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#15 /2016 06



Can Documentaries
**Breathe New Life into
the Creative Industries
in Macao?**

Opinion

Made in Macau – Outlook for Fashion Industry
José Tang: Growing an Enterprise by Expanding Sales

Extravaganza

Art Basel: Transforming the Art Scene of a City

Around the Globe

**Hong Kong International Film & TV Market–
New Cross-Cultures Opportunities**



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Editor's Letter

Documentaries are often seen as a boring subject when compared with blockbuster films with elements of romance, sci-fi and action. But excellent documentaries are in fact a reflection of society and a dialogue with what's happening in a particular era. Documentary production is mushrooming in Macao, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Mainland recently, and there are documentary film festivals and competitions aplenty. We anticipate that these are good opportunities to groom new talent for the field. In this issue, five documentary filmmakers from Macao and Hong Kong share their views and insights of the industry.

In addition, José Tang, doyen in the garment industry in Macao, talks about his views on local fashion and its export. We also cover the "Macao Pavilion", set up jointly by the Macao Government Tourism Office and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government in the FILMART in Around the World, as well as Art Basel Hong Kong in Extravaganza. Our bloggers, as usual, bring news on the cultural and creative industries in Asia and Europe to our readers.

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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Can Documentaries Breathe New Life into the Creative Industries in Macao?

Many leading filmmakers, such as Jia Zhangke and Michael Moore, have made excellent documentaries, or have introduced documentary-style filmmaking seamlessly in their film production. What is the importance of documentary filmmaking in Macao, and what are the opportunities open to the local documentary filmmakers? To find out more about their views and preoccupations, we interviewed documentary filmmakers across different generations in both Macao and Hong Kong.

By Jason Leong, Lei Ka lo, Leo Lei
Photo courtesy of old sin@Calvan sin Production,
TitusSky@In's Creation, Lam Kin Kuan,
Cheung King Wai, Albert Chu lao lan,
Cheong Kin Man, James Jacinto

Macao International Documentary Film Festival: Revamping the Image of Documentaries

The inaugural Macao International Documentary Film Festival held in late April has, in its own way, introduced the art of documentaries to the community. With doMEmentary as a slogan, the Festival brought together documentaries based on personal stories from different parts of the world for the Macao community. The opening gala film, *The Taste of Youth*, is a new film directed by the Golden Horse award-winner Cheung King Wai, while other films screened at the Festival included *Wansei Back Home* by Huang Ming-Cheng, Taiwan's leading director; *Taxi*, which won the Golden Bear Award at the Berlinale; as well as *I'm Here* directed by the local film director, Choi Ian Sin.

The Festival curator and person-in-charge, Lam Kin Kuan, said that Macao did not have such documentary festivals previously, and so the act of handpicking these award-winning films which feature everyday life is a deliberate choice to engage the audience, and to make them understand that documentaries can also be very appealing and full of personality.

"In English, we call these documentaries, but the term should not be confused with the word 'document', hence they have nothing to do with documents or files. After all, documentaries are a way of storytelling, and are all about narratives and characters. However, since documentary production is concerned with the recording of real events, such that the audience enjoys

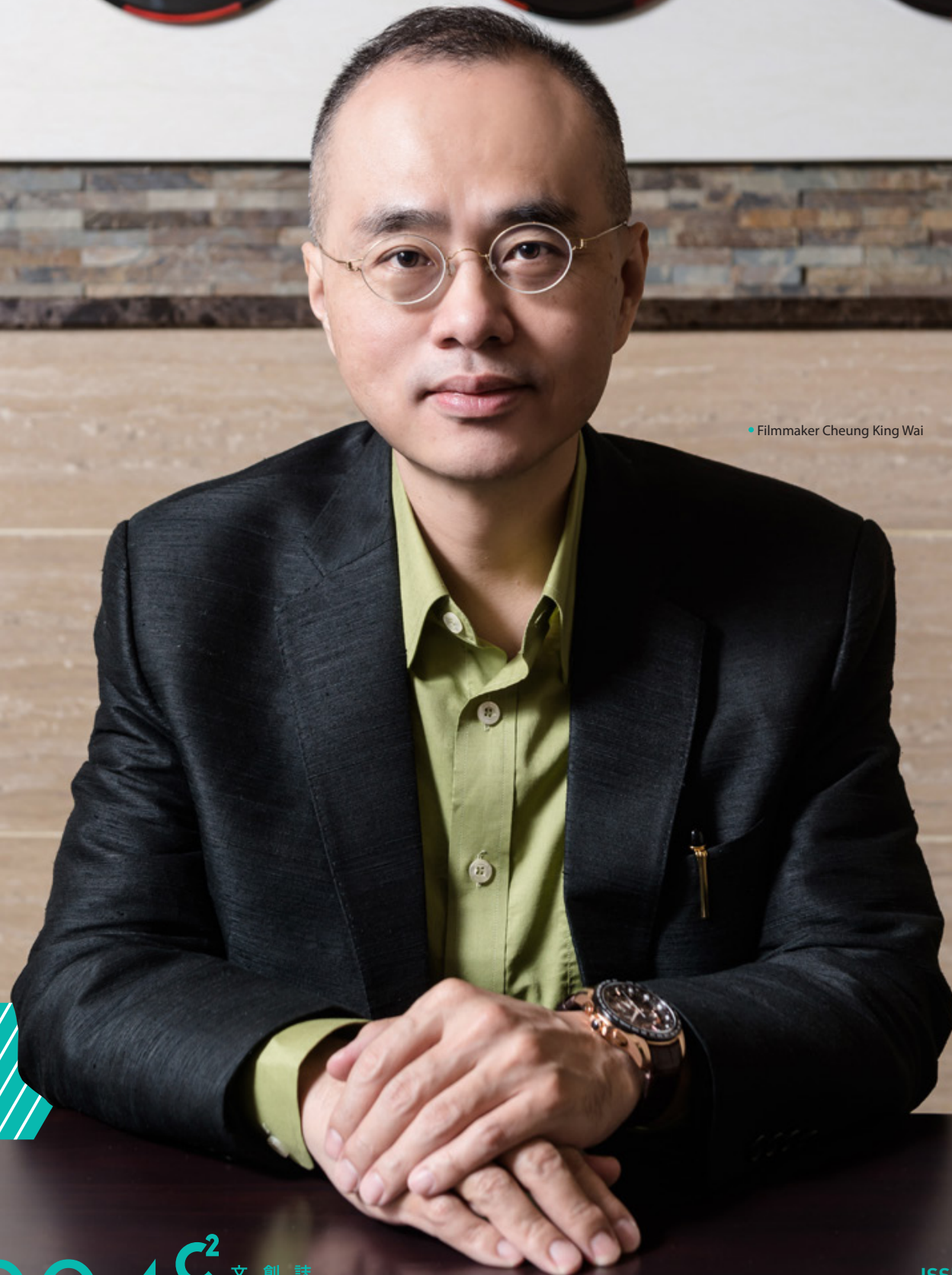
a sense of authenticity, the effects can be different," said Lam.

Lam Kin Kuan majored in journalism in the University of Macau, and obtained a Master's degree in TV documentary literature at Goldsmiths College, University of London, with the subsidy from the Cultural Affairs Bureau. After his studies, he returned to Macao, working in film production, and has participated in the Local View Power held in Macao Cultural Centre. With funding support of this scheme, Lam succeeded in working full-time in his passionate interest.

"To date, this is the fourth year running in which I take part in this competition. In the past, my work (including my graduation portfolio for the Master's degree) has been funded by the scheme. Sadly, there is a lack of diversity in the film audience in Macao, and so entering contests is especially important for



• Film still for *Wansei Back Home*, Taiwanese documentary Film screened in Macao International Documentary Film Festival.



• Filmmaker Cheung King Wai

Lam also pointed out that, with its rich local history, Macao has a lot of room and materials to offer for documentary filmmakers. "As a place where the Chinese and Portuguese cultures meet, Macao has a unique local enigma. Such cultural background can be very appealing to foreigners. Therefore, we should not feel limited to our own resources. In Hong Kong, Taiwan as well as overseas, there are investment seminars for filmmaking professionals from all over the world who are interested in funding innovative [films]. If they are successful, they can make use of foreign funding to film in Macao. My previous piece, *I Repeated*, was funded by the overseas TV station, Peninsula Television. There are still a lot of choices for the development of documentary production in Macao. It all depends on how proactive you are in seeking opportunities." In the future, Lam planned to make more documentaries to do with Macao, including a film based on Macao's former governor, João Ferreira do Amaral, who lost his arm in the battle of Itaparica.

While documentaries are still being developed in Macao, the same can be said for Hong Kong's scene, even if the latter enjoys a longer history of documentaries and that more sophisticated works can be found.

The opening gala film for the Macao International Documentary Film Festival, *The Taste of Youth*, is directed by the leading Hong Kong director, Cheung King Wai. In 2009, Cheung's long documentary, *Music and Life*, won the Best Documentary in the 46th Golden Horse Awards, the Best Film-Editing and the Best Sound Effect. Subsequently, his works such as the drama *Crimson Jade*, and *Hill of Illha Verde*, which was filmed in Macao, have

garnered many international awards.

In face of people's misunderstandings about the nature of documentaries, particularly the assumption that they must be boring and news-like, Cheung pointed out that creative works all share something in common. Be it a drama film or a documentary, their goal is to explore social issues, and that whether the film is interesting or not simply depends on the chosen approach of production.

He said: "In the past, I used to play the cello. I graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts, and later I also performed in orchestras. Eventually, I became a film director. But I don't see much difference in what I do, be it cello performance or film directing. It all has to do with exploring and understanding life. As far as filmmaking goes, the plot is not the key. Rather, what is important is the perspective. We have to keep questioning and to address those questions, and to present our own views towards life to the audience. That is the film director's task."

Despite the fact that documentaries can be less imaginative as drama films, Cheung said that he often makes new discoveries during the filmmaking process. "What is so special about documentaries is that you cannot stick to a script, nor do you have to come up with any, because what you need to capture are the real incidents as they unfold. All you have to do is to record what happen before your eyes. Your filming target will reveal itself based on the various things that take place. During the post-production, you can compose a story and the plot based on film editing and sequence."

Cheung added: "During our production, what we have to do is to be in full grasp of filmmaking techniques, the cinematic sound and the visuals. Once everything is set up, we just have to be patient enough to wait for and capture the most touching imagery under the lens."

While it sounds so simple, Cheung felt that in order to make a good film, the director must be inquisitive about his surroundings. "Filmmaking can be quite tiring. If you do not feel much towards your characters or their environments, you can only produce a standard piece of work, rather than a touching masterpiece. I am deeply interested in people and the society, and have an urge to translate my feelings into the visual form. This is the artistic direction I will follow in the future." Cheung is now at work on a new documentary film based on a Mainland Chinese girl who dreams of becoming a film star. There is not much agenda for this film, he said. He simply wanted to capture what it is like to live in the contemporary society.



• Film still for *The Taste of Youth*

Local View Power: Nurturing Film and TV Talents For Macao

Local View Power organised by the Macao Cultural Centre is nearing its tenth edition, giving birth to a total of 49 local video productions, which nurtured generations of talents in film and TV such as documentary, and contributed to recording the development of Macao. Albert Chu lao lan, head of organising unit Audio-Visual Cut Association, thought that Macao productions and talents bear talent to go international, and they are only lacking opportunities and experiences.

Established in 1999, Audio-Visual Cut Association aimed at promoting the development of contemporary Macao movies. Over the years, it has nurtured a number of local movie talents and conducted external exchanges. The three episodes of serial movie *Macao Stories*, which portrayed Macao in an in-depth manner, were produced by Audio-Visual Cut Association, and received international recognition. Chu lao lan hopes to promote the development of Macao movie industry with his art group as the starting point. Since 2007, it has co-organised Local View Power with the Macao Cultural Centre to cultivate talents of the next generation.

Local View Power is divided into the three categories of Documentary, Short Feature and Animation, which are further divided into Freshmen, Open and Advanced levels. The threshold and subsidy for each stage is different. In these, the subsidy for advanced documentary can reach MOP\$200,000. The possibility of advancing from one level to another has become a motivation for movie amateurs. "There was only documentary filming in the beginning, because it does not involve too many professional supports. Scenes and actors can be found real life, and the finance are more handleable. It was in later stages that animation and feature were gradually added, and the competition became more diversified," said Chu.

It is not an easy task to be shortlisted for the final evaluation and public screening. The whole process takes nearly a year with three phases of evaluation, including the formulation of proposal, discussion and

production with professional team of the organiser. The final product will only be screened at the Macao Cultural Centre after it is finished. Despite the arduous process, the competition has directly nurtured a number of local Macao movie talents, such as Lam Kin Kuan featured in this issue, and *I'm Here* director Choi Ian Sin. They prove that Macao can produce outstanding movie talents, and the competition plays a role in nurturing them.

Into its ninth year, the competition has gradually developed a mature system, but the prospect after screening at the Cultural Centre - for instance, the arrangement to screen on overseas movie festivals - still lacks support. Chu think that the government can transform from passive promotion in newspaper and other media to actively approaching international movie festivals or make school tours for screening, allowing people from more places to appreciate outstanding Macao productions.

"The first edition of the competition coincided with the opening of Macao's gaming industry, and most works explored the changes in the society; up till now when things have been settled, the topics of the productions become diversified. Documentaries are interesting in the sense that they bear fictional elements and authenticity at the same time. Looking back at productions ten years ago, you would know the social landscape and historic significance back then. This is why I insisted on documentary production," said Chu.



Albert Chu lao lan has been grooming film and TV talents and audiences in Macao.

• Emerging documentary director Cheong Kin Man

Cheong Kin Man: Strike Proactively, First Experience as International Exhibitor

"The most important thing for Macao's documentaries is to build up popularity, and at least let people know that Macao has its own productions." Cheong Kin Man has been promoting his work *A Useless Fiction* around the world for the past two years. At the same time, he has invited numerous friends to participate in overseas exhibitions with their work, which made him realise the situation of Macao documentaries face in the international scene.

A Useless Fiction was originally Cheong Kin Man's graduate production for his Masters in Visual Anthropology, which explores the confusion of identity recognition. Cheong "merely wanted to hand in the homework" and never thought about publicising the movie. However, the production which he regarded as "bizarre" was unexpectedly well-received at the 2014 Berlin Movimiento Graduate Screening. The tutors then encouraged him to send his work to some film festivals.

"I barely knew anything about film festivals." Before doing his Masters, Cheong was involved in the production of documentaries, but has never submitted his work to overseas film festivals. After the Berlin public screening, with the guidance of seniors, he finally learnt about the rules of film festivals, such as the limitation on premiers in some large-scale film festivals.

Cheong submitted his work to around 300 film festivals, and got shortlisted in around 30 of them with various scales and around the world- it goes as far as Columbia and as close as Taiwan and Singapore. The experience of participation allowed him to understand the operation mode of different film festivals. He also made a lot of new friends, some of whom invited him to pick Macao productions for screening in their hometowns.

One of Cheong's friends whom he met at a local exhibition pulled the strings and asked Cheong to be in charge of the nomination of movies at the Asian short movie screening at the Slovenian LiberAc Cultural Festival in May. Cheong invited 11 Macao movies to the screening, and a lot of Macao directors, such as Helder Beja, were thrilled to have the opportunity.

In addition to being invited passively, Cheong also actively recommended Macao productions to film festival organisers. Under his suggestion, the Spain Anthropology Autumn Film Festival in 2015 held a special Macao movie day. Cheong regarded these type of work as "friendly promotion". "There is no award or support system for participation in international film festivals in Macao currently, and officials do not systematically organise directors to participate in international film festivals

from the first to fifth tiers," Cheong said. "Nonetheless, an advantage of it is that movie makers, particularly individual producers, have more space to participate and introduce Macao."

Without existing institutional support, movie producers have to do everything on their own. However, Cheong said that different kinds of film festivals have their own uniqueness and merit. "Being shortlisted in large-scale film festivals certainly have significant positive impact on the movie, but the exchanges at smaller film festivals are often more in-depth and one-of-a-kind. Therefore, I think we should not blindly go after renowned film festivals. Instead, we should form participation plans according to the audience and positioning of the movie."

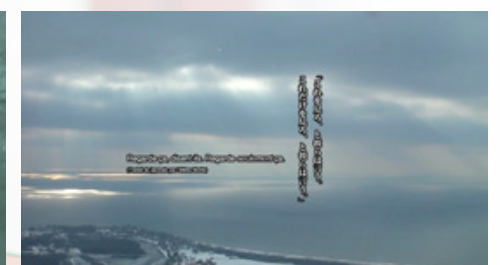
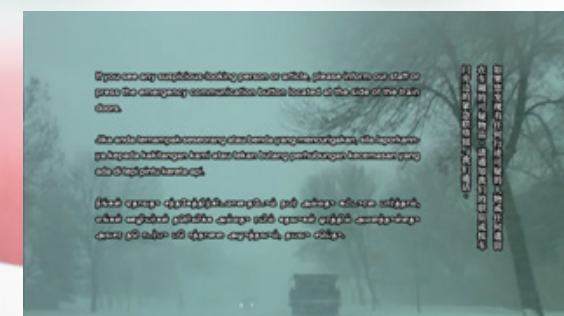
That said, film festivals are not the only way to go international. European online paid documentary platform European Documentary Network recently included *A Useless Fiction*. For Cheong, this is a change in promotion mode. "The wish of creators are very important, it depends on what kind of screening opportunity and experience they want."

A Useless Fiction carries strong experimental style. In the beginning, the elegant melody of the song *Olive Trees* is played, and with the lyrics going in the background, scenes of silent Macanese around the world flies by one after the other. These are followed by landscape videos taken with iPhone, and scenes shot with lens covered by papers. Subtitles in Chinese, Portuguese, English, and Burmese are laid on the screen, while the voiceover is sometimes Cheong's calm and brisk narrative, and sometimes insect chirpings or recordings from inside a train.

This year, the Macao Literary Festival screened this "bizarre" production. However, over half of the audience left as soon as the movie is over and did not stay for Cheong's sharing session. Ordinary people's failure to understand the movie is a sharp contrast with the praise of professional movie critics.

"If you take documentaries as an industry, you need to find a balance between audience's interest and directors' arts. After all, they depend on box office revenues and need to cater to audience's taste; but I think we should not over-entertain (the audiences), or else documentaries will become mere tools to make money." Therefore, in multiple times of nomination of Macao productions, Cheong insisted that the standard does not lie within the quality of the movie, but the background, motive and message of them.

"I find art-oriented productions with income as the secondary motive particularly worthy of government support," Cheong said.



• Cheong Kin Man's *A Useless Fiction* has already gained opportunities to be screened in overseas film festivals



James Jacinto: Distribution Network Lacking for Documentaries

Director James Jacinto points out that promoting documentaries is no easy task as there are no established distribution channels in Macao yet

Since 2000, the Macao Efficient Productions (Efficient) managed by James Jacinto has produced many documentaries of Macao. For instance, from 2006 to 2007, it produced a TV documentary series for Teledifusão de Macao (TDM), including *Youngsters Working in Casinos*, *Foreigners Living in Macao* and three other chapters; in 2008 it produced the documentary *Patuá di Macau, unde ta vai?* sponsored by the Macao Foundation; its recent production was *The Chronicles of Wu Li in St. Paul's College* (The Chronicles) which was based on Jiangsu painter Wu Li's story in Macao in early Qing dynasty, premiered in 2015.

Jacinto has extensive experience in documentary production, but most of them were commissioned for education or public purposes. Only *The Chronicles*, *Patuá di Macau, unde ta vai?* and *The Priest's Land* were initiated and shot by their company. He said: "Distribution is the hardest hurdle. The content of these three documentaries were based mainly on history and are not commercialised. Therefore, despite our attempt to seek distribution channel, no distributors found them attractive. This is such a shame, because there are not many documentaries with historic significance in Macao."

Jacinto said that at present, there is no

complete distribution system in Macao, nor relevant database that helps searching of information in this regard. Whether or not your production meets its audience relies solely on your time to explore and your connections. It takes up substantial amount of time and resources just to send the work to different organisations and agencies.

He gave an example: "The cost to make 2,000 blu-ray discs is around MOP\$200,000 excluding seeking of distribution channel. Without distributors, it is impossible to rely only on the financial resources of us producers."

Jacinto claimed that only because *The Chronicles* was sponsored by UA Cinemas that it could be screened in the cinemas under UA. Otherwise, it is very difficult for this kind of non-commercial movies to be showed in cinemas. "Moreover, there was a cooperation agreement between TDM and our company, so it could not be played in paid movie channels or YouTube for a period of time. However, we are planning on taking it to a Singapore movie festival, which will help promote Macao's documentaries overseas."

Indeed, without the sponsor or subsidy of organisations and foundations, the shooting of documentaries is like burning money. Regarding this, Jacinto thought that gaming enterprises can do more. "From the society, for the society. Gaming enterprises can provide more resources to shoot worthy documentaries. The current problem in Macao is that the topic of documentaries are very narrow, mainly due to the close interpersonal relationship and the raft of sensitive political areas. In fact, topics such as Macao's triads and sex industry are worthy of shooting. However, you may encounter troubles while shooting and it may be difficult to secure subsidy or sponsor. This is the dilemma Macao is facing."

Made in Macau – Outlook for Fashion Industry

José Tang:

Growing an Enterprise by Expanding Sales

“Most arts practitioners are more focused on their ideals than on making a living. They tend to have little business acumen. What’s more, government support in terms of sales and marketing channels are also lacking. These factors have hindered the growth of local cultural and creative industries,” said José Tang, deputy president of Industrial Association of Macau. With over 30 years of experience in garment manufacturing, Tang’s business clients range from international fashion brands to local charities. With an established production of well-designed products, Tang has created courses jointly with government bodies to provide training for fashion designers on different topics, ranging from garment manufacture to business operation. Tang believes that, notwithstanding the excellent design talent in Macao, creativity must be complemented by business acumen.

By Yuki leong

Photo courtesy of Calvin
sin Production and José Tang

• José Tang is the deputy
president of Industrial
Association of Macau

• Industrial Association
of Macau registers Made
in Macau (MinM) as a
trademark for goods
made in Macao



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Firm Advocate of
Local Production

As the CEO of Agencia Comercial Carmen Lda, José Tang also owns three garment factories in Macao. During the mid-1980s, i.e. the boom of Macao’s garment-making industry, there were over 1,000 factories in Macao. Later, in late 1980s, the industries in Macao have rapidly reduced, and the garment manufacture industry also went through a difficult time, as the sector was hit by the surge of cost and a shrinking market, coupled with the relocation of factories to other regions. However, Tang remains a keen advocate of locally made goods, and decided to keep his factories in Macao, so as to maintain the quality of products.

In 2009, Made in Macau (MinM) became a trademark for goods made in Macao, and offers a platform for small- and medium-sized enterprises in Macao to nurture their own brands, promoting consumer awareness towards locally produced goods. Similarly, Agencia Comercial Carmen also boasts of MinM products, manufacturing uniforms for the gaming industry, government departments, Red Cross Macao, as well as the product supplier for Macao’s Grand Prix and Lions Clubs products.

Lei Un Garment Factory under Agencia Comercial Carmen Lda. serves an arts service platform sponsored by the Cultural Industries Fund. It offers fashion business operation courses at the Zhuhai-Macao industrial zone. These courses cover fashion design sample-making, production, production management, capital management, taxation matters, etc, helping entrepreneurs to resolve issues such as stock inventory and small-scale production. It is envisaged that this course will include ten different lecturing topics. Last year, the two topics introduced have already attracted 60 enrolled students.

Dedicated in his efforts to nurture new talent in the local fashion industry, Tang often meets and works with young, emerging designers who have little knowledge on garment-making processes. Their lack of knowledge on production often leads to difficulties in liaising with Mainland factories during sample-making.

“There are many jargons specific to manufacture. Sometimes, subtle differences to do with the colour, material and thickness of a thread are already enough to produce very different results. Back in the old days, people could go to the factories to observe and learn about the processes, but nowadays this kind of self-learning is no longer available to the young people.” With his commercial experience, Tang saw that the young fashion designers are hindered by their lack of business skills. “I often say to them that whatever they would like to design, their products must have

commercial value in order to be sell-able, and not exist for the sake of design. Cost is a critical factor, and it is important to make a living out of it.”

Self-sustaining
Retail

Reflecting on Macao’s cultural and creative industries, Tang is particularly thoughtful: “The community in Macao is quite fortunate in the sense that the government is doing a lot to promote cultural and creative activities.”

However, the support to the fashion design industry is still inadequate, according to Tang. “Subsidy Programme for Fashion Design on Sample Making being held each year has seen to a number of excellent designs, but while the award recipients are funded to make samples, their designs are often deprived of sales and marketing channels.” Tang recalled that one designer who won the funding has put forth his design for sale online, but only managed to sell one or two garments each year.

Tang believed that the online platform is one of the sales channels for cultural and creative products, but one must bear in mind that many online consumers do not buy more expensive items online, and so this makes it difficult when some local fashion designers rely heavily on online sales.

In neighbouring regions, cultural and creative districts such as Taipei New Horizon in Taiwan, 798 Art Zone in Beijing, M50 Creative Park in Shanghai, exist to bring together art studios and retail. Tang said that the difference between these places and Macao lies in the fact that, while those local governments elsewhere are helping to promote culture and creativity by opening up retail spaces for the sector, locally made products in Macao are not accessible to tourists because of the lack of retail outlets for local goods.

“Macao Ideas, a venue for showcasing Macao’s local products, has now moved from Tourism Activities Centre to 19th floor of China Civil Plaza. Besides, it is only a showroom rather than a retail location. C-shop opposite Old Court House is known for selling local products, but some designers found that the requirements for joining the C-shop are relatively high. The Macao Fashion Gallery in St. Lazarus’ Church District, on the other hand, has limited space, and can only showcase the works of a few designers.”

“In Macao, there is no problem with the supply of creativity, but there is a lack of real enterprise.” According to his observations, public resources can only provide funding to local designers for their creative design and production processes, but not in support of their sales and marketing activities. Sadly, what designers lack most is retail space. Tang felt that the local designers have proven their capabilities in many aspects. Their only drawback is the lack of resources to open up a retail market for their goods.

“How can design become an enterprise if the designed goods have no selling platforms? My suggestion is that a public body led by the Cultural Affairs Bureau can handpick some locally designed goods for sales and distribution at various tourist attractions, and to explore possibilities with various gaming operators on the possibility to set up Macao’s cultural and creative shops at the gaming venues. By offering them retail space, there is hope that the designs can transform into an enterprise.”



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Art Basel:

Transforming the Art Scene of a City

By Yuki leong
Photo courtesy of Yuki leong

Held in March this year, Art Basel Hong Kong has led to a new wave of visual arts activities: Hong Kong Tourism Board has named March the Month of Art, with highlights of over 20 arts events including Art Central Hong Kong, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Asia Contemporary Art Show, etc., attracting collectors and curators from all over the world. Compared with the international vision of Art Basel, Art Central focuses more on Asian art, with 75% of participating galleries from Asia, featuring over 500 artworks. The joint director of Art Central, Maree Di Pasquale, remarked: "We have always felt that Hong Kong has the potential to become an international arts hub, with the competitiveness of other global arts hubs such as Paris, Miami or New York."

According to the global art market report from TEFAF, the aggregate sales total of the Chinese art market has fallen by 23% to US\$11.8 billion. Despite this, the transactions recorded at this year's Hong Kong Art Basel was still considerable, with an artwork represented by Cardi Gallery (London and Milan) acquired by a private art collector from Europe at a price of US\$10 million. Based in London and New York, David Zwirner Gallery also sold five artworks by a Belgian artist, Michaël Borremans, at the Art Basel, amounting to US\$1.6 million.



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Ripple Effect of Art

Founded in 1970 in Basel in Switzerland, Art Basel features modern and contemporary art. In 2002, Art Basel was also set up in Miami in the US, and made its debut in Hong Kong in 2013.

This year, the Hong Kong Art Basel attracted as many as 239 participating galleries from 35 countries and regions, with 28 art galleries taking part for the first time. Compared with Art Basel's previous shows, the audience for this year drew a football of over 70,000 persons: a record-breaking figure.

Anthea Fan, director of Hong Kong's am space gallery – a gallery joining Art Basel for the second year running – pointed out that when Art Basel was first introduced in Hong Kong in 2013, it already succeeded in increasing the exposure of Hong Kong artists, and quickly became a significant trade platform for the Hong Kong as well as Asian art market. However, at that time, Hong Kong's art was considered lacking in sophistication. In the last few years, having staged more art shows in Hong Kong, the quality of local art has improved considerably, to such an extent that some full-time artists have emerged in the sector. Fan felt that Art Basel has already successfully made an impact on the art scene across the Pearl River Delta. She said: "Everyone is learning about the model of art expos in the West. In these few years, there has been a surge of art shows in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Mainland, albeit some of these expos are not so self-sustainable."

An International Exchange Platform

Anthea Fan said that Art Basel is significant not only in terms of the volume of market transactions, it is also Hong Kong's one and only opportunity for Hong Kong artists to interact with the staff from art museums abroad.

"What the artists care about is not just the gross sales from art, but to get themselves invited by leading galleries to take part in exhibitions abroad. After all, this is what really matters: to develop their careers."

Last year, am space was one of the two Hong Kong-based participating galleries in a particular exhibition zone, but by this year, it is the one and only gallery from Hong Kong featured in this zone. Fan was unsurprised, saying: "The event is heavily business-oriented. After all, the primary motive for staging such a well-recognised art event in Hong Kong is mainly aimed at expanding the art market in Asia. In order to apply for a stall, a gallery would have to submit a proposal and a fee of US\$1,000. Despite this hefty price tag, many art galleries compete for a chance to be featured in this art show. Hence, the fact that it took place in Hong Kong doesn't mean that the organiser would allocate more places for Hong Kong galleries."

More Sophisticated Art Collectors in Asia

Xu Jianguo is an American Chinese artist taking part in Art Basel for the first time. Having researched on Western art in the US for 30 years, Xu has exhibited in New York, Shanghai and Beijing. He thought that Art Basel is not very different from similar art shows abroad in terms of its operation. What is different is mainly the philosophy and attitudes of artists in different countries.

"Art in the west is more focused on the appreciation of the physical as well as the logic and application of visual thinking. On the other hand, art in the East is more focused on feelings and expression."

Xu further pointed out that the aesthetic judgment and understanding have gradually increased among Asians in recent years. "Nowadays, the quality of collectors on the Mainland has also increased, although the majority of collectors are still geared towards profitability. Art collectors with a genuine sense of independent thinking are of the minority. With more opportunities for those on the Mainland to study abroad and their improved economic outlooks, they will begin to appreciate art as part of life, and cultivate their taste for art."



• American Chinese artist Xu Jianguo



• Anthea Fan, director of am space gallery.





Hong Kong International Film & TV Market–

New Cross-Cultures Opportunities



By Jason Leong
Photo courtesy of Chris Cheung

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong International Film & TV Market (FILMART). For the first time, the Macao Government Tourism Office and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government work together to set up a “Macao Pavilion” at the FILMART. Opened on 14 March, FILMART was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center for four consecutive days, with the aim to facilitate cooperation within the film and TV industry. FILMART has always been an important marketplace for film financing, distribution, and production, etc. This year, the event welcomed an overwhelming turnout of more than 7,300 buyers.

In this edition, FILMART featured 800 exhibitors from more than 30 countries and regions, including the United States, France, Japan and India. China accounted for most number of exhibitors, with provinces and cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Hangzhou all having their pavilions. Hong Kong's film and TV organisations, such as Sun Entertainment, Emperor Entertainment Group, Media Asia and Television Broadcasts Limited were also among the participants. In addition, Macao SAR set up the "Macao Pavilion" at the FILMART for the first time to showcase the city's film and TV culture by local entertainment agencies like Chessman Entertainment and Pride Entertainment to the international market. According to our observations on the spot, lusophone investors were interested in the Macao booth and products, and business talks aplenty. The promotional purpose seemed to have achieved.



• The anime market has started gaining grounds in the Mainland



• Cross-culture and cross-language cooperations are the trend in the film and TV industry



Mainland Anime Market Gaining Grounds

In addition to exhibition booths, FILMART has organised 400 screenings and over 70 professional seminars with talents in movie, television, post-production, animation and music as speakers. Delegates from several popular animation studios shared their recipes for success in the animation conference "How Can a Small/Medium Size Animation Studio be Successful in the Global Market?". Samuel Choy, General Manager of Bliss Concepts Limited, which produced the famous Hong Kong animation *McDull*, said: "The production of *McDull* enabled us to tap into the mainland market, and we realised that there is tremendous development potential. For instance, the mainland lacks serial animation similar to the US superheroes movies. This is where we are heading towards."

Kazuhiro Nishikawa, director of Japanese Dandelion Animation Studio, also said that they would study the likings of Chinese audiences and add Chinese culture in their animation to go into the mainland market. Nishikawa said that Japan is currently affected by declining birth rate and there is a drop in animation audience. It is necessary to study and plan to tap into the international market for the sustainable development of the animation industry.



New Opportunities and Challenges in the Film and TV Industry Under the "Belt and Road" Initiative

On the other hand, the TVWorld 2016 – International Forum was simultaneously held at the venue of FILMART, with "Belt & Road' Business Opportunities for the Global TV Industry" as the topic, and explored new opportunities for the film and TV industry brought by the Belt and Road initiative. The industry predicted that cross-border film partnerships would become a major development trend in the future. At the Forum, Chen Bin, Senior Vice President of DMG YinJi Film, Television, Entertainment & Media Company Ltd., said: "TV industry in the mainland is undergoing rapid development. Box office is in par with that in North America, and has great development potential. If the Belt and Road initiative is developed properly, it will enable Chinese film and TV industry to internationalise and go further than the Chinese market. We predict that there will be a lot of cross-border cooperation, and cross-culture and cross-language exchanges in the future."

However, Vasily Korvyakov, Partner of Veles Media from Russia, pointed out that: "Because of cultural differences, the preferences of the audiences in different countries could be quite diverse. Cross-border film partnerships could therefore prove difficult, since there will be limitation in the process of creation. For instance, the storyline has to conform to the culture of both places. But under the Belt and Road Initiative, Sino-Russian trade and commerce will become more frequent, and topics with common interest can be found. For example, love or deception stories between Chinese and Russian citizens should be well-received." Italian producer Giovanni Robbiano agreed, and said that the opening of the international market will foster integration of film and TV productions by different cultures. In the future, there will be more high-level joint collaborations.

EVENT CALENDER

Call for Tenders: Cinematheque • Passion

Submission deadline: 5pm, 25/7/2016 (Monday)

Address: Reception, Building of Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macao, Rua do Tap Siac

Details: The Cultural Affairs Bureau is now calling for proposals to operate Cinematheque • Passion for a term of three years. Companies with Macao residents hold at least 50% of the shares, and registered under the Financial Services Bureau and Business and Properties Registration Bureau, are eligible to submit proposals. Details of the tender, regulations and related documents can be reviewed in person at the Building of the Cultural Affairs Bureau during 9am-1pm, 2:30pm-5:30pm, Monday to Friday)

Web: www.icm.gov.mo/cn/announcement



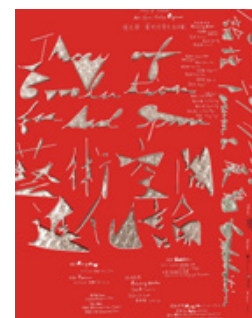
Call for Tenders: Nam Van C-Shop

Submission deadline: 5pm, 13/6/2016 (Monday)

Address: Reception, Building of Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macao, Rua do Tap Siac

Details: The Cultural Affairs Bureau is now calling for proposals to operate Nam Van C-Shop for a term of 48 months. The shop has to be specialised in selling Macao-designed products. Companies with Macao residents hold at least 50% of the shares, and registered under the Financial Services Bureau and the Business and Properties Registration Bureau, are eligible to submit proposals. Details of the tender, regulations and related documents can be reviewed in person at the Building of the Cultural Affairs Bureau during 9am-1pm, 2:30pm-5:30pm, Monday to Friday)

Web: www.icm.gov.mo/cn/announcement



Theory of Evolution for Art Spaces: Forum and Exhibition

Date: 21/5/2016-10/7/2016

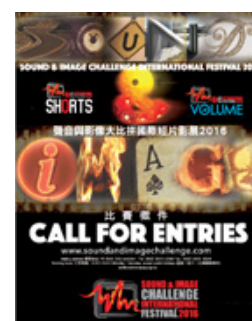
Time: 12pm-7pm (Closed on Tuesdays)

Venue: Ox Warehouse

Ticket: Free

Organiser: Ox Warehouse

Web: oxwarehouse.blogspot.com



The 7th Edition of The Sound & Image Challenge

Submission deadline: 16/6/2016

Submission method: Upload to icloud and email the link to sic@creativemacau.org.mo or submit in person to Creative Macau, Macao Cultural Centre

Organisers: Creative Macau and Institute of European Studies of Macau

Web: us10.campaign-archive1.com/?u=cf9a263a8f966a71c0b1f3764&id=8b930c7099



Baroque Chamber Music & Andersen's The Little Match Girl Storytelling Concert

Date: 26/6/2016

Time: 2:30pm, 4:30pm

Venue: Recital Hall, Hong Kong City Hall (High Block 8th Floor)

Tickets: HK\$190/160

Organiser: Concerto da Camera

Web: www.concertodacamera.org



Shrek the Musical

Date: 22/7/2016-7/8/2016

Time: 1pm, 2pm, 6pm, 8pm

Venue: Venetian Theatre

Tickets: MOP780/580/380/180

Organiser: Venetian Macao

Web: hk.venetianmacao.com/entertainment/shows-and-events/shrek-the-musical.html



Reading for you V: Reading workshop 2016

Date: 9/6/2016-12/6/2016

Time: Various

Venue: 3/F, Rehearsal Room, Guling Street Avant-Garde Theatre, Taipei

Fee: NTD 2,000 (members of the theatre enjoys 50% discounts)

Deposit: NTD 1,000(Refund with 100% attendance)

Organiser: Guling Street Avant-Garde Theatre

Web: www.glt.org.tw



Joan Cornella's Solo Exhibition

Date: 17/6/2016-26/6/2016

Time: 10am-10pm

Venue: Ground Floor, Wah Kin Mansion, 18-20 Fort Street, North Point, Hong Kong

Ticket: HK\$50

Organiser: Factotum Productions

Web: www.facebook.com/factotumproductions



Happy Birthday to Maestro Doming Lam

Date: 30/6/2016

Time: 8pm

Venue: Grand Auditorium, Macao Cultural Centre

Tickets: MOP650up

Organiser: Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra Association

Web: www.macauyso.org.mo



Don't Let Daddy Know Macau DJ Revolution

Date: 1/7/2016

Time: 8pm

Venue: Studio City Macau

Tickets: From MOP650

Organisers: DLDK and Studio City Macau

Web: www.studiocity-macau.com



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*.

Joe Tang

—A Toothbrush with a Story—

Not long ago I got a chance to visit a sizeable design firm in Shenzhen. At the reception area there is a memorial gallery that displays products designed by the firm. Each item has its own story and is a record of what the company has gone through. While they are all eye-catching, one of the products is really unforgettable. It's a toothbrush with a story.

One day, the boss of a toothbrush factory comes to this design firm. He makes it clear and direct that he wants the design firm to help his business grow. The boss starts his business step-by-step from the assembly line, so he is very familiar with his own products. He garrulously talks about jargon and terminology like spiral clean toothbrush and soft and slim tapered bristles, etc. But the designer tells him that what he has to do is to manufacture products, and let the team of designers tell the story. After a period of time of planning, they come up with a love story about the guards. The toothbrush is designed with a royal guard handle and each package contains a pair of "guards", signifying the guardian of love. With an outstanding design and a thoughtful meaning, this specially designed toothbrush stands out in the red oceans in the mainland. Even the price is more than double (from RMB4 to RMB9), the product is very popular especially among young couples. The sales volume continues

to increase as a lot of young couples buy it as a gift, and usually they buy a pair of them. The spokesperson of the design firm said that since then the boss of the factory has become a diehard fan of the toothbrush.

Everybody likes stories. They not only give the brain a buzz but also help us understand and memorise complicated matter or concept. The core of creativity is all about story telling. Arts like film, TV drama, novel and theatrical play all need stories, but a piece of clothes, a pair of shoes, a glass, a notebook, a pen, a piece of almond pastry, and a toothbrush also need a good story to be told. Like Chanel in France, Burberry in the United Kingdom, Starbucks in the United States, Quanjude in Beijing, as well as Apple, Samsonite and Eslite, each successful brand has an enchanting story behind it. A brand without a story is like a lifeless symbol. With a story behind, a brand becomes powerful not only to capture one's heart, but also to pass on its message, meaning and value.

The creative industries in Macao are still infant industries. When I walk into those shops that feature creative products and visit art markets, it's not difficult to find some appealing items already out there. However, even if the local creative force is up

to par, what I haven't seen yet is a "good story" to be told. What I meant is first, to find out the best way to tell a story, and second, to take storytelling seriously. In fact, the technique of storytelling is not only applicable to the design and production of creative merchandise, but also to Macao as a city. Macao itself can be a brand to strengthen recognition by locals, as well as to attract visitors. And stories are needed in both cases.

Macao is chock full of stories. A street or a road, a temple or a church, a historical building, a piece of stone or a tree, each has its story yet to be told. The question is whether we people of Macao are ready to come up with a good story to tell? And how to add creativity to the rich history and culture of Macao, so as to make the brand of the city filled with appealing, creative energy, other than the glamour of gaming?



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.

Ho Ka Cheng

—Decoding the Meaning of Film Festivals—

In recent years, one of the most exciting events for filmmakers in Macao has to be the Gold Aries Award Macau International Film Festival organised by the Macao International Film and Multicultural Development Promotion Association, and jointly organised by Beijing Film Academy. This prestigious festival boasts James Cameron, the director for *Avatar*, as its honorary chairman, while its evaluation committee chairperson is China's leading actor Ge You. Kim Dong Ho, the former chairperson for Busan International Film Festival, is also a committee member. Surely, the people in Macao must be proud of the fact that the city is capable of organising such a prestigious film award event. At the same time, however, it is also a good moment to reflect on the potential possibilities that are yet to be captured and leveraged upon from such an important event, particularly for the benefit of Macao's own film industry. After all, what kind of film festivals or film events are most suitable for the city?

Broadly speaking, there are two types of film festivals: one typically involving film screenings instead of prizes, such as the Hong Kong International Film Festival. Another type is to feature film awards as well as screenings, such as the Cannes Film Festival. Those mainly aimed at prize presentations are often not called film festivals as such. Instead, they are known for the awards, such as the Academy Awards, the Golden Globe Awards, the Golden Horse Awards, and the Hong Kong Film Awards, etc. Nowadays, these three key international film festivals are most recognised by the International Federation of Film Producers Association: the Venice International Film Festival in Italy, the Cannes Film Festival in

France, and the Berlin Film Festival in Germany. To date, these three film festivals are the biggest film events worldwide, and certainly their awards are the most recognised. While the Academy Awards are also significant on an international level, they are set up primarily to encourage and affirm the contribution of American film practitioners, and were initially called the Academy Award of Merit, presented by the American Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. Since these awards are to encourage the industry professionals, they involve fine categories such as the Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor and Actress, etc., while the script awards are even sub-divided into the Best Original Screenplay and the Best Adapted Screenplay. Besides, there are also awards on the Best Costume Design and Best Make-up, making a total of 24 awards altogether. Since the aim of the Academy Awards is to affirm the work of different talents in the various processes of the film industry, the focus is on trade professionals, hence it is very different from other film festivals. For example, the Venice International Film Festival does not offer such a fine breakdown of awards, nor do the Cannes and the Berlin Film Festivals. These three major film festivals focus on the essence of film. Among these three events, the Berlin Film Festival is known for its controversial awards. For example, given the global concern towards the issue of Syrian refugees, films on the lives of refugees have also won this year's Berlin Film Festival awards.

In this context, what category of film festivals does the Gold Aries Awards belong to? Based on the official schedule, the event kicks off with an opening ceremony and city

tour by film professionals, while the second day features a film enterprise and tourism culture discussion forum, and a media session, to be followed by a red-carpet-style ceremony and the prize presentation on the third day. There are no film screenings, and so it can be derived that this is an awards-based event. Judging from the graphic design strategies of the festival, there is an emphasis on glamour, while its sales and advertising have successfully attracted the support of many film celebrities and considerable media attention. More importantly, it has the support of the gaming enterprises. No doubt, staging its opening ceremony in a newly-opened, luxurious casino venue is an attractive advertising draw for the gaming enterprise. Seen in this light, the Gold Aries Awards have successfully secured the partnerships from film celebrities, the media, hospitality groups and gaming enterprises, and has shown itself as an exemplary event that leverages on the idea of film to promote Macao as a tourist attraction. This seems to complement Macao's self-positioning as an "international tourist leisure centre".

Sadly, no local filmmakers have won the Gold Aries Awards. Nevertheless, this is not the major focus here. The fact that there are local filmmakers passionate about films, that the Macao government is keen to promote film development, and that local film critics have played their part in encouraging new work, is already worth celebrating. One must hope that, with these positive factors in place, it will not be long before Macao enjoys its own film festival or award event of scale, one that is as grand as the Gold Aries Award while at the same time affirms the work of local film talents.



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

— To Leave, or to Remain: The Future Tense for Britain and the EU from a Review of Responses of Arts Organisations —

On 23 June 2016, the British Government is set to introduce the EU referendum to decide on whether Britain will remain or leave the EU. Although the government is still rather inclined to remain in the EU, the recent issues that trouble Europe, such as the refugee crisis and terrorist incidents, have led to some feelings of uncertainty within the UK, causing some British people to doubt the necessity to cross the straits and get involved in the EU politics? Indeed, the relationship between the UK and the EU states have always been complicated, and is not easily reconciled, be it seen from the political, economic or social perspective. However, one can, from the activities and declarations by UK arts organisations, understand the inseparable ties between the two regions, at least in the short term.

V&A: Launch of European Hall

As a leading arts organisation in London, the European hall at V&A has stirred up a heated debate since its opening at the end of last year. Having taken several years to complete and costing considerable resources, the hall featured over 1,100 artistic, design and antique exhibits from 1600 to 1815, ranging from ceramics, glass, furniture, metals, drawings, sculptures and books. Not only does it offer a glimpse of the royal and aristocratic lives in Europe back then, it also sheds light on the lives of the common people. Instead of narrating European history according to geographical locations or historical periods, the entire hall follows a thematic narrative. For example, the first exhibition room suggests the inter-relationship between extravagance and power. Other themes include the urban and the commerce, precious gems and treasures,

the rise of France, and the relationship between Europe and the world.

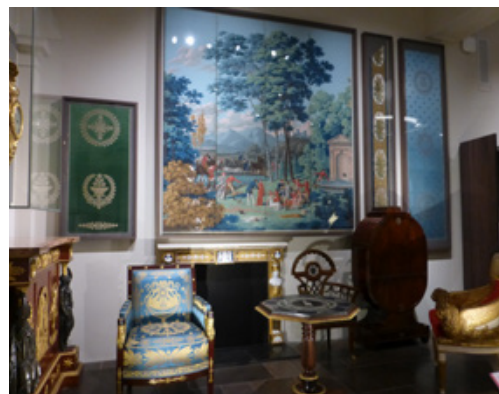
Not long after the opening of the new hall, the museum team convened an international roundtable forum by museum directors in the UK and Europe discussed and debated on the theme of "Crisis as Opportunity?". Each director purported his or her own view of museum operation, while the audience were keen to ask questions as well as elaborate their own views. Nevertheless, the consensus was that, despite differences in political management across countries, they do share some commonalities in terms of backgrounds and cultural movements. Through the setting up of this brand new exhibition hall, it is hoped that the community can understand more about the historical pasts and social nourishment of the various European states, and the inter-connectedness between Britain and these states, via the artistic and cultural exhibits. To understand the present or to envisage the future, one must first retrieve the past. Perhaps the crises that the people are faced with nowadays can become the critical moments that transform the future.

An Active Call for Action from the Museum Arts Sector

In late February this year, Alistair Brown, member of the policy committee of the Museums Association in the UK, said that if Britain were to leave the EU, it will be a tremendous blow to the academic research, exhibition programmes and funding resources of art galleries and museums at all levels and scale. This will no doubt impact on the museum sector in the UK given that it is/ already suffering from the lack of resources. As far as practical

operation is concerned, arts organisations in the UK have considerable funding from EU organisations. If this relationship with the EU is terminated, would the financial situation of the UK be self-sustainable? In terms of cultural thinking, how should arts organisations articulate the cultural exchanges between the past, present and the future, after Britain's possible exit from the EU? These challenging questions that will arise after a supposed exit from the EU should be debated and addressed imminently.

Simon Brown, who works at the Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, pointed out that the UK community should articulate to the world their global vision and receptivity through voting for remaining in the EU, rather than to appear short-sighted and narrow-minded. Moreover, he also urged his peers in the sector to act, emphasising the influence of the entire museum arts sector to connect Britain with the EU. It is understood that the People's History Museum in Manchester has plans to stage an exhibition on this theme during the referendum period, as a response to the processes and outcome of the referendum. What will be the relationship between Britain and the EU? The jury is still out on this one.



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

— Sri Lanka Style —

What's the difference between tradition and modern? How to divide the line between foreign and local? Colonised by Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for approximately 450 years, Sri Lanka has had enough intake of foreign elements to develop its own character, and the blend of different cultures has given birth to something brand new and beautiful. I was wandering in Paradise Road, a prominent retail outlet in Sri Lanka. I couldn't help buying a basket of homewares. The beautiful crockery has the signature black and white lines on it. Most of the items are handmade by artisans in Sri Lanka, and the pattern and design are matchable with a modern kitchen. Tormented by civil wars and tsunamis, this island country surrounded by the Indian Ocean actually has pioneered some excellent designs. The founder of Paradise Road, Shanth Fernando, is himself a designer. His two daughters also followed the same career path and the Fernando family is a prominent family of designers in Sri Lanka.

Fernando is a forward-looking man. More than twenty years ago he founded the fashionable Paradise Road The Gallery Café, a famous coffee shop and accessory shop combo in Colombo. It's located in the former office of Geoffrey Bawa (1919-2003), the most renowned designer in Sri Lanka. This comfortable space showcases Bawa's idea of creativity. At the entrance there are several enchanting plumeria trees. Before you enter the coffee shop, there is a long, narrow courtyard and a rectangular pool with loaches and water lilies. A serene and tranquil ambience is naturally formed. Bawa's forte is to break through the dividing

line between indoor and outdoor. Outdoor landscape is introduced into indoor space in his design, which allows people to enjoy the natural surroundings at any time.

Bawa's design also showcases the perfect fusion of the east and the west. The designer was born into an aristocratic family in 1919, during which Sri Lanka was still one of the colonies of the United Kingdom. When Bawa was small, he received an aristocratic education founded in the British public school tradition. After which he studied English in Cambridge and read law thereafter. He started working as a lawyer when he returned to Colombo. But he didn't like his profession. At the age of 38, Bawa had a career change and started practising as an architect. In the 1980s, Bawa's style reached maturity and he had designed a number of provocative public buildings, including temples, resorts, university campus and parliament building. Buildings designed by him dotted all over Sri Lanka, India, Maldives and Japan. While tropical modernism is revered by architects in Southeast Asia, Bawa was one of the original proponents of this design movement. It is believed that all architecture firms in Singapore in the 1980s boasted at least a copy of a battered book devoted to his work.

I didn't want to miss a chance to visit buildings designed by him when I was in Sri Lanka. Apart from Paradise Road The Gallery Café, the Kandalama Hotel located in the Sri Lanka's Culture Triangle is a supreme example of Bawa's philosophy of design. Sinhalese culture is ingenious infused into modern design, which breathes new life into tradition. The open-air lobby is low-ceilinged and narrow. Sound of

rain and wind as well as sunlight can be heard and seen in the lobby with no limitations. Beside the lobby, a dimly lit, winding path leads to the main building of the hotel. The white curved walls of the passageway are polished up so as to absorb natural light from the outside. On the other side you will see the original, solid rock formation. The natural surroundings of the cave are preserved and the design allows each visitor to become an explorer.

The original rock formation preserved in the hotel is the most natural form of installation art. The architecture no longer only consists of straight lines, but is literally carved into the rock face. Bawa's talent was to blur the lines between human creations and nature. When an architect works with the nature, he or she has to use resources from the nature, too. Bawa planted a lot of trees in and outside the hotel, hoping that the entire hotel could be engulfed by the power of the nature.

Creativity comes from a detailed observation and study of our surrounding environment, and an answer could be found out in this process. The natural landscape in Sri Lanka is the muse of designers, and Bawa's style of design totally respects the originality of the site. He made good use of the rocky landscape and designed an infinity pool that can seamlessly blend with the ocean. Even if there are trees that are bizarrely shaped and block certain space, he didn't cut them down. Instead he integrated them into the design. While Bawa's design is simplistic in style, old stones and trees are often incorporated in his work and they are considered the most precious decorative details of his buildings.



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

— Photographers Who Love Kids —

I went back to Hong Kong for a few days last year and was staying with my brother. After I put on a make-up in my bedroom in the morning, I saw my six-year-old niece waiting for me outside when I opened the door. “Aunt, your room smells good,” she said. I actually spread some white floral perfume in my room. My niece cocked her head and looked at me thoughtfully. With dimples on her cheeks, she smiled with her eyes. During day times, I could see that her eyes are dazzling. I very much wanted to photograph this but I know that when my camera is ready, it will no longer be the same. She would probably try hard to put a smile on her face.

I think that kids’ demeanour is the most natural and adorable when they are unaware of cameras.

In Japan, a number of photographers whose claim to fame is their forte of photographing kids. One of the most well-known is Kotori Kawashima, who has documented the everyday life of little Japanese girl Mirai. The girl’s face is striking through his lens, no matter when she gobbles down scramble eggs, gets a face full of ice-cream, or when she snuffles and blows her nose. The images also show her sweet smile with a



Photo courtesy of Hideaki Hamada

flower in her mouth, and day-dreaming while hugging a pillar. Mirai’s everyday life is vividly seen throughout the images, and a number of readers would have thought that because Mirai was the photographer’s daughter so her expressions were captured naturally.

While images of Mirai are rich and whimsical, portraits of kids by Hideaki Hamada are mostly stony-faced. Hamada used to work as a web designer. After his first child Haru was born, he deliberately started taking up photography. Two years later his second child Mina was born and he started documenting the brothers, sometimes using his favourite Pentax 67II, sometimes using his smartphone.

Looking at Hamada’s images, I feel that I am not looking at a photo but a window that allows one to go into the world of tranquility behind the frame. In that world, the brothers turn somersaults, play guitar and sing in front of a fan, and look to the streets from the balcony. They do not notice that there are outsiders, just like they do not really pay attention to their father when he photographs them. Like us, Hamada is a bystander. He quietly observes his children. He never intervenes or participates in what they are doing. He said: “Most of my works are family photos. When I photograph my family especially my kids, I try to maintain an objective perspective. I never stay too close or too far away from them, as if I am watching them from behind. I think what I am doing is more like merely observing them. It’s within such distance I carefully photograph the intangible yet visible ambiance surrounding the brothers. What I hope is a photo can

give room to people to imagine what has happened before and what will happen after the photo is taken.” Hamada has repeatedly explained his photography techniques in different interviews, and the reason why he takes pictures in such a way is because he would like to observe how his kids grow up. This thought is so powerful that he is able to capture candid moments of his kids through his lens.

He said: “Most people naturally want to capture something momentous through lens. But kids do not smile or cry very often. Most of the time they are inexpressive. I want to document what my kids actually do in day-to-day life. Through this the occasionally appeared timeless moments can be captured and turned to an image we will never get tired of looking at.”

How can an image show the cuteness of the kids? When we adults tell kids to pose for the photographs we often ask them to smile or to assume certain posture. Those images are only what we thought a “cute kid” should be, not what they actually are. I believe that if Kawashima, like Hamada, only uses smartphone to take photos, he is also able to produce excellent, heart-warming images of kids. It’s because both of them are willing to spend time to observe children. They witness their day-to-day world and determine to protect it.

Hamada said that he will keep photographing his kids until Haru and Mina ask him to stop. He hopes that these photos would become a gift for his kids in the future. After all, they are the most important readers of these images.



An accountant by profession, Ashley is member of several anime and comics associations in Macao. She started writing fiction, illustrated and drew the comic strip of *Macao Daily* in the early 1990s. Later on she took the role of comics writer, and she is now the managing editor of *MIND²*, a comics magazine published by Comic’s Kingdom. Ashley also participates in organising the Macao Animation, Comic and Toy Expo, an event run by Macao Animation & Comic Alliance.

Ashley Chong

— Macao’s Manga: Style and Inspiration —

When interviewed, a manga artist will always confess that his or her profession is derived from a love for manga at an early age.

The appeal of manga not only includes attractive visuals. A cohesive narrative is essential to spring together the various images and to engage the readers.

The development of Macao’s original manga works is hampered by the fact that most artists are doing it on an amateur basis. These artists compose their work based on self-sourced materials, and since they have very little time for composition, the output is not as perfect as desired. Notwithstanding, Macao’s manga works have improved over the years and benefited from processes of exploration and reflection. In recent years, the original works by local artists have shown signs of strong creativity, as compared with the more imitative style of manga in the earlier decade.

So how is Macao’s manga like?

In Macao, comic strips tend to draw on politics and community issues. However, works by comic strips artists who have relatively less life experience or knowledge may come across as less fascinating. Emerging artists like to do their drawings based on subjects from everyday life, since such materials are more manageable. In recent years, with the rise of bolder thinking and creativity, a new type of creative work has emerged, which is based on a play on graphic and visual impact, rather than a narrative plot.

Strangely enough, it is rather unusual to find manga love stories in Macao. For a long time, many of the artists in Macao prefer to compose fictional stories with surreal settings and plots. While it is possible that such settings

or plots are used as tools of satire, many of them are simply writing whatever is on their minds. Even if some of the stories are based on real happenings, the plots are unrealistic. Nevertheless, manga is, after all, a work of fantasy to please the readers (and the artists), and so there is no harm in that. A few excellent manga artists, however, are able to come up with adaptations based on a variety of subjects, ranging from astronomy, geography, history, fables to electronics, even on religious matters.

In recent years, the Macao SAR government has a policy of supporting the arts, and so Macao’s heritage attractions are also brought into local manga books. After all, how can these attractions be left out when talking about Macao’s local characteristics? Honestly, the repeated use of these elements is already becoming cliché even in various local graphic design products. Certainly, the witty ones might highlight some aspects of the materials to engage with people, such as to make their contents more informative, or to make the plots more engaging, so as to enhance the sophistication of the work.

It has been said that Macao enjoys a history of over four centuries of cultural exchange between the East and the West. Understanding this, it is obvious that the subjects worth exploring in any work of art are not limited to transport problems, heritage sites or frivolous dating games. For example, one veteran artist has successfully captured local history and characteristics by telling the story of Buddha statues in Rua

dos Ervanarios in his work. If one is willing, there are plenty of such stories to do with Macao’s streets and places that provide rich materials, although some efforts in research and retelling are inevitable.

There are also artists who aim to venture beyond Macao’s scene and explore their own directions. Recently, an artist has produced a documentary style manga story based on the life of a well-known Mainland Chinese boxing athlete. Being a boxing professional himself, the artist has firsthand experience in boxing, and the story is very well-written and touching.

In Macao, many manga artists are doing their illustrations for pleasure rather than see it as a job. As a result, they are also faced with less pressure in terms of deadlines and market taste, and so enjoy a greater sense of freedom. This should have given them more possibilities compared to those operating in other countries. At the same time, their works can be rather subjective. No doubt, such idiosyncratic works may help to encourage different styles to co-exist. However, on a more macro scale, better ways are needed to expand the depth and diversity of these artistic works.





Cheong Sio Pang

A full time researcher in university and an amateur art commentator, Cheong obtained his master's degree in Public Policy at Willy Brandt School of Public Policy at the University of Erfurt and is formerly a clarinettist of the Erfurt Philharmonic Orchestra in Germany. He loves classical music and now serves as conductor of the orchestra in Escola Choi Nong Chi Tai, by which he can connect art to everyday life. Cheong is also a book lover.

—Creative Industries Precincts in Guangzhou—

Several months ago I joined a cultural industries exchange tour organised by a local youth group and got a chance to visit some iconic sites in Guangzhou, including Guangzhou Leafun Culture Science and Technology Co. Ltd. (Leafun), Redtory and Yi-Gather Community. Our group got an opportunity to meet Lin Zhuanghao, the representative of Leafun, and use the 100-seat venue developed by its brand Lemuse (an acoustic system). Digital technology is employed to change the traditional way of how sound is transmitted. This enables a single venue to create different acoustic effects.

Instead of using sound absorbers to keep perfect acoustic effect, Lemuse has its own strength. For instances, the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing consists of three venues to provide space and acoustic facilities to satisfy different needs. They are opera house, concert hall and theatre. However, Lemuse is able to change the acoustic effect inside one single venue by applying digital technologies. This not only suits the needs of different acoustic requirement, it's also cost-competitive. However, I have reservations about using such technology when it comes to classical music. After all, concert-goers are looking for live and authentic effects. Listening to CDs at home is perhaps better than listening to sound produced by a digital mixing console.

The size of the Redtory in Guangzhou perhaps is not comparable with 798 in Beijing, but the shops in Redtory, no matter the design and the layout, are full of Lingnan style – elaborate, durable, petite and exquisite. Prices of the merchandise are obviously higher than what average Guangzhou people can afford. But there is no admission fee. I saw quite a lot

of tourists and locals alike lingering around the area. If Macao aims to turn itself to a world-class travel and leisure destination, and to promote cultural and creative industries in its policy, the modus operandi of the Redtory is a very good reference. However, what Macao lacks is a piece of land that has less land-use controls, affordable and allows the industries to group together. The Bairro de São Lázaro in Macao is too small and thus difficult to become well-known. It can't provide the concentration that is necessary to grow the industries. The lack of manpower also hinders the industries to further develop. A concentrated site allows the industries to proliferate and better the brand recognition, therefore a genuine creative industries precinct can eventually be built. Regrettably, the Cultural Industries Fund now only provides subsidies to building renovation, and to art groups and individuals. The mode of operation is like a relation between a manager and a tenant. Tenants should have opportunities to exchange ideas, but now landlords tend to make profits by leasing or subletting the sites. The original purpose is not achieved but instead it has become a tool to make profits.

Yi-Gather Community is located at Zhongshan 7th Road in Liwan District. It's a historical neighbourhood in Guangzhou and a lot of traditional houses are still there. Yi-Gather is housed in a traditional three-storey Canton-style building. Members of the community are closely connected to each other and free to exchange ideas. Discussions and workshops about creativity are held regularly so as to improve design skills. What I found interesting is some people criticise that the joining fee is too

low. However, the major source of income is not from subletting units of the building. Instead, artists get together to work on commissioned projects (usually commissioned by corporates) and make money out of them. Also, the community hosts events and incomes are used as revenue expenditure. According to its representative, the revenues are considerable. In comparison with Yi-Gather, creative precincts in Macao are rather short-sighted when it comes to efficacy. Now, those precincts only rely on subletting spaces to generate profits as the way to go. But when it comes to allocating resources, the only factor that a tenant would consider is how much he or she has to pay to rent the space, and thus creative precincts may not be considered as an option. Also, from the point of view of a precinct's management, subletting spaces and getting rent in return are not the ultimate function a creative precinct should have. According to what Guangzhou has already gone through, it may be a good idea that the management of the precinct creates job opportunities for the artists. By doing this not only professionals in the industries have more incentive to settle in the precincts, but also the productivity of the precincts would be enhanced. It's a win-win situation.



Photo courtesy of Redtory