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Talk of the town

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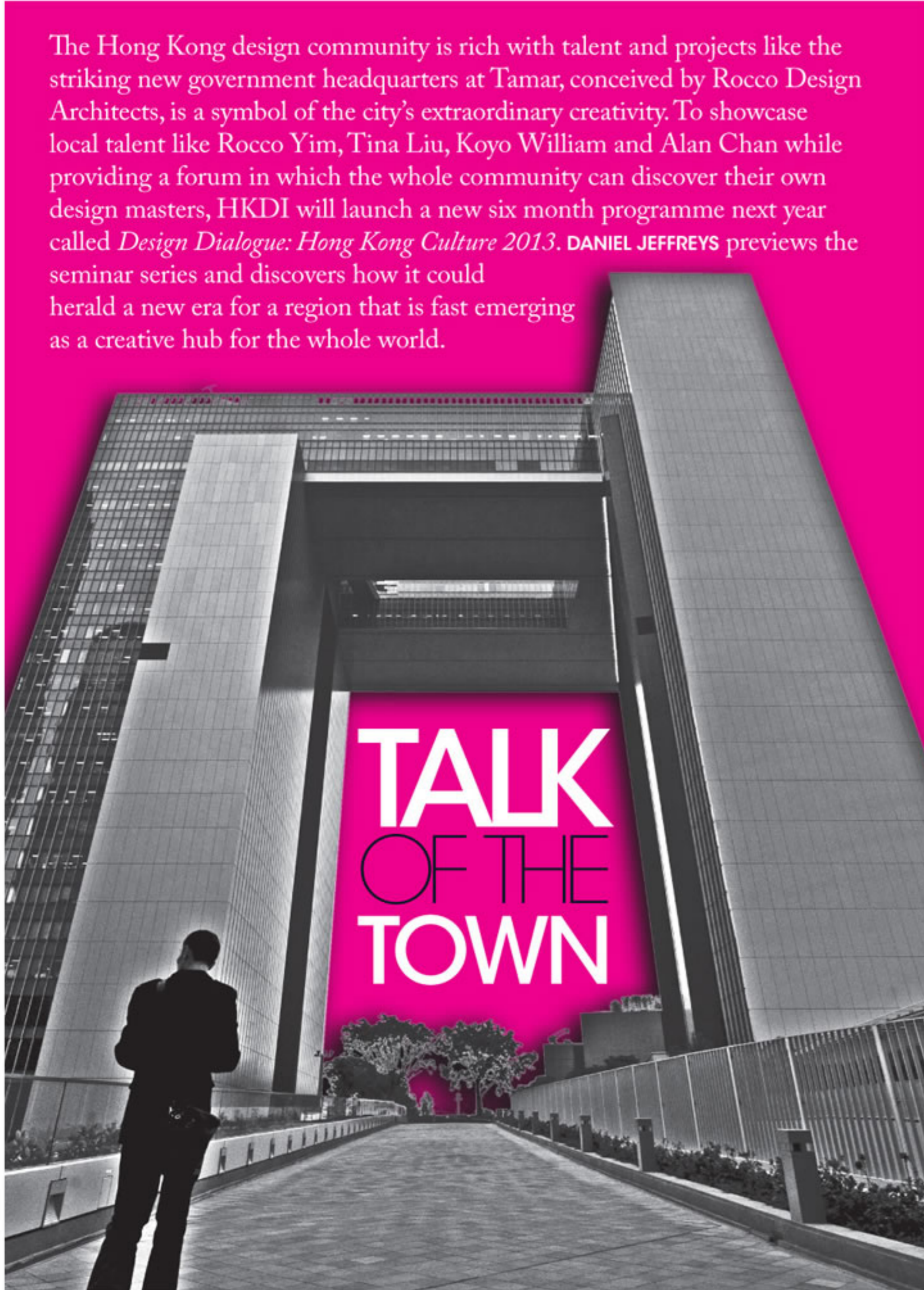


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The Hong Kong design community is rich with talent and projects like the striking new government headquarters at Tamar, conceived by Rocco Design Architects, is a symbol of the city's extraordinary creativity. To showcase local talent like Rocco Yim, Tina Liu, Koyo William and Alan Chan while providing a forum in which the whole community can discover their own design masters, HKDI will launch a new six month programme next year called *Design Dialogue: Hong Kong Culture 2013*. DANIEL JEFFREYS previews the seminar series and discovers how it could herald a new era for a region that is fast emerging as a creative hub for the whole world.

TALK OF THE TOWN

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE



DIALOGUE MASTERS

THROUGHOUT 2012 HONG KONG has played host to a strong field of international conferences focused on design, including the Business of Design Week's tenth anniversary event (BoDW), the AGI Open (for graphic designers) and ATypl (for typographers). These events have brought a spectacular range of designers to the city, including furniture designer Ron Arad, architect Thomas Heatherwick, visual designer Ilse Crawford and film director Hanna Sköld.

But like several other areas of Hong Kong cultural life, for example the arts, where ArtHK has focused heavily on foreign artists, these design shows have had a relatively small number of Hong Kong-based designers on their roster. The result has been a shortage of forums for the many internationally renowned designers in the city, and a lack of emphasis upon a design aesthetic that has its roots in the unique elements of Hong Kong culture.

That will change next year with the launch of *Design Dialogue: Hong Kong Culture 2013*. The series of 11 seminars over six months will provide a unique window on Hong Kong designers, their concerns and inspirations, while giving the local community a chance to interact with the city's home grown masters.

"I have worked in advertising and design for the past 42 years and I have applied my expertise to an array of creative projects ranging from corporate and brand identity, packaging, product and interior design, architecture and art," says Alan Chan, the first Hong Kong designer to have a one-man show at the Shanghai Museum of Art, who will speak on February 22. "I am looking forward to sharing my design and life journey with younger design students, hopefully giving them insights and illuminating the path of their own design journey."

HENRY STEINER

(January 24) founded Steiner & Co., one of the world's leading branding design consultancies. He is best known for designing the HSBC hexagon mark and banknotes for Standard Chartered. Named World Master by Japan's Idea magazine, and one of *Iconogra*'s Masters of the 20th Century, *Next* magazine cited him as among the 100 most influential people in Hong Kong's history. In 2010 he faced the challenge of designing a new series of banknotes for Standard Chartered that retained the integrity of the first series he created in the 1970s while conforming to strict new guidelines that had been imposed on all three Hong Kong banks. Steiner's seminar is titled *How to Make Money in China*.



iconic buildings in Asia, including the new HKSAR government headquarters at Tamar. He won The Chicago Athenaeum Architectural Awards in 2006 and 2011 and his works have been displayed at the Venice Biennale in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2012. Yim believes that architecture must transcend art and not just look good, but do good as well. His topic, inspired by his humanistic perspective on sustainability and authenticity, will be *Is Architecture an Art?*

TINA LIU

(January 24) With years of experience from the film, television, radio, music, stage, publishing, fashion retail and service industries, Liu's forte in image design, production and training has earned her compliments throughout the region's media. Liu has been named as one of the Ten Best Dressed Personalities in Hong Kong by the Hong Kong Fashion Designers Association, and Marie Claire magazine recently gave her the Inspiring Women 2012 Award. Her seminar will be called *Journey of an Image Director* and she will aim to answer a range of questions including whether image design is as glamorous and exciting as people suppose.

ROCCO YIM

(February 2) has been responsible for several



ALAN CHAN

(February 22) and his company have won more than 600 local and

international awards during his 42 years in advertising and design. Besides being selected twice for the Shanghai Biennale and Hong Kong Contemporary Art Biennial, he is also the first Hong Kong designer to be invited to hold a solo exhibition at the Shanghai Art Museum (in 2007). Since 2010, Chan has been developing his iPhone photography series *iEye-ai*, first exhibited in Hong Kong and Shanghai. In September 2012, *iEye-ai* was exhibited at New Age Gallery in Beijing 798 Art Zone. Chan will talk about the ways in which he has built bridges between Eastern and Western aesthetic traditions in his address *Revisiting "Oriental Passion, Western Harmony"*.

KOYO WILLIAM

(March 22) is the Founder and Creative Director of KOYO,

which specialises in customising bespoke clothes for celebrities and providing stage and concert-related fashion styling services. His designs and creativity are held in high esteem by actors and musicians, making KOYO a sought after brand in both the fashion and entertainment industries. The company's



《Creativity should not be reserved for the creative few.》

The series will kick off on January 24th with a Henry Steiner seminar. Steiner is often referred to as the father of Hong Kong design and his logo for HSBC, banknotes for Standard Chartered and gold coins for the Singapore mint have made his approach to graphic design famous throughout the world.

“Henry was born in Vienna and raised in New York but he regards himself as Hong Kong home grown and he sees that as an honour,” says Grace Kao, who is the head of the Professional Education & Engagement Centre at HKDI and is directing the *Design Dialogue* project.

“We do have a lot of design seminars and events held annually in Hong Kong, most of which focus on internationally renowned designers and have relatively high admission fees,” say Kao. “The attendees are usually limited to industry players who can afford to participate. We want to promote design to a much wider audience, not just for designers, but for everyone.”

Kao's motto is that “creativity should not be reserved for the creative few”, and this idea has generated a passion at HKDI for promoting the best designers in Hong Kong and creating a deeper awareness of the cultural roots that feed the city's design aesthetic.

The result has been an ambitious programme that will feature renowned graphic designers, fashion designers, filmmakers, architects, interior designers, brand consultants, artists, industrial designers, creative entrepreneurs, and costume designers. The series begins on January 24 with Steiner's seminar, followed by Tina Liu's talk titled *Journey of an Image Director*. Liu is the executive director of Tina Liu Image Consultancy Limited and vice chairman of the Hong Kong Film Art Association. VTC full-time students will be admitted free to all events and the general public will pay HK\$150 per session, or HK\$120 if they book early.

“The work of these 11 designers is all derived from the culture and traditions of Hong Kong,” says Kao. “The seminars will deal with the cultural aspects of working here. The Hong Kong

environment is defined by limited space and moves very fast. A key question that the *Design Dialogue* seminars will address is how can creativity thrive in such an environment.”

Kao says that “Our own students may not even know these masters,” and acknowledges that a key reason for creating event is to correct a lack of understanding about Hong Kong design and its importance on the world stage.

“Our ambition is that this should become an annual event,” says Kao, implying that this inaugural series will just scratch the surface of available design talent in Hong Kong. “We want students and the public to know that some of the best designers in the world work in this city.”

Unlike the other design conventions held in Hong Kong, *Design Dialogue* will not have English as its official language. The seminars will be conducted in whichever language the guest is most comfortable with. Many of the designers will present their ideas in Cantonese.

Kao believes that by allowing the designers who participate to speak their native language will give them an opportunity to convey the depth and power of their ideas more effectively, but above all she and her colleagues hope the *Design Dialogue* will deliver a constructive message to Hong Kong and the design world.

“Hong Kong's unique work ethic, energy and can-do-frame of mind, means that we have the ability to adapt very quickly and that is a key attribute for success in the design industry,” she says. “Hong Kong has many designers of international class and creativity who have flourished here despite the challenging environment. The way they have surmounted obstacles has lessons for the Hong Kong community and the wider world of design.”

With the final *Design Dialogue* seminar scheduled to be delivered on June 21, by the iconoclastic fashion designer William Tang, it's likely the city's own awareness of its design heritage will be much stronger in 2013, and with the price of the seminars making them much more accessible to young people and the wider public it's possible the series may sow the seeds for a new generation of home-grown designers.

“I hope this series will help a new generation to understand that design and creativity are not merely a tool,” says Alan Chan. “Design is also a spirit that builds bridges between people and helps to create harmony between them, cultivating love for others and for life.”

retail spaces were designed by Koyo and are inspired by European Gothic Church architecture. The arches, buttresses and ribbed vaults that were characteristic of that genre have found a place in the store interiors, the display of products and in some of Koyo's clothing designs. The title of his talk is *The Art of Backward Thinking* and it will reveal the designer's philosophy of *Destroy and Reborn*.

MICHAEL MILLER YU

(April 5)

graduated from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University



in industrial design in 1973. Since then, he has worked as an interior designer, graphic designer and advertising creative director at agencies worldwide and he established his own design company CreationHouse. Yu has won over two hundred local and overseas design awards and in 2006 he received the Ten Outstanding Designers Awards from the renowned Hong Kong Art & Design Festival. From 2007 to 2010, three of his major projects have won the Outstanding Greater China Design Awards and he has been the Chairman of the Hong Kong Outstanding Designers Association since 2012. Yu believes that designers should not be too romantic about Hong Kong's unique mix of Chinese heritage and international character but should focus instead on uplifting the city's design aesthetic. His seminar is titled *The Love Affair between Culture, Art and Design*.



DOUGLAS YOUNG

(April 12),

born in Hong Kong in 1965, is a Hong Kong design

institution thanks to G.O.D., the company he co-founded with Benjamin Lau in 1996. The company designs and retails contemporary furniture, fashion, homeware, and lifestyle accessories with

a Chinese twist. A multi-disciplinary design team led by Young designs most of the G.O.D. merchandise in-house, and the company now have 8 stores located throughout Hong Kong. Young's topic is *Hong Kong Pride* and he will talk about the way his company has grown and what it needs to do in order to continue thriving.



LEE CHI WING

(May 3)

Born in Hong Kong, Lee Chi Wing was educated at

Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Ecole nationale supérieure de création industrielle in Paris, where he received his MA. In 1998, he set up Milk Design, which provides design consultancy services for international companies making consumer and industrial products, and the creation of lifestyle products. Lee is driven by the belief that design is simple and human, and should enhance the possibilities and experience or daily life. He loves to collect “dated objects” to understand the past and the ways in which design has helped society to evolve. His talk is called *Looking Back and Moving Forward*.



YEE CHUNG MAN

(May 10)

studied design in Hong Kong and

New York, and he has been active in art, design, costume and makeup since the 1970's. He has won multiple awards as an Art Director for films including *A Chinese Ghost Story*, *Comrades: Almost a Love Story*, *Perhaps Love*, *Wuxia* and *He's a Woman, She's a Man*. In 2001, Yee received a nomination for Best Costume Design at the Academy Awards for his work on *Curse of the Golden Flower*. The title of his seminar is *Word and Image – Art Direction of Film*.

GARY CHANG

(May 31)

Gary Chang is one of the most influential figures within



the architectural, interior and product design world and his work has focused on spatial flexibility and the interplay between art and practicality. Mr. Chang founded EDGE Design Institute Ltd. in 1994 and has since created such notable works as the Suitcase House in Beijing, a tea-set for Alessi, and the transformation of the 32 square meter apartment where he lived in childhood into a space-maximizing icon that has been featured in media stories throughout the world. Chang believes that Change (universal possibilities), Choice (the manifestation of desire), Co-existence (diversity), Connectivity (the fluid relationship between all systems) are the four elements that capture the formidable and constantly evolving spirit of Hong Kong. His chosen topic is *In Search of a New Urban Dynamics: The Culture of Change, Choice, Connection and Co-Existence*.



WILLIAM TANG

(June 21)

Hong Kong fashion designer William Tang is

a major international fashion figure through his labels *W by William Tang* and *William Tang*, and a widely recognised commentator on travel, culture, and style. Mr. Tang's designs and shows are noted for the way he seeks to push the edges of creativity or challenge conventions and he is often referred to as a “bad boy of fashion”. He will address the subject *Heritage-Culture-Fashioned HK Fashion*.

Seminars will take place between 6:30 and 8:30 pm at VTC Auditorium, HKDI, 3 King Ling Road, Tseung Kwan O, New Territories, Hong Kong
www.hkdi-designdialogue.com