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Sweeting I
Sónar Hong Kong Festival



*ASEF culture360 contributor David Fernandez interviews Justin Sweeting, Co-founder and music director of Magnetic Asia and music director of [Sónar Kong Kong](#) after its inaugural edition in Hong Kong. The music and multimedia art festival presented more than 30 live shows, live concerts and dj sets ranging from dance music to experimental electronica, and also Asia's first edition of **Sónar+D**, the conference dedicated to creative technologies.*

[caption id="attachment_63552" align="aligncenter" width="640"] © Photos courtesy of Sónar Hong Kong[/caption]

DAVID FERNÁNDEZ: How did the idea for Sónar Hong Kong festival come about?

JUSTIN SWEETING: We felt that Sónar's brand of music, creativity and technology was relevant for Hong Kong and would add considerable value to the creative and cultural landscape locally. We got in touch with the team in Barcelona and found that our vision and work practices were aligned and remarkably similar, so we teamed up to make it happen.

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DF: What is HK’s music scene like nowadays? How important is the local urban context in putting on Sónar?

JS: The local scene is continuously developing, and we need more opportunities like Sónar to help aid and further encourage that growth. The local context is extremely important for us and we’re extremely proud that we are the only Asian edition for Sónar presently, and want to ensure the event also represents a local flavour. The venue itself at the wonderful HK Science Park is the first step in that regard, and an ideal home for Sónar HK.

DF: How many artists have you welcomed this year, and from which parts of the world?

JS: There were over 50 artists performing this year over our six stages, from all around the world: US, European countries like UK, Germany, Italy & Spain were represented, and of course local Hong Kong and regional Asian artists from our neighbouring countries.

DF: How do you think collaboration between Asian and European artists can be beneficial for the societies of both regions?

JS: The sharing and cross-pollination of ideas, contexts, information and histories help develop creative breakthroughs. This isn’t limited to artistic endeavor but all facets of life I feel. We are certainly of the opinion that celebrating diversity, building bridges and connecting the dots is highly beneficial to society as a whole.

[caption id="attachment_63553" align="aligncenter" width="640"]



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DF: What are you trying to bring to Sónar HK specifically that you haven’t seen elsewhere?

JS: It’s that **convergence of music, creativity and technology** which hasn’t been seen here before, and which we feel is so culturally relevant. Of course, we want Sónar Hong Kong to inspire and capture the

imagination of the audience.

DF: The festival has offered many different multimedia programmes this year apart from music, including screenings, talks and workshops. Can you give us a brief review of the highlights at Sónar +D?

JS: Sónar plays a vital role in promoting creative technology via the [Sónar+D](#) programme, providing a unique platform for exchanging ideas and exploring the spaces where creativity and technology meet in a fun and inspirational environment. Highlights of this edition included the pioneering Virtual Reality showcase; state-of-the-art audiovisual works by tech-savvy music innovators [Dirty Electronics](#) and [Myriam Bleau](#); and a keynote speech and performance from influential Japanese new media artist and designer Daito Manabe.

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Hong Kong[/caption]

DF: What is your hope for the future of Sónar Hong Kong? And for the HK music and creative scene?

JS: We want it to truly contribute as a cultural cornerstone on the annual calendar here. To not only be a meeting point for the creative scene but also a catalyst for onward action. This has been the start and we're very excited, and want to help guide where it may lead.

Read more about the Festival: www.sonarhongkong.com

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David Fernández is a Spanish-born contributing writer based in Bangkok, Thailand. Currently working as freelance arts & cultural project manager and digital media consultant, he is also one of the co-founders of Cho Why multi-disciplinary project space. He previously co-founded Le Cool Bangkok arts & culture webzine and worked as content director. Formerly, he served as cultural attaché at the Embassy of Spain – Cultural Office in Bangkok.

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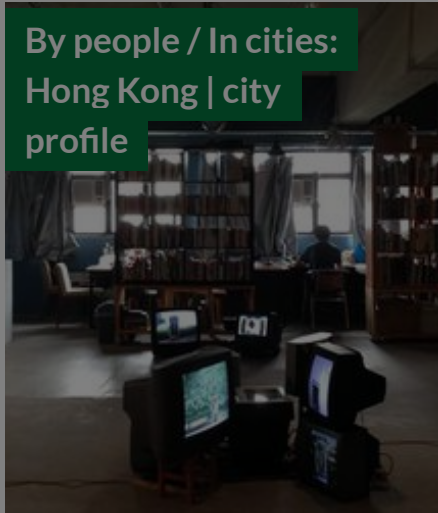
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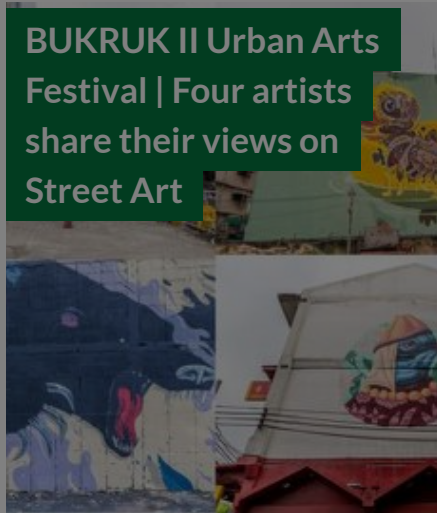
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