

# Repossession Point

## 據點。。。再出發



Hong Kong's modern history can be said to have begun in 1842. This was the year when British forces first landed and claimed sovereignty of Hong Kong — a flag was raised followed by a gun ceremony, and we became part of an empire. To commemorate this historically important episode, we return to Possession Street (where the event took place) and begin our tour of Sheung Wan — adding a bit of irony along the way. Instead of taking possession, we depart on a journey to repossess the creative side — ignored, neglected or hidden — of Sheung Wan.

The Chinese name of Possession Street '水坑口街', roughly means Water Well (natural) Street. This moniker was given to acknowledge the natural wells — an important source of drinking and sanitation water — that were there decades ago. Today, these wells don't exist; however, dozens of manholes litter Possession Street to bear witness of these forgotten wells.

要追溯香港現代史，我們當一起重回一八四二年，也就是英國勢力初次踏足香港，繼而取得治港權的一年。隨著安放於水坑口街的大炮齊響，國旗飄揚，我們就成了大英帝國的一份子。為了紀念這歷史上重要的一環，讓我們以此街為起點，重新取回那經已被人忽略及遺忘的上環，看她包容創意的一面。

「水坑口街」由來：綽號來自數十年前在此為居民提供食水、比比皆是的水井。現在這些水井已無蹤影，但它們遺下的坑渠蓋卻為這段歷史作出見證。



**A1** Long before Nike's Swoosh or Chuck Taylor's canvas sneaker became icons of urban living, there was a shop in Sheung Wan making traditional shoes. Founded over 50 years ago by Mr. Tam Kwok Kwong, this fixture of the local topography is now run by energetic wife, Mrs. Tam. The shoes are a favourite of locals and tourists alike — everything here is hand-made and custom designed to fit. Great care is taken by Mrs. Tam — using quality materials and nearly five hours — to craft each pair of footwear. Most are intrigued by the striking designs, particularly the kung fu shoes — a remnant of a time long gone.

遠在Nike或Chuck Taylor一系列波鞋未成為街頭文化指標時，於五十年前的上環一角，譚國光先生已創辦一家出產傳統鞋款的鞋店。店面現由譚太打理，度身訂造的手造鞋仍極受本地與外國人歡迎，除了因譚太著物料品質外，也歸功於她對每雙鞋所花上約五小時的心血。但論到最討人歡喜的，莫過於譚氏精心製作的傳統功夫鞋。

**A2** Take a glimpse at the work by Marc & Chantal Design and you would never have imagined that co-founder, Marc Cansier was once a designer timid with colour. Born in the Alps of Europe and educated in France, Marc now jokingly refers to Paris — the city of romance — as boring and bland, where everyone tends to share a similar palette of insipid pigments. "In the past, I wasn't really into colour," says Marc. "It was here in Hong Kong that I was able to develop my skill in colour." For Marc, Hong Kong is a city noted for its boldness. Success at Marc & Chantal has always come from a relentless desire to create strong, cohesive messages — to help build brands, ad campaigns or the interiors of a structure. When pressed about Sheung Wan and its significance, the designer simply responds, "Sheung Wan is the real Hong Kong." We only wonder how he was able to gather such a message.

看過Marc & Chantal Design作品的人，都不能想像其始創人之一Marc Cansier曾經是個對用色極保守的設計師。於法國接受教育的Marc笑說，巴黎，這人所共知的浪漫之都讓人感到乏味無燥，全因人人在用色方面俱所差無幾。「以往我對色彩興趣不大，後來在香港卻可以發展出運用色彩的技巧。」對於Marc來說，香港是一個極有膽色的城市。Marc & Chantal的成功源自他的執着，從替客戶建立品牌、廣告與室內設計中，不斷建立強而有力的訊息。當問及上環有多重要時，Marc簡單回答：「上環才是真正的香港。」當然，我們都猜度Marc何來此訊息。







**A4** Over the years, Lorence Johnston's story has unfolded with many twists and turns. This well-travelled man has been to numerous points across the globe and in a variety of roles. In his current character Johnston sees himself selling what he loves most — rare stories, some a century old.

For Johnston books occupy a special place in culture and society. His life-long passion comes from the belief

that — apart from the vivid and gripping tales told — books bring out conversations. "People would come into the shop, sit and chat," remarks the shop owner. "You just have wonderful conversations when discussing books. People begin to talk about childhoods, growing up and their influences. Books allow us to meet lots of different characters."

As a business, Lok Man Rare Books inhabits a tremendously exclusive market. If the interior — highlighted by art deco leather armchairs, custom-made by partner Philip Van Remoortere and hardwood bookshelves (both are for sale) — does not indicate this, then the fact that *Catcher in the Rye's* first-edition and its breed are traded here will.

好些年來，Lorence Johnston的故事總充滿曲折離奇，他去過許多地方，亦擔當過不同角色。現在他是一個買賣舊書的商人，向人售賣及推介各式古舊而罕見的故事。

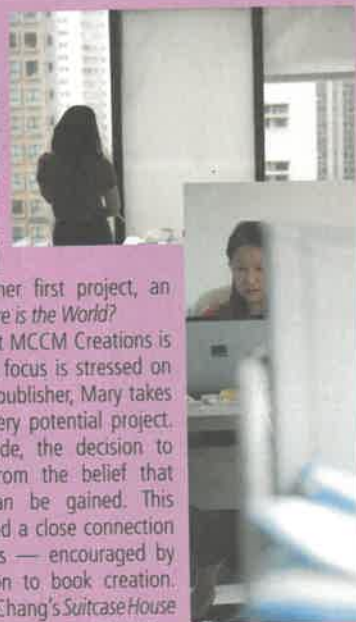
身為樂文的店主，書本在他看來擁有著極獨特的社會文化地位。他深信書籍除交代了一個個引人入勝的故事，也製造了無窮的話題。他解釋客人來到店內時，起初談論書籍，接著便會閒聊各自的童年成長與經歷。書本，正讓我們看出世上千百種人性。

但凡目睹過店內的真皮沙發及硬木大書櫃（由另一個合作夥伴Philip Van Remoortere特意為樂文設計的，兩者俱可發售）、《Catcher in the Rye》的初本甚至其他珍藏，相信都不會反對，樂文書店於市場中，的確看顧著一群與眾不同的支持者。

**A3** Mary Chan is a person with a rather large penchant for hand drawn things. Whether it is the subtleness, sincerity or other qualities, the fact remains: she is a life-long admirer. Turning passion into profession, this soft-spoken lady went

into publishing through her first project, an illustrated book titled *Where is the World?*

Mary admits that output at MCCM Creations is relatively low. She reveals focus is stressed on quality not quantity. As a publisher, Mary takes great care to evaluate every potential project. Financial implications aside, the decision to commit usually comes from the belief that personal satisfactions can be gained. This explains why Mary has had a close connection with designers and artists — encouraged by her sincerity and devotion to book creation. Acclaimed books like Gary Chang's *Suitcase House* and Stanley Wong's distinctive *RedWhiteBlue* have all resulted from such fruitful relationships.



Mary Chan對手繪畫特別喜好，不管是抽象無邊或是有形有色的她都喜愛。文靜的她，將自己對圖畫的熱誠帶到事業上，繼而孕育及出版了首本插畫書《Where is the World?》。Mary的公司MCCM Creations重質不重量，全因作為出版人的她，希望審慎評估每一個有潛質的項目。要決定那些項目值得實行，除了經濟因素外，往往在於其能否成就個人滿足感。正因為Mary對書本創作的熱誠與投入，使她與每個設計師與藝術家



家都有著緊密的關係，更成就了張智強的《箱宅》與黃炳培（又一山人）的《紅白藍》，兩本大獲好評的書籍。



**A5** Moving to Sheung Wan has taught Samues Leung a lesson in respect. The State Of The Arts Gallery owner recounts an altercation he had with shoe maker Tam Kwok Kwong. It was about the signage — Samues found it to be obtrusive. In the end, however, nothing changed. "When I learned about his history in the area," recalls Samues, "I gave up on the idea. It was best if we could exist in harmony." Being in Sheung Wan has also changed the business. The gallery used to be focussed on events-based exhibitions. Now the business has found its comfort zone from specialising in art from Austria and Latin America.

搬入上環曾讓Samues Leung領會到互相尊重的意義。身為State-Of-The-Arts Gallery的店主，他坦言曾與鞋匠譚國光因招牌的問題而意見分歧，事後認為這是一件很冒失的事情，而且最終什麼都沒有改變。「當我知道有關他在上環的歷史之後，我就放棄了自己的意見，因為能和諧共處才是最好的。」

Samues畫廊的經營手法亦因移至上環而相應改變。畫廊現時專門展出奧地利及拉丁美洲的藝術品，相比過往以舉辦項目展覽為主，反而更得心應手。

