

## PAK Sheung-chuen

### Suggested class activities for Junior Secondary

**Artist:** PAK Sheung-chuen

**Level:** Junior Secondary

**Theme:** Playing with Chinese Words

**Suggested length:** 3 hours

**Teaching concept:**

Contemporary art encompasses diverse art forms, one of which, conceptual art, is particularly difficult for students to grasp. PAK Sheung-chuen is good at expressing his ideas through conceptual art. His works are closely related to daily life, giving them a human touch, and are easy to understand. He emphasises that his inspiration comes mostly from observing and recording everyday objects, reflecting on them and then transforming them into works of art.

This course aims to help students learn about a new art-making approach, using the concepts behind PAK's works instead of conventional art approaches. The students experience conceptual art through PAK's approach and style.

**Required background knowledge:**

1. The students should have the basic ability to read.

**Teaching goals:**

1. Learn about and appreciate PAK's creative approach and style through his video.
2. Understand the characteristics and development of conceptual art.
3. Learn about the SCAMPER technique to discover ways of creating conceptual art.
4. Explore how textual arrangement or features can help create meaningful or unique phrases by selecting words from a textual piece.

**Preparation before class:** Ask the students to select and photocopy an article from a book, textbook, newspaper or magazine.

**Suggested Class Activities:**

1. **Motivating the students (Suggested length: 5 mins)**

Show the **“Artist Introduction ppt” pp6-8** and Q&A:

- What do you see in the picture?  
(Shopping receipts)

- Do you think this is a piece of artwork?  
(Free to discuss)



2. Introduce PAK Sheung-chuen and his artistic style (Suggested length: 5 mins)

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp2-4

Born in Fujian in 1977, PAK Sheung-chuen settled in Hong Kong in 1984. He obtained his B.A. degree in Fine Arts and Theology from The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2002. He was awarded the Overseas Exchange Prize (Chinese Performance Art) from the Macao Museum of Art in 2005 and 2008. In 2011, he was selected by *ArtAsiaPacific* as one of five Outstanding Artists and Promising Figures. In 2012, he received the Best Artist Award in the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards and the Award for Best Artist (Visual Arts) at Hong Kong Arts Development Awards. In 2009, he represented Hong Kong to participate in the Venice Biennale. He joined Frieze London and was awarded the Stand Prize in 2012.

PAK’s works span photography, painting and conceptual art, addressing the connections between individuals, cities and nature.

3. Play the “Artist Video mp4” (Suggested length: 20 mins)

Play 0:00-3:42 and followed by Q&A

- Where does PAK get his inspiration?  
(Daily life.)

- According to PAK, what is the meaning of his artworks?  
(The audience thinks he sees things from distinct perspectives, but PAK believes that our attitude decides what we see. Our ideas allow us to assign different meanings to things.)

**Play the remaining video**

4. **Appreciation of PAK’s works (Suggested length: 15 mins)**

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp9-14

Explain the ideas and methods of expression behind PAK’s artworks:

- *The Horizon Placed at Home* (2004)

Idea: To create a sea view.

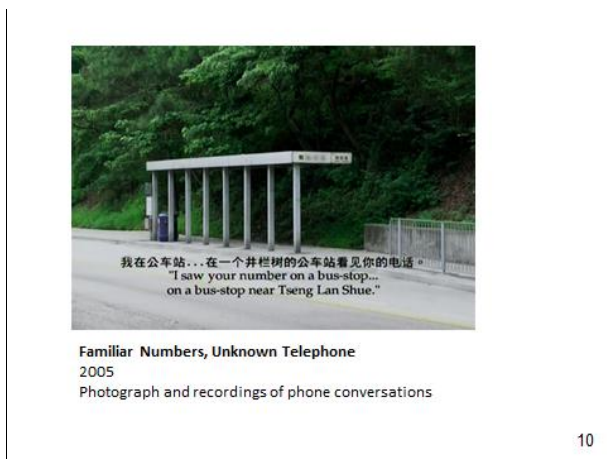
Method of expression: He collected a bottle of seawater from five spots in Victoria Harbour, ensuring each bottle had the same amount of water, and stood them on a shelf at home. The water in the five bottles created a straight line, forming a sea horizon.



- *Familiar Numbers, Unknown Telephone* (2005)

Idea: Link unrelated things to represent connections between individuals, which can be intimate but distant at the same time.

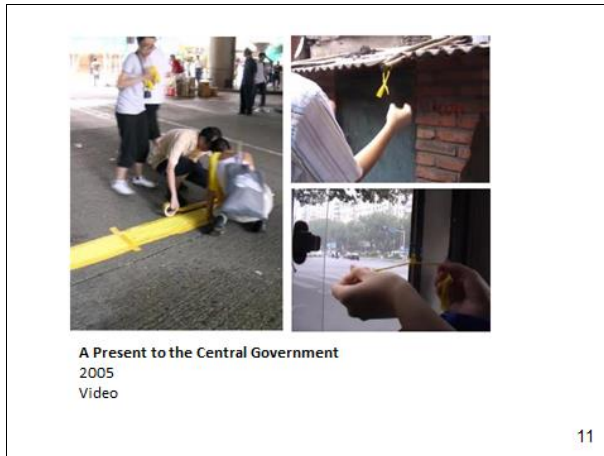
Method of expression: Generating random numbers by linking familiar bus numbers.



- *A Present to the Central Government* (2005)

Idea: Present the symbolic meanings of 1 July in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Method of expression: He took the yellow fabric which the marchers had stepped on in the 1 July democracy march in Hong Kong and cut them into strips. Then he tied the yellow strips together to symbolically encircle Tiananmen Square.



- *Breathing in a House* (2006)

Idea: How long does it take to consume all the air in a room?

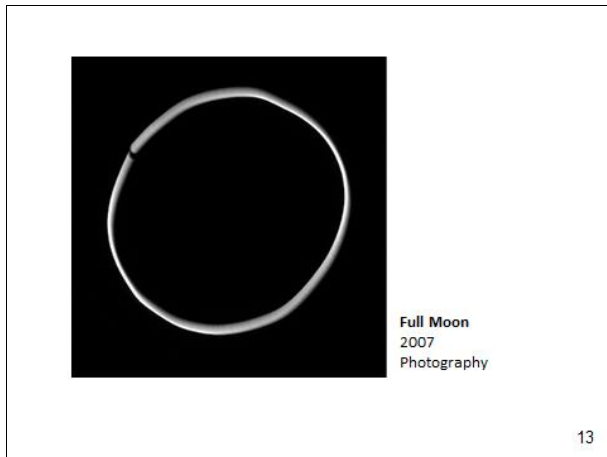
Method of expression: PAK blew air from his lungs into plastic bags and calculated the time required to fill the room with the plastic bags.



- *Full Moon* (2007)

Idea: Create an image of a full moon to remember his family.

Method of expression: By turning the camera in a circle, PAK captured the image of a full moon.



- *Gospel TV* (2012)

Idea: Spread the gospel.

Method of expression: PAK sent people to visit strangers' homes and stick black tape on the four corners of their televisions, so that the remaining visible screen became cross-shaped, representing the idea that "every light that passes through is a cross".



- The teacher should summarize PAK's creative ideas and point out that his sources of inspiration come from daily life. PAK's artworks are about the relationship between individuals and their environment. He is good at including words in his artworks. He emphasised that an idea comes before a visual presentation. That is why he does not set any limitations in terms of artistic expression.

5. **Introduce the background and characteristics of conceptual art (Suggested length: 10 mins)**


Show the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp2-4**

- The origin of conceptual art:

**The origin of conceptual art:**

- It became popular in Europe and America in the 1970s.

- The characteristics of conceptual art:



**The characteristics of conceptual art:**

- It emphasises that the concepts expressed by an artist are more important than the artwork itself.
- The process of creation is more important than the creative outcome.
- It emphasises the connection and communication between individuals, daily life and the environment.

- Why conceptual art often uses objects found in everyday life:

**Why conceptual art often uses objects found in everyday life:**

- It is a phenomenon continued since French painter and sculptor Marcel Duchamp adopted everyday objects in his art.
- Conceptual art is not bound by traditions or rules. That is why everyday objects can be used.

6. **Introduce SCAMPER (Suggested length: 20 mins)**

Show the “**Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt**” pp5-13

- Briefly explain the definition of SCAMPER (substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, eliminate and reverse):




### Introducing SCAMPER

- Robert F. Eberle invented SCAMPER based on Alex Osborn’s idea of the checklist method of brainstorming.
- SCAMPER is an acronym that represents seven ways of thinking.



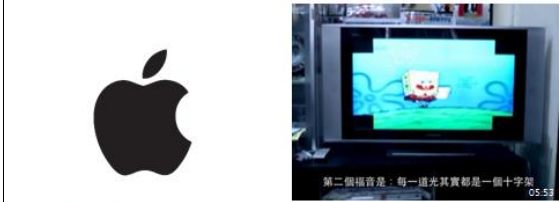
<h2>Introducing SCAMPER</h2>		
S	Substitute(替代)	Substituted one element with another.
C	Combine(合併)	Combine one element with another.
A	Adapt (調整)	Adjust the position, shape, size, colour, texture or concept.
M	Modify(修改)	Enlarge, heighten, extend, thicken, accelerate, deepen, shrink, lower, shorten, make thinner, decelerate or reduce. Change usual method or apply something in other ways.
P	Put to other uses (其他用途)	Change the usual method or use something in other ways.
E	Eliminate(消除)	Eliminate, omit or simplify some elements.
R	Re-arrange(重新安排) Reverse(反轉)	Reverse, turn upside down, turn inside out or re-arrange the content.



- Use the artworks of PAK or other artists as examples to explain SCAMPER.


S	Substitute	<p>Substituted one element with another.</p> <div data-bbox="708 293 1270 712"> <p><b>1. Substitute</b></p>  <p>Salvador Dalí Mae West's Lips Sofa 1936-37</p> <p>PAK Sheung-chuen The Horizon Placed at Home 2004 5 bottles of seawater and a map</p> </div>
C	Combine	<p>Combine one element with another.</p> <div data-bbox="708 819 1270 1238"> <p><b>2. Combine</b></p>  <p>PAK Sheung-chuen Familiar Numbers, Unknown Telephone 2005 Photograph and Recordings of Phone conversations</p> <p>PAK Sheung-chuen The Horizon Placed at Home 2004 5 bottles of seawater and a map</p> </div>
A	Adapt	<p>Adjust the position, shape, size, colour, texture or concept.</p> <div data-bbox="708 1395 1270 1814"> <p><b>3. Adapt</b></p>  <p>PAK Sheung-chuen Full Moon 2007 Photography</p> <p>PAK Sheung-chuen A Present to the Central Government 2005 Video</p> </div>
M	Modify	<p>Enlarge, heighten, extend, thicken, accelerate, deepen, shrink, lower, shorten, make thinner, decelerate or reduce.</p>




		<p>Change usual method or apply something in other ways.</p> <div data-bbox="708 293 1270 712"> <p><b>4. Modify</b></p>  <p>Claes and Coosje van Bruggen Oldenburg <b>Spoonbridge and Cherry</b> 1985-1988 Sculptures</p> <p>Florentijn Hofman <b>Rubber Duck</b> 2013 Installation</p> </div>
P	Put to another use	<p>Change the usual method or use something in other ways.</p> <div data-bbox="708 869 1270 1288"> <p><b>5. Put to other uses</b></p>  <p>PAK Sheung-chuen <b>Familiar Numbers, Unknown Telephone</b> 2005 Photograph and voice recordings</p> <p>PAK Sheung-chuen <b>Breathing in a House</b> 2006 Video</p> </div>
E	Eliminate	<p>Eliminate, omit or simplify some elements.</p> <div data-bbox="708 1395 1270 1814"> <p><b>6. Eliminate</b></p>  <p>the Apple logo 1999</p> <p>PAK Sheung-chuen <b>Gospel TV</b> 2012 Tape and calligraphy</p> </div>
R	Re-arrange Reverse	<p>Reverse, turn upside down, turn inside out or re-arrange the content.</p>

## 7. Re-arrange

### Reverse



Xu Bing  
Square Calligraphy Classroom  
1994  
Woodblock print




Pak Sheung-chuen  
Miracle of \$132.30  
2003  
Shopping receipt

**7. Appreciation and discussion (Suggested length: 25 mins)**

Show the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp14-15**

- Divide the students into groups. Ask them to discuss the ideas and method of expression of PAK’s *Miracle of \$132.30* using the following questions. Select some groups to share their opinions.

### Appreciation and discussion



C & C 超市 (2003)  
嘉 樂 街 412 號

康翠蝦球 25g	¥10.00	7.50	A
康翠肉 375 毫升	4.00	A	
康翠鮮魷 300g	25.90	0	
鳳爪 1.5kg 淨重 570g	10.90	0	
3合1 康翠鮮牛奶 400.50	39.90	0	
純鮮康翠鮮牛奶 45.00	3.00	A	
康翠鮮牛奶 375	4.00	A	
康翠鮮牛奶 400.50	39.90	A	
TOTAL	132.30		
Change	132.30 - 0.00		

Pak Sheung-chuen  
Miracle of \$132.30  
2003  
Shopping receipt

- I went to the supermarket and purchased eight products. If you read the second word of each product on the shopping receipt from top to bottom, you get the following (in Chinese): ...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

### Appreciation and discussion

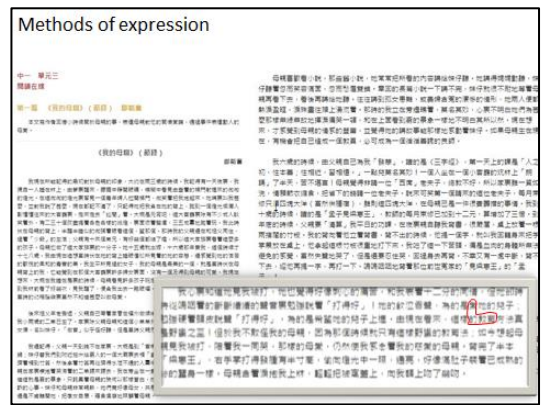
- What is/are the form(s) of artistic expression?
- How is it different from traditional artworks (such as paintings and sculptures)?
- What do you think is the message behind the artwork?
- How would you describe the artist’s creative process?
- What do you think about PAK’s conceptual art?

8. Class activity (Suggested length: 60 mins)

Show the “Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp16-20

Guide the students to create an artwork with the following procedure:


- 8.1 Have the students brainstorm a message they would like to express.
- 8.2 Methods of expression:
  - Preparation before class: Have the students brainstorm using the SCAMPER technique. Have them select an article from a textbook, newspaper, magazine or book, make a photocopy of it, and create an artwork with it.
  - Have the students form groups and discuss the possible ways of reading the text (e.g. reading a vertically arranged article horizontally, skipping words or reading backwards) or using creative methods (e.g. cutting and pasting, folding, or painting). Then have them look for words in the article to form a meaningful sentence.



8.3 Organising and recording the information:

- Remind the students that it takes time to develop a conceptual artwork. They should express their ideas with forms such as photography or drafting. Then, they should record the date they completed their artwork, their creative ideas and process, and their reflections.
- Use the following record as an example to guide students to record their brainstormed artworks.

Title of the artwork	<i>Miracle of \$132.30</i>
Idea behind the artwork	<p>The artist thought that we cannot fully prove the existence or non-existence of God with rationality and logic, so he tried to do it in the opposite way. With the use of irrational, illogical and random methods, the artist raised the question: how many “miracles” have been caused by humans?</p> <p><a href="http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html">http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.grateful-heart.org/WonderfulGrace/content.php?article=2638&amp;page=2">http://www.grateful-heart.org/WonderfulGrace/content.php?article=2638&amp;page=2</a></p>

<p>Method of expression (Describe the date, artistic method, media used and location(s) of the creative process.)</p>	<p>On 13 November 2003, the artist went to the CRC supermarket near Garden Rivera in Shatin and purchased eight products. He arranged the sequence of the products for the shopkeeper to scan the barcodes so that when we read the second word of each product on the shopping receipt from top to bottom, we get the following (in Chinese): ...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). The media of the artwork included the actions, words, photos and shopping receipt.</p>  <p><a href="http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html">http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html</a></p>
<p>The method used to express the artist's idea.</p>	<p>The artist arranged the sequence of the products to be scanned by the cashier so that the second words of the scanned products would form a meaningful phrase. The artist's manipulation behind the mechanical process presents a question regarding religion: whereas things may seem to be part of God's arrangement, very often, they have been arranged by humans. The artist expressed his doubt about religion through the artwork.</p>

<p>Organising and recording the information</p> <p><i>Miracle of \$132.30 – Idea behind the artwork</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The artist thought that we cannot fully prove the existence or non-existence of God with rationality and logic, so he tried to do it in the opposite way. With the use of irrational, illogical and random methods, the artist raised the question:</li> <li>• How many “miracles” have been caused by humans?</li> <li>• <a href="http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html">http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.grateful-heart.org/WonderfulGrace/content.php?article=2638&amp;page=2">http://www.grateful-heart.org/WonderfulGrace/content.php?article=2638&amp;page=2</a></li> </ul>
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### Organising and recording the information

#### *Miracle of \$132.30* – Method of expression (Describe the date, artistic method, media used and location(s) of the creative process.)

- On 13 November 2003, the artist went to the CRC supermarket near Garden Rivera in Shatin and purchased eight products. He arranged the sequence of the products for the shopkeeper to scan the barcodes so that when we read the second word of each product on the shopping receipt from top to bottom, we get the following (in Chinese): ...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).



- The media of the artwork included the actions, words, photos and shopping receipt.

• [http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://oneeyeman.blogspot.hk/2013_11_01_archive.html)

### Organising and recording the information

#### *Miracle of \$132.30* – Explain the method used to express the artist's idea

- The artist arranged the sequence of the products to be scanned by the cashier so that the second words of the scanned products would form a meaningful phrase.
- The artist's manipulation behind the mechanical process presents a question regarding religion: whereas things may seem to be part of God's arrangement, very often, they have been arranged by humans. The artist expressed his doubt about religion through the artwork.

## 9. Presentation and conclusion (Suggested length: 25 mins)

- Select a few students to share their thoughts about their conceptual artworks, the ideas behind the works, their method of expression and the method they chose to express their ideas.

## 10. Materials

Plain paper, sign pen, correction tape