Performing arts in Hong Kong
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Beyond Art Basel: 11 best cultural events in Hong Kong this month, from a Coco Chanel ballet and M+'s Yayoi Kusama retrospective, to a Leslie Cheung tribute and Mirror's Edan Lui at HKT x WestK Popfest

- Post-Clockenflap, music fans should check out the first HKT x WestK Popfest, which features over 70 home-grown acts including Anson Lo, Janice Vidal and Merry Lamb Lamb
- Hong Kong International Film Festival pays tribute to Jean Luc Godard, while old favourites French May, Art Central and HKwalls make a welcome return to the city's cultural calendar

Amanda Sheppard + FOLLOW
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Coco Chanel show. Photo: Handout

March is proving to be mayhem for events in Hong Kong, with the recent successes of events including Clockenflap and the Hong Kong Arts Festival earlier in the month, and the hot-ticketed Rugby Sevens tournament taking place at the end of this month. And with Art Basel's 2023 iteration promising bigger names, more galleries and a whole host of new offerings, it may come as no surprise that the rest of the city is following suit.

Here's our pick of the biggest and best cultural events hitting Hong Kong in the weeks ahead.

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Coco Chanel: The Life of a Fashion Icon

The upcoming production of Coco Chanel: The Life of a Fashion Icon by the Hong Kong Ballet. Photo: SW Kit/Hong Kong Ballet

Coco Chanel revolutionised the fashion world, and her iconic creations – the likes of which include the little black dress and bouclé jackets – have stood the test of time. Her story is told through ballet for the first time in this world premiere choreographed by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa. The production features an original score by Peter Salem and costumes by award-winning designer Jérôme Kaplan.

March 24-26 at Hong Kong Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui

Missed Clockenflap? Book these 7 upcoming music festivals in Asia instead
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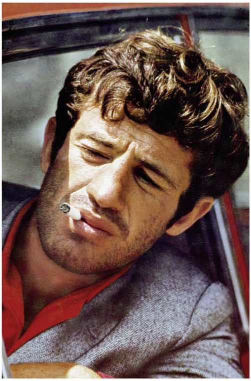
Hong Kong International Film Festival



A still from Pierrot le Fou. The Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) pays tribute to French filmmaker Jean Luc Godard with an eight-film retrospective. Photo: Hong Kong International Film Festival

The Hong Kong International Film Festival returns this year with a 47th edition in a hybrid format, offering a combination of in-person screenings and events as well as curated online programmes. With Aaron Kwok returning as festival

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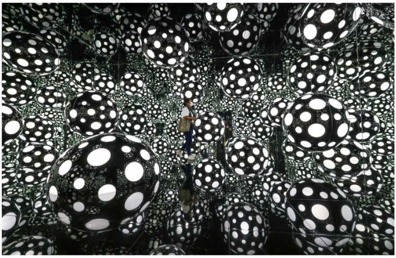
ambassador, highlights include the complete Jûzô Itami retrospective, an eight-film tribute to Jean-Luc Godard and his muse Anna Karina, and screenings of eight classic films – including films by Satyajit Ray and Bernardo Bertolucci – digitally remastered in 4K.

March 30-April 10 at various locations

"Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now"

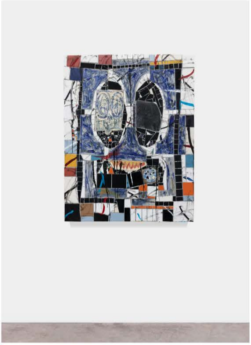


The "Yayoi Kusama: 1945 to Now" retrospective at M+, features Dots Obsession – Aspiring to Heaven's Love, one of the three new works created by the Japanese artist for the blockbuster M+ exhibition. Photo: May Tse

From her instantly recognisable pumpkins her pervading use of use of polkadots, this exhibition is the largest retrospective of Kusama's work outside Japan. Featuring more than 200 paintings, drawings, sculptures, installations and archive materials, Kusama has also created three new pieces for the exhibition – the large scale *Death or Nerves* installation, the immersive *Dot's Obsession – Aspiring to Heaven's Love* and two pumpkin sculptures.

Until May 14 at M+, 38 Museum Drive, West Kowloon Cultural District

"Rashid Johnson. Nudiustertian"



American artist Rashid Johnson is known for his uses of unconventional materials in his works. Photo: Stephanie Powell

For his first solo exhibition in Asia, American artist Rashid Johnson has created several new paintings and mosaics. The artist – whose work spans paintings, sculptures, filmmaking and installations among other mediums – draws upon diverse influences including art history, literature, philosophy, cultural identify and the personal realm. Johnson's creativity knows no boundaries, and he has been known to include unconventional materials in his works, ranging from a radio to tropical plants.

Until May 13 at Hauser & Wirth Hong Kong, 15-16/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central, Central

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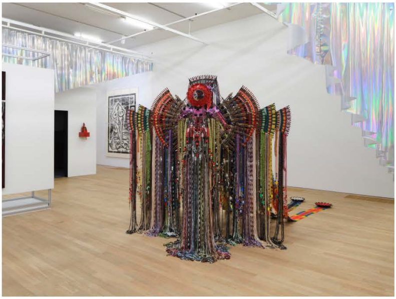
Eschenbach & Ray Chen

The Eschenbach & Ray Chen concert by the Hong Kong Philharmonic will be held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Photo: Hong Kong Philharmonic

With acclaimed conductor Christoph Eschenbach at the helm, ticket holders will be transported to a whimsical world through Bruckner and Mendelssohn's music. The concert opens with celebrated violinist Ray Chen performing Mendelssohn's violin concerto in its entirety, before Bruckner's Symphony No 4 – nicknamed "Romantic" by the composer himself – is the embodiment of the Romantic period in musical history.

March 31 & April 1 at Hong Kong Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui

"Myth Makers – Spectrosynthesis III"



Anne Samat's Conundrum Ka Sorga / To Heaven (2019) installation at the "Myth Makers – Spectrosynthesis III' Photo: Tai Kwun

Featuring new and historic works from more than 60 artists across Asia and its diasporas, this exhibition invites artists to explore queer mythologies and is one of the first major exhibitions to do so in the city. Expanding upon the Spectrosynthesis series of exhibitions in Taipei and Bangkok, the Hong Kong instalment is curated by Inti Guerrero and Chantal Wong. One third of the artworks on display are on loan from the Sunpride Foundation, an organisation dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of the LGBTQ+ community and inspire young creatives.

Until April 10 at Tai Kwun Contemporary, 10 Hollywood Road, Central

Art Central

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Last year's Art Central fair at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre at Wan Chai. Photo: Sam Tsang

Handily located in the same building as Art Basel, the Art Central fair offers culture vultures the opportunity to experience art from an additional 70 participating galleries from around the world. Expect large scale installations, sculptures, paintings, mixed media, video art and more. To complement the artistic offerings, a series of talks, panels and performances will be made available to the public.

March 22-25 at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai

Ahead of Art Basel, Hong Kong's socialite scene is finally regaining its mojo
28 Feb 2023

French May

Acclaimed pianist Niu Niu performs a piano duet with Théo Fouchenneret for the 30th anniversary of Le French May. Photo: Handout

Annual cultural festival French May returns this year, celebrating its 30th anniversary. Highlights include a collaboration between local composer Olivier Cong and dance artists Zelia Tan and Ong Yong Lock, behind an immersive experience narrated by the festival's ambassador Karena Lam. Elsewhere renowned pianists Niu Niu and Théo Fouchenneret take to the stage for a piano duet, and a touring immersive digital exhibition of Versailles comes to Hong Kong for the first time.

Dates TBA, various locations

HKwalls Festival 2023

A colourful mural from HKwalls outside the Hong Kong Observation Wheel in Central in 2022. Photo: Jonathan Wong

HKwalls transforms ordinary facades into works of art, splashing creative murals and street art across the city, this year invading Central and Sheung Wan. For the first time in four years, the festival welcomes international artists to the mix, including Koga One, Innerfields and Jurne. Experience the street art at your own pace or join a free guided walking tour led by Alexandra Unrein of Wanderlust Walks.

Until March 26, various locations across Central and Sheung Wan

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HKT x WestK Popfest

EDAN LUI
呂爵安
洪嘉豪
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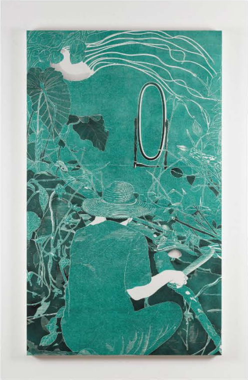
Fans of boy band Mirror showing their support during the media briefing of the HKT x WestK Popfest at West Kowloon Cultural District. Photo: Sam Tsang

Music fans will be pleased to know that Clockenflap isn't the only festival of this month. More than 70 home-grown acts are performing across West Kowloon Cultural District, including Anson Lo, Janice Vidal, Merry Lamb Lamb and Mirror's Edan Lui. Event highlights include a tribute to Leslie Cheung, and a live music screening of graphic artist Kong Kee's animation *Dragon's Delusion – Paracusia.*

March 22-April 2 at Freespace, Art Park, Wonderland and M+, West Kowloon Cultural District

The Collectors' Choice Art Exhibition



Bath (2022) by Li Ning will be displayed at The Collectors' Choice Art Exhibition. Photo: Handout

Curated by the Hong Kong Arts Centre Alumni Network led by artist Shirky Chan, Pao Galleries hosts 30 pieces of art created by its former students. The exhibition invites local and international audiences to celebrate the successes of the Hong Kong Art School over the years. The works are on loan from nine private collections, and showcase various mediums, including painting, ceramics, photography, video art and installations.

March 23–April 10 at Pao Galleries, 5/F, Hong Kong Arts Centre, 2 Harbour Road, Wan Chai

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Amanda Sheppard

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Amanda is a culture, travel and lifestyle writer based in Hong Kong, always on the search for the next great story and the city's strongest coffee.

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