

# Macao 澳門

## Honouring our roots

Macao celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China

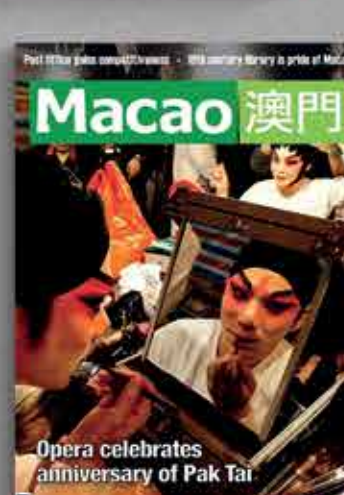
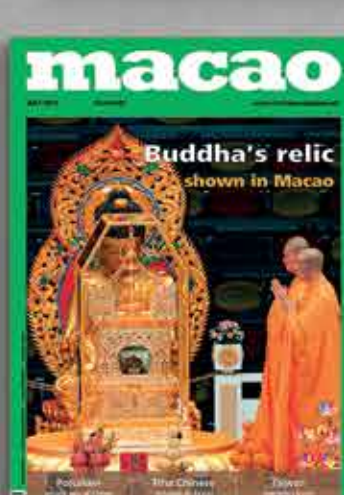
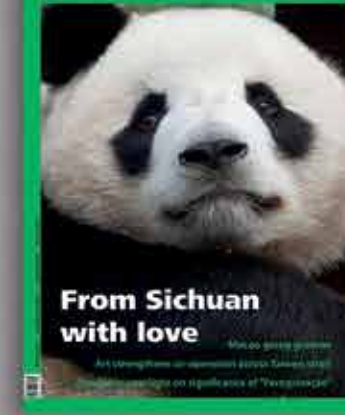
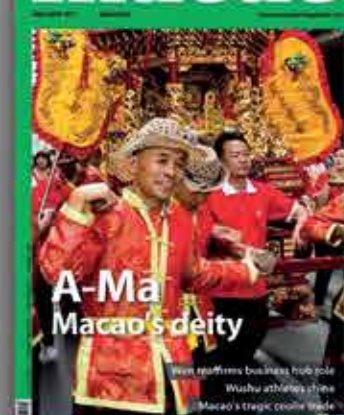
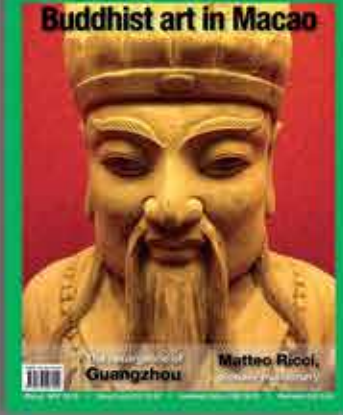
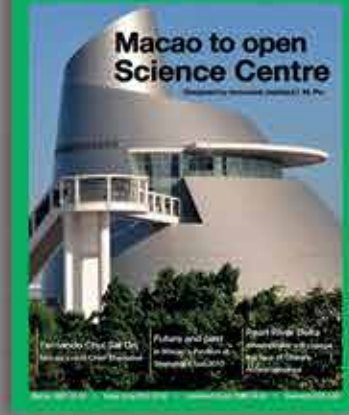
National treasures: Macanese cuisine, Patuá theatre and belief and customs of Tou Tei

Macao and Hengqin, the path to the future



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Art  
Macao  
2021

## ILLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MASTERS

This exhibition comprises two national artistic treasures. *The Abode of Illusions: The Garden of Zhang Daqian* features Hu Chongxian's photographs of the last garden designed by Zhang, each inscribed by Zhang in his distinctive calligraphy. This collection illustrates the unique aesthetic of traditional Chinese art through a new medium. *Life Reflection: Contemporary Ceramics of Zhu Legeng* showcases creations the artist made and exhibited during visits with national leaders and a collection inspired by the spirit of Macau.

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**July 17 to October 31**

**12p.m. to 7p.m (closed on Mondays)**

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The Abode of Illusions: The Garden of Zhang Daqian is organized by Yuz Museum

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Courtesy of the family members of the artists and Yuz Foundation

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**Cover image** Children visit the photo exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. Image taken by Xinhua News Agency/Cheong Kam Ka



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## From the Editor

# Macao Magazine: Twelve years promoting Macao's development

Since its first edition in October 2009, Macao Magazine has been covering the major political, economic and social developments across the territory. In this era of rapid change, the region's unstoppable momentum has had an indelible impact on life in our city.

Despite recent difficulties with the outbreak of the pandemic, the government continues to invest heavily in social housing, healthcare, infrastructure projects and Macao's integration into the Greater Bay Area, particularly Hengqin – a combination that's radically changing the face of the city.

Staying consistent with our editorial purview, Macao Magazine's July edition unpacks recent political decisions and events. For instance, we explore new measures to deepen relations between Macao and Guangdong in Hengqin, as well as a large exhibition organised by the government to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China.

At the socio-cultural level, this edition highlights Beijing's decision to include Macanese cuisine, Patu  theatre and the Tou Tei beliefs and customs on its National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Continuing our ode to culture, we also visit a fascinating museum: the Xian Xinghai

Memorial Museum, which is dedicated to Macao-born musician Xian Xinghai. Best known for his 'Yellow River Cantata', the famous classical composer gained a following in China and Russia in the 20th century.

Hundreds of years after the Portuguese introduced the art to Macao, it's once again seeing a revival thanks to support from local institutions. Contemporary culture also takes centre stage with local manga artists whose work has elevated Macao's reputation as a hub of creativity across the region, as well as raised awareness on the Public Security Police's crime prevention work. In terms of gastronomy, we tell the story of the century-old Chinese pastry shop, Pastelaria Fong Kei, which is now recognised as a must-visit landmark in Taipa Village.

Turning an eye on the current situation, we also applaud the government's efforts to increase Covid-19 vaccination rates – an initiative that's been supported by the civil society, companies and social groups alike.

Finally, an inspiring story that speaks to humankind's relentless pursuit of progress and adventure. We chronicle the experience of Portuguese pilots, who in 1987, made the first aerial journey between Portugal and Macao. Their single-engine plane still rests in Seac Pai Van Park park in Coloane today.

Gonalo C sar de S   
Editor-in-Chief





POLITICS

# Chief Executive commends Macao's prosperity

**Ho Iat Seng praises China at the opening of a photo exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.**

Text Christian Ritter Photos Cheong Kam Ka

Without the Communist Party of China (CPC) there would be no new China, and without the Party's leadership there would be no prosperous and stable Macao under the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said in June.

Ho made the remarks at the opening ceremony of a photo exhibition at the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex which was held to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China.

The exhibition, which was organised by the Macao Foundation, highlighted China's development over the past century, attracting more than 43,000 visitors in just over three weeks. The 300 images on show

were divided into four sections: founding the CPC and seizing the victory of the revolution; founding the People's Republic of China and carrying out revolution and construction; promoting reform and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics; and completing a more prosperous society and embarking on a new journey to build a modern socialist China.

The exhibition also showcased the history of China's railway development since the foundation of the CPC. Local institutions, companies and associations organised visits to the exhibition to allow citizens to understand the development and progress of the country in the last one hundred years.

The exhibition attracted the largest audience since the Macao Foundation was inaugurated 30 years ago.



# 共產黨的100年

## DO PARTIDO COMUNISTA DA CHINA

### 共產黨成立100周年大型主題圖片展

#### As de Celebração do Aniversário do Partido Comunista da China



Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of the photo exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China held in Macao

“History is the best textbook,” Ho said about the Party’s ‘100 years of continuous struggle to unite and lead the Chinese people to accomplish world-renowned achievements in the history of the development of the Chinese nation and the progress of human society.’

The Chief Executive, a former member of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), also noted that without the Party’s leadership China would not have been able to achieve what it is today, and neither would it have achieved the international status that it has today.

Ho also pointed to “the successful resumption of the nation’s exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macao in 1997 and 1999 respectively” adding that the CPC “is the pioneer, leader, practitioner and defender of the cause of the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle in Macao.”







Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR Fu Ziying

The Chief Executive, who has been at the helm of the local government since December 2019, also said that the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) will 'unswervingly implement the principle of 'Patriots Governing Macao' and continue to consolidate the social and political foundations of 'Loving the Country and Loving Macao'.'

Ho, an ex-president of the local legislature and former business community leader, also said that 'our country is closer to the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation than

at any time in history,' adding: "We firmly believe that under the strong leadership of the CPC, the cause of the 'One Country, Two Systems' with Macao characteristics will surely proceed steadily and go far."

Meanwhile, Central People's Government Liaison Office in the MSAR Director Fu Ziying stressed in his speech that "in Macao society, we must always adhere to the leadership of the CPC and resolutely defend the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests."

Fu, the central government's highest-ranked official posted to Macao, also said that efforts should be made to maintain in the local community the core value of 'Loving the Country and Loving Macao' and ensure the implementation of the fundamental principle of 'Patriots Governing Macao'.

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng also visited Beijing in June to attend China's celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. ●



Scan the QR code above to see the virtual exhibition.



COVID-19

# Covid-19: The long and winding road



**Everyone in Macao has made valiant efforts to unite against the pandemic, giving the city an advantage in fighting Covid-19.**

Text **Rafelle Allego** Photos Xinhua News Agency

For more than 18 months, Macao has continued its efforts in the global battle against Covid-19. The pandemic has brought many trials and tribulations to the city, but with quick government intervention and citizen co-operation, Macao is prevailing. We take a look at the measures that allowed the SAR to push through and spotlight the vaccination efforts driving us towards a post-pandemic future.

When Covid-19 first struck Macao on 22 January 2020, the government immediately took action by implementing safety measures for the benefit of the entire city. This quick response is what ensured the city was one of the best prepared to face the pandemic.

The government's rapid intervention in acquiring 1.4 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine – Germany's BioNTech mRNA and China's Sinopharm inactivated vaccines – in late 2020 allowed for public walk-in vaccination sites to be opened as early as 18 May 2021. Other government protocols – such as readily available personal hygiene suggestions and measures as well as the sale of reasonably priced masks subsidised by the government – secured the city as one of the fortunate few to have registered no local cases or fatalities.

The most rigorous Covid-19 measures in 2020 saw the closure of the border with mainland China, the shutdown of casinos and public institutions for 13 days, and non-Macao residents barred from entering the SAR. With a population of 685,000 crammed into just 32.9 square kilometres, Macao is an example of how correctly applied measures can prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the community.

With these precautions in place, Macao safely held important public events in 2020. Among these were the Macau Grand Prix, the Macao International Marathon, the Dragon Boat Festival, the Light Festival and the Macao Food Festival, which gave residents a chance to enjoy moments of leisure and entertainment reminiscent of pre-Covid days.

It's also noteworthy that infrastructure work planned for 2020 and 2021 still went ahead. The construction of a fourth bridge to connect Macao to Taipa and Coloane and the expansion of the light rail transit to new housing areas and to Hengqin have progressed as forecasted, as have the tunnels and other scheduled improvements to pedestrian zones.





Images courtesy of The Macao News



### Moving towards group immunity

At the end of July 2021, 42 per cent of the population had been fully vaccinated though this is still far from the minimum percentage necessary to get herd immunity, which the Macao Health Bureau (SSM) places at 80 per cent.

Private entities also supported the government's Covid-19 measures by motivating their workers and their families to get vaccinated. Financial institutions, business groups, hotels and integrated resorts have created incentives including cash handouts or time off work, to commit to this goal. For instance, Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) offered extra leave and prizes to vaccinated staff.

Efforts were also made by other private entities, such as The Macao News media group which produced the 'This Is Our Shot' campaign to encourage citizens to get their Covid-19 jabs. The first video of its kind to be produced in Macao and first launched across their digital channels, it featured local residents of various nationalities, industries and ages, all calling for the population to get their jabs.

The video is currently being shown on MOME's platforms which include screens on public transportation buses, supermarkets, pharmacies, office building lobbies and more. The videos on the buses have been viewed by more than 536,000 passengers daily. The 'This

Is Our Shot' video is also being shown across the city on Sands China's marquee screens and property communication channels.

In the campaign, Galaxy Entertainment Group Senior Vice President of Public Relations Buddy Lam reminds residents that we are fortunate to have the choice of two free vaccines – either the BioNTech mRNA vaccine or the inactivated Sinopharm vaccine – in contrast to regions with insufficient vaccine supplies. He urged residents to take their Covid-19 shot, a position shared by local pop group MFM, as well as BNU CEO Carlos Cid Álvares who points to the 'artificial situation' [travel restrictions] the city is currently enduring.

Kevin Ho, president of the Industry and Commerce Association of Macau, stressed the dangers a Covid-19 outbreak would pose to the community and the need for group immunisation, to prevent the very easy spread of the virus in the 'densest city in the world'.

Paula Carion, Joe Liu, and Carlos Couto allay the fears of many residents regarding the negative effects of the vaccination, all recalling that they felt no pain during their shot and no symptoms afterwards. For Carion, getting her shot was 'a requirement' to protect herself and 'to save everybody else around' her. To that end, they emphasised the need for everyone to be vaccinated, for the good of Macao's population and families.

### Overcoming hurdles

As Macao continues its return to normal life, the city is considering measures that will allow greater connection with the outside world, while still safeguarding its citizens. With mutations of the virus spreading globally, the SSM has established a programme of containment and immunisation. Though these measures require the reduced movement of tourists and residents alike, they remain extremely important for maintaining the near-normal situation in the city.

Currently, the SSM classifies only Macao and mainland China as Covid-19 low-risk areas, while Hong Kong is classified as a low-to-medium risk and Taiwan as a medium-risk. Everywhere else is still classified as a high-risk area. However, the turbulent nature of the virus still raises uncertainties, especially with a spate of Covid-19 cases in Nanjing and other parts of the mainland in mid-July. This episode prompted local officials to issue an emergency order for all 150 travellers who went through the Chinese city's airport to undergo immediate hotel quarantine.

Tai Wa Hou, a clinical director of the Conde de São Januário Hospital Centre, said that vaccination peaked at around 10,000 appointments near the end of June and beginning of July, but have since decreased to similar levels when the drive was first launched in February, which were around 2,000.

As Macau Green Student Union Chairman Joe Chan says in the 'This Is Our Shot' video, many have yet to get their vaccines as they 'wait and see' how it will affect others. But, he says, if people keep waiting things out, 'the pandemic may become worse'.

With inoculations remaining voluntary, health officials have urged Macao residents to get their Covid-19 shots as soon as possible. Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U also urged residents to assume their 'social responsibility' by getting their vaccines to help create herd immunity in the SAR and aid in the gradual easing of travel restrictions.

Benjamin Kidder Hodges, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Macau, underscored the significance for the SAR to return to normal, stating that the flow of people in and out of the SAR is the 'lifeflood of Macao'. As he and many others have pointed out, the sooner residents get vaccinated, the sooner herd immunity can be achieved. The sooner this happens, the sooner Macao's pre-pandemic lifestyle can become less of a memory and more of a reality.

Since early 2020, the pandemic has regrettably impacted every aspect of life in every country across the world. Fortunately, here in Macao, we have been, for the most part, spared the worst aspects of the pandemic with a low case total and no loss of life. With the continued efforts of the Macao government and residents alike, Macao will continue as a city that is both social and safe. ●



Scan the QR code to watch the 'This Is Our Shot' Covid-19 vaccination campaign.



CULTURE

# Putting the magic in Macao

**Macao has long been enormously proud of its one-of-a-kind cuisine, Patuá theatre and folk religion and now it has been given an extra boost by official nationwide recognition.**

Text Christian Ritter



Sopa de lacassá

Macao – a Chinese port with distinctive Portuguese characteristics – is unique in so many ways, but three of its age-old traditions combine to make it one of Asia’s most intriguing destinations.

First and foremost is a centuries-old Euro-Asian fusion cuisine; less well-known are its Patuá plays, staged in one of the world’s few extant Creole languages; and thirdly is the veneration for Tou Tei, a ubiquitous deity whose presence infuses almost every aspect of life in the city.

Each was formally recognised as part of China’s intangible cultural heritage by the State Council in Beijing in June 2021, providing an extra incentive to preserve and promote three of the aspects of Macao that make it so assuredly Macanese.

The city’s cuisine is a potential meal ticket for the tourism industry which is on the look-out for new sources of non-gaming income which will shift the perception of Macao as nothing more than a mecca for gamblers.

Customarily, the term ‘Macanese’ refers to Macao’s community of Asian-Portuguese descent and its diaspora as well as its cuisine and other cultural aspects.

Macanese cookery is an enticing blend of mostly Portuguese, Indian, Malay and Cantonese recipes and ingredients. Popular Macanese dishes are ‘capela’ (meatloaf), ‘porco balichão tamarindo’ (balichang tamarind braised pork, ‘balichang’ being a traditional Malay condiment

made of krill), ‘sopa de lacassá’ (shrimp vermicelli soup), ‘tacho’ (stew) and the famous ‘minchi’ (minced beef and pork with deep-fried diced potatoes).

Macanese cuisine is one of the oldest Euro-Asian fusion cuisines, going back to the 16th century. Traditional European-overseas fusion cuisines going back hundreds of years such as in Macao can also be found in India, the Caribbean and the Philippines. They are the culinary product of the so-called Age of Discovery.

Typical of the sort of restaurant that trumpets the glories of Macanese cuisine on a daily basis is La Famiglia in Taipa Village, run by Florita Alves on lines that could only be described as utterly authentic and totally traditional.

“Eating is a necessity for everyone,” she says. “It’s a good way, and a direct way, to deliver a part of our culture to the community.”

A retired civil servant, Alves grew up helping her grandmother in the kitchen. “But my real exposure to Macanese food came when I married my husband,” she explains.

“My mother-in-law and her friends were very skilled in the kitchen, and I had

the great privilege of learning from them,” she says, as she flips through a trove of handwritten family recipes passed down to her, some dating back as far as the 1800s. Scribbled on scraps of notepaper or the backs of old newspaper ads, the recipes are documented in a flowery, elaborate script from a different era, the paper’s edges delicately crinkled and discoloured from centuries of use.

With so much inherited knowledge at her disposal, Alves felt impelled to make use of it. “I don’t feel like it’s an obligation to pass on the Macanese cuisine,” says Alves. “Instead, it’s something I feel inside, something I really want to do. As an intangible part of Macanese heritage, I feel quite honoured that I can play a role, however small, in keeping it alive.”



Florita Alves

Billy Yiu



The formal recognition of Macanese cuisine is also a well-deserved – lamentably posthumous – honour for Aida de Jesus, the doyenne of Macanese cuisine, who passed away at the age of 105 in March 2021. Without Dona Aida, as she was endearingly known by her many friends and admirers, Macanese cuisine’s multi-ethnic recipes would hardly have survived to this day. And Macanese author Cecília Jorge’s ‘Macanese Cooking’ book’s English edition has helped make Macao’s very own cuisine known to the international public.

Dona Aida was also one of the few remaining speakers of Patuá, the highly-endangered Portuguese-Asian Creole. She loved watching the comedies staged by the ‘Dóci Papiçam di Macao’ (‘Macao’s Sweet Language’) group of amateur actors, directed by lawyer-cum-playwright Miguel de Senna Fernandes.

Patuá plays, which poke fun at local customs, community relations and politics, are an entertaining effort to keep the language alive – at least on stage.

Patuá is a local Creole that emerged in the 16th century when Portuguese seafarers settled in Macao after long journeys around Africa and via India and Malacca. The language is a mix of Portuguese, Malay and Cantonese. While a major part of its vocabulary is Portuguese, its grammar is strongly influenced by Asian languages. According to local scholars, possibly just a few dozen people in Macao still speak Patuá, or at least have a basic understanding of the language, while there are probably hundreds among the Macanese diaspora who are still fluent in the language.

While some local academics in Macao have run Patuá courses for a small number of students over the past few years and a basic Patuá-Portuguese-English dictionary was published some two decades ago, the language is not taught at local schools, not even at the Portuguese school, and no textbook of the ‘sweet language’ has ever been published.

UNESCO has classified Patuá as a highly endangered language. Urgent

revival action is needed to stop Patuá from becoming another corpse in the world’s language graveyard.

“Our stage is a cultural platform that represents all parts of Macao: we have Macanese, Portuguese and Chinese actors,” says Miguel de Senna Fernandes.

“Because this is a Patuá show, it is mostly performed in Patuá. But we also include Chinese actors who speak Cantonese, Portuguese actors



Aida de Jesus (recently deceased) and her daughter Sónia Palmer (standing) at Riquexó restaurant



Patuá theatre

Leonor Rosário



Miguel de Senna Fernandes

Leonor Rosário

who speak Portuguese, and some English, too. With so many different elements, this makes it a multicultural platform that reflects our audience.

“We are trying to preserve our collective memory through these performances. We want to raise awareness of the social and cultural aspects of the language. Nowadays, since we all use Cantonese, English or Portuguese, there’s not much space for Patuá. Younger people don’t know much about it. So it only survives in the theatre.”



Image courtesy of António Conceição Junior

The third heritage item from Macao is the belief in a divinity called Tou Tei in Cantonese – the God of Earth known in Putonghua as Tudi ('Earth and Ground'). Tou Tei is ubiquitous in Macao thanks to the many temples, shrines and statuettes in his honour. The tutelary deity is widely worshipped as a guardian, patron and protector of a particular place such as one's home or shop, and the Feast of Tou Tei on the second day of the second lunar month is one of Macao's most important religious festivals.

Tou Tei statuettes are commonly placed in front of residential, commercial and other kinds of premises in the expectation that the deity protects the owners and even helps increase their wealth. For instance, several Tou Tei temples and shrines are located around the city.

Folk belief – customarily blended with Buddhism and Taoism – is Macao's main religion, and it is one of the most important aspects of local culture.

"Chinese civilisation developed within an agrarian context that has always been present in almost every aspect of its culture" says cultural commentator António Conceição Junior, who is one of Macao's best-known artists.

"This cult of millennia evolved into Tu Ti Gong (the old man of the earth), spreading throughout the Empire. Thus, Macao too shares the same rites and temples dedicated to its own Tu Ti Gong or, in the Cantonese dialect, T'ou Tei K'ong, whose celebration takes place in the second lunar month." •



(bottom centre) Tou Tei statue;  
(inset) António Conceição Junior



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GREATER BAY AREA

# Opportunity on the horizon

**The development of Hengqin as a special economic zone has been giving nearby Macao the support needed to help diversify its economy beyond gaming. But those on the ground there believe more could still be done.**

Text **Tony Lai** Photos **Weiming Xie**

Hengqin, Zhuhai, has been deemed the 'backyard of Macao' ever since the central government kicked off a series of initiatives to develop the 106-square-kilometre island, adjacent to the city's Cotai area, back in 2009. With the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in recent times, the two cities have become increasingly intertwined, from investments and cross-border commerce, to a growing community of Macao locals and institutions.

"Many years ago, we didn't see much economic activity and business development taking place in Hengqin, but if you have

stopped by there lately you will see all these high-rise buildings," says Prof Jacky Yuk-chow So from the Macao University of Science and Technology (MUST). "The overall development progress in Hengqin has happened quite fast. There were difficulties when it first started, but now the momentum has really started to kick in."

The vice president and dean of the School of Business of MUST added that the central government's master plan for turning the barren land into a developed city – including a business district, industrial areas, tourism zone and more – were finally starting to be realised in the past few years.





Prof Jacky Yuk-chow So; (opposite page) an artist's rendering of Serensia Woods; (inset) Amber Li

reliance on gaming. For instance, Beijing designated about one square kilometre of land in Hengqin to be used for the University of Macau's new campus, which was inaugurated in 2013 and is governed by the laws of Macao. Moreover, a further five square kilometres of territory on the island was earmarked for projects specifically backed by Macao capital and local authorities, which has come to be known as the Guangdong-Macao Co-operation Industrial Park.

A total of 1,395 new Macao firms were incorporated in Hengqin in 2020 alone, representing a growth of 67.5 per cent from the previous year. This brought the total number of Macao firms registered in Hengqin to 3,575 by the end of last year, placing the island as the region with the most number of Macao firms in mainland China, according to local authorities.

Concerning the Macao-backed projects in the co-operation industrial park, as of the end of 2020, 24 projects totaling an investment amount of RMB 79.27 billion, have been approved for construction. Among the 24 projects includes Legend Ponto Square, a shopping complex inspired by Portuguese classic architecture which counts Macao businessman David Chow Kam Fai as a stakeholder. Add to that, a second batch of 123 Macao-backed projects have applied for the co-operation industrial park, 17 of which have already been given the green light to launch planning and construction works.

### New business opportunities

HN Group is one such firm eager to break ground in the co-operation industrial park. A multi-faceted local conglomerate from retail to trading to engineering, the company is developing a RMB 2.5 billion high-end project, featuring luxury accommodation, a hotel, villas, an extensive spa, swimming pool, gym, and restaurants. Serensia Woods, which sprawls over 40,000 square metres, is expected to have a soft opening by the end of this year, including wellness facilities that offer holistic treatments and physiotherapy.

The vision for Serensia Woods had existed in the mind of Amber Li, president of HN Group, since the 1990s, but was hampered by the lack of land resources in Macao. She eventually decided to pursue development in Beijing in the late 2000s. When the news broke that Beijing intended to develop Hengqin, however, it changed everything.

"As a Macao-based firm for over a century, we felt we had a responsibility to participate in the government's development plan," Li explains. "Obviously, Hengqin also provides a lot of opportunities to us given its unique location – because it's next to Macao and Hong Kong – and special economic policies from the central government. This encouraged us to transfer the project from Beijing to Hengqin."

"Infrastructure-wise, Hengqin is a different place now compared to 12 years ago; the local government has done a great job and designed the city in a nice way. But

for further development, we need to see more industries moving in."

A guideline for the industrial development of Hengqin published in 2013 indicates seven key areas for the island to explore, including tourism and leisure, logistics and commercial services, finance, culture and creative industry, healthcare and medicine, research and development, and high technology. Six years later in 2019, the ambitious 'Hengqin International Leisure Tourism Island Construction Scheme' was announced to accelerate the development of the tourism sector, aiming to turn the barren land into a mix of business towers, theme parks, resorts, hotels, performance venues and other entertainment facilities by 2035.



Amber Li





### Influx of professionals

In addition to reserving land resources for Macao projects and companies, the central government and Hengqin authorities have also rolled out an array of other incentives and measures over the years to attract a flow of human capital from Macao.

A so-called single plate policy was debuted in 2016, in which Macao vehicles bearing a single licence plate permit could enter and travel within Hengqin without the need for a mainland Chinese license, provided the owners work, live or invest on the island. An annual quota of 400 permits was initially made available, but after huge demand from local motorists, this number expanded to 10,000 in 2021.

New legislations have also been put in place in the past few years ensuring that professional certifications issued and recognised by Macao and Hong Kong authorities – which include tourist guides, construction companies, architectural firms, and medical doctors – may work in Hengqin without having to pass mainland Chinese certification tests and requirements. Policies like this echo the blueprint laid down by Beijing in the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in 2019, which called for turning the island into “a demonstration zone for in-depth co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao”.

As of the end of 2020, a total of 589 tourist guides, 34 construction and architectural firms, and 152 professionals in the construction field from Macao and Hong Kong were approved to work in Hengqin, according to local government data. The Hengqin Branch of Zhuhai People's Hospital, a public hospital, also employed 53 Macao doctors earlier this year to provide medical services and treatment, a first for the hospital and the island, according to mainland Chinese media.

### Community service

With housing prices that are roughly half the price of Macao, a streamlined customs procedures, and other incentives and measures, an increasing number of Macao residents have been investing in Hengqin residential

properties, with some opting to reside permanently on the island. Government figures show that 8,224 Hengqin real estate properties were bought by Macao purchasers at the end of 2020, while about 5,132 Macao residents held permits to live on the island.

One of the largest non-profit social services organisations in the city, the General Union of Macau Residents' Associations (UGAMM), or Kai Fong in Cantonese, was invited by Hengqin officials to provide a wide range of community services on the island. The group inaugurated a 2,200-square-metre integrated service centre in collaboration with the Hengqin authorities in November 2019 – the first centre of its kind run by a Macao association in mainland China – catering to the needs of children, teenagers, the elderly and families, as well as providing consultations with social workers and others.

In light of the success of the integrated service centre, the association has also launched two other service points on a smaller scale in different districts of Hengqin with a third becoming fully operational by this June, says



Tian Yi, head of the Guangdong branch of UGAMM.

“As the administration of Hengqin New Area foresees more Macao residents working and staying there, officials invited us two years ago to bring Macao-standard social and community services to the island,” he explains. “We have decades of experience in providing community service in Macao and we pay attention to the evolving needs of our clients.”

“Our integrated service centre and three service points in Hengqin are basically able to cover all the biggest and most active districts on the island now,” Tian adds. “After setting foot in Hengqin about a year and a half ago, we have now served nearly 30,000 clients – including both Macao and non-Macao residents – and held over 700 activities for the community.”

Though public services available in Hengqin might not be as convenient as those in Macao, he believes the continuous improvements and a stronger push for integration between the two locations will see more residents keen to explore opportunities and inhabit the island.

One of these latest developments, for example, is the Macao New Neighborhood, an ambitious housing complex in Hengqin boasting 3,800 flats that cater specifically to Macao residents. A major project for the Guangdong-Macao co-operation that is slated to open in 2023, it will include a kindergarten, school, elderly centre, medical clinics and other recreational facilities run by Macao-approved institutions.

### More action

Administrations from both sides have also planned to develop the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Co-operation Zone on the island, which is believed to be a game changer for future Macao-Hengqin co-operation. Asked about the progress in the Legislative Assembly in April, Macao Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng revealed there would be a new joint development and management mechanism between Guangdong and Macao for the intensive co-operation zone, but more details would only be available once the plan received approval from the central government.

In an interview with the state-run Newsgd.com in the same month, Ho said one of his priorities after taking office in late 2019 was to strengthen the city’s exchanges with the nearby province, in particular advancing the implementation of the intensive co-operation zone. As Macao faces a shortage of land resources, the Chief Executive noted the intensive co-operation zone could provide more room for development and new opportunities for Macao, and help usher in a new era of economic prosperity.

This is perhaps what Li of HN Group hoped for, when she made the decision to move her development project from Beijing to Hengqin. “Economic diversification does not only mean building the infrastructure, but how Macao could take the opportunities provided by Hengqin to incubate and nurture new industries,” she says. “It’s important for the government to encourage people and industries moving to Hengqin via policies.”

“The governments do have a vision of what Hengqin ought to be,” she adds. “But a vision will not get anyone anywhere. Only action can.” she adds.





## Hengqin holds the future for Macao

A cross-border video conference sets out an array of new ideas and proposals which will bind Macao's fortunes closer to the Greater Bay Area.

Text **Christian Ritter**

Hengqin – Macao's 'new big brother' – is set to become the cornerstone of its future relations with Guangdong, acting as a pivot for greater cooperation and shoring up the city's economic diversification.

At the Guangdong-Macao Cooperation Joint Conference last June, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng and Guangdong Governor Ma Xingrui took four major decisions.

The first is to concentrate on the future Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, speeding up legislation and policy co-ordination while accelerating the launch of specific projects.

Secondly, cooperation in science and research, high-end manufacturing, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), financial services, high- and new-technology sectors, culture and tourism, and the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions industry will be enhanced to boost Macao's

economic diversification.

Thirdly, cross-border connections will be improved to help Macao citizens living and working in Guangdong.

Finally, steps will be taken to speed up economic development and optimise people's livelihoods. In particular, the two sides vowed to devote further efforts to epidemic control and prevention, support Macao's young people to work or start a business in Guangdong, and enhance exchanges and collaboration in education, food safety and ecological protection.

Ho said that 2021 marks the first year of the country's 14th Five-Year Plan, as well as a significant period for Macao to integrate further into national development.

Ma said that Guangdong and Macao will work closely in order to take advantage of opportunities presented by the Greater Bay Area (GBA) development. In particular, Guangdong and Macao will work together on the TCM Science and Technology Industrial Park, the Hengqin Macao Youth Business Valley, and the Macao New Neighbourhood project.

During the conference, Guangdong and Macao signed six agreements concerning exchanges and cooperation on food safety issues; standards of quality and recognition regarding inspection work; accounting standards for Macao enterprises set up in Guangdong; cooperation in tourism; cooperation in holding job fairs; and internships for university students in the GBA and TCM cooperation.



### Free movement

According to a 2021 report looking ahead for Hengqin, one of the island's top tasks is to create even more incentives in trading, finance, taxation and immigration. The authorities also pledged to enhance the GDP of Hengqin and the nearby districts to RMB150-180 billion by 2025, about four times its current value, and bolster the population of Macao residents on the island to 30,000-50,000 over the same time period.

"The aim of the Macao-Hengqin co-operation – and the integration of the two special administrative regions into the Greater Bay Area – is to create synergies. How can we do that? We do what we specialise in," Prof So from MUST says. "Macao could help the other [mainland] cities in the Greater Bay Area to attract capital and provide management know-how; on the other hand, Macao doesn't have enough talents or land resources, which the other [mainland] cities could help."

"The right way to go is definitely the service industry," says Prof So, explaining how the gaming enclave could utilise Hengqin to further reduce its reliance on the gaming sector, and expand instead into tourism and finance.

While Macao is now undertaking a feasibility study about the possibilities of setting up a yuan-denominated equities market, the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission, the nation's top planner, said last year the market could be located physically in Hengqin and still achieve the same purpose of diversifying the Macao economy.

Regardless of what types of Macao-Hengqin co-operation are in the pipeline, ensuring the smooth movement of people, goods and capital is key. A new border crossing checkpoint between the two destinations was established last year, which is open around the clock and includes customs officers from both Macao and Hengqin, helping to accelerate the immigration process.

"What I mean is not totally getting rid of customs [from the two sides] and other regulations but [the authorities] should try to make the experience more user-friendly. There is always room for improvement," Prof So says. Local authorities could learn from the example of land borders among the US, Canada and Mexico, he

adds, namely the policies and technologies employed to facilitate free movement between them.

"When I taught in Texas, I sometimes went to Mexico for lunch with my colleagues, and when we drove through the borders, all we needed to do was to pay a quarter. No questions were asked [by customs] and passports were not needed. We only needed to show our passports after returning [to the US] from lunch."

### Better informed

Apart from a new border checkpoint, the Macao administration has also committed to improving the public transportation infrastructure linking the two regions. The MOP 3.5-billion (US\$437.5-million) works for a new Light Rail Transit (LRT) line started in March, connecting the Cotai section of the railway to the border checkpoint in Hengqin. The project, slated for completion in 2025, will ultimately link up with the mainland's high-speed rail network.

Better infrastructure and more incentives might help attract Macao residents to stay, work and develop businesses on the nearby island, says Tian of UGAMM, but getting the word out about Hengqin's advantageous policies and initiatives is the next step in the process. In his daily interactions with Macao residents in Hengqin, he says many do not yet have a full understanding of the policies in the mainland. "With a living or work permit in Hengqin, Macao residents are actually entitled to similar benefits and treatment as their mainland counterparts in terms of social security, pensions, and others. But many of them are only now aware of this." ●







ARTS AND CULTURE

# Visions of Connection

**Macao's 2021 Venice Biennale of Architecture exhibitors envision a future of integration, connection and coexistence with the Greater Bay Area.**

Text **Rafelle Allego** Photos **António Sanmarful**

Since the Venice Biennale of Architecture (Biennale Architettura) was established in 1980, the exhibition has provided a space for the world's most creative minds to explore architectural concepts, prototypes and ideas. By combining form and function, architecture can provide solutions for social problems, enhance urban environments and bring communities together – challenges that are ever more prescient given the ongoing pandemic.

And that's exactly what this year's Biennale hopes to explore. On 22 May, the international exhibition sought to address the question, 'How will we live together?', in reference to the conditions created by Covid-19. Participating for its fourth year, Macao approached the quandary through a local lens, presenting a group entry with a shared theme of 'Connectivities: Living beyond the boundaries – Macao and the Greater Bay Area' with a total budget of roughly MOP 500,000, or MOP 125,000 per installation.

With organisational support from the Macao Museum of Art (MAM) under the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), three acclaimed architects – Chan Ka Tat, Asai Che Chi Hong and Daniel Ho Ting Fong – and one urban planner – Ina Lao Man Si – offered compelling visions of a truly integrated Greater Bay Area (GBA) through a mix of abstract, mixed-media installations.

Curator Carlos Marreiros of MAA Marreiros Architectural Atelier says that the connections between the GBA – formed by Macao, Hong Kong and Guangdong – will play a vital role in a post-pandemic world that is increasingly globalised.

"We live in a completely interconnected region," says Marreiros. "We're living beyond the boundaries. And Macao's future depends strongly on the GBA. Macao has to do its best to integrate in this region, while protecting our own identity, culture and industries. It's very important."

(left to right) Daniel Ho Ting Fong, Chan Ka Tat, Carlos Marreiros, Ina Lao Man Si and Asai Che Chi Hong





### The code of coexistence

One of the four participating entrants, Ina Lao Man Si was the lone urban planner among the Macao talents. She is currently the Macao Urban Planning Institute's board council treasurer – a role which helped Lao devise a concept for her installation, called 'Coexistence'.

"The people, buildings and the districts of Macao co-exist very well," says Lao. "When I imagine the future of Macao and the GBA, I think we need even better co-existence to develop a more inclusive community." As Lao explains, this can be achieved through the preservation of architectural design codes, which can help to visually and culturally link nearby cities.

In celebration of the city's cultural diversity and collective memories, Lao set out to showcase

Macao's 'multicultural beauty' in her photo-driven installation, which hangs from the ceiling like a mobile. "I chose to use canvas cloth because of its simplicity and dynamic qualities," she says. The material is also recyclable and low impact which she hopes symbolises Macao's environmental protection efforts.

To bring the exhibition to life, Lao partnered with a friend who is a photographer, António Leong (known on social media as Antonius Photoscript). They printed 77 images of Macao onto the canvas cloth, with the photos divided into three different sections: past, present and future.

Starting at the top of the arrangement, Lao showcased Macao's heritage buildings and old districts to represent the past. The next strata shows current living areas

and buildings to symbolise the city's present. And at the bottom, Lao uses text – phrases like 'urban renewal', 'public participation', 'Macao New Urban Zone' and 'World Heritage' – to represent the city's unknown future in relation to the Hengqin New Area and the GBA.

"The division between the layers and time periods isn't very clear," she says, which serves as a testament to Macao's interwoven past and present. "I also got a lot of help from friends, making me feel like I'm truly living in a society that embodies the topic of my work – co-existence."

Using the excess cloth from her installation, Lao created canvas bags for exhibition guests to take home with them. "I hope visitors can imagine the city's future through my exhibit and the many possibilities for the development of Macao," Lao says.

### Deeper connections

When visitors approached Chan Ka Tat's 'Connected' exhibition, the first thing they saw was a burst of colour and dynamic lights. The installation – a mixed-media display, a map of the region, and one lit-up archway framing a mixed-media background – explore what's in the pipeline. Symbolically connecting Macao on one side and the GBA on the other, the arch represents fast-moving information, people, technology and skills and his vision for a 'constant flow of life' across the region, says the architectural designer.

Chan foresees a future where people will operate around the clock, while safeguarding

their own culture and identity. This vision, he says, is best communicated via his installation's mirrored, multi-colour floor, which was based on a Chinese saying that 'Water is as smooth as a mirror' (水平如镜). "It's like a calm body of water, reflecting the arch's high-energy image. They complement each other like Taoist yin and yang."

For him, water – equivalent to the mirror in Chinese culture – has always served as an open bridge between China and the West, which made Macao's history as a port even more significant. Now, it's more important than ever for Macao to find its place in the GBA, says Chan. "Of course, we still have to promote our unique culture – Macao's Sino-Portuguese culture," says Chan.



Chan Ka Tat sitting on the mirrored, multi-colour floor in his 'Connected' exhibition; (opposite page) Ina Lao Man Si reaching up to one of the canvas pieces in her 'Coexistence' exhibition



### In the pipeline

When approaching the theme, architectural designer Asai Che Chi Hong set out to unpack the importance of fluidity and connection in the context of the GBA. As a result, his exhibition, dubbed ‘Connectivity is from point to point!’, harnesses water as an apt symbol. “Macao is a coastal city and our origin was as a small fishing village,” he says. And since water can be found in many different states – from liquid to gas to solid – it symbolises the city’s adaptability and fluidity, he adds.

To create his interactive exhibition, Che cut over 300 white PVC pipes into irregular sizes and organised them inside three acrylic boxes – representing either Macao, Hong Kong or Guangdong. Inside each pipe, he hid data, text and images related to the three places, which viewers could explore and discover. “It’s quite fun to see people be child-like as they peer into the tubes to see what image they might find then start talking and reminiscing about these places,” he says.

The installation speaks to Che’s belief that, in the future, Macao will need to

deepen ties and cooperation with the GBA for economic strength and to stay competitive. “Geographically, Macao has an advantage that we should utilise,” Che says. “Because of the different opportunities and platforms across the region, the connection between the GBA and Macao is increasingly important.”

### Up and away

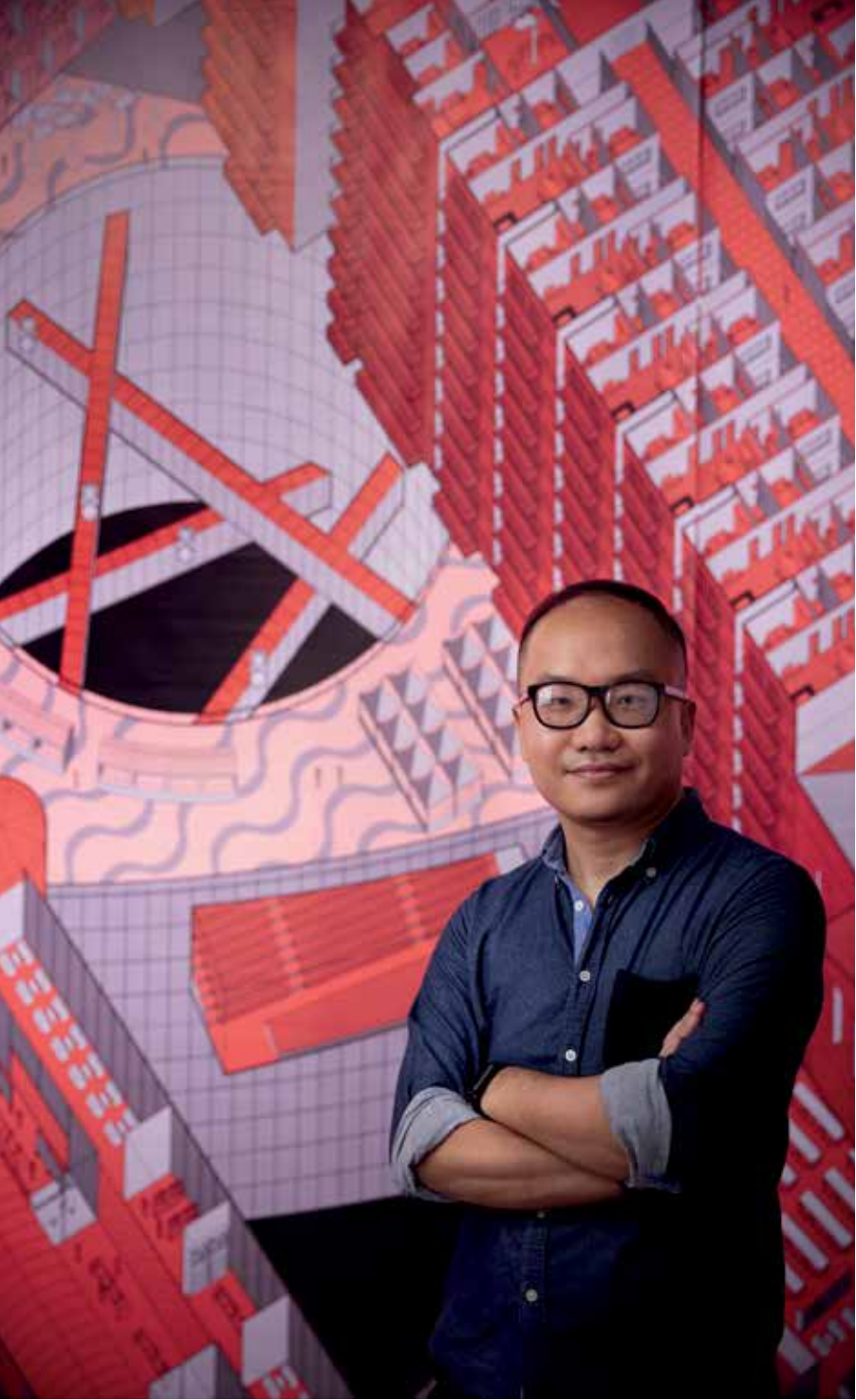
Daniel Ho Ting Fong’s ‘Boundary Verticalisation – the Collision of Two Different Urban System’ exhibition aims to raise a question, rather than provide an answer. While researching, Ho mapped Macao’s physical expansion over the years and GBA’s impact on the city, particularly along the border. He found that land reclamation, infrastructure, and mega projects along the city’s periphery have grown larger and larger over the years, dwarfing Macao in size and scope.

Experimenting with possible architectural solutions, Ho proposes that Macao must build vertically – not horizontally – due to a lack of land and space. That’s how he came to his elevated community model, which is a more ‘sustainable compact urban system, integrating different purposes – commercial, residential, leisure and public urban life – into each vertical community’.

At the Biennale, he presented a floor-to-ceiling digital drawing – which took him around a month to complete – that shows the community’s activities and functions, such as theatre, travelling tubes, shopping malls, playgrounds, art galleries, hotels, housing and offices. For Ho, the communities of the future will need to serve diverse functions, rather than simple housing blocks with only one purpose. “My wish for my exhibition is to provide a place where visitors can think and reflect on this,” he says.

### New challenges, new opportunities

Though disappointed that they could not travel to Venice, the four first-time



Daniel Ho Ting Fong in front of his floor-to-ceiling digital drawing in his ‘Boundary Verticalisation – the Collision of Two Different Urban System’ exhibition; (opposite page) Asai Che Chi Hong in front of his ‘Connectivity is from point to point!’ exhibition

exhibitors felt honoured and excited to have an opportunity to present their models, experiments and ideas to the city and the world. This summer, their works will be screened on-location at the Macao-China Pavilion in Venice, where visitors can get a taste of what Macao is capable of in the realm of architectural planning and design.

The digital nature of the exhibition further supports the theme of ‘connectivities’, showcasing the city’s innovative thinking and technological abilities. However, challenges exist. When it comes to architecture and construction, Macao’s information and technology centre needs to advance more rapidly to keep pace and integrate with the Greater Bay Area, says Ho. “If Macao’s industry can adapt to this challenge, the entire construction industry – and our whole society – will be able to develop and progress,” he says.

As demonstrated in all the four exhibitions, Macao and the GBA are quickly growing closer and more interconnected year after year. “With Macao’s limited land and lack of natural and energy resources, the city will be very dependent on the GBA to develop further,” says Ho.

Marreiros, the curator, agrees, adding that preparation is essential if Macao is to thrive within the GBA. “Urban connectivities flow like the arteries, simultaneously carrying our collective memories of the past, the present and possibilities for the future,” he says. “Just as you need to prepare the body for optimal health, a well-prepared Macao will have a bright future.” ●

### CONNECTIVITIES: LIVING BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES – MACAO AND THE GREATER BAY AREA

Inaugurated on 18 June, the exhibitions will be displayed in the ‘Exhibitions Gallery’ and ‘Nostalgic House’ at the Taipa Houses–Museum from 19 June to 24 September. Admission is free and is open to the public from 10 am to 7 pm daily (except Mondays), including public holidays.





SOCIAL AFFAIRS

# An Artistic Force

We meet the creative talents behind the Public Security Police Force's engaging cartoons, calendars and comics.

Text Rafelle Allego Photos Oswald Vas Artwork courtesy of Public Security Police





When thinking of crime-fighting policemen, rarely do light-hearted comics come to mind. But in recent years, the Public Relations Division at Macao's Public Security Police Force (PSP) has been creating informative artwork that make the force's initiatives more approachable.

Traditional informational materials were too boring, explains Chief Superintendent Lei Tak Fai, who leads the Public Relations Division. In order to better engage the public, the force had to get creative. So in 2014, they deployed an unconventional new strategy and started creating a slew of artistic promotional materials.

With ten people on the creative team, the PSP Public Relations Division creates everything from the comics, which you may have

seen advertised on the public buses, to infographics for social media, cartoons, calendars, animations and more. "We decided to create things like comics and calendars so people can take them home and learn more about the police force's activities," says Lei.

### A talented team

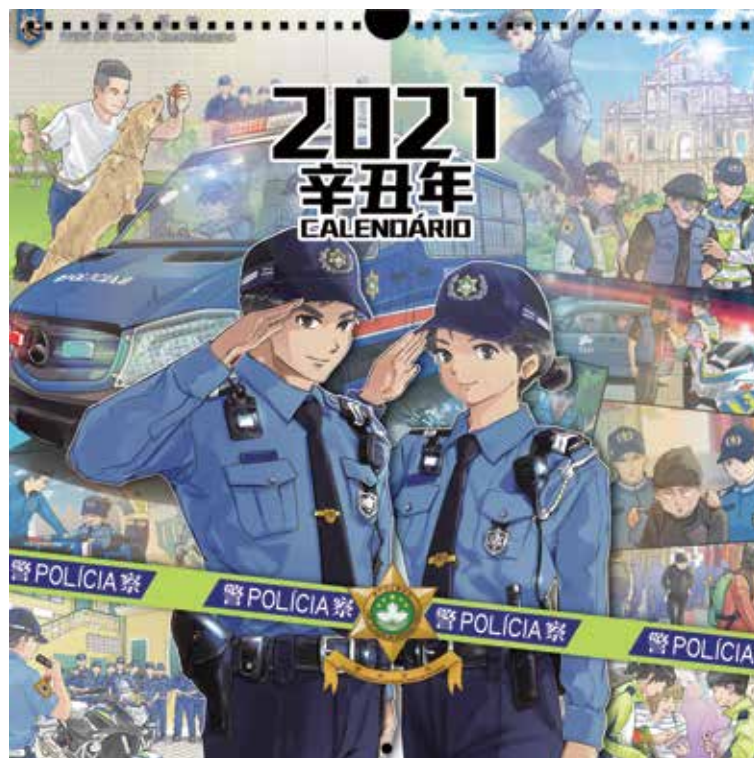
With ten people on the creative team, the PSP Public Relations Division creates everything from the comics, which you may have seen advertised on the public buses, to infographics for social media. Spearheading the art direction is Principal Police Constable Fong Hei Hong, who has been on the team since it started around seven years ago.

(opposite page)  
Chief Superintendent  
Lei Tak Fai





Principal Police Constable  
Fong Hei Hong



The programme has been very successful when it comes to shifting public sentiment, he says. In the past, people often became nervous or scared when they saw a policeman walking down the street. Many also felt anxious if they had to visit a police station, even if they were just asking for information or making a report. “We hope to establish a closer relationship between the police and the public through our comics,” says Fong.

Among the team, there are many different types of creative experts. Some are focused on illustration and comics, while others work on graphics, animation, and 3D modelling. One of the more established artists is Chief Constable

Lei Wai Man, who is in charge of all of the publicly displayed comic art.

In addition to being a police officer, Lei is also an experienced comic book artist, who goes by the alias, MP Man. With this Japanese manga-inspired style, the chief constable strives to inform the public more about police work with his artwork – evident in some of his previous comics, including the ‘Escola de Polícia II’ and ‘Herois do Circuito’ series, the latter of which centres around the Macau Grand Prix. “It’s hard to find anyone as good as Lei when it comes to drawing comics,” says Fong.

Exposed to comics and manga from an early age, Lei started illustrating when he was 15-16

years old and even self-published a comic in secondary school. But as he learned more about the industry, Lei realised that it is very difficult to make it professionally as a local comic artist, so he set his artwork aside and joined the PSP in 1997. After around 17 years without creating a comic, Lei was transferred to the PR division where he had an opportunity to pick up the craft once again. “As a member of the team, I was very excited when I joined because comic creation has always been a favourite,” he says. “Now I can contribute my ability to the force and I am absolutely proud of it.” He also shares how well the team gets along, with superiors that are very supportive towards their creativity.



Another member of the team is Chrissie Kong, who works on the force's various animation projects. Kong loved to draw growing up and eventually studied design at a university in mainland China at Huaqiao University in 2011. She also enrolled in an exchange programme in Taiwan, where she studied Multimedia Art Animation at National Taiwan University of Arts in 2013.

When she returned to Macao in 2014, she applied to join the police force in 2016. "I've been here for three years now," Kong says. "My work is very fun because I have the freedom to decide how the animations should move."

In terms of the work environment, Kong says she enjoys the team's creative discussions, because it helps them continuously improve their work. When it comes to the animations, she says, the team often brainstorms different ways to make the end result more entertaining and approachable.

### Everyday inspiration

Chief Constable Lei finds inspiration for his police comics everywhere, especially the daily happenings in the city. For instance, if the police force logs a series of crimes, Lei and the rest

of the creative team may propose a public service campaign on crime prevention to inform and educate the public.

They also find inspiration from the force's busy schedule, which includes everything from award ceremonies, education events and training sessions. "For our calendars, we decide a theme for each month based on the police-related events scheduled for that time period," says Chief Superintendent Lei Tak Fai, who leads the Public Relations Division. "The art for March on the calendar usually relates to the funfair celebration. And then in July and August, our artwork is usually all about youth to coincide with our Junior Police programme."

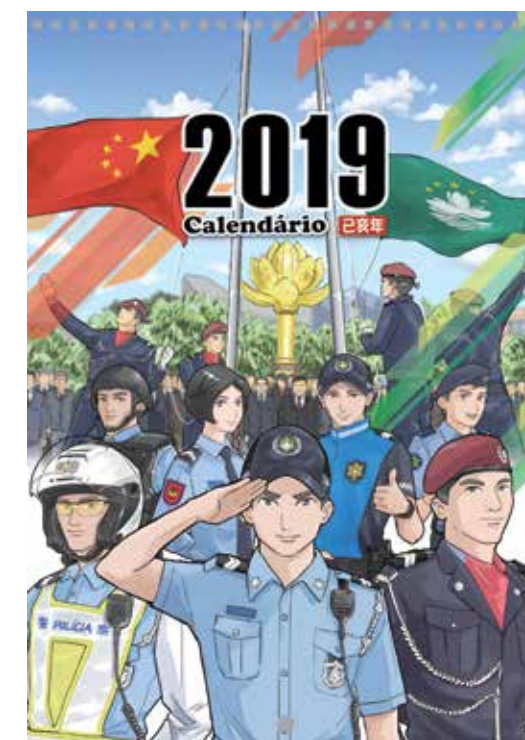
During the annual 'Police and Citizen Fun Fair Day', the force awards its Certificate of Commendation for Good Citizens and Certificate of Commendation for Police Officers. Typically taking place on the Sunday before 14 March, which is Macao's official Policeman Day, the event is widely popular, drawing nearly 10,000 people each year.

It's easy to see why: the police force provides lots of games for the public to enjoy, custom-made police plush toys as giveaways, and an opportunity to share feedback with the officers. According to Chief Superintendent Lei, the police force takes the public opinions shared during the event very seriously and some suggestions can potentially impact how the force operates going forward.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the force hasn't held the celebration for the past two years but they have been collecting ideas with hopes that the event will go on in March 2022.

The team also stays up-to-date on pop-culture and art trends, even taking part in 2020's '#SailorMoonRedraw' Twitter challenge, in which digital creatives submitted their own artistic interpretations of Usagi Tsukino, a popular manga character. As Chief Superintendent Lei shares, it took their in-house comic Chief Constable Lei about one day to complete the artwork on behalf of the PSP. "The team is often online, observing trends to get ideas and decide what to create," he adds.

Chief Constable  
Lei Wai Man







Public Security Police's creative team at work

### Closing the distance

According to information compiled by the PSP, public satisfaction has improved over the years, but Lei says this has to do more with the work of frontline officers in the crime and traffic divisions than the department's artistic endeavours. Based on the information compiled by the PSP, overall service satisfaction for frontline officers was 4.043 out of 5 points in 2019, compared to 3.80 points in 2014. "The PSP's relationship with citizens is much more due to the frontline department and how they serve and treat the citizens. Our role is to help them," says Lei. Even so, he says it is positive to see people using the force's annual calendars and reusable bags, as well as learning from the department's comics and infographics.

The infographics, he says, are key to helping people distil complex information and data in an efficient,

easy-to-understand way. "Complicated information is better explained in a simpler manner such as in comics," he says, adding that they are designed to be shared. "People can also share these infographics with one another over messaging platforms."

Looking to the future, Chief Constable Lei Wai Man, the comic artist, hopes the team is able to continue producing comics and animations so 'people get a deeper understanding of police work'.

To that end, Chief Superintendent Lei says the department's end goal is to make the police more approachable, raise awareness about important topics like crime prevention, and develop deeper ties with the public. "We want to grow closer with the public so they won't hesitate to contact us if they have questions or suggestions," he says. "We want the public to know that we care about their wellbeing and that we strive to make sure Macao is a safe place." ●





Image courtesy of Fu Lun Youth Association

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

# Window to the World

The Fu Lun Youth Association encourages women to realise their full potential with its annual International Affairs Training Program.

Text **Vivianna Cheong** Photos **António Sanmarful**

**E**ducation. Empowerment. Experience. The Fu Lun Youth Association of Macau has been serving the city's young female community.

Fu Lun, also known as the Women's General Association of Macau, is one of a kind in the city. In 2018, the United Nations granted the association special consultative status and it is the only NGO to represent Macao at the annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

As part of its mission to empower women, Fu Lun has introduced several programmes, including the International Affairs Training Program (IATP). Debuted in 2014, the certificate programme welcomes 100 talented, ambitious young women each year, arming them with the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected, globalised world.

"The local market is small, so we hope to widen local women's vision of the world," says a spokesperson of the Fu Lun Youth Association of Macau. "In the programme, they have a chance to explore their potential, expand their knowledge and gain insights into various fields and industries."

## Local talent, global affairs

In 2016, forty participants were selected from 100 applications. In 2020 and 2021 respectively, more than 300 applications were received and 100 participants were selected.

The IATP is very competitive and requires a multi-step application process, including an interview undertaken in Cantonese, Mandarin and English, group discussions and solo presentations on local and international

social and gender issues.

Once accepted, students – aged 18 to 45 – are immersed in a global education that's designed to expand their horizons and build a sense of community. Inspired by the UN's sustainable development goals, IATP focuses on international affairs, communication, public speaking (in both English and Chinese), model UN exercises and global problem solving skills.

Other courses turn a spotlight on general etiquette, and new media trends and local issues, including law, politics and Macao history, but are not set in stone. For example, the programme added a course about post-pandemic life this year, in order to prepare students for the inevitable changes ahead.

The programme also includes a visit to Macao's Liaison Office of the Central

People's Government and a talk by a representative from the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as several organisations in the Greater Bay Area, such as the Guangzhou City Planning Exhibition Center and the Guangzhou Science Square Exhibition Hall.

## In good company

The programme not only sees a growing number of scholars, including doctoral candidates, but also welcomes young mothers who want to get back into the workforce. Many women stop working due to pregnancy or health issues, but through this programme, they can rebuild their professional networks, redirect their career, and break through the glass ceiling.





Fong Wai Chio

For example, the programme triggered Fong Wai Chio to step out of her comfort zone and look for a change. As a civil servant, she always aims high. After completing a master's in International Integrated Resort Management at the University of Macau in 2016, Fong enrolled in a Doctorate of Business Administration Program at Zurich's SBS Swiss Business School.

When she joined IATP in 2019, she hoped to develop public speaking skills for her job. She was also interested in the programme's model UN conference experiences, as well as general etiquette. Identifying herself as an introvert, Fong never dreamed she could speak in front of an audience, but now she feels confident and capable.

Among the many IATP experiences, Fong greatly valued a 2019 visit to Guangzhou, where she gained a deeper understanding of the region's developments. "I didn't know much about the economic atmosphere of the Greater Bay Area – it was not a common topic in my social circle. From the trip, I got to learn more about the political policy of China," says Fong.

Getting out of her comfort zone helped prepare Fong for IATP's model UN conference on women's issues, where the programme splits women into small groups and assigns each a country to represent.

Fong represented Argentina, and though she found it difficult to find information about women's issues in the country, presented a position paper on the gender ratios in government. "In Argentina, women do not have a high social status," she says.

"However, by law, the government cabinets have to set a quota for female candidates. I wondered if such a quota could happen in Macao one day."

### Nurturing global citizens

Another civil servant, Iong Kit Yeng, joined the fourth edition of IATP in 2017. The scholar – who holds a bachelor's degree in English Studies in Civil Aviation from China's Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and a master's degree in applied linguistics (Chinese & English translation studies) at the University of Macau – is currently pursuing a PhD in government studies at the University of Saint Joseph.

While she has always been a good student, Iong realised that she lacked awareness of global issues while travelling for work. "When I had meetings with other people on business trips, I didn't have many opinions on international issues," she says.

Hoping to expand her worldview, Iong found exactly what she was looking for at IATP. "In Macao, it is quite rare to find international courses for professions or have the opportunity to join a model UN meeting," she says. "I didn't know much about the UN before the classes, so I thought it would be good for me to learn more and acquire this knowledge."

The experience was so inspiring for Iong that she became an organiser of IATP's model UN conference the following year, then later judged participants' performances and hosted a model UN meeting. Fu Lun also invited her to introduce Macao's Domestic Violence Act at the UN China office in Beijing in 2019 and she also had the opportunity to share Fu Lun's work with young people and women at Macao's United Nations University Institute during a summit.

"It's been a great learning experience for me," says Iong. "This is not something that I could gain from other courses."



Iong Kit Yeng; (inset) Kelly Sou



Image courtesy of Kelly Sou

### A valuable network

For Kelly Sou, IATP is all about culture and community. Sou founded her interior design and furnishing company WH Furniture in 2006 and the mother of five was used to taking frequent work trips before the pandemic. But when travel came to a halt due to Covid-19, Sou joined IATP out of curiosity.

"I have over 10 years of work experience, but I found that it was time to brush up on some things which I already knew," says Sou, who found the courses on Macao history to be the most inspiring.

"What I really like about these courses is the chance to get to know a group of professional women in my age group. We all have years of work experience and can accomplish a lot together."

Inspired by the programme, Sou has teamed up with around 14 IATP classmates across different professions and backgrounds

to organise a smaller-scale platform where local professional women can interact, practice public speaking and support each other. They hope to launch the community later this year.

### Macao's bright future

Over the last two decades, Macao has become an international city with foreign direct investments streaming in from all over the world. Many local women are eager to overcome traditional stereotypes – of mother, teacher, caregiver – and explore their potential.

The IATP programme strives to provide courses and a community where women can thrive and shine, where they can brush up on their skills, explore global perspectives, prepare different industries and elevate themselves personally and professionally. ●



## TRADITION

# Pastaria Fong Kei

## A SLICE OF HERITAGE IN TAIPA

Text Vivianna Cheong Photos Cheong Kam Ka



**Not many businesses can survive 119 years, four generations and a pandemic. But Pastaria Fong Kei in Taipa Village has stood the test of time.**

Macao has long embraced its East-meets-West heritage, celebrating each beautiful layer of diversity that has emerged over time. And nowhere is this more apparent than in Taipa Village, which has transformed from a fishing village and fireworks manufacturing hub into an epicentre of lifestyle, dining and culture.

The village's modern cafes and boutiques sit side-by-side with historic architecture and businesses, from the now-defunct Iec Long Firework Factory to the Taipa Houses-Museum, a Portuguese church, Chinese temples, and traditional eateries.

Among the local icons of Taipa Village is Pastaria Fong Kei. Opened in 1902 by Fong Kou, a fisherman turned pastry chef, the bakery was originally a tea house. But over the course of the past century – and three generations of Kou owners – it transformed into the bakery that customers know and love today.

Fong Kei's sweet and savoury Chinese baked goods are a household name in Macao. Fong Kei serves a wide range of hand-filled pastries, from chicken pastries to walnut cookies, Chinese shortbread, sesame pastries and Wife Cakes (a flaky pastry filled with candied winter melon), but the signature

pork-flavoured biscuits have garnered the most acclaim. These salty, crunchy bites are baked fresh daily using a secret family recipe that includes pork, fermented bean curd and sugar.

“

*Now, people treasure handmade products because so many things are machine-made.*

– Alon Kou

In 2016, when the Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau launched its first street food guide, the guide shortlisted Fong Kei as one of 12 recommended addresses. Five years later, the pastry shop still holds a coveted Michelin Plate recommendation – a testament to the quality and craftsmanship of Fong Kei's creations. What's more, the Macao government added the confection of Chinese pastries to its

list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2020 – only enhancing the bakery's significance.

“In the old days, a lot of things were handmade, such as milk tea or egg rolls. That was the norm,” says Alon Kou, the current owner and grandson of founder Fong Kou, about the bakery's rising profile. “But now, people treasure handmade products because so many things are machine-made.”

### A century-old family business

The tiny, 119-year-old shop along Rua do Cunha feels like it's been preserved in a time capsule. At the entrance, an old-fashioned iron gate greets customers with a ‘Fong Kei Teahouse’ engraving, while inside, the shop features green-and-white tiled walls and floors, ceiling fans, nostalgic photos with famous visitors, and a large black-and-white portrait of Fong Kou.

This humble, nostalgic atmosphere serves as a fitting setting for a traditional Chinese bakery.

After all, baked goods have been an important element of Chinese culture throughout history. In the early 20th century, Macao was still primarily a fishing town and many locals relied on these meat-filled, starchy pastries to fill their stomachs.

Alon Kou (right) and his son with a black-and-white portrait of Fong Kou, founder Fong Kei in the background



Even as Macao evolved into an international city with a thriving economy, residents never lost their appetite for baked goods. It's still common to enjoy these savoury bites as a daily snack or at festivals, wedding ceremonies and other family events.

Fong Kei has evolved right alongside Macao, having been passed down through four generations of Kou men over the past century. Today, the shop is run by Alon Kou, one of founder Fong Kou's six grandchildren. Alon took the reins in 2007, after a 30-year career as a civil servant.

"My brother [Kou Pui Kei] was about 60 and wanted to retire, so I started learning to make pastries and took over," says Alon, who is now 60 himself.

Many things have changed since his grandfather and father ran the bakery. "In the old days, we cut the biscuits with a large bamboo tube and the tea house opened at 3 am every day," says Alon. "Many Taipa residents and staff from the fireworks factories enjoyed afternoon tea here during their breaks. At that time, there were not many cafés. My father led the kitchen and made all the pastries. He was young and strong, so he ran everything on his own."

As the tea house industry declined, the business transformed into a pastry shop in 1972. That was two years before Governor Nobre de Carvalho Bridge opened, becoming the first bridge to connect the Macao Peninsula and Taipa Island. Thanks to the bridge, more residents from central Macao visited Taipa, and business picked up as a result. "I was only 10 in 1972, but I still remember that moment," he says.

### The fourth generation

While Alon manages the bakery, his son, Tedmond Kou, is hard at work upstairs in the kitchen. Donning a flour-splattered apron, the 26-year-old joined the family business in 2017 at the age of 22, right after earning a bachelor's degree in Business Administration at Boston University.

When Tedmond joined, his uncle, Kou Pui Kei, taught him to make pastries. "We didn't have step-by-step, fixed lessons where I could learn each type of pastry one at a time," says Tedmond. "Whatever my uncle needed that day, I had to learn the recipe and all the skills on the spot."



Tedmond Kou making one of Fong Kei's signature walnut cookies





Over the last four years, Tedmond has been practicing the art of Chinese pastries and he now manages 15 kitchen staff. “Every morning, I start around 8:30 am. I am the one who makes the dough, which is divided into smaller pieces so the team can create various kinds of pastries ... my mother helps make some fillings, so she starts earlier than me,” he explains, adding that so many women in the family – including mothers, wives, sisters and aunties – have been instrumental to the bakery’s success over the years.

With so many family members helping out, each bag and box full of baked goods is truly a labour of love. “It takes two days to make the pork-flavoured biscuits. On the first day, we make the dough and let it sit in the fridge overnight, then cut it into slices the following day. Otherwise, the dough would be too soft to cut.”

Among all of Fong Kei’s pastries, Tedmond says the Chinese shortbread is the most difficult to master. “Our recipe, which has been handed down through generations, does not specify the exact amount of flour needed. You have to feel the dough with your hands until it’s spot on.”

Tedmond, who will eventually take over the bakery from his father, Alon, says he feels a sense of responsibility to keep the business and traditions alive. “It would be a shame not to continue the business; I would feel guilty,” he says.

But it’s hard work – and not everyone is cut out for it. “When I started, it was challenging. There is no air-conditioning [because it is an older building]. Every day, I used to sweat a lot and sometimes I would

ask myself: Why don’t I get a 9-to-5 job in an air-conditioned office? But now I am used to it. And when I hear and see people enjoying our pastries, I feel a sense of achievement.”

Of course, the pandemic has thrown another challenge their way. “When it was busy [in 2019], I had to make dough for six hours non-stop,” says Tedmond. “Now, business is quieter. I make about six or seven pieces of dough every day.” Each piece of dough is enough to make a few hundred chicken pastries and around 1,000 slices of pork-flavoured biscuit slices, he adds. What’s more, Tedmond estimates the shop’s business has dropped by 80 per cent, and they currently produce about 10 per cent as many pastries as they did pre-pandemic.



## Did you know?

Rua do Cunha, or Cunha Street, was named after Pedro Alexandrino da Cunha, the 81st governor of Macao, in 1884. The Portuguese Navy captain was one of the first victims of cholera in Macao, and he died of the disease in 1850 – just 37 days after his arrival in Macao.

The street that takes his name became Macao’s first pedestrian zone in 1983. At 121 metres long, the street features snack bars, restaurants and souvenir boutiques where tourists can shop for the must-buy almond cookies, peanut candies and egg rolls.



(above) Freshly baked pork-flavoured biscuits being packaged



**“To pass on our craft and ensure high quality, we will keep the one and only Fong Kei in the family.”**

- Tedmond Kou

But Tedmond says he is thankful for government support. Even before Covid-19, Tedmond says the government’s heritage preservation projects benefited the bakery. In 2019, for instance, the government named Fong Kei a ‘Macao Classic Brand’ along with 11 other shops as part of efforts to celebrate homegrown establishments in operation for more than four decades. With help from the government, the shops will be restored and rejuvenated by 2022, as of the most recent report. “During the pandemic, the government continues to promote our brand,” adds Tedmond. “In addition, it launched the [consumption] benefit package and [increased] consumption.”

As he readies himself to take over the bakery in the future, Tedmond and his father are

committed to keeping the tradition of Chinese pastry-making alive in their nostalgic spot on Rua do Cunha. “I think it is very important to pass on such traditions. In Macao, there used to be many Chinese pastry shops but some closed down because the younger generation did not want to take over or the family emigrated,” says Tedmond.

But he feels the future of Chinese pastry is very promising, especially when tourism picks up again. “Travellers often buy Macao pastries as souvenirs, which really encourages the younger generation,” says Tedmond. “As for our shop on Rua do Cunha, we can’t mass produce our pastries, because they are all made by hand. To pass on our craft and ensure high quality, we will keep the one and only Fong Kei in the family.” ●



ARTS AND CULTURE

# Xian Xinghai

## MACAO'S MUSICAL TREASURE

We peek inside a Mong-Ha Villa to explore a fascinating museum dedicated to the life and work of Macao-born composer Xian Xinghai.

Text Vivianna Cheong Photos courtesy of Cultural Affairs Bureau



Museum exterior

On bustling Avenida do Coronel Mesquita, the mint-coloured, Portuguese heritage villas contrast the area's traditional 'tong lao'-style Chinese buildings. Formerly residences for civil servants, the villas are not just beautiful – they're full of fascinating exhibitions, too.

One of the latest to open is the Xian Xinghai Museum. Having debuted in 2019, the bijou museum houses countless manuscripts, letters, photos and videos about the life of acclaimed Macao-born composer Xian Xinghai, who lived from 1905 to 1945.

Hailed as the 'People's Composer', Xian is most famous for his remarkable work 'Yellow River Cantata' (1939). He composed the piece with Chinese poet Guang Weiran, who wrote the namesake poem to galvanise people to fight against enemies during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). Apart from 'Yellow River', Xian created an extensive collection of patriotic works, garnering great acclaim from leaders in mainland China and Macao.

Indeed, Xian is something of a local treasure, and the city has commemorated him in various ways over the years. For

starters, the Macao Cultural Centre resides on a street named after the composer. Within walking distance of the centre, a bronze statue of the composer sits at the junction of Avenida Xian Xing Hai and Rua de Berlim.

What's more, the government issued commemorative stamps in Xian's honour to commemorate the composer in 2011 and to celebrate the 110th anniversary of his birth in 2015. Most recently, the Xian Xinghai Memorial Museum celebrates his life and work across two floors of exhibition space.



“While the villa itself is not related to Xian’s life, the museum is part of a larger plan to turn the Mong-Ha area into a cultural destination,” says Sio Kit Meng, a senior technician at the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) who oversaw the museum’s creation. “We chose this building because it has been carefully revitalised and can accommodate visitors, exhibitions and screenings about Xian’s incredible contribution as a Macao composer and musician.”

A statue of Xian Xinghai in the museum;  
(opposite page, left) Facsimile of manuscript of Yellow River Cantata 1939;  
(opposite page, right) Xian Xinghai’s violin, borrowed for the inaugural exhibition of the museum



## The stars and the sea

To say Xian came from humble beginnings would be an understatement. He was born into a poor, boat-dwelling Tanka family with ancestral links in Guangdong. Also known as ‘boat people,’ this nomadic fishing community historically lived on houseboats and moved around southern’s China’s rivers and coastal areas.

In the 1990s, many Tanka families moved onto land, but the traditional image of Tanka people rowing boats and singing folk songs remains ingrained in Macao’s collective consciousness.

A few legends swirl around the composer’s early life. As the story goes, his father died before Xian was born, and his widowed mother gave birth on their houseboat in the middle of the night. It’s said that the composer’s mother named him ‘Xinghai’ (which means ‘the stars and the sea’ in Mandarin) because of the remarkable way in which he came into this world. “The legend was recorded in a memoir by Xian’s wife. His daughter [Xian Nina] has confirmed it as well,” says Sio. “This is a romantic narrative, but we cannot prove it.”

According to a letter from Xian’s mother to a relative, Xian was born on the water near Rua da Praia do Manduco, where many fishing boats docked at the height of the fishing industry. In the museum, visitors can view a small-scale replica of the pier alongside a large picture of fishing boats. “We could not find specific details about Xian’s birthplace, but we tried to visualise the environment in which he was born,” Sio says.

It is said that Xian’s mother often sang folk songs and told him about the harsh life at piers. Some rhymes carried a message of determination, such as “Tough it out, even though you are poor.”

Without a doubt, growing up in poverty deeply influenced the composer. According to his mother’s oral narrative, Xian composed a Cantonese song called “Tough it Out”, which is thought to be inspired by his mother and their challenging life together.

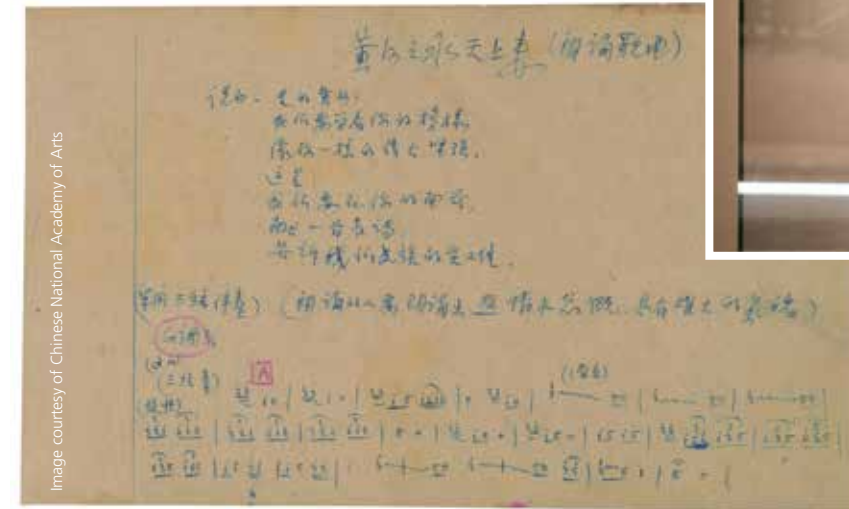


Image courtesy of Chinese National Academy of Arts



Image courtesy of Government Information Bureau

Recognising the significant influence Xian’s mother had on the composer, the museum features a small statue of a woman holding a baby, created by local artist Wong Ka Long. “It was the wish of Xian’s daughter, Nina, to have a statue of her grandmother – born and bred in Macao – and her father at the museum,” adds Sio.

The same artist also created a life-size statue of the composer, which visitors will find in the museum’s garden.

## A nomadic life

Xian grew up in Macao, living with his mother and grandfather until he was six when his grandfather passed away. Following a friend’s recommendation, Xian’s mother moved with Xian to Singapore, where she worked as a maid. This was common in the early 20th century, before China’s economic reform in 1980. Many Chinese people, known as Nanyang, ventured across Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Singapore, to find work and escape the oppressive Manchu emperors.

In Singapore, Xian attended Yeung Ching School, where he played the clarinet in the band and studied musical theory. In 1921, the school selected a group of musically gifted students – including Xian – to study at the Overseas Chinese School of the Lingnan University in Guangzhou.

With his talent and passion in alignment, Xian later enrolled in the National Music institute at Peking University in 1926, followed by the National Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1928. In Shanghai, he picked up the violin and piano before moving to France in 1934 to deepen his musical composition studies under famous French composer and teacher Paul Dukas at the Paris Conservatory.

“Through letters and interviews with his students, we learned that Xian bought the cheapest ticket to France,” says Sio. “He was so poor that he worked in the kitchen on the ship to scrape by. During his stay in France, he worked and studied at the same time. We don’t know where he worked, but we believe he held various jobs to make ends meet.”





Museum interior; (inset) Sio Kit Meng

Xian was eager to explore many styles of music but specialised in classical.

During his time in France, he composed over ten pieces, including the well-received 'Wind' and 'Violin Sonata in D'. Most of his works are solo, duet or vocal chamber works, evidently influenced by contemporary French music.

Upon his return to China in 1935, Xian began taking part in patriotic activities, and it soon became a central theme in his work. He eventually created scores for many films and theatre productions – including 'Revive', 'Sunrise' and 'Midnight Song' – to promote patriotism. In addition, he wrote many works that galvanised people to fight against the Japanese during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

In 1939, he took a job at the Communist Party's Lu Xun College of Art as the dean of the music department. For the next year, he taught music history, theory, and conducted and wrote large-scale operas and compositions, including his renowned 'Yellow River Cantata'.

A year later, in 1940, the composer travelled to the Soviet Union to work on the

score for a documentary called 'Yan'an and the Eighth Route Army', which explores the experiences of young people in Yan'an after the war broke out, as well as the economic and political background of the city. During this time, Xian also wrote his first symphony, entitled 'National Liberation'. Towards the later stage of his short life, Xian created outlines for teaching musical composition and conducting while researching Chinese folk music.

### The Macao connection

With a dedicated museum in Macao, Sio and the government hope to shed light on this often-overlooked local artist. "Since Xian only lived in Macao for six years and many residents do not know much about him, we wanted to provide a comprehensive introduction to his life and musical achievements," Sio explains. "He is a great person with perseverance – this is something we all can look up to."

With this goal in mind, the museum showcases a copy of the cantata's musical score. The Macao museum borrowed the original from the Chinese National Academy of Arts for the opening in 2019 but later returned it. "It had never left the academy

before, so it took us a long time to negotiate that," recalls Sio.

When it came to collecting and curating the museum materials, Sio says most of Xian's belongings could be found in the academy's library. In 2016, the team visited Beijing to identify documents, music sheets, and photos that would emphasise the composer's connection with Macao. They visited once again in 2018, then compiled a final exhibition list for the museum.

The Macao Museum is full of interesting details and historical references, including the composer's identity documents from France, which list Macao as his birthplace. "Some people doubt his birthplace because his ancestors came from Panyu [in Guangdong], so this document is important to us," Sio shares.

Another fascinating exhibit is an autobiography, which Xian penned in 1940 under a pseudonym while in the Soviet Union composing the score for a film. "When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Xian was exiled to Mongolia. He planned to return to China from there," says Sio. "In this autobiography, he made up his identity [Kong Yu], whose mother is from Macao. This document is so interesting, because it combines the real and the imagined."

The museum also showcases many black-and-white photos, videos and oral histories, which Sio assembled with support from one very important person: Xian Nina. The composer's daughter studies his work and serves as an honorary director of Xian Xinghai Museum in Panyu.

The Macao Museum borrowed many photos and images from Panyu. At the same time, Sio and her team created new multimedia elements after interviewing six of Xian's former students from his time in Yan'an.

"Oral history is an important complement to our research on Xian. Among the interviewees, the youngest was 90 years old, and one was 100," says Sio. "In the end, we showed videos of three interviewees and, of those, unfortunately, two passed away before the museum opened."

Apart from oral interviews, the museum also edited and compiled footage from two documentaries: one about Lu Xun College of Art, made by China Central Television, and another on Xian's students and friends made by the Panyu museum.

The museum is just the beginning of a larger project dedicated to Xian, which should come to fruition in the coming years. For the second phase, researchers will collect more information, documents, oral histories and relics from the Second Sino-Japanese War, when Xian contributed to the resistance, and showcase them in the Mong-Ha villa next door.

Against all odds, Xian became one of the greatest composers, musicians, researchers and teachers in China. For his love of his country, he attempted to express his patriotism and passion for life through many remarkable works. "He is such an inspiring person. When I did my research, I wondered how he could manage to travel all the way from Macao to France?" says Sio. "Back then, he was even encouraged to study music even though he was poor and music was not considered a practical career. His persistence in the face of challenges is something we should look up to." ●

Fishing boats at the pier near Rua da Praia do Manduco in the late 19th century





HEALTH

# Blood Ties

## MEET MACAO'S TOP BLOOD DONORS

**In honour of World Blood Donor Day this June, we spoke to three members of Macao's blood donor community to learn why they keep choosing to donate, again and again.**

Text **Vivianna Cheong** and **Tanja Wessels** Photos **António Sanmarful**

**B**lood is an essential part of our existence, and one that perhaps too many of us take for granted. For many, however, blood isn't something to be overlooked or forgotten; it's the difference between life and death.

That's why access to safe blood and transfusions are vital to a robust and efficient health care system. Every 14 June is World Blood Donor Day (WBDD), an effort to raise global awareness of the life-saving importance of blood donation and encourage more donors to sign up.

Every year, blood donations save millions of lives, and improve the health outcomes and quality of life of countless more. This year's WBDD slogan is "Give blood and keep the world beating," a message highlighting just how integral donors are to sustaining human life on our planet.

To learn more about blood donation in Macao, we spoke to three of the city's most dedicated donors about why they choose to donate, and how the experience has changed them.



Learn more about how to become a blood donor in Macao at [ssm.gov.mo/cts/](https://ssm.gov.mo/cts/).







### Paulo Rodrigues Rosa

Originally from Portugal, Paulo Rodrigues Rosa has called Macao home for the past 41 years. For much of that four decades, he has given blood regularly.

Not only is Rodrigues – who owns his own sanitation company – a long-time donor, he was also one of the first in line to give blood at the Macao Blood Transfusion Centre, when it was first opened in 1988.

“In the late 80s, I first heard about the blood bank on the radio, asking people to sign up and donate,” recalls Rodrigues. “When a friend of mine who worked at the health department suggested that I donate blood, I thought, ‘Why not?’”

Rodrigues was the 42nd person to sign up, and his blood donor number is 42. Today, the blood donor numbers are five digits long, currently reaching well into the 70,000-range – so it’s fair to say that he was ahead of the game.

Since his first visit, Rodrigues has donated an incredible 143 times. At 450 ml of blood each time, he is single-handedly responsible for a total of 64.35 litres of blood – ten times his own blood circulation, and a significant contribution to the community. For him, Rodrigues says it felt like a duty that he was only too happy to fulfill.

“When we give blood we are saving lives. I got the gift of life and I want to give back – it’s as simple as that.”

Over his four decades of donating, the 67-year-old has become well-known by staff at the Macao Blood Transfusion Centre, and in turn has gotten to know them, speaking highly of their dedication and work ethic. “The blood bank is by far the best official department in the government,” says Rodrigues. “They are kind, they take care

of us, and they are always very polite, even during emergencies. They are outstanding and always go the extra mile.”

In fact, he says that he also benefits from his frequent trips to the blood bank, gaining insights into his own health from regular screening. “They test our blood all the time. Every three months, I get my blood screened and analysed, so if there are signs of disease in my body, they can catch it earlier.”

He jokingly adds that giving blood may even play a part in keeping him youthful; with so many donations, he says that his blood is “new all the time.” According to the Red Cross, our bodies regenerate and replace blood that is lost with new blood within a few weeks. “It’s like being a tree; every spring I am regenerated,” laughs Rodrigues.

Rodrigues points out that the pandemic has caused him to be extra-vigilant about his health, both out of concern for himself and for the people who rely on him. He says that while he abstained from large gatherings, in observation of government recommendations, he would still venture out to make donations.

“At the very beginning of the pandemic early last year, there was a need for blood supplies, so I rushed to the centre to donate. People didn’t want to leave their houses but the centre needed blood and I was one of the few to do so.”

Despite not receiving any compensation (blood donors are not paid), Rodrigues regards it as a simple matter of civility. “We are part of a society, so we need to look after those who are less fortunate,” he says. “If someone needs surgery or has a health crisis, we need to be there for each other.”





## Wan Wai Wun

Wan Wai Wun remembers a time before Macao offered blood donation, and how it affected the people who needed it most. “Back then in Macao, patients had to pay if they needed blood,” she says.

After hearing reports about blood donation vehicles in Hong Kong, Wan remembers feeling excited about the prospect of a similar service in her hometown. When the Macao Blood Transfusion Centre finally opened in 1988, she couldn’t wait to register; she has since donated 96 times, around 450 ml of blood each time.

At first, it wasn’t easy for her. As a teacher, she often wasn’t able to visit the clinic, which was only open during school hours. “Back then it operated on a much smaller scale than it currently is. The opening hours were short, so I had to wait for my [summer] holiday to donate blood.” In July 1988, she was finally able to visit the clinic, and signed up to be a donor.

Despite her excitement, at first she chose not to mention it to her family. “Thirty years ago, donating blood was something inconceivable to the traditional Chinese community, who really treasure blood,” says Wan. “I didn’t want to scare the elderly members in my family. They found out later but they didn’t object, which I always assumed meant they supported and respected my decision.”

Regardless of the challenges she has faced along the way, Wan says giving blood has helped her feel more connected to her city. “Blood donors are the defenders of Macao, and I am proud to be one of them.”

The issue of giving blood became even more personal for Wan over a decade ago, when her mother needed a transfusion after surgery. “It was the first time a family member of mine received blood for free. I remember watching the blood flowing into her body, and wanting so badly to thank that donor.”

Wan believes it’s a blessing that she has been able to give as much as she has – not everyone is so lucky. “Some donors who are eager to give don’t meet the standards they need or have health issues,” she says. “I feel so blessed to be able to donate blood. I am getting old now, so the number of times I can donate every year is getting less, but I still treasure each time.” Women in Macao may donate blood up to three times a year.

For this long-time donor, she says Macao’s blood bank has brought the city a certain degree of stability. “We all want Macao to thrive. Since we launched our own community blood drive, the city is finally self-sufficient in blood supply – and that is good for everyone.”







Pedro Amado Vizeu

Despite being born and bred in Macao, Pedro Amado Vizeu made his first blood donation in 1979 on a trip to Hong Kong, nearly a decade before Macao's Blood Transfusion Center would open. He says the inspiration came from his high school biology class, where he learned about blood and its properties, and from commercials he had seen on television.

"They aired public service announcements on Hong Kong television channels about how blood donation could save lives, and I really wanted to do it, but there were no blood banks in Macao yet. I was visiting Hong Kong one day and passed by a blood donation vehicle, and just hopped on!"

Once Macao opened its Blood Transfusion Centre, Vizeu signed up to become a regular donor, donating three times a year (men can give blood up to four times a year). To date, he says he has donated 144 times, each time donating between 350 to 400 ml of blood.

Much like Rodrigues, Vizeu says that being a donor has caused him to live his life differently, in a way that has impacted him for the better. "I avoid alcohol, soft drinks, and oily or fried food. I go to bed early, and am quite self-disciplined as I must ensure my blood is good enough [for other people]." The 60-year-old adds that he also likes to stay fit, participating in sports like running, swimming and canoeing.

Vizeu says that he's noticed more awareness around the necessity of committed blood donors, and praises the Macao Blood Transfusion Center for its work in promoting the cause. "I see more young donors, especially those in their 20s. Local people have become more aware of it now."

A retired civil servant with a 36-

year career in government service, Vizeu says that to him, giving blood means giving back to society. Although he won't be able to give blood forever – the ages of eligibility are between 17 to 69 years old – he plans to continue for the foreseeable future. "As long as I can contribute, I want to." •



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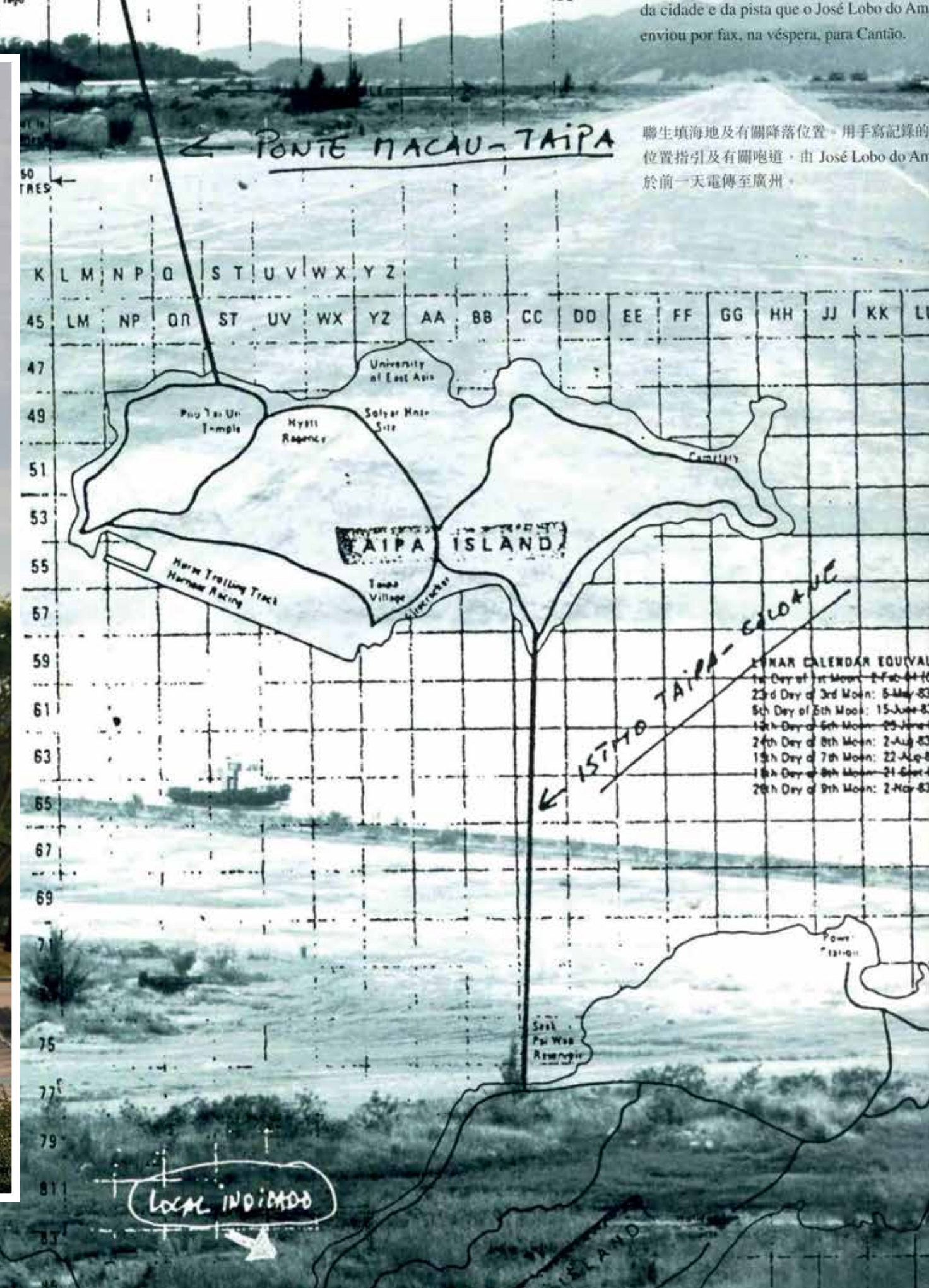


HISTORY

# Magnificent men and a flying machine

In 1987, Sagres completed the first aerial journey from Lisbon to Macao. Today, the plane is stationed in a park in Coloane.

Text Catarina Brites Soares Photos António Sanmarful



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enviou por fax, na véspera, para Cantão.

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位置指引及有關砲道，由 José Lobo do Am  
於前一天電傳至廣州。

LUNAR CALENDAR EQUIVALENT  
1st Day of 1st Moon: 2-Feb-83  
23rd Day of 3rd Moon: 8-May-83  
5th Day of 5th Moon: 15-June-83  
12th Day of 6th Moon: 29-June-83  
24th Day of 8th Moon: 2-Aug-83  
13th Day of 7th Moon: 22-Aug-83  
18th Day of 8th Moon: 24-Sept-83  
26th Day of 9th Moon: 2-Nov-83





Cruz Galego, Prata Mendes and Alves Leal successfully landed Sagres in Coloane on 6 February 1987; (above) Sagres arriving with dozens of people celebrating the occasion

In January 1987, Jorge Cruz Galego, Álvaro Prata Mendes and Arnaldo Alves Leal took off from Lisbon, aboard a single-engine plane named Sagres. Their destination? Macao. The goal? To honour Portuguese pilots Sarmento Beires and Brito Pais, and engineer Manuel Gouveia, who had first attempted to fly halfway round the world from the Portuguese capital to Macao back in the summer of 1924.

Unfortunately, the first plane's engine failed while flying over India due to a storm. Though no one was hurt, the crew had to wait for assistance. The Portuguese government authorised the purchase of a second aircraft, the Pátria II, which completed the odyssey with stops in Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and finally in Canton, where it once again was forced to make an emergency landing. Although the crew emerged unscathed, they couldn't complete the challenge and ended the journey on 23 June 1924.

Inspired by these earlier adventurers, Cruz Galego, Prata Mendes and Alves Leal finally fulfilled the historic feat 63 years later, successfully landing Sagres on a makeshift airstrip in Coloane on 6 February 1987. To this day, the plane sits inside the park as a monument to the mission.

"In 1986, people were already talking about the transfer of Portuguese administration in Macao [to China]," explains Prata Mendes. An aeronautical engineer, at 41, Mendes was the youngest member of the crew and served as the maintenance director during the trip.

"The flight served as a double tribute, both to those who for centuries ensured Portugal's presence in Macao as well as to three intrepid aviators who attempted the first air connection," adds the 74-year-old, who spoke with Macao Magazine by phone from his home in Portugal.



### Into the wide blue yonder

The idea to attempt the journey started with a discussion between former Portuguese military commander and pilot Jorge Cruz Galego and Dr Fonseca Marques, the CEO of Portuguese brewery the Sociedade Central de Cervejas (SCC).

"Jorge wanted to repeat the attempt to fly from Lisbon to Macao, both for national pride and to recognise the earlier efforts," says Prata Mendes. The SCC, which owns the Sagres beer brand, sponsored the aerial adventure. The plane was named after the beer, as well as the name of the Portuguese city in the south of the country, Sagres, from which the Portuguese left by sea to discover the world in the age of exploration.

Owned by Alves Leal (who died in December 2018), Sagres was a 1965 Mooney 21. It was just seven metres long, was powered by a single 200-horsepower

engine, could remain airborne for five hours and had a top speed of 270 kph.

It was a tight squeeze on board, and the trio only had room for essentials. "There were three of us, and the plane was tiny," says Prata Mendes. "Luckily, there was no need to take groceries because we had to refuel every five hours, anyway."

Before taking off on 10 January 1987, the pilots carefully plotted their route and secured the rights to fly and land in each jurisdiction. They had a 15,000-kilometre, multi-leg journey ahead of them, which would require them to stop in 10 countries and make 23 landings along the way.

On average, the pilots flew five hours a day, with one exception – the Corfu to Heraklion, Greece, leg – when they flew 10 hours. By the end of the journey, they clocked more than 135 hours – 40 of them at night with low visibility – in flight across a total of 26 days.





“

*It was the first plane to land in Macao. It was a remarkable event.*

– Prata Mendes

### Problems aloft, and on the ground

Prata Mendes never feared for his life, but he says the crew experienced their fair share of challenges, starting with an unexpected twist from Mother Nature.

Sagres left Lisbon for Ibiza with ease, but after they took off from Palermo, a huge storm forced them to change course to Cagliari, Sardinia’s capital. “The storm was so massive, it was something absolutely indescribable,” he recalls of that first emergency. “But we managed to land Sagres safely. And from Sicily, we could venture on to Greece as planned.”

Sagres experienced an electrical failure three days later when leaving Corfu

that left the crew without instruments or communications. They had to ad-lib, with Cruz Galego navigating based on a magnetic compass and Prata Mendes holding a flashlight so they could see.

“We had another problem when we left Egypt for Saudi Arabia,” recalls Prata Mendes. “The airfield was closed. But fortunately, the lights were on, and we landed in the dead of night. We were lucky.”

They also ran out of fuel on the way to Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, while flying over the desert. “Suddenly, a runway appeared – Riyadh Air Base – and we had no choice but to land without authorisation. It was either that or the desert.”

While the technical situation had improved dramatically since 1924, social obstacles around the world proved harder to navigate. “The situations at various airports were tough, especially on the legs between Europe and [greater] China,” recalls Prata Mendes.

The trio encountered many problems in Egypt, where in addition to obsolete infrastructure, corruption ran rampant. “I had to pay for everything: to get permission to take off, for the flight plan, to have it signed...”

In Pakistan, where barbed wire and machine guns surrounded the airport, they extended their stay because the country was in the midst of a dispute with India

(also known as the Siachen conflict).

And in Bangladesh, they flew into a chaotic scene where people and animals roamed the runway, as though it were just another road in the city. “When the siren sounded, the traffic would clear, and then planes could land or take off,” he says.

Just as they entered the home stretch, the crew encountered one last hiccup. During a stopover in mainland China, a cyclist crashed into the plane at night. “I don’t know what the man was doing with the bicycle on the airfield,” says Prata Mendes. “The plane was very badly damaged, with a dented wing and a torn plate. But [airport staff] helped us fix the plane, and we managed to get to Macao.”



## Mission accomplished

Ahead of their landing in Macao, which did not have an airport at the time, then Governor Joaquim Germano Pinto Machado Correia da Silva built a runway in Coloane for the sole purpose of receiving Sagres.

“It was the first plane to land in Macao,” Prata Mendes says proudly. “Definitely, I would do it again. It was a very instructive adventure. It was a remarkable event.”

Roughly a dozen people, including several official delegates, met Sagres to welcome the pilots and celebrate the momentous event. The city also held a large reception with fireworks, dragon dances, dinners and lunches, press conferences, and many interviews for the next few days.

That day, Governor Pinto Machado awarded the three pilots the Macao Sports Merit Medal (Medalha de Mérito Desportivo de Macao) and named them national heroes.

They were also given a commemorative plaque with the trip’s name and date, which was placed inside the Leal Senado building next to a similar plaque honouring the 1924 mission by Sarmento Beires, Brito Pais and Manuel Gouveia.

With the festivities behind them, the pilots planned to retrace their steps back to Lisbon. They left on 15 February, but a fuel leak forced an emergency landing in Lishicun, in Yunnan province, and severely damaged the plane.

As it would have been impossible to fly Sagres back to Portugal, the pilots left the plane in mainland China and continued home. The Portuguese ambassador in Beijing later sent the aircraft back to Macao for repairs.

According to the Municipal Affairs Bureau, the crew offered the plane to Macao’s Provisional Islands City Council, in 1987. The government moved Sagres to Seac Pai Van Park, very close to the landing site, in memory of the feat. And still today, it can be visited by residents, tourists and aviation enthusiasts alike.

The experience also resulted in a book, ‘Raid Aéreo no Sagres de Sagres a Macau’ (loosely translated to ‘Aerial Flight in Sagres from Sagres to Macao’ in English), written by pilot Jorge Cruz Galego and published in 1988.

He describes the journey as one of the most memorable experiences of his life: “We landed nervous and tired. Thrilled, we watched the many celebrations that followed, while receiving greetings from entities and friends there. It was worth it!” ●

‘Raid Aéreo no Sagres de Sagres a Macau’  
by Jorge Cruz Galego





ZOOM

# 2021 Art Macao

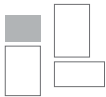
With 30 art exhibits across 25 locations, this year’s mega art and cultural festival is set to infuse the city with a wide array of exhibitions and installations.

With the successful launch of Art Macao in 2019 that celebrated art, culture, dance, drama and music, its second iteration is already underway, running from June to October. The ‘Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2021’ will encompass the city, both indoors and outdoors, under the theme of ‘Create for Wellbeing’. Featuring 30 art exhibitions across 25 locations – including Macao’s resorts – the art extravaganza will also feature artists from the mainland, Argentina, Egypt, Italy and Thailand.

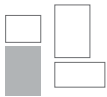
The four-month arts and culture festival – granted a total of MOP 8 million by the government – provides Macao artists a platform for international exchange, broadening horizons and nurturing talents, all while offering up visual art experiences for locals and tourists to enjoy throughout the city. Curated by one of China’s most influential contemporary artists, Professor Qiu Zhijie – also dean of the School of Experimental Art of the Central Academy of Fine Arts – the international event will immerse Macao as it makes the whole city its live gallery.



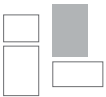
CHINA  
**SHEN QUAN**  
*'Hundreds Birds Worshipping the Phoenix'* (Qing Dynasty); embroidery (438cm x 39cm)



PORTUGAL  
**VASCO ARAÚJO**  
*'Botany #7'* (2012-2014); wooden table with 15 digital photographs in wood and metal frames (100cm x 100cm x 120cm)



THAILAND  
**GONGKAN**  
*'Miss You'* (2021); mirror and fiberglass (1.6m x 2.4m x 1.2m)



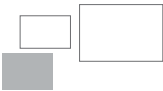
CHINA  
**DRAWING ARCHITECTURE STUDIO**  
*'Learning from Macao'* (2021); graphic film and ink (12.5m x 26.2m)



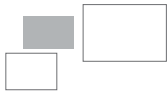




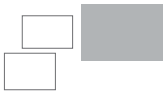
CHINA  
**ZHU YINGCHUN**  
*'Insects Series'* (2010-2015); Chinese art paper, book, acrylic, monotype, multimedia installation (variable size)



EGYPT  
**MOATAZ NASR**  
*'Sun Boat'* (2018); wood, rope and metal (3.5m x 510m)



WYNN PALACE  
**ZHU LEGENG**  
*'Box of Life'* (2021) is an architectural scene made of ceramics, and part of the 'Life Reflection: Contemporary Ceramics of Zhu Legeng' exhibition featuring large-scale ceramic installations at the Wynn Palace on Cotai.







SANDS CHINA LTD

**GU YUE**

'Seventy-Two Changes of Craftsmen' (2021) is a glazed ceramic, and part of the 'Project Sands X: Beyond the Blue – An Exhibition of Ceramic Extraordinaire' exhibition at the main lobby of The Venetian. 154cm x 95cm





CITY OF DREAMS

**ANGE LECCIA**

'LA MER' (2021) is a specially commissioned video work that records the endless waves crashing onto the beach, showcasing the water's rhythm and shapeshifting, showing at the House of Dancing Water theatre.





MGM MACAU  
**XUE SONG**  
*'The Awakening Lion' (2021)* is a mixed media collage being displayed at the MGM Macau's exhibition 'Awakening'.  
250cm x 250cm



GRAND LISBOA  
**DENIS MURRELL**  
*'Untitled' (2021)* is an acrylic, ink and tissue paper on canvas, part of the 'Art • Creation • New Ambience' exhibition at the Grand Lisboa.  
1,200cm x 900cm



GALAXY MACAU  
**TANG MUN KIAN**  
*'Drunken Dragon' (2021)* is a welded steel work based on the Malaysian artist's sketches, which is part of the 'Juxtapose' exhibition at Galaxy Macau.  
3,600cm x 4,000cm









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