

Jaffa Lam

Jaffa Lam (b. 1973) is a Hong Kong-based artist specialising in large-scale, site-specific, and mixed-media works. She often employs recycled materials, such as wood, stone, old furniture, abandoned metal, and umbrella fabric. For nearly three decades, she's built a community-based practice to explore issues related to local culture, history, society, and current affairs. She deftly highlights the city's disappearing craftsmanship, while fostering the ecosystem of art and the urban environment. Her works provide social commentary and create unique dialogues to allow viewer interaction and collaborative engagement, in addition to activating spaces where multiple voices can be heard.

“What can artists do for society?” This is a constant question that Lam investigates before conceiving artistic concepts. Social engagement has played a significant role in her practice since she started the “Micro Economy” project in 2009, working with women from the Hong Kong Women's Workers' Association. This organisation was formed to protect workers' rights and focus on support for former female garment factory workers who were laid off due to the socio-economic transformation in the early 2000s. Lam migrated to Hong Kong at age twelve, and she worked in various garment factories to help support her family. To create her large-scale umbrella installations, she collaborated with other female workers, stimulating their potential creativities. Lam encourages collective work and her collaborations provide the women with evolved skillsets that they explore together in this new medium. Through her community-oriented practice, she not only creates a vibrant ecosystem within the city but also generates a second life to recycled materials, weaving personal stories in response to societal transformations in flux across generations.

Twenty-five years into her career, Lam's works—driven by her social interactions—are being recognised and re-evaluated in the regional arts scene and beyond. Today, her large-scale installation works are held by some of the world's renowned museums, including The Centre Pompidou (France), M+ Museum (Hong Kong), and He Art Museum (China). However, her community initiatives and socially engaging practices have been widely recognised among scholars since the early 2000s. This recognition has led to invitations to art residencies in various countries such as Japan, France, the U.S.A., Bangladesh, and Kenya, to name a few.

Exhibition history

– selected solo exhibitions

Axel Vervoordt Gallery

2025

Behind the blue, Sea World Culture and Arts Center, Shenzhen, China

2023

Sailing, Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium

2022

Jaffa Lam: Chasing an Elusive Nature, Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Hong Kong

2018

Piu3, Shouson Theatre, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong

2017

Jaffa Lam X Sam Tung Uk, Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong

2015

Looking for my family story, Lumenvisum Gallery, Hong Kong

2013

Jaffa Lam Laam Collaborative: Weaver, Pao Galleries, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong

2011

Micro Economy, RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

2005

Travel with Rickshaw, Alliance Française, Dhaka, Bangladesh

2003

Murmur, Shatin Town Hall, Yuen Long Theatre, Hong Kong

Exhibition history – selected group exhibitions

2025

Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2025, Macao, China

2024

Multiple Future, Ennova Art Biennale. LangFang, China,

Facing Fabrics: Contemporary Textile Exhibition, biennial Textile Festival Ronse, Belgium

Lunar Maria, W. onespace, Shenzhen, China

The City Collection Antwerp: In/Sight, M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium.

A Constellation of Cities: Contemporary Art and Experiment in Southern China and Beyond,

Opening Exhibition of the New Guangdong Museum of Art, China

Closer Together, Pao Galleries, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong

Bridge, Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Wijnegem, Belgium

Axel Vervoordt Gallery

2023

Tales of the South, He Art Museum, Foshan, China

Fuji Textile Week 2023, Fujiyoshida, Japan

2019, Zilberman Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

Green Snake: women-centred ecologies, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong

signals...瞬息: signals...folds and splits', Para Site, Hong Kong

Closer Together, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne

2022

Minding the G(r)a(s)p, Para Site, Hong Kong

Transmission / Transmutation - Seven Hong Kong Teaching Artists, Grotto Fine Art, Hong Kong

31 Women Artists Hong Kong, 10 Chancery Lane, Hong Kong

Ze/Ro, Ben Brown Fine Arts, Hong Kong

2021

Residual Heat, Axel Vervoordt Gallery, Hong Kong

2019-2020

A Beast, A God, And A Line, Para Site, Hong Kong (Traveling exhibition: Kunsthall Trondheim, Norway)

2019

THE heart of SUMMER, The Repulse Bay Historical Gallery, Hong Kong

2019 Kai Hua Temple International Art Festival, Gao Ping, Shang Xi, China.

2018

Heimat - The 2018 Guang'an Field Art Biennale, Wusheng Bao Zhen Sai, Guang An. China.

Fete Des Lumieres, Lyon, France

Hong Kong Arts Centre 40th Anniversary Flagship Exhibition: Wanchai Grammatica: Past, Present, Future Tense, Pao Gallery, Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong

A Beast, A God, And A Line, Para Site, Hong Kong (Traveling exhibition: Pyinsa Rasa Art Space at The Secretariat & Myanna/art Gallery, Yangon; Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Poland)

Manifesta 12, The European Nomadic Biennial, Palermo, Italy

2017

Lumieres Hong Kong, Edinburg Place, Central, Hong Kong.

2016

Art Safietal, Land art festival in Safiental Vallley, Switzerland

Human Vibration Exhibition, Statue Square Gardens, Central, Hong Kong.

Utopias and Heterotopias: The Wuzhen International Contemporary Art, Wuzhen, China.

2015

Morden Weavolution, Hong Gah Museum, Taiwan

Axel Vervoordt Gallery

A New Dynasty-Created in China, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Denmark
In the Name of Art-Hong Kong Contemporary Art Exhibition, Hong Kong Week 2015, MOCA, Taiwan.

China8- Contemporary Art From China, Rhine and Ruhr, Lehmbruck Museum, Germany
Methods of Art, Connecting Space, Hong Kong.

Project Across: Touch Wood, K11 Art Space, Hong Kong.

2014

Fine Art Asia 2014, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong.

2013

Asia Platform in Setouchi Triennale 2013, Fukuda, Shodoshima, Japan

Hong Kong Contemporary Art Awards 2012 Thematic Exhibition, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong

10 day Fest-Social Innovative Festival, Jockey Club Innovation Tower, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

2012

Diverse City, 8Q, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

Blue Wind International Multimedia Art Festival, Yangon, Myanmar

Citizenizing, Vargas Museum, University of Philippines, Manila, The Philippines

Dialogue, Liu Hai Su Art Museum, Shanghai, China

Passing through memory, Suzhou Jinji Lake Art Museum Opening Exhibition, Suzhou, China

2011

Strolling on the Water, Westlake Contemporary Museum, Hang Zhou, China

2010

Butterfly Effect, He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China

Detour, Victoria Prison, Hong Kong

2009

Subvision Art Festival, Hamburg, Germany

Sound Festival, Hong Kong Architecture Centre, Hong Kong

2008

Looking for Antonio Mak, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong

2007

The Tree Museum 10th Anniversary Exhibition, The Tree Museum, Muskoka, Canada

2006

Between Obstruction and Crossover: 2006 International Windbreak Forest Environment Arts Exhibition, Tainan, Taiwan

2005

Hong Kong Art Biennial, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong

2004

Wasanii International Artists' Workshop, Lamu, Kenya

2003

Hualien International Artists' Workshop", Hualien, Taiwan

Hong Kong Art Biennial, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong

2001

Hong Kong Art Biennial, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong

1996

Hong Kong Art Biennial, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong

Awards

2017

Commendation Award, presented by the Secretary of Home Affairs, Hong Kong

2010

40 UNDER 40, Recognising the next generation of design talent 2010, Perspective Magazine, Hong Kong

2009

Honorable Mention, 2009-10 Freeman Foundation Asian Artists' Fellowship

2007

Urban Glass Visiting Artist Fellowship

2006

Asia Cultural Council Fellowship

2002

Awarded artist by the Hong Kong Art Promotion Office for "Artists in Neighbourhood Scheme II"

1997

Winner of International Art Contest (Hong Kong) Award (Mixed Media)

Winner of Hong Kong Creative Paper Works Competition (Mixed Media)

1996

Winner Y.S.Hui Arts Collection Award (Print Making)

Publications

Enid Tsui, *Art in Hong Kong, portrait of a city in flux*, Lund Humphries, Jan 2025.
Institute for Land and Environmental Art: *Landscape #1*, Alps Art Academy, 2019

Chasing an elusive nature, Axel Vervoordt gallery, 2023

Michelle Vosper, *Women in the Arts from China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan*, East Slope Publishing Limited, 2017

Dr. Victor Lai Ming Hoi, *Art in Heritage Research*, Hong Kong

Editor: Chang Tsong-Zung, Serenella Ciclitira, *Hong Kong Eye- Hong Kong Contemporary Art*, Skira, Italy, 2013

Editor: Yeung Yang, *Away from the Crowd*, Soundpocket, Hong Kong, 2013

Caroline Ha Thuc, *Contemporary Art in Hong Kong*, Asia One (Hong Kong) and Nouvelles Editions Scala (France), 2013

Cedric Maridet, *Erasing the visible- Jaffa Lam's Sound Tree*, 2010

Editor: Yeung Yang, *Around*, Soundpocket, Hong Kong, 2010

Editor: Victor Lai Ming-Hoi, *Artists' Studios in Hong Kong*, Vol. 2, Asia One Product & Publishing Ltd, 2008

Selected public collections

China Art Museum, Shanghai (Originally Shanghai Art Museum)
Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong
Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
The Mass Transit Railway, Hong Kong
Hongkong Land, Hong Kong
He Museum, China
New Hall Art Collection, Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge
Rabobank, Hong Kong
K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong
Burger Collection, Hong Kong
M+ Museum, Hong Kong
Centre Pompidou, Paris
Shane Akeroyd Collection, Hong Kong