

## Stretched Connotations

★★★★★

**White Tube** Until March 31

Calling the narrow stretch of corridor on the 10th floor of the Hong Kong Arts Centre the White Tube gallery doesn't change the fact that the space is in fact an entrance hallway to the Hong Kong Art School. Two officious looking receptionists perched behind banker teller style windows point to the dimly lit alleyway punctuated by doors and light switches and confirm that this is in fact the whole display space being utilised for *Stretched Connotations*, a group exhibition examining the use of canvas in painting.

But modest surroundings aside, it is commendable that the people at HKAS are determined to use every available space to nurture and display current works by developing local artists. In this case the curation of Helen Ng and Evangelo Costadimas have carefully utilised the space to create

an interesting narrative discussing an endless debate in art. The first use of canvas in painting is thought to span back to the 16th century, during the Italian renaissance; five centuries later and a group of Hong Kong artist are still inspired to examine its enduring use as a medium.

Stephanie Sin's large white diptych *Habitat Inhibition* opens the show, a mixture of oil, acrylic, sand and dry pastel hint at the swirling iron works of a hidden gate. Her restraint in palette is in harsh contrast to the blistering greens and pinks of Carol Ho's *Swing for Love*, the final canvas tucked around the corner of the cramped corridor. In addition to their painted pieces the artists have each compiled a study of their works in sketches and notes that have then been pinned to the reverse frame of an empty canvas and placed in close proximity to the

finished works. As a lesson in artistic practices the studies are interesting, kitsch glimpses into the creative mind, but as a grand addition to the canvas controversy they are perhaps rightly left out in the hallway. *Mary Agnew*



**Colourful dream** Carol Ho's *Swing for Love*