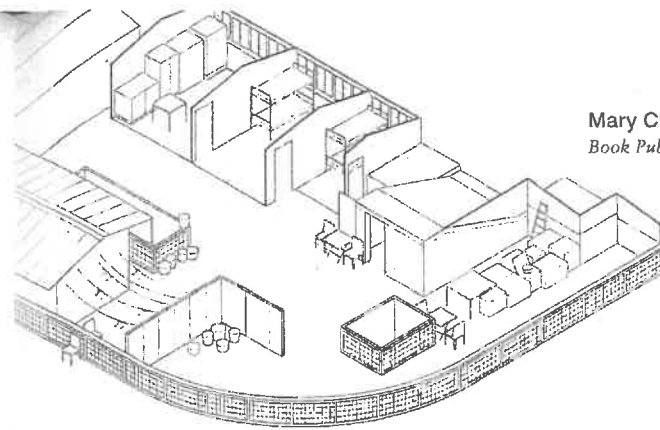


Soft-spoken Mary Chan is an anomaly in a city filled with hard-edged business people obsessed with scalability and profit. After a decade working for some of the biggest names in international advertising, Chan dropped out in a search for tranquility and a career she could believe in. She found it, almost by accident, in publishing, when a friend came to her with a manuscript for a children's book. Since then, her bilingual publishing company, MCCM Creations, has published some 60 titles but remains tightly focused on books with a strong Hong Kong or China connection, particularly in the fields of architecture, urban planning, and design, a niche that was nearly empty before she began to fill it.



*Source: Hong Kong: Creative Ecologies
The Shaping of a Design Culture
published by Hong Kong Design Centre*



Mary Chan MCCM Creations
Book Publisher

If you create something, the world is always open to you

When Mary Chan ventured into the world of independent publishing in 2001, she had little more to go on than a love of the arts, a friend with a manuscript, and her background in advertising and public relations with firms such as Saatchi & Saatchi and J. Walter Thompson. She quickly discovered the perennial problem in book publishing – it's one thing to put together a book, quite another to find a way to introduce it to readers. When she did her first design book, a visual history of Chinese medicine packaging, she discovered a field that was virtually untouched by the publishing industry, although there were plenty of self-published books by architects and designers.

"I was one of the first to handle design books in a more systematic manner, not just as a one-off project", she recalls. "Even if you are a designer or artist, if you publish a book, you don't know what to do afterwards. If I published a book, I had to figure out how to market and distribute it". She found a Dutch distributor to take her into the European and North American market, an Australian distributor for Australia and New Zealand, and a Shanghai-based distributor for China, and she was in business.

As an imprint, the style and philosophy of MCCM Creations was shaped by Chan's first project, an illustrated children's book called *Where in the World* by her friend Peter Suart, which introduced the characters Tik and Tok. The Tik and Tok series of books went on to include a total of seven titles, but more importantly, they introduced the combination of high-quality visuals together with a loosely defined Hong Kong connection – in Suart's case, the fact that he had lived for many years in Hong Kong.

For most projects, the Hong Kong link is more direct. MCCM's most recent book, *Grandma Grandpa Cook*, based on research for a 2004 community

play by Art for All, is both cookbook and an intimate introduction to the senior citizens behind the recipes. A foldout book by author and photographer Kenneth Lo called *Nathan Road* is a panoramic portrait of both sides of that street; Edwin Lai's *Our Home, Shek Kip Mei 1954-2006* is a photographic essay on one of Hong Kong's first public estates, demolished in 2006. Prominent architects and designers have turned to MCCM as well, including Rocco Yim, Gary Chang, William Lim, and Stanley Wong, attracted by its reputation for quality design and execution.

Among the most complex projects MCCM has undertaken was the 2005 publication of *red-white-blue/here/there/everywhere*. The two-volume book is a celebration of the sturdy, sun-resistant, waterproof, foldable plastic sheeling used by construction workers, street vendors, working class households, and graphic designer Stanley Wong in a series of installations that have made it an icon of Hong Kong. When Wong first approached the publisher, he had in mind a relatively simple photographic essay. But under Chan's guidance, the book became an occasion for artists, designers, architects, and academics to collaborate using text, objects and the book itself to explore the history, manufacture, and design applications of red, white, and blue sheeling.

This degree of playfulness, invention, and quality of execution has long been a feature of the independent book publishing industry in developed countries. But Chan is among the first to bring it to Hong Kong. Independent publishing survives because it brings a special passion and intensity to books whose readers are equally intense and passionate, often about subjects that have little or no appeal to the mass market. In Chan's case, she has been able to reveal Hong Kong's identity to itself.

在香港這個執著於規模和利潤的城市裏，說話輕柔的陳麗珊是個異類。在國際知名廣告公司工作十年後，她辭職去尋求安寧的生活，還有值得她信奉的事業。出於偶然，當朋友帶著一本兒童書手稿找她時，她在出版業找到了自己的方向。從那以後，她的雙插出版公司「簡亦樂出版」已發行60多本書，主要是與香港和中國大陸相關的書，特別是建築、城市規劃和設計類圖書——這個在她之前幾乎還是一片空白的市場。



阿爾卑斯山的傳說

Legends from the Swiss Alps

2001年，陳麗珊大膽闖入獨立出版界時，只是憑藉對藝術的熱愛、一份手稿，還有她在廣告業和公關業的關係。她很快遇到圖書出版業永恆的困境：做好書是一回事，如何推銷是另一回事。她在做第一本設計類圖書《Design You Don't Know What to Do With》時，發現了設計類圖書的新天地，儘管市面上有大量由建築師和設計師自行出版的圖書。

「我是最早以較系統的方式處理設計類圖書的出版人，而不僅僅把它當成一次性的項目。」她回憶道，「即使你是個設計師或藝術家，但當你要出書時，你也不知道接下來該怎麼做。我要做書的時候，一定要搞清楚如何營銷與分銷。」她找到一個荷蘭經銷商進入了歐洲和北美市場，又找到一個澳洲經銷商進入澳洲和新西蘭市場，她還通過一個上海經銷商打開了內地市場。

陳麗珊做的第一本書是由她朋友 Peter Suart 撰寫的插圖兒童書《Where in the World》，主角叫 Tik 和 Tok。這本書奠定了簡亦樂出版的風格與哲學。Tik 和 Tok 系列圖書共推出7本，Suart 在香港生活多年，除了給讀者帶來高品質的視覺效果，輕輕帶出與香港的關係。

大多數項目與香港的關聯性更加直接。MCCM 的新書《老麥媽思廚》建基於對全人藝術 (Art for All) 於2004年的一部社區藝術的研究，它是本烹飪書，菜單背後卻有對老居民的親切介紹。由盧沛雄寫作和攝影的《彌敦道》是本折頁書，展開就是彌敦道兩邊的全景圖；徐偉達的《我住石硤尾》是關於香港首個公屋新村（2006年拆除）的攝影隨筆。著名建築師和設計師也轉向簡亦樂出版，其中包括嚴迅奇、張智強、林偉而、黃炳培，他們都被簡亦樂出版高品質的設計與製作所吸引。

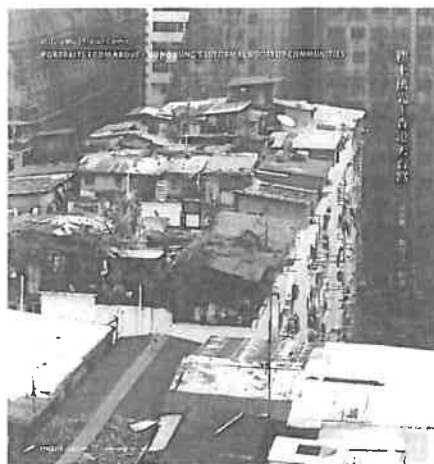
簡亦樂出版最繁瑣的項目是2005年出版的《無處不在紅白藍》。這部兩冊的圖書採用了強韌、防日光、防水、可折疊的紅白藍尼龍布，這種材料通常被建築工人、街頭小販、勞工階層使用，而平面設計師黃炳培在一系列裝置作品中大量使用它，令它成為香港的一個標誌。黃炳培最初聯繫出版商時，設想的只是一個比較簡單的攝影隨筆集。但陳麗珊集合一批藝術家、設計師、建築師和學者參與，用文本、物件和圖書探究紅白藍塑膠尼龍布的歷史、製造和設計應用。

在發達國家，獨立出版業的特點是好玩、創新、高品質。獨立出版業能夠生存，是因為它給圖書注入熱情，儘管它的主題不太被大眾市場關注。陳麗珊最早將它引入香港，她的獨立出版事業也展示出香港身份的認同。

如果你創造了某種東西，世界就會一直對你開放。



陳麗珊 簡亦樂出版
出版人



老麥媽思廚
CRANNA GRAMPA LÉIS



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