

YOUR GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND

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48
HOURS

**IAN MCKELLEN:
WORDS FROM
THE WISE**

**A FRESH TAKE
ON JAPANESE
CURRY**

**EXPLORE THE
NATURAL HIGHS
OF PING CHAU**

There's a lot going on just over the border

Shenzhen express

EXHIBITION

PATTERN OF ABUSE

Text: KYLIE KNOTT



THE PERMEABILITY OF CERTAIN MATTERS

Spring Workshop

HYPNOTIC WALLPAPER lines the huge gallery space, the pinkish pattern grabbing the eye's gaze, interrupted sporadically by framed pictures of flowers. It's all very serene and country estate. But serious messages exist beneath "The Permeability of Certain Matters" exhibition at the Spring Workshop in Aberdeen, about mass production and the history of child labour.

The show, a collaboration between Cypriot Christodoulos Panayiotou and German-born Philip Wiegard, sets Panayiotou's photographic works against the backdrop of Wiegard's handcrafted wallpaper called "Festoons."

"The print used on the wallpaper is a pattern inspired by a German design from the 1770s. It's a pattern that used an artisanal technique that benefits from the dexterity of children's small fingers," says Wiegard. But what the viewer does not get to see are the

behind the scenes "making of" of the wallpaper, a production process that took 11 days and involved 32 tiny-fingered children recruited from across Hong Kong.

Alluding to different labour practices of the pre-industrial and industrial age, Wiegard choreographed a workflow that optimised the labour intensive creation of large quantities of wallpaper.

Aged from eight to 15 years, the children worked from 10am to 4pm for several days last month, with rest and meal breaks and an allowance of HK\$40 an hour (more than Hong Kong's minimum wage of HK\$30 per hour). "My work contradicts the idea of a workshop in the context of art or pedagogy by inverting its commonplace values of self expression and creativity.

"Instead, the children have to function within a standardised framework and workflow to produce

the geometrical and repetitive pattern. But their signatures remain in the gestural expressiveness of the manual rendering. It creates a sense of instability and awkwardness that paraphrases the state and appearance of adolescence," he explains.

The photos are part of a project by Panayiotou, who visited Guangdong province to research what has become home to the world's largest concentration of artificial flower factories. "I've wanted to get to the production source of these globalised and aesthetically charged objects for a while; it's a sort of 'reverse pilgrimage'."

Spring Workshop, 3/F Remex Centre, 42 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Tuesday-Sunday, noon-6pm. Ends July 13. Inquiries: 2110 4370

PLASTIC FANTASTIC: artworks by Christodoulos Panayiotou. Photo: courtesy of the artist and Rodeo