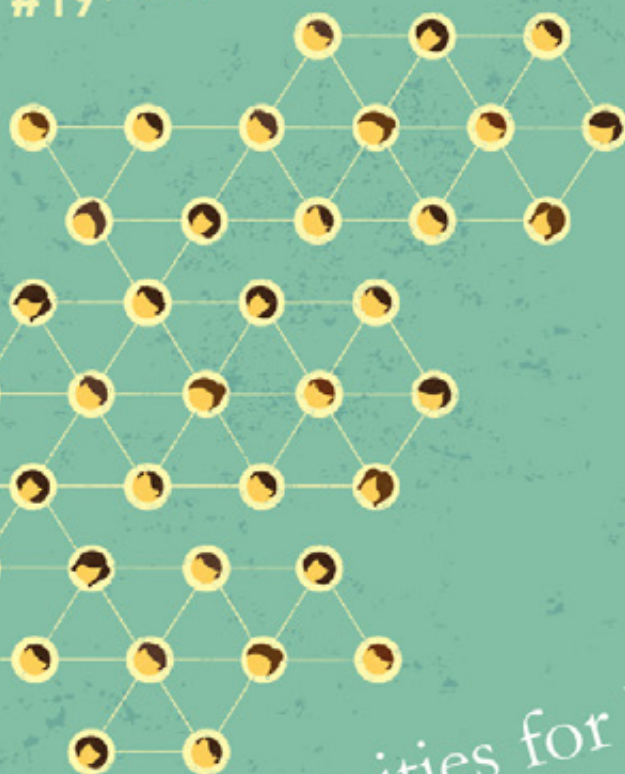




C²

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#19 / 2017 02



Opportunities for Macao's
Online Celebrities

Brand Story

O-Moon: The New Blood in Accessory Design in Macao

Opinion

Niche and Market Positioning — Interview with Branding Designer Mann Lao

Budding Talents

Life Observer Behind the Lens

Interview with Up and Coming Director Hong Heng Fai



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Editor's Letter

Online celebrities have become a meme on the internet for a while. A lot of creative practitioners have made good use of the power of the online communities to launch their works and spread their whimsical ideas. In the Feature, travel writer Sio Ng shares her experience in running a facebook fan page which eventually brought her an opportunity to publish her travelogue. Comedian duo Shoot & Chop, full-time online celebrity Carl Ao leong, and renowned Hong Kong-based illustrator Tse Sai Pei also talk about how they made a name for themselves as cyberstars and their thoughts on web marketing.

Macao has no shortage of accessory shops, but only a few of them boast cultural and creative elements. Emerging brand O-Moon saw the gap in the market and has accordingly launched products flavoured with Macao characteristics. In Brand Story, the co-founders of O-Moon share their insight into how to tap into the market of creative merchandise and the key to successful operation and marketing. In Opinion, Mann Lao, Creative & Managing Director of Chiii Design Ltd. advises young designers to carefully position themselves in order to stand out in a crowded market. Lao used to work in Hong Kong, the Mainland and Portugal. He returned to Macao several years ago and now actively engages himself in grooming local design talents. In Budding Talents, up and coming director Hong Heng Fai is in the spotlight. His short film *Crash* was nominated in the "Best Live Action Short Film" category of last year's Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, becoming the first Macao picture to be nominated for that award.

Our bloggers, as ever, continue to bring news and insight about creative industries around the world.

C² Magazine Editorial Board

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and the interviewees, which do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao S.A.R. Government.



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In the Mainland, "online economy" is thriving, with leading online celebrities enjoying much higher salaries than first-tier pop stars. Their popularity stems largely from fashionable trends, while some make their fame by creative acts. For the latter, their work has given impetus to the arts and cultural industries. Indeed, what are the prospects for these local online celebrities? In today's online world, how do they maintain their competitiveness? In this issue, we find out about the stories of local online celebrities Sio Ng, the duo Shoot & Chop, Carl Ao leong, as well as Hong Kong-based Tse Sai Pei.

Opportunities for Macao's

Text by Jason Leong
Photo courtesy of Samsam Chao@Sam's images,
Calvan sin Production and interviewees

Online Celebrities

Global Traveller Sio Ng: Publication Opportunities

Having travelled around the world for some 800 days, Sio's travelogue via social media has become a tremendous hit. In just two years' time, Sio's fan page has garnered the support of nearly 60,000 followers. At the end of last year, she approached publishers in Taiwan for interest to publish her travelogue. Her book, *The Heart's Freedom Lies in the Sky*, rose to the top of chart as soon as in its pre-launch, being ranked as one of the top ten books to read. However, Sio confessed that the process has been somewhat challenging: "You may not know, but I have travelled for some 1,600 instead of 800 days, and that the greatest challenge of this project is not so much about the trip itself, but the work that comes after it!" According to her agreement with the Taiwanese publisher, the publisher would help Sio execute the marketing and publicity for the book, provided that Sio first launch a personal webpage to amass interest. This means that the book project will only go ahead if there is enough evidence of support, and will be scrapped if there isn't. "It explains why I was quite desperate for support at that time. I even call my friends individually to explain my situation in order to secure more support. At first, I could hardly sleep, being so preoccupied with this challenge. Once I realised that the project is going ahead, I was able to relax a little more," Sio laughed.

Sio's overseas cultural experience is a rather unique theme, and it has successfully gained for Sio tremendous popularity. Many commercial clients have also contacted her to get Sio advertise for them, hoping to leverage on her publicity to produce short films for selling their own products. "To be honest, I don't know why they want to find me. After all, I am not even pretty. Perhaps they like my image, my ability to speak several languages or my outlook in life?"

Earlier, a Japanese property agency from Osaka even invited Sio to Japan to shoot a promotional video on Japanese tourism and their products, offering to sponsor her expenses and accommodation, including an income of over MOP 10,000 per episode. This is certainly a very attractive offer that Sio found hard to turn down, although she admitted that such invitations do not always come so easily.

In building her success as an online celebrity, the self-defined "business-minded creative practitioner" reveals how she would go through a project proposal with her clients, listing out in detail the number of followers, her online responses and posts, complemented by graphs and pictures as well as chronology. Thanks to her well-planned execution, it is not difficult to see why she

managed to win so many projects.

The advancement of technology means that campaigns using online personalities are becoming more and more popular. Sio pointed out that this approach has gone on for some time abroad, although at the present there are not so many of such instances in Hong Kong and Macao. She also urged those interested to make a name for themselves in this industry to be more proactive. Sio felt that there are many mobile-friendly apps tailored for online celebrities. In the same way, clients would upload the desirable criteria for the advertised roles, so that the prospective job-seekers could identify themselves and liaise with the company. This convenient, one-stop procedure is not dissimilar to job-hunting.

Sio added that nowadays, many online celebrities, especially those who focus on cosmetics and beauty or gym industries, do not know anything other than their own sector, and don't understand the importance of marketing or client communication. Therefore, those apps mentioned are helpful in guiding them in the early stages. Of course, using these services will entail some additional middle-man fees, which will be

used to sustain these platforms.

While most may assume that travelling around the world is a work of leisure, Sio revealed that the work is actually much harder than one can think. "One of the most challenging things is that I have to keep up with my fanpage daily, maintaining the popularity ranking. Every day I have to come up with at least one or two posts. This isn't always so easy to do! What's more, I am constantly responding to messages from the online users too, so sometimes I could barely find time to rest."

According to Sio, she is someone who enjoys a more leisurely pace. On the other hand, being an online celebrity, she has to respond to a fast-paced online world where time is of essence. In producing her own videos, Sio would usually set a deadline of around three days to herself. For her, there is hardly a moment when she can be truly unwind. "Many projects such as the advertisement on car racing, have a definite deadline. But sometimes the pace for video production is just so quick that it is hard to catch up."

"Having the experience of running a production house myself, I appreciate that the income of each production is quite high, and can rise up to over MOP 10,000. However, my income gained from my fanpage only comes up to thousand dollars, which is very little compared to a proper full-time job. There are lots of untapped opportunities in online marketing. Perhaps in the future people can combine both elements in life, and that we are allowed to operate our pages with the support of the company."

* Sio Ng travels around the world for 800 days. She shares her experiences on social media and later on successfully publishes her travelogue.



Shoot & Chop: A Hilarious Take on Macao

When browsing social media, have you noticed an entertaining viral clip that features a group of Western-looking friends conversing in Cantonese? This film comes from the emerging local media community, Shoot & Chop, a hugely successful community with over 20,000 followers in just a year's time.

Shoot & Chop is co-managed by Kenny and Iwin, with Kenny being responsible for the creative production, from filmmaking to performance, while Iwin is responsible for external affairs such as client liaison. Together with two full-time staff, they

operate Shoot & Chop from a rented unit in a creative arts centre, where the wild and hilarious materials are created.

Other than film production, Kenny oversees the commissioning of online celebrities, whose sense of humour helps to raise the profile for the company. A Macao-born Canadian who has returned to the city, Kenny advocates films that focus on the cultural clash between the East and the West. Coupled with Kenny's fast-paced film editing techniques, all the uploaded videos command well over 1,000 likes by its fans, as well as numerous comments. One of the hugely popular clips feature Kenny's foreign friends, as they try out exotic Chinese food such as stinky tofu and shrimp paste.

• The comedy duo Shoot & Chop. Kenny is director, producer and actor, while Iwin is responsible for external public relations and negotiating deals.



Their expressive agony and dialogue, juxtaposed with curious Chinese phrases, are all so entertaining that the clip will bring tears to your eyes.

Another strength of Shoot & Chop is in producing satires inspired by local current affairs. One film, for example, questions the delay of the typhoon signal no.8 during adverse weather. Directed and produced by Kenny himself, the narrative mocks the situation by telling us that Kenny's motorcycle has been blown away by the typhoon, and questions if the government will make the day after the typhoon a statutory holiday for everyone's benefit. Neatly poised between humour and irony, it is not hard to understand why it wins so much support from online viewers.

Riding on co-partner Iwin's substantial public relations experience in Macao, Shoot & Chop also engages in commercial filmmaking projects, with most clients coming from the small- to medium- enterprises and entertainment enterprises. From time to time, they will also bid for government projects such as films to prevent drug abuse. Because of their extremely popularity, winning projects is not an issue.

All things considering, the success of the company lies

in Kenny's creative ideas presented in a somewhat Western style. Raised in Canada, Kenny's parents are local-born Macao natives, and so Kenny grew up speaking fluent English and Cantonese. This certainly helps him understand a lot more about both Eastern and Western cultures.

After graduating from his degree in new media at university, Kenny went on to work in a film production company, where he acquired his sophisticated filmmaking skills. "I enjoy shooting films since I was small, and would bring my viewcam everywhere to make new clips. Nowadays, I would like to portray what my hometown is like under my lens."

At the beginning, Kenny has a dilemma choosing whether to base their company in Macao, in Hong Kong or in the Mainland. Having visited all three places and compared them, he decided to return to launch his business in Macao, since it is his hometown where his family is based. Moreover, he also finds the people in Macao much more friendly.

Nowadays, with publicity relying heavily on online networks, Shoot & Chop is certainly well-positioned to benefit from this. Nevertheless, other than their entertaining jokes, what is it that makes them so fearless in their ironic critiques of those in power? "Perhaps it has to do with my love for the city. I just cannot stay silent when I see injustices in the system," Kenny said. "Moreover, there is an abundant supply of similar, over-conservative video materials on YouTube. I think filmmaking is a creative practice and so we need to think out of the box." Iwin also said that Shoot & Chop is still developing. In the future, their company will continue to produce more fascinating, hilarious films that capture the latest happenings in Macao.

Carl Ao leong the Full-time Web Celebrity: From a Virtual World to Fronting the Real World

Many will be familiar with the web shorts by Manner Production. With an official fan page boasting more than 320,000 followers, they are the most popular among their peers in Macao. Manner's actors also command huge followings, with Carl Ao leong leading the popularity stakes – his page is followed by 75,000 fans. Carl is thus the perfect person to speak to for us to get a lowdown on what it is to be a web celebrity.

The interview took place at Manner's headquarters. Their staff took up two fairly spacious studios. On the wall is a calendar detailing the movements of the whole Manner crew in the coming month. Props fill the floor, with more than ten wigs among them. To make people laugh is a serious business for Manner.

Manner has a core team of 15 members, and Carl is, of course, the key man. This is because, besides his personal appeal and status as a top web celebrity in Macao, he is among the few online stars who are fully devoted to what they do. "I don't have a full-time job. That's right, I'm a full-time web celebrity. I go to the Macau Academy of Performing Arts for drama classes in the evenings. At weekends, I go out to shoot shorts. I spend the rest of the time designing my fantasies," Carl said.

Carl had earlier had a full-time job after he graduated a year ago. However, he had little energy left to create anything after long days at work and all he wanted was rest when he got home at night. In the end, Carl chose to chase his dreams while he is still young. "I don't make much money. It's just about enough to feed myself," he laughed.

Part of Carl's income comes from his assignments as an event host, which is something that rides on his popularity online. Also, Manner works with companies to shoot commercials for their products, which are then plugged on Manner's fan page. Each member of the Manner crew gets a share of the pay from each successful collaboration. And since Carl is the most popular face, quite a few clients ask for him to front their commercials, which pushes up his earnings. "Actually, I'd only earn several thousand a month during a busy period. The income is unstable. But once I've got into this way of life, it is hard to turn back. Luckily, I'm supported by my parents and others around me. I'm young, so I should give everything a shot."

Carl said his parents still treats him like a kid even though he is a grown-up. They would

give him financial support every now and then to push him farther on the road of online stardom. "They've seen my films and found them very interesting. Even though they don't really know what social media is, they don't get in my way, because they say so long as I'm doing what I like, then it is fine."

With two new shorts released each week, Manner is prolific. Every week the whole Manner team is mobilised to film, rain or shine, which represents a tall order for any web celebrity to match. "We have our regular meeting every Monday. The creative leads will present their ideas to the team. After they'll be put to a vote to be turned into films. We then spend the whole of Saturday and Sunday for shooting."

To reward the creativity of team members, Manner would present several ideas to its clients each time. Whoever's idea gets picked by the client will then get extra "prize money". In the early days, Carl used to spend most of his time crafting his films, but these days he focuses on the acting. Earlier the Hong Kong hip-hop duo FAMA came to Macao to team up with Manner. They shot a commercial together with Carl to promote Manner's shorts. Some of FAMA's classic numbers can be heard in the commercial, and the effect is natural and does not come across as "hard sell". It looks like Manner's productions are not raw or amateurish at all.

Some SMEs wanting to save costs will skip Manner's official platform and go straight to Carl's fan page, even though it has relatively fewer fans. But this has meant extra revenue for Carl, and it is also a recognition of his work. "As a web celebrity, the happiest part is when my hard work is returned with support from fans. Every time a fan tells me to keep up the good work, it motivates me to keep going."

Carl laughs that he has received complaints from fans as more commercials are appearing on his personal fan page recently. But such feedback also provides him with an opportunity to interact with his fans and flex his PR skills. "Carl just wants to feed himself after all, haha," he told his fans.

However, much as Carl's videos enjoy great popularity, films by web celebrities will always stay in a virtual world, no matter how interesting or lively they can get, and this is a point Carl understands. Therefore, he has been actively looking for "real world" opportunities of late, bagging appearances in drama shows and even micro movies.

• Carl Ao leong is a core member of Manner Production and his comedian style has won the heart of many.



• Starting from publishing illustrations online, now Tse Sai Pei has collaborated with merchants to do commercial illustrations. This is one of the smartphone cases illustrated by her.

Illustrator Tse Sai Pei: Becoming an Online Celebrity is Not in My Plan

Hong Kong-based illustrator Jasmine Tse, aka Tse Sai Pei, made a name for herself with an illustration that portrays a green-faced girl with a slovenly appearance. She is considered one of those online celebrities who had become internet famous at an early stage in Hong Kong, and now her fan page has 120 thousands of followers. Born in the 1980s, Tse has just got a master's degree in Britain and published a collection of her works, titled *LONG TIME NO SES*. The book has secured good reviews and ratings because of her unique style of drawing that portrays her daily life in England. Tse is not ambitious in her career, nor does she have strong material desire. What she loves to do is to live with her cats and to travel around to observe if there are any interesting things coming up.

Tse made her debut in 2012 by drawing a green-faced schoolgirl wearing an oversized knitted sweater and quietly listening to the MP3 music. The illustration has many resonances for girls. Even boys like it a lot. It has gone viral on social media and made Tse become famous.

Why is she called Tse Sai Pei (in Cantonese slang it means exhausting or exhausted)? "There is no special implication. After I graduated and started working, my state of mind was very exhausting. Drawing is one of the means for me to release negative energy and I have never thought that I would have got so many supporters by drawing those illustrations." Tse believes that even one becomes overnight success on the internet, one can also become a failure suddenly in the online world. Thus, Tse does not really care how many fans she has garnered. She pointed out that war of words on the internet can occur anytime. Even a comment can trigger trolling and flaming. Tse frankly said that she is very careful when communicating with internet fans.

Tse's popularity has brought her a lot of clients. Most of them are merchants that target specifically at female customers. Tse would modify her design to suit their needs.

For example, the green-faced girl can be turned to white-faced or pink-faced to match the product. Tse believes that to make modification within a framework is part of her creativity. It does not mean that she is giving up her own style to make commercial compromises. Fortunately she has yet to meet difficult clients. "Perhaps I myself am a difficult client too," Tse laughed.

Although Tse described that she has no particular goals that she wants to achieve and only wants to spend time with her cats, when we look at her works, we found that Tse is actually very hardworking. In 2013, she collaborated with technology company to develop apps; her collections of works have been published later on; and she has also held a number of solo exhibitions and written for several media. She is definitely more hardworking than a lot of office workers. "I still do not have a stable source of income. But every time it's my potential clients actively contact me to discuss collaboration. I am so grateful for that."

If you have followed Tse on the social media, you will found that Tse's postings are not only full of humour, they are also philosophical. Does she make it deliberately or naturally? "I draw whatever has come to my mind. Philosophy is an honest reflection on oneself. So long as you are passionate you will be able to understand the truth about someone or something. The society is filled with mainstream values that expect all of us to walk on the same path. But I want to make my voice and opinion heard."

Will Tse continue to make a living as an online celebrity? Tse said that from the very beginning she has no intention to become internet famous. She does not care how it happened and what it is leading to. "Now I only hope that I can spend time to travel around, say three months to half a year. One of the big pros of my job is I can work at anywhere. I am thinking of sojourning in Taiwan or northern Europe. Going back to Britain is also an option." Perhaps it's this genuine and free spirit that has made Tse garnered so many supporters.

• Tse Sai Pei's claim to fame is this early piece of work that depicts a schoolgirl quietly listening to MP3 music while attending class

• Tse Sai Pei's latest collection of works *LONG TIME NO SES*



O-Moon:

The New Blood in Accessory Design in Macao

By Lei Ka lo
Photo courtesy of Calvin sin Production

The shop is located in Rua de Cinco de Outubro and named O-Moon, which pronunciation is similar to Ou Mun (The name for Macao in Cantonese). If you look to the shop from the street, you will be attracted by the colours of the Portuguese painted tiles and the Chinese blue-and-white tiles that decorated the shop. The wall near the showcase in the shop is clad with white wall paper with illustrations painted in blue. To echo the shop's name, a balloon painted with a moon on is hanged on the ceiling. If you take a closer look to it, you will see an illustration of the St Paul's Ruins in the moon.

The founders of O-Moon come from different backgrounds. Ng is a businessman and he is in charge of the administration and operation of the shop. Wu is a professional illustrator. He designs and draws all the products. Wong has her own accessory store that sells her handmade leather products. "We think from the angles of a businessman, a designer and a woman so we can strike a balance in business operations," said Wong. "We do cultural design in Macao with our hearts."

O-Moon's forte is to highlight the culture of Macao. However, with so many similar products available in the market, how can their products stand out? "We avoid doing what other people have been doing. We do what other people do not do" has become O-Moon's strategy. Hand-painted products are their trump card. O-Moon's products also have images of Macao's landmarks like the St Paul's Ruins, A Ma Temple and Sai Van Bridge. But when Wu designs the images, he first makes a draft and separates the composition of the image part by part. Then he draws the



• Ng Kam Seng (left), Xenia Wong and Jet Wu are founders of O-Moon

images on the paper and scans them into the computer. Finally he makes adjustments and pairings. "I can use computer software to draw, but I deliberately makes curved lines because I want to highlight that they are handpaintings."

Sometimes, beautiful images are not enough to attract customers. Whether a product is sensible is more important. "Imagine that there are two items. One is beautiful, another one is both beautiful and sensible. Which one will you choose?" asked Wu. Thus, O-Moon has launched products like brollies, portable chargers and cushions that can turn into blankets, in addition to souvenirs like postcards and key rings. Once a customer complained that the ceramic body is too thin and one's hand would be scalded. O-Moon immediately revised the design, using thicker ceramic body and added a handle to the mug. Ng said that by doing this their products are not only designed for the 30 millions of visitors but also

for the locals.

Ng continued that 30% of O-Moon's customers are locals and 70% are visitors. Among the visitors, half of them are from Hong Kong and the other half are from the Mainland, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, etc. Rua de Cinco de Outubro is not the most visited area by tourists, therefore rents are not high, unlike the casino areas and the areas near St Paul's Ruins that the monthly rent can go up to MOP200,000. In addition to the business-to-consumer market, O-Moon has also tapped into the business-to-business market and sells products to various associations and governmental departments.

An accessory store has to sell ordinary products like key rings as well. Wu said that such products are favoured by visitors and generate good sales volume. The payback period is short and these products are cash cow that can help pay the rent. Macao is almost inseparable with gaming, so it is necessary to have a product that

A s a tourist destination, Macao has no shortage of accessory shores. Shops near any attractions in Macao sell various types of souvenirs, such as postcards, key rings and St Paul's Ruins-themed decorations. In early November 2016, a brand new accessory store was opened and entered the competitive market. The founders, after doing a market survey in Macao, are confident about the future of their business. "Macao's traditional accessory stores never think of making changes," said Ng Kam Seng, one of the founders of O-Moon. "They are still selling the same products as they sold ten years ago." Having spotted the gap in the market, Ng, together with Jet Wu and Xenia Wong, jointly invested in the business, with the aim of creating a brand that is recognised among visitors and locals alike.

shows this element. However, visitors from the Mainland will be having trouble when they go through the custom if they buy such products. This explains why so few people are interested in chip-themed products.

O-Moon has various products available. They not only sell products designed by themselves, but also collaborate with bakery shops, photographers, accessory designers, etc. Yet, We believes that there should be more items available in the shop. "The more you offer, the longer a customer is willing to spend time in the shop, and the easier the products are sold." O-Moon's investment in refurbishment of the shop and product design has almost reached one million patacas. Even though risks are huge, Wu is very confident about the business and the market. The business pressure is still bearable so far. "No investment, no return."

"We do not design unique products. We apply our design to products that are already available in the market," said Wu. "Trends are ever-changing, so our designs have to keep abreast of changes."

There are not many recognisable cultural icons in Macao and eventually they will be exhausted. O-Moon looks ahead to the future and is now designing a brand new cartoon character as a long-term investment. At present, the design of a set of animal mascots, Black Bear BOBO, is almost finished and is about to be launched via a mobile app. Wu's plan is to launch a series of animation and comics with a humorous BOBO theme. After attracting enough netizens and getting certain popularity, related products will be launched to secure revenues. He has already tested the market by running a Facebook page called "The Art of

Macao" with another artist. Animated short films are made and released there. Among them, the one that made fun of single people on Valentine's Day has gone viral, secured 350 thousand hit rates.

O-Moon has not only one big plan. Following the trend, Wu is considering buying a 3D printer to make immediately available yet bespoke items.

Looking to the future, Wong hopes that O-Moon eventually can become an iconic brand in Macao. "I hope that visitors to Macao will not only think of buying almond pastries. I hope that they can give our moon some thoughts."

• Items designed by O-Moon highlight not only the culture of Macao but also their functionality





"It is every designer's dream to have a studio of his own. With hundreds of such local design studios, one must think carefully about or her own market positioning and how he or she can outcompete other designers," Mann Lao, Creative & Managing Director of Chiii Design Ltd., advised young designers.

NICHE AND MARKET POSITIONING

Interview with Branding Designer Mann Lao

By Yuki leong

Photo courtesy of Calvin sin Studio & interviewee

Before graduating from university, Lao had worked as an intern in several 4A advertising agencies. He went on to work for the studio of the design maestro, Tommy Li. Later, he worked in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Portugal. These experiences helped to enrich his professional exposure and achievements. Three and a half years ago, he turned down jobs from well-known design firms in order to return to Macao to further his career, where he actively supported young local designers.

"Any creative work must have marketability, otherwise, without the commercial value, it is only an artpiece. If it exists only as an artpiece, and disregards the market, it will certainly fail to gain market support and recognition." Lao emphasises his positioning is business-oriented. While he studied at university, he worked as an intern in Hong Kong and Shanghai, which helped him to learn more about the design industry with new insights. These experiences also fostered his determination to pursue branding design.

"Tommy Li has taught me that branding design is not pure design, but to help clients grow their businesses. I have learnt a lot more about how to use visual design

to promote business for my clients."

"Macao is a place that lacks commercial design, and I hope to open up more opportunities, so that people can better appreciate Macao design." Lao is a true pioneer in advocating local commercial design. Before his return to Macao, others have warned him: "There are abundant opportunities outside Macao. There is no necessity to come back to a place where there is not enough market for what you do." He confessed that, back then when he set up his practice, the market had a substantial need for expo design, such that all the businesses that came to them were related to expos. However he decided to focus only on branding design, turning down all other assignments. Nowadays, his clients come from all over the world, including Canada, Britain and the United States.

When asked his view towards his profession, he said: "Most local design practices are concerned with following the client briefs and are suspicious towards local designers." In the past, Macao enterprises would only hire branding designers from Hong Kong or the Mainland. So does it mean that local designers would only be sought after if they have some overseas experience? Lao felt that young designers should not care too much about this.

"The year I left Tommy Li's studio and returned to find another job in Macao, I was a designer without much reputation. Since the commercial world does not even know who Tommy Li is, the experience I have from abroad has given me a competitive edge and new insights. I think that clients care about that kind of experience in the sense that my professional knowledge is demonstrated through the work I do, rather than take me on just because I have studied or worked overseas."

"In Macao, many young people are quite passive and have a lesser sense of urgency when it comes to seeking opportunities." For Lao, this is a concern in the development of human talent in Macao. Earlier, he was invited to give lectures for first year undergraduates in the Polytechnic University. That year, he focused on doing the teaching well, especially in inspiring the students' interest in the art of design. "Regardless of the subject, I feel that there is a lot more to learn from the real world rather than in the classroom. The role of a teacher, therefore, is mainly to arouse

the students' interest for new knowledge, and to guide them to seek their own answers."

In September last year, Lao sought for more collaborations with enterprises, and organised the First Macau Art Graduates Joint Exhibition ("joint exhibition") in Macao, inviting art students from five tertiary institutions to take part. This has attracted a lot of attention from design institutes in Taiwan and Japan, as well as prompted several enterprises to get in touch with art students in Macao to look for collaborative opportunities. According to Lao, Macao has the advantage of being a small city, and so it is much easier to promote culture and creativity. However, the fact that everyone knows each other in the sector also makes it difficult to invite someone without jeopardising the relationship with others. Hence, this joint exhibition was organised without any additional funding, and proved to be successful in opening up many opportunities for the sector, even with a discreet budget.

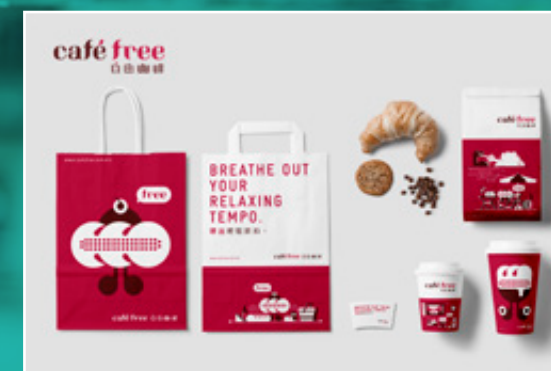
In his work to promote local design talent, Lao said that many design students told him that they were no longer interested to work in the field. This suggested the risk that this sector is losing its talent to other professional fields. "To many of these young people, working as a designer seems to be a tough job, but if they give up before even trying, this is certainly a shame." Currently, Lao is at work putting together the new joint exhibition. "Most people thought that I organise this for the students but, in fact, other than promoting student exchange, another key aim is to encourage design educators to engage more fully with the contents of the subject."

In the future, Lao hopes that the government could put in more efforts to cultivate talent. Some people consider that the promotion of design education is futile, but he is willing to do it steadily. Lao believed that training always takes time, but in the long run it will pay off, as Macao benefits from a higher quality of local design talent. "The government is keen to promote arts and culture, but they must do it from the source, paying attention to the quality of education. There is no shortcut in achieving the same results. After all, the cultivation of talent is a long marathon."

• Designer Mann Lao believes that the government should put in more efforts to cultivate design talent



• The First Macau Art Graduates Joint Exhibition



• Branding design by Chiii Design



Life Observer Behind the Lens

Interview with Up and Coming
Director Hong Heng Fai

The up and coming director Hong Heng Fai was thrown under the spotlight when his short film *Crash* was nominated in multiple film festivals and won the "Best Feature Film" in the 16th South Taiwan Film Festival. *Crash* was also nominated in the "Best Live Action Short Film" category of the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, becoming the first Macao picture to be nominated for that award, thus attracting wide attention. Despite all these, Hong still keeps his simple and casual attitude, because he knows that going down a red carpet can be a really long way, and his journey has just begun.

By Wendy Wong
Photo courtesy of Calvin sin Production
& interviewee



Pictures Travel Farther

Hong graduated from the Department of Advertising of Taiwan's Shih Hsin University, and has worked in offices for several years. In the end, he has decided to return to the theatre, which he has been participating in since secondary school. "Nonetheless, even if the theatre starts doing the long-run series, what can be expressed is still limited. Only pictures can spread messages in a wider manner."

Struggling between theatre plays and film creation, Hong thought he was caught between two stools and felt lost. Four years ago, he travelled to Europe and experienced a sudden realisation in midst of the local culture and lifestyle there, conceiving in him the idea of making films for his career. When he returned to Macao, he shot a series of short films such as *Before Dawn* and *In Memory of Her* to explore living states and what truth is.

"When you want to make a film, there will be a lot of people around you who are interested in every position. When I first started and did not know how to write a script, I found insightful people who knew how to write to do it together. I actually had many help from the theatre circle in the creation of *Crash*." The crew of *Crash* included people from the movie industry as

well as the theatre industry. Cai, the leading character in the story, found out that his mother, who suffers from Alzheimer's, has disappeared. He posted an appeal for help on facebook, and attracted a large number of strangers to help him in the searching. Nonetheless, he got caught in the halo as the dutiful son in the virtual world and struggles to extricate himself.

The film carried a high sense of irony, but Hong did not intend to magnify social issues; it was only due to the fact that his daily thinking involves small details in life. He thinks that only by finding a mode of creation which he likes will he truly enjoy the process. Filming is not merely presenting texts on screen. The discussion process with screenwriters or actors will result in unexpected gains.

Short films are Worth Developing

Despite the fact that Hong has only shot four short films, he is ready to take the challenge in filming long movies of over 80 minutes, and is now brainstorming for the storyline. Hong does not agree to filming with his own money. He believes that it's necessary to look for funding. Applying for subsidies is one of the means to finance the production. The Cultural Centre rolls out the "Local View Power" to publicly call for films every year, and

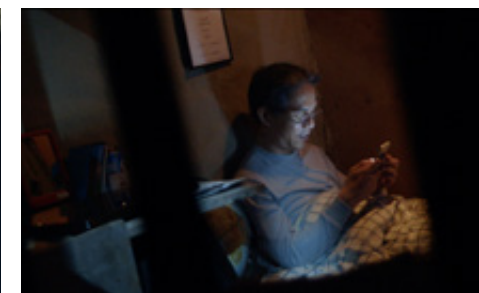
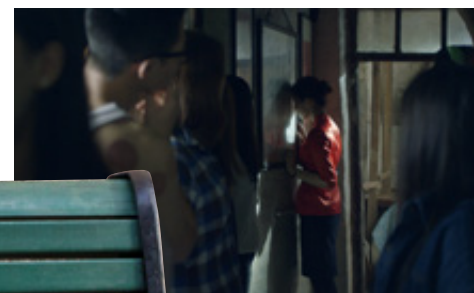
he is one of the frequent participants.

Local subsidy plans are rather limited, but Hong thinks that they are very useful in easing financial pressure and administrative hassles and allow him to focus on his creation. "Subsidies are necessary, and its supporting measures are also important. The subsidy programmes will review your proposal, seniors in the industry will guide your shooting, and there are judges to select winners. You can learn a lot of things that you need to know in shooting." Hong added that the quotas are not enough, and many of his friends have failed their applications over the past years.

Hong watches a lot of local productions and supports new movies whenever they come out. He thinks Macao's productions are diversified. The movies he watched in overseas film festivals were very realistic, while those in Macao are more creative, and can be seen as the characteristics of local production. "Compared with other places, we certainly have a lot of insufficiencies. I think we are still exploring."

He pointed out that short films are worth developing. He used movie-playing platforms in the mainland as an example: "We always say we have to develop the movie industry, but short films are often easily neglected! Short films can also be an industry. This phenomenon has emerged in the mainland and overseas in recent years. Nowadays, people's entertainment is no longer confined to units of two hours. Short films may exactly be the future trend in films."

"Short film is a necessary stage before shooting long movies. Neglecting it will make you go slower in the future. Since the market here is insufficient and lacks commercial investment, we might as well focus on short films. They may be able to engage with more audiences through the Internet, and it is actually very suitable for Macao."



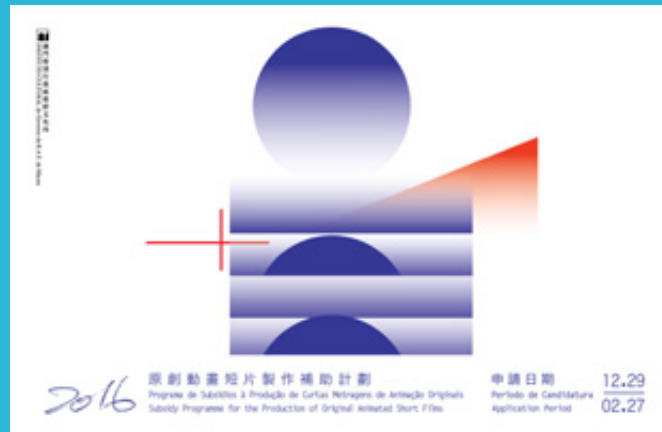
• In addition to the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival and the South Taiwan Film Festival, *Crash* was also nominated in Macao's Sound and Image Challenge International Festival 2016- SHORTS, the mainland's 13th China Independent Film Festival, the 32nd International Short Film Festival Berlin and the 14th Switzerland SHNIT International Short Film Festival etc.

Postscript

When Hong participated in Germany and Taiwan film festivals, the maturity there widened his horizons. "The entire events were truly centred with movies and showed respect to movies." Asked about his thoughts on the International Film Festival & Awards · Macao, Hong said: "I was wondering if film festivals are hooked with tourism?" He does not deny that the festival carries great significance for the local movie industry, but he emphasised that he does not want to take these thoughts as the conclusion. He said that audiences will have their answer.



EVENT CALENDER



2016 Subsidy Programme for the Production of Original Animation Short Films

Application Period: 29/12/2016-27/2/2017

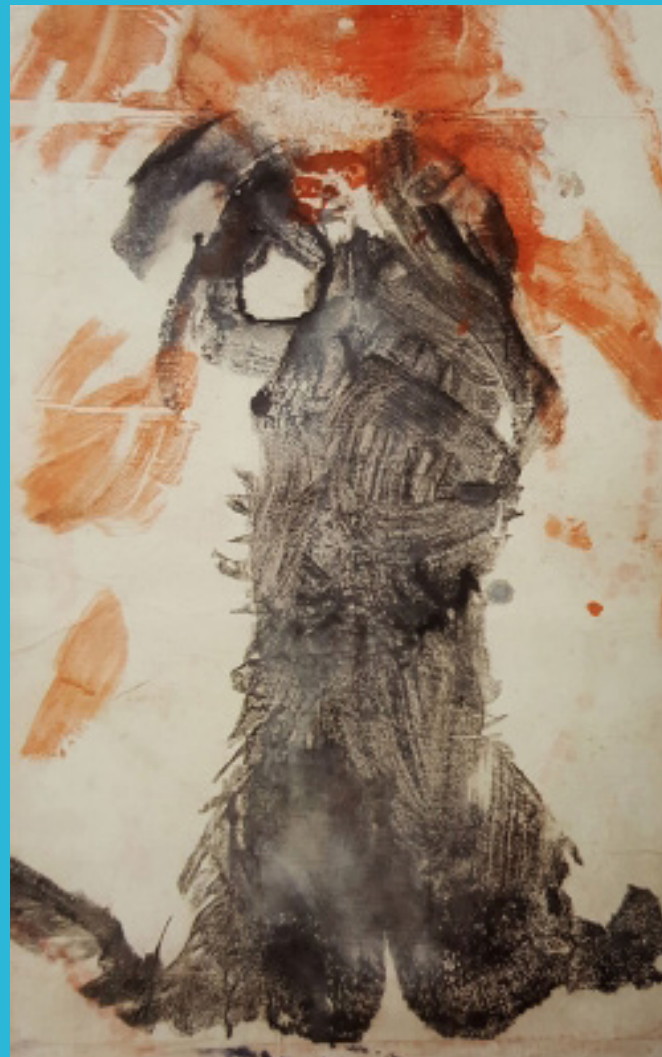
Submission Time: 9:30am-12:30pm, 3pm-5pm (Mon to Fri)

Submission Venue: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region Government—Department for Promoting Cultural and Creative Industries, No. 567, Av. da Praia Grande, Edif. BNU, 12th floor A-D, Macao

Details: Beneficiaries of the programme will each be granted MOP240,000 to produce and promote original animation short films. The programme aims to promote the development of Macao's animation industry and nurture local talent in animation creation, production and planning, as well as to enhance their creativity in planning and storytelling techniques. It is hoped that the programme will encourage professionals in the industry to produce original animations, and promote the animation industry in Macao through exhibitions, public screening and online marketing.

Organiser: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government

Web: www.icm.gov.mo/cn/CCI-Subsidy; www.macaucci.com/sps



Sailing for Dream – Works by Kwok Woon

Date: 31/12/2016-23/4/2017

Time: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays)

Venue: Navy Yard No. 1 (Rua de S. Tiago da Barra, Macao)

Ticket: Free

Details: Sailing for Dream - Works by Kwok Woon is the first exhibition held in the Navy Yard No.1. More than 40 pieces of works by the late artist Kwok Woon are showcased, with the focus in how he collected materials in different parts of Macao and turned them to different forms of arts like painting, mixed materials and installations. Kwok Woon was born in Guangdong and came to Macao in the 1980s. He dedicated himself to the promotion of the development of visual arts in the city.

Organiser: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government

Web: www.icm.gov.mo/cn/news/detail/14529



"Open Box" Series 2017

Date: 10/2/2017-19/2/2017

Time: Please refer to schedule

Venue: Small Auditorium, Macao Cultural Centre

Ticket: \$120

Organiser: Macao Cultural Centre

Web: www.ccm.gov.mo/Event.aspx/35



Cabaret

Date: 11/2/2017-12/2/2017

Time: 3:30pm, 8pm

Venue: Black Box Theatre, Old Court Building

Ticket: \$280

Organiser: Bluebluesky Macao

Web: www.facebook.com/people/Bluebluesky-Macao/
100010146037886



Flower Vessels from the Palace Museum

Date: 16/12/2016-12/3/2017

Time: 10am-7pm (Closed on Mondays)

Venue: 4/F, Macao Museum of Art

Ticket: Free

Organiser: Macao Museum of Art, Palace Museum, Macao Foundation, Macau Government Tourism Office, Macao Daily

Web: www.mam.gov.mo



Change of Times – Solo Exhibition by Eric Fok

Date: 14/12/2016-10/2/017

Time: 11am-10pm

Venue: IFT Café, Anim' Arte NAM VAN

Ticket: Free

Organiser: Institute for Tourism Studies



Weekend Music Party – Sand Art Music Show

Date: 4/3/2017

Time: 4pm

Venue: Dom Pedro V Theatre

Ticket: \$100, \$120

Organiser: Macao Orchestra

Web: www.icm.gov.mo/om/cn/Season/detail.aspx?s=382&c=382&id=6035



Works Exhibition of Diploma Course in Fashion Design & Manufacturing

Date: 14/1/2017-26/3/2017

Time: 10am-8pm (Closed on Mondays)

Venue: Macao Fashion Gallery (47, Rua de S. Roque, Macao)

Ticket: Free

Organiser: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government & Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Center

Web: www.macaofashiongallery.com



Aesthetics of Horror: Junji Ito's Exhibition in Hong Kong

Date: 6/2/2017-26/2/2017

Time: 10am-9pm

Venue: PMQ, Hong Kong

Ticket: HK\$200

Organiser: BIGSMART, Semicolon Design, Co.

Web: www.itojunjitaiwan.tw



Art Central 2017

Date: 21/3/2017-25/3/2017

Time: Please refer to schedule

Venue: Central Harborfront, Hong Kong

Ticket: From HK\$230

Organiser: Art Central

Web: artcentralhongkong.com



Joe Tang

Recipient of Macao Literary Prize and Macao Novel Prize, Joe Tang is a writer and cultural commentator, and has published novels, including *The Floating City*, *Assassin*, and *The Lost Spirit*. The latter two titles were translated into English and Portuguese. Joe's portfolio also includes commentaries on art and plays. They include *Words from Thoughts*, *Philosopher's Stone*, *Journey to the West*, *Rock Lion*, *Magical Monkey* and *The Empress and the Legendary Heroes*.

From the Film Festival to the Fringe Festival

At the time of writing, the inaugural International Film Festival & Awards · Macao was just closed. Its news and discussions, usually with texts and pictures, have gone viral on social media. Artist Joe Lei has given a lot of comments on room for improvement in his column in *Macao Daily*. He suggested that “we should give the organiser time to make it”. This somehow is true. Time and effort are needed to build a cultural brand. It's useless to rush. In conclusion, we should keep the good and improve the bad. This is the attitude we should have whenever we want to make advancement. Now I think it's worth discussing the matter of “positioning”. A film festival can be of any scale. But how to organise an excellent film festival? How to attract local and overseas film lovers to attend the event? How to create a cultural brand for Macao? And how to expand cultural tourism as well as to boost related businesses like film and video rental, food and beverage, convention and public relations, design and souvenir industries? All of these involve the participation of the creative industry as well as the convention and exhibition industry. It's complicated but the core of all matters is how to position.

The three prominent international film festivals in Europe – Venice Film Festival, Cannes International Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival, as well as those in Asia like Tokyo International Film Festival, Shanghai International Film Festival, Busan International Film Festival and Hong Kong Asian Film Festival can be a reference to Macao. If you think that such references are

too unrealistic to Macao, then take a look at Fantasia International Film Festival, “the most outstanding and largest genre film festival in North America”. The festival was founded in 1996. Now it is a showcase of all genre films like horror and fantasy films around the world. Even if I am in Asia, I have been thinking of going there for a visit. There is a reason for its success. It has the right positioning. In fact, an accurate positioning and high recognised film festival is not only able to connect with the local film industry and audiences. It can also bridge the film and television industry, audiences and resources regionally and internationally. Now the question is how should Macao's International Film Festival be positioned so as to stand out from an ocean of film festivals? It is necessary make an effort in positioning, execution and promotion. We have to, step by step, build up a film festival that is both internationally attractive and can showcase the character of Macao.

What is a positioning with Macao characteristics? In my opinion, it is the hybrid of the European and Asian cultures that the city and its people boast. With several hundred years of cultural exchange between China and Portugal, the city of Macao boasts some charming characteristics: both eastern and western architectural styles can be found here, old and modern buildings co-exist, Southeast Asian cultures, customs and culinary skills mix well with their European counterparts. The vibes in Macao

are obviously different from those in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Mainland. The charm of Macao is not about being majestic. It's about being small but attractive. The city looks chaotic, but order can be found in chaos. And there is a beauty of inclusivity, co-existence and harmony.

I have thought of the Fringe Festival (now renamed Macau City Fringe Festival and this year is the 16th edition of the festival, which was held during 13-22 January) launched in 1999, the year of the handover of Macao. Over the years, this festival has turned the whole city to a stage that allows different genres of arts to be performed. They can be avant-garde, funny and fun, even though they aren't really big brands or big productions. And they have added artistic senses and creative vibes to the city. No matter it's the Fringe Festival or the Film Festival, Macao already has platforms to showcase local arts and culture. Now what really matters is whether the organiser has heart and ability to accurately position the event. Careful execution and good management are also necessary to make the event impactful.



• Poster of Fantasia International Film Festival 2016



Ho Ka Cheng

Supervisor of Audio-Visual CUT Association. One of the directors of *Macao Stories 1*, also involved in *Macao Stories 2 – Love in the City* and *Macao Stories 3 – City Maze*. *Macao Stories 2 – Love in the City* received a special mention at Portugal's Avanca Film Festival, and was shown at film festivals in Tokyo and Osaka.

Creating a Sustainable Local Film Industry

The International Film Festivals & Awards · Macao (IFFAM) was launched last year. Although festival director Marco Müller had resigned from his position, the festival still brought several dozens of exclusive screenings of upcoming releases to Macao.

CRASH was shortlisted in the Best Live Action Short Film Award in the Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan, but finally it failed to secure the award. However, it is still a confidence booster to the film industry in Macao. At the beginning of 2017, let's take a look of what has Macao gone through: In 2007, the Cultural Centre managed by IACM began to promote documentaries and short films; in 2013, the Cultural Affairs Bureau began to run the Support Programme for the Production of Feature Films; in 2014, Macau University of Science and Technology founded the Macau Academy of Cinematic Arts and in 2016, the first PhD of Management in Film Industry was launched; in 2015, the Cultural Affairs Bureau undertook the “Survey on Film and Its Related Industries”, with the aim of setting up guidelines for the film industry; in recent years, the Cultural Affairs Bureau has held film investment and trade fair and streamlined the procedure of applying funding for film productions; in 2016, the Macao Government Tourism Office launched the IFFAM, meaning that films have become a theme of the city's festive events. Moreover, Macao has also participated in Hong Kong International Film Festival and set up a booth in Le Marché du Film - Festival de Cannes. All these indicate that the film industry in Macao is more organised than before. It is now more structural and starts to know which way it should go.

In the past, the Cultural Centre was managed by IACM and it was responsible for

promoting short films while the Cultural Affairs Bureau launched the Support Programme for the Production of Feature Films. This was to allow filmmakers who specialised in short films can further their career by involving in the production of feature films. Now, the Cultural Centre is under the management of the Cultural Affairs Bureau. It is hoped that the connection between short films and feature films, as well as the development of both, can get better resources and management. This creates a clearer career path for creative practitioners, and this is also the model that a lot of countries have adopted. For instances, Germany has produced thousands of short films yearly. Many of the short film directors, actors and technical workers are invited to work in the sphere of feature films. The most difficult part in producing feature films is financing. The PhD of Management in Film Industry run by Macau University of Science and Technology is able to groom talents in this respect. The PhD programme covers marketing, financing, management of human resources and film investment. On the other hand, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Film Production Investment and Trade Fair aims to explore more new financing opportunities as the Pearl River Delta integrates and introduce Macao films to the market in Guangdong province. After all, Guangdong is one of the provinces in the Mainland that boasts a lot of audiences. By introducing local films to Guangdong, artists in Macao will have more opportunities to advance their careers. Even though Macao at the moment do not have a large quantities of films that can be sold to Guangdong, the investment and trade fair allows local filmmakers to participate and understand the details of financing. The

training workshops run by the Golden Horse Film Project Promotion can also be a good reference too. Veteran filmmakers are invited to give comments to the proposals, which allows creative practitioners more time to prepare before the presentation and they can also learn how to market their own works.

The “Survey on Film and Its Related Industries” is neither as eye-catching as the red carpet in a film festival nor as heart-warming as the acceptance speech, but it is important to set guidelines for the film industry, defining and constructing the scope of the industry and the operation and cycle of the value chain during the process of inception, production, communication and presentation. The guidelines will become objective and solid grounds for creative practitioners, researchers and policy makers to steadily and sustainably develop the local film industry. To make the survey truly useful to the film industry, the accuracy of data collection and the transparency of information are paramount. For instances, Taiwan passed the “Film Amendment Bill” in June 2015. It stipulates that film practitioners have to establish computerised box office systems. The complete, accurate and transparent box office data will be very useful to Taiwan's film production companies, marketing agencies and investors to understand more what is happening in the market.

The role of the filmmaker is the most eye-catching role in the film industry. But it's not going to work if the industry only puts focus in grooming film directors and ignore other personnel. This cannot be called an industry at all. What creative practitioners need is a diversified, steady and healthy industry, and this will be the perfect platform for them to show their talent.



Yi-Hsin Lin graduated from SOAS; now living in England as a writer. Lin has participated in the curation of Chinese painting in Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum. He is also a lecturer in Chinese art at Christie's Education and contributes to several Chinese-language art magazines.

Yi-Hsin Lin

— Introducing the New Design Museum in London —

As everyone expected, the Design Museum, one of the leading museums in London's creative industries, was finally relocated and re-opened in late November 2016. The architecture of the new museum was designed by the prominent architecture firm OMA, and the interior design was led by John Pawson, a well-known British minimalist architectural designer. Located in Kensington High Street in West London, the museum is just a stone's throw from other leading arts institutions like the V&A Museum, the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Royal College of Art. As the first museum with a contemporary design theme in the world, the new museum will be on top of the "must see" list among creatives and artists all over the world.

An Interactive Platform to Exchange Creative Ideas

In 1982, a group of leading designers, including Roy Strong, Terence Conran and Stephen Bayley, held a series of exhibitions in a defunct boiler house adjacent to the V&A Museum to showcase the importance of contemporary industrial design. This had become the renowned "Bolierhouse Project". Because of the tremendous feedback it had received, the project was relocated five years later to the old warehouses in the south bank of the River Thames, near the Tower Bridge. It

had expanded to showcase more exhibits. After that, the designers officially announced that the Design Museum was founded and it would be the first arts institution in the world dedicated to collect, research and showcase contemporary design. Over the last 30 years, the Design Museum has exhibited new and excellent designs in products, fashion, architecture, furniture, graphics and multimedia. The museum has not only made an impact to the public on how they see aestheticism, but has also groomed a lot of creative practitioners who got inspirations from the museum.

With an increasing number of visitors and the scale of exhibition is expanding, the senior management of the Design Museum had been thinking of the possibility of relocation. After years of effort, a plot of land in Kensington High Street was earmarked for the new museum. When the new museum was opened, it was estimated that the number of visitors would reach more than 500 thousands per year. The museum will include areas for one permanent exhibition, two temporary exhibitions and 400sqm of learning spaces. Shops, restaurants and cafés are also included, with the aim of allowing audiences to leisurely visit the museum. Apart from facilities that cater to audiences, the museum has also equipped with studios for designers-in-residence to use, a library, and audio and visual facilities for

educational purposes. This is to encourage more professionals in the industry to actively engage in the museum's activities, and to facilitate interaction between the designers and the museums' collections.

A Thought-provoking Museum

To celebrate the opening of the new museum, the organiser held a special exhibition "Fear and Love: Reactions to a Complex World". The aim is to present different emotions generated amid the rapid changes in the contemporary world, like hope, doubt, frustration and anger. Avant-garde works of 11 leading designers and teams are showcased. They include Hussein Chalayan, Madeline Gannon, Andrés Jaque, Kenya Hara, Metahaven, Neri Oxman and Ma Ke, among others. The exhibition leads an in-depth discussion about a spectrum of controversial topics and trends, like networked sexuality, sentient robots, slow fashion and settled nomads. The exhibition asserts that design is deeply connected not just to commerce and culture but to the sphere of emotions and social environment. This shows that the museum also takes the role of facilitating debates and exchanging ideas by exhibiting thought-provoking works. This not only allows one to rethink the relationship between oneself and others, but also to highlight universal values and multiculturalism.



Yap loves design, travel and everything beautiful in life. He writes for various media about travel and design and has published works, including *Wander Bhutan* and *Myanmar Odyssey*. Formerly publisher of Lonely Planet (China Office), Yap is now Chief Content Officer of Youpu Apps, a Beijing-based travel app company.

Yap Seow Choong

— An Unconventional Art Gallery —

If Hai Zi lived in Hobart, it would be difficult for him to come up with poetry that reads: "From tomorrow on, I will care about food and vegetables. / Living in a house facing the sea, / where flowers blossom in the warm climate." In Hobart, all the houses are sea-facing, and people hardly have to worry about the supply of food and vegetables, since the level of comfort and leisure in the place is unlikely to inspire the innocent yet intense longing expressed in this poem. There is no need to "begin from tomorrow", when Hobart is beautiful from the beginning.

With its unimpressive attractions and museums downtown, Hobart is not necessarily a tourism-friendly city. The many houses built by the British settlers during the colonial period are also not remarkable in terms of scale or richness of detail. However, it is a lovely place to live, and the residents here seem much contented by what it offers. Otherwise, there will not be such a vast range of plants that fill their gardens and blossom in the beauty of spring.

Those who have been to Hobart have told us that Mona Art Gallery is an unmissable destination. In recent years, the modest city of Hobart has drawn much attention among travellers because of this art gallery. Founded by the wealthy merchant David Walsh, this gallery is the largest privately-owned art gallery in Australia, and has showcased many solo exhibitions. Given its huge popularity, the gallery has recently decided to charge an admission fee for the shows.

The gallery has a striking architecture and, in particular, a fascinating layout. The front part of the gallery is decorated with a number of

large-scale installations. What intrigues most is that there is a tennis court at the front, a design adopted to please David Walsh, its founder, who is very keen on tennis. What an indulgence.

Entering the gallery feels like going through a deep tunnel. Located 17 metres below ground, visitors find themselves rising from its deepest part to the ground level exit. The gallery has retained the rough texture of its stone walls, and features a windowless design where the interior is kept dark and mysterious. This not only dramatises the overall gallery experience, it is also befitting for a gallery that features such controversial, outrageous exhibits. Many of the 400 exhibits in the gallery are owned by Walsh. An eclectic range, these exhibits range from historical relics to contemporary objects, with one of the most curious exhibits being the "manure machine" conceived by the Belgium maestro, Wim Delvoye. It manufactures manure on a daily basis, and invites the visitor to witness the production process. The product is then packaged into a sealed vacuum bag and sold as a product in a charity sale, a critique on at the idea of commercialised acts in a production-led capitalist society. Other than these objects of intrigue, there are also more traditional exhibits such as mummies from Egypt and handicrafts from Africa. Some of the most contemporary and classic exhibits are displayed alongside each other, as they all capture an aesthetic appeal that the founder approves of. The fact that these items have caught the eye of their master, helps to justify their presence in this space, and makes it unnecessary to split them up into categories.

The gallery boasts an organic layout where no thematic arrangement or captions are visible. Instead, the information on each exhibit is contained in the iPad device that guides the visitor along. If a visitor finds a painting he likes, he or she can then use the device to retrieve the detailed information on this exhibit and its artist. He or she can also share his or her thoughts on the exhibition by leaving a message via the device, to indicate a "Like" or "Hate", or to "share" via social media. After one's visit, it is also possible to retain a copy of the information on the exhibits via email. The entire interactive process aims to bring in the use of social media in the gallery experience, illustrating the medium as a contemporary medium of exchange, and to encourage people to reflect on the traditional gallery experience. It is as if gallery browsing is similar to shop-browsing, where one is led by one's instincts and preferences, and that the enjoyment it brings does not depend on any fixed routes or visiting itinerary.

One remarkable fact about this unconventional gallery is that Walsh is a professional gambler who came up with a formula that calculates the probability of winning and losing a bid. Later, he reinvested his income from gambling into his private art collection, which proves that he is a businessman with foresight. The achievement of Mona lies in the way it revolutionises the art gallery experience, making it much more imaginative. As its owner said: "This is a subversive, adult Disneyland. Creativity is always subversive, as it is all about revealing something new through unprecedented acts."



Japan-based writer and traveller, specialising in design, lifestyle and travel journalism. Ron previously served as an editor of *MING Magazine*, *ELLE Decoration* and *CREAM*.

Ron Lam

— The Cultural Promotion of Wabi-sabi —

Lately I have been reading the book *Wabi-sabi Yugen no Kokoro* (literally “A Heart with Flawed Beauty and Subtle Profundity”) by Wabi-sabi researcher Morigami Shyoyou. The book proposes an interesting perspective: the spirit of Wabi-sabi (the acceptance of transience and imperfection), which we deem as the foundation of Japanese culture, was actually popularised during the Meiji period. The promotion of Wabi-sabi was due to the influx of foreign culture during the Meiji period. Back then, Japan’s technological development was not as advanced as that of Europe and the United States, and the architecture was not as majestic as other regions. In the face of the strong foreign cultures, Japanese felt small and weak. When seeking self-affirmation, they found wabi-sabi which advocates that there exists unique philosophy in their own delicate mind-set. Even if their country lags behind in other areas, they are ahead in the spiritual domain, and Japan is superior in this regard.

The word “wabi” originally means insufficiency and unhappiness, and sublimed it as a kind of beauty. Later it transformed into the aesthetics of suffering, roughness and uncontrollability. Morigami Shyoyou used the beauty of vicissitudes in the paintings *The Angelus* by Jean-François Millet and *Mona Lisa Smile* by Leonardo da Vinci to illustrate that there are concepts similar to wabi-sabi in the Western culture. Feelings of lost and melancholy are attractive in their own ways, and seasons and lives fleet. The acceptance of the easily changing variables and realising the aesthetics and reasons behind seem to be a common idea in both the East and the West, but such concept is more influential in the Japanese culture and art.

Wabi-sabi has become the most valued element in traditional Japanese art, and is the most outstanding charm of Japan in the eyes of Western countries. Walking into Kyoto’s Ryoanji Temple and sitting by the famous rock garden, you will find a garden of 25m by 10m. The stones depict a stream or a sea of clouds in which the 15 pieces of stones firmly stand, but it also looks like they are floating in the air. We cannot come to a conclusion, but we sense a little something that calms our heart and appreciate the beauty of wabi-sabi. Every year, over 50 million tourists visit Kyoto. The historical sites of the ancient capital and its gourmet are certainly the major attractions, but I think the ambiguous engagement with wabi-sabi is another abstract attraction.

In recent years, Japanese crafts are widely sought after by European countries and the United States. Brands such as Hosoo which produces Nishijin fabrics and Takezasa which produces woodblock paintings started using traditional arts to produce furniture that integrates with modern homes, and promote them overseas through large-scale international exhibitions such as *Maison et Objet* and the *Salone Internazionale del Mobile Milano*. Kaikado is a successful example of this.

Kaikado is the very first company to manufacture metal-made tea caddies. Cylindrical tea caddies can now be found in any home stores. The design of an inner and outer lid was created by Kaikado. There is a Japanese saying: “*Aji ga deru*”. Its literal meaning is “the taste has come out”. It is used to describe crafts being used for many years, comparing them to broth, which takes time to get its flavour out. Kaikado’s tea caddies, made with brass

or tin, emphasises craftsmanship as well as the special trait that the colour changes with time. Its “flavour” comes out after a long period of usage. This is in line with the aesthetics of wabi-sabi, which embraces the transformation of things. While shiny brass is beautiful, the beauty is unparalleled when it turns brown and becomes engraved with time and the sentiment between the user and the utensil.

Shigaraki, one of the six ancient kilns in Japan, is rough in texture and is not covered in colourful glazes. Nonetheless, it was deemed by the tea industry practitioners as the great in beauty. Before Sen no Rikyū popularised “wabi-cha”, tea industry practitioners only favoured expensive Chinese ceramics, and paid no attention to the humble Shigaraki. The spirit of wabi-sabi taught people to appreciate the beauty of Shigaraki. Fast forward several centuries, Shigaraki and Bizen which embody natural beauty are now more popular among Japanese and even foreigners compared to delicate and fine ceramics.

The identity crisis during the Meiji period has made Japan come to realise the uniqueness in its national culture and philosophy and promoted the idea to become an unbreakable spirit in the culture industry. Of these, wabi-sabi is probably the one with the longest history and is most deep-rooted.



• Tea caddies of Kaikado



Having majored in Chinese Language and Literature as well as in Arts (Creative Industries) at Peking University, Lam went on to work in the Creative Industries Department in the Macao SAR Government. She is now pursuing an MA in Arts Administration in New York University.

Lam Sio Man

— Shall We Talk? Art and Business in Macao —

For a long time, there is no mistaking the divide between business and art. Indeed, many arts and cultural activities are typically sponsored by the government, and seldom attracted the support of the business sector. However, in 2016, some business leaders, mainly from the gaming sector, have proactively organised several large-scaled arts and cultural activities. For example, Ms Sabrina Ho, daughter of the tycoon Stanley Ho, staged two Macao hotel art expos as well as a graduation art exhibition within a year’s time. Moreover, Chau Cheok Wa, the local gaming tycoon, pioneered the inaugural International Film Festival & Awards · Macao, directed by leading international film show curator, Marco Müller, which led to much anticipation from the cultural sector as well as considerable international attention.

Judging from the discussion on social media, the local cultural sector has paid much attention to these projects, particularly because these projects will help them create platforms for business and international exchange, such as allowing artists to sell and promote their works. Later, Müller decided to resign from the role due to his conflicts in opinion with the rest of the organising committee, but a discussion with Müller has revealed the level of engagement by the potential in the new wave of Macao-born filmmakers. This also reveals that the project has been successful in offering international exchange for the local film enterprises. Nonetheless, as soon as the film expo started, there was controversy within the sector. According to the local sector, although the event was attended by international filmmakers or practitioners, there was little audience. This suggested that the event could

benefit from more extensive publicity. The key to achieving industry recognition, therefore, has to do with how much the organisers care about the professional trade and local participation. In Macao, is the convergence of art and business a lasting one or a short term effect? This is certainly food for thought.

As far as international communities are concerned, enterprises and individuals have always been important sponsors for the arts and cultural sector. The United States, for example, has a substantial amount of such sponsors, with over 30% of income of the non-profit sector coming from these enterprises and individuals, which is five times higher than the income they received from government bodies. From a financial point of view, such sponsorship is usually motivated by certain agenda, such as tax exemptions, branding and social recognition. What is worth considering is that if the benefits of business sponsorships are so obvious, why do we still need to put in so much effort to lobby for it? The reason why the businesses and individuals are so keen to support arts and cultural events, after all, demand for some incentives other than fame or financial reward.

In recent times, the leading banking and financial giant in the United States, J P Morgan, has acquired an extensive art collection. In the 20th century, he was appointed the Chairman of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. His tireless advocacy for more business support to the arts has a reverberating impact on the American public arts industry. When we look at the history of J P Morgan, we can see that he majored in fine art history when he was at university, a time when he visited art galleries, museums and historic relics. As a result of his

knowledge in arts and culture, Morgan became known as one of the important arts patrons and advocates.

As we can see, the motivation behind business participation in arts and culture could be related to certain agenda such as the knowledge on arts and culture of the patrons, or the networks developed between the enterprises and certain arts and cultural leaders. A similar parallel could be found in the art patrons in Macao, even now, in discussing individual and business sponsorships for activities, non-profit organisations in the United States care about the mutual understanding between the parties. This goes to show the social dimension of the convergence of arts and business. In the example of Macao’s arts and culture, this convergence is still in its early stage. Nonetheless, such mutual dialogue between arts and cultural enterprises and the businesses may perhaps encourage a more diverse and sustainable sector.



• Photo courtesy of Ieong Man Pan
The works of local Macao-based artist, Ieong Man Pan, have been acquired by private collector Sabrina Ho



Based in Beijing, Cheong works in academic research and enjoys listening to classical music. His publications include *An Oral History of the Concert Band in Macao*. He is the editor of *Macao Music Yearbook 2014* and *Macao Music Yearbook 2015*. He loves learning.

Cheong Sio Pang

Longings beyond Words

Last year, Tsinghua University invited Joja Wendt, a German pianist, to give a piano concert, “Around the World in 88 Keys” at the New Tsinghua Xuetaang, which proved very popular with the children. Performing to the audience of over 1,500 persons, Wendt delivered a most impressive concert. A complete opposite to the sort of over-formal performance one might associate with classical music, Wendt gave a light-hearted and friendly show, making music appreciation more accessible than ever. Indeed, the audience was invited to interact with the music. This event brought to mind some similar shows by Raymond Chan Wai Man, a Macao-based musician, whose concert series, “Comedia de Musica Classica” in recent years have done much to promote classical music appreciation. His show last year, which features collaborative cross-over with Cantonese opera, was a great hit. These performances by Wendt and Chan illustrate that music can be made much more accessible to the audience if interpreted in a more refreshing way, especially through collaborations. At the same time, they made it easier to appreciate classical music as an art form that draws from life. In other words, with an effective platform or interpretation in place, classical music can feel more connected to our everyday lives and be widely promoted.

Lasting over two hours, Wendt’s concert was filled with laughter, singing and joy, as the audience took part in the music-making. Influenced by the piano blues of Boogie-Woogie, his music is more palatable and invites interaction given the all-time popularity of jazz music. Wendt also took care to explain the way he engaged with different instruments to enhance his music performance. For

example, he used his “gigantic palm” (with an arc spanning 12 degrees) when performing Rachmaninov’s music. While other pianists will make use of professional musical instruments, the humorous Wendt decided to achieve the effect with a wooden stick, so that the audience could better understand how powerful and immense is a pianist’s hand. Moreover, he recounted his days learning the piano as a child, when he would make up stories using piano long before he could navigate the piano keys. In the concert, he led the audience into his childhood memories, encouraging them to make up music together by playing the piano impromptu, in the same way as he used to make up a “horror story” with his siblings. The pianist confessed that this kind of process helped him understand the meaning of music: the way a different sound can articulate one’s inner feeling.

Wendt’s virtuoso is empowering not because of the performance in itself. Rather, it lies in the artist’s ability to create music together with the audience. This reveals the most important value in music, in its possibility to express people’s inner feelings and dreams. After all, the complexity of human feelings means that not everything can be put down in words. Art is therefore a way for us to express what lies beyond words. In this sense, it does not matter whether the nature of the musical piece is elegant or not. Instead, the significance of the work resides in its expressive power that transcends languages and bridges the gap between feelings and words.

The richness of Beijing’s art scene reflects a new era when the steady economic developments in China have changed the

lives of the middle classes, who begin to enjoy a better living standard and pursue higher fulfillment in life. Despite the fact that the capital attracted many international tour groups to stage their works, there is room for more improvement to the city’s infrastructures. For example, there is a lack of translation support for performance groups, as evident in the poorly translated speech of Wendt, which made it hard for the audience to appreciate what the artist actually said. This is not to say that the translator did not prepare his notes well, but there were instances when the pianist made some impromptu remarks, which proved challenging for the translator to grasp. As a result, the effectiveness of the performance was undermined. If only the music performances could be backed by more quality simultaneous interpretation support. After all, the surge in international performance tours taking place in Beijing has made this need more pressing than ever.



Photo courtesy of Tsinghua University Arts Centre
German pianist Joja Wendt