

Macao 澳門



**The city of
temples**

**Cheng Kei
Noodle**
the story of a
Macao family

**Macao and
Hong Kong
cooperation
key to the
future of
Greater
Bay Area**





**Interactive multimedia facilities and
racing scenario displays boost the
immersive educational fun experience**

*Visit the Macao Grand Prix Museum at
first hand by purchasing tickets
on-site or online*

<https://eticket.macaotourism.gov.mo>



Address: Rua de Luís Gonzaga Gomes n.º 431, Macau

Website: mgpm.macaotourism.gov.mo

Macao 澳門

PUBLISHER

Government Information Bureau of the Macao SAR
15th Floor, China Plaza Building, Avenida da Praia Grande, 762 – 804, Macao
T +853 2833 2886 F +853 2835 5426 info@gcs.gov.mo

DIRECTOR
Chan Lou

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Amelia Leong Man Ieng

EDITOR
Eva Lei Sao Iok

MEET OUR TEAM

PRODUCER AND DISTRIBUTOR

Macaolink News and Information Services, Ltd.
Av. do Dr Rodrigo Rodrigues 600-E, Edf. Centro Comercial First Nacional 2406, Macao
T + 853 2835 5315 F +853 2835 5466 contact@macaulink.com.mo

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Gonçalo César de Sá
cesardesa@macaulink.com.mo

MANAGING EDITOR
Mariana César de Sá
marianasa@macaulink.com.mo

EDITOR
Amanda Saxton

TRANSLATOR
Mani Fong

STAFF WRITERS
Erico Dias, Gilbert Humphrey, Sara Santos Silva

SENIOR DESIGNER
Sandra Norte

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Vivianna Cheong, Christopher Chu,
Christian Ritter, Craig Sauers,

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Lei Heong Ieong, João Monteiro,
António Sanmarful

PROOFREADER
Anna O'Connor

PRINTER
Welfare Printing Company, Ltd. Macau

ISSN 2076 – 5479 All rights reserved



COVER IMAGE
Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng (right) and Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu at the Government Headquarters in Macao - Photo by Xinhua News Agency

Contents

- 04

Macao-Hong Kong cooperation key to post-Covid future

The SARs’ chief executives met twice in March, describing their territories as China’s bridge to the world.
- 06

Nearly four decades of Macao-made medicine

With strong foundations in pharmaceuticals, Macao is set to boost its medical sector – part of the government’s plan for economic diversification.
- 14

Lusophone companies look east

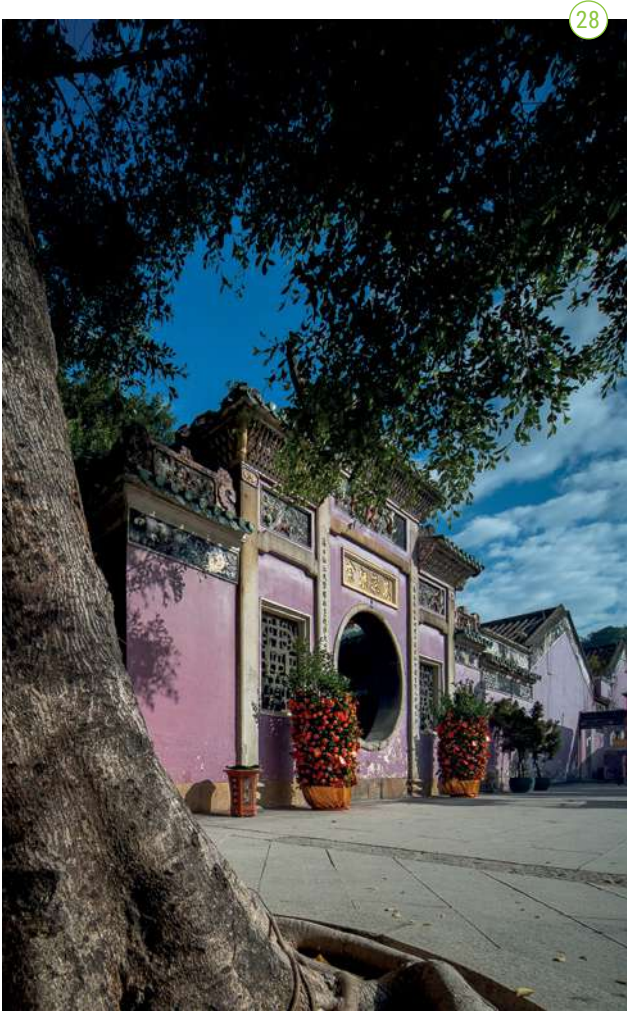
Macao’s historic connections with Portuguese-speaking countries are being leveraged by the financial services sector as it seeks to expand their reach in the Greater Bay Area.
- 22

Boosting British business in the GBA

British Chamber of Commerce Chairman and construction expert Keith Buckley has made an impact on many places around the world over the past 50-plus years. But his influence on the local community might be greater in Macao than anywhere else.
- 28

City of temples

Macao has more temples per square kilometre than any other city in Greater China, some dating back to the 13th century. What role do they play in the territory today and how are they being preserved by the government?



- 40

Family-run noodle factory sets sights beyond Macao

Cheong Kei Noodles is a second-generation noodle business that’s adapting with the times – and paying tribute to its past.
- 46

Vintage fashion is on the rise in Macao

Meet the people behind the city’s growing vintage clothing scene, centred in the city’s charming St Lazarus District.
- 52

Cashing in on the art toy boom

Macao’s creatives are positioning the city as a hub for collectable, high-value toys – for adults.



- 60

The history keepers

Can you truly understand a place without knowing its past? Meet the people keeping Macao’s fascinating history alive.
- 70

From the ashes

Wildlife is returning to the Gorongosa Park after decades of philanthropic and government efforts. Will tourists follow?
- 82

Annual Catholic procession returns

Macao’s Catholics honour Jesus’s suffering with a tradition dating back centuries.



▶ SCAN THE QR CODE TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER



Macao-Hong Kong cooperation key to post-Covid future

The SARs' chief executives met twice in March, describing their territories as China's bridge to the world.

Text **Christian Ritter**

In March, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu visited Macao for the first time since his nomination in May 2022. Lee met with Macao Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng twice within the space of that week – the first meeting was held in Hong Kong – and the two leaders reaffirmed their desire for strong, mutually beneficial cooperation between the Special Administrative Regions (SARs).
Lee said that travel between Hong Kong and Macao had been "vigorous" since normal travel fully resumed on 6 February, demonstrating the close ties between the two populations. While in Macao, Lee toured the city's latest developments in tourism and exhibition facilities. He noted that now was

the "perfect time" to collaborate on tourism ventures, with each SAR's borders fully open in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lee also welcomed the Macao Government Tourism Office's invitation to join a large-scale delegation – formed by members of the Hong Kong tourism sector – to visit Macao.

In both meetings, the leaders spoke about the need to promote multi-destination tourism within the Greater Bay Area (GBA). They described a joint vision for creating a world-class destination for leisure, in line with what's set out in China's Culture and Tourism Development Plan for the GBA. Lee linked the SARs' joint promotion of regional development to the broader wellbeing of the nation.

Lee said that Hong Kong and Macao, with their strong international connectivity, serve as a bridge between the mainland and the rest of the world. He said that both contributed to and benefited from China's prosperous development.

Ho agreed. "As Hong Kong and Macao are parts of the GBA – which also includes nine cities in Guangdong Province – the two SARs should further strengthen cooperation, and step up their contributions toward the high-quality development of the area, as well as the process of integration into the overall national development," he said.

Ho told Lee he was confident Macao's economy will recover, thanks to support from the Central People's Government, Hong Kong, and mainland provinces and cities. He requested that the SARs deepen coordination in the fields of scientific and technological innovation, finance,

traditional Chinese medicine, culture and sporting events.

Macao's leader also briefed Lee how the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin was tracking. He said that the cooperation zone would welcome investments from Hong Kong, and that his government would provide the necessary policy support.

According to a Macao Government Information Bureau statement, Ho and Lee noted that – while the SARs' legal systems are different – they should strengthen communication around their respective legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms in order to safeguard national security.

Overall, both leaders agreed that Macao and Hong Kong's cooperation is key to a bright, post-Covid future. ●

(Opposite page)
Macao Chief Executive
Ho Iat Seng (right)
with Hong Kong
Chief Executive John
Lee Ka-chiu at the
Macao Government
Headquarters

The Hong Kong chief
executive (right)
welcomed his Macao
counterpart for a
meeting in Hong Kong
the week prior

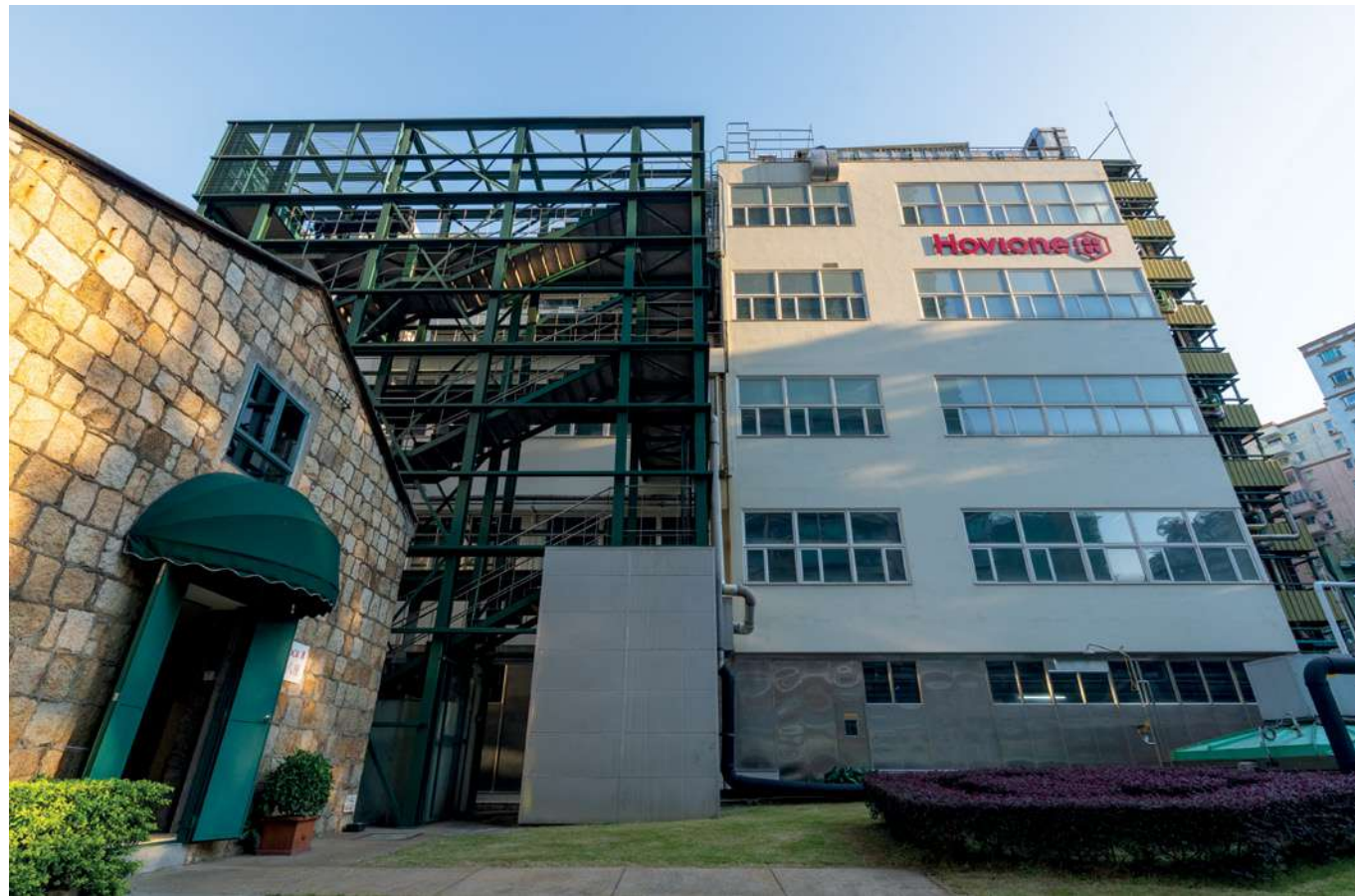




BUSINESS

Nearly four decades of Macao-made medicine

With strong foundations in pharmaceuticals, Macao is set to boost its medical sector – part of the government's plan for economic diversification.



Text **Gilbert Humphrey**
Photos **Lei Heong Ieong**

Hovione Macau's operations are outgrowing its current location, tucked away in a residential neighbourhood in Taipa

(Opposite page) Eddy Leong rose up the ranks to site manager of Hovione Macau

When newly graduated chemical engineer Eddy Leong heard there was a pharmaceutical plant operating near the Taipa Carmo Municipal Cemetery, he headed over in his car to find out its exact address. Outside what was once a major firecracker factory, Leong found a small sign bearing the word 'Hovione' – marking the modest outpost of a Portuguese drug manufacturer. He noted down the street number and drove home to post the company his resume.

That was in 1997. Hovione Macau offered Macao-born, US-educated Leong – now 49 – a job as a shift officer, and he went on to earn the top job of site manager. Hovione Macau's multinational parent, Hovione PharmaScience Limited,

is headquartered in Loures, Portugal. There are two other manufacturing plants in the US state of New Jersey and in Ireland's city of Cork. It also maintains offices in India, Japan, Switzerland and Hong Kong.

Hovione Macau was established in 1986 and is the only drug manufacturer in the territory. The plant is responsible for a large percentage of all generic active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) produced by Hovione PharmaScience for the global pharmaceutical industry.

FROM EUROPE TO ASIA

Hovione was founded in Portugal, in 1959, by four Hungarian refugees: husband-and-wife Ivan and Diane

Villax, Nicholas de Horthy, and Andrew Onody. The word 'Hovione' is an amalgamation of letters from the co-founders' family names.

In the late 1970s, these founders famously predicted that the world's "centre of gravity will be in Asia". They also believed China would become the world's largest producer of pharmaceutical ingredients, so promptly opened an administration office in Hong Kong – a strategic location for purchasing raw materials from the mainland.

As the company grew, its founders decided to open an in-region manufacturing plant. Macao was an obvious choice for its proximity to the mainland, but also for the fact that the city was still under Portuguese administration. It had similar tax and legal systems to what Hovione was used to in Loures.

In 1986, the Portuguese administration granted Hovione Macau a lease on the same plot of land it occupies today – where Him Un Iec Kei Chan firecracker factory once stood. Incidentally, the pharmaceuticals company has preserved two of Him Un Iec Kei Chan's old buildings, as a nod to one of Macao's bygone industries. The defunct factory's name is still displayed across the site's main gates.

In 1987, the US Food and Drug Administration approved the plant as an API manufacturer – a crucial step for any company aiming to export drug substances to the US.

"Time has shown us that [setting up here] was the right decision," Leong says. "Not only has it brought Hovione closer to the supply chain, but it's opened up new opportunities." According to Leong, China's ever-increasing investments into healthcare and medical research is paving the way for more collaboration between local and international players in the pharmaceuticals field.





Making high-quality APIs requires round-the-clock personnel to oversee every step of the process

Courtesy of Hovione



Courtesy of Hovione

MADE IN MACAO

Like Hovione's other manufacturing plants, Hovione Macau's focus is on making APIs – also known as drug substances. As the name suggests, APIs are the ingredients that make drug products (usually a combination of two or more APIs in the form of a tablet, capsule, or solution) alleviate and/or cure medical ailments.

Doxycycline, for example, is an API used in antibiotics. The antiparasitic API ivermectin is used to treat the likes of head lice, scabies, and river blindness (caused by a parasitic worm primarily found in sub-Saharan Africa).

Hovione manufactures a sizeable fleet of APIs, including anti-inflammatory corticosteroids; glycopyrronium bromide, which inhibits anaesthetised patients' respiratory secretions; and a substance called salmeterol xinafoate – used to make breathing easier during asthma attacks. Some of Hovione Macau's customers request exclusive 'recipes' of drug substances, an offering known as custom synthesis.

Making APIs is a round-the-clock process. Shift workers are on-site 24/7 to ensure Hovione's highly technical manufacturing operations run smoothly.

Once they're ready, APIs get sent off to pharmaceutical companies around the world. Those companies process them into generic-name (as opposed to brand-name) drug products, or use them in non-drug goods like medical shampoo. The resulting user-friendly end-products are then dispersed to other markets, including back to Macao. "If you buy drugs from a pharmacy, you won't see Hovione's name on the drugs but there's a good chance most of them use ingredients from here," Leong explains.

He says the company's biggest customers are in the US and Europe. India and Japan are emerging markets for Hovione Macau, while Australia and South Africa are smaller players in the industry.

GROWING WITH THE COMPANY

When Leong started with Hovione as a shift officer, he performed a lot of grunt work. Packing finished products, loading and unloading boxes, even washing floors and tanks. He points out that these tasks taught him the ins and outs of the plant. "Every step in the chain impacts on the quality of the products and, in the end, affects the final consumers – the patients," he says.

Leong was promoted to chemical engineer in 1998 and in 12 years made it all the way to general manager. That's the role he still holds, though in 2022 his title was changed to 'site manager'. "For me, this has been a fulfilling career," Leong says. "Because what I do actually helps save lives and improve the quality of life for so many people around the world."

“

Every step in the chain impacts on the quality of the products and, in the end, affects the final consumers – the patients.

– Eddy Leong

The company has grown alongside Leong. These days, Hovione Macau has around 170 employees – more than double the number of people it had back in 1997.

Many of the original staff came from Portugal, as local pharmaceutical talents were few and far between at the time. "You couldn't find people here with the right degree, so a lot of technicians and engineers came from abroad," Leong explains. Nowadays, most Hovione Macau's staff members are Macao people who studied abroad then returned – like Leong did in the 1990s. Macao-based staff get opportunities to transfer to other Hovione sites around the world: "We believe the right talents need to move to the right places," Leong says.

BEING A B CORP: SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Hovione was certified as a B Corporation across its global operations in 2017. B Corps, as they're known, are recognised for their excellent social and environmental efforts. The accreditation is fashionable nowadays, but this company's slogan – 'Safety First, Quality Always' – has been at the heart of its culture since day one. "I believe the most important thing [in a workplace] is having a safety-conscious and quality-driven culture amongst employees," Leong says. "It means we don't just save patients' lives with our products, but also protect our colleagues' lives on the job."

There are many on-the job risks at a 24/7 manufacturing plant, including complex machinery, chemicals and burnout. "Hovione commits to managing its activities in accordance with the principles of protecting people, facilities and the environment, strategically to our development," explains Leong, underlining that the manufacturing site is ISO 45001 certified (an international occupational health and safety standard).

Sustainability is an increasingly important part of the company's culture, too. Leong says Hovione Macau has its own on-site recycling plant where the likes of used solvents get disposed of safely. Only waste that

“

We always fuse sustainability into our processes and operations, so we can reduce the waste and recycle what we can.

– Eddy Leong

The current Hovione Macau headquarters is housed where Him Un Iec Kei Chan firecracker factory once stood

can't be recycled gets sent off-site to the government-operated Macau Refuse Incineration Plant, he adds. "We always fuse sustainability into our processes and operations, so we can reduce the waste and recycle what we can."

Leong is committed to year-on-year water, electricity and gas reductions. With pride, he notes that Hovione Macau managed to use 20 percent less water in 2022 than in 2021. The company likes to think of itself as ahead of the game in this respect. In 2017, for instance, it spent several million US dollars constructing a system that could reduce the company's greenhouse gas emissions – before Macao's government introduced its 2030 carbon peak commitment.

THE PANDEMIC AND ITS AFTERMATH

While none of Hovione Macau's APIs are used to treat or prevent Covid-19, sales stayed strong throughout the pandemic. As Leong says, "It's not like all the other diseases just stopped."

Restrictions did impact the company's day-to-day operations, however. "All audits and visits – from customers as well as from Hovione headquarters – had to be done virtually, or they had to be delayed," says Leong. Much of Hovione Macau's

complex equipment comes from abroad, and requires regular upgrades. But the suppliers' technicians couldn't enter Macao during the pandemic, so the company had to rely heavily on internal resources.

Key raw materials used in Hovione Macau's APIs could keep entering the city from their origins in the US, India and Japan. But negotiations around major orders, normally conducted in person, had to happen online.

Now that the border has opened and operations are returning to normal, Leong says he's confident 2023 will be a good year for the company – which plans to expand its range of products.

For young people in Macao interested in entering the pharmaceutical industry and developing their careers with Hovione, the company offers internships to university students and highschool graduates. "They don't even need to work here in the future, we just want to cherish science and technology in Macao," Leong says. "We cannot have everyone in Macao working in tourism. I know we cannot change this number one industry, but we can complement it with other industries in the city." ●



Weiming Xie

ECONOMY

Lusophone companies look east

Macao's historic connections with Portuguese-speaking countries are being leveraged by the financial services sector as it seeks to expand their reach in the Greater Bay Area.

Text **Christopher Chu**

Hengqin Island offers space for Macao's economy – including Macao-PSC financial services – to grow

With the dearth of tourists visiting Macao over the past three years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses that normally relied on overseas holidaymakers began looking inward. Restaurant entrepreneur Asai, who requested only his first name be used, knew he would have his work cut out for him. “Our restaurants prepare traditional Portuguese dishes, which attract fewer local eaters compared to the tourists,” the founding partner of Portuguese Restaurants & Retail Concepts (PRRC) explains. “So, to attract new customers, we collaborated with other businesses selling exotic imports from Portuguese-speaking countries [PSCs] to widen the appreciation for PSC flavours and products.”

PRRC runs ALBERGUE 1601 and 3 Sardines, popular Macao restaurants with an emphasis on Portuguese cuisine. In September 2022, Asai and PRRC teamed up with Heiman Sou – owner of importer

Sardinia Macau, which specialises in Portuguese products – to organise Macao's inaugural Lusophone Market. The event was held in St Lazarus's picturesque Albergue SCM courtyard, and showcased an array of PSC offerings including Portuguese wines, Mozambican cashews, and coffee beans grown in Timor-Leste. All sold against a backdrop of live music and storytelling.

Macao had just emerged from a summer lockdown and the borders were still closed, the turnout was impressive. The market allowed Macao people a chance to travel (culinarily speaking) beyond the selection of products normally available in their local Chinese supermarkets. All in all, the first Lusophone Market was successful enough that a second was held in December – sponsored by one of the Special Administrative Region (SAR)'s two note-issuing banks, Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU).

“

The GBA's economy is valued at almost US\$2 trillion, six times the size of Portugal's economy, providing tremendous opportunities for PSC enterprises.

– Carlos Cid Álvares

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT AND FUTURE GAINS

PRRC and Sardinia Macau's project is, of course, far from the first trade venture between Greater China and Portugal. For the better part of almost five centuries, Macao has served as a gateway for PSC companies targeting the mainland. BNU – a subsidiary of Portugal's largest bank, the Caixa Geral de Depósitos Group – has partnered with Lusophone companies entering the Chinese market for 120 years. CEO Carlos Cid Álvares says the bank is always looking for ways to support Macao's small-to-medium sized businesses.

Demand at Lusophone Market is proof of a growing interest in PSC products, which Álvares says bodes well for Macao. He notes that as China's post-Covid economic recovery unfolds, PSC companies are looking eastwards. Historic and cultural ties make Macao their springboard into the Greater Bay Area (GBA), a hugely valuable market made up of nine cities in Guangdong's Pearl River Delta, along with Hong Kong and Macao.

“The GBA's economy is valued at almost US\$2 trillion, six times the size of Portugal's economy, providing tremendous opportunities for PSC enterprises,” Álvares says. The GBA, in turn, opens doors to the rest of China. According to Álvares, what's happening in Macao will influence these companies' international investment strategies.

The Macao-PSC partnership works both ways, says a spokesperson from Bank of China (BOC) Macau, the SAR's second note-issuing bank. Local companies view Portugal as their door to the European Union, Brazil as their door to South America, and also have multiple entry points into Africa. The bank views Macao's traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) companies as a future growth pillar for the local economy, growing in tandem with overseas interests and serving as an important cultural symbol for China.



Macao News



António Sanmarful

Carlos Cid Álvares, CEO of Banco Nacional Ultramarino

(Opposite page) The inaugural Lusophone Market was held in the Albergue SCM courtyard in the heart of the St Lazarus District

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MACAO?

Macao's issuing banks believe this two-way business expansion is poised to take off. In preparation, the city's maturing financial market is busy facilitating capital links between investors, enterprises, and consumers in China and PSCs, and diversifying the services traditionally offered. Chinese and Portuguese financial institutions are working together to underwrite bond and debt instruments that specifically help small-to-medium-sized businesses – a significant move, as most loans from Macao banks are currently gaming related. These business loans will help smaller companies find their feet in the GBA.

BOC Macau has also invited more Portuguese commercial banks to develop RMB clearing capability, which would further internationalise the Chinese currency.

To sidestep Macao's severe land shortage, the Guangdong-Macao In-Depth Cooperation Zone is becoming the new nexus for Macao-PSC financial services. Namely, Hengqin – the island just south of Zhuhai, directly connected to Macao by the Lotus Bridge. In 2017, BNU became the first Macao-headquartered bank allowed to operate a foreign exchange with RMB businesses in Hengqin. The island is also a free trade zone, with no tariffs levied on imports. Álvares says he expects to open more BNU branches in Hengqin in the near future, to reflect growing investor optimism.

BNU has more than a century of experience connecting Macao and the PSCs



Renato Marques

In April 2022, Chinese policymakers revealed plans for the construction of a China-PSC International Trade Center there. Its purpose, naturally, will be to deepen economic cooperation through bolstering trade. In June, favourable individual corporate and income tax policies were announced for businesses operating in Hengqin, including a corporate tax rate of 15 percent for qualifying industrial enterprises – significantly less than the 25 percent levied in the mainland.

Along with hard infrastructure projects, BOC Macau and BNU are facilitating soft collaborations between Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries, including cultural exchanges and trade shows. According to the BOC Macau spokesperson, this cross-border integration fosters scientific and industrial innovation.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Favourable tax policies, new infrastructure, and interest from PSCs aside, there are some major challenges to Macao's economic diversification. A talent shortage is one. "Macao is educating the world and not benefiting from its own investments into human capital," says Álvares. "Students from around the world attend Macao's universities, but often leave after graduating – which comes at the city's expense."

"Macao has all the conditions to be a centre for multinational companies here, but it needs the talent to fulfil that potential," says Álvares.

For many Macao businesses, China's National Immigration Administration (NIA)'s new pilot programme – aiming to make it easier for specific professionals to engage in scientific research and academic exchanges within GBA – came as welcome relief.

Since the end of February, skilled professionals from within the GBA that fall into six categories of expertise (including academia, health, law, science and research) can apply for multiple-entry visas to Hong Kong and Macao. Similar to multi-entry visas for business, the new policy makes it easier for professionals to collaborate with experts in their field within the GBA.

Such arrangements are becoming an important platform for economic and trade development, alongside Macao's plans for diversifying financial services in the territory.

A PROMISING START TO THE RECOVERY

Early evidence of Macao's economic recovery began materialising after border restrictions loosened in early January. In February 2023, nearly 1.6 million visitors travelled to Macao, a 143 percent increase when compared to the same period last year. Gaming revenue also increased by more than 30 percent year-on-year to MOP 10.3 billion in February.

The city's streets and restaurants are once again packed with locals and tourists. With renewed interests in Macao, souvenirs from PSCs are being pulled off the store shelves by tourists.



BOC Macau will also be key in shaping Macao's future

Macao is also leveraging its unique food culture (to which it owes its centuries' long history with Portugal, India, Malaysia and other countries) to promote itself as a culinary destination for any budget, from cheap street eats to some of the finest dining on the planet. PRRC's Asai is fully on board. This spring, he plans to open a new Portuguese café featuring gourmet canned fish, with his shop located just below the Ruins of St Paul.

The fact he senses Macao's demand for this Portuguese delicacy is a

promising sign for PSC companies looking to enter the GBA market.

"The stomach is the best way to share culture," says Asai. "Customers are looking for more sophisticated dishes. This can only be done through greater participation among local businesses."

A third Lusophone Market is scheduled for spring, and Asai says Macao can look forward to more PSC-related events later in the year. "As long as we can find good partners, and the policies remain supportive, these events will continue to draw in the right profile for Macao." ●

MEET@MACAO



Macao, Asia's meeting place for small to mega events, offers a safe haven to meet at the doorstep of the world's most dynamic economic growth region. Meeting planners have plenty options of meeting space and accommodation rooms, all conveniently close to transport and access ports. Delegates will be rewarded from a range of immersive experiences from Macao's unique blend of Chinese and Portuguese cultures to soft adventure, or to indulge in health and wellness activities.

Contact Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) to find out about our attractive support programmes and services to help you achieve event success.





Photo courtesy of CESL Asia

Q&A

Boosting British business in the GBA

British Chamber of Commerce Chairman and construction expert Keith Buckley has made an impact on many places around the world over the past 50-plus years. But his influence on the local community might be greater in Macao than anywhere else.

Text **Craig Sauers**

Photos **Lei Heong Jeong**

Keith Buckley has been with BritCham Macao (then the British Business Association of Macao) since its founding in 2006

In a construction and civil engineering career spanning more than five decades, Keith Buckley has brought many engineering feats to life. The 74-year-old worked on transformational projects around the world, from a Baghdad motorway to grain terminals in Turkey to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, before moving to Macao in 2003. Here, Buckley has not only overseen the construction of integrated resorts – he has also shaped Macao outside office hours. The chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce (BritCham) talks to *Macao* magazine about boosting business in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) and how Macao is changing.

What is BritCham, and what is its role in Macao?

The British Chamber of Commerce was originally called the British Business Association of Macao.

I've been involved since it was founded in 2006. About seven years ago, I became chairman. We have elections every two years. Macao is a small community. We have a full-time general manager responsible for organising events and the administration, and then we have a management committee of nine people who are all volunteers.

Our aim is to further our members' network connections, raise awareness of their companies through high-quality events and link them with all that is British – including the British trade ethos, integrity and standards. Companies and individuals don't have to be British to join our chamber, so we do have quite a few [of our 91] members who aren't from the UK. But I think all our members join our association to enjoy British codes of practice and values through fun social opportunities and events.



Keith Buckley presents a cheque to the Good Shepherd Sisters with his Australian Chamber of Commerce (AustCham) counterpart, Janet McNab (right)

What types of events do you host?

We try to do maybe five events per month. Some are commercial-type events covering business and things going on in Macao, and others are social events. In March, we [co-hosted] an event for International Women’s Day with the Australian Chamber and raised MOP 70,000 for charity. We held a talk on environmental and social governance and its effects on business. We had the president and executive director of Sands China Ltd. talk about the new gaming concessions and the way forward.

We have regular breakfast briefings, business lunches, our

‘brews and buzz’ event, which is a more casual affair with a speaker and then drinks, and our cultural supper club, where we have a dinner and invite someone like a historian to speak on, for example, British historical influence in Macao. We also organise several British events. On 5 May, we’ll have a special event to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

We also arrange visits to interesting sites, such as the water treatment plant or the electricity generating station, and have an active environment committee that leads events, usually in conjunction with the University of Saint Joseph. They are one of our members, and some of their staff are on our environmental committee.

Can you tell us about the BritCham Ball?

The ball is our big annual event. It’s a high-class function, and I would say it’s one of the best of such functions in Macao. Half the profits from the event go to our CSR [corporate social responsibility] fund, which we use to support charitable ventures. For instance, we support students who are not so well off financially so they can go to university. We give them a fellowship to help see them through their coursework. [Since 2009, BritCham’s CSR fund has distributed MOP 670,513 in scholarships, donations and fellowship support.]

What about you? What’s your background, and what keeps you going?

I’m a construction guy. I’ve lived in Asia now for 33 years, and I’ve had a good cultural upbringing. I was born in Germany and lived there for 18 years. Then I went to university in the UK. I had to work for one year as part of the course [in civil engineering], so I went to Switzerland because I spoke German, then I was sent to the Netherlands, then I worked in England for five years, and then I started my travels which took me to Poland, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Beijing and Macao, where I both lived and worked.

I’m used to working with different cultures and in different ways. Sometimes people ask me, ‘Where did you prefer to live? Which was your favourite country?’ And I think my answer is I don’t really think about that. I say, ‘My home is where I am’. I haven’t lived anywhere that I didn’t like.

Sometimes you live in a place, the project comes to an end, and you move on, but it hasn’t been like that in Macao [because the projects kept coming]. I was responsible for the construction of the integrated resorts and the Cotai Strip over the last 17 years. Now I work for Macau Professional Services Ltd., an architecture, engineering and statutory consultancy, as the principal director.

The heads of AustCham Macau, BritCham Macao and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Macao toast the Queen at her Jubilee Celebrations at The Londoner Macao in 2022





You're involved in another charity, the Lighthouse Club. Can you tell us about that endeavour?

The Lighthouse Club was founded in the UK in 1956 to support individuals and families who are suffering from construction accidents, often fatalities. The Macao branch was established in 2005. I've been involved from the start. I've been the chairman for quite a long time – seven or eight years.

The aim of the Lighthouse Club is to create fellowship between construction people and raise money for the Benevolent Fund. We hold monthly functions, with companies sponsoring events [such as] an annual dinner, an annual golf day. Last year, we paid out MOP 440,000, which supported six families in Macao who lost their breadwinner. It's a very popular club. Some years ago, we would probably be dominated by expats. But in Macao, it's about 50-50 [foreign and local members], so that's a good sign.

What is BritCham's connection with other cities in the GBA?

In the British Consulate in Hong Kong, there's a section called the Department of International Trade. Their representatives visit us quite regularly. In early March, a delegation came from the British Consulate, including the consul general, and a team of 14 people in the various trade sectors like health, hospitality, and construction. They held a reception – the first one in more than three years [because

of the pandemic]. It was a good experience, and we are looking forward to more visits. As you know, Hong Kong is a stepping stone into Macao for business because people often fly into Hong Kong first.

What is BritCham focused on moving forward?

Now that travel restrictions are lifted ... we see a big future in the GBA. The momentum is building. There are lots of initiatives. Every day, something's happening. We want to get more British business here, so we work closely with Hong Kong, the British Consulate in

Guangzhou and the British Chamber of Commerce there [to facilitate business growth and expansion across the region].

Why should someone join BritCham?

You want to join to improve your networking, especially because it's not only British people – you're networking with people from many different nationalities. Above all, you get access to information. The trade missions come from Hong Kong representing various sectors, from design or food and beverages to health and beyond. Whatever your interest is, we're trying to accommodate it. ●



Photo courtesy of BritCham

BritCham members enjoyed a site visit to the world's first immersive zipline attraction, ZIPCITY Macau



CULTURE

City of temples

Macao has more temples per square kilometre than any other city in Greater China, some dating back to the 13th century. What role do they play in the territory today and how are they being preserved by the government?



Text **Sara Santos Silva**
Photos **Lei Heong Ieong**

Devotees pray and burn incense at A-Ma Temple's main pavilion, which features a circular aperture overlooking what used to be the bay of A-Ma

(Opposite page) Andre Lui is an architect and temple expert in Macao. Lui founded his own architecture firm, CITA Planning and Design, and works as an assistant professor of architectural heritage at the MUST

Every morning, the air inside A-Ma Temple fills with the heady aroma of burning incense. Worshippers brandishing joss sticks wend their way between different altars, bowing an auspicious three times before each, as they have done for untold generations. Most prayers are directed to the sea goddess Mazu, though it's unlikely many modern-day Macao people pray for safety in the ocean. These days they use bridges to cross the sea and have air-conditioned office

jobs. Their troubles are more of the landlubber variety.

But prayer content aside, A-Ma feels remarkably like a portal to the past. The temple's first iteration dates back to the 15th century. While much of A-Ma's structure has been rebuilt over time, a bas-relief in the temple's courtyard – featuring a Fujianese merchant junk – is believed to be original. It's not too hard to imagine the Ming dynasty fishermen who carved it praying reverently amidst

the fragrant smoke. Those men were genuinely in need of a sea goddess's intervention; in fact, they believed their lives depended on it. Mazu, of course, has been considered the protector of seafarers across much of Asia for almost a thousand years.

According to the Cultural Affairs Bureau, there are over 40 temples honouring Buddhist, Taoist, and Chinese folk deities atop the city's tiny landmass – 29 in the Macao Peninsula, nine in Coloane and seven in Taipa. This includes three with UNESCO World Heritage status: A-Ma; Kuan Tai Temple, built in 1750; and little Na Tcha Temple, tucked behind the Ruins of St Paul. The latter was built in 1888, a few decades after the 17th-century cathedral burnt down following a typhoon – leaving only a skeletal façade, now an iconic symbol of Macao. That's more temples per square kilometre than any other city in Greater China. Hong Kong, for instance, is home to around 600 temples, which makes 0.54 temples per square kilometre. Macao counts 1.25 per square kilometre.

Many have borne witness to the unfolding of Macao's rich history. The city's old-world temples currently provide stark contrast to the city's glitzy casinos, which almost match them in number.

All the while, these temples have been active places of worship. Heritage expert Andre Lui notes that in much of today's world, venerable, historically significant buildings like A-Ma are often demoted to tourist attractions. In Macao, however, temples have remained an important part of local people's daily lives. Lui is a registered architect, founder

of CITA Planning & Design firm and a visiting assistant professor of architectural heritage at Macau University of Science and Technology.

“Visiting temples is deeply ingrained in the culture,” he explains. “Their preservation is, therefore, of the utmost significance.”





A-Ma Temple's intricate wudian rooftops reflect the sea goddess' high divinity status

DIVERSE DIVINITY

Some of Macao's temples are Taoist. Others are Buddhist. Most, however, offer a seamless merging of the two religions – with pavilions dedicated to worthy figures from each. “It's far more common to encounter temples that harbour both philosophies or religions under one roof,” affirms Lui. “That is the case with A-Ma.” Temples are built to honour (or harbour) gods, goddesses, warriors and Chinese folk heroes. There's no limit to how many an especially popular entity will inspire: Mazu has five, for instance.

In terms of design, feng shui rules. As it does with anything built to the principles of traditional southern Chinese Lingnan architecture – the architectural style seen in the Lingnan region, which comprises the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi, both located south of the Five Mountains. The Taoist concept of feng shui – which literally means ‘wind-water’ and implies the flow of vital energy – is all about enabling harmony between nature and man-made structures.

At A-Ma, for example, a series of small halls were built up a hillside to align with the temple's main gate. The hill was not altered to accommodate the buildings, rather they exist in harmony with the natural landscape, explains Lui. “Between the pavilions built up the hill at A-Ma Temple you'll see rocks and trees and other elements

of nature mixed with the architectural structure. This is a Taoist feature.”

Lingnan architecture also imbues temple rooftops with meaning. “In ancient China, the architecture [of an edifice] reflects social hierarchy. Different rooftops reflect the social level of its owner or, in temples, rooftops reflect the level of its goddess,” Lui explains.

For example, A-Ma Temple has a *wudian*, or hipped roof – because Mazu is considered very high status. Tou Tei Temple, meanwhile, has a *yingshan* roof to shelter the relatively modest God of Land.

In terms of materials, many Macao temples are built with ‘blue brick’. According to architect and author Carlos Marreiros on *ACE Macau (Architecture Culture Environment, Macau)*, a book published by the Polytechnic University of Milan, there are “unsubstantiated statements by some authors” that these bricks, made from a mixture of mud, straw and oyster shell lime, might have been brought over from Malacca by the Portuguese.

According to Marreiros, the ridges on temples' roofs often boast intricate decorations depicting “mythological scenes, tales and historic narratives” made of either non-glazed or mainly glazed and multicoloured terracotta. Auspicious symbols such as dragons or carps can be seen over these ridges, “frequently centred by a cosmic pearl,” Marreiros writes.



Macao Government Tourism Office

A-Ma Festival

Every April or May, Barra Square is the stage for the Festival of A-Ma in honour of the Goddess of Seafarers. Three elements of intangible cultural heritage merge at this lively festival: the beliefs and customs of A-Ma, Cantonese opera, and the craft of bamboo scaffolding. The goddess – and hundreds of festival goers – are invited to watch Cantonese operas perform in a massive bamboo shed erected at Barra Square for the celebration. After being thoroughly entertained, the goddess is escorted back to the temple in a show of respect and honour.

Fujian traditions

"I grew up in Macao but my hometown is Fujian. People in Fujian usually pray to Kun Iam, which is why I also pray to Kun Iam. I come here to pray for good health and best wishes to my family."

Chu, Macao resident

THREE TEMPLES EMBEDDED IN MACAO'S HISTORY

A-Ma's original structure, of course, was built before Portuguese sailors and traders set foot on Macao's shores. It's a sprawling complex that's been added onto, renovated and re-built since 1488. When the Portuguese first reached Macao in 1553, they heard locals using the term 'A-Ma-Gau', meaning 'Bay of A-Ma'. They took this to be the name of the island they'd landed on, and started referring to it as 'Amagau', or 'Amacao', which eventually evolved into 'Macao'.

The sea goddess Mazu's origins are hazy, too. Some claim she was a 10th-century girl from Fujian Province who fell in love with a Taoism teacher. He taught her a special charm that allowed her to fall into a trance and save her father and brother from a shipwreck. Later, the girl is said to have committed suicide to escape an arranged marriage with an older man.

By the 12th century, fishermen were reporting Mazu had aided them in storms off the Fujian coast. As such, she became the venerated guardian



Tam Kam Weng

Peaceful worshipping

"I've prayed in this temple [Lin Fong Temple] since I was young. It's been so many years! I come to pray to Kun Iam for good health and safety. Praying at the temple also puts my mind at ease."

Chan, 61, Macao resident



Tam Kam Weng

Also known as Lotus Temple, Lin Fong Temple comprises the The Lin Zexu Memorial Museum, which sheds a light on another pivotal moment in Macao's history – Imperial Commissioner's visit to the city back in the early 1800's

(Opposite page) Kun Iam Temple is not only one of the city's best loved temples, but it is also deeply embedded in Macao's history – emissaries from the Chinese Empire and the United States signed the Treaty of Wangxia in its garden back in 1844

of seafarers. In the 15th century, when Macao's A-Ma temple was built, seafarers made up the bulk of the region's population. According to lore, Mazu, who also goes by the name of Tin Hau, is matched in glory only by the Buddhist goddess of mercy – Kun Iam.

Kun Iam has her own sizable temple in Macao. Its first iteration dates back to the 13th century, built in Macao's northern centre, and the current structure was completed in 1627.

Lin Fong Temple, also known as the Lotus Temple, is just 500 metres north of Kun Iam Temple

and was built at the end of the 16th century. It was here where Lin Fong hosted Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu during his campaign against opium. At the temple, Lin Zexu met with Portuguese Governor Adrião Acácio da Silveira Pinto – ordering him to ban the opium trade (and spare Macao the serious substance abuse problems plaguing Hong Kong). The commissioner threatened to cut off Macao's access to basic food staples if Pinto didn't oblige, which prompted the Portuguese to cease opium trading in the territory, shipping off the drug's stock to the Philippines.



*Map of the
main temples
in Macao*



Located behind the city's flagship landmark, the Ruins of St Paul's, Na Tcha Temple is one of three UNESCO-listed temples in Macao

Today, a six-foot tall granite statue honouring Lin Zexu stands at Lin Fong Temple's entrance. The Lin Zexu Memorial Museum resides within the temple's spacious courtyard, offering insights into those troubled times.

PRESERVATION EFFORTS: NOT JUST MACAO'S HERITAGE

Macao's older temples wouldn't be here without significant investments into their preservation. Most temples

– including those three – are managed by non-governmental temple associations, funded both by donations and the Macao government. They carry out day-to-day maintenance and minor repairs. More in-depth restoration projects are handled by the Department of Cultural Heritage, part of the government's Cultural Affairs Bureau (ICM).

ICM has undertaken 23 major temple restoration projects in the last five years.

Nestled just steps away from Senado Square, Kuan Tai Temple is part of the Historic Centre of Macao and honours Kuan Tai, the Chinese God of War

(Opposite page) A-Ma Temple feels like a living museum – a place of inestimable heritage bonding collective identity and local culture



Macao Government Tourism Office

Faithful reverence

“My family members are Buddhists and my ancestors’ pedestals are also in this temple, so I usually come here. I find it so comfortable and relaxing here. I hope there will be more large-scale religious events or activities in the future, such as some festivals or celebrations.”

Wu, 22, university student

Most recently, it tackled Coloane’s Tin Hau Temple, which was built in the mid-18th century. In a written reply to *Macao* magazine, the bureau describes the restoration as “mostly repair works to the tiled roof; repairs and renovation for the wooden beams and other architectural components; cleaning and maintenance of the interior and exterior walls and stone fences; dredging storm drains and manholes; maintenance and reinforcement for indoor platforms; as well as maintenance and renovation for certain components inside the temple.”

Less extensive preservation projects are centred around preventative measures – especially in the realm of fire safety. Unsurprisingly, fire poses a considerable risk to temples. In 2016, a serious one in

A-Ma’s main pavilion caused enough damage to close the temple for two years. ICM works closely with the Fire Services Bureau to run regular safety training sessions and drill exercises at temples, and carries out around 200 preventive fire inspections a year.

“Macao’s precious temples and their related culture” serve the city on social, spiritual, and economic (in the form of tourism) levels, ICM tells *Macao* magazine. “[They] serve as a vital channel for residents to develop a sense of self-identity and for visitors to understand local culture.” ●

Preserving temples

“I think temples in Macao represent the city’s living memory and the culture of the people who live here, so it’s important to get them well maintained.”

Simon, 43, tourist from Hong Kong



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE VIDEO

FOOD AND DRINK

Family-run noodle factory sets sights beyond Macao

Cheong Kei Noodles is a second-generation noodle business that's adapting with the times – and paying tribute to its past.

Text **Vivianna Cheong**
Photos **Lei Heong Ieong**

Cheong long Chai stills works in the kitchen after handing the business down to his son

At first glance, Cheong Kei Noodles appears to be a nondescript grocery store. The worn glass cabinet in its front window does display packets of dry noodles, but also cartons of drinks and a selection of eggs. Lots of the shop's foot traffic comes in to buy soft drinks. And for those who specifically seek noodles, it's easy to miss the store's wooden sign – which features a logo designed with the Chinese character *sam*, meaning 'heart' in English.

It is, however, home to an old-fashioned commercial kitchen

churning out about 400 catty (240kg) of fresh and dry noodles each day. This puts Cheong Kei Noodles at the boutique end of the noodle factory spectrum; owner Cheong Keng Lei says he's a quality over quantity sort of guy. His customers are Macao restaurants that use his famous shrimp roe noodles as a base for their own delicious dishes, as well as individuals who cook at home. But Keng Lei's noodles travel further afield, too. Right now he's busy accumulating customers in Hong Kong and on the mainland.





Cheong Keng Lei (centre) with his parents, Ho Wai Chan (left) and Cheong Iong Chai

(Opposite page) Carrot and spinach noodles add a splash of colour – and nutritious vegetables – to any dish

The 37-year-old is the second generation of his family to run the business, which was started by his parents in 1995. His parents – Cheong Iong Chai and Ho Wai Chan – left their birthplace in Guangdong Province for Macao in the 1970s. A relative had offered Iong Chai, who is now in his 70s, a job at their own noodle factory in the Three Lamps District. He ended up working there for over a decade.

“My father was offered many learning opportunities and acquired many techniques [at the Three Lamps factory],” says Keng Lei. “After ten years, his boss said my father was ready to run his own business and was happy to let him take some of his customers.”

Iong Chai set up shop in northern Macao’s bustling Fai Chi Kei neighbourhood, where he secured a large enough space with affordable rent. The Iao Hon Municipal Market is at the heart of this densely populated area. Cheong Kei Noodles, not to be confused with the restaurant of the same name in the city centre, still sits on one of the quieter streets radiating out from the market, Rua Graciosa.

A TIME-HONOURED HISTORY

While noodles have played an important role in China’s history, Keng Lei says his dad has always focused on the staple’s here and now. First as his ticket to a paycheck

when he arrived in Macao, though gradually – as Iong Chai mastered his chanced-upon profession – Keng Lei says he grew to appreciate the fact he was “making something delicious for local residents.”

Nevertheless, both father and son are part of an industry that’s fed their compatriots for millennia. The oldest noodles ever found date back some 4,000 years; they were made from millet and nestled in the very bowl they’d been served in, albeit beneath 3 metres of sediment. Archeologists unearthed those Xia dynasty-era noodles in 2005, at the Lajia archaeological site in mountainous Qinghai Province.

Since whatever natural disaster disrupted that ancient meal, narrow strips of unleavened dough – ie noodles – have become a culinary staple in cultures around the world.

They vary in shape, texture, colour and composition, but always contain some kind of starch. In Italy, cylindrical spaghetti and ribbon-like fettuccine are made from durum wheat semolina. Vietnam’s fragile pho is a thin, white noodle made from rice flour and served in broth. Japanese udon are white, fat and chewy, made from wheat. Brown buckwheat gives Japanese soba noodles their distinctive grainy texture and colour. Korea’s transparent *dangmyeon* noodles contain starch from sweet potatoes.

In China, of course, there are noodle varieties galore. The noodles themselves possess regional characteristics, as do the dishes they’re used in: Sichuan’s spicy *dan dan* noodles are served with chilli oil and minced pork; hand-pulled *biang biang* noodles from Shaanxi

Province are as broad as belts; Beijing’s ubiquitous *zha jiang mian* is made with slender wheat noodles fried in a rich and sweet bean paste. Meanwhile, Cantonese cuisine includes rare *jook-sing* noodles that are kneaded by a large bamboo pole, and braised *e-fu* noodles served at banquets.

Inside Cheong Kei’s kitchen, a team of seven prepare salty, speckled shrimp roe noodles, fish noodles, and an assortment made with spinach, carrots or Chinese yams. Each type has its own unique recipe and method. After the basic ingredients are kneaded into dough, rolled flat, and cut into long strips, the roe noodles are sprinkled with shrimp eggs and steamed, for instance. Vegetable noodles are hand-pulled then hung up on racks to dry. The fish noodles contain fish stock and egg whites, which – according to Keng Lei – provide not only the subtle fishy flavour but a smooth texture beloved by elderly customers.

Fish and shrimp roe noodles have been Cheong Kei’s best sellers since the beginning, when Keng Lei’s parents did everything themselves. The vegetable noodles are new products and they’ve proven to be a big hit. Not only are they popular with families who see them as a way to get their kids eating more vegetables, but they’re naturally colourful (the spinach ones are green, carrot adds orange). “Colourful noodles are prevalent now, but ours are a healthy version,” Cheong Keng Lei says of his recipe. “We do not add artificial pigments, food additives, or salt to our vegetable noodles.”



CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

In 2017, Cheong Kei Noodles came close to closing down. “There was an issue with our licence, which my parents found difficult to sort out,” Keng Lei explains. “My elder sister and I had other jobs, so they were considering closing the business. They felt sad about it, and so did I.”

In the end, Keng Lei decided to leave his marketing career to take over the noodle factory. He says he’d always enjoyed helping out at the shop as a kid, delivering noodles to nearby eateries on foot or bike. “I thought it was fun,” he recalls. When Cheong Keng Lei returned as an adult, he began learning how to actually make the noodles – and this, he discovered, was “so much fun.”

“In my old marketing job, my team thought up a promotional strategy for a product, then another team would follow up and deliver that strategy,” he explains.

“However, here I am involved in production, quality control, sales, promotion and delivery. Being involved in the whole process gives me a great sense of achievement.”



Today, Keng Lei is the boss; he mans the cashier, helps out in the kitchen, and sometimes – as he did in his youth – delivers noodles to customers. His dad, long Chai, hasn’t fully stepped back from the business yet and still works in the kitchen – mainly on quality control. As for the other members of the team, they help out wherever they’re needed.

“We’re not running a large business here and there’s not much job definition,” Keng Lei says. “We all have to do everything, including mixing ingredients, topping up the fridge with drinks, sweeping, cleaning, cutting noodles, and packaging.”

Cheong Kei Noodles has evolved with Keng Lei and his marketing prowess at the helm, as well as due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As lockdowns spurred the home delivery industry, more

and more Macao people and eateries signed up to apps that enabled food to be brought directly to their doors. Cheong Kei Noodles got on board, covering the delivery cost for orders over MOP 1,610. Keng Lei says door-to-door deliveries were a major help during the pandemic.

Nevertheless, he admits the economics of running a food business are currently very tough. “The prices of raw ingredients have risen. Meanwhile, we keep the same price and quality,” he says.

Leaning on his marketing background, in a bid to expand his customer base, Keng Lei has strengthened his noodle brand’s online presence, translated his sales catalogues into English, and regularly attends trade shows in Macao, Hong Kong and the mainland. He’s also launched a whole new brand – Tung Sum, or ‘together, with one heart’ – under the Cheong Kei umbrella.

The Tung Sum line packaging features beautiful illustrations of each noodle variety’s hero ingredient, a far cry from the generic clear packaging Cheong Kei noodles originally came in. The new style is attractive and instantly recognisable, drawing in customers – and potential overseas partners.

As Keng Lei presses ahead with his efforts to sell noodles far and wide, he never loses sight of Cheong Kei’s origins. Some restaurants serving up his product today followed Keng Lei’s dad from the Three Lamps factory back in the ’90s, and there are Fai Chi Kei locals who’ve enjoyed the same noodles for almost three decades. “My parents think they haven’t achieved a lot, but they have worked so hard,” Keng Lei says. Tung Sum, in a way, is both a tribute to and continuation of his parents’ legacy. ●



Now in his 70s, Cheong long Chai opened his store nearly 30 years ago

(Opposite page) Meaning ‘together, with one heart’, the Tung Sum brand reflects the company’s family values



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE VIDEO

Text **Erico Dias**
Photos **Lei Heong Jeong**

Terence and Elva Chan first crossed paths on a dating app, and fell in love while exploring their shared passion for vintage fashion. That was in 2012. Back then, the pickings were slim in Macao. So, the new couple took regular trips to Hong Kong in search of the perfect pair of vintage denim jeans.

In 2013, Elva opened her own online boutique selling a mix of secondhand and new garments with Terence's help. She named her e-commerce site Vintage Room. As its customer base expanded, the 35-year-old's ambitions grew: she opened her brick-and-mortar store, renamed Vintage Market, in 2014. It's a treasure trove of retro clothing, tucked behind a mustard yellow sliding gate in the trendy St Lazarus District. Today, Elva and Terence, 38 – now married – manage the store together.

The appeal of vintage fashion is manifold. Older clothes are often better quality than those made during the 'fast-fashion' era, because clothing from earlier decades was made to last a lifetime rather than a season. Buying secondhand is therefore a great way to get high-calibre attire for a fraction of what it'd cost new (if it's even still available to purchase). There's also that sense of personal achievement you get when stumbling upon something truly special, perhaps a piece of mint-condition French couture, while sifting through racks and stacks of random apparel. Nostalgia plays a part, too: the fact every vintage shirt, dress and accessory is a tangible link to places and times you may have only dreamed of. To top it off, wearing secondhand clothing is good for the planet. In the US, for example, 70 percent of clothing and footwear produced each year ends up in landfill, according to data from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Elva (left) and Terence Chan, owners of Vintage Market, fell in love while exploring their shared passion for vintage fashion

BUSINESS

Vintage fashion is on the rise in Macao

Meet the people behind the city's growing vintage clothing scene, centred in the city's charming St Lazarus District.

The Chans source most of their vintage items from abroad. They travel to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and the US, returning to Macao with colourful hauls of T-shirts, pants, shirts, dresses, skirts, kimonos, hats, shoes and accessories. Not everything they sell is secondhand, however. Vintage Market stocks hats made by H.W. Dog & Co., a premium Japanese brand known for its 19th- and 20th-century design inspiration. Items at the store tend to be priced between MOP 200 and 500.

Col Bleu.Union Vintage is a higher-end store, where pre-loved clothes have sold for upward of MOP 10,000. Like Vintage Market, its owners are a retro-loving couple who started selling online – then opened a brick-and-mortar shop in St Lazarus in 2018. Col Bleu purports to be the only store in Macao selling mainly French vintage items, including military uniforms and workwear, mostly made between the early 1900s and 1970s.

Its 30-year-old co-owner, Joseph Leong, says his clothes have “meanings or stories behind them – so customers are not only buying a piece of cloth, but also a piece of history.”

The French phrase *col bleu* means ‘blue collar’ in English. It refers to Leong and his wife Mia Chang’s appreciation for a specific style of indigo cotton twill jacket that indeed has a rich history. Between the 1940s and 1950s, blue-collar French workers wore a utilitarian *bleu de travail*, or ‘blue work’ jacket designed for demanding physical jobs. Workers often repaired rips with patches – a mentality and aesthetic Leong admires. These jackets have surged in popularity in recent years as must-have fashion items.

While Leong’s wares are relatively pricey, he personally entered the secondhand scene as a way to save money. The ‘aha moment’ came when a friend informed him that he could buy a perfectly good pair of pre-loved Dickies trousers for about half the price they’d cost new.



Later, Leong came to appreciate the difference between what was merely ‘used clothing’ and the stuff sold at genuinely vintage stores. Thrift stores and charity shops (like the Salvation Army’s store in Macao) sell the former, usually for very low prices. People donate their unwanted clothes to these stores, which donate any profits to a good cause. Those items’ quality varies and most will be fast-fashion (cheaply made clothes that follow fleeting trends) or home-made (stuff that was never trendy in the first place). Vintage stores, however, are commercially savvy businesses that stock a carefully curated selection of secondhand goods. Designer items that are hard to find and will never go out of style, for instance.

A good vintage store also evokes a sense of stepping back in time, or, in the case of Pepperland, entering another universe. The 33-year-old owners, Amy Pang and Sandy Vong, named their shop after a track featured in The Beatles’ 1968 animated musical film *Yellow Submarine* – which is set within a psychedelic paradise. “We use yellow as the theme, so you feel like you step into the yellow submarine in Pepperland,” explains Pang.

Pang and Vong have been friends since secondary school, at Sacred Heart Canossian College, and later studied together at the University of Macau. That’s when they first discussed the idea of opening a vintage clothing store together. Both had a serious interest in fashion: Pang would travel to Taiwan specifically to peruse its excellent array of vintage shops; Vong’s job as a buyer for Rainbow Group, an international luxury brand retailer in Macao, sent her to Milan, Italy, to purchase products from Emporio Armani.

On those trips, Vong recalls feeling astonished by how the locals dressed: “The Italians have their own style and uniqueness, and [I wanted to] bring that to Macao,” she says.



The friends established Pepperland in 2016. Their store specialises in luxurious women’s fashions and accessories, including jewellery, bags and clothing. It stocks frocks from couture brands like Dior and Givenchy, as well as exquisite vintage wedding dresses from Taiwan (that are also available to rent). Most items cost between MOP 300 and 1,500, though the wedding dresses sell for MOP 7,000. Pepperland also sells new accessories from contemporary Hong Kong brands like Cutcha, Amlas, Hahayhay and Glasshouse Plaiting.

Amy Pang (left) and Sandy Vong offer a whimsical, luxurious style with their vintage shop, Pepperland

(Opposite page) Joseph Leong (left) and Mia Chang, the husband-and-wife duo behind Col Bleu.Union Vintage

Benny Tam is another luxury fashion buyer-turned-vintage aficionado in Macao. He and his wife, Vikki Wong, 35, discovered the joys of vintage fashion on a trip to Kowloon, in Hong Kong. “What is quite fascinating is that you can get quite good-quality stuff for a lower price [in Kowloon], and you can also buy clothes that you cannot find anywhere else,” says the 34-year-old.

In 2018, the couple opened Vintage Around, a compact but comprehensive store filled with a rotating jumble of secondhand clothing. Some loyal customers visit the boutique every week, knowing they’re sure to find fresh items. Vintage Around specialises in a colourful array of Hawaiian shirts and dresses, which Tam and Wong stock by the thousand.



(Inset) The jewel of Tam and Wong’s retro sportswear collection: a 1992 Olympics T-shirt commissioned by the Grateful Dead

Benny Tam opened Vintage Around with his wife, Vikki Wong (not pictured), in 2018



The couple also collect retro sportswear that reflects historical moments. Their most highly prized item has been a Lithuanian basketball shirt from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and Tam loves to tell its story. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the newly independent country couldn’t afford to fund its basketball team at the Olympics. When American rock band the Grateful Dead heard about the team’s plight, they printed tie-dye T-shirts and basketball jerseys in Lithuania’s national colours – and paid for the team to join the Olympics. Lithuania’s top basketballers went on to win a bronze medal in their category.

“It was pretty significant, and, of course, the T-shirt looks cool,” Tam says, adding that the shirt – which features a skeleton shooting hoops – had a price tag of MOP 3,000. Most of the store’s items sell for a more modest MOP 100 to 500, however.

The current generation embraces vintage fashion’s aesthetic and ethic more than their predecessors did, Macao’s vintage purveyors agree. Ten years ago, when Elva Chan first opened her store, potential customers weren’t that keen on wearing clothes that had already been owned by someone else – no matter how pristine the condition. They also worried that the yesteryear styles might look out of place on modern Macao’s streets, or not suit them. Elva recalls needing to make a lot of suggestions; almost cajoling customers into trying on outfits they wouldn’t have considered otherwise.

According to her, “Macao’s culture has changed and today’s customers are more open.” They seek their fashion inspiration from a far wider range of sources than they did a decade ago – and there’s more emphasis on dressing uniquely. “Now customers come in knowing the look they want, and don’t need us to style them; that’s the main difference from when we started,” Elva says. ●



SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Cashing in on the art toy boom

Macao's creatives are positioning the city as a hub for collectable, high-value toys – for adults.

Text **Craig Sauers**

Bearbrick, a popular series from Japanese toy company MediCom, offer anthropomorphised bears in a variety of colours and patterns

(Below) Among the best-known arts toys are KAWS's signature Companions series

Toys are traditionally for children. Playthings that are loved fiercely, often to the point of disintegration. But there's a growing subset of toy buyers who, while incredibly fond of their toys, prefer to keep them as pristine as possible. These are adults and they're not after cuddly teddy bears. They seek investment opportunities in the form of designer toys, also known as 'art toys,' or *chaowan* in Chinese.

Art toys are limited edition objets d'art first and playthings second (if at all), made by small, independent companies and artists. The mainland's

chaowan market was estimated to be worth more than RMB 38 billion (MOP 44.6 billion) in 2021; it's the second biggest toy market in the world.

The art toy boom has given Macao brands like Nativo and 50% Toy licence to flex their creative muscles and sell one-of-a-kind items at a premium.

"Shoppers in China love the fact that [our toys are] not mainstream. They can show it off to their friends, like, 'Look, I got this, and it doesn't look like anything else in stores,'" says Felipe Wong, co-founder of Nativo. "They're crazy about art toys."



ART TOYS COME TO MACAO

Art toys are having a moment, but they're not a new concept. One of the best-known examples is a series of vinyl figurines with crosses for eyes created by American artist Brian Donnelly – known professionally as KAWS – and the Japanese clothing brand Bounty Hunter. These came out in the 1990s and now sell for upward of US\$100,000 (MOP 809,000). Bearbrick was another instant classic, made by the Japanese company MediCom in the early 2000s.

Closer to home, in Hong Kong, is the man now known as the 'godfather of art toys'. Michael Lau released his influential Gardener vinyl toy series in 1999 and went on to become one of the most influential toy designers in Greater China.

"We wanted to be like [Michael Lau]," admits Siomeng Chan, co-founder of 50% Toy. "Because of him, art toys started to become famous in Asia."

Chan, who studied graphic design at Macao Polytechnic University, started sketching prototypes for what would become the nascent brand's first character in 2016. That was Dino, a slouched, hulking figure in a yellow hooded jumpsuit.

Four years later, Chan and his friend from university, Kay Tung, left their careers in graphic design to launch 50% Toy.



António Sanmarful

The Craftsman version of Dino, the first character from Macao-based 50% Toy

(Opposite page) Siomeng Chan (left) and Kay Tung, co-founders of 50% Toy

For inspiration, Chan and Tung looked to their childhoods – which were full of cartoons and action figures like One Piece and Gundam. After some trial and error in the production process, Dino was ready for the market. "The most difficult thing is when you transform a face from a 2D sketch to a 3D product," Chan says.

Today, 20-centimetre-tall, vinyl versions of Dino sell for MOP 800 and unique, cardboard pop-up versions of it sell for MOP 110. Chan and Tung are currently working to bring a second character named Joyboy to life. Joyboy is Tung's design, though the pair claim it's a manifestation of both of their inner child.

The name '50% Toy' represents Chan and Tung's work philosophy: half fun, half professionalism. They aim to stoke that inner child. "We think [this mindset] is very important to making toys," explains Chan. "We need to make it fun and joyful. But on the other side of this, we also put our professionalism into our toys – our graphic design and illustration skills."

The process behind building something tangible – and sellable – from your imagination is hard work, according to Chan. He starts off with a sketch, either on paper or his iPad, then tweaks the design until it's perfect. The finished product gets sent off to resellers in the mainland, Taiwan, and beyond.



António Sanmarful

50% Toy's biggest reseller is in Taiwan, a store called Monster Taipei. It also sells direct from its website and through a store at the Macau International Airport. Expos play a major role in getting the company's name out there, as well as highlight Macao's creative potential. In terms of aspirations, Chan thinks big. "One of our ultimate goals is to collaborate someday with some world-famous brands, like Nike, Adidas or a luxury brand like Chanel," he says.

REDEFINING MACAO KEEPSAKES

While 50% Toy is working to raise Macao's creative profile overseas, toy company Nativo focuses on sharing stories and products that paint the city in a new and colourful light.

Since 2020, husband-and-wife duo Felipe Wong and Anny Chong have tapped into their creative backgrounds as street artists and in marketing to share a different narrative of the city – Chong's hometown. "We don't want to use gimmicks like a picture of the Ruins of St Paul's on our toys. That's not art, but a souvenir," says Chong.

Their range of designer toys references Chinese traditions like calligraphy and feng shui, as well as things that are personal to the couple. MoeJoe, for instance, is a funky soft-toy inspired by their own dog – Macho – and described on their website as a "scaredy pup" on his way to becoming "the ultimate good boy." These small-sized figures sell for MOP 80. The MJ Espectro, a chrome-plated resin version of MoeJoe that sells for MOP 1,333, is described as "the portrait of that natural flow of things that brings us peace and balance".



Lei Heong Leong

The co-founders of Nativo, Anny Chong (left) and Felipe Wong, have also contributed stunning murals to the city under the alias AAFK

The bulk of their unconventional toys reflect street culture. Characters like G-Blaster EIA – a Bearbrick-meets-hip-hop vinyl toy donning Nike Air Force 1s, retails for MOP 1,333 – and the soft vinyl MoeJoe figures evoke graffiti art with their edgy colour schemes and cartoonishly round shapes. Chong and Wong say they are proud to represent this side of the city.

"We are very influenced by hip-hop culture," explains Wong, a Costa Rican who has been based in Asia since 2009. "The b-boys [breakdancers], the DJs, the rappers all have their own way to create art, their way to create style, their way to compete. When we paint, we call it a jam, just like musicians."

It took time to turn their jam sessions into collectible toys, however. The two have regularly worked together on wall murals under their alias AAFK for the past decade, including taking part in festivals like HK Walls. They have also worked together in a formal setting, in the marketing and advertising department for Dracco, a Hong Kong-based Danish toy company.

'Bare' BareTime soft vinyl toys before each is handpainted by the artists behind Nativo

(Inset) MoeJoe is modelled after the Nativo founders' dog, Macho

(Opposite page) Much of the pricetag on this soft vinyl toy – known as G-Blaster EIA – comes down to the artistry and time required in handpainting



Their time at Dracco helped the couple develop a network as well as expertise in toy production. In 2020, they launched their own homegrown toy company, Nativo (which translates to 'native' in Portuguese and Spanish). Nativo's mission is to connect people through depicting their roots in toy form. Wong and Chong are proud to be viewed as pushing the Macao creative scene deeper into the city's collective consciousness.

They developed the first Macao-made 'blind boxes' – mystery packages with a surprise toy inside, a booming trend in the mainland – and sell them both locally and internationally. They're also keen collaborators and are part of what's best described as a long-distance, artistic tag team. Basically, there's a global network of artists who work on customised toy designs for each other, sending the finished products back and forth around the world.

"We believe that [the art toy scene] only grows if there's an exchange of creative ideas," says Chong. "You have these figures and then everybody composes their story on top of it. That interaction is

what is the most interesting. How are you going to tell your story with this canvas?"

In 2021, the couple organised Macao's first international toy exhibition through their spinoff brand, Toy Academy – a venture they are developing to support creators, exchange culture and knowledge, and educate people about designer toys. Due to the city's Covid-19 restrictions at the time, offshore designers weren't able to attend the exhibition in person. But toymakers from as far away as Costa Rica, Argentina, Colombia and Scotland still shipped their offerings to Macao to be part of the event.

Ultimately, Chong and Wong hope to position Macao as a hub for the global art toy industry – both as a creative centre and shopping destination. More projects and events are on the horizon.

"We do these things to educate our customers, to plant some seeds," says Wong. "We want to see if we can kick start something here and make people feel like, 'Wow, if these guys can do it, we can do it, too.' And if there's someone who can do it better than us, that's even better." ●

HISTORY

The history keepers

Can you truly understand a place without knowing its past? Meet the people keeping Macao's fascinating history alive.

A photograph taken in the 1970s by Lei Chiu Vang depicts the Macao-Gongbei Barrier Gate, which has gone through many changes over the past decades

Text **Gilbert Humphrey**

It's no secret that Macao is a fast-evolving city. Less than 20 years ago, for instance, one of its most visited areas – the 5.2-square-kilometre Cotai – didn't even exist. Nor did any of its towering integrated resorts. But with development comes casualties. A lot of structures that generations of Macao people grew up taking for granted have vanished. The Macau Power Station in Areia Preta. Taipa's landmark cotton mill, with its distinctive sawtooth roof. The iconic seafront Hotel Caravela, on Avenida da República.

Conservation is becoming more and more important to the city. Fortunately, a sizable swathe of Macao Peninsula's historic architecture is protected by its UNESCO World Heritage status. But what about the structures that are already lost, and all the memories associated with them?

This is the question Macao's creatives and curators are working hard to answer. In different ways, these people are the city's self-appointed history keepers.



HO TAI ON: BEARING WITNESS

Over seven decades, the antique shop owner Ho Tai On has watched his hometown transform from sleepy fishing village into a vibrant resort city. In 2005, he felt compelled to start documenting the city's changing face.

Ho does this through turning old photographs of Macao into postcard series and books. The 73-year-old's first book, *The Past and Present of the Inner Harbour*, was published in 2007. Sponsored by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the book is a guide to historical trails around what was once the city's fabled main port.

Over the years, Ho has broadened his postcard project to include black and white photos

he takes himself using his Canon cameras. "I use black and white to give a sense of ancientness," he says. "Because the pictures I take now, in the future, will be considered the past."

Ho sells the postcards at his own small shop, Fu Kei, in Beco dos Fai tiões in the Inner Harbour – along with antiques and vintage Macao memorabilia. Each set of postcards is more than a simple record of what's been lost. Rather, the images depict how changes throughout history have shaped 2023 Macao.

Nam Van Lake, the Macau Grand Prix, local schools, and the now-defunct Yat Yuen Canidrome have their own sets. So does the Workers' Stadium, which used to be where the Grand Lisboa is

today. It's been relocated near the Macao-Zhuhai Border Gate.

Many subjects of Ho's postcards have disappeared completely. The rose-coloured Hotel Caravela started off as prominent Macanese businessman Bernardino de Senna Fernandes' personal home, then got converted into a popular hotel in the 1950s. It was demolished in 1979.

"Photography makes it easy to understand history through visualisation," Ho says. "If you are a local here, having lived and grown up here, there is no reason to not know and explore the history and the culture behind this city." He likes to think both locals and tourists can use his work to explore Macao's streets and their storied context.

Old photos of the Macau Grand Prix (left to right), Workers' Stadium and the long-gone Hotel Caravela are among the images turned into postcards now sold at, Fu Kei, in Beco dos Fai tiões in the Inner Harbour

(Opposite page) Ho Tai On documents Macao's changes by capturing them in photos before turning them into postcards for locals and tourists to learn more about the city's history



All images on this spread courtesy of YiiMa

The YiiMa artistic duo, Chan Hin Io (left) and Ung Vai Meng, have collaborated for years to create various artworks depicting the missing links between Macao's past, present and future, some of which were showcased at the 2022 Venice Biennale in Italy

(Opposite page) YiiMa's art pieces are currently displayed in an exhibition at the Tap Seac Gallery until 21 May

YIIMA: AN ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PAST

YiiMa is the collective name of a local artistic duo, Ung Vai Meng and Chan Hin Io. Both share Ho's view that people in Macao should know the city's past.

The pair have collaborated for years to create art in the form of photography, videos, sculptures, literature and performance art pieces – all depicting missing links between Macao's past, present and future. YiiMa means 'the twins' in Mandarin and refers to how close the two men have grown as they've worked alongside each other.

Sixty-five-year-old Ung is a Macao-born painter and conceptual artist who's held high-level roles at the Macao Museum of Art (MAM) and the Cultural Affairs Bureau. Chan is a photographer who was born in Zhongshan, in the mainland, in 1964, and moved to Macao in the '90s. He's always been interested in photography, and became passionate about documenting his adopted home's evolution with his camera.

Since 2009, Chan has published more than 10 photography books on Macao. He's also held solo exhibitions in Australia and Europe. His photos can be found at MAM,



the Macao Foundation, the Archives of Macao and Lisbon's Belém Culture Centre.

The men's work was featured at the 2022 Venice Biennale, in Italy, and is currently on display at the Tap Seac Gallery in Tap Seac Square. That exhibition, titled "Allegory of Dreams: On the Way to the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia" will be at Tap Seac until 21 May and offers a glimpse of Macao's hidden corners and fading memories.

One photo from the project shows an alley near the YiiMa art studio. In the 19th century, this was a market for human labourers – Chinese people who were shipped

off to various parts of the world to dig for gold. "These people imagined there'd be, like, a mountain of gold," says Ung. "When they got to those places, their working conditions were not as they imagined. They were treated cruelly and many of them even died."

Macao's labour trade lasted until 1874. Destinations included San Francisco and Los Angeles in the United States, as well as Melbourne in Australia.

Another part of Ung and Chan's project involved photographing the interiors of local family's homes. "We chose different families and studied their stories," Ung explains. "So, through the exhibitions, people can understand what happened in Macao."

“

Museums work as a storage for our memories. As more and more things disappear over time, our memories will fade. No memory means no history.

– Lúcia Lemos

LÚCIA LEMOS: MACAO NEEDS MEMORY STORAGE

Those structural losers are one reason Creative Macau founder Lúcia Lemos believes the city needs more dedicated places preserving Macao's unique history. “Many people want to know the history of Macao, and it's a city that thinks memories are important – so we need to have places to keep those memories,” the 68-year-old says. “Museums work as a storage for our memories. As more and more things disappear over time, our memories will fade. No memory means no history.”

Macao already has several good museums and exhibition venues, of course, including the newly opened Iec Long Firecracker Factory. The Cultural Affairs Bureau has transformed the long-abandoned industrial site into a museum showcasing one of Macao's major industries of the 20th century.

There's also the Macao Museum, near the Ruins of St Paul's, offering

many views of Macao's history. But Lemos wants more. “For example, we should have a museum of photography that can store old photographs of Macao,” she says.

Lemos moved to Macao from Portugal in 1982, with her Macanese husband and baby daughter. The city was not as metropolitan as it is today. It was occupied mostly by the Chinese, Portuguese and Macanese, as well as some Filipinos – and people lived in small flats as opposed to the big residential buildings you see everywhere now. “We could hear conversations and the neighbours shouting from the other apartments,” Lemos recalls.

Creative Macau is a non-profit organisation helping creative industries become sustainable. Its current office is in the Macao Cultural Centre, in NAPE. When Lemos moved to Macao, the neighbourhood had not been built – it was an empty expanse of reclaimed land used for fairs and special events.



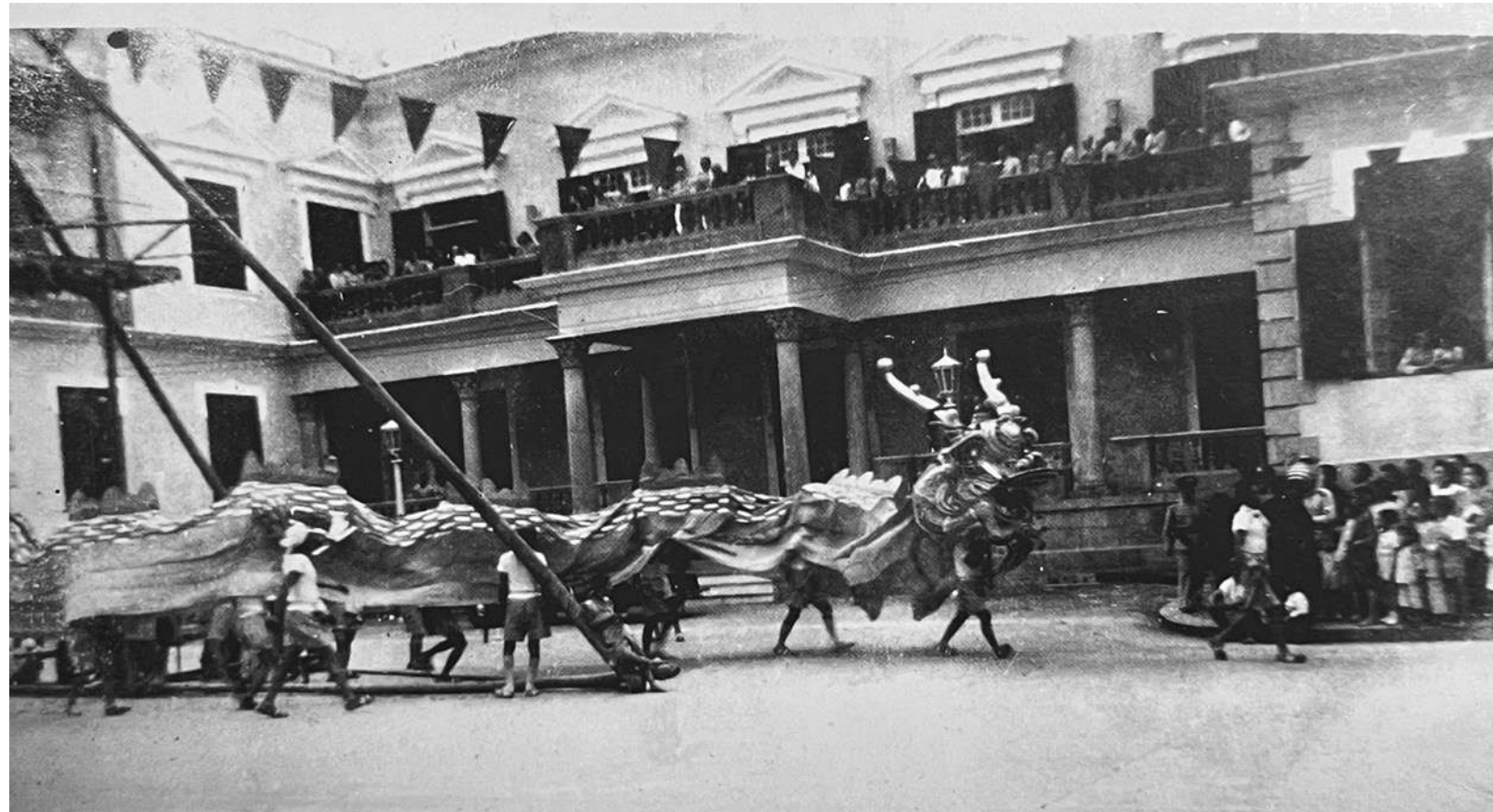
Courtesy of Creative Macau

Lúcia Lemos says Macao needs more museums to preserve fading memories of the city

“
The past is an
experience and
we can learn a
lot from it.

– Ung Vai Meng

These undated black and white images featured in Ho Tai On's postcards show a public gathering in Macao (below), the Government Headquarters (right) and the Avenida da República by Sai Van Lake during a typhoon



Lemos is now a mother to three adults and, in a way, the city grew alongside her family. She describes the process behind this growth as a “chaotic mess” that’s resulted in something great. Living conditions in Macao have improved as its economy has grown. Locals can afford to buy property and send their children to schools abroad.

“As people travel more, they become more open to working with others and less afraid of new things,” Lemos says. After 1999, there were more subsidies available for children, the elderly, health, education, and the arts.



“The government nowadays gives millions to art and cultural projects. They didn’t have that kind of money before,” Lemos underlines.

Ho, Lemos, Chan and Ung all agree that Macao’s history must be cherished, and feel – in their own ways – a responsibility to get the past chronicled for younger generations.

“The past is an experience and we can learn a lot from it,” says Ung. “We try to reconstruct those memories. Even if the actual memories don’t exist anymore, at least they exist in images.” ●

PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

From the ashes

Wildlife is returning to the Gorongosa Park – a celebrated jewel in Mozambique – after decades of philanthropic and government efforts. Will tourists follow?

Text **Amanda Saxton**

Vasco Galante was 6 years old when he first heard about Gorongosa National Park. He was at the cinema, in a small city near the centre of Portugal. It was 1962.

Before the main feature, the theatre played a short promotional documentary about Mozambique. Galante watched glamorous European tourists alight from tiny planes to go tooling about the savanna. Around them, exotic animals frolicked across what was then a veritable Eden.

“All those lions, hippos and zebras made a big impression on me,” Galante says. “I told myself, ‘One day, I have to come to Africa to see this life.’”



(Inset) As a child, Vasco Galante dreamed of visiting the park

The lush valley of Gorongosa National Park remains green even during the dry season



J da Silva

Animals like impala and buffalo manage plant life while also serving as food for predator species

For several decades, Portugal was involved in an armed conflict with the Mozambique Liberation Front. One-by-one, Galante's older cousins turned 18 – and were conscripted to fight in the colony. He expected to follow them, a very different trip than the splendid safari he'd envisioned as a child. Then Mozambique's War of Independence ended in 1974, just short of his 18th birthday. Galante remembers his cousins returning home “with scars”.

“I was born in '56. The guys born in '55 had to fight. I was very lucky.”

The Republic of Mozambique emerged from more than four and

a half centuries under Portuguese rule only to quickly fall into an even bloodier civil war that lasted until 1992.

Galante, meanwhile, went on to have a highly successful career managing companies across Europe. In 2005, however, he realised he was on a fast track to burnout. To escape the rat race, Galante decided to travel to Mozambique where he volunteered at a local university. Naturally, he also planned to visit Gorongosa. But he hadn't realised how badly the Portuguese colony's first national park had been devastated by hunters, poachers and neglect. When he



Clive Dreyer

arrived, there were just rusted traps and war relics. Galante was aghast.

Back in Maputo, the coastal capital, he met an American philanthropist named Greg Carr. Carr was on a mission to revive all 3,770 square kilometres of Gorongosa, and spoke intoxicatingly about reintroducing animals, support for local farmers, scientific discoveries, and building schools. Galante was impressed and intrigued; he was also sceptical. Such plans would take massive amounts of money and heroic levels of commitment, while Mozambique was (and remains) one of the poorest

countries in the world. “The thing was, at that point I wasn't aware who Greg Carr actually is,” says Galante. “As it turned out, he has plenty of money and commitment.”

By the end of 2005, Galante was Gorongosa National Park's director of communications – the same job he diligently performs today. Sixty-three-year-old Carr is the president of the Gorongosa Restoration Project, which manages the park and its myriad of humanitarian initiatives. The project is a partnership between Carr's eponymous foundation and the Mozambique government.

A 2022 survey counted 620 elephants within Gorongosa

(Opposite page) American philanthropist Greg Carr takes a hands-on approach to his work funding the park

Back in the 1990s, Carr was a tech entrepreneur making his fortune developing and selling voice-mail services. But that’s not how he defines himself. “Technology is not actually an enormous part of my life,” Carr insists. “I started a computer company at 26, but by 32, I was pretty much finished with that.” Rather, he sees himself as a man shaped by a childhood in rugged Idaho – where he’d be out exploring the state’s vast tracts of wilderness at every opportunity – who studied history, then earned a master’s in public policy. His somewhat unlikely stint as a tech

tycoon officially ended in 1998, with Carr’s decision to devote both himself and his gains to philanthropy. His first forays into this new field included funding the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard, his alma mater, and co-founding a museum in his hometown, Idaho Falls. But Carr wanted to be a hands-on benefactor, and sought a long-term project to throw heart and soul into. At the same time, Mozambique’s then-president Joaquim Chissano wanted to bring Gorongosa National Park back to life and tourists back to Gorongosa. The two men – one



Courtesy of Vasco Galante



Jean Paul Vermeulen

with an expensive dream, one with millions of dollars – met in 2004, when Chissano invited Carr to Mozambique. They were kindred spirits who understood conservation and human development as inextricably linked. Their shared vision went beyond a nature reserve to attract tourists; they saw Gorongosa National Park as a way to support local communities and vice versa. Carr has split his time between the US and Mozambique ever since. “I think it was natural for me to fall in love with Gorongosa,” he says. “There are similarities with Idaho [which contains part of Yellowstone National Park], in that it’s a place where people need to work with nature to earn their living. I know first-hand how an intact ecosystem can provide a healthy life and economic opportunities for people. I’ve always seen [humans and nature] as integrated, not opposing.”



The park has a footprint more than three times the size of Hong Kong

“I mean, I do love being out on safari. I love seeing elephants. I love seeing birds flying low over the water at sunset. Those are very magical experiences. But even more magical for me is seeing, you know, children in school with opportunities. I think the human side of all of this is what really touched my heart.”

Located in the heart of Mozambique, Gorongosa National Park has a footprint more than three times the size of Hong Kong. Most of the park is located in the southern tip of the Great Rift Valley, with the namesake Mount Gorongosa towering over the relatively flat surrounds. Unlike the Serengeti and

Masai Mara, animals in Gorongosa remain year-round, the rainier climate of the valley ensuring they have good grazing even during the dry season.

A 1972 aerial survey counted about 2,200 elephants, 200 lions, 3,500 hippos and 3,000 zebras, 14,000 buffalo and throngs more animals living there.

Carr found something very different when he first visited the park decades later. “You’d be lucky to see one warthog,” he recalls. While the ecosystem’s physical elements were in place – grass, trees, rivers and a lake – it needed animals to function properly.



Courtesy of Gorongosa's Pangolin Rehabilitation Centre

“If you don't have the herbivores eating the grass, the grass is not healthy,” explains Carr. “And if you don't have herbivores, then you don't have carnivores. And if you don't have hippos in the water, the water doesn't have the right chemistry. Because hippos go out at night and eat grass and then they use the river as their bathroom, bringing nutrients into the water. Which sustains fish and insects. And if you don't have fish and insects in your river, then you won't have birds in your trees.”

The first step towards rebooting Gorongosa’s ecosystem was to make it safe for animals. The project hired hundreds of rangers to defend it against poachers. Tens of thousands of traps and wire snares were removed. The next step was to import herbivores. Between 2006 and 2008, 85 buffalo, 180 wildebeest, six elephants and five hippopotamuses were reintroduced to the park. They mainly came from South Africa, travelling thousands of kilometres by truck.

Locals are lending a hand in conservation, turning over endangered pangolins to the park's Pangolin Rehabilitation Centre

(Opposite page) Recent surveys of Gorongosa's animal population show births and deaths at healthy rates



Larissa Sousa

(Opposite page) New coffee plantations are employing locals while helping to reforest the park's namesake, Mount Gorongosa

Animal reintroduction is a “pretty complicated” process, admits Carr. Just getting permission to transport what are often endangered species across international borders is no mean feat. African buffalo, for example, are not docile cattle and balk at the prospect of climbing into an enclosed space. “Buffalo might actually kill each other on the way up,” Carr says. “And zebras [reintroduced in 2013] are remarkably feisty.”

In 2011, the first lot of carnivores arrived: four cheetahs, also from South Africa. Wild dogs, leopards and hyenas followed. Lions, much to everyone's delight, reintroduced themselves as numbers of their natural prey grew. The 2022 aerial survey noted 620 elephants, 964 hippos, 41 zebras and 1,465 buffalo – still a far cry from Gorongosa's heyday, but proof that the park's inhabitants are reproducing and dying at healthy rates. The day after speaking with *Macao* magazine, the park obtained eight jackals.

As new animals adjust to the park, Gorongosa's human communities – subsistence farmers in the 10-kilometre-wide strip of land surrounding the park, called the Buffer Zone – are adjusting to the animals. It's a

challenge. Thirty-two-year-old Larissa Sousa, the park's spokeswoman, puts it starkly: “Mozambicans didn't have access to the park in its early days. Wait. Let me rephrase that. *Black* Mozambicans didn't have access. In the 1960s, only white people could enjoy the famous paradise that Gorongosa was.”

These are some of the attitudes the Gorongosa Restoration Project is working to transform. “It's a step-by-step process to turn communities into stewards for these conservation efforts,” says Sousa, noting that the Buffer Zone got its name through being the first line of defence against poachers (a growing issue now that animal numbers are rising). “At the start, a lot of people referred to Gorongosa as ‘your park’ [as in, management's], because they didn't see how being involved could benefit them. So, we are doing a lot to help them understand that Gorongosa is for every Mozambican and that everyone actually owns this park. If they help protect it, tourists will come. And 20 percent of the park's profits go directly to local communities.”

One sign their efforts are working is that Buffer Zone residents have started handing over critically endangered pangolins to Gorongosa's Pangolin Rehabilitation Centre. In other words, acting as partners in protecting the park's precious wildlife; these spaniel-sized animals are the most trafficked mammal on earth due to their scales' perceived medicinal value.

Without locals on board, the park couldn't operate. Without the park, local poverty would be all the more intractable. Alongside its health and education initiatives, the park is one of the biggest employers in Sofala Province. The Gorongosa Restoration Project has also launched new industries, like coffee production. Coffee plantations provide a new income stream for more than 800 local farmers, while playing a major role in reforesting Mount Gorongosa.

Girls Club is another example of the park's people-centred conservation. It's Sousa's baby; she's led the extracurricular programme since its official launch in 2017. Broadly, Girls Club exists to empower girls by keeping them in school, and out of early marriages.



All images on this spread courtesy of Larissa Sousa

Courtesy of Larissa Sousa



Girls Clubs throughout the Buffer Zone encourage girls' education and sports

Education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty as it enables girls to earn money throughout their lives.

There are currently 92 Girls Clubs, with 40 girls each. While boys are encouraged to play sports like soccer, girls are expected to spend their time helping out around the home. This is something Girls Club has changed – though Sousa acknowledges it wasn't easy. No one came to watch the first girls-only soccer tournament she organised: "The dads were all like, 'No! Girls cannot wear shorts!'" she recalls. So, she convinced a handful of community leaders to show up. With them on board, wary fathers followed. Now Sousa describes the enthusiastic support for girls' matches as "one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen."

Opportunities for Mozambican women and girls is a very personal subject for Sousa. Having grown up in a Mozambican family that

valued education above all else, she knows what it feels like to have the world as her oyster. "Wonderful" is how she describes it. Sousa's parents worked hard, long hours to send her to an English-language international high school in Chimoio, her hometown. Her dad was employed by a Finnish company, and one of his colleagues helped cover the costs of her university studies in Finland.

After five years studying and working in Europe, Sousa returned to Mozambique. She met Carr while working on her master's thesis – and he asked whether she'd be interested in running Gorongosa's Girls Club. Sousa said yes. "Mozambique has been independent for 40 years now, but people are still living in very basic conditions," she says. "I saw this as an opportunity to help make sure there is change."

In theory, tourism helps fund the changes Gorongosa National Park is implementing. There's plenty of accommodation, from budget campsites to a luxury lodge, and activities galore. Aside from wildlife safaris, visitors can climb Mount Gorongosa, cross a river to the Buffer Zone and kick balls around with local kids, or observe the scientists based at the main Chitengo camp (where Sousa, Galante, and Carr also stay when on-site) who study everything from live elephants to ancient fossils. Beyond the park, Mozambique boasts idyllic beaches, delicious cuisine and a hospitable culture. Galante compares the country's

charms to Thailand's, which welcomed nearly 40 million tourists in 2019.

National Geographic and *Condé Nast Traveller* both endorsed Gorongosa as a 'must-do' experience in recent years. According to World Bank data, Mozambique welcomed just over 2 million visitors in 2019. Galante says this figure is misleading, however, as the majority arrive for non-tourism reasons. Regardless, just a few thousand people visit Gorongosa in a good year.

He believes Gorongosa will need philanthropic help for a long time yet; something the Carr Foundation is fully on board with. Galante is proud to contribute, too. For him, there's a patriotic element to the work. "Portugal made many mistakes, of course, during colonial times," Galante says. "But the Gorongosa National Park was one of the greatest things they ever did – not just for biodiversity, but because it has become a social development engine for the region." ●

The introduction of prey animals naturally drew lions back to the park

Jeff Trollip



ZOOM

Annual Catholic procession returns

Macao's Catholics honour Jesus's suffering with a tradition dating back centuries.

One half of the procession complete, the statue of Jesus Christ leaves the Sé Cathedral for St Augustine's Church





Text **Gonalo C sar de S **

- ① Bishop Stephen Lee Bun-sang leads the procession, carrying with him a relic of the True Cross
- ② The procession crosses Leal Senado Square on its return journey to St Augustine's Church
- ③ Young Catholic girls, dressed all in white, scatter flower petals along the procession route

In February, after a three-year hiatus, thousands of Catholics once again marked the first weekend of Lent by marching between St Augustine's Church to the Cathedral of the Nativity of Our Lady (commonly known as the S  Cathedral). The annual Procession of the Passion of Our Lord, the God Jesus sees a statue of Christ carrying a cross through the city's streets over two days.

En route, worshippers trace the 14 Stations of the Cross. These depict poignant moments Jesus experienced before his crucifixion, as described in the Bible. The Macao Public Security Police Force Band accompanied the

devotees while playing a solemn march. Bishop Stephen Lee Bun-sang, appointed head of the Diocese of Macao in 2016, led the procession alongside fellow members of the clergy. The holy men wore purple gowns, as purple is the colour of Lent – a 40-day period beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday, where the Catholic faithful focus on Jesus's suffering before celebrating his resurrection.

Listed as part of Macao's Intangible Heritage, the Passion of Our Lord, the God Jesus was instituted by Augustinian friars in 1708. The event was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, 2021 and 2022. ●



④



⑤

- ④ A young woman takes on the role of Veronica, who used her veil to wipe the sweat from Jesus's brow as he carried the cross
- ⑤ The solemn procession passes St Dominic's Church
- ⑥ At each Station of the Cross, 'Veronica' sings 'O Vos Omnes' and presents her veil, now emblazoned with the face of Christ
- ⑦ Catholics turn out in the thousands to see the procession wend its way through the historic centre of Macao



⑥



⑦



João Monteiro

⑧ The statue passes Dom Pedro V Theatre as it departs St Augustine's Church for the Sé Cathedral, where it will remain overnight

Learn how the **Permanent Secretariat of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao)** uses Macao as a platform by visiting their website: forumchinaplp.org.mo



藝無界
Art Boundless
Arte Sem Limites

塵光

方力鈞個展

The Light of Dust

A Luz Poeirenta

FANG LILUN

Organized by:  澳門特別行政區政府文化局
INSTITUTO CULTURAL do Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau

Supporters:  澳門藝術博物館
MUSEU DE ARTE DA UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU

 广东美术馆
GUANGDONG MUSEUM OF ART

 國立故宮博物院
NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

Academic Support:  ACAC

MACAO MUSEUM OF ART Avenida Xian Xing Hai, Macao

Exhibition Opening Hours: 10am – 7pm (last entry at 6:30pm). Closed on Mondays and open on public holidays. Free admission

Tel: (853) 8791 9814 Fax: (853) 2875 1317 Website: www.MAM.gov.mo E-mail: MAM@icm.gov.mo



 澳門文化局 IC  澳門藝術博物館 Macao Museum of Art

藝博館
MAM **04/03 - 11/06/2023**