

Connecting Artists with Collectors

With an educational approach to art, Villepin is a gallery that inspires highly personalised connections between creators and their patrons.

Co-founder Arthur de Villepin grew up surrounded by art. His father, former French prime minister Dominique de Villepin, is an avid art collector. His mother and sister are both professional artists. After relocating to Hong Kong a decade ago, de Villepin founded Art de Vivre in 2012 as a platform for French lifestyle companies. Yet the entrepreneur always wanted to be directly involved in fine arts. In March 2020, de Villepin teamed up with his father to open their eponymous three-storey gallery Villepin in the heart of Hong Kong's Hollywood Road art district.

Commitment to Hong Kong

"It was an amazing challenge," recalled de Villepin. "But we look at Hong Kong and Mainland China on a long term basis and the gallery reinforces our willingness to be here even during difficult times. We believe in Hong Kong and its potential to reach Mainland China. Villepin is a brand that I started with my father, and the idea of working with family is important to me. I hope to transfer to my own children one day to continue its legacy with my passion for art."

Its opening exhibition, *Friendship & Reconciliation*, showcases works by Chinese-French artist Zao Wou-ki. The artist was a close friend of the de Villepin family, allowing the exhibition to provide insider

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Arthur de Villepin
Co-founder
Villepin



glimpses into the artist's life and career. The approach underscores how meaningful connections between collectors and artists lead to works being appreciated beyond their investment opportunity.

"The art market is different than the art world," de Villepin acknowledged. "We want to offer something different – something closer to artists and their history. As we are collectors ourselves, we will also show our art collection and intend to partner with other galleries. Art is about education and learning why certain pieces are in museums. Rather than art as investment, we hope to facilitate art appreciation and help people understand the art of collecting. We bring artists and collectors to the centre of what we do. We promote art that we love and that is close to our family."

A genuine art city

By mounting half-year long exhibitions, Villepin Gallery offers the space and time for debates, salons and discussions to promote deeper understanding of an artist's works. de Villepin feels that mature Hong Kong collectors will appreciate him going the extra mile. "Compared to France, I am pleasantly surprised by the number of sophisticated collectors in the city and their capacity to make offers even during volatile times," he stated. "As the Executive Committee member

of the Friends of Hong Kong Museum of Art, I think the Hong Kong's art standards are amongst the best in the world. It has fantastic infrastructure and the auction houses here have done a great job. It's a genuine art city."

de Villepin appreciates the support that InvestHK has provided. "It gives the right advice and direction, and is a great platform to get our message across," he said.

With Hong Kong as his base, de Villepin has grown to love his second hometown. "Everyone needs to find his own Hong Kong," he suggested. "There are so many different facets to discover – urban and countryside."

Villepin

- Founded in 2020 by father and son duo Dominique and Arthur de Villepin, Villepin is a gallery that aims to forge lasting relationships between artists and collectors through on-going events, educational programmes and exhibitions

 villepinart.com