

dialogue ... with this theme, I found that handling the car was a more personal, interactive experience, such that the sensation of driving became the inspiration."
Wonne Lai

Marriage of Swiss artist technology



Each wedding band is made to order and usually takes about two to three weeks to finish, including engraving and other customised features. Apart from the conventional initials, Chinese characters and even fingerprints can be engraved on the band.

"Our philosophy enables us, on the one hand, to combine knowledge of traditional craftsmanship passed down through generations with the most innovative technologies, and, on the other, to fulfil our clients' entitlement to quality, individuality and ethics," he said.

With the wedding bands coming with a lifetime warranty, Häusermann said he had seen rings from the 1920s being brought back to the store.

COMMUNITY

Catholics urged to shun chain stores

Church group calls on followers to buy from small businesses throughout the 40 days of Lent

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The Catholic church has launched a campaign in support of small businesses by encouraging people to give up relying on chain stores for Lent and support their local shopkeeper.

The Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs yesterday appealed to Catholics to shop in small stores in their neighbourhood instead of chain supermarkets and department stores.

Programme officer Yu Siu-po of the commission said the church was alarmed by the growing trend of small shops being edged out by a few major players who can afford higher rent and offer more discounts on products.

"During the campaign which will last for 40 days until April 1, we invite

our fellow Catholics to look for the small shops in their neighbourhood and shop there. For instance, they are encouraged to buy soft drinks from grocery stores, instead of the few major supermarkets or chain convenience stores," Yu said.

Yu admitted that in some districts it was hard to find small stores as many had been forced out by the major chains, from supermarkets and convenience stores, fast food restaurants, fashion outlets, to pharmacies.

"Besides our support to the small businesses, we also appeal to the whole community to change the spending culture."

According to Yu, the campaign is based on the biblical lesson about Jesus being led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days, where he was tempted by the devil. Many Christians choose to give up a "vice"

such as smoking or chocolate for Lent, in the run-up to Easter.

"Hong Kong is branded as a shopping paradise with a lot of temptation for people to spend money on things they do not actually need," he said.

"During the 40 days of the campaign, we appeal to people to save up money and donate to the needy instead."

The church also urges supporters of the campaign to share their thoughts on the church's Facebook page.



Buy soft drinks from grocery stores, instead of the few major supermarkets

YU SIU-PO, PROGRAMME OFFICER

Yu said it was the first time the church had run the campaign and it might be repeated next year.

The *Sunday Morning Post* reported yesterday that small shops in Admiralty were ousted after high-end store Lane Crawford and British luxury brand Burberry moved in.

At Pacific Place, Burberry will move into the space now occupied by Lane Crawford – taking up 21,000 sq ft over two floors – later this year.

Lane Crawford will move into neighbouring Queensway Plaza this month, sending shockwaves through the government-owned shopping centre. The store is forcing out small businesses and taking up most one-storey shop spaces.

The small stores are scrambling to find new places in nearby malls to reopen. But the move has drastically increased rents in the area.

The problem of chain store dominance has alarmed the Consumer Council for years. Wet markets, for instance, face competition from superstores.

Opportunity missed or a confusion home from

REVIEW

Show Flat
Hong Kong City Hall Theatre
Reviewed: February 16

Written and directed by Wai-sum, *Show Flat* follows a man's search for an ideal home. It can be read as an allegory of his relationships, post-1997 Hong Kong, the current property market, and at least that is what I think comedy drama is or can be. This is by far the most complete work of Poon's and, frankly, incomprehensible.

It opens with rival producer Keung (Chan Chu-hei), Kam-ching) and Goldy (Clayton Kopp) mocking and cursing one another. They wait for their prospective buyer Eu Look (Lau Shau-ching) to arrive from Sealand (Shaw Mei-kwan) to buy a flat.

When the couple arrives, the trio are not human. They are ghosts of the past – weird.

What follows makes little sense. There is a (fantasy) scenario where the ambience/locale of the flat is altered by plucking at a string. As well as numerous references to the *Battle of Red Cliffs* from the literary classic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* that have no connection to the opening night, members of the audience were seen walking out during the way into the performance.

The parameter of this play is interesting and holds relevance for contemporary Hong Kong. It has been a satire on the property market – how real estate agents manipulate the market.

MEDIA

Journalists unhappy with fire department releases

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A journalists' group yesterday criticised the Fire Services Department for withholding information from the media since it adopted a new communications system at the start of the month.

The Journalists' Association said the department had only released one in 10 incident reports on an average



name of protecting privacy. "What we need involves nothing about privacy. We are not asking for the release of names or ages or the like of people involved in the cases. We are just asking for real-time issues of cases," Mak said.

"They are just trying to cover up cases they don't want to publicise in the name of protecting privacy. Why do they censor? The messages from the Fire Services Department were more related to public safety than

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