

For discussion on
23 July 2014

Legislative Council
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Update on the Development of M+

PURPOSE

This paper serves to update Members on the progress of M+ development.

BACKGROUND

2. M+ is a new museum for visual culture in Hong Kong, as part of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), with its mission to focus on the 20th and 21st century visual culture, broadly defined, from a Hong Kong perspective, the perspective of now, and with a global vision. In order to realise its vision and mission, M+ needs to develop on four fronts: to build a team; to build a collection; to build a museum building and to raise awareness through inventive pre-opening programmes.

LATEST PROGRESS

3. In the past year, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) has made significant progress in the M+ development in different areas including collection and acquisition, museum facilities, governance structure, capacity building, audience building as well as stakeholder engagement.

Collection and Acquisition

4. Since the formulation of the first and comprehensive Acquisition Policy in June 2012 which lays down the broad strategy and procedures for building up the M+ Collection, M+ has started

making acquisitions and the M+ Collection has been growing rather rapidly.

5. Following the acquisition of a group of 47 works of Chinese contemporary art from Dr Uli Sigg, a leading collector of Chinese contemporary art, and the acceptance of a donation of 1,463 works from a Swiss Foundation established by Dr Sigg, M+ has made major progress in building up its collection. As at 30 June 2014, M+ has acquired (excluding the M+ Sigg Collection and donations) around 920 works. In terms of value, the geographical distribution of these acquisitions is quite balanced and works from Hong Kong accounted for over 50% of the total number of works purchased since 2012. The roadmaps for the Ink Art, Design, and Greater Asia collection have been presented to the Interim Acquisition Committee last year, and M+ is currently conducting in-depth research and developing the strategy on Hong Kong Visual Culture and Moving Image.

6. The Interim Acquisition Committee held seven meetings during the financial year 2013-14. During the period from 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2014, acquisitions by purchase totaling 352 works of visual culture were approved. Of these 352 works, 79 are from Hong Kong.

7. M+ has also attracted interest from major artists and collectors who have made various important donations including, for example, the generous donation of 37 important works of Chinese contemporary art from Mr Guan Yi, one of the most important art collectors in Pearl River Delta; the donation of the work “Guard Kissing” by Tino Sehgal from Mr Alan Lau, an avid collector of contemporary art in Hong Kong; an anonymous donation to support the acquisition of the “Asian Field” by Antony Gormley; and the cash donation (Brown Family Annual Acquisition Fund) for acquiring artworks at the Art Basel Hong Kong in the coming ten years. As at 30 June 2014, M+ has received 2,029 artwork items from 51 donors as well as the two abovementioned cash donations, with value totaling HKD 1,350,350,000. M+ will continue its effort in securing more donations in the coming years.

8. To underline its commitment to transparency, WKCDA has published the M+ Acquisition Policy, which was developed based on the policies of major museums in the United States of America, Canada as well as Australia, and in consultation with the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The approving

procedures and limits as laid down in the policy are comparable to those of many major international museums. For instance, M+ needs to seek approval from the WKCD Board before making major acquisitions. Depending on the price/value of the proposed acquisition, the M+ Acquisition Policy sets out different acquisition approving authorities which comprise members with strong arts/cultural background, and M+ could seek the advice of independent experts when necessary. The policy will be reviewed at least once every two years. In addition, the complete lists of the M+ Sigg Collection and other recent acquisitions and donations have been uploaded to the WKCD official website for public information.

Museum Facilities

M+ Building

9. Following the design competition for M+, the Swiss architect firm of Herzog & de Meuron (HdM), in joint venture with Hong Kong-based TFP Farrells and Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong (HdM Joint Venture), has been selected to design and administer the M+ building project.

10. The winning design for the M+ building is made up of two main components – a horizontal slab and a vertical tower. The horizontal building houses the exhibition spaces and galleries. A central plaza provides direct access to the entire exhibition area with a diversity of well-considered gallery spaces. The vertical plane of the M+ building is centred on the horizontal slab of exhibition spaces, fused into the shape of an upside down T. The vertical building will house a research centre, a curatorial centre and retail, dining and entertainment facilities on the top floor. The ground and lower levels will provide easy access to the Park and other WKCD facilities, alongside a learning centre, a moving image centre, museum shops and cafes, creator's studios, and back-of-house functions. Conservation and storage facilities will be accommodated in an ancillary building to the north. Details of architectural design of M+ are shown at **Annex**.

11. The M+ design consultancy services commenced in September 2013. Detailed design is progressing well and is due for completion in December 2014. As the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council has not been able to consider the funding application of the advance public infrastructure works in the M+ portion of the integrated basement as scheduled for July 2014, it is

anticipated that the completion date for M+ will be revised from end 2017 to the first half of 2018.

12. On the other hand, advance works for M+ commenced on 1 April 2014 and is expected to be completed in August 2014.

13. In keeping with WKCDA's prudent financial management, regular reviews are being undertaken to monitor the estimated construction cost. Value engineering studies, such as the optimisation of plant room areas and choice of façade materials, will continue to form part of the ongoing design management and cost control activities.

Conservation and Storage Facility

14. The conservation and storage facility, a purpose-built facility on the M+ site, is now in the detailed design phase. M+ is currently finalising the building mass and working with the design team on the storage and supporting space layout.

Governance Structure

15. Following the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the WKCD as well as the report of the Museums Advisory Group, WKCDA has studied the governance structure of major museums overseas to consider how the future M+ should be managed. For the purposes of removing legal ambiguity in the eyes of people dealing with the museum, administrative transparency, accountability and efficiency and of maximising public perception of the artistic freedom and curatorial independence of M+, the governance of M+ would be implemented through the establishment of a wholly owned subsidiary company under WKCDA as a separate legal entity.

16. Under this model, the WKCDA Board will be the body setting overall policies for the governance of WKCDA, including M+, and the overall strategic direction for the WKCD, while the new M+ Board for the wholly owned subsidiary shall develop the mandate/mission, vision and operating strategies for M+. M+ would retain control over its museological and curatorial policies and the M+ Board would hold the authority to approve the daily work and decisions within defined levels. This would allow for more effective and streamlined operations of the museum. M+'s management and governance need to be compliant with the policies of WKCDA.

WKCDA is currently working out further details to implement the governance structure.

Capacity Building

Expertise Development

17. M+ has been gradually building up its professional expertise in the different areas including curatorial practice, collection management, art education, research, and technical areas, especially back-of-house capacity. Currently, the recruitment focus is in the curatorial and collection management areas. This is to ensure that M+ will have the requisite curatorial expertise in each of the four main visual culture areas and the expertise in managing the ever expanding M+ Collection. The focus will also slowly shift towards the areas of audience development, digital programme, publications, membership and building management. M+ currently has a total of 32 staff members with 18 in the curatorial area, six in the collection management, one in the building area and the rest are executive and administration staff. Of the 18 curatorial staff, nine are young curators from Hong Kong, and M+ will continue to recruit locally, whenever possible, in filling up the growing number of vacancies leading to the full operation of the museum.

Internship and Volunteer Programmes

18. To meet the increased demand for artistic and administrative talents as well as curatorial, art education and back-of-house staff, M+ has launched different internship and volunteer programmes, for example the extensive and ambitious internship programme for the 55th Venice Biennale from June to November 2013 and the recurring M+ Internship Programme. The first two cohorts (i.e. the 2013 Fall intake and the 2014 Spring intake) of the recurring M+ Internship Programme have been successfully completed and one of the interns from the 2013 Fall intake was engaged by WKCDA to support the Mobile M+: NEON SIGNS.HK project which was presented from March to June 2014. M+ will continue to develop more internship programmes to further broaden the curatorial and collection management knowledge base in Hong Kong in the coming years.

19. The M+ Docent Volunteer Programme was launched in early 2013 and the first group of museum docents was selected to provide regular public and school tours during M+'s exhibition

periods. This will be a long-term programme, with a plan for review in one year's time and aims to develop a pool of experienced, committed and passionate docents (currently 47 in total), leading to the opening of the physical museum. It is anticipated that another docent volunteer programme may be launched in 2015. Ongoing training and workshops have been offered to these docents.

M+/Design Trust Fellowship 2014-2015

20. Design Trust, which is a new initiative launched by the Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design, has invited M+ to be a partnering institution for an annual research fellowship grant, namely the M+/Design Trust Fellowship 2014-2015 (The Fellowship). The Fellowship aims to support an original research project investigating issues relating to design and architecture in the Greater Pearl River Delta region. Apart from expanding the current body of knowledge in these areas, it is hoped that the findings from the Fellowship will also inform future acquisitions and other programmes at M+. Design Trust will provide the funding for the Fellowship whereas M+ will provide the grantee with the platform, support and guidance for the research. Applications for the Fellowship closed on 30 June 2014, and it is planned that selected candidates would be announced on 30 August 2014.

Audience Building

21. The main strategy for building audiences on a long-term basis is to organise pre-opening exhibition programmes either on the WKCD site or in different parts of Hong Kong – and later in the Arts Pavilion of the Park once the facility is delivered.

Mobile M+

22. Mobile M+ is a nomadic exhibition platform that enables M+ to develop different exhibition, education and communication forms prior to the opening of the museum building. Mobile M+ puts special emphasis on developing Hong Kong art and artists through the production and communication of new artworks and extensive educational programmes accompanying exhibitions.

23. During last year, a number of different programmes have been produced, for example, 'You (you).' - Lee Kit, 55th Venice Biennale (1 June to 24 November 2013), the collateral event

presented by M+ and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) at the 55th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale which presented a Hong Kong artist, Lee Kit; *Building M+: The Museum and Architecture Collection Exhibition* (10 January to 9 February 2014) which presented in greater detail, the winning design of HdM Joint Venture, and the shortlisted entries of the M+ Design Competition as well as M+'s growing architecture collection; *Mobile M+: 'You.' - Lee Kit* (6 March to 13 April 2014) which was an expanded adaptation of 'You (you).'; and *Mobile M+: NEON SIGNS.HK* (21 March to 30 June 2014) which was an interactive, online exhibition dedicated to exploring, mapping and documenting Hong Kong's neon signs.

24. To evaluate the outcome of 'You (you).' - Lee Kit, 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, HKADC has conducted analysis and produced an evaluation report on the exhibition which showed that the collaboration was a success in terms of the quality of the exhibition, enhancement of the publicity as well as promotional and educational activities and so forth. HKADC would like to continue this collaboration and invited M+ to curate the 56th Venice Biennale to be held in 2015. M+ has accepted the invitation and a press announcement was made on 26 June 2014.

M+ at Art Basel in Hong Kong

25. In addition to the programmes mentioned above, M+ also participated in the Art Basel in Hong Kong in 2014 with a presentation on the M+ Building design and the M+ Collection. This event took place from 14 to 18 May 2014.

M+ Matters

26. M+ Matters is a series of public talks exploring critical issues with key players in the field of visual art, design, architecture and moving image. The first three of the series were held in 2012-13 and the fourth of the series, "ARTWORK DOCUMENTATION" was held in November 2013 and included two public programmes with selected speakers (22 and 25 November 2013), and finally "Postwar Abstraction in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan" was held on 28 June 2014. M+ plans to either host or collaborate with related institutions, international museums and visual art professionals and students to organise a stream of research-related events in the coming years.

Stakeholder Engagement

27. With the objective both to listen to stakeholders' views as well as to explain the developing vision for M+, M+ continues to organise public forums. M+ hold these public forums regularly to inform the general public about the latest development of M+, including the progress of the M+ building projects and the expanding collection, as well as M+'s forthcoming exhibitions projects. M+ will also continue communication with stakeholders through attending local art and cultural events, giving lectures in different institutions and universities, participating in public panel as well as frequent small group/one-on-one discussions with members of the arts community.

**West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
July 2014**



M+ VIEW FROM THE PARK
從公園望向M+



M+ VIEW FROM THE HARBOUR
從維多利亞港望向M+



M+ VIEW FROM ARTIST SQUARE
從藝術廣場望向M+