



PRESS RELEASE

#Photography #Exhibition #HongKong #WingShya #SweetSorrow

SWEET SORROW by Wing Shya

A photography exhibition at Blue Lotus Gallery from 17 March to 28 April 2018

This solo exhibition will also be featured at **Art Central 2018**, 26 March - 1 April (booth B09)

PRIVATE PREVIEW

17 March 2018, 4-6 pm

ART CENTRAL

26 March – 1 April 2018

EXHIBITION RUNS UNTIL

28 April 2018

VENUE:

1606 Chai Wan Industrial City Phase 1,
60 Wing Tai Rd., Chai Wan

OPENING HOURS:

Tuesday - Saturday 11am to 6pm,
(we will be open on appointment only during Art Central)



CONTACT:

Press & Inquiries (English):

Christina Jensen:

christina@bluelotus-gallery.com

Sarah Greene

sarah@bluelotus-gallery.com

Press & Inquiries (Chinese):

Eunice Lam :

eunice@bluelotus-gallery.com

Wing Shya's representative HK: www.bluelotus-gallery.com

Wing Shya's official website: www.wingshya.com

For images and/or interviews with the artist, please contact us.



...Such sweet sorrow of no morrow...

Darkness crept through fragile beings whose sentiments bare themselves in different corners of the city of turmoil. Uncanniness could not lavish enough apathy on the outwardly bound extravagance. Vanity so to speak. Turmoil tinted the minds of these beings - perhaps personas - who are left being trapped in their grotesque shells. Struggling with the very dim survival attempts, where lights being shed on is where they are found indulging themselves in the peace of mind of self-love. Such sweet sorrow of no morrow.

100 WORD PARAGRAPH:

Blue Lotus Gallery is proud to present **Sweet Sorrow**, Wing Shya's photographic ode to our desolate human condition. **Sweet Sorrow** reads as a techni-colour love letter to the city that raised him: Hong Kong. Our city serves as a backdrop to what is really going on in the psyche of the "Me Generation" who grew up with smart phones and a heightened attention to all things visual. This epic production which came with price tag of 3 million hkd, involving a creative team close to a 100 people, **Sweet Sorrow** may be the most visually gratifying work ever produced in Hong Kong to tackle a subject so intimate and personal as finding the sweet in the sorrow.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION (in more words):

Blue Lotus Gallery is proud to present **Sweet Sorrow**, Wing Shya's photographic ode to our desolate human condition that reads as a techni-colour love letter to the city that raised him: Hong Kong. The production from concept to the actual production took two years in the making and another two years to edit. Nine location were chosen from over 400 scouted locations, 32 models were selected from a cast of over 200 candidates, most of them not professionals but chosen for their unique features. This project in collaboration with Kanako B. Koga and Fantasia Utamaro and a whole orchestra close to a hundred talented people, **Sweet Sorrow** became an artistic feat of epic proportions never seen before. Wing Shya used Hong Kong as a backdrop to play out his spectacular vision of what is really going on in the psyche of the "Me Generation"; a generation who grew up with smart phones in hand and with a heightened attention to all things visual. These characters find comfort in their strangeness, their sexual exploits, their subculture and its expressions and their dance with melancholy. To feel alone is an epidemic in modern city life and thus this series resonates not only with the young but all urban creatures.

Sarah Greene, director of Blue Lotus Gallery mentioned: 'It becomes increasingly hard to find strong Hong Kong related projects that are different to what is already out there. Yet Wing Shya's work just blew me away on so many levels. Here is an artist that excels in photography, film, graphic design and set making, capable of a large spectacular productions such as this. But what strikes me most is his affinity and sensitivity towards our zeitgeist and the inner-life of our youth. I can't help but think that Wing, not a stranger to the woo's of glamour, fashion and fame, is not just portraying the angst of our



youth but also expresses his own personal experience of the emptiness behind all what shines and glitters.

The cinematic is always present in the work of Wing Shya having started as the still shots photographer on the set of Wong Kar-Wai's epic films. The perfection of design achieved in each scene is apparent from a photographer well versed in the language of fashion and cinema, and yet this body of work speaks volumes of something true to the artists' heart: the human condition and the beauty in its' messy endeavour to try understand itself. Cute yet dirty, gritty yet glowing, imagine dystopian scenes where a chain smoking Little Bo-Peep and Mini Mouse turn to Cosplay and bondage at a party with the Yakuza, My Little Pony and The Avengers in a Hong Kong urban wasteland reminiscent of Gotham City. Sweet Sorrow may be the most colourful and visually gratifying work to tackle a subject so intimate and personal, finding the sweet in the sorrow.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:



Wing Shya transmutes between film, art and fashion. Born in Hong Kong 1964, Shya returned to Hong Kong following his fine art studies at Emily Carr Institute in Canada and founded the award-winning design studio, Shya-la-la Workshop. In 1997, appointed as the exclusive photographer and graphic designer for Wong Kar Wai; Shya began his collaboration with the renowned movie director, on *Happy Together*, continued then on *In the Mood for Love*, *Eros* and *2046*. A now-recognized director himself, Shya began his venture in filmmaking by collaborating with musicians and artistes like Karen Mok, Jacky Cheung and Vanessa Mae on music videos. In Spring 2010, Shya debuted his block-buster movie, *Hot Summer Days* and continued to work on the sequel, *Love in Space*, released in Fall 2011. Shya made his return to fine art in 2006. Invited by the Mori Art Museum in Roppongi Hill,

Japan; Wing Shya was the first non-Japanese photographer to exhibit at the museum with his inaugural show, *Distraction/Attraction*. In 2007, he was selected to exhibit in *In Fashion 07*, curated by Marion de Beaupré at Art Basel Miami, and in October the same year, he had a solo exhibition, *Jealousy*, at Xintiandi, Shanghai. Shya also took part in *China Design Now* in 2008, which was exhibited at V&A Museum. In recent years, he has exhibited with Louise Alexander Gallery (Italy), +81 Gallery (Tokyo and New York) and Ooibotos Gallery (Hong Kong). Wing Shya frequently contributes to numerous fashion and art magazines, including *i-D* (UK), *Vogue Italia*, *32c* (Berlin), *Numéro* (France) and *TIME Style and Design* (US). His clientele includes Louis Vuitton, Maison Martin Margiela and many more.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION (FULL VERSION AND MORE BACKGROUND INFO):

Sweet Sorrow is project Wing Shya had burning inside him, a chance to make his own artistic mark and to voice his concern for the isolation felt by the young people of Hong Kong. He claims he never felt like a good photographer "until I did this," a completely self funded project that took almost two



years to complete. This otherworldly dystopian fairy tale comprising of a cast of spectacularly dressed misfits may not have a happy ending, instead it leaves us yearning to see more, and maybe we even see a little of ourselves mirrored in these beings.

A playful extravaganza of visual story telling, Sweet Sorrow, welcomes you to the city of darkness, the Hong Kong only an insider has walked, through the hidden temples, dingy rooftops, dilapidated houses where trees are claiming back the space and abandoned villages, disused toilets, the urban wasteland, its back alleys and ramshackle rooms, soon to be torn down for newer, cleaner skyscrapers. Wires upon wires, gardens of tv antennae, the drip, drip, dripping of graffiti down a dilapidated wall or fresh blood down a young girls' inner thigh. The end of innocence and the prickle of isolation has never been so colourful or visually indulgent, so sweet and so full of sorrow. This series of photographs manifests as a visual anthem for the "Me Generation" of Hong Kongers. The place is of great importance, as Wing Shya explains during an interview with CNN: "Hong Kong city is a collage. This is my creative source, the noise, the colour, the neon signs. Everything is very original. I use the colour, I make it more contrast, I make something un-matching, putting two different things together. Because Hong Kong is like that."

Sweet Sorrow is indeed a symphony conducted by Wing Shya, in collaboration with Kanako B. Koga and Fantasista Utamaro and a whole orchestra of talented people. The sheer scale of the project is only matched in its visual depth; the scenes themselves are collages. In addition to authentic Hong Kong locations and the living Manga-esque characters Shya chose to layer the images with the empty cartoon speech marks and sounds effects in the form of graffiti, neon lights or body paint by Japanese artist, Fantasista Utamaro. Instead of "bang!" "crash" "zap" "kaboom" - there is just stillness, silence and solitude. As if the Hong Kong visual landscape were not enough, he stretches the visual to new levels, in one scene two samurai sword holding super heroines stand by an impressive Hong Kong neon sign decorated with unique neon light designs made specially for the project. Everything is amplified and every detail is considered. Kanako B. Koga hand stitched every costume to bring to life the characters dancing in the mind of Wing Shya.

On film sets photographers can only shoot just before or after the action, leaving a haunting feeling as if something is about to happen or has just taken place. Wing Shya has made that part of his style and Sweet Sorrow continues with cinematic scenes that captures time itself, hanging on a thread.

Today the world of fetish has become ever more expressed in tightly packed urban landscapes that confines the body in space and time. As a way to re-connect with the sensory world, especially via pain and pleasure, humans find outlets in bondage and role play to deal with their inadequacies and deep seeded need for contact. Sweet Sorrow explores some of these external methods often shared between partners or in groups, as vehicles to get to the internal, to grasp the human. New subcultures and trends such as Cosplay, Furies, Japanese Roping "Shibari" and the like are more and more popular, spreading ever faster with the internet, and with them come a new visual language that is both culturally significant and anthropological in its practice of ritual, costume, play and communication.



Shya is concerned with a generation who grew up with the new age of information technology. He explains, "the Me Generation is resourceful and privileged in all material aspects... However, the pedestal of being blessed does not grant many of them happier lives, and in fact, in response to the vast changes of the society, the infinite consumption of information and material abundance; feelings of detachment and isolation in these people are prominent." Sweet Sorrow is an epic personal and creative challenge that the now world renowned artist set himself and Blue Lotus Gallery is proud to exhibit the iconic work that came out of it.

On the other hand it is also a sweet message from an older Hong Konger to the younger people to remember to reach out and break through their mask, their facade and connect with each other.

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ABOUT BLUE LOTUS GALLERY:

Blue Lotus Gallery, established in 2007 by Sarah Green is a frontrunner when it comes to discovering and exhibiting exciting Hong Kong related projects. Blue Lotus Gallery currently focuses mainly on exploring Hong Kong culture and identity through the medium of photography. Blue Lotus Gallery is behind the rediscovery of prominent photographer Fan Ho (exclusive world wide) through a string of exhibitions and book projects, is the gallery in chief for Michael Wolf and also accountable for the careers of new emerging talents such as Romain Jacquet Lagrèze, Tugo Cheng, Marcel Heijnen and KC Kwan. The gallery is proud to now also represent Hong Kong's mega star Wing Shya exclusively world wide.

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For More information or interviews with the artist please contact us.

Press & Inquiries (English):	Christina Jensen christina@bluelotus-gallery.com or +852 9019 8640
	Sarah Greene : sarah@bluelotus-gallery.com or +852 6100 1295
Press & Inquiries (Chinese):	Eunice Lam : eunice@bluelotus-gallery.com or +852 5193 0809