

Time Out

Hong Kong

ART BASEL SPECIAL!

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The SHAPE OF ART *to come*

From independent curators to directors of major institutions,
meet the individuals shaping perceptions of art in Hong Kong

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The **SHAPE OF ART** *to come*



Originating from the Latin word 'curare', meaning 'to take care', curators are the ones who bring exhibitions to life. Masters of multi-tasking, they are scholars, anthropologists, managers and often artists themselves. *Time Out* brings together six young curators working in various art spaces, from public institution to artist-run space, to discover how they're helping shape the local art scene. Art direction by Phoebe Cheng. Photography by Calvin Sit

Christina Li

Director and curator, Spring Workshop

Spring Workshop is one of the most extreme independent art spaces in Hong Kong. Snuggled into the industrial area of Wong Chuk Hang, the non-conformist space comes with an expiry date – it's a five year project that will complete in 2017. Who knows what's going to happen next, so be sure to head down for a stimulating experience of contemporary art!

You used to work for TVB Pearl, so how did you end up working in the art world?

By accident! I graduated from art history and comparative literature at Hong Kong University and at that time, I wasn't really aware of curating. Still, I got involved in the Hong Kong gallery world through reviewing a show at the now closed John Batten Gallery as a university student, and slowly built an understanding of the local art scene. After a short stint working at TVB Pearl on the scheduling and programming team, I was introduced to Tobias Berger, who had just arrived at Para Site as its first artistic director and was looking for an assistant curator to join his curatorial team. Under his mentorship I learnt about everything from installing projectors, to painting walls, conducting studio visits and conceptualising shows.

After curating a show at Spring Workshop last March, its founder, Mimi Brown, invited me to direct Spring, and it's an adventure I've been on since last August.

What in particular appealed to you about art?

What's always drawn me to the art world is the interaction, as well as rapport that I have built with artists, curators and other people who are dedicated to thinking rigorously about the world through art. Sometimes it just takes a good show or even a studio visit to remind myself why I am working as a curator. These encounters can transform how we look at the world around us as well as our experience as human beings.

What do you love about your job?

I adore the conversations I have with the artists I work with. Curating isn't only about how to put things in a space but also about developing ongoing exchanges with the artists you work with. Another part that I love is installation. I enjoy getting involved with hanging works as well as discussing and sometimes debating with artists about how we envision the works should look in the space. It's not always smooth sailing, but working as a curator means you should also be able to mitigate differences in opinions and viewpoints.

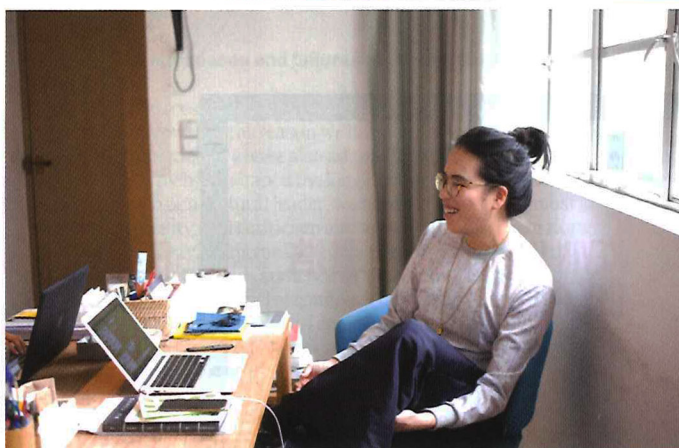
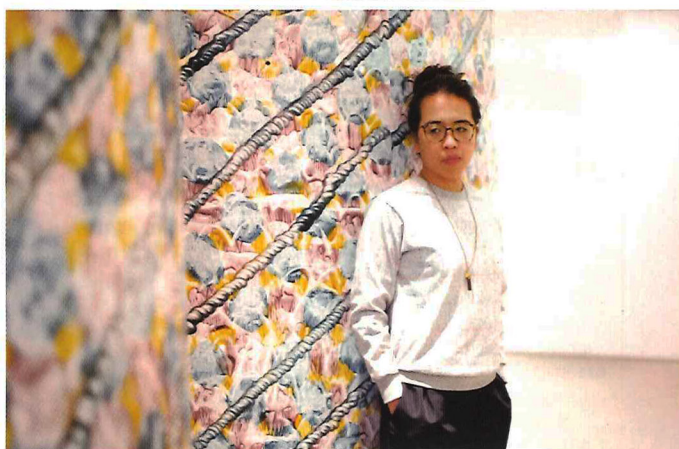
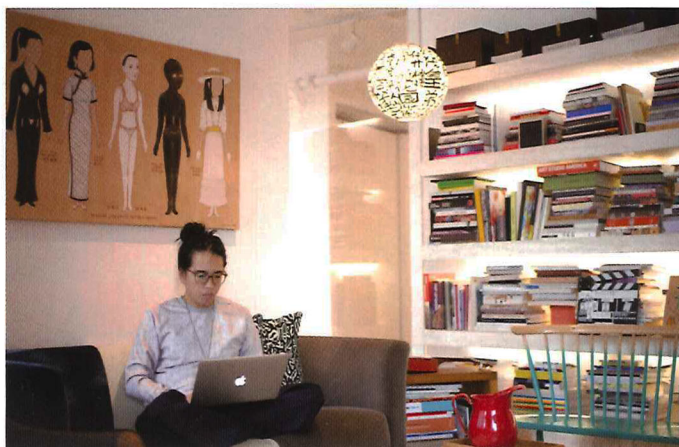
Why is curating important?

I don't know if curating is necessarily more important than other creative practices. In my mind, the work of a curator should help highlight and give visibility to voices, practices, histories or perspectives that ought to be put to the fore but, for whatever reasons – political, historical, ideological – aren't. I think what curating can achieve is to bring forth a situation or a space, be it an exhibition, a talk or a performance, where there would be a moment of encounter, or even action, only made possible by that curated moment.

What do you think the Hong Kong art scene lacks? And how can we fill that gap?

I think there should be more smaller or mid-sized spaces for young artists and curators to develop and present work. Compared to when I was a university student, there are so many more places where one could regularly see amazing work by international artists. Even though I, myself and others working in Hong Kong try to create moments on a varying scale in our programming, I do feel that more space is needed for homegrown talent to gather, discuss and grow together as a scene.

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Spring Workshop 3/F, Remex Ctr, 42 Wong Chuk Hang Rd, Aberdeen, 2110 4370; springworkshop.org.