

## **“Hong Kong Pop 60+” Exhibition**

### **Audio Tour Script**

#### **Film poster for *The House of 72 Tenants*** **1973**

*The House of 72 Tenants* was a film produced by Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) that premiered in 1973. Directed by Chor Yuen, the film has a star-studded cast, including Yueh Hua, Hu Chin, Ivan Ho, Lydia Sum and Nam Hung. It achieved unprecedented success and was crowned box-office champion, leading to more attention for Cantonese cinema, which had ceased production for years. The revival in Cantonese cinema led to the predominance of Cantonese films in Hong Kong.

This is a poster for *The House of 72 Tenants*, which covers a series of interesting events involving 72 tenants living in an old-style courtyard house, showing a rich tapestry of people’s lives during hard times in a satirical way. “Turn the tap off!” and other lines in the film are still fresh in people’s minds.

Hong Kong is short of fresh water, and serious water shortages have occurred many times, especially in the 1960s. From May 1963 to May 1964, people suffered from water rationing, even facing a period with water supplied just once every 4 days, for 4 hours at a time. With limited water supply, everyone turned on the water taps at the same time. As the water pressure was reduced, residents on high floors had to wait for people living below them to turn off their taps before the water could reach their homes. “Turn the tap off!” was a classic line everyone knew.

As there was a shortage of water buckets in those years, people repurposed various kinds of oil drums and kerosene containers into water buckets, which led to the interesting “bucket arrays” as people queued for water in the street.

To resolve the challenge of inadequate and unreliable rainwater supply, Hong Kong has been importing water from Dongjiang since 1965, to help meet local water demand. In 1967, when there was another serious water shortage in Hong Kong, the government not only continued purchasing fresh water from Guangdong Province, but was also close to completing Plover Cove Reservoir. It also began studying the possibility of building a desalination plant, and publicised the virtue of cherishing fresh water through civic education.