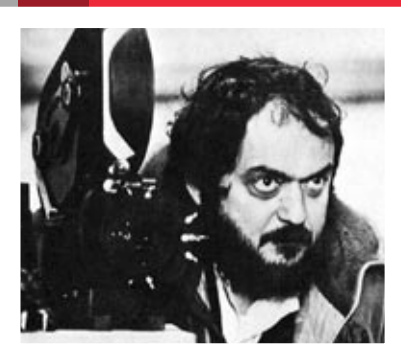
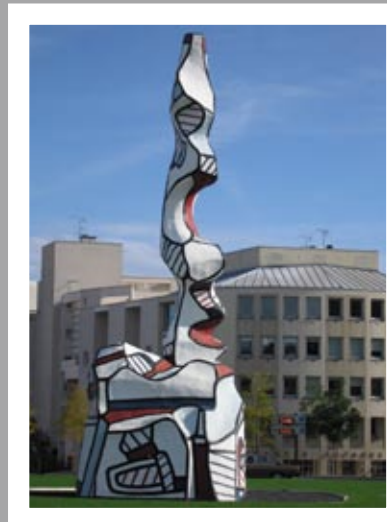




# J' AIME L'ART

Bask in the world of contemporary art as experts from Hong Kong Art School takes you on a trip in France

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▲▲▲ Clockwise from top right: Hong Kong Art School's Wylie Chan and Sharon Chan will lead the art tour in July; Stanley Kubrick exhibition at La Cinémathèque française in Paris; Kubrick with camera; Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne dedicated to contemporary French artists; and Pompidou Centre for groundbreaking artworks.



PHOTO JIMMY LUK

**Home to the most influential artworks - most notably Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*** - The Louvre is the sacred shrine where culture cultures make pilgrimage to. Yet, when Wylie Chan Kwok-pui takes off for his art tour in France next month, he has no intention to step into the historic monument.

"France is not only about famous paintings. It's renowned for its contemporary art and films as well. So what we're interested to explore is the evolution of images: how portraits become photographs and later motion pictures," explains the academic head of Hong Kong Art School, who will be leading the tour alongside lecturer Sharon Chan So-mei, both of them specialise in applied and media arts.

The tour marks the art school's initiatives to promote art appreciation for the public. A trip to Japan on ceramics and sculptures were planned for March but was later cancelled in wake of the tragic earthquake.

"It's a great opportunity for art lovers in town to get together and indulge in their passion," Wylie Chan tells *The PEAK*. "Since our tour touches on photography, we hope everyone will come with a camera, be it a professional model or a digital compact one, to document their journey. In the end, we hope to make a movie out of the pictures as a unique memento for participants.

"But you don't have to know anything about photography to join the tour. I, for one, will only bring a simple digital compact camera in my pocket. It's not about what equipment you have, it's about the way you use it."

The tour covers three areas - Paris, Versailles and Metz - in 11 days from July 15. The first stop is La Cinémathèque française in the 12<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris, which holds one of the largest archives of films, movie documents and film-related objects in the world. A temporary exhibition on the late American film director Stanley Kubrick, whose masterpieces include the groundbreaking *2001: A Space Odyssey*, darkly satirical science fiction *A Clockwork Orange*, and psychological horror film *The Shining*, is held until end of July. All of his films will be screened while lectures are organised.

"It's the first solo exhibition of Stanley Kubrick. His unique cinematography is a good way to understand composition of images," says Sharon Chan. "The Cinémathèque also showcases the history of cinema, from phantasmagoria, a modified magic lantern which projects frightening images, to props and costumes used in classical movies like famous robot from *Metropolis*, which is really



Takashi Murakami's Flower Matango (2001-2006) at Chateau de Versailles' The Hall of Mirrors. Made of fiberglass, iron, oil paint and acrylic, the cartoon-like artwork - more than two-metre long, wide and high - forms an interesting contrast with the grandeur palace.



Clockwise from top right: Takashi Murakami's Superflat Flowers (2010) at Chateau de Versailles' Salon de la Paix; the newly-opened Centre Pompidou Metz; and Jeff Koons' exhibition at Chateau de Versailles in 2008.



interesting. Many film terminologies like *mise-en-scène*, which means the arrangement of everything in front of the camera including sets, props, actors, costumes and lighting, come from French, showing their heavy involvement in film development."

Other attractions in Paris includes the Le Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, or MAC/VAL in short, dedicated to works of French artists from the 1950s to the present, and Pompidou Centre which houses world-class avant-garde artworks.

"We'll also pop around the local galleries in rue Rambuteau and rue de Seine, the street in the 1<sup>er</sup> arrondissement of Paris famous for anti-capitalist graffiti, to get a glimpse of the city's art vibe. As we walk around, you can see that even their advertisements are a deliberate artistic effort," she says.

On the east of Paris, near Luxemburg, Metz is a region with a rich 3,000 years of history. Standing out from the Gothic cathedrals and medieval castles is the new Pompidou Centre, opened last May.

"When the Paris Pompidou was built in the 1970s, it boasts high-tech architecture by putting all pipes and vents on the outside to create more space for the inside. And for its branch in Metz, Japanese architect Shigeru Ban used sustainable materials to reflect the trend in future. Its signature feature is a roof that looks like a giant woven bamboo Chinese hat. You can see how the centre carries on its visionary spirit," says Wylie Chan.

The last stop of the tour is Chateau de Versailles at some 20 kilometres southwest of the French capital. The court of Versailles

was the centre of political power in France from 1682, when Louis XIV moved from Paris, until the royal family was forced to return to the capital in 1789 after the beginning of the French Revolution.

"At Versailles, we can see the juxtaposition of classic and modern art provoking a strong visual impact," says Sharon Chan. "The palace itself is the climax of French palace design: adorned in gold with the most precious sculptures and paintings. But since 2008, it starts hosting exhibitions for contemporary artists like Takashi Murakami and Jeff Koons, which illustrate how classical word of art can keep on evolving in modern times."

Prolific artist Murakami is famed for blurring the boundaries between high and low art with elements from pop culture while American artist Koons is known for his reproductions of banal objects-such as balloon animals produced in stainless steel with mirror finish surfaces. In July, visitors will see Bernar Venet's colossal curvy sculptures around Versailles. The French artist plans to let his sculptures sprawl in the garden as he believes the golden light of sunrise and sunset will complement with the red-brown Corten steel that he uses.

"Being in the Versailles is already an amazing experience as you will be overwhelmed by its glamour and grandiose. Seeing the modern art against such a classical setting is very inspiring," recalls Sharon Chan who visited the Koons exhibition in 2008.

The tour costs HK\$35,000, excluding tax and meals. Travellers will be staying in three- or four-star hotels. "We don't have any time for shopping or fine-dining. It's a tour solely for art," stresses Wylie Chan. ▲