

Macao 澳門

Standing Side by Side

President Xi Jinping and Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng
look towards Macao's future together



Macao Movie Special:
Filmstars, awards and
iconic locations



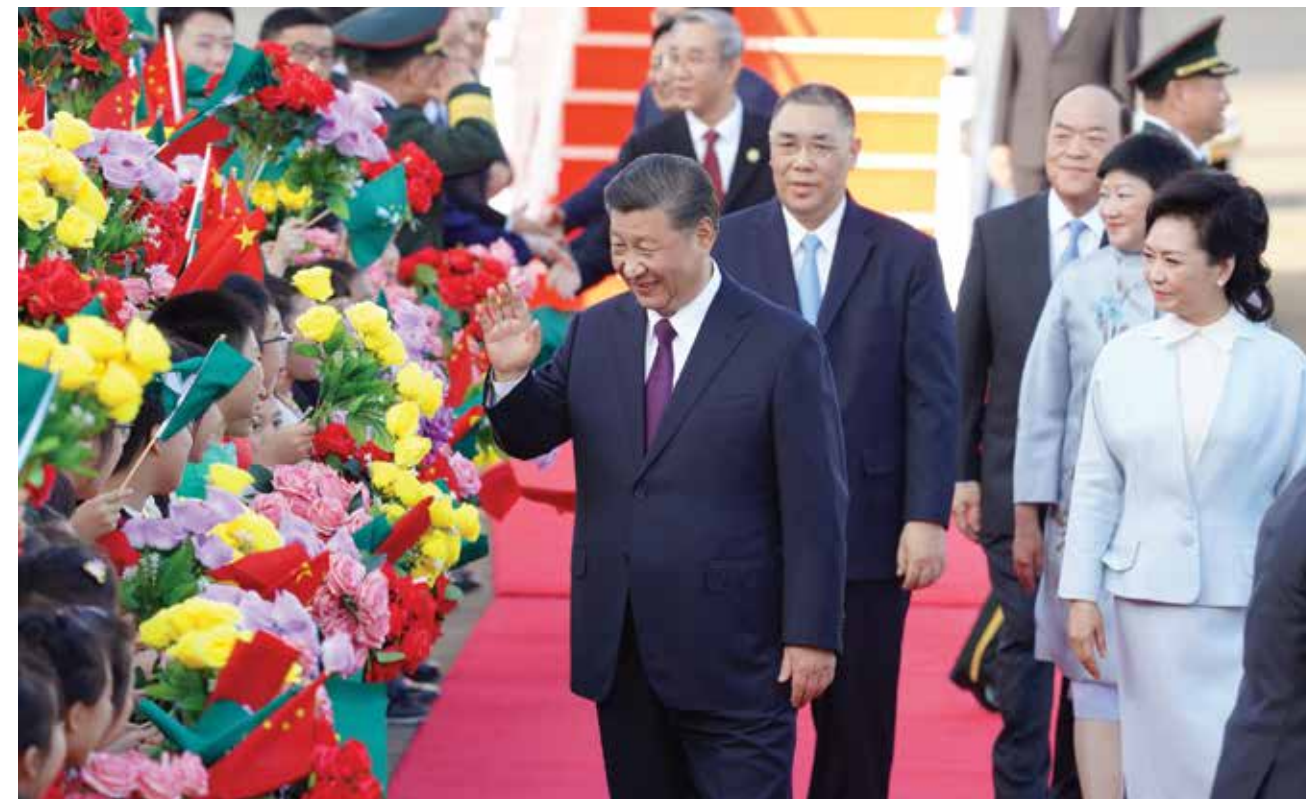
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IN THIS ISSUE



Addressing the SAR

It isn't every day that China's President visits Macao. But on a three-day trip to the city in December, Xi Jinping had many positive words to say about our future. **p.4**



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Macao Movie Special

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You're the Artist

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Meet our team

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Cover Illustration Chinese President Xi Jinping and Macao Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng. Photo by Reuters

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We’ve been busy over the past few months and redesigned our website. It’s packed with new stories and information on Macao. Check it out now at www.macaomagazine.net



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From the Editor

A new decade and a new life for Macao

Macao starts 2020 with a new Chief Executive, a new government and unlimited support from China to become an example of how the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle can be an engine of development and progress.

This was the vision and message given by the President of China, Xi Jinping, when he visited the territory in December for the inauguration of Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, clearly showing the guidelines for the future development of the Special Administrative Region of Macao.

These are articles we develop in our first issue of the decade that show in detail what President Xi wants for Macao and the position and role of the territory as a ‘platform’, as a ‘centre’ and as a major city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In this issue, Macao Magazine also features the new members of the Macao government, which is led by Ho Iat Seng, a former president of the Macao Legislative Assembly. We take a look at the new government members’ varied roles and backgrounds.

The increasing internationalisation of Macao’s Film Festival and Awards is also covered in this magazine alongside two other pieces dedicated to cinema in the city – Macao’s iconic film locations and an interview with one of the territory’s award-winning directors, Tracy Choi.

With art as a main topic in the city over the past few months, we cover a current exhibition by architect and artist Carlos Marreiros, Red December, which marks the 20th anniversary of the Macao Special Administrative Region. We also present the TeamLab exhibition, which will soon be in the city, where colours and sounds change our view of the real world and lead us into a new universe of sensations.

Lastly, we cover the multitude of forts and fortresses that have been built since the beginning of the Portuguese presence in the city in the 16th century. These structures were largely aimed at stopping any conquests by European countries, especially the Dutch and the British, who tried in vain to occupy the city. Far from those days in history and as we celebrate a new decade, join us as we enter a new dawn for Macao.

Gonçalo César de Sá
Editor-in-Chief

Politics

Welcoming President Xi

Text Christian Ritter and Gonalo C sar de S 

Photos Xinhua News Agency and Government Information Bureau

Macao played host to Xi Jinping in December – and China’s President said during a speech in the city that Macao and Hong Kong’s issues are the nation’s ‘internal matters’ and that no external forces can ‘dictate things to us’.



Macao became a place of celebration in December during the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Special Administrative Region. There were parties, parades and fireworks on and around 20 December to mark two decades since the handover of administration from Portugal to China. And one of the centrepieces of the celebrations was the visit of President Xi Jinping for three days in the SAR.

On the final day of his visit – which took place between 18 and 20 December – Xi gave a speech at the Macao East Asian Dome in Cotai. In the speech, he stressed that with the return of Macao and Hong Kong to the motherland, the handling of affairs in the two Special Administrative Regions is ‘strictly China’s

internal matter’ so ‘there is no need for any external forces to dictate things to us’.

Xi, who spoke during the swearing-in ceremony of fifth-term Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng, stated that the Chinese government and people have a ‘rock-firm determination’ to uphold national sovereignty, security and the country’s development interests. “We will never tolerate any external interference in Hong Kong and Macao affairs,” he added.

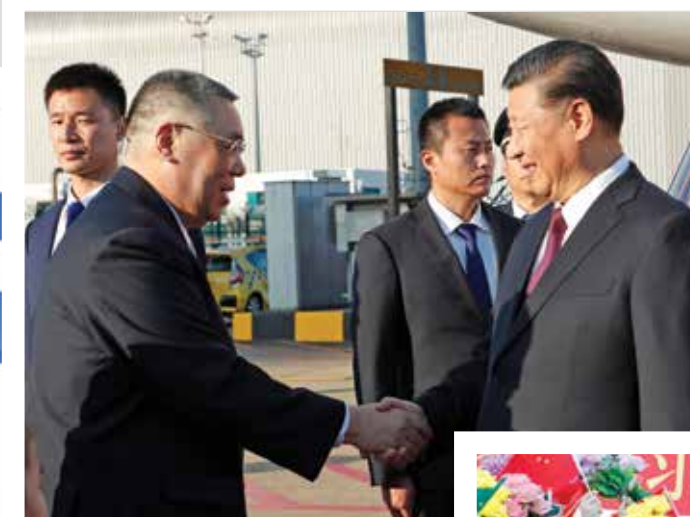
Xi said, to an audience of 1,100 people, that, over the past two decades, with the strong support of the central government and the Mainland and under the leadership of Chief Executives Ho Hau Wah and Chui Sai On, the SAR’s government and people from various sectors of Macao society have worked

FIRST DAY OF VISIT

18 December 2019



President Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan wave as they step out of their aircraft upon arrival at Macau International Airport



President Xi shakes hands with Macao’s outgoing Chief Executive Chui Sai On at the airport



President Xi receives a warm welcome upon arrival in Macao

closely together to take the city into its ‘best development’ period in history. A shining chapter has been written in the successful practice of ‘One Country, Two Systems’ with Macao characteristics, Xi added.

Constitutional matters

During the 30-minute speech, Xi pointed out that in the past 20 years Macao has ‘solidly established a constitutional order’ on the basis of the national Constitution and the SAR’s Basic Law, and it has improved its governance system. Macao’s constitutional responsibilities for upholding national sovereignty, security and the nation’s development interests have been effectively implemented, Xi underlined.

And he said that the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the SAR have performed their duties in ‘strict accordance’ with the law. In doing so, he added, they have ensured the ‘smooth functioning’ of the ‘executive-led system’ with the Chief Executive at its centre. As a result, according to Xi, the SAR has made orderly progress in democratic and political development, and Macao residents’ extensive rights and freedoms under the law have been ‘fully guaranteed’.

Xi said that, in the past 20 years since its return to the motherland, Macao has achieved phenomenal economic development and continuous improvements in people’s lives. Steady progress has been made in establishing Macao as ‘one centre, one platform, one

base’, he said. ‘One centre, one platform, one base’ refers to Macao’s role as global tourism and leisure centre, a commercial and trade co-operation service platform between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries and a cultural exchange and co-operation base with Chinese culture as its mainstream and the co-existence of different cultures, Xi pointed out.

The President also pointed out that significant results have been achieved in Macao’s ‘appropriate’ economic diversification and various emerging industries, such as conventions and exhibitions, traditional Chinese medicine and featured finance are booming, Xi said. Macao has taken an active part in the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater

Bay Area, Xi noted, adding that people’s welfare benefits have ‘risen substantially’.

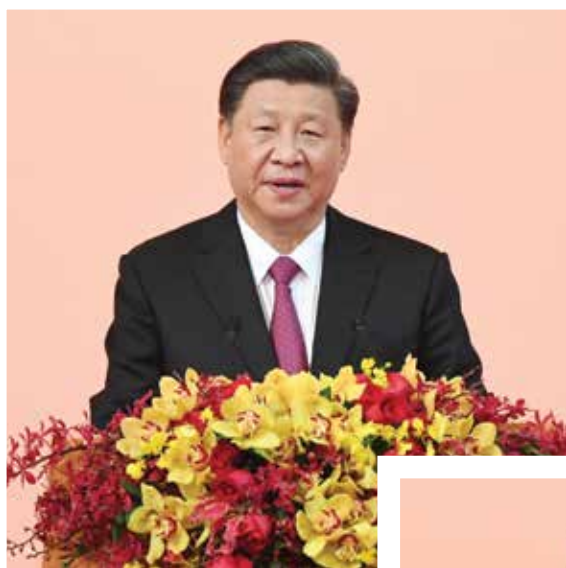
A harmonious message

President Xi stressed that in the past two decades, Macao has enjoyed social stability and harmony and a fusion of diverse cultures. ‘Inadequate law and order’ – a problem before the city’s return to the motherland – was swiftly addressed and Macao is now one of the safest cities in the world, he said. People from all walks of life express their aspirations and views in a ‘rational manner’ with a sound co-ordination mechanism in place, he said. On such a basis, Macao has both contributed to Chinese culture and embraced diverse cultures, Xi underlined.

SECOND DAY OF VISIT
19 December 2019



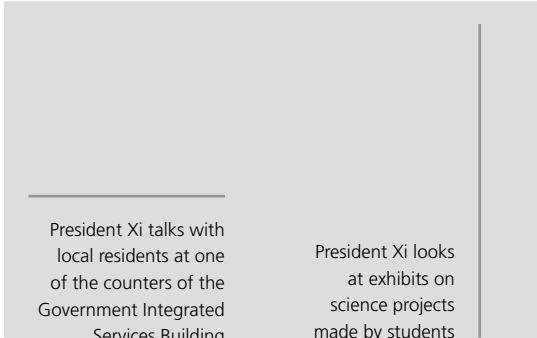
President Xi tours the Portuguese-speaking Countries Food Products Exhibition Centre



The outgoing Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, makes a speech at the welcome reception



President Xi pays a visit to the Government Integrated Services Building to learn about public services in Macao

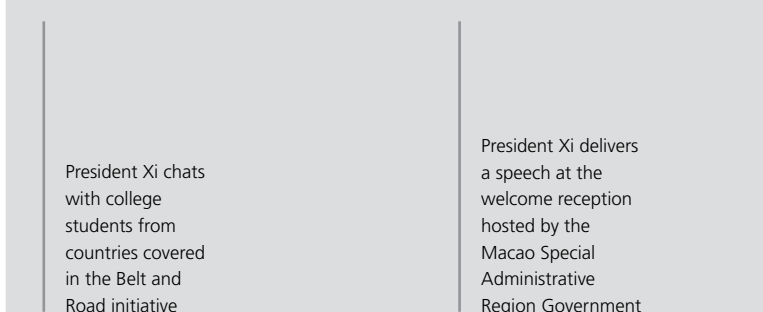


President Xi talks with local residents at one of the counters of the Government Integrated Services Building

President Xi looks at exhibits on science projects made by students



President Xi chats with college students from countries covered in the Belt and Road initiative



President Xi delivers a speech at the welcome reception hosted by the Macao Special Administrative Region Government



The President stressed that Macao's accomplishments over the past 20 years have captured the world's attention. Though limited in size, the city plays a unique role in the practice of 'One Country, Two Systems' as former leader of the People's Republic of China Deng Xiaoping envisaged 30 years ago. Firstly, the fellow compatriots in Macao genuinely support 'One Country, Two Systems' and see it as the 'best institutional arrangement' to ensure Macao's long-term prosperity and stability. In implementing 'One Country, Two Systems', Macao has been good at 'seizing the opportunities' brought about by the major development strategies and policies of the country. As a result, the city has gained a strong momentum and achieved

better development by finding its place in the overall development of the country. Macao's successful experience speaks volumes about the 'viability and strength' of the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle as long as the compatriots are 'committed to it and act on it', Xi stressed.

Secondly, the fellow compatriots in Macao truly have recognised 'One Country' as the premise and precondition of 'Two Systems', 'unequivocally upheld' the constitutional order established by the Constitution and the Basic Law, and respected the socialist system adopted on the Mainland and correctly handled issues concerning the relationship between the central government and the SAR. The executive branch, legislature and

judiciary of the SAR have upheld the central government's overall jurisdiction over the SAR while ensuring the SAR's high degree of autonomy, Xi stressed.

Thirdly, Macao compatriots have always maintained a strong sense of mission and responsibility in implementing the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and have always kept the country's overall interests and Macao's fundamental interests firmly in mind. The President pointed out that intensive efforts have been made by the SAR's government to focus on economic growth, effectively raise

**“
We will never
tolerate any
external
interference in
Hong Kong and
Macao affairs.”**

living standards, steadfastly uphold the rule of law, progressively advance democracy and promote social inclusiveness and harmony.

Fourthly, Xi said that Macao compatriots have a tradition of loving the motherland as well as a strong sense of national identity, belonging and pride, adding that this is the 'most important' reason behind the success of 'One Country, Two Systems' in Macao. He pointed out that the journey of 'One Country, Two Systems' is 'long and hard', adding that the world is experiencing changes unseen in a century and Macao is facing new

LAST DAY OF VISIT 20 December 2019



President Xi administers the oath of office to Ho Iat Seng, the fifth-term Chief Executive of the Macao SAR



The 20th Anniversary Celebration of Macao's Return to the Motherland and the Inauguration Ceremony of the Fifth-term Government of the Macao SAR is held at the East Asian Games Dome



President Xi shakes hands with Ho Iat Seng, who is newly sworn in as the fifth-term Chief Executive of the Macao SAR



The Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng, delivers a speech at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of Macao's Return to the Motherland and the Inauguration Ceremony of the Fifth-term Government of the Macao SAR

President Xi meets with the leaders of the central government's organisations stationed in Macao as well as representatives of enterprises with Chinese capital stationed in Macao, and poses for a group photo with them



dynamics internally and externally. In this context, Xi urged the new Macao government and all sectors of the city's society to stand higher and look farther, break new ground while keeping to the right path and be 'results-orientated' and 'hard-working'.

Four hopes

Building on what Macao has accomplished, Xi pointed out four hopes he has for the SAR. Firstly, he pointed out that Macao needs to adapt to the dynamics and new requirements of modern social governance, advance reform in public administration and other systems, enhance efficacy in administration and governance, and modernise the

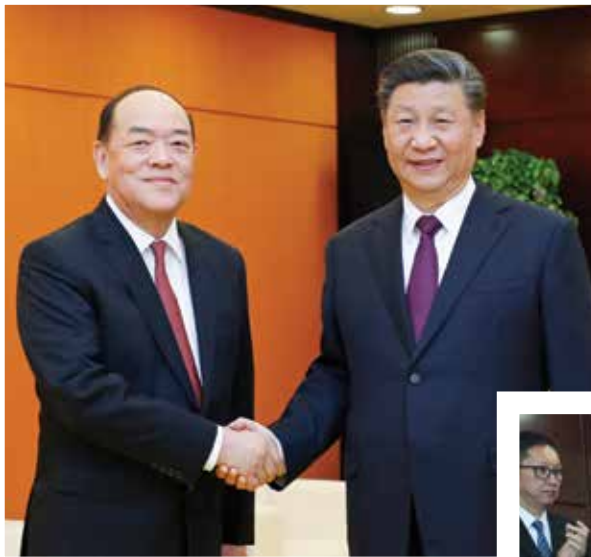
governance system and capacity. In addition, he said, Macao needs to harness science and technology, and move faster in public administration and social governance by using big data and other information technologies. The objective, he noted, is to enable better decision-making by the government, a more targeted approach to social governance and more efficient delivery of public services.

Secondly, the President stressed that a long-term perspective must be adopted when drawing development plans. With the goal of becoming 'one centre, one platform, one base' in mind, Macao needs to develop well-conceived plans, adopt a holistic and co-ordinated approach and implement the plans step-by-step. He also pointed out that

Macao needs to carve out its role in national strategies, seize the opportunities provided by Belt and Road Initiative co-operation and of the Greater Bay Area, better leverage its own strength and sharpen its competitive edge, as well as to ensure good collaboration with Zhuhai in developing Hengqin, as it will create immense space for Macao's long-term development and inject 'fresh impetus' into it.

Thirdly, Xi stressed that it must be clearly understood that the goal of development is to deliver better lives to the people of Macao, thus Macao needs to adopt institutional arrangements that are 'fairer, more equitable and beneficial to all', so that the fruits of development can be shared by all in the community. He pointed out that Macao

needs to combine its development needs with the people's needs and improve public infrastructure relating to transportation, energy, environmental protection, information and law and order. The SAR needs to solve 'prominent issues' in housing, healthcare and care for the elderly, and scale up assistance and support to the vulnerable. It is also important to keep developing education and put in place a high-standard education system, so as to create a more conducive environment for children and young people to grow and live to their full potential, Xi noted. Fourthly, the President pointed out that the core value of loving the motherland as well as Macao needs to be upheld and encouraged so that everyone in society will be mobilised



President Xi shakes hands with the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng

President Xi shakes hands with leading officials representing respectively the public administration, the legislature and the judiciary of the fifth-term government of the Macao SAR



President Xi inspects the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Garrison in Macao

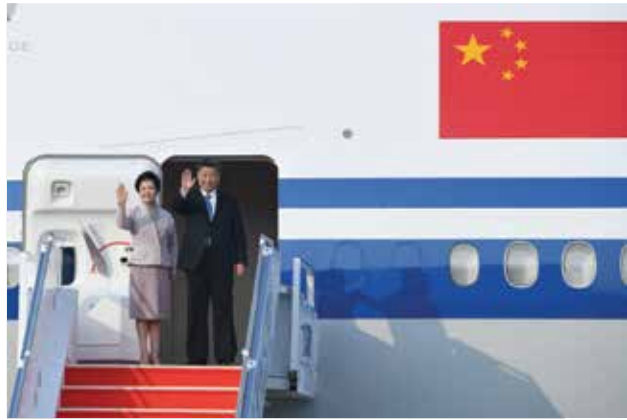
Wrapping up his Macao visit, President Xi bids farewell to the Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng



President Xi concludes his three-day visit to Macao



President Xi makes an address to leading officials representing respectively the public administration, the legislature and the judiciary of the fourth-term Government of the Macao SAR led by former Chief Executive Chui Sai On



to contribute to Macao’s development. He said societal problems must be properly addressed for the greater good of social harmony. As a place where Chinese and Western cultures meet, Macao is well positioned to do more to promote international people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning between civilisations, the President concluded.

Economic success

During a reception given by former Chief Executive Chui Sai On, Xi praised the economic and social achievements of the SAR over the past 20 years which have enabled ‘rapid and robust development’ in Macao and a substantial improvement in the well-being of its population. Xi, in a six-minute speech to 600 guests, praised the city for combining the principles and requirements of ‘One Country, Two Systems’ with the local reality.

President Xi also noted five points that he considered fundamental for Macao’s success at the reception. He named ‘the love of the motherland and Macao’ as the first point and stated that after the transfer of administration to China in 1999, ‘Macao patriots considered this aspect to be the most important and fundamental’. The consolidation of the Constitution and the Basic Law in Macao, the collaboration and balance between the Chief Executive and the executive and legislative bodies, and the independence of the judicial bodies were also mentioned by President Xi as important points that led to the development and progress of Macao.

Xi Jinping, who was making his sixth visit to Macao, also referred to the positive and proactive attitude of Macao and its population to be an integral part of national development, taking advantage of the opportunities created by the national strategies, such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. He said: “Macao has been good at seizing the opportunities brought by the major development strategies and policies of the country.” He also considered that an atmosphere of inclusiveness and harmony had strengthened social cohesion.

Among the visits that Xi made to governmental departments, schools and other institutions in the territory in December were the future facilities of the Services Complex for Trade Co-operation between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries, located next to Macau Tower, which he said was an important instrument for strengthening the city’s capacity to operate as a platform in tune with the needs of the country. He also met China’s representatives in Macao, the Mainland companies based in the SAR and members of the present and previous government. Plus, he visited the People’s Liberation Army headquarters and the troops stationed in the territory. ●

PRESIDENT XI’S SIX VISITS TO MACAO

● **2000**

When he was governor of Fujian province

● **2001**

His second visit while he was governor of Fujian province

● **2005**

When he was secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in Zhejiang province

● **2009**

When he was vice-president of the People’s Republic of China

● **2014**

As President of the PRC to attend the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the Macao SAR and to instate the second government headed by Chui Sai On

● **2019**

As President of the PRC to attend the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Macao SAR and to instate the fifth government headed by Ho Iat Seng



Ho Iat Seng has been Macao’s new Chief Executive since 20 December

A new dawn

Text Christian Ritter and Gonalo C sar de S  Photos Xinhua News Agency and Government Information Bureau

For the past few weeks, Macao has been home to a new Chief Executive. And shortly after Ho Iat Seng was sworn in last month, the city’s new head pledged to pursue the development of a ‘service-orientated’ government.

On 20 December 2019, Macao did not just celebrate 20 years as a SAR. It also welcomed a new Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng. And, shortly after he was sworn in by President Xi Jinping, Macao’s Chief Executive pledged to the city that he will pursue the development of a ‘service-orientated’ government and improved public administration efficiency.

Ho made the remarks in a speech at a reception hosted by the local government to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the SAR. During the speech, he noted that President Xi, who had only just ended his three-day visit to Macao, had made profound remarks about the characteristics, highlights and important experiences in the

city’s implementation of the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle.

Ho said Xi’s remarks had drawn a new blueprint for Macao’s development and demonstrated the central government’s ‘heartfelt care and sincere support’ for the SAR. “This has brought about new development opportunities for Macao and added new impetus to its development,” said the newly-sworn Chief Executive.

During his speech, the newly sworn-in Chief Executive Ho pledged that his new government will fully and accurately implement the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle, govern Macao in strict compliance with the nation’s Constitution and the Macao Basic Law, firmly uphold the central government’s ‘overall jurisdiction’ over the city and steadfastly uphold the country’s sovereignty, security and development interests.

Ho said that his new government aimed to set up a ‘service-orientated’ government, namely by strengthening the management capabilities of public servants, enforcing officials’ accountability, building a clean government, enhancing public administrative efficiency, making wise use of public money, improving e-government services, strengthening communication between officials and residents, and ‘steadily’ streamlining the public administration system. He also said that his new government will strengthen

promotional campaigns for the nation’s Constitution and the Macao Basic Law, and improve the mechanism in relation to their implementation. He also said that the new government will improve Macao’s legal system with the constitutional foundations jointly set up by the Constitution and the Macao Basic Law.

The new Chief Executive pledged that his new government will push ahead with diversifying the city’s economy and that it will continue to promote Macao’s role as a hub for trade and economic relations between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. The new government, he added, will safeguard and consolidate Macao’s social landscape of harmony and stability, as well as ‘more quickly’ pushing ahead with urban planning, urban renewal, the development of public housing projects, the improvements in the traffic condition and the development of a ‘smart city’. He also mentioned boosting environmental protection.

Synergies and advancement

Hours before the reception, the Chief Executive pledged that the new government will adopt ‘synergies and advancement, changes and innovation’ as its governance motto and promised a more open and courageous stance in decision-making. He spoke on the occasion of his inauguration as the fifth-term Chief Executive of Macao since the transfer of the territory’s administration to China in 1999 during a ceremony attended by more than 1,000 people.

Ho said that the last 20 years had proven that the principle of ‘One Country, Two Systems’ applied in Macao is feasible, attainable and well-received. The construction of diversified tourism industry and the promotion, establishment and growth of the convention and exhibition sector

Ho Iat Seng pledges to pursue the development of a ‘service-orientated’ government in front of hundreds of people



FACTFILE: HO IAT SENG

Ho Iat Seng was born in Macao in June 1957 and his ancestral home is in Zhejiang.

He comes from a well-off local business family. He was the CEO of the Ho Tin SARL Industrial Society, one of the oldest companies in Macao, and is also a former researcher at Zhejiang University.

In 2004, he was appointed as a member of the second-term Executive Council for the Macao government, member of the Economic Development Council and member of the Science, Technology and Innovation Council.

He was indirectly elected, also called indirectly returned member (in an election in which voters do not choose between candidates for an office but elect people who then choose), as member and vice-president of the fourth Legislative Assembly of the Macao SAR between 2009 and 2013, having resigned from the position as a member of the Executive Council.

He was an indirectly returned member and president of the fifth Legislative Assembly of the Macao SAR between 2014 and 2017.

Starting from 2018, he was an indirectly returned member and president of the sixth Legislative Assembly of the Macao SAR but on 5 July 2019, he resigned from those positions.

Since 2000, he was the deputy of and member of the Standing Committee of the ninth, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th National People’s Congress. In April last year, he tendered his resignation to the Standing Committee of the 13th NPC, resigning as deputy.

In 1999, he was awarded the Industrial and Commercial Merit Medal by the Governor of Macao, followed by another Industrial and Commercial Merit Medal, awarded by the Macao SAR government in 2001. In 2009, the SAR government awarded him the Honorable Medal of Golden Lotus Flower.

On 25 August 2019, he was elected the fifth-term Chief Executive of the Macao SAR.

On 4 September 2019, Premier Li Keqiang chaired the Third Plenary Session of the State Council, appointing Ho Iat Seng as the fifth Chief Executive of the Macao SAR.

He was sworn into office on 20 December 2019 by President Xi Jinping.



Ho Iat Seng is flanked by his new government

alongside the development of traditional Chinese medicine, of the cultural and creative industries and high technology, were considered by Ho as areas that his government should support.

Ho gave assurances that he would enhance the promotion and awareness of traditional Chinese culture, boosting exchanges and co-operation between the different cultures and promote the full development and innovation of cultural education. He also recalled that the Belt and Road initiative and the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area had brought major development opportunities to Macao.

Ho said that Macao's role, in its process of development, is to boost the construction of the 'one centre, one platform, one base' principle – where 'one centre' refers to the city's aim to become a world centre for tourism and leisure, 'one platform' refers to the economic and trade co-operation platform for China and Portuguese-speaking countries and 'one base' refers to the base of multiple cultures' co-existence with Chinese culture as the mainstream – to deepen regional co-operation, in particular with the city of Zhuhai, for the creation of new mechanisms of co-operation to develop Hengqin Island and

of the government, effectively making up the team that joins Ho as he takes Macao forward over the coming years. Only four of the 10 officials were reappointed, namely the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak; the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário; the Commissioner of Audit, Ho Veng On; and the Public Prosecutor-General, Ip Son Sang. The other six were all new to the team, including Ao Ieong U, who became the only female in the group, taking the role of Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture.

“*Macao has unique advantages as a bridge between East and West and between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries.*”

promote the proper diversification of its economy. “Macao has unique advantages as a bridge between East and West and between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries,” he said in conclusion.

The new government

Prior to Ho being sworn in as the city's Chief Executive on 20 December, China's State Council appointed the SAR's nine principal officials and the Chief Prosecutor

Ho also said that the government will continue to ensure the successful implementation of the principles of 'One Country, Two Systems' with Macao characteristics, 'Macao people governing Macao' and a high degree of autonomy. The 62-year-old pledged that his government will place strong emphasis on collecting opinions and suggestions from residents for its governance and that it will formulate measures and policies after fully considering civil society's views.

In this fifth-term MSAR government, Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) Commissioner André Cheong Weng Chon, 53, replaced Sónia Chan Hoi Fan as Secretary for Administration and Justice. Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) vice president Lei Wai Nong, 50, replaced Lionel Leong Vai Tac as Secretary for Economy and Finance. Wong Sio Chak, 51, was reappointed as Secretary for Security. Identification Services Bureau (DSI) director Elsie Ao Ieong U, 51, replaced Alexis Tam Chon Weng as Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture. Raimundo do Rosário, 63, was reappointed as Secretary for Transport and Public Works.

Assistant prosecutor-general of the Public Prosecution Office (MP) Chan Tsz King, 49, replaced André Cheong as the Commissioner Against Corruption. Ho Veng On, 57, was reappointed as the Commissioner of Audit. Public Security Police (PSP) Commissioner Leong Man Cheong, 55, replaced Ma Io Kun as Commissioner-General of the Unitary Police Service (SPU). Macao Customs Service deputy director Vong Man Chong, 53, replaced Alex Vong Iao Lek as director-general of the Macao Customs Service. Ip Son Sang, 55, was reappointed at the helm of the Public Prosecution Office (MP). ●

MEET THE TEAM

Macao's new government
since 20 December



André Cheong
*New Administration and
Justice Secretary*

Cheong, born in Beijing, was the director of the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ) until he was appointed head of the anti-graft body for the last government from 20 December 2014.



Lei Wai Nong
*New Economy and Finance
Secretary*

Lei, born in Fujian province, joined Macao's public administration in 1992. A former head of the Printing Bureau (IO), he has enjoyed two stints as vice-president of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau (IACM), which is the predecessor of the current Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM).



Wong Sio Chak
*Reappointed Security
Secretary*

Wong, born in Guangdong province, began working as a senior staff member in the Judiciary Police (PJ) in 1994. Since then, he's been a prosecutor, deputy PJ director, PJ director and an assistant prosecutor-general. He was appointed Secretary for Security for the last government.



Ao Ieong U
*New Social Affairs and
Culture Secretary*

The only female in the new government team, Ao Ieong, also born in Guangdong, joined Macao's public administration in 1994. She once worked for the PJ and was appointed deputy director of the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) in 2000 before becoming director in 2014.



Raimundo do Rosário
*Reappointed Transport
and Public Works Secretary*

Macao-born Rosário, a civil engineer by profession, joined the public administration in 1979 before leaving in 1990. He became Macao's representative in Lisbon when the MSAR was established and returned as Secretary for Transport and Public Works for the last government.



Chan Tsz King
*New Commissioner
Against Corruption*

Chan, born in Hong Kong, finished high school in Macao in 1987. He became a prosecutor in 1997 before being appointed as an assistant prosecutor-general in 2000.



Ho Veng On
*Reappointed Audit
Commissioner*

Ho, born in Macao, was the chief-of-cabinet of the Chief Executive Office (GCE) between 1999 and 2009 under Edmund Ho's administration before being appointed as the commissioner of Audit. He has been reappointed.



Leong Man Cheong
*New Unitary Police
Service head*

Leong, also born in Macao, joined the Public Security Police (PSP) in 1988. He headed the PSP Operations Department in 2013 before becoming an assistant to the Commissioner-General of the Unitary Police Service (SPU) in January 2014. He became PSP head on 20 December 2014.



Vong Man Chong
New Customs Chief

Vong, another new Secretary born and bred in Macao, joined the Maritime and Excise Police (PMF) in 1989 before he was transferred to the Macao Customs Service when it was established in 2001.



Ip Son Sang
*Reappointed Chief
Prosecutor*

Ip, who was born in Guangdong province, became a prosecutor in 1998 before becoming a judge of the Court of First Instance (TJB) when the SAR was established. He was appointed as the chief prosecutor for the last government in 2014.



The roll of honour

Text Tony Chouin Lai Photos Government Information Bureau

A total of 44 individuals and organisations were honoured for their work in the SAR by outgoing Chief Executive Chui Sai On at the end of last year. We speak to seven worthy winners of ‘Lotus’ awards.

The idea of ‘it takes a village’ applies not only to raising a child but also to the development of a city. The long-term prosperity and stability of Macao over the past two decades could not be achieved without the support of stakeholders across the community. In recognition of the outstanding achievements, contributions and services of individuals and organisations towards the growth of the SAR, the Chief Executive has given out Decorations of Honour, Medals of Merit, Medals for Distinguished Service and Honorary Titles every year since 2001, following recommendations from the Committee of Nomination of Medals and Honorary Titles.

At the end of last year, a total of 44 individuals and organisations were awarded for their hard work, dedication and exceptional contributions to Macao society. The conferring ceremony took place on 22 November, officiated by former Chief Executive Chui Sai On, who wrapped up his second five-year term just under a month later. We speak with seven individuals who received either Golden or Silver Lotus honours.

DECORATION OF HONOUR – GOLDEN LOTUS

The second top honour after the Grand Lotus – which was not awarded in 2019 – the Golden award is conferred to individuals or organisations for their exceptional contributions, both locally and internationally, to the good reputation and image of the SAR, as well as their endeavours in developing Macao.

Chui Sai On (left) congratulates Liu Chak Wan



LIU CHAK WAN

Age: 69

Public positions: Former member of the Executive Council; member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference; chairman of Kiang Wu Hospital Charitable Association.

Background: Liu has been actively involved in the local business and finance scene and has made contributions to the education and healthcare sectors of Macao as one of the co-founders and chancellor of the Macau University of Science and Technology.

What he said: “This medal is the recognition of the endeavours of my colleagues and I – and we will keep working hard and improving. We don’t keep working hard for the accolades but for the socio-economic development and prosperity [of Macao].”

MA IAO LAI**Age:** 71

Public positions: Former member of the Executive Council; member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; president of the Macao Chamber of Commerce.

Background: A businessman who has expedited the betterment of Macao and Mainland China for decades, particularly facilitating the development of the local industrial and commercial sectors and the co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

What he said: "Thanks to the guidance of my patriotic seniors, I have served in many major public positions. I hope all Macao residents can continue to work for the betterment of the city under the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems'."

**DECORATION OF HONOUR – SILVER LOTUS**

The third top honour, the Silver Lotus is also conferred to individuals or organisations for their exceptional contributions, both locally and internationally, to the good reputation and image of the SAR, as well as their endeavours in developing Macao.

**LEONEL ALBERTO ALVES****Age:** 62

Public positions: Member of the Executive Council; member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; president of the Discipline Inspection Committee of the Security Forces and Services of Macao.

Background: A veteran legislator for 33 years until 2017, Alves is a renowned lawyer and legal expert in the city.

What he said: "I'm humbled to receive this recognition. In the past 30 years and more – before and after the handover [of administration to China] – I've tried my best to contribute in my professional field, helping draft new legislations for Macao to improve our economic environment and better protect our human rights. I'm happy everyone [now] has the right to be assisted by a lawyer in court proceedings and outside court proceedings at the police station. It's very important to defend human rights in Macao."

**CHEANG CHI KEONG****Age:** 67

Public positions: Former member of the Executive Council; member of the Economic Development Council; advisor to the Macao branch of the Bank of China.

Background: He has been active in the local business and commercial scene, and has served as a legislator for 16 years.

What he said: "One of the reasons I've been awarded with this honour is due to my work in the Bank of China, underscoring the significance and status of the bank. I have to express my gratitude to my colleagues and clients, and my family, for their support and encouragement over the years. This medal also serves as recognition and acknowledgement for my work in the Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly."

HO SUT HENG**Age:** 60

Public positions: Former member of the Executive Council; Macao deputy to the National People's Congress; vice-president of the Macao Federation of Trade Unions, taking over as president on 9 January.

Background: Ho has been involved in local labour unions for more than four decades. She champions the improvement of local labour rules and regulations, as well as better relationships between employers and employees.

What she said: "This honour keeps me motivated in assisting in local labour issues. As Macao ushers in a new stage of development, which will translate to more opportunities for local employees to work in the Greater Bay Area, they have to keep learning and enhancing their expertise. [I will help] workers to receive more different types of vocation training, as well as striving for better treatment for all employees."





CHAN CHAK MO

Age: 68

Public positions: Member of the Executive Council; legislator since 2001; secretary-general of the Sports and Olympic Committee of Macao, China; president of the United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macau.

Background: A prominent local businessman, he has helped to facilitate the development of the local food and beverage sector and has been committed to nurturing local sport talents.

What he said: "I'm greatly delighted to get this once-in-a-lifetime honour. I've worked in the sectors of sports, business and food and beverage for many years. I'm not saying I have done an exceptional job but it's nice that my endeavours have been recognised. I'm genuinely honoured and grateful."



EDDIE WONG YUE KAI

Age: 67

Public positions: Former member of the Executive Council; member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; President of the Macao Red Cross.

Background: An architect with 40-year-plus experience, Wong has also dedicated himself to the Architects Association of Macao for many years.

What he said: "I'm happy that my work has been acknowledged and I'm also grateful to have had the opportunities to serve the Macao community for so many years. I have been involved in the local architectural sector for more than 40 years and I have engaged in the Macao Red Cross for more than 20 years. Looking ahead, I hope I can still have more chances to make contributions in these two areas."

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Business

Planting the seeds

Text Paulo Figueiredo Photos Alexandre Marques

The acquisition of one of Portugal's biggest agricultural companies by Macao firm CESL Asia last year may yet be seen as a defining moment in the economic relationship between China, Portugal and our SAR.



China's population is around 1.4 billion people. And that is a lot of mouths to feed. So when a Macao investment and services firm acquired one of Portugal's biggest agricultural companies a few months ago, the opportunities for the Middle Kingdom didn't go unnoticed.

In October, CESL Asia, a Macao firm which aims to 'foster a greener society' and works with clients and partners to introduce 'innovative and environmentally friendly solutions that help to minimise the environmental impacts arising from business activities', acquired Portuguese farming group Monte do Pasto, Portugal's largest beef producer, investing EUR 40 million (MOP 357 million or US\$44.58 million) into 3,700 hectares of agricultural land – an area that is bigger than Macao's entire land mass – in the south of the European country.

Monte do Pasto's land, which lies in the municipalities of Cuba and Alvito in the Alentejo region, is mainly used as pasture for cattle. It lies close to Alqueva Dam, which

constitutes one of the largest dams and artificial lakes in Western Europe, giving the fields excellent access to water. The company, which was established in 1981, has traditionally exported most of its beef as its cattle are 'known for having very good genetics'. But now it's in CESL Asia's hands following the acquisition from Portuguese bank Novo Banco.

The investment, which was financially supported by Bank of China's Macao branch, made headlines in both Portugal and Macao – not only because of the size and importance of the land but also because this was a Macao company investing in Portugal's heartland for the benefit of Macao, Portugal and China. Apart from Quinta da Marmeleira – a winery near Carregado in the heart of Portugal which was bought by Macao businessman Wu Zhiwei in 2016 – there have not been many investments from Macao companies in this sector in Portugal up to now.

As well as massive swathes of land at Monte do Pasto, there are also farmsteads and many modern buildings



“

For 2020, Portugal will continue to negotiate with our Chinese counterparts to open doors to more Portuguese products, like fruit, poultry and beef, creating new opportunities in Portugal's agricultural and agrifood sector.

A growing interest

The Portuguese ambassador to Beijing, José Augusto Duarte, also sees the great potential of the investment. He says he expects Macao and Hong Kong companies to maintain their 'agility to invest abroad' in the near future and identifies a 'growing interest' in China's decision-making bodies 'in the agricultural or agrifood sector abroad'. The CESL Asia farm at Monte do Pasto is a perfect example of this ambition.

Duarte, a former diplomatic advisor to the President of Portugal, says that the Chinese government has recognised the importance of the food sector and recalls that the Middle Kingdom does not have the productive capacity to feed its growing population without relying on imports. The country is home to more than 18 per cent of the world's population but, claims Duarte, it's home to only nine per cent of the globe's arable land and four per cent of its drinking water. "So it is imperative," he says, "to strongly increase [China's] investment in innovation in the agricultural sector in order to expand its productive capacity – and part of this focus is on co-operation between Chinese companies and their counterparts in other countries." Duarte adds that focus on 'investments abroad' is also imperative.

Portugal is keen on co-operating with China in the agricultural sector. Over the past few months, the European country has concluded negotiations to export Portuguese



The Portuguese ambassador to Beijing, José Augusto Duarte

pork to China. "For 2020," says Duarte, "we will continue to negotiate with our Chinese counterparts to open doors to more Portuguese products, such as fruit, poultry and beef, which will surely create new opportunities in Portugal's agricultural and agrifood sector."

The Monte do Pasto investment, says Duarte, deviates from the previously observed pattern of Chinese investments in the financial, insurance and energy sectors. "Portugal has also sought to promote investments in the real economy," he says. "Investments that bring new opportunities to the Portuguese." He adds that investments like this 'will always be indispensable for boosting local economies and creating jobs'. "With the growing importance of the agricultural sector," he concludes, "the Portuguese countryside can see here a window



Monte do Pasto is famous for its cattle; (opposite page) António Trindade surveys the land

of opportunity to combat desertification, which is a worldwide trend.” Desertification is a type of land degradation in drylands involving loss of biological productivity.

Sowing the seeds

“Our goal is to build things that have never been built,” says the head of CESL Asia, António Trindade, sitting in his office in Macao’s AIA Tower. “Things that are highly productive, both economically and socially.” He adds that CESL Asia, in the agricultural sphere, is looking to develop innovative methods of sustainable production – anything from wheat to beef – that can be replicated across the world.

“Our focus is not on herding cows,” says Trindade. “It’s always on the people involved and what they’re doing. Know-how comes with people. We are a people’s company. Our

platform is intellectual. What makes sense to us is producing value, technology, knowledge and science.” According to Trindade, all of CESL Asia’s expertise in working abroad can be shared with other Macao companies, thus strengthening the entire business ‘platform’ in the SAR.

An earlier project that saw CESL Asia join hands with Portugal took place in 2012, when the firm partnered up with Lisbon-based Magpower, which manufactures concentrator photovoltaic systems (CPV) solar modules and trackers. The two companies jointly invested around MOP 200 million (US\$29 million) into three power plants in the south of Portugal and they have since collaborated on technical and scientific projects.

That partnership and this investment in Monte do Pasto show a strengthening of relations between CESL Asia and Portuguese businesses. A statement from the Macao firm following the acquisition last year said that the deal aimed to continue the development of

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Factfile: the head of CESL Asia, António Trindade

Trindade was appointed CEO of CESL Asia in Macao in 1998.

He was born in Angola in 1960.

He was raised and educated in West Africa and Europe.

He graduated from Portugal’s Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) in 1984 with a five-year degree in structural and civil engineering.

He speaks English and Portuguese.

He has steadily guided the company in providing services and technology solutions addressing local needs in areas such as energy and technical facilities management, architectural and engineering services, development and operational services, and environmental services.

He holds a prodigious number of positions and associations, including founding member of the Macau China Thinktank for FinTech Industries and founding president of the Macao Association of Environmental Protection Industry.

He has a ‘Portuguese-Catholic’ background. He married a Chinese national and has raised his daughter – a fan of Sporting Clube de Portugal sports club and its football team – with the best of the two cultures.

Fairness, he says, also has a place in business. He says: “I would be happy if my daughter and people around me can say I have helped them improve their quality of life.”



social and economic co-operation between Portugal, China, Macao and African Portuguese-speaking countries. Macao could become more of a service platform, investing in and linking to countries and organisations across the globe. According to Trindade, the key to economic diversification could be ‘a combination of both’ the development of the platform with Portuguese-speaking countries and Macao’s role in the Greater Bay Area. And the financial services industry will also have to take centre-stage, says the trained engineer.

Cultivating a platform

In acquiring Monte do Pasto, CESL Asia is establishing a platform in Portugal. The firm wants to increase exports from the European country to the Macao and China markets, taking advantage of Macao itself as a ‘platform’ for social and economic co-operation between China, Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries. The company also sees Macao developing as an operational base for food and renewable energy businesses from Portugal, Macao, China and Portuguese-speaking countries. According to Trindade, ‘the potential of the Macao platform is bigger than that of [its] gaming industry’.

Trindade adds that it is important for the SAR to consider economic opportunities beyond gaming and he questions whether Macao’s gaming money ‘adds value’ to the city in terms of knowledge. He admits that the gaming industry has been ‘exceptional’ when it comes to boosting the local economy in past years but he argues that Macao is now confronted with ‘Dutch disease’ – the economic term that describes the causal relationship between the increase in development of a specific sector and



Monte do Pasto isn’t just a name. It’s a widely recognisable brand

a decline in others. In Macao’s case, this refers to the rapid economic increase in the gaming sector compared to all others.

But Trindade, who says that his company wants to ‘replicate CESL Asia in Portugal’, also notes that ‘the China-Lusophone platform cannot go through Macao only because Macao by itself does not have the resources and capabilities to serve the whole Chinese economy’. He admits that there is an opportunity for Monte do Pasto to supply meat to China but he is also keen to look beyond the short term. “The platform is a commitment, not a business opportunity,” he says, “to create a unique value chain. With this in mind, we are creating an economic

infrastructure that has never been created before.”

“What we know is that in 20 years’ time we will not be doing what we do today,” says Trindade. “We have to keep focus on constantly empowering people to produce greater value with the assets they have been entrusted with.” He says that the ‘main asset’ at Monte do Pasto is ‘the people working there’ who ‘will find out things that I might not even know about’ or ‘do things much better than what I can do’. “We can always find a way to look for and find opportunities to create value and do it with the least usage of resources possible and in a sustainable way,” he concludes. “This is an ethical process of generating value.” •

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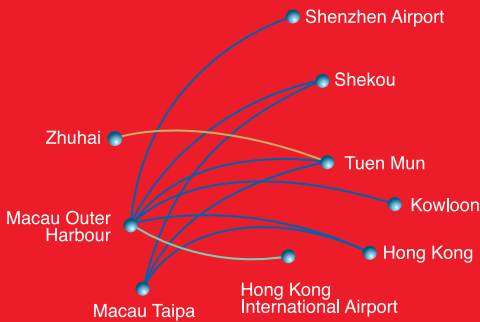


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Social affairs

The young and the selfless

Text **Rafelle Marie Allego** Photos **Cheong Kam Ka**

Meet five young people who are dedicating their lives to helping vulnerable people in Macao. This is a chance to thank all the young people in the city who are tirelessly trying to create a better society for everyone.

When an adult hits a certain age, they sometimes want to give back to the world. They have taken from their community, city, country and planet for many years and feel it is time to come to the aid of others. So they begin a period of charity or social work, raising money, raising awareness or directly helping those in need. That is always worthy of praise and helps the world go round – however, it’s even more admirable when young people, before they’ve even had time to take from their community, city or planet, dedicate their efforts into helping others who really need it.

Eric Ho Chon Hou, Ngou Cheng Ruby Chui, Rainnie Wong, Andy Lam and Lisa Ho are five selfless young Macao residents who have not chosen glamorous, glitzy or super-well-paid jobs. They have chosen roles after leaving education that help others. They each get a sense of great pride and achievement in working with the more vulnerable or needy people in the community, with a view to creating a better society.

Each member of this quintet is under 30 years old. They regularly encounter children or adults who find life challenging – but they tackle their roles with passion and dedication, each one caring for the people around them. And each one of the five hopes their work can contribute to creating a better Macao for all of us.

The disabilities worker

Working with people who have disabilities is hugely challenging. However, some people choose to do this as a career due to the equally huge rewards. This is why Ngou Cheng Ruby Chui decided to take up the post of assistant manager at the Fuhong Society of

Macao’s Pou Lei Centre. Founded by a group of volunteers in 2003, the Fuhong Society of Macao is a non-profit government-funded social service organisation in the city that provides services for people with disabilities, as well as those with mental illnesses who are being rehabilitated. It runs 13 service units in Macao, including Pou Lei Centre, which was also established in 2003 and specialises in the development of vocational training for people with disabilities.

Chui, who is a psychology graduate from the University of Macau and also has a master’s degree in cognitive neuropsychology from the UK’s University of Essex, says that working for the Fuhong Society of Macao allows her to use all she has learned at school and university, plus she has always wanted to help vulnerable people in her community. The 24-year-old is also passionate about spreading the importance of helping those with mental health issues.

In June, when the Fuhong Society of Macao organised and hosted the 2019 Rehabilitation International Asia and Pacific Regional Conference in Macao, Chui’s role at the event was that of co-ordinator. At the conference, there were seminars and workshops in which the rehabilitation of people with disabilities was discussed – and Chui says she is proud to have taken a leading role in such an important event.

Because of their disabilities, says Chui, ‘the world tends to sideline’ them. She says that many people with disabilities feel they are seen as not being able to do anything useful in society. However, she says this is not the case. She helps organise vocational training programmes for them, with the hope that many of them can get jobs as a result.

Chui hopes that she and her colleagues are making a positive difference to these people’s lives in Macao. She says that some of them have gone on to become, for instance, slipper packers at hotels and box folders at bakeries. That may not seem much to some people – but to those with disabilities, this is a way they can play an active part in their community.

Many of the people who use the society’s services are creative and some have made beautiful handicrafts and illustrated items, like postcards, over the years. The society sells some of these products, like scarves and towels, raising money in the process that goes directly back to their service users in the form of subsidies or is used to develop new programmes and activities that further develop their skills. Chui recalls how one person with autism was calmed by his box folding job and he could also do it quickly. He didn’t need to interact with anyone, which was a huge plus for him. “I believe, from observation,” says Chui, “that our service users really enjoy working and enjoy the idea of getting rewarded for it.”

The people with disabilities are not ‘problems which need curing’, emphasises Chui. Instead, she says they are people who often struggle to understand the world around them and are often misunderstood by that same world. “They are still people like all the rest of us,” she says. “People sometimes need to take time to understand their world too. I’m really pleased to be able to devote my life to not only these people but to also educating the community into accepting them.”

Ngou Cheng Ruby Chui; (opener photo) the quintet together, from left: Eric Ho Chon Hou, Rainnie Wong, Andy Lam, Ngou Cheng Ruby Chui and Lisa Ho



Eric Ho Chon Hou

The student counsellor

Students feel stress. Some students feel so much stress at school, they crumble under the pressure. But help is always there – and in Macao it comes from people like Eric Ho Chon Hou. The 24-year-old has been working for the ‘União Geral das Associações dos Moradores de Macau’ (UGAMM) – which translates to the ‘General Union of Macau Residents Associations’ – since he graduated from university last year. The group employs him as a school counsellor – a role he sees as extremely important.

Ho has been assigned by UGAMM to work with students at ‘Escola Seong Fan da Associação Comercial De Macau’, a school that is situated near the city’s ferry terminal. The students, who are all part of the school’s ‘back to education’ programme and are thus in the 18 to 24-years-old bracket, are referred to him by teachers – they are usually young people who are having problems coping with the workload or who are perhaps facing difficulties at home. So Ho talks to them about their mental and emotional wellbeing and, in instances where he sees fit, he then begins follow-up treatments with them to help them cope. He may also involve their teachers in the treatment so everyone is able to help the student.

Flexibility is a must in Ho’s work. He says that each student reacts differently to situations of stress and that each case is unique, so he must be flexible in order to accommodate each of the students’ needs. He says, however, that he takes a great deal of pride when a student begins to cope and progress better at school. “When I see them change after I have established a relationship with them,” he says, “I feel satisfied.”

Ho may not seem like he has enough life experience to help someone only a few years younger than himself. However, he disagrees. He decided to take on this role because he was once depressed at school after receiving poor exam results, so he brings plenty of experience to the table. He was helped by a counsellor through those tough days and was encouraged to regain his confidence, which he did before completing a social work degree at the University of Saint Joseph. And then he wanted to give back.

Since he started his role as a student counsellor, Ho has learned a lot and he is always gaining more experience from each case so that he can improve all the time. He says that his role gives him a ‘great sense of achievement’ – and that isn’t just when it comes to one-on-one sessions with students but also when he arranges career-planning and mental health workshops for them or when he takes them to visit the elderly so they can learn from their experiences.

Ho always appreciates feedback from the students. He remembers how one young person he counselled told him that after their talks that they felt ‘comforted’ and they were then able to gain confidence and focus once again on their studies. “It is precisely this sort of feedback,” he says, “that allows me to see that my work is valuable. It motivates me and keeps me moving forward. I always say ‘never give up and be your best!’”

António Sanmarful

WOMAN-KIND

At just 25-years-old, Ana Catarina Alvarez Doctor helps young women who have been subjected to abuse like battery or emotional torment

Aside from our quintet of young charity and social workers, one 25-year-old woman stands out for her courage when it comes to dealing with female victims of abuse. Ana Catarina Alvarez Doctor deals with traumatic cases every day and, despite her young age, gives her heart and soul to helping other women in need.

Doctor works at a centre for women in the city, which she does not name due to confidentiality rules. At the centre, regularly, women come through the doors seeking help for troubles at home – sometimes serious troubles that involve physical or emotional abuse. Doctor and her team counsel the women, help them look into points of law and generally lend a shoulder to them as they work through their trauma, often on a 24-hour basis.

This line of work ultimately affects Doctor’s emotional well-being as she struggles with some of the cases where the women can be helpless and hopeless. However, in times like these, she says she does her best to compartmentalise. “In order to help them,” she says, “I also need to take care of myself. I need to discover the things that help me as a person in order to provide help to others.”

Growing up in a migrant family in Macao, Doctor struggled through high school with both her studies and her own self-confidence, particularly as she was constantly juggling different languages. However, she found encouragement through the counsel of her church pastor, who holds a psychology degree, when she faced difficulties at school, which, like some of our quintet, led her into the world of social work. Overcoming her difficulties, she’s now gifted with a plethora of languages – Cantonese, Mandarin and English, as well as Tagalog and Ilocano from the Philippines – which greatly helps her with her work as she can speak fluently to most of the women who come into the centre.

“At first, I thought becoming a social worker meant helping other people,” says Doctor. “But then I realised that not only do you help others but you get to discover yourself.” Because of a process of self-discovery through her job, she’s now more confident than ever when it comes to helping others in need. She also says she hopes that one day Macao might have more forums for social workers to frequent so they can get to know one another. There are a handful of groups out there already but she says she would like to see more. “It might take time,” she says, “but it’s possible.”

The special education worker

Where Eric Ho Chon Hou works with young people on their problems and Ngou Cheng Ruby Chui works with people with disabilities, Rainnie Wong does both. For the past two years, the 26-year-old has worked for the Macao branch of Special Olympics, the world's largest sports organisation for children and adults with learning or physical disabilities. She assists children with special education needs at one primary school in the city, helping them to better connect to the world around them as a result.

The Special Olympics organisation is mostly known for developing the athletic skills of those with learning or physical disabilities. In Macao, however, the branch also provides other services to special needs individuals by offering job training and

placements to them, as well as a range of counselling and mentoring services. This is where Wong comes in – less of the sports side and more of the personal development side.

Since she was young, Wong has always found joy in helping others, willingly finding time to volunteer and join all sorts of charity activities that engage with those in need in Macao. She says she could have chosen a career as a maths teacher but her heart told her otherwise. “I chose social work like this,” she says, “because I get to help people.”

Wong, who has a degree in social work, is kind and patient – qualities which are of major importance when it comes to working with children between six and 12 years old who have special educational needs, particularly if she needs to counsel them through emotional problems. She also conducts group

sessions with children with a range of disabilities at the Macao branch – which is actually a handful of centres in the city, including the main base at Seis do Bairro da Areia Preta – to help improve their social skills, focus and attention.

In June, Wong, who helps out with the organisation's sports activities during school holidays, joined the branch's speech training programme – a programme that sees special needs children being taught how to improve their communication skills – which gave her the opportunity to step out of her comfort zone. “I was an unconfident person before,” she says, “but the trust my colleagues placed in me by allowing me to be a key part in this programme gave me encouragement. I believe everyone has their own special value. Maybe they can't see it yet, so it is my duty to spot this with the children.”

Rainnie Wong



Andy Lam

The crisis counsellor

When you're in a crisis and just need someone to talk to so you can get at least a glimmer of hope and perhaps some advice, then Andy Lam is here. The 25-year-old is – along with many other caring souls in the city – a counsellor at Life Hope Hotline Caritas Macau, an organisation that sees people from all ages and backgrounds calling in on the phone at any time of the day or night if they need emotional support, help and information during any sort of crisis. Counsellors like Lam have been lending an empathetic ear and encouraging callers 'to go on with life with hope and dignity' for more than 35 years under Caritas, a Catholic relief, development and social service that spans the globe.

Lam joined the service in 2016 and was given a lot of training to deal with the sort of calls that the Life Hope Hotline receives. In 2018, he received a Professional Certificate in Gambling Counselling, which gives an indication as to some of the calls he deals with on a daily basis. Shortly afterwards, Lam joined the Caritas delegation at the Asian Family Summit in Hong Kong, the first multi-day consortium of family and social service institutes to discuss family wellness and other topics in the region. Since then, he has actively taken part in discourse on the subject – and emotional wellness in general – in Macao.

It was a tough road that Lam walked on his way to realising his ambition to become a crisis counsellor. He hit a low point at school during his teens and, as a result, he met with his school's social workers. During that process, he grew close to the social workers who helped him and, as his emotional well-being improved, he began helping them by volunteering to join them at events, such as comforting the elderly at nursing homes. He learned a lot about counselling and decided this is what he wanted to do with his life – help others in distress. “I wanted to give something back,” he says. “I wanted to help people get over their difficulties and watch them grow just like I did.”

Aside from providing 24-hour emotional support for people in need on the phones, Lam also creates activities that promote suicide prevention in the community and online. He helps Caritas promote its services too – and he occasionally gives lectures on family and emotional wellness. But he does admit that the greatest challenge lies on those phones – particularly as all callers are anonymous, so he is unable to ring them back to check up on their progress. Lam says, however, that the anonymity is vital so those who call in can feel uninhibited and talk about whatever they want, from their day-to-day work life to their family problems.

Suicide, of course, is always tricky to deal with so Lam needs to be extremely alert when dealing with calls of this nature. “The biggest challenge,” he says, “is to always be ready to provide the best support for everyone in need.” One example Lam gives that made him realise the importance of his role was when a caller contemplated suicide due to marital issues but, after two hours of counselling, the caller said they felt motivated to continue with their life. That person thanked him for ‘being there during a really low point’ in their life at the end of the call. “At that moment,” says Lam, “I was proud of my work and I felt that everything we do here is always meaningful.”



The child worker

Working with children can bring great rewards – just ask Lisa Ho. The 28-year-old social worker deals directly with young children at Macao’s Cradle of Hope Association (COHA), a non-profit Christian organisation that manages two homes in the city for children and teenagers up to the age of 18 whose families may not have had the ability to take care of them properly. Together with the city’s Social Welfare Bureau, the organisation supports children – many who have suffered poverty, abandonment, neglect or violence in their early life – until they are self-sufficient through education or employment training.

Ho has been at COHA for five years now, mainly working at the organisation’s centre that is dedicated to children under four years old. “For me,” she says, “I love working with kids the most. Children live in a less complicated world and it’s a joy for me to be able to help guide them and provide a positive influence as they are growing up.”

It was difficult for Ho to decide what she wanted to do after she left high school in Macao as she had many choices out there. But she liked the idea of working with children so she considered becoming a kindergarten teacher. Then, she found social work. She had already studied many theories on family and child development, so she wanted to put her knowledge to good use and help young people at the same time to get a good start in life like she had done.

Ho, a graduate of the Macao Polytechnic Institute, was overjoyed when she was hired by COHA but over the past five years, she has not rested on her laurels. She has continually attended further training courses offered by COHA and the Social Welfare Bureau and



Lisa Ho

amassed experience on dealing with vulnerable children. She says that social work is not only about serving others but also learning about yourself. “You, yourself, are the first client,” she says. “All you learn is important to you and then, as a result, it becomes important to others.”

According to Ho, social workers provide a vital service in Macao, however she does understand cultural differences. For instance, she says that ‘it may take more time’ for some Chinese families to approach social services to reach out for help than it would for, perhaps, some Western families. “But, whatever the culture or background,” she says, “social workers are there to give good suggestions and advice to those who need it. And that is just as important in Macao as anywhere else in

the world. We have a really good society, especially when it comes to our financial well-being, but there are other parts of our society like vulnerable children and elderly people who live alone that we need to take care of – and social workers help to do this important work.”

Ho says that her job brings her immense satisfaction. She faces all problems with a smile and tries to help each and every child in her care. “There may be difficulties and disappointments along the way,” she says. “Life is not always good. But you do your best to help. It might not always work out with a child you are trying to help but that doesn’t mean you’re a failure. It means you tried. And wouldn’t it be great if everyone in the world at least tried to help others who are maybe less fortunate than them as much as they could?”

Commendable careers

Charitable young people like Eric Ho, Lisa Ho, Chui, Wong and Lam, who each have chosen a role in Macao that helps others to a better life, are to be commended, according to the assistant professor and co-ordinator of the University of Saint Joseph’s Department of Social Work, Ning Tang. The professor also praises all social and charity workers in the city, adding that most work with ‘families, children and communities’.

Professor Ning Tang says that, with strong support from the government, especially the Social Welfare Bureau, in terms of funding and with the introduction of better social work laws over time, the status of the social and charity work professions in the city will grow over the coming years. “I’m optimistic about the future of social work in Macao,” she says.

Some people may believe that social work and psychology are one and the same. This is just not true, according to the professor. She says these professions may seem similar but they function in different ways within a society. Whereas psychologists manage patients on a one-on-one basis, she says, social workers are equipped with the skills to address issues on a community level. “We should not only care about the mental status of people because that’s not the only reason that causes problems,” she says. “We also have to look at the environment around the people, which is what social workers can do.”

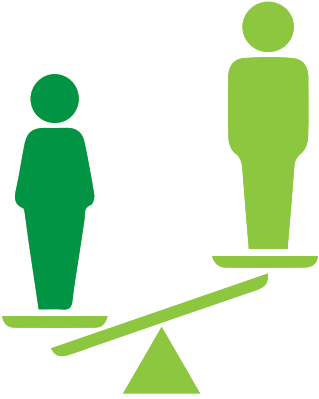
Macao is lucky to have its social and charity workers who give up their chance to earn huge wages and opt to care for other people and for their society instead. And it is even more fortunate that, just like our quintet of selfless young people, it is home to caring souls in their teens and 20s who, for their whole lives, just want to create a better Macao for all. ●

Ngou Cheng Ruby Chui spends time with one of the people she works with at the Fuhong Society of Macau



HELP IS OUT THERE Search online if you want to find out more about any of the organisations in this story. If you need to call the Life Hope Hotline, phone 2852 5222 for Chinese or 2852 5777 for English.

THE GENDER DISPARITY



Professor Ning Tang collected data for a study she was undertaking in 2018. In that study, she compared the amount of social work students in Macao to the amount in Zhuhai. She found that 70 per cent of social work students were female in Zhuhai but that figure was on a more even keel in Macao at 60 per cent.

Even so, the professor points out that ‘there are more females than males in general’ in social work and that this ‘is not unique to Macao’. “Also,” she says, “social workers can’t make a lot of money in the profession. So, for many males, especially in Asian culture where they are the breadwinners and may be looking to support their whole family, they are probably going to look for better paid jobs.”

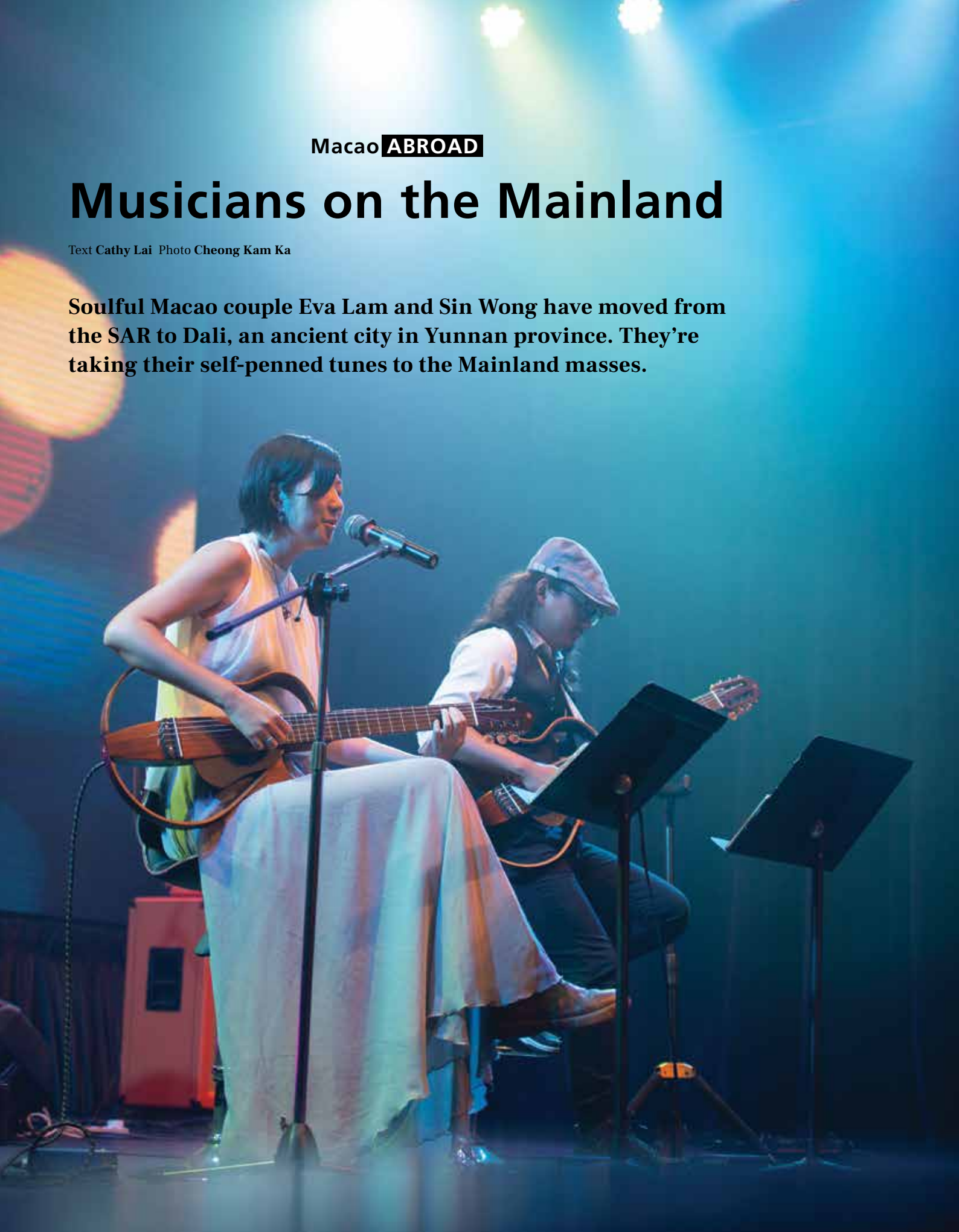
The professor adds that the historical ‘pioneers in social work’ were ‘mostly females as well’. “Usually,” she concludes, “females are better at caring work than males. Females have more empathy than males and are better at building connections.”

Macao **ABROAD**

Musicians on the Mainland

Text Cathy Lai Photo Cheong Kam Ka

Soulful Macao couple Eva Lam and Sin Wong have moved from the SAR to Dali, an ancient city in Yunnan province. They're taking their self-penned tunes to the Mainland masses.



Macao has produced some gifted musical acts over the years. From poet Adé, who wrote tunes in the Patuá language, and the ‘tuna’ bands who performed Macanese music in the 20th century to modern acts like Ari Calangi, who was a hit on the ‘Sing! China’ reality show, and Brazil-Macao indie mainstays Turtle Giant, there’s plenty to croon about when it comes to the SAR. But few acts can boast that they’ve left the city and headed into Mainland China, bringing their self-penned tunes with them.

Eva Lam and Sin Wong can boast just that. Two years ago, the married couple decided to leave Macao and start a new life in Yunnan, China’s southwestern province famous for its breathtaking nature and cultural diversity. They took their guitars with them and have since been introducing their brand of music to locals and tourists, promoting Macao and its culture in the process. It wasn’t just a spontaneous decision, however, to head abroad for a new life. It came from years of falling in love with the music scene in Yunnan.

Made in Macao

Lam and Wong, who married in 2012 and were both born and raised in Macao, say they were drawn to music at an early age. During secondary school, singer and guitarist Lam – who is now Eva Wong but still uses the stage name Eva Lam – was a regular contestant in singing contests and Wong played guitar in local band Real-US. The couple, now in their early 30s, met each other briefly in 2003 but started dating much later.

In 2010, Lam launched a photography company in Macao while Wong became a guitar teacher. Both could have stayed in the SAR forever until, in June 2012, they went on a life-changing trip to Yunnan. They fell in love with the province – the old towns, the romantic bars and the performances by musicians from around the world.

When they returned from Yunnan – made extra-romantic as Wong proposed there – they yearned to go back and take their music with them. “The live bars across Yunnan are welcoming,” says Wong. “You can just get on stage and jam with the performers.” The couple, over the following few years, went back to Yunnan regularly. But they didn’t yet have the pluck to leave Macao.

In 2016, Lam launched her first folk-style EP, ‘No-Where · Now-Where’. It was a huge achievement and encouraged the musician to pursue her dreams further. So, the following year, she flew to Dali – an ancient city in

Yunnan, close to China’s border with Myanmar – with only RMB 2,000 in her pocket and carrying just a small suitcase and her guitar. “At first,” she says, “I told my mother-in-law that I would spend only three months there. But, as it turns out, I’ve been there ever since and never looked back.”

Lam looked for chances to play in Dali. One night, she heard music coming from a pizza restaurant and stood outside. Noticing her interest, the owner invited her in to join a party and during the evening, Lam performed a cover of Norah Jones’ ‘Don’t Know Why’. Impressed, the owner recommended her to Sun Island bar. Lam got a regular gig there and thus began her musical career in Dali.

Wong joined his wife two months later and started playing gigs with her. At first, he struggled with the altitude – the city is about 2,000m above sea level – but he soon overcame this and the couple launched a new group, Faixa de Flor, performing together at Sun Island and other venues. One of their most popular songs has become

‘Dedicated to My Sweetness Homeland’, which was written by Lam in 2018 when she was sitting by the seaside of Macao’s Hac Sa Beach. It is sung in English but the locals in Yunnan can nevertheless appreciate the sentiments. And the tourists can appreciate it too. “Because the market is so big in Dali,” says Lam, “even the most unusual music will find its supporters.”

Standing (and singing) out

Lam and Wong believe their music stands out in Dali. Faixa de Flor has been invited back to Macao, however, to perform at the annual HUSH!! Full Music Festival for the past two years. They also spent two months in Portugal last year where they received lessons from a veteran samba musician from Brazil. “We have been self-learning samba and bossa nova for a long time,” says Lam, “and it’s great to finally receive some expert guidance.” The couple say they will continue to visit Portugal regularly.

Dali will always be their base, say Lam and Wong. “It’s not just about the music,” adds Lam. “It’s also about the nature and the honest lifestyle in Dali. However, we won’t forget about Macao. We’re just happy to bring a musical piece of Macao to Yunnan. It’s great to represent the city!” ●

“

I told my mother-in-law that I would spend only three months in Dali. But, as it turns out, I’ve been there ever since 2017 and never looked back.

TO FOLLOW Lam and Wong and listen to their music, visit facebook.com/evatana1900 or weibo.com/evalammacao.



Shaping up nicely

Text **Rafelle Marie Allego**

To coincide with the annual January health frenzy – and following the opening of six new gyms in the city last year – we speak to experts, trainers and enthusiasts to find out why people in Macao are finally becoming fitness fanatics.

Everybody wants to be fit and healthy – or, at least, everyone wants to be healthy. And as the years roll on, more and more people are hitting the treadmill in gyms and fitness studios across the world in a bid to keep the pounds off and keep the doctor away. But is the ever-growing fitness trend picking up speed in Macao? Yes, it is – and some say it’s bulking up quickly.

In developed countries, the health and fitness industries are growing all the time. The US’s industry, for example, which is estimated at US\$30 billion (MOP 242 billion) has seen constant growth every year. And closer to home, Mainland China now has an estimated 46,050 fitness studios – which, according to a 2018 report by Chinese fitness industry observer Gymsquare, is comparable with the number of gyms in the US, despite the country having far fewer people availing themselves of fitness services. The report also cites that, for the top 10 earners in the industry, the combined revenue amounted to RMB 10 billion (MOP 11.4 billion) in 2018. It is believed that the industry – which is targeted at seniors as well as younger people – will grow up to five times in the next five to 10 years.

But what about Macao? We can say – and certainly fitness professionals in the city agree – that the SAR has been in a ‘bubble’ over the past few decades when it comes to the industry. Failing, so far, to be influenced by our neighbours in Hong Kong – a city that is home to hundreds of gyms and fitness facilities, as well as tens of thousands of health fanatics – by promoting exercise and making gyms more accessible, it’s seemed for so long that many Macao residents would rather doze than pump iron.

As Macao’s fitness scene is so young, it’s hard to estimate its net worth – but some industry professionals in our city do make

one estimate: that it’s ‘15 to 30 years behind’ Hong Kong. Despite this perceived lag, though, we are now, finally, catching up. Six new gyms have set up their dumbbells in the city over the past 12 months, adding to the major gyms and studios, of which there are up to 35, that are already peppered around the SAR. There’s a change in the air – perhaps now we’re ready to embrace the fitness fanatic culture in Macao.

From grand beginnings...

“The gym that started all this was Macao Fitness,” says António Barrias, co-founder of Rua do Padre António Roliz-based Crossfit XVI. “It was the first gym that offered a gym like the rest of the world was offering. Like a business, not a hobby.” Many fitness professionals and enthusiasts also credit Macao Fitness, based in AIA Tower, as the ‘foundation’ of the local scene. It launched in 2011 and there were other smaller gyms at the time, such as a couple in the old Barra area – but none were anywhere near the scale of Macao Fitness. As the first commercial gym of its kind owned by a local, it had the equipment and manpower to compete on an international level. The company’s manager, Daniela Gomes, says it ‘offers diverse classes, especially in numbers’ – a feat that other gyms in the city might not be able to replicate.

Managing director and founding CEO of Macao Fitness, Norika Chio, says that her main goal when opening the gym was to better the lifestyle of locals by giving them the chance to experience high quality fitness facilities. She also adds that one draw has been providing personal training sessions as a proper introduction to eliminate the feeling of being lost when first entering the gym’s doors. As she



Norika Chio, founder of Macao Fitness; (right) the interiors at Macao Fitness, showing the pioneering gym’s sheer size

says: “You don’t need to be afraid of the iron. Personal training is to give them guidance and to let them have a goal for fitness.”

And Macao Fitness did give locals the chance to experience a grand gym – and it also inspired some of its instructors to branch out with their own concepts over time. For instance, Barrias once coached there. As did Yoga Light founder Ritesh Kumar, who was their first yoga teacher, snatched fresh off a Hong Kong yoga competition in the

early 2000s, where he represented India. Kumar founded his studio in 2016 and last year he opened a new location in Taipa.

From 2011, the gym scene has grown due to the availability of more bases to work out. It may also be because of the international trend. Co-founder of local physical wellbeing social enterprise Mana Vida, Cintia Martins, says: “I think it’s just worldwide. People are talking more about health, sustainability and about being fit. They see more celebrities involved in this and it’s a trigger. Instagram too, where everyone gets appraisal for doing some exercise.”

The new kids on the block

The industry has been expanding, including six new centres that have opened over the past 12 months. Four of them are Life Project, Flex Fitness, Anytime Fitness and 24/7 Fitness, which also share one of the latest trends, as they are all open 24 hours a day. The other two are Level Up Fitness and the Mini Education Centre, both of which focus on personal sessions with coaches. “Macao is a well-known city that never sleeps,” says Flex Fitness CEO Pedro Jorge Gomes. “I understand that a lot of locals do shift work, especially in the

hotel and casino industry.” Gomes notes that Flex is open round-the-clock because of the amount of people in the city who do shift work.

Life Project opened its Taipa location in Hoi Wan Garden a couple of months ago. One of its co-founders is Jason Yang, a 23-year-old economics graduate from the UK’s University of Bath, who works closely with the company’s clients one-on-one. He says he’s found that many of them come in hoping to transform into their favourite celebrities in terms of physique – the most popular request right now, claims Yang, is to look like Taiwanese-Canadian actor and singer Eddie Peng. Of course, he notes, this is not the only reason why they enroll, as some do it for health benefits. But, as Yang says, many are influenced by social media.

Appearance is paramount for many gym-goers, says Yang, especially when it comes to looking ‘slimmer’ in wedding photos or at events they need to attend. But instead of having just a one to two-month goal of becoming fit, Yang promotes the idea that exercise is a lifestyle, with many of his clients looking and feeling better about themselves after being motivated to change their lives.

Les Mills instructor at Macao Fitness, Jerson ‘Jason’ Sarmiento – Macao’s first Les Mills International certified instructor, a multi-discipline training regime that covers some of the world’s leading fitness classes such as BodyPump, BodyCombat, group indoor cycling workout RPM, BodyJam and more – confirms that one of the key reasons that fitness awareness is growing locally is because of social media. Posting your new-and-improved images can be great encouragement. As Sarmiento says about Facebook or Instagram, ‘you see these amazing body changes in posts and it encourages other people to do the same’.



Courtesy of Flex Fitness



Courtesy of Anytime Fitness



Courtesy of 24/7 Fitness

(From left) The gym is ready to go at the new Flex Fitness; an impressive array of equipment at also new Anytime Fitness; the facilities at 24/7 Fitness

The age of the influencer

With fitness gaining more traction through influencers on social media, Barrias – who notes that despite Macao seemingly having few gyms, many residential buildings have a fitness facility inside, meaning there could be up to 500 of these in the city – is concerned that although Facebook or Instagram posts may get many interested in joining a gym, some of these influencers may not be qualified despite their many followers. “They go on social media and they see the amount of followers as a measure of credibility and knowledge,” he says, “because they still have the quantity over quality mindset. But when the focus shifts to quality, people start following better accounts. They don’t follow the ‘booty’ Instagram model with 500,000 followers any more. They follow the coach that has 4,000 but really knows what he’s saying.”

A stressful lifestyle can also lead people to fitness. Having worked in marketing in Shanghai prior to opening Pilates House Macau,

Ceci Lam found her job stressful and sought relief through pilates. At first, she took lessons just so she could learn the discipline but as she needed to return to Macao for family reasons, her growing passion for pilates led her to founding her own studio, which opened in 2018, followed by another last year.

Yoga is also a great stress reliever. Kumar says many of his students who suffer from insomnia find well-needed rest through yoga. On top of that, they also find inner calm amid the hustle and bustle of the city streets directly outside the yoga studio. “Macao is very small and also very stressful,” says Jeffrey Nungay, senior pro trainer and International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness instructor at Macao Fitness. “The first thing that you can get and develop from entering fitness is stress reduction because it helps you release endorphins, the happy hormone that makes you feel so good.”

As Nungay mentions, the World Health Organisation recommends 150 minutes of physical activity

every week. Divide that five times a week and that would only be 30 minutes a day. “Typically,” he says, “there are eight hours for work and another eight hours for sleep. Within the other eight hours of doing whatever you want, why not devote an hour to physical activity?”

Driving forces

Offering new stimulus through a new lesson or coach certification can boost people’s interest in fitness – something Macao Fitness is dedicated to. “People are always bored here,” says Gomes. “That’s why we always try to provide diversity in terms of classes and equipment.” Macao Fitness is the first gym in the SAR to diversify its classes by offering Les Mills, as well as spinning, Zumba, hot yoga and aerial yoga.

This is supported by Sarmiento, who says that if members were not given ‘fresh styles’ to try at the gym, they might get tired of the routine and look for change elsewhere. When his two-year contract as a

trainer in Bahrain ended, he went to Hong Kong in search of a job and discovered the competitive nature of the industry over the water. As Nungay points out, gyms are open 24 hours in Hong Kong mainly to cater to foreigners – and compete with one another to attract the most members. “Foreigners are very active in terms of fitness,” he says, “and there’s a lot of people running out there 24/7. You go to the parks there, it’s full.”

With a larger amount of expats in Hong Kong, some say the city’s locals feel challenged and are more inclined to match the efforts made by expats to compete. Next to Hong Kong’s fitness scene, however, Macao is still not at the same level. From Martins’ experience, fitness in Macao can be a challenge culture-wise as locals often prefer personal training than being exposed during exercises. This often makes it challenging to get them ‘to pay to go to sweat’. A language barrier could also be another issue, especially when whole classes are taught in English. “If the local doesn’t understand really well,” says Martins, “it can be a challenge. It’s easier for us to reach expats.”

Regarding expat culture and the need to stay fit, Barrias concurs. “I’m almost certain that at least 90 per cent of the expat community trains in some fashion,” he says. “Well, exercises in some fashion. Like recreational jogging or the weekend trail hike. I would say that only 70 to 75 per cent of locals exercise regularly, though. Training-wise, only two per cent.”

The Health Bureau’s take

The Health Bureau of Macao says the growing fitness trend shows that ‘people in Macao are more concerned about their health and are willing to be physically active’. From a government document titled 2018 Statistical Yearbook – Health Statistics, the current life expectancy in Macao is 83.7 years, with men on average living until 80.6 years old and women until 86.6 years old but in the government’s Macau Health Survey 2016, it was reported that 34 per cent of the men surveyed qualified as obese or overweight, while it was 27.2 per cent for women.

“As more residents exercise, it can be predicted that overweight and obesity rates, as well as the cases of the four major chronic diseases in Macao, will decline in the future,” says a spokesman from the Health Bureau. “Ultimately, the average life expectancy of the Macao population will be extended.” Macao’s four major chronic diseases, according to the Macao Health Survey 2016, are obesity, hypertension, diabetes and dyslipidemia.

How's business?

Chio chose the heart of the business district at AIA Tower for her gym, an opportunity for her to educate locals about fitness for health and wellbeing. Diversifying has gone a long way for Macao Fitness, such as the recent addition of Les Mills classes, a standard in other places like Dubai, Hong Kong and China.

One big challenge, however, that keeps many locals from investing their time into going to a gym is their schedule. “So many people have given up because of their work schedules,” says Kumar. “If they’re working night shifts, they just want to rest and not move. They’ll be sleeping all day.” Despite this, there are still those who come back, though, which is made easier as the Yoga Light studio is located in the heart of the Dynasty business area. “We try to keep motivating people,” says Kumar.

But the interest is rising. And as a result, now, as Lam shares, ‘the demand is more than the supply’ when it comes to fitness offerings in Macao. She says that compared to somewhere like Shanghai, Macao’s scene is not densely packed and should still see growth. Barrias adds that the average household income in the city is reaching a point where people have enough for basic needs, so he says they are starting to live more extravagantly. But he says they soon realise they’ve gained weight and have a hard time sleeping at night. With a good income, however, he says they have the capacity to start their fitness journey. “But the income is still not enough for them to demand quality over quantity,” he notes.

“If you have a Ferrari and don’t know how to drive,” continues Barrias, “it’s still gonna crash. We have the offer but we still have a very long way to go. You’ll see that the

more money people make, the more quality [in fitness] they’ll demand.” Yang echoes this sentiment, adding that trainers can further lend a hand by offering to personalise training through finding out what their clients like. For his own clients at Life Project, he goes the extra mile by travelling to the grocery store with them to find out about their nutrition needs. This is one method, he says, that Macao’s fitness scene could further improve quality-wise.

Education, education, education

Barrias travels frequently across the globe to train with and learn from the best coaches. Last year, he completed a two-week-long private mentorship in Germany with Wolfgang Unsoeld – one of the world’s best coaches. The same goes for the other Crossfit XVI coaches, all who have undergone additional training so they can receive certifications and qualifications. Improvement is key to quality fitness. Sarmiento also underwent further education by training to be Macao’s first ever Les Mills instructor. Martins has likewise done the same by training under Lam, who is one of Macao’s few pilates instructors.

According to Barrias, Macao’s fitness scene will grow exponentially once the shift is made from quantity to quality – and that includes fitness instructors educating themselves and travelling outside of Macao to learn more. “For example,” he says, “eventually, the people who can afford personal trainers would have experienced a lot of PTs in Macao – and they’re gonna start wanting better and better, and we will see the rise of a much better quality service and a better offering.” Yang suggests that the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau could help with this by



Courtesy of CrossFit XVI

providing training centres so that the younger generations can gain more knowledge when it comes to fitness, including in sports training. “It’s not just about having better personal trainers,” adds Yang.

Dr Zhaowei Kong, associate professor at the University of Macau who specialises in sports science in the fields of exercise and health, as well as hypoxic training, believes there will be more boutique gyms that focus on specialised exercise activities in Macao in the future. However, he warns that too many gyms should be avoided because that would forsake quality. Instead, he suggests, a proper balance can be reached if the quality of the local fitness industry is prioritised through the continued education and training of both the instructors and those interested in fitness. This is something, he says, that the government could provide by setting up or allowing in organisations to review lessons in gyms and studios for quality control. This might then lead to a healthy fitness industry, he concludes.

Future forecast of fitness

More people in Macao are finding that gyms become ‘second homes’ that not only get them fit and healthy but where they have a community of like-minded individuals. “We like to give our members a feeling of enjoyment being here,” says Gomes. “You know, the feeling of recreation and relaxation.”

“Why pay money to medical doctors when you could gym?” asks Chio. “Go into fitness and maintain a healthy lifestyle, then you don’t need to take too much medicine.” Plus, getting fitter is a confidence booster, adds Chio.

A moment of meditation for a class at Yoga Light; (top) participants show their core strength in a Crossfit XVI class



Courtesy of Ritesh Kumar

The hard health facts

Between April and July 2016, the Health Bureau and the Statistics and Census Service jointly conducted the Macao Health Survey 2016. Data was collected from 1,963 households and 2,802 residents. Here are some interesting figures which could inspire you to get fit:

25.5%

of adults in Macao were ‘overweight’

25.5%

of adults suffered from hypertension

7.1%

of adults suffered from diabetes

5.1%

of adults in Macao were obese

24.3%

of adults suffered from dyslipidemia (usually too much fatty substance in the blood)

*There have been no similar studies since 2016.

And even students are becoming regular visitors to the city's gyms, observes Kong. He says he's noticed more students are regularly visiting the UM campus gym.

Fitness, flexibility or strength conditioning – take your pick. Whatever people are looking to develop, there are offerings in Macao. According to Sarmiento, he sees great potential in locals. He says gym-goers are focused on their workouts and have good attitudes. "Usually," he says, "they wake up early just to visit the gym for their workout, to be healthy. They can manage to get themselves to the gym because they have a goal."

"Soon, everything will change," says Nungay. "Over the past 12

months, new gyms have opened, so that's a sign that people are starting to get involved in the fitness scene. In two years, it will be totally different. Whether they like it or not, people will submit themselves. It just so happens that we're a little bit later than Hong Kong. What I'm seeing there will eventually happen here also." This prediction is supported by Sarmiento as he also believes that it will take two more years for more participation in the local fitness scene.

For Barrias, it will take five more years, which Martins agrees with. As Kumar puts it, 'Macao's fitness scene is still growing but we are expecting it to get a lot better than before'. "In upcoming years," he

says, "you will see it's going to be much better." For newcomer Yang, he believes that more gyms will be popping up soon, most of which will be smaller studios that do specialised training in some form or another. This, he says, could counter some people's tendency to get bored easily. Yang also says that the scene will grow over the next three years. "I really hope that one day," he says, "instead of eating out, people will be working out instead, incorporating it into their lifestyle."

So there's a healthy future ahead for Macao's gym industry, according to the experts. As Chio says: "If you live life healthier, you won't end up on the hospital floor, just on the gym floor. It's your choice." ●

Cheong Kam Ka



Jason Yang (centre) and staff at Life Project show how easy it is to get into shape

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Lights, camera, action!

Text Cláudia Aranda Photos courtesy of the 4th International Film Festival and Awards Macao

Hundreds of filmstars, movie makers and fans of cinema graced the glittering fourth edition of the International Film Festival and Awards Macao last month.

第四屆
澳門國際影展暨頒獎典禮
4th International Film Festival & Awards • Macao
4^o Festival Internacional de Cinema e
Cerimónia de Entrega de Prémios • Macau

The red carpet was rolled out for some of the most recognisable names in Asian cinema during the fourth edition of the International Film Festival and Awards Macao last month. More than 800 guests graced the SAR's biggest movie celebration of the year, with many cinematic talents posing for the cameras at the opening and closing ceremonies.

Aimed at building a platform for cultural exchange across the East and the West, the festival, which has been running annually since 2016, showcased the best of Asian and international cinema between 5 and 10 December. Around 50 films and six shorts were screened over the six days and a plethora of major awards were given out to movie makers, cast and crew from Macao, Asia and across the world at the annual Awards Ceremony on 10 December.

The festival, which was jointly organised by the Macao Government Tourism Office and the Macau Films and Television Productions and Culture Association, is committed to becoming a major gathering for international filmmakers to enhance cultural exchange, while putting Asian film talent and works on the global stage.

One of the highlights of the festival was Juliette Binoche's encounter with award-winning Chinese director Diao Yinan during an open session. The French actress, who said she had been 'touched by the tradition, the way of thinking and the poetry in China', shared details of her new film 'The Truth', directed by Japanese creative Hirokazu Kore-eda, with the audience. She also shared her experience on working with different filmmakers, including Iranian talent Abbas Kiarostami and Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski. Yinan and Binoche interacted enthusiastically as the French actress expressed her availability to star in one of Yinan's films. Binoche was the talent ambassador along with Hong Kong star Carina Lau and K-pop performer and actor Kim Junmyeon – aka Suho.

The festival included two main competitions: an international event where 10 feature films from first or second-time filmmakers competed for five awards including a US\$60,000 (MOP 481,350) prize for Best Film. And there was also an expanded New Chinese Cinema section, which this year added a competition element, with directors vying for five accolades. All of the winners were revealed at the awards ceremony.

Director of the MGTO and president of the IFFAM’s organising committee, Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, remarked that with the experience the organisers had gained from the past three editions, they were able to ‘progressively shape IFFAM into a mega event established with its own orientation, unique characteristics and special elements of Macao’. She added: “Macao could deliver a positive impact as a melting pot in the cultivation of Asia’s next generation of film directors and film talent.”

Taika bow

The festival opened on 5 December with a screening of ‘Jojo Rabbit’ by Taika Waititi, winner of the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival and considered by critics as a potential Oscar nominee. Two of the films screened in the past two editions of the festival have garnered Oscars for Best Picture – ‘The Shape of Water’ in 2018 and ‘Green Book’ last year.

With Portuguese being one of Macao’s official languages, the festival always includes the screening of Portuguese-speaking films. During the five days, it showcased the Portuguese film ‘The Domain’ by Tiago Guedes and Karim Aïnouz’s Brazil-Germany co-production ‘The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão’.

The IFFAM International Competition featured 10 films from across the globe, with ‘Give Me Liberty’ scooping the Best Film award. Written and directed by Kirill Mikhankovsky, a Russian who emigrated to the US, and produced and co-written by Alice Austen, the film draws inspiration from the director’s experience as a medical transport driver for people with disabilities. Mikhankovsky said the movie is a drama where ‘characters



(From top) Filmmakers Alice Austen and Kirill Mikhankovsky receive the Best Film award for ‘Give Me Liberty’; director Gu Xiaogang with his Best Film award in the New Chinese Cinema category for ‘Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains’; (previous page) the festival’s opening ceremony was a glitzy affair

are able to laugh at themselves and we laugh with them’ because ‘we always find humour in the most difficult moments’. He said: “Comedy is the noblest sub-genre. The comedy of life and we are all part of it. It’s great to be here to celebrate the comedy of life because that’s the only way to confront reality, through humour, by laughing at ourselves and at life.”

President of the International Competition’s jury, Hong Kong

director Peter Chan Ho-sun, said that ‘most of the directors are first-time or second-time directors’ and he said he had seen ‘that they have used some new ways to make movies, which is very inspiring for me’. Chan also shared that the jury members – which included British actor Tom Cullen of TV series ‘Downton Abbey’ and Indonesian actress Dian Sastrowardoyo – were compatible. “We did not argue a lot,” he said. “We share similar

ideas and similar feelings, and we voted for the same movie. We made decisions in a very short period of time, which is very rare.”

People’s award

Cambodian human trafficking drama ‘Buoyancy’ by Rodd Rathjen – which won a Prize of the Ecumenical Jury during the 2019 Berlin International Film Festival – received the Macao Audience Choice Award, while the film’s protagonist Sarm Heng picked up the Best Actor trophy. Other notable wins included the Best Director prize going to UK-based Fyza Boulifa for his debut feature ‘Lynn + Lucy’, while the film’s lead performer, Roxanne Scrimshaw, picked up the award for the Best Actress. The Best Screenplay award went to Hamish Bennett from New Zealand with ‘Bellbird’.

The New Chinese Cinema competition pitted seven films from Chinese-speaking territories, an increase from last year’s six, showing a wide range of different voices from diverse regions across Asia but all sharing the same language. Debutant filmmaker Gu Xiaogang’s ‘Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains’ won the Chinese language Best Film of the Year. Inspired by the painting of the same name by Huang Gongwang, the film follows the fates of a provincial family across four seasons.

Romanian award-winning filmmaker Cristian Mungiu was the New Chinese Cinema jury president. He said that being part of a film festival jury is ‘not only about watching movies’ – the jury member must understand ‘the spirit of the place, the complexity of the local culture and the direction’ of the territory, as well as ‘the direction the cinema goes’ in. He added that the jury members spent time together ‘discovering a very beautiful place

AND THE WINNER IS...

The victors at the awards

WINNERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

- Best Film: ‘Give Me Liberty’ by Kirill Mikhankovsky (US)
- Best Director: Fyza Boulifa for ‘Lynn + Lucy’ (UK/France)
- Best Actress: Roxanne Scrimshaw in ‘Lynn + Lucy’ (UK/France)
- Best Actor: Sarm Heng in ‘Buoyancy’ by Rodd Rathjen (Australia)
- Macao Audience Choice Award: ‘Buoyancy’ by Rodd Rathjen (Australia)
- Best Screenplay: Hamish Bennett with ‘Bellbird’ (New Zealand)

NEW CHINESE CINEMA WINNERS

- Best Film: ‘Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains’ by Gu Xiaogang (China)
- Best Director: Anthony Chen for ‘Wet Season’ (Singapore)
- Best Actress: Zhou Dongyu in ‘Better Days’ (China)
- Best Actor: Wu Xiaoliang in ‘Wisdom Tooth’ (China)
- Best Screenplay: Johnny Ma with ‘To Live to Sing’ (China/France)

AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING FILMS AND FILMMAKER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Asian Blockbuster Film 2019: Parasite (Korea) by Bong Joon Ho
- Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) Award: ‘To Live to Sing’ by Johnny Ma (China/France)
- ‘Spirit of Cinema’ Achievement Award: Li Shaohong, Chinese filmmaker who directed ‘A City Called Macau’
- ‘Variety’ Asian Stars: Up Next Award: Asmara Abigail (Indonesia), Bea Alonzo (Philippines), Bhumi Pednekar (India), Jenni Oprasert and Praewa Suthamphong (Thailand), Liên Bình Phát (Vietnam), Lim Yoona (Korea), Ryota Katayose (Japan)
- Cinephilia Critics’ Award: ‘Wet Season’ by Anthony Chen
- Cinephilia Critics’ Award for Best Macao Film: ‘Years of Macao’ by Tou Kim Hong, Penny Lam, Albert Chu, Emily Chan, Peeko Wong, Chao Koi Wang, Maxim Bessmertny, Ao Leong Weng Fong and António Caetano de Faria
- Shorts Competition Best Short Film: ‘Lonely Encounter’ by Jenny Wan (Hong Kong)

IFFAM PROJECT MARKET AWARD WINNERS

- Best Project Award: ‘Dear Wormwood’ by Dodo Dayao (Philippines)
- Creative Excellence Award: ‘The Day and Night of Brahma’ by Sheetal Magan (South Africa)
- Best Co-production Award: ‘Drum Wave’ by Natalie Erika James (Australia/Japan)
- Macao Spirit Award: ‘Uk Kei’ by Leonor Teles (Portugal)





French actress Juliette Binoche and Chinese director Diao Yinan both hold ‘tokens of appreciation’ and are joined by (from left) IFFAM secretary general Alice Azedo Augusto, MGTO director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes and IFFAM artistic director Mike Goodridge after the ‘In Conversation with Juliette Binoche’ event; (right) Binoche with another ‘token of appreciation’; (bottom right, from left) the team behind ‘Buoyancy’ who won the Macao Audience Choice Award; and talent ambassador, K-pop performer and actor Kim Junmyeon – aka Suho



Aspiring ‘to create an effective exchange platform for the film industry’, the IFFAM Industry Hub featured the IFFAM Project Market, Work-in-Progress Presentation and the Macao Forum. It took place for three days in a row, gathering more than 200 industry professionals from more than 30 countries and regions. The Project Market was ‘a point of pride’ according to its curator, Todd Brown, who presented 14 ‘particularly strong’ feature-film projects. Two of the projects were directed by Macao directors: ‘Investigator Mendonza’ by Maxim Bessmertny and ‘The Fortune Tower’ by Harriet Wong Teng Teng. The Project Market Awards were announced on 8 December, with Dodo Dayao, the Filipino director of critically acclaimed ‘Violator’, winning the US\$15,000 (MOP 120,400) Best Project Award for his ‘Dear Wormwood’. Portuguese director Leonor Teles won the US\$5,000 (MOP 40,140) Macao Spirit Award with the project ‘Uk Kei’, a journey of self-discovery. Teles is the

youngest director ever to have won a Golden Bear for best short after he scooped the prize at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2016. The budget for the festival was similar to previous years, amounting to MOP 55 million (US\$6.86 million), which was covered by the government, as well as private companies in Macao. Apart from the film screenings, the festival also offered master classes, namely with South Korean director Kim Yong-Hwa, founder of visual effects company Dexter Studios which has worked on films such as ‘The Taking of Tiger Mountain’, ‘The Monkey King’ and ‘Kung Fu Yoga’. The festival wrapped up on 10 December, however over its six days, filmmakers, actors, crew, producers and the public were able to enjoy, celebrate and reward Asian and international cinema, as well as the ever-growing Macao industry. Expect the fifth edition this year to be even bigger and better, with hopefully some important wins for Macao. ●

with very welcoming people and very fresh cinema’.

Chinese film director Li Shaohong was given the ‘Spirit of Cinema’ Achievement Award during the festival. Her ‘A City Called Macau’, which was released last year and serves as a tale of misplaced affection and gaming addiction in the SAR, was screened at the event. The filmmaker expressed surprise at the ceremony, saying that she was too young to earn such award. “I still want to shoot many films,” she said. “I feel I still have the energy and the desire to shoot more great films to offer to the audience.”

“Your films are like your children,” continued Li. “You think all your films are great and you have special feelings towards those films.

Actually, ‘A City Called Macau’ is one of my favourites. It was shot in Macao but the story is connected with the Mainland. It actually reflects the economic transformation in China.”

Local plaudits

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the SAR, a quintet of local films were introduced at the festival. “I am especially pleased that there are five new Macao features in the programme in this special anniversary year,” said Mike Goodridge, festival artistic director, as he introduced them.

The quintet included ‘Years of Macao’, which was commissioned by local filmmaker Tracy Choi, who selected nine shorts by nine local directors to make up the movie.

‘Years of Macao’ picked up the Cinephilia Critics’ Award for Best Macau Film and the other films were ‘Ina and the Blue Tiger Sauna’ by António Caetano de Faria and Bernardo Rao; ‘Let’s Sing’ by Keo Lou; ‘Patio of Illusion’, a drama by Shangshi Chen that pays homage to the rich heritage of the city; and ‘Strings Of Sorrow’, a drama by Oliver Fa that introduces Macao’s classical music scene.

The Shorts Competition was a new highlight launched in this edition of the festival. The Best Short Film award was granted to a Hong Kong production, ‘Lonely Encounter’ by Jenny Wan, who is actually a young director from Macao. There were four entries for the Shorts Competition, including ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ from Macao.





Through the lens

Text **Rafelle Marie Allego** Photo **António Sanmarful**

Award-winning Macao filmmaker Tracy Choi always champions the city's local movie industry. Fresh off the back of a Macao International Film Festival and Awards win for 'Years of Macau', we speak to the director about style, scripting and government support.

Macao may not be home to the world's biggest film industry but it does have a director who may have one of the industry's biggest hearts. Tracy Choi is passionate about filmmaking and she certainly loves her city and its representation on the silver screen. The 31-year-old, who was born and raised in Macao, has been a vocal supporter of the city's film industry over the past few years and she is always looking – along with other talents in the territory – to find ways to improve and grow the local movie scene.

Choi's movies often focus on gender and feminist issues, however she has an interest in many facets of life – particularly Macao life. The filmmaker, who has studied film in Taiwan and Hong Kong, also has a penchant for creating documentaries, such as 2014's 'Farming on the Wasteland', which discusses a local female author. However, her big break was with her first feature-length movie in the director's chair, 'Sisterhood', a moving drama made in 2016 that is set during both Macao's handover of administration to China and 15 years later. It scooped the Audience Choice Award at the first edition of the Macao International Film Festival and Awards and also won prizes in Japan and Canada.

Since 'Sisterhood', Choi has been involved in a raft of projects in the region, however she's now fresh off another Macao International Film Festival and Awards triumph. At December's fourth edition of the event, her movie 'Years of Macau' was given the Cinephilia Critics' Award for Best Macao Film. Choi, however, would argue it is not so much her film – she had a more organising and supervisory role in the project, as well as working as a producer – as the directors' film. There were nine directors who each created a short that together make up an anthology which covers the story of Macao over the past 20 years since it was established as a SAR.

With the Macao government putting more money into film projects over the past few years and with its ambition to become an international arts hub, talents like Choi are becoming more able to flex their creative muscles and help put the city on the global arts map. It may take a while before the territory's film industry is able to grow to the size of, say, Hong Kong's – but as Choi tells us when we meet shortly after her Cinephilia Critics' Award win, 'Macao's film industry of the future looks pretty good'...

‘Years of Macau’ won the Cinephilia Critics’ Award for Best Macao Film at the awards. What was it like to triumph again?

It was surprising that we won but we were glad we got the award, particularly as the judges could see that our film represented a whole group of people – the people of Macao. It is important that homegrown directors are honoured in this way because this can show other [foreign] filmmakers that our film industry is developing and that we’re growing as filmmakers.

You produced ‘Years of Macau’. What made the film so special?

We wanted to tell the story of the past 20 years on our own because Macao is often presented by others and not by Macao people. We wanted to do a project that told people how we feel about Macao. And we were a diverse group – the team included Chinese, Portuguese and Russian directors. Even the stories the directors told were diverse. For example, two directors took the year 2000. Portuguese director António Caetano de Faria focused on a Portuguese character’s decision on whether or not to stay in Macao in 2000. And Chinese director Penny Lam Kin Kuan also picked 2000, with the Macao Grand Prix – in which a fatal accident happens – as the backdrop. He focused his story on a boy contacting his mom on a pager, asking whether he should go out to eat breakfast or not, knowing that the roads are usually blocked off during the Grand Prix. Both stories are very different – but they are still Macao in their own way.

What makes Macao such a good place for filmmakers to practice their art?

For filmmakers, especially the younger ones, Macao is a good starting point because there is a lot of competition in places like Hong Kong, China and



A scene from the award-winning ‘Years of Macau’, an anthology which was overseen by Tracy Choi

Taiwan. In those places, there are a lot of young filmmakers who are straight out of film school or who have experience in the film industry already. In Macao, however, there’s not as much competition. So, for young filmmakers, there are more chances to make a project and get it seen. It is easier to get a first short or even a feature film made in Macao.

Is there a set ‘style’ to the films being made in Macao at the moment?

Take ‘Years of Macau’ for example. As I said, it’s so diverse. There are all sorts of styles in it and that is just like the Macao film industry right now. I don’t think there is a ‘look’ or a ‘style’ yet. It’s not like, say, Hong Kong or Taiwan. But I like the way it is now because of this diversity. It represents Macao as the city is so diverse, with many different ethnicities. I don’t think there is even a need for a shared ‘look’ or ‘style’. We all have our own style.

What’s the hardest part about making a film?

We don’t have an established film industry in Macao which makes it very hard to get funding from private entities. We don’t have a distribution network – and when you don’t have a distribution network, nobody wants to invest because your project will come to a dead end. We’re not Hong Kong, which has a long history in filmmaking. Even if they don’t sell to China or to the rest of the world, the Hong Kong audience can support their own films. Box office figures for just one local film can reach up to 10 million people. For Macao, we don’t have that many people. Even if the whole city went and watched the film, it wouldn’t be anywhere near that much. A lot of Macao films just screen once or twice and then that’s the end of the story. Filmmakers can take their movies to different festivals but that doesn’t mean they can get back the money that’s been spent on the project.

How did you get funding for ‘Years of Macau’, then?

For ‘Years of Macau’, the money mostly came from the Macao government’s Cultural Affairs Bureau [IC] as part of its Subsidy Programme Series for Macao’s Cultural and Creative Industries, which was set up in 2013 to support those with local artistic and cultural initiatives. The funding comes in the form of subsidies or interest-free loans. A film falls under the fund’s remit so we were pleased the IC helped us. The rest of our funding was from private companies. Because it was a low budget indie project, we managed to cover most of the costs.

How do you conceptualise the films you direct?

I do a lot of research. I’m not really a screenwriter and I often work with actual screenwriters. But usually I think of the themes first and then I do the research. And if I’ve got the money already or I pitch it and a budget becomes available, then I can hire a screenwriter who can work with me. We used to hire crew from Hong Kong but now most of the crew comes from Macao. So, more or less, we have enough talent locally to help with projects. However, there are still some positions that Macao lacks, such as producers, art directors, sound recorders, sound mixers, assistant directors and writers. There are just one or two of each who may be available. We could use more of these people in Macao.

What does the future hold for the SAR’s film industry?

There is definitely a future, with the help of FIC. There are at least eight films which have received funding and are waiting to be made. So yeah, I think there will be a lot of films being made over the next two years. Macao may never have a huge film industry in its future because it will never be

able to compete with Hong Kong due to audience reach but maybe we will one day have something substantial. With the support we already have from the government – and with the many people from my generation who’ve studied film abroad but have returned to Macao to join other creatives on projects – the film industry of the future looks pretty good.

Who are the young directors to watch in Macao over the coming years?

Easy – those directors who did ‘Years of Macau’ with me! There are some others too, like Hong Heng Fai (‘Crash’, 2016) and Chan Ka Keong (‘Passing Rain’, 2017).

Any projects coming up?

I’m working on a Hong Kong project which is about teenage pregnancy. We’ve been working on it for a year so far, talking to different teenage girls. But the project is different to anything I have worked on before because a film company contacted me about it. They wanted to do a film about teenage pregnancy with a female director. We’ve already finished the first draft of the script and we’re just waiting to develop it some more until it’s complete, as well as waiting for the cast to be chosen. The Hong Kong production team will secure that before moving forward. In short, watch this space.

What would you like to be doing in 20 years’ time?

I hope I can still be working in the industry. I’d have Macao as a base but I would definitely want to work outside the city too and co-operate with other people in different places across the world. But hopefully I will still be doing something in film in 20 years’ time. I really hope that Macao’s film industry keeps growing over the next couple of decades too. And I really hope I’m still here in Macao to be part of it all. That’s the dream. ●

THE MAGNIFICENT NINE

Nine directors took part in ‘Years of Macau’. These are their nine stories and the year represented in each short film

GO BACK HOME (回鄉)

Director: Tou Kin Hong (杜健康)

Year represented: 1999

REC – LAST DAYS (最後一天)

Director: António Caetano de Faria

Year represented: 2000

SPARKLING MIND (請留低口訊)

Director: Penny Lam Kin Kuan (林鍵均)

Year represented: 2000

TILL THE END OF THE WORLD

(陪你走到世界末日的盡頭)

Director: Emily Chan Nga Lei (陳雅莉)

Year represented: 2012

THE LAST SHOW (最後一場放映會)

Director: Albert Chu lao lan (朱佑人)

Year represented: 2012

A MOMENT (相聚一刻)

Director: Chao Koi Wang (周鉅宏)

Year represented: 2017

DIRTY LAUNDRY (洗衣機)

Director: Maxim Bessmertny (貝馬善)

Year represented: 2018

The First Cigarette (煙)

Director: Peeko Wong Sio Nga (黃小雅)

Year represented: 2019

A LITTLE SUMMER DAY (小夏)

Director: Mike Ao leong Weng Fong

(歐陽永鋒)

Year represented: 2019

TO WATCH ‘Years of Macau’, look

out for details over the coming weeks as an extra screening is being planned in the city.

Location, location, location

Text **Rafelle Marie Allego**

For decades now, Macao has provided the perfect backdrop for filmmakers from across the globe. Big budget flicks and artistic masterpieces have been shot in the SAR due to its glitzy and gritty locations. We choose our favourite movies which were entirely – or at least partly – filmed in our picturesque city.



Doug Chan Kin Tak, who plays Chan Li, waits in a vehicle against the backdrop of Macao in 'Passing Rain' (2017)

With its 16th century Portuguese architecture, cobblestone-covered sidewalks and glitzy resorts, Macao serves as a great backdrop for any movie. And, over the decades, it's done just that. Filmmakers from across the globe have headed to the SAR to go on location with their crew and cast in a bid to make masterpieces which may or may not be based on Macao at all. In fact, as access to China was once heavily restricted, many Hollywood blockbusters include scenes where the audience think they're on the Mainland when actually they are in Macao.

To celebrate our charming city as an iconic film location, we have chosen seven movies that have been shot in Macao over the past 30 years. These are some of the best feature length films that have used the territory as a location and they hail from places like Europe, Asia and even Macao itself. Of course, these movies include scenes that were actually shot in Macao rather than recreating the city in a studio like, say, 2012 Bond thriller 'Skyfall' did, which saw its Macao scenes filmed at the UK's Pinewood Studios. In short, the following films were all or in part made in Macao – and they each helped put the city on the international movie map.

Amor e Dedinhos de Pé (1992)

Director: Luís Filipe Rocha

Starring: Joaquim de Almeida, Ana Torrent, Jean-Pierre Cassel

Language: Portuguese

The film: Literally translating to 'Love and Tiny Toes', this period drama, set in Macao in 1897, was based on a Portuguese book by Macanese writer Henrique de Senna Fernandes. It follows Francisco Frontaria, played by Joaquim de Almeida, who is a boozing, irresponsible young man who insults the shy daughter of a prominent family, leading to his ostracisation and destitution. Months later, however, the pair meet once again with the roles much reversed.

Macao locations: Most of the movie was filmed in Macao. One notable scene was shot at Lou Lim Ieoc Garden.



Johnny Hallyday, gun in hand, trawls the Macao streets in 'Vengeance' (2009); (above) Joaquim de Almeida in period drama 'Amor e Dedinhos de Pé' (1992)

Vengeance (2009)

Director: Johnnie To

Starring: Johnny Hallyday, Anthony Chau-Sang Wong, Simon Yam, Sylvie Testud

Languages: English, French and Cantonese

The film: John Hallyday plays a French former assassin-turned-chef who heads to Macao to seek revenge for the death of his daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren. He enlists three local hitmen to help him on his quest.

Macao locations: Most of the movie – a French-Hong Kong co-production – was shot in Macao between November 2008 and January 2009, with just a few scenes filmed in our sister SAR.



THE BEST OF THE REST

Twelve other movies either entirely or partly shot in Macao

Caminhos Longos (1955) Meaning 'Long Paths' in English, this Portuguese film, directed by Eurico Ferreira, a man credited with helping to start the Mozambican film industry, vanished after its initial release in Macao and has never been found. Those who did see it say it was a romantic story with refugees and revolution.

Ferry to Hong Kong (1959) Directed by Lewis Gilbert and starring Orson Welles, this British melodrama has it all: typhoons, drunks, pirates and English cads.

Fist of Fury (1972) Bruce Lee is synonymous with Asian cinema and a couple of scenes from this classic Hong Kong martial arts movie were filmed in Macao.

Game Of Death (1978) It's all about that yellow jumpsuit. Lee and that costume also star in this iconic movie which features plenty of Macao, including the Ruins of St Paul's.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984) The second installment of arguably Hollywood's finest adventure series. The opening scenes of this Steven Spielberg-directed flick were shot on location in Macao, which should have won an Oscar for its role as Shanghai.

Casino Tycoon (1992) This Hong Kong action drama that stars Andy Lau is said to be inspired by stories of businessman Stanley Ho, who is a key part of Macao's history over recent decades.

Isabella (2006) Set in Macao, Hong Kong film 'Isabella' tells the tale of a local police officer whose bachelor life is interrupted by the daughter he never knew he had.

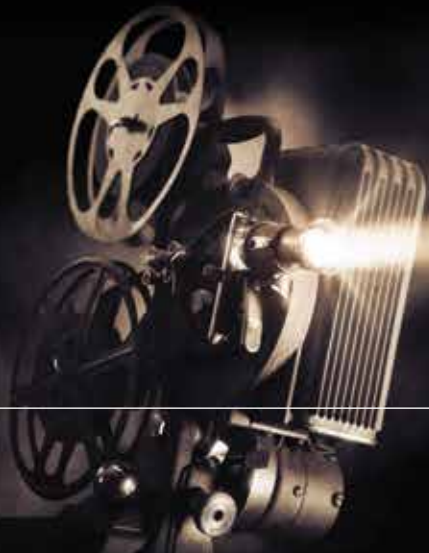
Exiled (2006) Another Hong Kong film set in Macao. This action drama produced and directed by Johnnie To is high octane and equipped with assassins, guns and gangsters.

Housefull (2010) This Indian Hindi-language comedy directed by Sajid Khan features a few scenes in Macao, including a memorable one at The Venetian Macao.

Johnny English Reborn (2011) British comedian Rowan Atkinson returned as the almost-James-Bond-like spy in this second film in the 'Johnny English' franchise. There are a few Macao scenes in the movie, including a sequence at the Grand Lisboa.

Unbeatable (2013) A Hong Kong-Chinese sports drama that focused on boxing. The setting of Macao was used as a backdrop for parts of the movie.

Sisterhood (2016) This Macao-Hong Kong drama directed by Tracy Choi and starring Gigi Leung includes the eve of Macao's handover of administration to China, as well as scenes of the city from 15 years later. There's plenty of emotion in this touching tale.





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A moody Macao street scene from ‘The Last Time I Saw Macao’ (2012); (left) the cast of ‘The Thieves’ (2012) walk down a back alley in the city with, no doubt, crime on their mind



The Last Time I Saw Macao (2012)

Directors: João Pedro Rodrigues and João Rui Guerra da Mata
Starring: Lydie Barbara, João Rui Guerra da Mata, João Pedro Rodrigues, Cindy Scrash
Language: Portuguese
The film: Originally titled ‘A Última Vez Que Vi Macau’, this Portuguese flick tells the story of a man who, after receiving a call from an old friend who tells him that she’s in some sort of trouble, travels from Lisbon to Macao to check up on her. At the same time, the trip allows him to reconnect with his origins in the SAR and reminisce on the best times of his life.
Macao locations: The entire film was set and shot in Macao. The city streets and alleys are as much a part of the story as the characters themselves.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Four films you may have thought were made in Macao but were not...

Macao (1952) You may have thought this classic film noir starring Robert Mitchum was shot in Macao. It’s called ‘Macao’ and set in Macao. But the only actual shot of Macao is stock footage at the beginning. The rest of the movie was filmed in a studio.

The Immortal Story (1968) ‘Une Histoire Immortelle’ was also set in Macao but it was mostly shot in director Orson Welles’ home in Madrid, Spain. Any exterior shots depicting Macao were filmed in a town near Madrid called Chinchón. Chinese waiters in Madrid served as extras.

Skyfall (2012) ‘The Man with the Golden Gun’ had scenes shot in Macao and later Bond thriller ‘Skyfall’ definitely nods towards the 1974 classic. But despite many believing some of the scenes in the 2012 flick were shot in the SAR, sadly they were all done in the UK’s Pinewood Studios. In one sequence, Daniel Craig as Bond enters Macao’s ‘Golden Dragon Casino’, which paints a pretty picture with a myriad of floating candles. Sadly, this does not exist in Macao but perhaps one day a resort may take inspiration from it. It would be a sight to behold.

Silence (2016) Martin Scorsese’s religious period flick ‘Silence’ is set in Japan but there are scenes in Macao and mentions of St Paul’s College too. Anyone thinking these scenes were made in Macao, however, is in for a surprise. And anyone thinking any sequence was shot in Japan is also in for a shock. The entire movie was filmed in Taiwan.



Passing Rain (2017)**Director:** Chan Ka Keong**Starring:** Doug Chan Kin Tak, Dicky Tsang, Wang Ping, Candice Lam**Language:** Cantonese and Mandarin**The film:** A fine film made in Macao that showcases the city through an authentic lens rather than presenting it as glitzy. Even local dishes are given screentime in this honest and deep production that focuses on six characters and the gamut of emotions they go through. 'Passing Rain' premiered at Macao's 2017 International Film Festival and Awards after it had taken Chan, who received an MOP 1.5 million grant for the project from the government in 2014, four years to complete. He did a lot on his own, including the scheduling and logistics.**Macao locations:** Every single scene was shot in Macao.**Hotel Império (2018)****Director:** Ivo Ferreira**Starring:** Margarida Vila-Nova, Rhydian Vaughan, Tiago Aldeia**Language:** Portuguese, Cantonese and English**The film:** Meaning 'Empire Hotel' in English, this Portuguese movie stars Margarida Vila-Nova as Maria, a young woman who operates, with her father, a rundown motel that's seen better days. The duo get kind offers to buy the property which gradually become threats as they keep on refusing. Soon Maria's ex-boyfriend is on the scene and there's trouble in the air.**Macao locations:** All the scenes were shot in Macao.

Wang Ping, who plays Mimi, sits at the foot of an escalator in Macao as another girl passes by in 'Passing Rain' (2017); (above) Rhydian Vaughan at the Rua da Felicidade in 'Hotel Império' (2018)



Bai Baihe in 'A City Called Macau' (2019);
(right) a man sits at a gaming table in the same film

A City Called Macau (2019)

Director: Li Shaohong

Starring: Bai Baihe, Wu Gang, Huang Jue, Geng Le

Language: Mandarin

The film: Released just over 12 months ago, Chinese drama 'A City Called Macau' is a tale of misplaced affection and gambling addiction set in the SAR between the early 2000s and 2014, when the gaming industry was quickly overtaking that of Las Vegas and casino brokers were emerging. Mei Xiao-ou, played by Bai Baihe, is a financial agent from Beijing who maintains long-term relationships with her wealthy clients by providing them with loans. But her clients quickly become gambling addicts.

Macao locations: Every scene was shot in Macao. ●



TRAILER TREASURE

Five more films set in Macao over the past 50 years that you just have to watch

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN (1974)

Director: Guy Hamilton

Starring: Roger Moore, Christopher Lee, Britt Ekland, Maud Adams

Language: English

The film: 'The Man With the Golden Gun' was the ninth in the 'James Bond' series, starring Roger Moore as 007. The MI6 agent is led to believe that he is targeted by the world's most expensive assassin while he tries to recover sensitive solar cell technology.

Macao locations: This was a special film for Macao. It was the first time Hollywood had sent a blockbuster cast and crew – including Moore – to the city to film a scene. That scene was set inside and outside the Macau Palace floating casino, which was popular in those days but closed in 2007.



WATCH THE
YOUTUBE
TRAILER

SHANGHAI SURPRISE (1986)

Director: Jim Goddard

Starring: Sean Penn, Madonna, Paul Freeman

Language: English

The film: A romantic comedy starring the then husband-and-wife team of Madonna and Sean Penn. Set in Shanghai in 1938, the film follows Madonna's chaste missionary who hires Penn's sleazy fortune hunter to help her track down opium for wounded Chinese soldiers under her care who need morphine. Cue campy action and other sleazy characters also hunting for opium.

Macao locations: Surprise indeed: not all of this movie's scenes were shot in Shanghai. Several were filmed in Macao, including at the Penang Hotel, where Penn's character stays. This was actually an old dilapidated hotel called Hotel Cantao at 286 Rua do Guimaraes, which is now a Mocha Club gaming and coffee establishment.



WATCH THE
YOUTUBE
TRAILER

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE (2000)

Director: Wong Kar-wai

Starring: Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Maggie Cheung, Ping Lam Siu

Language: Cantonese and Shanghaiese

The film: 'In the Mood for Love' was the second in Wong Kar-wai's award-winning series of movies that was preceded by his 1990 film 'Days of Being Wild' and followed by 2004's '2046'. Tony Leung is Chow Mo-wan and Maggie Cheung is Su Li-zhen – neighbours in the same apartment building whose spouses cheat on them with the other's partner, forcing them to find solace in each other's company, however they agree to keep their relationship platonic.

Macao locations: Parts of the film were shot in Macao. In fact, locations were shifted from Beijing to the city at the last minute. Parts of '2046', which also starred Faye Wong and Gong Li, were also shot in Macao. Both movies featured the Sanva Hotel, which is still there in Rua da Felicidade, as it had a poorly lit stairwell that was reminiscent of the 1950s.



WATCH THE
YOUTUBE
TRAILER

DOUBLE DHAMAAL (2011)

Director: Indra Kumar

Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Arshad Warsi, Riteish Deshmukh

Language: Hindi

The film: The second film in the 'Dhamaal' series, this Indian comedy flick continues from the previous film with the same four friends back for some more comedic conning mishaps. They end up in Macao in pursuit of an old enemy whose life they plan on ruining.

Macao locations: A fair amount of the film was shot in Macao, including a shot that shows three of the cast arriving at Cotai's Galaxy Macau.



WATCH THE
YOUTUBE
TRAILER

NOW YOU SEE ME 2 (2016)

Director: Jon M Chu

Starring: Jesse Eisenberg, Mark Ruffalo, Woody Harrelson, Daniel Radcliffe, Jay Chou

Language: English

The film: 'Now You See Me' was a fairly magical Hollywood hit when it came out in 2013 but this sequel takes the 'Four Horsemen' – a quartet of outstanding magicians – from American shores to the glamour of Macao. This time round, they meet a shady master criminal played by Daniel Radcliffe and seek help in a magic shop in the heart of the SAR.

Macao locations: Chu's team shot scenes all over Macao, including Rua da Felicidade, long's Magic Shop, Macao Science Centre and Sands Macao Hotel.



WATCH THE
YOUTUBE
TRAILER



A design for life

Text **Raquel Dias** Photo **António Sanmarful**

Macao architect Carlos Marreiros’ Red December exhibition is at Tap Seac Gallery until next month. The artist tells us all about his utopian ‘floating ship’, his ‘naughty’ sketches and his diaries full of memories and memorabilia that adorn the show’s walls.

Carlos Marreiros identifies himself as ‘an architect first and an artist second’. In reality, he is probably professor third, writer fourth, poet fifth, linguist sixth and the list goes on. The founder of MAA Marreiros Architectural Atelier on Rua de São Miguel is a talented man – and visitors to Tap Seac Gallery, just down the road in Avenida do Conselheiro Almeida Ferreira, are in for a treat at Red December, Marreiros’ latest exhibition.

Marreiros, whose family has more than 200 years of history in Macao, welcomes us at the door of Tap Seac Gallery which opened in November. We step inside with the man behind the ideas – it’s not often you get to be guided through an exhibition by the artist himself.

“Red December is an exhibition played in two concurrent tempos,” says Marreiros. “On the one hand, you have [more than] 50 sketchbooks – almost everything I have drawn or written so far – and on the other, you have this imaginary, floating ship.”

Marreiros was born in Macao in 1957 and he studied in the city, as well as in Portugal, Germany and Sweden. He has won an array of local and international awards in architecture and art over the years and is also an honorary professor at universities in China, as well as a guest professor at higher education institutions and universities in Macao. His artworks have been admired by many and Red December has already seen his pieces admired by many more over the past few weeks since its opening.

Comedy sketches

“It was a bit risky for me to exhibit all of my private sketches,” says Marreiros as he leads us across the gallery. “I have a naughty sense of humour.” The architect points at a black wall on which a number of large frames hold his sketchbooks. “If you look closely,” he says, “you’ll notice sketches of people we all know in funny costumes or saying interesting things. Some of them, I confess, I have had to hide – but most of them are here for everyone to see.”

From several representations of German-speaking Bohemian novelist Franz Kafka to a movie poster for the 1942 film ‘Casablanca’ and a caricature of a Brazilian

singer, there’s an eclectic mix of sketches throughout the exhibition, which has also been organised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau. The whole collection, in fact, could serve as homage to popular culture and the arts across the world.

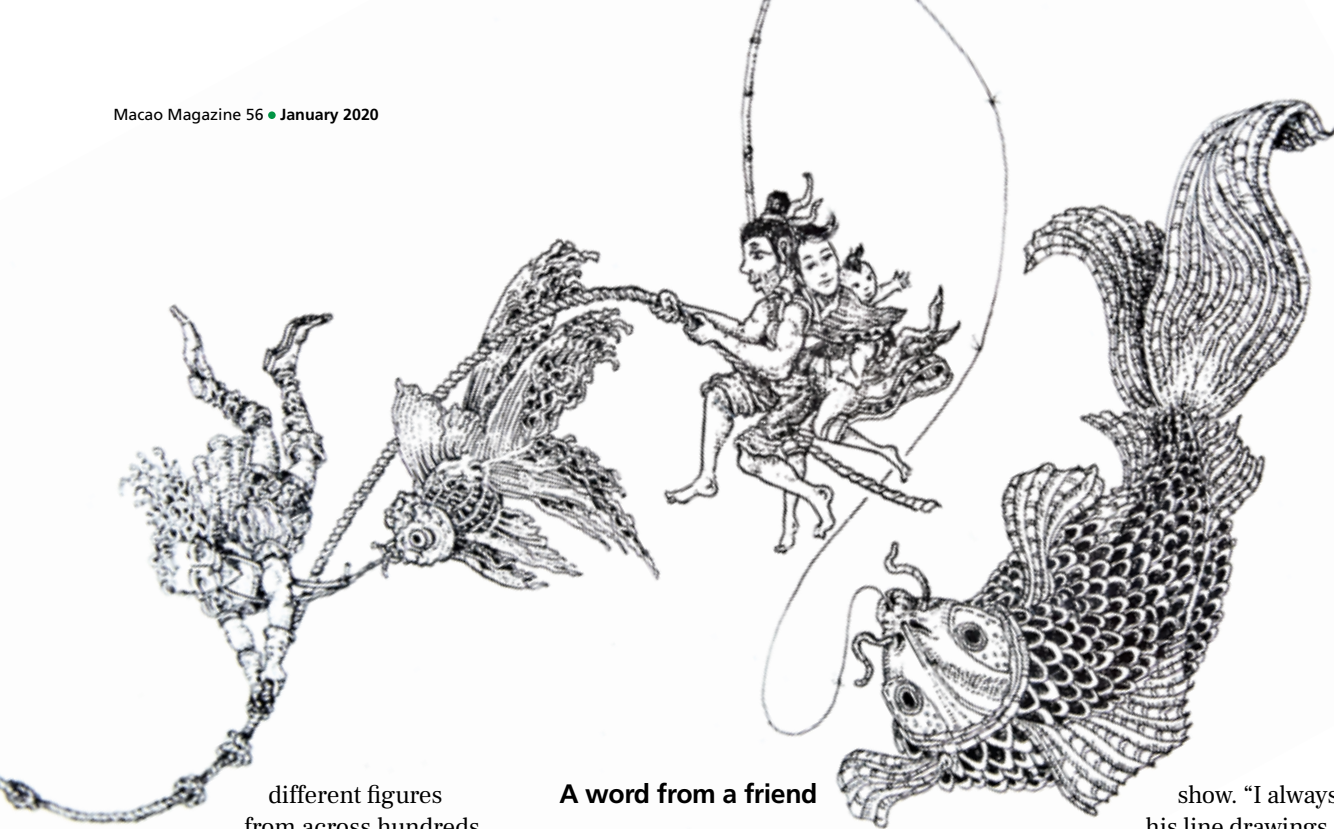
Visitors can also marvel at Marreiros’ beautifully detailed drawings of foreign cities. And his diaries that are on display are full of details, including business cards, napkins from restaurants he has eaten in and airport luggage stickers, all arranged into an eclectic collage that covers more than 60 years of life experience. When asked if he thinks he works too much, he simply confesses: “I cannot stop.”

Floating imagination

The focus of the exhibition is surely Marreiros’ ‘floating ship’, which is dubbed, like the exhibition, ‘Red December’. This is a large composition that is embedded with detail, depicting a scene where Chinese and Western historical figures from different eras come together to chat, creating a utopia where all cultures, no matter when they come from, exist in harmony. “This is the ‘pièce de résistance’,” says Marreiros, adding that the name itself is in ‘homage to China and Macao’. “No colour,” he says, when asked about the ‘Red December’ title, “is as important as red and I wanted to celebrate the 20 years of the establishment of the Macao SAR, which happened on 20 December 1999.”

At three by four metres in size, the original ‘Red December’ was too large to fit in the gallery space, so Marreiros divided the work into four horizontal sections which were individually framed. He also arranged two smaller-scale replicas. In total, the great ship carries 109





different figures from across hundreds of years. “I only included the characters I consider the most important,” he says, as he examines the piece closely with us. “You see these three people casually sitting together? They are [English poet and playwright] William Shakespeare, [founding father of the People’s Republic of China] Mao Zedong and [16th century Portuguese poet] Luís Vaz de Camões. I like to imagine them casually smoking and chatting.”

Traditional Chinese standards fly as the ship seemingly moves through the air, with little figures walking or enjoying a dim sum lunch. There’s a Michael Jackson concert and even James Bond holding a gun while several cats scamper on by. Visitors stand mesmerised for long periods of time, spotting all the details in this ‘pièce de résistance’. “I wanted to do in art what Gabriel García Márquez – the South American Nobel Prize winner – did in literature,” concludes Marreiros, referring to Márquez’s ‘imaginary cities’ in his books, which inspired the ‘city’ he creates in this piece. “Perhaps,” he adds, “this is to make sense of this ever-changing reality we are all living in.”

A word from a friend

Russian painter Konstantin Bessmertny has lived in Macao for more than 25 years and he is friends with Marreiros. He says that the first time he was confronted with the architect’s works of art he was ‘amazed’. “I was truly inspired,” says Bessmertny. “It was at an exhibition

“*William Shakespeare, Mao Zedong and Luís Vaz de Camões are sitting there in the artwork. I like to imagine them casually smoking and chatting.*”

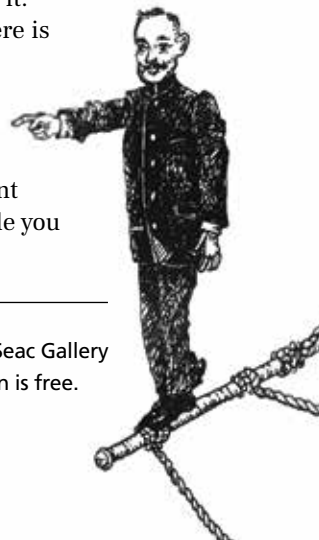
[he had] at Casa Garden [next to Camões Garden in St Anthony’s Parish] and I thought to myself ‘this man could be exhibiting anywhere in the world. He has a unique talent’.”

A video of Marreiros and Bessmertny conversing about the exhibition is projected as part of the

show. “I always liked his line drawings,” says Bessmertny. “They always had their own identity. When one sees any of his works – but especially ‘Red December’ – one can truly understand that this is Macao.” Bessmertny adds that ‘Macao in general has its own visual identity because of the artists living here’.

“When I first walked into the exhibition,” says Bessmertny, “I did not know what I was about to see. But I found a lot of surprises awaiting me.” Bessmertny singles out the sketchbooks as a highlight because they ‘represent long Chinese scrolls’ but they also boast ‘a lot of Portuguese – European, even – flavour’. “It is rare these days,” concludes Bessmertny, “to see a truly interesting contemporary art exhibition and enjoy it. More often than not, there is no authenticity. It was a completely different feeling when I saw Red December.” Experience this ‘different feeling’ at Tap Seac while you still have time. ●

RED DECEMBER is at Tap Seac Gallery until 13 February. Admission is free.



THE ART-CHITECT

Carlos Marreiros may be a thought-provoking artist but he has been first and foremost an architect, designing more than 250 buildings across the world. Here are a few of his noteworthy creations in Macao over the years:

Tap Seac Health Centre, 1984: A contemporary interpretation of Macao’s neoclassical buildings, including a wall of glass that mimics traditional female Chinese dresses. It won the Macao Architects Association’s ‘Best Institutional Building’ award in 1991 and, in 1999, it won the International Union of Architects’ ‘Jury Special Prize Award’. This is an NGO that’s recognised by UNESCO as the only architectural union operating at an international level.

Academy of Public Security Forces (ESFSM), 1989: Built in Coloane, Marreiros designed blocks I, II and III.

Macao Portuguese School, 1999: A unique example of modernist architecture, the original building opened as Pedro Nolasco School in 1966 before it changed its name to the Portuguese School of Macau in 1998. The Marreiros-designed four-storey wing was opened the following year.

Requalification of Tap Seac, 2003: A massive undertaking, this project saw the creation of a square and the multifunctional Glass House, as well as the revitalisation of older buildings.

Villa Konstantin Bessmertny, 2004: Marreiros’ design for his artist friend’s home in Coloane received a Gold Medal in the Residential Building category in the Architects Association of Macao’s ‘Awards for Architecture 2009-2010’.



All of the sketches on these two pages are by Marreiros and they all feature somewhere in the Red December exhibition

The Macao Pavilion at Shanghai World Expo, 2010: Not exactly Macao-based but this awesome bunny-shaped structure needs a mention. It was inspired by the traditional paper lanterns that are used in Macao during Mid-Autumn Festival. It won several international awards, including the ‘Red Dot Award: Communication Design 2010’.

Partial Rehabilitation of the St Francis Barracks Phase I, 2016: The barracks are in a colonial-era building in Calçada dos Quartéis. The building was once, back in the 16th century, a monastery but it was later abandoned and became a military camp in the 19th century. It is now the headquarters for the Public Security Forces Affairs Bureau of Macao. Marreiros designed a contemporary low-rise building here, winning the Architects Association of Macao’s ‘Award of Excellence’ in the Conservation Project category of the Architecture Awards in 2018.

New headquarters for the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, 2019: This building in the Lake Nam Van area is the new home of Forum Macao. It was designed to house the organisation’s necessary facilities, including a special room to be used by the central government for plenary sessions and a gallery.

Macao Central Library Project, 2018+: Yet to be built, the Old Courthouse in Macao is expected to be transformed into a library with enough space for up to a million books.

Into the unknown

Text Sam Sinha

Art meets science meets technology meets you at the upcoming TeamLab SuperNature exhibition at The Venetian Macao. We get a sneak preview of some of the interactive pieces that can be explored, admired and even shaped by their visitors.

Something special is under construction at The Venetian Macao. A gigantic walk-in ‘world of art’ that fuses art, science, tech and entertainment – all the while making the visitor actually part of the piece – opens in March, however an exact date was yet to be confirmed at the time of print. TeamLab – branded ‘teamLab’ – and it promises a uniquely interactive experience.

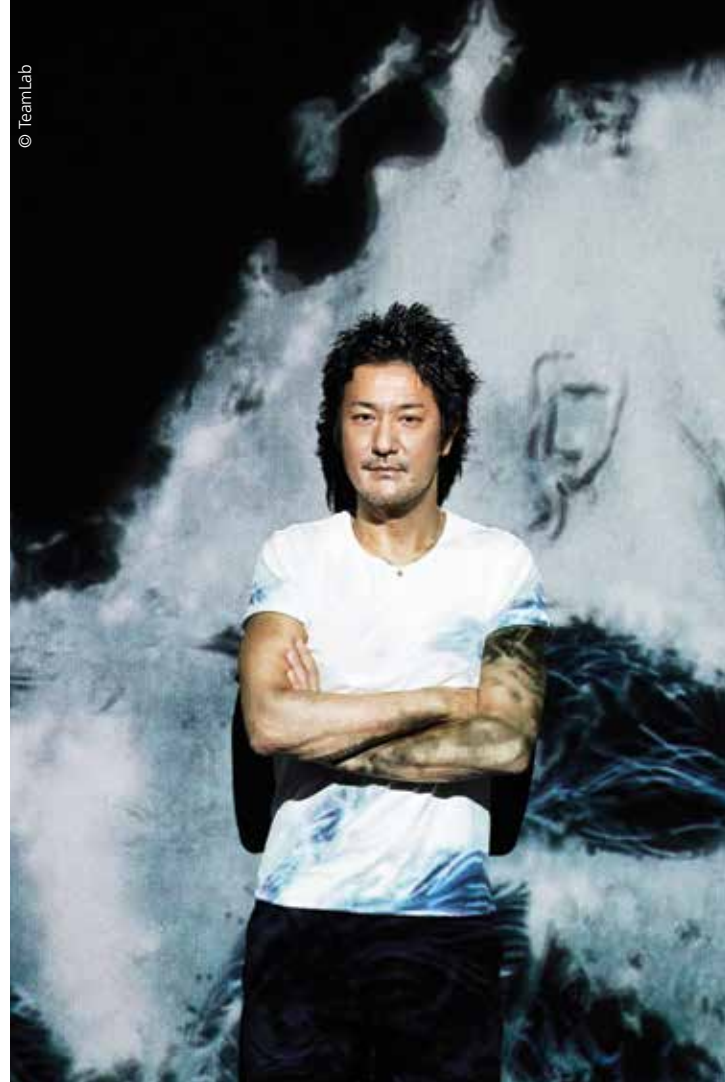
TeamLab describes itself as ‘an interdisciplinary group of various specialists such as artists, programmers, engineers, computer graphics animators, mathematicians and architects’ working at ‘the confluence of art, science, technology, design and the natural world’. Despite originating in Tokyo, the group stresses that it is ‘an art collective with members from all over the world’.

The group brings the exhibition to Macao fresh from wowing visitors with unique installations in the world’s leading artistic centres – Tokyo, Paris, London, New York, Melbourne, Singapore and San Francisco among others. The huge installation, which will be at The Venetian permanently (check TeamLab’s website for opening date details), will cover 5,000 square metres of ‘labyrinthine’ floor space with eight-metre-high ‘cavernous’ ceilings inside The Venetian’s Cotai Expo Hall F. This ‘monumental digital art destination’ is expected to attract not just locals but plenty of tourists too.

From humble beginnings

Creative visionary Toshiyuki Inoko founded the art collective along with a group of multi-talented friends in 2001 ‘to create a laboratory to experiment with a collaborative creation’. The Japanese student, fascinated by more than just his majors of maths and science, was keen to find a way to express his multidisciplinary interests. When we speak to him, Inoko says: “I like science and art. I wanted to know the world, wanted to know humans and wanted to know what the world is for humans.”

From the outset, the collective started to develop its unique take on art, science and technology but was largely ignored by the art world. That is, until 2011, when the group had its breakthrough as artist Takashi Murakami invited the group to exhibit at the Kaikai Kiki Gallery in Taipei, Taiwan. As word started to spread, more installations were commissioned and the team grew, helped along the way by promotion from New York’s Pace gallery. Finally, in 2015, TeamLab was able to organise its own exhibition, for the first time, in Tokyo. And it’s been a rollercoaster from there. Right up to the forthcoming show in Macao.



© TeamLab



TeamLab, exhibition view of TeamLab Borderless Shanghai, 2019 © TeamLab

Clockwise from below: Forest of Flowers and People: Lost, Immersed and Reborn – Honeycomb Structure from the permanent TeamLab Borderless Shanghai museum; the creative visionary behind the collective, Toshiyuki Inoko; Moving Creates Vortices and Vortices Create Movement from the permanent TeamLab Borderless Shanghai museum



TeamLab, exhibition view of TeamLab Borderless Shanghai, 2019 © TeamLab

The exhibition hall at The Venetian will act as a gigantic canvas for the interactive exhibition. Inoko says: “The larger the scale, the more organic and continuous the relationship becomes to execute the artwork. That process is quite miraculous.”

A sensory extravaganza

The collective’s members say they are reluctant to reveal all the details of how the installations will be created and how the technologies will be used at the Macao exhibition. There is certainly a big element of surprise for visitors. But they do say that it will be a full sensory experience using an arresting combination of emotive music, bold lighting and interactive visual effects on all surfaces – including walls, multi-level floors and objects like tables, balloons and even the exhibition-goers themselves. They say there will also be the use of ‘digital characters’ who interact with each other and visitors.

Without giving too much away, however, Macao Magazine can

reveal that the Macao exhibition will include ‘The Infinite Crystal Universe’, which uses an accumulation of light points on a gigantic scale to create three-dimensional objects, and ‘Mountain of Flowers and People: Lost, Immersed and Reborn’, a calming-yet-visually stimulating digital forest of colourful flowers on layered walls and floors that sway and react as people walk among them.

The exhibition merges nature and technology with a focus on natural elements like light, plants, water and animals. Inoko feels that science is about trying to understand the world by breaking it into ever smaller pieces. But he also says: “No matter how much humans divide things into pieces, they cannot understand the entirety. Even though what people really want to know is the world, the more they separate, the further they become from the overall perception.” In short, the collective aims to provide ‘continuity’ between the art and the viewers in order for them to understand existence as a whole.



Forest of Resonating Lamps – One Stroke, Snow installation at the permanent TeamLab Borderless Shanghai museum

The Macao show will include two sections that the group is excited to unveil: the ‘Future Park’ is a play space ‘based on the concept of collaborative creation’ and the ‘Athletics Forest’ is ‘a creative athletic space that helps train spatial awareness based on the concept of understanding the three-dimensionality of the world through the body’. The team also reveals an experimental work, ‘Massless Clouds Between Sculpture and Life’, in which visitors can walk right through a spinning cloud mass which breaks apart and then merges back into itself around them.

Masters of the universe

David Baxley, vice-president for Regional Entertainment at Sands China, which operates The Venetian, explains that the group has been

“*The exhibition is immediately accessible to anyone with a sense of imagination and wonder at technological marvels.*”

working with the arts collective since 2016 on projects such as the ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands’ Future World: Where Art Meets Science in Singapore. He says the artists’ work on similar immersive installations in Tokyo have ‘proved that the collective could handle larger budgets and spaces’.

For The Venetian, the draw of the collective’s art is its universal

appeal. Baxley says: “Appreciation of TeamLab’s unique technology does not require cultural expertise or knowledge. The exhibitions and artworks are immediately accessible to anyone with a sense of imagination and wonder at technological marvels.” Baxley adds that the entire installation involves nearly 30,000 pieces of equipment representing an ‘enormous effort by the collective in terms of man-hours, engineering and programming’.

“TeamLab SuperNature will inspire other organisations to see contemporary art as a means of attracting international tourists,” concludes Baxter. “We believe it will quickly become a must-see attraction in Macao.” Judge for yourself when you step into an infinite crystal universe in a few weeks’ time. ●



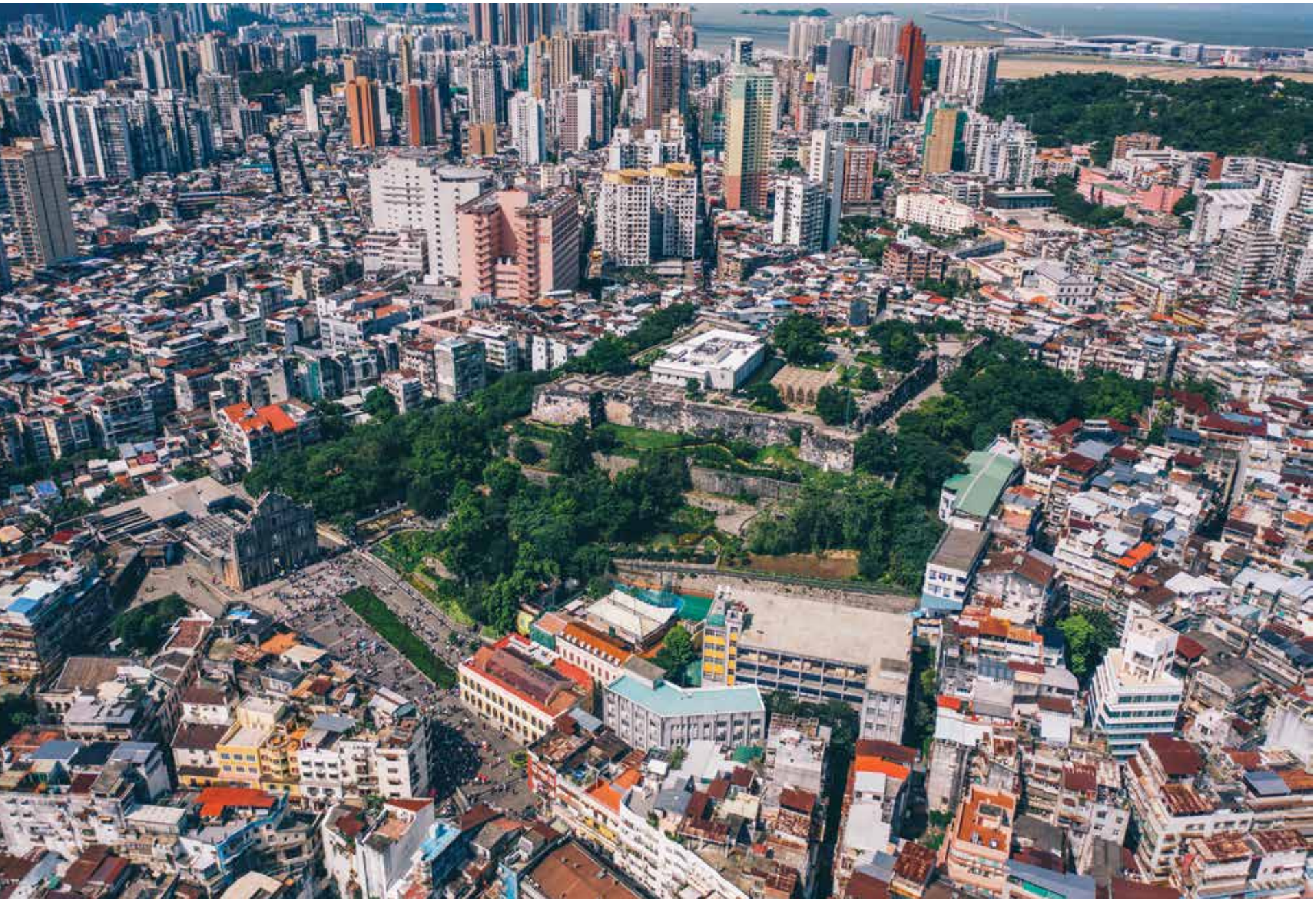
MACAU
NEWS

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History

Fortress Macao

Text Mark O'Neill Photos 秋綾



Whether still here to visit or lost completely to time, the forts of Macao are the strongholds of many stories. These vital defences once protected the city and its people over more than 400 years.

Every day in Macao, thousands of visitors traipse up the hill to spend a few hours inside Mount Fortress. Often they head up there simply to see the exhibits on show at the Museum of Macau, which sits inside the fort's walls, or they just climb the streets for the spectacular views over the city. However, while they're relaxing on the grass, enjoying the peace and tranquillity, they're unlikely to imagine what it was once like within this historic structure. Once upon a time, these fortifications bore witness to fierce fighting as Macao was defended against attackers who had come from across the oceans.

The most violent battles Macao has ever seen took place during the 17th century, as the Dutch attacked the territory, intent on seizing the territory and thus the Portuguese trading monopoly with China. So Mount Fortress was of huge importance, playing a key role in the city's defence. However, despite the attacks, the Portuguese held Macao for nearly 450 years. Their fortifications were designed to repel invaders from the sea, like the Dutch, the British and even pirates – but never China, whose emperors allowed the Portuguese to stay but were often suspicious of their intentions. So Beijing did not allow fortifications that faced inland – only those that protected the city from attack by sea.

Mount Fortress – 'Fortaleza do Monte' in Portuguese – may be the best known and most recognisable of Macao's forts but it's certainly not the only one. Guia Fortress in the nearby parish of St Lazarus, with its chapel and lighthouse, is equally important as a structure that has protected Macao in the past. And then there's São Francisco Fort, which was also vital in defending the city from the Dutch. It's now

demolished and instead home to São Francisco Barracks in Cathedral Parish but, like Mount and Guia fortresses, the site is nevertheless worth visiting not just for what you can see but for what you can learn about its history.

The Dutch attack

The Portuguese established their settlement in Macao in 1557. Initially, they built no fortifications – the Chinese government opposed the idea and the main purpose of the new arrivals was to use the sea to trade, so they did not consider a fortress of any kind necessary. But the lucrative East Asian trade with China, Japan and the Philippines attracted the envy of other European maritime powers, especially the Dutch and the British. In 1601, a Dutch fleet arrived in Macao for the first time. The admiral sent a boarding party, however the Portuguese attacked them before hanging 18 of their number and sending two to Goa.

In 1603, the Dutch returned. They opened fire on the city and plundered a cargo vessel. The next year, they tried to begin trade with China but the Portuguese prevented it. So the Dutch decided that they had no alternative but to seize Macao. Aware of this threat, the authorities in Macao began to build fortifications, most facing the sea but a handful facing inland. And so Mount Fortress, Guia Fortress and São Francisco Fort were born – three structures that would defend the city during an attack.

The Dutch fleet, equipped with 13 ships, 1,300 men and three cannons, arrived off the coast of Macao on 21 June 1622, with three warships bombarding the city with cannonfire

Mount Fortress, with the Museum of Macau nestled inside, stands majestically in the heart of the city

a day later. They also opened fire on São Francisco Fort and were able to land their cannons. The Portuguese defended fiercely, however – from Mount Fortress, they fired several guns, causing many Dutch casualties. One story tells of an Italian Jesuit priest, Giacomo Rho, who fired a cannon shot from the fortress at the passing Dutch. His shot landed on a barrel of gunpowder in the middle of the Dutch formation and the ensuing explosion injured many of their soldiers and destroyed most of their ammunition. The Dutch were thrown into disarray as a result. The Portuguese also attacked the Dutch at the foot of Guia Hill and drove the forces back. The battle ended in a total victory for the Portuguese, with almost 200 Dutch soldiers dead compared to just four Portuguese. All three fortifications had played a vital role in the battle.

Mount guard

The Dutch attack convinced the Portuguese to complete the fortifications they already had in place and build more. However, it wasn't long before the Chinese forced them to demolish those fortifications that were facing inland – but they allowed those that faced the sea. Many of these structures have remained standing since then.

Built in conjunction with the Jesuits between 1617 and 1626, Mount Fortress was the city's principal military defence structure. It was equipped with cannons, military barracks, wells and an arsenal that held sufficient ammunition and supplies to endure a siege lasting up to two years. The fortress covers an area of 10,000 square metres, in the shape of a trapezoid. Its four corners protrude to form bulwarks.

The Portuguese put 32 cannons around the walls and watchtowers

on two southeast corners. In 1965, the fortress was converted into the Meteorological Services and later opened up to the public. Built on top of Mount Hill, Mount Fortress offers an incredible panoramic view of the city, with the Ruins of St Paul's nearby. On 15 July 2005, the Historic Centre of Macao was officially listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, with Mount Fortress and the Ruins of St Paul's becoming the significant historical monuments in its centre.

The Museum of Macau opened on 18 April 1998 and has since welcomed visitors from across the globe who get to see numerous exhibitions as well as being able to wander the fortress' ramparts outside. The museum consists of two underground levels and a third one above the fortress' top platform where the old Meteorological Services is housed. The architectural character and special configuration of the architecture has been retained and preserved.



The magnificent Guia Fortress, along with its chapel and lighthouse; (left) a row of cannons sit atop the Mount Fortress overlooking the city; (top right) the Fortress of São Tiago da Barra, which was converted into the Pousada de São Tiago Macau hotel

Tough Guia

The other key location in defeating the Dutch was the defences at Guia Hill, which is also open to visitors today. This is the highest point on the Macao peninsula, at 94 metres above sea level. Initially, it was ignored by Portuguese military leaders because it was outside the main area of settlement. But they changed their mind after the Dutch attack of 1622 and decided to fortify it as one of the most strategic places in the city. The walls were built of granite blocks and the garrison lived close to the gateway, where the storerooms were also located. The current fort dates back to around 1637 and records from 1835 and 1846 show that it had five bronze and 15 iron cannons.

Inside the fortress is Guia Chapel, which was built around 1622 by Clarist nuns who lived at the site before



THE KING'S CASTLE

The Fortress of São Tiago da Barra was once a strategic stronghold

It isn't just Monte, Guia and Sao Francisco forts that make up Macao's impressive history of important fortifications. The Fortress of São Tiago da Barra was another structure that was, from the 1620s, a defensive site of strategic note.

Originally equipped with 16 cannons when it was built in 1629, 'Barra Fort' was actually based on the former site of a simpler defensive fortification previously built by the Portuguese in 1622. It was strategically important at the time because the commander of the fortress was directly appointed by the King of Portugal and was not subject to call by the Governor of Macao. Barra was, in fact, the only fortress built on the order of the King of Portugal.

The fortress wall measured 110 metres long and 40 metres wide, forming a rectangular platform rising three metres above sea level. Its location was perfect as, at the time, it ensured effective control on all maritime activities in the area and also guarded the water entrance towards the city's Inner Harbour. In 1981, the fortress was converted into the five-star Pousada de São Tiago Macau hotel in Avenida da República. The hotel was temporarily closed in 2017 due to the construction of the nearby Barra Transport Complex, which includes a light rail transit (LRT) link, and will not re-open until that project is completed over the next few years.

FIND THE FORTRESS



they set up the Convent of St Clare. In 1998, during routine conservation work, elaborate frescoes were uncovered in the chapel which depict representations of both Western and Chinese themes. They display religious and mythological motifs, a metaphor for the culture and history of the city. Also within the fortress walls is the 15-metre-high Guia Lighthouse – the first modern lighthouse on the China coast – which was built in 1865 but had its lantern mechanism replaced in 1910. However, the original

structure remains and the lighthouse continues to help mariners as it has done for the past 154 years. The hill is also home to military tunnels that were built in the 1930s and led to cannons emplacements to form an important defensive network. There is a large – and rusting – electric generator that was used by the soldiers who were once stationed there, pumping up water from a reservoir. Visitors to the fortress can see their uniforms, helmets, caps and rucksacks from the early to mid-20th century.

The photographs on the walls in the fortress give a glimpse of life in the first half of the last century – soldiers from the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, soldiers from India in the Moorish Barracks, which is now home to the Marine and Water Bureau, and a Japanese officer visiting Macao during World War Two. He was a reminder of the ever-present threat of invasion at that time. Guia Fort remained a heavily guarded military area until 1962. In the 1970s, it was opened to the public and the tunnels were opened in 2001.



The São Francisco Barracks sit on a site once occupied by the Fort of Sao Francisco; (top right) Mong-Há Fort

Another key fortress

The Fort of São Francisco cannot be overlooked as well when it comes to its importance to Macao's history. It was also particularly important in the defeat of the Dutch. In 1622, its battery fired and sunk some of the Dutch vessels and killed 70 men. In 1629, the Portuguese improved the battery and turned it into a fort. At the northern end of the Praia Grande, it covered the bay in front of Macao. Records from 1833 show that the fort had seven bronze and 11 iron cannons. Later, however, it was demolished to make way for the São Francisco Barracks. Construction started in 1864 and the Battalion of the First Line took over the premises on December 30, 1866, with the engineers building a defensive wall of granite blocks facing the sea. Visitors today can see the wall, as well as the handful of cannons which stand on top of it. Next to the site is the Military Club – still one of the most popular private clubs in the city – which dates back to 1870. The Portuguese military used the premises as their headquarters until their withdrawal and then it was taken over by the Security Forces. Inside its walls is a museum containing cannons, rifles and swords, as well as a model of a three-man military band, a mine detector, a model of a diver, a collection of radios and crests and badges. Defending champion

If an army that never fires a shot is the most successful army, then the defence of Macao has been a remarkable success. The only armed conflict with China in 442 years occurred on 25 August 1849, when imperial troops opened fire from a fort at Pak Shan Lan. The authorities



MACAO'S YOUNGEST FORT

Mong-Há Fort was built in 1849

Another fort worthy of considerable note is Mong-Há Fort, which lies at the summit of Mong-Há Hill near Ling Fong Sports Centre in the north of the city. The fort, which is Macao's youngest in its collection, is part of a greater military reservation – the Military District of Mong-Há, which included the Mong-Há Barracks. The main fort complex was built in 1849 – although construction work continued until 1866 – by governor Ferreira do Amaral to protect the Macao's northern sector as a precaution against a possible Chinese invasion following the First Opium War between Britain and China, which took place from 1839 to 1842. The brick-walled fort boasted an overall area of 650 square meters and held 10 artillery pieces with a firing range capable of reaching the Portas do Cerco or Barrier Gate, the structure which separated Macao from the Mainland. The Portuguese military establishment withdrew completely in the 1960s, so the fort and the Military District were deactivated, with public housing being built in the area in 2008. Since then, Mong-Há Fort has been open to the public and it is now a popular tourist spot with fabulous views of the northern part of the city.

were angry with Macao governor João Maria Ferreira do Amaral for closing the Chinese Customs House in March that year and insisting that farmers outside the city wall pay taxes to his government and not the Chinese mandarins. On the Macao side was a howitzer and 36 men led by Vicente Nicolau de Mesquita, a sub-lieutenant. His cannon fired a shell which landed in the middle of the Chinese troops before he led his own troops into a successful charge. In the decades that followed, relations between Portugal and China were often tense – but there was never fighting. Macao survived the years that followed the Xinhai revolution of 1911 unscathed and it was the

same during the Second World War, when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong and Guangdong province. The Japanese forces could easily have invaded Macao but they chose not to, preferring to leave it as a zone of neutrality, as Portugal was in Europe. The new government that took over in 1949 also left Macao alone. So, since the days of the Dutch attacks, Macao's fine fortresses were never seriously tested. And their cannons were never fired in a serious battle. But that isn't a problem for the city. It means that some of them, like Mount and Guia, are still there for tourists and locals alike to visit, admire and learn about Macao's colourful and successful military past. ●

Zoom

António Sammarful

Celebrate good times

Text Matt Fleming



There is always plenty to celebrate in Macao every December. However, December 2019 was a special occasion. Aside from Christmas, New Year and the festive holidays, there was also the 20th anniversary of the handover of administration to China to mark on and around 20 December. Over the entire month, the residents, the government and visitors to the city

were treated to events like the Macao-Zhuhai Fireworks Show, the Macao Light Festival and the Macao International Parade, which were all dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the SAR. Chinese President Xi Jinping also participated in the celebrations as performances were held across town. Join us as we look back on these events through the eyes of the photographers...

The Ruins of St Paul's are lit up throughout December as part of the annual Macao Light Festival, organised by the Macao Government Tourism Office

Government Information Bureau



President Xi Jinping sings 'Ode to the Motherland' alongside performers at a gala performance celebrating the 20th anniversary of the SAR on 19 December

Government Information Bureau



Outgoing Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam Chon Weng, attends a cultural performance by students in early December to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC and the 20th anniversary of the SAR

Government Information Bureau



Fireworks burst in the night sky on 23 December as the Macao and Zhuhai local governments jointly hold the first ever 'Macao-Zhuhai Fireworks Show in Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Macao's Handover to the Motherland'

Government Information Bureau



The beautiful fireworks show on 23 December symbolised unity, celebration, bliss and prosperity

António Sanmarful



Children play inside a light installation that spelled out '2019' from the front. This was part of the month-long Macao Light Festival

Xinhua News Agency



Futuristically dressed performers leap elegantly through Macao's streets as part of the colourful and energetic 2019 Macao International Parade on 8 December



Female performers are dressed in red for the International Parade, which included people from countries and regions along the Belt and Road as well as local artists



Performers head through the streets in the parade, with the Ruins of St Paul's in the background. The parade celebrated the 20th anniversary of the SAR and spread the concepts of 'love, peace and cultural integration'

金鼠賀歲喜臨門

2020農曆新年花車匯演 Parada de Celebração do Ano do Rato Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Rat

正月初三
27/01
20:00-22:00
路線 Percorso Route

西灣湖廣場
Praça do Lago Sai Van

孫逸仙大馬路
Av. Dr. Sun Yat Sen

澳門科學館
Centro de Ciência de Macau

正月初八
01/02
20:00-21:30
路線 Percorso Route

沙梨頭北街
Rua Norte do Prata

青洲大馬路
Av. do Conselheiro Bourje

拱形馬路
Estrada do Arco

黑沙環馬路
Estrada da Praia Preta

慕拉士大馬路
Av. de Venâncio de Moraes

黑沙環第四街
Rua Quatro do Bairro da Praia Preta

長壽大馬路
Av. da Longuidade

市場街
Rua do Mercado de Sao Hon

祐漢街市公園
Jardim do Mercado Municipal de Sao Hon

主辦單位 / Organizador / Organizer

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DIRECÇÃO DOS SERVIÇOS DE TURISMO
MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

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INSTITUTO CULTURAL do Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau

澳門特別行政區政府體育局
Instituto do Desporto do Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau

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8
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