

Art Agency, Partners


Art Agency, Partners is a bespoke art advisory firm founded in 2014, and built upon decades of combined experience, to provide counsel to many of the world's leading art collectors and institutions on collection assessment and development, estate planning, and innovative approaches to museum giving and growth.

An Insider's Guide

The A-Z of HK 香港



Still from Wong Kar-Wai *In The Mood For Love* (2000). Photo credit: Jet Tone/Kobal/Rex/Shutterstock

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We have been hearing for years that dealers need to go to Hong Kong because the future of the market is in Asia. There has been a sense of hesitation, with gallery owners sending their directors rather than visiting themselves. This year marks the beginning of a whole new phase.

The collector base has matured significantly; major galleries opening this year such as [David Zwirner](#) and [Hauser & Wirth](#) are here to stay, working hard to cultivate their client bases. And they are only augmenting the existing scene here, which has

been building for years.

It is hard to believe it is already the sixth edition of [Art Basel Hong Kong](#): what a long way it has come. It now seems fair to say that Hong Kong is truly a destination in its own right.

I was going to write my rules for the fair but realized I simply don't know Hong Kong well enough to offer a true insider's insights. So, I turned to our AAP director [Ed Tang](#)—a native of Hong Kong, and a very opinionated one at that—to give you a handy A to Z.

Ed Tang's □ □ □

Art □

The reason we're all here. As the fair and the cultural landscape of the region have evolved and collectors become more discerning, we're seeing more exciting and diverse works of art.

Buffet □ □ □

I am a total fan of the [Mandarin Oriental](#) buffet breakfast in the [Clipper Lounge](#). If you are not disciplined, you will have to be rolled out.

Camera □ □

Selfies are ubiquitous. Let people take pictures!

Duty-free □ □ □ □

Shopping is a national sport in Hong Kong and it is also duty-free. This goes beyond local tailors and cobblers: there is no VAT on art.

Exhibitions □

Don't miss the galleries and pop-up shows around town. There are much-anticipated solo shows opening this week in Hong Kong by the likes of [Mark Bradford](#), [Wolfgang Tillmans](#) and [Jennifer Guidi](#). Dealers are recognizing that the quality of collectors in town this week merits quality work.

Fashion □ □ □

Don't judge people by their clothes. By and large, Hong Kong is a very casual city so the most important collectors and patrons may be dressed like mushroom pickers.

Gamble □ □

Hop on the ferry to Macau, the former Portuguese colony turned gambling center of the East. It is gaudy and glaring, but gloriously so.

Hong Kong's Iron Lady ☐☐

Hong Kong's Chief Executive is a woman, [Carrie Lam](#) (at the last count, there were only 20 female heads of state in the world).

In The Mood for Love ☐☐

Set in Hong Kong in the 1960s, *In The Mood For Love* is simply the most beautiful movie. Director Wong Kar-Wai is a local and international cinematic hero.

Jetlag ☐

If you're coming from Europe or America, the jetlag is crippling. I tend to drink through the pain (water, of course).

Karaoke ☐

Can you even say you have been to Hong Kong if you don't go to karaoke?

Local ☐

Go local: From non-profit organizations like the [Asia Art Archive](#) and [Para Site](#) to local galleries such as [Hanart TZ](#) and [Exit](#), or the artists who live and work here, there is so much talent in the art scene here.

M+☐

This much anticipated [museum](#) is scheduled to fully open next year and its deputy director and chief curator Doryun Chong is talking. Speaking of which, Chong is participating in our panel discussion, "The Future of the Museum", on Thursday 29 March at 11am. Our other guests include Michael Govan (CEO and director, LACMA); Budi Tek (founder, Yuz Museum and Foundation); and our very own Allan Schwartzman. The panel will be introduced by Kevin Ching (CEO, Sotheby's Asia) and moderated by Charlotte Burns (editor, *In Other Words*). RSVP [here](#).

New ☐

There's always something new to discover in Hong Kong, even for a native like me. Venture out of the convention centre: new art, new friends and new shoes await.

Opium ☐

Hong Kong became a British colony as a result of the Opium Wars in the 19th-century. Through trade, this once-small fishing port is now a Special Administrative Region and has more skyscrapers than any other city in the world.

Pollution ☐

Hong Kong literally translates as the fragrant harbor (hard to believe, given the smog).

Question

Most asked question this week: "How much?"

Rules

To navigate the fair efficiently, look up Allan's art fair [rules](#).

Superstition

Superstitions and feng shui may be factors in peoples' decision-making. Consult your own numerologist to avoid incident or offense.

Touch

Feel free to tell people not to touch the art.

Umbrella

It will likely rain, so you'll need one. This humble object is also a poignant symbol for the Umbrella Movement, the series of street protests in Hong Kong in 2014.

Victoria

While Victoria Peak has wonderful and well-trodden trails, there are other less obvious hiking options and scenic splendor. Country parks and nature reserves make up 40% of the land in Hong Kong, so there is plenty of room to roam beyond the concrete jungle.

WeChat

The new business card. Download it, if you haven't already, because it is the most essential tool for networking in the region.

X-rated

Steer clear of dodgy massage parlors. Instead, head to the massage mecca [Ten Feet Tall](#) (where the endings are happy in a different way).

Yum cha

There are countless places to enjoy the Cantonese tradition of a brunch of dim-sum and tea. Be sure to indulge.

Zzz

I don't know about you, but I am already planning a long nap after this week.

