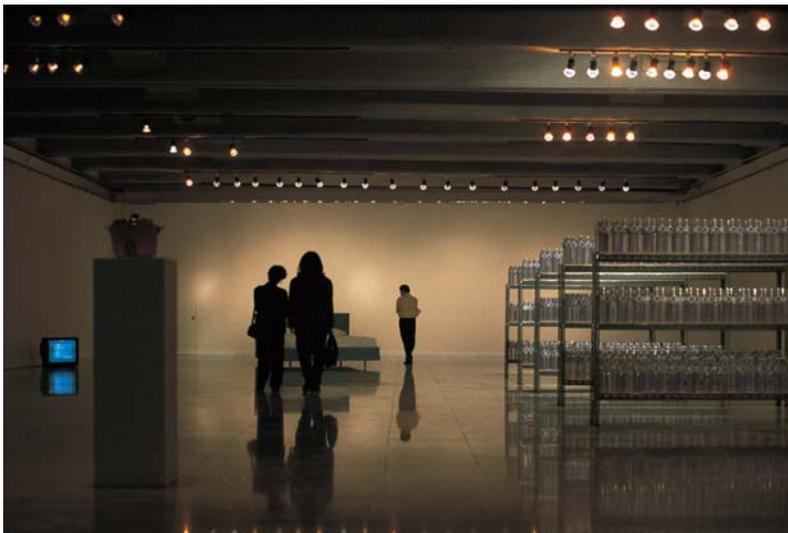
michael lin





1996

PLEASE REMOVE YOUR SHOES BEFORE
STEPPING ON THE CARPET
AND FEEL FREE TO CHOOSE
FROM THE SELECTION OF MUSIC
carpet, music, photo,
statement of greetings
from the host
Installation, dimensions variable
IT Park Gallery - Taipei - Taiwan



1997

IT PARK GROUP EXHIBITION

Graphic Eye 4000 Series Lighting Control
System

installation, dimensions variable

Taipei Fine Art Museum - Taipei - Taiwan



1998

GARDEN

pillows, tables, view,
documentation, emulsion
installation variable

La Ferme du Buisson - Vaires - France



1998

HOUSE

emulsion wall painting

900 x 500 cm

Bamboo Curtain Studio - Taipei - Taiwan



1998

IMPORTED

600 bottles of Taiwan beer, 20 cartons of
Long Life

cigarettes, tables and stools

Installation, dimensions variable

La Ferme du Buisson - Vaires - France



1998

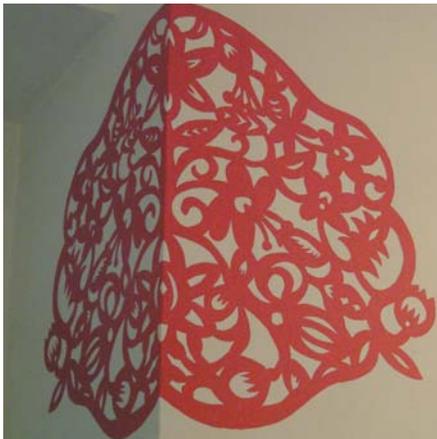
COMPLEMENTARY

pillows on tatami on wood

273 x 273 x 49 cm

Fukuoka Asian Art Museum - Fukuoka - Japan





2002
UNTITLED
(IN COLLABORATION WITH
MISSCHINA, PARIS)
installation, dimensions variable
Galerie Zurcher - Paris - France



1999

IT PARK 31.07-21.08.1999

emulsion floor painting

430 x 1037 cm

IT Park Gallery - Taipei - Taiwan



1999

UNTITLED CIGARETTE BREAK

emulsion on wood

installation

IT Park Gallery - Taipei - Taiwan



2000

TAMAR SITE 03.11-12.12.2000

(IN COLLABORATION WITH
REMY MARKOWITSCH)

emulsion on wood

Tamar Site - Hong Kong - China





2000

CHEZ DESJARDIN
emulsion wall painting
256 x 247 cm
Private Collection - Paris - France



2000

TFAM 08.09.2000-07.01.2001

emulsion on wood

3600 x 1600 cm

Taipei Fine Art Museum - Taipei - Taiwan



2001

PRIGIONI 10.06-04.11.2001

emulsion on wood

1345 x 735 x 40 cm

Taiwan Pavilion - Venice - Italy



2001

GUILD ROOM 27.10.2001-20.01.2002

emulsion on wood

500 x 900 cm

SMAK - Gent - Belgium





2001

KIASMA DAY BED
emulsion on wood
360 x 360 x 45 cm

Kiasma Museum - Helsinki - Finland





2001

PLATFORM

emulsion on wood

1600 x 1000 x 40 cm

Istanbul Biennial - Istanbul- Turkey





2001

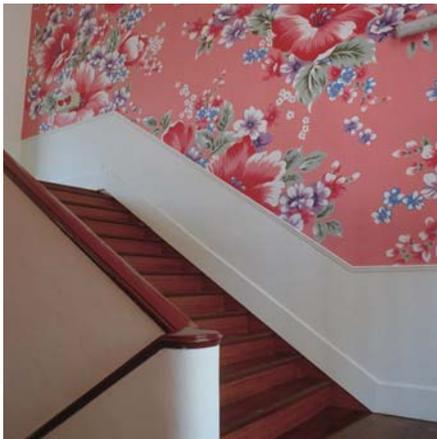
VILLA MERKEL 17.11.2001-20.01.2002

(IN COLLABORATION WITH
REMY MARKOWITSCH)

emulsion on wood

900 x 800 cm

Villa Merkel - Esslingen - Germany



2001

ICA 27.05-26.08.2001

emulsion

1400 x 400 cm

ICA Taipei - Taipei - Taiwan





2002

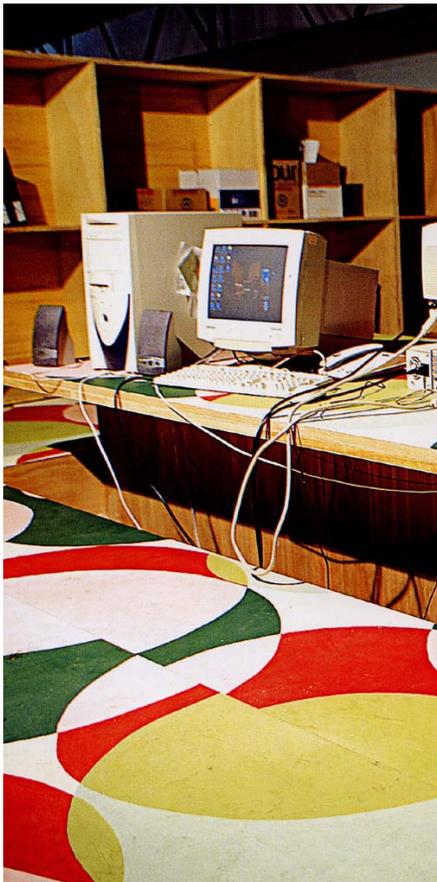
ATRIUM STADHUIS DEN HAAG

12.07-08.09.2002

emulsion on wood

5000 x 2500 cm

City Hall - The Hague - Netherlands



2002
GWANGJU BIENNALE OFFICE 29.03-29.06.2002
(IN COLLABORATION WITH CHANG YONG HO)
emulsion on wood
installation
Gwangju Biennale - Gwangju - Korea





2002

UNTITLED

emulsion on wood

900 x 600 cm

Galerie Ghislaine Hussenot - Paris - France





2002

PALAIS DE TOKYO 22.01-22.8.2002

emulsion on wood

2800 x 900 cm

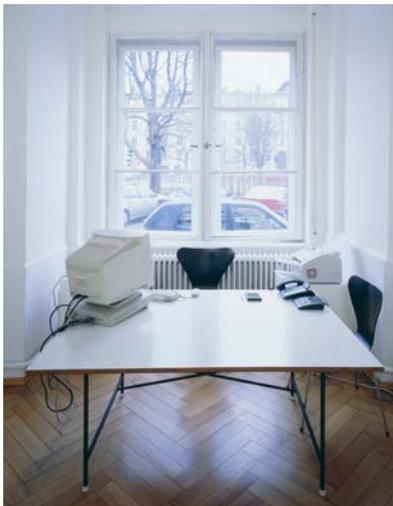
Palais de Tokyo - Paris - France





2002

INSTALLATION PHOTO
Galerie Tanit - Munich - Germany



UNTITLED
acrylic on wood
150 x 110 x 64 cm



UNTITLED
acrylic on canvas
230 x 200 cm



2002

GALLERY 5 WALL, QAG 09.12.2002-01.27.2003

synthetic polymer paint on plywood

1600 x 1840 cm

Queensland Art Gallery - Brisbane - Australia





2003

LISBOA, CAMA DE DIA

emulsion on wood

240 x 240 x 39 cm

Culturgest - Lisbon - Portugal





2003

UNTITLED

emulsion

300 x 250 cm

Galerie Urs Meile - Luzern - Switzerland





2003

UNTITLED

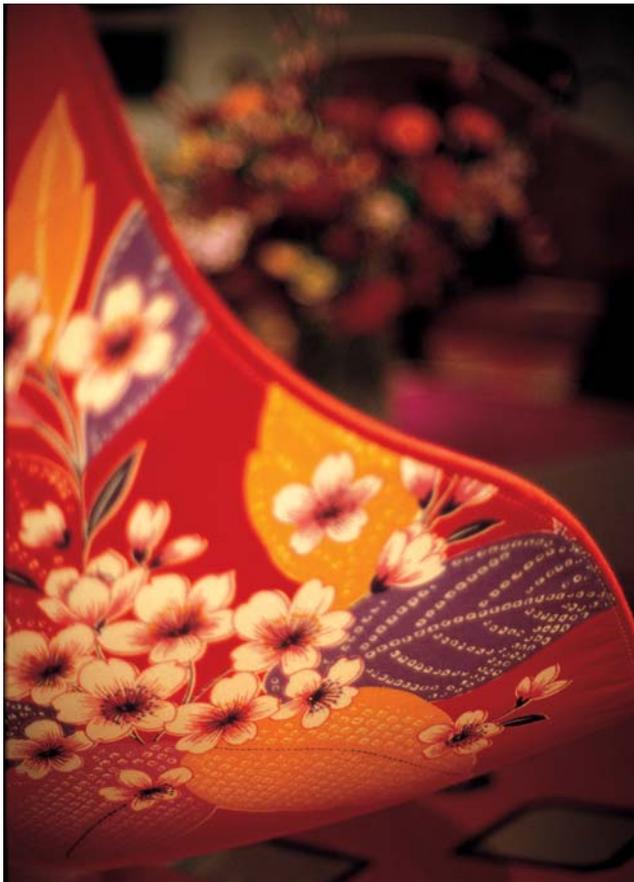
emulsion on wood

475 x 145 cm

Galerie Urs Meile - Luzern - Switzerland







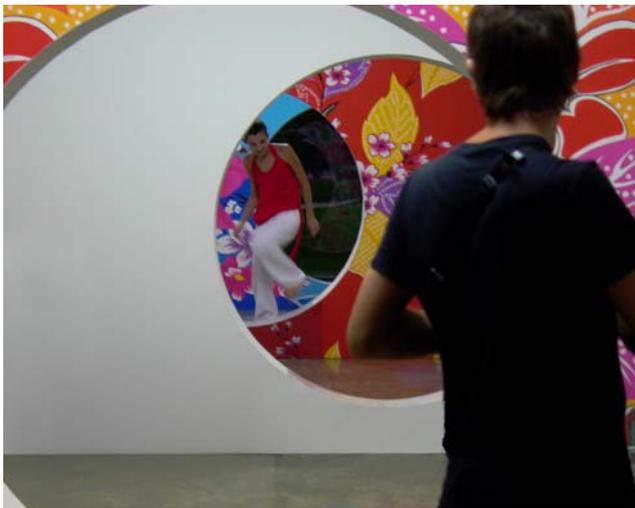
2003

SPRING 2003

installation

1000 x 588 cm

Moroso - Milan - Italy



2003
GARDEN PASSAGE
installation
Montenmedio - Cadiz - Spain

michael lin

b. 1964 lives and works in Paris/Taipei

1992–93 Art Center College of Design-Pasadena, CA, USA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2003 SPRING 2003-Palais de Tokyo-Paris, France
MICHAEL LIN-Galerie Urs Meile-Luzern, Switzerland
SPRING 2003-Moroso showroom-Milan, Italy
- 2002 PALAIS DE TOKYO-Site de Creation Contemporaine-Paris, France
MICHAEL LIN (with Andy Collions)-Galerie Ghislaine Husenot-Paris, France
ATRIUM STADHUIS DEN HAAG-Stroom-The Hague, Netherlands
MICHAEL LIN-Galerie Tanit-Munich, Germany
- 2000 PRIVATE COLLECTION-Artstyl.com-Paris, France
- 1999 HERE-IT Park Gallery-Taipei, Taiwan
- 1998 COMPLIMENTARY-Dimensions Endowment of Art, Taipei, Taiwan
- 1996 INTERIOR-IT Park Gallery-Taipei, Taiwan
- 1994 HUH-IT Park Gallery-Taipei, Taiwan
- 1993 AFTER-Art Center College of Design-Pasadena, CA, USA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2003 CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART, SUBVERSION AND POETRY-Culturgest-Lisbon, Portugal
BIBLIOTHERAPY(with Remy Markowitsch)-Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland
NMAC Montemedio Arte Contemporaneo-Cadiz, Spain
- 2002 URGENT PAINTING-Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris-Paris, France
ASIANVIBE-Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castello (EACC)-Castello, Spain
PAUSE_GWANGJU BIENNIAL-Gwangju Biennial Hall-Gwangju, Korea
SYNTHETIC-Galerie Zurcher-Paris, France
HOW BIG IS THE WORLD?-O.K.Centrum fur Gegenwartskunst -Linz, Austria
ASIAN ART TRIENNIAL-Queensland Art Gallery-Brisbane, Australia
INTERNATIONAL 2002-Liverpool Biennial-Liverpool, UK
THE GRAVITY OF THE IMMATERIAL-Total Museum-Seoul, Korea
- 2001 THE GRAVITY OF THE IMMATERIAL-Institute of Contemporary Art- Taipei, Taiwan
49TH BIENNIAL OF VENICE-Taiwan Pavilion- Venice, Italy
7TH ISTANBUL BIENNIAL-Istanbul, Turkey
ARS 01-Kiasma Museum-Helsinki, Finland
CASINO 2001-SMAK-Gent, Belgium
BIBLIOTHERAPY(with Remy Markowitsch)-Villa Merkel-Esslingen, Germany
- 2000 THE SKY IS THE LIMIT, 2000 TAIPEI BIENNIAL-Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan
SISTER SPACE PROJECT-Southern Exposure-San Francisco, CA, USA
VERY FUN PARK-Hong Kong Art Center-Hong Kong
FESTIVAL OF VISION/BERLIN IN HONG KONG-Tamar Site-Hong Kong
- 1999 VISIONS OF PLURALISM-China Art Museum-Beijing, China
MAGNETIC WRITING/MARCHING IDEAS-IT Park Gallery-Taipei, Taiwan
FUKUOKA TRIENNALE-Fukuoka Asian Art Museum-Fukuoka, Japan
KHOJ-International Artist Workshop-Modinagar, India
- 1998 TU PARLES/J'ECOUTE-Taipei Fine Arts Museum-Taipei, Taiwan
BACK FROM HOME-The Bamboo Curtain Studio-Taipei, Taiwan
TU PARLES/J'ECOUTE-La Ferme du Buisson- Paris, France
- 1997 IT PARK GROUP EXHIBITION- Taipei Fine Arts Museum-Taipei, Taiwan
ALLEGORY AND SIMULACRA-Gallery Pierre-Taichung, Taiwan
- 1996 PERIMETER 4-Gallery 456-New York, NY, USA
- 1995 TRANSITIONAL SITE-IT Park Gallery-Taipei, Taiwan
- 1994 POST MARSHALL LAW-Gate Gallery-Taipei, Taiwan

What about sleeping in a show? — Michael Lin's artistic intervention

Hou Hanru

Visiting a large scale exhibition which claims to be globally encompassing and relevant – the ARS01 show at Kiasma is such an exhibition -- can be an exciting experience. In the meantime, it can also be an exhausting physical and intellectual exercise. This tension or splitting between both sides, at the end, reflects to the contradictory situation of our cultural and artistic activities and the common ambition shared by many of us, facing the overwhelming globalisation and local reactions to such a “hegemonic” power. This affects deeply our everyday life as well as cultural concerns today. There have been all kinds of reactions, from radical “anti-globalisation” protests to profound intellectual debates, while it has also become a catalyst for artistic creation.

The Taipei based artist Michael Lin, far away from being an activist in the global-local negotiation, however, expresses his modest, discreet but unique voice in such a context to claim a space for free thoughts and actions. Instead of articulating the intellectual arguments or physically protesting gestures, he intervenes with a proposal for us to take a rest in the whirlpool of chaotic struggles: naming his project “Kiasma Day Bed”, he will build a large wooden platform (ca. 3 X 3 m) with painted surface in a textile motive with grid shape and pillows in a floral textile motive. This is a place for exhausted exhibition visitors to sit on or lay down to relax. People have views both outside to the city centre and inside to the entrance hall. The bed will be placed on the 2nd floor, a place which is also normally used as a 'sit down' place. By merging artistic-intellectual discourses and the everyday situation, Michael Lin suggests us to deal with the most spectacular and ambitious speculation of whatever that can be a kind of “global art” from an incredibly unexpected angle: to take a break.

No matter if Michael Lin has taken any obvious position in the “battle”. What is apparently extraordinary, and implicitly provocative, is that he has introduced some rather “disturbing” elements in contemporary art's adventure, in it's desperate search for re-relating itself to reality: an actual situation of daily life – the “Day Bed” that no longer distinguishes itself from real life. In the meantime, it's by no means an intellectually comfortable setting: in the thoroughly regulated and encoded space of a museum exhibition, it's a provocative gesture to invite the visitors to sleep in the middle of the busy parcours. And “Day Bed” suggests elimination between being awoken and asleep, between daydream and nightmare...not to mention the total break-down of the logic of art exhibition as a spectacle. Relating to this particular strategy of claiming an “art-free” space – a veritable third space, Michael Lin makes us confronting with another aspect of this uncomfortableness. He introduces an ignored element in the highly conceptualised contemporary art language, decoration, or textile motives, to be the main formal appearance of his work.

The proliferation and contamination of these motives, transcending the connotation of “Kitsch” that has been historically imposed on them, opens up a fresh space, both physical and cultural. It may recall the common strategy of Pop Art, but it definitively opposes itself to the heroic and macho show-off of Pop Art. Michael Lin's motives are borrowed from the folk craft textiles marginalized by the Capitalist consumer society. Their presentation in an high “neo-modernist” museum space provokes an obviously disaccording ambience. It is by no means that kind of tension that an exotic object may cause in contrast to Western norms of perception. Instead, it implies a clear attitude of resistance against the hegemonic “aesthetic” criteria and the values that they embody. Michael Lin's art is an ambient art with a clear content, a “soft Pop” against Pop itself.

At the end, it's not an indifferent fact that Michael Lin comes from Taiwan, a historically and geo-politically in-between land – an in-between island with its typical hybrid culture, floating on the sea of tension, negotiating its survival and aspiration between political uncertainty and economic and cultural development. The question of identity has always been a “national obsession”. It is equally a main focus for the art world. The identity anxiety, interestingly, has also become a driving force for cultural debates and development. It's here that Michael Lin's art becomes even more challenging. Emigrated to the US as a child and returned to Taiwan recently, he has a more distant and critical view on the issue. Rather than making any straightforward and partisan claim for an identity, he puts the question on the most down-to-earth level and dissolves it into the current of the everyday: identity is never a permanent and stable block. It is actually a constant changing construct. The movement of deconstruction, circulation and reconstruction is its real core. To demonstrate it, Michael Lin proposes us to experience its movement in the most intimate and invisible way: to sit or sleep in a bed full of “made in Taiwan” textile motives. However, they are not so much distinguished from what you can see in mainland China and other neighbours. To figure out the meaning of such a usage of the motives, one should actually transcend the question of origin and enjoy the contemplative experience of the real itself. The real unfolds itself in time and space; and it evolves in movement. Perhaps the most insightful understanding of issues like this can only be achieved in the state of half-awaken and half-asleep... on Michael's Day Bed.

Then, I remember another impressive experience of Michael Lin's work: in an exhibition in France, he set up a bar and offered the visitors Made-in-Taiwan beers. They tasted perfectly delicious, like any good beer in the world...

**ARS 01 2001KIASMA (Museum of Contemporary Art)
Helsinki, Finland**

The Language of Flowers — Michael Lin

Vivian Rehberg

A rose-colored carpet strewn with tendrils of red, yellow, violet, green, and white foliage unfurls beneath you, crawls up the walls, slithers through passage ways, butts against baseboards, arches, windows, and doors. This is excessive painting, painting that does not know its limits until it reaches them, is contained by them, and stops.

This is painting that so vividly and insistently asserts its capacity to extend beyond its frame, and its habitual frames of reference, that it threatens to turn into something else.

Instead, Michael Lin's site-conditioned work hovers between surface and structure, ornament and architecture, motif and ground. In *House* (1998), *Tamar Site* (2000) and *Villa Merkel 17.11.2001-22.1.2002* (2001), the lively patterns that Lin appropriates from Taiwanese textile designs are lavishly applied to made-to-measure wood panels placed on the wall or floor, at once disguising and laying bare the physical dimensions and properties of the space.

On the wall, Lin's work just winks at the history of gutsy, large-scale all-over painting before receding into the realm of the decorative backdrop. By theatrically, but ever so briefly, beckoning for attention, it toys with painting's status as an object of contemplation. On the floor, Lin's work floats seamlessly on its support; things are placed on it, one walks across it to get to somewhere else or to look at something else. Activated by these other presences, the floor paintings become the ground for myriad figures: a patch of contrasting cushions designed by the artist, clusters of people drinking and smoking, crushed cigarette butts and tossed candy wrappers, deflated exhibition visitors wondering what to see next, children running in circles.

Critics have related Lin's use of readily available, vernacular motifs to long-standing efforts to collapse the boundaries between painting and popular culture, and between painting and the decorative arts.

That the identification of "art" with the "non-artistic" (read as a confrontation between "high" and "low" culture) remains a legitimate field of investigation for contemporary production testifies that such boundaries—as social and cultural as they are aesthetic—have not crumbled with the advent of a post-modern, post-colonial, "global" society.

However, a more radical questioning of categories is enacted in the loose play with horizontality and verticality that is structurally built into Lin's work. For as his painting descends from the wall to the ground and stands back up again, it disrupts and destabilizes the position of the beholder accustomed to approaching sculpture, video-monitors, performances, projections, canvases, and installations from a more or less upright, more or less centered, and a more or less sovereign position. If verticality is "the axis the body shares with culture,"¹ then Lin's flowery fields seduce the beholder into rotating her corporeal axis out of line with it.

Such interplay between horizontality and verticality is evident in Lin's public commission for the *Palais de Tokyo: site de création contemporaine*, a work intimately connected to the architecture and the interior of the building. From the upper galleries looking down, the painting is framed by the staircases that lead directly into it. From the lower gallery, where it serves as a temporary floor for the bar, his juicy pink and lavender floral plane dialogues with Navin Rawanchaikul's eye-catching cartoon mural hanging above. Seen from above, the body bent parallel to the floor, Lin's painting can be absorbed in one visual sweep: it does not ask to be read, it does not require literacy. Down "in" the painting, sensorial distraction is highlighted—we stand and talk, we take a seat, we look out the windows, we look up the stairs—to the extent that the painting, *qua* painting, almost dematerializes.

What deceptively appears as benign "soft-pop", or easy-listening music for the eyes, in fact, turns out to be a site of considerable transgression. Transgression is initiated the moment the visitor places her foot onto a work by Lin (and who doesn't still feel a moment's hesitation before reaching out to touch, or before stepping onto a displayed object?). It is reinforced as she tentatively sits down, and then stretches her body across the painted surface. Now horizontal, the body may be at rest and vision may be thwarted, but it is at rest and it is thwarted in the space of painting and in the space of culture. Lin delineates these two spaces as hybrids: composed of heterogeneous elements translated from both Eastern and Western visual languages and traditions. Sarat Maharaj has discussed the "creative force" of hybridity in relation to translation, arguing that in a hybrid, "since each language seems to have its own system and manner of meaning, the construction of meaning in one does not square with that of another."²

Lin's achievement is that no matter how hard the body tries to sink fully into the hybrid space of culture, or cross the threshold out of that space, it never squares with it, it remains off-kilter; that is, just out of line.

Given that the position of the subject and meaning do not coincide here, questions remain as to how Lin's painting mediates the social interactions possible within the space it generates. It has been suggested that works like *Platform*, or *Kiasma Day Bed*, as well as others shown in the context of biennials or large group shows, provide visitors with a meeting place, a place for "living," and a temporal hiatus from the supposedly exhausting purview of cultural consumption and aesthetic transcendence that may be taking place in the other parts of the exhibition.³ Does the situation of culture today call for the creation of such alternative spaces within the framework of an exhibition? Judging solely from current artistic and curatorial practice, the answer would seem to be yes.

- 1 - Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), p. 102-103.
- 2 - Sarat Maharaj, "'Perfidious Fidelity' The Untranslatability of the Other," in Jean Fisher, ed. *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts*. (London: Kala Press, 1994), p. 29.
- 3 - See Hou Hanru, "What about sleeping in a show? Michael Lin's Artistic Intervention," in Maria Hirvi, ed. *ARS 01, exh. cat.*, (Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, 2001) and Manray Hsu, "Painting as place—On Michael Lin," in *Urgent Painting exh. cat.*, (ARC/Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris and Paris Musées, 2002).
- 4 - Henri Matisse, "Ecrits et propos sur l'art," (Paris, 1972), 50.
- 5 - See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle* (Paris, 1998) for a critical analysis of the "interactive, convivial, and relational" stakes of recent developments in contemporary art.

Let's not forget, however, that in 1908 Henri Matisse also dreamt of "an art which might be for every mental worker, be he businessman or writer, like an appeasing influence, like a mental sedative, something like a good armchair in which to rest from physical fatigue."⁴ In Matisse's case, art was to provide respite from the carnival of bourgeois society. According to a similar logic, Lin's painted floors, beds, and platforms are meant provide respite from Art.

And they are meant to do so through their staging of conviviality.⁵ For Lin, art is not something like Matisse's good armchair, it literally is an armchair. With *Untitled Cigarette Break* (1999), he leaves the realm of metaphor and, with cheery irony, covers two sleek beige Corbusier chairs with floral slip-covers (one can just imagine le Corbu turning over in his grave). By positioning their backs to the identically patterned paintings hung on the walls, Lin makes the chairs available without imposing the condition of looking on the visitor. He invites the spectator to break with the rhythm established as she moves throughout the exhibition, and to communicate with whoever might be in the neighboring chair. The seated visitors then become part of the installation, altering its form with speech and gesture, interfacing with their surroundings.

From the laborious construction of the floor and wall pieces with his assistants to the intermittent, festive gatherings that take place on and around them, the self-conscious *mise en scène* of social exchange is one of the key driving forces behind Michael Lin's painting. Here, the material form of social exchange is indexed as an extension of bodies in space, of corporeal movement, of the potential for pleasurable physical interaction. At the same time, the ambivalent, hybrid nature of that space, which is an aesthetic one, as well as its circumscription in a given time, leaves room for the failure of those interactions, and for their eventual release into a dimension other than the specific space/time of the exhibition.

Though his work is frequently geared toward collectives, Lin's understanding of the aesthetic does not carry with it hopes of reconciliation or communion. Instead, it manipulates form and plays with pictorial conventions in such a way as to trace out and safeguard a place for the individual—differentiated by her or his corporeal, cultural, and linguistic specificity—within the collective. The permeable limits of the body are held in tension against the permeable limits of the artwork. Neither can be translated into the other.

Michael Lin 2002
Palais de Tokyo site de creation contemporaine
Paris, France

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- 'Complimentary' Dimension Endowment of Art, 1998 (essay and drawings by Frances Stark)

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- Hou, Hanru- 'Asianvibe'-*Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castello*, 2002
- Hsu, Manray- 'Urgent Painting'- *Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris*, 2002- page 86-89
- Hou, Hanru- 'ARS 01'-*Kiasma Museum*, 2001- page 142-143
- Mahoney, Bronwyn- 'Egofugal'-*Istanbul Biennial*, 2001-pp.128-129
- Kao, Chien-hui- 'Living Cell'-*Venice Biennial, Taiwan Pavilion*, 2001-pp.30-39
- Shih, Jui Jen- 'Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial'- *Fukuoka Asian Art Museum*, 1999- page 94
- Bourne, Cecile- 'Tu Parles/J'ecoute'-*Taipei Fine Arts Museum*, 1998- page 66-69