

# Richard Skene on the art scene

‘The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom’

By Bruce Stanley

RICHARD Skene is no stranger to art nor to Phuket. While his professional training is in the management of property, he has maintained a lifelong interest in how art can reflect the struggle to find happiness.

“I’ve observed that the path to happiness can lead either to the pursuit of pleasure or the pursuit of restraint as practiced by followers of the Buddhist path. Thailand is a remarkable country where a person can travel in both directions with freedom of choice and opportunity.”

Richard is a self-trained artist. He has extensive knowledge of what is happening in the world of modern art and ideas. He follows the style of such iconic installation artists as Damian Hirst and Jeff Koons, whereby he creates a concept, designs the look, chooses the materials and then uses technicians to create the final product. This is a method used in the Italian Renaissance when well known artists would have studio assistants complete their ideas to a canvas or a wall.

“The Road of Excess Leads to the Palace of Wisdom” is the concept for Richard’s show at Breeze restaurant where owner Peter Hamilton displays his modern sculptures by Chinese artists.

“At Breeze, we want to provide the best things in life, including contemporary cuisine and interesting art. I’m happy to give Richard’s work some exposure on Phuket as it meets a high international standard,” explains Peter.

Richard recently qualified as a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (FRICS) and spent a couple years working with the Banyan Tree Resorts launching their luxury villas. Currently, he has his own sales and marketing consultancy and represents the residences of the W retreat on Koh Samui.

But creating art fills his spare time. He is not a painter but works with photography, screen prints, light installations and sculptures.

For his Phuket show, he is presenting images of what he sees as the “second most beautiful woman in the world.” *Foxy Lady* combines both positive and negative photographic images to heighten the erotic appeal of his ideal woman.

He likes to work with themes that



ALLURING: Artist Richard Skene with his piece *Foxy Lady* and *the Divine States of Buddhism* on the left. Photos: Jeremie Schatz

combine and contrast Thai life with American culture.

“The United States is the dominant power in the world. The country’s founding philosophy is man’s right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness not unlike the Thai Buddhist philosophy of pursuing happiness through meditation and non-attachment to all states of desire. While the Western model promotes consumption and the pursuit of physical pleasures, I’m interested in which path actually gets a person to the greater sense of happiness.”

His clever use of cultural imagery makes his work engaging. He designed an American flag using gold leaf for the stripes and the symbol of Buddhism, the *darmachakra*, for the stars. He’s created his own version of the Thai flag using a

light box with red, blue and white light bulbs. And he’s taken magical symbols used in religious tattoos and imposed his own ideas on an innovative design. All of Richard’s art shows a lively mind engaged in exploring new interpretations of universal themes on the pursuit of pleasure.

He speaks with great enthusiasm about his work celebrating the beauty of women. As much of his art is too graphic for publication, Phuket’s art lovers will have to visit Breeze restaurant at the entrance to Cape Yamu before January 5, 2014 to catch this stimulating show.

For more information on Richard Skene and his show at BREEZE, please email: [breezcapeyamu.com](mailto:breezcapeyamu.com) or [richardskene.com](http://richardskene.com) or contact Khun Ong 086 334 3333.



Breeze owner Peter Hamilton.



Art enthusiasts came to admire Richard Skene’s exhibition at Breeze restaurant.



Skene likes to work with themes that combine and contrast Thai life with American culture.