



Press Invitation

A Life in Silk

*Jen Bervin: Silk Poems*

November 4, 2019

The University Museum and Art Gallery (UMAG) of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) will present *Jen Bervin: Silk Poems* from November 15, 2019 to January 12, 2020. Jen Bervin's *Silk Poems* began as a six-year research project (2010–2016) developed with expertise from more than thirty international textile archives, medical libraries, nanotechnology and biomedical labs, and sericulture sites in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Beyond silk's traditional use in textiles, researchers are now experimenting with the material in novel forms of biomedical technology, as silk is compatible with human tissue; the immune system can accept silk on surfaces as sensitive as the human brain. In the UMAG exhibition *Silk Poems*, visual artist and author Bervin melds the medium's traditional applications with cutting edge research—engaging with silk's cultural, scientific and linguistic complexities.

In 2016, Ms Bervin collaborated with scientists at the Tufts University Bioengineering Department on fabricating her poetry at nanoscale. In this process, a mask was used to etch her poetry in gold spatter onto a silicon wafer, and then liquid silk was poured over the wafer. As the silk dried, the letters remained suspended in the film, resulting in a work that can be viewed through a microscope.

Throughout the exhibition, Bervin's poetry is recreated in the form of a strand of DNA so as to reflect both the filament pattern that silkworms create when making their cocoon and the genetic structure of silk, which forms like the weft thread in weaving.

Along with the microscope station, the exhibition also includes a video by filmmaker Charlotte Lagarde detailing the project, footage of Bervin reading from her book *Silk Poems*, an over-sized digital print on silk fabric, and materials related to the special edition of the *Silk Poems* publication that was produced by Granary Books.

Ms Bervin's exhibition and appearance in Hong Kong are part of 2019's International Poetry Nights in Hong Kong (IPNHK), a biennial literary festival that will be hosted again this year at UMAG, in collaboration with the poet Bei Dao and the Hong Kong Poetry Festival Foundation. A series of evening readings will be hosted at UMAG (20–24 November 2019), featuring work from 30 award-winning international poets, including Ms Bervin, and musical performances curated by record company Noise Asia.

For more images and captions of the exhibits, please click [here](#).





### Media Preview

**Date:** November 14, 2019 (Thursday)

**Media registration:** Starts at 17:00

**Time:** 17:15 – 17:45

**Meeting Point:** 1/F, Fung Ping Shan Building, UMAG, HKU, 90 Bonham Road, Pokfulam

**Language:** English

**Speaker:** Ms Jen Bervin, Participating Artist

**Media RSVP:**

Ms Elena Cheung, Tel: 2241 5512, Email: [elenac@hku.hk](mailto:elenac@hku.hk)

Ms Chelsea Choi, Tel: 2241 5509, Email: [cchelsea@hku.hk](mailto:cchelsea@hku.hk)

### Opening Ceremony

**Date:** November 14, 2019 (Thursday)

**Time:** 18:00 – 19:30

**Venue:** 1/F, Fung Ping Shan Building, UMAG, HKU, 90 Bonham Road, Pokfulam

**Officiating Guests:**

**Mr Hanscom Smith**, U.S. Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau

**Mr Bei Dao**, Founder IPNHK

**Ms Jen Bervin**, Participating Artist

**Ms Charlotte Lagarde**, Filmmaker

**Host:** Dr Florian Knothe, Director of UMAG, HKU

### International Poetry Nights Hong Kong 2019

**Date:** November 20, 2019 (Tuesday) to November 24, 2019 (Sunday)

**Time:** tbc

**Venues:** 1/F, Fung Ping Shan Building, UMAG, HKU, 90 Bonham Road, Pokfulam;

Studio 303, 3/F of Chong Yuet Ming Cultural Centre, HKU, Pokfulam

**For details, please click here:** <https://ipnhk.org/>

### Details of the Exhibition

**Period:** November 15, 2019 (Friday) to January 12, 2020 (Sunday)

**Opening Hours:**

09:30 – 18:00 (Tuesday to Saturday)

13:00 – 18:00 (Sunday)

Closed on Mondays, University and Public Holidays

**Venue:** 1/F, Fung Ping Shan Building, UMAG, HKU, 90 Bonham Road, Pokfulam

**Tel/Email:** (852) 2241 5500 (General Enquiry) / [museum@hku.hk](mailto:museum@hku.hk)

**Admission:** Free

**Website:** <http://www.umag.hku.hk/en/>





**Connect with UMAG on Social Media:**

Facebook: [http://bit.ly/umag\\_facebook](http://bit.ly/umag_facebook)

Instagram: @umag\_hku, #UMAG, #Silk, #Poems

Weibo: @香港大學美術博物館 UMAG

YouTube: [http://bit.ly/umag\\_youtube](http://bit.ly/umag_youtube)

LinkedIn: [http://bit.ly/umag\\_linkedin](http://bit.ly/umag_linkedin)

**About University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong (UMAG)**

UMAG was founded in 1953 as the Fung Ping Shan Museum. It was originally established as the Fung Ping Shan Library in 1932 in honour of its benefactor. For more information on UMAG, please [click here](#).

**Media Enquiries**

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UMAG Programme Officer Ms Chelsea Choi, Tel: (852) 2241 5509, Email: [cchelsea@hku.hk](mailto:cchelsea@hku.hk)

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