

MOST- Alternative Gallery,
Level 7-12A,
Jockey Club Creative Arts Center (JCCAC),
30 Pak Tin St.,
Shek Kip Mei,
Kowloon,

Museum of Site Heritage Education Center,
Block 54,
Lane 3,
Shing Mun San Tsuen,
Kam Tin,
Yuen Long,
N.T.
HONG KONG

Date: 8/31/09

To: Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project:
Meeting with deputations, the Administration and representatives of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD)

From: Mr Lam Hon Kin (presented by Mr Lau Chung Han)

Re: Submission of Museum of Site|| MOST to Legco dated Sep 7, 2009 (2:30 pm)

Recommendations on Professional Development of Art Administrators in Hong Kong:

- While Hong Kong is a metropolis with rich human resources, not many professionals are serving in art industry. **Many public facilities are not staffed or manned by professionally educated cultural workers.**
- In the pilot project of Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC), there is a lack of professionalism in terms of master-planning, facility design, procurement, project management, review and monitoring.... The landlord Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) is also incapable of monitoring the JCCAC project. It is recommended that the WKCD should be operated and monitored by **a crew of professional staffs and advisers.** The WKCD is 'controlled' by a great number of government officials but not monitored by a good team of professional arts workers.
- **Co-opted members** nominated by the community to the WKCD Consultation Committee have not yet contacted the arts professionals for advice.
- **Professional development of staff** in pre-service education, in-service coaching, operational practice and the like is needed in cultural industry.
- **Public-private partnership** should be built on professional visions, operation models, standards and codes of practice.
- **Closed-door lease** of the former Shek Kip Mei Industrial Building to such inexperienced art institution as Baptist University by HAB in 2004-5 created bad practice. The current 'single development' of the decommissioned industrial estate premises near Chai Wan MTR prime site by a big business without open competition informs nothing of professional consideration and policy embrace.
- **Professional art administrators in Hong Kong should be recruited** and they should be offered as many opportunities as possible for practice in some interim or pilot projects before the WKCD is formally launched.
- **Professional art administrators acting as 'change agents' are needed in Hong Kong. Pilot projects of the JCCAC and HKAC** can be well supported by the WKCD, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) that administrators and artists can gain more invaluable experience.

- **Mid-career LCSD staffs** can be financially assisted by the Government to receive in-service trainings in acclaimed overseas museums or performing institutions over a substantial period of time. These professionals will further serve Hong Kong's cultural industry on return.
- **An overall arts policy** in the nurture of creative infrastructure must be legally provided as soon as possible such that cross-sectored, cross-benefits can be yielded. Dialogue between LCSD staffs, WKCD staffs and other level players should be nurtured.
- The view of **professional educator** should be equally cared by the WKCDA.

Andrew Lam Hon Kin/ Museum of Site (MOST)

Appendix: APPRAISAL ON JCCAC'S GALLERY DEFECTS & WIDER CONSIDERATIONS

The paper helps one to assess the overall gallery policy, gallery design parameters and defects and it demonstrated the importance of professional staffing. The paper also discusses wider issues pertinent to JCCAC overall performance.

I. THE MISSION OF GALLERY: THE JOCKEY CLUB CREATIVE ARTS CENTER (JCCAC)

- 1.1. The former decommissioned JCCAC is a public space and a shared asset of our community. It seems that the empty gallery is not filled up with curatorial program. The JCCAC gallery is not staffed by professional curator and it has been run by aimless projects.
- 1.2. The appropriate use of the exhibition gallery should reinforce JCCAC's public image as a creative, event hub (i.e. constant provision of week-end fun-fair event or art market in 1F Atrium/ 2F Podium) deriving/ evolving from an art village based in the community fabric of Shum-Shek district or the more broader Kowloon region. However, the positioning the JCCAC is quite unclear. Its can not model on Beijing 798 as 798 is simply an exhibition center.
- 1.3. The principle of a rental-free policy is to optimize facility use and to attract serious art lovers or repeated audiences to the JCCAC. It is not a policy just cater for tenants' interests. In this connection, public spaces such as the staircases, corridors, 2F podium, 1F atrium and the like should be opened for free use for parallel/ satellite activities. The rental free policy of JCCAC should be applied/ opened to outside road shows or fun-fair exhibitors in the early stages.
- 1.4. With rental free, energetic exhibition activities, veteran, mid-career and fresh graduates' professional practices in the JCCAC can be groomed and supported. The JCCAC will, as time goes by, become a 'niche' event center in Kowloon before the WKCD is launched.
- 1.5. Exhibition project can also be viewed as an extension of resident's studio experiment to authentic gallery environment and other broader fields of cultural or professional practice. The above policy can help to realize the educational vision of the Baptist University and, more importantly, align with the general objectives of JCCAC. Otherwise, it is a mere a piecemeal arrangement.
- 1.6. From temporal, ephemeral not-for-profit exhibitions to long-term commercial projects, cross-benefits can be yielded to resident artists, shops/ cafes/ gallery owners, content-creators and visiting professionals on the one hand, and art critics, media workers, discourse interpreters, cultural educators, docents and other level players on the other. However, the current situation under the BU Management is just the opposite.

II. GALLERY POLICY AND WIDER CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Free Exhibition & Rental Policy:

- 1.1. The gallery of JCCAC should be open to:
 - 1) All resident tenants/ studio units of the JCCAC;
 - 2) Community groups/ institutions based in the Shum-Shek district/ JCCAC; and
 - 3) Other art professionals in Hong Kong (HK) for free use, at a time when advance booking cannot be secured.
- 1.2. Having said that THE GALLERY SHOULD NOT BE USED SOLELY BY RESIDENT ARTISTS, there should have well-defined aims, program objectives and publicity works to help publicizing and selecting appropriate gallery users under the newly launched rental-free policy.
- 1.3. Special care should be catered for community groups (i.e. the twelve community organizations struggling/ sharing a 300-ft studio space on 4/F) in the service of JCCAC, its vicinity and public.
- 1.4. The ratio of using the gallery by the above groups listed on 1.1. can be 12 (weeks per year): 12: 3 respectively.
- 1.5. A cap on period use for every year is needed for the JCCAC to work out alternative gallery development strategies as times go by.
- 1.6. The exhibits of tenants or outsiders can be priced and sold after exhibition. Non-profit nature and curatorial focus should be considered, if/ when outside professionals are invited for exhibition with tenants in the JCCAC. Good internal communication is needed for all tenancy projects.

2. Admission Policy:

- 2.1. The JCCAC Management Company can charge an admission fee to bring in revenue for the JCCAC, rather than taking an admission free policy.
- 2.2. An attractive fee as low as HK\$2 is suggested to stand trial. The in-take of visitors under this scheme can be counted as a reference comparing the overall admission rate of the JCCAC.
- 2.3. The disabled and elderly persons aged above 65 should not be charged. Donation box of the project organizer, which must be a registered charity, can be located near the entrance of the gallery.

3. Sponsorship Policy

- 3.1. In all events or activities of tenant exhibitor/ presenter/ curatorial group, sponsorship can be sought and the total income goes to curatorial group or whoever putting an effort in realizing the creative exhibition.

4. Subsidiary Policy of The JCCAC

- 4.1. Artist usually contributes artist fee and material fee. And the right or interest of artist should be protected.
- 4.2. Each project organized by the tenant (taking a time-slot no less than three weeks) should be funded/ sponsored by the JCCAC administration to cover the in-kind, material cost and/ or service provided.
- 4.3. A sum of HK\$5,000 per project sponsored by the JCCAC is suggested as the tenant has to pay a management fee and electricity fee HK\$80 per hour.
- 4.4. The charge for each tenant/ unit should be set no more than HK\$100 each time and the space/ size of each exhibitor/ unit should be creatively negotiated, rather than confined mechanically (the proposed magic figure HK\$100 is simply based on the current exercise *RUSH* Exhibition).
- 4.5. Project organized by outside group cannot be sponsored by the JCCAC administration, as they do not pay any management fee.

5. Sale of Work:

- 5.1. It should be based on the general practice of commercial gallery.
- 5.2. In general, 50% of the price can be returned to the participating artists.
- 5.3. One controversial point is whether 25% or more goes back to the Curatorial Team or Organizer and 25% or less goes to the JCCAC Administration. This could be modified for reaching a JCCAC or customary practice. At any rate, agreement under contract protection is needed. The sponsorship of JCCAC and sale income should be deemed as separate issues.

6. Naming Right Of The Galleries

- 6.1. Gallery spaces can be named for a certain period (i.e. 20 years, as BU's tenancy contract with HAB is 20 years). 2 patrons can be sought out.
- 6.2. A reference can be HK\$1,000 per sq ft. Some Foundation in HK can be contacted for such charity. But the JCCAC has yet done anything.
- 6.3. Since the tenants of JCCAC could use most of the gallery time and the JCCAC Company is just another tenant, **the SKM Arts Union can be given the right to negotiate the patron** and 50% of the naming right income can go to The Union, or the tenancy association. It is projected that the creative activities organized by the tenants themselves can draw naming income.
- 6.4. Naming right is a complicated issue and maybe, it is not the right time for the JCCAC management to launch this program in the short term.

7. The First Co-management Pilot Scheme in JCCAC/ HK

- 7.1. Like Whashang Art District in Taipei and CAPP House in Kobe, for instance, a gallery co-management scheme can be launched as a pilot using this JCCAC project with the involvement of tenants/ professional artists and JCCAC staffs. It can be a trial exemplary model for operating the future LCSD and WKCD exhibition venues/ practices.

III. GALLERY DESIGN & ITS DEFECTS

8.1. OVERALL DESIGN:

8.1.1. The master design of JCCAC gallery is seemingly not aspired to any design principle listed below:

An Approach to Education

An Approach to Orientation

An Approach to Contemporary Display: New Media, Interactive Installation, large-scale contemporary painting or sculpture, etc.

An Approach to Public Areas

An Approach to Possible Theme relevant to the Building or Premises

An Approach to Graphics, Signage, and other Communication Devices

An Approach to Customer Service

Instead, the designer/ BU team seemingly takes some modern design approaches aspired to nature, high public visibility, flexibility of spatial use, multiplicity of color scheme, honesty of building structure and service... The gallery design is seemingly **neither visitor nor object-concerned**.

8.1.2. Part of the galleries (0F, 1F & 3F) are not professionally designed. The defects of design much curtail the operation and rental possibility of gallery. The 1/F gallery does not accommodate an adequately **lighted entry** for display of general information and creation of the general character of gallery.

8.1.3 Some visitors just saw a great mass of glass and find it **difficult to identify the front door**. It could be a problem in case of fire or emergency. Also, there is no need to offer our audiences glimpses of the energetic football playground outside the gallery. **Gallery compartmentation is not furnished** to avoid fire emergency.

8.1.4. There is **no disability access** in-between 0F and 1F gallery, which is standard facility of a professional gallery.

8.1.5. The 1F gallery cannot present an ample space for **'central' display** and the 'horizontal' gallery makes exhibitors hard to present exhibits using a non-axial view.

8.1.6. Some corridor space, to cite for example, is so small and narrow that it is hard to keep the visitor a good distance/ scale with the exhibit. (a 5'9" H visitor's observation field/ **comfortable viewing range** is 12" and 28" (max) for a viewing distance from the wall/ painting 5'9 ft. (Arminta Neal, Gallery & Case Exhibit Design, 1963)

8.1.7. There is no rest, activity or **education area** in the gallery.

8.2. WRONG CHOICE OF WOODEN BOARD:

8.2.1. Choice of expensive, gypsum boards for wall finish is incorrect, since the relatively economical **plywood boards (THK 6mm) were not chosen**.

8.2.2. The boards are not functional and they are seemingly used to protect the wall-space rather than assuming a functional role of supporting/ hanging painting or 2-D work. **THE BOARDS CANNOT BE NAILED AND THE PRINCIPLE OF 'NAILABLE' IS NOT CARED**.

8.2.3 All boards should immediately be converted to 'nailable' surfaces, which can meet the green principle of **'reversibility'** after use.

8.2.4 The present gypsum board/ box system is suggested to be covered with **matt white plaster cloth**, board-covering fabric or heavily embossed vinyl wall fabric such that holes on board can immediately be in-filled, touched up and re-used for the next exhibition project. In this connection, a new tendering exercise is urgently needed. The job specification must be accurate and clearly consulted, written, advertised and assessed. **Accountability is needed** for shopping wrong item(s). The cost will be very expensive, but BU, rather than the users, should absorb the renovation cost for the mistake being made in the former procurement process.

8.2.5 The 20-ft H gallery on G/F or 0/F is currently mounted with **low-level 8' or 2,440mm high, railed wooden boards** (fig 7), which means hanging of 2-D works higher than 8' (i.e. 9-feet, 10-foot paintings) will become impracticable as the railings will interrupt the flat level of hanging.

8.2.6 That is to say, the installation of 8' boards is a waste and a neglect of artwork using a greater scale of 2-D works. Professional painters and installation artist would not prefer the **expensive hanging system**, as the system would seriously **interrupt the audiences' visibility**.

8.2.7. State-of-art museum/ national gallery is, most often, a white cube. The JCCAC Gallery should be designed like other conventional white neutral space for exhibit which is the central point of attention. **Disruptive building services and mechanics** nearly occupies approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the ceiling to ground level, and it is much encroaching the integrity or purity of the white wall space.

8.3. **INAPPROPRIATE USE OF 'REFLECTIVE' MATERIALS IN GALLERIES**

8.3.1. **Silver-colored pipes, grey drainage hosts** in the galleries (fig. 1) should be re-painted in matt white color. Some lines should be re-positioned/ re-routed or white box-covered (fig. 2; fig. 6) to minimize its shimmering effects as well as for safety reason.

8.3.2. The choice of wooden **floor planks is inappropriate**. (Original concrete flooring is more appropriate as simple re-coloring work can be conducted for a variety use and this could be a green idea to reflect the former JCCAC industrial character)

8.3.3. The current wooden floor paneling is not easy for reversion and some **ground-up installations using sand, water ... are impossible**.

8.3.4. **Matt coating** on the surface of floor planks should be made to protect the robust, materials. Currently it is coated on single/ back side only and the **shrinking effect** in cool times is increasing, making connecting lines/ cracks separate, wider and the **floors uneven** (fig. 3), particularly hard for wheelchair users.

8.3.5. All **unplugged sockets** should be covered with white plastic caps to ensure gallery safety (fig.4) and all **messy electricity lines** in the galleries must be ordered with white plastic wire cover (fig. 5).

8.4. **LIGHTING**

8.4.1. **Poor architectural design and gallery lighting design** is causing viewing problem. **The use of horizontal, door-windows** (fig. 6) framing outside views with white curtains/ blinds modeled on Mies's Glass House prototype is a wrong design. Big door-window lighting/ side-lighting should not be located in major gallery spaces, but in circulation spaces between galleries only (i.e. a good example is The Pao Gallery on the 5/F of The Hong Kong Art Centre) because of the natural occurrence of **phototropic effect**, which can make the eyes of audiences automatically attended to the brightest object (i.e. glasswork) in their fields of view. **Glare effect** make adaptation of the eyes to the low light levels constantly inhibited.

8.4.2. The fact that using '**visible light**' which creates '**variation in intensity**' (an inconsistent variability of infiltrating sun-beam through a day and through the seasons in Hong Kong) and causes '**deteriorating**' effects on certain 'low sensitivity' exhibition items, creating a 'negative' visit experience as well.

8.4.2. In all cases, the dimmer-controlled, artificial 'black-lit' gallery should be designed by using **artificial lighting system**, rather than natural lighting. Natural lighting can only be used as supplementary. The skillful operation of artificial lighting in a gallery can also be learned by young artists as a professional practice.

8.4.3. Natural lighting connotes a flood in of **uncontrollable UV** (<75 uWatts/ lumen), violet light, blue light, infra-red light, X-rays, Y-rays, microwave, ... inside the gallery, causing damage on some artifacts in the long term. Even there is the use of UV removing or filtering film, which reduces visible light levels on reinforced naked or regular glass, the cost is rather high.

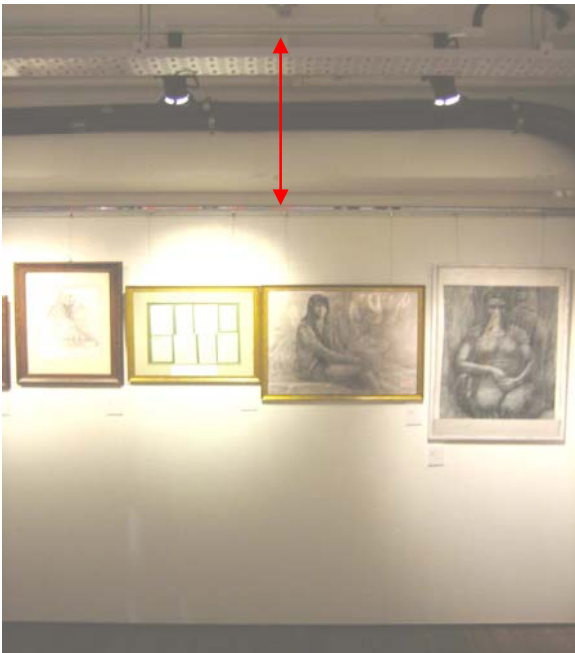
8.4.4. **A sound visual experience is hard** for visitors to peruse with the mixing of artificial and natural lighting. **Modulating of lighting effects** in each and/ or all chambers is difficult to create even there is a good curatorial team monitoring the project. Re-construction of visual memory and **visual cohesion/ acuity are hard** to attain partly because of fluctuation of illumination levels.

8.4.5. There is **no delicate design and operation of lighting system** in the gallery. Strict maintenance of figure and ground illumination in the galleries cannot be observed, if required. On the one hand, the contrast of illumination of the object and the ambience cannot reach the standard ratio of 6:1 on the 1/F gallery. On the other hand, there is no area that the user can use a dark matte, un-textured, high absorption background to create tautness and a theatre effect for some exhibits, when situation arises. In the galleries, only sub-standard incandescent spot-lights are provided. There is **no fluorescent lighting system or 'cold-beam' lighting** (w/ color temperature index 95 or better) available to supplement natural lighting.

- 8.4.6. **The inventory of JCCAC is a mess** without clear record of lamps and other exhibition equipments available. All unused workshops on O/F are messy and a good visit is even dangerous for professional staffs.
- 8.4.7. Besides, regular glass used in the galleries is **not a storm and fire-resistant material** (the standard fire rating of ICOM is 45 minutes minimum).
- 8.4.8. **The lay-out plans of track-lighting and some dimmer positions are incorrectly configured.** It should suit the dimensions of the gallery/ room, the ceiling height and the exhibition equipment dimensions. Installation of light tracks on some locations is overdone and not well-calculated. The generally referred formula calculating the distance of light track located from the wall is not used [X (distance in mm that the track is to be located from the wall)=ceiling height (or track height if suspended) in mm minus the average viewer's eye-height (1,570 mm) x 1.5777]. Some light tracks are now randomly wall-mounted without paying heed to the proper distance required for exhibits.
- 8.4.9. The number of dimmers in terms of the number, wattage per fixture and fixture space dimension is not well-calculated or supervised by light engineer. There is **no 'white light'** available in the gallery. No one knows **the exact lux level** in each gallery.
- 8.4.10. Since it takes time/ resource to rectify the situation so no recommendation is made at the moment. The question is: Is the gallery well designed for practical use? Is function following form or aesthetic?
- 8.5. **INSTABLE GALLERY CONDITION**
- 8.5.1. The following standard/ professional requirements are needed to follow: Gallery temperature should be set as stable as 21°C+-0.5°.
- 8.5.2. Relative humidity should be set as 50 +-3% RH year-round.
- 8.5.3. Light levels should be monitored by light metering and high-sensitivity artifacts such as works of rice paper, print, photography should be displayed with low lighting fixtures less than 25 watt (<50 lux), and low-sensitivity artifacts such as metal and glasswork should be displayed in <300 lux, based on ICOM's professional criteria. At the moment, there is no choice of lamp available.
- 8.5.4. Air cleanliness should be set as 90-95% efficiency particulate filtration, with activation of charcoal gaseous filtration ideally.

The JCCAC is not well designed and manned by professional staff and the future M+ in the WKCD should take this as an reference.

Curator/ Critic: Lam Hon Kin
MOST - Alternative Gallery



(fig 1. Vast Occupation of Building Service in a Wall Space)



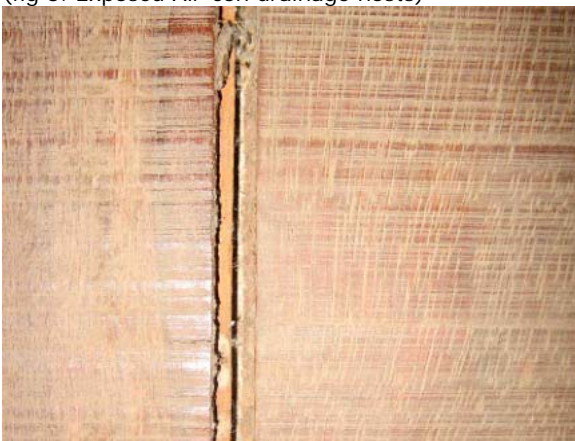
(fig.2. Reflective Materials)



(fig 3. Exposed Air-con drainage hosts)



(fig. 4 Air-con drainage hosts without white box-cover)



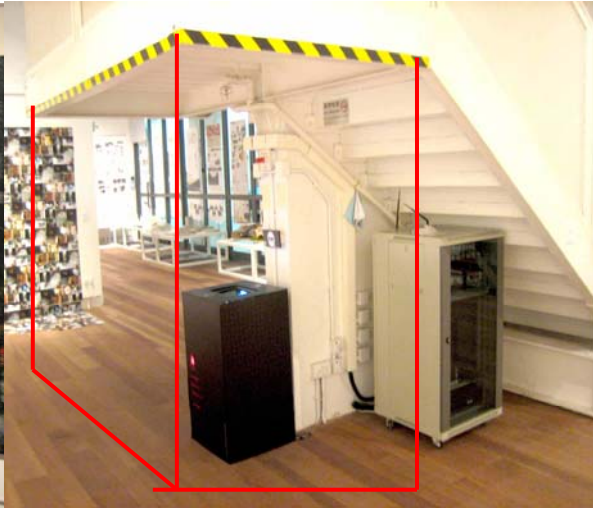
(fig 5. 2mm W cracks in-between wooden floor flanks)



(fig.6 Exposed Unplugged Socket being turned on)



(fig. 7 Electricity lines running uncontrolled



(fig. 8 Low-level Exposed Storing Space on G/F)



(fig.7 G/F Gallery is covered with 8ft H wooden box)



(fig. 7 UV infiltrated Door Window on 1/F Gallery)