

Macao

澳門

2024 MACAO INTERNATIONAL PARADE

A celebration of culture and unity

**TDM AT 40:
CONNECTING MACAO TO THE
GBA AND BEYOND**

**ARTFUL RAMEN CREATIONS
AT CULINARY GEM**





Macao 澳門

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COVER IMAGE

The 2024 Macao International Parade, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Macao SAR, featured 1,800 performers from local and international groups. Spectators watched as participants, vying for various awards, marched through Macao's streets. The event, supported by cultural and tourism bodies, included a carnival and concluded with evening shows at Sai Van Lake Square. Photo by Cultural Affairs Bureau

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A milestone for the Macau bridge

The northern and southern sections of Macao's widest bridge met last month. Engineering work now shifts to its deck, wind barriers and electrical system in preparation for its opening this year.

Text **Christian Ritter** and **Gonçalo César de Sá**

A milestone in Macao's infrastructure was achieved last month, as the northern and southern halves of a new bridge finally became a whole. The structure is the fourth bridge connecting Macao Peninsula with Taipa since the first opened in the mid-1970s.

Construction is set to be finished towards the end of this year – after more than four

years' of work – and the bridge should be fully operational shortly afterwards, according to the Public Works Bureau (DSOP). The bureau noted that connecting the two sides marked an "important and phased milestone" for the project.

With its main 3.1-kilometre-long skeleton in place, the focus is now on adding wind barriers and electrical systems, along with taking measures to protect the structure against corrosion and water damage. The government

has said that the bridge's wind protection barriers will enable it to remain open to traffic even during Typhoon Signal No. 8.

The fourth bridge will reduce traffic pressures for people driving between Taipa and Macao. Most importantly, it will serve the future needs of residents living in the yet-to-be-built Zone A housing development (near the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge's customs border). The southern side of the bridge is located in Zone E, which also hasn't been developed yet, near the Taipa Ferry Terminal and airport. Zone A is expected to house around 100,000 residents by 2040.

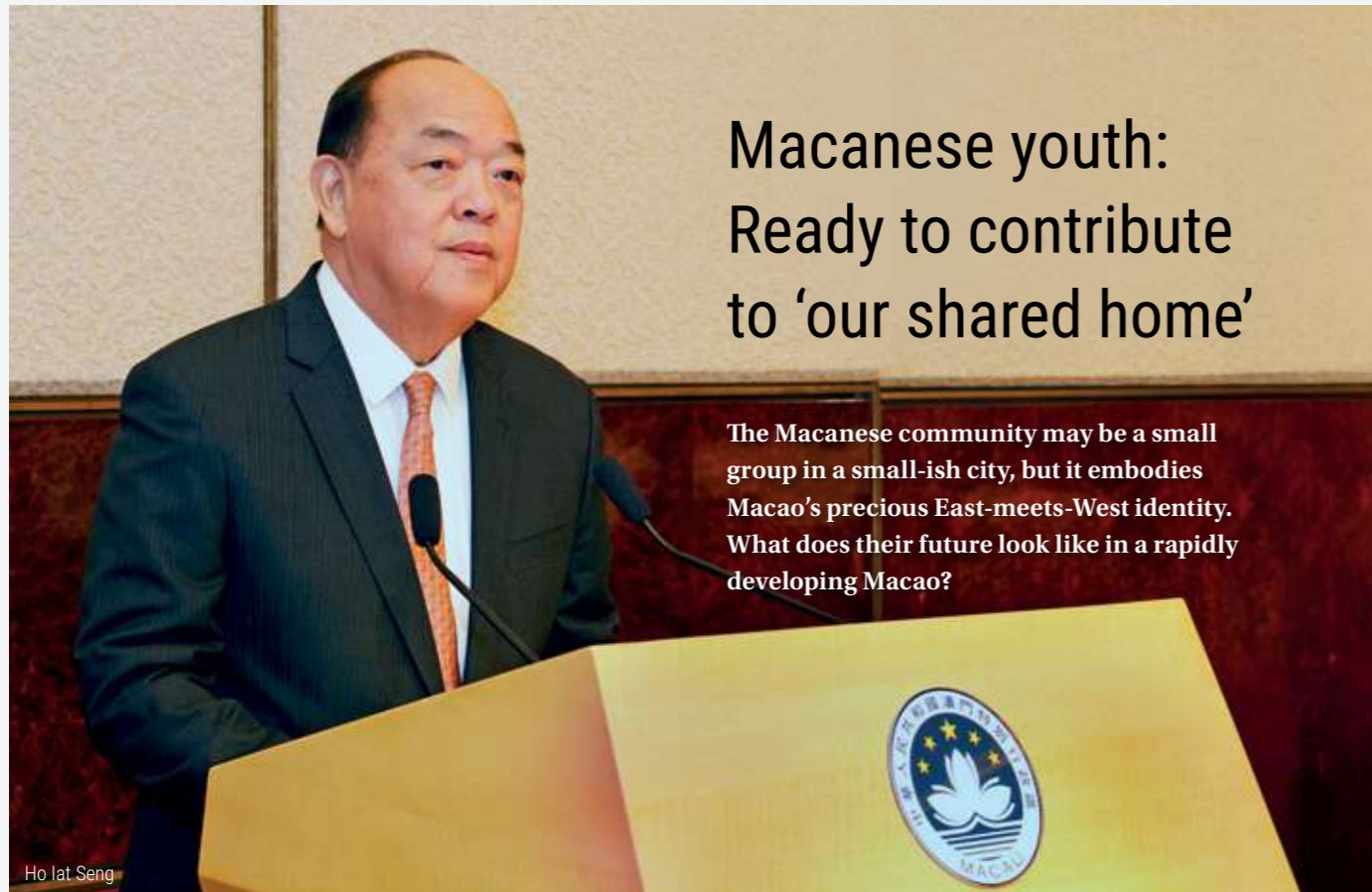
Macao's government engaged the public in the naming process of the bridge, initiating a competition in December. The competition received an impressive response from residents, with nearly 6,000 individuals submitting their proposed names. After consideration, the selection committee produced a list of five names that were shortlisted for further evaluation. Macau Bridge, New Urban Bridge, Kiang Hoi ('Mirror Sea' in Cantonese) Bridge, Silver Jubilee Bridge (as it will open the same

year Macao Special Administrative Region celebrates its 25th anniversary), and Hou Kong ('Oyster River' in Cantonese) Bridge. In late March, authorities decided to name the fourth bridge Macau Bridge.

The other three bridges are all located further west. The oldest, named Governador Nobre de Carvalho after a former Portuguese governor of Macao, opened in 1974 and is currently the only bridge used by pedestrians. The double-crested Amizade (or Friendship) Bridge opened two decades later, followed by the Sai Van Bridge in 2004. As of last year, the Sai Van Bridge has included the addition of Macao's Light Rapid Transit (LRT) Barra extension line.

While the Amizade Bridge remains the longest at 4.7 kilometres, the new bridge will be by far the widest. It's been designed to accommodate eight vehicular lanes – four in each direction – including two motor bikes-only lanes (one in each direction). Its deck will also have the capacity to support the likes of high-voltage electrical cables, gas and water pipes, and telecommunications cables. ●





Macanese youth: Ready to contribute to 'our shared home'

The Macanese community may be a small group in a small-ish city, but it embodies Macao's precious East-meets-West identity. What does their future look like in a rapidly developing Macao?

Ho Iat Seng

Text **Gonçalo César de Sá**

Leaders in Macao's Macanese community are grappling with two questions: What role do Macanese people play in the territory's future, and is their Macanese identity relevant in modern Macao? Earlier this year, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng helped the group – whose unique fusion culture dates back more than 400 years – find clarity.

Ho met with representatives from the Macanese community in late January. There, he recognised Macanese people as an "integral part" of Macao society and urged them to seize hold of opportunities arising as a multitude of economic diversification strategies unfurl over the coming years. He referenced the rapidly developing Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, and the revival of

Forum Macao – which will see its 10 member states meet this month.

Forum Macao positions the city as a platform for trade and exchange between China and nine Portuguese-speaking countries. Ho said he looked forward to seeing Macanese people capitalise on their language skills (many speak both Chinese and Portuguese) and culture to play a "pivotal" role in driving Sino-Lusophone relations forward.

Ho also encouraged initiatives from within the Macanese community that were geared towards keeping their culture alive. As well as being an intrinsic part of Macao's history, this culture – its unique cuisine, in particular – is a major tourism drawcard for the city.

At the gathering, the chief executive described Macao's economic recovery over the past year as testament to Macanese people's

resilience, strength and expertise – for which the leader offered his sincerest gratitude. Ho praised their "unflinching efforts" in sectors spanning education and law, the arts and hospitality.

"We were all born and grew up in this place, which makes Macao our shared home," he said. "The government will work with everyone to safeguard and develop our beautiful home and ensure its prosperity, stability and vitality."

Macao magazine has sought statements from three people active in the Macanese community. But before turning to them, we answer this question:

Who are the Macanese?

Macanese culture began emerging in 16th-century Macao, when early Portuguese settlers married into local Chinese families. Macanese people are descendants of these unions, though their rich ancestral tapestry is also interwoven with Malay, Japanese, English, Dutch and Indian influences.

A genetic potpourri has resulted in a uniquely Eurasian culture, cosmopolitan to

its core. Macanese dishes, for instance, were the world's first fusion cuisine. Fragrant with spices from Portuguese Africa and India, prepared using cooking techniques from Portugal and China, it's highly flavourful comfort food found nowhere else in the world.

In the past, many Macanese people spoke the creole language *Patuá* (along with Portuguese and/or Chinese). *Patuá*-language theatre (which was listed as an intangible heritage in 2017) and singing were once popular ways for the largely Catholic community to express itself and socialise. Other hallmarks of the culture are visible in Macao's architecture and folk festivals; both merge Chinese and Portuguese elements.

But the community's vibrancy has faded over the past few decades, as Macao has transitioned from being a Portuguese-administered city to a special administrative region of China. Many Macanese moved overseas, while others assimilated into the increasingly Chinese mainstream. Today, Macanese make up a tiny fraction of the territory's overall population. Their diaspora is bigger than the community still at home. And this is the context the community faces today.





Young Macanese want to work for a new Macao

António Monteiro, President of the Youth Macanese Association (AJM)

In Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng's meeting with leaders of the Macanese community, he said he hoped that the 'pulse' of the times will be grasped with determination – that Macanese would take full advantage of new development opportunities.

Young Macanese support the chief executive's words and believe in a promising future. There is a desire among the new generation for Macanese local associations to be called upon to contribute, at all levels and with professionalism. To demonstrate once again their central and important role in civil society.

The Macanese who are born and raised in Macao wish to support the initiatives

led by the chief executive in Macao and the Greater Bay Area. We also want to collaborate with our vast diaspora, spread across the world, who are well-positioned to promote Macao internationally.

Young Macanese are already involved in diverse sectors of Macao society. Culture, education, arts, sport, social services, communication, tourism, music, gastronomy, law, architecture, science and more. They are building on the previous generation of Macanese's work, those who played and still play an important role in Macao.

But our community is certain we can make an even stronger contribution today. We want to be called upon by the

government to actively participate with relevant tasks.

The idea that the Macanese community is limited to its famous gastronomy is wrong. Young Macanese want to participate in a civil society that recognises them as necessary talents in the development of Macao. To contribute to the diversification of Macao in all sectors. And they hope to be better heard and supported in their projects.

The community's innate cultural diversity and rich identity make its young people uniquely suited to growing relations between the People's Republic of China and Portuguese-speaking countries in Europe, South America, Asia and Africa. The chief executive has acknowledged this is an important role to play.

He also recognised our Macanese gastronomy, Patuá theatre and the vast inventory of intangible heritage that the Macanese community embodies in Macao. This is another area where the Macanese can participate both directly and indirectly. As is the work involved in preserving and strengthening old neighbourhoods.

Creating and promoting new brands, events or celebrations; new music; participating in sport; working on testimonies and remembering old stories through bringing them to life in a modern era... this is the responsibility of all Macanese, especially the younger generations. We must participate in, and expose the community's values.

The Macanese community is confident in the words of Ho Iat Seng, who said that the government will work with everyone to defend our beautiful home, and ensure Macao's stable and prosperous development. Young Macanese are prepared for the future challenges of Macao.

We are all Macanese

Sérgio Perez, Audiovisual Creative/ Producer

It is with a positive, hopeful mindset that I listened to the words of the Chief Executive of the Macao SAR Ho Iat Seng. To put in context my own perspective of the future for the community, its challenges and hopes, I must first clarify my own stance towards two key concepts that are inherent to this opinion.

These concepts are "Maquista" and "Macanese".

I identify myself as a "Maquista", which is a term I personally embrace for my own identity and community, born from the secular exchange between China and Portugal. It is multicultural in its essence, yet restricted to those that are ethnically, and/or culturally Maquistas. Maquista is a word in Patuá, the traditional language of the Macanese, that the community uses to refer to itself.

Embracing this concept frees me to give a broader meaning to the word "Macanese". Macanese is a term I believe should unite us all in Macao. Irrespective whether we belong to any specific ethnic group or community, we should embrace a joint sense of belonging, of understanding, of respecting the multicultural, multi-ethnic aspects of the city and make it our home. This goes beyond the more official definition of "Macao Permanent Resident".

Looking into the future, I believe it is important for us to first understand ourselves as Macanese. Just like the "Shanghainese", "New Yorkers" and "Pak King Yan" (Beijingers) embrace their own identities. This local, joint sense of community is very important. The chief executive talks about this in his discourse: our "shared home" in Macao. For a shared home to exist, we need to unite as Macanese. Only with this mindset can we contribute to a stronger China.

To be Macanese means looking at history without prejudice. Looking at our fellow Macanese, with their own cultural or ethnic differences, and embracing them. Understanding that each one is not more, or less, than the other. This is what creates the beautiful uniqueness of Macao. That multicultural mindset that fascinates and attracts so many from the mainland – and from all over the world – to visit and exchange, to feel well received and to trust.

It is only by developing this sense of the Macanese concept that we can truly love Macao, and – inherently – the country, China. Macao is a special city of China. In my view, loving Macao means loving China. Beijing people love Beijing *and* love the country. So do Shanghainese,



Leonor Rosário

Fujianese, et cetera. Each of them, proud of their own city, their own region, proud of their culture, because it's what makes them stand out and relevant. That is that "special something" they can offer to the country.

As Macanese, we can then embrace the exciting developments of Hengqin, the opportunities of the Greater Bay Area. To contribute and be relevant. We can, I believe, play an important role in the development of our beautiful, diverse, multicultural and full-of-potential country, China.

I say these words as a Maquista who is fully Macanese at heart. My essence is multicultural and multiethnic. There is no other place I truly call home: my family have been here for more

than seven generations. I have my own language, or dialect, that was born from this multicultural society: Patuá. But it is disappearing to the point of being almost extinct. I only know about it because of my active participation in probably the only active theatre group keeping it alive. I have my own gastronomy: one of, if not the first, fusion cuisines in the world. I know it from eating, but not from cooking. I speak fluently Portuguese, Cantonese, English and even limited French and Spanish – yet regretfully my Mandarin is poor. At 44, as a father of two with an active professional life, it becomes almost impossible to learn. In my daily life, I naturally flow between the various local communities.

The future of my community – and this is my personal opinion – is deeply connected to our joint understanding of how important it is for us to be united as Macanese.

There can only be a future for the Maquista if the essence of Macao is preserved. If its history is looked upon without prejudice. If Macao's unique multicultural society and multiculturalism is viewed with a positive mindset. And where "we" is the norm, not "us and them".

Macao, I believe, is a place built on love. True, Macao's history is not only of roses and rainbows. But the fact is, after so many centuries and against all odds, love prevailed. What better example of this is there than the Maquista community and its rich and unique culture? It is at the heart of a whole multicultural society where people of different origins, communities and ethnicities found themselves in this small corner of China. These people, I call them Macanese. It is with love, hope, and optimism that I look towards Macao's future. It's a future full of progress, of creating bridges, of joining hands with creativity, professionalism and excellence – of adding our unique voice to the future of China.

"Who could have imagined what today's Macao would look like?"

Ubaldo Sequeira Couto, Assistant Professor, Macao University of Tourism

Looking back over the past 25 years, Macao has gone from a small sleepy town to a tourism mecca of major integrated resorts, mega events and world-class award-winning restaurants. Who back then could have imagined what today's Macao would look like? Or what it will become as it continues to evolve?

The chief executive recently urged everyone in Macao to ride that wave of growth and transformation, but his key message to the Macanese community was clear: get involved. He reaffirmed the unique features of the Macanese, not only attesting to their history but also their role in promoting Macao and its future.

Macao is called a 'cultural Janus'. It embraces the East and West, the old and new simultaneously. The Macanese people are an essential component of that.

The "1+4" economic diversification strategy promises to breathe new air into Macao by incorporating and consolidating the city's four nascent industries with tourism to create the World Centre of Tourism and Leisure. In addition, Macao is to be a platform between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries for trade and cultural exchange. Not only do these ventures require immense financial investment, but their demand for talent is profound. In this regard, the Macanese youth should cherish these possibilities by capitalising new initiatives.

For example, aspiring entrepreneurs may look into the different support and incentives available in Hengqin for young people to establish businesses, such as rental reductions and bonuses. There are also many initiatives available, such as incubators, competitions and entrepreneurial programmes offering expert guidance and monetary prizes. Of course, it would bring more meaning if these business ideas and startups are related to the Macanese culture.

Another pursuit to consider is the conservation of Macanese culture. There are quite a few dedicated associations already, and they very much welcome new members – particularly those who are young and enthusiastic. More and more people are making the Macanese culture a focus of their work, particularly in the area of creative arts. These range from theatre

groups to academic events to cooking competitions; from community events to major festivals in Macao. These events are organised and supported by the wider community, including the government, which encourages us to embrace our history and heritage.

As an educator, I am very fortunate to be able to help young people (Macanese or not) partake in many of the initiatives set forth by the government. I also conduct research into Macanese culture and identity to help us better understand our past in preparation for co-creating Macao's vibrant future.

He extended his invitation to the Macanese community to contribute and participate in the development of this future. I am very much embracing the opportunities; this is how I am involved. How about you? ●



Image courtesy of Ubaldo Sequeira Couto



澳門廣播電視股份有限公司
TDM - TELEDIFUSÃO DE MACAU, S. A.



SOCIAL AFFAIRS

TDM today: 40 years of Macao's public broadcaster

In this Q&A, TDM Chairman António José de Freitas reflects on where the TV and radio broadcaster is now – and the factors shaping its future.

Text **Gonçalo César de Sá**
Photos **Lei Heong Ieong**

Macao's first television company, Teledifusão de Macau (TDM) celebrates the 40th anniversary of its first TV broadcast this year. Since then, the public broadcaster has absorbed two radio stations and offers five free-to-air television channels – the main ones being the Chinese-language TDM-Ou Mun and the Portuguese Canal Macau. Its radio stations are the Chinese-language Ou Mun Tin Toi and Rádio Macau, in Portuguese.

TDM also offers some programming in English, on its Portuguese-language channels, and has a dedicated English version of its news website and an App.

Macao magazine recently interviewed the chairman of TDM's board, António José de Freitas, to discuss new partnerships, how the company helps Macao position itself as a Sino-Lusophone platform, and the importance of credible public broadcasting in a world awash with 'fake news'.

First of all, how big is TDM's audience and how many people does it employ?

About 70 percent of Macao residents (more than 422,400 people) watch TDM's television stations, according to our third-party audience survey from 2023. Approximately 30 percent of residents (more than 179,700 people) listen to Rádio Macau. Both figures show we have significantly bigger audiences in Macao than other local and neighbouring stations.

Feedback in general is that TDM's television and radio channels are residents' main source of important information, and we are recognised for our accuracy and timeliness.

As of February 2024, TDM had 632 staff in total: 132 of them work for the Chinese-language TV news and 28 work on Chinese radio news; 38 worked for the Portuguese TV news station and 14 for Rádio Macau. The others in behind-the-scenes roles, related to production, finance, communications and the like.

TDM OVER THE YEARS provided by TDM

- 1980** ○ **Ou Mun Tin Toi (Chinese Channel) was officially launched**
Ou Mun Tin Toi (Chinese Channel) was officially launched, broadcasting in Portuguese (FM) and Cantonese (AM) respectively
- 1983** ○ **Teledifusão de Macao was established**
Teledifusão de Macao was founded in 1983 to broadcast radio programmes in Portuguese and Cantonese. The Chinese channel broadcast 18 hours a day from 6 am to midnight
- 1984** ○ **Launch of TDM TV channel in Chinese and Portuguese**
In May, TDM TV channel was launched. On the same channel at separate time slots, it broadcast news and programmes in Chinese and Portuguese, and also major events such as the Macao Grand Prix
- 1985** ○ **Ou Mun Tin Toi extended to FM stereo broadcasting**
In addition to AM broadcasting, Ou Mun Tin Toi developed FM stereo broadcasting in 1985
24-hour broadcast
Ou Mun Tin Toi began to serve the public with 24-hour broadcasting service
- 1990** ○ **Opening of TDM office in the Nam Kwong Building**
The TDM office in Nam Kwong Building began operations in 1990. Since then TDM Chinese and Portuguese radio and related technical and engineering departments have been operating there, providing 24-hour broadcasting services to the public
- 1999** ○ **Application of NICAM**
The use of NICAM technology provides a two-track sound option to enrich the audio experience of programmes, especially for sports events
- 2000** ○ **Launch of TDM's official website**
TDM's official website first launched in 2000. It provided 24-hour news and information, and also live webcasts and replays of its TV and radio channels
- 2003** ○ **The 1st TDM - Best of the Pop music awards**
To encourage the development of Macao's original pop music, TDM produced the 1st TDM - Best of the Pop music awards. The awarding ceremony took place on 31 July, with the first "Best of the Pop Golden Award" going to Filipe António da Silva Baptista Tou for his song "Montage"

2004 ○ **Organising PBI Annual Conference**

TDM hosted the PBI Annual Conference in October. Attended by representatives of public service broadcasters from nearly 30 countries and regions, the meeting discussed the roles and challenges of public service broadcasters, the use of resources, and the development of digital broadcasting technology

2008 ○ **Establishing Forum 2 studio**

TDM's recording studio located in Forum 2 opened in 2008. With 650 square metres of floor area and a total capacity of 341 viewer seats, the studio became an important milestone in Macao's television industry, allowing the production of a wider range of programmes that accept audience participation

The 84th ABU Administrative Council Meeting
TDM hosted the 84th Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Administrative Council Meeting. Attended by members from various countries and regions, the meeting reviewed administrative matters of ABU and discussed future development plans

2009 ○ **Completion of digital television broadcasting development plan**

TDM marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR with the launch of Ou Mun-Macao satellite TV channel, followed by TDM Sport and TDM Life (now known as TDM Info) in October. Together with the three existing digital terrestrial TV channels namely TDM Ou Mun, Canal Macao and TDM HD (now known as TDM Entertainment), TDM completed its digital TV broadcasting development plan in 2009. Through operating six TV channels, TDM serves the public with a wider range of audiovisual choices

CCTV News being broadcast in Macao on an independent TV channel
TDM and CCTV (currently known as CMG) have established a cooperation agreement that allowed, as of 1 October 2009, the channel to transmit CCTV News (CCTV-13) on an independent TV channel. Local citizens could now have faster access to information about the mainland and the international communities

Hosting Asian Media Summit 2009 in Macao
TDM organised the 6th Asia Media Summit in May, more than 400 representatives from the Asia-Pacific region, Africa, Europe, and the US were invited to exchange ideas on media development. It was the first time the summit was held outside of Malaysia

Image courtesy of TDM

**What is TDM's involvement in the Greater Bay Area?**

TDM pays close attention to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). We have long relationships with TV and radio stations in Guangdong Province, spanning news and current affairs, in-depth programming and joint productions.

Last October, TDM received approval from the National Radio and TV Administration to launch its TDM Ou Mun TV channel in the Pearl River Delta. Soon, a whole new audience will be able to watch our channel 24 hours a day, seven days a week, inclusive of news and current affairs, live events, programs and so on.

This channel aims to promote diversified development of Macao to the people in Guangdong Province and to keep Macao people in the province continuously updated. I strongly believe TDM Ou Mun could be the bridge between Guangdong and Macao, as it works to increase understanding between different cities within the Greater Bay Area.

In 2025, the National Games of China are taking place across the GBA. TDM looks forward to working with TV stations in Guangdong and Hong Kong to showcase the beauty of games.

And in the broader mainland?

As for the broader mainland, TDM has a wide range of partnerships with the likes of CCTV (China Central Television) and its parent, China Media Group (CMG). We carry some CCTV channels in Macao, helping people in Macao keep up to speed with the latest developments in our motherland. We have also been granted very good CCTV programmes, like Aerial China – Macau.

In recent years, TDM has been granted broadcasting rights for some mega sporting events. This year, CMG has granted TDM rights for the 2024 Paris Olympics – including three quotas for TDM staff to make programmes on the events in France, in person.

How are things progressing in Hengqin?

We are very pleased to say that TDM got approval from the All-China Journalists Association to open a newsroom and news studio in Hengqin this past January (trial operations kicked off in August 2023).

The facility allows TDM journalists to write stories, edit videos, conduct interviews and even broadcast live – making the working process in Hengqin more efficient and effective. In turn, this development lets our audience better understand the development going on in Hengqin and the GBA.

Tell us about your recent collaborations with media in Portuguese-speaking countries.

In September 2023, TDM invited representatives from public service TV stations in Portuguese-speaking countries including Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé to come to Macao for a 'Programme Exhibition Week'. This event resulted in new partnership agreements being signed.

Since then, we have received more than 60 hours of TV programming produced by stations in Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde and Mozambique – some of which have already aired. Many of these programmes reflect the culture, music, literature and wildlife of Portuguese-speaking countries.

In return, we have sent them more than 12 hours of our own Portuguese-language programming to broadcast to their audiences.

2010 ○ **Transmission of CCTV News and Hunan TV World**
TDM signed the cooperation agreements with CCTV (currently known as CMG) and Hunan Television, under which TDM would transmit CCTV News (now known as CGTN) and Hunan TV World channels respectively on two independent TV channels.

The transmission would provide the public with more diversified information and facilitate the dissemination of news

Organised the 9th AIBD General Conference

TDM organised the 36th Annual Gathering, and the 9th Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development General Conference & Associated Meetings. The July meetings attracted more than 70 members and leaders from Asia-Pacific broadcasting organisations joined the serial discussions, seminars and forums to exchange ideas on the development of television broadcasting in the region

2011 ○ **The first live current affairs programme Macao Forum**

Aiming to promote the social development of Macao, TDM launched the first live current affairs TV programme *Macao Forum*. According to the topic of each episode, related government officials, experts, and academics were invited to discuss and interact with the public in open sessions

Transmitting Haixia Satellite Channel

From April, Haixia Satellite Channel began to broadcast through TDM on an independent channel, helping the public to understand news and information about Fujian Province, its social situation, history and culture, and to satisfy Fujian residents' concern for their hometown

TDM began to transmit CGTN-Documentary

Starting from November, TDM began to broadcast CCTV English Documentary Channel (currently known as CGTN-Documentary), providing information on the mainland's culture, ways of life, and social conditions. It also helps to strengthen the connection with the motherland and broaden the vision of the audiences

2012 ○ **Launching a new version of TDM official website**

A new version of TDM Chinese website was launched in April, providing the audience a better experience in viewing news, TV/radio lives, programme replays, TDM updates and programme information, etc

Launch of TDM Facebook and Weibo pages
To provide more comprehensive and interactive communication platforms, TDM launched its Facebook and Weibo pages

2013 ○ **Launch of TDM App and TDM WeChat account**

In August, TDM launched the TDM App and TDM WeChat account, providing a more comprehensive experience for users

2014 ○ TDM being awarded the Medal of Merit - Culture

In recognition of TDM's contribution to promote Macao's communication and cultural industry, and also of TDM's effort over the past 30 years, TDM was awarded the Medal of Cultural - Culture by the Macao SAR government in 2014

Hosting ABU General Assembly

TDM hosted the 51st Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) General Assembly in October. About 600 leaders, experts, and academics from the Asia-Pacific broadcasting industry came to Macao to attend the meeting and discuss the development of the industry in various conferences and forums. Two major events, the ABU TV Song Festival and the ABU Prizes, were successfully held under the arrangement of TDM

The 30th Anniversary Gala Show of TV Broadcasting

TDM produced a special gala show to celebrate the 30th anniversary of TV Broadcasting in Macao, inviting local groups and talents from seven TV stations in the mainland and Taiwan to participate, bringing high quality and unique performances to the audience

2015 ○ Extension of programmes and information to public transport broadcasting platforms

In May, TDM started to collaborate with public transportation companies (TCM and Nova Era). Through screens installed on buses, selected programmes are broadcast in Chinese, Portuguese and English. TDM also provides selected programmes to Turbojet, which are displayed on screens installed onboard the ships on routes between Macao and Hong Kong

2016 ○ Broadcasting of CCTV- 1

TV channel CCTV-1 began broadcasting in Macao on the anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR. TDM provided technical support for the transmission of the channel, providing the public with more options and information about the mainland's development

The full switch to HD encoding format for TV channels

In July, TDM upgraded all its six TV channels to the high-definition (HD) encoding format, offering better visual quality to the audiences

Ou Mun - Macao Satellite TV Channel launched in Japan

The satellite television channel Ou Mun - Macao was successfully launched in Japan, providing visitors and citizens in Japan with access to TDM news, information and programmes through two major residential and hotel television networks

Aside from that, how is TDM helping Macao perform as a Sino-Lusophone platform?

Over the past few years, we have used Canal Macau to showcase an increasing number of programmes reflecting China's broader development. We believe the investment made in translating the mainland's TV programs into Portuguese is starting to pay off as these high-quality documentaries give Portuguese-language viewers a better understanding of the nation's development - economically, technologically, socially and culturally.

TDM has also been adding Portuguese subtitles to CCTV programmes and sending them to TV stations in Portuguese-speaking countries. This is so their audiences can understand more about the mainland. In 2023, we did this with the six-episode documentary *Remarkable Constructions*, and we will do similar things in 2024.

In addition, Canal Macau has started broadcasting a weekly news bulletin about the African Portuguese-speaking countries. This program is produced by Portugal's public broadcaster, Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP) and its wide network of local correspondents across the lusophone countries in Africa. The bulletin is tailor-made to meet the needs of TDM's audience.

RTP had a fundamental role in setting up TV broadcasts in Macao 40 years ago. It has been a core institutional partner for TDM and played a huge role in TDM's operations. On the other hand, RTP, being a public service broadcaster, is very much aligned with the TDM's core values of integrity, impartiality and fairness.

In terms of entertainment, we have bought TV programmes also from SIC and TVI, which are two commercial broadcasters based in Portugal.

2018 ○ Radio channel available on digital TV channel Channel 97

Since February, Ou Mun Tin Toi and Rádio Macao have been simulcast on digital TV channel Channel 97. Live video functions were also added to radio programmes, strengthening the integrated functions for radio and television, and providing more platforms for the public to enjoy TDM TV and radio programmes

2019 ○ TDM hosted the 107th ABU Administrative Council Meeting

TDM hosted the 107th Administrative Council Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), inviting leading representatives of the region's media organisations to discuss ABU's core tasks, including the development plan, finance, administration, and the secretary general's report

The 35th Anniversary of TV Broadcast in Macao Gala Show

To celebrate the 35th Anniversary of TV Broadcast in Macao, TDM held a large-scale gala show in May, showcasing a variety of great performances and TDM's professionalism in producing large-scale programme

Founding of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Broadcasting Alliance

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Broadcasting Alliance was inaugurated in Guangzhou, comprising 21 GBA broadcasting media. Being elected as the vice-chairman, TDM would help to further deepen the cooperation among other members, facilitate the output of each other, and promote the cultural development of the Greater Bay Area

TDM broadcast "High Ground Evacuation Warning Signal during Storm Surge"

Starting from August, TDM cooperates with Civil Protection Action Center to broadcast *High Ground Evacuation Warning Signal during Storm Surge* on TV, radio and multimedia platforms. The arrangement will enhance the efficiency in announcing vital life-saving messages, allowing the public and tourists to take fast actions for safety and reduce property loss

CCTV Sports began to broadcast in Macao

China Media Group (formerly known as CCTV) authorised its television channel CCTV Sports (CCTV-5) to be broadcast through TDM in Macao in December

2020 ○ Launch of Telegram and YouTube channels

In 2020, TDM launched the TDM News Telegram channel and TDM YouTube channel

Image courtesy of TDM



2021 **Authorised to broadcast live the Olympics and 100th Anniversary programmes of the CCP**

In July, the China Media Group (CMG) launched the screening event of a series of CMG's programmes themed on the centenary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); at the same time, an agreement was also signed under which TDM was granted the broadcasting right of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, allowing Macao audiences to enjoy CMG's live coverage of Olympic events in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Portuguese.

Authorised to broadcast live the 14th National Games
CMG has authorised TDM to broadcast in Macao the 14th National Games, the 11th National Games for People with Disabilities and the 8th Special Olympics. Via TDM TV channels and its multimedia platforms, Macao audience can watch all the competitions, opening, closing ceremonies and medal ceremonies live.

Completion of revamp project of TDM multimedia platforms

To provide the audience with a better experience and enhance the integration of TDM's TV, radio and new media platforms, TDM revamped its multimedia platforms, which officially began to serve the public in the fourth quarter of 2021.

China Media Group authorised TDM to broadcast a new round of mega sport events

In November, CMG and TDM signed an agreement for a new round of the Games Broadcasting Rights in Guangzhou, under which TDM is authorised to broadcast CMG's signals of the Olympic Games channel (CCTV-16) during the Beijing Winter Olympics and the Chengdu World University Summer Games.

2022 **Continuous support to broadcast CCTV-5 in Macao**

The Launching Ceremony of New Co-operation between the Macao SAR Government and China Media Group was held on August 15. CMG and TDM renewed their cooperation agreement, through which CCTV-5 sports channel will continue to be broadcasted in Macao with TDM's technical support, transmitting high-quality sports events to local audiences. In view of the epidemic situation, the agreement was signed online.

Promoting Chinese programs to Portuguese-speaking countries

Along with the second phase of the cooperation - "Portuguese Translation and Promotion of Chinese Programs" being launched in September, Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC in Macao SAR and TDM jointly organised in September the "Offering Ceremony of Documentaries on Chinese Culture - Joint Cultural Cooperation between the Media in China and the Portuguese Speaking Countries". Three series of Chinese cultural documentaries, which were translated into Portuguese by TDM, were presented in the ceremony to TV stations of Portuguese-speaking countries, allowing China and Portuguese-speaking countries to reach a deeper level of exchange and cooperation.



Rádio Macau also has a long history of producing programmes that highlight the music scene from Portuguese-speaking countries. These programmes range from pure music to interview formats. We have also been live broadcasting all the shows as part of Festival da Lusofonia, which is one of the highlights of our radio activities.

How is TDM adapting to challenges in the new, digitalised media landscape?

Due to rapidly changing audience behaviour and the rise of smart devices, traditional media does encounter challenges from so-called new media every day. To stay engaged with our audiences, TDM has made a lot of effort to improve our TV and radio content – as well as

adapt much of our content to digital media platforms.

We have our official website and the TDM app, which were both reworked in 2021. Of course, TDM also uses WeChat, Weibo, Facebook, YouTube and so on to extend our services' reach.

What role do you see TDM playing in Macao over the next five years?

Due to efforts by both the government and society, Macao's economy is bouncing back from the pandemic very quickly. The number of tourists climbed to over 28 million in 2023. Their numbers will continue to climb as we position ourselves as a 'City of Sports' and 'City of Performing Arts'. And for sure TDM will be there, contributing our services to the development of Macao.

On a more serious note, many people get much of their information from social media these days. But when a critical situation strikes – say, a typhoon hits Macao – what's often fake news on these platforms can be very confusing. That's why TDM believes that, as a public broadcaster with credibility, our professional newsroom is crucial for the stability of society. It's a role of increasing importance. ●



Image courtesy of TDM

2023 **New round of cooperation between China Media Group and Macao**

In March, the Spring Blossoms in Time – China Media Group's Excellent Programme Screening in Macao and Media Rights Licensing Ceremony was held in Beijing, in which a number of quality programmes about the spirit of the 20th National Congress were presented by CMG to Macao, and will be broadcast through the various TDM TV channels. An agreement was also signed in the ceremony, with which CMG granted TDM the rights of broadcasting the Hangzhou Asian Games and the Paris Olympic Games in Macao, allowing Macao audiences to enjoy these sports events for free.

TDM signs co-operation agreements with TV stations from Portuguese-speaking countries to deepen exchanges

In September, TDM signed a series of cooperation agreements with five television stations from Portuguese-speaking countries. The cooperation agreements mainly involved the exchange of news and information, technical training, etc., with the aim of promoting the exchange of knowledge and technologies by integrating the resources of both parties.

TDM Ou Mun channel broadcasts in the Pearl River Delta Region

In October, TDM officially launched in the Pearl River Delta region, reaching a population of more than 100 million and marking the beginning of a new era in the development of Macao's broadcasting industry. Audiences of the Guangdong Broadcasting and Television Network can all the way watch TDM Ou Mun for news, live broadcasts of spectacular events, diversified programmes and advertising information, as well as all the programmes of TDM Ou Mun channel 24 hours a day via GOODO app (谷豆TV app).

The Ceremony for the Documentary Series *Extraordinary Construction* to the Television Stations in Portuguese-speaking Countries was successfully held

In November, Building a Modern World Together by Spreading the Craftsman's Spirit - a ceremony on which the documentary series *Extraordinary Construction* (Season 1) was successfully presented to TV stations of Portuguese-speaking countries. The documentary programmes were granted to Portuguese-speaking countries by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC in Macao SAR, and translated into Portuguese, sent to the Portuguese broadcasters by TDM. The broadcast of the programmes in Portuguese-speaking countries will allow the citizens to learn more about China's efforts for high-quality development.

TDM and CTBM have completed their merger

TDM and Macao Basic Television Channels Limited (CTBM) completed their merger in December. Since then, TDM has been responsible for maintaining CTBM's operations by providing services to residents who receive the basic tv channels, which include a total of 45 digital tv channels and 29 analogue tv channels.

2024 **TDM's Hengqin Newsroom opens**

TDM's Hengqin Newsroom officially opened in January with the support of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Macao SAR Government, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR, and of the Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. With Hengqin as its base, facing the In-depth Cooperation Zone and the Greater Bay Area, the establishment of the newsroom promotes the exchange of information between Hengqin and Macao, and further helps the city integrate into the GBA and the overall development of the country.

TOURISM

My Macao: Travel tips from local insiders

From the prettiest views in the city to the easiest way to get hold of Lord Stow's famous egg tarts, these insider tips will help any traveller make the most out of a trip to Macao.

Text Sara Santos Silva

At a time when authenticity is a top priority for travellers, it feels harder than ever to find. Especially in a new destination, where venturing off the beaten track can seem risky. But cookie-cutter experiences and identical photographs to those already snapped by millions of others do not leave one with a sense of discovery – that thrill of having gotten under a city's skin.

This is where insider tips prove invaluable. While it is definitely worth visiting landmarks like the Ruins of St Paul's and A-Ma Temple, you can figure those things out for yourself. This *Macao* magazine's insiders' guide is for people looking to dive a little deeper into this surprising and rich-with-history city.

The guide includes culinary highlights (learn how to avoid long queues when buying the city's most famous pastry) and explains why locals like to pop into one particular hospital even while feeling perfectly fine. It also shows you where to find the best views and truly unique photography opportunities, while offering a special treat for bibliophiles.

Here are six best-kept secrets when it comes to visiting Macao:



All images on this spread by Eric Tam



STEP INSIDE THE GUIA LIGHTHOUSE

Said to be the oldest operating lighthouse on China's coast, this distinctive white and yellow structure was built in the 1860s. Part of the Guia Fortress – one of Macao's UNESCO-listed heritage sites – the Guia Lighthouse has become a treasured symbol of the city.

Travellers who time their visit right can climb its narrow spiral staircase to emerge on a deck encircling the beacon, where a spectacular view incorporates both sea and city. Guia Lighthouse is only open to the public during weekends in July, though you can visit the rest of the fortress year-round.

The Guia Fortress dates back more than 200 years further than the lighthouse. The site includes the Guia Chapel and its elaborate frescoes, and is located at the peak of a park-like hill overlooking the Outer Harbour – a popular green space in Macao.

VISIT THE SENATE LIBRARY

The oldest library in Macao and housed within the former Leal Senado building, the Senate Library will charm any bibliophile. The two-room space is lined with ornate wooden bookcases and features mezzanine galleries – essentially adding a second storey of books.

The library's 20,000 volumes are published in English, Portuguese and Chinese; many of these books are rare or antique. Much of the collection was donated by prominent literary figures from throughout Macao's history, including the symbolist poet Camilo Pessanha.

The Senate Library was designed to resemble a small-scale version of the capacious, Rococo-style Mafra Palace Library, near Portugal's capital and has been hailed as one of the finest libraries in Asia. The Leal Senado building was constructed in 1784 to serve as Macao's first municipal chamber, a role it still carries to this day (as home to the territory's Municipal Affairs Bureau).

While public access was restricted in 2021 in an effort to preserve the library and its contents, anyone affiliated with a research or academic institute (from anywhere in the world) can arrange to visit via the Macao Public Library.



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Photo courtesy of Lord Stow's Bakery



Lei Heong leong



THE SECRET TO AVOIDING LONG QUEUES AT LORD STOW'S BAKERY

The egg tarts at Lord Stow's Bakery are a justly famous take on the Portuguese pastéis de nata, made with English custard. Featured in many guidebooks, their immense popularity has the unfortunate consequence of leading to long queues outside the bakery's original Coloane premises.

Locals know how to skip the line. There are, in fact, four Lord Stow's in seaside Coloane Village: the original bakery, Lord Stow's Café (facing the water), Lord Stow's Garden Café, with its distinctive blue façade and Lord Stow's Express, right next to the Garden Café. As its name suggests, the latter is the one to target when in a hurry – but very few people seem to know about it.

Lord Stow's Express is compact; just a counter and some bar stools. Sometimes it isn't even manned, though that's only for a few moments at a time. But it sells exactly the same hot-from-the-oven egg tarts as the original bakery, which customers can buy by the box-full and eat along the nearby waterfront promenade.

SOME OF THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHY SPOTS ARE IN THE CITY'S HIDDEN COURTYARDS

Macao's urban fabric has changed dramatically over the past 20 years, but more than a hundred distinctive *pátios* and *becos* still remain. These are the hidden courtyards and narrow alleyways known for housing generations of close-knit communities.

Their traditional buildings and village-like atmospheres hold a lot of charm, appealing to photographers seeking shots of authentic Macao life. You still see older residents relaxing, chatting, hanging their laundry or taking care of their potted plants in peaceful *pátios*, seemingly immune from the bustle just a street or two over. Most are located within the UNESCO-listed Historic Centre of Macao.

A good place to start exploring is Pátio do Espinho – you'll find it hidden down a narrow lane accessible through Rua de Dom Belchior Carneiro. Or head over to the auspiciously named Pátio da Eterna Felicidade ("Eternal Happiness Court"), very near St Anthony's Church.



António Sammarful

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Macao News



THE ABANDONED WEATHER OBSERVATORY BOASTS INCREDIBLE VIEWS

It's a bit of a hike to get to by Macao's relatively tame standards, but the now defunct weather observatory perched atop Penha Hill is worth exploring. While the old structure has been partially reclaimed by vegetation, its adjoining terrace offers sweeping views over the peninsula, Taipa and Hengqin island. The lonely-yet-lovely spot is an excellent place for watching fireworks, or the sunset.

You'll find it's a 15-minute walk uphill from the Chapel of Our Lady of Penha, a 17th-century church worth visiting in its own right. The candy-coloured Santa Sancha Palace is also nearby; this 1846 mansion is currently the official residence of the Macao government's chief executive. While in the neighbourhood – if hungry – a local Macanese favourite is Henry's Galley, recommended for its African Chicken dish.

CONDE DE SÃO JANUÁRIO HOSPITAL'S CAFETERIA BAKES THE BEST CAKES

There are few places in the world where locals would suggest a hospital bakery when asked where to find a decent slice of cake. But they do in Macao. São Januário Hospital's beloved sponge and marble cakes are said to beat all others when it comes to flavour and texture.

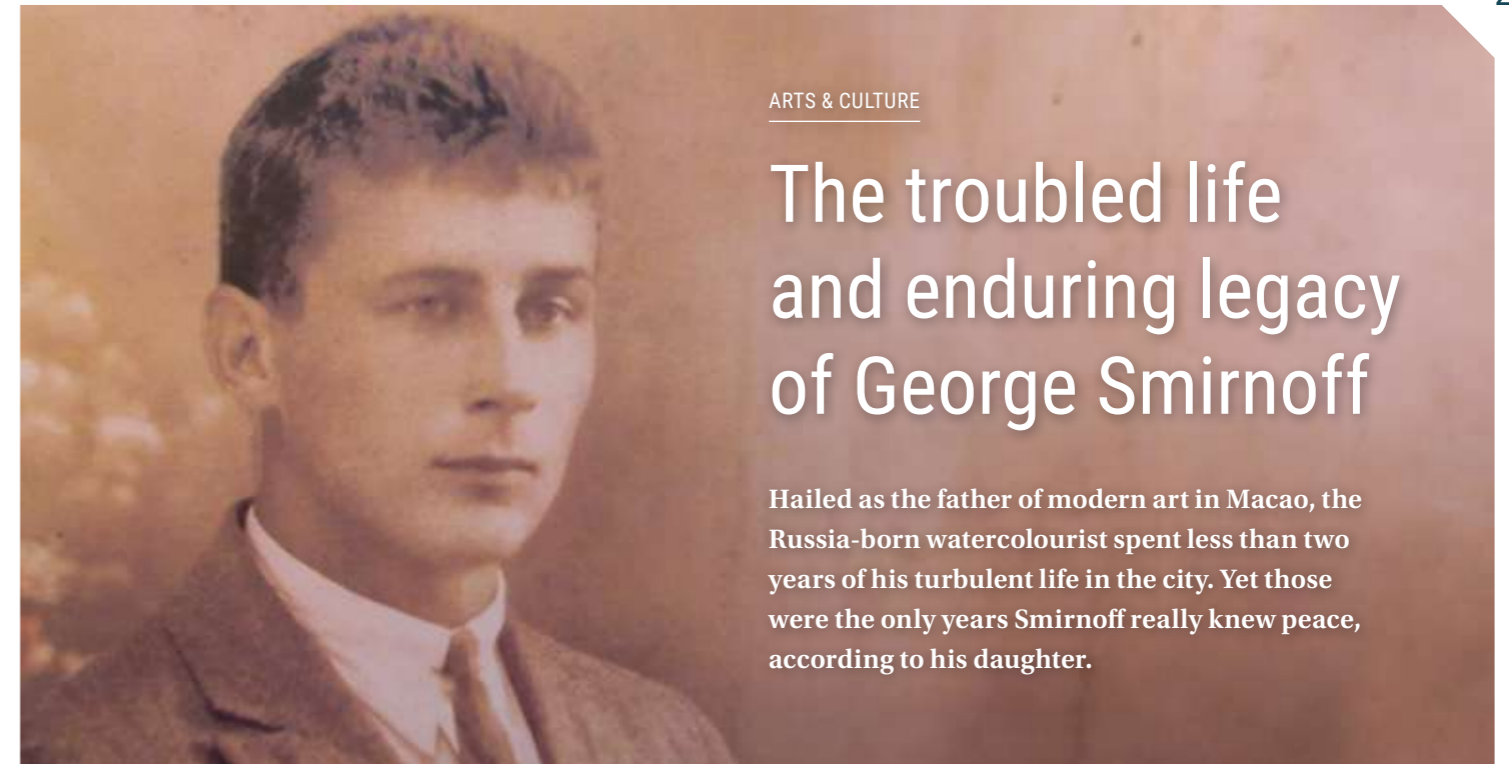
While this is a bonus for those recuperating from surgery or feeling under the weather, it is popular with the perfectly healthy, too. These cakes are always freshly baked and fluffy, with the right level of sweetness.

São Januário Hospital is located in the peninsula and its cakes can be purchased in the main lobby. ●



Macao News

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ARTS & CULTURE

The troubled life and enduring legacy of George Smirnoff

Hailed as the father of modern art in Macao, the Russia-born watercolourist spent less than two years of his turbulent life in the city. Yet those were the only years Smirnoff really knew peace, according to his daughter.

Text **Craig Sauers**

George Smirnoff in Harbin, China (circa 1935)

(Opposite page)
Gula Lighthouse (1945)
Watercolour

The painter and architect George Smirnoff first arrived in Macao in early 1944. By the end of 1945, he was gone. In that brief tenure, the Russian-born artist produced a celebrated series of watercolour paintings that captured the essence of everyday life in Macao – work that preserved a period of contrasts. As World War Two raged beyond the neutral city's borders, as neighbouring Hong Kong fell under the yoke of Imperial Japan, Smirnoff championed Macao's tranquillity. Its seascapes, churches, plazas and people.

Today, Smirnoff is hailed as a pioneer of modern art in Macao. His work is recognisable to many, having winged its way around the world in the form of postcards and postage stamps. Tiny representations of the city he was, perhaps, happiest in. But this ostensible success shrouds a troubled life. Despite his talent, the painter was often penniless, under duress or forced

to live as a refugee. Time and again, he had to uproot and relocate, from Russia to China, then Hong Kong and eventually Macao. He never put down roots; he never knew true financial security. Smirnoff died in Hong Kong, in 1947, before his 45th birthday.

While geopolitical turbulence seemed to dog him wherever he went, Smirnoff managed to find a window of peace in Macao. The quietude is reflected in his enduring artistic legacy.

AN ITINERANT LIFE

Born Yuri Vatilievitch Smirnoff in 1903, Smirnoff later went by 'George' (an anglicised version of Yuri). He grew up in Vladivostok, a bustling port on the Sea of Japan. In 1917, Smirnof and his mother left their homeland for neighbouring northern China, where they eventually settled in Harbin.



(Opposite page)
View of the ruins of São Paulo Church (1944)
Watercolour

Saint Tiago at Barra Fortress (1944)
Watercolour

The Russian language was widely spoken in the Manchurian city at that time, including at schools and universities. Smirnof himself was an excellent student and went on to study architecture at Harbin Polytechnical University. He married and had his first child, Irene, in Harbin. In early 1930s, Smirnof and his young family left to Qingdao on China's eastern coast. That's where Smirnof began building his career. He found work as an architect and drew plans for hundreds of residences. The work was largely seasonal. In the summer, when building demands were highest, he would draft architectural projects. The rest of the year, he would paint. Watercolours were his speciality and before long, people started buying his artwork.

IMPRISONED IN HONG KONG

As the Japanese Imperial Army marched south, Smirnof felt the need to up sticks yet again. This time the family relocated to Hong Kong. By the late 1930s, Smirnof was working as an architect in the city. He was employed by Marsman and Co., a mining company that contributed to Hong Kong's air raid precaution scheme through tunnel building. But Smirnof also joined the local artists' guild and helped to organise exhibitions.

Then, in 1941, Japan occupied Hong Kong. Later that same year, the artist was arrested for suspected espionage by the *Kempeitai*, military police unit within the Japanese Imperial Army.

While Smirnof was not found guilty of espionage, the police found bottles of bootlegged vodka in his home. That was enough of a crime to earn a stint in Hong Kong's Stanley Prison. Even without Smirnof's imprisonment, however, life for his family was hard in Hong Kong. The artist's daughter, Irene Smirnof-Garfinkle, recalled it as "a form of limbo" in the foreword to the Hong Kong-based historian Jason Wordie's 2013 book, *Macao*. Smirnof-Garfinkle passed away in late 2023 at the age of 88, in the US.

After Smirnof was released from prison under an amnesty agreement, American bombers destroyed the house his family had been living in. It was the final straw: "Macao was the only place we could go," wrote Smirnof-Garfinkle.

MAKING A MARK IN MACAO

She and her father were the first of their now five-member family to make the journey to Macao. Back then, the crossing took four hours by ferry. "We arrived in Macao with virtually nothing, except what little we could carry with us," Smirnof-Garfinkle recalled. Their first home in the then-Portuguese-administered city - which remained neutral throughout the war - was at the grand Bela Vista, one of Macao's first foreign-style hotels. Once a luxury property overlooking the Praia Grande, the Bela Vista had become a makeshift shelter for war refugees.





Lou Lim Ieoc Garden (1945)
Watercolour

(Opposite page)
*View from Hospital Conde
de São Januário – Museu
de Arte de Macau* (1945)
Watercolour

After Smirnov's wife, Nina, and two younger children arrived, the family moved into the top floor of a house in Pátio das Seis Casas – which still stands today, near the Mandarin's House. This was the start of a year-and-a-half chapter that Smirnov-Garfinkle described as “almost the only time in his life that my father was truly at peace with himself and his surroundings”.

“We had nothing of any material substance. But our family was intact, the people of Macao were wonderful to us and generously gave all kinds of help and support, and we had food on the table every day,” she said. “For once, after all our lives in China, war and disorder hadn't followed us.”

Relative peace didn't equate to an easy life, however. The influx of refugees meant jobs and everyday resources were scarce in Macao. Unable to find work as an architect, Smirnov made money teaching private art classes and designing theatre sets. In his free time, Smirnov-Garfinkle remembered her father roaming Macao extensively on foot, memorising the scenery. By night, he painted what he had seen. “If you matched what he painted to the real setting, it was almost like a photograph,” his daughter wrote.

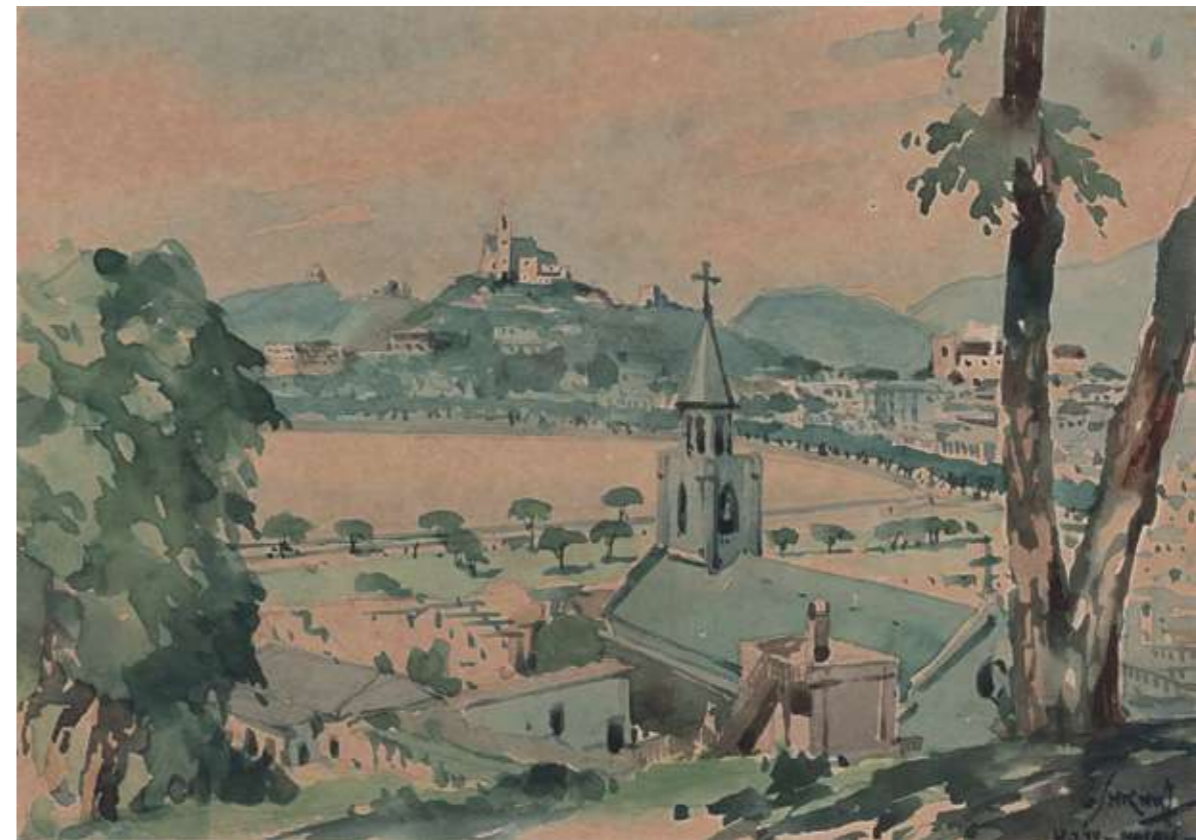
His skill and sensitivity as an artist eventually caught the attention of Dr Pedro José Lobo, a prominent political figure in Macao. Lobo commissioned Smirnov to produce a series of watercolours depicting Macao's urban landscapes – the aim of which was to create a permanent pictorial record of the city, according to Wordie's book.

The project yielded dozens of delicately daubed paintings that, today, evoke a sense of nostalgia for 1940s Macao. His artistic style leaned itself to capturing the crumbling facades of the city's splendid churches, yet he depicted its people and animals with sweetness, too. Smirnov's Macao series was considered a great success and, over the years, has featured on many postage stamps and postcards.

In 1945, Smirnov returned to Hong Kong to rejoin the Public Works Department. He took his own life just two years later. The artist was buried in Hong Kong's Happy Valley cemetery, an ironic resting place considering his tumultuous life.

Most of Smirnov's watercolour collection is now in storage at the Macao Museum of Art, as the original paintings are considered too fragile to be part of a permanent exhibition. Reproductions of his work are on display at Café Bela Vista, built in homage to the original hotel that Smirnov briefly lived in.

As a nod to Smirnov's lasting impact on the city, the Macao SAR government has produced a map that allows people to follow in the artist's footsteps. It includes places he painted, lived and worked. The map's text honours Smirnov as “the Father of Modern Art of Macao”. ●



FOOD AND DRINK

Humble premises, spectacular plating: Macao's hidden gem of a ramen shop

So close to the city's busiest tourist attraction and yet a tranquil world unto itself, chef Chio Chi Ngong's localised take on this Japanese classic is one of Macao's best-kept culinary secrets.

Text Kenny Fong
Photos Amanda Saxton

When it comes to ramen shops in Macao, A Chi is about as modest as they come. For starters, the eatery is tucked away at the end of an inner harbour alley called Travessa da Dorna. This means that while it's just a few hundred metres from the Ruins of St Paul's, the city's chief tourist attraction, only those venturing off the beaten track will chance upon it. The no-frills shop is also tiny, with just four small metal tables flanked by plastic stools. Even with the addition of a quaint dining shack directly across a paved plaza, A Chi is compact by most standards.

While A Chi's premises are humble, its spectacularly presented ramen dishes have been charming customers for almost 30 years. Here you'll find quality ingredients normally reserved for fine dining – think glossy red lobsters, crab roe and mantis shrimps – arranged into works of culinary art. The prettiest dish may be an abalone starter: four plump mollusks crowned with roe, nestled into mint-lined spoons and served atop a base that billows dry ice.

A Chi's prices are more in line with its structures than food, with a standard bowl of seafood ramen a bargain 45 patacas (US\$5.60). The signature 'half-lobster' option goes for 20 patacas more. Seafood is not all that's on the menu, incidentally. Noodle soups boasting Brazilian beef brisket, pork ribs and pork jowl are popular, too.

The mother-son team running A Chi is yet another drawcard. Chio Chi Ngong, 49, and his 80-year-old mum, Leong Wai Chan, tease each other as they dash between the kitchen, main restaurant and dining shack, regularly bursting into laughter. Estabelecimento de Comidas (Sopas de Fitas) A Chi – the eatery's full name, which means 'Food Establishment (Soup Noodles) A Chi' – has, on the whole, been a labour of love for the pair.

The sauce and soup base used in A Chi's ramen are all homemade

The mother-and-son team have been going strong for three decades

(Opposite page) Mantis shrimp ramen and lobster ramen are among the restaurant's most popular dishes



FROM WHEELS TO MEALS

The idea of opening up a ramen shop hadn't occurred to Chio when he purchased the property back in 1994. "When I bought it, I just wanted to park my motorcycles there," says the self-professed motorhead.

His mother, however, objected to the idea of "wasting" such a prime location on a garage. She urged her son to use it to open up their own eatery, an idea Chio had to admit made sense. He was a cook, after all, with experience working in hotel kitchens. So, he decided to follow his mum's advice and repurpose the space into a restaurant that she would be primarily in charge of.

In the early years, ramen was not on the menu. "Initially we sold wonton and beef brisket noodles," says Chio. But those dishes – the same items most food establishments ply – weren't gaining traction with customers. Chio realised he needed a way to stand out from the crowd. The budding restaurateur thus came up with an innovative noodle stir fry: lo mein with his own take on XO sauce (the spicy seafood condiment that originated in Hong Kong). A Chi's new dish turned out to be just the hit the eatery needed.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Chio kept exploring ways to make his menu shine. A fan of Japanese noodle soups himself, he began veering away from traditional Chinese cuisine to try his hand at ramen – a dish he also knew was popular with students in Macao.

This move did not please Chio's mum, who questioned the need to venture into foreign waters. But the results spoke for themselves: "After seeing that our customers were responsive to ramen, my mother stopped protesting... so, I guess that can be regarded as a sign of the dish's success," says Chio.

Before finalising his ramen recipe, Chio paid a visit to Japan to research what other chefs were doing. He ultimately opted for a localised path, however, and developed a unique broth incorporating Chinese herbs. Some ramen traditionalists disagree with his take on the dish, Chio acknowledges. But A Chi's many loyal customers are proof he landed on a recipe that resonates with Macao's palette.



Chio also brews unique beverages, the likes of pear and fig-infused herbal tea (a popular accompaniment to meals at A Chi). He uses rock sugar in his drinks, deliberately avoiding artificial sweeteners and preservatives. "We do it old-school here," he says. That old-school style is reflected in A Chi's general vibe. Portraits of Che Guevara, Marilyn Monroe and Elvis hang in the dining shack, while a classic rock radio station plays unobtrusively in the main eating area.

WEATHERING ROUGH TIMES

A Chi has overcome a number of challenges over the years, like the dramatic flash floods of 2017 (which arrived courtesy of Typhoon Hato). Low-lying areas of the Inner Harbour, including parts of Travessa da Dorna, saw flooding up to two metres high. Chio recalls his fridge floating all the way to the São Domingos Market, a journey of almost half a kilometre. "There were losses from Hato, but my business wasn't the only one in that boat," he notes, philosophically.



the space to store his motorbikes.

In the meantime, Chio's content to keep serving up lobster ramen to the community of customers who flock to his peaceful patio. He says he feels deeply connected to this local neighbourhood, where he's watched a whole generation come of age eating his food. "There's a group of children who have grown up eating here, and now they're bringing their own children to eat here - that really keeps the emotional bond strong," he says, beaming happily.

With just over a decade left on the clock, there might be just time to squeeze in a third generation of customers before Chio hangs up his apron for good. ●



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Despite being 80, Chio's mother still plays a very hands-on role in the restaurant

(Centre) Over the past decade, A Chi has seen an increase in the number of non-local diners

(Opposite page) Chio Chi Ngong's background as a hotel chef is evident from his professional plating techniques

Financial aid from the government in the wake of the cyclone helped tide A Chi over, Chio says. He's also grateful to the Government's Distinctive Shops Programme, aimed at safeguarding the city's cultural heritage through supporting local restaurants with unique traits. As a 'distinctive shop,' A Chi gets a marketing boost from the government.

The odd food influencer has endorsed A Chi's ramen, too. While Chio confesses he's never actually recognised any of them (he's not a social media man), the chef is always appreciative of their attention. Long queues tend to form outside the eatery after they post their experiences online.

COMING FULL CIRCLE

While Chio has been involved with A Chi since the very beginning, he didn't work there full time until 2013. At first, he spent his days cheffing at some of Macao's swankiest restaurants and his nights

preparing ingredients for his mum to use in the next day's meals at A Chi. It was Chio's time in hotels that saw him mastering fancy tricks like incorporating dry ice into his plating plans. It also took him outside of Macao for culinary competitions.

By 2013, Chio's mother was struggling to run A Chi on her own. She was around 70 years old by then, and wanted Chio by her side in the eatery. So, he quit the hotel industry and joined his beloved mum in Travessa da Dorna.

Chio doesn't plan to work as many years as she has. He says he already suffers from severe muscle strain due to the long-hours and physical toil involved in running the restaurant. Rather, he aims to retire at the comparatively young age of 60, in 11 years' time. Neither of Chio's two grown-up children want to take on the business, and he respects their choices to pursue their own careers. His kids have told him that, when retirement inevitably arrives, he should return to Plan A - and finally use



HISTORY

A staple in Macao medicine cabinets: Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil

The past six decades have seen this proudly local brand become a household staple. Poised for significant international expansion, multiple generations of Cheong Kun's family reflect on the medicine man's original goal: to improve the lives of Macao's seafarers.



The process of making Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil may be semi-automated nowadays, but the ingredients and high standard of production has remained unchanged



Text **Kenny Fong**
Photos **Lei Heong Ieong**

Cheong Kin Nang has seen his family's company grow from a small storehouse to two large factories in just two generations

(Opposite page) Safflower is just one of the 10 TCM ingredients that are used to make the medicinal oil

When a herbalist named Cheong Kun first launched his special pain-relieving oil back in the 1960s, he wasn't anticipating mass production. Or that his product would someday be popular in far-flung lands like Mozambique. According to his grandson, Cheong simply wanted to come up with an affordable way for Macao's seamen to treat their strains, sprains, cuts and bruises while out on the ocean.

And yet, almost 65 years later, the company bearing his name was honoured by Macao's government for its outstanding contributions to industry. Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil received a Medal of Merit in December of last year, a tribute to its status as a household staple across Macao.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AND A DESIRE TO DO GOOD

Born in 1921, in Guangdong Province, Cheong moved to Macao with his mother as a teen. The successful Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioner spent several years studying theory and pharmacology under a local expert, though he never received any formal training in the field. Before setting up his own clinic, however, Cheong pivoted into a different career – cooking meals aboard a cargo ship.

Ironically, this somewhat left-field decision eventually bounced him back onto the TCM track. Seafaring gave Cheong firsthand experience of how hard it was for people living aboard

boats for long periods of time to get medical treatment. He saw sailors at the mercy of injuries they sustained at sea, suffering terribly for lack of effective remedies. At the same time, to cope with the monotony of life at sea, Cheong kept pouring over books on Chinese herbs' medicinal properties and the ways in which they've been used to alleviate pain for millennia.

Cheong returned to solid land in 1950, to establish a humble shophouse clinic on the Inner Harbour street of Praia do Manduco. It was there he began formulating a medicinal oil that would – in theory – help stem bleeding, ease pain, heal burns and more. It took a lot of experimentation before Cheong declared himself satisfied with his product. The final recipe was made up of 10 ingredients, including papaya, safflower and peach kernel.

The medicine man's son, Cheong Kin Nang, remembers that experimental period well. "My father gave the product to friends and relatives to try out," the 66-year-old

tells *Macao* magazine. "Then the oil's effectiveness started getting out by word of mouth, so we began to package it more officially and entered the market."

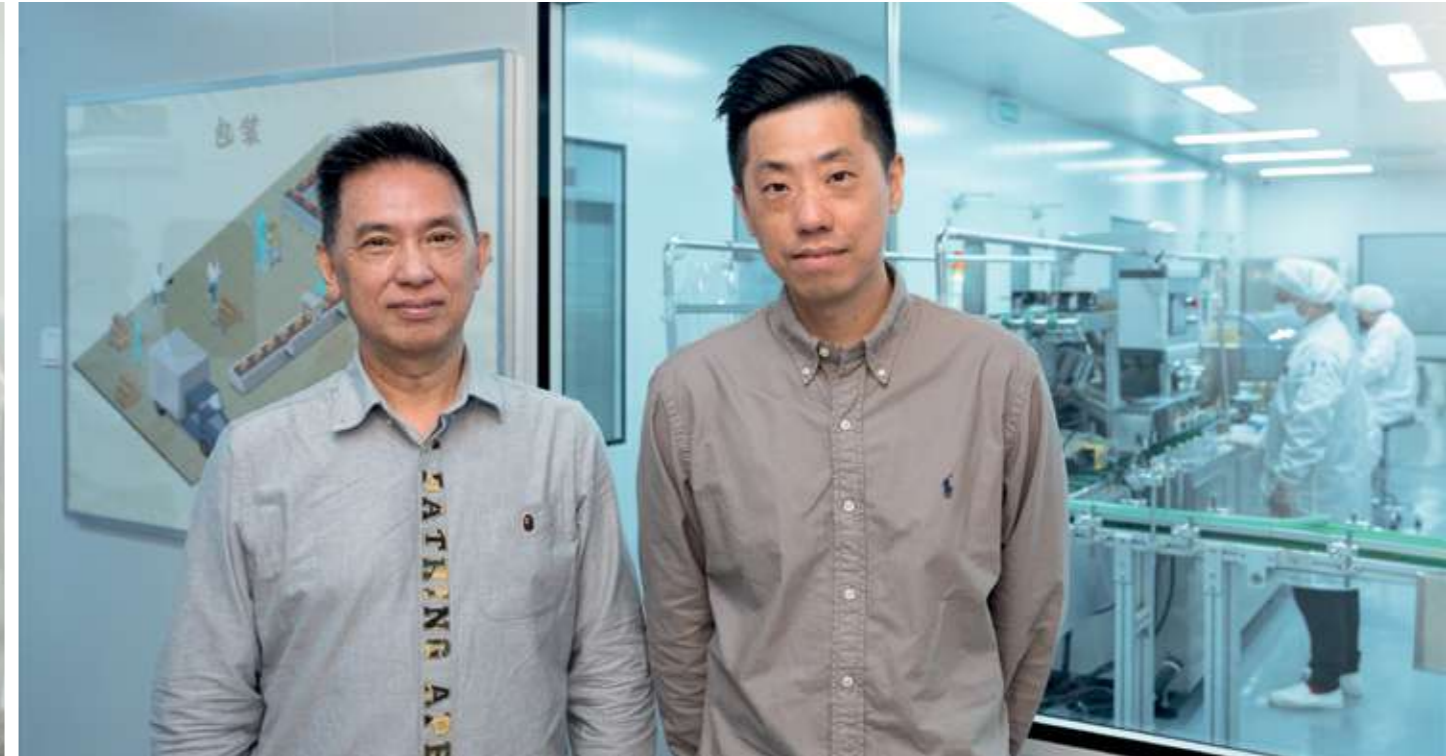
Woven throughout the pain reliever oil's history are stories of it coming to someone's aid in their time of need. The likes of a motorcyclist who collided with a car door that unexpectedly swung open as he rode past, the second-generation Cheong recalls. The man's neck had sustained a puncture wound and was bleeding profusely. "He already had a habit of using our pain reliever oil, but didn't have any in his motorbike... so, he immediately went to the nearest pharmacy to buy a bottle," Cheong says. As legend has it, the motorcyclist rubbed Cheong Kun's oil on his wound while waiting for an ambulance to arrive. The puncture had stopped bleeding by the time he reached Conde de São Januário Hospital, where a doctor asked him how on earth he'd managed to stop the flow of blood so effectively on his own.



TWO HANDOVERS AND A SEA CHANGE

Cheong Kin Nang is now the company's chairman and production supervisor. He took over in 1997, after his father's health took a turn for the worse. The elder Cheong passed away just one year later.

At first, Cheong Kin Nang produced pain reliever oil the same way his dad had done: in small-scale, hand-made batches. But that all changed in the early 2000s – after the territory became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China in 1999. What had been a fairly unregulated industry under the former Portuguese administration became subject to far more government oversight.



The Cheongs opened their Coloane factory on 19 June 2023

(Above) Cheong Kun hopes to become GMP certified by adopting the highest quality and safety standards in the industry

(Opposite page) Cheong Kin Nang (left) and Rocky Cheong are a father-and-son team

“After the handover, the SAR government entered the stage and gave me guidelines,” recalled Cheong. “It said that if we wanted to manufacture our type of TCM, we would need to find a factory space and produce the oil under specific conditions before selling it.”

Eager to comply with the new rules lest he lose the family business, Cheong quickly shifted all production to a newly built factory in Toi San District, in Macao's far north. Setting up the factory was difficult, but there was a silver lining: it massively increased the amount of oil the company could make. Gone were the days of laboriously brewing Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil on a kerosene stove behind the old clinic. Cheong now views the move as the major turning point in the company's history.

However, he wants it made clear that the oil's recipe remains exactly the same. “None of the ingredients or herbs have changed at all, the only difference is in the way we heat them,” he says. The company's original premises are still used to this day, though instead of a TCM clinic they serve as a retail outlet for Cheong Kun's incredibly popular oil.

BUILDING ON A LEGACY

Cheong's latest act of expansion was to open up a second factory mid-last year, in Coloane. At 2,000 square metres in area, it's five times bigger than the Toi San facility (which is still running) and operates in compliance with the World Health Organization's internationally recognised standard for medicine production – known as Good Manufacturing Practice, or GMP.

Cheong now works closely with his own son, Rocky Cheong Lok Kei. The pair are determined to make their family business officially GMP certified, which they understand to be key to opening up new markets. Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil is currently sold in Macao, Hong Kong and Mozambique. Singapore is next on the Cheongs' list, followed by more Lusophone countries including Brazil.

The company now employs a workforce of 50 people across its two factories. Running at full capacity, they have the capacity to churn out 10 million bottles of Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil in a year.

While production is semi-automated these days – and the bottles being churned out are made of plastic rather than glass – the oil's recipe isn't the only thing to have stayed the same. Those little bottles are still adorned with a distinctive yellow label designed by Cheong Kun, and feature his own highly recognisable bespectacled face.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil respects its past while looking towards the future. Not only is the company expanding its geographical reach, but it's preparing to broaden its offerings. The latter is the realm of its founder's grandson, Rocky, who plans to take over when his father retires.

The 40-year-old grew up working alongside his father and grandfather in the factory, especially during school holidays. He began working there

full-time in 2011, climbing the ladder from quality assurance manager to technical director.

It was Rocky who spearheaded collaborations with prestigious research institutes at Nanfang Hospital of Southern Medical University and the University of Canberra, working to prove the scientific efficacy of Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil for bodily aches and pains. And he's the one pushing to develop new ways of administering the oil: "We are hoping there will be a plaster, which will work best for athletes, and also a balm," Rocky notes. The company has certainly grown beyond serving its local seafarers.

Rocky acknowledges that working with family comes with its headaches. He and his dad can butt heads when it comes to Kun Pain Reliever Oil's direction. But at the end of the day, Rocky says, "We are family – we don't bring business home."

Of course, their multigenerational approach is also highly rewarding. In fact, Rocky says he'd love for his own 10-year-old son to someday get involved in the business. He's prepared to leave that decision up to the fourth-generation Cheong, however. Just as his own father left it up to him.

So long as Cheong Kun Pain Reliever Oil stays in the Cheong family, it will proudly display 'Made in Macao' across its iconic boxes, promises Rocky. "That was [specified] in my grandfather's will. He always said that since the oil was developed in Macao, to serve Macao people, it should keep being made in Macao." ●



The Cheongs hope to take their family business to a fourth generation



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ARTS & CULTURE

Meet Macao's 2024 Venice Biennale representative

The artist Wong Weng Cheong found inspiration in an Italian novel and English landscapes for his biennale installation, "Above Zobeide", an exploration of introversion.





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

Wong Weng Cheong developed his distinct style while studying abroad in the UK

In 2021, an emerging artist named Wong Weng Cheong held a solo exhibition at Macao's Casa Garden. Titled "Somewhere Still Wild", images of dimly lit grasslands dotted with stretched sheep occupied the walls. Wong's work had an ethereal quality; a mesmerising creepiness. The show caught the attention of Chang Chan, an independent curator who divides her time between Macao and London. She immediately knew its Macao-born artist was someone she wanted to work with. "Cheong is not a very expressive person, but his works are deeply moving," she told *Macao* magazine. The curator describes his

artwork as having "an intense style of its own". One that's a little grim and post-apocalyptic, but arresting.

"Somewhere Still Wild" led to the pair's collaboration on Wong's next exhibition, "The Secret of the Golden Flower" (an examination of humanity in the age of artificial intelligence). Last year, "The Secret of the Golden Flower" was selected for Macao's International Art Biennale. This year, Wong and Chang have set their sights even higher: they're off to the Venice Art Biennale, which opens this month. The Macao-born artist was selected to represent Macao by a panel of five arts academics and professionals.

FINDING HIS OWN STYLE

Wong's passion for art started in high school, where he spent much of his time sketching portraits. "I did that without really thinking about creating a distinct style," the 30-year-old says. In 2012, at the age of just 18, his work featured in the inaugural Macao Printmaking Triennial.

After that introduction to art as a profession, Wong earned a scholarship from the Cultural Affairs Bureau to study at the prestigious art college Goldsmiths, in London. Steeped in history and home to some of the best art institutions in the world, his time in the UK had a profound impact on Wong. Its distinctive scenery and landscapes – sheep grazing windswept pastures, the flitting shadows of clouds – are often visible in his oeuvre.

Spindly legged sheep, in particular, have become a recurring motif. He sees the woolly ruminants as indifferent to what's going on around them, focused only on eating. "In my work, the more a sheep eats, the longer its legs grow until, finally, it won't be able to reach down to the grass," Wong says. These sheep find themselves in what Wong describes as a contradictory situation: longing to devour even more grass, but prevented from doing so by their own insatiable appetites. He explains the concept as illustrating the perils of unchecked consumerism.

Above Zobeide
2024
mixed media

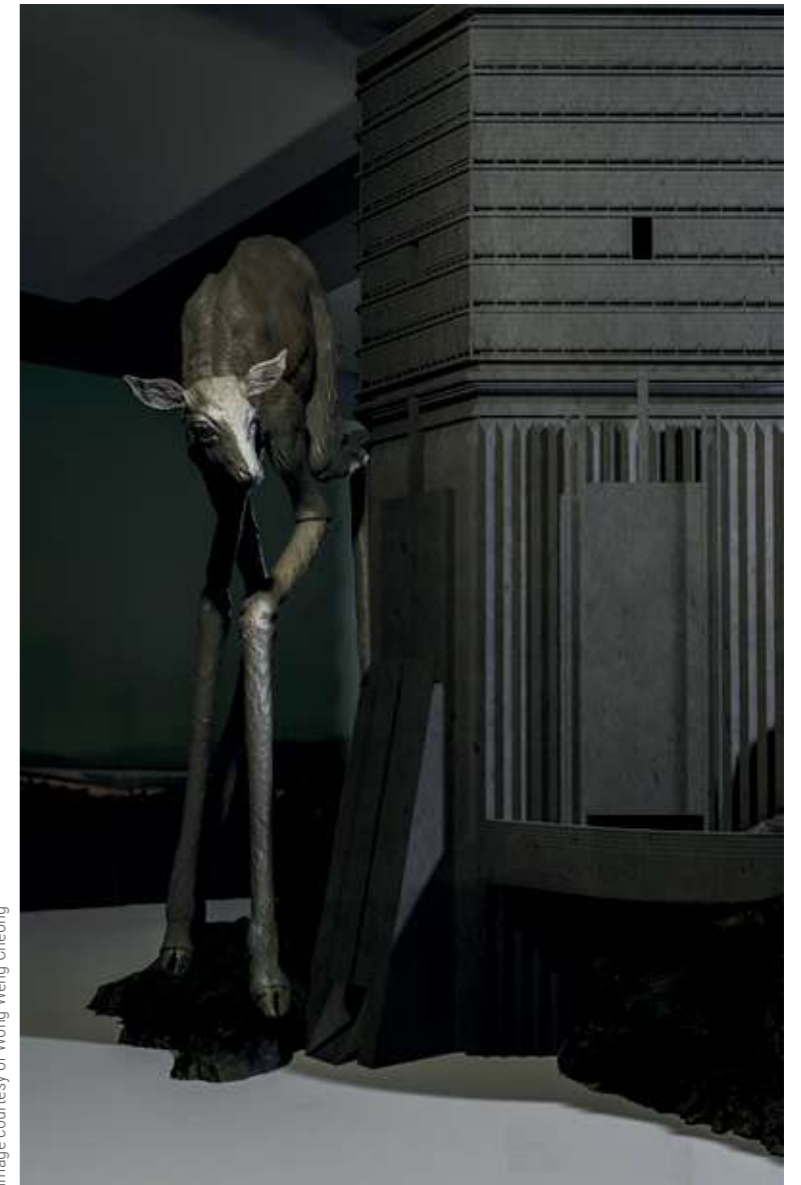


Image courtesy of Wong Weng Cheong

SEARCHING FOR CONNECTION

Wong's installation for the Venice Biennale is titled "Above Zobeide". 'Zobeide' is a reference to a fictional city in a novel by the Italian writer Italo Calvino, who wrote *Invisible Cities* in the early '70s. The book is framed around a conversation between Marco Polo and the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan, where the former tells the latter about his experiences exploring the world.

According to Calvino's Marco Polo, Zobeide is a chaotic, maze-like city full of men yearning for connection – yet amplifying their sense of isolation through an insistence on constructing their own, private spaces. The novel is a reflection on humanity's search for meaningful relationships in a world where individualism reigns.

Wong's work is a personal interpretation of Zobeide, however. In his version, the city takes on a preternatural undertone that hints at something having gone terribly awry. Spread across different rooms, the first inducts viewers into a pastoral scene that's more bleak *Wuthering Heights* than William Blake's green and pleasant land. The land is populated by 3D models of otherworldly animals (deer, hares and cattle this time, all with Wong's signature spindly legs). While there's also a wooden, apparently residential tower and lamp post, suggesting people live in this manufactured world, Wong's installation is devoid of human life. The only people tentatively making their way through his eerie landscape are Biennale goers. Or, as the artist labels them, "invaders".

In the next room, a sense of intrusion deepens. CCTV-esque cameras are recording what's going on in the first, and in this room the footage of Wong's invaders gets displayed on monitor screens for all to observe. The exhibition's attendees thus become part of the installation.

The Macao Museum of Art (MAM) has been instrumental in pulling together "Above Zobeide" – a large and ambitious work – according to Chang and Wong. As it does with every Macao representative at the Venice Biennale, MAM organised the likes of shipping the installation to Italy and getting it set up in situ. The museum also helps promote Macao's exhibits.

'FOREIGNERS EVERYWHERE'

The theme of this year's Venice Biennale is "Foreigners Everywhere". Each participating artist's work must involve an interpretation of that theme. According to the biennale's curator, Adriano Pedrosa, it has two possible meanings. The first is literal: in today's globalised world, we encounter people from other countries wherever we go (and we are often the people from those other countries). The second meaning is more introspective: no matter where we are, we can't shake the feeling that we're different – an alien.

Both options resonated with Wong and Chang, who managed to pull together their biennale submission in just two weeks. Ultimately "we were more drawn to the second meaning," Chang says. "And we found it interesting to explore



the question of *why* we feel like foreigners. It has something to do with our personal experiences."

Chang herself has long been a foreigner, of sorts. Born in Hubei Province in 1987, she relocated to Macao to study management in 2009. When she finished her degree, she realised she wanted to combine what she'd learned with her longtime passion: the arts. To do that, Chang pursued her masters in arts and cultural management at King's College, London. There, she became a foreigner for the second time.

Wong, of course, also experienced life as an expatriate while living in the UK. But his sensation of always being on the outside stems more from a deeply introverted personality. "He always wants to be alone, but his dream life of living without others is impossible in

reality," explains Chang. Such feelings are part of the reason why much of Wong's artwork involves landscapes lacking people. And drew him to Calvino's story about Zobeide.

Wong's installation, however, also manages to align with Pedrosa's first definition of the 'foreigners everywhere' concept. That wherever you go, even this seemingly abandoned and somewhat eerie landscape, you can't escape other people.

The Venice Biennale was founded in 1895 and is the oldest arts event of its kind. The festival spans much of the year, kicking off in April and running until November. "We feel very grateful to be able to participate in such a global event," says Chang, speaking for both herself and Wong. "We can promote Macao art and learn by exchanging ideas with our global counterparts." ●

Wong and independent curator Chang Chan (right) put together their Venice Biennale submission in just two weeks

Wandering In Wilderness #4
2024
print on paper, 42 x 52 cm





HISTORY

Macao's oldest social solidarity institution is alive and thriving

The Holy House of Mercy is more than a relic from 15th-century Portugal. In Macao, that's largely thanks to a passionate *provedor* who refused to give up back in the late 1990s.

Text **Amanda Saxton**
Photos **Lei Heong Ieong**

Macao's Holy House of Mercy (Santa Casa da Misericórdia in Portuguese) has occupied this same spot on Senado Square since 1569

Stepping into the Holy House of Mercy's Salão Nobre is rather like stepping into a church. Subliminal hymnal music plays softly, complemented by the rich smell of polished wood. Instead of saints, however, these walls are lined with portraits of ordinary mortals (albeit some very admirable ones). They are the benefactors whose generosity has enabled the venerable institution to carry out good works over the past 455 years.

The man who established Santa Casa Misericórdia Macau (SCMM) – the Holy House of Mercy's Portuguese name – maintains a physical presence in the Noble Hall, too. Bishop Belchior Carneiro's skull sits on a table, as though he's keeping an eye on his legacy. Carneiro was Portuguese, but many of the faces on the walls are Asiatic. They're the only indication we are in Macao, not 19th-century Europe.

One of them is an elegantly dressed Chinese woman named Marta da Silva Van Mierop; the imposing scale of her full-length

painting is testament to her profound impact on the Holy House's coffers. Born in 1766, Marta could be the poster child for how the organisation operates. Abandoned by her parents as a baby, she grew up within the Holy House of Mercy. The charity named, fed and clothed her, preparing young Marta for a future in respectable society (which in those days for women, entailed making a successful marriage). Marta wed an Englishman, who bequeathed his large fortune to her in his will. She is understood to have become the wealthiest woman in Macao.

Yet she never forgot her roots. Marta used her money to fund girls' education initiatives and equip them with dowries. When she died in 1828, she left the bulk of her remaining fortune to the Holy House of Mercy. The philanthropist was undoubtedly aware of the vital role an organisation dedicated to uplifting the marginalised – regardless of race, religion or gender – could play in the world.



The Salão Nobre, or Noble Hall, has portraits of the social solidarity institution's benefactors on its walls. Bishop Belchior Carneiro is pictured wearing red robes

(Opposite page) The Holy House of Mercy's long-serving president, José de Freitas, looks out from the building's balcony

JESUS HOMINUM SAVIOUR

A door near Marta's painting leads from the Salão Nobre into a charming museum. Most of its 200-odd Catholic artefacts hail from the 18th and 19th centuries. There are delicate *cloisonné* containers for holy water (*cloisonné* is a form of enamel work) and ivory figurines of Jesus' mother, Mary, among religious relics galore. The oldest exhibit is the Holy House of Mercy's original charter, handwritten in 1662. Much of the room is dedicated to an extensive collection of Chinese porcelain, adorned with a 'JHS' monogram encircled by a sun. It's an emblem belonging to the Jesuits, a Catholic order instrumental in spreading Christianity across Asia (Bishop Carneiro was a Jesuit). JHS stands for the

Latin words *Jesus Hominum Saviour* (Jesus, Humanity's Saviour).

The collection belongs to the Holy House of Mercy's long-serving president, José de Freitas, who started collecting it four decades ago. "Wherever I travelled to Europe, around Asia, I'd bring some of it back to Macao," the 71-year-old tells *Macao* magazine. It holds deep meaning for Freitas. Made in China, for a European religious order, "each piece reveals a unique and symbolic artistic-religious blend of the multicultural legacy of Macao," he says. Freitas eagerly points to certain items with the Jesuit monogram reversed; it reads 'SHJ'. He believes the error resulted from a muddle at the Chinese porcelain factory, as those in charge of painting would not have understood what the Latin



“

Each piece reveals a unique and symbolic artistic-religious blend of the multicultural legacy of Macao.

– José de Freitas

characters stood for. But the imperfection just makes those plates, bowls, vases and urns even more precious in his eyes.

The Salão Nobre and the museum are both open to the public and part of SCMM's white-painted headquarters. This, incidentally, is the only Holy House of Mercy left standing in Asia, though thousands still operate in Brazil and Europe. Freitas says Macao's regional longevity comes down to due to the territory's comparatively calm socio-political environment. There was never dramatic backlash against Christians or the Portuguese here, as there was in the likes of India and Japan.

A QUEEN'S REVOLUTION

The Holy House of Mercy was the brainchild of Portugal's Queen Dona Leonor, born Eleanor of Viseu in 1458. She founded the original Santa Casa Misericórdia in 1498, in Lisbon, as a means of redistributing the empire's rapidly accumulating wealth to those who most needed it.

Almost immediately, the concept began accompanying Portuguese explorers on their voyages around the world. There was a Holy House in Ceuta, Morocco, by 1502. Another popped up in Cochin, then part of Portuguese India, as early as 1505. Macao's was established by Bishop Carneiro in 1569, just 12 years after official Portuguese settlement of the territory.

"In the beginning, the Misericórdia was quite an impressive religious and sociological revolution," says the Macao-based historian Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, who has studied the Holy House of Mercy extensively. "The queen's goal was to mobilise profits accumulated by the trade bourgeoisie and turn them into works of mercy." In those days, Portuguese merchants were growing rich quickly, thanks to the empire's proliferation of maritime trade routes.

(Opposite page) The Holy House's original handwritten charter is on display in its museum, which is open to the public

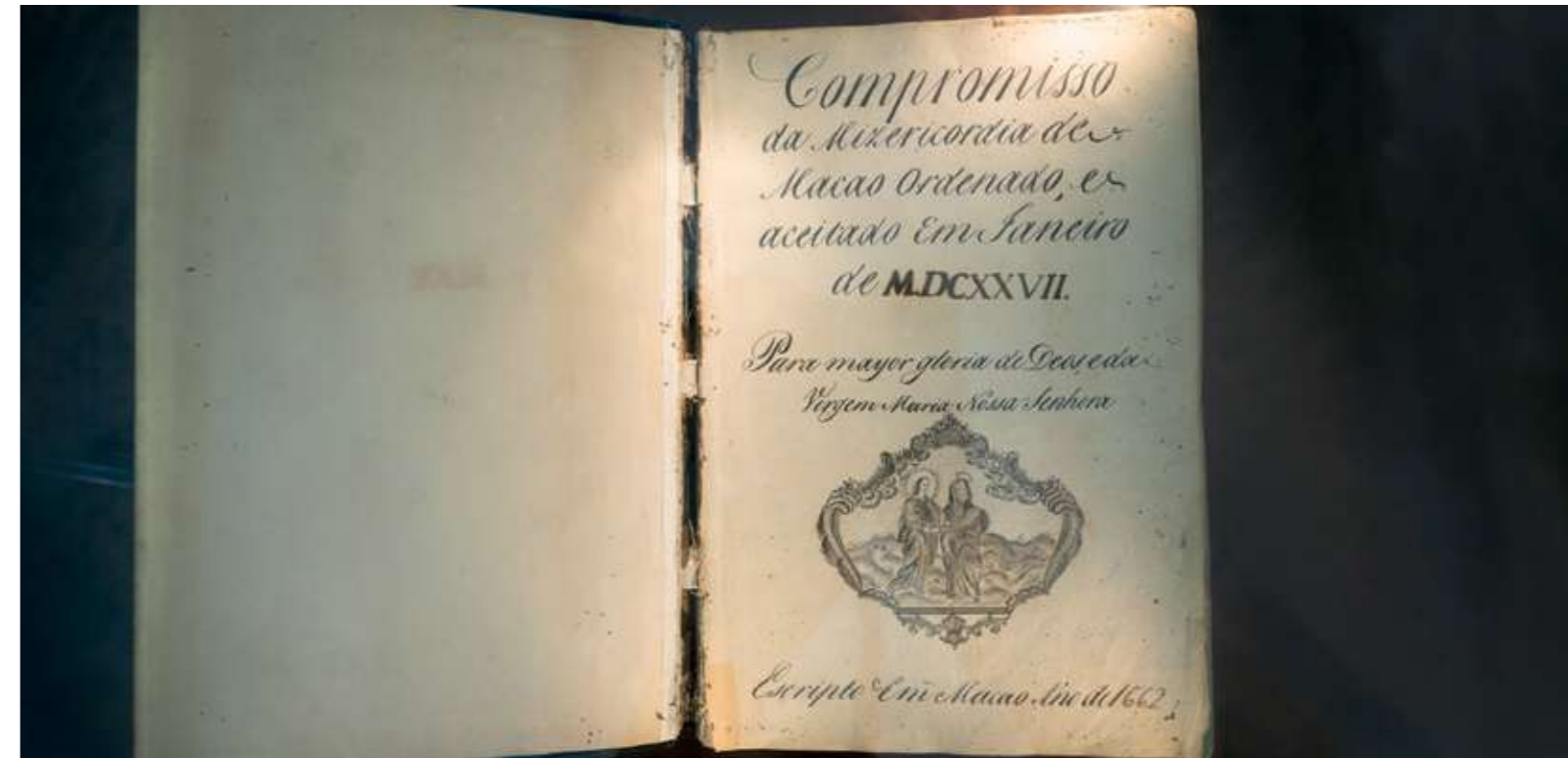
Colourful cloisonné holy water containers in the museum.

These opened access to Asia, Africa and the Americas, treasure troves brimming with silver, spices, and silk, all highly prized by Europeans. But peasants did not benefit from all that lucrative trade, and social welfare had not been invented. The poor, sick, imprisoned and marginalised had to fend for themselves. Small-scale Christian charities did exist, but their religiosity often got in the way, explains Sousa. Queen Leonor insisted that the Holy House of Mercy – while deeply Catholic in character – would be run by laypeople, free from ecclesiastical whims, and help anyone who needed it.

She also made sure the institution was financially independent from both church and crown. The queen's own substantial wealth helped endow the Holy House with land and properties from the start, enabling it to earn its own money. Then, the idea was for

successful businesspeople to bolster its coffers and property portfolio through donations and bequeathments in wills. This was a novel funding model at the time. It worked, however, as Portugal's merchants were eager to support their very popular queen's cause. She managed to convince them – good Catholics – that donating to the Holy House was the ideal way to obtain spiritual merit. Hefty donations also promised social prestige and networking opportunities, especially as the fraternity running it grew in power.

Before long, the Holy House of Mercy had become one of two pillars managing Portugal's overseas dominions. Town Halls were the administrative centres, in charge of enforcing the law, collecting taxes and maintaining public infrastructure. Holy Houses of Mercy ran hospitals, orphanages and other welfare services. Interestingly, they also formed an early international banking system for Portuguese traders, Sousa says. The interest charged on loans also helped fund their humanitarian efforts.



THE HOLY HOUSE IN MACAO

Macao, while never a Portuguese colony, was in possession of these two pillars almost from the beginning of Portugal's administration. The Town Hall (known locally as Leal Senado) and the Holy House of Mercy have sat parallel to each other in Senado Square for nigh on half a millenia. Today, appropriately, the territory's Municipal Affairs Bureau occupies Leal Senado.

Back in 1560s Portugal, however, the bishop who established Macao's Holy House of Mercy did not imagine himself living and dying in the newly established outpost in Asia. Carneiro felt called to serve in Ethiopia, though had been appointed bishop of the Nicaea region in today's Turkey. Nevertheless, Pope Pius V made him the apostolic administrator for

Portugal's missions in Japan and China in 1566 – a role he initially performed from India before arriving in Macao in 1568. While Macao became its own diocese in 1576, Carneiro was never appointed its bishop. He did achieve his dream of becoming Patriarch of Ethiopia in 1577, but only ever performed that role from afar. Carneiro didn't manage to visit the East African country before he died, in Macao, in 1583.

Carneiro's remains were eventually transferred to St Paul's Cathedral (now the Ruins of St Paul's), which was built in the early 1600s. In 1835, some of the bishop's bones and a cross he was buried with were rescued from a devastating fire that engulfed the building. That's how his skull came to be sitting in the Holy House of Mercy's Noble Hall today.



SUPPORTING THE BLIND, ELDERLY AND VERY YOUNG

For most of its long history, Macao's Holy House focused on supporting orphans and sailors' widows (all too common in a city of seafarers). As neither of those populations has existed in great numbers for some time now, it has pivoted towards providing for the blind, elderly and very young.

The Holy House began aiding blind people in Macao as early as 1900, through subsidising an order of nuns to provide shelter for them. It established its dedicated Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind in the 1960s and, since then, has been working with the visually impaired to build their resilience and help them find places within society.

Vocational training has always been a big part of that. In the past, the centre taught skills such as weaving and wickerwork. Nowadays, there's more emphasis on computer literacy and learning Braille. The centre is also a place for the visually impaired and their families to socialise, where singing and music can frequently be heard.

The Holy House is also a proud pioneer in elderly care, its president – Freitas – says. Its current facility, the Our Lady of Mercy Home for the Elderly, opened in 2000 and occupies in one of the organisation's oldest properties: a stately ochre structure near the Ruins of St Paul's. The home has 128 beds for residents whose advanced age means they can no longer take care of themselves. Freitas notes that Macao's ageing population makes multi-disciplinary elderly care services increasingly important in the city. He says the Holy House believes that a longer life expectancy "must be accompanied by quality of life", and that his staff are dedicated to ensuring its patients maintain all the dignity possible.

The organisation runs two day nurseries, too. Creche SCMM in NAPE and Creche Lara Reis, housed within a historic villa overlooking Sai Van Lake. Together, they have the capacity to look after more than 320 children under the age 3. Creche SCMM opened in 2002, in a building supplied by Macao's government. The other nursery opened in 2022 and is named for a professor – Fernando de Lara Reis – who bequeathed his villa to the Holy House back in 1949.

Bishop Belchior Carneiro's skull was rescued from the fire that destroyed St Paul's Cathedral in 1835. It now rests in in the Salão Nobre

(Below) José de Freitas with religious artefacts on display in the Holy House of Mercy's museum, many of which are from his personal collection



A PROVIDOR'S REVOLUTION

Macao's oldest social solidarity institution underwent an overhaul around the time Macao became a Special Administrative Region of China. It had been in dire financial straits in the final years of the Portuguese administration, according to Freitas – who joined the fraternity steering the Holy House back in 1997. "Some thought that SCMM should end all its services at that time, turn off the lights and close its doors permanently," he says. "This building would then become one of the many lifeless buildings that were once part of Macao's history."

But Freitas and his posse of "vigorous and determined young Catholics" refused to give up. "We felt obliged to continue its mission, whatever the cost, to preserve its history," he says. "[That sentiment] has a lot to do with our Macanese

and Portuguese commitment to remaining in Macao."

This is when Freitas became the Holy House of Mercy's president. Leaning on his professional experience in business and real estate, he turned the charity's financial situation around. Freitas opened what had long been a rather insular institution up to working with other players in Macao's network of non-government organisations – those united by their will to do good – and forged closer ties with the new government. His efforts paid off.

Looking back, Freitas is immensely proud of what his team has achieved. He personally considers his own work (which is unpaid) for the Holy House of Mercy as his life's mission. "After almost 25 years as the president – or, as we say in Portuguese, *provedor* – I practically have the words 'Holy House of Mercy' engraved on my forehead," Freitas says. "Everyone knows me as the provedor of this institution; even people who are my close friends greet me by calling me 'provedor' when they see me."

Today, he declares, there's no reason Macao's Holy House of Mercy can't continue supporting Macao's most vulnerable for the next 455 years. And the charity's purpose remains exactly the same as Queen Leonor intended, back in 1458: to perform acts of mercy for those who need it most, whomever they may be. ●

HISTORY

Macao's vanishing boundary stones

Through a few choice characters carved into granite, boundary stones offer glimpses into past iterations of Macao's Chinese communities. Historical researcher Tam Chon Ip has been tracking down these previously undocumented markings for over a decade – a mission that's become a race against urban development.

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

A family by the name of Sing paid for the construction of the wall at Pátio da Eterna Felicidade

(Below) Tam Chon Ip

About twelve years ago, the hobbyist researcher Tam Chon Ip spied his first boundary stone. It was next to Lou Lim Ioc Garden, a lovingly-tended haven in Macao, and engraved with the legend *Yu Yun* (Cantonese for 'Garden of Entertainment'). This small slab of granite, about 30 cm tall, marked the start of a journey for Tam – who has since become an expert on the boundary stones in Macao.

Boundary stones are a concept dating back at least two centuries. They were put in place by stonemasons for the purpose of identifying a building's original owner (the person who paid for its construction) and, sometimes, purpose. The stones were once common additions to premises across southern China, though never required by law. According to Tam, changes in construction techniques meant their usage was in decline by the early 1900s. Lou Lim Ioc Garden *Yu Yun* boundary stone would have been one of the later ones, as its wall was erected in 1906.

Boundary stones are most often found in the *becos* and *pátios* of Macao's traditional Chinese neighbourhoods. *Becos*, the Portuguese word for narrow alleyways, tend to lead into *pátios* – the semi-enclosed, paved courtyards flanked by housing, a distinct feature of urban Macao. *Pátios* and *becos* have historically been home to close-knit communities sharing a well for water and a small shrine for worshipping Tou Tei (the earth god).

Buildings in these older areas are often ripe for refurbishment or demolition. When this happens, their boundary stones seldom survive. Tam, along with his small team at the Shipbuilding Craft Culture Association, has recorded more than 70 of the stones since he became interested in the architectural phenomenon. He's also seen at least ten of them disappear. The 43-year-old's current goal is to catalogue the rest of Macao's boundary stones. Tam approaches his mission as a race against time: "Some are about to vanish as their buildings go up for sale," he warns.





The stone reveals that the former joss stick company Leung Wing Hing paid for the wall

(Opposite page) While the Yeong and Kam families paid for this wall, records show neither still own the properties

A NEW AREA OF RESEARCH

Born into a family of shipbuilders, Tam has always been interested in craftsmanship. He serves as the president of Macao's Shipbuilding Craft Culture Association, an organisation dedicated to preserving the territory's maritime heritage. But it also delves into other parts of Macao's history and culture. Tam personally counts dragon boats and the changing sea levels among his pet research interests, along with shipcraft and boundary stones.

Tam is a meticulous researcher. Whenever he discovers a previously undocumented boundary stone, he crosschecks the details on it with information held by public libraries, the

Archives of Macao and organisations such as Kiang Wu Hospital and the Tung Sin Tong charitable society. His aim is to understand how urban Macao has evolved over time.

In 2018, Tam teamed up with two other local culture groups to spread knowledge about the stones. With support from the government, the Brotherhood Art and Dream Theater associations conduct free tours for locals and visitors interested in learning about boundary stones' history. They emphasise similarities found within neighbouring regions, says Tam, who's one of the tour guides. "Through cultural exchange, I hope to enrich our understanding of the stones."



According to Tam, most boundary stones in Macao, Hong Kong and the mainland are made of granite and share the basic same purpose: identifying ownership. However, Hong Kong has another form of boundary stone – these demarcate the boundaries of the City of Victoria, its first urban settlement under the British. Stones in Foshan and Guangzhou tend to contain more information than their counterparts in Macao, and Tam has also heard about boundary stones in Shanghai marking roads.

FOLLOWING HISTORY'S TRAIL

The most fertile place for tracking down Macao's boundary stones is the city's historic centre. There's one very near the Ruins of St Paul's, for instance, along quiet Pátio do Sol. High on the brick wall of a former joss stick factory, the stone reveals that the Leung Wing Hing company paid for the wall. Leung Wing Hing is a well-known incense manufacturer that was founded in the late Qing dynasty and today operates out of Hong Kong.

Another, narrow boundary stone can be found just 100 metres from the former factory, on Pátio da Eterna Felicidade. This one belongs to a well-preserved residential complex that's witnessed the changing lifestyles of generations of Chinese families. Lush plant life threatens to obscure it, but brushing aside the vines reveals that a family by the name of Sing paid for the building's construction. Tam considers this boundary stone rather mysterious: Sing is an unusual last name, yet he hasn't been able to find any information out about this family.

In fact, the researcher has only been able to flesh out the human faces behind very few boundary stones. He found himself most interested in a Chinese merchant named Fung Weng Jin, who appears to have had a strong sense of civic duty. Fung's name appears on a stone in a small alley off the busy Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro and was erected above three separate properties.

Today, they are used as a waste collection station, a vehicle dealer and a *dit da* (a traditional Chinese bone-setting clinic). Fung, according to the stone, gifted the trio of premises to the Tung Sin Tong charitable society in 1932. Tam managed to dig up a photograph of Fung at the Tung Sin Tong Historical Archive Exhibition Hall, along with evidence he was heavily involved with both Tung Sin Tong and the Kiang Wu Charitable Association.

Sometimes it's not a person's name, but the style of language used on a boundary stone that piques Tam's interest. An example of this graces a three-storey building painted white, on Rua das Estalagens. "The wording on this stone is written in conversational Cantonese, not in formal Chinese," Tam says. A similar level of casualness can be read on boundary stones in Foshan and Guangzhou, but is uncommon in Macao.

That particular boundary stone's script reveals that the Yeong and Kam families paid for the wall between the white building and its since-demolished neighbour. "We looked up some records, and the building no longer belongs to either of those families," says Tam. "But their names are immortalised in the stone."

Chinese merchant Fung Weng Jin erected this stone, stating he donated the three properties below to the charity Tung Sin Tong



RACING AGAINST TIME

The endless march of urban development is seeing more and more of Macao's boundary stones vanish. While many are gone for good, Tam says others hide beneath refurbishments. The latter situation is the case for several around Rua dos Ervanários and Rua de Nossa Senhora do Amparo, which are tourist hotspots currently undergoing gentrification. Repairing and updating these buildings' exteriors (often in preparation for new arts shops and cafés) usually entails covering up their original masonry – and any boundary stones along with it.

Sometimes Tam and his colleagues are able to retrieve boundary stones from buildings undergoing demolition.

For posterity, they create rubbings off them – along with those on still-intact buildings – to fully capture their script and texture. "We hope to record as many boundary stones as possible," Tam says. The researcher also hopes to collaborate with fellow boundary stone experts and enthusiasts in the mainland, in order to exchange knowledge and build a more comprehensive understanding of the unique practice.

Boundary stones are, in their way, a record of Macao's history. Each one is an expression of how masons of the day practised their craft, as well as a record of a real person or company that made tangible contributions to the territory. They left buildings and businesses, families and legacies – along with their names, carved in stone. ●



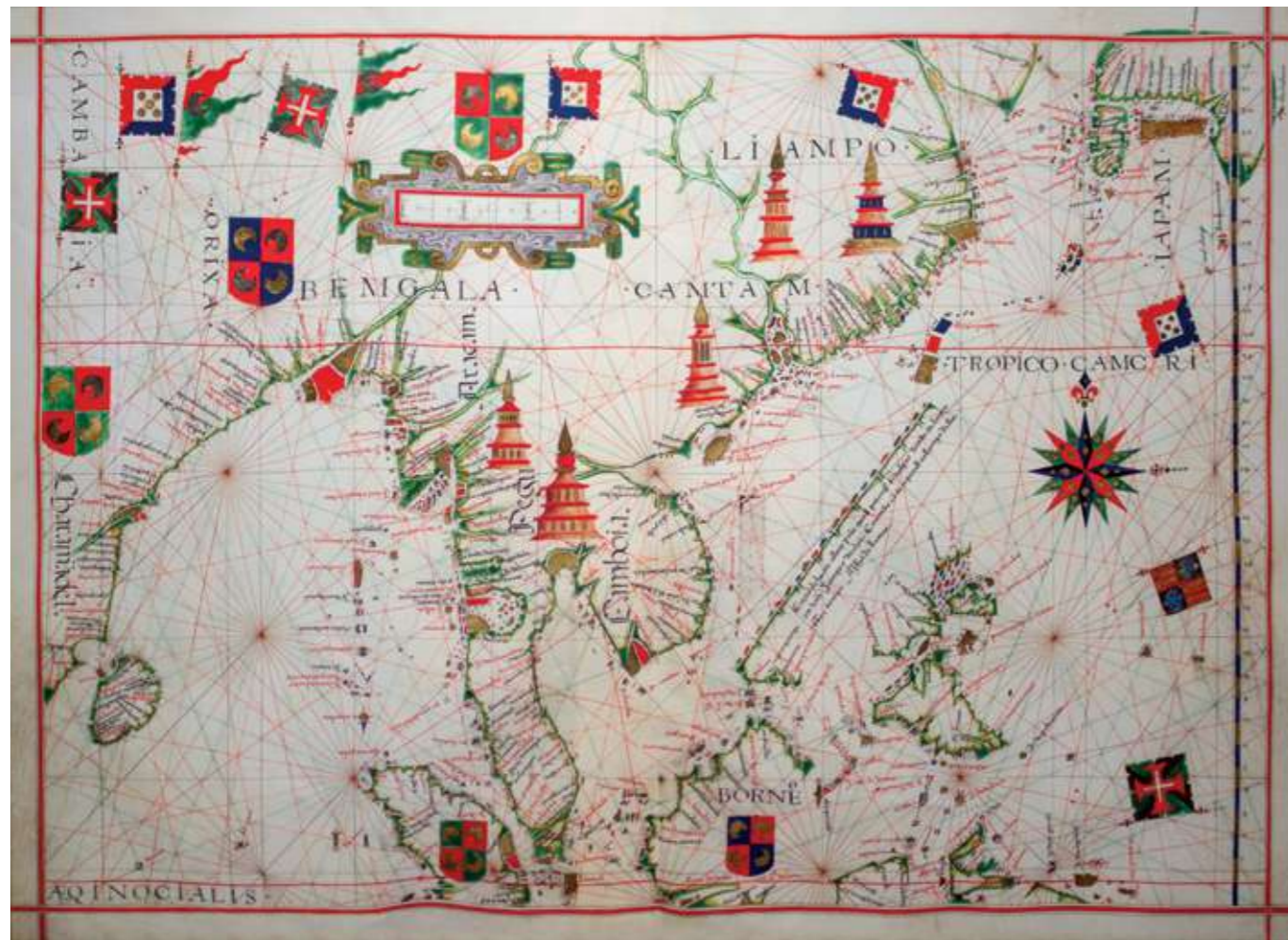
HISTORY

Art and science: A cartographic history of Macao

“Mapmorphism” packed five centuries’ worth of geography lessons into one exhibition while celebrating map making as a craft. And it paid homage to the human beings – from explorers to engravers to colourists – who dedicated their lives to creating beautiful, practical, world-changing works of art.

The exhibition was hosted by the Oriente Foundation, in historic Casa Garden’s art space





Text and Photos
Amanda Saxton

Mapa Mundo was the oldest map in the exhibition, created in 1576 as a comprehensive picture of Asia (according to knowledge at the time)

(Opposite page) Organiser Marco Rizzolio speaks at the "Mapmorphosis" opening event

Did Marco Polo plot his path to China using an atlas? This question was posed at a recent cartography seminar in Macao, held to mark the unveiling of the city's "Mapmorphosis" exhibition. "Mapmorphosis", hosted by the Orient Foundation at the historic Casa Garden, displayed large-scale maps pulled from across the past five centuries – all featuring Macao.

While the 34 exhibits aren't the fragile and often lost originals (many of those were destroyed during the 1755 Lisbon earthquake), these printed reproductions still convey the artistry, science and spirit of adventure required

from cartographers of yore. They also serve as a visual chronicle of Macao's geographic history. The maps illustrate how the territory slowly became better understood over time, how its urban and oceanic landscapes have evolved, and the tripling in landmass that's taken place over the past hundred years.

As for Marco Polo, seminar attendees learned that no, the explorer was not in possession of a map when setting sail from Venice in 1271. Given the nascent state of cartography at the time, he relied on local knowledge to navigate the Mediterranean, pass through Constantinople, reach Crimea and set off

overland through Central Asia and the Gobi Desert to finally arrive in Beijing.

Some 150 years later, accounts of Marco Polo's travels served as foundations for a new wave of navigational maps in Europe. The Portuguese prince known as Henry the Navigator was at the helm of this revolution – through his maritime research centre, the School of Sagres. He aimed to improve cartographical knowledge, equip sea captains with reliable maps, and extend Portugal's reach around the world. Henry the Navigator's vision, backed by considerable wealth, enabled the Age of Exploration.

"With every voyage, our picture of the world changes," the exhibition organiser, Marco Rizzolio, said at the "Mapmorphosis" opening. "With every voyage, the map becomes increasingly accurate. The map is an instrument of power."

MACAO'S HISTORY THROUGH MAPS

The first European to reach China by sea, via the Pearl River Delta, was Jorge Álvares, a Portuguese explorer whose statue stands tall near Macao's Nam Van Lake. While Álvares dropped anchor in Macao in 1513 (meaning the territory likely began featuring on European charts of the region shortly after), the oldest map in "Mapmorphosis" hails from the 1570s.

Mapa Mundo, as it's called, was an ambitious attempt at depicting Asia, with India on the far left and a barely recognisable Japan on its right. Macao is just a dot along the 'Cantam' (Canton) coastline, somewhere above an incomplete outline of Borneo. The map is credited to Fernão Vaz Dourado, a highly respected Portuguese cartographer based in Goa, India, for most of his life.

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With every voyage,
our picture of the
world changes.

– Marco Rizzolio

Image courtesy of Marco Rizzolio





Amacao is a pictorial made by the renowned Flemish engraver Theodore de Bry. It depicts details of life in Macao at the turn of the 17th century

Offering more insights into Macao's character at the turn of the 17th century – though limited guidance to navigators – is a pictorial map made by the Flemish engraver Theodore de Bry. Titled *Amacao*, this stylised depiction of urban Macao stretches to each edge of a territory almost surrounded by sea (there's a slender stalk peeling off to the left; its attachment to the mainland). *Amacao's* cartographic usefulness lies more in essence than geographical precision. It captures the territory's alive-to-this-day East-meets-West reality while imparting basic spatial intel about Macao.

At first glance the city appears European, peppered as De Bry's work is with churches and Portuguese caravels. There's a large cross standing in a courtyard: this territory is clearly Christian. But closer examination reveals men rowing dragon boats through choppy seas, and people moving beneath umbrellas held aloft by servants – common practices in parts of Asia at the time. There's also a sedan chair, a Chinese form of transport that didn't reach Europe until decades later, and several buildings with tiered, hip-and-gable roofs (implying pagodas).

More geographically accurate detail arrived in 1635, via a Portuguese cartographer named Pedro Barreto de Resende. His vivid watercolour showed a heavily fortified city with protective walls around its coastlines. Monte Fort – built in 1626 – is visible inland and bristling with canons. The fortifications were a bid to fend off maritime attacks after a heated period of Dutch bombardment.



A very similar map to Resende's formed part of the Casa Garden exhibition. This one, attributed to the official cosmographer to the Portuguese crown, António de Mariz Carneiro, is almost a stroke-for-stroke copy of Resende's original (minus a few decorative ships and a cross on a hill). It was published in 1639.

By the end of that century, European cartographers from beyond Portugal were developing a keener sense of what Macao looked like through firsthand experience of the land. One of these was the young explorer François Froger, part of an early French voyage to China in the 1690s. Froger – who wrote extensively about his travels and also sketched prolifically – created a refined map of Macao Peninsula with a key depicting its 10 main features. There's a Chinese village in the territory's northeast, both the Monte and Guia forts, and a wall separating Macao from "*les terres des Chinois*" (Chinese lands). Froger's map is one of the earliest to note the ancient A-Ma Temple, on the peninsula's southwestern flank (where it still stands today). The temple is labelled "*pagode Chinoise*".

Most early maps ignore Macao's southern islands, which didn't come under Portuguese administration until the mid-1800s and lacked major settlements. They started appearing more prominently near the

end of the 1700s, mainly as navigational features. The waterway between the islands (now fused through land reclamation) was labelled "Typa" and the islands themselves were named according to what side of the Typa they were on.

The English cartographer and sailing master William Bligh provided more insights into the islands in his 1781 map of Macao, offering tips to future navigators. "If going into the Typa, keep the south shore on board ... then steer for Shoal Point and anchor in 4 fathoms water," Bligh advises (his words are actually printed on the map). He also noted sections of sea that were dry at low tide and where reliable sources of fresh water could be obtained.

Bligh got his information firsthand while accompanying the British explorer James Cook on his 1780 voyage around the Pacific. Less than a decade later, he rose to fame as captain of the HMS *Bounty* and was at the heart of the ship's infamous mutiny in the South Pacific. After being overthrown by his crew, Bligh and a few loyal sailors embarked on a harrowing journey of almost 7,000 kilometres that landed them in Timor. Events of the mutiny have been well-preserved in popular culture through literature and film adaptations.



The French explorer François Froger's 1699 *Plan de la ville et port de Macao* above the Dutch geographer and watercolorist Joan Vinckeboons 1667 map, titled *View of the city of São Paulo de Macau on the Coast of China in India*

(Opposite page)
Exhibition-goers admiring the large-scale reproductions of historic maps

CHANGES ON THE GROUND

Up until the mid-1800s, the quite dramatic variations in Macao's size, shape and appearance depicted in maps stemmed from ever-improving knowledge of the region (helped along by technological advancements). However, changes that followed were the result of intentional modifications to the land itself. In 1912, Macao's total area was a mere 11.6 square kilometres; it has since expanded to more than 33 square kilometres.

In the exhibition, a large-scale chromolithographic map from 1889 shows Ilha Verde as an island to the city's northwest. Maps produced less than a decade later, however, reveal a narrow causeway tethering it to the Macao Peninsula. Over time, this causeway expanded due to land reclamation, erasing any trace of Ilha

Verde's insular nature. The area, its name translating to 'green island' in Portuguese, has since completely merged with the mainland on its north and eastern sides, and with Macao to its east.

A parallel phenomenon can be seen via what started out as a slim isthmus connecting Macao to the mainland. The territory's earliest maps show their boundaries defined by a collar-like structure: the Border Gate. However, as land reclamation efforts broadened the isthmus, the Border Gate stopped stretching from one coast to the other.

Perhaps one of the most interesting maps in the exhibition was the deceptively simple *Plano Geral das Obras do Porto Artificial de Macau*, from 1922. It foreshadows extensive land reclamation works planned for the city at the time – some of which, like the Outer Harbour and Nam Van Lake developments, would not be completed for many more decades.

A 1936 travel map produced by Macau Agencia de Turismo, meanwhile, reveals how the process of getting to and from Macao had evolved since the days of heavily rigged merchant vessels. The map includes illustrations of steam ships, and also a Pan American seaplane – 'moored' at Macao's once-famous seaplane port (now reclaimed land around today's Fisherman's Wharf).

'WONDERFUL JUST AS OBJECTS OF ART'

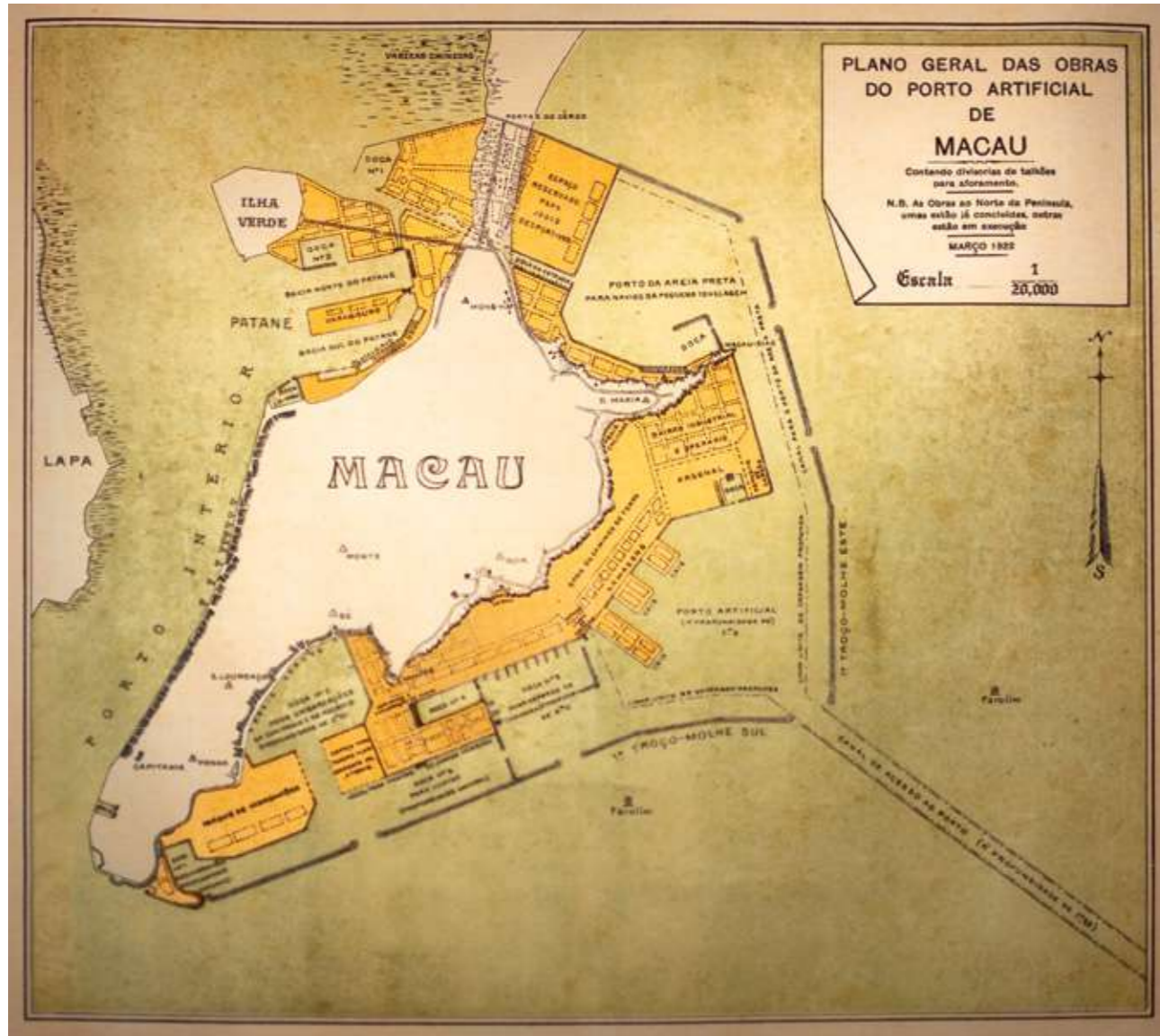
The maps featured in "Mapmorphism" are more than tools designed to get a person from A to B. "They really are quite wonderful just as objects of art," the historian Priscilla Roberts said during the exhibition's opening seminar. The University of St. Joseph professor is right: the maps are beautiful. Each one crafted by a team of talented artisans.

Some have been delicately daubed with pastel hues, others shot through with bold bolts of green and red. They capture a myriad of ways to depict Macao's many churches. Tiny sailboats and patchwork fields are exquisitely rendered, along with emblems signifying the European empire responsible for each map. Some maps are stripped down and minimalistic, like Froger's. Others are joyfully maximalist, a riot of colour and illustration. But all are elegant; created with care.

Making a map in the 17th century required enormous amounts of scarce resources and skilled labour. It was an incredibly expensive merging of global exploration, science, craftsmanship and art. First, came the surveys, carried out by cartographers, navigators, travelling merchants and sailors. Just getting to the location in question was hard, typically involving months' (even years') long voyages across often unfriendly seas. Given the purpose of cartographic missions was to produce better maps of an area, existing maps were usually flawed.



Image courtesy of Marco Rizzolo



A map from the 1920s showing plans for land reclamation projects (in yellow) that would take place over the next 80 years

(Opposite page) This travel map from 1936 shows the age of aviation had arrived: a seaplane is moored in the Outer Harbour

In situ, geographic details would be collected via journals, ships' logs and sketches. Distances between settlements and elevations of hills might be hazarded using the likes of astrolabes and primitive theodolites, but a lot of information came via word of mouth and observation. None of it as reliable as, say, satellite imagery and a GPS.

A cartographer would then collate everything he could into what's known as a 'manuscript map'. These were meticulously detailed drafts, hand drawn on parchment or vellum. Manuscript maps tended to include illustrations – a rocky shoreline, a fort with cannons – to offer an accurate visual sense of the landscape. They'd also feature the odd sea monster and other ornate embellishments.

Macao was known for producing high-quality manuscript maps during the Age of Exploration, which were shipped off to Europe for printing and reproduction. To print a map in those days, an engraver traced a mirror image of the cartographer's design onto a flat copper plate and poured ink over the heated metal. Excess ink would be wiped off, leaving just enough of it sticking to the copper plate's finely etched lines. Pressing the plate down onto slightly damp parchment (or whatever material was being used) imprinted a facsimile of the cartographer's original work. The colourist's job came next: he'd typically use watercolours to make a map's various geographical elements pop. The same copper plate was then re-used to produce copies of the map, though each one required fresh ink and colouring.

"The skill, the knowledge, the expertise that went into these [maps in the exhibition] is extraordinary," Roberts noted. Not only have most original maps from prior to the 19th century not survived, they were rare to begin with, she explained. "Those maps required so many hours of painstaking labour, time consuming craft and – not uncommonly – expensive, hard-to-find materials that you simply don't have many of them."

Roberts believes the "Mapmorphosis" exhibition goes beyond showcasing Macao's cartographical history. She sees it as honouring the commitment and craftsmanship of bygone mapmakers: "The many individuals who created works of art that are both elegant and beautiful but also extremely practical, fixing geographical knowledge in the historical record for future generations to see and appreciate." ●



PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Mbanza Kongo ruins

The vestiges of a fallen kingdom: Mbanza Kongo is making its comeback

Angola's first and only World Heritage site was once the capital of the Kingdom of Kongo, a historic civilization considered pivotal to Africa's development. Could the ruined city of Mbanza Kongo – and its more than 600 years of history – help kickstart the country's fledgling tourism industry?





Text **Fei Pou Lou**

Portuguese troops meet
Mbanza Kongo King

As Angola looks to capitalise on its tourism potential, the country's first and only World Heritage site is taking the stage. This ruined capital of the former kingdom, Mbanza Kongo, lies near the country's northern border, about 200 kilometres from the Atlantic coast. Earlier this year, Angola's government pledged to invest significant amounts of money into uncovering, protecting and managing what remains of the city, including remnants of one of sub-Saharan Africa's oldest cathedrals.

Historians and anthropologists consider the Kingdom of Kongo one of the most important former civilizations in Southern Africa. The vast realm was established in the late 14th century and lasted into the 1900s. At its height, the kingdom stretched from what is now Gabon, down through the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo and into northern Angola.

The Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão was the first European to set foot in the region and his 1482 arrival

dramatically changed the course of Kongo's history. By the end of that century, the kingdom's ruling monarch Nzinga a Nkuwu had converted to Catholicism and been baptised João I (a nod to Portugal's king at the time). While the Kongo's João later reverted to his traditional spiritual beliefs, his highly devout son and successor, Afonso Mvemba a Nzinga, made Christianity the kingdom's official religion.

Built on a plateau, Mbanza Kongo was centred around a royal residence and cemetery, a customary court and a sacred tree that dominated the kingdom's spirituality. After the Portuguese arrival, European-style buildings and churches were added to its expanding urban area.

According to UNESCO, "Mbanza Kongo illustrates, more than anywhere in sub-Saharan Africa, the profound changes caused by the introduction of Christianity and the arrival of the Portuguese into Central Africa." Traces of traditional Kongolese culture can be found in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo.

MBANZA KONGO TODAY

Visitors wandering around the Mbanza Kongo heritage site today can glean insights into the fallen kingdom through architectural remnants and reconstructions. Highlights include the foundations of the royal residence – its layout revealed through archaeological

excavations – and the Nkulumbimbi Shrine, a large rock engraved with symbols. The shrine has been referred to as "the mysterious site where the light will shine from to illuminate the world" and compared with the Tower of Babylon. A dozen churches, convents, schools, palaces and residences are also understood to have once occupied the area, and excavations to uncover further physical evidence of how the kingdom's subjects lived are ongoing.

Mbanza Kongo is – architecturally speaking – best known for the ruins of its centuries-old Portuguese cathedral. The Cathedral of the Holy Saviour of Congo's adobe and stone walls, which fuses indigenous African and European architectural styles, have survived centuries of modification, conflict and ultimately abandonment. With its original structure built more than 500 years ago, the cathedral is believed to be one of the oldest places of Christian worship in sub-Saharan Africa outside of Ethiopia.

While other parts of the former kingdom took on the name 'Congo', modern-day Mbanza Kongo, capital of northern Zaire Province, retains its pre-colonial spelling. The city of around 200,000 people boasts a respected museum dedicated to the kingdom's monarchs that houses cultural artefacts and royal portraits. Today's Mbanza Kongo is an important market for regional produce, including corn, almonds and cassava.

Capuchin missionaries baptising the people of Mbanza Kongo (1750)

(Opposite page)
The Mbanza Kongo residence of the king (São Salvador) by Olfert Dapper and G Child (1745)

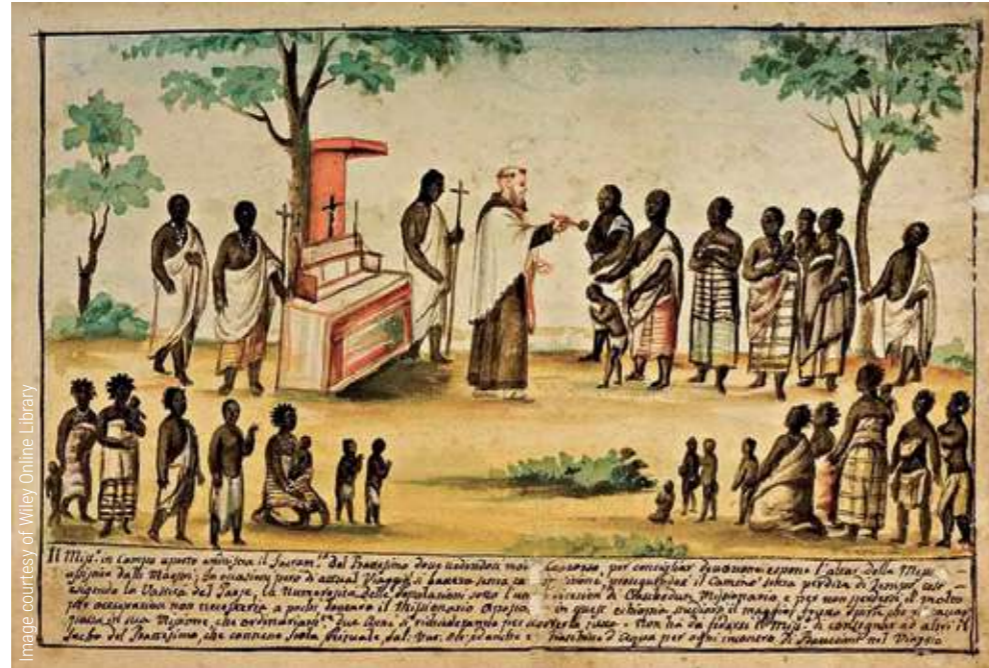


Image courtesy of Wiley Online Library

MBANZA KONGO'S RETURN TO THE FOREFRONT

Angola, home to 35 million people, emerged from decades of civil war in 2002. Since then, its economy has largely been running off oil and diamonds. In 2005, a mere 200,000 tourists visited Angola. That number reached a peak of 650,000 in 2013 and has been in decline until now.

But Angola's government hopes tourism will play a bigger role in its future. As it works to kick-start the fledgling industry, officials are eyeing up Mbanza Kongo as a potential drawcard for visitors – a cultural accompaniment to the country's wildlife and wilderness areas.

Mbanza Kongo was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2017. This January, President João Lourenço approved an agreement worth around US\$120 million for the restoration and conservation of the heritage site, which is legally protected by Angola's 2010 constitution. That government funding will help bring Mbanza

Kongo's management up to speed with UNESCO recommendations and promote cultural tourism.

There's also a major infrastructural development on the horizon: a new airport in the town of Nkiende II, just 34 kilometres away from Mbanza Kongo. In March, the government announced that this Chinese-built project would be up and running in 2025. Easy airport access could significantly boost the number of visitors to Mbanza Kongo.

UNESCO describes the Kingdom of Kongo's capital as an "eminent place of remembrance" for the former civilisation. "In its built structure and archaeological vestiges, the town retains the traces of its customary, colonial and religious past," the

United Nations agency explains in Mbanza Kongo's heritage listing. "It is quite remarkable that the passing of centuries has not led to any encroachment on the royal space, which is still clearly identifiable as the spiritual centre of the community."

UNESCO also described the kingdom's contributions to Africa as "attested and undeniable" – particularly with regard to Mbanza Kongo's role as a gateway that enabled the Christian world to enter the continent.

Known worldwide for its diamonds and gems, Angola may soon be profiting from another type of stone: that which was used to build Mbanza Kongo, the once-glorious capital of its fallen kingdom. ●





ZOOM

Macao International Parade celebrates cultural integration

The 2024 Macao International Parade celebrated the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to China with over 1,800 performers from 80 local and international groups, showcasing diverse cultural performances and engaging residents and tourists along the procession route.

Text Mariana César de Sá
Photos courtesy of
Cultural Affairs Bureau

The 2024 Macao International Parade, organised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, marked the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to China with a vibrant celebration. Showcasing more than 1,800 performers from 80 local and international groups, the parade embraced the spirit of "Love, Peace, and Cultural Integration."

Featuring an array of cultural performances, the parade included the participation of 64 local groups and 16 from countries and regions like Brazil, Portugal, France, Spain and Hong Kong. The procession weaved through the Historic Centre of Macao, creating a captivating experience for residents and tourists alike. Along the way, the lively VIVA Carnival at Avenida Panorâmica do Lago Nam Van offered interactive booths, games and workshops, while artists engaged with spectators on Avenida Doutor Stanley Ho. The procession culminated at Sai Van Lake Square, where performances competed for accolades.

Now in its tenth edition, the Macao International Parade has evolved into a significant event commemorating Macao's return to the motherland, garnering widespread global participation. ●



Marching through the streets of Macao's iconic landmarks, performers from around the world embarked on a vibrant journey. From historic streets and charming churches to the grand finale in front of the Macau Tower, this celebration of cultural diversity filled the city with excitement, colour and joyous melodies



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From traditional dances to modern artistic expressions, the parade showcased the harmonious blending of cultures, fostering international artistic connections and celebrating the power of creativity



The 10th edition of the parade showcased 1,800 performers from 64 local and international art groups, including participants from Brazil, Portugal, France, Spain, Norway, the United Kingdom, Italy, Mozambique, Togo, Shenzhen and Hong Kong



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