

LCQ3: Mr Tsang Tsou-choi's works

Following is a question by the Hon Alan Leong and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Ms Florence Hui, in the Legislative Council today (April 1):

Question:

It has been reported that the valued pieces of calligraphy painted at various places in Kowloon by the late Mr Tsang Tsou-choi, who is known as "the King of Kowloon", have become part of the collective memory of the people of Hong Kong, and hence have considerable conservation value. However, some residents of Kowloon East recently found that some of those valued pieces of calligraphy in Kai Yip Estate, Kowloon Bay, Tsui Ping Estate and Yue Man Square in Kwun Tong have been damaged, while exposure to wind and rain has faded some others. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether the authorities have adopted specific conservation measures to preserve the valued pieces of calligraphy of Mr Tsang; if so, of the details of the measures; if not, the reasons for that; and

(b) given that a valued piece of calligraphy of Mr Tsang on a concrete pillar opposite the Star Ferry Pier in Tsim Sha Tsui has become a distinctive tourist attraction after the authorities have encased it using a fibreglass panel and fixed a metal plaque on the ground to provide explanation, whether the authorities will make reference and properly conserve the valued pieces of calligraphy of Mr Tsang Tsou-choi in other places in this way; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) Regarding Mr Tsang Tsou-choi's works left in public places, we take different measures to protect them depending on the actual situation and feasibility. Owing to prolonged exposure to wind and rain, those works on traffic control boxes and walls have faded and can hardly be identified. These works have also peeled off together with the paint of the traffic control boxes and walls. Since they are in a poor condition, it is considered inappropriate to apply protective coating to the works or to

cover them with acrylic sheets. Instead, we have documented these works by making photographic records.

As for Tsang's work on the concrete pillar at the Star Ferry Pier in Tsim Sha Tsui, since both the work and the pillar are in comparatively good condition, we have applied transparent protective coating to it and mounted a strong and durable transparent polyester film on the surface for protection. Another piece of Tsang's work which is in good condition is the one on a lamp post at Kwun Tong Road (near Ping Shek Estate). It has already been covered with protective acrylic sheets. The condition of these two works is regularly checked by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

(b) We have carefully examined the feasibility of preserving Tsang's works in public places by means of applying transparent protective coating and covering them with transparent protective acrylic sheets. It is found that most of his works on walls have peeled off together with the emulsion paint of the walls after years of exposure to wind and rain. For those works on the metal surfaces of the traffic control boxes and lamp posts, it is also not appropriate to apply protective coating to them as it will lead to oxidation. Therefore, the protective measures adopted in the case of the pillar at the Star Ferry Pier in Tsim Sha Tsui are not considered appropriate for Tsang's works found in other places.

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