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Art Gallery Week aims to foster a cultural appreciation among public

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Eyeby Indian artist Atul Dodiya. His work is on show at 10 Chancery Lane Gallery.

There's no denying that Hong Kong's arts scene has exploded in recent years. But while becoming the world's third-biggest art auction market and the arrival this year of Art Basel added much gloss to the city's image, some say the local art gallery scene is suffering - being limited to a select crowd and lacking a gallery-hopping culture found in New York, Berlin and Beijing.

With this in mind, members of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association have joined forces to stage the inaugural Hong Kong Art Gallery Week from November 20 to 28, opening up art spaces

from Hong Kong Island to the New Territories for art talks, curated art walks and studio visits by artists.

"It's true that the art scene here has never been as 'hot' as it is now. It's very exciting. But more needs to be done to foster a cultural appreciation among Hong Kong residents as well as overseas visitors. ... People are not aware of the scene other than the high visibility around Art Basel," says Henrietta Tsui, founder and co-president of the association.

"That's the gap this event will fill - to bring a gallery-hopping culture to Hong Kong and to deliver a festival that will be enjoyed by both the local public and visiting collectors from abroad," Tsui says. "We want to open up the city's art spaces to engage with the public and cultivate the community's gallery culture."



Lost-Wax Bronze by Arturo Muela, at Puerta Roja gallery. Sponsored by the Bank of China, the event brings together 49 galleries and a diverse range of artists including Indian painter Atul Dodiya (represented by the 10 Chancery Lane Gallery), British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare (Pearl Lam Galleries); South

Korean sculptor and installation artist Do-Ho Suh (Lehmann Maupin); Angela Su (Gallery Exit); US photographer Peter Steinhauer (Contemporary By Angela Li) as well as sculptors Arturo Muela of Mexico (Puerta Roja), and the mainland's Xu Hongfei (Galerie Ora-Ora).

People will also get a chance to engage in some offbeat events, from a rare chance to peek inside the Kwai Chung studio of contemporary Chinese artist Fang Lijun, to breakfast talks with art collector Tan Guobin (who has decades of experience). A "Day of the Dead" event at the Puerta Roja gallery will celebrate the Mexican festival with music and food, while a "Chalk Art Painting" event on Chancery Lane invites visitors to create an artwork that will cover the entire lane.

Art market experts including [Artshare.com](https://www.artshare.com) founder Alexandre Errera and Christie's Asia vice-president Ingrid Dudek will give talks. Art walks are also on the programme: one is "Art After Hours: Art Gallery Night" on November 22 (6pm-10pm) and Art Gallery Day on November 23 (11am-5pm). Both will have hop-on, hop-off art buses shuttling people around Sheung Wan and Central, as well as Central to Aberdeen and Wan Chai.

"The Hong Kong Art Gallery Association was established to provide a collective voice for the industry in Hong Kong, create collaborations to reach a broader audience and deepen market knowledge and best practices to improve the art scene," says Tsui, the founder.

"The carefully designed programme of Art Gallery Week will further enhance this awareness.

"In a thriving metropolitan city like [ours], having our own appealing art scene is essential in order for Hong Kong to continue to grow as an obvious gateway for artistic and cultural exchanges," she says.

With such a diverse and interesting programme, there now seems no better time for art lovers in the city to get hopping.

Hong Kong Art Gallery Week, Nov 20-28. For more details, go to hk-aga.org

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as Time to hop to it