

**Consultative Committee on the
Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the
West Kowloon Cultural District**

Museums Advisory Group

**Background of the Four Preferred Museum Themes and
The Proposed Way Forward**

Purpose

This paper sets out the background of the four preferred museum themes under the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) and to seek Members' advice on the way forward.

Advice Sought

2. Members are invited to note the background of the four preferred museum themes i.e. modern art, ink, design and moving image (paragraphs 3 & 4 and **Annex A**); and to discuss the proposed way forward (paragraph 6 and **Annex C**).

Background

3. Over the past years, there had been a lot of discussions on various occasions about the themes of museums to be established in the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). Following discussions among government bureaux/departments and the Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC), we had included four specific museum themes in the Invitation for Proposals (IFP). Each museum theme has its own justifications, which are set out below.

Museum Themes	Justifications
Modern Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existing art museum facilities in Hong Kong are mixed and multipurpose. ● Sufficient content available for a specific theme covering modern art (from the early 20th Century to early 1970s) and contemporary art (1970s to the present). ● Uniqueness to show the history of art of Hong Kong over the past century.
Ink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ink art is unique in Eastern art and fundamental to Chinese cultural heritage. ● Ink painting and calligraphy tradition have profound influence in arts education and artists in Hong Kong in 1960s – 70s and the Western art. ● Hong Kong has a good foundation for an ink museum such as availability of important collections of modern and contemporary ink painting in Hong Kong. ● There is no “ink” museum anywhere in the

	<p>world that focus on ink art of the past hundred years. The display on ink paintings in the Hong Kong Museum of Art is not able to reflect the development of the ink painting.</p>
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The design trade in Hong Kong is unique and renowned internationally. ● A design museum could link up with the sector that help promote creative industry in Hong Kong, which will drive up the economic as well as cultural benefits. ● The Heritage Museum had been building up a comprehensive collection of Hong Kong design works and this archive could form the nucleus for the future Design Museum.
Moving Image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hong Kong film has been internationally recognized with great achievements. ● Collections from famous local superstars are easily available. ● The moving image museum would work closely with the film archive and the industry to promote Hong Kong's film and creative industry.

4. The details of proposed key features of each museum theme as specified in IFP are listed out at **Annex A**.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

5. At the last meeting, it was agreed that there was a need to draw up certain key criteria to facilitate consideration of the proposed themes and development concept of museum facilities in WKCD. The proposed key criteria are as follows: -

- (a) Whether the proposed theme(s) and development concept of the museums are conducive to achieving the objectives of developing the WKCD into a world-class arts and cultural district comprising local, traditional as well as international elements, which could enrich arts and cultural life for the people in Hong Kong and neighbouring areas, create job opportunities, benefit the tourism industry, and make Hong Kong an international cultural metropolis;
- (b) whether the proposed theme(s) are unique to Hong Kong and the international community;
- (c) whether the proposed theme(s) are capable of enabling the museums to perform their core functions as a cultural and educational institution—acquisition, research, exhibition and education;
- (d) whether they can present the rich and diverse culture of Hong Kong (as well as the tangible and intangible heritage of mankind) with sufficient impact, which could attract both local people and overseas visitors' attention, and induce repeated visits;
- (e) whether there exist relevant collections (sources of collections) and they are sustainable in terms of content and financing;
- (f) how the interface with existing museums in Hong Kong and the other parts of the WKCD (including the performing arts and tourism facilities) should be done;
- (g) whether there is sufficient audience, curatorial (and other professional) support, and public education. If not, how to cultivate them in preparation for the operation of the museum(s); and

- (h) whether the exhibition strategy and management model for the museums are appropriate for the purpose of setting them up in WKCD.

A summary list of these considerations are at **Annex B**.

PRELIMINARY IDEAS COLLECTED SO FAR

6. During the past and recent discussions, four possible approaches to develop the proposed museum facilities in WKCD have been suggested. They are:-

- (a) four separate museums, each with a clear identity;
- (b) a museum cluster containing museums with different themes;
- (c) a “Centre”, instead of a “Museum”, which incorporates different themes such as ink, design, visual art, film, popular culture etc.; and
- (d) a mixture of ideas (a) and (c) i.e. a “Centre” with a few distinct museums.

Details of each approach are at **Annex C**.

MAG Secretariat
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Museum Themes	Proposed Key features
Modern Art	<p data-bbox="488 371 645 411"><u>Purpose</u></p> <ul data-bbox="488 464 2031 810" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="488 464 2031 544">● To introduce the development of Hong Kong art from the 20th century to present day<li data-bbox="488 552 2031 632">● To introduce through temporary exhibitions contemporary art from overseas countries and regions outside Hong Kong<li data-bbox="488 639 2031 687">● To preserve Hong Kong heritage and culture in the context of Hong Kong art, and<li data-bbox="488 695 2031 810">● To provide museum services including acquisition, preservation, research and interpretation through exhibitions, publications, archival services, education and extension programmes <p data-bbox="488 906 869 946"><u>Content of Exhibits</u></p> <ul data-bbox="488 999 1429 1385" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="488 999 1429 1038">● Hong Kong Art Galleries for different periods<ul data-bbox="555 1082 2031 1385" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="555 1082 2031 1305">➤ The Origins, pre-1950s<p data-bbox="622 1174 2031 1305">Focusing on the early development of Hong Kong art from the 19th century to the 1950s. Exhibits include trade paintings by western artists and the Chinese trade painting studios.</p><li data-bbox="555 1350 2031 1385">➤ The Transformations, 1960s-1970s

	<p>The decade of 60s and 70s marked significant transformation and evolution of Hong Kong art. Exhibits include works by masters who carried on the ink painting and calligraphy tradition, the New Ink painting masters and followers, artists who produced profound influence in art colleges and universities as well as a generation of promising artists.</p> <p>➤ The Diversity and the New Century, 1980s-present</p> <p>Hong Kong art embarked on a path to face up to the advance of globalization. Post-modernist development produced intriguing and inquisitive art form to challenge traditional methods of artistic creation and presentation.</p> <p>➤ The New Media Gallery, Contemporary Experimentation</p> <p>This gallery will focus on the most recent development of Hong Kong art and features the most experimental works by local artists.</p>
Ink	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To show innovative trends of artistic development in China in the twentieth century through the ink medium ● To introduce the historical development of Chinese painting and calligraphy as a context for contemporary development ● To provide a platform for cutting-edge and experimental artistic presentations including ink installation, cross-media and digital art related to the material medium as well as the concept

Contents of Exhibits

- **Introduction to Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: a) Scholar's Studio b) Chinese Garden**

A chronological display of artworks, relevant artifacts and reproductions provides an overview on the development of Chinese painting and calligraphy from the dawn of the art of visualization to the great synthesis in the Qing dynasty.

- **Chinese Painting: Early 20th Century to 1979**

Chinese painting of the period encounters the urge to modernization and diversified theories of art. It demonstrates a strong continuity of the enduring tradition and, on the other hand, pursues for transformation with influence from the West.

- **Chinese Painting: Post 1979**

Socialism with Chinese characteristics, urbanization, democracy, post-modernism, deconstructivism are all factors in shaping the art scene during the turn of the century. Experimental ink, still being the most vital medium, searches for the expression of national spirit with a modern perspective.

- **Art of the Written Character**

The theme of the gallery will focus on how the execution of pictographs and written words in China, in addition to the function as a vehicle of communication, came to be associated with aesthetic appreciation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Art Education Gallery <p>The gallery features educational and interactive displays tailor-made for the young audiences whom would have the opportunities to understand and appreciate the art of ink painting and calligraphy through activity-approaches with reference to the exhibits in the galleries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special Exhibitions <p>The galleries can accommodate both traditional and modern ink painting and calligraphy and other related art forms of various media and themes.</p>
Design	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To introduce the development of design of various media in Hong Kong from the 20th century to present day ● To promote excellence in the design trade through exemplary displays on contemporary international design ● To provide a convenient resource for designers, a forum for idea exchanges and a source of creative inspiration and excitement on contemporary design ● To provide museum services including acquisition, preservation, research and interpretation through exhibitions, publications, education and extension programmes <p><u>Content of Exhibits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to Hong Kong Design History

Hong Kong is at the Gateway to China. In the 19th century, merchants from Europe went to Guangzhou via Hong Kong to do business and the product design in Guangzhou and Hong Kong were much in common. Hong Kong design followed the Shanghainese style during the 1920s and the 1930s. In the 1960s, designers from overseas were welcomed by the Federation of Hong Kong Industries in order to promote Hong Kong as a modern and westernized economy. They dominated the design scene of Hong Kong for a few decades. From the 1970s onwards, the efforts of locally trained designers led to the blooming development of the graphic design profession. In the 1980s and 1990s, many went abroad to study design and returned to work, leading Hong Kong into the international market. This gallery reflects the history of such development.

- **Graphic Design Gallery**

This gallery will display posters, typographies and packings designed by local designers to reflect the evolution and development of local graphic design from 1920s to present day.

- **Industrial Design/Product Design Gallery**

The local product design has undergone the evolution from OEM (Original Equipment Manufacture), to ODM (Original Design Manufacture) and OBM (Original Brand Manufacture). During the late 1960s (the age of OEM), many aspects of design appeared anonymous as manufacturers adapted western goods for export markets. Then we saw the shift from OEM to ODM in the 1970s. The increase in professionally trained designers enabled Hong Kong manufacturers to design and produce their own products to sell in Hong Kong and overseas markets. From 1990s onwards, the transformation of Hong Kong industry brought

challenges and opportunities for local product designers. They were more conscious in building their own brand of product line (OBM) for the international market. Medium-to-high end products were produced and marketed to compete with the western world. Exhibits in this gallery will include toys, novelties, consumer goods, time-pieces and stationeries, aiming to reflect the contributions of local manufacturers and local designers.

- **Craft Design/Decorative Arts Gallery**

The ‘ancestors’ of Hong Kong design were the craftsmen and artisans who established a reputation over centuries for the making of silverware, rattan furniture, paint decoration on ceramic-wares, etc. Until now, inherited from the tradition of skillful craftsmanship, innovative craft works are being designed and produced with the aid of advancement in new technology. Exhibits in this gallery will include jewellery, silverware, carving, ceramics and furniture, aiming to capture the extravagant craftsmanship of our ancestors and innovative modern works of craft.

- **Fashion Design Gallery**

Tailoring represents a classic part of Hong Kong fashion and clothing design for both Chinese and western styles. During the 1970s and 1980s, Hong Kong retailers and consumers were largely influenced by the western concept of mass consumption. Ready-to-wear clothing and fashion dominated the industry. In the 1990s, there came the demand for individuality and innovation. Mass production was replaced by the fast changing contemporary fashion and high-end garments. Tailoring has also returned in the 1990s because of the revival of *cheongsam* and Chinese garment. Exhibits in this gallery include couture, ready-to-wear, and tailoring, aiming to record the clothing design development in

Hong Kong from tailoring to fashion.

- **Communicative Design Gallery**

Design is a significant tool to enhance effective communication. As the digital and interaction design evolve, traditional communication design such as advertisements, newspapers, comics, are no longer the only means for communication. Designers not only master new technologies in their ongoing experiments, but also benchmark for the design excellence on the web and interactive media. Exhibits in this gallery include advertisements, newspapers, comics, websites, and interface designs.

- **Environmental Design Gallery**

Department stores used to be one of the largest employers of designers in Hong Kong for its lighting and display systems, fashion styling and interior design. In addition, design for trade promotion at trade fairs, expos, exhibition display in the cultural sector, and residential project and landscape design during the period of the fast growing properties market offer opportunities for the environmental design development. Exhibits in this gallery will include window displays, commercial/residential interior designs, exhibition and stage designs, and signage etc.

- **Special Exhibition Galleries**

Two special galleries will be used to stage temporary exhibitions including fashion shows. In case of need, these two galleries can be joined into a big gallery.

- **A Multi-purpose Lecture Theatre for 150 seats**

Moving Image	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To introduce world film history and technology ● To preserve and present local film heritage ● To provide film entertainment in the Imax 3D Theatre ● To provide museum services including acquisition, preservation, research and interpretation through exhibitions, publications, education and extension programmes <p><u>Content of Exhibits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Behind the Scene: World film history and technology <p>This gallery introduces the creation of the moving image and the advance in technology in film making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100 Years of HK Cinema - 1900s – 1930s: Early Developments <p><u>1900s</u> Westerners came and set up theatres in HK. Some travelogues were made. The first short film <i>Stealing a Roast Duck</i> was made in 1909, with the help of western filmmakers.</p> <p><u>1910s</u> In 1912, “Dream Train” appeared, showing travelogues in a train-like setting. Lai Man-wai and his brother Lai Buk-hoi, with the help of Benjamin Brodksy made</p>
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Chuang Tsu Tests His Wife (1913). In 1916, the first outdoor film theatre appeared, while some silent films were shown live narration. Many newsreels and news documentaries about events in China were shown.

1920s

1921, the first all-Chinese owned and operated theatre, the World Theatre was established, showing both Chinese and western films. 1922, Lai Man-wai's China Sun (Minxin) was founded, with its own office and equipment. Without a license to operate in HK, it was forced to make films inside China. 1924, China Sun made the first HK funded film *Rouge* in Guangzhou, and established an actors' school in HK. 1924, the first foreign made colour film, a travelogue was shown in HK. 1924-25, several other film companies were also getting established, making short and low budget films. But the General Strike in 1925 caused many productions to stop, and did not resume until 1929.

1930s

1930, the first large film studio appeared in the Lee Gardens area in Causeway Bay. Lai Buk-hoi made a spectacular epic with the help of a rich financier. Law Ming-yau and Ho Tung founded the Lianhua or United Photoplay Service Company in HK, which later became the most significant contribution to China's film history. 1932-33, HK experimented with sound film. 1933, the first sound film was shown. 1934-35, Joseph Chiu and Moon Kwan's Grandview made the first sound film *Romance of the Songstress* was a sensation, and they later collaborated with Lianhua to make films. 1935, Grandview (HK) was founded, making quality films in quantity. 1934-36, larger scale film companies were starting to set up in HK, making Cantonese sound films. 1937, China was at war with Japan. Many Shanghaiese filmmakers moved to HK, bringing their capital and skills, pushing the local industry entered its first phrase of prosperity in 1937-38. Pak Yin, Cheung Ying, Ng Chor-fan were starting to become stars. In support of China, HK

made many patriotic films from the late 30s to early 40s.

- **100 Years of HK Cinema - 1940s – 1950s Post-war Boom**

1940s

1941, HK fell to Japan. Production ceased for 4 years until 1946. Many HK filmmakers were on exile elsewhere during this period. After the war, some capitalists from China set up large studios like Great China, Yung Hwa made films for release both at HK, China, and South-east Asia. After 1946, Grandview (US) showed many US Chinese made films in HK. 1948, Yung Hwa's epics *Soul of China* and *Sorrows of the Forbidden City* were sensations, and were shown in Europe and France. 1949, both the Cantonese and Mandarin films were prosperous with colour productions. Cantonese cinema also had a reform movement.

- **100 Years of HK Cinema - Late 1950s – Early 1970s The Studio Era**

1950s

Progressive and patriotic filmmakers from China like Zhu Shilin, Fei Mu made some of the classics in Mandarin cinema in the early 1950s, causing the Cantonese cinema to make better quality films. Chung Luen was founded in 1952. The first film in the Wong Fei-hung series, starring Kwan Tak-hing was made in 1949. Up to 200 Cantonese films were produced annually. Opera film became a mainstream, starring Yam Kim-fai, Pak Suet-sin, Fong Yim-fun. For Mandarin cinema, it was the sing-song films. 1955, Singapore's huge Cathay Organistaion established an operation in HK to make Mandarin films in scale. 1957, Singapore's Shaw Brothers also came to plan for the Shaw Studios, aiming to make films on a large scale. HK's studio system was taking shape.

1960s

1961, Shaw Brothers Studio opened which later became the largest film studio in SE Asia. Both Cathay and Shaw were keen to train new talents, eg. Cathay's Grace Chang, Jeanette Lin Cui, Julie Yeh Feng, and Shaw's Cheng Pei-pei, Lily Ho. Linda Lin Dai, Ivy Ling Po became superstars, winning awards and drawing audiences. 1963, *Love Eterne* was a huge hit in HK, Taiwan, and SE Asia, starting the *hunagmei* opera craze. Early 60s, fantastic martial arts films appeared in the Cantonese cinema, like *Buddha's Palm*, *Sacred Fire*, *Heroic Wind*. Many special effects were used. 1967, Shaw pushed for the "new style of martial arts". Films by Chang Cheh and King Hu were the pioneers, using new stars like Jimmy Wang Yu, David Chaing, Ti Lung, Cheng Pei-pei, making vigorous and realistic martial arts films. 1967, the Cantonese youth films starring Chan Po-chu and Josephine Siao attracted many young audiences.

1980s

Film schools graduates from overseas and many young filmmakers who had worked at TV, like Ann Hui, Allan Fong, Tsui Hark, Yim Ho, were all making their first films starting in 1979. The HK New Wave appeared. New film companies like Cinema City, D&B, Golden Harvest took in many of these new talents and created many entertaining films of good quality. Technically and aesthetically HK cinema was reaching the international standards. The market of HK films was expanding overseas, cost escalated, and its income was surpassing western films by far. Mid 80s, a new style of entertainment appeared, Tsui Hark's *A Chinese Ghost Story*, John Woos' *A Better Tomorrow*, Ringo Lam's *City on Fire*, all huge box-office hits, helped bringing HK cinema into its all time high point. HK cinema was employing the Hollywood style special effects, CGs, as seen in *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*.

Another group of energetic filmmakers, like Stanley Kwan, Gordon Chan, Peter Chan, Wong Kar-wai, Jeff Lau, became famous in the late 80s locally and among

the international festival circuit.

- **100 Years of HK Cinema - 1990s – 2000s From Prosperity to Transformation**

1990s

Tsui Hark used *Swordsman* and *Once Upon A Time in China* and created the second martial arts craze. Stephen Chiau's comedy became a phenomenon throughout the 90s. Chow Yun-fat, Michelle Yeoh, Brigitte Lin, Maggie Cheung, Tony Leung Chiu-wai became superstars; with Chow and Yeoh making a name for themselves in Hollywood. John Woo, Ringo Lam, Kirk Wong, Ronny Yu were invited over to make films in Hollywood. Many large HK productions were made in collaboration with Taiwan and China. The Chinese language market for HK cinema was in decline, and in a state of shrinkage. Low budget and experimental independent production were springing up. Some of them managed to enter the international art house or festival circuit, and became HK's alternative cinema. Crime thrillers became HK's mainstream since the mid 90s. The films by Johnnie To, Wai Kar-fai, Gordon Chan were particularly successful. Low budget youth romance were also popular, especially by Joe Ma. But a shrinking market seem irreversible. But others like Wong Kar-wai, Peter Chan, Fruit Chan have remained creative while receiving recognitions overseas.

Globalisation 2000s

HK cinema has thus become more international, in terms of talents and capitals, like Tsui Hark's *Legend of Zu, Time and Tide*; the Ang Lee directed, Bill Kong produced *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; the Zhang Yimou directed, Bill Kong produced *Hero*.

- **Special Exhibition Gallery**

This gallery will present thematic exhibitions on subjects of film history and personalities and loan exhibitions from local and overseas sources.

- **Theatres**
- **A Multi-purpose cinema for film and video for 300 seats and a IMAX 3D theatre for 500 seats**

**Key Considerations of any Proposed Museum Facilities
in WKCD**

- Conduciveness to WKCD's objectives and cultural vision
- Availability and uniqueness of the exhibits
- Sustainability of the scope of the museum
- Attractiveness to local people and international visitors
- Effects on the local community
- Interface with existing museums in Hong Kong
- Development of audience
- Development of curatorial support
- Art education
- Development of collection
- Exhibition Strategy
- Management Model

Preliminary Ideas Collected so far Regarding the Museum Facilities in the West Kowloon Cultural District

A. Four separate museums

- Distinct identity for each museum theme, easier to attract donations for permanent collections
- Conventional functions of museum such as collection, display and education can be performed effectively
- Highly unlikely to be self-financing

B. A museum cluster of four preferred museum themes

- Greater flexibility in terms of programming, preservation and collections due to synergy effect as compared with idea (A)
- Distinct identity of each museums can still be maintained to a certain extent

C. A “Centre”, instead of a “Museum”, which incorporates different themes such as ink, designs, visual art, film, popular culture etc.

- Allow greatest flexibility and diversity in programming
- Widen source of audiences and collections
- Create an area full of art and culture experience with different dimensions and timelines in addition to the conventional functions
- May not be easy to attract donations for permanent collections of top quality due to the lack of clear identity

D. A mixture of ideas (A) and (C) i.e. a “Centre” with a few distinct museums

- A balanced approach, with a view to maximizing the advantages of the two ideas