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10 reasons art lovers should visit Hong Kong right now

May marks carnival time on the calendar of Asia's art hub. Here's some of the crazy that's coming up

By [Payal Uttam](#) (node/43631) 7 May, 2012

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COURTESY OF S[EDITION] AND FAUX

Art buying for beginners at the Art Flat at ART HK 12: Take home a Tracy Emin creation (left) for £50, or a few Wilson Shieh plates for HK\$3,800.

Four years after the Hong Kong International Art Fair (ART HK) burst onto the scene, the city has transformed itself into Asia's largest art market.

When Art Basel bought a majority stake in ART HK last year, it sent a clear message that Hong Kong was becoming the regional capital for the contemporary art trade.

There's no better place to see and buy art in Asia than Hong Kong in the spring when ART HK becomes a catalyst for tons of art happenings.

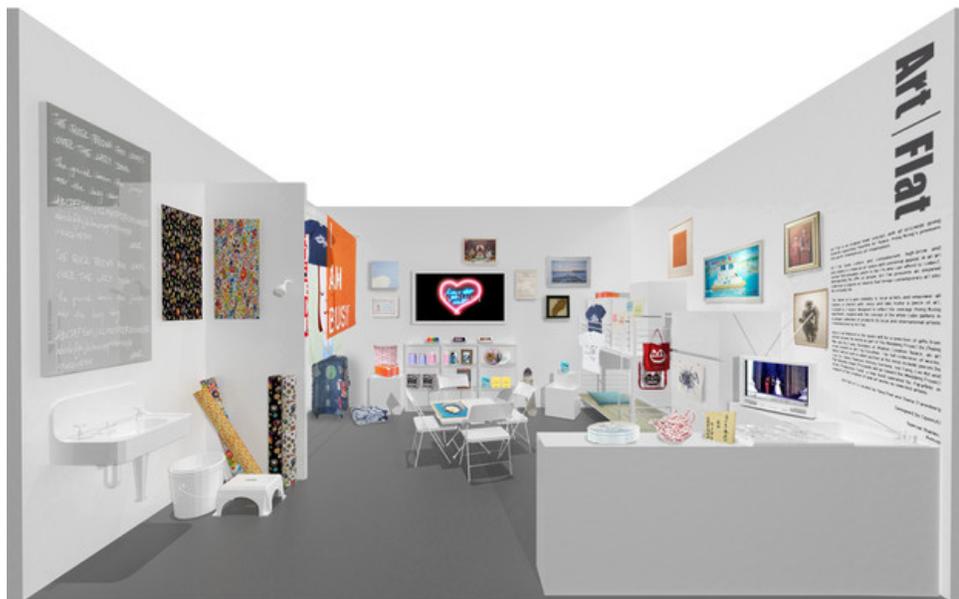
"There is an incredible buzz out there this year," says Magnus Renfrew, ART HK's fair director. "If you scratch beneath the surface there's a huge amount going on."

Such as artist-led sound tours of Hong Kong and public seminars with famous curators. The entire city is on art high alert during the month of the fair.

ART HK runs from May 17-20, but art events in the rest of the city continue into June. Here is what we are most looking forward to during Hong Kong's season of art.

www.hongkongartfair.com (<http://www.hongkongartfair.com/>)

1. Most "Hong Kong" way of selling art



COURTESY ART FLAT

The Art Flat. It's kind of like IKEA meets art. Minus all those bizarre Swedish names.

In true Hong Kong fashion, the "Art Flat" combines art with one of the city's favorite past times: shopping.

The installation that will be set up at ART HK is like a showroom for a typical 24-square-meter Hong Kong apartment. Except, it is filled with art pieces for sale. This is affordable art gone local.

Co-founder of Art Flat, Diana d'Arenberg, says the booth plays off the setting of art fairs "which by their very nature are commercial."

Items on sale range from limited edition plates to clothing. Artwork is by international heavyweights such as Damien Hirst as well as items by local artists like Wilson Shieh.

Prices range from HK\$80 to HK\$4,000, making art investments accessible to more people.

May 17-20; Booth Z11, Level 3, ART HK, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1 Expo Drive, Wanchai

2. Landmark openings

Hong Kong is a magnet for international galleries looking to break into the Asian market.

After the Gagosian Gallery and White Cube, a new wave of dealers are setting up spaces here this May.

Auction powerhouse Sotheby's hops on the Hong Kong bandwagon with an impressive new gallery in Pacific Place.

Meanwhile in Pedder Building, Shanghai-based Pearl Lam is opening a space with an exhibition of Chinese abstract paintings. London gallerist Simon Lee is also setting up shop three floors below.

And the paint has just dried on the walls of French dealer Emmanuel Perrotin's new gallery at 50 Connaught Road. American graffiti artist KAWS will be flying in for the inaugural show.

www.perrotin.com (<http://www.perrotin.com>) ; www.pearllam.com (<http://www.pearllam.com>) ; www.simonleegallery.com (<http://www.simonleegallery.com>) ; [www.sothebys.com](http://www.sothebys.com/en/inside/locations-worldwide/hong-kong/overview.html) (<http://www.sothebys.com/en/inside/locations-worldwide/hong-kong/overview.html>)

Also on CNNGo: [Hirst in Hong Kong: Gagosian Gallery opens with 'Forgotten Promises'](http://www.cnn.go.com/hong-kong/play/gagosian-gallery-opens-hong-kong-damien-hirst-446592)

(<http://www.cnn.go.com/hong-kong/play/gagosian-gallery-opens-hong-kong-damien-hirst-446592>)

3. Celebrity artists, up close

Here's our chance to check out artists who earn more with one work than we ever will in a lifetime.

Hong Kong's top gallerists save the best for May, timing their biggest shows to coincide with the ART HK.



Annie Leibovitz was the last person to photograph John Lennon before his death.

See the work of German photographer Andreas Gursky. The Gagosian Gallery will be bringing in his solo exhibition featuring images shot in Hong Kong in the 1990s. Gursky is of "Rhine II" fame, the photograph [that fetched US\\$4.3 million](#) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/8884829/Why-is-Andreas-Gurskys-Rhine-II-the-most-expensive-photograph.html>) at Christie's in New York in 2011.

Sundaram Tagore is showing legendary American photographer Annie Leibovitz, of Hollywood portraiture fame.

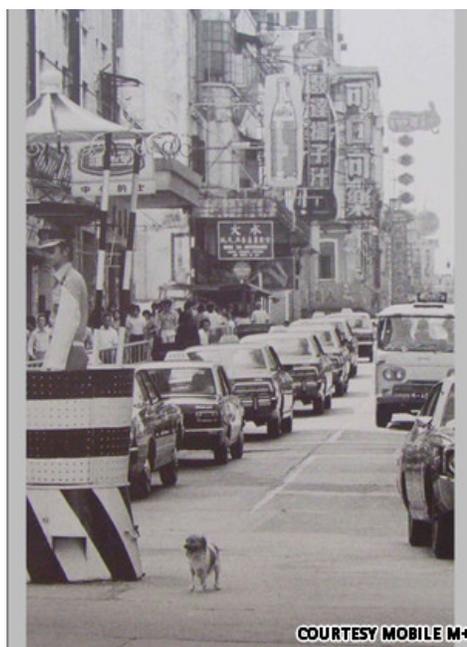
Meanwhile, Edouard Malingue Gallery just received official permission for French artist Laurent Grasso to set up a cabin-like installation on the rooftop of Central Ferry Pier 4 overlooking the harbor.

www.gagosian.com (<http://www.gagosian.com>)

; www.sundaramtagore.com (<http://www.sundaramtagore.com>)

; www.edouardmalingue.com (<http://www.edouardmalingue.com>)

4. Art takes over the city, literally



Watch out for Leung Mee-ping's nostalgic installation titled "I miss Fanta" in Yau Ma Tei.

Seven Hong Kong-based visual artists, including Pak Sheung-chuen and Tsang Kin-wah, are setting up site-specific installations across the historic district of Yau Ma Tei, one of Hong Kong's most crowded neighborhoods.

Look out for the pop-up exhibitions within recycling shops, calligraphy shops, public seating areas and street junctions. It's a series that inserts art right into the urban fabric of the city.

Dubbed "Mobile M+: Yau Ma Tei," the exhibitions will open on the eve of ART HK, to drum up anticipation for the M+ Museum. The behemoth art museum in West Kowloon Cultural District is scheduled to open in 2016.

Mobile M+ information center and starting point, Shop 1, G/F, Yen Chun Building, 18 Portland St., Yau Ma Tei. Open daily 9 a.m.-8 p.m. May 15-May 20; 10 a.m.-7 p.m., May 21-June 10; www.wkcda.hk/mobile-mplus (<http://www.wkcda.hk/mobile-mplus>)

5. Best way to enjoy art: eat it



Delicious irony: an edible Berlin wall on a decadent bed of foie gras.

Taking art as a point of departure, chef Uwe Opocensky at the Mandarin Grill + Bar has created a very literal edible art menu.

Each dish is based on a creative medium -- sculpture, graffiti, photography, painting and music.

For "graffiti," Opocensky used a slab of foie gras terrine and brioche to create an edible piece of the Berlin wall and sprayed on elaborate images with edible ink.

For "music," diners are made to listen to music on a set of headphones while an elaborate dessert is prepared right on the dining table to resemble messy art supplies.

That sort of thing.

The art menu is available throughout May at the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, 5 Connaught Road, Central, www.mandarinoriental.com (<http://www.mandarinoriental.com>)

6. Artist-led tours of Hong Kong



Hong Kong's grassroots communities through the eyes -- and ears -- of emerging artists.

Art fairs tend to focus on blue-chip players, but these emerging artists in Hong Kong are taking the spotlight out of the sterile art fair environment and into the streets of Hong Kong.

Local art organization, soundpocket, is working with two young artists Tsang Sin-yu and Wong Chun-hoi on their version of a soundwalk.

"The soundwalk makes room for different ways of imagining art," says Yeung Yang, founder of soundpocket.

"It is an intervention in the regular timeframe and regular sites in which the art market takes place."

The walk -- titled "Bring your own ears" -- is an aural adventure through To Kwa Wan district.

The duo leads visitors through a collapsed building and other sites to explore sounds such as clattering mah jong chips, mechanics at work, children playing and rustling trees.

The Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) students and professors recently joined forces to point their lens on one of the poorest districts of Hong Kong, Sham Shui Po.

After publishing a monograph titled "Tilting the Lens: Telling the Story of Sham Shui Po," which features photographs of people and architecture in the working class district, the college is organizing a tour to bring the pages of the book to life.

Director of Conservation and Historic Preservation at SCAD, Bob Dickensheets will be leading a tour past bonesetters, pawnshops and 19th-century temples that characterize the area.

To Kwa Wan Savannah, May 19, 3 p.m.–5 p.m., soundpocket, 10C, Gee Chang Industrial Building, 108 Lok Shan Road, Kowloon; listen@soundpocket.org.hk

SCAD walk in Sham Shui Po, May 19, noon–1 p.m., departing from the South Parking Lot at the Savannah College of Art and Design, 292 Tai Po Road Sham Shui Po, www.scad.edu (<http://www.scad.edu>)

7. The tyrant of tape



Proving granddad right: all you need is duct tape.

Street artist Max Zorn will be shaking things up at the ART HK vernissage, giving visitors a dose of the streets.

Based in Amsterdam, Zorn has built a reputation for roaming the city, creating cinematic portraits using nothing more than sticky tape.

Armed with his signature brown packing tape and a scalpel, Zorn will perform live at the fair and create a large work on site.

The tape specialist will also be based at The Sovereign Art Foundation's booth at various times during the fair

allowing children to assist him while he works.

Watch Max Zorn in action in [this YouTube video \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqoseOLkrc\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqoseOLkrc).

ART HK, Booth Z14, ART HK, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), 1 Expo Drive, Wanchai

8. Bigger is better, she says



Nature meets kawaii meets pipe dreams in Yayoi Kusama's giant artworks.

ART HK Projects is set on proving that size does matter.

Curator Yuko Hasegawa has selected 10 mammoth works to be shown in 100 square meter spaces. The monster installations will be scattered across the fair grounds.

In a city of shoebox-sized galleries, this highlight of the art fair is a chance to see works of an institutional scale.

"With the absence of a major [contemporary] museum in Hong Kong this is an opportunity to see what art can be," says Renfrew.

While the list of works is being kept secret, one of the highlights will be a series of giant hallucinogenic flowers by polka dot-obsessed artist Yayoi Kusama (this work will be located near the Gagosian Gallery booth).

ART HK 12, May 17-20, ART HK, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), 1 Expo Drive, Wanchai

9. Serious brainy stuff



Raise your hand at ART HK's series of talks and panels.

If you have an opinion about art, or would like to get one, this is the program for you.

ART HK pulls together movers and shakers in Asia's private museum industry for a salon-style conversation open to the public.

Speakers on this year's panel hail from institutions in China, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

And at an Intelligence Squared Debate Joseph Kosuth and media mogul Hung Huang will question whether "Contemporary Art Excludes the 99 Percent."

Meanwhile Asia Art Archive has invited celebrated curator and critic Okwui Enwezor to speak at its Backroom Conversations series.

Several book launches will also take place during the week including the Asia Society event "The Future is ... China" with celebrity curator Hans Ulrich Obrist.

The Royal Academy of Arts, London, will host an artist talk with renowned Japanese artist Mariko Mori who is currently showing a video work at the Asia Society.

Private Museum Panel, May 17, 2:15 p.m.-3:30 p.m. at ART HK, www.hongkongartfair.com
[\(http://www.hongkongartfair.com/eng/education-events/art-hk-private-museum-panel-in-partnership-with-vertu/102/\)](http://www.hongkongartfair.com/eng/education-events/art-hk-private-museum-panel-in-partnership-with-vertu/102/) Intelligence Squared
 debate, May 18, 6:30 p.m., Room N101 at ART HK, www.intelligencesquared.asia (<http://www.intelligencesquared.asia>).
 Okwui Enwezor talk, May 17, 6 p.m.-8 p.m., N106-108 at ART HK, www.aaa.org.hk/backroom
<http://www.aaa.org.hk/backroom> Mori Talk, May 17, noon-1 p.m., Asia Art Archive Booth N106-108 at ART
 HK, www.aaa.org.hk/backroom
<http://www.aaa.org.hk/backroom> Book launch, May 16, noon- 2 p.m., Asia Society Hong Kong, 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty,
www.asiasociety.org.hk (<http://www.asiasociety.org.hk>)

10. Warehouses of creativity



Dinh Q. Le's "Erasure" installation.

The city's various industrial buildings have become a breeding ground for creativity.

One of the most active art communities is in Chai Wan's warehouse spaces where gallerists, artists and non-profits will throw open their doors for the "Art East Island" event during the fair.

Veteran gallery 10 Chancery Lane's space will be taken over by a haunting video installation by Vietnamese Artist Dinh Q. Le.

Next door, an underground community of book sellers, fashion designers, artists and café owners have banded together for the open studio event "Chai Wan Mei."

Look out for Tangram design studio's sale on May 19 featuring pieces by some of the city's best fashion designers and creatives. Stop in for coffee and cake at warehouse café Chaiwanese after.

Shuttle buses will run daily to and from Chai Wan and the fair.

Art East Island, Chai Wan Industrial City Phase 1, 60 Wing Tai Road, Chai Wan; 10 Chancery Lane: Unit 603-605; arteastisland.wordpress.com

<http://arteastisland.wordpress.com/> Chai Wan Mei, Chai Wan Industrial City Phase 2, 70 Wing Tai Road, Chai Wan,

Tangram: Unit 1701, Chaiwanese: Unit 1307, check out [Chai Wan Mei on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ChaiWanMei)

<https://www.facebook.com/ChaiWanMei>



[\(node/43631\)](#)

A freelance writer, Payal Uttam found her way back to Hong Kong after a prolonged stint in Chicago.

Read more about [Payal Uttam \(node/43631\)](#)

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