

above Local artists explore the relationship between music and architecture in *Architecture is... discourse with music*

藝術攸關

今個月香港舉行第一個以建築為主題的藝術節，藝術總監胡恩威希望透過辯論與思考提昇社會的建築意識

撰文：BONNIE PAU 攝影：由進念·二十面體提供

建築是什麼？大家會覺得建築是住的地方、供欣賞的地標、城市發展的手段又或者宣示訊息的圖騰，大部份都是從目標和功利角度理解。但對於《建築是藝術節》藝術總監胡恩威而言，建築肯定而且只可以是藝術。

「現在很多的藝術節都變成上流社會有錢階級的高尚娛樂活動，我想做一個比較學術趣味的藝術節，讓觀眾學習、交流，他們需要主動投入與思考，而不是純粹參與一件盛事的心態。」胡恩威的《香港風格》系列一直深刻地檢討香港建築與城市規劃的發展，今次希望透過《建築是藝術節》繼續反思我們的城市。

進念·二十面體今年成為香港文化中心中的場地伙伴，《建築是藝術節》是進念主辦的香港第一個完全以建築為大主題的大型藝術節，由九月一日至十月十八日將會舉行一連串多媒體劇場、音樂演出、展覽、會議、公開座談及講座，節目分為四部份，提出四大問題：什麼是建築？什麼是中國建築？什麼是城市漫遊？什麼是西九？

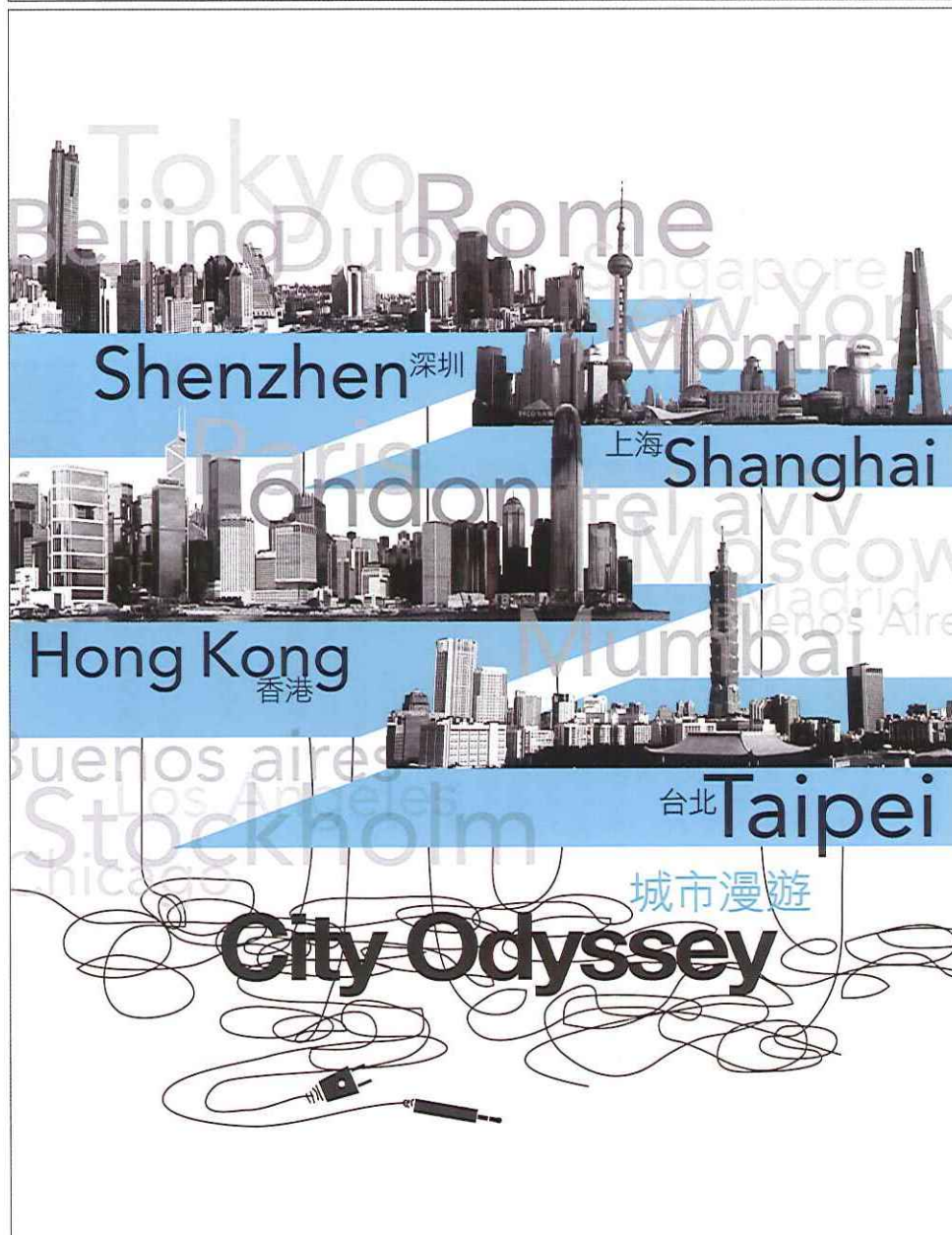
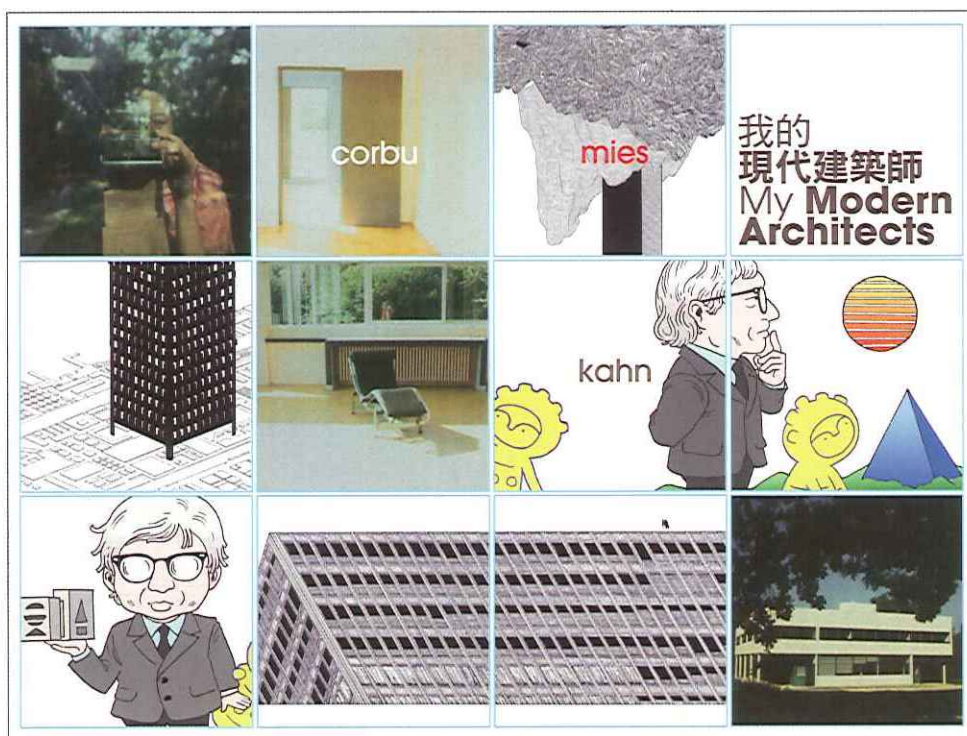
香港人對建築的認識不太深，要了解建築是藝術有一定難度，所以要從直接簡單的問題出發，先解釋建築的定義。胡恩威道：「西方現代主義建築影響我們的居住環境及生活，我們首先從三位建築大師的學說了解建築的意義。」德國現代主義建築師密斯·凡德羅「少即是多」的論點、勒·柯比意實踐理想建築的小房子和路易簡的哲學將會用多媒體演出及音樂形式搬上舞台。

對於怎樣用音樂表現建築思想，胡恩威有一套看法：「空間跟聲音很有關係，哥德式教堂興建時考慮到容納聲音，音樂也跟建築一樣有結構。表達方面，因為地點是劇院、本身也是建築的一部份，我們透過音樂、聲音去衍生活化學作用，讓大家都獨特體驗。」

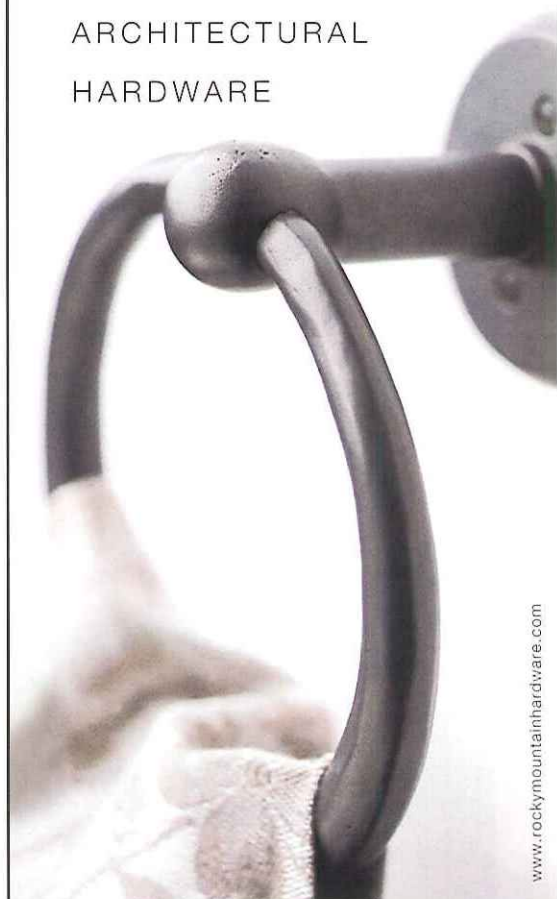
除了讓公眾有學習的機會，今次也邀請大家反思過去數十年來資本主義全球化及地產市場如何扭曲建築的本義。「原因是政府的政策，還有城市中掌握極多資源的精英階層。一個地方的建築反映當地精英的水平，很明顯香港的建築都是用來搵快錢。」

胡恩威甚至認為繼中環匯豐銀行總部及中銀大廈之後，基本上香港沒太多突破性建築：「全都是很平庸、用來炒賣賺錢的建築。」胡恩威一直關心西九龍文娛藝術區的發展，除了著作有關文章之外，2006年更獲得香港特區政府委任為西九龍文娛藝術區核心文化藝術設施諮詢委員會轄下表演藝術及旅遊小組成員。西九是世上最大型的文化建築規劃，理所當然成為第四個要問的問題：什麼是西九？進念社會劇場《東宮西宮八之西九龍珠》用輕鬆的喜劇解構這個問題，回應西九的最新發展。

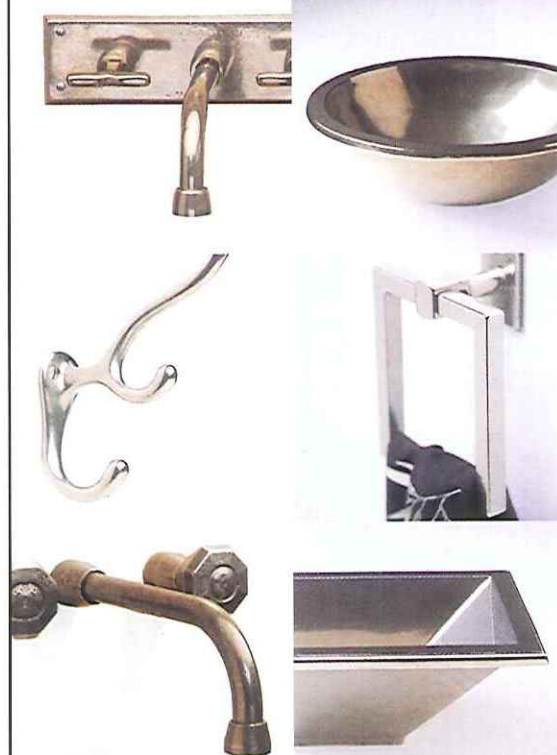
西九計劃多年來的進度有目共睹，胡恩威卻認為大眾不應放棄發聲的機會：「西方國家很多已經利用建築作為公共行政工具，改善管理及行政。很明顯香港政府未能做得到。我們要繼續要當局互相溝通，城市會不斷演變，未來幾十年若果香港人對建築及城市的意識改變，有一個比較強的回響，那麼有些事情是可以改變的。」E



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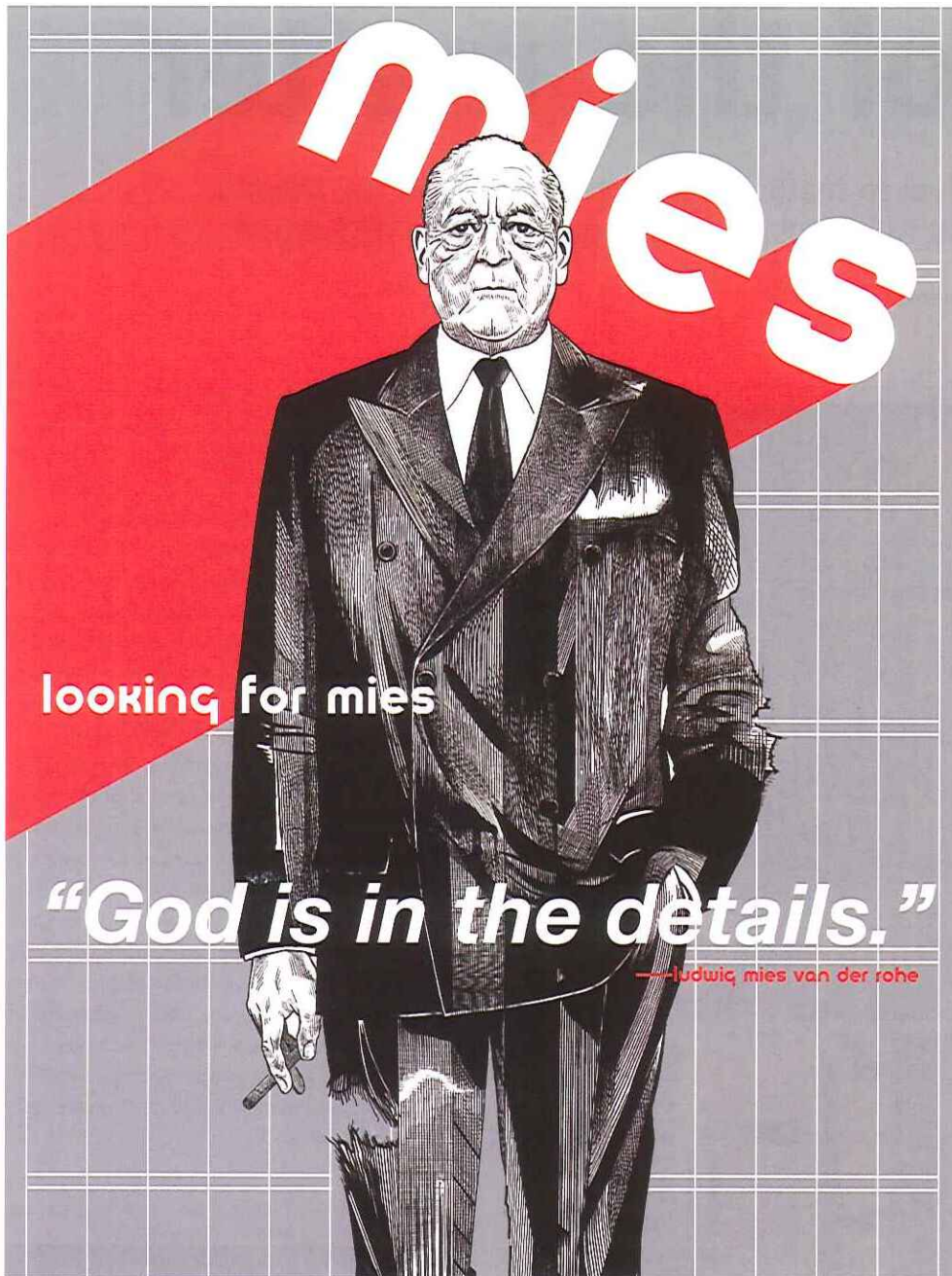


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closewise from top left *Looking for Mies* is a multimedia music performance about the works of German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe • *The Rethinking the Cultural Waterfront* exhibition features proposals on urban planning suggested by students of the department of architecture at the Chinese University • *Corbu and Kahn* is a play built around the ideas of two master architects **opposite page, from top** The festival shares the ideas of three modern architects, trying to define architecture • *City Odyssey* invites electronic music composers from Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taipei and Shenzhen to explore Hong Kong's cityscape with their works

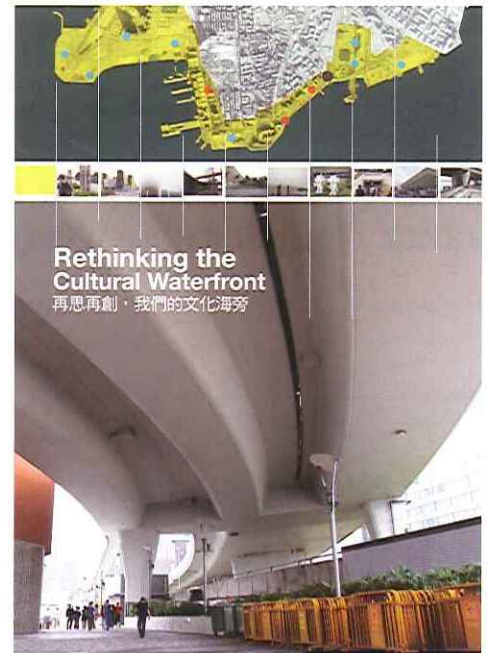
Woo points to the close relationship between architecture and music as another point of thought: "Gothic churches were built to contain sound. Music and architecture share one thing in common — they both possess structures. We perform in a theatre, which is architecture. What we're trying to do is utilise sound and music to produce chemistry, to bring about a unique experience."

Apart from educating, the festival also hopes to encourage audiences to consider how the nature of architecture is distorted by the globalisation of capitalism and the real estate market of the last few decades. "This is very much about government policies and the elite class, who are empowered with abundant resources — these have strong influences on architecture and the urban landscape. If architecture represents the preference of the elite

class in a society, then, apparently, architecture in Hong Kong merely exists for fast monetary returns."

Woo, who feels there has been no architectural progress of note since the design and construction of the HSBC Building in Central, and Bank of China Tower, says: "All we have left are mediocre buildings; commodities for economic benefit."

Appointed by the government of the HKSAR as a member of the Advisory Groups on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) in 2006, it comes as little surprise that Woo selected the WKCD as one of the four pillars of the festival. Through *West Kowloon Dragon Ball*, a comedy discussing the latest development of WKCD, he explores the district's significance as one of the largest cultural projects in the world.



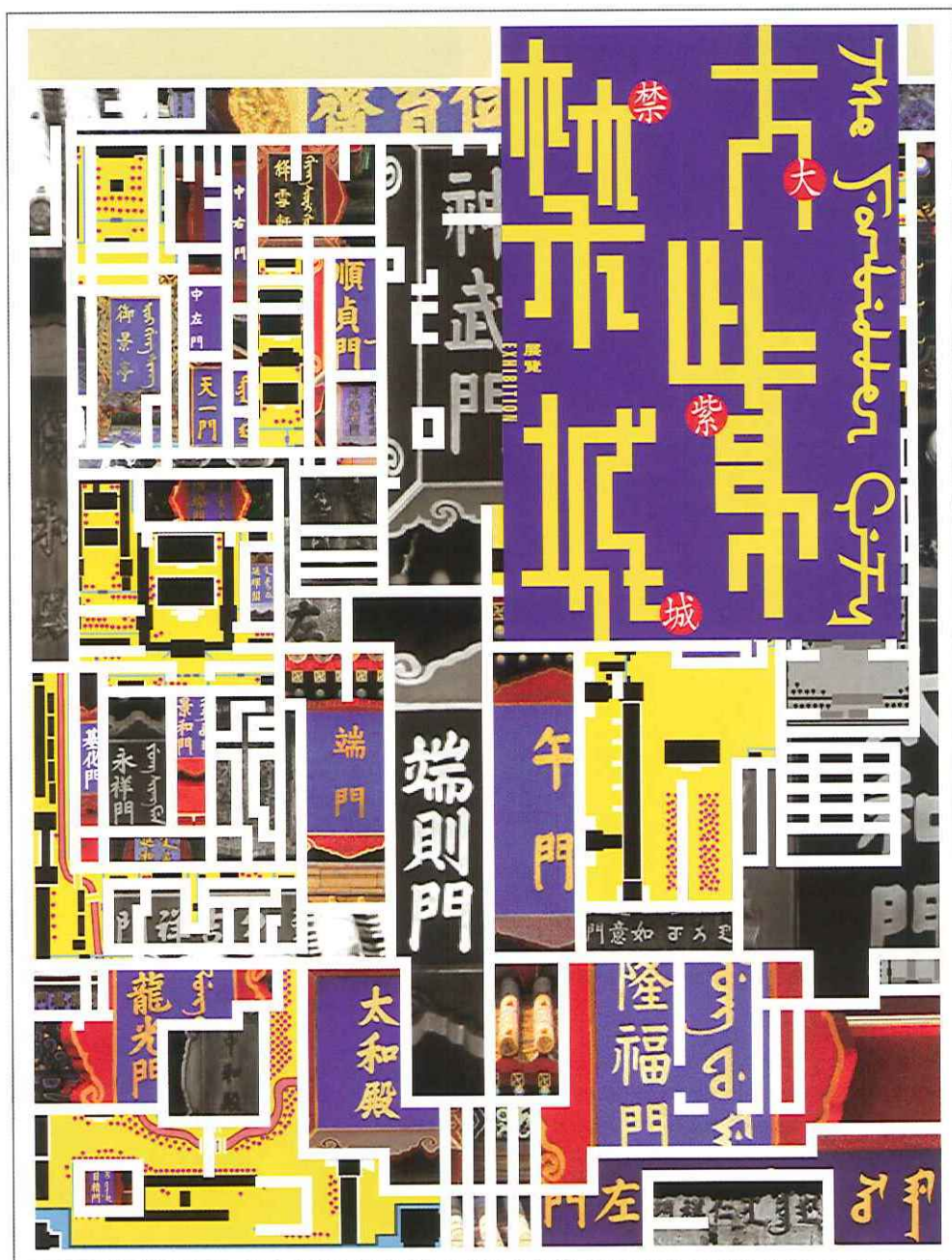
When asked about the progress of the WKCD project, Woo says: "Architecture is considered an essential tool of public administration in the West, where governments utilise architecture to improve public governance. Our government has failed to do the same, but a continuous effort should be made by the public to interact with the authorities. Our city is evolving and Hong Kong people may develop a better understanding of their architecture and urban planning in the coming decades. Improvements can be made with stronger reactions from us."



The art of the matter

In Hong Kong's first-ever art festival to feature architecture as its central theme, artistic director Mathias Woo aims to stimulate debate and provoke discussion

TEXT: BONNIE PAU PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF ZUNI ICOSAHDRON



Presented by Zuni Icosahedron, one of Hong Kong's premiere alternative theatre and multi-media performance groups, the Architecture is Art Festival is Hong Kong's first-ever comprehensive local art festival with architecture as its central theme. Running from September 1 to October 18 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, an array of programmes, including theatrical and music performances, exhibitions, seminars, lectures and conferences, are structured around four questions: What is architecture? What is Chinese architecture? What is City Odyssey? What is West Kowloon?

Promoting a better understanding of architecture as a form of art among the general public is not without its challenges. In this sense, Woo began by asking the fundamental question — what is architecture? "Our way of living is very much shaped by Modernist architecture. We selected three great architects, trying to define architecture with their ideas," he says. Under this umbrella concept, German architect Ludwig Mies van de Rohe's philosophy of "less is more", Le Corbusier's belief that "a house is a machine for living in", and Louis I Kahn's architectural theories are presented in the form of multi-media music performances.

below and left in the Forbidden City show, audiences are led into the world of Chinese architecture, history and culture



What is the ultimate nature of architecture?

For most people, it might be a place to inhabit, a landmark to appreciate, a way to develop a metropolis or even a medium through which to make a statement — all of which very much defines architecture in terms of its purpose and function. But for Mathias Woo, artistic director of the Architecture is Art Festival, the answer is obvious.

"Art festivals have become more like high-class entertainment for the wealthy. We want to encourage learning and an exchange of thoughts through intellectually-entertaining programmes, to invite audiences to participate and engage," says Woo, who is also the author of *HK Style*, a series of thought-provoking publications documenting the evolution of local architecture and urban planning.