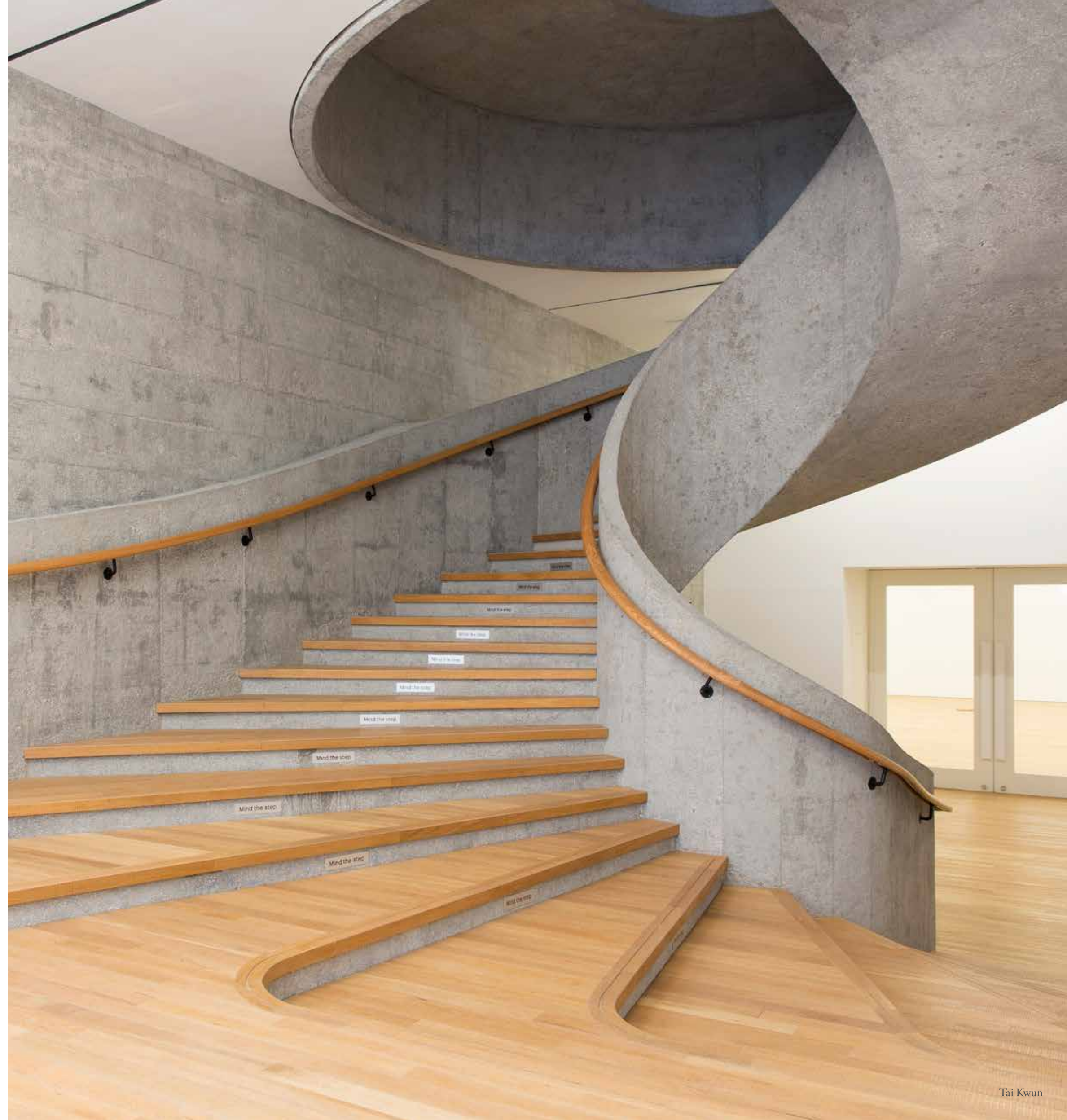


FROM THE EMERGING TO THE ESTABLISHED: *A Guide To Hong Kong's Most Exciting Arts And Cultural Venues*

TEXT: KATE FARR

Long since known as a dyed-in-the-wool city of commerce, these days Hong Kong is evolving into Asia's foremost arts and culture hub. With an ever-growing roll-call of international art fairs – including the prestigious Art Basel – making the city their regional base each year; along with a diverse assortment of new galleries, museums, theatres and major heritage restoration projects, it seems that Hong Kong is finally emphatically embracing its rich cultural community. We take a look at eight of the city's most significant spots – new and old – in which to fully immerse yourself in Hong Kong's inimitable brand of creativity.





Tai Kwun



Tai Kwun



PMQ

THE EMERGING

Tai Kwun

A walled compound in the heart of Central comprising the former Central Police Station, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison, Tai Kwun ('The Big Station' in Cantonese) was originally established by the British forces in 1841. After its eventual decommission in 2006, the site, by this time a declared monument, underwent ten years of detailed consultation before settling on the final Herzog & de Meuron architectural plan for its renovation.

Since throwing open its beautifully-restored doors to visitors in May 2018, Tai Kwun has quickly become the city's *de facto* centre for heritage and arts, with the not-for-profit site offering large public spaces, guided heritage tours, community exhibitions and performing arts programmes, that attract culture-hungry residents and visitors alike. The expansive site is also home to Tai Kwun Contemporary, the project's signature art programme, which brings 1,500 square metres of prime gallery space to this Central location, along with a wide range of public installations and sculptures dotted throughout the grounds. With a strong focus on contemporary art, Tai Kwun Contemporary will host six to eight curated exhibitions per year, further cementing Hong Kong's burgeoning reputation as an exciting new centre of modern art.

10 Hollywood Road, Central; +852 3559 2600
taikwun.hk

PMQ

Just a little further along Hollywood Road lies another significant heritage site that has been given a new, artistic lease on life. PMQ – the former Hong Kong Police Married Quarters – opened in 2014 with a remit to offer the city's vibrant creative community an opportunity to showcase their work to a wider audience, while delivering a unique and accessible cultural experience to visitors.

At the heart of the grade-three listed complex, PMQ's airy courtyard plays host to a year-round programme of pop-up art exhibitions, craft marketplaces and workshops, flanked on either side by imposing former accommodation blocks, Staunton and Aberdeen. Wandering these blocks, visitors can truly get a sense of the building's former purpose, with industrial features retained throughout. But the real draw here comes from within the site's many shops and studios. Selling artisan-made and small batch products that run the gamut from handmade shoes to eco-friendly paint, PMQ's stores and galleries showcase the very best of thoughtful local craftsmanship.

35 Aberdeen Street, Central; +852 2870 2335
pmq.org.hk



M+ Pavilion



Xiqu Centre

West Kowloon Cultural District

An evolving development, and certainly one that is unprecedented in scale, the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is set to become one of the world's largest cultural quarters as it launches on a rolling basis between now and 2021. Spanning 40 hectares of reclaimed waterfront land, the development comprises an array of ambitious cultural and artistic attractions with an emphatically Asia-centred approach.

Scheduled for completion in 2019, M+ will be the district's flagship attraction. A magnificent museum of contemporary visual culture, M+ will showcase predominantly Hong Kong, Chinese and Asian works, emphasising the art world's corresponding shift in focus to this fast-paced and ever-evolving region. Further underscoring this regional emphasis, the neighbouring Xiqu Centre's striking design is modelled on traditional paper lanterns, and is Hong Kong's new centre for Chinese theatre. Meanwhile, housing three auditoria, the largest of which can seat an audience of up to 1,450, The Lyric Theatre is set to produce the best of local and international dance and dramatic productions, while the nearby Hong Kong Palace Museum dedicates 7,600 square metres of gallery space to gold, jade, bronze and ceramic Chinese artefacts. This ambitious collection of world-class cultural destinations will be surrounded by public parkland and two kilometres of waterfront promenade, seamlessly integrating this once-disused site into Kowloon's thriving residential and tourist areas.

West Kowloon; +852 2200 0217
westkowloon.bk



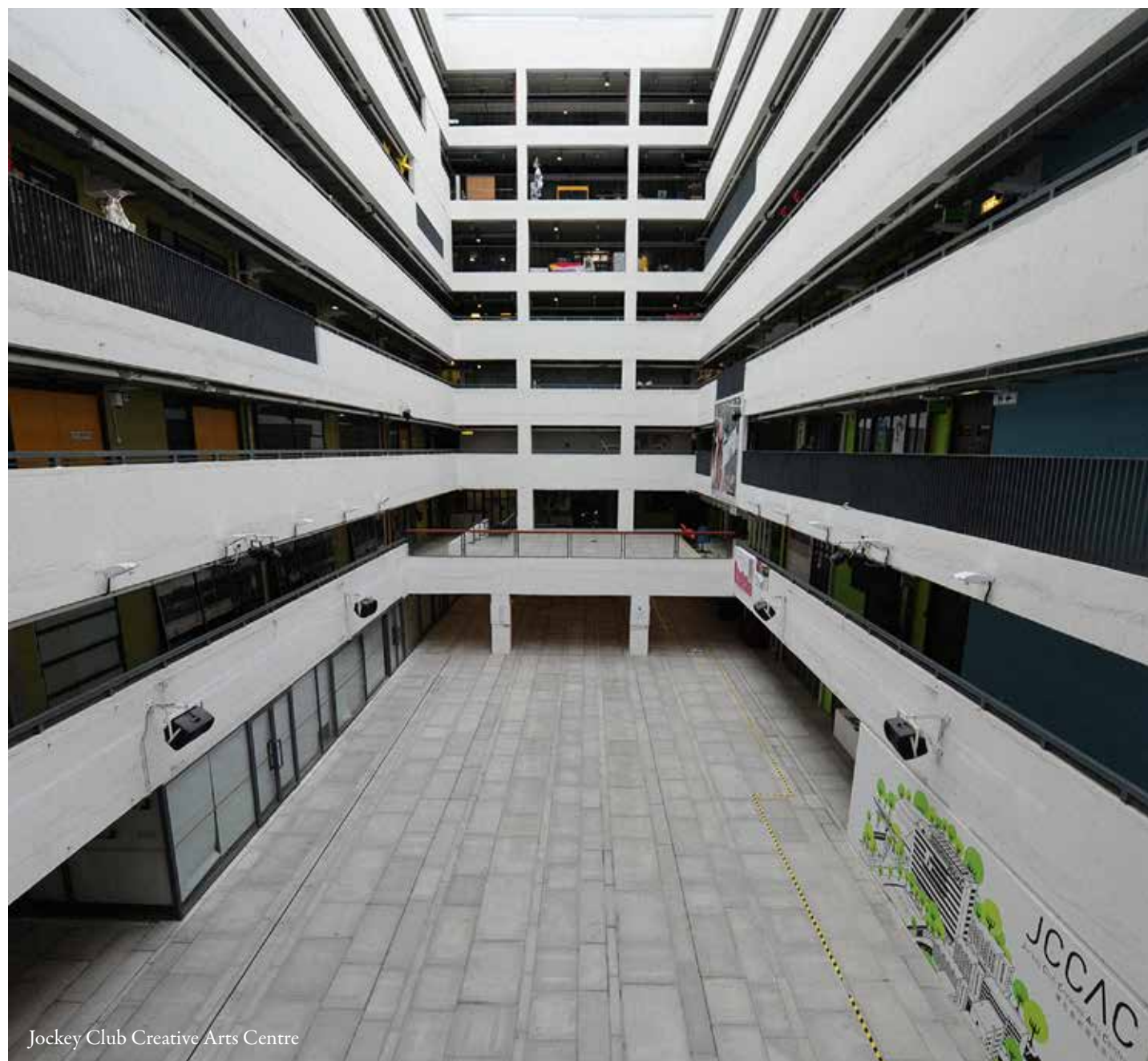
The Mills

Spearheaded by property developer Nan Fung Group as a living tribute to Hong Kong's textile industry, The Mills redevelopment has transformed this former Tsuen Wan industrial building into one of the New Territories' leading cultural hubs. The development consists of "techstyle" lab The Mills Fabrica; retail and education space The Mills Shopfloor, and the Centre for Heritage, Arts & Textile (CHAT), which focuses on public exhibitions, workshops and co-learning programmes.

Conservation and heritage are keystones of The Mills' redevelopment, with many of the site's key design and structural elements left unchanged since its 1960s heyday. However, this is no dusty relic of bygone days. Local design firm Thomas Chow

Architects has skilfully incorporated thoughtful contemporary design features into the project, such as the striking glass bridges that connect the former textile mill's buildings, a large park that brings a welcome green space to the long-vacant concrete factory roof, and a series of murals paying homage to the development's industrial past. Free weekly heritage tours are conducted in both English and Cantonese, and give fascinating insight into the site's history, along with its future – now assured as Hong Kong's foremost centre for creative textiles.

45 Pak Tin Par Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories; +3979 2300
themills.com.bk



Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre

THE ESTABLISHED

Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre

Housed within the former Shek Kip Mei Factory Estate, the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) is a multidisciplinary arts centre, providing studios, workshops, theatre and gallery space for up-and-coming local artists.

Public events are diverse and eclectic, and include a recent embroidery exhibition, an exhibition of intentionally provocative photography, and a cloth dying workshop. With over 140 individual creative and art organisations based out of the JCCAC, this established centre is a must-visit for anyone looking to gain deeper understanding of the work of Hong Kong's homegrown talent.

30 Pak Tin Street, Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon; +852 2353 1311
jccac.org.hk

Para-Site

One of Asia's oldest independent art institutions, Para-Site was initially founded in 1996 as an artist-run space, and has evolved

over subsequent years to its current status as Hong Kong's foremost contemporary art centre.

Producing exhibitions, workshops, screenings and conferences in close collaboration with other galleries, museums and educational establishments, Para-Site's diverse and prestigious list of associated artists aims to offer visitors an impressive array of arts experiences. One such example is their flagship Emerging Curators programme, which helps inexperienced curators to develop a full show with the support of Para-Site's resources and expert team. One such recent show explored the mechanisms and idiosyncrasies of language, and its effect on human culture as a whole, curated by emerging curator André Chan. This focus on nurturing and evolving new creative talent makes Para-Site one of Hong Kong's most enduring and exciting arts organisations.

22/F Wing Wah Industrial Building, 677 King's Road, Quarry Bay;
 +852 2517 4620
para-site.org.hk



Para-Site

Cattle Depot Artist Village

Founded in 2001, this restored listed red brick compound housed a slaughterhouse and cattle quarantine centre, before its eventual reimagining as an alternative arts centre. Today, the village is home to an eclectic, even avant-garde mix of unique artists and cultural organisations, including many that specialise in niche disciplines, such as new media art.

The Cattle Depot's most significant resident is Frog King, aka Kwok Mang-ho, whose fascinating studio is open to the public. A renowned conceptual and performance artist, Kwok was Hong Kong's official representative at the 54th Venice Biennale, and is widely regarded to have staged the first ever piece of performance art in China atop the Great Wall back in 1979. Other regular events include book fairs, small-scale theatrical productions, public art jams and gallery exhibitions.

63 Ma Tau Kok Road, To Kwa Wan, Kowloon City; +852 3509 7338

Cattle Depot Artist Village



The Fringe Club

The Fringe Club

With its distinctive red-and-white striped brick façade, the grade-one listed heritage Fringe Club building has been Central's leading contemporary arts and cultural centre since 1983, providing an essential platform for local musicians, artists and actors.

The multidiscipline building comprises a number of distinct and specialised venues. The Anita Chan Lai-ling gallery is a converted cold-storage warehouse that regularly showcases the work of local and international contemporary visual artists, while the Fringe Underground theatre, with its raw, industrial appearance, provides a gritty and intimate backdrop to independent theatrical productions. Arguably the most exciting of the Fringe's venues is the Fringe Dairy – Hong Kong's only dedicated jazz and cabaret space. Visitors can enjoy live performances in the highly atmospheric surrounds of the original 1913 Dairy Farm shop fittings, which include the original tiled floor, shutters and ceiling fans.

2 Lower Albert Road, Central; +852 2521 7251

hkfringeclub.com