

Hong Kong handover-themed exhibitions give artists freedom to explore political landscape

A group of artists have joined forces to respond and reflect on Hong Kong's changing political scene through installations, letters, and drawings

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241 SHARES



Plenty has been said this past week by the Chinese president, by protesters and most of all by the press about the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's handover. But conventional narratives leave plenty unsaid about what it feels like to live through the former British colony's tumultuous and uncharted transition into a Chinese city. However, four group exhibitions and a new anthology of personal recollections, on show in Hong Kong, are helping to fill in some of the gaps. There are no authoritative voices and no tidy conclusions, just attempts to capture the many shades of emotion, the private fears and desires that are experienced while living in Hong Kong at this historic moment.

Composing Stories with Fragments of Time, Karin Weber Gallery

Eight local artists were shown a letter from a Hong Kong emigrant to Australia in 1997 and asked to respond with a new work.

Luke Ching Chin-wai's *Imagine There's No Countries, Imagine There's No Heaven*(2017) is a collection of envelopes where, in place of the stamp, a sunken well holds a flip book made up of used stamps from the colonial years. There is also one made of stamps showing the flags of all the United Nations member states. As you flip through, the flags look as if they are all being lowered.



Annie Wan Lai-kuen's *(Lost) Art of Writing Letters/Hand-copy of Excerpts from Zhi Tingguangshu by Tang Junyi* (2017) is made up of three porcelain panels with lines taken from letters written by the Chinese philosopher. Wan had posted the panels to the gallery and one was smashed on the way there, a foreseeable outcome that she said mirrored the fragility of letter writing.

Angela Su's *Caspiar* (2017) is a video based on the late American comic Andy Kaufman's story of an island that sank in the middle of the Caspian Sea. In her tale, a former Caspiar resident made his way to North Point, in Hong Kong, and became a domestic worker.

The exhibition also includes works by Kurt Chan, Francis Yu, Lau Chi Chung, Carmen Ng and Elva Lai. It is fascinating to see how the artists all went off on different tangents, such as Hong Kong history, the concept of home, and comfort food.

*Karin Weber Gallery, G/F, 20 Aberdeen Street, Central, 11am-7pm, Tue-Sat. Until Aug 12.
This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as:*

All that's left unsaid