

COMIC & ILLUSTRATION

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Comic art is a form of sociology.

Comics portray lives of daily folks, life attitudes and social observations. When comics infiltrate society, the information delivered makes complicated topics easy to digest, transforming into a city's unique sub-culture. Comics are personal art and through feelings and emotions, convey messages with other like-minded people.

Readers can get a sense of other people's lives, enter into an imaginary world and even connect or sympathise with the characters in the comics transcending one generation to the next. For example, girls growing up in the 60s would find inspiration from the different images of Miss 13 Dots created by Theresa Lee Wei-chun, learn to be an independent, optimistic and fashionable woman with a girl's heart. Boys who read Old Master Q at the barber's would imagine themselves as one of the main characters. Embark on a journey with Old Master Q, Mr. Chin and Big Potato to explore 'intriguing and curious happenings' on the street. Get mad with the injustices when you read Zunzi's editorial cartoons on social affairs, smile at the watercolour illustrations of K.Y. Chan or be touched by the relationship between father and son in Cowboy.

Illustrations and cartoons on politics and satire comics of our times are closely related to the development of a nation, its people and the history of modern China. From late Qing dynasty to present day, the importance of comics and history cannot be denied. Despite their hard work and dedication, local illustrators and cartoonists were considered as alternative or non-mainstream and not regarded as 'real' artists among the local creative industries for many years.

Drawing Life

In the 60s, Wuxia Comics represented a genre of popular picture books of sequential drawings loved by readers throughout the Greater China for many decades. Tony Wong Yuk-long, Ma Wing-shing, Seung-gun Siu-bo and Tung Pui-san used visual aesthetics to bring out the fantasy of kung fu and other Chinese martial arts. Each artist had their own unique style, creating new inspirations among the local comics industry.

Hailed as the 'posterist', Yuen Tai-yung is known for his creation of the covers of Yuk Long Comics as well as iconic posters which included many films from Hui Brothers, Sammo Hung, Jacky Chan and Cinema City studio. He single-handedly depicted the look and feel of what can be described as the golden era of Hong Kong cinema from 70s to early 90s. Each character came alive under Yuen's vivid depiction and unique illustrative style. In 2017, Hui see-wai's documentary The Posterist captured the life and art of this self-taught genius and later in the year, Yuen was awarded the 36th Hong Kong Film Awards Professional Achievement Award in recognition of his contribution to the film industry. On the other hand, Ah Chung's watercolours reflect his philosophies on life and emotions that touch your heart and soul.

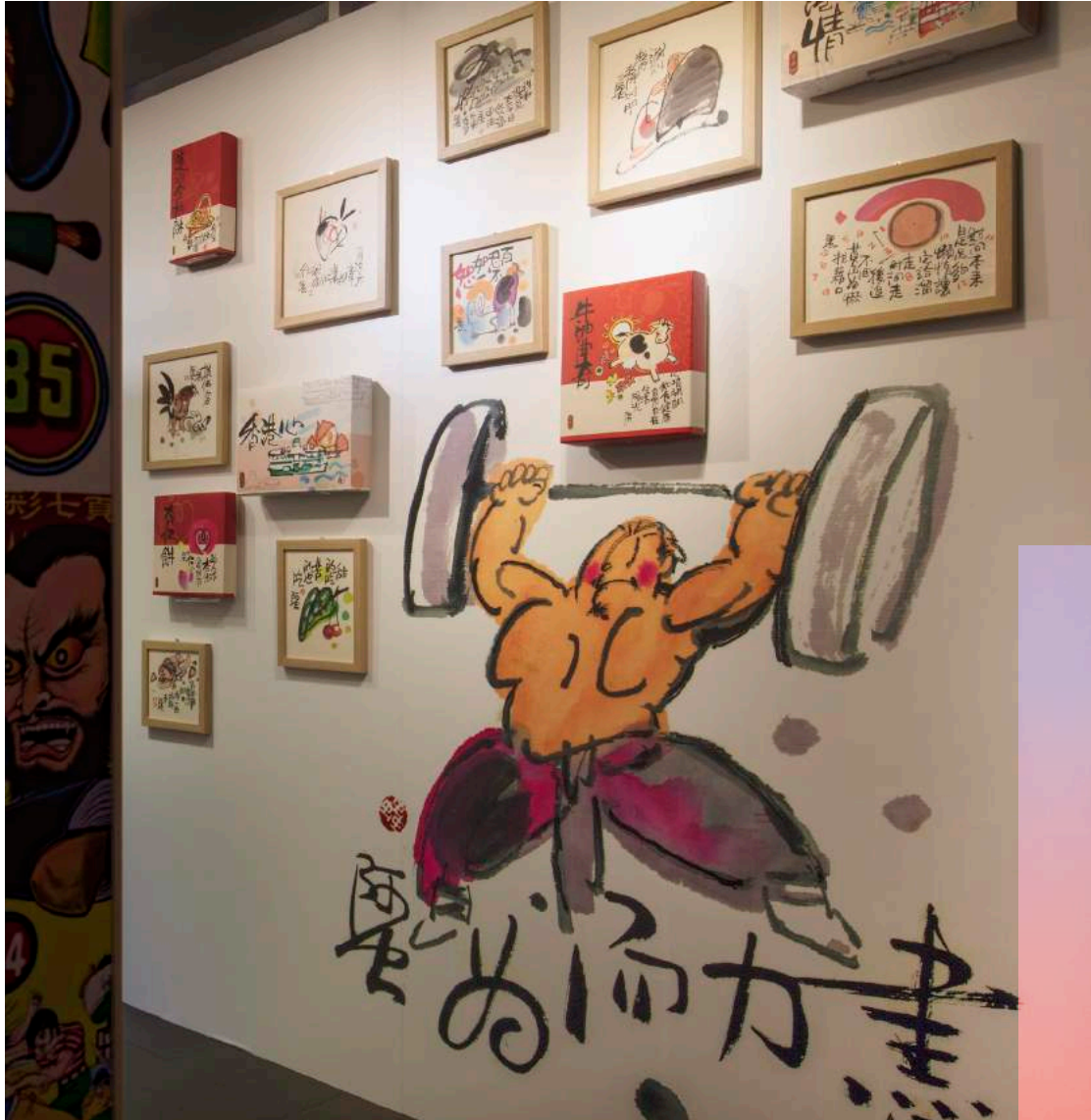
Approaching the end of the 20th century, we are seeing an emergence of new comic artists. These newcomers are not afraid of voicing their opinions on local politics and current affairs in different media, and are constantly testing the boundaries of social acceptance. With the popularisation of social media, many trained in graphic art, manga, anime and illustration bring with them new skills to convey their own messages through these new art forms.

Craig Au-yeung is one of the new generations of illustrators. His work portrays city life using personal encounters. McMug showcases the history and current affairs of Hong Kong and have melted the hearts of many locals. New independent comic anthologies include Spring Roll and Cockroach. Through the power of comics, this artistic way of storytelling offered a sounding board for all levels of society. Rather than just concepts, comics serve as a messenger and announcer of current issues to increase social awareness.

Our encounters in life are like the 4 or 6 frames we see in comics. One never knows what happens next. Whether absurd or funny, comics describe a chapter of local life in Hong Kong.

Ah Chung

Watercolour Paintings



At a young age, Yim Yee King (Ah Chung) moved from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. He learnt painting at the age of 19 and experienced life's suffering and happiness especially among the grassroots. He started to create and publish works from 1984 with the pseudonym Ah Chung. After drawing political cartoons for 20 years, he came to embrace the imperfection of life and started drawing Zen-themed ink brush comics. Down to earth but also profoundly philosophical, his comics convey positive messages that tackle many life challenges with one smile at a time.



Craig Au Yeung

My Own Private Heaven

In the 1990s, a new and diverse group of comic artists and illustrators were trained by art and design schools in Hong Kong. Among them, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Design-trained Craig Au Yeung has published comic novels including his debut work *Borderline*, a compilation of comic columns which appeared in *City Magazine*. His passion for comics stems from reading Bruce Lee and *Little Rascal* when he was young. His later comic series *My Own Private Heaven* captures the absurdity and helplessness of everyday life, delivers a subtle flair of poetry and wisdom, Au Yeung's diversified narratives and perspectives, sometimes ambiguous and sometimes forthright, allow the readers' imagination fly beyond the four walls amid the concrete jungle.

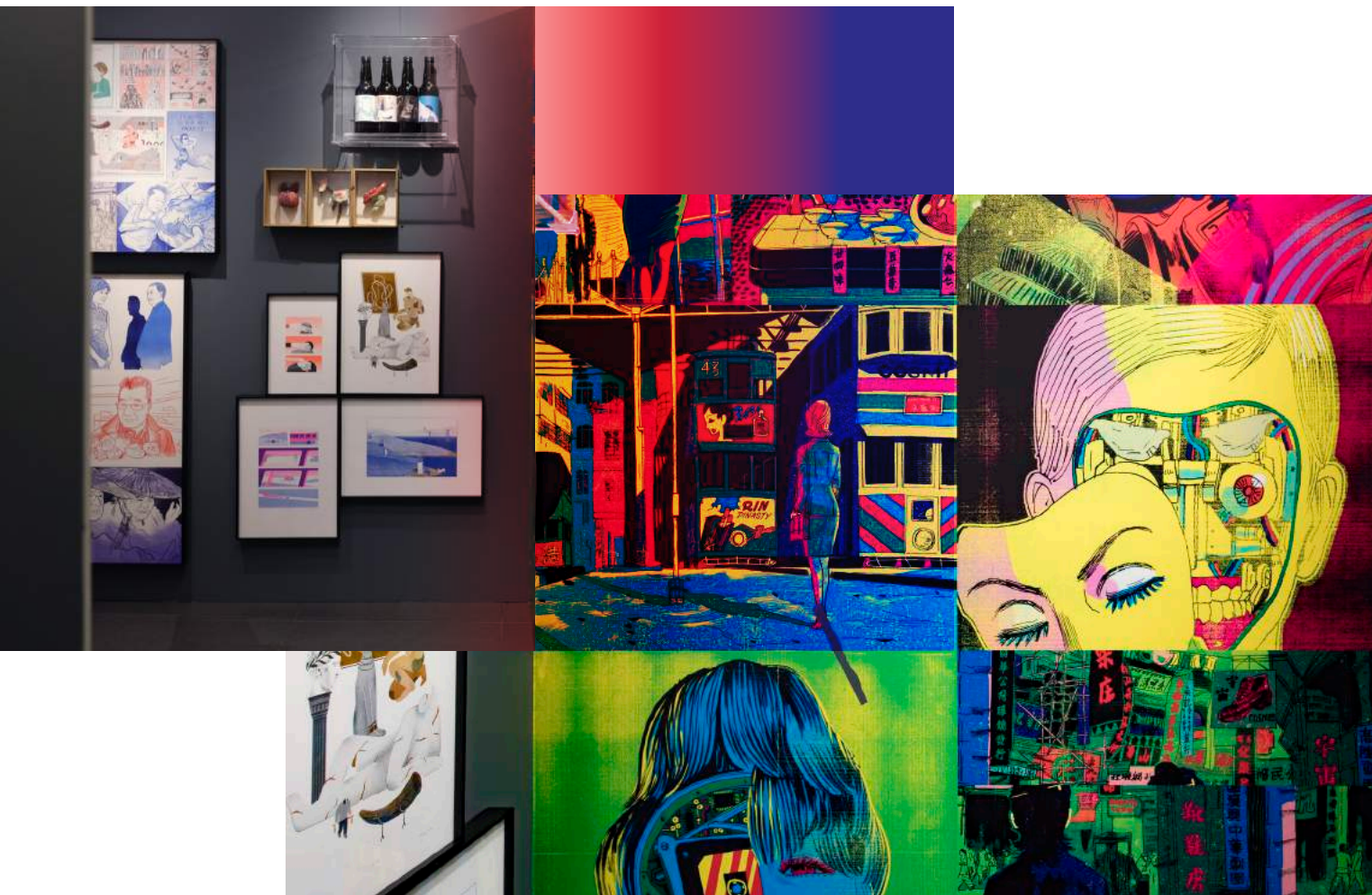


"I particularly admired the Out There Series of Craig Au-yeung. He represents the experience and helplessness people encountered in modern society within four little grids. He also inspired many new generation comic artists to create their works with a variety of topics and techniques."

— Stanley Wong

KongKee / PingPong

New Generation of Comic Art



As Hong Kong's newest crop of comic artists and illustrators, these young talents build their brand of art through publications, exhibitions, competitions, collaborations with artists in other media, and promotion on social media both locally and internationally. Their themes and styles are as varied as their own backgrounds.

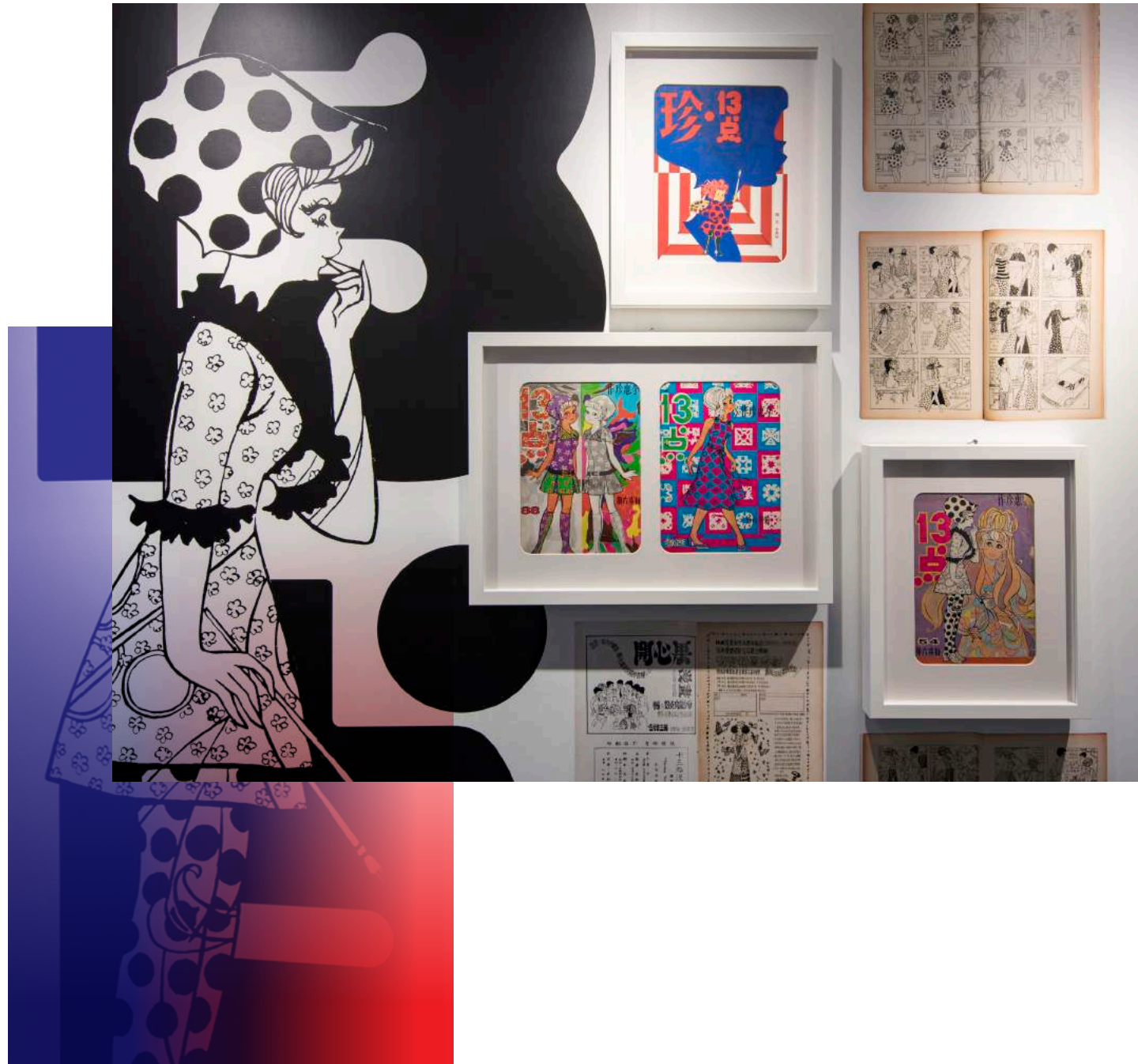
KongKee's Departure is an animated film fusing sci-fi with historical elements. The story depicts King Huai of Chu Kingdom and his minister Qu Yuan from the Warring States period riding a Kowloon-Canton Railway diesel-powered train to Hong Kong. KongKee collaborated with three animation production houses in Hong Kong, namely Nine Monkeys Workshop, Penguin Lab, and Zcratch for this project, which was funded by CreateHK and crowdsourcing. Departure is a much-anticipated animated feature made with Hong Kong elements, Hong Kong talents, and Hong Kong capital.

Ping Pong is an independent comic and illustration anthology featuring emerging Hong Kong comic artists and illustrators. Its formation was inspired by Springrollllll, hoping to make an independent and unique voice by joining forces, resulting in works that are highly experimental.

Theresa Lee Wai-chun

Miss 13 Dots

Theresa Lee's Miss 13 Dots was a biweekly comic book series popular among pre-teen girls in Hong Kong and Macau in the 60s and 70s. Lee created her first comic series of which the protagonist was a fashionable lady, and Miss 13 Dots was created a year later. The beloved eponymous heroine, Miss 13 Dots, was a teenage socialite donning the latest fashion with as many as 1,728 outfits and joined her friends for all kinds of adventures that made use of her brilliant problem solving and social skills. Through Miss 13 Dots, Theresa Lee projected an image of an independent and self-possessed young woman, of which she is also a living example. In the late 70s, Lee retired the character and began drawing comics and illustration in colour for a self-published children's periodical.



Ma Wing-shing

Chinese Hero / Fung Wan



Ma Wing-shing is among the most famous comic artists in Hong Kong. Since working at the age of 14, Ma's realist drawing style was hugely influenced by Japanese comic books. The huge success of his comic series, Chinese Hero, made many teenagers and working-class readers scramble for the latest copies at the newsstand every week. Ma is Hong Kong's first comic artist organising his solo exhibition. His series Fung Wan is considered his masterpiece as readers are riveted by its remarkable combination of martial arts, science fiction, and mythological motifs. Fung Wan remains to this date the bestselling comic book series in history. Ma's realism and complex plot development redefined Hong Kong wuxia comics and its influence is still felt today in popular culture, through adaptations of the two series into TV drama, film, dance theatre and musical.

Alfonso Wong / Joseph Wong Chak

Old Master Q

Sweeping in the Chinese world for more than half a century, Old Master Q comic series is Hong Kong's most long-lived comic. Alfonso Wong who passed away in 2017 used the name of his eldest son Wong Chak as his pseudonym, and now Wong Chak himself has inherited his father's legacy and continued to illustrate the Old Master Q. The absurdity of the city life and everyday encounter of the ordinary people all become inspirations of this six-panel grid comic. His humorous yet sarcastical brush strokes trained up the skill of painting and writing simultaneously.

Donning his signature master scholar garb and eyeglasses, albeit in a comical fashion, Old Master Q often got into fights with members of street gangs. He, and other characters, Big Potato and Mr. Chin portray Hong Kong street life in the 1970s with a humorous twist. In one of Wong's comic strips, Old Master Q reads, eats, watches television and sleeps in a small room where all furniture can be folded up and hidden in the wall. The comic strip seems to have accurately predicted the arrival of nano apartments decades later, which have become an unattainable dream for many young potential buyers. Wong's comic strip always managed to find humour even in the least favourable times. Children and young adults in the 70s and 80s grew up with Old Master Q. It has been repeatedly made into television, movies, animation and theatre performance.

Among the headings for the six-panel comic strips, "Intriguing and Curious" seems to be the most memorable with its many layers of meanings. The lack of explicit expression sometimes threw the readers a curve. Perhaps life is more interesting with its unexpected twists and turns. Alfonso Wong once jokingly said he used this title when he could not think of any appropriate headings, and he decided to leave room for readers' imagination.



"The behavior and attitude of a character in comics may not resemble you and me. In fact, I have never seen a person like Old Master Q who behaves ridiculously unconventional. To me, comics are a continuing habit in my life. Old Master Q is not only my spiritual food it also provides an alternative perspective of life."

— Stanley Wong



Wong Sze-ma

Cowboy

Cowboy's father, a character nicknamed the Godfather, was a sidekick in the comic book series Old Master Q. The publisher of Ming Pao Daily Jin Yong encouraged Wong Sze-ma, (real name was Wong Wing-hing) who worked for the newspaper, to develop the character for a serial comic strip. As Wong's son was born, he drew inspiration from the joy of fatherhood and the character Cowboy was created. The comic took on the bond between father and son, or a never-ending situation comedy set in Wong's family. Despite the rare use of dialogue, this four-panel comic strip is sweet and moving.

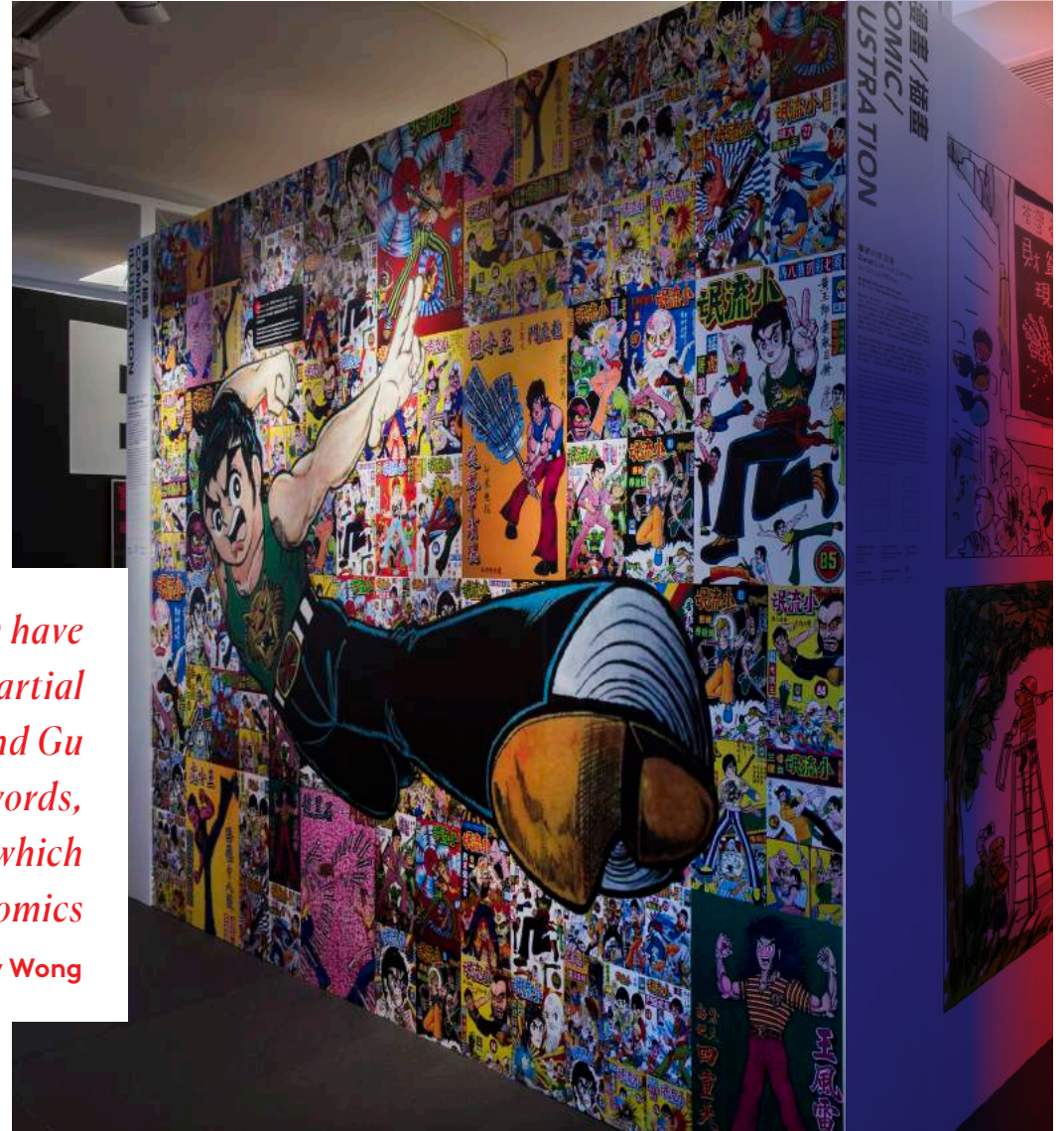


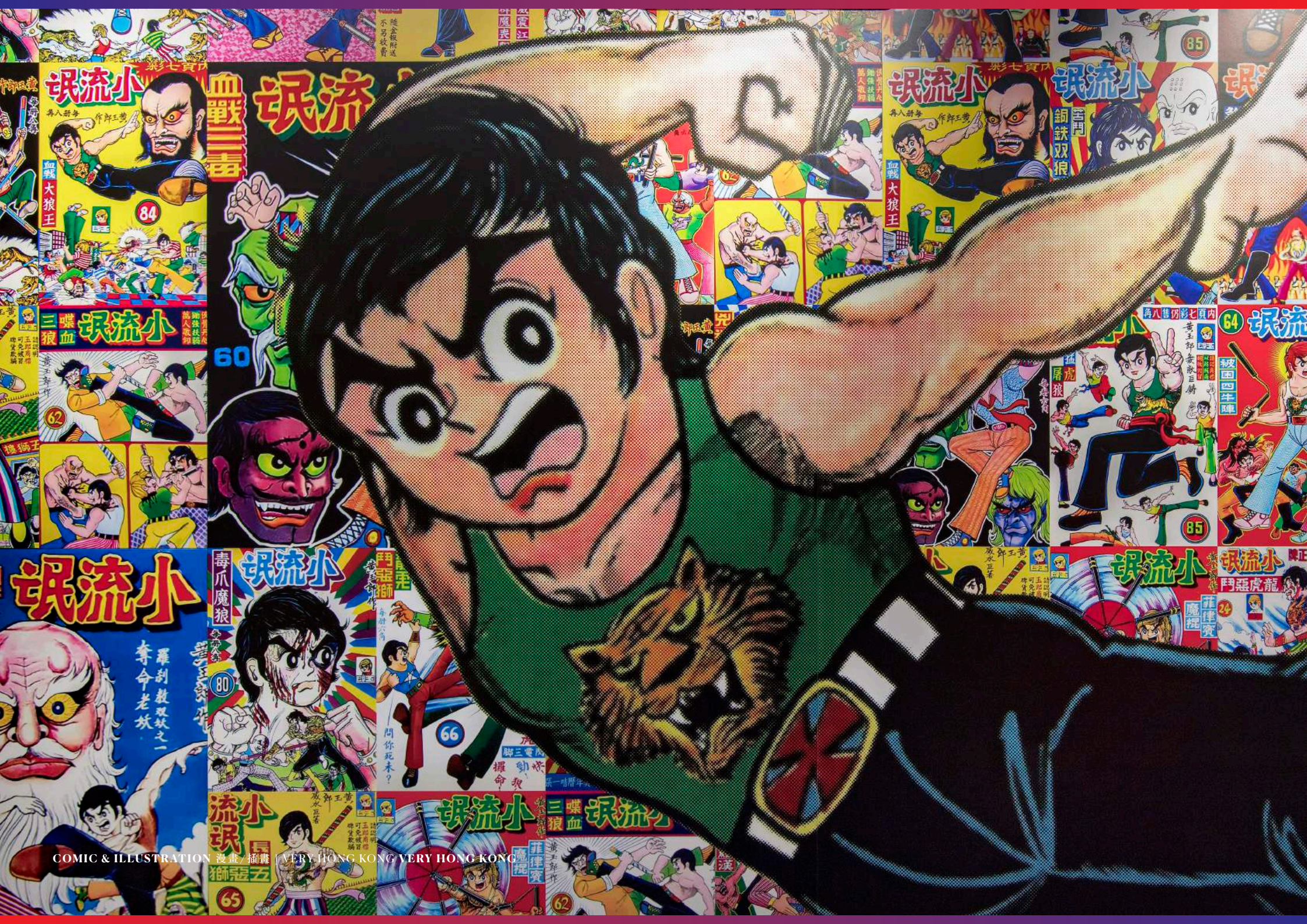
Tony Wong Yuk-long

Little Rascals / Oriental Heroes

Speaking of 'immortal fighting spirit' of Hong Kong, Tony Wong Yuk-long is definitely a perfect role model. As a poor boy at the age of 13, he debuted the mysterious and science fictional work. In 1970, he created the comic series Little Rascals (later renamed as Oriental Heroes), playing up the youth gang violence set in Hong Kong's public housing estates, and a large readership was drawn to the rebellious characters. Wong has turned the creation of comic into systemisation, master-protégé training, and division of labour, earning him two billion dollars. In 1987, he went bankrupt due to the stock market crash. In 1993, he gained popularity and fortune again by launching Weapon of the Gods. When the comic book publishing has become a sunset industry, he stepped into the online comics, earning him an annual income of over 100 million dollars and created a new era of Hong Kong. He is considered a representative of the Hong Kong spirit.

"It is fascinating how the Americans have Heavy Metal while we have "Oriental Martial Arts Hero", Tony Wong. Louis Cha and Gu Long presented Chinese martial arts by words, but Wong represented it by pictures, which drew readers to the amazing world of comics from imagination." - Stanley Wong





Spring Rolllll / Cockroach

Comic Anthologies

In 1998, Craig Au Yeung created a creative platform. Rather than publishing works attributable to a single author, he edited a quarterly comic book entitled Cockroach, which features comic artists from the Greater China Region. Cockroach connected the comic artists and comics magazines from Hong Kong and Switzerland, and hosted an exhibition in Switzerland. In 2004, Craig Au Yeung, Chihoi, Siuhak, Eric So and Yeung Hok Tak formed the collective 'Spring Rolllll' and co-published comic anthologies under the same name. Each story is themed about a word that starts with S: sweet, success, slow, softs, sad, sorrow and situation tragedy. Each uses his unique skill and style to illustrate the cultural spirit of Hong Kong, redefining the multifaceted urban lifestyle.



Springrolllll — Craig Au Yeung / Chihoi / Siuhak / Eric So /Yeung Hok Tak

Cockroach — Nick Lee + a Maze Workshop / Amazing Twins / Craig Au Yeung / C.C.Chan & A.Gi / K.Y. Chan / Chan Chung / Jim Chu / Percy Chung / David Cow / Fat Fish / K.C. Ho / K.F. Ho / John Ho / Mei-yi Hsu / Keung / Koo Koo / Pauline Lam / Lily Lau / Pui-yee Lau Gukzik / Vincent Lau / Lau Ching Ping / Woody Lee / Li Chi Tak / LTT Wing / [miau] / Mr.China / Niejun / Psychotic Humanoid / Richard / Ted / Marco Wong / M Wong / Yeung Hok Tak / Maggie Yung / Clark Yung

Yuen Tai-yung

Illustration Portfolio

“In 1970, my first job was working as a junior assistant in Grant Advertising Company, whereas Yuen Tai-yung was a superhero in studio in cases of an emergency. At that time, we produced a lot of advertisement storyboards and Yuen could draw as fast as lightning with gifted hands . He could produced six to seven storyboards in a day.” — Alan Chan



Yuen Tai-yung is one of the first generation Hong Kong illustrators to have mastered the art of caricatures. His works encompassed movie posters, advertisements, comic magazine covers, portraits, sketches, and satirical comics. In 1975, Yuen's caricatures of Michael and Sam Hui for the popular comedy film *The Last Message* enticed audience to see the movie and established him as the best-known movie 'posterist' in Hong Kong. Yuen worked his way up from the bottom of the advertising industry and contributed to the golden times of Hong Kong film industry. His training and experience allowed him to create illustrations that succinctly captured the aura and spirit of the subject. After his retirement in 1992, he has continued to create. Among Yuen's works, the portraits of Bruce Lee on the posters for *Way of the Dragon*, *Fist of Fury*, and *Big Boss* are the artist's favourites. This series also earned him international recognition.

Zunzi

Editorial Comics on Social Affairs

Wong Kee-kwan, known under his pseudonym Zunzi, is the most prominent political comic artist during the 80s and 90s of the 20th century. Zunzi was trained at the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Fine Arts Department, and embarked on a career as comic artist in 1983 to take over a column in Ming Pao Daily as Wong Sze-ma, creator of Cowboy comics, passed away.

Same as all other popular overseas editorial cartoons on social affairs, Zunzi's works are known to deliver punch and draw attention to the crux of the subject matter. The works are also characterised by the skillful use of allegories and metaphors on current affairs. His single-panel or four-panel comics, often in the form of moral or social protest, have inspired the millennials to draw their own comics and express their views towards current affairs on social media. In the period of handover, Hong Kong people's worries grew over the uncertain future, comics on social affairs with black humour have become a remedy for the society that put a sarcastic smile on readers' faces.



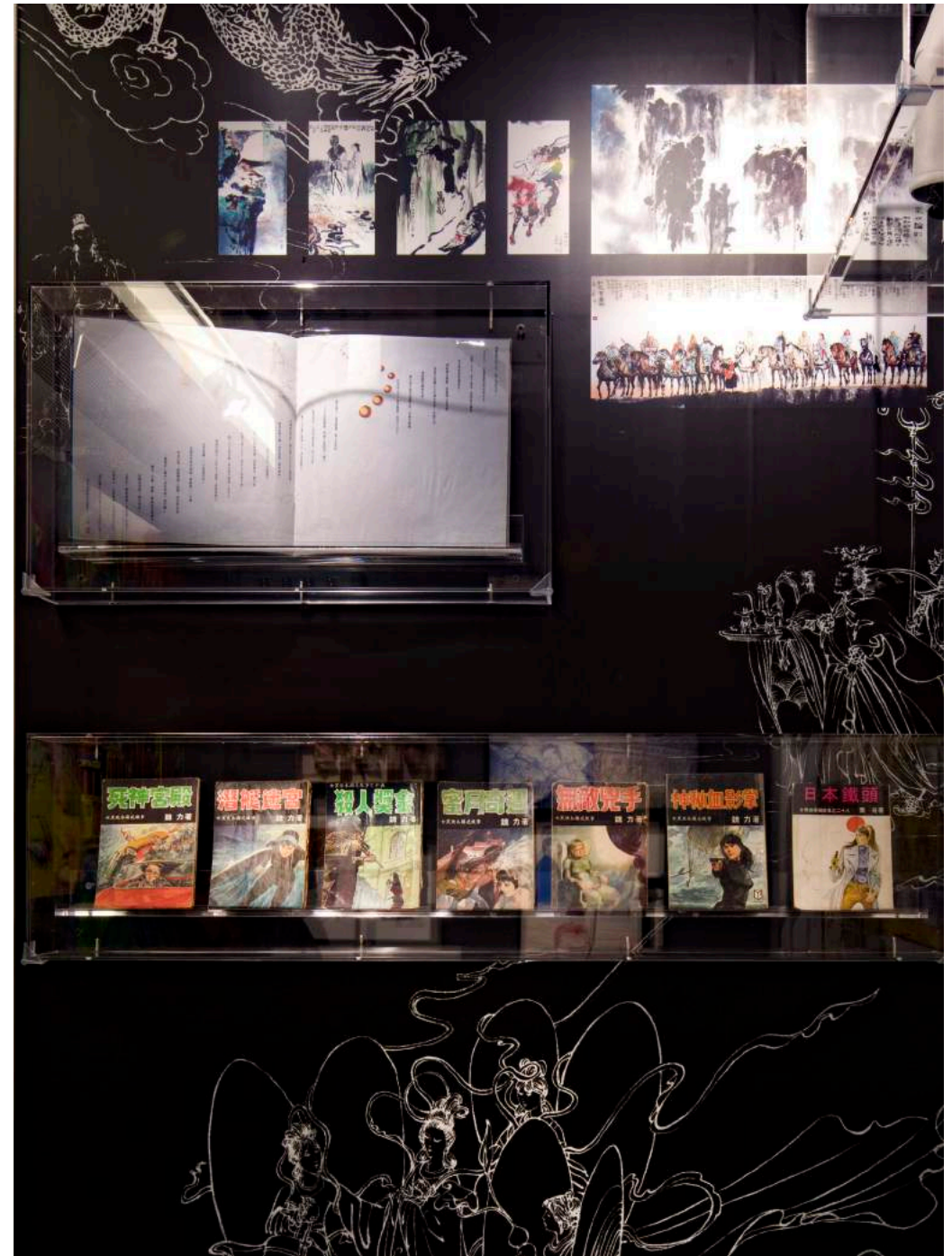
“Single grid cartoons created by Zunzi discuss a social issue each day. The picture contains many critical and thought-provoking implied message, providing inspiration to Hong Kong people in busy everyday life.” — Stanley Wong

Tung Pui-san

Illustrations for Wuxia Novel Series

Tung Pui-san is a highly versatile artist who is best known for his book covers and illustrations for Jin Yong's wuxia novel series. At the age of 15, he moved from Guangzhou to Hong Kong and became apprentice to two separate Lingnan Chinese painters Choi Dai-ho and Yang Shan-chen, who were themselves apprentice to Gao Qi-feng. When he was 17, he was drawing illustrations for many Hong Kong wuxia comic serials. In 1961, he worked as art director for Hong Kong Film Co., and started to do illustrations for film posters and marketing collaterals. In the 70s, he contributed to various newspaper and magazines, pointing out problems in the society through commoners' perspective. As an artist with a massive output, he produced over 300,000 works in his career.

After he relocated to Canada in the late 80s, he began drawing ink paintings in large scale for Jin Yong's famous wuxia novel series to much acclaim. Most recently, his artistic endeavors reached new heights as he began illustrating Chinese classics, such as the Dream of the Red Chamber and The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. His art straddles classics and popular culture and has influenced many commercial artists who continue to follow in his footsteps.



K.Y. Chan

Wanderer's Gaze Watercolour Series



Kai-yin Chan, who goes by his initials K.Y., is an illustrator and visual artist with 30 years of experience under his belt. He is known for his works in many genres, including comics, art installations, art critiques, and paintings. K.Y. was a graduate of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and has taught at many higher education institutions, nurturing the next generation of illustrators.

K.Y. wandered around the streets and back alleys of Hong Kong to collect carton boxes that had been disposed of. He painted a series of cityscape on those packaging materials. His fine art contrasts with the commercial packaging, so that actual objects collected from the streets are processed to become a piece of art that represents the very same streets these raw objects were found on. K.Y.'s watercolour paintings on actual objects found on the streets, offers us a fresh take on urban impression. In 2005, his visual art exhibition Wanderer's Gaze was held. In 2009, K.Y. published a book entitled Pencil and Eraser with writer Yan Pat-to. K.Y.'s illustrations and Yan's texts accentuate each other's impact.



Alice Mak / Brian Tse

McMug



Another graduate of Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Design, Alice Mak, along with writer Brian Tse, created the comic book characters McMug, and his cousin, McDull, and their family and friends. Depicting the story about the kindergarten school life, McMug series started as 'fairy tales for adults' publishing on coloured pages in Ming Pao Weekly, later themed more suitable for children and published in the children supplement Little Ming Pao Weekly which was developed into children magazine entitled The Yellow Bus in 1993 with McMug continued to be featured. It was later developed as an independent published comic book series. At the beginning McMug series targeted adults and intellectuals, it has later become beloved characters among children. As Mak describes her art as being on the 'peripheral' of the comics world, the artists duo aim to provide an alternative to comics art with a fresh take on urban life. As naïve and innocent as the characters may seem, some serious social topics are often touched on. These were made into a series of commercial products and animation movies that reflect the Hong Kong spirit.

Danny Yung

Tian Tian Xiang Shang

Danny Yung returned to Hong Kong from United States in the late 70s and began his lifelong commitment across different fields of arts, including experimental films, comic art, art installations, video art, performing arts and conceptual art. In the 70s, Yung was surprised to see the Chinese slogan 'Tian Tian Xiang Shang', meaning making progress every day, boldly written on the walls of every elementary school in China. He was so intrigued by the expression that he borrowed it as the title for his comic drawings. And the boy character naturally took the name Tian Tian. Comics are often seen as a product of popular culture as well as storytelling for the new generation. In his Tian Tian Xiang Shang comic series, all speech and thought bubbles are intentionally left blank. Yung questions and redefines the narrative form of comics and in doing so, this mental attitude makes one rethink the perspectives on position, space, narrative framework and communication structure.

