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BY ELIZABETH KERR

Perspective celebrated emerging architects, designers and artists with this year's edition of the 40 Under 40 Awards – and asked how Hong Kong might better embrace its heritage



New ways to look at old buildings: The heritage panel discussion



Hong Kong's heritage conservation is still in its infancy, the panel agrees



Hong Kong needs to develop its own rules, says Roger Wu



On notice: Heritage is increasingly on Hongkongers' radar

Photo: Dicky Liu, Eric Wong and Yan Wu

On May 28, dozens of interior designers, architects and thought-leaders filed into The Annex in Central, Hong Kong, for the presentation of the annual *Perspective* 40 Under 40 Awards, which acknowledge the next generation's work in the creative fields. But before the gongs were handed out to the worthy recipients, a group of academics and professional architects and designers took to the stage to contribute to a debate about heritage preservation: 'Heritage in Hong Kong: Trend, Benefit or Burden?' The short answer turned out to be: In Hong Kong, heritage is on-trend and has benefits – yet it can be a burden in a city that needs to expand.

Moderated by Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Hong Kong Chapter council member Roger Wu, the panellists agreed that the concept of heritage conservation in the SAR is in its infancy and has yet to be defined by a feasible set of metrics. In a city with the most expensive real estate in the world, rigid private property rights and a supply crunch across most sectors, heritage conservation is often seen as a roadblock to development. Structures such as the original Star Ferry Pier, Tai Kwun and the 1970s-era General Post Office – sitting inside the lucrative Site 3, which will eventually go to tender – were all cited as examples when discussing the costs and benefits of conservation.



Different values are emerging, says Edward Leung



There's a new appetite for heritage, says Dr Sujata S Govada

While the panel acknowledged there was a great deal of practical and policy work to be done, it was unanimous in its vision of a brighter, more historically engaged development future – one with more adaptive reuse and stronger links between heritage conservation, sustainability and good environmental practice. The first step, the panel noted, was reconciling the disconnect between the public good, land prices, profit margins and design goals.

“If I were to describe Hong Kong in one word, it’s ‘change,’” said Wu. “Conservation isn’t necessarily about

keeping old things; it’s about how you manage the change. Heritage conservation is relatively young in Hong Kong and we haven’t developed our own set of rules to judge and discuss conservation in a rational way. We do the best we can on a project-by-project level, but we can’t win the war in one day. There’s a long way to go, but hopefully we’ll get there.”

One way to get there is by persuading the government to actively correct outdated heritage and building policies, or act on existing policies that might work in favour of better conservation. Panellist Edward Leung, chair of the Heritage and Conservation Committee for the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA), noted that 144 declared monuments were protected from the wrecking ball by government ordinance, yet there were more than 1,700 Grade 2-listed historic buildings. These, he said, were at the greatest risk of being lost due to a lack of statutory protections, and that number doesn’t include privately held structures.

“We must have development incentives and building codes need to be refined by typology,” said Leung. “New code has come out and that tackles a lot of problems, and I think Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage and Arts was able to make use of some of these relaxations.” Grading more buildings would not solve the problem either, Leung believed; solutions would appear only with a wholesale shift in societal values, and understanding conservation was not about just protecting relics. “What prevents me from ripping something off is that we created something in the past that encapsulated the society of the time. The economics, politics, technology and aesthetics are our

“WE DO THE BEST WE CAN ON A PROJECT-BY-PROJECT LEVEL, BUT WE CAN’T WIN THE WAR IN ONE DAY. THERE’S A LONG WAY TO GO, BUT HOPEFULLY WE’LL GET THERE”



History and legacy meant something to Nan Fung, says The Mills’ Ray Zee

values. If you look at a building and see value per square foot, fine. Knock it down and knock it off. But that’s where people are starting to change. We’re seeing different values,” he said.

Sujata S Govada of the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism and founding director of integrated planning and design firm UDP International, agreed. Govada, who contributed to the adaptive reuse of Police Married Quarters (PMQ) in Hong Kong, views the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier in 2007 as the city’s inflexion point, and the one where residents began to see the link between heritage and community. “When I came here in 1994 there was no talk of heritage,” said Govada. “There is an appetite for it now. Projects like the Haw Par Mansion, with a music school, and The Mills – a private developer coming forward with a building that’s not even graded – are giving people confidence that the city is moving in the right direction.” Though she admits the fondly remembered Tiger Balm Garden, razed to make way for luxury housing in 2004, was a disappointment, Govada saw Haw Par’s revitalisation as a good sign for the future. Citing The Mills, she noted that developer and owner Nan Fung Group had married a fresh appetite for conservation with what her fellow panellist Leung saw as evolving value placements. The 10-plus post-war modernist factory buildings in out-of-the-way Tsuen Wan was a “hard commercial sell” that the Antiquities and Monuments Office would likely consider “functional”, rather than architecturally significant, she said. But Nan Fung was keen to exploit their history and legacy. Textile-related gallery spaces and a fashion incubator were the

result. “It may not have great commercial value but it meant something to [Nan Fung],” said Ray Zee, chief designer of Nan Fung Development. Zee activated the spaces that were previously not fully utilised, and incorporated era-specific colours, stencils, glass blocks and entry gates. “We had to be sure that when you squinted you saw the outline of the old,” said Zee. “It wasn’t used at night before but now we’re activating it in the evening, and we reintroduced original trinkets and details that tied it to its history.”



You need software and hardware, says Tai Kwun’s Winnie Yeung



Adaptive reuse of building clusters can create new urban spaces, says SCAD's Emily Verla Bovino

Govada lamented that, “If you look at cities today, we’re either forgetting people, places, the planet, or all three,” but she pointed to Tai Kwun as a success.

Part of what made the old Central Police Station complex of 16 buildings work was its connection to the community it served. “If you conserve the building and renovate for adaptive reuse – that’s hardware. You need the stories – the software that goes in to the project – to make it whole,” said Winnie Yeung, Tai Kwun’s head of heritage. “We don’t want the experience to be a one-off. The programmes were intended to promote more preservation and connect it to the people living there.” In support of that, Tai Kwun’s eight permanent exhibition spaces were called ‘storytelling spaces’, and the more complicated rooms – such as the original courtroom – have been repurposed for interactive education.

It was this connection to community, as well as history, that defined the success of most heritage conservation schemes. Singapore and London had created entire precincts that spoke to both while also generating revenue: Singapore’s Kampong Glam and London’s major King’s Cross regeneration were prime examples of area conservation that had yet to gain



The forum sparked heated discussion among the audience

“THIS ISN’T JUST ABOUT BUILDING AN OBJECT, IT’S ABOUT KNOWLEDGE AND SPACE”

traction in Hong Kong. Emily Verla Bovino, historian and professor of contemporary art and architecture at SCAD Hong Kong (housed in Palmer & Turner’s 1960 North Kowloon Magistracy), emphasised the need to consider “active form” and the adaptive reuse of building clusters to create new urban spaces. Govada’s vision of a physically and digitally connected Tai Kwun, PMQ, and – eventually – Central Market in a cultural triangle was the kind of new, active urban space Bovino envisaged.

“When I think about ‘burden’ in terms of heritage, I think about Shek O. The bus terminus there is one of those Grade 2 structures that doesn’t have any protection, but it’s Bauhaus-associated,” she explained. The fear among Shek O residents was that generations of building practices that had created Shek O could be lost; they were using the terminus’ Bauhaus association to protect their village. “This isn’t just about building an object, it’s about knowledge and space. It’s obviously trendy, and it’s a burden for those who live in the village, but if it were treated as a heritage precinct it would be a benefit,” said Bovino. “The three go together, and we need to build new paradigms for how we think of heritage.”



Talent pool: Winners of *Perspective's* 40 Under 40 2019

CLASS OF 2019

Following the forum was the gala presentation for the *Perspective* 40 Under 40 Awards, now in its 13th year, that recognise the best and brightest emerging creative minds from across Asia-Pacific and around the world in the fields of art, product design, interior design and architecture. The Art and Product Design categories winners included Pica Pica Gallery founder Bowie Choi, for her creative workshops for the disadvantaged; and public art advocates and creators Maggie Wu (founder of SOTI Design Studio), Ricci Wong (RAAW) and Joe Yiu (Y’s Concept) – all Hongkongers. This year’s product designers to watch included Hong Kong-based Marco D’Adamo of IoT-focused Boris Design Studio; Bodin Hon and Dilara Kan of Hong Kong’s Yellowdot Design; China’s Li Ximi, founder of furniture brand Urbancraft; and Italian designer Florian Seidl, currently with coffee giant Lavazza.

In the Interior Design category, T K Tsui & Associates’ Clement Cheng; ADO’s Cheuk Chun-kit; Tegan Kajewski at LW Design; Coco Cheung at HOK; and Valeria Pola all represented Hong Kong. From China, AT DESIGN founder Shen Mo; Ye Hui of Jingu Phoenix Space Planning Organization; and Matrix Design’s Wang Guan, Liu Jianhui and Wang Zhaobao pointed the way

ahead. Hiloni Sutaria of Hsc Designs and Studio Lotus’ Asha Sairam and Pankhuri Goel made the trek from India, while Luchetti Krelle’s Rachel Luchetti travelled from Australia. Wilson Associates’ design manager Wichupon Meeprasert and associate design director Zara Maducdoc represented Singapore; Taiwan’s Liao Keng-Yu and his KYDO Keng-Yu Design Office completed the field.



Product Design winners



Thumbs up: Architecture category winners with presenter Barrie Ho



Winners from the Interior Design category

Barrie Ho of Barrie Ho Architecture Interiors presented the awards in the Architecture category. The recipients included Zhu Peidong of gad•line+ studio; Zhao Jingxin of Lacime Architects; ATAH's Wang Dandan and Xu Guang; Yushe Design's quartet Xu Yi,

Gao Shantong, Simon Chen and Li Zhiqiang; Fan Jiujiang of Continuation Studio; and Atelier Alter founding partners Zhang Yingfan and Bu Xiaojun from China. Beijing-based Archimorphic founder Luoya Tu hails from the United States, while JC Architecture Johnny Chiu is from Taiwan. India was represented by Studio Lagom's Krishna Kapadia and Studio Symbiosis's Amit Gupta. Rounding off the category were Hong Kong designers likely to be tackling many of the city's heritage projects in the coming years. They included Larry Tsoi, design director for Atelier Global; Blend's Casey Wang; New Office Works co-founders Paul Tse and Evelyn Ting; BREAD Studio's Benny Lee; Groundwork Architects & Associates' Lau Chun-yu; Sarah Mui of One Bite Design Studio; EDITECTURE's Jacqueline Chak and Genevieve Chew; and HIR Studio founders and design directors Irene Cheng and Howard Chung.

perspectiveglobal.com/awards/40-under-40



The four winners in the Art category



ARCHITECTURE

Evelyn Ting and Paul Tse
New Office Works, Hong Kong

We feel honoured to receive this award and enjoyed the opportunity to meet other talented designers. The forum this year was very energetic – it was good to have an engaged audience. The ceremony also went smoothly and allowed time to connect with other guests.



ARCHITECTURE

Benny Lee
Bread Studio, Hong Kong

I feel honoured and privileged to be one of the winners of the 40 Under 40 awards of 2019. Professionally, architecture requires long years of training and practice to mature. The age of 40 is an interesting threshold, where we gain adequate experience in life and practice beyond our school and scholarship. It is admirable that this prestigious award targets these young but experienced creatives, acknowledging their achievements so far and encouraging them to continue to make a difference to our society.

ARCHITECTURE

Sarah Mui
One Bite Design Studio, Hong Kong

Thank you for the lovely event – it was a great time, catching up with old friends and meeting new ones.



ARCHITECTURE

Bu Xiaojun and Zhang Yingfan
Atelier Alter, China

Thank you for inviting us to Hong Kong to receive the 40 Under 40 award. We are thrilled to receive this award. Winning the award gives us more responsibility to express culture and history through architecture.

We’ve known this prize for many years. We know very famous architects from China, they promote themselves through *Perspective* magazine and the prize. So, we were very excited at being recognised by *Perspective* magazine. Thank you.



ARCHITECTURE

Luoya Tu
Archimorphic, United States

I really appreciate the awards *Perspective* put together. It was my honour to be recognised as one of the design talents in the industry. The ceremony was professional and well organised. I particularly enjoyed the panel discussion which brought me to Tai Kwun the next day. It was a highlight of my Hong Kong trip, visiting such an interesting project.



ARCHITECTURE

Lau Chun-yu
Groundwork Architects & Associates, Hong Kong

Thank you for organising the ceremony, it was a great event. I found the event was well-organised with great works displayed. It helps us connect with other like-minded people in the trade.



ARCHITECTURE

Jacqueline Chak and Genevieve Chew
EDITECTURE, Hong Kong

Getting this award means a lot to us. And being local Hong Kong designers, getting this award means a lot of encouragement and support for us and our brand. The award has been a really good platform for us to build our brand and to have more exposure to our brand image. It also gives us a lot of wider platforms and perspectives to meet other people in the industry, and also on the client side. So, we are really, really grateful for the award.

ARCHITECTURE

Casey Wang
BLEND, Hong Kong

First of all, thank you *Perspective* for giving me this huge recognition. It’s amazing for our studio that was only established three years ago. It’s great to be here to meet a lot of friends, back from school, and work colleagues.

So, having this award is definitely an upgrade for our studio. I think it’s best for our future work, and also introduces our studio, our works and our team. Hopefully, we can do more projects in the future, in Asia, in China, and all around the world.





ARCHITECTURE

Irene Chung and Howard Chung
HIR STUDIO, Hong Kong

Thank you for this award. I think this recognition gives us a very good opportunity for people to know more about us and our work. It also gives us a very big motivation to keep moving forward. So once again, thank you *Perspective* magazine. We hope that this event will be even more successful in the next years.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Valeria Pola
Hong Kong

This award has been a boost for me, a strong motivation to keep doing what I've done so far and to improve and look forward to new challenges! This has been a very intense working year for me, culminating my first steps with my studio, and this award is the beginning of a new chapter.



INTERIOR DESIGN

Cheuk Chun-kit
ADO, Hong Kong

Thanks again for your team giving great support for young design talent. It is my great honour to be one of the 40 Under 40 winners of 2019. And thanks for giving me a chance to join the HKTDC event. It is a great promotion for our company and Hong Kong design.



INTERIOR DESIGN

Asha Sairam and Pankhuri Goel
Studio Lotus, India

It feels great to win this award. Thank you so much to *Perspective* for recognising us. It's really wonderful and such an honour, and it's so nice to be here among all these talented designers and to be able to meet peers who are in this profession and practising internationally. We think it's going to help us advance to a new market and to different territories.



INTERIOR DESIGN

Zara Maducdoc & Wichupon Meeprasert
Wilson Associates, Singapore

We are very happy to be here. It's such a great milestone for young creatives to be receiving 40 Under 40 awards. And we are really happy that *Perspective* is offering this platform for young designers who want to make it out there. It's like giving us the motivation and encouragement to maintain our passion and enjoyment for our design journey.

PRODUCT

Dilara Kan and Bodin Hon
Yellowdot Design, Hong Kong

We feel very excited about winning, as it is very encouraging for a young design studio to be awarded. Our journey has been challenging, from setting up in a place that we are new to and slowly finding the right community to meet and share experiences with. The design community in Hong Kong is relatively small and hard to reach, so we feel that we can finally be recognised as part of the community. We feel that the region has great potential for creatives and there is a lot to be explored with the focus on innovation and also finding a unique voice through culture, heritage and arts. We are passionate about adding to the growing scene here in Hong Kong and representing the region through our creativity and designs in the coming future.



PRODUCT

Marco D'Adamo

Boris Design Studio, Hong Kong

I actually am very proud of the award victory, since it's the first award I have received as an individual. My managers Katarina Ivarsson and Anna Karlsson also won this award in 2013, so it has a special value to me being part of the BORIS team.



PRODUCT

Florian Seidl

Lavazza, Italy

It is an incredible honour to be named among these talented, young architects, artists and designers. I am sure this special award will help me take the next steps in my career. I consider it an important professional achievement and acknowledgment.

It was also a great pleasure to attend the event itself. I'm so glad I could be there – all in all, it wasn't easy for me to get organised, but I wouldn't miss it for the world. A terrific night and I enjoyed every single second of it!



ART

Ricci Wong

RAAW Studio, Hong Kong

I feel very happy to receive a 40 Under 40 award this year. I think the award marked a milestone I have achieved, from fine arts to architecture, interiors and art again.



ART

Bowie Choi

Pica Pica Gallery, Hong Kong

Thanks to *Perspective* for giving me this 40 Under 40 award. I hope this award can help raise the awareness among the public that many in society are in need of our helping hand. ■





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Guests gather at The Annex for an evening of celebration



Flipping through the June issue of *Perspective*



An occasion to connect with old friends and meet new ones



Guests take part in a timely discussion on heritage



The conversation on heritage continues off stage



Elaine Ng, founder of The Fabrick Lab, and winner Ricci Wong



Dilara Kan and Bodin Hon chat with fellow winner Howard Chung



Barrie Ho (centre) poses with guests including Ed Lau (far right), a winner from 2018, and designer Antony Chan (second from left)



Highland Park Whisky lucky draw winners



Capturing the moment and the memory



Winners of the HKTDC design tour competition



Interior Design judge Emma Maclean



Product Design judge Marc Cansier