

Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
West Kowloon Cultural District Development

Purpose

This paper provides information on museums in Hong Kong for Members' reference.

Museums in Hong Kong

(a) When were the museums established?

At present, the HKSAR administers, under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 13 museums (including a film archive). They are:

| Name | Location | Year Opened |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1. HK Museum of Art | 10 Salisbury Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon | Established in 1962 with the new premises at Tsim Sha Tsui opened in 1991 |
| 2. HK Museum of History | 100 Chatham Road South, Tsimshatsui East, Kowloon | Established in 1975 with the new premises at Tsim Sha Tsui partially opened in 1998, and fully opened in 2001 with the "Hong Kong Story" display. |
| 3. HK Heritage Museum | 1 Man Lam Road Sha Tin, N.T. | 2000 |
| 4. HK Science Museum | 2 Science Museum Road, Tsimshatsui East, Kowloon | 1991 |
| 5. HK Space Museum | 10 Salisbury Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon | 1980 |

| Name | Location | Year Opened |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 6. Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware (a branch managed under HK Museum of Art) | HK Park, Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hong Kong | 1984 |
| 7. Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum (a branch managed under HK Museum of History) | 41 Tonkin Street, Shamshuipo, Kowloon | 1957 |
| 8. Law Uk Folk Museum (a branch managed under HK Museum of History) | 14 Kut Shing Street, Chai Wan, Hong Kong | 1990 |
| 9. Sheung Yiu Folk Museum (a branch managed under HK Heritage Museum) | Pak Tam Chung, Sai Kung, N.T. | 1984 |
| 10. HK Railway Museum (a branch managed under HK Heritage Museum) | 13 Shung Tak Street, Tai Po, N.T. | 1985 |
| 11. Sam Tung Uk Museum (a branch managed under HK Heritage Museum) | Kwu Uk Lane, Tsuen Wan, N.T | 1987 |
| 12. HK Museum of Coastal Defence (a branch managed under HK Museum of History) | 175 Tung Hei Road, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong | 2000 |
| 13. HK Film Archive | 50 Lei King Road, Sai Wan Ho, Hong Kong | 2001 |

(b) How do the museums acquire their exhibits?

The existing museums administered under the HKSAR build up their collections through strategic purchases as well as through donations from members of the public over the years.

(c) Whether the exhibits are on loan to the museums, donated to or collected by the museums and the proportion among these different types of exhibits.

From time to time, the museums will organise exhibitions with the exhibits drawn from one of the following ways:

1. from its own collection;
2. on loan from individuals or institutions (like museums outside Hong Kong); and
3. from a combination of the above.

Take the present exhibitions in the Hong Kong Museum of Art as an example, the exhibits of the permanent exhibition “The Unrestrained Brush: Selections from the Xubaizhai Collection of Chinese Calligraphy II” are drawn solely from its own collection. The “Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth: Gems of Antiquities Collections in Hong Kong” is a combination of museum and local private collections. The exhibits of the temporary exhibition “The Huang Yongyu at 80: An Art Exhibition” are on loan from the artist. The “Hunting and Rituals: Treasures from the Ancient Dian Kingdom of Yunnan” exhibition at the Hong Kong Museum of History is on loan from the Yunnan Provincial Museum of China.

Most of the exhibits on display in a museum are included in standing displays selected from the museum’s own collections. The number of loan items in a museum is comparatively small and the quantity varies from time to time depending on the number and scale of temporary loan exhibitions organized by the museum. As regard to museum collections, they are built up through donations and purchases. The table below shows the relationship between purchased and donated items for all museums as at 1 January 2005. The high amount of donated items is a demonstration of public support for the museums.

| Name of Museum | Purchased Items | Donated Items | Total in Collection |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Hong Kong Museum of Art (including the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware) | 7,831 | 6,335 | 14,166 |
| Hong Kong Museum of History and 3 branches | 42,382 | 49,167 | 91,549 |
| Hong Kong Heritage Museum and 3 branches | 23,455 | 56,547 | 80,002 |
| Hong Kong Science Museum | 0 | 28 | 28* |
| Hong Kong Space Museum | 1 | 11 | 12* |
| Hong Kong Film Archive | 189,576 | 442,344 | 631,920 |

* The collections of the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum are relatively small in number because most of their exhibits are fabricated interactive exhibits.

(d) Are there any world-class exhibits donated to or collected by the museums; how were they acquired; how much, if any, had been paid for these exhibits; and did the Government make any financial contributions?

At present, there are four major donations, housed at the Hong Kong Museum of Art and the Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware, that are world-famous. They were donated to the museum by private individuals/foundation. Details are listed below:

| Description | Name of Donor | Estimated Current Value |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Lot of 473 items of Chinese Paintings and Calligraphies forming the Xubaizhai Collection | Mr Low Chuck-tiew | HK\$ 354,894,000 |
| A Lot of 605 Yixing Teapots and Related Items | Dr K S Lo | HK\$ 20,954,290 |
| A Lot of 690 Pieces of Chinese Ceramics and Seals | The KS Lo Foundation | HK\$ 207,176,900 |
| A Lot of 204 Pieces of Chinese Bamboo Carvings | Dr Yip Yee | HK\$ 5,036,320 |

Ever since the establishment of the public museum service in 1962, annual provisions have been allocated for museum acquisitions. Through strategic purchases and donations, the museums have built up representative collections. On this foundation the museums can continue their acquisitions with a modest budget. The provision for museum acquisition for 2004/05 is HK\$4.9M. With a limited budget, we are still able to make strategic purchases of some significant items from auctions, dealers and private individuals. These include a Ming underglaze blue vase with *chi* dragon and peony design (purchased in 1989), a carved red lacquer box with mark of the famous Yuan carver Zhang Cheng (purchased in 1983), a late Ming jade water container in the form of a dragon-headed tortoise (purchased in 1969), a green yellow jade *jia* of early Qing (purchased in 1997), a Qianlong rhinoceros horn libation cup (purchased in 1997) and a Ming carved red lacquer dish with flower design (purchased in 2000). These are star pieces of the Museum of Art's Chinese antiquities collection.

(e) Where is the source of finance for the museums?

All the 13 museums are financed by the Government. From time to time, individual museums have the support of the private sector to sponsor an exhibition or programme. For example, in 1997, the Amway (China) Co., Ltd sponsored HK\$3M for the exhibition "National Treasures – Gems of China's Cultural Relics" held at the Hong Kong Museum of Art. In 2003, the Friends of the Hong Kong Museum of Art sponsored HK\$0.4M for the exhibition "Desire and Devotion: Art from India, Nepal and Tibet in the John and Berthe Ford Collection". The HSBC sponsored the "Banknotes That Tell a Story" exhibition and the "Impressionism" exhibition. However the success of getting sponsorship depends on a number of factors such as the significance of the exhibition, the economic situation of Hong Kong, and most important of all, the willingness of the sponsor.

(f) The amount of annual expenses for operating the museums

The expenditures of 2003/04 for the 13 museums are listed in the table below-

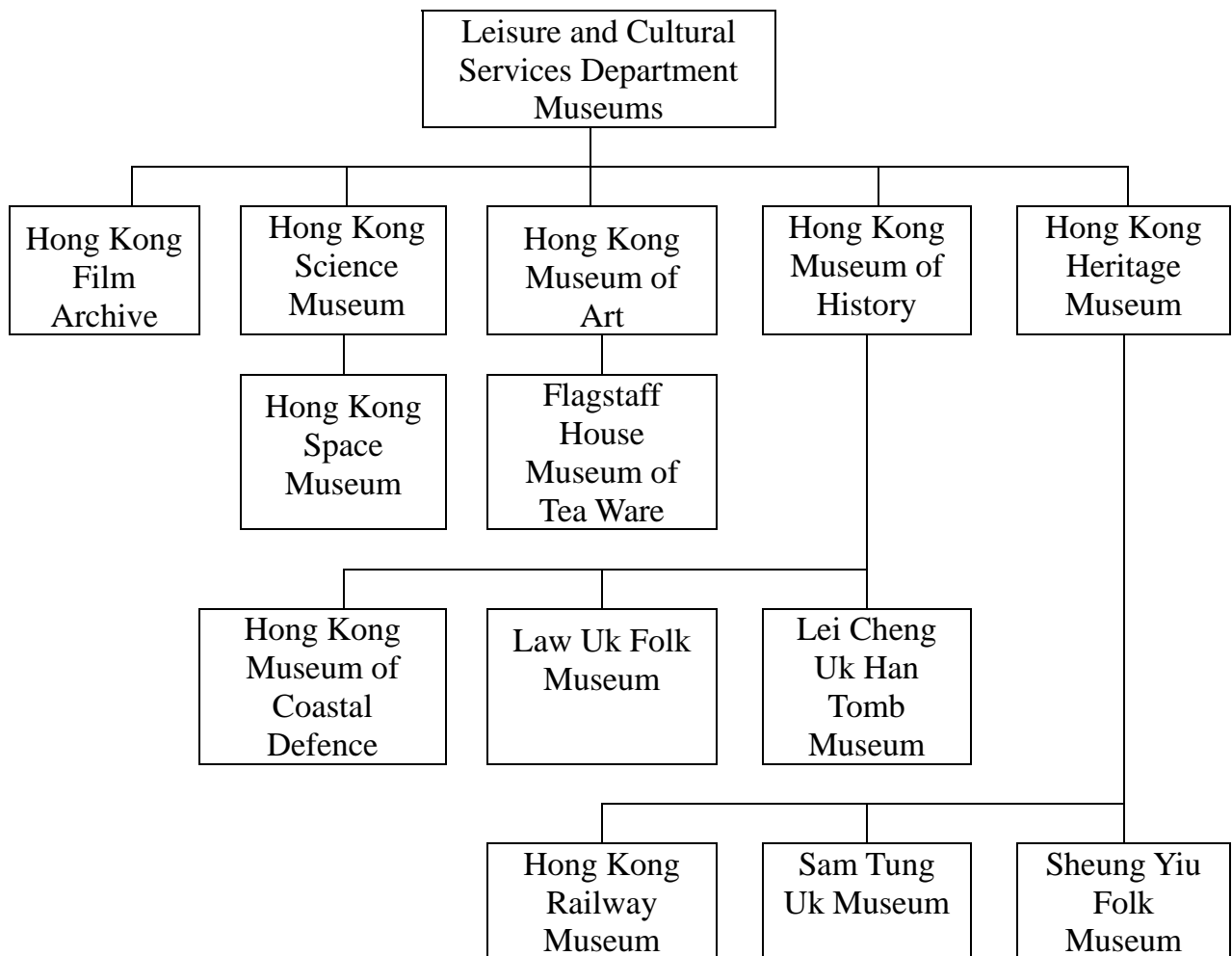
| Name of Museum | Expenditure 2003/04 (\$)* |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Hong Kong Museum of Art | 56,959,587 |
| Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware | 6,691,000 |
| Hong Kong Museum of History | 63,829,000 |
| Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence | 14,129,000 |
| Law Uk Folk Museum | 797,000 |
| Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum | 1,105,000 |
| Hong Kong Heritage Museum | 77,617,000 |
| Hong Kong Railway Museum | 1,919,000 |
| Sam Tung Uk Museum | 2,626,000 |

| Name of Museum | Expenditure 2003/04 (\$)* |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sheung Yiu Folk Museum | 560,000 |
| Hong Kong Science Museum | 68,135,000 |
| Hong Kong Space Museum | 40,382,700 |
| Hong Kong Film Archive | 42,447,000 |

* The figures include salaries, operating costs, electricity, cleaning, security, publicity, artifacts and exhibitions.

(g) How are the museums managed?

The 13 museums are administered under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. A Chief Curator is in charge of the daily operation of each of the main museum stream (such as Art, History, Heritage and Science) and its branches. A Chief Manager is in charge of the Hong Kong Film Archive. An organisation chart is shown below for easy reference.



**Leisure and Cultural Services Department
January 2005**