

FEATURE: Up in a cloud at Gaysorn



by Pattarawadee Saengmanee

BANGKOK (The Nation/ANN) - Celebrated Chinese design artist Yu Jordy Fu lets her imagination float free at the Bangkok mall.

Bangkok's Gaysorn mall is becoming even livelier with art, beginning with the exhibition "Jordy's Multidiscipline Showcase", which continues right through July. China's Yu Jordy Fu combines architecture, fashion and art to demonstrate that creativity is truly boundless.

"I've seen Jordy's works in several countries and really admire her talent," says Korakot Srivikorn, Gaysorn's executive director. "For this show we wanted her to create pieces that would fit in harmoniously with the mall."

Shoppers are immediately dazzled on entering by the sight of an enormous butterfly. Further along there's "Cloud", a complex, 250-metre-long and 18-meter-tall vertical installation made up of layers of luxury lifestyle products - just like you'd find in a department store, but arrayed in a fantastical way.

Jordy has adapted Chinese paper-cutting techniques to stainless steel and aluminium, coated the metal in white powder and deployed LED lights and natural illumination from the skylights to create shadows.

"It is like a cloud!" she says. "A cloud takes recognisable different forms depending on your imagination. I sketched out the sculptural form using a 3D computer programme and cut the aluminium with a laser. I also used sewing techniques and inserted the details of jewellery into each layer to represent the urban lifestyle."

Jordy was born in Chengdu and from an early age was sketching the outlines of buildings. She actually had a solo exhibition when she was only six, at the Beijing Capital Museum, and a year later was publishing books of her drawings.

Just 16 when she was accepted at St Martin's College of Art and Design in London, she completed a course in spatial design and then took her master's in architecture at the Royal College of Art.

In 2005 the British Council named Jordy among 10 young artists chosen to present their innovative design work in both the UK and China. The following year she gained wider fame with a piece at the Venice Architecture Biennale, "Family Project", which involved paper cut by hand, and with a partner set up a design and architecture company, Marques & Jordy.

The firm has since done commissions for Hermes, Selfridges, the Design Museum and the Southbank Centre in London and Bloomberg's headquarters in the British capital.

"My company works in interior design, architecture, furniture design and fashion," Jordy says. "We've designed many five-star resorts, office buildings, shopping malls and private mansions around the world."

The "Cloud" pieces have become a signature for her, mingling diverse materials and traditional and contemporary techniques to assemble three-dimensional landscapes.

"I'm a creator, but I'm also basically an architect," Jordy says. "I like creating inspirations for everyday life. I combine nature and art, and the work is easy to understand. Every Cloud uses the same concept and techniques, but they're different in the details of the stories they tell, and they can be assembled in several forms, just as a cloud has a variety of shapes."

Now there's also the J by Jordy clothing brand, which debuted at Arab Fashion Week in Dubai last year. "I like fashion and my designs have a romantic fluidity, blending art and architecture," she says.

The Gallery is hosting several of Jordy's best-known pieces. There's a Cloud chandelier with LED lights that throw striking shadows on the walls, and a Cloud lamp in laser-cut aluminium resembling the wings of a butterfly while bearing a pattern of Thai elephants.

"The Cloud and Butterfly lamps are meant to be artworks that people can actually use. Most of my designs relate to nature and particularly animals. I get involved in animal-protection campaigns."

Among her futuristic furniture and home decor are a Dream sofa - a gorgeous balance of elegance and modern design - the dust-proof Tulip rag and a Butterfly wall fixture with soft and fluid lines.

Also on view are Jordy's inaugural line of layered evening dresses, similarly contrived with a paper-cutting technique so the silhouette seems architectural, and her oil paintings, both abstract and figurative, rendered in sweeping brushstrokes and very emotive.

"Fire" captures the power of a horse in motion, full of the fire of life that burns inside to escape restraints. "Sun Beaming" portrays a cloud in different shapes, and "Daybreak Fusion" is inspired by the light and shadows found in places Jordy has visited.

You can pick up some lovely souvenirs, too, including ornately cut cards depicting scenes from the fashion runway and women shoppers trying on shoes, clothing and jewellery.