

East meets West in



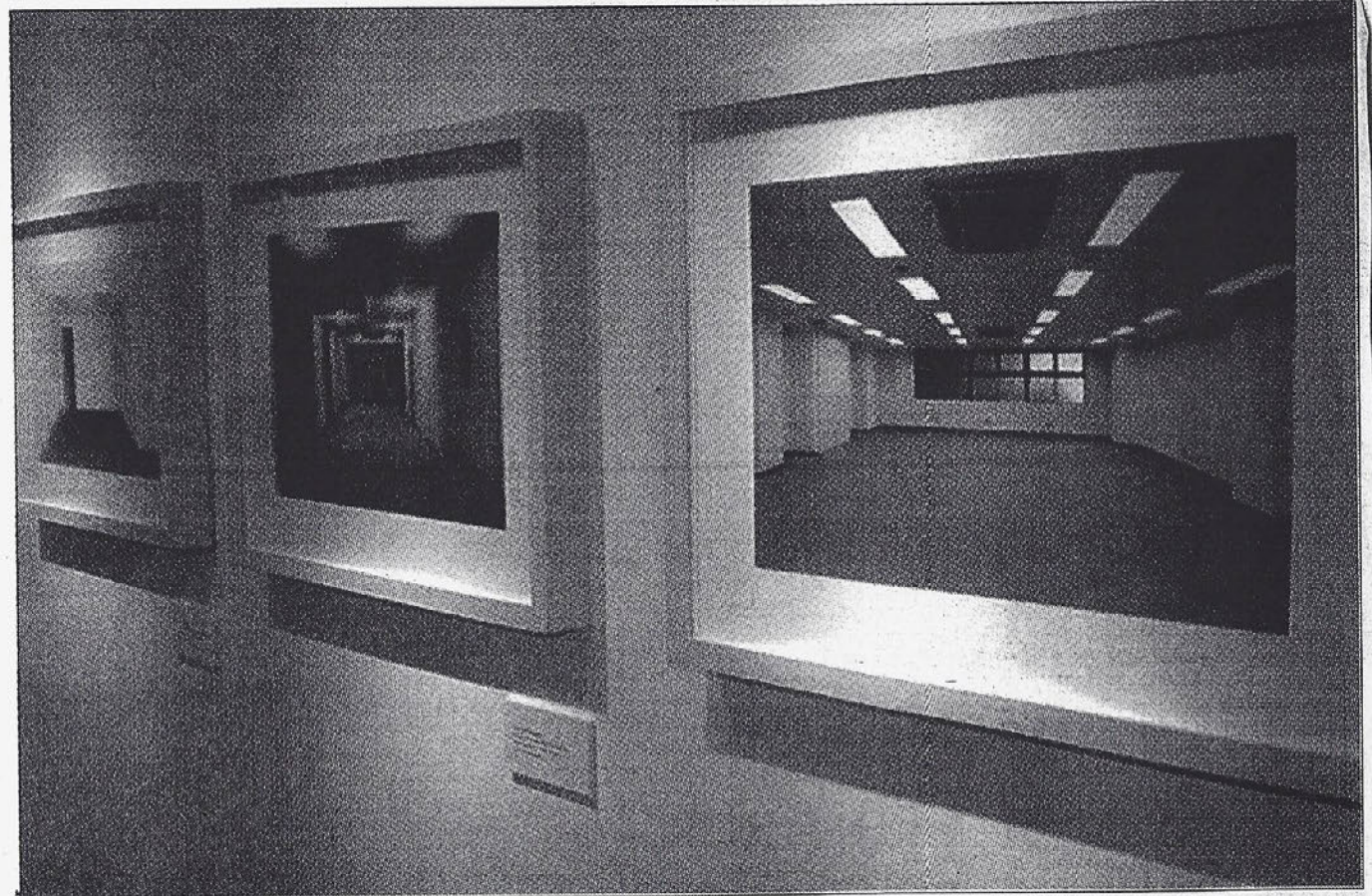
One of five in Zhang Hontu's *Shitao (Album)* – Van Gogh.

Story and photos
Elphina Magona

Over 170 people attended the opening night at the National Gallery's *TransASIAN* in Cayman, an exhibition of contemporary Asian art on Monday. Visitors to the 2,000

attended and provocative show.

The exhibition, which runs until 23 December, offers an engaging exposition of cultural fusion and contemporary forms of expression as experienced and translated by Asian artists, some living predominantly in the



Photographs in Fumiko Nozawa's *For Rent* series.

insightful work, informed by exposure to Western culture by seven artists from Japan, China, Korea and Vietnam, shared wall and floor space.

Pieces ranged from oils, photography and installation pieces to video art.

The exhibition's theme

interpret and make sense of cultural diversity through the social constructs including race, culture and identity.

The fusion of East meets West, as it shapes and influences their art, is retold in seven strikingly different ways. The differences in media and interpreta-

while retaining a strong sense of Self.

Two of the seven artists and the show's bi-lingual guest curator accompanied the exhibition. All were on hand to guide visitors through the pieces.

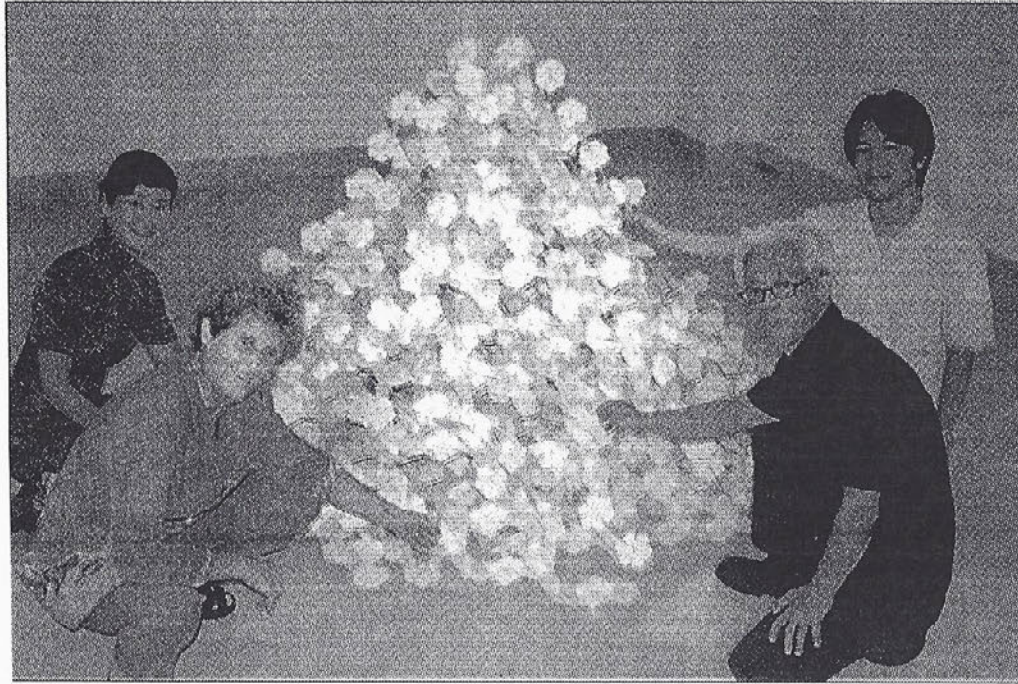
Chinese born Zhang Hongtu, now resident in Brooklyn, New York, was

familiar but retain a vibrant and tangible link to classical Chinese landscape art.

The oils, says Zhang, are "a marriage of classical Chinese *Shitao* landscape art and Impressionism.

"Basically my paintings relate to my life experiences and education in China and the United States.

ConversASIAN



The exhibition's guest curator, Miyako Yoshinaga; national gallery director, Leslie Bigelman, artists Zhang Hongtu and Toshihiro Sakuma touch Toshihiro's installation *Colony*.

and Western cultures. Generally, I think today everyone is mixed, nothing is pure... and similarly, pure is no longer the standard and the ideal it was."

Japanese artist Toshihiro Sakuma was the other exhibitor present at the show. He is the originator of a piece called *Colony*. This includes 14 photographic images on display, each with the overlaid faces of 100 Japanese males both living and dead.

As custom dictates, the images are mounted high on the walls out of respect to ancestors. All looking unnervingly the same. The images bring to mind perceptions of Asian ho-

mogeneity and the historic insularity of Japanese, in particular, in terms of miscegenation.

The other part of the exhibit is the three-foot cone-like installation. The artist's interpretation of this piece rests with the four definitions of what colony means.

Two thousand interconnected cards, each bearing the name of Japanese living and dead, were culled from telephone directories, the Internet, tombstones and schools and represent the interconnectedness of in-

dividuals.

One got the impression, speaking to the artist, that the installation represents Occidental thinking that individualism is more commonly subsumed in a greater collective consciousness.

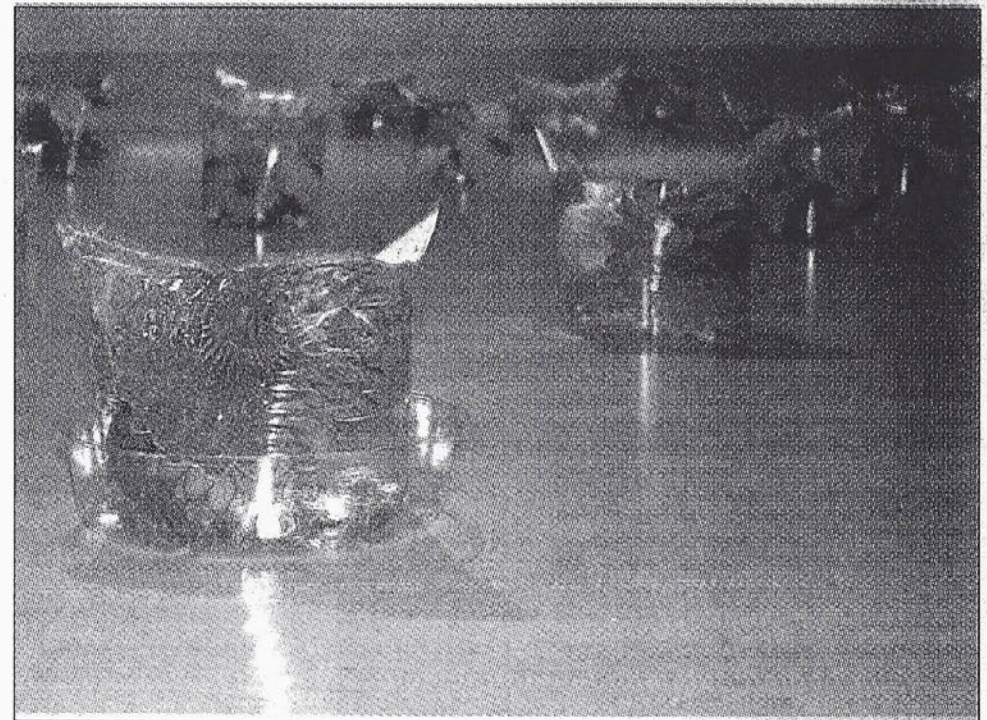
Another strong exhibit is Yang Zhenzhong's video "I Will Die".

All 31 pieces are for sale.

A fascinating exhibition ConversASIAN in Cayman is definitely worth viewing, and for some will merit a second visit to the Gallery in Harbour Place.



One contributor in Yang Zhenzhong's disturbing video *I Will Die*.



Part of Hoang Duong Cam's installation *Wedding*.