



Hong Kong Fiesta

EDUCATION Recent printmaking MA graduate, Gini Wade, describes her experiences as a student representative at Hong Kong's annual graphics festival celebrating prints and printmaking

The annual *Hong Kong Graphic Fiesta* is an ambitious international event with a different focus every year. In 2010 it promoted exchange between print studios; the 2011 theme was student printmaking. Universities worldwide were approached to enter student work. Paul Croft RE, head of printmaking at Aberystwyth School of Art, Wales, entered ten students and I was fortunate to be selected. My pieces were made for my MA show in 2010: a lithograph of sequential images of a dancing skeleton, plus an animation, both entitled *Stone Bone Boogie*.¹

The students' exhibition was titled *Xin Yi Dai* (*New Generation*). Its venue was Sha Tin Town Hall, before touring central Hong Kong galleries. Imaginatively hung from a brightly painted framework, the standard was high. All methods were represented, including animations and 'printinstallations'. The work came from the UK, Australia, Brazil, Spain, Malaysia, Canada, USA, the Czech Republic, Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China. The many prints from China were mainly large reliefs and lithographs, technically very impressive.

Hong Kong Open Printshop

The *Graphic Fiesta* is organized by the Hong Kong Open Printshop, a non-government, not-for-profit organization run by and for printmakers. It was founded in 2000 by Yung Sau Mui (trained at Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque) and Fung Ho-yin (photographer making gum-bichromate prints) with fellow Hong Kong printmakers. After difficulties due to lack of city space

and high rents, the studio is at the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre, Kowloon, with three full-time employees and funded on a project basis.

They say there is little support for printmaking in Hong Kong, but they have built up collaborative networks with government cultural bodies such as the Art Promotion Office, Hong Kong Visual Art Centre and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, all of which were involved in the Fiesta. This year they collaborated with mainland China, through the Guan Shanuye Art Museum, Shenzhen, which hosted the *Xin Yi Dai* show to coincide with the 26th Summer World University Games. The museum specializes in contemporary Chinese prints.

The Printshop's objectives are: community art, art education and professional exchange. Besides the *Graphic Fiesta*, it runs impressive events such as workshops responding to an exhibition at Hong Kong Heritage Museum: *Imprint of the Heart: The Artistic Journey of Huang Xin-Bo* – a leading figure of the New Woodblock Movement of the 1930s whose prints reflected social and political concerns.

This year's *Fiesta: Youth Impressions*, will show work by secondary school children. Fung Ho-yin and Yung Sau Mui feel that print's status in Hong Kong is precarious compared to mainland China, where students follow four-year courses devoted to it. While such intensive studies ensure high technical standards, I heard (from mainland and Hong Kong Chinese) that competitive pressure can cause a narrow focus in Chinese student prints, whereas the Hong Kong equivalent is more playful and experimental.

Student Sharing

I spent a week in Hong Kong. At the official opening, we student speakers were whisked around to meet the organizers, visit the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and consume two large banquets. Two days were devoted to talks and demonstrations at the well equipped Hong Kong Visual Art Centre. I demonstrated etching, processing and printing aluminium ball-grained litho plates – with difficulties, probably due to the humidity. 'Hong Kong is litho hell!' according to Yung Sau Mui. As a mature student I was a novelty as, apparently, such do not exist in Hong Kong. Other speakers were from the University of the West of England; Queensland University of Technology; Hong Kong Polytechnic University; Hong Kong Art School; and the School of Printmaking, Xian Art Academy, China. There were demonstrations of photo-etching by John Lynch of UWE, relief printing and experiences of making animations from prints by Hong Kong and mainland students.

I was so impressed by Yung Sau Mui, Fung Ho-yin and their team who put so much work into the Fiesta. Their determination to ensure print flourishes in Hong Kong is admirable.

Gini Wade now teaches at the Sidney Nolan Trust, Presteigne, Wales. She is an independent artist/printmaker and a director of Aberystwyth Printmakers

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Notes

- 1 Gini Wade's animation can be seen on YouTube – search for *Stone Bone Boogie*.
- 2 To see the online catalogue, click on issuu.com and search for hkop. HKOP also has a Facebook page with photos of the Fiesta

Images, left to right

Gini Wade demonstrating plate lithography at the Hong Kong Visual Art Centre
Serve Mao by Cheung Wai-ming of Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Screenprint
The Associated Landscape – Water VI by Li Chang-xing of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, China. Lithograph