

CULTURE

magazine

Issue **143**

arts • travel • lifestyle • food • wine • community

Explosive Creativity

at the

InnoDesignTech
Expo

The Louvre

Day and Night Discovery of Art Masterpieces

Vibrant Street Art
in Taipa Village

H2O
a study of water
and its beauty

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CULTURE

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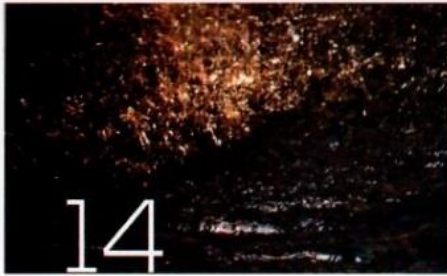
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From the **EDITOR**
in chief



Aperture



Vibrant Street Art In Macau



Events to See & Do

The Louvre is one of my favourite places in Paris. There is always something to discover at this centuries-old must-go-to repository of world art masterpieces. On my recent trip there, I experienced the Louvre by day and night and spent hours looking at paintings, collections of Egyptian, Greek and Roman Art and antiquities from all cultures. The museum is amazing because it houses so many rare treasures. The repository is a bona fide museum and art gallery all in one. And recently, there have been some positive changes that make for a more friendly experience. I was there from the morning until past sundown, when the museum got fairly dark and seemed more mysterious because of the subdued light. A bonus was seeing the Louvre Pyramid, exterior facade and the courtyard beautifully lit up against a rare super moon. It was a remarkable sight to see.

Stewart Hawkins presents a study of water and its beauty in his first exhibition in Hong Kong, titled H2O. Water was one of the rarest things in the dirt town in the middle of the Australian desert where he was born. Now living in Hong Kong, where there is no shortage of water, it fascinates him. The series of images taken on his phone tells a story of water and its beauty. He pushes the technology as far as he can, and the results are ethereal abstractions and timeless images of the most common and essential elements on the planet.

Tiny Taipa Village, sandwiched between Macau city and the growing pressure of Cotai, seems a little lost in time, writes Ingrid Piper. Taipa Village Cultural Association is hoping to

reinvent the neighbourhood by promoting this charming part of Macau as an artistic and creative hub. Currently, Macanese graffiti artist Pat Lam Ka Hou (street tag P.I.B.G.) is presenting his first solo exhibition P.I.B.G.: On the Verge in the new Taipa Village Art Space. It's an intriguing look inside this street artist's work and includes tiny sketches and designs for his large outdoor works of art.

A Food and Wine Lover's Take on Venice was promised by Sandi Butchkiss and Cliff Shaffran as the second part story of their long stay in that magical city. From cichetti, negronis and vino locale, to frito misto, polenta and gelato, it seems our dynamic writer and photographer team ate their way from the famed Mercato di Rialto on the Grand Canal to St. Mark's Square. They wisely stayed near a market, and right on their doorstep they bought all varieties of fruit, vegetables and seafood from happy stall-keepers who greeted them like old friends. Their feature reads like the perfect foodie's guide through the city.

Enjoy.

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Vibrant Street Art In Macau

Tiny Taipa Village steps away from tradition and heritage to build a mighty reputation for accessible street art

Text Ingrid Piper / Photos Cammy Yiu

Emerging from an underworld of spray cans and guerilla-style tactics practised surreptitiously under cover of darkness, and popularly viewed as unsightly and illegal, graffiti once blighted declining urban landscapes. Today, it's regarded worldwide as vibrant and alive street art, overflowing with social comment and quirks.

Street art and its world renowned artists like Banksy are familiar names, further legitimising an art form that has also helped encourage tremendous urban renewal in places like London's Shoreditch, now one of the city's coolest of urban hubs, brimming with youthful energy, barber shops, cafes and high end restaurants.

Even Macau's tiny Taipa Village is hoping to reinvent itself using street art.

Taipa Village Cultural Association wants to promote this charming part of Macau as an artistic and creative hub to encourage more tourists to linger and enjoy local street art.

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Sandwiched between Macau city and the growing pressure of Cotai's glitzy casino strip and malls filled with luxury brands, Taipa Village feels a little lost in time.

Here, the slap and swish of Mahjong tiles can be heard as you walk through narrow laneways. In quieter streets, homeowners leave their front doors that open directly onto the narrow streets ajar to catch breezes. Passing by, it's easy to peek inside and see traditional Portuguese influences in the design of these village houses, where tiles cover the dimly lit ground floors. Narrow and

steep wooden staircases leading to upper levels of dwellings hint at old Chinese influences.

Part of Taipa's charm is its slow place – although on weekends its main thoroughfares are packed with tourists buying snacks like pork chop buns, egg tarts and freshly baked and still-warm almond biscuits. Now Taipa Village Cultural Association wants to promote this charming part of Macau as an artistic and creative hub to encourage more tourists to linger and enjoy local street art.

Vibrant Street Art In Macau



In his latest collaboration, Macanese graffiti artist Pat Lam Ka Hou (street tag P.I.B.G.) has moved in-house with his first solo exhibition P.I.B.G.: On the Verge in the new Taipa Village Art Space at 10 Rua dos Clerigos. The exhibition will be on display until 8 January 2017. It's an intriguing look inside this street artist's work and includes tiny sketches and designs for his large outdoor works of art.

Although much of P.I.B.G.'s previously work has involved commercial collaborations, he says his exhibition in Taipa Village Art Space allows him to showcase art at another level.

"As an art creator, it gives me a lot of support and encouragement," he says.

"Being inside an art gallery is very exciting for me, but I will always prefer to have my creations outdoors. Not only does it give me a lot more space and freedom; it also lets me interact with like-minded artists, which makes creating art more interesting. Having said that, I still look forward to hosting and participating in other exhibitions, as it's an opportunity to showcase more of my work and to meet new friends, as friendship also inspires my creations," he says.

"Graffiti is one of the most exciting mediums I've come across.

I don't like things that are very complicated or messy, so I found spray paint very handy for me to create art! Having graffiti on the street walls somehow forces by-passers to look and admire the artwork. Some art is required to exhibit at a particular venue, and it is not as easy for viewers to see when compared with graffiti."

Pat's work also spills onto the streets surrounding the new art space with his super sized murals Art-less/full and On the Verge. He describes the latter as fun, using gorgeous colours, sketches and graffiti, which he says, are techniques that oppose each other but in the case of this mural, co-exist on the same wall.

The huge canvas for Art-less/full is an abandoned building site that was once a home or shop, now abandoned and overgrown with tropical vines. It features his son wearing a fox-headed mask.

"I always think that my son isn't as naive as he seems. I think he's like a fox, lively and cunning. Other people might think he's innocent and cute, either "Artless" or "Artful", it depends on the viewer's perspective. Art is the commonality of the two, just like the controversy between graffiti and formal art," Pat says.

With a background in sculpture, calligraphy, painting and graphic design, P.I.B.G.'s tag first appeared in the late 1990s. In 2004 he founded Macau's first graffiti art group. While his work



“Graffiti is one of the most exciting mediums I’ve come across. I don’t like things that are very complicated or messy, so I found spray paint very handy for me to create art,”



is now considered mainstream, his work wasn’t always so well received publicly.

“I have been arrested, fined and beaten up since the start of my creative life. Deep in my heart, I am only someone who likes to create, draw and use the city as my canvas,” he says.

Despite his past tribulations, he still believes community art can change society.

“Even if it is only the tiniest change, it will still count. Creativity is free and unique, if you feel happy or sad after looking at my work; this proves how art can influence others. If advertising can change the world, then community art can definitely make a change as well.

“There is no definite way to define art. I started with traditional graffiti, which makes many people associate me with street graffiti artist. However, my recent work is no longer limited to a graffiti style, and I don’t think we should categorise art by boundaries. Having said so, it is often viewers who decide whether it is art or not. As an artist, I usually just do what I like and what I am interested in.”

Pat believes Taipa village’s atmosphere will certainly be enhanced

and revitalised with the help of outdoor art. But he also sees a need to protect this historic precinct.

“Taipa is already beautiful in itself, and it’s even better with outdoor art. But if there’s too much, Taipa’s originality will be gone,” he says.

As yet there appears to be no danger of art overload in Taipa. The village, which resists the gaudy delights of the casinos just a stone’s throw away, still manages to preserve its heritage. But how long will it be before luxury brands begin to see its authenticity as a marketing opportunity?

Wandering through the back streets, one local restaurant is preparing for its evening customers. Its chef takes advantage of the cool late afternoon as he sits in the restaurant’s narrow doorway, slicing and dicing huge bunches of onions and greens.

A few metres away, young and trendy Millennials gather eagerly around the counter of Taipa’s new Japanese store Snaffles, for Hokkaido soft ice cream and fluffy, tangy cheesecake, made from milk imported from Japan. Each item is high end and beautifully presented. Perhaps Taipa’s future has already arrived. If so, will edgy street art be enough to help it retain its wonderful village atmosphere? 📷