

INTRODUCING

Pretty on the Surface

Who Kin-wah Tsang (29)

Where Hong Kong

Goal To let people see things, ideas and daily life from different perspectives

How By presenting vulgar contents in an elegant way, thus making them look very similar to beautiful or classic things

Latest project A series of works related to religion

Philosophy To make works that reflect my inner feelings and interests

Approach Allowing daily life to spark my creativity

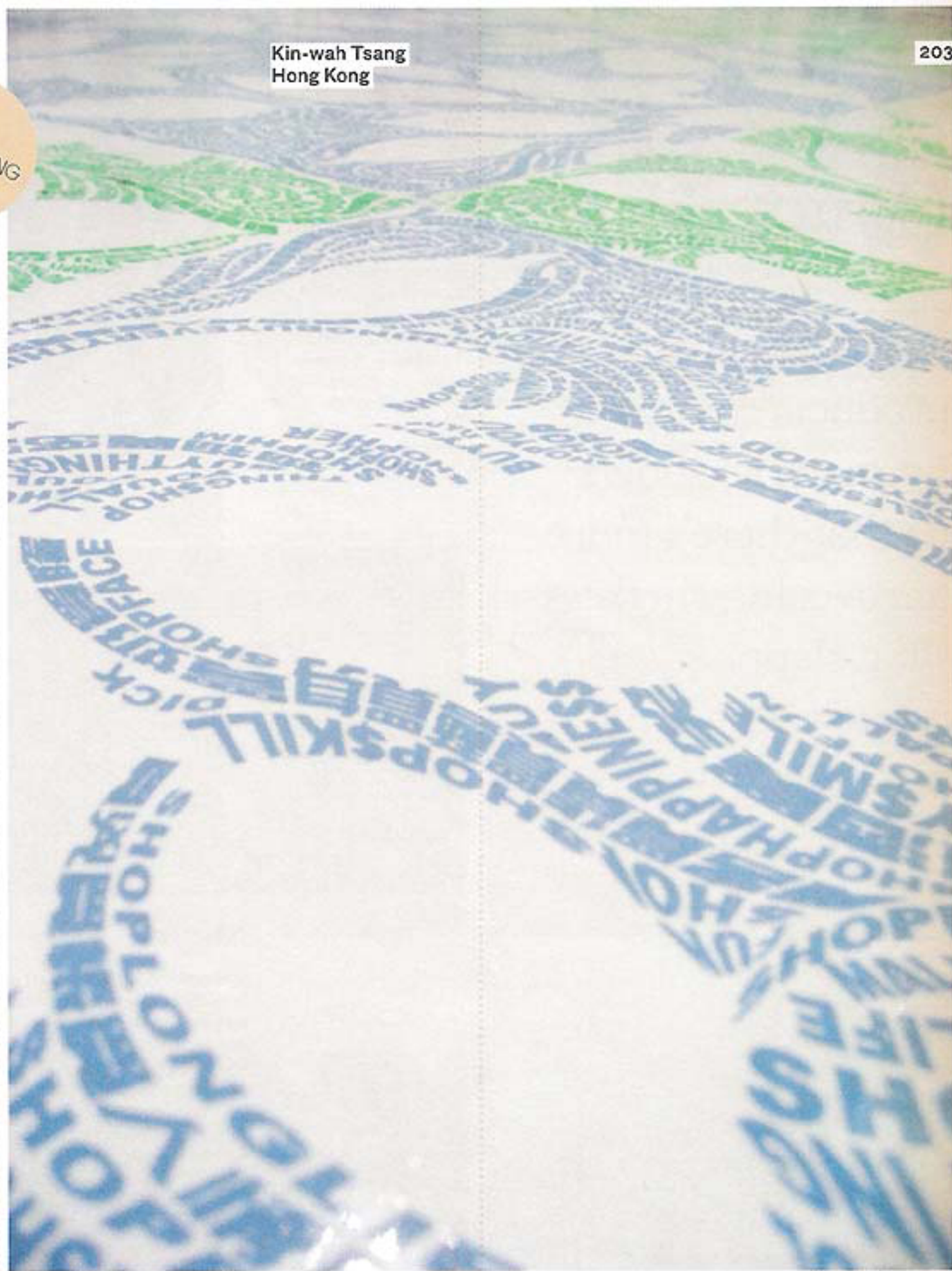
Words: Andrea Eschbach



Ornamental patterns, coiled lines and artful arabesques. The work of Kin-wah Tsang is reminiscent of the style developed by William Morris. But Tsang isn't producing adaptations of the printed fabrics, painted tiles and hand-woven carpets designed by the father of the Arts and Crafts movement in the 19th century. The works carefully crafted by the Hong Kong artist are a fascinating combination of design and calligraphy. When viewed at close range, the interwoven floral ornaments turn out to be arrangements of precisely drawn words and sentences. The young Chinese artist, designer and calligrapher is one of the more impressive

Kin-wah Tsang
Hong Kong

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talents to emerge from Asia in recent years. He studied art at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and book arts at Camberwell College of Arts in London. Within the past year, he has been awarded the coveted Sovereign Asian Art Prize, has had his works added to collections from Zürich to London, has taken part in a series of group shows, and has mounted three solo exhibitions. In 2005 he covered the walls and window of the John Batten Gallery in Hong Kong. Entitled *White Cube*, the work depicts white garlands formed from English words and Chinese symbols. On closer inspection, however, *White Cube* reveals Tsang's covert criticism of the art market. 'I work with various layers,' he explains. The beauty of the floral ornaments softens the harshness of the language and the associated feelings. Tsang is currently transforming a space in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum into a vibrant installation. Cushions, benches, walls and floor are all getting a covering of the artist's classic computer-generated

ornaments, while a video plays a film to the sounds of Mozart and a monotonous computer voice. The installation *ISHOPY OUSHOPHESHOPSHESHOPITSHOPTHE Y...* forms part of MegARTstore, a group exhibition that features work by five artists set in a simulated shopping mall. Tsang's décor replicates the leisure zones of shopping centres. 'I wanted to create a brainwash effect,' he explains, 'to criticize consumer habits, the cleansed reality of shopping spaces and the constant stream of ads that hit you in the mall and everywhere else today. And, so, in the elegant ornaments you can decipher such banalities as "You shop therefore you are".' Only a tweak away from artist Barbara Kruger's famous work *'I shop, therefore I am'*.

www.tsangkinwah.com