

'ArtSIA Calendar' website to promote major Asian arts events

Developed and maintained by the Home Affairs Bureau, the ArtSIA Calendar website (<http://www.artsia.org>) which disseminates the latest information on signature arts events in 11 Asian economies was launched at the Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (ACCF) 2007 today (July 23).

The public is now able to access information on major arts events on the Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam via this website.

Officiating at today's launching ceremony at the Asian cultural ministers' meeting at ACCF, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, said he hoped the website would not only arouse wider public interest in the arts programmes of Asia, but also strengthen the flow of cultural information among the participating Asian countries and create a clustering effect in promoting cultural tourism in the region.

Initiated at the Asian cultural ministers' meeting at ACCF 2006, it is the objective of the ArtSIA Calendar to encourage cultural exchange among artists and arts organisations in Asia and to showcase Asian creative talents on a wider global stage. It also creates a new branding of Asia in the arts.

Apart from a brief description of the featured arts programmes, the website also provides enquiry telephone numbers and Internet links whenever possible to enable visitors to access more information about the programmes and other related information to facilitate planning visits. A search tool is also built in. There are also useful links provided under the "Links" section to other cultural and tourist information of the participating Asian economies.

Mr Tsang thanked the cultural ministries of the participating economies and their consulates in Hong Kong for making the website possible.

"The launch of the website today is only a start. We will continue to fine-tune it to make it even more user-friendly and appealing to surfers."

Cultural ministers of the participating countries also speak highly of the new website. The Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts of Singapore, Dr Lee Boon Yang applauded the move to launch the ArtSIA Calendar. "This is an effective way to promote and strengthen cultural relations among Asian countries as well as between Asia and the world. ArtSIA Calendar will facilitate information sharing within Asia and internationally, and expand people-to-people exchanges which are so important for the arts and culture sector. Singapore gives its full support to this initiative."

Director, Cultural Industry Department, Ministry of Culture, Mr Wang Yongzhang said the ArtSIA Calendar website was a very meaningful initiative. "Not only does it promote the cultural exchange and co-operation among the Asian countries and regions, it also enables the whole world to know more about Asian culture. The website provides useful links to websites including 'ChinaCulture.org', 'China Culture Information Net' as well as 'China Cultural Industries' under the Ministry of Culture. Furthermore, the ArtSIA Calendar website serves as a bridge to foster cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland, as well as the Mainland and Asia or even the world, to enable the world to have a better understanding of Chinese culture. I wish the website a great success," he said.

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