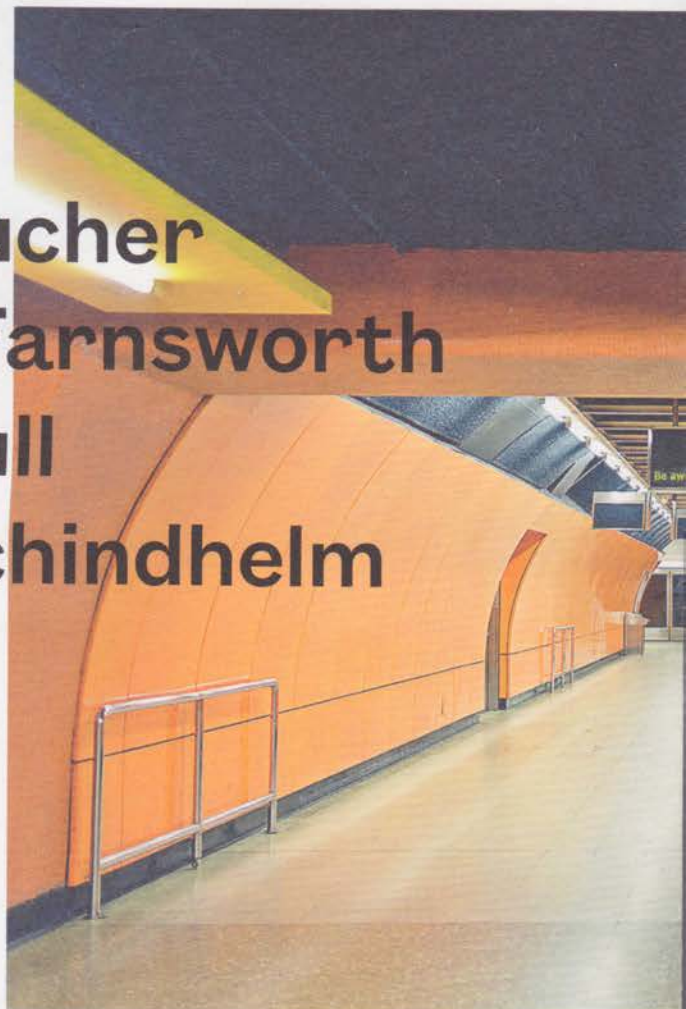


Why Hong Kong



**Claudio Bucher
Brandon Farnsworth
Patrick Kull
Michael Schindhelm**



Connecting Spaces
Hong Kong - Zurich

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In early 2014, I was asked if I would be interested in participating in a project looking at the developments in the Hong Kong arts scene taking place in the context of the of the M+ Museum, a part of the future West Kowloon Cultural District project. Upon immersing myself in the material, I soon realized that my interests lay in discovering the positions and opinions of Hong Kong artists on these developments.

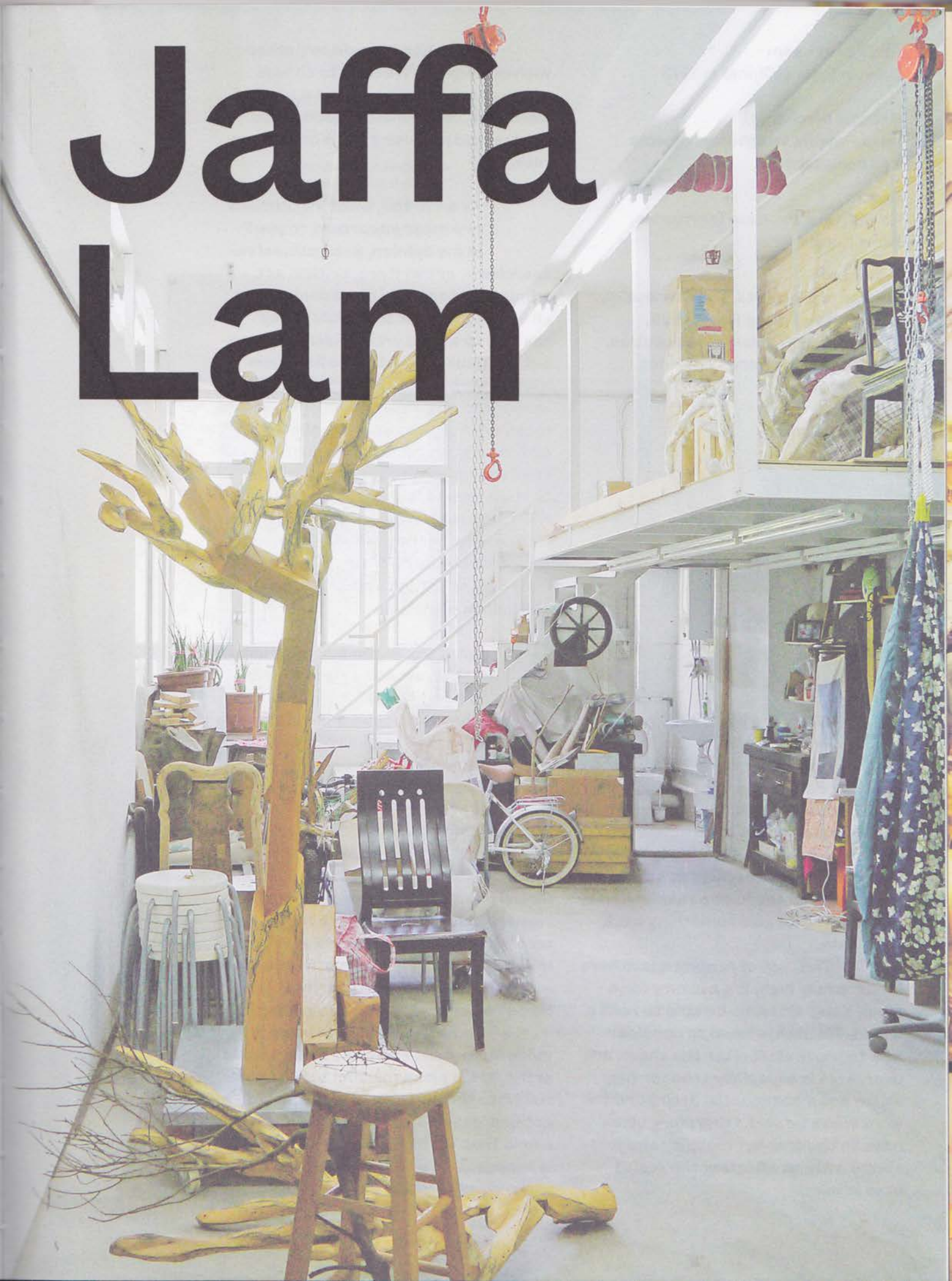
Through researching, I built up a list of Hong Kong-based artists who I then contacted to ask if I could visit them in person in early May in Hong Kong. In the end, I managed to get a list of nine artists who I would meet during the week I was there. I tried as much as possible to visit them in their studios, so as also to get a feeling for how they work and under what sorts of conditions.

The short conversations I then conducted are an attempt to paint a picture of the working situations, ideas, current works, and thoughts on the future that the artists have. In the following pages, I have included pictures from both myself (distinguishable by the square white frame around each of them), as well as the artists themselves, who were generous enough to send me photos of their works and ateliers. The different sources produce a heterogeneous mix of both my and the artists' view of their works and studios.

These short interviews should not be seen as representative of the extensive creative output of any of the artists featured. If the reader wishes to have more information about any given artist, I recommend they consult the artist's website, listed in the short biographies, for more about their works and their contact details.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the artists I met with for their warm welcome, their patience, and their pictures.

Jaffa Lam



Jaffa Lam Laam
Born in Fujian (China) in 1973

Artistic Medium(s)

mixed-media sculptures, objects
and installations

Studio

Fo Tan, Sha Tin, New Territories,
Hong Kong

Education

Master of Fine Arts, The Chinese
University of Hong Kong, 1999.
Postgraduate Diploma in Education,
The Chinese University of Hong
Kong, 2000.

www.jaffalam.net

What are some typical problems of a Hong Kong artist?

As in other cities in Asia, people typically don't understand what an artist actually does. They often think that being an artist means that you can't make a living. Personally, I solve that problem by teaching at the university; I also see it as a responsibility of the artist to give something back to society.

The cost of renting space here is extremely high, it's a luxury for a Hong Kong artist to be able to rent a space. We always need to consider how to store stuff after the shows are over. This is especially true for me, as I'm not a commercial artist and the work won't be sold. I therefore often have to think about mobility and foldability without affecting the scale I have in mind.

Hong Kong is a place packed with exhibitions. We have to choose which shows we will participate in and which not, so as to avoid getting too sidetracked or losing focus on our own research.

As an artist, what institutions are most important to you?

In my opinion, professional researchers, art writers, critics, art administrators, and good dealers are all very important to artists. They can help to spread artists' ideas throughout the public, as well as to link them with other professions, such as artists working in other mediums, or even social workers, local craftsmen, activists, educators, etc. I think that NGOs, archives, universities, alternative exhibition spaces, museums, art foundations, and residency programs are also very important. In short, there should be a wide diversity of institutions helping artists that are linked into and help one another.

What would you say to a young artist just starting arts school in Hong Kong?

That's a difficult question to answer. I'd prefer to be a role model and show them with my actions. I would probably tell them to control and practice their artistic technique, as this is basic to development. Keep your eyes as well as your mind open, learn new things on your own or by listening to different people, have a sense of social responsibility. Everyone is equal, no matter if they are rich or poor. Keep reminding yourself what your first urge was to become an artist, no matter if you're doing very well or very badly.

To be a good human being is more important than just being a good artist, art is just a medium to help you cultivate the meaning of life. Also, don't get depressed if you have to work in a field that isn't art or art related; art is supposed to be a tattoo which follows you around even if it goes unnoticed.

← Jaffa Lam's studio,
Fo Tan, Hong Kong. *JL*

Jaffa Lam with part of
her Pencil Ball series from
2002-2010. *PK*

→ Parachute in Melbourne
at School of Art Gallery,
RMIT Building, Australia,
2011. *JL*





