



# THE YOUNG REPORTER *magazine*

October 2015

**Umbrella movement  
activists to run in District  
Council Election**  
P10

**Cross-border students  
struggle with language and  
time**  
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**Across decades, cultures  
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## Letter from the Editor

One year ago, the unexpected takeover of Occupy Central by students led to the largest scale civil disobedience movement in the city's history.

In the past year, the Legislative Council vetoed the political reform proposal; Hong Kong's press and academic freedom are being challenged; Hong Kong's faith in rule of law has been shaken; student allies have fallen apart.

With political debates consistently making airtime and front pages around the world, Hong Kong has entered a post-2047 discussion of what's next?

As the generation that grew up with this debate, we went to the 1st anniversary of the Umbrella Movement looking to see how the city has changed and how young people are preparing to join

the political scene through their first District Council election in November.

We have seen that the debates have not stopped the people in Hong Kong from caring for the city. The nostalgia for old items in communities, the love for local-culture infused comedy shows and the appreciation for modest architectural aesthetics are not only still there but growing strong.

The Young Reporter is returning after the summer with more timely information online. Check out our website at Tyr.hk and our social media platforms for more quality content.

The District Council election is just around the corner and TYR aims to provide the public service of keeping our readers informed.

**Crystal Tse**  
Editor

# THE YOUNG REPORTER magazine

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Volume 48 No. 1  
2015

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Previous issue explores the situation of love hotels in one of Hong Kong's most expensive districts, Kowloon Tong.

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# One Moment

*Yellow umbrellas blossom again at Admiralty September 28, on the first anniversary of the 79-day Occupy Movement in 2014.*

By **Fred Lai**



# SAVE OUR TREES





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藥



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“We have affection for the trees.

The government should have consulted us before removing these plants so hastily,” said Tsang Yi-ping, who has lived in the neighbourhood for more than 20 years.

On Aug. 7, Highways Department officials removed a 600 year-old tree that was attached to a stonewall on Bonham Road.

Mrs Tsang was one of many local residents who were upset that the tree was gone with no prior notice, except for a note posted in their

building two hours before the tree was axed.

The government faced a barrage of criticism by local citizens, environmental groups and District Council members. They questioned why no one was consulted.

In 1996, a total of 1,275 stonewall trees are rooted in masonry walls all over Hong Kong. The six plants on Bonham Road maintained by the Highways Department were the largest of the stonewall trees.

In 2013, the department realised

that some of the roots had become detached and some of the trunks had hollowed out. The department proposed nine ways to remedy the problem, none of which was thought to be feasible. The government then concluded that they had to remove the trees before anyone was hurt.

But on July 22, one of the trees on Bonham Road collapsed, injuring two people and damaging a truck that was passing by. Inspectors later found there were 16 cracks on the tree. Worried about the approach of what was supposed to be the

most severe typhoon of the year, the Highways Department decided to remove the plant as a precaution.

Wong Kin-shing, Councillor for Central and Western District received an email from the Highways Department that the tree would be gone, half an hour before it was chopped down. He thought that was disrespectful for the council since they had no time for discussion. Normally, District Councils are given 10 to 14 days to discuss any proposal before coming

to any decisions.

“The government did not submit any report about the problems with the tree. I think they were jittery with an imaginary fear due to the sudden collapse of tree T2,” he said.

The Hong Kong government has adopted an integrated approach to tree management under which different departments are responsible for vegetation, including trees, on different plots of land.

Trees at Victoria Park, for example, are maintained by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department while the Highways Department was responsible for the plants on Bonham Road.

The Tree Management Office (TMO) under the Development Bureau was set up in 2013 to ensure effective implementation of the policy, but it has no right to interfere in the decisions of individual department on tree maintenance.

“The TMO is just an administration office without decision-making power,” said Charmaine Leung Sze-ming, information officer of the Development Bureau.

As a result, there is no standard practice on how to care for the trees.

Ms Leung added that the TMO only managed the 483 trees listed on a Register of Old and Valuable Trees. That’s less than 5 per cent of the 10,742 government marked trees in Hong Kong. The trees removed on Aug. 7 were not on the list.

Mr Wong was concerned with the lack of transparency in tree management policy will mean the loss of more trees.

“If the government informs the public of its decisions and get them involved, then the opinions of different stakeholders might help officials come up with better policies. There is then a better chance that the trees can be kept instead of being removed unnecessarily,” Mr Wong said.

Community Surveillance was one of the highlighted sections on

the TMO website. “That means members of the public can help to monitor and report problematic trees,” a TMO spokesman explained.

The Legislative Council has been calling for laws to protect trees since 2009. In a statement, a TMO official said the government held a “prudent and open” attitude and that the current priority is to improve the professionalism of tree management.

The day after the tree was removed, people gathered where the tree once



stood and tied paper flowers and ribbons to the stumps and roots on the wall.

A month later, people hung Chinese couplets on the stone wall.

Roy Tam Hoi-pong is the Chief Executive of a local environmental group Green Sense. He considered the fallen trees as “icons and symbols” of the district. “Citizens are in a very passive position, as they have no say in the fate of the trees,” he said.

Mr Tam has received a growing number of complaints about tree removal over the past two months. But he doubts if local people will become more involved in protecting trees. “Environmental protection campaigns takes time, something that an economy driven city cannot afford,” he said.

“I have seen various memorials and protests at the site. But those will soon die down. This is Hong Kong.” He said.







*Residents sign up for a campaign to call for escalators in the estate's shopping centre at Wong's booth.*

One year on since the Umbrella Movement and Hong Kong is no closer to universal suffrage than organisers of the campaign had hoped. But what it might have achieved is to stir up local interest in politics. Kenny Wong Chun-kit is among Hong Kong's new aspiring politicians.

The 28-year-old insurance agent founded Youngspiration along with a group of his friends who share his political philosophy. Mr Wong told TYR that he did not care much about local politics before the Umbrella Movement.

"During the Umbrella Movement, everyone in the occupied area supported and served each other. That's a picture very different from the 'Hong Kong' we used to know, where people were distant and unfamiliar with each other. The occupied area was a real community and that's how Hong Kong should be," Mr Wong said.

Mr Wong said that the Umbrella Movement motivated him to make Hong Kong a better place. He and his friends formed Youngspiration, in order to run in the District Council Election in November.

They want to strive for resources and power that should belong to Hong Kongers from local people's perspectives. They want to encourage local political participation and seek social justice.

They said that the seven police officers who beat an unarmed participant in the Umbrella Movement was a typical incident that showed Hong Kong police is abusing its power. They have not even received any just judgement from the police force and the court.

**"In the past, the district councils were heavily criticised for not using their resources well... the young parties should let voters know how they might change the status quo,"**

**Dr. Benson Wong Wai-Kwok**  
**Assistant Professor of Government and International Studies**  
**Hong Kong Baptist University**



## POLITICS

# ***Umbrella Movement activists to run in District Council Election***

**Can the young activists make changes to the political spectrum in the future?**

Other political groups that have formed since the Umbrella Movement include North of the Rings and Kowloon East Community. They too will compete for seats in the Districts Council Election in Yau Tsim Mong, Kwun Tong and the North Districts.

Apart from running in the election, these young political groups sometimes take their political aspirations on to the streets. Hong Kong Indigenous organised youngsters in anti-parallel trading protests. Some of the members called for Hong Kong independence.

“We welcome all kinds of methods, as long as they are effective in fighting for more resources for Hongkongers. The anti-parallel trading protests successfully forced the government to get rid of multiple entry permits for mainland visitors and limit the visas to one trip per week only,” said Mr Wong.

But fighting for independence is not on his party’s agenda. Neither do they think the idea is feasible nor will it gain local support.

“Most people in Hong Kong do not understand the unique values of Hong Kong. They have been brainwashed by the self-censored media and think that Hong Kong will die without the Chinese mainland. It is important for us to first empower Hongkongers, make them understand the political reality and build their own points of view. They can then eventually form a civil society in Hong Kong. Only

then can we talk about striving for more autonomy for Hong Kong or independence,” Mr Wong said.

Dr Benson Wai-Kowk Wong, Assistant Professor of Government and International Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University believes the participation of these new groups in the District Council Election is good for local politics, though it remains to be seen how effective they might be.

“Both the pan-democratic and the pro-establishment camp have rooted social ties in the territories throughout the years, and that did not change much after the Umbrella Movement. The young parties cannot compete with that,” said Dr Wong.

Mr Chan Siu-tong, a current District Council member from the pro-establishment camp in Yau Tsim Mong Districts, said that one of the young parties’ weaknesses in running for election is insufficient resources, for example in reaching out to local residents. He also believes that in his constituency, the young parties are joining the election just to instill a sense of belonging among local people, but they are not there to serve the residents. Such attitude may not be acceptable to most voters.

Mr Wong’s response: if young politicians only wanted to promote their aspirations, they would not have put in so much effort in starting projects since February to serve local residents.

Dr Wong said that if the new politicians want to win seats, they need to bring new political insight to the community.

“Although districts councils are always considered to be not politically influential, they do have a lot of resources. In the past, the district councils were heavily criticised for not using their resources well, for example, for building a shelter that does not allow people to stand inside. The young parties should let the voters know how they might change the status quo,” said Dr Wong.

Mr Wong agreed that the current district councils might not be effective in serving the public.

“They should be actively collecting the residents’ opinions. How could they know the needs of the residents if they rarely meet them?” said Mr Wong.

Mr Wong is planning to seize the seat in Kwai Tsing District in the District Council Election. He is setting up a booth in the neighbourhood to listen to residents’ voices in the morning and evening. Apart from improving the facilities in the neighbourhood, he is also planning to set up a dawn market and a board game counter. He wants to continue to enhance cohesion among residents and give them a sense of belonging even if he loses at the poll.

“We, Hongkongers should do what we feel is right. Be true to our hearts and don’t make a big deal of the election results.”

## BUSINESS

# HelloReporter: matching journalists with start ups

An online community builds a mutually beneficial relationship between journalists and start ups

Entrepreneur, Tim Chan, had a tough time trying to get the media to promote his new company. “I was hoping for some media coverage and then a thought come to mind: maybe I can create a medium to help others like me,” Mr Chan said.

He came up with the idea of an app matching journalists with start ups. The result: HelloReporter, a platform where journalists can find potential interviewees quickly.

Start up companies which want media coverage pay a subscription fee to the app operator. Journalists looking for companies to interview would enter the kind of business they are searching for on the app. HelloReporter then matches their search with the list of companies that have subscribed to their service.

Launched in May 2015, over 50 companies and more than 40 reporters from six media organizations have already signed up. HelloReporter is one of the youngest startup companies in the Empowering Young Entrepreneurs Program run by Google and the Center for Entrepreneurship of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The app only has six members of staff, but they are hoping to expand. Tim Chan is going hire coaches to train his staff and some of them will go on an exchange program in Taiwan.



“We will help to organize pitch competitions in Hong Kong,” Mr Chan said. The idea is to teach his staff how to promote subscribers’ companies so that they can attract journalists’ attention on the app. Mr Chan is now looking into providing public relations services for start ups as well.

“Both my partner and I have worked in PR so we know how the industry works,” he said.

“We are one of the few companies in Hong Kong which specializes in this topics,” said the 31-year-old Mr Chan. HelloReporter now has a Shenzhen based office for programmers.

However, Visiting Senior Lecturer at the Department of Journalism at Hong Kong Baptist University, Ms Jenny Lam Chor-Kan doubts whether HelloReporter will work because of ethical reasons.

“This is not how the Hong Kong media find news stories,” she said. “When reporters want to find startup companies, they can always go to certain free platforms, for example, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.” she said.

“Finding interviews through a paid service is ethically unacceptable.”

As much as it might be convenient for junior reporters, Ms Lam would not recommend her students use this platform. It would be bad practice for reporters in training,” she explained

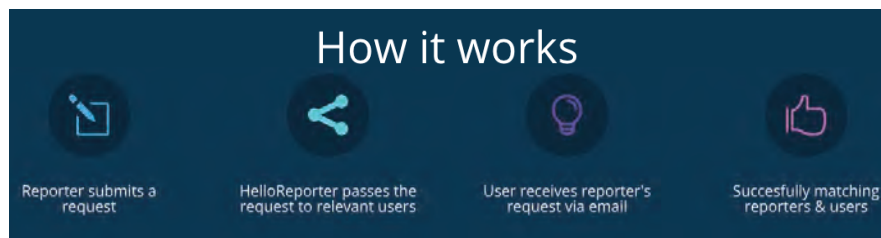
“The article would be an advertorial, not journalism,” she continued.

But Mr Geffron Au Yeung Chi-Hin, an Editorial Assistant at Up2U HK thinks otherwise. “It will save me a lot of time,” said Au Yeung, “I won’t need to discover different stories. There will be many ideas I can write about.”

Au Yeung would like to try HelloReporter’s service, especially when it is free for journalists. But he added that HelloReporter is relatively new and he believed it will take some time before journalists will get used to their services. He fears the app will not attract enough reporters.

“For more interesting and unique stories, I will have to dig into different fields anyway,” Au Yeung said. He thinks HelloReporter will only work for articles of a commercial nature.

“I will give it half a year,” said Au Yeung.



By **Candice Tang**  
Edited by **Joanne Lee**



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***editor@tyr.hk***

*The Young Reporter  
run by HKBU journalism students since 1969*



SOCIETY

## *Tourism is up in Hong Kong, but where's the money?*

More mainland Chinese tourists is the answer, a lawmaker says.



**“Opening up more Individual Visit Scheme Cities is only palliative,”**

**Wong Wang-to,  
North District Councillor**





*The jewelry shop owned by Mr. Law Kit-fung in Central has lost their sales in this year.*

To stimulate the economy, more mainland Chinese cities should be opened to the Individual Visit Scheme to attract money-spending tourists, Liberal Party lawmaker Vincent Fang Kang said after a dinner with Chief Executive CY Leung in late August.

The retail industry in Hong Kong declined by 2.8 per cent year-on-year, according to July figures from the Hong Kong government. This is despite a 12 percent increase in tourists to Hong Kong, close to 61 million visitors, in 2014.

Mainland China accounted for three quarters of total arrivals with the majority coming under the Individual Visit Scheme as same-day visitors. And so far this year, the number of mainland Chinese tourists has grown by nearly 5 percent.

The Individual Visit Scheme was first started in July 2003,

with 49 mainland Chinese cities participating, including Guangdong province.

Residents of participating cities can visit Hong Kong as individuals, instead of the once-required group tour, for not more than seven days. Residents can re-apply for the permit after expiration without any quota.

Law Kit-fung, a jewellery shop owner in Central whose customers are mostly from the mainland, said, his sales have declined this year. "It [Business] is highly affected by the economy of Hong Kong and China," he said, adding that restrictions on parallel trading could also be a reason.

"There are many other external reasons that caused the decline of the retail industry, such as a strong US dollar and weak RMB," Mo Pak-hung, associate professor of economics at Hong Kong Baptist

University said. "We can do nothing about it."

"Before opening up more Individual Visit Scheme cities, we have to soften the resentment of Hong Kong against Mainlanders," said Dr Mo. "Otherwise, opening up more cities will worsen the image of Hong Kong tourism as more protests will go on."

"Opening up more Individual Visit Scheme Cities is only palliative," North District Councilor Wong Wang-to said. "In solving the tourism slump, the government should modify the tourism policies, such as developing more rival spots."

Opening up more cities could also intensify the already touchy parallel trading issue, he added. But if more tourists came by airplane, then "they will go to other districts apart from North District which can lighten the pressure," he said.

By **Flavia Wong**  
Edited by **Joey Hung**

## SOCIETY

# Cross-border students struggle with language and time

A long commute keeps mainland Chinese students from participating in school activities in Hong Kong.

It's a typical summer morning at the Futian Checkpoint between Shenzhen and Hong Kong — crowded, loud and sweltering. It's 6.15 am, just 15 minutes before the gate opens, but hundreds of people are already waiting.

A flock of primary-school children stand in line quietly. Some of them spend up to two hours commuting from their homes in Shenzhen to their schools in Hong Kong.

Liu Jilong, a grade-five student, has been commuting on a daily basis for more than one-and-a-half years. His school finishes at 3.30 pm, and he arrives home around 5.30 pm.

When Jilong gets home, he only has time for homework and dinner before bed, says Feng Guangyin, Jilong's mother.

"We are the lucky ones who live near the border," says Ms Feng. "For students who live even further, like the Baoan District, they are more overwhelmed."

More than 40 percent of cross-border students don't participate in any kind of after-school activities, limiting exposure to Hong Kong culture, reported Wong Tick-ming, executive director of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, in research published last year.

Tu Yunfei, whose parents are both mainland Chinese citizens, attends an elementary school in Tai Po, in which more than half the students are cross-border pupils.

"We can only get her to participate in the extracurricular classes offered by mainland organizations. It is cheaper and more convenient," says Yunfei's mother, Fu Zhen. "Hong Kong culture...maybe she doesn't even know what it means exactly."

Research shows that communication and interaction with Hong Kong residents helps to build up a stronger sense of belonging for non-locals.

"My son almost has no opportunity to communicate with local students. He only gets on well with the students who ride together on the same bus on the way to school," Ms Feng says.

Most of the students in her son's school are cross-border students, she says. "It seems that the government intentionally allocates the students from the mainland together to some schools," she says.

Language is another barrier for cross-border students. Guo Yuling from Caritas Yuen Long Chan Chun Ha Secondary School still finds it difficult to communicate with local students in her fourth-year class in Hong Kong.

"Sometimes it's hard to communicate with them in Cantonese. The first two years I came here, I rarely hung out with the local students," Yuling says.

Jilong uses simplified Chinese characters in the mainland, but in Hong Kong he has to use traditional characters.

"Compared to Cantonese, traditional Chinese is even tougher," Ms Feng says. "It's demanding for him to switch to another character system...I find that he performs poorly when he works with traditional characters, but he needs to endure to be a qualified Hong Kong citizen."

*More than a half of the students at the Caritas Yuen Long Chan Chun Ha Secondary School are cross-border students.*







Over 6,100 cross-border pupils registered in Futian Port since 2013.

Yunfei doesn't do well in English. "It takes time," says Yunfei's mother Ms Fu.

Hong Kong Localism Power and Civic Passion staged a protest against cross-border students in May. They say pupils from the mainland deny opportunities to locals.

"Hong Kong should have its own population policy," says Wong Yeung-tat, founder of Civic Passion. "Children born to mainland parents have led to an influx of cross-border students. This has robbed Hong Kong children of schooling opportunities. We believe the government should take this seriously."

"I can only tell my son when he asks me about the phenomenon that it's unavoidable. It's true that we occupy the resources of the local people to some extent without paying tax," said Liu Jingdong, father of a cross-border student.

Ms Fu says she and her daughter were once questioned by border authorities because they cross everyday.

"My daughter asked me why we are unwelcome if our behavior is justifiable. I just don't know how to answer," Ms Fu says. However, she is glad that the teachers and fellow parents aren't that aggressive.

Many primary schools arrange activities in Hong Kong on weekends specifically for cross-border students but Feng doesn't allow her son to participate.

"They play more and may develop stronger attachment to Hong Kong, but less time and attention will be spent on their study," says Ms Feng, who worries that her son might fail to be accepted into a public secondary school. "We have no choice. After all, he is nominally a Hong Kong citizen."

By **Terrance Zheng**  
Edited by **Catherine Chen**

## PEOPLE

## The reality inside a rainbow concrete jungle

Canadian photographer discovers Hong Kong's colourful buildings and dreary lives of those residing in them

One of Mr David Elliott's collections "Hong Kong in Living Colours" was displayed at the "Patterns of Living" exhibition earlier this year.

He climbs the roofs of public housing estates, scales fire escapes in industrial buildings and clambers along bamboo scaffolds, just to capture the painted facades for his artwork "Hong Kong in Living Colours". He is David Elliott, a 42-year-old Canadian documentary fine art photographer, whose work is displayed at the "Patterns of Living" exhibition.

"I would like people to appreciate and celebrate the history of this beautiful city," said Mr Elliott. "And to provoke bewilderment in the audience: what are people's lives like behind these radiant facades?"

His collection features old buildings, the exteriors of which are painted by those who dwell within. Every image

resembles a cube -- Mr Elliott's unique style.

Mr Elliott was a model and an actor before he became a photographer. His previous jobs enabled him to travel around the world and that's how he gained inspiration for photography. The work of his Chinese great grandfather, also a photographer, have nurtured Mr Elliott's passion in cameras and films since 2008.

Captivated by the ever-changing landscapes of Southeast Asia and Himalaya, he left Canada and decided to stay in the East.

"Hong Kong is such a fascinating city with a stark contrast between the old and new," he said. "Since

I'm half Chinese, it has also given me a chance to learn more about my culture."

He explained that his philosophy was to "take something that is old and give a modern twist to it". He tries to do also as an art collector and documentary maker..

"I want something that when you look at it, you will be drawn into it," he added. "I then want the viewers to start looking at it more closely and reflect about themselves." His latest subjects are the Pearl of the East's coloured buildings.

On putting together the "Patterns of Living" exhibition, he said it was the people behind those colourful walls who shocked him. He couldn't



believe that while some families live in spacious apartments that measure thousands of square feet, while others cram into six-by-six feet cage homes.

“Buildings are often photographed in Hong Kong, but we wanted our visitors to appreciate a different aspect of Hong Kong, by looking at something they see all the time,” said the host of the exhibition and Director of the Picture This Gallery, David Bailey.

Coming from Ladysmith, a small town in British Columbia in Canada, Mr Elliott said one single estate in Hong Kong would be enough to fit in everyone from his hometown. But the question

he asks is “does fitting everyone in cages like this guarantee living quality and happiness?”

Irene Ng, a visitor to the gallery, said the artwork made her empathise with people living in those buildings captured by Mr Elliott.

“They seem to be dragged down into a deep hole and cannot turn around for the rest of their lives,” she said. “I know that more than three million people live in public housing estates in Hong Kong, and that is almost half of the city’s population.”

The photographer wanted to tell his audience that although wealth

does not equal happiness, the income gap in Hong Kong is so big that some elderly people in their 80s have to work for a living by selling rubbish. Housing problem is the underlying theme of this set of artwork.

“I want my photos to be a documentary of this important piece of history,” he said.

By **Sharon Shi**  
Edited by **Nathaniel Suen**



*With his unique style, Mr David Elliot expresses his love for Hong Kong's urban landscape through image*



ARTS&CULTURE

# Across decades, cultures and languages, the laughing matters

Standup comedy shows infused with local culture stuns audience and challenges performers.

Buried in a dark, crowded room on a tiny stage in a Soho basement is a single wooden stool and a microphone. A figure appears and within minutes, using only words, the room is lit up with laughter.

Stand-up comedy in Hong Kong has been around for two decades, though mostly moving from restaurant to bar with no permanent home and only English-speaking performers. But now, with an increase in venues and interest, local comedians are carving a place into the heart of the city with bilingual content to match. The rise in multicultural comedy shows has been compared to the potential of the diversifying US stand-up market in the mid-to-late 20th century.

"The future of stand-up comedy is in Asia," said Jami Gong, owner of the first permanent-venue comedy club in Hong Kong, TakeOut Comedy Club. "We've got an untapped market."

Mr Gong is also in charge of Hong Kong's ninth annual International Comedy Competition running shows throughout September this year, creating a chance for local artists to compete against international performers and showcasing Hong Kong home-grown talent.

TakeOut isn't the first place to catch a comedy show in Hong Kong. In the 1990s, the Hong Kong Comedy Club featured western expats and overseas comedians at the now-closed Godown bar in Admiralty. It was taken over by Australian John Moorhead in 1994 and

turned into The Punchline Comedy Club, which is still going strong. Other restaurants and bars around the city regularly feature comedy acts, but it was TakeOut that established Hong Kong's first comedy-only venue.

Hong Kong's comedy audience adds an element of the unpredictable. On any given night, viewers can be from around the world: locals, tourists, expats, of any age and any background, all looking for a good laugh. It's a challenging demographic.

Many experiences are universally funny: family, relationships, Comedic material often comes from everyday life, playing on tiny observations that are taken for granted. Stand-up comedians tell the audience something they already know in a novel way.

Mr Vivek Mahbubani  
Photo courtesy of Phil Nee Photography



Mr Christopher Coleman



Mr Jami Gong  
Photo courtesy of Long from Kenneth Lim Photography







*Roy Wood Jr. opens the 9th Annual Hong Kong International Comedy Festival.  
Photo courtesy of Long from Kenneth Lim Photography*

“It’s funny, because it’s true,” said Michael Dorsher, full-time comedian and creator of local stand-up show calendar Comedy.hk. “Usually we’re laughing because [the jokes] are grounded in some sort of reality.”

Sometimes the jokes are about obvious things about Hong Kong that can be observed after only a few days in the city.

“As a traveller, you can go to a local comedy show and really learn about the place,” said Mr Dorsher. “How does the society that lives here see itself? What do they find weird?”

Hong Kong’s bilingual culture contributes to the popularity of bilingual comedy shows. Some performers are able to perform in both English and Cantonese.

“Some of the [jokes] work both ways, but there are a lot of unique jokes that only work for Cantonese locals,” said Vivek Mahbubani, a performer and previous winner of Hong Kong’s International Comedy Competition in both the English and Cantonese categories.

Though a western audience generally knows what to expect at a stand-up show, many are “comedy virgins” in Hong Kong, having just discovered the local live scene. But Cantonese shows, like the language, are more difficult with an audience that is harder to impress.

Mr Mahbubani said. “With Cantonese shows, some people come down with a really challenging mindset. I enjoy the guy that comes in with his arms crossed. If I can make him laugh, then I know I’ve been successful,” he said.

Mr Dorsher said that an unexpected audience response adds challenges to performers, but also means each show is unique. “You have to be flexible when you’re on stage. Although most of it is prepared, the performance is a conversation, an indirect discussion,” he said.

But for improviser Chris Coleman, with the improvisational comedy group People’s Liberation Improv, unpredictability is what he enjoys most. In improv, a group works from an idea and build a unique performance on the spot. “It bored me to always do the same material,” Mr Coleman said.

“It’s a relief of daily stress, where it’s okay to be silly and ridiculous,” he added.



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Street culture no longer a subculture?

Hong Kong attempts to answer the call for more public space for artists.

At the southern-west tip of the Kowloon peninsula on a day in mid-September, 5,000 visitors wandered around the newly opened Nursery Park in the West Kowloon Cultural District.

“Freespace Happening”, for the second year, will be held on the second Sunday of each month until March. Organised by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority with Youth Outreach as a partner, the event will showcase movies, music, a handicraft market, workshops and sport activities.

The event may be an answer to the recent opinion that art performers lack public space, including the call for young people to have a place to develop their talents.

Mr Nicolas Wong shows the crowd what street workout is.



Many local performers are not shy to take part in the event.



“The event provides a larger stage for talented teenagers to perform what our society defines as ‘subcultures’ or ‘non-mainstream cultures’,” said Ted Tam Chung Hoi, the Assistant Executive Director (Outreaching Services) of Youth Outreach.

Nicolas Wong Wai-fung, 22, performed a street workout using urban structures to exercise. Mr Wong won the WSWCF Street Workout Championship in Hong Kong this year and also won in the organization’s final in Taiwan.

“The art of street workout has changed me to be a better person with confidence and be keen on doing exercise,” he said.





*Members of School of Hip-hop offer an opportunity for kids to dance together.*

Nevertheless, “it takes time to develop arts and cultures,” said Low Kee-hong, Head of Artistic Development (Theatre) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority. He hopes the free outdoor space can attract talented performers.

The event includes a market with stalls for rent, “I would like to use this public-free space to meet some new friends,” said Jason Tsang, who rented a stall and set up an IQ questions corner to attract visitors.

“Although I need to pay \$150 to rent a stall, it is still worthwhile as this is a valuable platform to promote arts and to share my artworks with people,” said Cherry Yue, a design student from the Hong Kong Design Institute.

Burla Poon, a visitor, said she enjoyed the opportunity to experience art, as she doesn’t often have the opportunity.

“Other than spending a family day here, the event allows people to know more about and having higher

acceptance towards different arts,” she said.

“Arts should not be categorized as “subculture” or “non-mainstream” as they all require substantial trainings which should be respected. The development of performing arts can move forwards through the elements of imagination and dreaming,” said Mr Low.

By **Jonathan Chan**  
Edited by **Thomas Chan**



*Buskers can enjoy doing what they love while audience stop by and share the joy.*





INTERNATIONAL

# *Singapore paints the town red for 50*

**O**n August 9, Singaporeans crowded downtown to celebrate their 50th National Day, the small island city-state a sea of red, the color of Singapore's flag. "Excited" and "proud" were the words most used to describe their feelings.

Singapore gained independence from Malaysia in 1965, after race riots between ethnic Chinese and Malay killed dozens. Not all Singaporeans were joyful over being expelled from Malaysia's federation, but Singapore went on to build a strong, successful economy.

"The National Day gives my family a feeling that we are playing an essential role in building our country," said Tan Soo-ling, who joined the parade. "So my family chose not to go abroad but celebrate in our own country."

The government spared no expense in encouraging attendance. Singapore's two main transportation systems provided free bus and train services on National Day.

The event, themed after the national anthem "Majulah Singapura," was held in the Padang field, a public site since 1819. Live streaming was broadcast on screens around town.

The aerial display began after the tribute to the late Lee Kwan-yew. Twenty F-16s flew in a "50" formation and another display showed off an array of the Republic of Singapore Air Force's assets, including the last F-15.

At 8pm, fireworks exploded in a variety of shapes across Marina Bay along a 300m platform, ending with a salute to the nation.

By **Anna Tang**  
Edited by **Joanna Wong**









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## PHOTO ESSAY

## A haunted legend

A goofy month offers a great opportunity for opera tropes to perform

**I**n Hong Kong, Halloween parties with revelers in terrifying makeup and flamboyant costumes are all the rage for one night. But the Yu Lan Ghost Festival, also called the Chinese Halloween, lasts an entire month.

This year the Ghost Festival fell in August and September and is said to mark the period when the gates to hell are unlocked and hungry ghosts roam the earth.

The 1.2 million-strong Chiu Chow community in Hong Kong is linked to the history of the festival. They pay respects to hungry ghosts and spirits with opera performances and special dishes.

Chiu Chow opera is staged in more than 30 places in Asia, according to the Chinese Opera Information Center run by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

New Hangjiang Chiu Chow Opera trope, which has been performing for more than 20 years, is one of five troupes invited from China to perform during the one-month-long festival.

Four years ago, the Yu Lan Ghost Festival was put on China's intangible cultural heritage list, falling into the category of 'social practices, rituals and festive events' set by UNESCO.

However, with fewer young people involved in the annual festival in past years, Mr Lee, a middle-aged Chiu Chow father, worries about the tradition. "Even my children are not willing to come, but I can't help," he said. He hopes the ghosts will still have someone to haunt in the future.

By **Juliena Wu**

Edited by **Christy Leung**















POST-OC

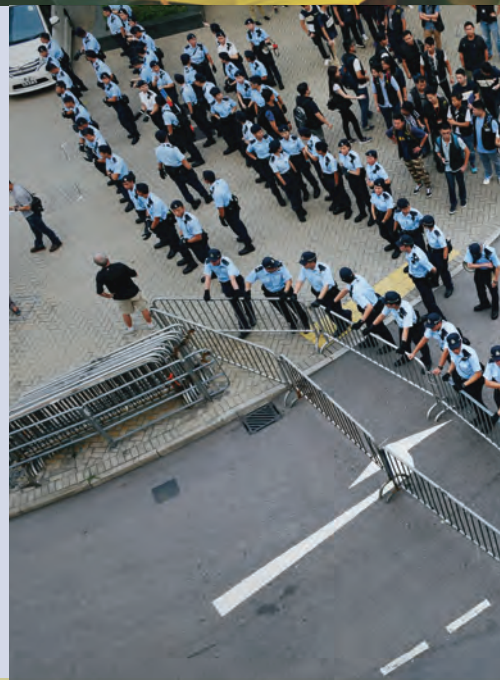
## *A year after: Umbrella Movement*

**I**t is the one year after the police fired tear gas to disperse pro-democracy protesters in Admiralty, followed by a 79-day civil disobedience campaign named the Umbrella Movement. From September 28 last year, thousands took to the streets and occupied the busiest business districts. Yellow umbrellas representing the movement became a new logo of Hong Kong.

The movement was an attempt to gain the right of electing Hong Kong's chief executive democratically. Protesters accused a Beijing-backed political reform proposal of being a "fake universal suffrage" for requiring the candidates to be filtered before entering the public vote. Earlier in June this year, the Legislative Council rejected the controversial proposal, leaving no timeline for future discussion on political reform.

On the first anniversary of the Umbrella Movement, political groups and individual protesters are heading towards Admiralty again. Some are trying to bring back memories, and many are coming up with their own plans of what Hong Kongers should do next.

By Fred Lai, Tanya McGovern, Janet Sun, Crystal Tse









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