



Clockwise from left: Ricky Cheung at work in the studio; illustrations on creating hand-carved mahjong; Cheung brings her tiles to different parts of the world; painting mahjong by hand; and old photos from the Fuk Hing Lung mahjong factory.

Tales told in tiles

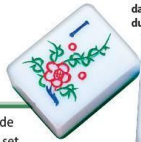
Crystal Wu

Karen Cheung grew up on the other side of the mahjong table. Her grandfather set up the Fuk Hing Lung mahjong factory in 1963. By the time it was passed on to her father, Ricky Cheung, it was one of the largest factories in the industry in Hong Kong.

As a child, Cheung would spend a lot of time in the factory watching her father carve the tiles, which her grandmother and aunts would paint and her uncle, polish.

Unfortunately, even with her father's efforts to modernize, the family business was not able to fight off competition from

Mahjong tiles by the father-daughter duo.



the mainland and it had to close down in 2009. "The craftsmen who learned the craft suddenly found their talents to be useless," she recalled.

Cheung has always been creative. She tried studying art in high school but gave up as she felt like she didn't have the talent. "Five years ago, I picked up the pen again to draw," she said. "Initially, I drew scenes from my travels."

Then she felt compelled to document the stories of the mahjong factory. She started drawing the tools that her family used in their craft. "It was that illustration that got people to notice my story," she said.

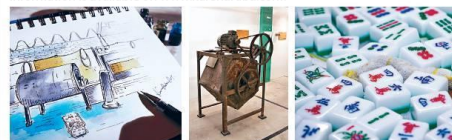
One factory was keen to develop her first mahjong-inspired designs and products. Her first design, the *Travel Mahjong City*, features a laser engraved, gradient effect design on some of Hong Kong's districts with a wordplay on the winds tile. It won her design awards.

It also meant that she could invite her father back to doing the craft he loved. The father and daughter duo started to work together in designing and crafting new designs into the traditional mahjong tiles in the hope of reviving and conserving the dying craft. This led to the opening of the Karen Aruba Studio in September at the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre.

In the converted factory estate are illustrations depicting the Cheung family story, as well as historic exhibits such as tiles manufactured by Cheung's family factory. It also hosts new designs and pigments that are not traditionally found on the game tiles.

"When I think of new designs, I always keep in mind my father's craftsmanship. I do not want the whole product to be machine-made. My whole family lost their jobs due to machinery in 2009 and I especially treasure that time-consuming craftsmanship." Her latest is a display set of Chinese zodiac symbols painted in metallic red and green, as well as bronze.

She is holding an exhibition and open studio called *Wanderlust in Mahjong Craftsmanship* every Saturday until February 27. The tile-coloring workshops, however, are canceled until further notice due to the pandemic. More information is available on www.karenaruba.com.



From left: Cheung's illustration of a polishing machine from the factory; a display of the actual machine at the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre; and a handcrafted mahjong set.



Splash of color

David Zwirner gallery's first show of the New Year is awash in color. *Raoul De Keyser* features the late artist's paintings from the last 25 years of his five-decade career.

De Keyser's palette is full of bright colors conveying a sense of spring, such as yellow and ultramarine.

The colors appear in simple shapes and painterly marks in his painting by brush strokes and looser factures.

When: until March 6

Where: 5-6/F, H Queen's, Central

Laughter in doses



Ernest Chang loves to laugh. In the local artist's exhibition, *Bling Dynasty*, instantly recognizable images from pop and consumer culture are

reinterpreted in traditional Chinese style.

It offers a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the influence of Chinese consumer power on the global marketplace.

When: from February 2 to April 4

Where: The Stallery WCH, G/F, 82A Stone Nullah Lane, Wan Chai



Pouring one out

For his untitled mixed-media exhibition, Alex Hubbard explores materials in new and inventive ways. He pulls and drips industrial materials such as resin, urethane, oil and wax on the canvas, sometimes with a squeegee. His latest process also involves UV printing, which unites the abstract and figurative on a single canvas via underlying prints of machinery and everyday items.

When: until March 13

Where: Simon Lee gallery, 12 Pedder Street, Central
CARA CHEN

Redeem premium red packets at Harbour City

Harbour City is going to launch a set of 3D "Bountiful Koi Fish" Red Packets. Symbolizing longevity, energy and prosperity, each set of red packets contain 5 styles – 2 large ones and 3 small ones – of "Koi Fish". They encapsulate festive elements including money, fireworks, pinwheels and Chinese knots.



The red packets are brilliantly embossed with line patterns for folding into 3D Koi Fish as ornaments to wish receivers a vibrant new year and good luck.

Upon spending of a designated amount and participating in "REWARDING EVERY DAY" Promotion at Harbour City, customers can redeem one set of Limited Edition 3D "Bountiful Koi Fish" Red Packets (16 pieces, 4 large ones and 12 small ones) and one Mini Pleated Bag for free or by on-site donation. They will be available from 25 January to 11 February.

Enquiry 2118 8666
Website www.harbourcity.com.hk

