



a believer of her art

IN BETWEEN MANAGING ASIAN ART OPTIONS AND CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE FOR ART ITSELF, AUDREY PHNG SPILLS THE BEANS ON THE THINGS THAT MAKE HER WORLD GO ROUND.

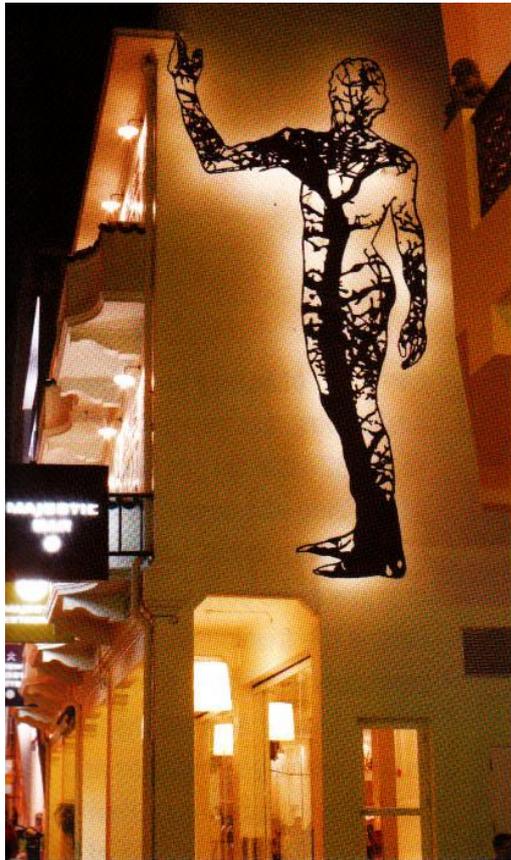


If you're an art enthusiast or emerging artist, the name Audrey Phng might ring a bell. Despite having only joined her American friend and Asian Art Options founder Claudia Cellini six years ago, she has successfully made her mark in the arts scene. Not that she was any less creative before, having dabbled in fashion, lifestyle and journalism after obtaining her Master's Degree from New York University. But like many, the articulate lady eventually found her calling in a passion that had been brewing inside her all those years.

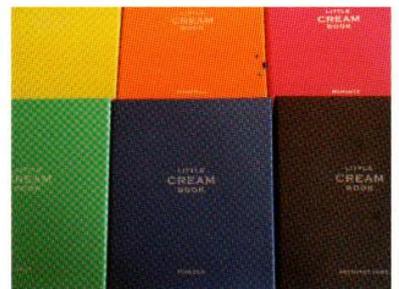
"I always believe that people will somehow find their way back into doing what they want to do. I know many people who were doctors or lawyers before, but now own galleries. Some even give up their careers to pursue their dreams," Phng says. "Art to me is something priceless, intangible... soulful. For an individual it could be personal, but collectively, it defines a country." Given the time, she would resume painting like she used to in her childhood days, believing that art and art appreciation are both nurturing and therapeutic.

Phng enjoys being able to contribute to the arts scene and manage the careers of emerging artists. Although there are too many under the stable of Asian Art Options to name, there is a certain contemporary feel to their art that links them. Phng says, "As an art consultancy, we work backwards and understand what our clients' needs are and advise them accordingly as to what kind of artwork best suits their profile. We do need breadth when it comes to artists and part of why I love my business is that there is no right or wrong in art."

With more consultancies springing up, there is little Phng can do to prevent it. But on occasions where she feels there are better options, she will be quick to point it out. "I believe in open collaborations, so there's no reason not to include another art consultant, as long as there's an understanding of where we're coming from and our role in delivering the best service for our clients. In fact, I'm constantly learning something new – it is this quest for knowledge that keeps me going."



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In the nine years that Asian Art Options has been around, a lot has been achieved for the relatively small company. Phng shares, “At first we were more focused on corporate work, but we’ve grown to include private collectors. We work with interior design and architecture firms too, finding suitable artwork for show flats and client’s homes.”

One of her biggest clients is SingTel, a company that has often incorporated art into its corporate branding. Same goes with Marina Mandarin, where Phng is responsible for crafting the artist-in-residence program, while Majestic Hotel is one of her all-time favourites. “Working on the Majestic Hotel and Bar was by far, one of the most interesting projects. Very often, art consultants are brought in last but with the Majestic, we were there from day one, so it took a year and a half. Often, the architects and interior designers would have set the tone, but here we were, working hand-in-hand with them and nine emerging artists, coming up with ideas and artworks. We got to create site-specific work, resulting in a mural or hanging sculpture for each room.”

Despite her accomplishments, Phng is clearly not one to rest on her laurels, choosing to dedicate what’s left of her little free time to an interesting project called The Little Cream

Book. “I’m working with a publisher on a series of luxury travel guides where each book has its own theme. Cool destinations will have the A to Z of must-visit places worldwide, same goes with golf, romance, goodwill, powder, cool drives and architecture. The one I’m currently working on is based on the theme of inspiration and who better to talk about it than artists? We’re working with a group of international artists and finding out how different spaces inspire them.”

When she’s not working, Phng’s life revolves around her two Basset Hounds, Toto and Mojo. Otherwise, she’s busy with finishing touches and moving into her new home that she says “took 10,000 years to complete!” “It’s a painful but gratifying project, crafted for my husband and I and the art that we plan to put in. It has brass and copper roofs that wrap around, copper fixtures that are very organic, and this giant 10-metre slanting wall,” she says. Phng is one lucky lady indeed, considering she’s doing what she loves and living her dream. “Sometimes I take a step back and think what I’d rather be doing...and actually, my answer is still this,” she says. “Maybe minus the dramas,” she quickly adds with a laugh. “But this. And not many people can say that.” ■