



Pulling together

Community centres can do more than host group activities and art exhibitions. A few centres in Yau Ma Tei and Wan Chai serve as community organisers, and help people develop a sense of pride and belonging

District's living room

BASED at the Shanghai Street Artspace, the Yau Ma Tei centre is designed to be different from typical arts centres. "It isn't a place only for displaying art, but a **platform** for engaging the community," said Roland Ip (葉浩麟), one of the core members of Woofert Ten.



▲ Roland Ip of Woofert Ten.

Ten local artists established Woofert Ten in 2009, but they do not see it solely as an arts centre. "Some locals see it as a community centre; some even mistake it for a council member's office and make complaints to us. Indeed we welcome everyone to come and **explore** the possibilities it offers here."

Woofert Ten often organises activities to reach out to the neighbourhood. In its first year, the young artists explored stories behind the shops in Shanghai Street and delivered amusing awards to provide support and encouragement to the small shops. For example, a snake shop owner was awarded the 'King of the Snakes' award because of the shop owner's mastery of Qigong (氣功).

This April, they organised a **parade** in which participants brought wine to nearby shops and had a drink with the shopkeepers.

These activities are not art events, but they bring joy and energy to the community, which is exactly what the centre hopes to do.

There is also a workshop where artists and locals are invited to hold classes, such as painting, Pakistani cooking and Chinese rice cake making. Always crowded with people, the centre is like the neighbourhood's living room.

Woofert Ten

Address: G/F 404 Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei

Tel: 3485 6499

Website: www.wooferten.org



Rekindling relationships

RUN by the St. James' Settlement, the historic Blue House in Wan Chai was **revitalised** and turned into the 'Hong Kong House of Stories'.

"It is a platform for serving the community," said Suki Chau (周希旋) from St. James' Settlement. "Through unique cultural and arts activities, it helps nearby residents build a better sense of belonging to the district and serves to show that museums are not the only option for **heritage** buildings."



▲ St. James' Settlement's Suki Chau.

Apart from workshops and exhibitions, the House organises community tours, led by Wan Chai housewives, of the district's historic buildings. Other events include an annual Mid-Autumn Festival Evening Show, and a paper puppet show created by the locals about the history of the Blue House. In a recent evening music show, independent musicians played while others enjoyed a night of music and wine.

"There used to be a lot of public areas for locals to gather," Chau said. "But now they are losing such space and it's no surprise that they are **drifting apart**." Chau felt that the House drew Wan Chai locals closer. "People might not come only for the activities. They are always welcome to drop by for a chat."

There was a strong **bond** between Wan Chai and its people, Chau explained. "They may seem a bit quiet but they are actually very friendly. As neighbours they care about each other. This kind of neighbourhood **ambience** could only be found in old districts."

Hong Kong House of Stories

Address: 74 Stone Nullah Lane, Wan Chai

Tel: 2117 5850

Website: <http://houseofstories.sjs.org.hk/>



WORKSHEET

A Reading Comprehension

According to the article, decide whether each of the statements below is True, False or Not Stated. Tick ONE circle for each statement.

	True	False	Not Stated
1. Woofert Ten is not a community centre but an arts centre.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Roland Ip is one of the founding members of Woofert Ten.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Everyone is welcome to visit Woofert Ten.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The Blue House belongs to the St. James' Settlement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Suki Chau thinks that Wan Chai locals do not have enough public space to gather.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The paper puppet show in the House tells the history of Wan Chai.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B Vocabulary

Find the words in the article which share the same meaning with the following:

- usual _____
- total control over _____
- one-of-a-kind _____
- choice _____
- alcoholic drink _____
- relationship _____

C Questions

- Who founded Woofert Ten?

- Why is Woofert Ten called a living room of the neighbourhood?

- What activities has the 'Hong Kong House of Stories' held for the community? Write two examples.

- How can the 'Hong Kong House of Stories' draw the locals together? Write your answer in ONE complete sentence.

Answers on E12