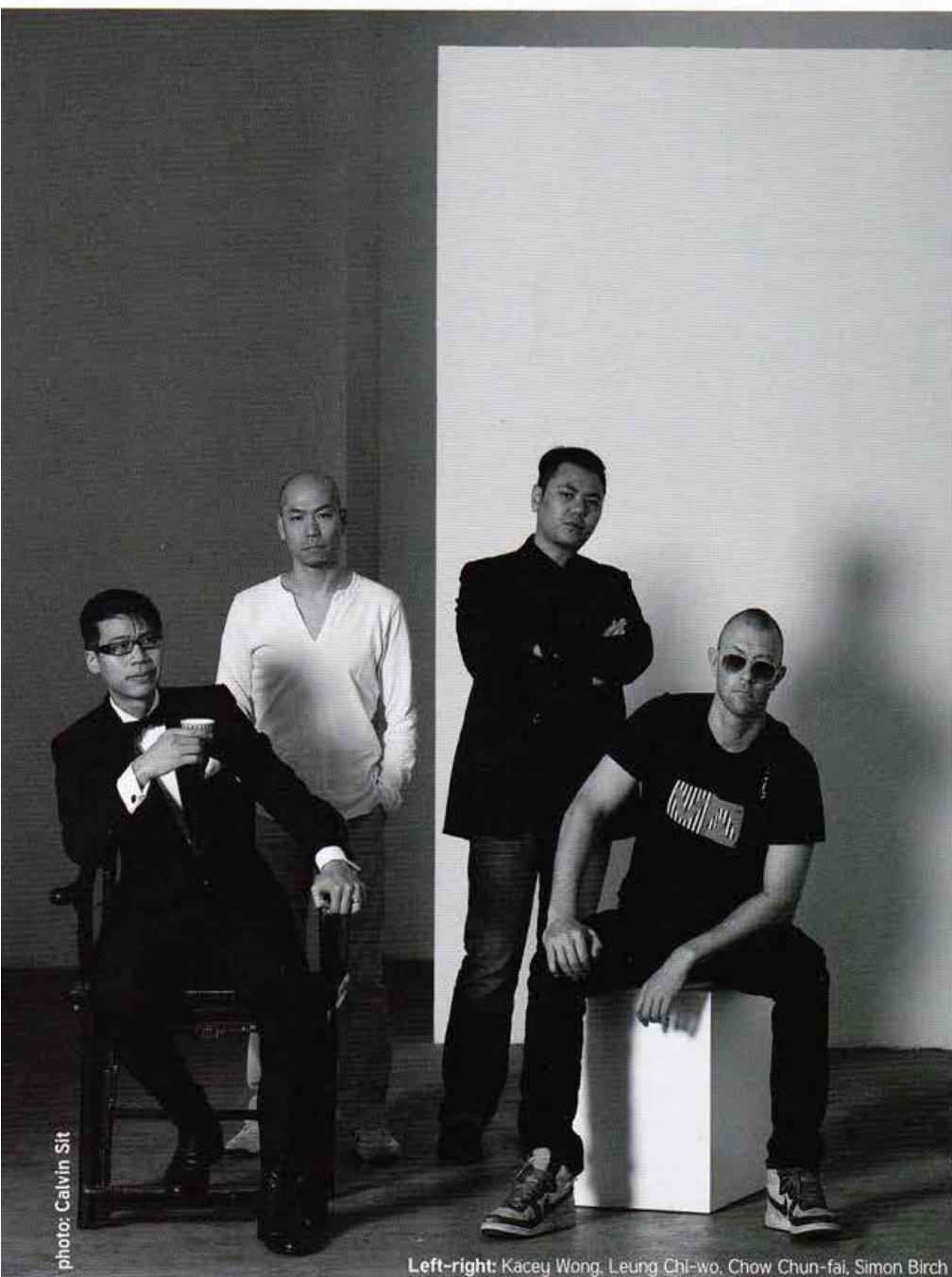


The Faces of



Left-right: Kacey Wong, Leung Chi-wo, Chow Chun-fai, Simon Birch



Left-right: Jaffa Lam Laam, Adrian Wong, anothermountainman

Hong Kong artists are moving up the pecking order of global art. Organizing them all to be in the same room was a grand undertaking - they were flying in and out of the city, trying to dodge volcanic ash as they hastened to their respective international exhibitions.

The four characters who managed to collide in the left panel of our triptych are all strong arts personalities. Kacey Wong, who strode in the room in a gleaming tux, brought his trademark surreal and humorous energy with him. Having won the Hong Kong Art Development Council's Best Artist Award this April, the installation artist is entering his strongest phase yet with a string of performance and installation projects that have seen him setting up a temporary home outside the Hong Kong Museum of Art and constructing mini apartment/floating devices, which he threw into the harbour and set sail for the sunset, cleverly critiquing Hong Kong's property-obsessed culture along the way.

The wise Leung Chi-wo stood quietly behind, a veteran artist whose work straddles photography, sculpture, performance and installation, and

who has already been involved in more than seven shows this year from the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, to 'No Soul For Sale' at the Tate Modern and a recent appearance at 'The Problem of Asia' at Sydney's Chalk Horse Art Centre. Leung is flanked by the mysterious Chow Chun-fai, who graces our cover with his reinterpretation of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's *The Martyrdom of Saint Matthew* fused with Shi Naian's *Water Margin*. An artist who embodies the very hybrid quality of this city, Chow first emerged with iconic painted stills of Hong Kong movie scenes, before moving into installation and performance. This trend of straddling media is equally attributed to the charismatic Simon Birch. The painter-turned installation artist/sculptor/filmmaker has won our respect for his tireless creative endeavors in Hong Kong; his massive multimedia installation 'Hope & Glory' in Quarry Bay has broken barriers of arts funding in the city.

Heading into the central panel is the charismatic artist Jaffa Lam Laam, whose work centres around specific historical events, social themes and

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Left-right: Tang Kwok-hin, Pak Sheung-chuen, Anson Mak

cultural and urban issues. In her latest community project, 'Tiny Micro Economic System of Art', she is covertly working with housewives. She has also made remarkable sculptural works, in particular at the seminal 'Looking for Antonio Mak' exhibition at the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 2008-09. Standing behind is the witty and fiercely intelligent Chicago-born Adrian Wong, who teaches sculpture and theory at UCLA but is mainly based in Hong Kong. Wong's installations, videos, and sculptures explore his relationship with his environment through the filter of fantastical or fictionalized narratives – usually with a very funny, Cantonese edge.

A man indeed of the future, another mountain man (aka Stanley Wong Ping-pui) is one of Hong Kong's most prominent artists. His days as a top advertising creative director are long gone – after his seminal 'Red-White-Blue' series where he propelled a common fabric to high art, he is now making noise with his striking 'Lan Wei' photography project.

In contrast, Tang Kwok-hin is at the beginning of his career. After winning the first prize at last year's Hong Kong Biennale Awards, his

virtual, Hong Kong-inspired cityscapes hidden inside layers of glass and plexiglass, are garnering attention. Anson Mak is another under-the-radar, yet important Hong Kong film, video and sound artist whose work won a silver medal at the recent IFVA (Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards). Her digital archive 'Map of Our Own: Kwun Tong Culture & Histories' is capturing the emotional and cultural history of yet another district about to come under the developer's wrecking ball.

And what better way to end than with the conceptual mastermind Pak Sheung-chuen who was propelled onto the world stage after being the first solo artist to take over the Hong Kong Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale. Pak performs and documents intricate musings on daily life – his ideas span politics, religion and globalization. His art demands that the audience wake up and start thinking. A fitting call-to-arms for Hong Kong art as we hurtle into a crucial decade of cultural development in the city.

Thanks to 10 Chancery Lane Art Projects for the location.