

LCQ6: Use of open space and government properties to display works of art

Following is a question by Hon Lee Wing-tat and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (July 8):

Question:

Regarding the use of open space and government properties to display works of art, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the details of the various schemes, participated by each government department and public organisation in the past three years, which were under the public art programmes (PAP) organised by the Art Promotion Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department;

(b) apart from PAP, whether various government departments and public organisations had discussed or studied in the past three years the setting aside of indoor or outdoor areas in their properties for displaying works of local artists; if they had, of the procedure or process for making applications or arrangements for display; if not, the reasons for that; apart from museums, of the name of each property currently displaying works of local artists and the total number of such properties, as well as the number of works of art involved; and

(c) whether it has considered setting aside more indoor or outdoor areas in government properties for displaying works of local artists, and whether it has formulated guidelines to encourage various government departments and public organisations to do so accordingly; if it has, of the details of the guidelines; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) The Art Promotion Office (APO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is dedicated to the development and promotion of public art. Since its establishment in 2001, it has been from time to time partnering with government departments, public organisations, non-profit-making bodies and commercial undertakings, to organise public art programmes (PAP) for the display of works of

local artists in public places.

In the past three years, the government departments and public organisations participating in the PAP included the Highways Department, the Yuen Long District Council, the Hong Kong Arts Centre and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. The programmes concerned are set out in Annex 1. MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and the Link Management Limited have also co-operated with the APO to promote public art.

Since 2001, the APO and the museums under the LCSD have partnered with the Hong Kong Airport Authority (HKAA) in the display of selected pieces of cultural heritage and artwork in the Passenger Terminal Building of Hong Kong International Airport, in order to promote local art and creative activities. The exhibition currently underway at the Departures Hall of the Airport features the works of a number of local artists using white porcelain and white marble under the theme of "Rhyme of White". The LCSD has also been in liaison with the HKAA to update the exhibits and look for new display areas.

Apart from government departments and public organisations, the APO also teams up with non-profit-making bodies to organise PAP. The "Oasis · Mirage: Hong Kong International Sculpture Symposium 2009" co-organised not long ago with the Hong Kong Sculpture Society invited 14 local, Mainland and overseas artists to stage 11 days of on-site demonstration at the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade. The works thus created, together with the sculptures of various active local artists, were displayed at the Promenade for public enjoyment.

The PAP that will be launched shortly with partner organisations include - the "Public Art Project 2009" whereby the APO will work with the Sai Kung District Council to install four artworks at the LCSD venues in Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O Districts, namely the Po Tsui Park, Po Hong Park and Man Yee Playground; and the installation of a major artwork at the Tsim Sha Tsui East Promenade with the Hong Kong Arts Centre. These two projects are expected to complete in 2010. Another project is the "SAORI Hand-weaving Project" to be jointly organised with the Spastics Association of Hong Kong, the Salvation Army, and the Kadoorie Farm. This project is not only intended for art therapy for the disabled through hand-weaving workshops, but also for the promotion of art to the general public by displaying hand-weaving works in the Kadoorie Farm and the Hong Kong Central Library.

(b) The Government strongly supports the development of local art. We consider that pluralistic development of local art will enable local artists and people from different walks of life to have more chances of participation. Apart from the PAP mentioned above, the Government encourages and welcomes private and public organisations to allocate areas in their properties for the display of works by local artists. At present, government departments, public or other organisations can decide whether they would like to have display of artworks at suitable places, having regard to the actual conditions of the property concerned (e.g. availability of public space suitable for displaying artworks, flow of public visitors, security, etc.). We have not prescribed a set of standard procedures or process on the arrangements for the display of works of local artists.

Apart from museums, we understand that there is a total of 75 such properties where works of local artists are displayed. The location of these properties and the number of artworks involved are listed in Annex 2.

(c) To actively promote and further encourage government departments to display local artworks in their properties, the Home Affairs Bureau has established an inter-departmental working group to explore the feasibility of displaying local artworks at government properties (including government building projects under planning and existing government properties). The working group will further discuss a pilot scheme for installing local artworks at public spaces in existing government joint-user buildings. It will also formulate guidelines on the acquisition and preservation of local artworks.

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