

C²

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A revolution brought by blockchain technology in the cultural industry

【Local Force】

An art space that goes beyond art:
teamLab SuperNature at
the Venetian Macao

【Opinion】

Keep exploring, keep filming:
an exclusive interview with
advertisement director Cheok Lei

【Brand Story】

From Macao to the world:
an interview with design
firm Chiii Design

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Editor's letter

With the deepening and popularisation of blockchain technology, relevant applications have been introduced to the cultural and creative industries, bringing more room for further development. In the “Feature” section, Prof. Wang Zhong, associate dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the City University of Macao, is invited to draw us a clear picture of blockchain applications in the cultural and creative industries and the impact of blockchain on business models.

“teamLab SuperNature”, a brand new interactive experience project, is coming to The Venetian Macao. In the “Local Force” section, representative of the Sands China Ltd. introduces the characteristics of this project and the idea behind the design. Cheok Lei, a Macao-born advertisement director, currently lives and works in Shanghai. His excellent advertisements have won a number of International awards, which makes him get the favours of many International brands and stand out in the advertisement industry. In the “Opinion” section, Lei talks about ups and downs of his career and the advertisement industry inside out. In the “Brand story” section, two founders as well as the designers of local design company Chiii Design share their entrepreneur and business experiences and their way to explore overseas markets for the purpose of getting recognition by International brands.

As usual, our bloggers share their views and news of the creative industries around the world in Blogs, bringing latest cultural and creative information to readers.

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A revolution brought by blockchain technology in the cultural industry

With the deepening and popularisation of blockchain technology, relevant applications have been introduced to the cultural and creative industries, bringing more room for further development. In this issue, we have invited Prof. Wang Zhong, associate dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the City University of Macao, to draw us a clear picture of blockchain applications in the cultural and creative industry and blockchain's impact on business models.

By Wang Zhong, Professor and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the City University of Macao
Photo courtesy of the author

Part I The origin of blockchain

Blockchain as an emerging technology is a result of technological advancement and integration. It actually has its cultural background which can date back to an anarchist movement called cypherpunk movement in the 1970s in the west. Anarchists show extreme distrust to governments and do not believe in any institution. They advocate that governments need to be transparent and that individuals should enjoy the right to privacy. In addition, they also strongly believe that society should protect individual freedom. According to anarchists, there wouldn't be a free society if there is no privacy. To ensure privacy, they make use of cryptography and codes to fight against governments and build a safe and free Internet. Julian Assange, who is well-known for heading WikiLeaks, is also a member of the cypherpunks.

On March 9th 1993, cypherpunk Eric Hughes published *A Cypherpunk's Manifesto* that is over 1,600 words long, pointing out sharply that an open society requires anonymous transactions and therefore it is important to develop electronic money. The manifesto marked the start of the cypherpunk movement. The efforts made by countless top-notch hackers and cypherpunks eventually led to Satoshi Nakamoto's paper *Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System* published on November 1st 2008. Later on January 1st 2009, the first set of bitcoins was successfully mined. Bitcoin is the first decentralised digital currency in the world that does not have issuer. In short, bitcoins are empowered by an emerging technology called the blockchain.

Part II What is blockchain?

The Chinese government has found a number of professional experts for drafting regulation and standards on a blockchain. One expert defines blockchain as "a growing list of distributed blocks that are linked using cryptography." This is a rather academic description of blockchains. In this article, we will use simple language to explain what exactly blockchains are.

1. Blockchain ledgers

Blockchain technology's function is to build a secured database. What sets databases built by blockchain technology apart from the crowd is the way they write to databases. To illustrate, you can imagine we are taking notes on some paper. Once we finish writing on one paper we will continue to the other. Then we take a picture of the first paper after we finish the second one. We then attach the picture of the first paper to the second paper. Then we move on to the third paper and continue to process again. Through this way, we will be able to notice whether the content on the first or second paper has been changed as we have previous records on the third paper. Let's continue with this chain of logic. Once the note hit 10,000 pages, then the 10,000th paper will include the records of the previous 9,999 pages. Any change can then be immediately detected through an algorithm. This is what we call blockchain ledger.

As a matter of fact, it is incredibly hard to change the records on blockchain ledgers because you will have to copy all the blocks again and then repeat the process of taking records of previous blocks. What's more, you need to do all these without being noticed. This is why it is almost impossible for you to change the records on blockchain ledgers. So far, there hasn't been any case where records on blockchains are modified.

It is important to note that blockchains don't take records by taking photos. It is only an analogy. Blockchain does not record every bit of information. What they record and then distribute is more of an information fingerprint. The fingerprint is a standard 256-bit file generated by an algorithm called HASH. In other words, the data on a blockchain is only data's fingerprints. You can only access to full records in the database once you receive authorisation.



• A Cypherpunk's Manifesto

2. Asymmetric encryption

Asymmetric encryption is the backbone of cryptocurrency. However, it is not a new technology. You can see its application on the Internet everywhere. This is another example that shows blockchain technology is actually an integration of existing technologies.

Blockchain ledgers need to encrypt transactions that they record in order to ensure anonymity and increase security. It is done through a combination of encryption keys: the public key and private key. Public keys, as the name suggests, are public, while private keys are not. Different from symmetric encryption, asymmetric encryption does not use the same key for encryption and deciphering. On blockchains, when you are receiving a transaction, the recipient address (public key) is open. After the transaction is completed, only the private key can grant access to the database.

3. Distributed ledger

Traditionally, a ledger only has one original copy or a few copies and therefore the level of security is low. For instance, if a bank's database is attacked by hackers and some transaction records are lost as a result, the bank's client will then suffer from loss of asset. Or, the bank will go out of the business or has no choice but deduct money randomly from their clients' accounts. The clients' losses are untraceable. Blockchains fundamentally solve this problem as each block synchs all the records on the ledger. In other words, blockchain technology makes a copy of the ledger on every block.

The records on a distributed ledger's blocks will be broadcasted on the Internet. Every change to the ledger will be tracked and is traceable. This will make asset transaction and capital flow so much more convenient.

4. Distributed consensus and cross validation

Since every block on a blockchain is communicating information and writing to the ledger, it is important to make sure that every block is writing to the same ledger. How does blockchain technology achieve this? Here we need to understand the consensus mechanism on blockchains, which is a significant solution from Satoshi Nakamoto.

Under the consensus mechanism, every block on a blockchain will verify information using its own records. It works like aggregating opinions from different people with different perspectives to prove or disprove a certain statement. The consensus that the blocks on blockchain have is called distributed consensus. The process of verifying new information translates information into facts. In simpler words, every block writes different information to the ledger but there will be only one validated consensus on the standard ledger.

In this case, blockchain technology has achieved a revolutionary breakthrough as it can create an authentic ledger with no error given the fact that all the blocks on the blockchain will have standard consensus all the time.

5. Incentive structure

Why users are willing to or even fight to become a validator or miner on blockchains? The answer lies in blockchain's incentive structure, which is the core value of blockchains, reflected by a deep observation of human nature.

Who gets to write to a decentralised blockchain? Firstly, you need to prove you have contributed enough. This means that you need to provide a certain amount of computing power (CPU or graphics card) to a blockchain first before becoming eligible for writing to the blockchain. But of course, it doesn't mean the more computing power you can provide the more likely for you to become a writer to a certain blockchain since there is also the problem of probability. So why would people want to participate in this writing process anyway? This is where the concept of token comes into play. A token is a statement of a digital asset with properties such as utility and profit. Once a token is validated by others, it can be used in transaction. The tokens on the blockchain designed by Satoshi Nakamoto for example are the famous bitcoins. Bitcoin is a form of digital asset that can be used in transaction. The blockchain is programmed to create a block every ten minutes. People who are lucky to get to write to the ledger will receive 50, 20, 12.5 ... (the number will decrease by half every four years) bitcoins as rewards. The lucky ones also get to receive the transaction fee from bitcoin transactions on the blockchain. The reward is very direct. Sometimes you can see the return immediately. This is what draws lots of people to blockchains.

6. Smart contract

In the real world, a contract is hard to execute if either side bails on it. This is something that smart contract on blockchains can solve. Smart contract is a special agreement. Once initiated, a smart contract will automatically provide, validate and execute the agreement. It allows deals to go on without the involvement of a third party. This is a very important reason why we say blockchains are decentralised. Smart contracts include all relevant information of a deal. The transactions on blockchains are also traceable and cannot be reversed. Even though users on blockchains are stranger to each other, blockchains' digital agreements provide necessary constraints on people and boost mutual trust. Such trust is the foundation of a digital economy in the future. In 2015, *The Economist* even referred blockchain as the trust machine.



“Trust machine”
because it minimizes
trust needed to operate

It's more socially scalable.
(Ref Szabos)

• In 2015, the Economist described blockchain technology as "the trust machine".

Part III The cultural industry on blockchains

Blockchain technology also revolutionises our existing concepts. It is integrating cloud computing, big data, artificial technology, etc., bringing forth great benefits in information sharing, innovating business models, optimising business operations and lowering operational cost. It can be argued that blockchain technology can bring revolutionary changes to every industry. The cultural industry is no exception.

1. Stimulating the IP sector

The cultural industry is known as the IP sector in some countries because cultural products, whether it is in the form of book, music, video, animation or game, they are intellectual property at nature. Driven by the development of blockchain technology, the IP industry is going to experience exponential growth.

First, there will be a large growth in IPs. With blockchains, countless art pieces or even amateur works will be able to go on blockchains given their potential to cash in. These works will become actual IPs after cross-validation on blockchains, thus encouraging more people to put their works on blockchains.

Second, the actual value of an IP will be unleashed. Before the application of blockchain, enterprises are the main actors in trading IPs. This didn't change even after the cultural industry entered the digital era where IPs can be digitised. But on blockchains, IPs can be tokenised and traded like stocks, allowing IP sellers to sell IPs in shares that ordinary consumers can purchase. Tokenising IPs on blockchain is equivalent to securitising IPs. With more public participation in IP trading, the IP market will be completely revitalised, which paves ways for

IPs' true potential to be realised.

Moreover, blockchain technology also makes it easier to ensure legal protection of intellectual properties. All the information on blockchains, including production information, usage, the entire life cycle of an IP, will be recorded in a timeline and are traceable. This makes validating and protecting IPs extremely easy, saving lots of time and cost. IP owners can simply present evidence on blockchains to the relevant authority or to the court to support their case. For instance, Beijing Internet Court's Tianpin Blockchain makes use of blockchain technology to process IP infringement lawsuits, which greatly boosts efficiency and lowers cost. Zhixin Chain co-developed by Tencent and Beiming Software and launched in July last year is also a typical example of how blockchain technology can be applied in the justice system.

What's more, information stored on blockchains cannot be deleted. This means that behaviours such as IP infringement and fraud will leave a permanent record on blockchains once discovered. Such power can serve to deter the behaviours mentioned above and help build more trust in society.

2. From centralised companies to an ecosystem

The Internet was praised for its ability to make society more open and equal when it first emerged. But unfortunately, the Internet we have today is monopolised by giants and it is highly centralised. Many well-known Internet companies are collecting information from their users and exploit users' data for their own gains. The users never benefit from their own data.

Blockchain technology will turn the tides in the Internet industry. Blockchain ledgers and blockchain's incentive structure will allow enterprises, employees, clients and business partners to become stake-holding users who establish rules on cooperation and bring down walls built by monopolies. Each party will be a contributor to the business ecosystem and then benefited from it.

Blockchains' special features such as being multi-block, multi-writer and smart contract can help improve traditional cultural industry's processes. Blockchain technology can break the linear and closed-loop communication and information delay between consumer and companies who produce cultural products and distribute them. Blockchain technology can formulate agreements and close transactions at a fast speed, making sure that companies will roll out popular cultural products or improve their service.



3. Blockchain and new business opportunities

In theory, everything is connected. But discovering the linkage between things is no easy task. There are users from different walks of life on blockchains. When they are contributing to the operation of blockchains, the connection between different industries will gradually appear and so will new business opportunities. This will benefit blockchain users in terms of expanding their business.

A company in Beijing is trying to build a new form of a music club in China based on the sports club system in the west. The concept is to bring all the KTVs in China on a blockchain, which will then collect and sort out a mass amount of information and increase popularity. After that, the company can organise music contests (actual music contest similar to the soccer leagues in Europe instead of reality shows on TV) and other relevant activities to drive China’s music industry forward. This is indeed a very meaningful and feasible endeavour. Music contests can appeal to more users and thus expand the business chain, laying grounds for new business opportunities and a healthy business cycle.

4. Maximising fulfilment of individual’s creativity

The blockchain era is the best era for starting a business. Entrepreneurs only need to focus on their business and realise their creativity without having to worry about having their products validated by a centralised platform. Distributed platforms can also help with business development and make IP trading more accessible. This will provide people with the opportunity to cash in with their creativity.

When celebrities have built up their popularity and forged IP effect, everything related to them can be digitised and capitalised. After blockchain’s validation, relevant information will be sent to the fans through distributive encryption, maximising their value.

We can truly understand how blockchain can translate information network into value chain by looking at how it can help people cash in.

5. Small and medium-sized enterprises can find financing more easily

Finding financing has been a big issue for SMEs as it is very difficult and costly. It is difficult for SMEs to find financing because they generally lack credit in the initial stage and therefore investors cannot have a full picture of their status easily. Blockchains have a technological advantage in cross-validating and automatic activation. Besides, enterprise information on blockchains is transparent and authentic. The records on blockchains are also permanent and cannot be erased, which can prevent frauds, allowing financial institutions to quickly grasp the actual situations of companies and thus decide whether to make certain investments.

Part IV Blockchain technology’s limits

Experts have envisioned the potential use scenes of blockchain technology and industrial applications, including financial services, medical health, education, Internet of Things, sharing economy, communication, social administration, charity, entertainment, cultural industry, etc. However, blockchain technology is not yet well understood by the general public. In addition to that, stakeholders of the current centralised system are not willing to join the development of blockchains since it will harm their own interest. Besides, it is also quite difficult to generate tokens. All of these are obstacles to the development of blockchain technology. In reality, there aren’t a lot of applications of blockchain yet. But our experience in the past tells us that technological development cannot be stopped. State-level policy support and guidance also help accelerate the development of blockchain application. Different industries, including the cultural and creative industry, are paying close attention to the rise of blockchains. We believe that blockchain technology can bring about drastic changes to current business models, making them more democratic and diverse and helping to bring better products that can boost people’s life quality.



Wang Zhong

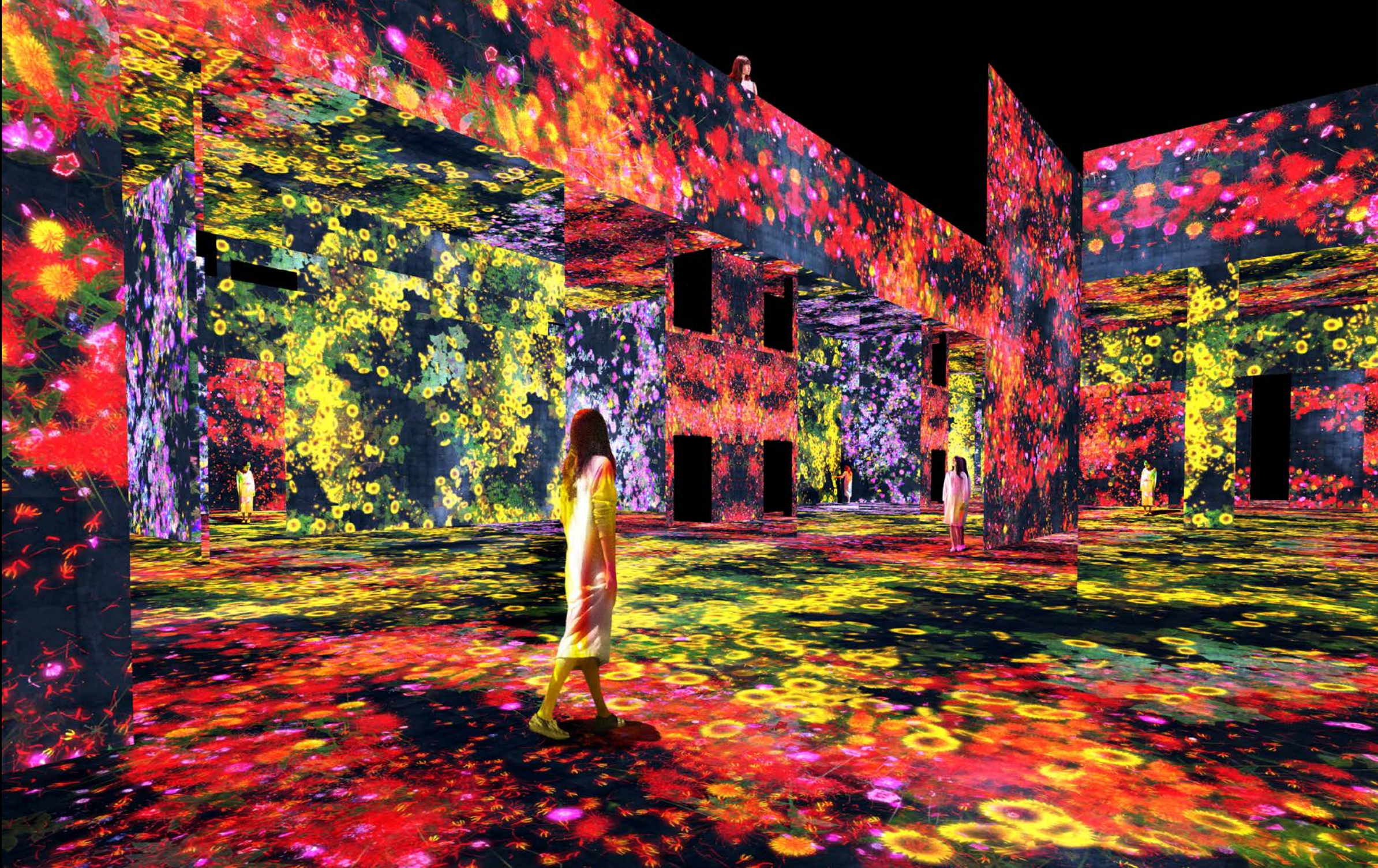
Wang holds a PhD degree. He is a professor and associate dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the City University of Macao, and a PhD supervisor of cultural industry research. Wang’s main research interest includes cultural industries theory and philosophy, sociology of science, folklore culture and intangible culture heritage, sociological study of traditional skills, etc. He has published a total number of seven academic works as sole author and co-author and published over 40 academic papers. His research works were read and reviewed by high officials in the Central Government and reproduced by *Xinhua Digest*. Wang has also received the Teaching Excellence Award and the Research Excellence Award from the City University of Macao. In addition, Wang is the chairman of the Macao Cultural Creative Industries Association and consultant of the Youth Research Think Tank Guangdong Province.

By Jasper Hou
Photos courtesy by The Venetian
Macao and teamLab

An art space that goes beyond art: teamLab SuperNature at The Venetian Macao

Since its inception in 2001, international new media art collective teamLab has been gaining popularity around the globe. It uses digital technology to create art exhibitions which change the perception of what museums and galleries can represent. teamLab is considered as one of the top ten must-go exhibitions in the world and the company will debut teamLab SuperNature Macao this year after popular exhibitions in Tokyo, Paris, London, San Francisco, and Singapore.

So what are the design concepts behind the new exhibition? In this issue we have invited David Baxley, Vice President for Regional Entertainment at Sands China Ltd and Marina Bay Sands, to give his take on the upcoming installation.



• teamLab
Mountain of Flowers and People: Lost, Immersed and Reborn, 2020,
Interactive Digital Installation, Endless,
Sound: Hideaki Takahashi
© teamLab

Bringing teamLab to Macao at the right time

teamLab is an increasingly popular brand in Asia. teamLab Borderless in Tokyo, which opened in June 2018 for example, has attracted over 2.3 million visitors from 160 countries and regions. It set a record for most visitors in a year for a single-artist museum, even surpassing the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam (around 2.1 million visitors). From Baxley’s perspective, teamLab’s success lies in its wide appeal to both art lovers and those who enjoy the immersive technology experience. teamLab is a mass-market art attraction that combines elements of entertainment, education and technology and appeals to visitors of all ages.

“I was introduced to teamLab when we brought ‘Future World’ to the ArtScience Museum at the Marina Bay Sands hotel in Singapore in 2016. After witnessing the fantastic success of ‘Future World’, I became convinced that something like this would be ideal for an international tourist destination like Macao,” Baxley said. “I have been involved in all aspects of the project, from negotiation to budgeting, construction, etc., to bring teamLab to Macao.”



• teamLab
Multi Jumping Universe, 2018–, Interactive
Digital Installation, Sound: Daishi Dance
© teamLab



• teamLab
Sketch Waterfall Droplets, Little Drops Cause Large Movement,
2018–, Interactive Digital Installation,
Sound: Hideaki Takahashi
© teamLab

A space that integrates humans, nature and art

Why is teamLab’s project in Macao called teamLab SuperNature? “teamLab SuperNature will offer what teamLab calls a ‘body immersive’ interactive experience that lets visitors explore new relationships between humans and nature through technology,” Baxley explained. “Visitors will experience artworks that blur the boundaries between the subjective and objective and physical and digital. teamLab believes this experience will allow visitors to gain a fresh perspective on the tension between the natural and artificial aspects of the world.”

“teamLab SuperNature covers an area of 5,000 square metres and has higher ceilings and more volume than other teamLab museums. Different from the exhibition opened in November last year at Shanghai museum, teamLab SuperNature will include roughly 25% of the space dedicated to a children’s play area. It will also feature the world premiere of an artwork called ‘Massless Clouds Between Sculpture and Life’ that will simulate weather and allow visitors to interact with synthetic clouds swirling in a vortex,” Baxley said. “I believe this is another breakthrough in art forms that will attract lots of fans!”

A new Instagram-worthy spot in Macao

“Sands China has been the clear leader in bringing world-class entertainment to Macao since 2006. In this project, we have transformed the eight-metre-high space into an extremely complex, 3D world with varying elevations, featuring constantly changing, immersive artworks,” Baxley explained. “With over 22,000 individual technical components, the organisation and coordination of the exhibition were extremely challenging. However, teamLab is very knowledgeable and precise about what is needed for the artworks and in the end, with the joint effort of the curation team, it all came together miraculously!”

teamLab SuperNature will provide visitors with a series of innovative experiences, including Future Park and Athletics Forest. Future Park is an educational solution that promotes co-creative and collaborative creation, aiming to provide an amusement park where everyone can co-create freely. Athletics Forest is based on the concept of understanding the world through the body and thinking of the world in three dimensional terms. It provides a new “creative physical space” that trains spatial recognition ability by promoting the growth of the brain and body. Baxley believes that teamLab SuperNature will become a new Instagram-spot in Macao. His team will further promote teamLab SuperNature through different market promotion activities to build up its reputation.

teamLab is represented by Pace Gallery.

Official site and ticketing | en.sandsresortsmacao.com/macau-shows/teamlab.html

Address | Cotai Expo, The Venetian Macao

Keep exploring, keep filming:

an exclusive interview with
advertisement director
Cheok Lei

He was the director of famous c-pop artist Hua Yuchen's music video. When filming in Singapore, he experienced the toing and froing between 80 different locations within six days. He had also suffered from extremely bad luck in China's southwestern province Sichuan where he waited for snow and sunlight that never came. He had also had the moment when he had to fly to Turkey the next day after an interview...

The person we are looking at here is Cheok Lei, a Macao-born advertisement director currently living in Shanghai. Lei has worked with a number of famous brands like Adidas. His work is always busy and full of excitement and the bustling life in Shanghai continues to bring him new surprises and encourage him to grow. He has been thinking about a further study recently. "Maybe one day I would stop making advertisements and start to do immersive art."

Going overseas for growth

Lei started to get the attention of Chinese media around 2015. At that time, Lei was studying in the United States, during which he made a series of outstanding achievements. His works won the Commercial 3rd Place at the 36th College Television Awards (Emmy Awards), Bronze Award in Los Angeles and Silver Award in California in the ADDY Awards—Student Group. However, Lei frankly admitted that his academic performance was not ideal when he was a kid studying in Macao. He started filming simply because his school allowed him to shoot a video to make up for the exam one year. "I made the films purely to pass the exam. I did not have to be anxious for film shooting considering scripts will be given," he said.

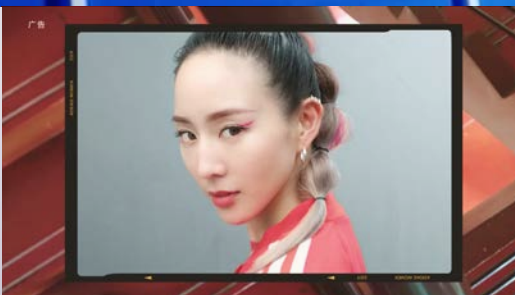
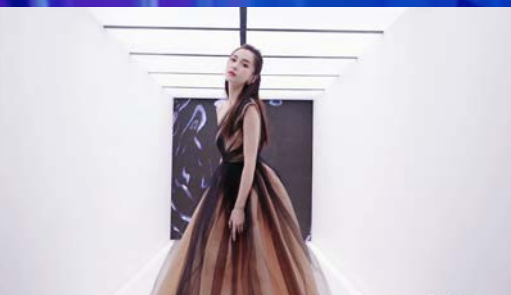
Lei then gradually fell in love with film art. But he still encountered frustration before becoming an award-winning director. Lei had participated in a film competition held by the Macao Cultural Centre. However, his work was mocked by the audience and it broke his heart. The video was about a love story. The male lead was Lei's friend, who is not really handsome and might look a bit overweight. This creates a big contrast because somehow the story is about a cute girl falling in love with a fat boy. "At that time, I didn't pay much attention to the details of film production. But after the incident, I realised that there were still many things for me to learn," Lei said.

Lei then began to improve himself. He studied filming techniques at the Macao i-Centre and accumulated experience through helping local veteran filmmakers. He once worked for the film *Macao Stories* as a grip. In addition, he had been participating in competitions and won a number of awards. When he was doing an advanced degree in Taiwan, a co-production from him and his classmates won the Fubon Young Voice Awards, which was a big encouragement for Lei.

Even though Lei has made some achievements, still, he was not complacent and hoped to learn more. He was eventually enrolled by prestigious California's ArtCentre College of Design, receiving funding from the Macao Cultural Affairs Bureau. He described the Arts Centre as a school of pragmatism, with a focus on getting students' hands dirty. During his study, he also provided his assistance for small brands in making promotional films so that he could earn some extra cash while getting more experience in filmmaking. Besides, the alumni network offered by the school got him the opportunity to get involved in the production of several music videos. In 2013, Lei won an award in a music video competition about American hip-hop singers Macklemore and Ryan Lewis' song *Bombom*.



• Lei's directorial commercial entitled "Anti-Smoking PSA" has won the Commercial 3rd Place at the 36th College Television Awards (Emmy Awards)



• Lei has been involved in the production of many artists's music videos and commercials



• Lei is doing filming work

Breaking a leg in metropolitans

After graduation, Lei worked in the U.S. for two years before returning home. “I went to Beijing and Shanghai. And I found a lot of people who make films in mainland China through many online sources like Vimeo and I tried to make contact with them. Finally, there was a creative agency in Shanghai that gave me a full-time job offer. Shanghai then became the second home for me,” Lei said.

Now Lei lives a life of “Shanghai drifter” and works as a freelancer. Many people would think that the income of film production is unstable. But Lei disagrees. “Shanghai has a large market with numerous opportunities, but it also means fierce competition,” he said. When speaking of his key to success, Lei believes that building a relationship with clients is the most important way to get opportunities. “For example, one of my former clients approached me again recently for cooperation. I believe my working style is valued by my clients. As long as I made a

promise, I will try my best with 100% effort regardless of the budget,” Lei said.

Up till now, Lei has built up a good reputation and enjoys a stable income. But he is still exploring in this sector. He expressed his interests in combining various elements in filmmaking, like tech and arts, to create interactive works. “For example, we have VR technology now. I have tried it and it was a very immersive experience,” Lei explained. “The world is evolving rapidly. Now, 5G is rising and 10G is expected to be developed by 2040. The speed of technological development is unimaginable. But as a user, I have a high expectation of technological innovation.” He concluded: “I will continue to learn. It is a good chance to learn new things and explore new areas. Maybe one day I would stop making advertisements and music videos to start doing immersive art!”

By Lai Chou In
Photo courtesy of
Doff Mak and interviewees

From Macao to the world: an interview with design firm Chiii Design

The grand opening of the Hotel Royal Classic Osaka at Osaka-Namba Station has attracted lots of attention. The project was designed by famous Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, turning an old complex similar to Kabuki-za Theatre into an integration of hotel, art space and exhibition. Surprisingly, the brand image of this new landmark in Osaka was in fact designed by a company from Macao, named Chiii Design; and this marks a milestone for the design industry in Macao. How did Chiii Design expand its business from a small city to 25 cities across the world in only six years? In this issue, we have invited the two founders of Chiii Design to share their stories.



• Mann Lao

• Nono Leong



• Two founders actively attend different activities and exhibitions to promote the brand

Designers need to have a business sense

Chiii Design was founded by Nono Leong and Mann Lao in 2013. Graduating from Macao Polytechnic Institute's School of Design, Leong and Lao had worked for several years both at home and overseas, accumulating rich experience in design. The pair then noticed that Macao didn't have much of resource in commercial design as most of the design projects in town focused on culture. That's the reason why they decided to kickstart a design business in Macao. "During that time, there were a number of design firms in town with very beautiful works. But design is not only about aesthetics," Leong, Chiii Design's art director said. "Most importantly, designers should also think about how to help their clients add more value to their brands." Lao, who is the creative director at the firm, added that commercial design is quite different from art design because it needs to help clients boost market performance or achieve other operational goals. "Brand image design is very commercial. You need to have a sense of business and strategy. The designers also need to know about many different things," Lao said.

A unique perspective

Chiii Design mainly provides services in brand design. It started with projects from local SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprise) and has expanded its business from mainland China to Macao, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Portugal, the U.K. and the U.S. after several years of development. At present, Chiii Design mostly serves big enterprises, such as Macao Pass, Macao International Airport, local casinos, Hong Kong Ocean Park, fashion brand G2000 and Japanese condom brand Okamoto. The firm’s designs have won over 200 regional and international awards.

“Although the company has only been around for six years, it feels like we have been working at this firm for ten years,” Leong said, saying that the reason why Chiii Design could achieve today’s progress is that Leong and Lao are two very different designers. According to Leong, he is more of an artsy designer while Lao is more commercial. When working together, they can often get inspired by each other. Chiii Design will also make thorough preparation to pinpoint its clients’ industry, competition, positioning, etc. before making design plans, Leong added. Chiii Design will also prepare several different design plans for the clients for references, which enables smoother meetings and processes.

According to Lao, Chiii Design has its unique perspective and strengths in design that appeal Macao designs to overseas and big clients. “Why would they approach us? I think it’s because they listen to our ideas instead of relying on the information from an Internet search. They listen to our insights,” Lao explained. “I believe if we could provide unique ideas, clients would naturally start to trust you.”



• Chiii Design Shanghai office

Going overseas through Macao’s platform

In the past six years, Lao and Leong have witnessed the development of Macao’s commercial design market and the emergence of local designers with great potential. Local government, big companies and SMEs are paying increasing attention to design. Local big companies initially didn’t care for Macao’s design but now they are using designs from local firms. However, it is true that Macao has a very small market given the small population of around 600,000. That’s why Lao and Leong pointed out that design enterprises shouldn’t limit their scope within Macao.

“During the first year of our entrepreneurship, I already believed we couldn’t just focus on the market in Macao. We need to go outside,” Lao stated. “Macao is a very special place in China and even Asia that can provide us with a good platform for getting exposure when we are entering other markets.”

Other than casinos

Chiii Design set up a branch in Shanghai in early 2019, in hopes of penetrating the market in mainland China. Besides that, Chiii Design has also successfully signed around seven projects in Japan in the last two years. The firm is now involved in redesigning the Whitestone Gallery and the hotel project at Osaka–Namba Station. “Kengo Kuma told us that he thinks that we have the best design among other cooperative projects. My first thought was like how is that even possible? But being able to get recognition from a master architect truly proves that our efforts in the past few years have been worth it,” Lao said. “This also proves that the gaming industry is not the only thing that Macao has, that a design team from Macao can also enter the Japanese market.”

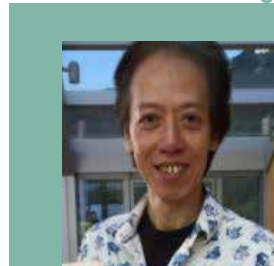
Although Chiii Design is gaining a foothold in Japan, the two entrepreneurs are not loosening up as the competition in the local market is very fierce while there is local protectionism. This means that local businesses won’t easily accept designs from foreign teams. In order to further penetrate the Japanese market, Lao and Leong will need to continue to improve their designs. They are also hoping to set up a branch in Japan in the future two or three years. “I feel like this is the ultimate fulfilment for me if I could pull this off,” Lao said with a smile, commenting that the next generation of designers in Macao would be leaders in bringing Macao’s designs to the west.



• Chiii Design has provided commercial design service for several local and international brands

Taiwan International Student Design Competition

Lo Che Ying



Lo is an experienced anime producer and began independent anime creation in 1977. His works won the first prize at the Hong Kong Independent Short Film Festival for four consecutive times and he was promoted as panel member. In the next year, he joined the Radio Television Hong Kong to work as cartoon producer until 1993. Over recent years, he spent efforts on promotion of the anime industry in Hong Kong and planning of anime exhibitions. Recently, he worked as the curator of the 50 Years of Hong Kong and Taiwanese Animation. He currently worked as Secretary General of the Hong Kong Animation and Culture Association.

I have been travelling to Taiwan quite a lot recently. Besides flying to Taiwan for the Golden Horse Awards and the Taichung International Animation Festival for panelling, I also attended a rather big competition as a panel for the very first time. The competition is called Taiwan International Student Design Competition, which was first organised in 2008. I never really noticed this competition before perhaps because it didn't seem to be about animation. But this time I joined the event as a representative of the Hong Kong Federation of Design Associations by coincidence and found that it was quite an excellent experience. That's why I am writing this piece to share with students from Macao and Hong Kong about this great event.

The name of this competition is long and therefore everyone calls it TISDC. Last year we have had the 12th TISDC, which was organised by the Taiwan Ministry of Education and sponsored by the iSee Taiwan Foundation and the Sayling Wen Cultural and Educational Foundation. From my observation, the 12th TISDC was backed by abundant human resources and financial support. I believe this reflects Taiwan's support for international events alike and helps them become more influential.

In fact, I was already in Taiwan earlier in October last year to help out the final assessment of TISDC's Digital Animation Category. I would not cover other categories such as Product Design, Visual Design and a category created in partnership with businesses since they are not my areas of expertise. There were 11 judges from around the world on the panel for the Digital Animation Category while there were 545 animations coming from 17 countries competing in the category. I found it interesting that there wasn't any animation coming from Hong Kong or Macao. Perhaps TISDC could have more promotions to attract students from the two cities. After the initial assessment, 43 animations were selected for the grand final. The final lasted for an entire day and we successfully selected the winners of Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes among some quality animations with satisfying results. After the panel finished the assessment, judges of the panel were selected to give a professional lecture at some of Taiwan's academies. A young designer from Russia and I were selected to give talks at the Tung Fang Design Institute in South Taiwan. We organised a design and animation lecture that's easy to comprehend and includes very useful knowledge. My talk's theme was about Hong Kong's recent animated feature film *Departure*. The lecture actually won great responses from the students, which made my trip to Taiwan even more meaningful.

In addition, panels coming from the design and animation industry around the world joined several seminars arranged by the event, in an effort to find new directions for animators of the next generation. TISDC also introduced Taiwan's culture to the panels, including Taiwan's food culture. There is no doubt that TISDC has played an essential role in the exchange of ideas.

In early December, I went to Taiwan again to join TISDC as the special guest for the award ceremony. Winning students from each category came together at TISDC, which gave me the opportunity to talk to several young animators. I believe everyone was benefited a lot from the event.

The Sea Within the Room, an animation from Taiwan that failed to win an award at the Taichung International Animation Festival, won the Gold Prize at the TISDC. It is a consensus that the success of this animation lies in theme. Every year TISDC will have a theme. This year, the theme has been empathy, which is in line with the story that *The Sea Within the Room* shows. The Silver Prize was awarded to *Seeing Through Her Eyes* from Malaysia with strong visual design. The three Bronze Prizes were taken by Japan's *Indoor Days*, Taiwan's *Cipher* and Thailand's *The Anthurium*, which are all 2D animations that focus on visuals. It appears that students are fond of 2D animations these years.

TISDC starts accepting applications every year between May and June, most of which are submitted by students. As long as you are under 30 years old, you are able to sign up for it and submit your application online. The entire process is free of charge. If you are lucky and get selected, you would at least get invited to Taiwan for exchange. There are also chances of winning cash prize and awards. I am hoping that I will be able to see some works from Hong Kong and Macao joining the TISDC in the coming year.

If you are interested in participating, please visit the official website at www.tisdc.org.

The 4th International Film Festival & Awards · Macao

Last year we have had the 4th International Film Festival & Awards·Macao in town. I have been personally involved in this event since the very first year and therefore I have some thoughts on this event that I want to share with everyone.

Tracy Choi



Movie director, her documentary *I'm Here* won the Jury Award at the 2012 Macao International Film and Video Festival and was subsequently invited to various festivals in Asia and Europe. Choi received her MFA degree in Cinema Production from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Her graduation film *Sometimes Naive* was short-listed in the 2013 Hong Kong Asian Film Festival. *The Farming on the Wasteland* won the The Jury's Commendation Award of the 2014 Macao International Film and Video Festival. Her latest production *Sisterhood* was selected in the competition section at the 1st International Film Festival & Awards·Macao and won the Macao Audience Choice Award at the festival. In addition, *Sisterhood* got two nominations at the 36th Hong Kong Film Awards.

I participated in the 1st International Film Festival & Awards·Macao for the screening of my first feature film *Sisterhood*. I was very nervous at that time because I was worried about my first work and I wasn't very familiar with the event. I actually received an invitation from an overseas film festival for *Sisterhood's* screening. But I eventually decided to do the screening in Macao since I wanted to launch my first film in my hometown and that it was the first international film festival in Macao. I thought it was quite a meaningful event. The overall experience was full of excitement as everything was very fresh to me at the first film festival. My work *Sisterhood* also received lots of media attention, which boosted investors and my confidence in the work. The film festival also continued to keep track of *Sisterhood's* development and recommended the film to different international film festivals around the world, in an attempt to provide *Sisterhood* with a better platform to reach the international audience.

I was an observer at the 2nd International Film Festival in Macao, which allowed me to see things more clearly. Surely, there aren't that many movie fans in Macao, which is indeed a disadvantage for the film festival. We have quite a number of quality movies but there are few viewers for them. This is definitely a harsh reality for filmmakers and film festivals. But it takes a long time to educate consumers to become movie viewers, especially viewers that will go to such non-profit film festivals. It is very difficult to achieve this within one or two years.

At the 3rd International Film Festival & Awards·Macao, I had a new identity again. I was there for the roadshow market. The roadshow was organised to select over ten film projects from around the world, providing a platform for filmmakers to pitch their ideas. It invited curators of international film festivals and investors, in hopes of attracting investment for film projects with potential. The roadshow market has been organised since the 2nd International Film Festival & Awards·Macao as the film festival wished to involve more filmmakers in Macao in the event. The roadshow market had been a very beneficial experience. There were experts who were invited by the film festival to provide us with suggestions in pitching techniques. Since the film projects were from different parts of the world, we were also given the opportunity to talk to directors and movie professionals from other places. It was a good chance for us to learn new possibilities on the international stage. More importantly, we were privileged to meet a number of investors with good potential to help make film projects take off.

Coming to 2019, at the 4th International Film Festival & Awards·Macao, I returned with a new identity again. I attended the event as a producer of two local films: *INA and the Blue Tiger Sauna* and *Years of Macao*. The role of a producer was a new experience for me. When I am directing films, I have always been taken good care of. But I still had a lot of improvements to make given my performance as a producer this time. From my perspective, I believe it is best for directors to focus on creating the content while the producers should help with other matters as best they can. The two films did their first screening at the film festival. It wasn't a simple task to pull off. But luckily, this year the film festival rolled out a special unit for Macao and the two films were selected. This helped gain international exposure for the directors and actors in Macao. When I was a director, I didn't necessarily think about what would happen after finishing making a film. But as a producer, you would be motivated to help the film go further and have a better development. At the 4th International Film Festival & Awards·Macao, I also got to meet filmmakers from different places, who had given us a variety of comments on the two films. I am hoping that we would be able to bring Macao's films to other markets after we have learned from these opinions, helping local productions reach more people. We are now making firm steps towards that goal.

The International Film Festival & Awards·Macao is like a new-born baby. There are still many things that the film festival is learning and trying. I am hoping that we will have grown into better filmmakers when we attend the film festival again in the coming year.

Creativity in historical documentary: observation of two documentary exhibitions

Ten years' sleep

Last year at the year-end, I was curating an exhibition for visiting artists in Macao at the Ox Warehouse. I was also lucky to find that the “We · Art Space” Documentary Exhibition was taking place at the two-storey venue. The exhibition displayed documents from the Ox Warehouse between 2001 and 2010, which gave me the gateway into the past of the Ox Warehouse.

The Ox Warehouse is the most well-known experimental venue for contemporary art in Macao. That is why “We · Art Space” Documentary Exhibition is more or less a documentary exhibition of Macao's contemporary art. However, the curator appeared to let the audience to write the historical records on their own as the exhibition did not tell many grand stories but mostly showcased promotional leaflets, publications and video documents from the past. Walking among these historical documents, you could almost hear them telling the stories, immersing yourself in history. Is it the time for Macao's contemporary art to start telling its history?

Two documentary exhibitions, two forms of contemporary documentation

2019 is probably a memorable year that is worth looking back in the future for the cultural community in Macao. Besides the documentary exhibition at the Ox Warehouse, there was also #O—90's Macao Theatre Document Exhibition curated by the Macao Theatre Culture Institute, which summarised the development of Macao's theatre scene in the 1990s through relevant historical documents and historical events. The former exhibition reconstructed the past scene of Macao's contemporary art scene, while the latter documents the history of Macao's contemporary theatre sector.

Macao Theatre Culture Institute's documentary exhibition is, in some way, critical. It not only summarises the history of Macao's theatres but also reflects on public participation in creating art through historical documents. In fact, most of the bibliographies and documentary publications on Macao were written by scholars from elsewhere. The curator of the documentary exhibition on Macao's theatres points out clearly that there is an urgent need for the theatre industry to document itself and have a reflection. As a matter of fact, the Macao Theatre Culture Institute had already been promoting local theatre reviews and studies when it was established over ten years ago. The institute advocates that “critics and reviews are crucial during golden times and that the ability to document brings power.” The emphasis on documentary and scholarly studies had enabled the local theatre industry to have its history, attaching more significance to every contemporary work created in Macao. I believe this is where historical documentary's creativity lies in. Documentary is not merely about the past.

In comparison, Macao's contemporary art community lacks the development of documentary from the grassroots. There is rarely much of a deep discussion or record after an exhibition. Regardless of the scale of an exhibition, you only get to see its name on a brief mention of the newspaper. There is a lack of professional art reviews and other relevant information on the exhibition, let alone documentary of Macao's contemporary art history. Let's take the documentary exhibition at the Ox Warehouse as an example. The exhibition was more about displaying documents to visitors instead of showing the history behind. It was not a clear documentary. This perhaps leaves more room for the documentary of Macao's contemporary art history. But we also need to consider whether this means local artists will continue to neglect the importance of documentary.

From moments of history to an art exhibition

In recent years, Macao has achieved excellent progress in contemporary art. Young talents are starting to see art as a viable career path. Local artists are having more active interaction with both the public and private sectors. Some artists have already achieved commercial success. But overall, Macao's contemporary art lacks recognition on the regional and international stage. A number of artists who are relatively more experienced also find it hard to have further achievement. This can be attributed to the lack of contemporary art critic and biography in Macao. Just like the exhibition curator Mok Sio Chong once said in an interview: “If you don't make good documentaries about yourself and only rely on others for a random collection of information, I would think that the situation is not very positive.”

In the long run, professional talents in the contemporary art sector in Macao can learn from the theatre industry and gradually form the ability to document and reflect themselves from the grassroots. This can help drive the development of a mechanism of critics and documentary and nurture professional art critics and commentators in Macao. Only through this way can Macao's contemporary art creation and exhibition progress and construct an art scene with depth based on history.

Lam Sio Man



Bachelor's degree with a double major in Chinese and Art in Peking University. Master of Art and Administration in New York University. She has served in the Macao Cultural Affairs Bureau, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the Museum of Chinese in America, working as art administrator and curator. She is now working as an art educator and administrator in New York, as well as an independent curator and writer.

How did Ibsen become famous?

When talking about Norway, Murakami Haruki's novel *Norwegian Wood* would come to most people's mind.

Of course, Norway does have its literature besides the ones written by foreign authors. The most famous author from Norway would be Ibsen. After arriving in Norway's capital city Oslo, I went straight to the Ibsen Museum.

Ibsen had a huge impact on Chinese literature. The leaders of the famous May Fourth Movement were fond of Ibsen's theatre plays. *La Jeunesse*, a Chinese magazine that played an important role in the New Culture Movement, even had special issues for Ibsen. Hu Shi was a big fan of Ibsenism. China's modern theatre play pioneer Tian Han even saw becoming China's Ibsen as his life goal. Nora, the protagonist of Ibsen's masterpiece *A Doll's House*, has been a very memorable character in literature. You can see Chinese versions of Nora in Hu Shi's *Marriage*, Ouyang Yuqian's *Pofu*, Xiong Foxi's *Life of the Newlywed* and Guo Moruo's *Zhuowenjun*. In these works, you can see a series of independent women who resemble Nora. That's why they are also called Nora plays.

Why Ibsen was considered by the May Fourth Movement as the representative of western theatre plays? Lu Xun believed Ibsen's outspoken criticisms on society and the majority earned him such recognition. But how Ibsen became so popular? I believe that timely literature translation was the key.

The craze for translating Ibsen's works originated from the grassroots. Today, the export of local contemporary literature is mostly dependent on governments, NGOs, or initiatives by universities that aim to increase international exposure.

Norway publishes around 10,000 books every year, which is around one-fourth of that of Taiwan. But the Norwegian government shows strong support for the publishing industry nonetheless. The royal members even took the same train with 19 Norwegian writers, such as Jostein Gaarder (famous works include *Sophie's World*), to the book fair in Frankfurt. This shows the Norwegian government's strong emphasis on exporting literature.

Un Sio San



Un obtained the dual Bachelor degrees in Chinese Language and Art (film and television production) of Peking University and dual Master degrees in East Asia Studies and Asia Pacific Studies of University of Toronto with the research field in literature and movies. She won the Henry Luce Foundation Chinese Poetry & Translation Fellowships and had been the village residing poet in the Vermont Creative Studio. She was invited to attend many international poem festivals such as the one held in Portugal and worked as the lyricist of Macao's first original indoor opera *A Fragrant Dream*. She published some collections of poems in Cross-Strait regions, and has been engaged in academy and publication for long time and writes columns for media organisations in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.

Norwegians are famous for their pragmatism. NORLA, the Norwegian Literature Abroad, established in 1978, provides strong support for the publishing industry. Besides exempting business tax, the local government in Norway will also purchase 750 copies of every new publication and circulate them in libraries. This allows Norwegians to have access to the latest books while supporting small publishers and writers' livelihood. If the publishers have the intention to translate a soon-to-release book into German and English, NORLA will subsidy 50% of the translation fee so as to boost Norwegian books' exposure on the international publishing market. NORLA has helped publish 6,000 Norwegian books to overseas market so far. These books have been translated into around 66 languages, which is surely impressive.

Mainland China has also begun trying to export its literary works through translating magazines. For example, there was the grass-rooted bilingual magazine *Chutzpah!*, which lasted for three years. There is also the semi-official *Pathlight*, which is the English version of *People's Literature*. In greater China region, Taiwan has the most systematic and advanced literature translation system. The island had regarded translating literature works and exporting literature as an important means to build up soft power. That's why Taiwan continues to provide support for initiatives that bring books from Taiwan to the world, such as setting up the Taiwan Literature Translation Centre, launching the Subsidy Scheme for Translating Taiwan's Original Literature Works by National Museum of Taiwan Literature and Subsidy Support for Translating Original Literature in Taiwan by Taipei Book Fair Foundation, etc. In addition, there is also a Translator Village Programme that invites foreign translators that translate Taiwanese literature to Taiwan. A literature translation online database was set up as well, which allows users to track and add records of Taiwan's literature translation.

Besides translation support, Taiwan also pays a lot of attention to publishing and marketing Taiwanese books. An International Marketing Programme for Taiwan Copyright selects ten original works in Taiwan with the potential to gain popularity internationally every six months and translate some of the chapters to test the waters. The translated content will go on the semiyearly magazine *BOOKS FROM TAIWAN*. The online platform "Books from Taiwan" is also set up as an information platform of copyrights for the international audience. The platform includes information on the writers, books, market response, literary awards, etc. In addition, Books from Taiwan also invites experts from both home and abroad to write exclusive pieces on the book market in Taiwan and around the world, in an attempt to drive the literature copyright sales of Taiwanese books.

Macao still can't compare with mainland China and Taiwan in the number of translated local literature. In addition, the export of local literature has been slow progress while the translation quality varies. After Macao returned to People's Republic of China's administration, there had a limited number of local literary works that have both Chinese and Portuguese version such as Joe Tang's *The Ecstasy* and Ling Ling's *Amores do Céu e da Terra*, *Contos de Macau*, etc. But at the end of the day, the number is very limited. Literature translation and overseas marketing can only be successful when they are sustainable. If we want to help literature in Macao enter the world market, it is urgent for us to have a literature translation programme that is facilitated by the government, universities and grassroots power in Macao!

A thousand villagers' happiness

Japan's countryside is facing the pressing issue of an aged society. The local population is decreasing. Life is becoming less and less convenient here. All these seem inevitable. But there are also young people who decided to go back to the countryside out of their nostalgic sentiment. They don't want the land and people that nurtured them to be forgotten by Japanese society. Bearing such hope, they return to their home after their venture around the world.

Ron Lam



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*.

Itsuki is a small village situated in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, covering an area of around 250 square kilometres. The village has only about 1,000 local residents, which makes it the smallest village in Kumamoto Prefecture in terms of population. Surrounded by mountains, the village actually enjoys a rather large area and its tribes are scattered in several plains among the mountains. Itsuki is therefore known as a village lying in the heart of nature. Several years ago, Kumamon, the tourism ambassador from Komamoto, came to the Kawabegawa River in Itsuki and walked on the 66-metre-tall Kobaebashi Bridge just like other visitors to the attraction. With both of his legs strapped with the safety robes, Kumamon did a bungee jump from the bridge. The Kobaebashi Bridge was originally a place for local residents to hide away from the summer heat and a destination to appreciate maple trees during autumn. The increase of tourists to the Kobaebashi Bridge has made Itsuki more lively during peak seasons.

However, Itsuki will return to its tranquil state in ordinary days, with its mountains covered in green. Over half of the local residents in the village are over 65 years old, most of whom are in the line of forestry. Every family here farms to support themselves since the supermarkets are very far away. It is also very difficult to buy groceries here. For example, it is hard to find construction materials, appliances, water supply, and utility maintenance in Itsuki. That is why the villagers here are all equipped with a diverse skill set. They know how to repair their homes and how to fix their water pipes, etc. Villagers at Istuki basically live off the land in their own ways.

Nozomi Tsuchiya was born and raised in Itsuki. Since little, she has always loved this small village where there is a strong sense of community. After leaving Itsuki for college, Nozomi participated in a series of events organised by Fumidas that aimed to help young talents engage in revitalisation of communities. Inspired by other young entrepreneurs, Nozomi started to brew the idea of helping Itsuki. After graduating from college, she decided to quit her job in the media industry and joined ETIC., an NPO specialised in regional revitalisation. Nozomi worked at ETIC. for three and a half years and returned to Itsuki with her husband Masaki Hino, as well as her rich experience in business planning. Together, the married couple founded Hizoe.

Hizoe is the name of a tribe that Nozomi had lived in. There are two tribes in Itsuki: Hiate (In Japanese: 日当) and Hizoe (In Japanese: 日添). In Japanese, Hiate means places where the sun shines upon while Hizoe means places where the sunlight can't reach. By the first impression, Hizoe might sound ominous. But Nozomi and Masaki believe that when there are places where the sun shines there would always be places the sun can't reach. In other words, the two concepts can't exist without each other. "Zoe" (In Japanese: 添) also has the meaning of companion and accessory in Japanese. "Finding the value of local people and villages and accompanying countryside" happens to be Hizoe's concept.

Hizoe's business plans are very diverse. Simply put, Hizoe's business plans aim to connect local residents in villages with people from other places. In addition, Hizoe tries to boost local villagers' sense of happiness by getting more attention from the outside. Hizoe's Café Minamoto, for example, has become a social venue where local villagers can meet visitors from other places. The foods served at Café Minamoto such as vegetables, fruits and rice are all fresh produces from local farmers. Meat, on the other hand, is supplied by hunters in the village. In addition, Hizoe also provides services in product development. All the products from their initiative can be sold through the vending machines in the café. Hizoe also provides assistance in the design of brand logo, name cards, leaflets, etc. It is Hizoe's hope to promote Itsuki through the village's catering business and increase villagers' business confidence through the income they make with the products they sell. The vending machines also sell food and other groceries that are hard to find in the village, bringing convenience to local life.

There are quite a number of villages in Japan that are similar to Itsuki. There are important values that are worthy of appreciation. As a matter of fact, every city and every region in the world has its own traditions. Hizoe is still in its initial process but it might be a great regional revitalisation reference for rural areas in Japan. And the lesson that we can learn from Hizoe is that we need to take action to appreciate and preserve the traditional value and culture that a place has.

A boulevard where you can have a timeout

Sometimes I would wonder which street could represent my lifestyle in the city I reside in.

Streets are bloodstreams of a city. A fun street would definitely leave an unforgettable and wonderful impression on visitors in town. Tel Aviv is a young and humble city. Whenever I think of this most fashionable city in Israel, Rothschild Boulevard will always come to my mind. When I was travelling in Tel Aviv, I was staying near Rothschild, which is a traffic intersection that you will pass by if you are going to attractions such as Yafo or lively beaches on the shore. It was a street that I would always pass by, where I would also stay longer for the fun things that were happening there.

The 2-km long Rothschild Boulevard is the earlier street designed in Tel Aviv, enjoying big fame among the locals. The old houses along the boulevard are also witnesses of the establishment of Israel. In 1948, the Israeli Declaration of Independence was signed here at the Independence Hall.

If you are interested in Bauhaus architecture design, then you would probably want to stay at the Rothschild longer. Between the 1920s and 1930s, Bauhaus architecture started to gain attention in Germany. After Hitler assumed power in 1933, more and more Jewish people started to flee to Israel, who also brought along Bauhaus design to Tel Aviv. Many of the Jewish architects were, in fact, graduates from Bauhaus Dessau. They came to Tel Aviv, a city that was just starting to develop, and turned deserts into their experimental field. In order to help immigrants displaced by the chaos in Europe settle in Israel, it became an urgent need to construct a large number of houses in a very short time. That is why Bauhaus was able to set itself apart from the crowd even though such style appeared to be shabby at that time. Bauhaus was inarguably the optimal solution in a time when resources were limited.

Slim window design can block out the intense sun in Tel Aviv while the balcony and hollow bottom design ensure ventilation. The simple linear and shape design is the assurance that guarantees there will be no waste of construction materials. Bauhaus designs believe in functionality and embed their aesthetics in these seemingly but practical designs. To save construction cost, these plain-looking buildings have almost no additional decoration. But these curvy balconies and symmetric buildings look incredibly classic today. Rothschild Boulevard concentrates the most interesting Bauhaus buildings in town. Many of the buildings are actually under protection and have been converted into boutique hotels, restaurants, etc.

One section of Rothschild Boulevard is home to many of the most expensive headquarters of banks in Tel Aviv, making Rothschild somewhat a financial centre in the city. Surprisingly, this robust economic centre is not overly bustling at all. You can still find plenty of booths that are dedicated to making good coffee. These small cafés are always packed. At Rothschild Boulevard, you can also find many performance spaces as this is the cultural centre of Tel Aviv as well. In the alleys hide a number of the most popular restaurants and cafés in town. Rothschild Boulevard serves different functions in Tel Aviv, attracting a diverse pool of people. This is what makes Rothschild the most classic street in the city.

Rothschild Boulevard started to lose its prosperity from the 1960s to 1980s. The boulevard became dirty and its infrastructure started to deteriorate. However, the boulevard was injected with new blood in 2005. The local government designed a revitalisation scheme to restore historical buildings and people started to come back to Rothschild. The inflow of residents also brought new cultural strength to the street. The biggest change that took place at Rothschild Boulevard was probably the initiative to make the street an open space for everyone.

Rothschild Boulevard is not a typical boulevard. It has very narrow lanes for cars but somehow offers great open space for bikes and pedestrians. In the middle of Rothschild Boulevard resembles a park, filled with thriving flame trees. Tel Aviv's public bike and scooter scheme has been extremely successful. There are also lanes specifically designed for people using these alternative public transportations. The traffic here would run very well if everyone is able to follow the traffic rules.

Inside the park, there are countless chairs and coaches where users can rest or lie down to stare at the sky or read a book. By the park, there are mobile libraries. Open spaces with sheds and power sockets are provided for people who are looking for a place to work outside. After all, staying in an office all day long is probably what kills your inspiration. Tel Aviv is famous for its startup scene. And you can find many entrepreneurs strolling around the street trying to find inspiration.

Rothschild Boulevard is a destination. People come here without a strong purpose. They are probably just chilling out aimlessly. But for busy urban residents in Tel Aviv, a street that provides you with the space to have a time out is much needed in town.

Yap Seow Choong



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.

Memorandum of going into society by a theatre worker (Part II)

Johnny Tam



Theatre director, art director of the Macao Experimental Theatre, has been living and working in Shanghai and Berlin. Representative works from these years are *Mr. Shi and His Lover* and *Lungs*.

The commercial world was an entry point for me to enter the theatre industry instead of the finish line. From my own experience, the most important thing for professional talents in the theatre sector is to find a special and meaningful role regardless of where they work. Then it is all about making yourself irreplaceable. Perhaps, it is impossible for you to find a particular job position. For me, it is more like self-alignment. You would need to explore this field with an open heart as an artist.

I have spent countless nights and days composing music in front of the computer, dreaming to become a composer and produce music for different theatre plays. I immerse myself in the intersection of music and theatre and really enjoy the works behind the scenes. When I was studying directing in college, I also worked as a music director for my professors' theatre plays. Those plays were going to participate in overseas art festivals. Given that back then mainland China didn't really pay attention to music and audio system, I was able to receive recognition in the theatre circuit because of my musicianship. That was something that I did not anticipate. But was that an adequate role for me, a fresh graduate from the directing school? I was valued because my hobby catered to big demand. But that demand could change and decline. I didn't want to be needed for a certain lack of demand and then slowed myself down. That's why I decided to leave music directing and turned to direct plays. I love music, but my role in the theatre scene is a theatre play director.

It is a long process for you to start from scratch and then gain recognition. During several rounds of negotiation with the investors, you would have to prepare all kinds of creative plans without making any money. Play directors are definitely in a disadvantage as they need to prepare a script when there hasn't been any contract signed yet. If the negotiation is not successful, the director would need to pay for all the opportunistic cost. After spending two years in Shanghai, it occurred to me that I was a typical loser in the commercial world. I wasted my time and I lost money. I didn't achieve much during those two years and I failed to fit in. Shanghai already has a mature theatre industry that has completed commercialisation, which has more abundant cultural resources than Macao does. There are more space and more talents in Shanghai. And I failed to find the right place in the metropolitan where I can become someone special.

If I only produce theatre plays out of passion, I wouldn't really worry about having a livelihood or career development. But once you choose art, you would need to face such struggles. I am experiencing a lot of self-doubts and lows that many young artists would experience. I simply want to make plays instead of money. But if I could not make a living then I wouldn't be able to fully create plays. When you can't reconcile with the reality you are facing, it is extremely important to stay true to yourself. For me, my goal from the very start is to become a theatre play director. But as a fresh graduate from college, I didn't know how to grow from an art student to an artist in society. What I needed to do the most was to care less about my sense of pride.

I decided to go back to the areas where I could achieve progress. I made the decision to go into a new environment where I could learn from seasoned veterans in the industry. I worked as a director's assistant, supporting actor, and doing odds and ends. I did everything that was related to the theatre industry, seeing personal development as my first and foremost task. I didn't have the pressure to produce satisfying works. I found the whole process meet all the expectations that I had had in the beginning. Art is not all about imagination at all. Every artist needs to have a solid foundation before they can enjoy freedom in the art realm.

Gradually, the way I work and think changed overtime. Even now I am still building my own theatre company and slowly develop the role of Macao Chinese director that creates content and curate exhibitions in different cultural circuits. This is merely a start for me instead of the finish line. Macao does not have a complete theatre industry yet and it is something that local industry workers need to embrace. In order to achieve development, it is necessary for professional theatre talents to absorb experience from different chains of the cultural industries, which will enable professional talents to accumulate skills in regards to theatre. In addition, this will also allow professional talents to have a deeper observation of the cities they are stationed in. This is how I enter the theatre industry. It is like a process of creating characters for a theatre play and experiencing the way of living in different places. It is important to be humble and keep growing.

(Memorandum of going into society by a theatre worker – part 2)



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