

My essentials: Chris Dingli's cultural picks

No 7 | Chris Dingli, 41, Actor, Writer, Comedian



1. Book

I'm reading 'A River in Darkness' by Masaji Ishikawa. It's an autobiographical account of how his family moved to North Korea from Japan in the 1960s, how they suffered, and how he eventually escaped. I like reading non-fiction and find myself particularly drawn to stories of people who have overcome or escaped great hardship to start a new life, usually by travelling for long distances over inhospitable terrain. Before that I read 'The Long Walk' by Sławomir Rawicz.

2. TV/Film

I'm writing a screenplay for a contained movie (one that has very limited locations and cast) and so I'm watching a bunch of similar films, such as *Oxygen*, *Locke*, and *The Guilty*. When writing a project, I sometimes find it useful to immerse myself in other examples of similar work. Observing the craft, the choices made in the writing, the techniques used to ratchet up tension, to reveal character, and keep the story moving forward. It's like pulling apart a machine to see how it's made. Calibri

3. Internet

I read an article about the art and design collective MSCHF, who bought a Warhol sketch for \$20,000, and then made 999 exact replicas of it. They mixed the original sketch in with the replicas so that it was indistinguishable from the copies, and then sold all 1,000 to different buyers for \$250 each. Any buyer had a 0.1 percent chance of actually purchasing the original, but the catch is they'll never know if they did.

4. Music

I find that seasons, weather, location, even the time of day affect my musical listening choices. For me, the music has to suit the surroundings, almost like a film soundtrack. It feels wrong to me to play certain kinds of music on an overcast day, for example. We're now in Autumn and that's the season for Shostakovich, Richter and Bruch. If not music, then a podcast: Tim Ferris, Marc Maron, Burgs, Scriptnotes, On the Page.

5. Place

London. I live here and when I didn't, I missed it every day. It obviously doesn't need any introduction, although I would say that if you have visited London and already seen the main sights, there are many not-so-central places that are well worth a visit. There are actually a ton of places in central London too that are not on main tourist trail that are worth checking out. Also find an evening or two in your visit to go and

see some fringe theatre or some stand-up comedy in a room above a pub.