



HOCA FOUNDATION PROUDLY PRESENTS “DEBRIS” THE FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION OF VHILS IN HONG KONG

A multi-site public intervention reflecting on the nature of urban societies

HONG KONG –**Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation [HOCA]** announces “Debris”, the first solo exhibition of celebrated Portuguese artist Alexandre Farto AKA Vhils in Hong Kong. The multi-site initiative will include an intervention on one of the city's iconic trams (in circulation from 19th March 2016) and an exhibition at Pier 4 (open between 21st March– 4th April 2016), encouraging visitors to explore the city and reflect on the nature of the urban environment through the lens of the artist.

Over the past decade, Vhils has been developing a unique visual reflection on present-day urban societies across the globe and the people who form them. Renowned for his groundbreaking carving technique, which employs the built environment as his canvas, Vhils’ approach has been hailed as one of the most compelling to have emerged from the contemporary urban art scene. Following multiple interventions across Hong Kong, “Debris” will be one of the most encompassing and holistic presentations of Vhils’ artistic production.

Central to the artist’s oeuvre, and a thematic basis for the upcoming exhibition, is an expression of the quotidian tension that lies between the individual and the demanding environment of urbanity. For “Debris”, HOCA has selected iconic sites across Hong Kong – a moving tram and the ferry pier – to display works and installations that reflect the breadth of the local cultural landscape. Utilizing a variety of techniques such as drilling, billboard collages, neon light boxes, and sculpture to present an immersive experience, Vhils will deconstruct the images and tropes that have become symbols of the city itself. This re-arrangement of components represents the multiplicity of stimuli people are subjected to in the urban space and is part of a broader reflection on identity in contemporary urban societies. Inspired by the time he has spent as an artist-in-residence in the city, the new works are composed of portraits, juxtapositions and imbrications of graphic and geometric elements, metropolitan patterns and motifs that form a reflection on how individuals are both shaped and help shape the seemingly overwhelming urban environment they live in.

In partnership with Hong Kong Tramways, Vhils will transform this traditional mode of transport into a moving art object by carving into layers of posters applied onto the façade of the carrier. Intended to draw attention to an icon of the local cityscape, the tram will be a moving tribute to the personal histories of the city’s inhabitants

The exhibition will be held at Pier 4, where Vhils will present artworks in new mediums for the first time. Central to the new series is the exploration of his practice of destructive creation in an environment characterised by the plurality of media. An avid experimentalist, the artist has been developing compositions made of neon and metal, enabling him to expand the boundaries of visual expression. A highlight, installed across an elongated exhibition space, is a video of the streets of

the city. In this enveloping experience, the audience will find themselves moving against the decelerated flow of the crowded city sidewalks, prompting a reflection on the role of the individual within the masses.

The landmark exhibition, created as a response to life in Hong Kong, represents HOCA's commitment to promoting public awareness and developing access to contemporary art in the city. With a vision and curatorial strategy that draws inspiration from popular culture, the non-profit organization seeks to enhance access to art, in all its multitude of forms, in the city.

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Alexandre Farto AKA Vhils and Curator of HOCA Foundation, Lauren Every-Wortman are available for interviews by request.

Media studio visits can also be arranged by request.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

[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 mediums from animation, illustration, graffiti, and graphic design, and seeks to enhance the dialogue of "high art" within the city.

In 2015, the HOCA Foundation 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.

[About Vhils](#)

Portuguese artist **Alexandre Farto** aka **Vhils** (b. 1987) has developed a unique visual language based on the removal of the surface layers of walls and other media with non-conventional tools and techniques, establishing symbolic reflections on identity, life in the urban context, the passage of time, and the relationship of interdependence between people and the surrounding environment. His groundbreaking carving technique has been met with critical acclaim. Since 2005 he has been presenting his work around the world in solo and collective exhibitions, art events, institutions, and site-specific interventions. He has also taken part in some of

the most prestigious contemporary and urban art projects. Vhils works with Vera Cortês Art Agency (Portugal), Lazarides Gallery (UK), and Magda Danysz Gallery (France and China). He is represented in several public and private collections in various countries.

Vhils currently lives and works in both Hong Kong and Lisbon.