

THE INK SOCIETY

Presentation to Legco Sub-Committee on West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD)

Tuesday 23rd October 2007

The Ink Society is clearly disappointed that the Ink Museum is no longer one of the four “core” groups represented in the proposed Museum +. Instead, ink art was replaced by a broad and loosely defined “contemporary culture”. Having said so, it does not mean there are no opportunities to develop an Ink Museum elsewhere in Hong Kong. The Ink Society will continue to work with Government to find a suitable alternative.

With or without the Ink Museum, the Ink Society continues to support WKCD.

During the colonial years, Government was practically the sole underwriter and sponsor of both performing and visual arts. Government owned most of the venues and directly or indirectly financed much of the arts and cultural activities. Today, Government understands that it should not be in the business of “running” the arts and culture business. Government should play the role of a “facilitator” in the macro environment and allow the private sector to do the rest. The Administration understands the need to go from “underwriter” to “facilitator”, but they cannot and should not just abandon the old policies and switch overnight. The transition has to be done gradually and carefully. The WKCD is a major step in the right direction. Government provides the physical infrastructure and funding while an independent WKCD Authority oversees its development. Meanwhile, the private sector is invited to play a key role in the entire project.

On a separate issue, we must always remember that Hong Kong is just a city of 7 million in a country of 1.3billion. It only makes sense that China has a much larger pool of artistic talent. While it is important to nurture Hong Kong creative talent, we should always remain open to the best from China. In fact, we should actively seek and invite the very best creative talent from China to work and study in Hong Kong. Excellent inspires everyone and having the best from China will enhance the standards of everyone in Hong Kong. We should not be afraid or feel threatened to work with the best talent from China; we should welcome that with open arms.