
MAICS CONNECT

2024-2025 Alumni Newsletter

issue

#02

June 2025

Professor Feature
Interview with
Prof. Christopher B. Patterson

A Walk with
Prof. Vincenz Serrano

TA Feature
A Conversation with
Issac Li Jinghui

Alumni Sharing
A Conversation with
Harvey Man Wing Cheong

MAICS Happenings



who are you
Today?



Prologue

text /Alison

We live in an age where binaries are still enforced by systemic oppression, and rights are stripped away solely based on gender. Many gender-related discussions create division instead of fostering understanding, and this compartmentalization polarises communities, leaving very little ground for mutual understanding.

In cultural studies, we are offered the lens to appreciate the world through the vast, diverse ways people think and live. As we battle patriarchy, we must recognise that this is not a fight among genders; it is a fight against domination itself.

Thus, we'd like to start the issue of the *MAICS* newsletter by telling you: this issue covers features and sharing from mostly biological male. Masculinity in itself is neutral, and through narratives of our teachers, TA and alumni, we see the lives of those assigned as male at birth, ways that they've chosen to express masculinity, and identities they choose to own and become.

As a gendered person, a non-gendered person, a fashionista, a fan, a son, or a lover—who do you decide to be today? With this question in mind, let's delve into this issue of *MAICS CONNECT*.

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01

Foreword: Words from Directors

Acting Programme Director
Prof. Tan Jia

The world we inhabit today is grappling with unprecedented challenges. This year, wars, authoritarian politics, economic inequality, and the ecological crisis have escalated. Hard-won progress in feminist, anti-racist, and LGBTQ+ rights faces backlash in many regions. As members of the MAICS community, we do not claim to have all the answers or solutions. However, we are “staying with the trouble together” by engaging with these realities in classrooms and through MAICS events such as the Voices from the Ground screening series, Digital Feminisms in Asia talk series, and the hosting of filmmaker and queer activist He Xiaopei. Whether as students, alumni, or educators, we confront these complexities with critical inquiry, creativity, and collective care. Let us move forward together, drawing strength from our shared commitment to learning, reflection, and meaningful action.

Associate Programme Director
Dr. Li Tiecheng

In today's age of information explosion and the prevalence of AI, we are constantly surrounded by big data analysis and influenced by opinions in echo chambers. It seems that the truth behind people and events is becoming increasingly unreachable, making it harder to think independently and critically. I once mentioned the “truthfulness” of documentaries in class, where the truth is not absolute but rather the creator's interpretation. The agency of the creator must be highlighted and analysed, whether in viewing or creating. However, in the reflections I received for this semester's documentary class, a student raised the idea of “the truth of the filmed subjects.” Whether they conceal, evade, or face the camera with honesty, their choices equally influence how they are portrayed.

Given the complexity between agency and medium, action becomes more important than ever: continuously engaging with the subject, participating in the event, listening and observing to gather first-hand information to support a solid argument. Action starts from small steps, and eventually, you will reach your goal.

(translated by Alison)

02

Professor Feature

From *Call of Duty* to *Roblox*: Interview with Prof. Christopher B. Patterson

text /Alison photo /Charlie



The world of gaming is one filled with intense clicking, screaming, laughing, and often sobbing—a vast and unique experience for every player. For Christopher B. Patterson, it is his passion to delve into the world of game studies. As a gamer who actively interprets and dissects video games, and even having produced his own game, Chris

is able to study and teach about video games from multiple perspectives. “I don’t really want to talk about other things. I find games so interesting and fascinating. Even though I took a very wayward path to get into them, now for me, they’re the most fascinating thing to talk about most of the time.”



We enjoyed playing *Little Fighter 2* (小朋友齊打交) with Chris after the interview.

His interest in studying video games academically began with his early experiences in shooting games such as *Call of Duty*. Confusing rage came from actions of violence towards people who shared his ethnic background, and it was not the only game that made him feel discomfort. For instance, Chris talked about the *Far Cry* series: “It’s just really, from a cultural studies point of view, kind of racist and very problematic. But they also make it really fun. There’s one that takes place in modern day Nepal, and you’re mostly killing brown people the whole time. So playing that game was really hard because just killing people who kind of look like you is really hard. And the way that the game tries to make it okay is really interesting.”

Apart from the problematic violence, he was also enraged by the existing litera-

ture on video games—hyperbolic idealism and presumptuous assumptions towards gamers, which were far from his own observations. Now, video game studies has become a site of intersection for him to explore empire power, racial anxieties, queer expressions—and just how fun games actually are. “As a game scholar, those things are really interesting to me because (the games) are smarter than they seem. And they’re put in with so much more thoughts than people think when they start playing them. Even players sometimes don’t understand just how artistic the designers are trying to think about everything, and their own take on the social norms and things.”

Research was not the only way for Chris to share his findings. He also writes, taking on another persona, known as Kawika Guillermo. One of the works he

published as Kawika was *Stamped: An Anti-Travel Novel*, which was eventually recreated into a visual novel. With a persona that encapsulates his mixed ethnic background from his family in Hawaii, he could express his thoughts and feelings in a less restrained way through becoming Kawika. Regardless, video games remain an integral part of both identities. As for Kawika's upcoming book *Of Floating Isles: On Growing Pains and Video Games*, he describes it as "part memoir, part video game analysis, part cultural critique of the world of games and our own political social moments growing up." "But I will say *Of Floating Isles* is probably the first book I've written, where I had a big audience in mind. I really wrote it to help people who were like me growing up, I guess, whatever that means, and who play games and feel like nobody understands them."



"In video games, you fail constantly, and you just restart and respawn. And to me, that's always like a crucial part of any kind of writing or research. You have to really be willing to fail and enjoy it a little bit. And it takes a lot of work working in those multiple spaces."

At the end of the day, there is no identity like fatherhood. Chris chose "father" as the identity that currently represents him the best as he explained his pastime with his son: playing *Roblox* together. "So it's just like a really amazing thing that does speak to my love for games, because games are kind of childish. You have to be willing to be silly and weird, and playing with a kid all day is kind of a way to get into that mindset. And also try to appreciate it while you can."

At the end of the interview, the editorial team brought a small gift for Chris—a classic fighting game for kids in Hong Kong named *Little Fighter 2* (小朋友齊打交). Through the 15" screen, WASD and several other keys, he explored the game intuitively, and quickly picked up the controls and combos, and easily won several fights. Ultimately, the charm of video games comes down to, as Chris described, childlike curiosity towards the constructed world inside the game. That is how a father connects with his son, and connects with anyone else.

Finding Your Footsteps: A Walk with Prof. Vincenz Serrano

text /Nancy photo /Michael

Field trip: Discovering the sounds of Sham Shui Po

On a rainy Friday afternoon, the streets of Sham Shui Po were bustling with people. Professor Vincenz Serrano and his students wove through the crowd, stopping at seemingly ordinary locations and listening to the sounds surrounding them.

They knocked on air vents at a bus stop, listening to the clattering of umbrellas against metal pipes. In an underground tunnel, they recorded the footsteps of passers-by on their phones. During this soundscape-themed walking tour, they opened their ears to experience the uniqueness of Hong Kong.

As they navigated through the busy urban area, the final stop of the walking tour was Garden Hill. Under a pavilion, they shared the various sounds they had encountered over the past few hours, such as different types of birds chirping and vendors yelling into microphones, selling goods on the streets. They were surprised by how the sounds varied depending on the weight of what people were carrying and how the rhythm changed when butchers were chopping meat.



Soundscape Walking Tour with soundpocket.

Exploring Hong Kong's cityscape

After we left the windy Garden Hill, we chatted with Vincenz in a cozy coffee shop, sharing his life in Hong Kong. He describes himself as an easy-going traveller who enjoys exploring a city on foot and savouring street food. He likes eating stinky tofu in Mong Kok and walking in Tai Po before doing grocery shopping. He mentioned visiting the Australia Dairy Company (澳洲牛奶公司), a cha chaan teng (茶餐廳) famous for its fast pace and sometimes rude waiters. "I did not get shouted!" He said proudly.

As a scholar, he reads extensively, so when travelling, he inevitably connects the literature he has read with the scenery around him. He enjoys novels by Nick Joaquin, a Filipino writer who once lived in Hong Kong. The story of his novel *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* is closely related to the city. He said, "Some of the scholarly dimension in me is like matching what Nick Joaquin is saying in the novel with the places I am walking in. He has scenes describing the Harbour, and he references Wan Chai and the Peak."

A poet that walks around, the Identity I can't deny

Everyone puts labels on themselves or is labelled by others. Our lives are inseparable from the constant awareness of our identities at any given moment. When asked which identity Vincenz believed best represented him, he paused for a long time, reflecting on the complexity of identity. He said, "You can't deal with other people unless you have a strong sense of who you are. But the moment the strong sense of identity becomes forced upon other people, it becomes wrong; it becomes an imposition."



Instead of choosing the identity that represents him most, he opted for one he could not deny: "a poet that walks around." He explained that the more he explores certain places, the more he realizes he is only scratching the surface.

"You think you understand the place, but when you see another area, your perceptions of that place change. In today's walk, I understood Sham Shui Po is a busy commercial area with housing projects, but when we went up the Garden Hill, 'Oh this is a new perspective. I did not expect that.'"

Walking, as an essential element that constitutes identity, is fascinating because it is an active behaviour. It involves a process of discovery, searching, and choosing where to focus your attention. Poetry also plays an important role in his life, as he can use words to uncover unexpected insights.

"When you walk around, you have to be open to what you see and hear. As you are walking around, there is a parallel activity happening in your mind. You think about your family and things you have to do. It's an interesting conjunction of what's happening outside and what's happening inside."

During the walking tour, we noticed that Vincenz primarily took photos of streets and buildings. He explained, "I am kind of shy about taking pictures of people, but buildings won't shout at me when I take a picture of them." At the end of the interview, we took some photos of him, and he appeared a little shy. So, we chatted while filming, capturing his naturally cheerful smile.

03

TA Feature

Flashlight: Moments in Photo-taking with Issac Li Jinghui

text /Alison photo /Charlie

With a compact, palm-sized camera in hand, Issac began to wander through the streets surrounding Lee Tung Street in Wan Chai. There was a certain rhythm of his photographic process: steadily yet swiftly, he scanned each corner with every blink. In an instant, he pointed his camera at a fruit store and captured the moment in the most casual manner. Before you knew it, he had already moved on to his next target, checking the screen simultaneously and deleting any unsuccessful shots. After exploring several streets, he finally paused and turned to us, saying, “I think that’s about it for today.”

In addition to his identity as a scholar in cultural studies, Issac is also recognized as a street photographer, sharing his work through “@komorebi_filmfoto” on Instagram. Much like the fleeting way sunlight filters through leaves, Issac captures everyday moments in people and spaces as they exist in that specific instant. His interest in photography began during the COVID pandemic, when there was nowhere to travel out of Hong Kong. His work serves as a mediation between visual representation and the materiality of film, reflected in his recent project, “Marry the Night,” which was shortlisted for the Colours of Humanity Arts Prize 2024. This theme this



Issac's recent project “Marry the Night” depicts queer nightlife in Hong Kong.

year was “Ripple Effects,” showcasing the intricate web of human interactions and their impacts.

“Marry the Night” is a series of photographs that depict queer nightlife in Hong Kong, paying tribute to the song of the same name by Lady Gaga and the night culture it represents. Halloween, drag, intimacy, and community—these are some of the keywords that Issac uses to describe his work. “This one is my favorite,” he pointed to a photo of his friend with two dildos in his hands, dressed like the omniscient villain, Jobu Tupaki, from the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. Nearby, two men shared an intimate moment. Plastic pull-up banners and a promotional sticker for “Leave Home Safe” (安心出行) were

visible in the background. The series highlights the intersectionality and temporality of queer nightlife, weaving together elements of popular culture, drag, crossdressing, gender performance, and social context.

“Normally, when I do street photography, there are power dynamics at play through the lens and my camera. But these photos are very different from my other works because I’m already their friend. I’m part of their community and lifestyle.” In fact, the selected photos were not initially taken with the intention of entering a competition. For his PhD thesis, Issac researched gay spaces and culture in Hong Kong and mainland China. The photos were originally intended for a chapter on Hong Kong gay

bars and clubs, which ultimately did not make it into the thesis. However, when he came across the open call for the Colours of Humanity Arts Prize, he thought, "This is a good opportunity to showcase these photos."

As a longtime visitor to the clubs, Issac has formed deep connections with the people in his photographs. Taking photos as an insider, he described the process as natural: "It was like taking a photo for an Instagram story." The subjects of his photos happily and proudly agreed when he asked for their consent; Issac attributes their positive reactions to the desire for visibility and representation. "They all told me they want to buy this work after the exhibition. But I think it was them who created this work...so I will just give the photos to them."



Issac was practicing street photography.

**"You can get drunk, dance,
and party at any bar.
Why is a gay club so different?
I think this is a complicated
question, but it's also an
important reminder about the
root of our community and
queer nightlife culture."**

After the interview, we asked Issac to pose with his DSLR camera for a few shots for the feature. That night, we received a warm message from him, along with a photo of us captured in that fleeting moment.

Alumni Sharing **04** Discovering Oneself within Football: A Conversation with Harvey Man Wing Cheong

text /Michael photo /Charlie



Harvey Man, perhaps better known as Man Sir (文Sir) from the iconic local YouTube channel "Trial & Error" (試當真), completed his journey in the MAICS programme and joined our amazing cohort of alumni in 2021. In this issue of *MAICS Connect*, we had the privilege to sit down with Harvey to talk about his life, his story and his multiple identities.

Having completed an MBA degree at Baptist University and teaching Marketing at Lingnan University, Harvey was looking for further enrichment to his scholarly background. However, instead of continuing his exploration in Business and Marketing, he decided that he should discover some other topics that he felt connected with. That was when the MAICS programme emerged as an ideal option.

"I remember that an MAICS alumnus has once described the programme as an experience of opening 'a third eye,' that allows you to view everything through a looking glass, revealing deeper underlying meanings. That was what moved me to enroll in MAICS."

Indeed, Harvey did not enter the MAICS classroom empty-handed—he brought his profound interest in football, not just in football matches and leagues, but also in local football fan culture, as well as more intricately, how football clubs run as an industry. No matter what courses he took, he always treated the coursework

as an opportunity to share his passion with the instructors. In the "Gender, Love and Sexuality" course taught by Dr. Janet Pang, which Harvey named one of the most remarkable courses, he investigated toxic masculinity in the British Premier League.

Harvey's love for football started at a young age. Like many other kids, he played football, but he was not quite like the football kids that he grew up with. He often found himself different from the macho boys—he considered himself a softer kid, always sensible to the surroundings. He did not put too much thought into this while he was dashing around with his football buddies. It wasn't until he took the course in gender studies that he looked into himself and comprehended the performance of masculinity, not only on football pitches, but as a male.

"Being a man could mean being a man of different forms, different styles on a wide spectrum." Harvey's kindness was felt throughout the whole interview, just like what his Instagram username suggests, "@empatharvey."

Harvey also saw fan culture in football as another topic that deserves more discussions. It was in the course "Politics of Cultural Identities" that he found the answer to the solidarity of football fans. As a big fan of Liverpool FC himself, he found a pathway to study the construction of identity in the Hong Kong context through the deep engagement of local supporters of



Harvey was reading a local comic book about football recommended by our team.



Liverpool. One of his findings is that Liverpool FC serves as a place for uniting individuals, finding their subjectivities through collective fan actions, especially in Hong Kong where an identity is never taken for granted.

"I still like Liverpool very much... The passion is always here, but I view fan culture from a much wider angle now. It makes me less of an extreme die-hard fan."

The academic training that Harvey received in the MAICS programme has equipped him with fresh insights into his career in the media industry. Soon after he graduated, he joined "Trial & Error" and started creating videos with his colleagues, Hui Yin 許賢 and Leung Yik-ho (Jen C-Fu 贊師父), who also happen to be football enthusiasts. His production includes the *ACOO Hong Kong Football* series and the documentary series of the "Trial & Error Football Team." While the 6-episode ACOO series displayed different dimensions of Hong Kong football on the screen, the documentary of the Trial & Error Football Team focused on the people. This series not only tells the story of a football team, but also shows how co-workers with different characters come together as a sports team.

"Football is a whole different game. The conflict becomes clear when a group of creators with distinct personalities play such a game that's all about teamwork. That conflict was why we named the documentary series *Trial and Error: Team and Ego*." For Harvey, the charm of football documentaries is not how they describe the performance of football teams, but how they dig into the personal stories of each player, thus forming dynamics within the team.

"They are not just colleagues, but a group of real people interacting with each other. After completing this series, I paid much more attention to how football displays personalities and how the players interact with each other, even when I am watching Liverpool's matches."

Recently, Harvey has experienced several changes in identity. At work, he has become one of the core members of the new sub-channel "Shoot La Due" (拍住先), but perhaps the most remarkable shift is his new role as a husband and dad. We asked Harvey, if he could only choose one single identity to represent himself at the moment, what would it be. With hardly a second's thought, he answered,

"My daughter popped into my mind. I like Liverpool a lot, and I enjoy being a creator as well, but my daughter is on another level." Harvey's parenting philosophy is to accompany. To accompany his 1-year-old daughter in exploring the world, experiencing different life stages, and overcoming various constraints.

"I want to show her that I care." We cannot but think of "@empatharvey" once again.



Screencap from the documentary series *Trial & Error: Team and Ego*.

05

MAICS Happenings
Events and Memories 2024-2025

Re-exploring Sham Shui Po



Mui Wo Guided Tour



Macau Field Trip



Jao Tsung-I Academy Field Trip



35th Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Screening

MAICS Artist-in-residence
Scheme 2025 Public Screenings:
He Xiaopei

- "Bad Women of China" (2021)
- "When Lesbians Divorce Gay Men" (2024)

Voices from the Ground
Screening Series

- "Daughter of the Light" (2020)
- "The Woman From Myanmar" (2022)
- "Fallen Treasures" (2024)
- "Obedience" (2024)

Field Trips

- Mui Wo Guided Tour
- Graffiti Tour
- Re-exploring Sham Shui Po
- Tai Kwun
- Macau
- Soundscape Walking Tour with soundpocket
- The Fu Court
- Jao Tsung-I Academy
- Chungking Mansions

Other Screenings

- 35th Hong Kong Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Screening @ CUHK
- "Once Upon a Time in HKDSE" Screening

Echoes from Tomorrow: Contemporary Women Digital Filmmaking in Cambodia



Digital Feminism in China: Censorship and Expression



10th Edition of My Kino-Eye |
Student Documentary Screening &
Documentary Media Course Project Showcase



Reading Group



Digital Feminism in Asia Talk Series

- Precarious Ecologies in/of Queer Asian Cinemas
- Digital Feminism in China: Censorship and Expression
- Echoes from Tomorrow: Contemporary Women Digital Filmmaking in Cambodia
- When Fans Meet AI: A Feminist Ethics of Care for Participatory Culture in Digital Asia

Talks and Sharing

- MAICS Career Talk: Why Study a PhD?
- Book Talk: Anime's Knowledge Cultures: Geek, Otaku, Zhai
- Can ChatGPT Write?
- Soviet Cyborgs and Chinese AI: A conversation
- Guest Lecture: Oral History, Urban Environment, and Community Building: A Case from Lantau Island
- Guest Lecture: The Boat People & The Vietnamese Diaspora in Hong Kong

Other Events

- Reading Group: Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness
- 10th Edition of My Kino-Eye | Student Documentary Screening and CULS5411 Documentary Media Course Project Showcase
- Reading Group: Dreadful Desires: The Uses of Love in Neoliberal China



Academic Exchange 2025

Manila, Philippines

text & photo /
Li Zuyuan

The exchange trip to Manila was a novel and heartwarming experience. During the three-day tour, I engaged in dialogue and reflection on the theme of Archives while exploring local cultural venues and unique churches in the Philippines. This journey also enriched my bonds with classmates and teachers, while also allowing me to forge new friendships within the local community.

Arriving in a foreign country is always a mix of excitement and unfamiliarity. However, once I hopped into a Manila taxi, I immediately felt the influence of

global pop culture on the city. The radio played the latest hit songs from the West and K-pop, and the driver eagerly discussed music trends with us. As a passionate fan of pop music, I quickly felt a connection to this vibrant place.

On our first day, we visited Ateneo De Manila University to participate in an exchange activity centered on the theme of Archives. I was struck by the diverse perspectives of students from various disciplines and cultural backgrounds. A Filipino student particularly captivated me with his insights on local myth-



ological stories and their significance within the framework of archives. These narratives serve as a reflection of evolving identity across various historical epochs.

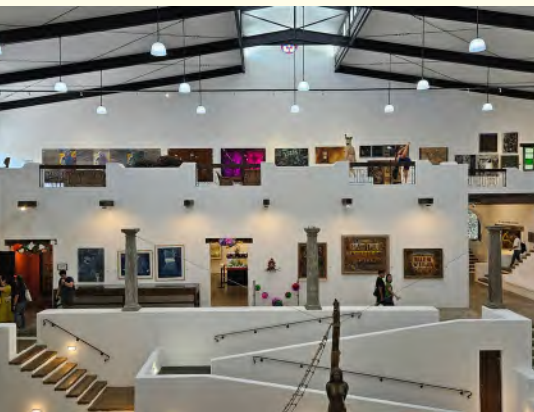
Beyond academic exchanges, we toured several cultural sites and churches in Manila. My favorite was the Pintô Art Museum, which, despite its small entrance, revealed an enchanting world with various themed exhibits. The serene natural environment inside provided a refreshing escape from the tropical heat. Additionally, visiting The Manila Cathedral offered insights into the Philippines' religious history.

Throughout these cultural experiences, I recalled Benny's course of Cultural Venues Management, which helped me to better understand the mission, vision, and values of these institutions and their roles in cultural preservation and public education in Manila.

Ultimately, the journey nurtured new friendships and strengthened existing bonds. The rich journey allowed for more profound interactions with classmates and teachers, while also connecting me with local friends, as we shared our lives across different cultural backgrounds.

Reflection on my Academic Exchange to Manila

text & photo / Xavier, Chan I Chun



This Manila trip was truly meaningful, focusing on both personal heritage and academic exploration. With Filipino descent, I found visiting Ateneo de Manila University was one of the highlights. The symposium of “Archive as Method in Literary & Cultural Studies.” was very inspiring and the students’ projects impressed me a lot—the students were all dedicated, keen to show what they knew in relation to their respective fields of expertise and creativity.

Visiting the Ateneo Art Gallery was another great experience. The exhibition presented the fascinating existence of the art pieces and installations, each of them embodied a rich contemporary artistic sense. Not only was the gallery visually appeal-

ing, but it also encouraged deep contemplation on culture and creativity to work together.

Moreover, for me, this academic exchange was a graduation trip with my classmates. We worked hard but had fun, busted out those presentations and ended up feeling accomplished along the way. Experiencing the efforts in such an active environment was indeed gratifying, and we had explored different local delicacies in Manila. Sweet halo-halo are our all-time favourite!

I am sincerely thankful to my professors at CUHK for arranging us this amazing and transformative trip! Being able to combine all the academic engagement with cultural immersion made this trip one that I will never forget!

Classroom Moments



Cultural Studies in Film and Video



Special Topics in Intercultural Studies:
Video Games Studies



Science, Technology, and Culture



AI Culture and Society



The Culture of Travel and the Travel of Culture



Classroom Moments



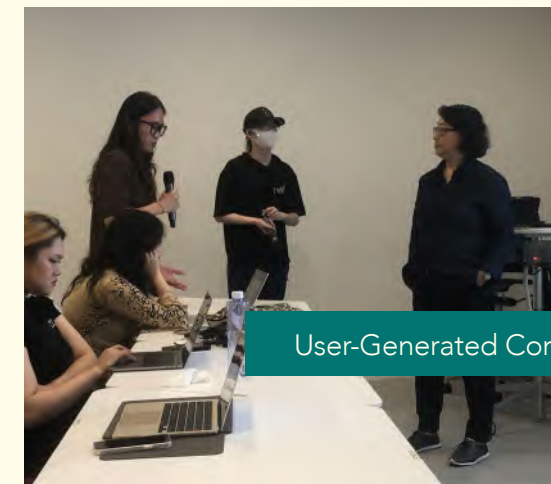
Special Topics in Intercultural Studies:
Law and Critical Humanities



Queer Movements and Sexual Politics



Fandom and Participatory Culture



User-Generated Content and Digital Culture



06 Afterword: Editors' Notes

Nancy Wong Shu Huen

It is exciting to share the release of our 2nd issue of the *MAICS CONNECT*! I hope you find it as enjoyable and inspiring as we did in creating it.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my incredible team members—Alison, Charlie, and Michael. Your hard work and dedication have made *MAICS CONNECT* a success. Thank you Janet and Zowie for your support in bringing this newsletter to life. Thank you all the interviewees and alumni for sharing your stories which did inspire us a lot.

We had the pleasure of taking a walk with Prof. Serrano and Issac in Sham Shui Po and Wan Chai respectively. When we asked Prof. Patterson and Harvey about their identities, we were amazed by their quick response: “Father.” Producing this issue of *MAICS CONNECT* has brought me great joy. I really cherish the chance to remain involved with our community. Once again, thank you all for your commitment and enthusiasm!

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