

THE INK SOCIETY

Presentation to the Legislative Council

Re: West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Bill

Saturday 12th April 2008

The Ink Society is disappointed that the Ink Museum is not included as a distinct and separate department within M+. We will continue to discuss with Government regarding an alternative venue and other options. We firmly believe that a well-designed space dedicated for art in the Ink tradition is a unique proposition that will enhance Hong Kong's status as the leading centre for research and exhibition of Chinese art.

The Ink Museum notwithstanding, the Ink Society continues to support the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD).

Appointment of WKCD Board: We do not believe members of Board for the West Kowloon Authority should be openly elected or appointed by a selection panel. The Board is the highest decision-making body and it is essential that the Board maintains a broad vision of the entire project. If certain Board members represent narrow constituents, then he is bound to favour that particular interest group.

If there were to be an election or selection panel, who is to decide who gets to vote or who gets to sit on the selection panel? Surely we cannot have the entire electorate in HK voting for several WKCD board members? That would be a huge waste of resources. On the other hand, there are numerous entities and groups both within and outside the arts community that would want to have direct representation on the Board. Should the dance community have a vote? If so, how about the HK Institute of Architects? Or maybe the financial sector because the WKCD will have the important responsibility of managing billions of dollars. Hong Kong has a long and successful history in running statutory bodies. It is in line with existing practice that members of these statutory bodies are appointed by Government and subject to public gazette.

Furthermore, under the proposed WKCD ordinance, Legco enjoys the right to summon the WKCD Chairman and Chief Executive at any time for questioning which provides a channel of constant public scrutiny. To enhance the transparency further, Government may consider asking the WKCD Board to hold regular briefing sessions open to the public and the press.

Our second point concerns the format of the WKCD Board meetings. There are suggestions that the some of the WKCD board meetings should be open to the public and media. This would greatly hinder the efficiency of the Board. Of course there needs to be exceptions and in practice, most sessions will be an "exception" and those that are open might not even have quorum.

Museum regulation: currently, museums in Hong Kong are owned and run directly by Government. The proposed M+ has a quasi public status that is not entirely clear. It is important that Government puts forward a clear set of guidelines that governs the

operation of the Museum. These guidelines should include a code of ethics that are comparable to those adopted by major museums around the world.