

S C M R E S E A R C H



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DEAN'S NOTES

It is wonderful to see so many students back on campus for the new semester. It feels to us all that life and vitality have returned to the SCM community after almost two years of distance learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. But we have emerged from the experience more resourceful and resilient, and determined to build an even stronger community of artists and technologists to meet the challenges of the future. Next year is the 25th anniversary of SCM, which is truly something to celebrate. We will be working over the coming months to build

a programme of events that will fully engage the entirety of our community, and especially our alumni, in marking both the distance travelled and our excitement for the future of creative media in Hong Kong.

Art Tech is currently the buzzword around town, prompted by the Hong Kong Government's visionary support of Art Tech development that has been encouraged by the Our Hong Kong Foundation. Of course, what exactly Art Tech is,





students, covering a wide range of subjects including animation, gaming, photography, sound art, video installation, mix media

installation, fiction film and documentary.

innovation and deployment of new technologies to create works of art, it is undoubtedly the case that SCM has been at the forefront of Art Tech development in Hong Kong over the past 25 years. Currently, as I write (Sept-Oct 2022), there are no less than four Art Tech events taking place that feature SCM faculty and alumni, The VR installation, *Phygital D*, at West Kowloon by Tsang Tsui-shan (MFA, 2005); *Cells that Fire Wire Together* at 7 Mallory Street, organized by Leung Kei-cheuk (aka GayBird, M.Phil, 2011) and featuring Yeung Ming-him, Hugo (BAS, 2015), SCM faculty Ip Yuk Yiu, and Kachi Chan; *Empty Space* at 618 Shanghai Street, featuring Vvzela Kook (MFA, 2015); and *In/Active*, directed by SCM faculty member RAY LC at Thy Lab, Sham Shui Po.

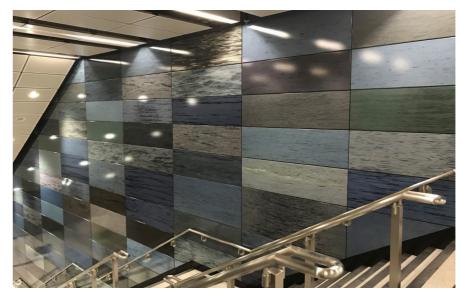
SCM faculty continue to garner remarkable success and accolades in the international arena for their artistic research. In Artnet News's recent article, "The Biennial Stars" https://news. artnet.com/market/biennial-star-funding-market-2127289, the editor researched 211 art events from 2017 to 2002 and identified SCM's Zheng Bo as the "sixth most exhibited artist" in the world. This is a guite remarkable achievement. Bo's work is featured in this issue. Linda Lai was recently a recipient, on behalf of Floating Projects, of the prestigious State of the Art/State of the Arts Award from Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria for her innovative online video zine D-Normal/V-Essay. Following his Robert Coover Prize Award, Ip Yuk Yiu received the Golden Cube Award at the Kasseler Dokumentarfilm-und Videofest in Germany for his installation False Words. Warren Chi Wo Leung's Water Memory, became a permanent installation at Exhibition MTR Station, Hong Kong, which everyone can see, after 8 years in development. Finally, on the film front, Rita Nga Shu Hui's film, Decameron, was featured at the Rotterdam International Film Festival and Louisa Wei's documentary,

is open to interpretation. However, if it is understood as the A Life in Six Chapters, was featured at the Singapore Chinese innovation and deployment of new technologies to create Film Festival.

Two new faculty are joining SCM this year. Jamie Zhao holds two PhDs from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Warwick, UK. Her research lies at the intersection of media and gender studies and her writings focus on how global media flows and local cultural imaginaries shape the representation of gender and sexuality. She is the author of numerous articles and is co-editor and contributor to the first English Language anthology on Chinese queer fandom studies. Jamie will join SCM as Assistant Professor. Dino Ge Zhang joins us as Visiting Assistant Professor. Dino Zhang is a media anthropologist who received his PhD from RMIT. His current research primarily focuses on the affective ecologies of contemporary video cultures in China, ranging from video games and esports to livestreaming media and online video. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles in the field as well as various commentaries in blogs and online magazines. Both Jamie and Dino will assume a leading role in teaching out Media and Culture of the MACM programme.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to two upcoming events. The SCM Annual, entitled *Enter*, which was deferred from the summer, will open on the October 14th and run till October 22nd. Also, our annual *Asia One Photographic Awards* will open on November 4th, featuring the work of 8 students. Please come!

Acting Dean and ACIM Director



Water Memory (2022), Leung Chi Wo

Commissioned by the MTRC and first conceived in 2014 as a permanent installation for the new Exhibition Centre Station, "Water Memory" addresses the architecture, its spatial and historical relations with the harbour.

ON THE COVER:

Cymatic Ground, 2022

An interactive installation that explores the relationship between shape, geometry, resonance and energy.

By Alvaro Cassinelli and Tobias Klein

Photo credit: Fong Hin Nam



ABSTRACT ANIMATION AS ART AND PEDAGOGY MAX HATTLER

Associate Professor Dr. Max Hattler is a world-renowned abstract animator who integrates innovative arts-based research in animation with creative approaches to teaching animation. Max's works have been featured in hundreds of festivals all around the world, winning many prestigious awards, including the Off Limits Award at the Annecy Festival, France, Best Experimental Film at ReAnima Festival, Bergen, Norway, and the Best Abstract Film Award at the London International Animation Festival, which he won twice. At the same time, through his teaching, Max has cultivated wide ranging success for his students whose work has featured in over 160 festivals and received numerous international awards. In a remarkable testament to his research and teaching achievement, Hattler was awarded CityU's President's Award 2021, and Teaching Excellence Award 2021/22.

Max's animation work explores three main themes: visual music, expanded stereoscopy, and abstract narrative. The theme of visual music revolves around the use of musical structures in visual imagery, and the translation of sound or music into moving images. It has a long history in the field of animation that Max draws on to make his art. The beautiful, sparse, monochrome animation, *Divisional Articulations* (2017), exemplifies his work in this field. Its Bauhaus aesthetic of machinic line and form, which is choreographed to the haunting music of Lux Prima, makes for an exquisite work of 2D animation. It is no surprise that this work has featured in over 100 festivals and won 7 awards.

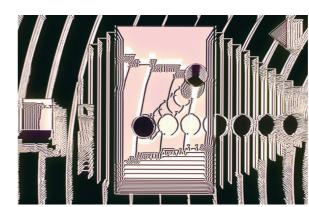
Max's work in expanded stereoscopy is perhaps the most research intensive and experimental aspect of his practice. It has been supported by a GRF and grants from Nvidia Corporation and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Here Max explores alternative approaches to stereoscopic vision. He is not simply interested in developing strategies for displaying 3D space but also in undermining or disrupting depth perception, for example through the use of binocular rivalry. Max has created many experimental works in this area including *Værtex* (2020), which was featured in CityU's recent *Art Machines: Past and Present* exhibition.



Værtex, 2020, Max Hattler

In the field of abstract narrative, Max focuses on the potential of abstract forms to transmit meaning or a story. In his widely seen and remarkably engaging ode to Hong Kong, *Serial Parallels* (2019), Hattler uses a simple technique of virtual stop motion animation to animate the facades of apartment buildings in Hong Kong in a way that is analogous to celluloid film strips. The film has been featured in more than 135 international events and won 25 awards and special mentions. Max says:

"Serial Parallels has a special significance for me. Because I'm working with abstraction, in a lot of my works, you cannot tell where they were made. After living in Hong Kong for several years, Serial Parallels is the first film which takes Hong Kong as its subject. It's quite interesting also how it's received in festivals internationally versus how it's received in Hong Kong. For Hong Kong residents, it presents a new way of looking at the buildings and the environment that surrounds them, but for people in Europe, for example, it's perceived as utterly dystopian, or even 'fake'-definitely a place that is beyond the European imagination. So that's also interesting to see how different audiences react to a piece, how an 'abstract narrative' changes depending on the recipient."



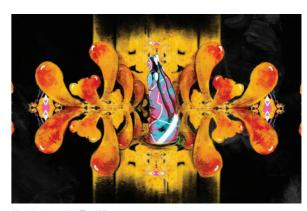
Divisional Articulations, 2017, Max Hattler



Serial Parallels, 2019, Max Hattler



Catgot, 2019, Ho Tsz Wing



Hand, 2021, Ho Tsz Wing

Max forges close links between his own research and practice and the learning and creative practice of his students, and he strives to deliver the films of his students to the wider public with the intention of generating impact in the wider society. Max says:

"I always try to get students to think beyond fulfilling the criteria of the course to get a grade, to think of themselves as artists and how they can contribute to the wider culture. To me, this has several benefits. It pushes the students to try to do their best because others will see their work, which always motivates them to work a little bit harder. It also builds confidence because you have your film shown in several festivals, where it might even win an award. And it builds up your CV, so by the time you graduate, you can rightfully say that you're an exhibited and practicing artist."

In 2020-21 alone, 45 student films were featured in more than 20 festivals, and 21 of them were chosen as Honourable Mentions at The Stone Flower Youth Film Festival. Sleepwalk. by Yang Hao, Xing Tong and Jiang Xinyue, received the award for Best Experimental Animation at Animex Awards 2021. Catgot, by Ho Tsz Wing was not only featured in 25 festivals but also won many awards. Finally, the MFA Thesis film entitled Hand, also created by Max's advisee Ho Tsz Wing, won a short film award at Supernova Digital Animation Festival 2021.

The creative potential of Max's students recently found further expression in the Hong Kong Tourism Board Youth Academy project. In this project, students created experimental animation films to present three Hong Kong neighbourhoods-Central, Sham Shui Po and West Kowloon. These films inventively combine photographic imagery from the neighborhood such as vendors, store fronts, streets sign, walls, overpasses, and traffic stops, with the editing, color, line, form, and music of abstract animation. And they evidence a remarkable range of styles from the smoothly lyrical to syncopated street rhythms. Max says, "We made a total of 18 one-minute films that are photography-based, and a lot of them had to do with the urban street environment. Then we made a whole range of longer films between three and four minutes both in 2D and 3D. HKTB will make an official selection of the films that they want to showcase in an exhibition which is planned for early next year."

Max has also been deeply involved in animation curation. Since 2017, he has played an important role in highlighting and showcasing experimental animation from Hong Kong. After arriving in Hong Kong, he realized that there wasn't sufficient awareness of experimental and abstract animation in Hong Kong so he began to create his Relentless Melt screening series. It features Hong Kong animators, including SCM students, and aims to attract both public and academic attention to the works of both Hong Kong animators and CityU students. To date, there have been 24 different Relentless Melt screening events both in Hong Kong and internationally.

Max plans to do a project about optical sound from the teaching grant he received after winning the Teaching Excellence Award. He says:

"In my practice. I work a lot with audiovisual relationships: the synchronization of sound and image, and working with optical sound is really good as you have immediate synchronization of sound and image and thus you hear what you see. I found a software that basically emulates the analogue film optical sound reading process but it's digital so you can just feed a video through it and will sonify it for vou. When you work with animation, you can specifically create certain shapes or patterns and then generate certain tones. So that's what we're going to do in my Abstract and Experimental Animation class next year, and I'm quite excited about it."





Sleepwalk, 2021, Yang Hao, Xing Tong and Jiang Xinyue

DACA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

dual-hub conference held virtually between 23-26 February 2022 at CityU Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre and on 5 March at Kunstuniversität Graz, Austria. The conference was accompanied by an exhibition entitled DAT/ACT, the online version of which is ongoing². Participants included academics, researchers, artists, graduate students in computer science, the arts, environmental studies, and journalism and media, together with members of the general public.

The event was conceptualized and led by PerMagnus Lindborg in collaboration with Katharina Groß-Vogt (IEM, Graz, Austria), Ryo Ikeshiro (SCM, CityU), and Shauhrat Chopra (SEE, CityU), among others. Both the conference and the exhibition focused on the sonification and visualisation of climate data with the aim of exploration, awareness, education and action. The conference consisted of keynotes by Andrea Polli and Moritz Stefaner, three paper sessions, three panels, three concerts, an Algorave (a live coded performance using data from Hong Kong Observatory), and a multiple work sound installation in Graz. A student workshop was also held in September 2022.

The conference and the exhibition were initially planned as physical events but due to the COVID-19 pandemic they were held solely online. PerMagnus explains why: "We had to postpone DACA thrice, hoping that we would be able to run it as two connected local and physical nodes. This idea of having two or preferably three physical local nodes that are connected over the Internet is a very good model for conferencing. We have written a journal article outlining this model³." Funding was provided by Hong Kong Environment and Conservation Fund and CityU Cultural and Sports Committee, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Observatory, the Institut für Elektronische Musik und Akustik, Kunstuniversität Graz and the Wegener Center for Climate and Global Change (Austria), and Frontiers.

The Data Art for Climate Action (DACA) Conference¹ was a The conference addressed one of the most pressing requirements of current times: the disastrous effects of man-made climate change upon the ecosystem. The papers and the artworks at the conference and the exhibition highlighted the pivotal role digital media art can play in disseminating scientific knowledge and data on the environmental impacts of climate change, revealing how the sonification and visualisation of climate data can embody the climate change experience, immerse the audience, and convey the underlying message more profoundly. While science conveys its findings through numbers, diagrams and words, art imparts knowledge thorough images, sculpture, sound and movement and the conference demonstrated the importance of art-science interdisciplinary collaboration.



PerMagnus Lindborg, DACA Chair



Keynote Speaker Mortitz Stefaner gave a talk on Visual Rhetorics.

¹ http://dataclimate.org/

² https://dat-act.scm.cityu.edu.hk/

³ Richard Parncutt, PerMagnus Lindborg, Nils Mever-Kahlen, Renee Timmers (2021/7), "The multi-hub academic conference: Global, inclusive, culturally diverse, creative, sustainable." Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics, section Scholarly Communication, doi: 10.3389/ frma.2021.699782

As PerMagnus explains: "The idea is to mix art and science. The art aspect is the design of experiential interfaces while science involves the data-driven study of climate change. DACA is about sonification and visualisation of scientific data not only as a means of improving communication about climate change realities but also to draw on what artists and designers do best, i.e. mainly to create things that are exciting, surprising, immersive and that are somehow generous in terms of giving people an experience. DACA conference tries to put art and science together and ideally act as a meeting place for people who want to do both or who are on one of these two sides yet close enough to be able to take in and understand and learn some of the perspectives of the other side."

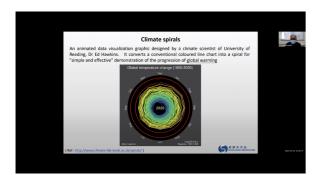
The *DAT/ACT* Exhibition displayed an array of artworks about climate change, mainly through strategies of visualisation and sonification. The curators of the exhibition were Ryo Ikeshiro and SCM PhD student, Lina Simon. Ryo reports: "I was the Art Track Chair for the conference, and I ran the panel committee for reviewing and selecting the artworks. I also curated the artworks for the exhibition from those from the open call as well as additional selected works by local artists." "What is necessary," he wrote in the curatorial statement, "is a consideration of how artists can engage with the topic of climate change, and how the viewer/listener can in turn engage with such artworks. The act required becomes a form of interpretation or reflection, or the formation of subjectivity, in experiencing the association of sensory affect with the context of climate data and its real-world implications."

PerMagnus says, "We had both screen-based and sound/headphone-based works and also physical artifacts such as sculptures that illustrate some ideas that are related to climate change in a technical or metaphorical way. For example, how concrete is the link between the representation and the actual phenomenon? Peggy Chan presented her "Specimen Tree Series", which featured miniature universes—little gardens

inside glass bowls. There were six of them. And inside, there were little pieces of nature. But if you look really closely you will see tiny animals there that are deformed and actually quite terrifying. Her work is to remind us that things that look pretty from a distance might not be the same when we look closer and that things are fragile and they might not always stay as beautiful as they are now."

The exhibition included PerMagnus's own work Stairway to Helheim, an eight-channel sound installation which contained a sonification of weather records received from Hong Kong Observatory spanning a period of 138 years (January 1884 - September 2021). He explains: "What I wanted to do with this artwork is to give listeners an embodied sense of how the climate has changed in Hong Kong in recent history. I sonified meteorological data, such as temperature and water levels in the harbour, and atmospheric pressure. They are mapped on to different sonic parameters. Throughout this piece you can hear what it is that is making the sound. It involves a lot of bouncing balls and each bounce actually means something, for example, a day of rain. So, when you have more rain, you hear more bounces, and larger balls. If less, then the bouncing is sparse and the objects used are small ping pong balls. Then you have the sea level of Victoria Harbour which sets the fundamental frequency of the piece. Then, depending on the temperature, the harmonies change. The first 6-7 decades, it all goes fairly steadily but then it starts to go up because water levels are generally rising. When you listen to the piece, you are somehow getting the experience of being choked-things getting more heightened and more tensed-and that is the intended physical reaction in relation to what the data is telling us."

DACA forms part of the ongoing research at SoundLab at the School of Creative Media and will form the basis of further research collaborations and teaching and learning projects in the years to come.



Keynote Speaker Dr. Lee Tsz-cheung from the Hong Kong Observatory gave a talk on Climate Monitoring and Data Resources in Hong Kong.



76, 2021, Enrico Dorigatti

Based on actual data registered by NOAA and published by NASA, 76 offers an artistic representation, through audiovisualisation (simultaneous sonification and visualization), of the anomalies related to the Earth temperature in the timespan ranging from 1940 to 2016.



Specimen Tree Series (No. 1-6), 2017, Peggy Chan Installation
Cyanotype, sunlight, time, film, pins, cement, copper, wax. 14x24, 23x31, 20x33, 21x38, 17x18, 14x28 cm

Photo credit: Kasin Fong

Chan visited the wetlands and protected areas in Macau and observed the fraught juxtaposition between city development and ecological protection. The area, which she once considered a place of beauty, is now surrounded by casinos, hotels and malls.



A Bitter-Sweet Reminder 隱韻, 2019, Andreas Schaub (BACM graduate)
Installation
Photo credit: Kasin Fond

A sound installation made up of a simple music box gently playing a familiar lullaby inside a transparent cabinet. The live sound is manipulated by a program that uses the wind datasets from the severe Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018 in an algorithm that destroys the melody. As the melody is dramatically affected by the storm data, sound becomes an alternative way to present natural force and danger.

DACA研討會與展覽

「因應氣候行動的數據藝術研討會 (DACA)」以線上形式在兩個地點舉行: 2022年2月23日至26日在城大的邵逸夫創意媒體中心以及3月5日在奥地利格拉茨藝術大學。研討會同時舉辦名為 DAT/ACT 的展覽, 現仍在線上延續。與會者包括學者、研究人員、藝術家, 還有電腦科學、藝術、環境研究、新聞和媒體的研究生以及公眾人士。

是次活動由 PerMagnus Lindborg 構思和領導,並聯同 Katharina Groß-Vogt (奧地利格拉茨音樂與表演藝術大學,電子音樂及聲學研究所)、Ryo Ikeshiro (城大創意媒體學院) 和 Shauhrat Chopra (城大能源及環境學院)等人攜手合作。研討會和展覽的重點是把氣候的數據化作聲音和視像,目的在於探索、覺察、學術交流和行動研究。研討會包括兩場主題演講、三場座談會、三場小組討論、三場音樂會、一場 Algorave (使用香港天文臺數據的現場編碼表演),以及在格拉茨展出多個聲音裝置作品。學生工作坊則定於2022年9月舉行。



The Weep of Irees, 2021
Band of Weeds (Kalle Hamm, Olli Aarni, Lauri Ainala and Hermanni Keko

A tree does not have to be fallen to make it a musical instrument. With the help of current technology, the reactions of trees, for example stress, can be measured with various devices. These measurements can be converted into audible sounds in the human ear.

RYAN LAM AND KOALA YIP: A UNIQUE COLLABORATION IN PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

SCM Instructors Ryan Lam and Koala Yip are two instructors with very different backgrounds and research interests, but they share the SCM teaching philosophy of learning by doing, and for many years now, they have pursued a very successful teaching collaboration on their foundation course for the SCM BScCM programme, SM3611 New Media for Installation, Events and Performance.

Ryan joined SCM in 2002. Ryan's background lies in computer programming, interactive media development and web design and his main creative projects involve game design applications. Since 2001, he has been engaged in writing hands-on reviews of the latest software for local computer magazines. Ryan's touch screen kiosk for the Hong Kong Pavilion and an augmented reality application for the Macau Pavilion were featured at the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

Koala has been with SCM since 2003. In contrast to Ryan, Koala's background is in multimedia performance and she blends theatre performance with virtual reality. Her work integrates different media such as installation, performance, and the

moving image in order to explore questions of multiculturalism and contemporary body identity. It has been featured in numerous international venues, such as Los Angeles Center for Digital Arts and Interactive Laboratory at Göttelborn, Germany.

Since Koala and Ryan are both instructors, they have together accumulated substantial experience teaching SCM students. They decided to join together to teach SM3611 in 2013. Ryan describes how this collaboration came about: "Koala and I were inspired by moving into the new facilities at CMC to initiate a ground-breaking course which could provide interdisciplinary training for the BScCM programme." He continues, "I mainly focus on teaching the technical aspect for this course, such as programming, digital media, interactivity and Human-Computer Interface (HCI). Koala focuses more on the multimedia performance and the installation part. As the course has a large-scale size (100~120 each year), we encourage the students to work as a group to produce work of high quality, contributing to the team according to their skills, experience, and personality."



(second from left) Ryan Lam and Koala Yip (right)





Students' interactive media works and performances in New Media For Installation Class



Wheel Our City, 2017 Interactive Installation Exhibited in Innovation Carnival 2017, this installation invites the general public to go on a journey in gameplay style by taking up the role of a wheelchair user



Outstanding Student Project "One Man Band" was exhibited in Innovation Carnival 2014





(Top) Gaming works in SIG Playful Media 2022 (Bottom) The annual SIG Playful Media Showcase

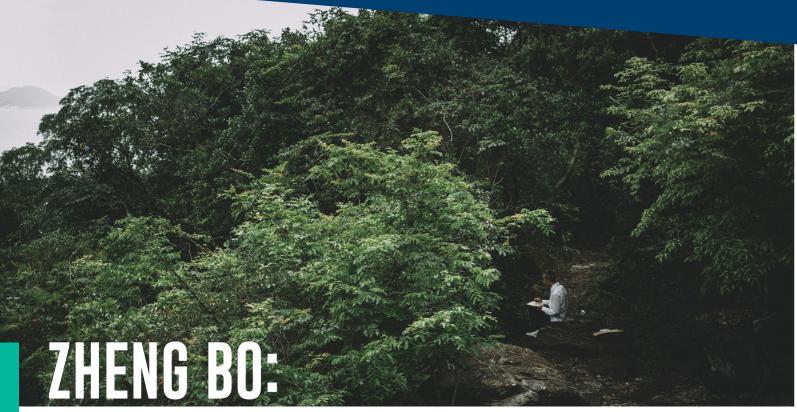
"SM3611 is a practice-based curriculum," Koala says. "Usually, the outcome every year is many student projects that represent the essence of what we do here at SCM. The works of our students have often been chosen to represent the university and have attracted funding for being really creative and of high quality. We are quite passionate about how students can transform their education into functional projects that can form the basis of their future career development."

She continues, "Our target is not just providing knowledge but we want to focus on the overall development of the students. Apart from spending time during the teaching hours, we spend a lot of time outside the classroom to advise the students on the development of their work. We support them not only with equipment and technology but also with personal consultations that ensure their well-rounded development."

lot of different classroom facilities and workshops. From the feedback provided by the students, they claim that our course is one of the most practical courses in SCM because it allows them to fully utilize our production spaces including the multimedia theatre and exhibition gallery and provides access to different kinds of production equipment. Students can build their portfolio for their future and transform their assignment into a final year project or a PhD thesis or apply for start-up funding in the future. Recently, our student projects were funded by the Hong Kong Tech 300 Seed Fund, which helps our students to develop innovative ideas into a start-up."

Ryan and Koala play an extensive role in supervising the final year projects of undergraduate students. They guide them to apply their knowledge into projects and work with them in curating the students' exhibition, Playful Media. This annual event, which began in 2007, is presented by the Special Interest Group (SIG), which was initiated in 2005 by Professor Liu Zhi-qiang and where Ryan and Koala are advisors. SIG has fostered in-depth training and learning for BScCM students since the beginning of the programme. By participating in SIG, students receive the opportunity to delve into supervised professional research, developmental activities and extracurricular activities, through which they obtain first-hand experience in creating digital media products which further nurture them to become successful in the digital entertainment industry.

Both Koala and Ryan have wide-ranging responsibilities Ryan adds, "In the School of Creative Media, there are a at SCM beyond teaching 4 courses a semester, and their collaboration on SM3611 and the Playful Media Showcase. Ryan serves as Admission Tutor, Internship Coordinator and Course Leader for BScCM Final Year Project. Koala is Director for First Year Studies and the coordinator of Student Orientation. Both individually and jointly, Koala and Ryan have supplied many years of outstanding service to SCM and will undoubtedly continue to benefit our students in myriad ways



LIVING TOGETHER WITH PLANTS

Zheng Bo is an artist whose work focusses on raising awareness about the natural environment. Bo's socially-engaged art is characterized by a long-term ecological commitment to other species and especially the lives of plants. He seeks not only to represent plants and human beings' relationship with them, through his drawings and audio-visual installations, but also to challenge the hierarchy that governs humans' engagement with plant life. This challenge involves transforming the practice of art into the practice of life and learning through the making of art, to dwell with plants in order to transform our relationship with them. Bo says, "We humans have become exceedingly arrogant. We believe that we can solve any problem—including the climate crisis and the sixth mass extinction—alone, even though every day every one of us is depending on other forms of life and matter to survive."

Exemplary of this practice is a work that he developed for a one-person show at Berlin's prestigious Gropius Bau called *Drawing Life*. This exhibition had a very simple premise. Bo exhibited 366 pencil drawings of plants, each of a similar size. *Drawing Life* inverts the practice of life drawing where a person is the subject. Here an individual plant is the subject in a manner which draws on the Chinese landscape and ink painting tradition. However, for Bo, the point is not to create a work of art in the traditional sense of say displaying a mastery of style and form, nor is it a botanical exercise in classification; rather, the purpose lies in the activity of spending time with these unique species on a daily basis that the discipline of drawing them requires, where making art becomes akin to a practice of meditation in and through nature.

Following an exhibition at the Thailand Biennale, Krabi, that was inspired by a community practice of re-planting orchids in the natural environment, in 2021, Bo staged an exhibition *Life is hard. Why do we make it so easy?* at Kadoorie Farm



LIFE IS HARD. WHY DO WE MAKE IT SO EASY?, 2018, Zheng Bo Commissioned by Thailand Biennale, Krabi Supported by Hong Kong Arts Development Council This project was exhibited in Kardoorie Farm and Botanic Garden in 2021.





Drawing Life, 2020-ongoing, Zheng Bo

and Botanic Garden, presented by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club. In collaboration with Stephan Gale, Senior Ecologist at Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, he produced an array of botanical slogans from an assortment of local orchid species, which invited viewers to reflect upon the equality of living beings and the crisis of the Anthropcene and which were then allowed to naturally re-seed and grow organically back into the environment.

For this year's prestigious Venice Biennale, *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alemani, for which Bo was an invited artist, he produced a mesmerizing 16-minute video titled *Le Sacre du printemps* ("The Rite of Spring"). *Le Sacre du printemps* is a sequel to Bo's tetralogy, *Pteridophilia* (2016-Present). In *Pteridophilia*, Bo explores the possibilities of forming sensual, erotic relationships between plants (specifically ferns) and human beings in Taiwan. Set in an ancient pine forest in Dalarna, Sweden, *Le Sacre du printemps* features five male Nordic dancers who through movement and touch respond to and evoke the collective desires of the forest. As the pine forest becomes inverted and its verdant floor is transformed into

and Botanic Garden, presented by the Hong Kong Arts

Development Council and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey

Club. In collaboration with Stephan Gale, Senior Ecologist at

Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, he produced an array of

Bo says: "For several months before the start of the project, I tried very hard to picture ways that the human body and the arboreal body could fuse sexually, but failed to come up with anything that would make sense. Only when we went into the forest and began to play with trees, did it dawn on us to turn our bodies upside down so that we can be grounded like the trees, so that we will stop fleeing, so that we could rely less on vision but more on smell and touch, so that we will not use hands but feet to express and embrace."

Bo is also the Principal Investigator of the research project, *EcoArtAsia*, which is funded by the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong SAR. The project documents contemporary ecological art practice in Mainland China and Hong Kong. Together with research associates, Bo identifies key artists and key projects, communicates with artists to gather visual materials, and writes case studies on their practice.

Participating artists in ECOARTASIA project:



Rice cultivation as research process (weeding, late season), 2018, Lai Wai-yi, Monti



First issue of Planting Hong Kong, 2016, Planting Hong Kong Team



After Noon... Extended Shelf-life Afternoon Tea, 2015, Lo Lai-lai, Natalie Photo credit: Andy Wona

鄭波:與植物共存

鄭波是位藝術家,其作品的目的是要喚起人類對自然環境的 覺察。鄭波蘊含社會關懷的藝術作品,長久以來關注其他物 種的生態環境,尤其是植物的生命。他以繪畫和視聽裝置來 表現植物,以及人類與植物的關係;不僅如此,他還挑戰人類 與植物的等級次序。這包括將藝術實踐轉化為生活的實踐與 學習,並且藉著藝術創作與植物共處,為求轉化我們與植物的 關係。鄭波說:「我們人類已經變得極其傲慢。我們相信可以 單憑己力解決任何問題,包括氣候危機和第六次大規模滅絕, 儘管我們每天都在依賴其他形式的生命和物質而生存。」



Le Sacre du printemps, 2021-22, Zheng Bo 4K color sound 16 min

Exhibited in *The Milk of Dreams*, the 59th Venice Biennale, curated by Cecilia Alemani. Photo credit: Edouard Malinque Gallery. Hong Kong.

This project is supported by Hong Kong Arts Development Council; Dance Art Critical Ecology (DACE); Finnish Cultural Foundation; Frame; Swedish Arts Council; Swedish Arts Grants Committee; Nordic Culture Fund; Nordic Culture Point; Färofabriken; SKH.

SONIC TOPOLOGIES: HONG KONG AT M+ BY RYO IKESHIRO & MetaObjects

Sonic Topologies: Hong Kong is a new semi-permanent installation at M+, which SCM faculty member, Ryo Ikeshiro, created in collaboration with the digital studio MetaObjects and the architectural studio, Sky Yutaka, and is featured in the exhibition Individuals, Networks, Expressions. Sonic Topologies: Hong Kong is an aural, cartographic interpretation of the colourful abstract painting, Work (1967), made by the Japanese artist Tsuruko Yamazaki, which is part of the M+ collection and displayed in the same exhibition. It draws inspiration from the collaborative and interdisciplinary spirit of the Japanese avant-garde artist group, Gutai Art Association, to which Yamazaki belonged. Gutai means "concrete" (as opposed, say, to "figurative") and the Gutai artists moved from painting to creating site-specific installations. In Sonic Topologies, when visitors move their hands over a 3D printed topographic relief derived from Yamazaki's painting, their hands are tracked through computer vision and machine learning to trigger a variety of field recordings from Hong Kong.

Ryo says, "It's a work that rethinks and reinterprets Tsuruko Yamazaki's painting and the interdisciplinary ethos of Gutai by using the means that we have available now in the 21st century like 3D printing, computer vision, machine learning and spatial audio. The painting originally suggests different textures and layers and these were accentuated through 3D printing. The different parts of the painting correspond to different locations within Hong Kong. When visitors come and view the work, at first, they don't hear anything. When they place their hands on or above the artwork, various field recordings are triggered from different locations in Hong Kong, depending on where their hand is placed. Each section of the painting corresponds to different places within Hong Kong which are significant



Ryo Ikeshiro Photo credit: Elke Reinhuber

historically or geographically. It is like taking a journey through Hong Kong by reimagining the soundscape of Hong Kong."

Ryo's interpretation of Yamazaki's *Work* as a sound map of Hong Kong thus references and updates Gutai's reinvention of community through installation-based art in post-war Japan. In this way, it serves to articulate the pan-Asian cross-fertilization of modern art and visual culture that defines the M+ museum itself. For the individual, *Sonic Topologies* provides a multisensory experience where, through touch guided by sight, one embarks on a journey through the sonic topography of Hong Kong. However, there is also, as Ryo explains, "an element of collaboration in how people might experience this work." The presence of more than one participant increases the spatialization and layers of sound in the surrounding environment. For more details about Ryo's project, please visit https://ryoikeshiro.com/installation/sonic-topologies-hong-kong/



Installation view, with visitors viewing locations of the field recordings accessible via QR codes
Photo credit: MetaObiects

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER PhD?



CAROLINE HA THUC

SCM PhD graduate Caroline Ha Thuc is a prominent French researcher, art writer, curator and lecturer, based in Hong Kong. Ha Thuc specializes in Asian contemporary art and contributes to various magazines including Art Press in France and CoBo Social and Artomity in Hong Kong. Ha Thuc has curated numerous art shows including the ongoing exhibition, titled 31 Women Artists – Hong Kong at 10 Chancery Lane Gallery and the Boundless Sea: the artist becoming researcher at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, which grew out of her PhD thesis on research-based art practices in Southeast Asia, supervised by Richard Allen and Zheng Bo. She works as a lecturer at Lingnan University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Hong Kong), and also at SCM, CityU.

Before moving to Hong Kong, Ha Thuc resided in Tokyo for two years where she published a book titled *Nouvel Art Contemporain Japonais* that revolves around the post-Murakami art scene in Japan. Her book, *Contemporary Art in Hong Kong*, offers essential keys to comprehend

Hong Kong's contemporary vibrant landscape and highlights the numerous links between art, culture, history and identity. In *After 2000: Contemporary Art in China*, Ha Thuc explores Chinese contemporary art against the background of a rapidly changing society.

The research which began as her CityU dissertation will soon see the light of day as: Research-Based Art Practices in Southeast Asia: The Artist as Producer of Knowledge (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022). While she came to SCM as an experienced writer, Ha Thuc credits the school for teaching her about "research methodology and academic writing." She adds, "I also discovered many theories that I didn't know before"





Books authored by Caroline Ha Thuc

Photo credit: (Left) Odani Motohiko (Right) Leung Chi Wo and Blindspot Gallery



HONG ZENG

Hong Zeng, an academic and curator, currently holds the post of Research Assistant Professor at the Department of Visual Studies, Lingnan University. Her research interests encompass film and contemporary art in Hong Kong and China, visual cultural studies, the cultural and creative industries, arts-based research and gender politics. Her PhD thesis, supervised by Dr. Kimburley Choi, explored women's art in Hong Kong, with a focus on the spatial politics that impact women artists and their art making. It encouraged her to continue her research on art and gender politics. Zeng was a visiting scholar at Columbia University's School of the Arts in 2015 and recipient of the Yale-China Arts Fellowship in 2020.

Zeng's curatorial projects include *Blown Away — Art, Science* and *Extreme Weather* at Tai Kwun, Hong Kong (2019) with SCM faculty member Scott Hessels; *Hong Kong in Poor Images* at Ely Center of Contemporary Art, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A. (2020); and "*Non-place*" and "*That Place*": *Ko Chi-Keung in Conversation with Tang Ying Chi* at Lumenvisum, Hong Kong (2021). She is currently curating an online exhibition involving artistic projects that focus on Hong Kong in collaboration with several other SCM alumni. She has also published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals that grew out of her dissertation research including *Continuum, Asian Cinema and Journal of Visual Art Practice*.





Exhibitions curated by Hong Zeng: (Left) *Blown Away – Art, Science, and Extreme Weather,* 2019 Photo credit: Dom Paul Chung

(Right) *Hong Kong in Poor Images*, 2020 Photo credit: Tang Kwok-hin



JONATHAN HARRINGTON

Jonathan Harrington is a researcher, game designer and developer. He moved to Hong Kong from Malta to join the PhD programme at SCM and now, having completed his PhD, he has returned to Malta where he is working in a company that develops and designs board games. Harrington has been involved in developing a number of highly successful gaming projects including Hamlet: The Village Building Game, Posthuman Saga Series and Excavation Earth, and now he has returned to game development with some exciting new projects in the pipeline.

Apart from game development, Harrington's particular research interest lies on how players formulate their own play methods within the world of digital games. He says that his doctoral dissertation, which was supervised by Dr. Olli Tapio Leino, primarily focused on players designing their own games while playing other games. For example, you are in an online game such as Minecraft and you use it as an opportunity to play hide and seek or even do memorials for people who died and commemorate them in online spaces. Harrington is appreciative of the versatile academic environment he experienced at SCM: "Doing a creative media PhD was interesting because the people there were very different from me. I learnt a lot about art curation; there were people in films, in ecology, in VR and AR... it proved to be really helpful for my career growth."



Jonathan is working on the project Hamlet, a village building game which will be released in the Fall 2022.



Vengeance: Roll and Fight is a revenge movie themed roll and write which hits the shelves worldwide very soon.



LUKASZ MIROCHA

SCM PhD graduate Lukasz Mirocha has been associated with new media/digital technology research and practice for nearly a decade. Prior to his PhD work, he was a government-funded researcher, strategic foresight researcher, technology journalist and consultant. He is currently a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Academy of Visual Arts, HKBU, working on a research project under the RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme entitled: "Have 3D Environments and the Physical World Converged? An Examination of Emerging Real-time Media Design Techniques for Virtual Production/Filmmaking and Machine Learning/Al." This is a continuation of his PhD research on the affordances of general-purpose game engines and 3D content creation software for designing new types of real-time, CGI-based content and 3D/VR environments.

Mirocha says, "Right now, I am developing what started during my PhD. I am creating a real-time 3D environment based on experimental cinematography that will involve both Al agents as well as human input." Speaking of his years at SCM, he says, "I found it a very open institution in the sense that the faculty members had a wide range of skills with different research approaches. At SCM, I learned about practice-based research in media arts. SCM helped me widen both my skills and interests and I was given a high degree of creative and research freedom." He also feels he benefitted by working with two different supervisors, Prof. Maurice Benayoun and Dr. Damien Charrieras. Mirocha has authored numerous publications on new media, digital design and digital aesthetics and his artworks have been exhibited internationally. The Torchbearer's Cave was recently exhibited at the DAT/ACT art exhibition which accompanied SCM's DACA conference (see this issue).



The Torchbearer's Cave (1.0), 2022, Lukasz Mirocha Interactive audiovisual installation



ANDY LI

Andy Li is a full stack developer and researcher with a wide range of technical experience. He pursued his PhD in Mobile Human-Computer Interface at SCM from 2010-2014. His skills include proficiency in Haxe, JavaScript, Python, C++, Java, HTML/CSS and new media art. His research interests include mobile-user interface encompassing motion detection and motion gesture to operate a smartphone, and developing techniques for touch screen for mobile interface.

After completing his PhD, Li joined the Haxe Foundation, and later he joined the Chinese company, TCL, where he was involved in R&D. He is currently working as a Senior Researcher at Beeinventor, an IoT technology company, where he is responsible for the natural user interface R&D of a smart helmet product named Dasloop, which aims to enhance safety in the construction industry. Li is also the founder of Giffon, which provides a platform to people to notify their family and friends about their preferred gifts on special occasions like birthdays and marriage anniversaries.

Li's PhD thesis focused on user interface research in mobile phones and he is grateful for the support of his PhD supervisor, Hongbo Fu: "I received a lot of help from my supervisor, who is a very hard-working person and who always motivated me to produce results in relation to my PhD thesis. He is a very experienced researcher. Sometimes when I get new ideas, I ask for his advice. He provides valuable inputs and sometimes also sends resources related to my research."



Andy is developing a new natural user interface for "Dasloop" smart helmet.

OUTSTANDING BScCM ALUMNI

The BScCM programme at CityU, co-taught by the School of Creative Media and the Department of Computer Science, seeks to train future creative industry professionals in art tech through an integrated training in technological and artistic disciplines. BScCM students are taught to utilize novel forms of media and computing technologies to produce different forms of art tech such as computer animation, computer games, mobile devices and internet applications. The three major areas of study are Computer Games and Interactive Media, Animation and Visual Effects, Photography and Graphics.



ZOIE CHOW

BScCM graduate Zoie Chow has been working as a User Experience Designer for over 7 years with global exposure across varied sectors. She is passionate about creating UX that fulfils both user and business requirements. She describes her strengths to be problem-solving and creating products and services that resolve user problems. She is currently working in a digital healthcare marketing organization, based in London. After completing the BScCM programme, Chow worked as a UX Designer in Hong Kong and then moved to Singapore where she was employed in various fields such as e-payment, clinical or medical projects, and smart home projects.

Chow describes her current role: "I am now in a marketing-

oriented medical field but more like in the life science farming industry. I think it has been quite an interesting journey for me in different countries and in different industries. I have made every good use of what I have learned in SCM, especially in media and design. We were taught how to create innovative media technologies. Currently, I am working as a designer. My work involves day-to-day, end-to-end UX designing which includes creating surveys, platform mapping and defining strategies for the businesses of clients. We work with health care professional hubs and engage in marketing activities. I look into their requirements and provide the most suitable materials and designs for them."

Chow recounts how the BScCM programme contributed to her career development: "When I was in the university, I learnt 60% programming and 40% media, art and design. It strengthened my ability to think logically and how to create things that make sense and how people can use them. Though I am a self-taught UX designer, the solid foundation provided by SCM makes me think more about the interactions between the users and products and machinery and how the mechanisms work between humans and machines or interfaces. I think it's a brilliant place to explore yourself, and your potential and think about what professional specialization you want to aim for."



ROCKY LOK

BScCM graduate Rocky Lok has over 10 years' accomplishment working in experience design, interactive design and digital branding. After graduating from CityU, he joined the Hong Kong-based media company, Guru Online. "At that time, it was one of the biggest social media companies in Hong Kong," he says, "I worked there for 3 years and I learnt the basic system of social media and programming. The requirements of the role also enabled me to implement what I learnt in CityU, especially web design and interactive game design. We created a lot of different brand campaigns for serving varied brands in Hong Kong. During these three years, I acquired extensive knowledge about the market situation in Mainland China."

After working in Guru Online, Lok joined the company Mirum where he mainly focused on experience design and interactive design. As part of the job requirement, Lok had to go to Shanghai to be part of a big project in the form of an expo. The event now takes place every year where Chinese companies participate to introduce their products and services to foreigners. While working in Mirum, Lok collaborated with programmers and designers and created a projection mapping experience: "One of our greatest inventions for the expo was an interactive device which looked like a transparent box. It was a see-through transparent monitor which enabled one to interact with it and it contained an introduction of the company products. It was one of the biggest projects where I worked. I am very proud of this project," says Lok.

Lok is currently based in Shanghai and mainly focuses on e-commerce campaigns (Tmall, JD.com) and digital branding. He says, "As part of my job profile, I am required to study all the new trends and technology every day as all the clients want new things in China. For example, recently, our company started studying NFT technology: how to use NFT technology to create marketing campaigns in China."

Lok praises the BScCM programme for introducing him to the world of technology. He further says: "The teachers helped me a lot to think in different ways. A key strength of the programme is using the latest technology and I really learned a lot in the BSc including 3D technology, interactive art, and programming. In this programme, they teach everything we need for the digital industry. All the learning materials were very useful and I use my learning even now."

Projects led by Rocky:



"3D digital table-top projection experience" display at the China International Import Expo 2018.



Digital Wayfinding Directory

AWARD-WINNING ALUMNI WINNERS OF 27th ifva AWARDS

(FORMERLY THE HONG KONG INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM AND VIDEO AWARDS)



Gold Award, Media Art Category

LAU CHING-WA, JESS

Ever since she graduated from SCM 8 years ago, Lau Ching-wa, Jess has been focusing on making stop motion animation, moving image installations, and creating children's picture books. Jess is the winner of the Gold Award for Media Art Category at the 27^{th} ifva awards for her remarkable fixed-point stop motion animation titled *The Cave with a Wheeze*. On a white wall, 2×3 meters in size, black beings move from the edge of the wall to the center, slowly filling the space, and once it is filled, the beings move from the center out, slowly become erased. The visuals are accompanied by a soundtrack that combines percussive effects with the sound of running water.

Jess describes the creation: "It was the summer of 2020 and I was selected to be the artist in residency at Tai Kwun Contemporary. They provided a huge room with white walls and a place to sleep. I haven't had such a big studio since graduation so it made me want to make something big and I came up with the idea of filling the wall with my body. Then I spent more than half a year completing the giant stop motion animation. I started working at noon every day till 7-8 pm. The clock in the animation shows my work schedule in reality which is in parallel with the condensed time in the animation. The work is mainly about energy and time."



The cave with a wheeze, 2021, Jess Lau Video excerpt



The cave with a wheeze, 2021, Jess Lau Documentation in the art-making process.

While recalling her SCM days, Jess says, "I learnt a lot while studying in SCM. I learnt to think in different ways mainly. At that time, my professors and schoolmates were really sharp. By observing how they think, how they create and how they discuss, I could develop the ability of critical thinking. We were not scared to be different and we had a lot of chances to discuss artworks/projects seriously and passionately. This may sound like a common scenario in universities, but I realized later after graduation that it was really precious, so I still keep in touch with some of my professors and schoolmates and we are now lifelong companions."



Silver Award, Media Art Category

KWAN TSZ-WAI, ALAN (CO-CREATED WITH YANG JING)

SCM graduate Alan Kwan is an artist, academician, technologist and game designer who studied at MIT and currently teaches at HKAPA. Going beyond the traditional gaming paradigm, his work primarily revolves around the use of videogame and virtual reality technologies to create story worlds and immersive experiences. He says, "I am interested in creating interesting architectural forms in the virtual world that is not possible in the physical world. In the virtual world, there is no gravity, construction constraints and economic



Special Mention, Open Categor

ERICA KWOK

Kwok Chung-yee, Erica is an independent filmmaker and video editor, based in Hong Kong. She has been selected as Special Mention for Open Category at the 27th ifva awards for her short film, *The Dancing Voice of Youth*. Kwok creates femalecentered narratives that focus on the issue of control and resistance. The film tells the story of a girl with a mysterious background who arrives in Hong Kong and whose existence gradually turns as light as the floating air. It explores the question of whether, in the dark night of a chaotic age, we must live like spectres. The film was funded by the Hong Kong Literary Criticism Society.

During her time at SCM, different courses in the school taught Kwok to think and use different forms of storytelling. She says, "They did not just teach us the techniques to make films and use equipment, but also taught us to watch and analyze and learn to use different forms of storytelling. For example, in my recent film 27, I used stop motion animation, and in *The Dancing Voice of Youth*, I collaborated with a choreographer to design dance performances and did some Zoom interviews. SCM inspired me to use different art forms in my films."





The Dancing Voice of Youth, 2021, Erica Kwok (Top) An anonymous girl dancing on the beach. (Bottom) A man trapped in a space full of squares.



Screenshots from the game Forgetter.

limitations and thus it provides the scope to create fascinating architectural forms." His latest experimental game, *Scent*, was selected for Honorary Mention at Prix Ars Electronica 2021 (Artificial Intelligence & Life Art Category) at Linz in September 2021.

Kwan is the recipient of the Silver Award for Media Art Category at the 27th ifva awards for the project *Forgetter*, created in collaboration with current SCM PhD student Yang Jing. *Forgetter* is an exploration video game which incorporates the art collection from dslcollection (Paris) into its narrative. The game is set in the near future where players work in a technology company as cleaners of the brains of dead artists, identifying and getting rid of traumatic memory blocks from their minds for recycling their brains for newborns. Several of the memory blocks are formed using Chinese contemporary artworks. The *Forgetter* has won a number of other awards at major indie game festivals in mainland China.

Kwan acknowledges SCM's contribution to his career: "Before I entered SCM, I was mostly interested in films and I wanted to become a film director. In the first and second year at SCM, the professors opened my mind to explore more experimental forms in cinema like interactive cinema and computational forms of films which further led to generating my interest in experimental forms of video games."

BEST NEW FILM DIRECTOR CHAN KIN LONG, KEVIN



SCM alumnus Chan Kin Long, Kevin has won the Best New Director Award of the 40th Hong Kong Film Award for his directorial debut, *Hand Rolled Cigarette* (2020). The crime drama movie is currently available for viewing on Netflix. *Hand Rolled Cigarette* was also nominated for Best Feature Film and for six other categories at the 57th Golden Horse Film Festival (2020) and the movie also functioned as the closing movie of the festival. Moreover, it was chosen for the opening of the 17th Hong Kong Asian Film Festival (2020).

In describing his approach to making the film, Kevin says, "I tried my best to shape a movie about Hong Kong through my perspective. Everyone has their own view of Hong Kong

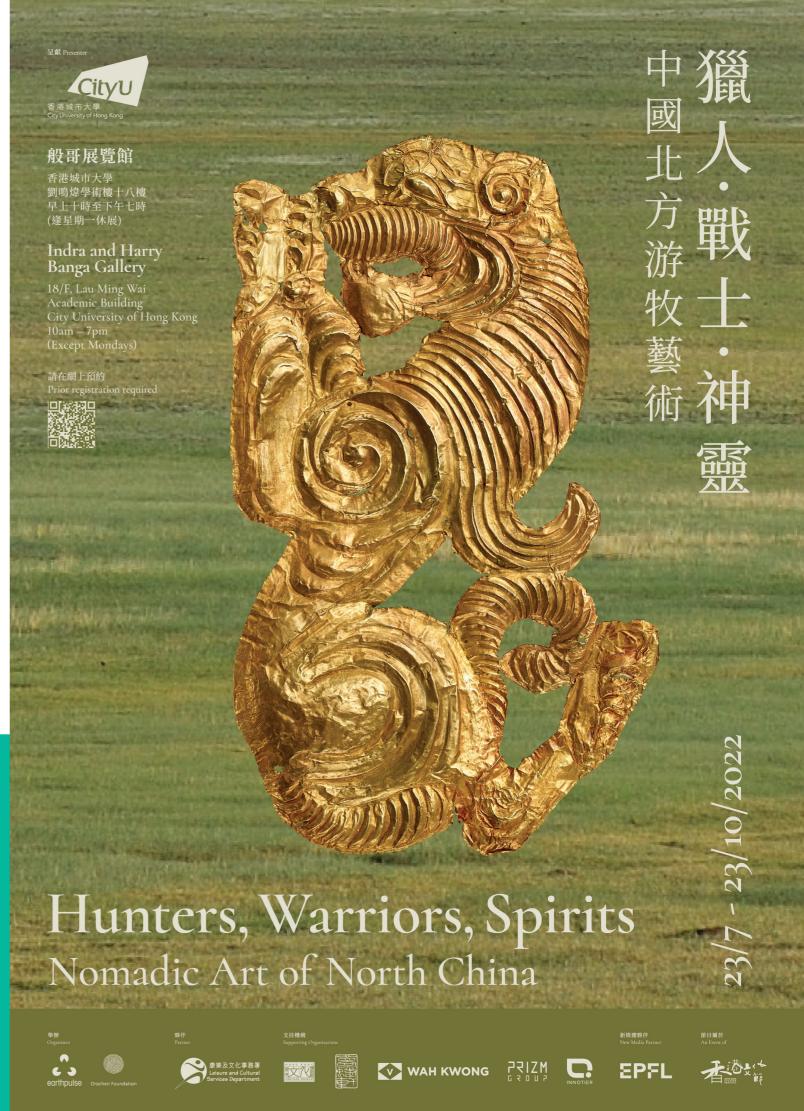
in relation to social issues. In the movie, I got a South Asian actor to be one of my main characters. When I was young, my parents told me that Hong Kong is characterized by diversity so I always wondered why can't we have a South Asian actor as a main character?" He continues, "The movie is about two people - a veteran British-Chinese soldier and a South Asian gangster in Hong Kong. I wanted to use these two characters to talk about the environment of Hong Kong society. I decided to use Chungking Mansions as my main location as some people view Chungking Mansions as a criminal area in Hong Kong but actually, for many people, it provides a source of their livelihood and residence." One of Chan's main goals was to explore the subject of discrimination in Hong Kong: "We always say that we don't want any discrimination and racism in Hong Kong but, in reality, people in Hong Kong always use their eyes to judge people based on what they look like and quickly form a first impression. I want to urge people to not judge others based on their colour," he explains.

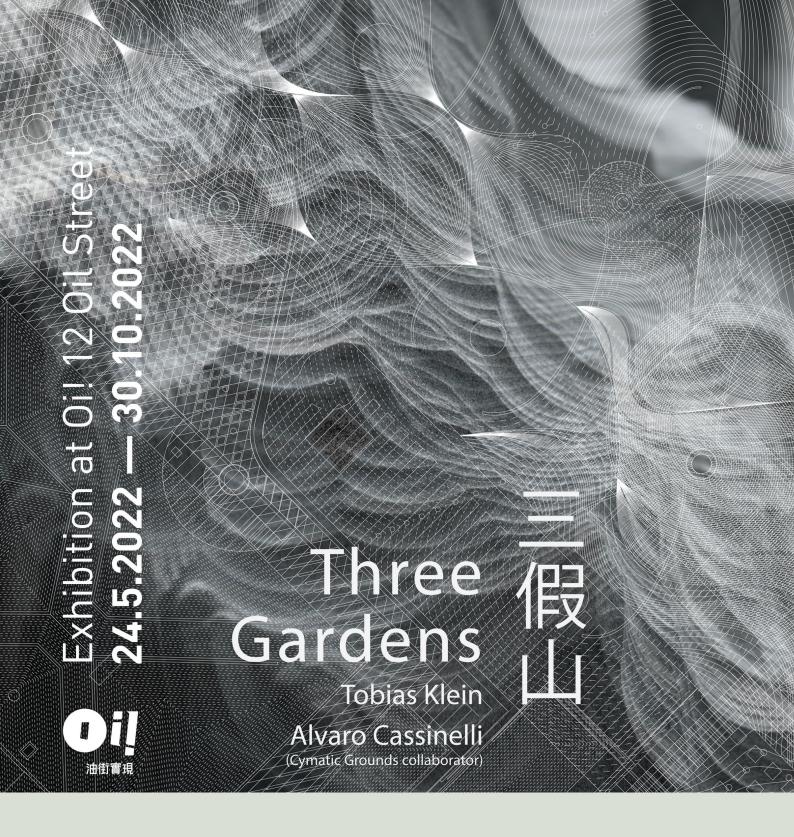
Chan completed the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Media Broadcasting at SCM. When he graduated, Kevin delved into acting, with his first movie as an actor being *The Midnight After* (2014), directed by Fruit Chan, but it was always his goal to direct. Chan says that SCM played a big part in encouraging him to build a career in the film industry: "SCM provided the inspiration I needed. If I did not get a seat in SCM then I wouldn't have participated in the film industry. It was kind of a starting point in relating to my career in the film industry. It provided the inspiration for me to learn how to create."



Still photographer: Lai Ka Fung Poster design: Wong San Mun







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