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Sampson Wong and Jason Lam, the artists behind *Pavilion for Our Living*.

Hong Kong: a cradle for arts and culture?

By Amanda Hui, Ambrose Li, and Arianna Mercado

In Hong Kong, a subdivided flat can hardly fit a bed frame, but at least your mattress is about three steps away from the kitchen.

Amidst the glamour of Atelier Swarovski and the flashiness of fashion brand initial's booth at Art Central, there is an empty box. Hong Kong artists Sampson Wong and Jason Lam's work, *Pavilion for Our Living*, replicated a 130 sq.ft. subdivided flat—a regular living situation for many of their friends. With lights and audio recordings, they diagram where the bed, kitchen and toilet are located.

Wong and Lam tackle only the tip of an iceberg of problems encountered by people working in the arts in Hong Kong: a curator, a theater manager, a musician, an artist. While large-scale contemporary art endeavors such as Art Basel, M+, and H Queen's continue to develop and project a colorful and progressive image of the Hong Kong art scene, the reality among working artists and others in creative fields is often much bleaker.

Vincent Chan, co-owner of Leo Gallery and a director of Hong Kong Art Galleries Association, said one of the biggest challenges local galleries face is actually increased competition from international galleries.

Contrary to popular belief, lack of space may not even be the main problem. "The control of money and spaces that can be allocated to the arts is dominated mostly by the government," said John Batten, president of the International Association of Art Critics Hong Kong. "That opens the possibility of censorship and homogenisation," he said.

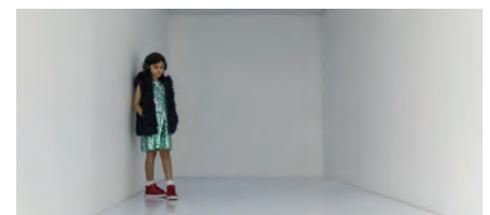
It is common to see the government remove artworks from public spaces. Last year, yarn-bombing pieces in Causeway Bay by a local art group Le Belle Epoque were removed, despite the artist and property owner following proper protocol. Ultimately, the work remained after public protests. Foreign artists receive similar treatment, such as when authorities removed works by French street artist Invader less than a month after its installation in 2014.

Wong said there is a polarised development in the cultural sector. There are plenty of art events in the city, yet few of them actively engage the public. For events like Art Central and Art Basel, he said, "it is 100% profit-making so it is not their main goal to promote local art or educate the public about the arts." Wong believes that rather than focusing on making millions, arts and culture should stimulate creativity.

The Arts Development Council gives out about HK\$1 million each year to support young artists in music, theatre, visual arts and other disciplines. Unfortunately, there are few initiatives that are philanthropic or artist-run.

Batten would rather see the government allocate space to independent groups. Doing so would allow for diversity and a variety of options for younger artists to further hone their craft and express their creativity, especially as commercial galleries tend to prefer more established artists for their roster of exhibitions. In this way, artists may not be as bound to producing revenue or to subscribing only to a particular idea.

Despite its efforts to present itself as a global arts hub, Hong Kong continues to be a difficult place for local artists to work. Wong said he didn't expect to see drastic changes to the industry, but he plans to continue working toward a more public-spirited arts scene.



Signals and Borders: Wolfgang Tillmans' Hong Kong

By Laurene Cen

One of the first things you notice about Wolfgang Tillmans' show isn't his photographs. Rather, it's the sound of Hong Kong traffic signals that echo through the Zwirner gallery, five floors above the street.

Tillmans recorded the signals on a previous visit to Hong Kong in his capacity as a DJ. "I recorded this in January, cut and modulated it in the studio," he said.

The four chambers of the self-titled exhibition, Tillmans' first in Hong Kong, are roughly organized in a manner that the upper floor of the two-story gallery contains mostly landscape and colourful photocopy works, while portraiture and Hong Kong features are downstairs.

"Each room could be an installation itself," the artist said. "But they are also connected, through different aspects that exist within my world."

Born in Germany, Tillmans is known for his diverse documentary snapshots and portraits. He was the first photographer and first non-Brit to win the Turner Prize.

The exhibition features a series of new works on Hong Kong, interspersed with those from 25 years ago when he first visited the city. He captures Hong Kong's liveliness: maids playing cards on a street in 2018, a reporter at a butcher's stall in 1993.

One theme of this show is Tillmans' study of Hong Kong's borders. In a pair of photos, he frames the dense towers of Shenzhen across the river with the bushes and reeds on the less-developed Hong Kong side.

For Tillmans, the presentation of his photos is as interesting as their subject matter. The artist invites the audience to "think about how was it made, what do I want to see in it, what do I really see in it, and what was the translation of the camera."



Wolfgang Tillmans at David Zwirners. Photo: Raphael Erhart

ART BUZZ



Notating Beauty That Moves – Music at an Exhibition, ArtisTree – Connecting the Dots concert, by Hong Kong Sinfonietta and Ensemble Offspring. Image courtesy of Swire Properties

Music in sight and art in motion

On Notating Beauty that Moves – Music at an Exhibition

By Lexie Ma, Helen Yau and Sam Ng

Dozens of paintings hang perpendicular to a flat wall, like the splayed pages of a book. Each page contains a musical score, superimposed with a child's watercolor paintings. The scores belonged to the father of Thai artist Thitiphorn Kotham, and the watercolors are hers from childhood. Kotham created the work as a way to reach out to her father, a musician who died when she was three.

Kotham's work, *Moon Spell in Summer*, is part of an exhibition called *Notating Beauty That Moves - Music at an Exhibition* assembled by Hong Kong composer Samson Young and independent curator Yang Yeung. The exhibition at ArtisTree in Taikoo Place features music-related visual art shown in conjunction with a series of 13 concerts ranging from classical to avant-garde, performed by members of the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the acclaimed Australian group Ensemble Offspring.

Scores from composers such as John Cage and Anestis Logothetis are on display, as well as drawings, photography, paintings, texts and videos from various artists exploring the intersection between visual art and music.

The exhibition takes place in a space comprised of an amphitheater set inside a larger room with the paintings hung on the surrounding wall. "The space is organized this way such that if visitors come in when a performance is ongoing, they can go through the outer ring and sit at the table to touch and flip through the scores while enjoying the music," Young said.

"I may not hear music from the musical scores, but they are beautiful objects," Yeung said. "They are very complex and precise as well."

To the curators, musical notations represent "a world of beauty which may be universally accessed, seen, and felt," as with Kotham's connection to her father's old scores.

Young, a sound artist as well as a composer, said he crosses into various artistic fields spontaneously. "It's not like I set out to cross into different genres," he said. "It's just that I'm curious, I guess."

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BEHIND THE NEWS



H Queen's Takes its Throne in Central

By Carmel Yang and Raphael Erhart

As the city braced for Hong Kong Art Week, a sizeable crowd wrapped around a block on Queen's Road Central on Monday. The line was for the public showing of H Queen's, a new self-described art and lifestyle building located in the heart of Hong Kong's financial district.

The 24-story high-rise developed by Henderson Land Development is the city's first property designed specifically for art galleries. Lead architect William Lim, of CL3, said he hopes it will bring more of an art scene to the Central district.

Lim first proposed the building to Henderson some five-and-a-half years ago. "Around that time, there were galleries coming to Hong Kong; it was difficult to find space, so many moved into office buildings. It was a difficult thing to visit these galleries on weekends."

The new building attempts to solve two problems for high-end galleries in Hong Kong: access to spaces that can fit large works of art, and a presence located in the city center.

Each floor has 4,000 to 5,000 square feet and the nearly five-metre high ceilings are a direct reaction to the low ceilings that hampered galleries looking for space in Central. The building is fitted with an external gondola system and large windows to allow tenants to hoist artworks in from the outside.

"I really like the building. I come from banking, so I've been in buildings like this before but I've never been in a building like this whose purpose is to show art," said Henrietta Tsui-Leung, founder of the Hong Kong-based Galerie Ora-Ora.

"It's great to be in the same building with other galleries: [David] Zwirner, Pace, us, that's great," said Marc Payot, vice president and

partner of Swiss-based gallery Hauser & Wirth. "The quality of not only the building but also the rooms and the location are unique here in Hong Kong."

However, some tenants have found it difficult to move their large-sized artworks into the building, whose elevators are too small for some of the big pieces. The gondola system works, they say, but wait times for city permits to use it can take four weeks, and it must be operated in the middle of the night after traffic has cleared.

"They've got the gondola system, which is available around two times a month for all of the galleries," Tsui-Leung said. "So we changed how we bring in the work by framing the paintings on location."

A representative for H Queen's said at least five tenants had used the gondola system "with satisfactory feedback." She confirmed that city permits were required in order to use it, but said the building management had provided them with several contractors to help coordinate the permitting process.

H Queen's is just a few blocks from the historic Pedder Building, which in recent years has seen an influx of high-end galleries wanting to open in Central. Ben Brown Fine Arts, which moved into Pedder, was drawn to its high ceilings, and accessible stairways and lifts, managing director Amanda Hon said. With six galleries in the building now, there is currently no more gallery space available, she said.

Ora-Ora's Tsui-Leung said her move to H Queen's has not only increased her gallery's exposure to the public, bringing in around 120 people on a typical Saturday. The building helps get artists more visibility, she said.

梁寶山：Art Basel 是藝術界迪士尼

By Helen Yau and Sam Ng



藝評人、《我愛Art Basel》作者梁寶山

Q: 書名《我愛Art Basel - 論盡藝術與資本》有甚麼含義？

A: 書名明顯是 marketing! Art Basel 只是全面資本化的代名詞。表面上說「我愛 Art Basel」，但想問的是「Art Basel 愛不愛我」呢？這個全球資本運作到底會否和我「講心」呢？藝博會本質是買賣，不是教育，也不是像博物館那樣為你解釋藝術。它和你「講金」，為何你卻和它「講心」？

Q: 香港政府和商界不時舉辦文化藝術大型活動，你認為這種藝術盛事化對香港的藝術發展有甚麼影響？

A: 今年旅發局推廣三月是香港藝術月，活動包括 Art Basel、香港藝術節、電影節、深水埗壁畫、火炭工作室參觀等。這種企劃其實是從消費角度考慮應該提供甚麼予人消費。假如這樣本末倒置地發展文化，到底本土的人需要的是甚麼？這就好像被忽略了。

Q: 香港的藝術生態不太成熟，Art Basel 一下子成為規模最大的藝博，更加劇了香港藝術發展由市場主導的傾向。你認為這樣是行錯了步驟嗎？

A: 我不會說是行錯步驟，因為每個城市都有自己的境況。Art Basel 顯得重大是因為它是一個全球化機器，是藝術界的迪士尼。最初紮根巴塞爾，然後在邁阿密開分店，就像開了個東京迪士尼；然後到香港，就像又多開一間上海迪士尼。至於 Art Basel 和香港的新自由主義經濟一拍即合，是因為資本運作條件已準備就緒。因此，它可以完完全全和香港的文化藝術本身沒有任何關係。

Q: 你將來有甚麼計劃？

A: 我最大的希望是「轉like成錢」。做這一行很虛幻，和娛樂圈一樣，你很紅、很多人關注，不代表已擁有金錢上可持續的事業。書寫的報酬比藝術家的報酬更少、更漫長，而我很不幸的選擇了書寫。

THE VOICE



George Condo: Following Picasso's Footsteps

By Raphael Erhart

What would the art of Pablo Picasso look like if he was working today? Would it be like that of contemporary American artist George Condo? The auction house Sotheby's certainly thinks so, and hopes that the moneyed collectors in Asia see the connection too.

In an exhibition running concurrently with Art Basel, Sotheby's juxtaposes the works of the Spanish inventor of cubism with those of Condo, who has described his own style as "psychological cubism."

One of the first things attendees at a press event were told about the exhibition—which features 41 works including 12 Picassos and 17 Condos for sale, plus another four Condos and seven Picassos on loan—was the art's value. The estimate is more than US\$300 million. This time, the paintings are offered at a set price, which is a departure from Sotheby's usual auction format.

"The inspiration for this exhibition came as a result of the strong interest from Asian collectors for works from these two legendary artists," Sotheby's said.

According to a UBS report on the global art market, the Asian market accounted for 23% of global sales in 2017. Asian buyers accounted for 15% of global dealer sales, with Chinese buyers representing 10% of those sales globally. That is up from 4% in 2016.

Condo's works range from abstract—such as one called *Red, White and Black*, which evokes Picasso with a stylised face and human eye—to some that remind the viewer of Disney characters, such as *The Opera Singer*, a mouse-like creature in a dress.

The exhibition, which runs from March 16 to 31, wasn't intended to coincide with Art Basel, which also ends March 31, gallery director Jonathan Wong said. The show is associated with the Sotheby's spring auctions, which start on March 30.



What Is the Value of Time?

By Franziska Winkler

An Inch of Time for an Inch of Gold is written in neon letters across Morgan Wong's booth at Art Basel in Hong Kong. The title refers to a Chinese proverb about the value of time.

On the booth's floor lies a snake-like gold chain, apparently one piece. But a closer look shows it is made up of separate, overlapping chains. Each contains a watch whose face has been filled with concrete.

This is the second time Wong, 34, has exhibited at Art Basel Hong Kong. The local artist has been producing for more than 10 years. The hardest thing about working in Hong Kong, he said, is finding the space, since rents are high and the city so dense.

Wong has been thinking about the concept of time since he studied to earn a MFA at University College London's Slade School of Fine Art. "I see the passage of time as a predicament, something we can never control—even if we try to," he said.

In 2013 Wong showed *I Got Time*, a 20-day performance in which he held 20 different cups of concrete for 24 hours each. In that performance, as well as in *An Inch of Time for an Inch of Gold*, he tries the impossible: stopping time. "The phrase 'I got time' is never true, for we are always bound to the system of time," he said.

Wong is exploring another angle on time: According to theoretical physics, he said, the passage of time might not even exist. "It gives me a kind of exit, so I don't have to be bound to the system of time anymore."

About Cultural Journalism Campus 關於文化新聞學研習營

Cultural Journalism Campus (CJC) is an award-winning non-profit educational initiative spearheaded by leading journalist Vivienne Chow.

CJC aspires to promote arts and culture among young people and children through the practice of cultural journalism, art criticism and storytelling.

In 2014, CJC launched CJC Fellowship, which aims to foster a new generation of talented writers who aspire to become journalists and critics covering arts and culture.

文化新聞學研習營是一個由資深新聞工作者 Vivienne Chow 創辦的非牟利教育計劃。自 2014 年開創起，文化新聞學研習營致力發掘具潛質、並熱衷於新聞工作和文化藝術評論的新一代。每年的 CJC Fellowship 也給予年青的新聞記者、就讀新聞系或文化藝術相關學科的大專生從事媒體工作的經驗。在資深新聞工作者和評論家的指導下，CJC Fellowship 為年青作者提供一個獨特的平台發表他們的文章，提高大眾對文化新聞和藝術評論的關注。