

For discussion
on 28 May 2013

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Provision of Funding for Acquiring and Commissioning Artworks by Local Artists

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' support for the proposal of providing \$50 million to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) for acquiring and commissioning artworks by local artists.

Background

2. It is the Government's cultural policy to develop Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis. To achieve this policy objective, one of our initiatives is to nurture artistic talent. To groom artists in the area of visual arts, it is important to provide them with opportunities to showcase their artworks on a frequent and continuous basis. This could help promote their profile and build their audience, which provides a solid basis for their development in the arts sector.

3. To promote the profile of local artists, one of the most effective means is to acquire their artworks and display them in our public museums. Currently, LCSD's art collections are held mainly in the Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMA) and the Hong Kong Heritage Museum (HKHM). In general, the former focuses on the collection of fine art whereas the latter establishes focused collections on the more applied forms of art like design and photography which complement the HKMA collection. These two museums have been acquiring artworks of our local artists where resources permit. On the other hand, the Art Promotion Office (APO) of LCSD has been promoting the profile and works of local artists, mainly through commissioning them to create artworks for public arts projects. These projects have proved to be very effective in promoting the profile of our artists and in nurturing the community's interest in arts and Hong Kong artists. However, the acquisition and commissioning of local artworks had to face resource constraint and competing demand for LCSD services.

4. Having regard to the policy objective of fostering the development of visual arts and grooming local talent in the field, the Financial Secretary proposed, in his 2013-14 Budget Speech, to allocate \$50 million to LCSD for acquiring and commissioning artworks by local artists. This allocation will provide the much needed source of funding for the acquisition of artworks and complement what we have been doing in the promotion of public art.

The Proposal

Acquisition of Artworks of Local Artists

5. We propose to make use of part of the \$50 million funding for HKMA and HKHM to acquire artworks of local artists so as to strengthen these museums' roles in collecting, exhibiting, and promoting Hong Kong art and Hong Kong artists comprehensively and systematically. The HKMA will also promote local art to the wider public in Hong Kong and to overseas audience through participation in international Biennials/Triennials, exchange exhibitions, etc.

Acquisition/Collection Strategy

6. With the provision of dedicated funding, LCSD will adopt the following acquisition/collection strategies in respect of artworks of local artists:

- (a) Representative artists/media of different historical periods based on research on Hong Kong art history

The birth of modern Hong Kong art is generally considered to be in the 1960s, yet its origin and lineage can be traced back to the 19th century with its strong relationship with Guangdong and its regional counterparts. LCSD will conduct a series of research on Hong Kong's art history with a view to identifying representative artists of the different historical periods up to the present time. Representative works by artists in different media from these historical periods will be collected to reflect a comprehensive Hong Kong art history and the local artistic development.

- (b) Systematic collection on individual masters

LCSD will systematically collect works of leading and emerging local artists to document their artistic development. Apart from established senior masters, LCSD may collect works of up-and-coming artists and artists who have participated in major international biennials/triennials. The artworks to be acquired include photography, prints, paintings,

calligraphies, sculptures, installations and mixed media. For contemporary artworks, we will strive to cover works in different media such as video, installation, new media, animation, digital art, sound art and other alternative media.

(c) Winning entries and selected works of the Hong Kong Contemporary Art (Biennial) Award (the Award)

The Award has been a signature event of HKMA since 1975. It provides a periodical survey of contemporary Hong Kong art development. As the winning entries are selected through a highly competitive process, LCSD intends to collect the award-winning works as well as the best selected works so as to document the artistic achievements of different eras.

(d) Selected artworks from public art projects

LCSD may acquire selected artworks commissioned by the Art Promotion Office (APO) for various public art projects (see paragraphs 11 to 14 below for details).

Procurement Procedures

7. Having regard to the advice given by the Corruption Prevention Department of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), LCSD has devised a set of procedures and assessment criteria for acquisition of artworks for museums. The criteria include the artistic merit of the proposed acquisition, its relevance to museums' collections, its physical condition, price, display and education value, as well as the reputation of the artist.

8. As an integral component of the procurement procedures, LCSD will invite its Museum Expert Advisers (Advisers) from the relevant museum advisory panel to give independent advice on the proposed acquisition in accordance with the above-mentioned procedures/criteria. Advisers have been appointed to different panels according to their areas of expertise such as Hong Kong art, design, photography, Chinese antiquities, historical pictures, etc. The number of Advisers to be engaged for each acquisition depends on the value of the artworks, but at least three Advisers will be engaged if the estimated value of the artwork is over \$50,000. The Advisers concerned are required to declare interest when conducting assessment to avoid conflict of interest and no remuneration or honorarium will be offered to them. Unanimous support of the Advisers involved in the proposed acquisition, including the price to be offered, is required.

Display of Art Collections

9. The artworks to be acquired will become museum collections and will be selected and displayed on a rotational basis in the museums' permanent and thematic exhibitions and other venues including the new Oil Street Art Space (to be opened in May 2013), as well as in outbound exhibitions presented overseas and in the Mainland to promote works of Hong Kong artists. These artworks, which form part of the art collections of our museums, will be uploaded onto the museums' websites. In addition, the two museums have taken part in the Google Art Project since 2012 - a total of 187 artworks have been uploaded on the Google platform last April, among which most are works of renowned Hong Kong artists. This platform enables us to share Hong Kong art with the global audience through a virtual wall-less museum, anywhere, anytime.

Coordination with M+ of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

10. We are conscious of the need to coordinate and communicate with M+ of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) on each other's scope of museum collection to avoid competition for local artworks. As we understand it, M+ aims to build a world-class collection representative of the 20th and 21st century visual culture, encompassing the disciplines of visual art, design, architecture and moving image from Hong Kong, the Mainland of China, and expanding to other regions of Asia and the rest of the world. As for LCSD, the collection policy of its museums focuses mainly on Hong Kong so as to reflect the long-term development and cultural identity of Hong Kong art as well as the accomplishments of local artists, though we will extend to cover the artistic and cultural heritage of South China particularly the Guangdong region which has strong connection with the development of Hong Kong art and culture. Besides, both sides will actively explore loaning of each other's collections or collaboration on exhibition to strengthen partnership. We will continue to strengthen dialogue and communication with WKCDA in this regard.

Commissioning of Artworks through Public Art Projects

11. Public art provides a ready and easily accessible platform for members of the public to appreciate art in daily life. The APO is tasked to promote public art through collaboration with various sectors in the community. Flagship public art projects organized by APO include ArtAlive@Park (in collaboration with tertiary institutions), Artists in the Neighbourhood, Art@Government Buildings, Park Déco and Public Art Schemes. The APO also collaborates with the District Councils and community groups in

organizing public art projects at the district level (e.g. Sai Kung District Council Public Art Project, and New Look for Public Places: Shanghai Street Public Art Project).

12. In addition to acquiring artworks, LCSD will use part of the new funding to commission local artists to create artworks for display at public open spaces such as parks and government buildings to promote public's appreciation of art and the works of Hong Kong artists. This will provide opportunities for Hong Kong artists to try out their ideas for site specific artworks, experiment with different creative media, and further develop their artistic careers.

13. For commissioning works, artists or teams will be selected through two channels, namely, open competition and collaboration with art related non-government organisations (NGOs). In the former case, an adjudication panel comprising experts in local and public art, representatives of the districts/venues concerned and Museum Expert Advisers, will be set up to select and recommend the appropriate artwork proposals for commissioning. Selection criteria include artistic merits and creativity, technical competence of the artist/team, feasibility and safety of the proposal, as well as the costs of implementation, management, maintenance and repair. For collaboration projects, the NGO partner appointed must be art-related, non-profit making and has a good track record in executing similar commissioning projects. It will first work out the details of the proposed project and mechanism for artwork selection for LCSD's consideration. The independent advice of Museum Expert Advisers as well as the views of the venue and district representatives will be sought as part of the process.

14. We will identify more public places for the display of the commissioned artworks so that people in different districts can easily appreciate art at public places. For example, we plan to display more site-specific artworks that will blend in the environment or reflect the history of new government premises and public open spaces to be completed in the coming years (e.g. the New Wing of Ko Shan Theatre, the new West Kowloon Government Offices, the new Trade & Industry Tower in the Kai Tak Development Area, the Kwun Tong Industrial Heritage Park (at the current site of Tsun Yip Street Playground)). We will continue to promote the installation of functional artworks (e.g. park furniture) to inject creativity into public open spaces (e.g. parks, leisure and recreational facilities) and objects (e.g. benches, signage, lamp post, fence, railing, rubbish bin). Innovative street art will also be displayed at various locations to enhance citizens' experience in art in their daily life.

Consultation

15. We have consulted the Art Museum Advisory Panel on the proposal, for which Members have indicated their support. Their views and suggestions have been incorporated in the details of the proposal presented above.

The Way Forward

16. Members are invited to support the above proposal. We plan to apply for funding approval for the proposal at the LegCo's Finance Committee meeting in June 2013.

Home Affairs Bureau
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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