

For discussion on
6 September 2021

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

**Talent Development Opportunities
provided by the West Kowloon Cultural District**

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the talent development opportunities being provided by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA or the Authority), including those being provided by M+, the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM) and the Performing Arts Division (PA Division).

BACKGROUND

2. One of the visions of the West Kowloon Cultural District (the District) is to become a world-class integrated arts and cultural hub for nurturing artists and international cultural exchange. Talent development is pivotal to achieving these goals. In the past years, every effort has been made by the PA Division, M+ and HKPM to develop a wide range of tailored programmes and initiatives to identify and nurture talented young and emerging artists from different art forms, build the capacity of artists, arts administrators, researchers as well as art curators and museum professionals so they have the platforms, opportunities and resources to showcase their works and talents locally and in the global stage.

3. In addition, professional training, workshops and lectures are also developed for the wider public who are interested in playing a part in the District's performing arts and museum programmes relating to contemporary visual art, the finest objects from the Palace Museum and other leading cultural institutions around the world.

M+

Supporting Artists and Talents

4. Building a broad and diverse audience base is pivotal in ensuring that M+'s programmes reach the broadest audiences and serve the widest public while promoting visual arts and culture in Hong Kong and nurturing local artists and makers.

5. M+ has been supporting the work and career development of many young artists from Hong Kong and Mainland China, specifically by acquiring their works. The M+ Sigg Collection, positions M+ as a leading institution that showcase a good part of the history of contemporary Chinese art from the 1970s to the 2010s. By continuing to acquire works by the most important emerging local and regional artists, M+ is not only further strengthening its unique position, it is also establishing itself as an important patron and supporter of new art talents across the region. As of the end of February 2021, the M+ Collection and the M+ Sigg Collection include 7 875 works, of which approximately 23% (around 1 820 works) are by Hong Kong makers. M+ has also set up the M+ Collection Archives which contain around 47 013 items, of which approximately 37% (around 17 300 items) are from Hong Kong.

6. Another important patronage initiative undertaken by M+ was the launch of the M+ Council for New Art (New Art Council) in 2017. The Council is supporting M+ acquisitions of works by young and emerging artists, beginning with artists from the Greater China region. With the contribution from its members, the first council of New Art (from 2018 to 2020) supported M+ to collect 45 works of 31 young artists (under 40) from Hong Kong and other regions.

7. The M+ International Council for Visual Art (Visual Art Council) and the M+ Council for Design and Architecture established in December 2019 and May 2020 respectively, are each supporting talent development by identifying important art works and acquiring them for the museum. The Visual Art Council focuses on acquiring artworks by established regional and global visual artists that will help build the canon of Asian art in M+ Collections. The Design and Architecture Council supports the acquisition of design and architecture works from Asia and beyond, and to

continue to trace and strengthen the contemporary narratives of these disciplines in the M+ Collections.

8. Members of the aforementioned Council will contribute to building the foundation of M+ Collections in the respective area of each Council through membership dues as well as their expertise and market knowledge. At the same time, M+ is exploring different initiatives to raise funds to support the works of artists in different disciplines.

9. Some of the Greater China region's most talented artists are now benefitting from **the Sigg Prize**, a biennial award established by M+ in 2018 that recognises outstanding artists born or working in the region, and offers them a platform to highlight and promote their works on an international scale. Hong Kong artist Samson Young with his installation *Muted Situations #22: Muted Tchaikovsky's 5th* was the winner of this inaugural Sigg Prize.

10. Organised in parallel with *the Sigg Prize*, **The Sigg Fellowship for Chinese Art Research** held every other year to support new research on Chinese art, in dialogue with the M+ Collections, which recognises the best of contemporary art practices in the Greater China region. The Fellowship corresponds with M+'s commitment to enriching the contemporary conversation on art in the region, and to defining new platforms for research and debate.

11. M+ has also been providing up-and-coming artists and art curators with opportunities to showcase their talents on the global stage. In collaboration with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), the widely recognised Hong Kong-born artist, Angela Su, was selected as the featured artist for Hong Kong's participation in the **59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia** in 2022. Responding to the unique conditions of the Hong Kong exhibition venue, her exhibition will be curated by Freya Chou, an independent curator based in Hong Kong. This will be the third time that M+ has appointed and engaged a guest curator for the event, following Ying Kwok in 2017 and Christina Li in 2019. For this coming edition, Ying Kwok will take on the role of Consulting Curator to support the artist and the guest curator.

12. This marks the fifth collaboration between M+ and HKADC for Hong Kong's participation in the *La Biennale di Venezia*. Angela Su follows solo presentations by Lee Kit in 2013, Tsang Kin-wah in 2015, Samson Young in 2017, and Shirley Tse in 2019. The works

of all these local artists were critically acclaimed and enthusiastically received by international and local audiences, as well as by the press.

13. To further nurture local talents, M+ has created two junior positions of Assistant Curator and Curatorial Assistant specifically for every project set out in paragraphs 9 to 12 above to provide invaluable on-the-job training opportunities for local young art curators. The junior curators have been engaged for the Venice exhibition as well as the response exhibition in Hong Kong. A total of seven junior positions were created since 2013. M+ has also recruited a group of exhibition and technical interns to the M+ team to help stage the Venice exhibition. During each Venice Biennale from 2013 to 2019, there were 36 Exhibition Interns and nine Technical Interns. These interns will thus gain some unique insights into the workings of the world's oldest and most renowned international art exhibition.

M+ Matters

14. M+ will continue to develop capacity of local art researchers through symposia and lectures, drawing together perspective and articulating positions on topics related to the museum's activities and lines of research. ***M+ Matters***, ***M+ Matters Keynote*** and ***Open-Up Museum Learning in the Twenty-First Century*** brought together artists, practitioners, scholars and museum professionals with different areas of expertise. These symposia produced fruitful discussions and conversations, offering new perspectives and identifying further lines of investigation into critical subjects related to visual culture and to the work of M+. Successful examples include *Archigram Cities Online Symposium* and *M+ Matters: Archigram Cities – It's Archigram!* which were held in November 2020 with over 2 400 live online viewers. Another overwhelming result was achieved via *M+ Matters Keynote: Understanding Museum Audiences in China* which held on 29 Mar 2021 and reached over 26 000 views.

M+ Internship Programme

15. Conceived in 2010, the one-year ***M+ Internship Programme*** has offered unique opportunities and professional training for those who are interested in developing a career in the museum field or cultural and creative sectors. Initially, the internship was only connected with curatorial in various disciplines

including visual culture, design and architecture, moving image, learning and digital content, but it has gradually expanded to cover all other areas of museum work, including collection management, archive operation, retail and commerce to train future museum practitioners in different fields. Interns are engaged for a period of one year, and work closely with mentors who are curators or senior, to gain both practical and theoretical training.

16. To date, 70 university students and young graduates have been offered M+ Internships, and more than 10% of them have gone on to become M+ staff in various positions and levels. For instance, a previous intern who began her ongoing journey with M+ as a student volunteer at M+ Summer Camp. Upon graduating from the university, she became M+ team's coordinator and later joined the internship to work with the Learning and Interpretation Team. Having completed her internship, she decided to re-join M+ and is now working as a Curatorial Assistant. Apart from those who are now working with M+, another 65% of the interns have either moved on to careers in the cultural or creative industries or have pursued further education in related fields.

M+ Guide Volunteer Programme and Educator Programme

17. The **M+ Guide Volunteer Programme** (formerly called the M+ Docent Volunteer Programme) **and Educator Programme**, engaged a group of dedicated volunteers and talented individuals to lead tours on the M+ Collections for the public. M+ provides them with essential knowledge and skills, including ongoing training on exhibition key messages, highlight objects and collections, and facilitation skills. Since 2016, more than 140 people of different ages and backgrounds have joined M+ as volunteers. In preparation for the opening of M+, a new round of volunteer recruitment exercise was conducted, which attracted around 1 000 applications in less than a month. Approximately 250 volunteers will be invited as M+ Guides to deliver regular daily drop-in activities including highlight tour and pop-up talk in multiple languages to the public. More than 10 educators will also be engaged to lead activities targeting specific audience groups such as teachers and students, people with special needs and family members of all ages.

M+ Young Collective

18. **M+ Young Collective** comprises 15 dedicated young individuals who will work closely with the M+ team and cultural

practitioners to design, create and produce programmes for their peers starting from the opening. These young individuals will preferably be university students or recent graduates with an interest in visual culture, sourced through open recruitment. Through in-depth collaboration and engagement with this small group, we hope to nurture their critical thinking in the ongoing process of generating, evaluating, and modifying ideas and plans. In delivering the programmes, it is expected that they will be empowered with transferrable work experience and skills ranging from thinking, planning, facilitation and implementation.

HONG KONG PALACE MUSEUM (HKPM)

Volunteer and Docent Programme

19. Scheduled to open in mid-2022, HKPM plans to launch a flagship volunteer and docent programme. Participants will be invited to attend exclusive workshops, lectures and other training programmes hosted by leading experts. Well-trained docents will lead tours and volunteers will assist with various learning and engagement programmes.

Youth Leadership Training and School Partnership

20. HKPM proposes to launch a cultural incubation project by collaborating with partners in the cultural and creative industries to provide leadership training and internship opportunities for youth leaders, including university students and young graduates. Participants of the programmes will gain professional knowledge and leadership skills in areas, such as curatorship, museum management, learning programme development, and conservation at HKPM, the Palace Museum (PM) and other organisations. After successful completion of the programmes, participants will have the opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills acquired as volunteers, interns or even staffers in art and cultural organisations.

21. HKPM will serve as a resource centre to foster long-term strategic partnerships with local schools in support of talent development and catalyst for innovation at the intersection of art and technology. We plan to offer training for teachers to inspire new ways of teaching to unleash students' creative potentials in the areas, such as art, technology, and conservation. Aspiring students

can also learn about art and culture and experiment with fresh ways of making art at HKPM.

Fellowship Programme and Staff Professional Development

22. HKPM and the PM plan to launch a fellowship programme in 2021-22 with the aim of sharing best practices and creating professional development opportunities between the two museums. It is anticipated that three mid-career PM experts in the fields of exhibition design and curation will be in residence at HKPM for a period of three to six months, contributing fully to exhibition planning and other projects. This fellowship programme is also designed to provide training opportunities for staffers of HKPM. HKPM expects to expand this fellowship programme with other leading museums around the world.

Engagement of Local Creative Talents

23. In designing and curating the opening exhibitions, HKPM has engaged an impressive team of local established and emerging talents, including architects, designers, multimedia specialists, visual and performing artists, and curators. They are working hand-in-hand with museum staff in areas of exhibition design, artistic direction, multimedia content development and production, exhibition development and curation, as well as learning programming. In particular, we invite a local artistic director to develop an opening exhibition featuring contemporary works by local creative talents inspired by palace art, culture, and architecture, and we have engaged with two renowned local artists to work on multimedia projects. We are looking further into opportunities to sustain our long-term partnership with local creative community and contribute further to the role of Hong Kong as an international centre of art and culture.

PERFORMING ARTS

24. Driven by WKCD's vision of being the home for Hong Kong's performing arts and to lead Hong Kong performing arts to the next level, the PA Division is committed to identifying, nurturing and building capacity for talented young and emerging Hong Kong artists, arts practitioners/personnel as well as art groups and

providing them expanded resources and platforms to develop artistic excellence and showcase their works.

Young Artist Resident-Training Programmes

25. WKCD's very own **Tea House Rising Stars Troupe** is the first venue-based artistic troupe in Hong Kong, receiving training and performance opportunities through the *Tea House Theatre Experience* under the artistic curatorship of Mr Law Kar-yin. The troupe currently consists of seven xiqu artists and 10 musicians recruited through open auditions. Since 2019, a total of over 350 performances have been staged, attracting a total of over 29 000 audience.

26. The **Freespace Ensemble** matches up some of the best local musicians working in different genres in its monthly shows beginning in September 2021. This latest boundary-expanding initiative offers musicians regular opportunities to collaborate across genres, to experiment with new compositions and arrangements, and to showcase their new music in and around Freespace.

Young Artist Platform

27. We also continue to create multiple platforms for Hong Kong's music scene to cross-pollinate and evolve. Every weekend and on selected weeknights, musicians from different backgrounds and disciplines are invited to perform at **Lau Bak Livehouse**, a bar-café and performance space at Freespace. The line-up ranges from jazz, rock, city folk, and classical to electronica, experimental music and more.

28. The ongoing '**Cycling Piano**' project at the Art Park every weekend provides a mobile stage for up-and-coming local jazz musicians on the one-of-a-kind tricycle, which was upcycled from a 1960s Hong Kong-made Morrison piano from Tsang Fook Piano Company. An array of promising local street performers is paired up to perform along the designated route that crosses the Waterfront Promenade and Great Lawn. Through attracting wider art and culture community to WKCD, the artists can also gain exposure and interact with a wider audience.

Creative Research and Development

29. Apart from music collaborations, we also encourage cross-genre collaboration between practitioners of different art forms. Over the years since 2016, our creative research platform **Choreographer and Composer Lab** has been bringing together different choreographers and composers and giving them scope to explore new approaches to composition in music and dance together. Their collaborative works are shared with audiences in a *Work-in-Development Showcase* for this programme staged in 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2021. The year 2021 marked the fourth edition for the *Choreographer and Composer Lab* with a total of 24 artists participated to date.

30. To support the development of Cantonese opera talents while simultaneously preserving and developing Cantonese opera and other forms of xiqu, the PA Division is launching two new initiatives, the *Creative Script Writing Project* and the *Creative Script Adaptation Project*. The *Creative Script Writing Project* will provide resources and production technology for emerging playwrights, directors and music arrangers that will enable them to collaborate and produce new xiqu works commissioned by the Xiqu Centre. Alongside this, the *Creative Script Adaptation Project* will invite young and talented local playwrights to enhance traditional scripts in ways that appeal to audience of today and can be performed by existing troupes. These two projects are giving new xiqu talents the opportunity to transcend traditional frameworks and create new and original works and adaptations for our time and place.

31. **TechBox** is a four-year collaborative platform with the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. It assembles media artists, theatre designers, faculty members and students to rethink new frontiers of technology and performance, and devise experimental creations in a technological context.

International Creative Exchange

32. During these challenging times, the PA Division is continuing to look for ways of delivering programmes and initiatives that will build capacity for Hong Kong's arts and cultural industry. During the pandemic period and amidst travel restrictions since 2020, Freespace partnered with four international institutions to present **Museum of Human E-motions**. This online residency

project brought together dance artists from overseas and Hong Kong to exchange creative ideas via a virtual platform. After exploring emotions as the research topic in the digital space for over three months, the artists concluded their research journey by showcasing their creations online to the public.

33. Another international creative exchange is a three-year residency and exchange programme with three dance institutions in Finland, namely Dance Info Finland, Zodiak – Centre for New Dance, and Dance House Helsinki. ***Creative Meeting Point: Hong Kong x Finland*** for dance artists from Hong Kong and Finland took place between 2016 and 2019. Taking the partnership between WKCDA and Zodiak to the next level in 2022, both institutions have committed to co-produce and present the new creations of this programme. Artists from Hong Kong and Finland will perform these two new creations separately at Freespace in April 2022 and the newly built Dance House Helsinki in May 2022. The new creations will include a new contemporary dance work of a famous local dance artist commissioned by Freespace.

Fellowships, Internships and Docents

34. Besides nurturing artists and performers, we also support emerging creatives, arts practitioners and academics. Our ***Arts Impact Fellowship*** (previously known as the *West Kowloon Young Fellows Scheme (Performing Arts)*) gives young artists, educators, researchers and arts administrators the opportunity to develop pioneering initiatives that inspire change, community engagement and audience building. Projects showing potential may be adopted by WKCDA for integration into its future learning and participation programmes. Since its launch in 2019, the scheme has supported five fellows in the development of proposals that demonstrate potential for social impact and positive change for Hong Kong's performing arts ecology.

35. To reach out to the public and help audiences learn about the art of xiqu in all its forms, the ***Xiqu Centre Guided Tour Docent Programme*** has been established to engage volunteers to lead 60-minute guided tours of the Xiqu Centre, and share information about the architectural characteristics of the venue, as well as the culture and stories behind the art form. Besides in-depth training, docents will have access to other learning programmes offered by the District, and have the chance to meet with art practitioners and fellow art-lovers.

36. WKCDA nurtures talent for arts administration through a range of internship and professional development opportunities in arts administration. **The Performing Arts Internship Programme** provides young interns with theoretical and practical training on programming, operations and technical production, coupled with mentoring by line managers from WKCDA. Every year, around 20 to 30 interns are enrolled by PA to participate the internship scheme. PA also works with overseas arts groups to foster and deepen cultural exchange between arts practitioners and arts managers in the Asia-Pacific region. Between 2019 and 2021, two overseas arts practitioners were invited to take up internship in PA Division.

ADVICE SOUGHT

37. Members are invited to note the talent development opportunities provided by the District.

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
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