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TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY SHOWCASES 「INK CITY」

Pushing the expressive boundaries of ink art through engagement with contemporary issues and narratives

Hong Kong, 21 April 2021, Wednesday



Tai Kwun Contemporary is pleased to announce a new thematic group exhibition, *INK CITY*, running from 23 April to 1 August 2021 at the art galleries in Tai Kwun. Curated by Katherine Don and Tobias Berger, *INK CITY* sets out an expanded vision of ink art grounded in contemporary themes, featuring artists who explore the transformative power of art to shape ideas and awareness.

With a selection of paintings, calligraphy, artists' books, installations, and video works spanning over fifty years, *INK CITY* showcases the diverse perspectives of artists from different generations and backgrounds, artists who live in Hong Kong, in other provinces in the Mainland, as well as a few artists who now reside in Europe or North America. These artists are nevertheless united in their passionate exploration of contemporary subjects, revealing to viewers the many ways in which artists understand and interpret the world through the medium of ink, and in doing so, demonstrating the dynamism of ink art.

While recognising the legacy of the ink tradition, *INK CITY* focuses on selected artists who tackle present-day social issues relatively more overtly through ink art. The exhibition finds its starting point in Hong Kong and extends across the global Chinese diaspora; in many ways, Hong Kong offers an ideal vantage point for viewers to see the conceptual breadth of contemporary ink art, thanks to the city's multifaceted heritage and its history of change and growth. Additionally, *INK CITY* revolves around issues encountered in dense cities such as Hong Kong. Some artists featured in *INK CITY* dive into complex urban problems such as environmental degradation and excessive material consumerism; other artists focus on





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feelings of isolation and personal struggles, while others tackle universal themes of gender, identity, desire, and fantasy,

Tobias Berger, Head of Art at Tai Kwun, said, “With *INK CITY* at Tai Kwun Contemporary, our curatorial intent is to present a thematic exhibition of what ink art can be within a contemporary art context. Some of the most fascinating contemporary artists in Hong Kong, such as Luis Chan and Chu Hing-Wah, have a grounding in ink art and extend its long tradition while providing fresh visual interpretations of everyday life encountered in a modern city like Hong Kong. It is our hope that visitors to *INK CITY* come away with an appreciation of how contemporary concerns may be addressed through ink art in refreshing and humorous ways—and indeed, how it can enrich artistic discourse in Hong Kong and beyond.”

Katherine Don, curator of the exhibition, said, “*INK CITY* is conceived as an opportunity to present contemporary ink art by both established and emerging artists of the genre, with the exhibition curated through a narrative that is focused on cultivating social awareness and change. Therefore, rather than exploring formalist themes of ink art and its materials, the exhibition focuses on social themes inspired, provoked, and articulated by the artists’ intentions. However broadly or narrowly defined, the artworks in this exhibition present examples of ink art free from the narrow confines of tradition and seek to engage with a wider public in the 20th and 21st century.”

INK CITY brings together a dynamic range of artists with an inclination towards ink and whose visual art offer a gamut of contemporary perspectives—from penetrating insights and trenchant satire of urban transformation to profound reflections and playful humour around social themes such as gender and cultural identity. Whether living and working in Amsterdam, Paris, Vancouver, New York, Beijing, or Hong Kong, the exhibited artists activate conversations that transcend geographical boundaries and provide a unique opportunity for viewers to witness the social narratives of a generation marked by transition.

The title of the exhibition is taken from *Ink City*, a video work by the late artist Chen Shaoxiong which is featured in the exhibition. A video of a day-long journey, the footage is composed of hundreds of ink wash observations that collectively convey a fleeting sensation of the frenetic urban transformation in the Mainland. In a similar way, the exhibition adopts a fragmentary approach in juxtaposing diverse artistic styles and visions of ink art, which are united in the artists’ passionate exploration of the power of art in shaping ideas and awareness.

Artists on show include:

- Luis Chan
- Chen Shaoxiong
- Chu Hing-Wah
- Sherry Fung Hoi Shan
- Frog King Kwok
- Lam Tung Pang
- Joey Leung Ka Yin
- Li Jin
- Wilson Shieh
- Sun Xun





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- Frank Tang Kai Yiu
- Tao Aimin
- Walasse Ting
- Tsang Tsou-Choi (King of Kowloon)
- Howie Tsui
- Evelyn Taocheng Wang
- Wei Dong
- Yang Jiechang
- Zhang Yanzi

Katherine Don is an independent curator and specialist of contemporary ink art. Previous roles included Head of Arts and Cultural Development at Asia Society Hong Kong Center, Head of Contemporary Ink Art at Sotheby's Hong Kong, and private advisor based in Beijing for contemporary Asian art. Past curatorial projects in Beijing, New York, Canada, and Spain had a consistent focus on works on paper, including contemporary Chinese ink painting. Born in Maui, USA, Don holds a dual-degree in Art History and East Asian Studies from Barnard College, Columbia University, and received an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management. She currently lives and works between Los Angeles and Honolulu where she currently serves as Executive Director of Hawaii Contemporary, presenting the Hawaii Triennial.

Public Programmes

Tai Kwun invites visitors of different backgrounds to join our learning and experience programmes—and explore possibilities through dialogue with art .

Hi! & Seek

Located on Tai Kwun Contemporary's second floor, Hi! & Seek is a space of dialogue and exploration. Tai Kwun is delighted to share with the public the stories behind the exhibitions and the artworks. Send Tai Kwun your insights and ideas, or questions and thoughts for the curator(s) or artist(s). This version of Hi! & Seek is co-presented by Tai Kwun Contemporary, CUMT4007 Museum Studies class, BA Programme in Cultural Management, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Dr Vivian Ting.

Tai Kwun Contemporary Weekend Guided Tour

Weekend visitors at Tai Kwun can enjoy an afternoon tour with one of our friendly, professional docents in order to learn about the art in our exhibitions.

Date & Time: 2 May–1 Aug 2021 every Saturday and Sunday, 2pm (Cantonese) & 3pm (English)

Venue: Tai Kwun Contemporary





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Family Day

Family visitors at Tai Kwun Contemporary can join gallery activities and family workshops. Each parent or guardian can bring one child (5+ years) to spend the day with us and learn about art.

Date: 9 & 23 May 2021; 6 & 20 Jun 2021; 11 & 18 Jul 2021; 8, 15 & 22 Aug 2021

Time: 11am–1pm & 3pm–5pm

Venue: Tai Kwun Contemporary

Tickets: \$80 per time slot, Family Pair (one adult with one child)

Visitor information

INK CITY runs from 23 April 2021 to 1 August 2021, every Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to 7pm at the art galleries in Tai Kwun. Free admission, with guided tours and related public programmes available. Along with *INK CITY*, visitors can visit *Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys*, a group exhibition that stems from the research of Ha Bik Chuen’s archive with five new commissioned works. The exhibition invites visitors to develop a nuanced understanding of Hong Kong’s cultural and artistic world.

The entire Tai Kwun site is open to the public daily from 10am to 11pm, while JC Contemporary is open from 11am to 7pm daily.

Tai Kwun’s social distancing measures comply with the latest safety regulations. Visitors are required to wear surgical masks, undergo temperature screening, and either scan the “LeaveHomeSafe” QR code or register personal particulars. Eating and drinking in public areas is temporarily prohibited. The frequency of cleaning is being stepped up for high contact surfaces throughout the day, and hand sanitiser stations are available throughout Tai Kwun.

Visit the Tai Kwun website for more details:

https://www.taikwun.hk/en/visit/visiting_tai_kwun

Programme details are subject to change, please refer to the Tai Kwun websites for news and updates.

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Editor’s notes:

Please click [here](#) to download the exhibition guidebook and hi-res images with captions.

About [Tai Kwun — Centre for Heritage and Arts](#)

Tai Kwun is Hong Kong’s Centre for Heritage and Arts — a cultural destination for inspiration, stimulation and enjoyment. We aspire to offer the best heritage and arts experiences, and to cultivate knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art, performing arts and history in the community.

Tai Kwun invites all visitors on a journey of discovery that unites across multiple genres of arts, heritage, culture and lifestyle in Hong Kong. Here, visitors will discover the rich heritage of the site through the thematic exhibitions and immersive public programmes that explore





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Hong Kong's history and culture, alongside a multitude of vibrant and inclusive contemporary art presentations and performing arts offerings all year round.

Opened in May 2018 and operating on a not-for-profit model, Tai Kwun is the fruition of a joint partnership between The Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Government of the HKSAR to conserve and revitalise the buildings of the historic Central Police Station compound, which represents one of the most significant revitalisation projects in Hong Kong. The site comprises three Declared Monuments of Hong Kong – the former Central Police Station, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison – all have been meticulously conserved, with unflinching attention to authenticity. The site also includes two new buildings – JC Contemporary and JC Cube, by renowned architects Herzog & de Meuron – and several outdoor spaces – Parade Ground, Prison Yard and Laundry Steps – providing an exciting venue for the public programmes presented by Tai Kwun and its partners.

Tai Kwun, which means “big station” in Chinese, is the colloquial name used by Hong Kong people to refer to the former police headquarters and the surrounding compound. The name has been adopted as a reminder of the historical importance of this living heritage site.

In 2019, Tai Kwun received the Award of Excellence in the 2019 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. This is the highest honour of the prestigious Awards, which bestows an international recognition of the outstanding achievement in the conservation and revitalisation efforts of Tai Kwun.

Tai Kwun Contemporary is the not-for-profit visual art programme of Tai Kwun. Realising six to eight exhibitions a year and curatorially driven, Tai Kwun Contemporary showcases and commissions artists from Hong Kong and beyond, while offering an extensive range of public programming. With the aspiration to contribute to and transform the experience and understanding of contemporary art in Hong Kong, Tai Kwun Contemporary is devoted to inspiring the Hong Kong public with an inquisitive attitude and committed to offering a conducive platform for learning and experimentation.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.TaiKwun.hk>.

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