



PREVIEW

Faces of the Chin Women

**Asia Fine Art
Until Nov 24**

When photographer and author Jens Uwe Parkitny first set foot in Myanmar a decade ago, he was struck by the cultural depth of the country. Then in 2001 when he went to the Chin State to trek Mount Victoria he came across a face that was to lead him back again and again – a woman with facial tattoos smoking a pipe.

"It's unusual because I see art on the face," the 44-year-old German says. "It collides with the Western perception of beauty, because in the West, most people tattoo and pierce every other part of the body except the face. The face is considered taboo. That was when I made it a personal quest [to photograph these women]."

Parkitny has spent the past eight years travelling to and from what used to be known as Burma to take photos of women who still have facial tattoos, an art that he believes is gradually vanishing partly because of modernisation. Some of these portraits are on show at Asia Fine Art and today he will launch the corresponding book *Bloodfaces* at Kelly & Walsh bookstore in Pacific Place. The proceeds from the sale of prints and books will go to the Training School for Girls Orphanage in Yangon.

Parkitny says there is no meaningful research done on this practice but there are universal interpretations of the art of facial tattoos. For example, "it can symbolise clan affiliation," he says. "In a clan-organised society, it identifies where a person with a certain face tattoo belongs. It can also be a transitional mark, from childhood to womanhood, because the Chin women are tattooed between seven and 15 years old, [before becoming] a full-fledged member of a clan."

"And then there is a very simple aspect to it – beauty. It is done to enhance beauty."

Parkitny says not all women are tattooed and suggests those wearing a tattoo enjoy a higher social status. "If you look at some of the tattoos, I'm quite certain they have some spiritual aspect to it. It's like a permanent mask either for identity or to feed off that supernatural power. But it's not known, the symbolism of some tattoos have been irretrievably lost."

One of the biggest challenges for this on-going project – the photographer is set to return early next year – is to locate these groups of women.

"I have to do my own field research," Parkitny says. "And build trust. For eight years I travelled back to the villages again and again to build that trust. I spend more than an hour to photograph them. It's a very intense experience for both."

Kevin Kwong

Daily, 9am-8pm, Starstreet, U/G Lobby, Three Pacific Place, Wan Chai. Inquiries: 2522 0405

Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd, Central, HK\$120, HK\$100 (members) HK Ticketing. Inquiries: 2521 7251

Swire Symphony under the Stars

Perry So conducts violinist Huang Mengla and the HK Philharmonic Orchestra in works by Strauss, Sarasate, Bao Yuan-kai, Rimsky-Korsakov, Zhu Jian'er, Ravel, Borodin and Tchaikovsky. Tomorrow, 7.30pm (doors open, 5.30pm), Happy Valley Racecourse Recreation Ground, free with ticket. Inquiries: 2721 2030

Man and Woman, War and Peace

The Edward Lam Dance Theatre's romantic-comedy about modern relationships. Starring Denise Ho Wan-see. In Putonghua with Chinese surtitles. Tomorrow-Nov 16, 7.45pm, also Sat-Nov 15, 2.30pm, Kwai Tsing Theatre, 12 Hing Ning Rd, Kwai Chung, HK\$120-HK\$120

Gidon Kremer & Kremerata Baltica

The Latvian violinist and the chamber orchestra he founded play works by Pärt, Đerkönytė, Schubert, Piazzolla and Mozart. Tomorrow, 8pm, HK Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd, TST, HK\$180-HK\$480 Urbtx. Inquiries: 2268 7321

★ EDITOR'S PICK

Musicarama – Paul Klee with Ensemble Sortisatio

The German quartet (oboeist Walter Klingner, bassoonist Axel Andrae, viola player Matthias Sannemüller and guitarist Thomas Blumenthal) play works such as Chan Wing-wah's *Oriental Garden*, Stephen Yip's *Reflection on Klee's Ancient Sound* and Pang Chun-ting's *When a Golden Fish is Morphing into Squares*. Tomorrow, 8pm, HK City Hall, 5 Edinburgh Place, Central, HK\$100

Not Even Wrong

Pants Production's stage adaptation of Paul Collins' tale about his autistic son. In Cantonese. Tomorrow-Sat, 8pm, Sat-Nov 15, 3pm, HK Cultural Centre, 10 Salisbury Rd, TST, HK\$120, HK\$160 Urbtx. Inquiries: 9238 3158

Zion to SoHo

Australian composer-pianist Warren Wills and Chinese-Canadian vocalist Heidi Mak perform a variety of music including ancient Middle Eastern, American jazz and Chinese pop. Tomorrow, 8pm, HK Arts Centre, 2 Harbour Rd, Wan Chai, HK\$220 Urbtx. Inquiries: 6679 0350

★ EDITOR'S PICK

Being Gidon Kremer: The Rise and Fall of the Classical Musician

Violinist Gidon Kremer, violin and piano duo Aleksey Igudesman and Richard

My Darling Clemmie

Perilous Mouths Entertainment's drama about Winston Churchill's wife, Clementine Hozier. Starring Rohan McCullough. Nov 17-21, 7.30pm, also Nov 21, 2.30pm, Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd, Central, HK\$280, HK\$220 (members) HK Ticketing. Inquiries: 2521 7251

Fame

The HK Academy for Performing Arts' production of the musical about students attending the New York City High School of Performing Arts. In Cantonese with Chinese and English surtitles. Nov 18-21, 7.30pm, also Nov 21, 2.30pm, HK Academy for Performing Arts, 1 Gloucester Rd, Wan Chai, HK\$65, HK\$100 HK Ticketing. Inquiries: 2584 8500

★ EDITOR'S PICK

Musicarama – *Serenades by*