

Proposal for Photograph Exhibition: *Untold Stories of Hong Kong*

Curator:

Jingyi Ge, CityU HongKong

Budget:

4k hkd for material , 3k hkd for space renting, 1k hkd for propaganda

Title of project:

Light Chaser – The interplay of light and shadows in our modern world

Purpose of project:

To convey the feelings of the modern metropol and at the same time long-standing, traditional city Hong Kong in this day and age. Showing its lights – the hopes and future possibilities it brings for people – as well as its shadows – the hardships faced and difficulties arising from history and fast-paced changes of modernity.

LOG LINE :

10 hardworking elderly individuals try to chase their lights – their hopes and future – working in different long-established professions in the fast-paced modern city of Hong Kong while trying to embrace the shadows – the hardships and history – that come with it.

INTENDED AUDIENCE :

Trying to intrigue the vast majority of the visitors of the exhibition of Untold Stories of Hong Kong by presenting different stories that different audiences can relate to. But setting a special focus on intriguing young people in order to teach them about old professions and history of Hong Kong while at the same time reaching those elderly who have common memories and interests about old Hong Kong stories.

GENRE/MEDIUM:

Photography installation with 10 sets of high-contrast photographs (each set a pair of 1 portrait of the worker and 1 photograph of her/his working environment) in a hanging installation combined with a sound experience – the sound of the work environment and the individual telling her/his story (interview). For the story, an interview will be conducted at the working place of the interviewer to increase the realisticness of the story and sentiment of both interviewer and audience.

SYNOPSIS:

In a dark room in the back of the former now vacant State Theatre Building in Fortress Hill amidst shining self-made neon lights an old man is sitting. He is concentrating on his work changing the details of the neon light he is editing right now. As a professional neon sign maker a few decades ago, all his work was still used for sales purposes. Nowadays he is one of the last of his kind and most of his works go to tourists or young locals who want to experience and keep this part of Hong Kong's heritage. As he loves what he is doing and loves being part of this heritage the light is (literally) still shining for him – making it easier to get through the shadows changes modernity of this fast-paced city brought.

He is not the only (elderly) worker in Hong Kong striving for his light in the midst of changes, fast-pasteness, contradictions and unknowing futures. Taking at least a peak at 10 individual stories working in the eclectic city of Hong Kong – as neon sign makers, 'experts', the zeitgeist and feeling of Hong Kong as a city between tradition, modernity and permanent change can be experienced... .

RATIONALE:

Every photo in this exhibition was taken by 10 ordinary Hong Kong persons. These ten photos stand out from more than 2,000 contestants. All the photographers do not have extraordinary photography skills or even professional knowledge, but they stand patiently from their busy schedule and observe daily life in order to snap this extraordinary photo.

For the medium, we will use a kind of image-hanging installation that the audience can walk in to perform our images created in a staggered distribution, using the spotlights above to make some lights and shadows around this hanging installation.

Because this kind of installation also forms some lights and shadow which can be related to "light chasers" as well. Like the people and their stories inside the artwork, the audience seem to be light chasers as well because there are lights around. Unlike the artwork, the audience are exploring and chasing the art and its beauty while people inside the artwork are chasing what they want differently. Lights can be just a metaphor.

So, in artworks, out of the artworks, both sides are chasing something, so that there will be an interaction, giving the audience 2 levels of experience to understand art deeper.

Apart from the hanging installation, there will also be a soundtrack of the interviewer in earphones to let visitors listen to each story and put the audience immersive to the environment.

The city of Hong Kong has a plentitude of untold stories. By portraying 10 sets of photographs of Hong Kong telling stories through portrays, work environment photographs and sound installation we hope to show some of the lights and shadows of these stories and Hong Kong as a whole. As we want to attract on the one hand the younger generation to tell them about how working in Hong Kong and experiencing its changes has affected the older generations and on the other hand want to make the elderly visitors feel connected to the stories told we chose a medium that is traditional (photography) but try to present it in a more modern way by choosing a hanging installation with addition of sound. This way both groups of audiences hopefully feel attracted.

Thus, when the audience walks into the exhibition hall they experience ten sets of hanging, life size photographs in a staggered distribution which are surrounded by some lights and shadows using the spotlights above around them. With the photographs being on eyelevel the visitors feel immersed in it. And as there are always two photographs behind each other – the first one a slightly transparenter portrayal, the second one a non-transparent shot of the working environment of the individual in the portrayal – they can see the story. At the same time they can hear and connect to it by listening to the sound ambience of the working place and hearing the individual telling her/his story in a short interview. The sound is provided through earphones next to every set of pictures. While walking through the installation the audience is furthermore surrounded by the lights and shadow formed by the spotlights from above. Walking through these lights and shadows can be related to the “light chasers” as well. Like the people and their stories inside the artwork, the audience seem to be light chasers as well because there are lights around. Unlike the artwork, the audience are exploring and chasing the art and its beauty while people inside the artwork are chasing what they want differently. Lights can be just a metaphor.

So, in artworks, out of the artworks, both sides are chasing something, so that there will be an interaction, giving the audience 2 levels of experience to understand art and the stories of chasing light deeper.