Welcome to our magazine

— where there’s a story occupying every space in Hong Kong

We aim to explore moments of past and present experiences within the diverse and ever so changing pockets of this city. Forever transient, Hong Kong constantly offers stories of innovation, passion, and emotion for those who trek through these streets, which makes this worth sharing even more.

We start in our beautiful HKU campus, and then move forward towards the little local spaces that are chic and Instagrammable. We also take a quick turn in time to revisit one of the city’s first supermarkets in the 70s. There will also be moments of past memories, stories of green projects in the city, to even an AI envisionment of future Hong Kong. We hope that you can find a little bit of “you” in each of these stories.

As an editor, it has been such an inspiring journey to see each writer’s exploration of this dynamic city in which we call “home.” I have definitely become more aware of these unknown spaces after hearing about its history and sentiment. I am so proud of the SPACES team for pushing themselves and putting their best work forward for you to read. I hope that you will enjoy it as well!

Hailey Yip
Editor in Chief
Students and staff inevitably encounter great pressure in their time at HKU. In these moments, we long for a hidden corner or a private bench where we can sit back, forget about our deadlines, and presentations, and relax for a while. But are there such spaces on campus? Where does our HKU community go to unwind?

** HKU HIDEOUTS **

*Find Yourself Somewhere Quiet*

By Simeng XU

Between Meng Wah Complex and Eliot Hall

“There are a few benches and picnic tables. Sometimes I will come here to study alone, to look over notes from my lectures or different materials.”

——Antony, a graduate student in the Faculty of Engineering.

The Lily Pond, next to the Knowles Building

“I often wander beside the pond. When I am stressed and want to run away from the office, I come here to relax and to give my eyes a break from staring at a computer. It is comfortable, pretty and the air feels clean.”

—— Li Rong, a PhD student in the Faculty of Architecture.

The third floor of the Jockey Club Tower

“You can picnic here, or just sit and chat. I used to sit here and eat lunch with my classmates before lessons. When I go back now it reminds me of those times we spent together.”

——Annabel, a part-time research assistant in the Department of Psychology, used to be a bachelor and master student at HKU.

Chi Wah Garden

“I come here to eat or listen to music. There’s lots of space and fresh air. It makes me comfortable.”

——Brandon, a freshman in the Faculty of Business and Economics

The Centennial Garden

“I often walk here after dinner, or when I need to focus on something. The trees, the scenery and the quiet help me feel calm.”

——Wei Yuantang, a 2nd year PhD Student in the Department of Physics

The Turtle Pond, between the Jockey Club Tower and Run Run Shaw Tower

“It’s a fun place. You can not only sit on the bench and enjoy the calm, but also watch the turtles. They are cute and you can feel your breathing become as slow as them, especially when you watch them swim in the pond.”

——Xu Simeng, a graduate student in JMSC

Chi Wah Garden
Li Hongbin, the owner of Gifts and Toys House, has been running this store for seven years.

Chow Kam-yu, 36, wanders along narrow Tai Yuen Street with her 8-year-old daughter, Hailey. Colourful vendors selling cheap household items and clothes occupy the space on this walkway, but it is the brightly lit shop windows on both pavements that have captured Hailey’s attention.

The little girl jumps up and down, excited to handle the different toys that line the shelves of store after store. Finally, her eyes fix on a small video game console, “Mummmm, I want this!”

“This is the street that I loved the most when I was a kid. It’s like a paradise for young children,” says Chow. “My mum also used to buy me toys here. Time flies. Now I am buying toys for my own kids.”

In the post-war era of the 1950s to 1970s, Hong Kong became a major hub for manufacturing plastic goods and toys, with many factories producing a wide range of products such as dolls, action figures, puzzles, and board games. The city’s strategic location and favorable business environment made it an attractive destination for foreign investors looking to take advantage of low labor costs and high production efficiency.

As a result, Hong Kong became a major exporter of plastic toys to markets all over the world, with many well-known brands producing their products there. The plastic toy industry played a significant role in the city’s economic growth during this period, and it helped establish Hong Kong as a global center for manufacturing and trade.

Tai Yuen Street in Wan Chai, became known for its toys during the 1990s, when a few stores like Yat Sing Toys and Hung Hing Toys first opened. As more and more toy shops opened, it soon became known as “Toy Street”, attracting customers with its great variety of playthings, including retro toys from the 1990s, Japanese Gashapon, Lego, model cars and action figures, and etc.

More recently, these stores, like other services in Hong Kong, have taken a strong hit by pandemic restrictions. They are still recovering.

According to data from Statista, offline toy sales dropped nearly 21% between 2019 and 2023. To cope with this changing consumer behaviour, Fung opened a Yat Sing Toys online store, but sales remain low.

“Usually I buy one set of Lego a month from the toy street. Lego from here is usually 20% cheaper than other stores,” said a young man with a large box of Lego tucked under his arm in a plastic bag.

For some, Tai Yuen Street is a great place to find a bargain, but for others it is a trip down memory lane.

“Most of our customers are parents and kids, but sometimes there are customers who just want to relive their childhood memories,” said Li Hongbin, a toy shop owner. “Some of the retro-style toys can easily take our customers back to their childhood.”

“Here I can still find some of the toys of my era and the memories just flood back,” said Chow. “Though modern toys are much more advanced, I still feel a sense of connection when looking at those ‘boring but classic’ toys.”

As Chow and Hailey exited the toy store, the little girl tore open the packaging, revealing a game console with Pikachu on its back. The mother watched with joy as her daughter held it close to her chest, her eyes lighting up with delight. She then leaned in to give her daughter a warm embrace, feeling grateful for this special moment they shared together.
At any moment in Hong Kong, there is an army of cleaners marching along the streets of the busy city. There are those who clean the pavements with water, leaving a trail of glistening water behind them. There are the elderly women who go around stacking cardboard boxes onto a trolley, to be taken away to the cardboard recycling shops. The cleaners with carts, collecting rubbish bags and sweeping pavements. Despite the diversity of their roles, they all share a common goal of keeping the city clean and tidy… Sadly, the work of such individuals like Rabi, often goes unnoticed.

A 70-year-old Nepalese man, Rabi, who is unable to provide his full name due to privacy issues, moved to Hong Kong three years ago with the help of his daughter and son-in-law. In Nepal, he worked as a carpenter, but at the age of 67 decided to move to Hong Kong to earn more money. When asked about the difference between working in the two places, he laughs and says that only very poor people or “inferior” individuals, as he puts it, would do cleaning work in Nepal.

“Chinese people are so nice,” he says. “They treat us Nepalese like equals. They don’t ignore us just because we’re cleaners.”

Since obtaining his Hong Kong ID card, Rabi has worked for three different companies as a cleaner and is now earning HK$18,135 per month.

Rabi is collecting rubbish from different booths.

“It is tough for me to stoop down so many times a day, especially in the morning when the street is dirtiest. My back almost breaks,” says Rabi.

He gets a three-and-a-half-hour break in the middle of the day and then continues working until 4:30 pm. Sometimes, when the nearby wet market is particularly dirty, he works until 5:30 pm.

“My friends only take one day off every month. Sometimes, they ask the boss whether they can keep working to earn extra money, but he says ‘at least one day off for resting’,” says Rabi. “My boss is a really good guy.”

8 a.m. in the morning, Rabi starts working in the Yau Ma Tei Wet Market with his trolley.

Rabi doesn’t have much time for entertainment during the day. Although he and his workmates are allowed to chat, he struggles to recall any memorable experiences or stories, but shares that he enjoys taking walks and drinking tea with his friends. The happiest times, he says, are when they get together to barbecue.

Rabi is sitting in one store near his working place.

Rabi explains that he currently lives in a shared room with a colleague, but his rent is still too expensive, at HK$4000 per month. Together with his travel, food, and other expenses, he needs to spend between HK$4000 to $9000 per month just for basic living. His daughter, who also lives in Hong Kong, pays his rent and provides some support so that Rabi can send more money back to Nepal, to support his sons and grandchildren.

“My grandchildren need money for their education. So I really hope that the government could provide public housing for us cleaners,” he says. “I hope we can be noticed by the public and the government, then we can be provided with better protection and profits.”

After our conversation ends, he walks down the street and vanishes from view, becoming invisible once again.
With their bold colours, geometric designs and a blend of old and new, Hong Kong architecture is an Instagrammer’s dream. We’ve explored some of Hong Kong’s most iconic structures, and some maybe lesser known, to give you the lowdown on where to go, whether or not they’re worth the visit and a brief history for you to pass off as your own work in your captions.

### Choi Hung Estate

As the largest public housing estate in Hong Kong, Choi Hung accommodates nearly 45,000 people. The Estate is made up of 11 residential blocks, five schools, and a variety of stores catering to residents’ every need. The colourful exterior makes Choi Hung Estate popular on social media.

**Notes:**
1) A car park roof is below the basketball playground for the estate residents. Be careful not to disturb them when you exit the MTR, basketball courts are located above the car park.
2) Choi Hung Estate has been built for over 60 years, and the colours on the building are indeed pale and light. You would need heavy photo editing such as adding saturation to photos to make them become colourful and attractive.

**Image style:** rainbow, modern
**Accessibility:** public space

*The basketball playground is surrounded by three colorful buildings.*

### Blue House

The Blue House is the original site of Hong Kong’s first hospital "Wah To Hospital" built in the 1870s. Today, it has been transformed into a 4-storey balcony-style cultural and historical centre. Its bright blue colour attracts a number of tourists, making it a landmark of Wan Chai.

As part of the government’s HK$100 million plan to preserve Chinese-style buildings, Blue House was renovated and reopened in 2016.

**Notes:**
There are a few restaurants and cafes around the blue house, but there aren’t other shopping options.

**Image style:** monochrome, colonial
**Accessibility:** public space

*There are still residents living in the Blue House, each with their own picture perfect balcony.*
3 Chung Wui Mansion

Chung Wui Mansion is a colourful composite building, a typical architectural style in Hong Kong that contains both residential areas and workplaces, located in the middle of the intersection between Johnston Road and Wan Chai Road. If you would like to take a full picture of it, it is recommended to take a tramcar to North Point/ Causeway Bay at Swatow Street station and sit in the front. Chung Wui Mansion is quite close to the Blue House, so you could arrange the trip for these two spots on the same day.

Note:
Same as Choi Hung Estate, the building is not as colourful as you see in the picture—you would need further photo editing to make it saturated. I would recommend you visiting on a sunny day to get a brighter picture.

Image style: multicolor
Accessibility: public space

4 China Hong Kong City

Located in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui, China Hong Kong City is famous for its shopping and ferries to Macau and Mainland China. However, it also has a remarkable spot for taking stylish pictures with its golden buildings.

Note: I took the pictures on the roof garden of the China Hong Kong City. I would suggest you to go on a sunny day, so that the mirror-like buildings will reflect the sunshine, which will make the image more stunning.

Image style: modern, metallic
Accessibility: commercial space

5 Monster Building (Yik Cheong Building)

One of the most representative buildings in Hong Kong the ’Monster Building’ is known for its incredible density. The tightly packed neighbourhood in Quarry Bay also forms a unique and iconic city view.

Note:
1) Since the buildings are for residential purposes, the community has banned public shooting. It is possible to be expelled from the neighbourhood. Please keep quiet while taking photos and do not stay there for too long
2) The environment is quite dark there, which means that you need to increase the “shadow” and lower “highlight” indexes in your photo editing software.

Image style: old Hong Kong, Steam punk, astounding density
Accessibility: private space

6 The Murray

The Murray was a major government officie building built in 1969. Its minimalistic and stylish terrace has attracted both locals and non-locals to visit and take pictures. In 2018, it reopened as a 5-star luxury hotel.

Notes:
The hotel is built on a ramp, which means if you want to get a full, symmetric, non-slanted picture, you will need vertical correction while editing.

Image style: modern, intense, minimalistic, stylish
Accessibility: public space

There is a corridor between the buildings, where people are able to enjoy the sea view.▼
RIDING THE HONG KONG RAINBOW

The Story Behind Hong Kong’s 99 Unique MTR colours

by Melody Li
You are in an MTR carriage on the Island Line. As the train pulls into a new station, the first thing you see is not the bustling crowds waiting on the platform, but a wide range of vibrant colours. Even if you miss the radio broadcast, you know immediately which station you are at – red for Central, blue for Admiralty, and green for Wan Chai. We busy commuters have long taken the colours for granted, but what we may overlook is the subtle designs about them, making them the hidden treasures of the MTR.

The history of the colours can be traced back to about 40 years ago when MTR was first established in the 1970s. At that time, Roland Paolletti, the first chief architect of the MTR, gave this new railway system some personality using three key designs – colours, mosaic tiles, and calligraphy. Aside from aesthetics, these designs were also based on practical considerations. Each station's single colour was designed to differentiate it from others and help orient people, especially since the large population was illiterate at the time. The colours also helped brighten up stations for granted, but what we may overlook is the subtle designs about them, making them the hidden treasures of the MTR.

Principles Behind the Station Colours

In terms of choosing colours for the MTR stations, key principles such as location, station name, and differentiation were taken into account. The surrounding environment of the stations can become the cue of their colours. For instance, the Whampoa Station is blue because it is close to water, while the Ho Man Tin Station is green because it is on a hill. The station's name may also be a source of inspiration. The Lam Tin Station is blue since "Lam" represents blue in Cantonese, while the Wong Tai Sin Station is yellow because "Wong" refers to yellow.

Meanwhile, neighbouring stations often adopt contrasting colours to show the differentiation. For example, the purple colour for Sai Ying Pun Station is in contrast to the green of its neighbour HKU Station. Key stations, including major interchanges and terminals, are coloured red to remind passengers, such as Central and Tsuen Wan.

"People sometimes want a more sophisticated answer from me, but these rules of thumb are the truth, and they work," Mead said. "We will apply exactly the same rules for the brand-new stations in the future."

Innovation of the Colours and Designs

If you are a discerning MTR passenger, you will notice that the current MTR stations can be divided into two categories – most of them are monochromatic, following the original design of Roland, while the relatively new stations, such as Ho Man Tin and To Kwa Wan, are a mixture of two different colours, which are produced by Mead's team.

The original monochromatic stations designed by Roland exhibit problems during the test of time. Firstly, passengers may easily lose a sense of direction when surrounded by the same colour. Besides, the existing stations have used up almost all the major colours, making it unrealistic to differentiate the new stations with only a single new colour.

The mixing colours of the new stations tell the solutions – on the premise that each station holds a signature colour, a secondary colour was added in.

The Ho Man Tin Station will be representational here - Being a primarily green station, it features different shades of green and grey throughout the platform.

At Ho Man Tin, the secondary colour grey was introduced in addition to the signature colour green for both the distinct station identity and clearer navigation.

"We want to make sure that each station has a unique personality, but the point is we have run out of colours, so we are introducing a range of secondary colours. Using colours is valid and I think it is part of our heritage, so it is very important that we continue it," Mead said.

Such combinations of colours not only make the new stations unique, but also enhance the clarity of signs and directions inside the stations.

He said, "We are dealing with people in a very unfamiliar environment, and sometimes we are dealing with people with vision impairments, so using a palette of colours that is easy to see is a very important part of our work."

Bridging the Old and the New

If you have travelled to the newly-expanded Admiralty and Diamond Hill Station, you may have a clear sense of the new design bridging the old - the new interchange platforms and the existing old ones are integrated well as a whole, yet you can still tell the new from the old.

"There are references to what we have done before, but still, we are always trying to produce something new. An analogy is the design of new cars. No matter what new designs are adopted, Mercedes will still look like Mercedes," Mead said.

Between the old and new platforms, colours and designs are what serve as the dividing line and connecting point. In Admiralty, the centre of the new platforms was changed into white, creating a contrast from the original blue station and giving the passengers a transition of the colour intensity as they move through the space.

The design for Diamond Hill is even more creative. As the original station is in a dark green colour with some small lighter tiles representing diamonds, Mead's team reinterpreted the idea of diamonds and decorated the new platform with some super-sized diamonds made of more reflective tiles.

The MTR, as the underground transport network of Hong Kong, runs through the whole city as an integral component.
Spreading out from that 'city centre', the landmarks of my hometown are scattered among parks where I drank bottles of cider and ran from police on Friday nights. The rug we danced on in the dining room after dinner. My first kiss towers next to a dimly lit street lamp in Romiley, and an amphitheatre stands on the rec where we played football to the passengers on the 383 bus that drove by on its route.

In Rome, where I was born, my landmarks have worn with time. They are the twisting roots of a formidable garden tree that sent me over the handlebars of the first bike I learnt to ride and its ragged trunk that, in a separate confrontation, I attempted to clamber up only to slip, and slide back down, leaving my tummy red raw.

As for Hong Kong, I arrived with a girlfriend and, when I leave, will do so with a wife. I will remember here for the AIA Ferris Wheel and I held my partner's hand, went out onto the observation terrace, overlooking Kowloon streets we walked down, plotting our next adventure. Between the dwindling number of neon lights, cats sat guarding store fronts and people trundling metal trolleys up and down pavements.

At a dim sum table in Prince Edward, our English and South African families will meet for the first time and navigate the challenges of using chopsticks and understanding each others' accents.

There is a rock on a cliff overlooking the ocean where I sat eating cake on the first birthday spent with my sister in seven years. There and how, under the mall, there is a minibus that will leave, will do so with a wife. I will remember here for the AIA Ferris Wheel and I held my partner's hand, went out onto the observation terrace, overlooking Kowloon streets we walked down, plotting our next adventure. Between the dwindling number of neon lights, cats sat guarding store fronts and people trundling metal trolleys up and down pavements.

At a dim sum table in Prince Edward, our English and South African families will meet for the first time and navigate the challenges of using chopsticks and understanding each others' accents.

There is a rock on a cliff overlooking the ocean where I sat eating cake on the first birthday spent with my sister in seven years. There and how, under the mall, there is a minibus that will leave, will do so with a wife. I will remember here for the AIA Ferris Wheel and I held my partner's hand, went out onto the observation terrace, overlooking Kowloon streets we walked down, plotting our next adventure. Between the dwindling number of neon lights, cats sat guarding store fronts and people trundling metal trolleys up and down pavements.

At a dim sum table in Prince Edward, our English and South African families will meet for the first time and navigate the challenges of using chopsticks and understanding each others' accents.

There is a rock on a cliff overlooking the ocean where I sat eating cake on the first birthday spent with my sister in seven years. There and how, under the mall, there is a minibus that will leave, will do so with a wife. I will remember here for the AIA Ferris Wheel and I held my partner's hand, went out onto the observation terrace, overlooking Kowloon streets we walked down, plotting our next adventure. Between the dwindling number of neon lights, cats sat guarding store fronts and people trundling metal trolleys up and down pavements.

At a dim sum table in Prince Edward, our English and South African families will meet for the first time and navigate the challenges of using chopsticks and understanding each others' accents.
How My Grandfather’s Dream became a Hong Kong Reality

Picking up groceries at the supermarket has become second nature to many people, but how did this phenomena happen? When did it make its way to Hong Kong?

By Hailey YIP

His innovation would change the way consumers grocery shop from here on out. Staff members would stack shelves with dry goods and products overnight, and then customers would serve themselves and bring the goods to the cashiers lined up in rows.

Not only did this self-serve method reduce labour costs, but also increased production value given that the personalised practice was gone. Though many shopkeepers feared the risk of shoplifting, the economic gain still outweighed the cost.

THE SUPERMARKET DREAM

During the 1970s, the government began its plan to urbanise the Sai Wan (西灣) area, now known as Chai Wan (柴灣). It was going to be the new residential district, so the government allocated certain spaces for essential businesses to take place, such as a pharmacy, a library, and a supermarket.

Spaces for these businesses have already been chosen, but it was up to the public to place bids for the right to run them. Seeing the opportunity arise, Yip, alongside his two minibus driver friends Lai Bing Him and Cheng Hin Cheung, decided to submit a $400,000 bid in hopes of running their own supermarket.

The trio came second in the bidding race, but a criminal record found on the winner’s file turned their dream into a reality. In 1979, they won the lease and opened Chai Wan Supermarket (柴灣超級市場) - the first-ever Chinese-run supermarket business in Chai Wan. The team was small: three bosses, four cashiers, and four stock clerks. None of them had experience in running a supermarket. Stocking. Ordering. Pricing. Tracking. They had to learn on the job.

Being the first in this specialised retail sector, the three thought they hit a jackpot, but business was slow. Businesses were set up, but people have not moved into the newly-built apartments yet. Rows of dry goods and household products filled the shelves, but rarely any left them. They feared that the supermarket would leave them in deficit. There was still a monthly $50,000 rent to pay. Employees to feed. Suppliers to reimburse. Yip would often stand outside the market entrance, hoping to see ladies with a trolley step inside.

After two years of deficit and waiting, their luck turned around when the residential district finally lived up to its name. As more and more people moved in, their business began to soar. Products were emptying shelves faster than they could restock. The days where they feared they couldn’t pay suppliers back were coming to an end. Instead, suppliers were now begging Yip for the best shelf spot in the hottest supermarket on the eastern side of Hong Kong Island.

THE LEGACY OF YIP DICK HOI (1933 - 2023)

“師傅，前面有落！Driver, getting off at the next stop!”

The familiar words that Yip Dick Hoi heard everyday as a Hong Kong minibus driver in the 1960s. The hours were long. The heat was unbearable. But he still got behind the wheel everyday to raise his family of four including his wife and two young sons. Yip didn’t mind the monotonous drives, but the countless parking tickets from lunch stops and bathroom breaks drove him crazy. A day’s work couldn’t even cover the costs of the deadly white slip. He decided it was time for a change.

THE SUPERMARKET DREAM

The bell rings when you walk into the store. The storekeeper greets you with a smile in his white and blue apron. You order your usual groceries: a pound of rice, three heads of broccoli, and a hundred grams of chicken. He turns around and begins fetching your order from the stacked shelves behind him. He then carefully measures each portion and wraps it with a long piece of twine.

That is what grocery shopping looked like in the late 1800s to early 1900s.

This personalised shopping experience was not only labour-intensive, but also very expensive given the inefficient time it took to serve each customer. As a result, Clarence Saunders decided to open the first ever self-service supermarket in Tennessee during 1916.

THE SUPERMARKET DREAM

During the 1970s, the government began its plan to urbanise the Sai Wan (西灣) area, now known as Chai Wan (柴灣). It was going to be the new residential district, so the government allocated certain spaces for essential businesses to take place, such as a pharmacy, a library, and a supermarket.

Spaces for these businesses have already been chosen, but it was up to the public to place bids for the right to run them. Seeing the opportunity arise, Yip, alongside his two minibus driver friends Lai Bing Him and Cheng Hin Cheung, decided to submit a $400,000 bid in hopes of running their own supermarket.

The trio came second in the bidding race, but a criminal record found on the winner’s file turned their dream into a reality. In 1979, they won the lease and opened Chai Wan Supermarket (柴灣超級市場) - the first-ever Chinese-run supermarket business in Chai Wan. The team was small: three bosses, four cashiers, and four stock clerks. None of them had experience in running a supermarket. Stocking. Ordering. Pricing. Tracking. They had to learn on the job.

Being the first in this specialised retail sector, the three thought they hit a jackpot, but business was slow. Businesses were set up, but people have not moved into the newly-built apartments yet. Rows of dry goods and household products filled the shelves, but rarely any left them. They feared that the supermarket would leave them in deficit. There was still a monthly $50,000 rent to pay. Employees to feed. Suppliers to reimburse. Yip would often stand outside the market entrance, hoping to see ladies with a trolley step inside.

After two years of deficit and waiting, their luck turned around when the residential district finally lived up to its name. As more and more people moved in, their business began to soar. Products were emptying shelves faster than they could restock. The days where they feared they couldn’t pay suppliers back were coming to an end. Instead, suppliers were now begging Yip for the best shelf spot in the hottest supermarket on the eastern side of Hong Kong Island.
Wet markets are known for their fresh produce and meat selection. Convenience stores had your everyday snack foods and drinks. So why did Hong Kong need supermarkets?

Hong Kong supermarkets sold everything else that its competitors didn’t. The city was becoming more and more fast paced, so its people relied on convenience and products that could last longer. Supermarkets sold dry products, frozen goods, household products, alcohol, and tobacco. What made this new business stand out was the variety that convenience stores lacked. Also, many people just wanted to enjoy the air conditioning that supermarkets offered.

But where do supermarkets get their products from?

Many have heard of the door-to-door salesman job. Turns out that position also exists in the retail sector. Given that Hong Kong is an international city that heavily relies on trading with other countries, the city was filled with importing companies. They were able to bring in the best household products. The top canned foods. And even the most expensive alcohol. Marketers from these local suppliers would then visit supermarkets with product catalogues. Shopkeepers would then choose the products that they felt would sell well with the Hong Kong locals. The suppliers would bring in the products plus a few extras as rebate. The clerks then stacked the shelves with the products marked up by a few dollars. At the end of the month, the shopkeeper would pay the cost of the products to the supplier, while keeping the difference made from the mark up. That is how revenue is made in a supermarket.

But when products don’t sell, supermarkets lose money unless the supplier is willing to give a refund. For big brands like Coca Cola and expensive goods like cigarettes, the companies require cash on delivery.

The grand opening of Chai Wan Supermarket’s second store.

Chai Wan Supermarket suddenly wasn’t just a place for your household needs, but also a free television program. The once minibus driver was now abandoning his oversized t-shirts for suits and ties. Winning various promotional competitions from Vitasoy to Remy Martin, Chai Wan Supermarket finally had its mark on the map.

In 1983, they decided to open a second supermarket a few streets down from the main. But history was repeating itself once again. Residents had not filled up that side of Chai Wan yet, so the store was very quiet. Afraid that a second store would be burdensome to their finances, they decided to rent it out to ParknShop and focus on their main store.

Instead of hearing “Getting off at the next light!” everyday, Yip was now accustomed to hearing “Good morning, boss” and “What’s the new promotion?” This job was hard work, but he loved the smiles and friendships he made with the Chai Wan residents. This was his second home.

As their business grew with experience, Yip’s wife Cheung So Chun focused more on marketing and branding. Corporations would host competitions for local supermarkets to see who could better promote their products, and of course make the most revenue. Unfortunately, social media and television commercials didn’t make the cut back then. Supermarkets relied on flashy display cases. Soda cans stacked in large pyramids. Cardboard cutouts with lights.

But after running a supermarket for 20 years, Yip felt it was time to say goodbye. He loved his supermarket, but he loved his family more. He wanted to immigrate to Canada to be with his sons. He ended the lease in 1998, and the Vanguard supermarket chain immediately took its place. Now, in 2023, a USelect has taken its place, continuing the supermarket legacy.

Yip Dick Hoi, his wife Cheung So Chun, and their two sons, Johnny and Lawrence say goodbye to Hong Kong. Source: family photos

Yip was known as one of Hong Kong’s supermarket founders, but to me, he was a loving grandfather. I am so grateful I got to experience his legacy. Sitting inside the shopping baskets. Making music on the cash register. The supermarket was my Disneyland. Even though the store left his ownership when I was a toddler, I will never forget the number of ice cream cones and Sprite soda pops I “shoplifted” from him. It took a few years for me to learn that I could not just take as I pleased whenever I walked into a supermarket. To this day, Sprite is still my favourite pop.
Just next to the Tsuen Wan Cemetery, Riviera Gardens is one of the most famous properties in Tsuen Wan. According to an agency website, the price of HK$15,000 per square foot far exceeds the average in the New Territories.

### Density in the Afterlife

*By Wulfric ZHANG*

**A Bird’s-Eye View of Hong Kong Cemeteries**

These hills, which stand out amidst the concrete of the city, are the place where thousands of Hong Kong residents go after their death. Hong Kong’s cemeteries contain a wide variety of gravestones from all cultures and religions.

In traditional Chinese Feng Shui, building cemeteries on hillsides meant gathering “positive energy” while blocking the negative. But from an architectural point of view, cemeteries were built on hillsides to avoid rainwater, wind, and sand that could erode graves and tombstones.
St. Michael’s Catholic Cemetery is built around the chapel which was first built in 1868. It can contain 23,000 graves. Even when the former Bishop of Hong Kong died, the cemetery still needed to vacate a tomb of a clergyman before burying him.

Given Hong Kong’s dense population, residential buildings are built next to cemeteries in Hong Kong. However, people don’t seem to mind at all. This symbiotic relationship between citizens and urban spaces like cemeteries have already become a part of Hong Kong culture.

Inevitably, the concern with the lack of space still stands even among the dead. People have to enter a lottery conducted by the government in order to buy a permanent spot in public cemeteries. For those who choose private cemeteries, the cost can be 10 to 50 times more expensive.

If you want to go to Cheung Chau’s most famous attraction, Cheung Po Chai Cave, then the quickest way is through this huge cemetery, where there is a huge contrast between the peace and quiet and the bustle of the waterfront shopping streets.

The sea breeze and the sunset make for a great walk under the cross at the top of the hill of Pokfulam Christian Cemetery. But if you want to get such a view after you die, you need to save at least HK$300,000.

In the aerial photo taken in the Pokfulam Christian Cemetery, these chessboard-like rectangles are tombs built on a hill, with a long staircase leading to the top of the mountain.
Why People Thought HSBC Is A Transformer Building

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) headquarters had been demolished and reerected in three major transformations. In the last iteration, the spectacular 47-story rectangular prism was built in 1985, with four basement levels and its long sides oriented to the panoramic views of the harbor.

Taking seven years to complete from conception to construction, the headquarters has become the icon for the region's largest bank.

Standing and defying the test of time

HSBC was found in 1865, in the wake of British victories in the Opium Wars against China and colonization of Hong Kong. The bank used to specialize in the opium trade between Europe and Asia. At the time, it was indispensable to the propensity of Hong Kong and for strengthening of the British Empire, as written by historian Eric Toussaint.

Standing at a 179m, the HSBC building was planned during the 1997 handover. The 1997 transfer of power casted a cloud over the city, sparking people's fear of possible changes and uncertainties to their way of life.

HSBC put a brand-new structure in place as a symbol of assurance to people who were packing and set to leave at the time. Yet, the HSBC headquarters soon found itself at the heart of controversies for its seemingly deconstructable skeleton and what it signifies.

The first tower without a central core

The headquarters was built upon a collection of prefabricated pieces manufactured and imported from around the globe for an on-site assemblage.

According to the Journal of Design History's "Globalizing Corporate Identity in Hong Kong: Rebranding Two Banks", such process of tailor-making architectural components for the building is characterized as "hand-crafting high tech." A notable example would be "sanitary modules" which comprise the bathroom facilities for each floor. Customized on a specially constructed production line in Japan, they were fitted down to the finest detail before being shipped to Hong Kong.

The headquarters was the most expensive of its time, costing approximately HK$5.2 billion.

Norman Foster, a British architect, was given the task to design "the best bank headquarters in the world" following an invited international competition. The final masterpiece put him on the map as a top-notch label.

Dubbing the transformer building as "kits of parts", the book "Hong Kong Bank: The building of Norman Foster's masterpiece" shows that the structure resorts to a stacking technique without an internal supporting structure, throughout the suspended floor plates, double-height trusses, a central atrium space, lower open plaza and basements floors.
A new use for the ground space of HSBC

Walking into the building, you would be in awe at how the office floors are raised off the ground, which have left plenty of space for a sheltered plaza and allowed pedestrians to pass underneath the building. The entrance to the plaza features a 40m high atrium, adorned with mirrors on top to reflect the sunlight, which allows light to enter the atrium.

With a pair of escalators ascending through a latticed glass floor and arriving in a tall central atrium filled with natural light, the brightness and transparency of the space is owed to what Foster describes as a "mirror scoop" fitted to the south facade of the tower, which bounces daylight onto the mirrored ceiling of the atrium.

Without surprise, the wide open space has since become a popular hangout spot, a cultural space for many city dwellers over the weekend.

Tala Garcia, a domestic helper in her 20s who has worked in Hong Kong for five years, is one of the building's loyal visitors.

"We just love the entire open area all laid out with good natural lighting that seeps in," Garcia said, explaining why she always returns to the headquarters' plaza.

According to "Foster Tower: A Global Architecture, the facades" are also embellished with sunshade louvers to reduce solar penetration and conserve energy.

The book also explains that the building is connected to the Victoria Harbour, using the seawater for heating and cooling. To run the air conditioning system, the sea water is brought in and chilled before traveling through to the air conditioning unit; the thermostat then uses the cooled water to cool the air.

Direct connection between Victoria Harbour and HSBC headquarter. The section also indicates the location of the seawater tunnel and sun scoop, and the height of the Building relative to surrounding structure.
How does the system work?

The DSD is responsible for flood prevention. The work includes processing daily reports of blockage in public drains, regular inspecting electrical, mechanical, and structural works, rehabilitating aged and damaged stormwater channels, and desilting drainage facilities.

However, drainage improvement in urban areas faces another type of construction problem.

Since most of the roads in Hong Kong are densely packed with utilities, such as cables, telephone lines, and gas pipes, traditional drainage works with excavation techniques inevitably require construction under existing underground utilities, thus affecting traffic and causing inconvenience to the public.

Therefore, the DSD tries to reduce such work. In addition to the broader use of trenchless excavation techniques to lay drainage pipes, they have adopted more innovative improvement options, including the use of stormwater drainage tunnels to intercept and convey stormwater and the construction of underground flood storage tanks for the temporary storage of stormwater.

Stormwater drainage tunnel

At present, there are four giant stormwater drainage tunnels throughout Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong Island West, Lai Chi Kok, Tsuen Wan stormwater drainage tunnels, and the Kai Tak Stormwater Transfer Scheme.

Those large tunnels can intercept rainwater midway and directly discharge it to the sea, reducing the upstream flow to the downstream urban runoff.

The Hong Kong Island West drainage tunnel, the longest and largest one with a length of 11 kilometers from Tai Hang to Cyberport, can drain away nearly 7,500 cubic meters — equivalent to three standard swimming pools of rainwater in a minute.

When you walk down the streets of Hong Kong, you pass by many roadside gullies and manhole covers with radial patterns. That means there is a stormwater drainpipe beneath your feet.

These underground drain pipes make up the whole stormwater drainage system of Hong Kong, which totals more than 2,800 kilometers. That is longer than the distance from Hong Kong to Beijing.

With an average annual rainfall of about 2400mm, Hong Kong has one of the highest rainfalls in the Pacific Rim. During exceptionally heavy rainfall, flooding may occur in low-lying areas and natural flood plains in the rural areas of the northern part of the New Territories.

Hong Kong also suffers from severe flooding during typhoon season, which is usually from April to October. In 1995, there were about 90 flooding black spots in Hong Kong, with serious ones larger than 100 hectares, the size of 14 soccer fields, resulting in substantial socio-economic losses.

The Drainage Services Department (DSD) was established by the government in September 1989 to provide effective approaches dealing with flooding issues. To protect the city from flooding, they built and kept improving the network of tunnels and dikes, hidden just below the streets.
Underground flood storage tank

Another method is to build a large underground water storage tank. These tanks can temporarily store rainwater upstream so that when the rain subsides, rainwater can be pumped out and the downstream drainage system has enough time to drain, which reduces the risk of flooding.

The construction of flood storage tanks underneath Happy Valley Stadium began in 2012 and was opened in March 2017. The first and second phases of the underground flood storage tank with a total capacity of 60,000 cubic meters is equivalent to 24 standard swimming pools.

After its operation, the flood discharge capacity of Happy Valley and the neighboring Wan Chai area was increased to withstand a 50-year rainstorm, protecting the lives and property of the people in the area.

River Management

The capacity of natural rivers can only cope with river flooding about once every two years.

In order to increase the capacity of the river to cope with the expected extreme conditions, the rivers need to be straightened, widened, deepened, and laminated.

After the completion of the river management projects in Shenzhen River, Wutong River, Shuangye River, Shanbei River, Kam Tin River, and Plain River, the risk of flooding in most flood-prone areas has been greatly reduced.

The Yuen Long Drainage Bypass was specially built to divert stormwater from Yuen Long Town Center. In addition to expanding the capacity of the river, river training projects will also grow many plants on both sides of the river, and even build artificial wetlands to provide a living environment for wildlife.

Maintenance

The effectiveness of a drainage system is easily affected by many factors.

Sediments can be slowly deposited in drains and drainage channels, affecting their capacity. Debris, bulky objects and leaves, and branches can be washed into drainage channels, severely blocking the drainage system.

Land development can affect the flow path, causing more flow than expected at some points in the drainage system.

Since the rainy season in Hong Kong runs from April to October, it is not easy to complete the desilting, maintenance, and repair work for the drainage facilities within such a tight time frame.

DSD Secretary for Development Wong Wai Lum said every year they remove up to 500 tons of sand and silt from the four drainage tunnels and four flood storage ponds, which is equivalent to the weight of about 54 double-decker buses.

Since 1995, the Drainage Services Department has eliminated a total of 127 flooding black spots. Now, only four flooding black spots remain, one of which is Chatham Road South. Its flood control project is expected to start in the third quarter of this year in hopes that this flooding black spot can eventually be removed from the list.

The large scale of flood prevention facilities now includes over 2,400 km of underground stormwater drains, over 360 km of man-made watercourses, four underground flood storage ponds with a total capacity of over 180,000 m³ (equivalent to 72 standard swimming pools), and four stormwater drainage tunnels with a total length of about 21 km.

With these large-scale long-term structural measures completed one after another, Hong Kong’s flooding black spots will be eliminated someday.

These major underground projects will also help Hong Kong cope with the increased and more devastating natural disasters that climate change brings in the future.
When people think of Hong Kong, they think of skyscrapers and bright lights. People tend to forget that it is also a place full of natural and cultural assets. Here are three places to learn about Hong Kong’s natural environments.

Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden

Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden stretches across Tai Po and Yuen Long districts. The farm is an ecological conservation and education centre, with a number of facilities housing a variety of wildlife, such as reptiles, mammals and birds.

Children can participate in different activities held by the farm and connect to the nature.

Kadoorie Farm is also a small zoo with different species of animals around the world.

Amongst the many attractions is the Piers Jacobs Wildlife Sanctuary, which houses the Red Muntjac (a deer species), Sasa and Didi. Both of which were rescued having been found orphaned in the wild here in Hong Kong.

As for the Garden, Kadoorie is home to a variety of plants and crops that can be viewed throughout the park. They promote organic farming through exhibitions that aim to educate visitors on practices such as aquaponics, a food production system that raises fish and plants.

Kadoorie plants various organic crops then sells those to visitors.

Located in Kowloon East, CIC-Zero Carbon Park is the first zero-carbon building in Hong Kong. The park is surrounded by tall buildings, but is an area where the government is striving to promote urban greenening.

The facilities inside the park are made from sustainable materials. The solar panels on the main building and the kiosk roofs generate power from sunlight. The jogging track that circles the park is covered with special material that absorbs sunlight to generate power.

Kwan Tong is a place where the government is trying to promote urban greenening. The green elements are combined with facilities or art works.

The cafe and playground offer a calm space for members of the public to come and relax, amid some 200 species of plants that serve as habitats for local birds and other animals in Hong Kong.

Inside the main building, an exhibition highlights the features and the history of Hong Kong’s sustainable construction industry, and the different facilities promote awareness of living sustainably. Visitors can book a guided tour on the CIC-ZCP website.

Tai O

Tai O, located on the western part of Lantau island, is famous for its natural landscapes and hiking routes, and is a wonderful cultural asset to Hong Kong.

Tai O was once a fishing village, but as large companies monopolised the trade, the village has gradually lost its traditional lifestyle. The stilt houses, however, remain an iconic image. The traditional structures have been preserved by the government and there are still residents living on top of the water.

Tai O is a place where the government is trying to promote urban greenening. The green elements are combined with facilities or art works.

Vendors shouting prices of freshly caught seafood and making the traditional local snack by leaving egg yolks to dry in the sun creates a bustling, vibrant Tai O atmosphere. Also known as the island of cats, feline paintings can be seen down streets across the island.

Temples are another crucial component of fishing culture, protecting the health of local residents and keeping them safe whilst away on fishing trips. Pay a visit to Kwan Tai or Tin Hau Temple in the village, as well as different exhibition centres, such as the Tai O Rural Committee Historic and Cultural Showroom, to learn about fishing culture and the local history of fishing and salt production.

Vendor shouting prices of freshly caught seafood creating a bustling, vibrant Tai O atmosphere.

Stilt House which has existed for around 200 years is the traditional habitation for the fishery families in Tai O.

The cafe and playground offer a calm space for members of the public to come and relax, amid some 200 species of plants that serve as habitats for local birds and other animals in Hong Kong.

Inside the main building, an exhibition highlights the features and the history of Hong Kong’s sustainable construction industry, and the different facilities promote awareness of living sustainably. Visitors can book a guided tour on the CIC-ZCP website.
PROTECTING THE OCEAN

Saving The Sea With AI & 3D Printing

By Larissa GAO

Although many people do not see the ocean every day, it covers 71% of the Earth’s surface. It plays an important role in people’s lives, and especially for Hong Kong people.

With a total coastline of 456 kilometers surrounding the city, Hong Kong people take advantage of it through watersports, such as kayaking and snorkeling.

However, human activities cause significant problems to the ocean ecology. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature – Hong Kong, the Hong Kong government collects 15,000 tons of waste per year in its waters.

Meanwhile, the habitats of some creatures have been ruined by human activities alongside the coastline.

Luckily, there are groups of experts dedicated to protecting the environment with ground-breaking technology.

Samyuktha Sriram is one of them.

AI-generated Bot

Sriram works as the head of business development and marketing at Clearbot, a tech startup in Hong Kong.

“Clearbot is an electric autonomous robot that we have created and allows us to do everything from pollution recovery to surveillance,” Sriram said. “So, we basically came up with the solution to make marine tasks more environmentally friendly and smarter.”

The AI-generated robots, which look like small motorboats, have already been used in multiple places in Hong Kong and India, she added.

“After we started our business, there were a lot of uncertainties and unexpected situations that did happen,” she said. “For example, there were a lot of extreme weather events, when the water was really hot, and our bot would be affected.”

These unexpected situations ended up helping the development of this start-up company in the long term.

“When we found the situational challenges, we have been able to improve our bots and keep weather conditions in mind so it doesn’t happen again.”

However, there were some limitations to this tool, as it could only collect certain kinds of trash, like bottles, that could fit within the width of the entry of the board.

“But all over this year, we would actually be increasing that to make a bigger bot that is able to carry a lot more than previously,” she said. “Now it is able to collect 200 kg at one time.”
Professor Christian J. Lange and Professor Weijen Wang from the University of Hong Kong use 3D printing for a project in a remote village in Hong Kong.

Wang choose Kuk Po because it has a diverse ecological system.

Most of the seashores have been changed because of human activities. However, like many border zones with China, Kuk Po has been "frozen" since 1949 because it is a restricted area where "there is no sufficient infrastructure provision with limited road access," Wang added.

Villagers living in those areas were offered to move to public housing in a new town and many immigrated to other countries, like the U.K., Wang said.

"The historic village was preserved because of the depopulation in that area," he said. "And nature comes back."

In the tidal zones, creatures must deal with different situations within a day. 3D printing terracotta could help creatures cope with these situations, like helping them escape from predators. Its design was inspired by Chinese ceramic stools.

"If you go and see that terracotta, you will find that many crabs live there," he said. "It is truly a by-product of my project."

"The 3D printing technique works beautifully for small-scale projects like this," he said. "But when civil engineers worked on projects of coastline protection, the magnitudes of that are much bigger than this."

The use of this technology for other projects in larger regions has not been sufficient on its own, he said.

"The effective way to handle the protection of the habitats is to use the mixed techniques that could work best in different civil engineering projects," he added.

In his project, the group of researchers added many crabs live there," he said. "It is truly a by-product of Hong Kong's ocean ecology as a whole.

"I care about environmental issues, and I am doing what I can do," he said. "That is just a tiny village. It is not realistic for me to help Hong Kong with all issues."

Hong Kong government

As for what the government has done to protect water environments, Sriram said the government worked with Clearbot to do pollution recovery.

"We do weed removal," she said. "Those are invasive plants that could harm the local ecosystems."

But since there are many important things that should be addressed, "it is not the government's priority to protect the ocean environment," Wang said.

At the moment, Wang added that the government is giving priority to building more houses in order to solve the housing crisis for Hong Kong's younger generation.

"I think being here and being around people who know the same things and are exposed to the same things but come from different backgrounds really pushes me to lay down my understanding and try to see the world from their perspective," he said.
A NEW ENVIRONMENT

Afghanistan to Hong Kong

by Safiullah Ahmadzai

Despite the Hong Kong government’s ban on visas for Afghan people in Hong Kong, Tahera Hashimi, 27, and I, two Afghan students, were able to move to Hong Kong under a university scholarship.

I used to be a journalist at one of the local television stations in Herat province in western Afghanistan. Tahera was teaching at Ghor University in central Afghanistan and getting a master's degree at the University of Putra in Malaysia.

Before coming to Hong Kong, I was living with my parents, my three sisters, and three brothers in a house that my father bought in 2015. At that time, with the presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan, people’s businesses were good and many foreign organizations were working in Afghanistan.

My father bought a three-story house for his four children so that they could live in this house after marriage. My two brothers are now married and have several children, now 14 people are living together in this house.

In Afghanistan, people usually live in large multi-story houses to accommodate multi-generation households. Even low-income families live in such spacious houses, which really contrast Hong Kong’s living situation.

Despite the Hong Kong government’s ban on visas for Afghan people in Hong Kong, Tahera Hashimi, 27, and I, two Afghan students, were able to move to Hong Kong under a university scholarship.

It is usually customary for sons to live with their parents for a long time after marriage. For this reason, people buy a house for their children and future grandchildren.

Although I have a safe life and a lot of freedom in Hong Kong, having a tiny space is a challenge. I recall my spacious house and big room in Afghanistan almost every night when I lie down. My feet touch the wardrobe and I feel uncomfortable because my room is too small and the bed and wardrobe hardly fit in my 64 square feet dorm.

Tahira, who has spent most of her life in the countryside and large mud houses, says that although in Hong Kong she has security and rights that women do not have in Afghanistan, she prefers the lifestyle back home.

"Sometimes my tiny apartment in Hong Kong makes me disappointed and I wish I didn’t come here. I miss living in a large mud house in my village," she said.

Tahira belongs to a low-income family. Her family relies on her father’s income from farming in Daikundi province in the center of Afghanistan.

Tahira’s father has rented a house in the center of Daikundi province so that his children can have access to education.
Dirty Laundry, Fresh Coffee — By Daoli ZHANG

Waiting for laundry to get clean can be tedious. Here are two local companies that created a mini cafe in the laundromat. You can plan a coffee date with friends while waiting for your laundry to be washed and dried.

1. Coffee & Laundry
Shop F, G/F, 1 Queen Street, Sheung Wan

If you’re in the mood for a vintage vibe, Sheung Wan’s Coffee & Laundry oozes cute and quirky decorations. Despite its small size, the store’s old wooden entrance and panda mascot catch your eye immediately. The panda theme follows into the store, as panda stickers cover the self-service machines. Customers can easily start their load with the tap of their Octopus card. A long strip of seats surround the front of the store, while some quieter seats fall in the back to allow patrons to enjoy a cup of coffee during their wait.

“I love the warm, modern feel of the place,” said Amanda, who came in to order a cup of coffee. “It brings the concept of slow living into this fast-moving city.”

When ordering coffee here, Queen’s Coffee is a must-try, featuring fresh orange and lemon juice infused in espresso for a rejuvenating and slightly sweet taste. The shop maximizes its indoor and outside spaces with specially-designed steps and cafe tables.

Clean is hard to miss with its yellow checkered brick walls contrasting beautifully with the old neighborhood. You are immediately welcomed by its bright and airy space. The shop maximizes its indoor and outside spaces with specially-designed steps and cafe tables.

Sustainability and veganism are at the forefront of Clean’s philosophy. The store charges extra for milk and take-out packaging, serving oat milk as the default option for coffee. In addition, the store develops and sells laundry products that support sustainable living, including hypoallergenic, natural, and non-harmful laundry detergent strips. You can use Octopus, Alipay, or WeChat for payment.

While waiting for your laundry, you can indulge in their range of vegan food and drinks, including their signature oat milk latte. For a gourmet drink, try cascara, a tangy tea made from coffee peels.

“Maybe it’s difficult to promote the idea of sustainable living like it is to promote oat milk, and our new store in Tsim Sha Tsui isn’t doing very well right now actually,” said Cynthia, the owner. “But it’s really something I want to do to contribute to the community.”

If you’re looking to start a sustainable lifestyle and make a positive impact on our community and planet, Clean is the perfect spot to start.

2. Clean
G/F, 100 Queen’s Road West, Western District

Clean is hard to miss with its yellow checkered brick walls contrasting beautifully with the old neighborhood. You are immediately welcomed by its bright and airy space. The shop maximizes its indoor and outside spaces with specially-designed steps and cafe tables.

Sustainability and veganism are at the forefront of Clean’s philosophy. The store charges extra for milk and take-out packaging, serving oat milk as the default option for coffee. In addition, the store develops and sells laundry products that support sustainable living, including hypoallergenic, natural, and non-harmful laundry detergent strips. You can use Octopus, Alipay, or WeChat for payment.

While waiting for your laundry, you can indulge in their range of vegan food and drinks, including their signature oat milk latte. For a gourmet drink, try cascara, a tangy tea made from coffee peels.

“Maybe it’s difficult to promote the idea of sustainable living like it is to promote oat milk, and our new store in Tsim Sha Tsui isn’t doing very well right now actually,” said Cynthia, the owner. “But it’s really something I want to do to contribute to the community.”

If you’re looking to start a sustainable lifestyle and make a positive impact on our community and planet, Clean is the perfect spot to start.

REVIEW: SECOND-HAND BOOKSTORES
Cozy places to browse books — By Qianyu ZHAO

How long has it been since you read a paper book in peace and quiet?

There are still many brick-and-mortar bookstores that offer people a choice to slow down. Second-hand bookstores go beyond that. Each physical copy also has a history that can be seen in the yellowed paper, old folds and trifling notes.

1. Lily Bookshop
Room F-G, G/F, Kai Fung Mansion, 189-205 Queen's Road

Harry Potter fans assemble! Lily Bookshop is absolutely a haven for English books. Although it only consists of just a few tiny rooms, you can find books of all kinds priced at around HK$30-300. According to the owner, many out-of-print books can also be found here too.

For Harry Potter fans, there are various versions of the novels and special-edition CDs for purchase. This is definitely the place you want to go to visit Hogwarts.

Lily Wong, the bookstore owner, said, “Shopping in a bookstore requires you to slow your mind down. It’s not that you are looking for the book, but the book is looking for you.”

2. Sam Kee Book Company
G/F, No.19, King’s Centre, North Point, 193 King’s Road

Five kittens here are looking forward to mingle. Sam Kee Book Company consists of two rooms with narrow aisles filled with historic Chinese literature - Tang poetry, song lyric poetry, martial arts novels, and etc. From Eileen Chang to Lu Xun, from Gu Long to Jin Yong, this bookstore is the best place to learn about Chinese history.

Unlike other bookstores, the owner decides the price so there are no price tags on the books. Don’t worry, the owner is a very welcoming person! Also, don’t miss the HK$5 discounted books at the door. The atmosphere may be quiet, but the store’s kittens bring a lot of life to your visit.

The sign in front of the Sam Kee Book Company is very visible.

By Qianyu ZHAO

REVIEW: SECOND-HAND BOOKSTORES
Cozy places to browse books — By Qianyu ZHAO

How long has it been since you read a paper book in peace and quiet?

There are still many brick-and-mortar bookstores that offer people a choice to slow down. Second-hand bookstores go beyond that. Each physical copy also has a history that can be seen in the yellowed paper, old folds and trifling notes.

1. Lily Bookshop
Room F-G, G/F, Kai Fung Mansion, 189-205 Queen’s Road

Harry Potter fans assemble! Lily Bookshop is absolutely a haven for English books. Although it only consists of just a few tiny rooms, you can find books of all kinds priced at around HK$30-300. According to the owner, many out-of-print books can also be found here too.

For Harry Potter fans, there are various versions of the novels and special-edition CDs for purchase. This is definitely the place you want to go to visit Hogwarts.

Lily Wong, the bookstore owner, said, “Shopping in a bookstore requires you to slow your mind down. It’s not that you are looking for the book, but the book is looking for you.”

2. Sam Kee Book Company
G/F, No.19, King’s Centre, North Point, 193 King’s Road

Five kittens here are looking forward to mingle. Sam Kee Book Company consists of two rooms with narrow aisles filled with historic Chinese literature - Tang poetry, song lyric poetry, martial arts novels, and etc. From Eileen Chang to Lu Xun, from Gu Long to Jin Yong, this bookstore is the best place to learn about Chinese history.

Unlike other bookstores, the owner decides the price so there are no price tags on the books. Don’t worry, the owner is a very welcoming person! Also, don’t miss the HK$5 discounted books at the door. The atmosphere may be quiet, but the store’s kittens bring a lot of life to your visit.

The sign in front of the Sam Kee Book Company is very visible.

By Qianyu ZHAO
The centre of the Spirit Book Store is filled with English books, surrounded by Chinese books.

The sunlight pours in through the window of Book & Co.

Flipping paper, whiffing coffee, relaxing piano music, warm lights, and comfortable seats... Choose a sunny weekend afternoon to have a latte here and enjoy the coziness of Book & Co.

Books here have no obvious category, so it is the perfect place for wandering aimlessly. Still, if the array of books overwhelms you, you can start with the shelf by the door dedicated to Penguin Group Bestsellers and work your way to the back. You can also pick up some English DVD movies and classical music CDs for only HK$10.

Book & Co. has five tables for readers to read and dine. They offer coffee, tea, and light meals for around HK$50.

The centre of the Spirit Book Store is filled with English books, surrounded by Chinese books.

For literature and history lovers

My Book Room mainly has books covering literature, history, and political science. There are three branches of this bookstore, which are all located on Kowloon Island.

One owner has filled their space with high stacks of books, leaving extremely narrow aisles for passage. This might not be the most suitable place for those who want to sit down and read.

The space might seem messy, but the owner has thoughtfully divided the Chinese books into 13 sections from A-M, English books by categories, and children’s books on its own to help you locate your choice of book faster. There are no price tags. The owner determines the price based on quality and thickness.

By Madeleine Mak

"I hope to see a future Hong Kong that is like a metaverse, more futuristic. I hope it will also have a more multicultural community where people feel free to exchange new ideas."

Five Hongkongers share their hopes for the city one century from now. Here is what A.I. imagined for them.

Admittedly, we have no idea what the future truly holds. Despite this uncertainty, we still dare to dream. Think about it for a moment. How do you feel about the future? What do you hope Hong Kong will look like a century from now?

I asked five people with different occupations in Hong Kong to reflect on these very questions.
From opinions on Hong Kong’s oceans and green spaces to education and business, what all these individuals found difficult was truly describing how their wants for the future could actually look. To bring their visions to life, I turned to Midjourney, an A.I. software that transforms text prompts into detailed images. Key words were extracted from interviewees’ responses and fed through a machine learning algorithm. In less than a minute, five pictures of a future Hong Kong were generated. The image deemed most representative of each participants’ view is displayed here.

In reality, the process of using Midjourney consisted of a lot of trial-and-error. Over 150 sets of artificial intelligence generated images were produced. Beyond fuzzy details and odd depictions of fish flying in the sky, the A.I. also showed moments of bias and assumption. For example, words such as ‘multiculturalism’ favoured one ethnicity over another. ‘Futuristic’ leaned towards dystopian unless instructed otherwise. While there is little transparency on where Midjourney gathers its visual references and how it stitches them together, I can only reflect on what these interpretations, as with what interviewees shared with me, reveal about present ideas on space, life and community. In a similar fashion, these images, while inspired by the thoughts of others, ultimately also contain a sliver of my own views as I modified text prompts to evade the A.I.’s misgivings and selected the final images.

You too, dear reader, may find yourself imagining a very different future from what is represented here. So, what figment of the future do you see? What values are you carrying with you into tomorrow? What stories do you hope are told?

Hermia Chan, 22, Youth Climate Activist

I hope to see a future Hong Kong with 100% Renewable Energy

Offshore wind power will be a reality, at least 30% of our oceans will be protected. Companies will be prioritising the planet over profit.

Matthew Wong, 40, Creative Entrepreneur

I hope to see a future Hong Kong with a transformed Education System that promotes non-traditional thought. Children will be able to explore and dream about what is possible in the creative industry rather than being pressured into career paths like law or medicine.

Colleen Chiu-Shee, 38, HKU Urban Planning Professor

I hope to see a future Hong Kong with more Green Spaces that can foster more social cohesion, such as in-field pocket parks. There are a lot of transient spaces, but not much that are open to the public where you can just slow down and enjoy.

Stef Chen, 26, Corporate Lawyer

I hope to see Hong Kong still thriving as an international business hub. Maybe there will be Flying Cars by then, who knows?