TURNING A traditional cultural symbol into a MARKETING CATALYST

PATA GOLD AWARD: MARKETING
In a city synonymous with casinos, how do you engage visitors who are expecting exactly that, wow them beyond their expectations, and keep them coming back for more?
COVID-19 disrupted the entire world. Macau, a tourism-dependent city, saw tourist numbers drop to zero.

For a city that is synonymous with casinos, the challenge for MGM was to not only pivot but to change visitors’ perceptions.

How do you wow visitors beyond their expectations of casinos, and ultimately, keep them coming back for more?
As a local integrated leisure and tourism enterprise in Macau, MGM took the lead in proposing the development concept of “tourism+” and has championed local culture as its central theme.

The challenge was to find the perfect local cultural symbol, and reinterpret its expression so every activity remains fresh and inspiring for contemporary travelers to experience Macau.
From a CULTURAL SYMBOL to a long-term brand engagement strategy
Macau embodies the essence of Lingnan culture, which draws on the substance of Central China and embraces new trends from all over the world.

An iconic symbol of Lingnan culture is the Lingnan lion dance. The lion dance thrives among overseas Chinese communities around the world and is well known globally. That is why there is a saying:

“WHERE THERE ARE CHINESE, THERE ARE LION DANCES.”

The lion too is an iconic symbol of MGM. It is the brand icon of MGM - one that is well known all over the world.

From this parallel came the idea to integrate the cultural Lingnan Lion Dance with the lion image of MGM:

THE LION IP STRATEGY.
A long-term STRATEGY

The strategy embraces the classical aesthetics of Chinese culture while injecting new vitality with modern techniques. This ensures the longevity and adaptability of the cultural program, keeping it relevant in the minds of generations.

The strategy centers around an iconic symbol that is internationally recognised, making it a powerful identity.
The strategy centers on the rich traditions of the Lingnan lion dance. With the promotion of the “Belt and Road” initiative, MGM brings the world to China, and also brings China to the world, by organizing world-class artistic events.

MGM’s unique approach to “shape tourism with culture, and promote culture with tourism” is driven by the use of innovative techniques that combine “technology” with “originality”. The result is an art platform that integrates diverse cultures and fresh interactive experiences to create a unique and attractive cultural and artistic experience for everyone, especially for the Z-generation.

In addition to innovation in the cultural and artistic fields, the Lion IP is also an important long-term sustainable development strategy. It represents MGM’s sense of responsibility for an organization that is based in Macau, rooted in the Great Bay Area, committed to China, and looking to the world.
A CULTURAL SYMBOL comes alive,

DIALING UP brand awareness
A cultural symbol comes alive, dialing up brand awareness

**ONE OBJECT, multiple touchpoints and experiences**

MGM has been consistently creating a series of unique brand collaborations and marketing campaigns around the Lion IP strategy. Through the integration of the “MGM Lion” with traditional intangible cultural heritage, Eastern and Western contemporary art, cultural and entertainment performances, original technology, cuisine, talent development, corporate social responsibility, and international exchanges, the Lion IP spirit and MGM’s corporate brand image have been fully demonstrated while promoting the inheritance and development of the Lingnan Lion Dance and Macau culture.

**ONE OBJECT, multiple audiences**

The programs promotes culture and offers distinctive experiences to everyone of all ages and background, transcending geographical boundaries and religious perspectives.
A cultural symbol comes alive, dialing up brand awareness

Created by renowned artist, Liu Guofu, this exhibition is a homage to Chinese watercolor tradition. In the scroll-style composition, a majestic lion is lying down, slowly awakening. Thus, it is not only the lion in the painting that is slowly awakening, but also the public’s sense of identity with Chinese culture.

AWAKENING

Special Exhibition at the 2nd “Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2021

Specially created by the artist Xue Song, the painting depicts a lion standing on a stone lion stack that embodies Chinese history. It is as if it is standing firmly in the present and about to embark on a broader world stage, demonstrating the cultural confidence and bearing of the East that is “awakening”.

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Empowered by the world’s largest permanent indoor LED screen which blurs the line between virtual and reality, the drama fuses the venue and the performance together to deliver a one-of-a-kind and visual-stimulating extravaganza to the audience.

A cultural symbol comes alive, dialing up brand awareness

MGM AWAKENING LION Ethnic Dance Drama
Launched in 2010, this has become one of Macau’s most popular events. In its latest iteration, the event moved to the MGM Theater, providing a larger stage for lion dance masters to compete and perform, and allowing audiences to better appreciate the brilliance of lion dancing, awakening contemporary society’s emphasis on cultural heritage and sports spirit.
To nurture traditional Chinese skills from an early age and popularize lion dance and Lingnan culture, MGM launched the “MGM Junior Lion Dance Training Program” in 2015. In 2018, the “Junior Lion Dance Performance Competition” went global.

In 2022, the “MGM Youth Traditional Lion Dance Championship” was launched, further cultivating young lion dance talents and promoting the passing down of Lingnan culture.
MACAU SPECIAL OLYMPICS × MGM LION DANCE TEAM

Joining hands with the Macau Special Olympics, MGM established Macau’s first lion dance troupe comprising people with intellectual disabilities. Through a series of activities, they showcase their talents, serve the community, and highlight the inclusivity of lion dance.
One of the most stunning works of the exhibition is the 190cm-high “Awakened Lion” sculpture, based on the elements of the “lion dance” and “tea drinking culture” in Lingnan customs, fully demonstrating the multi-dimensional innovation interpretation and inheritance of the Lion IP towards the lion dance.

MGM commissioned Zhou Yi, a Chinese sugar art master and “China’s Sugar King”, to combine the western sugar art with Chinese traditional and cultural craftsmanship of dough sculpture to create stunning Chinese style art. The exhibition breaks the rules of conventional exhibitions, presenting cultural and artistic expressions in new ways.

A cultural symbol comes alive, dialing up brand awareness
INSPIRING a brand, INSPIRING a city, INSPIRING a community
In just 2 years, the Lion IP programs drew the attention of an audience totaling over 1 billion worldwide. The numbers alone proves the strategy’s success in shaping tourism through culture, and promoting culture through tourism.

**AWAKENING BRAND**

**RESULTS** that matter

Special Exhibition at the 2nd “Art Macao: Macao International Art Biennale 2021

- **249** press coverage in 2 weeks
- Including **leading media outlets** in China and the Greater Bay Area
- **330,000** visitors in 4 months
- **340,000** viewers for the live opening ceremony broadcast and art forum
- Reaching a national audience of **188M** people

**AWAKENING LION RESIDENCY**

- **127** press coverage in 2 weeks
- **640** online visits
- **90+** official and leading media outlets in China and the Greater Bay Area

**2022 MGM LION DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP**

- **17** lion dance troupes
- **7** provinces and cities across China
- **19** social media platforms
  - Live streamed nationally
- **4M+** viewers online and offline

**FONDANT ART**

Exhibition, 2023

- **40,000** admissions in 4 months
- **90+** official and leading media outlets in China and the Greater Bay Area
- **Up to 1.7M** viewers for the live opening ceremony broadcast

Inspiring a brand, inspiring a city, inspiring a community
Through this program, MGM Macau as successfully created a series of representative original campaigns for the local community in Macau, attracting global tourists to experience the unique blend of Chinese and Western cultures and high-quality tourism services in Macau. These initiatives aim to promote the integrated development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and build Macau into a world-renowned “World Tourism Leisure Center.”

In the next decade, MGM Macau will focus on the Lion IP brand strategy and combine it with high-quality and diversified urban economic development of “tourism +” in Macau to conduct deeper levels of creative exploration and practice, striving to make the Lion IP the most attractive cultural and tourism business card of Macau.
**SUPPORTING VIDEO**

The Charm of the MGM Lion IP

🔗 [https://youtu.be/x56mNZDizzU](https://youtu.be/x56mNZDizzU)

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**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

of persons involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Responsible Person(s)</th>
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| IP Concept, Planning and Management | Catarina Lio  
Vice President of Brand Marketing of MGM |
| Art Exhibition Management     | Cristina Kuok  
Vice President of Arts & Culture of MGM |
| Entertainment and Performance | Catarina Lio  
Vice President of Brand Marketing of MGM |
| Marketing and Advertising     | Serena Ho  
Director of Brand Campaign Program of MGM |
| PR & Media Relations          | Irene Wong  
Vice President of Public and Community Relations of MGM |
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