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Local music artists:

composing diverse development in Macao

【Brand Story】

Naughty Roll:
an independent publishing
brand specialised in risograph

【Budding Talents】

Suzy Chan:
design should be
more than just business

【Close-up】

During the pandemic:
cultural and creative industries
fighting their way out

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Editor's letter

In recent years, the way music is consumed in the music industry has changed drastically in Asia and even around the world, which has led the artists to make changes in terms of work patterns and methods of creation, in order to keep up with the trends. In the “Feature” section, representatives from three Macao music groups, including Vivian Chan, MFM and Pun Kuan Pou, are invited to share the current developments in recent years and discuss the principle of survival of Macao artists in the changing dynamic of the current music industry.

Risograph is a kind of printing technique popular in the design sector in recent years, suitable for small workshops. In addition to offering a low printing cost, risographs also create many special effects that traditional printers cannot achieve. In the “Brand Story” section, three co-founders of “Naughty Roll” share the charm of products printed by risograph. The graduation project of local emerging graphic designer Suzy Chan, was selected as the Project of the Year by the British site *It's Nice That*, a website focusing on creative designs. In the “Budding Talents” section, Suzy Chan shares her learning and work experience in the design industry. The novel coronavirus pandemic brings challenges to both artistic and creative industries. The “Close-up” section summarizes how certain global famous platforms of the referred industries responded to the public's demand during the pandemic. In addition, two local artistic and creative entities, Hiu Kok Drama Association and O-Moon, share their responses against the challenges brought by the pandemic.

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.

C² Magazine Editorial Board

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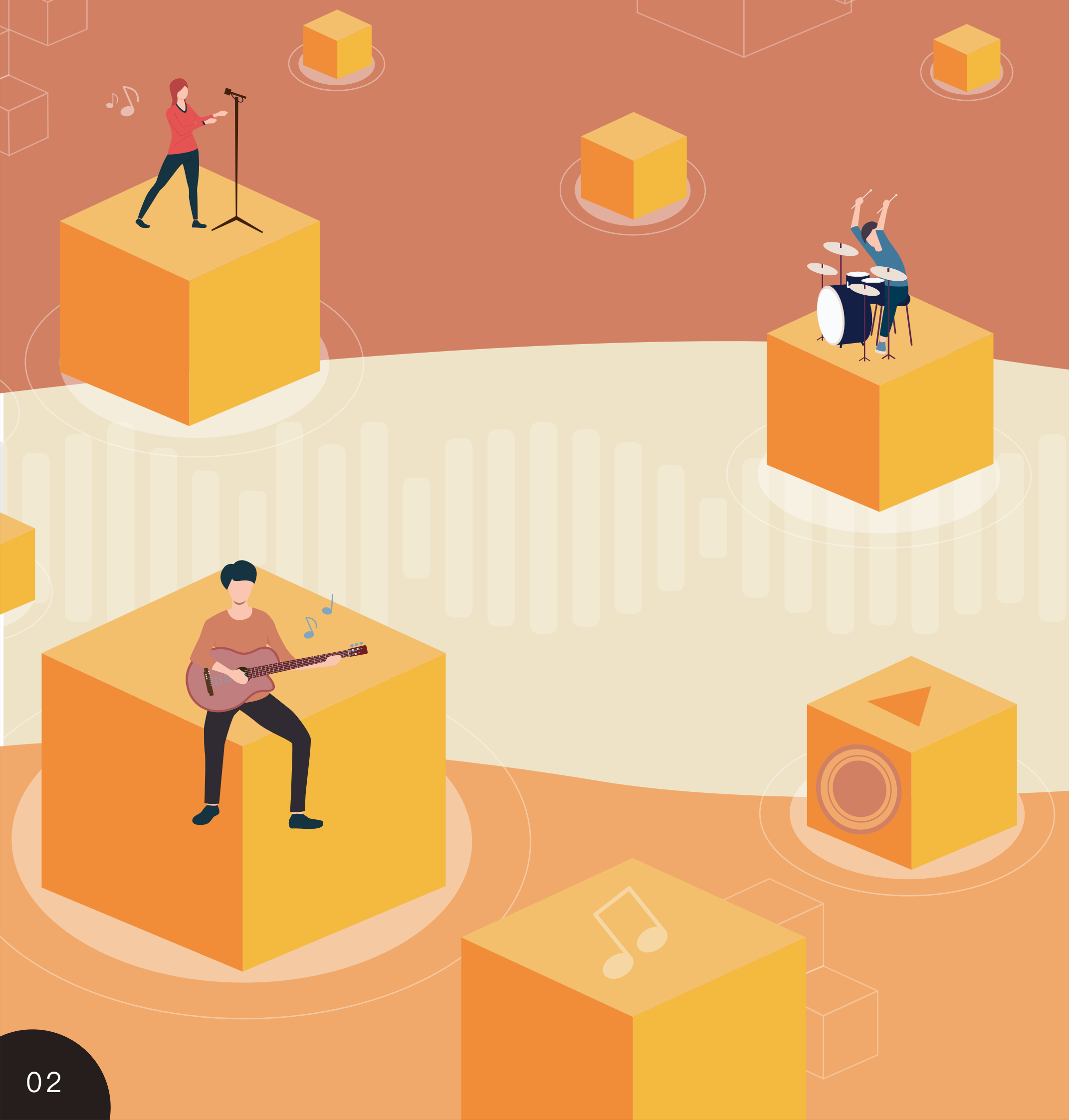
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Local music artists: composing diverse development in Macao

The way we consume music has drastically changed in the past few years if we compared recent development to that of one or two decades ago. Music streaming platforms have dominated the music scene as physical albums gradually fade away from people's attention. Music artists need to come up with innovative ways to make music in this industry to keep up with the trend. In this issue, we have invited representatives from three music groups in Macao to share their stories with us. Some of them have opened their studios, some have developed their career beyond Macao, while some have gone from behind scenes to the stage. The commonality that they share is that they all seek to diversify their work so as to remain competitive in this emerging local market.

By Lai Chou In
Photo courtesy of Crystal Leong and interviewees

Vivian Chan:
sailing around the world on
a “wooden boat”

Vivian Chan completed her 100-day tour journey recently, travelling to countries that she had never been to before, such as Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Besides a romantic encounter, Chan also got the inspiration to open her studio during the journey. She decided to exit from the traditional record agency model to find new aspiration with greater freedom.





• Vivian Chan started her studio Wooden Boat Music Studio

Bittersweet burdens

Although Chan only started the studio in March this year, she already had the idea since the very beginning of 2019. “I had worked with this company (Chessman Entertainment) for about seven or eight years. I had tried many different areas as an entertainer, including singing, acting and being an event host,” Chan recalled. “So I had been thinking about whether there is something new that I can try. Many artists in mainland China have started their studios and take control of their image and career. This inspired me to open my studio for my development.”

After negotiating with the company, Chan partnered with Chessman Entertainment and started Wooden Boat Music Studio. Chessman Entertainment is now a business partner of hers. “The biggest difference is that when I was an artist, the agency would arrange different activities and works for me. I would follow the agency’s arrangements, such as when to release a new album. I only needed to be a good performer,”

Chan explained. “Now I am in charge of the studio. I can’t distribute all the works to other people, which means I need to take on more responsibilities. Chessman Entertainment is more of a supportive role to me now as they are not directly involved in the operation.”

In other words, Chan has to oversee all levels of the studio’s operation, from coming up with an idea, to turning it into a reality, from networking to controlling costs. However, Chan feels that these are new burdens that make her feel happy. “Now I have to build up my brand image on my own. I could share my ideas directly with other people without having to go through a lot of procedures,” Chan explained. “I feel like my career has entered the next stage.” Although there are still a lot of things that Chan needs to learn, she has the confidence to handle all these challenges because of her rich experience accumulated through years of professional work.

Diverse business operation

Chan kicked off her career as a singer after participating in a singing competition in Hong Kong. Even though Chan had tried out different directions as an entertainer, she still has several ideas that she wants to realise through the studio. “For example, I have thought about organising music festivals, or designing fan merchandise for the studio,” Chan said. “I am interested in drawing and designing. I studied design back in school. So I want to combine my interest with my work.”

Becoming a KOL (key opinion leader) in travelling and lifestyle is also a direction that Chan wants to try out in the future. Chan made use of her 100-day journey that took place at the year-end of 2019 and made some short videos for putting on social media. She even planned some activities. But the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted her plans and therefore she would have to postpone them. “There are a lot of business opportunities online. I could help my potential clients to reach their target audience by building up my image on social media,” she explained, believing that diversifying one’s career is very important in Macao. She added that full-time singers in Macao cannot rely simply on their singing career to make a livelihood.



• Experiencing different cultures on a 100-day tour

Not about simply following trends

Chan’s focus is still about her music career. She has launched three albums and several singles so far. “The first two albums mostly consist of love songs. My third album is more of the folk genre. And the two singles I recently rolled out, for example, *Silence*, contain some philosophical thinking,” Chan explained. “I am hoping to incorporate more discussion about life in my songs.” According to Chan, she had done some market research and found that most of her fans enjoy her love songs, which is the reason why her future works will still be more or less constrained by the image of “Vivian Chan”. But of course, she will start adding some elements she likes into her songs. Chan will also try to compose and write her songs. “As a singer, you cannot simply follow the trends in the market because the market changes so fast,” Chan stressed. “If you only follow the trends, you will easily get lost.”

Staying true to the original goal

“In the past, people would ask me why I would want to be a singer considering I wasn’t especially good at singing and that I was small and didn’t look very pretty,” Chan said. “I was like ‘why not give it a try when you have the chance?’ I mean, if you don’t try it, how would you know it won’t work, right?” Chan recalled the time when she was determined to pursue her dream even though the conditions were not very good ten years ago. “I have been working in this industry for some time. And I still remember it was this courage that I had that helped me embark on this journey.”

Recommendations:

Track :

Silence

Available at :



youtu.be/S21RwoCxZns

Hurt

Available at :



youtu.be/E4diyD0RJl0

MFM:
entering the Formosa Island

MFM, a local singing group formed by Hyper Lo, Josie Ho and Adriano Jorge, entered the Taiwanese market last year, releasing their first Mandarin album *Our Stories*. The three-person group quickly garnered new fans in Taiwan and won the reputation of Macao's F.I.R. on the Formosa Island. Taiwan's mature music industry left a great impression on MFM. In Taiwan, MFM experienced a status that little music artists in Macao can have and encountered many of their first times.



Careful planning

It is quite rare for music artists from Macao to be favoured by record labels outside of Hong Kong and Macao. However, MFM was able to secure a contract with Taiwanese record label Seed Music, who helped them publish *Our Stories*. Industry veterans such as Malaysian music producer Jovi Theng saw potential in MFM and backed them up after listening to two of their Mandarin song demos. They then started to help introduce MFM to record labels in Taiwan. “Three labels approached us, including Seed Music. We had never thought we would have the opportunity to choose a record label,” Lo said.

MFM also had a lot of their “first times” in Taiwan. *Our Stories* was released in last September. MFM would visit Taiwan for a week every month from August to December last year. “When we were in Taiwan, we felt that we were well taken care of as music artists for the first time,” Ho said, recalling that everything had been well-planned before they arrived in Taiwan. From the launch conference, promotion events and media interviews, everything had been arranged. They did not have to worry about anything except for focusing on their performance.



A mature ecosystem

Macao’s music scene is a completely different story. Since the formation of MFM in 2017, the group has been involved in many aspects of the group operation given the company in Macao is of small scale. They would have to be involved in small details like a press release, event host scripts and more complicated things like receiving important guests. “It is super comfortable in Taiwan. They take care of you there,” Ho said. Besides, *The Lonely Song* and *Perfect*, two main singles from the album were successfully sold to karaoke companies in Taiwan with time-limited copyright license. “We are new to the music scene in Taiwan without a reputation. But we could still sell our music licenses at a reasonable price. This truly shows that the music industry in Taiwan is very sustainable,” Lo said.

Taiwan’s mature industrial chain is also reflected by other small details. According to MFM, they found that the event hosts they met at various shows and activities would all make thorough preparation beforehand. They would have a good understanding of MFM’s background and music. For instance, famous television host Mickey Huang from Taiwan was invited to host the launch conference of MFM’s new album. Huang was able to discuss every song on the album. The audience at different events also showed great responses. “We felt respected,” Jorge said. “We can see that they (Taiwanese people) are very passionate about music and their work.”



A lack of income sources

Our Stories drew inspiration from everyday life and different emotions. “This is the first time for us to release an album in Taiwan. So we were hoping that we could make some catchy songs while keeping our style (Cantonese songs) and bringing up good energy,” Jorge said. In comparison with the group’s previous two Cantonese albums, *Our Stories* had a higher production cost. For example, *The Lonely Song*’s production involved over 30 producers coming from places such as Beijing, Malaysia, Singapore and Macao, an effort aimed to help the song reach a broader audience.

However, even though MFM’s album is doing well in the C-Pop market, it is still unlikely for the group to make money out of selling physical albums in the status quo. “The most difficult part about making an album is looking for funding. Besides government subsidy, most of the fund came from the income we made for doing commercial performances,” Lo said, pointing out that they had been taking a number of commercial shows in the past but the pandemic outbreak had not only disrupted their gig opportunities but also their plans in Taiwan. According to Ho, music artists in other places could rely on income coming from advertisements in addition to gig shows, but there is a lack of opportunities to cash in through advertisements in Macao. Music artists in the city mainly rely on performing at commercial events, she said.



Going beyond Macao

MFM plans to roll out a new Mandarin song this year after the COVID-19 pandemic is contained. What’s more, the band also wants to produce a new Cantonese song if there is enough funding. Macao will continue to be MFM’s main market, while the Taiwanese market requires more exploration. Ho encourages local music artists to go beyond Macao. “Macao’s market is too small. There isn’t an industrial ecosystem yet. Music artists’ best job opportunities are doing their own concert and attending events. But then what is next?” she said, commenting that opportunities are essential in terms of going into other markets. “But more importantly, you need to be ready. Grab your chance when it comes,” Jorge concluded.

Recommendations:

Track :

The Lonely Song
Available at :



youtu.be/DBjWqTVy7z8

Our Stories
Available at :



youtu.be/vI_vlFAoiGs



**PKP:
new ways to make music**

Pun Kuan Pou (PKP) is a well-known name in Macao’s music scene. In the past decade, PKP had worked with several music artists as a producer and helped them produce hit singles. He had recently teamed up with seasoned music artist Sean Pang to make an EP album that is quite different from conventional Cantonese pop music, in hopes of getting into the spotlight and expose the audience to different possibilities in music.

From offstage to the spotlight

The EP album is titled *After Party*, which had received funding from the 2018 Subsidy Programme for the Production of Original Song Albums launched by the Cultural Affairs Bureau. The subsidy programme provides financial support up to MOP150,000 to selected albums while offering guidance from a panel of experts. Pang brought up the idea of the partnership first as he was planning to make a pop album with chill songs that are different from the current trend. Then he approached PKP, hoping that he could be the executive producer of the album. Pang was in charge of the performance, songwriting and track composition of the four songs in the album. PKP on the other hand mainly worked on the composition and production.

“Originally, we thought the collaboration would be similar to that of the past ones, which means I would mainly serve the music artists. They would tell me their ideas and I would assist them in composition, arrangement and production. Surprisingly, when we were jamming, I realised that my input was very important in the overall presentation of the music,” PKP said, pointing out that the album is produced under both of their names instead of mainly featuring Pang.

This kind of collaboration model has been quite popular in overseas markets for a long time. There are famous DJ and music artists like Calvin Harris and Mark Ronson who have more control over the songs than the performers. “Our depiction of this album is a bit different from that of fans in Macao. I think besides the performers, music itself is also the main lead here. We want to make use of this opportunity to promote this rather new music form to the audience and prove that it can also work,” PKP said.



• PKP is an active music artist in Macao, who actively explores new ways of cashing in.

The decline of the CD era

PKP and Pang had completed the recording of the four songs. These four songs have a music style that is different from each other. However, they all have the common theme of sex, aiming to imagine an afterparty vibe that leaves you longing for more. According to PKP, the album is currently undergoing the process of album cover and package design. The album is scheduled to launch as soon as in June. But so far there isn’t any plan for rolling out physical CDs. The album will be streamed through online music streaming platforms and download sites. Physical album will be distributed as limited versions in the form of USB. “CDs are pretty useless right now. I don’t even have a CD player,” PKP said, commenting that there have been major changes in how we consume music. This is especially true in Macao where the music market is immature. Most local artists lack popularity and exposure, meaning they would need to find financial support elsewhere to roll out an album if they couldn’t get a subsidy from the programme.

An industrial revolution in music

“In the past, music artists would want to express their music concept through a complete album. But the problem is a lot of people nowadays don’t have time to listen to an entire album, especially albums from music artists that they don’t know. It is already amazing if they could finish listening to one song. Producing music is relatively easier now as everything can be done with a computer. Then you can just upload it to the Internet. But of course, this process doesn’t necessarily make money, but it does generate traffic. This is a challenge to the industry. Or you could say it is an industrial revolution in music.”

As one of the founders of local music production company Chessman Music Industry, PKP has some insights in this “industrial revolution” in the music scene. He pointed out that the company mainly provides a one-stop comprehensive service for local music artists and produces music for the government and other organisations. However, in a market that changes so rapidly, the company could only grab every business opportunity it can get. Recently, the company has been actively exploring new ways to cash in, including music education for example.



Self-expression

PKP finished his college degree in music education in Macao in 2003. Later in 2007, he went to Australia to study pop music. After graduation, he came back to Macao and worked in the line of music production. In fact, he was never reluctant to perform on stage. In 2010, PKP was able to win the Favourite Song Award at the 8th TDM Music Awards with *One Day*, a song that was produced and performed by PKP. However, given the market constraints in Macao, it is relatively easier to get into the line of music production. “I love to have fun. So I am hoping to have more opportunities to appear in front of the audience. Music is the medium for me to express myself,” PKP said.

Recommendations:

Track :

The Nine Cuts
Available at :



youtu.be/EZWsgqOrcyE

Let’s Gather Together,
No Fighting against
the Pandemic
Available at :

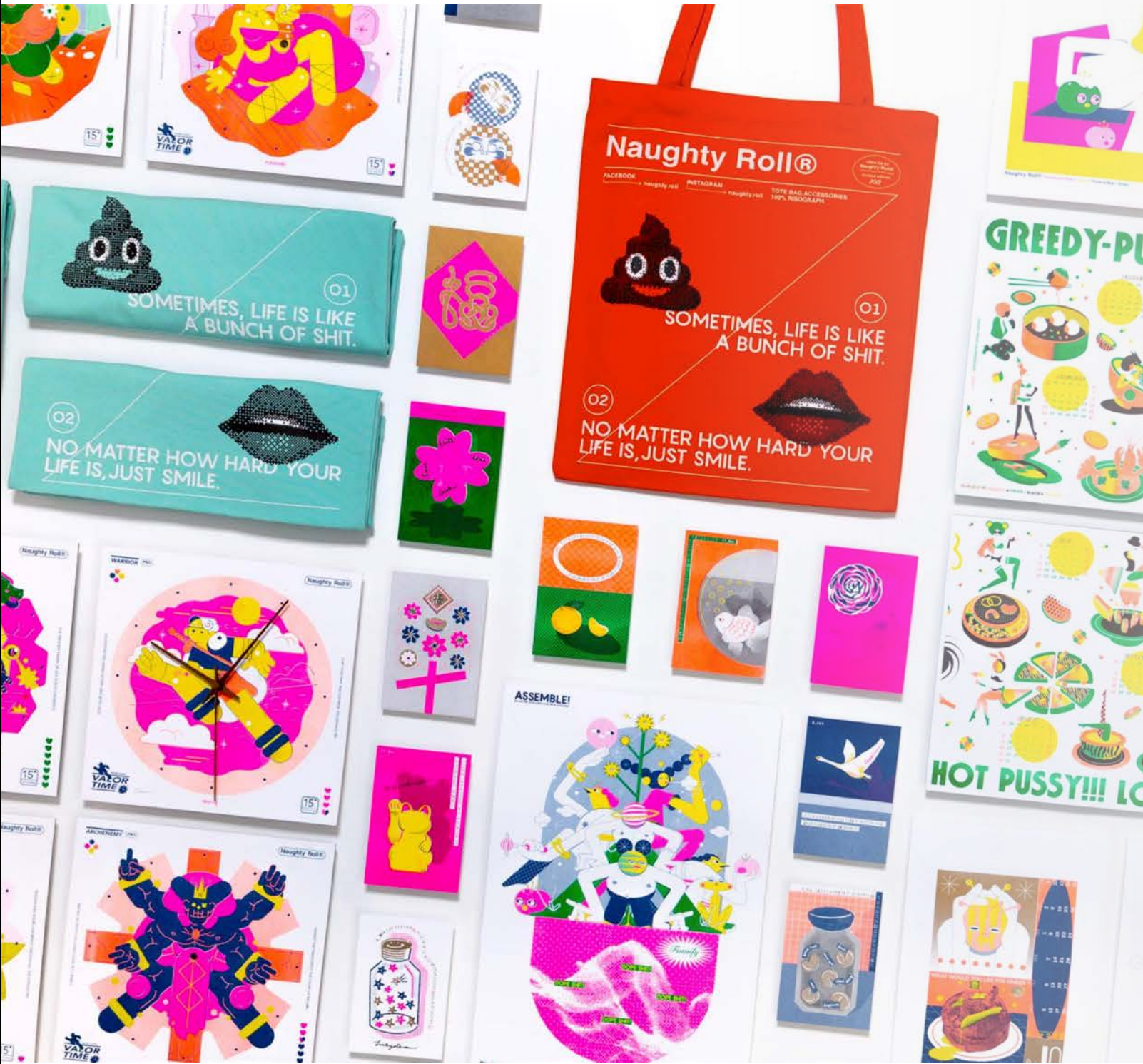


youtu.be/XLwI_CYOJks

By Jasper Hou
Photo courtesy of
Crystal Leong and interviewees

Naughty Roll: an independent publishing brand specialised in risograph

RISO is short for risograph, a recently trending printing technique that is suited for small workshops. Besides offering a low printing cost, RISO also boosts printing efficiency. However, since it is very difficult for RISO to have precise details, there are often “accidents” that result in lines that are out of alignment, prints on the wrong location and worn-out ink. Somehow these imperfections create many special effects that traditional printers cannot achieve. In this issue, we have invited the three co-founders of Naughty Roll to share the unexpected beauty coming from printing errors.



• Kun Lam, Bosco Kou and Dan Ferreria (from left)

Importing RISO at the right time

Founded in 2019, Naughty Roll is the only independent publishing and design brand that adopts RISO technique in Macao. The company was kickstarted by three young designers, Bosco Kou, Kun Lam and Dan Ferreira, who are the technology director, creative director and art director of the company. “Although it is true that print media are gradually declining, we as designers still have a special connection with printed publications,” Lam said, recalling how they first came across RISO. “Since all of us had a fulltime job back then, it became important for us to find a way to produce something we like at a low cost and in a short time. RISO’s features match our requirement. There wasn’t any firm that was using RISO in Macao at that time neither. So we decided to bring it to the city.”

In simpler words, RISO is a type of digital printer that prints one colour at a time like printmaking, which makes it more efficient to print out publications. “Most of the printing shops out there would print thousands of copies at one time. But lots of works from designers might not be mass-produced. Usually, they would have some experimental works instead,” Kou explained. “This is where RISO comes in. The printing cost, scale and process are all controlled by us using RISO. RISO can easily print out vibrant colours such as gold stamping that are considered as special colours among traditional printers.”



• RISO printer and its special ink



• Naughty Roll Golden Rat Postcard Set

Imperfection is what makes RISO exciting

From Ferreira’s perspective, what makes RISO exciting is that there are always unexpected accidents occurring during the printing process. “The final printing results might have imperfections such as malposition, scraps and unintended ink marks because of varying conditions like the paper we use, the ink and printing proportion,” Ferreira said. “The printed products don’t look delicate. They even look rough in quality. But that kind of retro vibe is exactly what we look for. When you print 100 copies of the same illustration, you will get copies that are more or less different from each other. This is one of the things that makes our brand special!”

Another feature of Naughty Roll is that its illustrations are rich in story. “We prefer illustrations. So you can see a lot of our materials feature cartoon illustrations. Some of them are about games, Japanese anime girls and humour,” Ferreira explained. “We also add a lot of stories into the illustrations. Like our 12-set RISO illustration calendar series. It tells stories of our everyday life humorously. Illustrations with stories can resonate with the consumers, which gained huge success when they hit the market.” “We didn’t have a target audience. We were only sharing what we love through designs and products. Our imaginations are wild and we have diverse designs, which I hope can attract different types of people,” Lam added.



• Shanghai Book Fair

Effective promotion at exhibitions

Although the brand was established in Macao, it received attention for the first time in Shanghai. “In last August, we took part in a book fair held in Shanghai by accident. That was our first time to showcase our works at an exhibition. It was a surprise to us that our works were able to receive unexpected popularity,” Lam recalled. “Then we started to think whether the mainland market sees our illustration-like works with vibrant colours as something rare and different in comparison with products in the mainland? We brought six products to the exhibition and they were all sold out. We also reached consignment agreements with bookstores from different regions to get our products to different places. This experience allowed us to realise that our products do have a market. Then we decided to make it a brand.” Besides using social media for promoting and marketing, the team will also bring the brand to different regions for book fairs and design exhibitions. “As an emerging design and publishing brand, we now focus more on promotion at exhibitions so that the audience can see our products in the flesh and appreciate their charm. Besides, we could also talk to our customers and get instant feedback from them,” Kou said.

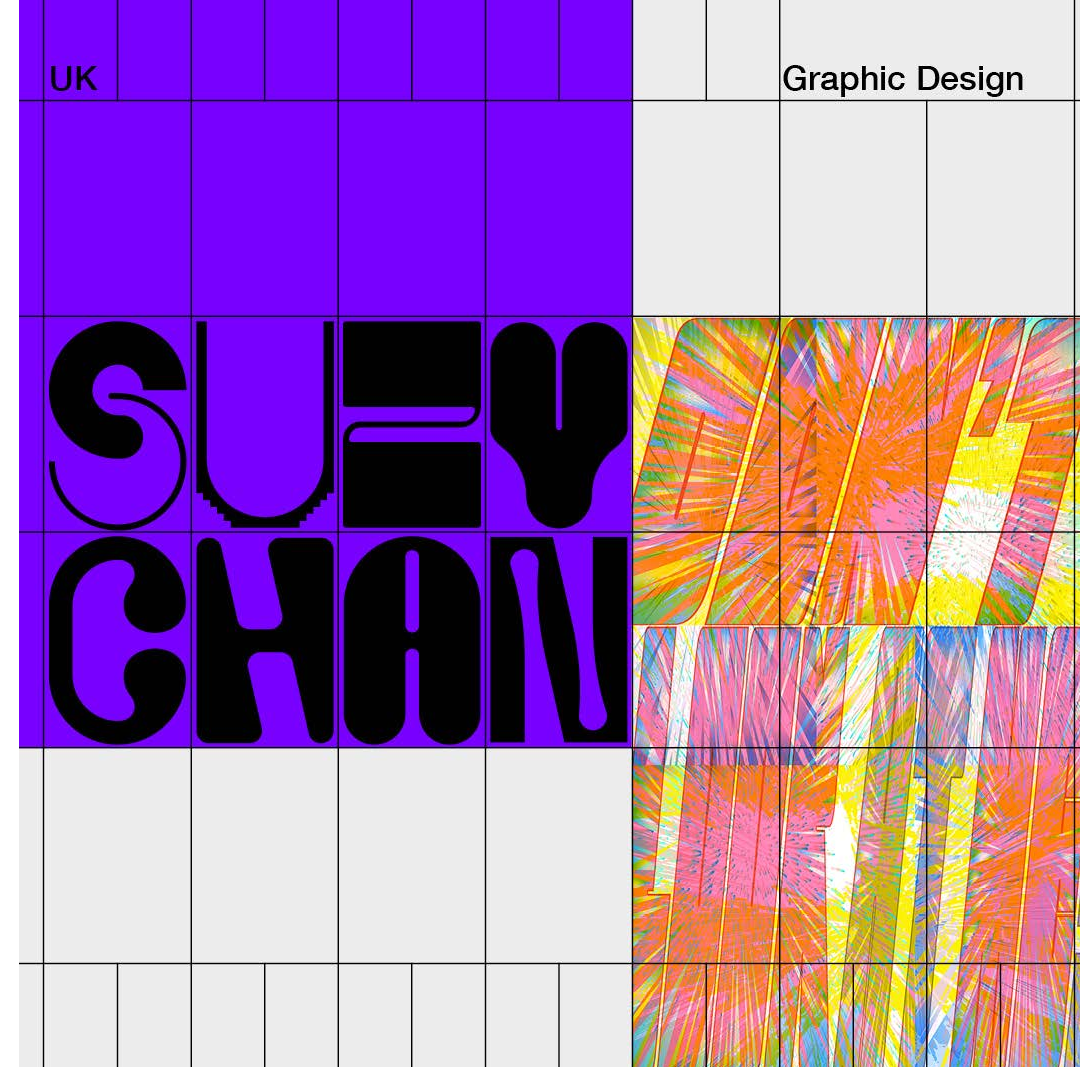
E-commerce platforms and consignment are the main sales channels for Naughty Roll. “Besides selling our products on Taobao, we also have consignment points at bookstores in places like Taiwan, Shanghai, Beijing, Ningbo, Hangzhou and Wuhan. We are having great responses. For now, we have received orders from these bookstores for restocking,” Lam said. “We are hoping to consign our products in more places like Europe, Japan, Korea and Malaysia through exhibitions.” Naughty Roll is working to extend the use of RISO beyond printing publications, eyeing things like fashion clothes and furniture to diversify their product line. The brand will hold its first exhibition in Macao from May to July at AT LIGHT at Patio do Padre Narciso No.1. People who are interested can appreciate the charm of RISO at the spot!

Suzy Chan: design should be more than just business

Local emerging graphic designer Suzy Chan, graduated from the College of Communication at the University of the Arts London with 1st Honours, won Project of the Year of British site It's Nice That, a website focusing on creative designs. Chan's project was reported by AIGA's *Eye on Design* magazine, receiving recognition and praises from the industry as a young designer. "Designers should reflect on society, culture and psychology and build up one's design philosophy and value. Through this, designers' works will be able to break free from materialistic market trends," Chan said. In this issue, we have invited Suzy Chan to share with us her journey as a student and emerging talent in the design industry.



• Suzy Chan



• Suzy Chan's work was selected for It's Nice That graduation project competition

Learning diverse cultures both domestic and abroad

Growing up as a straight-A student, Chan showed a knack for art. She went to a professional art and design academy in Beijing during high school time. When it was time for going to college, she successfully made it into Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. "Since I was a kid, I had been travelling between mainland China and Macao. This experience helped me understand different societies, which also had a huge influence over my later life choices and art designs," Chan said.

When Chan was a year-one freshman at Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, she achieved a cumulative GPA of 4.0, often surprising professors' expectations when doing course briefs. However, as she further proceeded her learning at the academy, she realised that the higher education model in mainland China failed to inspire her in design. "If we don't get deeper into subjects like society, culture, history and psychology in college and build up our design philosophy and value, then

wouldn't we become merely supporters of consumerism?" Chan commented. That's why Chan decided to drop out of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts after the completion of year-one study and applied for the College of Communication at University of the Arts London.

"Design education in the UK focuses more on nurturing students' ability to think, especially the ability to think critically," Chan explained. "Besides design courses, we also had courses that teach about sociology. For instance, I studied courses such as individual identity, national identity, journalism and fan culture. I listened to classmates from different cultural backgrounds expressing their opinions on the same issue we looked at. This allowed me to go beyond learning about design and know more about the associations between design, society and culture."



• Chan's design project "Casino City"

Self expression about social issues

Chan spent her spare time doing part-time jobs to fit into the local culture when she was studying in the UK. She met lots of immigrant friends of different nationalities with different cultural backgrounds because of her part-time jobs. She heard stories about an immigrant who immigrated illegally to the UK from Fujian over a decade ago, a confrontation caused by credit card theft committed by a Somali refugee, and strange rules set up by a business owner from Hong Kong that aimed to evade taxation... "These experiences are precious to me. They enabled me to look at the world from a new perspective, which also allows me to think deeper about how designs can shape society. That's why many of my designs are associated with social issues."

Chan made use of elements of Chinese traditional rituals and

Macao's casino advertisements in her works, hoping to encourage Macao residents to have more conversations with the government. From her perspective, this can help strike a balance between developing the economy and sustaining the ecosystem. She had also voiced out for protestors in London's Chinatown who were protesting against police entrapments. What's more, Chan keeps track of issues such as the connection between snack advertisements and cults, plastic particles in the ocean, and greenhouse fruits. "Overall, I don't have a particular design style. If I were to describe my design style, I would say I combine self expression with social issues because I believe graphic design is a public platform for expression," Chan explained. "As a designer, I need to express myself through my works after researching different social issues. This will maximise the power of design, granting design with more value than just commercial usage."

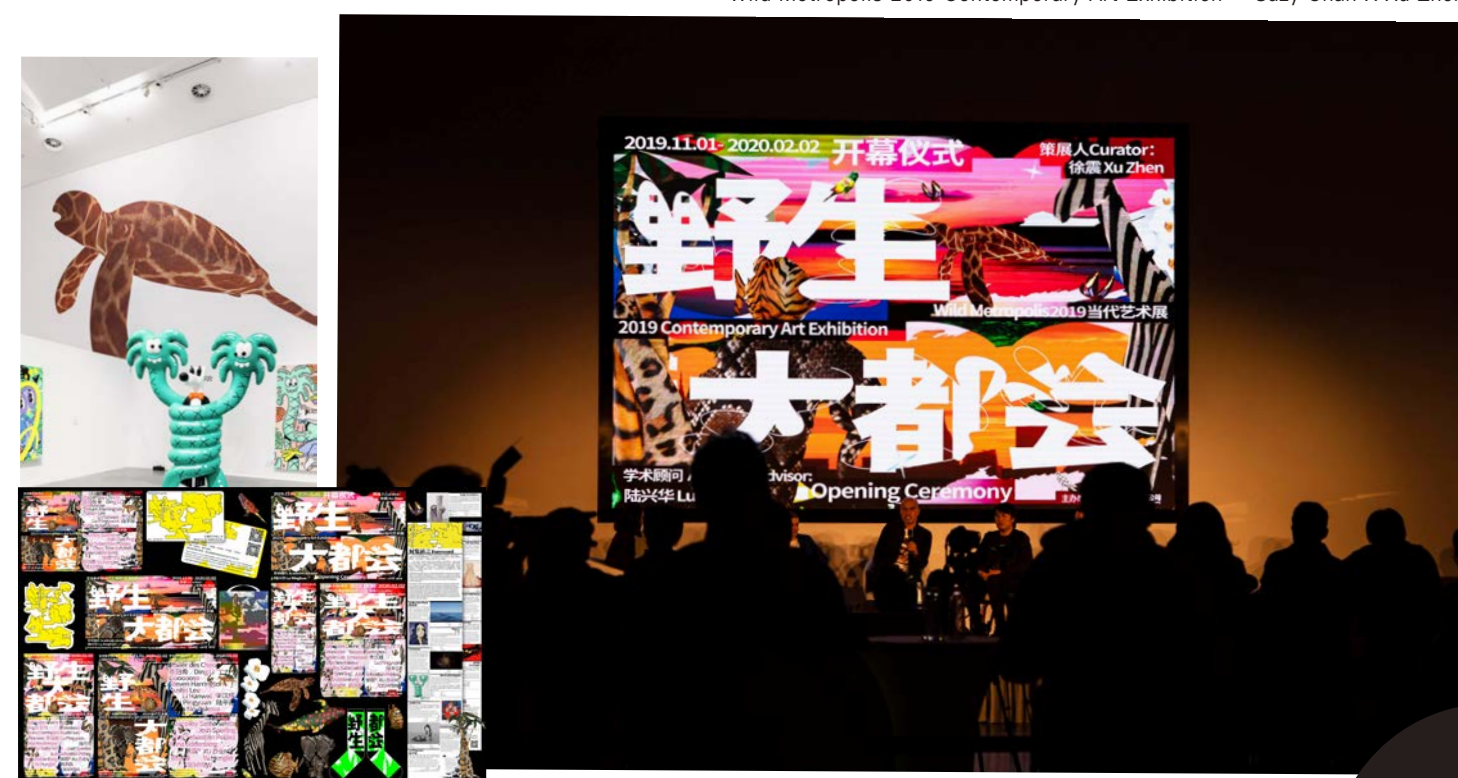
Not a "hip designer"?

In 2019, Chan graduated from the College of Communication at the University of the Arts London with 1st Honours. In the same year, Chan's graduation project won Project of the Year of British site It's Nice That, a website focusing on creativity. "They were not selecting certain design works, but designers. The panel would evaluate applicants' projects in college, including their understanding of design and future career plan," Chan said. "Platforms like this offer great support to emerging designers like me in breaking the structural barrier. I think all industries should pay more attention to young talents whom are considered as inexperienced newcomers who easily mess things up."

Chan is now a full-time freelancer, taking on projects that mainly come from overseas markets and some from mainland China. "You need to be forward-looking when making a design in order to roll out a product that holds significant value. It is the same for graphic design," Chan said. "So when I am talking to my clients, I would first think about whether I could deliver the things that they want. If sales performance is the metric, then I might not be the kind of designer that some clients are looking for."

This young designer from Macao just recently got enrolled in a graduate programme of the Royal College of Art in the UK. However, Chan is satisfied with her work now and decides to continue working for some time until she feels there is a need for further study. In addition, Chan believes that designers should not stay within their comfort zone and only make designs that cater to market trends. "Market trends are only one set of criteria. We also need to think about other things, such as what kind of drastic changes there will be globally in the future (especially after the pandemic), public opinions and how people's demand for visual designs will change. I believe these are important questions worth exploring if one wishes to become a good designer," Chan concluded.

• Wild Metropolis 2019 Contemporary Art Exhibition — Suzy Chan X Xu Zhen



During the pandemic: cultural and creative industries fighting their way out

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads across the globe, governments are encouraging their citizens to help contain the virus by staying at home. Galleries had subsequently closed. Art festivals had also been cancelled or postponed. There is no doubt that cultural and creative industries have been hit hard by the virus. With challenges come new inspirations, cultural and creative industries in Macao are also making their innovations to overcome hardships during the pandemic.



- Hiu Kok Theatre shared its work "February 29" with the audience on the Internet

Crossovers that help contain COVID-19

When we are staying at home and make our shares of contribution to fighting COVID-19, cultural and creative industries across the globe are also helping through their unique ways. For instance, luxury fashion brand LVMH Group announced that it had converted its perfume factories for producing hand sanitisers, while fashion brand Dior has started making face masks. During home-quarantine, we not only need to make sure we have food to eat but also have arts and entertainment that satisfy our hunger for spiritual pleasure. That's why some artists decided to put their works online and share them with everyone. Look at the Social Distancing Festival, for example. It called for artists around the world to upload their works to the Internet and share them with the audience. Hong Kong Repertory Theatre also launched the "Reviewing Classics" programme that allowed people to vote for the classic play that they want to watch again the most. The play with the highest votes has been streamed on the Internet since March 21. At the Smithsonian American Art Museum, there is also the "Experience American Art from Home" scheme that allows the general public to watch exhibitions online.

From offline to online

Cultural and creative industries in Macao are also making their innovations when facing challenges from the pandemic. Local theatre play society Hiu Kok had shared their work *February 29* online on March 1. The theatre company had postponed or even cancelled several performance plans like *Same Time, Next Year*, Hiu Kok's art director Hui Koc Kun said. Hiu Kok originally planned to perform six to eight shows from late February to March at the Macao Cultural Centre. The theatre company even planned to approach some businesses for helping to promote their ticket sales. However, several cultural facilities had been shut down due to the pandemic, which means Hiu Kok has to put off their plans. "If this had worked, we would continue this line of business and even make more new productions. We wouldn't need to rely on the government's support. But now we don't have any show. There is not going to be any show in the second half of this year. Even if we could get our hands on some performance space, we don't think we could easily find sponsorship from companies anyway since the economy is hard-hit by the pandemic. Who would help us promote our shows?"



- The theatre's work "Same Time Next Year" had been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic



- O-Moon rolls out "buy two get one free" promotion in response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on business

Hui Kok's tours in other destinations such as mainland China and Brazil had all been cancelled because of the pandemic. "When there is a challenge, there is also an opportunity," Hui said. During this special time, Hui Kok has been thinking about the development of the theatre industry and decided to upload their work *February 29* to the Internet. Hui Kok was the first theatre group in Macao to put their work on the Internet. "It wasn't much of a strategy. We were only thinking like we couldn't just sit around and wait. We needed to do something," Hui said. "So we put *February 29* out there. I don't care about the views. As long as people are appreciating this work of ours then it is good already."

Hui also pointed out that there were mixed opinions about putting productions on the Internet among his friends. Many thought that there could be extended activities and some efforts in recreating stories. "Some friends mentioned the possibility of having supplementary content such as play review and extended activities that make theatre appear to be fun for the audience," Hui said. "I would do them in the future because I don't have that much time and people right now. This could be more meaningful, not just simply about putting your work on the Internet. It should be about using Internet technology to drive the development of art forward."

Improving design and be ready

While theatre companies are actively working to expand their channels, souvenir shops are also making their adaptation to the pandemic situation. According to local souvenir brand O-Moon's owner Jet Wu, a series of plans had been postponed due to the pandemic while several physical outlets in touristic areas have been significantly impacted by the situation. "Sometimes we would only have a two-digit sales volume. On some days we even had zero sales. Oftentimes, we only made a couple hundred or less than one hundred MOP," Wu said with a bitter smile. "Sometimes the sales would hit four-digit on weekends. But before the pandemic, we had much better sales performance." At present, O-Moon only has one outlet open in Macao while the outlet in Taipa only opens on weekends given there is need to save cost and that some sales staff have not returned to Macao for work yet. "Opening up all stores now would just be a waste of utility money because there is no customer," Wu explained.

To mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, O-Moon has rolled out a "buy two get one free" discount to attract more customers. From Wu's perspective, consumption-stimulating measures such as gift card might not be effective because residents will tend to prioritise buying daily necessities instead of souvenirs. But Wu also looks to the positive side. "We need to think positively and prepare for exponential growth when the situation becomes

better. We cannot let despair plague us," Wu said. For instance, although the pandemic has indeed reduced business opportunities, it also provides designers with more time to come up with new inspirations. Now there is even sufficient time for brands to plan their future work in more detailed ways. "We are planning to turn O-Moon from a souvenir business into a fashion brand. We want to gradually transform from making souvenirs such as postcards and luggage belts to headbands and tote bags. We want to make things that are for everyone, not just tourists." In addition to that, a number of companies and organisations such as Orbis have partnered with O-Moon on promotion design projects. "Since it is not a good time for retailing, we are now working with other companies and organisations for building up our reputation. After the pandemic, we will achieve rebound!" Wu said.

However, Wu is not very sure how this will play out. "Nothing is certain now. Even if you make perfect preparation for the future, there is still nothing much you can do as long as the pandemic continues to spread. This means the key here is still about when the pandemic will end!" Wu concluded.

Event Calendar



Who heeds a man who sits and wails out in the cold?— Illustrations and Drawings by Rui Rasquinho

Date: From today until 3/7/2020

Time: 12pm–8pm (Closed on Monday)

Venue: Taipa Village Art Space (Rua dos Clérigos, No. 10, Macao)

Free Admission

Organiser: Taipa Village Cultural Association

Website: www.taipavillagemacau.com



The 11th Macao Fashion Illustration Contest

Deadline for entry submission: 17/6/2020

Organiser: Macao Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre

Website: www.cpttm.org.mo



2020 Exclusive Fashion Collections—Showroom

Date: From today until 31/12/2020

Venue: Macao Fashion Gallery

Co-organiser: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, Macao Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre

Website: www.macaofashiongallery.com



Naughty Roll Design Show

Date: From today until 11/7/2020

Time: 11:15am–6:30pm (Monday to Saturday); 10am–5pm (Sunday)

Venue: At Light (R/C, Pátio do Padre Narciso, No 1, Macao)

Free Admission

Organiser: Arts Empowering Lab

Website: www.facebook.com/events/836302203560171



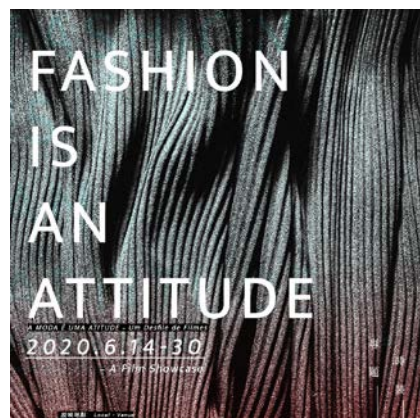
Publication of "City of Dreams — Macao Stories for Children"

Price: \$98

Venue for the book selling:

Universal Gallery & Bookstore, Public Information Centre, The Archives of Macao, Macao Museum of Art

Publisher: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, Tianjin Xinlei Publishing House



FASHION IS AN ATTITUDE — A Film Showcase

Date: From 14/6/2020 to 30/6/2020

Time: Check the schedule

Venue: Cinematheque·Passion

Ticket: \$60 (each film)

Organiser: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government

Co-organiser: Cinematheque·Passion

Website: www.cinematheque-passion.mo



Tam Kun Fong Artworks Exhibition

Date: From today until 29/6/2020

Time: 11am–8pm (Closed on Monday)

Venue: Gallery C02, 10 Fantasia, Macao

Free Admission

Organiser: Macao International Printmaking Arts Research Centre

Co-organiser: Creative Industries Promotion Association of St. Lazarus Church District, 10 Fantasia

Website: www.10fantasia.com



teamLab SuperNature Macao

Opening date: 15/6/2020

Time: 10am to 10pm (Last admission: 45 minutes before closing)

Venue: Cotai Expo, The Venetian Macao

Ticket: \$238 (Aged 13 and over); \$168 (Aged 3 – 12)

Website: www.sandsresortsmacao.com



HUSH!! X Creative Industries Flea Market

Date: From 18/7/2020 to 19/7/2020

Time: Check the schedule

Venue: Macao Science Centre Plaza

Organiser: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government

Website: www.icm.gov.mo



Art Blossom 2020

Application period:

From 15/3/2020 to 30/6/2020

Exhibition date:

From 7/8/2020 to 24/9/2020

Organiser: C'Gallery

Website: www.theartblossom.com

The animation industry in Hong Kong during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been spreading across the world since January this year. Hong Kong is no exception from the outbreak. In response, the city even adopted measures that are stricter than the measures taken in the 2003 SARS outbreak to contain the pandemic, while working with other regions to fight the pandemic.

Major events have all been cancelled or postponed to maintain social distancing. Public gatherings are limited to four people maximum. If feasible, people are encouraged to work from their home. Under these circumstances, animation events have also made subsequent changes.

Every March and April are considered as the months for the film industry in Hong Kong. There is the core event FILMART, coupled with other major events such as the Hong Kong International Film Festival, Hong Kong Film Awards and ifva. Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, these events have been postponed to July and August. However, since ifva needs to arrange a series of events throughout the year, the paneling process is proceeding as planned. ifva has only put off the award presentation ceremony.

With 25 years of history, ifva is recognised as an independent short film production platform in Asia. The animation category at ifva is becoming increasingly significant each year, catching lots of attention. I have been serving as a panel for ifva for a long time. This year we had switched to using online video conferencing for the panel meetings, which turned out to be quite effective. This year we have over 200 competing animations from across Asia. After the initial screening, ten animations made it into the final round of selection. The five-person judging panel has four Hong Kong representatives, including me. In addition, we have animation director Matt Abbiss from the UK on the panel as well. After a three-hour meeting on Hangouts, we successfully selected the winner of the competition!

Hong Kong animation *Another World* took home the gold award with great popularity. *A Gong* from Taiwan won the silver award, an equally good production. Unfortunately, this year the panel couldn't appreciate these animations on a silver screen first before commencing the selection meeting.

After all, these animations look incredible on a big silver screen. Such viewing experience is hard to achieve on the Internet. The 25th ifva's award results had been released on its official site in early March. The award presentation ceremony, on the other hand, might take place around August. Matt will not only join us at the award ceremony but would also be actively organising animation seminars and workshops to share his opinions on animations with friends from Hong Kong.

Another anticipated animation event has been the annual ASP (Animation Support Programme). ASP has been around for seven years. It originally planned to showcase 29 short animations that started production in July last year in early March. Five of the 29 animations received HKD500,000 subsidy each from the programme are of high quality. Their themes and animation techniques are both worthy of more discussion. Even animations that are only three to seven minutes long are works from small animation companies that aim to showcase their professional capabilities, which makes them highly enjoyable. The 7th ASP's screening ceremony is temporarily scheduled to happen in July. The audience will have to wait for a bit longer to see them.

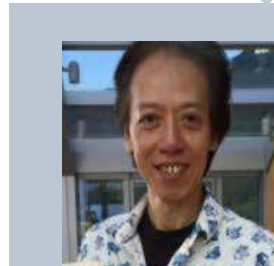
The 8th ASP's events will proceed as scheduled since it is important to match all teams' production plan. The only difference now is that they will take place online. Between April and May, there are four introductory conferences that aim to answer questions from potential ASP participants. The programme accepts applications until late May.

The 8th ASP has 30 quotas as previous ones. The programme targets three categories of animation companies, offering a subsidy of HKD110,000, HKD200,000 and HKD500,000 respectively for each of them to produce a respective animation work with storyline of at least 3/5/10 minutes. ASP has always been well-received by the industry and I believe the 8th ASP will not be an exception.

The Great Detective Sherlock Holmes, an animation from Hong Kong that entered the market last summer, also received a number of awards and recognitions during the pandemic. The animation has been produced its English version and would be able to enter cinemas in North America and Europe in the future. *The Great Detective Sherlock Holmes*'s DVD will start sales at the Hong Kong Book Fair that will be held in July this year if everything goes as planned. Then we can buy a DVD copy and enjoy the animation whenever we want. But of course, this is really dependent on the development of the pandemic.

One thing that made me very happy during this pandemic was knowing several animation professionals had gotten inspiration from this hard time and came up with animations with new themes. And they have started making them! I believe this is the most unexpected good outcome for animation makers during the pandemic!

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.

The Macao film industry during the COVID-19 pandemic

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 have been staying at home for most of the time in the past two months, which gave me the time to finish watching movies and TV shows that were on my view list. I even occasionally found time to take some online courses to learn more. My families and I had more opportunities to dine with each other and spend some time together. However, my work has been completely halted. All of my projects have been postponed by the pandemic. I haven't received final payments of some gaming companies' projects that were completed before the COVID-19 outbreak. Freelancers in Macao that are in the line of filmmaking business must have been considering whether to look for other jobs this spring.

Macao's economy is buttressed by tourism and the gaming industry, which means the film business is never a mainstream sector in the city. But why we have been hit hard nonetheless by the COVID-19 pandemic? To answer this question, we first need to discuss how the film industry operates in Macao before the coronavirus outbreak. Before the year 2000, there were very few filmmaking freelancers in the city. For the majority, making movies or filming short clips was merely a hobby. Most of the professional talents in the filmmaking business already had a fulltime job. If you were lucky, you might get business opportunities like shooting a commercial or design, which were relevant to filmmaking. But such opportunities were rare. You could only film some clips with your friends who shared common interests on weekends or during a vacation to get closer to your filmmaking dream. After the year 2010, business opportunities grew for freelancers in the film industry as more filmmaking talents came back to Macao. On the other hand, local emerging filmmaking talents also started to think about how to find new directions instead of finding a stable fulltime job.

Where does the financial income for filmmaking freelancers and companies come from in a small city like Macao? From my observation, there are two main sources of income: jobs like making commercials or shooting short films and jobs that are related to filmmaking. Many might immediately think that gaming companies must be the main clients of the filmmaking teams in Macao. But the truth is they will only work with local teams on small commercials. As for making major commercials, it is very rare for them to turn to local teams. I think this is understandable since gaming companies might believe the teams in Macao are not as experienced as teams from other regions and therefore cannot take on large scale production tasks. But given the fact that production teams from other places might not be familiar with the local environment, they would also hire local professionals to provide support. This means that professional talents in Macao would get the opportunity to earn some cash. Sometimes the production teams from other regions would outsource the production to local teams and earn some commission, which results in a smaller budget and subsequently less profit for local production crews. In addition, local teams are not getting a boost of reputation in the business from it neither.

Besides gaming companies, other commercial-making contracts come from the government and civic associations. Macao has a robust civic association culture. There are a lot of associations that need to make some introductory videos or documentaries. Making these films could help freelancers sustain a modest living. As for making movies, there are a very limited number of movie projects that are set in Macao, with less than three every year. There is also an absence of movie projects that are completely produced by a local production crew. This makes it impossible for filmmakers in Macao to rely on making movies to make a living. But when film production teams from other places come to Macao to film, they would hire a certain number of local personnel to help the production process. This is similar to the case of the production teams hired by gaming companies outsourcing their work to local teams. Besides, they would also occasionally hire local actors for filming, which generates quite some jobs as well. After the pandemic hit Macao, gaming businesses have been having a hard time and are trying very hard to survive. Promotion is not much of a priority during a pandemic. That's why every production project of the gaming industry had been halted. As for the government and civic associations, promotional videos are not a priority neither. The government is investing all of its energy in containing the pandemic and planning the resumption of work afterwards. Other things are now less important when compared with fighting the pandemic, including promotions. As for the film industry, it is experiencing a mass business closure across the world as major production projects had all been halted. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to have any production going on in Macao, be it productions of local teams or teams from other places.

The film industry in Macao has entered into a difficult situation during the pandemic. But as more people are self-quarantine at home, there is also a growing demand for video entertainment. We really need to give more thoughts into how to turn this crisis into an opportunity.

The art of reusing and reusing art during the COVID-19 pandemic

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.

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit the globe, medical resources and supplies have become increasingly in shortage internationally. As a result, industrial production lines had been converted and reused for producing medical supplies such as disinfectants, face masks and ventilators. Hotels are being used as quarantine centres. Even French luxury brand LVMH had converted its perfume production line to make sanitisers and other sterilising supplies. However, these supplies are not printed with LVMH's logo.

The conversion and reuse of these production lines and business spaces remind us of the supply shortage during wartime. In World War II, American automaker General Motors' production line was converted to manufacture weaponry and tanks. The American government called to its people to collect supplies like metal, paper and plastic to support the American army. Such conversion was everywhere, in Americans' lifestyle, in households. Coats made for men were remade and became shoes and coats for women. Sometimes, disasters and crises could inspire people to be more creative and make use of limited resources.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, a number of art and cultural organisations that had suspended operation, especially performing arts organisations, have also been considering how to make use of their existing resources. At a time where it is impossible to deliver live performances offline, lots of performances and shows have been filmed and uploaded to the Internet, providing the audience with an alternative

experience. Now there are a variety of dance performances, plays and concerts on the Internet, which allow users to watch for free. The audience somehow benefits from the pandemic.

Reusing content is an easy tactic for the cultural and art industry to respond to the pandemic. Cultural and art organisations also need to reuse their personnel as resources dive sharply. One interesting case has been the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in the Oklahoma City of the United States. The museum's head of security Tim was given an extra task that required him to run the museum's social media. Tim is a new user of Twitter. He often made a joke of himself on Twitter because of the lack of experience with social media. Most of his tweets are funny to read. For example, Tim's grandson tried to teach him to use a hashtag. And Tim typed hashtag on his tweets instead of using #. This won him more followers, turning him into an Internet influencer. The number of followers that the museum's social media page had subsequently jumped from a couple thousand to over 200,000 in 15 days.

Similar to other businesses, reusing existing resources not only ensures continuity of operation but also keeps jobs for employees. Professional talents of the cultural and art industry had been hit the hardest by the pandemic. Many businesses in the west have to layoff a mass number of employees to cut cost. Even the Museum of Modern Art of New York, which has a foundation of over one billion dollars, had terminated its contracts with its entire education department staff in early April. It is uncertain whether these cultural organisations had considered the possibility of reusing and redistributing existing resources. As one of the educators whose contract had been terminated pointed out, education might be even more important when galleries are closed down.

Another meaningful discussion from the perspective of cultural professionals is whether art can be reused. Or in other words, can art become more useful during the pandemic? The answer might be disappointing. Artists might be able to make use of their creativity and create new content by reusing existing materials. But art itself is not profit-driven. This means that art is "useless" at nature. When it is "useless", we can't reuse it. In my opinion, the biggest function of art during the COVID-19 pandemic has been its ability to help people escape from heavy issues like societal and economic aftermath. Art is still "useless" as it has always been, and therefore cannot be reused for other meaningful purposes. But the uselessness of art provides us with the chance to catch our breath by escaping the anxiety and boredom that we suffer during the pandemic, offering us moments of peace.

Rose of the North: an aggregation of independent bookstores and creativity in Thailand

I used to have very little expectation for Chiang Mai, the so-called Rose of the North in Thailand. But it turned out to be a place full of amazement.

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.

Chiang Mai is a historic city in the country. However, it also has a thriving scene of creative markets and cultural and creative villages. The city is vibrant with a hipster vibe. When I was strolling around in the city, I walked into an independent bookstore named Ranlao Bookshop by accident. I happened to bump into their 20th anniversary party that day.

Most of the customers at the majority of bookstores in Chiang Mai are tourists from other countries. They mainly sell books in English. In contrast, Ranlao Bookshop sells mostly Thai literature, picture books and manga. There are also world classics in Thai and local cultural and creative products in the shop. What impressed me the most was, as low-key as the bookstore might look, it is actually a hub connecting different cultures. On the wall inside the bookstore, you can find letters written by Thai authors to the bookstore owner. At the door, folk singers are performing for free. If you go upstairs, you would discover an EDM party that is also free of charge. You would meet local professionals, intellectuals, hipsters, college students, local residents wearing slippers, tourists and visitors who are passing by. Inside and outside the store, there are over ten cultural and creative booths, selling local snacks, enzymes drinks, organic fresh produce and cultural handicrafts from Chiang Mai. Some of the brands here already have a certain degree of reputation. There were some former cultural and creative industry workers who now run brick-and-mortar stores telling me that they came here to simply celebrate their friendship with Ranlao Bookstore's owner, to thank the owner for supporting them when their brands were unknown by anybody. They were very grateful for the bookstore owner for providing them with the chance to consign and promote their products at Ranlao while facilitating an exchange platform that inspires.

There are three things to look at to examine whether an independent bookstore is successful or not: past revenue, book selection and curating preferences, and a broad network that connects communities, different social groups, and people who share different interests and values. An independent bookstore is not isolated from the world. As an independent bookstore, you would focus more on aggregating creativity, linking neighbouring communities and artists across the city.

We have had quite a lot of discussions on cultural and creative spaces, which mainly talk about the tangible and intangible aggregation of creativity. Tangible aggregations are mostly big communities (such as the Pier-2 Art Centre in Kaohsiung, Taiwan), city blocks (like Wudaoying Hutong in Beijing), office towers or factories (PMQ — Staunton and The Mills in Hong Kong) and cultural and creative villages (like Chiang Mai's Baan Kang Wat). Intangible aggregations could be online communities. Internet influencers, similar to cultural and creative enterprises, focus on building up fan loyalty and increasing the number of followers. I wonder whether there are any other alternatives to tangible and intangible aggregations of creativity.

There are many reasons why cultural and creative villages in Hong Kong and Macao find it hard to further develop themselves. Besides factors such as the rent, visitor flow and the lack of diversity, operating in relative isolation is also a great shortcoming for them. Challenges brought about by the publishing industry decline and the emergence of digital books and online bookstores have made it necessary for physical bookstores to diversify. Independent bookstores are also gradually transforming from shops to aggregations of creativity, which are both tangible and intangible. Sitting right next to Broadway Cinematheque in Hong Kong, famous independent bookstore Kubrick offers a café and book clubs for hipsters. In addition to that, Kubrick provides consignment service for local organic food as well. It also supports the development of local picture book artists through efforts such as offering book cover design service and holding picture book exhibitions. Pin-to Livros, a popular independent bookstore in Macao, is an important consignment sales channel for cultural and creative products (especially publications, music albums, literature merchandise like pins with literature themes) from neighbouring regions while serving as a platform for cultural exchange (such as seminars, interviews and mini-concerts).

"The success of a cultural industry policy lies in whether we can create an environment that is full of creativity," Sirion Hrimpranee, director of the Policy Research Department of the Thailand's National Knowledge Centre, said in an interview. Art audience has become a modern tool in a global post-industrial society that helps transform spaces. Governments across the globe have been promoting policies such as integrating art in public spaces and bringing art into communities, hoping that citizens will become actively involved in the cultural making instead of being mere recipients. But most of the efforts are only making art more available like bringing in art performances or setting up art installations. There is a lack of consistent and in-depth efforts. Only when we combine artist communities with residential communities can we build a substantial ecosystem. As major cultural and creative concentrated areas work hard to develop and online platforms continue to emerge, the government needs to consider more of the aggregating power that independent bookstores have when coming up with policies for cultural and creative industries.

Reliving the history: Matsumoto city in Nagano prefecture

Every May, we would pay a visit to Matsumoto city in Nagano prefecture to take part in the 69 Artisan Street event. Friends from Tokyo, Nara, and Kyushu would also come to Matsumoto for this event, which is a great opportunity for me to meet my friends.

The event's schedule is similar every year. We attend the event's seminars and then go to Sanjiro for soba noodles. Then we would go treasure hunting in some antique shops and enjoy a cup of coffee and read at a café in Shioribi. In the evening, we would go to the event's celebration dinner. But this year is very likely to be different. When I was writing this article, the Japanese government had declared national emergency status. Although the emergency status doesn't include Nagano prefecture, I believe the 69 Artisan Street and Crafts Fair Matsumoto will not be able to proceed as scheduled given the severity of the pandemic outbreak.

When speaking of Nagano prefecture, Japanese people would think about skiing, hot springs and apples. But when you talk about Matsumoto city, the Matsumoto Castle and wood crafts will first come into people's mind. Matsumoto was an important city when Yanagi Soetsu was promoting the mingei movement, famous for its woodworks. The city is rich in historical heritage and faces the Hida Mountains, sitting next to hot spring attractions. That's why Matsumoto has been a hotspot for domestic travel in Japan. In recent years, Matsumoto has also become an ideal place to live for young people who long for rich culture and lifestyle.

Japan is facing an ageing society. Many cities would launch different initiatives to attract young people. As a result, more and more people are moving to Matsumoto. Matsumoto's city government has been making initiatives to help immigrants settle down in the city. For example, there are shop maps made specifically for immigrants and sharing sessions where *senpai* would share their experience of settling down in the city. There is also a pragmatic policy initiative that works closely with homestay businesses to provide discounts

for short stays. You can get one night's stay for free every seven days' stay. These policies bring more convenience to people who are interested in settling down in Matsumoto. But what makes this small city so attractive? What do young people see it in Matsumoto?

The Crafts Fair Matsumoto, founded in 1985 and in which Ryuji Mitani was involved, brings crowds to Matsumoto in May every year. Thousands of people would come from all over Japan to Matsumoto and visit a forest park's plaza that used to be a school infrastructure and appreciate crafts from different Japanese artisans. In the 1980s, Japan was still living its prime time as the economic bubble grew bigger and bigger. People were materialistic, producing and consuming lots of products. Even though the Crafts Fair Matsumoto was also a commercial event, but it brought a deeper meaning to material consumption. Under those blue and white booth tents, consumers and manufacturers would meet each other and appreciate the human emotions embedded in crafts, reviving the city's past as the city of crafts.

Today, Crafts Fair Matsumoto has over 230 participating units, a drastic increase from the 1st Crafts Fair Matsumoto which only have 45 units participated. Every year, 30% of the participating units will be new participants. Crafts Fair Matsumoto provides young artisans a good opportunity to get their works out there while bringing in a stable number of tourists. This also helps to maintain Matsumoto's unique city image.

Crafts Fair Matsumoto is a starting point for young artisans, who will later return after they achieve their goals. Matsumoto's boutique shop Laboratorio's owner Ifuji Masashi first came to the city because of the Crafts Fair. At that time, Masashi just started to make his wood crafts after leaving a wood artisan studio where he learned wood making. He brought his works to the Crafts Fair Matsumoto and exhibited them. After a long time, Masashi started to think about moving to a place where the climate is suitable for wood making, Matsumoto came into his mind. After settling down in Matsumoto, he opened the Laboratorio in 2009, selling crafts, homewares and food ingredients from across the country. The emergence of Ryuji Mitani's exhibition gallery 10cm, Shioribi Bookstore Café in the city pumped new blood into Matsumoto, turning it into a both traditional and young town. People who are new to Matsumoto also see new lifestyles because of this. All these are made possible by organic development instead of any planned strategies.

One thing about Matsumoto that appeals to me is that it has well-preserved old buildings in the city. It is interesting to find out that people who are working or doing business in these old buildings also treasure them. When I am walking in the streets of Matsumoto, I would often see a shop with two signboards. One is the original and old signboard of the shop while the other one is the signboard of the current business in that building. People here value the past of Matsumoto, not willing to replace the city's past with today's achievement.

Matsumoto's charm attracts people. Perhaps the city's beauty lies in its emphasis on valuing history and culture instead of its robust prospect. Matsumoto brings back the past and gives it adequate modernity.

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*.

Cuban creativity

A Mi Manera is a famous flying pizza restaurant in Havana. Situated in the city centre, the restaurant can be found in a neighbourhood that is rarely visited by tourists. Most of A Mi Manera's customers are local residents. This flying pizza restaurant not only sells tasty delicacy but also a legacy built by Cuban people's wisdom of overcoming hardship.

In 1993, the Cuban government lifted restrictions on commercial activities and started to allow Cuban people to open private restaurants in their household. Since then, all kinds of creative restaurants you can now visit in Cuba started to pop up. Visitors to Cuba no longer need to endure bad service and plain dishes at state-run restaurants. But of course, they would have to pay prices similar to those of western restaurants to have a taste of specialities offered in those private restaurants. Such expense is not affordable for ordinary Cuban people as the average monthly income in Cuba is merely USD25.

A Mi Manera means "my way" in Spanish. The restaurant is actually on the top floor of a building, which is quite inconvenient for customers to go up and down. There is also a lack of dining space. Given these physical constraints, A Mi Manera decided to "fly" their pizza from the rooftop to their customers. Pizzas are lowered down from the fourth floor to the ground floor with a front grill of a fan. Then the customer can just grab the pizza and go. Although the pizzas at A Mi Manera are priced higher than other pizza places that the local often go to, they taste great (the best meal that I had had in Cuba) nonetheless. Because of its tasty pizzas, A Mi Manera is often flooded with customers, selling around 900 pizzas every week. It is said that lots of people would come from other towns to buy pizzas from A Mi Manera.

The famous private restaurant San Cristóbal is not very far from A Mi Manera. San Cristóbal gained a big reputation after the former U.S. President Obama's visit. The restaurant's decoration is similar to that of our grandma's house. You can see piles of antiques in San Cristóbal. With

a shabby chic interior design, the restaurant presents a nostalgic vibe to its customers, which will definitely satisfy visitors' expectation for visiting Cuba. Cuba does not have the resources for fashion or luxury. In general, you cannot really find a lot of intriguing things in ordinary shops. That's why it is natural for Cuban restaurants and shops to go for shabby chic design, which matches Cuba's own voice. As for the dishes offered at San Cristóbal, I personally think they can fit into the category of "ok considering the lack of resources here". However, you can easily experience two different worlds of Havana in these restaurants. The waiters here wear smartwatch from Apple. Many people would give up their formal jobs to serve dishes here because they have the opportunity to earn foreign currency here. The tips they get one day might be the amount of salary that common folks make a month.

The urgency for utilising creativity is established by the lack of materials. The long-term economic sanction by the U.S. government did not bend Cuba, a small country at the Caribbean. Cuba subsequently opened up its border to tourists and launched several reforms that still look foreseeing now. The government encourages the local to use their home to accommodate tourists when there is a lack of hotel rooms. Perhaps Airbnb was inspired by this? When there is a fossil fuel shortage, Cuba would incentivise its people to commute by bike more. Cuba actually once bought one million bicycles from China. As for situations where there is a lack of food, then the local are encouraged to grow their own fresh produce at their backyard, which is more economical and brings healthy food. These are exactly the low-carbon lifestyles that are trending today. But they have long been embedded in Cuban people's genes. The difference here is that they did not have much choice when choosing their ways of living.

Travellers who have been to Cuba would always complain about the Internet service there. It is not just slow, but also very expensive and inconvenient. But you will be surprised by how familiar the local are with western pop culture. Their exposure to the west is attributed to *El Paquete*.

How do Cuban people break through the Internet restrictions imposed by the government and the extremely slow speed? To have more Internet access, Cuban people developed *El Paquete*, which means "The Package" in English. *El Paquete* is a very simple method to share information. Cuban people that are living overseas would download interesting content from the Internet to hard disks every week, and then smuggle them back to Cuba. The local would only need to pay USD1-2 to have access to the underground network and download content from the hard disks. The available content includes Hollywood movies, digital newspaper and other publications, smartphone and computer applications, etc. This also includes e-commerce information similar to that of Taobao. *El Paquete* is updated on a weekly basis, allowing Cuban people who have limited Internet access to also keep up with the world's development.

The Internet has undeniable contributions to the world. But we now live in a world that is overwhelmed by information, where we are always distracted by our smartphone and the Internet. This does not necessarily bring us more joy. Is it enjoyable to live in Cuba? This is not a simple question to answer. What I was able to see is that Cuban people's ability to make use of their creativity to live their life even with limited resources, and that they can find their joy without using different kinds of high tech.

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.

Filming theatre plays in a streaming era

This spring, we have all isolated ourselves from the rest of the world. But the “stay home” campaign has also provided us with the opportunities to enjoy lots of art exhibitions and performances online.

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*.

Art Basel’s exhibition in Hong Kong, for example, was cancelled previously. The organising committee eventually decided to hold an online exhibition and put all of the exhibiting works on the Internet, allowing everyone who is staying at home to appreciate over 2,000 art pieces that were scheduled to be displayed in Hong Kong. The theatre industry also prompted swift responses to the pandemic. Lehniner Platz Theatre live-streamed theatre play *An Enemy of the People* directed by Ostermeier online. American musical streaming platform Broadway HD also rolled out a variety of flash sale discounts, through which the audience can watch over 300 musicals at home. In the Internet era, we have grown accustomed to having access to high-quality content (like music and movie streaming) by tapping on the screen. That’s why it is interesting to see whether high-quality theatre plays can also compete with entertainment content on Netflix and other streaming platforms. But one thing is for sure. Going digital has its pros and cons. Let’s take art performance for an example. On one hand, artists and performance groups do want their content to reach a broader audience, but they also worry whether videos can reconstruct the charm of live performances for the audience.

What happens at the stage stays at the stage. Besides, the real-time responses from the audience are also something unique to live performance. We already hold the belief that videos cannot provide the audience with an immersive experience. From documenting shows through a

camera on a tripod to today’s costly multiple-camera set often seen on TV shows, it seems they cannot replicate the theatre experience. Since these two ways of recording live performance are far from satisfying, the producers and directors of live performances could think about how we can adapt our works into viral content in the Internet era. We might ask questions like how we could satisfy the audience’s expectation and whether there is another set of filming aesthetics behind streaming our content.

In the film industry, we have a genre called dance film. Dance films are co-produced by the choreographers, dancers, filming crew, director and editors. (For instance, First Run Features had released a dance film named *Dance for Camera* in the form of DVD. Germany entertainment company Arthaus Musik had also published works on dance crew DV8.) Dance films’ story might not happen at a theatre or on a particular stage because the filming scenes might be a swimming pool, public transport, or even in nature. These special scenes can add up to a consistent production with the help of good filming, editing, music and special effect, which also ensure the scenes in the movie will not be repetitive.

In other words, a good performance video also has its artistic value besides replicating the live performance for the audience. Filming and editing directors, who are the content creators behind the scene, play indispensable roles in the making of good theatre play content for streaming. They will use different film-making techniques and methods to exercise great control over the creation of theatre play videos, capturing details that are hard to notice and guiding the audience to appreciate theatre plays through their unique perspective.

In some way, editing and filming directors have multiple roles in the production process. They are content creators because they are reinventing existing content through technologies. They are also a play critic, as they are expressing their opinions through the choice of filming angle and colouring, as well as through editing. They are the audience as well. They have real-time interaction with the performers while thinking about the aesthetics and value that the play director or creator wants to convey.

During this pandemic, I would always think about whether our art and culture are that vulnerable when a pandemic or war hits. I believe my fellow theatre people around the world have more or less thought about it. On the one hand, we want this pandemic to end as soon as possible. On the other, we also know that we have to find a way to help theatres survive if we couldn’t get rid of our face masks and reunite with each other in a theatre.



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