

The Passport blog

The biggest names in art come to Hong Kong

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ART HK12 will showcase this psychedelic polka-dotted piece, *Flowers that Bloom at Midnight*, by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. (Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery)

Once a year the biggest names in the art world flock not to Basel or Venice -- but to Hong Kong. Springtime ushers in ART HK 12, an international art fair that this year will play host to 266 galleries from 39 countries.

Held 17 to 20 May at Hong Kong's [Wan Chai convention centre](#), visitors can browse works from prestigious international galleries like London's [Gagosian](#) and [White Cube](#) (both also have branches in Hong Kong) and Paris' [Tornabuoni Art](#). Among the artists showcased are contemporary masters such as Roy Lichtenstein and Frank Stella, as well as newer, influential players like Anish Kapoor and Ai Weiwei. In addition, large-scale installations will be scattered around the exhibition halls, including a psychedelic polka-dotted piece by 83-year-old Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, a quirky boundary breaker known for her use of repetitive patterns.

Now in its fifth year, [ART HK's](#) prominence has grown measurably since its inception. Attendance rose 38% between 2010 and 2011, with last year's festival welcoming more than 63,000 visitors, professional curators, hardcore collectors and lay art buffs.

What sets the fair apart is its insistence on giving an equal weight to artists from Asia (in a special section called Asia One), as well as emerging artists under 35 and those represented by galleries less than eight years old in the Art Futures section. Some artists to watch include Hong Kong native Lee Kit, who repurposes mundane objects in his almost sculptural works; Adrian Wong, a Yale MFA whose installations bear the imprint of Hong Kong culture; Cary Kwok, a London-based Hong Kong artist who uses everyday ballpoint pens to create a distinctive drawing style; and He Xiangyu, a mainland Chinese artist perhaps best known for [creating a corpse of Ai Weiwei](#) in an attempt to laud Ai's stance against the Chinese government.

ART HK 12 already vaulted the month of May to the top of Hong Kong's cultural calendar, but next year promises to shine even brighter. Though Art Basel already owns a majority stake in ART HK, on 8 May it announced plans to incorporate Hong Kong's fair more formally among its own slate of internationally renowned events. That means, starting in May 2013, we should expect even more from Hong Kong's art scene.

Tickets to ART HK cost \$250 Hong Kong dollars from [hkticketing.com](#).

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