

NEWS ALERT
For Immediate Release



The Mills Gallery presents first public act by Vhils in Hong Kong

A large-scale site-specific intervention in historic industrial district



HONG KONG. – **The Mills Gallery**, the non-profit cornerstone under The Mills heritage conservation project, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Contemporary Art (HOCA) Foundation, presents the first outdoor act in Hong Kong by celebrated Portuguese artist Alexandre Farto, internationally known for creating under the alias **Vhils**.

Over the following month, Vhils will complete a series of monolithic portraits in his signature medium, carving and drilling directly onto the façade of the original cotton mill walls of The Mills. The artist drew inspiration from his research into the historic heritage site, which played a critical role in the expansion of the local textiles industry of the 1970s and 80s, a pillar of Hong Kong's development. The artist, currently based in the city, will complete two portraits of unsung heroes who have contributed to the textiles industry, symbolising a formative generation who helped build Hong Kong's history and economy. The portraits, like the bygone recollections of personal experiences, will be poetic temporary installations, intended to be removed over the course of The Mills' renovations.

The media are invited to see Vhils' work on Monday, 30th November, 15:00.

Vhils has been interacting with the urban environment since his days as a prolific graffiti writer in the early 2000s. His groundbreaking carving technique has been hailed as one of the most compelling approaches to art created in the street in the last decade. This striking form of visual poetry, showcased around the world in both indoor and outdoor settings, explores the complex relationship between the individual and the built

environment, and thus exposing multi-layers of interpretation for the models of development and material aspirations that urban spaces entail.

The engagement is testament to The Mills Gallery's continuous commitment to foster and nurture artistic talent, with the aim of generating new thought, new ideas and new works, preserving the cultural values of Hong Kong whilst embedding it with new meaning.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About The Mills Gallery

The Mills Gallery is a cornerstone under The Mills heritage conservation project. Established in 2015, the space is expected to complete in 2018, spanning no less than 30,000 sq. feet and consisting of exhibition spaces, a resources centre, multi-functional halls, a gallery store and a café. As one of the largest private art spaces in Hong Kong, The Mills Gallery will execute a series of dynamic cross-disciplinary programmes centred around: Exhibition; Community Engagement; Learning and Artist-in-Residence, to conserve and promote textile art, as well as engage the community of Tsuen Wan and beyond. The non-profit Gallery is committed to fostering independent creative practice, to encouraging multi-cultural dialogue and to exploring new meanings and experiences of textile with local and international communities.

About Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation [HOCA]

HOCA Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2014, aimed at promoting public awareness and developing access to contemporary art in Hong Kong. With a curated series of programs across the city, HOCA will focus its attention on the younger generation of established international artists who are conceptually engaged with contemporary life and society. The curatorial strategy draws inspiration from popular culture, reappropriating or reinterpreting a wide range of medium from animation, illustration, graffiti and graphic design, and seeks to enhance the dialogue of "high art" within the city.

In 2015, the HOCA Foundation has already hosted landmark exhibitions of JR and Invader to critical acclaim, as well as a parallel education program, all accessible to the public. To further HOCA's community outreach, the Foundation will oversee the publication of contemporary art books and the subsequent donation of these to schools, libraries and charitable institutions.