

# Overseas tours promise an education in the arts

## Hong Kong Art School opens trips to the public for first time with visits to Japan and Australia

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Overseas tours taking an arts education out of the classroom and into the museums, galleries and studios of the world have for the first time been opened to the public.

The Hong Kong Art School has organised tours to Japan and Australia during which culture enthusiasts will not only see art in top museums, but also meet artists, curators and critics and even create art themselves.

The school hopes the tours will educate an audience for the future West Kowloon arts hub and inspire budding artists to enter the field.

The school is a division of the self-

funded and non-profit Hong Kong Arts Centre and any money generated from the tours will be put back into arts education.

Wylie Chan, the school's academ-



ic head, said the school had previously taken its fine art and applied art students to Taiwan and Beijing to see art outside the classroom.

He believed now was the time to make such tours available to non-students.

"Since we have a network of instructors who have experience and contacts, we want to take up a mission to promote art," Chan said. "Through such tours, participants can have a better understanding of modern and contemporary art."

The trips are not standard package tours. Participants are required to take a three-hour course to prepare for the trip. The seven-day tour to Japan, which starts on October 24, features guided visits to not only renowned Tokyo museums like the

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## Overseas tours give education in the arts

Mori Art Museum and 21\_21 Design Sight, but also arts and cultural institutions in other areas of the country, including the 21st Century Contemporary Art Museum in Kanazawa and a ceramic workshop in Tokoname.

Despite costing HK\$18,850 per head, the 35 places on the tour were quickly filled.

Chan said that to prepare for the tour, participants – including graduates from the school – were required to have a basic knowledge about the visual art history of Japan. “After the trip, we hope each individual can share their experience,” Chan said.

The same principle applies for the nine-day Australian tour, which leaves on November 26, with each of the 25 places costing HK\$28,000.

Participants will study implementation of public art in Melbourne and visit cultural landmarks including the National Gallery of Victoria and the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, Tasmania.

The tour also includes visits to the Perrin Sculpture Foundry run by artist Bill Perrin, and the studio of sculptor Robert Owen. Participants will also take part in a sculpture workshop at RMIT University’s sculpture studio.

“We hope to make public art the theme for the Australian art tour and to promote the concept of public art,”



**Pumpkin by Yayoi Kusama at one of the Japanese sites on the tour.** Photo: Hong Kong Art School

Chan said. “Participants will have a direct dialogue with artists, curators, arts administrators and urban planners to draw on their experiences of public art development.”

Featuring such high-brow content, and with English as the main medium of communication, Chan said the tour would mainly attract those who not only had a great inter-

est in art but also arts administrators and those working in the visual arts.

Chan said it had taken the school nine months to organise the two tours and it was unknown whether other tours would follow.

However, he believed there was a chance the tours could open a new market in overseas tourism.

“I dare not say that we are devel-

oping a new market, but in the past we have been contacted by commercial travel agents to organise trips,” Chan said.

“However, we don’t want to arbitrarily put together a random tour once every month, and we don’t want to give in to commercial elements. We want to keep our tours educational.”