

**Master thesis 2015**  
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**Hong Kong in Belgium**

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# **HONG KONG IN BELGIUM**

**How a different culture and its environment can  
be sold in Belgium.**

## **MASTER THESIS**

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HASSELT UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND ARTS  
2014 - 2015

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# PREFACE

The first words of my thesis I would like to dedicate to those who have supported me during the project, even when I was 10.000 kilometres away from them. First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Katelijn Quartier for her honest advise and feedback throughout the research project.

Secondly I would like to thank Philippe Swartenbroux, for the numerous tutorials, clever suggestions and motivating inspirations. Many thanks for letting me see that the solution was often right in front of me.

Furthermore I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to go to Hong Kong in the first place, as well as my friends who showed me the city and the outlying island, as if I were a local. Also many thanks to those who helped me make my trip abroad a whole new experience.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Even from the times before Marco Polo travelled and documented his travels to Asia, there has been an interest in other unknown countries to write about it and to show others the interesting and different customs from those cultures. Even now, times have not changed. Although it might have become easier with new technologies and social media, you can still ask yourself the question of what do you really know of other cultures? As I wanted to see how one can (re)create the feeling of another country's culture and surroundings, I have chosen to study the culture and environment of Hong Kong to see how I can bring this experience to my home country Belgium.

To do so I have discussed different aspects of the culture in Hong Kong and everything that goes with it, from my own experience. I examined and analysed distinct differences with Belgium, concerning the lifestyle, environment, behaviour, shopping experiences and Cantonese cuisine. Additionally I researched cases that previously have brought another culture or country to Belgium.

As a result I have created a store and restaurant, which sells brands from Hong Kong that follow the Hong Kong mind set, and which reflect the distinct culture and environment of Hong Kong. As I did not want to recreate the city literally, I have used metaphors and representations to refer to particular differences or striking elements from said culture. The result is a retail design concept in which the lifestyle and atmosphere of Hong Kong are portrayed.



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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Europeans have always been interested in Asia: the exotic, the unknown and the mysterious attracted merchants even before the times of Marco Polo. Today, it is still a vibrant and interesting period to discover Hong Kong, with the Umbrella Movement still going on. As I studied abroad for four months, I experienced the different culture and environment of Hong Kong. While spending time here, I found the city to be inspiring and fascinating and I wanted it to take it home with me. I wanted to sell Hong Kong to Belgians and take them on a journey to share the vibrant culture and show them how remarkable the city really is.

With this research I want to come closer to finding a way to make Belgians fond of Hong Kong and its products, through visiting the store. In order to do this I studied Hong Kong and its culture as a potential 'product' to sell in Belgium. To understand the city better, I started with an introduction to Hong Kong of how it once came to be and why it is such an interesting environment. I've done research on the lifestyle in Hong Kong, the shopping behaviour of such a crowded city, the delicious food, the different restaurants and other eating habits within the culture to tell the story of Hong Kong and to get an understanding of the distinct differences with Belgium. I've described the day-to-day elements that make Hong Kong to what it is.

To get to know the Hong Kong brands and to see how they are portrayed in-store, I've done several case studies while I was abroad. I've also done case studies in Belgium to find out how a different culture can be displayed in Belgium and to see how I can use this knowledge to create a better experience of Hong Kong in Belgium without literally recreating the city. Since the research and designing process are so much intertwined, I have **HIGHLIGHTED** several ideas that I used in my design project.

With this research and information combined I've found a way to interest Belgians in the different culture and environment of Hong Kong, by creating a store and restaurant that reflect the characteristics of the city and its culture.

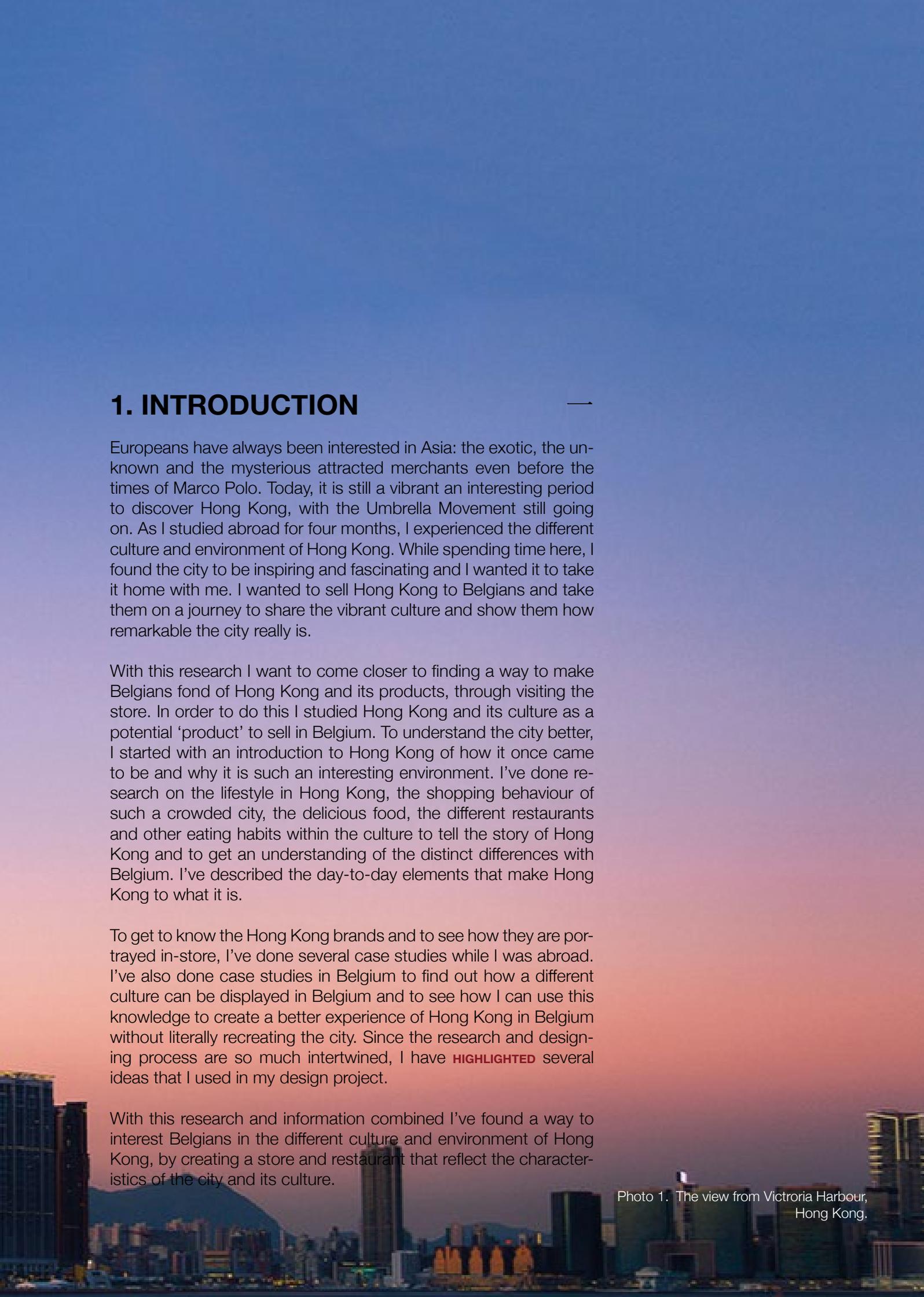


Photo 1. The view from Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong.



## 2. ABOUT HONG KONG

二



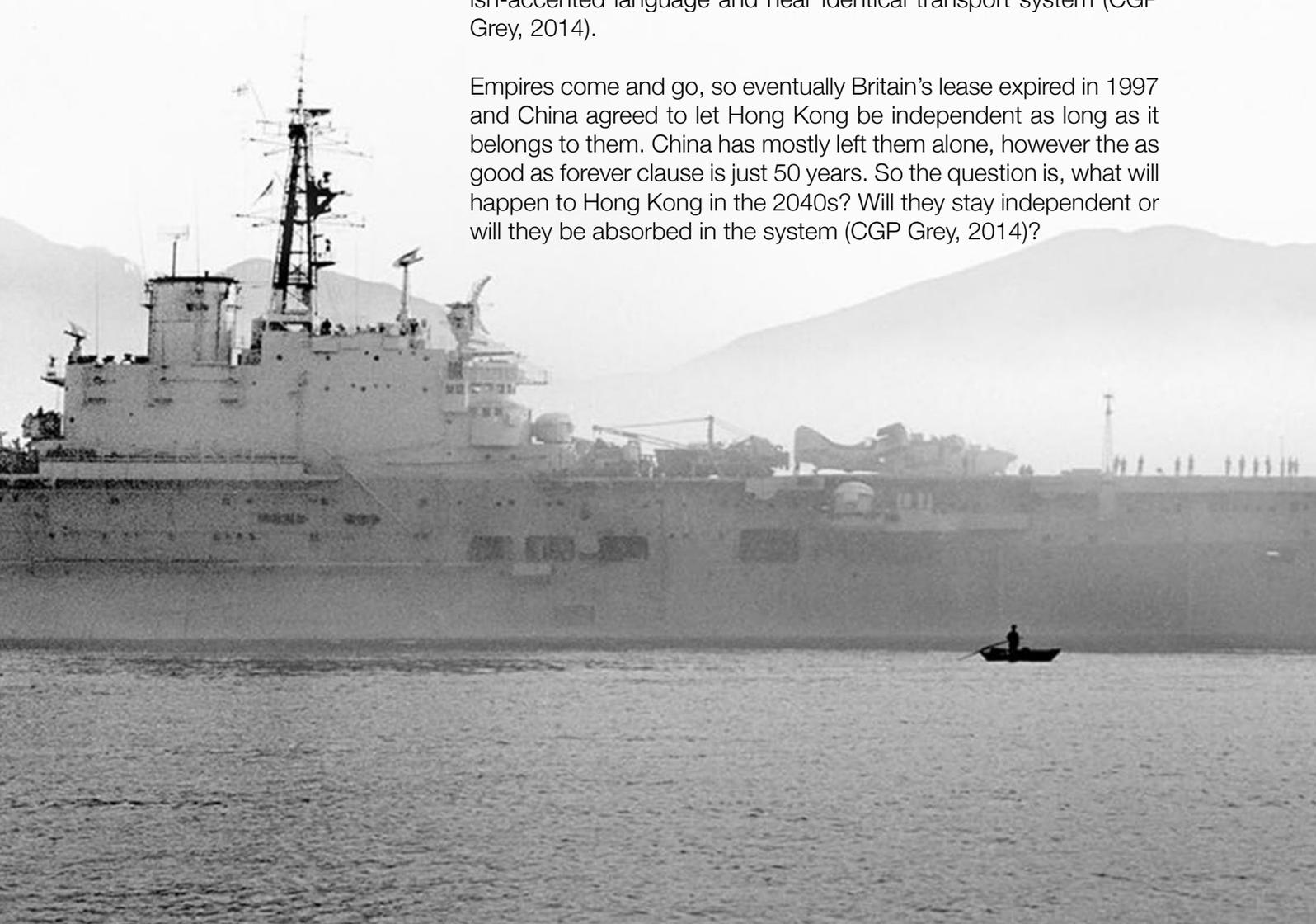
Photo 2. Waterfront by Fan Ho, 1965.

## 2.1. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

While Hong Kong is China, it doesn't act like it. Hong Kong has its own immigration policy, so you can't just walk in and out of China, Macau and Hong Kong. This applies to everyone, Hong Kongese can't just live in Mainland China and Mainland Chinese can't just live in Hong Kong, yet it is all China. Next to the inconvenient travel, as you need stamps or a visa to cross each border, they also have their own separate governments and political parties, separate police, separate currency, separate postal system, separate schools and languages. Hong Kong even has its own Olympic team. This all makes Hong Kong the most country-like country that isn't a country. So how come Hong Kong is China? 'Cause China says so. It's called one country, two systems (CGP Grey, 2014).

In 1839, the refusal of the Chinese authorities to support opium imports, caused the outbreak of the First Opium War between Britain and China. By defeating China, British forces occupied Hong Kong Island and established a crown colony in 1842. In 1898, Britain obtained a 99-year lease from China, to expand Hong Kong with the New Territories, Lantau Island and other outlying islands (Wikipedia, n.d.). With this, Hong Kong grew under the British civil laws to a flourishing harbour and finance centre. This influence is still seen today, with its love for business, international finances, British-accented language and near identical transport system (CGP Grey, 2014).

Empires come and go, so eventually Britain's lease expired in 1997 and China agreed to let Hong Kong be independent as long as it belongs to them. China has mostly left them alone, however the as good as forever clause is just 50 years. So the question is, what will happen to Hong Kong in the 2040s? Will they stay independent or will they be absorbed in the system (CGP Grey, 2014)?



## 2.2. Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a world city and has developed into the third most important **FINANCIAL** centre in the world. The economy, characterised by its low taxation, has been ranked as the world's freest economy in the Index of Economic Freedom of Heritage Foundation for twenty consecutive years, since the start in 1995 (The Heritage Foundation, 2015). With seven million people and limited flat land, Hong Kong is one of the **DENSEST CITIES** in the world. It has an average of 6.544 people per km<sup>2</sup> and even 55.204 people per km<sup>2</sup> in the Kwun Tong district, which is about 11km<sup>2</sup> (Census and Statistics Department, 2011). That is why the city has earned the title of the world's most **VERTICAL CITY** and is a centre of modern architecture, even with designs from Zaha Hadid, I.M. Pei and from 2017 on Herzog & de Meuron.

What makes shopping so interesting in Hong Kong? There are seven million local citizens and 54 million tourists each year (Tourism Commission, 2013), who come here primarily to shop. Hong Kong has no sales tax, which is the main reason that people all over Asia come to Hong Kong to shop. They feel like they are getting a bargain.

Hong Kong streets produce a **GREAT SHOPPING EXPERIENCE**. You can find everything in this city, from the cheap stuff to the high end. You can buy the highest of the high and the lowest of the low. In between the thousands of people, you will find a stimulating energy you can't find anywhere else.



Photo 3. East meets west, Victoria Harbour, Fan Ho, 1963.



### 3. HONG KONG RESEARCH



Photo 4. Hong Kong skyline.



### 3.1. Hong Kong ≠ China

Most European people think Hong Kong is the same as China. In a way it is, but in reality it couldn't be more different. Hong Kong is a gateway to Asia, as it is fairly westernised. But it mostly shows a mixture of the Eastern and Western cultures, which creates a **CULTURE ON ITS OWN**. Here are some examples to create a better picture.

#### Behaviour

Signs with 'no spitting' and 'no live poultry' are very common in MTR-stations (Mass Transit Railway or metro), as mainlanders do these things. The internet is full with articles about bad behaving Chinese tourists. Some examples: they have tendency not to flush the toilet, ignoring traffic laws while driving a car or riding a bicycle, being loud, littering, spitting and cutting queues (Li, 2013). According to Li (2013) this is because of the lack of education, as uneducated tourists disregard local customs and rules. Their knowledge of the destination country is often out-dated or non-existent.

The first section of the IKEA showroom is sofas and lounge chairs. Mainlanders aren't afraid to relax on a lounge chair or take a nap on one of the beds or mattresses. In fact, in China the IKEA store management doesn't discourage shoppers from sleeping on the showroom furniture as this shows how great and relaxing their furniture really is (www.telegraph.co.uk, n.d.). But this behaviour isn't encouraged in Hong Kong branches so they might come across

Photo 5. Chinese customers take a rest.



rude and uncultured. At the beginning of April 2015, this came in the news again, as managers try to ban this behaviour from IKEA, as it is disturbing to people who really want to shop.

Another **DIFFERENCE** between Hong Kongers and mainlanders, which is shown through IKEA, is the language. In December 2013, IKEA started selling a children's toy based on the wolf from Little Red Riding Hood to raise money for education in developing countries (Yip, 2013). The toy was called Lufsig, Swedish for clumsy, but was translated to 路姆西, which sounds perfectly normal in Mandarin, but in Cantonese it sounds as – to put it politely – an obscene three word phrase associated with a mother's genitalia (McBain, 2013). This mistake went viral after two protesters threw the stuffed toy at Hong Kong's Chief Executive CY Leung, nicknamed the wolf (McBain, 2013). This could be interpreted as 'throw a Lufsig at you', which in Cantonese sounds like 'f\*\*\* your mother's vagina' (Yip, 2013).

### **Made in China vs. Made in Hong Kong**

Because consumers often think Hong Kong is the same as China, they could link the 'Made in China' products to the '**MADE IN HONG KONG**' products. Everyone is familiar with the typical 'Made in China' items, created with poor quality plastic in factories with underpaid employees. But Hong Kong is quite the opposite. Most Hong Kong based brands are usually handcrafted, innovative, original and have high quality. These brands are ethically made and have some sort of exclusivity, as it is limited or unique every time. It might be a bit more expensive, but you get better quality in return.

Photo 6. Leung meets Lufsig, the toy mocked him with his reputation as a 'wolf'.



## 3.2. Liffestyle in Hong Kong

The lifestyle in Hong Kong is significantly different as that from Belgium. The city is very **CLEAN** and tidy. There aren't a lot of smokers and those who do, wait near a garbage bin to throw their cigarette butt away. In the morning, people hand out free English and Cantonese newspapers near MTR stations. In other MTR stations people collect those read newspapers to recycle them. When a person walks his dog, he usually carries a bottle of water to wash the dog's pee away.

Besides being clean, Hong Kong is also peaceful and nonviolent. This is translated in their behaviour, for example pro-democracy supporters started a boycott of classes, as they demanded that China should allow fully democratic elections in 2017 (Chiu & Chan, 2014). Supporters occupied Central and other areas with a non-violent protest (Chiu & Chan, 2014). In other countries people would react with violence. Even in Belgium there are protests that end with violence, where cars are set on fire and people injured (The Guardian, 2014). As a sign of peacefulness student protesters pick up litter to recycle it. Students even do their homework while **PROTESTING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT** (Popovic & Porell, 2014).

Besides being friendly and honest, citizens are also orderly and disciplined as Hong Kong once belonged to Great Britain (Gargan, 1997). At bus stops and MTR stations applies the first come, first served principle. People line up in a queue to wait and enter the double-decker bus. During rush hour you will find enormous

Photo 7. People queue up to wait for the bus.



queues for dozens of busses. As the same as they do in London, on escalators people stand on the right and walk on the left. But if someone doesn't do this, in Hong Kong people will stay silent as opposed to London where they will shout at you.

Sometimes you'll see older people strolling around with carts with recycled materials, and trying to get it on the MTR. Some delivery services make use of the MTR to deliver post and packages to get faster to **CROWDED** neighbourhoods.

On Sunday you can better stay at home than go to public spaces. Filipino women work in Hong Kong as nanny or domestic worker and Sunday is their day off (Kuo, 2014). They use this day to socialize with their friends, to eat and take selfies all day long. From 7AM they take over the streets, sidewalks, stairs and parks of Hong Kong with cardboard sheets or blankets to sit there all day. If you know that there are more than 300.000 foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong (Kuo, 2014), then you can imagine that streets are even more crowded as usual.

On Friday and Saturday night it can be crowded in Lan Kwai Fong, the going-out area, as well. Streets are filled with people, as bars and disco's charge an entrance fee or have high priced drinks. Beers and other simple alcoholic drinks can be around HK\$50 to 80 ( $\pm$  €5-8), that is why most people stay outside on the street and buy cheap drinks at 7/11. Or people take a taxi to Wan Chai, drink something cheaper and afterwards go back to LKF to enter a bar without an entrance fee, because taking two taxis and drinking somewhere else is still cheaper than drinking something inside one of the expensive bars at LKF.

Photo 8. Filipino women in Hong Kong.



In Asia there are different beauty standards as in the USA or Europe (Off the Great Wall, 2014). It is normal for a man to carry a bag or even to carry their girlfriend's purse, while in other countries people might find this feminine, unmanly or even 'whipped' (Eikenburg, 2014). Another interesting trend you can find in Hong Kong are the matched outfits. This trend originates from South Korea, where affection isn't shown in public (Wang, 2014). Couples adapt their outfits to match with each other, so the public can notice that they belong together.

The typical Hong Kong skyline shows you how locals in the city live. The average person lives in a small but expensive apartment in one of the **HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDINGS** (Wilson, n.d.), that they often share with their family. The lower stories are usually for commercial purposes and the above levels are rented out to tenants. But you can easily find a restaurant on the 18th floor of a commercial building. The rooftops of building aren't really used in Hong Kong. Locals don't spend time outside, they are used to sitting inside with the air-conditioning on. Even if it is autumn or spring, they'll go inside. Which is unusual in comparison to Belgium, where people grab a drink on a terrace on the first sunny day of the year. Although you can find non-locals on some rooftops, as they do notice the beauty and peacefulness on the rooftop while looking down on the beautiful lights of Hong Kong.

Photo 9. Hong Kong night view by Michael Wolf.



### 3.3. Shopping behaviour in Hong Kong

#### 3.3.1. Example IKEA

The Hong Kong shopping behaviour differs from that from Belgium. One of the best ways to notice this is from the internationally known IKEA. Because of the different culture and environment, IKEA is designed differently as what we are used to in Belgium. Starting with the location. IKEA had three branches in Hong Kong, but I will focus on the store located in one of the most expensive shopping areas in the world: Causeway Bay ([www.cushmanwakefield.be](http://www.cushmanwakefield.be), 2014). With bus stops for ten minibuses and 71 buses, an MTR-stop and a taxi stand just around the corner, it is easy to reach by public transport ([www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com), n.d.) as opposed to Belgian stores, where you need your own car to reach the store. If needed, it is possible to reach IKEA Causeway Bay by car via a highway nearby and a private paid parking garage is located underneath the building.

IKEA is open daily, from Monday to Sunday, from 10.30AM until 10.30PM ([www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com), n.d.). Which is quite normal in Hong Kong as most shops open around noon and close around midnight and are open seven days a week.

The shop is located on the Upper Basement, underneath the Parklane Hotel ([www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com), n.d.), which means you need to take the escalator down to enter the store. At that point you can enter the showroom or grab a quick bite at the bistro. There is no restaurant so this is the only possibility to eat something at IKEA Cause-

Photo 10. IKEA at Causeway Bay.  
Photo 11. Queue at the bistro.



way Bay. It is a small bistro similar to those found near the exit at a Belgian IKEA. Which make sense, as this is also the store's exit. They sell the same Swedish meatballs and classic hotdogs with a soft drink for HK\$10 ( $\pm$  €1) which you can personalize yourself with sauces or refill your cup with coke. The bistro functions in an other manner as those in Belgium. People start to line up in long queues, something you'll see everywhere in Hong Kong, even at bus stops. After you place your order, you'll receive a ticket that you can exchange at the corresponding counter for your snack. Then you need to move **QUICKLY** to the sauces- and soda-machines, as people are starting to queue up after you. As almost every place in Hong Kong, this space is small and crowded. There is almost no space to eat your snack and therefore a lot of people take their meatballs to go. There is no Småland (childcare) at this store.

Next up: the showroom. At first sight there are no major differences with the known Belgian showrooms. Most changes are subtle, such as the area of the showcased rooms. They are smaller because the lesser square metres of living space from the average Hongkonger. The shortcuts on the route aren't marked, despite that they are there. After the showroom, you are required to take the one-way escalator down to the market hall. There is no way back unless you can find the hidden elevator or staircase. After the market hall, we are used to see a high warehouse where we need to get our own packages. In Hong Kong there is no such warehouse to be found, as this would be too expensive. At most you will find three or four aisles with some shelves and chairs. These aisles are 2,5 metres high, if not less. There is a possibility to order large products, such as beds, sofas or tables at an information counter near the 'warehouse'. They will deliver it to your house, even if it's



Photo 12. The one-way escalators divided by textured glass.

Photo 13. Stock at IKEA.



18 stories up, and assemble it for a small fee. The only downside is, that this may take a few days, as almost everyone needs to get it delivered. Following the checkout is a small Swedish Food Market where you can buy your usual Swedish foods. There are some tables where you can pack and prepare your newly bought items so you can carry it around the streets of Hong Kong. On the shelves in the tables you will find rope, tape and handles so you can transport it easily, painless and car free to your home. Just take the one-way escalator up to arrive at the bistro and go home.

Because of limited space and the possibility to deliver every item, IKEA is also focussing on the online shopping experience. The on-line shop is efficiently organised, so you can even buy separate rice- or teacups. There is also a different online shop for Macau, since Hong Kong has the nearest IKEA stores ([www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com), n.d.).

To conclude, IKEA in Hong Kong differs from the stores in Europe. IKEA responds to a different behaviour in Hong Kong by adjusting their strategy. Their **DISTINCTIVE LOCATION**, within a shopping mall creates more consumer traffic ([www.ukessays.com](http://www.ukessays.com), 2013) and responds to a lifestyle where only 8% of the population are car owners (Luk-ki & Woo, 2012). It is adapted to a different, more crowded environment. IKEA still offers the possibility to take the furniture home by yourself, even without a car, by providing rope, handles and tape. The business strategy in the bistro, the queues, the extreme use of the racetrack layout and the opening hours are examples of the fast pace and great efficiency that is demanded in the Hong Kong society. Even the global standardization is adapted to Hong Kong by adjusting the size of the beds to 190cm instead

Photo 14. IKEA delivery truck.



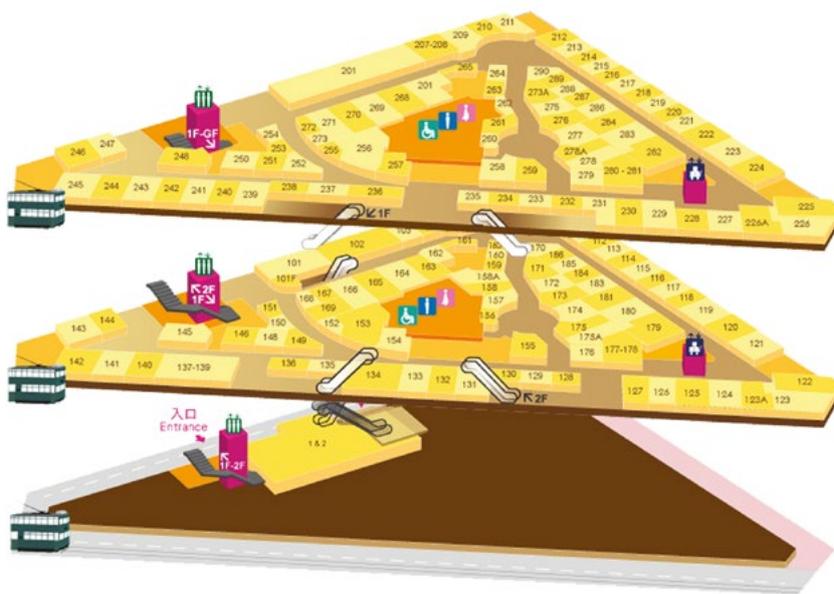
of 200cm (Burt, Johansson & Thelander, 2008).

### 3.3.2. Example *free size* shops

At Causeway Bay there are multiple shopping malls with only local boutiques. Such as Island Beverly Center, Laforet and Causeway Place, each with about hundred 'different' shops. These shops open around 2PM or 3PM and close around midnight, there is no opening or closing time set. They choose their own closing day if they even have one. All these shops are tiny; maybe ten square metres if not less. They all sell clothes with additionally shoes or accessories, but every shop has its own style so you can notice to what demographic it is targeted. From hipsters to classy women, you can find everything within these malls. Mainly women can find what they want here, as there aren't many male clothing shops here. From the moment you walk in or even take a glance at the shop window, a shop assistant will approach you to show you an item or let you try on a coat. Other items than coats or jackets aren't allowed to be fitted in the shop. This is why there isn't a fitting room to be found in these shops. Often it's one size fits all or free size because a lot of Asians fit in the same size. The *free size* stores don't allow any returns after purchase. There aren't any price tags on the items, so you always need to ask for the price. This way shops can charge more to foreigners or non-Cantonese speaking people. In general the prices aren't expensive. So it is cheap versus free size, no fitting and no return. It just depends on where your priorities lie.

When you're finished shopping in one of these malls, you can start searching for the exit. The malls aren't created in a logical grid, but with a corner here and there. So the exit is often tucked away in some corner. There are usually three or more floors and the escalators aren't built above each other. It is no exception to find yourself

Photo 15. Floor plan of Causeway Place.  
Photo 16. One of the many *free size* shops at La Foret.



looking for the exit and cross the same shop three times. In my experience, I find that Hong Kong people are usually very **FASHIONABLE** and enjoy having multiple outfits. The shops show that the quantity of options to choose from is more important than the quality. As fashion changes, it might be easier to change your style if the clothes you're buying are cheaper. As these malls target young people, who are usually on a budget, enjoy having a lot of outfits or change their style, such as students, bloggers or young women.



Photo 17. Carrefour products at Market Place in Hong Kong.

Photo 18. Fa Yuen wet market.

### 3.3.3. Other examples

In addition to the regular supermarket, there are wet markets as well, often located in a separate part of a shopping mall or by itself as a covered market. Here you can find fresh products such as fish, meat and vegetables underneath industrial lighting. Those within a shopping mall also have some small chaotic shops that sell almost everything. These markets are in cold, wet warehouses where the salesperson only speaks Cantonese. In comparison to the modern supermarkets, these spaces feel authentic and honest. Hong Kong has the opposite as well: luxurious supermarkets, like Market Place. Here you can find expensive foreign products, such as the Carrefour brand. As a Belgian, you'll get the strangest sense of humour and nostalgia at the sight of a shelf of French Carrefour products in a luxury supermarket at the other side of the world.

A strange phenomenon in Hong Kong is that shops are grouped together in an **EXTREME** way. You'll find streets with shops that all sell the same thing. Consumers go to that area knowing that they will have many choices of that same product, so this targeted consumer traffic attracts more business for the shops (Ron T., 2015).



In Mong Kok you have Sneaker Street, with only stores that sell sneakers ([www.sneaker-street.hk](http://www.sneaker-street.hk), n.d.). There are shops with multiple brands and flagship stores, such as Nike. There are six different Nike stores on the same street of 300 metres ([www.nike.com](http://www.nike.com), n.d.). The same occurs on Cat Street where antiques are sold, Ko Shing Street where shops sell traditional Chinese medicine and Tung Choi Street North where you'll only find goldfish shops ([www.discoverhongkong.com](http://www.discoverhongkong.com), n.d.).

All over Hong Kong shops open before or around noon and close around midnight. Only large retailers and supermarkets open earlier. So if you haven't found that one item you need by closing time, you can start looking online. Rent for retail property is very high in Hong Kong ([www.cnbc.com](http://www.cnbc.com), 2014) so many freelancers, often DIYers, start selling their items **ONLINE** on Instagram and Whatsapp. The Instagram-shops like photos with the hashtag #hkig, #hk or #hongkong, this way they sell to the people of Hong Kong and gain free advertisement. They usually follow a lot of people, so the followed person might subscribe to them as well. #like4like. The shops share their products on Instagram with information about the price, materials and WhatsApp number so they can contact them for an order. Another way to shop online is taobao.com, one of the largest e-commerce website in the world (Xu, 2014). This website sells everything, from cheap fashion to boyfriends (Xu, 2014). The only downside is that the shop isn't available in English and it doesn't ship outside of mainland China. But for every problem is a solution, so taobao-agents were created. These agents are located in China so you can send your order to them and they'll order it for you. When the package arrives at their location they will check it and send it directly to you, and all this for a small fee ([www.yoybuy.com](http://www.yoybuy.com), n.d.).

Photo 19. Ko Shing street.



### 3.3.4. Influence from mainland China

There is an influence from tourists and shoppers from mainland China that is noticeable. Almost every grocery store sells baby milk powder, so mainlanders can import it to China for personal use (Rimmele, 2013). In 2008, six small children died after drinking from contaminated packages. Even hundreds of thousands more got sick, so Chinese parents no longer trust quality controls from the authorities. Therefore they travel to Hong Kong, to buy cans of safe baby milk powder (Rimmele, 2013).

Gold is also very popular with the Chinese. There are a lot of jewellers on the busy high streets that try to sell kitschy figurines and jewellery to Chinese tourists. Mainlanders come to Hong Kong to buy luxury brands, such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Dior as it is tax-free and therefore cheaper (www.albatrossasia.com, n.d.).

Photo 20. Mainland Chinese are waiting in line to get their package with baby powder weighed in 2013, before the law of the restriction of the amount of baby formula was implemented.



Photo 21. Fish vendors in Wan Chai.



### 3.4. Food, restaurants and eating habits in Hong Kong

Food in Hong Kong, where to begin? The dozens of ‘what to eat’ lists and documentaries about Hong Kong food say enough. People generally eat five times a day: breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and *siu yeh*, which is a late night meal (Beijing Tourism, 2013). Even some snacks will fit right in between any meal. From roadside stalls to Michelin-star restaurants, Hong Kong provides unlimited variety of food for every moment of the day (Beijing Tourism, 2013).

Due to high population density, homes and kitchens are rather small. Locals want to buy their food **AS FRESH AS POSSIBLE**, so tend to shop more frequently (Zien, n.d.). You’ll see meat hanging out unrefrigerated at street stalls, as it fresh and will be sold within a couple of hours. It is even possible to choose a living chicken for your meal, come back 20 minutes later and it will be packed for you (Zien, n.d.). As this isn’t always possible with a 48-hour work-week (Stephenson, 2012), take-away and dining out in a restaurant is very common.

#### 3.4.1. *Dai pai dong*

*Dai pai dong* literally translates to ‘restaurant with big license plate’ and is an open-air food stall, popular with locals since the late 19th century (Angelakis & Owen, 2014). Since 1956, the government stopped licensing these restaurants, due to traffic congestion and issues of hygiene (Angelakis & Owen, 2014). In 2014, only 28 *dai pai dong* remain in operation (Whitehead, 2014).



Photo 22. A green *dai pai dong* kitchen.  
Photo 23. The famous Lan Tong Yuen.



A *dai pai dong* is characterised by its green metal kitchen, messy atmosphere, plastic chairs and tables in open air without any air-conditioning and cheap but delicious meals. Those operating during daytime usually sell toasts, noodles with ham, egg, lunch-eon meat or sausage, rice congee or the typically Hong Kong style macaroni noodles in tomato soup. During night time, the stalls sell more costly meals such as seafood (HK\$40-70 or about €4-7). If there is a shortage of seating, it is very normal to **SHARE TABLES** with other customers. Although the food is delicious, I do not recommend going there if you're highly germophobic.

### 3.4.2. *Cha chaan teng*

*Cha chaan teng* are a bit harder to characterise as it has nearly no parameters, but still easy to recognise. The menu at a typical *cha chaan teng* is full of endless possibilities of different dishes (Beerman, 2012). It is sometimes written on paper and taped to the walls, sometimes pictures of meals hang above the kitchen counter and sometimes the menu is stuck in between the table and the glass plate on top of it. There is usually no English menu, so non-Cantonese speaking people often shy away from these places (Beerman, 2012). These local diners serve almost everything, from noodles to milk tea to red bean ice drink, at almost every time of the day. *Cha chaan teng* translates to 'tea restaurant', so as soon as you sit down, a weak tea or even just hot water is served to all customers (Beerman, 2012). You can drink from it, but it is usually used to clean the utensils. It lays between the *dai pai dong*, but indoors and with a bit more class, and the Hong Kong-style fast food chain restaurants, but more local.

Photo 24. A typical *cha chaan teng*.



### 3.4.3. Hong Kong-style fast food

Hong Kong is a city where **SPEED AND EFFICIENCY** are expected; even with food it's no different. Hong Kong-style fast food is the response to the demand of quick and cheap meals. The biggest chains are Café de Coral, Fairwood and Maxim's, where you order at the entrance and collect your dish at the food counter within minutes (Discover Hong Kong, n.d.). It usually serves meals with a mixture from Chinese, Japanese or Western cuisine. The menu changes throughout the day, depending on the meal time (breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner) or if it's sold out, it might be replaced by another dish (Wikipedia, n.d.). The entire **MENU CHANGES** each day and is rotated on a weekly basis. Overall Fairwood has over 200 dishes that can be served (Wikipedia, n.d.). The meals sell for HK\$20-80 (± €2 to €8), with drinks, as these chain restaurants usually sell sets.

### 3.4.4. Cantonese Cuisine

Eating in Hong Kong is not 'just eating', it's an experience. It's a moment when people come together to share their stories and to socialize. The perfect moment to go to some commercial building, go up to the 17th floor to eat **HOTPOT OR DIM SUM**. These restaurants are usually larger than those found on the ground floor and are filled with round tables. As it is the moment to share stories, it is also the moment to **SHARE FOOD**. The host usually orders different types of dishes and are put on a round rotating plate in the middle so everyone can take a piece from each dish. Only when eating hotpot, there's no rotating plate, there is a shared hot pot to put the ingredients in.



Photo 25. Dim sum, pork filled bun.

Photo 26. Fairwood's menu and ordering desk.

Photo 27. Hotpot.



There will be a teapot with hot water or weak tea served, even without ordering, to clean the utensils. Time is money, so even if you ordered dozens of dishes, within minutes you will be served. This is true, even in the most upscale restaurant in Hong Kong. If not, people will start asking about their food after five to ten minutes. Usually you will get hot tea to drink during your meal as this supposed to help digest the oily and spicy food. A variation on this is the cold lemon tea, more pleasant during the hot summer months. Almost every restaurant has no napkins, so consumers usually bring packs of napkins with them.

Hong Kong food is delicious, but sometimes very adventurous. While eating dim sum it isn't very rare to serve chicken feet, pork blood cubes or cow stomach. While other meals are served with pig intestines, squid tentacles, stinky tofu or snake soup.

Photo 28. Tornado potato.  
Photo 29. Fish balls dipped in spicy curry.



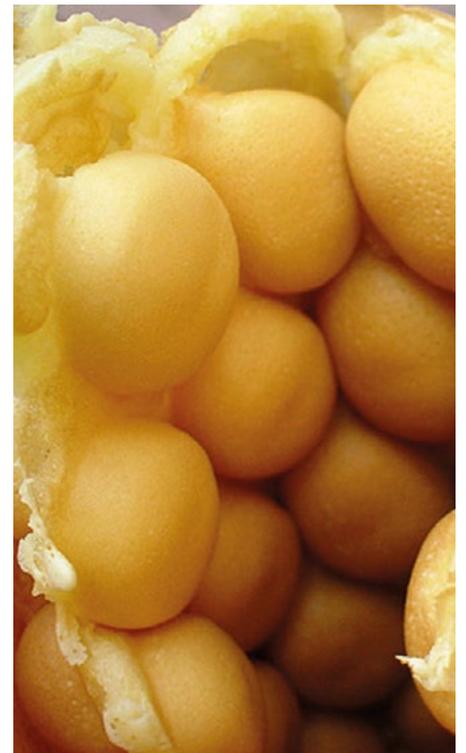
### 3.4.5. Road stalls

Everywhere in Hong Kong you can find snacks, from bakeries to 7/11, but nothing tops the food stalls in crowded areas such as Mong Kok, Kowloon or Causeway Bay. For example the stalls that sell various kinds of meats and fish on a stick. They could be barbecued, roasted or drenched in a curry sauce (Drescher, 2014). From bright orange pig intestines to squid tentacle to something more vegetarian such as deep-fried tofu, eggplant and green pepper, they sell everything (Rushton, 2013). For the less adventurous eater, there is the delicious egg waffles or a pizza waffle cone. These snacks range from HK\$5 to HK\$40 ( $\pm$  €0,50 to €4).

To conclude, Hong Kong has its own habits, but the most delicious food in the world in my opinion. Just try the strange snacks, you might like them. Everything local is cheap, even if you go to a Michelin star restaurant. For example, the most expensive meal I had, during my four months in Hong Kong, was an all-you-can-eat-in-two-hours hotpot meal with free drinks for HK\$110 ( $\pm$  €11). This says it all. Though, if you want something European, you'll have to pay for it.



Photo 30. Pineapple bun.  
Photo 31. Egg waffle.





## 4. CASE STUDIES 四

As most brands in Hong Kong often create an online store in addition to their offline store, I wanted to study cases that are using both platforms. Therefore I've mainly focussed on two case studies, as I wanted to know how Hong Kong brands are portrayed in store and online. Firstly Novelty Lane, as I found it interesting to research a store that only sells Hong Kong based fashion brands and at the same time to see the relationship between the online and offline store of the same shop. Secondly I've researched LOVERAMICS, as I wanted to see how a concept store of one single non-fashion brand is displayed both online and offline in Hong Kong.

Besides the shops in Hong Kong, I've also researched two cases in Belgium to find out how a different culture can be portrayed in another country without literally recreating the original environment. One of the cases is Moose in the City, a shop that has a similar concept as my project as it sells fashion and other items of the Scandinavian culture in Belgium. While the other case, BÚN, serves food of Vietnam, which I found interesting to explore as I also wanted to create a restaurant to sell typical fresh dishes from the Cantonese cuisine.



## 4.1. Case studies in Hong Kong

### 4.1.1 Novelty Lane

#### A. Information

**Address:** 2/F, 104-106 Johnston Road  
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

**Opening hours:** Mon – Sat: 12.00AM – 9.00PM  
Sun: 12.00AM – 8.00PM

**Online:** shop: [www.noveltylane.com](http://www.noveltylane.com)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/noveltylanehk>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/noveltylane>  
Instagram: <https://instagram.com/noveltylane/>  
Blog: <http://noveltylane.blogspot.be/>  
Weibo: <http://www.weibo.com/noveltylane>

**About:** Novelty Lane is a platform for independent boutiques, creative designers and alternative brands to showcase and sell their products in an offline and online shop. Their aim is to create a store where people can shop for a wide range of products in just one place ([www.noveltylane.com](http://www.noveltylane.com), n.d.).

**Brands:** 112 mountainyam, GREED, Kingdom of Socks, House of V, kiku, NUMB, Absurd Laboratory, Line Work Laboratory, Adarga, Chewed, DEMO., Sei Fong, Flux, DANA n NICHOLAS, FABcessories, GLUSH/, White Elephant, Sketcharound,...



## B. Retail strategy

### Store location

Novelty Lane is situated at the centre of Wan Chai. The shop is easy accessible by public transport, as it has an MTR-exit just around the corner, a tram stop across the road and a bus stop that is a one-minute-walk away. The shop is located on a very busy road, so it is easy to get a taxi here. Because of the steep staircase and the absence of a lift, it is not wheelchair accessible.

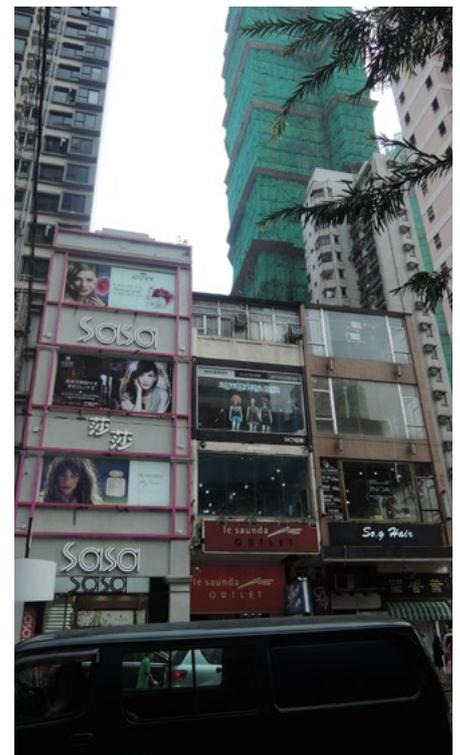
As the shop is located on the second floor, the shop window is only visible from across the street. Although it has bright coloured mannequins displayed in the shop window and a large 'Novelty Lane'-sign, it isn't really noticeable. It is placed in between Sasa, a bright pink beauty chain store that does stand out and Sog Hair Salon that has an even blander façade. Le Saunda Outlet, with a large red billboard, is located on the ground floor of the building and Lydia Hair Salon, with blue, red and white stripes, on the first floor. They all try to stand out with bright colours and large ads.

### Strategy

The shop isn't very noticeable, so customers come especially for the shop if they know about it. To get as much as exposure as possible, Novelty Lane promotes their brands by doing pop-up stores, opening parties and preview shows in their shop or on other locations. They advertise these events on their online shop, blog, Twitter, Facebook and are being sent to their mailing lists. Most of the events are then featured in press releases.

Novelty Lane has a wide range of different designers. Most brands are alternative or very specific, so most customers have their own

Photo 34. Entrance to the building.  
Photo 35. Staircase to Novelty Lane.  
Photo 36. General overview of the facade.



distinct personality and individual taste. The price ranges from HK\$260 to HK\$1800 ( $\pm$  €26-180) for a quality top and some of the items are limited and/or hand-made.

### Customer service

While there were three salesclerks at the time of visiting, only one approached me to help. One person was behind a desk, updating the online shop and another lady was restocking the offline shop. All were dressed in black. The salesperson was very friendly and eager to show me new products that would fit me. When I was looking around, this person was busy on her smartphone. Every customer will have to interact with a salesperson, as there are no price tags used. So to know the price of the products, you always need to ask for it.

### C. Signage and graphics

There was no need for location, category or point of sale signage in store, as the shop was rather small. Though, a lot of signage was used to guide customers up to the second floor. Each step of the stairs was used to advertise Novelty Lane and to lead people to the shop. From the ground floor to the first floor there was mainly advertisement for the hairdresser on the first floor. From that point on, there was only advertisement for Novelty Lane. It was even personalised by the use of OSB against the walls and pinned stickers of the website. There were no price tags or brand tags used. Although some garments had a photo of a model wearing said clothing, to display how it would look.

Photo 37. Categories of shopping as reference to the online shopping experience  
Photo 38. Cash register behind displays.

As Novelty Lane is first and foremost an online shop, they used the same corporate identity in the offline shop. So you'll notice different



references to noveltylane.com, such as the various shopping categories on the wall, the sign 'add to bag' near the cash register, the lack of fitting rooms and the use of the same packaging as it would be delivered to your doorstep.

#### D. Store layout and design

The store was designed with a free-form layout and a style/item presentation. Against the wall there were clothing racks with boxes above it that showed busts with jewellery. As the shop recreates the website by using its main colours black and white, all displays and clothing racks are white as well, except for two bright blue clothing racks. Other items, such as purses, wallets, bags, socks and other goods are shown on glass displays in the middle of the shop. These cabinets have different levels, some possible to pull out and are made from white painted wood and glass, so you can see right through it. Other jewellery is exhibited on white or black coloured hands, in wooden drawers or in some sort of architectural acrylic glass display. All jewellery and small items were displayed a bit chaotic, as there were a lot, maybe even too much products showed.

All walls are painted white in contrast to the black booth of the cash register, which looked like a bar, as it was higher than normal cash registers. Only the floor has a dark brown/black wooden shade. Most of the colours in the shop are created with bright clothes and playful accessories. As well as the online shop, the offline shop is frequently adjusted to new brands or designers by using different clothing racks or displays. Even while I was there, one of the store clerks was restocking a clothing rack, so some boxes and empty plastic bags were lying on the floor. Besides this, there was no



Photo 39. Jewellery displays.

Photo 40. Shop overview.

Photo 41. Jewellery displayed on hands.



stock to be seen in store. There were also no fitting rooms, though there was one mirror that could be used while trying on a coat or a sweater.

The large shop window creates a room with a lot of natural light. Four tracks with each three or four light fixtures on it create general lighting. There is no product displayed directly under a spotlight, only one jewellery case has its own spotlight built-in.

As it was hot (32°C) and humid at the time, the air-conditioning was on as in every other building, shop or apartment in Hong Kong. The contrast between the outside and inside temperature is usually quite big: you're freezing inside and sweating outside. But this shop was cooled enjoyably, instead of a freezing cold, which was unusual but nice.

There was no music playing and the shop had no special scent.

The shop is simple, clean and clear, just as the online shop. The artistic items and unique garments give originality, individuality and colour to the store. Which wouldn't happen if Novelty Lane would sell other brands or designers.

## E. Digitalisation

### Social media

Novelty Lane frequently updates Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Blogspot and Weibo to promote new clothes, designers and events. These updates are also shared with their mailing lists. Novelty Lane has quite a large fan base, with about 13.500 likes on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/noveltylanehk](http://www.facebook.com/noveltylanehk)) and 22.500 on Weibo ([www.weibo.com/noveltylane](http://www.weibo.com/noveltylane)), which is some type of Chinese Facebook/Twitter. Facebook and Weibo feature the same posts. It is almost

Photo 42. Large window at the facade.  
Photo 43. Spots aimed on artworks on the wall.



daily updated with photos of new collections, new brands or new events. Every post contains a link to the online shop, where you can buy the items. Novelty Lane's Twitter only reposts Facebook posts. On Novelty Lane's blog are only events and pop-up stores featured with information about the events and the designer that is celebrated during this day. They announce it on their blog and afterwards pictures are shared about the event.

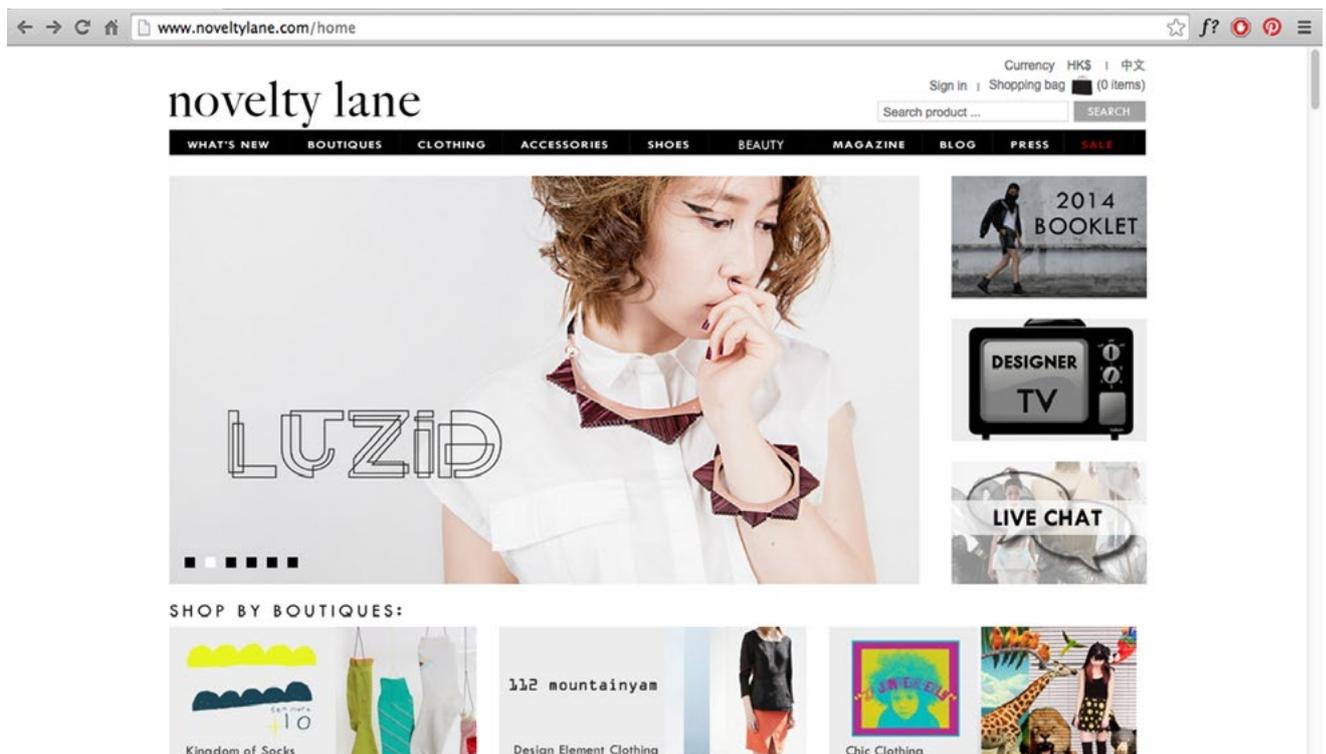
### Online store and advertisement

The online store sells even more products than the offline store and delivers to 170 countries around the world. Stock lists are updated daily and a live chat is available for fixing problems (www.novelty-lane.com, n.d.).

All brands are displayed on the homepage alphabetically with their logo and a photo of what the brand conveys, below a changing slideshow with new brands. So you get a first impression of what the brand is and wants to express. When you click on one of the brand-buttons, you will be sent to a page with the whole collection of the boutique. By clicking on a product, you will be directed to the product page, where you will find detailed information about the brand, product, used materials, sizing and measurements of the garment. There are other likewise items or products from the same label displayed under 'SEE ALSO'. By clicking on the brand name, a new tab opens on the website with a photo that varies from brand to brand. Some brands display their collection and some define their label.

I haven't seen any large billboard advertisements around the city, but Novelty Lane regularly gains publicity in magazines or on television (www.noveltylane.com, n.d.).

Photo 44. The homepage of Novelty Lane's online shop.





## 4.1.2. LOVERAMICS

### A. Information

**Address:** G/F, 97 Leighton Road  
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

**Opening hours:** Sun – Thu: 11.00AM – 9.00PM  
Fri- Sat: 11.00AM – 10.00PM

**Online:** shop: <http://www.loveramics.com/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/loveramics>  
Instagram: <https://instagram.com/loveramics/>  
Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/loveramics/>

**About:** LOVERAMICS creates contemporary ceramics that are fun, functional and affordable. They want to bring the modern ways of using, eating, cooking and drinking to you. They design and manufacture charming ceramics for the energetic youth and the contemporary lovers. From matching tableware to kitchen prep tools to coffee making, LOVERAMICS designs timeless pieces for everyone. ([www.loveramics.com](http://www.loveramics.com), n.d.)

**Brands:** LOVERAMICS is a concept store that only sells their own brand. Nevertheless they sell different collections with something for everyone. From simple cobalt, taupe and green designs such as Er-Go! to more romantic sets like Willow Love Story, Petal and Flutter to playful designs such as MAGISSO.



Photo 45. The Flutter collection.



## B. Retail strategy

### Store location

LOVERAMICS is located on the outskirts of Causeway Bay, one of the busiest shopping areas of the world. It is just a few blocks away from the Causeway Bay MTR-stop, bus stops where about 70 busses and mini-busses stop and several taxi stands. You need to take a five-minute-walk from the most crowded street to a calm and luxurious neighbourhood to get to the shop. The shop is quite visible as it is located on the wide corner of two streets. It is wheelchair accessible, apart from two steps at the back of the store.

The adjacent tenants are closed down, but most of the shops around are high end. There is a Bentley dealership on the overlying corner, an expensive Japanese ramen restaurant, some small clothing shops and a luxurious wine store down the street. HKU SPACE Community College is located across the road. The shopping malls Hysan Place and Caroline Centre are one block away, with exclusive shops like Gucci, Dior, Chanel, Cartier, Emporio Armani and Mercedes-Benz.

### Strategy

From spoons, soy dishes and chopsticks for HK\$19 ( $\pm$  €2) to a beautiful black terracotta cooler for HK\$599 ( $\pm$  €60), LOVERAMICS creates quality ceramics for an affordable price. Whole dinner or tea sets range in between HK\$400-1200 ( $\pm$  €40-120). Although cutlery is a bit more pricey, a single knife costs HK\$129 ( $\pm$  €13), but this might be because of the materials used and the craftsmanship. All the designs are elegant and unique, so there's something for everyone who wants something more personal.

Photo 46. LOVERAMICS plates against the wall.

Photo 47. Shop facade.



### Customer service

There were two salesclerks at the time of visiting; both were wearing an elegant and simple black and white outfit. They were very friendly, but not pushy, as they welcome you in the shop and ask if they may be of service. One of the ladies was working at the cash register, while the other moved around near the register. Sometimes they would talk softly to each other. When you want to buy something, you can ask the staff and they will gladly take it for you.

### C. Signage and graphics

The font used in the LOVERAMICS logo returns on every information sheet in the shop. Near a dining or tea set, a sheet of paper mounted on a thick board shows information about the inspiration, production process and the design of the sets. Another sheet displays little drawings of the collection, with information about the dimensions and the price. This creates a simple and easy to use overlook of the collection. The same font is even used to indicate the street name and number on the facade.

When you have bought ceramics, the staff will rap the ceramic items tightly in a white foam packaging with little LOVERAMICS logos on it. All items will be put in a white foldable – but strong – paper bag that has the logo and black graphic lines on it. The bill is like an invoice on an A5 sized paper, which is folded once and put in the bag as well.

### D. Store layout and design

The modern facade is matt black with large shop windows, some playful multilevel white table tops with wooden or black X-legs and 'fragile' boxes are used to display ceramics, knives and books to

Photo 48. LOVERAMICS logo on the wall  
Photo 49. Information about the sets.



window shoppers. The dinner sets are stacked, as it would be used in a luxurious 5-course meal. The knives are displayed underneath a rectangular box made of acrylic glass, so you're not able to touch them.

The first thing you'll notice when entering the shop is the large white painted brick wall with the large LOVERAMICS logo and dozens of mounted plates on. This brick wall, together with the concrete floor and exposed lighting fixtures make it feel more industrial. The shop is divided by collection. All dinner sets are displayed on wooden tables; the stock is placed underneath each table. Each plate or bowl is stacked on top of each other, which creates a handcrafted atmosphere. Fake plastic dishes are displayed on some plates; each dish suits the style of the collection. For example, sushi is placed on round plates that are delicately painted blue with graphic elements. The fake food looks a bit glossy and so fake that is playful but not cheap. Chopsticks are displayed in a large cylindrical shaped container that is fully filled.

Behind the white brick wall is some kind of volume, which you cannot enter. But this volume makes you walk around it to go explore the rest of the shop. The left side is rather small, so a mirror placed against the volume makes it look bigger. Against the other wall, small narrow wooden strips show the different coffee mugs, teacups and coffee percolators. Behind the volume are two other collections displayed on wooden tables. There is a small hallway with another large wooden table that displays cooking utensils and big bowls. Cutlery is portrayed as art against one wall, as it is exhibited in a frame next to a little card that has the information on it.



Photo 50. Small hallway at the back.

Photo 51. Wooden displays with stock placed underneath it.

Photo 52. Displays strips against the wall.



The cash register is quite small and has a computer screen build in it, under an angle so it is easier to read by the staff. There is an old chest of drawers next to the register with frames containing knives and corkscrews on top of it. These are displayed behind glass for safety reasons.

The large windows create a lot of natural light in the store. In front of the white brick wall are hanging light bulbs from a black base. Spotlights hang on tracks against the ceiling to light the items. This is even more visible in the back of the store, where it's darker. The displays stand out because of the artificial light from the lighting fixtures.

There was no music playing in the store and there was no special scent present. Though it was hot outside, it was pleasant inside.

LOVERAMICS displays their items in an elegant and humble manner. It is exhibited as a work of art, as they love their ceramics. The love for their products make it very hard to walk out empty handed.

## E. Digitalisation

### Social media

LOVERAMICS is present at Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. They have created several boards and pins on Pinterest, while Facebook is only used to repost Instagram pictures. This shows that LOVERAMICS targets the more artistic and individualistic side of the internet, as Instagram is more personal. For some people Instagram is all about seeing the day-to-day life of people, for others it is about inspiration, artistic stuff and beautiful

Photo 53. Old chest of drawers with knives and corkscrews.  
Photo 54. Cutlery is treated as art.



photos. While sharing content on Facebook makes you feel exposed, sharing it on Instagram feels cosier, safe and more intimate. 'It's for connecting people through fun, not strategy.' - Hannum, 2014

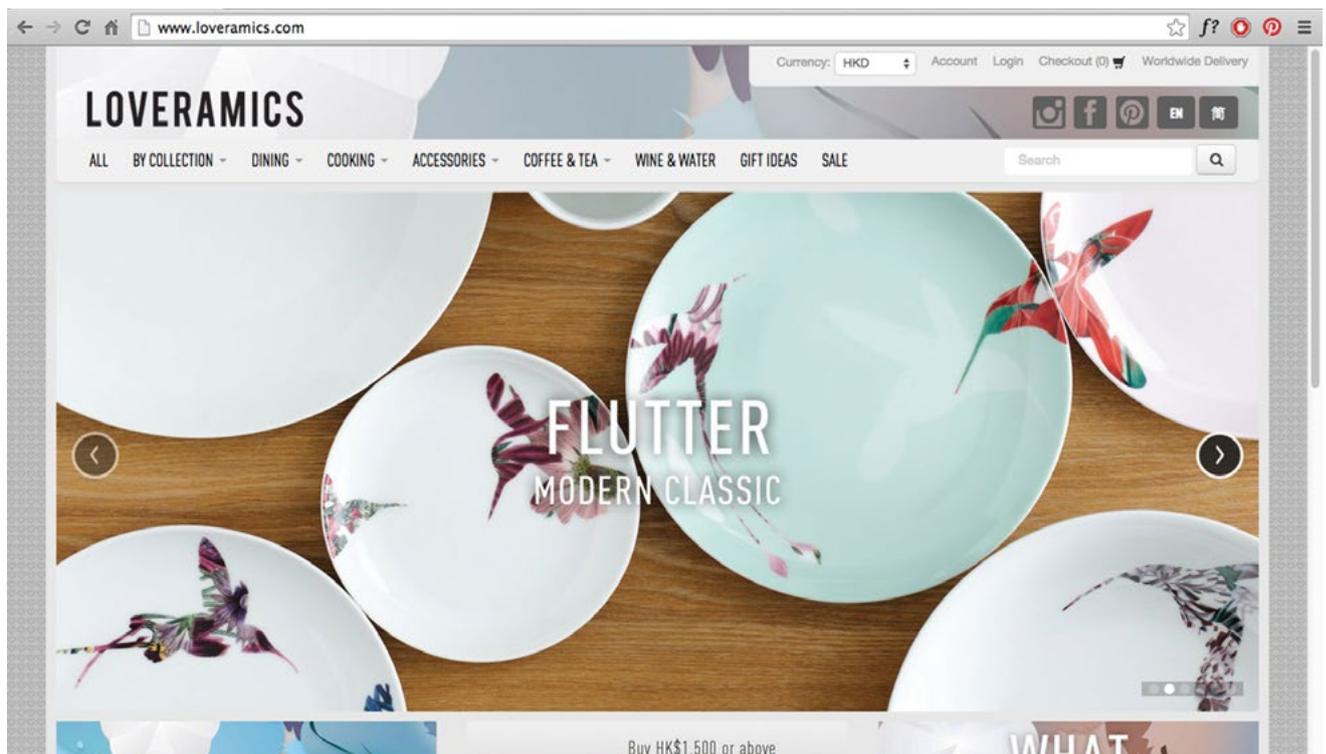
### Online store and advertisement

The online shop has the same fun, calm and elegant atmosphere to it as the offline shop. You can shop by collection or by category: dining, cooking, accessories, coffee & tea, wine & water and gift ideas. LOVERAMICS offers worldwide shipping to most countries, but you will be charged HK\$150 (± €15) for shipping fees, which is a lot but makes sense since ceramics can be quite heavy. The collection online is smaller as cooking knives, corkscrews and other sharp utensils aren't shipped for safety reasons.

I haven't noticed any extra advertisement around the city or online.



Photo 55. Multiple works of art.  
Photo 56. The LOVERAMICS online shop





### 4.1.3 Conclusion

Most shops in Hong Kong are active on **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE**, as it is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to advertise and gain a fan base of costumers. As retail space is limited and very expensive in the city, it is sometimes even the only possibility to showcase and sell products. So online and Instagram shops are very common for starting independent designers and brands in Hong Kong.

Most Hong Kong shops use their **CORPORATE IDENTITY** well, they use it for their logo, website, price tags, in-store signage, shopping bags and so on. Novelty Lane translates its online store to an of-line store by using some of its features. LOVERAMICS translates its offline store to an online store by using the same atmosphere and quality. In both cases the atmospheres fit well together, though I find LOVERAMICS's online and offline shop more professional and more qualitative than Novelty Lane's.

Novelty Lane is set on a typical location in Hong Kong, on an **UPPER FLOOR** of a commercial building, as this is usually cheaper. But his depends on the surroundings of the location.

For example, in another part of Wan Chai the second and third floors are more expensive as there is a crowded walkway in between buildings on this level. The price for advertisements is also higher.

By reason of the density of shops, stores want to stand out as much as possible. This creates the bright coloured overhead advertisements and illuminated logos above the streets. Because of the colourful adjacent tenants and its low-profile facade, Novelty Lane doesn't stand out. LOVERAMICS isn't located in one of those in-your-face streets, so it stands out because of its simplicity and elegance by using a matte black facade.

Everyone in Hong Kong is friendly especially store clerks. They usually try to sell you something by letting you try it on and giving compliments. But this can appear pushy and twofaced. LOVERAMICS was one of the few shops that came of **SINCERE AND HONEST**, just like their products. Also the use of their cell phone in-store when busy with a costumer seems uninterested and dispassionate.



## 4.2. Case studies in Belgium

### 4.2.1. Moose in the City

#### A. Information

**Address:** Ijzerenwaag 10-12  
2000 Antwerp, Belgium

**Opening hours:** Mon – Fri: 10.00AM – 6.00PM  
Sat: 10.00AM – 6.30PM  
1st Sunday of the month: 12.00AM – 6.00PM

**Online:** site: [www.moose-in-the-city.com](http://www.moose-in-the-city.com)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/moose.in.the.city.antwerp](http://www.facebook.com/moose.in.the.city.antwerp)

**About:** Moose in the City is a concept store that only sells Scandinavian brands. Everything from fashion to adventurous outdoor and sportswear, furniture and interior design accessories and books and films is sold, as long if it's Scandinavian.

**Brands:** Normann Copenhagen, Filippa K, Hestra, Nudie Jeans, Marimekko, Minimum Selected Homme, Björn Borg, Ferm Living, Muuto, HAY, Happy Socks, Adax, Arfurt, Mads Nørgaard, Skandinavisk, Tiger of Sweden, Part Two,...

**Interior architects:** PUUR Interior architects



Photo 57. Scandinavian design.



## B. Retail strategy

### Store location

Moose in the City is situated at the Ijzerenwaag, a street that connects the Nationalestraat with the Kammenstraat. It connects the high fashion from the Modemuseum (Museum of Fashion) to the hip and young streetwear in the Kammenstraat. The store is located in between De broers van Julienne (The brothers of Julienne), an organic shop/restaurant and HAY, a Danish furniture and design brand. There are several shops across the road, such as the skate shop Lockwood, the luxurious Belgian brand Annelies Timmermans and the Danish designer Malene Birger.

Moose in the City is a five-minute walk away from the Groenplaats, where several buses and under- and aboveground trams stop, so it is easily accessible by public transport. There is also the possibility to park alongside the road and to park at an underground parking nearby, but this is discouraged, as it is expensive. People can park their rentable bikes in the Velo-bike station nearby.

The Ijzerenwaag is a very calm street as it is car-free, but pedestrians and cyclists use it, as it is a shortcut. Most people already know about the shops in this street, so consumers go especially to this area for these stores. Moose in the City has a bright blue and white logo so it does stand out in the street, as most buildings are a bit bland. The store is wheelchair accessible as there is a ramp provided at each step.

Photo 58. The entrance of Moose in the City.



### Strategy

Most consumers go especially for the store to this area. The price range is large, from €10 for a small interior design accessory to €1000 for a sofa. The prices of the clothes vary as well, from €40 for a dress to €500 for a jacket. The shop is a bit expensive, but you get great Scandinavian quality in return. Moose in the City and the Scandinavian brands are established in Belgium by now, so it isn't very obscure to shop here. But it isn't mainstream as it is more expensive and qualitative. The target audience are therefore people who look for qualitative fashion and design. There is even a travel agent in-store, who can help you with your own trip to one of the Northern countries. Most of these vacations are custom and tailor-made for the traveller.

### Customer service

The staff is very friendly as they ask if they can help, within minutes from entering the store. They have great knowledge about Scandinavian brands and Northern culture. When trying on clothes they will help you find the right size and even get it for you, as they are very helpful.

### C. Signage and graphics

Moose in the City uses a bright blue and white coloured corporate identity. The logo, a moose in a city is used on the shopping bags, website and signage to indicate the store. But no more than that. The price tags on the clothes are from the original brand, but with a small sticker with the price on it. The price tags placed near the design and furniture accessories are plasticized pieces of paper, with the logo and price on it. They are all in different sizes and not aligned to each other, which makes it look cheaper and more un-professional. There is no indication of location or category signage.



Photo 59. The Moose in the City logo.  
Photo 60. The front of the store.



### D. Store layout and design

After two years of success the store has expanded with 200m<sup>2</sup>, in 2013 to answer to the interests of Scandinavian design. So the store is divided in two areas: the clothes, shoes and other accessories and the furniture, design items and trinkets. This expansion has created a second smaller entrance to the store. But it is the main entrance that gains your attention. It is quite a large space that creates the transition between outside and inside. It exhibits several birch strains, a typical Scandinavian tree and even the national tree of Finland. A film is projected on one of the walls, but it is hardly recognisable as there is too much light to see.

The step and wheelchair ramp to enter the store are made from a red coloured wood. From there on the store begins.

The old brick walls and concrete ceilings are painted light grey, so the brutal masonry and rough concrete structure stays uneven. A simple standardised display system was designed to display all the items and put the stock in-store. Limited materials and colours were used to create a sober and simple whole. The two steel white displays in the middle and against the walls create three long hallways with interesting items. All displays are able to adapt to another function, so the store can always stay up to date with demand and supply. The cash register and fitting rooms are integrated in the displays and indicated with a light grey/brown wood. Some not integrated brand displays with items are showcased in between empty spaces on the concrete floor. TL lighting fixtures placed vertically and horizontally within the steel displays light most of the products, although there are some spots mounted on the concrete beams.

Photo 61. White metal displays.  
Photo 62. Cash register integrated in the displays.



The right displays are primarily for men, those to the left are for females. The clothes are hung by colour, so the brands are shown interchangeably. Although some other items, like bags and shoes are displayed by brand.

In the area with the design accessories and furniture are no extra displays created. Everything is showcased on tables, cabinets or bookcases from brands that are sold in the shop. So every item in this area is possible to buy. Some products are showcased as it could be in your own living room, but mostly items are still displayed as in a showroom to be bought. For example, there are five different light fixtures on top of a cabinet. All of the design items and furniture are typically Scandinavian, so they create the same cosy environment with the same pastel colours and warm wooden tones. The same concrete flooring is used near the second entrance. White painted wooden platforms are used to overcome the height difference from the two areas. The lighting fixtures from different brands are on, but the TL fixtures against the ceiling create more general lighting as the shop window and deign fixtures can't lighten the entire room.

Photo 63. Furniture and accessories area.



Indie rock music is playing in the main area of the store, but it's hardly noticeable in the area with the furniture and design accessories as there are no speakers here. There is a scent in the store from the moment you walk in, it is hard to describe, but as soon as a male store clerk walks by, you recognise it as a male fragrance. Although it was cold outside when visiting, the store had a pleasant temperature even though the shop doors were open.

## E. Digitalisation

### Social media and advertisement

Moose in the City doesn't have an online shop, nor does it display brands on its website. The website is under construction and says it will be ready soon, but this is shown for several months now. In the meantime Moose in the City is present on Facebook, they post updates every three to four days about new products, sales, activities or special occasions. They aren't really active online.

Photo 64. Second entrance at the furniture area.





## 4.2.2. BÚN

### A. Information

**Address:** Sint-Jorispoort 22  
2000 Antwerpen, Belgium

**Opening hours:** Mon – Sat: 12.00AM – 9.00 PM  
Sun: 4.00PM – 9.00 PM  
Closed on Wednesday  
Reservations only after 8.00PM  
Take away orders until 7.00PM

**Online:** site: <http://www.bunantwerp.be/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bunantwerp>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BUNantwerp>  
Instagram: <https://instagram.com/bunantwerp>  
GooglePlus: <https://plus.google.com/+BUNantwerpen/about>

**About:** Hoa Truong and Huibrecht Berends serve authentic fresh and homemade Vietnamese street food. They use a mix of Vietnamese recipes and Belgian grown/breed products. The menu may vary daily, according to availability and their mood (BÚN, n.d.).

**Menu:** BÚN makes appetizers, such as dried squid and Vietnamese dry sausage, and entrees, like charcoal grilled dog cockle and steamed rice pancakes. They also serve main courses, such as rice noodle with grilled mackerel and noodle soup with WCLR beef. For dessert you can choose from warm banana pudding with tapioca & coconut milk and fermented sticky rice ([www.bunantwerp.be](http://www.bunantwerp.be), n.d.).



Photo 65. Halong Bay, Vietnam



## B. Retail strategy

### Store location

BÚN is located at the centre of the Theaterbuurt (Theatre district), which is a trendy and hip neighbourhood with several cafes and terraces, art and furniture galleries, a large second hand store and another Asian restaurant named *Ko'usi* that serves sushi. The restaurant is on a not too busy street, so it's peaceful and calm. It is a five-minute-walk away to a frequently used bus- and tram stop. There are paid parking spots in front of the shop and down the road. The restaurant is quite visible, with its large white BÚN logo on the window and bright red bench in front of the shop. It is not wheelchair accessible as there is a 20cm step to get in the restaurant.

### Strategy

Truong used to be the manager of the restaurant Little Asia in Brussels and Berends was restaurant manager of Pure C, the former restaurant of Sergio Herman. Together with the fresh ingredients and the handmade dishes, make it a high quality restaurant. The entrees are about €10, the main courses about €15-17 and everything else is in between €7 and €11. It's not the cheapest, but the quality and the servings are definitely worth it. During the day you go in and have a meal, while it's calm. During the evening it is usually full, reservations are better booked a month in advance. Though it is never crowded when full, as there is only place for thirteen people.



Photo 66. Rice noodle, grilled mackerel.  
Photo 67. Rice noodle, deep fried Brasvar pork.



### Customer service

The cooks and waiter are all very friendly. Before the meal, a snack to dip in a sauce is served. To clean your hands, hot wet towels are given, as this is customary in a lot of Asian countries. The waiter is very helpful and will explain the different meals to help people choosing a dish. When a meal is served, he will also explain which ingredients are used and how one should eat it so the flavours are at its best.

### C. Signage and graphics

The corporate identity of BÚN is simple and a little playful. The logo is cheeky as the Ú portrays a cup with two chopsticks. The same font is used on every platform, from the menu to the site, and creates a whole. Only the Vietnamese names for the dishes have sometimes a different font, as the language uses a lot of diacritical marks. The menu is printed double-sided on thick piece of A5 paper, it is rather small, but it suits the fast pace style food. The menu also displays the date, because of the changing dishes and the use of fresh products. The bill is presented in a little straw basket with a business card. The photo of a cockfight is displayed on the shirt of the uniform of the staff.

### D. Restaurant layout and design

The restaurant is tiny and has only place for 13 people, seven at the counter and six spots at two moveable tables. The two tables are moveable to a position where each table is separated for just three people or when put together one large table for six people. The restaurant is small in width but quite deep, so the kitchen is located at the back. The long counter divides the room in 2 areas: the eating and cooking area.

**BÚN**  
VIETNAMESE STREET FOOD

Photo 68. BÚN's logo.  
Photo 69. Restaurant.



Each spot has a white napkin with black chopsticks and a ceramic cup placed to indicate the seating arrangement. The counter top and the tables are made from a natural light brown wood. The stools used at the bar are Asumi's black LEM stools and at the tables typical Asian wooden stools are used. Though they are Asian design, it is not Vietnamese as both the designs are Japanese. Little wooden parallel bars on the ceiling emphasise the width and the depth of the restaurant. In the direction where diners look, two large fighting roosters are roughly painted on the wall, the same as on the shirts of the staff. Although this sport originates from the Philippines, it is also practiced in Vietnam.

The open kitchen is in the back of the shop and it is in proportion with the eating space. It is also very small, but just large enough for the two cooks to do their work, including the dishes. The entire kitchen is made from stainless steel. The kitchen is open to the eating area, so it is possible to smell the delicious scents from the moment you walk in. Sometimes, when the cooks are preparing meat and fish on the grill you can smell the delicious scent of typical Chinese barbecue, or at least this is what it smells to me. This direct contact with the scent and the food creates a bond, which I think is typical Asian.

The dishes are served in beautiful graphic bowls, often served with a smaller white ceramic cup with a homemade sweet and sour sauce with an Asian spoon. If it's not served in a bowl, then it will be served on a graphic matching long plate. The graphics on the utensils have an Asian feel to it.



Photo 70. Kitchen.

Photo 71. Front facade with red bench.



The large window and the corner window create a lot of natural light in the front of the shop. As it is quite small extra artificial light is used above the counter and in the kitchen. Six light fixtures hang above the counter; they are round and have a copper colour. Above the painting is a strip of indirect warm yellow light. In the kitchen, spots are mounted on the ceiling and a skylight is placed in the middle for natural light.

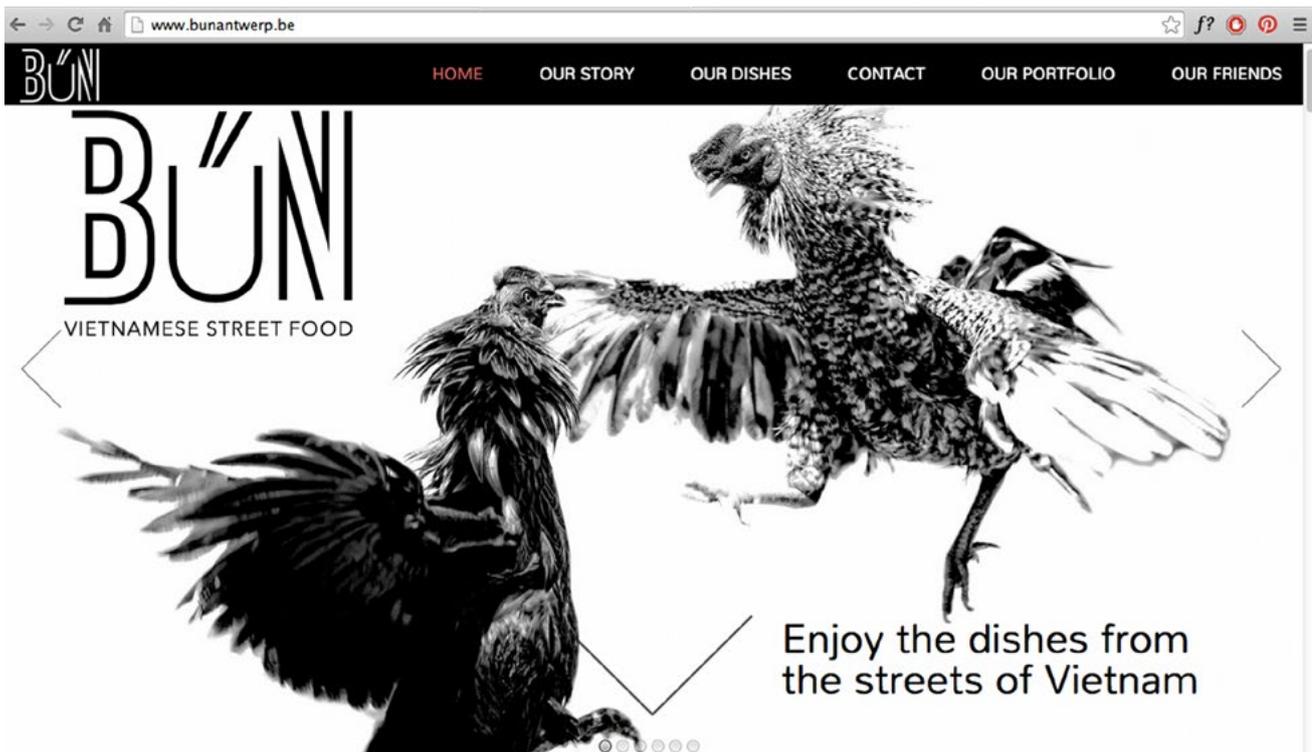
There is a speaker hung in a corner against the ceiling and is playing downtempo lounge and triphop music. The temperature is pleasant as it is warm enough to take off your jacket, which you can hang against the wall.

## E. Digitalisation

### Social media and advertisement

BÚN is present on Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus and Instagram and update their statuses weekly, mainly with posts about new dishes, press releases or last-minute cancellations. Though it is used, it is not focussed on as BÚN has a great reputation and a lot of word-of-mouth advertisement. The references of former workplaces have created several articles in newspapers and magazines.

Photo 72. The homepage of BÚN.



### 4.2.3. Conclusion

Both projects differ a lot from each other; they couldn't be more apart aesthetically. Although basically they're both the same, as they try to bring something from another culture or country to Belgium, one with **FOOD** and the other with **FASHION AND DESIGN**.

In both cases, the showing of the culture didn't happen by displaying literally the same as in the country of origin, but by creating the same vibe and **ATMOSPHERE** as in those countries. The relaxing vibe at BÚN displays the love and care for Vietnam. The delicious food and the beautiful environment make you **EXPERIENCE** a moment, as if you were in Asia. Scandinavian culture and design is so strong that you immediately get the Scandinavian atmosphere. But that is why I think, if you would strip away all the clothes, accessories and items, you won't experience the strong culture. Except for the entrance where there are birch trees.





5. DESIGN PROJECT

五



## 5.1. Program

As my goal is to portray the Hong Kong environment in-store, I want to sell brands that represent the city and its culture at its best. Although Hong Kong is rather small in size, it is still a big city and there is a lot to be found. That is why I have chosen for several categories of products, to emphasize the large quantity that can be found in this metropolis. These include fashion, accessories, beauty, small items & goods and food.

### Fashion

The clothes from the brands are unique, innovative and usually architectural. Some have soft fluid feminine shapes enhanced by delicate embellishments like Sarah Lai while others use unique printing to create new outlines in clothes to create an unconventional pattern. Though it is a mixture of differences, they all have some sort of uniqueness to them. Some brands, for example Absurd Laboratory, have both a female and male collection.

To ensure quality some brands only produce a limited quantity of items every season as they care a lot about business ethics within the production process, such as kenaxleung.

Some of the brands: House of V, Sarah Lai, 112 mountainyam, AURALO ARTE, Absurd Laboratory, chardonnay, CHEWTHECUD, kenaxleung, sketcharound,...

Photo 74-75. Absurd Laboratory.  
Photo 76-77. SKETCHAROUND.  
Photo 78-79. House of V.  
Photo 80-82. Sarah Lai.





83.



85.



87.



88.



89.



84.



86.



90.

### Accessories

Most Hong Kong based brands, such as Squarestreet, make their products by themselves; often using local materials, to ensure that every product has great quality, usability and durability. By doing so, brands can realise unusual and unique ideas and create exclusivity to the brand.

One of those unique ideas is the story behind MIPENNA, they create every quarter a new collection to tell a new story. The 'MIP' of the brand name stands for 'Myth In Paradise' as the brand concept is the myth in the designer's mind. There is a story behind each brand.

Some of the brands: Squarestreet, GLUSH/, FABcessories, 10 more socks, DECOoutfitters, Matter Matters, MIPENNA, 794729metal-work, POMCH...

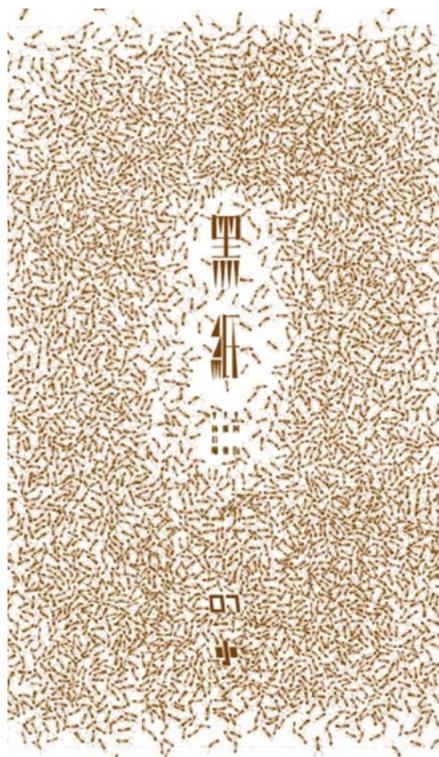
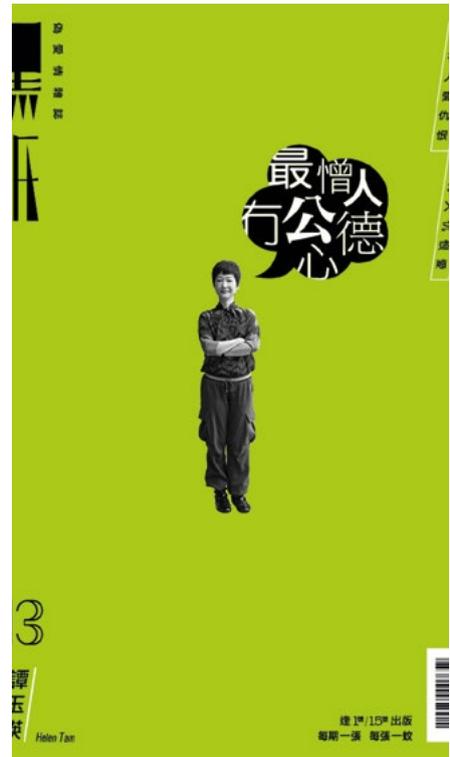
### Beauty

As most beauty and make-up addicts know, Asia stands further on the make-up market as European and American brands. Although most products originate from Japan or South Korea, Hong Kong has some beauty brands. Most women and men in that region usually have a more elaborate skincare routine than that we are used. And this is where Hong Kong comes in. Hong Kong beauty brands exist predominantly of skincare products, such as soaps, tonics, moisturisers, oils and serums. All of these brands are eco-friendly products, handmade of natural ingredients with traditional producing methods.

Brands: Native Essentials, Bathe to Basics, Two Girls

Photo 83. Matter Matters.  
 Photo 84. POMCH.  
 Photo 85. Squarestreet.  
 Photo 86. GLUSH/  
 Photo 87-89. DECOoutfitters.  
 Photo 90. 10 more socks.  
 Photo 91-96. Bathe to Basics.





### Small items and goods

By selling several Hong Kong books, magazines, vinyl, cd's and smaller design items such as ceramics or interior accessories, it is possible to show the lifestyle and culture. There are several cultural magazines and indie books that are bilingual. Muse sells bilingual Cantonese/English books. Although Blackpaper, for example, is only available in Cantonese, it looks visually attractive and interesting.

Bamboa sells items only made with bamboo, either the fibres are pressed to a plate or used to make blankets with it. As it is healthy to drink a hot beverage during your meal, tea drinking is very normal in the Hong Kong culture. Brands like LOVERAMICS and Flow+Living sell beautiful ceramics to use during your meal or while cooking. CreamArt on the otherhand sells quirky kitchen utensils to personalise your kitchen with.

Brands: Blackpaper (magazine), milk (magazine), Muse (magazine and publishing company), Flow+living (ceramics), LOVERAMICS (ceramics), BAMBOA (tableware), CreamArt (kitchenware),...

Photo 97. Blackpaper magazine, 2014.  
 Photo 98. Blackpaper magazine, 2014.  
 Photo 99. Blackpaper magazine, 2010.  
 Photo 100. Blackpaper magazine, 2010.  
 Photo 101. Blackpaper magazine, 2013.  
 Photo 102. Blackpaper magazine, 2013  
 Photo 103. LOVERAMICS, ER-GO!  
 Photo 104. LOVERAMICS, Flute.  
 Photo 105. Bamboa, Bamboo Fiber Set.  
 Photo 106. Bamboa, Bamboo Blanket.  
 Photo 107. CreamArt, Tong.  
 Photo 108. CreamArt, Life on Flow.



# hungry kong

## appetizers

- \_ lotus buns
- \_ yu dan (fishballs)
- \_ laap cheung (sausages)
- \_ siu yuk (roasted pork)
- \_ potato tornado

## dim sum\*

- \_ har gau (shrimp dumplings)
- \_ chiu-chao fan guo (pork, shrimp and peanuts dumplings)
- \_ siu mai (open-topped pork or shrimp dumplings)
- \_ wu gok (taro dumplings)
- \_ cha siu bao (barbecue pork buns)
- \_ cheong fan (rice noodle rolls)
- \_ zhaliang (fried, noodle-wrapped crullers)
- \_ fu pei guen (fried tofu skin rolls)
- \_ lo baak gou (turnip cake)
- \_ fung zhao (chickenfeet)

## desserts

- \_ gai daan jai (egg waffle)
- \_ boh loh bao (pineapple bun)
- \_ daan taat (eggtart)
- \_ jin deui (fried rice balls)

## drinks

- \_ lemon tea (hot/cold)
- \_ bubble tea (cold)
- \_ water 0.5l (non-/sparkling)
- \_ soy milk

\*order per basket (3 to 4 per basket)

## Food

As mentioned earlier in paragraph 3.4. Food, restaurants and eating habits, food is a big part of Hong Kong culture. The food is delicious, but often at its best when eaten directly after ordered. To bring this to Belgium I wanted to create a small restaurant, where you have the possibility to experience the best Cantonese dishes. This means you can taste the meals fresh out of the basket instead of selling pre-packaged dry foods in the store.

To experience the ordering as you were in Hong Kong, I want to use the same system as in large restaurants: a menu where you indicate on the paper how many baskets of the dish you would like to have.

## Conclusion

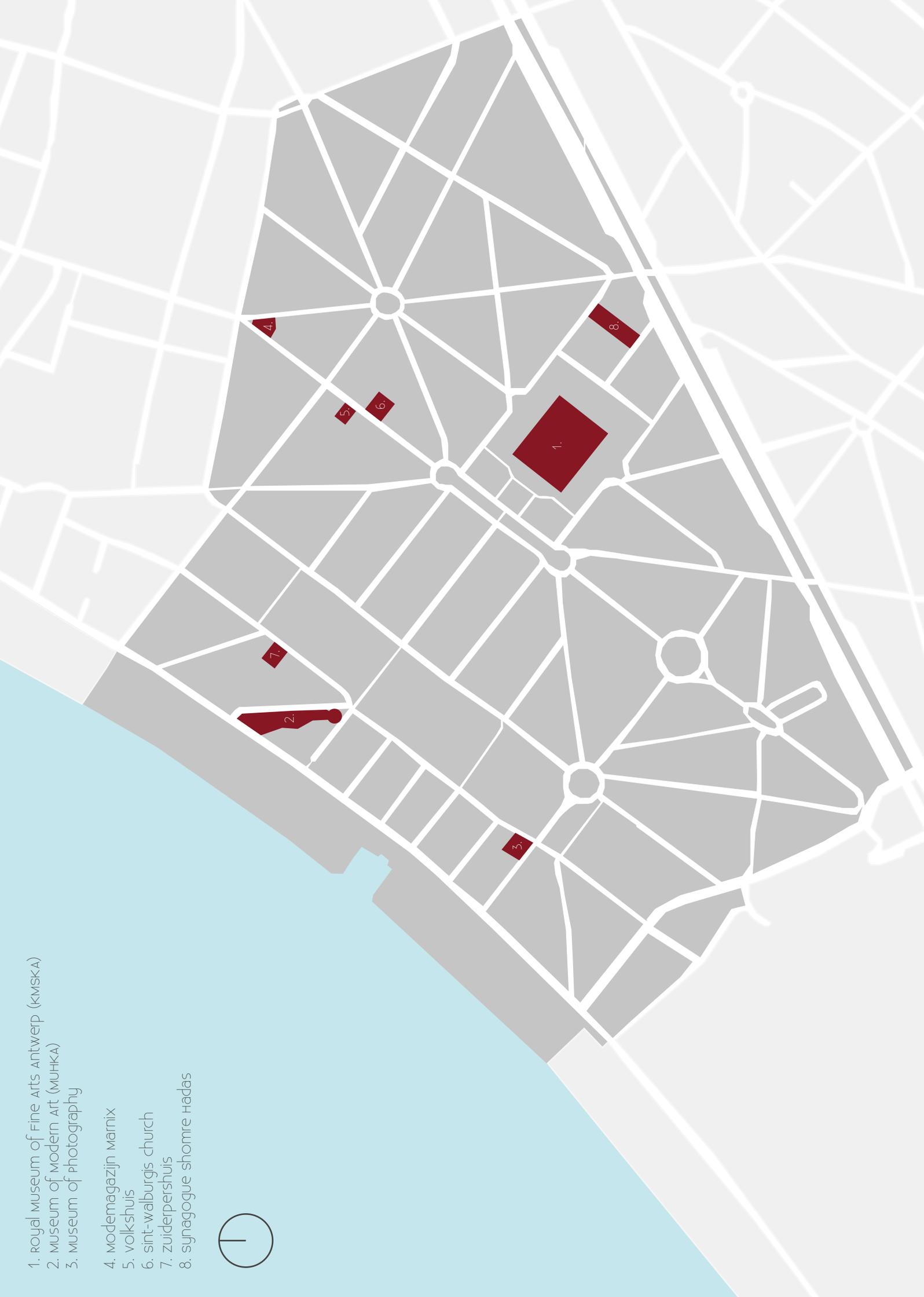
All brands mentioned aren't sold in Belgium yet. This makes it exclusive to the shop. This exclusivity can create a newfound interest in Hong Kong, as it is still unknown to most people. Each brand also tells a unique story – in comparison to the 'Made in China' products – I want to show their stories by displaying in-store. Maybe not literally, but by QR-code you can have the possibility to check the stories.

Photo 109. Menu of Hungry Kong.  
 Photo 110. Har gao (shrimp dumpling).  
 Photo 111. Siu mai (open topped pork or shrimp dumpling).  
 Photo 112. Cheong fan (rice noodle roll).  
 Photo 113. Lo bak gou (turnip cake).  
 Photo 114. Cha siu baau (pork buns).  
 Photo 115. Fung zhao (chickenfeet).



1. royal museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA)
2. Museum of Modern Art (MUNKA)
3. Museum of Photography

4. Modemagazijn marnix
5. volkshuis
6. sint-walburgis church
7. zuiderpershuis
8. synagoge shomre hadas



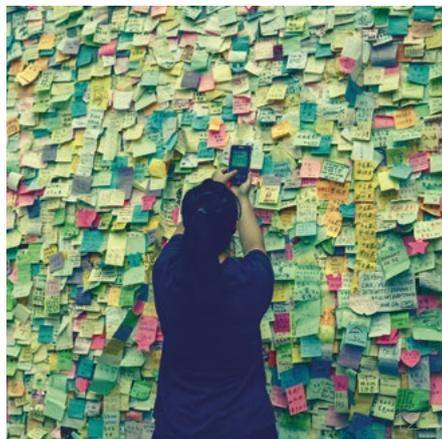
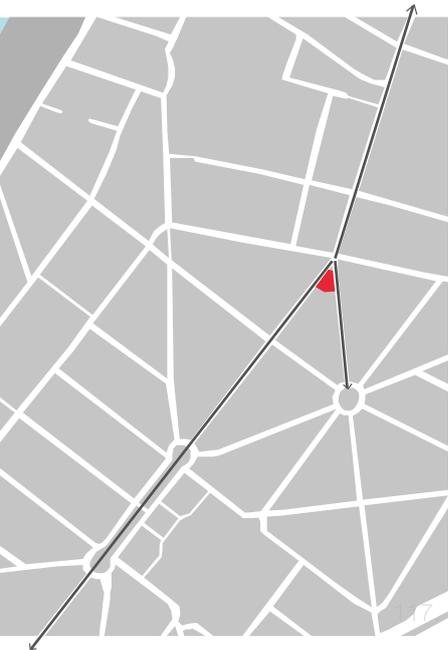
## 5.2. Location

### 5.2.1. *Modemagazijn Marnix*: it's all about perspective

It was not until 1874 when Het Zuid (the South) in Antwerp became to be, following the demolition works of the old city walls and het *Zuidkasteel* (the South Castle), which was originally build by the Spanish occupier. The Plan d'appropriation de la Citadelle du Sud by Van Bever was approved by Royal Decree in 1875. The street plan has a typical geometric layout that is clearly inspired on the works of Haussman in Paris, giving rise to the nickname Le Petit Paris (Manderyck, Plomteux, & Steyaert, n.d.). This geometric layout creates strong perspectives upon the streets, statues and buildings nearby.

These strong perspectives on the streets are quite noticeable, especially from the place where *Modemagazijn Marnix* is situated. The intersection of the Nationalestraat with the Volkstraat and the Geuzenstraat, is located right in front of the building. This means when you walk to the entrance, you either have a view on the Volkstraat towards the Palace of Justice or a view on the Geuzenstraat towards the statue '*Vrijmaking der Schelde*' (Liberation of the Scheldt). The view on the Nationalestraat shows you the *Modemuseum* (Museum of Fashion). This is no coincidence.

Photo 116. Map of 't Zuid.



The fact that I want to create a Hong Kong lifestyle store in Antwerp is because of the connections both cities have. Antwerp is one of the biggest harbour cities in the world, although Hong Kong's port is bigger (World Shipping Council, 2013), they both share their backgrounds from once being a flourishing harbour (Tellier, 2009; World Port Source, n.d.). This is also shown in the statue '*Vrijmaking der Schelde*'. The statue of Neptune was erected ten years after the end of a long period of blockades and tolls to the Netherlands, in 1863 (Everts, 2010). It represents the (fight for) freedom of the Scheldt, same as Hong Kong's search for freedom and independence from China. On the other side, there is the view on the Volkstraat and the Palace of Justice. This symbolizes the fight for justice and democracy in Hong Kong.

And finally, the Nationalestraat and the *MoMu*: this embodies – quite literally – the connection with fashion. Antwerp is famous for its fashion and the progressive designers the fashion department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts had produced (Menkes, 2013). In my opinion, Hong Kong is incredibly fashionable and progressive in their fashion, if not only in fashion, but as well in other fields.

- Photo 117. Map of the neighbourhood.
- Photo 118. Hong Kong protests, 2014.
- Photo 119. Fashion in Hong Kong.
- Photo 120. West Lamma Sea, Hong Kong.
- Photo 121. Wall of post-its during the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong, 2014.
- Photo 122. Modemuseum, Antwerp.
- Photo 123. Statue '*Vrijmaking der Schelde*', Antwerp.
- Photo 124. Palace of justice, Antwerp.



### 5.2.2. The neighbourhood

These days, *'t Zuid* is still an artistic and trendy neighbourhood in Antwerp with a few architectural beauties, for example the former Art Nouveau *Volkshuis* (house for the people), which now houses the Steinerschool (Vanschoonbeek, 2012) and the Sint-Walburgis church inspired by the New Objectivity (Hooft & Vanschoonbeek, 2012). The former hydraulic power station, *Zuiderpershuis*, is also located in the neighbourhood, which now houses an art centre where the Flemish tv-show *Café Corsari* is filmed. There is also a beautiful synagogue located in *'t Zuid*.

The neighbourhood is home to three museums such as the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, the Museum of Modern Art and the *Fotomuseum* (Museum of photography), several commercial art galleries, fun cafés and restaurants, and some up-market shops (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Photo 125. Sint-Walburgis church.  
 Photo 126. Hollandse Synagoge  
 Photo 127. Volkshuis.  
 Photo 128. Zuiderpershuis.  
 Photo 129. Royal Museum of Fine Arts.  
 Photo 130. Museum of Photography.  
 Photo 131. MuHKA.





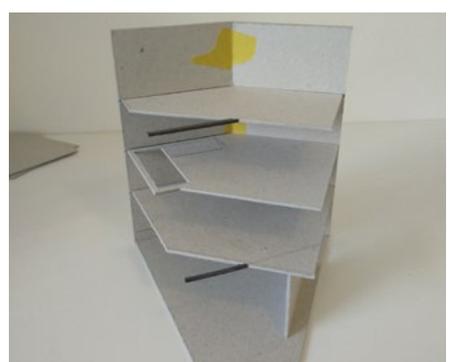
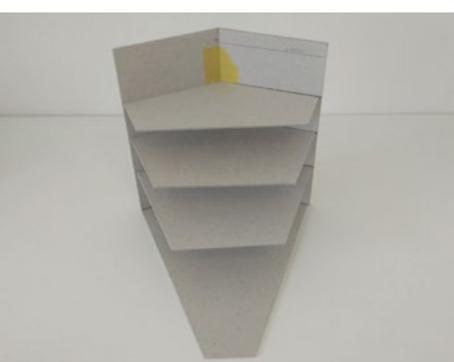
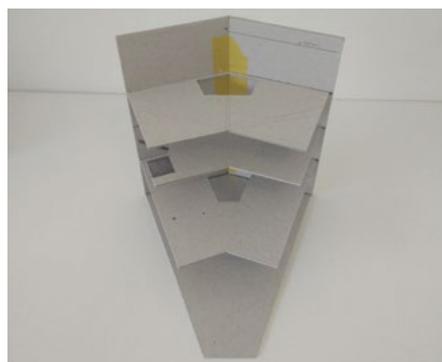
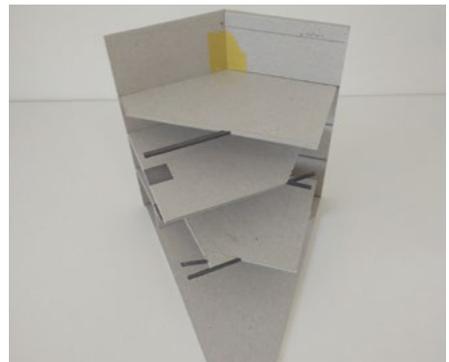
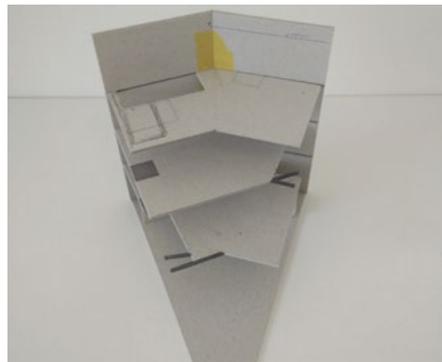
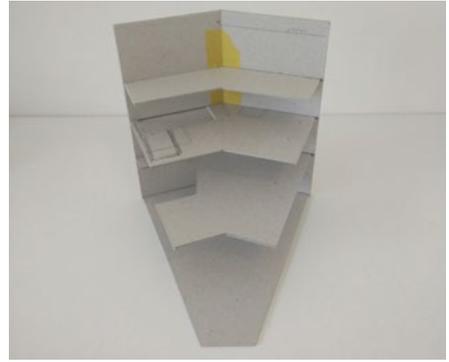
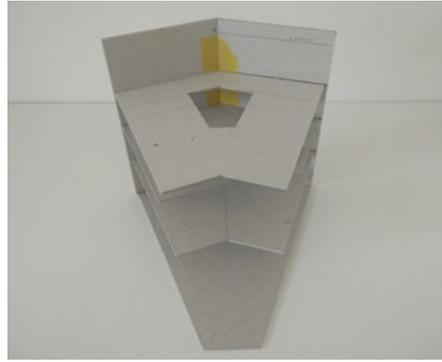
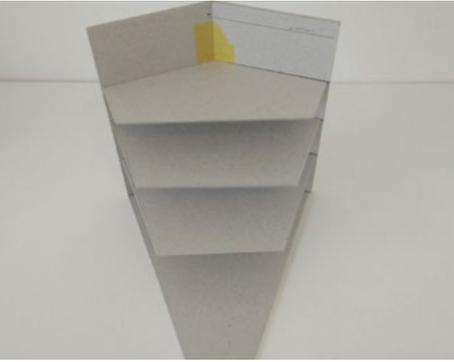
### 5.2.3. The building

In 1880, Jan Florus, an investor in the neighbourhood, built a residential and commercial building of four storeys on the corner of the Volkstraat and the Geuzenstraat (Florus, 1880). In 1885, the application for the construction of a banner with the inscription *'Restaurant et logement'* (restaurant and lodging house) on the corner of the Volkstraat and the Geuzenstraat was approved (Van Dun, 1885). As well as the application to hang blinds above two windows on the Volkstraat, in 1889 (Van Gaelen, 1889). This could mean a restaurant and a hostel housed in the neoclassical building before it was bombed during the First World War (Praeger, 1917). The building was probably rebuilt by architect A. Peeters in 1921, as there is an approved application for the construction of sewers in 1922 (Peeters, 1922). It is impossible to confirm the actual building date, due to the lack of construction files in the city archive.

The building recreates the classic, late-19th-century structure from the original building with four storeys and a basement. The facades on either side of the corner bay are divided into five bays. The ground floor had large rectangular windows that showcase the original joinery and transom windows (Hooft, 2012). The entrance to the store is situated on the corner of the building, while the upper levels are only accessible through the stairwell located behind the central bay on the Volkstraat. The facades are beautifully finished with a wooden cornice, including an Art Nouveau tinted frieze with grape vines and a profiled art deco band (Hooft, 2012). The multi-coloured advertising painting of *'Modemagazijn Marnix'* gives the building an additional cachet and distinguishes the building even more (Hooft, 2012).

Photo 132. Original building plans, 1880.  
 Photo 133. Modemagazijn Marnix.  
 Photo 134-135. Bombing during WW I.  
 Photo 136-138. Modemagazijn Marnix.





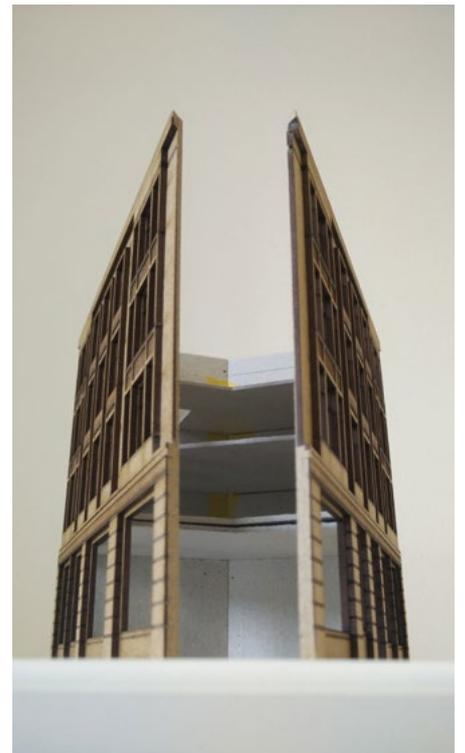
### 5.3. Design

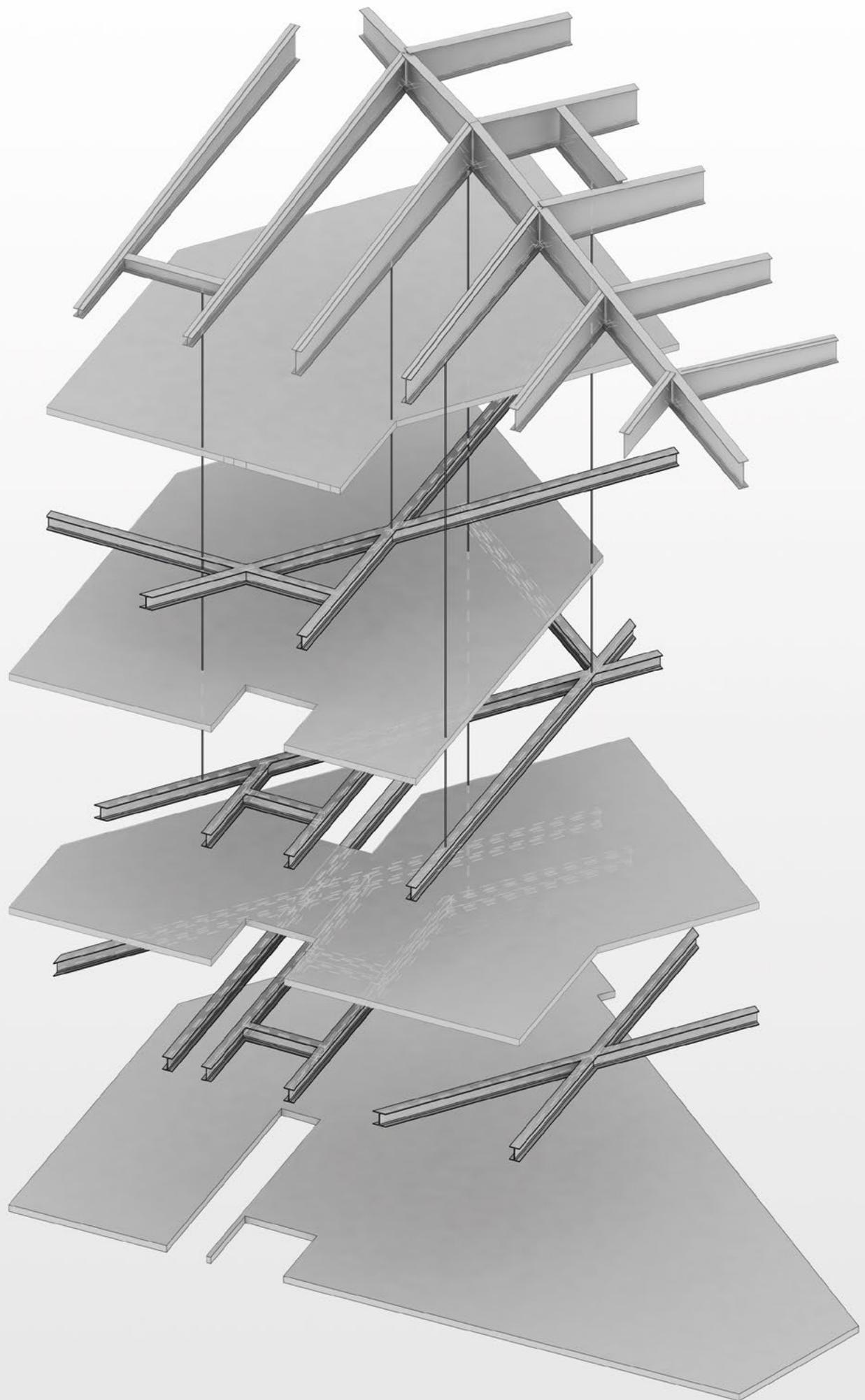
First of all, as mentioned in paragraph 3.1. Hong Kong  $\neq$  China, Hong Kong *ain't* China. The environment doesn't resemble China and the products don't follow the 'Made in China' mind set. That is why I didn't want to recreate the typical take-away Chinese or the supermarket at Chinatown that everyone knows. I want to symbolize Hong Kong through the use of metaphors.

From the first moment you arrive in Hong Kong, you'll have a 'wow' feeling. It is impressive: the surroundings, the buildings and definitely the height. I would like to recreate this feeling by barely touching the facades and to emphasize the height of the building by putting in new floors, supported from below or hung up on the construction of the roof. Each of the three upper floor levels has a different shape to highlight the height of the building. As the building has so many different angles and axes, I have chosen to put each side parallel to the back walls of the building.

I have researched multiple possibilities for the shape of the floor levels and stairwells. Either parallel to each of the back walls, front facade or any other axis I could think of. I have experimented with different models to see what options combined create a wow-factor. It was the most interesting if all floor levels were smaller going up, except for one floor that is partly placed above the one below to create multiple interesting views on all levels.

Photo 139-150. Study models.





Hong Kong is a city that develops each day, so wherever you are you can come across a construction site. I wanted to display this by showing the construction, wherever it is possible. For example on the second and third floor, either stairwell is put next to the floor slab so it is possible to see the construction of the floor above the staircase. This 'constructing' is also reflected in the use of material: concrete steel bars – but painted white to create a more clean and open look.

To continue the idea of constructing, every structural beam is still visible from below. While these beams are 30 centimetres high, the construction of the floor is only 15 centimetres, to add to the lightness and openness of the overall design.

As these floors need to have a connection to each other, I wanted to emphasise on the contrasts in Hong Kong. While the ground floor stairs can be very open, as it is next to an open structure to connect to the restaurant, the stairs on the first floor is completely closed, as it is located above the restaurant. To connect these extremes - open and closed – I wanted to use stretched steel and vertical supports that are open from one direction, while from another direction it looks closed.

Photo 151. Exploded view.



Hong Kong is a green city, something a lot of people don't expect. You can find nature all over the city and outlying islands. That is why I wanted to use plants. Especially ferns, as it cleans up the air better as other plants, as a metaphor for the air pollution in the city.

When a customer comes back after a period of time, these plants are grown. The surroundings change and develop continuously. Just like Hong Kong, where the city just keeps on growing and moving on. No day is the same as the day before. One day nothing happened, the next a building is surrounded by scaffolding – bamboo scaffolding. Because bamboo is such a strong and fast growing material, it is used very often. That is why I wanted to use steamed bamboo, not as scaffolding but as a wood type, for the planters used in between the construction of the concrete steel bars to hold the ferns. As I also wanted to use bamboo in a different way, I chose baked bamboo for the tabletops of the displays in the shop. The displays I designed have an Asian inspired shape with triangular bases, to refer to the Asian part of Hong Kong. Each clothing rack has the same inspired shape as the table and lower displays in-store. All displays are made of steel, white and matte to add lightness to the project.

Photo 152. Rendering of the construction in between the restaurant and shop.  
Photo 153. Nature in Hong Kong.





Besides the shop, there is a small restaurant at the back of the store – as an alley in between buildings – because if there's something you'll find in Hong Kong, it's alleys.

A city with about 6.544 people per km<sup>2</sup>, must be fast. This high pace is translated to a high table, as people do not tend to stay long on bar stools. Despite the high pace, people still love to eat together and share food – just take a look at the typical Cantonese dishes dim sum and hot pot as mentioned in paragraph 3.4.4. Cantonese cuisine. This is translated to one long table, where people might sit next to strangers, something that can often happen at *dai pai dongs* in Hong Kong, to refer back to paragraph 3.4.1. Dai pai dong.

To add to the fast pace and Hong Kong environment, I want to use the same ordering method as most large restaurant in Hong Kong: a method where you indicate the amount of baskets or ingredients you would like to order on the menu.

To highlight the freshness of the meals and the natural ingredients there is the possibility to change the menu day-to-day, so one day dim sum will be served, while the other day hotpot is on the menu. This way new consumers can have a taste of something new and different.

Photo 154. Hong Kong alley.

Photo 155. Hungry Kong facade view.





As I wanted to know what terms or elements locals link to Hong Kong, I did a small survey about the contrasts in the city and what people associate with Hong Kong. With an online survey I asked several multiple choice questions, some more relevant to the project than others as I wanted to know if there might be surprising contrasts in Hong Kong I did not think of to use. Fourteen people responded to the survey. Of those fourteen people nine live or lived in Hong Kong, two visited Hong Kong and three have never been there, but have a remarkable interest in the city. I have left out these last three results to focus on what people, who have actually been to Hong Kong, link to it.

Most participants link Hong Kong to one of the extremes of open or closed as seven out of eleven chose *open*, three indicated *closed* and only one selected *both*. This element is translated to the open or closed stairs. Eight out of eleven selected *hard*, while three chose *both*, so no one indicated specifically *soft*. That is why I mainly use hard materials, such as bamboo wood and steel. As mentioned, people don't expect nature in Hong Kong. Even six out of eleven selected *buildings* and five indicated *both*. That is why I specifically wanted to use plants in the project, to emphasise that it is present in the city. Ten out of eleven agreed with the *fast* pace and only one selected *slow*. The same amount selected *straight* and one chose *both*, which is why I avoided round shapes in the design of the retail space (Attachment 1).

Photo 156. Hong Kong.



## 6. CONCLUSION

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Just like Marco Polo once did, I travelled to a part of Asia and documented my experience in the hopes to bring the culture and surroundings with me, except for me it is a conceptual retail design project. To research how one can bring a different culture to another country, I used my own experiences to bring Hong Kong to Belgium. By creating a store and restaurant, which only sells brands from Hong Kong that represent the Hong Kong mind set, as well as a retail concept that reflects the culture and surroundings of Hong Kong by using metaphors and representations of distinct differences and striking elements of the lifestyle in Hong Kong.

I have done so because of the research from my own time in Hong Kong, as I examined and analysed distinct differences with my home country Belgium, regarding the other lifestyle, the characteristic atmosphere and surroundings of the city, interesting shopping experiences and different shops, other behaviour, typical Cantonese dishes and restaurants. The overall result is a retail design concept in which the lifestyle and atmosphere of Hong Kong are portrayed.

To reach this result I have used links and metaphors that I – and other locals – associated with Hong Kong. Such as the connection with the city being alive, the use of straight lines and no curves, the fast pace of the daily life in Hong Kong and even the link with the expensive side of the city. As well as the more obscure connection with the unknown nature next to the well-known buildings. All these representations combined create a wow-factor that one gets while exploring Hong Kong. Some might not get the metaphors hidden within the project at first sight, but after realizing the deeper meaning of the design choices it is possible to recognize the city of Hong Kong.



## 7. DISCUSSION

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Extensive research was conducted to understand the distinct differences between culture in Hong Kong and Belgium. To identify these elements I have immersed myself completely in the Hong Kong lifestyle. Locals have verified these dissimilarities and additionally certain study was conducted to confirm these differences with online articles and sources, as there were no literature studies to be found on the subject.

As the interpreting and designing process was largely based on experiences in Hong Kong, not all detailed aspects could have been implemented in the design of the project for example the idea of a road stall or a smaller free size shop. Though it has contributed to produce a broader sense of understanding for those who have not experienced the culture in real life and to see the city has more to offer than only concrete and glass buildings. Only distinct differences and striking elements have been implemented in the design of the project, following the functioning of the retail space.

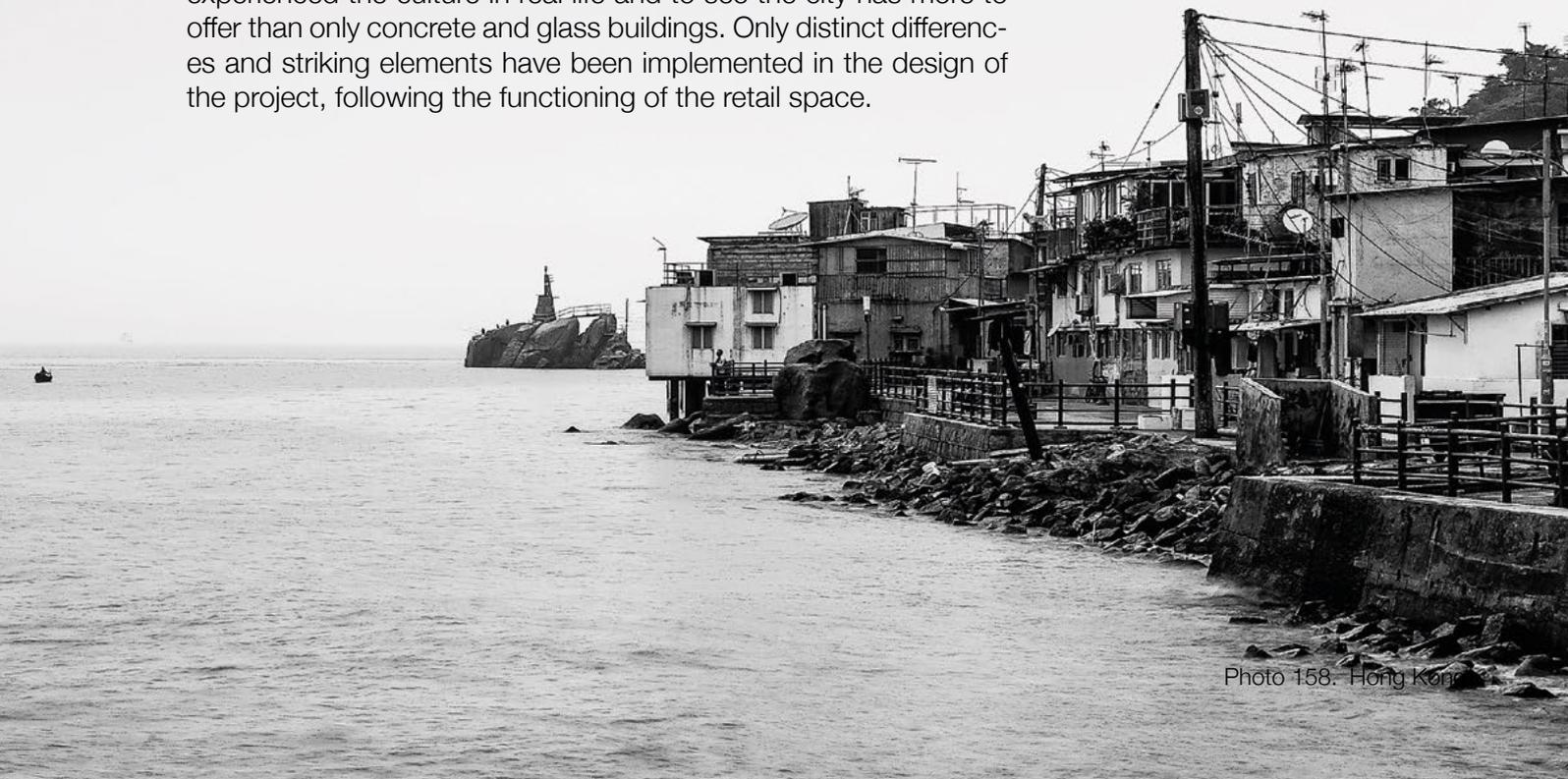


Photo 158. Hong Kong





In the beginning it seemed difficult to achieve a retail design inspired on another culture, which does have some similarities, as it was possible one could not recognise the elements of Hong Kong culture, without literally recreating it. Nevertheless after mainly focussing on differences within the culture and emphasising these distinctions in the design project, it was possible to create a new retail design that portrays the culture of Hong Kong. While I was abroad, I discovered that some elements in the culture of Hong Kong were subtle and elegant. Some of them I discovered only after three and a half months exploring and living in the city. This subtlety was the original inspiration for the metaphorical and representational direction of thinking. Only after staying so long in one place and immersing yourself in the culture of a city, it is that one can discover the real beauties of that environment. That is why the choice of *Modemagazijn Marnix* was the first important decision, as it was the first step towards the subtle metaphorical view on the project and for the connecting and linking of certain elements in the area.

This thesis explains a possibility of how another culture can be portrayed and sold in Belgium, through the method of using representations. This method of using metaphors that represent the culture and its environment can be adapted to another project and a different result can be achieved if another unknown culture or country is chosen to be portrayed in Belgium. Although new research, through immersion of that culture and personally spending a longer period of time to explore that culture, is necessary to portray it as best as possible.



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**10. ATTACHMENTS**



Attachment 1. Results of survey.

4/29/2015 14:56:27	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/29/2015 15:06:00	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/29/2015 15:11:27	Yes, I've visited Hong Kong
4/29/2015 15:11:58	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/29/2015 15:13:13	Yes, I've visited Hong Kong
4/29/2015 15:47:36	No, never been
4/29/2015 15:53:33	No, never been
4/29/2015 16:45:45	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/29/2015 17:19:50	No, never been
4/29/2015 18:47:16	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/29/2015 19:11:31	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/30/2015 08:39:08	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/30/2015 11:31:41	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong
4/30/2015 18:42:18	Yes, I live(d) in Hong Kong

Open - Closed - Both	Soft - Hard - Both	Light - Dark - Both	Nature - Buildings - Both
Closed	Hard	Both	Both
Closed	Hard	Dark	Buildings
Open	Hard	Both	Both
Open	Both	Both	Both
Open	Both	Light	Buildings
Open	Hard	Light	Buildings
Closed	Hard	Light	Both
Open	Both	Light	Buildings
Open	Hard	Light	Buildings
Open	Hard	Both	Buildings
Open	Hard	Light	Both
Both	Hard	Dark	Buildings
Closed	Hard	Dark	Buildings
Open	Hard	Light	Both

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High - Low - Both	Straightforward-Devious-Both	Honest - Dishonest - Both	Round - Straight - Both
High	Straightforward	Honest	Straight
High	Straightforward	Both	Both
Both	Straightforward	Dishonest	Straight
High	Straightforward	Honest	Straight
High	Both	Both	Straight
High	Devious	Dishonest	Straight
High	Straightforward	Dishonest	Straight
High	Straightforward	Honest	Straight
High	Devious	Both	Straight
High	Straightforward	Both	Straight
High	Straightforward	Honest	Straight
High	Straightforward	Dishonest	Straight
Both	Both	Both	Straight
High	Straightforward	Honest	Straight

Old - New - Both	Beautiful - Ugly - Both	Black - White - Both	Hot - Cold - Both	Quiet - Loud - Both	Fast - Slow - Both
Both	Beautiful	Black	Hot	Loud	Fast
Old	Both	Black	Both	Loud	Slow
Old	Both	Both	Both	Loud	Fast
Both	Beautiful	Both	Both	Loud	Fast
New	Beautiful	Both	Hot	Loud	Fast
New	Ugly	Black	Both	Loud	Fast
New	Beautiful	White	Hot	Loud	Fast
New	Beautiful	White	Hot	Loud	Fast
Both	Both	Black	Both	Loud	Fast
New	Both	Black	Hot	Loud	Fast
New	Beautiful	Black	Hot	Loud	Fast
New	Both	Both	Hot	Loud	Fast
Both	Ugly	Black	Hot	Loud	Fast
New	Beautiful	White	Hot	Loud	Fast

Large - Small - Both	Alive - Dead - Both	Light - Heavy - Both	Asian - Western - Both	Cheap - Expensive - Both
Large	Alive	Light	Both	Cheap
Large	Both	Heavy	Asian	Cheap
Small	Alive	Heavy	Asian	Expensive
Large	Alive	Both	Both	Both
Large	Alive	Light	Western	Cheap
Large	Both	Light	Asian	Expensive
Large	Alive	Light	Asian	Expensive
Large	Alive	Light	Asian	Expensive
Small	Alive	Both	Asian	Expensive
Large	Both	Heavy	Asian	Expensive
Large	Alive	Heavy	Asian	Expensive
Small	Both	Heavy	Both	Both
Small	Both	Light	Both	Both
Large	Alive	Light	Both	Both





