

P6 Unwelcome mainland tourists **P8** The chief executive's fervent fans **P10** Tutors that do not want your money **P11** A war-zone photographer's pursuit of truth

THE YOUNG REPORTER *magazine*

JUN 2013



A cultural
renaissance in
the wilds of
Aberdeen

P17

In This Issue

FRONT

4 One Moment

6 View

Mainland tourists: You are not welcome

NEWS

8 Haters are going to hate

Reasons Caring Hong Kong Power supports Mr Leung Chun-ying

10 Bazaar relocation turns bizarre

Why the government's good-willed initiative does not work for hawkers

12 Volunteering tutors

The lesser-known side of the billion-dollar tutoring industry

NEWS

14 Battered lenses

A war-zone photographer's never-ending pursuit of truth

18 Instashops

Fashion stores taking it to social media for “likes” and business

21 Newsmaking exhibition

Hong Kong News-Expo is set to break ground in three years

FEATURE

22 Cultural renaissance

Thriving art scene in the midst of factories and industrial blocks

In our previous issue, our reporter recounts his brief encounter with Jason Mraz. Check out tyr.hk for the story and more.



The Narrator

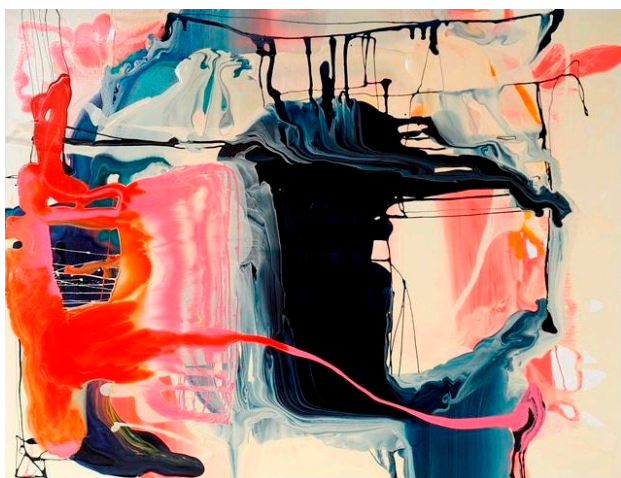
A beautiful mess

A journey into Jason Mraz's saddest tunes.

It was a warm, muggy night in the heart of the city, and the air was thick with the sound of music. Jason Mraz, the indie folk singer, was performing on stage, his voice resonating through the speakers. He was wearing a hat and a light-colored shirt, and he was playing an acoustic guitar. The audience was small, but the atmosphere was intimate. Mraz was singing a song that he had written about his struggles with mental health. He was looking down at his guitar, and his face was lit up with a smile. The audience was listening intently, and some were taking photos with their phones. Mraz was a popular performer in the city, and his music was loved by many. He was a talented singer and songwriter, and his music was a reflection of his life. He was a man who had overcome many challenges, and his music was a testament to his resilience. The audience was captivated by his performance, and they were all enjoying the moment. Mraz was a true artist, and his music was a beautiful mess.

Photo by Alan Wong

THE YOUNG REP•ORTER *magazine*



*Works from Dale
Frank's Solo
Exhibition at Art
Statements Gallery, in
Wong Chuk Hang*

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One Moment

Tens of thousands of Chinese protesters braved thunder and teeming rain to rally on the 24th anniversary of China's bloody Tiananmen crackdown. For the first time in 24 years, the rally was cut short, when rainstorm descended on the Victoria Park and caused an equipment failure.





View

You are not welcome

BEING a Chinese and a frequent traveller, I realised long ago how infamous we, the Chinese tourists, have become. Known to be the big spenders who would spit, slurp and squat, we are both loved and hated. Our prevailing bad manners resulted in a bad reputation so strong that even when we do “behave”, nobody remembers.

Yet this is an inevitable stage of development for a developing tourism, and the world needs to have some patience and tolerance, at least for now, at least for the money.

Let's see. Tourists from different countries have been detested for different reasons. I have no intention to start a fight, so we will go straight to the Chinese: my fellow countrymen have some trademark moves (or stereotypes) such as jumping queues, smoking in non-smoking areas, carving names on historic relics and stealing towels from hotels. While tourists from other countries would occasionally make the same moves, these behaviors are oftentimes associated and only associated with us. To both sides, they have become an overwhelming part of the tourism-related lexicon. But is it true that we just deserve it?

A poll conducted in March by the US-based site LivingSocial found Chinese to be the second-worst tourists in the world, second only to the American respondents themselves. The survey measured tourists' willingness to use local languages and try local foods, as well as their respect to culture and religion. No wonder we are so high on the list. Most Chinese tourists travel overseas through packages that include airfare, meals (most likely Chinese food), accommodation and a Chinese-speaking guide. Also, when rushed from one destination to another, Chinese tourists have little time to experience the local stuff. It is not all their fault. A lot of these visitors know little English and have barely travelled

outside their motherland.

When visiting the Louvre in Paris two years ago, I overheard a Chinese-speaking guide shouting “We have lots to see in ninety minutes, so we need to pick up our feet!” She darted ahead beneath a furled purple umbrella, which she used as a rallying flag. She advised her tourists to focus most on the “san bao” — the three treasures — the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Venus de Milo, and the Mona Lisa. Later I encountered them crowding around one artwork in turn while flanked by other Chinese tour groups as rival armies: red pins identify guests of the U-Tour travel agency, orange windbreakers the students from Shenzhen, and green hats the Tourfun visitors. At the same time many other visitors stood amazed and disturbed. Are we here to appreciate art or what?

We all remember that last year a Hong Kong group took out a full-page advertisement in a local newspaper complaining about mainland “locusts” swarming into the territory. For sure that is a more complicated issue than being the second worst tourists in the world, but Chinese visitors causing discomfort to local residents is often common.

The successful Chinese comedy *Lost in Thailand* came out before the 2013 Chinese New Year and lured tens of thousands of tourists to Chiang Mai, where the movie was filmed. Locals did not benefit from the huge inflow of Chinese tourists. Rather, they found their behaviours disrespectful and disturbing. Even Chinese living in Chiang Mai wrote letters to local newspapers, saying that they found the behaviour of their fellow countrymen shocking and embarrassing.

Chinese tourists have also reportedly leaped into Japanese-style baths without washing themselves off first, which is the custom in Japan, causing Japanese using the same baths to leap out in horror. Complaints by hosts in Thailand led

Yes, you. →



China's Spiritual Civilization Steering Committee to issue a guide on proper behaviour when abroad.

Last October, the French high-end fashion label Zadig et Voltaire told the media that Chinese guests would be banned from their new boutique hotel in Paris. This remark has stood out in the broader context where Chinese are the darlings of the world's tourism operators, including UK and Denmark, in what might otherwise be very lean times. Chinese tourists spent a record US\$102 billion overseas in 2012, surpassing Germany and United States as the top spender, according to a recent report by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

For many Chinese tourists, outbound travel is once-in-a-lifetime experience, so no matter how much they can afford, from postcards to luxury goods, souvenirs are a must. This love-hate relationship between Chinese tourists and all the destination countries is somehow ironic: Chinese tourists maintain their unpopularity, despite all the money spent. Somehow this reputation has become so strong that it blinds people from seeing the improvements.

Many young travellers in China now are choosing backpacking over tagging along some package tours. Solo travel is also getting popular. A new generation of travellers with better travel etiquette will gradually replace the older ones, and culture will supersede shopping to be the first thing they seek after in a trip.

With the development of outbound Chinese tourism, problems concerning travel manners will be solved. How long will it take? We don't know yet. But, before loading Chinese tourists with blames, maybe the world should have a little patience and tolerance. After all, Chinese did not travel overseas much until the mid-90's. It is fair to say that we all need time to grow. **by Coco Zheng**

But we got cash!





POLITICS

The opposition's opponent

Caring Hong Kong Power's love for the government

ON the first day of 2013, thousands of people poured into the streets across Hong Kong Island, demanding that chief executive Leung Chun-ying resign over his alleged lying about the illegal structures at his Peak mansion. Pro-democracy and anti-Beijing groups were spirited, and vocal. What was more contentious, albeit less visible, was the presence of fans of Mr Leung and champions of his policies.

For Caring Hong Kong Power, one of the earliest organisers of pro-CY protests, the urge to show their support for the government came from the intimidation of the pan-democrats.

"They oppose every policy the government makes, take it to the street easily and bring turbulence to society," said Mr Ken Chan, a member of the group.

In the illegal structure scandal, the group shunned the protesters' call for the chief executive's resignation.

"Why on earth does he need to step down? He was not harming anybody," said Mr Oscar Lee, another member of the group. He added that Mr Leung would not have invited reporters to inspect his house had he built the structures in question after he moved in.

"The media and pan-democratic groups had blown it way out of proportion. They have mislead people to question Mr Leung's credibility," he said.

Mr Leung is the least popular chief executive since Hong Kong's handover to China

in 1997, according to polls by the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong. However, Mr Peter Tong, co-founder of Caring Hong Kong Power, dismissed the rating as unreliable: "They could just simply survey those who are dissatisfied with the government."

Besides its pro-government stance, the group aims to stand up against pan-democrats, especially those who hold seats as Legislative Councillors, whom it blames for hampering the government's policy-making and disrupting society.

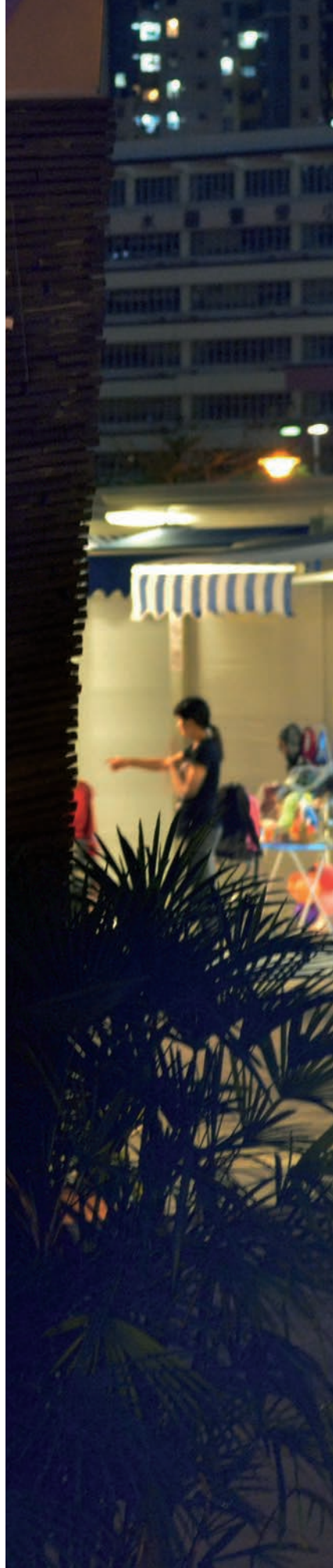
Another pro-government group, Voice of Loving Hong Kong, has a similar political outlook.

"Pan-democratic legislators politicise everything, holding back the city's development in many areas," said Mr Patrick Ko, convenor of the group. "We want Mr Leung to know he is not alone."

He stressed that the job of the chief executive was to maintain stability and boost the economy. He resented the growing anti-Beijing sentiment. "The Chinese government said Hong Kong should enjoy high autonomy, not independence," he said. "Hong Kong people are asking for too much."

The future of the groups is not their concern. They prefer that people volunteer to support their cause and join their campaigns. One of their slogans was: "Fight the pan-democrats, fight the evil remnants of the British Hong Kong Government."

By Eunice Leung



SOCIETY

Bizarre relocation

Relocated bazaar in Tin Shui Wai fails to win customers and keep tenants

ONCE heralded as the saving grace for hawkers in Tin Shui Wai, the government's initiative to regularise long-standing hawking activities in the area is now in tatters as tenants are complaining that the new Tin Sau bazaar has, so far, failed to wow enough visitors.

Poor accessibility and a dire lack of promotional efforts are just some of the problems vendors are fretting over after its opening in February, when the open-air bazaar was expected to get off to a fast start amidst the festive vibes of Lunar New Year.

For many years, Tin Shui Wai residents have complained about the town's urban planning, criticising the government for providing few shopping choices and employment opportunities as the malls in the area were all monopolised by the Link Reit, one of Hong Kong's largest mall operators.

Unable to afford the rent

ate in early mornings to avoid hawker control officers.

In a bid to tackle unauthorised hawking, the government announced a zoning plan last September to legitimise the "dawn market", under which the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals was commissioned to invite application for stalls and co-operate the new Tin Sau Bazaar with the government. As of now, 67 out of the 182 tenants in the new bazaar were hawkers from the "dawn market".

Ms Wong Chiu-ti, a florist at the bazaar, said that it was common to experience days without any customers. She blames the government for the lack of visitors as the lack of promotional activities means few people are aware of the bazaar's existence.

A single mother who goes by the name of Ah Li, who worked as a stall keeper for a welfare organisation at the bazaar, echoed Ms Wong's view, saying that the stall did not even do enough business to cover her salary.

Currently, vendors at the bazaar are required to pay a monthly rent of about \$800 to \$1000. In order to balance their

sheets, many businesses set their daily sales target at \$200, which according to Ah Li, is nearly impossible to reach.

"It's pointless to even think about \$200 as I can't even make \$100 on most days," she said. "My bosses have warned me that if business goes on like this,

"I can't even make \$100 on most days"

AH LI, A SINGLE MOTHER AND A VENDOR AT TIN SAU BAZAAR

at Link Reit malls, many hawkers sold groceries, vegetables and meat, usually at prices that beat supermarkets, along Tin Shui Wai Nullah ten years ago. They gradually formed an unauthorised hawking spot that was known as the "dawn market" as vendors congregated to oper-



they will close the stall down and I would have to find another job.”

However, Yuen Long District councillor Mr Lee-Yuet Man, attributed the lack of customers to another reason.

“I have been there several times but it lacks variety,” he said. “It’s hard to organise a tour there when there are just not enough stalls and items that make it interesting.”

Shops at Tin Sau Bazaar usually sell books, groceries, plants and other dried goods. Meat vendors, which is one of the highlights at the market, are banned as it is illegal to sell meat without certain licenses.

“Since hawkers are now under the supervision of the Tung Wah Group, they can no longer sell meat without a license,” said Mr Lee. “Counterfeit products such as those with Hello Kitty logos on are gone as well.”

Legislative councillor Mr Ip Kin-yuen once questioned the Home Affairs Department during a LegCo meeting on whether such a rigid and inflexible operation model was appropriate for open bazaars which were supposedly designed to bring vibrancy and vitality to the community.

The Director of Home Affairs, however, responded that plans for the bazaar was drawn up based on a “detailed” survey conducted by the Tung Wai Group and Hong Kong Baptist University.

Mr Kong Kin-shing, a Tin Shui Wai Community Alliance social worker, is far from happy with the director’s comments and said that the government must bear the bulk of the blame for what was happening at Tin Sau Bazaar.

“Construction [of the bazaar] first started in November and it was finished by February,” he said. “Planning for the project was insufficient and rushed.”

Mr Kong criticised the government’s short-sightedness, saying that it was unconceivable for any project of this scale to be completed in a little more than three months and that this lack of planning was the main reason business had been so bad.

“The dawn market had existed for many years and was a bottom-up community,” Mr Kong said. “It’s nothing like those generic government projects.” *By Kasim Chan*



EDUCATION

Free tuition

The other side of the lucrative tutoring industry

JUST as Ms Michelle Tse Wing-nam was about to begin her tutoring session with a Form Three pupil, in a McDonald’s, a manager came over and asked them to leave. She was not surprised; she had had similar experiences in other public venues where she gave tutorials. The difference between her and the majority of tutors, though, is that she teaches for free.

Ms Tse is among a growing number of tutors who volunteer to teach secondary students for free. On Hong Kong Volunteer Tutors, a matching site for students and voluntary tutors, secondary school pupils can sign up and specify their area of weakness; the system will then process the information and pair them up with tutors who have the relevant knowledge and experience.

This was how Ms Tse met her student. Since the website’s launch last December, over 700 students have signed up for free tutorials.

The website’s founder, Mr Andy Ho Chun-kin, 28, said he aimed to serve secondary school students from low-income families. He believes getting good grades can help them get into university and lead them to a good job.

“This is not the only way to get rid of

cross-generational poverty, but definitely a mainstream one,” said Mr Ho.

He said poor students often received little help with their studies compared with those from better-off families.

In Hong Kong, 85.5 per cent of secondary school pupils receive some sort of private tutoring, reported in a recent study by

About **181,000**
Children in Hong Kong live below the poverty line

More than **100,000**
Hong Kong students need academic assistance but cannot afford it

Asia Development Bank. The market size for their private tutoring exceeds \$1.9 billion, according to a 2010 survey by Synovate. But it is clear that not every student

can afford it.

Mr Ho estimated that at least 100,000 of people under the age of 18 needed but could not afford academic assistance.

In addition, Mr Ho pointed out that less-able students, in terms of grades, from well-off families who fail to get accepted to local universities may have the chance to study at university overseas, those from poor families, on the other hand, would have no option but to leave school for work.

Hong Kong Volunteer Tutors is not the only organisation that is trying to make tutoring accessible for poor pupils. But they all face the same challenge to provide quality education to students.

Mansyun Association interviews every person that signs up as a tutor. Prospective tutors are assessed in their teaching ability and taught professional ethics. Principal Chan's Free Tutorial Centre sends staff to the first lesson of every student to see if the tutor and student get along and makes follow-up calls to students every two weeks.

Professor Chou Kee-lee, associate head of the Department of Asian and Policy Studies at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, said the volunteer tutoring service could help some needy students but the impact might not be huge enough as the scale was small and unsustainable without stable funding.

In the long term, support from the government would be important to these pupils, he said.

He suggested that the government learn from the Sure Start Programme in the United Kingdom and start helping poor children from preschool, so they would not fall behind at the starting line.

Hong Kong Volunteer Tutors now has a group of 12 members matching tutors with students. Their long term target is to produce a set of quality teaching materials for free download for everyone.

"If a student is determined and industrious enough, a nice set of textbooks could be an invaluable aid for his success in study," said Mr Arthur Lau Chung-yin, one of the members. **By Kathleen Wong**



PEOPLE

Battered lenses

A war-zone photographer's never-ending pursuit of truth

IT was May 1992 and the Thai capital was gripped by a reign of terror following a military coup that overthrew the government. The ensuing days of protest were eventually met with a brutal military crackdown, with the terrifying sound of heavy gunfire permeating the main streets to the city centre.

American-born photojournalist Mr Ira Chaplain, now 60, who was then under contract with New York City-based photographic agency Black Star, found himself unwittingly dragged into a potential civil war.

With government forces shooting indiscriminately into the crowd occupying the vicinity of the Grand Palace at the heart of Bangkok, Mr Chaplain wriggled his way through a slew of injured protestors – among them university students who had been beaten and shot in the leg – to photograph the scenes of violence while staying low to the soot-strewn ground to dodge bullets flying overhead.

Holding a Nikon F4 firmly in his hands, he managed to snap a photo of a police officer clobbering a protestor with his baton and later of a group of people being arrested and taken away in trucks. These photos eventually earned him a bronze award from the American Society of Media Photographer in

1993.

Growing up in New Hampshire, New England in the 70s, Mr Chaplain was first exposed to photojournalism when he saw horrifying images of the Vietnam War in mainstream media and witnessed the impact of photography on American people's views about the war and the world in general.

"It was the photos that people saw that raised the level of people's anger against the government for being involved in this war," he said.

For Mr Chaplain, 1971 was a year of great significance as he turned 18 and was eligible for the draft. American involvement in the Vietnam War was entering its final phase amid preparations for the generation election to be held the following year.

Having been spared from the military service, he volunteered for late Democratic Senator George McGovern, who was running for president, and would ultimately compete with incumbent President Richard Nixon for the top job.

Mr Chaplain's first hands-on experience with photojournalism came when he travelled with Mr McGovern on his campaign trail and sent his photos to local newspapers that did not have their own photographers.



Demonstrators are jubilant in front of a street fire before a government building.



A mixed crowd demonstrates peacefully in Suan Luang near the Royal Palace



Policemen corner a demonstrator and beat him with their batons in a firestation.

Up until then, Mr Chaplain had never thought of being a photojournalist, although he found his passion for photography in high school and would later graduate with a degree in art photography at San Francisco Art Institute in 1977.

After his first job at an audio-visual company, Mr Chaplain moved to Sweden in 1987 to work as a photographer for a local newspaper for the next two years before setting for Thailand in 1989.

Mr Chaplain soon signed a contract with Black Star photo agency and started travelling to Cambodia regularly, where he first experienced the horrors of war and witnessed poverty and human suffering as a result of guerilla warfare.

Cambodia would also bring Mr Chaplain his first life-threatening experience. In 1991, while on a trip to Phnom Penh accompanied by Japanese UN forces, their vehicle was ambushed by nine bandits armed with AK-47 rifles and rocket propelled grenades.

He was later seriously injured during a helicopter crash on his way

to Siem Reap to interview a group of Vietnamese boat dwellers under constant attacks from Khmer Rouge rebels.

Despite having sustained severe injuries to his foot, he insisted on capturing the aftermath of the crash and of the injured people with the help of UN soldiers, before being sent to hospital.

Mr Chaplain was given a merit award from the American Society of Photographers in 1993 for his photo series of the crash.

"For me going to the hospitals in Cambodia with people injured by landmines or rocket attacks was the first thing that had a lot of impact on just the way I view the world, especially as somebody who has never experienced the horrors of war and death," said Mr Chaplain.

In 1994, Mr Chaplain came to Hong Kong from Bangkok to work for a start-up newspaper called Eastern Express. And later during the hand-

over, he would meet his future wife from Singapore at the Foreign Correspondents' Club and would later have two daughters.

Unfortunately, Mr Chaplain's career was halted in 2006 when he was diagnosed with cancer and was put on medication that caused him blurred vision and shaky hands.

Yet his passion for photography did not die. Three years ago, Mr Chaplain picked up the camera again, travelled the city on his motorcycle and co-authored a book with Hong Kong-based writer Ms Nicole Chabot titled *Kowloon: Unknown Territory*, which was published in November last year. The book compiles a series of photos with local residents' accounts of the five districts of Kowloon.

"You can't really know exactly what has been going on before you were there," said Mr Chaplain.

By **Brian Yap**



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LIFESTYLE

Newsmaking exhibition

First of its kind in Asia, Hong Kong News-Expo is set to break ground in three years

AFTER serving local residents for 60 years, Bridges Street Market in Sheung Wan has been embracing a period of stillness since 2011 when its last vendors moved out.

Had it not been for its distinctive Bauhaus style of architecture, the Grade III historic building might have already been torn down to make way for yet another skyscraper, like other old buildings in one of Hong Kong's oldest districts.

But thanks to the government's Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, the building will not only be preserved but also begin a new chapter in 2016 that harps on back to its earliest history.

Unknown to most people of Hong Kong, the building sits on a site where a church used to stand in the 19th century. It was where Dr Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of China's first republic, was baptised in the 1860s while he was studying medicine. The neighbourhood was also where Dr Sun's friends ran newspapers to promote their revolutionary ideas.

This chapter of Hong Kong's history will soon be brought to life again in a project spearheaded by the Journalism Education Foundation, a non-profit organisation dedicated to raising journalistic standards.

Securing the right to use historic building to set up Hong Kong News-Expo, it will usher in an exhibition-cum-education facility with news as

the main theme.

The foundation's project director, Mr Hui Yau-ming, said the idea of setting up Hong Kong News-Expo came from The Newseum in Washington, DC, in the United States, currently the world's only museum with a focus on news.

The expo will showcase the development of the media industry and the city's evolution from a fishing village to an international metropolis through displays of news reports about historic events.

By employing interactive, multi-media and virtual reality technology, visitors will also be able to experience what it is like reporting from a news scene.

Hong Kong News-Expo will also be offering media education programmes to students at all levels to help them understand the operation of the media and the importance of free speech and a free press to the success of Hong Kong.

Mr Hui said the foundation was transforming its blueprint into reality by forming a non-profit company to prepare the exhibits, design the education programmes and renovate the building.

The project director said a major challenge for the project was funding, and the foundation would be approaching media owners and other philanthropists for donations.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust promised to sponsor

students' participation in Hong Kong News-Expo's media education programmes for three years after its opening at \$2.5 million a year, he said.

The money would partly cover the operating costs of the facility, which would also be dependent on proceeds from selling souvenirs and books, rentals, and revenue from news games, he added.

Mr To Yiu-ming, an assistant journalism professor at Hong Kong Baptist University, said while funding remained a major concern for Hong Kong News-Expo, the quality of its content would be vital for its long-term development.

"Whether the News-Expo can be sustained really depends on what it does and how it functions," said Mr To, whose research focus is the region's journalism history.

"I think the News-Expo should remind people to appreciate our freedom of speech, rather than simply functioning as an ordinary museum by entertaining people's curiosity towards antiques," he said.

He added that the foundation would need to constantly update the exhibits to attract visitors, while showing how journalism affected social development. "The eminent tradition of journalism in Hong Kong since the 1950s has been to actively monitor the local community and mainland China. This strong sense of responsibility should be reflected." **By Song Cheng**



*Solo exhibition
by Dale
Frank, at Art
Statements
Gallery*

A cultural renaissance in the wilds of Aberdeen

As a bustling industrial zone in the heydays of Hong Kong's manufacturing industry, Wong Chuk Hang is chock-a-block with dilapidated industrial buildings that envelop this former factory town in abject bleakness.

Yet behind the decrepit façade of these industrial blocks is a powerful vibe that has been relentlessly gaining momentum over the past decade and will soon be fully charged to sweep the forlorn industrial town, if not the entire city, off its feet.

A fast-growing arts and cultural scene fuelled by new art galleries and studios in run-down factory buildings has seen Wong Chuk Hang gradually leaving its desolate past behind and heralding in a brand-new status as a potential creative centre in Hong Kong.

Thanks to its high availability of cheap commercial and office spaces for rent coupled with easy access to the city centre by public transportation, Wong Chuk Hang has successfully attracted entrepreneurs from all walks of life and nationalities to set up their businesses there.

Mr Dominique Perregaux, 41, is the



owner of Art Statements Gallery located in Wong Chuk Hang and has been dealing in Western and Chinese contemporary and modern art since he came to Hong Kong nearly a decade ago from Switzerland.

Having relocated his art business twice since opening his gallery in Soho in 2004, Mr Perregaux set sights on Wong Chuk Hang few years ago after considering it a prime location for his business and his overseas clientele.

He said, "I looked for a large space and the only location that could give me such large venue, and close to Central – Wong Chuk Hang is only 15 minutes from Central – was Wong Chuk Hang."

Mr Perregaux added that, compared to Wong Chuk Hang, Fo Tan – a former industrial quarter in the New Territories – was relatively more remote and harder to reach by public transportation to art collectors, most of whom resided on or frequented Hong Kong Island.

Mr Stanley Wong, chef and owner of kitchen studio Culinart in Wong Chuk Hang, has been providing catering services to art fairs and exhibitions in the town while offering private dining and cooking lessons in his studio in recent years.

He said that a majority of his clients came from Pok Fu lam, Central and other upscale neighbourhoods in the Western district, and Wong Chuk Hang being a major thoroughfare in southern Hong Kong with relatively cheap commercial properties for rent made it a prime location for business.

Having said that, the rapid commercialisation of Wong Chuk Hang could see its nascent arts and cultural scene gradually fade away in the next few years with rents expected to soar, thus triggering a mass exodus of art dealers and gallery owners in search of unspoiled land.

With the city's MTR South Island Line due for completion in 2015, a number of major local real-estate developers – such as Swire Properties, Cheung Kong and Henderson Land – has already received clearance for redeveloping industrial sites along Wong Chuk Hang Road into hotels as well as office buildings.

Wong Chuk Hang District Councillor Mr Tsui Yuen-wa pointed out that the government had been very reluctant to intervene in the urban development of Wong Chuk Hang, granting real-estate

developers as well as owners of industrial buildings absolute autonomy to decide when and where to carry out their construction projects.

As a means to safeguard the budding art culture against commercialisation, Mr Tsui has proposed that the government incorporate in land grants issued to private companies for commercial development an additional clause stipulating that all future landlords must designate a fixed amount of gross floor area – be it 10,000 or 20,000 square feet – for art galleries or workshops.

He added that, since buildings in Wong Chuk Hang had been limited to around 45 stories or 140 metres in height, it would be reasonable for the government to demand that three or four stories of commercial blocks be designated for art businesses.

Furthermore, despite being one of the key trading art hubs in Asia, Hong Kong lags behind other modern metropolises in the region, such as Tokyo, Seoul and even Shanghai, in terms of the overall level of public exposure to and knowledge of contemporary and modern art.

Mr Perregaux said, "More fairs, galleries and museum will of course improve the knowledge and interest of people for art so I can only hope that people will finally show more interest and refine their taste when they chose to get involved in art."

Art Basel HK was founded in 2007 with an aim to promote art and culture in Hong Kong by inviting international auction houses and art galleries to hold art sales as well as to open up overseas branches in the city, thereby bringing artistic minds together.

Mr Perregaux argued, "In Hong Kong there are very few museums and they do not have the dynamism and profile of museums in Japan, Korea, Singapore and Mainland China. The art appreciation and understanding in Hong Kong is also very low."

With a hotchpotch of arts and haute cuisine establishments plying their respective trade in an ever-evolving Wong Chuk Hang, there is an abundance of untapped potential that could transform the burgeoning town into a fully-fledged cultural hub. *By Brian Yap*

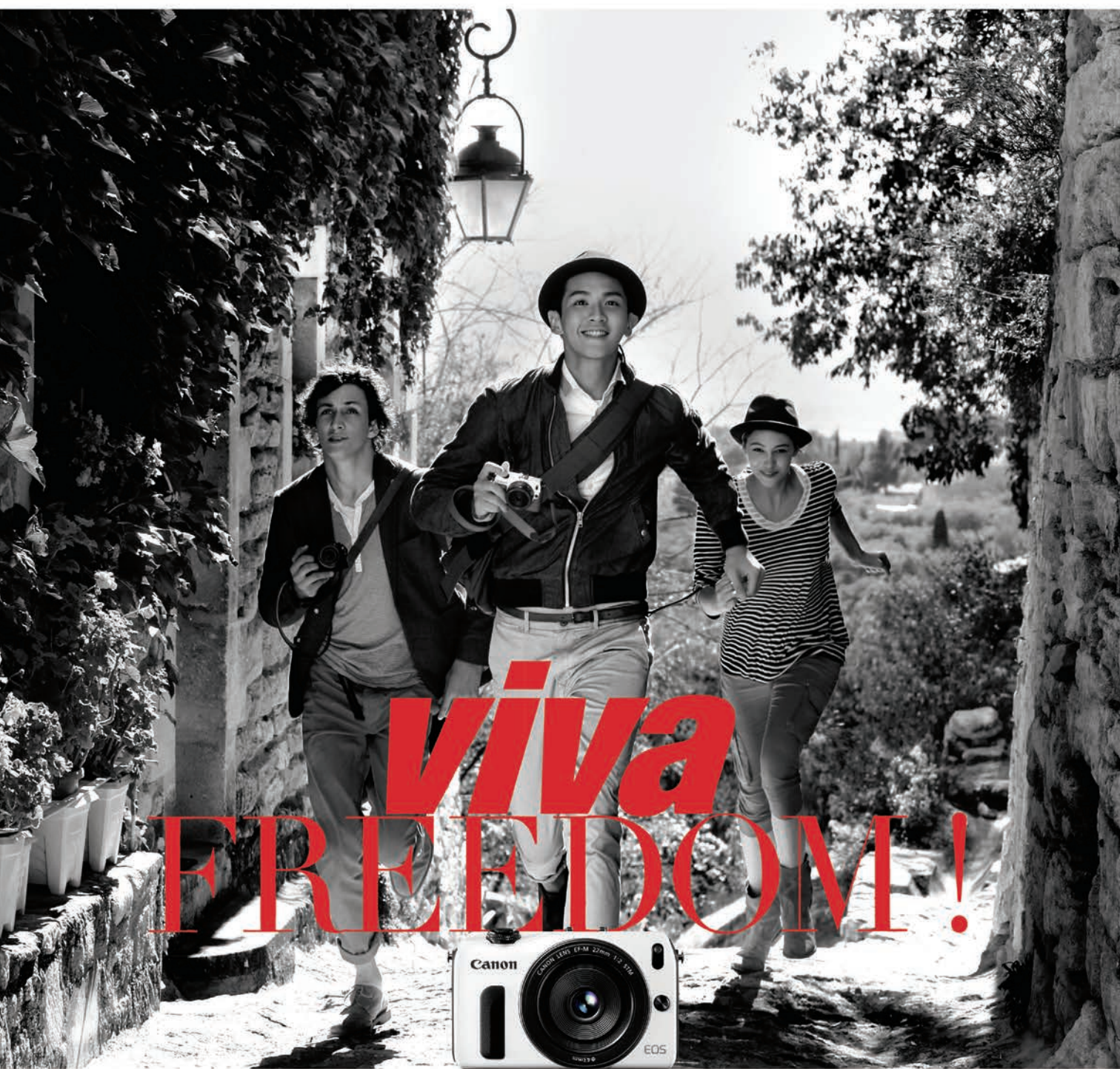


*An office building
stands in stark
contrast to the
adjoining industrial
block, a sign of rapid
commercialisation
in Wong Chuk Hang.*



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