

DESIGN



More international clients pass through our Hong Kong office than in London: 80 percent of our customers visit the city to meet their suppliers at least four times a year.

Michael Young
Director of Michael Young Ltd

Sector Snapshot

Hong Kong has become the design hub in the Asia region with government initiatives on landmark projects in support of creative industries. In Central district, PMQ, the former Police Married Quarters, has been adapted for re-use transforming into a design nucleus to serve evolving startup creative entrepreneurs and designers. The site offers 130 studio units as a platform for designers as points of sale to showcase their design and a creative exhibition space. Nearby, the Central Police Station Compound heritage site, renamed Tai Kwun, has been revitalised as a centre for heritage and art, offering an immersive experience in heritage and contemporary art, adding two new buildings to the site with world-class art exhibition space and a 200-seat auditorium.

The Wong Chuk Hang district has in the past few years grown organically into an art, lifestyle and design cluster with an increasing number of art space and galleries, design studios as well as non-commercial institutions located in large industrial spaces. The Hong Kong Design Centre's (HKDC) Design Incubation Programme has moved into this Southern District as part of their expansion, offering new facilities and larger premises for design incubatees. Organised by HKDC since 2002, the Business of Design Week has emerged as the Asia's leading annual event on design, innovation and brands.

The 40-hectare West Kowloon Cultural District has become Hong Kong's new vibrant cultural quarter. Its first permanent structure, the M+ Pavilion, a multi-purpose exhibition and performance space opened in July 2016. New cultural facilities under development include M+ Museum, a world-class museum for visual culture, Xiqu Centre, a new arts venue for Chinese Opera, Lyric Theatre Complex and the Hong Kong Palace Museum.

Hong Kong Advantages and Opportunities

- Being the Asia hub and key gateway to Mainland markets
- Major international brands with regional headquarters and key decision makers in Hong Kong
- An increasingly export oriented design industry with Mainland and Asia Pacific being the biggest export market for design services
- The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area as an innovation and technology powerhouse, with networks of well-established supply chains, free flow of talents and better inter-cities collaboration
- A regional design centre providing rich source of innovative products and design talents
- Dynamic design culture combining Western and Asian influences
- Rich supply of talented design graduates from leading universities and design institutes
- Rule of law protecting intellectual property and licensing; transparency in doing business
- Support for startups with incubation programmes and incentive schemes

Incubation Programmes

Hong Kong Design Centre – Design Incubation Programme

<http://www.hkdesignincubation.org/>

Cyberport Incubation Programme

<http://www.cyberport.hk/en/>

Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks (HKSTP) Incubation Programme

<https://www.hkstp.org/en/index.aspx>



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Hong Kong is a very dynamic place – people are always looking forward and moving forward. It is an open market, and that makes work fun, as well as good for business. ”

Jonathan Cummings
Chairman, Hong Kong
FITCH

Global Brand and Design Company Seeks Growth in Asia through Hong Kong

UK-headquartered FITCH acquired StartJG Hong Kong and made it the largest Asian office in its international creative network.

At the end of 2016, retail and brand consultancy FITCH, part of British multinational advertising and public relations company WPP, acquired a majority stake in StartJG in Hong Kong, formerly part of the Start Group. After rebranding, the Hong Kong operation became one of the 16 studios in the FITCH network and the biggest in Asia.

Jonathan Cummings, who opened StartJG in Hong Kong in 2009 and built it up into a successful company awarded by Marketing magazine as Brand Consultancy of the Year in 2014, is now Chairman, Hong Kong of FITCH. He said: “Our studio has brought to FITCH greater presence in Greater China and the knowledge to help the firm to grow in Mainland China. The second thing is our specialism in digital. We are not just adding another office but a genuinely expanded capability to the FITCH network, regionally and globally.”

FITCH has six other studios in Asia, in Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai, Delhi, Mumbai and Dubai. The Hong Kong office, which has a 48-strong staff, will be central to the expansion of FITCH in Asia.

“We want to at least double the size of the business within the next four years. My goal is to build on the success we have had so far, and continue using Hong Kong as the platform for further growth.”

He commented that the city is increasingly embracing innovation, which makes for a favourable environment for a business like FITCH to grow.

“Hong Kong is a very dynamic place – people are always looking forward and moving forward. There is an ever-growing and thriving startup community, and big organisations are building innovative labs and starting to inject the culture of innovation into their organisations. That is brilliant and gives us access to a lot of partners and collaborators.”

And he sees a lot of opportunities ahead as the retail sector is becoming competitive. “Brands are seeing the need to invest in differentiating themselves, to refine their proposition and their retail experience, and to really make themselves stand out. That’s where we come in,” he said.

InvestHK has a long working relationship with Cummings, and it was also present at the launch event of FITCH in Hong Kong.

“To have that support from the government made the team feel very valued and very special, and it showed our clients that they were working with a business valued by the government. That’s really important for a small business like ours,” he said.

“The best thing about working in Hong Kong is accessibility to people, whether it’s potential clients, partners or collaborators. It is an open market, and that makes work fun, as well as good for business,” he said.

FITCH

- One of the 16 studios in the global network of FITCH and the largest in Asia
- Leading the growth of FITCH in Greater China and the rest of Asia
- Plans to double the size of its business within the next four years

 [fitch.com/studios/hong-kong](https://www.fitch.com/studios/hong-kong)



During our initial visit to Hong Kong, we were struck with the ease of doing business, the buoyancy of the economy, the growing interest in conservation and the available means with which to fund it. ”

Brian Anderson
Managing Partner
PURCELL



UK Conservation Architect to Revitalise Central Police Station

PURCELL, a UK architecture firm has a family of many experts: architects, interior designers, heritage leaders and specialist consultants.

From its roots in the UK, and since 2010 well-established in the Asia Pacific region, Purcell undertake projects across eight core sectors, principal among these being high-end residential and hospitality, educational and cultural. Their strategy is to place their teams locally or regionally so that they are well versed in the distinctive character of a place. This is especially important at a time when regional architecture is at risk of being lost due to globalisation.

Much of their work is focussed on the revitalisation of existing buildings, which is gaining momentum more widely as heritage is more appreciated and sustainability and economics are driving development decisions. Finding new uses for existing buildings, or adapting them to keep pace with modern expectations, are key parts of Purcell's expertise. Its project portfolio includes some of the best-known buildings globally, ranging from a number of World Heritage sites to national treasures such as the National Gallery, National Maritime Museum, British Museum, Westminster Abbey, all in London, to the former Central Police Station and The Helena May Club, both in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club invited the firm in 2008 to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the former Central Police Station (CPS). The plan involved in-depth research to propose how the historical buildings, based on existing features and characteristics, could be transformed into a centre of heritage, arts and leisure facilities.

“During our initial visit to Hong Kong, we were struck with the ease of doing business, the buoyancy of the economy, the growing interest in conservation and the available means with which to fund it – all in addition to Hong Kong's proximity to important markets in the South East Asia region,” Brian Anderson, Managing Partner said. Therefore, instead of

setting up a single-project office, the firm decided to establish a permanent office in Hong Kong.

Over the past 10 years, the firm has expanded in the Asia Pacific region, opening offices in New Delhi, Melbourne and Sydney. Hong Kong continues to serve clients in Mainland China, Singapore and Myanmar. Moving forward in the Asia Pacific region and in Hong Kong, PURCELL have expanded into offering interior design as they seek to diversify and explore new markets.

At PURCELL, architectural conservation matters to the cultural and economic development of a city. They also think that the concept of “smart” cities is partly related to how “liveable” the cities are, and that they are measured on how easily people can travel, work and relax, and the sense of identity that people feel. By managing change sensitively, cities can evolve in a way that meets people's needs, and prosper.

PURCELL

- Award-winning conservation architect established in London in 1947
- Looking to diversify and explore new markets

 purcellap.com

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“ Hong Kong’s software engineering and creative professionals are definitely underestimated. People often think that Hong Kong’s talent in the creative industries is not as capable as its US counterparts, but I can prove that this is wrong. They definitely have the ability to excel and exceed their western counterparts. ”

Alvin Hung
Founder of Vyond



Annual Events

Business of Design Week (BODW)

BODW is Asia’s leading event on design, innovation and brands organised by the Hong Kong Design Centre since 2002. The annual event features a series of exhibitions, forums, outreach programmes and networking events for designers, business leaders, educators, corporations and design students to exchange ideas and explore business cooperation. An unparalleled line-up of experts and influential figures in design and innovation will gather to inspire on creative thinking and design management.

www.bodw.com

Business of IP Asia Forum

www.bipasiaforum.com

CENTRESTAGE

<http://www.centrestage.com.hk/en/index.php>

Design Inspire

<http://www.hktdc.com/ncs/designinspire2018/en/main/index.html>

DETOUR

www.detour.hk

Hong Kong International Licensing Show

<http://m.hktdc.com/fair/hklicensingshow-en/>

Knowledge of Design Week

<https://kodw.org/en/>

Useful Contacts

AIA Hong Kong

<http://www.aiahk.org/>

BUD Fund

<https://www.bud.hkpc.org/>

Create Hong Kong

<https://www.createhk.gov.hk/>

Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing

<https://www.hkaim.org/>

Hong Kong Cyberport Management Limited

<https://www.cyberport.hk/en>

Hong Kong Design Centre

<https://www.hkdesigncentre.org/>

Hong Kong Design Institute

<http://www.hkdi.edu.hk/en/>

Hong Kong Designers Association

<http://www.hongkongda.com/>

Hong Kong Institute of Architects

<http://www.hkia.net/en/Home/Index.htm>

Hong Kong Interior Design Association

<http://www.hkida.org/>

Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation

<https://www.hkstp.org/en>

IAB Hong Kong powered by HKDMA

<https://www.iabhongkong.com/>

Innovation and Technology Commission

<https://www.itc.gov.hk/>

PMQ

<http://www.pmq.org.hk/>

Retail Design Institute Hong Kong

<https://retaildesigninstitute.org/retail-design-institute-hong-kong-chapter/#!map>

RIBA Hong Kong

<https://www.architecture.com/my-local-riba/riba-hong-kong-chapter>

Savannah College of Art and Design

<http://scad.edu.hk/>

SME Funding Schemes

<https://www.smefund.tid.gov.hk/eindex.html>

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Digital Agency Sees Hong Kong as Platform for Ideas

Mirum Hong Kong hopes to connect Mainland China and the rest of the world through technology and innovation.



Mirum is one of the world's largest digital agencies and part of the J. Walter Thompson Company and WPP Network. WPP Network acquired Hong Kong-based DesignerCity in 2013 and, two years later, merged it with other agencies to form Mirum, which boasts a network of 46 offices in 20 countries.

The group provides clients around the world with services that come under the umbrellas of "Business Transformation", "Experience Design" and "Commerce Activation", and projects range from product launches and publicity campaigns to creating in-store experiences and digital platform designs.

Win Mak, who founded DesignerCity, is now the CEO of Mirum Hong Kong. He said: "Being connected to the other offices in the network allows us to work together on a more regional and global base. We are able to help other offices to bring clients to Mainland China, and the other way around, we are able to ship our technology out to other parts of the world through Mirum offices."

DesignerCity started out in 1995 as a fashion website and an e-commerce channel in London, UK run by three partners, and by 1999, it had a 40-strong staff and a contract designing and maintaining the e-commerce platform of a major national supermarket chain.

Mak made a decision to move back to his native city of Hong Kong in 2000 to continue developing the company, and by 2011, it had established itself as a pioneering digital agency at the forefront of technology and innovation.

The success, Mak said, may not have been possible had he not made the decision to come back. "In Hong Kong, you always feel this relentless push to move ahead, especially in this sector. If you don't grow, if you don't innovate, if you don't try new ideas, you will put yourself in the past. This is a very high-energy city," he said.

Hong Kong, he added, is also an ideal platform to test new ideas. "Hong Kong companies are brave and they are keen to be the first to try new things. Hong Kong is what I call a prototype market. If seven million people here have used the



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Win Mak
CEO, Mirum Hong Kong

technology, that's a good proof point and we can bring it out to other parts of the world with a business case," Mak said.

Mirum Hong Kong has an experience centre in Central, where clients can get their hands on some of the technology the agency offers, including an LCD table where, through a device resembling a hockey puck, one can change the colour and fabric of a garment and inspect it as a 3D image.

Mirum Hong Kong has a staff of about 130, some of which are fresh graduates who have joined the company after finishing the agency's annual summer internship programme.

Mak sees a bright future for the city. "Hong Kong is a melting pot, and it gives us a very open platform. As long as it keeps this openness to the world, we will be alright," he concluded.

Mirum Hong Kong

- A digital agency at the forefront of technology and innovation
- Operates an experience centre in Central to showcase its latest innovative solutions
- Employs a 130-strong staff with plans to expand

 mirumagency.com/hong-kong

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Hong Kong Based Interior Design and Branding Studio Providing Premium Creative Services across Asia

“There is a huge opportunity for Hong Kong, sitting on the doorstep to many of these rapidly changing markets, to become the de facto capital of design and innovation services for Asia Pacific.”

Rufus Turnbull

Founder and Creative Director, Studio X



Consumer expectations are constantly evolving, and businesses need to keep pace with this change in order to stay ahead in the game. That's the value proposition of Studio X, a boutique interior design and brand experience agency set up by two British entrepreneurs in Hong Kong.

“We have entered a ‘Post-Luxury’ period, and many consumers have begun to reassess how they wish to spend their time and their money and this change in attitude has placed challenges on mall operators, retailers and restaurateurs to come up with fresh ideas in order to attract customers and maintain loyalty,” Rufus Turnbull, Founder and Creative Director explained.

“There is a huge opportunity for Hong Kong, sitting on the doorstep to many of these rapidly changing markets, to become the de facto capital of design and innovation services for Asia Pacific.”

The company was set up in May 2016 and has already managed over 100 projects with a roster of clients that includes several global brands from retailers like IKEA and L'Occitane, Shopping Mall Operators like K11, and are even developing a brand new Co-Working concept for major property developer KWG.

Studio X's focus is to help clients create groundbreaking retail stores, F&B solutions, leisure and entertainment environments, but there is more to its services than meets the eye. One of the company's projects was an invitation-only cinema in Beijing for Canadian firm IMAX, and, along with designing the building and the interior, Studio X also developed a naming strategy and graphical identity. They even designed the staff uniforms and developed a digital ticketing platform to complement the project.

“Our approach is a holistic one, which means we don't just look at things in a decorative way. We look at the business, the consumer; and we are looking at how to bridge the gap between the two,” said Sam Bradley, co-Founder and Project Director.

Turnbull is a trained Product Designer and an expert in brand experience design, while Bradley has had an illustrious career working in interior architecture in London and Asia. They describe Studio X as “innovation-focused”, and its goal is to help clients improve business performance by challenging the status quo.

“The consumer market is changing more quickly than ever before, so that's where we step in. We focus heavily on understanding what consumers want and then we customise our creative approach on each project in order to disrupt and innovate.”

Turnbull and Bradley have a staff of 12 equipped with skills in interior architecture, visualisation, graphic design and digital experience. They plan to grow the headcount to around 20 by the end of 2018.

They also point to Hong Kong's burgeoning startup community as a great source of potential collaborators.

Turnbull and Bradley have been living in Hong Kong for five and six years respectively, and they both find the city to be an enjoyable place to work and live.

“Hong Kong is a really fun city to live in with a great climate, mountains, beaches and low tax, all of which make it easier to attract the best staff,” Turnbull said.

Bradley agreed. “There's the proximity to Asia and the amount of travel you can do within two hours. Once you've been here a few years, it's quite difficult to think about leaving,” he said.

Studio X

- Highly conceptual studio, with a dedicated project delivery and technical team
- Founded in April 2016 and has been commissioned on more than 100 projects
- Specialised in developing retail stores, entertainment spaces and other branded environments
- Looking to increase its staff size from 12 to 20 by the end of 2018

thisisstudiox.com

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