

Metropolis *Strange tales from our international brethren.*

Time Out Hong Kong



Museums that are simply roomfuls of relics just don't cut it for the people of Hong Kong. A community project called Build Your Dream Museum Everyday, allows regular people to upload pictures of objects that they think are befitting a museum display or drop them off at a stall set up at the Art HK 09 fair. Anything goes: You grandma's graduation picture, your prom dress and that coal-fuelled iron that no one ever uses. But if so many Hong Kong homes already house old-time memorabilia, why collect stuff for a new museum at all?



Time Out Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, rainy days aren't just gloomy, they're a pain for its fashion forward female residents, who are forced to spend precious minutes wondering what in their closet will survive the downpour. Enter Shuella Boots aka booties for stilettos. The HK\$ 400 (Rs 2,500) gumboot look-alike slips over chappals and Jimmy Choos and protects them from rain, muck and calf-deep flood. Once safely indoors, they fold up nicely into a little pouch, ready for the next use. Now why didn't we think of that?



Time Out New York

Want to swap ghost stories and hunt beings from beyond? Bro downs with Acme Paranormal, a 98-member club for spirit enthusiasts, founded by New Yorker Laurence Hewitt. Armend with devices like

electromagnetic-field meters and an Ovilus (a digital dictionary to communicate with ghosts) the group conducts investigations at a local cemetery where they mingle with the spirits of Leonard Bernstein and Boss Tweed. They also discuss reincarnation, the difference between ghosts and spirits and demonic possession. Creepy!



Time Out Hong Kong

The next time you're in Hong Kong and are in some serious need of eye candy, slip on some of the accessories by model-turned-jewellery designer Tadaaki Wakamatsu. On offer under his brand Q-pot are zero calorie macaroon rings, whipped cream phone straps, chocolate biscuit necklaces and other accessories that look like they should be on the candy tray of the local patisserie. None of these are edible, fortunately, which explains why Wakamatsu's model friends have been splurging over the little treats.



Time Out London

Boys! Do you want a firm butt? Boobs that don't sag like you've just breastfed your third? Biceps bulging enough to stand in for Stallone? Look no further than London's Karine Jackson Hair and Beauty Rooms. You read right, London's fit and not-so-famous aren't getting their sculpted bodies at a gym; they're now using CACI electro-therapy to zap their muscles into shape. The salon, which traditionally catered to female customers, now sees more males. Makes you wonder if that cutie you saw on the underground was a real man or just a "shockingly" good faker.

OPINION by Shyam Bhat

Pigs flu

The most frightening thing about the swine flu epidemic is the alacrity with which a segment of the populace began wearing masks.

For all I know, you might have a mask on right now. If so, then please do yourself a favour and get rid of it. It's useless. Firstly, if you bought the mask from one of those frantic looking men at a traffic signal, you should know that the mask began its life as a bra. (Those men could sell many more masks if they were upfront about its antecedents.) Secondly, even if you are wearing a surgical mask, you are still unprotected - the H1N1 virus is smaller than the pores on a surgical mask. Indeed, wearing an inappropriate mask might actually increase the risk of infection; after all there's nothing like a bit of warmth and humidity to help make the virus feel at home.

If you really must wear a mask, then the only one that might do you any good is what people in the know call a "N95" mask. No, it's not made by Nokia, and yes, it might protect you from swine flu, but only if it fits you as tightly as a muzzle on a crazed pit-bull.

But really, the point is not what kind of mask you are wearing, but why you are wearing one at all. One possible explanation is that you are wearing a mask because of a combination of fear and ignorance: the media did everything to scare you and very little to educate you. The reports in the newspaper, the frenzied, masked reporters on television describing another horrific death from swine flu, the name itself - "swine flu" - suggestive of some filthy post-apocalyptic

disease, all of this caused you to overestimate two things: Your risk of dying from swine flu, and the ability of the mask to protect you. And that is why you wore the mask.

But there was something else, I was convinced, something more to your mask-wearing fetish. A few observations struck me initially:

You are young, and seem healthier than most people who are not wearing masks.

You are male. Either women are generally more sensible, or would rather not have a bra wrapped around their faces.

You have a strange way of assessing and minimising risk in your life: for example, you wear a mask to protect yourself from the unlikely event of dying from swine flu, but you still ride your motorbike without a helmet.

And then I noticed that you seemed happier, more confident than usual. You looked at women with an uncharacteristic poise. You were louder, more assertive. You walked with a swagger, like a person who has conquered the elements, like someone who has stared at a deadly tiger in the face and laughed.

And then I realised that you are wearing a mask because it liberates you. Like alcohol and good dance music, wearing a mask decreases social inhibitions. You discovered the power of the mask, a power that people from all over the world have long known - from shamans in west Africa, to masked revellers at Mardi Gras, from people at masquerade balls, to Kabuki dancers in Japan. With your mask on, you feel empowered. With your mask on, you have found a new freedom. With your mask on, you have become more truly yourself.



In our inbox "Hi my dear, my name is Mercy and I am a beautiful lovine and caring young girl with full of love and caring."